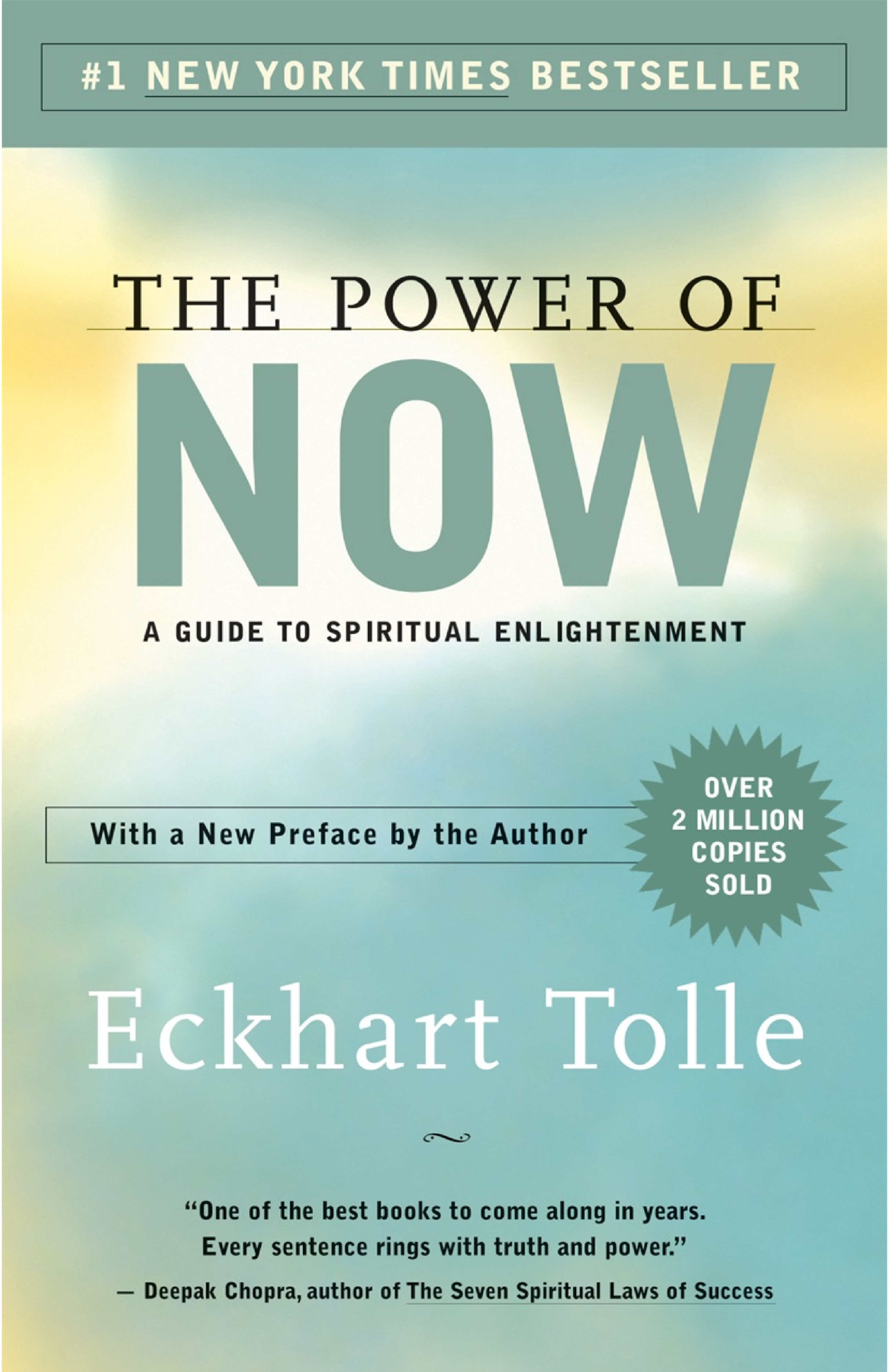

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Eckhart Tolle

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You are here to enable the divine
purpose of the universe to unfold.
That is how important you are!

— Eckhart Tolle

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE PAPERBACK EDITION

Six years after it was first published, *The Power of Now* continues to play its part in the urgent task of the transformation of human consciousness. Although I was privileged to give birth to it, I feel that the book has taken on a life and momentum of its own. It has reached several million readers worldwide, many of whom have written to me to tell of the life-changing effect it has had on them. Due to the extremely high volume of correspondence I receive, I am regretfully no longer able to send personal replies, but I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to all those who have written to me to share their experiences. I am moved and deeply touched by many of those accounts, and they leave no doubt in my mind that an unprecedented shift in consciousness is indeed happening on our planet.

Nobody could have predicted the rapid growth of the book when Namaste Publishing in Vancouver published the first edition of three thousand copies in 1997. During its first year of publication, the book found its readers almost exclusively through word of mouth. That was the time when I would personally deliver a few copies every week to some small bookstores in Vancouver, something I found enormously satisfying, knowing that every book that I handed over had the potential of changing someone's life. Friends helped by placing copies of the book in spiritual bookstores farther afield: Calgary, Seattle, California, London. Stephen Gawtry, the manager of Watkins, the world's oldest metaphysical bookstore in London, England, wrote at the time, "I foresee great things for this book." He was right: by the second year *The Power of Now* had developed into an "underground bestseller," as one reviewer later called it. Then, after the book received a number of favorable reviews in various journals and magazines, its growth accelerated and finally became explosive when Oprah Winfrey, who had been deeply affected by the book, proceeded to tell the world about it. Five years after it was first published, it reached #1 on the *New York Times* bestseller list, and it is now available in thirty languages. It has been very well received and become a bestseller even in India, a country considered by many to be the birthplace of humanity's quest for spiritual enlightenment.

Most of the thousands of letters and emails that have been sent to me from all over the world are from ordinary men and women, but there are also letters from Buddhist monks and Christian nuns, from people in prison or facing a life-threatening illness or imminent death. Psychotherapists have written to say that they recommend the book to their patients or incorporate the teachings in their practice. Many of those letters and emails mention a lessening or even a complete disappearance of suffering and problem-making in people's lives as a result of reading *The Power of Now* and putting the teachings into practice in everyday life. There is frequent mention of the amazing and beneficial effects of inner body awareness, the sense of freedom that comes from letting go of self-identification with one's personal history and life-situation, and a newfound inner peace that arises as one learns to relinquish mental/emotional resistance to the "suchness" of the present moment. Many people have read the book more than once, and they comment that the text loses none of its freshness upon subsequent readings, indeed that the book's transformative power remains not only undiminished, but actually becomes intensified.

The more the dysfunction of the human mind plays itself out on the world stage, clearly visible to everyone in the daily television news reports, the greater the number of people who realize the urgent need for a radical change in human consciousness if humanity is not to destroy both itself and the planet. This need, as well as readiness in millions of people for the arising of a new consciousness, is the context within which the "success" of *The Power of Now* must be seen and understood.

This does not mean, of course, that everyone responds favorably to the book. In many people, as well as in most of the political and economic structures and the greater part of the media, the old consciousness is still deeply entrenched. Anyone who is still totally identified with the voice in their head — the stream of involuntary and incessant thinking — will inevitably fail to see what *The Power of Now* is all about. Some enthusiastic readers gave a copy of the book to a friend or relative and were surprised and disappointed when the recipient found it quite meaningless and could not get beyond the first few pages. "Mumbo jumbo" was all that *Time* magazine could see in a book that countless people around the globe found life-changing. Furthermore, any teaching that puts the spotlight of attention on the workings of the ego will necessarily provoke egoic reaction, resistance, and attack.

However, despite a certain amount of misunderstanding and critical dissent, the response to the book around the globe has been overwhelmingly positive. I feel confident that in the years to come millions more will be drawn to it, and that *The Power of Now* will continue to make a vital contribution to the arising of a new consciousness and a more enlightened humanity.

— Eckhart Tolle
Vancouver, B.C.
April 19, 2004

THE POWER OF
NOW

INTRODUCTION

THE ORIGIN OF THIS BOOK

I have little use for the past and rarely think about it; however, I would briefly like to tell you how I came to be a spiritual teacher and how this book came into existence.

Until my thirtieth year, I lived in a state of almost continuous anxiety interspersed with periods of suicidal depression. It feels now as if I am talking about some past lifetime or somebody else's life.

One night not long after my twenty-ninth birthday, I woke up in the early hours with a feeling of absolute dread. I had woken up with such a feeling many times before, but this time it was more intense than it had ever been. The silence of the night, the vague outlines of the furniture in the dark room, the distant noise of a passing train — everything felt so alien, so hostile, and so utterly meaningless that it created in me a deep loathing of the world. The most loathsome thing of all, however, was my own existence. What was the point in continuing to live with this burden of misery? Why carry on with this continuous struggle? I could feel that a deep longing for annihilation, for nonexistence, was now becoming much stronger than the instinctive desire to continue to live.

"I cannot live with myself any longer." This was the thought that kept repeating itself in my mind. Then suddenly I became aware of what a peculiar thought it was. "Am I one or two? If I cannot live with myself, there must be two of me: the 'I' and the 'self' that 'I' cannot live with." "Maybe," I thought, "only one of them is real."

I was so stunned by this strange realization that my mind stopped. I was fully conscious, but there were no more thoughts. Then I felt drawn into what seemed like a vortex of energy. It was a slow movement at first and then accelerated. I was gripped by an intense fear, and my body started to shake. I heard the words "resist nothing," as if spoken inside my chest. I could feel myself being sucked into a void. It felt as if the void was inside myself rather than outside. Suddenly, there was no more fear, and I let myself fall into that void. I have no recollection of what happened after that.

I was awakened by the chirping of a bird outside the window. I had never heard such a sound before. My eyes were still closed, and I saw the image of a precious diamond. Yes, if a diamond could make a sound, this is what it would be like. I opened my eyes. The first light of dawn was filtering through the curtains. Without any thought, I felt, I knew, that there is infinitely more to light than we realize. That soft luminosity filtering through the curtains was love itself. Tears came into my eyes. I got up and walked around the room. I recognized the room, and yet I knew that I had never truly seen it before. Everything was fresh and pristine, as if it had just come into existence. I picked up things, a pencil, an empty bottle, marveling at the beauty and aliveness of it all.

That day I walked around the city in utter amazement at the miracle of life on earth, as if I had just been born into this world.

For the next five months, I lived in a state of uninterrupted deep peace and bliss. After that, it diminished somewhat in intensity, or perhaps it just seemed to because it became my natural state. I could still function in the world, although I realized that nothing I ever *did* could possibly add anything to what I already had.

I knew, of course, that something profoundly significant had happened to me, but I didn’t understand it at all. It wasn’t until several years later, after I had read spiritual texts and spent time with spiritual teachers, that I realized that what everybody was looking for had already happened to me. I understood that the intense pressure of suffering that night must have forced my consciousness to withdraw from its identification with the unhappy and deeply fearful self, which is ultimately a fiction of the mind. This withdrawal must have been so complete that this false, suffering self immediately collapsed, just as if a plug had been pulled out of an inflatable toy. What was left then was my true nature as the ever-present *I am:* consciousness in its pure state prior to identification with form. Later I also learned to go into that inner timeless and deathless realm that I had originally perceived as a void and remain fully conscious. I dwelt in states of such indescribable bliss and sacredness that even the original experience I just described pales in comparison. A time came when, for a while, I was left with nothing on the physical plane. I had no relationships, no job, no home, no socially defined identity. I spent almost two years sitting on park benches in a state of the most intense joy.

But even the most beautiful experiences come and go. More fundamental, perhaps, than any experience is the undercurrent of peace that has never left me since then. Sometimes it is very strong, almost palpable, and others can feel it too. At other times, it is somewhere in the background, like a distant melody.

Later, people would occasionally come up to me and say: “I want what you have. Can you give it to me, or show me how to get it?” And I would say: “You have it already. You just can’t feel it because your mind is making too much noise.” That answer later grew into the book that you are holding in your hands.

Before I knew it, I had an external identity again. I had become a spiritual teacher.

THE TRUTH THAT IS WITHIN YOU

This book represents the essence of my work, as far as it can be conveyed in words, with individuals and small groups of spiritual seekers during the past ten years, in Europe and in North America. In deep love and appreciation, I would like to thank those exceptional people for their courage, their willingness to embrace inner change, their challenging questions, and their readiness to listen. This book would not have come into existence without them. They belong to what is as yet a small but fortunately growing minority of spiritual pioneers: people who are reaching a point where they become capable of breaking out of inherited collective mind-patterns that have kept humans in bondage to suffering for eons.

I trust that this book will find its way to those who are ready for such radical inner transformation and so act as a catalyst for it. I also hope that it will reach many others who will find its content worthy of consideration, although they may not be ready to fully live or practice it. It is possible that at a later time, the seed that was sown when reading this book will merge with the seed of enlightenment that each human being carries within, and suddenly that seed will sprout and come alive within them.

The book in its present form originated, often spontaneously, in response to questions asked by individuals in seminars, meditation classes, and private counseling sessions, and so I have kept the question-and-answer format. I learned and received as much in those classes and sessions as the questioners. Some of the questions and answers I wrote down almost verbatim. Others are generic, which is to say I combined certain types of questions that were frequently asked into one, and extracted the essence from different answers to form one generic answer. Sometimes, in the process of writing, an entirely new answer came that was more profound or insightful than anything I had ever uttered. Some additional questions were asked by the editor so as to provide further clarification of certain points.

You will find that from the first to the last page, the dialogues continuously alternate between two different levels.

On one level, I draw your attention to what is *false* in you. I speak of the nature of human unconsciousness and dysfunction as well as its most common behavioral manifestations, from conflict in relationships to warfare between tribes or nations. Such knowledge is vital, for unless you learn to recognize the false as false — as not you — there can be no lasting transformation, and you would always end up being drawn back into illusion and into some form of pain. On this level, I also show you how not to make that which is false in you into a self and into a personal problem, for that is how the false perpetuates itself.

On another level, I speak of a profound transformation of human consciousness — not as a distant future possibility, but available now — no matter who or where you are. You are shown how to free yourself from enslavement to the mind, enter into this enlightened state of consciousness and sustain it in everyday life.

On this level of the book, the words are not always concerned with information, but often designed to draw you into this new consciousness as you read. Again and again, I endeavor to take you with me into that timeless state of intense conscious presence in the Now, so as to give you a taste of enlightenment. Until you are able to experience what I speak of, you may find those passages somewhat repetitive. As soon as you do, however, I believe you will realize that they contain a great deal of spiritual power, and they may become for you the most rewarding parts of the book. Moreover, since every person carries the seed of enlightenment within, I often address myself to the knower in you who dwells behind the thinker, the deeper self that immediately recognizes spiritual truth, resonates with it, and gains strength from it.

The pause symbol ∫ after certain passages is a suggestion that you may want to stop reading for a moment, become still, and feel and experience the truth of what has just been said. There may be other places in the text where you will do this naturally and spontaneously.

As you begin reading the book, the meaning of certain words, such as “Being” or “presence,” may not be entirely clear to you at first. Just read on. Questions or objections may occasionally come into your mind as you read. They will probably be answered later in the book, or they may turn out to be irrelevant as you go more deeply into the teaching — and into yourself.

Don’t read with the mind only. Watch out for any “feeling-response” as you read and a sense of recognition from deep within. I cannot tell you any spiritual truth that deep within you don’t know already. All I can do is remind you of what you have forgotten. Living knowledge, ancient and yet ever new, is then activated and released from within every cell of your body.

The mind always wants to categorize and compare, but this book will work better for you if you do not attempt to compare its terminology with that of other teachings; otherwise, you will probably become confused. I use words such as “mind,” “happiness,” and “consciousness” in ways that do not necessarily correlate with other teachings. Don’t get attached to any words. They are only stepping stones, to be left behind as quickly as possible.

When I occasionally quote the words of Jesus or the Buddha, from *A Course in Miracles* or from other teachings, I do so not in order to compare, but to draw your attention to the fact that in *essence* there is and always has been only one spiritual teaching, although it comes in many forms. Some of these forms, such as the ancient religions, have become so overlaid with extraneous matter that their spiritual essence has become almost completely obscured by it. To a large extent, therefore, their deeper meaning is no longer recognized and their transformative power lost. When I quote from the ancient religions or other teachings, it is to reveal their deeper meaning and thereby restore their transformative power — particularly for those readers who are followers of these religions or teachings. I say to them: there is no need to go elsewhere for the truth. Let me show you how to go more deeply into what you already have.

Mostly, however, I have endeavored to use terminology that is as neutral as possible in order to reach a wide range of people. This book can be seen as a restatement for our time of that one timeless spiritual teaching, the essence of all religions. It is not derived from external sources, but from the one true Source within, so it contains no theory or speculation. I speak from inner experience, and if at times I speak forcefully, it is to cut through heavy layers of mental resistance and to reach that place within you where you already *know,* just as I know, and where the truth is recognized when it is heard. There is then a feeling of exaltation and heightened aliveness, as something within you says: “Yes. I know this is true.”

CHAPTER ONE

YOU ARE NOT YOUR MIND

THE GREATEST OBSTACLE TO ENLIGHTENMENT

Enlightenment — what is that?

A beggar had been sitting by the side of a road for over thirty years. One day a stranger walked by. “Spare some change?” mumbled the beggar, mechanically holding out his old baseball cap. “I have nothing to give you,” said the stranger. Then he asked: “What’s that you are sitting on?” “Nothing,” replied the beggar. “Just an old box. I have been sitting on it for as long as I can remember.” “Ever looked inside?” asked the stranger. “No,” said the beggar. “What’s the point? There’s nothing in there.” “Have a look inside,” insisted the stranger. The beggar managed to pry open the lid. With astonishment, disbelief, and elation, he saw that the box was filled with gold.

I am that stranger who has nothing to give you and who is telling you to look inside. Not inside any box, as in the parable, but somewhere even closer: inside yourself.

“But I am not a beggar,” I can hear you say.

Those who have not found their true wealth, which is the radiant joy of Being and the deep, unshakable peace that comes with it, are beggars, even if they have great material wealth. They are looking outside for scraps of pleasure or fulfillment, for validation, security, or love, while they have a treasure within that not only includes all those things but is infinitely greater than anything the world can offer.

The word enlightenment conjures up the idea of some superhuman accomplishment, and the ego likes to keep it that way, but it is simply your natural state of *felt* oneness with Being. It is a state of connectedness with something immeasurable and indestructible, something that, almost paradoxically, is essentially you and yet is much greater than you. It is finding your true nature beyond name and form. The inability to feel this connectedness gives rise to the illusion of separation, from yourself and from the world around you. You then perceive yourself, consciously or unconsciously, as an isolated fragment. Fear arises, and conflict within and without becomes the norm.

I love the Buddha's simple definition of enlightenment as "the end of suffering." There is nothing superhuman in that, is there? Of course, as a definition, it is incomplete. It only tells you what enlightenment is not: no suffering. But what's left when there is no more suffering? The Buddha is silent on that, and his silence implies that you'll have to find out for yourself. He uses a negative definition so that the mind cannot make it into something to believe in or into a superhuman accomplishment, a goal that is impossible for you to attain. Despite this precaution, the majority of Buddhists still believe that enlightenment is for the Buddha, not for them, at least not in this lifetime.

You used the word Being. *Can you explain what you mean by that?*

Being is the eternal, ever-present One Life beyond the myriad forms of life that are subject to birth and death. However, Being is not only beyond but also deep within every form as its innermost invisible and indestructible essence. This means that it is accessible to you now as your own deepest self, your true nature. But don't seek to grasp it with your mind. Don't try to understand it. You can know it only when the mind is still. When you are present, when your attention is fully and intensely in the Now, Being can be felt, but it can never be understood mentally. To regain awareness of Being and to abide in that state of "feeling-realization" is enlightenment.

§

When you say Being, *are you talking about God? If you are, then why don't you say it?*

The word *God* has become empty of meaning through thousands of years of misuse. I use it sometimes, but I do so sparingly. By misuse, I mean that people who have never even glimpsed the realm of the sacred, the infinite vastness behind that word, use it with great conviction, as if they knew what they are talking about. Or they argue against it, as if they knew what it is that they are denying. This misuse gives rise to absurd beliefs, assertions, and egoic delusions, such as "*My* or *our* God is the only true God, and *your* God is false," or Nietzsche's famous statement "God is dead."

The word *God* has become a closed concept. The moment the word is uttered, a mental image is created, no longer, perhaps, of an old man with a white beard, but still a mental representation of someone or something outside you, and, yes, almost inevitably a *male* someone or something.

Neither *God* nor *Being* nor any other word can define or explain the ineffable reality behind the word, so the only important question is whether the word is a help or a hindrance in enabling you to experience That toward which it points. Does it point beyond itself to that transcendental reality, or does it lend itself too easily to becoming no more than an idea in your head that you believe in, a mental idol?

The word *Being* explains nothing, but nor does *God*. *Being*, however, has the advantage that it is an open concept. It does not reduce the infinite invisible to a finite entity. It is impossible to form a mental image of it. Nobody can claim exclusive possession of Being. It is your very essence, and it is immediately accessible to you as the feeling of your own presence, the realization *I am* that is prior to I am this or I am that. So it is only a small step from the word *Being* to the experience of Being.

* * *

What is the greatest obstacle to experiencing this reality?

Identification with your mind, which causes thought to become compulsive. Not to be able to stop thinking is a dreadful affliction, but we don't realize this because almost everybody is suffering from it, so it is considered normal.

This incessant mental noise prevents you from finding that realm of inner stillness that is inseparable from Being. It also creates a false mind-made self that casts a shadow of fear and suffering. We will look at all that in more detail later.

The philosopher Descartes believed that he had found the most fundamental truth when he made his famous statement: "I think, therefore I am." He had, in fact, given expression to the most basic error: to equate thinking with Being and identity with thinking. The compulsive thinker, which means almost everyone, lives in a state of apparent separateness, in an insanely complex world of continuous problems and conflict, a world that reflects the ever-increasing fragmentation of the mind. Enlightenment is a state of wholeness, of being "at one" and therefore at peace. At one with life in its manifested aspect, the world, as well as with your deepest self and life unmanifested — at one with Being. Enlightenment is not only the end of suffering and of continuous conflict within and without, but also the end of the dreadful enslavement to incessant thinking. What an incredible liberation this is!

Identification with your mind creates an opaque screen of concepts, labels, images, words, judgments, and definitions that blocks all true relationship. It comes between you and yourself, between you and your fellow man and woman, between you and nature, between you and God. It is this screen of thought that creates the illusion of separateness, the illusion that there is you *and* a totally separate "other." You then forget the essential fact that, underneath the level of physical appearances and separate forms, you are one with all that *is*. By "forget," I mean that you can no longer *feel* this oneness as self-evident reality. You may *believe* it to be true, but you no longer *know* it to be true. A belief may be comforting. Only through your own experience, however, does it become liberating.

Thinking has become a disease. Disease happens when things get out of balance. For example, there is nothing wrong with cells dividing and multiplying in the body, but when this process continues in disregard of the total organism, cells proliferate and we have disease.

The mind is a superb instrument if used rightly. Used wrongly, however, it becomes very destructive. To put it more accurately, it is not so much that you use your mind wrongly — you usually don't use it at all. It uses *you*. This is the disease. You believe that you *are* your mind. This is the delusion. The instrument has taken you over.

I don't quite agree. It is true that I do a lot of aimless thinking, like most people, but I can still choose to use my mind to get and accomplish things, and I do that all the time.

Just because you can solve a crossword puzzle or build an atom bomb doesn't mean that you use your mind. Just as dogs love to chew bones, the mind loves to get its teeth into problems. That's why it does crossword puzzles and builds atom bombs. *You* have no interest in either. Let me ask you this: can you be free of your mind whenever you want to? Have you found the "off" button?

You mean stop thinking altogether? No, I can't, except maybe for a moment or two.

Then the mind is using you. You are unconsciously identified with it, so you don't even know that you are its slave. It's almost as if you were possessed without knowing it, and so you take the possessing entity to be yourself. The beginning of freedom is the realization that you are not the possessing entity — the thinker. Knowing this enables you to observe the entity. The moment you start *watching the thinker,* a higher level of consciousness becomes activated. You then begin to realize that there is a vast realm of intelligence beyond thought, that thought is only a tiny aspect of that intelligence. You also realize that all the things that truly matter — beauty, love, creativity, joy, inner peace — arise from beyond the mind. You begin to awaken.

* * *

FREEING YOURSELF FROM YOUR MIND

What exactly do you mean by "watching the thinker"?

When someone goes to the doctor and says, "I hear a voice in my head," he or she will most likely be sent to a psychiatrist. The fact is that, in a very similar way, virtually everyone hears a voice, or several voices, in their head all the time: the involuntary thought processes that you don't realize you have the power to stop. Continuous monologues or dialogues.

You have probably come across "mad" people in the street incessantly talking or muttering to themselves. Well, that's not much different from what you and all other "normal" people do, except that you don't do it out loud. The voice comments, speculates, judges, compares, complains, likes, dislikes, and so on. The voice isn't necessarily relevant to the situation you find yourself in at the time; it may be reviving the recent or distant past or rehearsing or imagining possible future situations. Here it often imagines things going wrong and negative outcomes; this is called worry. Sometimes this soundtrack is accompanied by visual images or "mental movies." Even if the voice is relevant to the situation at hand, it will interpret it in terms of the past. This is because the voice belongs to your conditioned mind, which is the result of all your past history as well as of the collective cultural mind-set you inherited. So you see and judge the present through the eyes of the past and get a totally distorted view of it. It is not uncommon for the voice to be a person's own worst enemy. Many people live with a tormentor in their head that continuously attacks and punishes them and drains them of vital energy. It is the cause of untold misery and unhappiness, as well as of disease.

The good news is that you *can* free yourself from your mind. This is the only true liberation. You can take the first step right now. Start listening to the voice in your head as often as you can. Pay particular attention to any repetitive thought patterns, those old gramophone records that have been playing in your head perhaps for many years. This is what I mean by "watching the thinker," which is another way of saying: listen to the voice in your head, *be* there as the witnessing presence.

When you listen to that voice, listen to it impartially. That is to say, do not judge. Do not judge or condemn what you hear, for doing so would mean that the same voice has come in again through the back door. You'll soon realize: *there* is the voice, and here *I am* listening to it, watching it. This *I am* realization, this sense of your own presence, is not a thought. It arises from beyond the mind.

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So when you listen to a thought, you are aware not only of the thought but also of yourself as the witness of the thought. A new dimension of consciousness has come in. As you listen to the thought, you feel a conscious presence — your deeper self — behind or underneath the thought, as it were. The thought then loses its power over you and quickly subsides, because you are no longer energizing the mind through identification with it. This is the beginning of the end of involuntary and compulsive thinking.

When a thought subsides, you experience a discontinuity in the mental stream — a gap of "no-mind." At first, the gaps will be short, a few seconds perhaps, but gradually they will become longer. When these gaps occur, you feel a certain stillness and peace inside you. This is the beginning of your natural state of felt oneness with Being, which is usually obscured by the mind. With practice, the sense of stillness and peace will deepen. In fact, there is no end to its depth. You will also feel a subtle emanation of joy arising from deep within: the joy of Being.

It is not a trancelike state. Not at all. There is no loss of consciousness here. The opposite is the case. If the price of peace were a lowering of your consciousness, and the price of stillness a lack of vitality and alertness, then they would not be worth having. In this state of inner connectedness, you are much more alert, more awake than in the mind-identified state. You are fully present. It also raises the vibrational frequency of the energy field that gives life to the physical body.

As you go more deeply into this realm of no-mind, as it is sometimes called in the East, you realize the state of pure consciousness. In that state, you feel your own presence with such intensity and such joy that all thinking, all emotions, your physical body, as well as the whole external world become relatively insignificant in comparison to it. And yet this is not a selfish but a selfless state. It takes you beyond what you previously thought of as "your self." That presence is essentially you and at the same time inconceivably greater than you. What I am trying to convey here may sound paradoxical or even contradictory, but there is no other way that I can express it.

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Instead of "watching the thinker," you can also create a gap in the mind stream simply by directing the focus of your attention into the Now. Just become intensely conscious of the present moment. This is a deeply satisfying thing to do. In this way, you draw consciousness away from mind activity and create a gap of no-mind in which you are highly alert and aware but not thinking. This is the essence of meditation.

In your everyday life, you can practice this by taking any routine activity that normally is only a means to an end and giving it your fullest attention, so that it becomes an end in itself. For example, every time you walk up and down the stairs in your house or place of work, pay close attention to every step, every movement, even your breathing. Be totally present. Or when you wash your hands, pay attention to all the sense perceptions associated with the activity: the sound and feel of the water, the movement of your hands, the scent of the soap, and so on. Or when you get into your car, after you close the door, pause for a few seconds and observe the flow of your breath. Become aware of a silent but powerful sense of presence. There is one certain criterion by which you can measure your success in this practice: the degree of peace that you feel within.

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So the single most vital step on your journey toward enlightenment is this: learn to disidentify from your mind. Every time you create a gap in the stream of mind, the light of your consciousness grows stronger.

One day you may catch yourself smiling at the voice in your head, as you would smile at the antics of a child. This means that you no longer take the content of your mind all that seriously, as your sense of self does not depend on it.

ENLIGHTENMENT: RISING ABOVE THOUGHT

Isn't thinking essential in order to survive in this world?

Your mind is an instrument, a tool. It is there to be used for a specific task, and when the task is completed, you lay it down. As it is, I would say about 80 to 90 percent of most people's thinking is not only repetitive and useless, but because of its dysfunctional and often negative nature, much of it is also harmful. Observe your mind and you will find this to be true. It causes a serious leakage of vital energy.

This kind of compulsive thinking is actually an addiction. What characterizes an addiction? Quite simply this: you no longer feel that you have the choice to stop. It seems stronger than you. It also gives you a false sense of pleasure, pleasure that invariably turns into pain.

Why should we be addicted to thinking?

Because you are identified with it, which means that you derive your sense of self from the content and activity of your mind. Because you believe that you would cease to be if you stopped thinking. As you grow up, you form a mental image of who you are, based on your personal and cultural conditioning. We may call this phantom self the ego. It consists of mind activity and can only be kept going through constant thinking. The term *ego* means different things to different people, but when I use it here it means a false self, created by unconscious identification with the mind.

To the ego, the present moment hardly exists. Only past and future are considered important. This total reversal of the truth accounts for the fact that in the ego mode the mind is so dysfunctional. It is always concerned with keeping the past alive, because without it — who are you? It constantly projects itself into the future to ensure its continued survival and to seek some kind of release or fulfillment there. It says: "One day, when this, that, or the other happens, I am going to be okay, happy, at peace." Even when the ego seems to be concerned with the present, it is not the present that it sees: It misperceives it completely because it looks at it through the eyes of the past. Or it reduces the present to a means to an end, an end that always lies in the mind-projected future. Observe your mind and you'll see that this is how it works.

The present moment holds the key to liberation. But you cannot find the present moment as long as you *are* your mind.

I don't want to lose my ability to analyze and discriminate. I wouldn't mind learning to think more clearly, in a more focused way, but I don't want to lose my mind. The gift of thought is the most precious thing we have. Without it, we would just be another species of animal.

The predominance of mind is no more than a stage in the evolution of consciousness. We need to go on to the next stage now as a matter of urgency; otherwise, we will be destroyed by the mind, which has grown into a monster. I will talk about this in more detail later. Thinking and consciousness are not synonymous. Thinking is only a small aspect of consciousness. Thought cannot exist without consciousness, but consciousness does not need thought.

Enlightenment means rising above thought, not falling back to a level below thought, the level of an animal or a plant. In the enlightened state, you still use your thinking mind when needed, but in a much more focused and effective way than before. You use it mostly for practical purposes, but you are free of the involuntary internal dialogue, and there is inner stillness. When you do use your mind, and particularly when a creative solution is needed, you oscillate every few minutes or so between thought and stillness, between mind and no-mind. No-mind is consciousness without thought. Only in that way is it possible to think creatively, because only in that way does thought have any real power. Thought alone, when it is no longer connected with the much vaster realm of consciousness, quickly becomes barren, insane, destructive.

The mind is essentially a survival machine. Attack and defense against other minds, gathering, storing, and analyzing information — this is what it is good at, but it is not at all creative. All true artists, whether they know it or not, create from a place of no-mind, from inner stillness. The mind then gives form to the creative impulse or insight. Even the great scientists have reported that their creative breakthroughs came at a time of mental quietude. The surprising result of a nationwide inquiry among America's most eminent mathematicians, including Einstein, to find out their working methods, was that thinking "plays only a subordinate part in the brief, decisive phase of the creative act itself."[1] So I would say that the simple reason why the majority of scientists are *not* creative is not because they don't know how to think but because they don't know how to stop thinking!

It wasn't through the mind, through thinking, that the miracle that is life on earth or your body was created and is being sustained. There is clearly an intelligence at work that is far greater than the mind. How can a single human cell measuring 1/1,000 of an inch in diameter contain instructions within its DNA that would fill 1,000 books of 600 pages each? The more we learn about the workings of the body, the more we realize just how vast is the intelligence at work within it and how little we know. When the mind reconnects with that, it becomes a most wonderful tool. It then serves something greater than itself.

EMOTION: THE BODY'S REACTION TO YOUR MIND

What about emotions? I get caught up in my emotions more than I do in my mind.

Mind, in the way I use the word, is not just thought. It includes your emotions as well as all unconscious mental-emotional reactive patterns. Emotion arises at the place where mind and body meet. It is the body's reaction to your mind — or you might say, a reflection of your mind in the body. For example, an attack thought or a hostile thought will create a buildup of energy in the body that we call anger. The body is getting ready to fight. The thought that you are being threatened, physically or psychologically, causes the body to contract, and this is the physical side of what we call fear. Research has shown that strong emotions even cause changes in the biochemistry of the body. These biochemical changes represent the physical or material aspect of the emotion. Of course, you are not usually conscious of all your thought patterns, and it is often only through watching your emotions that you can bring them into awareness.

The more you are identified with your thinking, your likes and dislikes, judgments and interpretations, which is to say the less *present* you are as the watching consciousness, the stronger the emotional energy charge will be, whether you are aware of it or not. If you cannot feel your emotions, if you are cut off from them, you will eventually experience them on a purely physical level, as a physical problem or symptom. A great deal has been written about this in recent years, so we don't need to go into it here. A strong unconscious emotional pattern may even manifest as an external event that appears to just happen to you. For example, I have observed that people who carry a lot of anger inside without being aware of it and without expressing it are more likely to be attacked, verbally or even physically, by other angry people, and often for no apparent reason. They have a strong emanation of anger that certain people pick up subliminally and that triggers their own latent anger.

If you have difficulty feeling your emotions, start by focusing attention on the inner energy field of your body. Feel the body from within. This will also put you in touch with your emotions. We will explore this in more detail later.

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You say that an emotion is the mind's reflection in the body. But sometimes there is a conflict between the two: the mind says "no" while the emotion says "yes," or the other way around.

If you really want to know your mind, the body will always give you a truthful reflection, so look at the emotion, or rather *feel* it in your body. If there is an apparent conflict between them, the thought will be the lie, the emotion will be the truth. Not the ultimate truth of who you are, but the relative truth of your state of mind at that time.

Conflict between surface thoughts and unconscious mental processes is certainly common. You may not yet be able to bring your unconscious mind activity into awareness *as thoughts*, but it will always be reflected in the body *as an emotion*, and of this you *can* become aware. To watch an emotion in this way is basically the same as listening to or watching a thought, which I described earlier. The only difference is that, while a thought is in your head, an emotion has a strong physical component and so is primarily felt in the body. You can then allow the emotion to *be* there without being controlled by it. You no longer *are* the emotion; you are the watcher, the observing presence. If you practice this, all that is unconscious in you will be brought into the light of consciousness.

So observing our emotions is as important as observing our thoughts?

Yes. Make it a habit to ask yourself: What's going on inside me at this moment? That question will point you in the right direction. But don't analyze, just watch. Focus your attention within. Feel the energy of the emotion. If there is no emotion present, take your attention more deeply into the inner energy field of your body. It is the doorway into Being.

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An emotion usually represents an amplified and energized thought pattern, and because of its often overpowering energetic charge, it is not easy initially to stay present enough to be able to watch it. It wants to take you over, and it usually succeeds — unless there is enough presence in you. If you are pulled into unconscious identification with the emotion through lack of presence, which is normal, the emotion temporarily becomes "you." Often a vicious circle builds up between your thinking and the emotion: they feed each other. The thought pattern creates a magnified reflection of itself in the form of an emotion, and the vibrational frequency of the emotion keeps feeding the original thought pattern. By dwelling mentally on the situation, event, or person that is the perceived cause of the emotion, the thought feeds energy to the emotion, which in turn energizes the thought pattern, and so on.

Basically, all emotions are modifications of one primordial, undifferentiated emotion that has its origin in the loss of awareness of who you are beyond name and form. Because of its undifferentiated nature, it is hard to find a name that precisely describes this emotion. "Fear" comes close, but apart from a continuous sense of threat, it also includes a deep sense of abandonment and incompleteness. It may be best to use a term that is as undifferentiated as that basic emotion and simply call it "pain." One of the main tasks of the mind is to fight or remove that emotional pain, which is one of the reasons for its incessant activity, but all it can ever achieve is to cover it up temporarily. In fact, the harder the mind struggles to get rid of the pain, the greater the pain. The mind can never find the solution, nor can it afford to allow you to find the solution, because it is itself an intrinsic part of the "problem." Imagine a chief of police trying to find an arsonist when the arsonist *is* the chief of police. You will not be free of that pain until you cease to derive your sense of self from identification with the mind, which is to say from ego. The mind is then toppled from its place of power and Being reveals itself as your true nature.

Yes, I know what you are going to ask.

I was going to ask: What about positive emotions such as love and joy?

They are inseparable from your natural state of inner connectedness with Being. Glimpses of love and joy or brief moments of deep peace are possible whenever a gap occurs in the stream of thought. For most people, such gaps happen rarely and only accidentally, in moments when the mind is rendered "speechless," sometimes triggered by great beauty, extreme physical exertion, or even great danger. Suddenly, there is inner stillness. And within that stillness there is a subtle but intense joy, there is love, there is peace.

Usually, such moments are short-lived, as the mind quickly resumes its noise-making activity that we call thinking. Love, joy, and peace cannot flourish until you have freed yourself from mind dominance. But they are not what I would call emotions. They lie beyond the emotions, on a much deeper level. So you need to become fully conscious of your emotions and be able to *feel* them before you can feel that which lies beyond them. Emotion literally means "disturbance." The word comes from the Latin *emovere*, meaning "to disturb."

Love, joy, and peace are deep states of Being, or rather three aspects of the state of inner connectedness with Being. As such, they have no opposite. This is because they arise from beyond the mind. Emotions, on the other hand, being part of the dualistic mind, are subject to the law of opposites. This simply means that you cannot have good without bad. So in the unenlightened, mind-identified condition, what is sometimes wrongly called joy is the usually short-lived pleasure side of the continuously alternating pain/pleasure cycle. Pleasure is always derived from something outside you, whereas joy arises from within. The very thing that gives you pleasure today will give you pain tomorrow, or it will leave you, so its absence will give you pain. And what is often referred to as love may be pleasurable and exciting for a while, but it is an addictive clinging, an extremely needy condition that can turn into its opposite at the flick of a switch. Many "love" relationships, after the initial euphoria has passed, actually oscillate between "love" and hate, attraction and attack.

Real love doesn't make you suffer. How could it? It doesn't suddenly turn into hate, nor does real joy turn into pain. As I said, even before you are enlightened — before you have freed yourself from your mind — you may get glimpses of true joy, true love, or of a deep inner peace, still but vibrantly alive. These are aspects of your true nature, which is usually obscured by the mind. Even within a "normal" addictive relationship, there can be moments when the presence of something more genuine, something incorruptible, can be felt. But they will only be glimpses, soon to be covered up again through mind interference. It may then seem that you had something very precious and lost it, or your mind may convince you that it was all an illusion anyway. The truth is that it wasn't an illusion, and you cannot lose it. It is part of your natural state, which can be obscured but can never be destroyed by the mind. Even when the sky is heavily overcast, the sun hasn't disappeared. It's still there on the other side of the clouds.

The Buddha says that pain or suffering arises through desire or craving and that to be free of pain we need to cut the bonds of desire.

All cravings are the mind seeking salvation or fulfillment in external things and in the future as a substitute for the joy of Being. As long as I am my mind, I am those cravings, those needs, wants, attachments, and aversions, and apart from them there is no "I" except as a mere possibility, an unfulfilled potential, a seed that has not yet sprouted. In that state, even my desire to become free or enlightened is just another craving for fulfillment or completion in the future. So don't seek to become free of desire or "achieve" enlightenment. Become present. Be there as the observer of the mind. Instead of quoting the Buddha, *be* the Buddha, *be* "the awakened one," which is what the word *buddha* means.

Humans have been in the grip of pain for eons, ever since they fell from the state of grace, entered the realm of time and mind, and lost awareness of Being. At that point, they started to perceive themselves as meaningless fragments in an alien universe, unconnected to the Source and to each other.

Pain is inevitable as long as you are identified with your mind, which is to say as long as you are unconscious, spiritually speaking. I am talking here primarily of emotional pain, which is also the main cause of physical pain and physical disease. Resentment, hatred, self-pity, guilt, anger, depression, jealousy, and so on, even the slightest irritation, are all forms of pain. And every pleasure or emotional high contains within itself the seed of pain: its inseparable opposite, which will manifest in time.

Anybody who has ever taken drugs to get "high" will know that the high eventually turns into a low, that the pleasure turns into some form of pain. Many people also know from their own experience how easily and quickly an intimate relationship can turn from a source of pleasure to a source of pain. Seen from a higher perspective, both the negative and the positive polarities are faces of the same coin, are both part of the underlying pain that is inseparable from the mind-identified egoic state of consciousness.

There are two levels to your pain: the pain that you create now, and the pain from the past that still lives on in your mind and body. Ceasing to create pain in the present and dissolving past pain — this is what I want to talk about now.

CHAPTER TWO

CONSCIOUSNESS: THE WAY OUT OF PAIN

CREATE NO MORE PAIN IN THE PRESENT

Nobody's life is entirely free of pain and sorrow. Isn't it a question of learning to live with them rather than trying to avoid them?

The greater part of human pain is unnecessary. It is self-created as long as the unobserved mind runs your life.

The pain that you create now is always some form of nonacceptance, some form of unconscious resistance to what *is*. On the level of thought, the resistance is some form of judgment. On the emotional level, it is some form of negativity. The intensity of the pain depends on the degree of resistance to the present moment, and this in turn depends on how strongly you are identified with your mind. The mind always seeks to deny the Now and to escape from it. In other words, the more you are identified with your mind, the more you suffer. Or you may put it like this: the more you are able to honor and accept the Now, the more you are free of pain, of suffering — and free of the egoic mind.

Why does the mind habitually deny or resist the Now? Because it cannot function and remain in control without time, which is past and future, so it perceives the timeless Now as threatening. Time and mind are in fact inseparable.

Imagine the Earth devoid of human life, inhabited only by plants and animals. Would it still have a past and a future? Could we still speak of time in any meaningful way? The question "What time is it?" or "What's the date today?" — if anybody were there to ask it — would be quite meaningless. The oak tree or the eagle would be bemused by such a question. "What time?" they would ask. "Well, of course, it's now. The time is now. What else is there?"

Yes, we need the mind as well as time to function in this world, but there comes a point where they take over our lives, and this is where dysfunction, pain, and sorrow set in.

The mind, to ensure that it remains in control, seeks continuously to cover up the present moment with past and future, and so, as the vitality and infinite creative potential of Being, which is inseparable from the Now, becomes covered up by time, your true nature becomes obscured by the mind. An increasingly heavy burden of time has been accumulating in the human mind. All individuals are suffering under this burden, but they also keep adding to it every moment whenever they ignore or deny that precious moment or reduce it to a means of getting to some future moment, which only exists in the mind, never in actuality. The accumulation of time in the collective and individual human mind also holds a vast amount of residual pain from the past.

If you no longer want to create pain for yourself and others, if you no longer want to add to the residue of past pain that still lives on in you, then don't create any more time, or at least no more than is necessary to deal with the practical aspects of your life. How to stop creating time? Realize deeply that the present moment is all you ever have. Make the Now the primary focus of your life. Whereas before you dwelt in time and paid brief visits to the Now, have your dwelling place in the Now and pay brief visits to past and future when required to deal with the practical aspects of your life situation. Always say "yes" to the present moment. What could be more futile, more insane, than to create inner resistance to something that already *is*? What could be more insane than to oppose life itself, which is now and always now? Surrender to what *is*. Say "yes" to life — and see how life suddenly starts working *for* you rather than against you.

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The present moment is sometimes unacceptable, unpleasant, or awful.

It is as it is. Observe how the mind labels it and how this labeling process, this continuous sitting in judgment, creates pain and unhappiness. By watching the mechanics of the mind, you step out of its resistance patterns, and you can then *allow the present moment to be*. This will give you a taste of the state of inner freedom from external conditions, the state of true inner peace. Then see what happens, and take action if necessary or possible.

Accept — then act. Whatever the present moment contains, accept it as if you had chosen it. Always work with it, not against it. Make it your friend and ally, not your enemy. This will miraculously transform your whole life.

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PAST PAIN: DISSOLVING THE PAIN-BODY

As long as you are unable to access the power of the Now, every emotional pain that you experience leaves behind a residue of pain that lives on in you. It merges with the pain from the past, which was already there, and becomes lodged in your mind and body. This, of course, includes the pain you suffered as a child, caused by the unconsciousness of the world into which you were born.

This accumulated pain is a negative energy field that occupies your body and mind. If you look on it as an invisible entity in its own right, you are getting quite close to the truth. It's the emotional pain-body. It has two modes of being: dormant and active. A pain-body may be dormant 90 percent of the time; in a deeply unhappy person, though, it may be active up to 100 percent of the time. Some people live almost entirely through their pain-body, while others may experience it only in certain situations, such as intimate relationships, or situations linked with past loss or abandonment, physical or emotional hurt, and so on. Anything can trigger it, particularly if it resonates with a pain pattern from your past. When it is ready to awaken from its dormant stage, even a thought or an innocent remark made by someone close to you can activate it.

Some pain-bodies are obnoxious but relatively harmless, for example like a child who won't stop whining. Others are vicious and destructive monsters, true demons. Some are physically violent; many more are emotionally violent. Some will attack people around you or close to you, while others may attack you, their host. Thoughts and feelings you have about your life then become deeply negative and self-destructive. Illnesses and accidents are often created in this way. Some pain-bodies drive their hosts to suicide.

When you thought you knew a person and then you are suddenly confronted with this alien, nasty creature for the first time, you are in for quite a shock. However, it's more important to observe it in yourself than in someone else.

Watch out for any sign of unhappiness in yourself, in whatever form — it may be the awakening pain-body. This can take the form of irritation, impatience, a somber mood, a desire to hurt, anger, rage, depression, a need to have some drama in your relationship, and so on. Catch it the moment it awakens from its dormant state.

The pain-body wants to survive, just like every other entity in existence, and it can only survive if it gets you to unconsciously identify with it. It can then rise up, take you over, "become you," and live through you. It needs to get its "food" through you. It will feed on any experience that resonates with its own kind of energy, anything that creates further pain in whatever form: anger, destructiveness, hatred, grief, emotional drama, violence, and even illness. So the pain-body, when it has taken you over, will create a situation in your life that reflects back its own energy frequency for it to feed on. Pain can only feed on pain. Pain cannot feed on joy. It finds it quite indigestible.

Once the pain-body has taken you over, you want more pain. You become a victim or a perpetrator. You want to inflict pain, or you want to suffer pain, or both. There isn't really much difference between the two. You are not conscious of this, of course, and will vehemently claim that you do not want pain. But look closely and you will find that your thinking and behavior are designed to keep the pain going, for yourself and others. If you *were* truly conscious of it, the pattern would dissolve, for to want more pain is insanity, and nobody is consciously insane.

The pain-body, which is the dark shadow cast by the ego, is actually afraid of the light of your consciousness. It is afraid of being found out. Its survival depends on your unconscious identification with it, as well as on your unconscious fear of facing the pain that lives in you. But if you don't face it, if you don't bring the light of your consciousness into the pain, you will be forced to relive it again and again. The pain-body may seem to you like a dangerous monster that you cannot bear to look at, but I assure you that it is an insubstantial phantom that cannot prevail against the power of your presence.

Some spiritual teachings state that all pain is ultimately an illusion, and this is true. The question is: Is it true for you? A mere belief doesn't make it true. Do you want to experience pain for the rest of your life and keep saying that it is an illusion? Does that free you from the pain? What we are concerned with here is how you can *realize* this truth — that is, make it real in your own experience.

So the pain-body doesn't want you to observe it directly and see it for what it is. The moment you observe it, feel its energy field within you, and take your attention into it, the identification is broken. A higher dimension of consciousness has come in. I call it *presence*. You are now the witness or the watcher of the pain-body. This means that it cannot use you anymore by pretending to be you, and it can no longer replenish itself through you. You have found your own innermost strength. You have accessed the power of Now.

What happens to the pain-body when we become conscious enough to break our identification with it?

Unconsciousness creates it; consciousness transmutes it into itself. St. Paul expressed this universal principle beautifully: "Everything is shown up by being exposed to the light, and whatever is exposed to the light itself becomes light." Just as you cannot fight the darkness, you cannot fight the pain-body. Trying to do so would create inner conflict and thus further pain. Watching it is enough. Watching it implies accepting it as part of what *is* at that moment.

The pain-body consists of trapped life-energy that has split off from your total energy field and has temporarily become autonomous through the unnatural process of mind identification. It has turned in on itself and become anti-life, like an animal trying to devour its own tail. Why do you think our civilization has become so life-destructive? But even the life-destructive forces are still life-energy.

When you start to disidentify and become the watcher, the pain-body will continue to operate for a while and will try to trick you into identifying with it again. Although you are no longer energizing it through your identification, it has a certain momentum, just like a spinning wheel that will keep turning for a while even when it is no longer being propelled. At this stage, it may also create physical aches and pains in different parts of the body, but they won't last. Stay present, stay conscious. Be the ever-alert guardian of your inner space. You need to be present enough to be able to watch the pain-body directly and feel its energy. It then cannot control your thinking. The moment your thinking is aligned with the energy field of the pain-body, you are identified with it and again feeding it with your thoughts.

For example, if anger is the predominant energy vibration of the pain-body and you think angry thoughts, dwelling on what someone did to you or what you are going to do to him or her, then you have become unconscious, and the pain-body has become "you." Where there is anger, there is always pain underneath. Or when a dark mood comes upon you and you start getting into a negative mind-pattern and thinking how dreadful your life is, your thinking has become aligned with the pain-body, and you have become unconscious and vulnerable to the pain-body's attack. "Unconscious," the way that I use the word here, means to be identified with some mental or emotional pattern. It implies a complete absence of the watcher.

Sustained conscious attention severs the link between the pain-body and your thought processes and brings about the process of transmutation. It is as if the pain becomes fuel for the flame of your consciousness, which then burns more brightly as a result. This is the esoteric meaning of the ancient art of alchemy: the transmutation of base metal into gold, of suffering into consciousness. The split within is healed, and you become whole again. Your responsibility then is not to create further pain.

Let me summarize the process. Focus attention on the feeling inside you. Know that it is the pain-body. Accept that it is there. Don't *think* about it — don't let the feeling turn into thinking. Don't judge or analyze. Don't make an identity for yourself out of it. Stay present, and continue to be the observer of what is happening inside you. Become aware not only of the emotional pain but also of "the one who observes," the silent watcher. This is the power of the Now, the power of your own conscious presence. Then see what happens.

* * *

For many women, the pain-body awakens particularly at the time preceding the menstrual flow. I will talk about this and the reason for it in more detail later. Right now, let me just say this: If you are able to stay alert and present at that time and *watch* whatever you feel within, rather than be taken over by it, it affords an opportunity for the most powerful spiritual practice, and a rapid transmutation of all past pain becomes possible.

EGO IDENTIFICATION WITH THE PAIN-BODY

The process that I have just described is profoundly powerful yet simple. It could be taught to a child, and hopefully one day it will be one of the first things children learn in school. Once you have understood the basic principle of being present as the watcher of what happens inside you — and you "understand" it by experiencing it — you have at your disposal the most potent transformational tool.

This is not to deny that you may encounter intense inner resistance to disidentifying from your pain. This will be the case particularly if you have lived closely identified with your emotional pain-body for most of your life and the whole or a large part of your sense of self is invested in it. What this means is that you have made an unhappy self out of your pain-body and believe that this mind-made fiction is who you are. In that case, unconscious fear of losing your identity will create strong resistance to any disidentification. In other words, you would rather be in pain — *be* the pain-body — than take a leap into the unknown and risk losing the familiar unhappy self.

If this applies to you, observe the resistance within yourself. Observe the attachment to your pain. Be very alert. Observe the peculiar pleasure you derive from being unhappy. Observe the compulsion to talk or think about it. The resistance will cease if you make it conscious. You can then take your attention into the pain-body, stay present as the witness, and so initiate its transmutation.

Only *you* can do this. Nobody can do it *for* you. But if you are fortunate enough to find someone who is intensely conscious, if you can be with them and join them in the state of presence, that can be helpful and will accelerate things. In this way, your own light will quickly grow stronger. When a log that has only just started to burn is placed next to one that is burning fiercely, and after a while they are separated again, the first log will be burning with much greater intensity. After all, it is the same fire. To be such a fire is one of the functions of a spiritual teacher. Some therapists may also be able to fulfill that function, provided that they have gone beyond the level of mind and can create and sustain a state of intense conscious presence while they are working with you.

THE ORIGIN OF FEAR

You mentioned fear as being part of our basic underlying emotional pain. How does fear arise, and why is there so much of it in people's lives? And isn't a certain amount of fear just healthy self-protection? If I didn't have a fear of fire, I might put my hand in it and get burned.

The reason why you don't put your hand in the fire is not because of fear, it's because you know that you'll get burned. You don't need fear to avoid unnecessary danger — just a minimum of intelligence and common sense. For such practical matters, it is useful to apply the lessons learned in the past. Now if someone *threatened* you with fire or with physical violence, you might experience something like fear. This is an instinctive shrinking back from danger, but not the psychological condition of fear that we are talking about here. The psychological condition of fear is divorced from any concrete and true immediate danger. It comes in many forms: unease, worry, anxiety, nervousness, tension, dread, phobia, and so on. This kind of psychological fear is always of something that *might* happen, not of something that is happening now. *You* are in the here and now, while your mind is in the future. This creates an anxiety gap. And if you are identified with your mind and have lost touch with the power and simplicity of the Now, that anxiety gap will be your constant companion. You can always cope with the present moment, but you cannot cope with something that is only a mind projection — you cannot cope with the future.

Moreover, as long as you are identified with your mind, the ego runs your life, as I pointed out earlier. Because of its phantom nature, and despite elaborate defense mechanisms, the ego is very vulnerable and insecure, and it sees itself as constantly under threat. This, by the way, is the case even if the ego is outwardly very confident. Now remember that an emotion is the body's reaction to your mind. What message is the body receiving continuously from the ego, the false, mind-made self? Danger, I am under threat. And what is the emotion generated by this continuous message? Fear, of course.

Fear seems to have many causes. Fear of loss, fear of failure, fear of being hurt, and so on, but ultimately all fear is the ego's fear of death, of annihilation. To the ego, death is always just around the corner. In this mind-identified state, fear of death affects every aspect of your life. For example, even such a seemingly trivial and "normal" thing as the compulsive need to be right in an argument and make the other person wrong — defending the mental position with which you have identified — is due to the fear of death. If you identify with a mental position, then if you are wrong, your mind-based sense of self is seriously threatened with annihilation. So you as the ego cannot afford to be wrong. To be wrong is to die. Wars have been fought over this, and countless relationships have broken down.

Once you have disidentified from your mind, whether you are right or wrong makes no difference to your sense of self at all, so the forcefully compulsive and deeply unconscious need to be right, which is a form of violence, will no longer be there. You can state clearly and firmly how you feel or what you think, but there will be no aggressiveness or defensiveness about it. Your sense of self is then derived from a deeper and truer place within yourself, not from the mind. Watch out for any kind of defensiveness within yourself. What are you defending? An illusory identity, an image in your mind, a fictitious entity. By making this pattern conscious, by witnessing it, you disidentify from it. In the light of your consciousness, the unconscious pattern will then quickly dissolve. This is the end of all arguments and power games, which are so corrosive to relationships. Power over others is weakness disguised as strength. True power is within, and it is available to you now.

So anyone who is identified with their mind and, therefore, disconnected from their true power, their deeper self rooted in Being, will have fear as their constant companion. The number of people who have gone beyond mind is as yet extremely small, so you can assume that virtually everyone you meet or know lives in a state of fear. Only the intensity of it varies. It fluctuates between anxiety and dread at one end of the scale and a vague unease and distant sense of threat at the other. Most people become conscious of it only when it takes on one of its more acute forms.

THE EGO'S SEARCH FOR WHOLENESS

Another aspect of the emotional pain that is an intrinsic part of the egoic mind is a deep-seated sense of lack or incompleteness, of not being whole. In some people, this is conscious, in others unconscious. If it is conscious, it manifests as the unsettling and constant feeling of not being worthy or good enough. If it is unconscious, it will only be felt indirectly as an intense craving, wanting and needing. In either case, people will often enter into a compulsive pursuit of ego-gratification and things to identify with in order to fill this hole they feel within. So they strive after possessions, money, success, power, recognition, or a special relationship, basically so that they can feel better about themselves, feel more complete. But even when they attain all these things, they soon find that the hole is still there, that it is bottomless. Then they are really in trouble, because they cannot delude themselves anymore. Well, they can and do, but it gets more difficult.

As long as the egoic mind is running your life, you cannot truly be at ease; you cannot be at peace or fulfilled except for brief intervals when you obtained what you wanted, when a craving has just been fulfilled. Since the ego is a derived sense of self, it needs to identify with external things. It needs to be both defended and fed constantly. The most common ego identifications have to do with possessions, the work you do, social status and recognition, knowledge and education, physical appearance, special abilities, relationships, personal and family history, belief systems, and often also political, nationalistic, racial, religious, and other collective identifications. None of these is you.

Do you find this frightening? Or is it a relief to know this? All of these things you will have to relinquish sooner or later. Perhaps you find it as yet hard to believe, and I am certainly not asking you to *believe* that your identity cannot be found in any of those things. You will *know* the truth of it for yourself. You will know it at the latest when you feel death approaching. Death is a stripping away of all that is not you. The secret of life is to “die before you die” — and find that there is no death.

CHAPTER THREE

MOVING DEEPLY INTO THE NOW

DON’T SEEK YOUR SELF IN THE MIND

I feel that there is still a great deal I need to learn about the workings of my mind before I can get anywhere near full consciousness or spiritual enlightenment.

No, you don’t. The problems of the mind cannot be solved on the level of the mind. Once you have understood the basic dysfunction, there isn’t really much else that you need to learn or understand. Studying the complexities of the mind may make you a good psychologist, but doing so won’t take you beyond the mind, just as the study of madness isn’t enough to create sanity. You have already understood the basic mechanics of the unconscious state: identification with the mind, which creates a false self, the ego, as a substitute for your true self rooted in Being. You become as a “branch cut off from the vine,” as Jesus puts it.

The ego’s needs are endless. It feels vulnerable and threatened and so lives in a state of fear and want. Once you know how the basic dysfunction operates, there is no need to explore all its countless manifestations, no need to make it into a complex personal problem. The ego, of course, loves that. It is always seeking for something to attach itself to in order to uphold and strengthen its illusory sense of self, and it will readily attach itself to your problems. This is why, for so many people, a large part of their sense of self is intimately connected with their problems. Once this has happened, the last thing they want is to become free of them; that would mean loss of self. There can be a great deal of unconscious ego investment in pain and suffering.

So once you recognize the root of unconsciousness as identification with the mind, which of course includes the emotions, you step out of it. You become *present*. When you are present, you can allow the mind to be as it is without getting entangled in it. The mind in itself is not dysfunctional. It is a wonderful tool. Dysfunction sets in when you seek your self in it and mistake it for who you are. It then becomes the *egoic* mind and takes over your whole life.

END THE DELUSION OF TIME

It seems almost impossible to disidentify from the mind. We are all immersed in it. How do you teach a fish to fly?

Here is the key: End the delusion of time. Time and mind are inseparable. Remove time from the mind and it stops — unless you choose to use it.

To be identified with your mind is to be trapped in time: the compulsion to live almost exclusively through memory and anticipation. This creates an endless preoccupation with past and future and an unwillingness to honor and acknowledge the present moment and *allow it to be*. The compulsion arises because the past gives you an identity and the future holds the promise of salvation, of fulfillment in whatever form. Both are illusions.

But without a sense of time, how would we function in this world? There would be no goals to strive toward anymore. I wouldn't even know who I am, because my past makes me who I am today. I think time is something very precious, and we need to learn to use it wisely rather than waste it.

Time isn't precious at all, because it is an illusion. What you perceive as precious is not time but the one point that is out of time: the Now. That is precious indeed. The more you are focused on time — past and future — the more you miss the Now, the most precious thing there is.

Why is it the most precious thing? Firstly, because it is the *only* thing. It's all there is. The eternal present is the space within which your whole life unfolds, the one factor that remains constant. Life is now. There was never a time when your life was *not* now, nor will there ever be. Secondly, the Now is the only point that can take you beyond the limited confines of the mind. It is your only point of access into the timeless and formless realm of Being.

NOTHING EXISTS OUTSIDE THE NOW

Aren't past and future just as real, sometimes even more real, than the present? After all, the past determines who we are, as well as how we perceive and behave in the present. And our future goals determine which actions we take in the present.

You haven't yet grasped the essence of what I am saying because you are trying to understand it mentally. The mind cannot understand this. Only *you* can. Please just listen.

Have you ever experienced, done, thought, or felt anything outside the Now? Do you think you ever will? Is it possible for anything to happen or *be* outside the Now? The answer is obvious, is it not?

Nothing ever happened in the past; it happened in the Now.

Nothing will ever happen in the future; it will happen in the Now.

What you think of as the past is a memory trace, stored in the mind, of a former Now. When you remember the past, you reactivate a memory trace — and you do so now. The future is an imagined Now, a projection of the mind. When the future comes, it comes as the Now. When you think about the future, you do it now. Past and future obviously have no reality of their own. Just as the moon has no light of its own, but can only reflect the light of the sun, so are past and future only pale reflections of the light, power, and reality of the eternal present. Their reality is "borrowed" from the Now.

The essence of what I am saying here cannot be understood by the mind. The moment you grasp it, there is a shift in consciousness from mind to Being, from time to presence. Suddenly, everything feels alive, radiates energy, emanates Being.

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THE KEY TO THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION

In life-threatening emergency situations, the shift in consciousness from time to presence sometimes happens naturally. The personality that has a past and a future momentarily recedes and is replaced by an intense conscious presence, very still but very alert at the same time. Whatever response is needed then arises out of that state of consciousness.

The reason why some people love to engage in dangerous activities, such as mountain climbing, car racing, and so on, although they may not be aware of it, is that it forces them into the Now — that intensely alive state that is free of time, free of problems, free of thinking, free of the burden of the personality. Slipping away from the present moment even for a second may mean death. Unfortunately, they come to depend on a particular activity to be in that state. But you don't need to climb the north face of the Eiger. You can enter that state now.

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Since ancient times, spiritual masters of all traditions have pointed to the Now as the key to the spiritual dimension. Despite this, it seems to have remained a secret. It is certainly not taught in churches and temples. If you go to a church, you may hear readings from the Gospels such as "Take no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself," or "Nobody who puts his hands to the plow and *looks back* is fit for the Kingdom of God." Or you might hear the passage about the beautiful flowers that are not anxious about tomorrow but live with ease in the timeless Now and are provided for abundantly by God. The depth and radical nature of these teachings are not recognized. No one seems to realize that they are meant to be lived and so bring about a profound inner transformation.

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The whole essence of Zen consists in walking along the razor's edge of Now — to be so utterly, so completely *present* that no problem, no suffering, nothing that is not *who you are* in your essence, can survive in you. In the Now, in the absence of time, all your problems dissolve. Suffering needs time; it cannot survive in the Now.

The great Zen master Rinzai, in order to take his students' attention away from time, would often raise his finger and slowly ask: "What, at this moment, is lacking?" A powerful question that does not require an answer on the level of the mind. It is designed to take your attention deeply into the Now. A similar question in the Zen tradition is this: "If not now, when?"

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The Now is also central to the teaching of Sufism, the mystical branch of Islam. Sufis have a saying: "The Sufi is the son of time present." And Rumi, the great poet and teacher of Sufism, declares: "Past and future veil God from our sight; burn up both of them with fire."

Meister Eckhart, the thirteenth-century spiritual teacher, summed it all up beautifully: "Time is what keeps the light from reaching us. There is no greater obstacle to God than time."

* * *

ACCESSING THE POWER OF THE NOW

A moment ago, when you talked about the eternal present and the unreality of past and future, I found myself looking at that tree outside the window. I had looked at it a few times before, but this time it was different. The external perception had not changed much, except that the colors seemed brighter and more vibrant. But there was now an added dimension to it. This is hard to explain. I don't know how, but I was aware of something invisible that I felt was the essence of that tree, its inner spirit, if you like. And somehow I was part of that. I realize now that I hadn't truly seen the tree before, just a flat and dead image of it. When I look at the tree now, some of that awareness is still present, but I can feel it slipping away. You see, the experience is already receding into the past. Can something like this ever be more than a fleeting glimpse?

You were free of time for a moment. You moved into the Now and therefore perceived the tree without the screen of mind. The awareness of Being became part of your perception. With the timeless dimension comes a different kind of knowing, one that does not "kill" the spirit that lives within every creature and every thing. A knowing that does not destroy the sacredness and mystery of life but contains a deep love and reverence for all that *is*. A knowing of which the mind knows nothing.

The mind cannot know the tree. It can only know facts or information *about* the tree. My mind cannot know *you*, only labels, judgments, facts, and opinions *about* you. Being alone knows directly.

There is a place for mind and mind knowledge. It is in the practical realm of day-to-day living. However, when it takes over all aspects of your life, including your relationships with other human beings and with nature, it becomes a monstrous parasite that, unchecked, may well end up killing all life on the planet and finally itself by killing its host.

You have had a glimpse of how the timeless can transform your perceptions. But an experience is not enough, no matter how beautiful or profound. What is needed and what we are concerned with is a permanent shift in consciousness.

So break the old pattern of present-moment denial and present-moment resistance. Make it your practice to withdraw attention from past and future whenever they are not needed. Step out of the time dimension as much as possible in everyday life. If you find it hard to enter the Now directly, start by observing the habitual tendency of your mind to want to escape from the Now. You will observe that the future is usually imagined as either better or worse than the present. If the imagined future is better, it gives you hope or pleasurable anticipation. If it is worse, it creates anxiety. Both are illusory. Through self-observation, more *presence* comes into your life automatically. The moment you realize you are not present, you *are* present. Whenever you are able to observe your mind, you are no longer trapped in it. Another factor has come in, something that is not of the mind: the witnessing presence.

Be present as the watcher of your mind — of your thoughts and emotions as well as your reactions in various situations. Be at least as interested in your reactions as in the situation or person that causes you to react. Notice also how often your attention is in the past or future. Don't judge or analyze what you observe. Watch the thought, feel the emotion, observe the reaction. Don't make a personal problem out of them. You will then feel something more powerful than any of those things that you observe: the still, observing presence itself behind the content of your mind, the silent watcher.

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Intense presence is needed when certain situations trigger a reaction with a strong emotional charge, such as when your self-image is threatened, a challenge comes into your life that triggers fear, things "go wrong," or an emotional complex from the past is brought up. In those instances, the tendency is for you to become “unconscious.” The reaction or emotion takes you over — you “become” it. You act it out. You justify, make wrong, attack, defend. . .except that it isn’t you, it’s the reactive pattern, the mind in its habitual survival mode.

Identification with the mind gives it more energy; observation of the mind withdraws energy from it. Identification with the mind creates more time; observation of the mind opens up the dimension of the timeless. The energy that is withdrawn from the mind turns into presence. Once you can feel what it means to be present, it becomes much easier to simply choose to step out of the time dimension whenever time is not needed for practical purposes and move more deeply into the Now. This does not impair your ability to use time — past or future — when you need to refer to it for practical matters. Nor does it impair your ability to use your mind. In fact, it enhances it. When you do use your mind, it will be sharper, more focused.

LETTING GO OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TIME

Learn to use time in the practical aspects of your life — we may call this “clock time” — but immediately return to present-moment awareness when those practical matters have been dealt with. In this way, there will be no buildup of “psychological time,” which is identification with the past and continuous compulsive projection into the future.

Clock time is not just making an appointment or planning a trip. It includes learning from the past so that we don’t repeat the same mistakes over and over. Setting goals and working toward them. Predicting the future by means of patterns and laws, physical, mathematical and so on, learned from the past and taking appropriate action on the basis of our predictions.

But even here, within the sphere of practical living, where we cannot do without reference to past and future, the present moment remains the essential factor: Any lesson from the past becomes relevant and is applied *now*. Any planning as well as working toward achieving a particular goal is done *now*.

The enlightened person’s main focus of attention is always the Now, but they are still peripherally aware of time. In other words, they continue to use clock time but are free of psychological time.

Be alert as you practice this so that you do not unwittingly transform clock time into psychological time. For example, if you made a mistake in the past and learn from it now, you are using clock time. On the other hand, if you dwell on it mentally, and self-criticism, remorse, or guilt come up, then you are making the mistake into “me” and “mine”: You make it part of your sense of self, and it has become psychological time, which is always linked to a false sense of identity. Nonforgiveness necessarily implies a heavy burden of psychological time.

If you set yourself a goal and work toward it, you are using clock time. You are aware of where you want to go, but you honor and give your fullest attention to the step that you are taking at this moment. If you then become excessively focused on the goal, perhaps because you are seeking happiness, fulfillment, or a more complete sense of self in it, the Now is no longer honored. It becomes reduced to a mere stepping stone to the future, with no intrinsic value. Clock time then turns into psychological time. Your life’s journey is no longer an adventure, just an obsessive need to arrive, to attain, to “make it.” You no longer see or smell the flowers by the wayside either, nor are you aware of the beauty and the miracle of life that unfolds all around you when you are present in the Now.

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I can see the supreme importance of the Now, but I cannot quite go along with you when you say that time is a complete illusion.

When I say “time is an illusion,” my intention is not to make a philosophical statement. I am just reminding you of a simple fact — a fact so obvious that you may find it hard to grasp and may even find it meaningless — but once fully realized, it can cut like a sword through all the mind-created layers of complexity and “problems.” Let me say it again: the present moment is all you ever have. There is never a time when your life is not “this moment.” Is this not a fact?

THE INSANITY OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TIME

You will not have any doubt that psychological time is a mental disease if you look at its collective manifestations. They occur, for example, in the form of ideologies such as communism, national socialism or any nationalism, or rigid religious belief systems, which operate under the implicit assumption that the highest good lies in the future and that therefore the end justifies the means. The end is an idea, a point in the mind-projected future, when salvation in whatever form — happiness, fulfillment, equality, liberation, and so on — will be attained. Not infrequently, the means of getting there are the enslavement, torture, and murder of people in the present.

For example, it is estimated that as many as fifty million people were murdered to further the cause of communism, to bring about a "better world" in Russia, China, and other countries.[2] This is a chilling example of how belief in a future heaven creates a present hell. Can there be any doubt that psychological time is a serious and dangerous mental illness?

How does this mind pattern operate in *your* life? Are you always trying to get somewhere other than where you are? Is most of your *doing* just a means to an end? Is fulfillment always just around the corner or confined to short-lived pleasures, such as sex, food, drink, drugs, or thrills and excitement? Are you always focused on becoming, achieving, and attaining, or alternatively chasing some new thrill or pleasure? Do you believe that if you acquire more things you will become more fulfilled, good enough, or psychologically complete? Are you waiting for a man or woman to give meaning to your life?

In the normal, mind-identified or unenlightened state of consciousness, the power and infinite creative potential that lie concealed in the Now are completely obscured by psychological time. Your life then loses its vibrancy, its freshness, its sense of wonder. The old patterns of thought, emotion, behavior, reaction, and desire are acted out in endless repeat performances, a script in your mind that gives you an identity of sorts but distorts or covers up the reality of the Now. The mind then creates an obsession with the future as an escape from the unsatisfactory present.

NEGATIVITY AND SUFFERING HAVE THEIR ROOTS IN TIME

But the belief that the future will be better than the present is not always an illusion. The present can *be dreadful, and things* can *get better in the future, and often they do.*

Usually, the future is a replica of the past. Superficial changes are possible, but *real* transformation is rare and depends upon whether you can become present enough to dissolve the past by accessing the power of the Now. What you perceive as future is an intrinsic part of your state of consciousness now. If your mind carries a heavy burden of past, you will experience more of the same. The past perpetuates itself through lack of presence. The quality of your consciousness at this moment is what shapes the future — which, of course, can only be experienced as the Now.

You may win ten million dollars, but that kind of change is no more than skin deep. You would simply continue to act out the same conditioned patterns in more luxurious surroundings. Humans have learned to split the atom. Instead of killing ten or twenty people with a wooden club, one person can now kill a million just by pushing a button. Is that *real* change?

If it is the quality of your consciousness at this moment that determines the future, then what is it that determines the quality of your consciousness? Your degree of presence. So the only place where true change can occur and where the past can be dissolved is the Now.

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All negativity is caused by an accumulation of psychological time and denial of the present. Unease, anxiety, tension, stress, worry — all forms of fear — are caused by too much future, and not enough presence. Guilt, regret, resentment, grievances, sadness, bitterness, and all forms of nonforgiveness are caused by too much past, and not enough presence. Most people find it difficult to believe that a state of consciousness totally free of all negativity is possible. And yet this is the liberated state to which all spiritual teachings point. It is the promise of salvation, not in an illusory future but right here and now.

You may find it hard to recognize that time is the cause of your suffering or your problems. You believe that they are caused by specific situations in your life, and seen from a conventional viewpoint, this is true. But until you have dealt with the basic problem-making dysfunction of the mind — its attachment to past and future and denial of the Now — problems are actually interchangeable. If all your problems or perceived causes of suffering or unhappiness were miraculously removed for you today, but you had not become more present, more conscious, you would soon find yourself with a similar set of problems or causes of suffering, like a shadow that follows you wherever you go. Ultimately, there is only one problem: the time-bound mind itself.

I cannot believe that I could ever reach a point where I am completely free of my problems.

You are right. You can never *reach* that point because you *are* at that point *now*.

There is no salvation in time. You cannot be free in the future. Presence is the key to freedom, so you can only be free now.

FINDING THE LIFE UNDERNEATH YOUR LIFE SITUATION

I don't see how I can be free now. As it happens, I am extremely unhappy with my life at the moment. This is a fact, and I would be deluding myself if I tried to convince myself that all is well when it definitely isn't. To me, the present moment is very unhappy; it is not liberating at all. What keeps me going is the hope or possibility of some improvement in the future.

You think that your attention is in the present moment when it's actually taken up completely by time. You cannot be both unhappy *and* fully present in the Now.

What you refer to as your "life" should more accurately be called your "life situation." It is psychological time: past and future. Certain things in the past didn't go the way you wanted them to go. You are still resisting what happened in the past, and now you are resisting what *is*. Hope is what keeps you going, but hope keeps you focused on the future, and this continued focus perpetuates your denial of the Now and therefore your unhappiness.

It is true that my present life situation is the result of things that happened in the past, but it is still my present situation, and being stuck in it is what makes me unhappy.

Forget about your life situation for a while and pay attention to your *life.*

What is the difference?

Your life situation exists in time.

Your life is now.

Your life situation is mind-stuff.

Your life is real.

Find the "narrow gate that leads to life." It is called the Now. Narrow your life down to this moment. Your life situation may be full of problems — most life situations are — but find out if you have any problem at this moment. Not tomorrow or in ten minutes, but now. Do you have a problem now?

When you are full of problems, there is no room for anything new to enter, no room for a solution. So whenever you can, make some room, create some space, so that you find the life underneath your life situation.

Use your senses fully. Be where you are. Look around. Just look, don't interpret. See the light, shapes, colors, textures. Be aware of the silent presence of each thing. Be aware of the space that allows everything to be. Listen to the sounds; don't judge them. Listen to the silence underneath the sounds. Touch something — anything — and feel and acknowledge its Being. Observe the rhythm of your breathing; feel the air flowing in and out, feel the life energy inside your body. Allow everything to be, within and without. Allow the "isness" of all things. Move deeply into the Now.

You are leaving behind the deadening world of mental abstraction, of time. You are getting out of the insane mind that is draining you of life energy, just as it is slowly poisoning and destroying the Earth. You are awakening out of the dream of time into the present.

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ALL PROBLEMS ARE ILLUSIONS OF THE MIND

It feels as if a heavy burden has been lifted. A sense of lightness. I feel clear. . . but my problems are still there waiting for me, aren't they? They haven't been solved. Am I not just temporarily evading them?

If you found yourself in paradise, it wouldn't be long before your mind would say "yes, but. . . ." Ultimately, this is not about solving your problems. It's about realizing that there *are* no problems. Only situations — to be dealt with now, or to be left alone and accepted as part of the "isness" of the present moment until they change or *can* be dealt with. Problems are mind-made and need time to survive. They cannot survive in the actuality of the Now.

Focus your attention on the Now and tell me what problem you have at this moment.

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I am not getting any answer because it is impossible to have a problem when your attention is fully in the Now. A situation that needs to be either dealt with or accepted — yes. Why make it into a problem? Why make anything into a problem? Isn't life challenging enough as it is? What do you need problems for? The mind unconsciously loves problems because they give you an identity of sorts. This is normal, and it is insane. "Problem" means that you are dwelling on a situation mentally without there being a true intention or possibility of taking action now and that you are unconsciously making it part of your sense of self. You become so overwhelmed by your life situation that you lose your sense of life, of Being. Or you are carrying in your mind the insane burden of a hundred things that you will or may have to do in the future instead of focusing your attention on the one thing that you *can* do now.

When you create a problem, you create pain. All it takes is a simple choice, a simple decision: no matter what happens, I will create no more pain for myself. I will create no more problems. Although it is a simple choice, it is also very radical. You won't make that choice unless you are truly fed up with suffering, unless you have truly had enough. And you won't be able to go through with it unless you access the power of the Now. If you create no more pain for yourself, then you create no more pain for others. You also no longer contaminate the beautiful Earth, your inner space, and the collective human psyche with the negativity of problem-making.

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If you have ever been in a life-or-death emergency situation, you will know that it wasn't a problem. The mind didn't have *time* to fool around and make it into a problem. In a true emergency, the mind stops; you become totally present in the Now, and something infinitely more powerful takes over. This is why there are many reports of ordinary people suddenly becoming capable of incredibly courageous deeds. In any emergency, either you survive or you don't. Either way, it is not a problem.

Some people get angry when they hear me say that problems are illusions. I am threatening to take away their sense of who they are. They have invested much time in a false sense of self. For many years, they have unconsciously defined their whole identity in terms of their problems or their suffering. Who would they be without it?

A great deal of what people say, think, or do is actually motivated by fear, which of course is always linked with having your focus on the future and being out of touch with the Now. As there are no problems in the Now, there is no fear either.

Should a situation arise that you need to deal with now, your action will be clear and incisive if it arises out of present-moment awareness. It is also more likely to be effective. It will not be a reaction coming from the past conditioning of your mind but an intuitive response to the situation. In other instances, when the time-bound mind would have reacted, you will find it more effective to do nothing — just stay centered in the Now.

A QUANTUM LEAP IN THE EVOLUTION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

I have had glimpses of this state of freedom from mind and time that you describe, but past and future are so overwhelmingly strong that I cannot keep them out for long.

The time-bound mode of consciousness is deeply embedded in the human psyche. But what we are doing here is part of a profound transformation that is taking place in the collective consciousness of the planet and beyond: the awakening of consciousness from the dream of matter, form, and separation. The ending of time. We are breaking mind patterns that have dominated human life for eons. Mind patterns that have created unimaginable suffering on a vast scale. I am not using the word evil. It is more helpful to call it unconsciousness or insanity.

This breaking up of the old mode of consciousness or rather unconsciousness: is it something we have to do *or will it happen anyway? I mean, is this change inevitable?*

That's a question of perspective. The doing and the happening is in fact a single process; because you are one with the totality of consciousness, you cannot separate the two. But there is no absolute guarantee that humans will make it. The process isn't inevitable or automatic. Your cooperation is an essential part of it. However you look at it, it is a quantum leap in the evolution of consciousness, as well as our only chance of survival as a race.

THE JOY OF BEING

To alert you that you have allowed yourself to be taken over by psychological time, you can use a simple criterion. Ask yourself: Is there joy, ease, and lightness in what I am doing? If there isn't, then time is covering up the present moment, and life is perceived as a burden or a struggle.

If there is no joy, ease, or lightness in what you are doing, it does not necessarily mean that you need to change *what* you are doing. It may be sufficient to change the *how*. "How" is always more important than "what." See if you can give much more attention to the *doing* than to the result that you want to achieve through it. Give your fullest attention to whatever the moment presents. This implies that you also completely accept what *is*, because you cannot give your full attention to something and at the same time resist it.

As soon as you honor the present moment, all unhappiness and struggle dissolve, and life begins to flow with joy and ease. When you act out of present-moment awareness, whatever you do becomes imbued with a sense of quality, care, and love — even the most simple action.

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So do not be concerned with the fruit of your action — just give attention to the action itself. The fruit will come of its own accord. This is a powerful spiritual practice. In the *Bhagavad Gita,* one of the oldest and most beautiful spiritual teachings in existence, nonattachment to the fruit of your action is called Karma Yoga. It is described as the path of "consecrated action."

When the compulsive striving away from the Now ceases, the joy of Being flows into everything you do. The moment your attention turns to the Now, you feel a presence, a stillness, a peace. You no longer depend on the future for fulfillment and satisfaction — you don't look to it for salvation. Therefore, you are not attached to the results. Neither failure nor success has the power to change your inner state of Being. You have found the life underneath your life situation.

In the absence of psychological time, your sense of self is derived from Being, not from your personal past. Therefore, the psychological need to become anything other than who you are already is no longer there. In the world, on the level of your life situation, you may indeed become wealthy, knowledgeable, successful, free of this or that, but in the deeper dimension of Being you are complete and whole *now*.

In that state of wholeness, would we still be able or willing to pursue external goals?

Of course, but you will not have illusory expectations that anything or anybody in the future will save you or make you happy. As far as your life situation is concerned, there may be things to be attained or acquired. That's the world of form, of gain and loss. Yet on a deeper level you are already complete, and when you realize that, there is a playful, joyous energy behind what you do. Being free of psychological time, you no longer pursue your goals with grim determination, driven by fear, anger, discontent, or the need to become someone. Nor will you remain inactive through fear of failure, which to the ego is loss of self. When your deeper sense of self is derived from Being, when you are free of "becoming" as a psychological need, neither your happiness nor your sense of self depends on the outcome, and so there is freedom from fear. You don't seek permanency where it cannot be found: in the world of form, of gain and loss, birth and death. You don't demand that situations, conditions, places, or people should make you happy, and then suffer when they don't live up to your expectations.

Everything is honored, but nothing matters. Forms are born and die, yet you are aware of the eternal underneath the forms. You know that "nothing real can be threatened."[3]

When this is your state of Being, how can you not succeed? You have succeeded already.

CHAPTER FOUR

MIND STRATEGIES FOR AVOIDING THE NOW

LOSS OF NOW: THE CORE DELUSION

Even if I completely accept that ultimately time is an illusion, what difference is that going to make in my life? I still have to live in a world that is completely dominated by time.

Intellectual agreement is just another belief and won't make much difference to your life. To realize this truth, you need to live it. When every cell of your body is so present that it feels vibrant with life, and when you can feel that life every moment as the joy of Being, then it can be said that you are free of time.

But I still have to pay the bills tomorrow, and I am still going to grow old and die just like everybody else. So how can I ever say that I am free of time?

Tomorrow's bills are not the problem. The dissolution of the physical body is not a problem. Loss of Now is the problem, or rather: the core delusion that turns a mere situation, event, or emotion into a personal problem and into suffering. Loss of Now is loss of Being.

To be free of time is to be free of the psychological need of past for your identity and future for your fulfillment. It represents the most profound transformation of consciousness that you can imagine. In some rare cases, this shift in consciousness happens dramatically and radically, once and for all. When it does, it usually comes about through total surrender in the midst of intense suffering. Most people, however, have to work at it.

When you have had your first few glimpses of the timeless state of consciousness, you begin to move back and forth between the dimensions of time and presence. First you become aware of just how rarely your attention is truly in the Now. But to *know* that you are *not* present is a great success: That knowing *is* presence — even if initially it only lasts for a couple of seconds of clock time before it is lost again. Then, with increasing frequency, you *choose* to have the focus of your consciousness in the present moment rather than in the past or future, and whenever you realize that you had lost the Now, you are able to stay in it not just for a couple of seconds, but for longer periods as perceived from the external perspective of clock time. So before you are firmly established in the state of presence, which is to say before you are fully conscious, you shift back and forth for a while between consciousness and unconsciousness, between the state of presence and the state of mind identification. You lose the Now, and you return to it, again and again. Eventually, presence becomes your predominant state.

For most people, presence is experienced either never at all or only accidentally and briefly on rare occasions without being recognized for what it is. Most humans alternate not between consciousness and unconsciousness but only between different levels of unconsciousness.

ORDINARY UNCONSCIOUSNESS AND DEEP UNCONSCIOUSNESS

What do you mean by different levels of unconsciousness?

As you probably know, in sleep you constantly move between the phases of dreamless sleep and the dream state. Similarly, in wakefulness most people only shift between ordinary unconsciousness and deep unconsciousness. What I call ordinary unconsciousness means being identified with your thought processes and emotions, your reactions, desires, and aversions. It is most people's normal state. In that state, you are run by the egoic mind, and you are unaware of Being. It is a state not of acute pain or unhappiness but of an almost continuous low level of unease, discontent, boredom, or nervousness — a kind of background static. You may not realize this because it is so much a part of "normal" living, just as you are not aware of a continuous low background noise, such as the hum of an air conditioner, until it stops. When it suddenly does stop, there is a sense of relief. Many people use alcohol, drugs, sex, food, work, television, or even shopping as anesthetics in an unconscious attempt to remove the basic unease. When this happens, an activity that might be very enjoyable if used in moderation becomes imbued with a compulsive or addictive quality, and all that is ever achieved through it is extremely short-lived symptom relief.

The unease of ordinary unconsciousness turns into the pain of deep unconsciousness — a state of more acute and more obvious suffering or unhappiness — when things "go wrong," when the ego is threatened or there is a major challenge, threat, or loss, real or imagined, in your life situation or conflict in a relationship. It is an intensified version of ordinary unconsciousness, different from it not in kind but in degree.

In ordinary unconsciousness, habitual resistance to or denial of what *is* creates the unease and discontent that most people accept as normal living. When this resistance becomes intensified through some challenge or threat to the ego, it brings up intense negativity such as anger, acute fear, aggression, depression, and so on. Deep unconsciousness often means that the pain-body has been triggered and that you have become identified with it. Physical violence would be impossible without deep unconsciousness. It can also occur easily whenever and wherever a crowd of people or even an entire nation generates a negative collective energy field.

The best indicator of your level of consciousness is how you deal with life's challenges when they come. Through those challenges, an already unconscious person tends to become more deeply unconscious, and a conscious person more intensely conscious. You can use a challenge to awaken you, or you can allow it to pull you into even deeper sleep. The dream of ordinary unconsciousness then turns into a nightmare.

If you cannot be present even in normal circumstances, such as when you are sitting alone in a room, walking in the woods, or listening to someone, then you certainly won't be able to stay conscious when something "goes wrong" or you are faced with difficult people or situations, with loss or the threat of loss. You will be taken over by a reaction, which ultimately is always some form of fear, and pulled into deep unconsciousness. Those challenges are your tests. Only the way in which you deal with them will show you and others where you are at as far as your state of consciousness is concerned, not how long you can sit with your eyes closed or what visions you see.

So it is essential to bring more consciousness into your life in ordinary situations when everything is going relatively smoothly. In this way, you grow in presence power. It generates an energy field in you and around you of a high vibrational frequency. No unconsciousness, no negativity, no discord or violence can enter that field and survive, just as darkness cannot survive in the presence of light.

When you learn to be the witness of your thoughts and emotions, which is an essential part of being present, you may be surprised when you first become aware of the background "static" of ordinary unconsciousness and realize how rarely, if ever, you are truly at ease within yourself. On the level of your thinking, you will find a great deal of resistance in the form of judgment, discontent, and mental projection away from the Now. On the emotional level, there will be an undercurrent of unease, tension, boredom, or nervousness. Both are aspects of the mind in its habitual resistance mode.

WHAT ARE THEY SEEKING?

Carl Jung tells in one of his books of a conversation he had with a Native American chief who pointed out to him that in his perception most white people have tense faces, staring eyes, and a cruel demeanor. He said: "They are always seeking something. What are they seeking? The whites always want something. They are always uneasy and restless. We don't know what they want. We think they are mad."

The undercurrent of constant unease started long before the rise of Western industrial civilization, of course, but in Western civilization, which now covers almost the entire globe, including most of the East, it manifests in an unprecedentedly acute form. It was already there at the time of Jesus, and it was there six hundred years before that at the time of Buddha, and long before that. Why are you always anxious? Jesus asked his disciples. "Can anxious thought add a single day to your life?" And the Buddha taught that the root of suffering is to be found in our constant wanting and craving.

Resistance to the Now as a collective dysfunction is intrinsically connected to loss of awareness of Being and forms the basis of our dehumanized industrial civilization. Freud, by the way, also recognized the existence of this undercurrent of unease and wrote about it in his book *Civilization and Its Discontents*, but he did not recognize the true root of the unease and failed to realize that freedom from it is possible. This collective dysfunction has created a very unhappy and extraordinarily violent civilization that has become a threat not only to itself but also to all life on the planet.

DISSOLVING ORDINARY UNCONSCIOUSNESS

So how can we be free of this affliction?

Make it conscious. Observe the many ways in which unease, discontent, and tension arise within you through unnecessary judgment, resistance to what *is*, and denial of the Now. Anything unconscious dissolves when you shine the light of consciousness on it. Once you know how to dissolve ordinary unconsciousness, the light of your presence will shine brightly, and it will be much easier to deal with deep unconsciousness whenever you feel its gravitational pull. However, ordinary unconsciousness may not be easy to detect initially because it is so normal.

Make it a habit to monitor your mental-emotional state through self-observation. “Am I at ease at this moment?” is a good question to ask yourself frequently. Or you can ask: “What’s going on inside me at this moment?” Be at least as interested in what goes on inside you as what happens outside. If you get the inside right, the outside will fall into place. Primary reality is within, secondary reality without. But don’t answer these questions immediately. Direct your attention inward. Have a look inside yourself. What kind of thoughts is your mind producing? What do you feel? Direct your attention into the body. Is there any tension? Once you detect that there is a low level of unease, the background static, see in what way you are avoiding, resisting, or denying life — by denying the Now. There are many ways in which people unconsciously resist the present moment. I will give you a few examples. With practice, your power of self-observation, of monitoring your inner state, will become sharpened.

FREEDOM FROM UNHAPPINESS

Do you resent doing what you are doing? It may be your job, or you may have agreed to do something and are doing it, but part of you resents and resists it. Are you carrying unspoken resentment toward a person close to you? Do you realize that the energy you thus emanate is so harmful in its effects that you are in fact contaminating yourself as well as those around you? Have a good look inside. Is there even the slightest trace of resentment, unwillingness? If there is, observe it on both the mental and the emotional levels. What thoughts is your mind creating around this situation? Then look at the emotion, which is the body’s reaction to those thoughts. Feel the emotion. Does it feel pleasant or unpleasant? Is it an energy that you would actually *choose* to have inside you? Do you *have* a choice?

Maybe you *are* being taken advantage of, maybe the activity you are engaged in *is* tedious, maybe someone close to you *is* dishonest, irritating, or unconscious, but all this is irrelevant. Whether your thoughts and emotions about this situation are justified or not makes no difference. The fact is that you are resisting what *is*. You are making the present moment into an enemy. You are creating unhappiness, conflict between the inner and the outer. Your unhappiness is polluting not only your own inner being and those around you but also the collective human psyche of which you are an inseparable part. The pollution of the planet is only an outward reflection of an inner psychic pollution: millions of unconscious individuals not taking responsibility for their inner space.

Either stop doing what you are doing, speak to the person concerned and express fully what you feel, or drop the negativity that your mind has created around the situation and that serves no purpose whatsoever except to strengthen a false sense of self. Recognizing its futility is important. Negativity is never the optimum way of dealing with any situation. In fact, in most cases it keeps you stuck in it, blocking real change. Anything that is done with negative energy will become contaminated by it and in time give rise to more pain, more unhappiness. Furthermore, any negative inner state is contagious: Unhappiness spreads more easily than a physical disease. Through the law of resonance, it triggers and feeds latent negativity in others, unless they are immune — that is, highly conscious.

Are you polluting the world or cleaning up the mess? You are responsible for your inner space; nobody else is, just as you are responsible for the planet. As within, so without: If humans clear inner pollution, then they will also cease to create outer pollution.

How can we drop negativity, as you suggest?

By dropping it. How do you drop a piece of hot coal that you are holding in your hand? How do you drop some heavy and useless baggage that you are carrying? By recognizing that you don't want to suffer the pain or carry the burden anymore and then letting go of it.

Deep unconsciousness, such as the pain-body, or other deep pain, such as the loss of a loved one, usually needs to be transmuted through acceptance combined with the light of your presence — your sustained attention. Many patterns in ordinary unconsciousness, on the other hand, can simply be dropped once you know that you don't want them and don't need them anymore, once you realize that you have a choice, that you are not just a bundle of conditioned reflexes. All this implies that you are able to access the power of Now. Without it, you have no choice.

If you call some emotions negative, aren't you creating a mental polarity of good and bad, as you explained earlier?

No. The polarity was created at an earlier stage when your mind judged the present moment as bad; this judgment then created the negative emotion.

But if you call some emotions negative, aren't you really saying that they shouldn't be *there, that it's not okay to have those emotions? My understanding is that we should give ourselves permission to have whatever feelings come up, rather than judge them as bad or say that we shouldn't have them. It's okay to feel resentful; it's okay to be angry, irritated, moody, or whatever — otherwise, we get into repression, inner conflict, or denial. Everything is okay as it is.*

Of course. Once a mind pattern, an emotion, or a reaction is there, accept it. You were not conscious enough to have a choice in the matter. That's not a judgment, just a fact. If you *had* a choice, or realized that you *do* have a choice, would you choose suffering or joy, ease or unease, peace or conflict? Would you choose a thought or feeling that cuts you off from your natural state of well-being, the joy of life within? Any such feeling I call negative, which simply means bad. Not in the sense that "You shouldn't have done that," but just plain factual bad, like feeling sick in the stomach.

How is it possible that humans killed in excess of one hundred million fellow humans in the twentieth century alone?[4] Humans inflicting pain of such magnitude on one another is beyond anything you can imagine. And that's not taking into account the mental, emotional and physical violence, the torture, pain, and cruelty they continue to inflict on each other as well as on other sentient beings on a daily basis.

Do they act in this way because they are in touch with their natural state, the joy of life within? Of course not. Only people who are in a deeply negative state, who feel very bad indeed, would create such a reality as a reflection of how they feel. Now they are engaged in destroying nature and the planet that sustains them. Unbelievable but true. Humans are a dangerously insane and very sick species. That's not a judgment. It's a fact. It is also a fact that the sanity *is* there underneath the madness. Healing and redemption are available right now.

Coming back specifically to what you said — it is certainly true that when you accept your resentment, moodiness, anger, and so on, you are no longer forced to act them out blindly, and you are less likely to project them onto others. But I wonder if you are not deceiving yourself. When you have been practicing acceptance for a while, as you have, there comes a point when you need to go on to the next stage, where those negative emotions are not created anymore. If you don't, your "acceptance" just becomes a mental label that allows your ego to continue to indulge in unhappiness and so strengthen its sense of separation from other people, your surroundings, your here and now. As you know, separation is the basis for the ego's sense of identity. True acceptance would transmute those feelings at once. And if you really knew deeply that everything is "okay," as you put it, and which of course is true, then would you have those negative feelings in the first place? Without judgment, without resistance to what *is*, they would not arise. You have an idea in your mind that "everything is okay," but deep down you don't really believe it, and so the old mental-emotional patterns of resistance are still in place. That's what makes you feel bad.

That's okay, too.

Are you defending your right to be unconscious, your right to suffer? Don't worry: Nobody is going to take that away from you. Once you realize that a certain kind of food makes you sick, would you carry on eating that food and keep asserting that it is okay to be sick?

WHEREVER YOU ARE, BE THERE TOTALLY

Can you give some more examples of ordinary unconsciousness?

See if you can catch yourself complaining, in either speech or thought, about a situation you find yourself in, what other people do or say, your surroundings, your life situation, even the weather. To complain is always nonacceptance of what *is*. It invariably carries an unconscious negative charge. When you complain, you make yourself into a victim. When you speak out, you are in your power. So change the situation by taking action or by speaking out if necessary or possible; leave the situation or accept it. All else is madness.

Ordinary unconsciousness is always linked in some way with denial of the Now. The Now, of course, also implies the here. Are you resisting your here and now? Some people would always rather be somewhere else. Their "here" is never good enough. Through self-observation, find out if that is the case in your life. Wherever you are, be there totally. If you find your here and now intolerable and it makes you unhappy, you have three options: remove yourself from the situation, change it, or accept it totally. If you want to take responsibility for your life, you must choose one of those three options, and you must choose now. Then accept the consequences. No excuses. No negativity. No psychic pollution. Keep your inner space clear.

If you take any action — leaving or changing your situation — drop the negativity first, if at all possible. Action arising out of insight into what is required is more effective than action arising out of negativity.

Any action is often better than no action, especially if you have been stuck in an unhappy situation for a long time. If it is a mistake, at least you learn something, in which case it's no longer a mistake. If you remain stuck, you learn nothing. Is fear preventing you from taking action? Acknowledge the fear, watch it, take your attention into it, be fully present with it. Doing so cuts the link between the fear and your thinking. *Don't let the fear rise up into your mind*. Use the power of the Now. Fear cannot prevail against it.

If there is truly nothing that you can do to change your here and now, and you can't remove yourself from the situation, then accept your here and now totally by dropping all inner resistance. The false, unhappy self that loves feeling miserable, resentful, or sorry for itself can then no longer survive. This is called surrender. Surrender is not weakness. There is great strength in it. Only a surrendered person has spiritual power. Through surrender, you will be free internally of the situation. You may then find that the situation changes without any effort on your part. In any case, you are free.

Or is there something that you "should" be doing but are not doing it? Get up and do it now. Alternatively, completely accept your inactivity, laziness, or passivity at this moment, if that is your choice. Go into it fully. Enjoy it. Be as lazy or inactive as you can. If you go into it fully and consciously, you will soon come out of it. Or maybe you won't. Either way, there is no inner conflict, no resistance, no negativity.

Are you stressed? Are you so busy getting to the future that the present is reduced to a means of getting there? Stress is caused by being "here" but wanting to be "there," or being in the present but wanting to be in the future. It's a split that tears you apart inside. To create and live with such an inner split is insane. The fact that everyone else is doing it doesn't make it any less insane. If you have to, you can move fast, work fast, or even run, without projecting yourself into the future and without resisting the present. As you move, work, run — do it totally. Enjoy the flow of energy, the high energy of that moment. Now you are no longer stressed, no longer splitting yourself in two. Just moving, running, working — and enjoying it. Or you can drop the whole thing and sit on a park bench. But when you do, watch your mind. It may say: "You should be working. You are wasting time." Observe the mind. Smile at it.

Does the past take up a great deal of your attention? Do you frequently talk and think about it, either positively or negatively? The great things that you have achieved, your adventures or experiences, or your victim story and the dreadful things that were done to you, or maybe what you did to someone else? Are your thought processes creating guilt, pride, resentment, anger, regret, or self-pity? Then you are not only reinforcing a false sense of self but also helping to accelerate your body's aging process by creating an accumulation of past in your psyche. Verify this for yourself by observing those around you who have a strong tendency to hold on to the past.

Die to the past every moment. You don't need it. Only refer to it when it is absolutely relevant to the present. Feel the power of this moment and the fullness of Being. Feel your presence.

* * *

Are you worried? Do you have many "what if" thoughts? You are identified with your mind, which is projecting itself into an imaginary future situation and creating fear. There is no way that you can cope with such a situation, because it doesn't exist. It's a mental phantom. You can stop this health-and life-corroding insanity simply by acknowledging the present moment. Become aware of your breathing. Feel the air flowing in and out of your body. Feel your inner energy field. All that you ever have to deal with, cope with, in real life — as opposed to imaginary mind projections — is *this moment*. Ask yourself what "problem" you have right now, not next year, tomorrow, or five minutes from now. What is wrong with this moment? You can always cope with the Now, but you can never cope with the future — nor do you have to. The answer, the strength, the right action or the resource will be there when you need it, not before, not after.

"One day I'll make it." Is your goal taking up so much of your attention that you reduce the present moment to a means to an end? Is it taking the joy out of your doing? Are you waiting to start living? If you develop such a mind pattern, no matter what you achieve or get, the present will never be good enough; the future will always seem better. A perfect recipe for permanent dissatisfaction and nonfulfillment, don't you agree?

Are you a habitual "waiter"? How much of your life do you spend waiting? What I call "small-scale waiting" is waiting in line at the post office, in a traffic jam, at the airport, or waiting for someone to arrive, to finish work, and so on. "Large-scale waiting" is waiting for the next vacation, for a better job, for the children to grow up, for a truly meaningful relationship, for success, to make money, to be important, to become enlightened. It is not uncommon for people to spend their whole life waiting to start living.

Waiting is a state of mind. Basically, it means that you want the future; you don't want the present. You don't want what you've got, and you want what you haven't got. With every kind of waiting, you unconsciously create inner conflict between your here and now, where you don't want to be, and the projected future, where you want to be. This greatly reduces the quality of your life by making you lose the present.

There is nothing wrong with striving to improve your life situation. You can improve your life situation, but you cannot improve your life. Life is primary. Life is your deepest inner Being. It is already whole, complete, perfect. Your life situation consists of your circumstances and your experiences. There is nothing wrong with setting goals and striving to achieve things. The mistake lies in using it as a substitute for the feeling of life, for Being. The only point of access for that is the Now. You are then like an architect who pays no attention to the foundation of a building but spends a lot of time working on the superstructure.

For example, many people are waiting for prosperity. It cannot come in the future. When you honor, acknowledge, and fully accept your present reality — where you are, who you are, what you are doing right now — when you fully accept what you have got, you are grateful for what you have got, grateful for what *is*, grateful for Being. Gratitude for the present moment and the fullness of *life now* is true prosperity. It cannot come in the future. Then, in time, that prosperity manifests for you in various ways.

If you are dissatisfied with what you have got, or even frustrated or angry about your present lack, that may motivate you to become rich, but even if you do make millions, you will continue to experience the inner condition of lack, and deep down you will continue to feel unfulfilled. You may have many exciting experiences that money can buy, but they will come and go and always leave you with an empty feeling and the need for further physical or psychological gratification. You won't abide in Being and so feel the fullness of life now that alone is true prosperity.

So give up waiting as a state of mind. When you catch yourself slipping into waiting . . . snap out of it. Come into the present moment. Just be, and enjoy being. If you are present, there is never any need for you to wait for anything. So next time somebody says, "Sorry to have kept you waiting," you can reply, "That's all right, I wasn't waiting. I was just standing here enjoying myself — in joy in my self."

These are just a few of the habitual mind strategies for denying the present moment that are part of ordinary unconsciousness. They are easy to overlook because they are so much a part of normal living: the background static of perpetual discontent. But the more you practice monitoring your inner mental-emotional state, the easier it will be to know when you have been trapped in past or future, which is to say unconscious, and to awaken out of the dream of time into the present. But beware: The false, unhappy self, based on mind identification, lives on time. It knows that the present moment is its own death and so feels very threatened by it. It will do all it can to take you out of it. It will try to keep you trapped in time.

THE INNER PURPOSE OF YOUR LIFE'S JOURNEY

I can see the truth of what you are saying, but I still think that we must have purpose on our life's journey; otherwise we just drift, and purpose means future, doesn't it? How do we reconcile that with living in the present?

When you are on a journey, it is certainly helpful to know where you are going or at least the general direction in which you are moving, but don't forget: The only thing that is ultimately real about your journey is the step that you are taking at this moment. That's all there ever is.

Your life's journey has an outer purpose and an inner purpose. The outer purpose is to arrive at your goal or destination, to accomplish what you set out to do, to achieve this or that, which, of course, implies future. But if your destination, or the steps you are going to take in the future, take up so much of your attention that they become more important to you than the step you are taking now, then you completely miss the journey's inner purpose, which has nothing to do with *where* you are going or *what* you are doing, but everything to do with *how*. It has nothing to do with future but everything to do with the quality of your consciousness at this moment. The outer purpose belongs to the horizontal dimension of space and time; the inner purpose concerns a deepening of your Being in the vertical dimension of the timeless Now. Your outer journey may contain a million steps; your inner journey only has one: the step you are taking right now. As you become more deeply aware of this one step, you realize that it already contains within itself all the other steps as well as the destination. This one step then becomes transformed into an expression of perfection, an act of great beauty and quality. It will have taken you into Being, and the light of Being will shine through it. This is both the purpose and the fulfillment of your inner journey, the journey into yourself.

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Does it matter whether we achieve our outer purpose, whether we succeed or fail in the world?

It will matter to you as long as you haven't realized your inner purpose. After that, the outer purpose is just a game that you may continue to play simply because you enjoy it. It is also possible to fail completely in your outer purpose and at the same time totally succeed in your inner purpose. Or the other way around, which is actually more common: outer riches and inner poverty, or to "gain the world and lose your soul," as Jesus puts it. Ultimately, of course, *every* outer purpose is doomed to "fail" sooner or later, simply because it is subject to the law of impermanence of all things. The sooner you realize that your outer purpose cannot give you lasting fulfillment, the better. When you have seen the limitations of your outer purpose, you give up your unrealistic expectation that it should make you happy, and you make it subservient to your inner purpose.

THE PAST CANNOT SURVIVE IN YOUR PRESENCE

You mentioned that thinking or talking about the past unnecessarily is one of the ways in which we avoid the present. But apart from the past that we remember and perhaps identify with, isn't there another level of past within us that is much more deep-seated? I am talking about the unconscious past that conditions our lives, especially through early childhood experiences, perhaps even past-life experiences. And then there is our cultural conditioning, which has to do with where we live geographically and the historical time period in which we live. All these things determine how we see the world, how we react, what we think, what kind of relationships we have, how we live our lives. How could we ever become conscious of all that or get rid of it? How long would that take? And even if we did, what would there be left?

What is left when illusion ends?

There is no need to investigate the unconscious past in you except as it manifests at this moment as a thought, an emotion, a desire, a reaction, or an external event that happens to you. Whatever you need to know about the unconscious past in you, the challenges of the present will bring it out. If you delve into the past, it will become a bottomless pit: There is always more. You may think that you need more time to understand the past or become free of it, in other words, that the future will eventually free you of the past. This is a delusion. Only the present can free you of the past. More time cannot free you of time. Access the power of Now. That is the key.

What is the power of Now?

None other than the power of your presence, your consciousness liberated from thought forms.

So deal with the past on the level of the present. The more attention you give to the past, the more you energize it, and the more likely you are to make a "self" out of it. Don't misunderstand: Attention is essential, but not to the past as past. Give attention to the present; give attention to your behavior, to your reactions, moods, thoughts, emotions, fears, and desires as they occur in the present. *There's* the past in you. If you can be present enough to watch all those things, not critically or analytically but nonjudgmentally, then you are dealing with the past and dissolving it through the power of your presence. You cannot find yourself by going into the past. You find yourself by coming into the present.

Isn't it helpful to understand the past and so understand why we do certain things, react in certain ways, or why we unconsciously create our particular kind of drama, patterns in relationships, and so on?

As you become more conscious of your present reality, you may suddenly get certain insights as to *why* your conditioning functions in those particular ways — for example, why your relationships follow certain patterns — and you may remember things that happened in the past or see them more clearly. That is fine and can be helpful, but it is not essential. What is essential is your conscious presence. *That* dissolves the past. That is the transformative agent. So don't seek to understand the past, but be as present as you can. The past cannot survive in your presence. It can only survive in your absence.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE STATE OF PRESENCE

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK IT IS

You keep talking about the state of presence as the key. I think I understand it intellectually, but I don't know if I have ever truly experienced it. I wonder — is it what I think it is, or is it something entirely different?

It's not what you think it is! You can't think about presence, and the mind can't understand it. Understanding presence is *being* present.

Try a little experiment. Close your eyes and say to yourself: "I wonder what my next thought is going to be." Then become very alert and wait for the next thought. Be like a cat watching a mouse hole. What thought is going to come out of the mouse hole? Try it now.

* * *

Well?

I had to wait for quite a long time before a thought came in.

Exactly. As long as you are in a state of intense presence, you are free of thought. You are still, yet highly alert. The instant your conscious attention sinks below a certain level, thought rushes in. The mental noise returns; the stillness is lost. You are back in time.

To test their degree of presence, some Zen masters have been known to creep up on their students from behind and suddenly hit them with a stick. Quite a shock! If the student had been fully present and in a state of alertness, if he had "kept his loin girded and his lamp burning," which is one of the analogies that Jesus uses for presence, he would have noticed the master coming up from behind and stopped him or stepped aside. But if he were hit, that would mean he was immersed in thought, which is to say absent, unconscious.

To stay present in everyday life, it helps to be deeply rooted within yourself; otherwise, the mind, which has incredible momentum, will drag you along like a wild river.

What do you mean by "rooted within yourself"?

It means to inhabit your body fully. To always have some of your attention in the inner energy field of your body. To feel the body from within, so to speak. Body awareness keeps you present. It anchors you in the Now (see chapter 6).

THE ESOTERIC MEANING OF "WAITING"

In a sense, the state of presence could be compared to waiting. Jesus used the analogy of waiting in some of his parables. This is not the usual bored or restless kind of waiting that is a denial of the present and that I spoke about already. It is not a waiting in which your attention is focused on some point in the future and the present is perceived as an undesirable obstacle that prevents you from having what you want. There is a qualitatively different kind of waiting, one that requires your total alertness. Something could happen at any moment, and if you are not absolutely awake, absolutely still, you will miss it. This is the kind of waiting Jesus talks about. In that state, all your attention is in the Now. There is none left for daydreaming, thinking, remembering, anticipating. There is no tension in it, no fear, just alert presence. You are present with your whole Being, with every cell of your body. In that state, the "you" that has a past and a future — the personality, if you like — is hardly there anymore. And yet nothing of value is lost. You are still essentially yourself. In fact, you are more fully yourself than you ever were before, or rather it is only *now* that you are truly yourself.

"Be like a servant waiting for the return of the master," says Jesus. The servant does not know at what hour the master is going to come. So he stays awake, alert, poised, still, lest he miss the master's arrival. In another parable, Jesus speaks of the five careless (unconscious) women who do not have enough oil (consciousness) to keep their lamps burning (stay present) and so miss the bridegroom (the Now) and don't get to the wedding feast (enlightenment). These five stand in contrast to the five wise women who have enough oil (stay conscious).

Even the men who wrote the Gospels did not understand the meaning of these parables, so the first misinterpretations and distortions crept in as they were written down. With subsequent erroneous interpretations, the real meaning was completely lost. These are parables not about the end of the world but about the end of psychological time. They point to the transcendence of the egoic mind and the possibility of living in an entirely new state of consciousness.

BEAUTY ARISES IN THE STILLNESS OF YOUR PRESENCE

What you have just described is something that I occasionally experience for brief moments when I am alone and surrounded by nature.

Yes. Zen masters use the word *satori* to describe a flash of insight, a moment of no-mind and total presence. Although *satori* is not a lasting transformation, be grateful when it comes, for it gives you a taste of enlightenment. You may, indeed, have experienced it many times without knowing what it is and realizing its importance. Presence is needed to become aware of the beauty, the majesty, the sacredness of nature. Have you ever gazed up into the infinity of space on a clear night, awestruck by the absolute stillness and inconceivable vastness of it? Have you listened, truly listened, to the sound of a mountain stream in the forest? Or to the song of a blackbird at dusk on a quiet summer evening? To become aware of such things, the mind needs to be still. You have to put down for a moment your personal baggage of problems, of past and future, as well as all your knowledge; otherwise, you will see but not see, hear but not hear. Your total presence is required.

Beyond the beauty of the external forms, there is more here: something that cannot be named, something ineffable, some deep, inner, holy essence. Whenever and wherever there is beauty, this inner essence shines through somehow. It only reveals itself to you when you are present. Could it be that this nameless essence and your presence are one and the same? Would it be there without your presence? Go deeply into it. Find out for yourself.

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When you experienced those moments of presence, you likely didn’t realize that you were briefly in a state of no mind. This is because the gap between that state and the influx of thought was too narrow. Your *satori* may only have lasted for a few seconds before the mind came in, but it was there; otherwise, you would not have experienced the beauty. Mind can neither recognize nor create beauty. Only for a few seconds, while you were completely present, was that beauty or that sacredness there. Because of the narrowness of that gap and a lack of vigilance and alertness on your part, you were probably unable to see the fundamental difference between the perception, the thoughtless awareness of beauty, and the naming and interpreting of it as thought: The time gap was so small that it seemed to be a single process. The truth is, however, that the moment thought came in, all you had was a memory of it.

The wider the time gap between perception and thought, the more depth there is to you as a human being, which is to say the more conscious you are.

Many people are so imprisoned in their minds that the beauty of nature does not really exist for them. They might say, "What a pretty flower," but that's just a mechanical mental labeling. Because they are not still, not present, they don't truly see the flower, don't feel its essence, its holiness — just as they don't know themselves, don't feel their own essence, their own holiness.

Because we live in such a mind-dominated culture, most modern art, architecture, music, and literature are devoid of beauty, of inner essence, with very few exceptions. The reason is that the people who create those things cannot — even for a moment — free themselves from their mind. So they are never in touch with that place within where true creativity and beauty arise. The mind left to itself creates monstrosities, and not only in art galleries. Look at our urban landscapes and industrial wastelands. No civilization has ever produced so much ugliness.

REALIZING PURE CONSCIOUSNESS

Is presence the same as Being?

When you become conscious of Being, what is really happening is that Being becomes conscious of itself. When Being becomes conscious of itself — that's presence. Since Being, consciousness, and life are synonymous, we could say that presence means consciousness becoming conscious of itself, or life attaining self-consciousness. But don't get attached to the words, and don't make an effort to understand this. There is nothing that you need to understand before you can become present.

I do understand what you just said, but it seems to imply that Being, the ultimate transcendental reality, is not yet complete, that it is undergoing a process of *development. Does God need time for personal growth?*

Yes, but only as seen from the limited perspective of the manifested universe. In the Bible, God declares: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, and I am the living One.” In the timeless realm where God dwells, which is also *your* home, the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega, are one, and the essence of everything that ever has been and ever will be is eternally present in an unmanifested state of oneness and perfection — totally beyond anything the human mind can ever imagine or comprehend. In our world of seemingly separate forms, however, timeless perfection is an inconceivable concept. Here even consciousness, which is the light emanating from the eternal Source, seems to be subject to a process of development, but this is due to our limited perception. It is not so in absolute terms. Nevertheless, let me continue to speak for a moment about the evolution of consciousness in this world.

Everything that exists has Being, has God-essence, has some degree of consciousness. Even a stone has rudimentary consciousness; otherwise, it would not be, and its atoms and molecules would disperse. Everything is alive. The sun, the earth, plants, animals, humans — all are expressions of consciousness in varying degrees, consciousness manifesting as form.

The world arises when consciousness takes on shapes and forms, thought forms and material forms. Look at the millions of life forms on this planet alone. In the sea, on land, in the air — and then each life form is replicated millions of times. To what end? Is someone or something playing a game, a game with form? This is what the ancient seers of India asked themselves. They saw the world as *lila*, a kind of divine game that God is playing. The individual life forms are obviously not very important in this game. In the sea, most life forms don’t survive for more than a few minutes after being born. The human form turns to dust pretty quickly too, and when it is gone it is as if it had never been. Is that tragic or cruel? Only if you create a separate identity for each form, if you forget that its consciousness is God-essence expressing itself in form. But you don’t truly *know* that until you realize your own God-essence as pure consciousness.

If a fish is born in your aquarium and you call him John, write out a birth certificate, tell him about his family history, and two minutes later he gets eaten by another fish — that’s tragic. But it’s only tragic because you projected a separate self where there was none. You got hold of a fraction of a dynamic process, a molecular dance, and made a separate entity out of it.

Consciousness takes on the disguise of forms until they reach such complexity that it completely loses itself in them. In present-day humans, consciousness is completely identified with its disguise. It only knows itself as form and therefore lives in fear of the annihilation of its physical or psychological form. This is the egoic mind, and this is where considerable dysfunction sets in. It now looks as if something had gone very wrong somewhere along the line of evolution. But even this is part of *lila*, the divine game. Finally, the pressure of suffering created by this apparent dysfunction forces consciousness to disidentify from form and awakens it from its dream of form: It regains self-consciousness, but it is at a far deeper level than when it lost it.

This process is explained by Jesus in his parable of the lost son, who leaves his father's home, squanders his wealth, becomes destitute, and is then forced by his suffering to return home. When he does, his father *loves him more* than before. The son's state is the same as it was before, yet not the same. It has an added dimension of depth. The parable describes a journey from unconscious perfection, through apparent imperfection and "evil" to conscious perfection.

Can you now see the deeper and wider significance of becoming present as the watcher of your mind? Whenever you watch the mind, you withdraw consciousness from mind forms, and it then becomes what we call the watcher or the witness. Consequently, the watcher — pure consciousness beyond form — becomes stronger, and the mental formations become weaker. When we talk about watching the mind we are personalizing an event that is truly of cosmic significance: Through you, consciousness is awakening out of its dream of identification with form and withdrawing from form. This foreshadows, but is already part of, an event that is probably still in the distant future as far as chronological time is concerned. The event is called — the end of the world.

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When consciousness frees itself from its identification with physical and mental forms, it becomes what we may call pure or enlightened consciousness, or presence. This has already happened in a few individuals, and it seems destined to happen soon on a much larger scale, although there is no absolute guarantee that it *will* happen. Most humans are still in the grip of the egoic mode of consciousness: identified with their mind and run by their mind. If they do not free themselves from their mind in time, they will be destroyed by it. They will experience increasing confusion, conflict, violence, illness, despair, madness. Egoic mind has become like a sinking ship. If you don't get off, you will go down with it. The collective egoic mind is the most dangerously insane and destructive entity ever to inhabit this planet. What do you think will happen on this planet if human consciousness remains unchanged?

Already for most humans, the only respite they find from their own minds is to occasionally revert to a level of consciousness below thought. Everyone does that every night during sleep. But this also happens to some extent through sex, alcohol, and other drugs that suppress excessive mind activity. If it weren’t for alcohol, tranquilizers, antidepressants, as well as the illegal drugs, which are all consumed in vast quantities, the insanity of the human mind would become even more glaringly obvious than it is already. I believe that, if deprived of their drugs, a large part of the population would become a danger to themselves and others. These drugs, of course, simply keep you stuck in dysfunction. Their widespread use only delays the breakdown of the old mind structures and the emergence of higher consciousness. While individual users may get some relief from the daily torture inflicted on them by their minds, they are prevented from generating enough conscious presence to rise above thought and so find true liberation.

Falling back to a level of consciousness below mind, which is the pre-thinking level of our distant ancestors and of animals and plants, is not an option for us. There is no way back. If the human race is to survive, it will have to go on to the next stage. Consciousness is evolving throughout the universe in billions of forms. So even if we didn’t make it, this wouldn’t matter on a cosmic scale. No gain in consciousness is ever lost, so it would simply express itself through some other form. But the very fact that I am speaking here and you are listening or reading this is a clear sign that the new consciousness *is* gaining a foothold on the planet.

There is nothing personal in this: I am not teaching you. You are consciousness, and you are listening to yourself. There is an Eastern saying: “The teacher and the taught together create the teaching.” In any case, the words in themselves are not important. They are not the Truth; they only point to it. I speak from presence, and as I speak, you may be able to join me in that state. Although every word that I use has a history, of course, and comes from the past, as all language does, the words that I speak to you now are carriers of the high-energy frequency of presence, quite apart from the meaning they convey as words.

Silence is an even more potent carrier of presence, so when you read this or listen to me speak, be aware of the silence between and underneath the words. Be aware of the gaps. To listen to the silence, wherever you are, is an easy and direct way of becoming present. Even if there is noise, there is always some silence underneath and in between the sounds. Listening to the silence immediately creates stillness inside you. Only the stillness in you can perceive the silence outside. And what is stillness other than presence, consciousness freed from thought forms? Here is the living realization of what we have been talking about.

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CHRIST: THE REALITY OF YOUR DIVINE PRESENCE

Don't get attached to any one word. You can substitute "Christ" for presence, if that is more meaningful to you. Christ is your God-essence or the Self, as it is sometimes called in the East. The only difference between Christ and presence is that Christ refers to your indwelling divinity regardless of whether you are conscious of it or not, whereas presence means your *awakened* divinity or God-essence.

Many misunderstandings and false beliefs about Christ will clear if you realize that there is no past or future in Christ. To say that Christ *was* or *will be* is a contradiction in terms. Jesus was. He was a man who lived two thousand years ago and realized divine presence, his true nature. And so he said: "Before Abraham was, I am." He did not say: "I already existed before Abraham was born." That would have meant that he was still within the dimension of time and form identity. The words *I am* used in a sentence that starts in the past tense indicate a radical shift, a discontinuity in the temporal dimension. It is a Zen-like statement of great profundity. Jesus attempted to convey directly, not through discursive thought, the meaning of presence, of self-realization. He had gone beyond the consciousness dimension governed by time, into the realm of the timeless. The dimension of eternity had come into this world. Eternity, of course, does not mean endless time, but no time. Thus, the man Jesus became Christ, a vehicle for pure consciousness. And what is God's self-definition in the Bible? Did God say, "I have always been, and I always will be?" Of course not. That would have given reality to past and future. God said: "I AM THAT I AM." No time here, just presence.

The "second coming" of Christ is a transformation of human consciousness, a shift from time to presence, from thinking to pure consciousness, not the arrival of some man or woman. If "Christ" were to return tomorrow in some externalized form, what could he or she possibly say to you other than this: "I am the Truth. I am divine presence. I am eternal life. I am within you. I am here. I am Now."

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Never personalize Christ. Don't make Christ into a form identity. Avatars, divine mothers, enlightened masters, the very few that are real, are not special as persons. Without a false self to uphold, defend, and feed, they are more simple, more ordinary than the ordinary man or woman. Anyone with a strong ego would regard them as insignificant or, more likely, not see them at all.

If you are drawn to an enlightened teacher, it is because there is already enough presence in you to recognize presence in another. There were many people who did not recognize Jesus or the Buddha, as there are and always have been many people who are drawn to false teachers. Egos are drawn to bigger egos. Darkness cannot recognize light. Only light can recognize light. So don't believe that the light is outside you or that it can only come through one particular form. If only your master is an incarnation of God, then who are you? Any kind of exclusivity is identification with form, and identification with form means ego, no matter how well disguised.

Use the master's presence to reflect your own identity beyond name and form back to you and to become more intensely present yourself. You will soon realize that there is no "mine" or "yours" in presence. Presence is one.

Group work can also be helpful for intensifying the light of your presence. A group of people coming together in a state of presence generates a collective energy field of great intensity. It not only raises the degree of presence of each member of the group but also helps to free the collective human consciousness from its current state of mind dominance. This will make the state of presence increasingly more accessible to individuals. However, unless at least one member of the group is already firmly established in it and thus can hold the energy frequency of that state, the egoic mind can easily reassert itself and sabotage the group's endeavors. Although group work is invaluable, it is not enough, and you must not come to depend on it. Nor must you come to depend on a teacher or a master, except during the transitional period, when you are learning the meaning and practice of presence.

CHAPTER SIX

THE INNER BODY

BEING IS YOUR DEEPEST SELF

You spoke earlier about the importance of having deep roots within or inhabiting the body. Can you explain what you meant by that?

The body can become a point of access into the realm of Being. Let's go into that more deeply now.

I am still not quite sure if I fully understand what you mean by Being.

"Water? What do you mean by that? I don't understand it." This is what a fish would say if it had a human mind.

Please stop trying to understand Being. You have already had significant glimpses of Being, but the mind will always try to squeeze it into a little box and then put a label on it. It cannot be done. It cannot become an object of knowledge. In Being, subject and object merge into one.

Being can be *felt* as the ever-present *I am* that is beyond name and form. To feel and thus to know that you *are* and to abide in that deeply rooted state is enlightenment, is the truth that Jesus says will make you free.

Free from what?

Free from the *illusion* that you are nothing more than your physical body and your mind. This "illusion of the self," as the Buddha calls it, is the core error. Free from *fear* in its countless disguises as the inevitable consequence of that illusion — the fear that is your constant tormentor as long as you derive your sense of self only from this ephemeral and vulnerable form. And free from *sin*, which is the suffering you unconsciously inflict on yourself and others as long as this illusory sense of self governs what you think, say, and do.

LOOK BEYOND THE WORDS

I don't like the word sin. *It implies that I am being judged and found guilty.*

I can understand that. Over the centuries, many erroneous views and interpretations have accumulated around words such as *sin*, due to ignorance, misunderstanding, or a desire to control, but they contain an essential core of truth. If you are unable to look beyond such interpretations and so cannot recognize the reality to which the word points, then don't use it. Don't get stuck on the level of words. A word is no more than a means to an end. It's an abstraction. Not unlike a signpost, it points beyond itself. The word *honey* isn't honey. You can study and talk about honey for as long as you like, but you won't really *know* it until you taste it. After you have tasted it, the word becomes less important to you. You won't be attached to it anymore. Similarly, you can talk or think about *God* continuously for the rest of your life, but does that mean you know or have even glimpsed the reality to which the word points? It really is no more than an obsessive attachment to a signpost, a mental idol.

The reverse also applies: If, for whatever reason, you disliked the word *honey*, that might prevent you from ever tasting it. If you had a strong aversion to the word *God*, which is a negative form of attachment, you may be denying not just the word but also the reality to which it points. You would be cutting yourself off from the possibility of experiencing that reality. All this is, of course, intrinsically connected with being identified with your mind.

So, if a word doesn't work for you anymore, then drop it and replace it with one that does work. If you don't like the word *sin*, then call it unconsciousness or insanity. That may get you closer to the truth, the reality behind the word, than a long-misused word like *sin*, and leaves little room for guilt.

I don't like those words either. They imply that there is something wrong with me. I am being judged.

Of course there is something wrong with you — and you are not being judged.

I don't mean to offend you personally, but do you not belong to the human race that killed over one hundred million members of its own species in the twentieth century alone?

You mean guilt by association?

It is not a question of guilt. But as long as you are run by the egoic mind, you are part of the collective insanity. Perhaps you haven't looked very deeply into the human condition in its state of dominance by the egoic mind. Open your eyes and see the fear, the despair, the greed, and the violence that are all-pervasive. See the heinous cruelty and suffering on an unimaginable scale that humans have inflicted and continue to inflict on each other as well as on other life forms on the planet. You don't need to condemn. Just observe. That is sin. That is insanity. That is unconsciousness. Above all, don't forget to observe your own mind. Seek out the root of the insanity there.

FINDING YOUR INVISIBLE AND INDESTRUCTIBLE REALITY

You said that identification with our physical form is part of the illusion, so how can the body, the physical form, bring you to a realization of Being?

The body that you can see and touch cannot take you into Being. But that visible and tangible body is only an outer shell, or rather a limited and distorted perception of a deeper reality. In your natural state of connectedness with Being, this deeper reality can be felt every moment as the invisible inner body, the animating presence within you. So to "inhabit the body" is to feel the body from within, to feel the life inside the body and thereby come to know that you are beyond the outer form.

But that is only the beginning of an inward journey that will take you ever more deeply into a realm of great stillness and peace, yet also of great power and vibrant life. At first, you may only get fleeting glimpses of it, but through them you will begin to realize that you are not just a meaningless fragment in an alien universe, briefly suspended between birth and death, allowed a few short-lived pleasures followed by pain and ultimate annihilation. Underneath your outer form, you are connected with something so vast, so immeasurable and sacred, that it cannot be conceived or spoken of — yet I am speaking of it now. I am speaking of it not to give you something to believe in but to show you how you can know it for yourself.

You are cut off from Being as long as your mind takes up all your attention. When this happens — and it happens continuously for most people — you are not in your body. The mind absorbs all your consciousness and transforms it into mind stuff. You cannot stop thinking. Compulsive thinking has become a collective disease. Your whole sense of who you are is then derived from mind activity. Your identity, as it is no longer rooted in Being, becomes a vulnerable and ever-needy mental construct, which creates fear as the predominant underlying emotion. The one thing that truly matters is then missing from your life: awareness of your deeper self — your invisible and indestructible reality.

To become conscious of Being, you need to reclaim consciousness from the mind. This is one of the most essential tasks on your spiritual journey. It will free vast amounts of consciousness that previously had been trapped in useless and compulsive thinking. A very effective way of doing this is simply to take the focus of your attention away from thinking and direct it into the body, where Being can be felt in the first instance as the invisible energy field that gives life to what you perceive as the physical body.

CONNECTING WITH THE INNER BODY

Please try it now. You may find it helpful to close your eyes for this practice. Later on, when "being in the body" has become natural and easy, this will no longer be necessary. Direct your attention into the body. Feel it from within. Is it alive? Is there life in your hands, arms, legs, and feet — in your abdomen, your chest? Can you feel the subtle energy field that pervades the entire body and gives vibrant life to every organ and every cell? Can you feel it simultaneously in all parts of the body as a single field of energy? Keep focusing on the feeling of your inner body for a few moments. Do not start to think about it. Feel it. The more attention you give it, the clearer and stronger this feeling will become. It will feel as if every cell is becoming more alive, and if you have a strong visual sense, you may get an image of your body becoming luminous. Although such an image can help you temporarily, pay more attention to the feeling than to any image that may arise. An image, no matter how beautiful or powerful, is already defined in form, so there is less scope for penetrating more deeply.

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The feeling of your inner body is formless, limitless, and unfathomable. You can always go into it more deeply. If you cannot feel very much at this stage, pay attention to whatever you *can* feel. Perhaps there is just a slight tingling in your hands or feet. That's good enough for the moment. Just focus on the feeling. Your body is coming alive. Later, we will practice some more. Please open your eyes now, but keep some attention in the inner energy field of the body even as you look around the room. The inner body lies at the threshold between your form identity and your essence identity, your true nature. Never lose touch with it.

TRANSFORMATION THROUGH THE BODY

Why have most religions condemned or denied the body? It seems that spiritual seekers have always regarded the body as a hindrance or even as sinful.

Why have so few seekers become finders?

On the level of the body, humans are very close to animals. All the basic bodily functions — pleasure, pain, breathing, eating, drinking, defecating, sleeping, the drive to find a mate and procreate, and of course birth and death — we share with the animals. A long time after their fall from a state of grace and oneness into illusion, humans suddenly woke up in what seemed to be an animal body — and they found this very disturbing. "Don't fool yourself. You are no more than an animal." This seemed to be the truth that was staring them in the face. But it was too disturbing a truth to tolerate. Adam and Eve saw that they were naked, and they became afraid. Unconscious denial of their animal nature set in very quickly. The threat that they might be taken over by powerful instinctual drives and revert back to complete unconsciousness was indeed a very real one. Shame and taboos appeared around certain parts of the body and bodily functions, especially sexuality. The light of their consciousness was not yet strong enough to make friends with their animal nature, to allow it to *be* and even enjoy that aspect of themselves — let alone to go deeply into it to find the divine hidden within it, the reality within the illusion. So they did what they had to do. They began to disassociate from their body. They now saw themselves as *having* a body, rather than just being it.

When religions arose, this disassociation became even more pronounced as the "you are not your body" belief. Countless people in East and West throughout the ages have tried to find God, salvation, or enlightenment through denial of the body. This took the form of denial of sense pleasures and of sexuality in particular, fasting, and other ascetic practices. They even inflicted pain on the body in an attempt to weaken or punish it because they regarded it as sinful. In Christianity, this used to be called mortification of the flesh. Others tried to escape from the body by entering trance states or seeking out-of-body experiences. Many still do. Even the Buddha is said to have practiced body denial through fasting and extreme forms of asceticism for six years, but he did not attain enlightenment until after he had given up this practice.

The fact is that no one has ever become enlightened through denying or fighting the body or through an out-of-body experience. Although such an experience can be fascinating and can give you a glimpse of the state of liberation from the material form, in the end you will always have to return to the body, where the essential work of transformation takes place. Transformation is *through* the body, not away from it. This is why no true master has ever advocated fighting or leaving the body, although their mind-based followers often have.

Of the ancient teachings concerning the body, only certain fragments survive, such as Jesus's statement that "your whole body will be filled with light," or they survive as myths, such as the belief that Jesus never relinquished his body but remained one with it and ascended into "heaven" with it. Almost no one to this day has understood those fragments or the hidden meaning of certain myths, and the "you are not your body" belief has prevailed universally, leading to body denial and attempts to escape from the body. Countless seekers have thus been prevented from attaining spiritual realization for themselves and becoming finders.

Is it possible to recover the lost teachings on the significance of the body or to reconstruct them from the existing fragments?

There is no need for that. All spiritual teachings originate from the same Source. In that sense, there is and always has been only one master, who manifests in many different forms. I am that master, and so are you, once you are able to access the Source within. And the way to it is through the inner body. Although all spiritual teachings originate from the same Source, once they become verbalized and written down they are obviously no more than collections of words — and a word is nothing but a signpost, as we talked about earlier. All such teachings are signposts pointing the way back to the Source.

I have already spoken of the Truth that is hidden within your body, but I will summarize for you again the lost teachings of the masters — so here is another signpost. Please endeavor to feel your inner body as you read or listen.

SERMON ON THE BODY

What you perceive as a dense physical structure called the body, which is subject to disease, old age, and death, is not ultimately real — is not you. It is a misperception of your essential reality that is beyond birth and death, and is due to the limitations of your mind, which, having lost touch with Being, creates the body as evidence of its illusory belief in separation and to justify its state of fear. But do not turn away from the body, for within that symbol of impermanence, limitation, and death that you perceive as the illusory creation of your mind is concealed the splendor of your essential and immortal reality. Do not turn your attention elsewhere in your search for the Truth, for it is nowhere else to be found but within your body.

Do not fight against the body, for in doing so you are fighting against your own reality. You *are* your body. The body that you can see and touch is only a thin illusory veil. Underneath it lies the invisible inner body, the doorway into Being, into Life Unmanifested. Through the inner body, you are inseparably connected to this unmanifested One Life — birthless, deathless, eternally present. Through the inner body, you are forever one with God.

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HAVE DEEP ROOTS WITHIN

The key is to be in a state of permanent connectedness with your inner body — to feel it at all times. This will rapidly deepen and transform your life. The more consciousness you direct into the inner body, the higher its vibrational frequency becomes, much like a light that grows brighter as you turn up the dimmer switch and so increase the flow of electricity. At this higher energy level, negativity cannot affect you anymore, and you tend to attract new circumstances that reflect this higher frequency.

If you keep your attention in the body as much as possible, you will be anchored in the Now. You won't lose yourself in the external world, and you won't lose yourself in your mind. Thoughts and emotions, fears and desires, may still be there to some extent, but they won't take you over.

Please examine where your attention is at this moment. You are listening to me, or you are reading these words in a book. That is the focus of your attention. You are also peripherally aware of your surroundings, other people, and so on. Furthermore, there may be some mind activity around what you are hearing or reading, some mental commentary. Yet there is no need for any of this to absorb *all* your attention. See if you can be in touch with your inner body at the same time. Keep some of your attention within. Don't let it all flow out. Feel your whole body from within, as a single field of energy. It is almost as if you were listening or reading with your whole body. Let this be your practice in the days and weeks to come.

Do not give all your attention away to the mind and the external world. By all means focus on what you are doing, but feel the inner body at the same time whenever possible. Stay rooted within. Then observe how this changes your state of consciousness and the quality of what you are doing.

Whenever you are waiting, wherever it may be, use that time to feel the inner body. In this way, traffic jams and lines become very enjoyable. Instead of mentally projecting yourself away from the Now, go more deeply into the Now by going more deeply into the body.

The art of inner-body awareness will develop into a completely new way of living, a state of permanent connectedness with Being, and will add a depth to your life that you have never known before.

It is easy to stay present as the observer of your mind when you are deeply rooted within your body. No matter what happens on the outside, nothing can shake you anymore.

Unless you stay present — and inhabiting your body is always an essential aspect of it — you will continue to be run by your mind. The script in your head that you learned a long time ago, the conditioning of your mind, will dictate your thinking and your behavior. You may be free of it for brief intervals, but rarely for long. This is especially true when something "goes wrong" or there is some loss or upset. Your conditioned reaction will then be involuntary, automatic, and predictable, fueled by the one basic emotion that underlies the mind-identified state of consciousness: fear.

So when such challenges come, as they always do, make it a habit to go within at once and focus as much as you can on the inner energy field of your body. This need not take long, just a few seconds. But you need to do it the moment that the challenge presents itself. Any delay will allow a conditioned mental-emotional reaction to arise and take you over. When you focus within and feel the inner body, you immediately become still and present as you are withdrawing consciousness from the mind. If a response is required in that situation, it will come up from this deeper level. Just as the sun is infinitely brighter than a candle flame, there is infinitely more intelligence in Being than in your mind.

As long as you are in conscious contact with your inner body, you are like a tree that is deeply rooted in the earth, or a building with a deep and solid foundation. The latter analogy is used by Jesus in the generally misunderstood parable of the two men who build a house. One man builds it on the sand, without a foundation, and when the storms and floods come, the house is swept away. The other man *digs deep* until he reaches the rock, then builds his house, which is not swept away by the floods.

BEFORE YOU ENTER THE BODY, FORGIVE

I felt very uncomfortable when I tried to put my attention on the inner body. There was a feeling of agitation and some nausea. So I haven't been able to experience what you are talking about.

What you felt was a lingering emotion that you were probably unaware of, until you started putting some attention into the body. Unless you first give it some attention, the emotion will prevent you from gaining access to the inner body, which lies at a deeper level underneath it. Attention does not mean that you start *thinking* about it. It means to just observe the emotion, to feel it fully, and so to acknowledge and accept it as it is. Some emotions are easily identified: anger, fear, grief, and so on. Others may be much harder to label. They may just be vague feelings of unease, heaviness, or constriction, halfway between an emotion and a physical sensation. In any case, what matters is not whether you can attach a mental label to it but whether you can bring the feeling of it into awareness as much as possible. Attention is the key to transformation — and full attention also implies acceptance. Attention is like a beam of light — the focused power of your consciousness that transmutes everything into itself.

In a fully functional organism, an emotion has a very short life span. It is like a momentary ripple or wave on the surface of your Being. When you are not in your body, however, an emotion can survive inside you for days or weeks, or join with other emotions of a similar frequency that have merged and become the pain-body, a parasite that can live inside you for years, feed on your energy, lead to physical illness, and make your life miserable (see chapter 2).

So place your attention on feeling the emotion, and check whether your mind is holding on to a grievance pattern such as blame, self-pity, or resentment that is feeding the emotion. If that is the case, it means that you haven't forgiven. Non-forgiveness is often toward another person or yourself, but it may just as well be toward any situation or condition — past, present, or future — that your mind refuses to accept. Yes, there can be nonforgiveness even with regard to the future. This is the mind's refusal to accept uncertainty, to accept that the future is ultimately beyond its control. Forgiveness is to relinquish your grievance and so to let go of grief. It happens naturally once you realize that your grievance serves no purpose except to strengthen a false sense of self. Forgiveness is to offer no resistance to life — to allow life to live through you. The alternatives are pain and suffering, a greatly restricted flow of life energy, and in many cases physical disease.

The moment you truly forgive, you have reclaimed your power from the mind. Nonforgiveness is the very nature of the mind, just as the mind-made false self, the ego, cannot survive without strife and conflict. The mind cannot forgive. Only *you* can. You become present, you enter your body, you feel the vibrant peace and stillness that emanate from Being. That is why Jesus said: "Before you enter the temple, forgive."

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YOUR LINK WITH THE UNMANIFESTED

What is the relationship between presence and the inner body?

Presence is pure consciousness — consciousness that has been reclaimed from the mind, from the world of form. The inner body is your link with the Unmanifested, and in its deepest aspect *is* the Unmanifested: the Source from which consciousness emanates, as light emanates from the sun. Awareness of the inner body is consciousness remembering its origin and returning to the Source.

Is the Unmanifested the same as Being?

Yes. The word *Unmanifested* attempts, by way of negation, to express That which cannot be spoken, thought, or imagined. It points to what it *is* by saying what it is *not*. *Being*, on the other hand, is a positive term. Please don't get attached to either of these words or start believing in them. They are no more than signposts.

You said that presence is consciousness that has been reclaimed from the mind. Who does the reclaiming?

You do. But since in your essence you *are* consciousness, we might as well say that it is an awakening of consciousness from the dream of form. This does not mean that your own form will instantly vanish in an explosion of light. You can continue in your present form yet be aware of the formless and deathless deep within you.

I must admit that this is way beyond my comprehension, and yet on some deeper level I seem to know what you are talking about. It's more like a feeling than anything else. Am I deceiving myself?

No, you are not. Feeling will get you closer to the truth of who you are than thinking. I cannot tell you anything that deep within you don't already know. When you have reached a certain stage of inner connectedness, you recognize the truth when you hear it. If you haven't reached that stage yet, the practice of body awareness will bring about the deepening that is necessary.

SLOWING DOWN THE AGING PROCESS

In the meantime, awareness of the inner body has other benefits in the physical realm. One of them is a significant slowing down of the aging of the physical body.

Whereas the outer body normally appears to grow old and wither fairly quickly, the inner body does not change with time, except that you may feel it more deeply and become it more fully. If you are twenty years old now, the energy field of your inner body will feel just the same when you are eighty. It will be just as vibrantly alive. As soon as your habitual state changes from being out of the body and trapped in your mind to being in the body and present in the Now, your physical body will feel lighter, clearer, more alive. As there is more consciousness in the body, its molecular structure actually becomes less dense. More consciousness means a lessening of the illusion of materiality.

When you become identified more with the timeless inner body than with the outer body, when presence becomes your normal mode of consciousness and past and future no longer dominate your attention, you do not accumulate time anymore in your psyche and in the cells of the body. The accumulation of time as the psychological burden of past and future greatly impairs the cells' capacity for self-renewal. So if you inhabit the inner body, the outer body will grow old at a much slower rate, and even when it does, your timeless essence will shine through the outer form, and you will not give the appearance of an old person.

Is there any scientific evidence for this?

Try it out and you will *be* the evidence.

STRENGTHENING THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

Another benefit of this practice in the physical realm is a great strengthening of the immune system, which occurs when you inhabit the body. The more consciousness you bring into the body, the stronger the immune system, becomes. It is as if every cell awakens and rejoices. The body loves your attention. It is also a potent form of self-healing. Most illnesses creep in when you are not present in the body. If the master is not present in the house, all kinds of shady characters will take up residence there. When you inhabit your body, it will be hard for unwanted guests to enter.

It is not only your physical immune system that becomes strengthened; your psychic immune system is greatly enhanced as well. The latter protects you from the negative mental-emotional force fields of others, which are highly contagious. Inhabiting the body protects you not by putting up a shield, but by raising the frequency vibration of your total energy field, so that anything that vibrates at a lower frequency, such as fear, anger, depression, and so on, now exists in what is virtually a different order of reality. It doesn't enter your field of consciousness anymore, or if it does you don't need to offer any resistance to it because it passes right through you. Please don't just accept or reject what I am saying. Put it to the test.

There is a simple but powerful self-healing meditation that you can do whenever you feel the need to boost your immune system. It is particularly effective if used when you feel the first symptoms of an illness, but it also works with illnesses that are already entrenched if you use it at frequent intervals and with an intense focus. It will also counteract any disruption of your energy field by some form of negativity. However, it is not a substitute for the moment-to-moment practice of being in the body; otherwise, its effect will only be temporary. Here it is.

When you are unoccupied for a few minutes, and especially last thing at night before falling asleep and first thing in the morning before getting up, "flood" your body with consciousness. Close your eyes. Lie flat on your back. Choose different parts of your body to focus your attention on briefly at first: hands, feet, arms, legs, abdomen, chest, head, and so on. Feel the life energy inside those parts as intensely as you can. Stay with each part for fifteen seconds or so. Then let your attention run through the body like a wave a few times, from feet to head and back again. This need only take a minute or so. After that, feel the inner body in its totality, as a single field of energy. Hold that feeling for a few minutes. Be intensely present during that time, present in every cell of your body. Don't be concerned if the mind occasionally succeeds in drawing your attention out of the body and you lose yourself in some thought. As soon as you notice that this has happened, just return your attention to the inner body.

LET THE BREATH TAKE YOU INTO THE BODY

At times, when my mind has been very active, it has acquired such momentum that I find it impossible to take my attention away from it and feel the inner body. This happens particularly when I get into a worry or anxiety pattern. Do you have any suggestions?

If at any time you are finding it hard to get in touch with the inner body, it is usually easier to focus on your breathing first. Conscious breathing, which is a powerful meditation in its own right, will gradually put you in touch with the body. Follow the breath with your attention as it moves in and out of your body. Breathe into the body, and feel your abdomen expanding and contracting slightly with each inhalation and exhalation. If you find it easy to visualize, close your eyes and see yourself surrounded by light or immersed in a luminous substance — a sea of consciousness. Then breathe in that light. Feel that luminous substance filling up your body and making it luminous also. Then gradually focus more on the feeling. You are now in your body. Don't get attached to any visual image.

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CREATIVE USE OF MIND

If you need to use your mind for a specific purpose, use it in conjunction with your inner body. Only if you are able to be conscious without thought can you use your mind creatively, and the easiest way to enter that state is through your body. Whenever an answer, a solution, or a creative idea is needed, stop thinking for a moment by focusing attention on your inner energy field. Become aware of the stillness. When you resume thinking, it will be fresh and creative. In any thought activity, make it a habit to go back and forth every few minutes or so between thinking and an inner kind of listening, an inner stillness. We could say: don't just think with your head, think with your whole body.

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THE ART OF LISTENING

When listening to another person, don’t just listen with your mind, listen with your whole body. Feel the energy field of your inner body as you listen. That takes attention away from thinking and creates a still space that enables you to truly listen without the mind interfering. You are giving the other person space — space to be. It is the most precious gift you can give. Most people don’t know how to listen because the major part of their attention is taken up by thinking. They pay more attention to that than to what the other person is saying, and none at all to what really matters: the Being of the other person underneath the words and the mind. Of course, you cannot feel someone else’s Being except through your own. This is the beginning of the realization of oneness, which is love. At the deepest level of Being, you are one with all that is.

Most human relationships consist mainly of minds interacting with each other, not of human beings communicating, being in communion. No relationship can thrive in that way, and that is why there is so much conflict in relationships. When the mind is running your life, conflict, strife, and problems are inevitable. Being in touch with your inner body creates a clear space of no-mind within which the relationship can flower.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PORTALS INTO
THE UNMANIFESTED

GOING DEEPLY INTO THE BODY

I can feel the energy inside my body, especially in my arms and legs, but I don't seem to be able to go more deeply, as you suggested earlier.

Make it into a meditation. It needn't take long. Ten to fifteen minutes of clock time should be sufficient. Make sure first that there are no external distractions such as telephones or people who are likely to interrupt you. Sit on a chair, but don't lean back. Keep the spine erect. Doing so will help you to stay alert. Alternatively, choose your own favorite position for meditation.

Make sure the body is relaxed. Close your eyes. Take a few deep breaths. Feel yourself breathing into the lower abdomen, as it were. Observe how it expands and contracts slightly with each in and out breath. Then become aware of the entire inner energy field of the body. Don't think about it — *feel* it. By doing this, you reclaim consciousness from the mind. If you find it helpful, use the "light" visualization I described earlier.

When you can feel the inner body clearly as a single field of energy, let go, if possible, of any visual image and focus exclusively on the feeling. If you can, also drop any mental image you may still have of the physical body. All that is left then is an all-encompassing sense of presence or "beingness," and the inner body is felt to be without a boundary. Then take your attention even more deeply into that feeling. Become one with it. Merge with the energy field, so that there is no longer a perceived duality of the observer and the observed, of you and your body. The distinction between inner and outer also dissolves now, so there is no inner body anymore. By going deeply into the body, you have transcended the body.

Stay in this realm of pure Being for as long as feels comfortable; then become aware again of the physical body, your breathing and physical senses, and open your eyes. Look at your surroundings for a few minutes in a meditative way — that is, without labeling them mentally — and continue to feel the inner body as you do so.

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Having access to that formless realm is truly liberating. It frees you from bondage to form and identification with form. It is life in its undifferentiated state prior to its fragmentation into multiplicity. We may call it the Unmanifested, the invisible Source of all things, the Being within all beings. It is a realm of deep stillness and peace, but also of joy and intense aliveness. Whenever you are present, you become "transparent" to some extent to the light, the pure consciousness that emanates from this Source. You also realize that the light is not separate from who you are but constitutes your very essence.

THE SOURCE OF CHI

Is the Unmanifested what in the East is called chi, a kind of universal life energy?

No, it isn't. The Unmanifested is the *source* of chi. Chi is the inner energy field of your body. It is the bridge between the outer you and the Source. It lies halfway between the manifested, the world of form, and the Unmanifested. Chi can be likened to a river or an energy stream. If you take the focus of your consciousness deeply into the inner body, you are tracing the course of this river back to its Source. Chi is movement; the Unmanifested is stillness. When you reach a point of absolute stillness, which is nevertheless vibrant with life, you have gone beyond the inner body and beyond chi to the Source itself: the Unmanifested. Chi is the link between the Unmanifested and the physical universe.

So if you take your attention deeply into the inner body, you may reach this point, this singularity, where the world dissolves into the Unmanifested and the Unmanifested takes on form as the energy stream of chi, which then becomes the world. This is the point of birth and death. When your consciousness is directed outward, mind and world arise. When it is directed inward, it realizes its own Source and returns home into the Unmanifested. Then, when your consciousness comes back to the manifested world, you reassume the form identity that you temporarily relinquished. You have a name, a past, a life situation, a future. But in one essential respect, you are not the same person you were before: You will have glimpsed a reality within yourself that is not "of this world," although it isn't separate from it, just as it isn’t separate from you.

Now let your spiritual practice be this: As you go about your life, don’t give 100 percent of your attention to the external world and to your mind. Keep some within. I have spoken about this already. Feel the inner body even when engaged in everyday activities, especially when engaged in relationships or when you are relating with nature. Feel the stillness deep inside it. Keep the portal open. It is quite possible to be conscious of the Unmanifested throughout your life. You feel it as a deep sense of peace somewhere in the background, a stillness that never leaves you, no matter what happens out here. You become a bridge between the Unmanifested and the manifested, between God and the world. This is the state of connectedness with the Source that we call enlightenment.

Don’t get the impression that the Unmanifested is separate from the manifested. How could it be? It is the life within every form, the inner essence of all that exists. It pervades this world. Let me explain.

DREAMLESS SLEEP

You take a journey into the Unmanifested every night when you enter the phase of deep dreamless sleep. You merge with the Source. You draw from it the vital energy that sustains you for a while when you return to the manifested, the world of separate forms. This energy is much more vital than food: “Man does not live by bread alone.” But in dreamless sleep, you don’t go into it consciously. Although the bodily functions are still operating, “you” no longer exist in that state. Can you imagine what it would be like to go into dreamless sleep with full consciousness? It is impossible to imagine it, because that state has no content.

The Unmanifested does not liberate you until you enter it consciously. That’s why Jesus did not say: the truth will make you free, but rather: “You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” This is not a conceptual truth. It is the truth of eternal life beyond form, which is known directly or not at all. But don’t attempt to stay conscious in dreamless sleep. It is highly unlikely that you will succeed. At most, you may remain conscious during the dream phase, but not beyond that. This is called lucid dreaming, which may be interesting and fascinating, but it is not liberating.

So use your inner body as a portal through which you enter the Unmanifested, and keep that portal open so that you stay connected with the Source at all times. It makes no difference, as far as the inner body is concerned, whether your outer physical body is old or young, frail or strong. The inner body is timeless. If you are not yet able to feel the inner body, use one of the other portals, although ultimately they are all one. Some I have spoken about at length already, but I'll mention them again briefly here.

OTHER PORTALS

The Now can be seen as the main portal. It is an essential aspect of every other portal, including the inner body. You cannot be *in your body* without being intensely present in the Now.

Time and the manifested are as inextricably linked as are the timeless Now and the Unmanifested. When you dissolve psychological time through intense present-moment awareness, you become conscious of the Unmanifested both directly and indirectly. Directly, you feel it as the radiance and power of your conscious presence — no content, just presence. Indirectly, you are aware of the Unmanifested in and through the sensory realm. In other words, you feel the God-essence in every creature, every flower, every stone, and you realize: "All that is, is holy." This is why Jesus, speaking entirely from his essence or Christ identity, says in the Gospel of Thomas: "Split a piece of wood; I am there. Lift up a stone, and you will find me there."

Another portal into the Unmanifested is created through the cessation of thinking. This can start with a very simple thing, such as taking one conscious breath or looking, in a state of intense alertness, at a flower, so that there is no mental commentary running at the same time. There are many ways to create a gap in the incessant stream of thought. This is what meditation is all about. Thought is part of the realm of the manifested. Continuous mind activity keeps you imprisoned in the world of form and becomes an opaque screen that prevents you from becoming conscious of the Unmanifested, conscious of the formless and timeless God-essence in yourself and in all things and all creatures. When you are intensely *present*, you don't need to be concerned about the cessation of thinking, of course, because the mind then stops automatically. That's why I said the Now is an essential aspect of every other portal.

Surrender — the letting go of mental-emotional resistance to what *is* — also becomes a portal into the Unmanifested. The reason for this is simple: inner resistance cuts you off from other people, from yourself, from the world around you. It strengthens the feeling of separateness on which the ego depends for its survival. The stronger the feeling of separateness, the more you are bound to the manifested, to the world of separate forms. The more you are bound to the world of form, the harder and more impenetrable your form identity becomes. The portal is closed, and you are cut off from the inner dimension, the dimension of depth. In the state of surrender, your form identity softens and becomes somewhat “transparent,” as it were, so the Unmanifested can shine through you.

It’s up to you to open a portal in your life that gives you conscious access to the Unmanifested. Get in touch with the energy field of the inner body, be intensely present, disidentify from the mind, surrender to what *is*; these are all portals you can use — but you only need to use one.

Surely love must also be one of those portals?

No, it isn’t. As soon as one of the portals is open, love is present in you as the “feeling-realization” of oneness. Love isn’t a portal; it’s what comes *through* the portal into this world. As long as you are completely trapped in your form identity, there can be no love. Your task is not to search for love but to find a portal through which love can enter.

SILENCE

Are there any other portals apart from those you just mentioned?

Yes, there are. The Unmanifested is not separate from the manifested. It pervades this world, but it is so well disguised that almost everybody misses it completely. If you know where to look, you’ll find it everywhere. A portal opens up every moment.

Do you hear that dog barking in the distance? Or that car passing by? Listen carefully. Can you feel the presence of the Unmanifested in that? You can’t? Look for it in the silence out of which the sounds come and into which they return. Pay more attention to the silence than to the sounds. Paying attention to outer silence creates inner silence: the mind becomes still. A portal is opening up.

Every sound is born out of silence, dies back into silence, and during its life span is surrounded by silence. Silence enables the sound to be. It is an intrinsic but unmanifested part of every sound, every musical note, every song, every word. The Unmanifested is present in this world as silence. This is why it has been said that nothing in this world is so like God as silence. All you have to do is pay attention to it. Even during a conversation, become conscious of the gaps between words, the brief silent intervals between sentences. As you do that, the dimension of stillness grows within you. You cannot pay attention to silence without simultaneously becoming still within. Silence without, stillness within. You have entered the Unmanifested.

SPACE

Just as no sound can exist without silence, nothing can exist without no-thing, without the empty space that enables it to be. Every physical object or body has come out of nothing, is surrounded by nothing, and will eventually return to nothing. Not only that, but even inside every physical body there is far more "nothing" than "something." Physicists tell us that the solidity of matter is an illusion. Even seemingly solid matter, including your physical body, is nearly 100 percent empty space — so vast are the distances between the atoms compared to their size. What is more, even inside every atom there is mostly empty space. What is left is more like a vibrational frequency than particles of solid matter, more like a musical note. Buddhists have known that for over 2,500 years. "Form is emptiness, emptiness is form," states the *Heart Sutra*, one of the best known ancient Buddhist texts. The essence of all things is emptiness.

The Unmanifested is not only present in this world as silence; it also pervades the entire physical universe as space — from within and without. This is just as easy to miss as silence. Everybody pays attention to the things in space, but who pays attention to space itself?

You seem to be implying that "emptiness" or "nothing" is not just nothing, that there is some mysterious quality to it. What is this nothing?

You cannot ask such a question. Your mind is trying to make nothing into something. The moment you make it into something, you have missed it. Nothing — space — is the appearance of the Unmanifested as an externalized phenomenon in a sense-perceived world. That's about as much as one can say about it, and even that is a kind of paradox. It cannot become an object of knowledge. You can't do a Ph.D. on "nothing." When scientists study space, they usually make it into something and thereby miss its essence entirely. Not surprisingly, the latest theory is that space isn't empty at all, that it is filled with some substance. Once you have a theory, it's not too hard to find evidence to substantiate it, at least until some other theory comes along.

"Nothing" can only become a portal into the Unmanifested for you if you don't try to grasp or understand it.

Isn't that what we are doing here?

Not at all. I am giving you pointers to show you how you can bring the dimension of the Unmanifested into your life. We are not trying to understand it. There is nothing to understand.

Space has no "existence." "To exist" literally means "to stand out." You cannot understand space because it doesn't stand out. Although in itself it has no existence, it enables everything else to exist. Silence has no existence either, nor does the Un-manifested.

So what happens if you withdraw attention from the objects in space and become aware of space itself? What is the essence of this room? The furniture, pictures, and so on are *in* the room, but they are not the room. The floor, walls, and ceiling define the boundary of the room, but they are not the room either. So what is the essence of the room? Space, of course, empty space. There would be no "room" without it. Since space is "nothing," we can say that what is *not* there is more important than what is there. So become aware of the space that is all around you. Don't think about it. Feel it, as it were. Pay attention to "nothing."

As you do that, a shift in consciousness takes place inside you. Here is why. The inner equivalent to objects in space such as furniture, walls, and so on are your mind objects: thoughts, emotions, and the objects of the senses. And the inner equivalent of space is the consciousness that enables your mind objects to be, just as space allows all things to be. So if you withdraw attention from *things* — objects in space — you automatically withdraw attention from your mind objects as well. In other words: You cannot think *and* be aware of space — or of silence, for that matter. By becoming aware of the empty space around you, you simultaneously become aware of the space of no-mind, of pure consciousness: the Unmanifested. This is how the contemplation of space can become a portal for you.

Space and silence are two aspects of the same thing, the same no-thing. They are an externalization of inner space and inner silence, which is stillness: the infinitely creative womb of all existence. Most humans are completely unconscious of this dimension. There is no inner space, no stillness. They are out of balance. In other words, they know the world, or think they do, but they don't know God. They identify exclusively with their own physical and psychological form, unconscious of essence. And because every form is highly unstable, they live in fear. This fear causes a deep misperception of themselves and of other humans, a distortion in their vision of the world.

If some cosmic convulsion brought about the end of our world, the

Unmanifested would remain totally unaffected by this. *A Course in Miracles* expresses this truth poignantly: “Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God.”

If you remain in conscious connection with the Unmanifested, you value, love, and deeply respect the manifested and every life form in it as an expression of the One Life beyond form. You also know that every form is destined to dissolve again and that ultimately nothing out here matters all that much. You have “overcome the world,” in the words of Jesus, or, as the Buddha put it, you have “crossed over to the other shore.”

THE TRUE NATURE OF SPACE AND TIME

Now consider this: If there were nothing but silence, it wouldn’t exist for you; you wouldn’t know what it is. Only when sound appears does silence come into being. Similarly, if there were only space without any objects in space, it wouldn’t exist for you. Imagine yourself as a point of consciousness floating in the vastness of space — no stars, no galaxies, just emptiness. Suddenly, space wouldn’t be vast anymore; it would not be there at all. There would be no speed, no movement from here to there. At least two points of reference are needed for distance and space to come into being. Space comes into being the moment the One becomes two, and as “two” become the “ten thousand things,” as Lao Tse calls the manifested world, space becomes more and more vast. So world and space arise simultaneously.

Nothing could *be* without space, yet space is nothing. Before the universe came into being, before the “big bang,” if you like, there wasn’t a vast empty space waiting to be filled. There was no space, as there was no thing. There was only the Unmanifested — the One. When the One became “the ten thousand things,” suddenly space seemed to be there and enabled the many to be. Where did it come from? Was it created by God to accommodate the universe? Of course not. Space is no-thing, so it was never created.

Go out on a clear night and look up at the sky. The thousands of stars you can see with the naked eye are no more than an infinitesimal fraction of what is there. Over 100 billion galaxies can already be detected with the most powerful telescopes, each galaxy an “island universe” with billions of stars. Yet what is even more awe-inspiring is the infinity of space itself, the depth and stillness that allows all of that magnificence to be. Nothing could be more awe-inspiring and majestic than the inconceivable vastness and stillness of space, and yet what is it? Emptiness, vast emptiness.

What appears to us as space in our universe perceived through the mind and the senses is the Unmanifested itself, externalized. It is the "body" of God. And the greatest miracle is this: That stillness and vastness that enables the universe to *be* is not just out there in space — it is also within you. When you are utterly and totally *present*, you encounter it as the still inner space of no-mind. Within you, it is vast in depth, not in extension. Spacial extension is ultimately a misperception of infinite depth — an attribute of the one transcendental reality.

According to Einstein, space and time are not separate. I don't really understand it, but I think he is saying that time is the fourth dimension of space. He calls it the "space-time continuum."

Yes. What you perceive externally as space and time are ultimately illusory, but they contain a core of truth. They are the two essential attributes of God, infinity and eternity, perceived as if they had an external existence outside you. Within you, both space and time have an inner equivalent that reveals their true nature, as well as your own. Whereas space is the still, infinitely deep realm of no-mind, the inner equivalent of time is presence, awareness of the eternal Now. Remember that there is no distinction between them. When space and time are realized within as the Unmanifested — no-mind and presence — external space and time continue to exist for you, but they become much less important. The world, too, continues to exist for you, but it will not bind you anymore.

Hence, the ultimate purpose of the world lies not within the world but in transcendence of the world. Just as you would not be conscious of space if there were no objects in space, the world is needed for the Unmanifested to be realized. You may have heard the Buddhist saying: "If there were no illusion, there would be no enlightenment." It is through the world and ultimately through *you* that the Unmanifested knows itself. You are here to enable the divine purpose of the universe to unfold. *That is how important you are!*

CONSCIOUS DEATH

Apart from dreamless sleep, which I mentioned already, there is one other involuntary portal. It opens up briefly at the time of physical death. Even if you have missed all the other opportunities for spiritual realization during your lifetime, one last portal will open up for you immediately after the body has died.

There are countless accounts by people who had a visual impression of this portal as radiant light and then returned from what is commonly known as a near-death experience. Many of them also spoke of a sense of blissful serenity and deep peace. In the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, it is described as "the luminous splendor of the colorless light of Emptiness," which it says is "your own true self." This portal opens up only very briefly, and unless you have already encountered the dimension of the Unmanifested in your lifetime, you will likely miss it. Most people carry too much residual resistance, too much fear, too much attachment to sensory experience, too much identification with the manifested world. So they see the portal, turn away in fear, and then lose consciousness. Most of what happens after that is involuntary and automatic. Eventually, there will be another round of birth and death. Their presence wasn't strong enough yet for conscious immortality.

So going through this portal does not mean annihilation?

As with all the other portals, your radiant true nature remains, but not the personality. In any case, whatever is real or of true value in your personality is your true nature shining through. This is never lost. Nothing that is of value, nothing that is *real*, is ever lost.

Approaching death and death itself, the dissolution of the physical form, is always a great opportunity for spiritual realization. This opportunity is tragically missed most of the time, since we live in a culture that is almost totally ignorant of death, as it is almost totally ignorant of anything that truly matters.

Every portal is a portal of death, the death of the false self. When you go through it, you cease to derive your identity from your psychological, mind-made form. You then realize that death is an illusion, just as your identification with form was an illusion. The end of illusion — that's all that death is. It is painful only as long as you cling to illusion.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ENLIGHTENED RELATIONSHIPS

ENTER THE NOW FROM WHEREVER YOU ARE

I always thought that true enlightenment is not possible except through love in a relationship between a man and a woman. Isn't this what makes us whole again? How can one's life be fulfilled until that happens?

Is that true in your experience? Has this happened to you?

Not yet, but how could it be otherwise? I know that it will *happen.*

In other words, you are waiting for an event *in time* to save you. Is this not the core error that we have been talking about? Salvation is not elsewhere in place or time. It is here and now.

What does that statement mean, "salvation is here and now"? I don't understand it. I don't even know what salvation means.

Most people pursue physical pleasures or various forms of psychological gratification because they believe that those things will make them happy or free them from a feeling of fear or lack. Happiness may be perceived as a heightened sense of aliveness attained through physical pleasure, or a more secure and more complete sense of self attained through some form of psychological gratification. This is the search for salvation from a state of unsatisfactoriness or insufficiency. Invariably, any satisfaction that they obtain is short-lived, so the condition of satisfaction or fulfillment is usually projected once again onto an imaginary point away from the here and now. "When I obtain *this* or am free of *that* — then I will be okay." This is the unconscious mind-set that creates the illusion of salvation in the future.

True salvation is fulfillment, peace, life in all its fullness. It is to be who you are, to feel within you the good that has no opposite, the joy of Being that depends on nothing outside itself. It is felt not as a passing experience but as an abiding presence. In theistic language, it is to "know God" — not as something outside you but as your own innermost essence. True salvation is to know yourself as an inseparable part of the timeless and formless One Life from which all that exists derives its being.

True salvation is a state of freedom — from fear, from suffering, from a perceived state of lack and insufficiency and therefore from all wanting, needing, grasping, and clinging. It is freedom from compulsive thinking, from negativity, and above all from past and future as a psychological need. Your mind is telling you that you cannot get there from here. Something needs to happen, or you need to become this or that before you can be free and fulfilled. It is saying, in fact, that you need time — that you need to find, sort out, do, achieve, acquire, become, or understand something before you can be free or complete. You see time as the means to salvation, whereas in truth it is the greatest obstacle to salvation. You think that you can't get there from where and who you are at this moment because you are not yet complete or good enough, but the truth is that here and now is the only point from where you *can* get there. You "get" there by realizing that you *are* there already. You find God the moment you realize that you don't need to seek God. So there is no *only* way to salvation: Any condition can be used, but no particular condition is needed. However, there is only one point of access: the Now. There can be no salvation away from this moment. You are lonely and without a partner? Enter the Now from there. You are in a relationship? Enter the Now from there.

There is nothing you can ever do or attain that will get you closer to salvation than it is at this moment. This may be hard to grasp for a mind accustomed to thinking that everything worthwhile is in the future. Nor can anything that you ever did or that was done to you in the past prevent you from saying yes to what *is* and taking your attention deeply into the Now. You cannot do this in the future. You do it now or not at all.

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LOVE/HATE RELATIONSHIPS

Unless and until you access the consciousness frequency of presence, all relationships, and particularly intimate relationships, are deeply flawed and ultimately dysfunctional. They may seem perfect for a while, such as when you are "in love," but invariably that apparent perfection gets disrupted as arguments, conflicts, dissatisfaction, and emotional or even physical violence occur with increasing frequency. It seems that most “love relationships” become love/hate relationships before long. Love can then turn into savage attack, feelings of hostility, or complete withdrawal of affection at the flick of a switch. This is considered normal. The relationship then oscillates for a while, a few months or a few years, between the polarities of “love” and hate, and it gives you as much pleasure as it gives you pain. It is not uncommon for couples to become addicted to those cycles. Their drama makes them feel alive. When a balance between the positive/negative polarities is lost and the negative, destructive cycles occur with increasing frequency and intensity, which tends to happen sooner or later, then it will not be long before the relationship finally collapses.

It may appear that if you could only eliminate the negative or destructive cycles, then all would be well and the relationship would flower beautifully — but alas, this is not possible. The polarities are mutually interdependent. You cannot have one without the other. The positive already contains within itself the as yet unmanifested negative. Both are in fact different aspects of the same dysfunction. I am speaking here of what are commonly called romantic relationships — not of true love, which has no opposite because it arises from beyond the mind. Love as a continuous state is as yet very rare — as rare as conscious human beings. Brief and elusive glimpses of love, however, are possible whenever there is a gap in the stream of mind.

The negative side of a relationship is, of course, more easily recognizable as dysfunctional than the positive one. And it is also easier to recognize the source of negativity in your partner than to see it in yourself. It can manifest in many forms: possessiveness, jealousy, control, withdrawal and unspoken resentment, the need to be right, insensitivity and self-absorption, emotional demands and manipulation, the urge to argue, criticize, judge, blame, or attack, anger, unconscious revenge for past pain inflicted by a parent, and rage and physical violence.

On the positive side, you are “in love” with your partner. This is at first a deeply satisfying state. You feel intensely alive. Your existence has suddenly become meaningful because someone needs you, wants you, and makes you feel special, and you do the same for him or her. When you are together, you feel whole. The feeling can become so intense that the rest of the world fades into insignificance.

However, you may also have noticed that there is a neediness and a clinging quality to that intensity. You become addicted to the other person. He or she acts on you like a drug. You are on a high when the drug is available, but even the possibility or the thought that he or she might no longer be there for you can lead to jealousy, possessiveness, attempts at manipulation through emotional blackmail, blaming and accusing — fear of loss. If the other person does leave you, this can give rise to the most intense hostility or the most profound grief and despair. In an instant, loving tenderness can turn into a savage attack or dreadful grief. Where is the love now? Can love change into its opposite in an instant? Was it love in the first place, or just an addictive grasping and clinging?

ADDICTION AND THE SEARCH FOR WHOLENESS

Why should we become addicted to another person?

The reason why the romantic love relationship is such an intense and universally sought-after experience is that it seems to offer liberation from a deep-seated state of fear, need, lack, and incompleteness that is part of the human condition in its unredeemed and unenlightened state. There is a physical as well as a psychological dimension to this state.

On the physical level, you are obviously not whole, nor will you ever be: You are either a man or a woman, which is to say, one-half of the whole. On this level, the longing for wholeness — the return to oneness — manifests as male-female attraction, man's need for a woman, woman's need for a man. It is an almost irresistible urge for union with the opposite energy polarity. The root of this physical urge is a spiritual one: the longing for an end to duality, a return to the state of wholeness. Sexual union is the closest you can get to this state on the physical level. This is why it is the most deeply satisfying experience the physical realm can offer. But sexual union is no more than a fleeting glimpse of wholeness, an instant of bliss. As long as it is unconsciously sought as a means of salvation, you are seeking the end of duality on the level of form, where it cannot be found. You are given a tantalizing glimpse of heaven, but you are not allowed to dwell there, and find yourself again in a separate body.

On the psychological level, the sense of lack and incompleteness is, if anything, even greater than on the physical level. As long as you are identified with the mind, you have an externally derived sense of self. That is to say, you get your sense of who you are from things that ultimately have nothing to do with who you are: your social role, possessions, external appearance, successes and failures, belief systems, and so on. This false, mind-made self, the ego, feels vulnerable, insecure, and is always seeking new things to identify with to give it a feeling that it exists. But nothing is ever enough to give it lasting fulfillment. Its fear remains; its sense of lack and neediness remains.

But then that special relationship comes along. It seems to be the answer to all the ego's problems and to meet all its needs. At least this is how it appears at first. All the other things that you derived your sense of self from before now become relatively insignificant. You now have a single focal point that replaces them all, that gives meaning to your life, and through which you define your identity: the person you are "in love" with. You are no longer a disconnected fragment in an uncaring universe, or so it seems. Your world now has a center: the loved one. The fact that the center is outside you and that, therefore, you still have an externally derived sense of self does not seem to matter at first. What matters is that the underlying feelings of incompleteness, of fear, lack, and unfulfillment so characteristic of the egoic state are no longer there — or are they? Have they dissolved, or do they continue to exist underneath the happy surface reality?

If in your relationships you experience both "love" and the opposite of love — attack, emotional violence, and so on — then it is likely that you are confusing ego attachment and addictive clinging with love. You cannot love your partner one moment and attack him or her the next. True love has no opposite. If your "love" has an opposite, then it is not love but a strong ego-need for a more complete and deeper sense of self, a need that the other person temporarily meets. It is the ego's substitute for salvation, and for a short time it almost does feel like salvation.

But there comes a point when your partner behaves in ways that fail to meet your needs, or rather those of your ego. The feelings of fear, pain, and lack that are an intrinsic part of egoic consciousness but had been covered up by the "love relationship" now resurface. Just as with every other addiction, you are on a high when the drug is available, but invariably there comes a time when the drug no longer works for you. When those painful feelings reappear, you feel them even more strongly than before, and what is more, you now perceive your partner as the *cause* of those feelings. This means that you project them outward and attack the other with all the savage violence that is part of your pain. This attack may awaken the partner's own pain, and he or she may counter your attack. At this point, the ego is still unconsciously hoping that its attack or its attempts at manipulation will be sufficient punishment to induce your partner to change their behavior, so that it can use them again as a cover-up for your pain.

Every addiction arises from an unconscious refusal to face and move through your own pain. Every addiction starts with pain and ends with pain.

Whatever the substance you are addicted to — alcohol, food, legal or illegal drugs, or a person — you are using something or somebody to cover up your pain. That is why, after the initial euphoria has passed, there is so much unhappiness, so much pain in intimate relationships. They do not cause pain and unhappiness. They *bring out* the pain and unhappiness that is already in you. Every addiction does that. Every addiction reaches a point where it does not work for you anymore, and then you feel the pain more intensely than ever.

This is one reason why most people are always trying to escape from the present moment and are seeking some kind of salvation in the future. The first thing that they might encounter if they focused their attention on the Now is their own pain, and this is what they fear. If they only knew how easy it is to access in the Now the power of presence that dissolves the past and its pain, the reality that dissolves the illusion. If they only knew how close they are to their own reality, how close to God.

Avoidance of relationships in an attempt to avoid pain is not the answer either. The pain is there anyway. Three failed relationships in as many years are more likely to force you into awakening than three years on a desert island or shut away in your room. But if you could bring intense presence into your aloneness, that would work for you too.

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FROM ADDICTIVE TO ENLIGHTENED RELATIONSHIPS

Can we change an addictive relationship into a true one?

Yes. Being present and intensifying your presence by taking your attention ever more deeply into the Now: Whether you are living alone or with a partner, this remains the key. For love to flourish, the light of your presence needs to be strong enough so that you no longer get taken over by the thinker or the pain-body and mistake them for who you are. To know yourself as the Being underneath the thinker, the stillness underneath the mental noise, the love and joy underneath the pain, is freedom, salvation, enlightenment. To disidentify from the pain-body is to bring presence into the pain and thus transmute it. To disidentify from thinking is to be the silent watcher of your thoughts and behavior, especially the repetitive patterns of your mind and the roles played by the ego.

If you stop investing it with “selfness,” the mind loses its compulsive quality, which basically is the compulsion to judge, and so to resist what *is*, which creates conflict, drama, and new pain. In fact, the moment that judgment stops through acceptance of what *is*, you are free of the mind. You have made room for love, for joy, for peace. First you stop judging yourself; then you stop judging your partner. The greatest catalyst for change in a relationship is complete acceptance of your partner as he or she is, without needing to judge or change them in any way. That immediately takes you beyond ego. All mind games and all addictive clinging are then over. There are no victims and no perpetrators anymore, no accuser and accused. This is also the end of all codependency, of being drawn into somebody else’s unconscious pattern and thereby enabling it to continue. You will then either separate — in love — or move ever more deeply into the Now together — into Being. Can it be that simple? Yes, it is that simple.

Love is a state of Being. Your love is not outside; it is deep within you. You can never lose it, and it cannot leave you. It is not dependent on some other body, some external form. In the stillness of your presence, you can feel your own formless and timeless reality as the unmanifested life that animates your physical form. You can then feel the same life deep within every other human and every other creature. You look beyond the veil of form and separation. This is the realization of oneness. This is love.

What is God? The eternal One Life underneath all the forms of life. What is love? To feel the presence of that One Life deep within yourself and within all creatures. To be it. Therefore, all love is the love of God.

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Love is not selective, just as the light of the sun is not selective. It does not make one person special. It is not exclusive. Exclusivity is not the love of God but the “love” of ego. However, the intensity with which true love is felt can vary. There may be one person who reflects your love back to you more clearly and more intensely than others, and if that person feels the same toward you, it can be said that you are in a love relationship with him or her. The bond that connects you with that person is the same bond that connects you with the person sitting next to you on a bus, or with a bird, a tree, a flower. Only the degree of intensity with which it is felt differs.

Even in an otherwise addictive relationship, there may be moments when something more real shines through, something beyond your mutual addictive needs. These are moments when both you and your partner's mind briefly subside and the pain-body is temporarily in a dormant state. This may sometimes happen during physical intimacy, or when you are both witnessing the miracle of childbirth, or in the presence of death, or when one of you is seriously ill — anything that renders the mind powerless. When this happens, your Being, which is usually buried underneath the mind, becomes revealed, and it is this that makes true communication possible.

True communication is communion — the realization of oneness, which is love. Usually, this is quickly lost again, unless you are able to stay present enough to keep out the mind and its old patterns. As soon as the mind and mind identification return, you are no longer yourself but a mental image of yourself, and you start playing games and roles again to get your ego needs met. You are a human mind again, pretending to be a human being, interacting with another mind, playing a drama called "love."

Although brief glimpses are possible, love cannot flourish unless you are permanently free of mind identification and your presence is intense enough to have dissolved the pain-body — or you can at least remain present as the watcher. The pain-body cannot then take you over and so become destructive of love.

RELATIONSHIPS AS SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

As the egoic mode of consciousness and all the social, political, and economic structures that it created enter the final stage of collapse, the relationships between men and women reflect the deep state of crisis in which humanity now finds itself. As humans have become increasingly identified with their mind, most relationships are not rooted in Being and so turn into a source of pain and become dominated by problems and conflict.

Millions are now living alone or as single parents, unable to establish an intimate relationship or unwilling to repeat the insane drama of past relationships. Others go from one relationship to another, from one pleasure-and-pain cycle to another, in search of the elusive goal of fulfillment through union with the opposite energy polarity. Still others compromise and continue to be together in a dysfunctional relationship in which negativity prevails, for the sake of the children or security, through force of habit, fear of being alone, or some other mutually "beneficial" arrangement, or even through the unconscious addiction to the excitement of emotional drama and pain.

However, every crisis represents not only danger but also opportunity. If relationships energize and magnify egoic mind patterns and activate the pain-body, as they do at this time, why not accept this fact rather than try to escape from it? Why not cooperate with it instead of avoiding relationships or continuing to pursue the phantom of an ideal partner as an answer to your problems or a means of feeling fulfilled? The opportunity that is concealed within every crisis does not manifest until all the facts of any given situation are acknowledged and fully accepted. As long as you deny them, as long as you try to escape from them or wish that things were different, the window of opportunity does not open up, and you remain trapped inside that situation, which will remain the same or deteriorate further.

With the acknowledgment and acceptance of the facts also comes a degree of freedom from them. For example, when you *know* there is disharmony and you hold that "knowing," through your knowing a new factor has come in, and the disharmony cannot remain unchanged. When you *know* you are not at peace, your knowing creates a still space that surrounds your nonpeace in a loving and tender embrace and then transmutes your nonpeace into peace. As far as inner transformation is concerned, there is nothing you can *do* about it. You cannot transform yourself, and you certainly cannot transform your partner or anybody else. All you *can* do is create a space for transformation to happen, for grace and love to enter.

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So whenever your relationship is not working, whenever it brings out the "madness" in you and in your partner, be glad. What was unconscious is being brought up to the light. It is an opportunity for salvation. Every moment, hold the knowing of that moment, particularly of your inner state. If there is anger, *know* that there is anger. If there is jealousy, defensiveness, the urge to argue, the need to be right, an inner child demanding love and attention, or emotional pain of any kind — whatever it is, *know* the reality of that moment and hold the knowing. The relationship then becomes your *sadhana*, your spiritual practice. If you observe unconscious behavior in your partner, hold it in the loving embrace of your knowing so that you won't react. Unconsciousness and knowing cannot coexist for long — even if the knowing is only in the other person and not in the one who is acting out the unconsciousness. The energy form that lies behind hostility and attack finds the presence of love absolutely intolerable. If you react at all to your partner's unconsciousness, you become unconscious yourself. But if you then remember to *know* your reaction, nothing is lost.

Humanity is under great pressure to evolve because it is our only chance of survival as a race. This will affect every aspect of your life and close relationships in particular. Never before have relationships been as problematic and conflict ridden as they are now. As you may have noticed, they are not here to make you happy or fulfilled. If you continue to pursue the goal of salvation through a relationship, you will be disillusioned again and again. But if you accept that the relationship is here to make you *conscious* instead of happy, then the relationship *will* offer you salvation, and you will be aligning yourself with the higher consciousness that wants to be born into this world. For those who hold on to the old patterns, there will be increasing pain, violence, confusion, and madness.

I suppose that it takes two to make a relationship into a spiritual practice, as you suggest. For example, my partner is still acting out his old patterns of jealousy and control. I have pointed this out many times, but he is unable to see it.

How many people does it take to make your life into a spiritual practice? Never mind if your partner will not cooperate. Sanity — consciousness — can only come into this world through you. You do not need to wait for the world to become sane, or for somebody else to become conscious, before you can be enlightened. You may wait forever. Do not accuse each other of being unconscious. The moment you start to argue, you have identified with a mental position and are now defending not only that position but also your sense of self. The ego is in charge. You have become unconscious. At times, it may be appropriate to point out certain aspects of your partner's behavior. If you are very alert, very present, you can do so without ego involvement — without blaming, accusing, or making the other wrong.

When your partner behaves unconsciously, relinquish all judgment. Judgment is either to confuse someone's unconscious behavior with who they are or to project your own unconsciousness onto another person and mistake *that* for who they are. To relinquish judgment does not mean that you do not recognize dysfunction and unconsciousness when you see it. It means "being the knowing" rather than "being the reaction" and the judge. You will then either be totally free of reaction or you may react and still be the knowing, the space in which the reaction is watched and allowed to be. Instead of fighting the darkness, you bring in the light. Instead of reacting to delusion, you see the delusion yet at the same time look through it. Being the knowing creates a clear space of loving presence that allows all things and all people to be as they are. No greater catalyst for transformation exists. If you practice this, your partner cannot stay with you *and* remain unconscious.

If you both agree that the relationship will be your spiritual practice, so much the better. You can then express your thoughts and feelings to each other as soon as they occur, or as soon as a reaction comes up, so that you do not create a time gap in which an unexpressed or unacknowledged emotion or grievance can fester and grow. Learn to give expression to what you feel without blaming. Learn to listen to your partner in an open, nondefensive way. Give your partner space for expressing himself or herself. Be present. Accusing, defending, attacking — all those patterns that are designed to strengthen or protect the ego or to get its needs met will then become redundant. Giving space to others — and to yourself — is vital. Love cannot flourish without it. When you have removed the two factors that are destructive to relationships — when the pain-body has been transmuted and you are no longer identified with mind and mental positions — and if your partner has done the same, you will experience the bliss of the flowering of relationship. Instead of mirroring to each other your pain and your unconsciousness, instead of satisfying your mutual addictive ego needs, you will reflect back to each other the love that you feel deep within, the love that comes with the realization of your oneness with all that is. This is the love that has no opposite.

If your partner is still identified with the mind and the pain-body while you are already free, this will represent a major challenge — not to you but to your partner. It is not easy to live with an enlightened person, or rather it is *so* easy that the ego finds it extremely threatening. Remember that the ego needs problems, conflict, and "enemies" to strengthen the sense of separateness on which its identity depends. The unenlightened partner's mind will be deeply frustrated because its fixed positions are not resisted, which means they will become shaky and weak, and there is even the "danger" that they may collapse altogether, resulting in loss of self. The pain-body is demanding feedback and not getting it. The need for argument, drama, and conflict is not being met. But beware: Some people who are unresponsive, withdrawn, insensitive, or cut off from their feelings may think and try to convince others that they are enlightened, or at least that there is "nothing wrong" with them and everything wrong with their partner. Men tend to do that more than women. They may see their female partners as irrational or emotional. But if you can feel your emotions, you are not far from the radiant inner body just underneath. If you are mainly in your head, the distance is much greater, and you need to bring consciousness into the emotional body before you can reach the inner body.

If there isn't an emanation of love and joy, complete presence and openness toward all beings, then it is not enlightenment. Another indicator is how a person behaves in difficult or challenging situations or when things "go wrong." If your "enlightenment" is egoic self-delusion, then life will soon give you a challenge that will bring out your unconsciousness in whatever form — as fear, anger, defensiveness, judgment, depression, and so on. If you are in a relationship, many of your challenges will come through your partner. For example, a woman may be challenged by an unresponsive male partner who lives almost entirely in his head. She will be challenged by his inability to *hear* her, to give her attention and space to be, which is due to his lack of presence. The absence of love in the relationship, which is usually more keenly felt by a woman than a man, will trigger the woman's pain-body, and through it she will attack her partner — blame, criticize, make wrong, and so on. This in turn now becomes *his* challenge. To defend himself against her pain-body's attack, which he sees as totally unwarranted, he will become even more deeply entrenched in his mental positions as he justifies, defends himself, or counterattacks. Eventually, this may activate his own pain-body. When both partners have thus been taken over, a level of deep unconsciousness has been reached, of emotional violence, savage attack and counterattack. It will not subside until both pain-bodies have replenished themselves and then enter the dormant stage. Until the next time.

This is only one of an endless number of possible scenarios. Many volumes have been written, and many more could be written, about the ways in which unconsciousness is brought out in male-female relationships. But, as I said earlier, once you understand the root of the dysfunction, you do not need to explore its countless manifestations.

Let's briefly look again at the scenario I have just described. Every challenge that it contains is actually a disguised opportunity for salvation. At every stage of the unfolding dysfunctional process, freedom from unconsciousness is possible. For example, the woman's hostility could become a signal for the man to come out of his mind-identified state, awaken into the Now, become present — instead of becoming even more identified with his mind, even more unconscious. Instead of "being" the pain-body, the woman could be the knowing that watches the emotional pain in herself, thus accessing the power of the Now and initiating the transmutation of the pain. This would remove the compulsive and automatic outward projection of it. She could then express her feelings to her partner. There is no guarantee, of course, that he will listen, but it gives him a good chance to become present and certainly breaks the insane cycle of the involuntary acting out of old mind patterns. If the woman misses that opportunity, the man could watch his own mental-emotional reaction to her pain, his own defensiveness, rather than *being* the reaction. He could then watch his own pain-body being triggered and thus bring consciousness into his emotions. In this way, a clear and still space of pure awareness would come into being — the knowing, the silent witness, the watcher. This awareness does not deny the pain and yet is beyond it. It allows the pain to be and yet transmutes it at the same time. It accepts everything and transforms everything. A door would have opened up for her through which she could easily join him in that space.

If you are consistently or at least predominantly present in your relationship, this will be the greatest challenge for your partner. They will not be able to tolerate your presence for very long and stay unconscious. If they are ready, they will walk through the door that you opened for them and join you in that state. If they are not, you will separate like oil and water. The light is too painful for someone who wants to remain in darkness.

WHY WOMEN ARE CLOSER TO ENLIGHTENMENT

Are the obstacles to enlightenment the same for a man as for a woman?

Yes, but the emphasis is different. Generally speaking, it is easier for a woman to feel and be in her body, so she is naturally closer to Being and potentially closer to enlightenment than a man. This is why many ancient cultures instinctively chose female figures or analogies to represent or describe the formless and transcendental reality. It was often seen as a womb that gives birth to everything in creation and sustains and nourishes it during its life as form. In the *Tao Te Ching*, one of the most ancient and profound books ever written, the *Tao*, which could be translated as *Being*, is described as "infinite, eternally present, the mother of the universe." Naturally, women are closer to it than men since they virtually "embody" the Unmanifested. What is more, all creatures and all things must eventually return to the Source. "All things vanish into the Tao. It alone endures." Since the Source is seen as female, this is represented as the light and dark sides of the archetypal feminine in psychology and mythology. The Goddess or Divine Mother has two aspects: She gives life, and she takes life.

When the mind took over and humans lost touch with the reality of their divine essence, they started to think of God as a male figure. Society became male-dominated, and the female was made subordinate to the male.

I am not suggesting a return to earlier female representations of the divine. Some people now use the term *Goddess* instead of *God*. They are redressing a balance between male and female that was lost a long time ago, and that is good. But it is still a representation and a concept, perhaps temporarily useful, just as a map or a signpost is temporarily useful, but more a hindrance than a help when you are ready to realize the reality beyond all concepts and images. What does remain true, however, is that the energy frequency of the mind appears to be essentially male. The mind resists, fights for control, uses, manipulates, attacks, tries to grasp and possess, and so on. This is why the traditional God is a patriarchal, controlling authority figure, an often angry man who you should live in fear of, as the Old Testament suggests. This God is a projection of the human mind.

To go beyond the mind and reconnect with the deeper reality of Being, very different qualities are needed: surrender, non-judgment, an openness that allows life to be instead of resisting it, the capacity to hold all things in the loving embrace of your knowing. All these qualities are much more closely related to the female principle. Whereas mind-energy is hard and rigid, Being-energy is soft and yielding and yet infinitely more powerful than mind. The mind runs our civilization, whereas Being is in charge of all life on our planet and beyond. Being is the very Intelligence whose visible manifestation is the physical universe. Although women are potentially closer to it, men can also access it within themselves.

At this time, the vast majority of men as well as women are still in the grip of the mind: identified with the thinker and the pain-body. This, of course, is what prevents enlightenment and the flowering of love. As a general rule, the major obstacle for men tends to be the thinking mind, and the major obstacle for women the pain-body, although in certain individual cases the opposite may be true, and in others the two factors may be equal.

DISSOLVING THE COLLECTIVE FEMALE PAIN-BODY

Why is the pain-body more of an obstacle for women?

The pain-body usually has a collective as well as a personal aspect. The personal aspect is the accumulated residue of emotional pain suffered in one’s own past. The collective one is the pain accumulated in the collective human psyche over thousands of years through disease, torture, war, murder, cruelty, madness, and so on. Everyone’s personal pain-body also partakes of this collective pain-body. There are different strands in the collective pain-body. For example, certain races or countries in which extreme forms of strife and violence occur have a heavier collective pain-body than others. Anyone with a strong pain-body and not enough consciousness to disidentify from it will not only continuously or periodically be forced to relive their emotional pain but may also easily become either the perpetrator or the victim of violence, depending on whether their pain-body is predominantly active or passive. On the other hand, they may also be potentially closer to enlightenment. This potential isn't necessarily realized, of course, but if you are trapped in a nightmare you will probably be more strongly motivated to awaken than someone who is just caught in the ups and downs of an ordinary dream.

Apart from her personal pain-body, every woman has her share in what could be described as the collective female pain-body — unless she is fully conscious. This consists of accumulated pain suffered by women partly through male subjugation of the female, through slavery, exploitation, rape, childbirth, child loss, and so on, over thousands of years. The emotional or physical pain that for many women precedes and coincides with the menstrual flow is the pain-body in its collective aspect that awakens from its dormancy at that time, although it can be triggered at other times too. It restricts the free flow of life energy through the body, of which menstruation is a physical expression. Let's dwell on this for a moment and see how it can become an opportunity for enlightenment.

Often a woman is "taken over" by the pain-body at that time. It has an extremely powerful energetic charge that can easily pull you into unconscious identification with it. You are then actively possessed by an energy field that occupies your inner space and pretends to be you — but, of course, is not you at all. It speaks through you, acts through you, thinks through you. It will create negative situations in your life so that it can feed on the energy. It wants more pain, in whatever form. I have described this process already. It can be vicious and destructive. It is pure pain, past pain — and it is not you.

The number of women who are now approaching the fully conscious state already exceeds that of men and will be growing even faster in the years to come. Men may catch up with them in the end, but for some considerable time there will be a gap between the consciousness of men and that of women. Women are regaining the function that is their birthright and, therefore, comes to them more naturally than it does to men: to be a bridge between the manifested world and the Unmanifested, between physicality and spirit. Your main task as a woman now is to transmute the pain-body so that it no longer comes between you and your true self, the essence of who you are. Of course, you also have to deal with the other obstacle to enlightenment, which is the thinking mind, but the intense presence you generate when dealing with the pain-body will also free you from identification with the mind.

The first thing to remember is this: As long as you make an identity for yourself out of the pain, you cannot become free of it. As long as part of your sense of self is invested in your emotional pain, you will unconsciously resist or sabotage every attempt that you make to heal that pain. Why? Quite simply because you want to keep yourself intact, and the pain has become an essential part of you. This is an unconscious process, and the only way to overcome it is to make it conscious.

To suddenly see that you are or have been attached to your pain can be quite a shocking realization. The moment you realize this, you have broken the attachment. The pain-body is an energy field, almost like an entity, that has become temporarily lodged in your inner space. It is life energy that has become trapped, energy that is no longer flowing. Of course, the pain-body is there because of certain things that happened in the past. It *is* the living past in you, and if you identify with it, you identify with the past. A victim identity is the belief that the past is more powerful than the present, which is the opposite of the truth. It is the belief that other people and what they did to you are responsible for who you are now, for your emotional pain or your inability to be your true self. The truth is that the only power there is is contained within this moment: It is the power of your presence. Once you know that, you also realize that *you* are responsible for your inner space now — nobody else is — and that the past cannot prevail against the power of the Now.

* * *

So identification prevents you from dealing with the pain-body. Some women who are already conscious enough to have relinquished their victim identity on the personal level are still holding on to a collective victim identity: "what men did to women." They are right — and they are also wrong. They are right inasmuch as the collective female pain-body *is* in large part due to male violence inflicted on women and repression of the female principle throughout the planet over millennia. They are wrong if they derive a sense of self from this fact and thereby keep themselves imprisoned in a collective victim identity. If a woman is still holding on to anger, resentment, or condemnation, she is holding on to her pain-body. This may give her a comforting sense of identity, of solidarity with other women, but it is keeping her in bondage to the past and blocking full access to her essence and true power. If women exclude themselves from men, that fosters a sense of separation and therefore a strengthening of the ego. And the stronger the ego, the more distant you are from your true nature.

So do not use the pain-body to give you an identity. Use it for enlightenment instead. Transmute it into consciousness. One of the best times for this is during menses. I believe that, in the years to come, many women will enter the fully conscious state during that time. Usually, it is a time of unconsciousness for many women, as they are taken over by the collective female pain-body. Once you have reached a certain level of consciousness, however, you can reverse this, so instead of becoming unconscious you become *more* conscious. I have described the basic process already, but let me take you through it again, this time with special reference to the collective female pain-body.

When you know that the menstrual flow is approaching, before you feel the first signs of what is commonly called premenstrual tension, the awakening of the collective female pain-body, become very alert and inhabit your body as fully as possible. When the first sign appears, you need to be alert enough to "catch" it before it takes you over. For example, the first sign may be a sudden, strong irritation or a flash of anger, or it may be a purely physical symptom. Whatever it is, catch it before it can take over your thinking or behavior. This simply means putting the spotlight of your attention on it. If it is an emotion, feel the strong energy charge behind it. Know that it is the pain-body. At the same time, be the knowing; that is to say, be aware of your conscious presence and feel its power. Any emotion that you take your presence into will quickly subside and become transmuted. If it is a purely physical symptom, the attention that you give it will prevent it from turning into an emotion or a thought. Then continue to be alert and wait for the next sign of the pain-body. When it appears, catch it again in the same way as before.

Later, when the pain-body has fully awakened from its dormant state, you may experience considerable turbulence in your inner space for a while, perhaps for several days. Whatever form this takes, stay present. Give it your complete attention. Watch the turbulence inside you. Know it is there. Hold the knowing, and be the knowing. Remember: Do not let the pain-body use your mind and take over your thinking. Watch it. Feel its energy directly, inside your body. As you know, full attention means full acceptance.

Through sustained attention and thus acceptance, there comes transmutation. The pain-body becomes transformed into radiant consciousness, just as a piece of wood, when placed in or near a fire, itself is transformed into fire. Menstruation will then become not only a joyful and fulfilling expression of your womanhood but also a sacred time of transmutation, when you give birth to a new consciousness. Your true nature then shines forth, both in its female aspect as the Goddess and in its transcendental aspect as the divine Being that you are beyond male and female duality.

If your male partner is conscious enough, he can help you with the practice I have just described by holding the frequency of intense presence particularly at this time. If he stays present whenever you fall back into unconscious identification with the pain-body, which can and will happen at first, you will be able to quickly rejoin him in that state. This means that whenever the pain-body temporarily takes over, whether during menses or at other times, your partner will not mistake it for who you are. Even if the pain-body attacks him, as it probably will, he will not react to it as if it were "you," withdraw, or put up some kind of defense. He will hold the space of intense presence. Nothing else is needed for transformation. At other times, you will be able to do the same for him or help him reclaim consciousness from the mind by drawing his attention into the here and now whenever he becomes identified with his thinking.

In this way, a permanent energy field of a pure and high frequency will arise between you. No illusion, no pain, no conflict, nothing that is not *you*, and nothing that is not love can survive in it. This represents the fulfillment of the divine, transpersonal purpose of your relationship. It becomes a vortex of consciousness that will draw in many others.

§

GIVE UP THE RELATIONSHIP WITH YOURSELF

When one is fully conscious, would one still have a need for a relationship? Would a man still feel drawn to a woman? Would a woman still feel incomplete without a man?

Enlightened or not, you are either a man or a woman, so on the level of your form identity you are not complete. You are one-half of the whole. This incompleteness is felt as male-female attraction, the pull toward the opposite energy polarity, no matter how conscious you are. But in that state of inner connectedness, you feel this pull somewhere on the surface or periphery of your life. Anything that happens to you in that state feels somewhat like that. The whole world seems like waves or ripples on the surface of a vast and deep ocean. You are that ocean and, of course, you are also a ripple, but a ripple that has realized its true identity as the ocean, and compared to that vastness and depth, the world of waves and ripples is not all that important.

This does not mean that you don't relate deeply to other people or to your partner. In fact, you can relate deeply *only* if you are conscious of Being.

Coming from Being, you are able to focus beyond the veil of form. In Being, male and female are one. Your form may continue to have certain needs, but Being has none. It is already complete and whole. If those needs are met, that is beautiful, but whether or not they are met makes no difference to your deep inner state. So it is perfectly possible for an enlightened person, if the need for the male or female polarity is not met, to feel a sense of lack or incompleteness on the outer level of his or her being, yet at the same time be totally complete, fulfilled, and at peace within.

In the quest for enlightenment, is being gay a help or a hindrance, or does it not make any difference?

As you approach adulthood, uncertainty about your sexuality followed by the realization that you are "different" from others may force you to disidentify from socially conditioned patterns of thought and behavior. This will automatically raise your level of consciousness above that of the unconscious majority, whose members unquestioningly take on board all inherited patterns. In that respect, being gay can be a help. Being an outsider to some extent, someone who does not "fit in" with others or is rejected by them for whatever reason, makes life difficult, but it also places you at an advantage as far as enlightenment is concerned. It takes you out of unconsciousness almost by force.

On the other hand, if you then develop a sense of identity based on your gayness, you have escaped one trap only to fall into another. You will play roles and games dictated by a mental image you have of yourself as gay. You will become unconscious. You will become unreal. Underneath your ego mask, you will become very unhappy. If this happens to you, being gay will have become a hindrance. But you always get another chance, of course. Acute unhappiness can be a great awakener.

Is it not true that you need to have a good relationship with yourself and love yourself before you can have a fulfilling relationship with another person?

If you cannot be at ease with yourself when you are alone, you will seek a relationship to cover up your unease. You can be sure that the unease will then reappear in some other form within the relationship, and you will probably hold your partner responsible for it.

All you really need to do is accept this moment fully. You are then at ease in the here and now and at ease with yourself.

But do you need to have a relationship with yourself at all? Why can’t you just *be* yourself? When you have a relationship with yourself, you have split yourself into two: “I” and “myself,” subject and object. That mind-created duality is the root cause of all unnecessary complexity, of all problems and conflict in your life. In the state of enlightenment, you *are* yourself — “you” and “yourself” merge into one. You do not judge yourself, you do not feel sorry for yourself, you are not proud of yourself, you do not love yourself, you do not hate yourself, and so on. The split caused by self-reflective consciousness is healed, its curse removed. There is no “self” that you need to protect, defend, or feed anymore. When you are enlightened, there is one relationship that you no longer have: the relationship with yourself. Once you have given that up, all your other relationships will be love relationships.

CHAPTER NINE

BEYOND HAPPINESS
AND UNHAPPINESS
THERE IS PEACE

THE HIGHER GOOD BEYOND GOOD AND BAD

Is there a difference between happiness and inner peace?

Yes. Happiness depends on conditions being perceived as positive; inner peace does not.

Is it not possible to attract only positive conditions into our life? If our attitude and our thinking are always positive, we would manifest only positive events and situations, wouldn't we?

Do you truly know what is positive and what is negative? Do you have the total picture? There have been many people for whom limitation, failure, loss, illness, or pain in whatever form turned out to be their greatest teacher. It taught them to let go of false self-images and superficial ego-dictated goals and desires. It gave them depth, humility, and compassion. It made them more *real*.

Whenever anything negative happens to you, there is a deep lesson concealed within it, although you may not see it at the time. Even a brief illness or an accident can show you what is real and unreal in your life, what ultimately matters and what doesn't.

Seen from a higher perspective, conditions *are* always positive. To be more precise: they are neither positive nor negative. They are as they are. And when you live in complete acceptance of what *is* — which is the only sane way to live — there is no "good" or "bad" in your life anymore. There is only a higher good — which includes the "bad." Seen from the perspective of the mind, however, there is good-bad, like-dislike, love-hate. Hence, in the Book of Genesis, it is said that Adam and Eve were no longer allowed to dwell in "paradise" when they "ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

This sounds to me like denial and self-deception. When something dreadful happens to me or someone close to me — accident, illness, pain of some kind, or death — I can pretend that it isn't bad, but the fact remains that it is *bad, so why deny it?*

You are not pretending anything. You are allowing it to be as it is, that's all. This "allowing to be" takes you beyond the mind with its resistance patterns that create the positive-negative polarities. It is an essential aspect of forgiveness. Forgiveness of the present is even more important than forgiveness of the past. If you forgive every moment — allow it to be as it is — then there will be no accumulation of resentment that needs to be forgiven at some later time.

Remember that we are not talking about happiness here. For example, when a loved one has just died, or you feel your own death approaching, you cannot be happy. It is impossible. But you *can* be at peace. There may be sadness and tears, but provided that you have relinquished resistance, underneath the sadness you will feel a deep serenity, a stillness, a sacred presence. This is the emanation of Being, this is inner peace, the good that has no opposite.

What if it is a situation that I can do something about? How can I allow it to be and change it at the same time?

Do what you have to do. In the meantime, accept what *is*. Since mind and resistance are synonymous, acceptance immediately frees you from mind dominance and thus reconnects you with Being. As a result, the usual ego motivations for "doing" — fear, greed, control, defending or feeding the false sense of self — will cease to operate. An intelligence much greater than the mind is now in charge, and so a different quality of consciousness will flow into your doing.

"Accept whatever comes to you woven in the pattern of your destiny, for what could more aptly fit your needs?" This was written two thousand years ago by Marcus Aurelius, one of those exceedingly rare humans who possessed worldly power as well as wisdom.

It seems that most people need to experience a great deal of suffering before they will relinquish resistance and accept — before they will forgive. As soon as they do, one of the greatest miracles happens: the awakening of Being-consciousness through what appears as evil, the transmutation of suffering into inner peace. The ultimate effect of all the evil and suffering in the world is that it will force humans into realizing who they are beyond name and form. Thus, what we perceive as evil from our limited perspective is actually part of the higher good that has no opposite. This, however, does not become true for you except through forgiveness. Until that happens, evil has not been redeemed and therefore remains evil.

Through forgiveness, which essentially means recognizing the insubstantiality of the past and allowing the present moment to be as it is, the miracle of transformation happens not only within but also without. A silent space of intense presence arises both in you and around you. Whoever or whatever enters that field of consciousness will be affected by it, sometimes visibly and immediately, sometimes at deeper levels with visible changes appearing at a later time. You dissolve discord, heal pain, dispel unconsciousness — without *doing* anything — simply by *being* and holding that frequency of intense presence.

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THE END OF YOUR LIFE DRAMA

In that state of acceptance and inner peace, even though you *may not call it "bad," can anything still come into your life that would be called "bad" from a perspective of ordinary consciousness?*

Most of the so-called bad things that happen in people's lives are due to unconsciousness. They are self-created, or rather ego-created. I sometimes refer to those things as "drama." When you are fully conscious, drama does not come into your life anymore. Let me remind you briefly how the ego operates and how it creates drama.

Ego is the unobserved mind that runs your life when you are not present as the witnessing consciousness, the watcher. The ego perceives itself as a separate fragment in a hostile universe, with no real inner connection to any other being, surrounded by other egos which it either sees as a potential threat or which it will attempt to use for its own ends. The basic ego patterns are designed to combat its own deep-seated fear and sense of lack. They are resistance, control, power, greed, defense, attack. Some of the ego's strategies are extremely clever, yet they never truly solve any of its problems, simply because the ego itself is the problem.

When egos come together, whether in personal relationships or in organizations or institutions, “bad” things happen sooner or later: drama of one kind or another, in the form of conflict, problems, power struggles, emotional or physical violence, and so on. This includes collective evils such as war, genocide, and exploitation — all due to massed unconsciousness. Furthermore, many types of illness are caused by the ego’s continuous resistance, which creates restrictions and blockages in the flow of energy through the body. When you reconnect with Being and are no longer run by your mind, you cease to create those things. You do not create or participate in drama anymore.

Whenever two or more egos come together, drama of one kind or another ensues. But even if you live totally alone, you still create your own drama. When you feel sorry for yourself, that’s drama. When you feel guilty or anxious, that’s drama. When you let the past or future obscure the present, you are creating time, psychological time — the stuff out of which drama is made. Whenever you are not honoring the present moment by allowing it to be, you are creating drama.

Most people are in love with their particular life drama. Their story is their identity. The ego runs their life. They have their whole sense of self invested in it. Even their — usually unsuccessful — search for an answer, a solution, or for healing becomes part of it. What they fear and resist most is the end of their drama. As long as they *are* their mind, what they fear and resist most is their own awakening.

When you live in complete acceptance of what *is*, that is the end of all drama in your life. Nobody can even have an argument with you, no matter how hard he or she tries. You cannot have an argument with a fully conscious person. An argument implies identification with your mind and a mental position, as well as resistance and reaction to the other person’s position. The result is that the polar opposites become mutually energized. These are the mechanics of unconsciousness. You can still make your point clearly and firmly, but there will be no reactive force behind it, no defense or attack. So it won’t turn into drama. When you are fully conscious, you cease to be in conflict. “No one who is at one with himself can even conceive of conflict,” states *A Course in Miracles*. This refers not only to conflict with other people but more fundamentally to conflict within you, which ceases when there is no longer any clash between the demands and expectations of your mind and what *is*.

IMPERMANENCE AND THE CYCLES OF LIFE

However, as long as you are in the physical dimension and linked to the collective human psyche, physical pain — although rare — is still possible. This is not to be confused with suffering, with mental-emotional pain. All suffering is ego-created and is due to resistance. Also, as long as you are in this dimension, you are still subject to its cyclical nature and to the law of impermanence of all things, but you no longer perceive this as "bad" — it just *is*.

Through allowing the "isness" of all things, a deeper dimension underneath the play of opposites reveals itself to you as an abiding presence, an unchanging deep stillness, an uncaused joy beyond good and bad. This is the joy of Being, the peace of God.

On the level of form, there is birth and death, creation and destruction, growth and dissolution, of seemingly separate forms. This is reflected everywhere: in the life cycle of a star or a planet, a physical body, a tree, a flower; in the rise and fall of nations, political systems, civilizations; and in the inevitable cycles of gain and loss in the life of an individual.

There are cycles of success, when things come to you and thrive, and cycles of failure, when they wither or disintegrate and you have to let them go in order to make room for new things to arise, or for transformation to happen. If you cling and resist at that point, it means you are refusing to go with the flow of life, and you will suffer.

It is not true that the up cycle is good and the down cycle bad, except in the mind's judgment. Growth is usually considered positive, but nothing can grow forever. If growth, of whatever kind, were to go on and on, it would eventually become monstrous and destructive. Dissolution is needed for new growth to happen. One cannot exist without the other.

The down cycle is absolutely essential for spiritual realization. You must have failed deeply on some level or experienced some deep loss or pain to be drawn to the spiritual dimension. Or perhaps your very success became empty and meaningless and so turned out to be failure. Failure lies concealed in every success, and success in every failure. In this world, which is to say on the level of form, everybody "fails" sooner or later, of course, and every achievement eventually comes to naught. All forms are impermanent.

You can still be active and enjoy manifesting and creating new forms and circumstances, but you won't be identified with them. You do not need them to give you a sense of self. They are not your life — only your life situation.

Your physical energy is also subject to cycles. It cannot always be at a peak.

There will be times of low as well as high energy. There will be periods when you are highly active and creative, but there may also be times when everything seems stagnant, when it seems that you are not getting anywhere, not achieving anything. A cycle can last for anything from a few hours to a few years. There are large cycles and small cycles within these large ones. Many illnesses are created through fighting against the cycles of low energy, which are vital for regeneration. The compulsion to do, and the tendency to derive your sense of self-worth and identity from external factors such as achievement, is an inevitable illusion as long as you are identified with the mind. This makes it hard or impossible for you to accept the low cycles and allow them to be. Thus, the intelligence of the organism may take over as a self-protective measure and create an illness in order to force you to stop, so that the necessary regeneration can take place.

The cyclical nature of the universe is closely linked with the impermanence of all things and situations. The Buddha made this a central part of his teaching. All conditions are highly unstable and in constant flux, or, as he put it, impermanence is a characteristic of every condition, every situation you will ever encounter in your life. It will change, disappear, or no longer satisfy you. Impermanence is also central to Jesus's teaching: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal. . . ."

As long as a condition is judged as "good" by your mind, whether it be a relationship, a possession, a social role, a place, or your physical body, the mind attaches itself to it and identifies with it. It makes you happy, makes you feel good about yourself, and it may become part of who you are or think you are. But nothing lasts in this dimension where moth and rust consume. Either it ends or it changes, or it may undergo a polarity shift: The same condition that was good yesterday or last year has suddenly or gradually turned into bad. The same condition that made you happy then makes you unhappy. The prosperity of today becomes the empty consumerism of tomorrow. The happy wedding and honeymoon become the unhappy divorce or the unhappy coexistence. Or a condition disappears, so its absence makes you unhappy. When a condition or situation that the mind has attached itself to and identified with changes or disappears, the mind cannot accept it. It will cling to the disappearing condition and resist the change. It is almost as if a limb were being torn off your body.

We sometimes hear of people who have lost all their money or whose reputations have been ruined committing suicide. Those are the extreme cases. Others, whenever a major loss of one kind or another occurs, just become deeply unhappy or make themselves ill. They cannot distinguish between their life and their life situation. I recently read about a famous actress who died in her eighties. As her beauty started to fade and became ravaged by old age, she grew desperately unhappy and became a recluse. She, too, had identified with a condition: her external appearance. First, the condition gave her a happy sense of self, then an unhappy one. If she had been able to connect with the formless and timeless life within, she could have watched and allowed the fading of her external form from a place of serenity and peace. Moreover, her external form would have become increasingly transparent to the light shining through from her ageless true nature, so her beauty would not really have faded but simply become transformed into spiritual beauty. However, nobody told her that this is possible. The most essential kind of knowledge is not yet widely accessible.

§

The Buddha taught that even your happiness is *dukkha* — a Pali word meaning "suffering" or "unsatisfactoriness." It is inseparable from its opposite. This means that your happiness and unhappiness are in fact one. Only the illusion of time separates them.

This is not being negative. It is simply recognizing the nature of things, so that you don't pursue an illusion for the rest of your life. Nor is it saying that you should no longer appreciate pleasant or beautiful things or conditions. But to seek something through them that they cannot give — an identity, a sense of permanency and fulfillment — is a recipe for frustration and suffering. The whole advertising industry and consumer society would collapse if people became enlightened and no longer sought to find their identity through *things*. The more you seek happiness in this way, the more it will elude you. Nothing out there will ever satisfy you except temporarily and superficially, but you may need to experience many disillusionments before you realize that truth. Things and conditions can give you pleasure, but they will also give you pain. Things and conditions can give you pleasure, but they cannot give you *joy*. Nothing can *give* you joy. Joy is uncaused and arises from within as the joy of Being. It is an essential part of the inner state of peace, the state that has been called the peace of God. It is your natural state, not something that you need to work hard for or struggle to attain.

Many people never realize that there can be no "salvation" in anything they do, possess, or attain. Those who do realize it often become world-weary and depressed: If nothing can give you true fulfillment, what is there left to strive for, what is the point in anything? The Old Testament prophet must have arrived at such a realization when he wrote: “I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind.” When you reach this point, you are one step away from despair — and one step away from enlightenment.

A Buddhist monk once told me: “All I have learned in the twenty years that I have been a monk I can sum up in one sentence: All that arises passes away. This I know.” What he meant, of course, was this: I have learned to offer no resistance to what *is*; I have learned to allow the present moment to be and to accept the impermanent nature of all things and conditions. Thus have I found peace.

To offer no resistance to life is to be in a state of grace, ease, and lightness. This state is then no longer dependent upon things being in a certain way, good or bad. It seems almost paradoxical, yet when your inner dependency on form is gone, the general conditions of your life, the outer forms, tend to improve greatly. Things, people, or conditions that you thought you needed for your happiness now come to you with no struggle or effort on your part, and you are free to enjoy and appreciate them — while they last. All those things, of course, will still pass away, cycles will come and go, but with dependency gone there is no fear of loss anymore. Life flows with ease.

The happiness that is derived from some secondary source is never very deep. It is only a pale reflection of the joy of Being, the vibrant peace that you find within as you enter the state of nonresistance. Being takes you beyond the polar opposites of the mind and frees you from dependency on form. Even if everything were to collapse and crumble all around you, you would still feel a deep inner core of peace. You may not be happy, but you will be at peace.

§

USING AND RELINQUISHING NEGATIVITY

All inner resistance is experienced as negativity in one form or another. All negativity *is* resistance. In this context, the two words are almost synonymous. Negativity ranges from irritation or impatience to fierce anger, from a depressed mood or sullen resentment to suicidal despair. Sometimes the resistance triggers the emotional pain-body, in which case even a minor situation may produce intense negativity, such as anger, depression, or deep grief.

The ego believes that through negativity it can manipulate reality and get what it wants. It believes that through it, it can attract a desirable condition or dissolve an undesirable one. *A Course in Miracles* rightly points out that, whenever you are unhappy, there is the unconscious belief that the unhappiness "buys" you what you want. If "you" — the mind — did not believe that unhappiness works, why would you create it? The fact is, of course, that negativity does not work. Instead of attracting a desirable condition, it stops it from arising. Instead of dissolving an undesirable one, it keeps it in place. Its only "useful" function is that it strengthens the ego, and that is why the ego loves it.

Once you have identified with some form of negativity, you do not want to let go, and on a deeply unconscious level, you do not want positive change. It would threaten your identity as a depressed, angry, or hard-done-by person. You will then ignore, deny, or sabotage the positive in your life. This is a common phenomenon. It is also insane.

Negativity is totally unnatural. It is a psychic pollutant, and there is a deep link between the poisoning and destruction of nature and the vast negativity that has accumulated in the collective human psyche. No other life-form on the planet knows negativity, only humans, just as no other life-form violates and poisons the Earth that sustains it. Have you ever seen an unhappy flower or a stressed oak tree? Have you come across a depressed dolphin, a frog that has a problem with self-esteem, a cat that cannot relax, or a bird that carries hatred and resentment? The only animals that may occasionally experience something akin to negativity or show signs of neurotic behavior are those that live in close contact with humans and so link into the human mind and its insanity.

Watch any plant or animal and let it teach you acceptance of what *is*, surrender to the Now. Let it teach you Being. Let it teach you integrity — which means to be one, to be yourself, to be real. Let it teach you how to live and how to die, and how *not* to make living and dying into a problem.

I have lived with several Zen masters — all of them cats. Even ducks have taught me important spiritual lessons. Just watching them is a meditation. How peacefully they float along, at ease with themselves, totally present in the Now, dignified and perfect as only a mindless creature can be. Occasionally, however, two ducks will get into a fight — sometimes for no apparent reason, or because one duck has strayed into another's private space. The fight usually lasts only for a few seconds, and then the ducks separate, swim off in opposite directions, and vigorously flap their wings a few times. They then continue to swim on peacefully as if the fight had never happened. When I observed that for the first time, I suddenly realized that by flapping their wings they were releasing surplus energy, thus preventing it from becoming trapped in their body and turning into negativity. This is natural wisdom, and it is easy for them because they do not have a mind that keeps the past alive unnecessarily and then builds an identity around it.

Couldn't a negative emotion also contain an important message? For example, if I often feel depressed, it may be a signal that there is something wrong with my life, and it may force me to look at my life situation and make some changes. So I need to listen to what the emotion is telling me and not just dismiss it as negative.

Yes, recurring negative emotions do sometimes contain a message, as do illnesses. But any changes that you make, whether they have to do with your work, your relationships, or your surroundings, are ultimately only cosmetic unless they arise out of a change in your level of consciousness. And as far as that is concerned, it can only mean one thing: becoming more present. When you have reached a certain degree of presence, you don't need negativity anymore to tell you what is needed in your life situation. But as long as negativity *is* there, use it. Use it as a kind of signal that reminds you to be more present.

How do we stop negativity from arising, and how do we get rid of it once it is there?

As I said, you stop it from arising by being fully present. But don't become discouraged. There are as yet few people on the planet who can sustain a state of continuous presence, although some are getting close to it. Soon, I believe, there will be many more.

Whenever you notice that some form of negativity has arisen within you, look on it not as a failure, but as a helpful signal that is telling you: "Wake up. Get out of your mind. Be present."

There is a novel by Aldous Huxley called *Island*, written in his later years when he became very interested in spiritual teachings. It tells the story of a man shipwrecked on a remote island cut off from the rest of the world. This island contains a unique civilization. The unusual thing about it is that its inhabitants, unlike those of the rest of the world, are actually sane. The first thing that the man notices are the colorful parrots perched in the trees, and they seem to be constantly croaking the words "Attention. Here and Now. Attention. Here and Now." We later learn that the islanders taught them these words in order to be reminded continuously to stay present.

So whenever you feel negativity arising within you, whether caused by an external factor, a thought, or even nothing in particular that you are aware of, look on it as a voice saying "Attention. Here and Now. Wake up." Even the slightest irritation is significant and needs to be acknowledged and looked at; otherwise, there will be a cumulative buildup of unobserved reactions. As I said before, you may be able to just drop it once you realize that you don't want to have this energy field inside you and that it serves no purpose. But then make sure that you drop it completely. If you cannot drop it, just accept that it is there and take your attention into the feeling, as I pointed out earlier.

As an alternative to dropping a negative reaction, you can make it disappear by imagining yourself becoming transparent to the external cause of the reaction. I recommend that you practice it with little, even trivial, things first. Let's say that you are sitting quietly at home. Suddenly, there is the penetrating sound of a car alarm from across the street. Irritation arises. What is the purpose of the irritation? None whatsoever. Why did you create it? You didn't. The mind did. It was totally automatic, totally unconscious. Why did the mind create it? Because it holds the unconscious belief that its resistance, which you experience as negativity or unhappiness in some form, will somehow dissolve the undesirable condition. This, of course, is a delusion. The resistance that it creates, the irritation or anger in this case, is far more disturbing than the original cause that it is attempting to dissolve.

All this can be transformed into spiritual practice. Feel yourself becoming transparent, as it were, without the solidity of a material body. Now allow the noise, or whatever causes a negative reaction, to pass right through you. It is no longer hitting a solid "wall" inside you. As I said, practice with little things first. The car alarm, the dog barking, the children screaming, the traffic jam. Instead of having a wall of resistance inside you that gets constantly and painfully hit by things that "should not be happening," let everything pass through you.

Somebody says something to you that is rude or designed to hurt. Instead of going into unconscious reaction and negativity, such as attack, defense, or withdrawal, you let it pass right through you. Offer no resistance. It is as if there is nobody there to get hurt anymore. *That* is forgiveness. In this way, you become invulnerable. You can still tell that person that his or her behavior is unacceptable, if that is what you choose to do. But that person no longer has the power to control your inner state. You are then in your power — not in someone else's, nor are you run by your mind. Whether it is a car alarm, a rude person, a flood, an earthquake, or the loss of all your possessions, the resistance mechanism is the same.

I have been practicing meditation, I have been to workshops, I have read many books on spirituality, I try to be in a state of nonresistance — but if you ask me whether I have found true and lasting inner peace, my honest answer would have to be "no." Why haven't I found it? What else can I do?

You are still seeking outside, and you cannot get out of the seeking mode. Maybe the next workshop will have the answer, maybe that new technique. To you I would say: Don't look for peace. Don't look for any other state than the one you are in now; otherwise, you will set up inner conflict and unconscious resistance. Forgive yourself for not being at peace. The moment you *completely* accept your non-peace, your non-peace becomes transmuted into peace. Anything you accept fully will get you there, will take you into peace. This is the miracle of surrender.

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You may have heard the phrase "turn the other cheek," which a great teacher of enlightenment used two thousand years ago. He was attempting to convey symbolically the secret of nonresistance and nonreaction. In this statement, as in all his others, he was concerned only with your inner reality, not with the outer conduct of your life.

Do you know the story of Banzan? Before he became a great Zen master, he spent many years in the pursuit of enlightenment, but it eluded him. Then one day, as he was walking in the marketplace, he overheard a conversation between a butcher and his customer. "Give me the best piece of meat you have," said the customer. And the butcher replied, "Every piece of meat I have is the best. There is no piece of meat here that is not the best." Upon hearing this, Banzan became enlightened.

I can see you are waiting for some explanation. When you accept what *is*, every piece of meat — every moment — is the best. That is enlightenment.

THE NATURE OF COMPASSION

Having gone beyond the mind-made opposites, you become like a deep lake. The outer situation of your life and whatever happens there is the surface of the lake. Sometimes calm, sometimes windy and rough, according to the cycles and seasons. Deep down, however, the lake is always undisturbed. You are the whole lake, not just the surface, and you are in touch with your own depth, which remains absolutely still. You don't resist change by mentally clinging to any situation. Your inner peace does not depend on it. You abide in Being — unchanging, timeless, deathless — and you are no longer dependent for fulfillment or happiness on the outer world of constantly fluctuating forms. You can enjoy them, play with them, create new forms, appreciate the beauty of it all. But there will be no need to attach yourself to any of it.

When you become this detached, does it not mean that you also become remote from other human beings?

On the contrary. As long as you are unaware of Being, the reality of other humans will elude you, because you have not found your own. Your mind will like or dislike their form, which is not just their body but includes their mind as well. True relationship becomes possible only when there is an awareness of Being. Coming from Being, you will perceive another person's body and mind as just a screen, as it were, behind which you can feel their true reality, as you feel yours. So, when confronted with someone else's suffering or unconscious behavior, you stay present and in touch with Being and are thus able to look beyond the form and feel the other person's radiant and pure Being through your own. At the level of Being, all suffering is recognized as an illusion. Suffering is due to identification with form. Miracles of healing sometimes occur through this realization, by awakening Being-consciousness in others — if they are ready.

Is that what compassion is?

Yes. Compassion is the awareness of a deep bond between yourself and all creatures. But there are two sides to compassion, two sides to this bond. On the one hand, since you are still here as a physical body, you share the vulnerability and mortality of your physical form with every other human and with every living being. Next time you say, "I have nothing in common with this person," remember that you have a great deal in common: A few years from now — two years or seventy years, it doesn't make much difference — both of you will have become rotting corpses, then piles of dust, then nothing at all. This is a sobering and humbling realization that leaves little room for pride. Is this a negative thought? No, it is a fact. Why close your eyes to it? In that sense, there is total equality between you and every other creature.

One of the most powerful spiritual practices is to meditate deeply on the mortality of physical forms, including your own. This is called: Die before you die. Go into it deeply. Your physical form is dissolving, is no more. Then a moment comes when all mind-forms or thoughts also die. Yet *you* are still there — the divine presence that you are. Radiant, fully awake. Nothing that was real ever died, only names, forms, and illusions.

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The realization of this deathless dimension, your true nature, is the other side of compassion. On a deep feeling-level, you now recognize not only your own immortality but through your own that of every other creature as well. On the level of form, you share mortality and the precariousness of existence. On the level of Being, you share eternal, radiant life. These are the two aspects of compassion. In compassion, the seemingly opposite feelings of sadness and joy merge into one and become transmuted into a deep inner peace. This is the peace of God. It is one of the most noble feelings that humans are capable of, and it has great healing and transformative power. But true compassion, as I have just described it, is as yet rare. To have deep empathy for the suffering of another being certainly requires a high degree of consciousness but represents only one side of compassion. It is not complete. True compassion goes beyond empathy or sympathy. It does not happen until sadness merges with joy, the joy of Being beyond form, the joy of eternal life.

TOWARD A DIFFERENT ORDER OF REALITY

I don't agree that the body needs to die. I am convinced that we can achieve physical immortality. We believe in death and that's why the body dies.

The body does not die because you believe in death. The body exists, or seems to, because you believe in death. Body and death are part of the same illusion, created by the egoic mode of consciousness, which has no awareness of the Source of life and sees itself as separate and constantly under threat. So it creates the illusion that you are a body, a dense, physical vehicle that is constantly under threat.

To perceive yourself as a vulnerable body that was born and a little later dies — that's the illusion. Body and death: one illusion. You cannot have one without the other. You want to keep one side of the illusion and get rid of the other, but that is impossible. Either you keep all of it or you relinquish all of it.

However, you cannot escape from the body, nor do you have to. The body is an incredible misperception of your true nature. But your true nature is concealed somewhere within that illusion, not outside it, so the body is still the only point of access to it.

If you saw an angel but mistook it for a stone statue, all you would have to do is adjust your vision and look more closely at the "stone statue," not start looking somewhere else. You would then find that there never was a stone statue.

If belief in death creates the body, why does an animal have a body? An animal doesn't have an ego, and it doesn't believe in death. . . .

But it still dies, or seems to.

Remember that your perception of the world is a reflection of your state of consciousness. You are not separate from it, and there is no objective world out there. Every moment, your consciousness creates the world that you inhabit. One of the greatest insights that has come out of modern physics is that of the unity between the observer and the observed: the person conducting the experiment — the observing consciousness — cannot be separated from the observed phenomena, and a different way of looking causes the observed phenomena to behave differently. If you believe, on a deep level, in separation and the struggle for survival, then you see that belief reflected all around you and your perceptions are governed by fear. You inhabit a world of death and of bodies fighting, killing, and devouring each other.

Nothing is what it seems to be. The world that you create and see through the egoic mind may seem a very imperfect place, even a vale of tears. But whatever you perceive is only a kind of symbol, like an image in a dream. It is how your consciousness interprets and interacts with the molecular energy dance of the universe. This energy is the raw material of so-called physical reality. You see it in terms of bodies and birth and death, or as a struggle for survival. An infinite number of completely different interpretations, completely different worlds, is possible and, in fact, exists — all depending on the perceiving consciousness. Every being is a focal point of consciousness, and every such focal point creates its own world, although all those worlds are interconnected. There is a human world, an ant world, a dolphin world, and so on. There are countless beings whose consciousness frequency is so different from yours that you are probably unaware of their existence, as they are of yours. Highly conscious beings who are aware of their connectedness with the Source and with each other would inhabit a world that to you would appear as a heavenly realm — and yet all worlds are ultimately one.

Our collective human world is largely created through the level of consciousness we call mind. Even within the collective human world there are vast differences, many different “sub-worlds,” depending on the perceivers or creators of their respective worlds. Since all worlds are interconnected, when collective human consciousness becomes transformed, nature and the animal kingdom will reflect that transformation. Hence the statement in the Bible that in the coming age “The lion shall lie down with the lamb.” This points to the possibility of a completely different order of reality.

The world as it appears to us now is, as I said, largely a reflection of the egoic mind. Fear being an unavoidable consequence of egoic delusion, it is a world dominated by fear. Just as the images in a dream are symbols of inner states and feelings, so our collective reality is largely a symbolic expression of fear and of the heavy layers of negativity that have accumulated in the collective human psyche. We are not separate from our world, so when the majority of humans become free of egoic delusion, this inner change will affect all of creation. You will literally inhabit a new world. It is a shift in planetary consciousness. The strange Buddhist saying that every tree and every blade of grass will eventually become enlightened points to the same truth. According to St. Paul, the whole of creation is waiting for humans to become enlightened. That is how I interpret his saying that “The created universe is waiting with eager expectation for God’s sons to be revealed.” St. Paul goes on to say that all of creation will become redeemed through this: “Up to the present. . .the whole created universe in all its parts groans as if in the pangs of childbirth.”

What is being born is a new consciousness and, as its inevitable reflection, a new world. This is also foretold in the New Testament Book of Revelation: “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.”

But don’t confuse cause and effect. Your primary task is not to seek salvation through creating a better world, but to awaken out of identification with form. You are then no longer bound to this world, this level of reality. You can feel your roots in the Unmanifested and so are free of attachment to the manifested world. You can still enjoy the passing pleasures of this world, but there is no fear of loss anymore, so you don’t need to cling to them. Although you can enjoy sensory pleasures, the craving for sensory experience is gone, as is the constant search for fulfillment through psychological gratification, through feeding the ego. You are in touch with something infinitely greater than any pleasure, greater than any manifested thing.

In a way, you then don’t need the world anymore. You don’t even need it to be different from the way it is.

It is only at this point that you begin to make a real contribution toward bringing about a better world, toward creating a different order of reality. It is only at this point that you are able to feel true compassion and to help others at the level of cause. Only those who have transcended the world can bring about a better world.

You may remember that we talked about the dual nature of true compassion, which is awareness of a common bond of shared mortality and immortality. At this deep level, compassion becomes healing in the widest sense. In that state, your healing influence is primarily based not on doing but on being. Everybody you come in contact with will be touched by your presence and affected by the peace that you emanate, whether they are conscious of it or not. When you are fully present and people around you manifest unconscious behavior, you won’t feel the need to react to it, so you don’t give it any reality. Your peace is so vast and deep that anything that is not peace disappears into it as if it had never existed. This breaks the karmic cycle of action and reaction. Animals, trees, flowers will feel your peace and respond to it. You teach through being, through demonstrating the peace of God. You become the “light of the world,” an emanation of pure consciousness, and so you eliminate suffering on the level of cause. You eliminate unconsciousness from the world.

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This doesn’t mean that you may not also teach through doing — for example, by pointing out how to disidentify from the mind, recognize unconscious patterns within oneself, and so on. But who you *are* is always a more vital teaching and a more powerful transformer of the world than what you say, and more essential even than what you do.

Furthermore, to recognize the primacy of Being, and thus work on the level of cause, does not exclude the possibility that your compassion may simultaneously manifest on the level of doing and of effect by alleviating suffering whenever you come across it. When a hungry person asks you for bread and you have some, you will give it. But as you give the bread, even though your interaction may only be very brief, what really matters is this moment of shared Being, of which the bread is only a symbol. A deep healing takes place within it. In that moment, there is no giver, no receiver.

But there shouldn't be any hunger and starvation in the first place. How can we create a better world without tackling evils such as hunger and violence first?

All evils are the *effect* of unconsciousness. You can alleviate the effects of unconsciousness, but you cannot eliminate them unless you eliminate their cause. True change happens within, not without.

If you feel called upon to alleviate suffering in the world, that is a very noble thing to do, but remember not to focus exclusively on the outer; otherwise, you will encounter frustration and despair. Without a profound change in human consciousness, the world's suffering is a bottomless pit. So don't let your compassion become one-sided. Empathy with someone else's pain or lack and a desire to help need to be balanced with a deeper realization of the eternal nature of all life and the ultimate illusion of all pain. Then let your peace flow into whatever you do and you will be working on the levels of effect and cause simultaneously.

This also applies if you are supporting a movement designed to stop deeply unconscious humans from destroying themselves, each other, and the planet, or from continuing to inflict dreadful suffering on other sentient beings. Remember: Just as you cannot fight the darkness, so you cannot fight unconsciousness. If you try to do so, the polar opposites will become strengthened and more deeply entrenched. You will become identified with one of the polarities, you will create an "enemy," and so be drawn into unconsciousness yourself. Raise awareness by disseminating information, or at the most, practice passive resistance. But make sure that you carry no resistance within, no hatred, no negativity. "Love your enemies," said Jesus, which, of course, means "have no enemies."

Once you get involved in working on the level of effect, it is all too easy to lose yourself in it. Stay alert and very, very present. The causal level needs to remain your primary focus, the teaching of enlightenment your main purpose, and peace your most precious gift to the world.

CHAPTER TEN

THE MEANING OF SURRENDER

ACCEPTANCE OF THE NOW

You mentioned "surrender" a few times. I don't like that idea. It sounds somewhat fatalistic. If we always accept the way things are, we are not going to make any effort to improve them. It seems to me what progress is all about, both in our personal lives and collectively, is not to accept the limitations of the present but to strive to go beyond them and create something better. If we hadn't done this, we would still be living in caves. How do you reconcile surrender with changing things and getting things done?

To some people, surrender may have negative connotations, implying defeat, giving up, failing to rise to the challenges of life, becoming lethargic, and so on. True surrender, however, is something entirely different. It does not mean to passively put up with whatever situation you find yourself in and to do nothing about it. Nor does it mean to cease making plans or initiating positive action.

Surrender is the simple but profound wisdom of *yielding to* rather than *opposing* the flow of life. The only place where you can experience the flow of life is the Now, so to surrender is to accept the present moment unconditionally and without reservation. It is to relinquish inner resistance to what *is*. Inner resistance is to say "no" to what *is*, through mental judgment and emotional negativity. It becomes particularly pronounced when things "go wrong," which means that there is a gap between the demands or rigid expectations of your mind and what *is*. That is the pain gap. If you have lived long enough, you will know that things "go wrong" quite often. It is precisely at those times that surrender needs to be practiced if you want to eliminate pain and sorrow from your life. Acceptance of what *is* immediately frees you from mind identification and thus reconnects you with Being. Resistance *is* the mind.

Surrender is a purely inner phenomenon. It does not mean that on the outer level you cannot take action and change the situation. In fact, it is not the overall situation that you need to accept when you surrender, but just the tiny segment called the Now.

For example, if you were stuck in the mud somewhere, you wouldn't say: "Okay, I resign myself to being stuck in the mud." Resignation is not surrender. You don't need to accept an undesirable or unpleasant life situation. Nor do you need to deceive yourself and say that there is nothing wrong with being stuck in the mud. No. You recognize fully that you want to get out of it. You then narrow your attention down to the present moment without mentally labeling it in any way. This means that there is no judgment of the Now. Therefore, there is no resistance, no emotional negativity. You accept the "isness" of this moment. Then you take action and do all that you can to get out of the mud. Such action I call positive action. It is far more effective than negative action, which arises out of anger, despair, or frustration. Until you achieve the desired result, you continue to practice surrender by refraining from labeling the Now.

Let me give you a visual analogy to illustrate the point I am making. You are walking along a path at night, surrounded by a thick fog. But you have a powerful flashlight that cuts through the fog and creates a narrow, clear space in front of you. The fog is your life situation, which includes past and future; the flashlight is your conscious presence; the clear space is the Now.

Non-surrender hardens your psychological form, the shell of the ego, and so creates a strong sense of separateness. The world around you and people in particular come to be perceived as threatening. The unconscious compulsion to destroy others through judgment arises, as does the need to compete and dominate. Even nature becomes your enemy and your perceptions and interpretations are governed by fear. The mental disease that we call paranoia is only a slightly more acute form of this normal but dysfunctional state of consciousness.

Not only your psychological form but also your physical form — your body — becomes hard and rigid through resistance. Tension arises in different parts of the body, and the body as a whole contracts. The free flow of life energy through the body, which is essential for its healthy functioning, is greatly restricted. Bodywork and certain forms of physical therapy can be helpful in restoring this flow, but unless you practice surrender in your everyday life, those things can only give temporary symptom relief since the cause — the resistance pattern — has not been dissolved.

There is something within you that remains unaffected by the transient circumstances that make up your life situation, and only through surrender do you have access to it. It is your life, your very Being — which exists eternally in the timeless realm of the present. Finding this life is "the one thing that is needed" that Jesus talked about.

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If you find your life situation unsatisfactory or even intolerable, it is only by surrendering first that you can break the unconscious resistance pattern that perpetuates that situation.

Surrender is perfectly compatible with taking action, initiating change, or achieving goals. But in the surrendered state a totally different energy, a different quality, flows into your doing. Surrender reconnects you with the source-energy of Being, and if your doing is infused with Being, it becomes a joyful celebration of life energy that takes you more deeply into the Now. Through nonresistance, the quality of your consciousness and, therefore, the quality of whatever you are doing or creating is enhanced immeasurably. The results will then look after themselves and reflect that quality. We could call this *surrendered action*. It is not work as we have known it for thousands of years. As more humans awaken, the word *work* is going to disappear from our vocabulary, and perhaps a new word will be created to replace it.

It is the quality of your consciousness at this moment that is the main determinant of what kind of future you will experience, so to surrender is the most important thing you can do to bring about positive change. Any action you take is secondary. No truly positive action can arise out of an unsurrendered state of consciousness.

I can see that if I am in a situation that is unpleasant or unsatisfactory and I completely accept the moment as it is, there will be no suffering or unhappiness. I will have risen above it. But I still can't quite see where the energy or motivation for taking action and bringing about change would come from if there isn't a certain amount of dissatisfaction.

In the state of surrender, you see very clearly what needs to be done, and you take action, doing one thing at a time and focusing on one thing at a time. Learn from nature: See how everything gets accomplished and how the miracle of life unfolds without dissatisfaction or unhappiness. That's why Jesus said: "Look at the lilies, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin."

If your overall situation is unsatisfactory or unpleasant, *separate out this instant* and surrender to what *is*. That's the flashlight cutting through the fog. Your state of consciousness then ceases to be controlled by external conditions. You are no longer coming from reaction and resistance.

Then look at the specifics of the situation. Ask yourself, "Is there anything I can do to change the situation, improve it, or remove myself from it?" If so, you take appropriate action. Focus not on the one hundred things that you will or may have to do at some future time but on the one thing that you can do now. This doesn't mean you should not do any planning. It may well be that planning is the one thing you can do now. But make sure you don't start to run "mental movies," project yourself into the future, and so lose the Now. Any action you take may not bear fruit immediately. Until it does — do not resist what is. If there is no action you can take, and you cannot remove yourself from the situation either, then use the situation to make you go more deeply into surrender, more deeply into the Now, more deeply into Being. When you enter this timeless dimension of the present, change often comes about in strange ways without the need for a great deal of doing on your part. Life becomes helpful and cooperative. If inner factors such as fear, guilt, or inertia prevented you from taking action, they will dissolve in the light of your conscious presence.

Do not confuse surrender with an attitude of "I can't be bothered anymore" or "I just don't care anymore." If you look at it closely, you will find that such an attitude is tainted with negativity in the form of hidden resentment and so is not surrender at all but masked resistance. As you surrender, direct your attention inward to check if there is any trace of resistance left inside you. Be very alert when you do so; otherwise, a pocket of resistance may continue to hide in some dark corner in the form of a thought or an unacknowledged emotion.

FROM MIND ENERGY TO SPIRITUAL ENERGY

Letting go of resistance is easier said than done. I still don't see clearly how *to let go. If you say it is by surrendering, the question remains: "How?"*

Start by acknowledging that there *is* resistance. *Be* there when it happens, when the resistance arises. Observe how your mind creates it, how it labels the situation, yourself, or others. Look at the thought process involved. Feel the energy of the emotion. By witnessing the resistance, you will see that it serves no purpose. By focusing all your attention on the Now, the unconscious resistance is made conscious, and that is the end of it. You cannot be conscious *and* unhappy, conscious *and* in negativity. Negativity, unhappiness, or suffering in whatever form means that there is resistance, and resistance is always unconscious.

Surely I can be conscious of my unhappy feelings?

Would you choose unhappiness? If you did not choose it, how did it arise? What is its purpose? Who is keeping it alive? You say that you are conscious of your unhappy feelings, but the truth is that you are identified with them and keep the process alive through compulsive thinking. All *that* is unconscious. If you were conscious, that is to say totally present in the Now, all negativity would dissolve almost instantly. It could not survive in your presence. It can only survive in your absence. Even the pain-body cannot survive for long in your presence. You keep your unhappiness alive by giving it time. That is its lifeblood. Remove time through intense present-moment awareness and it dies. But do you want it to die? Have you truly had enough? Who would you be without it?

Until you practice surrender, the spiritual dimension is something you read about, talk about, get excited about, write books about, think about, believe in — or don't, as the case may be. It makes no difference. Not until you surrender does it become a living reality in your life. When you do, the energy that you emanate and which then runs your life is of a much higher vibrational frequency than the mind energy that still runs our world — the energy that created the existing social, political, and economic structures of our civilization, and which also continuously perpetuates itself through our educational systems and the media. Through surrender, spiritual energy comes into this world. It creates no suffering for yourself, for other humans, or any other life form on the planet. Unlike mind energy, it does not pollute the earth, and it is not subject to the law of polarities, which dictates that nothing can exist without its opposite, that there can be no good without bad. Those who run on mind energy, which is still the vast majority of the Earth's population, remain unaware of the existence of spiritual energy. It belongs to a different order of reality and will create a different world when a sufficient number of humans enter the surrendered state and so become totally free of negativity. If the Earth is to survive, this will be the energy of those who inhabit it.

Jesus referred to this energy when he made his famous prophetic statement in the Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are the gentle; they shall have the earth for their possession." It is a silent but intense presence that dissolves the unconscious patterns of the mind. They may still remain active for a while, but they won't run your life anymore. The external conditions that were being resisted also tend to shift or dissolve quickly through surrender. It is a powerful transformer of situations and people. If conditions do not shift immediately, your acceptance of the Now enables you to rise above them. Either way, you are free.

SURRENDER IN PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

What about people who want to use me, manipulate or control me? Am I to surrender to them?

They are cut off from Being, so they unconsciously attempt to get energy and power from you. It is true that only an unconscious person will try to use or manipulate others, but it is equally true that only an unconscious person *can* be used and manipulated. If you resist or fight unconscious behavior in others, you become unconscious yourself. But surrender doesn't mean that you allow yourself to be used by unconscious people. Not at all. It is perfectly possible to say "no" firmly and clearly to a person or to walk away from a situation and be in a state of complete inner nonresistance at the same time. When you say "no" to a person or a situation, let it come not from reaction but from insight, from a clear realization of what is right or not right for you at that moment. Let it be a nonreactive "no," a high-quality "no," a "no" that is free of all negativity and so creates no further suffering.

I am in a situation at work that is unpleasant. I have tried to surrender to it, but I find it impossible. A lot of resistance keeps coming up.

If you cannot surrender, take action immediately: Speak up or do something to bring about a change in the situation — or remove yourself from it. Take responsibility for your life. Do not pollute your beautiful, radiant inner Being nor the Earth with negativity. Do not give unhappiness in any form whatsoever a dwelling place inside you.

If you cannot take action, for example if you are in prison, then you have two choices left: resistance or surrender. Bondage or inner freedom from external conditions. Suffering or inner peace.

Is nonresistance also to be practiced in the external conduct of our lives, such as nonresistance to violence, or is it something that just concerns our inner life?

You only need to be concerned with the inner aspect. That is primary. Of course, that will also transform the conduct of your outer life, your relationships, and so on.

Your relationships will be changed profoundly by surrender. If you can never accept what *is*, by implication you will not be able to accept anybody the way they are. You will judge, criticize, label, reject, or attempt to change people. Furthermore, if you continuously make the Now into a means to an end in the future, you will also make every person you encounter or relate with into a means to an end. The relationship — the human being — is then of secondary importance to you, or of no importance at all. What you can get out of the relationship is primary — be it material gain, a sense of power, physical pleasure, or some form of ego gratification.

Let me illustrate how surrender can work in relationships. When you become involved in an argument or some conflict situation, perhaps with a partner or someone close to you, start by observing how defensive you become as your own position is attacked, or feel the force of your own aggression as you attack the other person's position. Observe the attachment to your views and opinions. Feel the mental-emotional energy behind your need to be right and make the other person wrong. That's the energy of the egoic mind. You make it conscious by acknowledging it, by feeling it as fully as possible. Then one day, in the middle of an argument, you will suddenly realize that you have a choice, and you may decide to drop your own reaction — just to see what happens. You surrender. I don't mean dropping the reaction just verbally by saying, "Okay, you are right," with a look on your face that says, "I am above all this childish unconsciousness." That's just displacing the resistance to another level, with the egoic mind still in charge, claiming superiority. I am speaking of letting go of the entire mental-emotional energy field inside you that was fighting for power.

The ego is cunning, so you have to be very alert, very present, and totally honest with yourself to see whether you have truly relinquished your identification with a mental position and so freed yourself from your mind. If you suddenly feel very light, clear, and deeply at peace, that is an unmistakable sign that you have truly surrendered. Then observe what happens to the other person's mental position as you no longer energize it through resistance. When identification with mental positions is out of the way, true communication begins.

What about nonresistance in the face of violence, aggression, and the like?

Nonresistance doesn't necessarily mean doing nothing. All it means is that any "doing" becomes nonreactive. Remember the deep wisdom underlying the practice of Eastern martial arts: Don't resist the opponent's force. Yield to overcome.

Having said that, "doing nothing" when you are in a state of intense presence is a very powerful transformer and healer of situations and people. In Taoism, there is a term called *wu wei*, which is usually translated as "actionless activity" or "sitting quietly doing nothing." In ancient China, this was regarded as one of the highest achievements or virtues. It is radically different from inactivity in the ordinary state of consciousness, or rather unconsciousness, which stems from fear, inertia, or indecision. The real "doing nothing" implies inner nonresistance and intense alertness.

On the other hand, if action is required, you will no longer react from your conditioned mind, but you will respond to the situation out of your conscious presence. In that state, your mind is free of concepts, including the concept of non-violence. So who can predict what you will do?

The ego believes that in your resistance lies your strength, whereas in truth resistance cuts you off from Being, the only place of true power. Resistance is weakness and fear masquerading as strength. What the ego sees as weakness is your Being in its purity, innocence, and power. What it sees as strength is weakness. So the ego exists in a continuous resistance-mode and plays counterfeit roles to cover up your "weakness," which in truth is your power.

Until there is surrender, unconscious role-playing constitutes a large part of human interaction. In surrender, you no longer need ego defenses and false masks. You become very simple, very real. "That's dangerous," says the ego. "You'll get hurt. You'll become vulnerable." What the ego doesn't know, of course, is that only through the letting go of resistance, through becoming "vulnerable," can you discover your true and essential invulnerability.

TRANSFORMING ILLNESS INTO ENLIGHTENMENT

If someone is seriously ill and completely accepts their condition and surrenders to the illness, would they not have given up their will to get back to health? The determination to fight the illness would not be there anymore, would it?

Surrender is inner acceptance of what *is* without any reservations. We are talking about your *life* — this instant — not the conditions or circumstances of your life, not what I call your life situation. We have spoken about this already.

With regard to illness, this is what it means. Illness is part of your life situation. As such, it has a past and a future. Past and future form an uninterrupted continuum, unless the redeeming power of the Now is activated through your conscious presence. As you know, underneath the various conditions that make up your life situation, which exists in time, there is something deeper, more essential: your Life, your very Being in the timeless Now.

As there are no problems in the Now, there is no illness either. The belief in a label that someone attaches to your condition keeps the condition in place, empowers it, and makes a seemingly solid reality out of a temporary imbalance. It gives it not only reality and solidity but also a continuity in time that it did not have before. By focusing on this instant and refraining from labeling it mentally, illness is reduced to one or several of these factors: physical pain, weakness, discomfort, or disability. *That* is what you surrender to — now. You do not surrender to the idea of "illness." Allow the suffering to force you into the present moment, into a state of intense conscious presence. Use it for enlightenment.

Surrender does not transform what *is,* at least not directly. Surrender transforms *you*. When *you* are transformed, your whole world is transformed, because the world is only a reflection. We spoke about this earlier.

If you looked in the mirror and did not like what you saw, you would have to be mad to attack the image in the mirror. That is precisely what you do when you are in a state of nonacceptance. And, of course, if you attack the image, it attacks you back. If you accept the image, no matter what it is, if you become friendly toward it, it cannot *not* become friendly toward you. This is how you change the world.

Illness is not the problem. *You* are the problem — as long as the egoic mind is in control. When you are ill or disabled, do not feel that you have failed in some way, do not feel guilty. Do not blame life for treating you unfairly, but do not blame yourself either. All that is resistance. If you have a major illness, use it for enlightenment. Anything "bad" that happens in your life — use it for enlightenment. Withdraw time from the illness. Do not give it any past or future. Let it force you into intense present-moment awareness — and see what happens.

Become an alchemist. Transmute base metal into gold, suffering into consciousness, disaster into enlightenment.

Are you seriously ill and feeling angry now about what I have just said? Then that is a clear sign that the illness has become part of your sense of self and that you are now protecting your identity — as well as protecting the illness. The condition that is labeled "illness" has nothing to do with who you truly are.

WHEN DISASTER STRIKES

As far as the still unconscious majority of the population is concerned, only a critical limit-situation has the potential to crack the hard shell of the ego and force them into surrender and so into the awakened state. A limit-situation arises when through some disaster, drastic upheaval, deep loss, or suffering your whole world is shattered and doesn't make sense anymore. It is an encounter with death, be it physical or psychological. The egoic mind, the creator of this world, collapses. Out of the ashes of the old world, a new world can then come into being.

There is no guarantee, of course, that even a limit-situation will do it, but the potential is always there. Some people's resistance to what *is* even intensifies in such a situation, and so it becomes a descent into hell. In others, there may only be partial surrender, but even that will give them a certain depth and serenity that were not there before. Parts of the ego shell break off, and this allows small amounts of the radiance and peace that lie beyond the mind to shine through.

Limit-situations have produced many miracles. There have been murderers on death row waiting for execution who, in the last few hours of their lives, experienced the egoless state and the deep joy and peace that come with it. The inner resistance to the situation they found themselves in became so intense as to produce unbearable suffering, and there was nowhere to run and nothing to do to escape it, not even a mind-projected future. So they were forced into complete acceptance of the unacceptable. They were forced into surrender. In this way, they were able to enter the state of grace with which comes redemption: complete release from the past. Of course, it is not really the limit-situation that makes room for the miracle of grace and redemption, but the act of surrender.

So whenever any kind of disaster strikes, or something goes seriously "wrong" — illness, disability, loss of home or fortune or of a socially defined identity, breakup of a close relationship, death or suffering of a loved one, or your own impending death — know that there is another side to it, that you are just one step away from something incredible: a complete alchemical transmutation of the base metal of pain and suffering into gold. That one step is called surrender.

I do not mean to say that you will become happy in such a situation. You will not. But fear and pain will become transmuted into an inner peace and serenity that come from a very deep place — from the Unmanifested itself. It is "the peace of God, which passes all understanding." Compared to that, happiness is quite a shallow thing. With this radiant peace comes the realization — not on the level of mind but within the depth of your Being — that you are indestructible, immortal. This is not a belief. It is absolute certainty that needs no external evidence or proof from some secondary source.

TRANSFORMING SUFFERING INTO PEACE

I read about a stoic philosopher in ancient Greece who, when he was told that his son had died in an accident, replied, "I knew he was not immortal." Is that surrender? If it is, I don't want it. There are some situations in which surrender seems unnatural and inhuman.

Being cut off from your feelings is not surrender. But we don't know what his inner state was when he said those words. In certain extreme situations, it may still be impossible for you to accept the Now. But you always get a second chance at surrender.

Your first chance is to surrender each moment to the reality of that moment. Knowing that what *is* cannot be undone —because it already *is* — you say yes to what *is* or accept what isn't. Then you do what you have to do, whatever the situation requires. If you abide in this state of acceptance, you create no more negativity, no more suffering, no more unhappiness. You then live in a state of nonresistance, a state of grace and lightness, free of struggle.

Whenever you are unable to do that, whenever you miss that chance — either because you are not generating enough conscious presence to prevent some habitual and unconscious resistance pattern from arising or because the condition is so extreme as to be absolutely unacceptable to you — then you are creating some form of pain, some form of suffering. It may look as if the situation is creating the suffering, but ultimately this is not so — your resistance is.

Now here is your second chance at surrender: If you cannot accept what is outside, then accept what is *inside*. If you cannot accept the external condition, accept the internal condition. This means: Do not resist the pain. Allow it to be there. Surrender to the grief, despair, fear, loneliness, or whatever form the suffering takes. Witness it without labeling it mentally. Embrace it. Then see how the miracle of surrender transmutes deep suffering into deep peace. This is your crucifixion. Let it become your resurrection and ascension.

I do not see how one can surrender to suffering. As you yourself pointed out, suffering is *non-surrender. How could you surrender to non-surrender?*

Forget about surrender for a moment. When your pain is deep, all talk of surrender will probably seem futile and meaningless anyway. When your pain is deep, you will likely have a strong urge to escape from it rather than surrender to it. You don't want to feel what you feel. What could be more normal? But there is no escape, no way out. There are many pseudo escapes — work, drink, drugs, anger, projection, suppression, and so on — but they don't free you from the pain. Suffering does not diminish in intensity when you make it unconscious. When you deny emotional pain, everything you do or think as well as your relationships become contaminated with it. You broadcast it, so to speak, as the energy you emanate, and others will pick it up subliminally. If they are unconscious, they may even feel compelled to attack or hurt you in some way, or you may hurt them in an unconscious projection of your pain. You attract and manifest whatever corresponds to your inner state.

When there is no way out, there is still always a way *through*. So don't turn away from the pain. Face it. Feel it fully. *Feel* it — don't *think* about it! Express it if necessary, but don't create a script in your mind around it. Give all your attention to the feeling, not to the person, event, or situation that seems to have caused it. Don't let the mind use the pain to create a victim identity for yourself out of it. Feeling sorry for yourself and telling others your story will keep you stuck in suffering. Since it is impossible to get away from the feeling, the only possibility of change is to move into it; otherwise, nothing will shift. So give your complete attention to what you feel, and refrain from mentally labeling it. As you go into the feeling, be intensely alert. At first, it may seem like a dark and terrifying place, and when the urge to turn away from it comes, observe it but don't act on it. Keep putting your attention on the pain, keep feeling the grief, the fear, the dread, the loneliness, whatever it is. Stay alert, stay present — present with your whole Being, with every cell of your body. As you do so, you are bringing a light into this darkness. This is the flame of your consciousness.

At this stage, you don't need to be concerned with surrender anymore. It has happened already. How? Full attention *is* full acceptance, is surrender. By giving full attention, you use the power of the Now, which is the power of your presence. No hidden pocket of resistance can survive in it. Presence removes time. Without time, no suffering, no negativity, can survive.

The acceptance of suffering is a journey into death. Facing deep pain, allowing it to be, taking your attention into it, is to enter death consciously. When you have died this death, you realize that there is no death — and there is nothing to fear. Only the ego dies. Imagine a ray of sunlight that has forgotten it is an inseparable part of the sun and deludes itself into believing it has to fight for survival and create and cling to an identity other than the sun. Would the death of this delusion not be incredibly liberating?

Do you want an easy death? Would you rather die without pain, without agony? Then die to the past every moment, and let the light of your presence shine away the heavy, time-bound self you thought of as "you."

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THE WAY OF THE CROSS

There are many accounts of people who say they have found God through their deep suffering, and there is the Christian expression "the way of the cross," which I suppose points to the same thing.

We are concerned with nothing else here.

Strictly speaking, they did not find God through their suffering, because suffering implies resistance. They found God through surrender, through total acceptance of what *is*, into which they were forced by their intense suffering. They must have realized on some level that their pain was self-created.

How do you equate surrender with finding God?

Since resistance is inseparable from the mind, relinquishment of resistance — surrender — is the end of the mind as your master, the impostor pretending to be "you," the false god. All judgment and all negativity dissolve. The realm of Being, which had been obscured by the mind, then opens up. Suddenly, a great stillness arises within you, an unfathomable sense of peace. And within that peace, there is great joy. And within that joy, there is love. And at the innermost core, there is the sacred, the immeasurable, That which cannot be named.

I don't call it finding God, because how can you find that which was never lost, the very life that you are? The word God is limiting not only because of thousands of years of misperception and misuse, but also because it implies an entity other than you. God is Being itself, not a being. There can be no subject-object relationship here, no duality, no you *and* God. God-realization is the most natural thing there is. The amazing and incomprehensible fact is not that you *can* become conscious of God but that you are *not* conscious of God. The way of the cross that you mentioned is the old way to enlightenment, and until recently it was the only way. But don't dismiss it or underestimate its efficacy. It still works.

The way of the cross is a complete reversal. It means that the worst thing in your life, your cross, turns into the best thing that ever happened to you, by forcing you into surrender, into "death," forcing you to become as nothing, to become as God — because God, too, is no-thing.

At this time, as far as the unconscious majority of humans is concerned, the way of the cross is still the only way. They will only awaken through further suffering, and enlightenment as a collective phenomenon will be predictably preceded by vast upheavals. This process reflects the workings of certain universal laws that govern the growth of consciousness and thus was foreseen by some seers. It is described, among other places, in the Book of Revelation or Apocalypse, though cloaked in obscure and sometimes impenetrable symbology. This suffering is inflicted not by God but by humans on themselves and on each other, as well as by certain defensive measures that the Earth, which is a living, intelligent organism, is going to take to protect herself from the onslaught of human madness.

However, there is a growing number of humans alive today whose consciousness is sufficiently evolved not to need any more suffering before the realization of enlightenment. You may be one of them.

Enlightenment through suffering — the way of the cross — means to be forced into the kingdom of heaven kicking and screaming. You finally surrender because you can't stand the pain anymore, but the pain could go on for a long time until this happens. Enlightenment consciously chosen means to relinquish your attachment to past and future and to make the Now the main focus of your life. It means choosing to dwell in the state of presence rather than in time. It means saying yes to what *is*. You then don't need pain anymore. How much more time do you think you will need before you are able to say, "I will create no more pain, no more suffering"? How much more pain do you need before you can make that choice?

If you think that you need more time, you will get more time — and more pain. Time and pain are inseparable.

THE POWER TO CHOOSE

What about all those people who, it seems, actually want to suffer? I have a friend whose partner is physically abusive toward her, and her previous relationship was of a similar kind. Why does she choose such men, and why is she refusing to get out of that situation now? Why do so many people actually choose pain?

I know that the word *choose* is a favorite New Age term, but it isn't entirely accurate in this context. It is misleading to say that somebody "chose" a dysfunctional relationship or any other negative situation in his or her life. Choice implies consciousness — a high degree of consciousness. Without it, you have no choice. Choice begins the moment you disidentify from the mind and its conditioned patterns, the moment you become present. Until you reach that point, you are unconscious, spiritually speaking. This means that you are compelled to think, feel, and act in certain ways according to the conditioning of your mind. That is why Jesus said: "Forgive them, for they know not what they do." This is not related to intelligence in the conventional sense of the word. I have met many highly intelligent and educated people who were also completely unconscious, which is to say completely identified with their mind. In fact, if mental development and increased knowledge are not counterbalanced by a corresponding growth in consciousness, the potential for unhappiness and disaster is very great.

Your friend is stuck in a relationship with an abusive partner, and not for the first time. Why? No choice. The mind, conditioned as it is by the past, always seeks to re-create what it knows and is familiar with. Even if it is painful, at least it is familiar. The mind always adheres to the known. The unknown is dangerous because it has no control over it. That's why the mind dislikes and ignores the present moment. Present-moment awareness creates a gap not only in the stream of mind but also in the past-future continuum. Nothing truly new and creative can come into this world except through that gap, that clear space of infinite possibility.

So your friend, being identified with her mind, may be recreating a pattern learned in the past in which intimacy and abuse are inseparably linked. Alternatively, she may be acting out a mind pattern learned in early childhood according to which she is unworthy and deserves to be punished. It is possible, too, that she lives a large part of her life through the pain-body, which always seeks more pain on which to feed. Her partner has his own unconscious patterns, which complement hers. Of course her situation is self-created, but who or what is the self that is doing the creating? A mental-emotional pattern from the past, no more. Why make a self out of it? If you tell her that she has chosen her condition or situation, you are reinforcing her state of mind identification. But is her mind pattern who she is? Is it her self? Is her true identity derived from the past? Show your friend how to be the observing presence behind her thoughts and her emotions. Tell her about the pain-body and how to free herself from it. Teach her the art of inner-body awareness. Demonstrate to her the meaning of presence. As soon as she is able to access the power of the Now, and thereby break through her conditioned past, she *will* have a choice.

Nobody *chooses* dysfunction, conflict, pain. Nobody *chooses* insanity. They happen because there is not enough presence in you to dissolve the past, not enough light to dispel the darkness. You are not fully here. You have not quite woken up yet. In the meantime, the conditioned mind is running your life.

Similarly, if you are one of the many people who have an issue with their parents, if you still harbor resentment about something they did or did not do, then you still believe that they had a choice — that they could have acted differently. It always *looks* as if people had a choice, but that is an illusion. As long as your mind with its conditioned patterns runs your life, as long as you *are* your mind, what choice do you have? None. You are not even there. The mind-identified state is severely dysfunctional. It is a form of insanity. Almost everyone is suffering from this illness in varying degrees. The moment you realize this, there can be no more resentment. How can you resent someone's illness? The only appropriate response is compassion.

So that means nobody is responsible for what they do? I don't like that idea.

If you are run by your mind, although you have no choice you will still suffer the consequences of your unconsciousness, and you will create further suffering. You will bear the burden of fear, conflict, problems, and pain. The suffering thus created will eventually force you out of your unconscious state.

What you say about choice also applies to forgiveness, I suppose. You need to be fully conscious and surrender before you can forgive.

"Forgiveness" is a term that has been in use for two thousand years, but most people have a very limited view of what it means. You cannot truly forgive yourself or others as long as you derive your sense of self from the past. Only through accessing the power of the Now, which is your own power, can there be true forgiveness. This renders the past powerless, and you realize deeply that nothing you ever did or that was ever done to you could touch even in the slightest the radiant essence of who you are. The whole concept of forgiveness then becomes unnecessary.

And how do I get to that point of realization?

When you surrender to what *is* and so become fully present, the past ceases to have any power. You do not need it anymore. Presence is the key. The Now is the key.

How will I know when I have surrendered?

When you no longer need to ask the question.

NOTES

[1] Arthur Koestler, *The Ghost in the Machine* (London: Arkana, 1989), p. 180.

[2] Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *The Grand Failure* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1989), pp. 239–40.

[3] *A Course in Miracles* (Huntington Station, NY: Foundation for Inner Peace, 1975), introduction.

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Eckhart Tolle was born in Germany, where he spent the first thirteen years of his life. After graduating from the University of London, he was a research scholar and supervisor at Cambridge University. When he was twenty-nine, a profound spiritual transformation virtually dissolved his old identity and radically changed the course of his life.

He devoted the next few years to understanding, integrating, and deepening that transformation, which marked the beginning of an intense inward journey. Eckhart is not aligned with any particular religion or tradition. In his teaching, he conveys a simple yet profound message with the timeless and uncomplicated clarity of the ancient spiritual masters: there is a way out of suffering and into peace.

Eckhart is currently traveling extensively, taking his teachings and his presence throughout the world. He has lived in Vancouver, Canada, since 1996.

For upcoming events, books, and audios and videos of Eckhart's seminars, visit his website:

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A NEW EARTH

CHAPTER ONE

The Flowering of Human Consciousness

EVOCATION

Earth, 114 million years ago, one morning just after sunrise: The first flower ever to appear on the planet opens up to receive the rays of the sun. Prior to this momentous event that heralds an evolutionary transformation in the life of plants, the planet had already been covered in vegetation for millions of years. The first flower probably did not survive for long, and flowers must have remained rare and isolated phenomena, since conditions were most likely not yet favorable for a widespread flowering to occur. One day, however, a critical threshold was reached, and suddenly there would have been an explosion of color and scent all over the planet—if a perceiving consciousness had been there to witness it.

Much later, those delicate and fragrant beings we call flowers would come to play an essential part in the evolution of consciousness of another species. Humans would increasingly be drawn to and fascinated by them. As the consciousness of human beings developed, flowers were most likely the first thing they came to value that had no utilitarian purpose for them, that is to say, was not linked in some way to survival. They provided inspiration to countless artists, poets, and mystics. Jesus tells us to contemplate the flowers and learn from them how to live. The Buddha is said to have given a "silent sermon" once during which he held up a flower and gazed at it. After a while, one of those present, a monk called Mahakasyapa, began to smile. He is said to have been the only one who had understood the sermon. According to legend, that smile (that is to say, realization) was handed down by twenty-eight successive masters and much later became the origin of Zen.

Seeing beauty in a flower could awaken humans, however briefly, to the beauty that is an essential part of their own innermost being, their true nature. The first recognition of beauty was one of the most significant events in the evolution of human consciousness. The feelings of joy and love are intrinsically connected to that recognition. Without our fully realizing it, flowers would become for us an expression in form of that which is most high, most sacred, and ultimately formless within ourselves. Flowers, more fleeting, more ethereal, and more delicate than the plants out of which they emerged, would become like messengers from another realm, like a bridge between the world of physical forms and the formless. They not only had a scent that was delicate and pleasing to humans, but also brought a fragrance from the realm of spirit. Using the word “enlightenment” in a wider sense than the conventionally accepted one, we could look upon flowers as the enlightenment of plants.

Any life-form in any realm—mineral, vegetable, animal, or human—can be said to undergo “enlightenment.” It is, however, an extremely rare occurrence since it is more than an evolutionary progression: It also implies a discontinuity in its development, a leap to an entirely different level of Being and, most important, a lessening of materiality.

What could be heavier and more impenetrable than a rock, the densest of all forms? And yet some rocks undergo a change in their molecular structure, turn into crystals, and so become transparent to the light. Some carbons, under inconceivable heat and pressure, turn into diamonds, and some heavy minerals into other precious stones.

Most crawling reptilians, the most earthbound of all creatures, have remained unchanged for millions of years. Some, however, grew feathers and wings and turned into birds, thus defying the force of gravity that had held them for so long. They didn’t become better at crawling or walking, but transcended crawling and walking entirely.

Since time immemorial, flowers, crystals, precious stones, and birds have held special significance for the human spirit. Like all life-forms, they are, of course, temporary manifestations of the underlying one Life, one Consciousness. Their special significance and the reason why humans feel such fascination for and affinity with them can be attributed to their ethereal quality.

Once there is a certain degree of Presence, of still and alert attention in human beings’ perceptions, they can sense the divine life essence, the one indwelling consciousness or spirit in every creature, every life-form, recognize it as one with their own essence and so love it as themselves. Until this happens, however, most humans see only the outer forms, unaware of the inner essence, just as they are unaware of their own essence and identify only with their own physical and psychological form.

In the case of a flower, a crystal, precious stone, or bird, however, even someone with little or no Presence can occasionally sense that there is more there than the mere physical existence of that form, without knowing that this is the reason why he or she is drawn toward it, feels an affinity with it. Because of its ethereal nature, its form obscures the indwelling spirit to a lesser degree than is the case with other life-forms. The exception to this are all newborn life-forms—babies, puppies, kittens, lambs, and so on. They are fragile, delicate, not yet firmly established in materiality. An innocence, a sweetness and beauty that are not of this world still shine through them. They delight even relatively insensitive humans.

So when you are alert and contemplate a flower, crystal, or bird without naming it mentally, it becomes a window for you into the formless. There is an inner opening, however slight, into the realm of spirit. This is why these three "en-lightened" life-forms have played such an important part in the evolution of human consciousness since ancient times; why, for example, the jewel in the lotus flower is a central symbol of Buddhism and a white bird, the dove, signifies the Holy Spirit in Christianity. They have been preparing the ground for a more profound shift in planetary consciousness that is destined to take place in the human species. This is the spiritual awakening that we are beginning to witness now.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK

Is humanity ready for a transformation of consciousness, an inner flowering so radical and profound that compared to it the flowering of plants, no matter how beautiful, is only a pale reflection? Can human beings lose the density of their conditioned mind structures and become like crystals or precious stones, so to speak, transparent to the light of consciousness? Can they defy the gravitational pull of materialism and materiality and rise above identification with form that keeps the ego in place and condemns them to imprisonment within their own personality?

The possibility of such a transformation has been the central message of the great wisdom teachings of humankind. The messengers—Buddha, Jesus, and others, not all of them known—were humanity's early flowers. They were precursors, rare and precious beings. A widespread flowering was not yet possible at that time, and their message became largely misunderstood and often greatly distorted. It certainly did not transform human behavior, except in a small minority of people.

Is humanity more ready now than at the time of those early teachers? Why should this be so? What can you do, if anything, to bring about or accelerate this inner shift? What is it that characterizes the old egoic state of consciousness, and by what signs is the new emerging consciousness recognized? These and other essential questions will be addressed in this book. More important, this book itself is a transformational device that has come out of the arising new consciousness. The ideas and concepts presented here may be important, but they are secondary. They are no more than signposts pointing toward awakening. As you read, a shift takes place within you.

This book's main purpose is not to add new information or beliefs to your mind or to try to convince you of anything, but to bring about a shift in consciousness, that is to say, to awaken. In that sense, this book is not "interesting." Interesting means you can keep your distance, play around with ideas and concepts in your mind, agree or disagree. This book is about you. It will change your state of consciousness or it will be meaningless. It can only awaken those who are ready. Not everyone is ready yet, but many are, and with each person who awakens, the momentum in the collective consciousness grows, and it becomes easier for others. If you don't know what awakening means, read on. Only by awakening can you know the true meaning of that word. A glimpse is enough to initiate the awakening process, which is irreversible. For some, that glimpse will come while reading this book. For many others who may not even have realized it, the process has already begun. This book will help them recognize it. For some, it may have begun through loss or suffering; for others, through coming into contact with a spiritual teacher or teaching, through reading *The Power of Now* or some other spiritually alive and therefore transformational book—or any combination of the above. If the awakening process has begun in you, the reading of this book will accelerate and intensify it.

An essential part of the awakening is the recognition of the unawakened you, the ego as it thinks, speaks, and acts, as well as the recognition of the collectively conditioned mental processes that perpetuate the unawakened state. That is why this book shows the main aspects of the ego and how they operate in the individual as well as in the collective. This is important for two related reasons: The first is that unless you know the basic mechanics behind the workings of the ego, you won't recognize it, and it will trick you into identifying with it again and again. This means it takes you over, an imposter pretending to be you. The second reason is that the act of recognition itself is one of the ways in which awakening happens. When you recognize the unconsciousness in you, that which makes the recognition possible *is* the arising consciousness, *is* awakening. You cannot fight against the ego and win, just as you cannot fight against darkness. The light of consciousness is all that is necessary. You are that light.

OUR INHERITED DYSFUNCTION

If we look more deeply into humanity's ancient religions and spiritual traditions, we will find that underneath the many surface differences there are two core insights that most of them agree on. The words they use to describe those insights differ, yet they all point to a twofold fundamental truth. The first part of this truth is the realization that the "normal" state of mind of most human beings contains a strong element of what we might call dysfunction or even madness. Certain teachings at the heart of Hinduism perhaps come closest to seeing this dysfunction as a form of collective mental illness. They call it *maya,* the veil of delusion. Ramana Maharshi, one of the greatest Indian sages, bluntly states: "The mind is maya."

Buddhism uses different terms. According to the Buddha, the human mind in its normal state generates *dukkha*, which can be translated as suffering, unsatisfactoriness, or just plain misery. He sees it as a characteristic of the human condition. Wherever you go, whatever you do, says the Buddha, you will encounter *dukkha*, and it will manifest in every situation sooner or later.

According to Christian teachings, the normal collective state of humanity is one of "original sin." *Sin* is a word that has been greatly misunderstood and misinterpreted. Literally translated from the ancient Greek in which the New Testament was written, to sin means to miss the mark, as an archer who misses the target, so to sin means to *miss the point* of human existence. It means to live unskillfully, blindly, and thus to suffer and cause suffering. Again, the term, stripped of its cultural baggage and misinterpretations, points to the dysfunction inherent in the human condition.

The achievements of humanity are impressive and undeniable. We have created sublime works of music, literature, painting, architecture, and sculpture. More recently, science and technology have brought about radical changes in the way we live and have enabled us to do and create things that would have been considered miraculous even two hundred years ago. No doubt: The human mind is highly intelligent. Yet its very intelligence is tainted by madness. Science and technology have magnified the destructive impact that the dysfunction of the human mind has upon the planet, other life-forms, and upon humans themselves. That is why the history of the twentieth century is where that dysfunction, that collective insanity, can be most clearly recognized. A further factor is that this dysfunction is actually intensifying and accelerating.

The First World War broke out in 1914. Destructive and cruel wars, motivated by fear, greed, and the desire for power, had been common occurrences throughout human history, as had slavery, torture, and widespread violence inflicted for religious and ideological reasons. Humans suffered more at the hands of each other than through natural disasters. By the year 1914, however, the highly intelligent human mind had invented not only the internal combustion engine, but also bombs, machine guns, submarines, flame throwers, and poison gas. Intelligence in the service of madness! In static trench warfare in France and Belgium, millions of men perished to gain a few miles of mud. When the war was over in 1918, the survivors looked in horror and incomprehension upon the devastation left behind: ten million human beings killed and many more maimed or disfigured. Never before had human madness been so destructive in its effect, so clearly visible. Little did they know that this was only the beginning.

By the end of the century, the number of people who died a violent death at the hand of their fellow humans would rise to more than one hundred million. They died not only through wars between nations, but also through mass exterminations and genocide, such as the murder of twenty million “class enemies, spies, and traitors” in the Soviet Union under Stalin or the unspeakable horrors of the Holocaust in Nazi Germany. They also died in countless smaller internal conflicts, such as the Spanish civil war or during the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia when a quarter of that country’s population was murdered.

We only need to watch the daily news on television to realize that the madness has not abated, that it is continuing into the twenty-first century. Another aspect of the collective dysfunction of the human mind is the unprecedented violence that humans are inflicting on other life-forms and the planet itself—the destruction of oxygen-producing forests and other plant and animal life; ill-treatment of animals in factory farms; and poisoning of rivers, oceans, and air. Driven by greed, ignorant of their connectedness to the whole, humans persist in behavior that, if continued unchecked, can only result in their own destruction.

The collective manifestations of the insanity that lies at the heart of the human condition constitute the greater part of human history. It is to a large extent a history of madness. If the history of humanity were the clinical case history of a single human being, the diagnosis would have to be: chronic paranoid delusions, a pathological propensity to commit murder and acts of extreme violence and cruelty against his perceived “enemies”—his own unconsciousness projected outward. Criminally insane, with a few brief lucid intervals.

Fear, greed, and the desire for power are the psychological motivating forces not only behind warfare and violence between nations, tribes, religions, and ideologies, but also the cause of incessant conflict in personal relationships. They bring about a distortion in your perception of other people and yourself. Through them, you misinterpret every situation, leading to misguided action designed to rid you of fear and satisfy your need for *more*, a bottomless hole that can never be filled.

It is important to realize, however, that fear, greed, and the desire for power are not the dysfunction that we are speaking of, but are themselves created by the dysfunction, which is a deep-seated collective delusion that lies within the mind of each human being. A number of spiritual teachings tell us to let go of fear and desire. But those spiritual practices are usually unsuccessful. They haven't gone to the root of the dysfunction. Fear, greed, and desire for power are not the ultimate causal factors. Trying to become a good or better human being sounds like a commendable and high-minded thing to do, yet it is an endeavor you cannot ultimately succeed in unless there is a shift in consciousness. This is because it is still part of the same dysfunction, a more subtle and rarified form of self-enhancement, of desire for more and a strengthening of one's conceptual identity, one's self-image. You do not become good by trying to be good, but by finding the goodness that is already within you, and allowing that goodness to emerge. But it can only emerge if something fundamental changes in your state of consciousness.

The history of Communism, originally inspired by noble ideals, clearly illustrates what happens when people attempt to change external reality—create a new earth—without any prior change in their inner reality, their state of consciousness. They make plans without taking into account the blueprint for dysfunction that every human being carries within: the ego.

THE ARISING NEW CONSCIOUSNESS

Most ancient religions and spiritual traditions share the common insight—that our "normal" state of mind is marred by a fundamental defect. However, out of this insight into the nature of the human condition—we may call it the bad news—arises a second insight: the good news of the possibility of a radical transformation of human consciousness. In Hindu teachings (and sometimes in Buddhism also), this transformation is called *enlightenment*. In the teachings of Jesus, it is *salvation*, and in Buddhism, it is *the end of suffering*. *Liberation* and *awakening* are other terms used to describe this transformation.

The greatest achievement of humanity is not its works of art, science, or technology, but the recognition of its own dysfunction, its own madness. In the distant past, this recognition already came to a few individuals. A man called Gautama Siddhartha, who lived 2,600 years ago in India, was perhaps the first who saw it with absolute clarity. Later, the title Buddha was conferred upon him. *Buddha* means "the awakened one." At about the same time, another of humanity's early awakened teachers emerged in China. His name was Lao Tzu. He left a record of his teaching in the form of one of the most profound spiritual books ever written, the *Tao Te Ching*.

To recognize one's own insanity is, of course, the arising of sanity, the beginning of healing and transcendence. A new dimension of consciousness had begun to emerge on the planet, a first tentative flowering. Those rare individuals then spoke to their contemporaries. They spoke of sin, of suffering, of delusion. They said, "Look how you live. See what you are doing, the suffering you create." They then pointed to the possibility of awakening from the collective nightmare of "normal" human existence. They showed the way.

The world was not yet ready for them, and yet they were a vital and necessary part of human awakening. Inevitably, they were mostly misunderstood by their contemporaries, as well as by subsequent generations. Their teachings, although both simple and powerful, became distorted and misinterpreted, in some cases even as they were recorded in writing by their disciples. Over the centuries, many things were added that had nothing to do with the original teachings, but were reflections of a fundamental misunderstanding. Some of the teachers were ridiculed, reviled, or killed; others came to be worshiped as gods. Teachings that pointed the way beyond the dysfunction of the human mind, the way out of the collective insanity, were distorted and became themselves part of the insanity.

And so religions, to a large extent, became divisive rather than unifying forces. Instead of bringing about an ending of violence and hatred through a realization of the fundamental oneness of all life, they brought more violence and hatred, more divisions between people as well as between different religions and even within the same religion. They became ideologies, belief systems people could identify with and so use them to enhance their false sense of self. Through them, they could make themselves "right" and others "wrong" and thus define their identity through their enemies, the "others," the "nonbelievers" or "wrong believers" who not infrequently they saw themselves justified in killing. Man made "God" in his own image. The eternal, the infinite, and unnameable was reduced to a mental idol that you had to believe in and worship as "my god" or "our god."

And yet…and yet…in spite of all the insane deeds perpetrated in the name of religion, the Truth to which they point still shines at their core. It still shines, however dimly, through layers upon layers of distortion and misinterpretation. It is unlikely, however, that you will be able to perceive it there unless you have at least already had glimpses of that Truth within yourself. Throughout history, there have always been rare individuals who experienced a shift in consciousness and so realized within themselves that toward which all religions point. To describe that nonconceptual Truth, they then used the conceptual framework of their own religions.

Through some of those men and women, "schools" or movements developed within all major religions that represented not only a rediscovery, but in some cases an intensification of the light of the original teaching. This is how Gnosticism and mysticism came into existence in early and medieval Christianity, Sufism in the Islamic religion, Hasidism and Kabbala in Judaism, Advaita Vedanta in Hinduism, Zen and Dzogchen in Buddhism. Most of these schools were iconoclastic. They did away with layers upon layers of deadening conceptualization and mental belief structures, and for this reason most of them were viewed with suspicion and often hostility by the established religious hierarchies. Unlike mainstream religion, their teachings emphasized realization and inner transformation. It is through those esoteric schools or movements that the major religions regained the transformative power of the original teachings, although in most cases, only a small minority of people had access to them. Their numbers were never large enough to have any significant impact on the deep collective unconsciousness of the majority. Over time, some of those schools themselves became too rigidly formalized or conceptualized to remain effective.

SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION

What is the role of the established religions in the arising of the new consciousness? Many people are already aware of the difference between spirituality and religion. They realize that having a belief system—a set of thoughts that you regard as the absolute truth—does not make you spiritual no matter what the nature of those beliefs is. In fact, the more you make your thoughts (beliefs) into your identity, the more cut off you are from the spiritual dimension within yourself. Many "religious" people are stuck at that level. They equate truth with thought, and as they are completely identified with thought (their mind), they claim to be in sole possession of the truth in an unconscious attempt to protect their identity. They don't realize the limitations of thought. Unless you believe (think) exactly as they do, you are wrong in their eyes, and in the not-too-distant past, they would have felt justified in killing you for that. And some still do, even now.

The new spirituality, the transformation of consciousness, is arising to a large extent outside of the structures of the existing institutionalized religions. There were always pockets of spirituality even in mind-dominated religions, although the institutionalized hierarchies felt threatened by them and often tried to suppress them. A large-scale opening of spirituality outside of the religious structures is an entirely new development. In the past, this would have been inconceivable, especially in the West, the most mind-dominated of all cultures, where the Christian church had a virtual franchise on spirituality. You couldn't just stand up and give a spiritual talk or publish a spiritual book unless you were sanctioned by the church, and if you were not, they would quickly silence you. But now, even within certain churches and religions, there are signs of change. It is heartwarming, and one is grateful for even the slightest signs of openness, such as Pope John Paul II visiting a mosque as well as a synagogue.

Partly as a result of the spiritual teachings that have arisen outside the established religions, but also due to an influx of the ancient Eastern wisdom teachings, a growing number of followers of traditional religions are able to let go of identification with form, dogma, and rigid belief systems and discover the original depth that is hidden within their own spiritual tradition at the same time as they discover the depth within themselves. They realize that how "spiritual" you are has nothing to do with what you believe but everything to do with your state of consciousness. This, in turn, determines how you act in the world and interact with others.

Those unable to look beyond form become even more deeply entrenched in their beliefs, that is to say, in their mind. We are witnessing not only an unprecedented influx of consciousness at this time but also an entrenchment and intensification of the ego. Some religious institutions will be open to the new consciousness; others will harden their doctrinal positions and become part of all those other man-made structures through which the collective ego will defend itself and "fight back." Some churches, sects, cults, or religious movements are basically collective egoic entities, as rigidly identified with their mental positions as the followers of any political ideology that is closed to any alternative interpretation of reality.

But the ego is destined to dissolve, and all its ossified structures, whether they be religious or other institutions, corporations, or governments, will disintegrate from within, no matter how deeply entrenched they appear to be. The most rigid structures, the most impervious to change, will collapse first. This has already happened in the case of Soviet Communism. How deeply entrenched, how solid and monolithic it appeared, and yet within a few years, it disintegrated from within. No one foresaw this. All were taken by surprise. There are many more such surprises in store for us.

THE URGENCY OF TRANSFORMATION

When faced with a radical crisis, when the old way of being in the world, of interacting with each other and with the realm of nature doesn't work anymore, when survival is threatened by seemingly insurmountable problems, an individual life-form—or a species—will either die or become extinct or rise above the limitations of its condition through an evolutionary leap.

It is believed that the life-forms on this planet first evolved in the sea. When there were no animals yet to be found on land, the sea was already teeming with life. Then at some point, one of the sea creatures must have started to venture onto dry land. It would perhaps crawl a few inches at first, then, exhausted by the enormous gravitational pull of the planet, it would return to the water, where gravity is almost nonexistent and where it could live with much greater ease. And then it tried again and again and again, and much later would adapt to life on land, grow feet instead of fins, develop lungs instead of gills. It seems unlikely that a species would venture into such an alien environment and undergo an evolutionary transformation unless it was compelled to do so by some crisis situation. There may have been a large sea area that got cut off from the main ocean where the water gradually receded over thousands of years, forcing fish to leave their habitat and evolve.

Responding to a radical crisis that threatens our very survival—this is humanity's challenge now. The dysfunction of the egoic human mind, recognized already more than 2,500 years ago by the ancient wisdom teachers and now magnified through science and technology, is for the first time threatening the survival of the planet. Until very recently, the transformation of human consciousness—also pointed to by the ancient teachers—was no more than a possibility, realized by a few rare individuals here and there, irrespective of cultural or religious background. A widespread flowering of human consciousness did not happen because it was not yet imperative.

A significant portion of the earth's population will soon recognize, if they haven't already done so, that humanity is now faced with a stark choice: Evolve or die. A still relatively small but rapidly growing percentage of humanity is already experiencing within themselves the breakup of the old egoic mind patterns and the emergence of a new dimension of consciousness.

What is arising now is not a new belief system, a new religion, spiritual ideology, or mythology. We are coming to the end not only of mythologies but also of ideologies and belief systems. The change goes deeper than the content of your mind, deeper than your thoughts. In fact, at the heart of the new consciousness lies the transcendence of thought, the newfound ability of rising above thought, of realizing a dimension within yourself that is infinitely more vast than thought. You then no longer derive your identity, your sense of who you are, from the incessant stream of thinking that in the old consciousness you take to be yourself. What a liberation to realize that the "voice in my head" is not who I am. Who am I then? The one who sees that. The awareness that is prior to thought, the space in which the thought—or the emotion or sense perception—happens.

Ego is no more than this: identification with form, which primarily means thought forms. If evil has any reality—and it has a relative, not an absolute, reality—this is also its definition: complete identification with form—physical forms, thought forms, emotional forms. This results in a total unawareness of my connectedness with the whole, my intrinsic oneness with every "other" as well as with the Source. This forgetfulness is original sin, suffering, delusion. When this delusion of utter separateness underlies and governs whatever I think, say, and do, what kind of world do I create? To find the answer to this, observe how humans relate to each other, read a history book, or watch the news on television tonight.

If the structures of the human mind remain unchanged, we will always end up re-creating fundamentally the same world, the same evils, the same dysfunction.

A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH

The inspiration for the title of this book came from a Bible prophecy that seems more applicable now than at any other time in human history. It occurs in both the Old and the New Testament and speaks of the collapse of the existing world order and the arising of "a new heaven and a new earth."[1] We need to understand here that heaven is not a location but refers to the inner realm of consciousness. This is the esoteric meaning of the word, and this is also its meaning in the teachings of Jesus. Earth, on the other hand, is the outer manifestation in form, which is always a reflection of the inner. Collective human consciousness and life on our planet are intrinsically connected. *"A new heaven" is the emergence of a transformed state of human consciousness, and "a new earth" is its reflection in the physical realm.* Since human life and human consciousness are intrinsically one with the life of the planet, as the old consciousness dissolves, there are bound to be synchronistic geographic and climatic natural upheavals in many parts of the planet, some of which we are already witnessing now.

CHAPTER TWO

Ego: The Current State of Humanity

Words, no matter whether they are vocalized and made into sounds or remain unspoken as thoughts, can cast an almost hypnotic spell upon you. You easily lose yourself in them, become hypnotized into implicitly believing that when you have attached a word to something, you know what it is. The fact is: You don't know what it is. You have only covered up the mystery with a label. Everything, a bird, a tree, even a simple stone, and certainly a human being, is ultimately unknowable. This is because it has unfathomable depth. All we can perceive, experience, think about, is the surface layer of reality, less than the tip of an iceberg.

Underneath the surface appearance, everything is not only connected with everything else, but also with the Source of all life out of which it came. Even a stone, and more easily a flower or a bird, could show you the way back to God, to the Source, to yourself. When you look at it or hold it and *let it be* without imposing a word or mental label on it, a sense of awe, of wonder, arises within you. Its essence silently communicates itself to you and reflects your own essence back to you. This is what great artists sense and succeed in conveying in their art. Van Gogh didn't say: "That's just an old chair." He looked, and looked, and looked. He sensed the Beingness of the chair. Then he sat in front of the canvas and took up the brush. The chair itself would have sold for the equivalent of a few dollars. The painting of that same chair today would fetch in excess of $25 million.

When you don't cover up the world with words and labels, a sense of the miraculous returns to your life that was lost a long time ago when humanity, instead of using thought, became possessed by thought. A depth returns to your life. Things regain their newness, their freshness. And the greatest miracle is the experiencing of your essential self as prior to any words, thoughts, mental labels, and images. For this to happen, you need to disentangle your sense of I, of Beingness, from all the things it has become mixed up with, that is to say, identified with. That disentanglement is what this book is about.

The quicker you are in attaching verbal or mental labels to things, people, or situations, the more shallow and lifeless your reality becomes, and the more deadened you become to reality, the miracle of life that continuously unfolds within and around you. In this way, cleverness may be gained, but wisdom is lost, and so are joy, love, creativity, and aliveness. They are concealed in the still gap between the perception and the interpretation. Of course we have to use words and thoughts. They have their own beauty—but do we need to become imprisoned in them?

Words reduce reality to something the human mind can grasp, which isn't very much. Language consists of five basic sounds produced by the vocal cords. They are the vowels *a, e, i, o, u*. The other sounds are consonants produced by air pressure: *s, f, g*, and so forth. Do you believe some combination of such basic sounds could ever explain who you are, or the ultimate purpose of the universe, or even what a tree or stone is in its depth?

THE ILLUSORY SELF

The word "I" embodies the greatest error and the deepest truth, depending on how it is used. In conventional usage, it is not only one of the most frequently used words in the language (together with the related words: "me," "my," "mine," and "myself") but also one of the most misleading. In normal everyday usage, "I" embodies the primordial error, a misperception of who you are, an illusory sense of identity. This is the ego. This illusory sense of self is what Albert Einstein, who had deep insights not only into the reality of space and time but also into human nature, referred to as "an optical illusion of consciousness." That illusory self then becomes the basis for all further interpretations, or rather misinterpretations of reality, all thought processes, interactions, and relationships. Your reality becomes a reflection of the original illusion.

The good news is: If you can recognize illusion as illusion, it dissolves. The recognition of illusion is also its ending. Its survival depends on your mistaking it for reality. In the seeing of who you are not, the reality of who you are emerges by itself. This is what happens as you slowly and carefully read this and the next chapter, which are about the mechanics of the false self we call the ego. So what is the nature of this illusory self ?

What you usually refer to when you say "I" is not who you are. By a monstrous act of reductionism, the infinite depth of who you are is confused with a sound produced by the vocal cords or the thought of "I" in your mind and whatever the "I" has identified with. So what do the usual "I" and the related "me," "my," or "mine" refer to?

When a young child learns that a sequence of sounds produced by the parents' vocal cords is his or her name, the child begins to equate a word, which in the mind becomes a thought, with who he or she is. At that stage, some children refer to themselves in the third person. "Johnny is hungry." Soon after, they learn the magic word "I" and equate it with their name, which they have already equated with who they are. Then other thoughts come and merge with the original I-thought. The next step are thoughts of me and mine to designate things that are somehow part of "I." This is identification with objects, which means investing *things*, but ultimately thoughts that represent things, with a sense of self, thereby deriving an identity from them. When "my" toy breaks or is taken away, intense suffering arises. Not because of any intrinsic value that the toy has—the child will soon lose interest in it, and it will be replaced by other toys, other objects—but because of the thought of "mine." The toy became part of the child's developing sense of self, of "I."

And so as the child grows up, the original I-thought attracts other thoughts to itself: It becomes identified with a gender, possessions, the sense-perceived body, a nationality, race, religion, profession. Other things the "I" identifies with are roles—mother, father, husband, wife, and so on—accumulated knowledge or opinions, likes and dislikes, and also things that happened to "me" in the past, the memory of which are thoughts that further define my sense of self as "me and my story." These are only some of the things people derive their sense of identity from. They are ultimately no more than thoughts held together precariously by the fact that they are all invested with a sense of self. This mental construct is what you normally refer to when you say "I." To be more precise: Most of the time it is not you who speaks when you say or think "I" but some aspect of that mental construct, the egoic self. Once you awaken, you still use the word "I," but it will come from a much deeper place within yourself.

Most people are still completely identified with the incessant stream of mind, of compulsive thinking, most of it repetitive and pointless. There is no "I" apart from their thought processes and the emotions that go with them. This is the meaning of being spiritually unconscious. When told that there is a voice in their head that never stops speaking, they say, "What voice?" or angrily deny it, which of course *is* the voice, is the thinker, is the unobserved mind. It could almost be looked upon as an entity that has taken possession of them.

Some people never forget the first time they disidentified from their thoughts and thus briefly experienced the shift in identity from being the content of their mind to being the awareness in the background. For others it happens in such a subtle way they hardly notice it, or they just notice an influx of joy or inner peace without knowing the reason.

THE VOICE IN THE HEAD

That first glimpse of awareness came to me when I was a first-year student at the University of London. I would take the tube (subway) twice a week to go to the university library, usually around nine o'clock in the morning, toward the end of the rush hour. One time a woman in her early thirties sat opposite me. I had seen her before a few times on that train. One could not help but notice her. Although the train was full, the seats on either side of her were unoccupied, the reason being, no doubt, that she appeared to be quite insane. She looked extremely tense and talked to herself incessantly in a loud and angry voice. She was so absorbed in her thoughts that she was totally unaware, it seemed, of other people or her surroundings. Her head was facing downward and slightly to the left, as if she were addressing someone sitting in the empty seat next to her. Although I don't remember the precise content, her monologue went something like this: "And then she said to me…so I said to her you are a liar how dare you accuse me of…when you are the one who has always taken advantage of me I trusted you and you betrayed my trust…." There was the angry tone in her voice of someone who has been wronged, who needs to defend her position lest she become annihilated.

As the train approached Tottenham Court Road Station, she stood up and walked toward the door with still no break in the stream of words coming out of her mouth. That was my stop too, so I got off behind her. At street level, she began to walk toward Bedford Square, still engaged in her imaginary dialogue, still angrily accusing and asserting her position. My curiosity aroused, I decided to follow her as long as she was walking in the same general direction I had to go in. Although engrossed in her imaginary dialogue, she seemed to know where she was going. Soon we were within sight of the imposing structure of Senate House, a 1930s high-rise, the university's central administrative building and library. I was shocked. Was it possible that we were going to the same place? Yes, that's where she was heading. Was she a teacher, a student, an office worker, a librarian? Maybe she was some psychologist's research project. I never knew the answer. I walked twenty steps behind her, and by the time I entered the building (which ironically was the location of the headquarters of the "Mind Police" in the film version of George Orwell's novel, *1984*), she had already been swallowed up by one of the elevators.

I was somewhat taken aback by what I had just witnessed. A mature first-year student at twenty-five, I saw myself as an intellectual in the making, and I was convinced that all the answers to the dilemmas of human existence could be found through the intellect, that is to say, by thinking. I didn't realize yet that thinking without awareness *is* the main dilemma of human existence. I looked upon the professors as sages who had all the answers and upon the university as the temple of knowledge. How could an insane person like her be part of this?

I was still thinking about her when I was in the men's room prior to entering the library. As I was washing my hands, I thought: I hope I don't end up like her. The man next to me looked briefly in my direction, and I suddenly was shocked when I realized that I hadn't just thought those words, but mumbled them aloud. "Oh my God, I'm already like her," I thought. Wasn't my mind as incessantly active as hers? There were only minor differences between us. The predominant underlying emotion behind her thinking seemed to be anger. In my case, it was mostly anxiety. She thought out loud. I thought—mostly—in my head. If she was mad, then everyone was mad, including myself. There were differences in degree only.

For a moment, I was able to stand back from my own mind and see it from a deeper perspective, as it were. There was a brief shift from thinking to awareness. I was still in the men's room, but alone now, looking at my face in the mirror. At that moment of detachment from my mind, I laughed out loud. It may have sounded insane, but it was the laughter of sanity, the laughter of the big-bellied Buddha. "Life isn't as serious as my mind makes it out to be." That's what the laughter seemed to be saying. But it was only a glimpse, very quickly to be forgotten. I would spend the next three years in anxiety and depression, completely identified with my mind. I had to get close to suicide before awareness returned, and then it was much more than a glimpse. I became free of compulsive thinking and of the false, mind-made I.

The above incident not only gave me a first glimpse of awareness, it also planted the first doubt as to the absolute validity of the human intellect. A few months later, something tragic happened that made my doubt grow. On a Monday morning, we arrived for a lecture to be given by a professor whose mind I admired greatly, only to be told that sadly he had committed suicide sometime during the weekend by shooting himself. I was stunned. He was a highly respected teacher and seemed to have all the answers. However, I could as yet see no alternative to the cultivation of thought. I didn't realize yet that thinking is only a tiny aspect of the consciousness that we are, nor did I know anything about the ego, let alone being able to detect it within myself.

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE OF THE EGO

The egoic mind is completely conditioned by the past. Its conditioning is twofold: It consists of content and structure.

In the case of a child who cries in deep suffering because his toy has been taken away, the toy represents content. It is interchangeable with any other content, any other toy or object. The content you identify with is conditioned by your environment, your upbringing, and surrounding culture. Whether the child is rich or poor, whether the toy is a piece of wood shaped like an animal or a sophisticated electronic gadget makes no difference as far as the suffering caused by its loss is concerned. The reason why such acute suffering occurs is concealed in the word "my," and it is structural. The unconscious compulsion to enhance one's identity through association with an object is built into the very structure of the egoic mind.

One of the most basic mind structures through which the ego comes into existence is identification. The word "identification" is derived from the Latin word *idem*, meaning "same" and *facere*, which means "to make." So when I identify with something, I "make it the same." The same as what? The same as I. I endow it with a sense of self, and so it becomes part of my "identity." One of the most basic levels of identification is with things: My toy later becomes my car, my house, my clothes, and so on. I try to find myself in things but never quite make it and end up losing myself in them. That is the fate of the ego.

IDENTIFICATION WITH THINGS

The people in the advertising industry know very well that in order to sell things that people don't really need, they must convince them that those things will add something to how they see themselves or are seen by others; in other words, add something to their sense of self. They do this, for example, by telling you that you will stand out from the crowd by using this product and so by implication be more fully yourself. Or they may create an association in your mind between the product and a famous person, or a youthful, attractive, or happy-looking person. Even pictures of old or deceased celebrities in their prime work well for that purpose. The unspoken assumption is that by buying this product, through some magical act of appropriation, you become like them, or rather the surface image of them. And so in many cases you are not buying a product but an "identity enhancer." Designer labels are primarily collective identities that you buy into. They are expensive and therefore "exclusive." If everybody could buy them, they would lose their psychological value and all you would be left with would be their material value, which likely amounts to a fraction of what you paid.

What kind of things you identify with will vary from person to person according to age, gender, income, social class, fashion, the surrounding culture, and so on. *What* you identify with is all to do with content; whereas, the unconscious compulsion to identify is structural. It is one of the most basic ways in which the egoic mind operates.

Paradoxically, what keeps the so-called consumer society going is the fact that trying to find yourself through things doesn't work: The ego satisfaction is short-lived and so you keep looking for more, keep buying, keep consuming.

Of course, in this physical dimension that our surface selves inhabit, things are a necessary and inescapable part of our lives. We need housing, clothes, furniture, tools, transportation. There may also be things in our lives that we value because of their beauty or inherent quality. We need to honor the world of things, not despise it. Each thing has Beingness, is a temporary form that has its origin within the formless one Life, the source of all things, all bodies, all forms. In most ancient cultures, people believed that everything, even so-called inanimate objects, had an indwelling spirit, and in this respect they were closer to the truth than we are today. When you live in a world deadened by mental abstraction, you don't sense the aliveness of the universe anymore. Most people don't inhabit a living reality, but a conceptualized one.

But we cannot really honor things if we use them as a means to self-enhancement, that is to say, if we try to find ourselves through them. This is exactly what the ego does. Ego-identification with things creates attachment to things, obsession with things, which in turn creates our consumer society and economic structures where the only measure of progress is always *more*. The unchecked striving for more, for endless growth, is a dysfunction and a disease. It is the same dysfunction the cancerous cell manifests, whose only goal is to multiply itself, unaware that it is bringing about its own destruction by destroying the organism of which it is a part. Some economists are so attached to the notion of growth that they can't let go of that word, so they refer to recession as a time of "negative growth."

A large part of many people's lives is consumed by an obsessive preoccupation with things. This is why one of the ills of our times is object proliferation. When you can no longer feel the life that you are, you are likely to try to fill up your life with things. As a spiritual practice, I suggest that you investigate your relationship with the world of things through self-observation, and in particular, things that are designated with the word "my." You need to be alert and honest to find out, for example, whether your sense of self-worth is bound up with things you possess. Do certain things induce a subtle feeling of importance or superiority? Does the lack of them make you feel inferior to others who have more than you? Do you casually mention things you own or show them off to increase your sense of worth in someone else's eyes and through them in your own? Do you feel resentful or angry and somehow diminished in your sense of self when someone else has more than you or when you lose a prized possession?

THE LOST RING

When I was seeing people as a counselor and spiritual teacher, I would visit a woman twice a week whose body was riddled with cancer. She was a schoolteacher in her midforties and had been given no more than a few months to live by her doctors. Sometimes a few words were spoken during those visits, but mostly we would sit together in silence, and as we did, she had her first glimpses of the stillness within herself that she never knew existed during her busy life as a schoolteacher.

One day, however, I arrived to find her in a state of great distress and anger. "What happened?" I asked. Her diamond ring, of great monetary as well as sentimental value, had disappeared, and she said she was sure it had been stolen by the woman who came to look after her for a few hours every day. She said she didn't understand how anybody could be so callous and heartless as to do this to her. She asked me whether she should confront the woman or whether it would be better to call the police immediately. I said I couldn't tell her what to do, but asked her to find out how important a ring or anything else was at this point in her life. "You don't understand," she said. "This was my grandmother's ring. I used to wear it every day until I got ill and my hands became too swollen. It's more than just a ring to me. How can I not be upset?"

The quickness of her response and the anger and defensiveness in her voice were indications that she had not yet become present enough to look within and to disentangle her reaction from the event and observe them both. Her anger and defensiveness were signs that the ego was still speaking through her. I said, "I am going to ask you a few questions, but instead of answering them now, see if you can find the answers within you. I will pause briefly after each question. When an answer comes, it may not necessarily come in the form of words." She said she was ready to listen. I asked: "Do you realize that you will have to let go of the ring at some point, perhaps quite soon? How much more time do you need before you will be ready to let go of it? Will you become less when you let go of it? Has *who you are* become diminished by the loss?" There were a few minutes of silence after the last question.

When she started speaking again, there was a smile on her face, and she seemed at peace. "The last question made me realize something important. First I went to my mind for an answer and my mind said, 'Yes, of course you have been diminished.' Then I asked myself the question again, 'Has who I am become diminished?' This time I tried to feel rather than think the answer. And suddenly I could feel my I Am-ness. I have never felt that before. If I can feel the I Am so strongly, then who I am hasn't been diminished at all. I can still feel it now, something peaceful but very alive."

"That is the joy of Being," I said. "You can only feel it when you get out of your head. Being must be felt. It can't be thought. The ego doesn't know about it because thought is what it consists of. The ring was really in your head as a thought that you confused with the sense of I Am. You thought the I Am or a part of it was in the ring.

"Whatever the ego seeks and gets attached to are substitutes for the Being that it cannot feel. You can value and care for things, but whenever you get attached to them, you will know it's the ego. And you are never really attached to a thing but to a thought that has 'I,' 'me,' or 'mine' in it. Whenever you completely accept a loss, you go beyond ego, and who you are, the I Am which is consciousness itself, emerges."

She said, "Now I understand something Jesus said that never made much sense to me before: 'If someone takes your shirt, let him have your coat as well.'"

"That's right," I said. "It doesn't mean you should never lock your door. All it means is that sometimes letting things go is an act of far greater power than defending or hanging on."

In the last few weeks of her life as her body became weaker, she became more and more radiant, as if light were shining through her. She gave many of her possessions away, some to the woman she thought had stolen the ring, and with each thing she gave away, her joy deepened. When her mother called me to let me know she had passed away, she also mentioned that after her death they found her ring in the medicine cabinet in the bathroom. Did the woman return the ring, or had it been there all the time? Nobody will ever know. One thing we do know: Life will give you whatever experience is most helpful for the evolution of your consciousness. How do you know this is the experience you need? Because this is the experience you are having at this moment.

Is it wrong then to be proud of one's possessions or to feel resentful toward people who have more than you? Not at all. That sense of pride, of needing to stand out, the apparent enhancement of one's self through "more than" and diminishment through "less than" is neither right nor wrong—it is the ego. The ego isn't wrong; it's just unconscious. When you observe the ego in yourself, you are beginning to go beyond it. Don't take the ego too seriously. When you detect egoic behavior in yourself, smile. At times you may even laugh. How could humanity have been taken in by this for so long? Above all, know that the ego isn't personal. It isn't who you are. If you consider the ego to be your personal problem, that's just more ego.

THE ILLUSION OF OWNERSHIP

To "own" something—what does it really mean? What does it mean to make something "mine"? If you stand on a street in New York, point to a huge skyscraper and say, "That building is mine. I own it," you are either very wealthy or you are delusional or a liar. In any case, you are telling a story in which the thought form "I" and the thought form "building" merge into one. That's how the mental concept of ownership works. If everybody agrees with your story, there will be signed pieces of paper to certify their agreement with it. You are wealthy. If nobody agrees with the story, they will send you to a psychiatrist. You are delusional, or a compulsive liar.

It is important to recognize here that the story and the thought forms that make up the story, whether people agree with it or not, have absolutely nothing to do with who you are. Even if people agree with it, it is ultimately a fiction. Many people don't realize until they are on their deathbed and everything external falls away that *no thing* ever had anything to do with who they are. In the proximity of death, the whole concept of ownership stands revealed as ultimately meaningless. In the last moments of their life, they then also realize that while they were looking throughout their lives for a more complete sense of self, what they were really looking for, their Being, had actually always already been there, but had been largely obscured by their identification with things, which ultimately means identification with their mind.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit," Jesus said, "for theirs will be the kingdom of heaven."[1] What does "poor in spirit" mean? No inner baggage, no identifications. Not with things, nor with any mental concepts that have a sense of self in them. And what is the "kingdom of heaven"? The simple but profound joy of Being that is there when you let go of identifications and so become "poor in spirit."

This is why renouncing all possessions has been an ancient spiritual practice in both East and West. Renunciation of possessions, however, will not automatically free you of the ego. It will attempt to ensure its survival by finding something else to identity with, for example, a mental image of yourself as someone who has transcended all interest in material possessions and is therefore superior, is *more* spiritual than others. There are people who have renounced all possessions but have a bigger ego than some millionaires. If you take away one kind of identification, the ego will quickly find another. It ultimately doesn't mind what it identifies with as long as it has an identity. Anticonsumerism or antiprivate ownership would be another thought form, another mental position, that can replace identification with possessions. Through it you could make yourself right and others wrong. As we shall see later, making yourself right and others wrong is one of the principal egoic mind patterns, one of the main forms of unconsciousness. In other words, the content of the ego may change; the mind structure that keeps it alive does not.

One of the unconscious assumptions is that by identifying with an object through the fiction of ownership, the apparent solidity and permanency of that material object will endow your sense of self with greater solidity and permanency. This applies particularly to buildings and even more so to land since it is the only thing you think you can own that cannot be destroyed. The absurdity of owning something becomes even more apparent in the case of land. In the days of the white settlement, the natives of North America found ownership of land an incomprehensible concept. And so they lost it when the Europeans made them sign pieces of paper that were equally incomprehensible to them. They felt they belonged to the land, but the land did not belong to them.

The ego tends to equate having with Being: I have, therefore I am. And the more I have, the more I am. The ego lives through comparison. How you are seen by others turns into how you see yourself. If everyone lived in a mansion or everyone was wealthy, your mansion or your wealth would no longer serve to enhance your sense of self. You could then move to a simple cabin, give up your wealth, and regain an identity by seeing yourself and being seen as more spiritual than others. How you are seen by others becomes the mirror that tells you what you are like and who you are. The ego's sense of self-worth is in most cases bound up with the worth you have in the eyes of others. You need others to give you a sense of self, and if you live in a culture that to a large extent equates self-worth with how much and what you have, if you cannot look through this collective delusion, you will be condemned to chasing after things for the rest of your life in the vain hope of finding your worth and completion of your sense of self there.

How do you let go of attachment to things? Don't even try. It's impossible. Attachment to things drops away by itself when you no longer seek to find yourself in them. In the meantime, just be aware of your attachment to things. Sometimes you may not know that you are attached to something, which is to say, identified, until you lose it or there is the threat of loss. If you then become upset, anxious, and so on, it means you are attached. If you are aware that you are identified with a thing, the identification is no longer total. "I am the awareness that is aware that there is attachment." That's the beginning of the transformation of consciousness.

WANTING: THE NEED FOR MORE

The ego identifies with having, but its satisfaction in having is a relatively shallow and short-lived one. Concealed within it remains a deep-seated sense of dissatisfaction, of incompleteness, of "not enough." "I don't have enough yet," by which the ego really means, "I *am* not enough yet."

As we have seen, *having*—the concept of ownership—is a fiction created by the ego to give itself solidity and permanency and make itself stand out, make itself special. Since you cannot find yourself through having, however, there is another more powerful drive underneath it that pertains to the structure of the ego: the need for more, which we could also call "wanting." No ego can last for long without the need for more. Therefore, wanting keeps the ego alive much more than having. The ego wants to want more than it wants to have. And so the shallow satisfaction of having is always replaced by more wanting. This is the psychological need for more, that is to say, more things to identify with. It is an addictive need, not an authentic one.

In some cases, the psychological need for more or the feeling of not enough that is so characteristic of the ego becomes transferred to the physical level and so turns into insatiable hunger. The sufferers of bulimia will often make themselves vomit so they can continue eating. Their mind is hungry, not their body. This eating disorder would become healed if the sufferers, instead of being identified with their mind, could get in touch with their body and so feel the true needs of the body rather than the pseudo-needs of the egoic mind.

Some egos know what they want and pursue their aim with grim and ruthless determination—Genghis Khan, Stalin, Hitler, to give just a few larger-than-life examples. The energy behind their wanting, however, creates an opposing energy of equal intensity that in the end leads to their downfall. In the meantime, they make themselves and many others unhappy, or, in the larger-than-life examples, create hell on earth. Most egos have conflicting wants. They want different things at different times or may not even know what they want except that they don't want what is: the present moment. Unease, restlessness, boredom, anxiety, dissatisfaction, are the result of unfulfilled wanting. Wanting is structural, so no amount of content can provide lasting fulfillment as long as that mental structure remains in place. Intense wanting that has no specific object can often be found in the still-developing ego of teenagers, some of whom are in a permanent state of negativity and dissatisfaction.

The physical needs for food, water, shelter, clothing, and basic comforts could be easily met for all humans on the planet, were it not for the imbalance of resources created by the insane and rapacious need for more, the greed of the ego. It finds collective expression in the economic structures of this world, such as the huge corporations, which are egoic entities that compete with each other for more. Their only blind aim is profit. They pursue that aim with absolute ruthlessness. Nature, animals, people, even their own employees, are no more than digits on a balance sheet, lifeless objects to be used, then discarded.

The thought forms of "me" and "mine," of "more than," of "I want," "I need," "I must have," and of "not enough" pertain not to content but to the structure of the ego. The content is interchangeable. As long as you don't recognize those thought forms within yourself, as long as they remain unconscious, you will believe in what they say; you will be condemned to acting out those unconscious thoughts, condemned to seeking and not finding—because when those thought forms operate, no possession, place, person, or condition will ever satisfy you. No content will satisfy you, as long as the egoic structure remains in place. No matter what you have or get, you won't be happy. You will always be looking for something else that promises greater fulfillment, that promises to make your incomplete sense of self complete and fill that sense of lack you feel within.

IDENTIFICATION WITH THE BODY

Apart from objects, another basic form of identification is with "my" body. Firstly, the body is male or female, and so the sense of being a man or woman takes up a significant part of most people's sense of self. Gender becomes identity. Identification with gender is encouraged at an early age, and it forces you into a role, into conditioned patterns of behavior that affect all aspects of your life, not just sexuality. It is a role many people become completely trapped in, even more so in some of the traditional societies than in Western culture where identification with gender is beginning to lessen somewhat. In some traditional cultures, the worst fate a woman can have is to be unwed or barren, and for a man to lack sexual potency and not be able to produce children. Life's fulfillment is perceived to be fulfillment of one's gender identity.

In the West, it is the physical appearance of the body that contributes greatly to the sense of who you think you are: its strength or weakness, its perceived beauty or ugliness relative to others. For many people, their sense of self-worth is intimately bound up with their physical strength, good looks, fitness, and external appearance. Many feel a diminished sense of self-worth because they perceive their body as ugly or imperfect.

In some cases, the mental image or concept of "my body" is a complete distortion of reality. A young woman may think of herself as overweight and therefore starve herself when in fact she is quite thin. She cannot see her body anymore. All she "sees" is the mental concept of her body, which says "I am fat" or "I will become fat." At the root of this condition lies identification with the mind. As people have become more and more mind-identified, which is the intensification of egoic dysfunction, there has also been a dramatic increase in the incidence of anorexia in recent decades. If the sufferer could look at her body without the interfering judgments of her mind or even recognize those judgments for what they are instead of believing in them—or better still, if she could feel her body from within—this would initiate her healing.

Those who are identified with their good looks, physical strength, or abilities experience suffering when those attributes begin to fade and disappear, as of course they will. Their very identity that was based on them is then threatened with collapse. In either case, ugly or beautiful, people derive a significant part of their identity, be it negative or positive, from their body. To be more precise, they derive their identity from the I-thought that they erroneously attach to the mental image or concept of their body, which after all is no more than a physical form that shares the destiny of all forms—impermanence and ultimately decay.

Equating the physical sense-perceived body that is destined to grow old, wither, and die with "I" always leads to suffering sooner or later. To refrain from identifying with the body doesn't mean that you neglect, despise, or no longer care for it. If it is strong, beautiful, or vigorous, you can enjoy and appreciate those attributes—while they last. You can also improve the body's condition through right nutrition and exercise. If you don't equate the body with who you are, when beauty fades, vigor diminishes, or the body becomes incapacitated, this will not affect your sense of worth or identity in any way. In fact, as the body begins to weaken, the formless dimension, the light of consciousness, can shine more easily through the fading form.

It is not just people with good or near-perfect bodies who are likely to equate it with who they are. You can just as easily identify with a "problematic" body and make the body's imperfection, illness, or disability into your identity. You may then think and speak of yourself as a "sufferer" of this or that chronic illness or disability. You receive a great deal of attention from doctors and others who constantly confirm to you your conceptual identity as a sufferer or a patient. You then unconsciously cling to the illness because it has become the most important part of who you perceive yourself to be. It has become another thought form with which the ego can identify. Once the ego has found an identity, it does not want to let go. Amazingly but not infrequently, the ego in search of a stronger identity can and does create illnesses in order to strengthen itself through them.

FEELING THE INNER BODY

Although body-identification is one of the most basic forms of ego, the good news is that it is also the one that you can most easily go beyond. This is done not by trying to convince yourself that you are not your body, but by shifting your attention from the external form of your body and from thoughts about your body—beautiful, ugly, strong, weak, too fat, too thin—to the feeling of aliveness inside it. No matter what your body's appearance is on the outer level, beyond the outer form it is an intensely alive energy field.

If you are not familiar with "inner body" awareness, close your eyes for a moment and find out if there is life inside your hands. Don't ask your mind. It will say, "I can't feel anything." Probably it will also say, "Give me something more interesting to think about." So instead of asking your mind, go to the hands directly. By this I mean become aware of the subtle feeling of aliveness inside them. It is there. You just have to go there with your attention to notice it. You may get a slight tingling sensation at first, then a feeling of energy or aliveness. If you hold your attention in your hands for a while, the sense of aliveness will intensify. Some people won't even have to close their eyes. They will be able to feel their "inner hands" at the same time as they read this. Then go to your feet, keep your attention there for a minute or so, and begin to feel your hands and feet at the same time. Then incorporate other parts of the body —legs, arms, abdomen, chest, and so on—into that feeling until you are aware of the inner body as a global sense of aliveness.

What I call the "inner body" isn't really the body anymore but life energy, the bridge between form and formlessness. Make it a habit to feel the inner body as often as you can. After a while, you won't need to close your eyes anymore to feel it. For example, see if you can feel the inner body whenever you listen to someone. It almost seems like a paradox: When you are in touch with the inner body, you are not identified with your body anymore, nor are you identified with your mind. This is to say, you are no longer identified with form but moving away from form-identification toward formlessness, which we may also call Being. It is your essence identity. Body awareness not only anchors you in the present moment, it is a doorway out of the prison that is the ego. It also strengthens the immune system and the body's ability to heal itself.

FORGETFULNESS OF BEING

Ego is always identification with form, seeking yourself and thereby losing yourself in some form. Forms are not just material objects and physical bodies. More fundamental than the external forms—things and bodies—are the thought forms that continuously arise in the field of consciousness. They are energy formations, finer and less dense than physical matter, but they are forms nonetheless. What you may be aware of as a voice in your head that never stops speaking is the stream of incessant and compulsive thinking. When every thought absorbs your attention completely, when you are so identified with the voice in your head and the emotions that accompany it that you lose yourself in every thought and every emotion, then you are totally identified with form and therefore in the grip of ego. Ego is a conglomeration of recurring thought forms and conditioned mental-emotional patterns that are invested with a sense of I, a sense of self. Ego arises when your sense of

Beingness, of "I Am," which is formless consciousness, gets mixed up with form. This is the meaning of identification. This is forgetfulness of Being, the primary error, the illusion of absolute separateness that turns reality into a nightmare.

FROM DESCARTES'S ERROR TO SARTRE'S INSIGHT

The seventeenth-century philosopher Descartes, regarded as the founder of modern philosophy, gave expression to this primary error with his famous dictum (which he saw as primary truth): "I think, therefore I am." This was the answer he found to the question "Is there anything I can know with absolute certainty?" He realized that the fact that he was always thinking was beyond doubt, and so he equated thinking with Being, that is to say, identity—I am—with thinking. Instead of the ultimate truth, he had found the root of the ego, but he didn't know that.

It took almost three hundred years before another famous philosopher saw something in that statement that Descartes, as well as everybody else, had overlooked. His name was Jean-Paul Sartre. He looked at Descartes's statement "I think, therefore I am" very deeply and suddenly realized, in his own words, "The consciousness that says 'I am' is not the consciousness that thinks." What did he mean by that? When you are aware that you are thinking, that awareness is not part of thinking. It is a different dimension of consciousness. And it is that awareness that says "I am." If there were nothing but thought in you, you wouldn't even know you are thinking. You would be like a dreamer who doesn't know he is dreaming. You would be as identified with every thought as the dreamer is with every image in the dream. Many people still live like that, like sleepwalkers, trapped in old dysfunctional mind-sets that continuously re-create the same nightmarish reality. When you know you are dreaming, you are awake within the dream. Another dimension of consciousness has come in.

The implication of Sartre's insight is profound, but he himself was still too identified with thinking to realize the full significance of what he had discovered: an emerging new dimension of consciousness.

THE PEACE THAT PASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING

There are many accounts of people who experienced that emerging new dimension of consciousness as a result of tragic loss at some point in their lives. Some lost all of their possessions, others their children or spouse, their social position, reputation, or physical abilities. In some cases, through disaster or war, they lost all of these simultaneously and found themselves with "nothing." We may call this a limit-situation. Whatever they had identified with, whatever gave them their sense of self, had been taken away. Then suddenly and inexplicably, the anguish or intense fear they initially felt gave way to a sacred sense of Presence, a deep peace and serenity and complete freedom from fear. This phenomenon must have been familiar to St. Paul, who used the expression "the peace of God which passeth all understanding."[2] It is indeed a peace that doesn't seem to make sense, and the people who experienced it asked themselves: In the face of *this*, how can it be that I feel such peace?

The answer is simple, once you realize what the ego is and how it works. When forms that you had identified with, that gave you your sense of self, collapse or are taken away, it can lead to a collapse of the ego, since ego *is* identification with form. When there is nothing to identify with anymore, who are you? When forms around you die or death approaches, your sense of Beingness, of I Am, is freed from its entanglement with form: Spirit is released from its imprisonment in matter. You realize your essential identity as formless, as an all-pervasive Presence, of Being prior to all forms, all identifications. You realize your true identity as consciousness itself, rather than what consciousness had identified with. That's the peace of God. The ultimate truth of who you are is not I am this or I am that, but I Am.

Not everybody who experiences great loss also experiences this awakening, this disidentification from form. Some immediately create a strong mental image or thought form in which they see themselves as a victim, whether it be of circumstances, other people, an unjust fate, or God. This thought form and the emotions it creates, such as anger, resentment, self-pity, and so on, they strongly identify with, and it immediately takes the place of all the other identifications that have collapsed through the loss. In other words, the ego quickly finds a new form. The fact that this new form is a deeply unhappy one doesn't concern the ego too much, as long as it has an identity, good or bad. In fact, this new ego will be more contracted, more rigid and impenetrable than the old one.

Whenever tragic loss occurs, you either resist or you yield. Some people become bitter or deeply resentful; others become compassionate, wise, and loving. Yielding means inner acceptance of what is. You are open to life. Resistance is an inner contraction, a hardening of the shell of the ego. You are closed. Whatever action you take in a state of inner resistance (which we could also call negativity) will create more outer resistance, and the universe will not be on your side; life will not be helpful. If the shutters are closed, the sunlight cannot come in. When you yield internally, when you surrender, a new dimension of consciousness opens up. If action is possible or necessary, your action will be in alignment with the whole and supported by creative intelligence, the unconditioned consciousness which in a state of inner openness you become one with. Circumstances and people then become helpful, cooperative. Coincidences happen. If no action is possible, you rest in the peace and inner stillness that come with surrender. You rest in God.

CHAPTER THREE

The Core of Ego

Most people are so completely identified with the voice in the head—the incessant stream of involuntary and compulsive thinking and the emotions that accompany it—that we may describe them as being possessed by their mind. As long as you are completely unaware of this, you take the thinker to be who you are. This is the egoic mind. We call it egoic because there is a sense of self, of I (ego), in every thought—every memory, every interpretation, opinion, viewpoint, reaction, emotion. This is unconsciousness, spiritually speaking. Your thinking, the content of your mind, is of course conditioned by the past: your upbringing, culture, family background, and so on. The central core of all your mind activity consists of certain repetitive and persistent thoughts, emotions, and reactive patterns that you identify with most strongly. This entity is the ego itself.

In most cases, when you say "I," it is the ego speaking, not you, as we have seen. It consists of thought and emotion, of a bundle of memories you identify with as "me and my story," of habitual roles you play without knowing it, of collective identifications such as nationality, religion, race, social class, or political allegiance. It also contains personal identifications, not only with possessions, but also with opinions, external appearance, long-standing resentments, or concepts of yourself as better than or not as good as others, as a success or failure.

The content of the ego varies from person to person, but in every ego the same structure operates. In other words: Egos only differ on the surface. Deep down they are all the same. In what way are they the same? They live on identification and separation. When you live through the mind-made self comprised of thought and emotion that is the ego, the basis for your identity is precarious because thought and emotion are by their very nature ephemeral, fleeting. So every ego is continuously struggling for survival, trying to protect and enlarge itself. To uphold the I-thought, it needs the opposite thought of "the other." The conceptual "I" cannot survive without the conceptual "other." The others are most other when I see them as my enemies. At one end of the scale of this unconscious egoic pattern lies the egoic compulsive habit of faultfinding and complaining about others. Jesus referred to it when he said, "Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?"[1] At the other end of the scale, there is physical violence between individuals and warfare between nations. In the Bible, Jesus' question remains unanswered, but the answer is, of course: Because when I criticize or condemn another, it makes me feel bigger, superior.

COMPLAINING AND RESENTMENT

Complaining is one of the ego's favorite strategies for strengthening itself. Every complaint is a little story the mind makes up that you completely believe in. Whether you complain aloud or only in thought makes no difference. Some egos that perhaps don't have much else to identify with easily survive on complaining alone. When you are in the grip of such an ego, complaining, especially about other people, is habitual and, of course, unconscious, which means you don't know what you are doing. Applying negative mental labels to people, either to their face or more commonly when you speak about them to others or even just think about them, is often part of this pattern. Name-calling is the crudest form of such labeling and of the ego's need to be right and triumph over others: "jerk, bastard, bitch"—all definitive pronouncements that you can't argue with. On the next level down on the scale of unconsciousness, you have shouting and screaming, and not much below that, physical violence.

Resentment is the emotion that goes with complaining and the mental labeling of people and adds even more energy to the ego. Resentment means to feel bitter, indignant, aggrieved, or offended. You resent other people's greed, their dishonesty, their lack of integrity, what they are doing, what they did in the past, what they said, what they failed to do, what they should or shouldn't have done. The ego loves it. Instead of overlooking unconsciousness in others, you make it into their identity. Who is doing that? The unconsciousness in you, the ego. Sometimes the "fault" that you perceive in another isn't even there. It is a total misinterpretation, a projection by a mind conditioned to see enemies and to make itself right or superior. At other times, the fault may be there, but by focusing on it, sometimes to the exclusion of everything else, you amplify it. And what you react to in another, you strengthen in yourself.

Nonreaction to the ego in others is one of the most effective ways not only of going beyond ego in yourself but also of dissolving the collective human ego. But you can only be in a state of nonreaction if you can recognize someone's behavior as coming from the ego, as being an expression of the collective human dysfunction. When you realize it's not personal, there is no longer a compulsion to react as if it were. By not reacting to the ego, you will often be able to bring out the sanity in others, which is the unconditioned consciousness as opposed to the conditioned. At times you may have to take practical steps to protect yourself from deeply unconscious people. This you can do without making them into enemies. Your greatest protection, however, is being conscious. Somebody becomes an enemy if you personalize the unconsciousness that is the ego. Nonreaction is not weakness but strength. Another word for nonreaction is forgiveness. To forgive is to overlook, or rather to look through. You look through the ego to the sanity that is in every human being as his or her essence.

The ego loves to complain and feel resentful not only about other people but also about situations. What you can do to a person, you can also do to a situation: make it into an enemy. The implication is always: This should not be happening; I don't want to be here; I don't want to be doing this; I'm being treated unfairly. And the ego's greatest enemy of all is, of course, the present moment, which is to say, life itself.

Complaining is not to be confused with informing someone of a mistake or deficiency so that it can be put right. And to refrain from complaining doesn't necessarily mean putting up with bad quality or behavior. There is no ego in telling the waiter that your soup is cold and needs to be heated up—if you stick to the facts, which are always neutral. "How dare you serve me cold soup…." That's complaining. There is a "me" here that loves to feel personally offended by the cold soup and is going to make the most of it, a "me" that enjoys making someone wrong. The complaining we are talking about is in the service of the ego, not of change. Sometimes it becomes obvious that the ego doesn't really want change so that it can go on complaining.

See if you can catch, that is to say, notice, the voice in the head, perhaps in the very moment it complains about something, and recognize it for what it is: the voice of the ego, no more than a conditioned mind-pattern, a thought. Whenever you notice that voice, you will also realize that you are not the voice, but the one who is aware of it. In fact, you are the awareness that is aware of the voice. In the background, there is the awareness. In the foreground, there is the voice, the thinker. In this way you are becoming free of the ego, free of the unobserved mind. The moment you become aware of the ego in you, it is strictly speaking no longer the ego, but just an old, conditioned mind-pattern. Ego implies unawareness. Awareness and ego cannot coexist. The old mind-pattern or mental habit may still survive and reoccur for a while because it has the momentum of thousands of years of collective human unconsciousness behind it, but every time it is recognized, it is weakened.

REACTIVITY AND GRIEVANCES

Whereas resentment is often the emotion that goes with complaining, it may also be accompanied by a stronger emotion such as anger or some other form of upset. In this way, it becomes more highly charged energetically. Complaining then turns into reactivity, another of the ego's ways of strengthening itself. There are many people who are always waiting for the next thing to react against, to feel annoyed or disturbed about—and it never takes long before they find it. "This is an outrage," they say. "How dare you…." "I resent this." They are addicted to upset and anger as others are to a drug. Through reacting against this or that they assert and strengthen their feeling of self.

A long-standing resentment is called a grievance. To carry a grievance is to be in a permanent state of "against," and that is why grievances constitute a significant part of many people's ego. Collective grievances can survive for centuries in the psyche of a nation or tribe and fuel a never-ending cycle of violence.

A grievance is a strong negative emotion connected to an event in the sometimes distant past that is being kept alive by compulsive thinking, by retelling the story in the head or out loud of “what someone did to me” or “what someone did to us.” A grievance will also contaminate other areas of your life. For example, while you think about and feel your grievance, its negative emotional energy can distort your perception of an event that is happening in the present or influence the way in which you speak or behave toward someone in the present. One strong grievance is enough to contaminate large areas of your life and keep you in the grip of the ego.

It requires honesty to see whether you still harbor grievances, whether there is someone in your life you have not completely forgiven, an “enemy.” If you do, become aware of the grievance both on the level of thought as well as emotion, that is to say, be aware of the thoughts that keep it alive, and feel the emotion that is the body’s response to those thoughts. Don’t try to let go of the grievance. *Trying* to let go, to forgive, does not work. Forgiveness happens naturally when you see that it has no purpose other than to strengthen a false sense of self, to keep the ego in place. The seeing is freeing. Jesus’ teaching to “Forgive your enemies” is essentially about the undoing of one of the main egoic structures in the human mind.

The past has no power to stop you from being present now. Only your grievance about the past can do that. And what is a grievance? The baggage of old thought and emotion.

BEING RIGHT, MAKING WRONG

Complaining as well as faultfinding and reactivity strengthen the ego’s sense of boundary and separateness on which its survival depends. But they also strengthen the ego in another way by giving it a feeling of superiority on which it thrives. It may not be immediately apparent how complaining, say, about a traffic jam, about politicians, about the “greedy wealthy” or the “lazy unemployed,” or your colleagues or ex-spouse, men or women, can give you a sense of superiority. Here is why. When you complain, by implication you are right and the person or situation you complain about or react against is wrong.

There is nothing that strengthens the ego more than being right. Being right is identification with a mental position—a perspective, an opinion, a judgment, a story. For you to be right, of course, you need someone else to be wrong, and so the ego loves to make wrong in order to be right. In other words: You need to make others wrong in order to get a stronger sense of who you are. Not only a person, but also a situation can be made wrong through complaining and reactivity, which always implies that “this should not be happening.” Being right places you in a position of imagined moral superiority in relation to the person or situation that is being judged and found wanting. It is that sense of superiority the ego craves and through which it enhances itself.

IN DEFENSE OF AN ILLUSION

Facts undoubtedly exist. If you say: “Light travels faster than sound,” and someone else says the opposite is the case, you are obviously right, and he is wrong. The simple observation that lightning precedes thunder could confirm this. So not only are you right, but you know you are right. Is there any ego involved in this? Possibly, but not necessarily. If you are simply stating what you know to be true, the ego is not involved at all, because there is no identification. Identification with what? With mind and a mental position. Such identification, however, can easily creep in. If you find yourself saying, "Believe me, I know" or "Why do you never believe me?" then the ego has already crept in. It is hiding in the little word "me." A simple statement: "Light is faster than sound," although true, is now in the service of illusion, of ego. It has become contaminated with a false sense of "I" it has become personalized, turned into a mental position. The "I" feels diminished or offended because somebody doesn't believe what "I" said.

Ego takes everything personally. Emotion arises, defensiveness, perhaps even aggression. Are you defending the truth? No, the truth, in any case, needs no defense. The light or sound does not care about what you or anybody else thinks. You are defending yourself, or rather the illusion of yourself, the mind-made substitute. It would be even more accurate to say that the illusion is defending itself. If even the simple and straightforward realm of facts can lend itself to egoic distortion and illusion, how much more so the less tangible realm of opinions, viewpoints, and judgments, all of them thought forms that can easily become infused with a sense of "I."

Every ego confuses opinions and viewpoints with facts. Furthermore, it cannot tell the difference between an event and its reaction to that event. Every ego is a master of selective perception and distorted interpretation. Only through awareness—not through thinking—can you differentiate between fact and opinion. Only through awareness are you able to see: There is the situation and here is the anger I feel about it, and then realize there are other ways of approaching the situation, other ways of seeing it and dealing with it. Only through awareness can you see the totality of the situation or person instead of adopting one limited perspective.

TRUTH: RELATIVE OR ABSOLUTE?

Beyond the realm of simple and verifiable facts, the certainty that "I am right and you are wrong" is a dangerous thing in personal relationships as well as in interactions between nations, tribes, religions, and so on.

But if the belief "I am right; you are wrong" is one of the ways in which the ego strengthens itself, if making yourself right and others wrong is a mental dysfunction that perpetuates separation and conflict between human beings, does that mean there is no such thing as right or wrong behavior, action, or belief ? And wouldn't that be the moral relativism that some contemporary Christian teachings see as the great evil of our times?

The history of Christianity is, of course, a prime example of how the belief that you are in sole possession of the truth, that is to say, right, can corrupt your actions and behavior to the point of insanity. For centuries, torturing and burning people alive if their opinion diverged even in the slightest from Church doctrine or narrow interpretations of scripture (the "Truth") was considered right because the victims were "wrong." They were so wrong that they needed to be killed. The Truth was considered more important than human life. And what was the Truth? A story you had to believe in; which means, a bundle of thoughts.

The one million people that mad dictator Pol Pot of Cambodia ordered killed included everybody who wore glasses. Why? To him, the Marxist interpretation of history was the absolute truth, and according to his version of it, those who wore glasses belonged to the educated class, the bourgeoisie, the exploiters of the peasants. They needed to be eliminated to make room for a new social order. His truth also was a bundle of thoughts.

The Catholic and other churches are actually correct when they identify relativism, the belief that there is no absolute truth to guide human behavior, as one of the evils of our times; but you won't find absolute truth if you look for it where it cannot be found: in doctrines, ideologies, sets of rules, or stories. What do all of these have in common? They are made up of thought. Thought can at best point to the truth, but it never *is* the truth. That's why Buddhists say "The finger pointing to the moon is not the moon." All religions are equally false and equally true, depending on how you use them. You can use them in the service of the ego, or you can use them in the service of the Truth. If you believe only your religion is the Truth, you are using it in the service of the ego. Used in such a way, religion becomes ideology and creates an illusory sense of superiority as well as division and conflict between people. In the service of the Truth, religious teachings represent signposts or maps left behind by awakened humans to assist you in spiritual awakening, that is to say, in becoming free of identification with form.

There is only one absolute Truth, and all other truths emanate from it. When you find that Truth, your actions will be in alignment with it. Human action can reflect the Truth, or it can reflect illusion. Can the Truth be put into words? Yes, but the words are, of course, not it. They only point to it.

The Truth is inseparable from who you are. Yes, you *are* the Truth. If you look for it elsewhere, you will be deceived every time. The very Being that you are is Truth. Jesus tried to convey that when he said, "I am the way and the truth and the life."[2] These words uttered by Jesus are one of the most powerful and direct pointers to the Truth, if understood correctly. If misinterpreted, however, they become a great obstacle. Jesus speaks of the innermost I Am, the essence identity of every man and woman, every life-form, in fact. He speaks of the life that you are. Some Christian mystics have called it the Christ within; Buddhists call it your Buddha nature; for Hindus, it is Atman, the indwelling God. When you are in touch with that dimension within yourself—and being in touch with it is your natural state, not some miraculous achievement—all your actions and relationships will reflect the oneness with all life that you sense deep within. This is love. Laws, commandments, rules, and regulations are necessary for those who are cut off from who they are, the Truth within. They prevent the worst excesses of the ego, and often they don't even do that. "Love and do what you will," said St. Augustine. Words cannot get much closer to the Truth than that.

THE EGO IS NOT PERSONAL

On a collective level, the mind-set “We are right and they are wrong” is particularly deeply entrenched in those parts of the world where conflict between two nations, races, tribes, religions, or ideologies is long-standing, extreme, and endemic. Both sides of the conflict are equally identified with their own perspective, their own “story,” that is to say, identified with thought. Both are equally incapable of seeing that another perspective, another story, may exist and also be valid. Israeli writer Y. Halevi speaks of the possibility of “accommodating a competing narrative,”[3] but in many parts of the world, people are not yet able or willing to do that. Both sides believe themselves to be in possession of the truth. Both regard themselves as victims and the “other” as evil, and because they have conceptualized and thereby dehumanized the other as the enemy, they can kill and inflict all kinds of violence on the other, even on children, without feeling their humanity and suffering. They become trapped in an insane spiral of perpetration and retribution, action and reaction.

Here it becomes obvious that the human ego in its collective aspect as “us” against “them” is even more insane than the “me,” the individual ego, although the mechanism is the same. By far the greater part of violence that humans have inflicted on each other is not the work of criminals or the mentally deranged, but of normal, respectable citizens in the service of the collective ego. One can go so far as to say that on this planet “normal” equals insane. What is it that lies at the root of this insanity? Complete identification with thought and emotion, that is to say, ego.

Greed, selfishness, exploitation, cruelty, and violence are still all-pervasive on this planet. When you don’t recognize them as individual and collective manifestations of an underlying dysfunction or mental illness, you fall into the error of personalizing them. You construct a conceptual identity for an individual or group, and you say: “This is who he is. This is who they are.” When you confuse the ego that you perceive in others with their identity, it is the work of your own ego that uses this misperception to strengthen itself through being right and therefore superior, and through reacting with condemnation, indignation, and often anger against the perceived enemy. All this is enormously satisfying to the ego. It strengthens the sense of separation between yourself and the other, whose “otherness” has become magnified to such an extent that you can no longer feel your common humanity, nor the rootedness in the one Life that you share with each human being, your common divinity.

The particular egoic patterns that you react to most strongly in others and misperceive as their identity tend to be the same patterns that are also in you, but that you are unable or unwilling to detect within yourself. In that sense, you have much to learn from your enemies. What is it in them that you find most upsetting, most disturbing? Their selfishness? Their greed? Their need for power and control? Their insincerity, dishonesty, propensity to violence, or whatever it may be? Anything that you resent and strongly react to in another is also in you. But it is no more than a form of ego, and as such, it is completely impersonal. It has nothing to do with who that person is, nor has it anything to do with who you are. Only if you mistake it for who you are can observing it within you be threatening to your sense of self.

WAR IS A MIND-SET

In certain cases, you may need to protect yourself or someone else from being harmed by another, but beware of making it your mission to "eradicate evil," as you are likely to turn into the very thing you are fighting against. Fighting unconsciousness will draw you into unconsciousness yourself. Unconsciousness, dysfunctional egoic behavior, can never be defeated by attacking it. Even if you defeat your opponent, the unconsciousness will simply have moved into you, or the opponent reappears in a new disguise. Whatever you fight, you strengthen, and what you resist, persists.

These days you frequently hear the expression "the war against" this or that, and whenever I hear it, I know that it is condemned to failure. There is the war against drugs, the war against crime, the war against terrorism, the war against cancer, the war against poverty, and so on. For example, despite the war against crime and drugs, there has been a dramatic increase in crime and drug-related offenses in the past twenty-five years. The prison population of the United States has gone up from just under 300,000 in 1980 to a staggering 2.1 million in 2004.[4] The war against disease has given us, amongst other things, antibiotics. At first, they were spectacularly successful, seemingly enabling us to win the war against infectious diseases. Now, many experts agree that the widespread and indiscriminate use of antibiotics has created a time bomb and that antibiotic-resistant strains of bacteria, so-called super bugs, will in all likelihood bring about a reemergence of those diseases and possibly epidemics. According to the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, medical treatment is the third-leading cause of death after heart disease and cancer in the United States. Homeopathy and Chinese medicine are two examples of possible alternative approaches to disease that do not treat the illness as an enemy and therefore do not create new diseases.

War is a mind-set, and all action that comes out of such a mind-set will either strengthen the enemy, the perceived evil, or, if the war is won, will create a new enemy, a new evil equal to and often worse than the one that was defeated. There is a deep interrelatedness between your state of consciousness and external reality. When you are in the grip of a mind-set such as "war," your perceptions become extremely selective as well as distorted. In other words, you will see only what you want to see and then misinterpret it. You can imagine what kind of action comes out of such a delusional system. Or instead of imagining it, watch the news on TV tonight.

Recognize the ego for what it is: a collective dysfunction, the insanity of the human mind. When you recognize it for what it is, you no longer misperceive it as somebody's identity. Once you see the ego for what it is, it becomes much easier to remain nonreactive toward it. You don't take it personally anymore. There is no complaining, blaming, accusing, or making wrong. Nobody is wrong. It is the ego in someone, that's all. Compassion arises when you recognize that all are suffering from the same sickness of the mind, some more acutely than others. You do not fuel the drama anymore that is part of all egoic relationships. What is its fuel? Reactivity. The ego thrives on it.

DO YOU WANT PEACE OR DRAMA?

You want peace. There is no one who does not want peace. Yet there is something else in you that wants the drama, wants the conflict. You may not be able to feel it at this moment. You may have to wait for a situation or even just a thought that triggers a reaction in you: someone accusing you of this or that, not acknowledging you, encroaching on your territory, questioning the way you do things, an argument about money…. Can you then feel the enormous surge of force moving through you, the fear, perhaps being masked by anger or hostility? Can you hear your own voice becoming harsh or shrill, or louder and a few octaves lower? Can you be aware of your mind racing to defend its position, justify, attack, blame? In other words, can you awaken at that moment of unconsciousness? Can you feel that there is something in you that is at war, something that feels threatened and wants to survive at all cost, that needs the drama in order to assert its identity as the victorious character within that theatrical production? Can you feel there is something in you that would rather be right than at peace?

BEYOND EGO: YOUR TRUE IDENTITY

When the ego is at war, know that it is no more than an illusion that is fighting to survive. That illusion thinks it is you. It is not easy at first to *be* there as the witnessing Presence, especially when the ego is in survival mode or some emotional pattern from the past has become activated, but once you have had a taste of it, you will grow in Presence power, and the ego will lose its grip on you. And so a power comes into your life that is far greater than the ego, greater than the mind. All that is required to become free of the ego is to be aware of it, since awareness and ego are incompatible. Awareness is the power that is concealed within the present moment. This is why we may also call it Presence. The ultimate purpose of human existence, which is to say, your purpose, is to bring that power into this world. And this is also why becoming free of the ego cannot be made into a goal to be attained at some point in the future. Only Presence can free you of the ego, and you can only be present Now, not yesterday or tomorrow. Only Presence can undo the past in you and thus transform your state of consciousness.

What is spiritual realization? The belief that you are spirit? No, that's a thought. A little closer to the truth than the thought that believes you are who your birth certificate says you are, but still a thought. Spiritual realization is to see clearly that what I perceive, experience, think, or feel is ultimately not who I am, that I cannot find myself in all those things that continuously pass away. The Buddha was probably the first human being to see this clearly, and so *anata* (no self) became one of the central points of his teaching. And when Jesus said, "Deny thyself," what he meant was: Negate (and thus undo) the illusion of self. If the self—ego—were truly who I am, it would be absurd to "deny" it.

What remains is the light of consciousness in which perceptions, experiences, thoughts, and feelings come and go. That is Being, that is the deeper, true I. When I know myself as that, whatever happens in my life is no longer of absolute but only of relative importance. I honor it, but it loses its absolute seriousness, its heaviness. The only thing that ultimately matters is this: Can I sense my essential Beingness, the I Am, in the background of my life at all times? To be more accurate, can I sense the I Am that I Am at this moment? Can I sense my essential identity as consciousness itself ? Or am I losing myself in what happens, losing myself in the mind, in the world?

ALL STRUCTURES ARE UNSTABLE

Whatever form it takes, the unconscious drive behind ego is to strengthen the image of who I think I am, the phantom self that came into existence when thought—a great blessing as well as a great curse—began to take over and obscured the simple yet profound joy of connectedness with Being, the Source, God. Whatever behavior the ego manifests, the hidden motivating force is always the same: the need to stand out, be special, be in control; the need for power, for attention, for more. And, of course, the need to feel a sense of separation, that is to say, the need for opposition, enemies.

The ego always wants something from other people or situations. There is always a hidden agenda, always a sense of "not enough yet," of insufficiency and lack that needs to be filled. It uses people and situations to get what it wants, and even when it succeeds, it is never satisfied for long. Often it is thwarted in its aims, and for the most part the gap between "I want" and "what is" becomes a constant source of upset and anguish. The famous and now classic pop song, "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction," is the song of the ego. The underlying emotion that governs all the activity of the ego is fear. The fear of being nobody, the fear of nonexistence, the fear of death. All its activities are ultimately designed to eliminate this fear, but the most the ego can ever do is to cover it up temporarily with an intimate relationship, a new possession, or winning at this or that. Illusion will never satisfy you. Only the truth of who you are, if realized, will set you free.

Why fear? Because the ego arises by identification with form, and deep down it knows that no forms are permanent, that they are all fleeting. So there is always a sense of insecurity around the ego even if on the outside it appears confident.

As I was walking with a friend through a beautiful nature reserve near Malibu in California, we came upon the ruins of what had been once a country house, destroyed by a fire several decades ago. As we approached the property, long overgrown with trees and all kinds of magnificent plants, there was a sign by the side of the trail put there by the park authorities. It read: danger. all structures are unstable. I said to my friend, "That's a profound sutra [sacred scripture]." And we stood there in awe. Once you realize and accept that all structures (forms) are unstable, even the seemingly solid material ones, peace arises within you. This is because the recognition of the impermanence of all forms awakens you to the dimension of the formless within yourself, that which is beyond death. Jesus called it "eternal life."

THE EGO'S NEED TO FEEL SUPERIOR

There are many subtle but easily overlooked forms of ego that you may observe in other people and, more important, in yourself. Remember: The moment you become aware of the ego in yourself, that emerging awareness is who you are beyond ego, the deeper "I." The recognition of the false is already the arising of the real.

For example, you are about to tell someone the news of what happened. "Guess what? You don't know yet? Let me tell you." If you are alert enough, present enough, you may be able to detect a momentary sense of satisfaction within yourself just before imparting the news, even if it is bad news. It is due to the fact that for a brief moment there is, in the eyes of the ego, an imbalance in your favor between you and the other person. For that brief moment, you know *more* than the other. The satisfaction that you feel is of the ego, and it is derived from feeling a stronger sense of self relative to the other person. Even if he or she is the president or the pope, you feel superior in that moment because you know *more*. Many people are addicted to gossiping partly for this reason. In addition, gossiping often carries an element of malicious criticism and judgment of others, and so it also strengthens the ego through the implied but imagined moral superiority that is there whenever you apply a negative judgment to anyone.

If someone has more, knows more, or can do more than I, the ego feels threatened because the feeling of "less" diminishes its imagined sense of self relative to the other. It may then try to restore itself by somehow diminishing, criticizing, or belittling the value of the other person's possessions, knowledge, or abilities. Or the ego may shift its strategy, and instead of competing with the other person, it will enhance itself by association with that person, if he or she is important in the eyes of others.

EGO AND FAME

The well-known phenomenon of "name dropping," the casual mention of who you know, is part of the ego's strategy of gaining a superior identity in the eyes of others and therefore in its own eyes through association with someone "important." The bane of being famous in this world is that who you are becomes totally obscured by a collective mental image. Most people you meet want to enhance their identity—the mental image of who they are—through association with you. They themselves may not know that they are not interested in you at all, but only in strengthening their ultimately fictitious sense of self. They believe that through you they can be more. They are looking to complete themselves through you, or rather through the mental image they have of you as a famous person, a larger-than-life collective conceptual identity.

The absurd overvaluation of fame is just one of the many manifestations of egoic madness in our world. Some famous people fall into the same error and identify with the collective fiction, the image people and the media have created of them, and they begin to actually see themselves as superior to ordinary mortals. As a result, they become more and more alienated from themselves and others, more and more unhappy, more and more dependent on their continuing popularity. Surrounded only by people who feed their inflated self-image, they become incapable of genuine relationships.

Albert Einstein, who was admired as almost superhuman and whose fate it was to become one of the most famous people on the planet, never identified with the image the collective mind had created of him. He remained humble, egoless. In fact, he spoke of “a grotesque contradiction between what people consider to be my achievements and abilities and the reality of who I am and what I am capable of.”[5]

This is why it is hard for a famous person to be in a genuine relationship with others. A genuine relationship is one that is not dominated by the ego with its image-making and self-seeking. In a genuine relationship, there is an outward flow of open, alert attention toward the other person in which there is no wanting whatsoever. That alert attention is Presence. It is the prerequisite for any authentic relationship. The ego always either wants something, or if it believes there is nothing to get from the other, it is in a state of utter indifference: It doesn’t care about you. And so, the three predominant states of egoic relationships are: wanting, thwarted wanting (anger, resentment, blaming, complaining), and indifference.

CHAPTER FOUR

Role-playing: The Many Faces of the Ego

An ego that wants something from another—and what ego doesn't—will usually play some kind of role to get its "needs" met, be they material gain, a sense of power, superiority, or specialness, or some kind of gratification, be it physical or psychological. Usually people are completely unaware of the roles they play. They *are* those roles. Some roles are subtle; others are blatantly obvious, except to the person playing it. Some roles are designed simply to get attention from others. The ego thrives on others' attention, which is after all a form of psychic energy. The ego doesn't know that the source of all energy is within you, so it seeks it outside. It is not the formless attention which is Presence that the ego seeks, but attention in some *form*, such as recognition, praise, admiration, or just to be noticed in some way, to have its existence acknowledged.

A shy person who is afraid of the attention of others is not free of ego, but has an ambivalent ego that both wants and fears attention from others. The fear is that the attention may take the form of disapproval or criticism, that is to say, something that diminishes the sense of self rather than enhances it. So the shy person's fear of attention is greater than his or her need of attention. Shyness often goes with a self-concept that is predominately negative, the belief of being inadequate. Any conceptual sense of self—seeing myself as this or that—is ego, whether predominately positive (I am the greatest) or negative (I am no good). Behind every positive self-concept is the hidden fear of not being good enough. Behind every negative self-concept is the hidden desire of being the greatest or better than others. Behind the confident ego's feeling of and continuing need for superiority is the unconscious fear of inferiority. Conversely, the shy, inadequate ego that feels inferior has a strong hidden desire for superiority. Many people fluctuate between feelings of inferiority and superiority, depending on situations or the people they come into contact with. All you need to know and observe in yourself is this: Whenever you feel superior or inferior to anyone, that's the ego in you.

VILLAIN, VICTIM, LOVER

Some egos, if they cannot get praise or admiration, will settle for other forms of attention and play roles to elicit them. If they cannot get positive attention, they may seek negative attention instead, for example, by provoking a negative reaction in someone else. Some children already do that too. They misbehave to get attention. The playing of negative roles becomes particularly pronounced whenever the ego is magnified by an active pain-body, that is to say, emotional pain from the past that wants to renew itself through experiencing more pain. Some egos perpetrate crimes in their search for fame. They seek attention through notoriety and other people's condemnation. "Please tell me that I exist, that I am not insignificant," they seem to say. Such pathological forms of ego are only more extreme versions of normal egos.

A very common role is the one of victim, and the form of attention it seeks is sympathy or pity or others' interest in *my* problems, "me and my story." Seeing oneself as a victim is an element in many egoic patterns, such as complaining, being offended, outraged, and so on. Of course, once I am identified with a story in which I assigned myself the role of victim, I don't want it to end, and so, as every therapist knows, the ego does not want an end to its "problems" because they are part of its identity. If no one will listen to my sad story, I can tell it to myself in my head, over and over, and feel sorry for myself, and so have an identity as someone who is being treated unfairly by life or other people, fate or God. It gives definition to my self-image, makes me into someone, and that is all that matters to the ego.

In the early stages of many so-called romantic relationships, role-playing is quite common in order to attract and keep whoever is perceived by the ego as the one who is going to "make me happy, make me feel special, and fulfill all my needs." "I'll play who you want me to be, and you'll play who I want you to be." That's the unspoken and unconscious agreement. However, role-playing is hard work, and so those roles cannot be sustained indefinitely, especially once you start living together. When those roles slip, what do you see? Unfortunately, in most cases, not yet the true essence of that being, but that which covers up the true essence: the raw ego divested of its roles, with its pain-body, and its thwarted wanting which now turns into anger, most likely directed at the spouse or partner for having failed to remove the underlying fear and sense of lack that is an intrinsic part of the egoic sense of self.

What is commonly called "falling in love" is in most cases an intensification of egoic wanting and needing. You become addicted to another person, or rather to your image of that person. It has nothing to do with true love, which contains no wanting whatsoever. The Spanish language is the most honest in regard to conventional notions of love: *Te quiero* means "I want you" as well as "I love you." The other expression for "I love you," *te amo,* which does not have this ambiguity, is rarely used—perhaps because true love is just as rare.

LETTING GO OF SELF-DEFINITIONS

As tribal cultures developed into the ancient civilizations, certain functions began to be allotted to certain people: ruler, priest or priestess, warrior, farmer, merchant, craftsman, laborer, and so on. A class system developed. Your function, which in most cases you were born into, determined your identity, determined who you were in the eyes of others, as well as in your own eyes. Your function became a role, but it wasn't recognized as a role: It was who you were, or thought you were. Only rare beings at the time, such as the Buddha or Jesus, saw the ultimate irrelevance of caste or social class, recognized it as identification with form and saw that such identification with the conditioned and the temporal obscured the light of the unconditioned and eternal that shines in each human being.

In our contemporary world, the social structures are less rigid, less clearly defined than they used to be. Although most people are, of course, still conditioned by their environment, they are no longer automatically assigned a function and with it an identity. In fact, in the modern world, more and more people are confused as to where they fit in, what their purpose is, and even who they are.

I usually congratulate people when they tell me, "I don't know who I am anymore." Then they look perplexed and ask, "Are you saying it is a good thing to be confused?" I ask them to investigate. What does it mean to be confused? "I don't know" is not confusion. Confusion is: "I don't know, but I should know" or "I don't know, but I need to know." Is it possible to let go of the belief that you should or need to know who you are? In other words, can you cease looking to conceptual definitions to give you a sense of self ? Can you cease looking to *thought* for an identity? When you let go of the belief that you should or need to know who you are, what happens to confusion? Suddenly it is gone. When you fully accept that you don't know, you actually enter a state of peace and clarity that is closer to who you truly are than thought could ever be. Defining yourself through thought is limiting yourself.

PRE-ESTABLISHED ROLES

Of course different people fulfill different functions in this world. It cannot be otherwise. As far as intellectual or physical abilities are concerned—knowledge, skills, talents, and energy levels—human beings differ widely. What really matters is not what function you fulfill in this world, but whether you identify with your function to such an extent that it takes you over and becomes a role that you play. When you play roles, you are unconscious. When you catch yourself playing a role, that recognition creates a space between you and the role. It is the beginning of freedom from the role. When you are completely identified with a role, you confuse a pattern of behavior with who you are, and you take yourself very seriously. You also automatically assign roles to others that correspond to yours. For example, when you visit doctors who are totally identified with their role, to them you will not be a human being but a patient or a case history.

Although the social structures in the contemporary world are less rigid than in ancient cultures, there are still many pre-established functions or roles that people readily identify with and which thus become part of the ego. This causes human interactions to become inauthentic, dehumanized, alienating. Those pre-established roles may give you a somewhat comforting sense of identity, but ultimately, you lose yourself in them. The functions people have in hierarchical organizations, such as the military, the church, a government institution, or large corporation, easily lend themselves to becoming role identities. Authentic human interactions become impossible when you lose yourself in a role.

Some pre-established roles we could call social archetypes. To mention just a few: the middle-class housewife (not as prevalent as it used to be, but still widespread); the tough macho male; the female seductress; the "nonconformist" artist or performer; a person of "culture" (a role quite common in Europe) who displays a knowledge of literature, fine art, and music in the same way as others might display an expensive dress or car. And then there is the universal role of adult. When you play that role, you take yourself and life very seriously. Spontaneity, lightheartedness, and joy are not part of that role.

The hippie movement that originated on the West Coast of the United States in the 1960s and then spread throughout the Western world came out of many young people's rejection of social archetypes, of roles, of pre-established patterns of behavior as well as egoically based social and economic structures. They refused to play the roles their parents and society wanted to impose on them. Significantly, it coincided with the horrors of the Vietnam War, in which more than 57,000 young Americans and 3 million Vietnamese died and through which the insanity of the system and the underlying mind-set was exposed for all to see. Whereas in the 1950s, most Americans were still extremely conformist in thought and behavior, in the 1960s, millions of people began to withdraw their identification with a collective conceptual identity because the insanity of the collective was so obvious. The hippie movement represented a loosening of the hitherto rigid egoic structures in the psyche of humanity. The movement itself degenerated and came to an end, but it left behind an opening, and not just in those who were part of the movement. This made it possible for ancient Eastern wisdom and spirituality to move west and play an essential part in the awakening of global consciousness.

TEMPORARY ROLES

If you are awake enough, aware enough, to be able to observe how you interact with other people, you may detect subtle changes in your speech, attitude, and behavior depending on the person you are interacting with. At first, it may be easier to observe this in others; then, you may also detect it in yourself. The way in which you speak to the chairman of the company may be different in subtle ways from how you speak to the janitor. How you speak to a child may be different from how you speak to an adult. Why is that? You are playing roles. You are not yourself, neither with the chairman nor with the janitor or the child. When you walk into a store to buy something, when you go to a restaurant, the bank, the post office, you may find yourself slipping into pre-established social roles. You become a customer and speak and act as such. And you may be treated by the salesperson or waiter, who is also playing a role, as a customer. A range of conditioned patterns of behavior come into effect between two human beings that determine the nature of the interaction. Instead of human beings, conceptual mental images are interacting with each other. The more identified people are with their respective roles, the more inauthentic the relationships become.

You have a mental image not only of who the other person is, but also of who you are, especially in relation to the person you are interacting with. So *you* are not relating with that person at all, but who you think you are is relating to who you think the other person is and vice versa. The conceptual image your mind has made of yourself is relating to its own creation, which is the conceptual image it has made of the other person. The other person's mind has probably done the same, so every egoic interaction between two people is in reality the interaction between four conceptual mind-made identities that are ultimately fictions. It is therefore not surprising there is so much conflict in relationships. There *is* no true relationship.

THE MONK WITH SWEATY PALMS

Kasan, a Zen teacher and monk, was to officiate at a funeral of a famous nobleman. As he stood there waiting for the governor of the province and other lords and ladies to arrive, he noticed that the palms of his hands were sweaty.

The next day he called his disciples together and confessed he was not yet ready to be a true teacher. He explained to them that he still lacked the sameness of bearing before all human beings, whether beggar or king. He was still unable to look through social roles and conceptual identities and see the sameness of being in every human. He then left and became the pupil of another master. He returned to his former disciples eight years later, enlightened.

HAPPINESS AS A ROLE VS. TRUE HAPPINESS

"How are you?" "Just great. Couldn't be better." True or false?

In many cases, happiness is a role people play, and behind the smiling façade, there is a great deal of pain. Depression, breakdowns, and overreactions are common when unhappiness is covered up behind a smiling exterior and brilliant white teeth, when there is denial, sometimes even to one's self, that there is much unhappiness.

"Just fine" is a role the ego plays more commonly in America than in certain other countries where being and looking miserable is almost the norm and therefore more socially acceptable. It is probably an exaggeration, but I am told that in the capital of one Nordic country you run the risk of being arrested for drunken behavior if you smile at strangers in the street.

If there is unhappiness in you, first you need to acknowledge that it is there. But don't say, "I'm unhappy." Unhappiness has nothing to do with who you are. Say: "There is unhappiness in me." Then investigate it. A situation you find yourself in may have something to do with it. Action may be required to change the situation or remove yourself from it. If there is nothing you can do, face what is and say, "Well, right now, this is how it is. I can either accept it, or make myself miserable." The primary cause of unhappiness is never the situation but your thoughts about it. Be aware of the thoughts you are thinking. Separate them from the situation, which is always neutral, which always is as it is. There is the situation or the fact, and here are my thoughts about it. Instead of making up stories, stay with the facts. For example, "I am ruined" is a story. It limits you and prevents you from taking effective action. "I have fifty cents left in my bank account" is a fact. Facing facts is always empowering. Be aware that what you think, to a large extent, creates the emotions that you feel. See the link between your thinking and your emotions. Rather than being your thoughts and emotions, be the awareness behind them.

Don't seek happiness. If you seek it, you won't find it, because seeking is the antithesis of happiness. Happiness is ever elusive, but freedom from unhappiness is attainable now, by facing what is rather than making up stories about it. Unhappiness covers up your natural state of well-being and inner peace, the source of true happiness.

PARENTHOOD: ROLE OR FUNCTION?

Many adults play roles when they speak to young children. They use silly words and sounds. They talk down to the child. They don't treat the child as an equal. The fact that you temporarily know more or that you are bigger does not mean the child is not your equal. The majority of adults, at some point in their lives, find themselves being a parent, one of the most universal roles. The all-important question is: Are you able to fulfill the function of being a parent and fulfill it well, without identifying with that function, that is, without it becoming a role? Part of the necessary function of being a parent is looking after the needs of the child, preventing the child from getting into danger, and at times telling the child what to do and not to do. When being a parent becomes an identity, however, when your sense of self is entirely or largely derived from it, the function easily becomes overemphasized, exaggerated, and takes you over. Giving children what they need becomes excessive and turns into spoiling; preventing them from getting into danger becomes overprotectiveness and interferes with their need to explore the world and try things out for themselves. Telling children what to do or not to do becomes controlling, overbearing.

What is more, the role-playing identity remains in place long after the need for those particular functions has passed. Parents then cannot let go of being a parent even when the child grows into an adult. They can't let go of the need to be needed by their child. Even when the adult child is forty years old, parents can't let go of the notion "I know what's best for you." The role of parent is still being played compulsively, and so there is no authentic relationship. Parents define themselves by that role and are unconsciously afraid of loss of identity when they cease being parents. If their desire to control or influence the actions of their adult child is thwarted—as it usually is—they will start to criticize or show their disapproval, or try to make the child feel guilty, all in an unconscious attempt to preserve their role, their identity. On the surface it looks as if they were concerned about their child, and they themselves believe it, but they are only really concerned about preserving their role-identity. All egoic motivations are self-enhancement and self-interest, sometimes cleverly disguised, even from the person in whom the ego operates.

A mother or father who identifies with the parental role may also try to become more complete through their children. The ego's need to manipulate others into filling the sense of lack it continuously feels is then directed toward them. If the mostly unconscious assumptions and motivations behind the parent's compulsion to manipulate their children were made conscious and voiced, they would probably include some or all of the following: "I want you to achieve what I never achieved; I want you to be somebody in the eyes of the world, so that I too can be somebody through you. Don't disappoint me. I sacrificed so much for you. My disapproval of you is intended to make you feel so guilty and uncomfortable that you finally conform to my wishes. And it goes without saying that I know what's best for you. I love you and I will continue to love you if you do what I know is right for you."

When you make such unconscious motivations conscious, you immediately see how absurd they are. The ego that lies behind them becomes visible, as does its dysfunction. Some parents that I spoke to suddenly realized, "My God, is this what I have been doing?" Once you see what you are doing or have been doing, you also see its futility, and that unconscious pattern then comes to an end by itself. Awareness is the greatest agent for change.

If your parents are doing this to you, do not tell them they are unconscious and in the grip of the ego. That will likely make them even more unconscious, because the ego will take up a defensive position. It is enough for you to recognize that it is the ego in them, that it is not who they are. Egoic patterns, even long-standing ones, sometimes dissolve almost miraculously when you don't oppose them internally. Opposition only gives them renewed strength. But even if they don't, you can then accept your parents' behavior with compassion, without needing to react to it, that is to say, without personalizing it.

Be aware also of your own unconscious assumptions or expectations that lie behind your old, habitual reactions to them. "My parents should approve of what I do. They should understand me and accept me for who I am." Really? Why should they? The fact is they don't because they can't. Their evolving consciousness hasn't made the quantum leap to the level of awareness yet. They are not yet able to disidentify from their role. "Yes, but I can't feel happy and comfortable with who I am unless I have their approval and understanding." Really? What difference does their approval or disapproval truly make to who you are? All such unexamined assumptions cause a great deal of negative emotion, much unnecessary unhappiness.

Be alert. Are some of the thoughts that go through your mind the internalized voice of your father or mother, saying perhaps something like, "You are not good enough. You will never amount to anything," or some other judgment or mental position? If there is awareness in you, you will be able to recognize that voice in your head for what it is: an old thought, conditioned by the past. If there is awareness in you, you no longer need to believe in every thought you think. It's an old thought, no more. Awareness means Presence, and only Presence can dissolve the unconscious past in you.

"If you think you are so enlightened," Ram Dass said, "go and spend a week with your parents." That is good advice. The relationship with your parents is not only the primordial relationship that sets the tone for all subsequent relationships, it is also a good test for your degree of Presence. The more shared past there is in a relationship, the more present you need to be; otherwise, you will be forced to relive the past again and again.

CONSCIOUS SUFFERING

If you have young children, give them help, guidance, and protection to the best of your ability, but even more important, give them space—space to be. They come into this world through you, but they are not "yours." The belief "I know what's best for you" may be true when they are very young, but the older they get, the less true it becomes. The more expectations you have of how their life should unfold, the more you are in your mind instead of being present for them. Eventually, they will make mistakes, and they will experience some form of suffering, as all humans do. In fact, they may be mistakes only from your perspective. What to you is a mistake may be exactly what your children need to do or experience. Give them as much help and guidance as you can, but realize that you may also at times have to allow them to make mistakes, especially as they begin to reach adulthood. At times, you may also have to allow them to suffer. Suffering may come to them out of the blue or it may come as the consequence of their own mistakes.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could spare them from all suffering? No, it wouldn't. They would not evolve as human beings and would remain shallow, identified with the external form of things. Suffering drives you deeper. The paradox is that suffering is caused by identification with form and erodes identification with form. A lot of it is caused by the ego, although eventually suffering destroys the ego—but not until you suffer consciously.

Humanity is destined to go beyond suffering, but not in the way the ego thinks. One of the ego's many erroneous assumptions, one of its many deluded thoughts is "I should not have to suffer." Sometimes the thought gets transferred to someone close to you: "My child should not have to suffer." That thought itself lies at the root of suffering. Suffering has a noble purpose: the evolution of consciousness and the burning up of the ego. The man on the cross is an archetypal image. He is every man and every woman. As long as you resist suffering, it is a slow process because the resistance creates more ego to burn up. When you accept suffering, however, there is an acceleration of that process which is brought about by the fact that you suffer consciously. You can accept suffering for yourself, or you can accept it for someone else, such as your child or parent. In the midst of conscious suffering, there is already the transmutation. The fire of suffering becomes the light of consciousness.

The ego says, "I shouldn't have to suffer," and that thought makes you suffer so much more. It is a distortion of the truth, which is always paradoxical. The truth is that you need to say yes to suffering before you can transcend it.

CONSCIOUS PARENTING

Many children harbor hidden anger and resentment toward their parents and often the cause is inauthenticity in the relationship. The child has a deep longing for the parent to be there as a human being, not as a role, no matter how conscientiously that role is being played. You may be doing all the right things and the best you can for your child, but even doing the best you can is not enough. *In fact, doing is never enough if you neglect Being.* The ego knows nothing of Being but believes you will eventually be saved by doing. If you are in the grip of the ego, you believe that by doing more and more you will eventually accumulate enough "doings" to make yourself feel complete at some point in the future. You won't. You will only lose yourself in doing. The entire civilization is losing itself in doing that is not rooted in Being and thus becomes futile.

How do you bring Being into the life of a busy family, into the relationship with your child? The key is to give your child attention. There are two kinds of attention. One we might call form-based attention. The other is formless attention. Form-based attention is always connected in some way with doing or evaluating. "Have you done your homework? Eat your dinner. Tidy up your room. Brush your teeth. Do this. Stop doing that. Hurry up, get ready."

What's the next thing we have to do? This question pretty much summarizes what family life is like in many homes. Form-based attention is of course necessary and has its place, but if that's all there is in the relationship with your child, then the most vital dimension is missing and Being becomes completely obscured by doing, by "the cares of the world," as Jesus puts it. Formless attention is inseparable from the dimension of Being. How does it work?

As you look at, listen to, touch, or help your child with this or that, you are alert, still, completely present, not wanting anything other than that moment as it is. In this way, you make room for Being. In that moment, if you are present, you are not a father or mother. You are the alertness, the stillness, the Presence that is listening, looking, touching, even speaking. You are the Being behind the doing.

RECOGNIZING YOUR CHILD

You are a human being. What does that mean? Mastery of life is not a question of control, but of finding a balance between human and Being. Mother, father, husband, wife, young, old, the roles you play, the functions you fulfill, whatever you do—all that belongs to the human dimension. It has its place and needs to be honored, but in itself it is not enough for a fulfilled, truly meaningful relationship or life. Human alone is never enough, no matter how hard you try or what you achieve. Then there is Being. It is found in the still, alert presence of Consciousness itself, the Consciousness that you are. Human is form. Being is formless. Human and Being are not separate but interwoven.

In the human dimension, you are unquestionably superior to your child. You are bigger, stronger, know more, can do more. If that dimension is all you know, you will feel superior to your child, if only unconsciously. And you will make your child feel inferior, if only unconsciously. There is no equality between you and your child because there is only form in your relationship, and in form, you are of course not equal. You may love your child, but your love will be human only, that is to say, conditional, possessive, intermittent. Only beyond form, in Being, are you equal, and only when you find the formless dimension in yourself can there be true love in that relationship. The Presence that you are, the timeless I Am, recognizes itself in another, and the other, the child in this case, feels loved, that is to say, recognized.

To love is to recognize yourself in another. The other's "otherness" then stands revealed as an illusion pertaining to the purely human realm, the realm of form. The longing for love that is in every child is the longing to be recognized, not on the level of form, but on the level of Being. If parents honor only the human dimension of the child but neglect Being, the child will sense that the relationship is unfulfilled, that something absolutely vital is missing, and there will be a buildup of pain in the child and sometimes unconscious resentment toward the parents. "Why don't you recognize me?" This is what the pain or resentment seems to be saying.

When another recognizes you, that recognition draws the dimension of Being more fully into this world through both of you. That is the love that redeems the world. I have been speaking of this with specific reference to the relationship with your child, but it equally applies, of course, to all relationships.

It has been said "God is love" but that is not absolutely correct. God is the One Life in and beyond the countless forms of life. Love implies duality: lover and beloved, subject and object. So love is the recognition of oneness in the world of duality. This is the birth of God into the world of form. Love makes the world less worldly, less dense, more transparent to the divine dimension, the light of consciousness itself.

GIVING UP ROLE-PLAYING

To do whatever is required of you in any situation without it becoming a role that you identify with is an essential lesson in the art of living that each one of us is here to learn. You become most powerful in whatever you do if the action is performed for its own sake rather than as a means to protect, enhance, or conform to your role identity. Every role is a fictitious sense of self, and through it everything becomes personalized and thus corrupted and distorted by the mind-made "little me" and whatever role it happens to be playing. Most of the people who are in positions of power in this world, such as politicians, TV personalities, business as well as religious leaders, are completely identified with their role, with a few notable exceptions. They may be considered VIPs, but they are no more than unconscious players in the egoic game, a game that looks so important yet is ultimately devoid of true purpose. It is, in the words of Shakespeare, "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."[1] Amazingly, Shakespeare arrived at this conclusion without having the benefit of television. If the egoic earth drama has any purpose at all, it is an indirect one: It creates more and more suffering on the planet, and suffering, although largely ego-created, is in the end also ego-destructive. It is the fire in which the ego burns itself up.

In a world of role-playing personalities, those few people who don't project a mind-made image—and there are some even on TV, in the media, and the business world—but function from the deeper core of their Being, those who do not attempt to appear more than they are but are simply themselves, stand out as remarkable and are the only ones who truly make a difference in this world. They are the bringers of the new consciousness. Whatever they do becomes empowered because it is in alignment with the purpose of the whole. Their influence, however, goes far beyond what they do, far beyond their function. Their mere presence—simple, natural, unassuming—has a transformational effect on whoever they come into contact with.

When you don't play roles, it means there is no self (ego) in what you do. There is no secondary agenda: protection or strengthening of your self. As a result, your actions have far greater power. You are totally focused on the situation. You become one with it. You don't try to be anybody in particular. You are most powerful, most effective, when you are completely yourself. But don't try to be yourself. That's another role. It's called "natural, spontaneous me." As soon as you are trying to be this or that, you are playing a role. "Just be yourself" is good advice, but it can also be misleading. The mind will come in and say, "Let's see. How can I be myself ?" Then, the mind will develop some kind of strategy: "How to be myself." Another role. "How can I be myself ?" is, in fact, the wrong question. It implies you have to do something to be yourself. But how doesn't apply here because you are yourself already. Just stop adding unnecessary baggage to who you already are. "But I don't know who I am. I don't know what it means to be myself." If you can be absolutely comfortable with not knowing who you are, then what's left is who you are—the Being behind the human, a field of pure potentiality rather than something that is already defined.

Give up defining yourself—to yourself or to others. You won't die. You will come to life. And don't be concerned with how others define you. When they define you, they are limiting themselves, so it's their problem. Whenever you interact with people, don't be there primarily as a function or a role, but as a field of conscious Presence.

Why does the ego play roles? Because of one unexamined assumption, one fundamental error, one unconscious thought. That thought is: I am not enough. Other unconscious thoughts follow: I need to play a role in order to get what I need to be fully myself; I need to get more so that I can be more. But you cannot be more than you are because underneath your physical and psychological form, you are one with Life itself, one with Being. In form, you are and will always be inferior to some, superior to others. In essence, you are neither inferior nor superior to anyone. True self-esteem and true humility arise out of that realization. In the eyes of the ego, self-esteem and humility are contradictory. In truth, they are one and the same.

THE PATHOLOGICAL EGO

In a wider sense of the word, the ego itself is pathological, no matter what form it takes. When we look at the ancient Greek root of the word *pathological,* we discover just how appropriate that term is when applied to the ego. Although the word is normally used to describe a condition of disease, it is derived from *pathos,* which means suffering. This is, of course, exactly what the Buddha already discovered 2,600 years ago as a characteristic of the human condition.

A person in the grip of ego, however, does not recognize suffering as suffering, but will look upon it as the only appropriate response in any given situation. The ego in its blindness is incapable of seeing the suffering it inflicts on itself and on others. Unhappiness is an ego-created mental-emotional disease that has reached epidemic proportions. It is the inner equivalent of the environmental pollution of our planet. Negative states such as anger, anxiety, hatred, resentment, discontent, envy, jealousy, and so on, are not recognized as negative but as totally justified and are further misperceived not as self-created but as caused by someone else or some external factor. "I am holding you responsible for my pain." This is what by implication the ego is saying.

The ego cannot distinguish between a situation and its interpretation of and reaction to that situation. You might say, "What a dreadful day," without realizing that the cold, the wind, and the rain or whatever condition you react to are not dreadful. They are as they are. What is dreadful is your reaction, your inner resistance to it, and the emotion that is created by that resistance. In Shakespeare's words, "There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so."[2] What is more, suffering or negativity is often misperceived by the ego as pleasure because up to a point the ego strengthens itself through it.

For example, anger or resentment strengthen the ego enormously by increasing the sense of separateness, emphasizing the otherness of others and creating a seemingly unassailable fortresslike mental position of "rightness." If you were able to observe the physiological changes that take place inside your body when possessed by such negative states, how they adversely affect the functioning of the heart, the digestive and immune systems, and countless other bodily functions, it would become abundantly clear that such states are indeed pathological, are forms of suffering and not pleasure.

Whenever you are in a negative state, there is something in you that wants the negativity, that perceives it as pleasurable, or that believes it will get you what you want. Otherwise, who would want to hang on to negativity, make themselves and others miserable, and create disease in the body? So, whenever there is negativity in you, if you can be aware at that moment that there is something in you that takes pleasure in it or believes it has a useful purpose, you are becoming aware of the ego directly. The moment this happens, your identity has shifted from ego to awareness. This means the ego is shrinking and awareness is growing.

If in the midst of negativity you are able to realize "At this moment I am creating suffering for myself" it will be enough to raise you above the limitations of conditioned egoic states and reactions. It will open up infinite possibilities which come to you when there is awareness—other vastly more intelligent ways of dealing with any situation. You will be free to let go of your unhappiness the moment you recognize it as unintelligent. Negativity is not intelligent. It is always of the ego. The ego may be clever, but it is not intelligent. Cleverness pursues its own little aims. Intelligence sees the larger whole in which all things are connected. Cleverness is motivated by self-interest, and it is extremely short-sighted. Most politicians and businesspeople are clever. Very few are intelligent. Whatever is attained through cleverness is short-lived and always turns out to be eventually self-defeating. Cleverness divides; intelligence includes.

THE BACKGROUND UNHAPPINESS

The ego creates separation, and separation creates suffering. The ego is therefore clearly pathological. Apart from the obvious ones such as anger, hatred, and so on, there are other more subtle forms of negativity that are so common they are usually not recognized as such, for example, impatience, irritation, nervousness, and being "fed up." They constitute the background unhappiness that is many people's predominant inner state. You need to be extremely alert and absolutely present to be able to detect them. Whenever you do, it is a moment of awakening, of disidentification from the mind.

Here is one of the most common negative states that is easily overlooked, precisely because it is so common, so normal. You may be familiar with it. Do you often experience a feeling of discontent that could best be described as a kind of background resentment? It may be either specific or nonspecific. Many people spend a large part of their lives in that state. They are so identified with it that they cannot stand back and see it. Underlying that feeling are certain unconsciously held beliefs, that is to say, thoughts. You think these thoughts in the same way that you dream your dreams when you are asleep. In other words, you don't know you are thinking those thoughts, just as the dreamer doesn't know he is dreaming.

Here are some of the most common unconscious thoughts that feed the feeling of discontent or background resentment. I have stripped away the content from those thoughts so that the bare structure remains. They become more clearly visible that way. Whenever there is unhappiness in the background of your life (or even in the foreground), you can see which of these thoughts applies and fill in your own content according to your personal situation:

"There is something that needs to happen in my life before I can be at peace (happy, fulfilled, etc.). And I resent that it hasn't happened yet. Maybe my resentment will finally make it happen."

"Something happened in the past that should not have happened, and I resent that. If that hadn't happened, I would be at peace now."

"Something is happening now that should not be happening, and it is preventing me from being at peace now."

Often the unconscious beliefs are directed toward a person and so "happening" becomes "doing":

"You should do this or that so that I can be at peace. And I resent that you haven't done it yet. Maybe my resentment will make you do it."

"Something you (or I) did, said, or failed to do in the past is preventing me from being at peace now."

"What you are doing or failing to do now is preventing me from being at peace."

THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS

All of the above are assumptions, unexamined thoughts that are confused with reality. They are stories the ego creates to convince you that you cannot be at peace now or cannot be fully yourself now. Being at peace and being who you are, that is, being yourself, are one. The ego says: Maybe at some point in the future, I can be at peace—if this, that, or the other happens, or I obtain this or become that. Or it says: I can never be at peace because of something that happened in the past. Listen to people's stories and they could all be entitled "Why I Cannot Be at Peace Now." The ego doesn't know that your only opportunity for being at peace *is* now. Or maybe it does know, and it is afraid that you may find this out. Peace, after all, is the end of the ego.

How to be at peace now? By making peace with the present moment. The present moment is the field on which the game of life happens. It cannot happen anywhere else. Once you have made peace with the present moment, see what happens, what you can do or choose to do, or rather what life does through you. There are three words that convey the secret of the art of living, the secret of all success and happiness: One With Life. Being one with life is being one with Now. You then realize that you don't live your life, but life lives you. Life is the dancer, and you are the dance.

The ego loves its resentment of reality. What is reality? Whatever is. Buddha called it *tatata*—the suchness of life, which is no more than the suchness of this moment. Opposition toward that suchness is one of the main features of the ego. It creates the negativity that the ego thrives on, the unhappiness that it loves. In this way, you make yourself and others suffer and don't even know that you are doing it, don't know that you are creating hell on earth. To create suffering without recognizing it—this is the essence of unconscious living; this is being totally in the grip of the ego. The extent of the ego's inability to recognize itself and see what it is doing is staggering and unbelievable. It will do exactly what it condemns others for and not see it. When it is pointed out, it will use angry denial, clever arguments, and self-justifications to distort the facts. People do it, corporations do it, governments do it. When all else fails, the ego will resort to shouting or even to physical violence. Send in the marines. We can now understand the deep wisdom in Jesus' words on the cross: "Forgive them for they know not what they do."

To end the misery that has afflicted the human condition for thousands of years, you have to start with yourself and take responsibility for your inner state at any given moment. That means now. Ask yourself, "Is there negativity in me at this moment?" Then, become alert, attentive to your thoughts as well as your emotions. Watch out for the low-level unhappiness in whatever form that I mentioned earlier, such as discontent, nervousness, being "fed up," and so on. Watch out for thoughts that appear to justify or explain this unhappiness but in reality cause it. The moment you become aware of a negative state within yourself, it does not mean you have failed. It means that you have succeeded. Until that awareness happens, there is identification with inner states, and such identification is ego. With awareness comes disidentification from thoughts, emotions, and reactions. This is not to be confused with denial. The thoughts, emotions, or reactions are recognized, and in the moment of recognizing, disidentification happens automatically. Your sense of self, of who you are, then undergoes a shift: Before you were the thoughts, emotions, and reactions; now you are the awareness, the conscious Presence that witnesses those states.

"One day I will be free of the ego." Who is talking? The ego. To become free of the ego is not really a big job but a very small one. All you need to do is be aware of your thoughts and emotions—as they happen. This is not really a "doing," but an alert "seeing." In that sense, it is true that there is nothing you can do to become free of the ego. When that shift happens, which is the shift from thinking to awareness, an intelligence far greater than the ego's cleverness begins to operate in your life. Emotions and even thoughts become depersonalized through awareness. Their impersonal nature is recognized. There is no longer a self in them. They are just human emotions, human thoughts. Your entire personal history, which is ultimately no more than a story, a bundle of thoughts and emotions, becomes of secondary importance and no longer occupies the forefront of your consciousness. It no longer forms the basis for your sense of identity. You are the light of Presence, the awareness that is prior to and deeper than any thoughts and emotions.

PATHOLOGICAL FORMS OF EGO

As we have seen, the ego is in its essential nature pathological, if we use the word in its wider sense to denote dysfunction and suffering. Many mental disorders consist of the same egoic traits that operate in a normal person, except that they have become so pronounced that their pathological nature is now obvious to anyone, except the sufferer.

For example, many normal people tell certain kinds of lies from time to time in order to appear more important, more special, and to enhance their image in the mind of others: who they know, what their achievements, abilities, and possessions are, and whatever else the ego uses to identify with. Some people, however, driven by the ego's feeling of insufficiency and its need to have or be "more," lie habitually and compulsively. Most of what they tell you about themselves, their story, is a complete fantasy, a fictitious edifice the ego has designed for itself to feel bigger, more special. Their grandiose and inflated self-image can sometimes fool others, but usually not for long. It is then quickly recognized by most people as a complete fiction.

The mental illness that is called paranoid schizophrenia, or paranoia for short, is essentially an exaggerated form of ego. It usually consists of a fictitious story the mind has invented to make sense of a persistent underlying feeling of fear. The main element of the story is the belief that certain people (sometimes large numbers or almost everyone) are plotting against me, or are conspiring to control or kill me. The story often has an inner consistency and logic so that it sometimes fools others into believing it too. Sometimes organizations or entire nations have paranoid belief systems at their very basis. The ego's fear and distrust of other people, its tendency to emphasize the "otherness" of others by focusing on their perceived faults and make those faults into their identity, is taken a little further and makes others into inhuman monsters. The ego needs others, but its dilemma is that deep down it hates and fears them. Jean-Paul Sartre's statement "Hell is other people" is the voice of the ego. The person suffering from paranoia experiences that hell most acutely, but everyone in whom the egoic patterns still operate will feel it to some degree. The stronger the ego in you, the more likely it is that in your perception other people are the main source of problems in your life. It is also more than likely that you will make life difficult for others. But, of course, you won't be able to see that. It is always others who seem to be doing it to you.

The mental illness we call paranoia also manifests another symptom that is an element of every ego, although in paranoia it takes on a more extreme form. The more the sufferer sees himself persecuted, spied on, or threatened by others, the more pronounced becomes his sense of being the center of the universe around whom everything revolves, and the more special and important he feels as the imagined focal point of so many people's attention. His sense of being a victim, of being wronged by so many people, makes him feel very special. In the story that forms the basis of his delusional system, he often assigns to himself the role of both victim and potential hero who is going to save the world or defeat the forces of evil.

The collective ego of tribes, nations, and religious organizations also frequently contains a strong element of paranoia: us against the evil others. It is the cause of much human suffering. The Spanish Inquisition, the persecution and burning of heretics and "witches," the relations between nations leading up to the First and Second World Wars, Communism throughout its history, the "Cold War," McCarthyism in America in the 1950s, prolonged violent conflict in the Middle East are all painful episodes in human history dominated by extreme collective paranoia.

The more unconscious individuals, groups, or nations are, the more likely it is that egoic pathology will assume the form of physical violence. Violence is a primitive but still very widespread way in which the ego attempts to assert itself, to prove itself right and another wrong. With very unconscious people, arguments can easily lead to physical violence. What is an argument? Two or more people express their opinions and those opinions differ. Each person is so identified with the thoughts that make up their opinion, that those thoughts harden into mental positions which are invested with a sense of self. In other words: Identity and thought merge. Once this has happened, when I defend my opinions (thoughts), I feel and act as if I were defending my very self. Unconsciously, I feel and act as if I were fighting for survival and so my emotions will reflect this unconscious belief. They become turbulent. I am upset, angry, defensive, or aggressive. I need to win at all cost lest I become annihilated. That's the illusion. The ego doesn't know that mind and mental positions have nothing to do with who you are because the ego is the unobserved mind itself.

In Zen they say: "Don't seek the truth. Just cease to cherish opinions." What does that mean? Let go of identification with your mind. Who you are beyond the mind then emerges by itself.

WORK—WITH AND WITHOUT EGO

Most people have moments when they are free of ego. Those who are exceptionally good at what they do may be completely or largely free of ego while performing their work. They may not know it, but their work has become a spiritual practice. Most of them are present while they do their work and fall back into relative unconsciousness in their private life. This means their state of Presence is for the time being confined to one area of their life. I have met teachers, artists, nurses, doctors, scientists, social workers, waiters, hairdressers, business owners, and salespeople who perform their work admirably without any self-seeking, fully responding to whatever the moment requires of them. They are one with what they do, one with the Now, one with the people or the task they serve. The influence such people have upon others goes far beyond the function they perform. They bring about a lessening of the ego in everyone who comes into contact with them. Even people with heavy egos sometimes begin to relax, let down their guard, and stop playing their roles when they interact with them. It comes as no surprise that those people who work without ego are extraordinarily successful at what they do. Anybody who is one with what he or she does is building the new earth.

I have also met many others who may be technically good at what they do but whose ego constantly sabotages their work. Only part of their attention is on the work they perform; the other part is on themselves. Their ego demands personal recognition and wastes energy in resentment if it doesn't get enough—and it's never enough. "Is someone else getting more recognition than me?" Or their main focus of attention is profit or power, and their work is no more than a means to that end. When work is no more than a means to an end, it cannot be of high quality. When obstacles or difficulties arise in their work, when things don't go according to expectation, when other people or circumstances are not helpful or cooperative, instead of immediately becoming one with the new situation and responding to the requirements of the present moment, they react against the situation and so separate themselves from it. There is a "me" that feels personally offended or resentful, and a huge amount of energy is burned up in useless protest or anger, energy that could be used for solving the situation if it were not being misused by the ego. What is more, this "anti"-energy creates new obstacles, new opposition. Many people are truly their own worst enemy.

People unknowingly sabotage their own work when they withhold help or information from others or try to undermine them lest they become more successful or get more credit than “me.” Cooperation is alien to the ego, except when there is a secondary motive. The ego doesn’t know that the more you include others, the more smoothly things flow and the more easily things come to you. When you give little or no help to others or put obstacles in their path, the universe—in the form of people and circumstances—gives little or no help to you because you have cut yourself off from the whole. The ego’s unconscious core feeling of “not enough” causes it to react to someone else’s success as if that success had taken something away from “me.” It doesn’t know that your resentment of another person’s success curtails your own chances of success. In order to attract success, you need to welcome it wherever you see it.

THE EGO IN ILLNESS

An illness can either strengthen or weaken the ego. If you complain, feel self-pity, or resent being ill, your ego becomes stronger. It also becomes stronger if you make the illness part of your conceptual identity: “I am a sufferer of such and such a disease.” Ah, so now we know who you are. Some people, on the other hand, who in normal life have a big ego, suddenly become gentle and kind and much nicer people when they are ill. They may gain insights they may never have had in their normal life. They may access their inner knowing and contentment and speak words of wisdom. Then, when they get better, energy returns and so does the ego.

When you are ill, your energy level is quite low, and the intelligence of the organism may take over and use the remaining energy for the healing of the body, and so there is not enough left for the mind, that is to say, egoic thinking and emotion. The ego burns up considerable amounts of energy. In some cases, however, the ego retains the little energy that remains and uses it for its own purposes. Needless to say, those people who experience a strengthening of the ego in illness take much longer to recover. Some never do, and so the illness becomes chronic and a permanent part of their false sense of self.

THE COLLECTIVE EGO

How hard it is to live with yourself! One of the ways in which the ego attempts to escape the unsatisfactoriness of personal selfhood is to enlarge and strengthen its sense of self by identifying with a group—a nation, political party, corporation, institution, sect, club, gang, football team.

In some cases the personal ego seems to dissolve completely as someone dedicates his or her life to working selflessly for the greater good of the collective without demanding personal rewards, recognition, or aggrandizement. What a relief to be freed of the dreadful burden of personal self. The members of the collective feel happy and fulfilled, no matter how hard they work, how many sacrifices they make. They appear to have gone beyond ego. The question is: Have they truly become free, or has the ego simply shifted from the personal to the collective?

A collective ego manifests the same characteristics as the personal ego, such as the need for conflict and enemies, the need for more, the need to be right against others who are wrong, and so on. Sooner or later, the collective will come into conflict with other collectives, because it unconsciously seeks conflict and it needs opposition to define its boundary and thus its identity. Its members will then experience the suffering that inevitably comes in the wake of any ego-motivated action. At that point, they may wake up and realize that their collective has a strong element of insanity.

It can be painful at first to suddenly wake up and realize that the collective you had identified with and worked for is actually insane. Some people at that point become cynical or bitter and henceforth deny all values, all worth. This means that they quickly adopted another belief system when the previous one was recognized as illusory and therefore collapsed. They didn't face the death of their ego but ran away and reincarnated into a new one.

A collective ego is usually more unconscious than the individuals that make up that ego. For example, crowds (which are temporary collective egoic entities) are capable of committing atrocities that the individual away from the crowd would not be. Nations not infrequently engage in behavior that would be immediately recognizable as psychopathic in an individual.

As the new consciousness emerges, some people will feel called upon to form groups that reflect the enlightened consciousness. These groups will not be collective egos. The individuals who make up these groups will have no need to define their identity through them. They no longer look to any form to define who they are. Even if the members that make up those groups are not totally free of ego yet, there will be enough awareness in them to recognize the ego in themselves or in others as soon as it appears. However, constant alertness is required since the ego *will* try to take over and reassert itself in any way it can. Dissolving the human ego by bringing it into the light of awareness —this will be one of the main purposes of these groups, whether they be enlightened businesses, charitable organizations, schools, or communities of people living together. Enlightened collectives will fulfill an important function in the arising of the new consciousness. Just as egoic collectives pull you into unconsciousness and suffering, the enlightened collective can be a vortex for consciousness that will accelerate the planetary shift.

INCONTROVERTIBLE PROOF OF IMMORTALITY

Ego comes about through a split in the human psyche in which identity separates into two parts that we could call "I" and "me" or "me" and "myself." Every ego is therefore schizophrenic, to use the word in its popular meaning of split personality. You live with a mental image of yourself, a conceptual self that you have a relationship with. Life itself becomes conceptualized and separated from who you are when you speak of "my life." The moment you say or think "my life" and believe in what you are saying (rather than it just being a linguistic convention), you have entered the realm of delusion. If there is such a thing as "my life," it follows that I and life are two separate things, and so I can also lose my life, my imaginary treasured possession. Death becomes a seeming reality and a threat. Words and concepts split life into separate segments that have no reality in themselves. We could even say that the notion “my life” is the original delusion of separateness, the source of ego. If I and life are two, if I am separate from life, then I am separate from all things, all beings, all people. But how could I be separate from life? What “I” could there be apart from life, apart from Being? It is utterly impossible. So there is no such thing as “my life,” and I don’t *have* a life. I *am* life. I and life are one. It cannot be otherwise. So how could I lose my life? How can I lose something that I don’t have in the first place? How can I lose something that I Am? It is impossible.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Pain-Body

The greater part of most people's thinking is involuntary, automatic, and repetitive. It is no more than a kind of mental static and fulfills no real purpose. Strictly speaking, you don't think: Thinking happens to you. The statement "I think" implies volition. It implies that you have a say in the matter, that there is choice involved on your part. For most people, this is not yet the case. "I think" is just as false a statement as "I digest" or "I circulate my blood." Digestion happens, circulation happens, thinking happens.

The voice in the head has a life of its own. Most people are at the mercy of that voice; they are possessed by thought, by the mind. And since the mind is conditioned by the past, you are then forced to reenact the past again and again. The Eastern term for this is karma. When you are identified with that voice, you don't know this, of course. If you knew it, you would no longer be possessed because you are only truly possessed when you mistake the possessing entity for who you are, that is to say, when you become it.

For thousands of years, humanity has been increasingly mind-possessed, failing to recognize the possessing entity as "not self." Through complete identification with the mind, a false sense of self—the ego—came into existence. The density of the ego depends on the degree to which you—the consciousness—are identified with your mind, with thinking. Thinking is no more than a tiny aspect of the totality of consciousness, the totality of who you are.

The degree of identification with the mind differs from person to person. Some people enjoy periods of freedom from it, however brief, and the peace, joy, and aliveness they experience in those moments make life worth living. These are also the moments when creativity, love, and compassion arise. Others are constantly trapped in the egoic state. They are alienated from themselves, as well as from others and the world around them. When you look at them, you may see the tension in their face, perhaps the furrowed brow, or the absent or staring expression in their eyes. Most of their attention is absorbed by thinking, and so they don't really see you, and they are not really listening to you. They are not present in any situation, their attention being either in the past or future which, of course, exist only in the mind as thought forms. Or they relate to you through some kind of role they play and so are not themselves. Most people are alienated from who they are, and some are alienated to such a degree that the way they behave and interact is recognized as "phony" by almost everyone, except those who are equally phony, equally alienated from who they are.

Alienation means you don't feel at ease in any situation, any place, or with any person, not even with yourself. You are always trying to get "home" but never feel at home. Some of the greatest writers of the twentieth century, such as Franz Kafka, Albert Camus, T. S. Eliot, and James Joyce, recognized alienation as the universal dilemma of human existence, probably felt it deeply within themselves and so were able to express it brilliantly in their works. They don't offer a solution. Their contribution is to show us a reflection of the human predicament so that we can see it more clearly. To see one's predicament clearly is a first step toward going beyond it.

THE BIRTH OF EMOTION

In addition to the movement of thought, although not entirely separate from it, there is another dimension to the ego: emotion. This is not to say that all thinking and all emotion are of the ego. They turn into ego only when you identify with them and they take you over completely, that is to say, when they become "I."

The physical organism, your body, has its own intelligence, as does the organism of every other life-form. And that intelligence reacts to what your mind is saying, reacts to your thoughts. So emotion is the body's reaction to your mind. The body's intelligence is, of course, an inseparable part of universal intelligence, one of its countless manifestations. It gives temporary cohesion to the atoms and molecules that make up your physical organism. It is the organizing principle behind the workings of all the organs of the body, the conversion of oxygen and food into energy, the heartbeat and circulation of the blood, the immune system that protects the body from invaders, the translation of sensory input into nerve impulses that are sent to the brain, decoded there, and reassembled into a coherent inner picture of outer reality. All these, as well as thousands of other simultaneously occurring functions, are coordinated perfectly by that intelligence. You don't run your body. The intelligence does. It also is in charge of the organism's responses to its environment.

This is true for any life-form. It is the same intelligence that brought the plant into physical form and then manifests as the flower that comes out of the plant, the flower that opens its petals in the morning to receive the rays of the sun and closes them at nighttime. It is the same intelligence that manifests as Gaia, the complex living being that is planet earth.

This intelligence gives rise to instinctive reactions of the organism to any threat or challenge. It produces responses in animals that appear to be akin to human emotions: anger, fear, pleasure. These instinctive responses could be considered primordial forms of emotion. In certain situations, human beings experience instinctive responses in the same way that animals do. In the face of danger, when the survival of the organism is threatened, the heart beats faster, the muscles contract, breathing becomes rapid in preparation for fight or flight. Primordial fear. When being cornered, a sudden flare-up of intense energy gives strength to the body that it didn't have before. Primordial anger. These instinctive responses appear akin to emotions, but are not emotions in the true sense of the word. The fundamental difference between an instinctive response and an emotion is this: An instinctive response is the body's direct response to some external situation. An emotion, on the other hand, is the body's response to a thought.

Indirectly, an emotion can also be a response to an actual situation or event, but it will be a response to the event seen through the filter of a mental interpretation, the filter of thought, that is to say, through the mental concepts of good and bad, like and dislike, me and mine. For example, it is likely you won't feel any emotion when you are told that someone's car has been stolen, but when it is *your* car, you will probably feel upset. It is amazing how much emotion a little mental concept like "my" can generate.

Although the body is very intelligent, it cannot tell the difference between an actual situation and a thought. It reacts to every thought as if it were a reality. It doesn't know it is just a thought. To the body, a worrisome, fearful thought means "I am in danger," and it responds accordingly, even though you may be lying in a warm and comfortable bed at night. The heart beats faster, muscles contract, breathing becomes rapid. There is a buildup of energy, but since the danger is only a mental fiction, the energy has no outlet. Part of it is fed back to the mind and generates even more anxious thought. The rest of the energy turns toxic and interferes with the harmonious functioning of the body.

EMOTIONS AND THE EGO

The ego is not only the unobserved mind, the voice in the head which pretends to be you, but also the unobserved emotions that are the body's reaction to what the voice in the head is saying.

We have already seen what kind of thinking the egoic voice engages in most of the time and the dysfunction inherent in the structure of its thought processes, regardless of content. This dysfunctional thinking is what the body reacts to with negative emotion.

The voice in the head tells a story that the body believes in and reacts to. Those reactions are the emotions. The emotions, in turn, feed energy back to the thoughts that created the emotion in the first place. This is the vicious circle between unexamined thoughts and emotions, giving rise to emotional thinking and emotional story-making.

The emotional component of ego differs from person to person. In some egos, it is greater than in others. Thoughts that trigger emotional responses in the body may sometimes come so fast that before the mind has had time to voice them, the body has already responded with an emotion, and the emotion has turned into a reaction. Those thoughts exist at a preverbal stage and could be called unspoken, unconscious assumptions. They have their origin in a person's past conditioning, usually from early childhood. "People cannot be trusted" would be an example of such an unconscious assumption in a person whose primordial relationships, that is to say, with parents or siblings, were not supportive and did not inspire trust. Here are a few more common unconscious assumptions: “Nobody respects and appreciates me. I need to fight to survive. There is never enough money. Life always lets you down. I don’t deserve abundance. I don’t deserve love.” Unconscious assumptions create emotions in the body which in turn generate mind activity and/or instant reactions. In this way, they create your personal reality.

The voice of the ego continuously disrupts the body’s natural state of well-being. Almost every human body is under a great deal of strain and stress, not because it is threatened by some external factor but from within the mind. The body has an ego attached to it, and it cannot but respond to all the dysfunctional thought patterns that make up the ego. Thus, a stream of negative emotion accompanies the stream of incessant and compulsive thinking.

What is a negative emotion? An emotion that is toxic to the body and interferes with its balance and harmonious functioning. Fear, anxiety, anger, bearing a grudge, sadness, hatred or intense dislike, jealousy, envy—all disrupt the energy flow through the body, affect the heart, the immune system, digestion, production of hormones, and so on. Even mainstream medicine, although it knows very little about how the ego operates yet, is beginning to recognize the connection between negative emotional states and physical disease. An emotion that does harm to the body also infects the people you come into contact with and indirectly, through a process of chain reaction, countless others you never meet. There is a generic term for all negative emotions: unhappiness.

Do positive emotions then have the opposite effect on the physical body? Do they strengthen the immune system, invigorate and heal the body? They do, indeed, but we need to differentiate between positive emotions that are ego-generated and deeper emotions that emanate from your natural state of connectedness with Being.

Positive emotions generated by the ego already contain within themselves their opposite into which they can quickly turn. Here are some examples: What the ego calls love is possessiveness and addictive clinging that can turn into hate within a second. Anticipation about an upcoming event, which is the ego’s overvaluation of future, easily turns into its opposite—letdown or disappointment—when the event is over or doesn’t fulfill the ego’s expectations. Praise and recognition make you feel alive and happy one day; being criticized or ignored make you dejected and unhappy the next. The pleasure of a wild party turns into bleakness and a hangover the next morning. There is not good without bad, no high without low.

Ego-generated emotions are derived from the mind’s identification with external factors which are, of course, all unstable and liable to change at any moment. The deeper emotions are not really emotions at all but states of Being. Emotions exist within the realm of opposites. States of Being can be obscured, but they have no opposite. They emanate from within you as the love, joy, and peace that are aspects of your true nature.

THE DUCK WITH A HUMAN MIND

In *The Power of Now*, I mentioned my observation that after two ducks get into a fight, which never lasts long, they will separate and float off in opposite directions. Then each duck will flap its wings vigorously a few times, thus releasing the surplus energy that built up during the fight. After they flap their wings, they float on peacefully, as if nothing had ever happened.

If the duck had a human mind, it would keep the fight alive by thinking, by story-making. This would probably be the duck's story: "I don't believe what he just did. He came to within five inches of me. He thinks he owns this pond. He has no consideration for my private space. I'll never trust him again. Next time he'll try something else just to annoy me. I'm sure he's plotting something already. But I'm not going to stand for this. I'll teach him a lesson he won't forget." And on and on the mind spins its tales, still thinking and talking about it days, months, or years later. As far as the body is concerned, the fight is still continuing, and the energy it generates in response to all those thoughts is emotion, which in turn generates more thinking. This becomes the emotional thinking of the ego. You can see how problematic the duck's life would become if it had a human mind. But this is how most humans live all the time. No situation or event is ever really finished. The mind and the mind-made "me and my story" keep it going.

We are a species that has lost its way. Everything natural, every flower or tree, and every animal have important lessons to teach us if we would only stop, look, and listen. Our duck's lesson is this: Flap your wings—which translates as "let go of the story"—and return to the only place of power: the present moment.

CARRYING THE PAST

The inability or rather unwillingness of the human mind to let go of the past is beautifully illustrated in the story of two Zen monks, Tanzan and Ekido, who were walking along a country road that had become extremely muddy after heavy rains. Near a village, they came upon a young woman who was trying to cross the road, but the mud was so deep it would have ruined the silk kimono she was wearing. Tanzan at once picked her up and carried her to the other side.

The monks walked on in silence. Five hours later, as they were approaching the lodging temple, Ekido couldn't restrain himself any longer. "Why did you carry that girl across the road?" he asked. "We monks are not supposed to do things like that."

"I put the girl down hours ago," said Tanzan. "Are you still carrying her?"

Now imagine what life would be like for someone who lived like Ekido all the time, unable or unwilling to let go internally of situations, accumulating more and more "stuff" inside, and you get a sense of what life is like for the majority of people on our planet. What a heavy burden of past they carry around with them in their minds.

The past lives in you as memories, but memories in themselves are not a problem. In fact, it is through memory that we learn from the past and from past mistakes. It is only when memories, that is to say, thoughts about the past, take you over completely that they turn into a burden, turn problematic, and become part of your sense of self. Your personality, which is conditioned by the past, then becomes your prison. Your memories are invested with a sense of self, and your story becomes who you perceive yourself to be. This "little me" is an illusion that obscures your true identity as timeless and formless Presence.

Your story, however, consists not only of mental but also of emotional memory—old emotion that is being revived continuously. As in the case of the monk who carried the burden of his resentment for five hours by feeding it with his thoughts, most people carry a large amount of unnecessary baggage, both mental and emotional, throughout their lives. They limit themselves through grievances, regret, hostility, guilt. Their emotional thinking has become their self, and so they hang on to the old emotion because it strengthens their identity.

Because of the human tendency to perpetuate old emotion, almost everyone carries in his or her energy field an accumulation of old emotional pain, which I call "the pain-body."

We can, however, stop adding to the pain-body that we already have. We can learn to break the habit of accumulating and perpetuating old emotion by flapping our wings, metaphorically speaking, and refrain from mentally dwelling on the past, regardless of whether something happened yesterday or thirty years ago. We can learn not to keep situations or events alive in our minds, but to return our attention continuously to the pristine, timeless present moment rather than be caught up in mental movie-making. Our very Presence then becomes our identity, rather than our thoughts and emotions.

Nothing ever happened in the past that can prevent you from being present now; and if the past cannot prevent you from being present now, what power does it have?

INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE

Any negative emotion that is not fully faced and seen for what it is in the moment it arises does not completely dissolve. It leaves behind a remnant of pain.

Children in particular find strong negative emotions too overwhelming to cope with and tend to try not to feel them. In the absence of a fully conscious adult who guides them with love and compassionate understanding into facing the emotion directly, choosing not to feel it is indeed the only option for the child at that time. Unfortunately, that early defense mechanism usually remains in place when the child becomes an adult. The emotion still lives in him or her unrecognized and manifests indirectly, for example, as anxiety, anger, outbursts of violence, a mood, or even as a physical illness. In some cases, it interferes with or sabotages every intimate relationship. Most psychotherapists have met patients who claimed initially to have had a totally happy childhood, and later the opposite turned out to be the case. Those may be the more extreme cases, but nobody can go through childhood without suffering emotional pain. Even if both of your parents were enlightened, you would still find yourself growing up in a largely unconscious world.

The remnants of pain left behind by every strong negative emotion that is not fully faced, accepted, and then let go of join together to form an energy field that lives in the very cells of your body. It consists not just of childhood pain, but also painful emotions that were added to it later in adolescence and during your adult life, much of it created by the voice of the ego. It is the emotional pain that is your unavoidable companion when a false sense of self is the basis of your life.

This energy field of old but still very-much-alive emotion that lives in almost every human being is the pain-body.

The pain-body, however, is not just individual in nature. It also partakes of the pain suffered by countless humans throughout the history of humanity, which is a history of continuous tribal warfare, of enslavement, pillage, rape, torture, and other forms of violence. This pain still lives in the collective psyche of humanity and is being added to on a daily basis, as you can verify when you watch the news tonight or look at the drama in people's relationships. The collective pain-body is probably encoded within every human's DNA, although we haven't discovered it there yet.

Every newborn who comes into this world already carries an emotional pain-body. In some it is heavier, more dense than in others. Some babies are quite happy most of the time. Others seem to carry an enormous amount of unhappiness within them. It is true that some babies cry a great deal because they are not given enough love and attention, but others cry for no apparent reason, almost as if they were trying to make everyone around them as unhappy as they are—and often they succeed. They have come into this world with a heavy share of human pain. Other babies may cry frequently because they can sense the emanation of their mother's and father's negative emotion, and it causes them pain and also causes their pain-body to grow already by absorbing energy from the parents' pain-bodies. Whatever the case may be, as the baby's physical body grows, so does the pain-body.

An infant with only a light pain-body is not necessarily going to be a spiritually "more advanced" man or woman than somebody with a dense one. In fact, the opposite is often the case. People with heavy pain-bodies usually have a better chance to awaken spiritually than those with a relatively light one. Whereas some of them do remain trapped in their heavy pain-bodies, many others reach a point where they cannot live with their unhappiness any longer, and so their motivation to awaken becomes strong.

Why is the suffering body of Christ, his face distorted in agony and his body bleeding from countless wounds, such a significant image in the collective consciousness of humanity? Millions of people, particularly in medieval times, would not have related to it as deeply as they did if something within themselves had not resonated with it, if they had not unconsciously recognized it as an outer representation of their own inner reality—the pain-body. They were not yet conscious enough to recognize it directly within themselves, but it was the beginning of their becoming aware of it. Christ can be seen as the archetypal human, embodying both the pain and the possibility of transcendence.

HOW THE PAIN-BODY RENEWS ITSELF

The pain-body is a semiautonomous energy-form that lives within most human beings, an entity made up of emotion. It has its own primitive intelligence, not unlike a cunning animal, and its intelligence is directed primarily at survival. Like all life-forms, it periodically needs to feed—to take in new energy—and the food it requires to replenish itself consists of energy that is compatible with its own, which is to say, energy that vibrates at a similar frequency. Any emotionally painful experience can be used as food by the pain-body. That's why it thrives on negative thinking as well as drama in relationships. The pain-body is an addiction to unhappiness.

It may be shocking when you realize for the first time that there is something within you that periodically seeks emotional negativity, seeks unhappiness. You need even more awareness to see it in yourself than to recognize it in another person. Once the unhappiness has taken you over, not only do you not want an end to it, but you want to make others just as miserable as you are in order to feed on their negative emotional reactions.

In most people, the pain-body has a dormant and an active stage. When it is dormant, you easily forget that you carry a heavy dark cloud or a dormant volcano inside you, depending on the energy field of your particular pain-body. How long it remains dormant varies from person to person: A few weeks is the most common, but it can be a few days or months. In rare cases the pain-body can lie in hibernation for years before it gets triggered by some event.

HOW THE PAIN-BODY FEEDS ON YOUR THOUGHTS

The pain-body awakens from its dormancy when it gets hungry, when it is time to replenish itself. Alternatively, it may get triggered by an event at any time. The pain-body that is ready to feed can use the most insignificant event as a trigger, something somebody says or does, or even a thought. If you live alone or there is nobody around at the time, the pain-body will feed on your thoughts. Suddenly, your thinking becomes deeply negative. You were most likely unaware that just prior to the influx of negative thinking a wave of emotion invaded your mind—as a dark and heavy mood, as anxiety or fiery anger. All thought is energy and the pain-body is now feeding on the energy of your thoughts. But it cannot feed on any thought. You don't need to be particularly sensitive to notice that a positive thought has a totally different feeling-tone than a negative one. It is the same energy, but it vibrates at a different frequency. A happy, positive thought is indigestible to the pain-body. It can only feed on negative thoughts because only those thoughts are compatible with its own energy field.

All things are vibrating energy fields in ceaseless motion. The chair you sit on, the book you are holding in your hands appear solid and motionless only because that is how your senses perceive their vibrational frequency, that is to say, the incessant movement of the molecules, atoms, electrons, and subatomic particles that together create what you perceive as a chair, a book, a tree, or a body. What we perceive as physical matter is energy vibrating (moving) at a particular range of frequencies. Thoughts consist of the same energy vibrating at a higher frequency than matter, which is why they cannot be seen or touched. Thoughts have their own range of frequencies, with negative thoughts at the lower end of the scale and positive thoughts at the higher. The vibrational frequency of the pain-body resonates with that of negative thoughts, which is why only those thoughts can feed the pain-body.

The usual pattern of thought creating emotion is reversed in the case of the pain-body, at least initially. Emotion from the pain-body quickly gains control of your thinking, and once your mind has been taken over by the pain-body, your thinking becomes negative. The voice in your head will be telling sad, anxious, or angry stories about yourself or your life, about other people, about past, future, or imaginary events. The voice will be blaming, accusing, complaining, imagining. And you are totally identified with whatever the voice says, believe all its distorted thoughts. At that point, the addiction to unhappiness has set in.

It is not so much that you cannot stop your train of negative thoughts, but that you don't want to. This is because the pain-body at that time is living through you, pretending to be you. And to the pain-body, pain is pleasure. It eagerly devours every negative thought. In fact, the usual voice in your head has now become the voice of the pain-body. It has taken over the internal dialogue. A vicious circle becomes established between the pain-body and your thinking. Every thought feeds the pain-body and in turn the pain-body generates more thoughts. At some point, after a few hours or even a few days, it has replenished itself and returns to its dormant stage, leaving behind a depleted organism and a body that is much more susceptible to illness. If that sounds to you like a psychic parasite, you are right. That's exactly what it is.

HOW THE PAIN-BODY FEEDS ON DRAMA

If there are other people around, preferably your partner or a close family member, the pain-body will attempt to provoke them—push their buttons, as the expression goes—so it can feed on the ensuing drama. Pain-bodies love intimate relationships and families because that is where they get most of their food. It is hard to resist another person's pain-body that is determined to draw you into a reaction. Instinctively it knows your weakest, most vulnerable points. If it doesn't succeed the first time, it will try again and again. It is raw emotion looking for more emotion. The other person's pain-body wants to awaken yours so that both pain-bodies can mutually energize each other.

Many relationships go through violent and destructive pain-body episodes at regular intervals. It is almost unbearably painful for a young child to have to witness the emotional violence of their parents' pain-bodies, and yet that is the fate of millions of children all over the world, the nightmare of their daily existence. That is also one of the main ways in which the human pain-body is passed on from generation to generation. After each episode, the partners make up, and there is an interval of relative peace, to the limited extent that the ego allows it.

Excessive consumption of alcohol will often activate the pain-body, particularly in men, but also in some women. When a person becomes drunk, he goes through a complete personality change as the pain-body takes him over. A deeply unconscious person whose pain-body habitually replenishes itself through physical violence often directs it toward his spouse or children.

When he becomes sober, he is truly sorry and may say he will never do this again, and he means it. The person who is talking and making promises, however, is not the entity that commits the violence, and so you can be sure that it will happen again and again unless he becomes present, recognizes the pain-body within himself, and thus disidentifies from it. In some cases, counseling can help him do that.

Most pain-bodies want to both inflict and suffer pain, but some are predominately either perpetrators or victims. In either case, they feed on violence, whether emotional or physical. Some couples who may think they have "fallen in love" are actually feeling drawn to each other because their respective pain-bodies complement each other. Sometimes the roles of perpetrator and victim are already clearly prescribed the first time they meet. Some marriages that are thought to be made in heaven are actually made in hell.

If you have ever lived with a cat, you will know that even when the cat seems to be asleep, it still knows what is going on, because at the slightest unusual noise, its ears will move toward it, and its eyes may open slightly. Dormant pain-bodies are the same. On some level, they are still awake, ready to jump into action when an appropriate trigger presents itself.

In intimate relationships, pain-bodies are often clever enough to lie low until you start living together and preferably have signed a contract committing yourself to be with this person for the rest of your life. You don't just marry your wife or husband, you also marry her or his pain-body—and your spouse marries yours. It can be quite a shock when, perhaps not long after moving in together or after the honeymoon, you find suddenly one day there is a complete personality change in your partner. Her voice becomes harsh or shrill as she accuses you, blames you, or shouts at you, most likely over a relatively trivial matter. Or she becomes totally withdrawn. "What's wrong?" you ask. "Nothing is wrong," she says. But the intensely hostile energy she emanates is saying, "Everything is wrong." When you look into her eyes, there is no light in them anymore; it is as if a heavy veil has descended, and the being you know and love which before was able to shine through her ego, is now totally obscured. A complete stranger seems to be looking back at you, and in her eyes there is hatred, hostility, bitterness, or anger. When she speaks to you, it is not your spouse or partner who is speaking but the pain-body speaking through them. Whatever she is saying is the pain-body's version of reality, a reality completely distorted by fear, hostility, anger, and a desire to inflict and receive more pain.

At this point you may wonder whether this is your partner's real face that you had never seen before and whether you made a dreadful mistake in choosing this person. It is, of course, not the real face, just the pain-body that temporarily has taken possession. It would be hard to find a partner who does not carry a pain-body, but it would perhaps be wise to choose someone whose pain-body is not excessively dense.

DENSE PAIN-BODIES

Some people carry dense pain-bodies that are never completely dormant. They may be smiling and making polite conversation, but you do not need to be psychic to sense that seething ball of unhappy emotion in them just underneath the surface, waiting for the next event to react to, the next person to blame or confront, the next thing to be unhappy about. Their pain-bodies can never get enough, are always hungry. They magnify the ego's need for enemies.

Through their reactivity, relatively insignificant matters are blown up out of all proportion as they try to pull other people into their drama by getting them to react. Some get involved in protracted and ultimately pointless battles or court cases with organizations or individuals. Others are consumed by obsessive hatred toward an ex-spouse or partner. Unaware of the pain they carry inside, by their reaction, they project the pain into events and situations. Due to a complete lack of self-awareness, they cannot tell the difference between an event and their reaction to the event. To them, the unhappiness and even the pain itself is out there in the event or situation. Being unconscious of their inner state, they don't even know that they are deeply unhappy, that they are suffering.

Sometimes people with such dense pain-bodies become activists fighting for a cause. The cause may indeed be worthy, and they are sometimes successful at first in getting things done; however, the negative energy that flows into what they say and do and their unconscious need for enemies and conflict tend to generate increasing opposition to their cause. Usually they also end up creating enemies within their own organization, because wherever they go, they find reasons for feeling bad, and so their pain-body continues to find exactly what it is looking for.

ENTERTAINMENT, THE MEDIA, AND THE PAIN-BODY

If you were not familiar with our contemporary civilization, if you had come here from another age or another planet, one of the things that would amaze you is that millions of people love and pay money to watch humans kill and inflict pain on each other and call it "entertainment."

Why do violent films attract such large audiences? There is an entire industry, a large part of which fuels the human addiction to unhappiness. People obviously watch those films because they want to feel bad. What is it in humans that loves to feel bad and calls it good? The pain-body, of course. A large part of the entertainment industry caters to it. So, in addition to reactivity, negative thinking, and personal drama, the pain-body also renews itself vicariously through the cinema and television screen. Pain-bodies write and produce these films, and pain-bodies pay to watch them.

Is it always "wrong" to show and watch violence on television and the cinema screen? Does all such violence cater to the pain-body? At the current evolutionary stage of humanity, violence is still not only all-pervasive but even on the increase, as the old egoic consciousness, amplified by the collective pain-body, intensifies prior to its inevitable demise. If films show violence in its wider context, if they show its origin and its consequences, show what it does to the victim as well as the perpetrator, show the collective unconsciousness that lies behind it and is passed on from generation to generation (the anger and hatred that lives in humans as the pain-body), then those films can fulfill a vital function in the awakening of humanity. They can act as a mirror in which humanity sees its own insanity. That in you which recognizes madness as madness (even if it is your own) is sanity, is the arising awareness, is the end of insanity.

Such films do exist and they do not fuel the pain-body. Some of the best antiwar films are films that show the reality of war rather than a glamorized version of it. The pain-body can only feed on films in which violence is portrayed as normal or even desirable human behavior, or that glorify violence with the sole purpose of generating negative emotion in the viewer and so become a “fix” for the pain-addicted pain-body.

The popular tabloid press does not primarily sell news but negative emotion—food for the pain-body. “Outrage” screams the three-inch headline, or “Bastards.” The British tabloid press excels at this. They know that negative emotion sells far more papers than news does.

There is a tendency in the news media in general, including television, to thrive on negative news. The worse things get, the more excited the presenters become, and often the negative excitement is generated by the media itself. Pain-bodies just love it.

THE COLLECTIVE FEMALE PAIN-BODY

The collective dimension of the pain-body has different strands in it. Tribes, nations, races, all have their own collective pain-body, some heavier than others, and most members of that tribe, nation, or race have a share in it to a greater or lesser degree.

Almost every woman has her share in the collective female pain-body, which tends to become activated particularly just prior to the time of menstruation. At that time many women become over whelmed by intense negative emotion.

The suppression of the feminine principle especially over the past two thousand years has enabled the ego to gain absolute supremacy in the collective human psyche. Although women have egos, of course, the ego can take root and grow more easily in the male form than in the female. This is because women are less mind-identified than men. They are more in touch with the inner body and the intelligence of the organism where the intuitive faculties originate. The female form is less rigidly encapsulated than the male, has greater openness and sensitivity toward other life-forms, and is more attuned to the natural world.

If the balance between male and female energies had not been destroyed on our planet, the ego’s growth would have been greatly curtailed. We would not have declared war on nature, and we would not be so completely alienated from our Being.

Nobody knows the exact figure because records were not kept, but it seems certain that during a three-hundred-year period between three and five million women were tortured and killed by the “Holy Inquisition,” an institution founded by the Roman Catholic Church to suppress heresy. This surely ranks together with the Holocaust as one of the darkest chapters in human history. It was enough for a woman to show a love for animals, walk alone in the fields or woods, or gather medicinal plants to be branded a witch, then tortured and burned at the stake. The sacred feminine was declared demonic, and an entire dimension largely disappeared from human experience. Other cultures and religions, such as Judaism, Islam, and even Buddhism, also suppressed the female dimension, although in a less violent way. Women's status was reduced to being child bearers and men's property. Males who denied the feminine even within themselves were now running the world, a world that was totally out of balance. The rest is history or rather a case history of insanity.

Who was responsible for this fear of the feminine that could only be described as acute collective paranoia? We could say: Of course, men were responsible. But then why in many ancient pre-Christian civilizations such as the Sumerian, Egyptian, and Celtic were women respected and the feminine principle not feared but revered? What is it that suddenly made men feel threatened by the female? The evolving ego in them. It knew it could gain full control of our planet only through the male form, and to do so, it had to render the female powerless.

In time, the ego also took over most women, although it could never become as deeply entrenched in them as in men.

We now have a situation in which the suppression of the feminine has become internalized, even in most women. The sacred feminine, because it is suppressed, is felt by many women as emotional pain. In fact, it has become part of their pain-body, together with the accumulated pain suffered by women over millennia through childbirth, rape, slavery, torture, and violent death.

But things are changing rapidly now. With many people becoming more conscious, the ego is losing its hold on the human mind. Because the ego was never as deeply rooted in woman, it is losing its hold on women more quickly than on men.

NATIONAL AND RACIAL PAIN-BODIES

Certain countries in which many acts of collective violence were suffered or perpetrated have a heavier collective pain-body than others. This is why older nations tend to have stronger pain-bodies. It is also why younger countries, such as Canada or Australia, and those that have remained more sheltered from the surrounding madness, such as Switzerland, tend to have lighter collective pain-bodies. Of course, in those countries, people still have their personal pain-body to deal with. If you are sensitive enough, you can feel a heaviness in the energy field of certain countries as soon as you step off the plane. In other countries, one can sense an energy field of latent violence just underneath the surface of everyday life. In some nations, for example, in the Middle East, the collective pain-body is so acute that a significant part of the population finds itself forced to act it out in an endless and insane cycle of perpetration and retribution through which the pain-body renews itself continuously.

In countries where the pain-body is heavy but no longer acute, there has been a tendency for people to try and desensitize themselves to the collective emotional pain: in Germany and Japan through work, in some other countries through widespread indulgence in alcohol (which, however, can also have the opposite effect of stimulating the pain-body, particularly if consumed in excess). China’s heavy pain-body is to some extent mitigated by the widespread practice of t’ai chi, which amazingly was not declared illegal by the Communist government that otherwise feels threatened by anything it cannot control. Every day in the streets and city parks, millions practice this movement meditation that stills the mind. This makes a considerable difference to the collective energy field and goes some way toward diminishing the pain-body by reducing thinking and generating Presence.

Spiritual practices that involve the physical body, such as t’ai chi, qigong, and yoga, are also increasingly being embraced in the Western world. These practices do not create a separation between body and spirit and are helpful in weakening the pain-body. They will play an important role in the global awakening.

The collective racial pain-body is pronounced in Jewish people, who have suffered persecution over many centuries. Not surprisingly, it is strong as well in Native Americans, whose numbers were decimated and whose culture all but destroyed by the European settlers. In Black Americans too the collective pain-body is pronounced. Their ancestors were violently uprooted, beaten into submission, and sold into slavery. The foundation of American economic prosperity rested on the labor of four to five million black slaves. In fact, the suffering inflicted on Native and Black Americans has not remained confined to those two races, but has become part of the collective American pain-body. It is always the case that both victim and perpetrator suffer the consequences of any acts of violence, oppression, or brutality. For what you do to others, you do to yourself.

It doesn’t really matter what proportion of your pain-body belongs to your nation or race and what proportion is personal. In either case, you can only go beyond it by taking responsibility for your inner state now. Even if blame seems more than justified, as long as you blame others, you keep feeding the pain-body with your thoughts and remain trapped in your ego. There is only one perpetrator of evil on the planet: human unconsciousness. That realization is true forgiveness. With forgiveness, your victim identity dissolves, and your true power emerges—the power of Presence. Instead of blaming the darkness, you bring in the light.

CHAPTER SIX

Breaking Free

The beginning of freedom from the pain-body lies first of all in the realization that you *have* a pain-body. Then, more important, in your ability to stay present enough, alert enough, to notice the pain-body in yourself as a heavy influx of negative emotion when it becomes active. When it is recognized, it can no longer pretend to be you and live and renew itself through you.

It is your conscious Presence that breaks the identification with the pain-body. When you don't identify with it, the pain-body can no longer control your thinking and so cannot renew itself anymore by feeding on your thoughts. The pain-body in most cases does not dissolve immediately, but once you have severed the link between it and your thinking, the pain-body begins to lose energy. Your thinking ceases to be clouded by emotion; your present perceptions are no longer distorted by the past. The energy that was trapped in the pain-body then changes its vibrational frequency and is transmuted into Presence. In this way, the pain-body becomes fuel for consciousness. This is why many of the wisest, most enlightened men and women on our planet once had a heavy pain-body.

Regardless of what you say or do or what face you show to the world, your mental-emotional state cannot be concealed. Every human being emanates an energy field that corresponds to his or her inner state, and most people can sense it, although they may feel someone else's energy emanation only subliminally. That is to say, they don't know that they sense it, yet it determines to a large extent how they feel about and react to that person. Some people are most clearly aware of it when they first meet someone, even before any words are exchanged. A little later, however, words take over the relationship and with words come the roles that most people play. Attention then moves to the realm of mind, and the ability to sense the other person's energy field becomes greatly diminished. Nevertheless, it is still felt on an unconscious level.

When you realize that pain-bodies unconsciously seek more pain, that is to say, that they want something bad to happen, you will understand that many traffic accidents are caused by drivers whose pain-bodies are active at the time. When two drivers with active pain-bodies arrive at an intersection at the same time, the likelihood of an accident is many times greater than under normal circumstances. Unconsciously they both want the accident to happen.

The role of pain-bodies in traffic accidents is most obvious in the phenomenon called "road rage," when drivers become physically violent often over a trivial matter such as someone in front of them driving too slowly.

Many acts of violence are committed by "normal" people who temporarily turn into maniacs. All over the world at court proceedings you hear the defense lawyers say, "This is totally out of character," and the accused, "I don't know what came over me." To my knowledge so far, no defense lawyer has said to the judge—although the day may not be far off—"This is a case of diminished responsibility. My client's pain-body was activated, and he did not know what he was doing. In fact, he didn't do it. His pain-body did."

Does this mean that people are not responsible for what they do when possessed by the pain-body? My answer is: How can they be? How can you be responsible when you are unconscious, when you don't know what you are doing? However, in the greater scheme of things, human beings are meant to evolve into conscious beings, and those who don't will suffer the consequences of their unconsciousness. They are out of alignment with the evolutionary impulse of the universe.

And even that is only relatively true. From a higher perspective, it is not possible to be out of alignment with the evolution of the universe, and even human unconsciousness and the suffering it generates is part of that evolution. When you can't stand the endless cycle of suffering anymore, you begin to awaken. So the pain-body too has its necessary place in the larger picture.

PRESENCE

A woman in her thirties came to see me. As she greeted me, I could sense the pain behind her polite and superficial smile. She started telling me her story, and within one second her smile changed into a grimace of pain. Then, she began to sob uncontrollably. She said she felt lonely and unfulfilled. There was much anger and sadness. As a child she had been abused by a physically violent father. I saw quickly that her pain was not caused by her present life circumstances but by an extraordinarily heavy pain-body. Her pain-body had become the filter through which she viewed her life situation. She was not yet able to see the link between the emotional pain and her thoughts, being completely identified with both. She could not yet see that she was feeding the pain-body with her thoughts. In other words, she lived with the burden of a deeply unhappy self. At some level, however, she must have realized that her pain originated within herself, that she was a burden to herself. She was ready to awaken, and this is why she had come.

I directed the focus of her attention to what she was feeling inside her body and asked her to sense the emotion directly, instead of through the filter of her unhappy thoughts, her unhappy story. She said she had come expecting me to show her the way out of her unhappiness, not into it. Reluctantly, however, she did what I asked her to do. Tears were rolling down her face, her whole body was shaking. "At this moment, this is what you feel," I said. "There is nothing you can do about the fact that *at this moment* this is what you feel. Now, instead of wanting this moment to be different from the way it is, which adds more pain to the pain that is already there, is it possible for you to completely accept that this is what you feel right now?"

She was quiet for a moment. Suddenly she looked impatient, as if she was about to get up, and said angrily, "No, I don't want to accept this." "Who is speaking?" I asked her. "You or the unhappiness in you? Can you see that your unhappiness about being unhappy is just another layer of unhappiness?" She became quiet again. "I am not asking you to *do* anything. All I'm asking is that you find out whether it is possible for you to allow those feelings to be there. In other words, and this may sound strange, if you don't mind being unhappy, what happens to the unhappiness? Don't you want to find out?"

She looked puzzled briefly, and after a minute or so of sitting silently, I suddenly noticed a significant shift in her energy field. She said, "This is weird. I'm still unhappy, but now there is space around it. It seems to matter less." This was the first time I heard somebody put it like that: There is space around my unhappiness. That space, of course, comes when there is inner acceptance of whatever you are experiencing in the present moment.

I didn't say much else, allowing her to be with the experience. Later she came to understand that the moment she stopped identifying with the feeling, the old painful emotion that lived in her, the moment she put her attention on it directly without trying to resist it, it could no longer control her thinking and so become mixed up with a mentally constructed story called "The Unhappy Me." Another dimension had come into her life that transcended her personal past—the dimension of Presence. Since you cannot be unhappy without an unhappy story, this was the end of her unhappiness. It was also the beginning of the end of her pain-body. Emotion in itself is not unhappiness. Only emotion plus an unhappy story is unhappiness.

When our session came to an end, it was fulfilling to know that I had just witnessed the arising of Presence in another human being. The very reason for our existence in human form is to bring that dimension of consciousness into this world. I had also witnessed a diminishment of the pain-body, not through fighting it but through bringing the light of consciousness to it.

A few minutes after my visitor left, a friend arrived to drop something off. As soon as she came into the room she said, "What happened here? The energy feels heavy and murky. It almost makes me feel sick. You need to open the windows, burn some incense." I explained that I had just witnessed a major release in someone with a very dense pain-body and that what she felt must be some of the energy that was released during our session. My friend, however, didn't want to stay and listen. She wanted to get away as soon as possible.

I opened the windows and went out to have dinner at a small Indian restaurant nearby. What happened there was a clear, further confirmation of what I already knew: That on some level, all seemingly individual human pain-bodies are connected. Although the form this particular confirmation took did come as a shock.

THE RETURN OF THE PAIN-BODY

I sat down at a table and ordered a meal. There were a few other guests. At a nearby table, there was a middle-aged man in a wheelchair who was just finishing his meal. He glanced at me once, briefly but intensely. A few minutes passed. Suddenly he became restless, agitated, his body began twitching. The waiter came to take his plate. The man started arguing with him. “The food was no good. It was dreadful.” “Then why did you eat it?” asked the waiter. And that really set him off. He started shouting, became abusive. Vile words were coming out of his mouth; intense, violent hatred filled the room. One could feel that energy entering the cells of one’s body looking for something to latch on to. Now he was shouting at the other guests too, but for some strange reason ignoring me completely as I sat in intense Presence. I suspected that the universal human pain-body had come back to tell me, “You thought you defeated me. Look, I’m still here.” I also considered the possibility that the released energy field left behind after our session followed me to the restaurant and attached itself to the one person in whom it found a compatible vibrational frequency, that is to say, a heavy pain-body.

The manager opened the door, “Just leave. Just leave.” The man zoomed out in his electric wheelchair, leaving everyone stunned. One minute later he returned. His pain-body wasn’t finished yet. It needed more. He pushed open the door with his wheelchair, shouting obscenities. A waitress tried to stop him from coming in. He put his chair in fast-forward and pinned her against the wall. Other guests jumped up and tried to pull him away. Shouting, screaming, pandemonium. A little later a policeman arrived, the man became quiet, was asked to leave and not return. The waitress fortunately was not hurt, except for bruises on her legs. When it was all over, the manager came to my table and asked me, half joking but perhaps feeling intuitively that there was some connection, “Did you cause all this?”

THE PAIN-BODY IN CHILDREN

Children’s pain-bodies sometimes manifest as moodiness or withdrawal. The child becomes sullen, refuses to interact, and may sit in a corner, hugging a doll or sucking a thumb. They can also manifest as weeping fits or temper tantrums. The child screams, may throw him or herself on the floor, or become destructive. Thwarted wanting can easily trigger the pain-body, and in a developing ego, the force of wanting can be intense. Parents may watch helplessly in incomprehension and disbelief as their little angel becomes transformed within a few seconds into a little monster. “Where does all that unhappiness come from?” they wonder. To a greater or lesser extent, it is the child’s share of the collective pain-body of humanity which goes back to the very origin of the human ego.

But the child may also already have taken on pain from his or her parents’ pain-bodies, and so the parents may see in the child a reflection of what is also in them. Highly sensitive children are particularly affected by their parents’ pain-bodies. Having to witness their parents’ insane drama causes almost unbearable emotional pain, and so it is often these sensitive children who grow into adults with heavy pain-bodies. Children are not fooled by parents who try to hide their pain-body from them, who say to each other, “We mustn’t fight in front of the children.” This usually means while the parents make polite conversation, the home is pervaded with negative energy.

Suppressed pain-bodies are extremely toxic, even more so than openly active ones, and that psychic toxicity is absorbed by the children and contributes to the development of their own pain-body.

Some children learn subliminally about ego and pain-body simply by living with very unconscious parents. A woman whose parents both had strong egos and heavy pain-bodies told me that often when her parents were shouting and screaming at each other, she would look at them and although she loved them, would say to herself, "These people are nuts. How did I ever end up here?" There was already an awareness in her of the insanity of living in such a way. That awareness helped reduce the amount of pain she absorbed from her parents.

Parents often wonder how to deal with their child's pain-body. The primary question is, of course, are they dealing with their own? Do they recognize it within themselves? Are they able to stay present enough when it becomes activated so that they can be aware of the emotion on the feeling level before it gets a chance to turn into thinking and thus into an "unhappy person"?

While the child is having a pain-body attack, there isn't much you can do except to stay present so that you are not drawn into an emotional reaction. The child's pain-body would only feed on it. Pain-bodies can be extremely dramatic. Don't buy into the drama. Don't take it too seriously. If the pain-body was triggered by thwarted wanting, don't give in now to its demands. Otherwise, the child will learn: "The more unhappy I become, the more likely I am to get what I want." This is a recipe for dysfunction in later life. The pain-body will be frustrated by your nonreaction and may briefly act up even more before it subsides. Fortunately, pain-body episodes in children are usually more short-lived than in adults.

A little while after it has subsided, or perhaps the next day, you can talk to the child about what happened. But don't *tell* the child about the pain-body. Ask questions instead. For example: "What was it that came over you yesterday when you wouldn't stop screaming? Do you remember? What did it feel like? Was it a good feeling? That thing that came over you, does it have a name? No? If it had a name, what would it be called? If you could see it, what would it look like? Can you paint a picture of what it would look like? What happened to it when it went away? Did it go to sleep? Do you think it may come back?"

These are just a few suggested questions. All these questions are designed to awaken the witnessing faculty in the child, which is Presence. They will help the child to disidentify from the pain-body. You may also want to talk to the child about your own pain-body using the child's terminology. The next time the child gets taken over by the pain-body, you can say, "It's come back, hasn't it?" Use whatever words the child used when you talked about it. Direct the child's attention to what it *feels* like. Let your attitude be one of interest or curiosity rather than one of criticism or condemnation.

It is unlikely that this will stop the pain-body in its tracks, and it may appear that the child will not even be hearing you, yet some awareness will remain in the background of the child's consciousness even while the pain-body is active. After a few times, the awareness will have grown stronger and the pain-body will have weakened. The child is growing in Presence. One day you may find that the child is the one to point out to you that your own pain-body has taken control of you.

UNHAPPINESS

Not all unhappiness is of the pain-body. Some of it is new unhappiness, created whenever you are out of alignment with the present moment, when the Now is denied in one way or another. When you recognize that the present moment is always already the case and therefore inevitable, you can bring an uncompromising inner "yes" to it and so not only create no further unhappiness, but, with inner resistance gone, find yourself empowered by Life itself.

The pain-body's unhappiness is always clearly out of proportion to the apparent cause. In other words, it is an overreaction. This is how it is recognized, although not usually by the sufferer, the person possessed. Someone with a heavy pain-body easily finds reasons for being upset, angry, hurt, sad, or fearful. Relatively insignificant things that someone else would shrug off with a smile or not even notice become the apparent cause of intense unhappiness. They are, of course, not the true cause but only act as a trigger. They bring back to life the old accumulated emotion. The emotion then moves into the head and amplifies and energizes the egoic mind structures.

Pain-body and ego are close relatives. They need each other. The triggering event or situation is then interpreted and reacted to through the screen of a heavily emotional ego. This is to say, its significance becomes completely distorted. You look at the present through the eyes of the emotional past within you. In other words, what you see and experience is not in the event or situation but in you. Or in some cases, it may be there in the event or situation, but you amplify it through your reaction. This reaction, this amplification, is what the pain-body wants and needs, what it feeds on.

For someone possessed by a heavy pain-body, it is often impossible to step outside his or her distorted interpretation, the heavily emotional "story." The more negative emotion there is in a story, the heavier and more impenetrable it becomes. And so the story is not recognized as such but is taken to be reality. When you are completely trapped in the movement of thought and the accompanying emotion, stepping outside is not possible because you don't even know that there is an outside. You are trapped in your own movie or dream, trapped in your own hell. To you it is reality and no other reality is possible. And as far as you are concerned, your reaction is the only possible reaction.

BREAKING IDENTIFICATION WITH THE PAIN-BODY

A person with a strong, active pain-body has a particular energy emanation that other people perceive as extremely unpleasant. When they meet such a person, some people will immediately want to remove themselves or reduce interaction with him or her to a minimum. They feel repulsed by the person's energy field. Others will feel a wave of aggression toward this person, and they will be rude or attack him or her verbally and in some cases, even physically. This means there is something within them that resonates with the other person's pain-body. What they react to so strongly is also in them. It is their own pain-body.

Not surprisingly, people with heavy and frequently active pain-bodies often find themselves in conflict situations. Sometimes, of course, they actively provoke them. But at other times, they may not actually do anything. The negativity they emanate is enough to attract hostility and generate conflict. It requires a high degree of Presence to avoid reacting when confronted by someone with such an active pain-body. If you are able to stay present, it sometimes happens that your Presence enables the other person to disidentify from his or her own pain-body and thus experience the miracle of a sudden awakening. Although the awakening may be short-lived, the awakening process will have become initiated.

One of the first such awakenings that I witnessed happened many years ago. My doorbell rang close to eleven o'clock at night. My neighbor Ethel's anxiety-laden voice came through the intercom. "We need to talk. This is very important. Please let me in." Ethel was middle-aged, intelligent, and highly educated. She also had a strong ego and a heavy pain-body. She escaped from Nazi Germany when she was an adolescent, and many of her family members perished in the concentration camps.

Ethel sat down on my sofa, agitated, her hands trembling. She took letters and documents out of the file she carried with her and spread them out all over the sofa and floor. At once I had the strange sensation as if a dimmer switch had turned the inside of my entire body to maximum power. There was nothing to do other than remain open, alert, intensely present—present with every cell of the body. I looked at her with no thought and no judgment and listened in stillness without any mental commentary. A torrent of words came out of her mouth. "They sent me another disturbing letter today. They are conducting a vendetta against me. You must help. We need to fight them together. Their crooked lawyers will stop at nothing. I will lose my home. They are threatening me with dispossession."

It transpired that she refused to pay the service charge because the property managers had failed to carry out some repairs. They in turn threatened to take her to court.

She talked for ten minutes or so. I sat, looked, and listened. Suddenly she stopped talking, looked at the papers all around her as if she had just woken up from a dream. She became calm and gentle. Her entire energy field changed. Then she looked at me and said, "This isn't important at all, is it?" "No, it isn't," I said. She sat quietly for a couple more minutes, then picked up her papers and left. The next morning she stopped me in the street, looking at me somewhat suspiciously. "What did you do to me? Last night was the first night in years that I slept well. In fact, I slept like a baby."

She believed I had "done something" to her, but I had done nothing. Instead of asking what I had done to her, perhaps she should have asked what I had not done. I had not reacted, not confirmed the reality of her story, not fed her mind with more thought and her pain-body with more emotion. I had allowed her to experience whatever she was experiencing at that moment, and the power of allowing lies in noninterference, nondoing. Being present is always infinitely more powerful than anything one could say or do, although sometimes being present can give rise to words or actions.

What happened to her was not yet a permanent shift, but a glimpse of what is possible, a glimpse of what was already within her. In Zen, such a glimpse is called *satori.* Satori is a moment of Presence, a brief stepping out of the voice in your head, the thought processes, and their reflection in the body as emotion. It is the arising of inner spaciousness where before there was the clutter of thought and the turmoil of emotion.

The thinking mind cannot understand Presence and so will often misinterpret it. It will say that you are uncaring, distant, have no compassion, are not relating. The truth is, you are relating but at a level deeper than thought and emotion. In fact, at that level there is a true coming together, a true joining that goes far beyond relating. In the stillness of Presence, you can sense the formless essence in yourself and in the other as one. Knowing the oneness of yourself and the other is true love, true care, true compassion.

"TRIGGERS"

Some pain-bodies react to only one particular kind of trigger or situation, which is usually one that resonates with a certain kind of emotional pain suffered in the past. For example, if a child grows up with parents for whom financial issues are the source of frequent drama and conflict, he or she may absorb the parents' fear around money and develop a pain-body that is triggered whenever financial issues are involved. The child as adult gets upset or angry even over insignificant amounts of money. Behind the upset or anger lies issues of survival and intense fear. I have seen spiritual, that is to say, relatively conscious, people who started to shout, blame, and make accusations the moment they picked up the phone to talk to their stockbroker or realtor. Just as there is a health warning on every package of cigarettes, perhaps there should be similar warnings on every banknote and bank statement: "Money can activate the pain-body and cause complete unconsciousness."

Someone who in childhood was neglected or abandoned by one or both parents will likely develop a pain-body that becomes triggered in any situation that resonates even remotely with their primordial pain of abandonment. A friend arriving a few minutes late to pick them up at the airport or a spouse coming home late can trigger a major pain-body attack. If their partner or spouse leaves them or dies, the emotional pain they experience goes far beyond the pain that is natural in such a situation. It may be intense anguish, long-lasting, incapacitating depression, or obsessive anger.

A woman who in childhood was physically abused by her father may find that her pain-body becomes easily activated in any close relationship with a man. Alternatively, the emotion that makes up her pain-body may draw her to a man whose pain-body is similar to that of her father. Her pain-body may feel a magnetic pull to someone who it senses will give it more of the same pain. That pain is sometimes misinterpreted as falling in love.

A man who had been an unwanted child and was given no love and a minimum of care and attention by his mother developed a heavy ambivalent pain-body that consisted of unfulfilled intense longing for his mother's love and attention and at the same time intense hatred toward her for withholding what he so desperately needed. When he became an adult, almost every woman would trigger his pain-body's neediness—a form of emotional pain—and this would manifest as an addictive compulsion to "conquer and seduce" almost every woman he met and in this way get the female love and attention that the pain-body craved. He became quite an expert on seduction, but as soon as a relationship turned intimate or his advances were rejected, the pain-body's anger toward his mother would come up and sabotage the relationship.

When you recognize your own pain-body as it arises, you will also quickly learn what the most common triggers are that activate it, whether it be situations or certain things other people do or say. When those triggers occur, you will immediately see them for what they are and enter a heightened state of alertness. Within a second or two, you will also notice the emotional reaction that is the arising pain-body, but in that state of alert Presence, you won't identify with it, which means the pain-body cannot take you over and become the voice in your head. If you are with your partner at the time, you may tell him or her: "What you just said (or did) triggered my pain-body." Have an agreement with your partner that whenever either of you says or does something that triggers the other person's pain-body, you will immediately mention it. In this way, the pain-body can no longer renew itself through drama in the relationship and instead of pulling you into unconsciousness, will help you become fully present.

Every time you are present when the pain-body arises, some of the pain-body's negative emotional energy will burn up, as it were, and become transmuted into Presence. The rest of the pain-body will quickly withdraw and wait for a better opportunity to arise again, that is to say, when you are less conscious. A better opportunity for the pain-body to arise may come whenever you lose Presence, perhaps after you have had a few drinks or while watching a violent film. The tiniest negative emotion, such as being irritated or anxious, can also serve as a doorway through which the pain-body can return. The pain-body needs your unconsciousness. It cannot tolerate the light of Presence.

THE PAIN-BODY AS AN AWAKENER

At first sight, it may seem that the pain-body is the greatest obstacle to the arising of a new consciousness in humanity. It occupies your mind, controls and distorts your thinking, disrupts your relationships, and feels like a dark cloud that occupies your entire energy field. It tends to make you unconscious, spiritually speaking, which means totally identified with mind and emotion. It makes you reactive, makes you say and do things that are designed to increase the unhappiness within yourself and the world.

As unhappiness increases, however, it also causes increasing disruption in your life. Perhaps the body can't take the stress anymore and develops an illness or some dysfunction. Perhaps you become involved in an accident, some huge conflict situation or drama that was caused by the pain-body's desire for something bad to happen, or you become the perpetrator of physical violence. Or it all becomes too much and you cannot live with your unhappy self anymore. The pain-body, of course, is part of that false self.

Whenever you get taken over by the pain-body, whenever you don't recognize it for what it is, it becomes part of your ego. Whatever you identify with turns into ego. The pain-body is one of the most powerful things the ego can identify with, just as the pain-body needs the ego to renew itself through it. That unholy alliance, however, eventually breaks down in those cases where the pain-body is so heavy that the egoic mind structures, instead of being strengthened by it, are becoming eroded by the continuous onslaught of the pain-body's energy charge, in the same way that an electronic device can be empowered by an electric current but also destroyed by it if the voltage is too high.

People with strong pain-bodies often reach a point where they feel their life is becoming unbearable, where they can't take any more pain, any more drama. One person expressed this by saying plainly and simply that she was "fed up with being unhappy." Some people may feel, as I did, that they cannot live with themselves anymore. Inner peace then becomes their first priority. Their acute emotional pain forces them to disidentify from the content of their minds and the mental-emotional structures that give birth to and perpetuate the unhappy me. They then know that neither their unhappy story nor the emotion they feel is who they are. They realize they are the knowing, not the known. Rather than pulling them into unconsciousness, the pain-body becomes their awakener, the decisive factor that forces them into a state of Presence.

However, due to the unprecedented influx of consciousness we are witnessing on the planet now, many people no longer need to go through the depth of acute suffering to be able to disidentify from the pain-body. Whenever they notice they have slipped back into a dysfunctional state, they are able to *choose* to step out of identification with thinking and emotion and enter the state of Presence. They relinquish resistance, become still and alert, one with what is, within and without.

The next step in human evolution is not inevitable, but for the first time in the history of our planet, it can be a conscious choice. Who is making that choice? You are. And who are you? Consciousness that has become conscious of itself.

BREAKING FREE OF THE PAIN-BODY

A question people frequently ask is, "How long does it take to become free of the pain-body?" The answer is, of course, that it depends both on the density of an individual's pain-body as well as the degree or intensity of that individual's arising Presence. But it is not the pain-body, but identification with it that causes the suffering that you inflict on yourself and others. It is not the pain-body but identification with the pain-body that forces you to relive the past again and again and keeps you in a state of unconsciousness. So a more important question to ask would be this: "How long does it take to become free of identification with the pain-body?”

And the answer to that question is: It takes no time at all. When the pain-body is activated, know that what you are feeling is the pain-body in you. This knowing is all that is needed to break your identification with it. And when identification with it ceases, the transmutation begins. The knowing prevents the old emotion from rising up into your head and taking over not only the internal dialogue, but also your actions as well as interactions with other people. This means the pain-body cannot use you anymore and renew itself through you. The old emotion may then still live in you for a while and come up periodically. It may also still occasionally trick you into identifying with it again and thus obscure the knowing, but not for long. Not projecting the old emotion into situations means facing it directly within yourself. It may not be pleasant, but it won’t kill you. Your Presence is more than capable of containing it. The emotion is not who you are.

When you feel the pain-body, don’t fall into the error of thinking there is something wrong with you. Making yourself into a problem—the ego loves that. The knowing needs to be followed by accepting. Anything else will obscure it again. Accepting means you allow yourself to feel whatever it is you are feeling at that moment. It is part of the is-ness of the Now. You can’t argue with *what is*. Well, you can, but if you do, you suffer. Through allowing, you become what you are: vast, spacious. You become whole. You are not a fragment anymore, which is how the ego perceives itself. Your true nature emerges, which is one with the nature of God.

Jesus points to this when he says, “Be ye whole, even as your Father in Heaven is whole.”[1] The New Testament’s “Be ye perfect” is a mistranslation of the original Greek word, which means whole. This is to say, you don’t need to become whole, but *be* what you already are—with or without the pain-body.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Finding Who You Truly Are

Gnothi Seauton—Know Thyself. These words were inscribed above the entrance to the temple of Apollo at Delphi, site of the sacred Oracle. In ancient Greece, people would visit the Oracle hoping to find out what destiny had in store for them or what course of action to take in a particular situation. It is likely that most visitors read those words as they entered the building without realizing that they pointed to a deeper truth than anything the Oracle could possibly tell them. They may not have realized either that, no matter how great a revelation or how accurate the information they received, it would ultimately prove to be of no avail, would not save them from further unhappiness and self-created suffering, if they failed to find the truth that is concealed in that injunction—Know Thyself. What those words imply is this: Before you ask any other question, first ask the most fundamental question of your life: Who am I?

Unconscious people—and many remain unconscious, trapped in their egos throughout their lives—will quickly tell you who they are: their name, their occupation, their personal history, the shape or state of their body, and whatever else they identify with. Others may appear to be more evolved because they think of themselves as an immortal soul or divine spirit. But do they really know themselves, or have they just added some spiritual-sounding concepts to the content of their mind? Knowing yourself goes far deeper than the adoption of a set of ideas or beliefs. Spiritual ideas and beliefs may at best be helpful pointers, but in themselves they rarely have the power to dislodge the more firmly established core concepts of who you think you are, which are part of the conditioning of the human mind. Knowing yourself deeply has nothing to do with whatever ideas are floating around in your mind. Knowing yourself is to be rooted in Being, instead of lost in your mind.

WHO YOU THINK YOU ARE

Your sense of who you are determines what you perceive as your needs and what matters to you in life—and whatever matters to you will have the power to upset and disturb you. You can use this as a criterion to find out how deeply you know yourself. What matters to you is not necessarily what you say or believe, but what your actions and reactions reveal as important and serious to you. So you may want to ask yourself the question: What are the things that upset and disturb me? If small things have the power to disturb you, then who you think you are is exactly that: small. That will be your unconscious belief. What are the small things? Ultimately all things are small things because all things are transient.

You might say, “I know I am an immortal spirit,” or “I am tired of this mad world, and peace is all I want”—until the phone rings. Bad news: The stock market has collapsed; the deal may fall through; the car has been stolen; your mother-in-law has arrived; the trip is cancelled, the contract has been broken; your partner has left you; they demand more money; they say it’s your fault. Suddenly there is a surge of anger, of anxiety. A harshness comes into your voice; “I can’t take any more of this.” You accuse and blame, attack, defend, or justify yourself, and it’s all happening on autopilot. Something is obviously much more important to you now than the inner peace that a moment ago you said was all you wanted, and you’re not an immortal spirit anymore either. The deal, the money, the contract, the loss or threat of loss are more important. To whom? To the immortal spirit that you said you are? No, to me. The small me that seeks security or fulfillment in things that are transient and gets anxious or angry because it fails to find it. Well, at least now you know who you really think you are.

If peace is really what you want, then you will choose peace. If peace mattered to you more than anything else and if you truly knew yourself to be spirit rather than a little me, you would remain nonreactive and absolutely alert when confronted with challenging people or situations. You would immediately accept the situation and thus become one with it rather than separate yourself from it. Then out of your alertness would come a response. Who you are (consciousness), not who you think you are (a small me), would be responding. It would be powerful and effective and would make no person or situation into an enemy.

The world always makes sure that you cannot fool yourself for long about who you really think you are by showing you what truly matters to you. How you react to people and situations, especially when challenges arise, is the best indicator of how deeply you know yourself.

The more limited, the more narrowly egoic the view of yourself, the more you will see, focus on, and react to the egoic limitations, the unconsciousness in others. Their “faults” or what you perceive as their faults become to you their identity. This means you will see only the ego in them and thus strengthen the ego in yourself. Instead of looking “through” the ego in others, you are looking “at” the ego. Who is looking at the ego? The ego in you.

Very unconscious people experience their own ego through its reflection in others. When you realize that what you react to in others is also in you (and sometimes only in you), you begin to become aware of your own ego. At that stage, you may also realize that you were doing to others what you thought others were doing to you. You cease seeing yourself as a victim.

You are not the ego, so when you become aware of the ego in you, it does not mean you know who you are—it means you know who you are *not*. But it is through knowing who you are not that the greatest obstacle to truly knowing yourself is removed.

Nobody can tell you who you are. It would just be another concept, so it would not change you. *Who you are* requires no belief. In fact, every belief is an obstacle. It does not even require your realization, since you already are who you are. But without realization, who you are does not shine forth into this world. It remains in the unmanifested which is, of course, your true home. You are then like an apparently poor person who does not know he has a bank account with $100 million in it and so his wealth remains an unexpressed potential.

ABUNDANCE

Who you think you are is also intimately connected with how you see yourself treated by others. Many people complain that others do not treat them well enough. "I don't get any respect, attention, recognition, acknowledgment," they say. "I'm being taken for granted." When people are kind, they suspect hidden motives. "Others want to manipulate me, take advantage of me. Nobody loves me."

Who they think they are is this: "I am a needy 'little me' whose needs are not being met." This basic misperception of who they are creates dysfunction in all their relationships. They believe they have nothing to give and that the world or other people are withholding from them what they need. Their entire reality is based on an illusory sense of who they are. It sabotages situations, mars all relationships. If the thought of lack—whether it be money, recognition, or love—has become part of who you think you are, you will always experience lack. Rather than acknowledge the good that is already in your life, all you see is lack. Acknowledging the good that is already in your life is the foundation for all abundance. The fact is: Whatever you think the world is withholding from you, you are withholding from the world. You are withholding it because deep down you think you are small and that you have nothing to give.

Try this for a couple of weeks and see how it changes your reality: Whatever you think people are withholding from you—praise, appreciation, assistance, loving care, and so on—give it to them. You don't have it? Just act as if you had it, and it will come. Then, soon after you start giving, you will start receiving. You cannot receive what you don't give. Outflow determines inflow. Whatever you think the world is withholding from you, you already have, but unless you allow it to flow out, you won't even know that you have it. This includes abundance. The law that outflow determines inflow is expressed by Jesus in this powerful image: "Give and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap."[1]

The source of all abundance is not outside you. It is part of who you are. However, start by acknowledging and recognizing abundance without. See the fullness of life all around you. The warmth of the sun on your skin, the display of magnificent flowers outside a florist's shop, biting into a succulent fruit, or getting soaked in an abundance of water falling from the sky. The fullness of life is there at every step. The acknowledgment of that abundance that is all around you awakens the dormant abundance within. Then let it flow out. When you smile at a stranger, there is already a minute outflow of energy. You become a giver. Ask yourself often: "What can I give here; how can I be of service to this person, this situation?" You don't need to own anything to feel abundant, although if you feel abundant consistently things will almost certainly come to you. Abundance comes only to those who already have it. It sounds almost unfair, but of course it isn't. It is a universal law. Both abundance and scarcity are inner states that manifest as your reality. Jesus puts it like this: "For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away."[2]

KNOWING YOURSELF AND KNOWING *ABOUT* YOURSELF

You may not want to know yourself because you are afraid of what you may find out. Many people have a secret fear that they are bad. But nothing you can find out about yourself is you. Nothing you can know *about* you is you.

While some people do not want to know who they are because of fear, others have an insatiable curiosity about themselves and want to find out more and more. You may be so fascinated with yourself that you spend years in psychoanalysis, delve into every aspect of your childhood, uncover secret fears and desires, and find layers upon layers of complexity in the makeup of your personality and character. After ten years, the therapist may get tired of you and your story and tell you that your analysis is now complete. Perhaps he sends you away with a five-thousand-page dossier. "This is all about you. This is who you are." As you carry the heavy file home, the initial satisfaction of at last knowing yourself gives way quickly to a feeling of incompleteness and a lurking suspicion that there must be more to who you are than this. And indeed there is more—not perhaps in quantitative terms of more facts but in the qualitative dimension of depth.

There is nothing wrong with psychoanalysis or finding out about your past as long as you don't confuse knowing *about* yourself with knowing yourself. The five-thousand-page dossier is *about* yourself: the content of your mind which is conditioned by the past. Whatever you learn through psychoanalysis or self-observation is *about* you. It is not you. It is content, not essence. Going beyond ego is stepping out of content. Knowing yourself is being yourself, and being yourself is ceasing to identify with content.

Most people define themselves through the content of their lives. Whatever you perceive, experience, do, think, or feel is content. Content is what absorbs most people's attention entirely, and it is what they identify with. When you think or say, "my life," you are not referring to the life that you *are* but the life that you *have*, or seem to have. You are referring to content—your age, health, relationships, finances, work and living situation, as well as your mental-emotional state. The inner and outer circumstances of your life, your past and your future, all belong to the realm of content—as do events, that is to say, anything that happens.

What is there other than content? That which enables the content to be—the inner space of consciousness.

CHAOS AND HIGHER ORDER

When you know yourself only through content, you will also think you know what is good or bad for you. You differentiate between events that are “good for me” and those that are “bad.” This is a fragmented perception of the wholeness of life in which everything is interconnected, in which every event has its necessary place and function within the totality. The totality, however, is more than the surface appearance of things, more than the sum total of its parts, more than whatever your life or the world contains.

Behind the sometimes seemingly random or even chaotic succession of events in our lives as well as in the world lies concealed the unfolding of a higher order and purpose. This is beautifully expressed in the Zen saying “The snow falls, each flake in its appropriate place.” We can never understand this higher order through thinking about it because whatever we think about is content; whereas, the higher order emanates from the formless realm of consciousness, from universal intelligence. But we can glimpse it, and more than that, align ourselves with it, which means be conscious participants in the unfolding of that higher purpose.

When we go into a forest that has not been interfered with by man, our thinking mind will see only disorder and chaos all around us. It won’t even be able to differentiate between life (good) and death (bad) anymore since everywhere new life grows out of rotting and decaying matter. Only if we are still enough inside and the noise of thinking subsides can we become aware that there is a hidden harmony here, a sacredness, a higher order in which everything has its perfect place and could not be other than what it is and the way it is.

The mind is more comfortable in a landscaped park because it has been planned through thought; it has not grown organically. There is an order here that the mind can understand. In the forest, there is an incomprehensible order that to the mind looks like chaos. It is beyond the mental categories of good and bad. You cannot understand it through thought, but you can sense it when you let go of thought, become still and alert, and don’t try to understand or explain. Only then can you be aware of the sacredness of the forest. As soon as you sense that hidden harmony, that sacredness, you realize you are not separate from it, and when you realize that, you become a conscious participant in it. In this way, nature can help you become realigned with the wholeness of life.

GOOD AND BAD

At some point in their lives, most people become aware that there is not only birth, growth, success, good health, pleasure, and winning, but also loss, failure, sickness, old age, decay, pain, and death. Conventionally these are labeled “good” and “bad,” order and disorder. The “meaning” of people’s lives is usually associated with what they term the “good,” but the good is continually threatened by collapse, breakdown, disorder; threatened by meaninglessness and the “bad,” when explanations fail and life ceases to make sense. Sooner or later, disorder will irrupt into everyone’s life no matter how many insurance policies he or she has. It may come in the form of loss or accident, sickness, disability, old age, death. However, the irruption of disorder into a person's life, and the resultant collapse of a mentally defined meaning, can become the opening into a higher order.

"The wisdom of this world is folly with God," says the Bible.[3] What is the wisdom of this world? The movement of thought, and meaning that is defined exclusively by thought.

Thinking isolates a situation or event and calls it good or bad, as if it had a separate existence. Through excessive reliance on thinking, reality becomes fragmented. This fragmentation is an illusion, but it seems very real while you are trapped in it. And yet the universe is an indivisible whole in which all things are interconnected, in which nothing exists in isolation.

The deeper interconnectedness of all things and events implies that the mental labels of "good" and "bad" are ultimately illusory. They always imply a limited perspective and so are true only relatively and temporarily. This is illustrated in the story of a wise man who won an expensive car in a lottery. His family and friends were very happy for him and came to celebrate. "Isn't it great!" they said. "You are so lucky." The man smiled and said, "Maybe." For a few weeks he enjoyed driving the car. Then one day a drunken driver crashed into his new car at an intersection and he ended up in the hospital, with multiple injuries. His family and friends came to see him and said, "That was really unfortunate." Again the man smiled and said, "Maybe." While he was still in the hospital, one night there was a landslide and his house fell into the sea. Again his friends came the next day and said, "Weren't you lucky to have been here in hospital." Again he said, "Maybe."

The wise man's "maybe" signifies a refusal to judge anything that happens. Instead of judging what is, he accepts it and so enters into conscious alignment with the higher order. He knows that often it is impossible for the mind to understand what place or purpose a seemingly random event has in the tapestry of the whole. But there are no random events, nor are there events or things that exist by and for themselves, in isolation. The atoms that make up your body were once forged inside stars, and the causes of even the smallest event are virtually infinite and connected with the whole in incomprehensible ways. If you wanted to trace back the cause of any event, you would have to go back all the way to the beginning of creation. The cosmos is not chaotic. The very word *cosmos* means order. But this is not an order the human mind can ever comprehend, although it can sometimes glimpse it.

NOT MINDING WHAT HAPPENS

J. Krishnamurti, the great Indian philosopher and spiritual teacher, spoke and traveled almost continuously all over the world for more than fifty years attempting to convey through words—which are content—that which is beyond words, beyond content. At one of his talks in the later part of his life, he surprised his audience by asking, "Do you want to know my secret?" Everyone became very alert. Many people in the audience had been coming to listen to him for twenty or thirty years and still failed to grasp the essence of his teaching. Finally, after all these years, the master would give them the key to understanding. "This is my secret," he said. "I don't mind what happens."

He did not elaborate, and so I suspect most of his audience were even more perplexed than before. The implications of this simple statement, however, are profound.

When I don't mind what happens, what does that imply? It implies that internally I am in alignment with what happens. "What happens," of course, refers to the suchness of this moment, which always already is as it is. It refers to content, the form that this moment—the only moment there ever is—takes. To be in alignment with *what is* means to be in a relationship of inner nonresistance with what happens. It means not to label it mentally as good or bad, but to let it be. Does this mean you can no longer take action to bring about change in your life? On the contrary. When the basis for your actions is inner alignment with the present moment, your actions become empowered by the intelligence of Life itself.

IS THAT SO?

The Zen Master Hakuin lived in a town in Japan. He was held in high regard and many people came to him for spiritual teaching. Then it happened that the teenage daughter of his next-door neighbor became pregnant. When being questioned by her angry and scolding parents as to the identity of the father, she finally told them that he was Hakuin, the Zen Master. In great anger the parents rushed over to Hakuin and told him with much shouting and accusing that their daughter had confessed that he was the father. All he replied was, "Is that so?"

News of the scandal spread throughout the town and beyond. The Master lost his reputation. This did not trouble him. Nobody came to see him anymore. He remained unmoved. When the child was born, the parents brought the baby to Hakuin. "You are the father, so you look after him." The Master took loving care of the child. A year later, the mother remorsefully confessed to her parents that the real father of the child was the young man who worked at the butcher shop. In great distress they went to see Hakuin to apologize and ask for forgiveness. "We are really sorry. We have come to take the baby back. Our daughter confessed that you are not the father." "Is that so?" is all he would say as he handed the baby over to them.

The Master responds to falsehood and truth, bad news and good news, in exactly the same way: "Is that so?" He allows the form of the moment, good or bad, to be as it is and so does not become a participant in human drama. To him there is only this moment, and this moment is as it is. Events are not personalized. He is nobody's victim. He is so completely at one with what happens that what happens has no power over him anymore. Only if you resist what happens are you at the mercy of what happens, and the world will determine your happiness and unhappiness.

The baby is looked after with loving care. Bad turns into good through the power of nonresistance. Always responding to what the present moment requires, he lets go of the baby when it is time to do so.

Imagine briefly how the ego would have reacted during the various stages of the unfolding of these events.

THE EGO AND THE PRESENT MOMENT

The most important, the primordial relationship in your life is your relationship with the Now, or rather with whatever form the Now takes, that is to say, what is or what happens. If your relationship with the Now is dysfunctional, that dysfunction will be reflected in every relationship and every situation you encounter. The ego could be defined simply in this way: a dysfunctional relationship with the present moment. It is at this moment that you can decide what kind of relationship you want to have with the present moment.

Once you have reached a certain level of consciousness, (and if you are reading this, you almost certainly have), you are able to decide what kind of a relationship you want to have with the present moment. Do I want the present moment to be my friend or my enemy? The present moment is inseparable from life, so you are really deciding what kind of a relationship you want to have with life. Once you have decided you want the present moment to be your friend, it is up to you to make the first move: Become friendly toward it, welcome it no matter in what disguise it comes, and soon you will see the results. Life becomes friendly toward you; people become helpful, circumstances cooperative. One decision changes your entire reality. But that one decision you have to make again and again and again—until it becomes natural to live in such a way.

The decision to make the present moment into your friend is the end of the ego. The ego can never be in alignment with the present moment, which is to say, aligned with life, since its very nature compels it to ignore, resist, or devalue the Now. Time is what the ego lives on. The stronger the ego, the more time takes over your life. Almost every thought you think is then concerned with past or future, and your sense of self depends on the past for your identity and on the future for its fulfillment. Fear, anxiety, expectation, regret, guilt, anger are the dysfunctions of the time-bound state of consciousness.

There are three ways in which the ego will treat the present moment: as a means to an end, as an obstacle, or as an enemy. Let us look at them in turn, so that when this pattern operates in you, you can recognize it and—decide again.

To the ego, the present moment is, at best, only useful as a means to an end. It gets you to some future moment that is considered more important, even though the future never comes except as the present moment and is therefore never more than a thought in your head. In other words, you are never fully here because you are always busy trying to get elsewhere.

When this pattern becomes more pronounced, and this is very common, the present moment is regarded and treated as if it were an obstacle to be overcome. This is where impatience, frustration, and stress arise, and in our culture, it is many people's everyday reality, their normal state. Life, which is now, is seen as a "problem," and you come to inhabit a world of problems that all need to be solved before you can be happy, fulfilled, or really start living—or so you think. The problem is: For every problem that is solved, another one pops up. As long as the present moment is seen as an obstacle, there can be no end to problems. "I'll be whatever you want me to be," says Life or the Now. "I'll treat you the way you treat me. If you see me as a problem, I will be a problem to you. If you treat me as an obstacle, I will be an obstacle."

At worst, and this is also very common, the present moment is treated as if it were an enemy. When you hate what you are doing, complain about your surroundings, curse things that are happening or have happened, or when your internal dialogue consists of shoulds and shouldn'ts, of blaming and accusing, then you are arguing with what *is*, arguing with that which is always already the case. You are making Life into an enemy and Life says, "War is what you want, and war is what you get." External reality, which always reflects back to you your inner state, is then experienced as hostile.

A vital question to ask yourself frequently is: What is my relationship with the present moment? Then become alert to find out the answer. Am I treating the Now as no more than a means to an end? Do I see it as an obstacle? Am I making it into an enemy? Since the present moment is all you ever have, since Life is inseparable from the Now, what the question really means is: What is my relationship with Life? This question is an excellent way of unmasking the ego in you and bringing you into the state of Presence. Although the question doesn't embody the absolute truth (ultimately, I and the present moment are one), it is a useful pointer in the right direction. Ask yourself it often until you don't need it anymore.

How do you go beyond a dysfunctional relationship with the present moment? The most important thing is to see it in yourself, in your thoughts and actions. In the moment of seeing, of noticing that your relationship with the Now is dysfunctional, you are present. The seeing is the arising Presence. The moment you see the dysfunction, it begins to dissolve. Some people laugh out loud when they see this. With the seeing comes the power of choice—the choice of saying yes to the Now, of making it into your friend.

THE PARADOX OF TIME

On the surface, the present moment is "what happens." Since what happens changes continuously, it seems that every day of your life consists of thousands of moments in which different things happen. Time is seen as the endless succession of moments, some "good," some "bad." Yet, if you look more closely, that is to say, through your own immediate experience, you find that there are not many moments at all. You discover that there is only ever *this moment*. Life is always now. Your entire life unfolds in this constant Now. Even past or future moments only exist when you remember or anticipate them, and you do so by thinking about them in the only moment there is: this one.

Why does it appear then as if there were many moments? Because the present moment is confused with what happens, confused with content. The space of Now is confused with what happens in that space. The confusion of the present moment with content gives rise not only to the illusion of time, but also to the illusion of ego.

There is a paradox here. On the one hand, how can we deny the reality of time? You need it to go from here to there, to prepare a meal, build a house, read this book. You need time to grow up, to learn new things. Whatever you do seems to take time. Everything is subject to it and eventually "this bloody tyrant time," as Shakespeare calls it, is going to kill you. You could compare it to a raging river that drags you along with it, or a fire in which everything is consumed.

I recently met some old friends, a family I had not seen in a long time, and I was shocked when I saw them. I almost asked, "Are you ill? What happened? Who did this to you?" The mother, who walked with a cane, seemed to have shrunk in size, her face shriveled like an old apple. The daughter, who had been full of energy, enthusiasm, and the expectations of youth when I last saw her, seemed worn out, tired after bringing up three children. Then I remembered: Almost thirty years had passed since we last met. Time had done this to them. And I'm sure they were just as shocked when they saw me.

Everything seems to be subject to time, yet it all happens in the Now. That is the paradox. Wherever you look, there is plenty of *circumstantial* evidence for the reality of time—a rotting apple, your face in the bathroom mirror compared to your face in a photo taken thirty years ago—yet you never find any *direct* evidence, you never experience time itself. You only ever experience the present moment, or rather what happens in it. If you go by direct evidence only, then there is no time, and the Now is all there ever is.

ELIMINATING TIME

You cannot make the egoless state into a future goal and then work toward it. All you get is more dissatisfaction, more inner conflict, because it will always seem that you have not arrived yet, have not "attained" that state yet. When freedom from ego is your goal for the future, you give yourself more time, and more time means more ego. Look carefully to find out if your spiritual search is a disguised form of ego. Even trying to get rid of your "self" can be a disguised search for more if the getting rid of your "self" is made into a future goal. Giving yourself more time is precisely this: giving your "self" more time. Time, that is to say, past and future, is what the false mind-made self, the ego, lives on, and time is in your mind. It isn't something that has an objective existence "out there." It is a mind-structure needed for sensory perception, indispensable for practical purposes, but the greatest hindrance to knowing yourself. Time is the horizontal dimension of life, the surface layer of reality. Then there is the vertical dimension of depth, accessible to you only through the portal of the present moment.

So instead of adding time to yourself, remove time. The elimination of time from your consciousness is the elimination of ego. It is the only true spiritual practice.

When we speak of the elimination of time, we are, of course, not referring to clock time, which is the use of time for practical purposes, such as making an appointment or planning a trip. It would be almost impossible to function in this world without clock time. What we are speaking of is the elimination of psychological time, which is the egoic mind's endless preoccupation with past and future and its unwillingness to be one with life by living in alignment with the inevitable *isness* of the present moment.

Whenever a habitual no to life turns into a yes, whenever you allow this moment to be as it is, you dissolve time as well as ego. For the ego to survive, it must make time—past and future—more important than the present moment. The ego cannot tolerate becoming friendly with the present moment, except briefly just after it got what it wanted. But nothing can satisfy the ego for long. As long as it runs your life, there are two ways of being unhappy. Not getting what you want is one. Getting what you want is the other.

Whatever is or happens is the form that the Now takes. As long as you resist it internally, form, that is to say, the world, is an impenetrable barrier that separates you from who you are beyond form, separates you from the formless one Life that you are. When you bring an inner yes to the form the Now takes, that very form becomes a doorway into the formless. The separation between the world and God dissolves.

When you react against the form that Life takes at this moment, when you treat the Now as a means, an obstacle, or an enemy, you strengthen your own form identity, the ego. Hence the ego's reactivity. What is reactivity? Becoming addicted to reaction. The more reactive you are, the more entangled you become with form. The more identified with form, the stronger the ego. Your Being then does not shine through form anymore—or only barely.

Through nonresistance to form, that in you which is beyond form emerges as an all-encompassing Presence, a silent power far greater than your short-lived form identity, the person. It is more deeply who you are than anything in the world of form.

THE DREAMER AND THE DREAM

Nonresistance is the key to the greatest power in the universe. Through it, consciousness (spirit) is freed from its imprisonment in form. Inner nonresistance to form whatever is or happens—is a denial of the absolute reality of form. Resistance makes the world and the things of the world appear more real, more solid, and more lasting than they are, including your own form identity, the ego. It endows the world and the ego with a heaviness and an absolute importance that makes you take yourself and the world very seriously. The play of form is then misperceived as a struggle for survival, and when that is your perception, it becomes your reality.

The many things that happen, the many forms that life takes on, are of an ephemeral nature. They are all fleeting. Things, bodies and egos, events, situations, thoughts, emotions, desires, ambitions, fears, drama…they come, pretend to be all-important, and before you know it they are gone, dissolved into the no-thingness out of which they came. Were they ever real? Were they ever more than a dream, the dream of form?

When we wake up in the morning, the night's dream dissolves, and we say, "Oh, it was only a dream. It wasn't real." But something in the dream must have been real otherwise it could not be. When death approaches, we may look back on our life and wonder if it was just another dream. Even now you may look back on last year's vacation or yesterday's drama and see that it is very similar to last night's dream.

There is the dream, and there is the dreamer of the dream. The dream is a short-lived play of forms. It is the world—relatively real but not absolutely real. Then there is the dreamer, the absolute reality in which the forms come and go. The dreamer is not the person. The person is part of the dream. The dreamer is the substratum in which the dream appears, that which makes the dream possible. It is the absolute behind the relative, the timeless behind time, the consciousness in and behind form. The dreamer is consciousness itself—who you are.

To awaken within the dream is our purpose now. When we are awake within the dream, the ego-created earth-drama comes to an end and a more benign and wondrous dream arises. This is the new earth.

GOING BEYOND LIMITATION

In each person's life there comes a time when he or she pursues growth and expansion on the level of form. This is when you strive to overcome limitation such as physical weakness or financial scarcity, when you acquire new skills and knowledge, or through creative action bring something new into this world that is life-enhancing for yourself as well as others. This may be a piece of music or a work of art, a book, a service you provide, a function you perform, a business or organization that you set up or make a vital contribution to.

When you are present, when your attention is fully in the Now, that Presence will flow into and transform what you do. There will be quality and power in it. You are present when what you are doing is not primarily a means to an end (money, prestige, winning) but fulfilling in itself, when there is joy and aliveness in what you do. And, of course, you cannot be present unless you become friendly with the present moment. That is the basis for effective action, uncontaminated by negativity.

Form means limitation. We are here not only to experience limitation, but also to grow in consciousness by going beyond limitation. Some limitations can be overcome on an external level. There may be other limitations in your life that you have to learn to live with. They can only be overcome internally. Everyone will encounter them sooner or later. Those limitations either keep you trapped in egoic reaction, which means intense unhappiness, or you rise above them internally by uncompromising surrender to what is. That is what they are here to teach. The surrendered state of consciousness opens up the vertical dimension in your life, the dimension of depth. Something will then come forth from that dimension into this world, something of infinite value that otherwise would have remained unmanifested. Some people who surrendered to severe limitation become healers or spiritual teachers. Others work selflessly to lessen human suffering or bring some creative gift into this world.

In the late seventies, I would have lunch every day with one or two friends in the cafeteria of the graduate center at Cambridge University, where I was studying. A man in a wheelchair would sometimes sit at a nearby table, usually accompanied by three or four people. One day, when he was sitting at a table directly opposite me, I could not help but look at him more closely, and I was shocked by what I saw. He seemed almost totally paralyzed. His body was emaciated, his head permanently slumped forward. One of the people accompanying him was carefully putting food in his mouth, a great deal of which would fall out again and be caught on a small plate another man was holding under his chin. Occasionally the wheelchair-bound man would produce unintelligible croaking sounds, and someone would hold an ear close to his mouth and then amazingly would interpret what he was trying to say.

Later I asked my friend whether he knew who he was. "Of course," he said, "he is a professor of mathematics, and the people with him are his graduate students. He has motor neuron disease that progressively paralyzes every part of the body. He has been given five years at the most. It must be the most dreadful fate that can befall a human being."

A few weeks later, as I was leaving the building, he was coming in, and when I held the door open for his electric wheelchair to come through, our eyes met. With surprise I saw that his eyes were clear. There was no trace in them of unhappiness. I knew immediately he had relinquished resistance; he was living in surrender.

A number of years later when buying a newspaper at a kiosk, I was amazed to see him on the front page of a popular international news magazine. Not only was he still alive, but he had by then become the world's most famous theoretical physicist, Stephen Hawking. There was a beautiful line in the article that confirmed what I had sensed when I had looked into his eyes many years earlier. Commenting upon his life, he said (now with the help of the voice synthesizer), "Who could have wished for more?"

THE JOY OF BEING

Unhappiness or negativity is a disease on our planet. What pollution is on the outer level is negativity on the inner. It is everywhere, not just in places where people don't have enough, but even more so where they have more than enough. Is that surprising? No. The affluent world is even more deeply identified with form, more lost in content, more trapped in ego.

People believe themselves to be dependent on what happens for their happiness, that is to say, dependent on form. They don't realize that what happens is the most unstable thing in the universe. It changes constantly. They look upon the present moment as either marred by something that has happened and shouldn't have or as deficient because of something that has not happened but should have. And so they miss the deeper perfection that is inherent in life itself, a perfection that is always already here, that lies beyond what is happening or not happening, beyond form. Accept the present moment and find the perfection that is deeper than any form and untouched by time.

The joy of Being, which is the only true happiness, cannot come to you through any form, possession, achievement, person, or event—through anything that happens. That joy cannot *come* to you—ever. It emanates from the formless dimension within you, from consciousness itself and thus is one with who you are.

ALLOWING THE DIMINISHMENT OF THE EGO

The ego is always on guard against any kind of perceived diminishment. Automatic ego-repair mechanisms come into effect to restore the mental form of “me.” When someone blames or criticizes me, that to the ego is a diminishment of self, and it will immediately attempt to repair its diminished sense of self through self-justification, defense, or blaming. Whether the other person is right or wrong is irrelevant to the ego. It is much more interested in self-preservation than in the truth. This is the preservation of the psychological form of “me.” Even such a normal thing as shouting something back when another driver calls you “idiot” is an automatic and unconscious ego-repair mechanism. One of the most common ego-repair mechanisms is anger, which causes a temporary but huge ego inflation. All repair mechanisms make perfect sense to the ego but are actually dysfunctional. Those that are most extreme in their dysfunction are physical violence and self-delusion in the form of grandiose fantasies.

A powerful spiritual practice is consciously to allow the diminishment of ego when it happens without attempting to restore it. I recommend that you experiment with this from time to time. For example, when someone criticizes you, blames you, or calls you names, instead of immediately retaliating or defending yourself—do nothing. Allow the self-image to remain diminished and become alert to what that feels like deep inside you. For a few seconds, it may feel uncomfortable, as if you had shrunk in size. Then you may sense an inner spaciousness that feels intensely alive. You haven’t been diminished at all. In fact, you have expanded. You may then come to an amazing realization: When you are seemingly diminished in some way and remain in absolute nonreaction, not just externally but also internally, you realize that nothing real has been diminished, that through becoming “less,” you become more. When you no longer defend or attempt to strengthen the form of yourself, you step out of identification with form, with mental self-image. Through becoming less (in the ego’s perception), you in fact undergo an expansion and make room for Being to come forward. True power, who you are beyond form, can then shine through the apparently weakened form. This is what Jesus means when he says, “Deny yourself” or “Turn the other cheek.”

This does not mean, of course, that you invite abuse or turn yourself into a victim of unconscious people. Sometimes a situation may demand that you tell someone to “back off” in no uncertain terms. Without egoic defensiveness, there will be power behind your words, yet no reactive force. If necessary, you can also say no to someone firmly and clearly, and it will be what I call a “high-quality no” that is free of all negativity.

If you are content with being nobody in particular, content not to stand out, you align yourself with the power of the universe. What looks like weakness to the ego is in fact the only true strength. This spiritual truth is diametrically opposed to the values of our contemporary culture and the way it conditions people to behave.

Instead of trying to be a mountain, teaches the ancient *Tao Te Ching*, “Be the valley of the universe.”[4] In this way, you are restored to wholeness and so “all things will come to you.”[5]

Similarly, Jesus, in one of his parables, teaches that “When you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place so that when your host comes, he may say to you, friend, move up higher. Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."[6]

Another aspect of this practice is to refrain from attempting to strengthen the self by showing off, wanting to stand out, be special, make an impression, or demand attention. It may include occasionally refraining from expressing your opinion when everybody is expressing his or hers, and seeing what that feels like.

AS WITHOUT, SO WITHIN

When you look up at the clear sky at night, you may easily realize a truth at once utterly simple and extraordinarily profound. What is it that you see? The moon, planets, stars, the luminous band of the Milky Way, perhaps a comet or even the neighboring Andromeda Galaxy two million light years away. Yes, but if you simplify even more, what do you see? Objects floating in space. So what does the universe consist of ? Objects and space.

If you don't become speechless when looking out into space on a clear night, you are not really looking, not aware of the totality of what is there. You are probably only looking at the objects and perhaps seeking to name them. If you have ever experienced a sense of awe when looking into space, perhaps even felt a deep reverence in the face of this incomprehensible mystery, it means you must have relinquished for a moment your desire to explain and label and have become aware not only of the objects in space but of the infinite depth of space itself. You must have become still enough inside to notice the vastness in which these countless worlds exist. The feeling of awe is not derived from the fact that there are billions of worlds out there, but the depth that contains them all.

You cannot see space, of course, nor can you hear, touch, taste, or smell it, so how do you even know it exists? This logical-sounding question already contains a fundamental error. The essence of space is no-thingness, so it doesn't "exist" in the normal sense of the word. Only things—forms—exist. Even calling it space can be misleading because by naming it, you make it into an object.

Let us put it like this: There is something within you that has an affinity with space; that is why you can be aware of it. Aware of it? That's not totally true either because how can you be aware of space if there is nothing there to be aware of ?

The answer is both simple and profound. When you are aware of space, you are not really aware of anything, except awareness itself—the inner space of consciousness. Through you, the universe is becoming aware of itself!

When the eye finds nothing to see, that no-thingness is perceived as space. When the ear finds nothing to hear, that no-thingness is perceived as stillness. When the senses, which are designed to perceive form, meet an absence of form, the formless consciousness that lies behind perception and makes all perception, all experience, possible, is no longer obscured by form. When you contemplate the unfathomable depth of space or listen to the silence in the early hours just before sunrise, something within you resonates with it as if in recognition. You then sense the vast depth of space as your own depth, and you know that precious stillness that has no form to be more deeply who you are than any of the things that make up the content of your life.

The Upanishads, the ancient scriptures of India, point to the same truth with these words:

> What cannot be seen with the eye, but that whereby the eye can see: know that alone to be Brahman the Spirit and not what people here adore. What cannot be heard with the ear but that whereby the ear can hear: know that alone to be Brahman the Spirit and not what people here adore…. What cannot be thought with the mind, but that whereby the mind can think: know that alone to be Brahman the Spirit and not what people here adore.[7]

God, the scripture is saying, is formless consciousness and the essence of who you are. Everything else is form, is "what people here adore."

The twofold reality of the universe, which consists of things and space—thingness and no-thingness—is also your own. A sane, balanced, and fruitful human life is a dance between the two dimensions that make up reality: form and space. Most people are so identified with the dimension of form, with sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotion, that the vital hidden half is missing from their lives. Their identification with form keeps them trapped in ego.

What you see, hear, feel, touch, or think about is only one half of reality, so to speak. It is form. In the teaching of Jesus, it is simply called "the world," and the other dimension is "the kingdom of heaven" or "eternal life."

Just as space enables all things to exist and just as without silence there could be no sound, you would not exist without the vital formless dimension that is the essence of who you are. We could say "God" if the word had not been so misused. I prefer to call it Being. Being is prior to existence. Existence is form, content, "what happens." Existence is the foreground of life; Being is the background, as it were.

The collective disease of humanity is that people are so engrossed in what happens, so hypnotized by the world of fluctuating forms, so absorbed in the content of their lives, they have forgotten the essence, that which is beyond content, beyond form, beyond thought. They are so consumed by time that they have forgotten eternity, which is their origin, their home, their destiny. Eternity is the living reality of who you are.

Some years ago when visiting China, I came upon a stupa on a mountaintop near Guilin. It had writing embossed in gold on it, and I asked my Chinese host what it meant. "It means 'Buddha,'" he said. "Why are there two characters rather than one?" I asked. "One," he explained, means 'man.' The other means 'no.' And the two together means 'Buddha.'" I stood there in awe. The character for Buddha already contained the whole teaching of the Buddha, and for those who have eyes to see, the secret of life. Here are the two dimensions that make up reality, thingness and no-thingness, form and the denial of form, which is the recognition that form is not who you are.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Discovery of Inner Space

According to an ancient Sufi story, there lived a king in some Middle Eastern land who was continuously torn between happiness and despondency. The slightest thing would cause him great upset or provoke an intense reaction, and his happiness would quickly turn into disappointment and despair. A time came when the king finally got tired of himself and of life, and he began to seek a way out. He sent for a wise man who lived in his kingdom and who was reputed to be enlightened. When the wise man came, the king said to him, "I want to be like you. Can you give me something that will bring balance, serenity, and wisdom into my life? I will pay any price you ask."

The wise man said, "I may be able to help you. But the price is so great that your entire kingdom would not be sufficient payment for it. Therefore it will be a gift to you if you will honor it." The king gave his assurances, and the wise man left.

A few weeks later, he returned and handed the king an ornate box carved in jade. The king opened the box and found a simple gold ring inside. Some letters were inscribed on the ring. The inscription read: *This, too, will pass.* "What is the meaning of this?" asked the king. The wise man said, "Wear this ring always. Whatever happens, before you call it good or bad, touch this ring and read the inscription. That way, you will always be at peace."

This, too, will pass. What is it about these simple words that makes them so powerful? Looking at it superficially, it would seem while those words may provide some comfort in a bad situation, they would also diminish the enjoyment of the good things in life. "Don't be too happy, because it won't last." This seems to be what they are saying when applied in a situation that is perceived as good.

The full import of these words becomes clear when we consider them in the context of two other stories that we encountered earlier. The story of the Zen Master whose only response was always "Is that so?" shows the good that comes through inner nonresistance to events, that is to say, being at one with what happens. The story of the man whose comment was invariably a laconic "Maybe" illustrates the wisdom of nonjudgment, and the story of the ring points to the fact of impermanence which, when recognized, leads to nonattachment. Nonresistance, nonjudgment, and nonattachment are the three aspects of true freedom and enlightened living.

Those words inscribed on the ring are not telling you that you should not enjoy the good in your life, nor are they merely meant to provide some comfort in times of suffering. They have a deeper purpose: to make you aware of the fleetingness of every situation, which is due to the transience of all forms—good or bad. When you become aware of the transience of all forms, your attachment to them lessens, and you disidentify from them to some extent. Being detached does not mean that you cannot enjoy the good that the world has to offer. In fact, you enjoy it more. Once you see and accept the transience of all things and the inevitability of change, you can enjoy the pleasures of the world while they last without fear of loss or anxiety about the future. When you are detached, you gain a higher vantage point from which to view the events in your life instead of being trapped inside them. You become like an astronaut who sees the planet Earth surrounded by the vastness of space and realizes a paradoxical truth: The earth is precious and at the same time insignificant. The recognition that *This, too, will pass* brings detachment and with detachment another dimension comes into your life—inner space. Through detachment, as well as nonjudgment and inner nonresistance, you gain access to that dimension.

When you are no longer totally identified with forms, consciousness—who you are—becomes freed from its imprisonment in form. This freedom is the arising of inner space. It comes as a stillness, a subtle peace deep within you, even in the face of something seemingly bad. *This, too, will pass.* Suddenly, there is space around the event. There is also space around the emotional highs and lows, even around pain. And above all, there is space between your thoughts. And from that space emanates a peace that is not "of this world," because this world is form, and the peace is space. This is the peace of God.

Now you can enjoy and honor the things of this world without giving them an importance and significance they don't have. You can participate in the dance of creation and be active without attachment to outcome and without placing unreasonable demands upon the world: Fulfill me, make me happy, make me feel safe, tell me who I am. The world cannot give you those things, and when you no longer have such expectations, all self-created suffering comes to an end. All such suffering is due to an overvaluation of form and an unawareness of the dimension of inner space. When that dimension is present in your life, you can enjoy things, experiences, and the pleasures of the senses without losing yourself in them, without inner attachment to them, that is to say, without becoming addicted to the world.

The words *This, too, will pass* are pointers toward reality. In pointing to the impermanence of all forms, by implication, they are also pointing to the eternal. Only the eternal in you can recognize the impermanent as impermanent.

When the dimension of space is lost or rather not known, the things of the world assume an absolute importance, a seriousness and heaviness that in truth they do not have. When the world is not viewed from the perspective of the formless, it becomes a threatening place, and ultimately a place of despair. The Old Testament prophet must have felt this when he wrote, "All things are full of weariness. A man cannot utter it."[1]

OBJECT CONSCIOUSNESS AND SPACE CONSCIOUSNESS

Most people's lives are cluttered up with things: material things, things to do, things to think about. Their lives are like the history of humanity, which Winston Churchill defined as "one damn thing after another." Their minds are filled up with the clutter of thoughts, one thought after another. This is the dimension of object consciousness that is many people's predominant reality, and that is why their lives are so out of balance. Object consciousness needs to be balanced by space consciousness for sanity to return to our planet and for humanity to fulfill its destiny. The arising of space consciousness is the next stage in the evolution of humanity.

Space consciousness means that in addition to being conscious of things—which always comes down to sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions—there is an undercurrent of awareness. Awareness implies that you are not only conscious of things (objects), but you are also conscious of being conscious. If you can sense an alert inner stillness in the background while things happen in the foreground—that's it! This dimension is there in everyone, but most people are completely unaware of it. Sometimes I point to it by saying, "Can you feel your own Presence?"

Space consciousness represents not only freedom from ego, but also from dependency on the things of this world, from materialism and materiality. It is the spiritual dimension which alone can give transcendent and true meaning to this world.

Whenever you are upset about an event, a person, or a situation, the real cause is not the event, person, or situation but a loss of true perspective that only space can provide. You are trapped in object consciousness, unaware of the timeless inner space of consciousness itself. The words *This, too, will pass* when used as a pointer can restore awareness of that dimension to you.

Another pointer to the truth in you is contained in the following statement: "I am never upset for the reason I think."[2]

FALLING BELOW AND RISING ABOVE THOUGHT

When you are very tired, you may become more peaceful, more relaxed, than in your usual state. This is because thinking is subsiding, and so you can't remember your mind-made problematic self anymore. You are moving toward sleep. When you drink alcohol or take certain drugs (provided they don't trigger your pain-body), you may also feel more relaxed, more carefree, and perhaps more alive for a while. You may start singing and dancing, which since ancient times are expressions of the joy of life. Because you are less burdened by your mind, you can glimpse the joy of Being. Perhaps this is the reason alcohol is also called "spirit." But there is a high price to pay: unconsciousness. Instead of rising above thought, you have fallen below it. A few more drinks, and you will have regressed to the vegetable realm.

Space consciousness has little to do with being "spaced out." Both states are beyond thought. This they have in common. The fundamental difference, however, is that in the former, you rise above thought; in the latter, you fall below it. One is the next step in the evolution of human consciousness, the other a regression to a stage we left behind eons ago.

TELEVISION

Watching television is the favorite leisure activity or rather nonactivity for millions of people around the world. The average American, by the time he is sixty years old, will have spent fifteen years staring at the TV screen. In many other countries the figures are similar.

Many people find watching TV "relaxing." Observe yourself closely and you will find that the longer the screen remains the focus of your attention, the more your thought activity becomes suspended, and for long periods you are watching the talk show, game show, sitcom, or even commercials with almost no thought being generated by your mind. Not only do you not remember your problems anymore, but you become temporarily free of yourself—and what could be more relaxing than that?

So does TV watching create inner space? Does it cause you to be present? Unfortunately, it does not. Although for long periods your mind may not be generating any thoughts, it has linked into the thought activity of the television show. It has linked up with the TV version of the collective mind, and is thinking its thoughts. Your mind is inactive only in the sense that it is not producing thoughts. It is, however, continuously absorbing thoughts and images that come through the TV screen. This induces a trancelike passive state of heightened susceptibility, not unlike hypnosis. That is why it lends itself to manipulation of "public opinion," as politicians and special-interest groups as well as advertisers know and will pay millions of dollars to catch you in that state of receptive unawareness. They want their thoughts to become your thoughts, and usually they succeed.

So when watching television, the tendency is for you to fall below thought, not rise above it. Television has this in common with alcohol and certain other drugs. While it provides some relief from your mind, you again pay a high price: loss of consciousness. Like those drugs, it too has a strong addictive quality. You reach for the remote control to switch off and instead find yourself going through all the channels. Half an hour or an hour later, you are still watching, still going through the channels. The off button is the only one your finger seems unable to press. You are still watching, usually not because anything of interest has caught your attention, but precisely because there is nothing of interest to watch. Once you are hooked, the more trivial, the more meaningless, it is, the more addictive it becomes. If it were interesting, thought provoking, it would stimulate your mind into thinking for itself again, which is more conscious and therefore preferable to a TV-induced trance. Your attention would, therefore, no longer be totally held captive by the images on the screen.

The content of the program, if there is a certain quality to it, can to some extent counteract and sometimes even undo the hypnotic, mind-numbing effect of the medium of TV. There are some programs that have been extremely helpful to many people; have changed their lives for the better, opened their heart, made them more conscious. Even some comedy shows, although they may be about nothing in particular, can be unintentionally spiritual by showing a caricature version of human folly and the ego. They teach us not to take anything too seriously, to approach life in a lighthearted way, and above all, they teach by making us laugh. Laughter is extraordinarily liberating as well as healing. Most of television, however, is as yet controlled by people who are totally controlled by the ego, and so the TV's hidden agenda becomes control of you by putting you to sleep, that is to say, making you unconscious. Yet there is enormous and still largely unexplored potential in the medium of television.

Avoid watching programs and commercials that assault you with a rapid succession of images that change every two or three seconds or less. Excessive TV watching and those programs in particular are largely responsible for attention deficit disorder, a mental dysfunction now affecting millions of children worldwide. A short attention span makes all your perceptions and relationships shallow and unsatisfying. Whatever you do, whatever action you perform in that state, lacks quality, because quality requires attention.

Frequent and prolonged TV watching not only makes you unconscious, it also induces passivity and drains you of energy. Therefore, rather than watching at random, choose the programs you want to see. Whenever you remember to do so, feel the aliveness inside your body as you watch. Alternatively, be aware of your breathing from time to time. Look away from the screen at regular intervals so that it does not completely take possession of your visual sense. Don't turn up the volume any higher than necessary so that the TV doesn't overwhelm you on the auditory level. Use the mute button during commercials. Make sure you don't go to sleep immediately after switching off the set or, even worse, fall asleep with the set still on.

RECOGNIZING INNER SPACE

Space between thoughts is probably already arising sporadically in your life, and you may not even know it. A consciousness mesmerized by experiences and conditioned to identify exclusively with form, that is to say, object consciousness, finds it at first almost impossible to become aware of space. This ultimately means that you cannot become aware of yourself, because you are always aware of something else. You are continuously distracted by form. Even when you seem to be aware of yourself, you have made yourself into an object, a thought form, and so what you are aware of is a thought, not yourself.

When you hear of inner space, you may start seeking it, and, because you are seeking it as if you were looking for an object or for an experience, you cannot find it. This is the dilemma of all those who are seeking spiritual realization or enlightenment. Hence, Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Lo, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you."[3]

If you are not spending all of your waking life in discontent, worry, anxiety, depression, despair, or consumed by other negative states; if you are able to enjoy simple things like listening to the sound of the rain or the wind; if you can see the beauty of clouds moving across the sky or be alone at times without feeling lonely or needing the mental stimulus of entertainment; if you find yourself treating a complete stranger with heartfelt kindness without wanting anything from him or her…it means that a space has opened up, no matter how briefly, in the otherwise incessant stream of thinking that is the human mind. When this happens, there is a sense of well-being, of alive peace, even though it may be subtle. The intensity will vary from a perhaps barely noticeable background sense of contentment to what the ancient sages of India called *ananda*—the bliss of Being. Because you have been conditioned to pay attention only to form, you are probably not aware of it except indirectly. For example, there is a common element in the ability to see beauty, to appreciate simple things, to enjoy your own company, or to relate to other people with loving kindness. This common element is a sense of contentment, peace, and aliveness that is the invisible background without which these experiences would not be possible.

Whenever there is beauty, kindness, the recognition of the goodness of simple things in your life, look for the background to that experience within yourself. But don't look for it as if you were looking for something. You cannot pin it down and say, "Now I have it," or grasp it mentally and define it in some way. It is like the cloudless sky. It has no form. It is space; it is stillness, the sweetness of Being and infinitely more than these words, which are only pointers. When you are able to sense it directly within yourself, it deepens. So when you appreciate something simple—a sound, a sight, a touch—when you see beauty, when you feel loving kindness toward another, sense the inner spaciousness that is the source and background to that experience.

Many poets and sages throughout the ages have observed that true happiness—I call it the joy of Being—is found in simple, seemingly unremarkable things. Most people, in their restless search for something significant to happen to them, continuously miss the insignificant, which may not be insignificant at all. The philosopher Nietzsche, in a rare moment of deep stillness, wrote, "For happiness, how little suffices for happiness!…the least thing precisely, the gentlest thing, the lightest thing, a lizard's rustling, a breath, a wisk, an eye glance—little maketh up the best happiness. Be still."[4]

Why is it the "least thing" that makes up "the best happiness"? Because true happiness is not *caused* by the thing or event, although this is how it first appears. The thing or event is so subtle, so unobtrusive, that it takes up only a small part of your consciousness—and the rest is inner space, consciousness itself unobstructed by form. Inner space consciousness and who you are in your essence are one and the same. In other words, the form of little things leaves room for inner space. And it is from inner space, the unconditioned consciousness itself, that true happiness, the joy of Being, emanates. To be aware of little, quiet things, however, you need to be quiet inside. A high degree of alertness is required. Be still. Look. Listen. Be present.

Here is another way of finding inner space: Become conscious of being conscious. Say or think "I Am" and add nothing to it. Be aware of the stillness that follows the I Am. Sense your presence, the naked, unveiled, unclothed beingness. It is untouched by young or old, rich or poor, good or bad, or any other attributes. It is the spacious womb of all creation, all form.

CAN YOU HEAR THE MOUNTAIN STREAM?

A Zen Master was walking in silence with one of his disciples along a mountain trail. When they came to an ancient cedar tree, they sat down under it for a simple meal of some rice and vegetables. After the meal, the disciple, a young monk who had not yet found the key to the mystery of Zen, broke the silence by asking the Master, "Master, how do I enter Zen?"

He was, of course, inquiring how to enter the state of consciousness which is Zen.

The Master remained silent. Almost five minutes passed while the disciple anxiously waited for an answer. He was about to ask another question when the Master suddenly spoke. "Do you hear the sound of that mountain stream?"

The disciple had not been aware of any mountain stream. He had been too busy thinking about the meaning of Zen. Now, as he began to listen for the sound, his noisy mind subsided. At first he heard nothing. Then, his thinking gave way to heightened alertness, and suddenly he did hear the hardly perceptible murmur of a small stream in the far distance.

"Yes, I can hear it now," he said.

The Master raised his finger and, with a look in his eyes that in some way was both fierce and gentle, said, "Enter Zen from there."

The disciple was stunned. It was his first satori—a flash of enlightenment. He knew what Zen was without knowing what it was that he knew!

They continued on their journey in silence. The disciple was amazed at the aliveness of the world around him. He experienced everything as if for the first time. Gradually, however, he started thinking again. The alert stillness became covered up again by mental noise, and before long he had another question. "Master," he said, "I have been thinking. What would you have said if I hadn't been able to hear the mountain stream?" The Master stopped, looked at him, raised his finger and said, "Enter Zen from there."

RIGHT ACTION

The ego asks, How can I make this situation fulfill my needs or how can I get to some other situation that *will* fulfill my needs?

Presence is a state of inner spaciousness. When you are present, you ask: How do I respond to the needs of this situation, of this moment? In fact, you don't even need to ask the question. You are still, alert, open to what *is*. You bring a new dimension into the situation: space. Then you look and you listen. Thus you become one with the situation. When instead of reacting against a situation, you merge with it, the solution arises out of the situation itself. Actually, it is not you, the person, who is looking and listening, but the alert stillness itself. Then, if action is possible or necessary, you take action or rather right action happens through you. Right action is action that is appropriate to the whole. When the action is accomplished, the alert, spacious stillness remains. There is nobody who raises his arms in a gesture of triumph shouting a defiant "Yeah!" There is no one who says, "Look, I did that."

All creativity comes out of inner spaciousness. Once the creation has happened and something has come into form, you have to be vigilant so that the notion of "me" or "mine" does not arise. If you take credit for what you accomplished, the ego has returned, and the spaciousness has become obscured.

PERCEIVING WITHOUT NAMING

Most people are only peripherally aware of the world that surrounds them, especially if their surroundings are familiar. The voice in the head absorbs the greater part of their attention. Some people feel more alive when they travel and visit unfamiliar places or foreign countries because at those times sense perception—experiencing—takes up more of their consciousness than thinking. They become more present. Others remain completely possessed by the voice in the head even then. Their perceptions and experiences are distorted by instant judgments. They haven't really gone anywhere. Only their body is traveling, while they remain where they have always been: in their head.

This is most people's reality: As soon as something is perceived, it is named, interpreted, compared with something else, liked, disliked, or called good or bad by the phantom self, the ego. They are imprisoned in thought forms, in object consciousness.

You do not awaken spiritually until the compulsive and unconscious naming ceases, or at least you become aware of it and thus are able to observe it as it happens. It is through this constant naming that the ego remains in place as the unobserved mind. Whenever it ceases and even when you just become aware of it, there is inner space, and you are not possessed by the mind anymore.

Choose an object close to you—a pen, a chair, a cup, a plant—and explore it visually, that is to say, look at it with great interest, almost curiosity. Avoid any objects with strong personal associations that remind you of the past, such as where you bought it, who gave it to you, and so on. Also avoid anything that has writing on it such as a book or a bottle. It would stimulate thought. Without straining, relaxed but alert, give your complete attention to the object, every detail of it. If thoughts arise, don't get involved in them. It is not the thoughts you are interested in, but the act of perception itself. Can you take the thinking out of the perceiving? Can you look without the voice in your head commenting, drawing conclusions, comparing, or trying to figure something out? After a couple of minutes or so, let your gaze wander around the room or wherever you are, your alert attention lighting up each thing that it rests upon.

Then, listen to any sounds that may be present. Listen to them in the same way as you looked at the things around you. Some sounds may be natural—water, wind, birds—while others are man-made. Some may be pleasant, others unpleasant. However, don't differentiate between good and bad. Allow each sound to be as it is, without interpretation. Here too, relaxed but alert attention is the key.

When you look and listen in this way, you may become aware of a subtle and at first perhaps hardly noticeable sense of calm. Some people feel it as a stillness in the background. Others call it peace. When consciousness is no longer totally absorbed by thinking, some of it remains in its formless, unconditioned, original state. This is inner space.

WHO IS THE EXPERIENCER?

What you see and hear, taste, touch, and smell are, of course, sense objects. They are what you experience. But who is the subject, the experiencer? If you now say, for example, “Well, of course, I, Jane Smith, senior accountant, forty-five years old, divorced, mother of two, American, am the subject, the experiencer,” you are mistaken. Jane Smith and whatever else becomes identified with the mental concept of Jane Smith are all objects of experience, not the experiencing subject.

Every experience has three possible ingredients: sense perceptions, thoughts or mental images, and emotions. Jane Smith, senior accountant, forty-five years old, mother of two, divorced, American—these are all thoughts and therefore part of what you experience the moment you think these thoughts. They and whatever else you can say and think about yourself are objects, not the subject. They are experience, not the experiencer. You can add a thousand more definitions (thoughts) of who you are and by doing so will certainly increase the complexity of the experience of yourself (as well as your psychiatrist’s income) but, in this way, you will not end up with the subject, the experiencer who is prior to all experience but without whom there would be no experience.

So who is the experiencer? You are. And who are you? Consciousness. And what is consciousness? This question cannot be answered. The moment you answer it, you have falsified it, made it into another object. Consciousness, the traditional word for which is *spirit,* cannot be known in the normal sense of the word, and seeking it is futile. All knowing is within the realm of duality—subject and object, the knower and the known. The subject, the I, the knower without which nothing could be known, perceived, thought, or felt, must remain forever unknowable. This is because the I has no form. Only forms can be known, and yet without the formless dimension, the world of form could not be. It is the luminous space in which the world arises and subsides. That space is the life that I Am. It is timeless. I Am timeless, eternal. What happens in that space is relative and temporary: pleasure and pain, gain and loss, birth and death.

The greatest impediment to the discovery of inner space, the greatest impediment to finding the experiencer, is to become so enthralled by the experience that you lose yourself in it. It means consciousness is lost in its own dream. You get taken in by every thought, every emotion, and every experience to such a degree that you are in fact in a dreamlike state. This has been the normal state of humanity for thousands of years.

Although you cannot know consciousness, you can become conscious of it as yourself. You can sense it directly in any situation, no matter where you are. You can sense it here and now as your very Presence, the inner space in which the words on this page are perceived and become thoughts. It is the underlying I Am. The words you are reading and thinking are the foreground, and the I Am is the substratum, the underlying background to every experience, thought, feeling.

Discover inner space by creating gaps in the stream of thinking. Without those gaps, your thinking becomes repetitive, uninspired, devoid of any creative spark, which is how it still is for most people on the planet. You don't need to be concerned with the duration of those gaps. A few seconds is good enough. Gradually, they will lengthen by themselves, without any effort on your part. More important than their length is to bring them in frequently so that your daily activities and your stream of thinking become interspersed with space.

Someone recently showed me the annual prospectus of a large spiritual organization. When I looked through it, I was impressed by the wide choice of interesting seminars and workshops. It reminded me of a smorgasbord, one of those Scandinavian buffets where you can take your pick from a huge variety of enticing dishes. The person asked me whether I could recommend one or two courses. "I don't know," I said. "They all look so interesting. But I do know this," I added. "Be aware of your breathing as often as you are able, whenever you remember. Do that for one year, and it will be more powerfully transformative than attending all of these courses. And it's free."

Being aware of your breathing takes attention away from thinking and creates space. It is one way of generating consciousness. Although the fullness of consciousness is already there as the unmanifested, we are here to bring consciousness into this dimension.

Be aware of your breathing. Notice the sensation of the breath. Feel the air moving in and out of your body. Notice how the chest and abdomen expand and contract slightly with the in- and outbreath. One conscious breath is enough to make some space where before there was the uninterrupted succession of one thought after another. One conscious breath (two or three would be even better), taken many times a day, is an excellent way of bringing space into your life. Even if you meditated on your breathing for two hours or more, which some people do, one breath is all you ever need to be aware of, indeed ever can be aware of. The rest is memory or anticipation, which is to say, thought. Breathing isn't really something that you do but something that you witness as it happens. Breathing happens by itself. The intelligence within the body is doing it. All you have to do is watch it happening. There is no strain or effort involved. Also, notice the brief cessation of the breath, particularly the still point at the end of the outbreath, before you start breathing in again.

Many people's breath is unnaturally shallow. The more you are aware of the breath, the more its natural depth will reestablish itself.

Because breath has no form as such, it has since ancient times been equated with spirit—the formless one Life. "God formed man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living creature."[5] The German word for breathing—*atmen*—is derived from the ancient Indian (Sanskrit) word *Atman*, meaning the indwelling divine spirit or God within.

The fact that breath has no form is one of the reasons why breath awareness is an extremely effective way of bringing space into your life, of generating consciousness. It is an excellent meditation object precisely because it is not an object, has no shape or form. The other reason is that breath is one of the most subtle and seemingly insignificant phenomena, the "least thing" that according to Nietzsche makes up the "best happiness." Whether or not you practice breath awareness as an actual formal meditation is up to you. Formal meditation, however, is no substitute for bringing space consciousness into everyday life.

Being aware of your breath forces you into the present moment—the key to all inner transformation. Whenever you are conscious of the breath, you are absolutely present. You may also notice that you cannot think *and* be aware of your breathing. Conscious breathing stops your mind. But far from being in a trance or half asleep, you are fully awake and highly alert. You are not falling below thinking, but rising above it. And if you look more closely, you will find that those two things—coming fully into the present moment and ceasing thinking without loss of consciousness—are actually one and the same: the arising of space consciousness.

ADDICTIONS

A long-standing compulsive behavior pattern may be called an addiction, and an addiction lives inside you as a quasientity or subpersonality, an energy field that periodically takes you over completely. It even takes over your mind, the voice in your head, which then becomes the voice of the addiction. It may be saying, "You've had a rough day. You deserve a treat. Why deny yourself the only pleasure that is left in your life?" And so, if you are identified with the internal voice due to lack of awareness, you find yourself walking to the fridge and reaching for that rich chocolate cake. At other times, the addiction may bypass the thinking mind completely and you suddenly find yourself puffing on a cigarette or holding a drink. "How did that get into my hand?" Taking the cigarette out of the packet and lighting it, or pouring yourself a drink were actions performed in complete unconsciousness.

If you have a compulsive behavior pattern such as smoking, overeating, drinking, TV watching, Internet addiction, or whatever it may be, this is what you can do: When you notice the compulsive need arising in you, stop and take three conscious breaths. This generates awareness. Then for a few minutes be aware of the compulsive urge itself as an energy field inside you. Consciously feel that need to physically or mentally ingest or consume a certain substance or the desire to act out some form of compulsive behavior. Then take a few more conscious breaths. After that you may find that the compulsive urge has disappeared—for the time being. Or you may find that it still overpowers you, and you cannot help but indulge or act it out again. Don't make it into a problem. Make the addiction part of your awareness practice in the way described above. As awareness grows, addictive patterns will weaken and eventually dissolve. Remember, however, to catch any thoughts that justify the addictive behavior, sometimes with clever arguments, as they arise in your mind. Ask yourself, Who is talking here? And you will realize the addiction is talking. As long as you know that, as long as you are present as the observer of your mind, it is less likely to trick you into doing what it wants.

INNER BODY AWARENESS

Another simple but highly effective way of finding space in your life is closely linked to the breath. You will find that by feeling the subtle flow of air in and out of the body as well as the rise and fall of your chest and abdomen, you are also becoming aware of the inner body. Your attention may then shift from the breath to that felt aliveness within you, diffused throughout the body.

Most people are so distracted by their thoughts, so identified with the voices in their heads, they can no longer feel the aliveness within them. To be unable to feel the life that animates the physical body, the very life that you are, is the greatest deprivation that can happen to you. You then begin to look not only for substitutes for that natural state of well-being within, but also for something to cover up the continuous unease that you feel when you are not in touch with the aliveness that is always there but usually overlooked. Some of the substitutes people seek out are drug-induced highs, sensory overstimulation such as excessively loud music, thrills or dangerous activities, or an obsession with sex. Even drama in relationships is used as a substitute for that genuine sense of aliveness. The most sought-after cover-up for the continuous background unease are intimate relationships: a man or a woman who is going to "make me happy." It is, of course, also one of the most frequently experienced of all the "letdowns." And when the unease surfaces again, people will usually blame their partner for it.

Take two or three conscious breaths. Now see if you can detect a subtle sense of aliveness that pervades your entire inner body. Can you feel your body from within, so to speak? Sense briefly specific parts of your body. Feel your hands, then your arms, feet, and legs. Can you feel your abdomen, chest, neck, and head? What about your lips? Is there life in them? Then become aware again of the inner body as a whole. You may want to close your eyes initially for this practice, and once you can feel your body, open your eyes, look around, and continue to feel your body at the same time. Some readers may find there is no need to close their eyes; they can in fact feel their inner body as they read this.

INNER AND OUTER SPACE

Your inner body is not solid but spacious. It is not your physical form but the life that animates the physical form. It is the intelligence that created and sustains the body, simultaneously coordinating hundreds of different functions of such extraordinary complexity that the human mind can only understand a tiny fraction of it. When you become aware of it, what is really happening is that the intelligence is becoming aware of itself. It is the elusive "life" that no scientist has ever found because the consciousness that is looking for it *is it*.

Physicists have discovered that the apparent solidity of matter is an illusion created by our senses. This includes the physical body, which we perceive and think of as form, but 99.99 % of which is actually empty space. This is how vast the space is between the atoms compared to their size, and there is as much space again within each atom. The physical body is no more than a misperception of who you are. In many ways, it is a microcosmic version of outer space. To give you an idea of how vast the space is between celestial bodies, consider this: Light traveling at a constant speed of 186,000 miles (300,000 kilometers) per second takes just over one second to travel between the earth and the moon; light from the sun takes about eight minutes to reach the earth. Light from our nearest neighbor in space, a star called Proxima Centauri, which is the sun that is closest to our own sun, travels for 4.5 years before it reaches the earth. This is how vast the space is that surrounds us. And then there is the intergalactic space, whose vastness defies all comprehension. Light from the galaxy closest to our own, the Andromeda Galaxy, takes 2.4 million years to reach us. Isn't it amazing that your body is just as spacious as the universe?

So your physical body, which is form, reveals itself as essentially formless when you go deeper into it. It becomes a doorway into inner space. Although inner space has no form, it is intensely alive. That "empty space" is life in its fullness, the unmanifested Source out of which all manifestation flows. The traditional word for that Source is God.

Thoughts and words belong to the world of form; they cannot express the formless. So when you say, "I can feel my inner body" that is a misperception created by thought. What is really happening is that the consciousness that appears as the body—the consciousness that I Am—is becoming conscious of itself. When I no longer confuse who I am with a temporary form of "me," then the dimension of the limitless and the eternal—God—can express itself through "me" and guide "me." It also frees me from dependency on form. However, a purely intellectual recognition or belief that "I am not this form" does not help. The all-important question is: At this moment, can I sense the presence of inner space, which really means, can I sense my own Presence, or rather, the Presence that I Am?

Or we can approach this truth using a different pointer. Ask yourself, "Am I aware not only of what is happening at this moment, but also of the Now itself as the living timeless inner space in which everything happens?" Although this question seems to have nothing to do with the inner body, you may be surprised that by becoming aware of the space of Now, you suddenly feel more alive inside. You are feeling the aliveness of the inner body—the aliveness that is an intrinsic part of the joy of Being. We have to enter the body to go beyond it and find out that we are not that.

As much as possible in everyday life, use awareness of the inner body to create space. When waiting, when listening to someone, when pausing to look at the sky, a tree, a flower, your partner, or child, feel the aliveness within at the same time. This means part of your attention or consciousness remains formless, and the rest is available for the outer world of form. Whenever you "inhabit" your body in this way, it serves as an anchor for staying present in the Now. It prevents you from losing yourself in thinking, in emotions, or in external situations.

When you think, feel, perceive, and experience, consciousness is born into form. It is reincarnating—into a thought, a feeling, a sense perception, an experience. The cycle of rebirths that Buddhists hope to get out of eventually is happening continuously, and it is only at this moment—through the power of

Now—that you can get out of it. Through complete acceptance of the form of the Now, you become internally aligned with space, which is the essence of Now. Through acceptance, you become spacious inside. Aligned with space instead of form: That brings true perspective and balance into your life.

NOTICING THE GAPS

Throughout the day, there is a continuously changing succession of things that you see and hear. In the first moment of seeing something or hearing a sound —and more so if it is unfamiliar—before the mind names or interprets what you see or hear, there is usually a gap of alert attention in which the perception occurs. That is the inner space. Its duration differs from person to person. It is easy to miss because in many people those spaces are extremely short, perhaps only a second or less.

This is what happens: A new sight or sound arises, and in the first moment of perception, there is a brief cessation in the habitual stream of thinking. Consciousness is diverted away from thought because it is required for sense perception. A very unusual sight or sound may leave you "speechless"—even inside, that is to say, bring about a longer gap.

The frequency and duration of those spaces determine your ability to enjoy life, to feel an inner connectedness with other human beings as well as nature. It also determines the degree to which you are free of ego because ego implies complete unawareness of the dimension of space.

When you become conscious of these brief spaces as they happen naturally, they will lengthen, and as they do, you will experience with increasing frequency the joy of perceiving with little or no interference of thinking. The world around you then feels fresh, new, and alive. The more you perceive life through a mental screen of abstraction and conceptualization, the more lifeless and flat the world around you becomes.

LOSE YOURSELF TO FIND YOURSELF

Inner space also arises whenever you let go of the need to emphasize your form-identity. That need is of the ego. It is not a true need. We have already touched briefly upon this. Whenever you relinquish one of these behavior patterns, inner space emerges. You become more truly yourself. To the ego it will seem as if you were losing yourself, but the opposite is the case. Jesus already taught that you need to lose yourself to find yourself. Whenever you let go of one of these patterns, you de-emphasize who you are on the level of form and who you are beyond form emerges more fully. You become less, so you can be more.

Here are some ways in which people unconsciously try to emphasize their form-identity. If you are alert enough, you may be able to detect some of these unconscious patterns within yourself: demanding recognition for something you did and getting angry or upset if you don't get it; trying to get attention by talking about your problems, the story of your illnesses, or making a scene; giving your opinion when nobody has asked for it and it makes no difference to the situation; being more concerned with how the other person sees you than with the other person, which is to say, using other people for egoic reflection or as ego enhancers; trying to make an impression on others through possessions, knowledge, good looks, status, physical strength, and so on; bringing about temporary ego inflation through angry reaction against something or someone; taking things personally, feeling offended; making yourself right and others wrong through futile mental or verbal complaining; wanting to be seen, or to appear important.

Once you have detected such a pattern within yourself, I suggest that you conduct an experiment. Find out what it feels like and what happens if you let go of that pattern. Just drop it and see what happens.

De-emphasizing who you are on the level of form is another way of generating consciousness. Discover the enormous power that flows through you into the world when you stop emphasizing your form-identity.

STILLNESS

It has been said: "Stillness is the language God speaks, and everything else is a bad translation." Stillness is really another word for space. Becoming conscious of stillness whenever we encounter it in our lives will connect us with the formless and timeless dimension within ourselves, that which is beyond thought, beyond ego. It may be the stillness that pervades the world of nature, or the stillness in your room in the early hours of the morning, or the silent gaps in between sounds. Stillness has no form—that is why through thinking we cannot become aware of it. Thought is form. Being aware of stillness means to be still. To be still is to be conscious without thought. You are never more essentially, more deeply, yourself than when you are still. When you are still, you are who you were before you temporarily assumed this physical and mental form called a person. You are also who you will be when the form dissolves. When you are still, you are who you are beyond your temporal existence: consciousness—unconditioned, formless, eternal.

CHAPTER NINE

Your Inner Purpose

As soon as you rise above mere survival, the question of meaning and purpose becomes of paramount importance in your life. Many people feel caught up in the routines of daily living that seem to deprive their life of significance. Some believe life is passing them by or has passed them by already. Others feel severely restricted by the demands of their job and supporting a family or by their financial or living situation. Some are consumed by acute stress, others by acute boredom. Some are lost in frantic doing; others are lost in stagnation. Many people long for the freedom and expansion that prosperity promises. Others already enjoy the relative freedom that comes with prosperity and discover that even that is not enough to endow their lives with meaning. There is no substitute for finding true purpose. But the true or primary purpose of your life cannot be found on the outer level. It does not concern what you do but what you are—that is to say, your state of consciousness.

So the most important thing to realize is this: Your life has an inner purpose and an outer purpose. Inner purpose concerns Being and is primary. Outer purpose concerns doing and is secondary. While this book speaks mainly of your inner purpose, this chapter and the next will also address the question of how to align outer purpose and inner purpose in your life. Inner and outer, however, are so intertwined that it is almost impossible to speak of one without referring to the other.

Your inner purpose is to awaken. It is as simple as that. You share that purpose with every other person on the planet—because it is the purpose of humanity. Your inner purpose is an essential part of the purpose of the whole, the universe and its emerging intelligence. Your outer purpose can change over time. It varies greatly from person to person. Finding and living in alignment with the inner purpose is the foundation for fulfilling your outer purpose. It is the basis for true success. Without that alignment, you can still achieve certain things through effort, struggle, determination, and sheer hard work or cunning. But there is no joy in such endeavor, and it invariably ends in some form of suffering.

AWAKENING

Awakening is a shift in consciousness in which thinking and awareness separate. For most people it is not an event but a process they undergo. Even those rare beings who experience a sudden, dramatic, and seemingly irreversible awakening will still go through a process in which the new state of consciousness gradually flows into and transforms everything they do and so becomes integrated into their lives.

Instead of being lost in your thinking, when you are awake you recognize yourself as the awareness behind it. Thinking then ceases to be a self-serving autonomous activity that takes possession of you and runs your life. Awareness takes over from thinking. Instead of being in charge of your life, thinking becomes the servant of awareness. Awareness is conscious connection with universal intelligence. Another word for it is Presence: consciousness without thought.

The initiation of the awakening process is an act of grace. You cannot make it happen nor can you prepare yourself for it or accumulate credits toward it. There isn't a tidy sequence of logical steps that leads toward it, although the mind would love that. You don't have to become worthy first. It may come to the sinner before it comes to the saint, but not necessarily. That's why Jesus associated with all kinds of people, not just the respectable ones. There is nothing you can do about awakening. Whatever you do will be the ego trying to add awakening or enlightenment to itself as its most prized possession and thereby making itself more important and bigger. Instead of awakening, you add the *concept* of awakening to your mind, or the mental image of what an awakened or enlightened person is like, and then try to live up to that image. Living up to an image that you have of yourself or that other people have of you is inauthentic living—another unconscious role the ego plays.

So if there is nothing you can do about awakening, if it has either already happened or not yet happened, how can it be the primary purpose of your life? Does not purpose imply that you can do something about it?

Only the first awakening, the first glimpse of consciousness without thought, happens by grace, without any doing on your part. If you find this book incomprehensible or meaningless, it has not yet happened to you. If something within you responds to it, however, if you somehow recognize the truth in it, it means the process of awakening has begun. Once it has done so, it cannot be reversed, although it can be delayed by the ego. For some people, the reading of this book will initiate the awakening process. For others, the function of this book is to help them recognize that they have already begun to awaken and to intensify and accelerate the process. Another function of this book is to help people recognize the ego within them whenever it tries to regain control and obscure the arising awareness. For some, the awakening happens as they suddenly become aware of the kinds of thoughts they habitually think, especially persistent negative thoughts that they may have been identified with all of their lives. Suddenly there is an awareness that is aware of thought but is not part of it.

What is the relationship between awareness and thinking? Awareness is the space in which thoughts exist when that space has become conscious of itself.

Once you have had a glimpse of awareness or Presence, you know it firsthand. It is no longer just a concept in your mind. You can then make a conscious choice to be present rather than to indulge in useless thinking. You can invite Presence into your life, that is to say, make space. With the grace of awakening comes responsibility. You can either try to go on as if nothing has happened, or you can see its significance and recognize the arising of awareness as the most important thing that *can* happen to you. Opening yourself to the emerging consciousness and bringing its light into this world then becomes the primary purpose of your life.

"I want to know the mind of God," Einstein said. "The rest are details." What is the mind of God? Consciousness. What does it mean to know the mind of God? To be aware. What are the details? Your outer purpose, and whatever happens outwardly.

So while you are perhaps still waiting for something significant to happen in your life, you may not realize that the most significant thing that can happen to a human being has already happened within you: the beginning of the separation process of thinking and awareness.

Many people who are going through the early stages of the awakening process are no longer certain what their outer purpose is. What drives the world no longer drives them. Seeing the madness of our civilization so clearly, they may feel somewhat alienated from the culture around them. Some feel that they inhabit a no-man's-land between two worlds. They are no longer run by the ego, yet the arising awareness has not yet become fully integrated into their lives. Inner and outer purpose have not merged.

A DIALOGUE ON INNER PURPOSE

The following dialogue condenses numerous conversations I have had with people who were looking for their true life purpose. Something is true when it resonates with and expresses your innermost Being, when it is in alignment with your inner purpose. This is why I am directing their attention to their inner and primary purpose first.

I don't know exactly what it is, but I want some change in my life. I want expansion; I want to be doing something meaningful and, yes, I want prosperity and the freedom that comes with it. I want to do something significant, something that makes a difference in the world. But if you asked me what exactly I want, I would have to say that I don't know. Can you help me find my life purpose?

Your purpose is to sit here and talk to me, because that's where you are and that's what you are doing. Until you get up and do something else. Then, that becomes your purpose.

So my purpose is to sit in my office for the next thirty years until I retire or get laid off?

You are not in your office now, so that's not your purpose. When you do sit in your office and do whatever you do, then that is your purpose. Not for the next thirty years, but for now.

I think there is some misunderstanding here. For you, purpose means what you are doing now; for me it means having an overall aim in life, something big and *significant that gives meaning to what I do, something that makes a difference. Shuffling papers in the office is not it. I know that.*

As long as you are unaware of Being, you will seek meaning only within the dimension of doing and of future, that is to say, the dimension of time. And whatever meaning or fulfillment you find will dissolve or turn out to have been a deception. Invariably, it will be destroyed by time. Any meaning we find on that level is true only relatively and temporarily.

For example, if caring for your children gives meaning to your life, what happens to that meaning when they don't need you and perhaps don't even listen to you anymore? If helping others gives meaning to your life, you depend on others being worse off than yourself so that your life can continue to be meaningful and you can feel good about yourself. If the desire to excel, win, or succeed at this or that activity provides you with meaning, what if you never win or your winning streak comes to an end one day, as it will? You would then have to look to your imagination or memories—a very unsatisfactory place to bring some meager meaning into your life. "Making it" in whatever field is only meaningful as long as there are thousands or millions of others who don't make it, so you need other human beings to "fail" so that your life can have meaning.

I am not saying here that helping others, caring for your children, or striving for excellence in whatever field are not worthwhile things to do. For many people, they are an important part of their outer purpose, but outer purpose alone is always relative, unstable, and impermanent. This does not mean that you should not be engaged in those activities. It means you should connect them to your inner, primary purpose, so that a deeper meaning flows into what you do.

Without living in alignment with your primary purpose, whatever purpose you come up with, even if it is to create heaven on earth, will be of the ego or become destroyed by time. Sooner or later, it will lead to suffering. If you ignore your inner purpose, no matter what you do, even if it looks spiritual, the ego will creep into *how* you do it, and so the means will corrupt the end. The common saying "The road to hell is paved with good intentions" points to this truth. In other words, not your aims or your actions are primary, but the state of consciousness out of which they come. Fulfilling your primary purpose is laying the foundation for a new reality, a new earth. Once that foundation is there, your external purpose becomes charged with spiritual power because your aims and intentions will be one with the evolutionary impulse of the universe.

The separation of thinking and awareness, which lies at the core of your primary purpose, happens through the negation of time. We are not speaking here, of course, of the use of time for practical purposes, such as making an appointment or planning a trip. We are not speaking of clock time, but of psychological time, which is the mind's deep-seated habit of seeking the fullness of life in the future where it cannot be found and ignoring the only point of access to it: the present moment.

When you look upon what you do or where you are as the main purpose of your life, you negate time. This is enormously empowering. The negation of time in what you do also provides the link between your inner and outer purposes, between Being and doing. When you negate time, you negate the ego. Whatever you do, you will be doing extraordinarily well, because the doing itself becomes the focal point of your attention. Your doing then becomes a channel through which consciousness enters this world. This means there is quality in what you do, even in the most simple action, like turning the pages in the phone book or walking across the room. The main purpose for turning the pages is to turn the pages; the secondary purpose is to find a phone number. The main purpose for walking across the room is to walk across the room; the secondary purpose is to pick up a book at the other end, and the moment you pick up the book, that becomes your main purpose.

You may remember the paradox of time we mentioned earlier: Whatever you do takes time, and yet it is always now. So while your inner purpose is to negate time, your outer purpose necessarily involves future and so could not exist without time. But it is always secondary. Whenever you become anxious or stressed, outer purpose has taken over, and you lost sight of your inner purpose. You have forgotten that your state of consciousness is primary, all else secondary.

Would living like this not stop me from looking to achieve something great? My fear is that I will remain stuck with doing little things for the rest of my life, things that are of no consequence. I'm afraid of never rising above mediocrity, never daring to achieve anything great, not fulfilling my potential.

The great arises out of small things that are honored and cared for. Everybody's life really consists of small things. Greatness is a mental abstraction and a favorite fantasy of the ego. The paradox is that the foundation for greatness is honoring the small things of the present moment instead of pursuing the idea of greatness. The present moment is always small in the sense that it is always simple, but concealed within it lies the greatest power. Like the atom, it is one of the smallest things yet contains enormous power. Only when you align yourself with the present moment do you have access to that power. Or it may be more true to say that *it* then has access to you and through you to this world. Jesus was referring to this power when he said, "It is not I but the Father within me who does the works." And "I can of my own self do nothing."[1] Anxiety, stress, and negativity cut you off from that power. The illusion that you are separate from the power that runs the universe returns. You feel yourself to be alone again, struggling against something or trying to achieve this or that. But why did anxiety, stress, or negativity arise? Because you turned away from the present moment. And why did you do that? You thought something else was more important. You forgot your main purpose. One small error, one misperception, creates a world of suffering.

Through the present moment, you have access to the power of life itself, that which has traditionally been called "God." As soon as you turn away from it, God ceases to be a reality in your life, and all you are left with is the mental *concept* of God, which some people believe in and others deny. Even belief in God is only a poor substitute for the living reality of God manifesting every moment of your life.

Would complete harmony with the present moment not imply the cessation of all movement? Doesn't the existence of any goal imply that there is a temporary *disruption in that harmony with the present moment and perhaps a reestablishment of harmony at a higher or more complex level once the goal has been attained? I imagine that the sapling that pushes its way through the soil can't be in total harmony with the present moment either because it has a goal: It wants to become a big tree. Maybe once it has reached maturity it will live in harmony with the present moment.*

The sapling doesn't want anything because it is at one with the totality, and the totality acts through it. "Look at the lilies of the field, how they grow" said Jesus, "they toil not, neither do they spin. Yet even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."[2] We could say that the totality—Life—*wants* the sapling to become a tree, but the sapling doesn't see itself as separate from life and so wants nothing for itself. It is one with what Life wants. That's why it isn't worried or stressed. And if it has to die prematurely, it dies with ease. It is as surrendered in death as it is in life. It senses, no matter how obscurely, its rootedness in Being, the formless and eternal one Life.

Like the Taoist sages of ancient China, Jesus likes to draw our attention to nature because he sees a power at work in it that humans have lost touch with. It is the creative power of the universe. Jesus goes on to say that if God clothes simple flowers in such beauty, how much more will God clothe you. That is to say, that while nature is a beautiful expression of the evolutionary impulse of the universe, when humans become aligned with the intelligence that underlies it, they will express that same impulse on a higher, more wondrous level.

So be true to life by being true to your inner purpose. As you become present and thereby total in what you do, your actions become charged with spiritual power. At first there may be no noticeable change in *what* you do—only the *how* changes. Your primary purpose is now to enable consciousness to flow into what you do. The secondary purpose is whatever you want to achieve through the doing. Whereas the notion of purpose before was always associated with future, there is now a deeper purpose that can only be found in the present, through the denial of time.

When you meet with people, at work or wherever it may be, give them your fullest attention. You are no longer there primarily as a person, but as a field of awareness, of alert Presence. The original reason for interacting with the other person—buying or selling something, requesting or giving information, and so on—now becomes secondary. The field of awareness that arises between you becomes the primary purpose for the interaction. That space of awareness becomes more important than what you may be talking about, more important than physical or thought objects. The human *Being* becomes more important than the things of this world. It does not mean you neglect whatever needs to be done on a practical level. In fact, the doing unfolds not only more easily, but more powerfully when the dimension of Being is acknowledged and so becomes primary. The arising of that unifying field of awareness between human beings is the most essential factor in relationships on the new earth.

Is the notion of success just an egoic illusion? How do we measure true success?

The world will tell you that success is achieving what you set out to do. It will tell you that success is winning, that finding recognition and/or prosperity are essential ingredients in any success. All or some of the above are usually by-products of success, but they are not success. The conventional notion of success is concerned with the outcome of what you do. Some say that success is the result of a combination of hard work and luck, or determination and talent, or being in the right place at the right time. While any of these may be determinants of success, they are not its essence. What the world doesn't tell you—because it doesn't know—is that you cannot *become* successful. You can only *be* successful. Don't let a mad world tell you that success is anything other than a successful present moment. And what is that? There is a sense of quality in what you do, even the most simple action. Quality implies care and attention, which come with awareness. Quality requires your Presence.

Let's say that you are a businessperson and after two years of intense stress and strain you finally manage to come out with a product or service that sells well and makes money. Success? In conventional terms, yes. In reality, you spent two years polluting your body as well as the earth with negative energy, made yourself and those around you miserable, and affected many others you never even met. The unconscious assumption behind all such action is that success is a future event, and that the end justifies the means. But the end and the means are one. And if the means did not contribute to human happiness, neither will the end. The outcome, which is inseparable from the actions that led to it, is already contaminated by those actions and so will create further unhappiness. This is karmic action, which is the unconscious perpetuation of unhappiness.

As you already know, your secondary or outer purpose lies within the dimension of time, while your main purpose is inseparable from the Now and therefore requires the negation of time. How are they reconciled? By realizing that your entire life journey ultimately consists of the step you are taking at this moment. There is always only this one step, and so you give it your fullest attention. This doesn't mean you don't know where you are going; it just means this step is primary, the destination secondary. And what you encounter at your destination once you get there depends on the quality of this one step. Another way of putting it: What the future holds for you depends on your state of consciousness now.

When doing becomes infused with the timeless quality of Being, *that* is success. Unless Being flows into doing, unless you are present, you lose yourself in whatever you do. You also lose yourself in thinking, as well as in your reactions to what happens externally.

What exactly do you mean when you say, "You lose yourself"?

The essence of who you are is consciousness. When consciousness (you) becomes completely identified with thinking and thus forgets its essential nature, it loses itself in thought. When it becomes identified with mental-emotional formations such as wanting and fearing—the primary motivating forces of the ego—it loses itself in those formations. Consciousness also loses itself when it identifies with acting and reacting to what happens. Every thought, every desire or fear, every action or reaction, is then infused with a false sense of self that is incapable of sensing the simple joy of Being and so seeks pleasure, and sometimes even pain, as substitutes for it. This is living in forgetfulness of Being. In that state of forgetfulness of who you are, every success is no more than a passing delusion. Whatever you achieve, soon you will be unhappy again, or some new problem or dilemma will draw your attention in completely.

How do I go from realizing what my inner purpose is to finding out what I am supposed to do on the outer level?

The outer purpose varies greatly from person to person, and no outer purpose lasts forever. It is subject to time and then replaced by some other purpose. The extent to which dedication to the inner purpose of awakening changes the external circumstances of your life also varies greatly. For some people, there is a sudden or gradual break with their past: their work, living situation, relationships—everything undergoes profound change. Some of the change may be initiated by themselves, not through an agonizing decision-making process but by a sudden realization or recognition: This is what I have to do. The decision arrives ready-made, so to speak. It comes through awareness, not through thinking. You wake up one morning and you know what to do. Some people find themselves walking out of an insane work environment or living situation. So before you discover what is right for you on the external level, before you discover what works, what is compatible with the awakening consciousness, you may have to find out what is not right, what no longer works, what is incompatible with your inner purpose.

Other kinds of change may suddenly come to you from without. A chance meeting brings new opportunity and expansion into your life. A long-standing obstacle or conflict dissolves. Your friends either go through this inner transformation with you or drift out of your life. Some relationships dissolve, others deepen. You may get laid off from your job, or you become an agent for positive change at your workplace. Your spouse leaves you, or you reach a new level of intimacy. Some changes may look negative on the surface but you will soon realize that space is being created in your life for something new to emerge.

There may be a period of insecurity and uncertainty. What should I do? As the ego is no longer running your life, the psychological need for external security, which is illusory anyway, lessens. You are able to live with uncertainty, even enjoy it. When you become comfortable with uncertainty, infinite possibilities open up in your life. It means fear is no longer a dominant factor in what you do and no longer prevents you from taking action to initiate change. The Roman philosopher Tacitus rightly observed that “the desire for safety stands against every great and noble enterprise.” If uncertainty is unacceptable to you, it turns into fear. If it is perfectly acceptable, it turns into increased aliveness, alertness, and creativity.

Many years ago, as a result of a strong inner impulse, I walked out of an academic career that the world would have called “promising,” stepping into complete uncertainty; and out of that, after several years, emerged my new incarnation as a spiritual teacher. Much later, something similar happened again. The impulse came to give up my home in England and move to the West Coast of North America. I obeyed that impulse, although I didn’t know the reason for it. Out of that move into uncertainty came *The Power of Now*, most of which was written in California and British Columbia while I didn’t have a home of my own. I had virtually no income and lived on my savings, which were quickly running out. In fact, everything fell into place beautifully. I ran out of money just when I was getting close to finishing writing. I bought a lottery ticket and won $1,000, which kept me going for another month.

Not everybody, however, will have to go through drastic change in their external circumstances. At the other end of the spectrum you have people who stay exactly where they are and keep doing whatever they are doing. For them, only the *how* changes, not the *what*. This is not due to fear or inertia. What they are doing already is a perfect vehicle for consciousness to come into this world, and it needs no other. They too bring into manifestation the new earth.

Shouldn't this be the case for everybody? If fulfilling your inner purpose is being at one with the present moment, why should anybody feel the need to remove themselves from their current work or living situation?

Being at one with what *is* doesn't mean you no longer initiate change or become incapable of taking action. But the motivation to take action comes from a deeper level, not from egoic wanting or fearing. Inner alignment with the present moment opens your consciousness and brings it into alignment with the whole, of which the present moment is an integral part. The whole, the totality of life, then acts through you.

What do you mean by the whole?

On the one hand, the whole comprises all that exists. It is the world or the cosmos. But all things in existence, from microbes to human beings to galaxies, are not really separate things or entities, but form part of a web of interconnected multidimensional processes.

There are two reasons why we don't see this unity, why we see things as separate. One is perception, which reduces reality to what is accessible to us through the small range of our senses: what we can see, hear, smell, taste, and touch. But when we perceive without interpreting or mental labeling, which means without adding thought to our perceptions, we can actually still sense the deeper connectedness underneath our perception of seemingly separate things.

The other more serious reason for the illusion of separateness is compulsive thinking. It is when we are trapped in incessant streams of compulsive thinking that the universe really disintegrates for us, and we lose the ability to sense the interconnectedness of all that exists. Thinking cuts reality up into lifeless fragments. Extremely unintelligent and destructive action arises out of such a fragmented view of reality.

However, there is an even deeper level to the whole than the interconnectedness of everything in existence. At that deeper level, all things are one. It is the Source, the unmanifested one Life. It is the timeless intelligence that manifests as a universe unfolding in time.

The whole is made up of existence and Being, the manifested and the unmanifested, the world and God. So when you become aligned with the whole, you become a conscious part of the interconnectedness of the whole and its purpose: the emergence of consciousness into this world. As a result, spontaneous helpful occurrences, chance encounters, coincidences, and synchronistic events happen much more frequently. Carl Jung called synchronicity an "acausal connecting principle." This means there is no causal connection between synchronistic events on our surface level of reality. It is an outer manifestation of an underlying intelligence behind the world of appearances and a deeper connectedness that our mind cannot understand. But we can be conscious participants in the unfolding of that intelligence, the flowering consciousness.

Nature exists in a state of unconscious oneness with the whole. This, for example, is why virtually no wild animals were killed in the tsunami disaster of 2004. Being more in touch with the totality than humans, they could sense the tsunami's approach long before it could be seen or heard and so had time to withdraw to higher terrain. Perhaps even that is looking at it from a human perspective. They probably just found themselves moving to higher terrain. Doing *this* because of *that* is the mind's way of cutting up reality; whereas nature lives in unconscious oneness with the whole. It is our purpose and destiny to bring a new dimension into this world by living in conscious oneness with the totality and conscious alignment with universal intelligence.

Can the whole use the human mind to create things or bring about situations that are in alignment with its purpose?

Yes, whenever there is inspiration, which translates as "in spirit," and enthusiasm, which means "in God," there is a creative empowerment that goes far beyond what a mere person is capable of.

CHAPTER TEN

A New Earth

Astronomers have discovered evidence to suggest that the universe came into existence fifteen billion years ago in a gigantic explosion and has been expanding ever since. Not only has it been expanding, but it is also growing in complexity and becoming more and more differentiated. Some scientists also postulate that this movement from unity to multiplicity will eventually become reversed. The universe will then stop expanding and begin to contract again and finally return to the unmanifested, the inconceivable nothingness out of which it came—and perhaps repeat the cycles of birth, expansion, contraction, and death again and again. For what purpose? "Why does the universe go to all the bother of existing?" asks physicist Stephen Hawking, realizing at the same time that no mathematical model could ever supply the answer.

If you look within rather than only without, however, you discover that you have an inner and an outer purpose, and since you are a microcosmic reflection of the macrocosm, it follows that the universe too has an inner and outer purpose inseparable from yours. The outer purpose of the universe is to create form and experience the interaction of forms—the play, the dream, the drama, or whatever you choose to call it. Its inner purpose is to awaken to its formless essence. Then comes the reconciliation of outer and inner purpose: to bring that essence—consciousness—into the world of form and thereby transform the world. The ultimate purpose of that transformation goes far beyond anything the human mind can imagine or comprehend. And yet, on this planet at this time, that transformation is the task allotted us. That is the reconciliation of outer and inner purpose, the reconciliation of the world and God.

Before we look at what relevance the expansion and contraction of the universe has to your own life, we need to bear in mind here that nothing we say about the nature of the universe should be taken as an absolute truth. Neither concepts nor mathematical formulae can explain the infinite. No thought can encapsulate the vastness of the totality. Reality is a unified whole, but thought cuts it up into fragments. This gives rise to fundamental misperceptions, for example, that there are separate things and events, or that *this* is the cause of *that*. Every thought implies a perspective, and every perspective, by its very nature, implies limitation, which ultimately means that it is not true, at least not absolutely. Only the whole is true, but the whole cannot be spoken or thought. Seen from beyond the limitations of thinking and therefore incomprehensible to the human mind, everything is happening now. All that ever has been or will be is now, outside of time, which is a mental construct.

As an illustration of relative and absolute truth, consider the sunrise and sunset. When we say the sun rises in the morning and sets in the evening, that is true, but only relatively. In absolute terms, it is false. Only from the limited perspective of an observer on or near the planet's surface does the sun rise and set. If you were far out in space, you would see that the sun neither rises nor sets, but that it shines continuously. And yet, even after realizing that, we can continue to speak of the sunrise or sunset, still see its beauty, paint it, write poems about it, even though we now know that it is a relative rather than an absolute truth.

So let us continue to speak for a moment of another relative truth: the coming into form of the universe and its return to the formless, which implies the limited perspective of time, and see what relevance this has to your own life. The notion of "my own life" is, of course, another limited perspective created by thought, another relative truth. There is ultimately no such thing as "your" life, since you and life are not two, but one.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF YOUR LIFE

The coming into manifestation of the world as well as its return to the unmanifested—its expansion and contraction—are two universal movements that we could call the outgoing and the return home. Those two movements are reflected throughout the universe in many ways, such as in the incessant expansion and contraction of your heart, as well as in the inhalation and exhalation of your breath. They are also reflected in the cycles of sleep and wakefulness. Each night, without knowing it, you return to the unmanifested Source of all life when you enter the stage of deep, dreamless sleep, and then reemerge again in the morning, replenished.

Those two movements, the outgoing and the return, are also reflected in each person's life cycles. Out of nowhere, so to speak, "you" suddenly appear in this world. Birth is followed by expansion. There is not only physical growth, but also growth of knowledge, activities, possessions, experiences. Your sphere of influence expands and life becomes increasingly complex. This is a time when you are mainly concerned with finding or pursuing your outer purpose. Usually there is also a corresponding growth of the ego, which is identification with all the above things, and so your form identity becomes more and more defined. This is also the time when outer purpose—growth—tends to becomes usurped by the ego, which unlike nature does not know when to stop in its pursuit of expansion and has a voracious appetite for *more.*

And then, just when you thought you made it or that you belong here, the return movement begins. Perhaps people close to you begin to die, people who were a part of your world. Then your physical form weakens; your sphere of influence shrinks. Instead of becoming more, you now become less, and the ego reacts to this with increasing anxiety or depression. Your world is beginning to contract, and you may find you are not in control anymore. Instead of acting upon life, life now acts upon you by slowly reducing your world. The consciousness that identified with form is now experiencing the sunset, the dissolution of form. And then one day, you too disappear. Your armchair is still there. But instead of you sitting in it, there is just an empty space. You went back to where you came from just a few years ago.

Each person's life—each life-form, in fact—represents a world, a unique way in which the universe experiences itself. And when your form dissolves, a world comes to an end—one of countless worlds.

AWAKENING AND THE RETURN MOVEMENT

The return movement in a person's life, the weakening or dissolution of form, whether through old age, illness, disability, loss, or some kind of personal tragedy, carries great potential for spiritual awakening—the dis-identification of consciousness from form. Since there is very little spiritual truth in our contemporary culture, not many people recognize this as an opportunity, and so when it happens to them or to someone close to them, they think there is something dreadfully wrong, something that should not be happening.

There is in our civilization a great deal of ignorance about the human condition, and the more spiritually ignorant you are, the more you suffer. For many people, particularly in the West, death is no more than an abstract concept, and so they have no idea what happens to the human form when it approaches dissolution. Most decrepit and old people are shut away in nursing homes. Dead bodies, which in some older cultures are on open display for all to see, are hidden away. Try to see a dead body, and you will find that it is virtually illegal, except if the deceased is a close family member. In funeral homes, they even apply makeup to the face. You are only allowed to see a sanitized version of death.

Since death is only an abstract concept to them, most people are totally unprepared for the dissolution of form that awaits them. When it approaches, there is shock, incomprehension, despair, and great fear. Nothing makes sense anymore, because all the meaning and purpose that life had for them was associated with accumulating, succeeding, building, protecting, and sense gratification. It was associated with the outward movement and identification with form, that is to say, ego. Most people cannot conceive of any meaning when their life, their world, is being demolished. And yet, potentially, there is even deeper meaning here than in the outward movement.

It is precisely through the onset of old age, through loss or personal tragedy, that the spiritual dimension would traditionally come into people's lives. This is to say, their inner purpose would emerge only as their outer purpose collapsed and the shell of the ego would begin to crack open. Such events represent the beginning of the return movement toward the dissolution of form. In most ancient cultures, there must have been an intuitive understanding of this process, which is why old people were respected and revered. They were the repositories of wisdom and provided the dimension of depth without which no civilization can survive for long. In our civilization, which is totally identified with the outer and ignorant of the inner dimension of spirit, the word *old* has mainly negative connotations. It equals useless and so we regard it as almost an insult to refer to someone as old. To avoid the word, we use euphemisms such as elderly and senior. The First Nation's "grandmother" is a figure of great dignity. Today's "granny" is at best cute. Why is old considered useless? Because in old age, the emphasis shifts from doing to Being, and our civilization, which is lost in doing, knows nothing of Being. It asks: Being? What do you do with it?

In some people, the outward movement of growth and expansion gets severely disrupted by a seemingly premature onset of the return movement, the dissolving of form. In some cases, it is a temporary disruption; in others a permanent one. We believe that a young child should not have to face death, but the fact is that some children do have to face the death of one or both parents through illness or accident—or even the possibility of their own death. Some children are born with disabilities that severely restrict the natural expansion of their lives. Or some severe limitation comes into a person's life at a relatively young age.

The disruption of the outward movement at a time when it is "not meant to be happening" can also potentially bring forth an early spiritual awakening in a person. Ultimately, nothing happens that is not meant to happen, which is to say, nothing happens that is not part of the greater whole and its purpose. Thus, destruction or disruption of outer purpose can lead to finding your inner purpose and subsequently the arising of a deeper outer purpose that is aligned with the inner. Children who have suffered greatly often grow into young adults who are mature beyond their years.

What is lost on the level of form is gained on the level of essence. In the traditional figure of the "blind seer" or the "wounded healer" of ancient cultures and legend, some great loss or disability on the level of form has become an opening into spirit. When you have had a direct experience of the unstable nature of all forms, you will likely never overvalue form again and thus lose yourself by blindly pursuing it or attaching yourself to it.

The opportunity that the dissolution of form, and in particular, old age, represents is only just beginning to be recognized in our contemporary culture. In the majority of people, that opportunity is still tragically missed, because the ego identifies with the return movement just as it identified with the outward movement. This results in a hardening of the egoic shell, a contraction rather than an opening. The diminished ego then spends the rest of its days whining or complaining, trapped in fear or anger, self-pity, guilt, blame, or other negative mental-emotional states or avoidance strategies, such as attachment to memories and thinking and talking about the past.

When the ego is no longer identified with the return movement in a person's life, old age or approaching death becomes what it is meant to be: an opening into the realm of spirit. I have met old people who were living embodiments of this process. They had become radiant. Their weakening forms had become transparent to the light of consciousness.

On the new earth, old age will be universally recognized and highly valued as a time for the flowering of consciousness. For those who are still lost in the outer circumstances of their lives, it will be a time of a late homecoming, when they awaken to their inner purpose. For many others, it will represent an intensification and a culmination of the awakening process.

AWAKENING AND THE OUTGOING MOVEMENT

The natural expansion of one’s life that comes with the outward movement has traditionally been usurped by the ego and used for its own expansion. “Look what *I* can do. I bet *you* can’t do that,” says the small child to another as he discovers the increasing strength and abilities of his body. That is one of the ego’s first attempts to enhance itself through identification with the outward movement and the concept of “more than you” and to strengthen itself by diminishing others. It is, of course, only the beginning of the ego’s many misperceptions.

However, as your awareness increases and the ego is no longer running your life, you don’t have to wait for your world to shrink or collapse through old age or personal tragedy in order for you to awaken to your inner purpose. As the new consciousness is beginning to emerge on the planet, an increasing number of people no longer need to be shaken to have an awakening. They embrace the awakening process voluntarily even while still engaged in the outward cycle of growth and expansion. When that cycle is no longer usurped by the ego, the spiritual dimension will come into this world through the outward movement—thought, speech, action, creation—as powerfully as through the return movement—stillness, Being, and dissolution of form.

Until now, human intelligence, which is no more than a minute aspect of universal intelligence, has been distorted and misused by the ego. I call that “intelligence in the service of madness.” Splitting the atom requires great intelligence. Using that intelligence for building and stockpiling atom bombs is insane or at best extremely unintelligent. Stupidity is relatively harmless, but intelligent stupidity is highly dangerous. This intelligent stupidity, for which one could find countless obvious examples, is threatening our survival as a species.

Without the impairment of egoic dysfunction, our intelligence comes into full alignment with the outgoing cycle of universal intelligence and its impulse to create. We become conscious participants in the creation of form. It is not we who create, but universal intelligence that creates through us. We don’t identify with what we create and so don’t lose ourselves in what we do. We are learning that the act of creation may involve energy of the highest intensity, but that is not “hard work” or stressful. We need to understand the difference between stress and intensity, as we shall see. Struggle or stress is a sign that the ego has returned, as are negative reactions when we encounter obstacles.

The force behind the ego’s wanting creates “enemies,” that is to say, reaction in the form of an opposing force equal in intensity. The stronger the ego, the stronger the sense of separateness between people. The only actions that do not cause opposing reactions are those that are aimed at the good of all. They are inclusive, not exclusive. They join; they don’t separate. They are not for “my” country but for all of humanity, not for “my” religion but the emergence of consciousness in all human beings, not for “my” species but for all sentient beings and all of nature.

We are also learning that action, although necessary, is only a secondary factor in manifesting our external reality. The primary factor in creation is consciousness. No matter how active we are, how much effort we make, our state of consciousness creates our world, and if there is no change on that inner level, no amount of action will make any difference. We would only re-create modified versions of the same world again and again, a world that is an external reflection of the ego.

CONSCIOUSNESS

Consciousness is already conscious. It is the unmanifested, the eternal. The universe, however, is only gradually becoming conscious. Consciousness itself is timeless and therefore does not evolve. It was never born and does not die. When consciousness becomes the manifested universe, it appears to be subject to time and to undergo an evolutionary process. No human mind is capable of comprehending fully the reason for this process. But we can glimpse it within ourselves and become a conscious participant in it.

Consciousness is the intelligence, the organizing principle behind the arising of form. Consciousness has been preparing forms for millions of years so that it can express itself through them in the manifested.

Although the unmanifested realm of pure consciousness could be considered another dimension, it is not separate from this dimension of form. Form and formlessness interpenetrate. The unmanifested flows into this dimension as awareness, inner space, Presence. How does it do that? Through the human form that becomes conscious and thus fulfills its destiny. The human form was created for this higher purpose, and millions of other forms prepared the ground for it.

Consciousness incarnates into the manifested dimension, that is to say, it becomes form. When it does so, it enters a dreamlike state. Intelligence remains, but consciousness becomes unconscious of itself. It loses itself in form, becomes identified with forms. This could be described as the descent of the divine into matter. At that stage in the evolution of the universe, the entire outgoing movement takes place in that dreamlike state. Glimpses of awakening come only at the moment of the dissolution of an individual form, that is to say, death. And then begins the next incarnation, the next identification with form, the next individual dream that is part of the collective dream. When the lion tears apart the body of the zebra, the consciousness that incarnated into the zebra-form detaches itself from the dissolving form and for a brief moment awakens to its essential immortal nature as consciousness; and then immediately falls back into sleep and reincarnates into another form. When the lion becomes old and cannot hunt anymore, as it draws its last breath, there is again the briefest of glimpses of an awakening, followed by another dream of form.

On our planet, the human ego represents the final stage of universal sleep, the identification of consciousness with form. It was a necessary stage in the evolution of consciousness.

The human brain is a highly differentiated form through which consciousness enters this dimension. It contains approximately one hundred billion nerve cells (called neurons), about the same number as there are stars in our galaxy, which could be seen as a macrocosmic brain. The brain does not create consciousness, but consciousness created the brain, the most complex physical form on earth, for its expression. When the brain gets damaged, it does not mean you lose consciousness. It means consciousness can no longer use that form to enter this dimension. You cannot lose consciousness because it is, in essence, who you are. You can only lose something that you have, but you cannot lose something that you are.

AWAKENED DOING

Awakened doing is the outer aspect of the next stage in the evolution of consciousness on our planet. The closer we get to the end of our present evolutionary stage, the more dysfunctional the ego becomes, in the same way that a caterpillar becomes dysfunctional just before it transforms into a butterfly. But the new consciousness is arising even as the old dissolves.

We are in the midst of a momentous event in the evolution of human consciousness, but they won't be talking about it in the news tonight. On our planet, and perhaps simultaneously in many parts of our galaxy and beyond, consciousness is awakening from the dream of form. This does not mean all forms (the world) are going to dissolve, although quite a few almost certainly will. It means consciousness can now begin to create form without losing itself in it. It can remain conscious of itself, even while it creates and experiences form. Why should it continue to create and experience form? For the enjoyment of it. How does consciousness do that? Through awakened humans who have learned the meaning of *awakened doing.*

Awakened doing is the alignment of your outer purpose—what you do—with your inner purpose—awakening and staying awake. Through awakened doing, you become one with the outgoing purpose of the universe. Consciousness flows through you into this world. It flows into your thoughts and inspires them. It flows into what you do and guides and empowers it.

Not *what* you do, but *how* you do what you do determines whether you are fulfilling your destiny. And how you do what you do is determined by your state of consciousness.

A reversal of your priorities comes about when the main purpose for doing what you do becomes the doing itself, or rather, the current of consciousness that flows into what you do. That current of consciousness is what determines quality. Another way of putting it: In any situation and in whatever you do, your state of consciousness is the primary factor; the situation and what you do is secondary. "Future" success is dependent upon and inseparable from the consciousness out of which the actions emanate. That can be either the reactive force of the ego or the alert attention of awakened consciousness. All truly successful action comes out of that field of alert attention, rather than from ego and conditioned, unconscious thinking.

THE THREE MODALITIES OF AWAKENED DOING

There are three ways in which consciousness can flow into what you do and thus through you into this world, three modalities in which you can align your life with the creative power of the universe. Modality means the underlying energy-frequency that flows into what you do and connects your actions with the awakened consciousness that is emerging into this world. What you do will be dysfunctional and of the ego unless it arises out of one of these three modalities. They may change during the course of a day, although one of them may be dominant during a certain stage in your life. Each modality is appropriate to certain situations.

The modalities of awakened doing are acceptance, enjoyment, and enthusiasm. Each one represents a certain vibrational frequency of consciousness. You need to be vigilant to make sure that one of them operates whenever you are engaged in doing anything at all—from the most simple task to the most complex. If you are not in the state of either acceptance, enjoyment, or enthusiasm, look closely and you will find that you are creating suffering for yourself and others.

ACCEPTANCE

Whatever you cannot enjoy doing, you can at least accept that this is what you have to do. Acceptance means: For now, this is what this situation, this moment, requires me to do, and so I do it willingly. We already spoke at length about the importance of inner acceptance of what *happens*, and acceptance of what you have to *do* is just another aspect of it. For example, you probably won’t be able to enjoy changing the flat tire on your car at night in the middle of nowhere and in pouring rain, let alone be enthusiastic about it, but you can bring acceptance to it. Performing an action in the state of acceptance means you are at peace while you do it. That peace is a subtle energy vibration which then flows into what you do. On the surface, acceptance looks like a passive state, but in reality it is active and creative because it brings something entirely new into this world. That peace, that subtle energy vibration, is consciousness, and one of the ways in which it enters this world is through surrendered action, one aspect of which is acceptance.

If you can neither enjoy or bring acceptance to what you do—stop. Otherwise, you are not taking responsibility for the only thing you can really take responsibility for, which also happens to be one thing that really matters: your state of consciousness. And if you are not taking responsibility for your state of consciousness, you are not taking responsibility for life.

ENJOYMENT

The peace that comes with surrendered action turns to a sense of aliveness when you actually enjoy what you are doing. Enjoyment is the second modality of awakened doing. On the new earth, enjoyment will replace wanting as the motivating power behind people’s actions. Wanting arises from the ego’s delusion that you are a separate fragment that is disconnected from the power that lies behind all creation. Through enjoyment, you link into that universal creative power itself.

When you make the present moment, instead of past and future, the focal point of your life, your ability to enjoy what you do—and with it the quality of your life—increases dramatically. Joy is the dynamic aspect of Being. When the creative power of the universe becomes conscious of itself, it manifests as joy. You don't have to wait for something "meaningful" to come into your life so that you can finally enjoy what you do. There is more meaning in joy than you will ever need. The "waiting to start living" syndrome is one of the most common delusions of the unconscious state. Expansion and positive change on the outer level is much more likely to come into your life if you can enjoy what you are doing already, instead of waiting for some change so that you can start enjoying what you do. Don't ask your mind for permission to enjoy what you do. All you will get is plenty of reasons why you can't enjoy it. "Not now," the mind will say. "Can't you see I'm busy? There's no time. Maybe tomorrow you can start enjoying…." That tomorrow will never come unless you begin enjoying what you are doing now.

When you say, I enjoy doing this or that, it is really a misperception. It makes it appear that the joy comes from what you do, but that is not the case. Joy does not come from what you do, it flows into what you do and thus into this world from deep within you. The misperception that joy comes from what you do is normal, and it is also dangerous, because it creates the belief that joy is something that can be derived from something else, such as an activity or thing. You then look to the world to bring you joy, happiness. But it cannot do that. This is why many people live in constant frustration. The world is not giving them what they think they need.

Then what is the relationship between something that you do and the state of joy? You will enjoy any activity in which you are fully present, any activity that is not just a means to an end. It isn't the action you perform that you really enjoy, but the deep sense of aliveness that flows into it. That aliveness is one with who you are. This means that when you enjoy doing something, you are really experiencing the joy of Being in its dynamic aspect. That's why anything you enjoy doing connects you with the power behind all creation.

Here is a spiritual practice that will bring empowerment and creative expansion into your life. Make a list of a number of everyday routine activities that you perform frequently. Include activities that you may consider uninteresting, boring, tedious, irritating, or stressful. But don't include anything that you hate or detest doing. That's a case either for acceptance or for stopping what you do. The list may include traveling to and from work, buying groceries, doing your laundry, or anything that you find tedious or stressful in your daily work. Then, whenever you are engaged in those activities, let them be a vehicle for alertness. Be absolutely present in what you do and sense the alert, alive stillness within you in the background of the activity. You will soon find that what you do in such a state of heightened awareness, instead of being stressful, tedious, or irritating, is actually becoming enjoyable. To be more precise, what you are enjoying is not really the outward action but the inner dimension of consciousness that flows into the action. This is finding the joy of Being in what you are doing. If you feel your life lacks significance or is too stressful or tedious, it is because you haven't brought that dimension into your life yet. Being conscious in what you do has not yet become your main aim.

The new earth arises as more and more people discover that their main purpose in life is to bring the light of consciousness into this world and so use whatever they do as a vehicle for consciousness.

The joy of Being is the joy of being conscious.

Awakened consciousness then takes over from ego and begins to run your life. You may then find that an activity that you have been engaged in for a long time naturally begins to expand into something much bigger when it becomes empowered by consciousness.

Some of those people who, through creative action, enrich the lives of many others simply do what they enjoy doing most without wanting to achieve or become anything through that activity. They may be musicians, artists, writers, scientists, teachers, or builders, or they may bring into manifestation new social or business structures (enlightened businesses). Sometimes for a few years their sphere of influence remains small; and then it can happen that suddenly or gradually a wave of creative empowerment flows into what they do, and their activity expands beyond anything they could have imagined and touches countless others. In addition to enjoyment, an intensity is now added to what they do and with it comes a creativity that goes beyond anything an ordinary human could accomplish.

But don’t let it go to your head, because up there is where a remnant of ego may be hiding. You are still an ordinary human. What is extraordinary is what comes through you into this world. But that essence you share with all beings. The fourteenth-century Persian poet and Sufi master Hafiz expresses this truth beautifully: “I am a hole in a flute that the Christ’s breath moves through. Listen to this music.”[1]

ENTHUSIASM

Then there is another way of creative manifestation that may come to those who remain true to their inner purpose of awakening. Suddenly one day they know what their outer purpose is. They have a great vision, a goal, and from then on they work toward implementing that goal. Their goal or vision is usually connected in some way to something that on a smaller scale they are doing and enjoy doing already. This is where the third modality of awakened doing arises: enthusiasm.

Enthusiasm means there is deep enjoyment in what you do plus the added element of a goal or a vision that you work toward. When you add a goal to the enjoyment of what you do, the energy-field or vibrational frequency changes. A certain degree of what we might call structural tension is now added to enjoyment, and so it turns into enthusiasm. At the height of creative activity fueled by enthusiasm, there will be enormous intensity and energy behind what you do. You will feel like an arrow that is moving toward the target—and enjoying the journey.

To an onlooker, it may appear that you are under stress, but the intensity of enthusiasm has nothing to do with stress. When you want to arrive at your goal more than you want to be doing what you are doing, you become stressed. The balance between enjoyment and structural tension is lost, and the latter has won. When there is stress, it is usually a sign that the ego has returned, and you are cutting yourself off from the creative power of the universe. Instead, there is only the force and strain of egoic wanting, and so you have to struggle and "work hard" to make it. Stress always diminishes both the quality and effectiveness of what you do under its influence. There is also a strong link between stress and negative emotions, such as anxiety and anger. It is toxic to the body and is now becoming recognized as one of the main causes of the so-called degenerative diseases such as cancer and heart disease.

Unlike stress, enthusiasm has a high energy frequency and so resonates with the creative power of the universe. This is why Ralph Waldo Emerson said that, "Nothing great has ever been achieved without enthusiasm."[2] The word *enthusiasm* comes from ancient Greek—*en* and *theos*, meaning God. And the related word *enthousiazein* means "to be possessed by a god." With enthusiasm you will find that you don't have to do it all by yourself. In fact, there is nothing of significance that you *can* do by yourself. Sustained enthusiasm brings into existence a wave of creative energy, and all you have to do then is "ride the wave."

Enthusiasm brings an enormous empowerment into what you do, so that all those who have not accessed that power would look upon "your" achievements in awe and may equate them with who you are. You, however, know the truth that Jesus pointed to when he said, "I can of my own self do nothing."[3] Unlike egoic wanting, which creates opposition in direct proportion to the intensity of its wanting, enthusiasm never opposes. It is non-confrontational. Its activity does not create winners and losers. It is based on inclusion, not exclusion, of others. It does not need to use and manipulate people, because it is the power of creation itself and so does not need to take energy from some secondary source. The ego's wanting always tries to take from something or someone; enthusiasm gives out of its own abundance. When enthusiasm encounters obstacles in the form of adverse situations or uncooperative people, it never attacks but walks around them or by yielding or embracing turns the opposing energy into a helpful one, the foe into a friend.

Enthusiasm and the ego cannot coexist. One implies the absence of the other. Enthusiasm knows where it is going, but at the same time, it is deeply at one with the present moment, the source of its aliveness, its joy, and its power. Enthusiasm "wants" nothing because it lacks nothing. It is at one with life and no matter how dynamic the enthusiasm-inspired activities are, you don't lose yourself in them. And there remains always a still but intensely alive space at the center of the wheel, a core of peace in the midst of activity that is both the source of all and untouched by it all.

Through enthusiasm you enter into full alignment with the outgoing creative principle of the universe, but without identifying with its creations, that is to say, without ego. Where there is no identification, there is no attachment—one of the great sources of suffering. Once a wave of creative energy has passed, structural tension diminishes again and joy in what you are doing remains. Nobody can live in enthusiasm all the time. A new wave of creative energy may come later and lead to renewed enthusiasm.

When the return movement toward the dissolution of form sets in, enthusiasm no longer serves you. Enthusiasm belongs to the outgoing cycle of life. It is only through surrender that you can align yourself with the return movement—the journey home.

To sum up: Enjoyment of what you are doing, combined with a goal or vision that you work toward, becomes enthusiasm. Even though you have a goal, what you are doing in the present moment needs to remain the focal point of your attention; otherwise, you will fall out of alignment with universal purpose. Make sure your vision or goal is not an inflated image of yourself and therefore a concealed form of ego, such as wanting to become a movie star, a famous writer, or a wealthy entrepreneur. Also make sure your goal is not focused on *having* this or that, such as a mansion by the sea, your own company, or ten million dollars in the bank. An enlarged image of yourself or a vision of yourself *having* this or that are all static goals and therefore don't empower you. Instead, make sure your goals are dynamic, that is to say, point toward an *activity* that you are engaged in and through which you are connected to other human beings as well as to the whole. Instead of seeing yourself as a famous actor and writer and so on, see yourself inspiring countless people with your work and enriching their lives. Feel how that activity enriches or deepens not only your life but that of countless others. Feel yourself being an opening through which energy flows from the unmanifested Source of all life through you for the benefit of all.

All this implies that your goal or vision is then already a reality within you, on the level of mind and of feeling. Enthusiasm is the power that transfers the mental blueprint into the physical dimension. That is the creative use of mind, and that is why there is no wanting involved. You cannot manifest what you want; you can only manifest what you already have. You may get what you want through hard work and stress, but that is not the way of the new earth. Jesus gave the key to the creative use of mind and to the conscious manifestation of form when he said, "Whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."[4]

THE FREQUENCY-HOLDERS

The outward movement into form does not express itself with equal intensity in all people. Some feel a strong urge to build, create, become involved, achieve, make an impact upon the world. If they are unconscious, their ego will, of course, take over and use the energy of the outgoing cycle for its own purposes. This, however, also greatly reduces the flow of creative energy available to them and increasingly they need to rely on "efforting" to get what they want. If they are conscious, those people in whom the outward movement is strong will be highly creative. Others, after the natural expansion that comes with growing up has run its course, lead an outwardly unremarkable, seemingly more passive and relatively uneventful existence.

They are more inward looking by nature, and for them the outward movement into form is minimal. They would rather return home than go out. They have no desire to get strongly involved in or change the world. If they have any ambitions, they usually don't go beyond finding something to do that gives them a degree of independence. Some of them find it hard to fit into this world. Some are lucky enough to find a protective niche where they can lead a relatively sheltered life, a job that provides them with a regular income or a small business of their own. Some may feel drawn toward living in a spiritual community or monastery. Others may become dropouts and live on the margins of a society they feel they have little in common with. Some turn to drugs because they find living in this world too painful. Others eventually become healers or spiritual teachers, that is to say, teachers of Being.

In past ages, they would probably have been called contemplatives. There is no place for them, it seems, in our contemporary civilization. On the arising new earth, however, their role is just as vital as that of the creators, the doers, the reformers. Their function is to anchor the frequency of the new consciousness on this planet. I call them the frequency-holders. They are here to generate consciousness through the activities of daily life, through their interactions with others as well as through "just being."

In this way, they endow the seemingly insignificant with profound meaning. Their task is to bring spacious stillness into this world by being absolutely present in whatever they do. There is consciousness and therefore quality in what they do, even the simplest task. Their purpose is to do everything in a sacred manner. As each human being is an integral part of the collective human consciousness, they affect the world much more deeply than is visible on the surface of their lives.

THE NEW EARTH IS NO UTOPIA

Is the notion of a new earth not just another utopian vision? Not at all. All utopian visions have this in common: the mental projection of a future time when all will be well, we will be saved, there will be peace and harmony and the end of our problems. There have been many such utopian visions. Some ended in disappointment, others in disaster.

At the core of all utopian visions lies one of the main structural dysfunctions of the old consciousness: looking to the future for salvation. The only existence the future actually has is as a thought form in your mind, so when you look to the future for salvation, you are unconsciously looking to your own mind for salvation. You are trapped in form, and that is ego.

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth,"[5] writes the biblical prophet. The foundation for a new earth is a new heaven—the awakened consciousness. The earth—external reality—is only its outer reflection. The arising of a new heaven and by implication a new earth are not future events that are going to make us free. Nothing is *going to* make us free because only the present moment can make us free. That realization is the awakening. Awakening as a future event has no meaning because awakening is the realization of Presence. So the new heaven, the awakened consciousness, is not a future state to be achieved. A new heaven and a new earth are arising within you at this moment, and if they are not arising at this moment, they are no more than a thought in your head and therefore not arising at all. What did Jesus tell his disciples? "Heaven is right here in the midst of you."[6]

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus makes a prediction that to this day few people have understood. He says, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."[7] In modern versions of the Bible, "meek" is translated as humble. Who are the meek or the humble, and what does it mean that they shall inherit the earth?

The meek are the egoless. They are those who have awakened to their essential true nature as consciousness and recognize that essence in all "others," all life-forms. They live in the surrendered state and so feel their oneness with the whole and the Source. They embody the awakened consciousness that is changing all aspects of life on our planet, including nature, because life on earth is inseparable from the human consciousness that perceives and interacts with it. That is the sense in which the meek will inherit the earth.

A new species is arising on the planet. It is arising now, and you are it!

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CHAPTER TWO

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3 John 5:30 (New Revised Standard Version)

4 Mark 11:24 (New Revised Standard Version)

5 Revelation 21:1 (New Revised Standard Version)

6 Luke 17:21 (New Revised Standard Version)

7 Matthew 5:5 (New Revised Standard Version)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Eckhart Tolle is a contemporary spiritual teacher who is not aligned with any particular religion or tradition. In his writing and seminars, he conveys a simple yet profound message with the timeless and uncomplicated clarity of the ancient spiritual masters: There is a way out of suffering and into peace. Tolle travels extensively, taking his teachings throughout the world. He lives in Vancouver, British Columbia.

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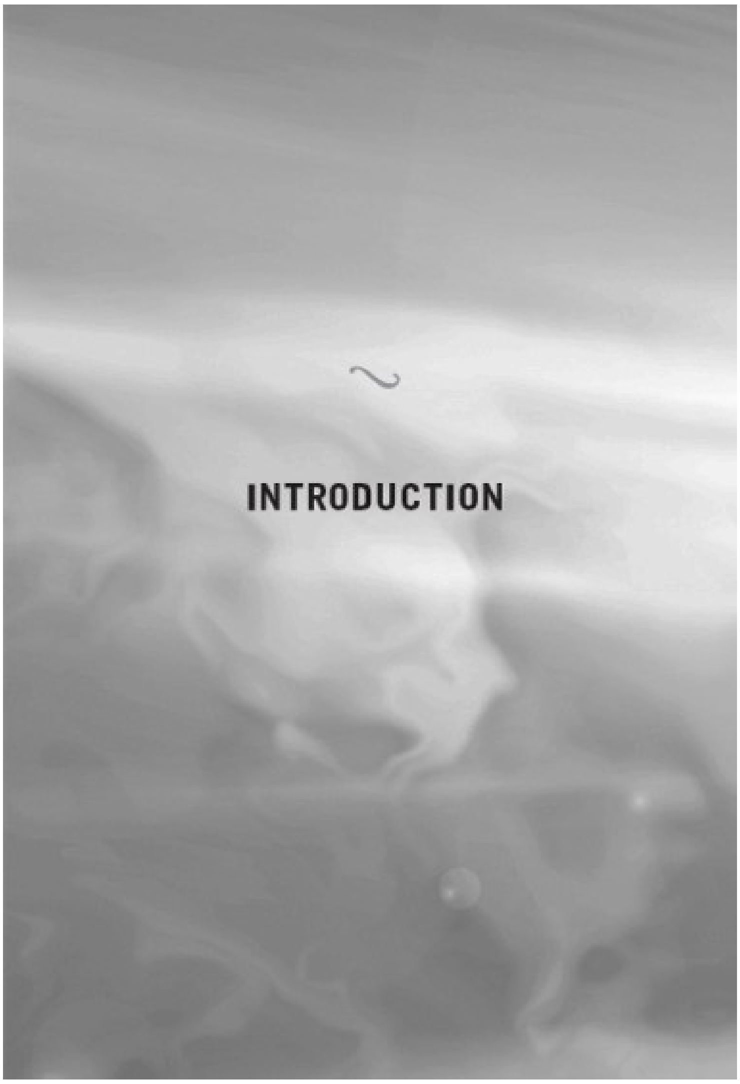

INTRODUCTION

A true spiritual teacher does not have anything to teach in the conventional sense of the word, does not have anything to give or add to you, such as new information, beliefs, or rules of conduct. The only function of such a teacher is to help you remove that which separates you from the truth of who you already are and what you already know in the depth of your being. The spiritual teacher is there to uncover and reveal to you that dimension of inner depth that is also peace.

If you come to a spiritual teacher — or this book — looking for stimulating ideas, theories, beliefs, intellectual discussions, then you will be disappointed. In other words, if you are looking for food for thought, you won't find it, and you will miss the very essence of the teaching, the essence of this book, which is not in the words but within yourself. It is good to remember that, to feel that, as you read. The words are no more than signposts. That to which they point is not to be found within the realm of thought, but a dimension within yourself that is deeper and infinitely vaster than thought. A vibrantly alive peace is one of the characteristics of that dimension, so whenever you feel inner peace arising as you read, the book is doing its work and fulfilling its function as your teacher: it is reminding you of who you are and pointing the way back home.

This is not a book to be read from cover to cover and then put away. Live with it, pick it up frequently, and, more importantly, put it down frequently, or spend more time holding it than reading it. Many readers will feel naturally inclined to stop reading after each entry, to pause, reflect, become still. It is always more helpful and more important to stop reading than to continue reading. Allow the book to do its work, to awaken you from the old grooves of your repetitive and conditioned thinking.

The form of this book can be seen as a revival for the present age of the oldest form of recorded spiritual teachings: the sutras of ancient India. Sutras are powerful pointers to the truth in the form of aphorisms or short sayings, with little conceptual elaboration. The Vedas and Upanishads are the early sacred teachings recorded in the form of sutras, as are the words of the Buddha. The sayings and parables of Jesus, too, when taken out of their narrative context, could be regarded as sutras, as well as the profound teachings contained in the *Ta o Te Ching,* the ancient Chinese book of wisdom. The advantage of the sutra form lies in its brevity. It does not engage the thinking mind more than is necessary. What it doesn't say — but only points to — is more important than what it says. The sutra-like character of the writings in this book is particularly marked in chapter 1 (“Silence & Stillness”), which contains only the briefest of entries. This chapter contains the essence of the entire book and may be all that some readers require. The other chapters are there for those who need a few more signposts.

Just like the ancient sutras, the writings contained within this book are sacred and have come out of a state of consciousness we may call stillness. Unlike those ancient sutras, however, they don't belong to any one religion or spiritual tradition, but are immediately accessible to the whole of humanity. There is also an added sense of urgency here. The transformation of human consciousness is no longer a luxury, so to speak, available only to a few isolated individuals, but a necessity if humankind is not to destroy itself. At the present time, the dysfunction of the old consciousness and the arising of the new are both accelerating. Paradoxically, things are getting worse and better at the same time, although the worse is more apparent because it makes so much “noise.”

This book, of course, uses words that in the act of reading become thoughts in your mind. But those are not ordinary thoughts — repetitive, noisy, self-serving, clamoring for attention. Just like every true spiritual teacher, just like the ancient sutras, the thoughts within this book don't say, “Look at me,” but “Look beyond me.” Because the thoughts came out of stillness, they have power — the power to take you back into the same stillness from which they arose. That stillness is also inner peace, and that stillness and peace are the essence of your Being. It is inner stillness that will save and transform the world.

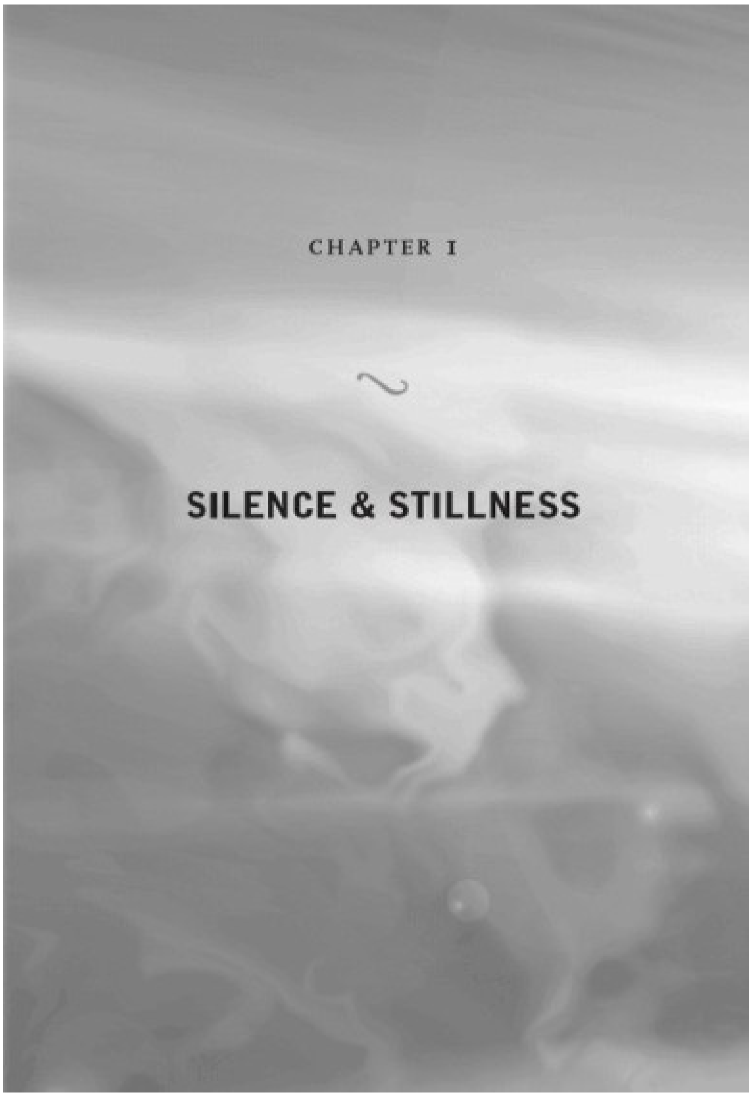

CHAPTER I

SILENCE & STILLNESS

When you lose touch with inner stillness, you lose touch with yourself. When you lose touch with yourself, you lose yourself in the world.
Your innermost sense of self, of who you are, is inseparable from stillness. This is the *I Am* that is deeper than name and form.

* * *

Stillness is your essential nature. What is stillness? The inner space or awareness in which the words on this page are being perceived and become thoughts. Without that awareness, there would be no perception, no thoughts, no world.
You are that awareness, disguised as a person.

* * *

The equivalent of external noise is the inner noise of thinking. The equivalent of external silence is inner stillness.

Whenever there is some silence around you — listen to it. That means just notice it. Pay attention to it. Listening to silence awakens the dimension of stillness within yourself, because it is only through stillness that you can be aware of silence.

See that in the moment of noticing the silence around you, you are not thinking. You are aware, but not thinking.

~

When you become aware of silence, immediately there is that state of inner still alertness. You are present. You have stepped out of thousands of years of collective human conditioning.

~

Look at a tree, a flower, a plant. Let your awareness rest upon it. How still they are, how deeply rooted in Being. Allow nature to teach you stillness.

~

When you look at a tree and perceive its stillness, you become still yourself. You connect with it at a very deep level. You feel a oneness with whatever you perceive in and through stillness. Feeling the oneness of yourself with all things is true love.

~

Silence is helpful, but you don't need it in order to find stillness. Even when there is noise, you can be aware of the stillness underneath the noise, of the space in which the noise arises. That is the inner space of pure awareness, consciousness itself.

You can become aware of awareness as the background to all your sense perceptions, all your thinking. Becoming aware of awareness is the arising of inner stillness.

~

Any disturbing noise can be as helpful as silence. How? By dropping your inner resistance to the noise, by allowing it to be as it is, this acceptance also takes you into that realm of inner peace that is stillness.
Whenever you deeply accept this moment as it is — no matter what form it takes — you are still, you are at peace.

~

Pay attention to the gap — the gap between two thoughts, the brief, silent space between words in a conversation, between the notes of a piano or flute, or the gap between the in-breath and out-breath.
When you pay attention to those gaps, awareness of "something" becomes — just awareness. The formless dimension of pure consciousness arises from within you and replaces identification with form.

~

True intelligence operates silently. Stillness is where creativity and solutions to problems are found.

~

Is stillness just the absence of noise and content? No, it is intelligence itself — the underlying consciousness out of which every form is born. And how could that be separate from who you are?
The form that you think you are came out of that and is being sustained by it.
It is the essence of all galaxies and blades of grass; of all flowers, trees, birds, and all other forms.

~

Stillness is the only thing in this world that has no form. But then, it is not really a thing, and it is not of this world.

~

When you look at a tree or a human being in stillness, who is looking? Something deeper than the person. Consciousness is looking at its creation.
In the Bible, it says that God created the world and saw that it was good. That

is what you see when you look from stillness without thought.

* * *

Do you need more knowledge? Is more information going to save the world, or faster computers, more scientific or intellectual analysis? Is it not wisdom that humanity needs most at this time?

But what is wisdom and where is it to be found? Wisdom comes with the ability to be still. Just look and just listen. No more is needed. Being still, looking, and listening activates the non-conceptual intelligence within you. Let stillness direct your words and actions.

* * *

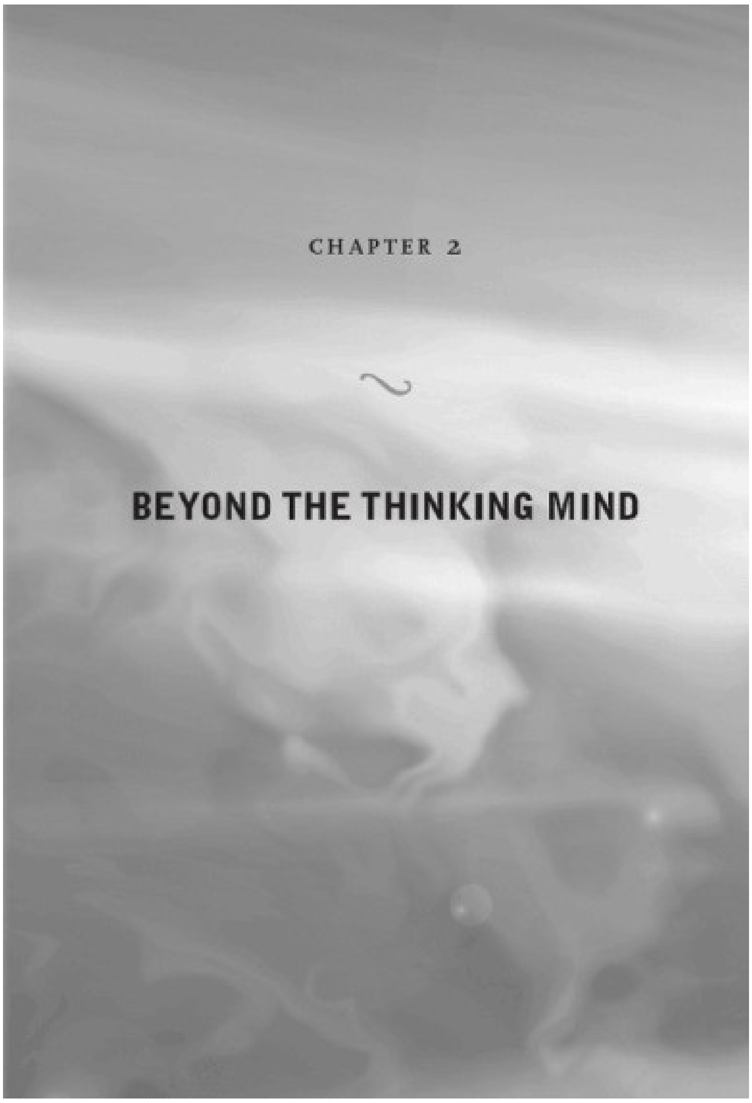

CHAPTER 2

BEYOND THE THINKING MIND

The human condition: lost in thought.

* * *

Most people spend their entire life imprisoned within the confines of their own thoughts. They never go beyond a narrow, mind-made, personalized sense of self that is conditioned by the past.

In you, as in each human being, there is a dimension of consciousness far deeper than thought. It is the very essence of who you are. We may call it presence, awareness, the unconditioned consciousness. In the ancient teachings, it is the Christ within, or your Buddha nature.

Finding that dimension frees you and the world from the suffering you inflict on yourself and others when the mind-made "little me" is all you know and runs your life. Love, joy, creative expansion, and lasting inner peace cannot come into your life except through that unconditioned dimension of consciousness.

If you can recognize, even occasionally, the thoughts that go through your mind as simply thoughts, if you can witness your own mentalemotional reactive patterns as they happen, then that dimension is already emerging in you as the awareness in which thoughts and emotions happen — the timeless inner space in which the content of your life unfolds.

~

The stream of thinking has enormous momentum that can easily drag you along with it. Every thought pretends that it matters so much. It wants to draw your attention in completely.

Here is a new spiritual practice for you: don't take your thoughts too seriously.

~

How easy it is for people to become trapped in their conceptual prisons.

The human mind, in its desire to know, understand, and control, mistakes its opinions and viewpoints for the truth. It says: this is how it is. You have to be larger than thought to realize that however you interpret “your life” or someone else's life or behavior, however you judge any situation, it is no more than a viewpoint, one of many possible perspectives. It is no more than a bundle of thoughts. But reality is one unified whole, in which all things are interwoven, where nothing exists in and by itself. Thinking fragments reality — it cuts it up into conceptual bits and pieces.

The thinking mind is a useful and powerful tool, but it is also very limiting when it takes over your life completely, when you don't realize that it is only a small aspect of the consciousness that you are.

~

Wisdom is not a product of thought. The deep *knowing* that is wisdom arises through the simple act of giving someone or something your full attention. Attention is primordial intelligence, consciousness itself. It dissolves the barriers created by conceptual thought, and with this comes the recognition that nothing exists in and by itself. It joins the perceiver and the perceived in a unifying field of awareness. It is the healer of separation.

~

Whenever you are immersed in compulsive thinking, you are avoiding what is. You don't want to be where you are. Here, Now.

~

Dogmas — religious, political, scientific — arise out of the erroneous belief that thought can encapsulate reality or the truth. Dogmas are collective conceptual prisons. And the strange thing is that people love their prison cells because they give them a sense of security and a false sense of “I know.”

Nothing has inflicted more suffering on humanity than its dogmas. It is true that every dogma crumbles sooner or later, because reality will eventually disclose its falseness; however, unless the basic delusion of it is seen for what it is, it will be replaced by others.

What is this basic delusion? Identification with thought.

~

Spiritual awakening is awakening from the dream of thought.

~

The realm of consciousness is much vaster than thought can grasp. When you no longer believe everything you think, you step out of thought and see clearly that the thinker is not who you are.

~

The mind exists in a state of “not enough” and so is always greedy for more. When you are identified with mind, you get bored and restless very easily. Boredom means the mind is hungry for more stimulus, more food for thought, and its hunger is not being satisfied.

When you feel bored, you can satisfy the mind's hunger by picking up a magazine, making a phone call, switching on the TV, surfing the web, going shopping, or — and this is not uncommon — transferring the mental sense of lack and its need for *more* to the body and satisfy it briefly by ingesting more food.

Or you can stay bored and restless and observe what it feels like to be bored and restless. As you bring awareness to the feeling, there is suddenly some space and stillness around it, as it were. A little at first, but as the sense of inner space grows, the feeling of boredom will begin to diminish in intensity and significance. So even boredom can teach you who you are and who you

are not.
You discover that a “bored person” is not who you are. Boredom is simply a conditioned energy movement within you. Neither are you an angry, sad, or fearful person. Boredom, anger, sadness, or fear are not “yours,” not personal. They are conditions of the human mind. They come and go.
Nothing that comes and goes is you.
“I am bored.” Who knows this?
“I am angry, sad, afraid.” Who knows this?
You are the knowing, not the condition that is known.

~

Prejudice of any kind implies that you are identified with the thinking mind. It means you don't see the other human being anymore, but only your own concept of that human being. To reduce the aliveness of another human being to a concept is already a form of violence.

~

Thinking that is not rooted in awareness becomes self-serving and dysfunctional. Cleverness devoid of wisdom is extremely dangerous and destructive. That is the current state of most of humanity. The amplification of thought as science and technology, although intrinsically neither good nor bad, has also become destructive because so often the thinking out of which it comes has no roots in awareness.
The next step in human evolution is to transcend thought. This is now our urgent task. It doesn't mean not to think anymore, but simply not to be completely identified with thought, possessed by thought.

~

Feel the energy of your inner body. Immediately mental noise slows down or ceases. Feel it in your hands, your feet, your abdomen, your chest. Feel the life that you are, the life that animates the body.
The body then becomes a doorway, so to speak, into a deeper sense of aliveness underneath the fluctuating emotions and underneath your thinking.

~

There is an aliveness in you that you can feel with your entire Being, not just in the head. Every cell is alive in that presence in which you don't need to think. Yet, in that state, if thought is required for some practical purpose, it is there. The mind can still operate, and it operates beautifully when the greater intelligence that you *are* uses it and expresses itself through it.

~

You may have overlooked that brief periods in which you are “conscious without thought” are already occurring naturally and spontaneously in your life. You may be engaged in some manual activity, or walking across the room, or waiting at the airline counter, and be so completely present that the usual mental static of thought subsides and is replaced by an aware presence. Or you may find yourself looking at the sky or listening to someone without any inner mental commentary. Your perceptions become crystal clear, unclouded by thought.

To the mind, all this is not significant, because it has “more important” things to think about. It is also not memorable, and that's why you may have overlooked that it is already happening.

The truth is that it is the most significant thing that *can* happen to you. It is the beginning of a shift from thinking to aware presence.

~

Become at ease with the state of “not knowing.” This takes you beyond mind because the mind is always trying to conclude and interpret. It is afraid of not knowing. So, when you can be at ease with not knowing, you have already gone beyond the mind. A deeper knowing that is non-conceptual then arises out of that state.

~

Artistic creation, sports, dance, teaching, counseling — mastery in any field of endeavor implies that the thinking mind is either no longer involved at all or at least is taking second place. A power and intelligence greater than you and yet one with you in essence takes over. There is no decision-making process anymore; spontaneous right action happens, and “you” are not doing it. Mastery of life is the opposite of control. You become aligned with the greater consciousness. *It* acts, speaks, does the works.

~

A moment of danger can bring about a temporary cessation of the stream of thinking and thus give you a taste of what it means to be present, alert, aware.

~

The Truth is far more all-encompassing than the mind could ever comprehend. No thought can encapsulate the Truth. At best, it can point to it. For example, it can say: “All things are intrinsically one.” That is a pointer, not an explanation. Understanding these words means *feeling* deep within you the truth to which they point.

~

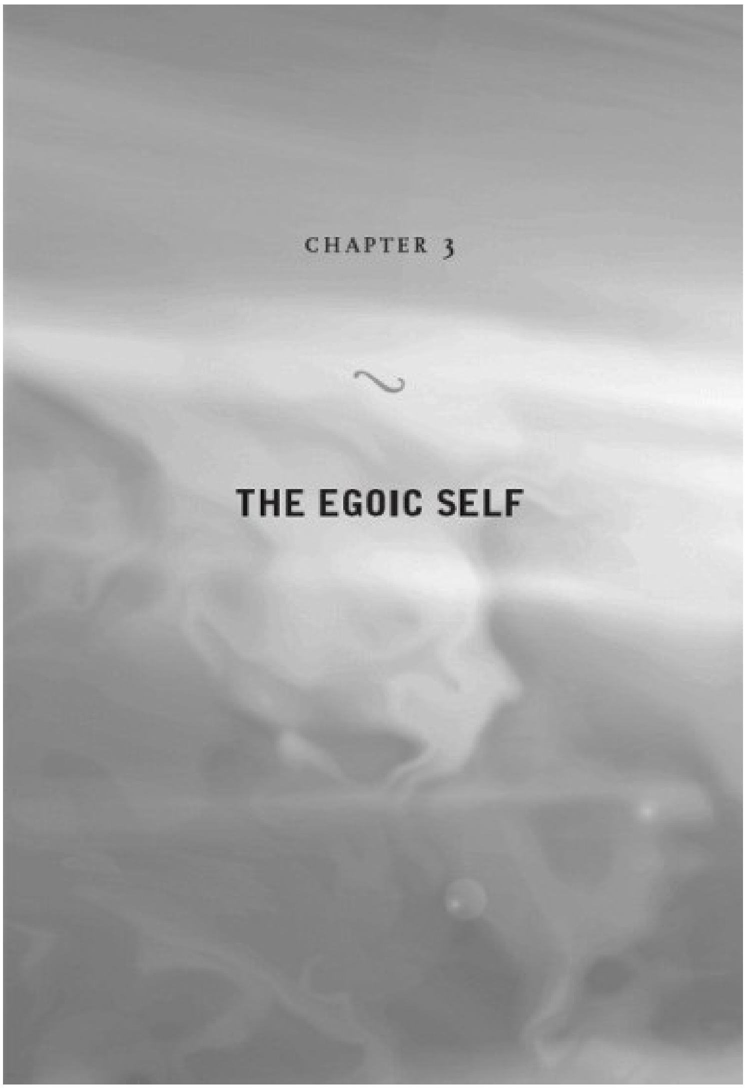

CHAPTER 3

THE EGOIC SELF

The mind is incessantly looking not only for food for thought; it is looking for food for its identity, its sense of self. This is how the ego comes into existence and continuously re-creates itself.

* * *

When you think or speak about yourself, when you say, “I,” what you usually refer to is “me and my story.” This is the “I” of your likes and dislikes, fears and desires, the “I” that is never satisfied for long. It is a mind-made sense of who you are, conditioned by the past and seeking to find its fulfillment in the future.

Can you see that this “I” is fleeting, a temporary formation, like a wave pattern on the surface of the water?

Who is it that sees this? Who is it that is *aware* of the fleetingness of your physical and psychological form? I Am. This is the deeper “I” that has nothing to do with past and future.

~

What will be left of all the fearing and wanting associated with your problematic life situation that every day takes up most of your attention? A dash — one or two inches long, between the date of birth and date of death on your gravestone.

To the egoic self, this is a depressing thought. To you, it is liberating.

~

When each thought absorbs your attention completely, it means you identify with the voice in your head. Thought then becomes invested with a sense of self. This is the ego, a mind-made "me." That mentally constructed self feels incomplete and precarious. That's why fearing and wanting are its predominant emotions and motivating forces.

When you recognize that there is a voice in your head that pretends to be you and never stops speaking, you are awakening out of your unconscious identification with the stream of thinking. When you notice that voice, you realize that who you are is not the voice — the thinker — but the one who is aware of it.

Knowing yourself as the awareness behind the voice is freedom.

~

The egoic self is always engaged in seeking. It is seeking more of this or that to add to itself, to make itself feel more complete. This explains the ego's compulsive preoccupation with future.

Whenever you become aware of yourself "living for the next moment," you have already stepped out of that egoic mind pattern, and the possibility of choosing to give your full attention to this moment arises simultaneously.

By giving your full attention to this moment, an intelligence far greater than the egoic mind enters your life.

~

When you live through the ego, you always reduce the present moment to a means to an end. You live for the future, and when you achieve your goals, they don't satisfy you, at least not for long.

When you give more attention to the doing than to the future result that you

want to achieve through it, you break the old egoic conditioning.
Your doing then becomes not only a great deal more effective, but infinitely more fulfilling and joyful.

~

Almost every ego contains at least an element of what we might call “victim identity.” Some people have such a strong victim image of themselves that it becomes the central core of their ego. Resentment and grievances form an essential part of their sense of self.
Even if your grievances are completely “justified,” you have constructed an identity for yourself that is much like a prison whose bars are made of thought forms. See what you are doing to yourself, or rather what your mind is doing to you. Feel the emotional attachment you have to your victim story and become aware of the compulsion to think or talk about it. Be there as the witnessing presence of your inner state. You don't have to *do* anything. With awareness comes transformation and freedom.

~

Complaining and reactivity are favorite mind patterns through which the ego strengthens itself. For many people, a large part of their mentalemotional activity consists of complaining and reacting against this or that. By doing this, you make others or a situation “wrong” and yourself “right.” Through being “right,” you feel superior, and through feeling superior, you strengthen your sense of self. In reality, of course, you are only strengthening the illusion of ego.
Can you observe those patterns within yourself and recognize the complaining voice in your head for what it is?

~

The egoic sense of self needs conflict because its sense of a separate identity gets strengthened in fighting against this or that, and in demonstrating that this is “me” and that is not “me.”
Not infrequently, tribes, nations, and religions derive a strengthened sense of collective identity from having enemies. Who would the “believer” be without the “unbeliever”?

~

In your dealings with people, can you detect subtle feelings of either superiority or inferiority toward them? You are looking at the ego, which lives through comparison.

Envy is a by-product of the ego, which feels diminished if something good happens to someone else, or someone has more, knows more, or can do more than you. The ego's identity depends on comparison and feeds on *more.* It will grasp at anything. If all else fails, you can strengthen your fictitious sense of self through seeing yourself as *more* unfairly treated by life or *more* ill than someone else.

What are the stories, the fictions from which you derive your sense of self?

~

Built into the very structure of the egoic self is a need to oppose, resist, and exclude to maintain the sense of separateness on which its continued survival depends. So there is “me” against the “other,” “us” against “them.”

The ego needs to be in conflict with something or someone. That explains why you are looking for peace and joy and love but cannot tolerate them for very long. You say you want happiness but are addicted to your unhappiness.

Your unhappiness ultimately arises not from the circumstances of your life but from the conditioning of your mind.

~

Do you carry feelings of guilt about something you did — or failed to do — in the past? This much is certain: you acted according to your level of consciousness or rather unconsciousness at that time. If you had been more aware, more conscious, you would have acted differently.

Guilt is another attempt by the ego to create an identity, a sense of self. To the ego, it doesn't matter whether that self is positive or negative. What you did or failed to do was a manifestation of unconsciousness — human unconsciousness. The ego, however, personalizes it and says, “I did that,” and so you carry a mental image of yourself as “bad.”

Throughout history humans have inflicted countless violent, cruel, and hurtful acts on each other, and continue to do so. Are they all to be condemned; are they all guilty? Or are those acts simply expressions of unconsciousness, an evolutionary stage that we are now growing out of?

Jesus' words, “Forgive them for they know not what they do,” also apply to yourself.

~

If you set egoic goals for the purpose of freeing yourself, enhancing yourself or

your sense of importance, even if you achieve them, they will not satisfy you.
Set goals, but know that the arriving is not all that important. When anything arises out of presence, it means this moment is not a means to an end: the doing is fulfilling in itself every moment. You are no longer reducing the Now to a means to an end, which is the egoic consciousness.

~

"No self. No problem," said the Buddhist Master when asked to explain the deeper meaning of Buddhism.

~

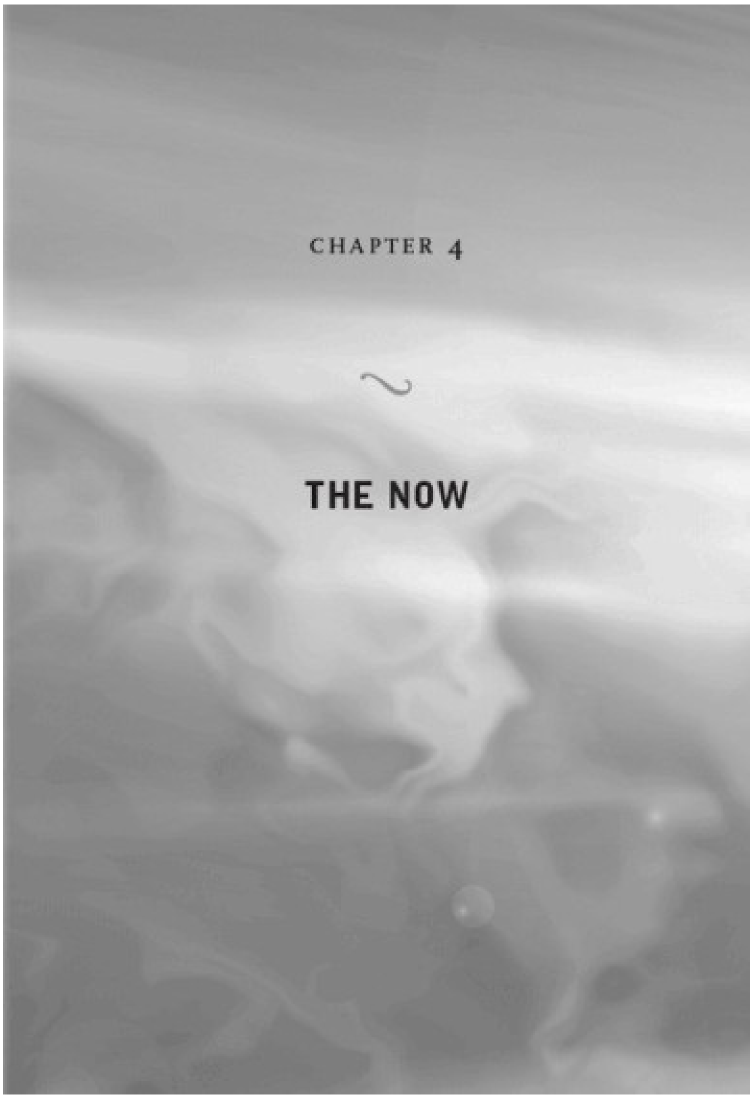

CHAPTER 4

THE NOW

On the surface it seems that the present moment is only one of many, many moments. Each day of your life appears to consist of thousands of moments where different things happen. Yet if you look more deeply, is there not only one moment, ever? Is life ever not “this moment”?

This one moment — Now — is the only thing you can never escape from, the one constant factor in your life. No matter what happens, no matter how much your life changes, one thing is certain: it's always Now.

Since there is no escape from the Now, why not welcome it, become friendly with it?

* * *

When you make friends with the present moment, you feel at home no matter where you are. When you don't feel at home in the Now, no matter where you go, you will carry unease with you.

~

The present moment is as it is. Always. Can you let it be?

~

The division of life into past, present, and future is mind-made and ultimately illusory. Past and future are thought forms, mental abstractions. The past can only be remembered Now. What you remember is an event that took place in the Now, and you remember it Now. The future, when it comes, is the Now. So the only thing that is real, the only thing there ever is *is* the Now.

~

To have your attention in the Now is not a denial of what is needed in your life. It is recognizing what is primary. Then you can deal with what is secondary with great ease. It is not saying, “I'm not dealing with things anymore because there is only the Now.” No. Find what is primary first, and make the Now into your friend, not your enemy. Acknowledge it, honor it. When the Now is the foundation and primary focus of your life, then your life unfolds with ease.

~

Putting away the dishes, drawing up a business strategy, planning a trip — what is more important: the doing or the result that you want to achieve through the doing? This moment or some future moment?
Do you treat *this moment* as if it were an obstacle to be overcome? Do you feel you have a future moment to get to that is more important?
Almost everyone lives like this most of the time. Since the future never arrives, except *as* the present, it is a dysfunctional way to live. It generates a constant undercurrent of unease, tension, and discontent. It does not honor life, which is Now and never not Now.

~

Feel the aliveness within your body. That anchors you in the Now.

~

Ultimately you are not taking responsibility for life until you take responsibility for *this moment* — Now. This is because Now is the only place where life can be found.

Taking responsibility for this moment means not to oppose internally the "suchness" of Now, not to argue with what is. It means to be in alignment with life.

The Now is as it is because it cannot be otherwise. What Buddhists have always known, physicists now confirm: there are no isolated things or events. Underneath the surface appearance, all things are interconnected, are part of the totality of the cosmos that has brought about the form that this moment takes.

When you say "yes" to what is, you become aligned with the power and intelligence of Life itself. Only then can you become an agent for positive change in the world.

~

A simple but radical spiritual practice is to accept whatever arises in the Now — within and without.

~

When your attention moves into the Now, there is an alertness. It is as if you were waking up from a dream, the dream of thought, the dream of past and future. Such clarity, such simplicity. No room for problem-making. Just this moment as it is.

~

The moment you enter the Now with your attention, you realize that life is sacred. There is a sacredness to everything you perceive when you are present. The more you live in the Now, the more you sense the simple yet profound joy of Being and the sacredness of all life.

~

Most people confuse the Now with *what happens* in the Now, but that's not what it is. The Now is deeper than what happens in it. It is the space in which it happens.

So do not confuse the content of this moment with the Now. The Now is deeper than any content that arises in it.

~

When you step into the Now, you step out of the content of your mind. The incessant stream of thinking slows down. Thoughts don't absorb all your attention anymore, don't draw you in totally. Gaps arise in between thoughts — spaciousness, stillness. You begin to realize how much vaster and deeper you are than your thoughts.

~

Thoughts, emotions, sense perceptions, and whatever you experience make up the content of your life. “My life” is what you derive your sense of self from, and “my life” is content, or so you believe.

You continuously overlook the most obvious fact: your innermost sense of *I Am* has nothing to do with what *happens* in your life, nothing to do with content. That sense of *I Am* is one with the Now. It always remains the same. In childhood and old age, in health or sickness, in success or failure, the *I Am* — the space of Now — remains unchanged at its deepest level. It usually gets confused with content, and so you experience *I Am* or the Now only faintly and indirectly, *through* the content of your life. In other words: your sense of Being becomes obscured by circumstances, your stream of thinking, and the many things of this world. The Now becomes obscured by time.

And so you forget your rootedness in Being, your divine reality, and lose yourself in the world. Confusion, anger, depression, violence, and conflict arise when humans forget who they are.

Yet how easy it is to remember the truth and thus return home:

I am not my thoughts, emotions, sense perceptions, and experiences. I am not the content of my life. I am Life. I am the space in which all things happen. I am consciousness. I am the Now. I Am.

~

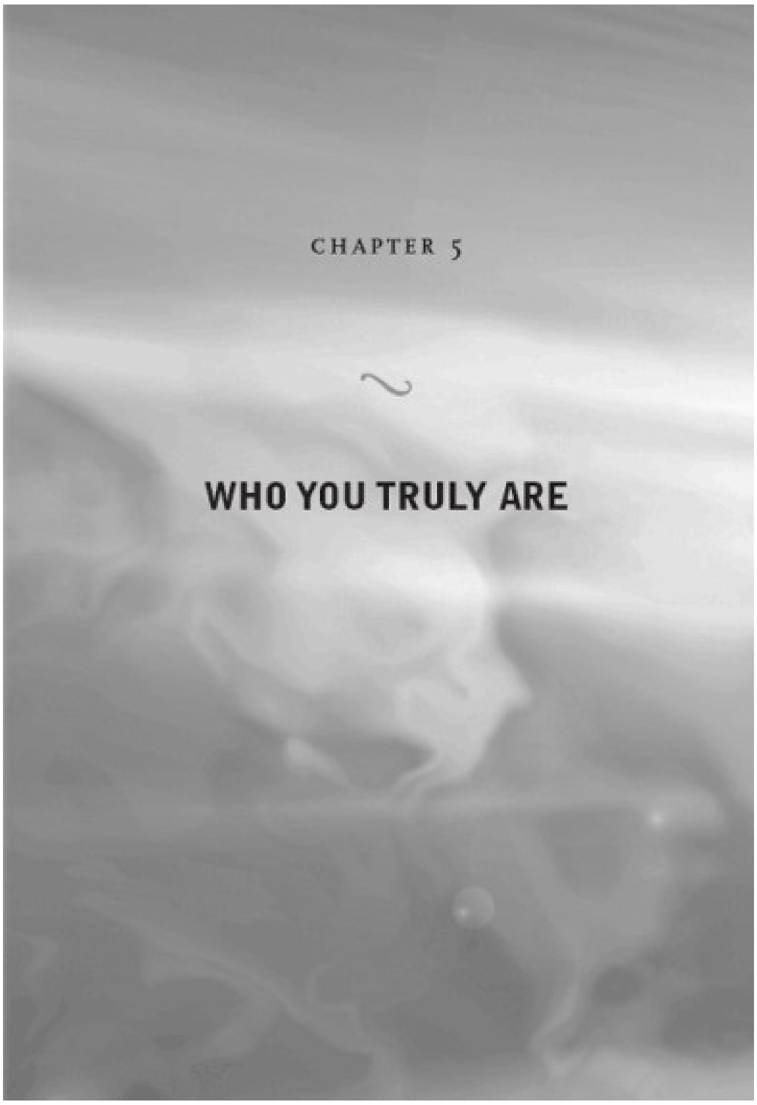

CHAPTER 5

WHO YOU TRULY ARE

The Now is inseparable from who you are at the deepest level.

* * *

Many things in your life matter, but only one thing matters absolutely.

It matters whether you succeed or fail in the eyes of the world. It matters whether you are healthy or not healthy, whether you are educated or not educated. It matters whether you are rich or poor — it certainly makes a difference in your life. Yes, all these things matter, relatively speaking, but they don't matter absolutely.

There is something that matters more than any of those things and that is finding the essence of who you are beyond that short-lived entity, that short-lived personalized sense of self.

You find peace not by rearranging the circumstances of your life, but by realizing who you are at the deepest level.

~

Reincarnation doesn't help you if in your next incarnation you still don't know who you are.

~

All the misery on the planet arises due to a personalized sense of “me” or “us.” That covers up the essence of who you are. When you are unaware of that inner essence, in the end you always create misery. It's as simple as that. When you don't know who you are, you create a mind-made self as a substitute for your beautiful divine being and cling to that fearful and needy self.

Protecting and enhancing that false sense of self then becomes your primary motivating force.

~

Many expressions that are in common usage, and sometimes the structure of language itself, reveal the fact that people don't know who they are. You say: “He lost his life” or “my life,” as if life were something that you can possess or lose. The truth is: you don't *have* a life, you *are* life. The One Life, the one consciousness that pervades the entire universe and takes temporary form to experience itself as a stone or a blade of grass, as an animal, a person, a star or a galaxy.

Can you sense deep within that you already know that? Can you sense that you already are That?

~

For most things in life, you need time: to learn a new skill, build a house, become an expert, make a cup of tea. . . . Time is useless, however, for the most essential thing in life, the one thing that really matters: self-realization, which means knowing who you are beyond the surface self — beyond your name, your physical form, your history, your story.

You cannot find yourself in the past or future. The only place where you can find yourself is in the Now.

Spiritual seekers look for self-realization or enlightenment in the future. To be a seeker implies that you need the future. If this is what you believe, it becomes true for you: you *will* need time until you realize that you don't need time to be who you are.

~

When you look at a tree, you are aware of the tree. When you have a thought or feeling, you are aware of that thought or feeling. When you have a pleasurable or painful experience, you are aware of that experience.

These seem to be true and obvious statements, yet if you look at them very closely, you will find that in a subtle way their very structure contains a fundamental illusion, an illusion that is unavoidable when you use language. Thought and language create an apparent duality and a separate person where there is none. The truth is: you are not somebody who is aware of the tree, the thought, feeling, or experience. You are the awareness or consciousness in and by which those things appear.

As you go about your life, can you be aware of yourself as the awareness in which the entire content of your life unfolds?

~

You say, "I want to know myself." You *are* the "I." You *are* the Knowing. You *are* the consciousness through which everything is known. And that cannot *know* itself; it *is* itself.

There is nothing to know beyond that, and yet all knowing arises out of it. The "I" cannot make itself into an object of knowledge, of consciousness.

So you cannot become an object to yourself. That is the very reason the illusion of egoic identity arose — because mentally you made yourself into an object. "That's me," you say. And then you begin to have a relationship with yourself, and tell others and yourself your story.

~

By knowing yourself as the awareness in which phenomenal existence happens, you become free of dependency on phenomena and free of self-seeking in situations, places, and conditions. In other words: what happens or doesn't happen is not that important anymore. Things lose their heaviness, their seriousness. A playfulness comes into your life. You recognize this world as a cosmic dance, the dance of form — no more and no less.

~

When you know who you truly are, there is an abiding alive sense of peace. You could call it joy because that's what joy is: vibrantly alive peace. It is the joy of knowing yourself as the very life essence before life takes on form. That is the joy of Being — of being who you truly are.

~

Just as water can be solid, liquid, or gaseous, consciousness can be seen to be "frozen" as physical matter, "liquid" as mind and thought, or formless as pure consciousness.

Pure consciousness is Life before it comes into manifestation, and that Life looks at the world of form through "your" eyes because consciousness is who you are. When you know yourself as That, then you recognize yourself in everything. It is a state of complete clarity of perception. You are no longer an entity with a heavy past that becomes a screen of concepts through which every experience is interpreted.

When you perceive without interpretation, you can then sense what it is that is perceiving. The most we can say in language is that there is a field of alert stillness in which the perception happens.

Through "you," formless consciousness has become aware of itself.

~

Most people's lives are run by desire and fear.

Desire is the need to *add* something to yourself in order to *be* yourself more fully. All fear is the fear of *losing* something and thereby becoming diminished and *being* less.

These two movements obscure the fact that Being cannot be given or taken away. Being in its fullness is already within you, Now.

~

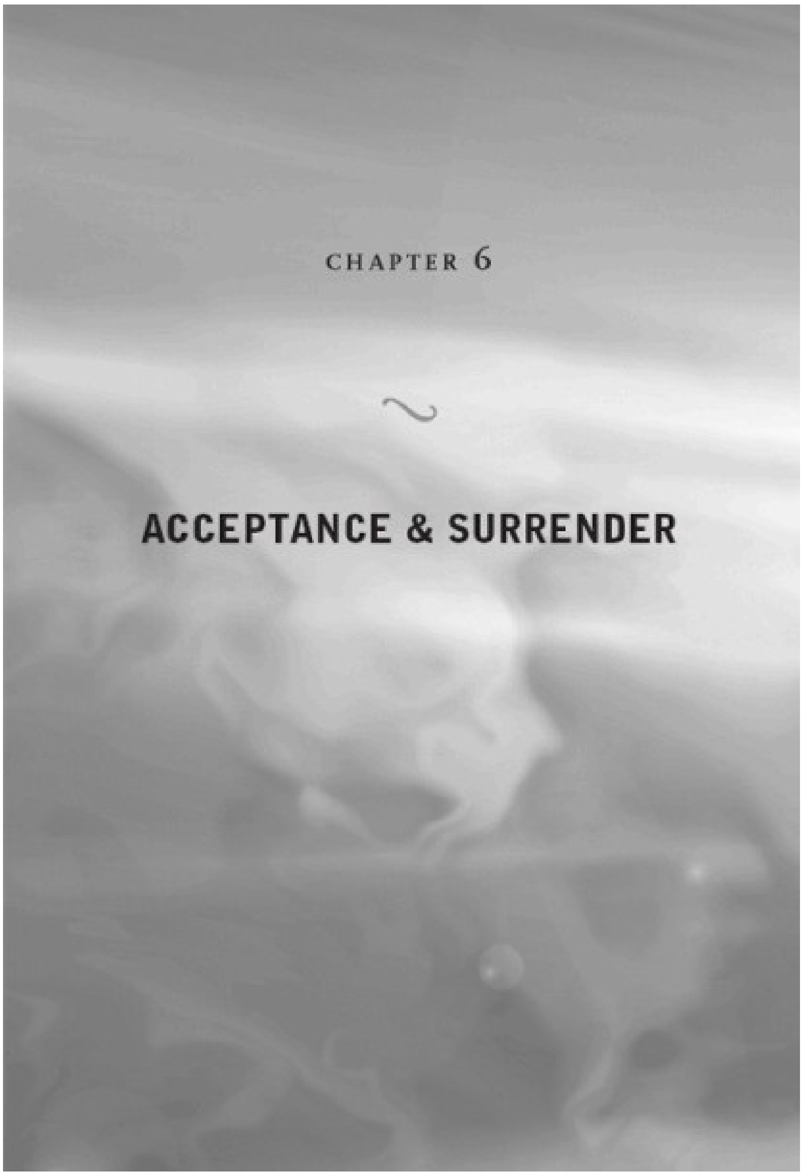

CHAPTER 6

ACCEPTANCE & SURRENDER

Whenever you are able, have a "look" inside yourself to see whether you are unconsciously creating conflict between the inner and the outer, between your external circumstances at that moment — where you are, who you are with, or what you are doing — and your thoughts and feelings. Can you feel how painful it is to internally stand in opposition to what *is?*

When you recognize this, you also realize that you are now free to give up this futile conflict, this inner state of war.

* * *

How often each day, if you were to verbalize your inner reality at that moment, would you have to say, "I don't want to be where I am"? What does it feel like when you don't want to be where you are — the traffic jam, your place of work, the airport lounge, the people you are with?

It is true, of course, that some places are good places to walk out of — and sometimes that may well be the most appropriate thing for you to do. In many cases, however, walking out is not an option. In all those cases, the “I don't want to be here” is not only useless but also dysfunctional. It makes you and others unhappy.

It has been said: wherever you go, there you are. In other words: you are here. Always. Is it so hard to accept that?

~

Do you really need to mentally label every sense perception and experience? Do you really need to have a reactive like/dislike relationship with life where you are in almost continuous conflict with situations and people? Or is that just a deep-seated mental habit that can be broken? Not by doing anything, but by allowing this moment to be as it is.

~

The habitual and reactive “no” strengthens the ego. “Yes” weakens it. Your form identity, the ego, cannot survive surrender.

~

“I have so much to do.” Yes, but what is the quality of your doing? Driving to work, speaking to clients, working on the computer, running errands, dealing with the countless things that make up your daily life — how total are you in what you do? Is your doing surrendered or non-surrendered? This is what determines your success in life, not how much effort you make. Effort implies stress and strain, *needing* to reach a certain point in the future or accomplish a certain result.

Can you detect even the slightest element within yourself of *not wanting* to be doing what you are doing? That is a denial of life, and so a truly successful outcome is not possible.

If you can detect this within yourself, can you also drop it and be total in what you do?

~

“Doing one thing at a time” is how one Zen Master defined the essence of Zen.

Doing one thing at a time means to be total in what you do, to give it your complete attention. This is surrendered action — empowered action.

~

Your acceptance of what *is* takes you to a deeper level where your inner state as well as your sense of self no longer depend on the mind's judgments of “good” or “bad.”

When you say “yes” to the “isness” of life, when you accept this moment as it is, you can feel a sense of spaciousness within you that is deeply peaceful.

On the surface, you may still be happy when it's sunny and not so happy when it's rainy; you may be happy at winning a million dollars and unhappy at losing all your possessions. Neither happiness nor unhappiness, however, go all that deep anymore. They are ripples on the surface of your Being. The background peace within you remains undisturbed regardless of the nature of the outside condition.

The “yes” to what *is* reveals a dimension of depth within you that is dependent neither on external conditions nor on the internal conditions of constantly fluctuating thoughts and emotions.

~

Surrender becomes so much easier when you realize the fleeting nature of all experiences and that the world cannot give you anything of lasting value. You then continue to meet people, to be involved in experiences and activities, but without the wants and fears of the egoic self. That is to say, you no longer demand that a situation, person, place, or event should satisfy you or make you happy. Its passing and imperfect nature is allowed to be.

And the miracle is that when you are no longer placing an impossible demand on it, every situation, person, place, or event becomes not only satisfying but also more harmonious, more peaceful.

~

When you completely accept this moment, when you no longer argue with what *is,* the compulsion to think lessens and is replaced by an alert stillness. You are fully conscious, yet the mind is not labeling this moment in any way. This state of inner nonresistance opens you to the unconditioned consciousness that is infinitely greater than the human mind. This vast intelligence can then express itself through you and assist you, both from within and from without. That is why, by letting go of inner resistance, you often find circumstances change for the better.

~

Am I saying, “Enjoy this moment. Be happy”? No.
Allow the “suchness” of this moment. That's enough.

~

Surrender is surrender to *this moment*, not to a story through which you *interpret* this moment and then try to resign yourself to it.
For instance, you may have a disability and can't walk anymore. The condition is as it is.
Perhaps your mind is now creating a story that says, “This is what my life has come to. I have ended up in a wheelchair. Life has treated me harshly and unfairly. I don't deserve this.”
Can you accept the *isness* of this moment and not confuse it with a story the mind has created around it?

~

Surrender comes when you no longer ask, “Why is this happening to me?”

~

Even within the seemingly most unacceptable and painful situation is concealed a deeper good, and within every disaster is contained the seed of grace.
Throughout history, there have been women and men who, in the face of great loss, illness, imprisonment, or impending death, accepted the seemingly unacceptable and thus found “the peace that passeth all understanding.”
Acceptance of the unacceptable is the greatest source of grace in this world.

~

There are situations where all answers and explanations fail. Life does not make sense anymore. Or someone in distress comes to you for help, and you don't know what to do or say.
When you fully accept that you don't know, you give up struggling to find answers with the limited thinking mind, and that is when a greater intelligence can operate through you. And even thought can then benefit from that, since the greater intelligence can flow into it and inspire it.

Sometimes surrender means giving up trying to understand and becoming comfortable with not knowing.

~

Do you know of someone whose main function in life seems to be to make themselves and others miserable, to spread unhappiness? Forgive them, for they too are part of the awakening of humanity. The role they play represents an intensification of the nightmare of egoic consciousness, the state of non-surrender. There is nothing personal in all this. It is not who they are.

~

Surrender, one could say, is the inner transition from resistance to acceptance, from "no" to "yes."
When you surrender, your sense of self shifts from being identified with a reaction or mental judgment to being the *space around* the reaction or judgment. It is a shift from identification with form — the thought or the emotion — to being and recognizing yourself as that which has no form — spacious awareness.

~

Whatever you accept completely will take you to peace, including the acceptance that you cannot accept, that you are in resistance.

~

Leave Life alone. Let it be.

~

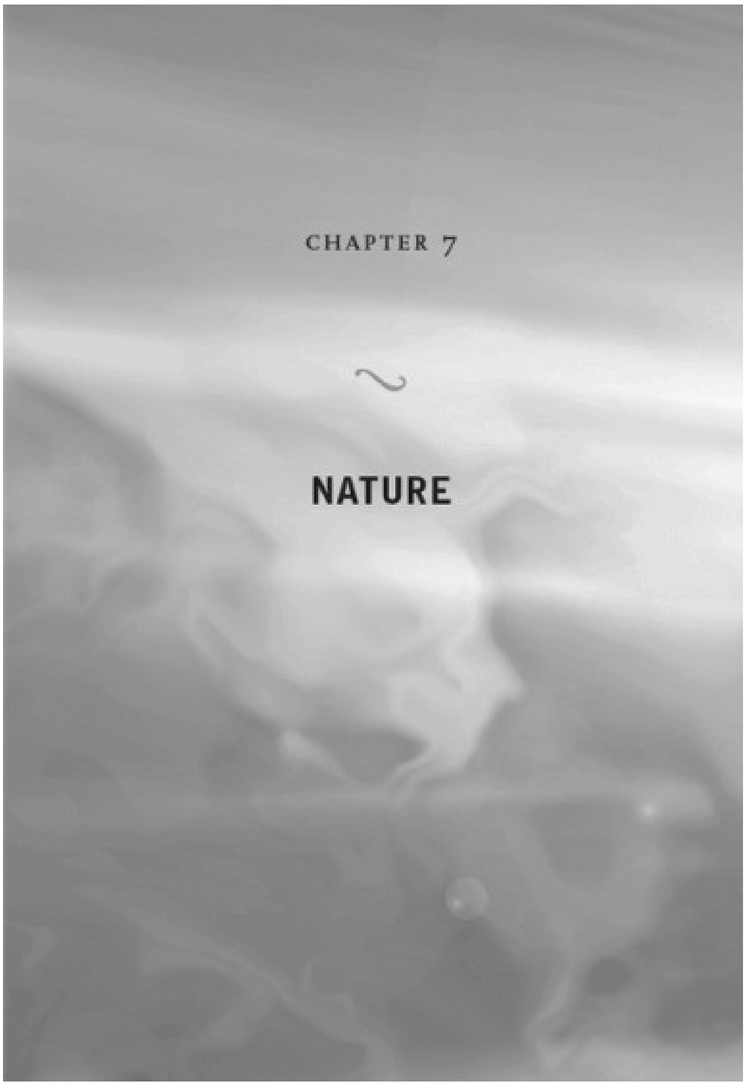

CHAPTER 7

NATURE

We depend on nature not only for our physical survival. We also need nature to show us the way home, the way out of the prison of our own minds. We got lost in doing, thinking, remembering, anticipating — lost in a maze of complexity and a world of problems.

We have forgotten what rocks, plants, and animals still know. We have forgotten how to *be* — to be still, to be ourselves, to be where life is: Here and Now.

* * *

Whenever you bring your attention to anything natural, anything that has come into existence without human intervention, you step out of the prison of conceptualized thinking and, to some extent, participate in the state of connectedness with Being in which everything natural still exists.

To bring your attention to a stone, a tree, or an animal does not mean to *think* about it, but simply to perceive it, to hold it in your awareness.

Something of its essence then transmits itself to you. You can sense how still it is, and in doing so the same stillness arises within you. You sense how deeply it rests in Being — completely at one with what it is and where it is. In realizing this, you too come to a place of rest deep within yourself.

~

When walking or resting in nature, honor that realm by being there fully. Be still. Look. Listen. See how every animal and every plant is completely itself. Unlike humans, they have not split themselves in two. They do not live through mental images of themselves, so they do not need to be concerned with trying to protect and enhance those images. The deer *is* itself. The daffodil *is* itself.

All things in nature are not only one with themselves but also one with the totality. They haven't removed themselves from the fabric of the whole by claiming a separate existence: “me” and the rest of the universe.

The contemplation of nature can free you of that “me,” the great troublemaker.

~

Bring awareness to the many subtle sounds of nature — the rustling of leaves in the wind, raindrops falling, the humming of an insect, the first birdsong at dawn. Give yourself completely to the act of listening. Beyond the sounds there is something greater: a sacredness that cannot be understood through thought.

~

You didn't create your body, nor are you able to control the body's functions. An intelligence greater than the human mind is at work. It is the same intelligence that sustains all of nature. You cannot get any closer to that intelligence than by being aware of your own inner energy field — by feeling the aliveness, the animating presence within the body.

~

The playfulness and joy of a dog, its unconditional love and readiness to celebrate life at any moment often contrast sharply with the inner state of the dog's owner — depressed, anxious, burdened by problems, lost in thought, not present in the only place and only time there is: Here and Now. One wonders: living with this person, how does the dog manage to remain so sane, so joyous?

~

When you perceive nature only through the mind, through thinking, you cannot sense its aliveness, its beingness. You see the form only and are unaware of the life within the form — the sacred mystery. Thought reduces nature to a commodity to be used in the pursuit of profit or knowledge or some other utilitarian purpose. The ancient forest becomes timber, the bird a research project, the mountain something to be mined or conquered.

When you perceive nature, let there be spaces of no thought, no mind. When you approach nature in this way, it will respond to you and participate in the evolution of human and planetary consciousness.

~

Notice how present a flower is, how surrendered to life.

~

The plant that you have in your home — have you ever truly looked at it? Have you allowed that familiar yet mysterious being we call *plant* to teach you its secrets? Have you noticed how deeply peaceful it is? How it is surrounded by a field of stillness? The moment you become aware of a plant's emanation of stillness and peace, that plant becomes your teacher.

~

Watch an animal, a flower, a tree, and see how it rests in Being. It *is* itself. It has enormous dignity, innocence, and holiness. However, for you to see that, you need to go beyond the mental habit of naming and labeling. The moment you look beyond mental labels, you feel that ineffable dimension of nature that cannot be understood by thought or perceived through the senses. It is a harmony, a sacredness that permeates not only the whole of nature but is also within you.

~

The air that you breathe is nature, as is the breathing process itself.

Bring your attention to your breathing and realize that you are not doing it. It is the breath of nature. If you had to remember to breathe, you would soon die, and if you tried to stop breathing, nature would prevail.

You reconnect with nature in the most intimate and powerful way by becoming aware of your breathing and learning to hold your attention there. This is a healing and deeply empowering thing to do. It brings about a shift in consciousness from the conceptual world of thought to the inner realm of unconditioned consciousness.

~

You need nature as your teacher to help you reconnect with Being. But not only do you need nature, it also needs you.

You are not separate from nature. We are all part of the One Life that manifests itself in countless forms throughout the universe, forms that are all completely interconnected. When you recognize the sacredness, the beauty, the incredible stillness and dignity in which a flower or a tree exists, you add something to the flower or the tree. Through your recognition, your awareness, nature too comes to know itself. It comes to know its own beauty and sacredness through you!

~

A great silent space holds all of nature in its embrace. It also holds you.

~

Only when you are still inside do you have access to the realm of stillness that rocks, plants, and animals inhabit. Only when your noisy mind subsides can you connect with nature at a deep level and go beyond the sense of separation created by excessive thinking.

Thinking is a stage in the evolution of life. Nature exists in innocent stillness that is prior to the arising of thought. The tree, the flower, the bird, the rock are unaware of their own beauty and sacredness. When human beings become still, they go beyond thought. There is an added dimension of knowing, of awareness, in the stillness that is beyond thought.

Nature can bring you to stillness. That is its gift to you. When you perceive and join with nature in the field of stillness, that field becomes permeated with your awareness. That is your gift to nature.

Through you nature becomes aware of itself. Nature has been waiting for you, as it were, for millions of years.

~

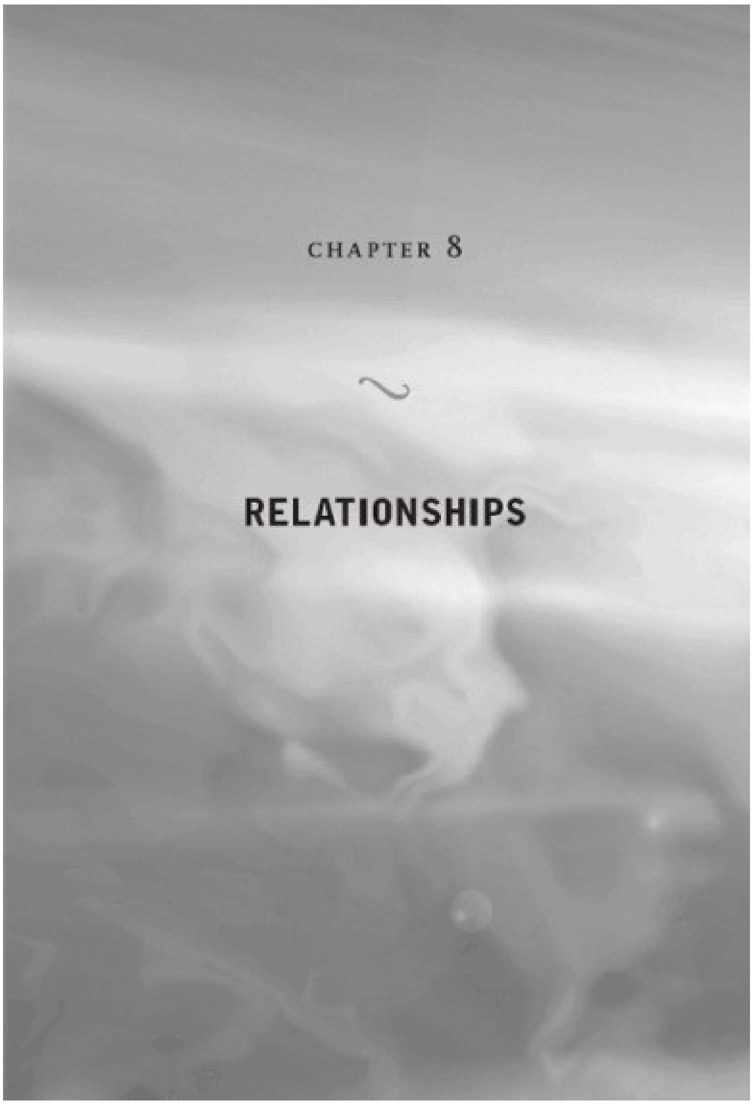

CHAPTER 8

RELATIONSHIPS

How quick we are to form an opinion of a person, to come to a conclusion about them. It is satisfying to the egoic mind to label another human being, to give them a conceptual identity, to pronounce righteous judgment upon them. Every human being has been conditioned to think and behave in certain ways — conditioned genetically as well as by their childhood experiences and their cultural environment.

That is not who they are, but that is who they appear to be. When you pronounce judgment upon someone, you confuse those conditioned mind patterns with who they are. To do that is in itself a deeply conditioned and unconscious pattern. You give them a conceptual identity, and that false identity becomes a prison not only for the other person but also for yourself.

To let go of judgment does not mean that you don't see what they do. It means that you recognize their behavior as a form of conditioning, and you see it and accept it as that. You don't construct an identity out of it for that person.

That liberates you as well as the other person from identification with conditioning, with form, with mind. The ego then no longer runs your relationships.

~

As long as the ego runs your life, most of your thoughts, emotions, and actions arise from desire and fear. In relationships you then either want or fear something from the other person.

What you want from them may be pleasure or material gain, recognition, praise or attention, or a strengthening of your sense of self through comparison and through establishing that you are, have, or know more than they. What you fear is that the opposite may be the case, and they may diminish your sense of self in some way.

When you make the present moment the focal point of your attention — instead of using it as a means to an end — you go beyond the ego and beyond the unconscious compulsion to use people as a means to an end, the end being self-enhancement at the cost of others. When you give your fullest attention to whoever you are interacting with, you take past and future out of the relationship, except for practical matters. When you are fully present with everyone you meet, you relinquish the conceptual identity you made for them — your interpretation of who they are and what they did in the past — and are able to interact without the egoic movements of desire and fear. Attention, which is alert stillness, is the key.

How wonderful to go beyond wanting and fearing in your relationships. Love does not want or fear anything.

~

If her past were your past, her pain your pain, her level of consciousness your level of consciousness, you would think and act exactly as she does. With this realization comes forgiveness, compassion, peace.

The ego doesn't like to hear this, because if it cannot be reactive and righteous anymore, it will lose strength.

~

When you receive whoever comes into the space of Now as a noble guest, when you allow each person to be as they are, they begin to change.

~

To know another human being in their essence, you don't really need to know anything *about* them — their past, their history, their story. We confuse knowing *about* with a deeper knowing that is non-conceptual. Knowing *about* and knowing are totally different modalities. One is concerned with form, the other with the formless. One operates through thought, the other through stillness.

Knowing *about* is helpful for practical purposes. On that level, we cannot do without it. When it is the predominant modality in relationships, however, it becomes very limiting, even destructive. Thoughts and concepts create an artificial barrier, a separation between human beings. Your interactions are then not rooted in Being, but become mind-based. Without the conceptual barriers, love is naturally present in all human interactions.

~

Most human interactions are confined to the exchange of words — the realm of thought. It is essential to bring some stillness, particularly into your close relationships.

No relationship can thrive without the sense of spaciousness that comes with stillness. Meditate or spend silent time in nature together. When going for a walk or sitting in the car or at home, become comfortable with being in stillness together. Stillness cannot and need not be created. Just be receptive to the stillness that is already there, but is usually obscured by mental noise.

If spacious stillness is missing, the relationship will be dominated by the mind and can easily be taken over by problems and conflict. If stillness is there, it can contain anything.

~

True listening is another way of bringing stillness into the relationship. When you truly listen to someone, the dimension of stillness arises and becomes an essential part of the relationship. But true listening is a rare skill. Usually, the greater part of a person's attention is taken up by their thinking. At best, they may be evaluating your words or preparing the next thing to say. Or they may not be listening at all, lost in their own thoughts.

True listening goes far beyond auditory perception. It is the arising of alert attention, a space of presence in which the words are being received. The words now become secondary. They may be meaningful or they may not make sense. Far more important than *what* you are listening to is the act of listening itself, the space of conscious presence that arises as you listen. That space is a unifying field of awareness in which you meet the other person without the separative barriers created by conceptual thinking. And now the other person is no longer “other.” In that space, you are joined together as one awareness, one consciousness.

~

Do you experience frequent and repetitive drama in your close relationships? Do relatively insignificant disagreements often trigger violent arguments and emotional pain?

At the root of such experiences lie the basic egoic patterns: the need to be right and, of course, for someone else to be wrong; that is to say, identification with mental positions. There is also the ego's need to be periodically in conflict with something or someone in order to strengthen its sense of separation between "me" and the "other" without which it cannot survive.

In addition, there is the accumulated emotional pain from the past that you and each human being carries within, both from your personal past as well as the collective pain of humanity that goes back a long, long time. This "pain-body" is an energy field within you that sporadically takes you over because it needs to experience more emotional pain for it to feed on and replenish itself. It will try to control your thinking and make it deeply negative. It loves your negative thoughts, since it resonates with their frequency and so can feed on them. It will also provoke negative emotional reactions in people close to you, especially your partner, in order to feed on the ensuing drama and emotional pain.

How can you free yourself from this deep-seated unconscious identification with pain that creates so much misery in your life?

Become aware of it. Realize that it is not who you are, and recognize it for what it is: past pain. Witness it as it happens in your partner or in yourself. When your unconscious identification with it is broken, when you are able to observe it within yourself, you don't feed it anymore, and it will gradually lose its energy charge.

~

Human interaction can be hell. Or it can be a great spiritual practice.

~

When you look upon another human being and feel great love toward them, or when you contemplate beauty in nature and something within you responds deeply to it, close your eyes for a moment and feel the essence of that love or that beauty within you, inseparable from who you are, your true nature. The outer form is a temporary reflection of what you are within, in your essence. That is why love and beauty can never leave you, although all outer forms will.

~

What is your relationship with the world of objects, the countless things that surround you and that you handle every day? The chair you sit on, the pen, the car, the cup? Are they to you merely a means to an end, or do you occasionally acknowledge their existence, their being, no matter how briefly, by noticing them and giving them your attention?

When you get attached to objects, when you are using them to enhance your worth in your own eyes and in the eyes of others, concern about things can easily take over your whole life. When there is self-identification with things, you don't appreciate them for what they are because you are looking for yourself in them.

When you appreciate an object for what it is, when you acknowledge its being without mental projection, you cannot *not* feel grateful for its existence. You may also sense that it is not really inanimate, that it only appears so to the senses. Physicists will confirm that on a molecular level it is indeed a pulsating energy field.

Through selfless appreciation of the realm of things, the world around you will come alive in ways that you cannot even begin to comprehend with the mind.

~

Whenever you meet anyone, no matter how briefly, do you acknowledge their being by giving them your full attention? Or are you reducing them to a means to an end, a mere function or role?

What is the quality of your relationship with the cashier at the supermarket, the parking attendant, the repairman, the “customer”?

A moment of attention is enough. As you look at them or listen to them, there is an alert stillness — perhaps only two or three seconds, perhaps longer. That is enough for something more real to emerge than the roles we usually play and identify with. All roles are part of the conditioned consciousness that is the human mind. That which emerges through the act of attention is the unconditioned — who you are in your essence, underneath your name and form. You are no longer acting out a script; you become real. When that dimension emerges from within you, it also draws it forth from within the other person.

Ultimately, of course, there is no other, and you are always meeting yourself.

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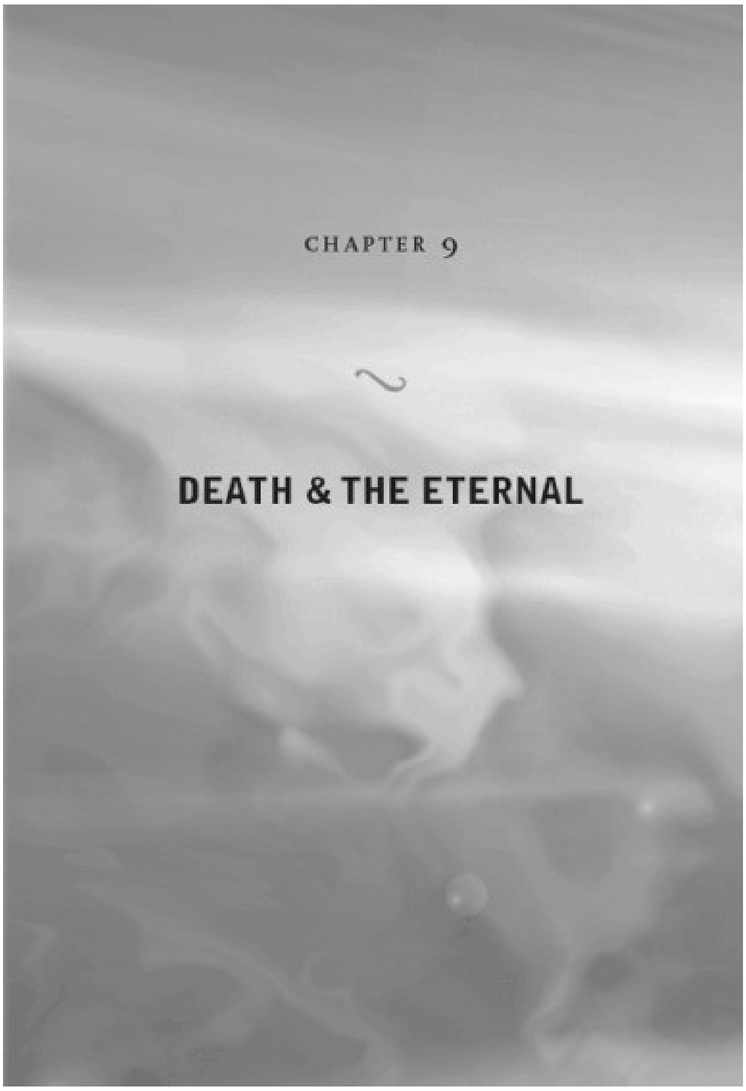

CHAPTER 9

DEATH & THE ETERNAL

When you walk through a forest that has not been tamed and interfered with by man, you will see not only abundant life all around you, but you will also encounter fallen trees and decaying trunks, rotting leaves and decomposing matter at every step. Wherever you look, you will find death as well as life.

Upon closer scrutiny, however, you will discover that the decomposing tree trunk and rotting leaves not only give birth to new life, but are full of life themselves. Microorganisms are at work. Molecules are rearranging themselves. So death isn't to be found anywhere. There is only the metamorphosis of life forms. What can you learn from this?

Death is not the opposite of life. Life has no opposite. The opposite of death is birth. Life is eternal.

* * *

Sages and poets throughout the ages have recognized the dreamlike quality of human existence — seemingly so solid and real and yet so fleeting that it could dissolve at any moment.

At the hour of your death, the story of your life may, indeed, appear to you like a dream that is coming to an end. Yet even in a dream there must be an essence that is real. There must be a consciousness in which the dream happens; otherwise, it would not be.

That consciousness — does the body create it or does consciousness create the dream of body, the dream of somebody?

Why have most of those who went through a near-death experience lost their fear of death? Reflect upon this.

~

Of course you know you are going to die, but that remains a mere mental concept until you meet death "in person" for the first time: through a serious illness or an accident that happens to you or someone close to you, or through the passing away of a loved one, death enters your life as the awareness of your own mortality.

Most people turn away from it in fear, but if you do not flinch and face the fact that your body is fleeting and could dissolve at any moment, there is some degree of disidentification, however slight, from your own physical and psychological form, the "me." When you see and accept the impermanent nature of all life forms, a strange sense of peace comes upon you.

Through facing death, your consciousness is freed to some extent from identification with form. This is why in some Buddhist traditions, the monks regularly visit the morgue to sit and meditate among the dead bodies.

There is still a widespread denial of death in Western cultures. Even old people try not to speak or think about it, and dead bodies are hidden away. A culture that denies death inevitably becomes shallow and superficial, concerned only with the external form of things. When death is denied, life loses its depth. The possibility of knowing who we are beyond name and form, the dimension of the transcendent, disappears from our lives because death is the opening into that dimension.

~

People tend to be uncomfortable with endings, because every ending is a little death. That's why in many languages, the word for "good-bye" means "see you again."

Whenever an experience comes to an end — a gathering of friends, a vacation, your children leaving home — you die a little death. A "form" that appeared in your consciousness as that experience dissolves. Often this leaves behind a feeling of emptiness that most people try hard not to feel, not to face.

If you can learn to accept and even welcome the endings in your life, you may find that the feeling of emptiness that initially felt uncomfortable turns into a sense of inner spaciousness that is deeply peaceful.

By learning to die daily in this way, you open yourself to Life.

~

Most people feel that their identity, their sense of self, is something incredibly precious that they don't want to lose. That is why they have such fear of death. It seems unimaginable and frightening that "I" could cease to exist. But you confuse that precious "I" with your name and form and a story associated with it. That "I" is no more than a temporary formation in the field of consciousness.

As long as that form identity is all you know, you are not aware that this preciousness is your own essence, your innermost sense of *I Am,* which is consciousness itself. It is the eternal in you — and that's the only thing you *cannot* lose.

~

Whenever any kind of deep loss occurs in your life — such as loss of possessions, your home, a close relationship; or loss of your reputation, job, or physical abilities — something inside you dies. You feel diminished in your sense of who you are. There may also be a certain disorientation. "Without this...who am I?"

When a form that you had unconsciously identified with as part of yourself leaves you or dissolves, that can be extremely painful. It leaves a hole, so to speak, in the fabric of your existence.

When this happens, don't deny or ignore the pain or the sadness that you feel. Accept that it is there. Beware of your mind's tendency to construct a story around that loss in which you are assigned the role of victim. Fear, anger, resentment, or self-pity are the emotions that go with that role. Then become aware of what lies behind those emotions as well as behind the mind-made story: that hole, that empty space. Can you face and accept that strange sense of emptiness? If you do, you may find that it is no longer a fearful place. You may be surprised to find peace emanating from it.

Whenever death occurs, whenever a life form dissolves, God, the formless and unmanifested, shines through the opening left by the dissolving form. That is why the most sacred thing in life is death. That is why the peace of God can come to you through the contemplation and acceptance of death.

~

How short-lived every human experience is, how fleeting our lives. Is there anything that is not subject to birth and death, anything that is eternal?

Consider this: if there were only one color, let us say blue, and the entire world and everything in it were blue, then there would be no blue. There needs to be something that is not blue so that blue can be recognized; otherwise, it would not "stand out," would not exist.

In the same way, does it not require something that is not fleeting and impermanent for the fleetingness of all things to be recognized? In other words: if everything, including yourself, were impermanent, would you even know it? Does the fact that you are aware of and can witness the short-lived nature of all forms, including your own, not mean that there is something in you that is not subject to decay?

When you are twenty, you are aware of your body as strong and vigorous; sixty years later, you are aware of your body as weakened and old. Your thinking too may have changed from when you were twenty, but the awareness that knows that your body is young or old or that your thinking has changed has undergone no change. That awareness is the eternal in you — consciousness itself. It is the formless One Life. Can you lose It? No, because you are It.

~

Some people become deeply peaceful and almost luminous just before they die, as if something is shining through the dissolving form.

Sometimes it happens that very ill or old people become almost transparent, so to speak, in the last few weeks, months, or even years of their lives. As they look at you, you may see a light shining through their eyes. There is no psychological suffering left. They have surrendered and so the person, the mind-made egoic "me," has already dissolved. They have "died before they died" and found the deep inner peace that is the realization of the deathless within themselves.

~

To every accident and disaster there is a potentially redemptive dimension that we are usually unaware of.

The tremendous shock of totally unexpected, imminent death can have the effect of forcing your consciousness completely out of identification with form. In the last few moments before physical death, and as you die, you then experience yourself as consciousness free of form. Suddenly, there is no more fear, just peace and a knowing that "all is well" and that death is only a form dissolving. Death is then recognized as ultimately illusory — as illusory as the form you had identified with as yourself.

~

Death is not an anomaly or the most dreadful of all events as modern culture would have you believe, but the most natural thing in the world, inseparable from and just as natural as its polarity — birth. Remind yourself of this when you sit with a dying person.

It is a great privilege and a sacred act to be present at a person's death as a witness and companion.

When you sit with a dying person, do not deny any aspect of that experience. Do not deny what is happening and do not deny your feelings. The recognition that there is nothing you can do may make you feel helpless, sad, or angry. Accept what you feel. Then go one step further: accept that there is nothing you can do, and accept it completely. You are not in control. Deeply surrender to every aspect of that experience, your feelings as well as any pain or discomfort the dying person may be experiencing. Your surrendered state of consciousness and the stillness that comes with it will greatly assist the dying person and ease their transition. If words are called for, they will come out of the stillness within you. But they will be secondary.

With the stillness comes the benediction: peace.

~

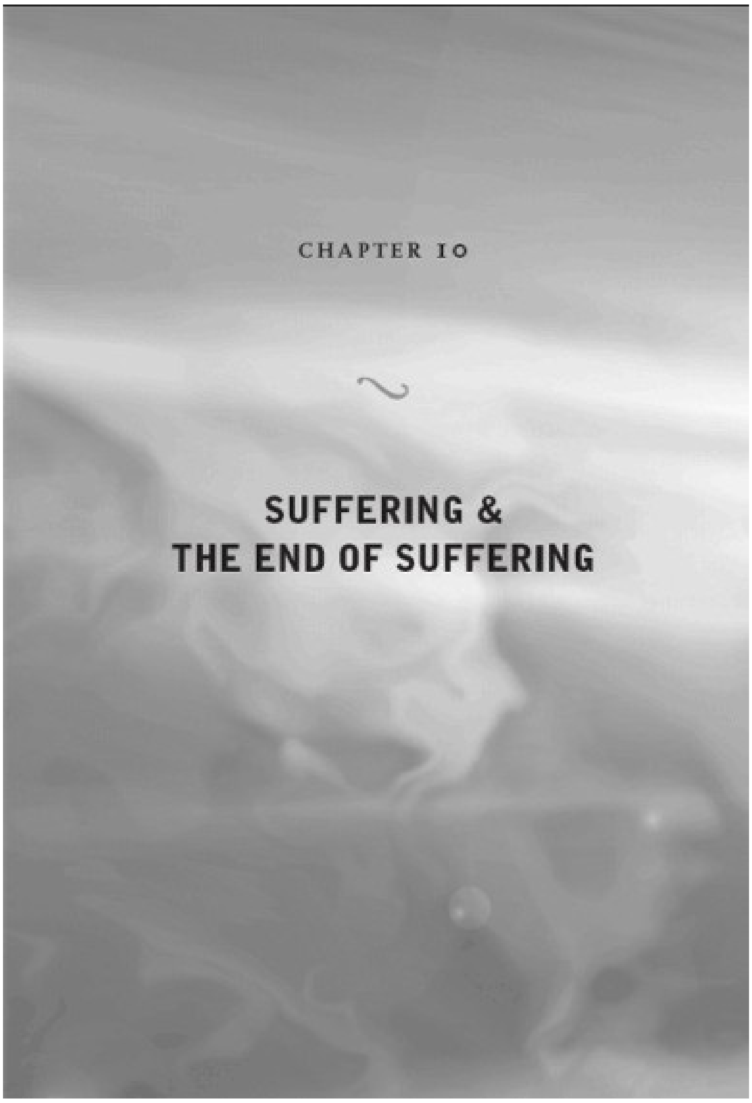

CHAPTER 10

SUFFERING & THE END OF SUFFERING

The interconnectedness of all things: Buddhists have always known it, and physicists now confirm it. Nothing that happens is an isolated event; it only appears to be. The more we judge and label it, the more we isolate it. The wholeness of life becomes fragmented through our thinking. Yet the totality of life has brought this event about. It is part of the web of interconnectedness that is the cosmos.

This means: whatever *is* could not be otherwise.

In most cases, we cannot begin to understand what role a seemingly senseless event may have within the totality of the cosmos, but recognizing its inevitability within the vastness of the whole can be the beginning of an inner acceptance of what *is* and thus a realignment with the wholeness of life.

* * *

True freedom and the end of suffering is living in such a way as if you had completely chosen whatever you feel or experience at this moment.
This inner alignment with Now is the end of suffering.

~

Is suffering really necessary? Yes and no.
If you had not suffered as you have, there would be no depth to you as a human being, no humility, no compassion. You would not be reading this now. Suffering cracks open the shell of ego, and then comes a point when it has served its purpose. Suffering is necessary until you realize it is unnecessary.

~

Unhappiness needs a mind-made “me” with a story, a conceptual identity. It needs time — past and future. When you remove time from your unhappiness, what is it that remains? The “such-ness” of this moment remains.
It may be a feeling of heaviness, agitation, tightness, anger, or even nausea. That is not unhappiness, and it is not a personal problem. There is nothing personal in human pain. It is simply an intense pressure or intense energy that you feel somewhere in the body. By giving it attention, the feeling doesn't turn into thinking and thus reactivate the unhappy “me.”
See what happens when you just allow a feeling to be.

~

Much suffering, much unhappiness arises when you take each thought that comes into your head for the truth. Situations don't make you unhappy. They may cause you physical pain, but they don't make you unhappy. Your thoughts make you unhappy. Your interpretations, the stories you tell yourself make you unhappy.
“The thoughts I am thinking right now are making me unhappy.” This realization breaks your unconscious identification with those thoughts.

~

What a miserable day.
He didn't have the decency to return my call.
She let me down.

Little stories we tell ourselves and others, often in the form of complaints. They are unconsciously designed to enhance our always deficient sense of self through being “right” and making something or someone “wrong.” Being “right” places us in a position of imagined superiority and so strengthens our false sense of self, the ego. This also creates some kind of enemy: yes, the ego needs enemies to define its boundary, and even the weather can serve that function.

Through habitual mental judgment and emotional contraction, you have a personalized, reactive relationship to people and events in your life. These are all forms of self-created suffering, but they are not recognized as such because to the ego they are satisfying. The ego enhances itself through reactivity and conflict.

How simple life would be without those stories.

It is raining.

He did not call.

I was there. She was not.

~

When you are suffering, when you are unhappy, stay totally with what is Now. Unhappiness or problems cannot survive in the Now.

~

Suffering begins when you mentally name or label a situation in some way as undesirable or bad. You resent a situation and that resentment personalizes it and brings in a reactive “me.”

Naming and labeling are habitual, but that habit can be broken. Start practicing “not naming” with small things. If you miss the plane, drop and break a cup, or slip and fall in the mud, can you refrain from naming the experience as bad or painful? Can you immediately accept the “isness” of that moment?

Naming something as bad causes an emotional contraction within you. When you let it be, without naming it, enormous power is suddenly available to you. The contraction cuts you off from that power, the power of life itself.

~

They ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Go beyond good and bad by refraining from mentally labeling anything as good or bad. When you go beyond the habitual naming, the power of the universe moves through you. When you are in a nonreactive relationship to experiences, what you would have called “bad” before often turns around

quickly, if not immediately, through the power of life itself.
Watch what happens when you don't name an experience as “bad” and instead bring an inner acceptance, an inner “yes” to it, and so let it be as it is.

~

Whatever your life situation is, how would you feel if you completely accepted it as it is — right Now?

~

There are many subtle and not so subtle forms of suffering that are so “normal” they are usually not recognized as suffering and may even feel satisfying to the ego — irritation, impatience, anger, having an issue with something or someone, resentment, complaining.
You can learn to recognize all those forms of suffering as they happen and know: at this moment, I am creating suffering for myself.
If you are in the habit of creating suffering for yourself, you are probably creating suffering for others too. These unconscious mind patterns tend to come to an end simply by making them conscious, by becoming aware of them as they happen.
You cannot be conscious *and* create suffering for yourself.

~

This is the miracle: behind every condition, person, or situation that appears “bad” or “evil” lies concealed a deeper good. That deeper good reveals itself to you — both within and without — through inner acceptance of what *is.*
“Resist not evil” is one of the highest truths of humanity.

~

A dialogue:
Accept what is.
I truly cannot. I'm agitated and angry about this.
Then accept what is.
Accept that I'm agitated and angry? Accept that I cannot accept?
Yes. Bring acceptance into your nonacceptance. Bring surrender into your nonsurrender. Then see what happens.

~

Chronic physical pain is one of the harshest teachers you can have. "Resistance is futile" is its teaching.

Nothing could be more normal than an unwillingness to suffer. Yet if you can let go of that unwillingness, and instead allow the pain to be there, you may notice a subtle inner separation from the pain, a space between you and the pain, as it were. This means to suffer consciously, willingly. When you suffer consciously, physical pain can quickly burn up the ego in you, since ego consists largely of resistance. The same is true of extreme physical disability.

You "offer up your suffering to God" is another way of saying this.

~

You don't need to be a Christian to understand the deep universal truth that is contained in symbolic form in the image of the cross.

The cross is a torture instrument. It stands for the most extreme suffering, limitation, and helplessness a human being can encounter. Then suddenly that human being surrenders, suffers willingly, consciously, expressed through the words, "Not my will but Thy will be done." At that moment, the cross, the torture instrument, shows its hidden face: it is also a sacred symbol, a symbol for the divine.

That which seemed to deny the existence of any transcendental dimension to life, through surrender becomes an opening into that dimension.

~

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

~

Spiritual teacher and author Eckhart Tolle was born in Germany and educated at the Universities of London and Cambridge. When he was twenty-nine, a profound inner transformation radically changed the course of his life. He devoted the next few years to understanding, integrating, and deepening that transformation, which marked the beginning of an intense inward journey. Later, he began to work in London with individuals and small groups as a counselor and spiritual teacher. Since 1995 he has lived in Vancouver, Canada.

Eckhart is the author of the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *The Power of Now* (translated into thirty-three languages) and the highly acclaimed follow-up, *A New Earth*, which are widely regarded as two of the most influential spiritual books of our time. Eckhart's other works include *Stillness Speaks*, a book designed for meditative reading, and *Practicing the Power of Now*, which consists of selections from *The Power of Now*.

Eckhart's profound yet simple teachings have already helped countless people throughout the world find inner peace and greater fulfillment in their lives. At the core of the teachings lies the transformation of consciousness, a spiritual awakening that he sees as the next step in human evolution. An essential aspect of this awakening consists in transcending our ego-based state of consciousness. This is a prerequisite not only for personal happiness but also for ending the violent conflict endemic on our planet.

Eckhart is a sought-after public speaker who teaches and travels extensively throughout the world. Many of his talks, intensives, and retreats are published on CD and DVD. Most of the teachings are given in English, but occasionally Eckhart also gives talks in German and Spanish.

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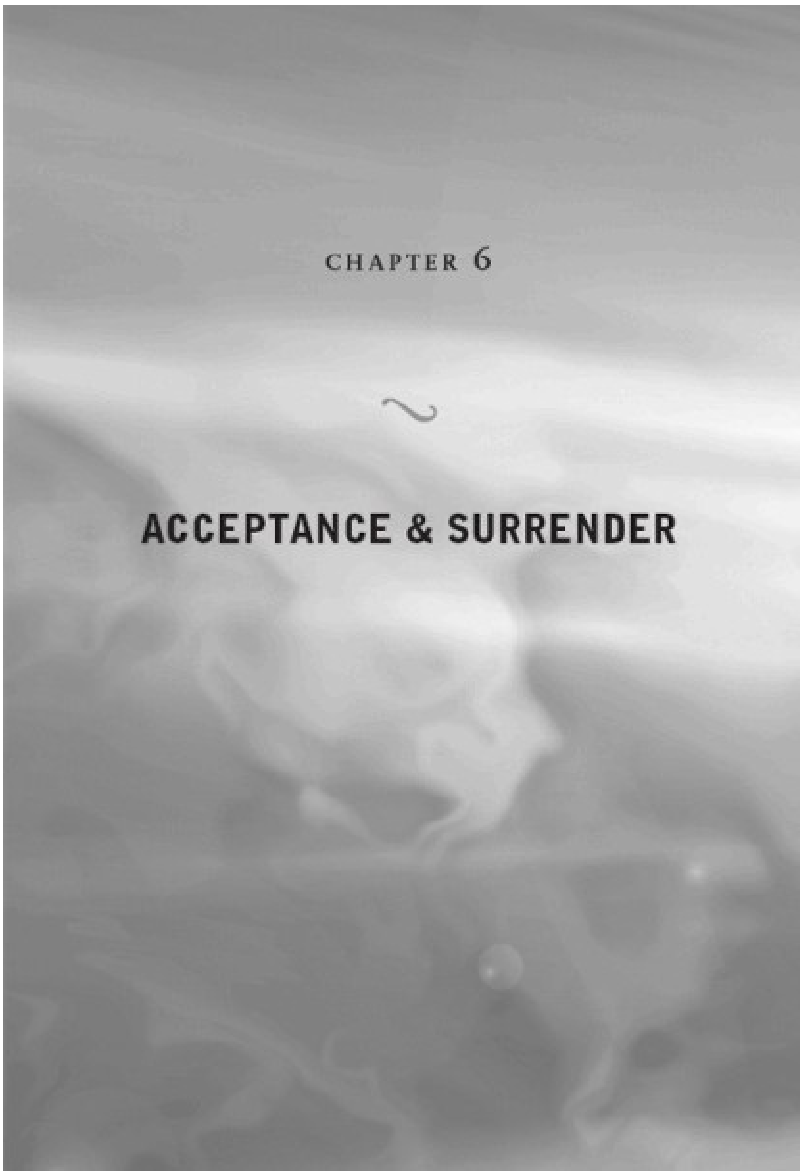

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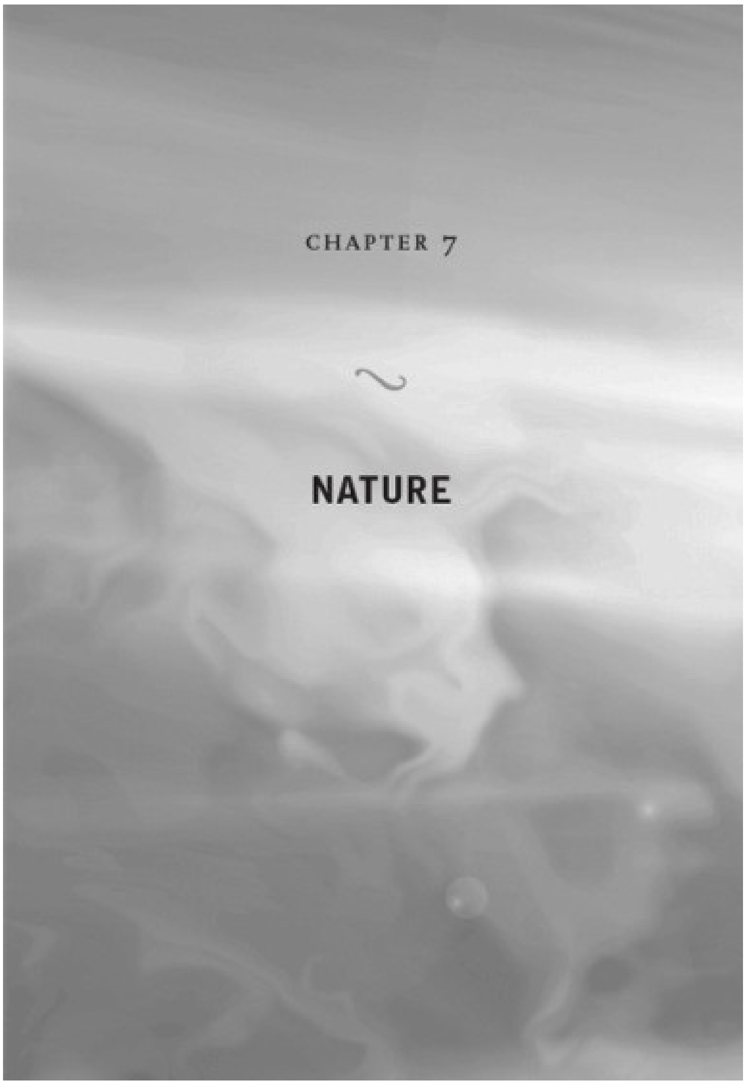

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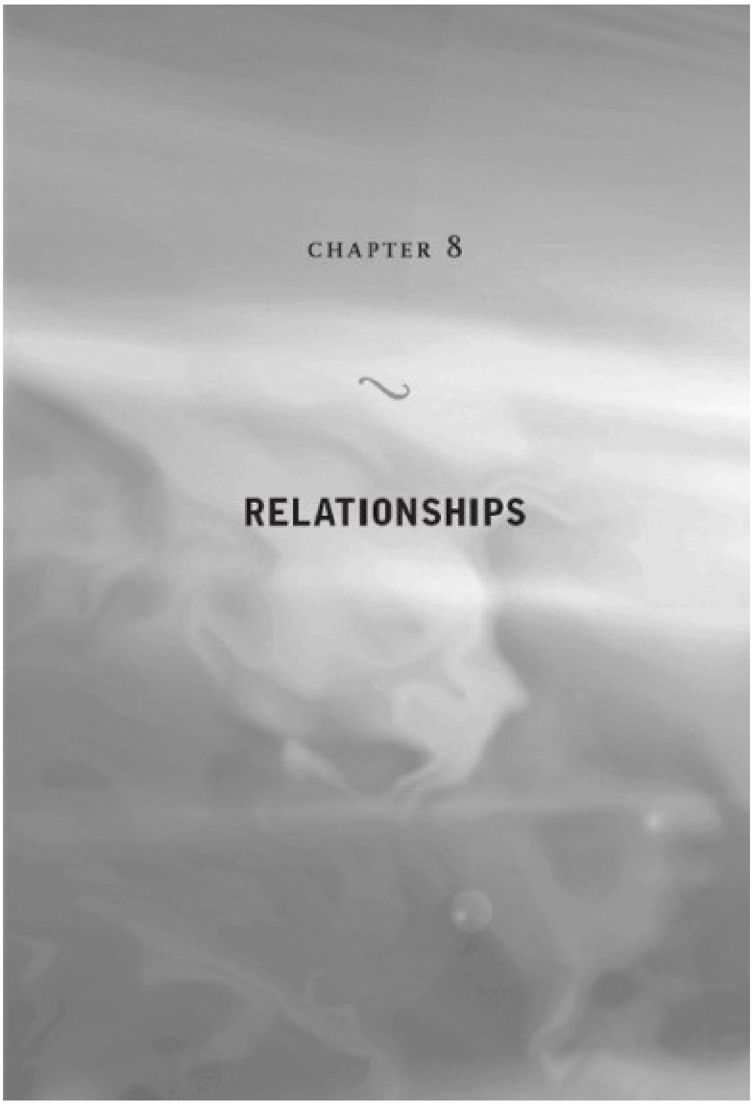

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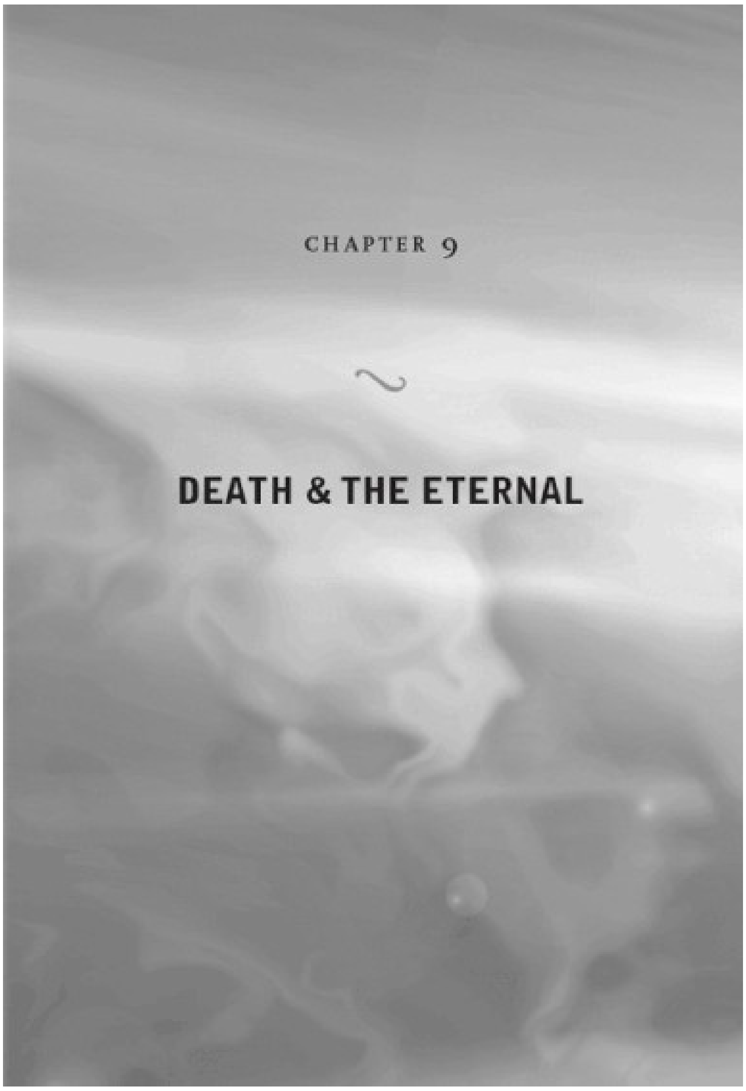

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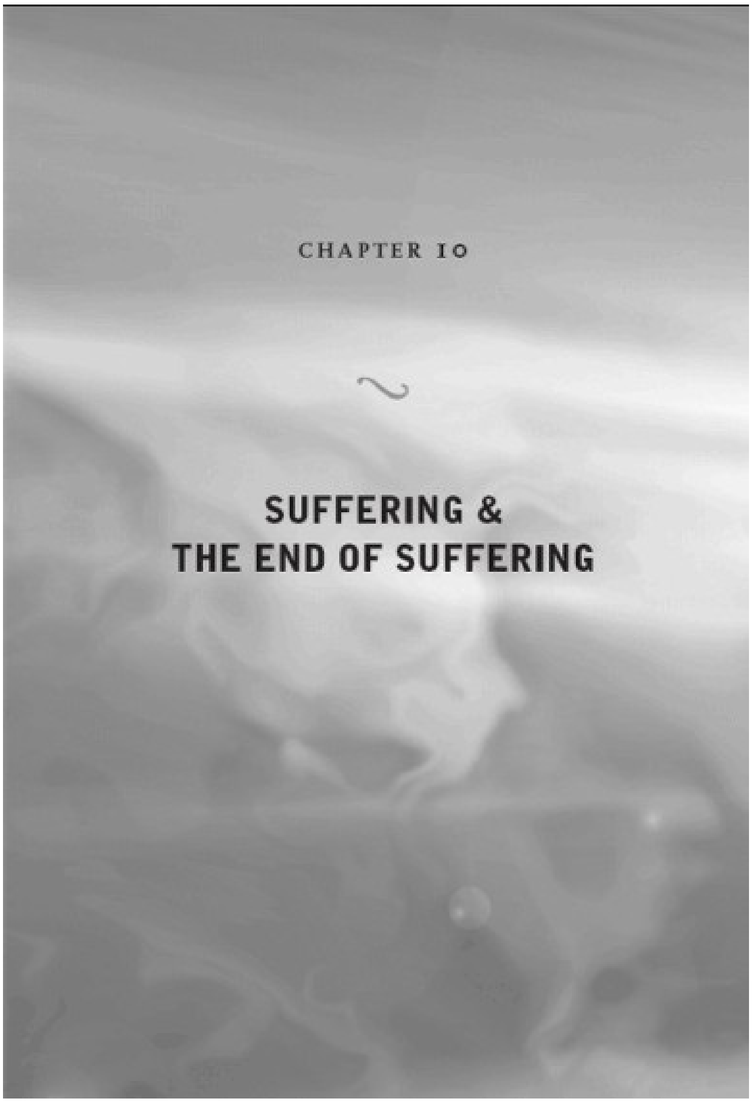

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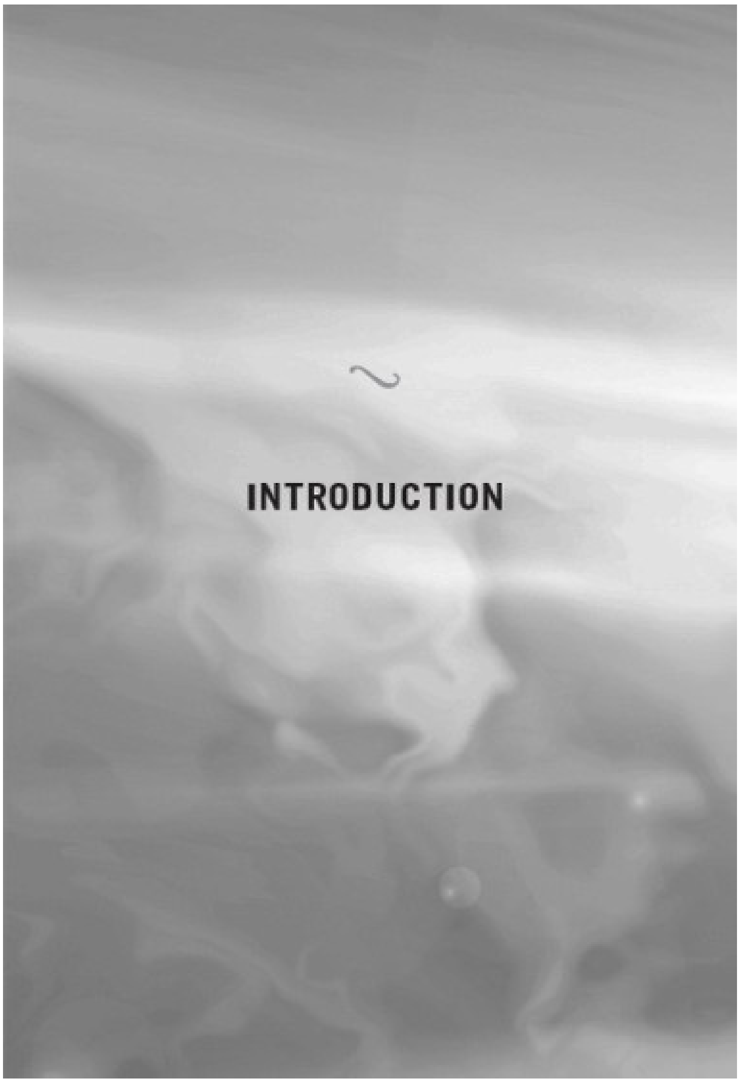

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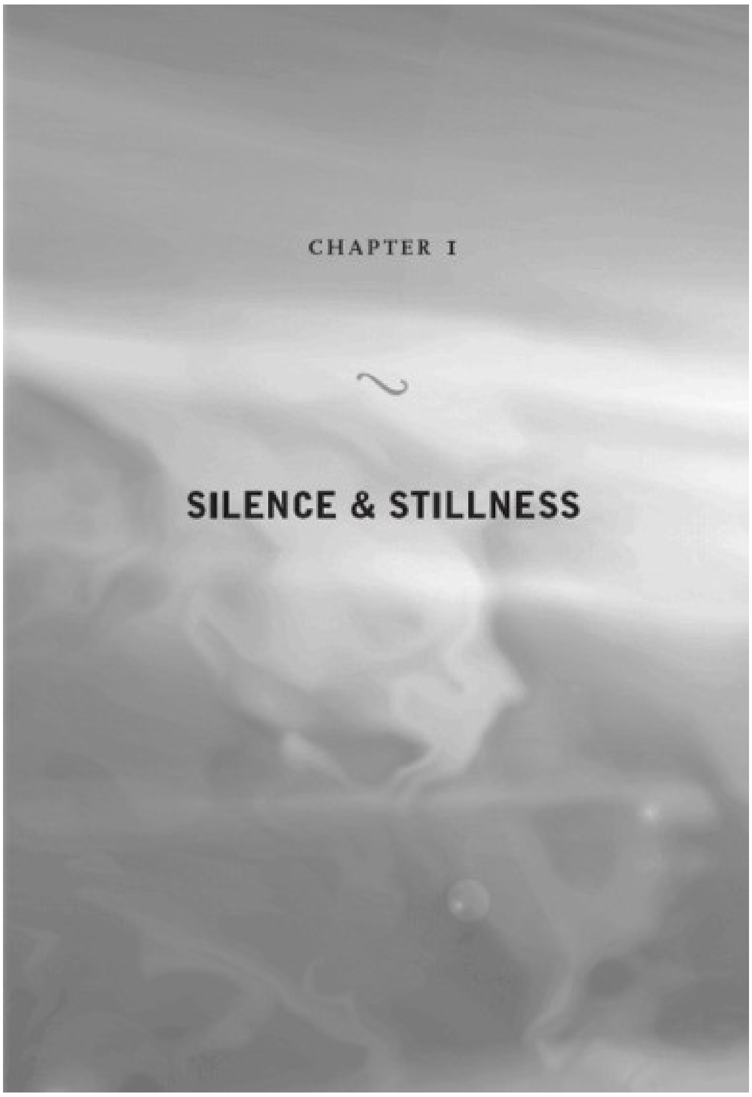

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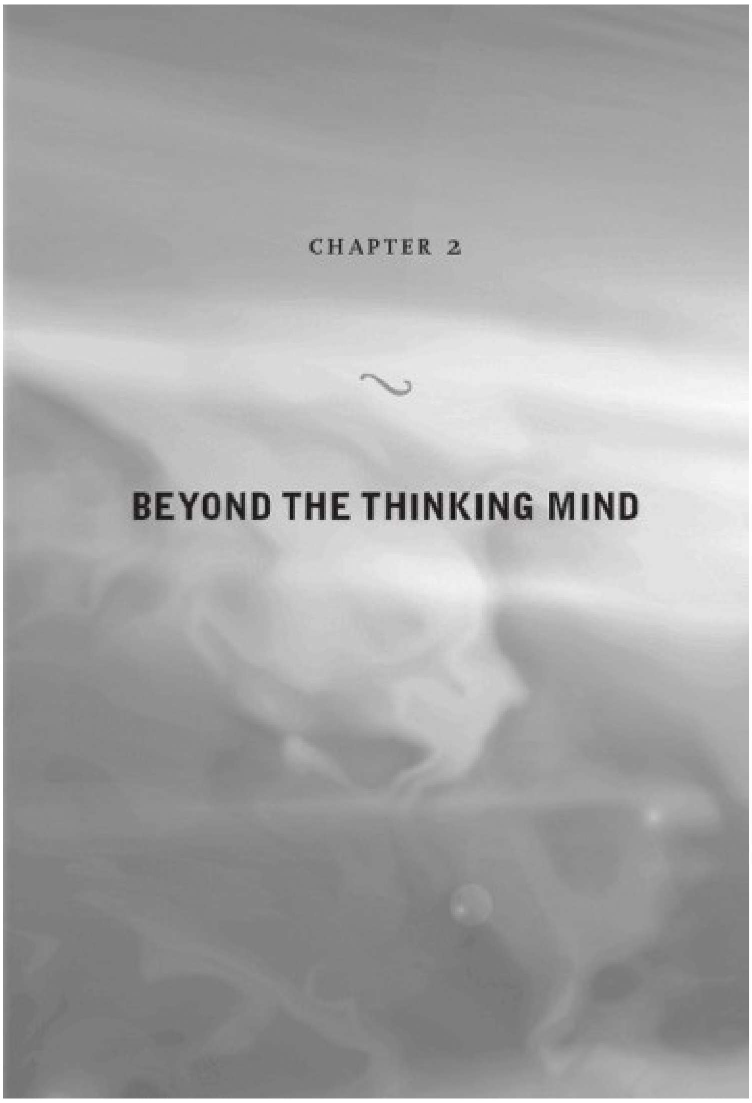

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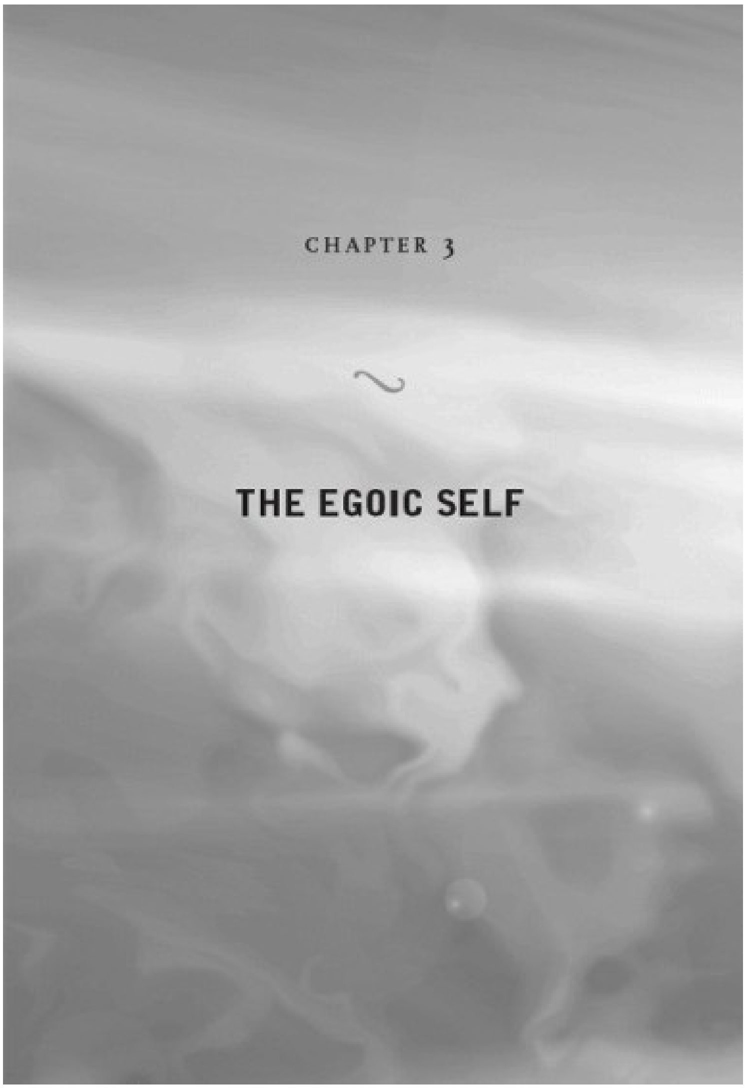

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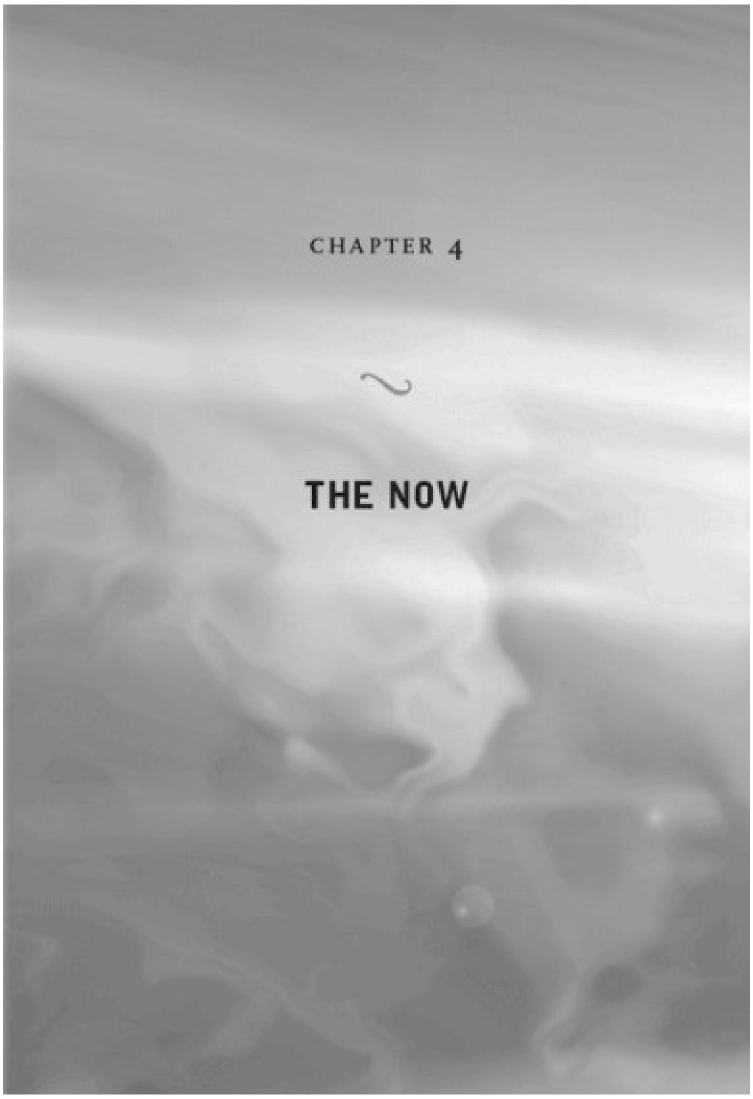

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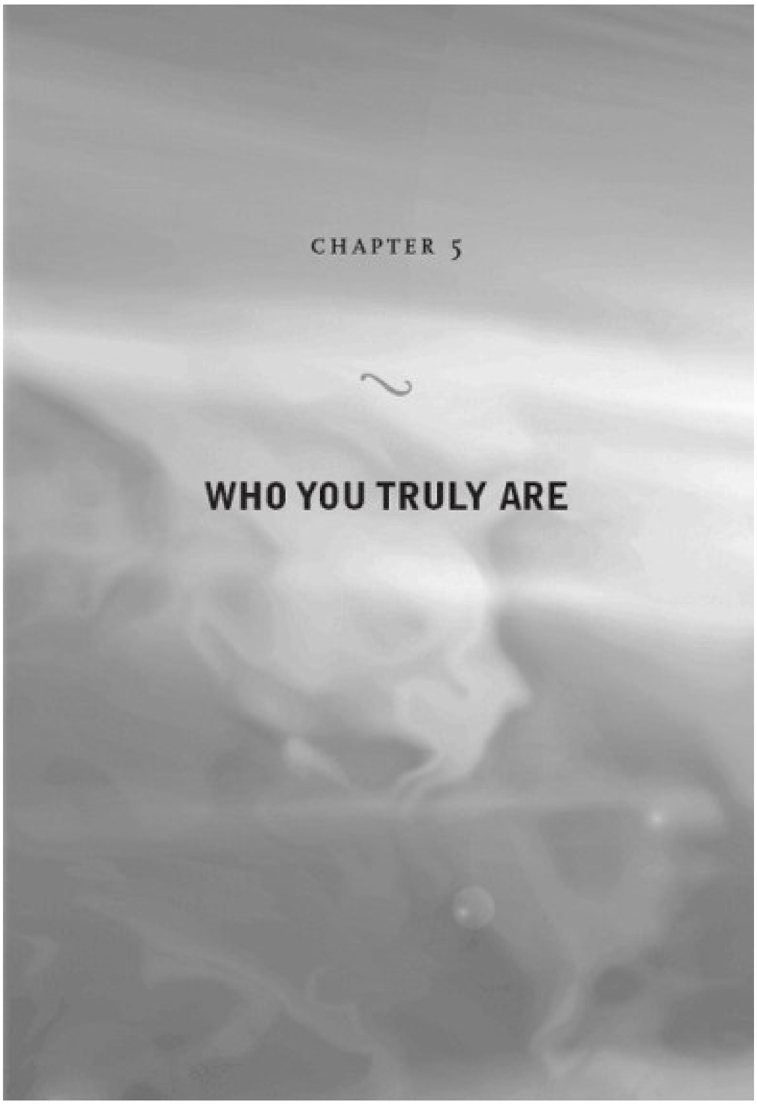

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WHO YOU TRULY ARE

ONENESS WITH ALL LIFE

Inspirational Selections from
A New Earth

TREASURY EDITION

DUTTON

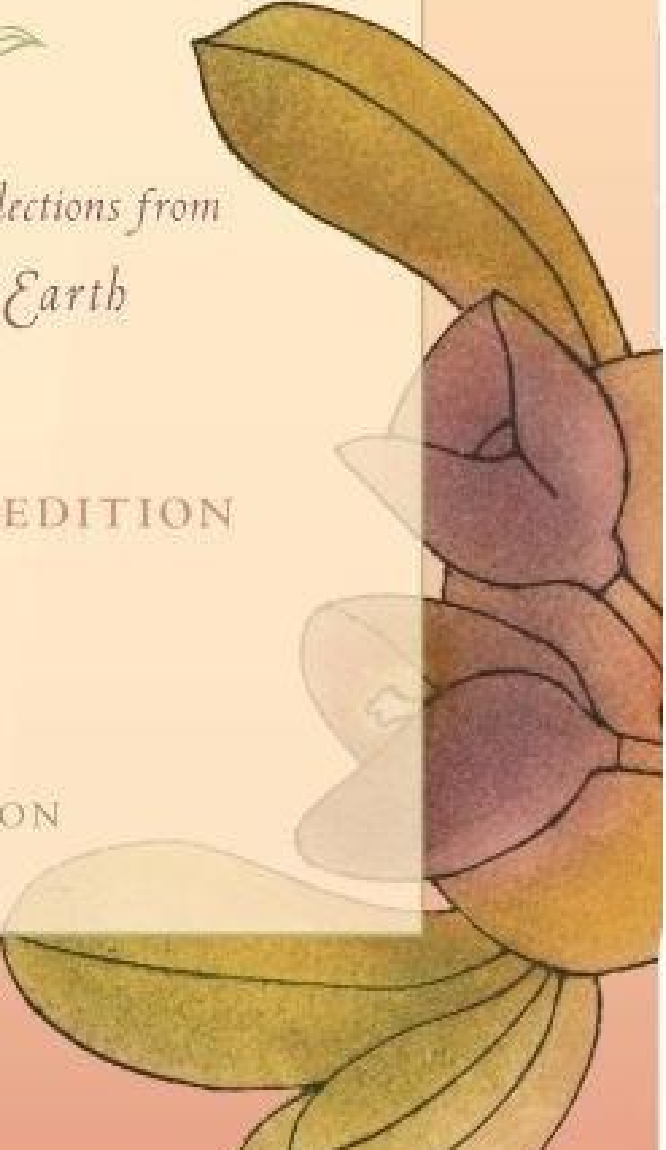

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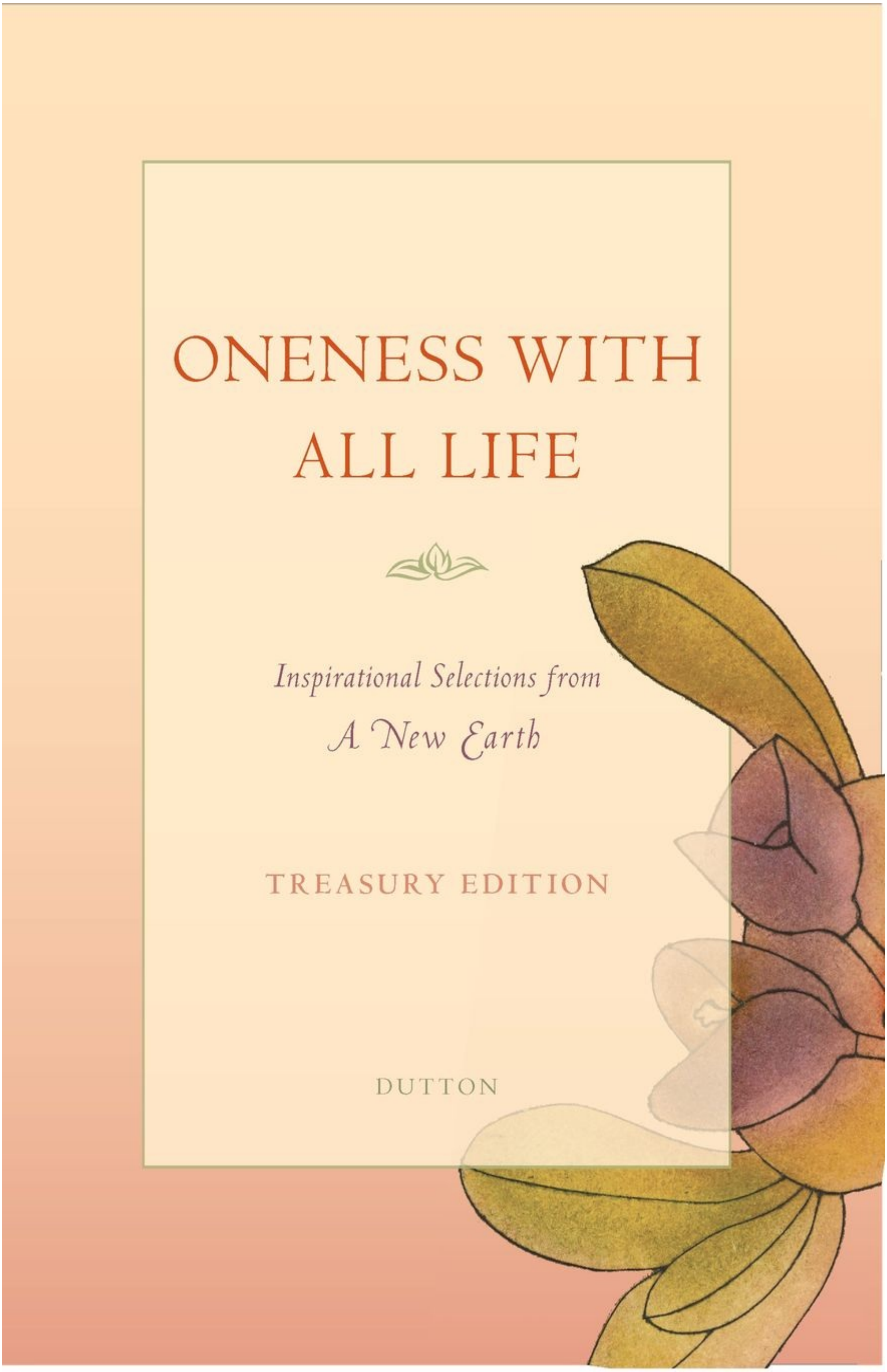

ONENESS WITH ALL LIFE

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INTRODUCTION

For this companion volume to *A New Earth,* I selected passages from the original book that felt particularly suitable for inspirational or meditative reading. For this reason I do not recommend that you read this book straight through from cover to cover. It would be far more beneficial to read, at the most, one chapter at a time, stopping at and perhaps rereading whatever passages elicit an inner response. Then let the words sink in and sense the truth to which they point, which is, of course, already within you. It can also be helpful to open the book at random occasionally, read one page or just one passage and let the words point the way to that dimension deep within that is beyond words, beyond thought. The truth to which the words point, the timeless dimension of consciousness, cannot be arrived at through discursive thought and conceptual understanding.

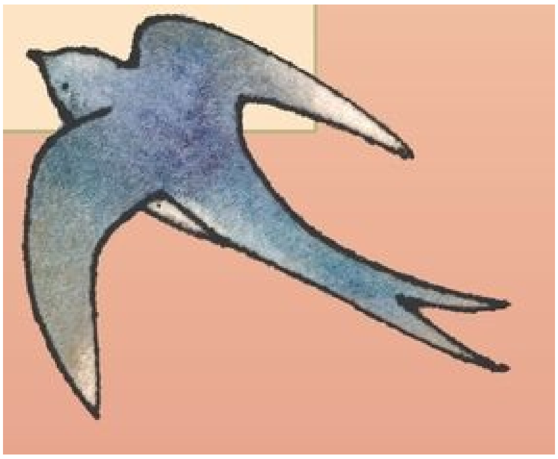

This book is not a condensed version of *A New Earth.* Although it contains some of the most powerful pointers from the original book, there is relatively little here about the ego and nothing about the pain-body. In other words: If you want to understand and thus be able to detect those mental-emotional patterns within you that block the arising of a new consciousness, you have to go to the original book.

This book will be of greatest benefit to those who have already read *A New Earth*—perhaps more than once—responded to it deeply, and experienced some degree of inner transformation through it. The informational content of this book is of relatively little importance. You read it not so much to learn something new, but to go deeper, become more present, awaken out of the stream of incessant and compulsive thinking. If there is no inner recognition, however distant or fleeting, of that to which the words point, then the words will be quite meaningless and remain no more than abstract concepts. If there is such a recognition, however, it means that the awakened consciousness is beginning to emerge from within you and the words you are reading help to draw it out. If you come across passages in this book that you feel are powerful, I want you to realize that what you are feeling is your own spiritual power, that is to say who you are in your essence. Only Spirit can recognize Spirit.

Chapter 1

GOING BEYOND THOUGHT

Thinking is no more than a tiny aspect of the totality of consciousness, the totality of who you are.

What is arising now is not a new belief system, a new religion, spiritual ideology, or mythology. We are coming to the end not only of mythologies but also of ideologies and belief systems. The change goes deeper than the content of your mind, deeper than your thoughts. In fact, at the heart of the new consciousness lies the transcendence of thought, the newfound ability of rising above thought, of realizing a dimension within yourself that is infinitely more vast than thought.

You then no longer derive your identity, your sense of who you are, from the incessant stream of thinking that in the old consciousness you take to be yourself. What a liberation to realize that the "voice in my head" is not who I am.

Who am I then? The one who sees that. The awareness that is prior to thought, the space in which the thought—or the emotion or sense perception—happens.

The primary cause of unhappiness is never the situation but your thoughts about it.

Be aware of the thoughts you are thinking. Separate them from the situation, which is always neutral, which always is as it is. There is the situation or the fact, and here are my thoughts about it. Instead of making up stories, stay with the facts. For example, "I am ruined" is a story. It limits you and prevents you from taking effective action. "I have fifty cents left in my bank account" is a fact. Facing facts is always empowering. Be aware that what you think, to a large extent, creates the emotions that you feel. See the link between your thinking and your emotions. Rather than being your thoughts and emotions, be the awareness behind them.

"The wisdom of this world is folly with God," says the Bible.[1] What is the wisdom of this world? The movement of thought, and meaning that is defined exclusively by thought.

Thinking isolates a situation or event and calls it good or bad, as if it had a separate existence. Through excessive reliance on thinking, reality becomes fragmented. This fragmentation is an illusion, but it seems very real while you are trapped in it. And yet the universe is an indivisible whole in which all things are interconnected, in which nothing exists in isolation. The deeper interconnectedness of all things and events implies that the mental labels of "good" and "bad" are ultimately illusory. They always imply a limited perspective and so are true only relatively and temporarily.

There are no random events, nor are there events or things that exist by and for themselves, in isolation. The atoms that make up your body were once forged inside stars, and the causes of even the smallest event are virtually infinite and connected with the whole in incomprehensible ways.

If you wanted to trace back the cause of any event, you would have to go back all the way to the beginning of creation. The cosmos is not chaotic. The very word *cosmos* means order. But this is not an order the human mind can ever comprehend, although it can sometimes glimpse it.

When we go into a forest that has not been interfered with by man, our thinking mind will see only disorder and chaos all around us. It won't even be able to differentiate between life (good) and death (bad) anymore since everywhere new life grows out of rotting and decaying matter. Only if we are still enough inside and the noise of thinking subsides can we become aware that there is a hidden harmony here, a sacredness, a higher order in which everything has its perfect place and could not be other than what it is and the way it is.

The mind is more comfortable in a landscaped park because it has been planned through thought; it has not grown organically. There is an order here that the mind can understand. In the forest, there is an incomprehensible order that to the mind looks like chaos. It is beyond the mental categories of good and bad. You cannot understand it through thought, but you can sense it when you let go of thought, become still and alert, and don't try to understand or explain. Only then can you be aware of the sacredness of the forest. As soon as you sense that hidden harmony, that sacredness, you realize you are not separate from it, and when you realize that, you become a conscious participant in it. In this way, nature can help you become realigned with the wholeness of life.

This is most people's reality: As soon as something is perceived, it is named, interpreted, compared with something else, liked, disliked, or called good or bad by the phantom self, the ego. They are imprisoned in thought forms, in object consciousness.

You do not awaken spiritually until the compulsive and unconscious naming ceases, or at least you become aware of it and thus are able to observe it as it happens. It is through this constant naming that the ego remains in place as the unobserved mind. Whenever it ceases and even when you just become aware of it, there is inner space, and you are not possessed by the mind anymore.

Choose an object close to you—a pen, a chair, a cup, a plant—and explore it visually, that is to say, look at it with great interest, almost curiosity. Avoid any objects with strong personal associations that remind you of the past, such as where you bought it, who gave it to you, and so on. Also avoid anything that has writing on it such as a book or a bottle. It would stimulate thought. Without straining, relaxed but alert, give your complete attention to the object, every detail of it. If thoughts arise, don't get involved in them. It is not the thoughts you are interested in, but the act of perception itself. Can you take the thinking out of the perceiving? Can you look without the voice in your head commenting, drawing conclusions, comparing, or trying to figure something out? After a couple of minutes or so, let your gaze wander around the room or wherever you are, your alert attention lighting up each thing that it rests upon.

Then, listen to any sounds that may be present. Listen to them in the same way as you looked at the things around you. Some sounds may be natural—water, wind, birds—while others are man-made. Some may be pleasant, others unpleasant. However, don't differentiate between good and bad. Allow each sound to be as it is, without interpretation. Here too, relaxed but alert attention is the key.

When we perceive without interpreting or mental labeling, which means without adding thought to our perceptions, we can still sense the deeper connectedness underneath our perception of seemingly separate things.

*S*ee if you can catch, that is to say, notice, the voice in the head, perhaps in the very moment it complains about something, and recognize it for what it is: the voice of the ego, no more than a conditioned mind-pattern, a thought. Whenever you notice that voice, you will also realize that you are not the voice, but the one who is aware of it.

In fact, you *are* the awareness that is aware of the voice. In the background, there is the awareness. In the foreground, there is the voice, the thinker. In this way you are becoming free of the ego, free of the unobserved mind.

*N*either concepts nor mathematical formulae can explain the infinite. No thought can encapsulate the vastness of the totality. Reality is a unified whole, but thought cuts it up into fragments. This gives rise to fundamental misperceptions, for example, that there are separate things and events, or that *this* is the cause of *that.* Every thought implies a perspective, and every perspective, by its very nature, implies limitation, which ultimately means that it is not true, at least not absolutely. Only the whole is true, but the whole cannot be spoken or thought. Seen from beyond the limitations of thinking and therefore incomprehensible to the human mind, everything is happening now. All that ever has been or will be is now, outside of time, which is a mental construct.

*W*hen you don't cover up the world with words and labels, a sense of the miraculous returns to your life that was lost a long time ago when humanity, instead of using thought, became possessed by thought. A depth returns to your life. Things regain their newness, their freshness. And the greatest miracle is the experiencing of your essential self as prior to any words, thoughts, mental labels, and images. For this to happen, you need to disentangle your sense of I, of Beingness, from all the things it has become mixed up with, that is to say, identified with.

*I*s it possible to let go of the belief that you should or need to know who you are? In other words, can you cease looking to conceptual definitions to give you a sense of self ? Can you cease looking to *thought* for an identity?

*T*he more you make your thoughts into your identity, the more cut off you are from the spiritual dimension within yourself.

*D*efining yourself through thought is limiting yourself. When you fully accept that you don't know, you actually enter a state of peace and clarity that is closer to who you truly are than thought could ever be.

*D*on’t seek happiness. If you seek it, you won’t find it, because seeking is the antithesis of happiness. Happiness is ever elusive, but freedom from unhappiness is attainable now, by facing what is rather than making up stories about it. Unhappiness covers up your natural state of well-being and inner peace, the source of true happiness.

Chapter 2

THE POWER OF THE PRESENT MOMENT

*T*he ego's greatest enemy is the present moment, which is to say, life itself.

*T*ime is seen as the endless succession of moments, some "good," some "bad." Yet, if you look more closely, that is to say, through your own immediate experience, you find that there are not many moments at all. You discover that there is only ever *this moment.* Life is always now. Your entire life unfolds in this constant Now. Even past or future moments only exist when you remember or anticipate them, and you do so by thinking about them in the only moment there is: this one.

Why does it appear then as if there were many moments? Because the present moment is confused with what happens, confused with content. The space of Now is confused with what happens in that space. The confusion of the present moment with content gives rise not only to the illusion of time, but also the illusion of ego.

*E*verything seems to be subject to time, yet it all happens in the Now. That is the paradox. Wherever you look, there is plenty of *circumstantial* evidence for the reality of time—a rotting apple, your face in the bathroom mirror compared to your face in a photo taken thirty years ago—yet you never find any *direct* evidence, you never experience time itself. You only ever experience the present moment, or rather what happens in it. If you go by direct evidence only, there is no time, and the Now is all there ever is.

*W*hatever is or happens is the form that the Now takes. As long as you resist it internally, form, that is to say, the world, is an impenetrable barrier that separates you from who you are beyond form, separates you from the formless one Life that you are. When you bring an inner yes to the form the Now takes, that very form becomes a doorway into the formless. The separation between the world and God dissolves.

If you resist what happens, you are at the mercy of what happens, and the world will determine your happiness and unhappiness.

*M*ost egos have conflicting wants. They want different things at different times or may not even know what they want except that they don't want what is: the present moment.

*T*o be in alignment with *what is* means to be in a relationship of inner nonresistance with what happens. It means not to label it mentally as good or bad, but to let it be. Does this mean you can no longer take action to bring about change in your life? On the contrary. When the basis for your actions is inner alignment with the present moment, your actions become empowered by the intelligence of Life itself.

*W*henever you become anxious or stressed, outer purpose has taken over, and you lost sight of your inner purpose. You have forgotten that your state of consciousness is primary, all else secondary.

*W*hy do anxiety, stress, or negativity arise? Because you turned away from the present moment. And why did you do that? You thought something else was more important. You forgot your main purpose. One small error, one misperception, creates a world of suffering.

*T*here are three ways in which the ego will treat the present moment: as a means to and end, as an obstacle, or as an enemy.

*W*hen you react against the form that Life takes at this moment, when you treat the Now as a means, an obstacle, or an enemy, you strengthen your own form identity, the ego. Hence the ego's reactivity. What is reactivity? Becoming addicted to reaction. The more reactive you are, the more entangled you become with form. The more identified with form, the stronger the ego. Your Being then does not shine through form anymore—or only barely.

*P*eople believe themselves to be dependent on what happens for their happiness, that is to say, dependent on form. They don't realize that what happens is the most unstable thing in the universe. It changes constantly. They look upon the present moment as either marred by something that has happened and shouldn't have or as deficient because of something that has not happened but should have. And so they miss the deeper perfection that is inherent in life itself, a perfection that is always already here, that lies beyond what is happening or not happening, beyond form.

Accept the present moment and find the perfection that is deeper than any form and untouched by time.

*T*he most important, the primordial relationship in your life is your relationship with the Now, or rather with whatever form the Now takes, that is to say, what is or what happens. If your relationship with the Now is dysfunctional, that dysfunction will be reflected in every relationship and every situation you encounter. The ego could be defined simply in this way: a dysfunctional relationship with the present moment. It is at this moment that you can decide what kind of relationship you want to have with the present moment.

"Do I want the present moment to be my friend or my enemy?" The present moment is inseparable from life, so you are really deciding what kind of relationship you want to have with life. Once you have decided you want the present moment to be your friend, it is up to you to make the first move: Become friendly toward it, welcome it no matter in what disguise it comes, and soon you will see the results. Life becomes friendly toward you; people become helpful, circumstances cooperative. One decision changes your entire reality. But that one decision you have to make again and again and again—until it becomes natural to live in such a way.

*T*he elimination of time from your consciousness is the elimination of ego. It is the only true spiritual practice. . . . What we are speaking of is the elimination of *psychological* time, which is the egoic mind's endless preoccupation with past and future and its unwillingness to be one with life by living in alignment with the inevitable *isness* of the present moment.

*W*henever a habitual no to life turns into a yes, whenever you allow this moment to be as it is, you dissolve time as well as ego. For the ego to survive, it must make time—past and future—more important than the present moment.

*T*ime is the horizontal dimension of life, the surface layer of reality. Then there is the vertical dimension of depth, accessible to you only through the portal of the present moment.

A wareness is the power that is concealed within the present moment. This is why we may also call it Presence.

The ultimate purpose of human existence, which is to say, your purpose, is to bring that power into this world.

Your primary purpose is to enable consciousness to flow into what you do. The secondary purpose is whatever you want to achieve through the doing. Whereas the notion of purpose before was always associated with future, there is now a deeper purpose that can only be found in the present, through the denial of time.

Your secondary or outer purpose lies within the dimension of time, while your main purpose is inseparable from the Now and therefore requires the negation of time. How are they reconciled? By realizing that your entire life journey ultimately consists of the step your are taking at this moment. There is always only this one step, and you give it your fullest attention. This doesn't mean you don't know where you are going; it just means this step is primary, the destination secondary. And what you encounter at your destination once you get there depends on the quality of this one step. Another way of putting it: What the future holds for you depends on your state of consciousness now.

Through the present moment, you have access to the power of life itself, that which has traditionally been called "God." As soon as you turn away from it, God ceases to be a reality in your life, and all you are left with is the mental *concept* of God, which some people believe in and others deny. Even belief in God is only a poor substitute for the living reality of God manifesting every moment of your life.

Chapter 3

WHO AM I?

The ultimate truth of who you are is not I am this or I am that, but I Am.

Equating the physical sense-perceived body with "I," the body that is destined to grow old, wither, and die, always leads to suffering sooner or later. To refrain from identifying with the body doesn't mean that you neglect, despise, or no longer care for it. If it is strong, beautiful, or vigorous, you can enjoy and appreciate those attributes—while they last. You can also improve the body's condition through right nutrition and exercise. If you don't equate the body with who you are, when beauty fades, vigor diminishes, or the body becomes incapacitated, this will not affect your sense of worth or identity in any way. In fact, as the body begins to weaken, the formless dimension, the light of consciousness, can shine more easily through the fading form.

Ego arises when your sense of Beingness, of "I Am," which is formless consciousness, gets mixed up with form. This is the meaning of identification. This is forgetfulness of Being, the primary error, the illusion of absolute separateness that turns reality into a nightmare.

Ego is always identification with form, seeking yourself and thereby losing yourself in some form. Forms are not just material objects and physical bodies. More fundamental than the external forms—things and bodies—are the thought forms that continuously arise in the field of consciousness.

You are a human being. What does that mean? Mastery of life is not a question of control, but of finding a balance between human and Being. Mother, father, husband, wife, young, old, the roles you play, the functions you fulfill, whatever you do—all that belongs to the human dimension. It has its place and needs to be honored, but in itself it is not enough for a fulfilled, truly meaningful relationship or life. Human alone is never enough, no matter how hard you try or what you achieve. Then there is Being. It is found in the still, alert presence of Consciousness itself, the Consciousness that you are. Human is form. Being is formless. Human and Being are not separate but interwoven.

*W*hen you become aware of the transience of all forms, your attachment to them lessens, and you disidentify from them to some extent. Being detached does not mean that you cannot enjoy the good that the world has to offer. In fact, you enjoy it more. Once you see and accept the transience of all things and the inevitability of change, you can enjoy the pleasures of the world while they last without fear of loss or anxiety about the future. When you are detached, you gain a higher vantage point from which to view the events in your life instead of being trapped inside them.

*"B*lessed are the poor in spirit," Jesus said, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." [2] What does "poor in spirit" mean? No inner baggage, no identifications. Not with things, nor with any mental concepts that have a sense of self in them. And what is the "kingdom of heaven"? The simple but profound joy of Being that is there when you let go of identifications and so become "poor in spirit."

*H*ow do you let go of attachment to things? Don't even try. It's impossible. Attachment to things drops away by itself when you no longer seek to find yourself in them. In the meantime, just be aware of your attachment to things. Sometimes you may not know that you are attached to something, which is to say, identified, until you lose it or there is the threat of loss. If you then become upset, anxious, and so on, it means you are attached. If you are aware that you are identified with a thing, the identification is no longer total. "I am the awareness that is aware that there is attachment." That's the beginning of the transformation of consciousness.

*W*hen you contemplate the unfathomable depth of space or listen to the silence in the early hours just before sunrise, something within you resonates with it as if in recognition. You then sense the vast depth of space as your own depth, and you know that precious stillness that has no form to be more deeply who you are than any of the things that make up the content of your life.

*T*he twofold reality of the universe, which consists of things and space—thingness and no-thingness—is also your own. A sane, balanced, and fruitful human life is a dance between the two dimensions that make up reality: form and space. Most people are so identified with the dimension of form, with sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions, that the vital hidden half is missing from their lives. Their identification with form keeps them trapped in ego.

*J*ust as space enables all things to exist and just as without silence there could be no sound, you would not exist without the vital formless dimension that is the essence of who you are. We could say "God" if the word had not been so misused. I prefer to call it Being. Being is prior to existence. Existence is form, content, "what happens." Existence is the foreground of life; Being is the background, as it were.

*T*he collective disease of humanity is that people are so engrossed in what happens, so hypnotized by the world of fluctuating forms, so absorbed in the content of their lives, they have forgotten the essence, that which is beyond content, beyond form, beyond thought. They are so consumed by time that they have forgotten eternity, which is their origin, their home, their destiny. Eternity is the living reality of who you are.

*S*eeing beauty in a flower can awaken you, however briefly, to the beauty that is an essential part of your own innermost being, your true nature. Joy and love are intrinsically connected to that recognition. Flowers can become for us an expression in form of that which is most high, most sacred, and ultimately formless within ourselves. Flowers, more fleeting, more ethereal, and more delicate than the plants out of which they emerge, are like messengers from another realm, like a bridge between the world of physical forms and the formless. They not only have a scent that is delicate and pleasing, but also bring a fragrance from the realm of spirit.

*W*hen you are alert and contemplate a flower without naming it mentally, it becomes a window for you into the formless. There is an inner opening, however slight, into the spiritual dimension.

*W*hen you don't play roles, it means there is no self (ego) in what you do. There is no secondary agenda: protection or strengthening of your self. As a result, your actions have far greater power. You are totally focused on the situation. You become one with it. You don't try to be anybody in particular. You are most powerful, most effective, when you are completely yourself.

"*H*ow can I be myself ?" is, however, the wrong question. It implies you have to do something to be yourself. But how doesn't apply here because you are yourself already. Just stop adding unnecessary baggage to who you already are. “But I don’t know who I am. I don’t know what it means to be myself.” If you can be absolutely comfortable with not knowing who you are, then what’s left is who you are—the Being behind the human, a field of pure potentiality rather than something that is already defined.

Give up defining yourself—to yourself or to others. You won’t die. You will come to life. And don’t be concerned with how others define you. When they define you, they are limiting themselves, so it’s their problem. Whenever you interact with people, don’t be there primarily as a function or a role, but as a field of conscious Presence.

When you react against the form that Life takes at this moment, when you treat the Now as a means, an obstacle, or an enemy, you strengthen your own form identity, the ego. Hence the ego’s reactivity. What is reactivity? Becoming addicted to reaction. The more reactive you are, the more entangled you become with form. The more identified with form, the stronger the ego. Your Being then does not shine through form anymore—or only barely.

Through nonresistance to form, that in you which is beyond form emerges as an all-encompassing Presence, a silent power far greater than your short-lived form identity, the person. It is more deeply who you are than anything in the world of form.

When you think, feel, perceive, and experience, consciousness is born into form. It is reincarnating—into a thought, a feeling, a sense perception, an experience. The cycle of rebirths that Buddhists hope to get out of eventually is happening continuously, and it is only at this moment—through the power of Now—that you can get out of it. Through complete acceptance of the form of the Now, you become internally aligned with space, which is the essence of Now. Through acceptance, you become spacious inside. Aligned with space instead of form: That brings true perspective and balance into your life.

People believe themselves to be dependent on what happens for their happiness, that is to say, dependent on form. They don’t realize that what happens is the most unstable thing in the universe. It changes constantly. They look upon the present moment as either marred by something that has happened and shouldn’t have or as deficient because of something that has not happened but should have. And so they miss the deeper perfection that is inherent in life itself, a perfection that is always already here, that lies beyond what is happening or not happening, beyond form. Accept the present moment and find the perfection that is deeper than any form and untouched by time.

The joy of Being, which is the only true happiness, cannot come to you through any form, possession, achievement, person, or event—through anything that happens. That joy cannot *come* to you—ever. It emanates from the formless dimension within you, from consciousness itself and thus is one with who you are.

Chapter 4

AWAKENING

Only by awakening can you know the true meaning of that word.

Instead of being lost in your thinking, when you awaken you recognize yourself as the awareness behind it. Thinking then ceases to be a self-serving autonomous activity that takes possession of you and runs your life. Awareness takes over from thinking. Instead of being in charge of your life, thinking becomes the servant of awareness. Awareness is conscious connection with universal intelligence. Another word for it is Presence: consciousness without thought.

What is the relationship between awareness and thinking? Awareness is the space in which thoughts exist when that space has become conscious of itself.

Your inner purpose is to awaken. It is as simple as that. You share that purpose with every other person on the planet—because it is the purpose of humanity. Your inner purpose is an essential part of the purpose of the whole, the universe and its emerging intelligence. Your outer purpose can change over time. It varies greatly from person to person. Finding and living in alignment with the inner purpose is the foundation for fulfilling your outer purpose. It is the basis for true success.

Humanity is destined to go beyond suffering, but not in the way the ego thinks. One of the ego's many erroneous assumptions, one of its many deluded thoughts is "I should not have to suffer." That thought itself lies at the root of suffering. Suffering has a noble purpose: the evolution of consciousness (the awakening) and the burning up of the ego. The man on the cross is an archetypal image. He is every man and every woman. As long as you resist suffering, it is a slow process because the resistance creates more ego to burn up. When you accept suffering, however, there is an acceleration of that process which is brought about by the fact that you suffer consciously. You can accept suffering for yourself, or you can accept it for someone else, such as your child or parent. In the midst of conscious suffering, there is already the transmutation. The fire of suffering becomes the light of consciousness.

*T*he ego says, “I shouldn’t have to suffer,” and that thought makes you suffer so much more. It is a distortion of the truth, which is always paradoxical. The truth is that you need to say yes to suffering before you can transcend it.

*I*f the egoic earth drama has any purpose at all, it is an indirect one: It creates more and more suffering on the planet, and suffering, although largely ego-created, is in the end also ego-destructive. It is the fire in which the ego burns itself up.

*“O*ne day I will be free of the ego: I will awaken.” Who is talking? The ego. To become free of the ego is not really a big job but a very small one. All you need to do is be aware of your thoughts and emotions—as they happen. This is not really a “doing,” but an alert “seeing.” In that sense, it is true that there is nothing you can do to become free of the ego. When that shift happens, which is the shift from thinking to awareness, an intelligence far greater than the ego’s cleverness begins to operate in your life.

*Y*ou do not become good by trying to be good, but by finding the goodness that is already within you, and allowing that goodness to emerge. But it can only emerge if something fundamental changes in your state of consciousness.

*I*n Zen they say: “Don’t seek the truth. Just cease to cherish opinions.” What does that mean? Let go of identification with your mind. Who you are beyond the mind then emerges by itself.

*A*n essential part of awakening is the recognition of the unawakened you, the ego as it thinks, speaks, and acts. When you recognize the unconsciousness in you, that which makes the recognition possible *is* the arising consciousness, *is* awakening. You cannot fight against the ego and win, just as you cannot fight against darkness. The light of consciousness is all that is necessary. You are that light.

A large part of many people's lives is consumed by an obsessive preoccupation with things. Whatever the ego seeks and gets attached to are substitutes for the Being that it cannot feel. You can value and care for things, but whenever you get attached to them, you will know it's the ego. And you are never really attached to a thing but to a thought that has "I," "me," or "mine" in it. Whenever you completely accept a loss, you go beyond ego, and who you are, the I Am which is consciousness itself, emerges.

*M*any people don't realize until they are on their deathbed and everything external falls away that *no thing* ever had anything to do with who they are. In the proximity of death, the whole concept of ownership stands revealed as ultimately meaningless. In the last moments of their life, they then also realize that while they were looking throughout their lives for a more complete sense of self, what they were really looking for, their Being, had actually always already been there, but had been largely obscured by their identification with things, which ultimately means identification with their mind.

*F*or some, the awakening happens as they suddenly become aware of the kinds of thoughts they habitually think, especially persistent negative thoughts that they may have been identified with all of their lives. Suddenly there is an awareness that is aware of the thought but is not part of it.

*T*he return movement in a person's life, the weakening or dissolution of form, whether through old age, illness, disability, loss, or some kind of personal tragedy, carries great potential for spiritual awakening—the dis-identification of consciousness from form.

*O*n the new earth, old age will be universally recognized and highly valued as a time for the flowering of consciousness. For those who are still lost in the outer circumstances of their lives, it will be a time of a late homecoming, when they awaken to their inner purpose. For many others, it will represent an intensification and a culmination of the awakening process.

*H*owever, as your awareness increases and the ego is no longer running your life, you don't have to wait for your world to shrink or collapse through old age or personal tragedy in order for you to awaken to your inner purpose. As the new consciousness is beginning to emerge on the planet, an increasing number of people no longer need to be shaken to have an awakening. They embrace the awakening process voluntarily even while still engaged in the outward cycle of growth and expansion. When that cycle is no longer usurped by the ego, the spiritual dimension will come into this world through the outward movement—thought, speech, action, creation—as powerfully as through the return movement—stillness, Being, and the dissolution of form.

*T*o love is to recognize yourself in another. The other's "otherness" then stands revealed as an illusion pertaining to the purely human realm, the realm of form.

*W*hen another recognizes you, that recognition draws the dimension of Being more fully into this world through both of you. That is the love that redeems the world.

Chapter 5

INNER SPACE

When consciousness is no longer totally absorbed by thinking, some of it remains in its formless, unconditioned, original state. This is inner space.

Most people's lives are cluttered up with things: material things, things to do, things to think about. Their lives are like the history of humanity, which Winston Churchill defined as "one damn thing after another." Their minds are filled up with the clutter of thoughts, one thought after another. This is the dimension of object consciousness that is many people's predominant reality, and that is why their lives are so out of balance. Object consciousness needs to be balanced by space consciousness for sanity to return to our planet and for humanity to fulfill its destiny. The arising of space consciousness is the next stage in the evolution of humanity.

Space consciousness means that in addition to being conscious of things—which always comes down to sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions—there is an undercurrent of awareness. Awareness implies that you are not only conscious of things (objects), but you are also conscious of being conscious. If you can sense an alert inner stillness in the background while things happen in the foreground—that's it! This dimension is there in everyone, but most people are completely unaware of it. Sometimes I point to it by saying, "Can you feel your own Presence?"

Space consciousness represents not only freedom from ego, but also from dependency on the things of this world, from materialism and materiality. It is the spiritual dimension which alone can give transcendent and true meaning to this world.

When you are no longer totally identified with forms, consciousness—who you are—becomes freed from its imprisonment in form. This freedom is the arising of inner space. It comes as a stillness, a subtle peace deep within you, even in the face of something seemingly bad. Suddenly, there is space around the event. There is also space around the emotional highs and lows, even around pain. And above all, there is space between your thoughts. And from that space emanates a peace that is not "of this world," because this world is form, and the peace is space. This is the peace of God.

*N*ow you can enjoy and honor the things of this world without giving them an importance and significance they don't have. You can participate in the dance of creation and be active without attachment to outcome and without placing unreasonable demands upon the world: Fulfill me, make me happy, make me feel safe, tell me who I am. The world cannot give you those things, and when you no longer have such expectations, all self-created suffering comes to an end. All such suffering is due to an overvaluation of form and an unawareness of the dimension of inner space. When that dimension is present in your life, you can enjoy things, experiences, and the pleasures of the senses without losing yourself in them, without inner attachment to them, that is to say, without becoming addicted to the world.

*W*hen the dimension of space is lost or rather not known, the things of the world assume an absolute importance, a seriousness and heaviness that in truth they do not have. When the world is not viewed from the perspective of the formless, it becomes a threatening place, and ultimately a place of despair. The Old Testament prophet must have felt this when he wrote, "All things are full of weariness. A man cannot utter it." [3]

*D*iscover inner space by creating gaps in the stream of thinking. Without those gaps, your thinking becomes repetitive, uninspired, devoid of any creative spark, which is how it still is for most people on the planet. You don't need to be concerned with the duration of those gaps. A few seconds is good enough. Gradually, they will lengthen by themselves, without any effort on your part. More important than their length is to bring them in frequently so that your daily activities and your stream of thinking become interspersed with space.

*B*e aware of your breathing. Notice how this takes attention away from your thinking and creates space.

*N*otice the sensation of the breath. Feel the air moving in and out of your body. Notice how the chest and abdomen expand and contract slightly with the in- and outbreath. One conscious breath is enough to make some space where before there was the uninterrupted succession of one thought after another. One conscious breath (two or three would be even better), taken many times a day, is an excellent way of bringing space into your life. Even if you meditated on your breathing for two hours or more, which some people do, one breath is all you ever need to be aware of, indeed ever can be aware of. The rest is memory or anticipation, which is to say, thought. Breathing isn't really something that you do but something that you witness as it happens. Breathing happens by itself. The intelligence within the body is doing it. All you have to do is watch it happening. There is no strain or effort involved. Also, notice the brief cessation of the breath, particularly the still point at the end of the out-breath, before you start breathing in again.

*W*henever you are upset about an event, a person, or a situation, the real cause is not the event, person, or situation but a loss of true perspective that only space can provide. You are trapped in object consciousness, unaware of the timeless inner space of consciousness itself.

*S*pace consciousness has little to do with being "spaced out." Both states are beyond thought. This they have in common. The fundamental difference, however, is that in the former, you rise above thought; in the latter, you fall below it. One is the next step in the evolution of human consciousness, the other a regression to a stage we left behind eons ago.

*T*he greatest impediment to the discovery of inner space, the greatest impediment to finding the experiencer, the formless I Am, is to become so enthralled by the experience that you lose yourself in it. It means consciousness is lost in its own dream. You get taken in by every thought, every emotion, and every experience to such a degree that you are in fact in a dreamlike state. This has been the normal state of humanity for thousands of years.

*W*hen you hear of inner space, you may start seeking it, and, because you are seeking it as if you were looking for an object or for an experience, you cannot find it. This is the dilemma of all those who are seeking spiritual realization or enlightenment. Hence, Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Lo, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you." [4]

*I*f you are not spending all of your waking life in discontent, worry, anxiety, depression, despair, or consumed by other negative states; if you are able to enjoy simple things like listening to the sound of the rain or the wind; if you can see the beauty of clouds moving across the sky or be alone at times without feeling lonely or needing the mental stimulus of entertainment; if you find yourself treating a complete stranger with heartfelt kindness without wanting anything from him or her . . . it means that a space has opened up, no matter how briefly, in the otherwise incessant stream of thinking that is the human mind. When this happens, there is a sense of well-being, of alive peace, even though it may be subtle. The intensity will vary from a perhaps barely noticeable background sense of contentment to what the ancient sages of India called *ananda*—the bliss of Being. Because you have been conditioned to pay attention only to form, you are probably not aware of it except indirectly. For example, there is a common element in the ability to see beauty, to appreciate simple things, to enjoy your own company, or to relate to other people with loving kindness. This common element is a sense of contentment, peace, and aliveness that is the invisible background without which these experiences would not be possible.

*W*henever there is beauty, kindness, the recognition of the goodness of simple things in your life, look for the background to that experience within yourself. But don’t look for it as if you were looking for something. You cannot pin it down and say, “Now I have it,” or grasp it mentally and define it in some way. It is like the cloudless sky. It has no form. It is space; it is stillness, the sweetness of Being and infinitely more than these words, which are only pointers. When you are able to sense it directly within yourself, it deepens. So when you appreciate something simple—a sound, a sight, a touch—when you see beauty, when you feel loving kindness toward another, sense the inner spaciousness that is the source and background to that experience.

*H*ere is another way of finding inner space: Become conscious of being conscious. Say or think “I Am” and add nothing to it. Be aware of the stillness that follows the I Am. Sense your presence, the naked, unveiled, unclothed beingness. It is untouched by young or old, rich or poor, good or bad, or any other attributes.

Chapter 6

YOUR LIFE PURPOSE

Your life has an inner purpose and an outer purpose. Inner purpose concerns Being and is primary. Outer purpose concerns doing and is secondary.

The true or primary purpose of your life cannot be found on the outer level. It does not concern what you do but what you are—that is to say, your state of consciousness.

Action, although necessary, is only a secondary factor in manifesting our external reality. The primary factor in creation is consciousness. No matter how active we are, how much effort we make, our state of consciousness creates our world, and if there is no change on that inner level, no amount of action will make any difference. We would only re-create modified versions of the same world again and again, a world that is an external reflection of the ego.

Once you have had a glimpse of awareness or Presence, you know it firsthand. It is no longer just a concept in your mind. You can then make a conscious choice to be present rather than to indulge in useless thinking. You can invite Presence into your life, that is to say, make space. With the grace of awakening comes responsibility. You can either try to go on as if nothing has happened, or you can see its significance and recognize the arising of awareness as the most important thing that *can* happen to you. Opening yourself to the emerging consciousness and bringing its light into this world then becomes the primary purpose of your life.

Awakened doing is the alignment of your outer purpose—what you do—with your inner purpose—awakening and staying awake. Through awakened doing, you become one with the outgoing purpose of the universe.

Consciousness flows through you into this world. It flows into your thoughts and inspires them. It flows into what you do and guides and empowers it.

*T*he modalities of awakened doing are acceptance, enjoyment, and enthusiasm. Each one represents a certain vibrational frequency of consciousness. You need to be vigilant to make sure that one of them operates whenever you are engaged in doing anything at all—from the most simple task to the most complex. If you are not in the state of either acceptance, enjoyment, or enthusiasm, look closely and you will find that you are creating suffering for yourself and others.

*W*hatever you cannot enjoy doing, you can at least accept that this is what you have to do. Acceptance means: For now, this is what this situation, this moment requires me to do, and so I do it willingly.

*I*f you can neither enjoy nor bring acceptance to what you do—stop. Otherwise, you are not taking responsibility for the only thing you can really take responsibility for, which also happens to be the one thing that really matters: your state of consciousness. And if you are not taking responsibility for your state of consciousness, you are not taking responsibility for life.

*O*n the new earth, enjoyment will replace wanting as the motivating power behind people's actions. Wanting arises from the ego's delusion that you are a separate fragment that is disconnected from the power that lies behind all creation. Through enjoyment, you link into that universal creative power itself.

*E*xpansion and positive change on the outer level is much more likely to come into your life if you can enjoy what you are doing already, instead of waiting for some change so that you can start enjoying what you do.

*W*hen you make the present moment, instead of past and future, the focal point of your life, your ability to enjoy what you do—and with it the quality of your life—increases dramatically.

*J*oy does not come from what you do, it flows into what you do and thus into this world from deep within you.

*Y*ou will enjoy any activity in which you are fully present, any activity that is not just a means to an end. It isn't the action you perform that you really enjoy, but the deep sense of aliveness that flows into it. That aliveness is one with who you are. This means that when you enjoy doing something, you are really experiencing the joy of Being in its dynamic aspect. That's why anything you enjoy doing connects you with the power behind all creation.

*H*ere is a spiritual practice that will bring empowerment and creative expansion into your life. Make a list of a number of everyday routine activities that you perform frequently. Include activities that you may consider uninteresting, boring, tedious, irritating, or stressful. But don't include anything that you hate or detest doing. That's a case either for acceptance or for stopping what you do. The list may include traveling to and from work, buying groceries, doing your laundry, or anything that you find tedious or stressful in your daily work. Then, whenever you are engaged in those activities, let them be a vehicle for alertness. Be absolutely present in what you do and sense the alert, alive stillness within you in the background of the activity. You will soon find that what you do in such a state of heightened awareness, instead of being stressful, tedious, or irritating, is actually becoming enjoyable. To be more precise, what you are enjoying is not really the outward action but the inner dimension of consciousness that flows into the action. This is finding the joy of Being in what you are doing. If you feel your life lacks significance or is too stressful or tedious, it is because you haven't brought that dimension into your life yet. Being conscious in what you do has not yet become your main aim.

*E*nthusiasm means there is deep enjoyment in what you do plus the added element of a goal or vision that you work toward. When you add a goal to the enjoyment of what you do, the energy-field or vibrational frequency changes. A certain degree of what we might call structural tension is now added to enjoyment, and so it turns into enthusiasm. At the height of creative activity fueled by enthusiasm, there will be enormous intensity and energy behind what you do. You will feel like an arrow that is moving toward the target—and enjoying the journey.

To an onlooker, it may appear that you are under stress, but the intensity of enthusiasm has nothing to do with stress. When you want to arrive at your goal more than you want to be doing what you are doing, you become stressed. The balance between enjoyment and structural tension is lost, and the latter has won.

Stress always diminishes both the quality and effectiveness of what you do under its influence. There is also a strong link between stress and negative emotions, such as anxiety and anger. Stress is also toxic to the body.

*U*nlike stress, enthusiasm has a high energy frequency and so resonates with the creative power of the universe. This is why Ralph Waldo Emerson said that, "Nothing great has ever been achieved without enthusiasm." [5]

*E*nthusiasm knows where it is going, but at the same time, it is deeply at one with the present moment, the source of aliveness, its joy, and its power. Enthusiasm "wants" nothing because it lacks nothing. It is at one with life and no matter how dynamic the enthusiasm-inspired activities are, you don't lose yourself in them. And there remains always a still but intensely alive space at the center of the wheel, a core of peace in the midst of activity that is both the source of all and untouched by it all.

*W*e are in the midst of a momentous event in the evolution of human consciousness. On our planet, and perhaps simultaneously in many parts of our galaxy and beyond, consciousness is awakening from the dream of form. This does not mean all forms (the world) are going to dissolve, although quite a few almost certainly will. It means consciousness can now begin to create form without losing itself in it. It can remain conscious of itself, even while it creates and experiences form. Why should it continue to create and experience form? For the enjoyment of it. How does consciousness do that? Through awakened humans who have learned the meaning of *awakened doing.*

A new species is arising on the planet. It is arising now, and you are it!

Chapter 7

BECOMING PRESENT

We can learn not to keep situations or events alive in our minds, but to return our attention continuously to the pristine, timeless present moment rather than be caught up in mental movie-making. Our very Presence then becomes our identity, rather than our thoughts and emotions.

Only Presence can free you of the ego, and you can only be present Now, not yesterday or tomorrow. Only Presence can undo the past in you and thus transform your state of consciousness.

Be alert. If there is awareness in you, you will be able to recognize the voice in your head for what it is: an old thought, conditioned by the past. If there is awareness in you, you no longer need to believe in every thought you think. It's an old thought, no more. Awareness means Presence, and only Presence can dissolve the unconscious past in you.

What in Zen is called *satori* is a moment of Presence, a brief stepping out of the voice in your head, the thought processes, and their reflection in the body as emotion. It is the arising of inner spaciousness where before there was the clutter of thought and the turmoil of emotion.

To end the misery that has afflicted the human condition for thousands of years, you have to start with yourself and take responsibility for your inner state at any given moment. That means now. Ask yourself, "Is there negativity in me at this moment?" Then, become alert, attentive to your thoughts as well as your emotions. Watch out for the low-level unhappiness in whatever form, such as discontent, nervousness, being "fed up," and so on. Watch out for thoughts that appear to justify or explain this unhappiness but in reality cause it. The moment you become aware of a negative state within yourself, it does not mean you have failed. It means that you have succeeded. Until that awareness happens, there is identification with inner states, and such identification is ego.

With awareness comes disidentification from thoughts, emotions, and reactions. This is not to be confused with denial. The thoughts, emotions, or reactions are recognized, and in the moment of recognizing, disidentification happens automatically. Your sense of self, of who you are, then undergoes a shift: Before you were the thoughts, emotions, and reactions; now you are the awareness, the conscious Presence that witnesses those states.

Emotions and even thoughts become depersonalized through awareness. Their impersonal nature is recognized. There is no longer a self in them. They are just human emotions, human thoughts. Your entire personal history, which is ultimately no more than a story, a bundle of thoughts and emotions, becomes of secondary importance and no longer occupies the forefront of your consciousness. It no longer forms the basis for your sense of identity. You are the light of Presence, the awareness that is prior to and deeper than any thoughts and emotions.

Negativity is not intelligent. It is always of the ego.

Whenever you are in a negative state, there is something in you that wants the negativity, that perceives it as pleasurable, or that believes it will get you what you want. Otherwise, who would want to hang on to negativity, make themselves and others miserable, and create disease in the body? So, whenever there is negativity in you, if you can be aware at that moment that there is something in you that takes pleasure in it or believes it has a useful purpose, you are becoming aware of the ego directly. The moment this happens, your identity has shifted from ego to awareness. This means the ego is shrinking and awareness is growing.

If in the midst of negativity you are able to realize “At this moment I am creating suffering for myself ” it will be enough to raise you above the limitations of conditioned egoic states and reactions. It will open up infinite possibilities which come to you when there is awareness—other vastly more intelligent ways of dealing with any situation. You will be free to let go of your unhappiness the moment you recognize it as unintelligent.

The more shared past there is in a relationship, the more present you need to be; otherwise, you will be forced to relive the past again and again.

A genuine relationship is one that is not dominated by the ego with its image-making and self-seeking. In a genuine relationship, there is an outward flow of open, alert attention toward the other person in which there is no wanting whatsoever. That alert attention is Presence. It is the prerequisite for any authentic relationship.

*A*s you look at, listen to, touch, or help your child with this or that, you are alert, still, completely present, not wanting anything other than that moment as it is. In this way, you make room for Being. In that moment, if you are present, you are not a father or mother. You are the alertness, the stillness, the Presence that is listening, looking, touching, even speaking. You are the Being behind the doing.

I have been speaking of this with specific reference to the relationship with your child, but it equally applies, of course, to all relationships.

*D*oing is never enough if you neglect Being.

*M*ost humans see only the outer forms, unaware of the inner essence, just as they are unaware of their own essence and identify only with their own physical and psychological form. Once there is a certain degree of Presence, of still and alert attention in your perceptions, however, you can sense the divine life essence, the one indwelling consciousness or spirit in every creature, every life-form, recognize it as one with your own essence and so love it as yourself.

*W*hen you meet with people, at work or wherever it may be, give them your fullest attention. You are no longer there primarily as a person, but as a field of awareness, of alert Presence. The original reason for interacting with the other person—buying or selling something, requesting or giving information, and so on—now becomes secondary. The field of awareness that arises between you becomes the primary purpose for the interaction. That space of awareness becomes more important than what you may be talking about, more important than physical or thought objects. The human *Being* becomes more important than the things of this world. It does not mean you neglect whatever needs to be done on a practical level. In fact, the doing unfolds not only more easily, but more powerfully when the dimension of Being is acknowledged and so becomes primary. The arising of that unifying field of awareness between human beings is the most essential factor in relationships on the new earth.

*F*orgiveness happens naturally when you see that your grievances have no purpose other than to strengthen a false sense of self, to keep the ego in place. The seeing is freeing. Jesus' teaching to "Forgive your enemies" is essentially about the undoing of one of the main egoic structures in the human mind.

*T*here is only one perpetrator of evil on the planet: human unconsciousness. That realization is true forgiveness. With forgiveness, your victim identity dissolves, and your true power emerges—the power of Presence. Instead of blaming the darkness, you bring in the light.

*P*resence is a state of inner spaciousness. When you are present, you ask: How do I respond to the needs of this situation, of this moment? In fact, you don't even need to ask the question. You are still, alert, open to what is. You bring a new dimension into the situation: space. Then you look and you listen. Thus you become one with the situation. When instead of reacting against a situation, you merge with it, the solution arises out of the situation itself. Actually, it is not you, the person, who is looking and listening, but the alert stillness itself. Then, if action is possible or necessary, you take action or rather right action happens through you. Right action is action that is appropriate to the whole. When the action is accomplished, the alert, spacious stillness remains. There is nobody who raises his arms in a gesture of triumph shouting a defiant "Yeah!" There is no one who says, "Look, I did that."

*W*hen you are present, when your attention is fully in the Now, that Presence will flow into and transform what you do. There will be quality and power in it. You are present when what you are doing is not primarily a means to an end (money, prestige, winning) but fulfilling in itself, when there is joy and aliveness in what you do. And, of course, you cannot be present unless you become friendly with the present moment. That is the basis for effective action, uncontaminated by negativity.

Chapter 8

CONSCIOUSNESS

The joy of Being is the joy of being conscious.

Consciousness is already conscious. It is the unmanifested, the eternal. The universe, however, is only gradually becoming conscious. Consciousness itself is timeless and therefore does not evolve. It was never born and does not die. When consciousness becomes the manifested universe, it appears to be subject to time and to undergo an evolutionary process. No human mind is capable of comprehending fully the reason for this process. But we can glimpse it within ourselves and become a conscious participant in it.

Consciousness is the intelligence, the organizing principle behind the arising of form. Consciousness has been preparing forms for millions of years so that it can express itself through them in the manifested.

Although the unmanifested realm of pure consciousness could be considered another dimension, it is not separate from this dimension of form. Form and formlessness interpenetrate. The unmanifested flows into this dimension as awareness, inner space, Presence. How does it do that? Through the human form that becomes conscious and thus fulfills its destiny.

Consciousness incarnates into the manifested dimension, that is to say, it becomes form. When it does so, it enters a dreamlike state. Intelligence remains, but consciousness becomes unconscious of itself. It loses itself in form, becomes identified with forms. This could be described as the descent of the divine into matter.

On our planet, the human ego represents the final stage of universal sleep, the identification of consciousness with form. It was a necessary stage in the evolution of consciousness.

The next step in human evolution is not inevitable, but for the first time in the history of our planet, it can be a conscious choice. Who is making that choice? You are. And who are you? Consciousness that has become conscious of itself.

The human brain is a highly differentiated form through which consciousness enters this dimension. It contains approximately one hundred billion nerve cells (called neurons), about the same number as there are stars in our galaxy, which could be seen as a macrocosmic brain. The brain does not create consciousness, but consciousness created the brain, the most complex physical form on earth, for its expression. When the brain gets damaged, it does not mean you lose consciousness. It means consciousness can no longer use that form to enter this dimension. You cannot lose consciousness because it is, in essence, who you are. You can only lose something that you have, but you cannot lose something that you are.

Although you cannot know consciousness, you can become conscious of it as yourself. You can sense it directly in any situation, no matter where you are. You can sense it here and now as your very Presence, the inner space in which the words on this page are perceived and become thoughts. It is the underlying I Am. The words you are reading and thinking are the foreground, and the I Am is the substratum, the underlying background to every experience, thought, feeling.

Spiritual realization is to see clearly that what I perceive, experience, think, or feel is ultimately not who I am, that I cannot find myself in all those things that continuously pass away.

The Buddha was probably the first human being to see this clearly, and so *anata* (no self) became one of the central points of his teaching. And when Jesus said, “Deny thyself,” what he meant was: Negate (and thus undo) the illusion of self. If the self—ego—were truly who I am, it would be absurd to “deny” it.

What remains is the light of consciousness in which perceptions, experiences, thoughts, and feelings come and go. That is Being, that is the deeper, true I. When I know myself as that, whatever happens in my life is no longer of absolute but only of relative importance. I honor it, but it loses its absolute seriousness, its heaviness.

*T*he only thing that ultimately matters is this: Can I sense my essential Beingness, the I Am, in the background of my life at all times? To be more accurate, can I sense the I Am that I Am at this moment? Can I sense my essential identity as consciousness itself ? Or am I losing myself in what happens, losing myself in the mind, in the world?

*W*hen forms that you had identified with, that gave you your sense of self, collapse or are taken away, it can lead to a collapse of the ego, since ego is identification with form. When there is nothing to identify with anymore, who are you? When forms around you die or death approaches, your sense of Beingness, of I Am, is freed from its entanglement with form: Spirit is released from its imprisonment in matter. You realize your essential identity as formless, as an all-pervasive Presence, of Being prior to all forms, all identifications. You realize your true identity as consciousness itself, rather than what consciousness had identified with. That is the peace of God.

"I want to know the mind of God," Einstein said. "The rest are details." What is the mind of God? Consciousness. What does it mean to know the mind of God? To be aware. What are the details? Your outer purpose, and whatever happens outwardly.

*I*t has been said: "Stillness is the language God speaks, and everything else is a bad translation." Becoming conscious of stillness whenever we encounter it in our lives will connect us with the formless and timeless dimension within ourselves, that which is beyond thought, beyond ego. It may be the stillness that pervades the world of nature, or the stillness in your room in the early hours of the morning, or the silent gaps in between sounds. Stillness has no form—that is why through thinking we cannot become aware of it. Thought is form. Being aware of stillness means to be still. To be still is to be conscious without thought. You are never more essentially, more deeply, yourself than when you are still. When you are still, you are who you were before you temporarily assumed this physical and mental form called a person. You are also who you will be when the form dissolves. When you are still, you are who you are beyond your temporal existence: consciousness—unconditioned, formless, eternal.

Chapter 9

THE INNER BODY

We have to enter the body to go beyond it and find out that we are not that.

Equating the physical sense-perceived body that is destined to grow old, wither, and die with "I" always leads to suffering sooner or later. To refrain from identifying with the body doesn't mean that you neglect, despise, or no longer care for it. If it is strong, beautiful, or vigorous, you can enjoy and appreciate those attributes—while they last. You can also improve the body's condition through right nutrition and exercise. If you don't equate the body with who you are, when beauty fades, vigor diminishes, or the body becomes incapacitated, this will not affect your sense of worth or identity in any way. In fact, as the body begins to weaken, the formless dimension, the light of consciousness, can shine more easily through the fading form.

Ego arises when your sense of Beingness, of "I Am," which is formless consciousness, gets mixed up with form. This is the meaning of identification. This is forgetfulness of Being, the primary error.

Although body-identification is one of the most basic forms of ego, the good news is that it is also the one that you can most easily go beyond. This is done not by trying to convince yourself that you are not your body, but by shifting your attention from the external form of your body and from thoughts about your body—beautiful, ugly, strong, weak, too fat, too thin—to the feeling of aliveness inside it. No matter what your body's appearance is on the outer level, beyond the outer form it is an intensely alive energy field.

Take two or three conscious breaths. Now see if you can detect a subtle sense of aliveness that pervades your entire inner body. Can you feel your body from within, so to speak? Sense briefly specific parts of your body. Feel your hands, then your arms, feet, and legs. Can you feel your abdomen, chest, neck, and head? What about your lips? Is there life in them? Then become aware again of the inner body as a whole. You may want to close your eyes initially for this practice, and once you can feel your body, open your eyes, look around, and continue to feel your body at the same time. You may find there is no need to close your eyes, that you can, in fact, feel your inner body as you read this.

Your inner body is not solid but spacious. It is not your physical form but the life that animates the physical form. It is the intelligence that created and sustains the body, simultaneously coordinating hundreds of different functions of such extraordinary complexity that the human mind can only understand a tiny fraction of it. When you become aware of it, what is really happening is that the intelligence is becoming aware of itself. It is the elusive "life" that no scientist has ever found because the consciousness that is looking for it *is it.*

If you are not familiar with "inner body" awareness, close your eyes for a moment and find out if there is life inside your hands. Don't ask your mind. It will say, "I can't feel anything." Probably it will also say, "Give me something more interesting to think about." So instead of asking your mind, go to the hands directly. By this I mean become aware of the subtle feeling of aliveness inside them. It is there. You just have to go there with your attention to notice it. You may get a slight tingling sensation at first, then a feeling of energy or aliveness. If you hold your attention in your hands for a while, the sense of aliveness will intensify. Some people won't even have to close their eyes. They will be able to feel their "inner hands" at the same time as they read this. Then go to your feet, keep your attention there for a minute or so, and begin to feel your hands and feet at the same time. Then incorporate other parts of the body —legs, arms, abdomen, chest, and so on—into that feeling until you are aware of the inner body as a global sense of aliveness, diffused throughout the body.

What I call the "inner body" isn't really the body anymore but life energy, the bridge between form and formlessness. Make it a habit to feel the inner body as often as you can. After a while, you won't need to close your eyes anymore to feel it. For example, see if you can feel the inner body whenever you listen to someone. It almost seems like a paradox: When you are in touch with the inner body, you are not identified with your body anymore, nor are you identified with your mind. This is to say, you are no longer identified with form but moving away from form-identification toward formlessness, which we may also call Being. It is your essence identity. Body awareness not only anchors you in the present moment, it is a doorway out of the prison that is the ego. It also strengthens the immune system and the body's ability to heal itself.

As much as possible in everyday life, use awareness of the inner body to create space. When waiting, when listening to someone, when pausing to look at the sky, a tree, a flower, your partner, or child, feel the aliveness within at the same time. This means part of your attention or consciousness remains formless, and the rest is available for the outer world of form. Whenever you "inhabit" your body in this way, it serves as an anchor for staying present in the Now. It prevents you from losing yourself in thinking, in emotions, or in external situations.

Your physical body, which is form, reveals itself as essentially formless when you go deeper into it. It becomes a doorway into inner space. Although inner space has no form, it is intensely alive. That "empty space" is life in its fullness, the unmanifested Source out of which all manifestation flows. The traditional word for that Source is God.

Chapter 10

ONENESS WITH ALL LIFE

Underneath the surface appearance, everything is not only connected with everything else, but also with the Source of all life out of which it came. Even a stone, and more easily a flower or a bird, could show you the way back to God, to the Source, to yourself. When you look at it or hold it and *let it be* without imposing a word or mental label on it, a sense of awe, of wonder, arises within you. Its essence silently communicates itself to you and reflects your own essence back to you.

Why does the ego play roles? Because of one unexamined assumption, one fundamental error, one unconscious thought. That thought is: I am not enough. Other unconscious thoughts follow: I need to play a role in order to get what I need to be fully myself; I need to get more so that I can be more. But you cannot be more than you are because underneath your physical and psychological form, you are one with Life itself, one with Being. In form, you are and will always be inferior to some, superior to others. In essence, you are neither inferior nor superior to anyone. True self-esteem and true humility arise out of that realization. In the eyes of the ego, self-esteem and humility are contradictory. In truth, they are one and the same.

What "I" could there be apart from life, apart from Being? It is utterly impossible. So there is no such thing as "my life," and I don't *have* a life. I *am* life. I and life are one. It cannot be otherwise. So how could I lose my life? How can I lose something that I don't have in the first place? How can I lose something that I Am? It is impossible.

The Truth is inseparable from who you are. Yes, you *are* the Truth. The very Being that you are is Truth. Jesus tried to convey that when he said, "I am the way and the truth and the life." [6] These words are one of the most powerful and direct pointers to the Truth, if understood correctly. Jesus speaks of the innermost I Am, the essence identity of every man and woman, every life-form, in fact. He speaks of the life that you are. Some Christian mystics have called it the Christ within; Buddhists call it your Buddha nature; for Hindus, it is Atman, the indwelling God. When you are in touch with that dimension within yourself—and being in touch with it is your natural state, not some miraculous achievement—all your actions and relationships will reflect the oneness with all life that you sense deep within. This is love.

*A*cknowledging the good that is already in your life is the foundation for all abundance.

*T*he source of all abundance is not outside you. It is part of who you are. However, start by acknowledging and recognizing abundance without. See the fullness of life all around you. The warmth of the sun on your skin, the display of magnificent flowers outside a florist's shop, biting into a succulent fruit, or getting soaked in an abundance of water falling from the sky. The fullness of life is there at every step. The acknowledgment of that abundance that is all around you awakens the dormant abundance within. Then let it flow out. When you smile at a stranger, there is already a minute outflow of energy. You become a giver. Ask yourself often: "What can I give here; how can I be of service to this person, this situation?" You don't need to own anything to feel abundant, although if you feel abundant consistently things will almost certainly come to you. Abundance comes only to those who already have it.

*T*he sapling doesn't want anything because it is at one with the totality, and the totality acts through it. "Look at the lilies of the field, how they grow" said Jesus, "they toil not, neither do they spin. Yet even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." [7] We could say that the totality—Life—wants the sapling to become a tree, but the sapling doesn't see itself as separate from life and so wants nothing for itself. It is one with what Life wants. That's why it isn't worried or stressed. And if it has to die prematurely, it dies with ease. It is as surrendered in death as it is in life. It senses, no matter how obscurely, its rootedness in Being, the formless and eternal one Life.

*W*henever tragic loss occurs, you either resist or you yield. Some people become bitter or deeply resentful; others become compassionate, wise, and loving. Resistance is an inner contraction, a hardening of the shell of the ego. You are closed. Yielding means inner acceptance of what is. You are open to life.

*W*hen you yield internally, when you surrender, a new dimension of consciousness opens up. If action is possible or necessary, your action will be in alignment with the whole and supported by creative intelligence, the unconditioned consciousness. Circumstances and people then become helpful, cooperative. Coincidences happen. If no action is possible, you rest in the peace and inner stillness that come with surrender. You rest in God.

*W*hen I no longer confuse who I am with a temporary form of "me," then the dimension of the limitless and the eternal—God—can express itself through "me" and guide "me." It also frees me from dependency on form. However, a purely intellectual recognition or belief that "I am not this form" does not help. The all-important question is: At this moment, can I sense the presence of inner space, which really means, can I sense my own Presence, or rather, the Presence that I Am?

*A*sk yourself, "Am I aware not only of what is happening at this moment, but also of the Now itself as the living timeless inner space in which everything happens?"

*I*f peace is really what you want, then you will choose peace. If peace mattered to you more than anything else and if you truly knew yourself to be spirit rather than a little me, you would remain nonreactive and absolutely alert when confronted with challenging people or situations. You would immediately accept the situation and thus become one with it rather than separate yourself from it. Then out of your alertness would come a response. Who you are (consciousness), not who you think you are (a small me), would be responding. It would be powerful and effective and would make no person or situation into an enemy.

B eing at one with what *is,* at one with the present moment, doesn't mean you no longer initiate change or become incapable of taking action. But the motivation to take action comes from a deeper level, not from egoic wanting or fearing. Inner alignment with the present moment opens your consciousness and brings it into alignment with the whole, of which the present moment is an integral part. The whole, the totality of life, then acts through you.

*L*ife will give you whatever experience is most helpful for the evolution of your consciousness. How do you know this is the experience you need? Because this is the experience you are having at this moment.

*H*ow to be at peace now? By making peace with the present moment. The present moment is the field on which the game of life happens. It cannot happen anywhere else. Once you have made peace with the present moment, see what happens, what you can do or choose to do, or rather what life does through you.

*T*here are three words that convey the secret of the art of living, the secret of all success and happiness: One With Life. Being one with life is being one with Now. You then realize that you don’t live your life, but life lives you. Life is the dancer, and you are the dance.

*G*od is the One Life in and beyond the countless forms of life. Love implies duality: lover and beloved, subject and object. So love is the recognition of oneness in the world of duality. This is the birth of God into the world of form. Love makes the world less worldly, less dense, more transparent to the divine dimension, the light of consciousness itself.

NOTES

1 I Corinthians 3:19 (New Revised Standard Version)

2 Matthew 5:3 (New Revised Standard Version)

3 Ecclesiastes 1:8 (New Revised Standard Version)

4 Luke 17:20-21 (New Revised Standard Version)

5 Emerson, Ralph Waldo, "Circles," in *Ralph Waldo Emerson: Selected Lectures, Essays, and Poems* (New York: Bantam Classics).

6 John 14:6 (New Revised Standard Version)

7 Matthew 6:28-29 (New Revised Standard Version)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Spiritual teacher and author ECKHART TOLLE was born in Germany and was educated at the universities of London and Cambridge. At the age of twenty-nine, a profound inner transformation radically changed the course of his life. The next few years were devoted to understanding, integrating, and deepening that transformation, which marked the beginning of an intense inward journey. Later, he began to work in London with individuals and small groups, as a counselor and spiritual teacher. Since 1995 he has lived in Vancouver, Canada.

Eckhart Tolle is the author of the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *The Power of Now* (translated into thirty-three languages) and the highly acclaimed follow-up, *A New Earth*, which are widely regarded as two of the most influential spiritual books of our time.

Eckhart's profound yet simple teachings have already helped countless people throughout the world find inner peace and greater fulfillment in their lives. At the core of the teachings lies the transformation of consciousness, a spiritual awakening that he sees as the next step in human evolution. An essential aspect of this awakening consists in transcending our ego-based state of consciousness. This is a prerequisite not only for personal happiness but also for the ending of violent conflict endemic on our planet.

Eckhart is a sought-after public speaker and teaches and travels extensively throughout the world. Many of his talks, intensives, and retreats are published on CD and DVD. Most of the teachings are given in English, but occasionally Eckhart also gives talks in German and Spanish. In addition to *The Power of Now* and *A New Earth*, Eckhart has written a book designed for meditative reading titled *Stillness Speaks*. A book consisting of selections from *The Power of Now* is also available, titled *Practicing the Power of Now*.

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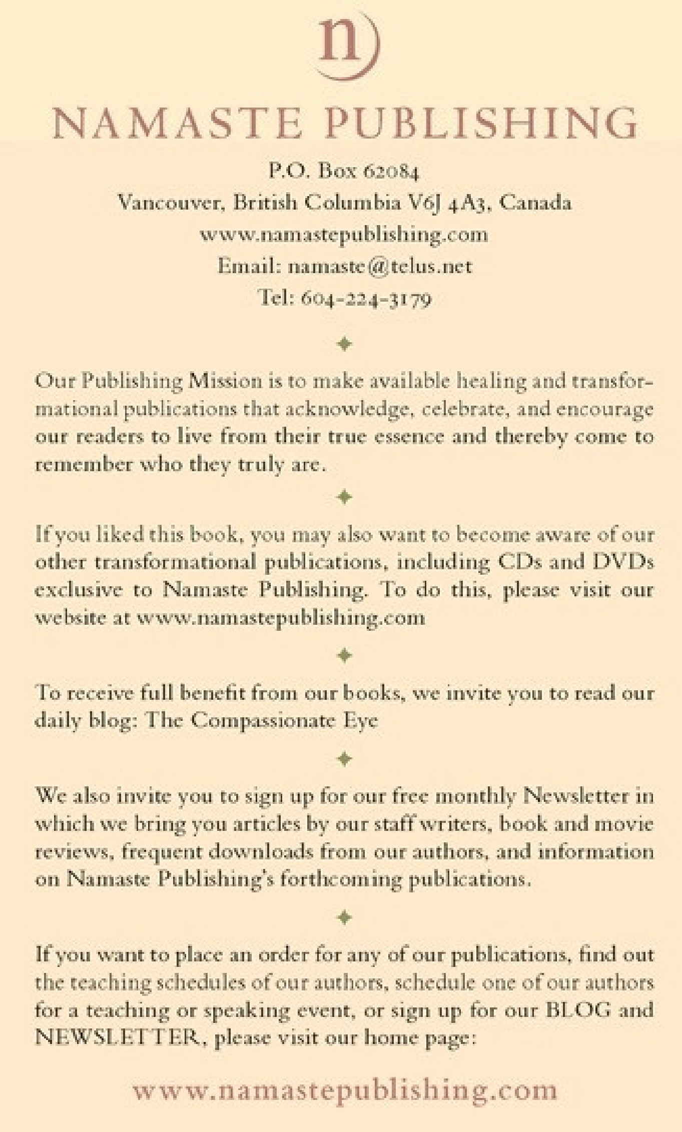

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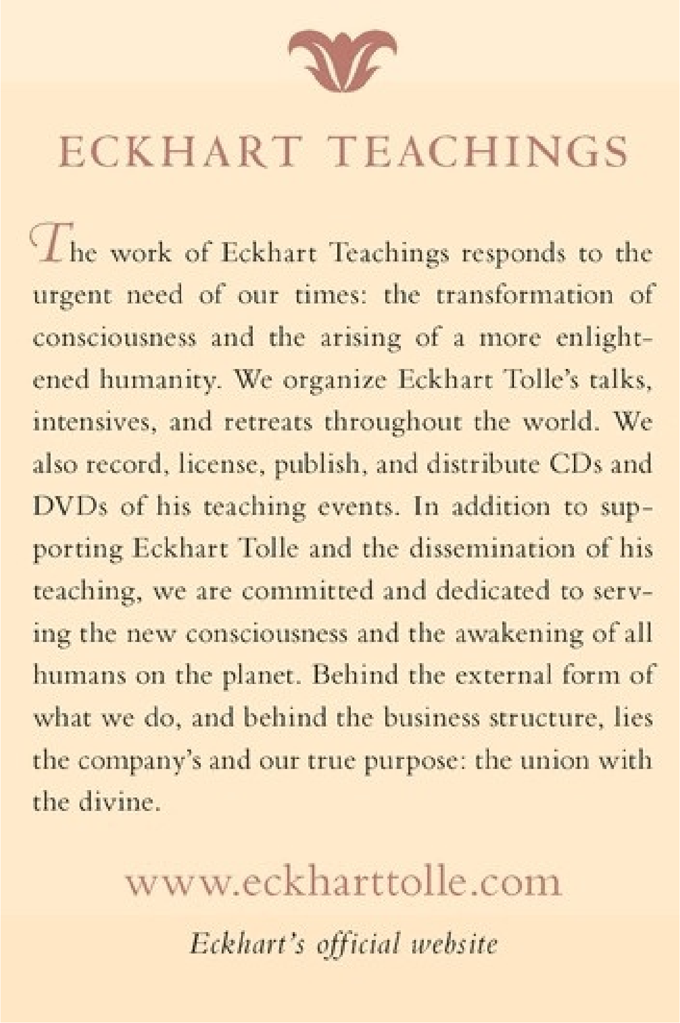

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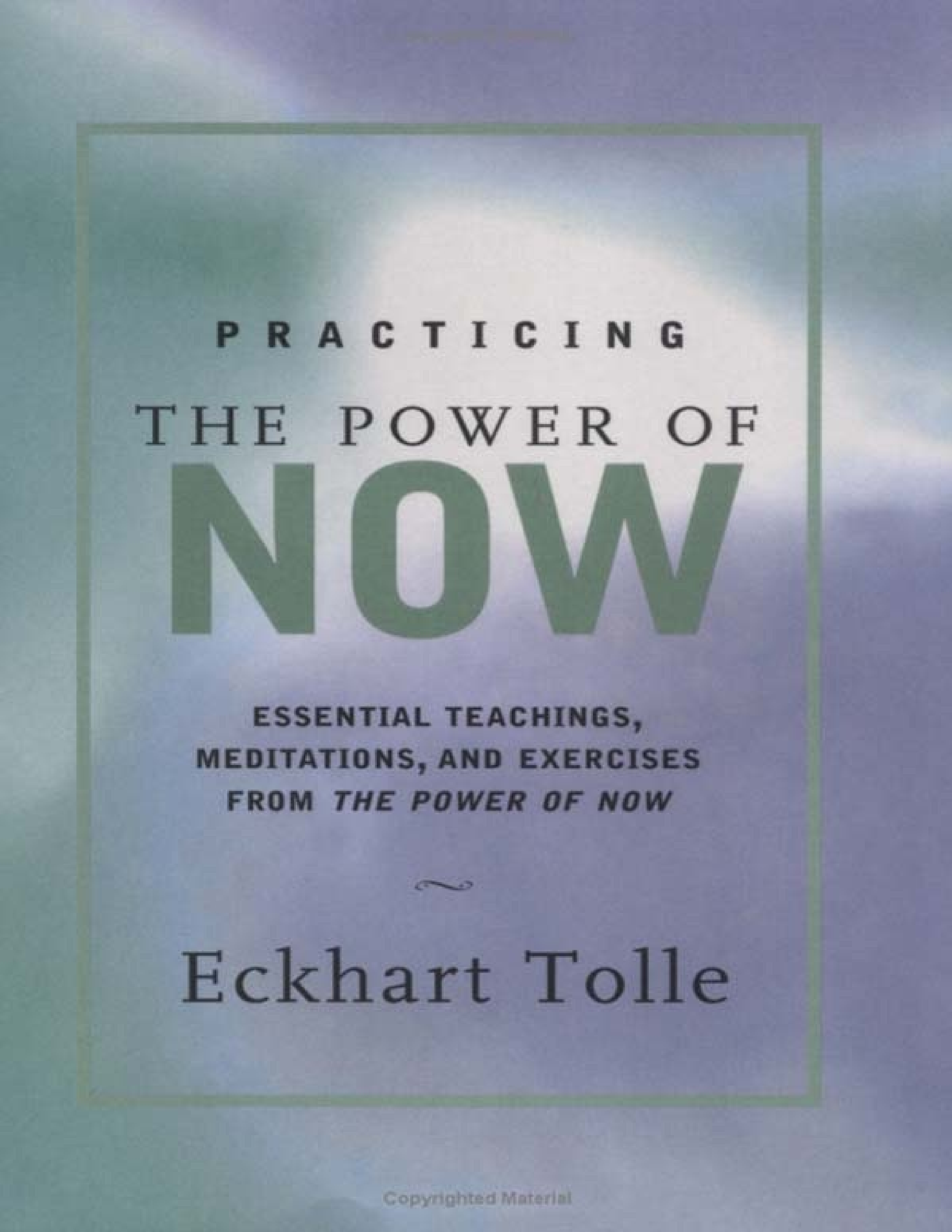

PRACTICING THE POWER OF NOW

ESSENTIAL TEACHINGS, MEDITATIONS, AND EXERCISES FROM *THE POWER OF NOW*

Eckhart Tolle

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tiny aspect of that intelligence.
You also realize that all the things that truly matter —
beauty, love, creativity, joy, inner peace —
arise from beyond the mind.

You begin to awaken.

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INTRODUCTION

BY ECKHART TOLLE

Since it was first published in 1997, *The Power of Now* has already had an impact on the collective consciousness of the planet far beyond anything I could have imagined. It has been translated into fifteen languages, and I receive mail from around the globe every day from readers who tell me that their lives have been changed through coming into contact with the teaching embodied in the book.

Although the effects of the insanity of the egoic mind are still visible everywhere, something new *is* emerging. Never before have so many people been ready to break out of collective mind-patterns that have kept humanity in bondage to suffering since time immemorial. A new state of consciousness is emerging. We have suffered enough! Even at this moment it is emerging from within you, as you hold this book in your hands and read these lines that speak of the possibility of living the liberated life, in which you no longer inflict suffering on yourself or others.

Many of the readers who wrote to me expressed a wish to have the practical aspects of the teachings contained in *The Power of Now* presented in a more readily accessible format, to be used in their daily practice. That request became the impetus for this book.

In addition to the exercises and practices, however, this book also contains some shorter passages from the original work that can serve as a reminder of some of the ideas and concepts and can become a primer for incorporating those concepts daily.

Many of those passages are particularly suitable for meditative reading. When you practice meditative reading, you do not read primarily to gather new information, but to enter a different state of consciousness as you read. This is why you can re-read the same passage many times, and every time it feels fresh and new. Only words that were written or spoken in a state of presence have this transformative power, which is the power to awaken presence in the reader.

These passages are best read slowly. Many times you may want to pause and allow for a moment of quiet reflection, or stillness. At other times, you may just open the book at random and read a few lines.

For those readers who felt daunted or overwhelmed by *The Power of Now*, this book can also serve as an introduction.

— Eckhart Tolle

PART ONE

ACCESSING THE POWER OF NOW

When your consciousness
is directed outward,
mind and world arise.
When it is directed inward,
it realizes its own Source
and returns home into the Unmanifested.

CHAPTER ONE

BEING AND ENLIGHTENMENT

There is an eternal, ever-present One Life beyond the myriad forms of life that are subject to birth and death. Many people use the word God to describe it; I often call it Being. The word Being explains nothing, but nor does God. Being, however, has the advantage that it is an open concept. It does not reduce the infinite invisible to a finite entity. It is impossible to form a mental image of it. Nobody can claim exclusive possession of Being. It is your very presence, and it is immediately accessible to you as the feeling of your own presence. So it is only a small step from the word Being to the experience of Being.

> **BEING IS NOT ONLY BEYOND BUT ALSO DEEP WITHIN** every form as its innermost invisible and indestructible essence. This means that it is accessible to you now as your own deepest self, your true nature. But don't seek to grasp it with your mind. Don't try to understand it.
>
> You can know it only when the mind is still. When you are present, when your attention is fully and intensely in the Now, Being can be felt, but it can never be understood mentally.

To regain awareness of Being and to abide in that state of "feeling-realization" is enlightenment.

The word *enlightenment* conjures up the idea of some superhuman accomplishment, and the ego likes to keep it that way, but it is simply your natural state of felt oneness with Being. It is a state of connectedness with something immeasurable and indestructible, something that, almost paradoxically, is essentially you and yet is much greater than you. It is finding your true nature beyond name and form.

The inability to feel this connectedness gives rise to the illusion of separation, from yourself and from the world around you. You then perceive yourself, consciously or unconsciously, as an isolated fragment. Fear arises, and conflicts within and without become the norm.

The greatest obstacle to experiencing the reality of your connectedness is identification with your mind, which causes thought to become compulsive. Not to be able to stop thinking is a dreadful affliction, but we don't realize this because almost everybody is suffering from it, so it is considered normal. This incessant mental noise prevents you from finding that realm of inner stillness that is inseparable from Being. It also creates a false mind-made self that casts a shadow of fear and suffering.

Identification with your mind creates an opaque screen of concepts, labels, images, words, judgments, and definitions that blocks all true relationship. It comes between you and yourself, between you and your fellow man and woman, between you and nature, between you and God. It is this screen of thought that creates the illusion of separateness, the illusion that there is you and a totally separate "other." You then forget the essential fact that, underneath the level of physical appearances and separate forms, you are one with all that is.

The mind is a superb instrument if used rightly. Used wrongly, however, it becomes very destructive. To put it more accurately, it is not so much that you use your mind wrongly — you usually don't use it at all. It uses you. This is the disease. You believe that you are your mind. This is the delusion. The instrument has taken you over.

It's almost as if you were possessed without knowing it, and so you take the possessing entity to be yourself.

> **THE BEGINNING OF FREEDOM** is the realization that you are not the possessing entity — the thinker. Knowing this enables you to observe the entity. The moment you start watching the thinker, a higher level of consciousness becomes activated.

You then begin to realize that there is a vast realm of intelligence beyond thought, that thought is only a tiny aspect of that intelligence. You also realize that all the things that truly matter — beauty, love, creativity, joy, inner peace — arise from beyond the mind.

You begin to awaken.

~

FREEING YOURSELF FROM YOUR MIND

The good news is that you can free yourself from your mind. This is the only true liberation. You can take the first step right now.

> **START LISTENING TO THE VOICE IN YOUR HEAD** as often as you can. Pay particular attention to any repetitive thought patterns, those old audiotapes that have been playing in your head perhaps for many years.
>
> This is what I mean by "watching the thinker," which is another way of saying: Listen to the voice in your head, be there as the witnessing presence.
>
> When you listen to that voice, listen to it impartially. That is to say, do not judge. Do not judge or condemn what you hear, for doing so would mean that the same voice has come in again through the back door. You'll soon realize: There is the voice, and here I am listening to it, watching it. This *I am* realization, this sense of your own presence, is not a thought. It arises from beyond the mind.

So when you listen to a thought, you are aware not only of the thought but also of yourself as the witness of the thought. A new dimension of consciousness has come in.

> **AS YOU LISTEN TO THE THOUGHT,** you feel a conscious presence — your deeper self — behind or underneath the thought, as it were. The thought then loses its power over you and quickly subsides, because you are no longer energizing the mind through identification with it. This is the beginning of the end of involuntary and compulsive thinking.

> When a thought subsides, you experience a discontinuity in the mental stream — a gap of “no-mind.” At first, the gaps will be short, a few seconds perhaps, but gradually they will become longer. When these gaps occur, you feel a certain stillness and peace inside you. This is the beginning of your natural state of felt oneness with Being, which is usually obscured by the mind.
>
> With practice, the sense of stillness and peace will deepen. In fact, there is no end to its depth. You will also feel a subtle emanation of joy arising from deep within: the joy of Being.

In this state of inner connectedness, you are much more alert, more awake than in the mind-identified state. You are fully present. It also raises the vibrational frequency of the energy field that gives life to the physical body.

As you go more deeply into this realm of no-mind, as it is sometimes called in the East, you realize the state of pure consciousness. In that state, you feel your own presence with such intensity and such joy that all thinking, all emotions, your physical body, as well as the whole external world become relatively insignificant in comparison to it. And yet this is not a selfish but a selfless state. It takes you beyond what you previously thought of as “your self.” That presence is essentially you and at the same time inconceivably greater than you.

> **INSTEAD OF “WATCHING THE THINKER,”** you can also create a gap in the mind stream simply by directing the focus of your attention into the Now. Just become intensely conscious of the present moment.

This is a deeply satisfying thing to do. In this way, you draw consciousness away from mind activity and create a gap of no-mind in which you are highly alert and aware but not thinking. This is the essence of meditation.

> **IN YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE,** you can practice this by taking any routine activity that normally is only a means to an end and giving it your fullest attention, so that it becomes an end in itself. For example, every time you walk up and down the stairs in your house or place of work, pay close attention to every step, every movement, even your breathing. Be totally present.
>
> Or when you wash your hands, pay attention to all the sense perceptions associated with the activity: the sound and feel of the water, the movement of your hands, the scent of the soap, and so on.
>
> Or when you get into your car, after you close the door, pause for a few seconds and observe the flow of your breath. Become aware of a silent but powerful sense of presence.
>
> There is one certain criterion by which you can measure your success in this practice: the degree of peace that you feel within.

The single most vital step on your journey toward enlightenment is this: Learn to disidentify from your mind. Every time you create a gap in the stream of mind, the light of your consciousness grows stronger.

One day you may catch yourself smiling at the voice in your head, as you would smile at the antics of a child. This means that you no longer take the content of your mind all that seriously, as your sense of self does not depend on it.

~

ENLIGHTENMENT: RISING ABOVE THOUGHT

As you grow up, you form a mental image of who you are, based on your personal and cultural conditioning. We may call this phantom self the ego. It consists of mind activity and can only be kept going through constant thinking. The term *ego* means different things to different people, but when I use it here it means a false self, created by unconscious identification with the mind.

To the ego, the present moment hardly exists. Only past and future are considered important. This total reversal of the truth accounts for the fact that in the ego mode the mind is so dysfunctional. It is always concerned with keeping the past alive, because without it — who are you? It constantly projects itself into the future to ensure its continued survival and to seek some kind of release or fulfillment there. It says: "One day, when this, that, or the other happens, I am going to be okay, happy, at peace."

Even when the ego seems to be concerned with the present, it is not the present that it sees: It misperceives it completely because it looks at it through the eyes of the past. Or it reduces the present to a means to an end, an end that always lies in the mind-projected future. Observe your mind and you'll see that this is how it works.

The present moment holds the key to liberation. But you cannot find the present moment as long as you are your mind.

Enlightenment means rising above thought. In the enlightened state, you still use your thinking mind when needed, but in a much more focused and effective way than before. You use it mostly for practical purposes, but you are free of the involuntary internal dialogue, and there is inner stillness.

When you do use your mind, and particularly when a creative solution is needed, you oscillate every few minutes or so between thought and stillness, between mind and no-mind. No-mind is consciousness without thought. Only in that way is it possible to think creatively, because only in that way does thought have any real power. Thought alone, when it is no longer connected with the much vaster realm of consciousness quickly becomes barren, insane, destructive.

~

EMOTION:
THE BODY'S REACTION TO YOUR MIND

Mind, in the way I use the word, is not just thought. It includes your emotions as well as all unconscious mental-emotional reactive patterns. Emotion arises at the place where mind and body meet. It is the body's reaction to your mind — or you might say a reflection of your mind in the body.

The more you are identified with your thinking, your likes and dislikes, judgments and interpretations, which is to say the less present you are as the watching consciousness, the stronger the emotional energy charge will be, whether you are aware of it or not. If you cannot feel your emotions, if you are cut off from them, you will eventually experience them on a purely physical level, as a physical problem or symptom.

> **IF YOU HAVE DIFFICULTY FEELING YOUR EMOTIONS,** start by focusing attention on the inner energy field of your body. Feel the body from within. This will also put you in touch with your emotions.
>
> If you really want to know your mind, the body will always give you a truthful reflection, so look at the emotion, or rather feel it in your body. If there is an apparent conflict between them, the thought will be the lie, the emotion will be the truth. Not the ultimate truth of who you are, but the relative truth of your state of mind at that time.
>
> You may not yet be able to bring your unconscious mind activity into awareness as thoughts, but it will always be reflected in the body as an emotion, and of this you can become aware.
>
> To watch an emotion in this way is basically the same as listening to or watching a thought, which I described earlier. The only difference is that, while a thought is in your head, an emotion has a strong physical component and so is primarily felt in the body. You can then allow the emotion to be there without being controlled by it. You no longer are the emotion; you are the watcher, the observing presence.

If you practice this, all that is unconscious in you will be brought into the light of consciousness.

> **MAKE IT A HABIT TO ASK YOURSELF:** What’s going on inside me at this moment? That question will point you in the right direction. But don’t analyze, just watch. Focus your attention within. Feel the energy of the emotion.
>
> If there is no emotion present, take your attention more deeply into the inner energy field of your body. It is the doorway into Being.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ORIGIN OF FEAR

The psychological condition of fear is divorced from any concrete and true immediate danger. It comes in many forms: unease, worry, anxiety, nervousness, tension, dread, phobia, and so on. This kind of psychological fear is always of something that might happen, not of something that is happening now. You are in the here and now, while your mind is in the future. This creates an anxiety gap. And if you are identified with your mind and have lost touch with the power and simplicity of the Now, that anxiety gap will be your constant companion. You can always cope with the present moment, but you cannot cope with something that is only a mind projection — you cannot cope with the future.

Moreover, as long as you are identified with your mind, the ego runs your life. Because of its phantom nature, and despite elaborate defense mechanisms, the ego is very vulnerable and insecure, and it sees itself as constantly under threat. This, by the way, is the case even if the ego is outwardly very confident. Now remember that an emotion is the body's reaction to your mind. What message is the body receiving continuously from the ego, the false, mind-made self? Danger, I am under threat. And what is the emotion generated by this continuous message? Fear, of course.

Fear seems to have many causes. Fear of loss, fear of failure, fear of being hurt, and so on, but ultimately all fear is the ego's fear of death, of annihilation. To the ego, death is always just around the corner. In this mind-identified state, fear of death affects every aspect of your life.

For example, even such a seemingly trivial and "normal" thing as the compulsive need to be right in an argument and make the other person wrong — defending the mental position with which you have identified — is due to the fear of death. If you identify with a mental position, then if you are wrong, your mind-based sense of self is seriously threatened with annihilation. So you as the ego cannot afford to be wrong. To be wrong is to die. Wars have been fought over this, and countless relationships have broken down.

Once you have disidentified from your mind, whether you are right or wrong makes no difference to your sense of self at all, so the forcefully compulsive and deeply unconscious need to be right, which is a form of violence, will no longer be there. You can state clearly and firmly how you feel or what you think, but there will be no aggressiveness or defensiveness about it. Your sense of self is then derived from a deeper and truer place within yourself, not from the mind.

> **WATCH OUT FOR ANY KIND OF DEFENSIVENESS** within yourself. What are you defending? An illusory identity, an image in your mind, a fictitious entity. By making this pattern conscious, by witnessing it, you disidentify from it. In the light of your consciousness, the unconscious pattern will then quickly dissolve.

> This is the end of all arguments and power games, which are so corrosive to relationships. Power over others is weakness disguised as strength. True power is within, and it is available to you now.

The mind always seeks to deny the Now and to escape from it. In other words, the more you are identified with your mind, the more you suffer. Or you may put it like this: The more you are able to honor and accept the Now, the more you are free of pain, of suffering — and free of the egoic mind.

If you no longer want to create pain for yourself and others, if you no longer want to add to the residue of past pain that still lives on in you, then don't create any more time, or at least no more than is necessary to deal with the practical aspects of your life. How to stop creating time?

> **REALIZE DEEPLY THAT THE PRESENT MOMENT** is all you ever have. Make the Now the primary focus of your life.
>
> Whereas before you dwelt in time and paid brief visits to the Now, have your dwelling place in the Now and pay brief visits to past and future when required to deal with the practical aspects of your life situation.
>
> Always say "yes" to the present moment.

* * *

END THE DELUSION OF TIME

Here is the key: End the delusion of time. Time and mind are inseparable. Remove time from the mind and it stops — unless you choose to use it.

To be identified with your mind is to be trapped in time: the compulsion to live almost exclusively through memory and anticipation. This creates an endless preoccupation with past and future and an unwillingness to honor and acknowledge the present moment and allow it to be. The compulsion arises because the past gives you an identity and the future holds the promise of salvation, of fulfillment in whatever form. Both are illusions.

The more you are focused on time — past and future — the more you miss the Now, the most precious thing there is.

Why is it the most precious thing? Firstly, because it is the only thing. It's all there is. The eternal present is the space within which your whole life unfolds, the one factor that remains constant. Life is now. There was never a time when your life was not now, nor will there ever be.

Secondly, the Now is the only point that can take you beyond the limited confines of the mind. It is your only point of access into the timeless and formless realm of Being.

Have you ever experienced, done, thought, or felt anything outside the Now? Do you think you ever will? Is it possible for anything to happen or be outside the Now? The answer is obvious, is it not?

Nothing ever happened in the past; it happened in the Now. Nothing will ever happen in the future; it will happen in the Now.

The essence of what I am saying here cannot be understood by the mind. The moment you grasp it, there is a shift in consciousness from mind to Being, from time to presence. Suddenly, everything feels alive, radiates energy, emanates Being.

CHAPTER THREE

ENTERING THE NOW

With the timeless dimension comes a different kind of knowing, one that does not "kill" the spirit that lives within every creature and every thing. A knowing that does not destroy the sacredness and mystery of life but contains a deep love and reverence for all that is. A knowing of which the mind knows nothing.

> **BREAK THE OLD PATTERN** of present-moment denial and present-moment resistance. Make it your practice to withdraw attention from past and future whenever they are not needed. Step out of the time dimension as much as possible in everyday life.
>
> If you find it hard to enter the Now directly, start by observing the habitual tendency of your mind to want to escape from the Now. You will observe that the future is usually imagined as either better or worse than the present. If the imagined future is better, it gives you hope or pleasurable anticipation. If it is worse, it creates anxiety. Both are illusory.
>
> Through self-observation, more presence comes into your life automatically. The moment you realize you are not present, you are present. Whenever you are able to observe your mind, you are no longer trapped in it. Another factor has come in, something that is not of the mind: the witnessing presence.
>
> Be present as the watcher of your mind — of your thoughts and emotions as well as your reactions in various situations. Be at least as interested in your reactions as in the situation or person that causes you to react.
>
> Notice also how often your attention is in the past or future. Don't judge or analyze what you observe. Watch the thought, feel the emotion, observe the reaction. Don't make a personal problem out of them. You will then feel something more powerful than any of those things that you observe: the still, observing presence itself behind the content of your mind, the silent watcher.

Intense presence is needed when certain situations trigger a reaction with a strong emotional charge, such as when your self-image is threatened, a challenge comes into your life that triggers fear, things "go wrong," or an emotional complex from the past is brought up. In those instances, the tendency is for you to become "unconscious." The reaction or emotion takes you over — you "become" it. You act it out. You justify, make wrong, attack, defend. . . except that it isn't you, it's the reactive pattern, the mind in its habitual survival mode.

Identification with the mind gives it more energy; observation of the mind withdraws energy from it. Identification with the mind creates more time; observation of the mind opens up the dimension of the timeless. The energy that is withdrawn from the mind turns into presence. Once you can feel what it means to be present, it becomes much easier to simply choose to step out of the time dimension whenever time is not needed for practical purposes and move more deeply into the Now.

This does not impair your ability to use time — past or future — when you need to refer to it for practical matters. Nor does it impair your ability to use your mind. In fact, it enhances it. When you do use your mind, it will be sharper, more focused.

The enlightened person’s main focus of attention is always the Now, but they are still peripherally aware of time. In other words, they continue to use clock time but are free of psychological time.

* * *

LETTING GO OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TIME

Learn to use time in the practical aspects of your life — we may call this “clock time” — but immediately return to present-moment awareness when those practical matters have been dealt with. In this way, there will be no buildup of “psychological time,” which is identification with the past and continuous compulsive projection into the future.

If you set yourself a goal and work toward it, you are using clock time. You are aware of where you want to go, but you honor and give your fullest attention to the step that you are taking at this moment. If you then become excessively focused on the goal, perhaps because you are seeking happiness, fulfillment, or a more complete sense of self in it, the Now is no longer honored. It becomes reduced to a mere stepping-stone to the future, with no intrinsic value. Clock time then turns into psychological time. Your life’s journey is no longer an adventure, just an obsessive need to arrive, to attain, to “make it.” You no longer see or smell the flowers by the wayside either, nor are you aware of the beauty and the miracle of life that unfolds all around you when you are present in the Now.

Are you always trying to get somewhere other than where you are? Is most of your doing just a means to an end? Is fulfillment always just around the corner or confined to short-lived pleasures, such as sex, food, drink, drugs, or thrills and excitement? Are you always focused on becoming, achieving, and attaining, or alternatively chasing some new thrill or pleasure? Do you believe that if you acquire more things you will become more fulfilled, good enough, or psychologically complete? Are you waiting for a man or woman to give meaning to your life?

In the normal, mind-identified or unenlightened state of consciousness, the power and infinite creative potential that lie concealed in the Now are completely obscured by psychological time. Your life then loses its vibrancy, its freshness, its sense of wonder. The old patterns of thought, emotion, behavior, reaction, and desire are acted out in endless repeat performances, a script in your mind that gives you an identity of sorts but distorts or covers up the reality of the Now. The mind then creates an obsession with the future as an escape from the unsatisfactory present.

What you perceive as future is an intrinsic part of your state of consciousness now. If your mind carries a heavy burden of past, you will experience more of the same. The past perpetuates itself through lack of presence. The quality of your consciousness at this moment is what shapes the future — which, of course, can only be experienced as the Now.

If it is the quality of your consciousness at this moment that determines the future, then what is it that determines the quality of your consciousness? Your degree of presence. So the only place where true change can occur and where the past can be dissolved is the Now.

You may find it hard to recognize that time is the cause of your suffering or your problems. You believe that they are caused by specific situations in your life, and seen from a conventional viewpoint, this is true. But until you have dealt with the basic problem-making dysfunction of the mind — its attachment to past and future and denial of the Now — problems are actually interchangeable.

If all your problems or perceived causes of suffering or unhappiness were miraculously removed for you today, but you had not become more present, more conscious, you would soon find yourself with a similar set of problems or causes of suffering, like a shadow that follows you wherever you go. Ultimately, there is only one problem: the time-bound mind itself.

There is no salvation in time. You cannot be free in the future.

PRESENCE IS THE KEY to freedom, so you can only be free now.

FINDING THE LIFE UNDERNEATH YOUR LIFE SITUATION

What you refer to as your “life” should more accurately be called your “life situation.” It is psychological time: past and future. Certain things in the past didn’t go the way you wanted them to go. You are still resisting what happened in the past, and now you are resisting what is. Hope is what keeps you going, but hope keeps you focused on the future, and this continued focus perpetuates your denial of the Now and therefore your unhappiness.

FORGET ABOUT YOUR LIFE SITUATION for a while and pay attention to your life.

Your life situation exists in time. Your life is now.

Your life situation is mind-stuff. Your life is real.

Find the “narrow gate that leads to life.” It is called the Now. Narrow your life down to this moment. Your life situation may be full of problems — most life situations are — but find out if you have any problem at this moment. Not tomorrow or in ten minutes, but now. Do you have a problem now?

When you are full of problems, there is no room for anything new to enter, no room for a solution. So whenever you can, make some room, create some space, so that you find the life underneath your life situation.

USE YOUR SENSES FULLY. Be where you are. Look around. Just look, don’t interpret. See the light, shapes, colors, textures. Be aware of the silent

> presence of each thing. Be aware of the space that allows everything to be.
>
> Listen to the sounds; don't judge them. Listen to the silence underneath the sounds.
>
> Touch something — anything — and feel and acknowledge its Being.
>
> Observe the rhythm of your breathing; feel the air flowing in and out, feel the life energy inside your body. Allow everything to be, within and without. Allow the "isness" of all things. Move deeply into the Now.

You are leaving behind the deadening world of mental abstraction, of time. You are getting out of the insane mind that is draining you of life energy, just as it is slowly poisoning and destroying the Earth. You are awakening out of the dream of time into the present.

~

ALL PROBLEMS ARE ILLUSIONS OF THE MIND

> **FOCUS YOUR ATTENTION ON THE NOW** and tell me what problem you have at this moment.

I am not getting any answer because it is impossible to have a problem when your attention is fully in the Now. A situation needs to be either dealt with or accepted. Why make it into a problem?

The mind unconsciously loves problems because they give you an identity of sorts. This is normal, and it is insane. "Problem" means that you are dwelling on a situation mentally without there being a true intention or possibility of taking action now and that you are unconsciously making it part of your sense of self. You become so overwhelmed by your life situation that you lose your sense of life, of Being. Or you are carrying in your mind the insane burden of a hundred things that you will or may have to do in the future instead of focusing your attention on the one thing that you can do now.

> **WHEN YOU CREATE A PROBLEM,** you create pain. All it takes is a simple choice, a simple decision: No matter what happens, I will create no more pain for myself. I will create no more problems.

Although it is a simple choice, it is also very radical. You won't make that choice unless you are truly fed up with suffering, unless you have truly had enough. And you won't be able to go through with it unless you access the power of the Now. If you create no more pain for yourself, then you create no more pain for others. You also no longer contaminate the beautiful Earth, your inner space, and the collective human psyche with the negativity of problem making.

Should a situation arise that you need to deal with now, your action will be clear and incisive if it arises out of present-moment awareness. It is also more likely to be effective. It will not be a reaction coming from the past conditioning of your mind but an intuitive response to the situation. In other instances, when the time-bound mind would have reacted, you will find it more effective to do nothing — just stay centered in the Now.

* * *

THE JOY OF BEING

To alert you that you have allowed yourself to be taken over by psychological time, you can use a simple criterion.

> **ASK YOURSELF:** Is there joy, ease, and lightness in what I am doing? If there isn't, then time is covering up the present moment, and life is perceived as a burden or a struggle.
>
> If there is no joy, ease, or lightness in what you are doing, it does not necessarily mean that you need to change what you are doing. It may be sufficient to change the how. "How" is always more important than "what." See if you can give much more attention to the doing than to the result that you want to achieve through it. Give your fullest attention to whatever the moment presents. This implies that you also completely accept what is, because you cannot give your full attention to something and at the same time resist it.

As soon as you honor the present moment, all unhappiness and struggle dissolve, and life begins to flow with joy and ease. When you act out of present-moment awareness, whatever you do becomes imbued with a sense of quality, care, and love — even the most simple action.

> **DO NOT BE CONCERNED WITH THE FRUIT OF YOUR ACTION** — just give attention to the action itself. The fruit will come of its own accord. This is a powerful spiritual practice.

When the compulsive striving away from the Now ceases, the joy of Being flows into everything you do. The moment your attention turns to the Now, you feel a presence, a stillness, a peace. You no longer depend on the future for fulfillment and satisfaction — you don't look to it for salvation. Therefore, you are not attached to the results. Neither failure nor success has the power to change your inner state of Being. You have found the life underneath your life situation.

In the absence of psychological time, your sense of self is derived from Being, not from your personal past. Therefore, the psychological need to become anything other than who you are already is no longer there. In the world, on the level of your life situation, you may indeed become wealthy, knowledgeable, successful, free of this or that, but in the deeper dimension of Being you are complete and whole now.

* * *

THE TIMELESS STATE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

When every cell of your body is so present that it feels vibrant with life, and when you can feel that life every moment as the joy of Being, then it can be said that you are free of time. To be free of time is to be free of the psychological need of the past for your identity and the future for your fulfillment. It represents the most profound transformation of consciousness that you can imagine.

> **WHEN YOU HAVE HAD YOUR FIRST FEW GLIMPSES OF THE TIMELESS STATE OF CONSCIOUSNESS,** you begin to move back and forth between the dimensions of time and presence. First you become aware of just how rarely your attention is truly in the Now. But to know that you are not present is a great success: That knowing is presence — even if initially it only lasts for a couple of seconds of clock time before it is lost again.
>
> Then, with increasing frequency, you choose to have the focus of your consciousness in the present moment rather than in the past or future, and whenever you realize that you had lost the Now, you are able to stay in it not just for a couple of seconds, but for longer periods as perceived from the external perspective of clock time.

So before you are firmly established in the state of presence, which is to say, before you are fully conscious, you shift back and forth for a while between consciousness and unconsciousness, between the state of presence and the state of mind identification. You lose the Now, and you return to it, again and again. Eventually, presence becomes your predominant state.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISSOLVING UNCONSCIOUSNESS

It is essential to bring more consciousness into your life in ordinary situations when everything is going relatively smoothly. In this way, you grow in presence power. It generates an energy field in you and around you of a high vibrational frequency. No unconsciousness, no negativity, no discord or violence can enter that field and survive, just as darkness cannot survive in the presence of light.

When you learn to be the witness of your thoughts and emotions, which is an essential part of being present, you may be surprised when you first become aware of the background "static" of ordinary unconsciousness and realize how rarely, if ever, you are truly at ease within yourself.

On the level of your thinking, you will find a great deal of resistance in the form of judgment, discontent, and mental projection away from the Now. On the emotional level, there will be an undercurrent of unease, tension, boredom, or nervousness. Both are aspects of the mind in its habitual resistance mode.

> **OBSERVE THE MANY WAYS IN WHICH UNEASE,** discontent, and tension arise within you through unnecessary judgment, resistance to what is, and denial of the Now.
>
> Anything unconscious dissolves when you shine the light of consciousness on it.

Once you know how to dissolve ordinary unconsciousness, the light of your presence will shine brightly, and it will be much easier to deal with deep unconsciousness whenever you feel its gravitational pull. However, ordinary unconsciousness may not be easy to detect initially because it is so normal.

> **MAKE IT A HABIT TO MONITOR YOUR MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL STATE** through self-observation.
>
> "Am I at ease at this moment?" is a good question to ask yourself frequently.
>
> Or you can ask: "What's going on inside me at this moment?"

Be at least as interested in what goes on inside you as what happens outside. If you get the inside right, the outside will fall into place. Primary reality is within, secondary reality without.

> **BUT DON'T ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS IMMEDIATELY.** Direct your attention inward. Have a look inside yourself.
>
> What kind of thoughts is your mind producing?
>
> What do you feel?
>
> Direct your attention into the body. Is there any tension?

> Once you detect that there is a low level of unease, the background static, see in what way you are avoiding, resisting, or denying life — by denying the Now.

There are many ways in which people unconsciously resist the present moment. With practice, your power of self-observation, of monitoring your inner state, will become sharpened.

~

WHEREVER YOU ARE, BE THERE TOTALLY

Are you stressed? Are you so busy getting to the future that the present is reduced to a means of getting there? Stress is caused by being "here" but wanting to be "there," or being in the present but wanting to be in the future. It's a split that tears you apart inside.

Does the past take up a great deal of your attention? Do you frequently talk and think about it, either positively or negatively? The great things that you have achieved, your adventures or experiences, or your victim story and the dreadful things that were done to you, or maybe what you did to someone else?

Are your thought processes creating guilt, pride, resentment, anger, regret, or self-pity? Then you are not only reinforcing a false sense of self but also helping to accelerate your body's aging process by creating an accumulation of past in your psyche. Verify this for yourself by observing those around you who have a strong tendency to hold on to the past.

> **DIE TO THE PAST EVERY MOMENT.** You don't need it. Only refer to it when it is absolutely relevant to the present. Feel the power of this moment and the fullness of Being. Feel your presence.

Are you worried? Do you have many "what if " thoughts? You are identified with your mind, which is projecting itself into an imaginary future situation and creating fear. There is no way that you can cope with such a situation, because it doesn't exist. It's a mental phantom.

You can stop this health- and life-corroding insanity simply by acknowledging the present moment.

> **BECOME AWARE OF YOUR BREATHING.** Feel the air flowing in and out of your body. Feel your inner energy field. All that you ever have to deal with, cope with, in real life — as opposed to imaginary mind projections — is this moment.
>
> Ask yourself what "problem" you have right now, not next year, tomorrow, or five minutes from now. What is wrong with this moment?

You can always cope with the Now, but you can never cope with the future — nor do you have to. The answer, the strength, the right action, or the resource will be there when you need it, not before, not after.

Are you a habitual "waiter"? How much of your life do you spend waiting? What I call "small-scale waiting" is waiting in line at the post office, in a traffic jam, at the airport, or waiting for someone to arrive, to finish work, and so on. "Large-scale waiting" is waiting for the next vacation, for a better job, for the children to grow up, for a truly meaningful relationship, for success, to make money, to be important, to become enlightened. It is not uncommon for people to spend their whole life waiting to start living.

Waiting is a state of mind. Basically, it means that you want the future; you don't want the present. You don't want what you've got, and you want what you haven't got. With every kind of waiting, you unconsciously create inner conflict between your here and now, where you don't want to be, and the projected future, where you want to be. This greatly reduces the quality of your life by making you lose the present.

For example, many people are waiting for prosperity. It cannot come in the future. When you honor, acknowledge, and fully accept your present reality — where you are, who you are, what you are doing right now — when you fully accept what you have got, you are grateful for what you have got, grateful for what is, grateful for Being. Gratitude for the present moment and the fullness of life now is true prosperity. It cannot come in the future. Then, in time, that prosperity manifests for you in various ways.

If you are dissatisfied with what you have got, or even frustrated or angry about your present lack, that may motivate you to become rich, but even if you do make millions, you will continue to experience the inner condition of lack, and deep down you will continue to feel unfulfilled. You may have many exciting experiences that money can buy, but they will come and go and always leave you with an empty feeling and the need for further physical or psychological gratification. You won't abide in Being and so feel the fullness of life now that alone is true prosperity.

> **GIVE UP WAITING AS A STATE OF MIND.** When you catch yourself slipping into waiting . . . snap out of it. Come into the present moment. Just be, and enjoy being. If you are present, there is never any need for you to wait for anything.
>
> So next time somebody says, "Sorry to have kept you waiting," you can reply, "That's all right, I wasn't waiting. I was just standing here enjoying myself — in joy in my self."

These are just a few of the habitual mind strategies for denying the present moment that are part of ordinary unconsciousness. They are easy to overlook because they are so much a part of normal living: the background static of perpetual discontent. But the more you practice monitoring your inner mental-emotional state, the easier it will be to know when you have been trapped in past or future, which is to say unconscious, and to awaken out of the dream of time into the present.

But beware: The false, unhappy self, based on mind identification, lives on time. It knows that the present moment is its own death and so feels very threatened by it. It will do all it can to take you out of it. It will try to keep you trapped in time.

In a sense, the state of presence could be compared to waiting. It is a qualitatively different kind of waiting, one that requires your total alertness. Something could happen at any moment, and if you are not absolutely awake, absolutely still, you will miss it. In that state, all your attention is in the Now. There is none left for daydreaming, thinking, remembering, anticipating. There is no tension in it, no fear, just alert presence. You are present with your whole Being, with every cell of your body.

In that state, the “you” that has a past and a future, the personality if you like, is hardly there anymore. And yet nothing of value is lost. You are still essentially yourself. In fact, you are more fully yourself than you ever were before, or rather it is only now that you are truly yourself.

~

THE PAST CANNOT SURVIVE IN YOUR PRESENCE

Whatever you need to know about the unconscious past in you, the challenges of the present will bring it out. If you delve into the past, it will become a bottomless pit: There is always more. You may think that you need more time to understand the past or become free of it, in other words, that the future will eventually free you of the past. This is a delusion. Only the present can free you of the past. More time cannot free you of time.

Access the power of Now. That is the key. The power of Now is none other than the power of your presence, your consciousness liberated from thought forms. So deal with the past on the level of the present. The more attention you give to the past, the more you energize it, and the more likely you are to make a “self ” out of it.

Don’t misunderstand: Attention is essential, but not to the past as past. Give attention to the present; give attention to your behavior, to your reactions, moods, thoughts, emotions, fears, and desires as they occur in the present. There’s the past in you. If you can be present enough to watch all those things, not critically or analytically but nonjudgmentally, then you are dealing with the past and dissolving it through the power of your presence.

You cannot find yourself by going into the past. You find yourself by coming into the present.

CHAPTER FIVE

BEAUTY ARISES IN THE TILLNESS OF YOUR PRESENCE

Presence is needed to become aware of the beauty, the majesty, the sacredness of nature. Have you ever gazed up into the infinity of space on a clear night, awestruck by the absolute stillness and inconceivable vastness of it? Have you listened, truly listened, to the sound of a mountain stream in the forest? Or to the song of a blackbird at dusk on a quiet summer evening?

To become aware of such things, the mind needs to be still. You have to put down for a moment your personal baggage of problems, of past and future, as well as all your knowledge; otherwise, you will see but not see, hear but not hear. Your total presence is required.

> **BEYOND THE BEAUTY OF THE EXTERNAL FORMS,** there is more here: something that cannot be named, something ineffable, some deep, inner, holy essence. Whenever and wherever there is beauty, this inner essence shines through somehow. It only reveals itself to you when you are present.
>
> Could it be that this nameless essence and your presence are one and the same?
>
> Would it be there without your presence?
>
> Go deeply into it. Find out for yourself.

* * *

REALIZING PURE CONSCIOUSNESS

Whenever you watch the mind, you withdraw consciousness from mind forms, which then becomes what we call the watcher or the witness. Consequently, the watcher — pure consciousness beyond form — becomes stronger, and the mental formations become weaker.

When we talk about watching the mind, we are personalizing an event that is truly of cosmic significance: Through you, consciousness is awakening out of its dream of identification with form and withdrawing from form. This foreshadows, but is already part of, an event that is probably still in the distant future as far as chronological time is concerned. The event is called — the end of the world.

> **TO STAY PRESENT IN EVERYDAY LIFE,** it helps to be deeply rooted within yourself; otherwise, the mind, which has incredible momentum, will drag you along like a wild river.
>
> It means to inhabit your body fully. To always have some of your attention

> in the inner energy field of your body. To feel the body from within, so to speak. Body awareness keeps you present. It anchors you in the Now.

The body that you can see and touch cannot take you into Being. But that visible and tangible body is only an outer shell, or rather a limited and distorted perception of a deeper reality. In your natural state of connectedness with Being, this deeper reality can be felt every moment as the invisible inner body, the animating presence within you. So to "inhabit the body" is to feel the body from within, to feel the life inside the body and thereby come to know that you are beyond the outer form.

You are cut off from Being as long as your mind takes up all your attention. When this happens — and it happens continuously for most people — you are not in your body. The mind absorbs all your consciousness and transforms it into mind stuff. You cannot stop thinking.

To become conscious of Being, you need to reclaim consciousness from the mind. This is one of the most essential tasks on your spiritual journey. It will free vast amounts of consciousness that previously had been trapped in useless and compulsive thinking. A very effective way of doing this is simply to take the focus of your attention away from thinking and direct it into the body, where Being can be felt in the first instance as the invisible energy field that gives life to what you perceive as the physical body.

* * *

CONNECTING WITH THE INNER BODY

Please try it now. You may find it helpful to close your eyes for this practice. Later on, when "being in the body" has become natural and easy, this will no longer be necessary.

> **DIRECT YOUR ATTENTION INTO THE BODY.** Feel it from within. Is it alive? Is there life in your hands, arms, legs, and feet — in your abdomen, your chest?
>
> Can you feel the subtle energy field that pervades the entire body and gives vibrant life to every organ and every cell? Can you feel it simultaneously in all parts of the body as a single field of energy?
>
> Keep focusing on the feeling of your inner body for a few moments. Do not start to think about it. Feel it.

The more attention you give it, the clearer and stronger this feeling will become. It will feel as if every cell is becoming more alive, and if you have a strong visual sense, you may get an image of your body becoming luminous. Although such an image can help you temporarily, pay more attention to the feeling than to any image that may arise. An image, no matter how beautiful or powerful, is already defined in form, so there is less scope for penetrating more deeply.

* * *

GOING DEEPLY INTO THE BODY

To go even more deeply into the body, try the following meditation. Ten to fifteen minutes of clock time should be sufficient.

> **MAKE SURE FIRST THAT THERE ARE NO EXTERNAL DISTRACTIONS** such as telephones or people who are likely to interrupt you. Sit on a chair, but don't lean back. Keep the spine erect. Doing so will help you to stay alert. Alternatively, choose your own favorite position for meditation.
>
> Make sure the body is relaxed. Close your eyes. Take a few deep breaths. Feel yourself breathing into the lower abdomen, as it were. Observe how it expands and contracts slightly with each in and out breath.
>
> Then become aware of the entire inner energy field of the body. Don't think about it — feel it. By doing this, you reclaim consciousness from the mind. If you find it helpful, use the "light" visualization I just described.
>
> When you can feel the inner body clearly as a single field of energy, let go, if possible, of any visual image and focus exclusively on the feeling. If you can, also drop any mental image you may still have of the physical body. All that is left then is an all-encompassing sense of presence or "beingness," and the inner body is felt to be without a boundary.
>
> Then take your attention even more deeply into that feeling. Become one with it. Merge with the energy field, so that there is no longer a perceived duality of the observer and the observed, of you and your body. The distinction between inner and outer also dissolves now, so there is no inner body anymore. By going deeply into the body, you have transcended the body.
>
> Stay in this realm of pure Being for as long as feels comfortable; then become aware again of the physical body, your breathing and physical senses, and open your eyes. Look at your surroundings for a few minutes in a meditative way — that is, without labeling them mentally — and continue to feel the inner body as you do so.

Having access to that formless realm is truly liberating. It frees you from bondage to form and identification with form. We may call it the Unmanifested, the invisible Source of all things, the Being within all beings. It is a realm of deep stillness and peace, but also of joy and intense aliveness. Whenever you are present, you become "transparent" to some extent to the light, the pure consciousness that emanates from this Source. You also realize that the light is not separate from who you are but constitutes your very essence.

When your consciousness is directed outward, mind and world arise. When it is directed inward, it realizes its own Source and returns home into the Unmanifested.

Then, when your consciousness comes back to the manifested world, you reassume the form identity that you temporarily relinquished. You have a name, a past, a life situation, a future. But in one essential respect, you are not the same person you were before: You will have glimpsed a reality within yourself that is not "of this world," although it isn't separate from it, just as it isn't separate from you.

Now let your spiritual practice be this:

> **AS YOU GO ABOUT YOUR LIFE,** don't give 100 percent of your attention to the external world and to your mind. Keep some within.
>
> Feel the inner body even when engaged in everyday activities, especially when engaged in relationships or when you are relating with nature. Feel the stillness deep inside it. Keep the portal open.
>
> It is quite possible to be conscious of the Unmanifested throughout your life. You feel it as a deep sense of peace somewhere in the background, a stillness that never leaves you, no matter what happens out here. You become a bridge between the Unmanifested and the manifested, between God and the world.
>
> This is the state of connectedness with the Source that we call enlightenment.

~

HAVE DEEP ROOTS WITHIN

The key is to be in a state of permanent connectedness with your inner body — to feel it at all times. This will rapidly deepen and transform your life. The more consciousness you direct into the inner body, the higher its vibrational frequency becomes, much like a light that grows brighter as you turn up the dimmer switch and so increase the flow of electricity. At this higher energy level, negativity cannot affect you anymore, and you tend to attract new circumstances that reflect this higher frequency.

If you keep your attention in the body as much as possible, you will be anchored in the Now. You won't lose yourself in the external world, and you won't lose yourself in your mind. Thoughts and emotions, fears and desires may still be there to some extent, but they won't take you over.

> **PLEASE EXAMINE WHERE YOUR ATTENTION IS** at this moment. You are listening to me, or you are reading these words in a book. That is the focus of your attention. You are also peripherally aware of your surroundings, other people, and so on. Furthermore, there may be some mind activity around what you are hearing or reading, some mental commentary.
>
> Yet there is no need for any of this to absorb all your attention. See if you can be in touch with your inner body at the same time. Keep some of your attention within. Don't let it all flow out. Feel your whole body from within, as a single field of energy. It is almost as if you were listening or reading with your whole body. Let this be your practice in the days and weeks to come.
>
> Do not give all your attention away to the mind and the external world. By

all means focus on what you are doing, but feel the inner body at the same time whenever possible. Stay rooted within. Then observe how this changes your state of consciousness and the quality of what you are doing.

Please don't just accept or reject what I am saying. Put it to the test.

◆

STRENGTHENING THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

There is a simple but powerful self-healing meditation that you can do whenever you feel the need to boost your immune system. It is particularly effective if used when you feel the first symptoms of an illness, but it also works with illnesses that are already entrenched if you use it at frequent intervals and with an intense focus. It will also counteract any disruption of your energy field by some form of negativity.

It is not a substitute, however, for the moment-to-moment practice of being in the body; otherwise, its effect will only be temporary. Here it is.

> **WHEN YOU ARE UNOCCUPIED FOR A FEW MINUTES,** and especially last thing at night before falling asleep and first thing in the morning before getting up, "flood" your body with consciousness. Close your eyes. Lie flat on your back. Choose different parts of your body to focus your attention on briefly at first: hands, feet, arms, legs, abdomen, chest, head, and so on. Feel the life energy inside those parts as intensely as you can. Stay with each part for fifteen seconds or so.
>
> Then let your attention run through the body like a wave a few times, from feet to head and back again. This need only take a minute or so. After that, feel the inner body in its totality, as a single field of energy. Hold that feeling for a few minutes.
>
> Be intensely present during that time, present in every cell of your body.

Don't be concerned if the mind occasionally succeeds in drawing your attention out of the body and you lose yourself in some thought. As soon as you notice that this has happened, just return your attention to the inner body.

◆

CREATIVE USE OF MIND

If you need to use your mind for a specific purpose, use it in conjunction with your inner body. Only if you are able to be conscious without thought can you use your mind creatively, and the easiest way to enter that state is through your body.

> **WHENEVER AN ANSWER, A SOLUTION, OR A CREATIVE IDEA IS NEEDED,** stop thinking for a moment by focusing attention on your inner energy field. Become aware of the stillness.
>
> When you resume thinking, it will be fresh and creative. In any thought

activity, make it a habit to go back and forth every few minutes or so between thinking and an inner kind of listening, an inner stillness.

We could say: Don't just think with your head, think with your whole body.

* * *

LET THE BREATH TAKE YOU INTO THE BODY

If at any time you are finding it hard to get in touch with the inner body, it is usually easier to focus on your breathing first. Conscious breathing, which is a powerful meditation in its own right, will gradually put you in touch with the body.

FOLLOW THE BREATH WITH YOUR ATTENTION as it moves in and out of your body. Breathe into the body, and feel your abdomen expanding and contracting slightly with each inhalation and exhalation.

If you find it easy to visualize, close your eyes and see yourself surrounded by light or immersed in a luminous substance — a sea of consciousness. Then breathe in that light. Feel that luminous substance filling up your body and making it luminous also.

Then gradually focus more on the feeling. Don't get attached to any visual image. You are now in your body. You have accessed the power of Now.

PART TWO

RELATIONSHIP AS SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Love is a state of Being.
Your love is not outside; it is deep within you.
You can never lose it, and it cannot leave you.
It is not dependent on some other body,
some external form.

CHAPTER SIX

DISSOLVING THE PAIN-BODY

The greater part of human pain is unnecessary. It is self-created as long as the unobserved mind runs your life. The pain that you create now is always some form of nonacceptance, some form of unconscious resistance to what is.

On the level of thought, the resistance is some form of judgment. On the emotional level, it is some form of negativity. The intensity of the pain depends on the degree of resistance to the present moment, and this in turn depends on how strongly you are identified with your mind. The mind always seeks to deny the Now and to escape from it.

In other words, the more you are identified with your mind, the more you suffer. Or you may put it like this: The more you are able to honor and accept the Now, the more you are free of pain, of suffering — and free of the egoic mind.

Some spiritual teachings state that all pain is ultimately an illusion, and this is true. The question is: Is it true for you? A mere belief doesn't make it true. Do you want to experience pain for the rest of your life and keep saying that it is an illusion? Does that free you from the pain? What we are concerned with here is how you can realize this truth — that is, make it real in your own experience.

Pain is inevitable as long as you are identified with your mind, which is to say as long as you are unconscious, spiritually speaking. I am talking here primarily of emotional pain, which is also the main cause of physical pain and physical disease. Resentment, hatred, self-pity, guilt, anger, depression, jealousy, and so on, even the slightest irritation, are all forms of pain. And every pleasure or emotional high contains within itself the seed of pain: its inseparable opposite, which will manifest in time.

Anybody who has ever taken drugs to get "high" will know that the high eventually turns into a low, that the pleasure turns into some form of pain. Many people also know from their own experience how easily and quickly an intimate relationship can turn from a source of pleasure to a source of pain. Seen from a higher perspective, both the negative and the positive polarities are faces of the same coin, are part of the underlying pain that is inseparable from the mind-identified egoic state of consciousness.

There are two levels to your pain: the pain that you create now, and the pain from the past that still lives on in your mind and body.

As long as you are unable to access the power of the Now, every emotional pain that you experience leaves behind a residue of pain that lives on in you. It merges with the pain from the past, which was already there, and becomes lodged in your mind and body. This, of course, includes the pain you suffered as a child, caused by the unconsciousness of the world into which you were born.

This accumulated pain is a negative energy field that occupies your body and mind.

If you look on it as an invisible entity in its own right, you are getting quite close to the truth. It's the emotional pain-body.

The pain-body has two modes of being: dormant and active. It may be dormant 90 percent of the time; in a deeply unhappy person, though, it may be active up to 100 percent of the time. Some people live almost entirely through their pain-body, while others may experience it only in certain situations, such as intimate relationships, or situations linked with past loss or abandonment, physical or emotional hurt, and so on.

Anything can trigger it, particularly if it resonates with a pain pattern from your past. When it is ready to awaken from its dormant stage, even a thought or an innocent remark made by someone close to you can activate it.

~

BREAKING IDENTIFICATION WITH THE PAIN-BODY

> **THE PAIN-BODY DOESN'T WANT YOU TO OBSERVE IT DIRECTLY** and see it for what it is. The moment you observe the pain-body, feel its energy field within you, and take your attention into it, the identification is broken.
>
> A higher dimension of consciousness has come in. I call it presence. You are now the witness or the watcher of the pain-body. This means that it cannot use you anymore by pretending to be you, and it can no longer replenish itself through you. You have found your own innermost strength.

Some pain-bodies are obnoxious but relatively harmless, for example, like a child who won't stop whining. Others are vicious and destructive monsters, true demons. Some are physically violent; many more are emotionally violent. Some will attack people around you or close to you, while others may attack you, their host. Thoughts and feelings you have about your life then become deeply negative and self-destructive. Illnesses and accidents are often created in this way. Some pain-bodies drive their hosts to suicide.

When you thought you knew a person and then you are suddenly confronted with this alien, nasty creature for the first time, you are in for quite a shock. It is more important, however, to observe it in yourself than in someone else.

> **WATCH OUT FOR ANY SIGN OF UNHAPPINESS IN YOURSELF,** in whatever form — it may be the awakening pain-body. This can take the form of irritation, impatience, a somber mood, a desire to hurt, anger, rage, depression, a need to have some drama in your relationship, and so on. Catch it the moment it awakens from its dormant state.

The pain-body wants to survive, just like every other entity in existence, and it can only survive if it gets you to unconsciously identify with it. It can then rise up, take you over, "become you," and live through you.

It needs to get its "food" through you. It will feed on any experience that resonates with its own kind of energy, anything that creates further pain in whatever form: anger, destructiveness, hatred, grief, emotional drama, violence, and even illness. So the pain-body, when it has taken you over, will create a situation in your life that reflects back its own energy frequency for it to feed on. Pain can only feed on pain. Pain cannot feed on joy. It finds it quite indigestible.

Once the pain-body has taken you over, you want more pain. You become a victim or a perpetrator. You want to inflict pain, or you want to suffer pain, or both. There isn't really much difference between the two. You are not conscious of this, of course, and will vehemently claim that you do not want pain. But look closely and you will find that your thinking and behavior are designed to keep the pain going, for yourself and others. If you were truly conscious of it, the pattern would dissolve, for to want more pain is insanity, and nobody is consciously insane.

The pain-body, which is the dark shadow cast by the ego, is actually afraid of the light of your consciousness. It is afraid of being found out. Its survival depends on your unconscious identification with it, as well as on your unconscious fear of facing the pain that lives in you. But if you don't face it, if you don't bring the light of your consciousness into the pain, you will be forced to relive it again and again.

The pain-body may seem to you like a dangerous monster that you cannot bear to look at, but I assure you that it is an insubstantial phantom that cannot prevail against the power of your presence.

> **WHEN YOU BECOME THE WATCHER** and start to disidentify, the pain-body will continue to operate for a while and will try to trick you into identifying with it again. Although you are no longer energizing it through your identification, it has a certain momentum, just like a spinning wheel that will keep turning for a while even when it is no longer being propelled. At this stage, it may also create physical aches and pains in different parts of the body, but they won't last.
>
> Stay present, stay conscious. Be the ever-alert guardian of your inner space. You need to be present enough to be able to watch the pain-body directly and feel its energy. It then cannot control your thinking.

The moment your thinking is aligned with the energy field of the pain-body, you are identified with it and again feeding it with your thoughts. For example, if anger is the predominant energy vibration of the pain-body and you think angry thoughts, dwelling on what someone did to you or what you are going to do to him or her, then you have become unconscious, and the pain-body has become "you." Where there is anger, there is always pain underneath.

Or when a dark mood comes upon you and you start getting into a negative mind-pattern and thinking how dreadful your life is, your thinking has become aligned with the pain-body, and you have become unconscious and vulnerable to the pain-body's attack.

"Unconscious," the way that I use the word here, means to be identified with some mental or emotional pattern. It implies a complete absence of the watcher.

TRANSMUTING SUFFERING INTO CONSCIOUSNESS

Sustained conscious attention severs the link between the pain-body and your thought processes and brings about the process of transmutation. It is as if the pain becomes fuel for the flame of your consciousness, which then burns more brightly as a result.

This is the esoteric meaning of the ancient art of alchemy: the transmutation of base metal into gold, of suffering into consciousness. The split within is healed, and you become whole again. Your responsibility then is not to create further pain.

> **FOCUS ATTENTION ON THE FEELING INSIDE YOU.** Know that it is the pain-body. Accept that it is there. Don't think about it — don't let the feeling turn into thinking. Don't judge or analyze. Don't make an identity for yourself out of it. Stay present, and continue to be the observer of what is happening inside you.
>
> Become aware not only of the emotional pain but also of "the one who observes," the silent watcher. This is the power of the Now, the power of your own conscious presence. Then see what happens.

EGO IDENTIFICATION WITH THE PAIN-BODY

The process that I have just described is profoundly powerful yet simple. It could be taught to a child, and hopefully one day it will be one of the first things children learn in school. Once you have understood the basic principle of being present as the watcher of what happens inside you — and you "understand" it by experiencing it — you have at your disposal the most potent transformational tool.

This is not to deny that you may encounter intense inner resistance to disidentifying from your pain. This will be the case particularly if you have lived closely identified with your emotional pain-body for most of your life and the whole or a large part of your sense of self is invested in it. What this means is that you have made an unhappy self out of your pain-body and believe that this mind-made fiction is who you are. In that case, unconscious fear of losing your identity will create strong resistance to any disidentification. In other words, you would rather be in pain — be the pain-body — than take a leap into the unknown and risk losing the familiar unhappy self.

> **OBSERVE THE RESISTANCE WITHIN YOURSELF.** Observe the attachment to your pain. Be very alert. Observe the peculiar pleasure you derive from being unhappy. Observe the compulsion to talk or think about it. The resistance will cease if you make it conscious.
>
> You can then take your attention into the pain-body, stay present as the witness, and so initiate its transmutation.

Only you can do this. Nobody can do it for you. But if you are fortunate enough to find someone who is intensely conscious, if you can be with them and join them in the state of presence, that can be helpful and will accelerate things. In this way, your own light will quickly grow stronger.

When a log that has only just started to burn is placed next to one that is burning fiercely, and after a while they are separated again, the first log will be burning with much greater intensity. After all, it is the same fire. To be such a fire is one of the functions of a spiritual teacher. Some therapists may also be able to fulfill that function, provided that they have gone beyond the level of mind and can create and sustain a state of intense conscious presence while they are working with you.

The first thing to remember is this: As long as you make an identity for yourself out of the pain, you cannot become free of it. As long as part of your sense of self is invested in your emotional pain, you will unconsciously resist or sabotage every attempt that you make to heal that pain.

Why? Quite simply because you want to keep yourself intact, and the pain has become an essential part of you. This is an unconscious process, and the only way to overcome it is to make it conscious.

* * *

THE POWER OF YOUR PRESENCE

TO SUDDENLY SEE that you are or have been attached to your pain can be quite a shocking realization. The moment you realize this, you have broken the attachment.

The pain-body is an energy field, almost like an entity, that has become temporarily lodged in your inner space. It is life energy that has become trapped, energy that is no longer flowing.

Of course, the pain-body is there because of certain things that happened in the past. It is the living past in you, and if you identify with it, you identify with the past. A victim identity is the belief that the past is more powerful than the present, which is the opposite of the truth. It is the belief that other people and what they did to you are responsible for who you are now, for your emotional pain or your inability to be your true self.

The truth is that the only power there is, is contained within this moment: It is the power of your presence. Once you know that, you also realize that you are responsible for your inner space now — nobody else is — and that the past cannot prevail against the power of the Now.

Unconsciousness creates it; consciousness transmutes it into itself. St. Paul expressed this universal principle beautifully: “Everything is shown up by being exposed to the light, and whatever is exposed to the light itself becomes light.”

Just as you cannot fight the darkness, you cannot fight the pain-body. Trying to do so would create inner conflict and thus further pain. Watching it is enough. Watching it implies accepting it as part of what is at that moment.

CHAPTER SEVEN

FROM ADDICTIVE TO ENLIGHTENED RELATIONSHIPS

LOVE/HATE RELATIONSHIPS

Unless and until you access the consciousness frequency of presence, all relationships, and particularly intimate relationships, are deeply flawed and ultimately dysfunctional. They may seem perfect for a while, such as when you are "in love," but invariably that apparent perfection gets disrupted as arguments, conflicts, dissatisfaction, and emotional or even physical violence occur with increasing frequency.

It seems that most "love relationships" become love/hate relationships before long. Love can then turn into savage attack, feelings of hostility, or complete withdrawal of affection at the flick of a switch. This is considered normal.

If in your relationships you experience both "love" and the opposite of love — attack, emotional violence, and so on — then it is likely that you are confusing ego attachment and addictive clinging with love. You cannot love your partner one moment and attack him or her the next. True love has no opposite. If your "love" has an opposite, then it is not love but a strong ego-need for a more complete and deeper sense of self, a need that the other person temporarily meets. It is the ego's substitute for salvation, and for a short time it almost does feel like salvation.

But there comes a point when your partner behaves in ways that fail to meet your needs, or rather those of your ego. The feelings of fear, pain, and lack that are an intrinsic part of egoic consciousness but had been covered up by the "love relationship" now resurface.

Just as with every other addiction, you are on a high when the drug is available, but invariably there comes a time when the drug no longer works for you.

When those painful feelings reappear, you feel them even more strongly than before, and what is more, you now perceive your partner as the cause of those feelings. This means that you project them outward and attack the other with all the savage violence that is part of your pain.

This attack may awaken the partner's own pain, and he or she may counter your attack. At this point, the ego is still unconsciously hoping that its attack or its attempts at manipulation will be sufficient punishment to induce your partner to change their behavior, so that it can use them again as a cover-up for your pain.

Every addiction arises from an unconscious refusal to face and move through your own pain. Every addiction starts with pain and ends with pain. Whatever the substance you are addicted to — alcohol, food, legal or illegal drugs, or a person — you are using something or somebody to cover up your pain.

That is why, after the initial euphoria has passed, there is so much unhappiness, so much pain in intimate relationships. They do not cause pain and unhappiness. They bring out the pain and unhappiness that is already in you. Every addiction does that. Every addiction reaches a point where it does not work for you anymore, and then you feel the pain more intensely than ever.

This is one reason why most people are always trying to escape from the present moment and are seeking some kind of salvation in the future. The first thing that they might encounter if they focused their attention on the Now is their own pain, and this is what they fear. If they only knew how easy it is to access in the Now the power of presence that dissolves the past and its pain, the reality that dissolves the illusion. If they only knew how close they are to their own reality, how close to God.

Avoidance of relationships in an attempt to avoid pain is not the answer either. The pain is there anyway. Three failed relationships in as many years are more likely to force you into awakening than three years on a desert island or shut away in your room. But if you could bring intense presence into your aloneness, that would work for you too.

FROM ADDICTIVE TO ENLIGHTENED RELATIONSHIPS

> **WHETHER YOU ARE LIVING ALONE OR WITH A PARTNER,** this remains the key: being present and intensifying your presence by taking your attention ever more deeply into the Now.
>
> For love to flourish, the light of your presence needs to be strong enough so that you no longer get taken over by the thinker or the pain-body and mistake them for who you are.
>
> To know yourself as the Being underneath the thinker, the stillness underneath the mental noise, the love and joy underneath the pain, is freedom, salvation, enlightenment.

To disidentify from the pain-body is to bring presence into the pain and thus transmute it. To disidentify from thinking is to be the silent watcher of your thoughts and behavior, especially the repetitive patterns of your mind and the roles played by the ego.

If you stop investing it with “selfness,” the mind loses its compulsive quality, which basically is the compulsion to judge, and so to resist what is, which creates conflict, drama, and new pain. In fact, the moment that judgment stops through acceptance of what is, you are free of the mind. You have made room for love, for joy, for peace.

> **FIRST YOU STOP JUDGING YOURSELF;** then you stop judging your partner. The greatest catalyst for change in a relationship is complete acceptance of your partner as he or she is, without needing to judge or change them in any way.
>
> That immediately takes you beyond ego. All mind games and all addictive

> clinging are then over. There are no victims and no perpetrators anymore, no accuser and accused.

This is also the end of all codependency, of being drawn into somebody else's unconscious pattern and thereby enabling it to continue. You will then either separate — in love — or move ever more deeply into the Now together, into Being. Can it be that simple? Yes, it is that simple.

Love is a state of Being. Your love is not outside; it is deep within you. You can never lose it, and it cannot leave you. It is not dependent on some other body, some external form.

> **IN THE STILLNESS OF YOUR PRESENCE,** you can feel your own formless and timeless reality as the unmanifested life that animates your physical form. You can then feel the same life deep within every other human and every other creature. You look beyond the veil of form and separation. This is the realization of oneness. This is love.

Although brief glimpses are possible, love cannot flourish unless you are permanently free of mind identification and your presence is intense enough to have dissolved the pain-body — or you can at least remain present as the watcher. The pain-body cannot then take you over and so become destructive of love.

* * *

RELATIONSHIPS AS SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

As humans have become increasingly identified with their mind, most relationships are not rooted in Being and so turn into a source of pain and become dominated by problems and conflict.

If relationships energize and magnify egoic mind patterns and activate the pain-body, as they do at this time, why not accept this fact rather than try to escape from it? Why not cooperate with it instead of avoiding relationships or continuing to pursue the phantom of an ideal partner as an answer to your problems or a means of feeling fulfilled?

With the acknowledgment and acceptance of the facts also comes a degree of freedom from them.

For example, when you *know* there is disharmony and you hold that "knowing," through your knowing a new factor has come in, and the disharmony cannot remain unchanged.

> **WHEN YOU KNOW YOU ARE NOT AT PEACE,** your knowing creates a still space that surrounds your nonpeace in a loving and tender embrace and then transmutes your nonpeace into peace.
>
> As far as inner transformation is concerned, there is nothing you can *do* about it. You cannot transform yourself, and you certainly cannot transform your partner or anybody else. All you *can* do is create a space for transformation to happen, for grace and love to enter.

So whenever your relationship is not working, whenever it brings out the “madness” in you and in your partner, be glad. What was unconscious is being brought up to the light. It is an opportunity for salvation.

> **EVERY MOMENT, HOLD THE KNOWING OF THAT MOMENT,** particularly of your inner state. If there is anger, know that there is anger. If there is jealousy, defensiveness, the urge to argue, the need to be right, an inner child demanding love and attention, or emotional pain of any kind — whatever it is, know the reality of that moment and hold the knowing.

The relationship then becomes your sadhana, your spiritual practice. If you observe unconscious behavior in your partner, hold it in the loving embrace of your knowing so that you won’t react.

Unconsciousness and knowing cannot coexist for long — even if the knowing is only in the other person and not in the one who is acting out the unconsciousness. The energy form that lies behind hostility and attack finds the presence of love absolutely intolerable. If you react at all to your partner’s unconsciousness, you become unconscious yourself. But if you then remember to know your reaction, nothing is lost.

Never before have relationships been as problematic and conflict ridden as they are now. As you may have noticed, they are not here to make you happy or fulfilled. If you continue to pursue the goal of salvation through a relationship, you will be disillusioned again and again. But if you accept that the relationship is here to make you conscious instead of happy, then the relationship will offer you salvation, and you will be aligning yourself with the higher consciousness that wants to be born into this world.

For those who hold on to the old patterns, there will be increasing pain, violence, confusion, and madness.

How many people does it take to make your life into a spiritual practice? Never mind if your partner will not cooperate. Sanity — consciousness — can only come into this world through you. You do not need to wait for the world to become sane, or for somebody else to become conscious, before you can be enlightened. You may wait forever.

Do not accuse each other of being unconscious. The moment you start to argue, you have identified with a mental position and are now defending not only that position but also your sense of self. The ego is in charge. You have become unconscious. At times, it may be appropriate to point out certain aspects of your partner’s behavior. If you are very alert, very present, you can do so without ego involvement — without blaming, accusing, or making the other wrong.

When your partner behaves unconsciously, relinquish all judgment. Judgment is either to confuse someone’s unconscious behavior with who they are or to project your own unconsciousness onto another person and mistake that for who they are.

To relinquish judgment does not mean that you do not recognize dysfunction and unconsciousness when you see it. It means “being the knowing” rather than “being the reaction” and the judge. You will then either be totally free of reaction or you may react and still be the knowing, the space in which the reaction is watched and allowed to be. Instead of fighting the darkness, you bring in the light. Instead of reacting to delusion, you see the delusion yet at the same time look through it.

Being the knowing creates a clear space of loving presence that allows all things and all people to be as they are. No greater catalyst for transformation exists. If you practice this, your partner cannot stay with you and remain unconscious.

If you both agree that the relationship will be your spiritual practice, so much the better. You can then express your thoughts and feelings to each other as soon as they occur, or as soon as a reaction comes up, so that you do not create a time gap in which an unexpressed or unacknowledged emotion or grievance can fester and grow.

> **LEARN TO GIVE EXPRESSION** to what you feel without blaming. Learn to listen to your partner in an open, nondefensive way.
>
> Give your partner space for expressing himself or herself. Be present. Accusing, defending, attacking — all those patterns that are designed to strengthen or protect the ego or to get its needs met will then become redundant. Giving space to others — and to yourself — is vital. Love cannot flourish without it.

When you have removed the two factors that are destructive of relationships — when the pain-body has been transmuted and you are no longer identified with mind and mental positions — and if your partner has done the same, you will experience the bliss of the flowering of relationship. Instead of mirroring to each other your pain and your unconsciousness, instead of satisfying your mutual addictive ego needs, you will reflect back to each other the love that you feel deep within, the love that comes with the realization of your oneness with all that is.

This is the love that has no opposite.

If your partner is still identified with the mind and the pain-body while you are already free, this will represent a major challenge — not to you but to your partner. It is not easy to live with an enlightened person, or rather it is so easy that the ego finds it extremely threatening.

Remember that the ego needs problems, conflict, and “enemies” to strengthen the sense of separateness on which its identity depends. The unenlightened partner’s mind will be deeply frustrated because its fixed positions are not resisted, which means they will become shaky and weak, and there is even the “danger” that they may collapse altogether, resulting in loss of self.

The pain-body is demanding feedback and not getting it. The need for argument, drama, and conflict is not being met.

* * *

GIVE UP THE RELATIONSHIP WITH YOURSELF

Enlightened or not, you are either a man or a woman, so on the level of your form identity you are not complete. You are one-half of the whole. This incompleteness is felt as male-female attraction, the pull toward the opposite energy polarity, no matter how conscious you are. But in that state of inner connectedness, you feel this pull somewhere on the surface or periphery of your life.

This does not mean that you don't relate deeply to other people or to your partner. In fact, you can relate deeply only if you are conscious of Being. Coming from Being, you are able to focus beyond the veil of form. In Being, male and female are one. Your form may continue to have certain needs, but Being has none. It is already complete and whole. If those needs are met, that is beautiful, but whether or not they are met makes no difference to your deep inner state.

So it is perfectly possible for an enlightened person, if the need for the male or female polarity is not met, to feel a sense of lack or incompleteness on the outer level of his or her being, yet at the same time be totally complete, fulfilled, and at peace within.

If you cannot be at ease with yourself when you are alone, you will seek a relationship to cover up your unease. You can be sure that the unease will then reappear in some other form within the relationship, and you will probably hold your partner responsible for it.

ALL YOU REALLY NEED TO DO IS ACCEPT THIS MOMENT FULLY.
You are then at ease in the here and now and at ease with yourself.

But do you need to have a relationship with yourself at all? Why can't you just be yourself? When you have a relationship with yourself, you have split yourself into two: "I" and "myself," subject and object. That mind-created duality is the root cause of all unnecessary complexity, of all problems and conflict in your life.

In the state of enlightenment, you are yourself — "you" and "yourself " merge into one. You do not judge yourself, you do not feel sorry for yourself, you are not proud of yourself, you do not love yourself, you do not hate yourself, and so on. The split caused by self-reflective consciousness is healed, its curse removed. There is no "self " that you need to protect, defend, or feed anymore.

When you are enlightened, there is one relationship that you no longer have: the relationship with yourself. Once you have given that up, all your other relationships will be love relationships.

PART THREE

ACCEPTANCE AND SURRENDER

When you surrender to what is
and so become fully present,
the past ceases to have any power.
The realm of Being, which had been obscured by
the mind, then opens up.
Suddenly, a great stillness arises within you,
an unfathomable sense of peace.
And within that peace, there is great joy.
And within that joy, there is love.
And at the innermost core, there is the sacred,
the immeasurable, That which cannot be named.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ACCEPTANCE OF THE NOW

IMPERMANENCE AND THE CYCLES OF LIFE

There are cycles of success, when things come to you and thrive, and cycles of failure, when they wither or disintegrate, and you have to let them go in order to make room for new things to arise, or for transformation to happen.

If you cling and resist at that point, it means you are refusing to go with the flow of life, and you will suffer. Dissolution is needed for new growth to happen. One cycle cannot exist without the other.

The down cycle is absolutely essential for spiritual realization. You must have failed deeply on some level or experienced some deep loss or pain to be drawn to the spiritual dimension. Or perhaps your very success became empty and meaningless and so turned out to be failure.

Failure lies concealed in every success, and success in every failure. In this world, which is to say on the level of form, everybody "fails" sooner or later, of course, and every achievement eventually comes to naught. All forms are impermanent.

You can still be active and enjoy manifesting and creating new forms and circumstances, but you won't be identified with them. You do not need them to give you a sense of self. They are not your life — only your life situation.

A cycle can last for anything from a few hours to a few years. There are large cycles and small cycles within these large ones. Many illnesses are created through fighting against the cycles of low energy, which are vital for regeneration. The compulsion to do, and the tendency to derive your sense of self-worth and identity from external factors such as achievement, is an inevitable illusion as long as you are identified with the mind.

This makes it hard or impossible for you to accept the low cycles and allow them to be. Thus, the intelligence of the organism may take over as a self-protective measure and create an illness in order to force you to stop, so that the necessary regeneration can take place.

As long as a condition is judged as "good" by your mind, whether it be a relationship, a possession, a social role, a place, or your physical body, the mind attaches itself to it and identifies with it. It makes you happy, makes you feel good about yourself, and it may become part of who you are or think you are.

But nothing lasts in this dimension where moth and rust consume. Either it ends or it changes, or it may undergo a polarity shift: The same condition that was good yesterday or last year has suddenly or gradually turned into bad. The same condition that made you happy then makes you unhappy. The prosperity of today becomes the empty consumerism of tomorrow. The happy wedding and honeymoon become the unhappy divorce or the unhappy coexistence.

Or a condition disappears, so its absence makes you unhappy. When a condition or situation that the mind has attached itself to and identified with changes or disappears, the mind cannot accept it. It will cling to the disappearing condition and resist the change. It is almost as if a limb were being torn off your body.

This means that your happiness and unhappiness are in fact one. Only the illusion of time separates them.

> **TO OFFER NO RESISTANCE TO LIFE** is to be in a state of grace, ease, and lightness. This state is then no longer dependent upon things being in a certain way, good or bad.

It seems almost paradoxical, yet when your inner dependency on form is gone, the general conditions of your life, the outer forms, tend to improve greatly. Things, people, or conditions that you thought you needed for your happiness now come to you with no struggle or effort on your part, and you are free to enjoy and appreciate them — while they last.

All those things, of course, will still pass away, cycles will come and go, but with dependency gone there is no fear of loss anymore. Life flows with ease.

The happiness that is derived from some secondary source is never very deep. It is only a pale reflection of the joy of Being, the vibrant peace that you find within as you enter the state of nonresistance. Being takes you beyond the polar opposites of the mind and frees you from dependency on form. Even if everything were to collapse and crumble all around you, you would still feel a deep inner core of peace. You may not be happy, but you will be at peace.

* * *

USING AND RELINQUISHING NEGATIVITY

All inner resistance is experienced as negativity in one form or another. All negativity is resistance. In this context, the two words are almost synonymous.

Negativity ranges from irritation or impatience to fierce anger, from a depressed mood or sullen resentment to suicidal despair. Sometimes the resistance triggers the emotional pain-body, in which case even a minor situation may produce intense negativity, such as anger, depression, or deep grief.

The ego believes that through negativity it can manipulate reality and get what it wants. It believes that through it, it can attract a desirable condition or dissolve an undesirable one.

If "you" — the mind — did not believe that unhappiness works, why would you create it? The fact is, of course, that negativity does not work. Instead of attracting a desirable condition, it stops it from arising. Instead of dissolving an undesirable one, it keeps it in place. Its only "useful" function is that it strengthens the ego, and that is why the ego loves it.

Once you have identified with some form of negativity, you do not want to let go, and on a deeply unconscious level, you do not want positive change. It would threaten your identity as a depressed, angry, or hard-done-by person. You will then ignore, deny, or sabotage the positive in your life. This is a common phenomenon. It is also insane.

> **WATCH ANY PLANT OR ANIMAL AND LET IT TEACH YOU** acceptance of what is, surrender to the Now.
>
> Let it teach you Being.
>
> Let it teach you integrity — which means to be one, to be yourself, to be real.
>
> Let it teach you how to live and how to die, and how not to make living and dying into a problem.

Recurring negative emotions do sometimes contain a message, as do illnesses. But any changes that you make, whether they have to do with your work, your relationships, or your surroundings, are ultimately only cosmetic unless they arise out of a change in your level of consciousness. And as far as that is concerned, it can only mean one thing: becoming more present. When you have reached a certain degree of presence, you don't need negativity anymore to tell you what is needed in your life situation.

But as long as negativity is there, use it. Use it as a kind of signal that reminds you to be more present.

> **WHENEVER YOU FEEL NEGATIVITY ARISING WITHIN YOU,** whether caused by an external factor, a thought, or even nothing in particular that you are aware of, look on it as a voice saying, "Attention. Here and Now. Wake up. Get out of your mind. Be present."
>
> Even the slightest irritation is significant and needs to be acknowledged and looked at; otherwise, there will be a cumulative buildup of unobserved reactions.

You may be able to just drop it once you realize that you don't want to have this energy field inside you and that it serves no purpose. But then make sure that you drop it completely. If you cannot drop it, just accept that it is there and take your attention into the feeling.

> **AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO DROPPING A NEGATIVE REACTION,** you can make it disappear by imagining yourself becoming transparent to the external cause of the reaction.

I recommend that you practice this with little, even trivial, things first. Let's say that you are sitting quietly at home. Suddenly, there is the penetrating sound of a car alarm from across the street. Irritation arises. What is the purpose of the irritation? None whatsoever. Why did you create it? You didn't. The mind did. It was totally automatic, totally unconscious.

Why did the mind create it? Because it holds the unconscious belief that its resistance, which you experience as negativity or unhappiness in some form, will somehow dissolve the undesirable condition. This, of course, is a delusion. The resistance that it creates, the irritation or anger in this case, is far more disturbing than the original cause that it is attempting to dissolve.

All this can be transformed into spiritual practice.

> **FEEL YOURSELF BECOMING TRANSPARENT,** as it were, without the solidity of a material body. Now allow the noise, or whatever causes a negative reaction, to pass right through you. It is no longer hitting a solid "wall" inside you.

As I said, practice with little things first. The car alarm, the dog barking, the children screaming, the traffic jam. Instead of having a wall of resistance inside you that gets constantly and painfully hit by things that "should not be happening," let everything pass through you.

Somebody says something to you that is rude or designed to hurt. Instead of going into unconscious reaction and negativity, such as attack, defense, or withdrawal, you let it pass right through you. Offer no resistance. It is as if there is nobody there to get hurt anymore. That is forgiveness. In this way, you become invulnerable.

You can still tell that person that his or her behavior is unacceptable, if that is what you choose to do. But that person no longer has the power to control your inner state. You are then in your power — not in someone else's, nor are you run by your mind. Whether it is a car alarm, a rude person, a flood, an earthquake, or the loss of all your possessions, the resistance mechanism is the same.

You are still seeking outside, and you cannot get out of the seeking mode. Maybe the next workshop will have the answer, maybe that new technique. To you I would say:

> **DON'T LOOK FOR PEACE.** Don't look for any other state than the one you are in now; otherwise, you will set up inner conflict and unconscious resistance.
>
> Forgive yourself for not being at peace. The moment you completely accept your non-peace, your non-peace becomes transmuted into peace. Anything you accept fully will get you there, will take you into peace. This is the miracle of surrender.
>
> When you accept what is, every moment is the best moment. That is enlightenment.

* * *

THE NATURE OF COMPASSION

> **HAVING GONE BEYOND THE MIND-MADE OPPOSITES,** you become like a deep lake. The outer situation of your life, whatever happens there, is the surface of the lake. Sometimes calm, sometimes windy and rough, according to the cycles and seasons. Deep down, however, the lake is always undisturbed. You are the whole lake, not just the surface, and you are in touch with your own depth, which remains absolutely still.

You don't resist change by mentally clinging to any situation. Your inner peace does not depend on it. You abide in Being — unchanging, timeless, deathless — and you are no longer dependent for fulfillment or happiness on the outer world of constantly fluctuating forms. You can enjoy them, play with them, create new forms, appreciate the beauty of it all. But there will be no need to attach yourself to any of it.

As long as you are unaware of Being, the reality of other humans will elude you, because you have not found your own. Your mind will like or dislike their form, which is not just their body but includes their mind as well. True relationship becomes possible only when there is an awareness of Being.

Coming from Being, you will perceive another person's body and mind as just a screen, as it were, behind which you can feel their true reality, as you feel yours. So, when confronted with someone else's suffering or unconscious behavior, you stay present and in touch with Being and are thus able to look beyond the form and feel the other person's radiant and pure Being through your own.

At the level of Being, all suffering is recognized as an illusion. Suffering is due to identification with form. Miracles of healing sometimes occur through this realization, by awakening Being-consciousness in others — if they are ready.

Compassion is the awareness of a deep bond between yourself and all creatures. Next time you say, "I have nothing in common with this person," remember that you have a great deal in common: A few years from now — two years or seventy years, it doesn't make much difference — both of you will have become rotting corpses, then piles of dust, then nothing at all. This is a sobering and humbling realization that leaves little room for pride.

Is this a negative thought? No, it is a fact. Why close your eyes to it? In that sense, there is total equality between you and every other creature.

> **ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL SPIRITUAL PRACTICES** is to meditate deeply on the mortality of physical forms, including your own. This is called: Die before you die.
>
> Go into it deeply. Your physical form is dissolving, is no more. Then a moment comes when all mind-forms or thoughts also die. Yet you are still there — the divine presence that you are. Radiant, fully awake.
>
> Nothing that was real ever died, only names, forms, and illusions.
>
> At this deep level, compassion becomes healing in the widest sense. In that state, your healing influence is primarily based not on doing but on being. Everybody you come in contact with will be touched by your presence and affected by the peace that you emanate, whether they are conscious of it or not.

When you are fully present and people around you manifest unconscious behavior, you won't feel the need to react to it, so you don't give it any reality. Your peace is so vast and deep that anything that is not peace disappears into it as if it had never existed. This breaks the karmic cycle of action and reaction.

Animals, trees, flowers will feel your peace and respond to it. You teach through being, through demonstrating the peace of God.

You become the "light of the world," an emanation of pure consciousness, and so you eliminate suffering on the level of cause. You eliminate unconsciousness from the world.

* * *

THE WISDOM OF SURRENDER

It is the quality of your consciousness at this moment that is the main determinant of what kind of future you will experience, so to surrender is the most important thing you can do to bring about positive change. Any action you take is secondary. No truly positive action can arise out of an unsurrendered state of consciousness.

To some people, surrender may have negative connotations, implying defeat, giving up, failing to rise to the challenges of life, becoming lethargic, and so on. True surrender, however, is something entirely different. It does not mean to passively put up with whatever situation you find yourself in and to do nothing about it. Nor does it mean to cease making plans or initiating positive action.

> **SURRENDER IS THE SIMPLE** but profound wisdom of yielding to rather than opposing the flow of life. The only place where you can experience the flow of life is the Now, so to surrender is to accept the present moment unconditionally and without reservation.
>
> It is to relinquish inner resistance to what is.

Inner resistance is to say “no” to what is, through mental judgment and emotional negativity. It becomes particularly pronounced when things “go wrong,” which means that there is a gap between the demands or rigid expectations of your mind and what is. That is the pain gap.

If you have lived long enough, you will know that things “go wrong” quite often. It is precisely at those times that surrender needs to be practiced if you want to eliminate pain and sorrow from your life. Acceptance of what is immediately frees you from mind identification and thus reconnects you with Being. Resistance is the mind.

Surrender is a purely inner phenomenon. It does not mean that on the outer level you cannot take action and change the situation.

In fact, it is not the overall situation that you need to accept when you surrender, but just the tiny segment called the Now. For example, if you were stuck in the mud somewhere, you wouldn’t say: “Okay, I resign myself to being stuck in the mud.” Resignation is not surrender.

> **YOU DON’T NEED TO ACCEPT AN UNDESIRABLE OR UNPLEASANT LIFE SITUATION.** Nor do you need to deceive yourself and say that there is nothing wrong with it. No. You recognize fully that you want to get out of it. You then narrow your attention down to the present moment without mentally labeling it in any way.
>
> This means that there is no judgment of the Now. Therefore, there is no resistance, no emotional negativity. You accept the “isness” of this moment.

> Then you take action and do all that you can to get out of the situation.

Such action I call positive action. It is far more effective than negative action, which arises out of anger, despair, or frustration. Until you achieve the desired result, you continue to practice surrender by refraining from labeling the Now

Let me give you a visual analogy to illustrate the point I am making. You are walking along a path at night, surrounded by a thick fog. But you have a powerful flashlight that cuts through the fog and creates a narrow, clear space in front of you. The fog is your life situation, which includes past and future; the flashlight is your conscious presence; the clear space is the Now.

Non-surrender hardens your psychological form, the shell of the ego, and so creates a strong sense of separateness. The world around you and people in particular come to be perceived as threatening. The unconscious compulsion to destroy others through judgment arises, as does the need to compete and dominate. Even nature becomes your enemy and your perceptions and interpretations are governed by fear. The mental disease that we call paranoia is only a slightly more acute form of this normal but dysfunctional state of consciousness.

Not only your psychological form but also your physical form — your body — becomes hard and rigid through resistance. Tension arises in different parts of the body, and the body as a whole contracts. The free flow of life energy through the body, which is essential for its healthy functioning, is greatly restricted.

Bodywork and certain forms of physical therapy can be helpful in restoring this flow, but unless you practice surrender in your everyday life, those things can only give temporary symptom relief since the cause — the resistance pattern — has not been dissolved.

There is something within you that remains unaffected by the transient circumstances that make up your life situation, and only through surrender do you have access to it. It is your life, your very Being — which exists eternally in the timeless realm of the present.

> **IF YOU FIND YOUR LIFE SITUATION UNSATISFACTORY** or even intolerable, it is only by surrendering first that you can break the unconscious resistance pattern that perpetuates that situation.

Surrender is perfectly compatible with taking action, initiating change or achieving goals. But in the surrendered state a totally different energy, a different quality, flows into your doing. Surrender reconnects you with the source-energy of Being, and if your doing is infused with Being, it becomes a joyful celebration of life energy that takes you more deeply into the Now.

Through nonresistance, the quality of your consciousness and, therefore, the quality of whatever you are doing or creating is enhanced immeasurably. The results will then look after themselves and reflect that quality. We could call this “surrendered action.”

> **IN THE STATE OF SURRENDER,** you see very clearly what needs to be done, and you take action, doing one thing at a time and focusing on one thing at a time.

Learn from nature: See how everything gets accomplished and how the miracle of life unfolds without dissatisfaction or unhappiness.

That's why Jesus said: "Look at the lilies, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin."

IF YOUR OVERALL SITUATION IS UNSATISFACTORY or unpleasant, separate out this instant and surrender to what is. That's the flashlight cutting through the fog. Your state of consciousness then ceases to be controlled by external conditions. You are no longer coming from reaction and resistance.

Then look at the specifics of the situation. Ask yourself, "Is there anything I can do to change the situation, improve it, or remove myself from it?" If so, take appropriate action.

Focus not on the hundred things that you will or may have to do at some future time but on the one thing that you can do now. This doesn't mean you should not do any planning. It may well be that planning is the one thing you can do now. But make sure you don't keep running "mental movies" that continually project yourself into the future, and so lose the Now. Any action you take may not bear fruit immediately. Until it does — do not resist what is.

IF THERE IS NO ACTION YOU CAN TAKE, and you cannot remove yourself from the situation either, then use the situation to make you go more deeply into surrender, more deeply into the Now, more deeply into Being.

When you enter this timeless dimension of the present, change often comes about in strange ways without the need for a great deal of doing on your part. Life becomes helpful and cooperative. If inner factors such as fear, guilt, or inertia prevented you from taking action, they will dissolve in the light of your conscious presence.

Do not confuse surrender with an attitude of "I can't be bothered anymore" or "I just don't care anymore." If you look at it closely, you will find that such an attitude is tainted with negativity in the form of hidden resentment and so is not surrender at all but masked resistance.

As you surrender, direct your attention inward to check if there is any trace of resistance left inside you. Be very alert when you do so; otherwise, a pocket of resistance may continue to hide in some dark corner in the form of a thought or an unacknowledged emotion.

* * *

FROM MIND ENERGY TO SPIRITUAL ENERGY

START BY ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THERE IS RESISTANCE. Be there when it happens, when the resistance arises. Observe how your mind creates it, how it labels the situation, yourself, or others. Look at the thought process involved. Feel the energy of the emotion.

By witnessing the resistance, you will see that it serves no purpose. By focusing all your attention on the Now, the unconscious resistance is made conscious, and that is the end of it.

You cannot be conscious and unhappy, conscious and in negativity. Negativity, unhappiness, or suffering in whatever form means that there is resistance, and resistance is always unconscious,

Would you choose unhappiness? If you did not choose it, how did it arise? What is its purpose? Who is keeping it alive?

Even if you are conscious of your unhappy feelings, the truth is that you are identified with them and keep the process alive through compulsive thinking. All that is unconscious. If you were conscious, that is to say totally present in the Now, all negativity would dissolve almost instantly. It could not survive in your presence. It can only survive in your absence.

Even the pain-body cannot survive for long in your presence. You keep your unhappiness alive by giving it time. That is its lifeblood. Remove time through intense present-moment awareness and it dies. But do you want it to die? Have you truly had enough? Who would you be without it?

Until you practice surrender, the spiritual dimension is something you read about, talk about, get excited about, write books about, think about, believe in — or don't, as the case may be. It makes no difference.

> **NOT UNTIL YOU SURRENDER** does the spiritual dimension become a living reality in your life.
>
> When you do, the energy that you emanate and which then runs your life is of a much higher vibrational frequency than the mind energy that still runs our world.
>
> Through surrender, spiritual energy comes into this world. It creates no suffering for yourself, for other humans, or any other life form on the planet.

* * *

SURRENDER IN PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

It is true that only an unconscious person will try to use or manipulate others, but it is equally true that only an unconscious person can be used and manipulated. If you resist or fight unconscious behavior in others, you become unconscious yourself.

But surrender doesn't mean that you allow yourself to be used by unconscious people. Not at all. It is perfectly possible to say "no" firmly and clearly to a person or to walk away from a situation and be in a state of complete inner nonresistance at the same time.

> **WHEN YOU SAY "NO"** to a person or a situation, let it come not from reaction but from insight, from a clear realization of what is right or not right for you at that moment.
>
> Let it be a nonreactive "no," a high-quality "no," a "no" that is free of all negativity and so creates no further suffering.

> If you cannot surrender, take action immediately: Speak up or do something to bring about a change in the situation — or remove yourself from it. Take responsibility for your life.

Do not pollute your beautiful, radiant inner Being nor the Earth with negativity. Do not give unhappiness in any form whatsoever a dwelling place inside you.

> **IF YOU CANNOT TAKE ACTION** — if you are in prison, for example — then you have two choices left: resistance or surrender. Bondage or inner freedom from external conditions. Suffering or inner peace.

Your relationships will be changed profoundly by surrender. If you can never accept what is, by implication you will not be able to accept anybody the way they are. You will judge, criticize, label, reject, or attempt to change people.

Furthermore, if you continuously make the Now into a means to an end in the future, you will also make every person you encounter or relate with into a means to an end. The relationship — the human being — is then of secondary importance to you, or of no importance at all. What you can get out of the relationship is primary — be it material gain, a sense of power, physical pleasure, or some form of ego gratification.

Let me illustrate how surrender can work in relationships.

> **WHEN YOU BECOME INVOLVED IN AN ARGUMENT** or some conflict situation, perhaps with a partner or someone close to you, start by observing how defensive you become as your own position is attacked, or feel the force of your own aggression as you attack the other person's position.
>
> Observe the attachment to your views and opinions. Feel the mental-emotional energy behind your need to be right and make the other person wrong. That's the energy of the egoic mind. You make it conscious by acknowledging it, by feeling it as fully as possible.
>
> Then one day, in the middle of an argument, you will suddenly realize that you have a choice, and you may decide to drop your own reaction — just to see what happens. You surrender.

I don't mean dropping the reaction just verbally by saying "Okay, you are right," with a look on your face that says, "I am above all this childish unconsciousness." That's just displacing the resistance to another level, with the egoic mind still in charge, claiming superiority. I am speaking of letting go of the entire mental-emotional energy field inside you that was fighting for power.

The ego is cunning, so you have to be very alert, very present, and totally honest with yourself to see whether you have truly relinquished your identification with a mental position and so freed yourself from your mind.

> **IF YOU SUDDENLY FEEL VERY LIGHT, CLEAR, AND DEEPLY AT PEACE,** that is an unmistakable sign that you have truly surrendered. Then observe what happens to the other person's mental position as you no longer energize it through resistance. When identification with mental positions is out of the way, true communication begins.

Nonresistance doesn’t necessarily mean doing nothing. All it means is that any “doing” becomes nonreactive. Remember the deep wisdom underlying the practice of Eastern martial arts: don’t resist the opponent’s force. Yield to overcome.

Having said that, “doing nothing” when you are in a state of intense presence is a very powerful transformer and healer of situations and people.

It is radically different from inactivity in the ordinary state of consciousness, or rather unconsciousness, which stems from fear, inertia, or indecision. The real “doing nothing” implies inner nonresistance and intense alertness.

On the other hand, if action is required, you will no longer react from your conditioned mind, but you will respond to the situation out of your conscious presence. In that state, your mind is free of concepts, including the concept of nonviolence. So who can predict what you will do?

The ego believes that in your resistance lies your strength, whereas in truth resistance cuts you off from Being, the only place of true power. Resistance is weakness and fear masquerading as strength. What the ego sees as weakness is your Being in its purity, innocence, and power. What it sees as strength is weakness. So the ego exists in a continuous resistance-mode and plays counterfeit roles to cover up your “weakness,” which in truth is your power.

Until there is surrender, unconscious role-playing constitutes a large part of human interaction. In surrender, you no longer need ego defenses and false masks. You become very simple, very real. “That’s dangerous,” says the ego. “You’ll get hurt. You’ll become vulnerable.”

What the ego doesn’t know, of course, is that only through the letting go of resistance, through becoming “vulnerable,” can you discover your true and essential invulnerability.

CHAPTER NINE

TRANSFORMING ILLNESS AND SUFFERING

TRANSFORMING ILLNESS INTO ENLIGHTENMENT

Surrender is inner acceptance of what is without any reservations. We are talking about your life — this instant — not the conditions or circumstances of your life, not what I call your life situation.

Illness is part of your life situation. As such, it has a past and a future. Past and future form an uninterrupted continuum, unless the redeeming power of the Now is activated through your conscious presence. As you know, underneath the various conditions that make up your life situation, which exists in time, there is something deeper, more essential: your Life, your very Being in the timeless Now.

As there are no problems in the Now, there is no illness either. The belief in a label that someone attaches to your condition keeps the condition in place, empowers it, and makes a seemingly solid reality out of a temporary imbalance. It gives it not only reality and solidity but also continuity in time that it did not have before.

> **BY FOCUSING ON THIS INSTANT** and refraining from labeling it mentally, illness is reduced to one or several of these factors: physical pain, weakness, discomfort, or disability. That is what you surrender to — now. You do not surrender to the idea of "illness."
>
> Allow the suffering to force you into the present moment, into a state of intense conscious presence. Use it for enlightenment.

Surrender does not transform what is, at least not directly. Surrender transforms you. When you are transformed, your whole world is transformed, because the world is only a reflection.

Illness is not the problem. You are the problem — as long as the egoic mind is in control.

> **WHEN YOU ARE ILL OR DISABLED,** do not feel that you have failed in some way, do not feel guilty. Do not blame life for treating you unfairly, but do not blame yourself either. All that is resistance.
>
> If you have a major illness, use it for enlightenment. Anything "bad" that happens in your life — use it for enlightenment.
>
> Withdraw time from the illness. Do not give it any past or future. Let it force you into intense present-moment awareness — and see what happens.

Become an alchemist. Transmute base metal into gold, suffering into consciousness, disaster into enlightenment.

Are you seriously ill and feeling angry now about what I have just said? Then that is a clear sign that the illness has become part of your sense of self and that you are now protecting your identity — as well as protecting the illness.

The condition that is labeled "illness" has nothing to do with who you truly are.

Whenever any kind of disaster strikes, or something goes seriously "wrong" — illness, disability, loss of home or fortune or of a socially defined identity, break-up of a close relationship, death or suffering of a loved one, or your own impending death — know that there is another side to it, that you are just one step away from something incredible: a complete alchemical transmutation of the base metal of pain and suffering into gold. That one step is called surrender.

I do not mean to say that you will become happy in such a situation. You will not. But fear and pain will become transmuted into an inner peace and serenity that come from a very deep place — from the Unmanifested itself. It is "the peace of God, which passes all understanding." Compared to that, happiness is quite a shallow thing.

With this radiant peace comes the realization — not on the level of mind but within the depth of your Being — that you are indestructible, immortal. This is not a belief. It is absolute certainty that needs no external evidence or proof from some secondary source.

* * *

TRANSFORMING SUFFERING INTO PEACE

In certain extreme situations, it may still be impossible for you to accept the Now. But you always get a second chance at surrender.

> **YOUR FIRST CHANCE IS TO SURRENDER** each moment to the reality of that moment. Knowing that what is cannot be undone — because it already is — you say yes to what is or accept what isn't.
>
> Then you do what you have to do, whatever the situation requires.
>
> If you abide in this state of acceptance, you create no more negativity, no more suffering, no more unhappiness. You then live in a state of nonresistance, a state of grace and lightness, free of struggle.

Whenever you are unable to do that, whenever you miss that chance — either because you are not generating enough conscious presence to prevent some habitual and unconscious resistance pattern from arising, or because the condition is so extreme as to be absolutely unacceptable to you — then you are creating some form of pain, some form of suffering.

It may look as if the situation is creating the suffering, but ultimately this is not so — your resistance is.

> **NOW HERE IS YOUR SECOND CHANCE AT SURRENDER:** If you cannot accept what is outside, then accept what is inside. If you cannot accept the external condition, accept the internal condition.

> This means: Do not resist the pain. Allow it to be there. Surrender to the grief, despair, fear, loneliness, or whatever form the suffering takes. Witness it without labeling it mentally. Embrace it.
>
> Then see how the miracle of surrender transmutes deep suffering into deep peace. This is your crucifixion. Let it become your resurrection and ascension.

When your pain is deep, all talk of surrender will probably seem futile and meaningless anyway. When your pain is deep, you will likely have a strong urge to escape from it rather than surrender to it. You don't want to feel what you feel. What could be more normal? But there is no escape, no way out.

There are many pseudo escapes — work, drink, drugs, anger, projection, suppression, and so on — but they don't free you from the pain. Suffering does not diminish in intensity when you make it unconscious. When you deny emotional pain, everything you do or think as well as your relationships become contaminated with it. You broadcast it, so to speak, as the energy you emanate, and others will pick it up subliminally.

If they are unconscious, they may even feel compelled to attack or hurt you in some way, or you may hurt them in an unconscious projection of your pain.

You attract and manifest whatever corresponds to your inner state.

> **WHEN THERE IS NO WAY OUT, THERE IS STILL ALWAYS A WAY THROUGH.** So don't turn away from the pain. Face it. Feel it fully. Feel it — don't think about it! Express it if necessary, but don't create a script in your mind around it. Give all your attention to the feeling, not to the person, event, or situation that seems to have caused it.
>
> Don't let the mind use the pain to create a victim identity for yourself out of it. Feeling sorry for yourself and telling others your story will keep you stuck in suffering.
>
> Since it is impossible to get away from the feeling, the only possibility of change is to move into it; otherwise, nothing will shift.
>
> So give your complete attention to what you feel, and refrain from mentally labeling it. As you go into the feeling, be intensely alert.
>
> At first, it may seem like a dark and terrifying place, and when the urge to turn away from it comes, observe it but don't act on it. Keep putting your attention on the pain, keep feeling the grief, the fear, the dread, the loneliness, whatever it is.
>
> Stay alert, stay present — present with your whole Being, with every cell of your body. As you do so, you are bringing a light into this darkness. This is the flame of your consciousness.

At this stage, you don't need to be concerned with surrender anymore. It has happened already. How? Full attention is full acceptance, is surrender. By giving full attention, you use the power of the Now, which is the power of your presence.

No hidden pocket of resistance can survive in it. Presence removes time. Without time, no suffering, no negativity, can survive.

> **THE ACCEPTANCE OF SUFFERING** is a journey into death. Facing deep pain, allowing it to be, taking your attention into it, is to enter death consciously. When you have died this death, you realize that there is no death — and there is nothing to fear. Only the ego dies.

Imagine a ray of sunlight that has forgotten it is an inseparable part of the sun and deludes itself into believing it has to fight for survival and create and cling to an identity other than the sun. Would the death of this delusion not be incredibly liberating?

> **DO YOU WANT AN EASY DEATH?** Would you rather die without pain, without agony? Then die to the past every moment, and let the light of your presence shine away the heavy, time-bound self you thought of as "you."

* * *

ENLIGHTENMENT THROUGH SUFFERING — THE WAY OF THE CROSS

The way of the cross is the old way to enlightenment, and until recently it was the only way. But don't dismiss it or underestimate its efficacy. It still works.

The way of the cross is a complete reversal. It means that the worst thing in your life, your cross, turns into the best thing that ever happened to you, by forcing you into surrender, into "death," forcing you to become as nothing, to become as God — because God, too, is no-thing.

Enlightenment through suffering — the way of the cross — means to be forced into the kingdom of heaven kicking and screaming. You finally surrender because you can't stand the pain anymore, but the pain could go on for a long time until this happens.

> **ENLIGHTENMENT CONSCIOUSLY CHOSEN** means to relinquish your attachment to past and future and to make the Now the main focus of your life.
>
> It means choosing to dwell in the state of presence rather than in time.
>
> It means saying yes to what is.
>
> You then don't need pain anymore.

How much more time do you think you will need before you are able to say, "I will create no more pain, no more suffering?" How much more pain do you need before you can make that choice?

If you think that you need more time, you will get more time — and more pain. Time and pain are inseparable.

* * *

THE POWER TO CHOOSE

Choice implies consciousness — a high degree of consciousness. Without it, you have no choice. Choice begins the moment you disidentify from the mind and its conditioned patterns, the moment you become present.

Until you reach that point, you are unconscious, spiritually speaking. This means that you are compelled to think, feel, and act in certain ways according to the conditioning of your mind.

Nobody chooses dysfunction, conflict, pain. Nobody chooses insanity. They happen because there is not enough presence in you to dissolve the past, not enough light to dispel the darkness. You are not fully here. You have not quite woken up yet. In the meantime, the conditioned mind is running your life.

Similarly, if you are one of the many people who have an issue with their parents, if you still harbor resentment about something they did or did not do, then you still believe that they had a choice — that they could have acted differently. It always looks as if people had a choice, but that is an illusion. As long as your mind with its conditioned patterns runs your life, as long as you are your mind, what choice do you have? None. You are not even there. The mind-identified state is severely dysfunctional. It is a form of insanity.

Almost everyone is suffering from this illness in varying degrees. The moment you realize this, there can be no more resentment. How can you resent someone's illness? The only appropriate response is compassion.

If you are run by your mind, although you have no choice you will still suffer the consequences of your unconsciousness, and you will create further suffering. You will bear the burden of fear, conflict, problems, and pain. The suffering thus created will eventually force you out of your unconscious state.

> **YOU CANNOT TRULY FORGIVE YOURSELF** or others as long as you derive your sense of self from the past. Only through accessing the power of the Now, which is your own power, can there be true forgiveness. This renders the past powerless, and you realize deeply that nothing you ever did or that was ever done to you could touch even in the slightest the radiant essence of who you are.
>
> When you surrender to what is and so become fully present, the past ceases to have any power. You do not need it anymore. Presence is the key. The Now is the key.

Since resistance is inseparable from the mind, relinquishment of resistance — surrender — is the end of the mind as your master, the impostor pretending to be "you," the false god. All judgment and all negativity dissolve.

The realm of Being, which had been obscured by the mind, then opens up.

Suddenly, a great stillness arises within you, an unfathomable sense of peace.

And within that peace, there is great joy.

And within that joy, there is love.

And at the innermost core, there is the sacred, the immeasurable, That which cannot be named.

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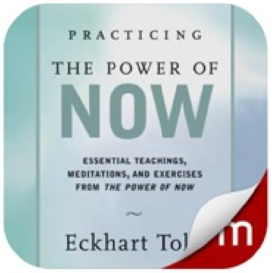

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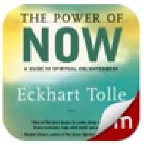

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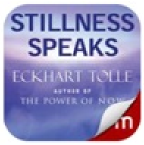

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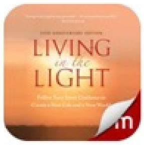

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Spiritual Teacher

Eckhart Tolle is widely recognized as one of the most inspiring and visionary spiritual teachers in the world today. With his international bestsellers, The Power of Now and A New Earth—translated into 52 languages—he has introduced millions to the joy and freedom of living life in the present moment. The New York Times has described him as “the most popular spiritual author in the United States”, and in 2011, Watkins Review named him “the most spiritually influential person in the world”.

Eckhart Tolle’s profound, yet simple teachings have helped countless people around the globe experience a state of vibrantly alive inner peace in their daily lives. His teachings focus on the significance and power of Presence, the awakened state of consciousness, which transcends ego and discursive thinking. Eckhart sees this awakening as the essential next step in human evolution.

(1998) First Television Interview Eckhart Tolle (1998).mp4

[Speaker 2] (0:02 - 0:24)

Hello, welcome to CONTACT. I'm Nina Rhodes. And today we are truly privileged to have as our guest Mr. Eckhart Tolle, who has written a wonderful book called The Power of Now, A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment. And I want to meet him immediately because this book is so fascinating and gives us all the information we really need to know about living life to its fullest. Welcome, Eckhart.

[Speaker 1] (0:25 - 0:25)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (0:25 - 0:41)

I have read the book, and I cannot tell you how important it has been to my life. And I know that this was an incredible journey that took you to writing this wonderful book. So would you kindly enlighten us as to what your journey was?

[Speaker 1] (0:42 - 4:06)

Well, it kind of goes back to my early 20s. I'll just briefly tell you a psychological transformation that I went through at that time, virtually an overnight transformation. I had just been awarded a scholarship, research scholarship, for Cambridge University, so I'd been doing quite well on an external level.

Everybody considered that my life was successful. But inside, I was suffering from very deep depressions and continuous states of anxiety. And I had been suffering from that for years.

So I was actually miserably unhappy, while everybody else around me thought that I was a very successful person. So there was one night when I reached a kind of depth of depression, and a thought kept reoccurring in my mind that I can't live with myself any longer. The pain of this dreadful unhappiness is too much.

I can't take it anymore. I can't live with myself any longer. And that sentence became a trigger for a transformation.

I cannot live with myself any longer. And suddenly, I thought, what does this mean? Who is the I, and who is the self that I cannot live with?

There was a kind of separation that occurred at that moment. I separated myself, my sense of identity separated from the unhappy, depressed, and anxious person. And suddenly, there was me here observing that unhappy self.

So there was a disidentification. And I thought, how is that possible? I can now observe the unhappiness as if it were in me, but not essentially me.

So I describe that in a little bit more detail in the book. When I woke up the next morning, I was in a state of very deep peace. And that lasted for several months, and it never really left me.

But that deeply blissful state lasted for several months. And I didn't know what had happened to me. How is it possible that from one day being a very anxious person, I could suddenly become transformed into a deeply peaceful person?

It was only years later that I understood what actually had happened to me at that time. So in a way... What was it?

It's a realization that the suffering me is ultimately a fiction of the mind. I had created a mental fiction that I believed in and identified with. You could call it the ego.

And through the pressure of suffering, I separated from that fiction. And when I separated from that fiction, it collapsed as if a plug had been pulled out of an inflatable toy, because it ultimately wasn't real. I realized then that the suffering self wasn't ultimately real.

It was a fiction. And in a way, that's also the basis of the book. And when I later started to work with people, very often people came to me who were in some kind of suffering, some form of pain.

And what I'm trying to convey and teach is that it is possible to live free of suffering, to go beyond suffering.

[Speaker 2] (4:07 - 4:35)

Well, the expression that I'm really fond of is, instead of saying, I am upset, because the I am is self, saying, I'm having an upset. Or I am angry. I'm experiencing anger.

Of course, you wouldn't say that, I'm experiencing anger. But to say, I am upset or I am sick, you know, is really sort of embedding that into yourself, where you say, you know, I'm having an upset. Well, if you have something, you can give it away.

[Speaker 1] (4:35 - 5:03)

That's right. So it's already progress if from saying, I am angry or I am upset, you say, there is anger in me or there is upset in me. You have already separated your essential identity from the emotional state.

So you are no longer reinforcing the emotional state through your identification. So that's already the beginning of inner transformation. It's that separation from the passing mental or emotional state.

[Speaker 2] (5:03 - 5:09)

Well, that's such a wonderful time in life when suddenly you realize that you don't have to be the victim of your thoughts.

[Speaker 1] (5:09 - 5:10)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (5:10 - 5:35)

That you can shut those off just through the power of being in the now and understanding what you have written in this book. Now, the word enlightenment has been tossed about in so many different expressions, meanings, philosophies. Could you explain to us what the book embraces with the power of now a guide to spiritual enlightenment?

What is enlightenment?

[Speaker 1] (5:36 - 7:47)

Well, as you say, the word has been used a lot of times and people attribute different meanings to it. But the word enlightenment essentially comes from the East, originally from Buddhism. It points to a radical psychological transformation.

But it's not confined to the East. It also exists in other ancient religions. The term salvation in Christianity, I believe, is really another form of the Buddhist enlightenment.

Or the term liberation in Hinduism is really just another way of pointing to the same thing. So they all point to the possibility of a radical inner transformation. And before we look at that, we need to realize that urgent need in the human psyche, the personal psyche and the collective psyche, for a radical psychological transformation.

All the ancient religions recognized that there is something wrong with human beings. Despite the ingenuity of the human mind, there seems to be some essential flaw which causes humans to go into suffering, to create suffering and pain for themselves and for others. And the ancient religions have given different names to that essential flaw.

So Buddhism, for example, straightforward calls it suffering. One of the characteristics of human existence, Buddhism says, is suffering. Hinduism says humans are in a state of delusion.

There's a veil of Maya. We do not perceive things clearly. We see them as through a veil.

So we are deluded. Christianity says there is an original state of sin that humans are in.

So if you look at the deeper structure underlying all those terms, what it's really saying is there's something not right.

Something seems to have gone wrong. But all the religions also say there is a path, there is a way of reversing this. So there's the bad news, which all religions agree on, and there's the good news, which also all religions agree on.

[Speaker 2] (7:48 - 7:57)

And do they agree in the process that it would take to create this so-called enlightenment? Because we do live, and I know this just in everyday life, people live in a state of victimhood.

[Speaker 1] (7:58 - 9:05)

Yes. Essentially, yes, the process is the same. Sometimes the names and the terminology differs, but the essential process is the same.

And really what it starts with is to disidentify from the thinking mind. Now, this for some people may be a new thing, because most people are totally identified with their thought processes. So they are kind of trapped in their mind.

And most people almost never experience a gap in the stream of mind. So the mind is like a river that pulls you along. And another way of describing it is to say that it's almost as if somebody had built a noise machine into your head.

It would be a fiendish thing to do. Imagine some demon builds a noise machine into your head, and it doesn't have a switch-off button.

[Speaker 2] (9:05 - 9:32)

Oh, it's so true. It's that constant inner dialogue that you feel, you know, can I quiet my mind? And the native cultures have a saying that it's a trickster, which is the trickster keeps trying to trick you into these negative thinking patterns, and there are ways to quiet the mind and be still.

Yes. And people feel, I think, even if there's a lull in the conversation, people feel they must fill it immediately because the thoughts are going so quickly.

[Speaker 1] (9:32 - 10:40)

That's right. That's right. So there is a way, and in a way the first step is stand back inside yourself, take one step back and observe what the mind does.

So you become the observer of your mind. That's a very essential step. And then you'll find that there are certain patterns that occur again and again, thought patterns, often negative ones.

They're like old gramophone records that perhaps have been playing in your mind for years. So you take a step back and say, oh, there's my mind. I can observe the thoughts that go through my mind.

So your sense of identity shifts from being the thought to being the observer of your thoughts, sometimes called the witness. So you are witnessing all the thoughts that go through your mind, and that's a very essential shift in identity. In a way, you withdraw more deeply into yourself from where you observe the flow of mind, the flow of thinking.

[Speaker 2] (10:40 - 10:51)

And in the flow of mind, witnessing your thoughts, is this without judgment, without editing it, saying, oh, I don't want to think that, or whatever. So it's then without judgment and without editing what the thought flow is.

[Speaker 1] (10:51 - 10:56)

That's a very good point, because the moment you judge what you're observing, that's the mind again.

[Speaker 2] (10:56 - 10:56)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (10:56 - 11:26)

So it's only when you're free of judgment and you're simply almost like a mirror that just shows you what the mind is doing. You're not taking any position and say, I like that or I don't like that. You allow the thoughts to be.

But if you allow the thoughts to be, they lose their energy, because you're no longer feeding them energy through your identification. It's when you're totally identified that all the thoughts actually feed on you, on your life energy.

[Speaker 2] (11:27 - 11:27)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (11:27 - 11:33)

And you then find that a lot of your thinking is actually completely useless.

[Speaker 2] (11:34 - 11:44)

It's true, especially in the middle of the night when you're solving every single problem in the world in your mind and you wake up in the morning and certainly it wasn't that bad, and you're not solving it anyway by tragedizing.

[Speaker 1] (11:44 - 13:50)

Yes, and in fact it was creating problems rather than solving. Exactly, like sleeplessness, tiredness for the next day's productivity. That's right.

So that's the first step. Now the next step is to consciously, occasionally create little gaps in the stream of mind. That can start with a simple thing like taking one conscious breath.

Just taking one conscious breath. A conscious breath means you're focusing your attention on the breathing. You observe how the air flows into your body and out of your body.

Now by doing that, you take attention away from thinking, because you're now observing the breath directly. It flows in and out. And during that time, which may only be ten seconds, the mind is still.

You've taken consciousness, by choice, you've taken consciousness away from the mind and put it onto your breathing. So you've created a little gap in the stream of mind. And in that gap there's the dimension of inner stillness.

And that's a wonderfully liberating thing. Suddenly, stillness. And in that stillness, if you go more deeply into it, there's also a very subtle joy.

There's even love. There's a presence. It's kind of finding a deeper you, a deeper sense of self than the mind that you find in that stillness.

And this is just one example. You take a conscious breath. And use moments when the gap occurs naturally.

For some people it happens when they go out into nature. You're surrounded by trees in the forest. And you're suddenly overwhelmed by the beauty of nature.

And when that happens, also for that moment, the mind stops in the stillness.

[Speaker 2] (13:51 - 13:52)

Like a sunset.

[Speaker 1] (13:52 - 15:04)

Yes. Something overwhelmingly beautiful can sometimes create that stillness. And for most people it only lasts for a few seconds.

But if you become conscious of it, you can actually prolong it and go into it and feel the stillness inside you. So it can happen through beauty. It can also happen for other people through physical exertion when they are engaged in some kind of physical activity, perhaps even jogging, although some people wear Walkman while they jog, so it can't happen then.

But extreme physical exertion can sometimes also lead to mental stillness. So you can find it there. Other people find it in a moment of extreme danger.

I don't know if you've read accounts of people. I've seen quite a few accounts of people who were driving in a car and they knew an accident was about to happen. There were only a few seconds left and they could see it's inevitable now.

And at that moment many people reported that suddenly they became very, very still and peaceful and they became just the observer of what was happening and there was no fear.

[Speaker 2] (15:04 - 15:46)

Yes, it seems to go in slow motion. I noticed that the other day. I was jogging and I began to fall, and as I fell it was just like in slow motion.

And I've experienced when there is danger, you sort of just experience it in a very different manner of thought and emotion. And the breath is, you've taught this, you do exquisite meditation sessions because I've been privileged to be present. And my husband was telling me that he uses the breathing when he can't sleep at night, when his mind starts.

And the breath is a very profound thing and we take it for granted because we're so busy with the mundane. But most meditative processes start with taking breath.

[Speaker 1] (15:47 - 15:47)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (15:47 - 16:00)

And you just breathe. And the breathing itself is a very profound method of just quieting and understanding the miracle of breath and the body and just being at quiet with self. So I see what you say by the magic of that.

[Speaker 1] (16:01 - 18:16)

Yes, breath is a very old form of meditation. It's probably the Buddha who first created it. The Buddha's teaching is so simple and really one of the main points is be conscious of your breathing.

Anapanasati Yoga is the meditation on your breath, the breath awareness meditation. And why it works so beautifully is that it takes attention away from thinking. It takes consciousness away from thinking.

And then it becomes what I call presence. If you take consciousness away from thinking, what happens? You become very, very present in the here and now.

Whereas if you're involved in thought activity, you're never in the here and now because thought is always either in past or future. So here and now, the present moment is really the key to that inner transformation. So whenever the mind becomes still, what happens simultaneously is you become present.

And that in itself is a transformation of consciousness, that presence. And out of that presence comes a different sense of identity, a very deep sense of well-being that's inside everybody, but usually it's buried underneath the mental noise. Everybody carries inside a sense of peace and well-being and a natural connectedness with who you are.

But most people are not conscious of it. They seem to have lost it or they never lost it, but it becomes so covered up by mental noise that they can never feel it. So they are cut off from their deeper being.

And that's a dreadful deprivation. It's sort of like falling from grace, almost. Yes, yes.

And in a way, that is really the origin of this flaw that I mentioned earlier, what Christians call sin, Buddhism calls suffering, or Hinduism calls delusion. It's a disconnectedness from who you essentially are on a deeper level.

[Speaker 2] (18:16 - 18:17)

And a connectedness with all that is as well.

[Speaker 1] (18:17 - 18:53)

Yes, yes. And then what you have as a substitute is a mind-made sense of self, which we call the ego, which consists of past, of things that happened to you, of mental images you have about yourself, your conditioning. So it's an artificially mentally constructed sense of self, which most people's identity lies in that.

And because it lacks any foundation in reality, it really lives in a state of constant fear.

[Speaker 2] (18:54 - 19:21)

Yes, you mentioned something that was so profound, and that is most of us either live in the past, of, oh, this happened to me, living in the victimhood of whatever happened in the past, and living their life on, well, this happened to me before, so I better be careful, or worrying about the future. They're either reminiscing in a depressive way about the past or anxious about the future. So the now is totally lost to them for the pleasure of just the presence.

[Speaker 1] (19:21 - 20:26)

That's right. That's essential that the loss of now is also the loss of being and the loss of your essential identity, because it can only be found in the now. So when people come from the artificially generated sense of self that we call ego, which is mind-made and consists of images of who you are, which you need to defend and feed constantly, and that creates constant fear, so you're never fully present here and now in this moment.

So the now, for most people, is never or very rarely acknowledged, and all it is really is a means to an end. It becomes reduced to a means to an end because everybody is striving to get to some future moment, which promises to give them what they want. So they're always reaching out to the next moment.

The now is reduced to a means to getting to the next moment. So it's never really paid any attention to, except as that means.

[Speaker 2] (20:26 - 21:09)

Or even fear of getting to the next moment. I remember saying to my daughter when she was having a party, let's celebrate our celebrations. People worry over a dinner party.

Will the food come on time, or will this happen right, or will this get burnt, or even on a holiday. Will my luggage get lost, will the room be right, will there be a plane crash? They even worry about going on the plane and say, how fortunate I am to be able to have the time to take this holiday or to plan this wonderful celebration of an anniversary or a birthday or some great event.

They're concerned about all the ramifications and all the details, and they worry, and then the event is over, and they're watching it with this watchful, frightened eye, and then it's over, and they're so thrilled that this wonderful celebration is over. How fortunate I am to have the opportunity to celebrate this moment.

[Speaker 1] (21:09 - 21:16)

Yes, and those people, they actually miss the whole celebration because they're in that state of constant anticipation and anxiety.

[Speaker 2] (21:16 - 21:21)

Absolutely. Can we discuss the inner body, or have we touched on that mostly?

[Speaker 1] (21:21 - 22:23)

No, we'll come to that in a second, because it's deeply connected with the now. But I'll just say something else briefly first, that we need to realize fully that all we ever have in life is this moment because there is nothing else. Yes.

When the future comes, it comes as this moment. People think things happened in the past, but nothing happened in the past. When it happened, it was the present moment.

It cannot happen at any other time. So you cannot feel, experience, do, or think anything ever that is not this moment. This moment is your life.

That's all there is. Yes, and we get conditioned at an early age to miss it. Already at school, it's constantly preparation for something else.

It's a constant looking to some future moment. So it's a very deep-seated conditioning of ignoring the present moment.

[Speaker 2] (22:24 - 22:31)

Ironically, speaking of present moments, we only have about four minutes left. So being in the present moment, now we have to think about the future.

[Speaker 1] (22:32 - 22:33)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (22:33 - 23:37)

Because we have so much to talk about. I do want to say one thing, though, before we continue with the inner body, is that The Power of Now, and I'm going to show this to our viewing audience, is a wonderful book that is one of the bestsellers now of Banyan Books, and it can be purchased at Banyan Books. Also at the Greenhouse Books, and that's in the Denman Mall.

And for your meditation centers, which truly, I have to say, are life-changing. And actually exemplifying what you're talking about, being in the now and you walk away with such a great feeling of peace. And the number to contact you about the book, and I understand you're getting tons of email from people that have read the book and are just in joy over it.

So the number is 224-3179, and I'll repeat it, 224-3179, for people who want to partake in this great gift that you have to offer. So with three minutes left, and Namaste Publishing is the name of the company. And what is Namaste?

[Speaker 1] (23:38 - 23:43)

It's hard to translate, but it means approximately I greet the spirit within you.

[Speaker 2] (23:43 - 23:47)

I greet the spirit within you. It's a Mayan greeting as well. And so the inner body.

[Speaker 1] (23:47 - 24:59)

The inner body. Now, because the mind is so active continuously and continuously tries to take you away from the now, we need some kind of anchor so that we can focus our attention in the now. And by inner body, I mean having some of your attention in the inner energy field of the body to actually feel the life energy in the body, in your hands, there's life in there, in your feet, in your legs, in the totality of your body, to focus attention on that and feel that as much as you can.

When you're alone, you can practice it. Take attention away from thinking. Feel you're alive.

And you can actually feel the life that courses through the body. And that can become a very powerful anchor for staying present if you can feel the life that you are, the invisible life that animates the body. The chi energy.

Yes, you can call it chi. Have some attention in that, even when you're listening to somebody talking or when you're waiting somewhere, feel the inner body that keeps you present in the now and the mind can't easily take you away from that.

[Speaker 2] (24:59 - 25:09)

Your aliveness. We need to wrap with a message, and I know that you must have something to say to the people before that. Is that sort of an ending to this?

[Speaker 1] (25:09 - 25:36)

Well, I would say make the present moment your friend and not your enemy. Be friendly with it, and then you will see how life becomes friendly towards you because the present moment is life. If you make friends with the present moment and always say yes to whatever is, life becomes friendly towards you because life always shows you the face that you show it.

It's always a mirror.

[Speaker 2] (25:38 - 26:07)

Yes, and indeed it is. And I look at your face, and I must tell you, I see such a great deal of peace and such a great deal of joy, and I am so pleased that you came to write this book and teach us of the power of living in the now, and indeed it is a very enlightening process, and I find myself using it all the time, and it helps with creativity and productivity in life and truly celebrating your celebrations. And so, thank you for coming.

[Speaker 1] (26:07 - 26:08)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (26:08 - 26:16)

And thank you for watching Contact. I'm Nina Rhodes. Until the next time, please take care.

(1998) TV Interview Eckhart Tolle about his book The Power of Now (Eckhart Tolle).mp4

[Speaker 2] (0:00 - 1:03)

Hello, I'm Georgia Schachter Hill, and I want to welcome you to Living in Balance. Our subject today is about relationship and health, and we are going to look at it from the perspective of the power of now. Come join us.

Eckhart Tolle has been described as the modern mystic. He is the author of The Power of Now, and I've asked him if he would talk with us today about The Power of Now and how we can relate it on such a practical and important level as relationship, and also about our health and suffering. So that is the subject.

You are the author of this wonderful book that thousands of people have read, and also thousands of people have been drawn to come and listen to you talk. You are a guru to some, and you said, I liked your analogy, you're a window through which the light can shine.

[Speaker 1] (1:04 - 1:29)

Yes, people don't really come to see me, they come to see that which comes through this form. It's everybody's destiny to become a little bit more transparent to the light of consciousness shining through, and so people come to be more fully with themselves rather than come to see another person when they come to talks.

[Speaker 2] (1:30 - 1:57)

And I've asked you if we could concentrate on relationship. I just loved your information that you shared through The Power of Now about relationship. It puts it in such a perspective, and you mentioned it as relationship as practice in spirituality, or spiritual practice, how we can work with our relationships from that perspective.

And we have so many that are painful, so many that are addictive, and that have a negative aspect to them, but they don't have to be like that. They should not be.

[Speaker 1] (1:58 - 2:54)

No, it seems that relationships are a great source of both pleasure and suffering for many people. And many people have experienced how easily the pleasure of a relationship can turn into suffering, and how quickly that can happen. How easily it seems that love can turn into hate in relationships.

It can happen within a second. And so there's a source of great suffering there for many people. Why is it that there's so much conflict in relationships, and does it have to be that way?

So we need to look at what the source of that conflict may be. Now most people experience periodic drama in their relationships, once a week, every other day, depending on their relationship.

[Speaker 2] (2:55 - 3:05)

And we can become addicted to the drama itself. Because it is emotional, it is intense, we experience it. And even if it's painful, it's intense.

[Speaker 1] (3:05 - 4:04)

Yes. There is something that one could almost call an addiction to suffering in most human beings. But that's mostly unconscious, so they don't know that they are addicted to suffering.

And what that is, is not so much caused, it's seemingly caused by the relationship, but the fact is that human beings over thousands of years of history have created so much suffering for themselves. If you look at human history, you see the atrocities, the almost continuous warfare that's been going on. So that has left traces in the human collective consciousness, and those are residues of past human suffering.

Even the planet itself carries an energy field of suffering, collectively, in the collective psyche.

[Speaker 2] (4:04 - 4:09)

So we have inherited, through all these generations and ancestors, ancestry now, their suffering.

[Speaker 1] (4:09 - 6:27)

Yes, and I call that the pain body. So it's a residue of past emotional suffering, past, both the past of humanity, and your own personal past, because every child suffers in one way or another. So all the emotional suffering that you go to is added to the pain body, the emotional field of suffering that you've already come into this world with.

So this pain body, now I'm going to look at it for a moment as if it were almost an independent entity. It's an emotional energy field that lives in you, and the pain body is not always active. It has a dormant period when you can hardly feel it and everything seems to be fine, and then it has an active period when it needs to come up and feed again, add to its suffering by creating more suffering.

So this pain body that people carry inside from the past, past emotion, periodically comes out of its dormant state and seeks some further experience of suffering, because that is the energy vibration that it feeds on. So the first thing that happens, a little trigger awakens the pain body. Something relatively insignificant happens, perhaps in your relationship.

Your partner says something, makes a comment, and suddenly there's an enormous reaction out of proportion to the significance of the triggering effect, and the pain body came up because it needed to feed. So the pain body feeds in two ways. It feeds on your mind by rising up into your thoughts and making your thought processes very negative.

They become negative and self-destructive, destructive of self or others. So every negative thought has a certain frequency vibration to it which corresponds to the emotional frequency of the pain body. And some pain bodies are predominantly angry pain bodies.

Other pain bodies are predominantly sad or extremely turbulent or fearful.

[Speaker 2] (6:28 - 6:35)

But we all know that pain body, and we know how it can come up, and it's disproportionate, as you said, to what has actually happened to us.

[Speaker 1] (6:35 - 6:35)

That's right.

[Speaker 2] (6:35 - 6:37)

But we can dissolve the pain body.

[Speaker 1] (6:37 - 7:24)

Yes. Now, the pain body will try to feed, to add to its energy. It wants you to completely identify with that energy field that it represents, that it is.

So it will feed on your mind, but in relationships, it will also feed on reactions, your partner's reactions. It will unconsciously, of course, you don't know that when you're identified with it, you don't know that this is what you're doing. You will try to make your partner react in a certain way that feeds your pain body also by provoking anger, for example.

And it's done unconsciously, so the reaction, your partner's reaction, will be feeding your pain body. And that is what I call the need for drama in a relationship.

[Speaker 2] (7:25 - 7:35)

You know what I like about this, too, is once you think of this pain body as a separate entity, that you detach from it, and you literally then can detach from it?

[Speaker 1] (7:35 - 8:27)

Yes. When you know it is not you, it loses its personal nature. Kind of the pain that you experience periodically then becomes depersonalized.

It's no longer my pain, my identity, my painful story, but simply you know that it is human pain that lives in you. Because there's really nothing personal about these feelings. Anger is not a personal anger, it's human anger.

It's the same in every human being, the same feeling. Sadness is the same feeling of sadness. Fear is fear.

But people personalize it completely, so the emotion energizes and amplifies the mind-made sense of self, which then becomes a very fearful or angry one.

[Speaker 2] (8:27 - 8:51)

But you mentioned that women especially experience this because we really empathize with, we have that history of like the women of Afghanistan that had to wear the burqas and the way that women have been tortured because they're smaller and they've been raped and so forth. So part of that is part of this whole culture and the whole pain body of like the race.

[Speaker 1] (8:51 - 11:00)

Yes, there is a collective aspect to pain body in that sense that certain countries have a heavier collective pain body than other countries. And those tend to be countries where many atrocities or continuous warfare has happened. Eastern Europe, if you go to East European countries and sometimes Central European countries, you can often sense there's a certain heaviness in the energy field.

And that is a collective pain body. Another aspect of the collective pain body is that certain races who've suffered a lot also have accumulated a stronger collective pain body. And women who have been victims really for thousands of years also have a collective female pain body that I point, I talk about in the book that it tends to come up particularly before menstruation in women when there's suddenly great emotional turmoil.

And it can take you over so easily then you become totally identified with and you're forced to act it out again and again. On a monthly basis. Yes, not that men don't have a pain body.

They also have a pain body. But there's the collective aspect of the female pain body. So once you know that, then you can actually bring more presence into it and simply observe that movement, that turbulence or that heaviness inside you.

So it doesn't control your thinking anymore. You simply feel the turbulence or the heaviness inside you and watch it. So you bring a certain amount of presence to it.

And that is bringing the power of now into those emotions that are part of the human pain body. And that is the arising really of a new state, a deeper or higher state of consciousness that is not conditioned, that has the ability to simply witness what is taking place.

[Speaker 2] (11:01 - 11:02)

And that shifts that whole consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (11:02 - 11:27)

That shifts it and you're no longer feeding it. When you know that that's what it is, it's less likely that the pain body can move into your mind, force you to think certain thoughts, which of course will be negative. And it's also less likely that the pain body will make you use your partner to give you more pain in the need to reenact this drama.

[Speaker 2] (11:27 - 12:06)

Over and over, the drama. We will be back in just a moment with more of Eckhart Tolle and the power of now with your health. And if you are just joining us, I'm Georgia Shakti Hill and we're talking with Eckhart Tolle.

The power of now is his book and the practices that you can learn from the power of now can really assist you in becoming a healthy, balanced person. As you know, stress is what makes our lives so difficult and can bring on illness. One technique or practice that is so profound is surrender.

It even affects the aging process, does it not?

[Speaker 1] (12:06 - 13:43)

Yes. Surrender is acceptance of this moment as it is, because you realize the futility of that state of inner resistance to what is, to simply make this moment your friend rather than your enemy. And then you realize that perhaps for many years, the now, the present moment, you've treated it as an enemy, trying to get away from it, not liking it, constantly criticizing it.

So this transformation of no longer internally trying to escape from or deny the aliveness that is in this moment, that also brings about a transformation in the physical body, because a lot of the contraction that people sense, that which stops the healthy flow of life energy through the body, what is called qi, that which stops that is the state of fearful contraction that is there. And where does that originate? It's because you never embrace this moment as it is.

You mentally project yourself forward to some possible future moment, and in that gap between now and later, fear arises. The fear makes the body contract, and that greatly impedes the flow of life energy through the body.

[Speaker 2] (13:43 - 14:04)

You mentioned continue to say yes, say yes to life, say yes to now, say yes to what is going on. It really is a matter of acceptance. And going with kind of the flow of your life, and if you are in fear, then that's when the blockages come.

But the acceptance of the now, okay, so we accept it, we actually embrace it.

[Speaker 1] (14:05 - 14:53)

The now and life are one, because there is no life outside of now. So when you look at it, most people live in past and future, rarely in the now, so they live in a conceptualized universe, because now is all there ever is. Nothing ever happened in the past, it happened in the now.

Nothing will ever happen in the future, it will happen in the now. So when you realize how vital it is, then you open yourself up to an enormous power that is here all the time, that you cut yourself off from when you live in and through mental projections of past and, for many people, future mostly.

[Speaker 2] (14:53 - 15:09)

Now a lot of people will, oh, maybe they'll do astrology, or they'll do I Ching, or they'll do the Tarot, or they will do some form of divination. And is it because they really are not satisfied or not living in the now, and they're projecting into the future, they want to see what the future holds? Is it like a dissatisfaction with what is?

[Speaker 1] (15:10 - 15:32)

Well, they want to in some way perhaps control what is going to happen to them. They want to know. But of course, if you knew what is going to happen to you, your life would lose all sense of adventure.

Everything would be totally fixed. So simply, the most powerful spiritual practice is the practice of now.

[Speaker 2] (15:34 - 15:54)

Be in the moment, as the Sufi Master would say. That's why they dance, that's why they whirl. It brings you into the moment.

And there are practices that do that. Now some of the things, one thing that you suggested was the inner body. And tell me about that and how people can come from the inner body and come into the now, be in the now.

[Speaker 1] (15:54 - 18:23)

Most people are cut off from the aliveness of their body because all their attention is absorbed continuously by thought processes. In other words, they're completely in the head. Their center of gravity, so to speak, is in the mind, in their continuous stream of thinking.

And what are they thinking about? Probably the next moment, the future. They're projecting themselves forward, trying to control it in some way, trying to prevent certain things from happening.

And so they lose themselves in the mind and in time, in future. So a very powerful practice is to bring your attention from the head into the body and to feel the aliveness that is always present throughout your entire body. And it can start with a simple thing like sensing the aliveness that is in your hand.

And at first, some people say, I can't feel anything. And I sometimes point out, yes, you can. Just close your eyes, hold up your right hand.

And without moving your hand and without looking at it, is there any way you can know whether your right hand is still there? And then they do that. And suddenly they can feel the energy in their right hand.

They can sense it. And they're beginning now to enter the body with their attention. And in the same way that you can feel the aliveness there, you can very easily feel the aliveness that is in the rest of the body and then sense it as a general flow of aliveness.

Every cell is alive. And that takes your attention away from the mind and also brings you into the now, because you cannot be inhabiting the body. It's one way of putting it, truly inhabiting the body.

When you inhabit the body, you cannot be away from the now. That is an anchor for staying present. And that is a state of great power, because we may not realize how much intelligence is actually, how much intelligence lives in the body and in every cell of the body.

If you had to control the workings of the body through your mind, the body would break down immediately because it's far too complex.

[Speaker 3] (18:24 - 18:24)

Oh, yes, yes.

[Speaker 1] (18:24 - 18:53)

Only the intelligence in the body, that is in every cell and in every organ, can make the body function in that way. So the greater intelligence that is there, the one intelligence that is there of which the human mind is only a tiny aspect, how to connect with that one intelligence that runs the entire universe, the easiest way to connect with that is to start by connecting it with, connecting with your inner body.

[Speaker 2] (18:54 - 19:12)

Now, many people are suffering with disease, and we know that through pain and through disease and trauma, we often do evolve. However, how can we transform illness and suffering? What can we do with the power of now to transform illness and suffering?

[Speaker 1] (19:12 - 21:35)

If illness is already there, see that you don't form an identity out of your illness. You don't make an identity out of it. You identify with it so much that the image forms in your mind of me as a person who has that, who is a sufferer of that, to simply bring it down to this moment and the reality of this moment.

So when I speak of surrendering to an illness, I'm not saying surrender to the fact that you are ill. That's a mental image. Simply surrender to whatever this moment presents, and that may be at this moment pain.

It may be disability. It may be discomfort. And an illness can become your spiritual teacher because it can teach you the state of surrender.

To say yes to what is. Not resist it. Enormous healing powers are released when you enter the state of non-resistance, which has nothing to do with resignation and saying, oh, I might as well accept I'm not going to get any better.

Give in to it. Nothing to do with that. It's simply accept the reality of this moment as it is without constructing a mental story on top of it.

Simply this. The pain is there. So let the pain teach you surrender.

That's how the egoic entity, the mind-made self, can actually become eroded through an illness. And it has happened. I have met people who have had severe disability, and there they were in their wheelchair, perhaps totally incapacitated.

And I looked into their eyes, and there was an enormous light shining through, an enormous aliveness. They had surrendered to their condition. And then I met others in the same condition.

There was great bitterness and anger and resentment. They had closed down. And so healing is more likely to happen, much more likely to happen in the surrendered state.

[Speaker 2] (21:35 - 21:39)

Because that tenseness is gone, the anger, the harming your body.

[Speaker 1] (21:39 - 21:51)

All healing powers are released in the state of openness, that is the state of surrender. Because the state of non-surrender is the state of closeness, shutting down, contraction, tightness.

[Speaker 2] (21:52 - 21:59)

So the power of now can be that we can actually put ourselves in a healing state, being open to healing.

[Speaker 1] (21:59 - 22:19)

So the power of now is always connected with working with whatever is at this moment, not demanding that your life should be different, not being antagonistic towards the reality of this moment.

[Speaker 2] (22:20 - 22:20)

To surrender to the moment.

[Speaker 1] (22:21 - 22:21)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (22:21 - 23:11)

Thank you, Eckhart. If you would like to be in touch with Eckhart, and you know we always love to hear from you, stay tuned and we'll let you know how. And then we'll be back with a parting thought.

Living in this moment, accepting what is, can change our relationships, can change our health. Then we can truly live in balance in mind, body and spirit. Until next time, I'm Georgia Shakti Hill.

May you be well, happy and peaceful. And may you have the power of now.

(Eckhart Tolle) with Tami Simon Sounds True Awakening Experience of Eckhart Tolle - Eckhart Tolle experience of the moment of Awakening--.mp4

[Speaker 2] (0:06 - 1:25)

Eckhart, you've now had the chance at Eckhart Tolle TV to answer over a hundred questions from different members of the Eckhart Tolle TV community, and we still have more questions. But what I'm really curious about today is to hear about you, your experience. Most of the questions have been about our community members and their process of awakening.

But in your case, awakening wasn't really a process. It was a sudden and complete overhaul, if you will, rewiring, restructuring of your being. And as important as this event was, a rare event, actually, in human life, you've written about it in just a few paragraphs in The Power of Now.

But I've never heard you tell the story of your awakening. And that's where I'd like to start, if you will, in as much detail as possible.

[Speaker 1] (1:25 - 15:25)

Well, the background to it is several years of inner states of anxiety and depression in my 20s. And even at university, I got to university late because I didn't have any qualifications. Initially, I left school at 14.

So later in England, I got the qualifications to get into university. I was already in my early 20s, and I had a full-time job at the same time. And at that time, gradually, the depressions and a lot of states of high anxiety also started.

I did very well at university in my degree course, and I worked very hard. I wasn't aware of that so much at the time. But later on, years later, I met somebody who was a student at the same time in a different faculty, but he observed me, and he said, oh, you were always working.

You were working till midnight in the library, and I couldn't believe it. And then I realized, oh, yeah, I must have been working very hard. But the motivation was fear, anxiety of not doing well.

So it wasn't enjoyable. I was motivated by anxiety. And that came to a head after I graduated.

I did very well. I was happy for two or three weeks. And then the anxiety and depression came back, even worse than before.

So that night came, I was living in a little bedsitter, as they call it in England, in London. I had finished my university course. I didn't know what to do next.

And that night, I woke up again in the night with a very active mind. But at that moment, of course, I was my mind. I didn't know that there was an active mind, because I was the thought processes that kept me awake and were telling me how many reasons I had to be in a state of fear, the uncertainty of future, what am I going to live on, am I going to make it, and so on.

Unhappiness with who I was as a person, inadequacy, and so on. And so there was this incessant mind activity that during that night again creating enormous amount of anxiety to the point of breathlessness. And feeling completely cut off from the outside world, meaning alien, it seemed alien.

When I remember looking at objects in the room, they seemed completely alien to me. It's only later, years later, I read a novel, I don't remember much of it, but a similar feeling was described there, and I recognized it. It was by Jean-Paul Sartre, and the novel was called La Nausee, Nausea, Existential Anguish, and so that was how I experienced it.

So intense unhappiness and fear, and then the thought came as I was lying in bed that the burden of living was too much. I didn't want to do it anymore. I can't, and so the thought arose, I can't live with myself any longer.

That thought repeated itself a few times, and then the moment came when I became aware of that thought as a thought, and the thought then said, is that I can't live with myself? What does that mean? There must be two of myself here, because if I can't live with myself, who am I and who is the self?

There was a sudden, I was looking at that statement that my mind had created, I can't live with myself, and I saw the strangeness of it. I had separated myself in two, and so I saw who am I and who is the self? And that question, that was the last thought, the last significant thought before the awakening experience, this last significant thought posed a question, and that question was, who am I and who is that self that I can't live with?

Is there one or two here? Am I one or two? That was the last thought, and the answer to that question did not come as a thought.

The answer to that question, I didn't know at the time, by the way, that this is what was happening, but I can explain it now. I couldn't have explained it then. The answer to that question came not as a thought, but as an inner stepping back from thought, an inner disidentification from thought.

And so I suddenly realized, but not through analytical thinking, that that self that I couldn't live with had no actual reality. That was the unhappy self. So its illusory nature was recognized, but not through thinking, not through thinking the self is really illusory,

no.

The illusory nature was recognized as an indirect recognition beyond thought. I could see that it is nothing, but without saying that mentally. So am I one or two?

The last question led to a disidentification from the me, the unhappy me, the whole sense of self that was burdened with unhappiness and fear and anxiety and inadequacy and so on. So that self kind of dissolved because I must have withdrawn completely my identification with it. So I stepped out of the mind created self and what remained was myself as consciousness, but not as the unhappy me.

And so the unhappy me began to get shaky and then something happened to it. It must have, in its final stages, I think there was again, I felt almost disappearing into some black hole because it was a kind of death experience. It was the death of the unhappy me.

And so the perception of that, it wasn't so much visual as more like a feeling that I was disappearing into some hole. And there was still some fear left there, anxiety of what's happening to me. And then, but I heard a voice again, not as an audible voice, but more as the realization don't resist or resist nothing, I think it said.

And so I just let go and then a kind of void opened, but not a visual one. And I don't remember much else. I must have gone to sleep soon after that.

So there was the, am I one or two was the question that arose. I can't live with myself. That question brought about an inner separation between the mind created self and the consciousness that had identified with it, that was fueling it.

So the consciousness that had created this dreamlike figure or self stepped out of it. And so I realized, yes, I was to the self and I, but only one was real. And so the consciousness that I am was real and the unreal was no longer being sustained by my identification with it.

I'm explaining it now, but I couldn't have explained it then. It just happened. It took several years.

I don't know how many, maybe at least seven or eight years before I could have explained it in the way in which I'm explaining it now. And the next morning I awoke at first, I didn't even remember that what happened in the night. So my eyes opened and the first impression was of everything being fresh and new around me, or it was the old familiar room.

Everything felt alive. Everything was amazing. And even simple objects, their very presence was lovely to look at.

The light coming through the curtains, I knew it was alive. And most important of all, it's a deep sense of peace inside. So I was looking at everything through the peace and I thought, wow, it's wonderful.

And I picked some things up and looked as if I'd been born into this world for the first time. And of course, I can give an additional explanation now, which I couldn't have done then. I wasn't bringing the past into my sense perceptions.

There was just the sense perception without the labeling of the sense perception. There was just a peaceful background to it. And I wasn't calling it anything.

It wasn't the old familiar objects in the room because the old familiar self wasn't there anymore. There was only a consciousness there, a field of consciousness. And that day I took a bus and went into downtown central London and the same in the middle of the traffic, watching the people and then getting off the bus, walking around the city, this incredible sense of peace.

And I thought, well, this is amazing today I feel so peaceful. But then the next day it was there still again, the peace. Then I actually got a notebook and I wrote down something important has happened to me, but I don't know what it is, but I'm just going to write down these things because I might lose it again and forget about it, forget what happened.

I haven't, by the way, haven't looked at that notebook in a long, long, long time. So I don't know exactly what I wrote there.

[Speaker 2] (15:26 - 15:27)

But you still have it.

[Speaker 1] (15:27 - 15:27)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (15:28 - 15:28)

Well, that might be curious.

[Speaker 1] (15:29 - 15:30)

I'll have a look one of these days.

[Speaker 2] (15:32 - 15:39)

Now, one thing you were lying down during the entire experience. So when this separation of the little me and consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (15:39 - 15:45)

Yes, in bed, yes. And it was dark, yes. Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (15:45 - 16:21)

Now, sometimes people say that you can't describe awakening as a quote-unquote experience. And I notice even as you recount this, there are aspects where it's hard to find the words because it wasn't being processed through that part of your mind. So if it's not exactly an experience, what's happening outside of, I mean, you can't quite give a visual for it.

You can't quite say that you felt this or that. That's very curious to me.

[Speaker 1] (16:22 - 18:59)

It's not an experience as such because an experience is something that is added to you, one could say. When you experience something, it's something new that is added to your life. We call it a life experience.

But this is definitely not a life experience. And it is the opposite of something being added to you. It's the, so in that sense, it's the opposite of an experience because instead of something being added to you, something is being removed from you.

So something that before was heavy and looked substantial is being, something dissolves rather than something being added. And it leaves behind something that, again, is not entirely new but had been obscured before. So it's not an adding onto.

And that perhaps is even for spiritual seekers an important thing to consider because many people are looking for some spiritual experience as if it were something that can be added to them. And that's not how it is. In that sense, one could say it's a negative experience.

So, or you could say it's a loss rather than a gain. But it's a beautiful loss. But in the transitional moment of loss, it can still be painful because it is a kind of death.

So you lose something, but what you gain is not something that comes, that just, it emerges, had been there before always, your essential reality, but it's not added on. Hard to explain, I can only point. So the important thing is not to look for an experience that, not to look for an adding onto me because that's everything else is like that.

One wants to have more of more experiences. And that's the big minus experience, not a plus experience.

[Speaker 2] (19:03 - 19:51)

For many people in the process of awakening, integrating their physical form with vast, infinite states of being creates certain interesting experiences, challenges. Sometimes people who touch big states of openness will then find their body shaking or that there's a sense of, wow, this is so much energy and this physical form isn't used to that much energy running through the nervous system. And here your experience, or your minus experience, so complete seemingly, such a huge restructuring, what was that like for you physically?

[Speaker 1] (19:52 - 21:37)

I don't remember anything, any kind of painful physical experience accompanying it. There was, part of the sense of peace was a much heightened sense of aliveness in the inner energy field of the body. So I felt my entire being felt more alive.

I hardly knew that because that was part of the total experience afterwards of, not experience because it was lasting, of that vibrantly alive sense of inner peace that was there all the time. And part of that vibrantly alive sense of inner peace was the aliveness that I could feel throughout the entire body. But that was very pleasant.

It wasn't an unpleasant thing. So why it is that some people seem to experience even painful things as the energy increases, it could be that the pain or the pressure is felt where there are still blockages in the body. And it could be that with that, what happened, the surrender that night, if you call it that, may well have dissolved also all those blockages that would have been there otherwise.

But that's, I'm guessing, I don't know the ultimate answer of why I didn't experience that.

[Speaker 2] (21:38 - 21:42)

Were you even aware of an inner body, quote-unquote, before? No.

[Speaker 1] (21:43 - 21:57)

No, I was completely in the head. So there was no, I didn't feel alive except the turmoil in the head felt a bit alive, but not a pleasant aliveness.

[Speaker 2] (21:58 - 22:05)

So what did that feeling inside your body feel like? I wonder if you can describe it for me in even greater detail.

[Speaker 1] (22:06 - 23:20)

Well, as you know, later that became part of, many years later, became part of the teaching where I'm, as you, pointing out to people that they can actually, what happened to me accidentally, that one aspect of what has happened, they can actually consciously direct their attention away from where it normally dwells in the movement of thought and direct attention. So when you're asking me what it felt like or feels like, and my answer is to direct you or whoever is listening to this, direct them to the actual, you can actually go there right now in yourself and relive what happened there to me accidentally by consciously choosing to direct attention into the inner energy field of the body. Usually I tell people to start with one part of the body, put attention into your hands, and as we speak.

[Speaker 2] (23:21 - 23:26)

Yeah, if you can describe the feelings to me, that's what I'm curious about for you, even right now, right here.

[Speaker 1] (23:27 - 27:42)

A tingling would be going too far, although for some people, some people describe it as tingling, but it's on the way towards tingling inside. If I could make a sound, it doesn't have a sound, but if it were a sound, it would go zzzz, it's almost feels like a vibration. It's not quite a vibration, but it almost feels like a vibration.

So very hard to put into words because language is designed to reflect objects, ultimately, whether physical objects or mental objects, but language can't really find adequate words to talk about that which has no object to it as such. So all I can say is approximate. It's a bit like tingling.

It's a little bit like a vibration. It could even be as a warmth. Sometimes actually the temperature in the body sometimes increases for people as they become more aware of what I call now the inner body.

And once you can sense the energy inside your hands as that tingling or vibrating aliveness, very subtle perhaps only, that's fine, then it becomes easier to be aware that it's in other parts of the body too. And so it's a very pleasant way of becoming rooted more deeply within the being that you are. And also it's a very effective way of becoming anchored in the present moment, whereas the mind is never really in the present moment.

It's always elsewhere. So you take attention away from thought into that and then you rest in that and you can still speak and listen and you can even think, but you're not going to do more thinking when you fence the inner body. You're not going to do more thinking than you actually need to do it at that moment.

And it may well be that you don't need to do any thinking that moment. Maybe it's just, so that's, the inner body is part of what I now call presence, the state of presence. So you are present with your whole body.

So that kind of happened to me accidentally and you could say, as I began to understand after years what had happened to me accidentally and as I began to work with people who came to me to ask questions and then I began speaking to them, answers came, then that which happened to me accidentally, I became part of the teaching and I realized this is something that you don't have to actually wait for for you to happen to you accidentally, neither the inner body awareness nor the surrender to whatever is and the disidentification from thinking, all these things you can actually do. You can, so I'm showing people a way, but a lot of the teaching comes out of that spontaneous occurrence that happened to me, so to speak.

And so what happened that night and gradually as I began to understand it, help people with their problems, it gradually over the years became more differentiated and became a spiritual teaching and that took years and years and it was an organic process. The foundation didn't change.

[Speaker 2] (27:43 - 28:01)

Now just to clarify one thing, are you saying that in a state of presence when someone is present that the inner body will always be there in some wakeful, slightly tingly or something like that way, that there's always that physical correlate?

[Speaker 1] (28:01 - 28:41)

An aliveness there, the presence is an entire body state. It almost seems that in presence even things around you are more present. So it really affects everything that your body and the moment you look at things in presence, you realize they are alive.

So it's not only you, you become more alive. It seems that the world around you becomes more alive or rather you, it may not, it is not more alive, but you recognize for the first time it's aliveness.

[Speaker 2] (28:42 - 28:42)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (28:42 - 28:53)

And you share, you share the aliveness with the flower. You recognize your own aliveness in the, aliveness is one word I'm using, I could use other words.

[Speaker 3] (28:54 - 28:54)

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (29:01 - 29:23)

When you started making sense, if we can say that, of your experience, having a framework for it, did the question ever occur to you, why me? This kind of sudden, very thorough awakening happens to so few people in any generation. Did you have the thought, why me?

Why did this happen to me?

[Speaker 1] (29:23 - 31:25)

Never, I never had that thought. And I believe the reason for this is that I'd never perceived it as something that happened to me, really. When I talk about it because we're using language, it sounds as if it was something that happened to me, but that's, language works like that.

Otherwise I wouldn't be able to use language at all. But if I look deeper, I'll have to say I never had the feeling that that was something that happened to me. And that is because the essence of that is the disappearance of the me.

The me becoming, so we, the me, the sense of personal or separate identity as with Giorgio, that's me, me. That sense of the form identity as the me became so weakened in that, that something was shining through then where the me was, there was only a transparency. There was still a form, of course, to some extent, but no identification with it.

And without the identification with the form, it became, the form became semi-transparent. And the entire thing that happened, if we can even call it happened, was that as the me became transparent, the consciousness came through very strongly. And it is not the me, it's the consciousness, which is formless and has nothing to do with the person.

So it only happened because the me almost disappeared that it could happen. And for this reason, it never occurred to me to ask why did it happen to me? I don't know if that makes sense.

[Speaker 2] (31:26 - 31:59)

It does make sense. I guess the question, though, still remains for me. This body-mind form was somehow selected by the cosmos to undergo this minus experience for, I would say, in my words, the benefit of other people.

How come it was chosen, that particular body-mind? Maybe that question didn't occur to you, but here I'm asking it now. If you were answering, just looking at this from the outside, what would you say?

[Speaker 1] (32:00 - 32:40)

I don't know if it was chosen. It would, of course, happen to any me that recognizes its own essential nothingness. Any me anywhere in the world that recognizes that essentially its sense of identity was to a large extent illusory, and then the realization is there.

Why did the realization come to this particular illusory identity? I don't know. I never actually asked myself that question.

It's a mystery.

[Speaker 2] (32:42 - 33:42)

Even though you might not have asked yourself that question in the past, here in this moment, if you take a look at it, do you have any ideas about why perhaps this, Eckhart, there's plenty of people who understand everything you said about the panic, the anxiety. There's a sense that there's a little me, there's an awareness that there's two of me here, but that's where the story ends for them. Then maybe they pray to have the kind of awakening you had, lying on the ground, face down, praying, crying, whatever, and nothing happens.

They wake up the same miserable wretch the next morning, and perhaps keep reading books, become a member of Eckhart Tolle TV, or who knows what. And so there's something clearly unique in your particular story, in anyone's story, but rare in your story. So it's, for you, it just goes into the mystery.

[Speaker 1] (33:43 - 33:44)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (33:44 - 33:44)

Column?

[Speaker 1] (33:45 - 36:34)

Perhaps the form was ready through previous lifetimes, one way or another. I've never investigated past lifetimes because I lost interest in past, but it may well be that the form was prepared for that. And that's the reason why it happened, but that would, I wouldn't be reluctant to say that that is actually the case, because that would mean the only way you can really awaken is if you've had enough incarnations and so on.

The teaching is really pointing out that virtually anybody can awaken, and not as drastically as happened here, but almost anybody can at least enter the awakening process. There's a term in Buddhism, which is, I think it's called a stream enterer. So anybody can enter the awakening process.

Yes, some degree of readiness is required, but anybody who reads a book like The Power of Now or New Earth, or any other spiritually powerful book that was written from a deep place of realization, anybody who reads that and is open to it and recognizes the essential truth in it, anybody who's drawn to a spiritual teaching and goes there, there is an openness there. There are still millions of people who don't. They wouldn't touch a spiritual book, and if they opened it, it would be totally meaningless.

So I'm not talking of all those people. They obviously have to wait a little longer. But others who are, in whom there is an openness, then the awakening process can begin.

They can enter the awakening process, and that's all that's needed. And I don't see, I just cannot see myself as a chosen one. It's something inside me that says no to that, but I may be wrong.

[Speaker 2] (36:41 - 37:40)

So I had the opportunity to interview you once before Eckhart about 10 years ago, and one of the things you reported to me then was that after this awakening, you experienced an 80% reduction in mental activity. And I'm curious in your life what it's like for you in terms of your relationship to thoughts, meaning do you sometimes have hours go by where there literally are no thoughts, or are there thoughts coming but they just float by and there's no attention is given to them? So what's it actually like?

And I'm sure it's different, obviously, if you're in the middle of an airport doing something than if you're just relaxing at home. But I'm curious to know more about the interior of your experience.

[Speaker 1] (37:40 - 43:41)

Yes, yes. Well, there are long stretches of no thought, and I can still function in that state. For example, you talk about airport.

I can perfectly check in or walk to the, go through security check and then on to whatever the lounge without any thought. And this would not be uncommon that I would do something or go from where I get into the car and drive to the store to buy something. And again, virtually no thought is not uncommon.

So, and it does make occasionally little fragments may come up like little puffs of clouds and then they're gone. So it's, there can be, or let's say I'm sitting at home not doing much and occasional thoughts can drift in and out of awareness like clouds, like the sky is blue, but little puffy clouds come from time to time and they go, the thoughts have no, I don't follow them and they don't even try anymore to get my attention as is the case with people who are still very strongly identified with thought. Every thought pulls you.

Every thought pulls you where it wants you to go. And thoughts don't really have that pull anymore. They just, when they appear, there's a blue sky and the clouds appear and disappear, appear and disappear.

And there could even occasionally be a stream of thoughts in certain situations or maybe not even connected to anything happening outside of me. There can be times when there are certain streams of thoughts, but again, they are harmless. They're not the thoughts that have this gravitational pull that just, and you have to follow them with your entire attention.

But it's a thought that, yes, from time to time, there may even be more clouds than blue sky, but these clouds are no longer the heavy weather clouds that I had in the distant past and that other people perhaps recognize in their own lives. They are more like innocent little puffy clouds with thoughts, but no thought matters that much. And then it disappears.

It's not amplified by following it up and identifying with it and then becomes a heavy thing that takes possession of you. So it never feels as if any thought were taking possession of me. So yes, then to summarize, I think if anybody entered my inner state, they would be surprised how little thinking there actually is compared to probably what I still, is still for most people normal, almost continuous.

How relatively little there is. Yes, there is some, and that which there is is doesn't have the heaviness anymore that it has when you're identified with the thoughts and they have a gravitational pull and they develop into streams and proliferate and develop into streams and you lose yourself completely in it. So that doesn't happen.

So I, I'm most, the not thinking is almost, would say predominates unless there's something specific to think about. But then occasionally, yes, clouds come and go and so on. But there's always an awareness of the sky also.

It's, and it doesn't really matter whether I'm in, out in nature, in the, walking in the forest, looking around. Let's just describe, let's just describe perhaps one minute of let me walking in the forest, walking, looking, the dog, trees, no thought, just looking at the trees, the plants, the aliveness of it, sensing the energy field. And then a thought may come and says, oh, when I get home, I need to, I need to do this or that.

I forgot to do that. I need to, when I get home, I still need to do that. Or I need to buy some, I need to buy some bananas later.

Okay, and then it's gone. And then, and then some other thought comes of something, maybe could be anything. A person that tried to contact me the other day, didn't.

And then it's gone again and back. So puffs come, go, go, predominantly, really awareness. It's so much nicer than thinking.

[Speaker 2] (43:43 - 44:01)

So just to be sure that I fully hear you correctly, it never happens that one of these puffs kind of has a little hook that comes down that catches you by the neck or something like that. And, you know, just a little hook that comes in, like I forgot to do something. And.

[Speaker 1] (44:03 - 44:27)

Good question. I have experienced in the past, not for some time now, occasionally some thought coming in and hook is a good word. I experienced in the past sometimes, and I can't remember when the last time was, occasionally some thought coming in and wanting more of me than just appear and disappear.

[Speaker 2] (44:27 - 44:28)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (44:28 - 44:32)

It goes, I perceive it, it goes like this. It pulls your sleeve.

[Speaker 2] (44:33 - 44:34)

Yeah, yeah.

[Speaker 1] (44:36 - 44:52)

And so that's, I usually, I notice it and then there's an intensification of presence. There's a conscious choice at that moment to be more intensely present.

[Speaker 2] (44:52 - 44:53)

Interesting.

[Speaker 1] (44:53 - 46:15)

Yeah. The same thing happens when a challenge comes in everyday life. Something goes wrong, whatever it may be, and a challenge comes in.

And what otherwise could easily develop into some kind of minor drama. And again, at that time, usually it's not even so much a conscious choice. It almost happens naturally that immediately there's an intensification of presence.

So that's something that I hadn't mentioned before. There is the, the normal level of presence is the taking over of the normal level. When a challenge comes in, there is a, I call it sometimes the dimmer switch, is turned up and there's more intense presence when the challenge comes because only more intense presence can burn the thoughts that want to arise there.

And so there's then a, and hard to describe what a heightening of presence is, but if I could act it out.

[Speaker 2] (46:16 - 46:16)

Please.

[Speaker 1] (46:18 - 47:53)

It's like normal presence is, and more intense presence is, and back to normal, more intense. The more intense presence is a, this presence becomes a sharp sword, as I sometimes compare it to that in intense presence, which if you're surrounded by pandemonium, could happen, then that is required. And so there's the, or if there's a very strong pull by some thought that says, come this way, I will lead you to a wonderful place.

It's called drama and unhappiness. Just follow me, you will love it. And then you have to go.

You can't fight that thing. You can't say, no, go away. You give it more power.

You just go. You have to have that fierceness then, the presence becomes fierce presence, whereas before, presence was gentle, gentle presence.

[Speaker 2] (47:56 - 48:19)

And have you noticed in your life what it is that happens in your life? What kinds of thoughts might require you to turn up the volume on presence? For example, for some people, it might be thoughts about money or thoughts about their intimate partner.

I'm just curious, have you seen any pattern for you? Which ones are the tuggy thoughts?

[Speaker 1] (48:20 - 48:20)

Well.

[Speaker 2] (48:22 - 48:25)

I know I'm getting personal here, Eckhart, but I can't help myself.

[Speaker 1] (48:28 - 49:01)

The incomprehensible world of personal finance, having to see my accountant tomorrow, for example, and not understanding all the paperwork and so on can sometimes lead us to an attempt of the mind to get in there and start thinking about it, and then I realize back to presence. That could be, for example, that kind of thing.

[Speaker 2] (49:02 - 49:17)

And of course, you teach so many different approaches to turning up presence. What is it that you do when you turn up presence? Do you have a standard approach?

Do you intensify the feeling of the inner body, or what do you do?

[Speaker 1] (49:19 - 49:46)

It's just, it just happens. I do it, I could say sometimes I do it, or sometimes it just happens, but I cannot say how this, because there is no how. I could say if it's, if it doesn't, if you don't know, if you don't do it, I could recommend that you, to somebody, to be more intensely present in their inner body.

[Speaker 2] (49:46 - 49:47)

But in your experience.

[Speaker 1] (49:47 - 51:32)

But in my case, I'm not saying, okay, I need to be more intensely present in my inner body. There is no, it just happens without any intermediate step. It just happens.

I can even do it here. I can be present in the normal, gentle way, or as I just demonstrated, or I can be present more intensely, which is the sharp sword. And it requires no step, really.

It just happens immediately. Let's see. They're both quite pleasant.

They're very pleasant, the normal presence and the intense presence. And then you could have, again, let's say I am participating in a conversation or whatever. Then there is the presence is in the background.

So I may be talking or contributing to the conversation. And then the presence is there as a sense of still aliveness in the background, which I sometimes call space, inner space, to sense the inner space. That's vital because otherwise you get, your mind takes over.

So, but that does not happen anymore, fortunately. So degrees of presence.

[Speaker 2] (51:35 - 52:30)

One of the things that I've discovered about you here now working on Eckhart Tolle TV with you and getting to know you better over the last couple years is how sharp and precise your mind is. I didn't know this, I think, in the beginning because so much of your teaching was about exploring the space in between thoughts that I didn't realize. Eckhart is actually quite sharp and sophisticated.

For example, when you tell a story or you teach on a book, you're very exact. You have the details right, or you don't state them. And I'm curious if you've found any relationship between the space in your mind and the exactitude and precision of your mind and what that relationship might be.

[Speaker 1] (52:33 - 55:07)

Well, with the space, the sense of space, thought actually works better, works more precisely, more simply, and has more power to it than, let's compare it perhaps to an engine, a car engine. A car engine that is, but the owner, let's say, misuses the engine by sitting in the car a lot of the time. The car is in neutral and he or she is just putting the foot on the gas just to hear the sound of the engine and it goes for hours.

He sits in the stationary car going, vroom, vroom, vroom, vroom, not going anywhere at all, just to get so used to it. And then when he finally needs to go somewhere, the engine isn't that efficient anymore because it's worn out. So the same applies to the mind.

If there's continuous misuse of the mind, and you can't even call it use because the mind has taken over, and there is, every hour of the day, there's continuous stream of thinking, a lot of it useless, repetitive, and even negative. And if then this person who is usually immersed in the stream of repetitive, continuous thinking, mental noise, has to actually apply their mind and in order to analyze something or relate something or find a solution to a problem, certain situations require thought, then their mind isn't actually that effective anymore, just like the engine that has been misused. It loses its sharpness and its power.

So I'm using that analogy and I believe it is true. My mind, I believe, works better now than it did when I was at university. Usually people say, well, you lose your mental powers as you grow older, but I don't find that.

I think my mental powers in my 20s were less than they are now. And I can also think more creatively now than I could then.

[Speaker 2] (55:07 - 56:07)

I don't know. Okay, Eckhart, I think I have a pretty good sense of the, or a sense of the inner landscape of your mind. And now I'd like to see if we could talk some about emotions.

Some teachers who emphasize disidentification still value and want to welcome and feel the full range of emotional experience. You could say a sort of tantric approach, if you will. Bring on the rage, bring on the desire, bring on the sadness, even.

There's no identification, but these are different kinds of clouds that move through space. And I'm wondering if it's like that for you or if it's not like that for you in terms of the range of emotions and the depth of emotional experience.

[Speaker 1] (56:08 - 56:09)

It's not like that.

[Speaker 2] (56:09 - 56:10)

I had a feeling.

[Speaker 1] (56:14 - 1:04:39)

There's relatively little, and what there is is very short-lived. It can come as a, let's say, anger on very rare occasions, as a flash that goes through and then passes out again. It's not, thought doesn't get hold of it and starts amplifying it and prolonging it.

So it doesn't, any emotion that arises, sadness, perhaps seeing some human suffering or other suffering, any life form, suddenly sadness arising. I can cry. Occasionally I cry when I see a movie, it can happen.

And so the emotion is there. I can also cry when I see occasionally something, a human being in suffering. And so the emotion comes and then it passes again.

It lasts maybe a minute or two minutes or less. And it's rare. So there are, doesn't happen that often, any kind of emotion really.

This doesn't mean I'm dead inside. If there were no presence and I didn't have any emotion, then I would be dead inside. So if you have no presence and no emotions, that means you're not truly alive inside.

But if there is presence in you, if there's awareness, then that is the primary source of aliveness. And compared to that, emotion is only a turbulence within that primary aliveness. So if you have nothing, if you don't have access to the primary aliveness, then you need the turbulence to give you some sense of aliveness.

And that's why people need, many people need their drama, their daily drama or weekly drama, or the drama in relationships that we are still alive. It's still, without the drama, everything seems to die down. So people love their drama.

They create it in their daily life unconsciously because at least it gives them some sense of aliveness. As I get excited about my problems and talk about it, at least I know I'm alive, but this doesn't, I don't have that. You don't actually need all those things when there's presence.

So within the field of presence, occasional small turbulences happen. They're rare, that's how I experience it. I don't want to pronounce judgment upon people who still say they are present, but they love indulging in all kinds of emotions.

I haven't been inside them, so I can't really tell what their state is like, whether it's just a justification for loss of awareness or whether there is something that is actually, they just love the emotion despite the fact that they are aware. I would have to enter into these people to know how they experience that. So I'd better not to pronounce any judgment on them.

So many days pass without any particular emotion arising at all. So it's much more common not to have any emotion. By the way, to feel empathy with another human being, to feel love or loving kindness for another human being, I don't regard that as an emotion.

That emotion is the neediness of attachment to another human being. But the outflow of loving kindness or love towards another human being is not a turbulence. It's a deep thing that comes out of the recognition that the consciousness that I am is the essence of who you are also.

So what I love in you is consciousness loves itself. What I love in my dog, when I look at the dog, although the fur is nice and soft and it's lovely to touch the dog, but when I look into the eyes of the dog, there's something that I love in the dog that is more than the fur or the tissues or the blood and bones that is there. If you look under the skin and under the fur, it's just really a bag of organs and blood and bones and tissue that's not the same with a human being.

That's not what you love. So what I love in the dog is the consciousness of the dog because I can see there is a consciousness looking. Within the limitations of the dog form, there is the consciousness coming looking and I'll see myself in a somewhat very different form.

And the same when you look at another human being and there is the connection, the inner connection, that's not, to me, this is not an emotion at all. It is much deeper than that. And so that is there a lot of the time.

I actually, I love so many things, not just when I connect with humans. I haven't spoken about that yet. It just came to me because it's so natural.

I don't usually, I don't think about that. I love inanimate objects. I often, I pick something up and hold it for a few seconds because I love its presence.

It could be the toothpaste tube. It could be a book and I love it not because what's written in it but its simple physical presence. Anything, anything, it could be anything.

The table, the surface of the table. So there's, the world is, that is an aspect, I would say, of the sense of aliveness of the world that you inhabit and of not reducing everything around you to a means to an end. It's for, I'm using this for this or that purpose and it needs to get me there.

But to appreciate it for what it is, not for what it can do for you but simply for what it is. So that's the lovingness towards things, the appreciation of things. But all that is not emotional.

There's no emotion there. And again, the true love between humans is emotion between two humans can be part of what is the deeper foundation for the connection between two humans is awareness, presence. That's the consciousness that connects you.

In addition to having that as a foundation, there can be emotions floating around the surface too. But they are not the focal point. They are not the main thing of what connects you.

So, I don't want to create the impression in anybody that they should get rid of their emotions because that's not how it works.

[Speaker 2] (1:04:39 - 1:05:06)

No, but you don't seem to be a very big fan of emotions, I would say, from hearing how it works inside of you, meaning something like sadness. Yeah. Some people, some maybe melancholy loving people might see sadness as something quite beautiful and interesting and worth really spending some time in.

But it sounds like for you, it's more like a cloud formation that's passing.

[Speaker 1] (1:05:07 - 1:05:40)

Yes, yes. I also, I don't feel drawn to music that's emotional. So, and so it's not, I'm not afraid of emotion.

It's like being in a, it's the, a place that is much deeper than any emotion and more a permanent aliveness, not a temporary high or temporary low, which is what emotions are.

[Speaker 2] (1:05:41 - 1:06:07)

Yeah, I mean, it sounds like what you're saying is without being explicitly judgmental, it sounds like what you're saying though is that your sense is that people who indulge, quote unquote, take their emotions for a ride, it's really a way that they can feel alive because their inner presence and sense of aliveness isn't active and awake enough, so they have to, this is the way they can feel alive.

[Speaker 1] (1:06:07 - 1:06:26)

That's right, yes, yes. And as far as they are concerned, I mean, they are right because then at least they remain connected to that substitute, as I call it, some substitute sense of aliveness, but at least there's some aliveness there then. So rather than being dead, have some drama, yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:06:27 - 1:07:38)

Okay. Now I have a slightly different question here, Eckhart, which is some people who have experienced some degree of wakefulness still seem to manifest quite a difficult time in certain areas of their life. Maybe it's in their business life or it's in their relationship life or it's with their physical health.

And the spiritual openness that they've touched doesn't seem to translate into these other aspects of their life. And what I'm getting at here is I'm curious if you think that spiritual awakening in and of itself quote unquote solves all of our problems or if at the same time it's quite important for people to do their psychological work, focus on their physical health, concern themselves with nutrition, or do these things just naturally happen? They naturally happen, you don't have to worry about it.

[Speaker 1] (1:07:39 - 1:15:22)

Well, a spiritual awakening does not immediately solve all your problems, nor does it mean that your life from then on will be free of challenges. So the challenges continue. Not that you would be likely to find yourself continuously in dysfunctional situations that are very unlikely when you are spiritually awake or even relatively conscious, if not even fully awake, it's unlikely that you would find yourself for long periods of time or most of the time in dysfunctional or unpleasant drama situations and so on.

However, challenges remain. Life will continue to give you challenges. That's part of being here as a physical form.

So there will be no end to the whatever challenges of whatever kind will come from time to time. And so it's not that spiritual awakening removes all those things, all those challenges, but it does improve your life immeasurably even on the outer level to a large extent, but challenges will still come. And whatever new situation you go into, there will be some new challenge that arises there.

And that spiritual awakening doesn't mean that that does not happen. What happens to spiritually awaken is, even as they are confronted with a challenge, you are, the challenge is seen within the context of a deeper transcendent dimension, that there is a spaciousness in which the challenge is not seen as something, some gigantic thing that completely occupies your attention. It is here within the spaciousness of presence and there's the challenge.

You primarily dwell in the presence. You don't dwell in the problem. That's why the challenge doesn't become a problem.

It remains a challenge. So you remain rooted in the transcendent dimension. And from there, you do what you can, if there's anything you can do to deal with the challenge.

Also, what doesn't happen is, you will never encounter situations in life that are totally satisfying. You will never encounter physical locations that are totally satisfying. You don't encounter living situations that are totally satisfying, even relationships that are totally satisfying, or activities that are totally satisfying all the time.

You'll never encounter that. No matter where you go and what you do, you will always find an element of unsatisfactoriness. That's part of living in the world of form, but every form is limited.

And so to believe that with spiritual realization, the element of unsatisfactoriness will disappear from your external life experience, it's not the case, it remains. But that is no longer a problem because it is all seen from the larger context of what I sometimes call the transcendent dimension. In other words, your happiness or your sense of satisfaction is never derived from the conditions of your life.

This is where people, of course, look for happiness and satisfaction before they awaken. When they are unawakened, they look for the satisfactions in the conditions of their life. For a little while, they find it here, and then for another little while, they find it in some other condition, but always they find the condition does not ultimately provide happiness and satisfaction.

And that eventually, that very fact, eventually produces more and more suffering, and the suffering eventually produces the awakening, so it's all fine. But the fact is, conditions cannot give you happiness or satisfaction because there's always something that's not quite right. And so the difference between an awakened and an unawakened or an unconscious human being and even a somewhat conscious human being is that the unconscious human continuously is looking for the right conditions as some kind of prerequisite for happiness.

The awakened human does no longer look for the perfect conditions in my life because his or her happiness or satisfaction or aliveness or joy or peace, whatever you want to call it, he or she does not need to derive it anymore from the conditions of their life. It comes from the unconditioned consciousness, the alive presence that you sense that you are, consciousness itself. This is the ultimate satisfaction, and this is the transcendent dimension of life, formless.

It has nothing to do with the conditions of your life. So, and then you can have a spacious relationship with the conditions of your life without clinging to conditions or becoming repelled by conditions. You can have a spacious relationship with the conditions and allow them to be the way they are at this moment as they are in all their loveliness for a while and in all their defectiveness with something is missing, something goes wrong within it.

It's so life becomes, for the first time, satisfying because you're not dependent on the conditions of your life for your satisfaction or happiness. And that's a great liberation. So it's a misperception in people to believe that once I awaken spiritually, everything is going to be just absolutely great.

Everything around me is going to be absolutely great. No, it's not in the nature of the world of form to be like that. It's a continuous flux.

It's a continuous change. So it's not going to remain. If it's absolutely great today, it won't be tomorrow or next year.

So, and you don't need it. You don't need that. What you need is to be in touch with that which transcends all conditions.

This, I'm only putting what the Buddha already talked about very clearly also in his teachings.

[Speaker 2] (1:15:23 - 1:15:53)

So in your own life, have you not experienced after your awakening the need for something like seeing a therapist for psychological trouble about something or other or seeing a physical coach to help you with this or that or saying, you know, I still need these other inputs to work out things on the relative level that are still problematic or is it not like that?

[Speaker 1] (1:15:53 - 1:17:13)

No, I've never, never occurred to me that I needed to seek help for something on a psychological level. I could have sought help for my body is not, I mean, it seems perfectly fine. It's not a perfect body.

It's a bit crooked here and there and it's not, but I'm okay with that. And it doesn't cause me much trouble at all so far. Eventually, probably will because things decay eventually.

So many people tell me you should see a physical therapist and maybe it would be helpful, but somehow for some reason, I don't like my energy field to be invaded by someone no matter how conscious that physical therapists may be and how wonderful work he or she does. Some will have a reluctance to get my energy field invaded by that, but that's not necessarily saying that there's great wisdom in that. That's just a characteristic that's there in me.

[Speaker 2] (1:17:14 - 1:18:17)

Okay, Eckhart, I just have one final question. In talking about your awakening minus experience, there can be a sense that there's a gap between we people in the process of awakening and Eckhart Tolle's dramatic experience. And yet I asked you to do this.

I wanted to hear about this, sort of like seeing a vision of something that's possible and the value in that. But how individual do you think awakening might be? Perhaps it will look very, very different for someone who's listening, watching, going through the process of awakening.

What do you think about that? How much has to be there? This is what it's like, no matter who you are, what time or place, and how much is quite individual?

[Speaker 1] (1:18:19 - 1:22:52)

Probably the awakening, what happens in the awakening must be the same in every human being, but the way in which that human being then interprets what happened or the way in which he or she talks about it or thinks about it, or even how he or she interprets it could vary enormously. If, for example, awakening could happen to somebody who is still, who is very much within the cultural context of a particular form of spirituality. So if an awakening happens to somebody who lives in an ashram in India, it might be interpreted very differently or somebody who is a Christian.

And again, that's why you can see some people talk about the birth of Christ in me. And I suddenly, they say, I got this incredible sense of Christ entering me. This could be one way of interpreting the awakening process.

And they are not entirely wrong because if Christ means anything, Christ is the transcendent human. Jesus becomes the Christ. The Christ has no past to it.

The Christ is the transcendental reality. And even St. Paul in the New Testament said something like, I must diminish and Christ in me must diminish. I must grow.

So it looks then as if I talk about it and somebody like that talks about it, they talk about something totally different, but fundamentally they are not. It's only when it reaches, when that which takes place in the formless is then seen from the dimension of form, it may look very different from person to person. But the fundamental dis-identification from mental forms, that is the same because it's only then that the Christ consciousness or Buddha nature, whatever you want to call it, then suddenly is born in you.

Another way of putting it, and that's beautiful. So that's one part of the answer. The second part is then what that person does with the awakened state, how the awakened state works in that particular human being.

And when that human being then interacts in the world with others in situations, that also varies enormously. So not everybody who awakens becomes, writes a book and becomes a formal spiritual teacher. It could be very different.

It could be that some creativity comes through you. It could be that you work with a group of people in a, innumerable possibilities. And again, that varies from person to person.

And also a few personal characteristics also may remain, then they're not part of, you don't have the ego anymore. So you're not identified with them, but certain traits that you had before you awakened may still be there after you awaken. It even happened that in India, one famous spiritual teacher, he was a chain smoker before he awakened and he was still a chain smoker after he awakened.

And so this cat, he died of course, because he smoked too much. Not that he minded very much, so. Yes, so there are variations on the surface, but the core is the same.

I'm sure of that, of what happens deep down in you is the same in anybody in the awakening process.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:54 - 1:23:09)

And if our conversation has initiated a greater longing in people for a deeper level of awakening, what would you say to our viewers in response to that?

[Speaker 1] (1:23:10 - 1:24:50)

Well, the longing for awakening is already part of the awakening. So if there's a longing for awakening, then you're already, the door is already there. You have already, the door is already a little bit open because otherwise you would belong to those millions who not only have no longing, but actually would intensely dislike even the concept of awakening or have never even heard of it.

It doesn't even enter their consciousness. So if there's a longing for awakening, then you're already touching it and it's already beginning to happen because the longing is there because you're recognizing that something in what we are saying here is true. There's an immediate saying, yes.

On some level, you can sense that there is a truth in here about the human condition and about you. And that in you which can sense that is that part that is already awake. And that needs to grow in you, but don't believe the mind might be telling you that you are not there at all yet.

And yet you are listening to this and you are going, yes. Well, that means part of you is already awakening. So don't believe your mind when the mind doesn't know that because it cannot recognize, the thinking mind cannot recognize awakening.

It says, I need to awaken. It's happening already. So if you recognize that, then that will be a great help.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:51 - 1:24:58)

Wonderful. Thank you, Eckhart. Thanks for giving us a window into your inner world.

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:24:58 - 1:25:00)

Thank you. Thank you.

(Waking up) Perspective Eckhart Tolle - The Death of the Little Me

[Speaker 2] (0:17 - 1:58)

Welcome to Waking Up. What does it really mean? A series of interviews celebrating Soundstrue's 30th anniversary.

This episode of Waking Up features prominent spiritual teacher and the author of the bestselling books The Power of Now and A New Earth, Eckhart Tolle. The conversation you're about to hear is an excerpt of an interview that I did with Eckhart Tolle about his experience of awakening that was originally broadcast on Eckhart Tolle TV and is included as part of this series on Waking Up, courtesy of Eckhart Tolle TV. Eckhart provides access to hundreds of hours of audio and video teachings from Eckhart and from his teaching partner Kim Eng.

If you'd like to receive a free trial and experience Eckhart Tolle TV for yourself, please visit EckhartTolleTV.com. My conversation with Eckhart Tolle began with Eckhart to describe in as much detail as possible his experience of awakening. As many people know, right at the beginning of The Power of Now, Eckhart devotes three paragraphs to describing the radical shift he underwent at the age of 29 in London.

Only three paragraphs. If possible, I wanted more detail. So I asked.

Here's Eckhart Tolle on his experience of awakening.

[Speaker 1] (2:01 - 15:43)

Well, the background to it is several years of inner states of anxiety and depression in my 20s. And even at university, I got to university late because I didn't have any qualifications. Initially, I left school at 14.

So later in England, I got the qualifications to get into university. I was already in my early 20s and I had a full-time job at the same time. And at that time, gradually the depressions and a lot of states of high anxiety also started.

I did very well at university in my degree course and I worked very hard. I wasn't aware of that so much at the time. But later on, years later, I met somebody who was a student at the same time in a different faculty, but he observed me and he said, oh, you were always working.

You were working till midnight in the library and I couldn't believe it. And then I realized, oh yeah, I must have been working very hard. But the motivation was fear, anxiety of not doing well.

So it wasn't enjoyable. I was motivated by anxiety. And that came to a head after I graduated.

I did very well. I was happy for two or three weeks. And then the anxiety and depression came back, even worse than before.

So that night came, I was living in a little bedsitter, as they call it in England, in London. I had finished my university course. I didn't know what to do next.

And that night, I woke up again in the night with a very active mind. But at that moment, of course, I was my mind. I didn't know that there was an active mind, because I was the thought processes that kept me awake and were telling me how many reasons I had to be in a state of fear, the uncertainty of future, what am I going to live on?

Am I going to make it? And so on. Unhappiness with who I was as a person, inadequacy, and so on.

So there was this incessant mind activity that during that night again, creating enormous amount of anxiety to the point of breathlessness. And feeling completely cut off from the outside world, meaning alien, it seemed alien. When I remember looking at objects in the room, they seemed completely alien to me.

It's only later, years later, I read a novel. I don't remember much of it, but a similar feeling was described there, and I recognized it. It was by Jean-Paul Sartre.

And the novel was called La Nausee, nausea, existential anguish, and so that was how I experienced it. So intense unhappiness and fear, and then the thought came as I was lying in bed, that the burden of living was too much. I didn't want to do it anymore.

I can't, and so the thought arose, I can't live with myself any longer. That thought repeated itself a few times, and then the moment came when I became aware of that thought as a thought. And the thought then said, is that I can't live with myself?

What does that mean? There must be two of myself here, because if I can't live with myself, who am I and who is the self? There was a sudden, I was looking at that statement that my mind had created, I can't live with myself, and I saw the strangeness of it.

I had separated myself in two, and so I saw who am I and who is the self? And that question, that was the last thought, the last significant thought before the awakening experience, this last significant thought posed a question, and that question was, who am I and who is that self that I can't live with? Is there one or two here?

Am I one or two? That was the last thought. And the answer to that question did not come as a thought.

The answer to that question, I didn't know at the time, by the way, that this is what was happening, but I can explain it now. I couldn't have explained it then. The answer to that question came not as a thought, but as an inner stepping back from thought, an inner disidentification from thought.

And so I suddenly realized, but not through analytical thinking, that that self that I couldn't live with had no actual reality. That was the unhappy self. So its illusory nature was recognized, but not through thinking, not through thinking this, the self is really illusory.

No, the illusory nature was recognized as a indirect recognition beyond thought. I could see that it is nothing, but without saying that mentally. So am I one or two?

The last question led to a disidentification from the me, the unhappy me, the whole sense of self that was burdened with unhappiness and fear and anxiety and inadequacy and so on. So that self kind of dissolved, because I must have withdrawn completely my identification with it. So I stepped out of the mind created self.

And what remained was myself as consciousness, but not as the unhappy me. And so the unhappy me began to get shaky. And then something happened to it, it must have, in its final stages, I think there was again, I felt almost disappearing into some black hole.

Because it was a kind of death experience. It was the death of the unhappy me. And so the perception of that, it wasn't so much visual as of more like a feeling that I was disappearing into some hole.

And there was still some fear left there, anxiety of what's happening to me. And then but I heard a voice, again, not as an audible voice, but more as a realization, don't resist, or resist nothing, I think it said. And so I just let go.

And then a kind of void opened, but not a visual one. And I don't remember much else, I must have gone to sleep soon after that. So there was the, am I one or two was the question that arose.

I can't live with myself, that question brought about a separate an inner separation between the mind created self and the consciousness that create that had identified with it, that was fueling it. So the consciousness that had created this dreamlike figure or self stepped out of it. And so I realized, yes, I was to the self and I, but only one was real.

And so the consciousness that I am, was real, and the unreal was no longer being sustained by my identification with it. I'm explaining it now. But I couldn't have explained it then.

It just happened. It took several years, I don't know how many, maybe at least seven or eight years before I could have explained it in the way in which I'm explaining it now. And the next morning I awoke, at first I didn't even remember that what happened in the night.

So my eyes opened and the first impression was of everything being fresh and new around me, or it was the old familiar room. Everything felt alive. Everything was amazing.

And even simple objects, their very presence was lovely to look at. The light coming through the curtains, it I knew it was alive. And, and most important of all, and a deep sense of peace inside.

So I was looking at everything through the peace. And I thought, wow, it's wonderful. And I picked some things up and looked as if I'd been born into this world for the first time.

And of course, I can give an additional explanation now, which I couldn't have done then. I wasn't bringing the past into my sense perceptions. There was just the sense perception.

Without the labeling of the sense perception, there was just a peaceful background to it. And that's, I wasn't calling it anything. It wasn't the old familiar objects in the room.

Because the old familiar self wasn't there anymore. There was only consciousness there, the field of consciousness. And that day, I took a bus and went into downtown central London.

And the same in the middle of the traffic, watching the people and then getting off the bus walking around the city. This incredible sense of peace. And I thought, well, this is amazing that today I feel so peaceful.

But then the next day, it was there still again, the peace. Then I actually got a notebook. And I wrote, I wrote down, something important has happened to me, but I don't know what it is.

But I'm just going to write down these things, because I might lose it again and forget about it. Forget what happened. I haven't, by the way, I haven't looked at that notebook in a long, long, long time.

So I don't know exactly what I wrote there.

[Speaker 2] (15:43 - 15:45)

But you still have it.

[Speaker 1] (15:45 - 15:45)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (15:45 - 15:46)

That might be curious.

[Speaker 1] (15:46 - 15:48)

I'll have a look one of these days.

[Speaker 2] (15:49 - 15:57)

Now, one thing, you were lying down during the entire experience. So when this separation of the little me and consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (15:57 - 16:02)

Yes, in bed, yes. And it was dark. Yes.

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (16:03 - 16:39)

Now, sometimes people say that you can't describe awakening as a quote unquote, experience. And I noticed even as you recount this, there are aspects where it's hard to find the words because it wasn't being processed through that part of your, of your mind. So if it's not exactly an experience, what's happening outside of, I mean, you can't quite give a visual for it.

You can't quite say that you felt this or that. That's very curious to me.

[Speaker 1] (16:40 - 19:17)

It's a, it's not an experience as such, because an experience is something that is added to you, one could say, when you experience something, it's something new that is added to your life, we call it a life experience. But this is definitely not a life experience. And it is the opposite of something being added to you.

It's the so in that sense, it's the opposite of an experience, because instead of something being added to you, something is being removed from you. So something that before was heavy, and looked substantial, is being something dissolves rather than something being added. And it leaves behind something that, again, is not entirely new, but had been obscured before.

So it's not an adding on to and that perhaps is even for spiritual seekers, an important thing to consider, because many people are looking for some spiritual experience in as if there it were something that can be added to them. And that's not how it is. In that sense, one could say it's a negative experience.

So all you could say, it's a loss rather than a gain. But it's a beautiful loss. But in the transitional moment of loss, it can still be painful, because it is a kind of death.

So you lose something, but what you gain is not something that comes, that just it emerges, had been there before always, your essential reality. But it's not added on. Hard to explain, I can only point.

So the important thing is not to look for an experience that, not to look for an adding on to me, because everything else is like that. One wants to have more of more experiences. That's the big minus experience, not a plus experience.

[Speaker 2] (19:20 - 20:08)

For many people in the process of awakening, integrating their physical form with vast, infinite states of being creates certain interesting experiences, challenges. Sometimes people who touch big states of openness will then find their body shaking, or that there's a sense of, wow, this is so much energy. And this physical form isn't used to that much energy running through the nervous system.

And here, your experience, or your minus experience, so complete, seemingly, such a huge restructuring. What was that like for you physically?

[Speaker 1] (20:09 - 21:55)

I don't remember anything, any kind of painful physical experience accompanying it. There was, part of the sense of peace was a much heightened sense of aliveness in the inner energy field of the body. So I felt my entire being felt more alive.

I hardly knew that, because that was part of the total experience afterwards of, not experience because it was lasting, of that vibrantly alive sense of inner peace that was there all the time. And part of that vibrantly alive sense of inner peace was the aliveness that I could feel throughout the entire body. But that was very pleasant.

It wasn't an unpleasant thing. So why it is that some people seem to experience even painful things as the energy increases, it could be that the pain or the pressure is felt where there are still blockages in the body. And it could be that with that, what happened, the surrender that night, if you call it that, may well have dissolved also all those blockages that would have been there otherwise.

But that's a, I'm guessing, I don't know the ultimate answer of why I didn't experience that.

[Speaker 2] (21:55 - 21:59)

Were you even aware of an inner body, quote unquote, before?

[Speaker 1] (22:00 - 22:14)

No. No, I was completely in the head. So there was no, I didn't feel alive, except the turmoil in the head felt a bit alive, but not a pleasant aliveness.

[Speaker 2] (22:15 - 22:23)

So what did that feeling inside your body feel like? I wonder if you can describe it for me in even greater detail.

[Speaker 1] (22:24 - 23:37)

Well, as you know, later that became part of, many years later, became part of the teaching where I'm pointing out to people that they can actually, what happened to me accidentally, that one aspect of what has happened, they can actually consciously direct their attention away from where it normally dwells in the movement of thought. And direct attention. So when you're asking me what it felt like or feels like, and my answer is to direct you or whoever is listening to this, direct them to the actual, you can actually go there right now in yourself and relive what happened there to me accidentally.

Yeah. By consciously choosing to direct attention into the inner energy field of the body. Usually I tell people to start with one part of the body, put attention into your hands.

And as we speak.

[Speaker 2] (23:38 - 23:43)

Yeah, if you can describe the feelings to me, that's what I'm curious about for you, even right now, right here.

[Speaker 1] (23:43 - 27:59)

A tingling would be going too far, although for some people, some people describe it as tingling, but it's on the way towards tingling inside. A zzzz. If I could make a sound, it doesn't have a sound, but if it were a sound, it would go zzzz.

It almost feels like a vibration. It's not quite a vibration, but it almost feels like a vibration. So very hard to put into words because language is designed to reflect objects, ultimately, whether physical objects or mental objects.

But language can't really find adequate words to talk about that which has no object to it as such. So all I can say is approximate. It's a bit like tingling.

It's a little bit like a vibration. It could even be as a warmth. Sometimes, actually, the temperature in the body sometimes increases for people as they become more aware of what I call now the inner body.

And once you can sense the energy inside your hands, as that tingling or vibrating aliveness, very subtle perhaps only, that's fine, then it becomes easier to be aware that it's in other parts of the body too. And so it's a very pleasant way of becoming rooted more deeply within the being that you are. And also, it's a very effective way of becoming anchored in the present moment, whereas the mind is never really in the present moment.

It's always elsewhere. So you take attention away from thought into that, and then you rest in that, and you can still speak and listen. And you can even think, but you're not going to do more thinking when you fence the inner body.

You're not going to do more thinking than you actually need to do it at that moment. And it may well be that you don't need to do any thinking that moment. Maybe it's just, so that's, the inner body is part of what I now call presence, the state of presence.

So you are present with your whole body. So that kind of happened to me accidentally. And you could say, as I began to understand after years, what had happened to me accidentally, and as I began to work with people who came to me to ask questions, and then I began speaking to them, answers came.

Then that which happened to me accidentally, I became part of the teaching, and I realized this is something that you don't have to actually wait for, for you to happen to you accidentally, neither the inner body awareness, nor the surrender to whatever is, and the disidentification from thinking, all these things, you can actually do. You can, so I'm showing people a way, but a lot of the teaching comes out of that spontaneous occurrence that happened to me, so to speak. And so what happened that night, and gradually, as I began to understand it, help people with their problems, it gradually over the years became more differentiated, and became a spiritual teaching, and that took years and years, and it was an organic process.

The foundation didn't change.

[Speaker 2] (28:00 - 28:17)

Now, just to clarify one thing, are you saying that in a state of presence, when someone is present, that the inner body will always be there in some wakeful, slightly tingly, or something like that way?

[Speaker 1] (28:17 - 29:11)

Yes, an aliveness there, an entire, the presence is an entire body state. It almost seems that in presence, even things around you are more present, so it's, it really affects everything, that your body, and the moment you look at things in presence, you realize they are alive, so it's not only you. It seems that the world around you becomes more alive, or rather you, it may not, it is not more alive, but you recognize for the first time its aliveness, and you share, you share the aliveness with the flower.

You recognize your own aliveness in the, aliveness is one word I'm using, I could use other words.

[Speaker 2] (29:11 - 29:37)

Yeah. When you started making sense, if we can say that, of your experience, having a framework for it, did the question ever occur to you, why me? This kind of sudden, very thorough awakening happens to so few people in any generation.

Did you have the thought, why me, why does this happen to me?

[Speaker 1] (29:37 - 31:39)

Never. I never had that thought, and I believe the reason for this is that I never perceived it as something that happened to me, really. When I talk about it because we're using language, it sounds as if it was something that happened to me, but that's, language works like that, otherwise I wouldn't be able to use language at all.

But if I look deeper, I'll have to say I never had the feeling that that was something that happened to me, and that is because the essence of that is the disappearance of the me, the me becoming, so we, the me, the sense of personal or separate identity, that's me, me. That sense of a form identity as the me became so weakened in that, that something was shining through then, where the me was, there was only a transparency, there was still a form, of course, to some extent, but no identification with it, and without the identification with the form, it became, the form became semi-transparent, and the entire thing that happened, if we can even call it happened, was that as the me became transparent, the consciousness came through very strongly, and it is not the me, it's the consciousness, which is formless and has nothing to do with the person.

So it only happened because the me almost disappeared, that it could happen, and for this reason, it never occurred to me to ask, why did it happen to me? I don't know if that makes sense.

[Speaker 2] (31:39 - 32:13)

It does make sense. I guess the question, though, still remains for me. This body-mind form was somehow selected by the cosmos to undergo this minus experience for, I would say, in my words, the benefit of other people.

How come it was chosen, that particular body-mind? Maybe that question didn't occur to you, but here I'm asking it now. If you were answering, just looking at this from the outside, what would you say?

[Speaker 1] (32:13 - 32:54)

I don't know if it was chosen. It would, of course, happen to any me that recognizes its own essential nothingness, any me anywhere in the world that recognizes that essentially its sense of identity was to a large extent illusory, and then the realization is there. Why did the realization come to this particular illusory identity?

I don't know. I never actually asked myself that question. It's a mystery.

[Speaker 2] (32:55 - 33:57)

Even though you might not have asked yourself that question in the past, here in this moment, if you take a look at it, do you have any ideas about why perhaps this, I mean, Eckhart, there's plenty of people who understand everything you said about the panic, the anxiety. There's a sense that there's a little me. There's an awareness that there's two of me here, but that's where the story ends for them.

Then maybe they pray to have the kind of awakening you had, lying on the ground, face down, praying, crying, whatever, and nothing happens. They wake up the same miserable wretch the next morning, and perhaps keep reading books, become a member of Eckhart Tolle TV, or who knows what. There's something clearly unique in your particular story, in anyone's story, but rare in your story.

For you, it just goes into the mystery column?

[Speaker 1] (33:57 - 36:47)

Yes. Perhaps the form was ready through previous lifetimes, one way or another. I've never investigated past lifetimes because I lost interest in the past, but it may well be that the form was prepared for that.

And that's the reason why it happened, but that would, I would be reluctant to say that that is actually the case, because that would mean the only way you can really awaken is if you've had enough incarnations and so on. The teaching is really pointing out that virtually anybody can awaken, and not as drastically as happened here, but almost anybody can at least enter the awakening process. There's a term in Buddhism which is, I think it's called a stream enterer.

So anybody can enter the awakening process. Yes, some degree of readiness is required, but anybody who reads a book like The Power of Now or New Earth or any other spiritually powerful book that was written from a deep place of realization, anybody who reads that and is open to it and recognizes the essential truth in it, anybody who's drawn to a spiritual teaching and goes there, there is an openness there. There are still millions of people who don't.

They wouldn't touch a spiritual book, and if they opened it, it would be totally meaningless. So I'm not talking of all those people. They obviously have to wait a little longer.

But others who are, in whom there is an openness, then the awakening process can begin. They can enter the awakening process, and that's all that's needed. And I don't see, I just cannot see myself as a chosen one.

It's something inside me that says no to that, but I may be wrong.

[Speaker 2] (36:51 - 38:02)

Now I have a slightly different question here, Eckhart, which is some people who have experienced some degree of wakefulness still seem to manifest quite a difficult time in certain areas of their life. Maybe it's in their business life, or it's in their relationship life, or it's with their physical health. And the spiritual openness that they've touched doesn't seem to translate into these other aspects of their life.

And what I'm getting at here is I'm curious if you think that spiritual awakening in and of itself, quote unquote, solves all of our problems, or if at the same time it's quite important for people to do their psychological work, focus on their physical health, concern themselves with nutrition, or do these things just naturally happen? They naturally happen. You don't have to worry about it.

[Speaker 1] (38:02 - 45:46)

Well, spiritual awakening does not immediately solve all your problems, nor does it mean that your life from then on will be free of challenges. So the challenges continue. Not that you would be likely to find yourself continuously in dysfunctional situations.

That's very unlikely when you are spiritually awake, or even relatively conscious, if not even fully awake. It's unlikely that you would find yourself for long periods of time, or most of the time, in dysfunctional or unpleasant drama situations and so on. However, challenges remain.

Life will continue to give you challenges. That's part of being here as a physical form. So there will be no end to the whatever challenges of whatever kind will come from time to time.

And so it's not that spiritual awakening removes all those things, all those challenges, but it does improve your life immeasurably, even on the outer level to a large extent, but challenges will still come. And whatever new situation you go into, there will be some new challenge that arises there, and that spiritual awakening doesn't mean that that does not happen. What happens in spiritual awakening is, even as you are confronted with a challenge, the challenge is seen within the context of a deeper transcendent dimension.

There is a spaciousness in which the challenge is not seen as something, some gigantic thing that completely occupies your attention. It is here within the spaciousness of presence, and there is the challenge. You primarily dwell in the presence.

You don't dwell in the problem. That's why the challenge doesn't become a problem. It remains a challenge.

So you remain rooted in the transcendent dimension, and from there you do what you can, if there's anything you can do, to deal with the challenge. Also, what doesn't happen is you will never encounter situations in life that are totally satisfying. You will never encounter physical locations that are totally satisfying.

You don't encounter living situations that are totally satisfying, even relationships that are totally satisfying, or activities that are totally satisfying all the time. You never encounter that. No matter where you go and what you do, you will always find an element of unsatisfactoriness.

That's part of living in the world of form, which every form is limited. And so to believe that with spiritual realization the element of unsatisfactoriness will disappear from your external life experience, that's not the case. It remains.

But that is no longer a problem, because it is all seen from the larger context of what I sometimes call the transcendent dimension. In other words, your happiness or your sense of satisfaction is never derived from the conditions of your life. This is where people, of course, look for happiness and satisfaction before they awaken.

When they are unawakened, they look for the satisfactions in the conditions of their life. For a little while they find it here, and then for another little while they find it in some other condition, but always they find the condition does not ultimately provide happiness and satisfaction. And that eventually, that very fact, eventually produces more and more suffering, and the suffering eventually produces the awakening, so it's all fine.

But the fact is, conditions cannot give you happiness or satisfaction, because there's always something that's not quite right. And so the difference between an awakened and an unawakened, or an unconscious human being, and even a somewhat conscious human being, is that the unconscious human continuously is looking for the right conditions as some kind of prerequisite for happiness. The awakened human does no longer look for the perfect conditions in my life, because his or her happiness or satisfaction or aliveness or joy or peace, whatever you want to call it, he or she does not need to derive it anymore from the conditions of their life.

It comes from the unconditioned consciousness, the alive presence that you sense that you are, consciousness itself. This is the ultimate satisfaction, and this is the transcendent dimension of life, formless. It has nothing to do with the conditions of your life.

And then you can have a spacious relationship with the conditions of your life without clinging to conditions or becoming repelled by conditions. You can have a spacious relationship with the conditions and allow them to be the way they are at this moment as they are, in all their loveliness for a while, and in all their defectiveness with something is missing, something goes wrong within it. So life becomes, for the first time, satisfying because you're not dependent on the conditions of your life for your satisfaction or happiness, and that's the great liberation.

So it's a misperception in people to believe that once I awaken spiritually, everything is going to be just absolutely great, everything around me is going to be absolutely great. No, it's not in the nature of the world of form to be like that. It's a continuous flux, it's a continuous change, so it's not going to remain.

If it's absolutely great today, it won't be tomorrow or next year. So, and you don't need it, you don't need that. What you need is to be in touch with that which transcends all conditions.

This, I'm only putting what the Buddha already talked about very clearly also in his teachings.

[Speaker 2] (45:46 - 46:16)

So in your own life, have you not experienced after your awakening the need for something like seeing a therapist for psychological trouble about something or other, or seeing a physical coach to help you with this or that, or saying, you know, I still need these other inputs to work out things on the relative level that are still problematic. Have you ever felt like that?

[Speaker 1] (46:17 - 47:37)

No, I've never, never occurred to me that I needed to seek help for something on a psychological level. I could have sought help for my body is not, I mean, it seems perfectly fine. It's not a perfect body, it's a bit crooked here and there and it's not, but I'm okay with that.

And it doesn't cause me much trouble at all so far, eventually probably will because things decay eventually. So many people tell me you should see a physical therapist and maybe it would be helpful. But somehow, for some reason, I don't like my energy field to be invaded by someone, no matter how conscious that physical therapist may be and how wonderful work he or she does.

Somehow I have a reluctance to get my energy field invaded by that. But that's not necessarily saying that there's great wisdom in that, that's just a characteristic that's there in me.

[Speaker 2] (47:38 - 48:26)

Okay, Eckhart, I just have one final question. In talking about your awakening minus experience, there can be a sense that there's a gap between we people in the process of awakening and Eckhart Tolle's dramatic experience. But how individual do you think awakening might be?

Perhaps it will look very, very different for someone who's listening, going through the process of awakening. What do you think about that? How much has to be there?

This is what it's like, no matter who you are, what time or place, and how much is quite individual?

[Speaker 1] (48:28 - 53:00)

Probably the awakening, what happens in the awakening must be the same in every human being. But the way in which that human being then interprets what happened or the way in which he or she talks about it or thinks about it or even how he or she interprets it could vary enormously. For example, awakening could happen to somebody who is still, who is very much within the cultural context of a particular form of spirituality.

So if an awakening happens to somebody who lives in an ashram in India, it might be interpreted very differently, or somebody who is a Christian. And again, that's why you can see some people talk about the birth of Christ in me, and I suddenly, they say, I got this incredible sense of Christ entering me. This could be one way of interpreting the awakening process.

And they are not entirely wrong, because if Christ means anything, Christ is the transcendent human, Jesus becomes the Christ. The Christ has no past to it, the Christ is the transcendental reality. And even St. Paul in the New Testament said something like, I must diminish and Christ in me must grow. So it looks then as if I talk about it and somebody like that talks about it, they talk about something totally different, but fundamentally they are not. It's only when it reaches, when that which takes place in the formless is then seen from the dimension of form, it may look very different from person to person. But the fundamental disidentification from mental forms, that is the same, because it's only then that the Christ consciousness, or Buddha nature, whatever you want to call it, then suddenly is born in you.

Another way of putting it, and that's beautiful. So that's one part of the answer. The second part is then what that person does with the awakened state, how the awakened state works in that particular human being.

And when that human being then interacts in the world with others in situations, that also varies enormously. So not everybody who awakens becomes, writes a book and becomes a formal spiritual teacher. It could be very different.

It could be that some creativity comes through you. It could be that you work with a group of people, innumerable possibilities. And again, that varies from person to person.

And also, a few personal characteristics also may remain. They're not part of, you don't have the ego anymore, so you're not identified with them. But certain traits that you had before you awakened may still be there after you awaken.

It even happened that in India, one famous spiritual teacher, he was a chain smoker before he awakened, and he was still a chain smoker after he awakened. So he died, of course, because he smoked too much. But not that he minded very much.

Yes, so there are variations on the surface, but the core is the same, I'm sure, of what happens. Deep down in you is the same, in anybody, in the awakening process.

[Speaker 2] (53:02 - 53:16)

And if our conversation has initiated a greater longing in people for a deeper level of awakening, what would you say in response to that?

[Speaker 1] (53:17 - 54:57)

Well, the longing for awakening is already part of the awakening. So if there's a longing for awakening, then the door is already there. The door is already a little bit open, because otherwise you would belong to those millions who not only have no longing, but actually would intensely dislike even the concept of awakening, or have never even heard of it.

It doesn't even enter their consciousness. So if there's a longing for awakening, then you're already touching it, and it's already beginning to happen, because the longing is there, because you're recognizing that something in what we are saying here is true. There is an immediate saying, yes.

And on some level, you can sense that there is a truth in here about the human condition and about you. And that in you, which can sense that, is that part that is already awake. And that needs to grow in you, but don't believe the mind might be telling you that you are not there at all yet.

And yet, you are listening to this, and you are going, yes. Oh, that means part of you is already awakening. So don't believe your mind, when the mind doesn't know that, because it cannot recognize, the thinking mind cannot recognize awakening.

It says, I need to awaken. It's happening already. So if you recognize that, then that would be a great help.

[Speaker 2] (54:58 - 55:00)

Wonderful. Thank you, Eckhart.

[Speaker 1] (55:00 - 55:01)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (55:05 - 56:10)

Eckhart Tolle, On the Death of the Little Me. An excerpt from an interview with Eckhart Tolle, provided courtesy of Eckhart Tolle TV. A subscription service that provides access to hundreds of hours of audio and video teachings by Eckhart and his teaching partner, Kim Eng.

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(PainBody) Eckhart Tolle Compilation of his talks on transmuting with Emotional Pain-Body

[Speaker 1] (0:02 - 44:20)

The spiritual teaching or teacher, if it is true, says, okay, do you realize that you don't need to suffer anymore? Are you fed up enough with suffering or would you like to hang on to suffering? Anybody who has come here today has already suffered enough, otherwise you wouldn't be here.

So in a way your suffering has been wonderful because it's taken you to this point. I know that I wouldn't be sitting here without having had dreadful suffering and pain. So it's it's taken you here.

And now the message that comes is further suffering is not necessary if you voluntarily step into the new state of consciousness. You choose the kingdom of heaven. Life doesn't have to drag you into it, kick you into the kingdom of heaven.

It's painful. It did that to me, but now my job is to tell people that you don't have to wait for that to happen to you. Choose the new state and you are able to do that.

I wouldn't tell this to anybody, but not anybody comes here. If you come here, your level of consciousness, the new consciousness is sufficiently emerged already for you to understand what I mean when I say you can choose to live in the state that is free of suffering. You can choose the state in which suffering is not possible anymore.

Unhappiness does not arise. Not a state in which you close yourself and you become, okay nothing can touch me anymore. Protective shell, nothing to do with that, because if nothing can touch, if you have a protective shell around you, that means that all the beautiful and good things can't touch you anymore either.

That's not what it is. It's a state of complete openness, a state of such intense presence that unhappiness has nowhere to cling to anymore, because unhappiness can only cling to a mentally made sense of self, a little me, past, which moves continuously in past and future and continuously ignores the now. So the realization that in the now there are no problems and there is no unhappiness.

And the unhappy me that lives through past and future dissolves as you become present. That's the teaching. That's the very same message that the Buddha gave 2,600 years ago and a few people got it.

And then misinterpretation started, because the mind started getting in there and say, okay let's work this out. What does it really mean? How can we categorize it?

How can we make a system out of that? So as heavy superstructure of mind stuff arose on top of the beautiful teaching. Do we need some air?

Some air may be nice. So this always happens. The mind tries to get in there and so the heaviness of religion arises on top of the purity and simplicity of the original teaching.

And this is the simplicity of the original teaching. We going back to that, freedom from pain is possible now. Now first that means you understand how pain arises.

It arises by not being present to this moment. By running away. By fighting.

By denying. By running away internally from what is. So that's how pain arises.

Always. When you accept what is, the new state of consciousness immediately is present. So you can't separate acceptance of what is from the new state of thoughtless awareness.

The moment you fully accept what is, the new state of thoughtless awareness is present. The whole mind stuff is resisting what is. Its very existence, the very ground for its existence is the continuous state of resistance to what is.

So resistance to is and the old consciousness go together. So our practice is to not resist what is and thereby access the power of life. And yet that may not immediately free you of all pain and suffering because humans have been in that state for many thousands of years.

And there is an energy field of pain that every human being inherits simply by the very fact that you are born into the human condition. Into the unenlightened painful human condition. In ultimately mad human condition up to this point.

You are born into that. So every human being has a share of human pain that comes even from very, as you're born into this world you're already born with a burden of pain. So this is a very important part of our practice and realization.

This is not a facile thing of saying okay from now on we can all be happy. It goes deeper than that and we are not running away also we are not running away from the fact that in you there lives an energy field of residue of past human pain. On a personal level pain from childhood that leaves residues, energetic residues, different things, painful things have happened to you in childhood and of course far beyond that in time.

But let's just talk from the level of your present existence in this form. Pain that is carried over from your childhood and beyond and leaves, doesn't go away completely, it leaves residues of pain and energy fields. Everything is energy.

Then those energy fields get together because they feel they vibrate at the same frequency. So emotional pain gathers into one mass of pain contracted energy that isn't flowing freely, an energy of that I call the pain body that humans carry inside, an energy field of pain. And if you don't recognize that no matter how much spiritual practice you do and even what we are doing here, if you do not see, if you do not recognize how the pain body operates, it will trick you every time and you will lose consciousness through it.

So I want to address it now. After our break I would invite questions especially connected with dealing with the pain body in yourself and how to bring presence to it. So first we realize there is an energy field of pain in me that may manifest either as turbulence, anger, heaviness like depression, tightness, fear, whatever way it manifests, it's not pleasant, it's painful, it's past pain residues but very much alive still.

You carry it inside but you're not always conscious of it and I talk about it briefly in one chapter of the book, so we go into it a little bit more deeply now and now there's the added energy of presence that we take into the pain body. The pain body is sometimes dormant and sometimes active. It becomes active when you suddenly feel it very strongly, when it needs to feed on further experience of pain.

As it always has to do regularly, like it's a little entity almost, it needs feeding temporarily on the experience of further pain and you will know that this has happened when a relatively insignificant trigger produces an incredible outburst reaction of pain. A minor thing goes wrong or somebody says something or your partner does something or says something and there's suddenly a deep or even a thought comes in and suddenly it serves as a trigger for an immense arising of deep emotional pain. At that moment the pain body, this energy field, has come up out of its dormant state.

It is ready to feed on more pain. It produces first two ways in which it, I haven't quite put it that clearly in the book, I'll explain it in the next book, there are two ways in which it produces, it feeds on the further experience, because it's all you can feed on. You cannot, the pain body consists of that energy of pain it needs.

Please, where can I get more pain? It feeds on your thoughts when it's ready to rise up. It will control your thinking.

It rises into the mind and the mind, which is your thought activity, becomes aligned with the pain body. Every thought you think is destructive and painful and the pain body loves it. It gobbles up the energy of every thought that you think, every destructive and deeply negative thought.

It eats it up, so to speak. And it's having a good time. It's feeding.

And at that moment, one way of putting it is, one could say that that is the addictive quality of human pain. Addictive because it loves its pain. When the pain body has taken you over and has succeeded in pretending that that's who you are, all your thinking is completely aligned with it.

And it's feeding on it. At that very moment, the least thing you want, the last thing you want is to be free of pain. At that moment, pain is what you want because at that moment you are the pain body.

And anybody who tells you that if I came into your life at that moment and gave you this message that a life free from pain is possible, you would hit me over the head. Because the pain body would be there and I would be talking to the pain body and the pain body would be talking back at me. So the pain body needs to come in periodically.

And you will all, you all have experienced it with partners. Finding the ideal partner and after a few weeks, realizing that there's another side to them that periodically they become a little monster. And then thinking, oh I must have made a dreadful mistake.

You haven't. Everybody has a pain body, including yourself. But it's a bit more difficult to see the little monster coming up in yourself.

Now the pain body will use your thinking. It will feed on your negative and destructive thinking. It can go on.

Now how long the feeding time lasts of a particular pain body varies greatly from person to person. It could be a brief one, a pain body that feeds very quickly, could be an hour or two. Some pain bodies have a feeding time of several weeks, even months.

That's extreme. And in very extreme cases there are some pain bodies that are, have virtually no dormant stage. They are continuously feeding and active.

But that's more rare. But it also happens. These, you sometimes meet people who are, and you look into their eyes and you can see they are, the pain body is looking at you through their eyes and they are waiting for an excuse to have more, they want you to give them a painful reaction.

They want you to be angry with them. They want you to attack them. That's people who are totally possessed by the pain body.

So level one, pain body feeds on your thinking. Level two, pain body feeds on the feedback of emotional pain from other people. So it will not only use your thinking, it might even predominantly use somebody else's reactions.

In relationships, when the pain body is ready to arise and feed, it will provoke a reaction in your partner, or the partner does it to you, pushes the right buttons, because it wants pain. The pain body loves the drama. This is why drama is an essential part of most relationships.

The pain body needs feeding. And you could be saying, suddenly it comes in. At the slightest trigger, there it is.

So it feeds on the other person's reaction, and that's where drama arises in the relationship. And just look, give me more pain, please. And the mind is aligned with it, so the mind will find wonderful ways of rationalizing why it'll add to it, through heated discussions or shouting matches.

So it's totally, and then the other person's pain body awakens, and the two feed on each other, until feeding time is over. And the two pain bodies subside, go to sleep, digesting the food, and then the relationship for a while is harmonious again. And then the cycle starts again.

So pain body feeding on thinking, pain body feeding on other people's reactions. Now I mentioned last night, the unhappy me, a mind pattern that people are identified with, an unhappy sense of self. This mind pattern, when the pain body is active, becomes amplified.

Its energy, the energy of the unhappy me, when the pain body moves into that mind pattern, that already has been telling you, your life isn't good enough, and so on. And you may not make it, and life has passed me by, and so on. Now the pain body moves into that mind pattern, and its energy gets amplified ten times, twenty times, fifty times, a hundred times.

In other words, the unhappy me, when the pain body arises and flows into that mind structure, the emotion flows into the mind structure, the unhappy sense of me becomes dreadfully unhappy, and loves its unhappiness. That's what it consists of. Now all that it is, it is not a foreign body that lives in you.

It is, there's nothing that is not life energy. Even the pain body is life energy, except that it isn't flowing freely. It's got stuck somewhere.

And when energy gets stuck and cannot flow freely, pain arises. Like a river, if a river cannot flow, the water accumulates and pressure accumulates. But it's really, it's beautiful life energy.

The water is still beautiful, but there's pressure accumulating inside. That's what the pain body is. Now, as we bring presence, this consciousness into the pain body, it no longer, can no longer fool you into completely identifying with it.

The presence, as the pain arises, from now on, and many of you are already practicing that, pain arises, the pain body comes up, and at that moment you will recognize it as the pain body. That's the beginning of freedom from it. The recognition, when it comes, slight trigger, provocation, even a thought, deep pain arises, in whatever form.

In some people it's a very active pain, active, aggressive pain. In other persons it's a passive form of pain, poor, little me, victim pain. Doesn't matter which pain bodies have different qualities in different people.

It may be turbulence or heaviness or tightness or constriction, it doesn't matter what it is. As it arises, you will know there is a witnessing presence, and you watch, oops, there's the pain body, and you feel the energy field of it in your body. Often you can feel it in the solar plexus or stomach area, sometimes in the belly, as a dreadful sense of, oh, heaviness, or some people perceive it as a big hole, a gaping hole inside, or it may be intense anger.

But whatever it is, you watch it. This is why sitting here is so helpful, because the witnessing presence, which is part of this new state of consciousness, gets so much strengthened simply by sitting in this energy field. So the watcher will be there, watching the pain, so the pain cannot use your mind anymore.

It cannot feed on your thinking, because you're watching it directly. It cannot creep into your mind and then become an unhappy me. So all that's left of the pain is an energy field of turbulence or heaviness, but the pain has not become an unhappy me, an unhappy sense of self, of who you are.

That's the beginning of the end of the pain. But our practice is allowing what is to be, and that also applies as long as the pain body is there in you, allowing the pain that is there in you also to be. That is a very powerful practice.

So I'm not saying we are not fighting the pain, we are not even trying to get rid of it. You bring the consciousness, which is a very compassionate state of allowing what is its very powerful state, it implies your present, as the one who is able to allow, you are the one who is able to allow the pain to be. You know you're not creating this pain at this moment, because you practice accepting what is.

So it's not pain that you are creating, it's old pain. You bring the acceptance to the old pain. This wonderful state, this powerful practice, it does not just concern what happens to you externally, allowing this moment to be as it is, it includes the arising of pain and the pain body.

You watch it, feel it, allow it. So you bring presence into it. You meet, the presence meets the pain body.

Here's the pain body, and there comes the silent space of presence. Okay. And you hold the state of presence as the turbulence happens.

Then the pain body is not replenishing itself. You've cut the link between the pain body and your thought processes. It's not feeding on your thinking anymore.

You're watching it. Now the best time to catch it and watch it is as it first arises in you. When you first notice it arising, to immediately become very alert with every cell of your body, and feel it.

There it is. And stay alert. Stay present, continue to watch.

This is the beginning of the transmutation of pain. The more you watch, the less it can feed. It loses its energy charge every time you stay present as the watcher of it.

It's not gaining new energy. In fact, it's losing energy as the pain body, but the very energy that was trapped in there as the pain body becomes part of the aliveness of who you are. Many people's life energy is, to a large extent, trapped in their pain body.

They have little access to their aliveness because the pain absorbs so much of their aliveness. And it's all trapped in there, in a big unhappy me. And nothing is flowing.

There's no flow whatsoever. There's only a big, huge contraction. Many human beings are one big contraction.

That's amazing. The egoic state is one big contracted state. Nothing flows.

And as the energy becomes freed that's in the pain body, there's an incredible increase in aliveness and vitality. And of course, pain goes. It won't, it will not go the very first time you do it.

You will have to do it many times. It will, many times it will try to arise again and it will arise. Many times you will lose it.

You will lose yourself in it again. That's right. It's all part of this.

There will be times when it will take you over again and afterwards you remember, oh, there it was and I missed it completely. You might have gone through three hours of drama with your partner and afterwards you say, oh, that was the pain body. I missed it completely.

That's all right. Next time maybe you'll catch it and know that it's there. The good thing is that the pain body becomes actually your ally in your presence practice because without it very few people would have enough motivation to enter the new state of consciousness.

Every time the pain body comes, until you know this fact, the pain body will trick you every time and you will lose consciousness every time. But now that you know this, whenever it comes, it becomes incorporated into your practice of presence. So the more often it comes, the better it is.

You're lucky. If you have a strong pain body, you're lucky. It's good for your practice.

It can become a great teacher. That is actually the most powerful part of your practice is to work with the pain body and see how quickly the transmutation happens when it no longer is an unhappy me. It's simply pain.

Not pleasant, but you can allow it and there's an incredible intensification of presence every time you bring it to the pain body. Now those of you who have very dense or heavy pain bodies will need more intense presence. Most people that I know who have gone to become almost free of pain, there are not yet many who are completely free, but there will be, are people who have had very dense pain bodies because their motivation is stronger to be free.

In Eastern terms, we are talking about karma. Karma really ultimately is all the conditioning from the past, including the past pain that you mistakenly believe is who you are. Karma is to be identified with all past conditioning and to be condemned to relive and act out continuously your past conditioning.

So pain body is an important aspect of karma. So what we are addressing here is going beyond the unconsciousness that is karma. What we are talking about here is actually the dissolving of karma.

There would be no end to karma otherwise because it renews itself. That's why it's often likened to a wheel. It renews itself continuously.

This is an end to pain, an end to suffering. Use, all the questions after the break, I'm sure there will be quite a few, use your relationships in your practice and realize that no matter who you choose as your partner, they will have a pain body. Don't look for the ideal partner without a pain body.

And that's good. And use the relationship because it's so much easier to become aware of your own pain body in a relationship than if you live alone. Great opportunity for practice.

And we'll address that in a little bit more detail perhaps after the break. Both of you, if both of you understand how it works, you could have an agreement that you will help each other when the pain body arises in the other person so that the other can stay very, very present instead of going into reactivity. Stay very, very present.

And if the partner gets taken over by the pain body, stay so present that you allow it without reacting and thinking that that's who that person is. Allowing it. If your partner doesn't want to cooperate, you just do it for yourself.

It only takes one person ultimately to be free. It's great if he or she does. For many women, pain body arises as the approaching menstrual cycle comes.

I mentioned it briefly in the book. Because there's so much collective female pain, there is a, there are, one aspect of pain body is collective human pain. Now collective may be the pain of a nation that you belong to.

Certain nations have more of a heaviness to them than other nations. The new world has relatively less heaviness to it than the old world. Because the old world, Europe, Asia to some extent, there's so much past there.

There's so much, the heaviness of past and the heaviness of past pain is very much apparent. Certain countries, you just get off the plane, and if you're sensitive, you feel the energy field of the collective pain body. Eastern Europe, in many countries, you can feel it when you, the moment you step.

Germany, I feel it the moment I step off the plane. Russia. And every individual who lives part of their pain body is the collective pain body.

So it's not just a past. Pain body is never a personal problem of yours. It's the human condition.

It's your share in the human condition. Not a personal problem. There are no personal problem.

Every pain that you have in your life is your share of the human condition manifesting in a particular form. So there's one aspect of the collective pain body is the nation, the national. United States has some pain body, but less karma.

There's less karma here than European states, and certainly some European states. And even such a thing as a relatively short-lived like Vietnam War or something adds a bit to the collective pain body, the experience. Fifty million men, fifty thousand men killed in some distant country.

And Secretary of State at that time in his autobiography now says, well, in retrospect, it was probably a mistake. Human madness. Just one more manifestation of human madness.

But if you and some of you were actually, I know, had to go there and suffer pain there, and that's fine. You work with that now. Now there's also female pain, collective pain body.

Just as there's a male collective pain body, the female collective pain body that every woman partakes in has to do with dreadful pain suffered particularly through women being treated as slaves and as worthless property for thousands of years. Not always. There was a time before that when women had their rightful place.

But for thousands of years in most countries, women became victim of the patriarchal mind-dominated state of consciousness. So that becomes particularly pronounced when the menstrual cycle starts, the very thing that is the femininity in you on the biological level is very painful. It awakens the female pain body just as it happens.

And this is, in the old traditional teachings in Buddhism they say, no, women can never make it. They can't become enlightened because every time they go through their cycle they lose consciousness. So they say, okay, we'll have to exclude women.

And they did. And so it's become more and more lifeless by doing that. And it's become more and more mind-dominated.

The very fact is that the opposite is true. If women can use that knowing that that is the time particularly when the pain body arises and become present at that time, it will be through that that women become very quickly now free of their pain body by bringing presence into, especially when the pain body arises at the approaching menstrual cycle, bring presence into that and become very alert. Watch the pain arising.

Watch it, allow it to be. Be compassionate towards it, which is what the allowing is. Be compassionate, the compassionate one who allows the pain to be and who is able to hold it, to hold the turbulence.

The state of presence is always a gentle embracing of what is. It's bringing a gentleness to it which is a very powerful gentleness. Bringing the gentleness to it and embracing what is and holding it in that embrace.

And you stay present as you hold your pain, the pain, and watch the turbulence of it. Hold it. The more you hold it, the stronger, very, very quickly your sense of presence grows much, much stronger as you hold the pain.

And the pain will slowly lessen. But it no longer matters because your acceptance of the pain is so total, you're not making that moment into a means to an end because I want to get to the end of my pain. Your acceptance of pain is complete and that's where your spiritual power lies, in fully accepting it.

But of course now it hasn't become you. It hasn't become an unhappy me. You are fully there, you're fully present with it, you fully accept that there's a pain body vibrating in you.

And you may have to hold that pain for quite a while when the cycle comes. It can go on for a few days and hold, bring presence to it. You may occasionally lose it and then remember again and be present with it again.

By losing it I mean it may succeed in moving into your mind and control your thinking again. And then suddenly you'll remember and you hold it, holding it. So that pain becomes incredible teacher and every time it happens you bring the presence to it.

That's why women are going, it's already, there's always more women coming to consciousness groups than men. Women will move forward more quickly now than men. I've seen that.

I'm seeing it all the time. And part of the reason is that they'll be able to work with their pain bodies, which up to now has looked, has been a great obstacle, now becomes a great help as you bring the presence to it. Men still have, are less in touch with their bodies, more, women of course are also in the mind, but men even more deeply entrenched in their mind structures.

So there's a different, they of course also have pain bodies, but the predominant thing for men is identification with their head. The predominant thing for women is identification with pain body. So that's, these are just the focal points.

Wonderful practice. And I'd love to know after the break, those of you who have already been practicing after reading the book, how you're doing, and how it's, what obstacles there are, how, where it is becoming difficult, or any questions that arise out of that. But it is, it is so, this practice is so easy and so wonderful and so powerful that it's amazing that it's taken humans so long to get to this point.

But transformation can be very quick now. Very quick. So make your pain body into your ally.

Your pain body is not your enemy. When you make it into an enemy, that's the old minds thing starting over and making even the pain body into a problem. How can I get rid of it?

Let's ask a question if one arises. Would you want to ask a question? Is the microphone going there?

While the microphone travels there, we are present, not waiting for anything to happen.

[Speaker 4] (44:29 - 44:58)

Hello. Hi. I'm wondering how you handle when two people's pain bodies collide Oh, yes.

For example, there's, well, my wife, who I love very deeply, there's my raging pain body, and then there's my pain in the ass body, which sometimes rages back. And I'm wondering how one handles that. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (45:00 - 57:04)

Now use the relationship as an essential part of your practice. The pain body is not there continuously. As you know, it arises at times.

And it will start arising in one person, either you or your partner. Be there as it arises in yourself. Watch the beginning of it, the beginning of pain.

That implies that you are there. That implies, I wouldn't be telling this if you did not have the necessary degree of presence to be there as the witness. But you have now, if only after sitting here for three hours, there is enough presence for you to be there as the witness of the pain as it arises.

If you catch it at an early stage, it's easier to stay present and it won't take you over. If it arises so quickly, and that happens in certain pain bodies whose energy field predominantly is anger, anger has a fiery quality to it, and an angry pain body as opposed to a heavy, depressed pain body, an angry pain body, you have virtually no time to watch it arising, because it arises like an explosion. And if they are fully fledged, in one second.

So if it's an angry pain body, it's very hard to watch it arising because it arises explosively. If it's a different pain body, a heavy one, a fearful one, it's easier to watch it arising and trying to get into your mind. So being there as it starts, the partner can be very helpful, because you may already at an early stage become identified with it and start to argue, and of course the arguing will already be energized by the pain that lies behind the mental rationalizations and arguments.

And your partner may still be present and become intensely present and watch as your pain body arises, your partner watches the arising. If you can't watch the arising of your own pain body, which sometimes you may not be able to yet, your partner can do it for you almost. That's how wonderful the relationship can work.

Your partner becomes the witness. If you lose the witness, your partner becomes the witness. This can be a very powerful practice.

So what then happens, if I'm with a partner, I can see the pain body arising and already creeping into her mind, wanting me to react, enter the state of intense presence, which is also a state of great openness. And you feel immediately every cell of your body vibrates with life. And you hold that state of complete openness and presence and you watch the arising of the partner's pain body going through the mind.

Now it will try every trick to pull you into unconscious reaction to the pain body. Pain bodies have extreme cleverness. Your partner will try every trick, it will try, it will push buttons that have worked in the past every time in making you unconscious.

Say just the right thing that he or she knows is going to make you unconscious and give an emotional reaction. And you stay present. Do it for them.

If they lose themselves in the pain body, you hold the presence and watch how the pain body tries every trick to get you, to pull you into unconsciousness. And that presence is always, it emanates as an energy field around you. So if you are with someone, if you stay intensely present, there's an emanation of presence around you.

It's very hard for a pain body to remain active for long in the energy field of presence, even if it comes from another person. Now it may be that the pain body will remove itself, the person will run out of the room, or jump in the car and drive off, or there will be a sudden, and this can happen and it's miraculous, in the middle of being taken over by the pain body there's an awakening and there's a sudden aware presence that suddenly is awakened and you're able to watch the intense pain taking place. It could even happen in the middle of a shouting, you're shouting at your partner, and at that moment the presence arises.

And what that feels like is like you're an actor on stage acting out a script, a very powerful script, forgotten that you're acting out a script, and suddenly there's a remembering that this is just acting out, an acting out of a conditioned pattern. And there's suddenly a watching presence there. That's amazing.

So you help each other, if the other person loses him or herself, you stay present. Presence never means that you withdraw or protect the present yourself. And you need to be, this is why being here is helpful, to become familiar with the state of presence.

Some people mistake it for a state of aloofness, when let's say you're being attacked by your partner's pain body, and then you go into withdrawal, it looks like this. That's not presence. And then even the death of the partner, the death of the little me can say, okay, I'm beyond that, I'm not touched by the pain body, I'm beyond such unconsciousness.

So presence is open, complete, it's the allowing, you allow your partner to be where he or she is. It's a deep allowing, vast power comes with that. And again, you're embracing, whether you embrace your own pain, or you embrace your partner's pain, and you can remain in a state of love, and you realize there's the movement of pain.

And you don't need to point it out through words, that probably wouldn't work anyway at that point. But also be careful that the pain bodies are very cunning, it is plain possible that your pain body may be arising and projecting something at that moment and saying to your partner, there's your pain body. All kinds of things can happen, but if you're present, that'll be fine.

I know of some couples who give themselves a secret signal when the other notices the pain body arising in the partner. And for some that works, a little hand signal, or the, just, but it can be, sometimes it doesn't work at all when the pain body has a, it can, it can, the pain body is already there, and is being told something, and of course the reactive force can be very strong then. One signal that definitely doesn't work that somebody suggested to me is...

So, it is, it's helpful sometimes after you've had an interaction governed by the pain body, to talk about it and see where it's started, where it came in first, how it used the mind, how it used arguments and mental positions of me being right and you being wrong, how it moved into those mind structures, and talk about it afterwards. So it's a good practice occasionally to retrospectively bring presence into an event when you got completely taken over by it. So after consciousness has returned, you kissed and made up and had a nice meal, or whatever else you have afterwards, and then talk about it, and isn't that, that was the pain body, did it start in you or in me?

Let's see, let's trace it back to the beginning. There it was, the beginning movement when, when you, you didn't phone me to let me know you were going to be late, or you didn't put the garbage out, the most, it can start with very insignificant things. So retrospectively to bring presence into the whole growth of it, and then next time see if you can be present as it happens.

Wonderful practice, and whenever you lose it, afterwards see where you lost it, not in some kind of, oh I have failed to strengthen the little me that isn't good enough, no, just looking at it objectively, see that's where it started. That's where the whole pain movement started. That's good practice too.

So see, talk to your partner and see, so you can help each other in it. It makes it easier if you help each other. Because it's always one partner when it comes into one person, the other will still be for a little while conscious, so that can, that's a great advantage.

Next time I come, let me know how it's going. The mic is coming.

[Speaker 3] (57:14 - 57:30)

I wanted to ask you about consciousness in children and if we can prevent them from having the pain.

[Speaker 1] (57:30 - 1:05:22)

Oh, that's a good question, yes. Asking about consciousness in children and if we can prevent children from having or developing a pain body. Now, many children absorb pain body at an early age from their parents pain body.

That adds greatly to, some pain is already present in every human being even as they come into this world, but that adds greatly to the personal pain body. You absorb the pain. It happened, my pain body grew very quickly in the first six, seven years of my life because my parents pain bodies were both there with great intensity.

Many homes are like that, so children absorb their parents pain body. Now, of course, you're asking the question for the people in this room and they're all, there's consciousness moving in. The most helpful thing you can do with children is to bring consciousness into your own pain body or if you live with a partner, you do it, both of you do it so that you don't emanate and act out continuously pain body and then they absorb it.

Now, but even those, even children where parents are not getting lost in their pain body, they will still have a certain amount of pain and many children, even four, three or four year olds, you can often observe how an angel within a few seconds, in a matter of seconds, will can be transformed into a screaming monster. The transformation is so amazing, we take it for granted that that's normal. This beautiful being, light shining out of his or her eyes, not much mind started yet, the egoic me is not very strong yet, so there's still a lot of being flowing through their eyes and suddenly they go into dreadful contraction and throw themselves on the floor and start screaming.

That's the pain body. And it's relatively short lived with children because it doesn't, their mind isn't developed enough for the pain body to hang on in their mind for a long period of time. So it goes through quickly and believes them, it subsides again quickly.

Now, the greatest thing you can do for children is to point out to them that there's something happening, after an event like that, a screaming fate or what other children may do, other things, extreme withdrawal or something, to say what happened when this energy, do you remember yesterday when you had the screaming fate? What happened there? Who was that?

I see by talking, by pointing out that there was an energy movement in the child and perhaps giving it a name, you can help the child to stay present and watch it as it arises. You can't do it in the middle of it, you'll have to do it afterwards. You can't talk to a screaming monster.

But when the angel is back, you talk to the angel and say, who was that monster? Not to induce any guilt or anything like that, in an interested way, isn't that funny, where does that come from? Has he got a name?

And then next time it happens, just as it arises, oh there, so and so is back. You can say it even while it's happening, although of course that won't wake them up at that point, but a little bit of awareness will be there at that point. And after it has subsided, you say again, oh it was again, wasn't that funny?

And if you can catch the arising of the pain body in the child just as it first starts, you can say, oh it's coming on, can you feel it? That means very quickly the witnessing presence in the child will grow and they can actually watch the movement of the pain body in themselves. And that is wonderful, that's something that every parent, everybody who sits here can do easily.

So you're not trying to get rid of it, it's almost like it's a phenomenon that you and the child together contemplate. And you have to admit openly if your own pain body has taken you over, you can say, do you know what, that was the same thing that happened in me, what happened this morning, you talk to the child, that was mine. And a point may come when the child may tell you, oh there's your pain body.

That is a truly functional home when that happens. And children can do that. And they would love to be there as the watcher.

It's like a game, it's fun. Here's something to surrender to. Now even with something before we ask the next question, even with something like that, this is a minor irritation, unless your pain body is ready to awaken, in which fact it could be a big irritation.

Or unfortunately it's stopped now, but I was just... Anything like that, you can practice even with little irritations, see if you can be in complete acceptance of what was up to this point irritating, just completely allowing it, allowing it totally. So you work with it, whatever it is, you work with it, allowing it totally, and see what happens.

Anything that you allow totally takes you into peace, into the state of great peace. It's amazing. Anything that you allow completely.

So that's the work with children, it's wonderful.

[Speaker 4] (1:05:34 - 1:05:43)

All of us have pain bodies, as you point out, and most of us go to a job. And I'm wondering if you can use...

[Speaker 1] (1:05:50 - 1:16:38)

Now at work, usually you go into an environment that is dominated by little me's and egos, and big ego structures, unconsciousness at work, many big organizations are still run, there are maybe a few exceptions, but many organizations are still run by that consciousness, that state of consciousness. So, a great help is not to expect others to be conscious, not to expect consciousness where there isn't consciousness. You will be very often, as you do this practice for yourself, you will very easily observe unconsciousness and pain bodies arising in other people at work, being acted out through their mind, and it will happen continuously, in some companies more than in others.

And it's the same practice because it's basically a relationship, it's bringing presence into relationships. When pain body arises in somebody else, don't go into the reactivity that would be the little me fighting somebody's pain body, which can easily trigger your own pain body, and you get a big argument. The practice is relinquishing the reactivity of the little me, so you allow unconsciousness in the other person.

Doesn't mean you give in every time. It's getting hold of the state of presence and bringing presence into your work, to the conference table, to the committee meeting, and as you sit there, little egos having their battles all around the table, you watch and perhaps for a moment you remember this moment, and that brings back the state of presence, and then you sit there in the state of, you feel intensely connected with the body, and you watch everybody's contribution without mental judgment, you bring presence to the conference table, to the committee meeting, not the reactivity of the me. And then you sit there and you think, you may find yourself making a contribution and saying something out of the state of presence, and it will bring a different quality to the whole interaction.

There's one person there who brings in a different consciousness, and then see what happens. So instead of, there's nothing you can do to change others as such. And most of the world still lives in unconsciousness.

That's how it is. Don't expect it to be otherwise. So it's allowing, it's in the allowing people their unconsciousness, this by the way also implies to your relationships with other people like long-standing relationships with parents, which to many people, or children, grown-up children and parents, for many people that's a very problematic area, because there's so much past in there.

There's often so much unconsciousness and dysfunction in families. So the most beautiful thing happens when you can, let's say it's your parents, when you can allow your parents completely to be who they are. You give up, which is really the little me, you give up the desire to be understood by them.

The little me says, you need to understand me. They won't. But a weight, you will feel a weight being taken off your shoulders when you, there's a relinquishing of the need to be understood by your parents.

Oh, that's a relief, they don't need to understand me. And then there's a letting go, as this all comes with presence, there's a letting go of wanting them to be different, wanting them to behave differently, accusing them of having done this or that, or having failed to do this or that. There was nobody there to have failed.

There was just unconsciousness in motion, nothing personal in it. They did what they could do, according to their level of consciousness. Really, there was nobody there to ever have done anything or not done anything.

It was unconsciousness playing itself out. That's why Jesus said, if you want to know the truth forgive them, for they know not what they do. When you realize, they didn't know any better, there wasn't enough consciousness.

If Jesus had lived now, he would have said, forgive them, for they are completely unconscious. That's what it means. It's just unconsciousness playing itself out.

And then even that drops away, the feeling that they should have done something differently. And the more presence arises in you, the more you realize nobody ever did anything to you. The presence, it's only the little, the identity of the little me feels hurt or injured.

When the dimension of presence arises, presence always remained totally pristine, totally pure, totally fresh and new, nothing ever happened to it. The reality of who you are, nothing ever happened to that, no matter what pain was inflicted on you in your childhood. As presence emerges, you realize there's a dimension in you that was never touched.

And then forgiveness happens automatically. You don't have to try to forgive. As long as you try to forgive, it's not really working.

Oh, I should be forgiving, because I'm spiritual. You cannot really make yourself. Forgiveness happens naturally as presence arises and you feel the vastness of who you truly are, beyond the little me.

Forgiveness is just there. You don't even have a word for it anymore. So it's really, towards all relationships, whether at work or with parents, between parents and children, the most powerful tool is to allow everyone to be who they are, which is an aspect of allowing this moment to be as it is.

On the canvas of this moment, very often people will appear in it. Very often this moment will come to you as a person. It may come to you as a person's pain body, coming out of this, at you.

Okay. The practice is, allow it to be. That's where power flows through.

The mind says, no, you can't allow it to be. You should be doing something about it. The most powerful transformation happens through allowing to be.

So when I say, allow the present moment to be, very often that means, allow this person to be. Allow the unconsciousness to be there. It's fine.

And then you will notice relationships with your parents improve dramatically when you give up the desire to be understood. You don't need that anymore. You realize there was nobody there who ever did anything to you or failed to do anything.

So you can see miraculous transformations in situations through allowing. That's where the vast power comes through, whether it's at work or with, you can try it out. What's coming up soon?

Thanksgiving? Wonderful place to practice when all the family gets together. For some people it's agony having to go through that.

Now, this time, see if you can bring in complete acceptance of what is. Everybody around the table happens to be part of this moment then. Allow this moment, including the turkey dinner and whatever it is, people acting out their conditioned behavior.

You can predict what they're going to say next because they said the same thing ten years ago. Allow it to be. And then your next practice will be Christmas.

They get together again. There's always, there's always something that's always a good and the ultimate test is parents. You may, Ram Dass said his famous statement, if you think you're so enlightened, go and spend a week with your parents.

[Speaker 3] (1:16:52 - 1:17:02)

Can you say a little bit about the intense pain of losing somebody through death, somebody who you're really close to, or the pain of a marriage dissolution?

[Speaker 1] (1:17:02 - 2:18:53)

Yes, thank you. Now, the pain of great loss, either loss of a loved one through death or loss of a relationship, which is also a close relationship, is also a kind of death. There may be some situations where surrendering to what is seems impossible.

Some situations are intrinsically so painful that you just, no matter, you may have been successfully practicing surrendering to what is, but suddenly something happens and you just can't and intense pain arises. And this is the second level of surrender. The first level of surrender is surrendering to what is.

That's the most perfect surrender. But this may not be the possible yet. The second level of surrender is to surrender to what you feel.

So if pain arises, because you couldn't surrender on level one to what is, it just wasn't possible, if pain arises, you surrender to the pain. You accept the pain. And that is a strange thing at first.

Everything inside you says, no, this is dreadful. I don't want the pain. The pain may flow into your mind.

But if you surrender to the pain, that can be a wonderful opening, the pain of loss, deep loss. Feel it and accept the pain that you feel so completely that almost as if there's not a person there anymore who is suffering the pain. There's only the pain.

And there's a complete acceptance of that. At first, it's very, it seems unnatural to do that. But as you continue to accept it and be with the pain, instead of running away from it, you will, after a while, something happens.

And the pain turns around and you feel it. And there's suddenly a vast peace underneath the pain, which is not a denial of the pain. It's only by going into the pain and allowing it, you touch it suddenly.

Whenever there's loss, whether a big loss or a little loss, it's an opportunity. You're the fabric of your existence, and suddenly a hole appears in it. Something vital is gone.

That is an emptiness. Great loss leaves a feeling of great emptiness. And that great emptiness at first is deep pain, because there's a reaction.

The emptiness is painful. The reactive me reacts. Now, if you allow the emptiness to be, that is there where there was that being is gone, there's a hole.

The winds of grace blow through that hole that is left when there's great loss. There's an incredible opportunity there if you only allow it. In the absence, whenever there's an absence of something that had been greatly valued, it leaves a nothingness.

The nothingness is at first very painful. As you surrender into the nothingness, there's a fullness that is hiding underneath, behind there. And some people have done that.

They lost everything all at once. There have been reports of people losing their position, their family and their homes all at once. It's almost as if there's a fabric of your existence that only holds in it now.

And at first there was an influx of incredible, unbearable pain, and then there was complete surrender. And suddenly there was what Jesus calls the peace that passes all understanding, coming out of what was intense pain through surrender. And so that, when somebody dies close to you, surrender to the pain.

Surrender to the feeling of the pain and see how it becomes transformed. And what happens after that, there's such an intense depth of peace and aliveness. If it could speak, of course it doesn't speak.

If it could speak, it would say, all is well, there is no death. If it could speak. That's what it feels like.

But you don't even need the words. And it will happen to everybody. Some loss, some great loss will come into everybody's life.

Somebody close to you will die. Another great loss will come. Your own death at some point will come approaching.

And you can see, oh. And by, perhaps everybody in this room, by then, will have already gone beyond identification with the little person and the little me, and already has access to a dimension that is beyond death. The reality of who you are that is beyond death.

I don't want to give you any belief. That's why I don't want to talk about it too much. We are here to experience, to be the timeless consciousness, the timeless state of consciousness that is beyond birth and death, that is your reality and everybody else's reality.

It is often through pain that you have access to it. And here it's an easier way. But if pain is happening in your life at this time and coinciding with being here, that is wonderful.

Life has given you this at this time. The two come together. And that's beautiful.

So anything you cannot accept externally, and pain arises, or something, whatever arises as a feeling, accept. Surrender to what you feel. Surrender to what is.

If you can't, surrender to what you feel about that. Satsang with Mooji So since yesterday morning and before, you've been chopping wood and carrying water, one way or another, being total with whatever you are doing at any moment, or rather in the one moment. Expressed also in another Zen saying that a master once answered when his disciples said, they talked to him of another master who could walk on water.

And they said, he can walk on water, what can you do? And he gave the famous reply, when I'm hungry I eat, when I'm tired I sleep. Doesn't everybody do that?

What he means is he does nothing else at that moment. He has no stuff around eating when he eats, and no stuff around sleeping when he goes to bed. No resistance, no demands, this moment is just as it is.

There's no self that moves into the action, whatever he's doing. No expectation, this moment is enough. Not expectation always implies you're hoping that some future moment will be fuller through this moment, through doing something at this moment.

But if you haven't found the fullness of this moment, you can't find the fullness no matter what the next moment contains, because the next moment is this moment always when it comes. So carrying the burden of self into what you do greatly reduces your sense of aliveness, greatly reduces your intelligence, intelligent not IQ intelligence, true, deeper intelligence, and makes life heavy, because yourself, the sense of me, with its unfulfilled expectations of this or that, or its complaints about what's not happening now, or whatever it may be, that's the heaviness that lends itself to that.

That then flows into what you do, because every self is heavy, there's then no lightness in life. You could even have stuff around sitting here this moment, not totally wanting to be here complaining about this or that, carrying some memory from the past into here, or a very common thing, would rather be somewhere else. So you're not total, not truly, fully here because there's self, the burden of self, which is mind stuff.

It's a self, a conceptual self, and it's in its very nature that it cannot be fulfilled in the present moment. It looks always to the next moment. Its state is unfulfillment, and that's not personal.

And the strange thing is, the sense of being unfulfilled makes up a large part of what people conceive of as themselves, their personal sense of self. All it is, it's a mind pattern, collective human mind pattern, and it's mistaken for me, my dilemma, my sense of not enough. And perhaps it was the Buddha 2,600 years ago, who was the first human, I don't know, who realized the illusion of self, who realized the truth of no self, who realized the truth of no self in any form, any thought, any emotion, any external form or internal form.

He realized the truth of anatta, there's no self in it. And if you're looking for self, there's dukkha suffering. So there's only suffering if you're looking for self in thought, for self in an emotion, if thought is endowed with a sense of self and every emotion is endowed with a sense of self, is not recognized as just a human emotion passing through, thoughts passing through, or external situations where I'm looking for myself through something or other, through some external possession, through fame, through recognition, whatever it may be, through my father or my mother understanding me. So you cannot find yourself anywhere, and so the Buddhists have this strange expression, no self, as the essence, sometimes even called, and it's frightening to the ego, emptiness.

Emptiness, emptiness, emptiness, emptiness, emptiness. All it means is stillness, a still mind or rather no mind, emptiness, and yet what is there when the mind is still? There's something there but you cannot define it because it has no form.

Something, not even a thing, any word you use is wrong because every word derives from the world of things. Remember to be here in touch with your inner energy field otherwise you'll become restless and start thinking. When you become restless, you've moved, you've lost touch with a deeper sense of being and moved into the head.

And then unconscious body movements can sometimes happen. Emotions are also restless then, but you're not usually conscious of it. I can sometimes tell when people are not fully here, their legs or feet start shaking.

Their eyes go drifting. They're looking for somewhere else, some other place. They've moved into the head.

In the meantime, the legs go, and it's quite normal. Many people spend a lot of time sitting like that. If an animal did it, we would have to take it to the vet because imagine your dog doing that.

Then it would be obvious there's something wrong with the dog. But with humans, it's normal. And when you notice it, then something, another dimension has come in.

There's an awareness suddenly that your leg is shaking or the restlessness, and suddenly you notice it. You notice certain involuntary movements or whatever it is. And that's very significant and noticing because awareness is there.

Presence is there. It's only then you can see what's going on inside you. When there's no presence, you don't know what's going on inside you because you're so identified with going on, you are what is going on.

You don't know what's going on. And you have to, you're acting it out. You're an actor who has forgotten that he or she is acting out a script.

You're totally in it. And it's all conditioned. And then people's behavior becomes predictable.

You can tell from people, relatives and so on, that you've known for a long time that most of people's behavior is predictable. You can even predict what they're going to answer when you say something, what their reaction is going to be. Predictable reaction.

But whatever you can observe in yourself means you're conscious enough to observe something in yourself. That's all that's needed. You don't really need to change anything as such because then you have another dilemma.

And that dilemma is part of many people's sense of self. And that is, there's something wrong with me. And many people have that.

There's something wrong with me and I need to, there's something I need to repair, whatever it is. Now you could either say, there are two statements we can make here and just two different perspectives on it, and they're both right in their own way. There's nothing wrong with you.

And there's something wrong with everybody. As long as there's no presence, of course there's dysfunction. But the moment you notice that, there's nothing wrong.

Awareness is all that's needed. Presence is all that's needed. For example, when you become conscious of your legs shaking, soon after it'll stop shaking because it will only shaking because you are unconscious of it.

It would be rare for a human to consciously shake their legs and say, okay, I'll just carry on shaking this leg. They don't do it. It's, oh, and then after a while it dies down because your attention was there.

It's flown into there and you see that, and then it slows down and goes, oh. Another one is to notice that you are unfriendly towards the present moment. And that's, does that mean there's something wrong with you?

No, it's you have something supremely right with you because you are conscious, you are aware that you are unfriendly with the present moment. That's all that's needed. If there's something wrong with you, truly wrong, you don't even know it.

So those humans with whom there is something wrong, they have no idea. They think there's absolutely nothing wrong. Those who are the most extreme manifestations of human unconsciousness, those human beings who go around with bombs or machine guns or throw whatever they throw, they don't think there's anything wrong with them.

Nothing wrong with me. There's everything wrong with them there. So when you notice something, hostility towards the present moment in whatever form, oh, there's nothing wrong.

The presence is there. The very purpose of your life on earth is fulfilling itself at that moment, the arising of consciousness. So what could possibly be wrong?

And yet the egoic identity, the egoic self insists in many cases, there is something wrong with me. And it can sometimes obscure the awareness when you observe something in yourself such as hostility towards what is, the present moment. At that moment, the mind can come in again and obscure the awareness that was there for a moment and formulate some kind of judgment, which is a new way of thinking.

A new thought. And that judgment, for example, would say, you see, you're not good enough. You can't do it.

You've been to the retreat, plus 50 workshops before that, and you see, you still can't do it. There's something wrong with you. You see, you're no good.

Look, they're all present, you're the only one who can't do it. You might as well give up. So when you observe something in yourself, the mind may then come in, obscure the presence that was there for a moment and make a thought out of it that has to do something with yourself, to add something to your sense of self.

And so the heaviness of self can increase even there. Because when you become aware, you become aware of so many ways in which you create heaviness in your life, in which you resist the present moment, in which you add stuff to the chopping of the wood and the carrying of the water, and a mental commentary while you carry the water. Oh, this is awful.

How much longer? She feels much heavier than yesterday. Why do I have to do this?

Why don't they carry the water? There should be stuff around, all kinds of mind stuff. Am I getting weaker?

All kinds of, whatever it is. I shouldn't be carrying water. I've been doing it for 10 years.

It's other people's turn now. Nobody acknowledges me that I'm carrying this water. They don't even thank me.

It's hard work. Carrying that water is hard work. But 80% of the energy that is expanded on carrying the water is actually mind stuff, the heaviness that the mind produces.

Otherwise it would just be that. It might be a heavy bucket, but it's not really. It's just easy.

So it's wonderful to realize there's nothing wrong with you. And the more things you discover in yourself that had been unconscious, the more you're fulfilling your destiny on the planet, which is, you become a manifestation of consciousness arising. You go beyond the merely personal, the delusion of a form identification.

A heavy thing for many people is the pain body, which is the reason why many people think there's something very wrong with them, because periodically they suffer an influx of heavy emotion, painful emotion, negative emotion, fear, deep sadness, or very dark mood, anger, all kinds of forms of upset. And even those in whom consciousness is already arising, presence is already arising, they still find themselves in many cases at the mercy of the periodic arising of their pain body, which is past pain, remnants of past pain that are still alive and have accumulated inside you as a little entity, personal plus collective. Part of it is the collective pain body.

It could be the collective pain body of your family that's part of your personal pain body, or the collective pain body of the part of the world you live in. It could be heavier, some are heavier than others. And certainly it will be also partly the suffering of humanity, the collective pain body of humanity, and everybody has his or her share of that.

And that is a little energy form in you. And that's obviously, that's what it is, because everything, every form is an energy form. Every thought is an energy form, the table is an energy form, it just looks solid, it isn't.

There's also an amazing realization from physics, it's 99% empty space, but it looks solid. Same as the body. 99.999% empty space. 99.999% empty space. 99.999% empty space. So the pain body is energy, an energy form.

One could say almost like a little entity, made up of emotion, an emotional entity. I saw in a film recently a character that got closest to what the human pain body looks like, and it's in the film Lord of the Rings, a little being, I can't remember the name, Gollum. But yet sometimes if you look, it's very well done, sometimes when you look into his eyes, you see there's a being hiding in there.

There's even there, there's a sweet being hiding in there somewhere. And that just the same, the pain body is energy, life energy. Trapped, that's all.

Created by the ego by thousands of years of living through an illusory sense of self and creating a reality on the basis of that illusion. Living in a world of enemies, because that's the ego's world. Creating enemies wherever you go, not being able to live without them.

Making the whole world appear hostile towards you, having to fear every little thing. Of course that creates a lot of pain. And even though presence may be arising in you, and in all of you it is, you may still find yourself being taken over by that thing when it wakes up from its dormant stage, might be dormant for a week or two or three or four, and then at some point it wants to experience more pain.

It wakes up. And then it tries to find out what's going on in your life right now. It looks for an opening where it can go into your mind.

And so that could be a slight upset with something while you're driving. Traffic, a driver cuts across and there's a slight, oh. And at that moment the pain body uses that as an opening and flows into that little upset.

And then before you know it, the little upset has developed into a stream of negative thinking about the world and in general and yourself and other people and the stupidity of them all. And before you know it, the little thing has grown into you something, a huge field of heavy negative energy. Oh, that's the pain body.

It used that little, it was waiting for it. And of course pain bodies help each other. So the driver who cut across you was probably possessed by his pain body.

So I'm going to show him the phenomenon that's called road rage, where two drivers stop their cars and start attacking each other physically. It means when two active pain bodies help each other, they happen to meet on the road, that can happen. Not only two active pain bodies, but two active pain bodies in two humans in whom not the slightest trace of presence has yet arisen.

They are totally identified with that. And they can't help it. They're driven into it.

So the pain body becomes part of the self. It amplifies the already heavy and dysfunctional self even without the influx of the heavy past emotion that is in the pain body. So even at the best of times, there's a heaviness to the self, to that sense of self, of me.

But that becomes amplified through the old emotion of the pain body. It uses the structures, the mind structures of the egoic self and flows into them. And then they become, it's like putting higher voltage into the heaviness of the ego and the dysfunction of it.

You plug it into. And so they have all the egoic structures plus an enormous amount of emotion, raw, needing desperately to experience some more drama or pain. Wanting more pain.

And one way of looking at that is, that is in human beings, the addiction to emotional pain. That's the pain body. And if you ever discover that in yourself, that at that moment you're loving it, indulging in negative thinking, for example, which is one way in which the pain body renews itself, feeding on your thinking, your thought.

Every thought feeds it. And the emotion flows into the pain body. And the emotion flows into the pain body.

The emotion fuels the negative thinking. The thinking feeds the emotion. The emotion fuels the thinking.

The thinking feeds the emotion. Vicious circle. Can go on and it's great.

Don't want to get up. Then at that moment you don't want to get out of your pain. So if the pain body may be feeding on your thinking, may be feeding on other people's reactions.

And at that moment you don't want anything else. You want that. Because you are the pain body at that moment.

There's an addiction to emotional pain. So if you get drawn into a stream of negative thinking about life, about other people, about yourself, about whatever it may be, or one person, which could be yourself or your partner, or your father, or some politician. Not mentioning any names.

And whenever the image of that person comes into your head, there's an enormous influx of pain. But again, we could easily misinterpret the pain body as being personal. And as unconsciousness being a personal shortcoming of someone.

But all that, if it's a politician or your partner or whatever, but all that is there is the expression of human unconsciousness. And the pain body. Wonderfully expressed in the words of Jesus, they know not what they do.

Forgive them, for they know not what they do. Or in the modern translation, it hasn't been published yet, they are completely unconscious. And when that is the case, they create suffering.

And when you react as if there were a person there who knows what he is doing, you also become unconscious. The reaction can make you unconscious. The reaction can take you over.

And then your own pain body suddenly is there. So, and the pain body contributes to the fact that many people believe there's something wrong with them. And there isn't.

It's the human pain body. And the heavier it is in you, because people have varying degrees of density in their pain body, the more likely it is that it will drive you into consciousness because the pain gets too much. I can't live like that anymore.

And then suddenly you notice it when it arises. The first sign of it you may be able to catch. A little event triggering an enormous reaction.

Oh, what's that? And you notice that emotional movement inside you. You're present.

What then happens, we don't know. The pain body may still arise, depending on your degree of presence. A strange thing happens when the pain body comes up.

It uses an opportunity. We mentioned the car. Could be your partner who makes a remark or a comment that the pain body can use as an opportunity to arise.

What did you mean when you said that? Were you accusing me? Why are you accusing me?

The partner says, I wasn't accusing you. Yes, you were accusing. And to observe it then as it arises.

Whether you can do that depends on your degree of presence. And it's quite possible that you can detect it. For most people it works like this.

They become conscious just after it's happened. The pain body episode has happened. The pain body came up, a drama developed, perhaps with your partner or at work or some other member of your family or even with a stranger.

Drama developed. There was perhaps a lot of shouting and fighting and shouting and then pain body fed itself on the emotional pain and then subsided and went back to its dormant state. And then consciousness, some consciousness comes back.

What was that? What was all that about? Sometimes partners can do it.

After the drama they can both say, what was all that about? And then you think, how did it start? We can't even remember what the whole thing was about in some cases.

They can't even remember how it all started. It was about nothing in many cases. Much ado about nothing, Shakespeare's play.

And then they become conscious, there was our pain body or there was my pain body. That was it. Okay.

Well, let's see if next time we can catch it a little bit sooner. And then usually it arises in one person before it triggers the reaction in the other. So it can sometimes happen that one partner remains conscious and observes the arising of the pain body in the other.

And then perhaps can either point it out or if that's too difficult to do, then too dangerous, can simply be intensely present in the body and simply be there as an aware presence, a non-reacting presence. But that requires great intensity of presence because the pain body is clever, very clever. It knows the weak points where you're most likely to react.

Or if you think it's all too much for you, you can quietly walk out of the room. But who knows what happens after that. Of course, as you know, it's easier to see it in others than in yourself.

And if you're genuinely present and say, there's your pain body, it's starting, the other person may become conscious at that moment and say, yeah, you're right. Or the pain body may already have taken possession of their thoughts and so the person can no longer see it. And a pain body then will never admit that he or she is the pain body, of course.

If you ask, are you the pain body? They would not admit to it. But they would probably tell you that you are the pain body.

Or throw something at you. Or deny the whole thing, all that nonsense about pain body. So, pain body is a great challenge.

It is not personal. It does not mean there's something wrong with you. Usually, as presence arises, the gap between the ending of a pain body episode and the arising of conscious presence, when you recognize what has happened, gets shorter and shorter.

At first, you might need an hour or two after an episode, or even a day, and then you look back what happened yesterday. Oh, that was... And then that shortens.

And then you may be able to be present either, when it's not yet, either has not fully arisen yet in its very early stages of an emotional reaction, trying to move into your mind, and you may be able to catch it there and watch it. Or you may be able to catch it as it begins to subside, the episode is coming to an end, and gradually you're getting tired of the drama. It's exhausting, of course.

And at that moment, the pain body is still partly there. You catch it and say, oh, I can still feel it. There it is.

It often happens very frequently that the... It also happens very frequently that the pain body, when it needs to feed on more pain, comes up, and you are there, very present, very alert, and you see it. So it meets presence, the light of presence.

And usually, when you are in that state of awareness, usually it may stick around for a little while to see if it can get through there somewhere. Presence, by the way, is not holding it down. Presence never exerts any effort on anything.

It never resists anything. Presence never holds the pain body down in any way. That is a dangerous thing.

One could do that through willpower. I have no negative emotion because I'm spiritually advanced. I'm just not seeing them.

I'm just not...they don't exist. And of course, then they'll come out in very strange ways. So you cannot hold the pain body down.

You can for a short while, and then it'll come up in the strangest ways, and you do the weirdest things, including physical violence, or you inflict cruelty on people and don't even know it. Or you make your body very ill. If the pain body has no other outlet, it can become very destructive, an unexpressed emotion churning around you for years.

So presence never pushes it down. It's simply a light into which it comes. That's all.

The light of presence, the light of awareness, the light of consciousness. The pain body comes into the light. And the strange thing is, it doesn't like the light.

So it will either try to obscure the light so that it can continue to pretend to be you. It can take you over and become you for a while and live through you. The emotion wants to live again through you.

Another form of reincarnation. The emotion wants to live again through you. It wants to relive what it already knows, what it makes up its energy field.

And so it cannot do that when there's presence. When you are there, you are actually there as the consciousness that watches. Then it can't do it.

So it may, for a while, it'll try. You can see it comes up, the little entity, and there's a light shining on it. And then it may try again, coming up, and you're still, you watch it.

And then it tends to shrink back into a little dark corner. It waits for a better opportunity. And that's, it's fine.

That's how the whole, this is how consciousness works. It doesn't mean you're now totally free of pain body just at that moment, it's gone down. It's you're too conscious, can't come.

In the evening perhaps it'll find a better opportunity. When you lose consciousness through watching a certain politician on TV. Or your partner comes home late from work.

Where have you been? And then some upset happens. One drink too many.

And there's his chance or her chance. In certain, it's more in males, there are quite a few. I don't know the percentage of the population.

It is, frequently happens that in certain males, the pain body comes up, particularly when they drink too much. And so they lose their level of consciousness that they normally have, which may not be that high even at the best of times. But when they get drunk, it goes down considerably.

And so often violence is associated with being drunk. For, in perhaps 10% of men, they become physically violent when they become unconscious. Through alcohol.

And they do dreadful things. And then when they're sober again, how could I have done such a thing? I don't know what came over me.

And some have that cycle in their, with their partner. Physically abusive. And so of course when they're a little bit more conscious, they always promise, this is the last time.

It won't happen again. Now that's not the pain body speaking, that's them speaking when there's a little bit more consciousness. And of course it will happen again.

Unless presence truly comes into their lives. So in some cases, you may have to physically remove yourself from a destructive pain body if change otherwise is not happening or would take too long. You would not survive two more years with that person perhaps.

In that case, you cannot stay around. It would be too dangerous. That person will then go its own, his or her own way and evolve in their own time.

So pain body meets presence, shrinks back, then waits for a better opportunity. But as presence arises, there's even the possibility that you could detect an active pain body in you even in the midst of it. Even in the midst of it, it is possible to wake up and suddenly realize what's happening.

You are acting out old emotional pain. And at that moment, there happens a dissociation between that entire emotional field and yourself. It's like stepping out of a role, out of an energy field.

You were in it, and suddenly you step out of that phantom self. You step out and there you see it. It's still there, active, still in you, still doing what it does.

Maybe still you're waving your arms about or whatever it is. At that moment, there may still be words coming out of your mouth, you, you. And at that moment, you see it.

[Speaker 6] (2:18:54 - 2:18:54)

Wow.

[Speaker 1] (2:18:57 - 2:49:37)

And then it cannot last for long, very much longer, at least not right there. It doesn't mean it's gone forever. But then it will quickly shrink again back because it cannot, consciousness and pain body cannot coexist for long.

And every time you bring presence to it, the pain body cannot renew itself. So it can only play out its old energy. When you, the more you can be present with it, the less can it use you to renew itself.

And so it, what happens then to the pain body? The energy becomes freed that was trapped in there. And many people have carried so much pain that they can't do much else in their lives.

They haven't, that absorbs so much of their aliveness that they have little left to live their life. The emotional pain, and this is in the case of dense pain bodies, the emotional pain is so much that it consumes them. It's like a parasite.

It consumes them, all their aliveness. And as we bring consciousness to it, that trapped energy becomes freed. It was trapped at a low frequency.

If you could hear it, something like that. You wouldn't want to listen to a radio station for too long like that. And so that becomes freed, but it is life energy.

It is aliveness ultimately. And there's an increasing sense of aliveness that you feel because the energy leaves its trap in the pain body. Very much you could compare to, I sometimes compare it to a piece of heavy wood that's being burned, or coal.

The coal is transmuted into fire, the flame of consciousness. First it was a heavy substance, dark and heavy substance, and suddenly the dark and heavy substance burns and becomes a flame. It becomes a transmutation into pure energy.

Beautiful. So that's, and that is the beauty of it, why ultimately whatever is, is fine as it is. Or even the human pain body has a function, and that is that it provides fuel for consciousness, the pain.

It makes ultimately, it becomes your spiritual teacher. One of your spiritual teachers. And for some people, their main spiritual teacher.

I would say for me it was my main spiritual teacher, because I couldn't live with him any longer. So I couldn't live with myself any longer, and a large part of myself, when that realization came to me as a thought, I cannot live with myself any longer. A large part of who I felt myself to be consisted of emotional pain, and that just became unbearable.

And that's why I'm here now. So the mechanism there of ultimately what is ego-induced pain, pain induced through unconscious living, through ego, pain body. Egoic living creates pain, suffering.

It even needs the continuation of pain, because the ego and the pain body, they both need conflict, they both need further pain. The ego needs it to define itself through the other, the enemy, the not me. It needs the boundary around itself.

It needs to create opposition in order to feel itself. It needs somebody to disagree with me, for example, so that I can feel that I'm right, he's wrong. And in being right, the delusion of who I am grows a little bit.

So I need that. If everybody agrees with me, and everybody, I would begin to lose my artificial sense of self, my mind-made sense of self. So religions, often the collective identity that is in certain religions, largely consists of the unbelievers, those who are not us, give us our identity.

We define ourselves through those unbelievers. They give us our sense of who we are. Now, if suddenly they all became believers, we would be at a loss, who are we now?

They are all in possession of the truth now, so we lose our identity as the possessors of the truth. If everybody's in possession of the truth, who are we? If we're at peace with everybody and we don't have enemies, who are we?

If we don't define ourselves through our enemies, not only collectively, also personally, people define themselves through their problematic life situation. All the problems in their life situation make up my life, me and my life. So that artificially induced sense of self disappears.

Pain body, pain is not who you are. It's simply an energy that is in your body. It's simply an energy that lives in you for a while and then becomes transmuted.

Become friendly with your pain body. May not yet be thankful for it. I'm thankful now, but at that time I wasn't thankful.

Become friendly with your pain body. This is the most powerful transformative tool, so to speak. Because very often what manifests in the present moment is the pain body in you.

So if you're not making the now into an enemy, if you become friendly with the now, that will mean at times you have to become friendly with the pain body because you're experiencing that emotion now. It's part of what is now. And that is becoming friendly with it, simply accept that it's there.

There it is. I can feel it. That implies, of course, that you know it's there, which in turn implies, of course, that there's enough presence for you to see it.

You cannot become friendly with the pain body if you don't see it. And the pain body's nature is not being friendly in itself. So when you are the pain body, you cannot become friendly with the present moment.

That's not what the pain body does. So you see how it connects? It's based on presence.

If there's presence in you, then you can accept it. Then you can be friendly with it. If there's not enough presence, you can't be friendly with the pain body because then you are the pain body, and the pain body is not friendly.

But once you are able to detect it, and that's all that's required, to know it's there, then you can bring acceptance to it and say, there you are, there it is, whatever. Or simply just watch, feel it. Wow.

Feel the raw emotion of it. Feel even the need to wanting somebody else to draw in, wanting someone else to draw in and make him or her part of that emotion. Feel what it feels like directly.

What does it feel like in you as an energy field? Amazing. So you're watching it.

That's all that's needed. So you cannot really watch it internally if you don't fully accept it. And you cannot fully accept it if you're not there as the witness, as the watcher of it.

And that's all that's needed. So pain body, nothing wrong with you. Human, humanity in its present evolutionary stage, you can't escape that.

The present evolutionary stage of humanity has pain body. Nothing personal. Not a problem.

Not your personal dilemma. And by the way, there's nothing personal in presence either. The whole idea of person ultimately comes from the fact that there ultimately goes out of the window.

As you probably know, the word person comes from Latin and is based on the mask that actors used to wear in the early forms of theater. Persona, the mask, the image of me. So presence isn't personal either and yet it's I am.

It's the essence of being, of your being. You and being are one. The essence of what obscurely shines through the egoic story of me, you feel there's somewhere in there, there is an I am in there somewhere.

But the I am gets mixed up with thought forms and memories and patterns in the mind. It gets mixed up with a story. There is something precious in the story, but it's not the story.

It's the consciousness in the story. Even in a dream, people say a dream is unreal. Yes, it's unreal, but if there were not something real in there, the dream couldn't even be.

For a dream to exist, there must be something there that enables the dream, the forms that make up the dream to exist. What is it that enables the dream to exist? Consciousness.

It appears in consciousness. What is it that enables the story of me to exist? What is the essence of who I am somewhere hidden in that story?

I'm looking for myself in the different forms of the story, and yet each form of the story conceives a different form. What I feel as the essence of that form is I am, a sense of presence or beingness. I'm hiding everywhere, but hiding so well disguised that I can't even recognize myself.

So it's a walking around, and everyone is God in heavy disguise. So you can say, I am God in disguise, and the other person says, oh, I hardly recognized you. Or you could say, you certainly did fool me.

And I fooled myself. So everybody feels there's something precious to who I am, and that is true. But it's not really in the forms of my story or in the form of anything.

But hidden in the form, the essence of each form, of each thought that I have, of each emotion that I have, the essence that enables it to be is always the same, is always the one, is the divine one self. So that solves the dilemma, the philosophical dilemma of whether the world is unreal or not. So if anybody was planning to ask that question this afternoon, you can drop it.

The world is obviously as real as a dream that you have. It has a certain reality, yes. And yet, just like a dream, the forms that make up the world change continuously.

They don't stay around for that long, this continuous flux. Things come and go very quickly, every experience. Everything is fleeting.

It's like a dream. And then it's gone, you say. Some people even don't know, occasionally they'd say, did I dream that or did that happen?

Because it's gone, it was a fleeting experience, and it's dissolved as that experience. What was that all about? Oh, there's one, the Chinese emperor who woke up from a dream and became very worried because he dreamt that he was a butterfly.

And then he suddenly thought, maybe I'm a butterfly dreaming that I'm an emperor. And it comes to the same thing. You see, the story of yourself is being dreamt by consciousness, you could say.

How could it be otherwise? And why is it happening? Because consciousness wants to dream that dream.

It's enjoying it on some level. But consciousness also wants to wake up now, otherwise we wouldn't be here. This is not to provide the ultimate philosophical explanation of the universe because it would be impossible to do that through words or through thoughts.

But it's a slight hint of what it's all about. It can only give a distant approximation of what it's all about. Never try to figure out through the mind what it's all about.

That's very heavy. There's a knowing that comes when the need to figure out the universe is relinquished and you're happy with being alert and still and not knowing the answer. If you become comfortable with not knowing, then there's enormous wisdom and knowing in there.

How much of that you could ever put into words, who knows? Maybe not very much. How much of that will ever find expression, who knows?

Maybe only a tiny fraction. That's okay. So it's knowing, finding who you are, not as a character in the story of me, not as a character in the dream, but as the dreamer.

You're not a character in your own story, but that's what the ego believes. You are, of course, the protagonist, the main character, the one character that really matters. All the others have supporting roles in the story of the ego, supporting cast, and then the rest of humanity, and then the protagonist, me.

And the me consists of a bundle of thought forms, memories, and then it dissolves. Sometimes it dissolves before the body dies, when it becomes too painful to continue to be me. Sometimes it dissolves when a very serious illness comes, or a very serious disability comes, and the image of me cannot hold itself up anymore.

And then you realize you are not the character, you are the dreamer of the character, the creator of the character, the consciousness behind it all. I've made it all up. And it was never deadly serious.

It's only deadly serious, it may be relatively serious, but it's not deadly serious. Because it's only deadly serious if the forms that consciousness takes in the dream are all you know. Then every form is heavy and deadly, and death is always around the corner, and it's frightening.

But knowing yourself as the consciousness, that changes the nature of the dream also. It doesn't mean that the dream will immediately evaporate. The dream actually becomes a more pleasant dream, when you know, when you're not totally lost in it.

You can continue to move in this world of form. Even your personal life continues, the story of me, of course continues, you carry on doing certain things that you've been doing. That continues, and yet there is a deeper dimension present now.

You no longer totally believe that you are in the absolute reality of these forms. You know they all come and go quickly. You're not looking for yourself in the dream anymore.

That's the relief. So you let the dream unfold, it's fine, but you're not looking for a stronger me, or a more complete me as that character in the dream. That's the dream, can't really do that for you.

And so, you know, you can it may well be, and here we come to another cosmological viewpoint, only a tentative, not to be taken as some absolute statement. The universe, ancient teachings, and more modern findings, both point to the possibility that the universe may be expanding at some and then, like a heartbeat, they say there was a big bang, maybe, maybe not, maybe it's happening every moment, and the universe came out of one point of nothingness, nobody can actually explain that, and suddenly, manifestation happened, and then it expanded and diversified.

And we may be still part of that. And then at some point, things come together again. Multiplicity, rising out of oneness, and yet, the beauty is the oneness is never lost.

The point that was there before the universe ever came into being, is still there. The point is still present in every being. The timeless moment, the timeless fullness of life, unmanifested life, that never really disappeared.

At some point, the journey home begins for the entire universe, back to oneness. The journey home. And what others have done, they have done it.

What else is this gathering than the journey home? So this may reflect something on a very small scale, but it's all connected. That's happening on a very large scale.

The beginning of the journey home to oneness, because you discover the underlying essence and oneness of all life and of yourself. And we couldn't do that if that were not part of a larger movement within the cosmos. And we are simply an expression of that awakening, out of the dream of multiplicity.

Perhaps a dream had to be dreamt so that God can know him, her, itself as God. Only after losing itself in form and then waking up. And it's so beautiful, that waking up, that is built into the dream, the need to wake up.

And that's why the dream is meant to become unpleasant after a while, because the unpleasantness of the dream, the dream turning unpleasant, is the built-in alarm clock in the dream. Preordained, built-in alarm clock. That's the unpleasantness.

And after that has rang, another character appears in a dream called the spiritual teacher. And the spiritual teacher says, as the character in the dream, don't you realize this is a dream? And that you can wake up even while you're still dreaming this dream, you can wake up and know who you are, even in the dream.

And continue to play that character without totally believing in it anymore, without losing yourself in the character, this temporary form. And then you see how much more pleasant the dream is. And that may also, you may know that all the very ancient myths in so many cultures have the story of the golden age, the very distant beginning of things when there was, when beings lived in harmony, in total harmony.

India has that story of the yugas, the original beginning of things, was when things perhaps were still closer to oneness. And the more you get away from the oneness into diversification, the more difficult things become, the harder it gets because every form believes itself to be separate. And then there's the promised return, the return to the state of oneness.

So things start with the golden age, then they deteriorate, so-called, and then they deteriorate continuously. But in the process of deterioration there's also a lot of learning of forms. We learn of what all the things that make up the universe.

And then comes the return, and as you go back to the source, back to, back home, things, the dream improves again, but this time with consciousness. With knowing. So we, paradise regained, as one ancient literary work is entitled, Paradise Regained, and that is the purpose.

Paradise regained is not quite the same as the original paradise. It's conscious. The original was natural.

Natural oneness. And then conscious oneness. So this gathering here is part of a huge thing.

It's not an isolated phenomenon. It's not even relegated to just this planet. It must be connected with everything else in the cosmos, otherwise it wouldn't be able to exist here as a gathering.

We wouldn't be sitting here talking about this and realizing this. If you can become still, whatever you truly need to know, you'll know. Out of that stillness, the answer suddenly comes.

The answer to every vital question is already in you. Not the answer to non-vital questions. I recommend that between now and dinner time, we keep noble silence, as the Buddha called it.

Noble silence is to be present in the silence. That's why it's noble. Otherwise it's just silence.

Noble silence between now and... We don't know, of course, what happens to the voice in your head. We'll see.

[Speaker 6] (2:53:11 - 2:53:14)

Let's ask a question if one arises.

[Speaker 1] (2:53:15 - 2:53:28)

Would you want to ask a question? Is the microphone going there? While the microphone travels there, we are present, not waiting for anything to happen.

[Speaker 4] (2:53:36 - 2:54:04)

Hello. Hi. I'm wondering how you handle when two people's pain bodies collide.

Oh, yes. For example, there's my wife, who I love very deeply. There's my raging pain body, and then there's my pain in the ass body, which sometimes rages back.

And I'm wondering how one handles that.

[Speaker 1] (2:54:04 - 3:00:44)

Yes. Now use the relationship as an essential part of your life. Practice.

The pain body is not there continuously, as you know. It arises at times. And it will start arising in one person, either you or your partner.

Be there as it arises in yourself. Watch the beginning of it, the beginning of pain. That implies, I wouldn't be telling this if you did not have the necessary degree of presence to be there as the witness.

But you have now, if only after sitting here for three hours, there is enough presence for you to be there as the witness of the pain as it arises. If you catch it at an early stage, it's easier to stay present, and it won't take you over. If it arises so quickly, and that happens in certain pain bodies whose energy field predominantly is anger, anger has a fiery quality to it.

And an angry pain body, as opposed to a heavy depressed pain body, an angry pain body, you have virtually no time to watch it arising, because it arises like an explosion and is there fully fledged in one second. So if it's an angry pain body, it's very hard to watch it arising, because it arises explosively. If it's a different pain body, a heavy one, fearful one, it's easier to watch it arising and trying to get into your mind.

So being there as it starts, the partner can be very helpful because you may already at an early stage become identified with it and start to argue, and of course the arguing will already be energized by the pain that lies behind the mental rationalizations and arguments. And your partner may still be present and become intensely present and watch as your pain body arises. Your partner watches the arising.

If you can't watch the arising of your own pain body, which sometimes you may not be able to yet, your partner can do it for you almost. That's how wonderful the relationship can work. Your partner becomes the witness.

If you lose the witness, your partner becomes the witness. That can be a very powerful practice. So what then happens, if I'm with a partner, I can see the pain body arising and already creeping into her mind, wanting me to react, enter the state of intense presence, which also is a state of great openness.

And you feel immediately every cell of your body vibrates with life. And you hold that state of complete openness and presence, and you watch the arising of the partner's pain body going through the mind. Now it will try every trick to pull you into unconscious reaction to the pain body.

Pain bodies have extreme cleverness. Your partner will try every trick. It will try, it will push buttons that have worked in the past every time in making you unconscious, say just the right thing that he or she knows is going to make you unconscious and give an emotional reaction.

And you stay present. Do it for them. If they lose themselves in the pain body, you hold the presence and watch how the pain body tries every trick to get you, to pull you into unconsciousness.

And that presence is always, it emanates as an energy field around you. So if you're with someone, if you stay intensely present, there's an emanation of presence around you. It's very hard for a pain body to remain active for long in the energy field of presence, even if it comes from another person.

Now it may be that the pain body will remove itself, the person will run out of the room, or jump in the car and drive off. Or there will be a sudden, and this can happen and it's miraculous, in the middle of being taken over by the pain body, there's an awakening and there's a sudden aware presence that suddenly is able to watch the intense pain taking place. It could even happen in the middle of a shouting.

You're shouting at your partner and at that moment presence arises. And what that feels like is like you're waking, you're an actor and on stage acting out a script, a very powerful script, forgotten that you're acting out a script and suddenly there's a remembering that this is just acting out, an acting out of a conditioned pattern. And there's suddenly a watching presence there.

That's amazing. So you help each other. If the other person loses him or herself, you stay present.

Presence never means that you withdraw or protect yourself. And you need to be, this is why being here is helpful, to become familiar with the state of presence. Some people mistake it for a state of aloofness, when let's say you're being attacked by your partner's pain body and then you go into withdrawal, it looks like this.

That's not presence.

[Speaker 6] (3:00:44 - 3:00:45)

It's a state of aloofness.

[Speaker 1] (3:00:47 - 3:05:44)

And then even the little me can say, okay, I'm beyond that, I'm not touched by the pain body. I'm beyond such unconsciousness. So presence is open, complete, it's the allowing, you allow your partner to be where he or she is.

It's a deep allowing that's a vast power comes with that. And again, you're embracing, whether you embrace your own pain or you embrace your partner's pain, and you can remain in a state of love and you realize there's the movement of pain. And you don't need to point it out through words.

That probably would work anyway at that point. But also be careful that the pain bodies are very cunning. It is possible that your pain body may be arising and projecting something at that moment and saying to your partner, there's your pain body.

All kinds of things can happen, but if you're present, that will be fine. I know of some couples who give themselves a secret signal when the other notices the pain body arising in the partner. And for some that works, a little hand signal or the just, but it can be, sometimes it can be a little bit sometimes it doesn't work at all when the pain body has it.

It can, the pain body is already there and is being told something. And of course, that the reactive force can be very strong then. One signal that definitely doesn't work, that somebody has already noticed somebody suggested to me as a...

So it is helpful sometimes after you've had an interaction governed by the pain body to talk about it and see where it started, where it came in first, how it used the mind, how it used arguments and mental positions of me being right and you being wrong, how it moved into those mind structures, and talk about it afterwards. So it's a good practice occasionally to retrospectively bring presence into an event when you got completely taken over by it. So after consciousness has returned, you kissed and made up and had a nice meal, or whatever else you have afterwards, and then talk about it.

And isn't that, that was the pain body, did it start in you or in me? Let's see, let's trace it back to the beginning. There it was, the beginning movement when you didn't phone me to let me know you were going to be late or you didn't put the garbage out.

The most, it can start with very insignificant things. So retrospectively to bring presence into the whole growth of it, and then next time see if you can be present as it happens. Wonderful practice.

And whenever you lose it, afterwards see where you lost it. Not in some kind of, oh I have failed to strengthen the little me that isn't good enough. No, just looking at it objectively, see that's where it started.

That's where the whole pain movement started. That's good practice too. So see, talk to your partner and see, so you can help each other in it.

It makes it easier if you help each other. Because it's always one partner when it comes into one person, the other will still be for a little while conscious. So that can, that's a great advantage.

The next time I come, let me know how it's going. The mic is coming.

[Speaker 4] (3:05:57 - 3:06:15)

Kim, you mentioned loving your pain body to death. When you say that, do you mean to accept it, that it is, forgive it for being, and in that way love it to death?

[Speaker 2] (3:06:17 - 3:07:43)

It's not love in the egoic sense. If you can equate space, God, consciousness, stillness as unconditional love, which it is, because if there's this, if you're the space of consciousness as holder, this frequency holder of God consciousness, it's unconditional love. So in other words, what I'm saying is that when the pain body arises, and if you can be alert, aware, and accept, so aware that this pain body has been activated, this awareness is the unconditional love.

This awareness, the unconditional love, then you say, we're loving our pain body to death. The awareness is loving the pain body to death. Because you can't, we can't define, if we try to define what love is, then we're getting into the mental realm, and love is not the mental realm.

You are love. Love is. Space is.

God is.

[Speaker 3] (3:07:58 - 3:08:09)

I wanted to ask you about consciousness in children, and if we can prevent them from having the pain body.

[Speaker 1] (3:08:09 - 3:24:42)

Oh, that's a good question, yes. Asking about consciousness in children, and if we can prevent children from having or developing a pain body. Now, many children absorb pain body at an early age from their parents' pain body.

That adds greatly to, some pain is already present in every human being, even as they come into this world, but that adds greatly to the personal pain body. You absorb the pain. It happened, my pain body grew very quickly in the first six, seven years of my life, because my parents' pain bodies were both there with great intensity.

Many homes are like that, so children absorb their parents' pain body. Now, of course, you're asking the question for the people in this room, and they're all, there's consciousness moving in. The most helpful thing you can do with children is to bring consciousness into your own pain body, or if you live with a partner, you do it, both of you do it, so that you don't emanate and act out continuously pain body, and then they absorb it.

Now, but even those, even children, or parents are not getting lost in their pain body. They will still have a certain amount of pain, and many children, even four, three or four-year-olds, you can often observe how an angel, within a few seconds, is able to can be transformed into a screaming monster. The transformation is so amazing, we take it for granted that that's normal.

This beautiful being, light shining out of his or her eyes, not much mind started yet, the egoic me is not very strong yet, so there's still a lot of being flowing through their eyes, and suddenly they go into dreadful contraction and throw themselves on the floor and start screaming. That's the pain body. And it's relatively short-lived with children, because it doesn't, their mind isn't developed enough for the pain body to hang on in their mind for a long period of time, so it goes through quickly and leaves them, it subsides again quickly.

Now, the greatest thing you can do for children is to point out to them that there's something happening. After an event like that, a screaming fate, or what other children may do, other things, extreme withdrawal or something, choose to say, what happened when this energy, do you remember yesterday when you had the screaming fate? What happened there?

Who was that? See, by talking, by pointing out that there was an energy movement in the child, and perhaps giving it a name, you can help the child to stay present and watch it as it arises. You can't do it in the middle of it, you'll have to do it afterwards.

You can't talk to a screaming monster, but when the angel is back, you talk to the angel and say, who was that monster? Not to induce any guilt or anything like that, but in an interested way, isn't that funny, where does that come from? Has it got a name?

And then next time it happens, just as it arises, oh there, so and so is back. You can say it even while it's happening, although of course that won't wake them up at that point, but a little bit of awareness will be there at that point. And after it has subsided, you say again, oh there it was again, wasn't that funny?

And if you can catch the arising of the pain body in the child just as it first starts, you can say, oh it's coming on, can you feel it? That means very quickly the witnessing presence in the child will grow, and they can actually watch the movement of the pain body in themselves. And that is wonderful, that's something that every parent, everybody who sits here can do easily.

So you're not trying to get rid of it, it's almost like it's a phenomenon that you and the child together contemplate and say, wow. And you have to admit openly, if your own pain body has taken you over, you can say, you know what, that was the same thing that happened in me, what happened this morning, you talk to the child, that was mine. And a point may come when the child may tell you, oh there's your pain body.

That is a truly functional home when that happens. And children can do that. And they would love to be there as the watcher.

It's like a game, it's fun. Here's something to surrender to. Now even with something, before we ask the next question, even with something like that, this is a minor irritation, unless your pain body is ready to awaken, in which fact it could be a big irritation.

Oh, unfortunately it stopped now. Anything like that, you can practice even with little irritations, practice see if you can be in complete acceptance of that, what was up to this point irritating, just completely allowing it, allowing it totally. So you work with it, whatever it is, you work with it, allowing it totally, and see what happens.

Anything that you allow totally takes you into peace, into the state of great peace. It's amazing. Anything that you allow completely.

So that's the work with children, it's wonderful. The spiritual teaching or teacher, if it is true, says, okay, do you realize that you don't need to suffer anymore anymore? Are you fed up enough with suffering?

Or would you like to hang on to suffering? Anybody who's come here today has already suffered enough, otherwise you wouldn't be here. So in a way, your suffering has been wonderful, because it's taken you to this point.

I know that I wouldn't be sitting here without having had dreadful suffering and pain. So it's taken you here, and now the message that comes is, further suffering is not necessary if you voluntarily step into the new state of consciousness. You choose the kingdom of heaven, life doesn't have to drag you into it, kick you into the kingdom of heaven, it's painful.

It did that to me, but now my job is to tell people that you don't have to wait for that to happen to you. Choose the new state, and you're able to do that. I wouldn't tell this to anybody, but not anybody comes here.

If you come here, your level of consciousness, the new consciousness is sufficiently emerged already for you to understand what I mean when I say you can choose to live in the state that is free of suffering. You can choose the state in which suffering is not possible anymore. Unhappiness does not arise.

Not a state in which you close yourself and you become, okay, nothing can touch me anymore. Protective shell, nothing to do with that, because if nothing can touch, if you have a protective shell around you, that means all the beautiful and good things can't touch you anymore either. That's not what it is.

It's a state of complete openness, a state of such intense presence that unhappiness has nowhere to cling to anymore, because unhappiness can only cling to a mentally made sense of self, a little me, past, which moves continuously in past and future and continuously ignores the now. So the realization that in the now, there are no problems and there is no unhappiness. And the unhappy me that lives through past and future dissolves as you become present.

That's the teaching. That's the very same message that the Buddha gave 2,600 years ago, and a few people got it, and then misinterpretation started, because the mind started getting in there and say, okay, let's work this out. What does it really mean?

How can we categorize it? How can we make a system out of that? So a heavy superstructure of mind stuff arose on top of the beautiful teaching.

So this always happens. The mind tries to get in there, and so the heaviness of religion arises on top of the purity and simplicity of the original teaching. And this is the simplicity of the original teaching.

We are going back to that. Freedom from pain is possible now. Now first that means you understand how pain arises.

It arises by not being present to this moment. By running away, by fighting, by denying, by running away internally from what is. So that's how pain arises, always.

When you accept what is, the new state of consciousness immediately is present. So you can't separate acceptance of what is from the new state of thoughtless awareness. The moment you fully accept what is, the new state of thoughtless awareness is present.

The whole mind stuff is resisting what is. Its very existence, the very ground for its existence is the continuous state of resistance to what is. So resistance to what is and the old consciousness go together.

So our practice is to not resist what is. And thereby access the power of life. And yet, that may not immediately free you of all pain and suffering, because humans have been in that state for many thousands of years, and there is an energy field of pain that every human being inherits.

And that energy field simply by the very fact that you are born into the human condition, into the unenlightened painful human condition, and ultimately mad human condition up to this point. You are born into that, so every human being has a share of human pain that comes even from very early, as you are born into this world, you are already born with a burden of pain. So this is a very important part of our practice and realization.

This is not a facile thing of saying, okay, from now on we can all be happy. It goes deeper than that, and we are not running away also, we are not running away from the fact that in you, there is a burden, there lives an energy field of residue of past human pain. On a personal level, pain from childhood, that leaves residues, energetic residues, different things, painful things have happened to you in childhood, and of course far beyond that in time.

But let's just talk from the level of your present existence in this form. Pain that is carried over from your childhood and beyond and leaves, doesn't go away completely, it leaves residues of pain and energy fields, everything is energy. Then those energy fields get together because they feel, they vibrate at the same frequency, so emotional pain gathers into one mass of pain, contracted energy that isn't flowing freely, an energy of, that I call the pain body that humans carry inside, an energy field of pain.

And it's, if you don't realize that no matter how much spiritual practice you do, and even what we are doing here, if you do not see, if you do not recognize how the pain body operates, it will trick you every time and you will lose consciousness through it. So I want to address it now.

[Speaker 2] (3:24:42 - 3:46:39)

I have to look down dear because I was told last time that my belly shows. It's like, it doesn't look flattering. I'm like, oh, I'm almost 50 years old and I've had a child, what do you expect?

So I'll just sort of adjust this, make myself look flattering. And we wonder why we've forgotten ourselves. And I was told that and I thought about the British films and British TV and, you know, many of the actors, you know, they have crooked teeth and, you know, their bodies are all sorts of different shapes and they're famous.

Seems like only here in the West we have to look this proper, be proper, hold in our tummies and we wonder after 20 years why we're constipated then. We don't have that room. You know, kids, you know, children, their bellies are completely relaxed and rounded.

You know, in an early age we start learning, suck that in, suck it in. Oh my. And I did that for a long time and I started chagong and it's like, don't suck in your tummy, you've got to relax everything.

Relax, relax. It's like, okay, but I look three months pregnant. These are the, oftentimes, the cloaks that we wear.

I mean, I see them as cloaks and we're told this from very young. I mean, we put on our clothes. We were born here, we're naked.

You know, we put on the first layer, you know, the undergarments, the second layer, we're topped in the third layer and then the makeup and then they hold the tummy in and, man, it's a wonder we forget who we are. I, sometimes I'll say, if I have to come back into this lifetime, I'm coming back as a dog. Because my, our dog will drag its buttocks across the bum.

It's got an itchy bum, it just goes. And, you know, we've just got to be prim and proper. I was recently in China and it was interesting to be there because they would sit there and they would pick their nose in a restaurant.

Or, you know, when I would go to India, you go to India and, you know, the whole world is a toilet. And it's, there's no shame in it, just like the dog dragging its rear across your carpet. There's no shame in putting down the pants and going to the bathroom or sitting there.

So, these are all the layers that we're uncovering. Not to say that we're going to end up picking our nose in public and all that. Or, you know, pulling down our pants.

But just the mere fact that we begin to see the conditioned layers put upon us. And layer by layer, just peeling them all away until we are again vulnerable, naked. We are who we are, without name, without condition, without form.

And that's our nature, truly. So, if we can fully understand that deep within, then something shifts in us. Not only inwardly, because we recognize it deep within, but then perhaps our outer world can manifest differently.

We can then accept a different culture, one that picks their nose in public, without judgment. They're like, oh, what are they doing? You know, or we just allow our bellies to hang over our pants.

I mean, goodness. It's natural. And we forget this.

Our natural, our nature. If you've got an itch, we itch. If it's in a place where all of a sudden you go, oh dear, I don't want anyone to see me itch there.

So, you're like, let's see how I can do this most naturally. But anyways, I think you understand what I'm saying, is that we are just taking off all those cloaks, the roles that we play, everything. When we finally take those off, I mean, we still play them.

It's fine, because we're in this world, we're in this form, but we're not identified with that.

For me, I want to be able to grow gracefully old. I mean, I get the beauty in that, to miss out in that.

When I watched Eckhart's mother just age before she passed away, and the fears that she had of growing old, and what she looked like, and I'm like, wow, the suffering that I saw on her face as a result of aging. I just really hope that I can grow old gracefully. I was standing at the sink not too long ago, washing dishes, and all of a sudden, there was this yank pulled out of my head, and I'm like, it was Eckhart, what are you doing?

He goes, well, I saw gray hair. And I'm like, okay, well, you know, I guess that's going to happen. But you know, before he did that, I had pulled out probably ten before that, until I realized, you know what, I'm going to be bald if I just don't accept my hair turning gray.

So that's the way it is, but we all do this, you know, and it's okay, but just recognizing that, okay, everything that is appearing external on the outside is not who I am, ultimately. So saying that, we'll go into a meditation, a guided meditation, and what is meditation? Simply awareness, and beginning to recognize all those cloaks that we wear, the roles that we play, the conditioning of our minds.

So see, now that it's still morning time, and maybe some of you are still sleepy, if you are feeling a little tired, you can always come right up and sit up at the edge of your chair. So your sit bones on the chair, so instead of just kind of being relaxed, just kind of sit upright. And your feet are uncrossed, with them firmly planted on the floor.

And you can sit here with your hands either on your lap, face down, or face up, whatever feels comfortable for you. So sitting up nice and tall, feeling your feet on the floor, the crown of your head lifted towards the heavens. You may wish to close your eyes, turning your attention inward, and becoming aware of your breath.

And now I'd like you to see if you can become aware of the inner body, whatever calls the inner body that feeling of aliveness within. In Sanskrit it's called prana, in Chinese it's called qi, it's your life force. And if you don't know what that inner body feels like, you could try just holding up your hands in front of you, palms facing up, so your hands are not touching your body.

And bring your attention to your hands, feeling your hands. And ask yourself, how do I know I even have hands? Dropping the label, hands, I just said hands.

And now simply feel the sensations that may be there. Perhaps a slight tingling, warmth, or even numbness. That's the inner body.

Now bring your attention to your arms. If you'd like, you can place your hands back down on your lap, or continue holding them up, and feel your arms. Now feel your arms and hands together.

And feel your shoulders, and then your entire arm, your shoulders, your arms, and your hands. And feel your front body, the belly, your chest. And now feel your belly, your chest, your shoulders, and your arms and hands together.

And don't worry whether you can feel any part of your body that you cannot feel, don't worry about it. Just go back to an area that you can feel. Perhaps you just stay with the hands.

Now let's feel the back body, your entire spine, your shoulder blades. Feel the back ribs, your lower back ribs, your upper back ribs. Now feel your back and front body, your shoulders, your arms, your hands together.

Now bring your attention to your hips, your buttocks, feeling the sensation. And then feel the sensations in your back, your front, your arms, your shoulders, your hands, your hips, your buttocks. And then bring your awareness to your feet, feeling your toes, your heels, your ankles, your arches, the tops of your feet.

Then feel your entire body, from your head down. Then bring awareness to your head, to the face, to the top of the head, the back of your head, your chin, your neck. Now feel your entire body as one energy field.

This is your inner body. This is the life force that is flowing through you, as you. This is the feeling of aliveness.

Feel free to stay here, feeling the inner body as long as you'd like. And when you're ready, just gently opening the eyes, taking in the world of form. So this inner body, the chi, the prana, your life force, it's unseen, like the wind, but palpable.

You can feel it. And this life force, this inner body, is your access, your portal to stillness. So that's just one way that we can access stillness.

And if we practice to pay attention to this inner body, and the more that we can practice that and go about our day and we do things, as we're doing our things, our daily things, feeling this inner body, this is the opening, the gateway into the present moment, into stillness. And it's like, voila, it's opened up. It's right there.

It's here. And yet the forms are here, manifested, consciousness. And then we can go about our day in what we can call a state of stillness, presence.

And we move, we act, we play, whatever. And this inner body, I mean, sometimes you can feel it, it's very strong, it's very palpable, and other times it's in the background, just as stillness is sometimes in the foreground, and other times it's in the background. But it's there.

But we don't pay attention to it, because most often we're continually looking out and not keeping some attention inward on stillness, the inner body, and just that sense of aliveness within. So really, this is our spiritual practice, is a continually going in, in, in, and not giving everything, all of our attention, to the world of form.

[Speaker 1] (3:46:51 - 3:53:38)

So first we realize there is an energy field of pain in me, and then we go about our day that may manifest either as turbulence, anger, heaviness, like depression, tightness, fear. Whatever way it manifests, it's not pleasant. It's painful.

It's past pain, residues, but very much alive still. You carry it inside. But you're not always conscious of it, and I talk about it briefly in one chapter of the book, so we go into it a little bit more deeply now, and now there's the added energy of presence that we take into the pain body.

The pain body is sometimes dormant, and sometimes active. It becomes active, and it becomes active when you suddenly feel it very strongly, when it needs to feed on further experience of pain. As it always has to do regularly, like it's a little entity almost, it needs feeding temporarily on the experience of further pain.

And you will know that this has happened when a relatively insignificant trigger produces an incredible outburst reaction of pain. A minor thing goes wrong, or somebody says something, or your partner does something, or says something, and there's suddenly a deep, or even a thought comes in, and suddenly it serves as a trigger for an immense, the arising of deep emotional pain. At that moment, the pain body, this energy field, has come up out of its dormant state.

It is ready to feed on more pain. It produces first two ways in which it, I haven't quite put it that clearly in the book, I'll explain it in the next book. There are two ways in which it produces, it feeds on the further experience, because it's all it can feed on.

You cannot, the pain body consists of that energy of pain it needs. Please, where can I get more pain? It feeds on your thoughts when it's ready to rise up.

It will control your thinking. It rises into the mind. It rises into the mind.

And the mind, which is your thought activity, becomes aligned with the pain body. Every thought you think is destructive and painful. And the pain body loves it.

It gobbles up the energy of every thought that you think, every destructive and deeply negative thought. It eats it up, so to speak. And it's having a good time.

It's feeding. And at that moment, one way of putting it is, one could say that that is the addictive quality of human pain. Addictive because it loves its pain.

When the pain body has taken you over and has succeeded in pretending that that's who you are, all your thinking is completely aligned with it. And it's feeding on it. At that very moment, the least thing you want, the last thing you want, is to be free of pain.

At that moment, pain is what you want, because at that moment you are the pain body. And anybody who tells you that if I came into your life at that moment and gave you this message that a life free from pain is possible, you would hit me over the head. Because the pain body would be there, and I would be talking to the pain body, and the pain body would be talking back at me.

So, the pain body needs to come in periodically. And you all have experienced it with partners, finding the ideal partner, and after a few weeks realizing that there's another side to them, that periodically they become a little monster. And then thinking, oh, I must have made a dreadful mistake.

You haven't. Everybody has a pain body, including yourself. But it's a bit more difficult to see the little monster coming up in yourself.

Now, the pain body will use your thinking. It will feed on your negative and destructive thinking. It can go on.

Now, how long the feeding time lasts of a particular pain body varies greatly from person to person. It could be a brief one, a pain body that feeds very quickly, could be an hour or two. Some pain bodies have a feeding time of several weeks, even months.

That's extreme. And in very extreme cases, there are some pain bodies that have virtually no dormant stage. They are continuously feeding and active, but that's more rare, but also happens.

You sometimes meet people who are, and you look into their eyes and you can see they are, the pain body is looking at you through their eyes and they're waiting for an excuse to have more, they want you to give them a painful reaction. They want you to be angry with them. They want you to attack them.

That's people who are totally possessed by the pain body.

[Speaker 3] (3:53:38 - 3:53:48)

Can you say a little bit about the intense pain of losing somebody through death, somebody who you're really close to, or the pain of a marriage dissolution?

[Speaker 1] (3:53:48 - 4:01:17)

Yes, thank you. Now, the pain of great loss, either loss of a loved one through death or loss of a relationship, which is also a close relationship, is also a kind of death. There may be some situations where surrendering to what is seems impossible.

Some situations are intrinsically so painful that you just, no matter, you may have been successfully practicing surrendering to what is, but suddenly something happens and you just can't and intense pain arises. And this is the second level of surrender. The first level of surrender is surrendering to what is.

That's the most perfect surrender. But this may not always be possible yet. The second level of surrender is to surrender to what you feel.

So if pain arises, because you couldn't surrender on level one to what is, it just wasn't possible, if pain arises, you surrender to the pain. You accept the pain. And that is a strange thing.

At first, everything inside you says, no, this is dreadful. I don't want the pain. The pain may flow into your mind.

But if you surrender to the pain, that can be a wonderful opening. The pain of loss, deep loss. Feel it and accept the pain that you feel so completely that almost as if there's not a person there anymore who is suffering the pain, there's only the pain.

And there's a complete acceptance of that. At first, it's very, it seems unnatural to do that. But as you continue to accept it and be with that pain, instead of running away from it, you will, after a while, something happens.

And the pain turns around. And there's suddenly a vast peace underneath the pain, which is not a denial of the pain. It's only by going into the pain and allowing it, you touch it suddenly.

Whenever there's loss, whether a big loss or little loss, it's an opportunity. You're the fabric of your existence. Suddenly a hole appears in it.

Something vital is gone. That is an emptiness. Great loss leaves a feeling of great emptiness.

And that great emptiness at first is deep pain because there's a reaction. The emptiness is painful. The reactive me reacts.

Now if you allow the emptiness to be, that is there where there was that being is gone, there's a hole. The winds of grace blow through that hole that is left when there's great loss. There's an incredible opportunity there if you only allow it.

In the absence, whenever there's an absence of something that had been greatly valued, it leaves a nothingness. The nothingness is at first very painful. As you surrender into the nothingness, there's a fullness that is hiding underneath, behind there.

And some people have done that. They lost everything all at once. There have been reports of people losing their position, their family, and their homes, all at once.

It's almost as if the fabric of your existence has only holes in it now. And at first there was an influx of incredible, unbearable pain. And then there was complete surrender.

And suddenly there was what Jesus calls the peace that passes all understanding, coming out of what was intense pain through surrender. And so that, that was the beginning when somebody dies close to you, surrender to the pain. Surrender to the feeling of the pain and see how it becomes transformed.

And what happens after that, it is, there's such an intense depth of peace and aliveness. If it could speak, of course it doesn't speak, if it could speak, it would say, all is well, there is no death. If there is no death, there is no death.

If it could speak, that's what it feels like. But you don't even need the words. And it will happen to everybody.

Some loss, some great loss will come into everybody's life. Somebody close to you will die. Another great loss will come.

Your own death at some point will come approaching. And you can see, oh. And by, perhaps everybody in this room by then will have already gone beyond identification with the little person and the little me, and already has access to a dimension that is beyond death.

The reality of who you are that is beyond death. I don't want to give you any belief. That's why I don't want to talk about it too much.

We are here to experience, to be the timeless consciousness, the timeless state of consciousness that is beyond birth and death, that is your reality and everybody else's reality. It is often through pain that you have access to it. And here it's an easier way.

But if pain is happening in your life at this time and coinciding with being here, that is wonderful. Life has given you this at this time. The two come together.

And that's beautiful. So anything you cannot accept externally and pain arises or something, whatever arises as a feeling, accept. Surrender to what you feel.

Surrender to what is. If you can't, surrender to what you feel about that.

[Speaker 5] (4:01:32 - 4:02:30)

This concludes Living the Liberated Life and Dealing with the Pain Body with Eckhart Tolle. For further information on lectures and workshops with Eckhart Tolle, you may visit his website at www.eckharttolle.com. You may also visit Namaste Publishing at www.namastepublishing.com.

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[Speaker 1] (4:02:49 - 4:16:14)

So level one, pain body feeds on your thinking. Level two, pain body feeds on the feedback of emotional pain from other people. So it will not only use your thinking, it might even predominantly use somebody else's reactions.

In relationships, when the pain body is ready to arise and feed, it will provoke a reaction in your partner or the partner does it to you, pushes the right buttons, because it wants pain. The pain body loves the drama. This is why drama is an essential part of most relationships.

The pain body needs feeding and you could be saying, suddenly it comes in. At the slightest trigger, there it is. So it feeds on the other person's reaction, and that's where drama arises in the relationship.

And it will give me more pain, please. And the mind is aligned with it, so the mind will find wonderful ways of rationalizing why it will add to it through heated discussions or shouting matches. So it's totally...

And then the other person's pain body awakens and the two feed on each other until feeding time is over. And the two pain bodies subside, go to sleep, digesting food, and then the relationship for a while is harmonious again. And then the cycle starts again.

So pain body feeding on thinking, pain body feeding on other people's reactions. Now I mentioned the unhappy me, a mind pattern that people are identified with, an unhappy sense of self. This mind pattern, when the pain body is active, becomes amplified, its energy, the energy of the unhappy me, when the pain body moves into that mind pattern that already has been telling you your life isn't good enough and so on, and you may not make it, and life has passed me by, and so on.

Now the pain body moves into that mind pattern and its energy gets amplified ten times, twenty times, fifty times, a hundred times. In other words, the unhappy me, when the pain body arises and flows into that mind structure, the emotion flows into the mind structure, the unhappy sense of me becomes dreadfully unhappy and loves its unhappiness, because that's what it consists of. Now all that it is, it is not a foreign body that lives in you.

It is, there's nothing that is not life energy. Even the pain body is life energy, except that it isn't flowing freely. It's got stuck somewhere.

And when energy gets stuck and cannot flow freely, pain arises, like a river. If a river cannot flow, the water accumulates and pressure accumulates. But it's really, it's beautiful life energy.

The water is still beautiful, but there's pressure accumulating inside. That's what the pain body is. Now, as we bring presence, this consciousness, into the pain body, it no longer, can no longer fool you into completely identifying with it.

The presence, as the pain arises, from now on, the pain body, and many of you are already practicing that, pain arises, the pain body comes up, and at that moment you will recognize it as the pain body. That's the beginning of freedom from it. The recognition, when it comes, slight trigger, provocation, even a thought, deep pain arises in whatever form.

In some people it's a very active pain, active pain, and aggressive pain. In other persons it's a passive form of pain, poor little me victim pain. Doesn't matter which pain bodies have different qualities in different people.

It may be turbulence or heaviness or tightness or constriction. It doesn't matter what it is. As it arises, you will know there is a witnessing presence.

And you watch, oops, there's the pain body. And you feel the energy field of it in your body. Often you can feel it in the solar plexus or stomach area, sometimes in the belly, as a dreadful sense of, oh, heaviness.

Some people perceive it as a big hole, some gaping hole inside. Or it may be intense anger. But whatever it is, you watch it.

This is why sitting here is so helpful, because the witnessing presence, which is part of this new state of consciousness, gets so much strengthened simply by sitting in this energy field. So the watcher will be there, watching the pain. So the pain cannot use your mind anymore.

It cannot feed on your thinking, because you're watching it directly. It cannot creep into your mind and then become an unhappy me. So all that's left of the pain is an energy field of turbulence or heaviness.

But the pain has not become an unhappy me, an unhappy sense of self, of who you are. That's the beginning of the end of the pain. But our practice is allowing what is to be.

And that also applies, as long as the pain body is there in you, allowing the pain that is there in you also to be. That is a very powerful practice. So I'm not saying we are not fighting the pain.

We are not even trying to get rid of it. You bring the consciousness, which is a very compassionate state of allowing what is its very powerful state. It implies your present as the one who is able to allow.

You are the one who is able to allow the pain to be. You know you're not creating this pain at this moment, because you practice accepting what is. So it's not pain that you are creating.

It's old pain. You bring the acceptance to the old pain. This wonderful state, this powerful practice does not just concern what happens to you externally, allowing this moment to be as it is.

It includes the arising of pain and the pain body. You watch it, feel it, allow it. So you bring presence into it.

You meet the presence meets the pain body. Here is the pain body, and there comes the silent space of presence. Okay.

And you hold the state of presence as the turbulence happens. Then the pain body is not replenishing itself. You've cut the link between the pain body and your thought processes.

It's not feeding on your thinking anymore. You're watching it. Now, the best time to catch it and watch it is as it first arises in you, when you first notice it arising, to immediately become very alert with every cell of your body and feel it.

There it is. And stay alert. Stay present.

Continue to watch. This is the beginning of the transmutation of pain. The more you watch, the less it can feed.

It loses its energy charge every time you stay present as the watcher of it. It's not gaining new energy. In fact, it's losing energy as the pain body, but the very energy that was trapped in there as the pain body becomes part of the aliveness of who you are.

Many people's life energy is, to a large extent, trapped in their pain body. They have little access to their aliveness because the pain absorbs so much of their aliveness, and it's all trapped in there, in a big, unhappy me. And nothing is flowing.

There's no flow whatsoever. There's only a big, huge contraction. Many human beings are one big contraction.

It's amazing, the egoic state. It's one big contraction. Nothing flows.

And as the energy becomes freed that's in the pain body, there's an incredible increase in aliveness and vitality. And, of course, pain goes. It will not go the very first time you do it.

You will have to do it many times. Many times it will try to arise again and it will arise. Many times you will lose it.

You will lose yourself in it again. That's right. It's all part of this.

There will be times when it will take you over again. And afterwards you remember, oh, there it was, and I missed it completely. You might have gone through three hours of drama with your partner, and afterwards you say, oh, that was the pain body.

I missed it completely. That's all right. Next time maybe you'll catch it and know that it's there.

The good thing is that the pain body becomes actually your ally in your presence practice because without it very few people would have been able to have enough motivation to enter the new state of consciousness. Every time the pain body comes until you know this fact, the pain body will trick you every time and you will lose consciousness every time. But now that you know this, whenever it comes, it becomes incorporated into your practice of presence.

So the more often it comes, the better it is. You're lucky. If you have a strong pain body, you're lucky.

It's good for your practice. It can become a great teacher. That is actually the most powerful part of your practice is to work with the pain body and see how quickly the transmutation happens when it no longer is an unhappy me.

It's simply pain. Not pleasant, but you can allow it, and there's an incredible intensification of presence every time you bring it to the pain body. Now those of you who have very dense or heavy pain bodies will need more intense presence.

Most people who I know who have gone to become almost free of pain, there are not yet many who are completely free, but there will be, are people who have had very dense pain bodies because their motivation is stronger to be free.

[Speaker 3] (4:16:53 - 4:17:19)

Probably my question is going to be a redundant and silly one. You don't have to answer it if you think it's redundant. My suffering has decreased by far, but I still feel frustrated with the return of pain body whenever it comes.

I know it's much less, much shorter and weaker and everything, and I try to not resist it, but I still do feel frustrated. Any comments?

[Speaker 1] (4:17:20 - 4:17:21)

Frustrated with?

[Speaker 3] (4:17:21 - 4:17:55)

With the return of pain body, and when I see myself reacting to whatever event it is, I have put these notes everywhere in my car, house, everywhere. But if I don't turn around and the pain body comes back, then I catch it very often in the middle of the attack and I just leave wherever I am and I go to this silent place. I try to say, okay, it's okay just to be compassionate toward myself, yet I do get frustrated after it happened again.

[Speaker 1] (4:17:57 - 4:18:40)

Well, that's lovely. Well, it's wonderful to see that there's already so much dis-identification from the pain body in you, maybe not enough yet for what you demand of yourself. Of course, it's complete freedom from the pain body, but there's already a lot of detachment coming in.

Does the awakening come in in the middle of being taken over by a pain body reaction sometimes, as you said, in the middle of it? And then what do you do?

[Speaker 3] (4:18:40 - 4:19:16)

What happens? If I'm shouting, then I just stop and then I say, okay, just leave. And then I just leave, which is quite often with my poor son.

And he's six and then I just try to leave wherever I am. And of course, he doesn't want me to leave. And at the same time, I'm thinking, okay, I'm the adult, I have to be able to master my whatever.

And I try to calm down. I do do that. And even he knows you.

And he says, okay, go read, listen to your teacher.

[Speaker 1] (4:19:23 - 4:19:25)

So how old is your son?

[Speaker 3] (4:19:26 - 4:19:26)

Pardon?

[Speaker 1] (4:19:26 - 4:19:47)

How old is he? He's six. Oh.

I wish I had parents who were as conscious as you when I was six. And I wish I had heard of the pain body when I was six. Nobody told me, but so he already knows about all that.

[Speaker 3] (4:19:47 - 4:19:47)

He does.

[Speaker 1] (4:19:48 - 4:19:50)

And he knows it's your pain body.

[Speaker 3] (4:19:50 - 4:19:52)

He does. I tell him.

[Speaker 1] (4:19:52 - 4:19:53)

That's wonderful, isn't it?

[Speaker 3] (4:19:53 - 4:19:55)

That was mommy's pain body.

[Speaker 1] (4:19:55 - 4:20:10)

So it's beautiful. So it's already happening. Why just let it go?

If you remove yourself, if that helps, go to another room and sit quietly for a few minutes.

[Speaker 3] (4:20:11 - 4:20:13)

But what does it come back? It's been three years.

[Speaker 1] (4:20:13 - 4:23:37)

It's been there for thousands of years. So a few years is very little for thousands of years to dissolve. So it's inherited.

It's ultimately every pain body is ultimately collective. It's part of the collective pain body. Even if it looks personal, when you look deep enough and you follow it back far enough, you realize it merges with the collective pain body of humanity.

And when you dissolve yours, you not only do it for yourself, you do it for collective also. It's not just a personal thing. So you're doing far more good when you realize.

And so just a little hint. There may be certain typical situations that you already know that tend to trigger your pain body. And when a typical situation that you already know tends to pull you into that unconscious reaction, you know already what's it, when you, just as this situation, it might be a conversation or whatever it is, just at the beginning of it, you know, okay, here I need to be particularly alert because this is one of those situations that pulls me into unconsciousness.

You don't even need to think it, you know it. And so then you can be, but then you can carry on and with an increased alertness inside yourself as you continue to talk and be involved in that typical situation and bring your increased alertness into it. And as you know, I sometimes use the expression, turn up the dimmer switch on the light, you go.

And when you know you're approaching a potential situation that is tends to pull you into unconsciousness, then you have to turn up the light on your dimmer switch. You go like, okay, now you carry on talking, but you're not identified anymore with mind, you're identified with presence, you are the presence. And so that's the practice.

You can even write down, make a little list of typical pain body triggers for me. One, two, three, four, five. And then, then you know them there and then you go, you see when it's coming, you say, oops, there's one.

Okay. Become alert, present in your entire body. With pain body, especially you need to have attention in the energy field of the body because pain body is a partly physical, physical energy, partly mental, a mixture.

And so you're in there with your attention and you can feel the aliveness in every cell and then continue to talk and then see, use it as a practice and to play with it. And if you fail, it's fine. At least you know you failed.

The world is full of people who continuously get drawn into it and never even know it because they're so identified with it. You're doing good work, not only for yourself, but for many others. Everybody does that who works with their pain body.

[Speaker 3] (4:23:38 - 4:23:54)

Can I be selfish, ask a quick question? I do feel that I have created a lot of pain body in him, like such as you mentioned that the first few. So does it stay with him and or can I, other than being present, can I help him?

[Speaker 1] (4:23:55 - 4:24:12)

It's possible that your pain body has already infected him a little bit, but your presence will infect him even more. So that counterbalances that a lot too. If you bring in presence, then he may not develop a fully fledged full pain body.

[Speaker 3] (4:24:13 - 4:24:13)

I hope so.

[Speaker 6] (4:24:15 - 4:24:16)

Just a little bit.

[Speaker 3] (4:24:16 - 4:24:18)

Thank you so much and thanks for your teaching. Thank you.

[Speaker 4] (4:24:35 - 4:25:06)

I understand how you can be in the moment and when it's a calm, peaceful moment, it's much easier to enter into a state of stillness. For somebody who's in a state of severe or prolonged psychic or physical pain, what is the process by which they learn to find some kind of stillness within that when it's so all-consuming what they desire is for it to pass more than anything else?

[Speaker 1] (4:25:06 - 4:35:39)

Yes. Thank you. Sometimes people just know or they haven't heard of the possibility of acceptance of what is.

The largest part of the population of our planet is not even aware that such a possibility exists, that you can accept a situation that usually would be called unacceptable. So a person really, either it happens spontaneously, there is a letting go of inner resistance because you cannot stand the pain anymore. And very often the large part of the pain is the resistance to whatever is the case.

A large part of the pain is the psychological pain that says, this is dreadful. The last few years of my mother, for example, she was, occasionally I was able to bring her into stillness, but very quickly she was drawn out again by her mind and 90% of her suffering, which was intense the last two or three years of her life, 90% of her suffering was psychological. Yes, her body was no longer working normally.

She found it increasingly difficult to walk. Then she had to walk with the help of this device, a walker, and then her eyesight was beginning to fail. So those, but she did not have physical pain, but she had physical discomfort and it became increasingly difficult to move from here to there by herself.

That in itself would have been, yes, not pleasant perhaps, it would have been uncomfortable. The eyesight failing, yes, you can't see very clearly anymore, but that you can live with, what you cannot live with is the enormous amount of psychological suffering that then she generated unconsciously for herself, which said, what if I go blind completely? And she spent hours and hours in terror at this thought of going blind completely.

What if I won't even be able to walk anymore? And so she spent many more hours thinking, what if I'm going to spend my last few years in bed and I can't go to the bathroom by myself anymore? What if that happens to me because that seems to be the way I'm going?

Enormous amount of suffering. And again, I tried again and again to say, if this is not what is now, it's just this, what you're experiencing now is just this. For brief moments she got it and she was free of the what-if extrapolation of what if this continues.

A further area of suffering was, since she had always been identified with her external appearance, what are people going to think of me? Now they see me walking with this walker. She must be dreadful for somebody to whom other people's opinion had always been very important.

So there was an enormous amount of psychological suffering there also. So every day was consumed in intense psychological suffering. So very often a large part of the suffering is psychic, psychological, emotional suffering generated unconsciously by the mind.

And then there is the actual physical suffering at times that is there in the form of pain or in the form of extreme discomfort or in the form of weakness. The message is there is a way of going beyond unnecessary suffering, which really is to say of going beyond all suffering, because suffering is, the way we use the term here, suffering is the superstructure on top of what is the mind-created baggage. There is a way of being free of that.

But not everybody is ready to hear this. Those who hear this message, which is in essence a spiritual message, but not everybody is yet open to this spiritual message. There are some people who don't even need the spiritual message to whom the realisation of letting go comes spontaneously.

That happened to me. So it came because the suffering, the psychological suffering became so intense there had to be a letting go, otherwise I would have had to kill myself. There had to be a letting go and some, the intelligence, the greater intelligence within, on some level must have realised that, well it did that night, it realised that I was doing it unconsciously.

I can't live with myself and who is the self that I can't live with? It's the unhappy superstructure that has been created. So to some people it happens by itself.

You sometimes see people in poor countries, people who certainly would never have attended a workshop, who would never have bought a spiritual book and perhaps never come into contact with any spiritual teaching perhaps beyond the traditional religion of their country, which in most cases is just a formal thing, and yet sometimes you see people and they may even occasionally a beggar you see who has gone through no suffering anymore.

You can see a light shining through their eyes, the body may be unwell, but they have gone into that inner acceptance of the is-ness of this moment and then something else has come through. Not everybody is ready, whoever is ready for it, it will happen for them. They will, whether it comes spontaneously or with the help of some so-called spiritual teaching, doesn't really matter.

If you are ready for it, either it will happen to you spontaneously or it will happen to you with the help of a spiritual teaching and you will suddenly hear it and suddenly see the possibility of what the Buddha called the end of suffering. That's the whole teaching of the Buddha, has that purpose to bring about the end of suffering. But neither at that time nor now is everybody ready to hear that.

So there are millions of people still on the planet who have never heard anything of the end of suffering, and if they heard it, they still wouldn't hear it. It still wouldn't, it wouldn't sink in. So sometimes people pick up a spiritual book, whatever it may be, Power of Now or any other spiritual book, somebody has sent it to them, says, you must, you really need this book.

Sometimes people tell me they send it to a friend, they send it to a relative, an uncle, their aging parent, or the other way, the aging parent sends it to their young daughter, you must read this book, you need it. And so the recipient gets the book, opens it, says, what does that mean? It means nothing.

Then they, well, at best they put it on the shelf and it gathers dust or they may, they even get angry. They can even get, they get angry, some people whose ego is so strongly entrenched and who don't want to let go of the suffering that's associated with ego, they get angry when they see this. In the office, Eckhart Techings, one day, apparently, I don't, I didn't see it, but a new earth arrived in a package and somebody had put it through a shredder and returned it to the office.

So that's what happened. So this person was not ready. You cannot force it on people and you cannot, like, if the apple isn't ripe, then there isn't, it just won't happen.

So there needs to be some degree of readiness and then either it happens spontaneously or it happens with the help of a teaching and then it happens. So all the spiritual teaching does, it saves time, which is not real, but it's on this level, you have to see levels, beautifully expressed in the Course in Miracles where it says, delay does not matter in eternity, but it is tragic in time, different levels. So it just, it saves time and suffering, that's what spiritual teaching does, because in the absence of a spiritual teaching, you still have your suffering.

That's the teaching and the teacher, everybody has that. That's the main teaching and the main teacher. Even if you never come into contact with any spiritual teaching, then your spiritual teacher is your suffering and then eventually it will wake you up, eventually.

It could take time. Of course, the awakening itself does not take time. You can only wake up now.

One more quote from the Course in Miracles, I haven't quoted that in a long time. It has taken time to misguide you so completely, but it takes no time at all to be who you are.

[Speaker 2] (4:36:08 - 4:47:14)

This exercise that we will do is called Whole Body Breathing and it's intended to not only quiet the mind, but to help you to become aware of the energy that you are, an energy that permeates within the body and extends beyond the body, connecting you to the universe. You may wish to do this exercise sitting just right here at your computer, or you may wish to stand whichever position you choose. Be totally present.

With what is arising and be conscious and aware of your entire body and the energy that flows. Come to sit at the edge of your chair, so your sit bones are at the edge of the chair. Your feet are flat on the floor, about hip width apart, and your spine is upright.

Hold your hands in front of you, palms facing each other, but not touching. You may wish to close the eyes. If you are standing, you are standing with your feet hip width apart and your knees are slightly bent.

Imagine the crown of your head reaching towards the sky, palms in front, facing each other, and close your eyes. As you inhale, your hands move apart, and as you exhale through the mouth or through the nose, your hands come closer together, but not touching. So, inhale, hands move apart, and exhale, bringing them closer together.

So, inhale through the nose, and exhale through the nose or through the mouth. So, our breathing is coordinated with the movement of your hands. And imagine the chi between your hands.

Not only imagine it, but feel it. See if you can feel the energy between the hands. So, your hands could be moving wide apart, or just very little.

Just be present with this energy, what's between the hands. Be present with your breath, coordinating breath and movement. Inhaling deeply, and exhaling, allowing your total body to relax.

Relaxing the shoulders, relaxing your jaw, relaxing your hands, your fingers. You may even notice that it's not only your hands are moving, but your arms are moving apart as you inhale, and exhale, come together. Now, feel yourself breathing not only through the nose, but with your entire body.

So, when you inhale, every cell of your body inhales. And as you exhale, all the stagnant energy in your body releases through every pore. It's a whole body breathing.

Your body breathes. Every cell becomes alive. Even the hairs on your body, your entire body, is breathing, is alive, is energy.

If you're standing, make sure your knees are unlocked. This simple exercise is rejuvenating for your entire body, calming for your mind. Breathing in deeply, you can even feel the breath coming in through your toes.

And exhale, relax. If thoughts arise, just return your attention to the breath. Return your attention to the chi between your hands.

We're not doing anything, just breathing. Simple breathing with your entire body. And a few more deep breaths.

And when you're ready, the chi between your hands. One more inhale. And as you exhale, bringing the chi between your hands to the dantian, your belly.

Scanning your body, making sure that everything's relaxed. Relaxed your shoulders, your face, your arms, your belly, your legs and your feet and your toes. Notice how you feel in this moment.

Perhaps you feel calmer, relaxed, energized. And when you're ready, you can slowly open your eyes. And thank you.

Namaste.

01 of 02 - eckhart tolle - dealing with the pain body

[Speaker 1] (0:02 - 43:59)

The spiritual teaching or teacher, if it is true, says, okay, do you realize that you don't need to suffer anymore? Are you fed up enough with suffering, or would you like to hang on to suffering? Anybody who has come here today has already suffered enough, otherwise he wouldn't be here.

So in a way, your suffering has been wonderful, because it's taken you to this point. I know that I wouldn't be sitting here without having had dreadful suffering and pain. So it's taken you here, and now the message that comes is, further suffering is not necessary if you voluntarily step into the new state of consciousness.

You choose the kingdom of heaven, life doesn't have to drag you into it, kick you into the kingdom of heaven, it's painful. It did that to me. But now my job is to tell people that you don't have to wait for that to happen to you.

Choose the new state, and you are able to do that. I wouldn't tell this to anybody, but not anybody comes here. If you come here, your level of consciousness, the new consciousness is sufficiently emerged already for you to understand what I mean when I say you can choose to live in the state that is free of suffering.

You can choose the state in which suffering is not possible anymore, unhappiness does not arise, not a state in which you close yourself and you become, okay, nothing can touch me anymore, protective shell, nothing to do with that, because if nothing can touch, if you have a protective shell around you, that means that all the beautiful and good things can't touch you anymore either. That's not what it is. It's a state of complete openness, a state of such intense presence that unhappiness has nowhere to cling to anymore.

Because unhappiness can only cling to a mentally made sense of self, a little me, past, which moves continuously in past and future and continuously ignores the now. So the realization that in the now there are no problems and there is no unhappiness and the unhappy me that lives through past and future dissolves as you become present. That's the teaching.

That's the very same message that the Buddha gave 2600 years ago and a few people got it and then misinterpretation started because the mind started getting in there and say, okay, let's work this out. What does it really mean? How can we categorize it?

How can we make a system out of that? So a heavy superstructure of mind stuff arose on top of the beautiful teaching. Do we need some air?

Some air may be nice. So this always happens. The mind tries to get in there and so the heaviness of religion arises on top of the purity and simplicity of the original teaching.

And this is the simplicity of the original teaching. We are going back to that. Freedom from pain is possible now.

Now first that means you understand how pain arises. It arises by not being present to this moment, by running away, by fighting, by denying, by running away internally from what is. So that's how pain arises.

Always. When you accept what is, the new state of consciousness immediately is present. So you can't separate acceptance of what is from the new state of thoughtless awareness.

The moment you fully accept what is, the new state of thoughtless awareness is present. The whole mind stuff is resisting what is. Its very existence, the very ground for its existence is the continuous state of resistance to what is.

So resistance to what is and the old consciousness go together. So our practice is to not resist what is and thereby access the power of life. And yet that may not immediately free you of all pain and suffering because humans have been in that state for many thousands of years and there is an energy field of pain that every human being inherits simply by the very fact that you are born into the human condition, into the unenlightened painful human condition, and ultimately mad human condition up to this point.

You are born into that so every human being has a share of human pain that comes even from very, as you are born into this world you are already born with a burden of pain. So this is a very important part of our practice and realization. This is not a facile thing of saying okay from now on we can all be happy.

It goes deeper than that and we are not running away also, we are not running away from the fact that in you there lives an energy field of residue of past human pain on a personal level, pain from childhood that leaves residues, energetic residues, different things, painful things have happened to you in childhood and of course far beyond that in time. But let's just talk from the level of your present existence in this form. Pain that is carried over from your childhood and beyond and leaves, doesn't go away completely, it leaves residues of pain and energy fields.

Everything is energy. Then those energy fields get together because they feel, they vibrate at the same frequency. So emotional pain gathers into one mass of pain contracted energy that isn't flowing freely, an energy that I call the pain body that humans carry inside, an energy field of pain.

And if you don't recognize that, no matter how much spiritual practice you do and even what we are doing here, if you do not see, if you do not recognize how the pain body operates, it will trick you every time and you will lose consciousness through it. So I want to address it now. After our break I will invite questions, especially connected with dealing with the pain body in yourself and how to bring presence to it.

So first we realize there is an energy field of pain in me that may manifest either as turbulence, anger, heaviness like depression, tightness, fear. Whatever way it manifests, it's not pleasant, it's painful, it's past pain residues but very much alive still. You carry it inside, but you're not always conscious of it.

And I talk about it briefly in one chapter of the book, so we go into it a little bit more deeply now. And now there's the added energy of presence that we take into the pain body. The pain body is sometimes dormant and sometimes active.

It becomes active when you suddenly feel it very strongly, when it needs to feed on further experience of pain. As it always has to do regularly, like it's a little entity almost, it needs feeding temporarily on the experience of further pain. And you will know that this has happened when a relatively insignificant trigger produces an incredible outburst reaction of pain.

A minor thing goes wrong or somebody says something or your partner does something or says something and there's suddenly a deep or even a thought comes in and suddenly it serves as a trigger for an immense arising of deep emotional pain. At that moment, the pain body, this energy field, has come up out of its dormant state. It is ready to feed on more pain.

It produces, first, two ways in which it, I haven't quite put it that clearly in the book, I'll explain it in the next book. There are two ways in which it produces, it feeds on the further, because that's all it can feed on. You cannot, the pain body consists of that energy of pain it needs.

Please, where can I get more pain? It feeds on your thoughts when it's ready to rise up. It will control your thinking.

It rises into the mind. And the mind, which is your thought activity, becomes aligned with the pain body. Every thought you think is destructive and painful.

And the pain body loves it. It gobbles up the energy of every thought that you think, every destructive and deeply negative thought. It eats it up, so to speak.

And it's having a good time. It's feeding. And at that moment, one way of putting it is, one could say that that is the addictive quality of human pain.

Addictive because it loves its pain. When the pain body has taken you over, and has succeeded in pretending that that's who you are, all your thinking is completely aligned with it. And it's feeding on it.

At that very moment, the least thing you want, the last thing you want, is to be free of pain. At that moment, pain is what you want, because at that moment you are the pain body. And anybody who tells you that if I came into your life at that moment, and gave you this message that a life free from pain is possible, you would hit me over the head.

Because the pain body would be there, and I would be talking to the pain body, and the pain body would be talking back at me. So the pain body needs to come in periodically, and you all have experienced it, with partners, finding the ideal partner, and after a few weeks, realizing that there's another side to them, that periodically they become a little monster. And then thinking, oh, I must have made a dreadful mistake.

You haven't. Everybody has a pain body, including yourself. But it's a bit more difficult to see the little monster coming up in yourself.

Now, the pain body will use your thinking. It will feed on your negative and destructive thinking. It can go on.

Now, how long the feeding time lasts of a particular pain body varies greatly from person to person. It could be a brief one, a pain body that feeds very quickly, could be an hour or two. Some pain bodies have a feeding time of several weeks, even months.

That's extreme. And in very extreme cases, there are some pain bodies that have virtually no dormant stage. They are continuously feeding and active, but that's more rare.

Much also happens. You sometimes meet people who are, and you look into their eyes and you can see, the pain body is looking at you through their eyes and they are waiting for an excuse to have more. They want you to give them a painful reaction.

They want you to be angry with them. They want you to attack them. That's people who are totally possessed by the pain body.

So, level one, pain body feeds on your thinking. Level two, pain body feeds on the feedback of emotional pain from other people. So, it will not only use your thinking, it might even predominantly use somebody else's reactions.

In relationships, when the pain body is ready to arise and feed, it will provoke a reaction in your partner, or the partner does it to you, pushes the right buttons, because it wants pain. The pain body loves the drama. This is why drama is an essential part of most relationships.

The pain body needs feeding, and you could be saying, suddenly it comes in. At the slightest trigger, there it is. So, it feeds on the other person's reaction, and that's where drama arises in the relationship.

And just give me more pain, please. And the mind is aligned with it, so the mind will find wonderful ways of rationalizing why it will add to it through heated discussions or shouting matches. So, it's totally...

And then the other person's pain body awakens, and the two feed on each other until feeding time is over. And the two pain bodies subside, go to sleep, digesting food, and then the relationship for a while is harmonious again. And then the cycle starts again.

So, pain body feeding on thinking, pain body feeding on other people's reactions. Now, I mentioned last night the unhappy me, a mind pattern that people are identified with, an unhappy sense of self. This mind pattern, when the pain body is active, becomes amplified.

Its energy, the energy of the unhappy me, when the pain body moves into that mind pattern that already has been telling you, your life isn't good enough, and so on, and you may not make it, and life has passed me by, and so on. Now, the pain body moves into that mind pattern, and its energy gets amplified ten times, twenty times, fifty times, a hundred times. In other words, the unhappy me, when the pain body arises and flows into that mind structure, the emotion flows into the mind structure, the unhappy sense of me becomes dreadfully unhappy, and loves its unhappiness, because that's what it consists of.

Now, all that it is, it is not a foreign body that lives in you, it is, there's nothing that is not life energy, even the pain body is life energy, except that it isn't flowing freely, it's got stuck somewhere. And when energy gets stuck and cannot flow freely, pain arises, like a river. If a river cannot flow, the water accumulates and pressure accumulates.

But it's really, it's beautiful life energy, the water is still beautiful, but there's pressure accumulating inside. That's what the pain body is. Now, as we bring presence, this consciousness, into the pain body, it no longer, can no longer fool you into completely identifying with it.

The presence, as the pain arises, from now on, and many of you are already practicing that, pain arises, the pain body comes up, and at that moment you will recognize it as the pain body. That's the beginning of freedom from it. The recognition, when it comes, slight trigger, provocation, even a thought, deep pain arises in whatever form, in some people it's a very active pain, active, aggressive pain, in other persons it's a passive form of pain, poor, little me, victim pain.

Doesn't matter which pain bodies have different qualities, in different people. It may be turbulence or heaviness or tightness or constriction, it doesn't matter what it is. As it arises, you will know there is a witnessing presence, and you watch, oops, there's the pain body, and you feel the energy field of it in your body, often you can feel it in the solar plexus or stomach area, sometimes in the belly, as a dreadful sense of, oh, heaviness, or some people perceive it as a big hole, some gaping hole inside, or it may be intense anger.

But whatever it is, if you watch it, this is why sitting here is so helpful, because the witnessing presence, which is part of this new state of consciousness, gets so much strengthened simply by sitting in this energy field. So the watcher will be there, watching the pain, so the pain cannot use your mind anymore, it cannot feed on your thinking, because you are watching it directly, it cannot creep into your mind, and then become an unhappy me. So all that's left of the pain is an energy field of turbulence or heaviness, but the pain has not become an unhappy me, an unhappy sense of self, of who you are.

That's the beginning of the end of the pain. But our practice is allowing what is to be, and that also applies as long as the pain body is there in you, allowing the pain that is there in you also to be. That is a very powerful practice.

So I'm not saying we are not fighting the pain, we are not even trying to get rid of it. You bring the consciousness, which is a very compassionate state of allowing, what is its very powerful state, it implies your present, as the one who is able to allow. You are the one who is able to allow the pain to be.

You know you're not creating this pain at this moment, because you practice accepting what is. So it's not pain that you are creating, it's old pain. You bring the acceptance to the old pain.

This wonderful state, this powerful practice, it does not just concern what happens to you externally, allowing this moment to be as it is. It includes the arising of pain in the pain body. You watch it, feel it, allow it.

So you bring presence into it. You meet, the presence meets the pain body. Here is the pain body, and there comes the silent space of presence.

Okay. And you hold the state of presence as the turbulence happens. Then the pain body is not replenishing itself.

You've cut the link between the pain body and your thought processes. It's not feeding on your thinking anymore. You're watching it.

Now, the best time to catch it and watch it is as it first arises in you. When you first notice it arising, to immediately become very alert with every cell of your body, and feel it. There it is.

And stay alert. Stay present. Continue to watch.

This is the beginning of the transmutation of pain. The more you watch, the less it can feed. It loses its energy charge every time you stay present as the watcher of it.

It's not gaining new energy. In fact, it's losing energy as the pain body, but the very energy that was trapped in there as the pain body becomes part of the aliveness of who you are. Many people's life energy is, to a large extent, trapped in their pain body.

They have little access to their aliveness because the pain absorbs so much of their aliveness. And it's all trapped in there, in a big unhappy me. And nothing is flowing.

There's no flow whatsoever. There's only a big, huge contraction. Many human beings are one big contraction.

That's amazing. The egoic state is one big contracted state. Nothing flows.

And as the energy becomes freed that's in the pain body, there's an incredible increase in aliveness and vitality. And, of course, pain goes. It will not go the very first time you do it.

You will have to do it many times. Many times it will try to arise again and it will arise. Many times you will lose it.

You will lose yourself in it again. That's all right. It's all part of this.

There will be times when it will take you over again. And afterwards you remember, Oh, there it was and I missed it completely. You might have gone through three hours of drama with your partner and afterwards you say, Oh, that was the pain body.

I missed it completely. That's all right. Next time maybe you'll catch it and know that it's there.

The good thing is that the pain body becomes actually your ally in your presence practice because without it very few people would have enough motivation to enter the new state of consciousness. Every time the pain body comes, until you know this fact, the pain body will trick you every time and you will lose consciousness every time. But now that you know this, whenever it comes, it becomes incorporated into your practice of presence.

So the more often it comes, the better it is. You're lucky if you have a strong pain body. You're lucky.

It's good for your practice. It can become a great teacher. That is actually the most powerful part of your practice is to work with the pain body and see how quickly the transmutation happens when it no longer is an unhappy me.

It's simply pain. Not pleasant, but you can allow it and there's an incredible intensification of presence every time you bring it to the pain body. Now those of you who have very dense or heavy pain bodies will need more intense presence.

Most people that I know who have gone to become almost free of pain, there are not yet many who are completely free, but there will be, are people who have had very dense pain bodies because their motivation is stronger to be free. In Eastern terms we are talking about karma. Karma really ultimately is all the conditioning from the past including the past pain that you mistakenly believe is who you are.

Karma is to be identified with all past conditioning and to be condemned to relive and act out continuously your past conditioning. So pain body is an important aspect of karma. So what we are addressing here is going beyond the unconsciousness that is karma.

What we are talking about here is actually the dissolving of karma. There would be no end to karma otherwise because it renews itself. That's why it's often likened to a wheel.

It renews itself continuously. This is an end to pain, an end to suffering. Use, all the questions after the break, I'm sure there will be quite a few, use your relationships in your practice and realize that no matter who you choose as your partner they will have a pain body.

Don't look for the ideal partner without a pain body. And that's good. And use the relationship because it's so much easier to become aware of your own pain body in a relationship than if you live alone.

Great opportunity for practice. And we'll address that in a little bit more detail perhaps after the break. If both of you understand how it works, you could have an agreement that you will help each other when the pain body arises in the other person so that the other can stay very, very present.

Instead of going into reactivity, stay very, very present. And if the partner gets taken over by the pain body, stay so present that you allow it without reacting and thinking that that's who that person is. Allowing it.

If your partner doesn't want to cooperate, you just do it for yourself. It only takes one person ultimately to be free. It's great if he or she does.

For many women, pain body arises as the approaching menstrual cycle comes. I mentioned it briefly in the book. Because there's so much collective female pain.

One aspect of pain body is collective human pain. Now collective may be the pain of a nation that you belong to. Certain nations have more of a heaviness to them than other nations.

The new world has relatively less heaviness to it than the old world. Because the old world, Europe, Asia to some extent, there's so much past there. There's so much...

The heaviness of past and the heaviness of past pain is very much apparent. Certain countries, you just get off the plane, and if you're sensitive, you feel the energy field of the collective pain body. Eastern Europe, in many countries, you can feel it the moment you step.

Germany, I feel it the moment I step off the plane. Russia. And every individual who lives, part of their pain body is the collective pain body.

So it's not just... Pain body is never a personal problem of yours. It's the human condition.

It's your share in the human condition. Not a personal problem. There are no personal problem.

Every pain that you have in your life is your share of the human condition manifesting in a particular form. So there's... One aspect of the collective pain body is the nation, the national.

United States has some pain body, but less karma. There's less karma here than European states, and certainly some European states. And even such a thing as a relatively short-lived, like Vietnam War or something, adds a bit to the collective pain body, the experience.

Fifty million men... Fifty thousand men killed in some distant country, and Secretary of State at that time in his autobiography now says, well, in retrospect, it was probably a mistake. Human madness.

That's just one more manifestation of human madness. But if you and some of you were actually, I know, had to go there and suffer pain there, then that's fine. You work with that now.

Now there's also female pain, collective pain body. Just as there's a male collective pain body, the female collective pain body that every woman partakes in has to do with dreadful pain suffered particularly through women being treated as slaves and as worthless property for thousands of years. Not always.

There was a time before that when women had their rightful place. But for thousands of years in most countries, women became victim of the patriarchal, mind-dominated state of consciousness. So that becomes particularly pronounced when the menstrual cycle starts.

The very thing that is the femininity in you on the biological level is very painful. It awakens the female pain body just as it happens. And this is, in the old traditional teachings in Buddhism, they say, no, women can never make it.

They can't become enlightened because every time they go through their cycle, they lose consciousness. So they say, OK, we'll have to exclude women. And they did.

And so it's become more and more lifeless by doing that. And it's become more and more mind-dominated. The very fact is that the opposite is true.

If women can use that, knowing that that is the time particularly when the pain body arises and become present at that time, it will be through that that women become very quickly now free of their pain body by bringing presence into, especially when the pain body arises at the approaching menstrual cycle, bring presence into that and become very alert. Watch the pain arising. Watch it.

Allow it to be. Be compassionate towards it, which is what the allowing is. Be compassionate, the compassionate one who allows the pain to be and who is able to hold it, to hold the turbulence.

The state of presence is always a gentle embracing of what is. It's bringing a gentleness to it, which is a very powerful gentleness. Bringing the gentleness to it and embracing what is and holding it in that embrace.

And you stay present as you hold your pain, the pain, and watch the turbulence of it. Hold it. The more you hold it, the stronger, very, very quickly, your sense of presence grows much, much stronger as you hold the pain.

And the pain will slowly lessen. But it no longer matters, because your acceptance of the pain is so total, you're not making that moment into a means to an end because I want to get to the end of my pain. Your acceptance of pain is complete and that's where your spiritual power lies, in fully accepting it.

But, of course, now it hasn't become you. It hasn't become an unhappy me. You are fully there.

You are fully present with it. You fully accept that there is the pain body vibrating in you. And you may have to hold that pain for quite a while when the cycle comes.

It can go on for a few days and bring presence to it. You may occasionally lose it and then remember again and be present with it again. By losing it, I mean, it may succeed in moving into your mind and control your thinking again.

And then suddenly you'll remember and you hold it, holding it. So that pain becomes an incredible teacher and every time it happens, you bring the presence to it. That's why women are going, it's already, there's always more women coming to consciousness groups than men.

Women will move forward more quickly now than men. I've seen that. I'm seeing it all the time.

And part of the reason is that they'll be able to work with their pain bodies, which up to now has looked, has been a great obstacle, now becomes a great help as you bring the presence to it. Men still have, are less in touch with their bodies, more, women of course are also in the mind, but men are even more deeply entrenched in their mind structures. So there's a different, they of course also have pain bodies, but the predominant thing for men is identification with their head.

The predominant thing for women is identification with pain body. So that's, these are just the focal points. Wonderful practice.

And I'd love to know, after the break, those of you who have already been practicing after reading the book, how you're doing, and how it's, what obstacles there are, where it is becoming difficult, or any questions that arise out of that. But it is, it is so, this practice is so easy and so wonderful and so powerful that it's amazing that it's taken humans so long to get to this point. But transformation can be very quick now.

Very quick. So make your pain body into your ally. Your pain body is not your enemy.

When you make it into an enemy, that's the old minds thing starting over, and making even the pain body into a problem. How can I get rid of it?

1 Eckhart Tolle - Abiding in Pure Awareness - Soa Daily Meditation [jZuvsNjH]

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 4:59)

We want to do this little meditation in each session that is so important. And that is the primary meditation for pure awareness. So not awareness in relation to sense perception, it's not awareness in relation to thought, not talk about awareness in relation to situations that arise, pain, body, just encountering awareness in its pure form.

And that's important. I remember twice, I recommend twice a day, even if it's only for five minutes each time, 10 might be better, but don't overdo it. Don't overdo anything.

So you, it's a good thing to start and end this by looking around wherever you happen to be before you close your eyes. So you just become comfortable with wherever you are and just look around very casual way. This is, and you're beginning to step out of thought, you're just looking around.

And then you close your eyes and what helps is to take a few breaths into the abdomen. So it, because that can put you in touch easily with the entire energy field of the inner body. As you breathe in, the abdomen expands a little, then you hold it at the end of the in-breath for two or three seconds and feel the energy expanding then throughout the body.

And then you breathe out and in again, and you follow the breath with your attention. This is the ancient breath awareness practice. And you can't be thinking at the same time and follow the breath with your attention.

That's why it's such a good practice. And you become aware of your body, the inner body, the aliveness. And now gradually you feel that the awareness of the inner body, the aliveness of the inner body and the inner body become a single thing or a single no thing.

So you merge with the sense of aliveness and stillness. Instead of observing it, you feel that you are it and it is awake. You may still have remnants of visual image of the body, but it's not necessary anymore.

So we just focus on that sense of all pervasive presence. And that is not other than you. That is essentially you.

That is the essence of who you are. That is the I before it becomes something. Just pure presence.

There's a meditation that starts with the question, who am I? The answer is not to be found in thought or in words. The answer is this, the presence that you sense.

You sense yourself as the presence. That's the answer to who am I.

[Speaker 2] (5:28 - 6:53)

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (7:02 - 13:06)

A criterion for success in this practice is sense of enjoyment or joy. And we could call it the joy of being. Not being anything in particular, just being.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

So eventually you encounter a state, this deep sense of beingness of I. It cannot be improved upon. Nothing needs to be added to it.

It doesn't get any better than this to use a common expression. This moment, being conscious of being, listening to the wind just on the surface of things. Feeling your connectedness with the source of all life.

From which the consciousness emanates, the consciousness that you are. That realization is the very fulfillment of your life in this moment. What is there to add to it?

On the level of being, you're already complete. There's nothing that you need to become. There's nothing missing.

There may be things missing on the human level, the human dimension, but not on the being level. There's nothing missing. You don't need time to become anything.

That's the fullness of life that Jesus talked about or the emptiness that Buddha talks about. Spaciousness is a better word for it. Inner spaciousness.

And then as you open your eyes and look around the room again, continue to feel the stillness or the spaciousness within as you look around the room. And that is how you realize the possibility of being present within and without.

2001 Eckhart Tolle Omega Retreat Beneath World Drama There is Peace Part 1 of 2

[Speaker 1] (2:58 - 1:14:35)

Welcome to our meditation retreat. It's wonderful to see that so many of you made it here despite the events of the last few days. If there's been any doubt in anybody's mind about the urgency of change in human consciousness, it's become very, very obvious now how urgent that inner transformation has become.

If we are not to be condemned to repeat the past over and over, to repeat the past, history, the collective human past, a lot of which is a succession of events, dreadful violence that we witnessed recently, but also the past within the conditioning of the human mind, the structures, the old patterns that to some extent are still there in everyone, in some humans in a much more acute form. So we are here to go beyond that conditioning, deep seated. And to go beyond that requires alertness, attention, presence.

So I'd like to open the retreat by ringing this bell. And the sound of that bell is a call to attention. And that is our continuous task for the next few days, to be in the state of alert attention that does not deny anything that's happening, allows it to be in a state of openness.

So our task in the next few days is to allow this moment to be. And the emotions that are part of this moment also allow them to be. And that allowing creates a space around it.

If it's an emotion, through allowing it, and emotions will come up, especially at this time. And not to deny, we are not here to deny any of that, but to allow it so completely that through the act of allowing, a spaciousness arises around what is. That is the essence of spiritual realization.

That's also the origin from where comes all healing, renewal, and not so much to be aware of that spaciousness around events, anything that arises at this moment, realizing that that is the essence of who you are. You are not that which arises, you are the field in which it arises. That is the deepest core.

So I'm starting the meditation retreat already by giving you the essence of it. So you could even go home after this. If you knew that deeply with every cell of the body and immediately see it deeply, then that's it.

And then you would realize also the truth that is so beautifully expressed in this big book, Cause and Miracles. It's at the very beginning, there's a summary. It says these lines summarize the whole cause.

And they say, nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God.

To allow this moment to be requires you to be in that state of alert attention. Otherwise, that which arises at this moment as a thought, an emotion, or an external event, will draw you in completely. Your sense of self will be drawn into that.

This is to be identified with thinking, the continuous stream of thought, which means your thought stream draws in your attention so completely that you're totally trapped in the conditioned structures of thought. And that state of inattention is the state out of which what we call evil, which is deep unconsciousness, arises. So the root of that deep unconsciousness that manifests as evil in the world is the state of being asleep, spiritually speaking.

Completely trapped in conditioned mind patterns. So our task here is to be aware of that in ourselves. That which arises, whatever arises at this moment, within or without, to be able to watch that.

Be with it, be open to it. And then there's always something greater than that which happens. Whether that which happens is a happy or an unhappy event, they come and go in any case.

If you want to cling to a happy event, or a happy thought, or a happy emotion, then of course after a little while that comes to an end. Or if you feel threatened by an unhappy event, or an unhappy emotion, then you get drawn into reactivity. And the world becomes a fearful place, because there are so many things that are to be feared inside yourself and outside.

Many thousands of people died a violent death not far from here last week. The mind seeks an explanation. I don't want to give you any facile explanations.

First of all, to see that, that's what happened. Of course every physical form comes to an end, but it always seems very sad if it comes to a very premature and violent end in that way. And we become aware of how fragile the fabric of phenomenal existence is, how quickly what seems so solid and real can dissolve.

And what looks so tragic from a normal perspective, and is, it is. If you have read accounts of people who faced the imminent possibility of death and survived, or people who underwent a so-called near-death experience, there's one common factor that most of them speak about. They speak about the fear that is there up to almost the very end, and then the last few seconds, an accident seems inevitable.

Somehow they survived, so later they could talk about it. An accident seemed inevitable, and the last few seconds, many of those survivors speak of suddenly great serenity and peace came. And you have a similar account in near-death experiences, where it seems that people already went into death, and many of them described those last few moments as a sense of deep peace, and a sense of all is well.

It seems contradictory when the survival of their physical form was threatened, but at the last moment, a shift happened. And suddenly there was a deep sense of rightness even there, which from an external perspective seems impossible. And that is, that peace that comes, and I'm sure it came to many of those who died in the last few seconds.

It came to me. I died psychologically, and the whole psychological structure of the self died through intense suffering. And again, there was the same experience of deep peace suddenly, when it all collapsed.

There is always, there is another side to it, even to what looks like an unmitigated tragedy and disaster. We can't, it's on the surface, this is not the case when you look at it from the surface. There is the redemptive factor at work.

And that is the realization that you are not this form identity as which you appear temporarily in this world. And when your form identity, your existence as this form, physical form, is threatened, truly threatened, then there's the possibility of spiritual awakening. And the strange thing is, in some cases, the spiritual awakening, or what I call the flowering of consciousness, can come to a person in the last five seconds of his or her life.

And it doesn't matter. The flowering is there. And according to the ancient Tibetan Book of the Dead, which is read by the monk to the dying person, even after the physical body has died, there's a thread that runs through the Tibetan Book of the Dead, and that is at various stages, even after that, the possibility for you to recognize your essential nature comes several times.

You miss it, and then another possibility comes. If you miss them all, then okay, then, as they say, I'm not wanting you to believe anything, but the book then says, then okay, you reincarnate again. If you miss that, then you will be forced into the cycle of reincarnation.

But please, I don't want to give you any new belief structures. And I don't want this to be a comforting belief, because we want to go deeper than that. So when your survival is threatened as a form identity, there is always the possibility of awakening out of identification with this form.

And your survival as a form identity can appear in two ways. One is your physical existence is threatened by something, imminent death of the physical. It can also be that the survival of your psychological form identity as the mind-made sense of me, the self, with my story, my history, and my unhappiness, and happiness occasionally, that is threatened or imminent, has reached a point of imminent collapse, sometimes because the suffering is so acute that it cannot sustain itself anymore.

And there also is the possibility of sudden disidentification from form, which is mind structures and emotional structures, before consciousness was totally identified with those structures. And suddenly it removes itself, so to speak, and when you speak of it later, people use different words, and some cannot express it at all, because it defies language. What is it that happens at that point of realization?

And some people to whom it happened, all they can say, this was the case with me when I died psychologically, all I could say was, there's so much peace suddenly, both within, and it even seems as if the peace were outside, even in the traffic, it seems to be even in there. I couldn't understand it. So many say such serenity, such peacefulness, and yet aliveness, and perhaps cannot explain any further where does that come from, what is that, in the very face of death and disaster, how could that suddenly appear?

And then fortunately there's a further possibility for that awakening, otherwise you would have to wait for disaster to happen, or your physical death. And perhaps the other possibility arises through spiritual teaching, not teaching in the form of learning new things, but the power of a teaching that arises out of that state of realization. And all then, a few pointers are given, but there's a power behind those pointers, and so one could say, you are here also to die to your form identity, to your complete identification with me as this physical, psychological form, which is a very fearful state, because everybody knows, no matter how much you deny it, that it's only a matter of time before that goes.

Whether it goes when you reach the age of 95 or 100, whether it goes in a violent explosion created by a madman, or whether it goes when you least expect it, and you slip on a banana skin and break your neck, and it's gone. Death comes in many disguises, but it's always the same. So we honor for a moment those thousands of people that died, and we are not denying that on one level, yes, it is deeply sad and tragic.

And we also see that there is a deeper level to it, and not as a belief that tries to reinterpret it, and just to make it okay so that we don't suffer so much. No, just to see the impermanence of all forms, life forms, to see how fragile this fabric of phenomenal existence is, of forms, to recognize that, that recognition is the beginning of something else. It's strange, it seems, what does it mean when you see, isn't it sad that every form of life is so short-lived?

Shouldn't we be weeping every day because each one of us is condemned to death? If you could even, you could have a little date on you, each one would have a date if you knew it, and you could read it on your hand or something, you'd say, oh, that's how much time I've got left. And that is the truth.

And it is a miracle that humans are not continuously wailing and weeping, because they are condemned to death, all of us. And why are they not continuously weeping and wailing? Because underneath it there is a recognition that that is not the ultimate truth.

Otherwise nobody could even live any longer. Why do anything, why carry on with anything? It's all going to dissolve anyway, of course it is.

And even your children, I mean, they are going to die too. It's all dissolving like dust. If it doesn't dissolve violently, it dissolves through the passage of time, which goes fairly quickly too.

So if you saw this room and a speeded up version on a film, which condenses 2,000 years into one minute, and 2,000 years is very little on a planetary or cosmic level, then all, even the seemingly solid objects, you would see them crumbling to dust. They're already crumbling to dust, it's just you can't see it. And that would be an amazing eye-opener, if you could see all of phenomenal existence within one minute.

Gone. Now let's see, if the whole world were one color, let's say if everything were green, every object, every being green, the color green would not exist for you, of course, because you would have nothing to differentiate it from. Now, the whole world, everything that appears in this world is impermanent, as this is dissolving already, every form, including this form.

If there were nothing else, remember the analogy I just gave you with green, if there were nothing else, you wouldn't even know it. If there were only green, there would be no green. If there were only impermanence, there wouldn't even be the knowledge of impermanence.

The very fact that you can know it and see it and be aware of it, not as a thought, but just as an awareness, an aware presence, and there's simply the looking, there's simply the seeing of it. So if you see how a form dissolves slowly or violently, and simply your eyes remain open, so to speak, I'm using seeing both literally and metaphorically, and you're simply in that state of open, almost astonishment, and you see the forms, the flux, the continuous coming and going, birth and death of all these life forms, and you see it. The seeing of it is the beginning of the awakening, is already the awakening.

It seems insignificant to see it, because after you've seen it, the mind will come in and say something about it. That's not it. The mind might draw some conclusion and say, okay, so that means I'm not going to do anything anymore because it's pointless anyway.

So what's the point of it all? I mean, I just might as well go home and get drunk. That's the mental conclusion that leads you astray again.

So if we can remain with the seeing, the pure seeing of it, and not come to any mental conclusions about it, and stay with the seeing of the coming and going of forms, not only as death, also of all forms that come into your life and then leave you again, come and leave you. Wow. And there you are, present.

There's a presence, suddenly, that seeing, that awareness is a... We need to be very careful here. At this point, it would be best for me to walk out of the room, stop speaking.

But that would throw the Omega Institute into disarray, and they would have to give you your money back. When I give it more labels now, there's always the danger that you get lost in mental labels, and you don't realize that every word I say is simply a pointer, just a different pointer, a slightly different perspective. And what comes together here is what I, at the very beginning today, I said, allowing this moment to be, that is the openness to what is, what arises.

And then goes away again. Comes, is born into this moment. It's born, and then it leaves.

To allow it to be, and that is the same, it's just now a different perspective on it, is to see how all the forms that appear in your life as the form that this moment takes, this moment ever, to see that and allow it to be. Allow the impermanent nature of the arising forms to be, and see it. You don't even need to call, mentally label it, not even say, yes, it's all impermanent.

So it's a state of open awareness in which that is recognized. That is enormously liberating, to see it, to recognize it without drawing any conclusions. And that is what is arising already from within you, is that which is beyond birth and death and the arising of forms.

The awareness itself that sees. And it is that which people who face imminent death, perhaps in the last few seconds of their lives, realize. That is the disidentification from form, from having your sense of self completely identified with a particular form, and then spend the rest of your life in a reactive relationship to whatever happens in this moment, the little me reacting.

Every form either will enhance your sense of form identity, I need this, I need you, I'm not going to let this go, I'm not going to let you go, or other forms threaten your sense of form identity, go away, I don't want this, I don't want this moment, what's happening, I don't like what's happening, push away what's happening at this moment. That's a very common thing. It's threatening, forms are threatening.

So when you are only here as a little form identity, you are in a continuous reactive relationship to what happens around you, personalized and reactive. And you're always looking out for the next threat to your form existence, often psychological threat, defensive, hold back, what does he want? What does he want from me?

Or you're looking out for something to enhance this always deficient sense of self. How can I feel more secure? I need to add something to who I am, and maybe I can add you.

Maybe if you all think that I'm great, then I can add that, that would be great. So the need to add more to who I think I am to strengthen my form identity is there in the absence of the recognition of that which is beyond form as who you truly are. So when you don't know that you are condemned to reenact those egoic patterns, egoic means simply identified with form, as me, physical and psychological image of me, my story, which is not complete enough, therefore I need to add more.

And the little me might even look for enlightenment because it thinks it is an experience or it is a firework that I can add to the store of my experiences as the supreme experience, because I've already got the big car and the big house, I've got that in my sack of experiences already, but it's not enough. I thought it would be, but it isn't. So I'm now looking for the greatest experience to add and then I'll be okay, of course, when I'm enlightened, I'll be okay.

So I'm looking for an event in time to happen and that's going to be it. And surely it will be some big fireworks going off inside, probably, when I'm enlightened. And of course it's possible that fireworks may go off inside you, it might be a beautiful spiritual experience, and then it comes to an end.

And then you say, oh, now I need another one. So we are not here, well, maybe one or two of you came for that reason, but we are not here to have a spiritual experience. That would be frustrating, because even if you do have one, and many of you won't, even if you do have one, you'd have to go home again.

Somebody wrote this book recently, I haven't read it, but it has a nice title, which is, the book is called, After the Ecstasy, The Laundry. So there is the, when you're identified with the mind, the mind is looking for more. The me, the mind-made me, is looking for more, it's looking to strengthen itself, it's looking to, really, you want to know more deeply who you are, you want to know, truly know yourself, you want to strengthen your sense of self, of who I am, to finally arrive at that sense of really being yourself fully.

And if necessary, if you are totally identified with those structures, in the complete absence of even the slightest awareness, completely trapped in firm identity, completely and totally trapped in it, then killing 10,000 people to strengthen your identity means nothing. You don't even know them as human beings anymore, because all you can see is the mental concepts in your head. You live in a conceptualized mind-made universe, so you deaden the moment, and you can see it in a slight manifestation, the moment you label somebody as this or that, already you have removed their aliveness from your awareness and deadened them a little bit.

And then if you put another label on them, and another one, then you're no longer aware of who this being is, because you're completely unaware of who you are, you're completely trapped in a conceptual mind, and so killing a human being means nothing, because you're not even aware what you're doing at all. There's the essence of human madness. And now, nobody in this room is at that level of unconsciousness where you're so trapped in your form identity that you would do anything to strengthen it and to be right, but those mind structures do operate in a much, in a more, not quite such a violent and total way, but in everyone, if you are alert, you can see your own mind structures that impose labels on other humans, on nature, on anything.

And then relate, not to that human being, but you've had, you suddenly have a screen between yourself and that human being, which is your mental label, and you're relating to that mental label. So that can arise not as completely in any of you as it still does in those humans who are totally, completely trapped in that. And of course, there are areas on the planet where those, this human unconsciousness expresses itself in a particularly acute form.

There are areas where there's continuous conflict, continuous, like totally forced to reenact those very unconscious mind patterns again and again. And those people who live there, they live as in a nightmare. I read in the newspaper, one Israeli woman said to an American a few days ago, a woman who lives in Israel, said to an American visitor, welcome to my nightmare.

And now, whenever you encounter a deeply unconscious human being who imposes these labels on you, and it's not only those mind structures, because those humans who are deeply unconscious are also completely unaware of the enormous amount of pain they carry within, and the pain, the collective human pain body that they carry within, emotional pain accumulated during thousands of years of human madness. And that is in you, but you don't even know it.

All it does, it amplifies your already insane mind structures. It means it gives them added emotional energy, and you don't even know that that's what's happening. And whenever you encounter a human like that, there's the danger that he or she may pull you also into unconsciousness, also into form identification.

So the encounter with a highly unconscious human being is always, there's the question, when you encounter such a human being, are you going to be pulled into the same level of unconsciousness? And that danger is always there. And on a personal level, that happens when you encounter another human being with a strong pain body, and it's being acted out, and you're maybe attacking you, if not physically, verbally, accusing, you did this, that, you.

And what the pain body wants, it wants you to have pain, and give me more pain too. It wants, please, pain, pain. And so unless you are very alert there, you will get drawn into that also.

Reactivity will come in. That happens in relationships a lot, mutual feeding of the pain body. And collectively, the challenge that collectively is being faced in America now is whether they collectively will be pulled to the same level as of unconsciousness.

In which case, they would perpetrate the same deeds, and would be saying, yes, we are justified in killing innocent people, they did it, we'll do it. So that is the challenge collectively, is not to be drawn, I'm not saying take no actions, action will happen, not to be drawn into that deep unconsciousness, which is total identification with form. Now this could be a belief, an emotion, it could be the collective form of our race, our nation, our tribe, our religion, complete identification, and you're encapsulated in a form identity, but it's mind stuff, completely mind created, encapsulated in a form identity that needs its enemies even to survive.

It would lose its identity without its enemies, so it needs to continuously create enemies. That's the human madness, it's been going on for thousands of years. Totally encapsulated in form identity.

People do it on a personal level also, and in certain cultures, it tends to be more a collective form identity, which is even more mad than a totally personalized form identity, which is mad enough. And the greatest evils have come, were inflicted on humans by other humans, not by people who were trapped in a personalized form, those are the so-called criminals. But the evil they do is nothing compared to what nations and tribes and religions do to other humans.

It's a drop compared to a huge ocean. Criminals are nothing, they just have a match, the same madness, but it's a personalized, but when you get the collective form identity, then you really see the madness of it. And what is form identity other than complete identification with mind?

Really, the whole identity is mind structures. So the challenge that America is being faced with is to stay, not to be drawn completely into that as a reaction. And ours being together here this week is more significant as far as the collective consciousness is concerned, is more significant than it appears on the surface.

A field, a group of human beings going beyond that, still relatively rare, but arising more and more on the planet, although at the moment all you see is the unconsciousness which has resurfaced. And you find that in yourself too, on a personal level, the resurfacing of old mind structures can happen also in yourself. It may even happen during these days, occasionally your pain body may come up.

Now the expression of that won't be as violent as the madness we are witnessing now, but the root of it is the same identification with form, with complete absence of spacious awareness. And then of course a complete inability to see any other mental position than the one that you identified with, which is your form identity. A total inability to see any other perspective than this one, that is because this is me, or us, which is a big me.

But that is the same in a milder form. It arises in you perhaps tonight when you're talking to somebody and you're having a discussion, and a certain emotional violence flows into defending your standpoint, because you know you're right, and there comes the emotion with it. And if you sense within yourself the enormous momentum behind mind structures energized by emotion, and when you speak, if you can observe, perhaps, and it seems not related, how is that related to the destruction of what happened a few days ago?

And the strange thing is, it is related. To see it seems so harmless to defend your point of view, but at the root, this is the root of the same unconsciousness. I'm not saying no longer have any point of view.

No. You have a point of view, and say, this is my point of view. But the strange thing is, whatever you express through the mind, any thought you have concerning something, is one perspective on it, any situation.

One perspective, okay, you could shift and move to another perspective. It could be true too, but not a single one is totally true. About almost any country in the world, one could probably put a credible case that this country is the worst country on earth.

And then you could put a credible case that this country is the best country on earth. Perspectives. Viewpoints.

Mental positions. The truth is far greater. You can never encapsulate it in one mental position.

Again, express a mental position, but not be a mental position. When you are a mental position, what you can still do is that you know that this is what's happening. Here we go again.

So let's see if what... And America, it happens to be where the greatest concentration of energy is on the planet. So what happens here is decisive for the future of the planet.

And is it going to go more unconscious? Or which way is it going to go in the face of this challenge? America is a country of extremes.

There are, even before this happens, there are extremes of violence, extremes of this, extremes of bigness, extremes of also spiritual things arising. Extremes of good and bad. Enormous.

Because there's so much energy here, you can see the extremes of good and bad more clearly. And so this is why it's so important what happens here now for humanity. We were driving yesterday.

The only way I could get here was to fly to Toronto and then drive down here. And we were in the car, maybe halfway down, and we were overtaking this car, and on the rear window, the driver had written in big white letters two lines. The bottom line read, God bless America, which is fine.

And the top line said, Kill them all! And we were overtaking this car with a Canadian license plate. I was hoping that them all did not include Canadians.

So it's in a strange way, it's all related. Us being here, what we are engaged in these days here, in a strange way, is related to something that seems like on a different planet. It's only a hundred miles from here it happened.

But it seems, if you look at the surroundings here, and the people here, relatively very conscious compared to still a large part of the population of the planet. So it seems we are two different worlds. Us here and the events that happened there.

This is almost like a heavenly realm. And there it seems hell on earth happened. And yet, they are not separate, they are related.

And the inner work, for lack of a better word, that we are doing here is very closely related to what happened there. And this is what I've just been addressing here to see how it is related. How your inner structures, those things are only more acute manifestations of that which each human being carries within.

And it is now or never, really, if humanity does not go beyond those old mind structures, it will relive the old, its history, and we know what that is like. Look at the 20th century. Oh, my God.

Compelled to relive history. And of course the planet couldn't endure that. Another hundred years of that, another century like this, 20th century, without the mind structures of humans changing, but with increasing, increased technology.

What technology and science does, although it is a, it requires intelligence, of course, to produce science and technology, and they're not bad in themselves, but what it tends to do is magnify the effects of human unconsciousness. It magnifies it. Before, it was the same unconsciousness, but they couldn't do that much harm because they didn't have the means.

They could have, but they didn't. So, if humans, if that change doesn't happen, it could be the end of humanity as a species. Pity.

It was a good try. Consciousness will move through any, consciousness wants to move through now and flower through this species, so these are critical times. It could go one way or the other.

The fact that we are here is a good sign, and change is happening. Of course, there is the reaction. Reactions are happening to the collective events, but there's also a deepening.

I saw somebody said on TV that a writer, an American writer, I've forgotten the name. America tended to be, she said, type A personalities. I'm not quite sure what that means, but I assume it means extrovert, doing, going out, getting things done, doing type A, and she perceived a shift from that, a deepening, a going within, which is, there's also the reactivity happening in others, so we'll have to see which way it is going.

The country could be swept by reactivity and unconsciousness, or there could be a deepening, and then if action is necessary, it would come out of that state of consciousness. It would be different from reactive action. So, how to be here, in these days that we are here, the essence is to remain awake to what arises in you, and allow it to be.

Observe thought structures, emotional fluctuations in yourself. Let them be. Let them be.

That's the spaciousness around them. Observe your mind, either the mind when it's talking to yourself, to itself, the inner monologue or dialogue. Observe your mind also in interaction with other people, the energy behind it.

And one could say a little tip for you for the next few days, and this is a good tip even to take beyond this retreat, is not to take your mind too seriously. That in itself is very liberating, because the very reason why we are here is to realize that we are much more than that, than the conditioned mental entity. So don't take it too seriously implies that there is an observing presence that knows that this is the mind.

And so it's automatically almost your mind isn't that serious anymore. So it implies when I say don't take your mind too seriously, it implies a continuous observing presence that may arise even in the middle of a heated conversation. By the way, we may have periods of silence too here, but not continuously.

Today perhaps you will be engaged in conversations with people and so on, and you may have positions to defend, to put forward, you may have things to complain about, not good enough, that shouldn't, they shouldn't have, why did they, or the speaker, why doesn't he, he should, why aren't we meditating? This should, that should, they should, why doesn't he, don't they, and you will see that when you are identified with mind, how much complaining it actually does. If not outwardly to others, some people are very good at that too, inward complaining, it's a very deep-seated, because complaining is a strong, why is that?

And how is that related to the events in New York? When you complain, you are right. Somebody else or a situation around you is wrong.

By being right and making someone or a situation around you wrong, you have strengthened your form identity, the me, and that to the me feels good. In reality, it feels bad. If you truly knew how it feels, you would know that it feels bad and your body knows that it feels bad, because it doesn't like that energy field, it actually gets sick if you are in that for years and years, because there is a continuous contraction.

Energy cannot flow anymore, because you are always, whenever you complain, there is a little contraction and the egoic form identity loves that, because when I complain, I can be right, somebody else can be wrong, then I am more fully myself. That feels good. So to watch that pattern of making wrong in yourself, continuously, also to the essence of what complaining is, I am not saying that if you put up with whatever people do to you, this is not the kind of complaining when you say, stop treading on my toes, that's not complaining, I am not talking about that, or take your hand out of my bag when somebody is about to take your money, that's not complaining, that's not what I am talking about, or in a restaurant you say, take back this soup, it's cold, I am not having it, that's not complaining either, but it could become complaining in a restaurant when you then say, how dare you put this, you give me this cold soup, what are you doing to me? And for the next two hours after you walk out of the restaurant, so to watch and to catch the complainer in your head, which is a very deep seated mind structure, and it seems innocent enough, a little bit of complaining can't do anybody any harm, and yet it's not that harmless at all, so that's a good thing to watch in yourself, and complaining of course is resistance to what is, and the egoic little me, the form identity loves that too, it doesn't like what is, it would rather complain about what is, and even in the midst of beautiful surroundings, it will look for the one thing that it can complain about, so you are here also watching your mind, and not condemning yourself when suddenly you realise that for example you have been complaining for the past ten minutes or two hours in your head, things may come, you are here for a few days, so many mental streams may arise in you, there may be one mental stream that says, well, I haven't had a spiritual experience, this obviously isn't working for me, I mean, I might as well go now, what's the point, I mean, all the things I should have, all the things I shouldn't have come here, I mean, I have so much to do at home to deal with.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:47 - 1:14:48)

So,

[Speaker 1] (1:15:16 - 1:26:56)

not to take your mind too seriously, and that is even an insult if there is anybody in this room completely identified still with their mind, that this statement is insulting, because that statement implies don't take yourself too seriously, what do you mean, I am serious, and it is liberating not to take your mind too seriously, and there is nothing personal in it, it's the human mind, there's no, it's not really you, it's not repersonalising it, it's the human mind, and emotions come, perhaps pain body may come, accumulated pain from the past, it's human pain, there it is, so it's not only that you don't take it seriously, you don't take it personally, especially that personally applies to the pain that arises in you, and it may arise perhaps in connection with the events that took place the last few days, which are dreadful, pain may arise, now I am not saying don't take that too seriously, let's leave that for the mind, but I am saying don't take it personally, this has been going on for thousands and thousands of years, the same violence, the same pain, allow it to be, human pain, allow it to be so completely that you feel almost gentle about it, in other words, gentleness around it, with allowing comes a gentleness into your life, non-allowing, and allowing always concerns the present moment, non-allowing is a harshness and reactivity, so the gentleness comes in through allowing, even if the emotion is harsh or very painful, so there is a space around it, a space around it, and when you don't take your mind too seriously, there is also a space around your mind activity, so this is why we are here, and it is such a, what could be greater than to step out of all that conditioning to a new level of consciousness, not new in the sense that it hasn't been there before, the ancient teachers pointed to it, one could say it's always there, it's always there, that spaciousness, but it's not there for you if you don't know it, you cannot do away with it and you cannot create it, it is the essence, it's consciousness itself, the vastness of the unconditioned consciousness, it's all pervasive, it is grace when you know it, it appears in your life as grace, when you don't know it, all the shutters in the house are closed, you sit in darkness and the house is flooded by sunlight, that would be the same, grace is there but you don't know it, so in that sense it's not there for you, very helpful thing throughout this time that you are here and beyond is to feel the aliveness in your body, what I call the inner body, to have some connectedness with the inner energy field of your body, to feel a very subtle, in a very subtle sense, there is an aliveness there in every cell of the body and that when I speak about this, it sounds as if I were encouraging you to identify with your physical body but that's not the case, it's sensing that which pervades the body but in itself is not the body, the very life, the very consciousness that appears temporarily as the body senses it as yourself and then suddenly you feel alive, every cell is alive and you can still pay attention to your surroundings, that takes your away attention from thinking, relatively little thinking is needed here and even in your reality in your life, the thinking that you need to do your work, that's fine, but most other thinking is very repetitive, it's the old mind structures.

I'm not telling you to stop thinking because that would create a further problem but we are going in that way and realize there is great intelligence beyond thought, that vast intelligence that you are. So here we are to allow that intelligence to arise, that is greater than the mind but not separate from the human mind and once you know that vast intelligence, the human mind functions beautifully when it's needed within that far greater whole, the human mind is fine then. You're not trapped in it as a form of entity in it, as a psychological form of me.

So dwelling in, inhabiting your body as you sit, speak to people, easy to get drawn into mind when you start talking, easy to identify with mental positions the moment you verbally interact with people, less likely to happen when you inhabit as you listen to the other person. Oh, in a state of open presence, listen to that viewpoint and give it space, spaciousness arises. As you sit here and listen to my voice, be there totally with every cell of the body, be here completely, dwell, rest in your energy field and then you're simply here as an alive, alert presence.

And it can be that alive and alert presence, without the baggage of past, it's not completely gone, it's still there, it may reassert itself from time to time. But to realize that you can be here as an alert presence, without the baggage of past, which means without the interference of conceptualization and labeling. And you haven't become stupid in that.

You're actually very intelligent in that state. That alertness itself, one could say, is pure intelligence, pure awareness. Thought can come out of it.

Anything can come out of that. Everything creative comes out of that. That is going beyond the conditioning that's been running most humans for so long.

So we are here to go beyond that conditioning of the mind. Beautiful, beautiful. And it's, we don't have to make it happen, it is already arising.

We will have a moment now of meditation, and we will begin on meditating. We honor the people who died those few days ago. And emotions that arise, we allow them to be.

There may be sadness. There's no need to convince yourself mentally that all is well.

[Speaker 2] (1:26:57 - 1:26:57)

No.

[Speaker 1] (1:26:58 - 2:33:54)

Whatever emotion is there, you allow it. But you allow it completely. Sadness, or anger, or a mixture, allowing it.

May they know who they truly are beyond form. May I know who I truly am beyond form. See the fact of impermanence of all forms dissolving.

Allow that also to be. There's an ancient statement which most of you know and that concerns all forms that arise. This too will pass.

And if you allow the emotions that are there, or any thoughts that are there, be aware that that allowing is a spaciousness, a stillness. And many of those who died may have seen that in the last few seconds. And that is the flowering of consciousness.

They may not have been ready on the surface. Ten minutes before, they may have been watching a computer screen. And yet suddenly it came.

And here the same death really is coming to you more gently. You can only be aware of the sacredness of life when you go beyond the forms of life. That is why death and sacredness are so strongly connected.

And the modern world knows nothing about that. Whenever a form dissolves, death, that's called death, something shines through that is not the form but it's the essence of the form. Traditionally it was impossible to awaken spiritually because death happened to you.

Psychological or close to physical death. Psychological death means you lose all the things that gave you your sense of self. Gone, gone, gone, gone.

Content was removed, the accumulated content was removed from your mind. Nothing could explain. The world doesn't make sense anymore.

Even that's gone. And you thought what this world was all about. Loss, death, loss, loss, loss.

Dreadful on the surface. And yet some of those people suddenly woke up, awakening and realized they are not the content of their minds. They are not their form, their mental form.

And it's usually simply realized as deep peace that cannot be threatened by anything. If it could speak, but usually that peace can't even say anything, it's just peace. If it could speak, it would say there is no death.

Life has no opposite. Birth has an opposite. Life has no opposite.

But usually the peace doesn't speak. And that is the deepest meaning of those lines that I quoted earlier from the summary of the Course in Miracles. Nothing real can be threatened.

Real is used in its deepest sense. The body is relatively real, but real in a deeper sense is only that which is not subject to birth and death and that's the essence of your being. And you cannot grasp that.

It fills this room. It fills your very being. But when the mind comes in and says, well, I'm still looking, because all the mind could do is look for further content, it is not in the realm of content.

Our whole being together here is nothing to do with adding content to your mind, so there's nothing here for the mind to grasp. It is subtle. So after our retreat, hopefully nobody is going to ask you, what did you get out of it?

However, if they do ask you, the correct answer is nothing. Imagine the mind starting off when they, what did you get out of it? Well, let me think.

Well, on the one hand, on the other hand, thank you, thank you. Oh yes, one other thing I forgot to mention. We're here for most of the week.

Plenty of time to go into the now. So much time, in fact, that we don't need to wait for anything while we're here. So that's the other practice while you're here, to let go of waiting, which is a mindset.

Most people are completely trapped in it, and again, it's part of the conditioned, part of the collective human conditioning to be always waiting for the next thing. So normal that most people don't know it. When you observe it in people, how they act and react and interact, they can see in people's faces often that they're not here internally.

There's an absence because they project themselves continuously forward into an imaginary future that they need to get to as soon as possible. Or an imaginary future that they need to fear might arrive. It's either one or the other.

And so there comes that expression in their faces and an entire energy emanation that is telling you, I'm not here. I'd rather be somewhere else. You know the stickers that some people have in the back of their cars that say, I'd rather be fishing or something like that.

But that's the mindset. I'd rather be somewhere else. And it's almost they are looking for something continuously.

When you're completely trapped in mind, that is the energy that comes and there's a tension that comes with that. One thing is certain. They are not at ease in the now.

And you can live your whole life like that. And that's only the face. The body would rather be in the now And so that's a collective pattern, not a personal problem, not anybody's personal problem.

So one can observe that in oneself. This psychological need for the next moment and an unease with this moment. Desire for the next moment because it's got to be more fulfilling than this one.

And that's the mindset. But it never arrives because the next moment can only arrive as this moment. Again, it's always this moment.

So it's got to be more than this isn't it, this can't be it. So there's the fear of the next moment. So the fluctuation between the fear of the next moment and yet even in the fear of the next moment, you're projecting yourself to the next moment, whether it's a minute from now or next week or next year, what might happen to you or someone close to you or the world.

There's a projection into a possible future situation that you don't want but surely it'll happen. Those dreadful things will happen to me and they're being played out, those possibilities in the mind continuously generating fear of future. And yet within that there is some strange compulsion that you want more of it, like an addiction.

Although it's a very unpleasant state to be in, it becomes a self-serving, it wants to, the state itself wants to perpetuate itself, that state of fearful anxiety, of fearful projection. And then if somebody says, stop, you don't need, no, this is important, I need to worry about this. Fear of future but wanting, still compulsively projecting oneself away into a fearful future.

And then the desire for, well, some improvement, something that I can add to the content of who I am and of course I need future for that, I need to become more of this or that. The two movements, fear and desire, both intimately connected with a mindset that lives in and through and is perpetuated by this future. So one can observe that in oneself.

The moment you observe it in yourself, you're already somewhat free of it. Oh, the mental projection, the restlessness, the unease with what is. And that is a peculiar state, normal, very normal.

It's an, since life, the whole of life is what is at this moment, the whole of life is inseparable from the suchness in your experience except the suchness of this moment. It's always what is now. And the mindset, if that is a denial or a rejection or a resistance to what is now, then that is your relationship with life is one of rejection, denial, resistance, non-openness to that beautiful thing which is not a thing that is life.

The vastness that is there, that intelligence that is there, far greater than the human mind it's there even in your very cells, it's within, it's without and yet you don't know it when you're trapped in these collective mindsets. There's a contraction. So to recognize it in oneself is a great thing.

There it is. And it's often with the recognition of this mindset operating of needing future and feeling it even in the body, that contraction, the unease which of course leads to dis-ease if you do it for a few years. With the awareness of it comes already freedom from it.

You're not completely trapped in the pattern. You see it. Again, there's the seeing of it.

And you don't take the next step after the seeing. You don't draw some kind of conclusion. You remember we talked about seeing the impermanent nature of all forms, seeing how short-lived, how fleeting the phenomenal existence is of every life form and not to jump to some conclusion, to stay with the seeing of it and here also to see patterns in oneself and stay with the seeing, not draw a conclusion that says, you see, you're not enlightened.

You're not going to make it. After 15 years of meditation you're still doing it, you see. What's the point?

You might as well give up, says the monologue in the head. You see, you're no good. You're doing it again.

You've done the workshop, whatever it is called, the retreat, and you're doing it again. It's pointless. You can't do it.

And then one conclusion after another. Or at a very early stage when you see it, and immediately you start writing a book about it. And so staying with just simply the seeing of those patterns.

With the seeing comes, yes, there comes the possibility of stepping out now. It often happens without any volition on your part. The seeing is already a stepping out, one could say, of those mind patterns.

And so if the one thing you get here, you catch here, it's more like you spend a few days here, but there's only one thing that I endeavor to transmit to you to avoid the word teaching. There's only one thing. There's not many things.

One thing that, and it's more like it's not so much that you understand that one thing mentally, it's like catching it. Oh. And if you only catch this one thing which is stepping out of being trapped in mind patterns, which are always associated with time, we talked about future, of course also past, stepping into the now, your attention, your awareness from being completely identified with mind forms, thoughts, and emotional forms your attention separates itself from identification with forms, mind forms, thought forms, and you perceive that as suddenly stepping out of time and out of mind, the two go together, into the now, that field of now that before didn't even exist for you. It's possible for you to step out of time and mind into now, and that is an awakening. You awaken out of identification with that into oh, this moment.

An alertness arises that can be compared to suddenly waking up from a dream, and you know when you wake up suddenly your eyes open and you go, oh, that was all a dream. Oh. And there's a similar qualitative difference between that state of consciousness of alert presence.

This is the thing alert presence and the state of dream-like state of being completely identified with mind patterns. And this is the reason why in the East, in India, ancient teachers speak of illusion and the unreality of the world and why they use the word awakening. It's been used for thousands of years.

Buddha means the one who is awake. Jesus speaks of staying awake. Staying awake, don't go to sleep.

He was pointing to a state of consciousness. And so the qualitative awakening out of that is like coming out of sleep. So in that sense it's true to say that whoever is completely identified with their mind lives in a kind of dream world.

That you have really and it's the conditioning, it's a dream that you're kind of born into. Remember the woman I mentioned this morning said, welcome to my nightmare. It becomes a collective dream to some extent.

Each person has their personal dream, their personal conditioning and that is part of the collective conditioning. So here it's seeing that you can step out of that. You can only do that when, so to speak, the state of presence is already arising in you.

That's why I can say to you it is possible for you to step out of that state of being immersed totally in time and mind into the vastness and the beauty and the sacredness of now. And if you can't stay for more than a few seconds it doesn't matter, but you stepped out. So I put it in those terms.

I say you are able to step out and you realize you can step out of that into now. And that may happen many times during the day. You step out of that and suddenly you realize, oh, I've lost the now.

Where is it? Here. The breath can take you into the body and you sense an aliveness which takes your attention away from mental noise.

And the alertness suddenly is there. And with that is also the alertness to sense perceptions. That before, when you were immersed in this you were almost completely unaware of.

Most people move through the world being only peripherally aware of whatever surrounds them. The beauty that is everywhere. But it's obscured by mind and mental noise.

And when you step out, oh, some of you are already experiencing those moments and you notice in that state of alert presence there's a knowing that is non-conceptual. You can sit here, feel your entire energy field, and alertness is there without a compulsion to interpret or label this moment. If you need labels, you have them.

Sometimes they are needed. Somebody may ask you what's your name or it's a label or your phone number and then you'll know it or anything else if you needed one. But the liberation that comes from not compulsively interpreting continuously which is labeling, which is judging, which is only done according to whatever the conditioning of your mind is.

That's the way in which you interpret, label and judge. And so you don't see what is, you're not at ease with what is, you're judging what is and that's the mind. And with that there is no...

All those things that make life worth living are not there when you are trapped in the labeling, judging, interpreting mind. Compassion, love, a deep aliveness, a peaceful aliveness, vibrant real life peace, to feel that you are alive, to feel the goodness of life every moment beyond what is happening at this moment, a deeper goodness, not the goodness that is a moment of happiness which comes and goes, but a deeper goodness that is the goodness that some people find the moment they die, the last few seconds before the accident happens and kills them and to the last few there's suddenly and peace and a deep knowing that despite those appearances which are telling you this is dreadful, despite the appearances on a deeper level, all is well. And that realization, you don't have to wait for some disaster to approach you and that's the beauty of true spiritual teaching and the power of spiritual teaching, it tells you you don't need to wait for death.

Death is a possibility of realization, approaching death, imminent death, death itself, but you don't need to wait for physical death because you might not catch it even then. Not everybody does. Death is really not only that you do not need a disaster unless you truly need it, you do not need more intense suffering before you can get there.

It's also some humans through intense mental emotional suffering to a point where it becomes unbearable and then suddenly something within them collapses that is comparable to physical death, but it's a psychological death. It's a collapse of the psychological structure of me that has created so much suffering for myself that it can't sustain itself anymore and so to speak auto-destructs. That's another way.

So life has all provided all these ways it gives you death and it gives you suffering, beautiful, it's provided for a realization of who you are beyond form and the most gentle of all it gives you spiritual teaching, true spiritual teaching, but that only applies to those who are ready to hear and not everybody is yet ready to hear. Those who are not ready to hear they need to be faced with death or intense suffering for realization and they get it. And then there are some who are ready to hear.

What are they ready to hear? They're ready to hear that you do not need a disaster to know who you are. You do not need more intense suffering in your life mental or emotional before you can know.

And ultimately it's saying you do not need more time before you can be free of that. That is the essence of spiritual teaching is telling you you do not need more time and everything in the conditioned human mind collectively conditioned human mind is telling you no, I need more time to find myself to be myself to arrive to make it to complete myself to complete the story of me that is going through my head every day. It's not complete so I need time.

So everything in the conditioned mind tells you I need time that is the psychological need for future more time. It says I need time because I'm not enough I need more of this I need more of that to complete myself. And that is true on the level of activities yes, everything requires time any exploration of new areas or new fields acquiring new knowledge learning new skills those things, yes, require time but we are not talking about those things we are talking about knowing yourself being yourself knowing the essence of who you are and for that then here comes the spiritual teaching which says you do not need more time to become free of the conditioned mind of thousands of years of conditioning it does not take a few more thousand years to dissolve thousands of years of conditioning to become free of time you do not need more time there is so much time accumulated inside me I think I need another five thousand years to dissolve that and not only does the spiritual teaching tell you that you don't need more time it also tells you that time is the one thing really ultimately the illusion of time on the deepest level the one thing that prevents you from realizing the fullness that is already here now the fullness of life that is in you already the completeness the fullness that already is the essence of who you are you don't there is nothing to do with time so it doesn't really matter in what way this realization arises in you ultimately one could say spiritual teachings and spiritual teachings are redundant because through suffering and facing death everybody will get it eventually through creating misery for yourself and others on the planet which looks like the workings of illusion and unconsciousness and they are and yet through creating hell on earth they'll wake up when the hell is unbearable that they have created for themselves and others so but by the grace of God the one life prior to form spiritual teachings are there for those who are ready to hear them and so you don't need more time and you have suffered enough suffering has been wonderful yes nobody would be here if they hadn't had their share of it I certainly wouldn't be here I don't know where I would be so it's worked it has worked it's taken you to this point where you are able to hear that message and recognize the truth and yet and the truth is emerging in you quite powerfully otherwise you wouldn't have made it here but there is another movement inside everyone and that is the momentum of the conditioned mind that is still there maybe for a little while now it's in the background there is something very powerful that has enabled you to be here and that enables you to remain here without running away because it is threatening to another part of you the collectively conditioned part of you it is threatening to be here and it is not pleasant to hear about your own death what you perceive to be my death it is ultimately the death of an illusion the end of identification with me my story my this, my that my problems, my this, my but occasionally in the next few days you may detect in yourself the momentum of the old coming back what am I doing here what's this all emotional pain that moves into your mind the pain body becomes active and makes you think painful thoughts or self-destructive thoughts or thoughts that condemn others around you look at them they are not spiritual I am more spiritual look they are just gossiping that's not spiritual or they say oh these people they are so spiritual they are here they know so much more than I and then comes you don't want to be here where can I run to and if I can't run physically I run away in my mind to a problematic future that I will have to face next week and a succession of things that are waiting for me next week that I have to deal with and then you play out in your mind how you are going to deal with them it's not the reality of now it's a tree because in reality life is not complex it's a mental creation the complexity of my life and all those things reality is simple because reality is this moment and whatever you are being faced with at this moment and what you are being faced with it may indeed be challenging but whenever you face this moment completely the power to deal with whatever this moment presents will also be there when you don't face it completely because you are somewhere else then the power becomes reduced to little or almost nothing and that's the beauty of it by facing what is in a state of openness embracing this moment that means the power is there available and right action arises out of that facing this moment as it is and so you can only do one thing at a time and you do it if you have 50 things that you need to deal with you look one thing will emerge and you deal with that this is essential so essential that even one Zen master once defined Zen when he was asked can you explain the essence of Zen he said doing one thing at a time that's Zen now that doesn't give the mind much room for building up things a philosophy doing one thing at a time but doing it completely being completely here with that that completeness is part of living always being completely here not half or 80% or 90% somewhere else not really wanting to be here but it's that yes that uncompromising yes to what is this moment the only thing there ever is and that gives your life a completeness and with that completeness comes great power great also yes compassion and love arise with that completeness so wherever you are you can be there completely and if it's an unpleasant place this happens to be the now you might as well be in it completely because it is it is and the truth is it's not a place that you dislike because you have given up your inner resistance no the miracle is that when you face it completely without inner contraction which is the resistance which is the no the no which is not just a mental no in the head which judges and condemns what is and projects itself forward into some better situation the no that you carry in the emotional energy field and even physical that no to what is is the physical state of contraction in your inner energy field no and most people live in that way so there's the mental no and there's the emotional no and there's even the physical no as the physical contraction and then you can experiment and say okay there's enough presence in you that you are now able to experiment and say okay I've lived with the no for 45 years 50 years I'll try something else now I'll try a yes to what is what have I got to lose and then for a day or a whole week maybe on a retreat what it feels like and how I experience life when I say yes internally to this moment and often you will not succeed because the no is deep seated the state of contraction and the mental conditioning but there's enough presence in you now to see it so you recognize the no and the contraction and by recognizing it and seeing it you're no longer trapped in it freedom is already there you're now able to step out the seeing is the stepping out oh wow, there it is again as one spiritual writer puts it you will often observe in yourself that state of no returning and he calls it you live in contraction city so while you're here you do not need to demand of yourself perfection you do not need to demand that you now at least while you're on this retreat at least while I'm here I should be managing to live completely in the now without resistance and if I'm not managing now I'm obviously no good and there's no point in carrying on no, that's not required you don't need to you don't even need to live in the state of yes for the rest of the week that's a big task how am I going to manage to live in the now for the rest of this week the beauty of it is that's not necessary all that's needed is this moment and it's here all that's needed is the openness to this just this moment not the next one there is no next moment just this to know whatever happens to be with it and if what happens is a state of contraction to know that oh, there it is the inner know there it is all right let the contraction be there and then you feel it and see what happens when you whatever arises even if it seems like an undesirable mental or emotional state that is not compatible with enlightenment even that arises and you are okay with that too that's okay that this now is okay no matter what form it takes the now is welcomed so that is perfection not to acquire an imagined state of perfection the master I need to become a master a spiritual master how am I going to get there the only difference between you and the master unless you may already be a master and just be enjoying yourself listening to all this the only difference between you and the master is that the master is completely aligned with what is not against it a state of completeness and openness to this moment whatever form it takes and the master is simply aligned with the suchness of now not opposing it thereby the master is aligned with life itself the vastness and power of life itself beyond forms in which life appears and that can move through him or her so that's the only difference it's not some imaginary ideal of perfection that you need to reach that's another big problem as if you didn't have enough already it is simply to be with what is in the state of yes at this moment the alignment with that that's the master so it's not really to do with improving what is that comes sometimes as a side effect of the state of acceptance not even improving yourself you're not really here to improve yourself that's heavy stuff and some of you may have been working at it for years and if you have then you realize that well, is that ever going to come to an end and on that level you could go on forever of improving yourself but realizing a vaster dimension in which this little being exists with all its imperfections it doesn't matter and there's within that vastness of now there exists a little story of me a few accumulated experiences some knowledge sufferings and then they are tied together in a bundle and it's called you write a name on it that you didn't even choose yourself somebody else wrote it on it and that's me and some bundles look nicer than others some bundles of me were given pitiful things dreadful things and they were put together and tied together and so that was your raw material and then other bundles were full of nice things but even those no that's not enough that's not really all those nice things in my bundle and yet the fear is still there the unease and no matter how you improve the bundle of me what you add to it not going to make that much difference and I'm not telling you not to improve yourself you have to learn new things and so on but you can't find yourself there or improving physically doing exercises that's wonderful great but again this is easier fortunately what this is about is easier than improving yourself which you can carry on with that anyway I'm not saying give it up that's not what's there a completion and if life gave you a bundle of awful things and put a name on that probably you didn't even like and you didn't like what was in it you never liked yourself East would call that bad karma well it's taken you here can't have been that bad somehow it worked my bundle get there more easily more quickly than others with a very nice bundle of content of things of me until they're faced with death I was lucky my bundle wasn't very good of content of stuff so it happened and it popped

[Speaker 2] (2:33:55 - 2:33:55)

popped

[Speaker 1] (2:34:11 - 2:57:05)

being the master not even I'm not saying pretend that you're the master you're not pretending when you're aligned with what is you're the master spiritual master maybe only for a moment but that's all there is and then you stop being a master for a while and then suddenly yes the yes is back and you will notice increasingly in situations that otherwise would have produced the opposite a very strong no when you feel the yes arriving in situations that would be judged normally as unpleasant or undesirable or even completely unacceptable situations these things happen they happen in the now so-called bad things happen there's a sticker also that says something like that this is a paraphrase of it see what the power of that lies in an uncompromising yes to what is to the now what that happens what that does is you are no longer dependent on this so-called bad thing that arises in the now be it an inner thing an emotion that doesn't feel good be it an external event but it's accepted completely because it is and then something arises so to speak words are never quite right something arises that is greater infinitely vaster than that which appears only temporarily in the moment the form, the emotion the event the person the disaster with an uncompromising yes it could be an illness that only gives you that takes time away from you so you're forced into the now one of the greatest things that could happen to you time is taken away you're forced that uncertainty that you haven't got much time nobody has got much time it's an illusion nobody in this room oh I've got plenty of time and then either an illness comes or a sudden disaster or you get older and then you get less and less time shrinks and most people take refuge in the past when that happens they live in the past remember, talk about it anything to avoid the now so if something is accepted completely and what I'm saying now is put into words let's put it this way you're suddenly aware of the now the now becomes stronger than that which happens in the now you're more aware of an underlying field and spaciousness in which whatever happens happens whether it's called good or bad you're more aware at first it's in the background you sense something strange something peaceful at first you sense a peace in the background somewhere even when something undesirable happens and you say yes there's a peace that seems to be in contradiction to what is happening then as it deepens you become you are more aware of the now as spaciousness than that which happens in it the event or the emotion and that's the essence of all you can take all the teachings of the ages spiritual teachings and if you extract the essence it is that but nobody has quite put it in that way because every age requires a new way of putting it and if you're trying to understand it mentally you touch it the worst only point so you're more aware of the now as an alive presence in which everything happens a spaciousness in which it happens how do you find the spaciousness you cannot grasp it or look for it because it's already here you find it simply by allowing allowing is how you find allowing the form that arises to be there be it an emotion or an event be it so called good or so called bad or so called wonderful or so called dreadful you allow it you are not opposing it which is people derive their identity from opposing this strengthens their little form the me the more the me can fight what is the stronger it feels in its pseudo identity it strengthens your illusory identity to be in opposition to what is the me feels stronger in it that's why people practice it so they're looking for themselves they're looking to strengthen their sense of self with what is and in a way in its mad way it works their illusion gets strengthened of me and they think they feel better in reality they feel worse but they call it I feel better now now I know who I am and the frightening thing to the little me is that when you allow the form identity the psychological form of me becomes loses its boundary it becomes more fluid being reactive looking for a stronger sense of identity that goes so when the form that appears is allowed to be whatever form that form takes that takes you beyond form that takes you into the spaciousness and more than that it makes you realize that the essence of who you are is not any form that arises it is not this physical form it is not the psychological form of me and that is wonderful freedom that is suddenly there and that can come to you even if you were in prison it could come from having to live in a reactive relationship to forms it doesn't mean that you no longer deal with things it is the opposite you respond beautifully now when you don't react anymore when response is needed so this is strange it is very strange to talk about something like this because every word is something beyond and you can practice here in these beautiful surroundings you walk across the lawn you walk on the grass under the trees a little piece of paradise and you watch there is out there there is an essence that you cannot grasp there are beautiful forms, yes but there is a greater sense in which these forms are embedded in which these forms arise and you can sense that as an underlying field of stillness so there is not much that you need to remember just remember this you are not here to achieve a particular state you are not here to achieve anything because if you think you are here to achieve a state to reach a state it takes you back into time and future and effort and struggling and frustration you are simply here to allow, to learn to be aligned with now does that take time asks one mind in this room yes and no on the outer realm of course there is time we meet here at a particular time we spend a period of time here but it all points to a deeper dimension of the timeless there are other forms in which the very same teaching appears there tend to be older forms you can, if you look into ancient teachings you may find the same message but you have to extricate the message from the cultural accumulations around the teaching and the foreign languages and the strange words this is the same arising here in a way that is I am not dismissing the ancient teachings they are beautiful and if you are able to extricate the essence they still work for you and this is the same teaching but perhaps with an added empowerment because well this is good news and bad news at the same time I was going to say and I am saying fortunately we are running out of time when the ancient teachings arose they still had more time humanity could afford to be unconscious and insane for a few more thousand years now perhaps we have another hundred years during which we could afford to be insane and then that would be it the planet couldn't take anymore it would have created so much havoc they would have self-destructed through violence could we for a moment do we have any source of noise that for a moment we could turn off and we can simply enjoy the field of stillness ultimately stillness is within but the outer stillness can be a help a little bit of noise in this age of machinery paying attention to stillness underneath any noise that there may be there is a field of stillness usually if you are the mind you are only aware of that which arises the noises you would pay attention to that you might be interested in that usually humans would be unaware of the silence the stillness in which the noises exist out of which the noise comes into which the noise returns the field the underlying field of stillness while you are here and you walk out in nature there is a stillness all around of course there are also a few noises but I recommend this practice to you pay more attention to the field of stillness than to any noise you hear the noises are there anyway they are beautiful in nature at night the many many noises that many little beings that come to life at night make a noise there is an underlying field one could say it's the canvas on which in this case the noises are painted is the field of stillness so you pay attention to that there are certain kinds of music also where the that point like the Japanese flute we may have listened to it this morning we may listen to some more here they the sounds point beyond themselves to the silence out of which they come that is the deepest spiritual music where the sounds only point beyond themselves to the silence and so they enable the listener to enter the state of this is the beauty when you listen to silence you pay attention to silence the mind becomes still you cannot otherwise pay attention to silence the mind can only pay attention to that which arises the form, the noise that comes out of the silence the moment you pay attention to silence you've gone beyond thought because it's not with thinking that you can pay attention to silence because there's nothing to think about there's no form in it this is another little device that can take you to that state of consciousness that is beyond form the spaciousness and if you when you walk in nature it will deepen your way of being there when you pay attention to that field of stillness and you will have a great sense of sacredness that is all-pervasive throughout nature and that is beyond the forms that are beautiful too but there is a hole within which w-h-o-l a hole in which all these forms appear a field and that is the essence of sacredness so the noises that you hear are the equivalent of your mental noise of thoughts appearing and the silence out of which the noises come are the equivalent of the inner state of stillness which is pure awareness prior to thought arising so these are little I call them portals sometimes the most powerful portal is perhaps allowing this moment to be that also takes you beyond form another portal is listening to silence especially out in nature that also takes you beyond form now the silence you may not have it all the time in this civilization it's hard sometimes to even find a place where there is silence but you'll be amazed even in a relatively noisy place you may still be able to become aware of an underlying field of stillness even in the midst of noise because ultimately it's within and in the end surrounded by heavy traffic

[Speaker 2] (2:57:06 - 2:57:07)

and

[Speaker 1] (2:57:08 - 3:04:49)

you're so okay with it this moment that there's great stillness in you that stillness comes with a yes to what is the compulsive noise persists with a no to what is remember that thoughts running through your head don't matter that much as you sit here there's a stillness underneath the thoughts and in between from the point of view of thought that is nothing an allowed

[Speaker 2] (3:04:52 - 3:04:53)

stillness

[Speaker 1] (3:04:53 - 3:52:30)

it's in everyone even those who are completely trapped in mental noise one could say so to speak underneath that there is a pool of stillness but they don't know it and that stillness as it arises when the screen of thought loses its density then from underneath thought stillness arises and the arising stillness is what I call the new state of consciousness and as you know all words are limited and the reason why we are here is to allow that to happen and in many of you even before you came here that arising was already happening so here there is an intensification of it or a deepening and as I pointed out yesterday you are not really here to add anything to your mind that's fine those you can go to lectures at universities and add things to your mind that's fine but the reason why we are here is not that pointers the words are not there as added baggage to your mind but they are simply pointers beyond that helpful pointers so we are here for the arising of presence one could say an evolutionary transformation because so far most humans have lived and are living in a very different state the normal state of consciousness which is continuous thought streams and identification with those continuous thought streams as a self a me so everyone carries a heavy burden of personal selfhood if that's a word that exists I think it does everyone carries the burden of a personalized me contracted and personalized sense of self and I say burden because there is a heaviness to it and as you go through life you feel this heaviness and people perceive it as the heaviness of living another day and more stuff happening and another problem what's the point of it all the last straw that's the last thing that I need it so there's the burden and then there comes the last straw and it probably won't be the last and so there's the this heaviness of me I have to carry me around all the time and if that weren't enough there's the living past in me both personal and racial meaning belonging to the whole human race and the pain of that because humans have generated so much pain through living in such a way reducing their lives to a little personalized sense of self which sometimes tries to make itself bigger by identifying with a collective a tribe or religion or nation but it's the same heaviness identifying with a collective for a moment looks like liberation from a little personal me but it's the illusion of liberation in fact you've gone into something even worse even heavier so they've then humans carry pain inside from the human past emotional residue of emotional pain of suffering and they don't see it as that through unconscious identification with it it becomes part of one's personalized sense of self so it was heavy enough already and now it gets even heavier because the whole heaviness of human existence in a state of consciousness that could be described as ignorant not ignorant in the sense of not knowing enough but ignorant of who you truly are so you carry the burden really of the whole of humanity with its heavy past and believe it to be yourself and then you interpret whatever is happening around you through that and you can imagine and perhaps you know from your experience I know it from my past experience how distorted everything gets when you interpret the world around you through the heaviness of a painful often more often than not painful personalized sense of self of me and then you see all those situations out there and all those people out there that seem to have been put there by some demon to make my life painful that's the interpretation and that's what it looks like that's what the world looks like from that point of view ultimately illusory viewpoint perspective and then you begin to fight against situations and people because you perceive them as your enemies and then you create the world that when you switch on the TV that's what you see when millions live in that way not that each one manifests that condition in the same degree of intensity no the degrees of intensity the degrees of ignorance that manifests through you differs nobody in this room probably would perpetrate acts of terrorism or carry a bomb around on your body and go to a public place and then detonate it and eliminate yourself and another hundred people that requires extreme degree of ignorance but it is the same mechanism at work the same misinterpretation the same fighting the external enemy to get rid of my pain so that's the human condition and again the human condition is not the personal problem of yours it is the human condition now that personal sense of selfhood sometimes dissolves in the face of extreme danger we talked a little bit about it yesterday it can dissolve in the face of imminent death sometimes it can also dissolve in the face when there is intense suffering which of course is generated by that itself so the redemptive factor about the whole sad story is that the very suffering that it generates for yourself and others ultimately wakes you up too because you can't stand it anymore so there is a self-destruct mechanism built into the illusion by the grace of God but that could take time unless you run out of time and so the alternative to needing more time for that to happen to become free and the alternative to needing more suffering needing more pain needing more drama until finally you can't stand it anymore the alternative to that is sitting here and in a much more dental way allow that personalized sense of self to dissolve because it wants to dissolve or rather something is emerging from underneath that wants to it's pushing through so when I said it wants to dissolve that's not quite true it doesn't want to dissolve it does and it doesn't it wants to continue it has a momentum but ultimately it also wants its own destruction yes the two are true and you can see it in excessive cases of extreme manifestations of that unconscious state that it seeks its own destruction if it can destroy others in the same process so much the better we can see it reflected in the events of past week you can see it in certain very in many people's lives that are very unhappy a self destructive urge in many almost addictive I certainly had it and it worked it self destructed itself now you may have this is a gentle way of arising of presence you may already have gone through more violent forms of transformation of suffering you've had your suffering and perhaps that's cracked you open there was this screen of mind and of thought streams and the density of pain and and identification with all that of me a dense heavy personal selfhood and then perhaps for quite a few of you something happened either to you or some in your surroundings to someone very close and it cracked open that dense density and whether it was some great loss or an illness or an accident or suffering or death of someone very close to you it the crack appeared and at first of course a crack like that is very painful nobody likes to be hit on the head and then comes you begin to realize the enormous grace that is suddenly in your life and that came into your life because of that and then so much presence begins to emerge through that crack one could say the sense of personal selfhood loses its density and something can shine through ah and with that comes a depth because you have no depth you have depth but you don't know it when there is only that screen when the crack appears suddenly there is a depth to you somebody that I watched on television the other day talking about the disaster of last week actually said a writer she said there was she perceived through the suffering there was a deepening a shift from type A personality and a deepening in the collective psyche of this country and that may be the case because all these things apply whether on the personal or collective level with that comes a depth and there comes a humbleness a humility no longer a me that needs to triumph or control and if it cannot triumph it can at least be triumphant in its misery because it's greater than yours mine is greater just listen to it and then the point is reached and many of you most of you perhaps all of you have reached the point where there's already presence arising not continuously it can get covered up again occasionally yes a personal sense of self can return even during our retreat the complaining heavy me is back it may happen to you it can come upon you suddenly as you sit here and you may have to run out of the room now don't let this stop you from going to the bathroom if you need to what are they going to think of me so it can suddenly come back the pain body can react in some people the pain body would react particularly here because and again we haven't even addressed the pain body directly yet we will it may it runs your mind then that's you may have to run out of the room or you may get up and shout no no this is not right or it may shut off you're not hearing anymore it can do strange things and so since pain body except in very rare cases cannot be dissolved all at once but it can be seen now for what it is so when it arises all you it's necessary for you to recognize it so that it doesn't become of part of a heavy personalized me that is reactive and then interprets everything through that look at all these people what are they doing here and immediately interpreting through the pain and distorting through that and you're distorting of course your own life through that your own the view of me who I am and when you see it so there's enough presence for you now to see it when it comes you can't stop the pain body if it wants to come up it'll come up it's old pain you carry it inside but if you see it for what it is it's no longer that much of a problem it's a bit like a physical pain which in itself is not a problem it's painful yes but not a problem not the heaviness of problem unpleasant perhaps but if you don't label it even it just is it is a turbulence or it may be a heaviness or it may be a painful contraction whatever the predominant energy field of your pain body is there it is and it passes especially if you don't feed it with thinking along the same lines as the pain body same kind of thoughts to reflect the energy field of the pain body there's enough presence for you to watch it instead of allowing it to run your mind and then it becomes a me that's the fundamental difference when that shift has happened pain body is fine and it begins to dissolve it is no longer a part of the personalized sense of self then and that removes an enormous chunk from the heaviness of a personalized sense of me or self certain mind structures of course are still at work identification with mental images of me problems of self esteem and all kinds of things who am who I am an opinion about yourself or many conflicting opinions about yourself good enough not good enough who knows and and the same mindset creating opinion for others who they are not as good as me better than me a possible threat to my sense of self I need to defend or maybe I can incorporate them into me my sense of self I could be bigger with that and then I find a trophy wife trophy wife is an expression that I read it's relatively recent for somebody who chooses a wife because he's already wealthy and the last trophy that he needs is a good looking wife to enhance his sense of self so self esteem of course part of the sense of self now I've already removed we said that's the pain body is already when you are aware of pain body as it arises a lot of the heaviness is already gone what remains still is the mind structures and again you need to see those when they operate recognize them for what they are if you have problems with self esteem it's opinions viewpoints images in your mind of me of who I am me as not good enough not as good as better than and that varies some of the eastern teachers when they come to the west the western mind is very developed even the east has ego too but the western mind is even more developed and I read recently the Dalai Lama when he first came started doing some teachings in the west when he was quite many years ago he was with a small group of western students and somebody mentioned self esteem problem with self esteem and he said what's that? and it was explained to him and then he went from one person to another and asked them lack of self esteem was explained to him and then he went from one person to the next and asked them do you have that? lack of self esteem and most people said yes I have that oh and probably not a single sutra of the ancient scriptures mentions that because when those scriptures were written the mind wasn't as advanced yet as it is now so to see that and here this is quite a helpful environment for you to see whatever arises either emotional particularly the heaviness of the emotions that are the past accumulated pain that lives in you as an energy frequency and to watch the mind thought stream hmm as it said it comes and goes and the more that the the washer arises the more the sense of who you are sense of identity sense of I am shifts from being this mental construct mental emotional construct which after all are only formations energy formations so your sense of who you are shifts from being believing you are those energy formations forms to being the observing presence that which sees all that another word that I used yesterday I always give you different pointers if one doesn't work for you the other one might you are the spaciousness in which the emotional and mental constructs and conditionings operate that's the liberation you cannot perfect or infinitely improve the construct the emotional mental construct if you improve it at one end then you lose something at the other there are always polarities if you become good at one thing then you lose your ability somewhere else so there it always exists it has the limitations of form and when you see your own limitations of form then that's fine the seeing there is something unlimited in the spaciousness that sees all that and allows it to be that is where you are unlimited that is the realm of that is the spiritual dimension if it has any meaning that's what it is that is your true nature as it's sometimes called beyond form and it arises simply through the arising of the witnessing presence that allows whatever is there at this moment to be and then you may become aware sometimes of that power that lies in that spaciousness that witnessing presence and as it arises more in you through you that becomes greater vaster it always was but now you realize that is vaster than anything that happens in it so it could happen to the most unworthy in quotation marks judged as the most unworthy and pitiful and seemingly deluded human being who had a life of sordid events it could and has happened can happen it does not happen through perfecting the me that would be nice everything would be neat and tidy and we could say we can now embark on a course like a university course where you have 101 and then you start from there the mind likes that because it's neat and tidy and you can finally graduate up to enlightenment but the eruption of that can come at any time and it comes often to people with very unfavorable conditioning often a very heavy personal sense of self or so heavy that it has inflicted pain on many other human beings can happen and then of course that pain is self inflicted and suddenly it goes so you cannot predict to whom this will happen and not even for many people it might not even be perceived as an event a particular event it could be a gradual dissolving but as it does and you no longer the shift now happens and you are the witnessing presence and you realize that's who you are and you feel that and not all the stuff that's been going on in your mental emotional field not that you deny it no you see it but you're not looking for yourself there anymore emotional conditioned energy streams mistaking that density for who you are or for who that other person is so you become a blessing because when you have seen the reality in yourself and the illusory nature of identification with that mental emotional condition conditioning as the me entity then you're no longer imposing perpetuating and fueling that illusory sense of self in others by reacting to it because the illusory sense of self energized by the pain body they continuously strengthen and feed each other through reacting to people around you that's how it the whole thing keeps going and of course then you will see the density often still operating in others and you realize beyond words that is not who they are you were in the trapped in the same illusion and density means they are identified with mental emotional energy formations that is a heavy me and then you would say oh react to it that goes because only the me when you're still trapped in it strengthens itself through reacting to others so you can look through that density which perhaps that in the other person because you've gone beyond it in yourself and as you witnessed and as you continue to witness the same in you you witness it and allow it to be in the other person and by staying present with that being the observing witness and allowing it to be you no longer recreate the illusion of an identity making an identity for that person out of the unconsciousness and in that sense the Course in Miracles puts it quite beautifully there's a line which says whoever you meet becomes a witness for either Christ or the ego whatever you perceive in him or her Christ means that your true nature one way of putting it you could say Buddha nature so whoever you meet whoever you come into contact with any human being in your life will witness will witness means confirm to you the truth that person can confirm to you that your illusion is true the witness for the ego if you perceive that is the ego is the egoic me entity the density so whoever you meet can witness say yes I was actually right that's who he or she is so that person becomes witness for the ego and continuously through this misinterpretation the truth of the illusion the truth in quotation marks the truth of this illusion will continuously be reflected back to you and confirmed and the truth the truth the absolute truth also everyone you meet can also become the witness of Christ which is Buddha nature your true nature when you do not mistake the density for who that being is and that becomes part of your spiritual practice is sitting here other part of your spiritual practice is going out into nature we may talk about it in more detail also and so allowing presence to arise and then comes the part presence being there when you are interacting with others that only works if a certain level of presence has already reached been reached in you otherwise the moment you start interacting with others you will get drawn back into identification with mental emotional sense of self presence would not unless a certain level of presence has been reached which presence cannot sustain itself when it is around heavy mental emotional energy fields called people so people are really challenging wouldn't it be easy if it weren't for other people just nature and there are some people also spiritual people so to speak who begin who avoid interaction because it always sooner or later leads to problems I've had enough but that's the very ground where you are being tested and you can find out for yourself your degree of presence not in any judgmental way but it becomes so clear when you are with people and when you are being challenged and of course most challenges will come through other people that's how it happens you may get challenged occasionally through a natural disaster but that's relatively rare you may live next to a volcano and get challenged by an eruption but it's rare so most challenges come through other people and then what comes in how do you meet the challenges of mental emotional entities coming at you and wanting something from you as they all do or fearing you and there by misinterpreting you completely so how do you meet the challenge of other people the challenge coming at you perhaps heavy pain bodies coming at you like a steam train or very heavy minds coming at you extremely problematic minds and people identified who have their sense of self in very heavy mind streams after I saw the film called Titanic there was a scene where they show in the bowels of the ship the steam engines at work and there are enormous engines that's before it goes down of course and they're and occasionally when I meet people who are very identified with minds the engines of the Titanic and you know what happened to that but quite impressive too so they are coming at you and then what can happen is I you meet it through presence and spaciousness of presence the alertness of presence the openness of presence and it comes there or you meet it through the reaction of the little me

[Speaker 2] (3:52:30 - 3:52:32)

it

[Speaker 1] (3:52:33 - 3:53:44)

re it comes it reacts and immediately you're drawn to the same frequency as that and that entity that's coming at you wants that it's not even an entity it's an energy field that's coming at you wants you to contribute to its own vibrational frequency so it'll do it's all unconscious of course it's not the person coming at you that doesn't say I want to see how much pain I can get back from that person they believe that they are right and you are wrong or whatever they believe or that you did something to them and so on but there it is so you can meet it presence openness which is non-reaction and that requires considerable degree of presence or you fall back into a little reactive me and you shout something back me I did that you did that to me I didn't do that to

[Speaker 2] (3:53:44 - 3:53:45)

you

[Speaker 1] (3:53:54 - 4:37:23)

that's only the beginning so even when that comes at you not mistake it for who that is that is not the reality of that person they may also come to you a suffering entity needing to tell you the story of their suffering perhaps they're coming for help how do you meet that how do you help increasingly people would be coming to you for help because presence is arising in you and many people underneath their conditioning are ready for it so they may feel drawn to you because they see something in you but they're still immersed in their story and they're telling you their story and it may be a very complicated story very complex how could I what can I possibly say to that person the problem seems so complex and again are you trying to work something out to help or simply be there in that field of spacious presence that is so much more intelligent than the little mind and just hold the field of spacious that spaciousness that presence in which it seems that you don't know anything stay with the not knowing and there's the alertness of that state and then see what comes nothing may come it may be enough or a shift may happen in the other person because you're not giving reality to what ultimately is illusory constructs you're not giving that reality either through reaction or through getting drawn into the story completely yes you truly are in a bad way yes you truly have dreadful problems on the surface they look true it's looking beyond that before your presence can be sustained in human interaction go out into nature easier and even out in nature you have a choice now you can meet the tree you can perceive the tree through mental noise in which case you hardly really perceive it because immediately there is the mental concepts or you can perceive the tree through stillness or presence that is much easier than a human being to start with because the tree exists in stillness itself it grew it's growing in stillness it's even if you carefully if you stay with the tree or a flower see how still it is but it's alive it has its own intelligence considerable intelligence that beauty only an aspect of the one intelligence of course manifesting as this form but it's so still it's even surrounded by stillness it has no problems that's why it's easier to be with a tree initially than to be with a human being it teaches you the state of no mind no thought because it lives in that state anything natural lives in the state of natural original connectedness with the one everything in nature lives in that state of grace still that humans have moved out of because they've gone out from the one the source into fragmentation and multiplicity more and more and that's the human mind and the complexity of the human world lost touch with the original oneness innocence grace beauty it's still there but they were not there and so everything in nature can teach you the state of grace if you can be with it truly now you are not with it when you perceive the tree through mental noise that says something about it or labels it in one way or another has thoughts around it you're relating to your thoughts not the tree so it teaches that state of no mind but for you the state of no mind when you re-enter it after losing it for so many thousands of years you do not return to that level of pre-mind so to speak that the tree lives in the state of original grace you return to it you it is a state of rising above thought and all language has limitations so I'm just just a pointer humans are rising now above thought into the state of no mind which has certain essential similarities with the state of original connectedness that natural things and animals still live in and yet there is an added depth and an added knowing to it when humans return to that state after having moved through the ignorance of mental being identified with mind totally it was a necessary stage it seems in human development this egoic stage of growth it's coming to an end and it's critical because it cannot survive in this form that state of consciousness the egoic state of consciousness cannot survive now the planet cannot survive with that so we return and yet it's more than a return in the state of having gone beyond thought thought can still operate when needed it's not that you forget everything thought still operates and operates beautifully but no longer a self seeking thought thought becomes free of a sense of self your sense of self is far vaster it is the stillness around thought and thought only is a small aspect that operates in there when it's needed and thought can be very powerful and creative when you need to create something but not as a separate me that needs something creating because you are part of the totality and the totality wants to create something through you and then thought may be extremely powerful when applied and you'd want to create something not because the little me needs it for its satisfaction but because the totality moves through you and it is then when humans become will become able to manifest to use a new age expression to manifest from within in ways that would now seem miraculous because now if they were able to do that now they would create even greater havoc than they are doing already. Imagine little egos manifesting what they want. If people to some extent they are manifesting of course the external world but manifesting in a more direct way so if you needed something it will immediately be there would be dreadful but when humans become free of the illusory sense of self and then power moves in also to manifest but not as a separate me that needs something as part of the whole the totality the one so in that sense thought the mind can be a powerful way of manifesting something but it won't be powerful until it becomes free of selfhood free of the illusory sense of self in there and so then also it loses its problematic quality the mind is no longer heavily problematic so that happens I rarely talk about those things because they happen naturally by themselves usually all I address is what is needed pointers that are needed to become free of that the rest happens so no longer we we are moving beyond being thought based mind based entities beyond and so in everything in nature can remind you of the state of connectedness but when you encounter that state it is not it is the same and yet not the same as the state of grace in which nature exists it is deeper there is a deep knowing to it but use anything in nature and be with it anything can be a teacher if you just stay with it for a while it could be a flower a little plant a tree it could be a river just be with it for a while and watch it and become aware of not only it but also of the observing presence so nature is the teacher of stillness and that is your opportunity here surrounded by beautiful nature I would advise that even if you have come here with a friend or partner that occasionally you take time to be alone with nature maybe choose one tree choose one flower one plant be with it for a while stand there or sit there and sense the stillness that is there and then all labels go a tree is far more than a tree every label reduces it immediately as if you knew what is there every mental label gives you the illusion of knowledge you don't know what that is how could you know it's a mystery it is a beautiful being the surface it looks like a tree perceived through the senses but it is a mystery everything is a mystery it's just sounds coming out of your mouth you may have heard the word self realization another pointer and that can easily be mistaken by the mind for knowing a great deal about yourself and you might think that after 25 years of psychoanalysis when you have examined everything you can possibly examine about yourself that would finally take you to self realization that accumulated knowledge of all what that make up the inner all the conditioning the content of your mind but really I have nothing against it on its own level it's fine you become acquainted with the content of your mind and self realization doesn't mean that you know a great deal about yourself the closest you can get to it through words is to say that you don't know anything anymore about yourself from the point of view of mind of course you still have some knowledge when it's needed but really there's a space of not knowing it looks like ignorance almost yes from the point of view of the mind who are you I don't know and that's not a comfortable state for the mind I don't know who I am anymore I need to figure something out there's some a few I need to have a few thoughts in my head a few images that tell me who I am surely I need that and then the amazing thing is when you become comfortable with not knowing and there is some knowing in there but it's not nothing to do with bits of knowledge there's a deep knowingness one could say you're simply a field of aware presence if there's anything that you needed to know truly at this moment it would come out of that if there was anything that you truly needed to do at this moment or respond to at this moment it would come out of that unprepared unpremeditated it's there it's one could say the totality acting through you and it's just right and then you're back in not knowing because nothing needs to be known and then if you can be with another human being in that way you become a great teacher the great teachers and quite a few of you are destined also to teach but I'm not please no new identity no I'm considering a career change I'll try a spiritual teacher but quite a few of you are destined otherwise you're otherwise you wouldn't be here to become teachers either in a more formal way or simply because you can't help it it just happens through you but only because you no longer have an image of you as a spiritual teacher and you don't feel that you know when you are with someone as long as you feel that I know the answers just come to me and I'll tell you that spiritual teacher doesn't know the spiritual teacher operates from the spaciousness of not knowing from stillness alert alive stillness that is the teacher presence is the teacher no human entity is the teacher but the your true nature is that so in that sense you are the teacher but there is no personal identity that could claim to be a teacher the moment you claim to be a teacher the spaciousness and the openness of presence is lost and perhaps you can then teach from accumulated knowledge but it's no longer truly true and powerful spiritual teaching it loses the essence so the sooner you become comfortable with that state that from the point of view of mind looks like not knowing anymore the more effective the more powerful you will become as a spiritual teacher the strange thing just a little comment every time I walk in here or anywhere I come to talk there's always this strange feeling I have nothing to say what the first when I started doing this kind of teaching a few times the mind came because there's still of course there's a mind but it's not it doesn't have a lot of power it's just occasionally comes in with a thought what am I going to say I've said it all and then it's fine not to know what to say it's actually quite beautiful which would be the greatest nightmare for the mind is to sit somewhere on a stage and quite a few people have had this nightmare I've forgotten my lines what am I supposed to say so you begin by being comfortable with not knowing in front of a tree or you look at the stars at night amazing the vastness of it all what could you possibly figure out in your mind about it what thought could possibly be in your mind that could be really meaningful in the face of that vastness the mind has to stop that was my earliest meditation I realized it later when I was a child I would often go out at night and look in awe at the Milky Way and the billions of suns because almost every star is a sun and the Milky Way which is just this luminosity across the sky and it's billions of suns and the vastness of space that's the greatest awe is the vastness of the spaciousness around it the distances the space and I would simply look many years later I realized oh that's meditation the mind stopped later on my mind wouldn't stop anymore it became more and more noisy until finally it gave up but so again here not knowing become comfortable with that it is not the state of not knowing that you enter when you drink some alcohol or take certain drugs because if you drink a scotch or something like that for a moment it can feel better because the mind can sometimes become less noisy less obsessive oh you become a little bit free of that heavy self after the second stiff drink and then but you're not moving beyond thought you're moving below thought you're beginning to move towards the plant realm which is beautiful for plants and so you drink a bit more a little bit more and finally it goes and you've lost consciousness totally so that it takes you but for a moment it feels good because it also takes you out of the mental me it can also activate as you move towards unconsciousness it can activate in some people they feel the pain body too they get violent after a few drinks and then they become unconscious so not knowing not in it's not that's not the not knowing that we talk about there is an alertness to that not knowing and you not know with your whole body there's an alertness throughout your being and there's even an alertness it seems after a while around you and that alertness is still but alive and that is pure intelligence pure awareness pure consciousness before it becomes a thought before it becomes something the ground I could ring this bell and the sound of this bell is perceived in stillness after the sound subsides there's stillness relative stillness not total but it doesn't matter ultimate stillness is within it is simply cessation of mental noise then a perception happens a form arises in this case it's a sound and then the form dies as every form dies sooner or later and what remains then is the pure field of awareness then another sound arises in the field of by voice and goes there's the undercurrent of awareness in which it happens that remains always unconditioned still pure consciousness pure just that so in any phenomenon that arises instead of being totally drawn into the arising phenomenon realize that in which it arises the spacious aware presence so there is that is the dimension that means then you know the world but you also know God the one continuously connected with that not connected you are that that is your true nature then that was put beautifully in one of the ancient Upanishads the ancient scriptures of India some of which were written a thousand years and longer ago 2000 years and it talks about the nature of God Brahman what is that what is Brahman what is God and it defines that like this it says not that which the eye sees but that whereby the eye can see know that alone to be Brahman the eternal and not what people hear adore not that which the ear hears but that whereby the ear can hear know that alone to be Brahman the eternal and not what people hear adore not that which the mind thinks but that whereby the mind can think know that alone to be Brahman the eternal and not what people hear adore so there is the truth the closest that words could ever get to the truth is that and yet the truth is not in the words they point to it not that which you see that which makes seeing possible the field of aware presence not that which you hear that which makes the perception possible the field of aware presence not that which you think that out of which all thought comes the one intelligence the one awareness and knowing it not in a dualistic sense but knowing it as yourself your essence some people who realize that make them of declaring joyfully I am God but they were misunderstood and killed in many cases it's better not to say it thank you that Japanese flute that we just listened to ideally should be listened to in complete silence because that kind of music is not about the sounds it's about knowing the silence it's about the gaps between the sounds the underlying field out of which the sounds come into which each sound returns and when you pay attention to that one could almost say you are aware of something beyond and deeper that is actually not separate from the beauty of these forms that you see life forms not separate from it but deeper an underlying unity a field I'm using words for something that one cannot describe of course so just little sign posts and when you pay attention to that one entry point is to say that you listen to the silence now strictly speaking you can't really listen to silence because there's nothing there to listen to so what that really means is there is a state of attention that arises attention not tension a state of attention because that is the moment you pay attention to the absence of sound the nothingness either in between two sounds or the field that is there even while the sound is there there's the underlying field one could say the canvas on which the music is painted or the canvas on which all the sense perceptions are painted and the same when you watch when you see a picture you're rarely aware of the canvas you're only aware of what's on it so we can shift awareness to the underlying field so when we go into nature we say be aware of a field of stillness that's all despite the sounds here and there there's a field of stillness all around but it's an alive stillness it's not a kind of dead stillness you would get in a sound studio there's an alive stillness all around and that's the background to all of which you see and that is the dimension when you sense that one could also that is the totality in which everything appears a larger wholeness and when you sense that pay attention to that automatically thought activity subsides because all thought is to do with form and content thought itself is a mental noise and so usually you're drawn into identification with the thoughts sense perceptions thoughts and so here the moment you tune into that level you cannot think and be aware of that underlying dimension of silence you cannot think and listen to silence this is why it becomes a portal for you to simply

[Speaker 2] (4:37:24 - 4:37:26)

as if

[Speaker 1] (4:37:26 - 4:37:57)

you were listening to silence then there is an attention there that is not thinking just an alertness and what is that awareness prior to thought the awareness the field that is there before thought and after thought

[Speaker 2] (4:37:58 - 4:37:59)

there's

[Speaker 1] (4:37:59 - 5:03:55)

that thoughtless awareness beautiful it's still but very conscious and you could even while you listen to these words they are the words and there's the gaps between the words and you may come to a point as somebody said to me at the last retreat after two or three days he or she I don't remember said I'm beginning to enjoy those times when you sit there and don't speak almost more than when you speak and that when that happens to you it's working I'm not needed anymore that means it's working so here now there isn't going to complete silence here because we have various devices machines living in this civilization that's how it is we have all kinds of machines that make little noises projector camera fans whatever this that's how it is and yet you can still pay attention to the gaps between the words that arise naturally and what is there when there's gaps between words and you're aware of the gaps there's inner stillness you're aware of the absence of the words the gaps and there's a stillness so that's the state of no mind thoughtless awareness or presence and that also means I call it presence because you're completely in the now in that state whenever thought occurs thought is always connected with past or future even if you're thinking about something that's happening now your thoughts about it are words which come from the past or are interpretations which are to do with the conditioning of your mind but most of the time you're not even thinking about what's happening now most thought is concerned with past or future never fully alive to this moment never fully or very rarely that is the normal state very rarely fully present with your attention in this aliveness this fullness that is fullness and emptiness at the same time the fullness of life that is now because the moment the mind is waiting for a better moment than this one where the mind created entity the me is going to fulfill itself where the mind created entity the me is going to add more to itself and it's trying to get there and while I don't speak here see if you can so to speak dwell in that state of simple awareness and you may find that your entire body is permeated by a sense of aliveness in that state you are actually inhabiting your body with your attention your attention is not only out there it's also within it's a sense of presence which is everywhere and you are that see if you can just dwell in that and hold it without effort you may find as you first as you hold it a particular part of your body you may feel that more strongly than any other part of the body the aliveness it could be the simple thing of your hands an aliveness within very subtle at first and to anybody who cannot feel it and you can do this whenever you tell people about the importance of inhabiting the body people who may not be ready to listen to anything else but who are tortured by their minds as most people are then you ask them close your eyes hold your right or left hand like this is there any way in which you can find out without looking and without moving your hand whether your right hand is still there that's a silly question but it works is there any way you can find out whether your right hand is still there you're not looking not moving it not touching anything and so what happens when that question is asked your attention moves into the hand and suddenly you feel an aliveness there that means you've entered the body with your attention that same aliveness you can then once you know what that means because there are people who don't know what I'm talking about when I say sense the inner body perhaps they have lived for years and years only in the head completely identified with thought once you can feel the hand that can remain becomes an anchor so that your mind is not always it loses some power the power to draw your attention in continuously with every little thought it absorbs it almost absorbs your entire consciousness and all your consciousness becomes thought everything is immediately transformed into form unaware of the formless the dimension of the unmanifested or the formless so as you sit here you can sense a generalized feeling of aliveness if you can feel your hand you can also feel the aliveness in your feet and legs and then all over the body subtle but it's there so you rest in that when I talk about it it still sounds as if there were duality that you are observing those feelings but after a while you realize that's only because of language it's actually part of the sense of presence is it's your presence the sense of presence is all over it's an entire body phenomenon so that you sink into that feeling you become one with it you are it there's such vast intelligence in the body DNA every cell has its own is its own manifestation of intelligence far greater than the mind the thinking mind you cannot control the functions of your body with your thinking mind hundreds thousands of things simultaneously would have to be coordinated every second it's impossible how do you circulate your blood how do you digest your food how do you whatever these organs perform keep the body at always the same temperature how do you make the cells reproduce themselves continuously how do you oh so much I can't keep up you would have to use the most powerful computers and they would break down even keeping the body alive for two seconds and that's the human body it's an expression in form of vast intelligence of course it's only a form it's short lived and the reality of who you are goes far beyond that manifestation of it what you see and feel externally is the manifestation an appearance in form that comes and goes it's like a smoke almost or a soap bubble or whatever anything any analogy metaphor whatever whatever work is short lived existence and then dissolves like that's how the body is it doesn't live for that long I'm always amazed when I look at old films that show people in a big city like say in the twenties they were running around the streets and they're all pursuing such important aims they're all almost dead now and they've been replaced by other people running around the streets in Europe you can get even more of a sense of that because the cities are very old almost every building is old and so there are generations and generations and generations that inhabit the same buildings and they come and then they melt away and then another generation inhabits these streets and buildings and runs around and then it's gone and every little life thought this is my it's so important what I'm doing yes it's relatively important but not absolutely important it's relatively important whether you succeed or fail in the eyes of the world it's relatively important whether you're healthy or not healthy it's relatively important whether you're rich or poor it makes some difference in your life relatively important whether you're educated or uneducated it's all the level of your form identity yes it matters but it doesn't matter that there's something that matters more than any of those things and that is knowing who you are beyond that short lived entity that short lived personalized sense of self Jesus said that in the story of Martha and Mary Martha being anxious about getting everything done must get this done this matters it's so important and Mary just listened to Jesus and Martha said why don't you tell her to help me and Jesus said there are many things but only one thing that truly matters and she has chosen that one thing I assume that Mary was in a state of thoughtless awareness that's why he said it she was listening when anyway you're truly listening you're in that state there's no true listening that is not the state of thoughtless awareness because everything else is a mental commentary as every therapist knows every therapist who is effective eventually sometimes only after years and years of applying learned and acquired knowledge something else takes over and they become simple and when the client comes they listen truly listen and immediately a higher intelligence is operating and that does the work occasionally words may come they come out of that state of attention attentive listening so we are concerned with this activation of that higher intelligence here that then at first it seems a passive thing that we are doing just becoming aware of silence paying attention to gaps but as this becomes activated in you you see that it can it begins to run your life you live from there not anymore from here you can still use this up here but you live from a wholeness something so the body is short-lived and there is some there is an aliveness there it is an expression of the one consciousness appearing as a temporary form and that in itself is beyond time so to sense the body is an entry point into connecting with who you truly are it's a return journey we've had the journey outwards for a long long time into fragmentation more and more thought noise getting lost in the world getting lost out there losing yourself the famous story of the prodigal son the lost son who leaves his home with wealth squanders all his wealth and then loses himself out there and then at some point he begins to travel back home so it's a we are coming home really to ourselves not the conditioned self that which reveals itself as yourself a simple sense of I am ness not the little me ness a simple sense of beingness or presence which is the thoughtless awareness that has nothing to do with your story the only relationship that it has with your life story and your personalized sense of identity is that through all the ups and downs and sufferings of your personalized sense of self you've come to this point of realization it's taken you here in that sense it all worked even though it might seem from a conventional perspective that your life hasn't worked very few lives actually seem to work truly and there are very few people who have that feeling that my life actually worked out the way it was supposed to it's all gone wonderfully many young people still have that idea of course and then things happen as somebody said to my mother she taught a woman very wealthy woman not my mother that woman very wealthy woman but unhappy said I never imagined my life to have turned out that way that was not what I imagined my life to be when I was young and so she is very unhappy because of the gap between the early imagination of how her life would be that survived in her head and it didn't life didn't conform to that early fantasy but the early fantasy remains in the head and remains the criterion by which they judge their present life and the present life doesn't conform to that fantasy and so they are unhappy I know a woman who is doing wonderful work she is a teacher at school she has incredible empathy with children that is obviously her life mission she has changed too many children's lives poor children disadvantaged children and wonderful work but she has an idea in her head of how her life should have turned out and now that idea says I'm only a school teacher this wasn't supposed to happen I was going to be an actress and there's great unhappiness because she can't fully see what she's doing and she's looking still to fulfill the fantasy to get rid of the unhappiness it's a conceptualized way of living of having some living with an image an idealized me an idealized story in the head and one day she called me and said I'm dreadfully depressed I said why? I applied to do a commercial on TV as a starting point for my acting career and I even got invited to the what?

yes and she was turned down my life has come to an end that wasn't the story that was meant to happen a conceptualized sense of self and this is what almost everybody is burdened with in the head the storyline of me and life always throws something in there to make it go not quite right occasionally you can get control of it and it's great when it works you're getting what you want that happens too you wanted the big house and the big car and the career and you did you made it but in there again there will be something that wasn't meant to happen oh not like that there was a film one or two years ago about a man who meets a beautiful woman who turns out to be the devil and she grants him six or seven or whatever wishes and every wish is an idealized story of me and each one turns out to be dreadful at first he gets what he wants but there's always something in there that makes it a failure there's an amazing truth in there because no matter what you do and where you go you will encounter there's always a polarity to any situation there isn't the one fulfilling permanently fulfilling situation that you can find wherever any situation you go into any relationship that you have any person you meet place you live job you get recognition from the world telling you you're important and you will always taste the other polarity there's something in there that no that wasn't there's always the two whenever you look at any situation the Buddha says wherever you go you will find some suffering but only if you look to a situation to satisfy you if you look to a relationship to a situation to fulfill your sense of self to fulfill you if you look to a place a situation a person a circumstance a condition to fulfill you to enhance and deepen your sense of who you are sense of rootedness of beingness then it won't satisfy you for a moment a little while it can and then something will come up oh no in the midst of that very desirable situation there's always another side to it you may get so famous that you can't go out in the street anymore

[Speaker 2] (5:03:58 - 5:03:59)

there's

[Speaker 1] (5:03:59 - 5:45:14)

a riot whenever you walk and do your shopping you lost all your freedom and you thought when I become a star my life will be fulfilled can't even go out anymore that wasn't supposed to happen and then all these people who come and want something from you want to be near you are they really interested in me you wonder or is it all false and then you have to look hard to find anybody real just one little example and we know it with relationships the ideal man and the ideal woman turns out not to be the ideal man or the ideal woman so to have an expectation of phenomenal the phenomenal world to do something for you ultimately the expectation is that you will find yourself in or through a situation a condition a person something out there that somehow that fulfillment you will find your fulfillment yourself through that and then life becomes a very frustrating thing because the world cannot give you that and if you don't know it that any situation is short lived it comes to an end or it no longer satisfies you because something else happens in it oh when you don't know it it's very frustrating this life nothing ever seems to work out it's not really meant to work out it's very liberating to see that that the story and that conceptualized sense of self and that image in the mind that that is never satisfying it's always frustrating so we step out of that when you see it you can allow the world to be the way it is without expecting something from it that it cannot give you and that is yourself and then when the expectation is dropped you become present suddenly to now and then you can go into situations without the expectation that says please fulfill me any situation which could be a new relationship a new place to live a new job a new this a new that please fulfill me when you don't do that anymore you accept the way it is right now with the polarity that it has there's always up down good bad and you accept it for what it is it's fine and you move to a new city or new big house it's fine I don't expect anything from that I'm not looking for myself in that because something will come up to spoil your pleasure and suddenly the world becomes a satisfying place because you don't expect to be satisfied by it anymore and suddenly this moment becomes a satisfying place to be because the illusion that at some future point things are going to improve and I will find myself through this or that has gone away so this is through seeing that through attaining in the future you won't find yourself anywhere in the future in any situation and suddenly what's the alternative? You look around where do I go from here? This looks all very depressing that means anything I do is really pointless isn't it?

So what's the point in doing anything? That's the mind still trying to work something out and suddenly you discover something long forgotten and that is this moment the now because until now the now had been a stepping stone to the future a means to an end reduced to that and if you look back you will see that almost everything you did was a means to an end because you were hoping for the point in the future the fulfilling point to be reached to complete yourself and your story in the head and now the now suddenly is no longer a means to an end you become aware of the now as it is it's not in the service of a mentally projected future or mentally projected self the now is sufficient unto itself and you discover how liberating it is to acknowledge the now miraculous truly miraculous everything is that little leaf moving in the wind don't imagine that a life that continuously misses the one vital dimension in your life missed continuously because you're looking for it somewhere else oh my god so this is truly awakening and you awaken into now now now now in many cases the now as judged through external appearances may not be such a wonderful desirable place when you look at it through the mind that says well here I am stuck in this boring job behind a desk every day is the same or here I am not enough money in this place it's not nice to live in here I am with a body that is not healthy here I am living with a wife or husband that's making me unhappy stuck but if I leave him or her who knows my situation might be even worse so I better stick around the external appearance of the now may not always appear to be a good place you may be in prison you may be listening to this tape in prison and I'm not trying to convince you that you are in a good place or say it's not so bad after all just you'll get out eventually in the state of presence there's something there that is greater than the forms that appear in your life vaster greater that is why many people who realized this realized it precisely when their life circumstances were very unfavorable dreadful in fact and suddenly they realized a deeper dimension of incredible power and aliveness and they perhaps were surrounded by prison walls and barred windows and suddenly they discovered incredible aliveness flooding their entire being but they only got there because they reached a point of no longer running away from this moment that seemed so unacceptable and nothing would be more normal than to run away from an unacceptable situation run away from it internally try if only fantasy world if you can't get out of prison at least you can create a fantasy world so you're running away from it and you're resisting it and you're creating great unhappiness through resisting whatever is at this moment and so those people perhaps a prisoner suddenly gave up the resistance to the now suddenly gave up trying to run to some mentally created future when they let me out in ten years I'll be fine and with the letting go of resistance to now came the liberation from external circumstances inner liberation and the liberation from the conditioning of the mind and suddenly there was a peace an alive peace they're still in the same place what's happened well simple they might not even have known it what happened you surrendered to this moment you surrendered to life you stopped saying no that's what happened it's simple that's what that's all that's what happened is it that simple why didn't I do this before my whole career as a criminal was unnecessary I'm talking about the person in prison because even in his criminal activities he was looking for himself where he could never find himself and he thought other people were obstacles to finding himself maybe he even killed somebody or he robbed banks or he surely if I have enough money through that I will find myself so that's what happened and then it happened to some people with life threatening illness great unhappiness and suddenly a shift what happened you said yes to this moment is that all maybe if I had done it 10 years ago there would have been no illness but it's never too late and miraculous possibilities of transformation are there when you align yourself totally with this moment if healing in the case of somebody who is ill if healing is possible at all it will happen and I've seen many cases of people becoming healed through complete surrender to what is this is not resignation I'm not saying it is not the surrender that says OK I'll better resign myself to the fact that I'm ill and that I'm not going to make it no that's not that's not it there's a mental projection there's a conceptual image of me as an ill person and some egos hang on even to that because if nobody has given me much attention when I was healthy at least now they're giving me attention and some egos need that it's the only way they can get some attention all these doctors are giving me attention these important people it's working I'm somebody not every illness is like that but that is an aspect that you can often observe in certain people so this is not the resignation that's okay I'm ill there's nothing I can do no that's not surrender is you surrender to this moment not a concept in your head that you resign yourself to you surrender to what is at this moment and what is it that is here I am and there may be certain feelings there may be a certain disability there may be a certain pain somewhere in the body there may even be an illness that you can't yet feel and yet they've told you that you're very ill but this is what is there's there's the disability I can't walk properly anymore whatever the disability is it is this moment not projecting myself and saying okay it's not going to change you might as well accept that that's future projection simply the is-ness of this moment it is and then you go from there every moment and I've seen occasionally people with serious disabilities that they've had for years and I've looked into their eyes occasionally in and in some of them I saw great unhappiness and dreadful burden of having to live in that way a very unhappy sense of self very understandable that you should be complaining inside when all the people around you seem to be okay and fit and walking everywhere and you can't move without assistance it's so understandable that you become an unhappy self and then I've seen a few and looked into their eyes and see a light shining an absence of an unhappy entity they were simply looking no complainer anymore inside no complaining entity that says why me and so on and builds an identity around the illness the disability there has been acceptance of the unacceptable and the shift happened surrender happened I saw this man this is an interesting story when I was a graduate student I never finished my graduate studies but transformation happened and that was it so that the PhD never happened but there was this man where I was used to go to eat every lunchtime at the university in the graduate center they would wheel in a man in this wheelchair and he was always surrounded by several people and one person would get his food and another person would feed him because he couldn't move any limb and another person had to hold up his head and somebody else was holding a napkin under his chin and then the food had to be put in his mouth and when I first arrived there I saw him and I asked who is this and they said he's a teacher he teaches here and he has this incurable illness and they have given him two years to live and these are his graduate students and he could only produce croaking sounds and there was always one or two people who could interpret what he was saying and one day he came into the building downstairs and I opened the door for him and he came wheeling in his wheelchair and he looked at me and I looked at him and I was surprised by the absence of unhappiness in him there was no unhappy me there just looking and that was just a few seconds and I saw that something happened he surrendered and then I left the university and many years later maybe ten years later I saw at a news stand the cover of Newsweek Magazine and there he was on the cover of Newsweek Magazine in his wheelchair and the headline said Master of the Universe so he had become the most famous physicist in the world and he was still around after they had given him two years to live ten years before and he produced creative thinking and his thought processes hadn't come to an end no not yet but there was no longer a self associated with his thought processes from having to think so you can see how what this first of all the predictions didn't come true it was a miracle that he continued to live and then it was a miracle that somebody like that could become make such a contribution no complaining entity was left in him he couldn't have survived if there had been a continuing conceptual sense of self complaining about the universe and itself and then I read the interview in that magazine and one thing he said there I remembered one statement he made in the interview about his life and he said who could wish for more he now speaks through some mechanical device who could wish for more so whatever your situation miraculous things happen when the uncompromising yes to what is arises in you because you see the futility and the madness of not aligning yourself with what is and you see it so completely and so there comes the uncompromising yes even if it seems unacceptable it's yes it is it is the first person who write to write to me from prison in the meantime I've had a few more letters from prison of people who read the book who understood the meaning of surrender of inhabiting the body and the first person who wrote to me soon after the book came out said I'm practicing the teaching my life is transformed and I'm teaching other prisoners and I have another 15 years to do here and it's okay my life is transformed and last year he got out nobody knows why he wasn't even eligible for parole I don't know the details of it but somehow he got out I'm not asking how but his happiness no longer depended on it that's why it happened his fulfillment no longer depended on it Jesus said all the same things seek all the just thought you needed them they will be added oh thank you it's not a big deal anymore you appreciate it but it's no longer that you know it have made it that doesn't happen anymore it's nice of course it won't last either nothing lasts so here the key word perhaps this afternoon is uncompromising the uncompromising yes no matter what it is you don't make a deal with life that says okay if you give me this and that then I'll say yes is it a deal no it won't work no matter what I say yes to what is just now this moment and whenever the shift occurs from the state of no to the state of yes that is surrender surrender is the shift from the inner denial and resistance to this moment to the openness and the embracing and the yes to this moment and that we call surrender now that shift you may have to go through many times even in one day because you will be able to detect more and more quickly within yourself the state of non surrender the state of resistance because there's more presence in you not complete mind identification anymore and through increasing presence you can detect much more quickly the states of no which always result in suffering and unhappiness and so you detect the no and you see it oh there's another no and there's the suffering that goes with it okay this is the no to what is you see the futility of the no and the yes arises by itself you don't have to create a yes just seeing the futility of the no to what is and the yes is there and that's you surrender and a few minutes later maybe another no comes in some other little situation and you detect it again and you surrender how long you dwell you persist in a no depends on your degree of presence to some extent also on the heaviness of your pain body that is not anything that not something you can do anything about you either have a heavy pain body or a less heavy pain body but here too you can be present with the pain that arises through your pain body and what can you do when it comes there it is there's the pain the emotional pain it is it's here what can you do yes and yes to what arises within and you detect it immediately as pain if you don't detect it the pain body becomes unhappy thought movements and so we have an unhappy me a personalized me we talked about it this morning that carries the heavy burden of human pain accumulated human pain and makes it into a self a heavy self that is hard to live with you yourself find it hard to live with and others around you find it hard to live with your problem to yourself and to others to the whole world your one big problem this is not a personal insult you are moving out of that in any case already but I was in my unhappy state which was almost continuous a walking problem and wherever the walking problem went it found problems so surrender is the shift from the no to the yes and so detecting the no is enough oh that is and you shift yes now some lucky ones have one enormous thing to surrender to in their lives most of you are not that lucky one enormous thing would be one great disability like the one I described this person in the wheelchair one great disaster one enormous loss something very so called wrong in your life from birth from very early on one heavy thing and resistance mainly focusing on this one thing and then in a case like that it is possible for complete surrender to happen all at once and the no never comes back but most of you have to surrender to many little no's little things arising in your life in the course of a normal day many little irritations little no's to what is and that's your practice it's fine it just takes a little bit longer than if you were faced with one huge thing in which case you might be unhappy for several years could be unhappy for the rest of your life there is no guarantee that the shift will happen but there's a greater possibility unless presence is arising as it is in you so even while you're here the next few days still detect the state of non surrender in yourself there it is and then the shift happens automatically into okay this moment is okay actually so you reenter the now you lose the now you reenter the now ways of reentering the now alertness suddenly returns you could suddenly become alert of sense perceptions oh you've been perhaps completely unaware of your surroundings for the past few minutes or hours there's a sharpness of suddenly alertness there's the sensations and an alert field or you sense your inner body and that's immediately you enter the now or you feel your breathing flowing in and out present you have to be now in the now otherwise you cannot sense your breathing but whatever it is it is always the state of alert presence that returns or you may catch yourself looking in the mirror and suddenly you see this unhappy face and you realize oh I've been in the now for the past two hours and didn't even know it something in you of course wants to continue with the now the little mind made me wants to continue it's an energy field an energy form it doesn't want to go the pain body doesn't want to go it wants to renew itself through your mind so you may also detect in yourself and this is perhaps the last thing this afternoon to want to tell you an element an addictive element almost I use the word addictive as far as unhappiness is concerned people carry something that one could carry something within that one could almost call an addiction to their own suffering a refusal to let go that's of course strongly associated with the pain body the pain body doesn't want to go it wants more pain and so detecting the state of no sometimes means detecting the pleasure so called that is being derived from unhappiness it's not really pleasure to the ego it's pleasure the body really knows that it's pain but the ego loves that pain because it's sense of identity gets stronger in the state of unhappiness an unhappy me is stronger than a happy me the fictitious self an unhappy me is more contracted so it's a habit it's an addictive habit and that's an amazing thing to detect in oneself one's addiction and you don't have to accuse yourself as I shouldn't be addicted no just to see it there's pleasure in unhappiness this is strange and then you notice that the unhappiness isn't really pleasurable at all it's pain mistaken as pleasure the ego mistakes pain in pleasure it's such an adventure to be engaged in this transformation of human consciousness it's funny too if questions arise we will perhaps tomorrow end and or Thursday we will look at some questions that may arise concerning the arising of presence not questions like explain to me I haven't quite understood yet what presence is I need a few more explanations not but questions to do with perhaps the pain body in your life so we'll have time for questions tomorrow and or Thursday and maybe even answers we may also have a time for silence not compulsory of course we may do that tomorrow recommended a period of silence perhaps sometime during the day tomorrow half a day or so and then perhaps again nothing here is compulsory some retreats are like and you may have attended one or two of those and this is quite gentle oh if you can endure the heat for another five minutes and surrender to it perhaps we could listen to a song and have something on a CD tomorrow somebody also would like to sing a song we may have that also tomorrow but I have a beautiful song here that is simply illustrates what we are talking about and just listen to it for five minutes Kirtana who cannot be with us he lives on the west coast sings a song entitled who you really are which I believe is on track six on the CD and so just we'll just listen to that and you will recognize the message and the song

[Speaker 2] (5:46:28 - 5:52:13)

and tell me what remains who you really are who you really are measure success by the things we accrue measure success measure success by the things we accrue measure success by the things we accrue measure success by the things we accrue measure success by the things we accrue measure success by the things we accrue measure success by the things we accrue measure success measure success measure success dance to see what's yet unworthy choice to throw this chance away this is your lifetime page your attention Where all the prayers are sung From the cycle of bondage and misidentity To wake from the dream And finally realize The truth of one's being Before the body dies So before the final scene is passed See the screen on which it's cast See what's seen, the story I knew You'll see Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (5:55:28 - 6:59:58)

Is it possible to just take an object, pick it up? This is a stone and a flower lying on top of it. But I've already interpreted it now through the mind.

I've explained to you what it is. Is it possible to be in your room and be in a relationship to objects that is non-conceptual where you allow each object to be, each object that you perceive so completely that you're not interpreting it or labeling it? So you pick something up.

You feel it and you see it. It has a presence. And you let it be.

And you're seeing it through stillness. At first you might think, well certainly the thinker thinks that this is not possible. You as the thinker thinks no.

And besides, what's the point? I mean, I've got other things to worry about. It's hard to see it seems such a simple and insignificant thing to do that and to make that as part of your spiritual practice.

And you could start with the world of objects, nature also, of course. But we relate to objects when we talk in terms of relationships. People think relationships to human beings.

You relate even more to objects because wherever you are, you are relating to the world of objects, so-called inanimate, not really inanimate, but so-called inanimate objects. You're always picking something up. You're sitting somewhere on something, handling something.

It's the world of objects. And usually each object that you handle is a means to an end. You want to achieve something through it because in the mind-dominated state, each moment, or rather the one moment, is always reduced to a means to an end.

Thereby you miss the fullness of life that can only be in the moment. And so the reason, of course, why we are here is to allow a transformation of consciousness to happen so that we are no longer trapped in a conceptual reality, trapped in the conditioning of the mind. And we saw, we addressed that on our first day, how that is so closely related and actually the cause of even the great evils that we see.

How does a terrorist become a terrorist? It is an extreme illustration, an extreme manifestation of being completely trapped in a conceptual reality where you reduce other human beings to mere concepts or labels in your head. And once you have reduced another human being to a concept or label in your head, you can do anything to them and you won't even know it anymore.

You will feel nothing. You've cut yourself off. You've cut them off.

You've cut yourself off from the deeper levels of your being. And you are totally mind-run, run by the mind, by the conceptual mind, by thought. And so, really, here we have the origins of what we could call evil.

And that is, Jesus said, they know not what they do. Forgive them, for they know not what they do. That process, in other words, is completely unconscious.

It is the very essence of unconsciousness in the way that we use the term here, which means to be unaware of who you are beyond thought, of who anybody else is beyond thought. Complete lack of attention or awareness. Totally trapped in conceptual thinking.

And so, but everybody to some extent is trapped in that, not perhaps to such an extreme, but this is simply a terrorist or anybody else who perpetrates acts of violence, inflicts suffering on humans, has reduced those humans to a mental concept. And then, you can do anything. But that is a very common, it's a normal way of being, really.

It's just more extreme. And when you see it in an extreme form, you can recognize the madness of it more clearly. And people do it to themselves.

They reduce themselves to concepts in the head, through self-images and opinions about yourself, which you partly received since childhood from parents. Beliefs, concepts, opinions. This is what you are.

This is how you are. And then, you have a conceptual sense of self. And again, very limiting.

And the conceptual sense of self is never at ease with itself. It's never enough, because it's a fabrication of the mind. So it is so, to step out of that is the transformation of consciousness and realize what depth there is to you as a human being beyond conceptual thought.

And actually realize that true intelligence lives beyond conceptual thought. Conceptual thought comes out of true intelligence. It's one of many possible manifestations of it.

But when you are trapped in this one little manifestation of intelligence, then your life is reduced to very little, very limited entity, problematic entity. And then you inflict suffering on yourself through conceptual thought. You begin to have dialogues with yourself and telling yourself something, who you are, and not enough.

So, to gradually become free of being dominated by conceptual thought, continuous labeling and interpreting and judging. That's why to pick something up is such a powerful spiritual practice. It seems so insignificant, and the mind might tell you that you have better things to do than pick something up and look at it.

At first it may not be, thought may still be there. And then perhaps there's a moment when there's just looking, just the awareness, the perception. Very different qualitative difference in that perception from a conceptualized, from a perception reduced by conceptualization.

And then you sense that even a stone has an aliveness to it. Which, nothing is alive when it's seen through mental concepts. Then the stone is more alive to you than another human being is to a terrorist, to take that as an extreme example.

So that is a beautiful practice. It's a gentle way, see if you can relate to objects in that way. The strange thing happened to me many years ago, when after a night of suffering, intense suffering, a shift in consciousness happened.

And the suffering conceptual entity, me, dissolved. And then I woke up the next morning, and I looked around the room, and the first thing, I saw these objects, they were all familiar. I had never given them much attention, because each object in my room was a means to an end.

And then I picked something up, a pen, a few other little things. They're so alive. And there's presence, there's beingness there.

I didn't know what that all meant. It was just a surprise, an astonishment of how alive the world actually is. I was astonished at the aliveness of it all, but I didn't know why I was astonished.

I didn't know that my mind wasn't commenting anymore, because otherwise the mind would have said, Oh, you see, you're not commenting anymore. And that could happen to you. This shift happened to me by accident, one could say, and here it happens, one could almost say, by choice.

You have the choice to step out of that conceptual reality. At first you may not succeed. You may pick something up and immediately think about, Oh, I mustn't think about this.

Or there's a moment of simple awareness of that perception, and then immediately the mind says, Now you've got it, that's it, you're right. And then, of course, the mind will say something, Okay, now, okay, you've done that, now what's the next thing? And somebody said to me once, You always talk about the present moment.

We've heard it now, it's an old hat. Present moment is... One writer in a newspaper who came to a talk said two things.

One thing he said in his article, Of course there's nothing new about the present moment. Teachers have spoken about it for thousands of years. But I must add to his credit, in the next sentence he said, There's nothing new to the present moment and everything new to the present moment.

Because the mind is looking for the next thing always. Whenever you become impatient with the present moment, the mind is looking for the next moment. So, okay, you've got that, understood.

Yes, present moment is all there is. Okay, we know that now. What's next?

I have mastered the present moment. Certificate on the wall, master of now. So it's not an achievement.

The transformation of consciousness isn't an achievement. Or anybody who could say, now I have achieved it. It's a continuous, it's continuously new.

So, I recommend that every day, once or twice, you walk around your familiar room for a few minutes. And whatever you happen to look at, stay with it for a little while, a few moments or one moment. Language is strange.

I sometimes use that expression, a few moments. It doesn't exist. There's only one moment.

It's just a way of speaking. And stay with that and see if you can let it be so completely that thought around it doesn't arise. If it arises, okay, then you know thought is arising.

You're not fighting it. It produces more thought. Thought is arising.

And then you watch the thought. You're not trying to do anything. You could fall into the trap of trying to be thoughtless about it, free of thought.

And, in fact, it's the non-trying always means you need to get to some point in the future. It could be the point where you are free of thought. But the state of thoughtless awareness is already arising in you anyway.

So you don't need to try. Just be gentle and allow it to be there. And so there's an alertness and a stillness through which you perceive.

And now you perceive actually much more deeply. There is a depth to whatever you perceive that before wasn't there at all. Even so-called inanimate objects suddenly have a presence, a beingness, a certain aliveness.

And imagine that depth that is already there even with so-called inanimate objects when they are perceived through stillness and non-conceptualization, what depth there is to natural things, the world of nature, how suddenly that deepens. And how you deepen, you discover how deep you are. That stillness is very deep.

Whereas before you were a shallow, nothing personal in that, it's a mind, a shallow being because mental conceptualization, no matter how complex your mind is and how much you know and can talk about and think about, it's always shallow. It always moves on the surface of things. There is no depth.

You could have the most highly developed intellect without depth. Just full of knowledge. So suddenly you discover the depth that there is to you that you are so much deeper than any set of concepts that you have in your head about who you are.

You and your past, which is of course limited, and your story, the story of you and your past. So it's the discovery of a depth. And that depth, it is fulfilling, that is so fulfilling, in that depth what disappears is fear.

Because that depth is a rootedness. You sense that you have deep roots in being. Whereas in the conceptual world, you live in fear because you have no roots in being, no depths, that every conceptual entity, every little me is extremely fearful.

They might be pretending that they are not, but there is always an undercurrent of fear. So one could say, and the stronger your form identity is, the me, the stronger also the fear that is underneath it. It may be unconscious.

It may be covered up by a display of confidence. But it's there. And so this is also where fear goes.

As a conceptual sense of self goes, and you don't derive your sense of who you are from your story anymore, then you become free of fears, because there is that depth in which you feel rooted. So you and that which you perceive suddenly acquires a depth. And that is particularly important when you relate to other human beings, because what makes human relationships so conflict-ridden and problematic is the fact that they are all conceptual relationships.

Once you live in a conceptualized reality, you've constructed it for yourself. You construct that conceptualized reality for everybody that you meet in images. And you may not have deadened that other person to the extent that a terrorist or a criminal who can kill without feeling anything, because he calls that person something in the head, and that reduces the person to a label or concept, and then anything is possible.

It is unlikely that you would reduce a person to such a degree, but the same principle really operates in human interaction when you reduce another human being to mental concepts and opinions. So, and you can see how you then relate. If there is a depth to even a stone that you pick up and you see it through stillness, perceive it through stillness, when you relate to another human being, what depth there is, what depth you can sense through your own in the other person.

Even if the other person is still full of mental concepts, and even if the other person is still relating to you through his or her screen of concepts. In other words, they have a set of opinions about you and think they know you through the set of concepts and opinions. They think they know the reality of who you are.

And it may be that the other person still operates through that screen. And the beauty is that when you no longer impose that screen, then it is actually possible to look through the screen that is in the other person. You see the screen, but you don't give it all that much attention.

You don't take it to be the reality of who that person is. You realize it is the human condition. It is a manifestation of the human condition that has been the human fate for many thousands of years.

And you don't manufacture a personal identity for that person out of that. And then say, now I really know who he or she is. Whereas the truth is, now you really know who he or she is not.

Now, the true meaning of forgiveness is not to mistake that screen, which often is energized by the pain body, which is old emotional pain accumulated over millennia in the human collective psyche, because of that very dysfunction. Because all that pain has continuously been created. Each human created it for themselves and for others.

All the enormous inconceivable pain and suffering inflicted by humans on other humans, and they didn't know what they were doing. But that pain, because of that, and we must call it dysfunction, because of that, there is such an accumulation of emotional pain in the human psyche, the collective pain body plus the personal pain body from your lifetime. And so that amplifies very often that conceptual reality with emotion.

And so your old pain flows into that madness. It's already madness, and now it becomes even more mad. So forgiveness is simply, it's not, the way people practice forgiveness doesn't really work all that well.

I forgive you. And it's interesting that Jesus talks about it a lot, the forgiveness of sins, and that they say he has the power to forgive sins, and he tells his disciples, you have the power to forgive sins. What does that mean?

What is sin? Forgiveness is simply not mistaking that conditioning of the mind that operates for who that person is. So if you mistake the unconsciousness, we could call it the movement of unconsciousness, unconscious conditioning, if you mistake that for the reality of that being, that person, that's non-forgiveness.

The recognition that this is simply an overlay, a screen, and ultimately there is nobody there. There is no identity in it. There is no personal identity in it.

The recognition of that is forgiveness. And then you don't even need the term anymore. The recognition of that is so simple.

You don't need to say, I forgive you. There's nothing to forgive suddenly anymore. So true forgiveness happens only when suddenly, you have seen so clearly through that there's nothing to forgive anymore.

Forgiveness, no, what for? And that applies to yourself because some people can't forgive themselves for something. Now, it is very likely that there's far greater consciousness in you than 10 years ago.

So you have moved through, you have manifested the human condition in one way or another. You had to. So it's likely that you did certain things that at your present level of consciousness you would not do because now there's far greater presence.

But when you look back, there can be a tendency for the mind to manufacture an identity for yourself out of the movement of unconsciousness, which is the human condition that you inherited. Being born into this world, you became part of that. Everybody inherits it.

Now, the mind, the mind-made self, is always looking to enhance its sense of self because it's never enough. And if it cannot find good things to enhance its sense of me-ness, it will find bad things and identify with that. As long as I have an identity, I'm okay, it says.

So a favorite thing is to identify with something that you did and make a personalized sense of self out of it and say, That was me. I did that. So the movement of unconsciousness becomes for you a self, an identity.

And that is, the egoic structures work in that way. So an essential part of many egoic little me's is that they haven't forgiven themselves, let alone others. They don't forgive others either.

But they haven't forgiven themselves for something. So they derive their sense of self from the movement of unconsciousness. Totally conditioned human unconsciousness.

And then, perhaps through suffering that you inflicted on yourself through that, gradually something awoke and there was an awareness that came in. Oh, my God. So when the moment the awareness comes in, then you see it, and then there's the danger that you fall back into thought and immediately fall back into a false identity.

Me, I did that. So it is so true, the words of Jesus. The last words he said in a normal state of consciousness, he would say, Look what you did to me.

You'll see what you get. You'll... whatever the mind would say.

And forgive them for they know not what they do. They are forgiven already. They know not what they do means they are completely unconscious.

That's the modern translation. And so you might ask, so what about responsibility? Is nobody then responsible for what they do?

If there's nobody there, they can't be responsible. But they will suffer. They inflict suffering on others and on themselves.

They go through hell. They create hell unconsciously. And gradually, through the suffering, the awakening happens.

For you, it's important to know that you do not mistake the movement of unconsciousness for somebody. That you manufacture an identity either for yourself or for others out of that. And so the beautiful line in the Course in Miracles that I quoted the other day, whenever you meet somebody, whenever you are with another human being, that person will become a witness to you of either Christ or the ego, whatever you perceive in him or her.

So you can perceive the ego and make that real, say that is who that is. Or you can look beyond that screen and what is called Christ is simply your true nature beyond the conditioned entity, Buddha nature. Christ, your essential reality where you are connected with the one, the source, where you are not separate from that.

And that is the depth. So the mind may try to take you out of that depth, cut you off again from it. But it's difficult now because it is so clear.

The depth of who you are and that there is nothing to fear there. There is only fear as long as you are trapped in a mental world of concepts. And could it begin with something as simple as picking up an object in your room holding it and looking at it and waiting, the moment comes when suddenly there is just the looking, just the perception.

And it happens within a field of stillness and there is the depth suddenly there. And it's peace too. Suddenly your perceptions happen within a field of peace.

They become peaceful, an alive peace. And then that becomes a new way of being in the world, non-interference to a large extent of conceptual thought. It doesn't mean you cannot use it.

You are holding a pen, simply seeing it, and then somebody comes in and says, what is it that you are holding? And it's a pen, you say. Now you know it.

You haven't lost the concept when it's needed. It's there. When it's not needed, it's not there.

Or it may occasionally still come and yet lose its heaviness because you realize there is more to it than that. So you are no longer completely trapped in it. It's recognized as a concept.

It's recognized as a thought around it. So just as you can be with an external object, you can also be with thoughts and emotions within yourself. And they are just there.

Instead of, again, bringing in concepts into what you feel, for example, just feel. Not make a story out of that which you feel. Just be aware of what you feel.

Just the feeling quality of it. And for many humans, what they feel is fear. Especially, I used to feel it especially at night.

But during the day, continuously, it was in the background. But at night, waking up in a state of terror almost. And if that happens to you, it's residual fear.

It's lived in there. It's part of the pain body. It's lived in there for years.

To simply, just as you are with an object, be with that fear without making a story out of it. Just feel that, the feeling vibration of it. And then you allow it.

Allow it. And again, even there, there can be a peace around it suddenly. Simply through saying, okay, there it is.

And not imposing an interpretation on it. Perhaps even the word fear can go. It is just that.

And then the miracle is, whatever you give your attention to in that way, which is not imposing anything on it, also undergoes a certain change. Because you cannot, your consciousness is not separate from anything that you perceive. And physicists have discovered in their experimentation in the subatomic world, that the observing presence, the consciousness that conducts the experiment, influences what happens.

And in many cases, it makes it happen. And in many cases, when they think there might be a particle called such and such, a little while later they discover it. And you can see how closely related the external world is, and your state of consciousness, how they are one.

And when you begin to interact with things around you, people around you in this new way, perceive in this new way, changes happen in that which is being perceived in this new way. I would go so far as to say, I sensed it, but I cannot give you empirical evidence of this. Even a stone that you hold, and perceive it through stillness, instead of deadening it through concepts, changes happen in the molecular structure, even of that stone.

And it's suddenly more alive. Not just to you. It's suddenly more alive.

Because you and it are not really separate. So you can see the incredible transformation that is here, that is not just in this little space here. Everything gets transformed through that.

You don't need to want to transform it, it happens. Your state of consciousness determines your world. This is true even in the unconscious state.

If you live in a world of chaos or nightmare, inner and outer are one. Just to see that when I go into nature, and again I cannot give you empirical evidence of this, because I know it directly. I cannot tell you how I know it.

But when you go out into nature, and you perceive nature in that way, nature fulfills itself through your perception of it. It suddenly knows itself, and its own beauty and depth through you, because you are not really separate. When you look at a tree through stillness, it's not just that it deepens to you, the tree, the tree deepens to itself.

And so nature is so important, because we talked about yesterday how important nature is, it can teach you stillness. How you can use nature to enter that state of consciousness. It helps you, but also you need nature, and nature needs you, so to speak.

Ultimately you are one anyway. You need nature, and nature needs you. And when this transformation of consciousness happens, one could say that nature also wants that to happen, because it is important for every natural thing that you go through.

It finds its fulfillment through that too. So when you walk through nature in that way, and perceive, it rejoices, because it knows itself through you. You are not separate from it.

It knows its beauty and its sacredness and its depth through you. That's how important you are. And that's, you can transform the world.

Not as a little me that says, I am going to transform the world. But you, now when I say you, I don't mean the you with its little history and its little, the little personal me. The depths of who you are, the consciousness that you are, the unconditioned consciousness, beyond the little conditioned entity that you are temporarily in this form, this physical and psychological form.

But there is the vastness of consciousness that is the essence of who you are. That is the stillness, unformed, unmanifested, the ground of all being. Out of which the whole cosmos comes every moment.

So, truly, you have the power to redeem the world. And could it start with such a simple thing as picking something up and just perceiving it through stillness? And you will know what I mean then when I say that whatever you perceive in this way undergoes a change too, not just you.

Every human being that is through healing that is not reduced to a label or a concept in your head and is, you look at that human being through stillness, something happens there too. No matter how unconscious that human being seems to be, how strongly that human being manifests the unconscious human collective condition. And that is true healing.

Healing in its deepest sense is to be with a human being in that way of complete, spacious openness, stillness. And there, something changes no matter how mad. And I use the word mad in the sense that it is a normal state of consciousness, but no matter to what an extreme that human being manifests the normal mad state of consciousness, there are only degrees of madness, something happens within.

If a stone becomes transformed into a tree through perceiving it in this way, you can see how a human being becomes transformed, but you are not wanting to do anything. It happens. And so one could say that you dissolve unconsciousness.

It's being dissolved. To some extent it happens in this room. I am not doing anything as a little entity.

How could I? But there's no thought in this head about who you are. And that is a wonderful thing.

That's why I know you. Unfortunately, this is the biggest retreat I've ever had, and there are so many people. I love the personal interaction and hugging.

Last time I hugged 120 people at a retreat, and that took a long time. And now we have almost 400 people here. And yet it still works.

And I have this... I know each one of you. In your essence, I know you.

And that's all that's needed. When you truly know beyond concepts, beyond thought, that's the new state of consciousness. And this is why there's a field of presence here that does not just come through this form.

It comes through all these forms that are losing their density, mental, emotional density, and identification with the density as me. And as the density is becoming less dense, something shines through it. And that's where you...

the depth is suddenly there within yourself. So all these fields of consciousness, which is really what you are, a field of... It looks like a walking human being.

And at the end of this retreat, you walk out of here, back to where you go. But really, you're a field of consciousness, like seeds moving out into different parts of the world. And then you begin to perceive and relate to the world in this new way.

And you'll notice things around you change. People around you. Those who are not yet ready for change may suddenly disappear.

Conditions change. Situations, conditions that you're in. And you don't need any of these changes to make you feel better anymore.

Watch the one thing that can be quite a challenge, and that is your pain body. The accumulated pain. Although the new state of consciousness is arising, for a little while you may have to live with old, accumulated pain.

And that is not such a big deal once you know it. Once it's no longer made into a me, a personal sense of me, my pain, once it no longer becomes identified with the story of me, then all you have is you're suddenly an unhappy human being. And that's who you are.

That's when the pain body, the emotional vibrational frequency of that, moves into the mind and gets mixed up with the memory of your life and who you are and an identity derived from that. Then you have an unhappy me. And when the pain body does that, it's continuously replenishing itself through your thought processes.

It gobbles up the energy of your thoughts, which are all negative when thoughts are aligned with the pain body. So now there's enough presence so that the pain body is no longer able to link in to the mind and become part of your sense of self. And then all that's left is a field of heaviness or turbulence or tightness here.

Energy trapped. Fear is a contraction. It's a tightness or sometimes a turbulence.

Or heaviness. Some pain bodies are predominantly sad or others are angry. And so now you know the pain body.

You know it directly. And you watch it when it comes. It will try to trick you so that it can use your mind again.

And then it becomes, again, you're back identified with human pain and becomes a me. But when you see it for what it is, you can actually perceive it, sense it in the same way that you perceive an object in your room and just look at it, so to speak. Feel it.

Look at it. Give it attention. There it is.

But now this, you also sense when you watch, pick something up and perceive it through stillness. As it deepens, one could say there are two things now that you perceive. One is the object that you're perceiving.

The second is you become aware of the field of stillness itself in which the perception happens. You become aware, so to speak, of awareness. This looks like duality, but that's only because of language.

One could say you become self-aware. In other words, you're looking at something, perceiving this through stillness, and you see it and you feel it. So there's the perception of it.

And then you sense that there's also the very power that makes the perception possible as one could say it's your attention, a still attention. I gave the example yesterday of ringing this bell. And again, here instead of seeing something, you're listening to it, which is another wonderful way of listening to sounds without interpreting them, without any kind of labeling.

And the sound arises, and at first you're just aware of the sound, and that's fine. You give it your complete attention. Then the sound dies.

What's left is the field of attention. And then you can know that field of attention. It's not that you know the field of attention.

It knows itself because you are that awareness. Even while you're listening, you're aware of the perception and the underlying field of attention or stillness. And there's no reason why you couldn't go into the middle of a noisy city.

And there's all the traffic and all the thousands of people moving about. And there's the underlying field of attention. Stillness that can no longer be disturbed by anything.

Once you know it in yourself as the very ground that makes all perception possible, then no matter where you go, it's there. And I'm talking about that now because when you feel the pain body, the same thing can happen. There's not just the turbulence or the heaviness or tightness that you feel.

There's also the awareness through which you can feel that, which is so much vaster than anything that could arise in it. Pain bodies look threatening at first. Big monsters.

And then the tendency is when you... Oh, I don't want to look at that. But when you look, and this is an old motive in fairy tales and mythology, when you face the monster, it's no longer a monster.

And you know that even from nightmares, when you're running away from some dreadful thing that's pursuing you, it's dreadful. But the moment you turn around, it gets transformed and suddenly looks relatively harmless. Oh, is that all it was?

And so many people never want to face the pain. Oh, no, don't want to go there. But if they did, oh, is that all it is?

It's contracted energy? Heavy? And it's not me.

It's just a stagnated, non-flowing energy field. So it's not who I am? No.

How could it be? You are the aware presence. And there's that.

And so the very secret, and this is the secret, I'm telling you now the secret of life. Now, all you have to do, it's like here's the key, but you still have to use the key. In any perception or awareness, or wherever you go or wherever you are, there will be things happening, arising, internally or externally.

That's the world. Things come and go. Forms, inner emotions, thoughts, outer forms, people, events, some good, some bad, whatever the mind calls it.

Giving attention, yes, to whatever there is at this moment. And you cannot give full attention if you are at war with the present moment, then of course you can't give it your attention. So giving attention to what arises implies that you say yes to the moment, and then you give it your full attention.

Otherwise you can't give it your full attention. But there's more. You give attention to what arises, and you are aware of that attention itself in which it arises.

One could call it also an alive stillness. This is the undercurrent that is continuously there in whatever happens. So there's the event, and there's the space in which the event happens.

And you stop seeking yourself in the event, whether it's external or internal, a thought, an emotion. You're not looking for yourself there. That's me.

I identify with some external thing. It's me, personalized, reactive relationship. Because you're looking for yourself somewhere.

I have to find myself somewhere. And you never find yourself truly, only a conceptual image. And therefore there's fear, because I haven't found myself.

And so you know you're no longer seeking yourself in anything, because you already know that you are the underlying field in which it happens, the spaciousness, the stillness in which it happens. Even if it's turbulence, that means knowing yourself, non-conceptually. And that means the world is no longer a threatening place, because nothing that comes can threaten who you are.

It's like saying nothing could threaten the space in this room. Hock, you can do anything. You cannot destroy the space in this room.

And it's the essence of this room. There wouldn't be a room if there were no space. The very essence of this is the spaciousness.

And this is an external kind of, I'm giving you an analogy, of external space is similar to that inner spaciousness. And ultimately what we perceive as external space is an externalization of that inner reality, the space of awareness. And it's indestructible.

We could do anything. We could even make an enormous amount of noise and bring in a heavy metal band to put in here. The moment they leave, nothing ever happened.

Just as still and spacious as it was before. And that's the true meaning, again, I'm quoting again these beautiful lines at the beginning of the Course in Miracles that summarizes it all. Nothing real can be threatened.

Nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God. Knowing that is the peace of God.

And could it start with a simple thing, such as picking something up in your room and looking? Yes. And then beginning to live in that way.

And now you'll find life will challenge you. Your new state of consciousness will not go unchallenged. You will move back into situations that are challenging.

Be with people that are challenging. Mind comes back at you. Pain bodies come back.

Now there are always two possibilities with any challenge. And any challenge says, give me your whole attention. I matter.

This matters. Totally and absolutely. Give me your attention.

And then it wants to be drawn into it. Yes, this matters. And not knowing that only one thing matters.

Ultimately. Everything else is relatively important but not absolutely. It's not saying not honoring the things of this world.

You're honoring, you do what you have to do. In that sense, you honor it. But ultimately, only one thing matters, and that is knowing who you are.

It's not a selfish thing. The only true thing that you can do for the world is to know who you are. And then everything changes.

Only that matters. But the world will tell you, and the world is the mind, and other people's minds.

[Speaker 2] (6:59:59 - 6:59:59)

This matters.

[Speaker 1] (6:59:59 - 8:04:06)

Come on. Surely you should get upset about this. Oh yes, you're right.

And even in the worst disaster, of course it's very hard not to react when something so disastrous happens as last week, collectively. And one almost feels, I have no right to be at peace in this situation. Do I have a right?

Do we have a right even to look for peace in this situation? It's the only thing that can save humankind, peace. So it's more than the right.

Your duty is to look for peace and to find the peace. And even in such a situation where you watch the TV and, oh my God, and even there you can suddenly sense that vastness. That perhaps quite a few of the people who died a violent death, and I mentioned that at the beginning the other day, they may have also known it in the last few seconds of their lives.

It often happens just before death. And we don't know that. This is not what you see on the surface.

On the surface you only see the dreadfulness of it. And then there's the vastness in which it happens. Still, always, present.

Present. A form dissolves violently. The essence remains.

So to even perceive disaster, whether it's your own personal disaster, which happens sooner or later, because death comes, that's disastrous to the person. Big disaster. So that comes, and be with it.

You've died already. That means you have this false sense of identity, a conceptualized sense of self, is already dissolved. There's nothing to fear anymore.

Fear is only not knowing who you are, mistaking that for who you are. There's nothing to fear. And then when death, the physical form comes, it's actually sacred and beautiful, and you recognize that.

If any mind in this room says, and then what happens? And after that? Is there more?

And then you find yourself in paradise, and the mind says, I wonder if there's an even higher paradise. Yes. You don't deserve to be here, says the mind.

So you'll be challenged by the world, by the mind, by the pain bodies in the world. And then one of two things can happen. You get drawn back into thinking that it matters and reacting as if it matters.

In other words, you lose that presence. It's obscured. You can't lose it.

It becomes obscure. But the density returns. You become a reactive little me again.

Your own pain body becomes activated again. This can happen. Challenges do that.

Or the challenge, through the challenge, presence intensifies in you. This happens to some people even who have never heard or read anything about this. When they're faced with death or a serious accident is about to happen, a moment comes when there's enormous presence.

And sometimes out of that action arises and they are saved or they save other people. And it just comes out of that state of consciousness suddenly there. You can see now which way you go.

The challenge can pull you back into unconsciousness or the challenge can make you more conscious. And once you've reached a certain level of presence, presence is flowing through you to a certain degree, it is more likely that any challenge will intensify presence. Not inevitably.

The other can also happen. In which case you'll get drawn back and after a while you'll know it. And you'll step out again.

And the mind will attempt to make some identity for yourself even out of that and say that you're not good enough and you're never going to make it or whatever it says. And then you observe that also. That's what the mind does.

It wants to give you another identity. It's trying its best to give you an identity. Not good enough.

Now I know who I am. I'm not good enough. Well, at least now I know.

So you can go both. Even if you get drawn back into reactive little me, it is not likely that you will be lost again for too long. Presence suddenly is back and then you step out.

And you'll often notice whenever it happens, of course, you lost the now. You got drawn back into time and mind and the world. And the world of problems.

The heaviness of problems. Not realizing that there are no problems. You believe again that there are problems.

I'm saying there are no problems because there's no problem at the present moment. Challenges, yes. A challenge can happen.

But it doesn't turn into a problem. It needs a problematic entity that derives its identity from a situation for a situation to become a problem. And then it's continuously revived and elaborated upon in the mind long before it ever happens.

If it ever happens. Probably won't. And long after something has happened it's a problem in the mind.

And there's a problematic me. And again having problems the little me likes that. Because the more problems I have and this is unconscious the more important I am.

I have real problems to worry about. The little me hangs onto that too because that also gives you an identity. You define your identity in terms of your problems.

Many people do that. Unconscious of course. Anything for an identity.

So you move back into a world that is still to a large extent mad. Not that that is the reality of who any human being is but that is the density that covers up the reality in human beings. And others are awakening.

Like yourself and others. You will meet also more people that are awakening as you awaken. And you will draw to yourself people who are ready to awaken and often they will come and maybe they don't know why and suddenly they may ask a question.

And then you become still and see what comes out of your mouth if anything. So your challenge is continuing to perceive the world and to interact knowing the field. Knowing this is the true meaning of now.

What is the deepest meaning of now is the field in which it happens. Nothing can happen anywhere else except now. Everything has been changing in your life.

You've gone through many changes but one thing was always the same. It was always now. Because that's the essence of who you are.

Because the now is the field in which everything happens. Now is the unconditioned consciousness out of which the whole world of the conditioned arises. Now is you.

The essence of you is the now. It's a miracle. So all there is to do and it's not a doing is to know the now while things happen in it to continue to know the now as yourself.

This afternoon my suggestion is that as much as possible we keep noble silence externally. The mind will do its own thing and you can watch that watch that in the now you can still be present with that. And as the depth happens in you more and more you may perceive the mental activity as surface patterns up here.

Sometimes huge waves come and go and sometimes little ripples and yet there's a depth. So there's mind and it doesn't matter that much anymore. The thoughts to some extent still come and go although there are gaps more and more between thoughts.

Yes, beautiful. Thoughts come and go but they don't matter that much anymore. You don't believe in each thought and it draws in your attention completely.

So let the mind be. So from lunch onwards or after lunch, there may be a few silent tables at lunch time and then after lunch if you can just be in external silence and as much as you can in inner stillness. That's there anyway.

Let the mind do what it wants. Perceive nature in that non-conceptual way. Be simple and just with what is until you need to use speech again.

Maybe in the evening you may be doing something. That's fine. It may be strange if you sit at a silent table unless you've already done quite a few retreats, in which case you're used to it.

If you haven't done any retreats at first it seems uncomfortable. There's a discomfort in you when you sit with the people and nobody is speaking. The same discomfort you might feel in an elevator.

You step in, there are one or two people in it and should I be saying something? And to simply you can watch the discomfort and then it goes and then it's actually OK to just be there without feeling the need that you need to say something. Just be there.

Nice practice in an elevator too. Just be in an elevator. Not here, but when you go back to the office.

Any elevator, no thought between you press the button and while you're waiting for it, no waiting either. You have little moments in your life, your everyday life I mentioned picking up things and just looking. Little moments when you're not waiting but simply be completely, fully totally here, in which case suddenly there's thoughtless awareness.

If you're totally here, there's thoughtless awareness. To be totally. Another one I often suggest to people, you get into your car, shut the door and before you put in the key stop.

Length of time doesn't matter as long as you stop. Even if it's only ten seconds. Thirty seconds.

And then put in. Nobody can be that busy that they cannot spare ten seconds. But the mind will tell you that you don't have ten seconds.

The stream of mind stepping out of that as much as you can. The stream of mind is the internal stream of continuous thinking. It externalizes itself as the continuous compulsion to go from one thing to the next and you never catch up with what you have to do.

It's always the next thing to do. While you're doing this, there's already the next thing to do. And this is only a means so that you can get to the next thing.

And that's an externalization of the mind stream. And so stepping out of the mind stream as much as possible, as often as you can. You know now how to step out of the mind stream.

And it's just a... Alertness returns. There's an awareness of sense perceptions.

You may feel your inner body suddenly. You may become aware that you're breathing. And, most importantly, you're aware that you're aware.

You're aware. It's more important how often you step out of the mind stream than how long you stay in that state. It's not timeless anyway.

How often do you step out? And nobody is so busy that they cannot step out periodically even while you're on a computer screen turning around and maybe there's a flower on your desk. Watch that.

It's especially important for people who are watching screens to sense the inner body so that some attention remains here. Otherwise it flows out continuously. And everything is conceptual on that screen.

I don't have one, but I know about it. People have told me. I know a little bit.

I know that these letters appear on the screen and people think they're communicating with other human beings, but it's just little letters on the screen. So if you cannot communicate through that letter on the screen, at least you can be in touch with yourself. And then perhaps you can be in touch even with that other person, but it won't be through the letters.

In another way, the connection will be there. We will look at questions that may arise out of the now if they do tomorrow. We can't know that now.

Maybe no question will arise anymore. All questions may have dissolved by tomorrow. So, vital questions, I would say, I'm not discouraging you from asking questions tomorrow, but vital questions, not abstract, conceptual questions, vital questions, I would say, you already have the answer to yourself.

If you truly need to know the answer, become still. Ask the question and then let go. If you need to know it, the answer comes from within, out of the stillness, which is the vastness of intelligence itself.

How could it not come? If it's not vital, the question will disappear in the stillness. You never needed to know.

You just thought you did. And there's a lot that we don't need to know. Many of you know the story, I've told it quite a few times, but there may be some of you who haven't heard it.

The Zen Master who became famous through just one thing, he would never explain anything. Whenever people asked him, please explain to us the meaning of Zen, which of course is already an impossible question, all he would do is raise his finger and look at you. Some people got it.

Of course, those who didn't get it, they asked, did you hear the question? Are you sitting there as a field of alert stillness or as a heavy person, heavy psychologically speaking, with a lot of accumulation in the mind, baggage? Are you home in this now or are you trying to get home?

Do you actually feel rooted in the now or looking for a better now? Trying to get home. Even when you're at home, trying to get home.

Being at home in the now, that's your home. And it's no longer a means to an end. This moment is not a means to an end.

That's an amazing thing. And even picking something up, a glass of water travels to your mouth in the same way that yesterday we started by pointing out that you can pick something up and look at it without the interference of labels, concepts. You can perform an action and be completely present with every stage.

It's not picking this up is not an inferior now to it reaching my mouth. But this is how most people live. Every moment is a means to the next one.

And the drinking itself, already somewhere else, it's a means to an end. At first it may only, from time to time, you're able to perform action in that way. Simple actions perhaps at first.

Where every movement is self-contained, it's just, it is fulfilling. Fulfilling not the end result in the future. The idea of being present with what you do is contained in ancient Japanese tea ceremony, for example, but it's become formalized now after hundreds of years.

You just go through the motions. It's become purely a technique for many people. But originally it's performing an action in which, or a sequence of actions in which no action is a means to an end.

There's a fullness of attention there. And that means there's a quality in what you do suddenly that is absent when the doing is a means to an end. A qualitative difference, you can actually feel what quality means when you compare an action that is a means to an end and an action that is done in the state of presence.

It is of high quality. And if you should be, if you were making something as part of your action, engaged in some kind of manufacturing something or building something, doing some kind of work that creates a structure in whatever field, whether it is in the arts or writing or anything that you're creating something, whether physical or otherwise, the creation reflects the state of consciousness and the quality will be whatever then is the end result of that present action will reflect presence.

It will emanate presence. Whatever is created in the state of presence when it's there, and it's not necessarily even a work of art when it's there, but this is the essence of all art, is that all great art emanates something that it still has an energy field of that state of consciousness out of which it came. So when you look at great art, it has a quality that is very hard to define, even art critics don't know how to define what is the difference between art and not art, and what is the difference between literature and just fiction.

Nobody can exactly say what that is. They've tried to write books about that. So it cannot be grasped or defined, it is an ineffable quality that is a reflection of the state of consciousness out of which this form arose.

And now the beauty of it is you don't need to become an artist because your whole life is this work of art. Your whole life and the conditions of your life, that is your work of art. So whether or not you're engaged in making something, in one way or another, everybody is making something, the external structures of your life.

So this quality is not there when it's a means to an end. So anything that is a lot of what is being manufactured in our civilization is a means to an end. It doesn't contain that essence of presence.

It's done because it's a means to an end. We need to produce enough to make a profit. So you produce one after another.

And so certain things have labels that say handmade and they are more expensive. But even that of course is not a guarantee that there was presence there. If there was, then you can feel it, you can sense it.

And even if you were just sitting there all day, not doing or making anything, that also you emanate the quality of presence directly then. And that is the highest form of healing. And inevitably sooner or later some people would be drawn to you because they sense that.

They can't say exactly what it is. But they sense something and so they want to be close to you because it feels good to be close to you. And that's the direct emanation of presence.

So you have the indirect emanation through works, something that you do or make or create. And you have a direct emanation of presence. And presence is and even I don't want to offend people to whom this word is distasteful, but presence is the presence of God.

Something shines through this form. This form has become somewhat transparent. And it's just a question of it's all the same.

There isn't my presence and your presence. It's nobody's possession. It's nobody's attainment.

There's nobody who can claim anything. I have attained presence. Who are you?

And so who are you? And the true answer is well I am presence. So how can I attain presence?

My presence is greater than yours. Just Egos can still sneak in at any stage still. And then that is your task is to become a transparency for presence.

Not as a future goal. The moment you have a future goal the transparency is actually lost. There's a density again because future goal implies a mind projection striving towards that now.

It can only be transparent now by not identifying with labels and concepts. So what happens collectively in this world, in this country depends on the degree of presence of consciousness that can come through the seemingly individual human beings. That's why Jesus always said I'm not doing anything.

It's not me. He even said don't call me good. Because that would affirm a form identity as my ultimate reality.

What Jesus called the Father is a term he had to use in a patriarchal society so that people would listen to him. Presence would have been too strange. And to say Dao, a Chinese word, wouldn't have meant anything.

There is somewhat, there's less identification now with form. This is why there's greater openness collectively to presence. In the past there was still very great identification with form.

And you couldn't have gone anywhere and nobody would have understood a single word if you had not spoken to them through the conditioning, the mental collective conditioning of their particular form. Eastern, whatever tradition it may be. So Jesus had to use the form of the Old Testament terminology, language to be heard.

But now, there's less identification with form. And this is good, you can actually see the truth, the same truth expressed in so many different forms. There's again the danger if you have been associated with one form for many years, it can happen that you become close to seeing the truth in other forms.

Some very strict Buddhists don't want to listen to me because it's not Buddhist enough. And some very strict Christians wouldn't want to listen to me, it's not Christian enough.

So before we go on to questions, just one more, this transparency is so important.

That's your task at any moment. Not to affirm your form identity. And perhaps not even to defend your form identity.

Often things happen as you move through life and interact with people where your form identity, the psychological form I'm not speaking your physical form is threatened relatively rarely, directly, but your psychological form of me is very often every day, somehow, somewhere at work or at home is threatened by someone who says something to you. If only you're driving along and another driver shouts something at you. You idiot.

But he doesn't say it like that. But when you sense then that comment and the energy behind it is like a blow and it threatens, it shakes your form identity. And deep down, even if you know very well that this is a very unconscious person, deep down the little me says maybe he's right.

And immediately comes a reactive mechanism in order to repair the injury to your form identity. Because it's painful to the form to be injured. Not physically painful, but emotionally painful.

And so you would shout something back and that repairs that. Or you would simply, perhaps you're beyond shouting back, but in your mind you would be saying you unconscious little worm. And that also works.

And in some way you may even be right. But not absolutely. So you have affirmed his form identity as he affirmed yours.

And for a few minutes or half an hour or an hour after that other things would come into your mind that you could have said but didn't say. And this can be quite interesting, the mind playing it out again and again with increasingly better versions of what you could have said. And then you say, why didn't I say that?

God, I should have said that. That's so good. Or if it's a different situation and this is a person that you meet regularly, then two days later you meet that person again.

The situation is long gone and then you say that thing that you've worked out in your mind. And... So there's an interesting thing, but I don't advocate what I'm saying now for people who all their lives have been extremely shy and fearful and never spoken up and said anything out of fear.

For them there are other practices. But not when your form identity is threatened in some way, not to resist that threat, simply allow that. Nothing really has been threatened, just a concept, a mental image.

And so somebody says something or shouts and instead of rushing into a repair job, just let it be. You idiot. It happened occasionally that while I was driving in those situations and once or twice the driver was very close and got very confused because he was looking at me and saying something similar and I was looking at him and there was no reacting force, nothing there to react and he got very confused.

And he shouted the same again because he thought, I must be deaf. And when you do that you suddenly, what at first seems like a weakness, you can sense an enormous peace and power and a very deeper level, not the power of me, a deeper power is suddenly there when you don't repair, attempt to repair your form identity when the world always does things to it, tries to do things to it. Or even try to assert it to make it bigger.

A typical case is in a conversation or a discussion, somebody says something which you'd absolutely disagree with or you know you have to put him right and it becomes a I know better and there's enormous energy behind it and then perhaps in the course of the discussion it's becoming revealed that this person has certain facts that are showing that your long held belief is actually not true and then this would be very hard to recognize if you're unconsciously identified with that position and keeping your sense of self intact you would be seeking all kinds of arguments to cover up the truth of what this person is saying because you're not defending the truth anymore, you're defending your mental image, your form identity.

This is often the case when you observe when people discuss things, they're defending a me and they're attempting to assert a me needing to stand out and another interesting practice then in a discussion, when it's not vital that this person should know your opinion, nothing much depends on it and it's just just simply be quiet but not then going into thought and thinking how spiritual I am because I'm not this is the deeper meaning behind this strange parable of Jesus saying turn the other cheek which is all metaphorical is not it's the practice of not attempting to repair your form identity something just non-reaction and there's enormous strength in that if you truly needed to say something because a certain situations or course of action depended on it, you would say it but you're not defending a me, a sense of self what you say then is in the service of the truth, if it is the truth, but not a me that identifies with what it sees as the truth and then it feels a little bit as if you were becoming nobody you're kind of becoming almost invisible when you're not God and there's a strange it actually feels good but at first the little me gets uncomfortable with that and then once you know the depth that is there when is the end of all fear, this is an aspect of the depth I talked about yesterday within yourself so a good thing would be for example if all the world suddenly thought you were dreadful maybe they have some kind of belief about you that you did something that you didn't do or maybe you did do it not repairing not needing to repair that because there's a greater power deep within you than that than your form this is contained in the story I've told a few times about the Zen master who lived in a town in Japan and was very highly respected and one day a young girl 17 year old gave birth, she wasn't married, she lived next door to the Zen master, she gave birth to a baby and the parents what happened who is the father, this is dreadful and she said well it's the Zen master next door, he did it 9 months ago when I was visiting him for spiritual counseling that's when it happened so they started screaming and shouting and rushing to the Zen master and saying she just told us what you did to her and they told everybody in the village and the whole village the town was in commotion and then the Zen master when the parents came sat there and listened she just told us that you are the father and you did it to her and he listened and all he said was is that so? and they said yes and here's the baby you have it, we don't want it, you look after it it's yours, this is your baby and he said oh is that so? and so he went away, he lost his reputation nobody came to see him anymore and for one year all his activities were looking after the baby feeding it a year later the girl became a little bit more mature and suddenly confessed to her parents that somebody else was the father, the boy who lived two streets away and not the Zen master so the parents became very disconcerted and rushed to the Zen master and said we're terribly sorry can you ever forgive us? she just told us that you're not the father and he listened and said is that so?

and said yes and we want the baby back now is that so? and he handed the baby back and suddenly his reputation was restored and this is a teaching story of, it's a little bit extreme just as Jesus' parable of turning the other cheek is a little bit extreme but it's a teaching story to show the state of non-resistance, inner non-resistance and the power that lies when you contact that state of, live in that state of inner non-resistance and you see the the good also that comes of any situation that looks bad on the surface just as in this teaching story it looks like a dreadful situation on the surface, big drama and so the good that comes out of any seemingly bad situation when you enter the state of non-resistance to that situation because any so-called bad situation is to do this, what is that so-called bad? that so-called bad is that some form is no longer surviving as that form whether it's a physical form in which case it is physical death or whether it is a psychological form of me or my belief systems that don't survive or my image of me that doesn't survive or other people's images of me who don't survive, it is always some form is being shaken and dissolving or dying this is what is called bad or the threat that some form may be the form is being attacked in one way or another and when that is not resisted from within then the form becomes loose, transparent or dissolves and whenever a form dissolves it really means death whenever there is death of any kind it could be a psychological death in the case of the Zen master it wasn't death anymore because he had died already psychologically so it was easy for him there was no longer a form there, there was just a form in other people's minds that was being projected a highly regarded Zen master and that collapsed if those projections had still been feeding his internal mental form that would have led to great suffering so it's always when the so called bad form is being threatened or destroyed or dissolving and there is no inner resistance to that and that goes death, the ultimate non-resistance to what looks evil there we gain inner non-resistance externally certain actions may happen inner an inner state of non-resistance do not resist evil one of the most profound statements it's about an inner

[Speaker 2] (8:04:06 - 8:04:07)

state

[Speaker 1] (8:04:08 - 8:28:33)

it doesn't necessarily mean that if somebody comes at you with a weapon that you don't prevent him from hitting you but it's an inner state so here this is the secret is this non-resistance and then the transformation of any situation into a deeper good not the good that is between continuous fluctuations in the world of polarities between good and bad something is born as good, something dies as bad deeper, a deeper good that is even contained in the image of Jesus on the cross which is an act of evil one could say but at the same time there is a depth to it and it's an archetypal image a deep truth embedded in it whether you are a Christian or not to see that there is a deep truth embedded in that the archetypal image of it is evil on the surface and yet there is a deeper good there because of surrender because of non-resistance so to know the power that is in you whenever that is the case now any situation is transformed into good imagine the situation you dissolve all drama because all those situations are drama some dramas are violent and that true healing is dissolving the drama through not contributing to drama in any way and this is what the Zen master did he never became part of their drama the whole town was acting out drama and there he was nothing ever happened only good came of it and the good was that this baby for one year grew up in his presence was loved deeply the best start in life you can imagine and only good came of it, the girl became conscious nobody accused she probably came back to him later and nothing, no change see the good that comes in any situation in your life in which you enter the state of non-resistance it is always to do with now of course in the now the parents come running and say you did that this is the form the now takes at this moment the parents come in and say you are the most dreadful person on earth you did it is that so?

that's an extreme form he could also say no I didn't do it without an inner defence mechanism taking place I didn't do it that's how it is and again he is not defending or asserting his form identity, simply stating the fact that would be a slightly less extreme form of the same teaching but the most extreme is not even to defend yourself verbally, not to say nothing but that nothing is the inner really and also it's not always people situations come not to resist them as forms that say this situation is bad and this strengthens the me that complains, remember we talked about the complaining entity in the head the favourite device for the egoic entity is to complain about a situation that you find yourself in, instead of being in a relationship of non-resistance towards the situation which may on the surface justifiably be called bad and then see the good that suddenly emerges and how quickly it actually changes when it's not internally resisted non-resistance internally does not always imply that there is no action externally but it is non-reactive action, simple action, not action that arises out of the reactive little me which is fearful action, violent action so this transformation into good of anything that looks bad through that any situation amazing, amazing and it could be that a situation happens and you know you probably only have 5 more minutes to live extreme case of bad and there is utter and complete yes and so there cannot be there cannot not be a deep serenity and peace suddenly filling your entire being and then death comes dancing towards you that's the flowering of consciousness and whether it flowers for the next 20, 30, 40 years in your life and gradually unfolds or whether it flowers for 5 minutes it doesn't really matter there is no it is beyond time that flowering arises out of the timeless dimension of pure consciousness anyway there is no time and even if in some of you the old mind structures obscure that flowering again as you move back into the world in a few it may happen when a crisis comes or death comes suddenly it will be there and you will remember sitting here but then it won't be a memory it will be an alive now the same aliveness suddenly is there and this also the collective situation in this country and in the world in general at this time non-resistance you look at it and see it and that's how it is don't create an enemy in your mind no situation is an enemy and no person is an enemy so there is a gentle what I sometimes describe as a spaciousness around this whole situation suddenly even the situation is not an enemy it is this collective situation it is and suddenly the situation itself is embedded in a spaciousness a gentleness and we may focus on that again this afternoon but you do it at any time, the collective situation in the world at this time don't make that situation you may have already relinquished the unconsciousness of making certain groups of people into enemies but you couldn't be making the situation into an enemy by feeling it is dreadful and it shouldn't be happening the fact is that it is it is there is non-resistance towards the situation you see the is-ness this is the situation at this time on the planet and it is as it is and then through allowing that is-ness and not judging it anymore a vastness reveals itself to you that is deeper than that particular formation collective formation which is temporary anyway one thing that is certain about any situation is this too will pass and that is healing that can be collective healing if a group of people even individual it's all one presence realizes this truth and holds that space of non-resistance even to the situation of course there are no enemies there is simply human unconsciousness and there is the conflict situation and there is the acceptance of that is-ness and suddenly the worst situation is surrounded by peace and then something happens even to the situation not because you want to change it I have to do something about it it is deeper than anybody's doing the one intelligence can then operate flow through the human form more fully and that does what is the only place where the only sanity there is is through the one intelligence so we are holding the space where we recognize the suchness of this collective situation and with that comes compassion with all involved all are involved in this violent drama and perhaps the violence won't be going on that much longer we don't know that now all that are involved in this violent human drama we could call it the earth drama we are looking upon that situation with acceptance and this means that is also compassion at first there may be some sadness there because the sadness is still there because you see the forms that have already died in there then comes acceptance of the sadness because that also is the suchness of this moment that something in you feels sad about what happened yes so you accept the suchness of that then you accept the suchness of that situation the totality of it and then the sadness becomes compassion now compassion in compassion at the core of compassion that is not sadness compassion arises when you not even resist the sadness that you feel or mourning about death which is a form of pain and that is not resisted either inside yourself you cannot reach the state of compassion if you don't move through that if you don't accept that which arises which is sadness or pain about the situation yes and so you go deeper by accepting that is what you feel and that takes you to a deeper core and that core that lies, that is the core of compassion compassion is a core of deep peace and on the it's hard to talk about this on the periphery of that deep peace there may be a lingering sadness yes but deep down there is a peace and a serenity that many many people have reported they found spontaneously when they were facing death and many who actually died were never able to tell us that that's what they found that serenity and that peace and that from there all healing emanates that has enormous transformative power to hold that state to be, to live in that state, it's enormous power so that is don't underestimate the effect on the collective consciousness a group such as this can have and simply because collectively collectively we enter that state and hold it not with any effort allow it to be there's the situation the earth drama there's a sadness around it some pain and through allowing both the external and the internal the external is the madness of the drama and the violence the internal is the to some extent the reaction of the personal self to it yes that's there too and so it's allowed on both levels the external and the internal and only if you allow both levels to be then that you go deeper to the core and suddenly you reach through the surrender you reach the serenity, the peace that is the essence of your being and of all beings the one essence and knowing that in effect in turn has enormous effect even on the world of form it's only by knowing the formless that something that shines through you and then affects even the world of form so this is perhaps it's no coincidence there are no coincidences everything is connected to the totality the fact that our gathering here this week is taking place at this particular time and some of you perhaps even doubted before coming here whether you wanted to come here you may have doubted whether even to look for peace whether you even have a right in that situation to look for inner peace do I have the right to look for inner peace when so many people are suffering perhaps you ask yourself a question like that and of course it's not a question of having a right there is no other way for humanity to become transformed and so it's not here not just while we are sitting here as a group it's also when you go away you continue to go within and go past the two possible levels of resistance which is resistance to what is externally and resistance to what is internally which means you feel bad about feeling bad you feel sad and then that doesn't feel good but you get stuck on that level of feeling sad and you have stories in your head about it and you give you never move beyond it because you feel sad but you don't want to be sad you shouldn't be feeling sad it's acceptance this is what I feel this is, that is so as we are doing it here you do it when you are alone when you go away from here wherever you go enter that state nothing can prevent you from finding that deep core of peace which transforms the world nothing can prevent you because there is nothing that you resist if there is nothing that you resist that means nothing can prevent you from finding it and if your inner state is turbulent you notice that your inner state is turbulent and say, there it is my inner state is turbulent there I feel the turbulence that's how it is there it is it is amazing what happens when you don't resist so nothing can stop you from non-resistance and all you might say you go and suddenly you wake up in the morning and remember all your problems and the dreadful problems of the world and you feel very unhappy and say this is reality and that retreat that wasn't reality the television is telling you what reality is and you get very sad and after two hours of unhappiness deep unhappiness you feel your unhappiness and then you remember your spiritual practice and you say well I couldn't possibly find peace look how unhappy I am there is no point in even trying to find peace in that unhappy state I am so unhappy ok you are unhappy that's what is I am unhappy at this moment I am so unhappy that's how it is unhappy so let me be unhappy it's ok to be unhappy this sounds very weird doesn't it because the very essence of unhappiness is that it's not ok something is not deeply not right and if you then say a seemingly mad statement I don't mind being unhappy doesn't seem to make sense but there is great power there because it's the end of resistance and the very cause of unhappiness was an enormous amount of resistance let me be unspiritual it's the letting be and suddenly there is something far greater depth than the little me that thinks of itself of this or that or even has the sadness suddenly the depth is there so isn't this is so amazing that nothing can stop you any condition that is non-resisted will take you there anything that's not resisted takes you there any condition any situation takes you to peace takes you to that you can find that out I'm speaking about this now with reference to large scale events you can find it out but on a small scale you're sitting quietly in your room enjoying the peace all around you and suddenly some huge noise starts up outside maybe it's one of those I don't know if they're called pneumatic drills here in England they're called pneumatic drills one of the worst noises there can be how can I be peaceful here I mean this just doesn't work and you can then try a little practice you listen to that noise and see there it is you accept the is-ness of that noise the mind no longer labels it when you accept the is-ness it is and you begin to listen to it and there's no longer a me that contracts and says no to it you begin to listen to it without a no complete non-resistance and you'll be very surprised what you feel suddenly and even the noise might be transformed and the pneumatic drill might be saying oooom

[Speaker 2] (8:28:34 - 8:28:34)

oooom

[Speaker 1] (8:28:58 - 8:51:12)

now whether you stay then in that room or not it's a secondary matter maybe you move to another room where it's more quiet or you may enjoy staying there and continue to listen to the oom the action that then takes place is secondary it will be right for that moment maybe you will remove yourself or maybe the moment the drill becomes oom maybe it stops so in some cases in little cases of acceptance you may be surprised sometimes in major cases it happens how quickly a situation changes once you've surrendered to it internally how quickly it changes and this is why some people say when they notice that this happens they say it almost looks as if life were giving a test a test whether you can surrender or not this is how it sometimes looks I don't necessarily want you to believe that you don't need to believe anything but it often looks as if life were giving you a little challenge just to see if you can surrender especially you'll get it when you claim that now you have arrived occasionally people come to me and I love it when they come or they call and come and say I am liberated now I'm totally liberated I know it, and it's wonderful I love that, I don't say you're not right, they may well be right but I often say just wait let it give it a few months before you start writing a book about it you can never plan for vital things we were going to have questions this morning but the present moment required something else so we may have questions this afternoon at the moment this is vital at this moment for us to realize that the power that we have not as we as individual little me's that the power that there is in consciousness and the power that this group has that each individual has not as an individual but as an opening into the power the one power so your power is the opening that you can be an opening into that and then it flows through you not as a me that claims anything that I am going to change the world no but the world can change through you so to speak it's not so much a doing as an opening and an allowing and even non-resistance is not really a doing one could say it's the opposite of doing resistance is doing non-resistance is allowing and so you have strange you have certain Indian philosophies and teachings that say there is no doer realize that nothing that you do is that you do it it just happens ultimately it's true but I don't approach it that way it looks often when I speak as if you could do something and that is both true and not true it must remain a paradox if we take one position we are not quite right if I say yes you can do it's not quite right if I say there is nothing you can do it's not quite right either you are one with the totality so anything that you do obviously is not separate from the totality it acts through you and even the belief that yes I can change the world if it's the right if you realize what that statement means yes there is truth in that if it's not misunderstood as if me as the little me could do it but if I what I perceive as I which is in the first instance is this form temporary, no, but that becomes a window sometimes in groups people like to arrive very early or when there are talks and they like to sit in the front and I sometimes wonder why do they like to sit in the front and they say because I can feel an emanation there that comes from you and and I first said well and I realized what they meant the emanation is because this form is a window and so the breeze comes through the opening it doesn't come from the window of course so there is some truth in it it's nice if you want to sit near an open window where you can feel the breeze but of course the real reason why you are sitting there is so that you also become an open window and then the breeze also comes through you the very fact that you recognize what I metaphorically call breeze the very fact that you can sense it means that it's already in you otherwise you wouldn't even sense that that in you which senses the deep peace the emanation of peace that comes from another person, the emanation of love that comes from what looks like another person that in you that is sensitive to that feels that, responds to that is the same it is the same love and peace that you see coming from that form that which draws you temporarily perhaps to that form is the same in you it recognizes itself that's why it wants to be close to that form, there is still the danger that the mind misinterprets it and thinks there is something essential to this form, to this person but that is never true it's only because that person is transparent that this person, so called person can reflect something to you that is your essential reality the mind the mind can construct now another identity for that a form identity for that transparency and say and you could then worship a form identity not realizing why you are doing that it's precisely because there is a transparency to the form and feel so you could a so called guru I'm not a guru well, who knows but is both can be very helpful and can be a hindrance to finding yourself if understood rightly the function of a spiritual teacher if understood rightly can be a great help if understood wrongly can become a hindrance because it can prevent you from finding you because then you see it all out there in this great divine being what about you? and so those are people who are totally attached to the form of their teacher and he or she is the greatest and there is no other like him or her well that's nice, but what about you?

what is your reality? are you not is your essence divine? so it's use that wisely the spiritual teacher and when you listen to tapes of this teacher the temporary form of course all videos use all those things wisely whenever the truth is recognized as if it were coming from out there who recognizes it?

what is it in you that recognizes it? it's the truth who is it that senses and feels and recognizes the emanation of peace or love? it's the peace and love in you that sees itself perhaps more clearly as yet you can sense it in yourself but it's the response is there and so it's good sometimes to when you sense that you let go of the form of the teacher some people have a photo of this form at first I thought that was weird because why would they want to have a photo of a face and then some people said well when I look at it I suddenly feel peaceful and I become present again there's a presence when I look at it and then I looked at my photo and I said yes it can work perhaps laughter laughter as long as they realize they are not looking at this form, they are looking really at themselves the essence of what they are looking at is themselves how can a photo work it's a piece of paper I don't quite understand that but on the other hand a piece of paper of course is alive too it's molecules, it's an energy field so I don't know if it works but then once you sense that and you see presence arises and the piece that comes with presence is there look away from the photo don't get attached to the form too much using the form as a reflector of your own reality which then can emerge more fully sitting here also it draws out presence in you that's the main reason that consciousness that we call presence that is not to do with the conditioning that lies on top of it is drawn out as you sit here it responds it recognizes itself and so that's the birth of presence one could say in many of you the birth has already happened and so it's simply an intensification of that and that is beautiful and so this form has a temporary function at some point it will pop like a soap bubble and it doesn't matter so using it wisely and whenever you see it in another you sense it where do you sense it? where is it?

here nobody is more divine closer to God than you nobody is closer to the one, to the source to God than you the only difference may be that you don't know how close you are you can also gaze into the eyes of a loved one a son a daughter a partner a parent you gaze into their eyes and there is a stillness while you look you look at each other not through mental concepts not even as this is my son or this is my partner or this is simply presence and you look and there is a love there and a peace any person that you love look into their eyes and where is the love? in you and what is that love?

if it is love if it is not the egoic clinging that is called love but the true love is knowing the other as yourself feeling that oneness not just at first it might be a deep connectedness but when you look more closely that connectedness is more than connectedness it is actually the oneness and knowing that sensing that is love so when you are with a partner it could be that you are beyond mental formations when you are with that partner there is just the love and then close your eyes and even if the form of the partner isn't there, the essence of that love is there, which is the same essence in that person so you everyone ultimately whoever you meet when you dwell in that state of connectedness which is more than connectedness oneness you are always meeting yourself and at first you may only realize that when you are with a spiritual teacher who emanates very clearly your own essence back to you, so to speak then it is very clear that you are meeting yourself and then you meet others, it may also be when you truly love another human being it is also easier to feel that you are meeting yourself the essence of oneness and then you meet many others where it is not so clear yet because there is all kinds of stuff that cover up the essence in that person and perhaps a reaction to that which covers up the essence in that person may bring back a little bit of covering up in yourself so you can't feel it but as it intensifies you can actually look through whatever covers up the divine reality of that human being you look through it you see it but it is not of interest to you whatever that person does whatever the conditioning mental, emotional conditioning little me entity is is not of much interest to you and you see it but you look through it and you can sense the essence of that person and love them no matter what they do or say or think they are because as you love them as yourself so you look through the veil of illusion an illusory identity and love each human being because you recognize them as yourself and then you love your neighbor as yourself your neighbor is everyone you meet there are no conditions to that love I will only love you if you become more conscious and of course Jesus said if you love only those who do good to you anybody can do that I don't think that's the exact translation but and said love even those who seem to be doing wrong to you or plotting evil or whatever what he means is because you can't try to do that Christians haven't fully understood the depths of that statement so he said okay I have to love this dreadful person I'm going to try I'll see if I can love all my neighbors and it never quite worked and in fact it often had a counterproductive effect because in your mind you created an image of a good Christian that I am who loves his neighbors and then you were even able to unable to acknowledge in yourself the hatred that you felt towards your neighbor and covering it up and then it comes out through very unconscious things that you say or do and deny even that no I didn't do that and it can go so far as to inflicting violence on others so what does he really mean when he says even those who it means looking through the layer of illusion that pretends to be a person and not making as I pointed out yesterday not making human unconsciousness into an identity for that person then you get stuck the wall of unconsciousness and when you've constructed an identity for another person out of the movement of unconsciousness you get you get drawn back a little bit more into your own illusory form identity you have to free everyone from that it's always reciprocal you construct an illusory identity for one other person in this world and then you're trapped to some extent yourself so human interaction is a great practice, spiritual practice it's the very ground where it all happens spiritual practice so using the teacher wisely recognizing yourself no more the essence of who you are you could use a Buddha Buddha is a beautiful image

[Speaker 2] (8:51:13 - 8:51:15)

he sits there

[Speaker 1] (8:51:24 - 9:17:23)

and of course it's not really an image of a person, nobody knows what the Buddha looked like and there were hundreds of years after he died for hundreds of years there were no Buddha images they came much later but it's an inner state it's a pointer to an inner state and there you see the peace and where is the peace? here and if there's non-peace, what do you do?

there's the peaceful Buddha and here's the unhappy me let me be unhappy then okay unhappy unhappy and there we go transformation happens something you can do with reference to it's not really a doing but language is like that with reference to the collective events in the world at this time you hold the situation in your consciousness you contemplate it allow it to be feel what you feel about it, if you still feel it could be that when you hold that situation you may already no longer be generating sadness it's possible that you can go directly from acceptance of the situation into peace or you may go indirectly from holding the situation not in total acceptance perhaps some sadness arises some pain arises then you accept that and then you go into peace and do that a few times during the day and also somebody told tonight the president will speak I don't know whether you are going to listen to it, I don't believe there's a TV set in this at Omega which usually is a good thing I would say if you listen to it or watch it somewhere on the radio then while you listen or watch or if you don't at that time perhaps particularly hold that spaciousness that doesn't say there's something dreadfully wrong in this world, no hold that spaciousness the suchness of this the isness of this that's all that's needed it's almost I'm doing this, it's almost as if here were the situation and the turbulence of it and here you are holding it in a gentle embrace it's a vast embrace because in a deeper sense whatever happens is there's nothing outside of you, whatever happens somehow is part of you there's ultimately nothing outside all unconsciousness that you see is all part of you there's nothing outside of you really, don't try to understand that mentally actually and so you can hold even a vast situation like that in a much greater vastness and there is gentleness and there is compassion this attitude of holding this gesture is I'm doing this to show you an inner state but to do it can also help to remind yourself of what it is like there's something perhaps feminine almost about it, it is so and you see it sometimes in statues of female representations of the divine it's often in that of Mary or often it's that gesture of gentle holding thank you thank you to Joe for the song and the Hopi elders for the message that you just heard part of that message I read it just now take nothing personally sadness, fear anger, even those things that seem to be mostly to do with who you are fear is human fear, anger is human anger sadness is human sadness not really personal and the mind is the human mind and its structures the way it works conditioned human mind and a mind based identity also conditioned nothing personal anywhere a new identity is emerging it's very different from the personalised sense of self some purists would say, well it's no identity at all, it's no self well it depends on how you want to use language I'd say a new identity is emerging who you are beyond the narrow personalised sense of me to some extent that still operates a little bit the framework of your life you remember things you still have a name probably but you're not seeking an identity accumulating stuff around your name which is an unconscious process starts as soon as you learn your name which you didn't even choose and then stuff accumulates around it a me, me, me the other thing I remember from just reading the message from the Hopi elders do everything in a sacred manner and that's exactly what we addressed this morning so that you cannot do something in a sacred manner if it's a means to an end if this moment is a means to an end and sacred action implies that you are completely present with that action and you give it your full attention you honour this now that's what I called this morning quality high quality really is that sacredness that comes into your life more and more it doesn't mean necessarily that you become extremely slow from now on although at times as this new thing comes into your life it may be that alone in your room you might be slowly practicing picking something up without making it into a means to an end this is it's pick up a pen an object, the hand moves towards it you pick it up and even that movement is not a means to an end and you look at it and let it be so completely that labels are unnecessary in the mind there's simply presence, the field of presence in which it appears that's you and put it down so you performed an action in the field of awareness that's sacred so at first you may slow down here and there and gradually you can resume perhaps not your normal speed because normal speed is a bit mad but you can do things naturally a natural flow to doing and if the situation requires it it may well be that the flow is a fast flow and yet you're present in every movement even while you're running you're present with every movement not trying to reach a mental projection of me over there where I would like to be laughing running without the mental projection of me over there, just me here movement, energy moving beautiful and again it's a better quality running there was an interesting film some years ago in which somebody does a lot of running and I remember the way he looks when he's running as Forrest Gump as if he were standing still and his head goes like that not and that happens to be a film who is about a man a fictitious person who his state is very similar to the enlightened state except that he is pre-thought but his connectedness, his oneness is the same as the enlightened state he doesn't know it so things come to him easily, whatever he needs he does heroic things in the war in that film and yet claims no credit, nobody did it it just happened so that's a beautiful example of enlightened state, not really what we call the state of becoming free of thinking but not yet having gone through the thinking state and thereby live in that state of greater connectedness, but we can't go that way a similar film many years earlier, if you want to watch it and haven't seen it yet about also a fictitious person in a similar state it's called Being There so that's both these films show how things become helpful how life cooperates with you when you live in that way of non-resistance and not having a personalized me that needs, wants and claims and resists that obstructs the flow and so life becomes a sacred thing it always was but we didn't know it we may have a few questions if there are any, just a few words about questions in general there may by the way be more questions than answers here no question matters that much because this is not about understanding ultimately what you need to understand is easy it's very little the rest isn't to do with working something out mentally and yet a few questions may arise I would encourage vital questions that concern yourself or maybe somebody close to you or your practicing of presence the arising of presence in you or the obstacles to the arising of presence in you or the pain body questions like that vital, immediate true and then there are other questions that are not so helpful but they may be interesting very interesting but not, they lack the vitality as an example would be please explain the difference between your concept of presence and the Buddhist concept of sunyata it's interesting but it's a thought based mind question and if we were here for many weeks maybe we could address that another question that is not vital, an example would be what are we Americans supposed to do in this situation what are we supposed to do now if President Bush came in here and asked that question it would be real and then perhaps if we are still enough an answer would come but if you ask that question it's a hypothetical question if you were in command what would you do well I'm not that's why I don't know what to do somebody who doesn't like public speaking handed me a question earlier so I'll start with that one this is quite a few people may have a similar question most questions if they are vital will be helpful to almost everybody the answers, if there are any answers will be helpful to everyone can you talk about community Sangha, that's the Buddhist word for community would you suggest meeting in small groups to practice together and what would we do exactly and how can we avoid the various trappings of ego rituals and organizations thank you so much for your teachings

[Speaker 2] (9:17:23 - 9:17:25)

thank you

[Speaker 1] (9:17:27 - 9:29:41)

many people are asking about meeting in small groups and many people already meeting in small groups once a week or whatever in their local communities cities, towns and you may already have a group at home or you may be part of a group or you the possibility of having or joining a group may have already come up in your life it's helpful it certainly is helpful to sit with a group of people in a shared space of presence that it truly is helpful if you don't have a group that's fine other people around you will begin to ask questions begin to wake up as you are waking up others around you will begin to wake up and you may well find yourself having an informal group, you never wanted to set up a group and suddenly there are a few people around you who are also waking up and so you get together occasionally and it can arise naturally without any prior planning, that's possible too and the best things arise in that way or you may have a slightly more formal setting where you open your home and invite people who have read the book to come and sit together and there are various ways then of doing this it's not so much a doing but the least risky way of doing this is to invite people in sit together in stillness for a while perhaps at the very beginning listen to some inspiring music because everybody comes in with the agitated mind energy often after work or whenever they come so a little bit of music then silence, shared stillness then you could listen to a tape for half an hour or an hour or a video and then have another period of silence and go home then there's very little danger of mind interference or you could have a more active group in which people share of their own life, how presence has come into their lives or obstacles they are meeting and that requires one or two people of the group to be able to hold the space of presence to hold that spaciousness to be in that state of awareness otherwise it can become a mind dominated group setting and everybody begins to talk expressing their viewpoints and suddenly presence is gone so if there are one or two perhaps you yourself it makes a difference if there is one person who is not there as a person but as a spaciousness and just be there and sometimes words may come out of that spaciousness that looks like a person not to be careful that it doesn't become a social gathering there's nothing wrong with social gatherings but most social gatherings are dominated by mind so it's a field of presence that people enter and yet avoiding all kind of self-consciousness about it some people like to have candles, others don't want any paraphernalia ritual was mentioned here some people like a little bit of ritual my only ritual is the bell there are candles some people will like it some people will be turned off by it somebody had a group somebody I know and quite a few people went and then one man who went there the first time said it was so spooky all these candles and keep ritual don't overdo ritual and get simple I don't want to create an organization as such because as the questioner mentions there's always egoic things that happen in organizations but some kind of place where people can find out who is running local groups I'm looking at that at the moment and so at some point there may be on my website local groups mentioned it may start soon and your group may be part of that we'll have to look without any organization as such just so that people can find out where there are groups but even if you have no formal group as you are awakening there will be people around you who are also awakening and so almost inevitably some kind of community does arise even if there's never anything formal if you're working one-on-one and perhaps you're already a counselor or do some other kind of work with people on a physical body work or whatever kind of work you may find that more and more presence comes in and takes over and you enter that state whenever you sit with someone or be with someone and for any counselors as you already probably know the main qualification to be a therapist an effective therapist is not I would disagree with Freud who said you need to have understood your own dreams yes that's helpful too but you need to be able to listen truly listen if anybody can truly listen would be already effective as a counselor and true listening means a state of complete non-conceptualization non-labeling judging complete openness in the same way that you look at a tree whatever is needed comes out of that state it may not even come through you within that spaciousness it may come through the other person that other person has a question, a problem and suddenly realizes what the answer is or suddenly realizes that the problem is meaningless and the question disappears or the answer comes through you suddenly you find yourself saying something and always becoming and many of you will be working if only informally working isn't the right word being with people becoming comfortable with not knowing the essence also of that kind of listening and of being with people is never feeling that I know or I should know but I don't know and people may sometimes come with problems that look beyond solution I don't know so not feeling that you need to know or that you do know you should know become comfortable with entering the space of not knowing then greater intelligence can operate through you and that's the alert presence you only know what is vital for you to know of that situation you won't know more than that and you won't know it beforehand and probably afterwards you forget what you said at the last retreat somebody asked me can you explain again what you said yesterday about this or that and I had forgotten and that person hadn't quite understood perhaps was a little bit hard of hearing and hadn't understood I had already said it but I couldn't remember what I had said but somebody in the audience remembered it and said it and then I repeated it and everybody laughed because when these words came out of my mouth they were not fresh and new they were lacking aliveness I repeated the same words that I had said the previous day but because somebody reminded me what I had said they came out of my mouth again and they were so flat and lifeless that everybody laughed and that is the truth that you remember it lacks the power to transform it lacks transformative power when it comes from memory and if it arises out of presence it has transformative power and it might be very simple and yet there's a power to that you're also free if you want to say a few words about our gathering feel free if it's not a question that's fine too and if it's a question feel free to ask a young man came to me yesterday I don't know if he wants to ask his question here now it could be that all questions have already dissolved

[Speaker 2] (9:29:57 - 9:30:08)

it concerns the body I got along with you talking sharing how the conditioned mind

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[Speaker 3] (0:00 - 1:46)

The body. I got along with you talking or sharing how the conditioned mind stops us from being in presence. And what I observe is that the body, physically, is constantly evaluating situations, judging, so to speak, this feels good, this feels bad, this is pleasurable.

And that is before, often, not always, before I perceive that there is a conceptualizing taking place. Or you asked us to observe nature, to learn from nature. And what has already been concerning me also for a long time is when I observe animals who are living bodies like we are, they are not conceptualizing, I guess, but like they are judging, they are fighting for dominance or territory.

So I feel like it's not only somehow the conditioned mind that seems to spark up duality for whatever it means in the end, but it is something physical also. And the third facet of that that really is close to me that when there is a trauma early in life, it seems to be a physical memory, it's before the concepts of thinking start, it's like a reflex, it can dominate your life, but it's not really a thinking. So this is my question concerning the body.

[Speaker 8] (1:47 - 1:48)

Thank you, thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:59 - 20:27)

The body carries a lot of, inherits, because it is inherited from the past, the DNA contains the information from the past, carries a lot of the stuff that is connected with the condition, the condition of separateness, of being a separate me. So that is already carried almost in the cells of the body, one could say. The pain body I mentioned is already in you before thinking starts.

The pain body is already there. A baby already comes into this world with an accumulation of past history in the body, of past suffering in the body. And some babies you may have found cry a lot, other babies cry relatively little, and that's to do with the density of the pain body.

So when things happen, often that deep-seated conditioning is already operating in you, but it is connected with the mind. It is the outcome of thousands and thousands of years of mind identification and seeing yourself as a separate entity, a me. Animals, if you look at animals you see compared to humans, they live in a world that is free of problems.

They don't carry the heaviness of a personalized sense of me. And yet, yes, they are involved in fights. Animals have their limitations.

An animal can express love mostly only towards its offspring, except animals that live very close to human beings. So animals have their own limitations, but when you look at the natural world, you see both things. You see great harmony, which is true.

There is the harmony of the totality. You see also animals living in a problem-free state, but occasionally they go out and fight and kill. And then they walk again, or they sleep, or they rest.

And then there's another, perhaps two males fighting for dominance. So they enter the periods of struggle and fight, but don't carry it around as a me. So I describe in the book, I observe ducks swimming in the water, and occasionally they get into a fight for some reason.

Perhaps territorial. They also need a little bit of space around. And then they separate, flap their wings a few times, stand up on the water, and swim off in opposite directions.

And then they swim just like Forrest Gump runs. When they swim, they go. And the past is immediately relinquished.

Yes, there is struggle there too. It's not animals. Every animal has its limitations.

An animal is deeply connected to the source, hasn't gone out that far, but also experiences the condition of separateness. But nothing is separate from your consciousness. So whatever you see on this planet is not totally separate from your consciousness.

So as your consciousness changes, you may find changes in nature taking place also. If your consciousness is a fearful state, your state of mind is one of fear and struggle for survival, you see the reflection of the fear and the struggle for survival everywhere. And there is a strange saying in the Bible and other more recent so-called prophecies, the lion shall lie with the lamb, and other prophecies concerning animals, that as humans undergo a shift in consciousness, animals also undergo a transformation.

To a large extent, when you observe animals in their, yes, not state of complete perfection, they also, they don't suffer, because to suffer you need a self who suffers. But they go have pain, they go through pain. A lot of pain, of course, is inflicted on them by humans, but they also go through some pain inflicted by other animals, no doubt.

And yet, there's great, a great balance in the totality of nature, in the animal kingdom and the totality, there's great balance. And there is, despite what seems like disharmony when one animal kills another and eats it, there is a harmony that pervades the whole, the totality of nature. And if you look at the individual animal, you can still learn a great deal from it, even though it has its limitations.

See how 90% of the time the animal is at ease with itself and its surroundings. Some animals are continuously alert, because there could be an enemy somewhere. So there are birds in a continuous state of alertness, but that is not fear.

When you watch a bird, to learn about animals you need to watch, and you learn a great deal that a bird is continuously going, and it's not a state of fear, it's simply a state of alertness. So, I'm not, I don't want to idealize the animal kingdom, because yes, it has a downside, and anybody who owns a cat, well, nobody owns a cat, but... Anybody who is owned by a cat, knows, you taste the polarities.

It's this beautiful creature that lives, when it walks, such harmony, such flow. When it rests, it rests completely. Many artists have painted an animal and cats at rest, that shape itself, such harmony.

When it looks, moves into a new territory, it stops, it pauses, it looks, it doesn't hurry, it just goes, before it jumps, it looks, and then you can see, it's already, it imagined itself there, and then the body follows. And then it comes home, and it tears apart a beautiful bird, and your whole living room is full of feathers, it's dreadful. It doesn't need the bird, it gets plenty of food, and yet, it cannot help it.

It is compulsively driven to attack the bird, or the mouse, or the rat, or the squirrel. Compulsively driven, it cannot get rid of half a million years, or a million years of conditioning, because for a long time it lived on these creatures, it can't get rid of that. So even seeing a bird, its mouth quivers.

Somebody visited me, I had three cats at some point, and that cat had just caught or killed a bird, and that woman picked up the cat and said, You shouldn't be doing that! And the woman had come to me for a counseling session, she couldn't get rid of deep-seated forms of conditioning. Only 40 years, and the cat a million years.

So there's always the two sides to the animal kingdom, there's great beauty and harmony, but if you look at humans, many humans are in a continuous state of disharmony and non-ill, what's the word, unease with their surroundings, they are not in alignment with life, they don't fit in, as animals do. In that sense, animals still express a greater wholeness than humans, despite the shortcomings, the limitations of their form. And so I would say you can still learn a great deal from watching the animal kingdom.

Reactions, the question also touched on, some reactions that you have seem to come before thought processes start, some reactions seem to be prior to thought processes. And that is the conditioning of the body, conditioned for thousands of years by thought, into a state of fearful contraction, which is, everybody carries a pain body, and therefore everybody lives, it's normal, so it's hard to detect, because everybody has it, almost, everybody lives in a state of fearful contraction. The state of fear is already in the DNA, if they could examine exactly what is in the DNA, there would be a lot of information about, you better be fearful.

The body has already built in fear, and fear is the predominant energy field of each pain body, even if it seems to be predominantly angry, or it seems to be predominantly sad or heavy, you can still see fear is always an essential ingredient of the separate state of being. So when people are born already with fear built into the structure of the body, and that is what reacts, and that is how do we get rid of that deep-seated conditioning. And then, of course, there's the mind, and they feed each other.

The fear that is already in the inherited pain body energizes fearful mind structures, and the fearful egoic mind structures give fuel to what is already in the body. So that vicious circle, how do we get rid of so, so much conditioning, collective conditioning that goes back such a long time, simply through knowing it, watching it as it arises, being alert enough so that it doesn't trick you into becoming something that it is not, which is a person, a projection, a story, so that you can observe it directly. That's why sitting here in this energy field of presence is the greatest thing you can do to dissolve conditioning, not that you are saying, I am dissolving my conditioning.

It is being dissolved through presence, the arising of presence, and the remaining conditioning will then come up, will even accelerate, come up, more of it will come up all at once, and you can watch it in the body. So having attention in the body is essential because the bodily reactions you can then watch, and no more is needed than to place your attention on it, that spaciousness that knows it's there, so when something happens, a situation happens, and you might remember, okay, say yes to this moment, that's important, and you say yes. But then you feel inside the body, and you may realize, oh, I've said yes, mentally and verbally, and yet my body is still saying no.

So this is important because that, when we speak of yes and no as an inner state and a way of being with things, it's important that you should not overlook a deep-seated no that may be inside your body as a contraction or a tightness. And up here you might be saying yes, and the body all the time is saying no, and here you might say, oh, I've forgiven this situation completely, there's nothing left, and you're not in touch with your body, and you can feel it's tight all over here, or wherever it is. And then, oh, maybe the forgiveness hasn't seeped into the cells of my body.

Maybe the no hasn't gone that deep yet, and all that is needed is for you to accept that it's not here yet, oh, it's not here yet, there's still a no in the body, it's interesting. Not feeling that I need to get rid of that, but simply saying that's how it is, it's still there. And then feel it, sense it, the contraction is still there.

Oh, and don't need to draw conclusions, I haven't made it yet. So whatever is there as presence arises, it will come to the surface, whether it is in the body or whether it is mind, the two go together, whether it's the inherited conditioning of the body, part of the human condition, it will come up, situations and challenges will bring it out. And the more presence arises, the more quickly these things will emerge, but you can take it.

Life knows exactly what you can take, and as presence arises, life says it's time to accelerate. And that's happening even collectively, there are great collective challenges. It's time for this acceleration to happen.

So being with the body, there is a covering, there is the pain body, there is the conditioning that's in there, and so to speak, underneath it is what one person suggested we should call the joy body, and that is there underneath a million years of conditioning. And so as human consciousness becomes transformed, perhaps the animal kingdom will go through a transformation too. But humans need it more desperately than the animals.

The animals would be fine for another million years and the planet would be happy with them. Humans won't be fine for another hundred years and the planet won't be happy with them.

[Speaker 6] (20:33 - 21:14)

Thank you. You've answered most of the questions. Thank you for being here, Eckhart.

Thank you. My question concerns practice. When we first start and the presence arises, it seems that it's covered over very quickly.

And if you want to look at it from the point of the pain body, it seems that the reservoir is endless. Is each of these arisings cumulative? Does it make the next one more probable or does the old soul have to go on the road again?

[Speaker 1] (21:17 - 21:21)

Could you repeat that, please? The whole thing?

[Speaker 6] (21:22 - 21:43)

No, just the last question. Is the arising of presence cumulative? In other words, does each one, when you have had the experience, make the next experience more probable?

Or does, I said, the old soul have to go to the road again and make all the actions again in exact order?

[Speaker 1] (21:47 - 29:19)

It does get easier. Presence intensifies. Often, for a while, the challenges also intensify as presence intensifies.

But at times it seems I'm falling back. I'm falling back into my old state of consciousness.

I was present for a while and now some challenge has pulled me back into a state I thought I'd left behind long ago.

But that's only temporary. Once presence arises, it can be obscured, but you can never go back to the old mind identification. The momentum of presence is already there.

It may be if your mind conditioning, mental-emotional conditioning, has great density and the clouds come back. There was sunshine, the clouds parted, and then the clouds come back. If you need some disaster, some loss, some breakdown, then it will happen to you so that presence can manifest more freely through you.

But you are here to make that unnecessary, except in those cases where it's still necessary. You don't need to ask, when am I going to be free? We need to be careful not to create some future state or goal that we need to achieve.

For example, to become free of my pain body. I'm waiting. When?

And there's more stuff coming up. But you've only perhaps been conscious of your pain body for a year or two or five or ten, which is not a lot. It's been there for thousands and thousands of years.

So it is happening fairly quickly. But even to ask, how much longer do I have to live with my pain? Don't create a state that you need to arrive at.

Be with your pain and let it be. It's not that bad. It's there, yes.

Don't label it even. Allow it to be. That's the power of surrender.

Often the mind can come in and say, when, when, I want to be free. You're free already. You can be free even if there's still pain operating in you.

If the pain is no longer mistaken for who you are, is no longer made into a personalized sense of self, a me, you can be free and yet periodically you may still carry your pain body. And it may get triggered and you recognize it as the pain body. But it's not who you are.

It doesn't become a story in the head. It does not energize thought patterns in the head, egoic mind patterns. It doesn't turn into an unhappy me.

It's simply leftover pain. And you carry it and what you do with it by allowing it to be, it's no longer you're not doing it for yourself. It doesn't really matter anymore to you when you become free of the pain body being an unhappy me.

The work that you're doing is you are dissolving human pain. And it's far more than, it seems you're just doing it for yourself, but the repercussions are much faster than that. One human being dissolving his or her pain has an enormous effect on the rest because all humans, everything else but humans, are connected with each other at a deeper, there is one organism, one collective human psyche.

And whatever happens, happens within that one collective human psyche including us, including you, surrendering when the pain arises and allowing it to be and saying, that's what is. It is as it is. Let it be.

And so there is a spaciousness that is suddenly there. And that is what is arising in the collective organism, the collective psychic organism of humanity. This group is an essential part of that.

And then there's the terrorists. Total insanity, extreme manifestations of an undercurrent of insanity that is in the whole of humanity, extreme manifestations of that, killing themselves and thousands of people in extreme acts of madness that is also ultimately not outside of you. And so whatever happens within you has enormous effect on the rest of humanity.

You're not in it for yourself. So enjoy the adventure of disidentifying from all that conditioning, the arising of presence, asking the question, how much longer can only obscure presence? Presence is intensifying, it is accelerating.

I know that. And the more you stop asking how much longer, or do we have to go on indefinitely, the more quickly it accelerates because the more, as you drop that question, you relinquish future. Let go of future, looking to future as that which is going to solve your pain, your problems.

It's not... So how much longer? I respect your question.

Many people have that question. I've been asked it many times. But ultimately, asking yourself that question isn't helpful because it can easily lead to the next thing, which is a complaint.

The next thought after asking that question, well, do I have to go on and on with that pain? Just be with the simplicity of this, of this moment. And whatever it is that arises, be okay with that.

[Speaker 8] (29:20 - 29:20)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (29:21 - 31:09)

It is as it is. That is already salvation. And so you don't need the future for salvation.

Trust that the present moment is all you need and realize the enormous power that is there. And many thoughts will arise in the mind that are perhaps cunningly designed to take you out of the now. They may be very logical, sensible thoughts or questions, but they are designed to take you out so that you can look to the future and then live in an unsatisfactory present again.

So it's important. See how the mind has great intelligence Ultimately, the intelligence is only a small part of the one great intelligence. And the egoic mind often uses its intelligence to perpetuate its own temporary form as the egoic mind.

So it can be quite clever, and it can trick you very easily, always back to now. You are already, as a beautiful line in the Course in Miracles, it is at this moment that salvation is offered to you. And it is at this moment that you can accept it.

No other time. And that is the truth. This moment.

[Speaker 8] (31:11 - 31:16)

I accept it. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (31:21 - 31:43)

My name is Michael. I realize that I may be leaving the room before you answer my question because I have a flight I have to take and shortly after 4.30 I may be leaving. So I want to say that I'm not interested in the answer if you're still talking and I leave.

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (31:44 - 31:48)

It won't be. It's not your pain body driving you.

[Speaker 2] (31:50 - 34:29)

I was just one of the founders here. I called him about a year and a half ago in Indonesia when I was having a very difficult time with the business I work in there. I would read your book at night and it would be a wonderful way to go to sleep and I called him and I said, you must read this book and he did and contacted the people necessary to bring you here.

So I'm just happy to have played a part in that and also the timing of you being here after what's happened and so many of us, this being the largest gathering, I'm hopeful somehow that something will generate from this group. I'm not hopeful. I sense it will already.

And there are two things that I wanted to ask about. One is I was on the roof of my apartment on that last Tuesday and I saw the trade centers and watched the South

Tower go down and I've been very shaken by this and in a way, well, it looks like flashbacks. I always wondered what the Vietnam veterans, why they just couldn't get over these flashbacks, why they were so screwed up somehow.

And I don't think, I have never been in a combat zone, so seeing this was very similar. Almost as I'm asking this, I can feel that it's just, it's the mind staying busy with these pictures and I still wanted to mention it because there's in a way all this appreciation for the fragility and the vulnerability that I feel and so much crying and just this morning I mailed a package, a small package in the post office and it said you must have identification to mail a package and I thought, oh, how sad, we have to do this. And when I asked the postal lady if she would like to see identification, she just looked into my eyes and said, oh no, she just knew.

And then I said something about what I had seen and we were both crying and so I never thought I'd be in a post office crying with a postal worker, especially postal workers. And so I see so much beauty coming out of this and the kinds of things people are saying here. And yeah, maybe I've answered my question just to see that the beauty is so, so much more than...

[Speaker 9] (34:30 - 34:30)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (34:30 - 36:42)

And the other thing is maybe this real, is perhaps an answer to this, is that last night I was in the dining hall with my friend Alan who also works here and I was asking him about his family and he said that his mother passed away recently and she had had Alzheimer's and she was 79 and I said, oh, well, when did she get it? And he said when she was 59. And I went, oh my God, what am I doing?

I'm just so indulging in these emotional depressions and feeling lonely and I felt this just lightness. Okay, I'm so grateful not to have Alzheimer's. And I went and sat down to the most beautiful woman I could find in the dining hall and I said, hi, I'm Michael, I'd like to meet you.

And I had a wonderful time meeting her and later I said, I don't know if you're married or gay or have a boyfriend, but I'd like to meet you again. And she lived in Atlanta. And she said she was with someone and I felt no disappointment.

It was just, oh, this wonderful connection happened. And the same thing this morning. There's a very lovely woman here in the room who I just, I felt very shaky to go up to her and she might say, get away from me.

But no, we went to the lake and connected so deeply just in a space of silence and I said something about a girlfriend I've been on and off with and she pointed to her finger and said, oh, well, I'm married. And somehow none of that mattered. And there's just, I feel like this friendship, somehow a friendship, a connection, not needing to be followed up by anything other than the meeting.

And the question is really, is a technique. I feel like I've now got this technique called, oh, you're grateful not to have Alzheimer's, so just go out and meet everybody on the planet. And not just beautiful women.

[Speaker 8] (36:45 - 36:46)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (36:46 - 36:47)

Thank you.

[Speaker 8] (36:50 - 36:52)

That's helpful. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (36:58 - 40:37)

But I'd also like to thank you because if it weren't for you, although there's nothing personal in it, it happens that we are here, we wouldn't be here at this time if you hadn't sent the book to your friend. So none of us would be here at this time. It's all connected in such ways that you could never work out through your mind how deeply everything and everyone is connected.

Thank you. And many people connect it at a deep level with others here, not man, woman, woman, woman, man, man, who knows. Ultimately that is just the form identity and so that attraction may be there or may not be there.

But there's a deeper connection here beyond form, beyond name and form. I forget most names of people I meet and yet I meet them very deeply. I very much feel whenever I meet, I know them.

I don't remember the names and yet it is always holy. The meeting is always sacred. And when you're not coming from an egoic sense of self, the beautiful thing is you neither want something from somebody nor do you fear them because in all normal egoic human interactions, you either want something from the other human being or you fear that they might do something or say something or injure you in some way or diminish you in some way.

So most human egoic interactions are governed by these two movements of wanting. And again, the form, you may feel an attraction on the level of form and yet feel the deeper connection beyond form at the same time without feeling, oh, I shouldn't be feeling this attraction on the form level, I should be beyond that by now. No, as long as you are here as a form, you might on that level, you may feel an attraction and it's not, it's to do with being here as a physical form and yet there's something far deeper than that operating now.

So when you're here only as a person, as my friend Katie says, personalities don't love, they want something. They may be pretending that they are loving you but they want something, the personalities, the persons. Or they fear something.

So it's how wonderful to go beyond that and for the first time truly be with another human being and the reality of that other human being beyond fearing or wanting.

[Speaker 5] (40:52 - 41:57)

It has been my experience that as you say, when I am sufficiently quiet, the answers to my questions arise inside me. In this current situation, I haven't been quiet enough for that to happen and I'd appreciate your help. I have very recently separated from my partner of many years.

During this retreat, grief and anger have arisen many times, thoughts and feelings together. I catch it and I think there it is, the pain body feeding itself with this story again or something to that effect. Sure enough, even as I observe and accept the phenomena, it dissolves almost as quickly as it arises.

Suffering ends almost as quickly as it begins. My concern is that I may be using this practice to avoid feeling painful feelings that are simply part of being human.

[Speaker 8] (41:57 - 41:59)

Thank you, thank you.

[Speaker 1] (42:02 - 48:57)

That's an important question. In many ways, what we call being human is being trapped in the egoic condition. So there are many states that we have been calling human that we are going beyond.

The characteristic of being human until now has been that you manifested insanity to a greater or lesser degree. The human condition has a strong element of insanity. But here, allowing a feeling completely is actually the opposite of not feeling it or wanting to be rid of it or terminating it before it has come up fully.

No. Allowing it to be is the opposite of saying no to it. There is no greater state of openness than to say to any feeling, I'll let you be here, you are here, and that's how it is.

Not the slightest rejection of it. But the miracle is, it dissolves when it's accepted completely. Now, it doesn't mean that you kill it.

And it doesn't mean that you eliminate anything. It's simply the energy that was that feeling, was in a form, loses its form as that feeling. And in many cases, immediately becomes presence.

The feeling may arise again, perhaps created by further thought. And the same thing happens. It's immediately allowed and is transformed into presence.

So nothing is denied. The feeling is there for as long as it needs to be there. But the beautiful thing is, it doesn't need to be there that long anymore.

It does not need to be perpetuated. It's there and then it dissolves. And then, as you live in the state of presence, to a large extent, things that would be called very human feelings don't really happen that much anymore.

Intense anger with situations and people, reactivity, depression moving from happy one day, unhappy the next, depressed, you're the greatest one day, the next day you're the most awful, the most dreadful, miserable one that ever existed. And all these things that are so normal, all the dysfunction in relationships, the continuous need for conflict, many of those things will be dissolving. It doesn't mean that you become less human, because you become more human, because what replaces that is a deep sense of oneness.

Love, compassion arise and are there a lot of the time, if not continuously yet. And those are the deepest feelings or emotions that they are so deep that I don't call them emotions. They are part of what in India is sometimes called your natural state of inner connectedness with being.

And so you don't become less human when suffering and dysfunction gradually leave you. You do not become less human, you become more fully human. Suffering leaves you, pain lingers for a while.

The difference between pain and suffering is suffering needs an entity, a me with a story. Pain lingers. The grief that you feel, at first you experience it as suffering.

The moment you accept it, the link between a story in the head and the pain is broken and all that remains is a pain. And even that you might not even label pain anymore. It's simply a feeling and it's accepted.

So you're becoming more fully human, not less human. If negative feelings were leaving you, those so-called negative feelings that don't feel good, feelings that cover up your natural state of connectedness with being, if they were leaving you but you were becoming deadened to the world around you, no light shining through you, no compassion, empathy, love, complete openness towards all human beings, that would be an illusion. You would be deadening yourself, desensitizing yourself.

And what this is about is the opposite of all that. It's a complete opening. So welcome to becoming fully human.

It's a question of how we use words. We can say we are now becoming fully human. Yes.

I call it the flowering of human consciousness. Or we could choose other words and we could say we are going beyond the human condition. We are stepping beyond that.

It's simply a question of how you want to use words. But the main thing is that you see the difference between denying or cutting yourself off from feelings and thereby having the illusion that you don't have them anymore and fully saying yes to them. You see the difference.

[Speaker 5] (48:57 - 49:01)

I do. Yes. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (49:01 - 49:01)

Thank you.

[Speaker 7] (49:08 - 49:39)

In the place of accepting all that is without resistance, I notice that there is a place in me that is not as motivated to take action. And it could be from being willing to stand up in front of an audience and ask a question or voting or writing a letter to the editor or any number of things. So my question is what keeps the passion and motivation alive in the place of acceptance?

[Speaker 1] (49:40 - 1:01:24)

Thank you. Good question. Now you may have noticed that there is great passion in what I do.

And action that arises out of presence is energized and very effective action. One could say there is great passion, there is great energy in action that arises out of presence. There can also be great energy in action that arises out of fear, out of anger, out of some form of resistance to what is.

There can be enormous and qualitatively a very different energy field. It is true perhaps that you said you find yourself perhaps there is a tendency observing a tendency in yourself of doing less as presence arises. Not so often does action happen.

A lot of the action that comes out of the egoic state is really unnecessary. A lot of the hyperactivity of our Western civilization, and most of the planet is covered now by

Western civilization, a lot of the hyperactivity that is, are all those things truly necessary for a full human existence? If you look at, and of course if you look at all that, life in big urban centers, the continuous running around, everybody is under stress, but everybody is engaged in what they believe to be very important things.

But there is a fear because you are never quite catching up with the next important thing that you need to do. So there is a running around that, a lot of energy, yes. A lot of unhappiness also being created through that.

A lot of people creating living hell for themselves and it becomes so normal that they don't know it anymore. And as presence arises, the motivating factor for taking action changes dramatically. It's not that action becomes no longer possible or that you are no longer capable of action, although I must admit it happened to me for a couple of years.

I went into complete beingness of presence. I lost the ability to take action, not that I saw it as a loss, but other people saw it as a loss in me. I had no guidance, so I got overtaken by presence and nobody could tell me that you can still be active.

Gradually I learned for myself that presence can be a state out of which very effective and passionate action happens, but probably it will be far fewer actions that come out of presence than actions, all the myriad activities and actions that come out of the state of resistance, of the state of no, that need to arrive at the future desperately because I haven't found myself yet, driven by fear, the fear of being nobody, the fear that you might not make it, the fear of survival, the fear of not enough, driven by that, creating perhaps a huge enterprise and just as you create it, you die of a nervous breakdown.

And all the people associated with your great enterprise are unhappy. So it looks great when you look at it, and then look at the inner state of the people inside, they're all driven. Is there an ease?

Is there an aliveness? Are they flowering as human beings? No.

So that is what I call karmic action. Karmic action arises out of a denial of life, of what is, it's resistant, induced, motivated by resistance and needing the future. And then you have action that arises out of presence.

Karmic action creates more karma, in other words. It arises out of suffering, ultimately, and creates more suffering. The energy behind it is the energy of suffering.

Karma means action, actionary action, actionary action. So that is karmic action. Ultimately, any action that is a means to an end is karmic action.

Any action where the outcome is more important to you than the doing now is karmic action. And that is the action of most of humanity, with a few exceptions, of course. Something else is arising.

So that's important to know, the difference between action motivated by presence and karmic action. Whenever the now is denied its primacy, the primacy of the now and the fullness is not recognized, it's reduced to a means to an end, any action then is karmic and produces more suffering in yourself and others who come into contact with that kind of action. But you may be an extremely busy person, of course, in that state, and most people are.

Then there is the state of presence, and only necessary action arises out of that. You mentioned some examples, writing a letter to a newspaper, and you could very well write a letter to a newspaper from a state of presence, rather than a state of perhaps great anger about a situation. And from a state of presence, you can show them how you see that from your point of view of presence, and there will be great power in what you write.

It won't make other people angry too, and thus contribute to more, because imagine you write an angry letter, maybe fully justified, because the world is full of things you could get angry about, full, full of things. So you write a letter that is angry to a newspaper, quite a few people read that, and in many of them the energy field of anger will linger as they go to work after reading your letter, which may have been totally right in what it says. You were justified in being angry, just an example, and so, and the next thing, that very same energy field goes into their pain body, and the next interaction at work expresses that anger, and it goes into the next one, the next pain body is awakened.

There was one beautiful episode of, I believe it's called a TV series, Touched by an Angel, I don't want to give you all the details, it's one angry or one person in a state of great negativity, how that person influences the whole sequence of events, one person commits suicide as a result of just that, going into a restaurant, how it spreads to others, and then it's reversed in the second part of that episode, how it could have been in a state of allowing, of non-resistance.

So you can write, then you write a letter which expresses the same, but points to a greater truth, makes people aware of what's going on, because if it makes you angry, it's likely that it will be part of human insanity that is out there, and there's a lot of that. And so it could awaken people into realizing, yes, they can see the insanity, you point it out, but it will be written from a greater truth, a deeper truth, than only getting angry at the insanity. And that will truly make a difference.

So this is just, or you may find it is pointless writing this letter, perhaps the newspaper lives on scandal, perhaps that's the very thing why they sell papers, because they are bought by pain bodies. It's possible. So in many cases, you might see that and say, there's no point in writing a letter to a newspaper.

The best country for that is England. They have the best and worst newspapers in the world. And the worst British papers are really bad.

And they are designed to create negative emotion in the reader. And almost every headline that you read in the morning, you go to the newsstand, and you see, you bastards, or something like that. And millions of people buy and get angry.

The National Enquirer, compared to that, is the highest magazine. So this is just an example. So action happens, effective, but more than just becoming part of what you are complaining about.

So you can point out, and then something deeper will be awakened, in this case, the person who reads the letter. And also in the state of presence, it will be clearer to you whether there is any point in action. The beautiful thing about action rising out of presence is a lot of the action is spontaneous.

And you may find your way of saying or doing something, and you hadn't even thought about it beforehand. You find yourself just getting up and doing it. And it's always just right.

It's never superfluous. It doesn't create more suffering for yourself or others. That is the beauty.

But, yes, it is true, you probably won't be quite as active as in the old state. That's true. But it will be quality action, good action.

[Speaker 7] (1:01:25 - 1:01:26)

Very good. Thank you.

[Speaker 4] (1:01:35 - 1:03:18)

I have found myself over the years sort of compiling this mental list of terrible things to make me unhappy. And so few of them are bad things that happen to me, but I haven't had that many terrible things happen to me. So a lot of them are things I've heard about happening to other people or read about happening to other people.

And I find myself sometimes just walking along perfectly happy and then thinking, I shouldn't be happy because there's this list of all these terrible things in my mind. Or I may wake up in the middle of the night and they'll all start, you know, coming into my mind one by one. And I get very, very, a lot of pain, very grief-stricken.

And when I read your book, I thought after reading what you said, I thought, well, maybe by continuing to go through this mental list, I'm feeding my pain body with these thoughts. So at that point, I started... I mean, the thoughts still came up and there would be that initial pain, but I didn't compulsively keep going through with the list and eventually the pain would dissipate, as you said.

But I've always not been completely sure if this is the right thing. And then this morning you said something that confused me. You were talking about how one might want to contemplate the events of last week and feel the pain come up if it came up and allow it, and then perhaps this shift would occur.

So now I'm wondering, well, maybe I should be contemplating this list of things. I'm not sure what the difference is.

[Speaker 1] (1:03:18 - 1:16:11)

Oh, right. Yes. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Basically your practice was the right one.

You observed what the mind was doing. You realized that all those thoughts were feeding your pain body and there could be no end to negative thoughts if you want to have them about your own life even. I could find reasons in my mind, these are just mental perspectives, that prove to me and others that I'm a miserable person and my life is dreadful.

I could prove also, of course, if I take another perspective, mental perspective, that I'm one of the luckiest people in the world and everything is wonderful. I could put a convincing case for both positions and everybody here could do that for themselves. You can convince yourself that your life is dreadful and adopt that position and you select then from your experience all the things that fit in with your life being dreadful, and there will be many.

And then you can choose to think along those lines and the pain body loves it. It gobbles up every thought. And of course then you feel even more dreadful because then the pain body energizes those very thoughts.

It's a vicious circle. It amplifies those thoughts and it feeds on those thoughts and then gives them back to the mind. Or you could think about the state of the world and find a list of why this is the, must surely be the worst planet of all planets in this galaxy, if not all galaxies.

And you might even think perhaps it's a mental home for other planets. Sorry. I may well be right.

But there's no doubt that you could find a long list of why being here is dreadful and you just don't want to be here. But you are. But you can have this long list of dreadful things, one after another, hell, to prove to you that you're living on a planet that is hell.

Not difficult to find that list. Very easy. So you can have those thoughts and continuously revive them and for quite a few years, I think, you said you lived in that way and then you realized what you were doing and realized you were feeding the pain body and that's exactly what it was.

And then more awareness came to it and then you broke the cycle between thought patterns and pain body and then that went. Now, when I talked about the events of last week, the emotion of these events, the memory of these events is still very fresh and this is a case where we can make a difference. There are certain situations that require healing.

Situations, they may be in your own life, there may be a person in your immediate environment who is ill in one way or another, suffering in one way or another, there may be an immediate event in your collective environment, a great disaster as happened last week that had an enormous ripple effect of suffering going out, even many people suffering who were not immediately connected to it, had great suffering going out, not just this country.

Even my mother who lives in Europe cried and many people suffer and still carry that burden all over the world. So here we have a true immediate situation that you are more or less directly involved in. We are just a few miles, 90 miles or whatever from New York City and it just happens that we are having this gathering close to that place at this time.

So things are deeply connected and there is a reason. So this is something that concerns us directly. It's not some list that you seek in your mind of what's wrong with the world.

This is immediate. And these things occasionally may appear in your own life. Somebody close to you in deep suffering.

And then it is very helpful to hold that situation or that person in consciousness. There is the situation. And although it seems unacceptable if somebody very close to you is suffering deeply, it seems, this can't be, it mustn't be, he mustn't suffer, she shouldn't be suffering like that.

Maybe a child of yours is suffering and a father or mother feels this is so dreadful, he shouldn't suffer like that. But he or she is. The event of last week, things like that shouldn't happen.

But there it is. And then hold it in consciousness. As you hold it in consciousness, there are two possibilities.

You may already be able to hold that situation in consciousness and totally accept the suchness of that situation. That's what happened. Or the suffering person close to you.

Because thousands of people suffering is just a multiplication. That's human suffering. So you hold that.

There is the suffering. And you may be able to accept it so deeply, immediately, that there is a spaciousness around that person or that situation. And suddenly you sense an inner depth and at the core there is a sense of peace or serenity which so, so many people, as I pointed out a few times, who have faced imminent death have reported that at the last moments they found that great peace and serenity.

Not all, but many, many. Most of them actually found death so they could never tell us about it. And all we see is the dreadful external event, seemingly dreadful.

And so there is that deep peace and that is, the situation is then released. And you stay with that, the peace that you sense. And there is not much thinking in that.

Just that. But if it's not possible for you, and it may not be, because that event was so recent and so drastic and so painful, that when you hold that event in consciousness you cannot immediately accept it totally. So the first thing as you hold that event, or if it's a person, a suffering person in consciousness, the first thing you notice is great sadness.

You yourself suffer with it, with that event, or with that person. And you feel this, it feels heavy and sad. And you may feel like weeping.

That of course is a sign that you resisted what is, but you couldn't accept it. So that's all it is. You couldn't accept that and so you feel that.

And then you move into that feeling, the sadness, and see, that's how it is. There's the sadness. I allow that also.

I allow that to be. The suchness of this feeling. This is what it is.

And then that takes you beyond it. So that is practiced when there are situations around you that require healing, that touch you immediately. If there's anything in the world that touches you deeply, affects you deeply, you can do that.

You can do it for the entire world. You can hold the entire world, this planet, in consciousness. And see the incredible suffering that is taking place at this very moment in many parts of the world.

At this very moment, every second, one or two people are dying. Probably, I think it's two every second. This second, one or two people dying.

Now, now, now, now, now, now, now. Some are in suffering. Some, at this moment, realize who they are beyond form.

And so much suffering being inflicted at this very moment by humans, on other humans, people in hospitals, people who don't even have hospitals, people in prison camps, people being killed at this very moment. It's all happening now, somewhere on the planet. Good things are also happening here.

But you can hold the planet, which, to a large extent, still has a great deal of disharmony, conflict, an enormous amount of suffering. You can hold the entire planet in consciousness instead of going through it, unless something concerns you directly and is immediate. Instead of going through it bit by bit, all the areas of suffering, you would have to spend continuous, all your life in meditation.

Take it as one, and the entire planet and humanity, you see it. And that's how it is. And it's not only that it's suffering now.

It has been going on since time immemorial. And you see that also. And it's going to go on indefinitely unless you become transformed.

And where and when do you become transformed? Now, at this moment. How?

I'm still suffering myself. By accepting the suchness of this moment. Transformation is immediate.

Nothing else can save the world than that.

[Speaker 4] (1:16:21 - 1:16:21)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:22 - 1:19:08)

Thank you. Now, I suggest that the few remaining... Thank you so much.

The few remaining questions we may address tomorrow morning. Listen to that beautiful sound. And just listen.

No need to label it in any way. Just listen to that gentleness. Just the sound.

And the awareness, without which it wouldn't even be there. And that's who you are. The awareness, without which that sound wouldn't be there.

Would anything be there? The whole world is created out of that. And when you know who you are, you know yourself as that.

Quite a harmonious world comes out of that. When you don't know yourself, when you don't know yourself as that, an illusory world comes out of that.

[Speaker 8] (1:21:35 - 1:21:36)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:24:11 - 2:35:00)

Although your bags may be packed, you're still here. And when you sit in the car, driving home or to the airport, you'll also still be here. You'll always be now, here.

But of course the scenery changes around you. The now is always there. The now is you.

The still point at the center. And then there's the periphery, which is all the world around you. And so you move.

Your physical form is part of all those forms that make up the world, the fluctuating forms of life. And you're there as a still point. Although the physical body may be moving as part of this dance of form that is the phenomenal universe, a continuous dance of form, and your phenomenal physical body is part of that.

So whether you want to or not, that will be part of the dance that continues. But not getting lost in that, in the phenomenal world. Not thinking that anything in the phenomenal world around you matters absolutely.

It only matters relatively. And regarding any form that is in your field of perception, situation, condition, place, person, regarding any form, this famous ancient statement is true, and that is, this too will pass. Fleeting.

That's the nature of phenomenal reality. Everything is fleeting. Even if you've had a long life, you reach the age of 95, and then you look back.

From one perspective, yes, it was a long time. Lots of things happened. And yet it was also so fleeting.

And you might, was it all a dream? All those things, long gone. All those people that I knew.

All those experiences. It's in the nature of a dream almost, because it is so fleeting. Every experience is so fleeting.

And then it's gone. When you get home, you might wake up the first morning after getting home after this. Your old familiar surroundings.

And then you remember that you were on this meditation retreat, or whatever we want to call it. Did I dream all that? It's gone already.

And you were looking forward to it perhaps for quite a while. It was coming towards you as an event. And then it comes, and then it goes.

And all events are like that. So this, our gathering, there's an external form to it, this place, all the people, the words that are spoken. And then, if you want to hang on to the external form of our gathering, then you might feel a little sad that it's coming to an end.

Or, in a few days or weeks' time, you might think back and say, Oh, I was peaceful then.

That was so nice, and now it's gone. But that is forgetting the essence of our gathering.

The essence of our gathering does not lie in the form, the physical location, which is beautiful. But you can't stay in one location forever. You could, but you wouldn't be happy with that either.

The structures, the words, walking from one building to another, the meals, meeting the people, all nice, beautiful. But the essence isn't any of this. The essence is precisely taking you to a deeper place than the form which your life takes externally.

The essence of our gathering is the now. And in 20 years' time, you could pick up a photo that was taken here, of yourself and some other people, and say, Oh, wasn't that wonderful? And then somebody asks, What was that all about?

Well, that it was all about the now. And then the person might ask, Where's that wonderful now now? And the essence, when you look at the photo, the essence of that is here, now, as myself, beyond a mind-based, story-based sense of me.

Because in 20 years' time, things will have been added to the story of me. It will have grown, a longer story of me. But even that won't be fulfilled yet, fulfilling.

There'll still be many things in it that shouldn't have happened. No, it's not complete yet. I need more things.

On the level of story, there's always a sense of incompleteness. But we are here not to complete the story of your life. That'll carry on.

But realize who you are beyond the story, which are the external circumstances, things that happen to you, and continue to happen. So we've stepped out of the story, and you may not be out permanently. You may get drawn in, your complete identification with the world around you, complete identification with your mind, complete identification with reactive patterns.

And so, seriousness, a heaviness, returns into your life. Every little thing matters. And every little thing has the power to upset you.

Oh! And then suddenly you remember, oh, I've lost the now. Where's the now?

And then the mind says, there's no point in even looking for it now, because obviously you're not in a fit state to be at peace. And with all the problems going on around you, there's just no point in even trying. Often you will hear thoughts like that, that your mind is telling you, not now, later.

I haven't got the time to be present now. No. But one good thing that has come out of this gathering is that you no longer completely believe in what your mind is telling you.

And you can watch that. And often it may be telling you things to manipulate you. I'm not saying the mind is your enemy, but it's an entity, a little form that consciousness has taken, and every form wants to persist in it as that form.

It doesn't want to metamorphose, transform. It wants to, but it does anyway. I'm sure the caterpillar, if you ask the caterpillar, would you like to become a butterfly?

It'll say, no way. I'm fine as I am. Because form wants to persist as that form.

There is a momentum and a static thing also wanting, you can see it in, at night you might get tired, but you're not going to bed because the momentum of the mind wants to carry on. And you know you're tired and you would be better off in bed, but you're still doing, because that form has its momentum, it wants to remain. And the opposite happens in the morning.

You need to get, you need to, then you want to stay in bed. That doesn't want to change. You can see it also with children.

Sometimes they don't want to go into the shower or the bath because it's a transition from the dry state to the wet state. But once they are in the wet state, they love it and they don't want to come out. So just examples of forms wanting to persist.

And so to see, and so the mind is a very deep seated form that consciousness has taken and it wants to carry on as that form, as the noisy mind that's in control of your life. And it'll come up with all kinds of justifications why it will and should and must remain in control. So you may remember we started on the first day by saying don't take your mind too seriously while you're here and whatever thoughts may come up, be gentle with it, but don't take it too seriously.

That means don't have your, don't be identified with every movement that comes up in your head and say oh yeah, yeah, oh yeah. And we've been stepping back continuously which is the essence of being present is an inner stepping back from the flux of thought and also an inner stepping back from the flux of emotions. No denial in that.

Simply you take a step back from where you are the observing presence, the witness. And when you step back, that also means you step out of being trapped in those mental formations, mental emotional formations with your sense of self. Otherwise they imprison your sense of self and it gets trapped in those mental emotional formations.

One could say there are many ways of speaking of what this gathering is and has been all about. One way is to say we are here to step out of identification, of seeking a self, of continuing in the illusion that there is a self, a sense of me, a true identity in the continuous flux of the conditioned mental emotional structures which are movements, energy movements of form. Nothing wrong with them, but it's not who you are.

But most people live completely identified with that movement. And so liberation means liberation from that, from being trapped with your sense of self in that. And so it's the stepping back and the stepping out, so to speak.

And the moment you step back from thought and emotional flux, you become present. The portal into that state that steps back is the present moment. And then you are present with, you can watch the flux.

Don't believe in it completely anymore. Especially when it tells you something about yourself or other people or even situations in your life. Whatever it says may have a relative truth in it, but it's relative.

It's a viewpoint, it's a perspective, it's a position. It's never the totality. There's no wisdom in there.

No wisdom in there. Knowledge, yes, a lot of knowledge. Conditioned knowledge, but no wisdom because it's always a positional thing.

One perspective, and there are many other possible perspectives on the same thing. I listened to the speech by the president last night, and it contained a promising statement, and that was, May God grant us wisdom. He didn't say, May God grant us victory, and he didn't say, May God grant us power.

He said, May God grant us wisdom. And so that is a promising statement. But wisdom in our civilization, not just this country, the entire civilization on the planet, is rare.

It's not taught really at any university that I know of, but wisdom is not knowledge. It's not the ability to think faster or to know more or to be able to analyze more quickly. That's all, that's so-called mind power, intelligence, IQ.

Wisdom is the ability to step out of the conditioned into a greater vastness of consciousness, which you know nothing of when you are trapped in the conditioned mind. So the simple, the ability to step back from there into the spaciousness, yes, the stillness of presence, the inner stillness and sense of spaciousness of presence, that is having access to the realm of wisdom. And it's not taught.

There is a continuous increase in knowledge. There's a continuous intensification on one level of identification with mental noise and knowledge, reactivity, and not much is known about wisdom. It's still what this, what I have been talking about here for most people on the planet, which is a completely unknown thing.

And this is amazing. The most important thing for a human being to know, the mainstream culture knows nothing of it. Almost occasionally little glimpses come through here and there.

Even on TV, occasionally little glimpses come through. In the media, occasionally here and there, yes, there's some truth there, some wisdom shining through or a statement inspired by wisdom. But on the whole, yet, it's not taught at schools or universities.

Wisdom 101. Nowhere. And what would an exam look like on wisdom?

Can you become an advanced practitioner of wisdom? Or would you be better at wisdom if you were a complete beginner at it? I remember a book title, another book I haven't read.

Zen Mind Beginner's Mind. It's probably a good book. Well, the title is good.

So that is having access to that realm within yourself. And again, it is not separate from who you are. That realm from where wisdom arises in your life is the essence of your very being.

So it is not some strange place that you visit. You visit it and you realize that's the essence. That's me.

And one way of putting it, I'm giving you just another little pointer. I've used the pointer before. It is also a realm of stillness that is there underneath all the mental noise.

In you can never be destroyed by mental noise. And the moment the mind stops, even for an instant, it's there. But you might not sense it at first because you've been desensitized by the continuous mental noise.

Just like somebody who spends six hours in a discotheque has become desensitized and will not be able to listen to silence when he or she steps out of the discotheque into the stillness of the night, deafened by the noise. And at first you step out and it seems, oh, this is dreadful. The noise has stopped and there's nothing here.

You wouldn't be able to hear the subtle noises of the night and the huge stillness underneath it, the alive stillness. You would have to stay out of the discotheque for quite a while before your ears become attuned to that much more subtle realm. And then you realize it's not just nothingness out here.

It's actually beautiful and sacred, very different from the noises of the discotheque. I have nothing against discotheques. It's just a metaphor for the human mind.

So at first, in many, many, most of you, already even before knowing this, expressed clearly and recognizing the truth of it, because somehow you already knew all this, of course. If you didn't know all this already, you would have gone home by now. You wouldn't have recognized the truth because you wouldn't have been able to listen to it.

You knew it already. So it's just being formulated. And then you say, see it more clearly out there.

Yes. And so you're now more conscious of it. But that state of awareness, stillness, very likely has already been arising in you, perhaps even without you knowing it, because the mind doesn't really recognize it.

To the mind, there's nothing going on here. I mean, what is all this? And so the cessation of thought for a moment, the arising of still, alive, aware presence, just awareness, which is there whenever something new appears in your life, something, let's say, something suddenly pops up out of a box, and there's a moment of looking before the mind finds a label for it.

Anything new that suddenly comes in, or a person suddenly pops up, that moment is a moment of awareness. After a second or so, maybe two, unless that thing is so unfamiliar that the mind cannot immediately label it, in which case the mind would stop for longer. If suddenly an extraterrestrial appeared in front of you, the mind would stop for longer, because it wouldn't perhaps immediately find a label for it.

And so there would be a prolonged awareness. But that is the state of pure awareness before the arising of mental labels. It can also be there after the arising of mental labels.

You no longer are identified with the mental labels, and then they subside, because you're not empowering or energizing the mental labels through your identification with them as me, my belief, my position, my judgment, me. And that gives it enormous power, that identification. Without that identification, it's simply a movement.

It may arise and subside. And then you have the awareness prior to thought and post-after thought. So the ET arises in front of you, and then the mind says something.

What is this? It's weird. I don't know what that is.

And then it stops again. You may also find it when you wake up in the morning, your eyes open, and you look around the room perhaps, and there's a sense of great aliveness throughout your entire being. Presence, aliveness.

The mind hasn't started yet. It hasn't reminded you of your problems yet. You're in that now in which there are no problems.

Undoubtedly, you're in bed, and the light is shining through the curtains, and you're breathing, and there's not a single problem there. You may not be aware of that. It may only last a few seconds.

For some people, it lasts a minute or two, and then gradually the engines of the Titanic start. I learned that very clearly. I was living in a community once, and there was a man who was tortured by his mind continuously.

But when he came out of the bedroom in the morning, came down for breakfast, for the first three, four, five minutes maximum, his face was unlined. He looked like a newborn with a freshness and a childlike quality, and then he started drinking his coffee. And then his mind started.

He left that moment. He left the now and was suddenly remembering himself, the me and its story, so unhappy and all the problems facing him on that day and the following days. Oh, and then there's that.

Oh, and that, and that. And so the face changed. The tension came back, and he aged 20 years in five minutes.

And then a deadness comes, a non-aliveness, no emanation anymore, gone until the next morning. What a fate, having to live in that way. And this man thought he had problems.

He was fine. Enough food, shelter, pleasant surroundings. He hadn't met Stephen Hawking in his wheelchair.

Unable to move, speak, feed himself, even lift his head. And when I first saw him, how could life deal such, how can fate deal such a cruel blow to a person? It's the most cruel thing fate could do to you, to incapacitate a person totally.

And he accepted. And he accepted, and that most dreadful thing became turned into good. That most dreadful of fates was turned into good through the yes to what is.

And here was this man complaining about his little problems. He hadn't suffered enough yet. He needed to get to a point where he couldn't stand himself anymore, where he couldn't stand that self-inflicted suffering anymore.

And then perhaps, I lost touch with him. We had a few conversations. So it doesn't matter whether you start with the, you could say the identification with the mental-emotional flux as me creates the state of resistance to what is.

Because the me is always unfulfilled and unsatisfied. And it's actually in need of conflict. Because otherwise I don't know who I am anymore.

It's in need of enemies, because otherwise I can't define who I am. And an enemy can be a situation or a person. We all know people who need their worries.

What would they do if they had nothing to worry about? Their whole sense of self would collapse. But to some extent that's true for everyone.

So that is the resisting entity. It refuses to let go. But it's no longer controlling you completely.

Otherwise you wouldn't have come here. At least you wouldn't have stayed all these days here. So from now on you can watch the phenomenal dance of the universe whether inner as emotions or thoughts or outer as people, situations, events, comings and goings, an adding to and a losing, gain and loss in your life, fluctuation of that.

You can't continuously gain things. You would get enormously heavy. Gain and loss.

And you can allow the flux of forms, within and without. You don't need to change it as such, but the change happens through changing your inner attitude towards it. That's the miracle.

If you go out and try to manipulate one particular area and change that, it could be within yourself. I'm going to fix myself. I'm going to sort that problem out inside myself.

You sort one out and another one pops up. Or you become good at one thing. You cultivate one particular area in your life and then you lose something there.

If you become very effective in one area, then you can't do that anymore and so on. There are hundreds of things that you could do but you won't do. There's infinite possibilities in everybody's life.

Hundreds of forms that could arise in your life, forms that your life could take but won't and others will. And it's all the flux of forms. I call it sometimes your life situation.

Your life situation changes, but your life situation is not your life. That's the essence to know that. If you confuse your life situation with your life and with who you are, then you're lost in your life situation.

You're lost in your mind. You're lost in time, past and future, which is the essence of your life situation. It unfolds through past and future, through time.

There's a past to it. That's your present life situation. Then there's its momentum, the momentum that it has, how it's going to develop.

And some of your life situations may be very good at this time. Things have just been added to you for a while. Others' life situation may be at a so-called state of loss.

It may be called not good. It doesn't matter where your life situation is. That is a continuous flux in any case.

So to know the difference between the phenomenal reality of your life and a deeper reality that is life prior to the world of arising and subsiding phenomena. Where is life? Here, now, not in thought.

When you step back from thought into a state of alert, alive presence, that's life. And it has no form. When I speak about it, it has a form, but in itself it has no form.

It is the formless life. So in the world of the senses, you can only know the life of form. Life, or you could say consciousness, life or consciousness, the one life essence is born into form temporarily.

Billions of life forms, even on this planet and then beyond. Life forms. Life is born into a form and then the form subsides, it dies.

When you look into nature, I was looking at a flower bed the other day and I saw suddenly these flowers, they appear for a few days, beautiful forms. Life incarnates as a flower, one of the many incarnations that the one essence takes is as a beautiful flower and it comes out and goes, and then it withers. Gone.

But before it's gone completely, the next one is already out. Is it a different flower? No, it's basically the same flower.

Again. And then I saw a speeded up version of flowers coming out and even trees coming out of the soil and going. And then the next, the same movement like a heartbeat.

Out and back in. Out and back in. To exist, the root of the word is to stand out.

X Latin for out. Sist, stand out. It comes out of the one and then back in.

Just as your body. Out, back. To see that pulse of life and every form is subject to that.

What is it that it comes out of? The ground of all being. Pure.

All labels are totally inadequate. It's absurd to even say anything about it, but I'm doing it. The ground of all being.

Pure consciousness. Life prior to form. The unmanifested one life.

One could say that is the state before the universe was born, out of which, because nobody, scientists look at it, they postulate a moment when the universe started as an explosion, they think. A big bang. And what did that explosion come out of?

The question arises, what was there before that explosion? And then... Um...

And how long was it before that could happen? All one can say is there was nothing and it came out of nothing and that's the ground of all being. That nothing.

It all must have come out of nothing because if it came out of something, where did that come out of? And that state before the universe was born was never lost. It is even now.

Your very essence. As it is the essence of all other life forms. In one sense, the big bang never really happened.

It just seemed to. So to know that your essence is one, obviously, with the essence of the universe. How could it not be?

You are an inseparable part. So you can know the essence in yourself. Not in a dualistic relationship.

I know it. In language, it appears that way. But you know it as yourself.

And is that hard to find? How could the essence be distant from you? How could it be hard to find if it is the essence of your being?

Well, do I need time? When am I going to... How long does it take me to find?

Time is part of the phenomenal universe. It cannot contribute, cannot help you to find your essence, the timeless essence that you are. It's only when you step out of time that the essence is suddenly there.

How do you step out of time? You say yes to this moment. Surrender to life.

That is surrender to life. When you say yes to the form that this moment takes as a situation, an event, or a person, a deep yes to the form that this moment takes, which changes continuously. This moment now is this gathering, and this moment this afternoon, it'll still be this moment.

You might be sitting in a car or plane. That's the form that this moment takes then, but it's the same now. The form differs.

But no matter what form it takes, and even if you got hijacked, who cares? It's... The form comes to an end at some point, and some people might think, it's too soon, too soon.

It's always too soon when you don't know who you are. Even when you're 95, it'll be too soon. I haven't found myself yet.

It's too soon. It is not... Death is not such a tragedy.

It looks like it when you know nothing but form. So whenever you totally, completely say yes to an arising form, whatever form this now takes, that yes takes you beyond the form, beyond your own form. Why is that?

Because when you react to a form, that reaction is your own form identity strengthening itself. When you resist anything that arises in the now and you react, there is a reacting entity, a me, that through its reaction strengthens its form identity. In other words, each reaction, which is also a denial of the now, it's a non-embracing, it's the opposite of embracing, it's a contraction, it's a reaction, it's a resistance.

Each reaction to whatever arises in the now, whatever form it takes, keeps you trapped more in your form identity, the limited nature of who you think you are, the little me. A non-reaction through surrender to whatever form arises takes you both beyond the limitations of that arising form. You may find yourself in a situation that would usually be called bad, but your surrender to that takes you beyond the limitations seemingly imposed on you by that arising form and the limitations of being trapped in a little me form identity in yourself.

In the case of Stephen Hawkins, which I gave as an example, look at the limitations of that form, of having to live, look at that life situation, couldn't be worse, couldn't possibly get much worse than that. And through acceptance, going beyond the limitations, that seeming limitations of that form. So you always go beyond the world, which is the world of form, through surrendering to what is.

The mind will tell you the opposite. It says you need to battle with the forms in your life. You need to fight.

That keeps you dependent on the forms and you actually strengthen the opposition of forms in your life. In other words, problems get heavier when you are in an antagonistic attitude towards this moment, whatever form arises at this moment. So the mind tells you, fight, struggle, try to make it.

Try harder. Resist. Don't give in.

And so you get, the world becomes denser and denser, heavier and heavier. And in yourself you find the same density of me struggling against all those others. People and situations, what do they all want of me?

They all seem to put obstacles in my path continuously. People and situations, I can't stand people anymore. So surrender to what is.

You can see now how that works. How instead of being at the mercy of external conditions through surrender, which the mind might be telling you, you go beyond the conditions of your life which seem so limited through surrender. That's the miracle.

And what do you surrender to? Only now. Nothing else is needed.

Only this moment. If I ask you to surrender from now on for the rest of your life or the rest of the year, what a task. That's too difficult.

I mean, even the whole day. How am I going to manage that? You have a new problem.

And then the mind thinks back in the evening and says, I didn't surrender very much today. And then you can feel bad about yourself, which to the little me is good because it strengthens your identity. So all that's needed in surrender is just this moment.

Whatever it is. Just this. It's not a lot, this.

It is as it is. And you embrace this. So that's where true power arises.

Power that is not derived from the little me entity, but a deeper power. The power of life. The power of consciousness.

The power of a much greater intelligence than the limited intelligence of the human mind, which you can still use when you need it. That power and then more and more you find that power not just freeing you from unhappiness and suffering, but that power running your life. Moving through you.

And things become easy. They lose their heaviness. So this is what Jesus meant when he said going beyond the I have overcome the world, he said.

But how? What does that mean? What did he mean when he said I have overcome the world?

He didn't have any worldly power or an army or weapons. Not even worldly knowledge. He probably knew less in terms of knowledge than any person in this room, because there wasn't that much knowledge at his time.

So on that level, he didn't have power. Obviously, what does that statement mean? I have overcome the world.

Well, this is what it means. That the phenomenal world was free of dependency on form. So when I say the dance continues, that is not a bad thing.

When you leave here, the dance of form, in India they have little deities expressing that dance with lots of arms. Well, I think that's what they do. The dance of form continues and it's not really threatening anymore when you know the truth of who you are beyond form, but you cannot know it as an accumulated thing in your mind.

It can only be known continuously in the aliveness of now. That's knowing the truth. It can never be made into knowledge that you accumulate.

It's a continuous knowing, which can only happen now, in this moment. Knowing who you are is not an achievement that is in the past. No certificate is possible that says self-knowledge acquired on such and such a date.

So when you know who you are, knowing it every moment, this moment, as the alert, still, alive presence beyond thought, that then the world of form becomes quite enjoyable, actually, because you have a greater spaciousness that you are in which all that happens. More and more you live as the space in which the world happens. Basically, it means you are the now in which it happens.

You're not what happens. You're not the thought that happens. You're not the emotion that happens, that comes and goes.

You're not the event that happens, the situation that you find yourself in. You're none of that. If you think you are, that's delusion.

You're not what happens. You are the space in which it happens. When you know that through surrendering to what is, life becomes quite enjoyable.

The world of form, the life of form is also quite enjoyable, the dance, and you know everything comes and goes. You don't need any one form and cling to it because it gives you your sense of self. I mustn't go.

I mustn't lose that. And there's not one form that you think you desperately need to complete who you are, and if you don't get that, you are not going to be complete, because the truth is, of course, if you get it for a moment, it satisfies you, and then you'll be unhappy again. And if you don't get it, you'll be unhappy.

In either case, you'll be unhappy. If you get what you think is going to make you complete, you'll be unhappy. The very thing will make you unhappy, or it'll leave you again.

That'll make you unhappy. So you're never going to find it there. But then you play with the world of form.

Instead of having a deadly, serious relationship with the world and your life situation, and there's a desperation about it, I've got to make it, and I might not make it, what then? And you depend on all these other people and what they tell you, whether you've made it or not. And we are waiting for a mad world to confirm to you that you're okay.

So instead of that dead seriousness, a more playful quality comes into your life, in which you still honor the world of form. Not that you say, I'm not paying attention anymore to any form, anything to do with it, I'll stop showering, and I'm not interested anymore. Just, I'm done with all that.

No, you can, you honor the world of form for what it is, because the essence of each form, each life form, is one with your essence. There is an essence in each life form, this leaf. So be careful with that word.

The formless one life, which is the essence. And you honor each form because you see that ultimately sacred essence in each form. And so, you have a loving relationship even to the world of form.

You do not become a hater of the world of form. Some ascetics have gone that way. They saw there was a glimpse of a certain reality, that there is something deeper than the world of form.

But some became haters of the world of form in the search for a more complete realization of that one reality. But hating the world of form doesn't take you there. Honoring and giving it its due.

So each form is honored and that particularly applies to other humans. Because a lot of the forms of life that you meet will be human forms. And your life situation is determined to a large extent by the human forms in your life.

And so they are honored. And when do they come into your life? In the now.

No human being can come into your life that's not in the now. And what do you do in the now? You accept the is-ness of this moment.

This being. No matter what this being says or does. That's the way.

That's what is. You might say, no, no can come out of your mouth and there's complete yes internally. A car pulls up and a drunk driver says, come on, I'll give you a ride.

And you don't say yes to that moment and get in the car. You see, you say, no, thank you. And you better get out of the car too.

Laughter But there's no reactivity. There's no little entity saying, you shouldn't be saying this. You shouldn't.

You should know better. Fighting. There's a strange thing is whatever you do in a non-fighting way is actually more effective.

Because any fighting creates more opposition. It doesn't mean you cannot defend yourself. If somebody comes at you with an axe, perhaps you raise your arm or you hit back.

Nobody can predict when you're present what you will do. You don't need a set of principles in your head anymore when you live in presence according to which you act. Right action arises out of surrender to what is.

And you don't need some abstract principles to guide you anymore. You need those when you're not connected with who you are. So questions like, should we, is it ever right to be violent or to even physically defend yourself or to save somebody or many people to kill somebody.

These questions are hypothetical. The right thing will always emerge out of the state of presence. Right action emerges out of the state of presence.

and that is yes to the suchness of this moment. And then perhaps action is required. It comes out of the yes, not out of the contracted state of no, which is a little me.

So there's the that's the secret of life. For some strange reason it's a secret. I don't know why it's there.

I'm not an advocate of conspiracy theories but it almost looks if it were a conspiracy, let's keep the secret of life a secret. Let's not teach our children that. Let's not teach it at universities.

Let's cram their heads full of useless knowledge but the secret is out now. Let's forget about the questions that you may still have or had yesterday. All the questions, if they are vital, you will know the answers from within.

If they are not vital, they'll dissolve. So enjoy the dance of your life situation. The life situation does not need to change.

You no longer have the need for it to change so that you can be okay. You're okay already now. And then watch the miracle unfold and be completely wherever you are.

It's the now. It's your home. Sitting in the car, sitting at an airport, sitting on a plane, sitting at home, sitting in the office, walking, standing, lying.

Of course, you'll be somewhere and it'll be in the now. It doesn't really matter where you walk or sit or stand or lie. You'll be somewhere.

The form will be somewhere and it'll be okay. Enjoy the passing scenery, situations, people. The only way to enjoy this externalized life of form is if you don't need it anymore to make you happy.

Then you can truly enjoy it. And the strange thing is more nice things tend to happen than when you need it. This has been a wonderful gathering, a wonderful on the surface, five days or whatever it has been, but in reality a wonderful deep one moment.

And there's no reason why your life cannot continue to be a wonderful deep one moment. It is. It is.

So you have already arrived. There's still an external seemingly a journey, a movement through space and time, but you have already arrived internally. You may occasionally forget that.

That's okay too. You won't forget it for very long. So as far as your outer life is concerned, send blessings on your journey through space and time and welcome home.

Thank you.

2001 Eckhart Tolle Omega Retreat May The Mind Be Servant of Awareness

[Speaker 1] (1:36 - 7:22:48)

Oh yes, we were going to check if it's still now. I think it is. That's a strange thing to, of course the way we did it just now it's a little bit funny, but just to, one could almost say you could, this is not quite right of course, it's language, but I'll say it.

One could almost say you could sense the now, be aware of it, not as something, but as a presence, an aliveness, not something. And so we've already fallen into an error of creating a subject and an object when we say you can become aware of the now. And that's what happens when one speaks, because that implies now there's two things here, there's you and that which you become aware of.

But the truth is, what we call the now is awareness itself that knows itself, but doesn't divide itself into two. And of course it cannot be from who you are, you are that awareness. That's the secret that frees you once you know it.

Now knowing it, this is not a knowing that is conceptual, because then you would have a belief, I am awareness could become a concept. But to know directly, here, now. So our practice is meeting the now fully.

We spoke of the possibility of allowing what is to be. And that means not imposing interpretations on it. So let's use the where we are, the setting here, the beauty that surrounds us.

Let's make it into part of our awareness practice during these days. And see if we can meet nature without imposing labels or mental labels or interpretations on it. That means we're working, working is not a good word, but one of these days that word is going to disappear from the language.

But not yet. Working with our sense perceptions. This is a very important, a very helpful way of stepping out of the stream of thinking.

A little, I've recently started to call it exits. The present of your mind, the present cell, the conditioned mind that most people identify with as themselves, as me, that present cell has hidden little exits, easy to overlook. It's not really locked, they're open.

And one such exit is quite simply sense perception. That to perceive something fully visual, auditory, takes you out of conditioned thinking. And anybody who perceives beauty is, no matter how briefly, able to step out of mind and perceive without interpretations or labeling, if only for one second.

But more than that, if you're very alert, now most people don't know this, because all they know is their, whatever they perceive is immediately interpreted through the conditioned thought processes. It's compared to something else, you find some personal relationship to it, it reminds you of that, or you simply put a label on it and then you think you know what it is. And you inhabit a flat universe that lacks depth because the lent labels obscure to you the depth that there is, and the aliveness and the sacredness that there is in every living thing.

And living thing includes what the mind calls dead things. Living things includes everything, because everything is alive. Even the stone, if you looked into the stone, you could see that there's an intense aliveness there.

Physicists have done it in their way. They know that the stone is an alive energy field. And matter itself is alive.

It looks to us as impenetrable, solid and dead, but it's not. So no matter whether we would conventionally call it a living thing, you realize whatever you perceive is alive. But let's speak specifically here about nature, plant life and animal life.

Of course, mineral is also very beautiful. So usually you perceive through the screen of conceptualization. And that is a deep-seated habit that we inherit, a collective mental habit.

And perhaps until recently there was not much chance of getting out of it. But now the possibility is there of stepping out of that deep-seated collective conditioning and see that it is possible to meet perceptions in the field of simple awareness. In many of you, if you are alert, you can observe an interesting phenomenon.

When you first perceive something, it could be a visual perception, it could be an auditory perception, suddenly you hear a bird singing. Or visually, you turn this way and suddenly you see a tree in the most amazing colors. And if you're alert, you can catch that first moment of perception, auditory, visual.

Something new arises in the field of perception. And there's a little space always when something new enters your field of perception in which the labeling has not started yet. That is the moment, really the moment of true perception.

And that moment is a moment of inner stillness where thought processes don't operate. There's a gap. And then thought processes usually come in.

And that gap is missed by most people. And to the mind it is not significant, because to the mind all that is significant is the thoughts. If you can't think any thoughts about something, it is insignificant to the thinking mind.

And so I'm certain that there are many people in this room, not only who in the first moment of perception, almost everybody does that. The first moment of perception, there is the freedom from labeling, but it's not recognized. But there are many of you here who already find in their everyday life there are moments of more prolonged non-labeling of perceptions.

And that is quite amazing. That is incredible shift in consciousness from the labeling mind to the free, unconditioned spaciousness in which that arises. And I suggest here as a practice to be alert, especially to that first moment.

And if you recognize that there's a moment when you first perceive something, a leaf, a stone, a tree, or the totality, a field, a grove of trees. And if you bring awareness to that, then that awareness itself will be there for longer. If you are aware of that space of awareness that is there the moment you first perceive something.

And then the sense perception happens within a field of stillness. That is, you bring the stillness into the sense. It is perceived against the background of stillness.

And then perhaps at some point the labeling mind may come in, if only to say, oh, you see, there's the stillness. It's possible. So that is a practice, especially these days that you're here.

Interact with nature in that way. Then, of course, everything becomes, really comes to life, becomes alive. However, there's something in you that doesn't want to do that.

Because there's the fear that you might be losing something important. And that fear is the fear of the mind, which says, I won't know anymore. The mind says, I won't even know what this is.

The strange thing is, all the mind knows is one particular kind of knowing that is through conceptualization, through labeling. There is a deeper knowing in which you know without the limitations of concepts. But that knowing is, to the mind, looks like not knowing anything anymore.

And really, that is the state in which a greater intelligence operates, perceives through you. But to the mind, it's like you've lost something. Of course, you haven't lost anything.

The labels, you know them when you need them. They are still there. You can get them out of the filing cabinet, or whatever analogy we can use in computer language.

I don't know that. Retrieve it from the data banks. Oh, that's it.

That's what it is. You retrieve it. When it's needed, the label is there.

A lot of the time, it's not only not needed, it limits you tremendously to be trapped in a world of labels. A conceptualized universe, when you only know concepts, labels, thoughts, you inhabit a conceptualized universe. Everything is immediately made into concepts.

Some people are so good at it. Unfortunately, in our culture, the better you are at it, the more intelligent they think you are. If you can manipulate concepts.

And so, that's, you can get your PhDs in that way. I can, there's nothing wrong with PhDs, if you're not trapped there. And that conceptualized existence is not only something you do to nature, you do it to people, and to yourself.

You conceptualize your own life into a series of thought forms, and call it me. And then you do it to others. Conceptualize who people are.

And some people are very good at that too. The moment they meet somebody, they just look at you just to find out what makes you tick. And then after two or three minutes, they have it.

Now, sometimes that thing of just working out what this person is all about, some people are actually very good at it. But all they can ever find out is the conditioned mind of that person. And on that level, they may even be right.

On the level of the egoic, conditioned mind, what they say might be, I'm sometimes surprised when people come to me and say, what did you think of this person? And I say, I don't know. And then they say, well, let me tell you about him.

This is how he is. That's what he really wants. He's doing this in order to manipulate you and to do this and that and that.

Oh. Maybe they're right. But another thing that they do is then they get, they don't see that as being the level of conditioning.

And from then on, whenever they relate to that person, they relate through the screen of their interpretation, which, of course, no matter who you are dealing with, it is extremely narrow and limited. It is not the reality of that human being. It may be an aspect of the conditioning that is operating there, pretending to be somebody.

But it's not, it cannot touch the reality of that human being. Every human being carries all possibilities within, including Buddhahood, Christhood, every saint. And it has happened that the greatest criminal turned into a saint.

When the conditioned entity broke down, through intense suffering it can happen. Fortunately, not to you, because you're here. If you were not here, it would happen through intense suffering.

That is the grace that is there through suffering. It erodes. Eventually, suffering is created, you could say, by this mind-made entity to a large extent.

People create their own suffering. Humanity creates its own suffering. And yet, there is built into the egoic madness, the element of grace, and that is the very suffering that is created by that limited, exclusively personalized sense of self, destroys, in the end, that sense of self, that limited sense.

It erodes it. And so, sometimes you find in people who have suffered a lot, physically or in other ways, they become very simple, a childlike state, not childish, childlike. That is the state of great openness, clarity.

That is the state of being free of mind, where a deeper intelligence operates. And it happened to them through suffering. And to some of you, suffering brought you here, and the rest happens here.

So that gets eroded. During this week, it gets eroded in a more pleasant way here. Although some of you may be in suffering as you sit here.

Can't stand any more of this. And you project yourself away from here, seeing yourself in the car driving home. And if you do jump in the car and drive home in the middle of the retreat, then just before you get home, you will think that you have failed miserably.

You've left the retreat, and now it's all gone. It's always the other. The other, where you are not, is always where you should be, of course.

So what we called this morning, and it seemed a very, first a very passive thing, when this morning we said, when you allow what is to be the is-ness of this moment, then something reveals itself to you that is beyond the form that this moment takes. And the form may appear limiting. The formless life consciousness is known through not reacting to the forms that appear.

Where do they appear? In the field of now. If you react to the forms in the field of now, your own form, psychological form of me, gets strengthened.

That's why the me likes reacting. Because it strengthens that I. And you can observe it in other people or in yourself.

When you react against something, perhaps wanting to be right, or you can see how, on one level, satisfying it is. And why is it satisfying? In reality, of course, it's painful.

It is a form of pain. The body knows that, because the energy, it cannot flow anymore. The energy field of the body stagnates.

The body knows it's painful, but the egoic entity thinks it's great. Because you've enhanced your sense of self. The enemy is there, and it feels great.

And some people even say it feels great after shouting at somebody and say, oh, that feels better. And so observe that you allow it, and that takes you beyond form. Your sense of self is no longer in form.

It is deeper than any form. So the easiest practice, and that's why we start here, is as you meet nature. Nature is exists beyond mind.

Nature is pre-mind, one could say. It exists in a much greater state of oneness with a source than humans. Humans have gone out of that much further.

Nature is more deeply connected to the source, animals, plants. So to enter the state of what is ultimately a state of no thought, I wasn't going to say it so soon in the retreat, not to frighten anybody. The state of no thought it is helpful to meet any natural phenomenon, a plant, an animal that lives in that state of no thought.

They also are expressions of consciousness, but they don't inhabit a conceptualized universe. The dog does not have a self-concept or a problematic sense of self. A cat doesn't, or anything that lives.

The bird simply hasn't separated itself and says, that's me. It doesn't derive its sense of identity from conceptualization in the mind. It hasn't created that split.

It just is an expression of the one in form. Limited through its form, yes, but a beautiful expression of that. And so it is often a great meditation if you can watch a tree, a flower, or a dog, or a wild, or a bird.

It does not stimulate thought, because it operates beyond thought. Conscious, yes, but not through conceptualization. Now we are not returning to that state.

This is not where we are going, because that would be a falling back. It would free you from a lot of suffering, yes. And some people seek to return.

They can't stand their mind anymore. They cannot stand the painful sense of self, that burden that I have to live with, me, living with me every day is dreadful. I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy to live.

I'm just giving an example. So many perceive life as a burden, a great burden, and every morning you wake up and you find yourself. Now you may think what you find is the problems in your life, but it really is the heaviness of the sense of self that looks out there for some kind of liberation or freedom and is not getting it.

All you ever encounter is some other limitation and little brief moments of apparent freedom which turn out to be illusions. So that is the self that has a heaviness to it. And an animal doesn't carry that burden.

It is limited through its form, yes, but it lives in alignment, in greater alignment than humans. And so its existence is not problematic, and it dies with great ease compared to humans. And in some cases human beings are kept sane by their animal.

That's why some people, they have a dog or a cat, and it's the one thing that keeps them, it's their anchor to a dimension beyond conceptualization and mind. They have this anchor there. So animals that humans keep fulfill an incredible function, an anchor of sanity.

And you can see with some animals how unhappy the master is, the owner of the animal, and how carefree the dog is. Even after having lived for five years with this person, the dog is still joyful, greeting every moment with joy. And so I saw a little sticker recently to put on the fridge which said, God, please let me be who my dog thinks I am.

Now, of course, the truth is that the dog doesn't think. That's why he's in joy. And that's why the dog relates to you.

He doesn't relate to the conceptualized you. He relates to the you beyond, that's hiding behind the conceptualized me with its problems. Amazing.

In everyone, of course, that dimension is there, the unconditioned, pure consciousness. And it's wanting to emerge. That's one way of putting it.

It wants to emerge. It wants to flower through humans. And that's why we are here.

So although you may have tried to escape from the prison of your conditioned mind by going into drugs or seeking some kind of escape, moving, wanting to get out of the mind, drinking sometimes helps a little bit, not for long, but you take, you're being, you're then taken into unconsciousness. You're moving out of your mind, yes, it feels liberating, yes, but you're moving towards sleep. And sometimes it's nice when you get very tired.

You can't think about your problems anymore. And then there's a moment before you reach sleep when you feel quite good. And then you go to sleep.

But we are not leaving mind by going that way. We are stepping beyond mind. And with that comes an alertness.

Freedom from thinking, yes, but at the same time there's wakefulness and alertness, not moving towards unconsciousness. But nature is very helpful because it teaches you to live in no mind. So in a way you meet, there's a deeper empathy with nature when you don't impose on it the screen of conceptualization.

There's a very deep meeting that takes place when you perceive nature in that way. And this is an ideal place surrounded by all this beauty of perceiving in that way. And it is a significant event, cosmic, going far beyond the personal when you perceive nature in the state of not labeling, in the state of still awareness.

Nature itself finds its fulfillment at that moment through you because you are not separate. Within the oneness, nature sees itself through you. It loves that, its own sacredness.

The tree, the flower become aware of themselves. This sounds a little mystical, but that's how it is. So the essence here, we begin with nature because nature is so helpful.

Just be aware for a little while of when you first see something. Bring some alertness into when you walk around here, sit. Be there as a field of alert presence and see that it is quite possible to step out of the habitual labeling mind.

For how long doesn't matter really. More important is how often you step out of the labeling mind. Then the rest looks after itself.

Once that movement has started, and this is miraculous, the current of awareness that has begun to come through what before was a heavy layer of conditioned mind stuff, once this current of awareness has begun to move through you, it has an intelligence of its own. It is pure intelligence. And that then operates, it's become free and you don't have to be concerned very much.

It flowers by itself. So sense perception is extremely important here. It is one way in which you can leave the prison of the conditioned mind.

And then you may notice when you perceive in such a way, there's the form that you perceive, whatever it may be, and one could say there's a stillness in which the perception happens. That's the field of awareness. At first this is not something you can know as an object, because it's the very essence of all knowing.

You cannot know that as an object of knowledge. You can only be it. You are it.

And even here, sitting here, you can sit here and think about your story, or the next moment, or the last moment, where you're going to be. Or you can be here as a field of aware presence. And the goodness that we spoke of, that you find when you allow this moment to be as it is, because this is allowing this moment to be as it is, not imposing an interpretation.

And if an interpretation comes, recognize it as a mind, an interpretation. Not totally believe in it, not totally be absorbed by it, just see it. Yeah, there's the conditioned mind which comes up with its, whatever it says.

And then you go back to the perception itself. So the goodness that is hiding underneath, no matter what form this moment takes, that is an aspect of that unconditioned dimension in yourself. And that then emerges through you.

So it is not, it might have seemed when I said it at first, it was a very passive state, to say you can notice that there is a goodness underneath the appearance of this moment.

That is inseparable from the state of pure awareness, presence, whatever you want to call it, space consciousness. It emerges from there.

And everybody, even very unconscious human beings, unconscious means totally identified with conditioned mind, even very unconscious human beings sometimes very obscurely sense that there is something in them that is greater, of there is a goodness that they cannot quite access. It doesn't seem to operate when they operate in their everyday life. It may break through occasionally, accidentally almost, sometimes in moments of great danger when they're threatened by death, it could break through when the conditioned mind subsides because it can't cope anymore with the urgency of this moment.

So almost everybody senses that in some obscure way they know that there is something in them that is greater than what they manifest as their everyday existence that may be pitiful. What they manifest in their everyday life may not be great. There may be a lot of wanting and needing and me against you on a small level, whether it's on a little level or whether it's you become the CEO.

CEO is becoming a dirty word these days. But there's no difference on CEO. It's just on a bigger scale, a bigger egoic scale.

That's all. That's why it's more noticeable. The greed of the ego, the greed, the need for more.

There's a fly buzzing around my head looking for something. So that then what many people obscurely sense within emerges is an aspect of the unconditioned. Love, joy, aliveness, compassion, it dwells there in that dimension.

So then that also begins to operate through you in your interactions with the world, the unconditioned. So this is why it's what at first sight seems so insignificant when I say, go to nature, look at the tree, and be completely there in the looking. Allow the perception to arise in a field of stillness.

It first seems, well, okay. Okay, I've done that now. What do I do now?

Next thing. To the mind it seems insignificant. And yet nothing is of greater significance than that because it's through that the unconditioned emerges.

And then those qualities that are an inseparable part of that dimension flow out into this world. You begin interacting with nature because nature helps you. The next level up then is interacting with human beings that you know superficially, people you've just met, people that you come into contact with casually, people perhaps on the retreat that you meet, and we'll be addressing that in more detail also, to bring that non-labeling awareness into your interactions with other human beings.

Then an enormous change happens on the planet when more humans interact in the way in which you don't impose conceptualization on other humans. So we'll be addressing that more. Nature is easier.

Humans are more difficult. So you begin with nature, and nature will continue to be extremely helpful in this. And that in itself is of the benefit of, is incredible, the way in which that deepens your life, the way in which you interact with nature, the depth that is there when you allow the mystery that is every living being to be there.

Yes, you still know the label if you should need it, but the mystery that is there that is covered up by the label that says three, the depth that is there is just inconceivable. And the aliveness that is there that some people have glimpsed when they took acid, that perhaps was their first time they glimpsed something that's beyond conceptualized mind, and the teapot suddenly became intensely alive. It wasn't a teapot anymore.

But then you've come back again. That is not the way. So this is much better than acid.

But for some people it's been a little glimpse of stepping out of the prison of conceptualized thought into an intense aliveness. So the mystery that is there, what, how absurd to think that you know when the moment you have put a label onto something. And children become conditioned at an early age in that way, when they learn language.

And the human mind wants that in the child, because the human mind says, what's that? And then the father or mother says, that's a tree. And then the child repeats, tree, tree.

And the illusion that the child then now knows what it is, it's already started. Next time, the next day, the child sees a tree. Before the child was looking, that was pre-mind.

And that you find in very young children, when you see them, mind hasn't started yet, and yet consciousness is already there of their surroundings. And they look, they are all little Buddhas. And then they look at you.

And that also, some humans are drawn to little children as they are drawn to animals, because they feel they are not being judged. They know that the dog or the little child, the pre-mind child, is not imposing a label on them. They find freedom there.

So they are drawn, whenever they see a little child, they go then, oh, yes, it's beautiful. And then a moment comes in the child's life when the conceptualizing mind wants to start. And the questions start, what is that?

It's demanding labels. So one day, the child is looking at the tree in openness and wonder. That is still the state of oneness.

And the next day, it has learned the word tree. And then it looks at the tree, and there's still a moment, the gap is still there that I mentioned. And then it remembers the label tree.

Oh, tree, tree, tree. Yeah, that's right. That's what it is.

And now let's go on to the next thing. For many humans from that moment onwards, they don't really look at the tree anymore, because they think they know what it is. And this is just one tiny example of then thousands of concepts, and then being imprisoned in that, and then having concepts about me.

That's who you are. So going beyond all that is liberation. The ancient word that's been used for thousands of years, free.

Free from what? Free from the conditioned mind. So nature, that in itself is an enormous shift when you can go into nature and interact in that way.

And yes, you look upon everything, that is love. Anything that is not labeled as you perceive it is looked upon with love. Not the love that the mind talks about that says, come here, I'll lead you.

I love you because I need you. I won't let you go. You're mine.

Or I love this flower so much that I'm going to take it home with me. It's not that kind of love. Very wisely in the Spanish language, the expression I love you is the same as the expression I want you, because that is the usual way in which what is called love by the mind.

But the true love emerges whenever there's the absence of conceptualization, of labeling. And that is why the dog loves you continuously. And that is why the little child can look, no matter who the child looks upon, there is that openness.

It doesn't judge a person as ugly. The openness is there. The label isn't there yet.

So nature is an access point. It is an opening for that. But also, including inanimate nature.

Let's call it inanimate nature. There is the beautiful realm of minerals. Wonderful.

The earth itself, the stones, the aliveness that is there. And even man-made, human-made things have an aliveness, especially if there's still some closeness to nature, like things made of wood, natural materials. But even synthetic things, yes, they too are alive, a little bit more removed from the source, perhaps.

But yes, also a temporary expression of consciousness. So you can sit in your room, perhaps, let's say the room where you're staying here, or the room, let's say with here, and just briefly sit and be there, look around, perceive your surroundings without needing to label. Innocent perception, you could call it.

Not wanting anything from something. Not comparing. Just letting it be.

Don't go on for too long, because from that state of having gone beyond mind, as this is something new for most humans, it is possible to go from that state of having gone beyond mind to a state of alertness, and suddenly you fall below mind into sleep. Until that becomes a more habitual state in you that can happen. So that's fine too.

Beautifully expressed, there was a film about golf playing, The Legend of Baga Vance, where somebody's learning to play, or relearning to play golf, and his teacher is showing him how to be present, how to be a step out of mind. In one line, the teacher says, he's now learning how to stop thinking without falling asleep, because only then can he play well. And every sportsman who does well knows that, that that state is the state of freedom from thinking.

Of absolute alertness, clarity, relaxed alertness and clarity. And so a few people, we mentioned artists earlier, some sportsmen have access to that in their field of activity. And here it is emerging as your normal state of consciousness.

It's becoming your normal state of consciousness. Thought is still there, yes. Will continue to be there for quite a while.

Quite a while. As long as you are here in the body, thought will also still be here. And yet, there's a freedom.

Thought moves, it is no longer problematic, it is no longer invested with self. You're not seeking yourself in thought forms anymore. That's liberation.

And thought is recognized as thought. You don't, you're not totally trapped in every thought that comes. So all that is the shift in consciousness that this gathering is part of.

Transitional period is when thought loses its capacity to make you unhappy. But it still operates. But you don't believe totally in the judgments of your mind anymore, about yourself, about your life, what it tells you about your life, how you have failed or been treated unfairly by life, whatever the story may be.

It's the old, conditioned thought forms. And your sense of self does not reside there anymore. So use the access, the exit, the little exit door that is nature.

Bring that alertness to your perceptions. That's nice. And then the thought subsides and there's more spacious presence.

And then some other thought comes. It's fine. And as you sit here, listen to these words as if they were coming from within you.

Because they are. They're not somebody else's words. The truth is coming through.

Consciousness speaks, that's all. It doesn't matter through which form it speaks. Consciousness speaks, is pointing the way back to itself.

So here too, you just simply sit here being present, alert, awake. That is the essence of all meditation. But it's no longer a separate activity.

It's now. Every moment. Once I had a group, we were addressing just this, and somebody put her hand up and said, when do we start meditating?

This is the meditation. And you are learning once the momentum of mind has taken you over again, and that will happen. It's been there for so long, it has a momentum still.

The mind will come back. It could come back even as you're sitting here, in which case you will no longer be here. You could be gone.

And you notice it, you're not seeing anymore, you're not perceiving anymore what's around you, only just enough not to bump into things. But when you can watch a person whose attention is totally drawn into thinking, there's very little outflow through eyes. There's an absence in the eyes.

I can demonstrate it, perhaps. Nobody there, not here. So your consciousness is being absorbed by thought processes.

It all goes in here. And then, not long after that, but if that happens to you, and it probably will at some point, and then you can then, suddenly you become aware that once this has started, it won't be very long before some form of suffering will appear. And then those thought processes will go more dense.

And then the emotions you will feel that accompany those thoughts. And then you might go to your partner and you say, you know I've been thinking. More often than not, whenever anybody comes to you and says, you know I've been thinking, you know here comes trouble.

And so that may happen to you, and then you will notice some form of suffering arising. And some form of suffering arises, and that's a little signal that says you must have lost the now. Where's the now?

Now? And that entity, one could call it, that is now there, it's a temporary little, because everything is life form. Every thought is a life form, and a conglomeration of thoughts pretending to be a personal me, is a temporary, one could say, life form, a temporary formation.

And that temporary formation wants to continue in existence as that formation. Like every life form wants to remain as that life form. It resists metamorphosis.

And I'm sure if we could know the inner life of a caterpillar, the caterpillar too would resist its metamorphosis into a butterfly until the last moment. No, I'm not becoming a butterfly. There is a certain inertia in every form.

The form, you can see it in children or sometimes adults. You're tired, but you don't want to go to bed, because there's an inertia in the state of being awake. You want to remain, you're not really awake anymore.

And then when you're in bed, you don't want to get out of bed. There's an inertia in that state. With children, you have it very often.

There's an inertia in every form. So the thought forms want to remain as those thought forms. So there is a, and that is the, they want, they will resist anything that would bring about a shift in consciousness.

So there is something in you, and it's fine, doesn't want to be free. And that's a strange realization. There is something in me that does not want to be free.

And that you might think, is that a personal fault of mine? No, there's nothing personal in that. That pretends to be a personal entity or personal matter.

That in me wants to be taken seriously and be somebody, me. But it is not a personal matter at all. It is a universal mind pattern, that principle of inertia is in you.

And it will find many reasons and excuses why you cannot be present now and why this moment is not important at all. Because I have far more important things to think about. It can give you many convincing arguments why it's not going to work for you.

You might as well forget it. It's all nonsense anyway. I mean, you've got all that nonsense about change in consciousness.

This is real. Your problems are real. The falling shares are real.

Your financial situation, that's real. And so it will come up, it will tell you what is real, what matters. Because it doesn't want to go.

And it comes up with things that you need to think about now. At night especially. Very important.

There's nothing you can do, you're lying there. And so what conventionally is called worry, it simply means uncontrolled, negative thought processes that are projecting themselves into future, if that's what worry is. I'm not sure it's not the dictionary definition, but totally identified with mind movement, creating situations and problems that are not here now.

What could happen, might happen, probably will happen. And so at night, those things can start up very strongly. And so the possibility of you noticing that so that the other dimension can come in is greater now, especially after having endured or enjoyed our retreat here.

Even if you think, and you probably will think because the thinker doesn't know what's going on here, even if you think that nothing is happening here, sitting here is quite enough for something to shift inside you. And the thinker, even if the thinker says, no, it's not happening, nothing is going on. So to recognize the mind, to recognize the momentum behind it and the inertia that is there, it doesn't want to stop worrying.

The worrying entity, the thinker, do you think the thinker wants to stop thinking? Or do you think the worrier wants to stop worrying? Its whole existence is worrying.

Well, conventionally, you all know this because we all know people who you asked, who would they be if they couldn't worry about something? But that is a pattern more strongly developed in others, in some than in others, that is in everyone. So the thinker does not want the end of thinking.

The worrier, which is the thinker intensified, doesn't want the end of worrying. The worry has a momentum too, particularly if the pattern of worry gets connected to the latent pain, emotional pain that humans carry in here. And that's what the thinker likes to do.

The thinking entity, the self, to keep itself going, it links into the, what I sometimes call pain body, which is the accumulation of pain from the past that humans carry, the residue goes back a long way. It's collective to a large extent, collective human pain inherited through thousands of years of madness, hundreds of thousands of years of suffering inflicted by humans on themselves and on each other, and your personal life too. Every child suffers coming into this world through the unconsciousness around them.

And so you carry that inside and the worrier and the thinker and the mind made self, when they don't, when it's to gain more momentum, will link into that energy field of emotion, the old emotion of pain. And that will energize those mind movements. And that is what keeps the self entity going again and again very strongly.

The old pain that gives energy to thought processes. And you think you're worrying about certain things in your life, but really you're acting out 100,000 years of human pain that are here. And then the mind finds some kind of explanation.

It's made into something personal, me. So to bring presence into that, we'll be addressing in more detail the pain body also, but just here to see that when it happens. And once this movement has started, something is operating in you, an energy field, almost one could say a temporary entity.

It does not want an end to the pain. It does not want an end to the worry. It wants to carry on worrying.

You can find that out for yourself. If at that moment somebody pointed out to you the possibility of stepping out of that, which is there, the possibility of recognizing that pattern and stepping out of it. If you are totally identified with a pattern, you will deny that possibility.

Because you are not speaking. The pattern is speaking. The conditioned entity is speaking.

And you will say, this is absolute nonsense. Whatever arguments it comes up with, it will say, there's no such thing as present moment. I'm not interested.

Leave me alone with that nonsense of present moment. This is what matters. And this is how it is.

That's what's going to happen. So to compensate, one could almost say for the enormous momentum of that, what we could call the movement of unconsciousness in humanity, which is not a personal problem, not anybody's personal problem. But that undeniably, very still, very powerful movement of unconsciousness that is in humanity.

Even after this retreat, you may not be totally free of that. May. And so what is needed, and yes, it is happening, the arising of that which is beyond that needs to be more powerful than that.

Not that it is fighting anything. It's not fighting that. In its vastness, it contains that and then dissolves it.

But the arising of presence needs to be intense. Otherwise, you will be totally drawn in again and again into the old movement of unconsciousness. Now, the question is, can you make that happen?

Can you make the arising of the unconditioned presence, can you make it more intense, or is it something that just happens by itself? And the answer is not clear-cut. It is yes and no.

Can you make it happen? Yes and no. From one perspective, yes.

You can, as I sometimes call it, you can take up the sort of presence that says, only this is real, only this moment is real. And what is the problem at this moment? That cuts through the problem-making conditioned mind, which needs past and future to continue to manufacture its problematic sense of self, to cut through, to access in yourself presence that cuts through all that and says, okay, stepping out of mind by choice into the aliveness and freedom of this moment.

You can do that, one could say. You can do what the Zen master described as the essence of Zen when he raised, he would only ever do one thing when he asked, what is the essence of Zen? This, intense presence.

He never said that. Aliveness, presence, be here fully. And that is something you can do.

You can choose presence. Now, nothing that I say or anybody says is totally true. And even that statement is not totally true.

Reality is far deeper than could ever be contained in any one statement. You can choose presence because presence is already arising in you and through you. And that can give you the feeling that, yes, I can choose presence, and that's good.

I wouldn't say that to anybody because it would not be true for them. If not enough presence is arising, you can't choose presence. So let's, why not, instead of trying to somehow resolve the paradox of the seemingly contradictory statements, why not allow the seemingly contradictory statements to be there because they point beyond themselves to a greater truth?

The mind says, no, let's work this out, yes or no? And it would even fight. If it has chosen the yes, it'll fight against the no.

And that is a wonderful thing because, and we can do that now, this is an example of allowing mental positions to be there and allowing different mental positions to coexist also without believing that one position encapsulates the entire truth. Now, the mind will tell you, will you not, will I not become totally paralyzed because I won't know what to do anymore? If I do not subscribe to one way of looking at things, what was going to be the motivating factor?

And the motivating factor will no longer be thought. The intelligence of the unconditioned consciousness will motivate you, things will happen, it will move through you, and action will happen when it's needed. But not through adopting and defending a mental position, because defending my mental position, whatever it may be, implies you're fighting other mental positions.

And an extreme manifestation of that is the terrorist, for example, or whatever else. It's totally being trapped in a conceptualized sense of us or self and totally making a conceptualized identity for others so that they are not alive anymore. Other humans are mental concepts.

As such, it is totally fine to kill them because they are no more than they are dead mental concepts. Whatever label you have put onto them, you have already killed them with your labels. Whether or not you then kill them physically doesn't really, almost doesn't matter anymore, you've done it already, almost.

So being trapped in conceptualization, the movement of unconsciousness is still in you, yes? The choice is there now. For the choice to be there, you need to recognize that you've been trapped in mind, that you are trapped in mind.

And a good sign is suffering in your life, any kind of suffering. You've lost the now. Re-enter the now.

One way is sense perceptions to truly, in the way that we described, truly perceive acute, with acute awareness. Another one is allowing this moment to be as it is. It's a little exit too.

And a beautiful one is the inner body feeling the aliveness in your inner energy field that takes attention away from thinking. That's another exit out of the prison of mind. That may be particularly helpful when the worry pattern starts, if that's the pattern.

Worry is a form of fear. At night, for example. All that's needed is notice that it's happening to you.

That requires already a minimum of awareness. If you don't have that, you have no choice. Because you are totally the worrier.

Worry, W-O. And the other one too. You're totally the worrier, and then you have no choice.

So the fact that there is choice means there's at least a minimum of awareness, even in the midst of unconsciousness, being taken over by the momentum of the mind, there's still the minimum of awareness that knows that you're being taken over by the mind. And in that moment, choice becomes in. But that is not up to you.

It's by the grace of the divine that that minimum of awareness is there in you. And there, the choice is there. And again, it's only a perspective to step out.

And the worrier will tell you, no, I can't. No point. That's another thought.

Should you totally believe in that thought? No. There's a thought that says you can't possibly get out of it.

And you really need to think about this. And then you do it anyway. That mind is very clever with arguments and trying to convince you why not.

And then you do it anyway. You can't possibly, you can't feel the inner body now. What's the point in even trying to feel the inner body with what's going on in here?

There's no point in even trying. And then you do it anyway. And then you sense there's an aliveness in your hands and your feet and the rest of the body.

Who says you can't feel your body? That was just a thought. And then attention moves there.

And it is quite possible within a minute or two, you can shift from a boring entity to feeling intensely alive and present in your entire energy field. And that means the inner body becomes an anchor for staying present. It's your anchor.

And then you will notice the pull of the mind of wanting your attention back. And it will then come up with some other thought. Just before you go in, just think about this.

And then it pulls your attention half out again. And for a moment, you're back in that. And then you notice it again and you're back in the body.

And then you have to walk on the razor's edge of now or the rest of lying awake that night. Because if you leave the now, you suffer. And another thought comes, you leave the now.

And then you're back. That is beautiful practice. Most of you probably drive cars.

Another wonderful field of practice to drive your car in presence. You're less likely to have an accident also. Mostly when you drive your car, you're thinking about something else.

It's on automatic. You're not thinking about the driving and nor should you be because you wouldn't be driving very well if you were thinking about so it's automatic. Something else is driving.

But why not just be still while you drive and perceive everything. Very aware of the movement. Very alert.

It's amazing how many people personalize the act of driving. So it's regarded as normal. They personalize going from A to B behind the wheel of a car.

It becomes a personal struggle. With other drivers, they get angry. They shout.

It's simply the movement of traffic. No different from the weather or any other movement, life movement. But they personalize it because the me strengthened itself through having, where's my enemy?

The enemy is right there. I always say, beware of driving pain bodies. What does a driving pain body want without knowing it?

The driving pain body wants something to go wrong, to have more pain. And sooner or later it will. All that he or she needs is another driving pain body in the vicinity.

So our practice here for nature, your own room, walking from A to B, not making that movement into a means to an end, needing to get there. Just be there every step. It's the next step is not going to be more important than this one.

The arriving is not going to be more important than this moment. Be there within every step. Walk along around the campus here as a field of aware, alert, alive presence without carrying the burden of your story and think about it as you walk.

Or I say, I wonder what's going on in the world. What's in the news? Not good.

It wasn't good last week. It's not good this week. And when you get home and you listen to the news again, it'll still be the same.

The news are very selective. The collective mind says this is important and this is important and this is important. That's the news.

It overlooks a lot. There's a wonderful person living here on campus, a great artist. He arranges all these flower arrangements that we see in different places with leaves and most incredible awareness has gone into that.

I believe his name is Jonathan. I remember rightly from last year. Just the most amazing example of beauty that is created whenever something is being performed in the state of presence and the love that flows into the doing naturally, any doing that arises out of presence.

And he can take any objects, a few dead leaves or dying leaves, a little bit of moss and a little bit of that and puts it together and it's a creation of great beauty. That is also very helpful to look upon anything that was created out of that state of consciousness, can reflect that state back to you, can give you a reflection of that state. That's the essence of art probably, to give you a reflection of the state out of which it came, which shines through the form.

Every great work of art is more than what you see. And it can't really define it through concepts. It's always more.

Something shines through that is not the form and that is the state of consciousness out of which it came. And when you look upon it rightly, which means in the state of aware presence, it can strengthen and deepen that state in you. That is the beauty of art.

And probably even relatively unconscious human beings, deep down they can sense something when they look at a work of art. And they may treasure it. It's very deep, they feel something.

They don't always recognize it. There's probably been great art that's never been recognized. And in the case of some great artists, they were never recognized in their lifetime.

I don't know who, perhaps it was Van Gogh, who never sold a single painting in his lifetime. Nobody wanted to, not interested. Nobody was really looking.

So something shines through. And even anything a craftsman makes can also happen. It doesn't have to be a great painting.

Anything that a craftsman has spent a long time being present with, not a means to an end, giving attention, the flow of attention, which is awareness, which is presence, goes into that. And then the object embodies that. It embodies quality in its deepest sense.

And it's always an aspect of sacredness to that, always. But whether or not you make something, only a few of you will be making something with your hands or in whatever way, presence manifests in so many different ways. It can also manifest entirely outside the world of form with just you sitting there, listening to someone, not even saying anything, just being there as spacious presence.

One more thing here. Little movements. Perform little movements and be present with that.

Just little, whatever you might be doing naturally, when you put on your shoes or your feet move into your sandals or you tie your shoelaces. Usually you would be thinking about the next thing, but why not just be there? And there's a stillness around the action in which the action happens.

Walking down a few steps or wherever it may be, or any habitual action. Don't make it too long at first. You might get lost in thought.

If you say, I'm going to perform making this cup of tea in presence, might be too much because you have to fill the kettle, you have to wait for it to boil, and by then you might be off somewhere. Why not just, while you stir the cup of tea, something that would be totally unnoticed, not noticeable to you in the normal state of consciousness, just small actions. Little bit of honey in the tea, if you take honey.

And there was a space of no thought, just that. Anything that's short, that you do often. Lighting a candle, you don't have candles here, you're not supposed to have candles.

Pouring liquid, water or juice. Little spaces in your life. And then more and more spaces, and then some spaces come naturally by themselves.

And sooner or later you might find a big space. It all implies getting out of living in that conceptualized me in the head. I suggest, stay for a little while with the empty chair, until you find yourself getting up.

When you find yourself getting up, it's time to get up. Thank you. A person was studying with a Zen master.

It was time to leave and go home, and so he came to the master and said, can you write something in my book? Something that I can then remember, remind myself of something important about Zen. It's already a sign, of course, that he didn't get it.

And so he gave him the book, and the Zen master wrote something in it, and he looked, and he saw he'd written, attention, in Japanese, presumably. Just one little symbol, probably shorter than our language. Is that all, he said?

Surely, can you say a little bit more, please? And he gave it back to the master, and the master wrote something else, and he looked, attention, attention. And he said, oh, come on, surely, there's more than that to Zen.

And he gave it back, please, just a little bit more. And he got the book back, attention, attention, attention. What is this attention?

Well, it's interesting, but anyway, what does attention mean, anyway, he asked the master, what does it mean? And the master said, attention means attention. With Zen stories, you never know whether that's the end or not.

But that is the end. Now you notice an interesting story. You can notice two things.

The mind's need for more, say a bit more, and then the need for further explanation. What does attention mean? He wants more explanation of what it, and so that is why he doesn't get it, because he is seeking the answer in the realm of thought still.

That's why he's asking, really saying, give me a little bit more to think about, so that I can understand what Zen is, through thought. And of course, the essence of Zen is knowing the dimension of consciousness that is beyond thought. Not that that is something that you can achieve or attain, another obstacle is that belief, but that dimension is already there.

That's the strange paradox. In you, so to speak, ultimately, within and without are one. That dimension of consciousness is already there.

It is, to a large extent, obscured by thought, by constant preoccupation with thought, but without it, thought couldn't even be there. It is, one could say, the medium in which all thought forms are floating, and it is there in between two thoughts that may be very brief in many people, these gaps. It is there in the first moment of perception.

It may be there when you wake up in the morning, and the machinery of thinking hasn't started up yet, the first moment of opening your eyes. At that moment, there is certain things already that are being perceived, but there's also that beautiful field of still attention in which the perception takes place that is sensed as a kind of background piece. The foreground is that which arises in the first instance, sense perceptions.

Then, thoughts, perhaps, arise in it. Thoughts are arising here at this moment, but they haven't taken over. So even though thoughts are happening, that dimension that is beyond thought is as present or more present here than the thoughts.

And it is possible to live in such a way that you are conscious continually of this background field. Even when thoughts happen, it does not depend on whether thoughts are there or not. That frees you from excessive identification with and attachment to the forms of this life, whether they be external forms that come into your life, things, people, situations, circumstances, or thought forms.

It frees you from excessive attachment, excessive identification with the thought forms and the emotional forms also. There's the flux, the continuous flux of phenomenal existence, within and without. Ultimately, it's all within.

The entire world, one could say, takes place within you. And it's all happening against this background. One could compare it perhaps to water that's everywhere, and all these things swimming in it.

And then the fish says, where's the water? I've been looking for it all my life. And the water makes up the very essence of the fish.

It's not just around the fish. The fish, too, is mostly water. Just a little analogy.

This is something very obvious. Subtle, yes, but so natural could be, potentially, for a human being to live in connectedness with that dimension. And not to sense that, not to know that, not knowing in a subject-object relationship, but to know it as the essence of I.

No longer I am that, because that refers to some kind of form, or name, or identification. Just the essence of I am. Not to know that is really to be deprived of the most important thing of all, which is a no-thing.

The only thing that absolutely matters in one's life is to know that. Everything else may matter also, but only relatively. Whether you are healthy or ill matters, but only relatively.

Whether you are in prison or in a beautiful home matters, but only relatively. If the prisoner in prison knows that dimension within, then he's much better off than you are in the mansion. And if the person in hospital bed knows that, perhaps even sensing the approach of death, and it may have come because there's the impending undoing of the physical form, which for some people is one way of encountering that dimension.

It's a little bit late, but it's fine. And from there, your whole life, your whole past suddenly makes sense, because it brought you to the flowering, to that point. The old past, which otherwise perhaps is a some meaningless accumulation of events, and in some people's lives, even seemingly meaningless, absurd events, or a series of what looks like mistakes, a series of things that shouldn't have happened to me, were not really meant to happen, but they happened.

People are trying to make sense of their life on the relative level, but you can't. Whatever edifice you build up mentally, something will come, and you will no longer be able to make sense of it. Collectively, it can happen when a collective disaster happens, such as last year in September, not far from here, and suddenly people cannot make sense anymore.

The explanations fail. Let them fail. It's good when the mind's attempt to explain, to form some philosophy on which I can base my life, fails.

That looks like bad news to the mind, but it's good. And here, it's also failing, as we are sitting here. I'm taking away from you, well not really, you are voluntarily letting go of identification with all that.

I am my name, and my story, and my thoughts, and my emotions, me. So this sitting here is so easy if you are fully here, and that's all that's needed for that dimension to emerge from within you, and it's so subtle. Where is it?

It's there the moment, even if you say, where is it? And instead of thinking where it is, you so to speak, listen to find it. Where is it?

Listen really is an analogy for attention. Where is it? And your attention is there, as if you were listening.

That's it. Pure field of attention. That's why Jesus used some of these parables of waiting for somebody to arrive.

Waiting not in the usual sense of impatience, when is it going to happen, but of alertness. When is he or she going to come? That kind of waiting.

It's the same state, you might notice, that is there when you look at something in the state of a tree, a flower, in the state of attention. So no matter what happens in your life, there are always two dimensions, one could say, in your life. Now most humans are lost in one dimension completely.

That's the dimension of the manifested world, the world of form, the world of phenomena, the world of time, of thought. They're totally, they don't know anything else. And then there's the world, the dimension, not the world, the dimension of the unmanifested, the one life, prior to form.

The one consciousness that underlies all life, no matter whether it's life on this planet, or somewhere else on the, in this galaxy, or one other, another galaxy of those billions of galaxies. The one life prior to form, the one consciousness, one could almost say, that which was there before the universe happened, continues to be there even now. Scientists ask and puzzle over the question, what was there before the Big Bang?

Big Bang is the, they say, is when it all started. Out of one point, or out of nothingness, came a whole universe. And what was there before then?

And what was there before time started? The mind stops. So scientists maybe haven't quite realized that they come up, these days, physicists come up with Koans, Zen questions, that have no logical answer.

All you get is the mind comes to a stop. And when the mind comes to a stop, that's the answer. That's the, that is the stillness of the unmanifested.

And compared to the mind forms, it is so subtle that at first you say, well, um, uh, and it's the most powerful. The only power there is, the only, the essence of all life forms is that. And it is that, it's only when you know that within yourself, as the deepest, I am in its deepest sense, a simple sense of presence, or I am-ness, that's left when you forget your name.

And when you forget your story, what's left is the, that which always was the essence of your story. The one thing that gave you a sense of I, so precious, and that got mixed up with form, with the story of me. So your, your sense of identity, then you think it's in the story of me, but really it, it is hiding beyond the story.

It just gets mixed up with the forms, the memories, the thought forms, because, so the innermost essence of who you are, even the story of you, is true. That innermost sense that there is something so precious here that, and then because it gets mixed up with form, people have this fear that they could lose that through death. But that's the one thing that is not lost.

The essence, it is consciousness itself. So that's what's left when the form goes. And some people need to experience death to find it.

Death means a form dissolves and leaves an opening into the formless. That's why death is sacred. Now, the opening may not be there for very long.

It gets covered up quickly. And that's why even there are sacred places where great humans who, early flowerings of conscious, of human consciousness, as I call them, who broke through to that dimension, and the place where they died is considered sacred. But any place where death happens is sacred, because a form dissolved.

And for that moment of death, the formless shines through that opening. And of course, there is such a thing as psychological death, which is when the identification with the psychological me dissolves, sometimes through intense suffering caused by identification with the psychological me. It's a beautiful paradox.

Nothing that happens is not right. It may look mad, but even within the madness, the universe is unfolding as it should. So the essence of your identity, I am, that's what's left when all identifications have gone.

Presence, beingness. I have difficulty with names, remembering names, because they don't seem that important. The being underneath the name, that's a different matter.

That's why I got the name wrong, this wonderful artist who does these flower arrangements here. His name is Anthony. And whenever I meet him, there's no, I don't meet a name.

There's simply a meeting on the level of essence, on the level of consciousness. That's why I didn't remember the name. And so the world is then recognized as relatively important, but it loses its overriding importance, seriousness, and heaviness.

And it's, I feel there's so much compassion when I see people, how they, how important things are to them. How, what importance they give, not only to physical things, how much importance they give to situations and what happens or doesn't happen, or a circumstance, or it's how much power they place there in the world of form. And it always, they expect something from it that only the formless can give.

They expect to find themselves somewhere in there. They expect happiness through the world of form. It can give you happiness briefly, and then it takes it away.

So you become dependent on what happens or doesn't happen. And sometimes it's the littlest, the tiniest things that make people unhappy. And they, I asked, why are you unhappy?

Well, this, this has just happened. This, what does it matter? So it's the, the impossible expectation that people place on the world.

It says, fulfill me, make me happy. The world means places, people, situations, circumstances, doesn't matter. All that means the world.

So they make these, they have these expectations and demands and no place, no person, no situation, no circumstance can meet those demands for long. And this is why life is experienced by most humans as very frustrating, almost designed by some devious God to frustrate you. And many people experience their life as it's designed to frustrate me continuously.

I've tried so hard and always something happens to frustrate me. Of course, there is an impossible demand being placed upon the phenomenal universe. And that demand is not only make me happy, because true happiness in the deepest sense is simply knowing yourself who you are beyond the forms, is true and lasting joy and happiness.

But they are looking for happiness through some imagined configuration of forms. When my life, when those forms in my life, those circumstances, people, places are in the right configuration, then it will be fine. And it could even happen that for a brief moment, they are in the right configuration.

You just moved to a beautiful new home. You just fell in love. And the stock market has just gone up.

And you're told, the doctor says, you're the most healthy, you have the most healthy body I've ever seen. Everything is just right. And then probably you would claim, the ego would claim some merit or achievement.

It would say, I did that. And because the world of form, although forms look solid, this is the illusion when you walk around, especially in a city, the solid structures and man-made, the solidity of everything, form looks so solid. And that's an illusion.

We don't realize that the world of form is very much like vapor or mist. Physicists know that too. They know that there's nothing solid here.

Even the most solid building can collapse in a moment. The grandest edifice, whether it be an office building or a temple, can collapse at any moment. And sometimes they do.

So the apparent or solidity of form is an illusion. To anybody who hasn't been to India, I recommend at least going there once to experience that the physical universe, the solidity of the physical universe is an illusion. In India, it's much easier to know that, because things are not that solid in the physical realm.

Things could go wrong at any moment. And it's beautiful. And that's maybe the reason why India has produced the greatest sages from the very first spiritual awakening of humanity happened there.

Perhaps because the physical realm is less solid, or the illusion is less, the illusion of solidity is less there than here. So because of the illusion of solidity, you believe that there can be something permanent in the phenomenal realm. But very quickly, here too, things shift, change, leave you, or make you unhappy.

Today, it makes you happy. Tomorrow, it makes you unhappy, that beautiful position that you got. The husband or wife makes you happy, then makes you unhappy.

Anybody who has been through more than one marriage, and even those who are still in one marriage, know that the person who makes you happy is also the person who makes you unhappy. So the demands that people place upon the manifested world are impossible. So, make me happy.

And when that, the only way, when that demand is dropped, and sometimes this dropping, this letting go of that demand can happen when the world has totally frustrated you. Totally. So much has gone wrong, so to speak, which means not really wrong, but against the expectations, against what I wanted and needed, that you let go of any further expectations, not in a negative sense, because if you let go of any further expectations in a negative sense, that means then you are saying, who cares?

I don't want to know anymore. I'm done with the world. You're not.

There's still a lot of attachment. But a true letting go, when perhaps you even smile or laugh, it's gone. It's all crumbled once again.

And no further expectations are placed upon the manifested. And suddenly you sense this enormous peace. What is that?

Everything has gone wrong, and yet there's this deep sense of rightness. So that can happen in cases where people become totally frustrated. It can also happen in a spiritual teaching to see, when you are ready to see, that readiness is there because the frustrations have already been there.

You wouldn't have come otherwise. That's already been there. And then suddenly you see the demands.

And part of the demands, very essential part of this demand that is placed upon the phenomenal world is the demand that the future should make you happy, because that is very, the next moment, the need for the next moment. And it is a great act of letting go when the psychological need for the next moment is relinquished. That's always an essential part of coming to an end of placing expectations, because every expectation that you place upon the world to some extent implies future.

And so it's a wonderful thing that demands that are made upon places, people or situations or circumstances are not there. And then you are comfortable with places as they are, because no matter what place you go to, it could be ideal in your imagination when you actually get there, something will be there that is not ideal, any, whatever place you go to, and person and circumstance. And that's the thing that frustrates you.

And that demand is not made anymore. It could be a simple thing, even demands you place upon people. Understand me.

He doesn't understand me. My parents don't understand me. My children don't understand me.

So, is that so bad? They understand what they can understand. Their stage of evolution, they understand just enough for them to understand.

They are okay with not understanding. You don't realize that nothing is added to you by having somebody understand you, except a psychological thought form that you then say, oh, it's confirmation that I exist. He's confirmed that I exist.

What is that existence that needs confirmation that you exist, or confirmation of the world? Some people think they need fame. Fame is totally overrated.

There's nothing in it. That's why some famous actors are interested in this teaching. They realized how empty that thing is called fame.

If fame fulfilled them, would they come to this teaching? What for? They're fulfilled by fame, by recognition.

Everybody recognizes how beautiful or great they are. So, isn't that fulfilling? No.

You think it's fulfilling when you don't have it. And when you have it, it's fulfilling for a little moment, and then it's no longer fulfilling. And you see, it's another way of finding this dimension.

One way is being totally frustrated and getting nothing. Another way is getting everything and being totally frustrated. And some famous actors go to drugs.

They try to deaden the frustration that they feel, which ultimately is a form of pain. They try to deaden it that way. Famous people, many have been very unhappy, committed suicide.

But some others see that. So, it doesn't really matter whether it's through achieving everything or achieving nothing, you find it. For most of you, it's kind of a mixture.

You've perhaps experienced success to some extent and failure to some extent. And you've experienced success turning into its opposite. So, that is the realization that everything in this phenomenal world is fleeting.

The Buddha came up with that realization. It's impermanent, everything that you encounter. He said there are three characteristics of human existence.

Everything is fleeting. There's no self in it. If you're seeking a self in any situation through an enhanced sense of self, this is why people make these demands upon the world.

Make me happy. Make me feel fully who I am. Make me know myself fully.

It's really because happiness is knowing yourself in the deepest level. So, when you say, make me happy, you're saying to the world, help me find myself. Enhance my deficient sense of self, this feeling of not enough yet, yet, this feeling of lack, not being fully myself yet.

Please help me get there, this person. Maybe if they understand me, they'll add something to me. Maybe if the world recognizes my worth, I can add that to me and that will do it.

Some achievement. And nothing works. So, it's a self-seeking.

This demand that is placed upon the world is ultimately a self-seeking in the world through the things of the world, the forms, the phenomenal, and that's why it's frustrating. There's no self in any of these things that the Buddha said. Anatta is the word in Pali uses.

The characteristic of all conditions is anatta, no self. And another characteristic, there are three characteristics. One is no self.

And that was a long time ago. One of the first flowers of humanity saw that no self, impermanence, anicca, and dukkha is, that sounds negative at first, but this is exactly what we've been talking about. It means the third characteristic, suffering.

It makes you suffer. What that means, dukkha, suffering. Suffering is one translation.

Another translation is misery. Another translation is unsatisfactoriness. And there are other translations, some are quite funny.

But they all point to that basic element that you find no matter what condition you encounter externally in this life, you'll find that somewhere. That's why it's so frustrating. Dukkha, anicca, anatta, the three characteristics, when you do not know who you are.

He didn't add that. He just said that, but then he pointed the way beyond also. Now, when you know who you are, and that's a strange way of putting it, all that it means is knowing the realm that is beyond form, beyond thought, the stillness that is here now.

What the Buddhists sometimes call emptiness, which is fullness also, but does not contain forms, fullness and emptiness prior to forms. It is that which Jesus points to when he says, I want you to have life in its fullness, sometimes translated as abundant life. That's what his teaching also is pointing to.

Obviously, he's not talking about proliferation of things. That was not part of the teaching, because that is mistaken when you are only aware of things and not aware of awareness, because that's what it is. When you are only aware of things, not aware of awareness, self-aware, I am, when you're not self-aware, then when somebody speaks of the fullness of life or abundant life, all you can think of is more things.

And this is why the Western civilization that kind of lost its way from the source, but that's fine too. It's all part of how it should be. Getting lost is good too.

That's why Western civilization came up with shopping malls, because all they can think of the fullness abundant life must be more and more things. So let's create more and more shopping malls and fill them up with more and more things. And this must be the kingdom of heaven that Jesus pointed to.

But all the people who are running around shopping malls feeling frustrated, somehow they are perhaps beginning to see that that is not the fullness of life. By the way, there's nothing wrong with shopping malls. You can enjoy walking through shopping malls when you don't need them anymore.

But when many humans don't need them anymore, then I don't know what will happen to them. I sometimes enjoy for not too long walking through shopping malls and just looking at the world of form, so many forms, and then it's enough. So that's why the fullness of life is not more of things, but it does not refer to that dimension.

It refers to the dimension of depth, that fullness that is there already within you, for which you don't need future. The fullness that is already the essence of your being now, how could you need future to get there? So these three characteristics that the Buddha pointed to, impermanence, no self, and misery, that is true as long as you don't know the dimension of depth.

You don't know who you are beyond identifications. You don't know the I am before it becomes a story, before it becomes a thought. Then, yes, then life is suffering.

And every situation that you go into, you'll find it there somewhere. But when you know the unmanifested, the I am, then the expectations that are being placed upon the world, people, places, situations, circumstances, are not there. And the strange thing is that then, when the expectation is not placed upon them, people, places, circumstances, and situations are quite pleasant.

You can actually quite enjoy them. You enjoy places without the demand that they should be in a particular way. You can ultimately, it comes down to, you can enjoy the is-ness of what is now, no matter what form this now takes.

You enjoy the forms, whereas if you needed the forms to be in a certain way, then it never quite worked. You needed the forms to be in a certain way for your happiness, never quite worked, not for long. When you don't need it, then suddenly the world of form can be enjoyed.

It's a beautiful play of form. The neediness isn't there, and it's only then that you can truly enjoy. So it's not this teaching and the true spiritual teaching, any true spiritual teaching, there's only one, is not a rejection of that dimension of the world.

But it becomes accepted, it becomes, you embrace that in the vastness of who you are, that world of form is playing itself out, continuously fluctuating forms. You can enjoy it, and even, amazing thing is, you love it. But you love not the form, I love the flower, I love you without knowing your story or your name, because what I love is the formless essence that I sense.

Only because I know it in myself, I can sense it in you. And sensing it in you, sensing what is my essence in you, is the realization that we are ultimately not separate. And that also applies to any living thing, and even all things are living, but let's talk about nature.

It applies to the flower, it applies to the tree, the cat, the dog. I sense myself in them. You could say God.

Sometimes there is a term, a Christian term, which is beautiful, loving the creator in the creature. Loving the creature is loving the form. That really isn't loving, it's attachment.

My form seeking to enhance itself through adding your form to my form, and completing me somehow, that's the illusion. But loving the formless in the form is recognition of oneness, and that is love. And so, that is how even what you experience as the world of form, undergoes a change when you know the formless within yourself.

What you experience as the external universe takes on greater harmony. Your world, your life, takes on a more harmonious flow. You're still for a while on this mad planet.

Well, the only mad thing about the planet is at the humanity. But the planet is beautiful, and humans are beautiful too. It's just a temporary mental illness, because they have come to the end of an evolutionary cycle.

And it's turned into some, the end of a cycle becomes dysfunctional, because a new cycle, a deepening is happening. The end of this evolutionary cycle, yes, looks like madness. Things are not working.

Things are breaking down. Great. That's supposed to happen.

And the madness increases as the mind-identified state of consciousness, based entirely upon thinking, where humans derive their identity from thinking, that is coming to an end. And so, that's beautiful, and you don't even need to believe that. Most of the things I say here don't require belief, because you can, you know for yourself that it's true.

If you don't believe, if you believe that it's not happening, that's fine too. The only question is, here, is it happening here? The shift.

And it is. So yes, you're still on this planet. You witness dysfunction.

You can also still feel to some extent the pain of this planet. Sometimes you can still feel it. It's no longer, it's not personal matter anymore.

You may still encounter pain body, collective pain body manifesting in you. It's not your personal problem anymore. It is recognized as human pain.

It is accepted for what it is. Gently, compassionately, you have compassion with your own emotional pain, which isn't your own at all. It just looks like it.

It's human pain. You have compassion with that. You accept that also.

And so you realize that acceptance of all the openings into that dimension, perhaps the most beautiful, the one that works immediately, without the need for any kind of time, is acceptance. That takes you to knowing the unmanifested within yourself. Acceptance of the manifested.

If it's pain, that's what it is. The spaciousness of the unmanifested is there as soon as you accept something fully. And then it changes.

Then, this is why I'm saying, when you live in connectedness with that state, even the external changes, yes, it's still mad, but things around you, places and people around you, unfold more harmoniously and it spreads. Your consciousness spreads out and affects the world around you, which becomes a more harmonious place, a place where love is there. You see love suddenly because it comes from within you and then you see it reflected, coming towards you from others.

And that's a little miracle when you don't need the world of things, the phenomenal to be in a certain way. Suddenly, it turns into a more harmonious place when the need is gone. For it to fulfill you, it becomes quite a pleasant place.

And even that which is not pleasant at first sight in this world, you will be taken into situations sometimes that are manifestation of the dysfunctional mind-identified consciousness, and which perhaps contain a great amount of human pain, pain body. And your presence in those situations will be a decisive factor in bringing about a shift. And your consciousness there, you cannot imagine how important one realized point of consciousness is in any situation.

One point of consciousness who is no longer totally identified with forms and is no longer reactive to forms, but comes from the gentleness, the compassion, the love that is there when you are there as the formless presence I am. And there you sit or stand while conflict may be going on around you, and you just watch. You look upon it in the state of attention, no strain in it, relaxed, alert, attention.

Whether it be a conflict situation that is there happening next to you, or whether it be a conflict situation, a challenge that affects you directly, there's the ability to look. I'm using the word look here in a wider sense. We already encountered looking, how important it can be to look in the state of attention at a flower, a tree, or anything.

Here I'm using looking in a wider sense, which is embracing it with your attention, which is a field of stillness. And there, that is the current of awareness, so to speak, that flows through you onto the situation, which may involve a person or several people. So that intelligence comes into play in that situation, the unmanifested intelligence, not reactive, not analytical, not trying to work out what can I do to change this situation, or even trying to work out what can I do to help these people.

A greater help comes when you enter that consciousness, and then suddenly, perhaps, words come, or suddenly action arises, not perhaps even from within you. It may come from somebody out there. You are the bringer of space, so to speak, space consciousness, the spaciousness of presence.

So it is an enormous thing to realize what power there lies in pure attention, looking, beyond just visual looking. Even a blind person can look in that sense, which is simply placing awareness, embracing it, one could say, with awareness, which implies allowing it to be as it is at this moment, because it already is. And that becomes the basis then for change.

So that's the most powerful thing in yourself, is to discover that still power that never fights anything or anybody, but embraces everything and everybody, and yet is also the most powerful agent of change, and also transforms the outer, so it becomes a more benign place, less hell. It approaches heaven a little bit more. Certain polarities will remain in the outer realm.

They keep the outer going, hot, cold, high, low, but they are benign polarities. They are to be enjoyed as the multiplicity of the phenomenal universe, to be enjoyed the multiple forms. So life can appear in so many forms.

So this is so simple, and this is perhaps why it's remained a secret for so long. Take this consciousness anywhere, and you immediately become a healer. And again, I'm using the word in a wider sense, that whatever enters that field of spacious presence becomes transformed, and if it is not ready to be transformed, will remove itself.

It's not ready yet, and that's fine too. People will come to you now as this is arising from within you more strongly. Many of you will find, and many of you are already finding, that people come to you, and they don't know why, and they ask a question.

You might meet people seemingly accidentally, maybe in an elevator or anywhere, and something that you say or they ask, there's something there. They are seeking something from you. Something within them can sense something, that there is something there.

They don't know what it is. So people will be drawn to you, and there's the temptation, there's the possibility that your mind will re-enter the stage and say, I've got to do something. It might say, I've got to help this person.

How can I help this person? That's a natural temptation to come when people come for help. To try to figure out how to help, and a far more effective help is available when you become comfortable with that state, the simple state of presence, in which it seems that you don't know anything.

There's simply a being there, simply a listening, an open field of attention. The person may be speaking, and there's an open field of attention. That is a very fine energy vibration.

That is intelligence. Out of that intelligence, whatever is needed comes through words, realizations, action, insights, sudden insights, or simply sometimes the arising of peace in the other person. And so that is the greatest transformative agent.

It's the frequency of awareness. And so the mind then takes secondary place, it steps back, and it becomes the servant, so to speak. Thought still operates sometimes.

When a realization comes, it may need to be expressed in words. So it becomes a thought, and that thought becomes the words. That's beautiful.

Then the mind works beautifully. It doesn't take over. It may try again, because it's been running the show for so long, and then it subsides.

You have to, because many of you live in, have one foot in the new consciousness, one foot in the old. It can still happen that mind takes over. It happens even to great spiritual teachers.

It can happen that the mind comes back and identification with me as special comes back. If for years, if for 10 years everybody tells me I'm special because they confuse the essence with the form, if for 10 years people tell me that I am special, then maybe if I don't meet, especially if I live in an ashram, never meet anybody else who doesn't tell me I'm special. Eventually, I am special.

I must be. Everybody's telling me. Enlightenment is nobody's possession or attainment.

It is simply there in the absence of the density of a mind-identified sense of self. In the absence of that density, the condition, the state of enlightenment is there. It's always been there even before.

The sun just shines through now. The sun could become obscured again because it's nobody's possession. Nobody says, I am in possession of a state of enlightenment now.

Who are you? It's in the absence of you that it's there. The absence of the mind made you.

So the mind may come in and want to run the show again and then at some point you will notice it. Oh, this may, this state of consciousness, it's important to, when you talk to people, even in situations that involve, that are not problematic, casual conversation, even there, the mind can easily take over and you lose the spaciousness. In any human interaction, the decisive factor, the only real important question in any human interaction is, is there space?

Or is there complete, or is the entire interaction dominated by object consciousness? Which means, is the entire interaction dominated by the activity of thought? And you can see how you get drawn into that.

It's the mind, the mind stream taking over. No space left. It's full.

It's like living cramped in a room, cramped full with things. And then comes the next thing. And then the next, because when you're in a mind stream, one thing leads to the next.

One thought leads to the next. And there's no end. And some people, many people, even when they're alone, it happens to them.

And then they get exhausted after a while because it burns up so much energy that, and then they look for somebody else to talk to. And in any interaction, so you can observe, is there space or has space been lost now? Space can never really be lost, but there's complete unawareness of space, which means there's no awareness of awareness.

There's only awareness of things. There's only awareness of thoughts, but awareness has become the thought, identification with thought. Awareness has been born into thought forms.

Consciousness has taken birth and is taking birth continuously as thought forms, a continuous stream. Like, you know, when some life forms give birth in rapids, some fishes that come out of the, when I was a child, I had an aquarium and I could sometimes see a fish giving birth. The fish would just come out of the mother fish.

This is the universe giving birth to form. And this happens on the level of thought. The consciousness, the one consciousness giving birth to form is born into form, one after another.

Rebirth, rebirth, rebirth. And you are in each rebirth. There is me, complete identification with the form, the thought form.

That is rebirth. That is you're condemned to be reborn. It's not some abstract Buddhist theory, rebirth.

Rebirth is a concrete thing happening at this moment into the next thought form and the next. And the end of rebirth is not some abstract Buddhist notion that says you need another 200 incarnations approximately to come to the end of rebirth. Rebirth.

The end of rebirth is, the possibility for that is here and now. Not to be reborn into the next thought. And then, suddenly, space is there.

A little bit of space around the thought. Watch people interacting, or even better, watch yourself interacting and see, are you there as a thought form, perhaps wedded to an emotion that goes with it, particularly if you're trying to be right, or reacting to something the person said, or reacting to a place or situation. And so, how much space is there in you?

Any? Even that question can be helpful, because that question is a little pointer. The question, of course, is still a thought, but it's pointing beyond itself.

How much space is there? Is there any space in me at this moment? And when you ask that question, you come to the end of thought, because to know whether there's any space in you, which is the space of awareness, which is the space of no thought, that very question, is there any space in me at this moment, that question, in order to answer it, you need to listen, watch, and be alert and attentive to find out whether there's any space in you, and that is the space. That's why the question can take you there. To answer it, the space needs to be there.

Is there any space in me? This is a similar question to the question we asked yesterday. Is it still now?

Now, these are beautiful questions, because to answer them, you can't think to answer them. There's no answer in thought. If there's an answer in thought, it's a mistake, it's wrong.

If you give that answer to a Zen master, he'll hit you. So, that's a beautiful little thing that in any interaction, if you simply remember that question, and then you will notice stopping for a moment, because you have to find out. And so, you can learn to interact noticing the mind stream, you will notice it more often when you're being dragged along in a mind stream, and then you're out.

Spaciousness is there. And it's good if you can, when you speak to people, one can be aware that you've said what you had to say, the mind's statement has come to an end, and then you can step back into spaciousness from there. That's a beautiful thing to do.

You've said, you've given your opinion. What do you think of such and such? Well, what do you think of political situation?

Well, I think it's like this, like that. I think he's right. I think he's wrong.

I think he's great. I think he's mad. There's the mental position.

And you've said it, and then you step back into spaciousness. Okay, you've said what you had to say. You can still have mental positions.

Your sense of self is in the space, not in the mental position. And then if he says, I disagree with you totally, he's not mad, he's doing the right thing. That's another viewpoint.

You can still defend yours. You can say, I still think you're wrong because this and this and this, without the self defending itself. And then you're already creating an enemy there.

The person who's disagreeing with you becomes your enemy because he's attacking your sense of self. That is madness. It's very normal.

And it's mad. So you can play around with mental positions. You don't need to give them up.

You may have favorite positions. I'm a Republican. I'm a Democrat.

Why not? Or whatever. It's fine.

And your position maybe is more right than somebody else's. Who knows? It may well be.

History will show that either he's mad or he's doing the right thing. So not to become trapped in in mind forms. Because you are part of the madness.

Even if you say that he's mad, and you get mad because somebody else disagrees with your viewpoint, you're part of the madness. Anybody in whom space consciousness is not arising is really part of the problem. And then you see certain things, of course, from space consciousness inside.

So there you can see quite deeply into things. And there's compassion in the seeing. Even if you see somebody's doing a mad thing, there's compassion in there, in that.

And again, compassion is not weak. Compassion is an aspect of the unconditioned. It arises out of that.

I suggest between now and the next our afternoon meeting, we keep noble silence. Perhaps even beyond, we'll see. Between now and this afternoon, a space of silence in which you are alone with your mind.

And be compassionate with your mind. Accept it. Be aware of all the many little things as you walk, walking around, and aware of the field in which this is arising, which is you.

Thank you. I suggest we spend the rest of the day in noble silence, except perhaps for this body sitting on a chair this afternoon. Words may come.

Some of you may be watching a film tonight, and there's no reason why you cannot be silent as you watch the film. Fierce, I believe it is tonight, Fierce Grace, about the life of Ram Dass. A good film.

And so if you can, extend the silence into sleep, until sleep happens tonight. For those of you who have come with a partner or friend, it would be good occasionally also to walk alone out here in nature, in silence. And awareness.

That's why it's called noble silence. There's silence and noble silence. Silence means you're not speaking.

Noble silence means you're not speaking and aware. The expression, I believe, originally comes from Buddha, the Buddha, or Buddhism. About many subjects it is said, when asked, the Buddha kept noble silence, which means he didn't give you an answer.

That reminds me that probably tomorrow morning we'll have a question and answer session. Questions, perhaps answers. This morning, I believe there was a CD played of meditation music, and if you still have it, if we could listen as a musical illustration of this morning's, what we were talking about this morning, this morning's talk.

I'd like you to just listen for two or three minutes to that little piece. And what to listen to, mainly, predominantly, is not the sounds or the tones, not the foreground, but the background. The background of space.

The background of stillness. And with music like that, even the act of listening to that, because it is the act of listening to an absence, the absence of sound. Listening to stillness brings about inner stillness.

It's only with that that you can acknowledge the dimension of silence. External silence. Only with the inner dimension of stillness, which is consciousness without thought.

That's what stillness is. Consciousness without thought. Only from that dimension can you be aware of silence, what seems like external silence.

That's why that, I mentioned perhaps briefly on our first day, whenever that was, perhaps yesterday, how listening to silence out in nature or in a room can also be an opening into that dimension. Because you cannot listen, acknowledge silence, notice silence, without the dimension of stillness. Thinking cannot even notice silence.

It's a little mystery, and it's a miracle. The simple act of noticing that dimension puts you into that dimension. Otherwise you can't notice that.

So listening to this music, we are aware of the background more than what happens. One could say the canvas on which the sound is painted. And as you do that, that pure awareness, that consciousness without thought arises.

So if we have that CD, if we could listen to track two of this morning's meditation CD. Okay. Thank you.

Thank you. But the background is more important than what happens. The only way the dimension of the sacred can come into this world is through the awareness of the background, which is awareness of awareness, space, inner space.

We said this morning, in any interaction, ask yourself whether there is space. In the interaction, the very question makes it possible for space to open up. This is really no different from asking whether there's love in the interaction.

Because out of that, love arises. The awareness of that is love. I don't use that word too often because it's been misused a lot.

So to see, this is the essence of our retreat, the essence of any spiritual teaching, to see this, to realize this truth that is so simple is one thing, no thing. That's what, that realization, they call satori in Zen, when you for the first time see. And another thing is to live it in your daily life.

The ability to live it could be called enlightenment. And again, it's not that helpful a concept because it sounds like an achievement, somebody's achievement. And one could almost say that the essence of enlightenment is the opposite of somebody's achievement.

Enlightenment, and perhaps some of you may have come here expecting to gain something, it's not a gain of anything, since it's already here. It would be closer to the truth to say that enlightenment is a loss of something, of that which covers it up. So it cannot be an achievement.

So the question is then how to live it in one's daily life, where the challenges pile up one after the other, living in this world, not to some extent, faced with the challenges of everyday life, which are primarily in oneself. They seem to appear as external factors. But your real challenge is the conditioned mind, the momentum of it.

And your real challenge is not to lose awareness when that starts up, not to lose awareness when the pain body becomes active and associates itself with the thinking mind. Old emotion, old human emotion, old human pain linking in with the activity of thought, personalizing the pain. The pain body says, don't talk about me, I can't stand it.

So there's thousands of years of conditioning, collective mental conditioning, plus your personal conditioning from this lifetime, which is bad enough in itself, and the personal pain from this lifetime, which will be quite enough. And so what to be aware of in your daily life is, of course, the movement of thought and the reflex of emotions. Aware means, know that it's there, so that there's a space around it.

One could say a space between you, which is a space between you and the thought, the space between you and the emotion. But ultimately, you are the space. So then the emotion happens within the space that you are.

Know yourself as space, not as that which happens in that space. This is why this music is helpful. Know yourself as the underlying field, not that which takes birth and then dies in the field, comes and goes.

So it means not getting, not believing in every label that the mind comes up with. That's why it's so important to begin to live in such a way that your life is not, that the aliveness of life is not obscured continuously by labels and concepts. That's why it's so important to go for a walk here and perceive clearly, aware in this place of awareness, without needing the labels.

Why it's so important to sometimes do small things, little movements, conventional little activities, and bring presence to them, a space. They happen within the spaciousness of no thought, just aware presence. Even a simple thing as putting an object from here to there.

While it travels from here to there, there's a space of pure awareness. So it's a beautiful gesture. It becomes beautiful through that.

Before it wasn't beautiful, it was a means to an end. I need to put this here. It doesn't have that quality to it that comes only with awareness.

Walking across your room consciously from the door to the bed, being free from thought for that little interval. It's just beautiful. So this is the beginning of not getting completely drawn into labels and believing that when you have a label you know what it is.

Living in that state of openness, which is true intelligence, which has the appearance that you don't know, and yet all knowing arises out of it. All true knowing. So here we have, this is the beginning, little labels, not to believe in the ultimate reality of the labels.

And then of course there's more, the human mind. There are huge patterns of ways in which you interpret the universe, inherited from your personal past, inherited from the collective past, your cultural past, the collective past of mankind, of humankind. Ways of interpretation which are based mainly on separative egoic consciousness.

The little me interprets the world in certain ways. And no longer totally believe in one's interpretation of situations, events, or people. And beware of premature conclusions, which the mind quickly reaches about things and people.

That's how it is. So beware of all interpretations of people or events and recognize them when they come, because they come, recognize them as interpretations, as a perspective, perhaps a possible perspective. Never the entire truth and very often a complete fantasy.

So it's always a standing back from thought into the spaciousness, being the spaciousness. There's the interpretation and then you stand back a little bit. There are many stories in Zen to illustrate how interpretations can mislead you.

I will tell you a little one. It was for a long time the custom in monasteries when visitors arrived in the evening to ask for lodging, sometimes other monks or other visitors, in order to gain the right to spend the night in the monastery. They'd have to challenge somebody who lives in the monastery to an argument and win the argument.

But it was a Zen argument, so it was never conducted with many words. And if they won, they could spend the night. If they lost, they would have to move on.

So there was one monastery where the abbot was a monk and his younger brother, who was not yet very enlightened, also lived there as a monk. The younger brother only had one eye. He had lost his eye early in childhood.

So one evening the younger brother came to the abbot and said, a visitor has just arrived and I happen to be standing at the gates and he challenged me to an argument, a discussion about what do I do. He had never done it and the abbot, his elder brother, knew that that was a risky thing. So he said, but he had been challenged, so he said, okay, conduct the argument in silence.

Okay, he went off. Ten minutes later, the visitor comes and knocks at the door of the abbot and says, I'd like to pay my respects to you and take my leave because your brother is so clever and enlightened, he completely defeated me in the argument. And the abbot said, also what happened?

He said, well, it started, our discussion started, said the visitor, with me raising one finger to signify Buddha, the enlightened one. Then your brother raised two fingers to signify Buddha, the enlightened one, is not complete without the dharma, the Buddha's teaching. Then I raised three fingers to indicate that the third element is also needed, which is the sangha, the brotherhood of monks, without which it's not complete.

So here they went. And then the visitor said, your brother suddenly shook his fist in my face to signify that all arises from the one act of enlightenment, the one realization. And so he completely defeated me.

I'll move on to another monastery and seek lodging there. Goodbye. And a few minutes later, the younger brother comes in and says to the abbot, where is this fellow?

I'm going to beat him up. He completely insulted me. And the abbot says, tell me what happened.

He said, well, we started, he raised one finger to say, to make fun of my own one eye. Then I decided to raise two fingers to compliment him on the fact that he had two eyes. And then he dared to raise three fingers to show that even between us, we only had three eyes.

And so I was going to punch him in the face, but he ran away. Different realities, different worlds. And so, beautiful example.

This, of course, was the conditioning of the brother. And probably, how did he get the, as a child, he was mocked many times. So there was already expecting something like that to happen.

And immediately, a neutral event was interpreted. So basically, and this happens to many people still in this world, they inhabit a fantasy world of conditioning from the past and looking at events that are happening in the present through that conditioning and interpreting events through that conditioning. And in many cases, it's complete fantasy.

But the strange thing is, when you continuously interpret the world in certain ways, it tends to reflect back to you that interpretation. So one could say that what is called karma, usually it's regarded as things that happen to you in your life. Good things, bad things, good karma, good karma, bad karma.

But really, how your life unfolds is perhaps 10% of what happens to you and 90% of the reactions to what happens to you. And the continuous reactions create their own reality. Reality confirms back to you that your interpretation is correct.

That's how it works. So if you interpret human beings as being basically dishonest and out to get you or get something from you, that becomes your selective perception of reality. That's the way in which you interpret events.

And then after a while, because perception is selective, you will get confirmation because you will only meet those people after a while that all conform to your expectations, the others you're not even interested in. And you might even bring out in people who are not totally conscious yet, that which you expect from them or that which you fear from them. You pull it out of them if they're not fully conscious.

So to be aware very much of the way in which one interprets reality. That's why this, I like this, Byron Katie, a spiritual teacher, has this question that you ask yourself whenever you have thoughts arising about a person, a situation, an event, and you have your interpretation of it. Do I really know that this is true?

Can I really know that this is true? And then you look deeply and say, I don't really know if this interpretation is true. I don't really know it.

Maybe it looks true to me, but I don't really know it. And so you're beginning to take a step back from thought, any thought, so that you can begin to dwell in the region of no thought and have your home, your dwelling place there, not in the interpretations of the mind. Have your dwelling place in that field, in that pure intelligence.

And out of there, yes, you respond to situations and events, but you don't react. React comes out of the old conditioning. So people carry inside them the past.

They look upon the present through the eyes of the past. And so what then happens is that that provides the continuity between past and future. You make sure that the future is going to be the same as the past.

And this is how most people live, and this is the essence of karma, is that there is a continuity between the unconscious past in you and the events that unfold. You are creating it through your interpretations and total identification with the thought structures, which then create that reality. Nations do it to each other.

Collective bodies, entities interpret it in their way. Cannot see any other perspective except that. There is no other perspective.

This is the truth. As I mentioned to the writer that I read in the New York Times, competing narrative, the unwillingness or the inability to accommodate a competing narrative, to see that, and to hold that in awareness. So to see inside oneself the structure of thought and the movement of old emotion that goes with it, and step back from it so that there's some space.

And that applies particularly, of course, when the movement of thought becomes connected to the old emotion, and they become a vicious circle. The old pain body, the old emotion, personal emotions from your past, collective pain from humanity as a whole, with which even every baby comes into this world. Most babies already cry.

Why do they already cry? There's already pain there. Some babies cry more than others.

Some babies have a heavier pain body than others. It doesn't mean those who don't have a heavy pain body are closer to liberation. Maybe the other way around.

Who knows? But that is there. And that pain body is an aspect of the mind-made self.

And it is that which makes it hard to step beyond it. If it were only thought structures, it wouldn't be that hard. But it is thought structures combined with a force of old human pain.

So when the pain body that lives in every human, not always active, sometimes dormant for periods of time, when it needs to replenish itself, which it can only do by absorbing energy frequency that corresponds to its own vibrational frequency, which is the frequency of pain in whatever form, oh, ah, whatever it is, this explains it better than concepts. Concepts create a distance, okay, anger, ah, or heaviness of depression. Can't, can't take any more, can't take any more of this.

So when the pain body needs to replenish itself, it can only do that by creating energy that vibrates at the same frequency, which is pain. And so it will move into your mind, the emotion rises up into the mind, thinking, and then suddenly your thinking reflects the emotion. You think along the lines of the emotion.

So if the predominant energy field of the emotion is anger, you think angry thoughts about, of course, it'll be about something here, the situation, somebody next to you, the situation you're in right now. It seems to be caused, the thoughts that you're thinking with great energy seem to be caused by something around you. But of course, that which is around you very often is a relatively insignificant event or thing that somebody did or said, but the emotion, the thoughts and the emotions are extremely powerful, extreme, have incredible force to them, out of proportion to the event, which was really only the triggering event, not the causal event.

But the mind made self believes it to be the causal event. You caused this, you did that to me. And not surprisingly, a very, very common characteristic of the self linked with pain body is to see itself as a victim of some personal situation, very common, almost every pain body has it, the interpretation of reality as doing something to me, because in miracles puts it beautifully, it says, beware of the temptation of seeing yourself unfairly treated.

And that is almost in everyone, that is an aspect of pain body and the self, mind made self, when it links in with pain body. Something there is doing something to, even the criminals in prison, almost all of them consider themselves to be victims. In some ways, one could say they are, it's a perspective.

You can take any perspective. So let's see, when the pain body needs to feed, there's a readiness for it to come. It cannot yet come unless it can find some trigger.

The trigger could be just one thought that goes through your head. That's the slightest trigger it can use. One, a little negative thought, a little negative reaction, then the pain body can use that and link into that.

And that would lead to a stream of thinking along the lines of the pain body. So just a little even driving in the traffic, an upset about another driver, oh, this, when the pain body is ready to come up, it'll use that moment and that will lead to a train of thought movement that is increasingly painful. And the pain body loves it.

It feeds on every painful thought because the thought carries the vibration that it wants. It's all suddenly seen through those eyes of pain. And so from one little traffic incident, suddenly the whole universe is, and yourself, and the pain body is feeding on the movement of thought.

And then that is the movement of unconsciousness. Is there a possibility at that point to wake up? Yes, now there is.

If there is enough presence in you, there is the possibility of knowing what is happening as it happens. If you can catch it at an early stage, it's even easier. Just as it arises, catch it to see, to feel the emotion directly before it becomes a thought.

If you can do that, it cannot begin to use your thought processes. If your awareness is there, and that requires alertness, that requires that, if the alertness is there, you can watch the emotion wanting to become a thought. And you continue simply to watch it on the level of the emotion, semi-physical entity.

Beautiful. It's no longer a personal matter. It's simply the movement of emotion in you.

And when you watch it, it is implied that you accept it because it's here. It's part of your acceptance practice, which is the most powerful way to go beyond is to accept what's there. There it is.

If you don't catch it at a very early stage, you may have to catch it already when thought is already moving. And then you may notice a strong disinclination, if that's a word, to want to get out of it. There may still be a presence in the background, a witnessing presence.

How strong it is, then, that will determine whether or not you can still rise above it, step out of it, see it for what it is. Ah, pain body. And feel it.

Oh. And then it's not replenishing itself through your thinking. Of course, as I'm sure many of you know, it also likes to replenish itself through other people, to provoke a reaction, to challenge somebody else.

Please give me some emotional reaction. React. You did that to me.

I didn't. You did it to me. So it feeds on the other person's.

It wants to awaken the other person's pain body. Pain bodies love other pain bodies. So partners feed on each other's pain body.

It's an essential ingredient of most relationships. The drama that is a necessary part of relationships, periodic drama. And after a while, the pain body has replenished itself and it subsides.

And then the same cycle starts again. And so to bring consciousness into that requires alertness, vigilance. You cannot suppress it.

It would only get stronger. For temporarily you could. I'm not going to let this pain body get the better of me.

I'm just going to sit here. Not acknowledging what the mind may call negative emotions is also dangerous. The minds might be saying, you may have an image, if you're still deriving your sense of self from thought, you may have an image in your mind of who you are, a spiritual person.

Maybe. Someone who has already gone beyond these things. Or if you're a Christian and want to follow the teaching of Jesus without having gone to the bottom of it, just the externals, then you may have an image of yourself as a good Christian.

A good Christian, there are certain things that a good Christian does not feel to be a good. And so there may be a clash between the emotion that you feel and your self-image. And then you deny that it's there.

I'm not angry at all. How dare you even suggest that I'm angry? Can go so far as to somebody shouting, I am not angry.

So to watch that, because people believe that the emotions that they experience are some personal dilemma. That they are not yet advanced enough, so that's why they're still there. Or not good enough people to have those emotions.

I'm not good enough if I have those emotions. Hmm. It's the belief that emotions are a personal matter.

Deriving your sense of self partly from emotions and partly from thought. That's the mind-made self consists of those elements. And so there is nothing personal neither in emotion nor in thought.

It's just human thought. No different from other human thought. Another human next to you has very similar thought structures.

And emotions. Anger is anger in the other person. It's very similar to your anger.

Basically the same. The stories around it may be slightly different. The explanations of why I'm angry may be slightly different from person to person.

Slightly different script in the head. But so what people derive their identity from, the sense of person, personal selfhood, is ultimately not personal at all. It is human emotion and human thinking.

And that makes it a little easier when you realize that your emotions are not personal matter. They're human emotions to do with the fact that you are a human, temporarily a human, here on this planet, have inherited certain things that are connected with the past of this planet. And those things are there.

That's all. So you can, by watching an emotion, you begin to depersonalize the emotion. Not denying, but depersonalizing it.

So it is not a personal problem of yours anymore, the fact that you get anger attacks once a week or whatever the pain body, whatever form the pain body may take. Then you can actually see that as the fiery emotion of that. It's easier to accept it too, when you realize it as not self, as not you.

It's easier to accept that, yes, there are still human emotions in you. Oh, how dreadful. So with that begins a depersonalization of pain body.

The pain body wants to pretend to be a person. It wants to take me very seriously. It wants to be linked to the story of me.

It gives energy to the story, which then becomes a very unhappy story when the pain body is there. So, and even to see that the story also of me, which consists of thought and reactive patterns, thoughts, reactive patterns, memories, mental images, are thought forms. That's concepts, thought forms, and images that happen in the field of consciousness.

And again, you would be surprised how similar the basic structure of human thought is from person to person. When you get to the bottom of it in yourself, you know every other mind. Even from other cultures, or in other cultures, the story may be different, but the basic elements are the same of totally identifying with one mental position.

If you're a woman and you travel to certain countries and forget to change your clothes, and you arrive at the airport wearing a and short sleeved blouse, then certain people in those countries will immediately interpret you as immoral, has no shame, is immoral, and that is their perspective. When they come here, you might have some other interpretation about them. And they cannot step yet, they cannot yet step beyond it and see it as one, as an interpretation, as a perspective.

They're still completely wedded to that mind form, that mind structure. And anybody who challenges it, challenges their very identity. That's the essence of unconsciousness.

So it's not, so your self is not in thought and emotion, it is in the space in which the thoughts and emotions happen. The one who can allow the thoughts and emotions to be there, which is the space, which is the I am presence, the deepest I amness. I am is usually followed by some concept or word, this or that, or a name, just a thought form.

The most frequently used word in the language may be I, and usually it refers to the mind made me and its emotions, which is the story. And when people tell you about I, they tell you about their story. But the deeper meaning of I, I is both the greatest illusion, the word that contains the greatest illusion, and the word that contains the deepest truth in language, the deepest essence.

Usually when I is used, it is the illusion, the illusory entity. But potentially, I is the deepest statement of who you are. I am, pure, aware presence of beingness.

And you can only know that when thought comes to an end. What is left, let's say you don't even remember your name anymore, or the stories from your past at this moment. You can't remember my name or the stories from my past.

What is left, is there anything essential that you have lost? No. In the absence of the memory of your story or your name, the deepest sense of beingness is still there, which before got mixed up in the stories that you were telling yourself and others.

This is the amazing thing that that remains, and it remains in its essence. Oh, and that is so precious, and so beautiful. And that's you, I.

It is the divine in you. It is formless. And that's why in the the most profound statement in the Bible is God's self-definition.

Who are you? And God says, I am that I am. The essence of I am is that.

And sometimes it comes to people who through some apparent accident, accidentally, lose everything that they thought they were. Life takes it away from them, strips you of all the things that you've been hanging on to. That works too.

Or here. It works in many different ways. This, in some places they may not come to teachings like this.

Somebody may lose, become a refugee, lose their homes. Loss does it sometimes. So this is emerging now on a larger scale for the first time on the planet.

Thousands of years ago, that realization came to one human being. The first flowering of human consciousness. The first realization, who I am beyond form.

And it is quite possible that that person was a person whose existence on this planet goes back into the legendary past. We know even less about him than we know about Jesus or Buddha. And there's the legend in India of Krishna.

And Krishna may well have been the first human to have realized that dimension within. And over time, now the amazing thing is that some humans recognized something in him. They recognized something of themselves in him, but didn't fully know that that was what was happening.

That they recognized something of themselves. A purer version, an undiluted version of themselves. An unobscured version of themselves.

And over time they associated the formless consciousness that was emerging with the form of the person. And so the person became a kind of God in people's eyes, in people's thoughts. But of course, that realization is the emergence of the formless.

It is not of a person, of a form. It does not belong to any form. It comes when the form becomes somehow transparent.

It's no longer obscured by the density of mental and emotional structures. And so that was perhaps the first flowering. And then came others here and there.

And gradually the possibility of this happening, this realization, could not come on this planet until now for the simple reason that the need for it was not there yet. They were preparations, one could say, almost for the shift in consciousness. The early flowerings.

Prototypes. Exactly the same happened, as I mentioned before, when flowers first appeared on the planet. Millions of years of plant life without flowers.

And one day, one plant developed a flower, which is, one could say, another dimension of plant life. Thousands of years later, another flower. Thousand years later, two flowers.

Until finally, suddenly a profusion of flowers all over the planet. Our human evolutionary stage, the way humans, where we are now, is coming to an end. The cycle of thought.

Not that thought will not operate anymore, but humans are going beyond having to rely predominantly on thought. They're going beyond needing to derive their identity from thought. And this is a momentous event.

Why is it happening now? For the simple reason that it has to happen now. Because the old consciousness is becoming increasingly dysfunctional, which is normal at the end of an evolutionary cycle.

Things don't work anymore. And so, even that is fine. Even the madness that we witness on the planet now, and have witnessed in past centuries, even the madness is good, is ultimately part of what is meant to be.

Ultimately. And part of it is also recognizing madness as madness. Recognizing dysfunction as dysfunction is equally important.

So let this, this is an event that goes far beyond this room. Because on the surface of things, not much is happening here. A person speaking, some people are listening.

And yet, it is part already of the transformation of human consciousness on the planet. Not significant enough, it is not what fit into the news, usually, although it can happen, it's happened, but it's rare. It's not, to a large extent, not yet a newsworthy event, although once this teaching was on the national news in Canada.

But it's rare, and they only gave it two and a half minutes. But it's a beginning. So don't believe entirely, don't believe that what you hear or see on television is the entire truth, and is the complete news of what's happening on this planet.

There's a lot happening that is not being mentioned on the news. And what is not being mentioned on the news is more significant than that which is mentioned. Beware of being drawn into reactivity when you watch events happening in the world.

Either into fear, or into anger, or into despair could happen. When you watch the news on television, be there as a witnessing presence. Compassionate, that comes naturally with the witnessing presence.

Be there, alert, just as you watch the tree or the flower, you can watch the news. Or just as you sit with a person who is in pain and talking to you, you can watch the news in that way. Let it happen within a field of peace.

Who is going to bring peace to this world if not you? And if enough people watch the news within a field of peace, even the news will change. It's all happening in consciousness.

The collective dream of humanity is changing. The collective nightmare is changing. We are waking up out of the collective nightmare.

To some extent you could say that all of phenomenal existence is a kind of dream, but it becomes a more beautiful dream. Be careful with the seductive quality of television, how it draws you out of the body if you watch for long, your attention, how it puts you into a semi-hypnotic state, how a particular world view is being continuously played out, although occasionally something else is coming in these days, not often yet. If you have to watch, it's very helpful to be in the body, to feel the inner energy field of body, so that you have an anchor that keeps you present, and you watch from there.

Something else that pulls your attention out is computer screens, staring at it for long periods. Again, it helps to connect with the inner body, and at times look away and feel the inner body. Maybe have a flower next to your computer or plant, something natural.

If you find it still difficult to perceive without thought, which is what I'm here talking about, connect with the inner body, even if it's only one part of the body, and feel the aliveness within that part, and then look. Then it is easier to perceive without thought. At the same time, even at this moment, you can look, see this room, and at the same time feel the aliveness within.

That's a beautiful way of getting to know what it means to perceive without thought, simply in awareness. Television, for many people, is almost liberating, and it's a drug. It liberates them from their own mind, because when you watch television, for long periods, you are not thinking your own thoughts.

Sometimes you are, but a lot of the time when you watch, you're simply linking into the collective mind. You're forced to think their thoughts. So it's not that you become free of mind, you become free of the personal aspect, your mind, your problems, but then what you watch is somebody else's problems.

Well, that's a little liberation, at least it's not your problems. Very important, as this shift happens, there are already children coming into this world who are more ready for the shift in consciousness than you and I ever were when we came into this world. I wasn't ready.

A lot of suffering had to happen before the readiness, but many children are already coming into this world now, and they are coming, of course, still into this culture, which is ignorant of such matters, no longer totally ignorant, because this is becoming almost mainstream now, so it is spreading, but the structures of society, the school system, and so on, still to a large extent ignorant. The structures are heavy, they're in place even if some of the teachers become enlightened, they still have to work within the structures of the unenlightened consciousness. That is not easy.

So there are humans within the old institutions, and this applies to quite a few of you perhaps, there are human beings who are already going through this transformation, but they are still working within the old structures, and only you can know for yourself, by becoming still, whether to continue working from within those structures and perhaps bring about a transformation of the structures from within, simply by being who you are, your consciousness, by being conscious within the unconscious structures.

Or it may be that you might find that those structures are so rigid that you see little possibility, and then you will know what to do. You may remove yourself, not through decision making, but through waking up one morning and saying, that's it, it could happen. Or you may transform them from within, as in some cases that may be possible.

There's no general truth here, only you can know what the truth is in your particular case. There are the economic structures, there are the corporations, we've heard a lot about them recently, the big corporations, how they operate, are they all evil, all the big managers, are they evil? No, they are egoic entities like everybody else, just a little bigger because of their position.

Educational, social structures, all those, political, so some may collapse and some may become transformed from within. Nobody can predict how it is going to happen. Do not leave prematurely, just see.

You will know what is right, and if you have to leave, life will look after you, and this is the truth. If you have to starve, and you won't, if you have to starve, you will starve beautifully. And then other children, who are some of them, have to be in those old structures, and they may not function very well within them.

So, if you come into contact, either as a parent, or in some other way, with children, the greatest gift you can give is the gift of space. They're just waiting for it, they'll recognize it very easily. They're waiting for you to give the gift of space, and then you give it to each other.

Before you know it, they may be teaching you, it's all one anyway. So, the greatest gift is the gift of space, and even those children who are still burdened, so it seems, with the old consciousness, strongly identified with the old consciousness, the gift of space is what they also long for deep within. And in families, the absence of space is the worst aspect of family life in our civilization.

The one thing that matters isn't there, and all the entire family is run by the thinking mind, object consciousness, one damn thing after another. Never, they don't have meals together anymore, they just, and even if they had meals together, there might not be space. You know what Thanksgiving dinners are like in families.

So, it's to provide that in your family, especially if they're children, be there as space, not be consumed by object consciousness, not be consumed by things that need to be done, that pretend to be important. Nothing is more important than this. And so, this begins with a little thing like the ability to listen to their child, no matter what the child is talking about, just listen.

The pure, the act of pure listening is the greatest thing, the act of pure listening is pure awareness. Pure listening is the most beautiful thing you can share with another human being. Even if they are talking coming from the noisy mind, it is being received within the spaciousness of pure listening.

The most powerful thing. Anybody who can listen becomes an effective healer. Anybody who can listen from that space, as that space, if you then put up a little sign and say psychotherapist, and your only qualification is that you can listen, you would do very well by word of mouth.

You might not get insurance though. And all effective psychotherapists know that they become only effective when they enter that state. Some of them do after many years of practice.

Simply they get bored with anything else, with applying their particular thought system to the patient. Applying their beliefs as their grid of interpretation, labels, and then after 10 or 20 years they get tired of the labels. And then they just sit there and listen.

And then they find amazing things sometimes come out of their mouth. And at other times amazing things come out of the person's mouth who is sitting with you. It's all part of not relying anymore on accumulated knowledge.

It's still there for little things, yes, it's good. But not relying on that. So let's live this now, starting right now.

Starting as you move away from this room, walking towards your room, one step at a time. Observing the movement of thought that may be there, and perhaps the spaciousness being there as you watch nature around you. If you watch the film tonight, it's about a deepening brought about through some pain that happens through suffering.

Ram Dass suffered a stroke and experienced an enormous deepening through that. So grace, the meaning of the title Fierce Grace is that grace sometimes comes in that form. It takes something away from you.

For example, your ability to move about. And then grace comes in a different form, like this. A moment of silence.

Thank you. The weather, the weather is now ideal for retreat. Our practice for the rest of this week, and this sentence already contains a paradox, our practice for the rest of this week is to stay with just this moment.

And that is the paradox that on the surface of things, time seems to be very real. Within the depths of yourself, time ceases to be real. So you always have, when one speaks of the timeless dimension of consciousness, you're using language which is derived from the world of time.

Paradox comes in. The practice then is to just stay just with this little moment. Just this one.

And it's always this one. When you're walking out there, stripping one step at a time, being in the state of yes to this moment. That is really all.

Now the yes to so-called beautiful, sunny, warm weather may be a little easier than the yes to cold, wet, windy weather. And you can extend that as almost a metaphor to the rest of your life. The strange thing is, however, that the yes to the cold, wet, and windy weather takes you even deeper than the yes to the good weather.

And the deepest is the yes to death. That takes you deepest. And death is any kind of death.

It's physical or psychological or some loss of something that was important to the me. Something dies. Part of your identity dies.

And then the yes takes you very deep. The yes to what is. So the space opens up immediately with the yes to what is.

The space that is beyond mind objects, thought. The thought, the mind, the mind made self, wants this to be more difficult. It would prefer to have an outline of what I am supposed to do for the next 10 years that finally will get me to a space consciousness.

It would be very happy if I gave you a folder describing the steps to take. And because it's very happy with being given additional time, future, it lives on that. And so it is not happy when it hears how simple the transformation of consciousness can be.

It's not happy that it doesn't require time. You mean I'm already enough? Can't be.

Not me. I'm not ready. I have a long way to go.

Surely there's so much that I don't know yet. And I still have to learn. I've only read 100 spiritual books.

There are so many experiences I haven't had yet. The fireworks that they talk about. Well, that may be a nice experience, but it doesn't last that long.

And then you are a little me again saying you can be a little me with the added thought form that once fireworks happened to me. And then you can live on the dilemma of how to get the fireworks back. So the need for more that is built into the structure of the human mind is also here, of course.

But of course, realization of who you are is not a more. And that includes more knowing, knowledge, or more understanding, which is not necessary. That's almost insulting to the mind.

You mean there's nothing for me to do, says the mind? If I may quote the philosopher Woody Allen, who said, I'm always astounded by people who want to understand the universe when it's hard enough to find your way around Chinatown. A sneeze can sometimes be satori.

So the yes to just this, just this moment. Space opens up within, spaciousness, and miraculously you become truly intelligent. I believe it was Krishnamurti who used the expression, the awakening of intelligence.

And that's what it is. There's more to intelligence than the mind can conceive. The mind being only a tiny aspect of the one intelligence, the human mind.

Fine, beautiful too, except when you seek the totality in it, when you seek yourself in it, when it becomes all there is, you get trapped in a tiny aspect of the totality. And that's a little delusion. When you're no longer trapped in it, the human mind is beautiful too.

So the practice here is not going beyond what is now. With the yes comes space. With the space comes, and I use that word reluctantly, with the space comes love.

Not the clinging and wanting love of the egoic self. A deeper love, the state of love that's inseparable from your essential beingness. You love what is.

And in loving what is, the universe actually becomes transformed. The universe is not separate from what appears in your consciousness. All the forms that appear in your consciousness make up the universe.

And when there's love, that which appears in your consciousness becomes transformed. That is the universe. And that only works if you do not differentiate between good and bad in your love.

Those teachings have been there for a while. Somebody else said it in different words 2,000 years ago. It only works if you don't differentiate between good and bad.

How do you not differentiate between good and bad? The mind, the thinking mind operates on the principle of good and bad. It discriminates.

We could call it, because that is its essential characteristic, the discriminating mind. The fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The discriminating mind.

Becoming trapped in the discriminating mind. And this is why it's so essential to bring the yes to what is. An unconditional yes, because it is.

The mind, the thinking mind cannot love what is. It might love what it judges as desirable. And it will reject, try to get away from, or hate that which it judges as undesirable.

Not helpful. Judged as no good. That's what the thinking mind does.

It's its job to judge. So you cannot change the thinking mind in that sentence saying, I don't want to judge anymore. They've tried it.

Because humans heard 2,000 years ago, judge not your neighbor, love thy neighbor as thyself. And then they tried not to judge. Never saw that the prerequisite for not judging is to step out of the mind.

It's only from the dimension of space consciousness that there can be the state of no judgment. The moment a thought comes in, you've judged something. Thought can be equated with judgment.

And there's nothing wrong with that. That's what thought does. And on its own level, it has a certain helpful function if you don't get lost in it.

So love arises the moment there is space. We could almost equate those two, space. Love is space.

And it's the only way in which the world can become transformed. It transforms the world from within because the world is an inner phenomenon. An enormous intelligence begins to operate with a yes when space arises.

So that's the destiny of humanity is to be every, what appears to be the individual human being, to be an opening for space. One could almost say that all the history of humanity up till now was the prehistory of humanity. We're not quite human yet.

I don't know if there will be any history after this. There may be, but it won't be very important as history. So you look upon whatever you look upon with love.

And you love your neighbor as yourself. Your neighbor is whoever comes into your field of consciousness, of course. And this is essential practice now when facing another human being.

I mentioned it briefly yesterday. Is there space, just a little bit of space? A little space of no thought as your attention is there on another human being.

A space of the openness of no thought. Not length, doesn't matter. The space, just open.

The mind comes in and again, a stepping back from mind. Ideally, it's there whenever you listen to anybody. Then it may be that when you begin to speak, you might lose it initially because it's a new way of living.

And so it's easy for the mind to draw you back into the stream of thinking. And if you then remember to step back from thought once you have uttered what you have to say, you step back again into space and you listen. And after a while, you can even sense spaciousness in the background as you speak.

Another way of saying it, you can sense yourself, your essential beingness in the background as you speak, the I am. This is probably what a very early spiritual teacher, as far as the Western world is concerned, a contemporary spiritual teacher, early 20th century, Gurdjieff, who spoke of self-remembering. Remember yourself in any situation.

It's probably what he meant was that it didn't mean remember the story of yourself. Remember the essence. And it's not even remembering it isn't quite perhaps the most, the best way of putting it.

Knowing it, being it. Remembering could lead you to believe that it is some kind of something you think about. Okay, I must think about myself.

So that's, and don't be, you will be challenged in two ways by the human mind in this. Because the human mind senses that it loses its control, predominance. And that's the challenge comes from within.

And it comes from other human minds. Which come disguised as human beings. Most human beings, they carry a disguise of mind.

Or the other way around. The mind disguises itself as a human being. The being is there.

But where? And that is the skill, the art of penetrating beyond mind in others. Of not getting caught up in that density when you are facing another human being.

Not getting caught up in the density, that frequency, that vibrational frequency that is the human mind. Because otherwise you get caught up in it and you become reactive. Which means it stimulates your own mind.

And that's the normal human interaction. You can only penetrate beyond that if you have gone beyond it within yourself. It's only then that you can go beyond that in others.

But with the yes applies here also. The yes to what is, when what is, is a human being right in front of you. That is the form that this moment takes.

And that may be the most difficult yes of all. Compared to which the yes to bad weather is easy. You could be in the Canadian Arctic and that yes would be easy compared to the yes that is needed sometimes, quite often, when you meet a human mind.

And here we have really, I don't remember who said it, perhaps it was Ram Dass who said, that relationships are the sadhana, the spiritual practice for the West. The main spiritual practice for the West is in and through relationships, encountering other humans. That's the challenge, the greatest challenge.

And that challenge has different levels to it. The more you are linked with these humans for some reason through family ties, one could say the more past you share with another human being, the harder it may be. And practice this at first when you encounter relatively uncomplicated encounters with humans that are seemingly superficial interactions.

And it's amazing how people reduce all those interactions, and of those there are many throughout the day, how they reduce them to a means to an end. When you have superficial interactions, ordering a meal in a restaurant, paying for your food, buying a newspaper, meeting someone in an elevator, talking to the cleaner coming in, whatever it may be, many kinds of brief, seemingly interactions that only seem to be a means to an end. Because in the mind-identified state, the present moment is always a means to an end.

So in the mind-identified state, whoever appears in this moment is also a means to an end. It's a dreadful reduction and impoverishment of human existence to live in such a way that most of your encounters with other humans, both superficial encounters and even other encounters, longer, other kinds of relationships are really, in the mind-identified state, a means to some end. Because you're never fully present in the now in that state.

You always want something else out of this now. The now is a stepping stone to where I want to get. So now, all those meetings, whenever you meet anybody, it's a wonderful opportunity for the arising of space in that meeting, which is love also.

And all that it requires is to look at this human being and to listen if they're saying something. In the spacious awareness, which has no thought in it, just that alertness. This is why we're here.

The whole reason why we're here is to know that state of consciousness. To look the same way you look at a flower or tree. And perhaps at the same time, if there is an interaction, it's taking place.

The waiter comes, you look up from the menu. Two seconds, one second. And then you say what you have to say.

And then he or she asks the question and you look. And then you say what you have to say. There's a little bit of space.

There's part of the interaction where you are not playing a role in that interaction when there is space. When there's no space, it's almost inevitable that you will slip into some kind of role. In a restaurant, and this is unconscious, in a restaurant you play the role of the customer.

And there's a subtle difference then in the way in which you speak to that other human being. And the waiter or waitress may be trapped in their own role, playing the role as waiter, waitress. And you can sometimes see it when they come.

Sometimes some of them play their role well. They get a good tip. Others don't play it very well either.

They play their role reluctantly. And then there are other roles that humans play. And you observe yourself.

Whenever the mind is there, there will be some kind of role that you play. Even to yourself, alone in your room, you play the role of perhaps you're the victim and you're thinking about your victimhood. And I'm not saying stop playing roles.

That would be a big demand. But what is possible is to be there when you do play roles, to know that there's a role, to notice it. You notice it, for example, if you behave and speak differently to that famous person that you meet and the waiter or the person who comes to do the cleaning.

Are there slight or considerable differences in the ways in which you speak to them or interact with them? Perhaps there are. Which means you're playing roles.

Which means the basis for your interaction is a conceptualized sense of self. And you're imposing another conceptualized self on the other person. And two conceptualized selves then play their respective roles.

The famous person may be playing their own role. Unless they are so famous that they've seen the emptiness of it and have gone beyond it. And you might still persist in imposing a conceptual identity.

People do it with spiritual teachers, believing when they meet a spiritual teacher they're meeting somebody important. They're not. They're not meeting anybody except themselves.

They might get nervous when they see a spiritual teacher. Are you nervous when you're meeting yourself? Strange.

But because they have a conceptual identity of somebody important. And then you have another conceptual identity of somebody who is not very important. And you may have a conceptual identity of yourself as important or not important.

Or you might not even quite know whether you're important or not important. Sometimes the world tells you this and sometimes the world tells you that. This includes all opinions you have of yourself.

And that's an interesting thing. That's more concepts. Opinions that you have of yourself are ultimately all parts of roles, concepts, not real whatsoever.

Is it possible to live without having an opinion about yourself? Do you lose something important when you no longer have an opinion about who you are in this life? You just are.

At any moment, when you live in the now, that goes automatically. It falls away. With the awareness that is there, the opinions that you have become unimportant.

The whole conceptual structure falls away. In the immediacy of present moment awareness, the entire conceptual structures fall away. So you are no longer imposing those structures on yourself or on others.

No opinions. Can I live without having opinions about myself? Am I losing something important?

Your opinions may be predominantly good or predominantly bad. And there's a reluctance in both cases of letting go, because there's an attachment. I won't know who I am anymore.

At least I know that I'm a wretched, miserable being. And so the liberating thing is that that becomes unimportant. The more there is that spaciousness in your life, the more those things fall away, the conceptual structures about yourself.

Are not important. They are not who you are. And then you don't inflict them on others.

That's the beauty of it. When they fall away within yourself, that conceptualized self, you don't inflict the conceptualized self on others. Which is, it sounds shocking, but we could say it is the first act of violence.

The very root of violence is to, because it's deadening the humanity, the essential beingness, the essential aliveness of the other human being, which ultimately is no other. And you will only do that if you have deadened it in yourself first. And that is the dilemma of humanity in its present evolutionary stage.

Amazing. So to see, in some ways, we are, this is why it's so wonderful to watch an animal, because an animal too has no opinion about itself. It is.

That's why the dog is so joyful and why the cat purrs. If the dog had an opinion about him or herself, that unconditional love wouldn't be there anymore, because the dog would then also inflict an opinion on you. And it might not be good.

And so the dog would be thinking, oh, here he comes again. So you are meeting another human being in that space of no thought. Brief, perhaps, it's fine.

And there is a true coming together, a true meeting beyond concepts, beyond roles or opinions. And if you should slip into roles, it may now be easier to notice it when it happens, to notice the subtle changes in your behavior and speech when you relate to different kinds of people according to the concepts you hold in your mind about those people, and how you compare your own self-concept with that self-concept. Is he or she more important than me?

And that will determine the role you play. Does he know more than me? See, whatever it is.

And then a little wanting comes in. You want something from he who you think is more than you. Comparison is a continuous thing that the egoic mind structure uses.

Continuous comparison of me with others. I can only evaluate me by comparing me to others. How do I rate here?

And that determines the conceptual structure of me. And then you try to improve it with all kinds of strange things. Name dropping.

Hoping that in you're talking to someone, you drop a name. Hoping that in that association with that name, which is a concept belief, this is a famous person and you know him, that your own self-concept is something is added to it that will give greater worth to yourself. This is why the names are dropped.

In the hope that, but in the eyes of that other person. So you're hoping that this person you are talking to will give you more recognition through dropping the name of somebody else who is famous or has some other high status. So it's a hope to gain a stronger self.

And name dropping is only a small example of the strategies used by the ego to enhance itself. It's always looking out for something. And so you may observe that even some spiritually advanced people occasionally can catch themselves name dropping.

When I talk to my friend so-and-so, Ram Dass called me the other day. So, and this is, it is whenever you notice something like that, it's not really a personal thing either. It's, this is how the egoic human mind operates.

And the noticing it, and that's the amazing thing. When you notice it, there are still many humans in this world who are trapped in these patterns and don't know it. They are totally those patterns.

Noticing it is actually the arising of space consciousness from where you can see what the mind is doing. And so whenever you notice a pattern, a role that you're playing, some conceptual game, that's a wonderful thing. It's not that now this is the mind from the brief insight that you have there, the realization of what is going on inside you, that could immediately be used by the mind again, and then formulate a judgment about yourself, which could be, oh, you see, you are still deficient in spirituality.

You see, you can't, you're doing it again. All that silly, you're still playing the silly games that everybody else is playing. You're no good, for example, or other things are possible too.

But if you stay with the noticing, that means it's only from the unconditioned dimension of consciousness that you can see the conditioned. From within the conditioned, after you've seen it, you might judge it. That's the conditioned again.

It's only so whatever you see in yourself, even the worst so-called traits of humanity, because all of humanity is within each human being. It may not be manifested, but all of humanity is within each human, and you might discover evil thoughts. I think those thoughts, I, there is no I beyond those thoughts.

There is the deepest, that the deepest I am is not thinking those thoughts. Those thoughts are clouds. They are human thoughts floating around.

And often people believe all their thoughts are, come from them. There is only really one human mind. There's a collective human mind.

And it's almost like clouds can float into your mind from other minds, and you think certain thoughts, and you think it's me. All it is, it's the collective human mind operating. So you can discover all strange things in yourself, and the temptation is there to judge yourself as not yet worthy, or might never be worthy, or you should definitely not be having these thoughts.

And so you are making them into a problem, a personal problem. The thoughts are personalized, and they become problematic. And you give them more power, because the making them problematic is further thought activity, is further self activity, the mind made self.

It loves whatever dilemma you can find, it loves it. And the more complex the dilemma of yourself, the better. Surely I need 20 years of psychoanalysis to get through all this, to get to the bottom of it all.

Well, if you examined the mind bit by bit, yes, it would take a long time. Where did this thought come from? So whatever you notice in yourself is beautiful, because the noticing, the seeing, is already liberation from being completely identified with whatever thoughts or emotions are happening inside you.

And so you can just stay with the seeing, and seeing it is human, the human mind, that's all it is. And you just watch. That means you are more interested in seeing, being the witness, than getting into the thought, or reacting to the thought, which creates further thought.

It draws you in. And the amazing thing is when you see patterns, especially repeatedly, they tend to drop away after a while by themselves. Don't have to do anything.

Patterns that are no longer invested with sense of self, but are recognized as patterns, they drop away. It's only through complete self-identification with patterns that they go on and on and on. And so the recognition comes with stepping back.

Oh, so now let's go back to the interactions. There is a human being. The question is, even in the briefest of interactions, it is, your life is made up of these things.

Your life is made up of what relatively insignificant moments. The moments that the mind tells you are significant are relatively few. And it might be waiting for one.

It might have been waiting for a long time. I'm waiting for a significant moment in my life. Then I came to a retreat.

I thought that might do it. There's a watch. They have the advertising slogan.

I don't remember what watch, so maybe it's not a good slogan. There's the watch and somebody's looking at it and just saying significant moment, significant moments. So I suppose whenever you look at that watch, that moment becomes significant.

Presumably it's an expensive watch. And so your conceptual self becomes significant when you remember that you're wearing it. A lot of the consumer industry works like that to enhance your sense of self through an image.

A fiction, yeah, of course. But they don't know it's a fiction. It's their self.

So life consists, unless you have an expensive watch, of insignificant. And one of the things that people are waiting for, because in the normal state of consciousness, you're always waiting for something, and really you're waiting for something significant to happen. And not that often does it happen.

And it doesn't last very long. The wedding comes and goes. And then daily existence is there.

Breakfast every morning. And then you're meeting all these people, these insignificant people, in your daily interactions, hoping to meet somebody significant. And not realizing that you're missing the whole thing.

You're missing your whole life in the waiting game, in the conceptual waiting game. You're missing your whole life. And every encounter with another human being is potentially a beautiful meeting with yourself.

It's potentially the most significant event there could be, even the briefest encounter, when there is a recognition of the other as yourself, which is there in the space, the perhaps brief space of no thought, which of course implies no concepts, no roles, no mental positions. There's the end of the illusion of separateness, the illusion of separation, which has been there for so long. And so you meet the ticket collector, the casual person you meet on the plane, or whatever brief encounters in the day.

And each time there's the possibility of being there as space, not as a little me and its role. So that's, and that is a beautiful practice, which then becomes extended to those people with whom you share more past. And this past that you share is of course an accumulation of concepts in your mind about them.

Otherwise there would be no past that you share. There may also be certain emotions that are linked to the concepts about concerning those people. So you carry a little mental emotional form, formation, one could almost say entity, because thought forms are entities, emotional fields are entities, they have a lifespan, they are born, they die.

And so you have a, for each person with whom you share past, you have inside yourself a little mental emotional formation. And that is the conceptual image that you hold in your mind for that person. When you only know, you are completely identified with mind, then to you, that conceptual emotional image that you hold that is based on past is that person.

You are completely trapped in that conceptual emotional formation. So this is, you have constructed unconsciously, not that you have done it, it's been done, it's done automatically, a little entity, a little mental formation that when you are totally identified with that, to you is that other person, is your wife, your ex-wife, your ex-lover, your lover, your father, your mother, your aunt, or whoever else it may be with whom you are, the person you've worked with for a long time, your boss, whoever it may be, you have that, you carry that. And that wants to remain in place.

What tends to happen is then all your interactions with that human being happening through the filter of that conceptual mental entity that you have, because you are not seeing who is there. You have, there will be things in that human being that you cannot see because they're not part of the image that you hold. And certainly you cannot see the deeper reality of that human being, which is beyond any concepts, any story.

Part of the concepts is the concepts form a little story too. That's part of that formation. So when you are totally identified with that, then that is the agent through which you interact with that person.

You're really interacting with your mental image. Another thing that tends to happen is all you see from that person then after a while is what corresponds and will strengthen that image that you already hold of that person. Other things you may not even see because they are not, perception is selective.

So they will be, that is how your interactions with other humans become very limited and become totally mind dominated. And that is how do you step out of that, that prison which first you have constructed for yourself. You put yourself into a prison because you have formed the same kind of image for who you are.

The me, the little me as I call it, the little me with its story, its memories, its patterns, its reactive patterns. And then the little me forms little other me's around it. And that's the prison cell that people inhabit.

You may not become immediately free of all that, but freedom is here as you step out of conceptual thinking. That's the beginning of that losing its overriding hold upon you, all those conceptual structures. And of course there is a reluctance, the conceptual structures, these little formations, almost entities.

Isn't it amazing that you have a little human, a little being in there that is called my ex-wife and she lives in here. My ex-husband, whatever, or my wife or my husband. After many years of marriage, it is not uncommon for partners, married couple, not, they hardly see each other anymore.

They just have the image of the other. There's nobody there. Just in the distant background there's a body sitting.

And there's the image. Body, image. Many of the old patterns become less empowered.

They just lose their force. And then you might meet somebody you've known for a long time, family, whoever. They don't see.

To them, if they are totally identified with their image, they won't even see what you have changed. They just continue. They want to project the old image.

They are refusing to let go of that. And you might want to say, hello, I'm here. They may also resent that somehow they can feel that there is now a clash between who you are and their image.

And they might become angry because the image doesn't fit anymore. What have you done? I don't like the way you are now.

You're too conscious. So with those, this is a beautiful challenge, those humans with whom you share a lot of past, to bring in that openness in your interactions. The Course in Miracles speaks of relating to another human being without past.

Easier said than done, you might say. In this moment, that human appears in front of you, and you're giving that human being your full attention. The same attention that you give to the tree or the flower.

That human being may be going through their conditioned behavior, and yet you're simply giving the most powerful thing there is. Simply giving, being attentive. Listening and looking.

Listening, looking. To be able to do that, there needs to be a yes. You have to allow that human being to be here at this moment.

You might as well, because they are here at this moment. They are right in front of you. I noticed a little, to illustrate this, a little anecdote.

I once knew a woman, not in a personal, not in an intimate relationship, an acquaintance, who was regarded by most people as one of the most obnoxious people around. Here comes trouble, would be the, when she comes, you would know she would be accusing you of something, wanting something, wanting you to get involved in her problems, complaining constantly. So, those were her patterns, and I noticed once, I was living in a small town where that she also lived.

Two or three times, I noticed there was basically only one high street, as they call it, where the shops are, main street in the town. I was walking in the high street, and more than once, I noticed myself, as I saw her coming the other way, was crossing over to the other side. But then, once or twice, or more than that, it happened that, as I was approaching a corner, she was coming around the corner.

Too late. And then, I noticed a very strange thing. The moment she stood in front of me, there was space and love.

The person that I wanted to avoid, if I could, but when I couldn't avoid her anymore, there she was, and there was spaciousness and love. And next time, I would avoid her again. But when she couldn't be avoided, it was beautiful.

And a few times in our interactions, she felt something. Something fell away from her, and she walked away as if some weight had been lifted. There was actually love there.

It was penetrating beyond those mind structures. Simply, spaciousness was there. Just a strange thing.

Somebody noticed once that I crossed to the other side, and then asked, why are you doing it? Well, it just happened. There was no decision-making involved.

It's very much like avoiding a thunderstorm or downpour of rain. If you can, if you, let's say, if you walk this way around, and this perhaps is similar, it's a kind of, you know, but if you get caught in the rain, and if you say yes, it's beautiful. So there may be human beings in your life that you would not perhaps choose to interact with, and you don't have to.

Unless life puts you in a position where you do have to. And then at that moment, the totality has determined that this is the ideal situation for you, and for that person. Otherwise, that person wouldn't be there.

So you do not need to seek out those people whom you can't stand. But it may be that for some reason, this person keeps coming up in your life. And the universe is not insane.

The human mind in its present form, perhaps, is insane. But the universe, there is an underlying intelligence at work, and that underlying intelligence knows what it is doing. Things are connected at a deeper level.

All humans are connected. Sometimes it comes to the surface as a synchronistic event, as a coincidence, and you see, how is that possible? It is, and what you see is only a tiny flash that is coming to the surface of things to show you the interconnectedness of all things on a deeper level.

So whatever is at this moment is part of the totality and could not be otherwise. It is because it could not be otherwise. And so to see the inevitability of is, which might mean that this human being that I would rather not be with, that is challenging or difficult for some reason, he or she is in my life.

And that is your teacher then. If there is a human who is there, that human must be my teacher. What is he or she teaching me?

What is this unconscious person going to teach me? It's teaching you this, giving attention, listening, looking, allowing to be this moment as it is, and thus going beyond conceptual structures in your interaction. And you may well be ready for this, even to practice.

Some of you may have a long-standing issue, perhaps with a parent or somebody very close to you. A long history of judgment, of resentment, carrying that inside and the other person carrying that inside. And it may well be that before you do it in the actual presence of that person, to be there fully in that spaciousness, the image may arise in your mind of that human being.

And you give attention and allow that image to be there in the spaciousness that you are. And perhaps you begin then to penetrate, to go deeper than the conceptual entity in your head. Forgiveness is really that.

Ultimately, forgiveness is letting go of conceptual identity for yourself and others. Give them space. Let's give them space, which is yourself.

Recognize the feelings that you have and the thoughts that you have as formations, as formations that live, a formation that lives inside you. The recognition of it means there is now, through the seeing of it as a formation, there's space around it. That means that is forgiveness, that is freeing.

And because all things are interconnected, it is not uncommon for people who do that on an inner level, for suddenly to happen that that person suddenly experiences something similar to what you experience. Some letting go. Not always the case.

You don't need it. You don't need the other person to go through that also. That's a bonus.

Might happen. But it has happened and people have reported it as miracles. In some cases, it's happened that the moment that shift happened, when they saw the limitations of the conceptual identity they were holding and space arose, which is love around it.

You don't need to, you don't love that conceptual, you don't love the conditioning, that entity, that you might want to have crossed the road to go to the other side of the road for. You love the being because the being is space and you are space. That essential beingness.

And it's not uncommon for humans who've done on an inner level, that shift happened and five minutes later the phone rang and it was that person. I've heard similar stories more than once. The phone rang and after years of no contact, that person rang.

How is that possible? Because of the interconnectedness of all things. So Jesus already pointed to the fact how important in your spiritual life, what he called your enemies are.

How important love your enemies. Now they understood that in a very limited sense and tried to do it through the structure of thought. Okay, I've got to try and love him.

Okay. I just can't, I hate him. Or you hear that and you just, but you exclude two or three people from that.

I love, of course, him or her, don't even mention. So that's a beautiful challenge. Bringing that into those relationships, longstanding, that have passed, that spiritual practice.

So those people who keep cropping up in your life, you can't get rid of. Use them as teachers or presence. You're supposed to be with them.

Otherwise they wouldn't be there. In some cases, it's family members, grown-up children, parents, doing mad things. You wouldn't associate with them.

You wouldn't want to be with them in the same room. In some cases, this is how people feel. If he weren't my father, my mother, we would have nothing in common except for the fact that he or she is my father or mother.

Some people feel that. Or daughter or son or some other close relation, and they're there for a reason. You may have more in common than you realize.

You certainly have more in common than you realize. This is beautiful, the rain, the truth being spoken and realized here, the possibility of going within. Could there be a better moment?

If you start thinking, yes. If you don't think, no. Then you realize the goodness of this moment, the depth of it, the incredible goodness.

But if you start thinking, you will think about a beach in Hawaii, perhaps, or some other place. It's always some other place. Could there be a better moment can lead you into thinking?

Let me think. Yes, there could be. Or the question, could there be a better moment, can take you deeply into this moment and the beauty and sacredness of this moment, something that thought cannot capture.

And so, awareness. It is known through awareness. It's inseparable from awareness.

So there's always that dimension of the sacred that now is always sacred. And that is amazing, no matter what form it takes. And, of course, naturally, as you become free of the conceptual heaviness, you look and listen, more attention arises to sense perceptions.

The sacredness isn't perhaps in the sound of this rain. It's underneath it. The mind says there's no mystery here.

Water molecules are dripping. And when they hit the ground, they produce a sound. That's the illusion of knowledge.

You still don't really know what it is. The sacredness, of course, is the space that is inseparable from you in which this happens. The world that is arising in you at this moment, the phenomenal, it's arising in that space, the background, the noise foreground.

But it's almost these natural phenomena like rain, it's almost as if space were still coming through even the phenomenon. Somebody once put it beautifully and said, God made everything out of nothing, but the nothingness still shines through. And so the nothingness, the no thingness, the one life beyond form shining through this rain to make the rest of today a time of stillness, of going within, and also being present without with just this moment.

It is unlikely that anything significant, according to the mind, will happen today, but go more deeply into the seemingly insignificant and realize how significant that truly is. There's not even a TV here, so definitely nothing significant. We'll address any questions that have survived in your mind tomorrow in the now.

This is what we've been waiting for. You often hear of the term renunciation in spiritual contexts. And the question arises, what do I need to renounce?

Do we need to renounce the world first? And traditionally, in all spiritual traditions, renunciation in one way or another has been practiced. Renunciation of food, reducing it to a minimum, renunciation of sexuality, renunciation of possessions, personal relationships.

In most of these cases, what the most fundamental renunciation has been forgotten. And that is why in most of these cases, renunciation hasn't quite worked. And that's the most fundamental renunciation.

Once that's been renounced, the rest doesn't matter. And that's to renounce time, and more specifically, future. Because all those who have renounced other things use their renunciation as a means towards an end, a future state to be achieved, an enhanced version of myself, hoping that through different ways of renouncing I can get to that.

To renounce the future is really the only true renunciation, and that is to renounce the next moment. What does that mean? To recognize this moment as the central core of your life.

This moment, not to make it inferior to a projected future moment in your mind. Simply by giving full attention to this moment and always realize how fundamental this is, you automatically renounce investment in future, seeking something in or through future. And that's a continuous, beautiful practice at first, then it's a way of being, of living.

Always a continuous return until you dwell in the now. You can still deal with future as part of your practical life, making appointments, plans for timetable when it's needed, without losing yourself in mental projections. I could plan where I'm traveling next year, now I have to, so look at the calendar, it's still the present moment.

If I project myself mentally to the next event in a year's time, then either some desire of fear will arise, some desire that that event is finally going to make it, make me, I'm finally through it, going to achieve an enhanced me, or fear arises. If we meet again next year and I project myself to that, I might be fearful, say, will I have anything more to say when we meet again? What am I going to say to them then?

I've said it all. And then they'll be dissatisfied, they will go, go home. And so the practice is simply to return to the simplicity of now, and always stepping out of mind and the conceptualized story and identity that wants all your attention.

That includes simple things, when you're traveling home from here, which you're not at this moment, not projecting yourself into the situation that you're going to encounter at home, but be there in the car or the plane, this moment, don't miss this. It can be very beautiful too when your attention is there, the simplicity of this moment. You deal with it, your problematic situation, whose situation is not problematic, when you get to it, and the problematic situation is not that problematic, when you deal with it, whatever challenge there may be in this moment, when you get there, then you look, look, look, attention.

What is it that this moment requires? Then action comes, or no action. Zen has even been defined once by a master as doing one thing at a time.

Another beautiful, the famous story of Zen, when the disciple comes to the master and says, a disciple of somebody, some other master, no, how does it go? No, the disciple goes to the master and says, they met somebody else, another master, they said, who can walk on water. So they asked him, what, can you do that?

Or can you do things like that? Or what can you do? And then, of course, the master comes up with a famous Zen, it's now become a famous Zen saying, when I'm hungry, I eat, when I'm tired, I sleep.

And one other related Zen saying is, when you stand, just stand, when you sit, just sit. And above all, don't wobble. It's an amazing thing to do something completely, to just this, honoring this, truly honoring it is honoring life.

This, whatever form this may take. And we'll come to questions in a minute, I'll stop in a minute. Questions, if there are any left.

So it's a stepping out of the conceptualized universe in the head with its past and future sunshine. Stepping out of that abstraction, making yourself into a mental abstraction, making your life into a mental abstraction, and carrying what ultimately is a burden, a great burden of mental abstraction that never feels it has completed itself. It always feels something important is missing in this abstraction of me.

But what is it? How can I find that missing piece in that abstract version of me? You don't know when you're identified with it, you don't know it's an abstract version of me, you think it's me.

It is me. How can I find that which completes me? And then you look, and this is the search, everybody's search, on a material level or through something or other.

And on that level, completion is never reached. It always feels incomplete, the me, the conceptual me. Sometimes you think it's complete now, and then something falls out of it, again, a big chunk that held it all together falls out, life does that, and again it feels incomplete.

Not to be absorbed in that abstraction, that conceptualized self, and the only way to leave it is to enter now. That breaks the continuity between past and future. The continuity, if it's not broken, the future will be very similar to the past, it's different, slightly different forms, but basically the same old thing.

Even the future of mankind would not change. Technology, yes, changes, superficial changes, but basically the same warfare, conflict, conflict, unless a shift happens here. So the razor's edge of now, that's where you walk.

And then you feel the pull of past and future, which is a mental pull, which is the pull of thought, because past and future you can only encounter through thought, not as an actuality ever. So you feel the pull of past and future, which is the pull of thought, wanting all your attention again, the conceptualized self that lives in and through past and future. You feel, and sometimes you wobble, or more than that, you get lost in it again, and then you notice it, return to the now.

This becomes then a new way to live, to walk on this razor's edge. The whole world becomes transformed through that. And even the complexity of your life situation loses its harshness, becomes softer, loses its overriding importance.

That's the sense that this matters so much to me, how this event turns out, whether I get this or not, anything, it matters so much. The heaviness and seriousness of things, so serious, if there's nothing else, that entire identity is in that, then it becomes, life is such a serious business. And with the now comes the space, and with that comes a lightness, and a point then comes where nothing is ever that serious.

Even death is not longer that serious. And it's only then that you can truly care for the things of this world, including other human beings. That quality that we call care can only be there when there is presence, there is awareness, now awareness.

It is inseparable from care. Whatever your attention shines upon, always that attention, that is awareness, that current of awareness contains that element of care, loving care, one could say, that flows into whatever attention moves to, it might be a human being, it might be a situation. And that is care.

It is not care, care has another meaning in the English language. The cares of the world, there's a care can be a heaviness too. But this is loving care.

Love, care, even for the world of objects when you relate, because when you speak of relationships and think exclusively of relationships as relationships to other human beings, but equally important is relationships to nature, very important for humanity, how humanity relates to nature. If humanity does not find a right relationship to nature, that's the end of humanity. So to find a right relationship to nature, and even the right relationship to the world of things, to have a relationship to an object that you pick up, and if there's an attention there, there's a certain care.

If there's no attention, all objects in your life are means to an end. Nature becomes a means to an end, and you just begin to destroy it. You don't see it, you don't know what you're doing then, because all you see is a means to an end.

What can this do for me? How much is this forest worth? What can we do with it?

It's future, using it. And then you don't see the forest as it is, which is a sacred space, because you're not in touch with that dimension within yourself, the space within. How can you see the sacred space in the forest?

All you see is a commodity through the mind. It becomes, you are trapped in object consciousness. So you bring that to the forest, and all you see in the forest is the object in the forest tree trunks.

You measure them, and then you know how much it's worth. So truly, the destruction of nature that humans are engaged in, truly the words of Jesus apply, forgive them, for they know not what they do. They truly don't know what they do.

So the space isn't there to know it. And that's why that transformation of consciousness, where you realize the essence of consciousness and the essence of yourself to be space, that's why that is so vital. Otherwise, no change, true change is possible.

I'll start with one or two questions that people have given me on a piece of paper, and then we'll go on and ask questions here, if there should be any. Whether there'll be answers, I don't know. There may be.

And I love Ramana Maharshi, the Indian teacher, who very often would not give answers to questions. So a person came, asked a question, perhaps they had prepared it for a long time, and this is a very important question, and asked the question, and he just sat there. It's like the question falling into a void.

And sometimes the ego of the questioner didn't like that and felt offended. Is my question not important enough to merit an answer? But at other times it happened that space arose in the questioner, sitting in that spaciousness that came through him, and then the question disappeared in it.

Or a spontaneous answer arose in the questioner's mind out of the space. And usually I didn't know it was that simple. I have been diagnosed with a so-called incurable, though not fatal, virus.

How can I improve my health without using the modalities as a means to an end? Thank you. This may be an important question for a few, quite a few of you.

Disease, fatal or non-fatal, those are just perhaps concepts or beliefs attached to conditions. It's very easy for a so-called disease to immediately become another concept in the mind, especially a so-called serious disease, can very easily become a concept in your mind and becomes incorporated into your sense of who you are. You are someone, this happens very easily.

You can also, if you have observed humans, you may have observed that some humans, for some humans who have had a disease for a long time, their disease becomes almost the central part of their sense of self. I once overheard a conversation in a bus, a woman talking to her friend. There was pride in her voice when she talked about the important doctor who was going to perform the operation for the third time on her the next day or the day after.

There was that sense of, in that egoic sense of self that is always looking for more to enhance itself, it can easily happen that it uses a condition such as an illness in order to gain more attention, in order to gain a deeper sense of self, because this sense of self is always deficient. So then I am a such and such sufferer. And when I speak of surrender, which means acceptance of what is, I'm not speaking of acceptance of an illness or acceptance of yourself as someone who has an illness, that would be strengthening the mind-made sense of self and strengthening the concept of illness.

Acceptance applies only to this moment, not to some situation in your life, only this. And whatever may manifest at this moment as an illness could be pain or disability or discomfort or weakness. And the condition of this moment is as it is at this moment.

And that is what you bring acceptance to, and with that space arises. With this acute pain that is not easy. Acute pain seems to fill up the entire space of your being.

But what else can you do except allow it to be there because it is there. And it has happened in quite a few cases that pain burned up the conceptualized structures of your mind. Pain burned up the ego, became a fire in which the egoic sense of self became consumed.

And for a few people, this is what happens. There may also be disability in movement, or you may have an illness that you simply know you're ill but there may not even be any particularly serious symptoms, you just know that there is that. Whatever it is, the question is important not to make it into a means to an end, which is the practice of accepting the is-ness of now in whatever form, not in order to achieve something, in order to get better.

But then it's not complete acceptance. But surrender to this. Let the illness force you into the present moment.

That is a beautiful thing. Then the illness becomes the teacher. It forces you into, and particularly if it is a fatal illness, so-called, it may not be.

And of course, in a wider sense, each one of us has a fatal illness. Of course, it's called mortality, an extremely dangerous virus. And it's just a question of time before it hits.

And even knowing the fact of the mortality of your physical could be of the same purpose, if you could remember it every day, as they did in medieval times. Some people, they had a skull on their desk to remind them of mortality. So whenever you sit there, you look at that.

But an illness, or in Buddhist countries, they, Buddhist monks in certain Buddhist countries, regularly visit the morgue. So they are let in, and then they sit where the dead bodies are, and they sit there for a few hours. That forces you into the now.

That's an amazing thing. Don't try to do it here. They'll think there's something very wrong with you.

The illness allow, whatever the condition is, to force you into the now. The illness becomes unhappiness. The illness becomes an unhappy self when you leave the now.

Then it really, then it becomes a me who is ill, who has an illness, who is an ill person. And particularly, if you've been told by the doctor that you only have a limited amount of time to live, whatever he may have said, one year, six months, this is perhaps the worst thing that, in the normal state of consciousness, that could happen to anybody. You go to the doctor and you say, I'm sorry, maybe six to twelve months.

He's basically telling you that there's no future for you. You have no more future. If this doesn't force you into the now, well, and it's happened.

I've met people who are in that condition, and an enormous, accelerated transformation has been happening inside them. They are on an accelerated course of realization. Because ultimately, none of us has that much time left.

It seems, it may seem still, you might think, oh well, 30 years, I haven't probably thought, 20 years, 40 years, maybe I even have 50 years left. It seems a long time. But time is a strange thing.

It's very fleeting. And before you know it, you're faced with very little left. Was that it?

I've been waiting for it to start, and now it's come to an end. Being forced into now by some condition, an illness can do that if used rightly. And the amazing thing is that healing is much more likely to happen in that state of surrender to now.

Acceptance, because there is an energy field there that is very healing, that is space. So there was a well-known doctor who wrote a big book on healing, and the modalities of healing. And he came to the conclusion by in research and talking to people, that in most cases where healing happened, it happened when there was acceptance.

And miraculous healings have happened. But this is not why you accept. And this is why the question is important.

If you're hoping for healing, you're not yet totally here. Because in a deeper sense, when there's complete alignment with the suchness of this moment, you're healed already, in the deepest sense. So it could be an illness that forces you into the now.

It could be some other unpleasant condition, such as being in a prison cell that forces you into the now. Any condition that in the normal state of consciousness would lead to a very miserable sense of self. Any such condition can force you into that.

It could even be somebody close to you going through extreme suffering, such as illness. Or somebody very close to you being in prison, being condemned for a crime, being some form of madness. Somebody very close to you, and perhaps that person very close to you, is not yet capable of surrender and is in extreme suffering.

And then you could easily, you could be drawn into suffering yourself. And again, here again, you can allow such a situation of suffering in your immediate vicinity, so to speak, that is happening to somebody who is very close to you. And he or she cannot yet see the possibility of acceptance.

So you do it for them. And that also often produces miracles, but that's a byproduct. You surrender for them if they cannot surrender.

Whether it be your child or grown-up child who is involved in some madness, whether it be your parent or your partner, or somebody close to you having a serious illness. Why can't they, they can't, they're not perhaps ready yet. You surrender.

Give them space. Let that force you into the now. Because if you leave the now, you suffer.

If you, the moment you leave the now, it becomes very painful. It becomes conceptual, painful conceptual reality. I spoke to a couple last year whose son has been condemned for a serious crime.

That is great suffering. He may not yet be able to surrender, but you can surrender for him. My friend Satyam Nadeen, who was in prison for a few years, reports that after having spent quite a long period in the worst prison in the United States, probably, overcrowded, overheated, violent, you never even knew whether you would reach the next day because people even got killed in there.

Very miserable life situation, especially after having had wealth and luxuries. And there you are in hell. And he was miserable.

His whole life had collapsed. His child taken away. The threat of being put away in an orphanage, he didn't know whether it would happen or not.

His possessions taken away. And there he is in hell. In Florida, a little window, no air conditioning, ghetto blasters, playing loud, heavy metal day and night.

This takes you to the limit, the limit of suffering. This is one way. And suddenly a point came when there was a letting go of resistance because resistance was futile.

You can resist. The pain becomes unbearable, the pain that is resistance, that is a non-acceptance. And finally there's, this is as it is.

Just this. And what collapsed were the conceptual structures of the self. Just this.

And suddenly there was peace in the midst of hell. In the midst of all that uncertainty of what's going to happen to me and what is happening to me. It happened just like that by being taken to the limit.

So what is called, can sometimes be called a limit situation. If you should encounter a limit situation, if you're not yet totally in present moment awareness now, then that will just give you the final push. Life knows what you need.

And if you should need that, you'll probably get it. You may not need it anymore because we're doing it here. It's only those who need it who get it.

Life is not absurd, it only looks like that on the surface. Let's see if there are any other questions. But before we do, I just mention, certain questions are more helpful than others.

And those are questions concerning yourself, perhaps someone close to you, your situation. Less helpful questions are questions that are mental or abstract. Such as, what was the Buddha's incarnation on the planet Mars?

I need to know this. Or questions such as, your teaching does not conform to the standards of Advaita Vedanta school of philosophy. And the discrepancies are as follows.

You say there is a doer, but Advaita says there is no doer. I need to know.

[Speaker 5] (7:22:55 - 7:23:23)

Thank you. I work as a career counselor. I have difficulty reconciling the need to meet one's inner purpose and the need to motivate people to meet their outer purpose using their unique talents, their skills.

So for me there's maybe a conflict or the reconciling is difficult for me to grasp.

[Speaker 1] (7:23:24 - 7:23:37)

Yes. Um, uniting the inner purpose with the outer purpose. Do you feel that has happened in your life, the inner and outer?

[Speaker 5] (7:23:38 - 7:23:42)

Up to now, I've been more concerned with the outer purpose.

[Speaker 1] (7:23:46 - 7:23:54)

But I presume you're bringing consciousness, presence, awareness when you work with people, when you counsel them.

[Speaker 5] (7:23:55 - 7:24:06)

Well, I really care about them reaching harmony with who they are and what they do.

[Speaker 1] (7:24:06 - 7:34:42)

Yes. Thank you. Let's see what answer emerges.

Whatever you do in life, it's not so much a question of what you do, but what, let's see, to put it in the most simple terms, it's not so much a question of what you do, but how you do what you do. So to guide people into finding out what it is that they need to do, not putting the focus in your case, because you guide them, you counsel them, not putting the focus on the what, what is it that I can do for this person? How, what is it that this person is supposed to do?

What am I supposed to say, really? Not to put the focus on what, what kind of help am I supposed to give this person? But to put the primary focus on your own state of consciousness as you sit with another human being.

So not to question the what, but to make sure that the primary condition is met, and that is in the presence of another person, you are in the state of presence. Out of that state, and this is why this is important having come to our retreat here, because that's the only teaching here, to embody the state of presence when you are sitting with another person is primary. Anything else that comes is secondary, and anything else that comes, any advice, realizations, insights, or any knowing or knowledge that comes will come out of that state.

What to say, how to help, or enabling that person to find the answers for him or herself, which is even better than answers coming from you. Enabling that person to go within and find what it is that would be right for them. That is your task there, and to be able to fulfill that task, I cannot tell you, it would be futile for me to tell you what to say to this person, because that, to be alive and truly an expression of the one intelligence needs to come out of the space of that moment what it is.

And if you bring that space, and you've been learning it here, very often you will notice a shift and a spaciousness arising in the person that you are sitting with. So that is primary. Then out of that, the realization, the insight may come what it is that they need to do, what is right for them.

It may come from you too, or it may come as a guiding question that you suddenly find yourself asking, and so you explore. But it is not, you don't, you no longer have, the structure of meeting these people will become less and less important to you. So you may, if you have a list of things that you ask, you may use them less, or spontaneous questions may arise from within you that are not on your list of questions that you usually ask that person because they are right for that moment.

So it is beautiful to help a person find what is right for them to do, but more important than that is to help a person find their more essential beingness. And your presence is part of that. So bring that, go into, and this applies not just to you, there are many people here who are working with other humans doing some kind of counseling.

This may be a little frightening at first, but the most powerful help you can give is to dwell, to allow yourself to dwell in the state of not knowing while you sit with someone, and then allow the more vital knowing to come out of that, either through you or the other person, or even as some external factor. And this is not easy, it's a shift, it's like jumping off a cliff. You get to the edge, and because you go into the region of not knowing anymore, there's an instinctive withdrawing from that.

Anybody who has gone into speaking to a group of people with prepared scripts knows how frightening it would be if you suddenly lost your script. And what are you going to say? And it's happened sometimes to people who know of one case, a man who was supposed to give a talk, and he was in a hurry in his hotel room, and he got a folder, and when he opened it up and he arrived, it was something total, it wasn't his speech at all.

And there were all these people waiting, and he had to say, I'm sorry, I haven't got my script here. And so there was a moment of panic, and he was, and suddenly he gave the best speech he had ever given. Subsequently, he didn't use scripts anymore.

So not to have, and another word is an agenda, even as me, and this is because you're in a helping profession, it's not easy to step out of the mental concept of me, I have to help this person somehow, I have to be of help to do something to help this person. See how powerful it is to go into that state of not knowing and be comfortable with not knowing, that is just amazing. Just sitting there, first you listen to the other person speak, then some questions may come.

So allow it to arise out of that. And then you will be doing more than career counseling, then career counseling will be the excuse for your spiritual work. And that, by the way, applies to any job you do, as you bring consciousness to it, whatever external activity you may be coming, be engaged in, is no longer the overriding concern.

The overriding concern is the state of consciousness that you bring to it. The activity becomes secondary and is a kind of, it's dressed up in that form, it's only the form. So there's the form of your activity and there's the essence of your activity.

And so it could happen that the form is not very conducive to embodying essence. That's rare. You might be working in a noisy discotheque and there may be an easier way to embody presence.

But if you can't get out of it, maybe they've shut you in there, it was the case in the present, then you do it there. You may be working in some slaughtering animals, probably you would remove yourself. But in most cases, the external form is secondary.

When the transformation of consciousness happened, as it is happening in you now, the form may remain the external form of your activity or it may change. If it remains, this added dimension will flow into it and it will become secondary. If the form has been unsatisfying, if you thought, I'm only a waiter, I'm only this or I'm only that, then suddenly, presence will flow into what you do and you're no longer only that.

It's only an excuse. And very often, change then comes by itself. It's beautiful.

[Speaker 3] (7:34:49 - 7:36:26)

You spoke earlier about living without relying on thought and gave us a couple of examples. Remaining seated until we find ourselves standing up and then we would know it was time to stand up. Or being in an oppressive organization and without going through a decision-making process, awakening one morning and realizing this is it.

I wonder about the place of planning a course of activities designed to produce some set of forms in the future, particularly when they require coordinating the activities of many people, making a movie, for example. I think I understand the seductiveness of thinking that making that movie will in some way enhance the self. My career has been helping organizations to create visions and goals and plans to bring certain configurations of form into being.

And you mentioned, well, okay, in the course of daily events, you need to plan appointments and such. But if our future is to live without reliance on thought, how do we coordinate activities designed to move into the future without relying on thought? Or am I leading people in the wrong direction?

Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (7:36:31 - 7:42:08)

Using thought but not relying on thought. That is the way one can live. Using thought for certain activities, many activities, thought will come in at some point, even here.

The words would not come out of this mouth if they were not thought, then becoming speech. So even here, thought plays a role, has a function. That which is being spoken comes out of presence.

So thought is linked to that dimension. So for example, you mentioned filmmaking, and that kind of thing involves people who coordinate that kind of thing. It involves hundreds of people, things that need to be dealt with spoken to, coordinated.

And you might think you need a lot of thought for that. For many of these things, if you watch any master, let's even a master filmmaker, you may find that as they are engaged, fully engaged in their work, a large part of that, what they do is a spontaneous arising. A director, for example, a good director who watches is in that he may not be in the rest of his life or her life, but in that field of his activity, that's if he is a master or she is a master, that director is in that state of alertness when engaged in giving instructions, telling people what to do.

How does he know what is right? The master doesn't know it. Thought plays a tiny part in that.

The master knows what is right, and then it becomes words, speech, and then he'll say it. It arises, anybody who has achieved mastery in any field, if you observe how they work, you will see that a large part of their work does not come from thought and all the creative element is not thought. The rest may involve thought.

So those things that do involve, there may be an aspect that is non-creative. Perhaps when the director gets home to his office, there's some paperwork to deal with or something else. So he may need to dictate a letter.

But even there, it is amazing when you live in that inner state of alignment, it's not that thought doesn't operate anymore. You use it. Even that isn't right.

You don't use it. I don't use thought. There's no planning, you might have noticed here.

And each time I come here, yesterday, for example, as I was coming here, I thought, oh, it's questions today. That's good because I have nothing more to say. And then words came and there were no questions.

So it's not so much that thought doesn't operate anymore, but thought becomes the servant of something deeper. You don't lose yourself in that because if you lose yourself in that, then you become, let's again, filmmaking, for example. Then you become a director who people fear, who perhaps a lot of the time is angry and because things are not going the way they should.

And or a director who is trying to figure out what the best way is to how to, what can I do now? That's the difference between a master and somebody who is just doing his or her job. And so it's a new way to live.

It's more sensing and feeling how that works rather than trying to understand what function thought is going to have. Planning is a part that everybody needs to do and there's no reason why you should lose yourself in thought or future by doing any planning. You simply give attention to this, to the calendar, the drawing board, the computer screen, what it is, what is it that this requires?

[Speaker 3] (7:42:10 - 7:42:27)

Yeah, when I stood up, I think I was ready to argue in favor of that we need to rely on the thought form of our schedules at least. And I've realized as you were speaking that one of the things that I may be able to do with the people, the organizations with whom I work is to help them have a different relationship to those schedules.

[Speaker 1] (7:42:28 - 7:48:08)

That's right, yes, the schedules are mind forms. That's right. It's just a wonderful way.

You cannot learn it the other way around. It's always strange when people come and observe those who have mastery in their area and then try to observe the externals, what they do and then try to make it into a system. So movement, beautiful practice.

To do it well, you need to be present with every movement. No movement is a means to an end. You're not trying to get to this place because you're at this place and you're completely at each place.

No, not one second is a means to an end. Otherwise you're not good at it. And how did that happen?

How did anybody ever come up with that? I'm sure it happened because someone who lived in that state spontaneously began to move and perform a very slow dance as a joyful expression, external expression of that state. And then somebody came and said, what's he doing?

And then people gathered around him. This is, it feels so good to just watch this. And after a little while, somebody clever came with a piece of paper and said, now he's lifting his left arm.

Now the right leg is going up. And then he began to teach. It wasn't quite, but fortunately in the case of Tai Chi, because that movement forces you back into that state.

So to some extent it can still work. Then they did it to psychotherapists. There were three effective psychotherapists who were so good, like everybody, all the patients were cured or whatever they're going to call it.

And finally somebody comes, how do they work? Let's observe how they work. Now their eyes go up this way.

Now they are in the same body posture as the patient. And if they asked the therapist, they didn't know they were doing it. It just happened because there was so much alignment with the person that sometimes when the patient sat like this, the therapist would go like, but it was spontaneous, a spontaneous becoming one.

And then it became a system. It loses something, of course. But even that can be helpful.

It's no longer, it doesn't arise out of the core of being, but even that can be helpful. But let's really go to the core and see where the core of mastery lies. And that you can live not just in the performance of your professional activities, but live in that state and when you are going about relatively insignificant, doing relatively so-called insignificant things in your life, traveling from here to there, to not doing anything in particular, interaction with other humans, be there.

So it's a beautiful challenge to bring that presence into whatever situation you're in and then see that, yes, thought is still there. And yet it has lost its overriding, its primary position. Deeper intelligence is informing thought and then it operates.

And then you don't, one characteristic of any action that's performed is that you're not reducing it to something inferior to where you want to get. And that is what the Bhagavad Gita calls, but really it is when whatever you do is not a means to an end, but your attention is fully in the doing. That is karma yoga, consecrated action, you could call it, not inferior to some thought or future achievement.

And then that's, thank you. And that's mastery. Okay.

Yes. Do we have another microphone? Okay.

So we can shift one side, then that side, and then that side.

[Speaker 2] (7:48:12 - 7:49:20)

Hello, my question is about children. My son, who's 13, is here with me this week because an exception was made to allow him to come. And we went through a lot of suffering and I was listening to your tapes in the car and one day my son said, don't take that out, mom, I need that.

That pain body thing makes sense to me. And that was his beginning of a journey into embracing this work. And he's watched a lot of videos.

He's been to some support groups where he's the only kid. And he's now helping me run a presence group. And so far he's the only kid.

But I would love to know what your thoughts are, I guess your knowing is, about how we can bring this and offer it to children. Because I see in him what a beautiful, really healing has happened in him and in me. And his healing has helped me and vice versa.

It's a team thing. So I'd love to hear you speak about how we can bring this to children.

[Speaker 1] (7:49:21 - 7:49:26)

Yes. And do you have contact with other children?

[Speaker 2] (7:49:30 - 7:50:11)

In my work, I rarely work with kids. I'm a psychotherapist and I usually work with adults. And we've been thinking about starting a special group for children.

Maybe some of the teenage kids whose parents have come to the adult presence group. And I've talked with a number of other people here and in the informal gatherings about groups. And I noticed some other people had an interest.

But I haven't yet met anyone who's led a group for kids particularly. Except to use it in, you know, they're working with kids in whatever way they work with kids if they do. Whether it's athletics or teaching.

[Speaker 1] (7:50:11 - 7:58:40)

Yes. Good. Thank you.

Well, perhaps this gathering is the beginning of a few groups like that. Starting and maybe you have planted the seed for that here. But I do know that more and more people who work with children are bringing this into their work.

School teachers. People who work with younger children. Some psychotherapists who work with children are bringing it in.

A few people are working on books written for children to embody their teaching. And quite a few children I hear from people are exposed to the tapes a lot of the time. And some of them have gone through a shift because the tapes or whatever the teaching is so simple that of course children can understand it.

Sometimes better than adults. And I've had reports of children who've gone through an enormous shift. Simply they've been exposed to that.

Whenever they are driving, their mother is driving, they have to listen to this tape. I know of one mother who her child, she had to listen to it all the time and then for the first time she got a video and so her child said, oh mom is that power of now the movie? So it is the answer to your question is already in this room.

It doesn't need to come. It's already in a few people in this room. The answer to your question is already in you.

It will emerge what it is that you need to do that perhaps even one child of course comes into contact with other children and a child who already experiences that transformation will affect other children naturally. Whether or not in your case there's going to be a more formal structure where you meet with children or children meet your son, meets with children. The answer doesn't come from me but will come from you and it will come as an insight into what it is.

And this is the beautiful thing when what is right will come as an answer from within you. Some people are writing books. I've already seen one or two books that seem to embody some aspect of the teaching such as pain body.

A book I saw that was written in French and somebody sent me the Italian translation of it was a book of drawings that shows a little child getting home and experiencing a pain body attack. It's not called pain body. It's all pictorial.

The pain body is seen as a monster in his belly and then that monster comes out of his mouth and he's shouting and screaming and going to his room and there's this big monster energy looks menacing but yet also benign at the same time filling his whole room and going berserk in his room throwing everything. And finally the monster subsides. So it's a child reads that and recognizes something in him or herself that is there as a pictorial symbol and by recognizing it finding a space between that and the space is already there through seeing it out there.

So many of you especially those who work with children or who have children you're already doing it. If there's teachers some teachers already when they tell me the beautiful things that happen in classrooms as they bring that in and how children respond and ask relevant questions how children become there's one child who has been forced to listen to the tape through her mother who's become her teacher who's been saying the most amazingly wise things and that's that dimension in many children is not yet as hidden obscured by mind stuff as it is in some adults so they respond more quickly.

So it is enough that you embody that and that is spreading to your children to your child and from there it will spread further. Go within and see if there is any more that you can do not you as a limited personal self but how that can come through you through whatever means writing organizing this or that but don't make it into a mental thing that thinks I need to do something. Ask the question and this is the beauty of true answers ask the question and then become still.

Is there more, is there anything else I can do? Let the question, the question becomes like a pebble that you drop into a still lake. The question then disappears in the stillness and then don't pursue that anymore just become still.

A few days later ask the question again whether there's more to do become still and suddenly you know what to do. And this is again it's arriving at decisions that are no longer decisions no longer relying also on some external answer. This is really I'm not answering your question in concrete terms because the answer the true answer of what it is right for you to do will come from within you and it'll unfold from there but don't forget it's unfolding already.

So it's simply a further unfolding of what's happening and when it's so grateful for what's happened and is happening already when you see it you cannot not be grateful for what the change that is already happening has already happened and out of that state of gratefulness it grows more. That's the beauty of it.

[Speaker 2] (7:58:43 - 7:58:44)

Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (7:58:44 - 7:58:46)

I don't know whose turn it is now.

[Speaker 4] (7:58:48 - 8:00:19)

I've been waiting for many many months to get here and ask something about it. Actually my original question has changed since I've been here but it still relates to the same thing which is this pain body which reminds me of the suffering that Gurdjieff talked about. What happened that was a change is I've got a band sort of around my chest it seems that when there's any kind of release there's massive anger, grief, fear stuff like that that's held in place by some sort of strange band.

I've been to doctors this year they've said there's nothing wrong with me. My lungs are fine. One of them said he thought it was emotional.

Anyway yesterday as I was trying to climb up the hill that black dog that had been in here yesterday I couldn't breathe and it was like I will never make it up and it was raining and I thought what am I going to do? The black dog passed me he looked at me I looked at him and then the second I noticed him and I was surprised to see him there was no problem. And then I realized there was no problem so the problem came back.

And actually my question at this point is is if I physically try to push through this with exercise do you think I can maybe make some headway so that I can breathe again?

[Speaker 1] (8:00:25 - 8:07:25)

Do the exercise only if you truly enjoy it but not as a means to an end. If you truly enjoy the exercise it's beautiful and it may do something but the enjoyment is that which makes it effective. Not an exercise because you think you should be doing it for some reason.

If without the enjoyment why do the exercise? Then there's something this is mainly at now because there's presence in you this is on a feeling level semi-physical as far as I can see what you feel is physical, emotional somehow where these two meet it could be an emotion it could be purely physical but you feel it very much here. It's no longer so much associated with that there's a danger that the mind will make it and you've given really the key already yourself the dangers the mind will make it into a problem of mine and try to solve it as a problem and then it becomes a dilemma I need to get rid of this and it could take years or it may never happen if that is the case so it is here this is when the dog was teaching you the dog taught because that's how dogs live to be completely with what is so for that for a moment you were completely with the suchness of that including that and that was a freeing it was liberating to see that there is no problem don't give it the heaviness that the mind will endow it with and make it into something that needs to be solved say yes to it it is appearing here at this moment make friends with it whatever comes into the space of now make friends with it because it is that is the most powerful healer because it is obviously an energy field there so it is life it has a particular form that form may have something to do with certain mind forms from your past so it has it the form is temporary life is eternal it has a particular vibrational frequency which is part of its form and that is something to do with certain thought forms partly personal but ultimately all collective from the human collective mind that created it and there's not really it's not a personal fault of yours at all that that became created it's a temporary form and it's alive and it is as it is at this moment so the key to transformation to make friends with this moment what form it takes doesn't matter say yes to it allow it be with it oh that was the dog's teaching I'm just translating it into words and that was the same dog we were coming in the golf cart that was running after us and I had a brief encounter with him too we looked at each other briefly it was beautiful oh beautiful moment and I knew that he knew we may have to carry on with questions if you can remember those of you who are waiting to ask if you can remember to come up this afternoon as the first people who come up it is now the clock the hands of this clock are pointing to the number 12 let's enjoy this beautiful day and this beautiful moment I or the dog will be here this afternoon

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[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 5:38:12)

We are spending a few days together, it seems, unless some of you run away before. But a few days is enough for boredom to arise, or discontent or restlessness. Restlessness, normal states.

So you don't necessarily have to run away the moment that arises. Could happen tonight, or it could happen in two days' time. Just watch the boredom, the restlessness, the discontent.

And then it passes, and you're still here. Now you might think that I could have chosen a better climate, a warmer climate, or a better time of year for the retreat. Wouldn't it be nice if it were warm and had very long days and could lie out in the open?

Wouldn't it be a more fulfilling experience if that were different? In some ways, perhaps. But it was chosen on purpose so as not to provide a totally fulfilling experience.

Not that there are that many experiences that are completely fulfilling. So as far as experiences go, I don't know how you would rate our retreat, you can tell me afterwards, on the scale of one to ten, of fascination or fascinating, how interesting it is as an experience. No doubt you will have beautiful experiences here, the hot tub, that's a beautiful experience, but you can't spend twelve hours a day in it, so it passes fairly quickly.

And then, especially as we will progressively move into more silence, I don't start the retreats by saying, we're not going to speak now for the rest of the week. That's too much of a shock to the system. So gradually we move into that.

And as we move into that, what you notice then, although of course the hot tubs are still there, and the beautiful trees, but you can't maybe walk for that long, it might rain or it might be too cold, you might notice, especially as we move into silence, an absence of things to fulfill you, to keep your interest going, an absence of interesting experiences, although there will be a few here and there, but not enough for the greedy mind, and there's nothing personal in that, that always seeks for more to add to me, collector of experiences, with which I can then identify and that make me feel a little bit more. And so there comes, and this is why it is likely, or possible, or likely, that waves of discontent, restlessness and boredom may arise in you, because although it is nice here, very nice, the mind after a day or two or three says, yes, it's nice, but it's not enough, it's not interesting enough. My first retreat that I did with a group a few years ago in North America, a small retreat, the woman who runs the retreat center after three or four days asked me, are they bored yet?

And I said, I don't know, I think some are, and she said, oh good, then it's working. So if you, there's more to this, or less to this, rather, than another experience, although on the level of experiences, of course, it also, that dimension is here, but you would probably only rate it on a level of one to ten as three, or as an experience. So we are not here to add a further experience that you can then remember, but to go deeper with what is, and what is to the mind may at times not be enough, not seem enough.

The first day or two it will be happy, because everything is new perhaps, and then not enough happening, and what it then does, it experiences a wave of boredom or restlessness, it will then entertain itself, especially as we move into silence, you can't, it cannot externalize its noise, the mind will then become more noisy within, and you will think all kinds of fascinating and interesting things, and you won't be here, the body will be here, and you'll be somewhere else.

So here, the important thing to know, we're not here to add more to ourselves, but to discover, to find something that's already here in you, it doesn't need to be added. And it may well be that most of your life you've gone through life looking for more to add to me, possessions, status, knowledge, better physical health, enlightenment, that's to watch the movement of needing to add what the Buddha called desire that continues. And of course, where do you, where does this come, where is the adding going to be fulfilled in the future, so it's that need for looking for the next thing to fulfill me, because I'm not enough yet.

And when the next thing is not in sight, then restlessness or boredom or discontent arise. And so you continuously miss yourself. Not that it is, there's nothing wrong with improving yourself, improving your physical health, adding knowledge, adding experiences, but in the expectation that it will fulfill you, that it will give you an enhanced self, a greater, deeper sense of self, it doesn't work on that level.

On other levels it's fine, it doesn't work on that level, and that's the only level that we are interested in here. So we stay with the simple suchness of this moment, even if to the mind it doesn't seem enough, not good enough, or it might even complain, it shouldn't be the way it is. And you will have something to complain about, you will find something to complain about, of course the mind will find it, easily.

And in that, the sense of self gets strengthened also, because if you complain about something, you are right about something, and another person or situation is wrong about something, so you complain about it. In the mind you might not speak about it, but it's a mind movement, whether it's externalized as words or whether it remains in the head, it doesn't matter, it's a deep-seated, collective mind pattern that the sense of self that we might call ego, the egoic sense of self needs. And sooner or later you will find that mind pattern arising.

If only, it might complain about, not enough, this is not interesting enough, or it might complain about little insignificant things, but it will blow them up into something big, about your bed, or your cabin, or the showers, or the food, or somebody you are sitting with at dinner table, or the person you are sharing the cabin with, or as you sit here, observe the mind coming in, not wanting to listen, or starting to complain. And why is that so satisfying to the self?

Because it grows through it. And in its illusion it believes that it has diminished something or someone through its complaining, and by diminishing something or someone, that it deludes itself that it can grow, it grows through that. Its sense of being right gets enhanced, and to be right is the greatest thing for the egoic self, the mind made self.

I am right about this situation, of course I am. So to watch that, you can watch that, it's so much there, so that may arise, and when it does you can watch it, be present as that mind movement arises, otherwise you become the mind movement, then you are the self. It doesn't want you to be present, and of course when you complain it's something you don't want to be here, you don't want this, you want this now to be different, or you want to be in a different now, but not in this now.

So our practice here is to watch those mind movements as they come, so that you are not totally drawn into them, and being forced to become them, and then you are a complaining little me entity, but to watch those mind movements as they come. And then our main practice here is the state of attention, the state of presence, that's the only thing I can show you, that is the state of aware presence. Nothing else is being taught here, just that.

And you won't get it through the words, although the words are useful little signposts, just as you won't get to Rome by looking at a signpost that says Rome. You can't, the words alone are not it. You can only get it through tuning yourself into a state out of which the words come, or one could say the stillness in between and underneath the words, a state of consciousness.

And the moment you recognize it as the state of alive stillness that is so alive and so peaceful, and the moment you recognize it and you think it's in somebody else like this form, it's in you, because it's only through the state arising in you that you can even recognize it in another. And when you recognize it, it's there. That is the new state of consciousness that is arising.

I say new, all words are limited. It's not new because it's always been your essence, but it's new to you if you have never known your essence. The times outside our gatherings when you are interacting with people or alone are as important as being in this room.

The practice there is the arising of presence, allowing the arising of presence through complete alignment with whatever arises in this moment while you're here. When you go home you can go back to the old if that's better. A complete alignment with this moment, which it always is.

A non-resistance to this that takes you out of mind, identification with mind. That is your practice, and become familiar with the state of attention in which thoughts become secondary, the awakened state. Thoughts may still operate, but there is a spaciousness suddenly that's far greater than thought, and you can't understand it through the mind.

And a little hint, while you listen to the talk, pay equal attention to the silent spaces that are there continuously throughout the talk, pay as much if not more attention to the silent spaces than the words. Now for you to do that, that requires alertness. A high degree of alertness that most people still on this planet encounter very rarely, accidentally sometimes when faced with death or great danger.

They encounter it briefly, but most humans, although the state is coming in, for many, for the majority, it is still a completely unknown state. The arising of that state that I call presence. So what does this mean when you pay attention to the words, but you pay equal or more, really more attention to the silent spaces between the words?

What does that, what is that attention? Does it have any meaning? What does it mean to pay attention to the silent spaces?

It does not mean that you think about it and say, oh, there's another silent space. I wonder when the next one is going to come. For you to be able to pay attention to the silent spaces, you need to be alert, very alert.

Like that. That alertness and the stillness are really one and the same. When I speak about it, it sounds as if you were becoming aware of the silence.

But the silence or the stillness and the awareness are one. That is pure awareness arising in you. Pure intelligence.

The human mind is only a tiny aspect of that. And you thought that was you. It's going through a whole life thinking that that tiny aspect, that the human mind is me.

It's a mind-made, egoic sense of self that needs to be right and complains and does hundreds of things to keep itself going. And not knowing who you are beyond that, taking a narrow, personalized sense of little me for who you are, always grasping for more because it's not enough yet, and then fearful that the little that I have, I might lose that. And being trapped in a personalized, exclusively personalized little me, and from that personalized mental perspective, I judge the entire world.

I'm the judge of everything and everyone. And everything I perceive is filtered through that, through a personalized little me that is not big enough yet. And so you can see the distortions that come in, in all your perceptions, in all interactions, everything, this personalized little me takes a mental position towards everything and the mental position is narrow and personalized and reactive.

And that's how people then go through their life. Trapped in that, everything, even the simplest perception is distorted through that. Human interactions become problem-ridden through that because they're all trapped in that.

This little me that takes a standard perspective, this is how I judge, this is how it is. This is how you are. That's who you are.

It attaches labels immediately onto everything and everybody, mental, because I need to know, I take, I identify then with perspectives. And an extreme version of this, a very extreme version of someone who identifies totally with one perspective, mind, thought, one thought, knows, you cannot, there is no situation that could be encapsulated, you can take a perspective on a situation through thought and express it and it would be a fragment of that situation. Even simple situations, when you apply a thought judgment to the situation, it will be one perspective on that situation.

And there are many other possible perspectives on that situation that thought could take. You can look at it from here, you can look at it from there or there, there's not one that contains the entire truth. Now this applies to anything you say about a human being, anything you say about a political situation, anything that you say, whatever it is, thought can only be fragmentary, can only be a fragment of the truth.

No thought can contain the totality, it's not big enough, it's always fragmented. And that's fine, on its own level it has its function. But to believe that you can utter something that is true and final, that your perspective is the true one on another human being or on yourself or on a situation, that is delusion.

You get trapped then in a narrow mind-made position and you identify with the position as me, and then you can't look beyond it anymore. An extreme version of that is the terrorist, who becomes an extreme manifestation of someone totally identified with one mental position, so you attach labels onto people so that you can no longer sense their aliveness. But the terrorist is only an extreme version.

The moment you call a person something and completely believe in that, through your mind, that's already the beginning of the same madness as the terrorist, which is an extreme version of that. To attach a label to a situation or person and completely believe in it, completely identify with that, identify with the mental position and think this is the truth, and you do it to another person and you've already committed an act of violence because you have deadened the aliveness of that human being to yourself. You can no longer sense that.

You've attached a label and you believe in it. Not that the mind will not often do that because the momentum is still there, it's been there for many thousands of years, but to be totally trapped in that perspective, in that judgment, in that labeling, that is the beginning really of... You've already killed that person in a way because you've covered up the aliveness.

You take your mental position for reality and there's no human being about whom another perspective and position is not also true. You can say he's obviously a jerk, he did that and that, and she is a bitch, she did that's what she did and that's how she is. This is one perspective and it may be true from that perspective, yes he is a jerk, but there may be other situations where he's not a jerk.

Maybe to his daughter he's not, who knows? Maybe after he's suffered an accident or illness that jerk is no longer there, but you have already created a mental structure and you might not even see changes that happen then. So getting out of all that the mind produces, all the judging and labeling, stepping out of that personalized little me that lives in and through all those mind movements.

And then you can still express an opinion without being totally in it. It is one perspective. This is my preferred perspective and then there are other perspectives.

So you become greater than the mind, which you already are but didn't know it, from where you can contain mind and many different perspectives, this is rising above mind, rising above thought or going beyond thought as that which gives you your sense of self. That's why we're here. And so that that dimension that is vaster than thought can arise in you, so that you recognize that dimension.

Ultimately it is, it recognizes itself, it arises. So you're becoming familiar with that dimension of pure awareness, self-awareness. In which sometimes thought happens, the mind movement comes and goes.

So you'll practice here as far as possible to maintain that alertness. Not only while you're here, by paying attention to the silent spaces, without alertness it's not possible. If you only listen to words, it requires a certain degree of concentration, but there's far greater consciousness when you pay attention to the silent spaces.

And as you continue to do that here and when you move outside here in nature, bring the alertness into your sense perceptions. The same alertness that is here that enables you to listen to the silent spaces. You then walk around the forest, and I recommend that even if you've come with a friend or partner, at least for one hour each day you spend time completely alone with nature.

Or if it's too wet out, there's a sanctuary where you can sit and just be, but nature is the best. Spend at least an hour when you're not interacting, even during the time when we are silent anyway. And then bring the stillness, the alertness into your sense perceptions.

So that you don't carry around that personalized little narrow me with its problems and its life situation, its past and its future. You don't carry the burden of that, and while you're walking through the forest you're already thinking about the problems facing you next week. Now the mind will be saying, yes, by walking around in a state of alertness in the forest, is that going to solve my problems?

Yes. And then the mind says, am I not running away? Am I not, I shouldn't even be here, the mind in some of you says, because there's so much that I have on my plate, as the expression goes, I've got so much on my plate and now why did I come here?

I mean, I haven't, gosh, so much I have to deal with and now I've taken a whole week and I'm not dealing with it. The mind will come up with things like that. You're not facing it, and then there's this little inner dialogue, you, you're not facing your problems, you're running away again, can't you see, this is pointless, all this talk about stillness and alertness, look at your problems.

You obviously have a lot to sort out first before you can even contemplate the transformation of consciousness. That's what the mind will tell you. The amazing thing is, facing, that is the true meaning of facing life, facing reality is this, facing each moment, or the only moment that there is, in the state of alert attention, alert presence, which is a state of complete openness to whatever is here, because I'm alert if I say internally, oh, this is awful, this shouldn't be happening.

You go beyond the judgments of good and bad as far as anything is concerned that arises at this moment. Nothing is either good or bad, Shakespeare said, but thinking makes it so. And we go beyond the thinking that makes it so.

And then the mind says, yes, but then I won't know anymore what's good and bad. How can I function in life? Well, wait and see.

See how you can function, how can you function at this moment without the judgment of good and bad, with a simple alignment with the is-ness of this moment, which your life always is, only that, only this. And that's facing reality. And people live with an accumulation of problems out from where they derive their identity, a me, it's a problematic me, because they never face reality.

But the mind says, oh, if I worry enough, I'm really facing reality. And you wake up at three in the morning and start facing reality. And of course, it's not reality.

The reality is your bed, your breathing, the aliveness of this moment, perhaps the stillness of the night. That is the reality. There is no problem at that moment.

Perhaps at nine o'clock in the morning, a problem will come in. The phone will ring, there will be a voice at the other end. It can only happen in the now.

But the amazing thing is, it can never be a problem in the now. And it is faced completely in the now. But before you face challenges, which is all it is, problems are not problems, that is a mind construct, mental construct, in the mind's attempt to enhance its identity.

I have important problems. It's unconscious, of course. It never says that I am big because I have big problems.

So facing only the now, that's reality. Facing that in that sharp, it is sharp and gentle at the same time, that alert field. And there's always, there's a space there of no thought.

The moment you look, a problem appears in whatever form, let's say suddenly there's a big dog barking at you, and there's a space of no thought. You can't really measure it in terms of time, but let's say it's one second, two seconds, three seconds. And there's that alertness in which it's faced.

And then action arises. And nobody can predict what action arises, if action is needed. Or nothing, action may not be possible at this moment.

And then there's the simple allowing of this, the now, in whatever form it takes, to be. There is a spaciousness suddenly. And that is, in that spaciousness, your whole life unfolds, no longer as a problem, but you don't need them anymore.

You don't need the accumulation of problems anymore to give you a sense of self, because you are that, the spaciousness in which your whole life happens, in the now. That. So you bring that, when you walk in the forest here, you bring that alert attention, that spacious presence into your sense perceptions, the same alertness with which you pay attention to the gaps in the words, between the words.

And the essential thing that you can learn through nature, and this is an ideal environment for that, is, and this is, nothing is more important in your life than this, no matter what the mind says, learn to perceive through that alert stillness. You look at nature and you listen to the sounds of nature. And you then walk around like, as if you had just been born into this moment, or maybe if they just arrived on this planet, from somewhere else, how would you, if you had just been born into this now, you would look, oh, oh, everything is new, there's nothing or labels.

And you just use the beauty of nature all around you to go there, and when you walk, some of you may occasionally want to walk fast, just to get some exercise, but also walk slowly, so that you, your sight can, your sense perception can, your sense perception can spend a few seconds with each thing that you look at. And occasionally stop, perhaps even find one or two friends out here in nature, and during these days, you go back to that tree, or that bush, or that pond, or whatever it may be, or the river, and you go back to it, and meet it each time, and you go back to it, and meet it in the state of alert stillness, in which there's no labeling, in which you, and you can then know what it means to know something without mind movement, a completely different way of knowing. When you are with a tree, or with a flower, or with a pool of water, or blades of grass, whatever it is, you know, you know that this is a tree, but you don't call it a tree. And you know it is far vaster than tree.

Tree was a label that reduced it, it gave the illusion that you actually knew what it was. Tree is only a sound, it's only a few letters put together. How can that be an exhaustive explanation?

Is that true knowledge of what this is? But even if you had more things, even if you had studied biology, or whatever, and you could write a PhD on that tree, it's still knowing about it, and yet it's not yet knowing it, which doesn't happen through mental labels. So that is, it's essential here to bring that into your perceptions.

So, and then there are always, there are two dimensions to your life. One is the dimension of whatever you perceive in the now, listen, look at, feel, and the other, of course that's the manifested dimension, the other is the unmanifested. And if I limit it the moment I put a word onto it, but I'm going to do it anyway, but you know every word is a limitation, I can ring this bell, and the sound when I ring this bell manifests, and it manifests to you as something audible, it's auditory perception, an experience you could say, when you listen to this sound which is beautiful, it becomes an experience, it's an auditory sense perception, and you could say you experience the sound, but that's only one dimension. Now for most people that's the only dimension they know, and they identify with the experience, with that manifested form.

In this case it's a sound. And if the whole week, if I were ringing these bells the whole week, you could say it was a beautiful experience, every day we listened to him ringing these beautiful bells continuously, and it was a nice, wonderful experience, that's the experience level. But that wouldn't be enough, because then you go away and then the bells are gone, or you would become dependent on more bells.

Now there's always to every experience and every sense perception there is an underlying dimension that most humans are not yet aware of, and they seek themselves in and through the experience of the sense perceptions, or they want to run away from it because it threatens their sense of self. So most humans are completely identified with the arising forms, auditory form, a sound, visual, billions of life forms, thought forms, thoughts, emotional forms, waves of emotion, they come and go. Now most humans then their sense of self either identifies with the form and wants to add it to me, or feels threatened by the form and wants to run away from it.

That's the reactive, personalized sense of self. And they look for themselves in the forms that arise, and that is not knowing who you are. So what is the dimension that usually you will not be aware of?

What is there before the sound happens, and after the sound has subsided? Let's find out. We could say stillness.

We could say alert presence. No form in it, yet it's before the sound, just alert presence. And the sound happens, and even while you listen to the sound, you can be aware of the alert presence, the awareness in which it arises, which is there after it subsides.

That's you, consciousness. So this is your practice, knowing yourself as that, not that which arises, but this field in which it arises. And that field is infinitely intelligent.

It is the one intelligence, the one consciousness, and that liberates you from a narrow, personalized little sense of self, with its reactivity, its complaining, its good and bad and shouldn't, and reaching out always to the next moment to fulfill itself, missing the now, which is the field in which it all happens. So returning always to that, and in any experience that you have, any sense perception, be aware of not only the form, but also, one could say, the one in whom it arises. One could say, be aware of yourself, the I, not the little me, that underlies all sense perception, all thought, all emotion, all thought, all emotion.

So, many times during this week, you will find yourself being drawn into mind again, and then you notice it, and you step out into, back into now. And that shift is a wonderful thing once you know how easy that is, the shift from being out of the now, identified with mind, not here, and even during a conversation, you can be completely not here, because you're completely identified with your mental positions. And then, suddenly, there's a shift, which otherwise would only happen if you were suddenly faced with death, imminent death, then it could happen fairly easily, it can happen to people who've never heard of this, and the mind stops.

When faced with death, truly faced with death, the mind can't do anything anymore. And this applies to your own death, or even death close to you. Death is not the greatest disaster that ever happened, it's the greatest opening, too.

On the level of form, of course, death is the greatest disaster that could ever befall anybody, and we might as well kill ourselves now, because what's the point? On that level, of course, if that's it. Also death, somebody near you, but death needs to be faced, not explained away through more mind stuff, or finding theories around it.

Faced, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, and when death comes to you, the mind can't, and it sometimes happens through death, in whatever form, through disaster, the mind can no longer explain things. And that's facing death. It stops the mind.

Death stops the mind. And then, some people who faced death and they didn't die, they talked about it, ah, some shift happened inside me, there was this incredible serenity, suddenly, and aliveness and peace, and all fear was gone, gone. And that is the shift here that you, this is a kind of death, too.

Just sitting here is facing death. Nothing real dies, but it can feel like death. And so, you enter death voluntarily during this week, and there's the shift from mind and me, and to suddenly the state of alert presence.

It also comes easily, there are various ways, we'll talk about this in more detail, but when, to simply put more attention into your sense perception, and perceptions is a first step, listening and hearing with alertness, such alertness that you are not labeling it. Oh, if you had to listen to a very distant sound, you'd have to listen so carefully that you couldn't be thinking other thoughts at the same time, and even the thought, can I hear it or can't I hear it, would prevent you from hearing it. The sound is so distant, it requires your total attention and alertness, and even tension in the body would prevent you, so it's an open, relaxed alertness, and you would be listening like, so sense perceptions bring alertness into sense perceptions, as if you were seeing this flower for the first time, and then after a while you sense the underlying alertness.

You can then look at a flower and close your eyes, it's gone. For a moment the image of flower still lingers in your mind, then that may be gone too, and it's simply a field of alive presence. So all these things I will be reminding you continuously, how to be here during these days, how to shift from mind to presence, and how to shift from mind to presence, and you will have to shift many times, because many times the mind will draw you back in, then stepping out, and you may observe that whenever the mind draws you back in, in some way it's a denial of this moment, you're running away from it internally, you're judging it, you're not facing it, you want to be in the next moment, perhaps you'd like to rather be, the mind says, why did I come here?

I live in a warm climate, and then why did I come here? I could be sitting in my backyard in Palm Springs, or wherever it is. Mind, and immediately you're back in mind movements, but you're here, and if you went back that moment, you would arrive the next day in Palm Springs, then you would be sitting in your backyard, and the mind would say, you see, you failed, that was an opportunity, you shouldn't have left, can't win.

So another way of shifting is a complete allowing of this moment to be as it is, and that includes things like maybe the shower is not free, and you're standing there, and wanting to get into the shower, but somebody's taking a long time in the shower, and there you are, a complete yes to this moment. Uncompromising yes, because what can you do? It is.

That also brings presence in very quickly, and you become, we will be talking, you become aware of an undercurrent when you allow this moment to be. Completely. That also is your practice here.

It's presence practice. Presence practice. Something in you loves that, and something in you hates that.

That's good to know too. That in you which loves it was strong enough to get you here. Maybe it was touch and go whether you would make it.

Maybe even shortly before leaving, something came up and said, well, do you really want to go? It'll be cold in late November, and he'll be talking about these things that I read about already in the book. Do you really want to?

It was touch and go. Something wants it, something doesn't want it. And what is it?

That which wants it is the mind made self, the me. Of course it doesn't want presence. And something deeper is arising that loves that.

Whenever you sit here and you love sitting here or being here, then that arises. Whenever you don't love being here, and not just here, anywhere, any here, whenever you don't, then the other is operating. It doesn't want to be here.

It wants to be in its own, its little world in the head, conceptualized universe and think about things and people and me and my life and my problems. Conceptualized universe in my head. And then peripherally I'm still aware of shadowy figures that are other people.

And then there's some greenery there, that's nature. And all the mind can do with that is to say, oh, I'd like to have that. Or that would look good in my backyard.

My backyard. I wonder how much five acres here would cost. Well, that's not as nice as the forest I saw five years ago.

It's mad, but nothing personal in it. So, we've been talking about how to be here. Strange way of putting it.

How to be here. Truly be here. And what that means.

The depth that is suddenly there when you are truly here. The depth that is in you. Whereas before there's a shallow little entity.

And suddenly there's an enormous depth. And it no longer matters how fulfilling this situation is. No situation is all that fulfilling for long.

Not for mostly, most situations are not very fulfilling. The external form of the situation is a depth far deeper than whatever form is here. The experience that you may be having comes and goes.

The depth of your being when you are here. And you've been looking for the reality of yourself in the future through trying to get away from here. That's all the practice.

Here, completely here. And so when you're walking from here between your cabin completely, you're not trying to get to the cabin, but what are you going to do there? It's a strange realization that the next moment is not going to be better.

It's an illusion. When you don't know this moment fully, the next one is not going to be better. It can give you the illusion that it's better for a little moment.

And then, oh. And then you're sitting in the cabin. And then you go to bed alive.

Every cell alive. You dwell in the sense of your inner body. Occasionally a few thoughts come in and out completely unimportant.

Thoughts are not really that important. That's one of the things perhaps that you realize here. That thought is not that important.

It's functional. But it's not that important. Whatever the mind brings up, it says, yes, this is important.

This thought is important. You should be completely in this. It's not that important, thought.

It's a tool. It's a function. One of your many functions.

You can think. It's good. And so that's another thing to remember here.

And I may remind you a few times. Thoughts that come into your head during these days, some of them, many of them will pretend to be very important. But you know that they are not that important.

So you find a different relationship to your mind. It's not this big, everything. It's a different relationship to your mind.

And when I say it's not that important, it means it's not that serious. Thought wants to be taken seriously. And I sometimes say that at the beginning of retreats, especially, one of my favorite practices, or your favorite practice, it will become soon your favorite practice.

I often recommend it now. Don't take your mind too seriously, which means thought. Whatever thoughts come, another thought, a perspective.

The food is good. The food is bad. It's not as good as it was there.

Better than there. It's a perspective. This person looks more spiritual than me.

He is not spiritual at all. Why, he shouldn't even be here. Look.

What's he doing here? Another thought. It wants to be taken seriously, but it's not.

So that's a very nice practice, not taking your mind that seriously. It's a very light practice. And you start to laugh a lot.

When you laugh at your mind, that means enlightenment is happening. In some ways I have encapsulated all our practices already tonight here, so if you want to leave early, pressing business somewhere, a moment of stillness, thank you. I recommend you just stay for just maybe a few minutes in this field.

Remember to go into sleep, sensing your inner body as you lie on your bed. Maybe keep words to a minimum for the rest of the evening. Also reading.

Don't escape into a book. There's no TV here, so you can't escape into that. The weather is ideal, of course, for a retreat.

In some Buddhist countries where they have rainy seasons, in Southeast Asia, they go on a rains retreat every year, called the rains. Not much else to do anyway. The simplicity of the moment of the now, this moment, the sound of the rain, the sense of presence or aliveness within and without stillness.

A strange characteristic of the now is that it has a sacredness to it. A sacredness that's, of course, the essence of who you are, because you and the field of now are inseparable. You don't know anything of it, but the now is obscured to you.

Any now, even the now of death, somebody dies close to you, there's a sacredness when your attention moves into the field of now. As it does so, aliveness rises throughout your entire being, and there's an openness. And then you notice there's an essence to the now that's sacred, and I don't want to explain or further define what that is, because you know what sacred is.

It's not separate from who you are. The mind may not know what it is and may demand further explanations. You can know it at this moment, you can know at first hand directly without need for further analysis or evidence or concepts that there is an essence to the now that's sacred.

Not just this now, the now, it doesn't matter what form the now takes, it's not just sacred. It's sacred here, it feels perhaps more sacred than downtown, wherever. But if you went to that downtown, and you could enter the now totally there in the midst of the noise and the traffic and the fumes, because you may not be able to, there's no silence externally, so you cannot enter the now through silence.

You enter the now downtown through a complete yes to that now. And then there's an underlying stillness within you, noise all around, and the alertness is there too, and there's nothing inside that demands that this should be different. Does that mean you're not going to change the world?

No, that's how you change the world. Because the externalized downtown and the traffic noise is an externalization of the human mind and its noise. It's mind made.

All the machinery is mind made. That's okay. As humans live in a different state of consciousness and dwell in the depth that is beyond mind, the world that they create will reflect that, just as the world that they created in the past few hundred or thousand years reflects an inner state.

And that becomes human history, the madness of it. It's continuously a new chapter. New chapters are being added, even now, continuously to the madness of that human history.

Externalization of an inner state, collective inner state. It's always easy to see the mad people are out there, but the core of madness is identification with mental noise and mind and mental images of me. And then you start fighting others to strengthen your identity.

So one could say, if you're comfortable with that word, I don't use it very often, you can only find God in this moment. God meaning the essence, the one life, the one consciousness out of which the many forms of life are born. Ultimately, of course, yourself, the essence of who you are is not separate from the essence of the universe.

So you can only know yourself deeply beyond mental constructs as you enter the field of now. And you can test it for yourself just to find out, let's see if this now is also sacred. But surely not this one.

But then you have to, if it seems it's impossible for this now, surely it cannot be sacred. Remember one little thing, say yes to this now that appears to surely not this now sacred and don't resist it. And immediately the resisting entity, you go beyond the resisting entity, which is the mind made self, which lives in and through resistance to the suchness of this moment.

And the depth reveals itself and that depth is sacred. That is the depth of now beyond what happens in the now. Those are forms that come and go.

The depth of now is the depth of your very being, is pure consciousness. And that is, how can that not be there? It's always there, except when you are in reactivity to the form that this now takes.

Then your own form identity gets strengthened and contracts even more. And then you look on everything as a little form identity and you look on everything through the eyes of and from the perspective of fear and desire. The form wants to add certain things to make itself bigger and fears other things that might diminish it.

Nothing else really this week here is your practice except re-entering the now whenever you lost it. Or in other words, it has become obscured to you. What happens when you lose that?

You don't lose it, it becomes obscured, but it is as if you had lost the now. You become identified with mental constructs and a conceptualized sense of self. Your whole life situation obscures the aliveness, the vitality, the power that is in the now.

It's here now. And you carry the burden of a mental construct and identity built on a mental construct and me, which is my life situation with the past and all the problems and the continuity of this problematic past in a problematic future. And the now is totally obscured by the mental construct that you carry, the burden of that.

And so you sit and you are totally absorbed by your life situation by the conceptualized mental identity, a me. And you miss that which has enormous power even to deal with all the problems that you think you have and are inseparable from who you are. That's what the belief is.

The now would immediately deal with them and reveal the fictitious and illusory nature of many of them. If they are real problems, they are a challenge that is in your life now. So it's the little thing is removing in any situation that you find yourself in, find the simplicity of that situation rather than carry the burden of past and future.

Here you are sitting on a bus going to an appointment with your attorney to declare bankruptcy. One possible situation. People encounter situations like that in their life.

Now that moment could be if you are, your identity is in a mental construct, a me, and your life at that moment has come to an end. It's, I can't face this. Years of work, all for nothing, and my wife has left me.

On top of all that, a fictitious situation, but it happens. The stories that go through your head, what you are telling yourself about your life, how dreadful it is, and you're, of course, surely not going to make it now. You might as well end it.

Fear, loathing, self-loathing, and what is the situation when you remove the mental construct that you carry? You're sitting on a bus. The seat is soft.

Breathing is happening. You're looking out of the window. There go trees go past.

There's the sky, and the body is alive too. It's a great aliveness, energy field. There's an energy field of presence perceiving through that stillness that is presence the world as it goes past, the world of form, and the bus is moving, and this moment is good.

Not because you're convincing yourself mentally it really, it's good. It's because you step out of the mental judgments, and you know the goodness of this moment, but it's more than the, the appearance is quite harmless without the story. Here's a body sitting in a seat, and perceiving the traffic or the trees, and it's not, it's neither bad nor good.

It's just a simple situation, and you, but your complete yes to that takes you even deeper to a deep sense of aliveness that has nothing to do with what stage your, your conceptualized identity in the head is at, up or down. And that, so it frees you, it's freedom from being trapped and deriving your sense of self from a life situation, which is a conceptualized image, mental image thing in me that needs to make it. Sometimes thinks it can make it, or sometimes think it has made it, and then didn't.

Or here you are, sitting, a slightly softer seat, in your own big car, driving to an appointment with the attorney to sign another million billion dollar deal. The difference is the seat is a little softer, there's a bit more air coming through, the same things are going past the window, but you can derive some, you can tell yourself that story in your head, I have made it. Another billion dollar deal is going to be signed.

And after a little while you find, when it's your fifth billion dollar deal, that, that story that you tell yourself in your head about who you are, becomes a bit stale. And then you think, well, maybe I should try another car, this one. Or try another wife.

Sooner or later, the conceptualized identity is not satisfying. And the point comes when it becomes very unsatisfying, to live in and through telling yourself a story of who you are, and getting others to confirm it, that you are right, so you get the recognition and the status. Yes.

And that becomes stale too. Because you still don't know, you live through a mental construct. And you miss that.

So both, let's see these two men, maybe it's the same man at different times, going to an appointment, one on a bus has lost everything, one in a big car has just gained everything. Both ultimately will encounter that situation is unsatisfactory. It is perhaps more, who knows who is going to, who will step out of a conceptualized identity first, or sooner.

The one who has lost everything, or the one who has gained everything, and doesn't find it fulfilling anymore. Because he can't find himself, no matter what stories he tells himself, in the head, there's still fear. There's still restlessness, discontent, and suffering, in one form or another.

So it is vital, no matter what your life situation is, to know how to step out of identification with that, and experience at first hand, the now. And it's deeper than an experience. The experience is the form that the now takes.

What is beyond experience is the depths of now. The stillness underneath the forms through which you perceive the forms. And this is important to do it here, because as you walk about here, in between our gatherings here, you walk from one building to another, or you walk into the hot tub, and out of the hot tub, and to the dining hall.

Sometimes you will be walking as that mental construct, thinking, and then you ask yourself, well, this situation doesn't really, why am I here? The now rarely fits into the mental construct. Or you can walk as a field of alive, alert presence.

And they become very simple, of course, in that state. But also intelligent. It's just this moment, walking, moving, sitting, breathing.

And so that is a dimension, that is a dimension of depths that now becomes revealed. The moment itself may seem not important enough. It doesn't contain that much.

There's no, the externals of any moment are not that, they're nice forms sometimes, but nothing lasts for that long. Stepping out of the mental concepts of who you think you are into now, when you no longer know who you are, and yet you do now, but not through concepts. And then, can one live in that way, that you spend more time in that vital aliveness, or can you only practice this on retreats?

Is it possible to live like that in a mind-dominated world out there? Is it possible to be in the now as you're driving to an appointment with your attorney, either to pick up a $10 million check or declare bankruptcy? Or is there too much stress for you?

And of course it is possible in any moment to be in the moment, without demanding that this moment should be different. And then some, a greater power begins to operate through you. That's the power of the unconditioned consciousness.

So that is your practice here. And recognize when you lose yourself in identification with life's situation and a sense of self derived from a conceptualized mental construct. And you have to then tell yourself that story to remind yourself who you are.

Problems, oh yeah, and next week, and then that. Now here, you've seen how important it is. This is not just, it's not a, it goes far beyond the personal to step out of a narrow personalized sense of self.

It's a huge transformation that happens in human consciousness. It's not a, you don't do it for yourself. Human consciousness, there's great urgency now for that transformation.

Not urgency in the sense of we need to get there as soon as we have, urgency in the sense of intensity. There's great, the intensity with which presence arises in many human beings now, not yet the majority on the planet, they need more suffering. That's their spiritual teacher.

Just as suffering has been your spiritual teacher for some years, and mine, that was my greatest teacher. Really the only teacher I had that took me to liberation was suffering.

So many humans still have suffering as their teacher.

In others, in whom there is openness, presence is already arising. And with more and more intensity, because humankind would not survive for that long if human consciousness remained unchanged. So as you continuously get drawn back into that, you step, when you notice it, you notice it as restlessness, unease, anxiety, fear, past, future, judgment in the mind with which you identify, discontent, an absence rather than a presence.

Then you notice it, and you step back into now. I recommend three little things that can help you step back into now as in these days, and at any time. One I mentioned last night, sense perceptions.

Become more acutely aware of seeing, the main sense perceptions are for seeing and hearing. Become more alert to what you see, because most humans are not at all alert to their sense perception, because most of their attention is in thought. Sense perceptions are peripheral to thought, sometimes totally obscured by thought.

They don't even know where they are. There's so much in their mind. Or you could talk to them and they don't even hear you.

What did you say? Oh, I wasn't, I was thinking. Where are we?

Where am I? How did I get here? I don't know, I've been thinking.

So you step out by bringing attention to sense perceptions, and this is particularly helpful in nature. It's beautiful to do that, but you could do it anywhere. And there's an alertness.

That alertness is the arising of presence, and thought will slow down, because attention to sense perceptions does not mean attention to the ways in which you label sense perceptions. It means direct attention to sense perceptions. Direct seeing, not the intermediary of mind through which you see and say, oh, what a pretty white flower.

What's it called? I can't remember. Oh, yes, carnation.

My mother used to grow them in her garden. Maybe I should have them in my garden, too. They would look nice.

I wonder if there are other colors available in my local shop. There was perhaps half a second in which you saw it, and then mind came in. So to stay, this is one way of stepping out, bringing attention to sense perceptions.

Hearing, listening. If you're in a hot tub, you can sense, feel. The body will come to that.

And so that requires a certain alertness, and that is one way of stepping out of thought.

Alertness arises the moment you become, and then you stay with something for just a little while. Then you look around in the state of alertness, and you listen, perhaps as a sound of rain, or the river, or other sounds.

You listen. You watch. And soon you notice, you get a sense of beyond that which you see or listen to, there's the field of alertness, still alert presence.

And that which you see, or that which you listen to, beautiful as it may be, becomes almost secondary, in fact, becomes secondary to the alert presence through which you see it, through which you hear it. And that's why you could go, when you've done it here in nature, the alert presence can arise in the middle of L.A. or New York, in the middle of the city, in the middle of external noise, and its stillness. You're beginning to find yourself there.

You're touching a depth that is beyond the person, beyond the person. So, here, whenever you lose yourself in mind, you notice it because in some form some suffering will come in, even if it's just minor suffering, unease, boredom. Boredom is a minor form of suffering.

What's next? Oh, another day here, it's raining. Nothing interesting to do except the hot tub, but I can't go there all the time.

What are we going to do tonight? Oh, nothing. Oh, I wonder.

And then you get out your calendar and count, okay, three more days. It's a minor form of suffering, not usually recognized as suffering. Just as before, you looked at your calendar and you said, three more weeks to the retreat.

And when you notice it, alert. Come back into now. How?

Now, at that moment when you know you lost yourself in mind, there will be a little voice that says, no, can't do it now. It's too much going on in my head. I just can't do it.

I know he's talking about these things, but I just, I really can't do it now. That voice is thought wanting to continue. And you don't need to believe that it says, oh, I can't do it.

When you hear the voice that says, I can't do it now, not now. I don't want the now now. Maybe later.

At that moment you can see, that's the thought, and then you do it anyway. Alert. And you watch.

Oh, step out of mind. Okay. So that's sense perceptions.

We'll be speaking about this continuously. And another little device for stepping out of thought, it's been used for thousands of years in spiritual practices. Am I breathing?

And the moment you know you're breathing, you're in the now. To sense yourself breathing, the inflow and outflow of breath, you're in the now. It takes you into the now.

That becomes, so one anchor for now is sense perception. Sense perceptions. Another anchor for now is breathing, breath awareness.

And that is a beautiful thing, to become friendly with your breath. There's a universal rhythm there of arising, flowering, fulfillment, and subsiding and dying. The in-breath is like birth.

Maturity is the end of the in-breath, and then you go into, towards death as you begin to breathe out. The end of the out-breath, each end of the out-breath is a little death. So you can follow the breath with your attention.

It moves in, and out. That's always there. And it takes you into now.

The Buddha is reported to have said that if you can observe your breathing for one hour, or something, I don't know if they had hours then, but some time measurement equivalent probably to an hour. If you can observe your breath for one hour, you will be liberated forever. If you can be present with your breath for one hour, but you don't need to do that.

Just this one breath. If you miss one breath, you have to start all over again. The hour starts always, if you miss one breath in the 59th minute, you start again.

Not long ago, or I don't know when, somebody showed me, it was some spiritual organization that offered a program of so many courses you could take. You could go to a week-long conference, and every day, or every two hours, you could book a different course of this and that. All kinds of practices, ancient and modern, a huge, what's that expression, smorgasbord of stuff that you can pick and choose from here and there, and it looked fascinating.

Somebody showed it to me and said, which one should I choose? They said, this one week thing, or two week thing, I can choose, there's so many, can you advise me? I said, if you spend that time observing your breath, that will be more useful.

And so many things, make so many things. If you can stay with one thing, that's fine, but eventually it'll take you to presence. If there's any reality in any practice, eventually, sooner or later, hopefully sooner, it will take you to this, to presence, the arising of presence, whether it's body work, or whatever practice, even counseling, if you go to counseling, eventually, if it works, there is presence, the counselor is there in a state of open alert attention, and a field of presence arises, and then it begins to work. Sometimes presence is hidden underneath a certain practice, and the essence of the practice is presence. And in a way here, we address presence very directly, without going, I love all those many practices, they are beautiful, because the essence is there.

But it happens that here, we go there very directly, even without movement, there's the essence of presence when you learn Tai Chi, these beautiful, slow movements. Of course, you cannot be good at Tai Chi if you're not present. If you're thinking beforehand, when your arm is here, that it's traveling to this point, and you're already there while the arm is still here, you're in the future while the arm is still in the present, you're not good at Tai Chi.

You're trying to get somewhere, to the end of that movement. To be a master at Tai Chi, and I don't know anything about Tai Chi, I just know presence, is to be there at every stage of the movement, to be at no stage of this movement of the arm, is a means to getting to the next point. The moment is not a means to an end, a future end, which is the mind condition, that reduces every moment to a means to an end of getting to the next moment.

And there's the movement of the hand, and your attention is there at every point, every moment, now, now. And so presence arises when you watch a Tai Chi master, you sense that there's a power there, there's a presence there, and it arises through that movement. And of course, how did it all start?

Did somebody think that up, all these movements? They think, okay, now we're going to design body movements. Did they form a committee, two, three thousand years ago in China, and got together and said, let's design body movements that bring about presence.

Okay. Nobody knows how Tai Chi started. I know that it started as spontaneous movement by somebody in presence, dwelling in presence, and suddenly the body started to move as a joyous expression of that inner state.

The body went into spontaneous, very slow dance, and some people around were amazed and looked at it and could feel something, and then a little later that person did it again. And more people came and started watching, and it felt good to be around that field of presence. And a little while later, somebody came with a piece of paper, whatever they had to write on at the time, and started taking notes.

We must learn this. This is good. Let's write down what he's doing now.

He's lifting his left arm. And just before it goes up completely, the right foot goes up. Let's write it down.

And now the whole body starts to move. Write it down. So gradually it became a system.

Originally it originated as spontaneous movement, as a joyous expression of presence. Then it became a system. But the strange way, the strange thing is, even as a system, you start at the other end, rather than arising from within as an expression of presence, you start by moving.

It still works. So even the movement, it's no longer the original spontaneous beauty of it, but perhaps with master, spontaneity does come in. I don't know enough about Tai Chi.

So that's a practice. There are many practices, and the essence of it, if you look, you will find presence arises through it. So breath.

Observe your breath. Feel your breath. Feel yourself breathing.

Slow. And breathing is not interesting, just as our retreat is not interesting to the mind. So you go beyond interesting or not interesting.

Breathing is boring to the mind. It wouldn't want to stay with that for very long. Well, I've been observing now my breath for one minute.

What now? And then, OK, I'll do another minute. So also you can pay attention to the end of the in-breath and the end of the out-breath.

There's always a point of cessation there. The end of the out-breath before the end of the out-breath is the death. A deep stillness there.

And you breathe in. There's also a point of cessation as you stop breathing in before starting to breathe out again. You can also bring the two practices together that I just described.

Attention to sense perceptions and at the same time, attention to your breathing. When we go more into silence here and even have silent meals very soon, that will be very helpful to be with your breathing as you sit there and eat and look at other people and feel yourself breathing. And you will notice when you feel yourself breathing, you can actually look at things without needing to label them.

And you do that, when you look upon a human being in that way, that's the beginning of love, true love. Very different from what the ego, it doesn't look like love from the ego point of view. But the beginning of true love is simply to look upon another human being without any thought, label, judgment.

You allow that person to be totally in that clear space of presence. And you suddenly know that person beyond form, a deeper knowing to which knowledge of form would add nothing to the depth of that knowing. I sometimes meet people only for 10 seconds, perhaps in a hug.

Look, we meet, we talk, we hug, we look at each other, and there's a hug. With very large gatherings, I can't hug anymore. It takes hours to hug 500 people.

But it's beautiful, there's a brief moment of, and I know the depth of that being, just as I know myself, to which if I ask, what do you do for a living, no knowledge on that level could add anything to it. If you can bring this state that is arising from within you here into your human interactions, as you bring it into your perception of nature, which is easier to bring it in there than into human interactions, but it is vital then as presence, enough presence is in you, you can bring it into human interactions. And look upon another human being in the same way that you look upon a flower in a state of alert attention or spaciousness.

And when you look, you sense the spaciousness, you sense the alert, the field of attention as your reality and as the other person's reality, and there you meet. Otherwise, you only meet through mind. So that is vital, and you change the world very quickly in that way, through bringing in that, because the good news is, it spreads, presence transmits itself.

It's not just a feeling, it is recognized by others, it is loved by others who temporarily might love you as the form and think you are very special, so they might be drawn to you as the form, but what they love is they can be more fully themselves when they're close to you. Why? Because there's a spacious presence when they enter that field.

It feels good to be in that field, and then it is, it awakens from within. It only requires the slightest opening in another human being. Many humans have heavy layers of mental noise covering up the unconditioned consciousness, the depth of who they are underneath that.

But in quite a few humans, there is now already a crack has appeared in the density, and all it requires is a little opening and something within will respond to presence and recognize presence, even though they may not know what it is. And there may still be, there are other humans whose emotional, mental emotional layers are too dense, and even when they are in the presence of the Buddha, they could live with the Buddha for a year and nothing would happen. So this is vital to bring it also into, not just, really when you interact with humans, you don't very often get a chance in normal everyday life to be still together.

You can't go to the office and say, unless you're in a very enlightened office, and say, okay, let's be still together for a moment. You don't need to do that even. Bring the stillness into the listening.

Whenever you listen, be the alert field of attention that is listening, not the person that is listening and at the same time thinking and judging and thinking what I'm going to say next, preparing your next sentence or preparing your argument or disagreeing in the mind. Listen. Just listen in that field of open attention.

And you can do it here. Listen, somebody else is speaking. It's just the listening.

Just as you listen to the sounds of nature, you listen to the sounds of the human voice. And if necessary, you may have to observe your breathing while you listen, because otherwise the mind may get drawn into noise. So we have as anchors for presence, alertness to sense perceptions.

We have observing your breathing, which requires the same alertness, the same wakefulness. And you'll notice the moment you get drawn back into mind, you lose the breath. The moment you're aware of breath again, the mind stops.

At this moment, there's the sound of the rain and there's your breathing. From the point of view of the mind, that is certainly not interesting, at least not for long. And yet if you stay with that, you go beyond interesting or not interesting to a greater depth of intense aliveness and sacredness of this moment.

This moment, you're breathing and you're listening to the rain. It's enough. Do you need more?

What for? What can you add to this? You're breathing and you're listening to the rain.

And there's something else. And that you cannot define through words, but I call it the underlying presence. That's where the sacredness resides.

The sacredness isn't as such in the sound of the rain. It's deeper than that. The sound happens within that sacred space of now.

Your breathing happens within the sacred space of now. So it has been said, there's no spot where God is not, which of course means there's no now where God is not. There's no physical place where God is not, because whenever you go there, it's now.

So to have access to that dimension, regardless of your life situation, regardless of whether next week you are going to declare bankruptcy or pick up a $10 million check, regardless of even whether your body is going to live for another 50 years or another six months, regardless of gain or loss, up or down, you have access to that, you have access to that now, not before something happens or after something has happened. And it is not the case that you are not facing your life situation when you pay attention to this one thing, the only thing that matters in your life.

The mind tells you, you're not dealing with it. You're not dealing with all your things. That is dealing with it.

And you will find that even your life situation, as it unfolds in the dimension of time, on the surface of things, there's time, you will find incredible changes happening there too, because you now have access to that dimension of depth. And that shines through the externals of your life situation. The depths that you now know yourself to be, when I say you have access to it, it's not quite right, the depths that you are, then shines through even your life situation.

Somehow there's a light that shines through. What does that mean when I say that? It means that this man who is traveling on a bus to an appointment with his attorney to declare bankruptcy has access to that, and then he steps into the attorney's office and everything happens with ease.

He signs a few papers. He goes away on another bus. Then he goes back home.

Perhaps his mansion is lost. He goes to a little room. And there he sits, looks out of the window, breathes, and there's intense aliveness, intense presence, great goodness to this moment.

And then out of that action arises. He suddenly finds himself getting up or going to the phone, taking a step, walking from here to there, perhaps getting a job. And the next day he's flipping hamburgers.

Or he's working in a restaurant as a waiter. Can I help you? What would you like?

And his present. And two weeks later one of the customers is so overcome by the waiter's presence that he offers him a job as financial administrator. Now wait for the next installment.

Helpful things come in when there's presence. I experienced that in my life, and I was amazed by it when I spent some time on park benches and I had lost interest in future because presence was so blissfully alive that no future moment could possibly be better. So I don't recommend that to you, but it happened.

And yet miraculously things came. The last minute somebody would offer me money, offer me a place to stay for a few days, offer me a part-time job once or twice. Always last minute a helpful factor comes in, and that came to somebody who didn't even move, and I don't advocate that.

I didn't have anybody to tell me that yes, you can be in the state of presence, but you can still move and do things. And you move beautifully and what you do in that state is much more powerful than what you do when you need the end result to fulfill you as a personal me. What if it doesn't work out?

There's a fear and that motivates you then. And even when you get what you want, you'll be just as miserable. So there's when you access that dimension, that then shines through even the external circumstances of your life.

It's not that you completely dismiss the external circumstances irrelevant, and that has been done in spiritual life too by practitioners. There were people in medieval times in Europe, and even now in India and certain countries who totally reject the external world, the phenomenal universe, because it's all illusion, I want nothing to do with it. And so they go, they stay in a cave or somewhere and don't move for years, or only walk a few steps or some, and reject all that as illusion.

You could do that, but that's not quite, there is still, there's something, there's a no somewhere there. Include the phenomenal universe, embrace it, knowing full well that nothing out there as such is going to fulfill you, not for long. And simply dropping the demand that the world should fulfill you, that you have a right to be fulfilled by circumstances, situations, places, or people.

How frustrating to move through life continuously demanding that circumstances, situations, places, or people should fulfill you. And they don't, except for brief moments, and realizing that no matter where you go and who you meet, ultimately that in itself is not going to fulfill you. That relationship may be beautiful, but in itself is, if the deeper dimension of a being is not accessed, the relationship in itself will not fulfill you.

Or that wonderful place that you go to, that tropical island, if the dimension of depth has not been found and accessed within yourself, the tropical island is not going to fulfill you. For a little while it feels good, and after a few weeks you get extremely bored and restless. Is that all?

And it's sunny every day, can't stand it anymore. Circumstances, whatever it is, and you can, it's wonderful to see it, and when you see it, you don't demand that these things should fulfill you. They simply are as they are.

And so there's the, you're fulfilled already. And then the circumstances, situations, places, and people are quite pleasant, almost fulfilling. But you're fulfilled already.

Only because you're fulfilled already do you now see places, circumstances, and people as fulfilling. It doesn't matter where you're fulfilled here, whether it's rainy or sunny, it's nice, very nice, beautiful. And in the middle of a big city, it's okay.

You might not choose to spend 10 hours in meditation in the middle of the traffic, or you might, just because you enjoy it, or you might choose to live in the country. But while you're in the city, it's fine. So if you demand that, if you demand it that this situation here should fulfill you, and provide totally satisfying experience, that would take you into suffering.

First, no place does that. Or if it did it, it would come to an end, and then you would go, oh my God, it's gone. Are you still breathing?

Yes. Is it still the now? Yes.

And another anchor for presence, of course, is the inner body, to sense the aliveness. And the breath can take you into the inner body. Feel, sense, there's the outer body, you can touch it.

That already takes you a little bit out of mind, just touching the body, your body or somebody else's body, because it brings you to direct perception, just as looking, listening. And there's touching, you can touch, there's the outer body. Even that touch takes you a little bit, when you pay complete attention to the touch, takes you out of mind, out of thought, just this, just that.

But now we go deeper, there's an indwelling aliveness throughout the body, that you cannot sense, you cannot feel, when your attention is only in thought, in the head. It's in your feet, it's in your hands, it's in your legs, your arms, subtle, but it's there. It's so, it's beautifully alive.

And you can feel that in the background, even as you sit here with your eyes open, hearing, listening, you sense the background of aliveness. You dwell in there. You might even feel you're breathing at the same time, because these practices are not separate from each other.

Because we are bringing them together here, you're looking, sense perception, sense your breathing, and the depths of aliveness in your body, and you rest in that. And suddenly, there are no more problems. In that state of consciousness, there is no room for problems.

And you don't need them anymore to add to your serious identity, a heavy identity. Of course, next week you may encounter challenges, but only in the now, it'll be the now. And you face them in the now.

Not in a reactive way anymore, through mental reactivity, but with the depths of who you are, you face the now, and the challenge of the now. So the challenge doesn't turn into a problem. Problem means there's an identity, mentally constructed identity around a perceived challenge.

Or the projection of what might become a challenge, fiction. If there's a true challenge, it will heighten your sense of presence. Or if you face death as the ultimate challenge, you will die in blissful presence.

The flowering has happened. The flowering of consciousness has happened. When did it happen?

Well, maybe not in some people, it happens a few minutes before they die. It doesn't matter. Or it happens now, here, as you die psychologically to the mind made self.

The flowering of consciousness happens here. It's a joyous death. Of course, we will have time this week for questions, if they arise, questions that are vital and alive.

We are also going to move into, slowly, into more silence, even as we move about here. Slowly. I recommend we start this afternoon, after lunch, when you walk out of the dining hall, to enter a period of noble silence, as the Buddha called it, until the beginning of dinner.

Of course, we'll meet here. I may be talking, who knows. But the rest of the afternoon we'll spend in silence.

Tomorrow we'll perhaps extend the silence a little bit, even to one or two mealtimes, into the night, and so on, being with others in silence at first, unless you're an old hat at retreats, and maybe have been to many retreats already that are far more demanding in terms of discipline and structure than this one. If you haven't been to many or any retreats, to be in silence with a group of people may seem disconcerting at first, just like stepping into an elevator and there are two people in the elevator, and it's a long way down or up, and you wonder you should be saying something. There's an unease when you're facing another human being in complete silence.

So usually one person can't stand it anymore after half a minute in the elevator and somebody says something about the weather or whatever. And then you become, suddenly an ease comes, you can be at ease without the need to speak, you can connect silently, you can practice it in an elevator, but you'll be practicing perhaps tomorrow here too, just being there. No need, or should be, that unease goes with silence.

And of course you've met many people, I'm sure everyone knows some, who can't tolerate a moment of silence, they need to talk, almost everybody in a conversation. And again, that will change now in you, not that you make another person feel uncomfortable, but you can relax into stillness. One more little hint to practice here.

While there's not silence, you may be talking to someone, speaking. Have some awareness if possible of, as you speak, of the mindstream and the energy that is behind the words that come out of your mouth. Be aware of how once there is a mindstream, the mindstream does not want to come to an end, it wants to grow further.

So how in a conversation sometimes one thing leads to another, somebody's talking, and then after 15 minutes they say, oh how did I get to this? We started off from there, and now how did I get from our starting point to this? It was a proliferation of mind, a mindstream.

So when you speak, you express an opinion, just an opinion of course, not the ultimate truth. You express an opinion, come to the end of the mindstream, express it, let it finish. Step back into stillness.

After you've said what you have to say, step back into stillness. Otherwise the mindstream will drag you along. So always speaking and stepping back.

And then you're listening or just being. It's so easy to get caught in mindstreams, enormous momentum behind it. And then once you're identified with it, God, the momentum that's behind it then because it's your very sense of self is in it now.

And the force behind your arguments, the force behind your opinions is now enormous because your sense of self is invested in it. And of course you believe you're talking the absolute truth. You believe that one statement can encapsulate the truth about the universe, or another human being, or a place, or a situation.

And you're completely in that. And should anybody dare to challenge it, you'll be in it even more strongly. That's identified with mindstreams.

So stepping. Sometimes people ask me some very intelligent questions. I make certain statements.

I might say, this is the play of form. The universe is the play of form. This is not the ultimate truth.

And somebody says, how do you know it's a play of form? It could be something completely different. I'm sure it is.

It's many things. How could one statement encapsulate the totality? One little fragment, one little thought, a few sounds coming out of your mouth could encapsulate the totality.

Just a little. We are not here, fortunately, this is not philosophy, so we are not here to explain the universe. And all statements are just little helpful pointers towards a state of consciousness in which you no longer demand to know what cannot be known on the level of mind through thought.

And you realize the relativity of all thought. Breathing, sitting, being here in the body, alert. So after lunch, I recommend noble silence.

Now of course, there's no guarantee that there will be noble silence in your head. Noble silence externally. The head is another matter.

If there's no noble silence in your head, don't demand that there should be noble silence in your head, and there isn't. That creates just more mental noise. Just realize that it's not that serious.

No thought is that serious. It doesn't matter that much. Mental noise?

Okay. And occasionally you may find yourself wanting suddenly to focus on breath, on sense perception. Then you get taken over again by mental noise.

For a moment you can't get out. At least it's telling you that you can't, and very often you can. Stage for just maybe two or three minutes in the field, or however long you want to be here in that field, with the empty chair, just as good as with somebody sitting on it.

Better, in fact. Thank you. What a wonderful time for silent retreat.

Fall or autumn is like the out-breath. Nature is breathing out, and the out-breath can take you deep into death, but only the death of forms. All the leaves that look so beautiful and wonderful, their colors, they're all dying in this great beauty there.

And if you walk through a forest and you see a very large part of the aliveness of the forest is forms that are undergoing death. There's no separation between life and death. When you go through an ancient forest, there are many, many things, fallen trees, leaves, branches, dying, and yet that gives life to the forest.

That makes up its aliveness. So this autumn is a beautiful time, very conducive to going beyond form, because many natural forms in this northern climate at the onset of winter, many natural forms undergo dissolution. Nothing really dies.

But it is, it can be compared to the out-breath. And if you really pay attention, when you pay attention to your breathing, you really pay attention to the out-breath and follow it with your attention to the end, and there's that point at the end that is deeply peaceful and alive. And that's the aliveness that is in death, because every out-breath is a mini-death.

So the amazing thing is, if you go into death consciously, that's immediately the realization that there is no death. And then that is what Jesus called eternal life, which is the life beyond form, which is your essence. So nature is breathing out right now.

And that can take you very deep. You can almost say that you are breathing out. You can sense that out-breath all around you.

And the mind calls it bad weather. And compares it to some other day when it was sunny, or some other place where it is sunny now. And if it were only that, and then it continues complaining, that leads to another complaint, and another.

And you miss all that. Nobody has put forward this theory, but I'll do it. Relatively few people have become liberated from mind and mind forms in God.

And that is good weather. Now of course we can extend good weather, what that means. Yes, weather in the conventional sense of the word, but also good weather and bad weather, metaphorically speaking, as your life situation.

Because as you go through life, you also enter periods of bad weather. The mind calls it that. And those are the times when some exhalation happens in your life.

Something dissolves. Something leaves you. Some kind of death.

Something happens. And here the mind jumps in and says, bad, bad. Because the mind is form.

Thought forms make up the mind. It cannot look beyond form. So anything that doesn't look good on the level of form, the mind calls bad.

So the mind, and with it, the mind-identified entity, the me, is afraid of that badness, which it calls bad. The reality is far faster. In the reality, the distinction good-bad isn't there.

You may remember I quoted something from a Shakespeare play. Nothing is either good or bad, but thinking makes it so. Thought makes it so.

In itself it is not. Hundreds of years ago he wrote that. He had never read any Buddhism.

Hadn't reached England yet. And then we have an interesting thing, good or bad, at the beginning of the Bible. What happened when they lost Eden, which I'm told the original meaning of the Garden of Eden is the place of joy.

They ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, good and bad. They ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and bad. Thought started coming in.

And suddenly there was good and bad. It had to come in. It was necessary.

But it itself wasn't bad either. And then a long, long time passed until humans became completely lost in thought and derived their identity exclusively from thought, no longer from the deeper level of being. And that also is only bad from one particular perspective, not from a higher perspective of the totality.

It is an evolutionary journey. We are moving out of thought now. It was an interesting journey.

And so when you relinquish good and bad, calling it, then you embrace both polarities. And even that takes you out of thought. Simply embracing different, seemingly opposite perspectives takes you out of thought.

And so here we see spring isn't good and fall is bad. It's an absurd separation that makes you lose the place of joy, the garden of Eden. And then there's a strange saying in the Bible, and there's another tree.

And God said they mustn't eat of that one. I don't think he said that or she said that. The tree of life.

So humans have been eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and bad for a long, long time. And now it's time to eat of the tree of life, the life beyond form, the one life that you are. And when you contemplate the exhalation of nature or any other exhalation in your life, whether it's the actual exhalation as your outgoing breath or the exhalation of loss in your life or dissolution of something, death, one form or another, and let it be, face it in a state of open acceptance, it takes you into deep peace and aliveness.

And the mind has come to a stop. Sometimes through disaster it comes to a stop. This is a dental death, nature for very gentle.

And that's why it's so important to be out there or anywhere in here, but let's talk about nature, in a state of non-interpretation, labeling, the perception, clear, unadulterated perception, unadulterated perception. Untainted by thought as you contemplate a tree or a flower or the totality of your surroundings, trees, pool, steaming water, steam rising. You can pay attention to individual forms.

You can also pay attention to the entire field when you walk around, I don't mean a literal field, the entire spaciousness, the whole of a forest or the space, the natural space here. One could say you pay attention to the space around things and inner space arises, spaciousness, which is a state of no thought. And thoughts will come in occasionally, but you don't attach importance to them.

So you continue to be aware of, as you go into nature, clear perception. And as we're more and more going to have silent meals, let your sense perception flow into the taste, taste the food. Just as you look at a flower, you taste the food, you eat in awareness, and then there's the food, and there's the awareness in which it happens.

The taste occurs as an experience. And the awareness is you, the sense of presence. And then, and this is a very important practice, especially here, and then it'll become, it's no longer a practice, it'll become a normal, natural way of doing things.

Take the clear awareness into little doings, short ones at first, very short doings. For example, you open a door to go through. You walk through and you close the door behind you.

Can you be so present that you're totally there in those movements? There's a field of attention in which those movements happen. And then you take on and put off your shoes.

Now usually, what kind of action is that for most people? A means to an end. When you put on your shoes, you want to get them on as quickly as possible, and you're probably mentally somewhere else, the next step ahead, or 10 steps ahead.

And the other way around, when you want to take them off, you want to have them off already. The action is a means to an end. You want the end result.

That's the mind. And this is a tiny, tiny example, but your whole life consists primarily of things like that. If you look at your everyday life, it is an accumulation of such seemingly insignificant actions.

And the mind, of course, is dwelling on big problems, in the meantime, you're putting on your shoes and taking off your shoes, getting up and sitting down, going from here to there. That's the reality, and you're not there. Now to the mind, that reality is not fulfilling enough, because all these are so insignificant, I don't want to bother taking off and putting on my shoes.

I want to be elsewhere, more fulfilling. So the mind takes you elsewhere, more fulfilling. It won't be here.

It's a projected world, a conceptual world. And your search for fulfillment creates many problems, because you haven't found it yet. But it is amazing to realize that your whole life consists of little actions, mostly, that the mind would rather not be performing, because they're not important enough.

It wants to be somewhere else. So now, of course, it is true that the mind, it is true that none of these little actions, really, is it important to open a door and shut a door? Is it taking off, putting on shoes, pouring tea or coffee, or peeling a banana, or getting into the car, and driving, getting out of the car, and picking up the phone, dial a number?

It's life, all little things. And everything when your mind dominated is a means towards getting away from now. And when you observe how people perform action, you can see it.

They don't really want to be doing it, because they don't want to be here. But it's useful only to the extent that it takes them to the next moment. And they're almost looking there in, where is the next moment?

And so the action is performed here. The projection is there. And there never comes.

And in the meantime, they go through the motions of everyday life and everyday living. And yes, that's called life. That's life.

And then after years of that, of course, there comes an emptiness. And you don't even want to get up anymore in the morning, because what for? Now what happens when you shift and actually pay attention to something seemingly unimportant and non-fulfilling?

That is a shift that happens inside you. One thing that happens, the action that you perform, putting on your shoes, opening the door, and you can observe it in yourself or in someone else who is present, has a completely different quality to it. It's exactly the same action that's being performed, putting on your shoes.

And yet, and this cannot be easily put into words, there's a quality to the action suddenly, a care with which that action happens. Now care is something that gets very close to love. That's why in Buddhism they have a word called loving care.

You really have to put the two together. And when you pay attention in that way so that the doing is not a means to an end, what then flows into the doing is the energy field of loving care, love. You honor this moment in whatever form this moment takes.

So a completely different emanation is suddenly there. And the seemingly insignificant doing, which is not a means to an end, which all those things that make up your life become almost, I don't have a word for it, a worship, a great reverence is in it. So you perform that insignificant thing into something else.

And then see how things change around you as this quality of loving care flows into insignificant actions. So I would suggest you begin, if you haven't been practicing that already, already doing it as your natural way of doing things, some of you are already doing it and you're here just for deepening, begin with things that involve everyday objects with which you interact. And that's a lot of your life.

You spend in that way. Relationships, primary relationships, people think about all my relationships, the most primary relationship is the relationship with the world of objects. Because with that you relate continuously.

Now, if every object that you handle is a means to an end, then you never honor that. So you begin your practice by choosing little movements that you make as in your everyday life. And especially if you do it here, you're putting, getting dressed, maybe getting dressed is too much.

Let's just say putting on one sweater and you give it total attention. Just as you give attention to the perception of a flower, you give attention to the doing. An alertness is there while you put that it is not a means to an end.

And then even putting on a sweater becomes a sacred act. There's not division anymore between sacred and profane. And so don't choose long things because that's, to start with, little things, little seemingly insignificant doings.

Take picking up a potato as you help yourself. That's a few seconds of presence. And then perhaps you lose it for a moment and then you pick up the tray and walk with it to a table.

At first you will probably be slowed down a little bit by presence. But eventually it makes no difference whether an action is being performed quickly or slowly. Presence is there.

You could be running to catch a train and be totally present with each step. You could be performing an action. You're packing your suitcase, let's say, because you're late, you have to catch a plane.

You're packing a suitcase. Now, the mind is, I can't afford to be present now because I haven't got the time. At first it may seem that you slow down a little bit.

There's nothing wrong with that, slowing down a little bit as you do that. And then you realize, no, you don't have to slow down. In fact, you can operate with great speed in presence.

And so you're looking. And that is a wonderful thing when there is external movement and yet it emanates from an inner place of complete rest. Because the mental projection into future isn't there.

But you don't need the mental projection into future for great energy to arise. So you can, and you then look for the things that you need to pack. The drawer is open.

And you look there. There are the socks. There's the underwear.

But it's not labeled. You're so effective that the simple looking is enough. And the looking leads to doing.

And you pick just the right things. And you get the next drawer. And people around you, if they don't look carefully, they might think you're not present at all.

But if they look carefully, they can see that you're very much at peace while you're moving fast. That is the beauty of, you're not condemned to life in slow motion after this. Many, personally, it just happens that I don't have any interest in sports.

But, and I sometimes wondered why people for hours look at people hitting a ball or trying to get one ball into one hole somewhere or hitting the same ball. And for hours, this is fascination. But then when I looked for a while to find out why people look, I realized that the masters at sports are completely present while they are performing their sport.

There's no thought activity. When you look at a great tennis player, do you think the tennis player is thinking, okay, now he's going to move that way. So therefore, if I move into that corner, then I'll be in the right position to catch that ball.

On the other hand, no, there's not a single thought. It's simple. And people like to watch that because, I believe it's not because of the way they hit the balls.

There's some presence that shines through there in that limited activity. There may be some players that operate in a different way, but many of them are very present. And I heard an interview some years ago with a famous tennis player.

She said she had enormous joy in this match that lasted for hours. And she said it was such great joy, which is there whenever an action is performed. And it's in presence.

The joy is there. That is an aspect of, I talked about care. There's also joy.

Care, joy, love flow into the doing. It's there you are working fast. And great energy can arise there.

Not dominated by fear, which is when you are under pressure, as most people who are, almost the entire world seems to be under stress these days. So it's a mind condition. Stress means I don't want to be where I am.

The mental projection pulls you. That pull is stress. Stress is when something pulls one way and something else pulls the other way.

So you can have stress in metal, and eventually it'll snap. And stress in human beings means you're being, by the mind, you're being pulled out of the now, out of yourself, into a mental projection of future, which you need to reach, but never quite reach it because it doesn't exist. In actuality, future must become the now for it to exist.

But the mindset is reaching out to the future. And then the doing happens with great energy, yes. But it's the energy of fear, because ultimately stress is you fear that you might not get there in time, to the future.

I'm late. So we are, we can't get there in time. So we realize that there is another way.

Not just another way of doing that wouldn't, it's not that we recondition ourselves to another way of doing. It goes deeper than that because the doing arises out of the being. It is another way of being that comes first.

Then the doing arises out of that. We are not here to recondition our lives. It's much deeper than that.

So you choose the little things that involve the world of objects, which is primary relationships and give care and attention to the doing, just as you perceive a tree or flower in that alert presence is the doing. You can even practice little things to realize that you are entering a state of consciousness of deep knowing, but not the knowing of the mind, not the knowledge of the mind. The mind separates you from the known.

It creates a separation. The knowing is punitive knowledge in which there's no separation between knower and known. And that is non-mental knowledge.

You can still use mind when you need it. A very funny little thing you can try is if you have a watch or a clock, not a digital one, but an analog clock or watch, if possible without the numbers on it, and you can practice in your room or anywhere, is it possible to look at your clock or watch and know what time it is without any thought, without the mind saying, it's 3.15. You simply look at where the second hand is and where our hand is and the second hand is. And there you know what time it is, but the mind is still. You may not succeed at first, but once you know that, it is a very strange thing to taste for the first time for some people, knowing that it's deeper than mind.

And this is a relatively insignificant thing, and yet it's beautiful if you can just know what time it is, but the mind isn't saying it. It's still. Only if somebody asked you then you could say it, then the mind would come in.

In the same way, when you look at a tree, you know on one level you're looking at a tree, but you also, there's far greater knowing of the tree has a presence, a beingness, and an aliveness that is far deeper than the label tree. So you still know that on the level of mind you're looking at a tree, this is a tree, but you know also that there's something far greater than tree and that its reality is not separate from you. Self-knowledge and knowledge of others become one.

So don't drive yourself mad by looking at a clock. Just a little example. In the same way, to truly take something in, to truly see, there needs to be a space of pure awareness in which the perception happens.

If you are an artist or let's say an art critic, if you have anything useful to say as an art critic, of course you have learned your things, the mind has its knowledge, but whether or not you have anything original and vital to say depends on whether there's a spaciousness while you look at a picture and then something arises. Any master in any field enters that state, that is the state of mastery. Because there are others who have mastered the technique, this can be learned mentally.

Any technique in any field of endeavor can be learned mentally. But then to go beyond the technique and become a master so that creativity flows into the form of the technique, whatever it may be, whether you construct something, that depends on whether there is space within you, empty space, clear space, at least while you're performing that. Because any insight, any realization, anything that is fresh, new and alive and vital is born out of that, not through thinking.

Thinking may give it form when you express it. But here, now of course I could be teaching you some skill and then see if archery, there's a nice book about Zen and the art of archery, how presence flows into the performance of a particular sport, if you can call it that, gardening, anything. But here we are not using a means, we are entering presence directly.

But if you are involved in any activity, see how it can be transformed through presence. So you practice with everyday things. And occasionally you may find yourself stopping in the middle of a movement and simply contemplating, holding an object, and it's there.

You're not thinking about it, it's just there. You feel the touch, there's complete attention to the seeing, the touch, the weight, and there is, one could almost say, a peace around it. Because the entire perception is happening within a field of stillness.

The tactile and the visual perception of this, and there is a field of stillness. That is an enormous transformation in your relationships and interaction with the external world. And then the external world changes.

The world that you manifest out of your inner state reflects that state. Are you breathing? Do you know you're breathing?

All meditation methods ultimately take you to that. The method is to bring about presence. And if you are practicing or have been practicing, that's fine.

Any form of meditation. But beware of the meditator who is trying to get somewhere with this meditation. Become good at it.

In the future, of course. One of the most ancient forms of meditation is breath awareness. Don't even need to call it meditation.

Don't need to sit in a particular way to be aware of your breathing. Another famous meditation is vipassana, body awareness, in a structured way. Become, pay attention to different parts of the body.

It's also beautiful meditation can take you into presence. Unless you are a meditator who is trying to get to some future state of perfection, then you miss the now. The beautiful thing here is that we are not trying, you are not trying to get to some future state of imagined perfection.

It could be misinterpreted what this is about. Could be misinterpreted by the mind. If the mind gets in there and says, oh, this sounds great, I can become enlightened.

And you could be striving towards a state of perfection, an imagined state of perfection, where the me is fully perfect and fulfilled. Of course it's in the future. But then you would miss the essence of our gathering here, which is not that at all.

And so there's a deep truth in the saying, you may have heard it, you're enlightened already. That is truer to say, it is more true to say that you are enlightened already, than to say you can attain enlightenment. It's a little bit closer to the truth.

You're already complete in your essence. You already are who you are fully. And you can only know that in the now.

I suggest we extend our silence to beyond dinner. So we include our dinner in the silence until you leave the dining hall. And that'll be beautiful.

You can practice presence in all the little things that you do there, including chewing the food. At first you might feel a little self-conscious. And then it becomes a natural way of doing.

And then there's a talk, I believe, at 7.30, about a beautiful new book that has come out, Mystics, Masters, Saints and Sages, to which you could go, that talk. We will be entering silence more deeply from tomorrow. So much so that silence will take over gradually as the main teacher, and I can then retire.

That's how it is. Somebody told me the story, she was in a group, a group of people, and she was with a spiritual teacher. And he gave a little talk.

And then they went into meditation and he said, let's just be, close our eyes and just be here together. And the meditation went on and on and on. And finally she opened her eyes and the chair was empty where he was sitting.

He had long since crept out of the room. And it was a powerful meditation. He left behind the emptiness.

John Klein was his name. He died a few years ago. Well, the form dissolved.

This is actually when you can sense, and you will sense it if you're not sensing it already, the emanation of silence that is here, that of course is within as stillness, without as silence, that it is a live presence, inner and outer presence. And when I say that becomes the teacher, that is not literally true, perhaps. But again, these statements haven't pointed to the truth that is beyond words.

And you could be in your room or walking in nature and feel that in that moment, silence is teaching you. And if you are comfortable with theistic language, yes, that is the presence of God within and without. So we'll have a silent dinner.

And for those of you who come to the talk, then after the talk, again, reduce the words for the rest of the evening to a minimum and go to bed in stillness. Be in the body. Feel your breathing.

No thought is important as you lie there on your bed. What could it possibly say? The nature of thinking will also change as presence arises and becomes your normal state.

The kinds of thoughts that you think, that changes too. We don't need to be concerned about this because it just happens. A point will come, this is my only prediction for the future that I'm making this week, a point will come when humans will create with thought whatever is needed for this moment, could be created out of consciousness, the prima materia, created whatever is needed through simple thought.

Of course, that'll be the end of factories. This won't happen until most humans have gone beyond ego. Because if they had the power to create with thought out of their egoic state, imagine what they would create.

Imagine what they're creating already without that only very limited power. Okay, let's forget about that. That happens.

I will conclude with a ritual of the bells. And of course, the bells always mean attention, alert, awake, be here. It's always a call to attention, waking you up out of mind.

The sound of the rain meditation. Can you sense that the sound of the rain is embedded, so to speak, in a field of stillness? It's not just the sound of the rain.

It's a vast stillness. These words are not to be taken literally, but vast stillness around it. And that gives it the beauty and the sacredness.

It's not the sound of the rain as such. What gives it the sacredness and the depth that it has is not that, but that which holds it, the stillness that is around it. And the moment you acknowledge that, you are deeper than the person or self.

You drop down to, something opens up. So the depth that is there in which the rain happens is really your own depth. You may remember a famous question sometimes called a koan, but it's not really a koan because it has a clear answer, whereas koans don't.

If a tree falls in the forest and nobody's there to hear it, does it make a noise? And of course it doesn't. Noise implies that there's a perceiving consciousness, and an ear, and an aware.

There is a vibration everywhere, but it doesn't become noise. Would there be the noise of the rain if without you? The depths in which the noise happens, would that be there without you?

Yes, it would, even if... Who is the you? Don't try to figure this out through the mind.

Because the moment you try to figure it out through the mind, you will have lost the rain, the awareness of it, and the awareness of the awareness in which it happens, the depth. Sometimes there's a spiritual practice that asks the question, who am I, continuously. Now could it be that you are that depth in which the rain happens?

So this is how awareness of sense perception can take you beyond that which you're aware of. At first you're acutely aware of the sound of the rain. And the point comes when you're aware of a deeper field in which it happens.

Then you shift. Awareness shifts from being aware of something to being aware of nothing, or no thing. We could call this awareness of awareness.

That's one, not two. It's only when we express it in language. There's a subject and an object.

Awareness of awareness. Self-awareness. And then it can happen that awareness of that field of awareness becomes much vaster to you than that which happens in it.

In other words, here, the rain, beautiful, but why is it so beautiful? And so there is something to it which you cannot put into words. It's just water dripping down from the clouds, little thousands and thousands of drops dripping down.

And a chemist could easily explain, well all that's happening is that these molecules are attracted by gravity and then they hit the ground and then they make a sound. That's all on the level of form. If you're only there on the level of form, that's all that it is.

And yet, and now you shift from being a scientist, there's nothing wrong with, I'm not offending any scientists, but scientists as mind. And then from being a scientist, you've suddenly, you become a poet. There's something to it.

It's the openness to a deeper dimension. You can become a poet without even ever uttering a word. Open to that which cannot be expressed in words.

An essence. So, and often it's not just with the rain. When you go anywhere in nature, there is something, there is an essence of sacredness, aliveness that is more, far more than the form, no matter how beautiful that you may be perceiving at that moment.

And yet it's not separate from it. Now this rain of course has been especially ordered for our meditation here. Because it's a perfect illustration, not only that it actually takes you deeper right now, it's also a perfect illustration of how one can live.

How it is possible to live. Acknowledging, honoring the world of form, the rain, and seeing the sacredness that is there. But you cannot see the sacredness if form is all there is.

Then you are purely the scientist who attaches labels to the rain. The form and the formless. And sometimes we call the formless the stillness.

It's a way of putting it. No word can contain it. Even stillness, it's a beautiful word, a beautiful pointer.

And yet there's far more to it than that, than any word could express. I could say God, if the mind didn't have so many concepts around it already, then that would be a great pointer. The world, God, rain, and the deep stillness in which it happens.

So could you live in such a way that you never lose touch with that dimension, the depths of yourself, the stillness in which all the phenomena of your life happen, come and go. And while they happen, know yourself as the stillness in which phenomena happen. And then recognize the sacredness, not to dismiss the phenomenal world as just illusion and just material stuff, whatever, not to dismiss it, but to honor also that because the stillness shines even through the phenomena.

It is within and far greater, it envelops all phenomena. Self-realization is that there may come a time next week, next month, next year, when you suddenly remember sitting here and you say, and maybe you are in your office or somewhere, and you say, oh, that was so wonderful. We were sitting there in that room and there was such stillness and there was the sound of the rain and the sense of sacred presence.

And now here I am back in this place. And be forgotten then that it doesn't leave you. The stillness is not something that is ultimately not an external phenomenon.

It's within. You could be surrounded by computers and office noise and become aware suddenly of this place in which these things happen, the inner space, the inner stillness. You become aware when you enter the state of alert presence.

Oh, so this is not really memorable, but it's you can't remember yourself, not in the usual sense. There was a teacher, early 20th century, who talked about self-remembering. Of course, that was the deeper meaning of self, the field, not a memory of a past event.

And then the world loses its happiness because the world is very heavy, including, of course, your mind, the heaviness of your mind, the burden of carrying around that mind and walking with a mind-based sense of self with its problems, its anxieties. The world then is heavy. And now the world loses its happiness because when you know yourself to be the stillness in which the world happens, there are two approaches to that.

One could be called active, and the other could be called passive. It's not, those words are not totally right. The active is choose presence at this moment.

The passive is to step out of mind, alert, pay attention, listen to the rain. By choice, stepping out of the mind stream, or directing your attention to sense perceptions, other sense perceptions or into the body. It looks as if you were doing something.

You are in a way. That's the, one could also call it, it's a masculine approach to finding yourself. Zen embodies that very strongly.

Zen is a very masculine approach. So many Zen masters look as if they were in a bad mood. And in their presence, you dare not be present, you wouldn't dare not be present.

They can even be physically violent, that's the worst of it. It could hit you at any moment. So Zen is this uncompromising, I want to find the reality of who I am.

And I'm not moving from here until I find it. Sometimes Zen happens to you because life doesn't give you much more time. I read an account in the book that you heard about last night, Saint Sages, Mystic's Master, Saint Sages, about a man who was, he had, in his forties, he had lived mainly interested in money and women.

And then he had his second heart attack in his forties, and many other organs started failing. The doctor said, go home, we can't do anything more for you, just arrange your affairs so that you get all your things in order before you die, which will be in about two or three months' time. That is also a Zen, like having an even worse than a Zen master.

So he went home. And now there was enormous urgency to his self-realization. No more time.

And that is similar to the Zen master asking you a nonsensical question and saying, give me the answer now, now! So sometimes either you go to Zen or life pushes you into, and there are accounts of Zen students who after years of meditation didn't find the depth of who they are, enlightenment, whatever, and then they sat down one night with a sword by their side and said, I'm not, if I don't find by sunrise, if I have not found liberation, found myself, I will plunge this sword into my belly. That's a masculine approach.

It does wake you up. It's not for everybody. But a minor form of this approach is for you to go out into nature and choose the state of presence, choose to focus totally on the sense perception, and suddenly become aware not just of the sense perceptions, but of the consciousness in which that perception happens, the field, as yourself.

So it's almost entering presence by choice, one could almost say. Of course, you can only do that because presence is arising in you. And it looks as if you could choose, and it's a helpful perspective, could choose presence.

And when you're challenged by a situation, you can choose presence just as, let's imagine being challenged by a Zen master, very challenging, with a stick or even a sword threatening to cut off your ear, whatever they do. And so you are, Zen masters can come in many forms into your life, uncompromising, tough, and so they wake you up. And you realize you can turn up the light within yourself.

The level of alertness rises, and you meet then the challenge in that alertness, which has a certain fierce quality to it when it is the masculine approach which will show you the fierce quality of presence. But presence is too vast to be able to be encapsulated in one word or one perspective. It has another quality which seems seemingly the opposite of fierceness.

So that is one we'll see. The fierceness of presence, it seems it's an active doing choice. And then there's the other, seemingly passive.

I say seemingly, it's not really passive. Whereas the first was that, the other is an opening, and all that it requires is, I could say it is a state of surrender, at any moment to have no resistance whatsoever to the form that this moment takes. Embrace the moment, there's only one, totally.

Wherever you are, whatever is happening, welcoming the now, in whatever form. That is the approach that is a very gentle, open, embracing the is-ness of now. One could call that the feminine approach.

And you sometimes see it in goddesses like Mary or Kuan Yin, sometimes there's this openness, the arms, holding the entire phenomenal world. Because that question, who am I, which is part of the active approach, who am I, is answered, because you don't ask that question in the other approach, the seemingly passive or feminine, you no longer ask who am I, because if you still ask a question, it means you haven't surrendered to now, you're still trying to figure something out. Questions subside when there's total surrender to the is-ness of this moment, you no longer ask who am I, but what happens, the same thing, the same realization happens.

How? It happens because you allow the phenomena, the form of this moment to be as it is. That allowing to be takes you from the egoic mind-identified entity to the depth of who you are.

And it is the same when you allow this rain to be totally. The allowing takes you to the spaciousness in which it all happens. The allowing takes you into that.

The not allowing, which is the usual egoic mind approach to the present moment, it has an issue with it, it doesn't allow completely, very rarely, that keeps you trapped in form, the form of me, because you're reacting to another form that arises there, a person, an event, a situation, a place, it's a form, temporary form. Now the me entity reacts to the arising of a form and then strengthens through it its own form identity of me. That's why the ego loves the reactivity.

And if it dropped the reactivity for too long, it would dissolve. You as the ego wouldn't know who you are anymore. If you have nothing to react against.

And so the reaction, the reactivity, strengthens its reactivity to an arising form in the now. It could be the rain. You could take the rain as a personal insult to you, as some people do.

Why is this rain happening to me just on a day when I'm supposed to be on a nice retreat and enjoy nature and now it's too wet to go out for long? It's me. Why is life always putting obstacles in my path?

And so the ego, it loves, it gets stronger. The me, when it complains and reacts, gets stronger. And many, you can observe that mind pattern in yourself.

Everything is personalized then. The form, the reactivity happens because you live in and through a personalized sense of self. And it's reactive.

It needs to be to keep up its personalized identity, me. You even react to and personalize emotions that come and then have your relationship with the emotions. Every emotion is a me emotion.

Anger, sadness. And you find a personal self in it, in the anger, in the sadness. Not realizing there's nothing personal in anger, sadness, whatever the emotion is.

It's human anger, it's human sadness. It's the same in each human being, although it gets attached to different stories in the head. But the emotion, the feeling, is the same in everyone.

It's a human feeling that arises and you derive a personal sense of self and even react to that. You're sad but you don't want to be sad. The sadness is the inner phenomenon that may arise in the now and there's another entity that says, I don't want that.

And so through allowing what is to be, which includes inner is, not just external phenomena that arise in this moment, but also inner phenomena that arise in this moment, emotions, even thoughts, although there's a slight contradiction here, most thoughts are against what is. But if they are there, if that is in the passive approach, you're not saying, I must stop thinking. That's the active approach.

And sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. You tie yourself into knots. Sometimes there's an uncompromising as Nisargadatta, the spiritual teacher, put it when he answered a question, what is meditation?

And he embodied quite masculine. He looked a bit like a Zen master, if you have seen a picture of him. And so he said meditation, which is presence, is the uncompromising, and if you, I saw a little video of him, an old video, he talked like that.

I'll just act it out now. Meditation, the uncompromising refusal to have a thought. Now in the, and then there's the other approach.

This thought, mental noise, what can I do? What can I do about it? It is as it is.

Even that is accepted. Although the noise itself is based on non-acceptance, that's why it's so noisy up here, and yet as presence arises, you allow even that. There's almost a contradiction.

Non-allowance is happening here, and then allowance is the surrender to what is. And very soon you know that there is a vastness even underneath the mental noise. The stillness is never touched by it at all.

Through allowing it, there it is, or let's say there's an unhappiness. You're telling yourself a story about yourself, fueled by past emotion, and there's an unhappy, heavy entity walking, and one teacher, the active teacher would say, stop! Get out of your mind!

How dare you be trapped in your mind and indulge in that nonsense? Get out of your mind! Wake up!

Sometimes it works. Sometimes it may have the opposite effect, even deeper entrenchment. And you say, I'm not going to see him again.

He is dreadful. And then there's the other approach, the accepting approach, and you come to the teacher, and he or perhaps she says, you say, I'm so unhappy, it's just so. Okay, so you're unhappy.

What's wrong with that? The universe doesn't mind, and the tree you're standing next to doesn't mind. So what?

You're unhappy. Okay, it's all right. And then you listen, you mean it's okay to be unhappy?

It doesn't make sense. Yes, it is. What can you do?

And then suddenly, you say, okay, let's see if that works. Okay, I don't mind being unhappy. Let me be unhappy.

If that's what it is at this moment, let me be unhappy. I don't mind. It is.

The unhappiness is. That's a strange thing to do. What happens then?

Because there's almost, there's again a contradiction here, because the unhappiness says you do mind, very much so. And there's a deeper level that comes in that says, I don't mind. And so, and then see what happens to the structure of unhappiness, and then when it is accepted.

See what happens to anything within or without when it is totally accepted. Even if it looks undesirable, an undesirable inner state, or an undesirable outer state, or a completely unacceptable inner state, or an unacceptable outer state, and the unacceptable is accepted, fully, the now, as the now, the form that the now takes. That's what happens that takes you beyond form.

The allowing or the accepting of an arising form takes you beyond the form, to the formless. You become the formless. The allowing takes you to the depth.

It's not that you become it, you realize that you are it. So these are the two approaches. Some work better for one, depending on your individual, your temperament, but it could be a mixture of the two.

What I give you is a mixture of the two. A little bit more the surrender, I would say, than the, well, maybe much more. But it could happen that you have a teacher, if you have a teacher, who is, mainly expresses, say, the masculine approach, you see a Zen teacher for a few years, and can't quite get it, just almost, and then one day you, by accident, see a teacher who embodies the opposite approach, total surrender, and then suddenly you get it.

Or the other way around. You see a teacher that says, just say yes to this moment. That's the most powerful spiritual practice, that's all that you ever need.

Total alignment with that will take you to the depths of who you are, the spaciousness, and you become like the space that allows everything to be, through allowing everything to be. You are that space, or spaciousness. That's all.

And you listen, to never, not totally there, and perhaps one day you visit a teacher who expresses the opposite polarity and says, stop that nonsense, get out of your mind now! And you're out. So who knows what works for you.

I would suggest you use a combination of both, surrender, and then alertness. Really you can't separate them, they all, they of course take you to the same place, the same realization. There is a, and then finally they merge, they become, when the realization is there, they have merged.

They don't remain separate. So what I just explained, how in, with reference to the rain, which is our meditation here, what that looks like is, I could say, be alert. Listen to the rain.

That's the masculine, a gentle form of the masculine approach. Be alert, listen to the rain. Keep listening.

Keep listening. Don't think about it, just listen. Now can you sense the stillness that's around it, as yourself?

And can you feel it and can you be aware of both? The manifested, the unmanifested, the awareness, and the phenomenon. Self-realization.

Here and now. Or the other approach, and that was a gentle form of the masculine approach. The other is, welcome the sound of the rain.

Because it is. Welcome the sound of the rain completely. Totally.

Because that is the form that this moment takes. And you welcome this form completely. Takes you to the same place.

And in the surrender approach, which is this, you don't even, you don't need to say more. Then you know who you are without words. The reactivity of the egoic entity has a momentum and occasionally it'll come up.

Even after this session. You can adopt then the masculine approach. As soon as you notice it, turn up the light.

Be in the body, present, alert to sense perceptions. Oh, I lost the now. I'm stepping back into now now.

Or you can, the negative, the reaction to what is, you observe it as an emotion around an event, a thought, a judgment around an event, and you notice it, and you allow it to be completely. Very powerful. So what you notice is the no to the now, to what some event, some person, some situation.

An inner no. Mental, emotional no. Contraction.

Even in the physical body it can be felt as a contraction. And the ego likes it, because that contraction is the egoic entity. Okay?

Then you notice the no, and you realize there's nothing personal in it. You personalize it, you say you still, you see, you can't do it, you spent a whole week on this retreat, and you're still doing it. You see?

You can't do it. It's pointless. You might as well give up.

That's what sometimes the voice says. And so you don't personalize the no, because the no has lived in the human collective mind for thousands of years, the contracted egoic state. You notice the inner no, and you say, here goes another no.

That's okay. Let it be there. Here goes a judgment.

All right, here goes another judgment. Let it be there. Here goes the anger or the sadness.

All right, there it is. What can I do? It is.

So that's a very powerful way of going beyond this, bringing a yes into the no. Bringing acceptance into non-acceptance. Accept even your non-acceptance, but you can only do that.

That implies there's sufficient presence already in you, and in each one of you there is, otherwise you would have run home already. It would have been unbearable. There's sufficient presence for you to notice that there is a no.

Now, you may not notice it immediately. How long an inner state of no can persist varies. It can be there for a minute.

It could be there for an hour. You might carry it for a day or two. Who knows?

Many people carry it almost continuously. It's probable that the no won't live undetected in you for that long when it arises again. I predict, I don't make many predictions, but I predict that it won't be undetected in you for too long, and that's all that's needed to detect the inner no to what is.

And once you have detected it, you can use, you can adopt the masculine approach, if that is your inclination, say, okay, I'm getting out of this. Or you adopt the feminine approach. Here's another no.

Here's a contraction. I allow that to be completely. I allow it.

It is as it is. Both work beautifully. So all that's needed is knowing that it's there.

And this may happen here. Even here. You may get up in the morning, and the first thing you hear is the sound of the rain.

And an habitual reaction comes into your mind which says, oh no, not another rainy day. I can't put up with another rainy day. Why did I come?

And the first train of thinking starts. Why did he have a, does he put up, has this retreat in the middle of the fall when he must know it's rainy and it's not. And why did I come here?

It's pointless. Getting wet, it's miserable, so much more comfortable sitting at home. God, I have my own bathroom.

I've got, I'm cut off here. I can't even make phone calls. Who knows what's going on in the world?

There's no TV. What's a, oh, Mark, just, big no, continuous no in the head. And then a person in a bad mood steps out of the cabin.

And of course, an ego in a bad mood is a bigger ego. Good mood is dangerous to the ego because you're going towards peace, and in peace it dissolves. Prolonged peace is dreadful to the ego.

So the egoic entity which is fueled, of course, also by the pain body, loves its unhappiness, its reactivity, and it may reassert itself here too at times. The only question is how long it takes you to detect it, to know it's there, which is the arising of presence, or how long you're totally identified with that mental-emotional stream. And that is the entity that didn't want you to come here.

And with some of you it was not clear even one or two days before whether you would actually come or not. It was yes, no. Something didn't want you to come.

Maybe you were dragged here by somebody else. That's a slightly different matter. And just to make you keep you happy, I'll come along.

All right, I'll come on the retreat. So you're happy. But now you're here.

And always in every retreat there's several people who cancel the last day or the last two days. Something has just come up. I can't make it.

Retreat centers know that, so they don't give you your money back. So something in you loves being here, and something in you hates being here. There's a depth in you that loves being here.

And there's an entity that is, that's enough of this. And that entity is threatened. Its unhappiness, which is part of its identity, is threatened here.

I don't want to lose myself. Somebody wants to take away who I am, or the miserable self. I don't want to lose myself.

All the things I've been complaining about for the last 20 years, in vain. Invested in all this, and now it's gone down. The stock market has crashed.

Now, I know that it's, the rain seems permanent, but it's not. What is permanent is the stillness. Timeless might be a better word.

So if you go via phenomena, via sense, through sense perceptions to the stillness, first focus on the perception completely. And then almost naturally, after a little while, you become aware of the field in which the perception happens. Almost naturally.

And then there's great depth to the sense perception. The sense perception, in this case it's the rain, happens in a depth, it goes very deep. And then the same, if this is easy, relatively with rain, you could meet in the same way that you sit here, in the rain, and meet the rain, be with the rain, you could meet another human being.

Giving total attention to the form of that human being, the physical form and the psychological form, whatever he or she is expressing through speech or behavior. And then being aware of the field of stillness in which you're meeting that human being, in which the perception of that form happens. So you take each human being deep, without feeling that I am doing something, it just happens.

Every human being you meet, you take him or her into that depth where you realize who they are and who you are, in that stillness, as one that is the most powerful healer, healer in the widest sense of the word. And then one could almost say each human being finds him or herself through you. Not you, the little you, the little me, but you as the consciousness, the stillness.

So as this arises in you, you cannot not teach. Even if you're not teaching directly, you will teach through every interaction that is non-reactive. You teach presence.

Or as A Course in Miracles puts it, you become a teacher of God. You cannot not teach. And you're even, although you might say in nature nothing has to learn anything from humans, you teach even nature.

You bring presence into nature. But by being in stillness with a natural form, let's say a tree or a flower, there's deep completion and fulfillment that happens to that tree, which knows its own sacredness through you, its own beauty through you, its finds itself through you, but not of course the little form of you, the consciousness, the spacious field of presence that you bring to it. Maybe that is a deeper meaning.

We see sometimes St. Francis preaching to the birds and the animals. I'm sure he didn't really preach to them, because on that level they have nothing to learn from us. What could a human say?

They could teach nature. Nature is so much more sane than the human mind. There's such sanity, such purity, such purity integrity in nature.

So on that level you cannot teach nature. Nature teaches you. It can teach you stillness, but then there's a depth when you find the stillness that nature has naturally as its natural state.

There is an added dimension to it of knowing, because you have been lost for a long time. Now you find yourself again. Now there's an added dimension to it.

That's what you can bring to nature. And perhaps that's what St. Francis brought to nature. And another aspect of that which then emanates from you when you know who you are is love.

Don't even need to talk about it. It's there. It's natural.

It's there naturally as your normal state. And love simply means recognizing the other, recognizing the other as yourself. In its essence, yourself.

Perceiving the other through your own essence of being or presence. Even recognizing the rain as yourself ultimately. So the entire world, every form is recognized in its essence as a manifestation of the one consciousness that you are.

Timeless, pure consciousness, which is the stillness. And so you come to live in such a way that nothing is outside you anymore. It's no longer perceived as this is me and there's the rest of the world.

That's the egoic state. Me against the rest of the world. Me against the universe.

That's the egoic battle. And that's no longer there. One could say that any thought that arises as you sit here is a very subtle non-allowing of this moment to be as it is.

As you hold attention on the rain, you may sometimes feel a pull back into thought. Like somebody pulling you by the sleeve. Come this way.

Pull, pull. The momentum of thought. Oh, all it's necessary is for you to notice it.

The pull of thought. And then you focus back on the rain. So we are going deeply.

The weather is exactly, of course, as it should be for our purposes. And we are going deeper into stillness here. So we will keep, I recommend it, keep noble silence today for the rest of the day.

Unless we ask, I don't know, maybe this afternoon or tomorrow, there may be some questions arising, then that's fine, of course. But otherwise, just be in silence, alone with your mind, if it's still there. Take some time, even if you're here with a friend or partner, take some time each day, maybe an hour, whatever, alone also.

Take some time alone with nature. Bring the alertness to it, the stillness. Walking, I mentioned yesterday, choosing little actions and bring complete presence into the movement, so that the movement doesn't become a means to an end.

And the same you do with walking. Because as you're here, you walk between your cabin and here. Between your cabin and the hot tub.

And then you walk maybe a little bit into the forest and you walk back. Is the walking a means of getting to the other place? Is there quality in each step, which means presence?

Or are you elsewhere? That's the question. Do you hear the crunch on the gravel?

Crunch, crunch. So it's the same way you listen to the rain. You listen to the crunch.

There's that. And so there's a stillness in which the steps happen. Listen to that.

That means there's quality, awareness, which is, I use that word quality, it came to me at some point, to describe any action that happens in or out of that state of aware presence has a quality. The same action performed in the mind-identified state which wants to get to the end of the action, it only wants the result in the future, is of low quality. Now you can sense that if you observe the same action taking place and one person is performing it because he or she wants to get to the end, maybe walking between the cabin and the hot tub, one person is walking the same speed, the same kind of walk, one person is mentally already in the hot tub and the other person is totally there with every step.

And if you observe them both, you can see the qualitative difference between the two walks. And you can then see why I use the word quality to describe it. You can get a sense of there's beauty in it, there's an aliveness in it.

It is not a means to an end. And if you should ever make something with your hands, manufacture something, then, or you're an artist or whatever, in the state of presence, that state of quality flows into this work. And when it's finished, whatever it may be, a painting, a sculpture, or even making a table, or who knows what, the finished product then still carries a fragrance of that state of consciousness out of which it came.

That's why it has high quality. And it doesn't require a lot of awareness to feel it. Many people who otherwise are unaware can recognize the piece that emanates quality, that is made, they don't know why, but they know it feels wonderful.

So every great work of art comes out of that state of presence. And the contemplation of art is also one way of entering the state of presence because that work still carries the fragrance of presence. So you contemplate that picture, if it is a picture, and suddenly you're in the same state that the artist was when he or she painted it.

Stillness, still, alert, openness. And so some artists have painted totally unremarkable scenes, nature scenes, which are not spectacular. Usually the extremely spectacular nature scenes are not real art.

You get this huge mountain with huge clouds and then there's a stack or something, and one can see it looks nice but it's not quite art. And then there's another totally unremarkable picture. Nobody would have looked at that scene twice.

Monet, whatever they painted, just relatively unremarkable things and there's an essence there. Van Gogh painted a chair, the cheapest chair you could find, old. Nobody would have paid 50 cents for it in a second-hand store, and he chose that and saw it in the state of presence.

And then he painted the chair and it still carries, there's more in that painting than the chair. Just as there's more in the rain than the rain. Now, some artists, they lost the state.

The moment they stopped out away from their canvas, they went into, many of them, into mind state. And the only place where they were free is when they're facing the canvas. Or you don't want to be reduced to that.

This is your whole life becoming that. And then whether or not you produce a work of art is irrelevant. Your life is that.

Just stay for a little while with the rain and the empty chair. When we look for a title for the tapes for this retreat, we already have it, The Rain's Retreat. And the next day, maybe this is even loud enough to be recorded on the tape.

It may be quite a few times on a retreat like this, because it is almost a week, quite a few times you have to enter, re-enter, surrender, re-enter presence. Some suffering may come up, and then you surrender again. Surrender is the shift from no to yes, to what is.

When you live in a continuous yes to what is, then you don't need to surrender anymore. And that, of course, is a very easy way to live, very easy, when you're not in disagreement with the suchness of this moment. Life becomes very easy.

But the mind says, oh, it's very hard to live in that way. That's how it is for humans. What is easy looks hard.

What is hard looks the easy way. So that's the shift from the yes to the no is always the surrender. And some of you, if my ears can be your first retreat, and even to be quiet for a whole day, may bring up resistance, unhappiness, may even trigger the pain body.

Can't take any more of this. Who says? Well, this thought says it.

And then you let go of that. And then there's a cessation of that thought. And this moment is fine.

Until the next thought comes up. No, no. And then that subsides.

And again, hmm. Oh. And another wave comes.

Thought wave. And then perhaps the old pain that lives in you, as it does in most humans, awakens temporarily. The pain body, the accumulation of old emotional pain.

Suddenly there's a turbulence inside. And when the two get together, that when it, there happens to be a thought, I can't take any more of this. Or a thought, this is dreadful, this rain doesn't, won't it ever stop?

Whatever the thought is. And at that moment, the emotional energy of old pain wakes up and links up with that thought. And the moment the connection is established between the weaving of the thoughts in your head and old emotional pain, then it's much more difficult to get out of the thought because it won't remain this one thought immediately because of the emotional energy that has flown into that thought.

It will become the energy, the relatively minor energy that was in that thought, just a little thought, I can't take any more, now becomes, I can't take any more. Because there's the old emotion amplifies and energizes that thought and that immediately develops into a stream of similar thought. And then angry about other people, who do they think they are?

And that is the link between, once the two have linked together, the emotional, old emotional pain and thought structures that deny the now, then you have an enormous, heavy sense of self suddenly because then the thoughts are so empowered, so amplified by the old emotion that very easily they draw all your attention in, all your, so you're completely identified with the thought stream because it's so powerful, it's powered by emotion.

And what before was simply a conditioned interpretation of a situation, you called it something, the mind, according to its conditioning, called a situation, interpreted it in its conditioned way. For example, it's a conditioned way to say that rain is bad, it's bad weather, it's bad, it's a relatively harmless conditioning, so it attached a label to that, so you couldn't see beyond the label bad weather. And you can see from this morning what that does to you when you attach even a simple label like bad weather to that, what it obscures for you immediately, the depth that is there in what the mind calls bad weather becomes obscured, the intense aliveness that is there in the rain, around the rain, when you pay attention to it, the sacredness that is there, all that doesn't exist for you when you, a label arises, a mental label, and there's complete identification with the mental label and this means you completely believe in what you have just said, bad weather.

And so that life, your life becomes a shallow phenomenon because if everything like this is immediately labeled, all depth is removed from it and you live in a shallow world of mental conceptualization and you've just conceptualized the sacred phenomenon of this rain, and now you think you know what it is, you've called it something, and you've deadened yourself to it. So that is the, it is an act of violence, it's of course unconscious, it's not violence in the sense that we normally think of violence, but to do that to yourself and to others by labeling them, you do it to nature, you label, the first act of violence against nature is to have a label like bad weather and believe in it. And so the depths and aliveness and sacredness is immediately covered up, all you have now is a label that you relate to, and you cannot go beyond, it's right there in front of your eyes where there's enormous depth, and so you've cut yourself off from the depth that is there, but that is the inner equivalent from your own depth that is beyond the mind, you are trapped in mind.

And so that happens with interpretations that come, labels that you attach to situations, that you attach to people, labels that you attach to yourself, and completely believe in, mental labels that come up according to mental conditioning. So you can see the reduction of one's aliveness, one's own depths, one's own reality, when you live in a world of conceptualization, labeling, interpretation, predominantly, as still most humans do, rarely do they step beyond, and those are the moments that are so rare, they say, what was that that was so wonderful 10 years ago, there was something so wonderful, what was that, I was there, and you stepped out of labeling, out of interpretations.

So that's, and that is an interpretation of the mind now, and you can see that that is what that does to you. Now, what we call interpretation, when it is empowered by old pain, the interpretation, old emotional pain, the interpretation becomes a reaction. Reaction, bad weather deadens it enough, but when it's reactive, then you feel very bad about the bad weather, and you are completely identified with feeling bad about the bad weather, and complaining.

So you have an added force to what was already bad enough, you've cut yourself off, and now your whole identity is reactive, and you take that to be the truth, the bad weather, and then you have a personalized reactive relationship to the bad weather, the so-called bad weather. You can see how you're drawn into a spiral of illusion, away from reality, when you get trapped in that. And once you see that, it's not surprising how mad human history is, how so much senseless nonsense, violence, so it's important to observe that.

Observe already, there's the interpretations that you believe in, and then occasionally when the pain body awakens, those mind structures become empowered, energized even more, and a sense of self, a strong, very heavy sense of me is derived from the emotion that is coupled with the thought. And then the vicious circle is established between the pain body and your thought processes, and you're completely identified with that vicious circle of emotional pain and thought. In other words, you become a very unhappy entity on the planet, with great heaviness and emanation of great unhappiness, and you are forced, because of complete identification, you're trapped in that cycle in which now the pain body, the old emotional pain, an energetic entity, one could almost say, in you, feeds on your mind.

And the mind, every negative thought, gives fuel to the emotion, so it adds to the pain body. And the egoic entity, a large part of the egoic entity, is pain body. So that's why the moment you are trapped in this vicious circle of pain body and mind activity, it is a form of, one could say, addiction to pain, an addiction to emotional pain.

In other words, at that moment you don't want to get out. No way. You don't want to be free, because you are not, you're asleep, so to speak.

What is pretending to be you is a mental emotional pattern with which you are completely identified. And it feeds on thinking, and then it feeds, as most of you know, it feeds on, once it's active in you, you will easily provoke others, even by your mere presence sometimes. At other times you will actively do something to provoke a partner to give you a feedback of more emotional pain.

But even your very presence could be provocative if the pain body is active in you and the vicious circle is running between the story in your head, that continuously working, and the pain, and you're walking out in the street and then you walk into a shop, just too innocent to buy a little paper or something, and it may happen that the shopkeeper is also in the grip of pain body at that moment. And it's the likelihood that at that moment you will have a very unpleasant interaction for some reason with the shopkeeper, it's very, very high. Because even if you say nothing, pain bodies can sense each other.

And that is amazing when you watch it. So when you are a walking pain body, you have to be very careful because you will attract other walking pain bodies to you, they will recognize, it's all unconscious of course, but they will recognize you, and will be drawn to you because they can feed on you and you can feed them. And this is why some people who are very, totally unconscious, and there are still many humans on the planet who are totally unconscious of this process, there are humans in whom the pain body is not just a phenomenon that arises once a week, for an hour or two.

There are people in whom the pain body is there 90% of the time, and even 100% of the time. Some people live in the whole identity is a painful sense of self, a me, either very, continuously very sad and heavy, or almost continuously angry, you can see it when you, if the predominant energy vibration of their pain body is anger, and that person walks past, you can sense it coming. It's just waiting for an excuse to externalize the anger, and when you look into the eyes of a person possessed by a pain body, you can see that the pain body looks through their eyes at you, it's pure raw emotion, and it wants some reaction from you.

It loves a reaction, give me a reaction. So if it's anger, then it will encounter anger because it attracts anger from other pain bodies. So if there are humans who are almost continuously possessed by that, and they encounter many unpleasant experiences, which then continuously confirms to their mind that their interpretation of the world, which is probably that basically this is not a good place to be, everybody's out to get me, and continuously life confirms that interpretation, because they experience so many, they meet so many other pain bodies, don't know that that's what they attract. So nobody here is at that degree of unconsciousness of course.

But the pain body is still there, it is a pain body, and occasionally it needs to come up, and that is a good thing, of course it is, because it is. So to, once you know that when the pain body has come up and moves into egoic mind structures, the meaning of me becomes heavy, and looking for trouble, it's looking for trouble, and usually finds it. Many traffic accidents are caused by driving pain bodies, because a driving pain body wants the accident, that's the amazing thing.

He doesn't know that if you say you want an accident, he says you're mad, I don't want an accident, but the driving pain body unconsciously seeks the experience, the painful experience of an accident. And so, sooner or later, he will come into proximity with another driving pain body, and both want the accident. Nobody knows in statistics they don't mention that.

Number of pain bodies, number of accidents caused by pain bodies this year. So to watch that, of course, the first thing when you realize how that works is you can see it in others, that's the first place where you discover pain bodies and how they work, how they operate. You may see it in your partner, you may see it in a family member, in a child even, you may see it at work, your boss, your secretary, whoever, and people you're in close proximity with, and they occasionally go through this transformation, and they suddenly become very heavy.

And so, and then you detect, you can detect pain body in others, oh, that is. If you don't know what it is, sometimes the mind will say silly things like, I suddenly saw his real face. It wasn't his real face, it was his pain body.

I suddenly realized who she is underneath that sweet exterior. It's not, it's just a pain body. It's not who she is, it's the human pain body.

It's emotion, human emotion, stagnant, trapped due to millennia, thousands of years of egoic illusion, great amount of pain has developed, thousands of years of not living in alignment with now, denying now, denying life, labeling, labeling started with God, our expulsion from paradise, the beginning of mental labeling, although it was still fairly harmless at the beginning, and then it becomes, in what we, bad weather. So you can see that you may even have detected in yourself the interpretation of the mind, it's a label, and the interpretation energized by the emotion which becomes the reaction.

So you have the two levels. It's bad enough to be trapped totally in mental interpretation and conceptualization, and then to add to that, you get the added energy of pain, emotional pain that flows into it, and that's the reactive me that lives on that. That's the human condition.

So is it surprising when you look at human history how mad it is, if that is the human condition? And it's so simple to see those workings of mind and emotion and identification with that, personalizing, me, personalizing mind streams, personalizing emotions, becomes a me, me. And so presence arises and suddenly you can see, so to speak, you step back from that, those patterns, and you see them in operation.

That's enough. Once you begin to see them, there's no stopping the further arising of presence. It's enough to just begin to see how they operate in oneself.

First you see it in others, and then after a while you see it also in yourself. The seeing is freeing. Seeing, I use it metaphorically.

Seeing is free. You don't necessarily see it with your eyes. You only see the external behavior with your eyes.

But you see it in the sense of know. You suddenly know. All that unconsciousness is recognized.

In that recognition it is depersonalized. There's no longer a me in it. It is simply a mental, emotional pattern that has been operating in humanity for so long.

That's the beginning of freedom. Freedom is already arising through seeing it. Oh, there's my pain body.

And for a while you will only see it afterwards. The energy may still be so overpowering when it takes you over that while it is in you, you don't see it. And the moment it leaves you, because then after a while it subsides because it has fed enough on your thinking and on other people, and then it goes to a dormant state, and then you suddenly see what's happened.

Oh, that was the pain body. The whole afternoon and evening yesterday, that was my pain body. And I was acting out this huge drama, perhaps with my partner, or at work, and completely believed every word.

And I even got others to go into similar states that I was in. And so that was a pain body episode. How interesting.

So at first the seeing may not happen in the middle of it. It may happen after the pain body has come and gone. Of course, it's never gone for that long.

It's dormant while it digests the food. And then after a while, a few days, a week, two weeks if you're lucky, the food is digested and then it goes, I'm hungry again. And that's fine if you see it after it's happened, as long as you don't make some personal thing out of that and think, I have failed.

I was in the grip of pain body and I couldn't do it. I couldn't see it. It's useless.

I might even give up. You see this little inner dialogue? Do you have that sometimes, a little voice that talks to you as you?

You see? You can't do it. Years of meditation and now you've been to the retreat and you still can't do it.

You're no good. So you personalize that. So make sure that the seeing doesn't become a renewed labeling by the mind.

Leave it on the level of seeing. Otherwise you personalize again and then you have a me problem. And then it happens that in the middle of pain body, using your mind and perhaps using other people, so you may already be in the middle of drama, you can suddenly see it.

It may not stop immediately, but you can see the energy of it. Or you may be involved in deep negative thinking about yourself, somebody else, the situation you're in, what you're going to do to somebody, what you're going to do to yourself. Some pain bodies are very self-aggressive.

Hate myself. I hate you and I hate myself. Some pain bodies attack you personally.

So suicide can happen in that way. The pain bodies last and final triumph against the world. So, and in the middle of it, you can suddenly know what's happening and you're shouting at somebody or you're shouting in your head at yourself or you're shouting at somebody in your head, what you're going to say to them.

And suddenly you know it. Oh, there it is. And that's freedom.

The arising of the witnessing presence. You don't need to, so it is not necessary to find some strategy for fixing yourself as far as the pain body or anything else is concerned. How can I, this isn't right, I shouldn't have a pain body.

How can I fix myself? It's not necessary. Not that you would even succeed.

See it. The seeing is freeing and then less and less are you identified with the movement of pain arising. And then very quickly, and many of you are at that point now, where pain body still arises, but it's no longer using your mind.

Or if it is using your mind, it can only use it very briefly before you wake up, so to speak, out of that identification. And then what's left when you wake up out of the identification with mental identification with pain body, at that moment you wake up and what's left is simply the emotional movement in here, in which you feel in your body. It's no longer fueled by thought.

It's recognized and seen for what it is directly. Your attention is on it directly. Attention.

You give it just, oh, that's the seeing, that is the attention on it. Attention frees you. Attention, you give it attention.

It's no longer feeding on your thinking. It cannot feed on your attention because the attention is a very high frequency. Thought is a lower frequency.

It's all the same, but thought is like, and attention is, and then at that moment the pain body is no longer your personal problem. It is not a personal self anymore. It has become un, that expression doesn't exist, but I'll use it, it has become unselfed.

And that's enormous liberation. You're already free. You can be free before you are completely free of pain body.

That's the good news. You don't have to wait until there's no remnant of past emotional pain in you, which after all is, the personal aspect of it is only a small part. There's the entire human race in here with its pain.

And you don't have to wait to be free. We're in its own time when the energy has become transmuted and has become freed. And the amazing thing is when you begin to put your attention on it and something happens between the energy field of the attention and the trapped energy in the pain body, the attention actually instead of the pain body feeding on attention, it can't, the attention feeds on the pain body.

One could say it's like the pain body is the coal and the attention is the fire. Or any substance, any fuel, fire will consume it and transform it into itself. So the beautiful thing is that your attention transmutes that energy.

So it's not that you need to get rid of the pain body because it is life energy, but stagnant and trapped due to egoic delusions. Can't move anymore. And so attention is on it.

And it actually, this is the strange thing why people with heavy pain bodies, one could say, are almost more likely to wake up out of their identification than people with light pain bodies. So the pain body transmutes that energy and so the vibrational frequency which was... becomes...

I don't take anything too literally, these are just pointers. And that's a beautiful thing. But you're free already to let this process happen.

If it takes 10 years, so be it. Who cares? But you are free of believing it to be yourself.

You have depersonalized the human pain because you have realized that anger is not... there's nothing personal in anger. There's nothing personal in sadness.

There's nothing personal in any emotional movement. It is human emotion. Why make a me out of that?

A heavy sense of self. And so you're free. And occasionally you, that free entity, experiences turbulence.

Okay, well, weather change in the air, weather change inside. A thunderstorm. A thunderstorm is not bad out there.

It's beautiful unless the mind calls it bad. Just the same as a turbulence can happen inside you and you allow it to be just as you allow the rain to be. You don't have a reactive personalized relationship anymore or complete identification.

It simply is. The suchness of this moment is that there's a movement of turbulence, pain in some form. And then it quickly passes when it's no longer that identification with mind isn't there anymore.

You may experience interesting things like what before was a heavy drama episode in your life when you were identified with pain body could now be a quick movement through your energy field of pain. Let's say it's anger. And you experience a quick flash of moving through you and it lasts for a minute, two minutes, five minutes or ten seconds.

Or it's there for a little while and you can then even talk if you have a partner. You can say, you know what's happening, don't you? Yes, it's your pain body.

Okay, well, okay. If it uses your mind, the pain body will immediately blame and accuse. You are responsible for this pain.

You, you, you did it. But if you know it, say, when you said that, it triggered my pain body. Isn't that interesting?

You would say to your partner. Or when you failed to do that or did that, suddenly it triggered and it's still here. Oh, thank you for triggering my pain body.

We may not go that far as that. But it can happen. And that's wonderful to watch that how gradually the energy charge of pain body becomes lessened.

And the same pain is just a, and there's no me in it, no story attached to it. Mental story attached to pain, to human pain. Me, my suffering, my this, my that.

So you can watch that here and you can alert so that you can see when an interpretation or a labeling, how quickly if the pain body is ready, it can trigger the pain body. And even a thing like getting up in the morning and saying in your head, bad weather again, not again. And not having any distance from that thought.

Not, if you have no witnessing presence, can't step back from the thought and recognize it as a conditioned thought, as Gurdjieff called it, was all mechanical, mechanical like a clockwork. Same old thoughts. If you can't stand back, then if the pain body could use that thought to attach itself to, and then we have the beginning of the pain body episode.

And then you might not even come here if it's on the retreat. You may be stuck in your room feeling, I'm not staying here. Why did I ever come here?

And all those thoughts that go through and feed the pain body. Interesting to watch. But if you recognize, then it passes.

That is the practice. So there's no guarantee, of course, that on spiritual retreats, the pain body remains at home. Just because it's a spiritual retreat, doesn't mean that the pain body won't be coming with you, as well as your mind.

They both travel with you. Somebody called me last year and said, I'm going on a retreat, totally alone, in a cabin in the mountains for two or three weeks. I can't remember.

There's enough, taking enough food, and I'm staying there completely alone for my private retreat. And I said, your mind is going with you, of course. My mind?

I don't know. Yeah, I suppose so. And when he came back, he said, he called and said, now I know what you meant.

And he said, my mind got worse and worse. With every day, the mental noise got worse and worse, louder and louder, because it couldn't externalize itself. There was nobody to speak to.

And so the inner dialogue just became louder and louder, and more hyperactive, until finally he reached a point where he couldn't stand it anymore, and then he entered surrender. So that was there, and that is here for you, of course, also. So these things need to be known.

It's a very simple, basic principle so that you can watch when it happens. If you don't know about pain body, you can meditate ten hours a day, and suddenly be taken over totally. I know people who have been to fifteen and more vipassana retreats.

Not that there's anything wrong with vipassana, it's a beautiful meditation. But vipassana retreats are long, I think ten days or something like that, of every day you meditate for something like fifteen hours. It's a boot camp for meditation.

Sometimes it works beautifully, but I have people who do fifteen of them, and they go through the same unconsciousness as everybody else, periodically. But haven't you observed yourself for so long? But the pain body tricks them every time.

So there are many levels to being here. Sometimes you have to face that, and at other times, there's the simple, the utter and profound simplicity of the now. And there's clarity, and there's non-labeling, if only for maybe a short duration, for a while, it doesn't matter.

There's non-interpretation, non-labeling. Just pure, clear, aware presence. And the rain is still there.

Permanent, semi-permanent. The same attention that you give to the rain is the attention that you give to the pain body. And so as you accept it, say yes, because it is at this moment, not only does the pain body become transmuted through the attention, also you become aware that around the emotional pain is a field of spaciousness, and the turbulence happens within that.

It's much easier to sense that stillness that is there when you give attention to the rain. Pain body is a noisy phenomenon, and yet there's also stillness around it. That's another, this is of course, presence.

Within the field of presence is the pain body. And gradually, let's see if there's another image I can use. All images, of course, are limited, but one could almost say that, you could say the pain body is a block of ice swimming in water.

And gradually, it becomes water. Ultimately, it was never different from that, just a different frequency, different molecular density. And it becomes water.

It dissolves into presence. That's another image one could use. Perhaps if there are any questions, we may start with having a few questions, particularly perhaps pain body, if that might be good.

Please feel free.

[Speaker 2] (5:38:19 - 5:39:59)

Well, this is body, and certainly pain body is part of that, but the scene here is that awareness has been trapped in thought. That's really clear, really clear. And a lot of thought is after the fact.

I think some decisions already been made some other place, and thought thinks it's making it, that kind of thing. Just a lot of seeing of thought that way. So then, the body is my question now, because it seems like this is my body, because I can feel it, and pain could come up in it, and I could claim it's mine or not.

And it is helpful to hear your, what I would say, metaphor of pain body. Or if somebody came and he stood on my foot, this foot, I'd say, not pleasant, please move. But the sense is that ultimately, it's, and I don't mean to push it away, but it's not really my body.

[Speaker 1] (5:40:00 - 5:40:01)

Yes, that's true.

[Speaker 2] (5:40:02 - 5:40:16)

And that that's where there's some hypnotism going on now.

[Speaker 1] (5:40:17 - 5:40:19)

Yes, that is right.

[Speaker 2] (5:40:19 - 5:40:32)

Like mind, thoughts can hypnotize, and then body awareness can hypnotize as well. Although it's useful to take me out of the thought, then it's like, okay, then I can get trapped in this feeling.

[Speaker 1] (5:40:32 - 5:50:48)

Yes, if you attach the me story to the body, that can also be an illusion, of course. Form identity, to be trapped in form identity on one level is to be trapped in a thought form identity, which I sometimes call the psychological form of me, the image, mind images connected with me and my story, is one form identity. The other aspect of form identity is identification.

Identification means deriving a sense of self from identification with me and my physical body. That is the physical form identity. And you step out of both those forms.

Form identities, realizing that, again, there's nothing really personal. There's no me. It is the human body.

Any body is basically the same body. The human body is here, and there's no me in that either. So the two levels of disidentification is one is from the form identity of the psychological me, and the other is the form identity of me as my physical body.

So most people are still completely trapped in these two levels of form identity. And then you shift from that. When you go into the inner, when you sense the inner energy field of body, you already go beyond form identity, because form identity is also really an image.

You have an image of me, this physical vehicle. You see it in the mirror, or you look at it from up here and see parts of it. And then you enter the inner energy field of the body, and there's intense aliveness there, but not a me anymore.

So the end of identifying with a physical body can easily go beyond that by taking attention deeper into the physical, because you only identify with the external appearance of the physical body. And then you go deeper, and there's intense presence and aliveness there. And what emerges then is essence identity, one could call that.

And essence identity in some spiritual traditions is denied, they say. There is no identity anymore, or they say there's no self anymore. Buddhism says no self.

Hinduism, the ancient teachings say you will then find the self. But they are not in contradiction. It's just a different way of using words.

It's the illusory nature of identifying with any form, and going beyond to self-realizing, realizing who you are beyond form. And we've been pointing to it here. But any word you use is dangerous, although I have been using words, because any word you use is form again.

And you can easily concretize what in Buddhism is sometimes called emptiness, which is your essence. And on purpose they use a word with which you can't do very much. Not an encouraging word.

It doesn't encourage you to form another identity around emptiness. You can't. So very wisely the Buddha used the word emptiness to point to your essence identity, because he saw that was the best word that the mind cannot use to construct another form identity out of.

And I sometimes use spaciousness, or presence, awareness. As you expressed very beautifully just now, you said, awareness has been trapped in thought. So that's the truth.

Awareness had been trapped in thought for so long. And now awareness moves out of thought. And thought is form.

And so that is the birth into form. Awareness, pure consciousness, is continuously born into form. Every time you think, consciousness is born into a form, a thought form.

And then it subsides into another thought form. And this is a compulsive process for most people. When that compulsive process stops, that is the deeper meaning of the Buddhists saying the end of rebirth.

Because that is the end of the compulsion to be reborn continuously into identification with some new form, and seek myself in this new form. It's a thought or it could be an external thing that a thought attaches itself to, and it adds to the sense of identity of me. Even a simple thing like a car, whatever it may be.

A child can give you your identity. A relationship, husband-wife, can give you an identity, form identity. Me, the wife.

Me, the parent. Me, the provider. Me, the this, that.

Form identity again, and then it always looks for new things to identify with, and then you acquire something new. There's a new thought form you identify with. Another rebirth.

The self has been reborn again into another form, and then it looks out for another one, bigger even. So what happens here, one could say, is the end of rebirth as the compulsion for the birth of form. And awareness, it's the opposite of birth, that's why I sometimes call it death here.

Awareness steps out of identification with form, and it is a blissful thing, and joyous, enormous thing to realize awareness, pure awareness in itself. And it's so hard to talk about it, and so dangerous to talk about it. Because that, the moment you utter a word, becomes again a form, and a thought form.

So any word is not the truth, it's only a little pointer beyond itself, it can never be it. And the best word, nobody will find a better word than the Buddha, emptiness. But it's not very encouraging to say that you are emptiness.

I use other words, and they also, they work. I do point out continuously the danger of identifying with words. So, the end of form identity, psychological form, physical form, emotional forms, thought forms, not me.

Again, the Buddha saw it all, I don't teach Buddhism as such, but there's such truth in it, that the illusion of deriving your sense of self from identification with form. Jesus probably also taught it, because we only really have fragments of Jesus' teachings. He used the strange expression, deny thyself.

I suspect that it's probably not been, hasn't been taken down correctly and then mistranslated. He probably said something like, dissolve the illusion of self, negate that illusion. And so, just when I read that for the first time, it was not long after this transformation happened, when the self, the soul bubble of the self popped, I read those lines in the New Testament, deny thyself.

And at the same time I was also reading certain Buddhist texts, and I saw the essential characteristic, anatta, no self, no self, in any phenomenon, the illusion of self, deny thyself. And then I remembered that night when I was in bed, and the thought went through my head, I can't live with myself anymore. No self, deny thyself, can't live with myself, the illusion of self, a separate selfhood.

Amazing to see the truth everywhere suddenly. Yes, there it is. And in most churches they don't know the depths of the meaning when Jesus says, deny thyself.

I don't know how they interpret it, but the depths of that utterance is not recognized by most churches. It's all there.

[Speaker 2] (5:51:01 - 5:51:11)

So then, a couple of things. The body, if we want to call it that, becomes everything.

[Speaker 1] (5:51:21 - 5:51:54)

There's no longer a distinction between inner and outer, you feel. I mentioned earlier this morning, it's almost a sense that there's nothing outside of you. When there's no longer the separation through mental concepts, which is form, there's the clarity of perception, there's no longer the sense, me and the world.

There's the fluidity of, it's all me.

[Speaker 2] (5:51:56 - 5:52:04)

So then you say, the inner body, that's maybe a step towards that.

[Speaker 1] (5:52:04 - 5:53:04)

Yes, yes. The inner body is an energy that you sense, that energy is still form, one could say, a chi, perhaps one could call some, it is an energy stream, but it's not physical yet, it's prior to physical, but it's form. But if you go deeply into the chi, take your attention, you get to a place out of which it arises, no form, complete, and that's the emptiness, the spaciousness.

It can take you there, because it's its source, and as it is the source of everything. But I don't want to make it sound too complicated, it's enough to be in a non-interpretative relationship to the world, and if there's still mental interpretations, recognize it simply as mental interpretation.

[Speaker 2] (5:53:05 - 5:53:41)

One last thing, there's a lot of stories about enlightenment, and even last night I didn't get to go, I was having a massage, anyway, and the moment of enlightenment, which can become another trap, let's say, because the experience of enlightenment, the experience here is that it's not a moment.

[Speaker 1] (5:53:43 - 5:56:21)

Thank you, that's an important point. I was very reluctant, it took me a long time to finally put that story of what happened to me in the book, because then people have certain expectations. Either they expect that it should happen in that way to them, or they, at least they expect some event suddenly to happen, and in some cases it is, but it's not for everybody, it has been like that, that suddenly an event happens after which everything shifts and nothing is the same, a permanent shift in consciousness.

If you think it's going to happen that way, it may or it may not, then you're going to wait for an event to happen to you in the future, and that could prolong things considerably, because you're waiting for an event to happen to you, and perhaps you've read some spectacular things, some people experience fireworks, so to speak, and they say, it was glorious, glorious! Well, that hasn't happened to me, is it going to happen to me? And you're waiting then for something, it was somebody's transformation, and when they talk about it, it's colored already by their mental makeup, the moment you utter a word, it's already colored by the language you use, the culture you live in, and so on.

So it's never it, anyway, what they talk about. So it's important for many people, it has not been one sudden, even great teachers, there were great teachers for whom there was not one sudden shift after which everything, it was a gradual, sometimes fairly fast, but for most people now it will be a gradual shift, not fireworks necessarily, after which everything is changed. A gradual shift, for most of you, it's a gradual shift from the mind-identified state into presence.

Whether some phenomena are associated with it is irrelevant, because they come and go. Even those people who have had fireworks, they don't have fireworks continuously, they might say, I had fireworks 30 years ago, after that nothing was ever the same, and what really matters is what is your inner state now, what has the inner state been in the last 30 years after the fireworks. So, don't expect an event, it's not like that.

Thank you.

[Speaker 4] (5:56:28 - 5:57:03)

Disillusion of self and form that we were talking about yesterday, you mentioned that we can go beyond manufacturing, we can become our own factory, so to speak. When we've dissolved that egoic mind and gotten to a place, is that when we can create form, and is that when we also create, if we choose to create our own form again? Yes.

[Speaker 1] (5:57:04 - 6:02:37)

Is that what they were talking about in Ascension? Yes. It's not so much, it's the strange, it's very hard to put this into language, it is not so much that then you as the entity creates it, but consciousness can flow into thought and use thought also as a tool, so thought is linked into the presence, as it is occasionally in minor forms with great artists who create great works of art where you say, this is sublime, how could a human being create something, and many things will be created that are even greater. But all that is, and of course the answer is, it's not the human being that, it's not that you say, okay, what am I going to create, what do I want, you know when this shift has happened, you don't really want anything anymore as an entity, you create what the totality creates through you, the one, you are one with the one, and the one intelligence then creates, it is similar, in one level similar, but on another level very different from how things get created in nature.

The tree, in this incredible beauty and aliveness, the tree does not, one cannot say that the tree decides on anything, the tree is aligned, consciousness expresses itself through this form, it takes on the form of a tree, it's not that the tree says, now should I grow a branch that way, and then the leaves, where should I put the leaves, and what kind of leaves do I want, it is, it happens. In the same way, but with an added dimension of depth and knowing, it happens through humans, it will happen through humans, the creation, it will not come out of an egoic need for anything, the joy of creating will be the motivating power behind the creation, not an egoic need to have this or to have that, so it arises, that kind of creation arises out of the fullness of life that you already are, and when you know yourself to be that fullness, that expresses itself in that way, so no need behind it, simply a celebration of the fullness that you already are, and then creations are no longer karmic creations, they have no karmic consequences, whereas mentally created things, egoically mentally created, whatever the egoic mind creates has a big downside, on the one hand it may be useful and nice, but every creation of the egoic mind has its downside, if you look at medicine, modern mainstream medicine, incredible things, beautiful, great inventions, and in the 19th century we still believed that there was no downside, medicine was progressing further and further, and now we see that there is a huge downside to the way in which mainstream medicine has developed, oh, what are we doing, antibiotics, soon they may not work anymore, through overuse, machinery is getting more and more complex and heavy, thousands and thousands die in hospitals simply because they are in hospitals, thousands and thousands die through medicines that are supposed to help, not saying this, the polarity, any science and technology, look at the incredible things that the mind is, but it's been created by the egoic mind, so it is karmically tainted, it has always, no matter what the egoic mind creates out there, it will have the other polarity, sooner or later you will encounter, oh, that wasn't meant to happen, motor car is a nice thing too, it gives you freedom, go anywhere, and so on, the ego can identify with it, great, and of course it has a big downside too, it kills enormous numbers of people every year, it's not even mentioned, it's just like major war almost, I can't remember the exact figure, but since the invention of the car already, it's a million or two million, I don't remember the figure, when I read that I was amazed, it's like a huge war, another world war, it's almost the same number being killed by the motor car, so was that a good thing or a bad thing? Well, always you have the others, those are the creations of the egoic mind, and so there are limitations to what the egoic mind can create, fortunately, otherwise we would have evaporated already through our insanity, and when you go beyond the egoic mind, a deeper creativity will arise, it does not come out of any need, need for power, need for increased personal identity, it comes out of the joy, and that is the greatest power.

[Speaker 4] (6:02:41 - 6:03:14)

I was attempting to get a little information about the ascension process that Jesus and other masters have gone through, is that coming from what we're talking about? Yes. Once you get to a certain level, then you can, are you accelerating your own molecular frequencies so that you're still existing, and you can choose to rematerialize or dematerialize your physical body?

[Speaker 1] (6:03:15 - 6:06:54)

I don't talk about these things because it would create mental images towards which we are making room for the transformation of consciousness to happen, when it's become initiated here, it will do what it does, you don't have to even know it, you become very much like a tree, a flower that expresses it, because you are one with it, so that any details will create, some people, if I mentioned things like that, some people here would find it fascinating, others would say, oh, I don't believe that, I focus simply on opening yourself to the transformation, allowing presence to arise, then it takes over, just as I don't know what I'm ever going to talk about here, presence speaks, it says what it has to say here, me, I don't, I have no idea what I'm going to say when I come here, what form this gathering will take, I don't need to know, that's the beauty of it, presence knows, so you're open, you're aligned with that, it moves through you, and it does, it creates, so you become a transparency for that, simply an instrument, or the instrument isn't the right word, because it implies some separation, let's just use it, an instrument, but a transparency for that to express itself, so you are here to become transparent to that, the egoic density leaves you, once you are transparent enough, it does what it does, so I don't, I always avoid saying anything, I don't want to say anything that cannot be immediately, very rarely say anything that cannot be immediately verified and known, if I say anything that you can doubt about, then I've gone too far into something mental, it may be the truth, but leaving it at the most practical level, transformation, here and now, then the one consciousness takes over anyway, don't have to know the details beforehand, the rest is details, as Einstein said, Einstein said, I want to know the mind of God, the rest is details, and that's a very profound statement, because he really said, I want to know what is the mind of God, the mind is the pure consciousness, is the mind of God, I don't know if he even realized the depth of what he said, he probably did, I want to know the mind of God, the rest is details, and I'm only concerned here with facilitating access for you to know the mind of God, the one consciousness, know yourself as not separate from that, and I leave the details, they come, those are the forms that then it takes, so trust that it'll happen. Einstein made some beautiful statements, and he was a scientist.

[Speaker 3] (6:06:55 - 6:08:18)

Thank you for being here. A question about, I see two states that you have described, and one is a state of alertness, another is a state of being, the consciousness being, or the awareness being trapped in a conceptual reality, the conceptual world that humans seem to build and live in much of the time. And as I sit here and listen, there's another state that seems to come in, and maybe it's a trick, but it seems to be slipping into a dream state, while I'm trying to listen to you and pay attention, all of a sudden I'm in a dream state somewhere else.

It's just like being completely different. And I wonder if you have any tips about staying here and not popping off into that when I want to be here, but pop off into somewhere else.

[Speaker 1] (6:08:18 - 6:11:47)

Yes, now the dream state is also the state, even when you conceptualize something in your immediate surroundings, like I gave the example of bad weather, saying that using the label and completely believing it, that separates, it is already, you're already trapped in a dream state, it's the dream of thought forms, and then that can take also the form of taking you, you're not even labeling anything that's around you, you go off completely into the world of thought structures.

They may refer to a place somewhere else in space or time, they may be just the play of thought, and that is a favorite thing of the egoic and entity of taking, stop, how can I stop him from listening to this, says the ego, the egoic mind, let's go off into dreamland, let's take him off into, and then you go off and ten minutes later you know the voice has been going, but you didn't hear a single word, because you identified with that, how can you be, stay present as you sit here, a good way is to be, as you listen, to stay rooted in your inner body, to sense in the background so to speak, an aliveness, even if you could only sense while you listen an aliveness in your hands, if you could only access that, but you can easily access the rest of the body, and have some attention, listen from there, I have, I feel the body even as I speak, and have some attention as you listen, so this anchors you in the now, the rest is another one that's of course closely related to body, if you sense yourself breathing while you listen, it also takes attention already, some attention moves into the body because the breath moves into the body, so you sit, so you have an anchor for presence, and then when I stop speaking occasionally for a moment, then you feel it a little bit more strongly, and that moment it comes more to the foreground, that sense of inner body, when there's silence, or you listen to something that is not words, but just a sound, like the rain, and if you want to stay here and listen to the rain for more than a few seconds, without being taken away by thought, you may need an anchor to keep you in the now, so that you can continue to listen, so you stay in the body, listen from here, so you feel a general sense of aliveness and the sound, ultimately, if you go deep enough, there's the emptiness that's in the body, out of which everything comes, and that emptiness, that spaciousness is listening, through it you listen, so a little anchor helps so that you don't drift off like a balloon.

[Speaker 6] (6:11:48 - 6:11:50)

Thank you.

[Speaker 5] (6:11:52 - 6:12:34)

I have a very practical question. I find myself with all the events of September 11th in turmoil, and so it's either, it seems, it's all very seductive, and it's, I find myself really alternating between a lot of different states, and even if I can, while I'm meditating, or whatever, find that place of peace with it, then I go to catastrophizing, and really everywhere, so I could use some help.

[Speaker 1] (6:12:35 - 6:12:42)

What do you mean by, when catastrophizing, you project possible events in your mind, further events like that?

[Speaker 5] (6:12:42 - 6:13:05)

Yeah, and it's very enticing, in other words, part of my job, it involves part of my work with people as well, trying to help them, protect them, but I can feel that, I use the spiritual tools that I have to try to be at peace with it, but it's very inconsistent.

[Speaker 1] (6:13:05 - 9:30:04)

Yes, so there's turmoil around it, when you think about it. Well, that applies to many people, that they also experience that. It applied even more strongly, we had the first retreat just a few days afterwards, and that was very close to New York City, in New York State, we had a one-week retreat with 350 people, just after the events, and many people were in turmoil, and as the events were still closer then, but even now, many people still are.

This is a massive event in which we faced death. Now, I don't want to explain it away, because if the mind creates explanations to give you some comforting explanations, that's not what would really help you. Facing death is something that most humans don't want to do.

Facing the fragility of all life forms, realizing how fragile all forms are, and sometimes that realization comes when somebody very close to you dies, and you're suddenly going into shock. It may be a premature death, then the shock is greater, as it was with these events, because it seems that all these people died too soon, but of course that happens a lot. Many people die through accidents and illnesses, and it seems too soon.

Many people who die in old age, they feel it's too soon also. Facing, I was walking in two weeks, maybe a week ago, 20 miles north of Los Angeles in a beautiful canyon, and we entered, there was an old abandoned house that had burned down, a huge big house burned down in the fifties with lots of little buildings, also burned down, and a wild, totally wild garden had grown, the original garden had become totally wild, just amazing to see the huge banana trees and all, totally wild, roof missing, and as we entered that piece of land where the house is, a sign was there, I call it a, it was put there by the city council, but I called it a sutra, a scripture, which said, danger, all structures are unstable.

And it's so easy to lose sight of that fact of how unstable all forms are, because in that, when the form dissolves, you are faced with the fact of death, which could come to any one of us at any time, suddenly. So it is, death is also when it is truly faced and not covered over by explanations. I could say to you, these people are all well now, it would require some belief on your part, it may be the truth, but I would make a statement that some of you would believe in, others would say, well, I'm not sure if that's true, and somebody else would say, how do you know that's true, and somebody else would say, oh, it's good to know that.

So I'm not saying that, I'm saying, sooner or later, each one of us, and sometimes it comes through accidents, sometimes it comes through violence, it can come through illness, it can come through old age, it can come through slipping on a banana skin, and die, could happen, facing the fact of death, the fragility of all forms, including this physical form, and not running away from that fact. To the mind, the egoic mind, which is, because ego is identification with form, death is the most dreadful thing that could ever happen, because it's the end of the form of me, so it doesn't want to look at it, or it will create an explanation to cover it up, but really, it's all a way of running away from the fact of death, that all forms are unstable. So not to run away from it, or label it as the most dreadful thing, because if death is the most dreadful thing there is, then you're really in a bad way, because it's going to happen to you.

And if it is the most dreadful thing there is, then what is the point in doing anything? We're going to die anyway, and we are condemned to death, it's just a question of when, as we are on the level of form, forms dissolve. And to stay with that fact, and it's a shock when it happens, especially when it happens unexpectedly, suddenly, and to so many people, and so close to you, it is not a rare event for so many people to die all at once, it just happened that it was so close to home this time.

In many parts of the world every year something like that, and worse happens, where thousands, hundreds of thousands sometimes get killed violently, but it seems much more distant. And so it also happens here continuously in car accidents, people are killed by many thousands and thousands every year, but again that is so normal, you only read about it in the local papers, particular accidents in the big papers don't talk about single car accidents, it's normal, nobody questions it anymore, and so there you don't face it unless it happens close in your family, and that's a dreadful shock, imagine your teenage son being killed in a car, and it happens. That is as bad to the parent or those close, as thousands killed in that disaster, to those close to it. So here we have the fact, is death the most dreadful thing, or is there another side to it?

Is there another side to the fact that all forms are unstable, and perhaps on the other side of that fragility, if that's the right word, of all forms, perhaps hides, something is concealed that is the redemptive dimension of death. You may have read many accounts of people who have got close to death, who faced death, many of them speak of a sudden shift that they've encountered in the last few seconds, they didn't actually die, but they thought they would, they were sure it was going to happen, the accident, whatever it was. The last few seconds, when death seemed unavoidable, you can read hundreds of thousands of accounts of that, they said, at the last few seconds an inner shift happened, and suddenly I found myself deeply at peace, and there was great serenity and aliveness, and I can't explain why.

And some of these people who then faced death and escaped death became transformed completely after that death experience. They realized something when the end of the form was imminent, at those last few seconds the psychological form of me already dissolved because it was, the end of the physical was also seemed assured. So the psychological entity already died in the face of death that happens, the psychological me went, and suddenly something that is beyond the form, psychological or physical form, a deeper reality, the essence of your being, emerged and was known, and it is usually known as intense peace and aliveness, even sacredness.

And those who had near-death experiences and came back, they might have been lying on a deathbed and could already see consciousness, could, they would see the people around them, and they wanted to tell them, don't cry, this is beautiful. They had already encountered the other side of death, because if you look at it from the dissolving form, death is dreadful. Once the form has dissolved, death is an opening.

That also applies to the psychological death that is the spiritual transformation. That night I died as the psychological entity, the self, the me, the psychologically created entity, couldn't stand this pain anymore, and so it died, it dissolved, and then I woke up, and the first thing I noticed was the peace, such peace. I had no idea that I had died, psychologically, I just knew such peace, I don't understand it.

That is the redemptive dimension, when a form dissolves, and it doesn't have to be the physical form, it can be in a spiritual death, the psychological form of me dissolves, and this is why I can talk about it. I've gone into death and realized that there is no death, it's only just the form dissolves. We don't know how many of those thousands who died violently in the last few seconds knew something deeper.

They might have spent their whole lives believing all that matters is a computer screen and my telephone calls, and be totally identified with that, and perhaps suddenly they were faced totally unexpectedly with the end of form. We don't know how many of those people in the last few seconds of their lives realized the deeper truth of who they are. Perhaps even the worst things one could watch when one watched TV was people needing to jump off.

What could be more dreadful? You don't want to commit suicide, but your choice is either to burn to death or to jump, and then you jump, and that was the most dreadful thing on one level. I'm not denying that on one level it is dreadful to watch, but if you have known death, you don't know what happened to them in the last few seconds, the turnaround of death and a deeper realization of who you are beyond form.

So this can, when death happens to you, but this collective event, whenever death happens, even those people who are not directly affected by it but are close to it, some of that redemptive dimension of death can be transmitted to them, and this has been, people who have sat with dying people have said that they themselves by facing, not denying, if you can truly sit with a dying person without denying the fact of death, because some people in the Western world will continuously deny death, and in hospitals the doctors might tell you, they know you're dying, and they say, oh, you'll be okay, you'll be fine tomorrow, and if you can truly sit with a dying person, in you too, in the face of death, although you yourself are not, something in you dies when you face death close to you, someone close to you, something dies, and when some aspect of ego goes, not perhaps the whole ego, but something in the ego is damaged, so to speak, a chunk falls out of the egoic density when you truly face death, and so those people who have truly faced death without denying it or finding explanations around it, this is, I'm talking about facing it, not explaining it away, have gone through a permanent shift. A woman I talked to a while ago told me about sitting with her dying 30-year-old son who died of cancer, and she sat there in the moment of his death in hospital, and his features became transformed in the last few moments into great serenity and almost light shining through, and she sat there without running away from it, and she said it was the most sacred experience she's ever had, and it remained something permanently shifted inside her, although the sacredness and the depth of that experience only lasted for five minutes, after which the mind came in and began to say how dreadful it was.

But for those, the actual moment of death and a few minutes after, she was in this place of complete acceptance, completely facing it, and she went through a shift, and she knows that her dying son also went through that shift. And here an interesting phenomenon, collectively, those thousands of people died, many more thousands, family members were directly affected by that, many more millions were indirectly affected by that, because it was close to everybody, it was even close to people in Europe. My mother called me, who lives in Europe, and she cried on the telephone about it.

So it was close to many people in the world, and people have reported that behavior of people in New York, which are supposed to be, people in New York are supposed to be not very... whatever. Well, they're in a hurry, so don't stop them.

And something shifted, and strangers talked to each other, there was, somebody on TV even talked about a shift in the whole American psyche, which had been, until now, type A personality, not those people here mostly, but... And a shift away, a deepening has happened, because the nation as a whole was confronted with death. Now, the deepening will happen in a considerable number of people.

In others, the opposite effect can also happen through death, and that is a tightening and strengthening of the egoic me entity, in which case you would get, go into reactivity, and you would want to do to them, you would want to repeat the same unconsciousness that caused that total human unconsciousness, which dominated most of human history, just, it's another chapter, if you read the 20th century history, that fits in very well, although it's a little different in nature, but basically, the same madness, carry, add another chapter to the human, total, complete human unconsciousness. Facing it, without running away from it, and by facing it, the fragility of all forms, realizing there's another side to it. Be open to that, don't run away from the fact of death.

When you walk back to your cabin, all the beautiful leaves, they're dying, and yet in nature, you realize that the beauty and sacredness that there is in death. When you walk through an ancient forest, half the things that you see are rotting and dying, and yet they're not, because immediately new life arises out of that. When you walk through an ancient forest, so much decaying matter is everywhere, which is, life is inseparable from death, in the ancient forest is inseparable from life, and this is true in a deeper sense, also as far as human death is concerned.

Facing death completely is finding the life that is beyond form, facing death close to you, facing death within yourself, so there's a shift. Those who can accept a deepening will happen, is happening already in the psyche. The other movement is an egoic reaction, and let's just see which one predominates.

So far, no matter whether you agree with what the politicians have done, between that event and now, it could have been even more unconscious, there could have been a totally unconscious reaction on the part, there was not a totally, even if you don't agree with what they've done, it was not a totally unconscious reaction. And whether you like or dislike the president, there are two words that he said in his address to Congress, five days afterwards, we were having the retreat then, may God grant us wisdom. That was a profound statement, I don't know if he himself wrote it, but he said it, and it was good that he said it.

He didn't say God grant us victory, he could have said that. So when death happens through violence and human unconsciousness, the danger is always that the reactivity can pull you into the same unconsciousness as that original act of violence. That's the challenge that faces the nation as a whole, and it's an important one because there is still the momentum of human unconsciousness.

It wasn't so long ago that Europeans more or less did what they do now in the name of religion, the Inquisition. If you didn't believe exactly what they wanted you to believe, they would kill you. That was a few hundred years ago in Europe.

And again, those people, they are so identified with mind structures and labels, I talk about obscuring the reality, the depths of this phenomenon that we call RAIN by labeling it. Imagine attaching labels to people or groups of people, you no longer sense their aliveness. This is why I said the beginning of violence is attaching a label, even a simple label like bad weather, and identify with that.

And the depth is lost. Now you attach labels to other people, whether you do it to individuals or to nations, groups, religions, tribes, and immediately, just as you deaden yourself to that, you deaden yourself to the depths, the aliveness. You've already done violence to that person by attaching labels.

And that's the essence of unconsciousness. They did it. They don't know what they do, because they're totally, they see only through the screen of conceptualization.

And the word Americans means kill, kill. They don't know that total unconsciousness. Now it's possible that America could be pulled into the same unconsciousness, in which case the label Muslim will mean the same.

That is the challenge, not to be pulled by reactivity to unconsciousness into the same unconsciousness. And a lot of it, the whole planet, a lot of how the evolution of consciousness on the planet and the arising of presence on the planet, a lot of that depends on what happens in this country. It just happens because there's such a concentration of energy here, different levels of energy.

But there's a great concentration of human energy, enormous pool of energy here. And where it goes here will be very important as far as the whole planet is concerned, which way back into more unconsciousness or rising above to greater consciousness. For some reason, I seem to be traveling here a lot, and that's not a coincidence that the pool here is very great.

The need is very great, and the potential is very great here. So it is all connected. It was no coincidence either that we had that retreat.

Of course, when it was planned, nobody knew that these events would happen. That retreat was so close with 350, 450 originally had booked, but many couldn't make it. But still, 350 just a few days after made it somehow.

And we were in New York State, close in space and time to those events, 350 people. And many of those expressed what you express, felt that very strongly. And then the deepening happened.

They faced death and saw. They faced also during the retreat. They faced death as you sit here.

You are also facing a kind of death, but it is beautiful when the egoic entity dies, the form identity dies. I can speak of the reality of death not as a belief because I know it. The form hasn't died yet, but the psychological form died.

And later when I read accounts of people who faced death, I said, they felt they report exactly what happened to me when they faced physical death, exactly what happened to me when I faced psychological death. Isn't that interesting? It's the same, whether death is psychological or physical.

So with that comes an acceptance, not believing that death shouldn't happen, but accepting it happens. And so remember the sutra that was put up by the city council, L.A., Malibu, city council, all structures are unstable. Could we ask the next question when we meet again?

And also I have some written questions which I want to address when we, at our next gathering. So please remember if you've been standing there to come up first next when we start questions again. I trust there's no personal entity reacting.

Thank you. Thank you. Let's go back to the ever-present sound of brain and the really ever-present stillness around it.

The stillness that's around it is within and without. Strange. Spend the evening in presence as much as you can.

Presence. Maybe tomorrow I believe we're having an evening meditation also. And tonight you can perhaps after dinner spend some time in the, there's a sanctuary, beautiful meditation, building for meditation.

Or perhaps come here or be in your cabin if you don't suffer from cabin fever, which is a mind condition. If you absolutely cannot stand it, you could read one or two pages in a spiritual book. Somebody asked me at the retreat last year when we had silent period, could we play chess with my wife?

Could I play chess? I don't know enough about chess to know whether you can play chess in a state of stillness or whether the mind is totally active while you play chess. What's my next move?

Better not. So let there be noble silence. Absolutely if you need to communicate something to someone, you can, of course, you're free to do anything.

It's just a recommendation. Noble silence until tomorrow morning. Unless there's an urgent need to communicate.

If that's what you choose to do or you don't, it's fine too. And perhaps tomorrow at breakfast we could have half the tables for those who want to remain in silence and the other half of the tables for those who wouldn't mind speaking a little. If you want to remain in silence and somebody addresses you, you could go and it won't be taken personally.

There's a Zen story in which the disciple asks the master, they're walking out in nature, going on a hike, and the disciple asks the master, master, how do I enter Zen? The question means how do I enter the state of consciousness that is Zen? And the master says, how do I enter Zen?

Can you hear the sound of that mountain stream? And the disciple begins to listen. At first he doesn't hear anything because it's so distant.

He listens. Yes master, I can hear it. The master says, enter Zen from there.

And then they walk on in silence. Two hours later, by then the disciple's mind has started again. And he says, master, I've been thinking, what if I had said, no, I can't hear the mountain stream, what would you have said then?

And the master says, raising his finger, disciple, yes master, enter Zen from there. So don't let this become a bad habit. It's a bad habit.

It's a bad habit. It's a memorable experience, this retreat. The mind may want to transform it into a memorable experience.

Although there isn't that much to remember, but it might say, it was so peaceful when we were sitting there listening to the rain. At other times it was complaining about the rain, but it was peaceful. What was peaceful about it?

The fact that you could step out of thought into the state of pure attention. And no matter where you are, you can step out of thought into the state of pure attention. So the essence of this retreat, it could never leave you.

The outer form of it evaporates quickly. When you wake up on Sunday or Monday morning in your usual surroundings, you may not even know whether you've been dreaming all this, that a week you spent in this rainy place in the middle of nature, sitting in a group of people every day and having hot tub, soaking in the hot tub. Was that all a dream or did it happen?

So quickly, the form of any experience, the experience, the form experience, so quickly, so fleeting, it's so fleeting that often you wonder, was it a dream? It was very much in the nature of a dream because it evaporated. Here I am again.

I was here before that dream and now I'm in the same bed after that dream. And then the mind may come up with erroneous judgments about that and say, so here you are back in reality. And this is an amazing and can take you very deep.

It is a meditation in itself and in a way this is very closely connected with what we've been doing, the contemplation of the awareness of how fleeting every phenomenal experience is. It's like a dream. It's like a cloud, a smoke.

It has a particular form and then it's gone. Now, because of technology, we now have means of preserving certain visual memories and auditory memories technologically in photographs and video cameras and recordings, voice recordings. And it's very important and not long ago, those things didn't exist.

And then the fleeting nature was even more obvious because you couldn't even capture the past, not even on a piece of paper. So people didn't remember what they looked like 30 years ago or what their friend or relative or looked like 30 years ago. It was gone.

It wasn't captured. It wasn't frozen on a piece of paper, which of course also fades. It lasts perhaps a little bit longer than the physical form.

And then that fades, although they've come up with new photo paper called archive paper. And the advertising slogan is, your memories may fade, but your photos should not. Of course they do in the end.

Another thing that we become very conscious of from the way they make books these days, they use paper that goes yellow very quickly and even becomes brittle after 20 or 30 years. And so many books that are made these days will be illegible in 50, 60 years' time. It's amazing to see that your own life, you have photo albums to prove that it all happened.

So in a little bit, the fleeting nature, you get the illusion by looking at a photo album or video recording that it's not really fleeting. This is all so real still. I have this heavy photo album that I'm holding in my hands.

This is my life. That was me 20 years ago, me 15 years, me with my first husband, me with my second. And there's that continuity of me where it's just a conglomeration of forms, form experiences.

And then there's an entity that claims a personal selfhood by collecting these form experiences, certain form experiences, and holding them internally. It claims an identity out of that. That's me.

And I have a photo album to prove it, and video films, and stories to prove it. And I'll tell you about it. If you don't want to listen, I'll tell myself about it.

And how is it all going to end, this story of me, the form identity? What will the end be? Well, it's like all forms.

It's the end of all forms. In the end, the form dissolves. And so to see that, how fleeting it all is, even yesterday, last week, let alone your childhood.

Where's that? What was that? Of course, it's left traces, but the traces are in the mind and in the emotional field.

They are there now. And that is strange to contemplate. It has a dreamlike quality when you look at past, distant or recent past.

There's a dreamlike quality to it. You may have heard the famous story of the Chinese emperor who woke up one morning and called his advisors, spiritual advisors, and told them he had just been dreaming that he was a butterfly. And now he was getting scared, thinking, perhaps my existence is the dream of that butterfly.

Maybe it's the other way around. Maybe I'm a butterfly dreaming that the butterfly's an emperor, and he asks his advisors to tell him what the reality is. So closely related is our sensory experience to dreams.

And so I sometimes point, it's helpful to see that everything is already dissolving. With solid, seemingly solid objects, you don't notice that, that they're already on the road to dissolution. They seem so solid, and they may be here for, they may survive for 1,000 or 2,000 years unless they're exposed to rust or the elements.

If you saw this room speeded up on a camera so that you see 2,000 years in one minute, it would be the most amazing revelation. If you saw anything speeded up, and 2,000 years isn't much on a cosmic scale or planetary or cosmic scale, you would be a changed person if you contemplated a film showing you what happens to all forms. And if you saw it condensed into one minute, what would you see about this room?

The first thing that would dissolve is the physical bodies, like melting, like wax. Then what would dissolve is the wooden structures becoming dust, and you would actually see it crumbling. And the last thing that would dissolve is metal that lasts longer, but eventually wind and rain would come in because the wood would, and then it would, you could see the metal going rusty and losing its solidity.

And then when the minute is over, there would still be a little bit of dust, and in the second minute the dust would be swept away. And you could see that in, and I have the similar thing when I watch old photographs, street scenes taken 40, 50, 60, 80 years ago or in the early days of photography, turn of the century, thousands of people out in the streets celebrating some political event. And now if you, European streets, there's not, in the old European cities there's not much change because the change in the stone structures is much slower than the physical bodies are more short-lived.

So you have the same London street, wherever it may be, leading to Buckingham Palace, still the same as it was in 1900, filled with thousands of people who had come to this coronation or whatever it may be, cheering. And you look at these thousands of people, they're all gone now. And the same street is filled for another coronation with thousands of people cheering.

Exactly the same buildings are still there, in many cases the same trees are still there, and these forms have been replaced by other forms. Or perhaps the busy street in New York, just after, in the 20s, I saw a picture of a freeway in LA, the early freeways of LA in the 20s, already cars, some cars had started to, freeways, cars on the freeways, a few tall buildings coming up. But all those people in those cars, in those streets, in those buildings are gone, replaced by others who are just as totally identified with their form identity and whatever they think matters in their lives, totally identified in political rallies, and then removed, and 40 years later totally different forms cheering again, political rallies.

Why am I talking about this? Because there's an amazing thing when you see the fleeting nature of forms, there is suddenly you become, what does, why is that? It could take you into despair, or it could take you into deep peace, the seeing of it.

How is it even, everything seems completely impermanent, every form. Everything is that, well, if everything were, the whole world were one particular color, everything in this world were blue, then you wouldn't know what blue is. To even recognize blue, there must be something that's not blue.

To recognize the impermanence of all things implies that there is something that is not impermanent. The recognition of impermanence, and I don't mean thinking about it, seeing it, you remember the importance of the word seeing, used in a deeper sense than just the seeing through the eyes. We talked about seeing the flower, seeing your inner states, the seeing itself is liberating.

To see the impermanent nature of forms takes you out of identification with forms, and what arises then is that which sees, that which is aware of, and that is the one thing that doesn't change, the awareness which is the now, the field of now, the knowing remains. So you can watch the forms, and the same knowing is here, when you watch these structures around you, and when you wake up in bed next week, you see different structures around you, but there's the same field of awareness through which it is known. In other words, one could say the one thing that never leaves you is this moment, the form of this moment, the depths of this moment, the depths of now beyond form, that remains unchanged, not subject to decay.

Everything else is subject to decay, or as the Buddha calls it, anitta. Anitta in Pali language, anitta, impermanence. Jesus calls it the realm where moth and rust consume, and thieves break in and steal.

Where moth and rust consume. Rust consumes the hardest, seemingly most solid thing, metal. Moths, they eat fabric, and it's consumed.

Moth and rust consume. Thieves break in and steal. Suddenly you think you own something, and it's gone.

It might not be thieves, it could be a fall in the stock market. By the way, the Dow Jones is down the bottom. That's a meditation, too.

Watching that, and suddenly, of course, it's all mental structures. One hundred billion dollars swept off the value of shares. Vapor, dream, dream world.

And what if you have a me in the Dow Jones, if you have a me investment in those figures, and you were not aware of them, and they go down, you feel diminished. And then fear comes. Am I going to make it?

I may end up with nothing. The whole thing may crash. Form identity.

Of course you end up with nothing. And when the impermanent nature of all forms is allowed to be and contemplated, there's a deepening also, seeing of that. That's why there are some of the most beautiful passages in the Old Testament are about in the impermanence of life, life forms.

The beautiful poems of the sonnets of Shakespeare, they're all about the beauty and how quickly the beauty fades. And it's about the fading of all that. It doesn't talk about anything else except how it all fades.

And it's enough to make the reading of it into a spiritual experience. Even if you never mention that there may be something that it doesn't fade, it's not necessary. Just watch how it all fades, and then you become the watching, the seeing, the field in which that happens.

And so this is why when something, some form fades or leaves you very suddenly, in other words really we are talking again, it brings us back to death. Because the fading of forms, the short-lived fleeting nature of all forms really is the fact of death. Because death is the end of form, the dissolving of a form.

And so the contemplation of that is beautiful. And when you see directly as something suddenly leaves you, a form, it leaves an emptiness. If that's not resisted, that emptiness is also fullness, great depths, intense life, formless, one consciousness.

It shines through whenever a form goes. So one could say every form obscures God. That is why at the point of death, God shines through, the light shines through.

Because that is the opening when it dissolves. So in a way every death is a flowering. It looks dreadful from the point of view of form, but it is an opening up.

Some of you have reached that age where you begin to see people around you, relatives, friends, they're beginning to die. And some people get very depressed then. One year somebody dies, next year somebody else dies.

It could be extremely depressing if you identify with a form, if you identify with forms. But if you watch that, how quickly it's all gone. And again, facing the fact of death without turning away from it, without formulating explanations or judgments, just facing it.

So there's deep wisdom in certain Buddhist traditions. Buddhist monks regularly visit the morgue where dead bodies are kept prior to burial. And they spend several hours or a day sitting there contemplating the dead bodies.

And the Western mind would say, that is weird. That is perverse. What are they doing?

It's dreadful. And yet, the Western mind is all they're doing is facing death and seeing the impermanent nature of forms. And that is the deepest meditation.

If you could be with a dead body for a few hours, not turn away from it, just become still and watch. Even a dead animal could be with you. Or when another loss occurs in your life, to be with that.

Just lost my life savings, for example. My house. Somebody left me.

Just all forms of death. And it's always an opening into life. That's the amazing thing.

Death is an opening into life. Because death is an opening death is the end of a form of life. So it's an opening into the unmanifested one life that you are.

That is the essence of all forms of life. It's an opening into that. And to the mind, which is identification with form, thought forms, it's dreadful.

So here we face death, even as we sit here. And that's the most gentle and most beautiful death that could happen to you. And that is the death that happens in the context of spiritual realization.

Because spiritual realization is this identification from form. And that is the death of form. In other words, death.

What happened to me in one night is happening to you over a slightly longer period. What was condensed into one sudden death for most of you, unless the last step is a sudden death, is a gradual dying. Dying to form.

To identifying with form. You might not even know it, sitting here. And this is why I mentioned before, something in you loves being here, and something else doesn't want to be here, because it doesn't want to die, the form identity.

But that form identity has been there for so long in humanity, and it becomes so extreme that one can describe it as a form of insanity. Not being able to come to total ignorance of who you are beyond this little form of body and psychological form. No idea that there's any.

And then of course, whatever this form does, any action that this form takes, any thought that this form thinks, any doing, is going to be motivated by that primary delusion and ignorance. It will seek to strengthen through its deeds and its thoughts, it will seek to strengthen continuously that illusion, that illusory identity. That's why motivation for most people is to strengthen their sense of me, through adding more to me, looking for me, in more future, more this, more that, me.

So all action, even if it looks great on the surface, there is the primary delusion and ignorance that the essence of who you are is beyond form, flows then into every action, its deluded action. And it flows into every relationship. Whatever, you can't go anywhere without expressing in some way that delusion.

And that explains the madness of human history. In some places more mad than others. There are certain places on the planet where even now they are focal points of human madness.

Not that other places are not mad, but in some places the madness is obvious and visible in a more concentrated form. Places of continuous conflict, continuous fighting. It's been going on for hundreds of years.

And again, it is the human mind, there's nothing personal in it. You can see the madness in Northern Ireland. It goes on and on and on.

Why are they marching through the streets? They have to march through these streets to celebrate a battle 300 years ago, 400 years ago when they killed more people than the others, the other side. And they have to walk through these streets.

Why? Why? They don't know exactly why, but of course it gives them their identity.

In the absence of knowing who you are, you need to hang on to something and that gives you your collective identity and you have to reaffirm who you are collectively as our group. And so you have to march through these streets and if you have to kill people to do it, you have to do it because it's your survival, me. So it's not, it is the essence of human insanity.

And this is only one example. Others identified with other religions as me, the other. And it's the essence of human insanity.

They need their enemies because that strengthens the form identity of me. And so they are thankful to their enemies. In reality, the extreme Muslims who express that extreme form of not so much religion but ideology, ideas in the mind, they are extremely grateful for the existence of America because it defines their sense of identity.

They don't clearly see that, of course. So you will do all kinds of mad things to find yourself. And then our society does other mad things.

You may find yourself looking for yourself in shopping malls. You're born, your sense of self is born into a new garment that you buy, a new acquisition. And you go, for some people it's compulsive.

Why is it compulsive? They're looking for themselves. And they're walking around the shopping mall not knowing they're looking for a strengthened sense of self.

Where am I? And then they open magazines. And the magazines are not selling you goods and articles.

They are selling you, mostly if you look at ads, they're selling an identity, an enhanced identity. That's how all the goods are packaged. If they were selling you just the goods, nobody would be very interested because deprived of a sense of identity, it's nothing much.

It's water with a fragrance in it. It's nothing without the identity around it. So the advertising people, although they themselves are trapped in an illusion, somehow they cooperate with that illusion.

Maybe they don't know it's an illusion. They probably think that's all there is, so we might as well use it. So they know about it, and then they are selling you an identity.

Or sometimes, yes, feeling good, feeling better about yourself. That's what they... And that's the...

Everybody is trapped in that. And if it's not that, maybe you are trapped in that for a few years. And then there's a feeling of purposelessness.

You have walked around shopping malls for five years, ten years, not found yourself. And then you get your first spiritual book. And suddenly you say, oh, there is something else.

I could perhaps... I could become enlightened. And then you start looking for yourself there.

No, that's maybe... You're already... You're moving perhaps a little bit towards something more real, but not very much yet.

Because there's again a looking for an enhanced identity through becoming bigger than I am now. More important than I am now. More perfect than I am now.

Adding something, because I am now. One thing is clear. This isn't enough.

So the search continues, and the search always implies future. Future. Looking for the more.

Looking for that which you can add to. Not realizing that nobody ever found themselves by adding to themselves. Nobody ever found themselves when life suddenly gave them everything.

If you read reports of people who stumbled upon spiritual realization accidentally, so to speak, they will all say that they found themselves when the opposite happened. Not when things were added, but when things left. Including ideas in the mind that they had formulated and built an identity around that crumbled also in the face of loss or death.

So when things left you, and seemingly left you with no thing, nothing, then suddenly spiritualization happened. In other words, that was already there. Underneath all those accumulations, mental accumulations, the truth and fullness and reality of who you are in your essence was already completely there.

And it only became revealed to them. They only knew it when at the point of self-diminishment, not at the point of self-growth. So this is why I sometimes point out our gatherings are not personal growth.

They're sometimes in books, sometimes I think even The Power of Now might carry, they have little categories so that bookshops know where to put them. It says personal growth. Of course, it's not that at all.

It's personal shrinkage. But then the bookshops don't have a section for that. And how many people would go to that section if they had it?

What are you interested in? In shrinkage, personal shrinkage. Oh, no.

And everything in this form identity resists that shrinkage. It resists and it finds its heights against any, even a threat of diminishment of me. It does not, because it feels it's its own death and on the level of form it is.

So you can see how the diminishment is constantly fought against. It's an unconscious movement. You can watch it in yourself and in others where how the need, the unconscious need to stand out, to express what your opinions are, to fight your mental position, put it forward.

And if anybody, you can see that diminishment, if anybody questions that your opinion might not be the right one, there's already the threat of diminished sense of self. Because your opinion, when you identify with it, gives you a sense of self, mental positions, perspectives. Your me, yourself is in that mind structure.

And that person suddenly attacks your position and there's enormous, because you're seeing yourself, coming towards you is a threat of diminishment. You might even be wrong. And when people are totally identified with the mental position and they start arguing about their mental positions, very soon you reach a point where you no longer care whether your mental position is the truth or not.

Because you're not defending the truth, you're defending an identity. And you would even come up with lies so that you can maintain that mental position. And your identity goes with it.

So that your sense of self is not diminished. And it happens in the most seemingly insignificant circumstances, that diminishment of self. I've given this example before and because it's so common, everybody can verify it in their own experience.

Somebody insults you, and this may happen in traffic, and shouts at you, you idiot. Or something like that. That remark takes something from you.

It diminishes the sense of who you are. You feel diminished when somebody calls you something. And automatically, and unconsciously, you would immediately, the mind would repair that diminishment by shouting something back.

And on that level it works. You feel a little bit better because you shouted something back. You have repaired a diminished sense of self.

So it's interesting, and this is just a tiny example of how that works. Now, what a beautiful spiritual practice is, not to resist diminishment. And of course, there have been many things, many spiritual teachings, teachers, Christian, Buddhists, have spoken about it.

And that is the deeper meaning of Jesus' saying, turning the other cheek, is not to resist, because that is a diminishment, of course. Not to resist a diminished sense of self. Not immediately rushing into a repair job.

And that's an amazing thing. When you find that, maybe you can practice it driving, the next time somebody shouts something at you. Not repair, except a diminished sense of self, because it's an illusion.

Anyway. So really, you are there faced with a diminished illusion. And just look.

You idiot. Oh. Or suddenly in an argument, drop your position.

Because maybe you don't, maybe the other person's right. Who knows? I don't know.

Even to say, I don't know, you feel a little bit less. Because when you know, you're greater. I know.

Just ask me. And in not knowing, there's less of you. Oh.

I don't know. And again, something inside you resists that. So, the most beautiful thing is, suddenly when a diminished self is not resisting, it's not resisting, it's immediately repaired, you suddenly sense an enormous, deep seated power.

That is also very peaceful, but enormously deep and vast. That is what is concealed underneath the illusory sense of self. A great depth and power and aliveness.

So you have in certain Christian teachings, ancient Christian teachings, strange sayings like, don't defend yourself when they accuse you. It doesn't, I'm not saying always follow literally this, this is just a pointer. There may be times when you speak up.

But just a pointer towards something. Jesus even has, be happy when they accuse you and talk behind your back, talk badly about you. Be glad.

It's in the Sermon on the Mount. Something like that. When, basically in the Sermon on the Mount, when seemingly bad things happen to you, you're blessed.

It's a turnaround of how one would usually interpret. Such, so revolutionary was that teaching that came with Jesus. And then you have the same truth that was recognized and then was formalized.

And when a deep truth is formalized, there's a little danger that comes in. For example, the truth of no self, diminished self is recognized and then you create a school where people enter in order to live in that way, non-self based. You become a monk or nun.

You shave your head, all designed to remove identification with form. You shave your head, you give away your clothes, you put on a not very nice, relatively cheap garment. Both Christianity and Buddhism do that.

You have a new name, not your old name because you want to let go of that. And you become humble, not seeking any ambition. Well, that's the idea behind it.

Now the moment it becomes formalized, there is the danger that you adopt a new sense of self based on the form of that. In other words, in certain Buddhist countries, Buddhist monk is a good career, respected. And so you become a Buddhist.

Quickly you have given up your identity and instead of truly entering that diminished sense of self, you get a heightened sense of self because you're really superior to all these householders. Of course you are. Very subtle.

The sense of self that is mind based, very subtle. If you abandon it here, it comes back there. You've heard about the rabbi and the priest who were sitting worshipping in Jerusalem, worshipping God together.

And the rabbi said, suddenly was overcome by the nothingness and the rabbi shouted, oh God, I am nothing. I am nobody. There's only God.

I am nobody. And the priest suddenly is also overcome by the presence of God, the one, and shouts, I am nobody. I am nobody.

And a street sweeper who has been sweeping the streets a few steps away hears them and stops sweeping the streets and suddenly shouts, I am nobody. I am nobody. And the rabbi looks to the priest and points at the street sweeper and says, look who thinks he's nobody.

That's how quickly a form identity can persist. After you've realized your nobodiness, it claims an identity out of the nobodiness. Just one more example.

A few people sitting around discussing some topic, maybe spiritual. You can sense sometimes the impulse to put forward your position. And you can try out sometimes not to put forward your position.

Just be there as a spacious presence instead of asserting your existence, standing out, needing to stand. Exist means to stand out. Ex means out.

Here, that's me. Instead of asserting your existence, be there as an opening. Far more powerful.

And if words should ever come out of that opening, they will be very different in aliveness and quality than words that come out of a sense of self needing to strengthen itself. That's mind interaction. So it doesn't mean you will never say anything again, but suddenly words come from a deeper level, if they do come, not to strengthen an identity or defend an identity.

Words coming from egoic identity. Sometimes words may arise out of presence. Any spiritual discourse, if it's true spiritual discourse arises, these words arise out of presence, not accumulated knowledge.

Although I speak about the same things all the time, basically I only speak about one thing all the time, and I have that strange feeling it's always new. And some people who come to all talks also sense that newness, because they've heard the words in one form or another before, but it comes out of the field of presence. There's an aliveness to that.

And you will find that yourself when you speak from presence, those words carry an energy frequency that is more than that which the words signify. In usual speech and discourse, the meaning of the words is in the word. They signify, or the words are little symbols, signifiers.

The symbols are decoded by the mind. When the words come through your ears, reach the brain, the mind, and then they are decoded, the language is decoded, and that's the meaning. With spiritual discourse there is an added dimension to the words.

They carry the energy frequency of presence. It's not just the meaning, it goes deeper. So the same words could be repeated, and they still work because they reach a deeper level within yourself that is beyond mind.

Unless your mind is so dense that the words get trapped when they reach the mind, they cannot go beyond the mind. They get trapped in the mesh of mind, and the mind plays around with them. It says, OK, he said that, but that doesn't agree with the scriptures, Buddhist scriptures, and the sutras say that, so there's a contradiction here.

The mind, the words, the energy that's in the words cannot then go beyond the mesh of mind. It gets stuck in here. And so sometimes people sit for an hour or two, and I can see they become not here because you've been sitting for so long, and they become, I can see they become restless, and they go, oh, foot movements.

It's not, the words don't go deeper than there, and they've listened for long enough. And then there are others who sit still, and I can see the words go, yes, they are heard. The mind decodes the words, and then they sink deeper, and then those words can awaken the words and the energy around in the words.

And even in books it can work like that. It's a mystery how that happens. Certain books are spiritually empowered, not that many, because the words came out directly out of presence, and you, after a while, and this is a good point, many of you have probably reached the point, you can pick up a book in a bookshop, read a page or half a page, and sense whether this book contains spiritual power or not.

It may still be very interesting and useful even if it doesn't contain spiritual power, but there's a difference, and you can sense that difference as you read just a few lines. And after a while you may still read certain books because they are interesting, but there are many spiritual books that you don't need to buy anymore, except those that contain that power, that come out of presence, because the other books give you information, which up to a point, in other words, they can give you useful signposts, but not empowered. That's the difference.

So you can save a lot of money in that way, just open it and read a few lines. I will talk about a few questions that came to me, written questions. One question is related to what we've just been talking about, and that is words arising in your mind as you sit here, where do they come from?

In the breathing practice, high-sounding words often arise. For example, on the breath, the Spirit of God makes me, I think it says, on the out-breath, the breath of the Almighty is my life. On the in-breath, as my eye is single, still, my body is filled with light on the out-breath.

I am not a body, or I am not a pain body. On the in-breath, I am free. Those words arise during the breathing practice to this person.

Although these words or pointers appear to be uplifting, I suspect they may be mental noise in disguise, sneaking in through the side door. Could you please clarify this? Well, of course, it is mental noise.

There are certain words or statements that are useful pointers to the truth. These words all point to the source. They don't point away from the source.

They point to the source. They are not the truth, but they point to it. So, why not allow them?

And if ever other words should arise that point away from the truth, they are recognized as mental noise, and also allowed, because you can't fight the mind. You recognize the mind. You recognize the mind.

So, to have a gentle relationship with the mind, and if words come up during your meditation practice, allow them. See if they are pointers to the truth, and if they are, they always point into stillness. They always point there.

Some of you may know this huge book called The Course in Miracles, full of words. Huge book. It takes months to read it.

It takes one year to practice all the lessons. But as you reach the end, all the words point back to the truth, and at the very end, it takes you into stillness. Stillness are the last pointers, the last lessons, and it says the use of words is almost over now.

And then the last lessons take you beyond words into stillness. So, any useful pointer that points back to the source points towards the stillness, and that's beautiful. So, there's no need to be concerned with words that arise.

If they are useful pointers, that's beautiful. Other words that point somewhere else, it might be saying, what's the point in all this? There's mental noise.

It comes, and it goes. So, not to undervalue if useful insights come and take the form of thought, can be very beautiful. You can suddenly have deep insights after coming out of stillness, after a period of stillness, suddenly a realization, a deep insight comes.

You honor that also, because you honor the world of form also. You don't dismiss it. You may even write it down.

This is a beautiful pointer. It may even help others. Don't write books prematurely after experiencing stillness for a few days.

Write a book about it. Some Western people immediately rush to, okay, I'm going to write a book about it. My publisher here at New World Library, he said, they get manuscripts every day, lots of manuscripts, people who've just had one spiritual insight and an experience of stillness, whatever it is, and immediately they had to write a book about it.

Instead of waiting, wait a little, let it mature, and let life challenge you and see whether this inner transformation is there in the face of challenges. It may well come to you that I'm free now. I often get people write to me or call me and say, I'm free, and it's wonderful.

I never say, oh, maybe you're not. I want them to be free, and if they are not free, life will show them that they are not. A challenge will come, and the challenge may pull you back into a little self.

But then that's useful, too. Two very similar questions here about things happening in the body as presence arises. For some time now, I have these intense energy experiences.

My body gets filled with energy to the point I almost feel I could explode. If I had to name it, I'd call it ecstasy. But even this isn't right.

It is like a fire burning yet without heat. All words are inadequate. Sometimes it is blissful.

Sometimes the intensity is extremely uncomfortable. Often I become exhausted. Even in the midst of this experience, the mind doesn't stop its compulsive thinking.

There's a great push-pull. Could you please offer some guidance? And I'll read one other question and can see how closely they are by somebody else, how closely they are related.

I have two experiences occurring frequently during presence that I haven't heard you mention. One is that I feel my upper body and head are filling with gas, for lack of a better description. In other words, similar to the previous, intense.

And it creates enormous pressure, especially in my head. This happened first while in your presence at Tucson and has been occurring regularly since that time. It brought us on uncomfortable.

Again, that's similar to the previous question. Also, I have only what I can describe as intense melting sensations. They come in waves, can last for quite a while, and are associated with this great sweetness and intense longing.

Should I be working with these experiences in some way or just watching them? So you can see it is not uncommon for people to have intense energy experiences in the body. Because an enormous amount of life energy is freed when it's no longer.

The energy arises when you sit in presence. Presence means energy that was trapped in thought structures, consciousness, awareness that was trapped in thinking. Because for most people, thought consumes a large part of their life.

Almost their entire consciousness is continuously born into thought forms. And useless and compulsive thinking, which is 90% of human thought, uses up enormous energy and is emotions associated with useless and compulsive thinking about me, my story, my past, my future, problems. So it's like sitting in a car and pushing down the accelerator, but you're not going anywhere.

You're in neutral, but the engine is revving. You're lying in bed at three in the morning. No action.

You're not taking any action because there's nothing you can do at this moment, but there are problems everywhere up here. And you try to solve them somehow and feel you're not responsible if you are not worrying about this. I heard a famous actress, I read about some years ago, I remember in a magazine, a famous actress said about her, her child was ill.

And she said, I wouldn't be human if I didn't worry myself sick about it. That's a belief. It is a belief that I need to worry.

I'm not responsible if I worry. This, by the way, is an actress who is continuously ill. Worry myself sick about it.

That is what makes me human. So that is compulsive thinking, and it erodes the aliveness of who you are, because all life energy moves into thought, and then emotions that accompany those mostly fearful thoughts. But when the egoic thought structures are working, there's always fear underneath, because you're identified with an illusion, trying to protect and strengthen the illusory identity.

And that's why thought is so compulsive. So you experience fear in the body, and the turmoil in the head, and that uses up your aliveness. And when suddenly presence arises, then an enormous amount of energy suddenly floods through your body.

For some people it happens the moment they pay attention, they put attention into the inner body, there's an enormous amount of energy suddenly in the body. And while they sit here, that can become almost unpleasant, almost too much to bear. But you can bear it.

Instead of trying to fix it in some way, contain that. Be greater than that energy movement. Contain the energy movement.

Also through a deep allowing. It knows what it's doing. Let it happen.

If you fight it, you often make it worse. Deep allowing. And you can hold your hands like this.

It helps, because that's the allowing attitude or gesture. And then you may get, after a while, a higher vibrational frequency is no longer so strange, and will no longer produce such uncomfortableness. You become adjusted to it, that increased aliveness.

You know what it feels like when you've cut off your blood. You've been sitting in a particular way, and your leg has gone asleep, so to speak. You've cut off your sensations, the blood flow has been cut off.

And then you get up, and suddenly you notice you can't walk for a while, and there's a moment of intense discomfort as blood rushes back into that part of the body. Energy is rushing back in where before there was almost nothing left. This is just an analogy, what happens after energy has been cut off.

Suddenly energy rushes back in, can be very uncomfortable. The secret to any experience is allowing. Allowing it to be, and be the space in which even bodily experiences happen.

And sometimes the mind then reacts to this, and starts figuring out what's happening. Allow it to happen. Now the strange thing is, presence can arise even while there is still mind activity.

And this applies to these situations, like this one, when you sit in an energy field of presence, that is at times very intense, and even if your mind has not stopped very much, because the energy field of presence in which you sit pulls presence out of you, your own presence. Even if your mind hasn't quietened, it's still just as active as before, and nevertheless in these situations, like retreats or spiritual intensives, talks, suddenly enormous amount of presence arises, even though the mind hasn't stopped. That's an amazing thing.

Your mind doesn't even need to stop, and when you sit in a group where there's a collective energy field of presence, presence will arise anyway. Subsequently, as presence arises, it will be easier to go beyond identification with mind. But for a while, you may experience both presence arising and the same old mind still going on.

And that is a benefit of group situations like this one. Something that otherwise would only happen to you if the mind became quite still, if you were alone, can happen here, even though the mind hasn't stopped yet. So it's a simultaneous event.

The old continues, and while the old continues, the new is arising at the same time. That's why it's so beautiful to come to a collective field of presence, and why it is so helpful. So I sometimes compare this transition from the old state of consciousness to the new with the caterpillar and the butterfly, which is the strangest phenomenon, when a caterpillar reaches the end of its lifespan as a caterpillar, and suddenly a butterfly emerges out of that.

This is an amazing miracle. And there comes a point, I am sure, when if the caterpillar had a mind, which it doesn't, it just happens, but if the caterpillar had a mind and could speak and think about what's happening, the caterpillar would reach a point of great discomfort. The discomfort would be with being a caterpillar just isn't working anymore, and the discomfort of the old, which has already half gone beyond the old, and then something new, very new coming in, which it doesn't know anything about.

And that's the point where I would say, what I often say, humans, the madness, the insanity of the human mind. And then somebody asked me not long ago, well, if the human mind is insane, the one consciousness has created all this, is born into forms, the one consciousness is also born into the sad mind forms. How could it be otherwise?

If there's only one consciousness, which expresses itself through billions of forms, whereas is born into forms, how could the insane human mind be separate from that? So the insanity of the human mind is then also a creation of that one consciousness. So how can we even call it insanity?

This was the question that this person asked me, and it's a good question. Is not this also part of the one? Is not this?

Yes. When I say, we'll see the insanity of the human mind, it addresses that situation from a particular perspective, not from the highest perspective. And again, to compare it with a caterpillar, if the caterpillar had a human mind, and came to the end of its life as a caterpillar, he would discover, he can't walk very well anymore as a caterpillar.

Many things don't work anymore in my life as a caterpillar. My existence as a caterpillar doesn't make sense anymore. And from the point of view of that evolutionary transition, it would be true to say for the caterpillar, that my existence just isn't working anymore.

This is mad. From an overall higher perspective, because no single statement can contain the whole truth. Any statement that is made through the human mind can only be a fragment of the truth.

Sometimes people expect me to utter the absolute truth, and they say, no, that doesn't make sense. Of course it doesn't. Every utterance is only a fragment.

And sometimes you have to consider the seemingly opposite perspective and utterance, and hold them both together to find the truth that is beyond the fragmentary nature of mind. So to say that the human mind is insane is a fragment of the truth, but not the entire truth, as no statement is. But it is a helpful fragment, because you are at that stage of the caterpillar where the caterpillar would say, it just isn't working anymore.

And there's no point. My existence as a caterpillar has become pointless. What now?

So, and then the new comes in. But recognizing that its existence has become meaningless on that level is part of the transition for the caterpillar. So it's right for the caterpillar to recognize that, because that is part of the transition.

It's right for humans to recognize the insanity of the human mind. From an overall perspective, there's absolutely nothing wrong with the insanity of the human mind. All is exactly as it should be at this moment.

There's nothing that is not right, and that is from the highest perspective that is true to say. Including all the madness of human history, but that's a distant, a more distant viewpoint of the totality. It is as it is to see that, and yet not get lost in that perspective either.

Not get lost in any one viewpoint or perspective, so that you have to see your own insanity. There it is. Some teachings say, there's nothing you can do.

All spiritual practice is pointless. If it happens, it happens. You are who you are.

It's a fragment of the truth, but if you believe in that, it won't take you to the truth. So develop the ability to hold in your awareness different mental perspectives and different pointers that may all be pointing to the truth, but from different levels. And you are greater than any mental perspectives.

You don't identify with one mental perspective and say, this is the truth. So you can contain many viewpoints and perspectives. And hold them, not for one and against the other.

Hold, because that is the vastness of awareness in which thought happens. Hold that. Can you hear the sound of the rain?

There are other questions on these papers by the same people. I will come to them. One more question is a little one.

How will we know when we have truly transcended so we don't go out and write that book prematurely? Well, simple. Just wait a little.

Wait a little. There's a beautiful account in that book, Mystics, Masters, Saints, and Sages, about fortunately I've forgotten her name. She had a liberating realization when she was working in a nearby town here in a canning factory.

And in the back room of the factory, suddenly she had this beautiful description. And before she had had other liberating experiences, and she went to her teacher two or three times and said, is this it? And the teacher said to her, wait, wait.

And she went on. And a year later, she went back to the teacher, is that it? And the teacher said, just wait, wait.

And finally the deepening, it happened then once and for all, she became liberated from mind in the back room of the canning factory. And she describes it beautifully, if you have the book. Read it.

Read it. That beautiful description of that disidentification from form. And so several times her teacher said, wait, don't jump into something prematurely.

And when you think you're enlightened, wait. That's all. If you're not, then life will show you soon, very soon, that it's not you're still identified with form.

And there's nothing wrong with that. It's beautiful. Life is showing you something.

If you think you're enlightened, life will challenge you. It will challenge you in any way. But particularly if you think you're enlightened, life will soon give you some challenge.

And then you either, there's surrender and non-resistance. The challenge is met in that state of openness that is surrender and non-resistance to what is, with great power, of course, met with that power that comes with that state. Or the challenge draws you back into identification with form and the contraction happens.

Reactivity of the me happens. And so, and that's all, you see. Oh, okay.

There it is again, identification with, okay. So wait a little bit longer. But only the challenges can show you.

If you shut yourself off in a room and let's say somebody brings you food every day and you're not challenged, it is possible, nor guaranteed, that you might suddenly enter an extremely peaceful, deep state and think that's it. And then you have to leave that room and encounter situations and people again and then show you whether that's this permanent state or not. It's easy to fool oneself when not being challenged.

But for most people, life doesn't allow that anyway. You can't walk around life not being challenged. And even in your room, you would probably be challenged by your mind and your pain body, even if you don't see anybody.

So that's all beautiful in how it should be. So the wait is a useful pointer. Wait a little.

And don't rush into doing or writing a book. At some point, perhaps writing will come. Perhaps it will be useful to many people, what your particular insight that may help many people.

And at some point, it may come. But waiting is important. In old traditions like Zen and other traditions, often after realization, they would wait for years before they would start teaching.

The master would say, okay, just wait and do ordinary jobs for years. And it matures. The realization is not immediately externalized as a powerful teaching stream, as was the case with me when after realization, I couldn't have taught immediately.

I had nothing to say. How can I help this person? They're asking.

I don't know. I'm completely at peace, whereas before I was always in turmoil. That's all I know.

I couldn't have explained very much at first. Gradually, it took time for the realization to become externalized through words and even through an external energy stream as a teaching. Probably, it's impossible to say when I started teaching as such, if you can even call it that.

There was never a formal beginning. But at least, before I even had any little groups, was at least eight or ten, eight years after. So for quite a few years after, I was just there as nobody.

Yes, once, occasionally people would ask, somebody would come and ask a few questions. And gradually, what I could say became a little bit more useful. At first, nothing much, then a little bit more useful.

And then recognizing the truth in ancient spiritual texts, that was beautiful. And that added to my ability to teach, because the inner state recognized the core of truth in many ancient teachings immediately through the words. But the teachings also shed some light on what had happened to me.

So there was a mutual, two-way recognition. The inner state recognized immediately the truth, but the way in which that truth was expressed different ways enabled me to understand a little bit more about what had happened. And that was helpful.

Although later, as every true, genuine teaching is not just a repetition of one form of teaching. There's always a new quality to it which arises out of that particular, through that particular form. So many of you are destined to teach.

All of you are destined to teach, not necessarily directly. Anyone in whom presence arises begins to teach in an indirect way, simply because you live in such a way that the reactivity of the ego acts less and less upon your life. So it spreads.

Whether or not, or when you will teach directly, or in whatever form, that will emerge very clearly. And it could be soon. There is an acceleration now of presence coming through.

So for many it may not be years anymore as it used to be. Nevertheless, weight is still a useful pointer. Some of you may go hiking if your rain gear is good enough this afternoon.

You may go to the beautiful trails into the forest. If you do, or whatever you do, bring that alertness. Don't just go for another hike.

Bring the alertness into it. Maybe you'll walk a little bit more slowly than you would usually do. And be the watcher.

Bring the alertness to sense perceptions, listening, hearing. Be a walking field of alert presence. Not a heavy person with a heavy past and future, or think about the Dow Jones.

Be an alert presence walking through the woods. And it's all in the presence. Death, nature, a lot of it is dying now.

Such intense aliveness in that death. The colors, so vibrant, such intensity. Or you go into the hot tub.

What a wonderful opportunity to be in no thought. Merge with the heat. Simple, alive presence.

Complete stillness. Who needs a hot tub? If you still do, it's there.

It's wonderful when you don't need it anymore. You're in a continuous hot tub. So use this afternoon for presence practice, no matter where you go.

Be aware. This is a reminder. You cannot be reminded often enough.

As you bring that intensity to your sense perceptions, don't get lost in the sense perceptions. There's the sense beauty, yes. But sense the stillness through which you perceive.

The field that makes the perception possible. And you may have heard me quote my favorite Upanishad written a long, long time ago in India. Not that which the eye sees, but that whereby the eye can see.

Know that to be Brahman, the eternal, and not what people here adore. Not that which the ear hears, but that whereby the ear can hear. Know that to be Brahman, the eternal, and not what people here adore.

Not that which the mind thinks, but that whereby the mind can think. Know that to be Brahman, know that alone to be Brahman, the eternal, and not what people here adore. There's the rain.

The ear hears it. And yet, that's not it. Not that which it's beautiful, but what shines through the sense perception.

Not that which the ear hears, but that whereby the ear can hear. Knowing the ground in which the form arises makes you recognize the sacredness of not just of the ground, but also of the form. When the form is perceived without knowing the ground out of which it arises, it is not sacred.

It's only a form which you may desire or fear or be indifferent towards. But when you perceive a form knowing the ground out of which it arises, then all forms are sacred. The sacredness is recognized, including your own.

Not knowing that ground, you're lost in form, in your own form reacting to other forms, desiring or fearing other forms. Lost. That's the secret of human existence.

Stay for a little while in this field before the body moves. We will meet again when the clock shows the number eight for our evening meditation. This morning you woke up and there was the sound of the rain again.

You may have seen a film called Groundhog Day. And those of you who haven't seen it, it's about a man who due to some time warp gets trapped in the same day. And every morning wakes up on the same day.

And he hates it. And he tries to commit suicide several times, he does commit suicide several times, and after suicide he wakes up on the same day. And that goes on for hundreds of days, it's the same day, until finally he lives in continuous fear and resistance.

He hates everything and everybody. And nobody likes him, of course. And then after trying suicide, it doesn't work either, surrender comes in very late.

Nothing else works. And suddenly he welcomes that day and every moment in that day and every person who appears in that day and becomes an enormous, powerful good in this little town where that happens. And everybody loves him.

And then he re-experiences that more and more fully and he doesn't want to leave anymore. And then the next morning he wakes up and he's out of that day. So let's see what happens tomorrow morning.

Watch for the sound of the rain whether it's there or not. So it's beautiful to see sometimes when spiritual truth comes through the media, occasionally it happens, films and so on. So there's deep truth in this that things don't change until you surrender to now.

Until you don't want them to change anymore, you don't need them to change. The need isn't there, the psychological need. And there's also the deep truth in here that what you experience as your life isn't determined so much by what happens to you because what happens to this man is the same every day.

The only thing that changes is how he interacts with what happens. So what determines your life is not what happens to you, but how you react or respond to what happens. React or respond.

In the way I use the words, reaction is the conditioning of the old and then you're forced to repeat the same day basically. Many people go through life basically, they relive the same day because they live, they interact with the world through their conditioning which is the same. So it's the same day basically.

Even if geographically the scenery changes and even the people are interchangeable, it's still the same one marriage, the next marriage and another marriage, whatever it is, basically the same until freedom arises from conditioning and then you respond instead of react. And responding happens out of presence and responding never opposes or fights what is. Reaction usually does.

It welcomes and then action happens. Thank you for that beautiful card, Halloween card, thank you. Everything flows, nothing remains, it says.

Heraclitus or Heraclitus, Heraclitus. Thank you. I believe he lived at the same time as the Buddha more or less, ancient Greek philosopher.

Deep insights. As you sit here and listen to the questions, there are some very good questions. Be in the body.

Some attention in the inner energy field of body. Be in the mind. Increasingly you will find all answers that you need come from within you.

And I can see that somehow sometimes with some questions you already know the answer but you still ask the question. If it's a true question and you give it stillness, you enter the stillness after asking the question, then the answer will come. If it's not a true question, the question dissolves in the stillness.

Not a true question means a mind-made question that once is designed to make you think more or figure something out that on the level of mind has no answer. I wonder, but what if? What if?

What would if that? Shouldn't we? Shouldn't they?

How does this compare with that? What's going to happen when? Why?

Of course the mind asks why. I believe it's in Gestalt therapy where why questions are regarded as dirty questions or something like that. It's another why question.

I believe he says, Fritz Perls, you're avoiding this moment. Dear Eckhart, thank you for your presence. Thank you.

Presence. Thank you for presence. I have moments here of extreme joy and also my mind seems to be racing, jammering on and on.

Perhaps I am just noticing it more. There's no real suffering in it unless I say I must stop it. Perhaps there is no question.

With much love and gratitude to you. Thank you. So the question in a way already contains the answer.

The mind still goes on and on. There's no suffering in it, however, unless I say I must stop it. That's a significant change to allow even the mind to go on and on.

And the mind, as presence arises, no longer has the ability to make you suffer. It still goes on and on. But when it has lost the ability to make you suffer, total identification with the mind is no longer there.

Yes, the mind has its momentum. And yet, there is a witnessing presence that knows that the mental noise is going on and on. There's no longer total identification, total belief in every thought that goes on and on.

Therefore, there's no real suffering anymore. That also is the arising of presence. It's not necessarily the case that the mind stops immediately.

The mind has its momentum and presence arises. It can happen, of course, that the mind stops totally if there's presence. But there is the simultaneous movement.

The momentum of the mind can still be there. And yet, presence is also arising. Then, total identification with mind is broken and it doesn't make you suffer anymore.

And it's not a problem anymore. It's just more mental noise. And also, there's less and less a sense of self invested in the mental noise of me.

So, that's wonderful. So, then there's nothing wrong with the mind. It is the human mind with its momentum.

And then, when you accept it, go totally in that way, of course, like with everything else, total acceptance changes everything. What is real in total acceptance deepens and the rest dissolves. So, in this point, when you reach that point that is wonderful where the mind, whatever thought you think, no longer has the power to make you suffer.

Because if you look at suffering, how much of that is derived from thoughts that you think about a situation, a person, yourself, an event, life, the world, this or that, and completely believe in it, not realizing it is a perspective. It may not even be the absolute, an absolute lie, but a fragment, a perspective. Anybody here could adopt the perspective and talk to us about their lives and justify the beliefs that they are the most miserable creatures, the creature here.

You adopt a particular perspective on your life, and then you shift. You could also express the opposite perspective. So, you have a loose relationship with thought, not clinging there, clinging to thought.

A loose thought is there. So, that question implies that there is a witnessing presence. That's all that's needed.

I love this earth, the physical, sensual side of life, juicy, wild, tantric. When you talk, I sometimes wonder if I go there, I lose this delicious side of life, detached from that. What to do about that?

It's fun here. We have addressed already, being able to truly enjoy the phenomenal world implies that there's a depth to all your perceptions, the depth of stillness, of the unmanifested, and then you can enjoy the manifested more, but in a different way. While you enjoy the manifested, it's beautiful.

You're not going to lose any of that. If anything, it'll deepen. Certain things you may no longer enjoy that's possible.

So, there's nothing as long as you enjoy, it's fine. But realize that if there's joy in any activity, sometimes it's good to go to the place of joy directly so that it doesn't get bound up with one particular thing or form. If being with a person, joy arises, which is an aspect of love, occasionally close your eyes and go there directly.

If you're out in nature and joy arises, go there. Where is the joy? Go there directly and then let go of the forms.

Now, it is true that those who have gone very deeply sometimes lost interest in all physical things because they went to the source of everything, being itself, the sweetness, the joy, the depth of being, beingness itself. And when they looked upon the world, it seemed like, sometimes one way I can put also how I sense this world, the sense-perceived world and sense experiences are enjoyable, but the sense of being, there's such depth in there that very much that seems like the cream and the world and the experiences of the world feel like skimmed milk. And skimmed milk is fine too.

So, there you have heard probably of sages in India, not in the West because there are probably people in the West to whom this also happened, who lost interest totally in the external world. And in India they sat by a cave or an old temple and didn't move anymore, totally immersed in the bliss of being. Unfortunately, the West, they would have put them away.

And they probably did to quite a few. In India, they left them where they were, and some people gave them food, and sometimes they never came out of that. At other times, they came out of it and were able again to interact with form.

So that's recognized and respected in that ancient culture. But the West on being totally trapped in form, to the West that's only, it must be insanity it says. So there can be a loss of balance in sometimes, particularly if being emerges suddenly, you suddenly plunge into the depths of the aliveness of just of beingness.

And you're engulfed, swallowed up one could say, by that. It happened to me not to such an extreme, they didn't put me away, but if I had gone a little bit further, they would have put me away. Complete loss of interest in things.

Now, I didn't lose anything because there was the cream there, the cream of everything that is in any pleasure, you get diluted. Any pleasure temporarily frees you from the inner striving towards needing to get somewhere for a moment. There's a cessation of that pull into future, and some joy arises.

But that is the pleasure, joy manifesting as pleasure, and it's attached to a form. For a moment the form is so fulfilling that the striving away from now ceases, and what opens up then is the joy of being through that. It never lasts, it always comes to an end quickly, and then sometimes it can turn into pain, or it leaves the need for some other pleasure.

But we are here to allow this moment to be, so nobody here is saying, don't go into sense pleasures, that will lead you astray. No, go into it fully, if that's what is. Be fully with whatever is.

Even a sense pleasure, if you go into it fully, it'll take you, anything that you go into fully can take you there. So you won't lose anything. A certain shift may happen, you may not need to seek sense pleasures, but enjoy them when they come.

Nobody here needs to be lost in being, so to speak, being swallowed up by that. And I'm sure there have been people that we never heard of, whose body dissolved very quickly, they got swallowed up in being and then the body died. Left behind was just a bliss, point of bliss, a blissful cell in the body of God.

And maybe that blissful cell then had so much bliss that it chooses to go into delusion again. There's so much bliss to spare that it chooses to go into delusion again, okay? Pretend that you have another body, and then you have to go for, just like the embryo has to repeat all the stages of evolution from being like a fish, gills, reptile, fish, and also you have to go through the stages of delusion again.

And you lose the bliss that's covered up, and then at some point, sooner rather than later, it's there again. And then you teach, and then you go on vacation again. And here we have a question that just leads on from there.

Since I have begun allowing presence to rise in my awareness, I experience resistance to the people and activities that used to occupy all of my time. I still love my friends and family, but do not wish to participate in much of their normality. What is this?

Well, I'm sure many of you have experienced or are experiencing. This could turn into resistance, but originally it's not so much resistance as a strange sense of not being in attunement with certain things that people do around you. You might feel that, I might feel that if I went into a discotheque.

And it's fine, the extremely loud music and the people drinking, and it's fine, they're enjoying themselves. But probably, I haven't tried it for a long time, I would probably remove myself fairly quickly. Because it's a different, it's a vibrational frequency that I don't feel drawn to.

This frequency does not feel drawn to that. But if I got shot in there, can't leave, then my choice is acceptance or surrender. And the acceptance would take me beyond this, still on a kind of phenomenal manifestation of vibrational frequencies.

The surrender takes me to a deeper place where the frequencies don't matter anymore. I may be totally out of attunement, maybe they'll put me in prison somewhere. Certainly I would not feel in tune with my surroundings.

So, if I had a choice, I would walk out. But in prison, usually you don't have a choice. So then, surrender happens.

And then whether or not on the level of form, because that is still form, you resonate with your surroundings or not becomes immaterial, because you go through surrender, you go deeper, beyond form. And not that you're ever in suffering when you don't resonate, you just sense that you don't resonate. There's no reactive entity that derives some kind of pleasure from its resistance to that.

You simply sense there's no resonance with what these people, they may be drinking, whatever it is. So, if you can remove yourself, you remove yourself. If you cannot remove yourself, you're trapped.

Surrender takes you beyond anything on the level of form. And there's suddenly enormous bliss, joy, in the midst of hell perhaps. The externals may be hell.

And some people have found themselves in hell externally. They certainly didn't resonate with being in a concentration camp or prison camp or close to waiting for execution in some mad place. They certainly didn't resonate with that.

But surrender happened. So you can still sense, it doesn't, strange people sometimes think surrender means wherever you are and whatever happens, you say yes externally. That's not the case.

Externally, you can say no, either words coming out of your mouth saying no, or you say no by removing yourself, and nevertheless not be in a state of inner resistance. Simply, you remove yourself. Or the word no comes out of your mouth, but not a resistant no.

Let's say you meet somebody who very clearly wants to get some money out of you and needs it for whatever they want to do with it. Let me please just another $1,000. And you may find yourself saying no.

Or you say eat this, it'll do you good. And you sense that it won't do you good. And you say no, I won't eat that.

It's not that you say yes to everything necessarily. Occasionally, the situation demands that you say no, and the no comes out of presence. But it's not resistant.

It is not a reactive no. No, I'm not going to eat that. Who do you think I am?

Or this is awful. So you're already making this right and wrong when it's a reactive no. Somebody is wrong.

If not a person, a situation. You can also make a situation wrong. And then you're in a reactive relationship to a situation.

And there's also a me in it. Me, you give that to me. So that's the reactive no, and that's normal.

And then there is the non-reactive no, and you just look at it. No, no, no, I won't eat that. Why not?

Well, it doesn't feel, the body doesn't want it. Okay. No, but you must eat.

No, no, I won't. Non-reactive. Can be very clear too, very no.

And it doesn't contain that violence that the reactive no has. It doesn't contain that it can be very powerful, but it contains no violence, no opposing force. Simply no.

And the same no can exist when you remove yourself from a situation. Now, if somebody forced you to eat that, maybe you are in some mad prison camp or whatever, you must, you might, as what was the famous Greek philosopher who had to drink poison, Socrates perhaps. And so he had to drink it.

And then, I wasn't there, but I would say there was surrender, complete surrender. There was no no left. And with that, there was deep peace.

So to see that there can be a no at the same time as there's a continuous inner yes, a non-resistant or as I sometimes call it, a high quality no. And many people find or have found, many of you, that there are certain people with whom you don't resonate anymore. It's not so much the people, it's their minds, what they manifest, the activities that they manifest through their mind, the words.

Perhaps you used to go to shopping malls every weekend with your friends, shopping, looking for yourself. And then that compulsive looking for yourself isn't there anymore. So you may not enjoy walking around shopping malls every weekend.

And so your friends say, what's happened to you? I just don't enjoy it anymore. I still love you, but I don't enjoy that.

And then sometimes as the shift happens in you, you pull people that are close to you with you. They also go through changes. Sometimes without even saying anything or very much, if there's a slightest opening, they will notice that inner change in you.

And some, the opening is not there, they won't want to see you anymore because you're no fun anymore, according to their view of fun. Of course, to you, you have much more fun really than walking around shopping malls could ever be. Not that when you visit shopping malls again, you would derive some sense of self from feeling above it all.

And that's the little danger of the ego. You remember the joke about the rabbi and the priest, how easily you could then walk with a very subtle, but strong, but subtle sense of superiority. Or you find yourself walking into McDonald's and detecting a very subtle sense of superiority.

In other words, the ego has come in again through the back door and if you're not very alert within yourself, you won't notice it, that you see yourself as superior and therefore have created another conceptualized me in the head. The origin may have been presence. You don't enjoy it anymore because of presence, but even as presence arises at various stages of the arising of presence, ego can come in and claim a me.

Any time that any sense of either superiority or inferiority arises, and you have to be alert to know it within yourself, it's egoic. To feel inferior to another human being is ego. To feel superior to another human being is ego.

Because you have made a form identity out of that human being and compared to your own form. Where do I stand here? And if you feel inferior towards another human being, perhaps because he or she is more, you see, him or her is more spiritual, whatever it may be, famous, wealthy, so that inferiority is a hidden desire to be superior.

It's the inverted ego's desire to feel superior. So detecting that in oneself, that comparing yourself to others, of course in Miracles has a beautiful statement and says, comparison is an ego device. Always the ego, always compare, where do I stand in relation to that person?

Very subtle process. And then it's need, if it can, it will claim superiority somewhere. So if you meet an extremely wealthy person, you might feel, well, but I'm so much more spiritual than you.

And it's not that you need to deny that in yourself and think, now you have failed. The greatest thing is to detect something like that in yourself. Because by detecting it, it stands revealed.

It is no longer running you. That's really all that's needed. To see these subtle movements in oneself is enough to see it.

Oh, there it is. I was sitting in McDonald's. I don't know what you're doing there.

If you're already spiritual, who knows? I'm often forced to go to places, not, I haven't been to McDonald's for a while, but I'm often forced because of all the traveling and often times if you're away from cities, there are only fast food places, junk food places that you can go to on long car trips. So you have to go in and be there, feel at home there.

It's fine. That sense of separation goes that you feel in any way, there's a question we may come to it today about sense of when one in spiritual work, there's a metaphor that can be used that is you're going up a mountain. And like all metaphors, of course, it's not totally, not quite adequate.

And then sensing that you become more and more removed from the ordinary human condition. And that's not really the case at all. So a better metaphor, which we'll come to that, the question I mentioned, is going down rather than going up.

And we've been addressing that as death, encountering death, going into that rather than seeking to go up. And when you go into that depth, that's the top of the mountain at the same time. But it's not, there's no sense of separation and no sense of superiority.

Nothing could be further from the truth than any sense of separation from anyone else. But, of course, you see spiritual people who look aloof. And sometimes they are very serious practitioners.

And there are people who try to, they imitate the form sometimes not knowing it of Zen, for example. Zen is beautiful, but every practice can lead to ego in a subtle way. You then form an image of, I am a Zen practitioner.

And then you become very aloof because they are like that. But not the real master. It's different.

So you, I visited monasteries and whenever I approached the one or two monks who embodied the fullness of consciousness and occasionally the abbot, there's no sense of position when you speak to them. And then you talk to other monks that have been there for three or four or five years or six months and there's a strong sense of how important I am. Are you aware that you're talking to a Buddhist monk?

It's implied. And they don't, it's so subtle, they don't see it. If they saw it, they would laugh.

Maybe if they saw a video, they would laugh and it would dissolve. So certain people in your life, you feel that they don't see it and the activities that are engaged in, you may not feel drawn to that. Some people may leave you and that's okay.

Others may change around you. And in rare cases, some people may neither leave you nor change. This could be your mother.

This could be your father. I'm speaking from personal experience. And you love them.

Long ago, you might have had the demand that your mother or father should understand you. And that demand, which is a mental position, caused a lot of suffering. You should understand.

Why don't you understand me? And then at some point, that mental position dropped, was relinquished. I don't need you to understand me.

You don't need to say that. The need just doesn't arise. Why do you need to be?

Does it add anything to who you are being understood by your mother or your father? Does it add to your sense of identity? Please give me your understanding.

I can be more fully myself if you understand me. I need that. And I can add that too.

I won't be complete unless you understand me. It adds nothing. And then it's beautiful when that love is there that is not conditional upon you understanding me.

So certain people, and it can be people with whom you have family ties. It's a strange thing. In your family, brothers, sisters, parents, there are people with whom you wouldn't spend much time if you met them.

It's a strange thing. You'd say, I wouldn't want to have a meal with that person. And yet, not on the level of form, because on the level of form, you have nothing in common, it seems.

And yet, that person is there in your life. And that is fine. And so you drop down beyond form or demanding anything on the level of form.

And there's love and the allowing. Now you may not choose to live with that person, or you may not have a choice. Maybe there's no other place where you could live, who knows?

And beautiful surrender practice. And yes, some friends you may lose, other friends will become transformed with you. And that's beautiful too.

I knew somebody who had a highly developed mind and he was continuously invited to dinner parties because he was the life and the heart of every dinner party with his funny stories. Witty, intelligent, funny, often about other people and often with an added element of exaggeration or lie to make it more witty and more funny. That's why they invited him.

And then he noticed his mind movements and he stopped telling these exaggerated, often not true stories and he got fewer and fewer invitations to dinner parties. He wasn't in demand anymore. That can happen.

But on the level of form, very often other forms, humans, human forms, you may draw into your life. They just, through resonance, come into your life with which you resonate more on the level of form. But the love is equal, that you sense, whether you go to McDonald's and there are people sitting around you, or somebody with whom on the level of form you resonate, the love is the same.

It's not that you love one person more than that. That's the beauty of it. A strange little story to illustrate this.

In this small town where I lived in England for a few years, there was a woman who was strongly identified with ego, an extreme illustration of ego, because she caused a lot of trouble for everybody, as the ego does, and many people avoided her and they often would talk about her. Oh no, she's coming, let's leave. And they would all run away when she was due to arrive somewhere.

And one day I found myself walking along the main street and she was coming the opposite direction and I found myself crossing over to the other side. And the following week, I was walking along the main street again, and there she came just around the corner. I couldn't cross over to the other side, there wasn't enough time, and there she stood in front of me.

Now that strange thing happened. I felt, at the moment she stood in front of me, I felt enormous love. It wasn't my choice to stand in front of her on the level of form, but when the form suddenly stood there, there was only love.

So the two levels, any form that comes into your life is the appearance of the now in this form, and it's beautiful. At another time she came, visited me, and she sat next to me on the sofa and talked about her heavy problems involving attorneys and struggles against evil people. And I watched her and suddenly she put down the papers she had.

Similar things had happened to me before with other people and still happen. A sudden shift from intense identification with ego to, and she looked, and then she said, there's only love, isn't there? That is how it can, it is amazing how suddenly, in the presence of presence, how the shift can happen.

The whole, it wasn't yet permanent in her case, but it was there. And it's a miracle when that happens. And you, if you haven't experienced that already with people, as you embody presence, so to speak, egoic entities come into your life and are not resisted, and see often how the shift can happen.

And there is that beautiful being suddenly coming through. Before there was the Halloween mask, and suddenly there's that. A course in miracles says, no one dies without their own consent.

I don't really want to die to the body before I have a chance to die to the ego, even though I know there's great opportunity for transcendence in physical death. Do I have a conscious choice? That's simple.

You have already exercised your choice. You're here. This is the conscious death.

This is finding death before death finds you. It's nice to have short answers. There are some longstanding chronic ailments in the body that don't seem to respond to alternative therapies.

The liver appears to be steadily and rapidly getting worse since August. The doctors do not recommend conventional treatment. They feel it's too rough for this body.

The healer feels that suppressed emotions that have been releasing slowly now must be released fast, or the body will not survive more than six months to a year. Do you feel emotional release work, such as rebirthing or some sort of psychotherapy or energy work, would be worthwhile, or would being present as much as possible be just as effective? Thank you.

I am 55 today. Yesterday, happy birthday. And I am honored to spend my birthday in your presence.

It appears here that there is little time. That may not be the truth, but that is the appearance. It may be the truth or it may not be the truth.

But there's no greater opportunity for presence, the arising of presence, than sensing that there is little time or no time left. The truth is that a lie is to everybody, because it's not, there isn't that much time. And I have met people who were given a few months to live, and that was 20 years ago, and they're still here.

On the level of form, I can never tell people what to do. Release through some kind of body work or breathing may be helpful. But continuous, intense, intense, intense, intense, intense presence, and you have great motivation now for intense presence, especially sensing the inner body with great intensity.

Jesus said, pray without ceasing. And I'm sure he didn't mean that you should mumble 24 hours a day. He used pray in a deeper sense.

And I'm sure he didn't mean that. And this is, be present continuously and intensely in the body. Refuse to leave the now.

That is intense presence. Uncompromising no to past and future, and yes to now. Even at night, whenever there's this, you're awake, intense aliveness throughout every cell of the body, as if you only had, there's no time left at all.

Just this. Imagine sitting here and having no future at all. And at the same time, the two are so intimately connected.

The past collapses too. Time collapses here. Imagine that you have no past and future.

Only this. Only this. And that's the truth.

I just had imagined, to fool you, because you have only this. I just imagined so that you didn't completely reject what I'm saying. And that's why I'll say it again, just to get in there.

Imagine you have no past and future. Only this. They collapse.

On the left is past, it collapses. On the right is future, it collapses. These two edifices, mental structures, collapse.

So before you walked like that, heaviness here, heaviness there. And sometimes you would look that way and see the heaviness, and then you look that way, future. And then you walk on.

That's how people live. And very rarely do they look here. Their look is either there or there.

And there they walk, usually in the same spot. And then they've been there for a while, and then they go, oh, that's right. Oh, no, that wasn't right.

That shouldn't have happened. That might happen, will happen. What if that happens?

Or that might not happen? And so you've lived with that heaviness for lifetimes. I'm talking to humanity.

You don't have to believe in lifetimes if you don't want to. And then suddenly, sometimes through a shock, perhaps somebody tells you you have no more time, or some strange spiritual teacher says, imagine that there's no time. And time collapses and that weight, and there's an intense and total awakening in now.

And then you stay in it, because especially in your case, the questioner, any movement away from now will take you into suffering. Is that the avoidance of suffering? Is that running away from suffering?

No. It takes you deeper than suffering. There's no avoidance when you totally face the now.

Now, in that now, there may be pain in the body somewhere. There may be discomfort in the body somewhere. There may be disability.

Perhaps somebody can hardly move anymore or can't move at all. And that is the now. But it is faced so completely that no conceptual entity arises anymore in the mind, and that conceptual entity lives through past and future, and complains or fears or denies, leaves the now, creates an imaginary future, and in that imaginary future, all you encounter is death.

That's dreadful. And you have avoided the death that is here already by projecting yourself to an imaginary future where the body dies, perhaps soon, but still future, and then being extremely fearful about that. But what you're avoiding is dying now.

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[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 3:36:01)

But what you're avoiding is dying now. So, yes, great fear, because this is avoidance. Sometimes people get it wrong, they think this presence is avoidance.

Everything else is avoidance. So, don't avoid the death that is actually already here for you now, because that death takes you to life. No past, no future.

Now, this statement applies to everyone. If you leave the now, you suffer. You cut through suffering.

There may be pain in the now. Suffering requires a conceptual entity that breathes stories around the physical whatever is. But that conceptual entity cannot survive in this moment without past and future.

So, the person is something shines through the person suddenly. Intense presence, consciousness, conscious awareness replaces the story in the head. That's all.

And if there is, if doctors tell you you may only have a few months or a few weeks, this is the greatest opportunity. Use that opportunity where it seems there's no more future, because there's no future anyway. Now, life has removed future from you.

Let go of past also. It's easy now that you have no future. They're so intrinsically connected.

Time collapses, and here I am. And now refuse to leave, and you can sense the enormous influx of aliveness when you refuse to leave the now. And so that requires you to be very much like the Zen master whose countenance expresses the uncompromising and fierce aspect of presence.

I'm not leaving the now. And then you go a little bit into future, and the suffering entity is back. And you can see the light immediately gets dimmed.

So, this has been the breakthrough for many people when they were told you may not have any more time, or they were told clearly you only have this short amount of time, basically no time, at least not enough time for the egoic entity to plan a happy ending to its story. Not enough time for that. Because everybody else hopes that that happy ending that the egoic entity is planning, that you will have enough time for that.

The true happy ending is the ending of the story now. So, intense presence, continuous presence, you are motivated enough now for that. And then if you seek some bodily, body treatment that releases emotion, but a lot of it gets burned up in intense presence.

The past gets burned up through intense presence. And that includes long-held emotions in the body, because intense presence is in every cell of the body. It permeates every cell, and it burns up.

I'm using metaphors here, but they point to the truth. It burns up the past. To some extent that happens to all of you in this gathering, because this gathering is an energy field of presence.

So even as you sit here, past in you is being consumed by presence. But to accelerate the process, if you are highly motivated, choose presence continuously as your normal state of being. And, of course, in certain people where it seems there's not much future left, choose presence.

That becomes your motivation. And then there's a very fast burning up of, ultimately, karma. To use an Eastern term, karma dissolves, because karma is the accumulation of unconscious past in you with which you identify as yourself.

That perpetuates itself as long as you identify with it as yourself. It leads to further action, reaction, action, reaction, action. The same old thing is perpetuated, karma.

The dissolving of karma is the arising of presence. And that is the dissolving of past. Conditioning, a mental, emotional conditioning.

So the deeper meaning, when Jesus utters the strange words, you have the power to forgive sins, he's really talking about the power of presence that dissolves the accumulation of unconsciousness in you, identification with which is the deeper meaning of sin. And that's what was his function also, to dissolve, to forgive sins. That's the terminology he used.

Forgive means dissolving through presence. So the whole, it's a fire. I use another metaphor, but that is the flame of the fire of presence.

So a lot of past has dissolved for you already. You don't need to believe it, but that's how it is. But there may be residues that require much more presence as you leave here.

It's continuing in the state of presence. I don't know, I have no idea numerically how much past has been dissolved in you. It varies from person to person, 10%, 20%, 30%, 50%, who knows.

But then the fire burns in you of presence. It's just a metaphor. And as you live in presence, it no longer matters very much on the level of form how much more time you have.

You've already entered death now. And so remember part of that is intense inner body awareness. What a beautiful place or no place the now is.

Always, even in the midst of collapsing forms. If all disease comes from the mind, why did Nisargadatta get cancer and experience a painful death? Why didn't he just choose to die?

I know of one awakened person with glaucoma, another who had a stroke. What is happening here? Nisargadatta was a spiritual teacher.

Why did he not choose to die? Why didn't he just choose to die? Well, he did.

He died long before the body died. He chose to die long before the body died. And then he lost interest, as many of these forms do.

They get drawn so much into the formless presence, beingness. He lost so much interest that he even continued to be a heavy smoker. That's why he got throat cancer.

He smoked, and then he gave profound spiritual talks. And then they asked him, what are you doing? And he said, well, the body has a few habits left.

Let it have the habits. And he was in pain, and they said, the body has pain, it doesn't matter. He had already long before chosen death.

He lived in death, or in the formless life that is the other side of death. One way of seeing it, until now, those beings, so-called enlightened, liberated, I look at them as early prototypes of an experiment in consciousness. Consciousness is flowering through the human form.

And all these early human forms are early flowerings of consciousness. And with that, there are still many discrepancies, because the consciousness flowers through the form of a body created by a million years of egoic delusion, the density of the body, and nevertheless it flowers. So the discrepancies come in.

A person carries the density of an egoic body, and enormous energy floods through it. And sometimes the body even gets killed by the influx of energy. It's not up to that.

Don't be scared, that's not the purpose of the... Some spiritual teachers had continuous aches and pains. Krishnamurti was plagued by intense headaches for many, many years, leading often to unconsciousness, so intense, for years and years.

And he never went to see a doctor about it. He knew it had nothing to do with that. There was an intensity of presence coming through him, through a relative density, although many bodies were far more dense than his.

And so those were all experiments. Consciousness, there's only consciousness. Consciousness somehow moves through whichever form offers least density or opaqueness.

It isn't concerned about who you are. It doesn't have favorite individuals. Consciousness moves wherever it can.

And if it can't express itself fully, it'll move anyway. And if the body can't stand it for long, it'll move anyway. But gradually, the human form becomes a better vehicle for presence to arise, more in tune.

The change is already happening in us. Presence moves through this body without pain, very rare. Only very recently, there have been a few days when there's pain.

For years and years, presence has moved through now without pain. But who knows? There's no claim that things can happen to this body.

Who knows? A perfect physical body is not, in any case, the aim. Eventually, it may become a byproduct.

As long as the body is there, there's a byproduct. But the density changes anyway, so what we perceive as body eventually will be very different. We don't need to be concerned about this.

It's happening already. But yes, with these experimental beings, sometimes the discrepancy is there between their physical form and what comes through the form. It doesn't matter to that form anymore.

They are fine. And they don't even suffer. Even in intense pain, they don't suffer.

Yes, they have intense pain. The intense pain is there, but the suffering entity isn't there. The me.

So what that feels like, and I had... My first pain was in many, many, many years. I can't even remember.

A few weeks ago, I had intense back pain in New York. And it's a strange... I had forgotten what pain is like.

And it's a strange sense of pain being somewhere in your awareness there is pain. There's all this field of awareness, and somewhere in that awareness, there's pain. And it's okay.

Hard to describe. It's almost as if pain were somewhere in your proximity. Oh, it's okay.

There it is, in the field of awareness. Not a suffering entity. And then it goes.

Now, for other, not talking now, not spiritual teachers, but there are many forms of pain, of course. Ultimately, the body is the product of the egoic mind, the human body. So everybody inherits that.

And it's only gradually that will change from... The body will then express, be a product of presence, rather than that. But that only comes when you're no longer identified with form.

Then the form becomes transparent. It's the identification with form that keeps the density of form. The transparency of form comes with a non-identification with form.

So form is never it. The perfection of form is not an aim. The aim, and even that is not the right word, because it would imply future, knowing yourself as the formless, then forms have greater transparency.

But everybody who is born inherits still the egoic bodily form. Sometimes they say in India that when liberation happens, this is a perspective, when liberation happens, it dissolves karma completely. What it doesn't dissolve, they say, is the karma that is in the body that you were born with, because they talk about it as the arrow that has left the bow.

It's been shot already. But even that is an old statement that may no longer apply, as there's an enormous acceleration now of presence coming in. One Zen master, of course, every spiritual master, which is you, chooses death now, the death to form that is there when there's only this, so has already entered death.

Then the death of the physical body, there have been some masters who chose also that. A Zen master announced tomorrow after the evening meditation, the body will go. They thought he had made another joke or some kind of riddle.

And after the evening meditation, he sat up, roared like a lion, and died. It's a nice way to go. There seem to be many dimensions of consciousness.

Examples of a few might be satori, where one knows all things and can heal from a distance. Dimensions of the high self with spirit guides, masters and teachers to guide us. Dimensions of the Akashic records.

Does being in the now help to open up to these dimensions? Now, you may have noticed that I don't talk about these dimensions or spirit guides. If you imagine a sphere, and physical existence is the surface of the sphere of physical existence, this work is concerned with going to the center, the source out of which everything arises.

The life of that sphere is energized by that center, the one source, the one pure formless intelligence, consciousness that you are. Because you are connected, even as this little form dancing on the surface for a few moments. You are an expression of that in form temporarily.

But in between that outer manifestation and the center, there are many realms of form. They're all form. The formless is only at the center.

That center is the center of you. That center is within yourself. But between the outer and the center, there are many other manifestations of forms.

There are form entities that we are not aware of, or only some people are aware of, manifestations of form on different levels. Now, some people, they go from the center, they penetrate one or two levels down, and then they encounter interesting forms there. That may be helpful, but where do they get their information?

Why is it, where do they get, how can they be helpful? Because they are connected to the source. You don't realize that you are equally connected to the source, so you need to get help from certain entities, and they are happy to help.

But they are only also an expression of the source. So this work is not to say this doesn't exist, it's simply to find the source within. If in between that and the outermost you encounter other things that are helpful, it's beautiful.

There's nothing there that you need, ultimately. There may be things that you enjoy, but there's nothing there that you need to know yourself or to be yourself, because that would be, you can get lost in that easily by thinking the answers come from some, or the answers come from some form that is in between here and the source. And they may have great answers and be very helpful, but then, ultimately, they prevent you from finding yourself.

Unless they tell you it's enough, we're done with helping you, now you do it yourself. If you get caught anywhere in between, that can be very tempting. You may develop certain, in India they have the expression, siddhis, certain powers, psychic powers, other powers.

And you can easily, at any point except the center, the ego can still find an involvement with some form and derive an added identity out of that. You may develop certain psychic powers by accessing somewhere in between there, and very easily the ego can claim. And so there have been people regarded as great teachers, but they got trapped somewhere, not the deepest source, but somewhere in between, and exercised psychic powers.

So psychic powers may happen, that psychic power means to, but they're not important, concerned, and if you lose the awareness of source, ego will come in. If the awareness of source is kept, then if occasionally psychic powers, the greatest psychic power is presence. But if you should, maybe you foresee the future, which doesn't exist anyway, but...

So that's the, yes, just as you don't deny or this form reality as physical forms, even there, there are forms, and if they enter your awareness, they are also honored. But just as you don't seek yourself in any of these physical forms, you don't seek yourself either in any of those forms that come. This has happened in the past.

I read the Theosophical Society before Krishnamurti and during Krishnamurti, when they found him, they were involved very much with spirit guides, and I could see the subtle egos there, they didn't know it, identifying with their relationship with the master. Speak to me if you want to speak to that master, because I have access to the master, and then hierarchies of attainment, all egoic things coming in, can be misleading. If Krishnamurti eventually said, I'll have none of this, this is it, I'm leaving, he needed to go to the source and did.

So it's not to deny any of this, just as you don't deny this, it is form, and it is. But realizing the essence of your being, anything that a spirit guide can tell you comes from the one intelligence, the one consciousness that you are. So go there directly.

And then if you meet a spirit guide, enjoy the meeting. Yes, there too is a holy encounter, just as our meeting is a holy encounter. Holy encounter at retreats, I very much enjoy, and people seem to enjoy it too, encountering each person face to face, and exchanging a hug.

That's a sacred, little sacred, one could almost say ceremony, but it's a meeting. And since I cannot hug everybody in one day, I'd like to hug people over today and tomorrow. And those of you who have better things to do can leave if you don't want the hug or don't want to sit while others are being hugged, or exchanging hugs.

Or you could sit here and simply take it as a meditation. If hugging seems a little silly to you, that's fine too. I'm having none of this new age stuff.

I'll just put the questions away. I'll come back to more questions. I'll stand here.

I saw in a mail order catalog of spiritual products a set of six silent tapes. It may work, if it gets you to listen to the silence. I paid for it, so I might as well listen.

Learning to listen, learning to look. I have a collection of photos. Occasionally I walk around with a camera and take photos of nature.

Looking at each photo is meditative. It was taken in a meditative state of presence. I sometimes walk around for an hour and then suddenly I take a photo.

So there too, just like art, if you see it, it can be a lesson in looking. Here you have a meditative scene, either painted or taken in a meditative state. It points.

It could teach you to look. Maybe one day I'll publish some photos. And it's a contemplation of learning how to look.

Of course, it's everywhere. You could take a square foot here, anywhere. You could take photos.

It's great beauty. But the looking always is through the stillness. And then it doesn't really matter what you're looking at anymore.

And then there's some beauty even if you are looking upon death, if you're looking through stillness. And the same with listening. Krishnamurti would walk around, go for long walks every day.

And he said, often for two or three hours, not a single thought arises during the walks. But this is not something that you need to aim at. It would create problems.

Just one simple look through stillness is enough, one at a time. What perception is like through stillness, as far as it can be expressed in words, and of course it can't really be expressed in words, is in his notebook, Krishnamurti's notebook, many, many descriptions of nature perceived through stillness. And you can see how every perception is fresh and new, totally alive.

And somehow he managed to get that across, even still in the words, that is still there. This looks like a long question, but the question comes at the end. We already touched upon this this morning.

Spiritual awakening is frequently described as a journey to the top of the mountain. We leave our attachments and our world, lives, behind and slowly make our way to the top. At the peak we have transcended all pain.

The interesting thing about this metaphor is that we leave all others behind, our drunken brother, our schizophrenic sister, our tormented animals and friends. Their suffering continues, unrelieved by our personal escape. Perhaps there could be a deficiency, not in the reality, but in the metaphor of moving up the mountain.

But let's just continue. In the process of discovering and living from an awakened and noble heart, on what Buddhists call Bodhicitta, the journey goes down, not up. It's as if the mountain points towards the, I can't read that word, of the earth, instead of reaching into the sky, the center of the earth, instead of reaching into the sky.

Instead of transcending the suffering of all creatures, the movement is towards turbulence and doubt. We jump into it, we slide into it, we tiptoe into it, we meet it fully, we move towards it however we can. We explore the reality and unpredictability of insecurity and pain.

We don't try to push it away. If it takes years, lifetimes, we let it be as it is, at our own pace, without speed or aggression, we move down and down and down. At the bottom, we discover water, the healing water of Bodhicitta.

Right down there in the thick of things, we discover the love that will not die. With us move millions of others, our companions in awakening from pain. What are the various advantages and pitfalls one might encounter, either moving up the mountain or inverting the mountain into the earth?

If the world is Brahman and Brahman is the world, what's the most effective means to reveal that this is always already so, leaving nothing out? Blessings to you, dear Eckhart. Thank you.

Now, all metaphors are limited, and the metaphor of moving up the mountain gives you the wrong impression that you're moving away from your fellow human beings and leave them behind. The metaphor of moving down gets a little bit closer to the truth, and from this we can see that you prefer this, the metaphor of moving down rather than up. And, of course, this is what we've also been doing here.

The constant theme here is facing death, not moving away from it, because ultimately down is death. That's the, you get to the bottom of it. But the reservation here is the feeling that you might be creating greater distance between you and your fellow human beings through going beyond suffering, as you are up there and they are down here.

So it looks as if you were leaving them behind. But all you're leaving behind is a dimension of consciousness that is suffering. You're not leaving behind your fellow human beings.

You go beyond the dimension of consciousness that is the dimension of suffering. And as you go beyond that, there is not a greater separation, there's the disappearance of the sense of separation from your fellow man and woman. Suffering itself is inseparable from the sense of separation, from yourself and from your fellow man and woman.

One could say the origin of suffering lies in one's perception of separateness, of seeing yourself separate from the one, the totality, and therefore from each other human being. And so a lot of the suffering that arises out of the illusion of separateness is generated when you interact through the illusion of separateness with other human beings, and the interaction itself creates further suffering, because the basis for the interaction is your perception of yourself and the others as separate. So the separation that you want to avoid lies there, and perhaps the main characteristic of suffering is the separation.

The separation between you and your fellow human being ends as you move beyond suffering. So when you're beyond suffering, it means beyond identification with all those mind structures. When you then look upon everything and everyone through the stillness which is love, there is no sense of separation.

So you join for the first time, truly, then. So the metaphor of moving up the mountain and leaving others behind doesn't really work very well, although it's an old one. Behind what you are writing here, there's the very noble and deep sense of oneness that you don't want to lose.

In fact, that is already arising in you, but you don't need to join others in their suffering. You have gone through that. You are still going through that.

We are never walking away from suffering here in this work. There's no walking away from suffering. There's only a walking through, a complete facing, no movement away from.

And suffering ultimately is the fact of death and everything that goes towards death. It's total facing it. And only by walking through suffering can you go beyond suffering.

And those that are still in suffering, the strange thing is, and nobody can understand this fully, you can only sense it or glimpse it, the connection between your consciousness and what you perceive as others or the world. There is an intimate connection between the world and the looker, the one who looks upon the world, the one who perceives the world, the consciousness through which seemingly others' other life forms are being perceived, that creates your world. And these strange insights that have arisen out of modern physics, similar insights that were already there in ancient Buddhism, of the close connection between what you believe is the world out there and the state of consciousness through which the world is being perceived and interpreted.

And there is an intimate connection there. And ultimately there is, and modern physics confirms it, there is no separate world out there, separate from your state of consciousness. So one, when you look upon the world no longer through the illusion of separateness, that is an enormous transformation.

The entire world shifts what you experience as the world. And our view of individuals as separate entities, again, is deficient, of course. Let's look for a moment at it from a different perspective, of humanity as one single organism.

And you are a cell in that organism of humanity. And what is happening to the organism of humanity, or just offering a perspective, one could say from one perspective is a healing, from another perspective you could say the organism is going through an evolutionary change, whatever perspective you prefer. And as that happens, the cells undergo a change, it's the process of healing or transformation.

Now would one cell say, no, I'm not going through that change because there are many others who haven't yet gone through that change, many other cells, I refuse, I am going to wait until all the others are also ready and then we'll all do it together. But of course, it's already happening. It has to happen somewhere, and then it spreads.

And so, in the new state of consciousness, there's no longer the sense of separation. There's love. There's no greater distance.

The distance was there when you were totally trapped in suffering, as it is still in all those humans who themselves are totally trapped in suffering. There's continuous separation. You cannot really unite in suffering.

You can only separate in suffering. Suffering is not compatible with union. And so, again, if you use the same perspective or metaphor, and of course it is an aspect of the truth of humanity as an organism, one whole, each one is a cell in this one organism, you would also look upon recent events in a different light, which show clearly that part of the organism is still diseased or very unconscious.

So you no longer, this is humanity. The terrorist is humanity. The victim is humanity.

The organism is inflicting pain on itself. The metaphor of disease is fairly adequate, quite good. And healing, us sitting here as cells in the organism, the cells, there's a healing taking place, a very deep healing.

But the healing is more than healing. Healing might mean restoring it to normal function, but there's more here. So the healing is also an evolution in progress.

There is no ultimate reality, only relative reality to individual identity. So ultimately the question of, why should I be free of suffering but not him or not her? I have no right to be free of suffering.

Many people had the feeling after the events of September the 11th, a few days after we had that retreat in New York, and many people had that feeling because the retreat is about the inner state of peace. They had the feeling, I have no right to be at peace in the midst of all that suffering. It is understandable to see it in that way because you give ultimate reality to individualized existence.

But here we have the totality of the organism, and it's almost as if cells within the organism were saying, we have no right to be healed. Look at these other cells. They are still diseased or they've just been killed.

Ultimately, every individual is a temporary expression in form of the one, the one life, the one consciousness. And if you look deep down, the essence of what you feel to be your individuality, the one thing that you wouldn't want to lose, there is something in each one. Not the story.

It sometimes gets mixed up with the story, covered up by the story of me. But within the story there is an essence of I-ness, I am-ness, a deep sense of beingness. That is the core of identity, and that is then misperceived through mental structures, and you identify that with stories.

It gives life, one could almost say. It's the light that shines through the film, and then you get it projected onto a screen, it is the story. But the essence of each film that you see projected on the screen with its figures and moving about in their personal drama, comedy or drama, the essence of each film is the light that shines through the film.

The whole drama that you see, the form reality, are modifications of the light that shines through that film. That's how a projection works onto a screen. If any one figure on that film, if it were possible to continue the metaphor, suddenly became aware that he or she is more than the part that he or she is acting out, or has been acting for years, always the same film basically, if suddenly became aware that there is a script here, and there is a conditioned forms that I am acting out, you could drop beyond the conditioning and realize within, perhaps in the midst of acting out all that, their essence as the core of what they had been covered up by identification with the story and the movement of the story, the core as I am-ness, being-ness, the light itself. And suddenly you know who you are as your essence.

Just like everything else that you interact with, the essence of it is the light also. Every form that you interact with, to continue the metaphor for a moment, every form that you interact with on that film, screen, the essence of that is also the light. And it's possible then that the whole script would change.

If we go further with the metaphor, it won't work anymore. Metaphors are very limited, you can't take them too far. But they help, they are little pointers.

So individuality, individual existence is relatively true, but in absolute terms, no. Each one of us is an expression of the one. Now to address the question with which it ends, and it's a good one.

If the world is Brahman and Brahman is the world, what's the most effective means to reveal that this is always already so, leaving nothing out? What is the most effective way to reveal that? Now you've overlooked that we've already been doing that, and it's easy to overlook because it's too little and simple.

In the mind's attempt to understand, it can overlook the truth that is so simple. What is the means to reveal to us that the world is Brahman, Brahman is the world, and that is always already so? And that, of course, is surrender to what is.

And it stands revealed. Surrender to the is-ness of this moment. And you know that to be the truth.

And that is so simple that the mind can easily overlook it, and five minutes later, it says, How? How? You talked about that?

I don't remember that. That's why I have said it so many times. And nothing else is needed.

That is the core of our gathering. Nothing else is needed in your life, ever, but surrender to what is already the case, to use those words. What is already the case is the suchness of now, whatever form it takes.

You cannot argue with what is. Action can arise, and you can do things also in the moment. But while it is now, it is.

And so, let us accept it completely, and let us surrender. The rest happens by itself. That is the opening.

Everything else happens. Even further questions become unnecessary in that. When there is real surrender, there is no further need to work anything out.

And it is not that you become stupid. You become intelligent, or rather, the intelligence, the one intelligence, can move through you now. So that simple act of uncompromising, yes, to what is now, the form of now, which changes continuously.

Although occasionally it stays around for a few days, like the rain. And then you can see how rarely, in the old state of mind, you live in that way. How deeply habitual the opposite is of not wanting what is, wanting what is not.

And how subtle that movement is, very subtle, sometimes very loud, but other times very subtle. There are many ways of denying the is-ness of this moment. From boredom, to screaming rage, to irritation, to mental complaining, to anger, all different forms, and all the mental judgments that go with it.

So the greatest thing that you can do, of course, is to live in that yes. Sometimes in spiritual traditions they ask, some teachers say, there's nothing you can do, and other teachers say, oh yes, there's something you can do. And this really is, you can look at it from one perspective, and the yes to what is looks as if you could do something.

You can surrender. Are you not doing something? It's spiritual practice of surrender.

You look at it from one perspective. So the teachers are true, so you can do something. The other perspective also works.

The teachers say, yes, nothing you can do. They are right too. That is simply another perspective of looking at surrender.

You're not doing anything. It is. I'm not doing anything.

I'm just open to what is. Just a different way of putting it. So if one teacher says there's nothing you can do, it's true.

And if you truly knew that, you would surrender to what is. There's nothing you can do spiritually to get anywhere. So the difference between the master and the non-master is simply the state of surrender.

It is not greater knowledge, greater skills, greater psychic powers. Psychic powers are not really nothing to do with spiritual mastery. You can have psychic powers and be like an athlete.

You've trained a particular faculty, like a muscle, and then you can perform certain things. Being a master has nothing to do with knowing more than you know now. It has nothing to do with needing to add another 5, 10 years of meditation to your store of spiritual attainment.

You could add indefinitely. It's a simple fact of not arguing with what is. So some masters are relatively ignorant.

They have no education or almost none, and it doesn't make any difference. And even in that state, wisdom comes out of their mouth with the little education they have. They still speak wisdom.

Who is speaking? The one intelligence to which they are now open. Not the limited mind that knows very little anyway, even in the most knowledgeable person.

That knowledgeable person is just full of mental labels and mistakes the labels for truly knowing. The labels, the more labels you have, the more you are in the illusion that you really know, because you can attach all these labels to phenomena. So the master, and often there are many masters, probably most masters have less education than any one of you, far less.

Know far less on the level of accumulated knowledge, and yet they open their mouth and wisdom comes out. There is a question here, what is wisdom? That's wisdom.

The mouth, you ask a question, and if it's a vital question, the answer comes. Who is speaking? The one intelligence, the one consciousness is using this inadequate little mind that knows almost nothing, and yet wisdom comes out.

And love and compassion flow through. Now obviously, for love and compassion, you don't need to know much. That flows through.

When Jesus talks of the rich man finding it very hard to enter the kingdom of heaven, rich, of course, can also refer to rich and accumulated knowledge, because that doesn't, no matter what you add, it cannot add to the essence of who you are already. And those people who have accumulated knowledge somehow had to relinquish a lot of that. As I did, there was a point in my life when I had reached a considerable accumulation of knowledge and I had built an egoic identity around it, because that was my main thing.

Other people may have physical strength and built an egoic identity around it. They may have good looks and built an egoic identity around it. They may have possessions and built an identity around it.

Or if they have none of these, they have a miserable self-image and built an identity around it as somebody who has none of these things. And so I had knowledge. Well, at first I didn't have that much, and I realized how little I had, and then I started reading books, and I began to sound more and more knowledgeable.

All these new dropping names and concepts, and just to show how much you know. And so you feel a bit bigger in that, and underneath it you're also still very miserable, because the more you get trapped in form, mental forms, the more the miserable little me suffers, because it's an unreality. But for a while, so more and more knowledge I acquired, and still felt extremely uneasy whenever I was in a room with people, because who knows, I might not say the right thing, and you know.

And then wait for just that one clever remark and get it in there. And then something happened, and all that became meaningless. And then after the shift, a lot of the accumulated knowledge was lost.

For a little while it stayed there, but as there was little interest in it, a lot of it got lost. If now I had to sit for an exam for things that I used to teach, I would fail miserably, completely. It's not really needed, it's not needed anymore.

So why carry all that around? So it's strange, the egoic sense of self often has a particular focal point around which the ego grows. So whether it's knowledge or any of the other things I mentioned, you can watch it, perhaps in yourself.

Many of you have already gone beyond or are in the process of transcending identification with that, and you can now look upon it without feeling, I can't face it, and you can smile if you look upon your ego and how it's behaved in the past. Maybe still occasionally does. And see if it's around a self-image of me as spiritual, a self-image of me as the one who has made it, or wealthy, whether it's based on knowledge, perhaps based on spiritual knowledge, acquired knowledge, so many things, good looks that last for a while, wealth that lasts for a while until the Dow Jones goes down even more.

The interesting form identity, and you don't even need to be concerned how to get rid of it if the focus of your life is now rather than before or later, it can't really operate very much in now. It needs past, future, continuity of me from past to future. Because in the now you're very simple.

In the now you're just the same as a beggar sitting next to you. You're sitting somewhere, here's a breathing body, and there's another breathing body, a beggar, and here's the millionaire, and you're in the state of presence, complete and utter presence. Then there's no longer a barrier.

The barrier between you and the beggar was the self-image, perhaps of you as the spiritual one, or of you as the wealthy one, or of you as the knowledgeable one, or the good-looking one, whatever. And that was the barrier, just as in the joke about the rabbi and the priest, and the rabbi, the street sweeper, he shouldn't be nobody, he's only a street sweeper. How dare you be nobody?

I am nobody. Nobody is more nobody than me. And in any situation, I pointed it out before, where you remove the superstructure of mental conceptualization from the now, there remains the simplicity of this moment.

You're sitting somewhere, standing somewhere, breathing, walking, moving, looking, alive, present. Here, there's attention, the field of attention that underlies all sense perceptions, that operates. And gone is the superstructure of conceptualization in which the present moment is obscured by a huge and complex mental story in which you are involved.

Because I'm on my way to seeing such and such about this important meeting, and it's going to be problematic. And in the meantime, you miss all this. And when you get there, all you have at your disposal to deal with it is the limited little me with its fears.

If you went with the periphery of your attention, knowing, yes, you're moving from A to B, peripherally you know, yes, I'm going to that meeting, I'm going there, but you're fully here while you go. There remains the simplicity and fullness of this without the complex me stifling the aliveness of this moment, like a heavy bell sitting on top of your head, which is the conceptualized me with its story. And it's trying to get somewhere, hoping at some point it will be free of that through a bit more future.

I just have to deal with this now, just get my divorce out of the way. Maybe then. And then I need to find someone.

Maybe then. And so people walk around with this heavy thing over their head, missing life continuously, but looking for life over there. It's a tragedy and comedy at the same time.

How simple this is, just this moment, always. Impossible for it to be complex. There's not enough room.

Complexity needs past and future. But here there's not enough room. My mother has Alzheimer's badly.

My father is her primary caregiver and is weary to his breaking point. I want so much to help them. How can I?

There's the practical level, and a more important level is your state of consciousness regarding that situation. At some point your father needs to learn, and he may be learning it already, the meaning of surrendered action. There may come a point when it goes beyond what he can do physically, and then action is taken on the practical level.

There's always a solution. Eventually on the practical level a solution will come. But what is more important is for him to use that situation, which is a situation of suffering, of course, great suffering.

And what can you do there except surrender? Perhaps he's already learning surrendered action, as long as he's doing it. And perhaps you are learning also surrender, without demanding that it should be different.

You're facing death. Alzheimer just happens that the psychological entity dies before the physical. Sometimes a brief flash of presence comes with it.

It is almost nature coming to a brief flowering, and then it's obscured again. But it's one way for that flowering to happen for some people, is to lose their mind. A friend of mine whose mother has Alzheimer, I haven't met her, but he told me about her, and he said, this is not the case with every stage of Alzheimer, but what he observed, he said for the first time in her life she's happy.

She has lived in misery her whole life, and perhaps that could not sustain itself anymore. It had to collapse. But it is facing death, the death of the form.

And sooner or later, one way or another, each one of us will face it, enjoy those who have already faced it. Before death comes to you, you have found death. We are finding it here.

So bring surrender, and surrender is especially effective in any situation that appears unacceptable, called by the mind unacceptable. Bring acceptance into what the mind calls completely unacceptable. Then it's very deep.

There are many little surrenders, even at a red traffic light, very little. The old reactive thing is dropped. There's simply, right, red light, stop, be here now.

Little tiny surrender, but beautiful too. But the big surrender comes when you face death, one form or another. So perhaps your father can read the book, the power of now may help, the tape may help.

If he is open, if he's not yet open, if he cannot listen to that, if surrender is a meaningless pointer to him, perhaps another pointer works. If nothing works, while nothing works, suffering will be his teacher, and that works too. He will still be in suffering, in deep suffering, and for many humans on the planet, that is still their teacher, and that's beautiful too, ultimately, and it works.

Crucifixion, encapsulated in the symbol of crucifixion. Suffering, eventually leading to surrender, but pointing out, if he's ready, that can save time. If nobody points it out to him, it might take longer.

If he's ready, he will suddenly go. And then in the midst of the doing, whatever he needs to do physically, until he can't do it anymore, and then change will happen, whatever he needs to do physically is done in the surrendered state, and it will take him into peace. Because anything that you accept fully, takes you into peace.

The worse it is, the more fully, the deeper the yes needs to be. And the worse it is, the deeper the peace that comes with that deep yes. And that's why occasionally, in a person's life, when it's gotten really bad, the yes became, first the suffering became unbearable, then the yes became so deep, that the no never came back.

But usually it has to get really bad, in the absence of spiritual teaching. The expression, although it is a little bit of a cliche, there's truth to the expression, blessing in disguise. Now, once you know that, nothing bad can really happen to you anymore, because it's immediately turned into good, through the yes.

It's just a question of how deep the yes needs to be, it will reflect the situation. You have one more month to live, then the yes will be either a dreadful no, or a very deep yes. And that month, if it's prediction is true, it may not be true.

Miracles happen in surrender, ultimately it doesn't matter. That month will be, compared to perhaps 50, 60, 70, 80 years of ordinary living, there's a month of flowering, intense aliveness, intense deep peace. If your life is led up to that, it all makes sense.

It's all one's past, which sometimes seems so nonsensical, why did I do that, why did that have to happen to me, and that was a big mistake. Getting involved with that, for years I spent, and then getting involved with that person, that was another big mistake. There's no story that is free of that mental story, and some stories are predominantly one big mistake.

It is not uncommon for a person to base their identity on a storyline whose essential characteristic is that of a mistake. That's a painful identity, a painful sense of self. Illusion, of course, painful illusion.

You never made any mistakes, because you're here now. It got you here, somehow. And if it was all one big mistake, that one big mistake got you here, so it worked.

Would you talk about prayer? I'm wondering about how one can pray and form intentions that don't focus on future, and that honor presence. Sometimes I feel love for my children, the world, other people, and so on, that feels so strong that I want to cry.

Is this emotions, or is it an intensity of presence? I wonder if I have some attachment or thoughts caught up in it. So there are two questions.

Let's see this one first. Sometimes I feel love for my children, the world, other people, that feels so strong that I want to cry. Now, is that emotions, or is it an intensity of presence?

I don't know. Only you can know. If you don't know, then the question is, how can you know?

If it's emotion, sooner or later, it will turn into its opposite. There's always an opposite. So if you feel great love for a person, and it's just an emotion, there's ego that goes with that.

Maybe for your child, or partner, or friend, and one day the friend doesn't return your phone call, and suddenly comes up an intense wave of anger, or whatever the friend does, or your child doesn't live up to expectations, does something silly regarded by you as silly, or doesn't come as often as he should, or doesn't return your phone calls, is otherwise engaged. And if it's emotion, you will often very quickly experience the opposite also, the fluctuation of love and the opposite of love. Frequently in partnerships, of course, you experience that.

Partners experience the fluctuation of intense emotional love, and the next day they're throwing things at each other, even hatred. That's the opposite polarity. So love towards other people, if it remains no matter what they do, then it arises out of presence.

And that can be very intense too, and yes, there can be tears there also. There are not many thoughts connected with love that arises out of presence. You don't build a story around the love.

It's just that. Often with emotions, there's again a strong element of story building with regards to the other person and your relationship with that person. So you can just wait and see.

And if it's emotion, is that bad? No, it's an emotion. And the best thing about it is that you see it.

You see that it's an emotion, a human emotion. There's nothing bad about it. And the seeing is freeing.

You see it as the movement of an emotion that occasionally turns into its opposite and then back to love and the fluctuation of that. And you see it. The seeing is the arising of presence.

The emotion is still there. You don't need to get rid of it, but see it as it happens. And if you don't see it, that's okay too.

Then your teacher is the suffering that arises out of attachment to it. That works too. Everything works.

The other question, prayer. How to pray and form intentions that don't focus on future and that honor presence. It's connected with similar questions that often arise about manifesting something, about positive thinking, about affirmations, visualizations, creating your own reality, famous concept.

Now there are many people who attempt to create their own reality not having recognized egoic mind structures. And to some extent that also works. Except that whatever I create won't make them happy.

It will eventually make them unhappy and that's why it works. Anything that's created before you have gone beyond egoic mind structures, the basis for the creation is the neediness of the ego and its desire, its urge to make itself bigger. Then you create your own reality with the aim of enhancing your sense of self through creating whatever you're creating.

And that works also for a while, but it doesn't fulfill its purpose because it is designed to make you find yourself. And that, it won't fulfill that purpose. It can't.

Eventually it'll make you unhappy. First it'll make you happy, then either it'll disappear, it's in the nature of things to disappear again, or the very thing will make you unhappy. It's because it doesn't deliver the goods, what you thought it would deliver, for a deep sense of who you are.

You add something big, you create your own reality, and even that big thing that you create out of thought power, it's possible. It comes about, and then for a while it's great, and then it doesn't work suddenly because the base for it was an illusion. So one could say there are two ways of being unhappy, not getting what you want and getting what you want.

So there's that need to add more, that's the egoic need, believing to find myself I need to add something. So although creating your own reality, there is a truth in it, a deep truth, but often that's misperceived if you haven't gone beyond, and haven't even detected ego in yourself. In a wider sense, of course you create your own reality, in the sense that your inner state and your outer, the world, what you experience as the world, they're intimately connected.

And an inner state of oneness and peace tends to be reflected in outer circumstances. Not totally, because everything out there has a beginning and an end, but certain polarities are still there. Any situation you go into, you encounter the world of form.

The world of form, what you gain here on the level of form, you lose there. If you suddenly become very wealthy, then you lose something somewhere else. You suddenly become famous, somewhere else you lose something.

You lose your privacy, but you've become famous. You can't walk in the streets anymore, so you're trapped alone, but you're famous. You can't relate to people anymore because they all want something from you, but you're famous.

And so many people who achieve great success, suddenly say, is that what it's like? It wasn't meant to be like that. I'm a prisoner now, can't go out anymore.

That's why quite a few famous people have read The Power of Now. If they were totally happy with being famous, they would never have read it. What for?

If you've made it. So what you experience, although the outer reflects the inner, and a state of deep inner connectedness, having gone beyond mind identification, tends to be reflected in the outer, but the outer will still have the limitations of forms. Whatever forms come to you on the outer will to some extent express the limitations of form, and there's nothing wrong with that.

But your world does change, the way in which you experience the world, because it is a reflection of the outer. Now the question is, having gone beyond egoic goals, realizing, having gone beyond the neediness of the egoic mind, and egoic sense of self, what about then? Could we not then use prayer or other means in order to create?

Or do we just sit there, I'm amplifying the question, I'm sure it's all in that question, or do we just sit there and wait for the universe to operate, and bring to us what we need, or until we are suddenly moved to doing something, the impulse comes? And both are true. The impulse to do will come from within, from a deeper level, consciousness, and at times all you need to do is be there in that state, and things come to you.

Whatever you will be teaching in one way or another, and the universe will be assisting you because the universe is moving towards consciousness, and you are then totally aligned with that. And how could it not assist you, even on the level of form? But it doesn't mean that you cannot do anymore.

You can create, yes. Not out of any need, however. We create because you see what you create is aligned with the universal purpose.

Not to make you happy. You would never create anything because you think it's going to make you happy. You realize nothing will make you happy.

You're happy already. Or rather, you've gone beyond happiness and unhappiness to the deeper place. So you don't need it to make you happy or to give you an identity, that's really the main, to enhance your identity, that's where the illusion lies.

But you don't need that anymore because you know who you are. You've gone beyond the story. You create, you can create out of play, the play with form.

Why not play a little and create something that you might enjoy on the level of form? But it is likely that it will be part of a greater purpose, not separate from the greater purpose.

Many of you may want to have a center, a healing center.

And that would, of course, be aligned with the greater purpose. And there to assist that, and even you can focus on that for a while, but make sure that it's not egoic. Make sure you are not unhappy and you want the healing center to lose your unhappiness, which means you're missing the basis, which is the now.

That needs to be right first, get that right first, this, this. Once you're in the now, you can create. But you're not creating to lose your dissatisfaction with what is.

You create more karma. You're no longer dissatisfied with what is. Then creation can happen through you.

And often you will find the impulse comes. Often you don't need to do anything. Things come.

You can still do. Affirm what it is that you know may be part of your purpose on life in this lifetime. And then you visualize your healing center.

That's a form of prayer. Not, and this is just one example, never saying that you are going to have it. Never saying, please let me have it.

That doesn't work very well. Always sensing and feeling that it's already there. It's already here.

Only that works powerfully. It's already here. It just hasn't appeared in physical manifestation yet.

And so you could use affirmations for a while, and even pictorial images for a while. Focus intensely and know it is here. And then put it aside.

Don't carry on for too long. Carry on for a while. The space, forget about it then.

If you carry on and on and it's not coming, it doesn't work like that. You put it out and forget about it. Otherwise, you would be looking, pulling out a plant and seeing if the roots are growing.

So if it's in alignment, it is not self-serving. It is not designed to enhance your identity. You don't need that.

Then it's not a karmic creation. It is aligned. And then that's fine.

Why not? It works beautifully. And many things will come.

It may not be exactly as you imagined it. It may be far greater. It may be different.

Again, finding the middle way between not being specific enough and being too specific.

If you're not specific enough, you might get little surprises. If you're too specific, you limit it.

It's a game. It's to be enjoyed. And then comes prayer for healing.

Perhaps somebody close to you is ill. Now, what do you do? Is there any point in asking for healing?

Requesting? Well, not asking, please heal this person. That doesn't work very well.

Certain affirmations that affirm the wholeness of that person. They are little signposts. Affirmations, no affirmation that implies that there is something wrong, that needs to be remedied.

That doesn't work very well. But affirmations, if you use them, that simply affirm the wholeness of that person whose outer form may look in need of healing. The perfection that is already inherent beyond the form in that person.

And at the same time, you sense that within yourself. That nothing needs to be added to the perfection that already is. And if you sense it strongly, and combine it with a healing statement through words, after which there is silence, it can work powerfully.

Important to remember, nothing that implies that something needs to be fixed or changed. But getting to the deeper place where wholeness already is, beyond the form. And if you come from that place within yourself, after you've uttered the statement with reference to someone, to a person, forget about the person too.

Even the image of that person is dropped. What remains is wholeness, peace, deep aliveness, stillness. The form of the person is also let go.

And then healing prayers can be very powerful. Nothing is needed, needs to be added to what is. That's where the power lies.

Nothing is deficient, there's only the appearance of that in form. You can also hold an entire situation in that way, realizing that the goodness that is underneath the appearance of badness, the deeper goodness that is beyond form, the entire situation with all the terrorists and all that, you can contemplate for a moment that situation and see it. And then, so to speak, you drop it into that, I'm using a metaphor, that pool of stillness, not trying to change anything.

And what remains is the stillness. And if the stillness could speak, it would say, all is well already, there's only the good that has no opposite. Although in the world of appearances, there's good and bad.

Time now for a few more sacred hugs. If you're not planning to hug, you can stay here or go, whatever your preference is. Treat it as a meditation, even as you just sit there, or go about your business out there.

At some point during the night, the last person must have surrendered. And so, Groundhog Day is over. Although it wouldn't be quite right to say, we did it.

Our last session. No need to project yourself mentally somewhere else. This afternoon, you'll be sitting or standing somewhere else, different scenery.

A shift in perception would be to perceive, rather than yourself moving through the world, the phenomenal world changing around you. And a similar shift in perspective, would be not to look upon the world as coming at you, but as coming from within. You are the projector.

And you don't really go anywhere. It just looks like it. And then the strange thing sometimes happens, the projector, the old pattern can't make, doesn't like its own projection.

I don't like this film that I'm just making right now. Somewhere in the book it says, accept each moment, which of course means this moment, as if you had chosen it. That's the state of surrender.

That's enough. If you only remember that, what else do you need? Then nothing needs to be added.

Life just unfolds beautifully. Accept this moment, each moment, really means this moment, because there are not many moments really, only always this one. But I've said each moment, to make it a little bit more accessible at first.

But the moment, as if you had chosen it. You don't need to believe that you chose it, or that you didn't choose it. That's a question of perspective.

Some new age people believe that, yes, you chose, when you go to a new age person with your problems, they will soon ask, why did you choose to manifest that? Why did you choose this? And then you might react and say, I never did.

How dare you even suggest that I chose this? And then you go away and never want to see them again. And then you can spin stories around, what arrogance suggests, makes me wrong.

It's true in a way. But I'm not taking a stand, neither here nor there. Nor do you need to.

Whether or not you actually did choose, or not choose this moment, is a question of perspective. There's not one true perspective. That's why I never say you chose it.

Don't need to believe that. Just accept it as if you had chosen it. That's all that's needed.

And then say, I will become a scientist and experiment, living in this way, for half a day, for one day, for an hour. And be attentive to this moment always. And occasionally you'll forget that you're experimenting.

And sometimes people also get it wrong. They don't realize what accepting this moment means. They sometimes believe they need to accept a story.

For example, well, I failed in three marriages. I might as well accept that I'm a failure on that level. Or I might as well accept that I'm ill.

Where are you in this moment? You are not ill. Ill is still a mental concept.

Not to negate the fact that you may be having pain. There may be pain at this moment. Or any other physical symptom.

Illness is more than this moment. Illness becomes reduced to just what is at this moment. Illness is an idea.

It has a past and a future in the head. But there's only this. So let's say somebody has told you you have an incurable illness, whatever it may be, AIDS, cancer, all those things that are called incurable.

Acceptance of each moment of this moment does not mean, okay, I might as well accept that I have this. That's not this moment. This moment is much less than that.

It's not having an illness or being an illness, deriving your identity from it. I might as well accept that I'm a sick person. No, no, that's not this moment.

Sick person is an image in the mind. And that's, of course, nothing to do with true acceptance. It's believing in a thought completely, a mental image, a concept, completely believing in it.

And then you think you've surrendered. So sometimes it takes a while before people get it, what this moment actually means and how little this moment is. And so you always have to bring the focus of your attention back to this moment, not some stream of mental images and concepts about myself, just this.

So you never need to accept your illness, just this moment. That's all there ever is, so you might as well. Many so-called illnesses would pass very quickly if we didn't develop ideas around it and a me around it.

But the whole culture, of course, does that. It projects it onto you. But to get out of a system of ideas in the head takes alertness.

To be in the now takes alertness. Just a few more questions. Why now?

Why now? Well, it goes on. Why is there a flowering of consciousness now?

People speak of the urgency of a mass shift in consciousness. Why now? Why not 2,000 years ago?

3,000 years ago? Well, there is a reason why now. And this is not yet apparent to everyone, but we looked the past few days at how great an awakener the fact of death is when it comes towards you and death is faced.

And humanity as a species is actually facing death unless change happens. And that has not happened before. It's unless the shift in consciousness happens, the insanity of the egoic mind, amplified as it is increasingly by science and technology, magnified, the effects of the insanity are amplified a thousandfold.

An insane person with a stick can't do that much harm, but the same egoic insanity with a nuclear bomb or chemical weapons can destroy the planet. So it's the same insanity, but it's being amplified. Whether or not the insanity is also increasing is a question of perspective.

One could say that it is. There's even an increase in the insanity plus an amplification of it through the means of science and technology, the effect of that insanity. So it becomes destructive.

100 years is probably the maximum that we have, perhaps less for a shift to happen. It may be less than that, perhaps much less. The planet itself could not endure more than that of the same old thing, the same old madness, the same violence being done to the planet.

And then comes the self-inflicted violence and madness that humans inflict on themselves and each other. Everywhere you see the effects of it. So now, because there's no choice anymore, and it's a good point to reach, whether it's an individual or a species, to reach a point of death unless a shift in consciousness happens is good.

Many individuals have reached that point and only then did the shift happen. They were confronted with the imminence of death. And so as a species, we are confronted with that, and that's why the urgency is there of change.

And not so much the urgency that, because we could easily get trapped, again drawn back into the old mindset, we need to do something, we must save the planet, do something now, quick. You're drawn, you're right, there is an urgency, but you would be, I'm not saying do nothing, but not being drawn into that mindset of fear because then you're turning away from the fact, the possibility of death. See it fully, clearly.

And the urgency is something within the totality knows, one consciousness knows that there's urgency, and that is why there is a great intensification of that new consciousness coming through, presence coming through with greater and greater intensity. That's the urgency. It's not the urgency of this, we must do something.

And then out of that, sometimes doing happens, but doing is always secondary. It arises out of a state of being. What is the state of consciousness out of which the doing arises?

And then right doing arises out of that new state of consciousness. The old state of consciousness will be in a state of fear and will be creating enemies and opponents, and there's no way out on that level. So the shift in consciousness until not long ago has been a luxury for humanity, a nice few flowers here and there, but not yet in a need, and now there's the absolute need for it to happen.

And maybe the momentum of the old is so powerful that it won't, it will obscure the arising presence and then the human species will come to an end. That's not such a big deal either. Consciousness then will flow through other forms and flower through other forms, millions of forms.

But since we're here, it would be nice if it, consciousness did flower through the human form. And the fact that we're here is a good sign. It is happening.

What is the relationship of astrology to karma, destiny, the pain body to presence? I assume the question means what are two questions, I assume. What is the relationship of astrology to karma and destiny, and what is the relationship of the pain body to presence?

Well, I know the pain body and I know presence. I don't know astrology very much. So whatever I say now doesn't come from any knowledge of astrology, just from an insight into how things are, which must include astrology.

What astrology points to is your interconnectedness with the totality. I know that without knowing much about astrology. So it can point to ways in which you are, could be seen as a microcosm of a larger reality, reflected here, intimately connected.

And seeing that already would take out, if you really see that, it already takes you out of personalizing everything. If you are just the expression in form of other huge energy movements, then what's personal in that? So if you could even see that, clearly that would depersonalize your life.

And from that point of view, from a certain perspective, it seems that things, there's a certain predetermination. Some people are born with a, if the astrologers, I've heard them speak of difficult chart, or they say, oh my God. Or they might say, oh people with this chart usually would be in prison or something like that.

Thank you, how much do I owe you? Now, the arising presence always means one thing, a disidentification from form and the dance of form. Awareness comes out of from being trapped in the form and completely identified with form and thereby creating an illusory identity.

Awareness somehow moves out of identification with form and then sees the movement of form but no longer totally in it with self-identification. That is the arising of presence. And that may be a dimension that goes beyond what astrology can do.

It can only perhaps point to moments when that arises, moments, periods, that could be an opening for that, maybe. So astrology is to do, as far as I can see, with how the forms are interconnected. It still operates, it's even as consciousness moves out of identification with form, the form still has its form movement and its relationship to other forms, but there is a distance now and there's less energy behind the movement of form, less momentum, egoic momentum.

So that, the dimension of presence, which awareness coming out of form may be something that perhaps astrology can only point to as a possible time or place when a doorway may be open, maybe. Perhaps not. Perhaps at other times the opposite may be true when astrology says this is the worst possible time in your bad karma and it could be precisely then, because it is the worst possible time in a very bad chart, it could be precisely then, because of the intense suffering generated, that consciousness removes itself from identification with form.

So how could they, it may be, I don't know the details of this, it may be very hard to predict when and where, when it looks easier, so there could be an opening, or when it looks there couldn't possibly be an opening there. So one could, you could conceive of two human beings being born in the same location within almost at the same time, the same city, more or less the same time, so they would, I presume, have a similar chart, or almost identical, and 30, 40, 50 years later the astrologer looks at that chart, which is one chart, but refers to two people, and the astrologer might see in this chart the influence, strong influence of Saturn, or something, I only have little fragments of knowledge about astrology, and so the astrologer, this is a particularly difficult time, and you're likely to be drawn into some drama, and you, whatever, whatever the astrologer, and this may be, then one of these people, in one of these people presence has already arisen, let us say, and there's been a disidentification from form, the other one is still totally identified with form, so with the same chart, one person, the one in whom the stepping out consciousness has already removed itself from a complete identification, he or she might experience that period as an inner turbulence, perhaps, in the pain body, and might say, wow, there's a turbulence, and sense it, and accept it, and hold it, and sit there, and not even construct a story around it, just be there in that, and then it passes, and the other person who is totally identified with pain body goes out to a bar, drinks too much, and gets involved in a car accident, or kills somebody, so that's the same chart, but degrees non-presence and presence, so what that implies is that with arising presence there's much more freedom from what seems inevitable and predetermined, and it's still there on the level of form, but does not operate with such force, you are not in it, the form of you, yes, but you beyond form are not in it, and so that applies to karma, all other aspects, because astrology is only one aspect of karma, that applies to all aspects of karma, to some extent this karma as all the preconditioning still operates, but it is almost, one could speak, of karma gradually fading out, not being abolished totally, but the forms of karma becoming less, like an old photo, after a few years the old photo, gradually the forms begin to fade, fade, fade, and so that's the realm of freedom coming in, freedom from that, so it's not that astrology then no longer applies, on the level of form it would still apply, but also wouldn't matter that much anymore, because the level of form doesn't matter that much anymore, you honor it, but it does not have the heaviness anymore, so that is somebody talking about astrology who knows nothing about astrology, and the second part of the question, I believe it's a separate question, but related, the relationship of the pain body to presence, well, pain body, usually for a while, since it is an accumulation of energetic patterns, an aspect of karma, is so powerful, so seemingly powerful, such momentum, that it can easily obscure the arising presence, and for a while it does that, I see it often in people who meditate a lot, and yet are totally still in the grip of their pain body when it comes, they don't see it coming, and when it's there it's too late, it's taken them over, so for a while the pain body is the obstacle to presence, then presence reaches a certain intensity, and then suddenly a shift happens, the pain body is no longer the obstacle to presence, but actually fuels presence, and we talked about that before, how it is like presence transmuting the trapped energy that is at a different vibrational frequency from presence, but presence can transmute anything, no matter what frequency, the pain body can't do that to presence, so presence transmutes the pain body, and so what it looks like, I don't want to speak in abstract terms, whenever the pain body arises in you, you know it's the pain body, or at least in the middle of it you suddenly know it, and then you bring your attention and your acceptance to it, attention and acceptance, they go together, disidentification from this form as me, so there's presence, and then presence intensifies through that process, it's a miracle, how people with such heavy pain bodies can suddenly step out, and although they are not yet free, they still experience the pain periodically, and yet are able to stay present with it, this is similar again to astrology, you still experience the energy movement, and yet you are not really in it anymore, it still happens, but there's no self in it, and that's how the transmutation happens, so the questions are closely related, because just as the astrological things and pain body are probably also related, if I knew more about astrology I could talk about that, but it all boils down to the simple thing of consciousness moving out of identification with form, and that is an event of great significance, it looks as if something personal were happening here to us, our lives becoming lighter, easier, more alive, more peaceful, but what really is, and it also looks sometimes as if you could even choose to step out of identification with form, and when you think you can choose, and that's a useful perspective, what is really happening is consciousness at this moment is moving out of the dream of form, one could say Brahman or God is waking up, that was a nice dream, but it's time to wake up, it's only a metaphor, and then enjoy the dream of form more, because you're not totally involved in it, you can actually enjoy a dream much more when you become conscious of the dream, in the dream, that it's a dream, that's nice, that's quite an adventure, you could do anything, if you knew it's a dream, oh, why great, I'm going to have a great time, because I can do anything, this is only a metaphor, so, us sitting here, you coming here, you looking at, somewhere it said retreat with Eckhart, and you think, a year ago, and you thought, well, should I go to that or not, maybe I will, maybe I won't, I'll put my name down and see how I feel when the time comes, and then the time comes, and you, oh no, I don't really feel like, and then in the end you did go, it all looks like it's a personal event, and you didn't realize that the whole thing is, consciousness is beginning to move out of being trapped in the dream of form, and there you thought there was me, booking a retreat, and then me going home, do we need to understand our own personal pain body, how it operates and its patterns, or is reflection on it another trap into mind stuff? Will it all be transformed by putting all our consciousness and attention into the now moment?

Is keeping a journal helpful or a hindrance? Now there isn't really that much to understand about the pain body. Its basic way of operating is the same in everyone.

The energy, predominant energy field of pain bodies may differ from person to person, but the way in which it operates can easily and clearly be recognized. The pain body is emotion. You can't, there's not much to understand beyond feeling it and sensing it.

There it is. What the understanding is the story that has attached itself to the pain body. There you could begin to explore because that story may be very complex.

The story that has attached itself to the pain body and is being fueled by pain body, by the emotional energy of pain body, may be very complex. Now you could delve into that for a long time, but that would not take you out of pain body. The essential thing is to cut the link between story and the emotion.

The story may be complex, the emotion is the emotion. You may remember certain things when you bring more presence. The pain body may be associated, an aspect of the pain body may be associated with something that happened in your childhood perhaps.

It may be associated with something that happened a million years ago. So you can't investigate it all. Because it's not only personal, it's from this lifetime, it's genetic too, it's inherited human pain.

And if evolution is true, maybe part of the pain body is that when you lived in the sea, you got eaten a million times. It's the pain of being trapped in form. Even animals are trapped in form, but not as much as humans.

Animals are trapped in their physical form, but they are not trapped in the psychological form. That's the added dimension, the added prison in which humans are trapped. This is why although animals have their limitations, which are the limitations of form, and are not a total expression of freedom, of course, they are governed by their conditioned behavior.

And yet, because they are free of the psychological form of me, it can be a teaching to watch an animal, how a being moves and lives that is free of psychological form of egoic identity, of a psychological me. So compared to humans, one could almost say, on one level an animal is freer almost, more deeply connected still to the source. And so it is always a meditation to watch an animal move and be itself without trying to be anything other than itself.

And that's why people love, perhaps they don't know that, but there are many people who love watching an animal, because it is a teaching so much at one with itself, so free of problems. It can have pain, of course, but also acceptance. When a cat, I've lived with many cats, at the moment I don't have any, well, you don't have cats anyway, but I don't live with cats.

And when a cat is unwell, he or she comes into the house and lies down, doesn't eat much or nothing, no complaining, complete acceptance. And also they don't make a sound, perhaps they've learned that they mustn't make this, not even a complaining sound that comes out of their mouth, because they learned that they are living in the wild for thousands of years, because they would attract predators. So they become very, just very still, and they just wait.

And then they say that regeneration happens, and one morning they are up again, drink the milk, and it's gone, it's immediately, it's gone. Once I had to move, when I left England, I had to leave, I had three cats, I had to leave each cat with a different person. And this old cat that had come to me, called Henry, would spend most of his life, at least in the winter, lying on the heater.

And that was, I felt, oh, will he adjust to a new life? And I felt some compassion and took him to a new home, out of the carrying box, and he came out, looked around, and there was a person sitting there, and after two minutes, he jumped on the lap of that person and started purring. Imagine a human, what, ah, I've lost my home!

Because home is a conceptual thing in the head. Immediately there is the simplicity of this moment. I know there are animals who would react differently, those that have lived very closely with humans, they have taken on certain human traits of behavior.

But the original, this is how the animal immediately is at this moment. If the cat carried the conceptual home in the head, he would be complaining and would be suffering. You've taken, and accuse me, of course, you've taken.

But some cats have a few human traits, when you go away for a long time, and you come back, they don't want to talk to you, see you. And that's a human trait. But the learning, learning that how the cat immediately adopted, said yes to that moment, it was fine to be there.

Any lap is as good as any other lap. And when you watch an animal, watch it in stillness, without interpreting, then it's a meditation. Because much more than humans, the animal is an expression of the one in form.

There's no doer, which is the mental concept in humans. The animal, the doing happens. The bird jumps off the branch and flies.

No prior decision involved, or should I or shouldn't I, it just happens. The doing, there's no separation, there's a flow of doing. And humans can live in that way, not by going back to the animal stage, but by going beyond the conceptual me, going beyond thought, yes, ultimately, going beyond the thought-based entity.

It is strange how often the weather seems to be connected with our retreats, what happens on retreats. I've often observed it, as today, there's a connection between, I'm not going to tell you try and change the weather, but there is a connection, and often it's at the end of the retreat that something happens in the weather. In Costa Rica, on the last day and last night, there was a violent storm.

The roofs, the tiles were torn off the roof of my house, and tents collapsed, at least one sturdy tent collapsed, and howling wind, as if the old were being swept away. And then when I first started having retreats, several times it happened that the weather was always bad at the beginning, in the first few days, and somebody put up the theory, it's not until everybody surrenders that the weather turns around. And very often that is still somehow true.

Even in Hong Kong, when we had a retreat, where usually it's warm, and it wasn't the rainy season, it was raining at first. Everything is, of course, connected. But don't try to transform the weather of the Northwest Pacific into Southern California.

This may be the last question. How to have no mind and still talk? Well, I've been talking all week with no mind.

Not completely so, but of course the mind was involved, otherwise the words would not come out of my mouth, they could not be formulated without some involvement of the mind. No mind primarily means no self-identification with mind. There's still some mind.

There may also be gaps of complete no mind, in which no talking arises, or is needed. But to live in a state of no mind is to live in a state of no self-identification with mind. When there's no self-identification with mind, the compulsive nature of mind stops.

Of needing to think continuously, that stops. So you become free of mind, but mind movements are still there. Now as the compulsive nature of mind stops, because there's no self in it anymore, therefore it doesn't need that compulsion.

The compulsion is only there because it wants to perpetuate itself as a personalized identity, a me, I mustn't let go, because I'll die without that, is the belief. That comes to an end, and so when the compulsive nature stops, increasingly you will become aware of actual gaps in the stream of mind, that's the complete no mind. And then the wonderful thing is to speak out of the state of no mind.

The words arise, it's like the mind becomes like a receiver. Not an old record, but a receiver that receives an intelligence impulse out of the one place where all intelligence resides, presence, stillness, an impulse comes, it is the beginning of form that intelligence takes, and then it reaches the mind, and one could say the brain, and the brain is a filter, through the filter of brain consciousness becomes reduced, just like you put an adapter into a high voltage outlet, and the adapter reduces the electricity to a very low trickle, so the impulse from consciousness in egoic minds is reduced to very, very little, that's why egoic minds are not very intelligent, they may be clever, but not true creative intelligence in the egoic mind.

But even if there's no egoic mind, then there will be more consciousness moving through, but it will still be reduced through the filter of brain, so then consciousness becomes mind, and there will be a great reduction between the vitality of the original intelligent impulse, which has just taken a beginning of form, then it assumes a very clearly defined form through language, thought, and then language, and then of course it's been greatly reduced from the original vitality that came up out of the stillness of presence, and yet, because the egoic mind wasn't in the way, it still carries some of that aliveness and wisdom that is the mark of true creative intelligence, which is the stillness, it still carries that. So when words come out, they're spoken out of presence, yes, there are the two levels then operating simultaneously in you, mind is there, and no mind is also there.

Mind is being informed by no mind, and there's a flow, a creative flow. Of course, every time expression is given, whether through words or through artistic creation, there's a great reduction in energy, because the form is, every form is very limited, and nevertheless, it still carries the vitality of that primary intelligence, and that's the beauty of it. So to understand that, at first, it may be difficult to, the moment you start to speak, there's the tendency to lose yourself completely in those mind forms, and then the deeper dimension of stillness is lost.

That's why it's very helpful as you interact with humans, as you interact with other humans, the beginning of being able to speak without getting lost in mind, that begins with the ability to listen, because every human interaction is an exchange between listening and speaking. So you begin by listening in the stillness, by feeling the inner body, for example, while you listen, and the alertness that fills your inner space, and even emanates, so you listen in that state of still alertness, and then you may find sometimes what you say then is unpremeditated, and comes directly out of the state of stillness, and it will be more powerful, more vitally alive than anything that comes through mind only, because mind is involved in some way. So that's the analogy of the adapter that reduces that considerably.

The ego reduces it to almost nothing, there's no creativity in egoic minds. Some egoic minds have little cracks in them, and those are the egos who are creative on some level, on some level of their work they create, there's a creative impulse flows in, and other egoic minds are totally so dense that nothing new comes in. To have no mind and still talk.

Yes, strange. Now this experience that you have been having these days is coming to an end, as all experiences do. The essence of our gathering is beyond any experience.

It's there wherever you go. It can't leave you. On the level of experience, this has not been, if it were only experience of forms, well, not all that memorable.

You had a few nice soaks in the hot tub, and then one day was like every other day, it was Groundhog Day, same. And yet there was something here, there is something here that is not memorable, but the essence, and that is you, and that is the now, and you and the now are one, the field of now. And then you go away from here, and just enjoy the continuing dance of phenomenal existence, changes all the time, unless you happen to get stuck on a Groundhog Day, but that only happens through resistance.

And if you find yourself in a few hours time at an airport, what difference does it make? Other forms moving about. Here there's nature, but those forms are also nature, covered up by mind, but nature, and it's the now.

It's miraculous when you find stillness in the most unlikely places, not as external silence, but the same stillness that is the backdrop to all natural phenomena, the beauty of nature. The same is there when you are certainly at Portland Airport or wherever. Don't get drawn, there's a tendency you could get drawn back into losing yourself in the forms again completely, the outer forms and the mind forms, and then believing that these forms matter absolutely.

And so you've lost, you've not lost it, but you don't know it anymore, the field of now. Only that matters absolutely, knowing yourself as that. Every form matters relatively, not absolutely.

And then you sit on a plane, and then you sit in a car, and then you walk a few steps, and then you arrive home, drink a cup of tea, maybe you rush to make some coffee, it's okay, or you rush into your bathroom, ah! At last, coffee, bathroom, and then the mind says, I guess I'm not ready for the spiritual life. But the spiritual life has nothing to do with bathroom or not bathroom, or coffee or no coffee.

You can be spiritual in a luxury bathroom, and you could be completely unspiritual living in a monastery where you have to break the ice every morning to get to wash your hands, because you might have a strong image of yourself as so spiritual as you break that ice. I was once in a monastery where that happened. I was visiting for a few days, and the monk who was breaking the ice said, as he was breaking the ice, he said, this is the holy life.

It could be, or it could not be. So the essence of our gathering here is always there with you as yourself, what else could it be? My love is with you as myself, what else could it be?

There's no separation, knowing that you're free. Thank you. A few more sacred hugs to come.

And if you have to rush off, remember the Zen saying, hurry slowly. So this is our silent evening meditation. I don't want to give you any techniques as such, but remember the two approaches.

As you sit here, surrender totally to this moment so completely that you accept this moment so completely that you don't need to add any thought to it. It couldn't add anything to the perfection that's already here. That's how completely you can accept this moment.

And then no further techniques are necessary. One could almost say you're in love with this moment, the now, the only now. And that means you're also in love with God.

You can't be in love with God and not be in love with this moment. Of course, being in love with God is being love because there's no duality, different perspectives. Or you can choose the other, the more active approach.

As we sit here, step into the state of attention, alert attention, out of involvement with thought. Choose the state of attention, sense perceptions. Looking, listening, paying total attention to sense perceptions.

And then sense the field of attention itself. That's the ground in which the sense perception happens. And it's even possible that the state of attention, that pure awareness, fills you so completely within and without that full emptiness that all phenomena are peripheral.

Eyes can be open or eyes can be closed, or you can alternate. Whether or not I'm going to speak during our meditation, I don't know yet. Whether or not words come.

The bell is the call to attention. The familiar sound of rain is not there tonight, but there's the sound of the river, I believe, water. Connect with the feeling of the inner body as you sit here now.

Aliveness. Hands, feet, legs, the entire body is alive. And you sense that aliveness.

You are that aliveness, inhabiting fully the body. And you're in the now. And from there, you can direct attention outward without losing yourself in the sense perception.

The strange thing that then arises, and that's a very new thing for almost everybody, you feel at home in the now. And that's, for most people, a completely new thing. They were always looking for home in a mental projection of future, but not now, to completely inhabit this now as your home.

What else is your home if not this? It's a kind of metaphor, of course, when I say home. It points to that state of oneness with what is.

Not deriving an illusory identity from your opposition to what is. And humans have lived like that for a long time. And what is here is the external forms, this room, the voice, your body resting on a cushion or a chair, the sound of the water, the space in this room, the totality of sense perceptions, and underneath it all, stillness, life stillness.

That's the essence of now. The room, the sounds, are the form of now. So knowing both the essence of now, and it's easy to say yes to the forms of now.

Or say yes to the forms of now, and then it's easy to know the essence of now. Any no to any form of now obscures to you the essence of now, which is the essence of being, of your very self. And that no is the basis for the egoic identity.

Now, if you know the essence of now, there's joy in that. But don't look for it, because at first that joy is very subtle. You may not even sense it at first.

The essence of now seems at first a nothingness, and then there's a subtle emanation of joy. It's very different from happiness, and it can appear precisely at the time when the form of now dissolves in front of your eyes. Death, and you don't run away from it.

Then the essence of now remains. I'm explaining in slightly different words, but I've explained already, different, slightly different perspective. And that's the depth and mystery of death and the eternal life.

Because when Jesus used this strange expression, eternal life, he speaks of the essence of now, the essence of life, not the form of life, the one life, the one consciousness. So we are not turning away from what looks at first like darkness, but it's not death. And so it has been said, find death before death finds you, because it'll find you.

And that's why we're here, to find death before it finds us. We found it already, and it turns out to be life beyond form. And that's what everybody's running away from all their lives.

They want to deny. So in that state of now awareness, pure awareness, or as I sometimes call it, awareness of awareness, self-awareness, this continuous awareness of that which is beyond form. So you are, the now is the portal into death and life.

From one side, it looks like death from the side, from the perspective of form. You step through it, and you realize it's life. That's the portal of now.

But many are so afraid to step through it, because it doesn't look nice from this side. So one could say it is the negation of one's form identity. It is, the form identity is allowed, but recognized as only form identity.

You live in continuous touch with death when you're present, fully present, which of course is life. And so not long ago, I found myself on a mountaintop in China, and there was an inscription in stone, carved into stone, Chinese characters. And I asked my friend who's Chinese, what does this mean?

And he said, it means Buddha. And then I looked more closely at the characters, and there were two there, not just one character, but two. And I said, why is it two if it means Buddha?

And he said, well, the first one means man or human being. And the one, the character next to it means no. And the two together mean Buddha.

Enormous wisdom in that. And perhaps most people don't see it anymore, even Buddhists, perhaps in popular Buddhism, popular religion is relatively superficial. To see the depth and wisdom in that, it is the negation of form, and that is Buddha.

The recognition of the illusory nature of form, and yet an illusion that is allowed, is embraced. You are now vast enough to embrace also the illusion of form, even enjoy it. In fact, you can only enjoy it when you don't look for yourself in it anymore.

As long as you look for yourself in it, you're trying hard to enjoy it, but it always turns into its opposite. And it's only when you're not looking in the form of me, any other form, to self-seeking in form, you can enjoy the world of form, the world. And it's no longer a serious business.

You honor it, yes. You care for it even. There's care now when you don't need, you neither need the forms, nor are you threatened by the forms that make up the world.

And only when you no longer need the forms and are not threatened by the forms can there be love. The absence of need and threat of forms is love. No matter how hard you try, as long as there's self-seeking in form, you're looking for yourself to identify with some form, thought form, external forms, or you fear the forms.

And you can try hard to love and say, I must love my neighbor. And they have tried for a long time. Jesus, I'm very certain, never said, you must love your neighbor as yourself.

He pointed to a state of consciousness in which you know your neighbor as yourself. You know the other as yourself. And he said, when you know your neighbor as yourself, that's love.

And when there's love, you know all forms in their essence being one with your essence. I wasn't going to say anything. So continuously, Kim asked me, are you going to say something?

And I said, no. So there's no table. You did put one in?

Oh, she knows me. And just one more reminder, how to go beyond form, being trapped in form. Allow the form of this moment to be as it is.

Enough. The allowing is the opening up of the formless. The yes to now, to the form of now, is the opening up of forms.

That's all. Not complicated. I'll ring the bell again.

Be here as long as feels comfortable sitting here. Should you open your eyes, meditate when I'm gone on the absence of this form. Beautiful.

Much nicer than the form. Always is.

2001-Eckhart-Tolle-Even-The-Sun-will-die-interview-with-Danish-journalist

[Speaker 2] (0:11 - 2:01)

Sounds True and Namaste Publishing present Even the Sun Will Die, an interview with Eckhart Tolle. My name is Tammy Simon, and I'm the publisher of Sounds True. In the summer of 2001, I was promised the opportunity to interview Eckhart Tolle later in the year, when I would be traveling in the Vancouver area where he lives.

I wanted to meet and talk with this unusual man of German descent who had reported in his book The Power of Now to have experienced at age 29 a sudden, spontaneous, radical spiritual awakening. Our interview together was scheduled for September 11th. Early that morning, like many people across North America, I awoke to a phone call from a friend, alerting me to the unbelievable sequence of events that had occurred that morning.

I called Eckhart's office, expecting our interview to be postponed. But no, Eckhart was poised and perfectly prepared for our interview to occur as scheduled. What follows is the audio record of our time together.

The first part was recorded on the morning of September 11th, and the second part a few days later. Here's Even the Sun Will Die with Eckhart Tolle. So this morning, Eckhart, the World Trade Center crumbled before the eyes of the world.

What is your reaction to that event?

[Speaker 1] (2:13 - 51:04)

I could feel a sadness and a compassion with the suffering that thousands of people are going through right now. I was not amazed because I know that the collective insanity that is in the human mind still has a grip on the world. And I know this is not the last extreme manifestation of the collective insanity that has dominated the whole of human history.

It becomes so obvious when we see such a violent manifestation of it. But if you look at the history of the 20th century, a lot of it is a history of madness, of suffering inflicted by humans on themselves, on others. Unnecessary, mostly.

So everywhere you look, I always tell people, if you doubt the insanity, which one could look at as a sickness, not blaming anybody, it's not anybody's personal deficiency, personal identity to be insane. It is an expression, a manifestation of the human condition as it has been ever since we recorded history and probably before that. It is not the last manifestation of that insanity.

Although there is something arising in the collective consciousness of the planet that is different, that is new, that is not part of that insanity. I sometimes call it a new state of consciousness is arising. It does not mean that the enormous momentum behind the insanity has come to an end yet.

So I'm sometimes asked by people, when I say something new is arising, a new state of consciousness is arising now on this planet, they ask me, are you really sure? Is the world really getting better? Because when we watch the news on TV and see what's happening, it very often looks as if the opposite were true.

So are things getting better or are things getting worse? And the answer is both. There is an acceleration both of the new energy that's coming in and there's also an intensification and an acceleration of the old, which is still playing itself out and refuses to let go.

And this is the collective manifestation of it, and you can often see on a personal level and the level of the individual the same applies. I know many people in whom a new consciousness is arising, enormous presence is arising, the old mind patterns don't seem to operate anymore, the old reactive patterns, the compulsive mental noise, identification with that compulsive mental noise that gives you a sense of self, identification with mind, all that which is part of the insanity is subsiding. Something new is arising in the individuals, and then suddenly it happens that a wave of the old consciousness, identification with mind, reactivity, loss of witnessing presence, suddenly comes back.

So I know many people who go through these waves, they almost live in two worlds for a while, they're very present, very conscious, and get taken over by the old again, the old consciousness, sometimes with more force, it seems, than before, as if the old consciousness were saying, I'm still here and I'm not going. And so for many people it's only when they experience the effects of human insanity in their own life as suffering, inflicted by situations, by circumstances, or inflicted on themselves by their own mind, their own emotional body, for many people it's only through that, through the effects, through experiencing the effects of the insanity, when there's nothing personal in it, that the openness comes about, the realization that came to me when I couldn't stand the suffering anymore, the continuous depression and anxiety that I lived with for years, that strange thought that came to me that said, I can't live with myself any longer. And then I looked at that thought and said, what is that self that I cannot live with? Who am I?

Who is that I? Who is the self that is so heavy and so unbearable and so insane, so much so that I can't live with it anymore? And at that moment the separation happened of that ultimately mad, fictitious sense of self and a deeper sense of presence or beingness.

So that me, whether it operates on a personal level or on a collective level, is the root of the insanity. It's a sense of self based on mind, on the conditioned mind, on thought structures, on mental images. And when it operates on a collective level, the me may become an us against them.

Now, whether it operates on a personal or collective level, the me cannot live without enemies. It creates its own enemies because its survival depends on a sense of separateness, a contraction. And it needs to perpetuate the sense of separateness.

It can only do that by creating enemies. And then once you've done that, you've created an enormous screen between yourself and the other, a mental screen of conceptualization of images. And then it's easy to kill because you can no longer sense what you're doing.

The other becomes a mind object. You no longer know, in the words of Christ, they know not what they do. It's a totally unconscious movement.

So humans are trapped in that and acting it out. The world wars. Look at what Germany did.

The collective egoic sense of self created through nationalism. It's the height of insanity and you see it so clearly, but it operates the same way on a personal level. Germany made the whole world into an enemy in the Second World War.

And that is the egoic pattern. And then they could feel so strongly, now we know who we are. They don't, of course, they only have a fiction in the mind, but it gives you the illusion that now you have a stronger sense of self.

And for a while that feels good, but really you're creating suffering, ultimately for yourself, and you're inflicting suffering on others. And so that is the core of the madness. And to dissolve it, it cannot be dissolved as a collective movement.

The collective follows. It can only be dissolved, that sickness, whatever you want to call it, the insanity, can only be dissolved in the individual. Because the collective is only the sum total.

If there's unconsciousness in the collective energy field, as a religion, a nation, a tribe, a company, whatever it may be, the collective is only the sum total of the unconsciousness in the individual. So if there are strong egoic collective patterns operating, in other words, madness on a collective level, it is only because the madness operates in every individual. But it is a little bit more difficult to see it in the individual, and the most difficult to see it in oneself.

So there you see the insanity reflected as human history. You see the insanity when you watch it on the TV, and especially at times like today. To see the root of it, and above all, to see the root of it in oneself, whenever one is identified with an image, with mind, it begins with identification with the continuous stream of thinking, which creates a sense of me based on mind activity, a conceptual sense of self.

The moment you get trapped, and it's almost every human's destiny to go through that, to get trapped in that. Society does it to you, and it's an inherited mind pattern. In Buddhism, it's almost the central teaching, you could say, beautifully summarized by a Buddhist monk who was once asked, could you define the essence of Buddhism?

And they expected a long-learned answer, and the monk, the spiritual master said, yes, it's simple, no self, no problem. One could also say, no self, no suffering. And there's a strange statement by Jesus, I feel, by the way, that the teaching of Jesus has come to us in fragments, so we have to look and see what are those fragments pointing to, what are those pointers, they're very powerful pointers.

There's a statement by Jesus, deny thyself. It's been misinterpreted, they didn't understand it, but it's probably also even a mistranslation, but he may have said something like dissolve the self. So how do we do it?

It seems like a task. Can I change my own state of consciousness? And so you have created another big problem.

You could fall back into the same problematic sense of self, and now you add something to the already very heavy and problematic sense of self that says, I need to get out of this state of consciousness, I need to reach a new state of consciousness. How do I get there? Another problem.

This is often the problem for spiritual people. They see something and it becomes a desirable state to be achieved at some point in the future. And the need to achieve something in the future lies at the core of the mind-made sense of self.

The insufficiency, the sense of lack, all that, is at the core of the mind-made sense of self. So many spiritual people fall into the trap of then striving towards some mentally created ideal sense of self or perfection. That's the trap of spirituality, of not realizing that the transformation of consciousness that is at the essence of the religions and the original teachings, those founders of those ancient religions, I call them early flowers of humanity, early openings, very early.

And then a few others came, some we know of, some we've probably never heard of. Now for the first time there's the possibility of more than a few isolated flowers opening, a flowering of human consciousness on a much larger scale. So they all pointed to that possibility of that transformation of consciousness.

Now the human mind looked at it and said, that sounds very good. And it made it into a distant object to be achieved in the future. But if you look at all the original teachings, there's an emphasis on here and now, on now, on the present moment, as the key, the entry point into that state of consciousness.

Now that's been covered up by all kinds of mind stuff, belief structures, future, time. Almost every religion gives you time to achieve, to become, and misses the essence which says time won't get you there. You cannot get out of that old state of consciousness by adding time, by giving yourself more time, or even by adding content to your mind through further experiences, through further knowledge, through maybe all kinds of spiritual experiences.

Experiences, whether spiritual or otherwise, doesn't matter. But this need to add more before I can be myself. And of course, I'm not saying there's anything wrong with acquiring knowledge.

I'm not saying there's anything wrong with having new experiences. That is one aspect of our existence here in form, is to, yes, to investigate, to explore, and all these things require time. To explore something requires time.

To learn a new skill, it requires time. To absorb new knowledge requires time. To become good at something requires time.

At future, on that level, I'm not denying there's nothing wrong with it. It's fine. It operates beautifully.

But there's something more vital that most humans miss, although in a deeper sense they're all looking for it, and that is knowing who you are beyond the form in which you appear, whether the physical form or the mind form, the mentally created me, knowing who you are beyond that. And that is the one vital thing in everybody's lives. It's the one thing that matters, as Jesus puts it when he speaks to Martha and Mary in the parable.

There's one thing that matters absolutely. Everything else matters relatively. We're not denying this phenomenal existence or running away from it or no longer interacting with it.

You can't even run away from it. You are part of it. We're not denying it.

But we are seeing that, yes, all that has its place, and yet all that, whatever you can experience, the knowledge you can inquire, the experiences you have, whatever you can add to yourself, is relatively important. Whether you have enough money in the bank to live comfortably, whether you lose all your money and have nothing anymore, yes, it's relatively important, but not absolutely important. Only one thing is absolutely important, knowing who you are beyond form, beyond mind, beyond concepts.

And that's the one thing that time cannot give you, that future cannot give you, that cannot be acquired through adding something to yourself. Nothing wrong with adding, but finding yourself, no, through adding something. So to see that the adding to oneself is beautiful, it's fine, but knowing yourself, you don't need to add anything.

And it is often for people who have gone through this transformation, as it seems almost accidentally, it happened to them, and in almost every case, perhaps every case, you will see it didn't happen to them when things were added to them, so they got more and more and became greater and bigger. No, it happened to them when things were taken away, content was removed. Whether external things that were important to them, possessions, social functions, status in society, relationships, people close to them, or inner things, mental beliefs suddenly crumbled.

In other words, whether content, whether physical content, external content, or mental content, was taken away from them. And then those people who accidentally, so to speak, went through this transformation of consciousness, suddenly something happened. And now, later when they speak about it, that is often colored by the language that they use, which is according to whatever culture they live in, whether they say Buddha nature suddenly emerged, I knew myself, my essence as Buddha, whether they say Christ consciousness, I knew my essence as Christ, whether they say I knew myself as pure consciousness, whatever words, or they might not even have any words to say anything about it, but something happened that the Buddha calls the end of suffering, not because something was added, there was not an enhanced sense of self, there was a diminished sense of self through loss, through suffering.

And then it happened. So that is the case when it happens to humans accidentally, so suffering, although suffering, and this is a beautiful paradox, a large part of human suffering is inflicted by the madness, and yet it's the very suffering, in many cases inflicted by the collective mental illness, that drives you to the point of collapse, when suffering reaches a state of acuteness or intensity, and often it happens through great loss. So every disaster, whether on a personal level or on a collective level, it looks dreadful, and from that point of view it is dreadful, every disaster is also an opening into something far deeper.

It's an opening, as if something was suddenly opening up, and there's a dimension that before was covered up by the forms. Often disaster means the forms dissolve. It can happen when something collapses, it's a very obvious thing, a form dissolves, but it can happen inside a person's head, when thought forms dissolve, identification with the mental images of me dissolve, firmly held beliefs dissolve, and you no longer know on the level of mind who you are.

Suddenly all explanations don't make sense anymore. And so there's great loss, and yet that loss, one could almost say it's as if a hole were appearing in the fabric of existence suddenly. And of course the fabric of physical existence is very fragile, the hole could appear at any moment in everybody's life, and suddenly there's this, it's painful, but that is the hole where something, I rarely use the word God, because it's been misused so much, one could say God shines through whenever a form dissolves, whenever that hole appears in the fabric of your existence, and sooner or later the hole will appear in everybody's fabric, no matter how comfortably their life is arranged right now, they may have a nice job and a family and a pension plan, and yet at any moment the hole could appear, and it will appear, you will die, the body will dissolve, people around you will die, the forms will dissolve, they're destined to dissolve.

So this can be the source of great suffering, but potentially it's a great opening. So the beautiful paradox is that the very madness is also inseparable from liberation from the madness, because it's the suffering that's caused by the madness that takes you to that point of liberation. When you encounter the effects of the madness, whether on a collective or personal level, encounter them in an acute form, and so things often dissolve violently around you.

And so here we have that lesson, when loss appears in your life, not to resist it, and loss will appear, it must appear. When something gets taken away, something is removed from you, not to resist that movement. So there's a, with that acceptance, acceptance of whatever it is, whatever the is-ness of this moment may present, not to resist it.

It is. Becoming friendly with is. That means, that simple thing means you're stepping out of thousands of years of old mind patterns which are never friendly with what is.

They need something else. They think they need something else. I need to find myself in the future.

And becoming friendly with what is is a spiritual practice. Some people don't become friendly with what is until what is, the suchness of this moment, becomes so painful and so unbearable that suddenly all resistance to it collapses. There's the state of surrender.

And that is really the essence of all spirituality, is the state of yes to what is. Some people are driven to it through the intensity of suffering. Others encounter intensity of suffering and never find the yes.

They remain trapped in a no. In other words, it's a descent into hell. At some point, they will wake up out of it.

The beauty of spiritual teaching is that you don't need to wait for disaster before you can enter the state of yes to realize the yes begins at this very moment. And if you cannot fully say yes to what is at this moment, internally, to simply align yourself with whatever appears in this now. After all, that's all there ever is.

There's only the now ever in your life. If you're not aligned with this now, that's all there ever is in your life, then you're not aligned with life. And the egoic sense of self, the little me, is not aligned with life.

It says, no, no, I want something else. So it's not open to the enormous possibilities that are in the now, possibilities both of spiritual realization, even possibilities in terms of helpful things happening to you on the phenomenal level of life giving you what you need at that moment. Even on that level, it works.

So how do we step out of these many thousands of years of mind pattern of mental illness? Simply by stepping out of the stream of mind and time into the newness of this moment. You wake up into the now.

And that's why I said you don't need for this one thing that matters, knowing who you are beyond form, beyond the story in the head that gives most people their sense of who they are. My this, my that, my experiences, my relationships, my... Let me tell you my story.

That's me. And needing to revive it continuously. And of course it hasn't completed itself, so needing desperately the future, because my story hasn't quite developed the way it should have.

This is everybody's story. But people don't know that. I think it's just my story that hasn't gone the way it should have gone.

But there's still the possibility that my story may work out. They never really work out for that long because you can't look for yourself in a mental story, the story of me. No story ends with a happy wedding or honeymoon.

It goes on. Old films, they are cut when there's a wedding to keep alive the illusion that the story can complete you, that you can find yourself in it. So to honor the story, yes.

To give it its due, yes. Not to neglect what I need to do on the level of my external existence, but not looking for who I am in the story of me. I'm beyond a storyline.

So stepping out of that, you're not losing your memory. No, it's simply you're no longer identifying with the content of your mind. And that unconscious compulsion to add further content, which is only there because you're looking for yourself in content and you're not complete yet.

You'll never be complete if you look for yourself in the content as experiences, knowledge, ideas, more relationships, whatever. That is really the energy behind what the Buddha calls, when he says what's at the root of all this human suffering, he calls it, is desire or craving or thirst, whatever way you want to translate what he said. That desire, desire is a relatively weak word, so it's better the craving, the wanting, the needing, that comes about because you're looking for yourself in the realm of content.

Whether it's just sense experience, add more sense experience to me, consume something, whether it's on the level of eating or sexuality or whatever, there's nothing wrong with any of these. Only if you start looking for yourself there, then it becomes this enormous craving behind it, enormous impulse and unconscious thirst, desire, craving, wanting, needing. Ultimately, it's not the object that you really want, whether it's the food or whether it's sex or whether it's the experience or whether it's the knowledge, whatever it is, that you're looking for on the level of content, the new car, whatever.

It's not really that what you're looking for. You're looking for yourself, and that is a desperate search for who I am. That's the root of all this desperate craving and wanting.

It runs our whole civilization. If people no longer had this desperate craving and wanting, it would collapse. So they're looking for themselves, even all the compulsions.

Ultimately, if you go to the root of it all, they're looking for themselves. And that in itself is not bad. It's beautiful that they're looking for themselves.

They're looking for where they cannot find themselves. It's true. But if they look for long enough where they cannot find themselves, they will realize something.

And so many humans have reached that point now. They have been looking a long time, for generations and generations and generations. They have been trapped in that movement.

So suddenly comes the realization, no, this is not it. I have achieved that. I have added that to me.

And still the craving is there. The needing is there. The sense of lack is there.

The fear is there. And then comes the realization, no, this is not where I am. And suddenly an openness comes to spiritual truth.

And they're able to listen. And sometimes all that's needed is just one little pointer. In many cases of people who are really ready, they hear one statement, one word, one pointer.

Oh, my God. And suddenly something new opens up. The world of the fictitious self loses its hold over you.

So the main thing is we are not making this transformation of consciousness that is happening into a goal to be achieved, as if you could add it to yourself. And many spiritual people who see themselves as spiritual and already see the unimportance ultimately of whatever they achieve or could add to themselves on an external level, they already see that, but they're still trapped in the mind pattern of needing to add something to themselves spiritually. And some get stuck in that then for 10, 20, 30 years.

And they're looking. They have some nice experience, yes, but they come and go. And some build a new, improved sense of self on the basis of the good experiences they have had.

Or they've become good meditators and so can enter good states of consciousness. Nothing wrong with that. But again, those mind structures can be very cunning.

They can come back through the back door. When you've recognized the fallacy already on one level, they come in through the back door, and you're trapped again and not getting there. I'm not enlightened yet.

You're looking for a state, and all that's happening is the state is already there. You are already in your fullness now, but it's obscured. It's obscured by more desire, by needing more future, needing mind structures, mental movement.

So the beauty of it is you don't need to bring about the new state of consciousness. You could only mess it up. All that's needed is allowing it to be there.

And how do you do that? Simply by allowing this moment to be as it is. That's the suchness of now, all there ever is.

And the now takes on many forms. It's always now. Forms appear in it.

Forms may dissolve. It's always now. So to align yourself with now, to become aware of now.

This is interesting. When I talk about now, people say they think the now is what happens, but what happens changes continuously. What appears in your life changes continuously.

That's why people believe there are many moments in one's life. There are many moments in one day. There are many moments in an hour.

But it's not really true, because it's always the now moment. Nothing can be that is not now. Nothing can happen that is not now.

So it's always really the one now moment. This one, this. So there are not many nows.

There's only one now. But the now is not a thing. You can't really make it into an object.

The danger when one speaks about it, it becomes another mind object. But the now is, one could say, a spaciousness in which the whole of phenomenal existence unfolds in that vast spaciousness. And when you allow to unfold whatever is unfolding in this now through the yes, the inner yes, the yes comes because you have recognized the futility, the absurdity, ultimately the madness of no, an inner no to what is.

To be in a fighting attitude towards life continuously. You've seen that is suffering. And so when you see the madness of living in this inner no, and it's normal, most people don't see it because it's so normal.

They've lived with it always. But when you see it, then the yes, the possibility of living in the yes comes. The inner yes to what is.

And then the strange thing is you go beyond whatever form arises in this moment. Yes, it's short-lived. It comes, it goes in the field of now.

When you say no, you react to whatever form arises. Now, the form could be a situation at this moment, something that happens at this moment, a person that comes into this moment, an emotion that comes into this moment, whatever comes into this moment. If you say no to it, you react to a form that comes.

If it's an emotion, it's an emotional form. A thought may come, thought form, external forms, a person, an event, a breakdown, this, that, some form. And if there's a no to it, to a form that arises, that no strengthens your own form identity, the form of me.

With every no comes an inner contraction. And the contraction makes your form identity stronger, the me. And so that is what keeps you trapped in the illusory sense of self.

It needs the no. It hates the yes. Because it loses its form, the yes is open, the openness comes.

Through the no, the contraction is there. So there is the fear that I will lose myself if I say yes to what is. Mostly unconscious, but some people actually say it, they have this fear.

If I say yes, who am I? So a miracle happens when the yes comes, you no longer react to the form, an arising form. The arising form is allowed to be.

You're no longer a reactive entity. Now what is there when the reactive entity is no longer operating? Who are you if you're not the reactive entity, the me, that needs its problems and its difficulties and its enemies?

Because if it doesn't have them, it can't react anymore. It doesn't know itself anymore. What happens if the reactive me doesn't operate anymore?

Who are you? Now, if I continue to speak, this is dangerous because language is form. I'm pointing to the formless essence of who you are.

So I will continue to speak, but we need to know now whatever I say now is form, it only points, it's not it. Any word that I use is not it, it's only a pointer beyond itself. So who are you when the form identity, the me, is no longer operating and it stops when you enter the state of yes?

One could say there's suddenly a sense of spaciousness, there's a sense of space in which things happen. So you are aware suddenly not only of what happens, you're aware of a spaciousness and this is only a pointer, a field of spaciousness in which it happens. One could almost say a field of peace that is around events, people, whatever it may be, that field is there.

That's the essence of who you are beyond form. That's also the deepest meaning of what we call the now, the present moment, because ultimately at the deepest level that is what the now is. So at the deepest level you are the now, this moment in which it all happens.

And then the beautiful thing is that whatever happens is no longer threatening. The world of form loses its power to intimidate you, but it also loses its promise to fulfill you. So suddenly both fear, which is the threat of the world, what the world can do to you, the world of form, fear dissolves and desire, because desire is looking for yourself, as we talked about earlier, in that world of forms, content.

Then you may still have superficial desires. You might say, oh, I'd love to eat a piece of cake. It's fine.

But there's no longer that craving behind it because you're not looking for yourself in it anymore. And if you get what you desire, there's not much energy charge in your desires then anymore. It's fine if you get it.

It's fine if you don't. So the world loses its power to make you fearful. It loses also its promise to fulfill you.

In other words, you become free of the world. Again, the world of form, all phenomenal existence, because you know yourself as the spaciousness in which all forms come and go. That's only a word.

You can use other words if they are more helpful. The awareness, the conscious, the pure consciousness in which it happens. You are that.

And it's not something you can make into a concept or an image. And from the point of view of the mind, which operates only through concepts and image-making, you no longer know who you are. And the egoic sense of self doesn't like that because it wants to be bigger and more of me, know myself totally.

But from the point of view of mind, you enter a state of not knowing. But that knowing is only not knowing from the point of view of conceptual knowledge. That is the field out of which all creativity arises.

One could say it's pure intelligence prior to form, pure intelligence itself before it becomes something, a thought or another form. So on the mind level, you no longer know who you are. And yet in that not knowing, there is a very deep sense of knowing, but not through concepts.

The strange thing also is when you dwell in that state, that spaciousness, whatever you truly need to know at this moment and only this moment, will be there, will come. Not only what you need to know, whatever you need at this moment comes out of that because it's the ground of all life. One could say it is life itself prior to form.

All the rest is the forms of life. They come and go quickly. Some go very unexpectedly.

But no form lasts that long. Even the sun, which compared to human existence is eternal, has a lifespan. So again, if that's just a belief system, another belief, sometimes when people study ancient teachings, they study all forms are impermanent, which is a beautiful truth, of course, a powerful pointer, but it goes beyond belief.

It's comforting if you believe that all forms are impermanent. It gives a little bit of comfort, perhaps already a little bit of spaciousness, just even to recognize the limited nature of all forms and to see the truth of the Buddhist, the impermanence of forms, the temporary nature, the fleeting nature of forms, the fact that no matter how hard you look, you can never find yourself in any form. Beautiful truth, ancient Buddhist truth.

To deeply see it, it could become, yes, another idea in the head that can happen, but if you just use it as a pointer and you see the impermanence of all forms, how quickly they come and go, and not to resist it, to see it, that seeing itself, that recognition of all forms as temporary, passing, flux, that is already the arising of that spaciousness, presence, I sometimes call it, and even the seeing of it is liberating.

Just to see it, even if nothing ever was pointed out, as the Buddha taught in purely negative terms, that never gave you anything really to believe in, although the human mind always manages in the end to find belief systems, to see it is already the arising of the spaciousness, and that's the liberation that is available to you, here, now. It's right here, now. It's there when there is the seeing of the impermanent nature of all forms, and with it a yes, not a resistance, that demands that these forms should not go away, they should be permanent, or these are not the forms that should be appearing in this moment, this moment is not as it should be.

[Speaker 2] (51:07 - 51:34)

Eckhart, I'm imagining someone whose entire family was devastated somehow in the terrorist tragedies that happened today, and I'm imagining that person listening to what you're saying, and perhaps at one level not connecting with it, because they might feel so emotionally overwhelmed by a sense of loss.

[Speaker 4] (51:34 - 51:35)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (51:35 - 51:42)

So my question would be, how do you address that person, someone who's immediately suffering from a grief or a tragedy?

[Speaker 1] (51:42 - 1:00:58)

Yes. So there's great pain. There will not be the possibility, probably on the external level, to accept that.

For most people, it will be impossible to accept on an external level, although I speak of the yes to what is. There are extreme cases of loss, disaster, or pain when it seems impossible to say yes to what is. And so when the yes is not there, pain is there, great suffering is there.

And the suffering, you can feel the suffering, in the very cells of the body. And the first step is actually to feel it in the cells of the body, not to deny it, but to feel that, the enormous suffering, which is human suffering. Millions of humans have experienced, millions, millions at all times disasters of that kind.

If you believe in reincarnation, and I'm not advocating either belief or non-belief, because what you believe doesn't matter, it doesn't contribute anything to the transformation of consciousness. It's not dependent on belief or disbelief in any idea. If you believe in reincarnation, then every human has already gone many times through that intensity of suffering.

If you don't believe in reincarnation, you can say millions of humans have already gone through that, because there's so much suffering. It's a human condition. And some humans encounter very acute suffering.

This is human suffering, and it's right here, now. When you feel it, it is an opportunity to accept the suffering, to say yes to what you feel. Not so much making it into mental stories, to feel it directly, to feel the feeling of suffering.

Oh, oh. And to cry, if necessary. Tears will come anyway.

And suffering will come in waves. It'll go away for a while, and a couple of hours later, there will be another wave of intense suffering. Whether you believe it or not, intense suffering of this kind is an enormous opening into spiritual realm in the deepest sense.

And allow it to be there. Allow the suffering to be there. Even, I've been talking about Buddhism, now I'm talking about Christianity.

The image of surrender to suffering is the image of Jesus on the cross. And this applies whether you see yourself as a Christian or not. It's an archetypal deep image that contains an enormous truth that perhaps people were not, for a long, long time, not able to hear consciously.

It could only be conveyed to them through that image. And that image of Jesus on the cross, we are used to the image. You may like it or dislike it.

It doesn't matter. But if you came to that image of Jesus on the cross without any preconceived ideas, you're coming from another planet and you see suddenly people worship this strange image of a man on a cross. And you would say, what is that?

Why do they worship this person who seems so completely helpless? And see, it's a mostly strange... If you come to that with a completely open state, you will see that it is an image of complete surrender to suffering.

And, of course, also in the story of the crucifixion, it's there as the last resistance of Jesus. And these are all archetypal images, archetypal teachings. The last resistance was, God, why hast thou forsaken me, Jesus says on the cross.

The last arising of resistance and suffering. And the next statement after that is not my will, but thy will be done. And that applies even if you have no belief in a personal God.

That is simply pointing to the state of complete surrender to what is, and it is the pain. Allow it to be there. You don't need to address a God if you don't believe in a God.

Simply allow it. What else can you do? There's nothing you can do, nothing.

Of course, you could train and start fighting them or go and become a terrorist in their country. It would be more deep unconsciousness. But truly, there's nothing you can do.

And to see that there's nothing you can do except allow this pain to be there. And then I'm not telling you or making any promise of what happens when you do that. You'll have to see for yourself what that allowing, what that surrender does.

That complete yes. And people have done it. Those who became teachers, the early teachers, somehow, perhaps through similar events, it happened to them.

Life did it to them. Dreadful, totally unacceptable disaster happened to them. Everything was removed from them.

And the pain became so unbearable that, of course, yes, they could have committed suicide. But really, a suicide is a deep no, still. It's an asserting of oneself against the world.

But instead, the suffering became so unbearable that they let go of the no. And even explanations in the head. You can't explain it, really, in the head.

Why, why, why, people ask. And the surrender only comes when you let go even of seeking an answer to why. You don't know.

It's not possible to know. So not even to seek an answer. And that is part of surrender because in complete spiritual surrender you embrace also the state of not knowing.

Accepting that there's deep pain and you have no answer. That's how it is. You just don't know.

And suddenly there's an openness. Suddenly there's some space around the pain. And the rest happens.

That's all really that is needed. I don't want to put ideas into your head and tell you what happens. Except to say that you will find some spaciousness in the midst of pain.

And there have been people in concentration camps, similar totally unacceptable situations that, you know, continuous intense suffering not knowing whether they would survive another hour, another day. Every moment could be the last. And suddenly a complete yes.

And suddenly they have reported, a few to whom it happened, a great sense of deep peace in the midst of hell. Peace in the midst of hell. That is the deepest teaching of the image of Christ on the cross.

Because ultimately every human is Christ on the cross.

[Speaker 2] (1:01:05 - 1:01:51)

Often, Eckhart, I've heard you talk about the new consciousness emerging and how this state is now available to more and more people. And honestly, I'm not convinced that this is not a projection of your experience. I have no doubt that you've flowered as a human.

But I don't see evidence around me of numbers and numbers of people. And I wonder if you're having some premonition that this is going to happen. Is it going to happen in five years, ten years, a thousand years?

Is there a timetable? Is there a number? And then, how will this actually transform the world?

[Speaker 1] (1:01:52 - 1:06:24)

Right. Now, admittedly, I seem to be at the epicenter of a wave of transformation because that is what I do. And people who come into contact with me, everybody I meet is going through a transformation.

And sometimes, when I switch on the television, I'm suddenly reminded, oh, it's not happening to everyone. So, because of my peculiar position, admittedly, it often seems to me as if the whole world were becoming transformed. And there's no denying that I get huge amounts of correspondence from people who are reporting shifts in consciousness.

An enormous lessening of suffering, and so on. So I see that everywhere. I don't have a time scale.

All I know and sense is that there's an acceleration of something. I also know that it is unlikely that the planet would survive another hundred years if the old consciousness predominates for another hundred years on the planet with all that that entails. It is unlikely that nature, that the planet, would be able to endure that.

So for the first time in human history, that transformation has become a necessity even for the survival of the species. And perhaps it's only then, in any evolutionary transformation, perhaps it's only when a species reaches a critical point, when its survival is threatened, if it continues untransformed, that the transformation on a collective level happens. I believe, I would say, it is almost a fact that if the old patterns continue of doing things for another hundred years, and of course the patterns will become even more magnified, the means of destruction even greater, if they continue, the planet would not be able to sustain human life for another hundred years.

So we've reached for the first time in the history a point where it's no longer a luxury, the transformation of human consciousness, it was perhaps at the time that the Buddha was an early flowering, Jesus early flowering, already pointing to something. Perhaps they knew what was going to, they could already see the way it was going. So early pointers to that.

And then quite a few flowers after that, here and there. But it was never a necessity, humans, the planet survived even with human madness, but then came technology, then came science. Of course, yes, there are also manifestations of great intelligence, and yet, to a large extent, science and technology have also magnified the madness.

Before, people had a sword, you could kill a few people with a sword, and now you can kill hundreds of thousands with one device. There's no change, it's simply magnifying the effects of unconsciousness. And in a way, that's a good thing, because we see it more clearly than ever.

The first shock came to people in the First World War, which was the first war that was fought with enormous weapons of destruction provided by technology. And they were suddenly like, what have we done? Millions, millions of young men dying uselessly in trenches, and then they looked, and oh my God, that was an eye-opener into the madness, and that was only the beginning of the 20th century, and now we know what happened the rest of the 20th century.

It is in your face now, it's so obvious. So, I know that the work I do, for lack of a better word, I don't feel it is work, is a manifestation of the new consciousness. Now, is enough of this coming through?

Are enough human beings going through this to save the planet? I don't know. Perhaps not.

[Speaker 2] (1:06:27 - 1:06:32)

So, is it fair to say that you're a kind of evolutionary mutant, in a way?

[Speaker 1] (1:06:32 - 1:07:12)

Yes. In a way, this really is what's happening, and it is almost like the species evolving into something new. Almost, to say, a new species evolving out of the old.

And again, not to make it into some kind of ego thing, or saying, we are the new species and you are not. That's more of the old. But yes, it is very much like a new species arising.

And it's arising because the old species is no longer capable of survival unless it changes.

[Speaker 2] (1:07:15 - 1:07:24)

And if you had to characterize the wiring or the characteristics of the new species, what would that be?

[Speaker 1] (1:07:26 - 1:11:35)

Well, the new species doesn't need enemies, drama, or conflict to give it a sense of identity. So it becomes free to a large extent of the conflict and the man-made suffering that is characteristic of the old consciousness. The Buddha had a very good perspective on it when he said, to describe the state of consciousness, of liberation, it is free of suffering.

You don't suffer anymore. There may still be pain, because pain to some extent is there as long as there is a physical body. You may have a toothache, or this or that.

Suffering as a psychological suffering that is caused by the me entity in the head, you no longer cause suffering to yourself through thought structures. And when you no longer cause suffering for yourself, you no longer cause suffering for others. Human interactions will be no longer governed by fear, as they are now, fear and desire, the two movements of the unconscious state.

But, and I use this word with great care, and rarely, because it's so precious, what it points to is so precious and really beyond words, human interactions will be governed by love and compassion. And love is simply, not love is not saying I need you, don't you ever dare leave me, because I know what I'm going to do to you if you leave me. That's the love of the old consciousness, the so-called.

Love is simply to recognize the other as yourself. The recognition of oneness is love. And in all interactions, to recognize the other as yourself, no longer interact through making an image, a form identity of who that person is, because you've gone beyond form identity in yourself.

You're no longer constructing little traps and boxes and concepts for other people. And so love operates. We cannot even conceive what a world would look like if a large part of humans live in that new state of consciousness.

I don't speculate on that. One could. It's nice speculation.

It is certain that you would not recognize the human-made structures. They would be very, very different now. Potentially, this planet is a paradise.

It is still a paradise. Humans have tried their hardest to make it into hell. But it's still a very beautiful paradise.

And I'm not saying that the level of form does not have its limitations. Yes, forms still come and go. And yet, harmony is possible.

To live in harmony with the impermanent nature of all forms. To live in a state of love. Loving all forms, not as forms, but loving the essence of each form.

That the one life that manifests as millions of forms of life. But loving the one life of which the millions of forms are only temporary manifestations. Loving it as yourself.

Being it. That is the new state of consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (1:11:35 - 1:13:32)

This concludes Session 1 of Even the Sun Will Die with Eckhart Tolle. Our program continues with Session 2. Sounds True and Namaste Publishing present Session 2 of Even the Sun Will Die, an interview with Eckhart Tolle.

So Eckhart, because it is so rare for me to get to sit with somebody like yourself, what I'd like to do is ask you some questions about how your perception works. So specifically, after the experience of your awakening, how now do you experience sensory information? And how is it different from before?

Sounds, tastes?

[Speaker 1] (1:13:34 - 1:49:20)

That's a good question. After the kind of shift in consciousness happened, all I knew was that from one day to the next, suddenly everything was peaceful. All sense perceptions happened within a very peaceful field.

But I couldn't have said very much at that time except I was anxious, depressed for many years and now I'm at peace. I could have said that and I said it, but I don't know why. I also said that many times.

I don't understand it. I didn't understand it at all. I didn't realize at the time what had happened was that my thought processes had become reduced.

Whereas before, my mind was agitated, hyperactive, which is the case with many people these days. And to a large extent, my mind activity was self-torture and continuous projection into future, which of course generates more fear and anxiety. And then suddenly, from living with an agitated mind, to living with a very benign mind.

And I realized much later that the reason why there was that peace was that my thought processes had become reduced by about 80%. And since then and up to now, the way in which I perceive things, the world, nature, people, is still very much through stillness. In other words, while I perceive, there isn't a lot of mind activity that comments on what I'm perceiving.

There isn't a lot of labeling of sense perceptions. They're just there. Not a mental voice saying this, that, this, or a mental voice taking a standpoint in relation to what I'm perceiving, a personalized standpoint, my personal relationship to this what's happening around me at this moment.

And then that of course is the root of this incessant mind activity because there is a mind-generated me, a self, which personalizes every experience and interprets and judges and labels and conceptualizes every perception and makes it fit in to its mind-made sense of self and its story which makes up its identity. And all that is the continuous mental noise. So most people live trapped in the mental noise and what they perceive is they perceive as if they were looking through a very dense screen of words, images, concepts, in other words, mind activity.

And what happened to me after the shift then was that I had become reduced to very little. So a lot of the time when I walk around the city or drive or when I sit with someone looking at someone, listening to someone, or as I like to do sit in public places like cafes. I love to just sit and watch people.

I also of course feel very deeply about nature. To simply be there as an observing presence without the need to call anything or anybody anything. Just allow everything and every being to be as it is.

There's nothing I can add to it by interpreting it. Now, many people would not want to go there because they are so identified with thought processes so they would think, well, the thought made me would think it would lose itself or lose something very valuable if it stopped interpreting, judging, labeling, because to the mind it seems when I stop all that I won't know anything anymore. I won't know what's going on anymore.

I need to know what's going on. So whenever people meet each other then there's immediately mental judgments come in and that's part of the labeling process and perhaps Jesus was referring to that when he said, judge not. All there's judging is it's mind activity, it's labeling.

And so it's such a relief to be able to be without that continuous interference and the amazing thing is that you do not become stupid or unconscious. In fact, you're much more awake in that state than you are in the state of identification with mental noise. So much so that one could almost say compared to that state of simply being present with what is without compulsively labeling, if you ever should need labels, they'll be there.

But when labels are not needed to a large extent, you're free or if labels should arise occasionally, they are recognized as mental labels and you don't necessarily believe in them or are identified with them so they don't contribute to any sense of self anymore. So it's not that you become unconscious or ignorant only from the point of view of the thinking mind which only knows thought, then yes, one could say that it's like becoming ignorant but only from the point of view of thought. So with this comes a wonderful realization there is a vast realm of consciousness beyond thought.

Thought is a tiny manifestation of a vast consciousness that is your essence and most people only know that tiny manifestation is not separate because consciousness embraces everything, is everything. Thought is only a particular form that consciousness takes so not to be trapped in that anymore, that tiny manifestation of consciousness, not that it will never operate again, no it can and does still operate but you're no longer trapped in it so it doesn't give you your sense of self anymore. It's not there in thought and all the emotions that accompany thought it's not there where you're seeking your identity or to enhance your identity through adding more content to your mind and so when that stops, oh suddenly you realize that you can simply be present here fully awake, alert and even know but not know through concepts or labels you just, you know without needing words, so there is a deeper knowing that can operate and does operate in that state in which thought activity can still happen when it's needed, in fact thought then becomes actually quite inspired insights, realizations, suddenly because they come out of that field of no thought when thought becomes trapped in itself, you go round and round and round and it's a continuous circle of largely useless and to a large extent destructive thinking psychologists found, even those who are not into anything spiritual they looked at thought processes and found that something like 98% of our thought processes are completely repetitive the same things go through the mind again and again and for many people what they thought 10 years ago, the same thoughts are still going through their mind, conditioned totally identified with the conditioning of the mind, the conditioned mind, and so you see it in relationships where people act out their conditioning continuously you can see it with couples if you had recorded what they quarrel about 5 years ago, you could replay it, it's the same thing they're talking about and quarreling about now, just one example so that's to become free of the compulsion to label and ultimately to think so to realize that it is possible to be conscious without thought, to be awake without thought and compared to that state of wakefulness the state of identification with thought is like dream dream world, like being trapped in a dream, and that's the reason I believe why the word awakening and awake is so important, and has been for a long time in spiritual language Buddhism itself is about being awake Buddha, the root means the one of that word, it's not a name the root of Buddha means to be awake from Sanskrit so really Buddha rather than being a person, Buddha is the state of being awake, a kind of personification of the state of wakefulness, which means not identified with thought one could say, although all these words are never totally right, rising above thought, one could say the next step in evolution for humankind is to rise above thought, whereas up till now humans have been totally identified with thought that's the state of unconsciousness, complete unconsciousness so what happened then was the liberation, one could say from compulsive thinking, and from identification with thinking thinking still happens sometimes but ever since then no thought has made me unhappy and thought still occasionally happens, and of course when I speak thought is involved because thought is needed so that words can come out of my mouth but it is spoken from that deeper field of no thought, so then thought arises out of that and any creative activity and any creative insight that ever occurred to anyone in the world has come out of that field that is deeper or higher, whatever you want to call it, than thought and so it's that anybody who is creative in any way if only momentarily must have access to that field of no thought where suddenly there's a stillness but an alertness and then perhaps it only lasts a moment and yet suddenly there's a realization then it takes form as thought and that's fine but now it's thought that is actually empowered, it has a newness a freshness to it, it's not the old record thought mostly is the old record going round and round so any artist creates from that even if they don't know it, just as I didn't know when the shift happened that my thought processes had become reduced they just had become reduced and I knew I was at peace but I didn't know why so there are many creative people who don't quite realize that where their creativity comes from and that they enter that state of what I often call presence, which is thoughtless awareness they enter that state perhaps only briefly occasionally, but that's where that's where the treasures come from and then they are given form by the mind and then perhaps external form as writing or as music or as painting whatever form it takes or it may be that it takes on a completely different form that field, if you're in touch with that field it could simply be not go through with the mind, it can enter this world as an emanation of peace compassion or love so in that sense sacredness one could say is associated as an essential characteristic of that realm that is beyond thought peace sacredness, love in the true sense of the word, I don't like to use that word so much because it's been misused but there's a sacredness to that field and that can those who are in touch with that for any length of time of course time only exists on the external level, in that field there is no time you're in touch with that, then also as long as you're in touch with that you emanate peace something shines through you one could say, something shines through the form there's an openness into a realm that is beyond form and so the way I now experience the world is through stillness mostly one could say everything happens in the field of stillness and even an agitation could happen around me and that also happens in the field of stillness it's liberation from the need to think and now perhaps before you ask another question maybe that is the question you're going to ask how does it happen? why did it happen to you?

can this happen to everybody? is it going to happen to everybody? or is there anything we can do to make it happen?

because there's not much point in just listening to something that happened to somebody else and think oh that's great but what about me? how could I? I couldn't get there but what I sense is that that state of becoming free of compulsive thinking is arising in many human beings already now it's not so much that they need to make it happen it's more like allowing it to happen and there are many humans who don't realize that already there are times when they are in that state of thoughtless awareness but it's not recognized because the mind cannot recognize it and because they're still perhaps 90% trapped in mind then it would simply seem like a moment of nothingness or it could if they go more deeply, it could be that they remember something as oh that was a wonderful moment but where is it now? sometimes people report in a moment of great danger they experience that shift when suddenly the mind stopped and they became enormously peaceful and they didn't know whether they would survive the next few seconds but suddenly there was that field of peace and they did survive, those who did and then they talked about it later and said that was very strange I was facing death and suddenly there was this peace and I could see whatever the situation was I could see the car coming towards me and I knew it wouldn't stop but I felt incredibly peaceful and alive and alert and present it can happen in those situations, it can happen in situations when for some reason the mind stops even sometimes through great physical exertion so much that suddenly the mind stops or overwhelmed by enormous beauty and for a moment there's simply an opening an opening and whenever you respond to beauty in nature for example or even the beauty of another human being a rose, a flower, a plant there's a moment for the recognition of beauty to be possible there's always a moment of thoughtless awareness and that's the moment when you truly perceive and for many people that moment is very short and then the mind comes in and interprets it but if they could pay more attention to that moment when there is actually the stillness it's only through perception in the stillness that you can be aware of beauty and so in that moment the beauty is there so the beauty and also this applies to love, true love can only be there in the absence of mental noise now for many people that is only very short and they don't recognize it because it's so short and then the mind comes in again and says something about it or say I want or future or past whatever comes in so if you pay attention to naturally arising moments of pure awareness or presence it could happen when you wake up in the morning eyes open and you look around and stillness is there and some people experience that and it may last for half a minute or a minute and for many people then the mind suddenly starts to work the machinery of mind the wheels and before they know it they've gone into the state of being completely identified with thought and suddenly they remember what their problems are and what they have to do today and all those, oh and that oh my god, oh and then I have to oh on yesterday this happened suddenly of course it's the state of being identified with thought is a problematic state and very heavy so if you can catch that time when thoughtless awareness is there naturally and when you pay attention to it it stays for longer just be aware of it because it is the awareness and nature is beautiful when you go into nature you can only really see it when the mind is still then you truly see you truly perceive may not, perhaps not necessarily totally still but you can at least some of the time you can truly be there and listen and see and smell what is and not label it and then imagine what that does to relations with human beings when you can allow the other person just to be without the compulsion to label immediately allow them to be and to say and to do and again I use the word allow and that's a key word that takes you as a little pointer that takes you into that state of presence allow what is to be and what is is always this moment and anybody who listens to me now will be able to do that they would no longer be listening by now if they were not something that they recognize as the truth so anybody who listens to this is able to allow this moment to be not continuously and the beautiful thing is it doesn't have to be continuous I'm not saying from now on you are going to be or try to be even worse try to be present and try hard to be present from now on for the rest of your life it's a new problem then fortunately that's not needed all that's needed is to allow this moment to be and that's not a lot it's just this moment and that's very strange because the normal human state is very different from being open completely with what is now and face it in that state of openness and in that state of alertness which is true intelligence a state of alertness which at first sight looks as if you didn't know much anymore but that is intelligence intelligence that is greater than thought then thought or action can come out of that state if it's needed and it'll be right for that moment it will be unpremeditated unrehearsed unprepared completely fresh, completely new and completely right the optimum response of that moment or nothing may happen no words may come no action may arise and then that will be the optimum response there are many situations in which nothing is needed except the simple act of surrender to what is there are many situations in which nothing can be done for now except the simple fact of realizing accepting that nothing can be done right now and so that is the beautiful state of surrender and that frees you from being dependent on and threatened by the world of form in other words, the world so one could say it frees you from the world, so to speak not that you turn away from it in fact you can only become free of the world by facing it fully and openly we're not running away from anything so that state of allowing what is is the opposite of running away from or denying what is that in fact is the mind's usual way denying what is because I'm looking for something else not this, I'm looking for the next moment, don't give me this moment this, I don't want this I want that I'm running to the next moment, that's why I'm in such a hurry because I'm hoping to complete myself there I needed to complete myself, I'm not complete yet leave me alone so the wonderful thing then and we come back to your question with that comes the realization that you are complete already on a deepest level I realized, and that was part of that piece that I am already complete of course there are many things I could still achieve and I haven't yet achieved in this world hundreds of things that I could achieve and if one or two I may achieve and there are many things I could learn and add to my knowledge or my experiences, there are still things to be experienced on that level fine, but on a deepest level there is that sense of fullness and completion already in which you don't need anymore to add to who you are, you are already the fullness, life is your essence but that's not the life of form it's the life prior to form, the formless one life that you are is already complete in you and then you as form, yes, can still do things and experience things beautifully and truly enjoy because you don't need those things anymore to enhance your sense of self as long as you need all those things to enhance your sense of self, you may be trying to enjoy yourself but really there is a kind of desperation behind it, a neediness and a frustration you are never quite getting there because you are using the world to enhance your sense of self and it doesn't work so that's the beautiful thing the realization that in the now there is already the fullness of life as your very essence so that's the wonderful thing when you can just walk around nature or the city in that state of openness in which thought isn't that important anymore and here that's an interesting thing, for many people there is a transitional stage from being identified with thought completely to moving into the realm which is I sometimes call it the new step in human evolution is to rise above thought and for some people there is an intermediate stage one could almost say in which they realize that all thought is relative any judgment or interpretation is a perspective on something and you could easily move to a different standpoint from where you see the same thing from a different perspective then you might have another judgment about it so some people are beginning to recognize the relativity of all thought and so they are no longer completely identified with thought and thought loses its heaviness one could almost say they no longer totally believe in all the mental noise it's recognized as mental noise, it's recognized as mental positions and that's a wonderful thing when you can see that any statement the mind makes might be relatively true but quite often the opposite statement is also true if you could look at it, that's how you see in the world when people argue they identify with their mental positions and once you've identified with the mental position you're defending your sense of self so you argue with great sometimes violence or you might need to kill some people so that your sense of self can survive or feel stronger so to see the relativity of any judgment or any position yes, you don't have to relinquish them, you can still have opinions but recognize them as mental positions and perspectives and not the truth so that is the intermediate stage you no longer take your thoughts all that seriously that implies of course that there's some presence from where you can allow those thoughts to be there without some presence and presence is the arising unconditioned consciousness the vast around beyond thought the fact that you're able not to take your mind too seriously means that realm presence is arising in you because if it were not you would still be totally trapped in mind and even the statement don't take your mind too seriously would be meaningless because you are your mind when you're totally identified it would be the unconscious state so to recognize thought as thought to recognize mental positions as mental positions you may still have them they may even still have a certain momentum, a certain energy and when words come out of your mouth and you're expressing your mental position you may feel the emotional momentum still behind it but hmm there it is I'm expressing a position you just see it and feel the energy that comes with that and so gradually there's the ability more and more to see and allow the mind and it is no longer that serious and the mind may play its own tricks and you then recognize repetitive patterns that tell you something about yourself perhaps you're not good enough or you should or why didn't and what if or whatever the patterns are and they go on and on self-talk dialogues in the head monologues repetitive at night you wake up and it goes on and on and the emotions that accompany that and fuel that very mind activity and the mind activity adding more fuel to the vicious circle between emotions and mind activity and you see it and you suddenly see it and that seeing is presence arising and that seeing is also the field of stillness arising there may be turbulence but when you can see turbulence as turbulence there is a stillness arising that is the seeing it as turbulence and so that's happening and through simply even listening to these words which are simply spoken from that state one could almost say when you listen to these words you're listening to yourself they're coming out of you really and even that can be very helpful there's an energy that is in the words because they come out of presence and anything that comes out of presence has still the flavor one could say of presence to it a certain energy is there and that awakens your own presence so to speak that draws it out and that's the power of spiritual discourse which goes beyond the usual usage of words which are simply to convey information and here the words are yes to convey information but more also to reach a deeper level in yourself that is beyond the conceptualizing mind and when it retouches that, the unconditioned consciousness, it responds and that is sometimes the exhilaration or the enormously satisfying feeling that you get when you listen to spiritual truth it can also happen when you read a book that comes, that is written from presence, there's still an energy field there one could say and the moment you read oh yes, yes I know that spiritual truth never needs convincing you don't need to convince anybody, persuade anybody that this is true and the beautiful thing of course it requires no belief all belief is mind stuff

[Speaker 2] (1:49:20 - 1:49:33)

so this 80% reduction in your thinking mind did it occur to you that maybe you'd gone insane or something

[Speaker 1] (1:49:33 - 1:56:42)

well not so much to me but to people around me that's right so people who knew me especially family parents, family members some friends thought something had gone wrong with me because well after the shift for a while I carried on with the external structures of my life I just carried on as if nothing had happened because they still had a certain momentum and there was just the momentum was there and I went with the momentum for 3 years or so 4 years and then realized that those external structures were totally out of alignment with my inner being I was in the academic world mind dominated completely and ego dominated completely and so then a moment came when I left it all behind and that's when people thought I was really mad because to leave a promising academic career behind and go into nothing and then sit on the park bench and not do anything anymore it was quite extreme because I didn't have any spiritual guidance nobody who told me that well you don't need to live on a park bench you can actually still function in the world I had to find that out for myself and that took quite a few more years that I could still function in the world but for a while the state of presence or beingness was so satisfying and beautiful and complete I lost all interest in future let alone ambition or needing to achieve this or that if the present moment is so fulfilling why need the future now of course on a practical level future still operates and it's quite helpful sometimes to know that you need to catch a plane in a few days or something like that or even to learn something that you need a certain amount of time to learn the language or whatever it is but I didn't need future internally anymore and it took years before I started being able to deal with the world again without needing the world almost in a playful way to initiate things, to do things and miraculously quite a few things came to me even when I was sitting on the park bench and not interested and often very close to having nothing in my pocket and usually at the last minute somebody or something came and again there would be enough to live for a while, to live on miraculously, it always happened and gradually then I was able to function in the world again I must say a few, two or three times I tried to drop back into the structures of the world I was feeling that my time on the park bench was coming to an end and I thought, okay, I better do something and then I once I applied for a job and this is quite funny I applied for a job at a merchant bank in the city of London and they actually, I actually got an interview and they listened to me with interest but didn't offer me a job and then I applied for an academic job and I also got an interview and I talked a bit about teaching and I must have said something that what really matters is I try to avoid spiritual language but the truth or that which is beyond and there was a panel of professors interviewing me maybe six or seven and at the end of the interview one of the professors asked me, and what do you really want to do? He could see that that was not what I really wanted to do and that was my last interview ever so I realized I really didn't want to drop back into the structures of the world and then gradually people came and asked questions sometimes and out of informal teaching situations then something a little bit more structured informal came and so then I became a spiritual teacher in the eyes of the world so that's how it happened and a while ago somebody asked me what is your greatest achievement in life and I couldn't think of very much but what suddenly came to me was well, I don't need to think that's why I couldn't think of it but I don't need to think anymore unless I want to think that's my achievement but that's not really an achievement because it's a negative thing, it's a non I don't need to think so I haven't achieved really anything and I wouldn't get a job if I put that in my resume I don't need to think anymore but really that's what it is the very power of the teaching comes from that state of awareness it's not me, I always, whenever I start a talk I have this feeling I've got absolutely nothing to say, there's nothing there so it's not really this person that is doing anything the whole teaching and is having quite an impact on the world but it is the state of no thought that comes out of that nothing to do with this person

[Speaker 2] (1:56:44 - 1:56:54)

so even though people from the outside might have thought that you were a little loony your internal experience you never questioned what had happened

[Speaker 1] (1:56:54 - 1:57:41)

no, no it was so clear and there was never any question the reality of it was so obvious and I once said somewhere that even if I had met the Buddha and the Buddha said oh no, that's not it, I would have said oh, so even the Buddha can be wrong, that's interesting and that's not spoken from ego it was just to say that how immediate and obvious the reality is that no mental thing or anything anybody says could question, it's like holding something in your hand and there's an apple and somebody comes and says no, that's not an apple, but you know it is

[Speaker 2] (1:57:43 - 1:58:03)

Now you talked about the change in the discursive mind reduction of 80%, I'm so glad you gave me a number, I really appreciate that I'm curious though about your physical body and how that changed or not, and how you experience your physical body now

[Speaker 1] (1:58:04 - 2:06:45)

yes well, my physical body is not strong and some people think I must be quite weak because my body looks a bit fragile, but there's actually quite a lot of energy in it, not continuously there are fluctuations of energy I haven't been really ill since then, I had flu I think it was last year for the first time in many many many years, I couldn't even remember when I last had a flu I'm not saying that necessarily physical health is always associated with spiritual realisation it is not but I very much sense the aliveness in my body a lot of the time because part of the sense of presence is that you're feeling that every cell is alive the centre of your attention is not in the head, it's diffused all over the body so as I sit here I can sense that there's an aliveness in the cells of the body subtle but it's there and so the moment you feel that you're alive and so you inhabit the body and then that becomes part of the state of presence because you're present with every cell of the body and then you look around it's a beautiful way of not being drawn back into mind when you dwell in your body and then you perceive still feeling the inner body and this is how I, this very moment it is for me my attention isn't completely in the words a lot of my attention is in the energy field of the body as I speak and that's part of that beautiful stillness and then you look around and even as you look at something or listen to something you still feel the aliveness and then whatever you look at or listen to, your sense perceptions you realize the world also is very much alive everything has aliveness to it not just what we call living things even so called inanimate objects have beingness of presence and of course every physicist would agree and they say that of course if you examined the atomic structure even of a stone you would see it's very much alive just like the body to only very small differences and so when you perceive through the screen of mind everything becomes dead for many people that's how they experience the world lifeless through no longer able to perceive because of the screen of mind and then suddenly you realize everything is alive and so that's wonderful and so that's the main thing concerning my body is that I sense it a lot of the time it's there, I know it's there occasionally when I sometimes tell people when you feel an illness coming on go more deeply into the body be there and hold that state of being, inhabiting the body and lie in that, sit or lie somewhere and be completely in here, in the body and hold it for 10 minutes, 15 minutes, whatever and that is so much aliveness suddenly that often the first signs of that illness suddenly is gone it works if you catch it when you sense the first signs of something not quite right somewhere in the body and then become very present you turn up the light of presence now for some people that happens because they are threatened by a crisis in their lives, maybe your very survival is threatened and then they become they could of course go into despair, it's the opposite or they step into presence there's always another aspect to the dreadful events that we witnessed this week in New York I'm saying this although perhaps some people will get angry with me when I say it when people face death, many people in the last moments realize the truth of who they are, they separate from the mind made self and there's a sudden realization and if that happened, and I'm sure it happened to quite a few people, many people there, then your life was worthwhile the flowering, even if it takes a few seconds, it's there I spoke to a man, I was staying in a cabin in the mountains a few weeks ago and there was a big lake there and this man had in the winter taken his kayak out and paddled in the lake and suddenly a gust of wind came and the kayak capsized and freezing lake and it took him half an hour to swim to the shore in the freezing water and he didn't know whether he would make it and he said that a shift happened while it was suddenly he could see himself there in the water there was a disassociation from the me and pure consciousness was there watching and he survived but this can happen when your life is threatened and suddenly there it is and many people have reported that in near death experiences, people who were very close to death came back or actually died in most cases the realization that on a deeper level all is well they suddenly saw from a deeper level that what was a tragedy what was a disaster and dreadful from a conventional perspective when they left they stepped out of their form identity identification with form which was being dissolving or threatened suddenly they realized it's fine all is well and also they realized there is no death beyond belief a live realization and so in any disaster this happens to people this realization and so you can read many accounts people who survived and many of them experienced that the beauty of spiritual transformation is that you don't need to wait for disaster or for death to happen that it actually can happen now what you die to now this moment is a mind made sense of self identification with thought and thought structures that is the me the me with it's story and it's needs and it's problems and it's conflicts you step out of it that's the true death

[Speaker 2] (2:06:47 - 2:07:07)

so Eckhart when I asked you about how you experienced your body now you described it as some very felt vibratory field that you are in touch with quite a bit of the time do you imagine that when you die what will occur to that field what will be your experience then

[Speaker 1] (2:07:09 - 2:11:48)

well in a way I feel that I have already died there is still the physical body and so that's what's left there is simply that the physical the density of the physical form dissolves and what is left is simply consciousness temporarily perhaps it will still have not a physical form but exists as a separate form unless you know that they say you can you can choose to reincarnate not compulsively take on another body but the choice may be there of taking on another body or of removing yourself completely I don't know what will happen I don't give much thought to the future so it does feel true to me that the choice is there not the compulsion of needing further sense experience that's gone long ago I can enjoy sense experience I can eat chocolate or whatever any kind of sense experience I enjoy it but if you said any of these things you can't have any more of this even sex no more for the rest of your life it wouldn't matter very much or no more chocolate it doesn't matter very much although I can enjoy it there's no compulsion anymore to experience whether sensory or other kinds of experience and so that need to live again in form, the desperate need is not there and there are many people now who are going beyond those who are ripe for realisation if you sense within yourself you will feel whether or not you want to live again you can already you want another physical existence do you need another physical existence and if you sense within you will know the answer perhaps at the moment you may still feel that you need another maybe in a few years you will feel that you don't want to have another physical existence and then it may be up to you whether or not in Buddhism they have the beautiful view that when you are free you can choose perhaps out of compassion to go through another incarnation and then if you do you have to go through another cycle of ignorance but fairly quickly the whole cycle of ignorance that humans is the destiny of humans has been for a long time you would have to reincarnate into that again but you would move through fairly quickly imagine living your whole life again not a nice prospect having to live through it all again but I usually don't speculate or even envisage what's going to happen not even tomorrow because I feel that my life is an unfolding consciousness unfolding and it does what it wants I'm not making any plans for it I occasionally make plans on a personal level travel plans but not beyond there's a nice story of the disciple asking the Zen master what happens after death master? and the master says I don't know and the disciple says well, aren't you a master?

and the master says yes, but I'm not a dead one laughter it's just not interested I have really no interest in future it's strange

[Speaker 2] (2:11:53 - 2:12:26)

Eckhart, I'm imagining someone whose entire family was devastated somehow in the terrorist tragedies that happened today and I'm imagining that person listening to what you're saying and perhaps at one level not connecting with it because they might feel so emotionally overwhelmed by a sense of loss so my question would be how do you address that person? someone who's immediately suffering from a grief or a tragedy

[Speaker 1] (2:12:27 - 2:13:47)

so there's great pain there will not be the possibility probably on the external level to accept that for most people it will be impossible to accept on an external level although I speak of the yes to what is there are extreme cases of loss disaster or pain when it seems impossible to say yes to what is and so when the yes is not there pain is there great suffering is there and the suffering you can feel the suffering in the very cells of the body and the first step is actually to feel it in the cells of the body not to deny it but to feel that the enormous suffering which is human suffering millions of humans have experienced, millions, millions at all times have experienced disasters of that kind

[Speaker 3] (2:13:50 - 2:13:51)

if you believe in

[Speaker 1] (2:13:52 - 2:21:43)

reincarnation and I'm not advocating either belief or non-belief because what you believe doesn't matter it doesn't contribute anything to the transformation of consciousness it's not dependent on belief or disbelief in any idea if you believe in reincarnation then every human has already gone many times through that intensity of suffering if you don't believe in reincarnation you can say millions of humans have already gone through that because there's so much suffering it's a human condition and some humans encounter very acute suffering this is human suffering and it's right here now when you feel it it is an opportunity to accept the suffering to say yes to what you feel not so much making it into mental stories, to feel it directly to feel the feeling of suffering and to cry if necessary tears will come anyway and suffering will come in waves it will go away for a while and a couple of hours later there will be another wave of intense suffering whether you believe it or not intense suffering of this kind is an enormous opening into spiritual realm in the deepest sense and allow it to be there allow the suffering to be there even, I've been talking about Buddhism, now I'm talking about Christianity the image of surrender to suffering is the image of Jesus on the cross and this applies whether you see yourself as a Christian or not it's an archetypal deep image that contains an enormous truth that perhaps people were not, for a long long time not able to hear consciously it could only be conveyed to them through that image and that image of Jesus on the cross we are used to the image you may like it or dislike it, it doesn't matter but if you came to that image of Jesus on the cross without any preconceived ideas you're coming from another planet and you see suddenly people worship this strange image of a man on the cross and you would say, what is that?

why do they worship this person who seems so completely helpless and see it's strange if you come to that with a completely open state you will see that it is an image of complete surrender to suffering and of course also in the story of the crucifixion it's there as the last resistance of Jesus and these are all archetypal images archetypal teachings the last resistance was, God why has thou forsaken me Jesus says on the cross the last arising of resistance and suffering and the next statement after that is not my will but thy will be done and that applies even if you have no belief in a personal God, that is simply pointing to the state of complete surrender to what is the pain allow it to be there you don't need to address a God if you don't believe in a God simply allow it what else can you do there is nothing you can do nothing of course you could train and start fighting them or go and become a terrorist in their country or it would be more deep unconsciousness but truly there is nothing you can do and to see that there is nothing you can do except allow this pain to be there and then I am not telling you or making any promise of what happens when you do that you will have to see for yourself what that allowing, what that surrender does that complete yes and people have done it those who became teachers, the early teachers somehow perhaps through similar events it happened to them, life did it to them dreadful, totally unacceptable disaster happened to them everything was removed from them and the pain became so unbearable that of course yes they could have committed suicide but really a suicide is a deep no still it's an asserting of oneself against the world but instead the suffering became so unbearable that they let go of the no and even explanations in the head you can't explain it really in the head, why, why, why people ask and the surrender only comes when you let go even of seeking an answer to why you don't know it's not possible to know, so not even to seek an answer and that is part of surrender because in complete spiritual surrender you embrace also the state of not knowing accepting that there is deep pain and you have no answer, that's how it is you just don't know and suddenly there's an openness suddenly there's some space around the pain and the rest happens that's all really that is needed, I don't want to put ideas into your head and tell you what happens, except to say that you will find some spaciousness in the midst of pain and there have been people in concentration camps similar totally unacceptable situations that continuous intense suffering, not knowing whether they would survive another hour, another day every moment could be the last and suddenly a complete yes and suddenly they have reported a few to whom it happened a great sense of deep peace in the midst of hell peace in the midst of hell that is the deepest teaching of the image of Christ on the cross because ultimately every human is Christ on the cross

[Speaker 2] (2:21:49 - 2:22:11)

and just a couple more questions Eckhart I've heard you a couple times quote Ramana Maharshi the great sage of India how do we measure spiritual progress and you attribute to him the saying that we measure spiritual progress by the absence of thought do you really believe that?

[Speaker 1] (2:22:13 - 2:26:34)

yes the degree of absence of thought yes yes, that's right so it's simple very simple now the mind might say ok, that means I haven't made any progress because I'm still thinking all the time well perhaps that's not true perhaps you don't know that there's already absence of thought in you, maybe brief that doesn't matter do you ever see beauty, respond to beauty there must be absence of thought in you because you wouldn't even see beauty otherwise that moment is absence of thought there may be many moments when there's absence of thought and then suddenly you become aware that there are times when thought is absent now of course then, very often the mind will come in and say oh, I'm not thinking because then you're thinking again but after a while you can actually feel that you know you're not thinking and still not thinking but it's good not to try to bring about that state because that could lead to more struggle and effort the quickest way to becoming free of thought is to surrender to this moment, to accept this moment as it is because if you observe the compulsive thought processes you find they're all associated with non-acceptance the non-acceptance is an essential characteristic of the mind made the egoic state non-acceptance of what is and all the compulsion really is a running away from the denial of the beauty and aliveness of now so when you see the truth of that and you can accept this moment as it is that's a state of great power, not weakness as the mind may tell you accept this moment as it is as a side effect of this acceptance, the mind slows down because when you're no longer fighting what is the compulsion to think subsides and that's something that can be continuous spiritual practice, many times you won't accept what is and then you will realize you're again denying the now and that realization means okay, you're present again when you see the non-acceptance you're already free of the non-acceptance only when you don't see the non-acceptance then you're again trapped in all the mental noise that is not accepting what is so the most powerful spiritual practice is accepting this moment as it is uncompromising acceptance of this moment as it is that's why the Zen Masters sometimes look so fierce, although they are gentle inside really when you see the pictures old pictures of Zen Masters drawings, fierce eyes it's the uncompromising nowness yes, this not moving, it's open and that state is both gentle and fierce, it's both at the same time and so that is the most powerful spiritual practice and it's really the only spiritual practice that doesn't give you time there's so many spiritual practices that give you time to become good at to practice more and more gradually but accepting this moment as it is you can only do it now yeah

[Speaker 2] (2:26:36 - 2:27:04)

and just finally Eckhart I'm curious if you can say a little bit more about this metaphor that you used the other day for humans such as yourself who have had a radical spiritual awakening you talked about them as flowers that have come forward and that in the past this was rare for humans to flower in this way but that you see it happening more and more why the image of a flower?

[Speaker 1] (2:27:05 - 2:34:33)

yes, the image of a flower that came to me when a few years ago I was talking to a friend who was his special field was the evolution of the planet he studied that and we talked about the evolution of life on the planet and he said that I was surprised when he told me that plant life existed on the planet for millions of years before there were ever any flowers so and then when he told me that I was very surprised and I had this image of the sun rising one day millions of years ago and suddenly the first flower opening it's like a new dimension there's plant life and then plant life there's a new dimension, maybe it was a cactus or something and the cactus looks quite just boring, just a piece of green and suddenly comes this incredible thing out of an uninteresting looking plant comes this incredible beauty where did that come from? well it produced it, it came out of this this being produced it and so the first flower came and probably it could well have been thousands of years before another flower opened and then perhaps and so the first flower came out of an uninteresting looking plant comes this incredible beauty where did that come from?

for millions of years before there were ever any flowers so and then when he told me that I was very surprised and I had this image of the sun rising and a few years ago I was talking to a friend who was there, somebody flower popped up and then a few hundred years later perhaps around the Buddha a few flowers opened and but always a rare phenomenon that flowering that awakening spiritual awakening and now I feel it's for the first time we've now reached the point where an abundance of flowers are going to appear and already appearing on the planet one reason being that they have to appear now because if there's no shift in consciousness and humankind carries on as before in the same state of consciousness another hundred years of this no change in technology and science just continuing medicine or continuing the same mind dominated way would mean the end probably the planet would not be able to sustain life for another hundred years of this human consciousness so if there's no shift now so it's the critical point now that we have reached is if there's no shift in consciousness then perhaps the species won't survive or fall back to a much earlier state of development and then perhaps try again if the planet is able to sustain life or it may not or the planet which has its own intelligence it's also this planetary intelligence the planet may decide to do away with humans to save itself nature could do that in many ways easily a body raises the temperature a few degrees to get rid of germs and the planet could do it in a similar way or more likely humanity in the old state of consciousness would self-destruct an increase in violence, madness wars and terrorism and so on so if the shift doesn't happen now then there's not much chance but I must admit I'm not totally sure that humanity will make it but I have a strong sense that the shift is happening and again there's also an acceleration of the old consciousness in its madness almost trying to assert itself again and so we may be seeing more of that in the near future an intensification of the madness that we've seen past century and other centuries, particularly of course the 20th century because the 20th century in the 20th century the madness of the human mind was magnified by, for the first time by science and technology and we could really see it so I do sense something new is arising and whether or not or to what extent the old will only go through destructive violence or whether the old structures are going to dissolve in a different less violent way, I don't know it depends probably on the number of humans who are open now to transformation because something is pushing forward to speak and in those humans who are open it can happen quite gently in those who are closed it can bring about disaster in order to produce the opening but still the sickness of the human mind if one could call it that is very visible at this time the illness collective illness so it's up to you to allow the new consciousness to come in allow it to come don't need to make it happen allow this moment to be it seems too simple but that's how it works

[Speaker 2] (2:34:53 - 2:36:08)

Music by Stephen McNamara This concludes Even the Sun Will Die An interview with Eckhart Tolle Music by Stephen McNamara For further information on lectures and workshops with Eckhart Tolle you may visit his website www.eckharttolle.com You may also visit Namaste Publishing www.namastepublishing.com or call Namaste Publishing 604-224-3179 or write PO Box 62084 Vancouver British Columbia Canada V6J1Z1 to order additional copies of this program or to receive a free catalog of over 400 audio and video tapes please visit the Sounds True website www.soundstrue.com or call 800-333-9185 or write the Sounds True catalog PO Box 8010 Boulder, Colorado 80306 Thank you for listening.

2001-Eckhart-Tolle-Findhorn-Talk-Retreat-in-Scotland

[Speaker 2] (0:11 - 1:12)

The Fyndhorn Foundation in the north of Scotland is a center of spiritual service in co-creation with nature, which emphasizes education and community. The Fyndhorn Foundation is at the heart of one of the best known intentional communities in the world, and is a major international center of adult educational, personal and spiritual transformation. About 14,000 visitors a year come to the Foundation in one of the many ways that it is possible to visit, live and work there.

Eckhart Tolle gave a weekend retreat in the Universal Hall to a group of over 300 people. This is a record of that event.

[Speaker 1] (2:35 - 38:21)

Welcome to our weekend retreat at this beautiful, sacred place. Our theme for this weekend is stillness, which is inseparable from who you are in the depth of your being. One could say everybody is still already.

The stillness is already there, it does not need to be found even. Certainly it does not need to be created, because it's already there. The only thing is, you may not notice it.

If there's a lot of mental noise, then you just don't notice it, but it's there. And also you don't notice the dimension within yourself that is far deeper than the movement of thought. And your whole identity is then bound up with the movement of thought.

A mind-created sense of self. A personal history and no more. That is soon coming to an end.

Soon, next year or in 40, 50 years time, it's soon. So who you are and stillness are one and the same. And if you have not yet gone completely mad in this mad world, that means you have some access to the stillness inside you.

You may not remember it afterwards because it's not memorable, since stillness is timeless. And the mind cannot memorize it or think, oh that was interesting, I'll remember that. Because stillness is not interesting.

Interesting is a mental thing. Just as our weekend here is not going to be interesting. You may have noticed that already.

But interesting is not the ultimate. It's only the ultimate to the human mind. You can go out here and look at a tree.

Or a flower. Or the sunset. Or a sunset.

And could you say, this sunset is interesting? Only if you were trying to write a PhD about sunsets. If you had to analyze it.

Or the oak tree. The oak tree becomes interesting the moment you start to analyze it mentally. And there is a place for that also in this dimension.

But if you get caught up on that dimension only, where you break things up into little bits and pieces and analyze them. And by the way, most kinds of analysis, you have to kill the thing first before you can analyze it. Or in the process of analysis it gets killed.

But if you just be with the oak tree, contemplate it, truly look. Then what you're looking at goes beyond interesting. It's far deeper than interesting.

Same as the sunset. There's nothing interesting about it. And yet it is awe-inspiring.

It is deep. There's a depth there that defies analysis by the mind. The moment you analyze it, you have reduced it to something lifeless.

And most people in our civilization, and this has been going on for a long time, are trapped in that dimension where compulsively they go about their life analyzing, interpreting, and labeling things as soon as they enter their field of consciousness. They do it to people. They do it to situations that they encounter.

Immediately have some personal reactive relationship to it. They do it to nature. And they can no longer perceive the sacredness that is there in nature because they approach it only through thinking.

And that is a dreadful prison that you then end up in. The prison of your own mind. And then you approach your whole life only through that.

And your whole life becomes reduced to a conceptual reality in the head consisting of thoughts that you have about things. Viewpoints, opinions, and even so-called knowledge. Knowledge is a thought, a label, and gives the illusion that you know.

And all it is, it's a thought that you have put on something. And then it loses its depth and aliveness. And you begin to relate to reality through the veil of thinking.

And you relate to yourself through the veil of thinking because you yourself become a conceptual thought-based entity an egoic self, a me, with its unfulfilled personal history its desires and fears and frustrations and its hopes that it will find ultimate fulfillment of its unfulfilled and unfulfilling sense of self based on the story in the future. Which again is the thought form. That's what the future is.

Nobody has ever encountered it except as a thought. And yet most people live unconsciously as if the next moment or the one after that were more important than this moment. The only thing there ever is.

This one moment that you could never escape from have never escaped from, will never escape from that is inseparable from the life that you are also inseparable from stillness because the moment you enter the now with your attention a stillness arises. The essence of the present moment no matter how mad it may appear on the surface is always stillness. It is also sacredness.

The only place where the sacred dimension can be found is now. You have to be present to this moment. You have to wake up into this moment to realize that life is sacred.

When you are lost in thought sacred is meaningless. It could become another of the many concepts that you can play with and you could write a PhD about it without ever having encountered it yourself. So this, the depth of now is inseparable from your very being, your very life and it is a sacred one life.

And yes, this is why we are here to deepen our awareness of that dimension. And the sacred is everywhere. If you become truly present you would find the sacredness everywhere.

It's easier here in certain places that are called sacred There is less of a density in the structures the physical structures, the forms. There is a transparency almost to the forms. Something shines through the forms.

And this is why we call those places sacred. But even here there are some people who cannot sense that because they are not present enough when they walk in the garden. They are still in their head thinking about where they are going the day after tomorrow and the accumulation of problems which are thought forms that are part of their sense of self.

I have important problems to think about. And occasionally you get a glimpse three seconds of presence and you get a glimpse and immediately there comes the movement of thought again. So some people cannot be present here.

Most of you can. And those who cannot I believe will quickly deepen and see how easy it is to be present and how hard it is not to be present. Normally people tell me the opposite.

They say it's so hard to be present. And this is what the mind believes. But the opposite is true.

Not being present to the now is hard. To live trapped in your mind is hard. That makes living into something that is a struggle and an effort.

And you never get there. You never make it. Because you live for the future which is only a thought form.

And this is another aspect of living trapped in thought with your whole sense of self trapped in thought hoping that at some point you will find yourself, complete yourself or it's all going to work out in the end. And in the way the mind imagines it it cannot work out. Because every form dies.

And every structure eventually dissolves again. And the mind only thinks in terms of forms and structures and it hopes that life will work itself out on that level of structures and forms. And it's always disappointed because it cannot.

And the miracle is it's already working out at this very moment. It's already as it should be at this moment. You have already arrived at the place of sacredness at this moment.

It's easier to see it here, to sense that here. More difficult to feel that this moment is sacred when you find yourself at Piccadilly Circus or Times Square. And you need to be an enlightened being perhaps which simply means very present to see the sacredness in the flashing Coca-Cola sign at Piccadilly Circus.

And you need to be a Buddha to see the sacredness in a prison camp. And if one says the prison camp also has the dimension of the sacred if one says that prematurely this will be misunderstood and really will not make sense unless you know within yourself that that which is beyond form the one formless life is indestructible. And some people who were in prison camps realized it for themselves.

So we are here to find that dimension that is deeper than thought within ourselves that has nothing to do with time. And so people ask sometimes how do I still my mind? I want to find the stillness.

And then, yes, there are some good meditation methods and eventually that also has to be left behind otherwise it comes in between who you are. You put a method there to find yourself that is a space between you and yourself. And every method eventually needs to be left behind.

You don't need it. It's the last thing you leave behind. And this particular teaching works without methods.

But if you have a method, it's beautiful and you use it until you don't need it anymore. Every thought in your mind when you are not aware of it as a thought has a sense of self in it. A sense of I am.

And you identify with the movement of thought. And that is the essence of unconscious living. And that is why people continuously live for the future.

The thought form of future where they are hoping to complete their insufficient sense of self. The happy ending of my story. This is not to say you should not pursue certain activities.

Learn new things. Explore new countries. Meet new people.

Learn this and that. Acquire knowledge, expertise here and there. Develop your abilities, physical or mental.

And create whatever you are called upon to create in this world. It is beautiful to create in this world. And on that level, of course, there is always more that you could do.

And as you grow older, there are certain things that you can no longer do. So gradually, on the level of form, your life becomes reduced. There are already many, many things that it is unlikely that I will be able to do.

I am not going to win a title at Wimbledon anymore. It would be a miracle if I managed to do that. Not totally impossible, but I am not even going to try it.

And many other things would say, well, it is just too late. And this is true. For many things, it is too late.

On the level of form, I need to accept, yes, no, I am not going to be the heavyweight boxing champion. It is just too late for that, or it never was possible. So on the level of form, yes, depending on where you are in years, there may still be many things that you can add to what you can do, and what you know, and what you explore.

Or it may be that you are reaching the end of the lifespan of this form, so there is little time left, and there is not that much more that you can add to yourself. And that is fine too. Now the question is, are you looking for yourself when you attempt to add more to who you are?

And that is the dilemma of human existence. There is a compulsive searching for more. Not that there is anything wrong with doing new things.

No. But there is a compulsive striving towards the next moment, and the next, and the next, hoping to add more to who I think I am. Thought forms.

Possessions, attainments, recognition by other people, all thought forms. My, I have not enough yet. I don't feel secure enough.

I only have five houses and three cars, and I still don't feel secure. And I think the houses are not big enough. That must be the reason.

Or they write about me in the papers, and then, okay, and by the way, I don't have five houses, just an example. Or to get recognition in that they all write about me, and then I read in the papers, finally people have recognized who I am. They think I'm great.

And that temporarily gives you the feeling of, I have now added that universal recognition to who I think I am. And many people strive for that. They think, when are they going to discover me?

When are they going to realize that I am special? They may never realize it. There is a search for specialness in the mind-made sense of self that in some cases is fulfilled, and in most cases is not fulfilled on the level where it's seeking.

And so in either case, that sense of specialness, you could say, there are two ways of being unhappy. Not getting what you want, and getting what you want. Because all the people who have attained universal recognition in whatever field, they are not happy either.

They are not at peace with themselves. They do not feel the sense of security and the sense of finally having arrived, that before they had it, they had associated with that idea. Once people recognize me, then I will have arrived.

And then the moment comes, and at first it feels good, and then you see that people's opinion of you are only thought forms. They are images that they create, or if they are very well known, the media creates a fiction that has your name. And then you read about yourself in the paper, and you see, who is this?

They're writing about, there's nothing to do with me at all. And so many people become unhappy, even more unhappy, when they attain recognition. The world tells them, yes, you are special, and yet, I don't feel special.

Or they see, this is an illusion, that's not me, it's an image, a mind-created image. And a few people then go beyond all the mind-created sense of identity because they have attained what the world tells us is desirable, wealth, property, recognition, attainment here or there, and yet, it has not provided them with what they were really looking for, myself, a sense of being rooted in life, the fullness of life, as Jesus calls it, the fullness of life. And so there are many famous people who take drugs, and they need to dull the dreadful unhappiness they feel inside because even the illusion of more in the future, that most people are still living by, doesn't work anymore, because if you already have everything, the illusion that the more, by attaining more in the future, you're going to be happy, can't work anymore for you.

What a dreadful fate. You can't look to the more anymore to feel that you are yourself. And so they feel even more unhappy, they cannot escape into the next moment anymore.

So they need to take some drugs so that for a little while, I feel better. Or a few break through to a deeper level within themselves. And realize that that sense of specialness that operated on the level of better than or more than was an illusion.

You can pursue it, and it will take you nowhere. It can never fulfill itself because it is a thought form, me, the special one, that you wanted to incorporate into the story of me, that is the basis of your identity as long as you are trapped only in thought. Me, the special one.

Some people have the fiction in their head that they are... I don't want to take away anybody's fiction if they still like it. You could have the fiction in your head that in a past lifetime you were Napoleon.

And that can give you a sense of specialness but it is derived from the movement of thought and images. But that keeps some people going. Nobody might agree with you that you were Napoleon, but at least temporarily it keeps you...

But you have to keep thinking about it and tell the story to others. And others have other stories where other people say, yeah, that's true, that's who you are. But it is based on the movement of thought and the emotions that go with those thoughts.

So you have a whole identity based on a personal history. Very little. And it's not going to last very long.

The soap bubble of my personal history is going to pop soon. And everybody can say, I'm not predicting my imminent death, nobody knows. But everybody's death is ultimately imminent because one year or 50 years, it comes quite soon.

And it'll be now when it comes, not tomorrow. And so to be trapped in that sense of self, a conceptual reality, that is a dreadful fate. It's constant neediness, which even gets translated into the spiritual.

Once you have realized, okay, I'm done with possessions, I know that that's not it. But be careful here with other thought forms that arise to replace. For example, you might have spent 20 years of your life making money.

And then you see, okay, I'm now giving away my BMW. I'm going to buy a bicycle because I'm spiritual. And I will only wear certain spiritual clothes or this or that.

It doesn't matter what it is. I'm on my bicycle and then I can be on my bicycle and look at the person who is still so unconscious that he's driving his BMW and can think how much superior I am in my spiritual. And of course, what you're carrying now is a much heavier thought form than the BMW thought form.

So your sense of self has become, can, it could, it's quite possible that the BMW man has less of a sense of self than the man on the bicycle. It's possible, probably not, but it's possible. So be careful with any, how the mind shifts and then chooses another story to feel, but always to feel, to make itself feel more than in one way or another so that it can, it works through comparison because it's thought.

I think of, I have an image of who I am and then I need to compare that to who I think other people are. So I impose images on myself, mental concepts and images and then I impose them on others and then I compare my image with that image. Okay, I'm more spiritual than this or he's more spiritual, he's been at it for much longer than me.

And then you get how much you know. Knowledge is another one. You casually mention from your great store of knowledge, you casually mention a few things and the other person is dumbfounded, doesn't know what you, and it's obvious that you know more than he.

And that gives the feeling of, and so it works with little things to enhance its always very precarious sense of self and then it loves being right and it loves others to be wrong because that's the only way you can be right. It loves being right and feels itself enhanced momentarily through, ah, I'm right. So it's always the strengthening of the fiction of self, the fiction of me, me and my story, and that people go through life looking for that.

That's the purpose of their life, is to strengthen the fiction of me. Ha, ha, ha. And so that becomes the motivating force behind their actions, what they do.

And it's always, it's an uneasy thing because very often you feel less than somebody else and then you have to kind of work around that. Less special than he. He knows more, but on the other hand I look better.

And then other people, if they cannot achieve the specialness in the way in which the world tells us you ought to be special, they achieve a reverse specialness by feeling unfairly treated by life. By feeling unfairly treated by feeling that they are a victim of certain people or situations and in their thought form of being a victim they feel very special. So you can still win even if you lose.

[Speaker 3] (38:26 - 38:28)

The mind is very clever.

[Speaker 1] (38:29 - 59:32)

And a victim identity can be very strongly lodged in some people's minds. And as soon as you meet them and after five minutes they will tell you their story. You know what happened to them.

25 years ago it happened. And of course, yes, dreadful things did happen 25 years ago and they happen today also in this mad world. But building an identity around some form of suffering that happens at some point or repeatedly in this mad world where suffering is inevitable to build a sense of specialness around that then you have put yourself into a dreadful prison with bars all around.

But at least you think you know who you are. You have a story. Oh great, at least I have a story.

My life treated me more unfairly than most people. So I can feel more then. And so whatever the mind, it will find something to give itself an identity, a conceptual identity.

And it is very much afraid of losing the story, of abandoning it, stepping beyond it. And usually, the story needs to become unpleasant for people to be pushed out of it. It's because in a way the story is a dream.

The dream of who I am. And if a dream becomes very unpleasant, then you will want to wake up. No dream of me is ultimately all that pleasant.

But some are more unpleasant than others. So see how the self, the conceptual self continuously tries to survive, not only to survive and protect itself from others, and to use others to enhance itself, use them in one way or another. And that determines the relationship between humans when you haven't stepped beyond that.

There is wanting to use another human or feeling you need to protect yourself from another human being. Those are the two things that govern relationships in the egoic state. You either use them or you fear them.

You need them and you're afraid of them. And sometimes both at the same time. And of course that also means there is no true relationship.

It gets distorted because you don't know who you are. You have only an image in the head that tries to make itself stronger because it doesn't feel enough yet. I'm not enough yet.

And so for some people the sense of specialness is attained by frequent complaining in the head and out aloud about life and situations and people and what's going on and it really shouldn't be happening. They should do something about it. It's all very bad indeed.

Why doesn't he... And there's blaming, continuously complaining and blaming and that the ego loves because it makes itself right by doing that. When you complain about something or somebody you feel you are right and the person or the situation you complain about is wrong.

I'm not saying complain in a practical sense when you say I'd like to exchange this thing that I bought because it's not working. That's fine. It's practical and you do something about it.

But the complaining that is the telling of stories in the head that has no practical purpose whatsoever, that constantly is in a conflict relationship with the present moment. There's always something about it that isn't right and so you complain or something has just happened and you complain or you complain because it hasn't happened yet. So many people feel they cannot be themselves or truly at peace with themselves because of something that happened or something that hasn't happened.

Those are the two reasons why you cannot be yourself. Either something has happened and that's preventing me from being myself truly or something hasn't happened yet. And if that doesn't happen, I can't be myself.

Isn't that a strange thing? I need something to happen so that I can be myself. So we are not...

All the many ways we are talking about this here so that you can recognize it when it happens in you because it is a universal pattern in every human. It's inherited. It is the collective human mind in its egoic unconscious state that operates in that way.

That keeps you trapped on the surface of your being. On the little surface movement, the wave movement of life. The forms of life.

All the things that happen and you're continuously trapped in that, on the level of form. Just... And of course on the level of form which includes even thought forms.

They are primordial forms. When you are identified with every thought that comes into your head and of course there is never an end to it because the next thought comes immediately afterwards. It's a string.

And so it goes the whole day long. It goes... And occasionally you get the little glimpses that keep you sane.

So that you can still survive here. They keep you from committing suicide or they keep you from going totally insane. You have little moments of...

And they may be short but they keep you alive. There is a little bit of joy seeping through from the depths of your being. Through the layers, the heavy layers of mind.

There's a little crack appears here and there. If it didn't, you would be totally lost in here and you certainly wouldn't be sitting here. And so occasionally there's moments, it may be when there's sudden beauty and it's overwhelming or sudden moment of danger that wakes you up out of the continuous voice in the head Oh!

And suddenly there's more intense aliveness. Beingness. Presence.

And then thought comes back. Or it could be for some people danger in the form of physical illness can come and suddenly that wakes you up. Oh!

And suddenly you realize all the things that you pursued and you thought were important are not important at all. So already something collapses on the level of thought. All the things that mattered so much and suddenly you develop a physical illness and see it doesn't matter at all.

And so that can be helpful for some. It can be an awakening for some people. Or it may be some people are kept sane by an animal.

Because whenever it's the only way they can relate to another being that is non-conceptual because when they meet humans they are trapped in the concepts that they have about every human they meet. They impose mental concepts and images in the form of what they think about. They know exactly what they think about you.

They're not relating to you, they're relating to the thoughts in their head they have about you. And most people do it to each other. So you have only two thought-made entities trying to be in a relationship.

Each one both needing and fearing the other. And this is of course why relationships are so problematic these days. So some people are kept sane by an animal and that the pets fulfill an incredible function that hasn't been fully acknowledged and recognized in this world.

They keep humanity sane. Because there you have when you touch the dog or the cat or whatever it is and for a moment you're not some people even there they carry ego but those are the extreme cases. You touch the animal and you can be yourself.

You don't need to psychologically protect yourself from the animal or want something from you just can be with that and you can something transmits itself because the animal lives more deeply connected with the source of life than most humans. Less removed or one could say the illusion has not grown to such an extent of being a separate entity, a me and the rest of the universe. The animal still has the oneness with the totality hasn't lost it totally.

It's deeply rooted in being. So the animal does not create a world of problems. The animal is one with life.

And humans have separated themselves from life. They have a conceptual image. This is me and there's the rest of the world.

There's a barrier. And there's the other, the other human being. A dreadful concept, other.

And they're needing others and fearing others. Walking through life and other is mentally another concept. So the egoic self the stronger you're trapped in the egoic sense of self the more you will emphasize the otherness of others.

And others will all become reduced to walking caricatures because the few labels that you have about them you reduce them. And they're basically all caricatures. And sometimes when people, you listen to people they mention about somebody they met or somebody they know and see how stupid that person is and they have a few judgments and when you listen to that you see this caricature of this strange distorted human being and when you meet them you say, this is the person we're talking about?

Yeah. And so the animal is not burdened by the continuous stream of thinking. It does not have a conceptual identity like the humans.

So it hasn't separated itself. So it can be an access point for some humans into being. A being without and it is for some humans it's a moment when they actually thought subsides when they pat their dog or you have a purring cat on your chest suddenly you think thought quietens becomes more quiet and you have a space of stillness and you feel the purring of a cat on your chest or simply to watch an animal if you can truly watch it can take you out of your mind and you become present because the animal is present and the same with the realm of nature, the trees and the flowers and the blades of grass they are all present they are all surrendered to life one with life, a beautiful temporary expression of one life and so for some humans that's their only access point and for some even that doesn't work anymore I knew someone with a very strong ego who had ego battles with her cat if the cat didn't come she had the kitchen window open and the cat one evening didn't appear and she said where is my cat and then she would shut the window and said if she doesn't want to see me I don't want to see her and so the poor cat had to stay outside all night that also happens so there are cases where humans cannot even relate to animals anymore and so we see millions and millions of humans living in a pseudo reality with a sense of self that is ultimately a fiction that is always insufficient, always feeling a sense of lack, always needing more always even needing to make enemies so that it can still define itself as me and the other needing some kind of conflict so that it's separate sense of self can remain intact what can I be in conflict with today what can I complain about now so that I can feel a little bit more myself ah there it is and so when millions of humans live like that then the result is what we read as human history a dreadful tale of incredible suffering that humans inflict on each other and other life forms on the planet incredible suffering and so the same you see on television tonight when you switch on the news you will see just how mad the collective consciousness is of humanity in its present evolutionary stage and yet here we are here we are and we recognize that all that is a form of one could say collective mental illness that humanity is suffering from and so one could say well how can God allow a whole species to become mentally ill I heard that question somewhere in somebody's mind and of course you can ask the same question on a personal level how can does God allow me to be ill, how dare he she it to allow me to be ill to suffer and of course within the larger whole everything has its place and everything is as it should including your personal illness for the moment doesn't mean healing cannot happen but there are many humans here who were brought here who would not be here if they had not suffered some kind of dysfunction in their lives physical illness perhaps or some great loss and so you can already see on your personal level that your suffering your physical suffering whatever it may be to some extent began to dissolve the egoic structures in your mind, it started to shake it loose so that something else could come through and you suddenly found yourself becoming interested in the present moment and then you end up here and no matter what your story is and some of you may feel that it was all one big mistake the story of me was all one big mistake you are here now and that's an amazing thing to be, to be here now and see that was the story and the outcome of all that big mistake was that now you are stepping out of it and you realize it as yes, on the level of form this is how my life unfolded and now let me speak personally for one moment I could easily look upon my whole life let's say until the world told me that I was important a few years ago it happened before that nobody told me that I was important until that I could look at my whole life up to that point as one complete disaster nothing actually worked out I tried that for a few years and then I was at university and then I did my PhD and then I gave that up and then I drifted for two years and then I went into that and then I tried that and it didn't, things, many things okay and then my mother said okay now you are 45 what have you achieved? others have already built up big businesses and so on the level of story it was a big disaster and yet fortunately at some point already I had given up identification with the story, the story was only my identity up to the age of 29 and it was a very unhappy one even there even when I was, that was my relatively successful, the only wildly success I had was I did well at university up to before I became a graduate student and it made me happy for two weeks

[Speaker 3] (59:34 - 59:37)

laughter laughter laughter laughter

[Speaker 1] (59:40 - 1:16:43)

and so how, isn't it strange that a failed story can produce the flower the flower of consciousness and perhaps the flower of consciousness needs the mud out of which it grows, you have the beautiful image of the lotus in Buddhism, the symbol of Buddhism the lotus flower it grows, it has its roots in the mud and it grows out of that and there is nothing more beautiful in human life than a failed story laughter laughter and the good news is every story ultimately fails because the forms because the story is based on the forms, it identifies with forms and no forms last for that long no building lasts for that long, eventually it crumbles, all forms are temporary and they are beautiful the essence that is hiding in each form is the formless one life that is indestructible, but even this beautiful form, finchon, it is not eternal as a form but the eternal shines through the forms here, that is why because the forms are transparent and you also are not eternal as this form and yet a transparency is happening in you even as you sit here so that that which is beyond form no matter what we call it stillness presence beingness a deep sense of I am being that before got mixed up with the story of me and that the preciousness of being is your true specialness what the egoic self had been looking for on the level of the story I want to be special that very thought obscured the fact that you already could not be more special than you are now but not special in the egoic sense that more than he or more than she special in the sense that there is a beauty and preciousness that is the essence of your being and that is what deep down you can sense even the person who is most completely identified with their story and their conceptual sense of self, they feel that there is somewhere there is something precious that is me, but they confuse it with the forms thought forms, it gets that essence of being which is formless and timeless gets mixed up with form, with thought and a story in the head and that is what the Buddha calls the fictitious self the self that the Buddha even 2600 years ago recognized as an illusion an enormous insight, the greatest perhaps the greatest insight of all humanity when he recognized the self is an illusion and by that he means the self that is identified with any form thought form physical form, anything and that is the illusion, to lose oneself in some form and then the preciousness of being that is the essence that is timeless and formless in every human and in every life form one could say incarnates in form and there is nothing wrong with incarnating in form as long as you know yourself as that which is beyond form but if you lose yourself in the incarnation and ultimately you had to do that too, that was part of the totality of how things work to lose oneself is as the Buddha called it suffering then you suffer because you don't know who you are anymore you are looking for yourself in some form in some thought form in some physical form that you identify with which is also a thought form me and so everybody is looking for the essence of their being not knowing that the specialness that they look for is already the essence of who they are but they can only find it when they stop looking for themselves in the future through more so the one place it's all like some strange game the one place where you truly can only find yourself in that one place most humans never look which is the present moment they look there for themselves and to feel I want to be more on the level of form you can temporarily be more that's true and then that dissolves again but there is a level within yourself where more does not operate but you do not need to be more you are already a full expression of the one life you are already complete on the level of the timeless the essence of your being now the only reason why you needed time was you needed to be ready to hear this truth and recognize it as a truth for that one could say you need time to hear the message that to be who you are you don't need time but the paradox is there are still many humans to whom this would be meaningless and they don't come here they need in other words they need more time they need to continue to look for themselves and they need to continue to be frustrated in their search that is part of the larger design the frustration is built into human existence and so that's what the world is for the so called world it is there to frustrate you laughter and to drive you deeper to eventually drive you out of identification with form because as long as you identify with form it is so frustrating and you can never make it you can never arrange the forms and accumulate all the forms that you need, you think you need to be yourself or sometimes you can do it for very brief a very brief time span you can suddenly find everything is now working in my life my health is good, my relationship is great great money got possessions, everybody loves me laughter they all write good things about me um it's all working my job, my living situation my finances, my health my relationships, they're all great but before long something there starts to crumble here and there it's either the finances or it's the relationship or it's the living situation it's in the nature of the world of form that nothing stays fixed for very long and so it starts to crumble again here you just sorted it all out laughter and so that's why humans they experience life as a series of frustrations why can't it work?

laughter and it doesn't work because they are looking for themselves there they are demanding that the world of form should make them complete and happy I demand that this world should complete who I am should give me my sense of self I just need this and that from there and then it's all this is what I demand and then it's not happening there's something wrong here life isn't working it seems to be working for everybody else but it's not working for me I read in the magazines all these glossy people laughter it seems to be working for them laughter but only if you look at the glossy pictures if you visited them at home you would see that it's not working for them either so it's built into living here is frustration it's meant to be frustrating this is the larger the whole there is a purpose but people haven't seen it so it's quite a relief to recognize first of all the world cannot make me happy secondly to demand that situations people, places or attainments should complete me or make me happy are bound to be frustrated whether I attain or do not attain laughter ok that looks very negative doesn't it laughter and that's why when you don't go deeper when you only see the surface you see, oh all is vanity as the Old Testament prophet said, vanity of vanities all is vanity I've seen it all, I can't remember the exact words but I'm giving you a free translation laughter I've seen it all, I've done it all and it's all completely meaningless is what he said and that was probably an elderly man who had tried it all and now why did they put this into the Bible, isn't it very negative to have such a statement that life is completely vain, whatever you can achieve is vanity they put that in there because when you see the truth of it you're already becoming free of it the seeing of the inability of the world to make you happy the seeing of the short-lived nature of whatever forms you encounter in real life what is it in you that is able to see that and say, ah or even laugh what before was a dreadful story and frustration you suddenly step out of your own story and see that your own frustrating story is not your personal dilemma but the human condition laughter and you derived your sense of self from that which is nothing personal whatsoever, it's the human condition and that it's the human condition in it's unconscious state it's unenlightened state and that's what gave you your sense of personal selfhood and that you wanted to cling to and now you step out of it by simply seeing it the seeing means something is arising that is not part of that unconsciousness and that is why they put it into the bible because when you see it that which can witness that in you the impermanent nature of all forms the fictitious nature of the mind made story what is it in you that is able to look at that and see, ah that is not thought that is the ability to be aware and hold up the mirror of awareness and simply see it there, ah or let's say better, the light of awareness shines on it the light of awareness shines on it and sees what before you were trapped in the frustrating story of my life and there is no life that is not ultimately frustrating it only begins it loses it's frustration when you do not look to the world anymore for your satisfaction or for yourself when you give up demanding that people, places, situations should make you happy fulfill you you don't demand it anymore then suddenly the ability arises to allow the forms of this moment to be as they are because life at this moment already always is as it is it always, the isness, you cannot doubt whatever forms appear in the present moment it always is as it is and so most humans are in a conflict relationship with the isness of life they internally run away from it or reject it or criticize it complain about it or look somewhere else I don't want the isness of this I want that so when you see what the world cannot do for you you no longer you drop your demand because you see it as absurd to demand something of the world that it cannot deliver and then you can simply be with whatever is and is and this moment are always inseparable of course whatever is at this moment is as it is I don't demand that this place even if you come here and you demand that Fintan should make me happy if you came with that demand you would probably already have experienced frustration here because no place is capable of doing that for long or doing it at all and so you come here and say oh that shouldn't be here there's a royal air force base right next to the spiritual center it doesn't make sense and so you can complain about that, that shouldn't be why did they put that here they should have gone somewhere else and then you can say I came here to find peace and what do I find I find screaming jets I'm going home and that's only one thing and you'll find many more my roommate snores I can't get a night I have to wait for the bathroom I'm going home and it's not sunny this is late May and it's not sunny I should never have come to Scotland so if you just little examples if you expect a place to fulfill you it can't do that even if you went to a South Pacific island there would be something that is not quite right it doesn't fit there whatever it is the sunshine every day it's too much

[Speaker 3] (1:16:46 - 1:16:47)

the mosquitoes

[Speaker 1] (1:16:47 - 1:22:33)

at night I didn't know about that they didn't mention them in the travel brochures so here again a beautiful opportunity to drop the demand that a particular place should make you happy or give you peace or help you find yourself and simply then bring a yes to whatever form this moment takes instead of demanding that the form of this moment should be different in order to satisfy me so you bring an inner alignment into your relationship with the present moment let's put it like that the way in which you relate to life which is always now only now an inner alignment comes in with now so you do not internally separate yourself from now which is life life and now are one because that is a source of great frustration and suffering and so whatever form this moment takes there's a jet flying there may be raining and then there's some sun coming through good, bad, the mind could call this good could call this bad but it all is as it is at this moment and an enormous freedom comes into your life when you drop the demand that this should be other than it is and then you no longer demand that Fintone should make you happy or give you peace and then every moment or rather the one moment is as it is you go one step at a time to wherever you go and you look around and you stand and you walk and you sit and there are people coming people going things here, things there and suddenly as you bring an inner alignment to the now, something arises within you that has nothing to do with the form that this moment takes and it arises because you allow the form that this moment takes to be as it is so in allowing the form that this moment takes internally embracing it, saying I might as well say yes because it is life because it is the only moment there ever is the now I might as well embrace it say yes, that's how it is this does not diminish your ability to change if anything needs changing action arises out of the alignment with what is so you can be aligned with getting something that is not good you can have food that's gone cold or something and then you bring it back to the kitchen and you say, this food is cold would you please heat it up again if it's possible nothing wrong with that but the action comes out of alignment the same action could arise out of an inner resistance to what is and then this immediately self comes in a complaining self a self that enhances itself through its complaints and then walks the same action but with a fundamentally different energy field you then walk with that plate to the kitchen and say what is this, don't you know, don't you heat your food here you should be serving you are in this your action is to enhance yourself through it, to make the self right, to strengthen the fiction of me, and then you do that to another human and that other human is going to defend itself and try to react in order to resist the diminishment of their sense of self because that's what the ego attempts to do it says, you are wrong, it tries to diminish the fiction of that other person and then the other will defend itself and come up with even bigger cannons and start shouting back at you in order to defend its diminishment of, again, the diminishment of the fiction what a world so you could live when you live in alignment with what is intelligence arises in your life that is far greater than the accumulated knowledge of the mind or the ability of the mind to analyse or solve IQ problems or crossword puzzles that's a limited tiny form of intelligence, nothing wrong with it, but it's tiny, but that's what this world calls intelligence you can memorise and analyse and be quick in giving answers manipulate thoughts and keep as many thoughts as possible in your head

[Speaker 3] (1:22:35 - 1:22:35)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (1:22:37 - 1:31:23)

and yet there's a far deeper intelligence that our civilisation knows nothing of and that is that out of which all true creation comes true creativity comes and so that is accessed when you bring a yes no more than that, a yes to the present moment that by the way includes the past because there are some people who carry a strong grievance or resentment connected with something that happened in the past somebody did it to you or a situation happened in the past and there's still a strong grievance that they carry and how does that work when I say accepting the present moment accepting the present moment the way it is now includes accepting the past because it is only because you believe that something that happened in the past is interfering somehow with your ability to be alive or to be yourself or to be fully yourself at this moment you are saying ok maybe you lost a limb or something like that somebody cut it off 10 years ago and you carry the grievance so how does when you accept this moment as it is you accept this as it is one limb is missing that is as it is that is the form that this moment takes well and you accept that this is how it is then you don't have the reference to the past anymore as having caused that and on the level of form of course that is a disability it prevents you from winning Wimbledon this year, you can't do it anymore yes on the level of form perhaps that imposed some limitation on your life but the world is full of limitations that are inherent in form if it is not one set of limitations you will encounter some other set of limitations so there is almost never a present moment that does not have certain limitations even the noise coming occasionally from the air force base next door could be considered a kind of limitation or even if you can't get a good night's sleep because your roommate snores could be considered a relatively minor limitation in your life but there are large limitations and they are also to do with the world of form and that's what the world of form does you can exchange limitations you can of course improve your life on the level of form there is nothing wrong with that as long as you are not looking for yourself in it it's beautiful to play with forms in your life ok I'm going to make money now I'll play with that but not hoping that once you've made enough then you can finally be someone if you are not someone now, being you cannot find it through money or through future then you can play with the world of form and the miraculous thing is when you drop your demands towards the world of form it should make you happy then wherever you find yourself whatever situation you find yourself in whoever you meet wherever you go place, situation person is actually quite satisfying because you have touched something within yourself that is deeper than the movement of thought which is form deeper than form the movement of thought is still form so the simple thing of internally bringing a yes to this moment is that all?

yes, but it needs for you to do that requires a certain degree of presence to be able to say this is as it is instead of being taken over by an old reactive pattern governed by the fictitious self that says this doesn't fit into the story of me or how can I fit this into my this isn't completing my story in fact this shouldn't be in my story at all get out of here so many people they are walking stories often when they meet other humans they don't want to be with other humans they say get out of my story you shouldn't be in here I want somebody else in here and again so you step beyond you step out of the movement of thought and the stillness and the peace arises the moment you become friendly with what is that's all, to become friendly with what is no matter what form this is takes it's going to change anyway quite soon and people who are stuck for years are usually stuck because there is a resistance pattern inside them that keeps them stuck in the same situation and the resistance pattern says I want to get out of this dreadful place that I'm in and every day they go to the office and they say this is and the same energy is there, the negativity and the resistance and every time they answer the phone, yes and so you get some people traditionally people at government offices carry a lot of frustration, I don't know if that's still true, probably is everywhere these days and so you people are continuously and they say why am I stuck in this boring job with all these dreadful people they always want something from me and 25 years later they're still stuck and complaining and then they hear the message it is possible to live differently it is possible to say yes not to say yes to a story, not say yes to ok I might as well accept that I've spent 25 years in this dreadful office and I'm probably going to spend another 10 years in this dreadful office I might as well say yes to that because I read that in a book somewhere no, this has nothing to do this has nothing to do with bringing a yes to some kind of story about your life or if you were in prison to say ok I might as well accept that everything has failed in my life and I've been in here for 20 years and I've got to do another 15 years and I might as well accept that I've been a miserable failure nothing saying yes to the present moment only means the present moment not a story it means it takes you out of the story and that is vital in your spiritual life now as a spiritual practice as often as possible to break the continuity between past and future ok I'm coming from there and I'm going there I'm just busy trying to get there and getting this done I'm on my way there don't stop me now laughter laughter and break ok but what about this moment where are you at this moment this moment

[Speaker 3] (1:31:25 - 1:31:27)

laughter oh

[Speaker 1] (1:31:29 - 1:41:30)

sigh sigh and suddenly you wake up out of that stream of past future that was pulled you from past to future always that is old conditioning same old thing same old thing no matter how much you complain the more you complain the more you're stuck and suddenly you take the present moment out of the story and you ah you wake up and suddenly alertness comes for example you might hear the birds singing oh and you realize it's beautiful and you feel yourself breathing and you feel an aliveness in the body every cell is alive the life that you are that which animates the body and as you feel that aliveness you're also aware that there's a stillness around you and in that stillness there's this incredibly beautiful sound that this little being produces which is a celebration of life every moment you've stepped out of the story into the aliveness of the present moment and yet you can still deal with things you may still be walking wherever you have to go and when you arrive there you're there and confront another human being you can still be present so there's more and more presence rather than time it's reversing whereas before you were dominated by time now you use time still but allow presence in which means break the story as often as you can step out of into the aliveness of this moment and then a far greater intelligence comes in and love and joy, all the things that otherwise you can only think about but never experience all those suddenly come in and transform even the story not that the story is ever going to be continuously wonderful in the level of form forms always come and go but because you're not dependent anymore on the forms of your life the circumstances of your life you have access to the life that is beyond form, that is you, the stillness the aliveness the I am that is deeper than I am this or I am that and then all those all the beauty and aliveness and joy that is there in the moment even if the forms were crumbling it can be there you would be missing the whole thing because you would be drifting continuously adrift in the mind only and the bird, you would not even hear it or hear it for a moment and say, oh that's pretty and then, ok, my problems, what are my problems laughter whenever you think you have problems a good question is what is the problem now well well I'm trying to see my lawyer about this thing and there's a bank, I'm going bankrupt and I'm seeing my lawyer about what is the problem now laughter there's no problem, I'm sitting here breathing beautiful bird sing birdsong stillness, space there's an aliveness that I feel inside every cell is alive there isn't really a problem now, but there may be one tomorrow and of course when tomorrow comes you have to ask the same question what is the problem now, as you sit in front of the lawyer, I say sign here to declare your bankruptcy you say, ok, what is the problem now here's a piece of paper and here's a pen scratching on a piece of paper and then you put it down and you listen to the bird and see the tree and the flower and feel the aliveness within and say, I'm still alive so you don't need the idea I am a bankrupt person to give you your sense of self anymore because your sense of self comes from the life that you are the aliveness of your very being and then, yes, on the level of form it happens that I had to declare bankruptcy I'm still breathing and the bird is still singing and a million people before me have survived that and this is just one example a more extreme example a friend of mine Byron Katie, a spiritual teacher was visiting a woman in hospital who had advanced cancer and she came into her room hospital room and the woman was of course very unhappy and Byron Katie said to her I don't see a problem and the woman got even more unhappy and she said you don't see a problem I'll show you a problem and she took off her blanket and showed her right leg was two or three times the size of her left leg this is a problem and Byron Katie said oh so your problem is that you think your right leg should be the same size as your left leg and in that moment the woman laughed for the first time in a long time she laughed because she dissociated from the thought form she stepped out of thought which judged this form as wrong which judged the present moment as wrong, should not be she was trapped in the thought form this should not be invested with a sense of self and so the stepping out is vital for you the story has a momentum that will reassert itself again and again because that is the momentum of the mind and I'm not saying that you no longer deal with things in your daily life you deal with them much more effectively when you have access to the deeper dimension where true intelligence resides that can then flow even into the way in which you deal with things on the level of form so even on the level of your story the story will unfold more harmoniously when you no longer demand that it should make you happy or do anything for you then you can truly honour this level of form because the neediness is gone because you are not looking to it anymore to give you a sense of who you are because who you are comes out of the aliveness and depth of this moment and so to step out of the story and into this moment as much as you can it's vital, always, ok just a second, where is it now especially when you get upset you lose yourself in some thought movement or you can help others if you have an agreement with your partner or friend and when you can see that they are not losing themselves in thought which almost certainly is going to be a world of problems it's not that they are solving problems by thinking, they are creating problems by thinking

[Speaker 3] (1:41:30 - 1:41:32)

to solve

[Speaker 1] (1:41:35 - 1:50:48)

the true solutions always come when for a moment you step out of thinking and become truly intelligent by becoming still and present and alive and then if thought should come back often a little later you suddenly have a creative insight that before wasn't there it came because that dimension operated in your life and then it comes more and more and then everything changes your relationships change because you don't demand that the other person should do something for me enhance my sense of self you don't compare yourself to others and try to be more than another to strengthen your sense of self it's fine to allow everyone to be as they are and you don't need to change them to say you should behave differently and then I'll be happy if you behave differently you will make me happy but in the meantime I'm going to be very unhappy and I'm going to show you that I'm unhappy so that you behave differently and then finally make me happy and many relationships work like that the partners show each other they're very unhappy because they want to change in their behavior and of course by their unhappiness they strengthen the same pattern and so especially in this beautiful place here don't pollute the garden of Fintan and be a walking story here that is heavy your steps become heavy and where a walking story steps no grass grows and so humanity has that that is collectively how humanity is on the planet now a great heaviness has descended on the planet and that is the collective human mind with its accumulated enormous amount of negativity and dreadful delusion and that's the heaviness that weighs heavily on nature also and life forms all life forms feel that pain so here step lightly don't carry the burden of personal selfhood around with you which is your past and your problematic future but be light as take one step at a time and be the presence through which you perceive be there with every step and when you perceive the tree the flower you are able to perceive against the background of stillness so you are not creating a barrier of concepts between nature and yourself a field of oneness arises between nature and yourself and then nature will be extremely helpful it's teaching you to be one with life to be still just go to any tree and see how still it is and the moment you notice how still and alive and surrendered to life the tree is that in you which notices that is the stillness otherwise you wouldn't even see that there's stillness there if you approach it only with thought you would have some kind of personal thing to do with nature oh that tree that would be great in my garden and don't feel guilty if that thought crossed your mind or even more wanting to pick a flower don't do it here also why I must have that it's mine now even on that level the personal self can come in or it comes in oh that that looks like a tree that my Aunt Mary had 10 years ago in her garden I wonder if it's still there she was a strange person but to be truly present there you are a field of aware presence walking and then it may happen that in addition to the beauty that you see around you and give give walk sometimes and be with, give some attention to perhaps a tree or flower for a little while, just be with it without no wanting nothing, just being with it and then you may notice there's a form you may notice in the background the presence that you are the light of consciousness in which this tree appears the presence the stillness that you are as a background to whatever you perceive birdsong trees, flowers different noises in nature and so there's the that which appears the form and that which is the space that enables this form to appear which is the space of yourself the space of now the space of consciousness the one consciousness, the light of consciousness in which forms appear so that is and even here as you sit here you can sense that in the foreground there's this room, there's the voice the shapes and colours and yet what is it that makes all this possible to be the being, being itself before it becomes something that is the one life the one consciousness that you are underneath the form so you are in two dimensions one could say at the same time the formless and form there's the and this is your practice in nature, nature is not challenging, it doesn't you can stay present easily with a tree or flower human beings are more challenging and so they pull you quickly into identification again with form with thought, reaction because most humans still come from thought, they are thought entities and they want you to contribute to their universe and they say give me more thought confirm to me that my story is important and then you can tell me yours and I'll do the same for you

[Speaker 3] (1:50:48 - 1:50:49)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (1:50:57 - 1:53:18)

and in bed tonight as you lie there you may find the mind wanting to drag you along with it again and think about ok there's only one more day or whatever it is, one more day or three more days or four more days left here and then I have to think about the things that are waiting for me when I get home, let me think about my problems now and then you suddenly remember ah the now all there ever is this moment where is it of course you can't see it but sometimes it happens that you wake up, your sense perception suddenly wake up, ah and then you feel the aliveness in the body and you can lie on your bed feeling the aliveness within that permeates the body, yes there's life, it's subtle but it's there and then the need to think lessens and you can just be a field of aware presence and perhaps you can listen to certain noises that you hear from nature and if it's your roommate snoring that's fine too, that's what is and be and if you have to remove yourself from that room that's fine or if you throw something at him or her you can do that too your ability to do things is not diminished when you live in surrender all it means, I surrender to what is I could try it, let's see if he wakes up if I throw something at him ok still snoring and you see that things that before would have created frustration and upset and anger and there's so many that happen in a person's life all those things that before would have created that now are simply part of the is-ness of this moment and suddenly you have a space around it

[Speaker 3] (1:53:19 - 1:53:20)

ok

[Speaker 1] (1:53:21 - 1:56:22)

and that space is the space of presence and so and then you get to know yourself as the spaciousness around things, so to speak not the thing you are that which allows the thing to be and then to disappear and then something else to come that's the now that's the deeper meaning of now is the space in which everything happens and so the now and yourself are one and the power of now of course is the power of life of the very being that you are and when I say yourself, of course I don't mean the fictitious self of the story that is form-based and thought-based but the deeper being that you are being itself freedom from the world ultimately and then the world becomes a very pleasant place not frustrating anymore things still come and go gain and loss happen birth and death continuously happen and that's how it is and there's an underlying peace and that peace is inseparable from who you are that's our practice this weekend and that's the way we can live our life our life which isn't really our life at all which is simply life living us life living through us we don't have a life because then there's me and life not possible we are life the one life in many forms that are born and die continuously the one consciousness, the one life and so life can then live freely through you and it can flower and that flowering may take form also as a creation or it may remain simply as an emanation that comes through this form and that emanation one could call love not the egoic love that says I want you, you stay here I need you and I want you or it says make me happy

[Speaker 2] (1:56:22 - 1:56:24)

sign here on the dotted line

[Speaker 1] (1:56:26 - 3:30:34)

but the true love the love that is a recognition of oneness as an emanation that's the flowering I suggest you stay for a little while until you feel ready to move stay with the stillness that is here the sacred field the sacred space until it's time to move thank you applause the bird is teaching much better than I could I'm sure they got it wrong when they say that Saint Francis was preaching to the birds of course he was listening to the birds they don't need preaching to such a divine sound and such a wonderful exquisite balance between stillness and sound that bird knows about balance there's always quite a long gap and then the next sound comes out of the stillness and it's always fresh and new it's never a repetition of the previous sound with this bird this is why it's so amazing and that would be enough if you have that around as your teacher what else do you need? the bird is teaching the balance between form and formless that's the art of living to live in both dimensions sound and stillness form and formless things and nothingness in this teaching the dimension of stillness of the formless is emphasized because the entire civilization is lost in light in form in things in objects in thoughts the entire civilization is lost in that dimension of things that includes thoughts and that's why there is a particular emphasis in this teaching on that which is missing balance needs to reestablish itself because no civilization can survive without the balance between form and formless now everybody has form already more than enough that's why this teaching isn't based on knowledge or new facts interesting facts new information information and because the world is full of that you can push any button of the many devices that you have and you get information and you're drowning in information and ultimately you see it's what is the point of it all if that's just more of that is that going to save the world more information or more things are we going to find the fullness of life through more things and greater and bigger shopping malls again form or are we going to find ourselves through improving our ability to think and analyze and solve problems analytically that were created by excessive thinking in the first place or as Carl Jung put it you cannot solve a problem on the same level of consciousness that created the problem and so what created the problem of our civilization is that humans lost touch with the formless dimension which we could also call spirit which we could call the sacred which we could call if that word were not had not been misused so much we could call God but we won't call it that and Jesus said what does it profit you if you gain the whole world and lose yourself or your soul that's really he could already see the tendency where things were going and form also includes time so we cannot deny that time has or seems to be real on the surface of life because it's everywhere as far as forms are concerned time seems to do something to the forms the life forms and it's strange it gradually grinds the forms down it erodes the forms some people have even looked upon time as some dreadful illness that inflicts everybody and that's one way of looking at it everybody is suffering from a lethal disease the outcome is the end of the form it's just a question of when and so you see it as my father says who is 87 now he says mirrors are not the same quality they used to be so the art is to live in this world where time seems on the one hand to be everywhere and control everything but where on the other hand time is also recognized as ultimately an illusion because if you look more deeply there is no time there is only ever this moment and therefore that is the portal into the formless dimension it's the narrow gate that Jesus talks about that leads to life the narrow gate that leads to life yes, it's very narrow, it's only this to find it and Jesus says there are not many who find it to find it you need to roll up the scroll of your life from which your story is written past future very unclear, you can't quite figure out what's it all about and you roll up people usually live carrying a burden, some more than others, but every carrying the burden of past, me my history I'm hoping or fearing which way it's going hope, fear so you have this okay, you're walking with myself, that's the self the form-based mind-based, time-based self and that has a heaviness to it and the more you carry of time, of past and future and think about it and talk about it and refer to as your sense of identity gives you your sense of self things that happened in the past and future, hoping to find yourself we talked about it then you are lost in form because all these are thought forms time and form go together, so you need to roll up you know these old scrolls you had to roll them, before there were books you had scrolls, you rolled them there's a beautiful story of a vision that the woman who wrote A Course in Miracles that came to her as an inner voice before the whole dictation started she had a vision in which she found a scroll in an old box a very ancient scroll and as she started to unfold unroll the scroll she saw symbols on the left and other symbols on the right, and she heard a voice saying, if you read what's on the left you know the past and if you read what is on the right you'll know the future and she looked at the left and the right and then she rolled it back to the central panel, on which was written God is and she said this is all that I'm interested in I don't want anything else that's all I want God is and then the same voice that had explained to her that is past and that is future said congratulations, you made it this time so her focal point had become the present moment if her focal point had not become the present moment the spaciousness that was necessary for the wisdom to come through her, out of the formless it was then given form by her mind, but the spaciousness would not have been there if she had said, ok, that's interesting let's see, I'm going to look at the future and then years later she would still be looking at the, oh wow and the past is interesting too and God is the isness of now just that and this is, you can use that as an image for your own life as much as possible so be interested in this and that is what we called getting out of the stream of the continuity between past and future as often as possible break that, make space as if you had a veil, and you say this is the veil of my life in which things are written, this is a fabric and then you go in there and separate it ah and then you put your head through into another dimension the way you see it in some of these films of magic and that is ah the awakening into now and as we are all transitional humans at this evolutionary stage of humanity many humans alive now are transitional beings they are dysfunctional as their manifestations of the old consciousness they are becoming more and more dysfunctional because the old consciousness that is totally identified with mind, form and time that's been running human history for thousands of years is reaching the end of its lifespan it cannot survive much longer and so every human being carries the old also still inside and many humans, and certainly those present here, and many others are transitional beings in the sense that the old still has a momentum within them as the new is arising I call it new because ultimately it's timeless it's not new, there's no time at all, but let's say I saw the name of one second hand shop was called new to you laughter laughter so no words can really express ever express the exact truth, you have to be allow for the fact that language is never quite right and especially is never quite right when you begin to speak of spiritual truth, the formless, because every word is form and ultimately can only function by expressing, reflecting something in the world of form and then it becomes difficult when language is used to express something that is beyond form and that's why Jesus used parables, and he never said this is the kingdom of heaven, he said the kingdom of heaven is like, or is a little bit like that, or like that and he gives you little stories and then the form of the words as long as you don't get entangled in the words and say, oh this is how it is if you allow the words to be pointers, little signposts then it can work but if you say there's the truth it's not, the truth is not in the word and especially in spiritual discourse, the truth is that to which the word points so you have to look beyond the words especially here and so we learn to bring a balance into our lives between time and timelessness between the world of things, handling that situations things objects and not getting lost in things in the world of things, in the world of situations, in the world in the world not losing yourself in the world and that world includes not only the external world but also the world that you carry as the mind made world in the head, because that one creates that one the human made world the so called external human made world and the inner state of consciousness, of course one continuum the inner, the outer only reflects the inner and so on the outer level for example, we have a civilization that is extraordinarily noisy if somebody came from some past civilization even 200 years back 1000 years back and would arrive here in a city or even in a small town, they would say what is going on with this deafening noise everywhere and these machines everywhere that make noise have I arrived in the hell realm? and if they don't have the noises that are produced by machines, they have to make noise for the sake of noise a lot of there is some good music, but a lot of so called music that you hear in restaurants I don't know if it's the same here in North America hard to find a restaurant without loud music you just open the door and put your head in and you go out again and a lot of that is for the sake of making noise it's called music there are some exceptions of course some music can have a divine function too in some rare cases it still has music that comes out of the stillness that when you listen to music that came out of the stillness whoever created it or whoever is playing it or singing it it comes out of that state of consciousness and then it assumes a form and yet the form is fresh and new it's come out of that and the stillness still clings to it, has a fragrance it still emanates that even if it's sound and that's the beauty of all art true art it reflects still that state of consciousness out of it, it comes and then you have a lot of pseudo-art in this world where clever minds are trying to be even more clever and think let's think of something new what can we do here maybe we could do that here or that could go there, that would look clever and then okay oh no let's do it they call it art but it lacks something it's totally trapped in form, there's only manipulating old forms nothing new has come in and nothing that can lead you back to the formless which is the original reason for all art is the sacred to be a portal an access point for the sacred so that when you see it or experience it you experience yourself in it you see yourself reflected the formless reflected shining through the form that is why it is true art always there is more than what you see or hear it's not just what you see or hear there is more than that and that shines through the form and that is what can happen to you what is happening to you ultimately it's not everybody's purpose to create works of art, a few humans do that, that is their function partly in this world but much more importantly is for you to become that work of art, your whole life and your very being becomes transparent so that the formless can shine through and that happens when you are no longer totally identified with the world of form and that happens when you have access to the realm of stillness within yourself and then something emanates through the form that is not nothing to do with the form it may emanate only as a silent emanation and not assume any form as such and so that is sometimes the case with so called there have been very few in the past holy people who simply in India they've always existed in any generation in India there have always been a few holy men or women who never did anything and that's very rare for the West they say what did they create what did they do and they never did anything they just sat there and the West says what a useless existence come on get a life get a job and some even because people when you are trapped in form you misperceive it completely because all you see there is a useless form sitting and they say they are parasites on society, they allow themselves to be fed by other people they bring them their food, they should work for a living like myself and that is when the mind that knows nothing but form, looks at the form it will totally misperceive it and so that's the beauty that in India they've always recognized that because they haven't completely lost touch, in fact they may have gone at some point too far in the opposite direction so that they lost interest in form because they went into being more now India is becoming western the more you read about India the more you see they are all into computers these days and cell phones and that's fine too, but the question is where is finding a balance I was totally lost in like most people completely lost in form and then a shift happened and I lost the balance and I became completely lost in the formless we can't really be lost in the formless it's just a way of putting it because the formless is essentially who you are and yet from a normal perspective it looked as if I had lost it laughter laughter because there was somebody who had a promising career and suddenly just sits around on park benches not doing anything anymore just being and tasting continuously the sweetness of being simply the beauty the sweetness of being alive the joy of simply being and then looking upon the world and seeing it reflected in all life forms reflected the joy of being in the trees and the birds and even the humans running around like mad and knowing that deep down there there is also the very same being and it's beautiful and so from an external perspective the ability to handle forms was gone to manipulate the world of form was gone for a while and then gradually had to re-establish itself so I could do again and of course be at the same time and that is the it is not the destiny of each one of you to move so deeply into being that you are no longer capable of handling the world of form around you that happens occasionally but it tends to happen more to those people who, those few who experience a dramatic shift from one to the other and then for a while they're gone that's of course the beautiful the beautiful sutra of Buddha gate, gate gone, gone, gone to the farthest shore and yet it seems it is our destiny here while we are still in form to balance form and formless here and that's why we are here and for most of you the transition to a new and what is the new state of consciousness that's arising it is the state that is balanced the two dimensions the manifested and the unmanifested balanced in a human being and that is such a radical transformation that when a certain number of humans live in that way so they become what before was a work of art you become the work of art you become that which is transparent to the formless the divine and then that will change the entire world not the way what you experience as the human-made world will be changed completely it is not necessary to speculate now what is the world going to look like when enough humans live in the new consciousness that's not important now the important thing is for us to enter that new state and then what that does to your story who knows how that changes the story the way in which your life unfolds in time what you do out here how that affects where you live what you do and so on you cannot predict nor do you need to predict that are you going to become a great artist are you going to win Wimbledon and of course bear in mind that great artists and the tennis players they are not enlightened masters they have access to that which is greater than the limited human mind in the small field of their activity and most of them when they go back into normal life away from where they have mastery they are just as mad as everybody else and sometimes even more mad because sometimes the mind made entity gets in there and looks at what they did and says, I did that that was me the greatest illusion and then of course it feels very special the ego then derives it identifies with whatever came out of the state of no ego and says, I did that and then begins to believe what other people are saying about you and that you are the greatest because they all they project their images of specialness onto you oh the great pop star whatever and the great pop stars also they have when they compose their songs or some of them where there is even a glimpse of aliveness and freshness, yes there is something there and then the personality the person comes back the moment they step back from the act of creation or the performance they step back and there is the old personality and sometimes it's a dreadful burden for some ability that comes from the non-personal realm to be integrated into the personal and they just can't do it it's totally misperceived just as the world misperceives it and then they believe themselves to be very special and there comes a huge conflict between power that comes out of the formless and the limited person that misinterprets it and claims something out of that and the magic that comes from the formless realm into your life is what when you look at our civilization it seems to be gone completely because the civilization is almost totally not sacred, it is profane, it is a dreary burdensome structure that humans have created when you look at the mainstream civilization and so many humans no matter what country you go to they seem to be tired, they are weary there's a weariness that they carry the civilization is grinding them down another day of dreary activity, of pointless running around and even those who are still running around they know deep down it's pointless what is the point?

and you ask the big executives in companies where are you going, why are you running around like mad and they can't give you an answer except that well, we are expanding, the organization is expanding we are swallowing up other organizations and that's our reason for being, is to grow, to get bigger it's to accumulate more and so it's all, this is why we are and it's totally meaningless activity and so there are many reasons why the entire civilization is reaching a point of collapse and one is that the humans who are still sustaining it they can't carry the burden of their self-created structures anymore the over-complicated world absurd complexity for the sake of complexity that they have created and they cannot carry their own burden of their own creation anymore mind-created, just a reflection of their state of consciousness in which there is no gap in the stream of one form after another, one thought after another, the voice in the head that never stops speaking becomes a civilization that is obsessed with form that is obsessed with things and therefore knows nothing of that which you could say is the most important dimension of human existence, the sacred the stillness the formless, the divine all these have become meaningless in our civilization and yet many humans are beginning to realize what's happening and so there is in many a search for something else and that number of humans is growing every day and that's the beauty of it so each one of us here is part of the transformation of consciousness that's happening on the planet it's not going to happen, it is happening, if it were not happening you could not even sit here it would be intolerable to sit here and yet there may be something in you that's the old consciousness that doesn't want to be here, you may occasionally feel that arises there's something that doesn't even understand what is being said that hears only the sound of the words and says it can't go to where the words point so you get stuck with the form the sound stuck with the thought and says presence stillness stillness well you haven't actually explained what you mean by stillness so this is a good example where the word is only the pointer and then you have to jump off the word stillness points to stillness it's not something to be believed in and the stillness of course is already in you it is not something that we need to create here we need to bring about by being doing the right things and then eventually we'll become still follow a certain course of a recipe if you do A, B, C and D you will finally become still that's very seductive but you have given yourself something to do before you can be still which means before you can find yourself and be yourself that is the problem of every method every spiritual method not that I would outright condemn all methods but the danger with any method is that it gives you time it says, OK, you will arrive and find yourself why not find yourself already why create something between yourself and yourself so the stillness that is already at this moment in you fully the stillness out of which the thoughts come every thought comes out and then goes back in sense perceptions get you a little closer to it and when you perceive and do not label it whatever you perceive just let it be then there is the perception the form and there is the one could almost say this is a limited analogy no analogies are that great but you could say there is the canvas on which the perception is painted there is a background of spacious stillness that's yourself that's the consciousness that you are formless not the conditioned consciousness that is the forms in your mind thoughts they are there too but simply being able to sense that which underlies whatever you perceive or think or feel Gurdjieff put it in the Russian teacher who lived at the beginning of the 20th century put it like he called it self-remembrance and of course that can be misinterpreted as if you had to think about ok let me remember who I am my name is such and such no he meant to remember not even to remember words are never right to know the knower to know who knows this in a dream let's say you dream and then you wake up and say it was only a dream, it was unreal of course it wasn't totally unreal because something within the forms that arose in the dream must have been there to enable these forms to exist there must have been a consciousness in which this dream unfolded and so in other words there must have been a dreamer of the dream as the consciousness in which it happened and that is the timeless and formless dimension without which forms would not exist and so our normal existence is very much like a dream because just like a dream everything dissolves fairly quickly every situation, everything and even the seemingly solid reality that surrounds us is not really that solid first of all, there is nothing solid it just appears solid it's just energy fields in motion and they are not going to remain in that form for very long if you could look more deeply you could see everything is already dissolving it's a temporary it comes into form and dissolves the bodies that are sitting here are already dissolving even this table if we look in 200 years it will still look more or less the same but if we could speed up on camera what happens to this room over a period of 3000 years which is very little on a global scale then you would see that even all seemingly solid objects are crumbling and within one minute you would see everything becoming dust and then disappearing and it would be a shocking and liberating thing to watch a film like that that shows you what is actually happening to the seemingly solid world around you and deep down it's a liberating thing when you see how short-lived every form is because what is it in you that sees that the short-lived nature of all forms and you witness that that is the aware presence from the stillness you see that and actually you become more still the more you see how short-lived every form is and you don't run away from that fact you just stay with it that's how important it is to face death in your life which is everywhere which is what our civilization is trying to hide continuously there is no death don't never look at a dead body because this just isn't done so there are people who have never seen a dead body and if it's not a close relative you would not be able to see a dead body because the civilization needs to hide death because it's the most threatening thing to somebody who is totally identified with the world of form death is the most dreadful thing and you must not think about it or talk about it and so whenever you are faced with death there is and even just watching it and when the table dissolves that's death too if you saw it over a period of 3000 years and saw it crumbling within a minute the entire room and everything in it goes oh or you would see a human being being born somebody showed me a clip apparently it was from an ad from some country it takes one minute a baby is coming out of the womb and shoots out like a cannonball into the sky and screams all the time but as the baby travels up into the sky it already begins to grow and grows and goes higher and higher and finally reaches full maturity and then starts going downhill and is still screaming and the closer and then becoming an old man as he approaches the ground hair is falling out and finally the last scream and he lands in the grave and it says underneath life is short now whether the people who made that film knew that they were making a spiritual film I don't know I think they were selling beer or something like that but that is deeply spiritual when you see how quickly everything dissolves and you don't run away from that fact and this that again what I mentioned yesterday the Old Testament prophet who said vanity of vanities all is vanity to see that is liberating because this now if everything were permanent it's the same as saying if the entire world were blue there would be no blue because you couldn't differentiate at all the color blue wouldn't exist now if everything were impermanent you wouldn't even know it because you only know it if there is something that is different so I just give you this to consider not to think about, to consider there is something in you that recognizes the impermanent nature of all life forms and that is the formless and the more you realize the impermanence of all forms the more the form you are aware of the formless in yourself but you and the formless are ultimately one so when you say you are aware of the formless you are already making a little mistake that is created by language what it really is that you are more fully yourself you are more aware of yourself not as two, but as one you become more self-aware awareness becomes aware of itself and there was a question here written by somebody who probably doesn't like public speaking later we may have some more questions in the now sometimes I am aware of expanding what is this? it seems to be awareness itself if I am aware of awareness, duality which am I? good question I am aware this is what it seems like when we talk about it but that's not how it is it's only when we put it into language we formulate a sentence which has a subject and an object but really when you become aware of awareness which really is the secret to a balanced human life to become aware of awareness and then also the forms but what does that mean?

who is becoming aware of awareness? the language that we use here creates the illusion of duality so it would be much better if we rephrase that and we say the awareness that I am becomes aware of itself no duality the awareness that is the essence of who I am becomes aware of itself and that is a miraculous beautiful incredible thing what traditionally has been called self-realization becoming aware awareness becoming aware of itself as simple stillness but every word reduces it again to something that is far greater and of course there is a sense of expansion because you are no longer trapped as the questioner mentions expanding you are no longer trapped your consciousness is no longer trapped in the form that's the incarnation the incarnation of consciousness into form and the realization of consciousness as the formless and so some spiritual traditions speak of reincarnating many times and they say you reincarnate again and again until you wake up until you realize who you are beyond form and that is true you are born again and again but I want to make it not something that I want you to believe in but to make it true in your experience and to make it true in your experience all you need to look at is today how you reincarnate today now how does that happen?

how do I reincarnate today? I thought it just happens once in a lifetime you know the sticker that the born again Christians have on their cars says born again Christians and the Buddhists have on their car born again and again and again and again how do you reincarnate today? and how many times do you reincarnate today?

every time you lose yourself in a thought or an emotion or something that happens out there which also of course you experience as thought and emotion let's say you lose yourself in a situation this is important, you must deal with this ok, what's going on here? and then you lose yourself in the reactive pattern and in the mental interpretation oh, this is awful, you must do something whatever it is you identify with a form every thought that arises in your mind that grips you completely there is a sense of self in it it's unconscious of course your sense of self means your sense of identity gets mixed up with a form of that thought or the emotion and so you are completely incarnated in the form that arises in your life and so humans go through life not knowing not realizing that every day they reincarnate many times they lose themselves continuously in forms they react to the forms around them they are totally in the reaction there is not an awareness in the background of ok, this is what's going on so there is no space there is only form there is no stillness there is only noise and that means being compulsively reincarnating every day many times and even while you sit alone in your room and you start thinking about if you were talking out loud the voice in your head that you identify with everybody would recognize it as insane but then on the other hand I don't know what if I do that I wonder what happens oh that would be dreadful I just hope that oh no, I hadn't thought of that and you reincarnate continuously into some new thought forms and so of course that's why Buddhists talk about coming to the end of reincarnation simply means not losing yourself in form again and again and again and it doesn't mean you reject all forms some spiritual traditions go a little bit far in their attempt to find the formless dimension they say don't even look at anything beautiful because it's not going to be around for very long it's all dissolving already don't even look at the flower certainly don't, they tell the monks never look at a beautiful woman you must not look and so they go because you would reincarnate in many ways you lose yourself in the attraction and that's dangerous so a monk mustn't even he can't hand a woman something because it's dangerous he puts it on the table and she picks it up because otherwise there could be some indirect contact now the idea behind it may be a good one that you mustn't lose yourself in form and yet to reject the world of form is perhaps again losing balance again in the other direction all beauty is dust because whatever I look upon is already dissolving the flower that looks beautiful today, tomorrow will be gone with it and so in some traditions the entire world of form is rejected completely now occasionally that seems to work mostly it doesn't but here and there, some people realize this even within that tradition but that probably doesn't have anything to do with the traditions, they would have realized even if they were sitting in an office they were ready so it is always problematic if that which is a natural process of disidentification is forced into an artificially created structure it may work it works if there is a human being there who can who embodies the two dimensions who embodies the awakened state, then it can work in many cases there is no human being there is only the tradition and then usually it doesn't get you there so the form not rejecting forms outright I work with to see that in every form something is hiding that is one with the essence of who you are and that is not something you can think about it is if you anything that you look upon and you are still enough or listen to the bird whatever it may be anything that you can be with in stillness so that you sense yourself as the still space in which that object or that being is perceived then you sense that that essence that you know sense yourself to be is also there in that being and even in inanimate objects even a table has being has presence some people need to take acid for the first time to realize that the table is alive too but this is not what I recommend here all you need to be is present with it and truly be alert and still and then look the moment you call it table you are under the illusion that now you know what it is you don't know at all it remains totally unknown and mysterious just because you put a label on it doesn't mean now you know you just have a thought in your head or a sound comes out of your mouth and you say that's what it is and then you cannot go deeper into it because you get stuck at the label you hit the label and then you are stuck oh that's a table, ok what's the next thing you never can go deeper into anything you only hit one label after another and therefore it's always a search because you only hit the surface of things you always then immediately the mind says ok, I've done that, I know what that is where is the next thing there is this continuous looking for the next thing because you can never stay with one thing where the depth that is in everything reveals itself to you and that's the restlessness of our civilization that always asks what's next and you already see even in relatively young children these days that continuous need for the new stimulus they can't sit still for a moment ok because they are used they are addicted to the next thing some new mental stimulus because they live in a civilization that is totally only on the surface of things lacking completely in depth so now you can bring in depth even into your perceptions of things perception is much closer to the unmanifested or to being than thought but thought is far removed it's an abstract for many people to become present when they realize oh, I'm lost I'm lost in some problem some world of problems where is the problem now and they wake up and the first thing they notice is sense perceptions around them they hadn't been aware of that at all because all their attention was in the thoughts and suddenly they look at the floor the hand, the table the light and in the looking there is a stillness in fact the strange thing is you cannot even look at anything without stillness because even the person who labels things compulsively which is almost everybody there is always a moment when they first let's just talk for a moment about the visual sense but it includes all sense perceptions there is always a first moment when you first look at something a tree a flower a table anything there is a one second or so in which there is stillness and then the mind interprets it and labels it but if you can catch yourself when you first look at something there is a brief moment of non-labeling otherwise you wouldn't even see it and then it recedes almost one could say the sense perception immediately loses its sharpness and aliveness because after one or two seconds the mental label replaces the aliveness that was there dead and then you look at the next thing or you listen to a bird and there is a moment of pure listening and then after two seconds the mind says something oh, that must be a black bird or what's the name of I can't remember gone or whatever the mind says about it so if you can catch yourself whenever something new enters your awareness whether it's auditory or visual tactile smelling, tasting even relatively undeveloped senses from contemporary humans there you can be there and be conscious of that first moment when there is no labeling there is the stillness and the aliveness and if you become conscious of that you may find that it becomes longer you don't need to automatically label it and so the stillness that is the background to sense perceptions becomes faster it's always fast but you didn't know it and so that is how another way in which the stillness in you expands so to speak everything is so to speak about stillness the stillness in you expands and then more and more you move about your life not just when you are passive passively perceiving but also bringing it into activity that that state of consciousness so to speak that is stillness flows into also into what you do so that you notice you can actually do things better with if they are done in a state of still presence than if you are thinking what you want to achieve through this movement where you want to get to in the next moment no, you are just present with so there is a stillness to what you perceive and there is a stillness that flows into the action and the action may be simple walking across the room opening a window turning on the tap feeling the water listening to the water looking out of the window in the morning you open the curtains and why? it's simply a deep seated habit to immediately call this day something and say oh no, not another grey day no, just let it be and then there is immediately a depth to everything that wasn't there when you immediately put a label on it so you stay with things a little longer and that depth is your own depth and the depths there, they are really one the things of the world are no longer experienced just as a surface phenomenon but as alive because the depth is the aliveness also in you and so this is the shift that is happening to you is that you bring in this so called new consciousness into everyday situations and you break the continuity of your story then intelligence comes in more and more also love because the only way love can come into your life is through space not through form love has no form and again in the egoic state love gets entangled in form so you think you need only this form you love not realizing that true love is the recognition of the formless in the other which is the recognition of yourself in the other and that is inseparable from looking upon the other in stillness without a form arising and saying this is who she is or what she is and if form still arises in your mind, recognize it's only a thought it's not who that human being is and then what beauty if you can recognize the formless in form first you can recognize it in natural things very easily, much more easily because natural things are less challenging than humans humans are were natural once but now they have become whatever the world of nature you approach first of all and relate through stillness and presence more and more and then gradually you bring it into human relationships easy with humans you meet for the first time let them be and as you're listening vital to be able to listen to another human it doesn't mean that the words all your attention is on the words when you listen, we're only listening almost as an analogy there is a field of attention of still attention that flows out towards that human being one could say you give him or her space and then that person may be speaking words arise in the space but you are there as the spaciousness that allows words to come you are there as a field of aware presence and then words may come out of your mouth suddenly and that's very different from so called normal human interaction that is all completely mind dominated to be still with another human being while you listen and sense yourself as the awareness while you listen so some of your attention is on the words and some of your attention is now with challenging humans get into your body so that you can be present with your entire energy field every cell of the body is present as you listen then you are because humans can be very challenging they want because they are dominated by mind they want you to contribute to their mental structures the drama, whatever it is their pain body may be active everybody here probably knows about pain body which is another way of identifying with form the old emotion that arises slight trigger triggers pain body a pain body episode pain body being the old stored up emotion from the past human suffering, human pain that hasn't gone away that is partly personal and partly collective humanity ultimately in the larger sense is all just human pain it's not ultimately personal at all and that is a little entity energetic entity that lives in you sometimes dormant and sometimes active and sometimes half dormant half asleep with one eye open waiting for an opportunity just for a trigger so that it can come up and the trigger could be a remark your partner makes are you accusing me of being... no I didn't say that yes you did and then we start the drama that awakens the partner's pain body that's supposed to happen they feed each other you totally reincarnate into old pain you live it it lives through you not knowing that you are going through another reincarnation and you may be a Buddhist and having thoughts in your head that you want to arrive at the end of the cycle of reincarnations and that some abstract entity is in your mind and you don't know that while you are fighting with your wife you are reincarnating at this very moment I must get back to my meditation I don't meditate an hour a day I'll have to reincarnate again and again while you are doing it now oh so this is one of the most frequent ways in which people reincarnate into the old emotion that wants to feed on the experience of more pain and it pretends to be you you identify with it it occupies your entire space and you feed on the other person's reaction and you love it when I say you I mean the pain body at that moment there is a mistaking the pain body for who you are that's reincarnation and then finally it subsides and then the next episode will be in a week's time just like the soap operas or it will feed on your mind if you have no partner it will feed on your thinking how dreadful my life is what he did to me, she did to me they did to me the world politicians, people whatever the mind can think of that's a negative thought the pain body loves it the pain body is the addiction to negativity that humans carry and it's a little entity, an energy form and all that is required is for you to see, to recognize it then you don't reincarnate into it anymore and even if you were reincarnated it is possible in the middle of negative thinking or in the middle of a drama with your spouse to suddenly know what's happening that means some of your consciousness has stepped out of the form and is there as pure awareness before it was totally trapped in the form and then when you suddenly see what's happening, that means what's happened there some consciousness has stepped out of the incarnation and is there as pure consciousness watching and there you are, the angry entities screaming oh, look at that and then it can't go on for that much longer because when there's awareness there presence which is simply the still watcher then it can't very well renew itself much longer because it needs your unawareness, it needs your complete identification with it to really renew itself so then it quickly subsides it goes, hmmm ok well, that was good, at least I woke up in the middle of it sometimes you wake up afterwards, there it was too late but it's not really too late because at least I'm awake now next time maybe I can catch it a little earlier and then next time it comes there it is and you can sometimes see how a little event can be used as an excuse by the pain body just a tiny thing going wrong somebody slams the door on your face and there's a reaction far greater than the relatively insignificant event, and that's because the pain body was waiting for something so shining the light of attention of consciousness on it is all that's needed, then you don't reincarnate completely into it every time and renew the old cycle, it's always the same always the same if you're not present in 30 years time you'll still have the same episodes with your wife or husband or it may be a new wife and a new husband but it'll be the same and the strange thing is you look for somebody saying you get a divorce finally I can't live with this pain body anymore I mean the one that I live with you still have your own and so you get divorced and say okay, now my next husband or wife I'm going to choose somebody who doesn't have a pain body, who's conscious and then you meet somebody who looks conscious they've done spiritual work for 25 years and then you start living together and within about 4 weeks you will encounter an aspect to that person that wasn't supposed to be there so that's the challenge of the pain body whether you are in a relationship or not it'll be there relationships are a good opportunity because that's the favorite playground of pain body renewal but if the pain body doesn't have a relationship it'll just use your mind that works too so watch for that because there's a momentum there that's very strong because it's been there's such a huge amount of human pain collective human pain on this planet built up over many many thousands of years and really all that your pain body is or it looks personal it's really human pain although something in your so called personal life may have added to it but really it is basically impersonal just as the movement of thought is basically impersonal the emotions are human emotions the thoughts are all thoughts that are being thought by the collective human mind and people think that's me but it is impersonal it's just that when you identify it it gives the illusion of being personal of being a person there you are being thought by the collective mind and so well where is the personal then? the strange thing is stillness isn't personal either presence stillness is not personal and yet it is essentially the beingness that you are but it's not personal personal means a little thing it is me and the others so ultimately there is nothing personal neither the unconsciousness that identifies with forms nor when the consciousness arises is not personal either and yet the essence of who you are the I am that is nothing to do with person but it gets mixed up with the personal the forms that the person identifies with that make up the person as you know person the word comes from Latin it means persona the mask that you wear these are the roles that you play when you interact with other humans as long as you are identified with mind and emotion you play the roles that are personal you play the script in your mind the conditioning of your mind again and again and again born again and again and again until you've had enough and then you're fed up with the suffering that that entails and the readiness comes to step out of that that's the end of reincarnation before we have a few questions there may not be any questions left that would be good too can you listen to the sound of the bell at the same time as you're aware of the awareness that is listening in other words aware of yourself as the presence in which the sound happens and then all that's left is spaciousness presence form and formless so even while you listen to the form, which is the sound follow the sound as it slowly dies down into formlessness that is death too when the sound slowly dies down when I ring this bell again after the Royal Air Force has passed follow the sound until it disappears that means the sound dies death means a form is dissolving dissolves and then what's left is formless consciousness you can do the same with your breath that's an old meditation method the simplest one one of the simplest doesn't really give you time to observe your breath the Buddha recommended that it's perhaps the most direct meditation method because it doesn't give you time unless the meditator comes in as a conceptual identity and says, I must get better at observing my breath when you observe how your breath moves out the end of the out-breath is also a little death and there's a moment of stillness any ending is helpful in that way because any ending is the ending of any form and it's always some kind of death when you accept it fully it's an opening into the formless even the ending of our little retreat can be like that because that too is a form and you could say, oh, what a pity this form is dissolving and you want to hang on to the form a recipe for unhappiness not realizing that the very reason why this gathering is meaningful is that it takes you beyond form so the more you welcome all the endings in your life goodbye formless way form is going the more the formless is there in your life the egoic entity works the opposite way it hates, it wants to think oh no, I want to keep this but it's going going, gone everything if you're old enough that you can see the death of this physical form approaching that can be very beautiful too to feel, to accept that, but not as a thought oh, I'm going to die soon no, let it push you into being present just that if any questions arise please ask one person there I think the microphone will travel to you

[Speaker 2] (3:30:39 - 3:30:41)

you use a lot of

[Speaker 3] (3:30:41 - 3:31:04)

humor in your a lot of laughter in your presentation and there appears to be a lot of laughter in you I have this sense that once the humorous thing is said and the laughter begins that that too is a porthole into presence can you speak about that?

[Speaker 1] (3:31:07 - 3:51:25)

the humor arises spontaneously when you look at really whenever this humor arises we're looking at the world of form and see that the normal existence which is the identification with form is a form of madness and when you see it in your own life the seeing is free in that moment of freedom from that old conditioned form there is a spontaneous relaxation and that produces the laughter so it's enormously liberating the more you laugh at the world of form not in a malicious way but in a free way to see the forms do not they pretend all the forms pretend that they are deadly serious the world wants to be taken every situation says I'm so serious and if you have no inauspiciousness then indeed every situation is dreadfully serious and so the absolute seriousness of the world of form disappears when you are rooted in the formless and that means laughter arises more frequently even in relatively unlikely situations and it does not mean that you have no empathy or compassion it's sometimes when I used to see people individually they would come to me and usually they begin by telling their story at that time I just let them tell me the story and sometimes while they were telling and sometimes it was a very unhappy story very unhappy and sometimes while I was listening there was a smile on my face and it just I don't know how it got there laughter and sometimes the people who were telling suddenly stopped and said what are you smiling about are you laughing at me no and then I found it hard to explain there was a time when I didn't have really many words to explain so I found it hard to explain why the smile was there not smiling at anything they said smiling because I recognized both within myself and within them underneath the story I recognized the dimension in which that story is relatively meaningless I recognized that underneath the story you are absolutely fine I recognized the dimension in you where you are never touched by the unhappy story who you are and because I recognized that the smile came and so but quite a few times people got angry because they thought I was smiling at their story or at them it wasn't taken all that seriously anymore just as my own story lost its seriousness it continued in some way playing itself out but it wasn't serious business anymore it doesn't mean you don't honor the world of form it doesn't mean that you have become callous towards things no, not at all there is you still here as this form identity you still carry a form also so you can empathize with the suffering that arises in anyone who is totally identified with form and yet that is one aspect of compassion that you know full well what it means to be trapped in form is suffering and I've been through it I know the suffering so there is the empathy on the level of form of suffering but there is also the recognition of that which is already beyond suffering in me, in you it's one and there come the two aspects of compassion on the one hand we share being trapped in this form seemingly on the other hand we also share the timeless and formless dimension of existence where we are already free and you bring the two together and that's true compassion because true compassion doesn't just mean you weep when the other person weeps you weep also you may weep but underneath the weeping there is joy the joy that knows of the formless that knows that you are in your essence indestructible not as an abstract idea but as a feeling realization so to speak so humor is a wonderful thing and I'm sure that Jesus and other teachers had a lot of humor too all the teachers did and just the disciples later on said oh we mustn't put that joke in that doesn't look serious enough beware of any spiritual teacher who is deadly serious because even the Zen Masters who look dreadfully serious they only look like that there's an enormous amount of humor inside them that's hidden in all the Zen stories and the way they deal with people so they just look like that but if you look into their eyes or if you see a drawing done by a great artist of a Zen Master you see underneath their perhaps frightening demeanor there is a softness also and there is a gentle smile hidden somewhere there and then of course you have the beautiful image traditionally all Buddha images have a slight smile this is the Buddha smile a very slight hint of a smile that comes with knowing yourself knowing the essence of being and then you have the images influenced by Taoism in China of the fat Buddha the fat Buddha there, wonderful there's this man with a huge belly toothless in many cases or just one tooth left and his belly is huge and he's continuously laughing laughter laughter and many people have that at home in China and nowadays in the West also and it's wonderful to see whenever you think you have a problem just look at him laughter and he's laughing not at you he's laughing not because he despises the world or he's callous towards human suffering he's laughing because he's rooted within in the formless and so it's a wonderful image you can also practice a laughing meditation I haven't done that yet laughter laughter that frees up a lot of rigid structures inside but here the laughing happens spontaneously and it's wonderful ok, one there and then we go there oh thank you can a fool realize his enlightenment thank you can a form realize a fool oh thank you wonderful question laughter there are some wonderful images fool is a very ancient mythological figure the tarot card of the fool and so on now by fool let's say we mean someone whose mental capacities are undeveloped I would say somebody who is not trapped in the usual structures of compulsive thinking not because he or she has transcended compulsive thinking but has not arrived at compulsive thinking laughter and in that sense that human being is already enlightened because it's not the enlightenment that we are addressing here but that state of not yet trapped in thought has many similarities with the enlightened state one could say he doesn't need enlightenment because in his own way he already is enlightened in modern contemporary mythology which is films laughter there is a beautiful example of that in the figure of Forrest Gump somebody whose mental capacities are undeveloped but who lives in many ways just like an enlightened person would live first of all he doesn't have an ego everything that comes everything he needs naturally comes to him his life unfolds naturally, he doesn't struggle for anything everything comes at the right moment and he achieves he even does great things but never says I did that because the I hasn't arisen yet he has to go to Vietnam and even there wherever he goes he is a force for good even when he has to go to the war in Vietnam he saves many people and he is a great hero and he doesn't look at himself as a great hero because he doesn't have a mental image of myself having done that he just explains that's what happened, I did that and so on and so in many ways he is already enlightened and you can say he doesn't need enlightenment because he is already there, for us we can't go back there he doesn't really need to go through thinking he is fine it seems to be the destiny of some humans to be connected and there may be a few remaining civilizations, remnants of ancient civilizations where humans live in oneness with nature and oneness with each other and they don't need the Buddha they already just as an animal there are some dogs or cats that I sometimes meet in some cases they have suffered a lot or they are very old and they reached the enlightenment of the dog or cat being the old cat who cannot be bothered anymore with catching birds because the cat knows it's pointless anyway, they are too old and so they go around and they are just completely there and the old dog there are beings who seem to have completely fulfilled the purpose of their existence in that form and have found the connectedness with the formless within the form has fulfilled its purpose and the connectedness is there this is not our destiny to return we are all, we have been or are, or most of us halfway stuck in the human mind so there is no way of going back, we cannot become fools again and yet when you go beyond thinking from the point of view of mind it often appears that you no longer know anything so in that way we also become fools from the point of view of conceptual thought and there are many similarities with the way that an enlightened person lives who has transcended thought means he is no longer trapped in thinking to somebody who has not yet gone through the evolutionary stage of being trapped in thinking didn't have to, for some reason consciousness flowered there, through that form and that's beautiful for us it's transcending thought and then becoming a fool again yes one could say, but yet we don't become forest gum there is a knowing that comes when you have transcended thought there is an awareness that wasn't there before in the natural state it's a regaining of the natural state but the regaining of the natural state that also all ancient civilizations speak of the myth of the golden age that exists in India in almost every civilization you have the myth that there was a time when humans lived in peace and happily the world was a kind of paradise, you have the same myth expressed in the beginning of the Bible so there must be an ancient truth there there is a natural state that humans lost those humans who didn't lose it, don't need it they are fine but it is the destiny the evolutionary destiny of consciousness is for humans to lose it and then to regain it and that's where we are and so in some ways you will look to humans who are still trapped in thinking when you live aligned to the present moment don't compulsively label things no longer a walking story you become quite simple the need to be special falls away you become very ordinary very ordinary because you don't need to project a sense of specialness anymore and find attempt to find your identity in there, because you already you are in touch with the preciousness that is the essence of who you are, so you don't need to seek a specialness in form anymore what a freedom that comes to us now of not needing to be special anymore to get some sense of who you are to become ordinary you have that beautifully expressed in the Taoist sages the whole Tao Te Ching the Chinese book of wisdom is all an expression of ordinariness to be ordinary not to project yourself wanting, needing to be someone but happy to be no one and that looks quite foolish from the point of view of our civilization and people may look upon you as nobody and that's wonderful the only regret is not really regret I have about the power of now that became so well known and with it the being that gave it birth no more is the projection of specialness whereas there was such beauty in being totally ordinary and nobody doubted that I was ordinary well, a few of you said you must go and see him he's so ordinary just to be just to live with the present moment see what nothing could be more ordinary than just to live aligned with whatever is here now that's all you ever have to do it's pretty ordinary just this the famous Zen saying chopping wood carrying water it's expressed in that it's a very profound Zen saying this is meant to encapsulate the whole of Zen existence chopping wood carrying water two of the most ordinary activities at that time when people did that in our case it will be something else most people, well, don't chop wood well, perhaps some people still do it is beautiful to be just just that whatever you happen to be doing at this moment there's no more than this moment chopping wood ah carrying water just that peace aliveness no interference of mind that says how many more weeks or years do I have to chop this wood if I don't do something now I'll still be stuck in 10 years time chopping wood the illusion of time is back here but only on the external not in here on the external level the clock keeps ticking or whatever modern clocks do this is not the end there is no end but this is not the end even on the level of form so after our little break I will meet with you again here in about 30 so called minutes and we will sit together just in silence for a little while unless something else happens thank you

2001-Eckhart-Tolle-Ripples-on-Surface-of-Being-interview-with-Andrew-Cohen

[Speaker 3] (0:00 - 0:09)

W. I. E.

Unbound presents Ripples on the Surface of Being, an interview with Eckhart Tolle. Part 1.

[Speaker 2] (0:11 - 0:39)

I know, you know, in the few moments, in just a few moments that we've been speaking together, you indicated in so many words that you spend a lot of time by yourself in solitude of one sort or another. So, I wanted to ask you just a little bit about what your life was like and, because I've heard you're a little bit of a recluse, but I don't know if that's true. Right.

[Speaker 1] (0:39 - 2:08)

In a way, that has been true in the past. Before the book came out, for many years, I was a recluse. And then my life, since the publication of the book, has changed dramatically.

So, I'm now really very much involved with teaching and traveling. And people who knew me before, when they see me now, they say, this is amazing because you used to be a hermit and now you're out in the world. And yet, I still feel that inside nothing has changed.

I still feel exactly the same as before. There's still a continuous sense of peace. And I'm surrendered to the fact that, on an external level, there's been a total change.

So, it's not actually true anymore that I'm a hermit. I used to be, but now I'm the opposite of a hermit. Now, this may well be a cycle.

It may well be that, at some point, this cycle will come to an end and I will become a hermit again. But at the moment, I'm surrendered to the fact that I'm almost continuously interacting. I do occasionally take time to be alone.

That is necessary, in between traveling, in between teaching and engagements.

[Speaker 2] (2:08 - 2:13)

Why is it that you need to take time to be alone? And what is it that happens when you take the time to be alone?

[Speaker 1] (2:18 - 2:33)

When I'm with people, I'm a spiritual teacher. That's a function, but it's not my identity. It's the moment I'm alone, my deepest joy is to be nobody.

[Speaker 2] (2:33 - 2:34)

Your deepest joy, you said?

[Speaker 1] (2:34 - 3:37)

Yes. It's to relinquish the function of teacher, which is only a function. It's not, I don't see it as an identity or my identity.

It's a temporary function. And the moment, let's say I'm seeing a group of people, the moment they leave me, that I'm suddenly alone, I'm no longer a spiritual teacher, there's no longer any sense of external identity. I simply go into the stillness more deeply.

So to be, the place that I love most is the stillness. And it's not that the stillness is lost when I talk or when I teach, but because the words arise out of the stillness. But when people leave me, there's only the stillness left, and I love that so much.

[Speaker 2] (3:38 - 3:40)

And so would you say you prefer it?

[Speaker 1] (3:41 - 6:23)

Not prefer. There's a balance now in my life, which perhaps wasn't there before, because when the inner transformation happened many years ago, I almost, one could almost say, a balance was lost. I almost, I got lost, I sometimes call it, I got lost in being completely.

It was so fulfilling and so blissful simply to be that I had lost all interest in doing or interacting. So one could say that for quite a few years a balance was lost in my life, I got lost in being, I had relinquished doing completely almost, just enough to keep myself alive, and even that was miraculous. And I had lost interest totally in future.

And then gradually a balance re-established itself, and it didn't re-establish itself fully until I started writing the book and now. The way I feel now is that there is a balance in my life between being alone and interacting with people, between being and doing, they are now completely balanced. Whereas before, the doing was relinquished, and there was only being, blissful, profound, beautiful.

But from an external viewpoint, many people thought something had happened to me, I had become unbalanced or mad, some people thought I was mad, to have let go of all the worldly things that I had, quote, achieved, not wanting or needing any of that anymore. So that's the balance now, also between aloneness and meeting with people.

And that's quite good, and I'm quite attentive to that so that the balance doesn't get lost.

There's now a pull towards increasing doing, people want me to talk here and talk there, and constant demands. So I know that I need to be attentive now so that the balance is not lost, and I don't get lost in doing, I don't think it would ever happen. But it requires a certain amount of vigilance.

[Speaker 2] (6:24 - 6:26)

And what would it mean to get lost in doing?

[Speaker 1] (6:26 - 7:16)

Well, theoretically it would mean that I continuously interact with people, I travel and teach, and perhaps if that happened, at some point the flow, the stillness, might not be there. I don't know, it may always be there. But I feel now that I need to return to the pure stillness periodically, and then just allow, when the teaching happens, allow it to rise out of the stillness.

So the teaching and stillness are very closely connected too. Of course. So the teaching arises out of the stillness.

When I'm alone, there's only the stillness, and that is my favorite place.

[Speaker 2] (7:16 - 7:21)

And when you're alone, do you spend a lot of time physically being still?

[Speaker 1] (7:21 - 7:52)

Yes, I can sometimes sit for two hours just in a room with almost no thought, just complete stillness. Sometimes when I go for walks also there's complete stillness. There's no mental labeling of sense perceptions.

There's simply a sense of awe or wonder or openness. And that's beautiful.

[Speaker 2] (8:00 - 8:15)

Okay. In your book, The Power of Now, you state that the ultimate purpose of the world lies not within the world but in transcendence of the world. Could you explain what you mean?

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (8:20 - 9:54)

Transcending the world does not mean to withdraw from the world, to no longer take action, or to stop interacting with people. Transcendence of the world is to act and to interact without any self-seeking. In other words, without seeking to enhance one's sense of self through one's action or one's interaction with people.

So ultimately what it means is not needing the future anymore for one's fulfillment or one's sense of self or being. So there's no seeking through doing, seeking an enhanced or more fulfilled or greater sense of self in the world. When that seeking isn't there anymore then you can be in the world but not be of the world.

You're not seeking for any identifications anymore in anything that you encounter out there.

[Speaker 2] (9:54 - 10:04)

So you were saying that you're no longer seeking to gain anything from it? Yes. So one hasn't given up an egotistical, materialistic relationship to the world?

[Speaker 1] (10:05 - 11:36)

Yes, especially not to gain a sense of self, a deeper or enhanced sense of self, because in the normal state of consciousness what people are looking for through their activity is to be more completely themselves. They're all looking for that. The bank robber is looking for it in some way.

The person who is striving for enlightenment is also looking for it because he is seeking to attain a state of perfection, a state of completion, a state of fullness at some point in future. So there is this seeking to gain something through one's activities. And that self-seeking, really seeking, they're seeking themselves, or you could say God, which comes to the same thing.

They're seeking for themselves and they're seeking where it can never be found in the normal state of consciousness. That means they are off the world. They are in the world and off the world.

You're looking for it in time. Yes, yes. The world and time are so intrinsically connected.

So it's the self-seeking in time. When that ceases, then you can be in the world without being off the world.

[Speaker 2] (11:44 - 11:59)

So just to go back to the question, when you say the ultimate purpose of the world lies not within the world but in transcendence of the world, what do you exactly mean that the purpose of the world lies in the transcendence of it?

[Speaker 1] (11:59 - 22:32)

Yes, everybody seems to need to go through the process when one loses oneself in the world. One, the world promises fulfillment somewhere in time, so there's a striving towards that fulfillment in time. And then the striving continues, becomes more intense, more acute.

Many times people feel, yes, now I have arrived, and then realize, no, they haven't arrived. So the striving continues. Expressed beautifully in the Course in Miracles where it says, the dictum of the ego is, seek but do not find.

So there's that continuous striving. And ultimately suffering arises through that, through not finding. And through that, that is the beginning of an awakening when the realization dawns that perhaps this is not the way.

Perhaps I will never get to where I'm striving. Perhaps it's not in the future at all. So after having been lost in the world, suddenly, often through the pressure of suffering, the realization comes that the answers may not be found out there in worldly attainment and not even in the future.

So before there had been an identification with situations and people and attainment and things, seeking, because the ego, the mentally derived sense of self, always seeks to grow and enhance itself through identifications. So there's a grasping for identifications, and that builds up the ego. But also it's never fulfilling.

It's never enough. And the more the identifications accumulate, the heavier and more dense the ego becomes, the greater also the suffering that goes with that. And that eventually brings about the awakening.

It's through the suffering created by that. So what then arises is, first, there's a collapse of the sense of self that had been running the show, so to speak, for many years. It no longer works.

People arrive at a point where that no longer works for them. And often that's perceived as a personal crisis. That even people who have attained success may come to reach that point.

They may be at the height of their success and suddenly enter a crisis because they realize that wasn't it either. It's not fulfilling. They haven't found themselves.

Everybody tells them they're the greatest, and they still wake up in the middle of the night with a state of dread and fear. And that's an important point for many people to reach, that sense of deep crisis when the world as they have known it and the sense of self that they have known, that's identified with the world, you think, becomes meaningless. And then that happened to me.

And then there's the possibility of suicide comes very close at that point. And some people actually do commit suicide. And I was just that close, just from suicide.

And then something else happened. A death happened of the sense of self that lived through identifications, mentally derived sense of self, identifications with my story, things around me, the world. Something arose at that moment that was a sense of deep and intense stillness and aliveness, beingness.

I later called it presence. And I realized beyond words that that is who I am, but it wasn't a mental process, that realization. I realized that that vibrantly alive deep stillness is who I am.

That is later, years later, I read books and I realized we could call that pure consciousness, whereas everything else is the conditioned consciousness. The human mind is the conditioned. Consciousness has taken form as thought.

The conditioned consciousness is all of the whole world that is created by the conditioned mind, is that. Everything is conditioned entities, objects. Everything is conditioned.

Consciousness has taken birth as a form and then that becomes the world. So to be lost in the conditioned seems to be necessary for humans. It seems to be part of their path.

To be lost in the world, to be lost in the mind, which is the conditioned consciousness, that seems to be the path. And then, due to the suffering that arises out of that, being lost, finding the unconditioned as oneself. Yes.

And that is why we need the world to transcend the world. Okay. So I am infinitely grateful for having been lost.

I understand, okay. And it's possible that this is also the meaning of when Jesus talks about the parable of the prodigal son, which usually is interpreted by the church in a different way. He talks about the parable of the prodigal son who leaves his father's home, which is a place of great wealth and joy and aliveness.

He says, no, I am going to be independent. I am going to make it my own. Give me my inheritance.

That's the story. He leaves and after a few years becomes poorer and poorer and destitute and even forgets his origin. It's a different version.

It's a Middle Eastern, actually, old Middle Eastern story. He forgets his origin and he becomes a beggar and destitute. And then his father sends messengers and says, don't you realize who you are?

And then returns home. So it's returning home after having been lost. This is not the same home that it is and it isn't the same home that you left perhaps a million years ago.

Because now, after having been lost, you reenter it with full consciousness. That's why that home is so beautiful now. So the purpose of the world is for you to be lost in it, ultimately.

The purpose of the world is for you to suffer, to create the suffering, which seems to be what is needed for the awakening to happen. And then, once the awakening happens, comes also the realization that suffering is unnecessary now. You have reached the end of suffering because you have transcended the world.

It is the place that is free of suffering. So this seems to be everybody's path. Perhaps not everybody's path in this lifetime, but it seems to be a universal path.

What a spiritual teaching does, because even without a spiritual teaching or a spiritual teacher, I would believe that everybody would get there eventually. But that could take time, much longer. A spiritual teaching is there to save time.

And the basic message of the teaching is that you don't need any more time. And the basic message of the teaching is that you don't need any more suffering. And if you are ready to hear, I tell this to people who come to me, if you are ready to hear this, then you are ready for it, because I am speaking to you.

You are ready to hear it because you are hearing it. There are still a million people out here who are not hearing it, but I am not talking to them. If you are hearing that, you don't need time anymore and you don't need suffering anymore.

You have been seeking in time and you have been seeking suffering. You have been seeking further suffering. And suddenly to hear, I don't need that anymore.

For some people, that has been the moment of transformation. Now, to be ready to hear this, of course they need it. They have already suffered.

If they hadn't suffered enough, they wouldn't be here listening. The fact that they are here means they have suffered enough already. So the beauty of this spiritual teaching is that it saves lifetimes of...

[Speaker 2] (22:32 - 22:34)

Unnecessary suffering. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (22:38 - 23:10)

So, it's good that people are lost in the world. I enjoy traveling to New York and Los Angeles where it seems that people are still totally involved. I was looking out of the window in New York.

We were next to the Empire State Building doing a group. Really? Yes, right next to me.

And everybody was rushing, almost running. Everybody seemed to be in a state of intense nervous tension, anxiety.

[Speaker 2] (23:10 - 23:11)

That's New York.

[Speaker 1] (23:11 - 23:47)

Suffering, really, but it's not recognized as suffering. And I looked and said, where are they all running to? And, of course, they're all running to the future.

They're needing to get somewhere, which is not here. It's a point in time, not here, but then. They're running to a then.

They are in suffering, but they don't even know it. But to me, even watching that was joyful. I didn't feel, oh, they should know better.

Why don't they? They're on their spiritual path. At the moment, that is their spiritual path, and it works beautifully.

[Speaker 2] (24:00 - 24:11)

All right, so third question. In your own experience, is the world real? Is the world unreal?

Bob? All right.

[Speaker 1] (24:15 - 27:17)

Many people read in a book that an Indian sage says the world is unreal. Then that becomes a belief, and then they repeat it, and they have these discussions with others who say, no, no, this is obviously wrong. The world is real.

So all I can talk about is from my own experience of how I perceive that, and that is, even when I'm, let's say, when I'm interacting with people or walking in a city, doing ordinary things, there's always, the way I perceive the world is like ripples, and this is a way of putting it, ripples on the surface of being. Underneath the world of sense perceptions and the world of mind activity, there's a vastness of being. There's a vast spaciousness.

There's a vast stillness, and there happens, there's a little ripple activity on the surface, which isn't separate, just like the ripples are not separate from the ocean. So there is no separation, the way I perceive it. There's no separation between being and the manifested world.

In other words, between the manifested and the unmanifested. But the unmanifested is so much vaster and deeper and greater than what happens in the manifested, that whatever happens in the manifested is so fleeting, every phenomenon in the manifested is so short-lived and fleeting, that yes, one could almost say that from the perspective of the unmanifested, which is the timeless beingness or presence, all that happens in the manifested realm really seems quite, it's a play of shadows or it seems vapor or mist, continuously new forms arising and disappearing, arising and disappearing. So the one who is deeply rooted in the unmanifested to that being, the manifested could very easily be called unreal. I don't call it unreal because I see it is still, it is not separate from anything.

So it is real. All that is real is beingness itself. Consciousness is all there is, pure consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (27:17 - 27:46)

So therefore you're saying the definition of real would be free from birth and death. That's right. So only that which was not born and cannot die would be real.

Yes. And since the manifest world is ultimately not separate from the unmanifest, according to what you're saying, ultimately one would have to say it's real.

[Speaker 1] (27:47 - 27:57)

Yes. And even within every form and every form that is subject to birth and death, there is the essence of every form is the deathless.

[Speaker 2] (27:57 - 27:58)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (27:58 - 28:15)

Even the essence of a blade of grass is the deathless. Yes. And that's why even the world of form is sacred.

It's not that the realm of the sacred is exclusively being or the unmanifested. Even the world of form, I see it as sacred.

[Speaker 2] (28:17 - 28:25)

Okay, so if someone simply asked you, very straightforward, is the world real or unreal, would you say it was simply real or would you have to qualify the statement?

[Speaker 1] (28:26 - 28:39)

I would probably qualify the statement. It's a temporary manifestation of the real.

[Speaker 4] (28:41 - 28:42)

Okay.

[Speaker 2] (28:45 - 29:02)

If the world is a temporary manifestation of the real, what is the enlightened relationship to the world? Right.

[Speaker 1] (29:03 - 34:04)

So to the unenlightened, the world is all there is. Yes. There is nothing else.

And so because the world is all there is to the unenlightened consciousness, the world holds enormous promise and poses a great threat at the same time. And so that is the dilemma of the unenlightened consciousness, is that it is torn between seeking, because seeking fulfillment, that's the promise of the world, seeking fulfillment in and through the world, and being threatened by it continuously and hoping that they will find themselves in it and at the same time knowing that the world is going to kill them. And that is the state of continuous conflict that the unenlightened consciousness is condemned to, being torn because that ultimately what it means is desire and fear.

Being torn continuously between desire and fear. Yes. Dreadful fate.

Yes. And then the enlightened consciousness is rooted in the unmanifested, really ultimately is one with it. It knows itself to be that.

It is the unmanifested, one could almost say it is the unmanifested looking out. Even with a simple thing like perceiving visually a form, a flower, a tree, perceiving that in a state of great alertness and deep stillness, at that moment already it is the unmanifesting. You are not a person anymore at that moment.

The unmanifested is perceiving itself in form. And it is always a sense of goodness in that perception. And then to be rooted continuously in that, not only as far as sense perceptions are concerned, but also in one's interactions with people, whenever action arises, never losing touch with the realm of vast stillness, that is the unmanifested consciousness.

So any action arises then out of that, and it has a completely different quality to it than action that arises out of the unenlightened consciousness, which is the human mind, which needs something and seeks something and needs to protect itself. And that is really where those intangible and precious qualities come in that we call love, joy, peace. They are all one with the unmanifested.

They arise out of that. No love and joy and peace are possible for those to whom the world is all there is. They may talk about it, they may seek it, they may try to be loving, but it doesn't work.

Many Christians have done that because they read the scriptures, you must love your neighbor. Okay, I'm going to try. So then it is possible for a human being to be a blessing on the earth, a human being who lives in connectedness with that and then acts and interacts, that human being becomes a blessing on the planet.

Whereas the unenlightened human is very heavy on the planet, there is a heaviness to the unenlightened, and the planet is suffering. The planet is suffering from millions of unenlightened humans. That's true.

And the burden on the planet is almost too much to bear. I can sometimes feel it as the planet saying, oh, no more of this.

[Speaker 2] (34:09 - 34:46)

It's literally true. Yeah. Yeah.

Okay. So the simple answer to the question could be said that the enlightened manifest, the enlightened relationship to the world would occur naturally as long as one never lost touch with one's true nature. Yes.

Which is the unmanifest self.

[Speaker 1] (34:46 - 35:01)

Yes. That's right. And then also you don't need to live by principles anymore then because right action arises out of that.

Spontaneously. Yeah. That's rare.

[Speaker 2] (35:01 - 35:44)

Yeah. Yeah. Good.

Okay. Do you think that it's possible for spiritual practice, meditation, being in the now or whatever, to ever begin to yield the depth of understanding that has the power to truly liberate the individual from their attachments to the world unless that practice occurs, unless the meditation occurs on a firm foundation of liberating insight? In other words, can spiritual practice ever become truly deep and have the power to liberate unless one has already given up the world, at least to some degree?

[Speaker 1] (35:45 - 38:49)

So first I would say that no spiritual practice as such would ever get you there. It can be helpful. Yes.

But in itself it would not be enough. And in some cases spiritual practice doesn't happen at all. It is with any spiritual practice in the narrow sense of the word, a technique or a method, that would be the narrow sense of the word spiritual, but that is not your question.

But I'll just mention this briefly. Spiritual practice in the narrow sense of the word, it always gives you time because you need to practice it, become good at it. And so that in itself has its own built-in obstacle that would make sure that it doesn't work for you because you're given time, you're striving, it's a movement in time, becoming a good meditator.

It's only when there's complete surrender to the now, to what is, only then is liberation. Now, I do not believe that a practice would take you into complete surrender. Complete surrender happens usually through one's true living.

Something happens, your very life is the practice, is the ground where that happens. And then surrender for some people may not be complete, there may be a partial surrender, and then there may be an opening, and then they may engage in spiritual practice, and then the spiritual practice is of course much more effective than for a person who perhaps even goes to a spiritual practice for self-seeking reasons. So if there has already been partial surrender, and then they engage in spiritual practice, that would increase the effectiveness of the spiritual practice.

But even then, I do not believe that the practice would take you into total surrender. That is inseparable from your life. That is, your life is the practice for that.

If spiritual practice may help you a little while along the way, then it's relinquished. For true surrender to happen, even the spiritual practice needs to be relinquished. In some cases, the surrender happens without any practice.

It happened to me. So that is possible too. So, no spiritual practice, whether the spiritual practice comes after a certain degree of insight or surrender, has already happened.

Even if the spiritual practice comes, in itself, the practice alone, even then, won't do it. Surrender, and surrender can happen to the most unlikely people. It can happen to...

[Speaker 2] (38:50 - 39:44)

Yes, that's true. But the thing is, this is specifically... I mean, I agree with you completely.

This is just that... I mean, this is something I found in my own work. It's basically that unless spiritual experience...

Because people can have... Basically, people can have all kinds of spiritual experience, but unless there is... Unless the world has been seen through to a certain degree, and unless there is a willingness, based on that seeing through, to let go of it, that the spiritual experience, no matter how powerful it is, is not going to lead to any kind of liberation.

That's right. That's basically my question.

[Speaker 1] (39:44 - 39:47)

That's right, and the willingness to let go is surrender.

[Speaker 2] (39:47 - 39:47)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (39:49 - 39:56)

That's right, and that remains the key. Without that, no amount of practice, or even spiritual experience.

[Speaker 2] (39:56 - 40:09)

Yes, exactly. Because the point is, as you yourself know, a lot of people are, yeah, yeah, I want to meditate or do whatever, but their spiritual aspirations are not based on any willingness to let go of anything substantial.

[Speaker 1] (40:09 - 40:16)

That's right. In fact, it may be the opposite. Spiritual practice may be trying to find something new to identify with.

[Speaker 2] (40:16 - 40:19)

Yes, of course, right. But that was basically the point.

[Speaker 1] (40:19 - 40:20)

Yes, so we...

[Speaker 2] (40:21 - 40:22)

We basically agree.

[Speaker 1] (40:22 - 40:22)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (40:22 - 40:39)

And in the context of the world, the real spiritual practice, the real spiritual experience would ultimately, is meant to lead one to the letting go of the world, the transcendence of the world, the relinquishment of the attachment to the world, etc.

[Speaker 1] (40:39 - 42:01)

Yes, and now in concrete terms, what that means, because sometimes people may say, well, how do you get to that? It sounds wonderful, but how do you get there? In concrete terms, that simply means, and this is, I want to put it in words that everybody can understand, what that, that is the simple, and we can't call that practice because it's too simple for that.

It is the most basic. At its most basic, it is simply to say yes to this moment, is the state of surrender. A total yes to what is, not the inner no to what is.

And the complete yes to what is, is transcendence of the world. It's as simple as that. A total openness to whatever arises at this moment.

The usual state of consciousness for humans is to resist, to run away from it, to deny, to resist it, not to look at it.

[Speaker 2] (42:01 - 42:04)

So when you say being yes, you mean not avoiding anything, facing everything.

[Speaker 1] (42:04 - 42:04)

That's right.

[Speaker 2] (42:05 - 42:06)

There's nothing necessarily to do with action.

[Speaker 1] (42:06 - 42:09)

No. Okay. Welcoming this moment.

[Speaker 2] (42:10 - 42:11)

Not resisting it at all.

[Speaker 1] (42:11 - 43:09)

That's right. Embracing this moment, and that is the state of surrender. Okay.

And that is really all that's needed. The only difference between a master and a non-master is that the master embraces what is totally. And immediately, when there's non-resistance to what is, there comes, there's a peace.

The portal is open. The unmanifested is there. That is the most powerful way.

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (43:13 - 43:14)

Good. We did it.

[Speaker 1] (43:14 - 43:15)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (43:18 - 43:19)

Hope you enjoyed it. I did.

[Speaker 1] (43:19 - 43:20)

I did. Thank you.

2001-Eckhart-Tolle-Talk-Titled-Realization-of-Being

[Speaker 1] (0:33 - 1:05:21)

Now we're here to enter a different state of consciousness. And one important characteristic of the new state of consciousness, you're not waiting for the future to be better than the present. You're not waiting for anything to happen.

Our normal state of consciousness, mankind's normal state of consciousness, is a state of non-presence, a state of absence. They're not really here. Your attention is never fully in the now.

So the fullness of life escapes you. And there's a seeking for the fullness of life through future, where it can never be found because it doesn't exist. The future comes as the now.

When it comes, it's the now. Now it's so normal to live in such a way that most people never even question it. That's how it is.

And that's why life gets so frustrating for many people and it becomes a burden. They're seeking for something where it cannot be found. They're seeking for the fullness of life, a sense of knowing, a sense of being fully yourself in the future, through something that's going to happen in the future.

The fullness of being, one day I'll get there. That's the mindset. And this is the revolutionary teaching that you're not going to get there.

You can only be there at this moment. And to feel the power that is inherent in the now as the power of your own being. Your own being is the totality of your being.

The physical is part of that, but it goes deeper. But the physical is an important part of it. It's not separate from being.

The physical is a temporary expression of who you are, but it's not separate from that. So throughout the day, today, as we go more deeply into being, I will be reminding you that it is your entire energy field, your entire physical energy field is part of this state of consciousness, of experience, of living the fullness of life now with every cell of your body. And as you sit there, not just listen with your ears, almost as if you are listening with every cell of the body to feel the aliveness, the very life that is in every cell, in every organ, the life itself.

So to dwell in your own energy field, to be that, so that you're not just listening with a monitor in your head, because then you would quickly get very bored. If you were only here with your mind and trying to figure out what I'm talking about, boredom would set in very quickly. If you cannot go deeper than level of mind, then you will soon wish that you hadn't come here.

And whenever you lose your connectedness with the body, you will, when you're back in mind, there will be moments when you drift off into some fantasy dreamland of future, what's going to happen tonight or tomorrow, what am I going to watch on TV tonight, and ten minutes later you wake up and suddenly you're back here. That's normal. Now when I say listen with the entire body, it's a strange way of putting it, but I do not mean just listening to the words.

In a way the words have second place here. They may be useful pointers or signposts, but the main teaching is through the state of consciousness itself, that is the state of, I call it stillness sometimes, and an energy field arises in this room that is an expression of the new state of consciousness. It's a powerful energy field, but it doesn't make any noise.

It's still. It's silent. And to be open with your entire being to the energy field, which in the East they sometimes call it the Buddha field, that is the main reason why we are here.

So to be receptive to that with your entire being. And there's nothing then that you need to figure out with your mind. Your mind isn't really needed here, or it's only peripheral.

There was a woman last night after the talk came to me and she didn't speak any English. She spoke only French and she said to me, my French isn't very good, I can understand a bit, I can't speak it very well, but she said to me, I didn't understand a word of what you said, but I understood you. I understood with the heart, she said, not with the mind.

My heart understood. So she was open, what she meant, she was open to the energy field, I call it the energy field of presence. It's very subtle, the mind can't grasp it or figure it out.

You're very alert, it needs to be an alertness to be open to that, an alert presence. And boredom in that state is completely impossible, it's inconceivable. Boredom is a mental state, a state when you're in the mind, you're disconnected from the aliveness, the fullness and the depth of aliveness of your being, and you're trapped in the mind, and the mind isn't getting enough food or stimulus, and then boredom sets in, because the mind needs continuous food or stimulus, what's the next thing I can gobble up, that I can get my teeth into, what's next, what's next? The constant restlessness when you're stuck in the head, and all the media is to satisfy that restlessness, to give you food for the mind, mostly totally trivial, and so there's continuous chatter that you get when you switch on things. And they talk in an excited voice, switch on the radio, and these, if you didn't know any English or whatever language they happen to be speaking in, if you didn't know the language and you just listened to the sound, it would sound as if they were saying something incredibly important, but if you can actually understand what they're saying, it's completely meaningless.

So boredom is a state, is a sign that you're identified with mind, and the state of consciousness that we are entering is a state in which boredom just cannot arise. When you are so deeply connected with being, there's such aliveness there, and in that aliveness there's the joy of the simple fact of being, beingness, a subtle but very powerful sense of joy that depends on nothing outside. And boredom is impossible there, and then your external experience just becomes an expression or a reflection of the joy of life, so it becomes pleasant, but you don't seek fulfillment through it, and that's why it becomes so pleasant.

The seeking of fulfillment through some experience or other is no longer necessary. The seeking for fulfillment through some future event, this, that, is no longer needed, and that's amazing. That means you can already be who you are fully at this moment.

Even if your external circumstances, if you feel there's a sense of incompleteness in your external life, I haven't quite achieved my full potential, that's a feeling many people have, in my outer life. There's a lot more that I could do, there's a lot more that I could achieve, and that is probably true as far as your outer circumstances are concerned. You could achieve mastery in this area or that area of your life, you can learn this or start practicing this or that, whatever it may be, become good at this or that, but that's peripheral.

On the external level, that has its place. There's always room, unless you're very old or you haven't got much time left, there's always room for becoming good at this or that, learning this or that, and achieving your potential through time or in time. But that's the peripheral, your outer being, your outer self, is fine, that's how it works on the level of the outer, what I call your life situation.

But there's something much more vital than your life situation, much deeper, more vital, and that is life itself, or being, or life itself. And if you're disconnected from that and you're seeking for fulfillment, the fullness of life through your life situation, that is a continuous source of frustration and ultimately non-fulfillment and ultimately suffering. Because that, the very essence of who you are, you cannot find.

It's peripheral. Any doing in your life is on the periphery of your being. Being is central, and being is now.

And so people get that totally wrong. They look for something where it cannot be found. They're really looking for themselves to be more fully themselves through some peripheral activity or some outer position.

And the world tells you, now that you're somebody, now that you've made it, and that's never, for a brief moment you may delude yourself, and the world is full of highly successful people who are unhappy and live on tranquilizers. They've made it, and now what? Still looking for something.

And then they look for some, okay, let's try this experience. They have enough money to buy any experience. Let's go into this one.

Another thrill. Let's travel there. And wherever they travel, they find themselves, and at first it feels good for a few moments, and then the old sense of dissatisfaction of something missing, something lacking.

This wasn't it either. Okay, let's try a new relationship. Yeah, got it now.

And a few weeks or a few months later, oh, that must have been the wrong person. I made a mistake. Or you travel to some ideal place.

When I make enough money, I can live there in paradise, on paradise island. And then after a little while in paradise, you get completely bored out of your mind, or you get stung by mosquitoes. Oh, that wasn't it.

And it's amazing. And then it can take people into despair almost, especially people who think they should be happy, I've made it, the world considers me important, they say, I'm a VIP, I have money, I can do it. And just there's still this, there's something not right here.

Now if you're poor, then you can still delude yourself that one day when you're going to make money, you're going to be okay. Now you may have to go through that, along that route that if you cannot, if you deeply believe that one day, when your bank account has grown to $10 million, then you're going to be okay, then you may have to experience that. And then experience that even then, for a little while you might feel exhilarated, and then the old dissatisfaction and the sense of lack will come in again.

But you may be able to see it now that that's not how it's going to, how the fulfillment of your life is not going to happen through anything. It cannot happen indirectly, through something or other, and in time. That has its place, but only as far as the outer is concerned, and the outer activities in your life, whatever happens is secondary.

And what is primary is being. Cause in Miracles points out beautifully that it takes no time to be who you are, so it doesn't take time to enter that state. Now, make sure that you stay connected with your entire body and listen, and be open not only to the words, but to the silent emanation in this room.

And then something from within you responds to that, and comes forward, emerges. This is a state of consciousness that you can't even understand with the mind. A state of fullness and alertness, simply being there, being totally.

And then you suddenly realize nothing that happens in the future could be an improvement on this, and that's a very radical and revolutionary realization. Nothing that happens in the future could be better than this moment. When the Cause in Miracles says it takes no time to be who you are, that's the second part of the statement.

The first part of that statement is, it has taken time to misguide you so completely, but it takes no time at all to be who you are. It has taken thousands of years to misguide you so completely for this state of consciousness that humans are still in to emerge, this state of consciousness of disconnectedness from being. It has taken time for the dysfunctional state of consciousness to develop, but it takes no time to go beyond that.

It is not an event in time, and certainly cannot happen in the future. And even if you only get glimpses of it as you sit there, all problems of your life become peripheral to your being. They don't fill your sense of who you are, they're on the periphery, little wave movements on the periphery of your being.

And here's the fullness and the aliveness of being who you are. Now, this is not something that CNN or CBC would come here and send TV crews here to report that a new state of consciousness is emerging on the planet. Because it's not, there's not enough happening here for them to report anything.

And if they came here, they would say, okay, what's going on here? If we went into fits of screaming and shaking, then they would have something to report. If it were an evangelical meeting and we have screaming fits, then, oh, that's going on there.

But this, there seems to be almost nothing here for the mind to get itself interested. Okay, this is, it's so subtle, and yet it's very powerful. An important part of being here is also when I'm not, to be attentive to the moments when I'm not speaking, to be particularly alert, to be particularly alert to the gaps, even the tiniest gaps between the words.

And simply hold that state of alert attention that is not waiting for the next statement, not waiting for the next word. A state of alert attention. And that is, that's consciousness itself before it becomes something that's the very, that underlies everything.

And it's, from the point of view of the mind, it looks like nothingness, and yet there's incredible power in that nothingness. So it's not nothingness, it's only as judged by the mind, oh, this is nothing, because it can't understand it, it can't grasp it, because the mind is the conditioned, is part of the conditioned, the world of form. Every thought is formed, is a form too, but we are here going deeper than form, not through any techniques, simply through the power of presence.

And what arises, what that stillness in between the words is, it's just pure consciousness itself, the unconditioned. And once you can sense it and you know it, it is a state of such beauty and fulfillment, that if I didn't say another word for the next three or four hours, that would be perfectly fine with you. And we could sit here in the fullness of being, and that's true meditation, beyond any meditation techniques, that's natural meditation.

All meditation techniques are trying to get you to that state, and why mostly they don't really work is because any technique still gives you time, step one, two, three, and then you're trying to become a good meditator, and trying to get somewhere. Occasionally it works when a point comes when the technique drops and you're there, but it's rare. And here, there's no, I don't give you time.

That's why whenever you lose connectedness with being and drift back into mind, sitting here will be boring, because without time the mind gets into terrible frustration. It needs time. It can't work without time.

So future, take away future from the mind, the most dreadful thing that could happen to anybody who is not connected with being is to be told that you have no more time. You'll be gone in a few hours or a few weeks, which is, let's imagine the doctor says to you, okay, you have another two months, almost nothing. What then?

Either you go into dreadful suffering, despair, or you suddenly enter a timeless state of consciousness, which is what this is, where time becomes irrelevant except for practical purposes. Make sure as you sit there and listen, you're listening, and as you listen, you're aware of the energy field that's listening, the being that makes the listening possible. And that includes your entire energy field, your entire body.

You're listening even with your little toe, with your legs. Your entire energy field is present, and you're listening or receptive with that and hold it. And then things arise in it, and you can allow them to arise.

The noise arises and subsides. My voice arises, the words arise, and then they go back into stillness. What remains is this vast energy field, and you experience first of all as the energy field of the physical is, but it's deeper already than physical, and you hold that.

So there are the words, and there is the field of consciousness, the field of being, in which the words arise, or anything else arises. These happen to be the words come from me, but they could come from you. If you stay connected with being, if a situation arises and you need to speak, and this is a totally new way of speaking, you will find suddenly the words come out of that vastness of being.

The words come, you say something, and that doesn't come from the conditioned mind. The mind is a little bit involved because the mind gives expression, expresses something in form through words, but it arises out of the unconditions. It's fresh, it's new, it's creative.

And that's how you become a deeply creative being. You are it already, in that state of connectedness. Whatever you can also take action out of that, it's not so much that you take action, the totality of being takes action through you, through this form.

So you become aligned with something vaster, more powerful, infinitely more than your little mind. But your little mind is not separate from being, it's a tiny aspect of being. But when it pretends that it is all there is, that's delusion.

The mind is like a candle, the flame of a candle, and the totality of being is the sun. Now the candle flame and the sun, they are in a close relationship, they are not really different, because the very energy that is burning in the candle flame originally comes from the sun, it's stored up sun energy. So even the sun, even the candle flame really is part of the sun, is the sun.

So even the mind is not nothing separate from being, but it's the flame of a candle. Beautiful, but tiny compared to, imagine how vast the sun is, it's about, I can't remember, 500 times or 1000 times bigger than the planet earth. And it's infinite energy, it's inconceivable that for millions and millions and millions of years, it's a continuous outpouring of energy, as if it were totally inexhaustible.

And of course, the sun itself, even the sun is not the ultimate, we are dealing here, we are going deeper even than that, but in the phenomenal realm, the sun is the closest you could get to being, the closest you can get to God or the divine or being. And this is why it's understandable that there were ancient cultures that worshipped the sun and saw it as divine. It is unbelievable that there seems to be inexhaustible, a continuous outflow of vast, inconceivably vast energy.

The very warmth in your body comes from the sun, calories produce warmth. You eat the food, the food has stored up sun energy, and the body converts. The sun is in your body, the sun, it's amazing.

But that is still within the phenomenal realm, and that's amazing enough. But we are going even beyond that, because even the sun is an expression in form of something even deeper and more powerful, and that is life, energy, or beingness itself, and everything in the cosmos is an expression of that. So when we go into that, we go beyond all phenomena, including the most grandiose, the most wonderful phenomena like the galaxies and the billions and billions of suns that exist.

Our sun is only one of thousands of billions of suns, many a hundred times bigger than our sun, inconceivable vastness, and yet all that is also part of the world of phenomena that arise in this dimension. And all that unfolds and arises in time and through time, and we are going beyond even that. All phenomena arise out of the vastness of being itself, and being itself is not a form.

You cannot grasp it, because you are it. You can't think about it, just like the candle flame cannot understand the sun, even if it started to think about it. But you can be it, because you are it, and then let being express itself through this form, no longer a little person trying to figure things out, make a living, or make money, or do this or that, or trying to be important in the world.

All this really becomes nonsense, and the strange thing is, the outer circumstances, when in the state of connectedness with being, improve greatly, because something greater than you flows through you. So all the things you struggled for before, and I need to do this, get that, to get some fulfillment, they tend to just come. When you're in the state of connectedness, many things just come.

And other things, they will come from within you, as some express them in some form. You're connected with being. This is quite, you're getting a high dosage, these hours that you sit here, of being, if you can stand it.

If your mind doesn't come in too often and say, what's going on here? What's he talking about? Just quickly, before I continue, feel some of you already deeply connected with the energy field of the body, so you can hold the state.

Those of you who are not yet, you can't feel it very much, start by putting attention, choose one part of the body and put attention there. That means feel it from within, for example, your hands. It's a strange thing to do, and immediately you notice the mind becomes less active, because you've taken attention away from thought.

The mind hasn't got enough consciousness now to make a lot of, to manufacture a lot of thoughts. Then you develop the ability to hold attention in that part of the body for a little while. Hold it, continue to feel the life.

It's a very, it starts with such a simple thing. And the mind says, oh, what's this? This is too simple.

It must be a more complicated technique, and this isn't even a technique. To feel the inner body is the beginning of the state of connectedness with being. And hold attention in your hands, let's say it's your hands, if you never learned more than that, taking attention away from thinking and holding attention in the energy field in your hands and feel the life energy in there.

Subtle at first, and then it grows stronger. Very great sense of aliveness. Now at this moment, it would be very hard for any illness to creep into your hands, because there's so much presence in there, so much aliveness, that it's almost as if every cell were rejoicing and saying, this feels good.

It feels alive. And all the cells are dancing with joy. That's what really it feels like.

And imagine if you do that with your whole body and your whole, the physical, all cells in a state of joy, and it's hard for the body to go wrong when the whole body is in a state of joy and aliveness. We can't wait for that to happen. We are entering that state now.

It's a revolutionary transformation to be able to perceive and to relate to the world without the baggage, the accumulated baggage in your mind. Which means you're free of the entire person that you thought of as yourself, which is the sum total of your conditioning, which you carry around. It becomes a burden, the heavy me, the burden of that person trying to find some fulfillment or some answer or some release through the future and never getting there.

And in the meantime, acting out in continuous, repeat performances, day after day, acting out the conditioning from the past and hoping that the future is going to get better. How can it? The future is just going to be a continuation of the past because you're acting it out every moment.

It can't get better as long as you're trapped in the conditioned. It's amazing, but it's so simple to get out of it, but nobody seems to know it, or very few people. Why is that?

It's almost like a conspiracy. Let's not mention liberation. On CNN, I don't think they've ever mentioned it.

Let's keep quiet about this. It's so simple to become free of the limited, little conditioned person. And every person is a little person, even if you're the president of this or that.

It's very limiting, and one day you will no longer be the president, and then you'll get old, and suddenly your social function isn't there anymore, your social position is gone. Oh, who am I now? Just an old man.

All this is, it's so simple to go beyond, so no longer to seek fulfillment through the conditioning, to make it better, to become a bigger person, to become a more important person, to wait for the world to tell you that you are important, that you're somebody. It might do, and then it may change its mind and tell you that you're nobody. So you're holding, this simple starts with such a simple thing as getting out of mind, hold attention in your hands.

I'm saying hands for those of you who cannot yet feel the entire body, start with hands. If you can feel the entire body when I say hands, feel the entire energy field of the body. Otherwise, hands is good enough for the moment.

Hold that, and then you will be able to, initially it's enough to perceive, and you will notice, you can look around, look at me, the room, people in the room, and there's a clarity of perception. A pureness of perception that comes in when the conditioned is no longer operating, and that's amazing to be free, and it doesn't take time. Right now you can be free at this moment.

Now, that state of freedom, that may not yet sustain itself continuously, mind waves will come back, and yet, entering the state is always now. You can always be free at this moment simply by entering the state of presence. Hold attention in your hands, or if you can, in your entire body, and then you're looking and listening.

So there's the sense perceptions, hearing, looking, seeing, and there's a vast energy field of being. And in the first instance, it feels as if that were your body, and that's good. So there's the vastness of beingness, and the perceptions arise, and it's fine.

And it's almost as if something that is not the person, but that is deeper than the person, is now looking through your eyes. Consciousness itself is looking, unconditioned. You could almost say, when you are present, I don't use these words very often, but when you are present and the conditioned is not operating anymore, you become the presence of God, because that is the unconditioned consciousness.

The pure beingness, out of which all the worlds arise, all the galaxies, everything, but it is beyond that. And could it start with such a simple thing as feeling your hands and looking around the room? That's amazing.

You don't have to go to some monasteries in the Far East, or spend 20 years in arduous meditation practice, or take a course of study that goes on for years, and then get a certificate. It's amazing that the entry into that is so simple, and this is a practice that you do for yourself, at home, at any time. Sit, connect with either the entire energy field of the body, or if that's still difficult, one part of the body, hold attention there, hold it, continue to feel it, and then begin to perceive and look around the room.

Or listen and look, and you will see the compulsion to label or to run away from this moment, which is the mind, isn't there, so you're allowing this to be totally. Underneath the perceptions, there's an intense aliveness. That is the secret.

Underneath all your sense perceptions, and even if still some thoughts come floating in and out, it doesn't matter, underneath that, there's an incredible energy field. And if nothing arises, that's fine too, even if you lost one of your senses, hearing or sight, it wouldn't matter so much anymore. But this is something that consciously you choose to enter that state.

You choose to enter that state many times, you choose to step out of mind identification. Now the ability to choose that means that really, what really is happening when you are choosing, as you are now, to be present, presence is choosing to emerge at this moment. It looks as if the person, the little you, were choosing, but you can't even, but it's a helpful way of putting it, it's a perspective on it to say, you can choose to be present, but when you think you choose to be present, at that moment, presence is emerging.

It looks as if you were choosing, but it's helpful to think of it as I'm choosing it. You can. So it looks almost as if you could make it happen, although ultimately you cannot make it happen.

When you think you're making it happen, it is happening by itself. It looks, from the limited perspectives of a separate me, as if you were making it happen, and that's a useful thing. I often say, you can choose.

It's more helpful to say you can choose than to say, okay, there's nothing I can do. So you might as well sit in front of the TV with a can of beer and wait to become enlightened. If there's nothing I can do, well, true.

So it's not helpful to say, some teachers or teachings say, there's nothing you can do. Ultimately, that may be true, and yet it's not helpful. So you are not separate from the totality.

The totality is moving through you, and when you think you're doing something, it's happening. Something is emerging. And once you feel the hands, then it's easier to connect with other parts of the body and feel your hands and your arms and hold attention there, alive.

It really feels as if the entire body became suddenly alive. And then you, can you feel your feet and hold attention there, just very subtle at first, and your legs, feel, and your chest, belly. And now gradually, you connect with the entire energy field of the body.

You know you're there when you feel that when I'm not speaking, it feels almost more powerful than when I'm speaking. You almost wish that I would shut up. That's a sign that you're there.

For those of you who are not yet there, don't worry, I'm not going to shut up yet. Because the words are so, compared to the aliveness that is in being, the words are nothing. And that's this, being is always, an important aspect of it is a deep stillness.

The aliveness is also a deep stillness. Because in being itself, nothing ever happens. Being remains a state of pure nothingness from the point of view of the mind.

And when it happens, something has taken form and become something, an event in time, a form arises. But being itself, there's nothing happening in it and nothing needs to happen. Any happening is time and form arise.

Out of being, being becomes something and returns into being. And when you're connected with being, there's no need for anything to happen. Yet, after a while, things do happen.

But gradually you feel that whatever happens, including sense perceptions, events, situations, happens on the surface of being. And that sensation no longer fills you. You're filled.

You are being. And then you hold attention in the entire energy field of body. And you'll notice then, you're not waiting for me to make another statement.

Because this moment has such aliveness to it. What could I possibly say to improve on that? This moment has such depth to it.

What can I possibly say that's better than that or greater than that? And your existence as a person, the phenomenal existence, still happens. It doesn't mean now everything becomes static.

At the moment we are sitting still and allowing this to arise, to emerge. But as you live in that state, you can act, you can be active out of that state. You're not confined from now on to sitting on a chair to be able to hold that.

That would be very limiting. But at first it's helpful to practice in an environment like this when there's no disturbance or relatively little, except your mind occasionally. And we are still and holding it.

And we're even still externally. Some people can get there more easily through certain activities, through practicing Tai Chi. You connect with the body and you need to be very present.

Or even dangerous activities that force you into the state of presence because you would have an accident if you thought about tonight's dinner while you're climbing up a mountain. So it forces you into presence. But even that becomes limiting because then that state of consciousness becomes associated with one particular activity.

And then in the rest of your life, you revert back to the old.

[Speaker 2] (1:05:36 - 1:06:18)

This concludes Session 1. Our program continues with Session 2. Sounds True and Namaste Publishing present The Realization of Being, Session 2 with Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (1:06:28 - 2:05:32)

The state of connectedness is always characterized by a very high degree of alertness, a very high degree of wakefulness, very awake. It's sometimes compared to the state of waiting, but not waiting in the old sense of waiting for something to happen, which means the present moment, you don't want the present moment, you want some other moment. That's the usual state of waiting.

I don't want this moment, I want the next moment. There's another kind of waiting that simply has a high degree of alertness to it, so alert that you're totally here, totally present. And that is like, as one Sufi master said when he was asked who his master was to teach him that incredible stillness that he emanated.

He said it was a cat, he said, I watched a cat for hours on end, I watched a cat watching a mouse hole, and that's how I learned the state of alert presence. I watched a cat watching a mouse hole, and that's, and that is not an impatient waiting, it's a simple being there, just, imagine if you watched a cat watching a mouse hole for two hours, you would become present. That's the state of, have you watched a cat watching a mouse hole?

It goes, not a single thought in the cat's head. Now, I'm not saying return to the state of consciousness of a cat, or, you are going beyond thought, we are rising above thought, we are not falling below thought, so although that state has certain similarities with the state that many animals are in a lot of the time, which is a much greater connectedness with being than most humans, a much greater connectedness with the source, that's why animals don't have problems as humans do, they don't live burdened with problems and they don't need therapy, and it's amazing.

And basically there's no, they don't accumulate unhappiness either, except a few animals that live so close with neurotic humans that they reflect certain human states. Some cats and dogs can display neurotic behavior, but that's because they've lived with humans for too long, but no animal out in the wild is neurotic. So I, this is, you can actually learn the state of consciousness that I'm talking about very often simply by being very attentive and watch an animal, preferably wild, but even some animals that live with humans, somehow they still manage to stay sane, and it's wonderful to simply, to watch a cat, how it moves, the graceful movement, how it is totally in the moment, how it relaxes, when it relaxes it is totally relaxed. The very shape of it when it lies there and relaxes, many artists have painted that, it's such harmony in that shape of a cat relaxing, or a dog, it's amazing that dogs are still so sane having lived with humans for thousands of years. The incredible goodness, aliveness, and love that is in a dog, no matter what happens, it's still there, no matter how mad the human environment, they're still alive to the present moment, ready to celebrate at any moment.

And the tale goes, they are alive, I mean, compared to humans, that's a state of incredibly blessed with grace and beingness and aliveness compared to most humans who are stuck in the head with their problems, living in a world deadened by continuous conceptualization, images, mental judgments and images and false sense of me. It's such a joy simply to watch the joy in a dog, ready to celebrate life continuously, any moment, the simplest thing is an excuse for celebration. And so there's the feeling of so much goodness there, the goodness of life expressing itself through this particular form.

And then you watch animals out in the wild, birds, other animals, but you need to watch in the state of non-labeling. Not to say, oh what a lovely little bird, what's it called, I just can't remember the name, no, you're not really relating, you're not really watching that incredible being that the mind labels as bird or whatever it is. You're just putting immediately labels on it, and then that's how the world becomes more and more dead.

But to truly be with that and learn from it, you watch, and it's easier if you stay connected with the body as you watch, that's why practicing here is so helpful. You feel your entire being, your energy field, and then you watch an animal, and you're no longer saying anything, you just watch in the state of alert attention, how it moves, it pauses, the state of alertness in a bird, how the head goes, how it's totally, it has no self-image. It doesn't have a problem with self-esteem or anything like that.

It is itself. It is totally itself. So the bird just, and then it finds some food and it goes, and then it flies off.

And it doesn't decide to fly, it just flies. It says, should I fly off to the next branch? Well, I'm not quite sure.

If I do, then this or that might happen. It just does it because the totality moves through it. It's not yet blocking the humans having formed this little limited self that is blocking the flow of the totality moving through it.

So you watch, and as you watch an animal in the state of non-labeling, you learn what it's teaching you is the state of no mind, of living free of thought. Because in an animal, thought, there's consciousness, but there's not conceptual thought. Thought has not arisen yet.

So every animal can teach you the state of no thought and can be a wonderful teacher if you're open to it. Now the state of no thought that you enter has certain similarities with the animal state, and yet it is also fundamentally different because you have lived through the illusion, you have lived through the mind stage for many thousands of years. You've gone through it, and now you return to the state, the original state of purity and innocence and connectedness with being that was lost a long time ago.

When you return to it, it has an added dimension of incredible depth and knowing to it, which the animals don't have because they are still in the original. But for us, the original state has been lost, and when we regain it, it is at a much deeper level than the original state that was lost. That's the meaning, as I mention in the book briefly, that is the meaning of the parable of the lost, the prodigal son or the lost son that Jesus talks about, which is actually a version of an ancient Middle Eastern parable.

The lost son who leaves his father's home, gives me my inheritance, he has incredible wealth, and then he squanders over the years, his wealth gets lost, he becomes destitute, he becomes a beggar. He even forgets who he is until some, this is the older version of it, until some messengers arrive and tell him, don't you remember, you are the son, and you are actually wealthy, and then he remembers, and then he starts the journey home. And when he returns home, the love that he finds there is deeper than when he left, because he has regained the lost state.

Whenever you regain something, you are more deeply in that. It's similar to anything, humans have lost their relatedness with nature, once they lived in close connection with nature, then nature became dead, as they became more and more trapped in the mind, then nature was only there to be used for their own gain. And now some humans are regaining an inner connectedness with nature and realize how sacred it is, and when you regain it, you regain it, it is deeper than the original state which was natural.

There was only nature, and being connected with nature was totally normal and natural, and it's only when you've lost it and regained it, then you have an added dimension of depth and you are deeply aware of the sacredness of it. So, coming back to animals, the animals are teaching you the state of no-mind, although the animal is at a level of pre-thought, and you are moving to a level beyond thought, where thought can still be used, but is no longer controlling you. This is why we are here, to go beyond thought, to go beyond the need to think, unless there truly is something to work out which happens occasionally.

But most of the time, thinking is totally superfluous, and it restricts you, because it's within the realm of the conditioned. So we are moving, it's truly moving to a completely new stage in human evolution, where the compulsion to think is no longer there. Thought can still be used, but it's no longer compulsive.

That means a lot of the time, there's simply conscious presence, and you act and perceive out of conscious presence, not through thought activity. So that's this unbelievable, unbelievable transformation, and yet simple. And this is the greatest, us sitting here, and a new state of consciousness emerging here, this is one of the greatest, today, one of the greatest events on the planet.

There may be some other groups where it's also happening, here and there, it's a Saturday, so there may be some groups where it's also emerging, and individuals, but it's still fairly rare. And yet, it's emerging more and more, and yet, it's not going to be on TV tonight, although it is the greatest event possible. You are connected with the energy field of the body, hold that state.

You may occasionally find the mind wanting to come in. It'll push, it'll try, it'll try a few thoughts, it'll hope that one thought is going to draw your attention in completely. The mind says, okay, let's try this thought, let's remind him or her about this problem that's going to be there next week, and see if that can draw attention in completely.

So as little thought comes up about, and that can quickly draw all your attention, it draws it out of the body, attention leaves the body, and it's back, and completely flows into that thought, which then becomes a thought stream. One thing leads to another, it proliferates, and one small thought develops suddenly into a vast current of mind. And you're suddenly in, oh, my problems, I shouldn't be sitting here, there's so many things I haven't dealt with yet, why have I come here?

And so this may happen, and the moment you become aware of it, you can still, it'll be easier here to be aware of it when it happens, because there's so much presence. And you say, wow, I've been completely lost for 10 minutes, you can suddenly see, and simply put, go back into, re-enter the body, be there. So now you're becoming familiar with that state, also energetically there will be an increase sitting here for several hours, which ultimately is not several hours, it's only really one timeless moment that will increase the intensity of that state of consciousness, state of presence.

And so you practice, don't confine your practice to moments of quiet practice, bring it into simple situations at first, the state of stillness or presence, meeting someone, saying hello, and what, looking at that person for a few moments, in a simple, if you can feel the body, and look, no judgment, just, who is looking then? Is it you, the little person, or is there something greater than you, looking through your eyes? Greater than you, and yet you, there is an energy, consciousness itself is looking, no longer the limited, conditioned consciousness as the person, when the mind is still, and you perceive the other person, who is perceiving?

One could say there's nobody anymore, not a person as such, who is perceiving, because there's no judgment and labeling, there's an energy, and so gradually you know yourself as that, not as the person, as the consciousness itself, and the consciousness itself looks. And when you look at the world as consciousness, you see incredible beauty everywhere, and you see, oh, wherever you look, there's a strange sense of, I'm looking at myself. You don't have to formulate these words, but there's a strange sense of everything is basically you, because consciousness, everything is consciousness, an expression of consciousness in some form, every human, every plant, every flower, every planet, every sun, is an expression.

Consciousness becomes something temporarily. So when you look from a place that is deeper than your form, consciousness looks and sees itself in some other form. It's a beautiful sense of, wherever I look, wherever I go, I encounter myself in some other form.

And I look at this flower, and there's a deep sense of, that is really, that's, I am that. The essence of who I am, and I'm speaking as you, the essence of who I am is expressed in millions and billions of life forms everywhere. And in that beauty, that beauty in this form, of course, is not going to last for very long, because the flower, in a few days, it will wilt.

And yet, that beauty is inseparable from consciousness. It is simply an external expression of something that is inherent, unmanifested, continuously in consciousness, not time-bound. So in the state of presence or non-labeling, knowing other life forms as yourself is what is actually, that is the deepest meaning of love.

And that's the only true meaning of love, is to know the other as yourself. The state of love, not love in the way the mind tries to love, okay, you must love much deeper than that. Not a clinging love, sticky, hanging on.

The love that cries when this life form, the flower, wilts, and this form dissolves. A love that is beyond any one particular form, and a love that knows that there is no death, there is only the transformation of different forms. But there is no death as such, because you are connected with something, the timeless dimension, where there is no birth and death.

Birth and death arises. Death, by the way, is the opposite of birth. Death is not the opposite of life.

Life has no opposite. Life is eternal. Life is consciousness itself.

So it's not life and death, it's birth and death. Those are the opposites. And then you can even know the other, even if the other doesn't know him or herself as consciousness, is trapped in an ego identity, an identity with form, you can still recognize, even though the other may be trapped in ego, you can still recognize him or her as yourself.

You look through the mind, the mental accumulations in the other person. And remember, I'm not talking about some state that only very few individuals can attain. It was like that in the past.

It's been a privilege of very rare individual people, one in millions, millions, and millions. But it's no longer the case. It is a state that becomes accessible to far greater numbers of people now.

It all begins, I've been talking about the state of continuous love as your normal state, and it all begins with such a simple thing as feeling your hands, or if you feel your entire body, and look around the room in a state of non-labeling and interpreting, of innocent perception. That all starts there, of not running away from this moment in any way. In fact, moving deeper and deeper into this moment.

This is the purpose of your life, how could it be otherwise, to move into that state of consciousness. If you're looking for some purpose elsewhere, you will become frustrated. You will encounter suffering, frustration.

If you're looking for a purely personal purpose for your life, what's my life purpose? There are many workshops to find your life purpose. And on a personal level, there may well be something that is right for you, but there's something much deeper, far beyond your personal life purpose, and that is the transformation of consciousness, which is the purpose of the universe.

The universe wants to, is moving into greater consciousness. The whole universe is a movement into consciousness. It wants that, and it's happening now.

That is your purpose, is for the consciousness to emerge fully through this form. Then all their personal purpose doesn't mean you have to, you're no longer active in anything, but your personal purpose becomes part of that. So the greater purpose of relating in this new way of dealing with life and situations through the unconditioned consciousness, that will then flow into your personal purpose and will incredibly empower your personal purpose, whatever that may be.

Whether you are a businessman, or whether you're a hairdresser, or whether you pick up garbage in a park, it doesn't make any difference. The new consciousness can flow into anything, into any activity. So the personal purpose is still honored, and yet it becomes part of something much greater, which is the universal purpose.

If the personal is not in alignment with the universal, how can it fulfill you? So how would that work? Let's say you continue with the activity that you're in, but not necessarily.

It's possible that when the conditioned consciousness no longer controls your life, that incredible newness and transformation comes into your life. So even the personal circumstances of your life may change totally, that's possible. Or it may be that it's simply that a totally new consciousness flows into what you have been doing already.

And then the quality of the doing would become incredibly transformed through that. So let's say you're a hairdresser now, and then the new consciousness is beginning to flow through you, you live in the state of presence more and more. Then the main purpose is everybody who comes to you would then be meeting you as this new consciousness.

Everybody who comes to you, you receive in the state of openness, of non-labeling, and of course people would love coming to you. Let's presume that you're a good hairdresser. If you're not a good hairdresser yet, you will be when you bring presence into it.

The only reason if you're not a good... I'm just taking one example. The only reason if you're not a good hairdresser why you're not a good hairdresser is because you're not present enough.

The more presence, the greater or higher the quality of whatever you're doing. Somehow, even in the external world, anything you do reflects the consciousness that flows into that. And the more present you are, so that means the doing is not a means to an end, which is the mind-dominated state.

The doing is totally honored in the state of presence, every moment is honored. Then the quality of whatever you're doing improves incredibly and reflects that. So you not only become a good hairdresser or even better, but the main reason why people then come to you is because they love being close to you.

And there's something there, an energy field that they enter when they come to see you. Or if you're a businessman, the business deal that needs to go through has no longer an obsessive quality. I need to get this, and so you're in despair or fear if it doesn't work.

Or you get into a temporary high when it does work, which then becomes a low. The outcome is secondary. You can still give great energy.

In fact, presence means incredible energy flows through you into what you're doing. And so you're doing it with great attention and care. But it's a totally different energy from the mind energy that said, I need to get there in the future.

So this deal that I need to complete is a means of getting to that point that I need to get to that's going to fulfill me. And I will finally be who I am. I will be somebody.

I will be more fully myself. These are the unspoken beliefs behind the state of anxiety or tension that I need that. That can also give you a lot of energy, but it's really suffering.

You're basically in a state of suffering, in a state of tension, stress, anxiety. That's how most of the business world works, and it doesn't have to be like that. So the state of presence is great energy flows through, but yet so different from the conditioned mind energy.

And then you're on a, and it's much more likely that the deal will go through because everybody will feel so comfortable with who you are, your being. And somehow they feel that there's a freedom there when they're in your presence. And if people feel good around you, the outcome is much more likely to reflect that.

And yet you don't need any particular outcome anymore because this moment is full enough. There is a fullness of life already. This is a wonderful liberation.

The whole, every activity that you're engaged in, which to the world, there's an obsessive quality to what people are doing. I need that, and I mustn't lose that. That doesn't operate anymore, and so in the new consciousness, there's a playfulness.

And yet energy, a lot of energy flows into it, but it's an energy of play. You play with the world of form, and you realize the whole world of form is a game to be played and enjoyed. You're not dependent on the various forms of life, whether one form stays with you or comes to you, or whether it leaves you.

It's a game with form. And then that actually becomes quite enjoyable. There's an inner sense of freedom from what you're doing, and yet you're doing it with full care and attention.

And there's the play. You're simply playing. That's a wonderful way.

One way, one day, perhaps all humans will live like that. But we have to make a start. Some humans, if we don't make a start now, that day would never come.

Some humans are beginning to live in that way now. And so that new state of consciousness emerges. It is inconceivable to the mind to imagine what this world would look like if most humans, or even half of the population, lived in that new state of consciousness.

Completely inconceivable. We cannot even conceive of what our human-made world would look like in the structures that we have created. Of course, they wouldn't persist in this form.

The whole business world, or the political, and all that. So if you left the planet for a while and came back in a thousand years, and humans, and then you revisit this planet, and humans live in the new state of consciousness, I'm sure it would look as if you're visiting a strange planet, an alien planet, and yet a very beautiful place. It would look like some heavenly realm.

Incredible beauty, harmony. Things would still, forms would still come and go, but it no longer matters. But if you returned to that planet with the old consciousness, and visited that place then that is an embodiment or an expression of the new consciousness, it would seem unbearable.

If you go into heaven with the old consciousness, it will look like hell. I can't stand this. For a start, there would be no entertainment anymore in the way we know it.

Nothing much to watch on TV, because those things wouldn't be needed anymore. You get bored out of your mind. And after a little while, it was, get me out of here.

If you were coming with the old mind to that place, this could also happen while you're sitting here. I talk a lot about the present moment, it is helpful, a helpful way of putting it. When we started here, that was the present moment we started, and now, two hours later, it's still the present moment.

That's a strange thing to say. And basically, it's the same moment. Just what arises in that moment has changed a little bit, not substantially here, it's just the moment has deepened.

All we do is we are deepening that timeless dimension here. But really, the one factor that remains permanent in your life, no matter what happens, is the present moment. It always is the present moment.

But what is the present moment? What is that? In any experience that you have, the one factor that remains, in any experience that unfolds in time, there's one factor that remains constant, that's the present moment, and that is the consciousness or the being, the field in which or out of which the experience arises.

There's the underlying field of consciousness, unconditioned, pure being, deep stillness, aliveness, nothingness from the point of view of the mind, and yet the fullness of life itself, all phenomena come out of that. So the now really is consciousness itself, before something happens in it. Continuous, the timeless factor in every experience is consciousness, and it's you.

In the deepest sense, the one timeless factor in any experience that happens to you is your being that remains. I don't know if you've had this sense, probably you've gone through many changes in your life, and some people go through such drastic changes that they almost feel they're living different incarnations in one lifetime. That happens more frequently nowadays.

Than in the past, people going through transformations quickly. And yet, underneath all that, although this is true, it seems like different incarnations sometimes in one lifetime. If you look very deeply, underlying all that, there's a deep sense of beingness that was there from the very first, when you were a six-year-old child, and it's there when you're 85.

A sense of the beingness to whom all this happens. A being to whom all these things happen, and the different incarnations happen, and yet they all happen in the field of being, which is the most fundamental sense of I-ness, of identity. And that is the one reality in one sense of identity, is the deep sense of beingness that remains forever, no matter what happens.

And that is the timeless being itself. So to know yourself as that is the liberation from form, from the person. You're alert, present.

At this moment, there's also a silence in the room, so you can use that, be aware of the silence. It may not last for very long, and yet it's always there. Even if noises come to cover it up, silence remains.

Pay attention to the silence, and immediately there's a stillness inside. Immediately you're out of mind. Just listening to silence is enough to take you out of mind, because with the mind you can't listen to silence, it's not possible.

So just as I mentioned animals as teachers, there are many things that can teach you. Animals can teach you the state of no mind. Silence is an incredible teacher.

Silence when you're at home, silence out in nature. Simply to become aware of that dimension, there's a shift inside you. Stillness arises the moment you become aware of silence, because the mind is noise.

So you use that as your teacher. Silence teaches you that state. You only have to be open to it.

For most people, silence doesn't even exist. They even feel uncomfortable when there's silence, and they say, okay, let's make some noise. Or if they can't make noise, their mind gets even noisier.

The more silent it is, the noisier the mind gets, as a resistance against the silence. And yet, it's so simple to just listen to, be aware of, pay attention to silence. To the mind, that's not a nice thing to do.

There's nothing there. And yet, at that moment, a consciousness that is beyond mind arises. The moment you become aware of silence, the inner silence is there.

And then it's no longer just silence. There's a quality to it. There's an aliveness, a preciousness to it that is not understandable through the mind.

There's a goodness to it. There's something unbelievable in that. It's like some vast power enveloping you, within and without.

And that vast power is incredibly benign. It's incredibly, it's actually, the only way I can put it is, it is love in the deepest sense, because it is the oneness. I remember I said love, what is love, is the recognition of oneness, of knowing yourself as the other.

The oneness is love. And these statements are more like poetic statements. You can't figure out mentally what I'm saying.

I'm only pointing to that state. The silence, there's a vast power in that silence. That's why somebody said, silence is the language God speaks.

Everything else is a bad translation. So it is something infinitely precious, and it's far more than silence, we're just using that word. There's an infinite power, within and without, and it has a gentleness to it, and yet incredible power to it.

And it is love itself. It sounds strange, but that's how it is. It's always there.

When it's not there, it means you've cut yourself off from it. And inner and outer merge in that. Even the entire energy field of your body is silent, but alive.

And there comes the human mind. And even when, once you dwell in silence, you don't, the inner silence I call stillness, once it's very helpful to use outer silence as a teacher, especially in nature, and then after a while, you don't even need that anymore, because wherever you go, the inner silence is there. And even in the middle of a city, noisy city street, there's a stillness inside.

And we're not dependent on outer silence, which now it's back, but whether that machine is going or not, it doesn't affect the inner. But until you become deeply established in the inner stillness, or the inner stillness has emerged more fully, it's very helpful to use silence as your teacher, the outer silence. I mean, you don't need any other, if that were the only teacher you have, it would be quite enough.

If you never read another book on spiritual things, or never saw another, never went to another workshop, or another talk, and all you did was to remember to listen to silence whenever possible. That's all you need. Through that, the new consciousness, the stillness, the stillness would emerge more and more in response.

And then there's a meeting of inner and outer silence, a oneness. At this moment, silence is teaching. You may find you drift out of silence and then move back into it, out of it, mind comes in, and then you move back into it.

That's fine. Just be still and know that I am God. It's time for the body to move a little bit.

We will take a break. Stay connected with the body as much as you can. When you listen to other people during our lunch break, listen from a place of stillness.

Just listen. So bring a little bit of this into your lunch break, that state, without becoming self-conscious about it. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (2:06:14 - 2:06:48)

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2001-Eckhart-Tolle-Through-The-Open-Door-to-Vastness-of-Your-True-Being

[Speaker 2] (0:17 - 0:38)

Sounds True and Namaste Publishing present Through the Open Door to the Vastness of Your True Being with Eckhart Tolle. The teachings on Through the Open Door were recorded at spiritual retreats before a live audience. And now session one, Through the Open Door with Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (0:59 - 1:16:21)

No expectancy, not waiting for anything to happen, being completely present here. Simply to allow that state of consciousness that is free of future, free of past, timeless state of simple presence to emerge here within yourself. Because that's why you're here.

You didn't come here to be fed new thoughts, concepts, ideas. Perhaps a few signposts, they are useful. But you didn't come here to collect more signposts which say Rome or Mecca or Enlightenment and then carry them home and put them in your library or living room.

Isn't that a beautiful signpost? Or worship the signpost, a concept, an idea, a thought in a way you are here so that the opposite of that can happen, a relinquishing of concepts and ideas, ultimately, and that may sound a little bit frightening to the mind, relinquishing thought. What is stillness other than a state of consciousness that is free of noise?

This is not some distant goal to be achieved in 10 years' time or in a future lifetime. If this state of consciousness were not emerging in you already, you wouldn't be sitting here. But to the mind and the egoic sense of self, which is a mind-identified sense of self, a mental image, me, my story, my past, my future, that may be a little bit frightening.

No thought. But who would I be without thought? It's all about relinquishing attachment to thinking and ultimately going beyond the compulsive need to think.

And what then arises is presence, a state of clarity, simplicity, of simple beingness, a very deep allowing, allowing this moment to be as it is. So that is love, that is compassion, that is a deep care, an embracing of whatever is. In other words, embracing life, saying yes to life.

Where is life? Here, now. Life cannot exist separately from here and now.

So any denial of the now, resistance to the now, running away from the now mentally, always trying to get to the next moment because fulfillment is there somewhere, and you miss this life. And then you reach the age of 85, still looking for something, and you've missed the beloved, the divine that is here every moment. Now this moment, and there's only one moment, appears in different forms.

This moment happens to be beautiful externally, beautiful surroundings, wonderful people, so it's a little bit easier as we sit here to enter the state of allowing. There may be moments that appear not good on the surface, not good in little ways or big ways. You miss a bus or a plane, something little, or something major happens, some breakdown in your life, some loss.

What happens then, usually, resistance comes up, not a deep no to what is. That is the reactivity of the little me, the mind-made sense of self, the story. It gets stronger.

The deeper the no is to this moment, and when a challenge comes, the no can become very intense, and that, of course, is pain, is suffering. The stronger the no, the deeper the challenge, the stronger the reactive no, and what I call the little me, which is a mind-made image of who I am, based on my past, things that happened to me. Not only that, more importantly, based on an interpretation of those things that happened to me.

So the things that happened to me, together with a mental interpretation of those events and people from my past, over the years, an image forms in the head, me, I. And there's a story, of course, that is an intrinsic part of the image of me. So everybody lives in that work of fiction created by the mind, and the me is the main protagonist in that work of fiction.

It may be a big drama, it may be a tragic comedy, a mixture, so being trapped in a sense of identity that is very small, my past, my story, which needs to be continuously revived mentally, and the little me lives in resistance to what is, because the artificial, the fictitious nature of that entity cannot be sustained except in the state of resistance to now or denial of now. No. Every life story, the little me story, is ultimately unsatisfactory.

It is not satisfying. Anybody who sits here, if you look at the story of me, it didn't quite work out the way it should have. That's not how I imagined my life to be.

It looks as if something had failed, it had gone wrong, something along the way, that shouldn't have happened like that, that wasn't meant to happen. So to discover this element of unsatisfactoriness in the story of me, always, however, if there is a little me sitting here, there may be one or two who are thinking at this moment, and he may be talking about everybody else, but I'm okay, because I've just found my, the ideal partner, I've just fallen in love, and the story has now come to a satisfying conclusion, so the little me says, okay, he's wrong about me, but he may be right about everybody else. My story is actually fine if the happy ending is there, or you just got the dream job, or you just won five million dollars in the lottery, and then the little me says, oh, this is it. If that's the case, we'll meet again here next year.

You will have returned by then from the honeymoon. The fiction that there can be a satisfying end to the story of me is upheld, of course, by the media and all those things that you watch on TV and in cinemas, and the end of most films tells you, yes, there is such a thing as an end, a satisfying end to the little me, so the director cuts after the wedding, or just before the cut here, and now for many others, it may be a revelation, the realization that, oh, do you mean to say I'm not the only one whose story is not satisfying? I thought everybody else was fine, and just me, I wasn't doing well. So to realize my story so far hasn't been all that satisfying as a story, the little me doesn't feel complete, what's, he's looking for something, what's, and there's pain in the story, suffering, sorrow, but then the little me says, okay, it may not have been a satisfying story up to this point, but you've still got the future, and the little me says, this is where the satisfying conclusion is going to happen. So this is why when you live from that mindset of the little me story, the future is such an essential, such a vital part of everybody's existence, because it's there where this little me says a satisfying conclusion to my story will be reached at some point, I will get there. Whatever the satisfying conclusion of the story is, it depends on what kind of story the little me has fabricated for itself, it may be material success, it may be finding the ideal partner, it may be reaching a state of enlightenment, one day I'll get there.

So the future promises fulfillment. That's why everybody is running towards it, if you go to a big city, I was in New York a few days ago, and everybody's almost running, continuously, imagine a visitor from another planet coming and looking at that. Where are they running to?

And of course, they're running to the future, they're trying to get away from this moment, because you're hurrying, moving, future, they're all, everybody is running towards the future, because this isn't good enough, we need to get there. So it's a frantic attempt of the little me to reach the future. And if you cannot get out of the story of me, but of course here we are getting out, perhaps even just by recognizing the nature of the story, by looking at it, we are beginning to step out, because it can only sustain itself if it remains unconscious.

It can only sustain itself, the fiction of the little me can only sustain itself if it remains an unconscious movement. But when you look at it, that basically means you're now witnessing, you're watching the mind and the structure of the mind, the recognition of that is already the beginning of the end of the unconsciousness that sustains that movement, and it has been running humanity for many, many thousands of years. So we are simply looking at the mechanical unconscious nature of the mind structures, but it's more than that.

By seeing it, the seeing is not part of it. The seeing is part of something that is arising that is not nothing to do with the conditioned consciousness, the mind, and that's arising here. So if you have not stepped out of the story of me at all, the worst thing that could happen to you would be not to have any more future, because then the little me gets into a panic and says, the story will not reach a conclusion.

If you take away future, you take away the possibility of a happy ending to my story, and it's the worst thing that could happen for me to tell you, to tell you have no more future or almost no more future. And the strange thing is, really, this is what's happening here in a subtle way, not going to shock you in any way, but in a very subtle way, gradually, we are removing future from our consciousness, so the whole, that level of consciousness, gradually, is replaced by something else. We're going into that gradually, so that the little me doesn't go into contraction, and you run out of the room.

Seeking salvation in the future, seeking completion in the future, that's one aspect of future, salvation for the little me. The other part of future is the little me also knows that the future is very threatening. It is drawn towards it as an answer to its story, but it knows at the same time that the future is going to kill it.

Of course it will, so a dreadful dilemma arises for the little me. It's drawn towards future as an answer, as salvation, as fulfillment, and at the same time, it's continuously threatened by the future, because anything may happen, I may lose what I already have, which may not be all that satisfying, but at least I have that, and the future may take it away from me. The two movements that govern whatever the fictitious entity that humans are trapped in, whatever action it undertakes, is governed by two motivating factors which are to do with future.

A deep striving towards future as an answer is the movement of wanting and needing. That's why they're all running towards it. Traditionally, this has been called desire in spiritual teachings.

The other movement connected with future is, my God, what's going to happen to me? What's the future going to do to me? That's called fear.

Fear arises. So humans move between these two in a continuous conflict or dilemma. Desire, which is wanting and needing, and fear, so drawn to future and fearing it at the same time.

Easy to see why humans live in such misery. And then the whole fiction of me cannot be sustained without being in opposition to something. The me to be sustained needs to be in conflict with something, almost continuously.

Because its survival depends on, not me, it depends on sustaining the illusion that this is a separate entity, this is my boundary, and here are the others and the rest of the world. And that can only be sustained, the illusion of separateness, of an encapsulated sense of self. And basically because of fear that underlies the little me, it's also a state of continuous contraction, both psychological contraction and even physical contraction, protection of the little me and its encapsulated sense of self.

It needs, so that its illusion of separateness can be sustained, it needs to be sustained by its enemies in some form or other. Why is it if you open a history book, why is it that human history, 90% of human history is the history of insanity? Anybody who opens a history book says, that is mad.

So we need to get to the root of human madness to go beyond it, not say, oh, this is the reason they are mad, it's to see, I am mad. To see I am mad is actually a very positive thing because where does that seeing arise? Sanity.

It's only as sanity rises you can see the madness. And we can see the collective madness of humanity as human history, unbelievable madness, killing, suffering. So how does that arise?

It arises in each individual, embedded in the very structure of the egoic sense of self is the need to have enemies. Enemies not necessarily in the form of people, although often that is the case too. Enemies in the form of situations, conditions, even places.

And so what's the very root of that? What is the real arch enemy of the little me? The present moment.

The thing it always is in opposition to trying to get away from or fighting, if you look to the very root of its need for enemies is to make the present moment into something that you need to oppose. And what is the present moment now? Life.

Because life cannot be in any other place, in any other moment except now. So the little me lives in opposition to life. Its enemy is life itself, which is now.

If that's not mad, what is? So it's me against the universe. Temporarily, the little me may have brief moments of relief.

Never for long, because it cannot afford to be in a state of non-opposition to what is for long. It cannot afford to be in a state of peace for long. It cannot afford to be in a state of joy for long.

It cannot afford to be in a state of love for long, because all those things arise only when there's no opposition to what is, but a deep embracing of what is. So the little me fears that embracing of what is. Its very existence depends on not embracing what is.

To recognize that is a wonderful realization. Something within that recognition is there's something in there that is nothing to do with the little me. So there are two movements.

You may find it even within yourself here. Something emerges that is deeper than that entity, egoic fiction, it's emerging now. And there's still the momentum behind the egoic fiction of me also maybe operating.

And you can be sure that it doesn't like the deep need that is embedded in the very structure of the egoic mind, really a deep need for unhappiness. Never made conscious because its survival, the survival of that mind structure depends on unconsciousness. When you make it conscious, suddenly you see, wow, this is mad.

My need to be unhappy, never recognized fully, always it comes in a hidden concealed way because the reasons for my unhappiness are always out there. This is making me unhappy, that is making me unhappy. The present moment is making me unhappy.

What is, is making me unhappy. Now as long as there's unconsciousness, the causes of unhappiness are out there. And there's always the interpretation if only those things changed or I could change them, I would be okay.

And then you're engaged in continuing fighting with what is. I'm going to change these things out there to remove the causes of my unhappiness. If your behavior changes, if I can make you to change your behavior, then I can be happy.

That's the illusion. And many people reach the end of their incarnation trapped, the majority still, reach the end of their incarnation trapped in that illusion. If only things were different, not seeing that unhappiness is embedded in the very structure of the mind, its need, because that is an intrinsic part of its need to fight, to sustain, its separate sense of me, to see within oneself the need for conflict, the need for enemies and the need for unhappiness.

You can see it in relationships, love, harmonious. If you meet a person, the first few days or weeks, sometimes even months, total harmony. And then first something arises that is very different, completely different energy.

The need returns for conflict. And the longest humans are without conflict is often when they fall in love and that can last a few weeks or if you went to live on a South Pacific island, you may be free of unhappiness for a little while. But you can be sure that the unhappiness, which is in here, not there, in the structure of the egoic mind, will find a reason for you to be unhappy.

Even there, in paradise, there will be something that's not right. Could be anything, mosquitoes, boredom. When there's, let's say, somebody could create for you an environment that has removed all causes for unhappiness, deep unhappiness would still arise out of unbearable boredom, even to the point of suicide.

You can sometimes see that with people who are born into great wealth where all their needs or desires are immediately met and often, I mean, they should be blissfully happy, they've got everything, and often deep misery arises, deep dissatisfaction with everything. So you can't get away from that. But there's a deep reaction, a revulsion to what I'm saying in the little me that says, well, he may be right, this may apply to other people, but really I'm unhappy because I have a reason to be unhappy.

The others may be in delusion, but my misery is real. And so to see, to look through that is an amazing realization that you carry around and within the structure of your mind, unhappiness. I'm using that as a generic term.

The Buddha used the term suffering. Other traditions use the term delusion or illusion, or even sin, Christ is. Something not right, always sin has been misinterpreted, Jesus uses it, dukkha as the Buddha put it, unsatisfactoriness, suffering, unhappiness.

In the seeing of that, it already begins to dissolve if that level of consciousness out of which the recognition arises is sustained, the structures of human unhappiness, which are the structures of that egoic conditioned mindset begin to dissolve. And what then happens, it only happens if your attention moves into the now and sustains itself in the now. And so in order for the deep conditioning to dissolve, the ego likes to make that into a problem too.

It says, okay, oh my God, it must take so long to get rid of that illusion of all that unhappiness that is in my mind, how long is it going to take to get rid of all that? If it's taken 100,000 years for it to arise in humans, unhappiness is not, suffering is not a personal problem of anybody, there's nothing personal in it. It's the human condition.

If it's taken so long, will it take just as long to get out of it, another 100,000 years? And the ego says, yes, yes, it will. Give me time.

That's why there's a strong attraction to cults. Every cult promises something. You are going to be very special, you are going to reach that, or we as a collective ego identity that can easily happen.

The little me joins with other little me's and says, us, same illusion, slightly different form, we against the rest of the world. Some countries do that. We against the rest of the world.

Religions, we, us, so sometimes the personal me becomes partly a collective me, moving out of that illusion. Now, cults give you time and promise something, and the leader usually says, if you stay with me for long enough, you can become like me, almost, not quite. And there's an attraction because time is given.

There's a spiritual longing, which is the longing to be free of all that, and the ego comes back and uses that very longing and makes more time, it needs more time. So the illusion that a spiritual seeker can easily get trapped in, and not only in the cults, is that I need more time to become free of all that. And the amazing realization is, not only do you not need more time, time is the very illusion on which the existence of that mindset, the continuing existence and the survival of that depends.

And so in a very subtle way, it will always try to get in there and, please, more time. You don't need another hundred thousand years to get out of the illusion that has taken a hundred thousand or a million years to build up. A beautiful line in the Course in Miracles says, it has taken time to misguide you so completely, but it takes no time at all to be who you are.

Now, to be who you are means who you are in your essence underneath the mind structures, the conditioned mind structures. And the only access you have to that is through the little doorway of now. And it's only here, it's only through the power of, that is inherent in the present moment, that all those mind structures dissolve.

The power of the present moment is the power of life itself, your very being. And they dissolve here and now. What arises in the now is presence, allowing this moment to be.

Let's say, really, that is, here we have the key. Since the survival of those mind structures depends on enemies and fighting the present moment, which is the root of its need for enemies, when you allow this moment to be, the whole illusion collapses. Now, sometimes people ask, can I make this happen?

Can I make this shift, this revolutionary, radical, this radical transformation of consciousness that you point to, that you talk about, that all the ancient teachings point to, in their essence, talk about, point to, can you make that happen? Sometimes people ask that question and say, you sound as if we could make it happen. Well, no, you can't really make it happen.

That's why I say, when you do not allow this moment to be, then you're trying to make something happen in the future. When you're allowing this moment to be, you're not trying anything. You're not trying to make anything happen.

It's the opposite of needing to make something happen. Allow. And the little me says, this is a place of weakness.

Don't go there, because you will have no defenses anymore. You won't even know what's going on anymore if you don't continuously judge and label what's happening at this moment. If you don't continuously interpret what is happening so you know what's going on, he's like this.

What does he want from me? What does he, how can I get something from him? Even looking at incredible beauty, the immediate need to say something, to relate it to something that you want, there's a flower, the need to pick it, now it's mine.

To immediately, to relate to everything immediately through mental noise instead of allowing it, because in the allowing, a stillness immediately arises. And there's no need to interpret. Allowing implies you give up the need to interpret the world continuously through the mind.

And the ego says, no, no, I will become totally ignorant at the mercy of everything and everybody. And the ego says, I will be stuck in this dreadful present moment for the rest of my life. I will be stuck in whatever situation I'm in now, this, that situation that's making me so miserably unhappy, I will be stuck in it for the rest of my life if I allow it.

I can't allow it. That's why I've been fighting it for 20 years, to get out of it. Are you out of it?

No, not yet, but I will. So the allowing really is something, when we talk about it, say allowing this moment to be, your ability to allow this moment to be is grace. It arises.

Grace is already arising from within you that is not the egoic me, that's not part of the madness. It's arising. That's why you are able to allow this moment to be.

And whatever arises in the moment, yes, yes, it's good. Feel this moment with every cell of your body. Be here with every cell of the body.

Every cell is alive and you sense a subtle, otherwise you're stuck in the head, trying to work out what I'm saying and there's nothing to work out, being alive, feeling the very aliveness that you are, the entire energy field is present, every cell is present. You don't need to make an effort, it is present and you sense that you're everywhere, you're not just here, you're throughout. So keeping, be here completely, not as a head attached to a body, be here totally.

The head is not enough to allow this moment to be. The entire being allows this moment to be and the head is not enough to be present. And be present with the entire being.

Sometimes people ask, doesn't it mean that you become identified with the body if you feel the body? No, it's a way of going beyond identification with the physical form of the body to feel the very essence that gives life to the physical form is not the physical form. To feel it and then the Advaita person may say, but aren't you saying that I should identify with an object that arises in consciousness as the feeling of the body and isn't the truth that knowing that I am the very awareness underlying it all, but the body is that, it's a temporary appearance of the consciousness that underlies everything.

It temporarily appears as the body, it's not the body. In a way you could say it's an illusion, the body is an illusion. But within the illusion there is something that is not an illusion.

Otherwise even an illusion needs a little bit of reality, otherwise it wouldn't be. So to sense the aliveness, the presence in the body, this is just a temporary way of putting it, and feel the aliveness throughout and then suddenly there's a field of aliveness not only within but also without, that has nothing to do anymore with your story, there's a field of aliveness within at first but suddenly also the surrounding world has an aliveness to it. Not that you need anything, it's beautiful but it's all form, it's temporary, but that presence or beingness is beyond form, so you know that which is beyond form as yourself, which is a field of still presence, intense aliveness, still presence.

And forms appear in that and that's beautiful. The body appears and it's fine. Thoughts appear, that's fine too because you're no longer trapped in the thoughts.

You are that which makes every thought possible. So the key is that stillness that is so alive, that is now. So when we talk about the present moment, the now, what does that mean?

The mind says it doesn't mean anything, the mind says there's no such thing as the now. Can you show me where it is? There's only past and future and something very fleeting here that really has no meaning, that's what the mind says.

But there's, when we say the now, there's a mystery in there and there's a key in there, what temporarily we call the now, something very strange. This moment, we are here, before this moment happened as an event in time, it already had a shadowy existence in your mind as the anticipation of this moment. It was going to happen, you knew you were going to come here, so it, and soon it will be over and it will recede into the past and it will be a memory.

Another present moment will be there or the same moment filled with the appearance of some other event, phenomenal event. Your whole life, strange how when something is gone, it evaporates into nothingness. Even this, there will come a time when nobody will remember this beautiful moment as an external appearance.

These bodies will go, so the memories will go and then a few photos may survive of this event, live a little bit longer and then become yellow. And then some people may have videoed something, but that probably has a limited lifespan too. And so eventually the external appearance of this moment will have evaporated completely, including the bodies.

And yet there's something here that is beyond the external appearance of this moment. There's something deeper, the very essence of your life, which is like a phantom, your childhood, where is it now? Events of last week, gone, dissolved.

It comes into the now, gone. What remains is the field of now in which your whole life unfolds as form, the stillness that is underneath whatever happens, things happen, the stillness is there and allows it to happen. To know yourself as that stillness is freedom, freedom from form, freedom from the world, freedom from self as the little me.

And then the world is a beautiful place, it's no longer threatening, it's not threatening and it's no longer promising. It loses the qualities of promise, something there is going to give it to me. It's here now, you don't need to be given anything, your very essence is life in its fullness now.

I don't want you to believe in that as an idea in your head, the words are only a little signpost. It's only if you are in the now with every cell of your body, that's how it's initially I put it, you can realize the truth of this, that life in its fullness, an expression Jesus used, he said, I want you to have the fullness of life. Life in its fullness beyond anything happening or not happening, nothing to do with how much time you still have as this form, nothing to do with any life situation or condition, good or bad, life in its fullness is already here and that's, I call that sometimes the power of this moment, which is life.

So, you don't need the world anymore then and you don't fear the world anymore and you don't need the future anymore, you don't fear the future anymore. It has a peripheral existence, only practical purposes, let's meet tomorrow at four o'clock, okay, that's practical, it works on that level. Beyond that, future is no longer needed to give you a sense of promise of some kind of deeper identity or fulfillment, it's an illusion, it never comes, how can it give you that?

And there's only this, so it's going beyond your life situation and the conditions of the me to a place of greater depth where you need nothing, need nothing. And then as a little gift, many things come to you on the phenomenal external level, life suddenly becomes so friendly, whereas before it was an enemy to be fighting, life suddenly becomes friendly, even the phenomenal existence has suddenly a friendly face, why, how can it change from life being what Churchill called when he talked about human, of history, Churchill said about history is one damn thing after another.

And for many people, that's how they perceive their existence, one damn thing after another, and that doesn't happen anymore, life is no longer perceived through external existence, existence is no longer perceived and created through the me, fictitious mindset of me, so when you're fighting life, life fights you, it's a mirror, and when you allow and say yes, life suddenly says yes, oh, you embrace it, that means life can flow through you freely, consciousness, life, God, just words, can move and even express itself through this form freely. And from being a burden on the planet, which is what humanity is right now, and from being a burden to yourself and a troublemaker to yourself and others, a little me, from being this burden, suddenly there's a blessing that walks on the planet, there's a lightness to it, no longer the heaviness of the person, and that's, love is now present, the person talks about love, but of course, it's all fiction, and thinks you had, the little me said, I need that for my happiness, often, they just come when you don't need them anymore, they may not, it doesn't matter, but the strange thing is, many things simply come, icing on the cake, the cake is what matters, and you have the cake, or you are the cake, seek only the kingdom of heaven, now seeking is a temporary phase, you're not seeking anymore, be who you are, that's the kingdom of heaven, which is within, here, now. All the other things that you thought you needed will be added onto you, seeking, coming to the end of seeking, seeking implies future, seeking, even seeking to understand more, I need to understand more about spirituality, I need to understand more about Buddhism, I need to understand more about Advaita, what are they really talking about, you don't need to understand more, you've understood enough for you to have come here, any further is just the mind trying to get back, OK, I need some more knowledge, I can't quite work out what stillness is, if you explain a bit more, perhaps I can get there, is your concept of stillness the same as the Buddha's concept? You could do a PhD, stillness in spirit, the world religions, 400 pages, and then you become the world expert on stillness, and perhaps if it's all mind, the world expert on honey was never tasted honey, it's quite possible, you could be the world expert on honey without ever, because it's all concepts, so we are tasting, not just tasting the honey, we are the honey, so a state of consciousness arises in which thinking plays very much a secondary role, it may come in occasionally, for this or that, your sense of who you are, of being, it's nothing to do anymore with any thought in your head about who you are, story, so your history is fine, it's just things that happened to this form, you don't need to say I'm trying to forget my history, burn your photo albums, no need, it's just no identification, that's just so and so, my ex-husband, my ex-wife, photo, no longer seeking the self, seeking to strengthen itself through identification with your history, that was my ex, what he did to me, I'll never forget, let me tell you about it, that means seeking a stronger sense of self through the history, and the history becomes the story and becomes the me, so it's the self seeking in your past goes, it's just past, no problem in it whatsoever, self seeking in future goes, then future is wholly practical relevance to your life, I'm booking a flight for next month, so that's how future works, it's fine, no self seeking in it, I'm booking this flight, it will take me to such and such a place and when I get there, there I will find the answer, the fulfilment, so all that self seeking goes to strengthen the sense of self artificially, and that means just you are yourself already, and as you always were, now, and maybe the mind can, well who am I then, step beyond the edge of understanding, allow this moment to be, be the stillness, you are not condemned from now on to permanent inactivity or passivity in stillness, at first it's good as it arises, let it arise in an environment that is conducive to stillness, although sometimes it arises in people by itself or accidentally in an environment that looks totally non-conducive to stillness, that's the other way, that's the way through suffering, as it happened to me, it's the stillness suddenly arose out of dreadful mental noise and resistance, and here this is another way, not through suffering, suffering has played its part because it's taken you here and it's been good, and this is a voluntary embracing of that, not to be pushed and kicked into the kingdom of heaven, life would do that to you anyway eventually, so there's no need, but it takes time, this saves time, removes time, and as it removes time, it also removes suffering, so you can get to the end of suffering through time and further suffering until there's a self-destruction of the egoic entity when it has created so much misery for itself that it cannot exist anymore and it self-destructs, or you've had enough suffering to come here and the eternal message of all spiritual teachings is you don't need to suffer anymore, and the greater your suffering has been, or if you're sitting here and feel you've come here with a burden of suffering, perhaps physical, some dreadful situation, or not knowing how much more time you have as this form, not quite knowing, nobody knows, let's just go into very deep yes, and the worse your suffering up to this point, the deeper your yes will have to be and the greater the opportunity, it can happen that the yes uttered once can be so deep that the no never returns, one deep yes to life, the end of all no, you can go very deeply into the yes and into the now and into presence so that the past and future falls away almost completely except a few practical matters, and you walk on this straight, this path of now I sometimes describe it as a tightrope of now, and that is the flowering of human consciousness, if you walk the tightrope of now and on a tightrope, to walk a tightrope you have to be very present, totally present, every step, there's no little me, you can't remember your problems on the tightrope you would fall off immediately, even fear, you can't fear the next step, you would fall off immediately, there's only this step and there's a total presence with every step, and this is the state that is arising and it's only in that utter and complete presence that the little me dissolves and all the problems that cling to the little me in fact make up it's very existence, they fall away, they cannot survive in intense presence look at any problem in your life, no matter how serious it looks, and see if it can survive when your attention is totally here and then you become what you have always been, which is consciousness itself, the field of still presence that underlies everything so the person dissolves, the heaviness is gone, that's the fulfillment of your human existence, now, doesn't matter how much longer this form then exists, a few weeks, 50 years, doesn't make that much difference fulfillment is, this flowering is the realization of who you are, but you wouldn't be able to say very much about it through the mind and if somebody asks who are you, there may just be a stillness, and now the strange thing is, from the point of view of the mind it looks as if you knew less about who you are than before and it's true, it is involuntary embracing and saying yes to the state of not knowing anything anymore, that's why it's so frightening to the little ego an embracing of not knowing, this vast power in that not knowing, whatever you need to know at any moment, which is always this moment, will arise out of what looks like the state of ignorance to the mind whatever you need to know or anything you need to do to know at any moment, wherever, in relationships, in any situation, arises out of the state of not knowing so to become comfortable, happy with not knowing, it's fine not to know and then you stay with the not knowing, which is the stillness, and whatever is needed suddenly comes, it may come as words, as an action, simply an emanation of love and then you return to the state of not knowing, it could be a simple thing like going for a walk and watching everything around you in that attentive alertness, you're not walking there as a little me with its problems you're walking as a field of awareness that looks at the universe, the phenomenal universe and its beauty, not needing to impose mental noise on anything, interpret, just don't need to know what this tree is called you might know it, it's no longer important, it won't interfere with the beauty of that moment, no longer the heaviness of a person walking through the street, that which looks through your eyes at the world is then pure consciousness the light that emanates from the one source looks through your eyes, sense perceptions and loves its creation because you created it, you are consciousness appearing as form and it's good you walk as a blessing on the earth, no longer as a burden and everything and everybody loves you for that, even nature, you will feel nature, trees, flowers love your presence it's almost as if the very being moved a little bit towards you because within the totality where there's no separation between this and that, when you see beauty without mind it's a self-recognition, consciousness, the flower which is an expression of consciousness recognizes its own beauty through you, it's not you, so even nature finds fulfillment through that, it knows itself through you, what looks like you and yet all that is form, the eternal is underneath the forms, this very moment, what are the ingredients of this moment, the voice, your perception of the voice the totality of this space, people, flowers, lights, sense perceptions, those things, ok, that's good there's also silence, that's even better, and to acknowledge the silence, listen to it, alert, presence, that's the arising of stillness silence is helpful, ultimately you don't need it, stillness doesn't depend on external silence but it's good, it's helpful to listen to silence and it's only the stillness in you that can even be aware of silence if your mind were very noisy sitting here, silence would be meaningless, a concept, the moment you listen to silence a stillness arises, through the stillness you become aware of silence, so it's within and without and then the realization it's always within, it may not always be without, but that dimension of consciousness is always there, and it's come out of the stillness, completely different dimension of consciousness is coming love, basically, beyond what the ego thinks love is, one deep moment, timeless, the timeless dimension of consciousness is coming and that looks like an event in time, but you have to accept certain paradoxes, that's how it is, let's acknowledge the silence, without, through the stillness, within and now meet everything, everybody, through the stillness, bring the stillness, be it, because you are it, and that is the dimension of the sacred that is arising, inseparable from the stillness

[Speaker 2] (1:16:40 - 1:17:26)

This concludes session one of Through the Open Door with Eckhart Tolle. Our program continues with session two. Sounds True and Namaste Publishing present Through the Open Door, session two, with Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (1:17:44 - 2:28:17)

As we are approaching the end of the weekend, a weekend of awakening, I wonder how many questions have managed to survive in your mind. You may feel a pressure, almost a kind of pressure inside your mind, of a question or questions wanting to be asked, needing to be answered, and when those questions are answered, there will be more, because every answer will generate further questions. And so, there's no need, there's no end to the number of questions you could ask about awakening.

It is true that certain answers can be helpful. They can take you up to a certain point of understanding. Up to a certain point, understanding can be helpful.

One could say it's like understanding how do I get from here to the edge of the cliff, and to know how you get from here to the edge of the cliff, to know that, certain signposts may be required to point you in the direction of the edge. That way, or that way. And when you have reached the edge, signposts are not necessary anymore.

In fact, they become a hindrance, an essential part of the process of awakening. And that is something that the human mind and the human ego look upon as almost an insult. An essential part of the awakening is letting go of the need to understand more, and to realize that ultimately, awakening is not to do with understanding more.

And finally, when you have reached complete understanding, you awake. And the great surprise, or even shock, that has come to those who have awakened, they didn't know more when they awakened. If anything, they knew less.

So if we can participate in what we could call renunciation, not renunciation of sugar, or sex, or material possessions, or whatever it is that people try to use to become free. A deeper renunciation, because all those that I mentioned, and many others, are surface renunciations that could actually, and very often do, strengthen your conceptual identity as the one who has renounced. The one who is superior because he or she has renounced sugar, money, sex, whatever, possessions.

A deeper renunciation than that, and I will put it very bluntly, don't be shocked, it's the renunciation of thought. And realize it is not through thought that you can awaken. It is not through adding more to the accumulation of thought in your mind that you can awaken.

It is not through any adding to yourself in any way, whether material things, or thought forms, or ideas, or beliefs, or experiences, it is not through adding more to yourself, to the content of your mind, that you awaken. It is not through adding more thought to the huge accumulation of thought forms that each human being, including yourself, already walks around with, and derives their sense of self from, the me. And the momentum that this accumulated thought structure that most people identify with as themselves, that accumulated movement of thought with all its accumulated content, thought forms, knowledge, experiences, memories, all thoughts, that has enormous momentum.

And an essential part of that momentum is that it needs more to add to itself, because the thought structure of yourself, the mind made self, believes that it is not yet complete. It needs more, and that more could be more understanding. It says, I don't yet understand the purpose of the universe.

And it might say, I've come here, listened to all these speakers, and I still don't understand the purpose of the universe, and how it all works, and how I fit into it. What's my place in it? That's the most important question.

What about me? There's all that, but this is more important. In a deeper sense, that is true.

In a superficial sense, it's an illusion. So there is this need in the mind, that is the mind, to accumulate. And if you are here this weekend, that means you have gone beyond the baser, base forms of accumulation, well, more or less.

And that is needing to accumulate material possessions, and thus by, and again, it's not the material possession that is ultimately what counts to the mind. It's the thought form, because you don't know what's out there, you only know it as a thought form. That's what it wants.

Identify with another thought form, the mansion, mine, the car, my car. A thought form becomes invested with self, and so it is added to the accumulated thought forms that make up the me. And so you have already gone beyond, to a large extent, although it may still linger a little bit, those base forms of identifications.

You may also have gone beyond of needing to add to yourself other thought forms. The thought forms of people think that I am great. The thought forms of getting recognition.

Oh, aren't you great? The thought form that needs to feel that you are famous. Yes, you've made it in the eyes of the world.

The world tells you, yes, yes, you are important. The phone rings all the time. Everybody wants to talk to you.

I am important. And that's a nice thought form, and many are longing for that, that need in millions of people, particularly in Western culture, that longing of, I haven't made it yet. If I make it, then I'll be complete.

And that means, once I have added further thought forms to me, further mental images of who I am, which other people will tell me, that's who you are. Ah, you are such and such. Satisfying mental labels.

President of this or that. So you may have gone beyond status or status. For many years, English pronunciation is status.

Status here, so that you understand what I say. Status. It's that you've gone beyond that, probably.

But the movement of needing to add more to yourself may still be there, but it may have moved to more subtle dimensions. And the more subtle dimensions could be the dimension of knowledge, dimension of accumulating thought forms as knowledge, spiritual knowledge perhaps, having read many spiritual books, attended many workshops, retreats, Buddhist monasteries or other monasteries. Or you may have come here also in that search of more, adding more to me.

And perhaps that more, the most subtle of all mores, was the more of spiritual realization. The ultimate attainment. I can add that and then I'll be finally complete.

And you look for it then in the realm of understanding more, which is mind. And that can keep you trapped in the subtle realms of needing more for the rest of your life. And that is the fate of being a spiritual seeker for the rest of your life.

In itself, not such a bad identity, spiritual seeker. It's better than many others. But the seeking movement is there.

The not yet having found is there. Because there has not been a renunciation of the movement of thought. Because it's the movement of thought that is the momentum behind the search for more.

So when we speak of renouncing thought, we are not saying that you are never to think again. It is the awakening out of the stream of thinking. With which perhaps you've been identified all your life as a me.

And the possibility of stepping out of that movement of thought is always here now. And it is here now, as you sit here. Listen.

You can sit here with a burning question at the back or the front of your mind. I'm going to ask him, when the moment he stops speaking, I'm going to ask him that question. It doesn't make sense.

Or you can sit here as a field of alert, aware presence. In which the words are being perceived, almost as if they were coming from within yourself. In which all the other peripheral perceptions are taking place.

Visual, man sitting on a chair, flowers. I'm labeling the perceptions right now, but as you perceive in that spacious field of presence that you are, you perceive through that the need to label, the compulsive need to label what is going on around you at any moment. To work it out, to interpret.

I need to know, what's this speaker going on about? That compulsive need is renounced. Now that sounds as if you could do something.

When I say this, it sounds as if you could choose to step out of that continuous stream of thinking into spacious awareness. And from one perspective, you can. It is true, but it's only a perspective.

And whatever words say, it's only a perspective. Because words are thoughts. These words, these thoughts that have become words, point beyond themselves.

They are pointers. In themselves, they are not really helpful. If you can never go beyond the signpost, like the dog that continuously looks at the master's finger, when the master says, the stick is there, there, I threw it there.

If you can't go beyond the signpost, then you go home with a few more accumulated signposts. Not enough yet, of course. So is it true that you can choose to step out of the identification with that stream of thinking and be present?

Yes, from one perspective. But how is it that there are other people in this city who didn't come here, and if they were here, they would say, what the hell is he talking about? It doesn't make sense at all.

I occasionally, because now so many people read The Power of Now, occasionally it gets into the hands of people who are not quite ready for it yet. And occasionally I get emails that say, your book makes no sense whatsoever. So when I say you can choose to step out of the stream of thinking, this may not be true for everyone.

But how is it that you can do that and somebody else in this city who may be engaged in other activities right now cannot do it? Well, perhaps they can, but they don't know they can. Somehow the apple is not ripe yet.

And so here we come to the limits of language. Because it's ultimately not you doing it. It's a way of putting it, it's a way of looking at it.

But when you feel that, yes, I can step out of presence, which is still a thought, that's not it of course. I can step out of identification with thinking to experience the peace that is there when you can be without the need to think. And the thoughts that may still arise are not that important anymore because there is space around them.

You can do that because it's happening here through you. It wants to happen. There is an evolutionary impulse at work in humanity.

And to say that you can step out of identification with mental noise, identification with concepts, identification with the seeking entity, the me, to say that really means when you feel, yes, that unconditioned consciousness is suddenly there. It wants to flower through this form. If it didn't want to flower through this form, you couldn't do it.

Because you and it are not separate. Only language creates the separation. So whatever we say about it, do not believe there's any absolute truth in anything that words can say about it.

So a shift, an inner shift, from thought to awareness, presence, and then the miracle happens, and it is happening for many of you here now, of being here as a field of awareness rather than as a person. And the miracle is there when you can look upon this room, listen to this voice, and let it be so completely, allow it to be as it is so completely, that there's no need to add mental commentaries to it. You can look at the flowers and perceive it through what we could call stillness.

Alert, aware, stillness. And that is the arising of an intelligence far greater than the limited human mind, which is only a small aspect of the vastness of intelligence, the one intelligence. And that's again a very limited word.

The arising within you of non-conceptual intelligence. That is what Krishnamurti called the awakening of intelligence. And that is there when you renounce thought.

Thought subsides. Thought subsides. It can still happen, and when it's needed, it's there, beautifully, not problematically.

When self, a sense of self is invested in thought, thought becomes problematic, and the self that almost everybody lives with is burdened with, that sense of self is in itself problematic. You cannot separate problematic from yourself. They are indistinguishable.

To walk around with a mind-derived self is to be problematic, is to live in a problematic life situation, and to experience your life as problematic, because you live mostly then in past and future, which is problematic. Whereas this moment is not problematic, ever. So to step out of all that, so that your self, your sense of self, is no longer in the movement of thought, that's all that it is, there's still a movement of thought, your sense of self is not invested in every thought that arises.

This way, you're pulled this way, and then you're pulled that way. Or you may have deeply lodged thoughts that never leave you, obsessions, convictions, beliefs, this is how it is. Just ask me, I'll tell you how it is.

Deeply entrenched thought-forms that many people walk around with, and they say, that's me. They don't see it as thought-forms that they walk around with, they are the thought-forms. They are the convictions.

They are the one who is looking for somebody to disagree with, to strengthen their sense of self. They are their thoughts. So stepping out of that is the great liberation.

It's the renunciation. And to some people, the renunciation of that thought comes because they can't stand thought anymore. It becomes so painful that finally they renounce.

And what they do then is they, the renunciation of thought, of course, is also the renunciation of past and future. Except for practical things, that's okay. But as that overwhelming concern with me and my future, and things that happened in the past, things that are going to happen to me, or not going to happen to me, renounce that and recognize that past and future are only thought-forms, no more.

They have no existence. Time, which is past and future, has no existence except as thought. You cannot encounter past and future.

Nobody has ever met the past, touched it, seen it, lived in it. You may think people lived in the past. How can they live in the past?

The Romans, they lived 2,000 years ago. That sounds plausible. But of course they didn't.

They lived in the now. And so unless you create a thought-form of past, there's no past. And the moment you can only create a thought-form at this moment, out of the fullness of now, which is consciousness itself, oh, is that what it is?

Yes. The now is unconditioned, pure consciousness itself. Primordial intelligence.

And out of that arise forms, thought-forms. And they become the conditioned form consciousness. And then thought-forms become material forms.

So we have thought, which are objects in consciousness. Sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions, they are all objects because they become, you perceive what you call a flower, it somehow, the image goes through your eyes, becomes a nerve impulse, whatever they say, then gets reconstructed in the brain, which normally the greatest doctor has no idea how it works. And then you get an image arises of a flower.

It's a thought-form too. An object in consciousness. Not conceptual thought, sense perception, conceptual thought.

Objects in consciousness and consciousness. Most people walk around identified continuously with objects in consciousness. They don't know themselves as the underlying space.

Space consciousness. Here we have another pointer in case you didn't get the first one. In ultimate terms, objects in consciousness are things.

Because we are speaking of form. So most people's lives consist of things that they are concerned with. Thoughts are things, material things, that comes first.

And that's from large part of the population of the planet. Their entire existence is consumed by concern with material things. And that applies both to the poor part of the world and to the wealthy part of the world.

The poor are concerned with material things because they may not have enough to meet all the needs of the body. And the wealthy are concerned with material things because nothing is ever enough to the me. I need more.

It's the unconscious movement of more. So there's one level on which one's life, one's entire existence is concerned with things, objects. And then it's things in a wider sense are anything that arises in your mind as an object.

Thought forms, experiences, knowledge. One thing after another arises inside you. And then you step out of identification with thought forms.

How do you do that, says the thought form. Give me a technique, says another thought. Okay, there are seven steps.

That will take you seven years. Now if we did that here, this gathering would be more satisfying to the mind. Because you could go home and tell your family when they ask you, what did you come away with, what did you learn?

And you could say, I learned seven steps and it'll take me seven years. Oh, that's great, you got your money's worth. And so it's satisfying to be given more time to the mind because it has that need.

It loves it. It's just waiting for something like that. And it's frustrating to the mind to be sitting here and saying, Okay, yeah, but how?

We can say, renounce thought. We could say, renounce time. But even that may be a little bit abstract.

To put it even more simply, we could say, renounce the next moment. Because you notice that most of your life you're more interested in the next moment than in this one. It's a deeply conditioned movement.

Renounce that need for the next moment. The psychological need for, okay, what's next? And be completely with this.

What is now. Completely allowing this moment so precious. Not precious because it's fleeting.

It's a superficial way of looking at the present moment. Sometimes people say, this moment is so fleeting, it'll be over soon. Just hang on to it and remember it, remember it.

Take a photo of it. No, it's not precious because of that. Because the present moment is not fleeting.

The forms of fleeting that arise in the field of now, come and go. But when you enter the now with your attention, and don't take it too literally, it's just a pointer. When you enter the now with your attention, then you renounce the next moment.

And a completely different quality of being arises. When you become present to what is. Instead of denying it, running away from it, making it a means to an end.

And it is at that moment the mind falls away. And then you realize how vast the space is inside you. And how relatively insignificant anything in object consciousness is, compared to the depth, the spaciousness within you.

The stillness. How relatively insignificant any thought that comes into your mind is. Relatively insignificant.

How relatively insignificant anything that happens or doesn't happen is. You see the relativity of whatever happens in the realm of object consciousness, in the realm of things. Okay, it's nicer perhaps to live in a beautiful mansion, than to live in a little hut, or a little room on the surface.

Yes, it might be nicer. If you have not found the dimension that is beyond object consciousness in yourself and live in a mansion, the mansion is not going to do that much for you. And if you have found it in the little room, whether you are in a little room or a mansion, it doesn't matter that much anymore.

Because there is such aliveness to the field of now, it doesn't really matter where you go, what the things are that surround you. They matter relatively, but not absolutely. And then the universe around you is recognized as playful, forms that come and go.

Experiences, different places, come and go. It's a bit like when you are rooted in the now, you are rooted in being, you are rooted in yourself. And there is such fullness to now.

It is the fullness of life itself, because before life becomes a thing, before life becomes an object, before life becomes a life form, there is life, consciousness, whatever word. And to know yourself as that is the ultimate liberation. What is liberation?

What are you liberated from? You are liberated from the world of things, from obsession, from being consumed by things, which includes thoughts. You are liberated from time, also as an obsession that you are consumed by.

And you are liberated from a very heavy sense of self, a me, what the Buddha called the self. Ah, all that. The key then, the little opening into what we might call space consciousness.

This is not from science fiction. Space consciousness within yourself, the unconditioned consciousness. How do I get from being consumed and identified with object consciousness to recognizing myself as space?

Ah, it doesn't work by trying to run away from the world. It's through allowing whatever form this moment takes, the world of form, the world of objects, allowing whatever form this moment takes, internally allowing it to be as it is. There is what one could call a sense of space around what is.

It could be an event that usually would trigger in you upset or impatience or anger, and you'd simply say yes to it because it is, and suddenly there's space around the event. It's just a little pointer. This is a beautiful thing to discover, the space around things.

Why should I allow something to be because it is? It already is the case. Yeah, but it shouldn't be happening.

But it is. At this moment, the mind says nothing will ever change if I allow this moment to be as it is. The deeper truth is, if I internally am antagonistic towards this moment, ultimately nothing is ever going to change.

Because that is the old consciousness, which it keeps itself in place, the egoic consciousness, the mind-identified consciousness, the object-identified consciousness keeps itself in place through fighting what is, the me. How could one argue with the is-ness of this moment once you realize that the entire cosmos is connected, interconnected, everything in the cosmos is totally interconnected. Physicists know that.

So nothing that happens is isolated, an isolated event. It is connected with the totality. And within the totality, it makes sense.

In many, many cases, you could never work out through your understanding, mental understanding, how an event that on the surface looks senseless or looks as if it shouldn't be happening, you could never work out through intellectual understanding how the totality has brought this event about. Because no mind, no human mind can even understand a fragment of the totality. It would be presumptuous to an absurd degree to believe that through the human mind you could understand the totality of the universe and then explain it through words.

Using five vowel sounds, A, I, E, O, U, five sounds are the basic sounds. And then there are the others, they're called consonants, I think. They are sounds that are produced through air pressure, produced by So you have the five vowel sounds plus a few noises produced through air pressure.

And we believe that we could explain something, the universe. So you see how useful it is to give up trying to understand. But what we can see, and this is confirmed not only by the ancient wisdom traditions of humanity, such as Buddhism, but also even through recent discoveries in molecular atomic physics, the interconnectedness of all things.

That we can know, yes, we don't know how, we can't understand how in what way, but we can see, yes, it all is ultimately one. The universe is one. It is one both at the unmanifested level, the primordial one, the unconditioned one, the unborn, as the Buddha called it, the unborn, the uncreated, the unmanifested.

Beautiful saying of the Buddha, he said, There is, O monks, that's how the translation goes, There is, O monks, the uncreated, the unborn, the unmanifested. If there were not the uncreated, the unborn, the unmanifested, there would be no escape from the born, the created, the manifested. So, yes, we can see the universe is one, both as the unmanifested, obviously, and it is one as an organism, even in the manifested realm.

It is one organism, which has many different cells to it. One cell in the organism is humanity. Humanity also is one organism.

And what humans are doing to each other is a diseased organism in many ways. So, the universe is one organism. Whatever happens has its place within the totality, even if it seems completely incomprehensible.

And many things do happen that seem, Why is this happening? And just to simply see what one could call the inevitability of what is. Within the context, the larger context of the whole, to see the inevitability of whatever form this moment takes in your life, whatever happens, could not be otherwise.

Oh, you do not need to understand it. Occasionally it happens that after an event you can get a glimpse of understanding, only a glimpse if you are lucky, a tiny glimpse. Some of you may have experienced something seemingly negative and incomprehensible happening to you, life doing something to you, making you ill, serious illness, losing everything.

It does not make sense anymore. I went to church every Sunday and I worked my off and I lost it all. This was not supposed to happen, I do not understand anymore.

And years later, you sit in the Inner Directions Conference and suddenly say, Wow, if that had not happened, of course I would not be here. I would still be slaving away in the corporate office. If those bad things had not happened to me, I would never have gone beyond the conditioning.

So occasionally you might get a glimpse, but in many other cases you may not get a glimpse of why. But it is wonderful to see that, yes, there is an inevitability to whatever form this moment takes. And so if you do not resist the form that this moment takes, internally, you are no longer trapped or imprisoned by the form that this moment takes.

Because very often that is what it looks like. That is why people always try to get away from this moment. Very often it looks like a limitation upon you, upon your life.

That is not what I want. What am I doing sitting here in this office, in this place, in this relationship, in this, that, this, that, the other. Whatever form this moment takes, to align yourself with it.

The moment you do that, and it is not a doing, only through language it creates the illusion that you are doing something. One could say it is the opposite of any doing. To internally align yourself with what is, is the opposite of, OK, I have to do something.

You don't have to do anything. Just, this is as it is. Always recognize that.

There is no doing involved. This, it is as it is. You align yourself with a form that, you don't fight the form.

The moment you fight the form, the form of me gets strengthened in yourself. The me that is based on my thought forms gets stronger through the struggle, the reaction, the reactivity against what is. Ultimately, you could say, the illusion of me gets strengthened through fighting what is.

And you can verify that in your own life, when you are resisting whatever situation, or in disagreement with someone, this shouldn't be reactivity, to see how your sense of self feels a little bit inflated through that. And you can see it when you watch angry people, who are fighting, there are some people who live almost continuously in angry opposition to what is. The entire universe is against them, or they are against it.

The world is their enemy, and they are just looking for the next thing to get upset about. And you can see how that strengthens, how that inflates the egoic sense of self, the reactivity, the fighting what is, the complaining pattern in the mind, and, oh, and every time you complain, you strengthen a little bit the form identity of me, the complainer, the thought form, the reaction, the egoic identity inflates a little bit through the complaint, because every complaint means that you are right, and what you are complaining about is wrong.

Situation, a person, a place, you are superior to that which you are complaining about. That is the illusion how the self entity inflates itself continuously through that. It doesn't ever last for long, and they need something else.

But once you watch that process in yourself or in another, it's a little bit easier to see it in somebody else, how the self importance grows through every complaint. The imagined superiority of me as compared to that which you are complaining about. And some people complain about the world.

The world, of course it's a mad place, but complaining doesn't help very much. They complain about humans, people. People are so unconscious.

God, what? You should know better. But they don't.

So to see how that fighting what is strengthens the thought made me. And accepting what is, allowing it, surrendering to this moment, the form that this moment takes, that's all that ever changes, this moment never changes, it's always now. Saying yes to the form doesn't mean you can't take action.

If action is needed, it comes out of the yes instead of the no. Totally different quality of action. It comes out of saying, well, this is how it is.

Here I am, two coins in my pocket, wet, not much food in the stomach. That's what is at this moment. And you go beyond the form of this moment and there is suddenly a peace from deep within.

And there's a beauty even to that moment, the form of that moment, but the beauty may not be in the form, but it comes from a deeper place of the formless. The formless life that you are, the very life that you are, underneath the form as which you appear, you know it not through rejecting the forms, but through accepting the forms. So the magic formula then is, but it doesn't work if it remains a thought form, the forms that seem to limit you in your life are the concealed openings into the formula.

The conditions that seem to limit you are the portals into the unconditioned, that which you are in your essence. So if you can look upon your life and see where is it that life seems to limit you, what is the area where you feel hemmed in by life, the forms in your life, your life situation. It could be relationships, it could be a place where you live, the people you live with, the physical structures around you, the house or the work situation, whatever it may be.

Almost everybody experiences some form of limitation in their life, some form of limitation, and see if there, and then you might notice also that you are in an almost habitual resistance to those limitations, those forms in your life. And see what happens if you let go of the resistance to what is. Use that and see what happens if you let go of the no to this moment.

You may be surprised how quickly things change, how quickly the stuckness gets unstuck when you surrender. And some of you have experienced it already in certain areas of your life. How quickly you become free of the conditioned, not by trying to reach some point of the unconditioned in the future, the limitless, but by not offering inner resistance to the conditioned.

And with that deep acceptance of what is comes a word that I usually avoid because it can easily become a thought form and it has been misused so much. With acceptance of what is comes love. You love what is.

We don't even need to say love. It's there when there's an allowing of whatever form this moment takes. Love arises.

So the secret is not to turn your back upon the limitations and trying to reach some point in the future where you realize yourself as unlimited. Once you've sorted out your life situation, it's never going to happen. Not for long.

Then something else crops up. Instead of looking for some liberation at a future moment, the more limited you are in your life situation, there are degrees of limitation. Very limited, for example, would be if your body may not make it for that much longer anymore.

They might have said you may have two more months. Those extreme limitations are the most powerful openings, the most powerful openings into presence, into space. When you surrender to that, and so it happens in some people's lives, there is one big thing, what Christians used to call or still do, your cross.

One big thing in your life that is a dreadful burden or seems a dreadful limitation. Most of you have many little things. That's fine too.

That works too. But the one big thing works even better. If you're lucky enough to have one big thing in your life that's absolutely unacceptable.

Nobody could accept that. Well, that's what the mind says. And then surrender happens.

For many of you, it will be a case of little surrenders. What is a little surrender? What is surrender?

It's the shift from no to yes. Surrender is detecting an inner no to what is. And then saying, aha, there it goes.

And then to see, well, but it is. And then you look upon what is. Hmm.

Acceptance means it's not judged anymore. It's allowed to be. And there's a field of attention.

Spacious awareness, the essence of your being, was always there. Never knew it. And this is how surrender to one big thing can take you once and for all.

Surrender is no more than surrender to this moment as it is. No other spiritual practice is required. But if you're happy with other spiritual practices, that's fine too.

But every spiritual practice ultimately points to that. So why not do it now? What beauty in welcoming the only thing there ever is, which is now.

What beauty in welcoming the form that this now takes, whatever the form may be. And realize yourself as that which is deeper than any form. Stillness.

Peace. Space. Not that which happens, but the space in which it happens.

That's who you are. And so, when you look at night into space, the vastness of outer space, vast, infinite, infinite depth, that's the external version of who you are. And then you also notice when you look there, you see, oh well, it's so simple.

There are basically two things in this world. The world, space, and things in space. It's as simple as that.

The world consists of space and things in space. Or rather, things in space are the world. Let's change it slightly.

Things in space are the world, and space is that which goes beyond anything that words could say. But it's so obvious, even if you look through the senses, that there's basically even this room. There are things, bodies, chairs, flowers, lights, and there's space.

Space, usually nobody notices. And usually nobody notices the inner space, the stillness that is underneath the noise, the incredible spaciousness that is there, within you. So you, you are the bridge between the object world and the formless, unconditioned, the One.

And you move through this world, interacting with form still. Your body is form too. Thoughts still happen, occasionally.

You interact with other forms. And the play of forms continues all around you. And you are rooted in the formless, which is peace.

And the world is then the play of forms around you, so to speak. And nothing in the world of form matters that much anymore. And then, and this is almost a paradox, something that is not of this world, which is the world of objects, something that is not of this world, shines through this form into this world.

And the formless, a certain transparency happens through surrender to what is. A certain transparency happens, and so the unconditioned shines through into the world of form. And the world of form then is experienced as a more benign place when that comes through you.

And it transforms how you experience the world of form also. Not that the world of form will lose its characteristics of having polarities, it has polarities. The world of form will always have certain polarities, otherwise forms could not survive.

High, low, hot, cold. But the manifestation of the polarities of the world of form will become more benign, not the harshness. So one could say love comes into this world, and love is not of this world.

That's how the world changes. Not that it matters that much anymore, whether or not it changes. And you certainly, as you surrender to what is, you relinquish the need for the world to change.

And then it changes. And that includes the need for your world to change, your situation, it must change. Well, first accept what is, and then see what happens.

[Speaker 2] (2:29:01 - 2:30:09)

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2001-Hollyhock-Retreat-01-To Know Yourself as the Underlying Awareness - Hollyhock Retreat 2001- 352x256 - 1 of 5

[Speaker 1] (2:51 - 1:17:51)

I hope you use the trail to come here. It's the most wonderful walk. Unless, of course, you're physically challenged, you may have to use the road.

If possible, use the trail. Magic. It's not magic if you're stuck in your mind and the mental noise when you walk along it.

Then it's just a trail, and you're getting from A to B on it. And so let's just address on how to be with nature and in nature. Let's just stay with that trail for a while, but it could be anything or anywhere, walking by the water, standing, sitting.

And there are all these beautiful forms, life forms, around you. And it's good to be aware of that, to acknowledge that, to look, to listen. But more important even than that is to be aware of a dimension that is beyond the forms that you see.

Words are dangerous because every word that I use now is a form. The whole of language only reflects the world of form. So when you speak of something that's beyond form, you immediately reduce it to form.

This is why the beginning of the Tao Te Ching, one of the most ancient and profound books written in Chinese thousands of years ago, the Tao is the essence of being, being itself. The Tao that can be spoken of is not the true Tao. And then, of course, the book continues to speak of it.

And the same happens here. But the book begins with those lines to alert the reader to the fact that the truth isn't in the words, that the words are already a reduction. Once you know that, then you're less inclined to mistake the words for the truth.

And you're aware of the limitations of language. And that's helpful when you know that, of course, it's limited, of course, that's not quite it. And they're only pointers, little pointers.

So I am saying the same as the writer of the Tao Te Ching said three thousand years ago. Don't hang on to the words. They're not explanations.

I'm not here to explain the universe. It's far beyond what you could understand through the mind. But the essence of the universe is in you.

So you can know the essence as yourself, but not conceptually. Only when the mind becomes still. And that knowing isn't like the knowing that the mind knows.

It's a knowing that looks as if you didn't know anything anymore from the point of view of the mind. That's why the Buddhists have called that state emptiness. But I don't use that word very much because, at least in the West, it's not a helpful pointer.

Everybody would walk out empty. But of course it's an attempt to speak of that which you cannot speak of. So having said this, we go back to the forest trail.

And there you are, walking. Your senses are alert, which means you're quite present. And you're perceiving visually, seeing, listening, hearing, in a state of simple, not strained, simple, open alertness.

Which means you don't carry the burden of a heavy personal sense of me which consists really mainly of your problems. And while you walk, you don't walk with that burden on your back. And you walk simply as a field of alert presence.

Don't worry about the me and the problems. You can pick them up at any time again. But while you walk, something arises that is greater than that limited personal sense of me.

You're not losing anything. So there's an alertness, presence. And then you look at, you may look, there's a tree movement of the branches.

You could focus on anything of this. At any moment there's thousands of life-forms surrounding you. Or you can take in the totality, occasionally focus on one.

And then you go deeper. And I suggest you do that at first when you're sitting down somewhere and watching, or standing somewhere and watching and listening. You acknowledge the forms.

And then there arises a sense of some all-encompassing presence that holds all these forms together. And at first you may, it may be that you become aware of an all-pervasive stillness that is there. But it's alive.

The stillness isn't quite right word, but what else can we say? There's a stillness around, although there are certain noises, the noises of the forest. Tiny, today the sea is like, almost like a mirror, but occasionally tiny waves and ripples make a noise.

And they're surrounded always by stillness. And then there are birds occasionally flying. An enormous field of still presence, like as if it were holding everything within its embrace.

And if you become aware of that, you've already gone beyond the forms. Not by denying the forms, but you go beyond. Because the moment you become aware of that field, that awareness is the arising of presence within you.

And what really that is, you're becoming aware of the awareness through which all perception happens directly. That sounds dualistic, becoming aware of awareness, but that's only because of language. That's because every sentence is a subject and an object.

It sounds as if you were becoming aware of something that is not you, an object in consciousness. And of course that is true as far as all sense perceptions are concerned. You are aware of something.

You see it, you touch it, you hear it. It's a sound, it's a visual thing. It's something.

You are aware of something. So that's why language reflects that. There's always a subject and an object in the sentence.

But when you become aware of awareness, the underlying field, there's no longer any duality there. What really happens is you're becoming aware of the essence of yourself. Awareness is becoming aware of itself.

Awareness knows itself. You know yourself as yourself. Not two, but one.

And it begins with a simple thing, like you contemplate a form in nature, and then become aware of the space and stillness around it. And then perhaps close your eyes for a moment, and the form that you have been looking at disappears. And there's simply, there was the disappearing form is gone, although there may still be a trace of it in your mind retained as a mental image, but that may also go.

And there's simply a sense of spacious presence. Not aware of anything in particular, just aware. So the ground of all being, beingness itself, which is not confined to the inner, there's ultimately no distinction between within and without.

Knowing the ground of all being, and knowing the forms that arise out of it, which are fine. So nature is a wonderful help, but some people get stuck when they go into nature, in the forms of nature. Even if they go beyond labeling, most nature enthusiasts, of course, go into nature because they are very knowledgeable about nature, and whatever they look at, they immediately know what it is, and they label it.

They might even go with a catalog of bird species, and then they cross off each one they see. And then others may go beyond that, and no longer label, but still not be aware of awareness. They're still with the forms, just the forms.

So the most wonderful thing is, and this is the whole, if you can get even a glimpse of it, that is the awakening of what it means simply to know yourself as the underlying awareness. Externalized, it is perceived as the underlying stillness, alive stillness around, that surrounds all phenomena. Now when you're in a city, it's hard to sense the underlying stillness that surrounds all phenomena on Times Square in New York, or on the freeway in L.A. Where's the underlying stillness that surrounds all phenomena out of which everything arises on the freeway? Of course, it's there too. But you may not be able to sense that as an external field of stillness as you do here. It's easy to know it in the so-called external world as a field of stillness.

On Times Square in New York, you may not sense it as the external field of stillness because there's so much noise going on there, and yet it's still within you as the space of aware presence. So there may be times when you find it both within and without, like here, in this gathering and out in nature, there is a still, very alive presence that is beyond the forms. The forms exist in it.

It's in and in between. You know how inadequate words are. So the opportunity here is you can begin to sense it as if it were something external to you.

So you step out of your room in the morning, and you open the door, and then your senses are alert, and you watch, and you look, and then you become aware of the very consciousness that is looking. And for a moment then you close your eyes. The forms, at least the visual forms, have disappeared.

What's left is simply beingness, presence. And maybe a thought occasionally arises in it and subsides. And another thought may come.

And that's also a form that arises. There's physical forms, and there are thought forms, inner. They arise also in that vastness.

But you know the vastness that is both within and without. It's even vaster when you go into outer space. If you traveled there, the vastness of nature here, you would realize how much vaster that is.

The infinite space that you perceive. And there's something here that takes you to the limit of what can be understood, because you see the infinity of outer space, and it goes on and on. And there seems to be no end to it.

And then the mind says, okay, if there is an end to the universe, to space, what's beyond that? There must be more space. And if there's no end, that seems impossible, too.

It goes on, billions of light years, the vastness of that. And it's a field of just space, of spaciousness. And this is how we perceive it through the senses.

We perceive it as a nothingness. And we perceive it as infinite nothingness. And a few forms in it.

Galaxies. And every galaxy, billions of suns and systems. And they're tiny forms of luminosity.

And then there's vast emptiness. And in another world, another galaxy. And another.

And a million and ten million. And a hundred million. But so much more space than things in it.

And if you look into everything, the essence of everything is also space there. It's mostly empty space. Every physical object, the atoms, the distances, the spaces between the atoms is so vast.

But it looks solid. So it's perceived through our senses as space. It is the eternal, the infinity, the infinite itself, the eternal.

You could say that the closest you can get to perceiving God through the senses is to see God as space. The all that pervades everything from within and without. That is the essence of everything.

But that's the external. Really what that is, what is perceived, it is the field of consciousness. The one consciousness.

So after our little excursion into space, we are back here, which is also space, becoming aware of the space or spaciousness in nature that embraces the forms. A field. And at that moment the mind becomes still and you're aware of the inner space.

It is aware of itself. And once you know that, you can go anywhere, even to places where there is no silence outside, or very little, where there is little nature. And even there it's no longer a problem, because it's all within.

The stillness is there, underneath thought. We don't have the heating on, do we? Now mostly people become aware of this dimension only through great loss, suffering, great loss.

Many forms that they had identified with, whether they be thought forms, belief systems, identifications with this or that, thoughts, which are identifications with external things, loss is experienced in a person's life, and loss is a disappearing, dissolving form. Death in one way or another. As long as you are attached to forms and derive your sense of self from forms, identified with different forms, thoughts, things, images, people, and a form disappears, dies, that is painful, that is suffering.

It's also a potential opening into that which is beyond form. The very dimension that we enter here, to most people, is only accessible when they come into contact with death in one form or another. And even then, it's only a potential opening into the formless.

In many cases, in most cases, that potential is not realized. There's only suffering. But whenever life removes a form from you that you had identified with, and it could be a person, or it could be possessions, or it could be that your belief structures suddenly crumble, the mental forms, whatever it may be, life removes forms and it leaves a sense of, you don't know who you are anymore because you had identified yourself through those forms that gave you your sense of me.

And always, at some point, life will remove the forms that you had identified with as me. So, life gives you that opportunity, and it's perceived, from the point of view of the me, as bad, as dreadful. It doesn't want to go there.

But every little me will have to go there, because the forms eventually will leave you. And the sooner it happens, in a way, the better. If you are so lucky that you live to the age of 90, and then no form has left you, your wife is still there, you've been married for 70 years, and your money is still there, and the world still thinks you're important, even, this is unlikely, but even then, at some point, it will come, your wife will die.

And the world may forget about you, that you're important. Or the world keeps telling you that you're important, and you can no longer believe in it yourself. That means that those forms leave you.

And some people are faced with a sudden loss of many forms all at once. And those were the first people who came to spiritual realization in the history of humankind. The first people who realized that which lies beyond form, were people, of course, the first, there were no spiritual teachers yet.

Those became spiritual teachers, but what first happened to them was life took almost everything away from them at once. So the forms went, and where the forms were, that they had identified with, there were just holes in their lives. Big holes.

And at first there was enormous pain, because it's death, death everywhere. And then the pain became so much that they couldn't stand it anymore. Suddenly, there was a relinquishment of resistance to the suchness of this, and there was a yes to the emptiness, the little, the holes everywhere.

And in that moment, enormous inner peace came suddenly. They had gone beyond form, beyond identification with form, which is also mind. And they had essence realization, realization of the essence of being.

No longer needing to define themselves through some form. And that's, later they look back and say, what happened there? Where's that peace?

Where did that come from? And then perhaps after a long time, they could see, oh yes, I became free, free. And then they tried to explain it to others, at first not successfully.

And then they tried to recreate that experience for others, and set up a school, a monastery. And people who came into the monastery shaved their head, and adopted a different name, and were, just threw away their old clothes, and just wear simple garments, to let go of identification with form. That makes sense.

However, the danger that immediately creeps in is that in itself becomes a new form that you identify with, because now you are, you have a new identity as the spiritual one, who has let go of all forms. And then, after hundreds of years, it becomes an established thing. And then a Buddhist monk is respected, well, not everywhere anymore in the East, but on the whole, respected.

He has status in society. In India, there's still the tradition of people at a certain stage in their life, leave everything behind. They don't even join a club.

They don't join necessarily a community or monastery. They just start wandering from place to place, leaving everything. That's great spiritual practice.

But you don't need that. You can do it. You're leaving it behind already.

It doesn't matter so much if in the external you carry on with the forms, as long as you, I'm not telling you to leave all the forms of your life behind. That's another, it is a way, but you carry the thought forms anyway, and they are not easily left behind. Continue to honor the world of form, whatever that is in your life, without getting lost, losing yourself in the forms and believing in them.

And that starts with a simple thing, like we pointed out last night. Don't take your mind too seriously. And that means also, because it's a reflection of external forms, don't take the external forms too seriously.

They do go together. When you don't take your mind too seriously, you don't take the events and the situations that arise and subside around you that seriously. Not that you don't honor them and face every challenge that presents itself in the now.

That's the only place where it can present itself. The rest is pseudo challenges, and that's called problems in the mind. True challenge is now, and you face that, not that you turn away and say, I'm done with form.

I don't want to know anything anymore. You could do. That's happened.

Some people have done it in India and turned away from all forms and went to a cave. And they were lucky they were in India, and people came and put food in their mouth. If you do it in the West, they will put you away.

So don't do it. You don't need to turn to reject forms and say, it's all unreal. Ultimately, it may be true, but I wouldn't even say it like that.

You don't reject the forms that constitute your life situation, and they may be good. They may be half-half. They may be bad.

You may be at a low cycle of your form identity, or you may be at a high cycle of your form identity. It doesn't really matter. If you're at a high cycle of your form identity, and you're nevertheless here, that means you have somehow already looked through that as not ultimately it, not ultimately you, not ultimately the truth.

And that's enormous to do that when people who the world is there at the peak, and yet they come. It's always a miracle. When you're at a low, it's easier.

It's easier to be drawn here. Forms become very unsatisfactory, and a low could mean that you have just experienced death in one way or another. Forms have left you.

Your form identity beginning to crumble. It's not working out. It shouldn't have happened.

It wasn't part of the story that was going to be my life. Now everybody, no matter whether you are at the peak of form, even if you're at the peak, of course, you will experience the other. That's the polarity of the world of form.

So it's a liberation from that, and it begins with what we called last night, don't take your thoughts too seriously, because thought is form, beginning of form. And when you don't take your thoughts too seriously, and that of course implies, I wouldn't say to anybody, because still a majority of humans are so identified with their thought that the statement don't take your thoughts too seriously would be meaningless. And the thought would immediately react to that statement.

What are you talking about? Because not being able to, anybody who can listen to this and can endure sitting here, not just for two hours, but a whole weekend, means there is space within you already. From there you can listen.

Otherwise, if you were totally identified with thought, you would either fall asleep, thought would switch off, or you would become so anxious, restless, you couldn't stand it anymore, or you would become reactive. Thought would react, it would feel threatened. Your very thought-based identity would feel threatened by every word.

And then you would shout something and run out. In a final attempt to be right, which is the ego's great thing, and before anybody can challenge you, you run out. It has happened.

So, not taking your mind too seriously, and then that leads to, inevitably, not taking your life situation too seriously. Handle it well, and you will, because there's presence. When you're not in your mind, you will handle, you do handle, situations that arise with care.

You give it attention. So it is, you take care of the now, and whatever arises in it, because your attention is there. It's not somewhere else where you want to be.

So you are truly responsible for this. You take responsibility for life, which is now, which means you have the ability to respond to the now fully. And yet, despite the fact that there is care, you don't take it that seriously, because you don't take your mind that seriously, which means it does not have the heaviness to it that otherwise it has, when all you know is the forms with which you identify as me, then they are very serious, and every event that happens and challenges, even in the slightest, your idea of how things should be, will lead to reactivity, anxiety, anger, fear. There's no space anymore, and you can always sense in a person the loss of inner spaciousness or presence, stillness, when they are being challenged, and that can happen through a challenge, and you get drawn back into, suddenly, this, it matters, it matters.

And it could be a tiny thing or a big thing, it's the same reaction. And that's to be lost, to be lost, what in India they would say, lost in illusion, lost in form, lost in an illusory sense of self, because every form, you need the form to give you your sense of self. In other words, you don't know who you are.

Beginning of suffering. You don't know yourself. Not that you could ever know yourself in the sense that the mind knows an object in awareness, you can't know yourself in that way.

And there are people who are seeking self-realization for 20, 30, and 40 years, believing that they could know themselves in the same way that they know an object in the external world. They believe, and they're looking for self-realization, thinking, at some point, I will know who I am, but they're looking for it on the level of objects in consciousness. I will have a complete knowledge of me.

That means, who is having that knowledge? You forgot the one, the I that has the knowledge, and you say, now I know myself, there it is. So you bake yourself into an object in consciousness, and know a lot about yourself.

That's all you can ever do when you make yourself into an object. You can know vast amounts about yourself, and it will be very complex. Because the longer you study the self, the more complex it gets.

And there are layers and layers of things. Not that, again, that may have its place for a while. But you can't know yourself in that way.

You cannot become an object to yourself, an object in awareness. That's the ego. That is the sense of the little me.

The egoic sense of self is the very thing you have made yourself into a mental object, and you have a relationship with that mental object. It's me, and you have a dialogue. It talks to itself.

And this is the amazing thing, to have a relationship with yourself. Who is the self, and who is the one who is having the relationship? And every relationship you have with yourself is problematic.

It's always a problematic relationship with yourself. It can't not be problematic, because you have made yourself into an object in consciousness. You don't know yourself as consciousness.

You think you're something that arises in consciousness, which is a form, a mind form, an image, consisting of many factors, but a mental image. And there we have the essence of self-delusion, of not knowing yourself. And it's called egoic sense of self, me.

And so some people who look for enlightenment, look on that level, as if they could find themselves there, as if they could become an object of knowledge, of consciousness. And you can't. And that's why those who reach that realization, reach that realization when their search on that level becomes totally frustrated.

That's another way. Either all the forms leave you, or you've been seeking and seeking, spiritually perhaps, for a long time. And finally you say, I give up.

Thirty years I've been meditating, and I've seen all the teachers. What's the point? And you come to the end of seeking, which is the end of future.

And then you sit under a tree, and suddenly you're not looking for some new form to add to you. For the first time in 30 years, after 30 years of spiritual practice, which without knowing it, actually was an attempt to add something to me. Another form, and it was called perhaps enlightenment.

I want to add the ultimate jewel into what I already have. The crowning achievement of my, what's it called in America, CV, curriculum vitae, my resume. And you sit under a tree, and no longer try to add anything.

And suddenly, here it is. Future collapses. Future as a need collapses.

You don't need to add any new form to me anymore. You're done with all that. And there you are, you sit under a tree, as the Buddha did when he gave up his search, and little petals fall on you.

And then the devas or celestial beings or angels come and say, please teach us stillness. We are still already, but not as still as you. This is the easiest way to realization.

The weekend here, you're done already with the difficult bit that's taken you here. And this is the enjoyable part. And this is the spiritual, the power of a spiritual teaching.

It removes the need for further suffering. You've recognized the ephemeral nature of all forms, and that it's not who you are. A voluntary death.

And then you can play in the world of form quite beautifully. It's not that serious. And you can be a wonderful player in the world of form, and engage in this or that activity, not looking for yourself in it.

If it works out, fine. If it doesn't work out, as it sometimes happens, fine. You don't need it to confirm to yourself that you are somebody or who you are.

You're playing now with form. And you are connected with a deeper, the deepest core, the deepest essence of who you are. And there's also beyond the fact that you play with forms and don't take them that seriously, something emanates from within you, even into the world of form.

And although it's not serious, there is a transformation that happens, even as far as your life situation, which is the world of form, is concerned. Even there, although it doesn't matter that much, even there, things become transformed. And although you cannot go beyond the polarities that govern the physical universe completely, in the world of form, you cannot go beyond up and down.

The tension between opposites upholds the entire universe. So your body is a form, your thoughts are forms, there's the world of polarity in which you move. Of course, your life will continue to have ups and downs, but it doesn't matter that much anymore, because you've gone beyond that within yourself.

But you experience the world of polarity now in a much more harmonious, benevolent way than before. When you're totally attached to forms, the world of polarity is very threatening. And it can be very extreme.

The more you're attached to form, the more extreme way you experience the polarities of the world. Heaven and hell, incredible drama. One day you go, I found the one who's going to make me happy.

I'm ecstatic. And then a few weeks later, you're, or worse, and you might be, is human unconsciousness playing itself out in one way or another. And that happens in your personal life.

Or it could be the other way. Somebody did something to me. He, she did that to me.

He did it, she did it. So instead of making identity for yourself out of unconsciousness, you put an identity onto somebody else. That's, so you get trapped in labels, definitions, and judgments, believing that there's somebody there who did it.

So both cases, it's identity, you're identified with form, and you make an identity out of human unconsciousness and say, it's me. And that's what the ego likes. The ego loves guilt.

It attaches itself to guilt because the strongest ego, some of the strongest egos are very guilty egos. Other aspect of very strong ego is resentment egos, which is the other way. Somebody out there, again, you give someone an identity.

And so that, that goes and then as this new dimension, you become a blessing. As you play in the world of form, there's something emanates from within you that teaches peace. Probably not the words, so simply the way you respond, the way you do things, the way you very often are free of reactive, free of reactivity, a teacher of peace.

You bring peace, not peace that puts you to sleep, alive, vibrantly alive peace. Not the peace that you get after two glasses of whiskey. You're going towards sleep there.

Vibrantly alive peace. Here we are, this moment in the world of form, this weekend, beautiful forms around you, and then it leaves you. And then it's gone.

No experience lasts that long. That's characteristic of form. If all you had here was the external experience, you would say, oh, what a pity.

It's gone already. But the essence of our gathering here and of this weekend is not to collect another experience. There's a timeless essence in this experience, to know the timeless essence within every experience, consciousness itself.

So use nature, pay attention to the forms, and then pay attention to the field of stillness surrounding the forms that is within and without. After a while you may find you feel that sense of still spaciousness that surrounds the form more strongly than the forms. And that's why some people in India, some teachers say the world is unreal, which I don't say, but because they sense, they know that which is beyond form so strongly, so intensely, that the world of form seems to them a play of shadows.

And so they say it's unreal. But I wouldn't say it's unreal. It is a level of relative reality, temporary forms.

If questions arise in the mind, we may look at them later, today or tomorrow, if they are still there. Some questions arise and then become irrelevant and disappear. Other questions may arise in the mind and suddenly the answer is also there because you became still after the question.

And a few questions may still be left by this afternoon or tomorrow, maybe. It doesn't matter that much. No question and answer can matter that much.

But why not look at it? Stay in connection with the body. And then that sense of inner body becomes the underlying field.

You listen with your entire body. Is that noise, can we switch that off? Is it humming noise?

No? Okay. We have something to surrender to.

There's silence, almost complete silence in the external. You listen to that bird, but not just to the sound, the space in which it happens. That's consciousness.

And now approaches within the field of consciousness, a manifestation of the human mind as an aeroplane. And that's fine, too, without losing the sense of aware presence in which that sound also happens. Now the silence is lost on the external level, but is still there on the inner level.

If it's accepted completely, the form that arises. And it's no different from a whole civilization, a noisy civilization has arisen and passed away, represented by the noise of an aeroplane in the vastness. Now to listen, so to speak, to the space underneath and between the birdsong requires vigilance and alertness.

It requires an alertness of the entire body, every cell, alert, alive, attentive. And a strange thing that arises as you enter that dimension becomes a love for whatever form arises in this field. When you are the knower of the field, which is not different from it, a love arises for whatever form is born, whether it's the bird or the aeroplane.

You love what is because it came out of you. It is you. So you know yourself.

In other life forms, you recognize your own essence there. That's love. And that's the greatest gift that you as a temporary form could give to the universe.

Of course, you are not giving it as not a mean. You become an opening for that. The love flows into this world of form.

One could almost say you redeem the world of form from its state of ignorance, which is to be trapped and identified with form. You redeem the world of form without deriving a new sense of identity out of that. Then you no longer redeem it.

You're back in form, knowing all the while that I am not doing it and yet it is the essence of who I am. So with that humility comes also great power. There's great the power of consciousness itself, the divine, the one, and great humility, knowing you're only a window, so to speak.

This form is a window. No window is important. The light that comes through is important.

Never worship a window. Just sit in the stillness for just a few minutes when I'm gone. You don't need any music.

No, just stay with it. Stillness. And then of course the stillness walks out of this room as you walk out of this room with you.

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[Speaker 1] (2:46 - 37:47)

We talked about space, giving space to whatever experience you have right now, and of course during this weekend. To give it space, that's what we called it last night. Without space, you're in a reactive relationship with your life experiences.

The reactive relationship with your life experiences really is the ego, the me. It needs to be in a reactive relationship, personalize everything. How does this experience fit into my story?

Do I even want it in my story? And a lot of the time, experiences happen to me, inner as feelings, emotions, outer conditions, situations, people and what they do or fail to do. I don't fit in with how the story should be going of me.

And that's the reaction. This should not be happening. And life is full of those things that shouldn't be happening and don't fit in.

They're not in the script that I had planned. And life is the strange tendency to throw up these things that you would rather not have in the story of me. Then when it happens, the me reacts and contracts, an attempt to eject it from the story, but you can't, it's there, it's happening.

So there's no space, there's immediate reaction to the experience, no spaciousness around it. Now the spaciousness around it, what is that? It's a simple thing like not naming the experience.

That's a compulsion. Not going around continuously naming what's going on here. And that is also an attempt of the egoic self to control what's happening, because if I can name it, at least I can have some control over it, even if I name it as awful, dreadful, I mean, some way I'm controlling it, still it's a delusion.

And this is a good space and setting for learning not to name. It begins with a simple thing. You're having the experience of looking at a flower and there's space around the perception, you're not calling it anything.

Or you sit here while you're listening and you don't need to categorize and name. You can allow the space, especially the space between the birds, to be there. And you give space to the words too, allow that.

Stage of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. That's good, that's bad. Thought started, but the polarities of thought.

Good, bad. Like, dislike. Want, don't want.

And then comes, that's only the beginning. And thought develops out of that, a huge, massive amount of thought. Until there's nothing left of you but thought.

Well, or so it seems. And that is the day, the destiny, the fate of most of humans until now, except that now humanity is stepping beyond that. Nothing but thought.

Oh, and it's all up here. So the deepening here is happening. One could put it in two ways.

You go deeper than thought. You could also say you go higher than thought. It's just two perspectives on it here.

There's a deepening of your being. Not that it's not deep already. Your being is already deep, the depth of being.

But knowing it, that's why we call it a deepening, as it were becoming deeper here. That's because that's what it seems like, this inner depths beyond thought and also beyond the emotions. So with little things, not naming, and then you may find something goes wrong in a little way somewhere.

You miss the train or the bus. You can't quite catch it. And that experience is not named in any way, internally.

There's enormous power when that ceases. It may even happen you drop something, and I'm talking about things going wrong. You drop a cup, and it breaks.

And that experience is not named. Oh, it's gone. You slip and fall in the mud.

We're getting a little bit more bigger experiences. And oh, a non-reactive relationship to the experience. And you cannot, because it's an immediate acceptance of it, as the is-ness of this moment.

Well, that's there you are. You are in the mud, without a contraction. Maybe the body responds, of course, it does something, but not the entity, the self.

And then you sense that enormous power that is suddenly there when you're not naming, and through the naming, reacting and contracting continuously. And then you lost your job. You get a letter.

Well, that's how it is. It's all contained in the story that some of you know, because I've told it before. The Zen master who had a high reputation in a town in Japan, and one day was accused by a young 17-year-old who had just given birth to a baby.

And she said, the Zen master is the father. She told her parents when they insisted, wanted to know who the father was. They said, it's the Zen master, because a few months ago, I went to see him.

You may remember. That's when it happened. So the parents tell everybody in the village, this is dreadful.

And then they run to the Zen master and say, she just told us what you did to her. And this is, you are the father of the baby. And the Zen master listened.

And all he said was, is that so? Yes, he said, and we've told everybody in the town, nobody's going to come to see you anymore. And here's the baby, you can look after it.

We don't want it. Oh, is that so? He looked after the baby for a year.

Nobody came to see him anymore. He lost his reputation. Disgraced.

But he just took care of what this moment presented. The moment was, the baby was there. He fed the baby every day, took care of the baby.

After a year, the girl became a little bit more mature. And she confessed to her parents that no, it was the young boy who lived in the next block. And he was the father.

And the parents were disturbed and ran to the Zen master and said, can you ever forgive us? We made a dreadful mistake. She just told us that you are not the father, but the boy, a few houses away.

And the Zen master said, is that so? And then they said, oh, yes, and we want our baby back, please. And he said, is that so?

All right, here's the baby. And suddenly, his reputation was back. And people came to see him again.

Nothing changed. The title of the story is, is that so? It is an extreme version of being in a non-reactive relationship to your experience, to what happens.

And the good that comes out of every experience when you are in a non-reactive relationship to it, when you don't feel you need to protect yourself against this experience. In that case, the baby was looked after by an enlightened master for one year. That's a wonderful start in life.

Was given care and love for one year. Every experience, when you don't resist it, when you're not in a reactive relationship to it, and not even label it as good or bad, simply because it is, turns into good. That's the amazing miracle.

So you go beyond good and bad by refraining from labeling just good and bad. It is. And then the very power of the universe moves through you, the one who is open to what is.

The power of the universe, the one consciousness, the one intelligence can only move through an open channel. So when you are not open to is, then it cannot move. It will move through other channels, it doesn't mind.

It can move a little bit, but tiny trickles only. And so to experience the amazing thing that happens when you're in a non-reactive relationship to the experience, and see how what would have been called bad, turns around through the power of life itself. And that includes things like illness, if that is your experience.

It includes loss of a loved one, loss of possessions, whatever it may be. Watch what happens when you don't name it and say yes, because it is. It is.

That's how life becomes transformed, when the little meat no longer protects itself against the experience that you're having, the is-ness of this moment. And so in another teaching, spiritual teaching, another teacher gave another extreme example of that, put it in an extreme way, and he said, if somebody hits you on the left cheek, turn the other cheek. It is an extreme example of being in a non-reactive but open relationship to the experience.

He's going quite far, to quite an extreme, to express something that otherwise people just didn't get. He didn't talk in the language that we use here. People didn't have an understanding of it.

They only could be taught through stories, so he gave them stories. And again, it simply is an illustration of non-reactivity to the is-ness, which does not mean that you become a doormat and everybody will walk all over you. No.

There's great power in one who is non-reactive. And you can say no also in the non-reactive. You're not, doesn't mean what comes out of your mouth needs to be yes.

This is the famous non-reactive no. Open, clear, strong, no. But not non-reactive.

Just no to whatever. You're not rejecting this experience, but no is the appropriate response. You're not rejecting whatever the experience is.

There are many examples you could give. Somebody gives me food that is no longer fresh, wants me to eat it, and I say no, because it's, my body doesn't want it. It's not fresh.

No. Non-reactive. You shouldn't be serving me this food.

Who do you think I am? What is, this is dreadful. Oh, look at that.

Look at this soup. It's, my God. And then once the situation is finished, it carries on in the head.

The dialogue goes on for another two hours. And some people have dialogues in there that go on for years about one experience. It happened quite a while ago.

It goes on and it strengthens this me. And it can be that one or two major experiences that have never been accepted form the basis of your sense of identity. And then color whatever other experiences you have will be colored by that.

It sometimes happens with certain relationships. For example, a relationship with your parents. And colors the rest of your relationships for the rest of your life.

Not faced, or the relationship with one partner. The first relationship. And there was an enormous, and then the rejection of the experience continues for years.

And everything is distorted and colored by that. Every further experience in that field. Amazing.

So that's our practice here. You have to make do with little experiences here. Unless something major happens, something major could happen within you.

That's possible. A sudden coming up of the pain body, of accumulated stuff, pain, emotional pain, suddenly it's there. That could be a major thing on the inner level.

And that's good. It's there. You sense that.

On the outer level, it's less likely that something big will come up. But little things. Right.

So if you have old stuff in here, pain body, old reactions, they still carry this energy charge. And you may know what it is from the past. You may not know what it is, because the human pain body goes back a long time.

The human pain body, the accumulation of past pain, emotional pain, is not just your lifetime. It's the human pain is in there. Thousands of years of human pain.

And that has an energy charge. And you feel it when it becomes active, as you know, or you all know that, that it needs to feed periodically and the pain body becomes active, awakens. And then you become extremely reactive.

A tiny thing will trigger it and it will amplify your egoic mind structures and the little unhappy me. And it will feed on your thinking. How dreadful.

What I did, he did to me, she did to me. Now you may not even know what the cause is of what you feel, but it's most likely that you will believe that you know what it is. There will be some event and the pain body will focus on that and believe that enormous amount of pain that you feel was because of that little thing that happened.

But it's human pain. And what do you do with it? Give it space.

And even here we practice not naming it. You know it's there. Not naming it means it's, we talked about that last night, the weaving of stories in the head comes to an end around what you feel.

What's left is simply what you feel. Always going directly to what you feel. Yes, something happened.

Somebody made a rude remark and there was intense contraction and fear or intense anger. The pain body was ready to awaken. And now the mind is working overtime, feeding the pain body, thinking thoughts that are aligned with it.

Or talking to somebody on the phone about it. You know, this happened, that, and then he said, and I said, it loves drama. The pain body needs a dramatic scenario.

And if there's nobody around in your life, then it has to play out the drama in the head, as dialogues and monologues. If there are people around, the pain body will attempt to draw them into my drama. Please be part of my drama.

And often other pain bodies will oblige. So that's unconsciousness. It means it becomes you.

Human pain becomes a personal sense of me, an entity. Human pain that lives in you becomes a personal problem, an unhappy me. And there's the feeling that it is my, that is essentially me.

So for many people, a pain body is an essential part of their sense of identity, the accumulated pain. And once it's an essential part of your identity, of course you don't want to let go of that. You might say, yes, yes, I want to, but the pain body doesn't want to go.

It has momentum. And if you're not there when it happens, it takes you over. And once it takes you over, you want it.

It becomes you. And that is the addiction to unhappiness and pain that is everywhere. And you can see it in yourself when you're engaged in drama and enormous energy of the emotion is there at that moment.

You don't want to be free. It's the last thing you want is not to have it. You want to have it.

It wants to be there because it's you for a little while. It pretends to be you. So it's the momentum of human pain.

Whether or not this comes up here, who knows? It may do. The longer you stay here, the more likely it is that it comes up.

Or it comes up when you leave. And just watching it, giving it space, knowing it's there. Hmm.

Okay. There's the pain, the fear, or the anger, or the sadness. Space around it.

And then you don't even name it anymore. First, the naming drops. It's no longer part of a story.

It just is the emotion. And then you could go even further and not even name that. It's only that.

Okay. It's no longer a problem. Just pain that still is there.

And even, not even, I call it even pain. It's a movement. Or whatever it feels like.

Heaviness. Explosive energy. I'm going to explode any minute.

And then you might explode consciously. How vast the space is. And it's only a little wave movement in the spaciousness that you are.

And that little wave movement is not who you are. It's a little wave movement. So we are here to know the spaciousness that you are.

Know yourself as that. Somebody got attacked by their pain body after our last retreat. I heard from second-hand sources.

And there was enormous drama on the ferry with two or three people. That's all right. If any questions arise, perhaps in connection with pain body, or whatever it may be, feel free to ask.

There is a microphone there. You could perhaps step up to the microphone. It's gone now, so I don't know if it'll come back.

Does anybody remember more than I do? No. I'll go still for a moment, see if it comes back.

It's gone. I'll let you know if it comes back. Oh, yes.

Yes. Thank you. Love or space.

It's the redemption of the temporary form. Can you see the difference, when I said it just now, between something coming from presence and something coming from memory? I'm not saying you said it.

I said it from memory when you told me.

[Speaker 6] (38:00 - 38:02)

I have a question about the pain body.

[Speaker 1] (38:03 - 38:03)

About?

[Speaker 6] (38:03 - 38:04)

The pain body.

[Speaker 1] (38:05 - 38:05)

Yes.

[Speaker 6] (38:06 - 38:48)

It's nice to talk to you, Eckhart. I've noticed amongst myself and female friends, there's a lot around the pain body and relationships with men. I went through something recently, and I practiced what you had in your book, where I felt the feeling and allowed it.

I noticed a belief came up. It was like I was holding this belief. Once I saw it, the belief and let it go, it seemed that the pain body dissipated.

Can you comment on that further, go deeper, share some insight on my experience?

[Speaker 1] (38:48 - 38:48)

Yes.

[Speaker 6] (38:48 - 38:49)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (38:49 - 38:55)

Thank you. Can you say what the belief was?

[Speaker 6] (38:56 - 38:58)

It won't work.

[Speaker 1] (38:58 - 39:00)

Ah, very good.

[Speaker 6] (39:00 - 39:09)

Oh, and on top of that, I wanted to blame my mother for everything, because she told me that, and I believed her. But now I've changed my mind, and it's working.

[Speaker 1] (39:11 - 39:12)

Very good.

[Speaker 6] (39:12 - 39:12)

Thanks.

[Speaker 1] (39:12 - 57:31)

Thank you. Now, there are two sources of pain. It's the pain that you create now, and the pain that lives in you from the past.

You can add to the pain and belief structures that you have in your mind. And there are many of them in the conditioned mind that create further pain, and they add to the pain that's already there. So those belief structures that you had and believed in and were identified with, they actually continuously created for you new pain.

It wasn't so much the pain body, but once new pain is created, the pain body also comes up and gets hold of that, and it learns to add it to itself. But this is primarily the creation of new pain through holding certain beliefs that are not questioned, thoughts that you completely identify with, and then often, of course, they become real for you. If you believe something strongly, your perception of life becomes filtered through the belief and becomes selective, and that also affects your relationship.

So the unrecognized belief structures flow into relationships and ways in which you interact, experiences, and you select what corresponds to the belief, and that's how many people go through life. If your belief, for example, is that people are basically out to cheat you, could be an unquestioned belief that you learned in early childhood from your father or mother or environment, just one example, it's likely that you will encounter that in your experience in life. Many people will cheat you, because of the conditioning, you will actually be drawn and select those people who confirm to you that your views are correct.

It's all unconscious. And if you ever came across people who are trustworthy and honest, you wouldn't even see them. And if they are trustworthy and honest, but have a very slight streak of an unconscious slight tendency of cheating also, because humans are complex, and the mind is all kinds of layers, then you would bring out that in them.

So to see how through interpretations, unquestioned voices in the head, it won't work, to recognize the voice and suddenly see it, that's the beginning of freedom, when you recognize it as a voice and no longer believe in it. That is an aspect of what we talked about yesterday, not taking your mind so seriously, to see it brings up many unquestioned thoughts, assumptions, lies, ultimately, that you are identified with, and so suddenly you can see what the mind is doing and in how many, many, many ways it creates pain and suffering for yourself, which is then added to the pain body. So there is the pain that lives in you, there is the new pain that you create, and then gets added to the pain body.

And you saw how new pain is created, you saw it in yourself, and the seeing of it is the beginning of freedom, because it's only as long as you are unconsciously identified with the mind structures that you are forced to act it out. So there's always the two levels, and you can ask, you have to be, watch, be alert when pain arises to see, is that pain that comes, that is old pain, and this is often the case if a relatively minor trigger in your life creates an out of proportion reaction of pain. Something relatively small happens, it's often something, not always small, but the pain body needs an excuse for coming up.

It could be a thought in your head, it could be something somebody does or says to you, and suddenly there's enormous anger out of proportion to the triggering event. Or enormous sadness and depression, and just a little thing happens, somebody didn't return your phone call, and suddenly you go into enormous sadness or great anger because he didn't return your phone call. I've had some pain bodies like that on the phone, as it gets harder to reach me on the phone, because every form is limited, and so some people are good, they accept, it's fine.

They're happy with leaving a message, and others get, you didn't, you, and I can see how the pain body is old, because it's interpreted as rejection, of course, I can see how it is, I'm not good enough, you're not returning the, so it's interpreted by some belief, an old deep-seated condition, form of conditioning, and then all the emotion that is stuck there comes up, pain body. So what, be careful to see, is this, am I creating new pain at this moment by, through a belief system, a belief structure, a thought, and so you're aware of what kinds of thoughts are going through your head right now. And so suddenly you notice it won't work, you've had this thought for years, and it became true every time, and suddenly you notice it.

I had many thoughts like that. One thought I had was, of course, bad things always happen to me, of course it was bound to happen to me, it's bad, everything bad happens to me. And for years, and that thought started, I was already, when I was 12 years old, and 10 years, I had already had that thought, bad things happen to me, and a resentment towards life, because life made bad things happen to me, and it became true.

Lots of bad things happened. And later on, I stepped out of all that, and then I saw it. Amazing.

So watch your mind, is the key. Watch your mind. And now I wouldn't tell you that if you didn't have enough presence, which is the ability to be present with what the mind is, to know what the mind is doing, to step back and see what the mind is doing.

Not all the time, perhaps, of course, you get drawn back in periodically. And then again, at the latest you know that you got drawn back in when you become unhappy again. The me becomes heavy or contracted.

And then, that can be a little alarm clock. Oh, I must have lost the now, that's the first thing, and if you lost the now, you are lost in your mind, that's how you lose the now. And so any form of unhappiness means I lost this moment, and if you lost this moment means I am identified in thought, with thought.

I'm lost in the mind. And the moment you notice it, the alertness is there, because the noticing of it, the seeing of it, is not part of the mind structure. Something is arising that is more powerful than the conditioned mind.

It's the unconscious, the unconditioned consciousness itself, which we call sometimes presence here. And with that comes the ability to watch the mind. And you see, and there's the noise.

And with that comes the ability not to take your mind that seriously. In other words, not to believe in every thought that comes up. Recognize it as thought, and as conditioned.

Have compassion towards it, yes. Because it is the human mind. So by giving it space, to simply allow that noise to be there.

I haven't used that word before this weekend, but whenever you give space to an experience, whether it's thought structures, emotions, or an external experience that you are having, and you allow it to be, you give it space, that is always, you're always then in a compassionate relationship to that experience. Whether that comes from another person, displaying varying degrees of unconsciousness, often, people around you. And that is your experience at this moment.

And you give it space. Is that so? Alright.

And there is compassion with whatever arises. That human being, you're not making an identity for this human being out of their mind structures. And so you, and towards yourself, compassion with yourself.

Which is the fact that, yes, there is a noisy human mind going on and on. Yes, there is old emotion in me. There it is.

And you give it space. Compassion. Space really is also compassion.

And it's the most wonderful human quality there is. But without space, you cannot have compassion towards someone else or yourself, or a situation. Compassion requires a sense of space around what is happening.

A spaciousness. And ultimately, compassion is very closely connected with love. True love.

They're really aspects of the same inner state of being, or connectedness with the spaciousness of being. That's the arising of compassion. So you cannot cultivate compassion.

Now, in religions, people try that. Even in Buddhism, and I love Buddhism. It's a wonderful truth.

But even there, of course, mind structures have developed around it later, around the essential core truth, which is beautiful. And then mind structures have developed around it. And they say, let us develop compassion.

But without, with the mind, you can't develop compassion. You can try. And then Christians try to, we need to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Let's try and love him. Let's try and love him. I can't.

I just can't love him. Or even worse, you create an image of a loving me in the head, because you're a good so-and-so. Whatever you are, Christian, you're a good Christian, and you have an image of yourself as loving.

So you deny even to yourself that you hate someone, and you speak of love. And underneath it, there's the opposite, which you can't even admit to yourself, because it would conflict with the image in your head as a good Christian, or a good this, or a good that. And you would become, it would shatter your whole self-structure.

So traditionally, many, this is why religions haven't worked so well. Occasionally they worked in a few individuals. Even within the religions, some became free.

Even within repressive medieval Christianity, the most repressive mental thing you can imagine, miraculously, a few within that structure, of course the structure tried to sometimes kill them and inject them, but within that structure, became free. And often the structure would spit them out, didn't want them anymore. That's too threatening.

And in Islam also, there were Sufis, and again, often they get stoned to death, and some of them were not very wise. They said, I am God! That was deep realization, but everybody misunderstood.

So amazing how many absurd beliefs run through people's heads as conditioned mind. Don't take it too seriously. Don't believe what your mind is telling you.

Don't create some superstructure of problems there. I no longer, I can't trust anybody, not even my mind. Often a new belief comes in when one experience is not fully accepted.

There is an experience that is not fully embraced, allowed to be, not given space, and out of that one experience comes a new belief, a deep seated. I can't trust anybody anymore. You can't trust men.

You can't trust women. I've seen it all. There's not a single one who is trustworthy, whatever.

So out of one experience that wasn't received, a little belief forms. And then it gets stuck in there, and it plays itself out, again and again. All men are bastards.

And of course, then you most likely meet them. It's amazing how many there are. So the wonderful thing here is, we do not need to investigate bit by bit what the mind is doing, because that would take a long time.

Let's examine the structure of your mind and all the stuff that goes on in there. A lot of stuff goes on in there. And so we simply recognize the basic mechanics of it, and that's enough to see it.

To see it. To see it.

[Speaker 3] (57:33 - 59:48)

Okay. Thank you, Eckhart, for being here. My question has to do with this naming that you spoke of, and it kind of links with what you said just a moment ago about feeling something and pretending something else.

And my question really is more like wanting to acknowledge that it seems to me that there is an importance to naming, actually, in that things do happen to children that are truly unspeakable for the children. And then they grow up. And until they can name what it is that they've had to internalize without anyone to turn to, they are caught in this terrible place where they're in denial about their very life.

And until it's possible to acknowledge, this occurred, my father did this unspeakable thing to me as an innocent child, then it's virtually impossible to move on and to actually have the freedom that we all seek. And I certainly realize that to continue naming it and naming it and naming it after you have initially named it or when it's inappropriate to do that is very different from somehow being empowered to actually name it. So that then you can come out into the light from this very dark place of amnesia, really.

[Speaker 1] (59:49 - 1:07:49)

Thank you. You have of course partly answered your own question that if you go on and on naming it, you become stuck in the naming of it. And the naming of it is more of an obstacle than the original event.

And that becomes a vicious circle. So rather than naming is to see it clearly, naming already implies that you take a position in regards to whatever the event is that you're naming. If you name it, you will name it as dreadful or awful or of course that is normal to name it in that way.

To go beyond that and simply see it as something that happened. What first comes up when something you might have denied it totally and not even known it, the first labels that may come up may be of that kind. But every naming implies a certain, already, an interpretation.

And with the interpretation comes great heaviness. So to see it, this is what happened. Accept it.

Acknowledge it. Speak about it, if necessary, to someone openly. But be so present that you don't get trapped in a particular interpretation of that event, no matter how dreadful it was.

Because it's the interpretation of the event that keeps your sense of identity trapped in it. And then for the rest of your life you have to think, something dreadful happened to me. Something dreadful was done to me.

And so that is the continuing of that. And you were right to say not to continue the naming. The naming becomes a seeing.

But in the seeing you no longer adopt a particular position towards it. You no longer need to adopt a particular position towards it, as call it this or that. But simply see.

There's already complete objectivity in seeing. And that takes you beyond the pain created by that event, which still has a momentum that will be there. But you're not adding to it by using those labels, or rather being used by the naming process.

And feeding the pain body continuously through it, and building an identity for yourself. Someone, I am someone who, to whom, something dreadful happened once. Of course it may have been true to go beyond dreadful.

It happened. It happened. Things happen all the time, this very moment on the planet.

Millions of things happen at this very moment that we could call dreadful. And they're all manifestations of human unconsciousness. The evolution of humanity, the present level of human evolution.

All an expression of that, at this very moment humans are being killed on the planet. Probably several every minute. I haven't got the exact figures.

I don't know if anybody has them. And things happen continuously. And they're all dreadful, yes, of course.

But you become, your relationship towards it becomes limited. When you continue to call it dreadful. Allow the label to arise, it was dreadful, yes.

It was also one of the, there are many ways in which every human suffers the effects of human unconsciousness. Some suffer it in more extreme ways than others. Every child suffers the effects of human unconsciousness in their culture, in their surroundings, in one way or another.

Some in more extreme ways than others. But everyone is born into that field of unconsciousness. It's very rare to be born into an enlightened household.

There are very few. I haven't met anybody who was born into an enlightened household. Maybe that day will come.

It could be very near. There are probably some enlightened households already now. And their baby is born there.

And they would not experience new pain as they grow up beyond the pain that comes through being a physical form. They may still have a pain body because that is inherited genetically, but no new pain is added. It may be possible.

But it was, all of us suffered, some in more extreme ways than others. Some didn't even survive. It was so extreme.

And to see, yes, dreadful, yes, it's true, and then we move beyond that label also. And so, space, spaciousness arises around it. It includes the pain that still lives in you.

But you don't get trapped in an identity based on what happened to you that is called dreadful. That's the danger. Don't get trapped in a mind-created identity.

And it's comforting, of course, to have it. You can meet others who had the same kind of suffering as you and get together. There's a little bit to be said for it, too, because now you can be open about it.

And then immediately, from being helpful, it can become a great hindrance. It's so, not constructing an identity for yourself out of it. So, not continuing to label.

And then you relinquish the labels. What's left after that is only the pain in your pain body. That's okay.

Not being fed anymore by the naming. And then just wait and let the energy transmute itself. That requires a little bit of time.

It's all right. You're already free. There's some pain in you.

You cannot, you can be free even with pain in you. It doesn't become you anymore. But basically, you're already free.

And at times you weep. But you're free.

[Speaker 4] (1:07:55 - 1:08:12)

I seem to have developed a joy body that I feed. And it feels as if I'm feeding it through a mind structure.

[Speaker 1] (1:08:17 - 1:08:19)

What's your mind saying about it?

[Speaker 4] (1:08:22 - 1:09:06)

My mind interprets experiences, or the now, by saying things like, Oh, yes. This is beautiful. Oh, I know this.

Oh, you know. So I, it's like I thought, you know. So I have stillness at some level.

Yet, oh, it feels as if there's a mind structure that's still there.

[Speaker 8] (1:09:07 - 1:09:08)

Oh, right.

[Speaker 4] (1:09:12 - 1:09:22)

It's like, is it presence? Stillness? Okay.

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:31 - 1:11:58)

Thank you. You could be sitting here. Thank you.

So, that is not created by the mind. And that's not a lot of mind. It's just a little bit of mind.

There's a deep sense of presence. It's not created by the thoughts. Yes.

Beautiful. Wow. It's not created by that.

The thoughts are an expression of that. And that happens sometimes. But sometimes thoughts can become, or can be obscured again.

If the initial expression of what you sense, the joy and the aliveness and the peace, and the mind can come in and go beyond, yes, beyond this is beautiful. Yes, this moment is good. It can go beyond that and start bringing up more things around it.

And then you might call somebody up and say, you know what I'm experiencing now? And let me talk to you about it. And through the talking, it can draw you out of it.

That can happen. You talk, you're trying to explain your wonderful state, and by the time you're finished explaining, you're out of it. That's possible.

But the important thing is to realize it is not created by those thoughts. They simply reflect that. So the mind actually, the more you live in presence, the more benign the thoughts become.

You no longer have this battlefield in your head. The more present they are, then the thoughts also tend to become more gentle. But it doesn't mean that the thoughts create it.

They simply reflect that then. That's wonderful. Thank you, thank you.

Beautiful.

[Speaker 7] (1:12:05 - 1:12:43)

I've noticed that sometimes after a weekend like this, where there's a tremendous amount of light coming in, I'm assuming that the universe wants to balance itself out and then something very negative will come up later. You know, my pain body is maybe getting more clever than it used to be. Because I think I can recognize a full-on attack of the pain body.

And I can stay present to external events that seem very negative. I'm wondering what you think is happening if you feel physically ill after a weekend like this. Is that the pain body?

[Speaker 1] (1:12:43 - 1:15:36)

That's possible. If the pain body can no longer use your mind, because there's too much presence, it just can't use it anymore. It can happen that the only way left to it to express itself is on the physical realm, in the physical realm.

For some people it means they even experience it in a group, like there's a sudden pain somewhere in the body, sharp pain or dull pain. It's just suddenly it's there. Or physical, not feeling well physically has happened, I've heard it a few times, in people who are too conscious, too present for the pain body to use their mind structures and feed on them, and to use their relationships and feed on other people's reactions, emotional reactions.

And then all it can do is that, and all you can do is be there. The pain body hopes that you will react to your physical condition. And the moment you react against your physical condition, every reactivity is a little bit of unconsciousness.

And through the reactivity it can get you again. When you get unhappy with your physical condition, through that reactivity then the pain body can flow in again and use your mind. And you're right, that's how clever it is.

So here too is to allow the physical condition, if it's a pain, to be there. And be in the body as much as you can. Be, have attention in the inner energy field of the body.

And there may be, the entire body may not feel well, but probably only one part doesn't feel well. The rest is still in a state of well-being. For most people, your fingers are usually in a state of well-being, they don't participate in illnesses that much.

It can happen also. But just to give you an example, your little toe is in a state of well-being. There's an aliveness in many parts of the body, even when there is a physical condition.

And just give that also space. Allow that to be. That is an experience too.

And give it space. Instead of falling into reactivity towards it. Then the pain body can come in there.

So you're right, it's a clever little thing.

[Speaker 7] (1:15:38 - 1:15:38)

After a while.

[Speaker 1] (1:15:39 - 1:15:39)

What?

[Speaker 7] (1:15:40 - 1:15:42)

Does it give up after a while?

[Speaker 1] (1:15:43 - 1:18:09)

No, it doesn't. It's not in its nature to give up. The energy gradually becomes freed.

Really, every pain body is stuck life energy. Through the egoic mind and the madness of the egoic mind, emotions can no longer flow freely. There's a stuckness.

And that's the little emotional entity. And it's not going to give up. It's the opposite of its very nature to give up.

It will try, but you're not feeding it anymore. And gradually the energy becomes part of your deepened sense of aliveness. Stuck in there.

So it is not destroyed. It's simply transmuted. You feel more alive.

For many people their aliveness is eaten up continuously by the pain body. And so they haven't got much energy left. And that changes.

And then you sense much more vibrancy in your energy field. Also much less prone to physical illness. The more you're in the body, the more immune you become also to many physical conditions.

Occasionally the pain body will come in, and a wave will come of pain or not well-being, and then it passes. I'm not saying you will forever be immune to all disease. Perhaps not.

The body has certain limitations. Perhaps a time will come when the body has transmuted sufficiently to be always free of disease. But the ultimate goal of human existence is not to be free of disease.

That's a limited thing. The ultimate goal is far greater. And some humans have found liberation through their physical condition.

It's become their teacher. So that's how it is. Thank you for the question.

[Speaker 2] (1:18:25 - 1:22:22)

I love how you bring your love and your joy to these aspects of form, and by doing so redeem them with us all here now. There is this transpersonal redemption, it seems to use a word, where we're not just individuals being present for what we have been unconscious about. We're not isolated doing that.

We're being present together. And it seems in the same way that we can feel, listen with our bodies, as you put it this morning, that we are listening with our body right now. And our listening with our body together has a power of love and redemption that is more than any one of us is capable of.

Yes. And so there is this, the word challenge is not a great word, but it may convey the meaning I'm reaching for here. There is this challenge of where it's possible, in the same way that I can reach, to touch this microphone stand, here in the now, we have the, the way I have the potential to do that, I don't have to do it, there seems to be, there is the potential that we can focus on what we are feeling, in a transpersonal sense.

And that this passageway, just like we'd walk down a path to get here to this room, or my hand would need to move through the space to touch the microphone stand, it's not in the future, it's a potential in the now, that, that there would, that there could be a freedom, a collective liberation, by us all beginning to practice this sense of literally sharing a greater body, heart and mind, a greater being.

And to, in doing that, to directly look at, with our whole, whole perceptual capacity, directly look at what are we noticing, to have that become, come into the foreground, I wish you could speak about how this could happen in conferences or in...

[Speaker 1] (1:22:22 - 1:25:07)

It's happening, you're simply describing what's happening, that's what is happening, it is not, it goes far beyond the personal, what's happening here, it may look as if little persons were becoming free of suffering, and that's true also, but that would be a limited perspective on what's happening here, so there is, in this energy field, consciousness is moving through each form, we are looking in the state of presence, at the structures of unconsciousness here, and by seeing them, we become free, it's, it is an event in the evolution of consciousness, what's happening here, going far beyond the personal, and that's wonderful, in fact, more and more, you will depersonalize your life experience, no longer being stuck in a limited sense of identity, story and mind-based identity, this is what's happening here, and once it's happening, there's not much that we need to do now, to make it happen, we could fall back into mind, if we thought we now had to add more to make it happen even more, we would fall back, get drawn back into mind, and into doing, it is more an allowing now, once it's started, the movement has begun, it's an allowing rather than, okay, what can I do to make it happen even more, or more quickly, allow, and the allowing always comes back to allowing the is-ness, that is the ultimate state, so realize, beyond this, your doing is not really required anymore, simply the allowing, if you call that doing, that's fine, but really it's not a doing, there's nothing you need to do, you've done so much already, thank you, just one more question please, and then I need to talk about a few more things to do with tonight,

[Speaker 5] (1:25:08 - 1:26:01)

please. So my question is about the pain body, and I've noticed that I get taken over by the pain body now and then, more than I'd like, and I was just thinking about how you were expressing that concept of the pain body, that it seems as though it's like an entity that grabs you and gets you by the neck and wrings every ounce of pain out of you that it can create, but I was thinking also that the pain body itself comes from separation, that it comes from the sense of not being loved, and I was just wondering about the utility of separating from the pain body in order to do something about it, that it seemed like a contradiction.

[Speaker 1] (1:26:01 - 1:27:02)

Yes, where you're not separating from it in that sense, we embrace it, realize, let it be within the spaciousness that you are, that is not, don't misunderstand in the sense that I don't want to have anything to do with it, I'm going to, it's not, I talk about disidentifying, yes, that means it's no longer using your mind, but not separating from it, because it is an expression of life also, and so, and also I'm not talking about, you're not going to eliminate it, you can't eliminate anything that's an expression of life, so it's by embracing it that the transmutation of it happens, which means the energy is no longer not flowing, but begins to move.

[Speaker 5] (1:27:03 - 1:27:06)

Yes, it seemed to me that observing and loving it would be...

[Speaker 1] (1:27:06 - 1:32:17)

That's what we are doing, I just don't call it loving it, but as I pointed out earlier, anything you give space, compassion arises towards it, and compassion, I mentioned also earlier, is closely linked with love, it's really an aspect of love, so you're right, that's how it is. Thank you. Thank you.

My recommendation for the rest of this evening, only recommendation, is to keep noble silence for the rest of the evening, except those people who are going to sing, and then that's fine, and after the singing is done, you return to noble silence. You don't have to be fanatical about it, but just keep words to an absolute, just what's absolutely necessary, and not that many words are necessary. So that is the practice for the rest of the evening, you may be out in nature, and be silent there, if there's inner noise in the head, you watch it, but it may subside occasionally, and then you give space to whatever you experience.

The most incredible thing about being here is the stillness that envelops all this, that's so rare these days, and that is so precious. So all you need to do is pay attention, acknowledge that stillness that surrounds you, that is really the essence, even when you go out into the forest, the essence, the aliveness of it is this vibrant stillness that pervades everything, and it's also in you. And then the stillness really is the nectar of being.

You don't need future, what could be improved upon? And if you want to come here for a little, be in this energy field, I believe it will be any time between 8 and 10 or whatever, you could also sit here for a while in silence, it will be really silent because the last noise that's left here, which is the hum of the amplifier, which you can hardly hear, but when you become very alert you hear it, that will be gone too. So it will be really very still.

And when you go to bed, be in the body as you lie there on your bed, dwell in the inner energy field of body, go to sleep from there, so it's not a discipline we are doing, which is silence, externally imposed discipline, but really by now, something that naturally arises from within, and so we just allow that. I have finished speaking, maybe we could just for a little while switch off the electrical system, since I'm not going to say anything anymore, and be together in the stillness for a moment.

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[Speaker 1] (3:24 - 1:26:37)

I was asked once, what's your greatest achievement? What do you consider your greatest achievement in life? And what came up was, I don't need to think all the time.

That's really it. Doesn't sound like a big thing. And it wouldn't get me a job, probably.

I haven't yet seen an ad in the paper looking for someone who doesn't think. Now, generally, society, when it talks of somebody who doesn't think, or the word thoughtless is considered very negative. And according to popular belief, the world is full of people who are thoughtless, who don't think for themselves.

Well, maybe they don't think for themselves. There's hardly anybody who thinks for themselves. Thought is collective.

So nobody really thinks for themselves. But they're all thinking. Of course, thought still happens.

Words wouldn't come out of my mouth. They require thought. Thought puts the words together.

But you saw yesterday, when I couldn't remember what I had said, because what I say doesn't come out of accumulated knowledge. The difference in the frequency between something that was just repeated from memory, which is normally how thought operates, and something that comes really out of the state of no thought. And even that can become thought.

It can become inspired thought, creative thought. And at other times, it doesn't become thought. It just remains the state of thoughtless awareness.

And if I were just talking about myself, it wouldn't be very interesting. But that state of thoughtless awareness is an aspect of what we're talking about. It's a different perspective on it.

We talked about not taking the mind too seriously, thought activity. That already implies that there is another dimension from where you are able not to take the mind too seriously. So even if you can not take your mind and your thoughts so seriously, it implies already that the dimension of thoughtless awareness is there in you, if only sporadically.

Maybe it's covered up by thought identification a lot of the time, but it's there. And there are times when you can not take your mind too seriously. To give every experience space.

Now, another perspective on that. Also, it implies the ability to have... What is that space?

What does it mean to give every experience that happens? Of course, in the now, the only place where it can happen. What does it mean to give it space?

What is that space? It's the space of no thought around it, in which it happens. It is known, but not known through concepts and labels.

What else did we talk about the first evening? The not needing, psychologically not needing always the next moment as virtually an obsession. Not needing the future psychologically.

Needing it on a practical level, because that's how it operates quite well. But not desperately needing it. That also implies that you're able to step out of thought, because thought operates within past and future.

So intelligence is usually defined as the ability to think, perhaps to think quickly, to be able to accumulate a lot of information, to be able to dissect and analyze this information. But there's never anything creative there. If that is intelligence, a day will come when computers will be able to do that better than humans.

In some ways, they're already doing certain things better than humans. There was a computer who defeated the world chess champion. That's a limited activity, of course.

But what is true intelligence, it comes out of the ability to step into no thought, and then perhaps be able to use thought creatively. Not in a self-serving way, looking for your sense of self in and through thought. That's why thought is so compulsive.

It's to keep oneself going, to keep one's sense of identity going. And every one of you, in every one of you, that dimension is already arising, even if you don't know it. Because the mind cannot recognize something that is beyond the mind.

And I've been with people who tell me, I'm never present, I don't know, it just doesn't seem to work for me. And I know they are present, not continuously, but I've seen them being present. And I reminded them, oh, yeah, that's true.

But the mind doesn't see it. So it's, the next step in human evolution is to transcend thought. Because thought has become self-serving and quite destructive.

The amplification of thought as science and technology also, although intrinsically neither good nor bad, has become quite destructive, because thought is not linked to a deeper dimension of being, of awareness. To transcend thought means not to leave it behind completely. Transcend this, you go beyond it.

But something that you transcend, you still, it's still there, it's still incorporated, but gone beyond, not confined anymore to that. That's the most amazing thing, that a species is actually going, reaching a different stage in evolution, almost like one could say a new species growing out of a thought- species. And a new species comes when things get difficult, when the dimension, one dimension, doesn't work anymore.

They say that life first developed in the sea. At some point, sea creatures started to crawl on land. Why wouldn't they have done that?

Because the only reason can be that they had to. There must have been a huge area of sea that got cut off from the rest, and water became less and less over a long period of time. So they were forced, their habitat didn't work anymore.

And so even now there are some creatures that can only just crawl on land, and then they are happy to get back in the sea. So there must have, something forced them out of that, and they started, and then they said, let's get back into the water. And that's those humans who are going through this transformation that's a bit like that.

The old familiar world of me and my problems. But humanity as a whole, collectively, that state of thought identification really cannot be sustained very much longer, because it inflicts too much damage and suffering on other life forms on the planet. It also inflicts too much suffering on each human who is trapped in that, not to speak of this incredible violence and suffering that humans inflict on others out of their ignorance, not knowing who they are.

Not necessarily ignorance in the sense of non-educated. They're highly educated people, totally unconscious. Well, most of them.

Which simply means identified completely with their mind, which is the meaning of unconscious, spiritually speaking. So that state of consciousness that has dominated humanity for so long has had its place. It's a stage in evolution.

It had, humans had to go through it. But when an evolutionary stage reaches its end, it becomes always very critical. The transition is critical.

Are they going to make it or not? And probably not every species who reaches the point of transition from one state of consciousness or way of, one dimension of existence to another, makes it. Perhaps some species reach the point where the transition becomes necessary, not just possible, but necessary, and yet never go beyond it.

And then the species dissolves. There have been species on the planet that didn't survive as species. Something happened.

And who knows how many species have had already reached to the point that we are at now and perhaps didn't make it. No point in speculating to take us into mind. The mind says, oh, I want to hear more about that.

And then the mind says, are we going to make it? Well, all I know is we are here now. Here we are.

That's a good sign. I also know that there's an enormous response to this, the transformation in consciousness, that I couldn't possibly have, I knew there was transformation of consciousness happening. I knew what comes through this form is the transformation of consciousness.

But that it happened, there's such an enormous response. I'm amazed by that. So it is happening.

We don't need to ask ourselves if humans are going to make it or not. It's enough to really, you are humanity. What does it mean to make it?

Well, it's the transition from one state of consciousness to another. But it's not in the future, because that's the old state of consciousness. To believe that this change is going to happen to you is still the old mindset of thought and future-dominated thought.

So that's the key, because the danger is that when one speaks of it, the old consciousness gets hold of that and uses it and obscures the truth that is there, and makes it into something that it can deal with and understand on its own level. And so the truth teachings, traditionally, that's happened to them, always, they became religions. And what that means is, the mind got in there and interpreted and therefore obscured the truth inherent in the original teachings, and made it into mind stuff.

And so a huge superstructure of mental stuff develops on top of the original message, because the message of the transformation of consciousness for the first time came 3,000 years ago, or even earlier that we don't know anymore, have no historical record. The Buddha pointed to it, one of the first flowerings of that transformation. The message of the Buddha is, the end of suffering is possible now.

And then even Buddhism became heavily burdened with mind stuff. Christianity even more so. But this is less likely now, there's an added energy to the same basic message, but there's an added energy to it.

And a new, a language that is not burdened, although all language is inadequate, but a language that is relatively neutral, and it doesn't lend itself easily into becoming converted to religion. I believe in the now. And you better believe it too.

We built a cathedral to the now. And I'm sure somebody one day will call it that. The mind will get in there, and then it says, okay, I've classified it, I've dealt with it, that's where it belongs.

Nowism, remotely related to existentialism, and influenced by other non-dualistic teachings. Okay, that's all right. What's the next thing?

Priests of now. Strange thing is, I believe yesterday in the restaurant, they had the Japanese flute music, which I gave them to play for you while you were silent. And traditionally, those were played, it's just a bamboo, hollow bamboo with a few holes in, but for hundreds of years, that's been played.

Traditionally, by the flute players were big straw hats that would hide their faces. And they were called priests of nothingness. So it is more difficult now for the mind, it can, it will still attempt to get in there and make it into mind stuff.

But the message is so clear, it's much harder now to get drawn back into, to make mind stuff out of it. It'll happen here and there, but not on a large scale. So you can catch yourself when no thought arises.

And this is a strange thing, to know that you are in a state of no thought. This is, I'm almost like saying, don't think of an elephant. To know that you are in a state of no thought, that state knows itself as no thought, but no language.

Just this. And you can often encounter it when you look at something natural in nature. And sometimes for the first moment, you just look at something new.

There's that space and there's an inner response. That's the space around the perception. Then the question is, how long does it take before the mind says something about it?

Or maybe the mind doesn't say anything about it at all, it says something about the stock market, or whatever the mind is concerned with. So don't become critical and say, okay, self-conscious. Just allow, be aware of that state of pure awareness when it's there.

And then you suddenly recognize it, because in many humans it is arising, but they don't recognize it. They don't recognize it's arising anyway, but also it can become obscured more easily again by the mind, because you don't recognize that either, that process by which the mind obscures it again very quickly. What happened to me when this sudden transformation happened from a state of mind identification to a state of clarity and alertness and peace, which is the state of no thought, and such a sudden transition is relatively rare.

For most humans it is a gradual, but just like the animals crawling, sea creatures crawling, and then back in the water, okay, I have to get out. And then for most it's gradual. For me it was sudden, but I didn't know anything about it.

And I was walking around the city after it happened and looking, and the mind occasionally said, why does everything is so peaceful? It's just really weird. Even the buses and all the, it was in the middle of London, the taxis, the crowds of people, everything that is this undercurrent of peace, it's like, where's it come?

I don't know. I didn't know at that time that there was actually very little thought. Occasionally thoughts came, how could everything be so peaceful?

That's a thought. And then, of course, there was no answer. But I was walking around in a state of simple awareness.

But it didn't yet recognize itself as awareness. All I knew it was peace. And much later I realized, oh, it's actually thought has been reduced by 80% or 90%.

And that recognition came much later. In fact, probably came the first time I listened to a Zen monk who defined Zenness, not thinking. That's when I was searching for some kind of understanding of what had happened to me.

And I went to see these people, and there was a Zen monk who said, all that Zen is, is no thought. And I immediately recognized he had just explained something to me. And there were others in the room who scratched their heads and said, what does he mean, no thought?

Because no thought, that state is hard to understand through thought. People have gone and studied Zen for years, trying to figure it out. And the famous philosopher and writer Arthur Koestler, who wrote wonderful books, one day he decided to study Zen and write a book about it.

He traveled to Japan, spent a few months with Zen teachers in monasteries. And he had a highly developed mind, enormous knowledge in arts and sciences. One of the last people, perhaps, very early knowledgeable in arts and sciences.

Vast amount of knowledge. But he tried to understand Zen through his knowledge. And after a few months, he wrote a book about it and came to the conclusion that it was all nonsense.

Which is the very thing that Zen actually teaches, they would agree. It doesn't make sense to the mind. The very point of Zen is to destroy addiction to the mind, compulsive thought, to take you beyond that.

And the first to agree that Zen is nonsense would be the Zen master. Of course it is. His other books are more interesting to read.

He wrote a book about creativity also, which he did recognize by interviewing people that thought is only one small aspect of creativity. The ability to step back from thought.

So the gap that arises in you of no thought, be aware of it.

Now that awareness can easily become transformed into also thought. And then the mind says, that's it, I'm there. Okay, that happens, but it was there before the mind came in.

And then you become familiar with a state of knowing that awareness, not through concepts or labels. That is so beautiful, it's like you've come home to yourself, one could say. To know that spaciousness that is so much faster than thought, not separate from it, but so much faster.

In which thought can still operate much better, much more effectively, and not creating problems. Because to a large extent, thought as it is now, is a problem maker, a trouble maker. Everything that thought creates, creates further problems.

Anything that thought creates, that is not thought, not linked to the deeper dimension of being or awareness. Every medicine, every piece of technology, all the side effects, every insecticide, whatever thought creates, has an enormous downside. And a norm creates more problems than it tries to solve.

And this is really what the East calls karmic action, it is karma. And something that comes from a deeper level, is created out of the depths of, comes because thought is linked into the dimension of stillness or awareness, it is possible for something to come into being that has no karmic repercussions. Just as, I may suggest just, for example, something like homeopathy, something that, I don't know if anybody really, fully, mentally understands how it works, it must have come from somewhere.

I know it works for many people, it works. It must have come from that depth, and those things have no side effects. They are not, they are harmless, they work, but not the same as conventional medicine, which is mind-created.

They say, let's fight that, let's eliminate that, fight that, get rid of that, get rid of viruses. And then, after a while, they come back. So as you probably know by now, here, in most workshops you learn many things.

It is not a workshop anyway, but in most workshops you learn many things, they tell you beforehand, you can read the leaflet and say, you will learn six ways of achieving that, five ways of overcoming that, ten techniques for that. And here, you don't, there's only one thing here, and all the words are really all about one thing, not, you can't even call it a thing, it points all to that state of consciousness. It not only points, and that's a good thing, if it were only pointing, it would be frustrating.

If it were only talking about, it would be frustrating. It actually is a direct expression already of that state of consciousness, our gathering, is an expression. So the state which we could call thoughtless awareness, presence, whatever, labeled you want to use, whatever pointer, arises in you.

And here it is a shared arising. Now this is not an experience. It could be confused by the mind with, you've come here to have an experience.

But an experience doesn't really last. It comes and then it's gone. But the arising of that is not something that comes and goes, or that can be obscured.

It's a dimension that actually, although I sometimes call it a new state of consciousness, the strange thing is, that dimension has always been there in you, unrecognized. It's only new in the sense that now you know it. It always will be there.

It's the timeless dimension of consciousness, of pure consciousness, unconditioned consciousness. It's always been there. So it's not an experience, something that you suddenly know that's always been there, but now you know it.

Of course it's not an experience, it was always there, it will always be there. So it goes beyond, far beyond having a spiritual experience, because there are still people looking for spiritual experience. That can be a great distraction.

And some people have read books about spiritual experiences and have read about fireworks that people experience, inner fireworks. I suddenly had an explosion of incredible lights and colors and everything went up. And then the next morning, I had breakfast.

Not to deny that there can be beautiful experiences. Life is full of beautiful, walking around nature is a beautiful experience, and so certain inner experiences can be very beautiful too. But they are experiences, they are things that arise in consciousness.

Objects of consciousness, we don't deny them, they are wonderful. And some experiences are actually helpful. They point, they take you beyond the experience so you realize something, the vastness in which the experience happens as yourself.

So spiritual experiences are fine, but I've met people who've told me, I've had such wonderful experiences and I can't get them back now. And now they're looking, they're missing the vital thing, the easy thing, because they're looking to recapture an experience they once had. And so, recently somebody wrote a book, I don't know whether it's good or bad, but the title is nice.

After the Ecstasy, the Laundry. Talking about spiritual experiences and everyday life, that it always comes to an end. And there's the laundry again, I have to do the laundry.

And so this experience is the ups and downs. So this is the arising, it's sometimes called, of who you truly are underneath images, underneath self-concepts and self-images based on me and my history and me and my story. Who is the being underneath?

But there's no answer through concepts because that's another thought. There's no real answer through thought or words to that question. The question creates an opening.

In some spiritual traditions, that is the spiritual practice, who am I? And people ask themselves constantly, who am I? Who am I?

And the answer is there when you've asked it so many times that the mind subsides after you've asked it. And there's simply a spaciousness, a spacious sense of presence. That's the opening.

Who am I? No answer. And since this is emerging in you and you fluctuate between mind and going beyond, when you're back in mind, you're no longer quite sure who you are.

The mind structures have become a little loosened. They're not as rigid as before where you actually thought you knew who you are. And I often meet people now who tell me, I don't know who I am anymore.

What's happening to me? That's wonderful if you don't know who you are anymore. That deeply entrenched mental image of me has become shaky.

And you see it's unreality. But then where do you go from there? Then the mind looks for some alternative answer to who I am.

And sometimes it takes refuge in some new belief. It sometimes takes refuge. It uses, although it's more difficult, it's almost like becoming a religion, but it's more difficult to do it with a simple teaching like this.

But the mind can still use that. And I've seen it. People who listen to the pointers and what they hear is, you are consciousness itself.

You are awareness. The essence of who you are is consciousness. And then they start saying it.

Okay, I've got it. Now I understand. I'm consciousness.

But it's only the mind that says, because to a limited extent the mind can say, yeah, I understand that. That makes sense to me. I am consciousness.

I'm not the objects that arise in consciousness. I'm consciousness itself. That makes sense.

And then you talk about it and you can repeat it. And for a while you feel better because it's like you've just converted to Buddhism or to Christianity. And the first period when you've just converted to some new belief, it feels good.

You now feel you know the truth. But it's still on the level of mind. And you will know it because when somebody argues with the fact that you are consciousness, you get angry or upset.

And when you get home, you still shout at your wife. So if nothing changes in the way in which you interact with the world, with nature, with other human beings, and you simply repeat, I'm consciousness, but nothing has changed. An extreme way of putting it is you speak of the non-duality and you can even be very good at arguing.

You have mastered the terminology of a new belief system. There are even some teachers who have mastered the terminology. They can defeat anybody in argument.

And then they go home and beat up their wife. An extreme way of putting it. The old unconsciousness is still there.

But here this is not likely to happen. Not that anybody would beat up their wives or their husbands. So catch yourself and recognize within yourself the state of awareness when you're walking through nature.

As you sit here, sometimes simple state of open, alert presence. Relaxed alertness. The entire being is alert.

An alertness throughout. That's the state of presence. Can one live in that state?

Yes. The intensity may vary. Sometimes there's an intensity and sometimes it's just there in the background.

That happens. But it's always there. And if occasionally it gets obscured by mental noise, it doesn't matter that much either.

And if occasionally you take your mind seriously again, which simply means you believe in what the mind is saying totally, you become identified with thought completely, then the mind is again a serious matter. And after a little while, through the suffering and the unhappiness that you then feel, you get woken up again. A little alarm clock goes, oh, I'm unhappy.

What happened? I lost the now. I got back, drawn back into mental noise.

So there's back and forth. And when you come out of mind identification again, there's a tendency for the mind, when you've suddenly recognized that you've been lost in mind for a while, that recognition means, of course, there's the arising of presence. But then there's a possibility that at that moment the mind will come in again and say, you see, you can't do it.

You're never present. Which isn't true, because the moment you recognize that you have not been present, you are present. That's all that's needed.

It's more important how often you step out of mind identification into presence than how long you can be present. Doesn't matter. It's timeless anyway.

So that's the all, what we ever talk about here. There's only one thing here. Now, everything in your life, the things that happen in your life or the things that don't happen in your life, of course, they are important.

Your environment, where you live, relationships, work situation, money situation, health situation, they're all important, but they're only relatively important. They have a relative importance. They all come and go.

There's only one thing that is absolute, and that is knowing who you are. And then you recognize the relativity of everything else in your life. That yes, you give it attention.

Yes, you pay attention to your form identity as you move through this existence, as this form, there is a form identity. This is your position in relation to other people. So you take care of that.

Honor your form identity. You may be a mother. You may be a father.

That's part of your form identity. Your job or the fact that you don't have a job may be form identity. And yet, not losing yourself and believing that there's anything there that is of absolute importance.

The only thing of absolute importance is knowing who you are beyond form. Once you know that, you recognize the relativity of everything else. And when you recognize the relativity of everything else, it becomes so much easier.

It doesn't matter that much. You honor it, but it no longer matters as if it were absolutely important. And this is the great sense of freedom.

A playfulness comes into your life. You go about your business or whatever you have to do with a playfulness. And you may actually put a lot of energy into it.

And yet, it is not the desperate kind of energy that is there when you don't know who you are. And you are looking for an enhanced sense of self through the result that you want to achieve to whatever you are doing. It means I'm looking for myself through future, through what I want to achieve.

And then you believe it absolutely matters. And if you don't get it, it's pain. It's great suffering.

So the rest of your life, our gathering does not really address that level of existence. And yet, it also becomes transformed through this inner shift. And of course, your relationships become transformed.

The ways in which you deal with situations becomes transformed. Everything happens within the spaciousness of being. And that's an amazing thing when you notice that in relationships, when you give space or spaciousness to every relationship, which simply means to be in a state of thoughtless awareness when you are with someone.

Not continuously, of course, but it is there. And that begins with the shortest relationship possible, buying something in a shop. The moment of interaction when you are looking at the other human being, and maybe you can't really measure it in time.

For two or three seconds, there's simply a spaciousness while you buy the item. Not a self-conscious thing like, I'm going to heal you or something like that. Then you have another identity in the head.

I'm the healer and I'm going to heal the world. Of course, you're going to heal the world, but not if you're stuck in the identity of a healer and I have to heal the world. Where's the next person I can heal?

Sorry, I don't want to offend anybody's identity. So it's not that you want anything to happen. It's being there as a spacious presence.

And so for two or three seconds, there's this thoughtless just beingness. So this being is fully honored. This moment is fully honored.

When you don't honor this moment, which is the spaciousness of now, it becomes a means to an end. If this moment becomes a means to an end, the human being that is there in front of you at this moment, you will make that person into a means to an end because you want something through or from him or her. And if you're going to a shop to buy something, what you want is you want to get it over with.

And this human being is just a slight delays you for a few seconds in your attempt to get to the next moment. That's his or her importance to you. He's delaying you because you're on your way to the next moment.

Let's get you over with as quickly as possible. And that's the arising of spaciousness in relationships. Now, of course, one could say everything is relationship when you're walking through nature.

You have a relationship with a tree. And again, it's vital there to have that spaciousness. And it's easier to have it there than to have that spaciousness when you relate with humans.

That's why I left it for a while before addressing humans because humans are difficult, more difficult to sustain the spaciousness because a lot of mind continuously comes at you, mental noise and non-spaciousness, challenging you to join them on that level of existence of mind. Come and interact with me on the mind level. So you bring in the spaciousness.

Just somebody, just when you say good morning to somebody, good morning, two or three seconds of just space. That's all. And then you'd speak.

But the space is there. And once it's there at the beginning of the interaction, it may be possible for the space to be there in the background, even as you speak. And as you speak, this is a great challenge, speaking with humans.

Because you get drawn into mind very easily, mind streams, and you can observe it in the restaurant. I haven't been there for a while, but when people speak, even here, you can still look sometimes, not last night, but you can observe how one easily gets into a mind stream. And then the sense of spaciousness underneath the words is lost.

And then your two minds are interacting, not really two beings. The being is obscured by mental noise. And when two minds are interacting, it won't be long before some problem or drama arises between these two minds.

Because really, that's how minds function. They get stronger through some drama. If somebody can disagree with me, you notice the intensification of mind that comes with that.

So, good morning, good morning, and then just nothing. Just allow this space. I mean, nobody's that much in a hurry that they can't allow three seconds after good morning, just speak.

And once you speak, a mind stream arises, and then step back. Once you have said what you have to say, step back from the mind stream into spacious presence again. Otherwise, one mind stream will lead to another mind stream, and another, and another, and go on, and you may be in for the whole day, for 15 hours, caught in mind streams.

And there's not a single gap. You just finish talking to one person, you pick up the phone and talk to another, and then somebody comes into the room, and when there's nobody there, it goes on in your head. No space, no space.

So, be alert, especially as you interact, so that you don't get dragged along in a mind stream. Always step back out of, you've said what you have to say, step back into spaciousness. And it may not last long, even if it's two seconds, it's fine, and then perhaps you have to say more, but the more spaciousness there is, the more powerful, alive, new is even what comes through your mind.

You saw it yesterday, when I repeated something that I had said before, from memory, and it had no longer the aliveness to it. It was just memory. There was perhaps interesting, when the mind can say, oh, that's an interesting thought, but it no longer had the aliveness of words or thoughts that come out of the state of presence, out of the spaciousness, that's the qualitative difference.

So, your interactions with other human beings, this qualitative difference will come in, an enormous qualitative difference in your relationships, when there is space. So, short relationships, and of course, long relationships, partners, family, to bring in a sense of space there. If both partners do it, it's fine.

You don't have to, it's not a thing like, you say, okay, every evening, between 6 and 6.30, we are going to bring in space. Then it's just a compartment. It's in between all the everyday things, spaciousness arises, in between, just not as a separate activity.

So, it's the simple ability to be with someone, and often it implies that you're listening. This listening could actually be used as a synonym for the state of presence. One could say the state of presence is a state of alert attention, as if you were listening, even if nothing is being said.

You know the state of listening is that, if it were so quiet here, and you were listening to the faintest noises that arise, you would have to be very alert. And you can sense how much space there is around that bird, which is awareness. It arises within the field of awareness.

Jesus said, be like a servant waiting for the return of the master. He doesn't know at what time the master is going to come, so he needs to be awake, he needs to be alert, he needs to be present, because the master could come in at any moment, and the master is very quiet. You may not even notice the master coming in, and this is simply a parable.

He's trying to point to that state of consciousness, of alert presence, the state of wakefulness. So what would your state be if you were alone in a house at night, just listening, just there may be a slight noise of somebody coming in. Just simple alert presence.

Space. In some people that arises accidentally when they're in a very dangerous situation, that requires total alertness. Even fear doesn't work anymore, and there's just that.

And then action arises. If action comes out of that state, it's totally right for that moment. And that is the state that the Zen master spoke about, that I have mentioned before to some of you.

The Zen master who became famous because he never explained what the meaning of Zen is, when they asked him, what is Zen, can you explain what it means? And he became famous because his only explanation of the meaning of Zen, which is the state of consciousness, was, what is Zen? That's what he did, with his huge bulging eyes.

And he looked so fierce that some people became frightened. But underneath the fierceness, there was enormous gentleness, which you can see in some drawings of Zen masters' fierceness. Because, and this is interesting, the state of presence is both gentle and fierce.

And it seems these are two irreconcilable qualities, and yet it has both. It is gentle and yet it has a great fierceness to it. Enormous intensity, but gentle.

So that was the famous Zen master who would simply raise his finger. And a few people got it. He just looked at you.

Then there was a boy in the monastery. Some of these monasteries had young children who perhaps had no parents anymore attached to it. And this 12-year-old boy would often imitate the Zen master when visitors came.

And visitors were discussing the meaning of Zen. The boy would raise his finger because he thought, if the master does it, it must be the meaning of Zen. And everybody got upset with the boy because he didn't respect, seems to be lack of respect for the master.

And one day, the boy was in the kitchen and there were some visitors and he was doing it again. The master crept up from behind. He was in the kitchen.

The boy didn't see him. And then, as the story goes, the master got the chopping knife and cut off the boy's finger. And the boy started screaming and ran out of the kitchen.

And when he was just going through the door, the master shouted, Stop! Turn around! And the boy stopped and looked at the master.

And the master went. And as the story goes, at that moment, the boy became enlightened. An emergency situation.

The approach towards the transformation of consciousness can vary according to one's predisposition. So there's a Japanese way of approaching it, and then there's a Chinese way, and there's an Indian way, and there's a European way. The essence is the same.

The approach may be different. Japanese like to do things in an uncompromising way. And sometimes it works.

So listen. When listening to someone, truly listening, if you can truly listen, it implies there is the spaciousness there, because otherwise you're not really listening to another person, let alone listening to the subtle noises in nature. So there needs to be the spaciousness so that you can listen.

The only qualification really you need if you want to be a successful therapist is the ability to listen. You don't really need that much knowledge. And some of the great therapists who are truly effective, after a while, they use less and less of what they know.

And after a few years, they're simply there in a state of listening. And everything else arises then out of that. Words may come out of it.

Words may come out of the person you're sitting with. That is true healing, but not in the sense that I am healing you. The totality of the situation is a healing situation.

So the ability to listen is the most wonderful thing. And what you're listening to may well be a drama in the head. It may well be somebody identified with their mind image of who they are and telling you about their story.

And there's simply the spaciousness in which this human being is allowed to be. Spacious listening. And then, if there's truly spacious listening, you're not reinforcing the mental noise.

And after a while, it subsides. And then true answers come. Then true realization comes out of that.

You're not looking for anything different. And when you're truly listening, this moment is good enough. You're not attempting to change anybody.

And then change happens. That was recognized by one famous psychotherapist, Carl Rogers, who taught simply to be in a state of unconditional acceptance of the other person. In a state of non-judgment.

And what does that mean? It means the mind is still as you listen. Every thought you have about that person would be some kind of judgment.

The mind is still. And then change happens. Then transformation happens.

But it's not engineered by me. How do I know what is the answer in this situation? It's the most wonderful thing.

Occasionally, I still see people, individual people, not very often. But often they come with problems, and some have huge problems. Somebody last week came with an enormous tragedy that happened in their lives.

Their son killed four people. And so, what is the answer to be with someone like that? It would be absurd for me to believe that I have an answer for you.

I'm going to tell you I have no answer. It is to become at ease with the state of not knowing. Because that's really another aspect of that.

Not to feel I should know. The mind, this takes you beyond mind, because the mind is trying to figure something out. And the mind is never at ease with the state of not knowing.

So when you can be at ease with that state, you're already beyond mind. And what is left is the state of openness in which you don't know, and no longer think that you should know. Because if you don't know but think that you should know, then it doesn't quite work yet.

You're stuck in between two, I don't know, and this is the most beautiful state of openness when you can be at ease with not knowing. And what else can, there's simply, we meet within that spacious presence. They speak, I listen.

He or she speaks, there's listening, receptive listening, openness. And there's silence, perhaps, between the words. At some point, usually, some words come, you find yourself speaking, and they come out of presence.

It may be that no words come. It can be fine too. It may be that all the words and all the answers, if there are answers on the level of words, and often there are no answers on the level of words, but if there are, they may come from the other person.

All you do is you hold this space. And that sounds as if you were doing something, but that's because of language. It really is the absence of doing anything on your part.

Holding the space is not really a doing. You are the space, the spaciousness. Everything that needs to happen happens out of that.

So that's the wonderful thing of becoming comfortable with not knowing, unknowing. And that may also be the case with certain things in your life situation. And you've been trying to figure out what to do about your life situation, and you don't know.

I could do this, but then on the other hand, what if I do that? Decision, what decision am I going to take? Step into not knowing.

Be comfortable with not knowing. Well, how long am I going to not know? I don't know.

I don't know. As far as external activities are concerned, my life situation for quite a few years was I wasn't doing very much externally. Occasionally, people came to see me.

Occasionally, I had little groups here and there. But I just didn't really know what my function was beyond seeing a few people here and there. What is my function in this world?

Is that all? There was peace inside, but I just didn't know whether that was it or whether there would be more. I didn't even try to figure it out because I knew I can't figure this out.

And so after a few years, one morning I woke up and I knew what to do. I have to move. I have to move to the West Coast of North America.

Why? And when I told people, it doesn't make sense. What?

And my mother, who thought I was mad already. Whether you haven't got a job and you just want to go, it doesn't make sense. And I just went.

It was the knowing that came out of the state of not knowing was complete. Occasionally, the mind says, I wonder what I'm doing here. It turned out that I had to write the book on the West Coast.

I couldn't have written it in England. For some reason, the energy field didn't draw it out of me. It took several weeks on the West Coast, maybe six, before the book started to happen.

And then it happened. And then I went back to England for a little while and the writing stopped immediately. Then I went back to the West Coast and the flow was there again.

And then, not until then, I realized, oh, now I understand why I had to move. But that was not decision-making. It was ready-made, a ready-made decision.

It's already there. And that can come out if you become comfortable with not knowing and don't put a time limit on it. Okay, I will give it four weeks of not knowing, but then, if I'm no answer by then...

Occasionally, people have called me patient, and I never understood that. I'm not patient. I never even thought of being patient.

When you're present with what is, you don't have to be patient, because patience is an attempt to be present, but you're not quite making it. And you know it when you say, okay, I'll be patient. There's a veiled threat underneath that when you say that.

All right. The sun is back. The rain was beautiful, too.

Before we break for lunch, I'd like to listen. Let's listen to a song. I like a song very much by Keatana, Who You Really Are.

Is it number six, track six?

[Speaker 2] (1:27:31 - 1:28:18)

More to life than the body can sense, than the mind can conclude from experience. Because who we are begin with breath, depend on form, or end with death. Strip away these roles, these names, and tell me what remains.

[Speaker 3] (1:28:21 - 1:28:30)

Who you really are. Who you really are.

[Speaker 2] (1:28:41 - 1:31:54)

Measure success by the things we accrue, or the bonds that we form, or the deeds we do. But these too shall pass. It's hard as we try to hold on to the form.

The form will die. But inherent in this dance of form is the chance to see what's yet unborn. A choice to throw this chance away, be caught up in the play of who we think we are.

Who we think we are. This is your lifetime. It could end at any time.

Where is your attention? Where is your prayer? Where is your song?

In your fortunate life comes a call to be free from the cycle of bondage and misidentity. To wake from the dream and finally realize the truth of one's being before the body dies. So before the final scene is passed, see the screen on which it's cast.

See what's seen, this me and you, and then you will see who. Who you really are.

[Speaker 3] (1:31:57 - 1:32:12)

Who you really are. Who you really are. Who we really are.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:40 - 1:32:48)

Thank you. You may want to just sit for a few minutes in silence.

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[Speaker 1] (1:33 - 1:04:04)

The sounds are not that important, of course. There's a lot of space in this kind. Just as with the Japanese flute, we may listen to one piece just for a few minutes, where what really matters there is not what is manifested, but what remains unmanifested.

That's the essence of that kind of music, if you can even call it music. Yes, it is music. Similar to paintings, certain Eastern, Chinese, Japanese, ancient paintings, where you might just see a little branch of a tree in one corner, and a rock, a small rock at the bottom of the painting, and a little bird flying across.

But 80% of the painting, there's nothing there. There's so much empty space. So that art form is perhaps the most spiritual of all art forms, because it points beyond itself.

It doesn't say, look at me, the manifested, how great I am. It says, look that way. So what arises in the contemplation of art like that is, when you contemplate it, the presence arises, inner stillness arises, as you watch, because there isn't much there to think about.

Another word we could use for this consciousness is space consciousness. Space consciousness arises in you. That is consciousness prior to becoming manifested as a form.

Consciousness, the essence. The very ground of all life. Life before it becomes a form of life.

The unmanifested one life before it is split up into, first into two, and then millions and billions of forms. So whether it's that art form where you visualize, it's mostly about nothingness. And as you watch that, space consciousness arises in you.

Awareness, thoughtless awareness. Consciousness prior to thought. And the same happens when you listen to that kind of music.

An awareness arises of the ground. The sounds are not that important. So we become aware of that which underlies the sounds.

The dimension of depth. And that's the depth within you. So when you withdraw attention from form, you're still aware of the forms, but you're withdrawing attention from the forms.

And what remains is pure attention itself. It's subtle, easy, not complex, but subtle. And we could say our gathering here has the same purpose.

Really, it's not in the words or whatever experience you have. It may be nice, too. You have nice experiences here, too.

But that's not it. If it were only that, then you would just add things to the content of me. The good thing is that that state of consciousness, which we might call presence or space consciousness, somehow transmits itself.

I don't want to become too esoteric here, but in some strange way, when one form enters that state of consciousness or it arises from within that form, it tends to spread to others. It awakens space consciousness in others energetically. There's almost a recognition.

The innermost essence of your being recognizes itself. That's why I sometimes say, people don't come here to listen to me or to see me. That would be pointless.

They come to be with themselves more fully. There's a reflective quality here, a self-recognition. And that's why sometimes people feel great joy and aliveness.

For the first time, they have dropped down below the level of mental noise and even below the level of the fluctuating emotions to the true depth, which is the inner spaciousness, which is just conscious, pure consciousness before it becomes something. You could say it's before the state, and again, without wanting to become too esoteric, the state scientists speak of, the creation of the universe in an explosion, as they call it, the Big Bang. That's the theory.

And nobody can say, what was there before the Big Bang? Nothing. So the whole universe must have come out of nothing.

There was nothing, because if there was something there, then it wasn't the birth of the universe. It was already there. So they say it started with the Big Bang, manifested existence, suddenly coming into being out of, they don't know what, nothing.

But when you start thinking about it, even the greatest scientists can't figure that out. It remains a mystery how all of this, all the galaxies came at some point out of nothing. So nothing, no thing, must be the ground of all being, of all existence, beingness itself.

And the strange thing is, the only reason why I mention that here, one could say, the state before the universe came into being, and that was a long time ago, that primordial state is still within each one of you as your essence. So, and then, it is born into form and thinking starts. That's the Big Bang inside.

It's the one, unmanifested, suddenly takes on forms, and that's the explosion. In you, it would be the explosion of sudden arising of thought. And then you can see that timeless essence was never really lost before the Big Bang.

It continues, untouched by the manifested universe. In you, yes, this is mystical teaching, true. So the source of all life, where is that, which some people call God, the source out of which all life arises, that is the essential identity of each life form, the beingness in each life form, is here now in you.

So you are the unmanifested consciousness. You are also temporarily the manifested form. That's your form identity, temporary, and your essence identity, one could say, the essence of your being.

Form identity is a realm of suffering, lost, to be lost in form, and not know yourself beyond your form identity, which has the two aspects, the physical body, form, short-lived, precarious. Anything could happen to it at any moment. You can slip on a banana skin, break your neck, and you're dead.

So it's very precarious. And the other aspect of your form identity is the psychological form of me in the head, that sense of who I am based on my past, and my story, my experiences, and the accumulation, the content of my mind, as an image, a mental image of who I am, reinforced by others around me, telling me, yes, that's who you are. Yes, that is your name.

Yes, that's your past. Yes, that's your ex-wife, your ex-husband. That's...

Yes, you're right to feel angry about him or her. Yes. Psychological identity, form, the psychological form of me, and the physical.

So that's where most humans derive their sense of who they are from the two aspects of form identity. And if that's all there is, and let's say your external form is extremely beautiful, and then the basis of that, most external forms don't have, don't feel that they are beautiful. But if it is, you sense, you form an image, it becomes an image of me based on appearance, and for a while it works quite well because you are better looking, or stronger, or whatever, than others.

And so it's a mixture of the external becomes an inner image of me, and then other things go into it too. And then the body goes older, and finally the form loses its vitality and beauty, and then the self image gets more and more shaky. And so, and then, but psychological forms also are very shaky.

They're very uncertain about themselves because they're also quite precarious. To live, to have an identity based on a psychological image of who I am, that depends on, to a large extent, on what others tell me, the feedback I get from the world, what the world is telling me who I am. And for a while, the world may be telling me you're great.

And then suddenly, they might be telling you the opposite, as in the example of the Zen master who was accused of having fathered a baby. So at first they think you're the greatest, and then suddenly you're nobody. Or the world forgets about you, and nobody's telling you you're great anymore.

Or maybe the world never told you that you're the greatest. Maybe from childhood onwards, a mental image formed of somebody who is inadequate and not quite good enough. A self image based on inadequacy and lack, quite normal too.

But whatever it is, when you only know yourself as form, that's the realm of suffering. And if you're not suffering yet, and if you only know yourself as form, just, well, it'll come. And that's the simple truth of the Buddha who said the human condition is one of suffering.

And what he was talking about, the human condition, the unenlightened, the human condition only identified with form. That is, and no matter how hard you try, you can't get out of, you will encounter suffering. And again, that's what the Buddha said.

Whatever you do, whatever condition you go into and try to identify with, eventually it'll turn into suffering. That's what he said. And when academics read that, they say, oh, Buddhism is a pessimistic philosophy.

They miss something, of course. They also say it's a world-denying pessimistic philosophy. And of course, they've missed the essence.

Because the very essence of Buddhism also, like any other true teaching, is its points beyond that. So if you only know yourself as the form, you're condemned to struggle and suffering, frustration. The form is trying to somehow achieve a state of completion and never quite makes it.

So salvation or liberation or enlightenment is knowing that within yourself that is beyond your form identity. And that, now most people use the human mind to find that. And the mind is form and all the mind thought, all that thought recognizes is other forms.

So you can look for a lifetime, you can be searching through your mind for yourself. But you're using thought, looking for something that thought can never comprehend, grasp, retain. And so, and because thought operates in and through past and future, you're condemned to always seeking the carrot dangling in front of you, the carrot.

And this grasping, just almost, almost got it this time. And then. So it is not through thinking that you can find yourself.

And that implies it is not through future that you can find yourself. It is only here, the portal to your essence identity is this timeless now in which the mind stops. And what happens when the mind stops?

From the point of view of mind, there's nothing much there. There may even be a sense of unease. There's nothing here.

I want to get back into. If you can only stay with that nothingness without running back into mind, and that is related to what we said earlier about being at ease with not knowing, with a state of consciousness in which there is an alert presence, but nothing is in it. It does not contain a form, a thought form.

There is simply spaciousness. To stay with that, which is a very strange thing at first, a realm that you are reluctant to stay in for very long at first. I sometimes compare it to people who have just spent five hours in a noisy discotheque.

And that discotheque is in the middle of the countryside, surrounded by incredible silence and stillness. And suddenly they open the doors and step outside. The door shuts behind them.

And at first, it is so strange, after being bombarded with continuous sound, there's nothing here. Their ears are not even attuned yet to the stillness. All they perceive is that it's like an alien world here.

And let's get back into the disco. Of course, in this analogy, the disco is the human mind with its continuous noise-making activity, which becomes, you're accustomed to it. So to step out of that at first can be a little disconcerting.

And once you know that, it's okay, you can stay with that. But allow yourself to be a little disconcerted. Allow yourself to dwell in that realm that looks like nothingness.

Just stay there for a while. You can always run back into the disco. In fact, the disco has a magnetic pull.

It'll suck you back in. And then... And then you have to get out again.

But if you stay out for long enough, then after a while, the subtlety of that state of being reveals itself. Just as it would if you had gone outside of the disco and not obeyed the impulse to run back and just stayed there. And gradually, your ears would have become attuned to the stillness and perhaps a few subtle sounds that arise out of the stillness.

But you would have begun to notice stillness, which is not something you can think about. The moment you think about stillness, it's gone. Gone beyond thought, free of thought.

It is prior to thought, and it is post-thought. In humans, it is post-thought. It is beyond thought.

Animals and all of nature live also in the state of no thought. That's why they have no problems. That's why they are beautiful expressions of the one consciousness, an unproblematic expression.

So they could say they are prior to thought, and humans move beyond thought. It's not that you fall back to the level of a plant. For some humans, that would be an improvement.

Humans who are dreadfully unhappy, if they could fall back to the level of an animal or plant, there would be some sanity there. And you can see when you look at many human beings compared to nature, how much more sane and how much more beautiful nature is, how much more dwelling within itself, not trying this or that. A state of, really still a state of connectedness with the one, not having gone out yet as far as humans have gone, left the state of oneness.

So nature has this incredible integrity to it. Everything in nature is itself. It is itself.

Not many humans are themselves. They are an image of themselves, the psychological identity which is being projected, trying to be someone. Some psychologists call it self-image actualizing.

And it's problematic. In nature, there's a simple, just if you watch the cat move, there's no projection of a self-image. It doesn't have a problem with self-image.

It is itself. Unproblematic, unless they've lived too close to humans for too long and they have taken on some of the madness of the human state. But it is beautiful to watch nature.

That's why it's such a help, and I so often point out to it. It is an expression of the one consciousness, and it lives. It still dwells within that stillness that is still in every tree and in animals.

And so there's also connectedness with this. There's a well-being. You can see it in a dog or in a cat, if you have observed them, when a cat pass, that deep sense of connectedness with being that's ananda, the joy of being.

And everybody knows a dog, how much joy there is in a dog. It's hard to find a human in whom there's as much joy as in a dog. It's incredible.

Some dogs are bundles of... And you just look at them and go... Miraculously, even dogs that have lived with neurotic owners for years are still joyful.

And perhaps the owner hasn't smiled in years and hasn't felt joy for so long. And there's this... And that's the only place where they can get a second-hand sense of joy when they look at their dog.

There's such connectedness with being there still, unproblematic. So that's prior to thought, there's still that connectedness. And then begins human existence.

Thought arises, the realm of human existence, and it becomes problematic. Paradise is lost. And then you move through that stage, and that can take a long time.

It has taken a long time. That is human history. And then, that stage becomes so painful and creates so much chaos and suffering that it cannot be sustained anymore.

And that's a sign that the species is ready to mutate to a new level. But that is not an automatic thing as it happens in nature. A transformation of a species can take half a million years.

It's happening much more quickly here, and it's happening because the species is choosing it. And there's the ability for humans to choose a new state of consciousness. Yes, it is arising.

That's why you can choose it. If it were not arising, you couldn't choose it. But it's a helpful perspective to say, yes, we can choose to step out of that.

We move beyond thought. We transcend thought. Of course, we can still use it, but we are no longer bound by it.

So, we are not returning to this beautiful, unproblematic world of nature that is not the way for humans. We move beyond. But then we meet again with nature because we both, what we then share with the world of nature is unproblematic existence.

And it is an enormous... It's not just a return to a state of oneness. It is a return to a lost state.

And now you know it for the first time. You know it. In nature, everything simply embodies it unconsciously.

And so, that is where you know your essence, not by perpetuating thought or thinking you can find it on the level of thought, but stepping beyond thought, out of the discotheque, into the stillness. And stay there, even if for a little while it seems strange. Take no thought for the morrow, Morrow is the old translation of what Jesus said.

Take no thought for the morrow. Now, I'm told that in old English, to take thought means to be anxious. That's why they translated that as in the modern translation of those words, you will read, don't be anxious about tomorrow.

Isn't it wonderful that in old English, to take thought is equivalent with being anxious? Take no thought means don't be anxious in fear. So, the discotheque is in the head.

A quick way out of it, of course you can simply allow space consciousness to arise, be a sudden alertness. And it always affects your entire being. That alertness is not a head phenomenon.

When that alertness arises, you feel whether you want to or not, you feel the inner body, which is beyond the physical appearance of body. It's becoming one again with the consciousness, the one consciousness of which the physical body is a temporary expression. It appears as a physical body.

The essence of course is just pure intelligence, pure consciousness appearing as a form. So, to sense the inner body is a wonderful way of stepping out of the discotheque and uniting the mind, which is only its little tentacle of consciousness. It has taken form as the mind, and the mind is thought.

And so the mind returns to its source out of which it came, the one consciousness. It's a withdrawal from the manifested into the unmanifested, the source. And not that you have to stay there.

You withdraw and you know it. And then you can again interact with the manifested in a very different way because you know something that is beyond the manifested in yourself. So the way in which you deal with the manifested world, not that you're going to never touch the manifested again, no.

The way in which you deal with the manifested changes tremendously after you have touched within yourself the unmanifested essence of your being. But that's the vital thing, is to touch that, to know yourself as that. The vital thing is to withdraw for a while from the manifested, and you withdraw simply when the mind stops.

The withdrawal is there. And touch that. And the portal, the easy portal, is the inner body.

The inner body that you sense as you sit there. And if you don't sense it yet, begin with feeling your right hand, the aliveness that is there. For some people, closing their eyes may help because then you're not distracted for a while by visual perceptions and you can put your whole attention there in a relaxed way.

Just notice it, really, that's all it is. But not just for a second, continue to notice it. You notice your right hand from within, and you continue to notice it.

That's the ability to hold attention there in a totally effortless way. All it means is you continue to notice it. It's still there.

And all you have done is you've entered your body here, and even that will take away a lot of mental noise. Even entering the body in one part of the body only and holding attention there diminishes the amount of mental noise enormously. So you can do it with your eyes closed, you can do it with your eyes open.

Eventually, it will be very easy to be in the body and able to interact at the same time and perceive and still sense very strongly your right hand and your left hand and both hands together in the background. And you're still perceiving and hearing. And then gradually you sense your arms also.

So you're entering the body. And then you begin to feel your feet. There's a certain aliveness there also.

And your legs. And you're still perceiving this room. And you hear my voice perfectly.

And yet some of your attention is in here now. And it continues to be in here, as well as in sense perceptions. And the amazing thing that happens then, and you can notice it right now, the ability arises to perceive without naming, labeling, or interpreting what you're being, what you are perceiving.

You're perceiving not through your conditioning anymore. Fresh. Without past coming in and distorting what you're perceiving by putting a learned label on it.

Freshness of perception. And so what it really means is true intelligence begins to operate unobscured by conditioning of the mind. And to the conditioned mind, it looks as if you knew nothing anymore.

So we continue to sense the inner body. And at the same time, if we want to, we can see and hear. And it is possible that at times your consciousness will fluctuate.

There will be more attention in the outer and just a remnant of attention left in the body. Or there may be a large part of your attention on the inner body and a little bit for the external world, depending on circumstances. There may be times when it is beautiful to simply sit when there's nothing that requires your attention or dealing with in the external world, to simply sit and dwell and rest within this energy field of the inner body, which somebody yesterday called the joy body.

And that's a good word. Because if you stay there for long enough, there is a subtle aliveness there. And that is sensed.

You notice after a while there's joy. The simple joy of aliveness in every cell of the body that is obscured when you are trapped continuously in mental noise. The dog still has it, but he doesn't even know that he has it.

He just has it. The cat has it, doesn't know that it has it. It just goes.

I was told an amazing thing by a vet who comes into contact with everyday animals very well. And she said, do you know that cats purr not only when they are happy, they also purr when they are afraid sometimes. I didn't know that because I rarely...

The cats that I had were usually happy. But when they go to the vet, often, of course, cats are afraid. And some cats, when they're afraid, they begin to purr also.

And I thought, this is strange. I thought the purring was an expression of joy. And then I suddenly realized, and probably the vets don't know the reason either, but when their form is threatened, the form that they are, the cat form, they withdraw to the formless within.

And the moment they withdraw to the formless, the joy is there despite the fact that their form is being threatened. That is the wisdom, the incredible wisdom of nature. That's just innate wisdom.

And it's so beautiful. And that's why nature is not afraid of death. It is still connected within with the deathless essence of being.

And every animal, when the form is threatened, it will withdraw to that. Not every animal purrs, but the animal then withdraws within. And we've lost that.

Humans gone out into, all out, all out there. It's all out there. Lost out there.

And now return, the return journey to a state that seems to have been lost. Of course, it was never really lost. You cannot lose the essence of your being.

But when you don't know that you have it anymore, it is as if you had lost it. What help is a bank account with $100 million in Switzerland if you don't know that you have it? That's a deficient analogy because the state of connectedness with being is of infinitely greater value than any millions of dollars.

It is nothing compared to that. But you can see this. Of course, it was never lost.

But it was only as if it had been lost. You can't lose yourself, really. And you may have heard some teachers or teachings have to say, everybody is already enlightened.

They just don't know it. And then some people say, well, that doesn't make sense. How can you be enlightened and not know it?

Well, you could say, you are awake, in a way, but in the normal state of wakefulness, all that you know is the forms that arise in that state. And you identify it with the forms, the thoughts, the emotions, and the sense perceptions and the experiences. But you don't know the state of wakefulness itself, directly.

And that's all it is. So in that sense, you're awake already. It's just obscured.

And as you sit here, you sense the inner body. You dwell. There's an aliveness there.

And the greatest miracle, if you go away from here and all that, if the only change is that there are moments when you no longer label your sense perceptions or your experience, that's an enormous transformation of consciousness. Just be with what is in that state of clarity, in that state of knowing, a deep knowing, which looks as if you didn't know anything anymore from the point of view of thought. And then you begin to purr, perhaps not making sounds.

That's a return to that connectedness with being. And there's joy, which is different from happiness. You may continue to experience certain fluctuations.

Of course, you experience fluctuations in your outer life. It has ups and downs. That's in the nature of phenomenal existence, up and down.

And you may even experience relative happiness and relative unhappiness. They don't touch you deeply anymore, but there are periods when something goes wrong and it's not so nice. It doesn't feel so good.

Something has just gone wrong, and something right happens, and you feel, oh, it's great. You're no longer devastated when unhappiness comes. It is only a very slight movement.

I compare that to, if you're in a dark room and you have a candle in that dark room, whether the candle is lit or whether the candle is extinguished makes a lot of difference, enormous difference. When there's no sunlight in the room, you depend on the candle being lit to feel okay, and then open the shutters, suddenly the room is flooded with sunlight, and you may still feel, oh, it's so nice to have a lit candle here, and then there's times when the candle is extinguished. It doesn't make that much difference in a room that's flooded with sunlight.

That's happiness and unhappiness in the state of connectedness with being. And that's unhappy and unhappiness, happiness and unhappiness when the shutters are closed in the state of unconnectedness with being. Oh my God, here I am in a dark room.

Allow the tears to be there completely. We're staying in the body, and yet we're here. It is amazing to look at another human being and not need to label or interpret him or her.

That's how relationships become sacred. That's the spaciousness that makes a relationship, any relationship, sacred. Even buying a newspaper in a corner shop, a moment, not being simply facing the other in that state of clarity and openness.

Why do I need to label anybody? Because any label that I may have will refer to your form identity. It will refer either to your physical appearance, or it will refer to the psychological entity in the head, the conditioned me, or any label that I have about you could be an expression and will be an expression of my own form identity, my own conditioning, through which I perceive you.

I mistake you for the conditioning that I perceive through my conditioning in you. You can see how distorted human interactions become. The label that I put onto you is already an expression of my own conditioning.

And what I see in you, and maybe there's some truth to the label that I'm attaching to you, maybe it's not 100% distorted by my own conditioning, and yet all it will ever refer to is the form identity, the conditioned entity that you think you are and that I think you are, never the essence of who you are. So by, somebody therefore said a long time ago, judge not, otherwise you judge yourself. Every time you put a label onto someone, you yourself become trapped in a cage of labelings.

You have not only trapped the other person, you have trapped yourself. And then that's the beginning of the relationship. And it will be problematic.

And there will be conflict, a lot of it. Because the basis for the relationship is illusion. And it's not that you completely, that you don't see certain things, but you kind of, you look through that.

You don't label it. There's this strange, there's the ability of seeing without labeling. Just in the way, this is why we talk so much about nature.

You see the tree, or you see the flower, and there is a, you know it, you see it, and you know it, but not through labels. In the same way, you may see certain aspects of a person's form identity and not label it. By not labeling it, you are not strengthening that person's illusion.

And you are not strengthening your own illusion, because that person is trapped in his or her form identity. If you label it, you strengthen the illusion. By not labeling it, just seeing it.

And not labeling is also a non-reactivity towards it. You see that particular form identity, but it's not labeled. And then often, it can awaken in the other, that which is beyond their own form.

And that could happen in the simple, just in the very simple way, they suddenly feel good being around you. It could be the beginning of that. Suddenly it feels so good to be near you, and they don't know why.

Because you are not confirming their illusion, their illusory self image. So for the first time, they can be themselves. They feel when they're close to you, they feel they are more themselves.

And that's in the body, in the body. Attentive, alert, present. Now in this state of non-labeling, when there's an openness to being, we're going to listen for five minutes.

It will seem longer than five minutes, but it's five minutes. We are going to listen to a Japanese flute, shakuhachi. And we are listening with the entire body.

Every cell of the body is listening, and it's listening primarily, track two, it is listening not so much to the sounds, but to the background of no sound, with every cell of the body. You listen to the space, underneath the sounds, you listen, not yet, I'll tell you, not, you listen, it's important, there's another important thing here, the sounds, there's a point, when each sound comes to an end, paying attention to that requires a certain alertness, the sound comes to an end, this ending, every time that can take you into space consciousness. Really what that is, is that sound dies, and every time something dies, it takes you there.

Any form that dies, which means it dissolves as form, is an opening. That is the beauty of death, which the mind fears so much. Every, the death of each form is actually also, is not such a disastrous event, it is an opening into that which is beyond form.

You could say, if you want to use that kind of language, God is easily found in the presence of death. But the mind says, death is, how can God allow death, this is dreadful. So we listen with the entire body, paying attention particularly to where the sound ends, and then continuously, even while the sound is there, there is the background of stillness.

Paying attention to that, it's track two.

[Speaker 2] (1:04:44 - 1:05:13)

Track two.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:26 - 1:13:15)

In a little while, perhaps we can turn off the electrical system, and to enjoy some complete silence. And also this evening, is it at 8.30? We will have a silent meditation.

Well, who knows what happens unless we don't have a silent meditation. But, after the silent meditation this evening, I'd also like to exchange hugs with whoever wants to exchange hugs with me. And then tomorrow we'll continue with hugs also.

Not compulsory. So when it becomes very still here, when we switch off everything, really all you need to do is pay attention to that no thingness that is the stillness and that is within and without you. Pure, aware presence with nothing happening in it unless something happens.

That's okay too. But it's good to know it also in its undiluted pure form with nothing happening and not even needing something to happen. It'll happen anyway.

So let's begin the process of switching off these devices. Oh, just one more thing. I may ring the bell two or three times during the silence and then that is maybe the only thing that arises apart from certain bird song that may be there in the background.

The sound will arise and subside. Follow the subsiding sound with your attention until it disappears into nothingness. What is left when this last object that remained in your consciousness, which is the sound, finally dies?

All that's left is the attention in which the sound happened. All that's left is the awareness in which that sound happened and that awareness knows itself as awareness and there's the key. Okay.

Thank you.

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[Speaker 1] (3:36 - 46:00)

So the dance continues, phenomenal existence, nothing stays in place for that long and that is a beautiful tool, the continuous change, continuous ending and beginning and ending and beginning experiences. Without looking for yourself in all that, in the dance of phenomenal existence, then it gets difficult. And the essence of our weekend retreat really is the essence of existence.

And that's by knowing yourself as the awareness in which phenomenal existence happens, become free of dependency on phenomena and free of self-seeking in situations, places, conditions, looking for a deeper me, a bigger me in phenomena, fearing change because I may lose something that I thought was part of me. Then phenomenal existence, people may pretend that they're having fun, but they're not really. It's a continuously enticing thing and also a threatening thing to be in phenomenal existence and not knowing yourself.

Only knowing yourself as a phenomenon in the head, so the freedom is simply knowing yourself as the aware space and then let it happen. And you even participate in it, you're not just a passive spectator, although that element is always there even as you act upon, as this form acts upon the world and participates in the dance, you're not just watching the dance of other life forms, you're also, there is a form, temporary form here that participates in the dance also. So you dance along, but you watch that also, you watch yourself dancing the dance of phenomenal existence.

And it's fine. Now the wonderful thing that happens when you know yourself as the awareness, you no longer demand that phenomenal existence should make you happy. Because everybody otherwise is demanding that, you don't know yourself, you demand something from the world, the world owes me, it should make me happy.

I've given so much, what has the world given me? And of course the world won't do that. But phenomena are not designed to make people happy.

To give the appearance of happiness for moments, yes, and then the tendency is to turn to either end or to turn into the opposite. That's in the nature of phenomena. They quickly come to an end, or if they continue, their satisfying nature is no longer satisfying.

And it's an amazing thing when the demand is dropped that the world should make you happy. And what does the world, the world means phenomena, the world means a place should make you happy. I found the place, the ideal place to live, I'm really going to be happy there.

People, this one, I found the one who is going to make me happy. Conditions, situations, anything phenomenal, expecting ultimate fulfillment, it cannot live up to that, the world cannot live up to that. And expecting to complete yourself, to find a sense of completion in phenomena also, it cannot, the world cannot give you that sense of completion and fulfillment.

So in the absence of knowing yourself, no space consciousness, as we could call it, presence, awareness, off-awareness, self-aware, then it's a struggle. And ultimately it's frustration. And you no longer demand that the world should make you happy, phenomena, experiences, the reactive relationship towards experiences goes, reactive personalized relationship towards everything that happens around you.

You may even get angry about the weather not being as it should be. It's a tiny thing, but it's just one of many things that people are reactive about. And then you may seek the ideal climate, and when you finally get there, something else happens to spoil the whole thing.

There's always something that comes in, in any condition, place, or situation, an element sooner or later comes in that is, seems to, a little thing that seems to spoil it. Something wants to come in it, to detract from the, that was so nice for a moment, and then a flaw comes in, and that is in the nature of phenomena, the little thing comes in, it's not quite working as it should, that wasn't in the plan. And when you see it, it's never quite perfect, the phenomenal world.

It's not, it's never, as long as you expect it to be perfect, just right, it's not. When you give up the demand or the expectation that a situation, a person, or a relationship should make you happy, should display perfection, should give you a sense of self, then it won't. If you drop the demand, then the strange thing is, it is quite a perfect place.

You don't need it to be perfect anymore, the imperfection inherent in all phenomena, which means they come to an end, they continuously change, is actually part of the dance. And quite beautiful too, that's expressed in Zen. A Zen master was sweeping the floor, and he knocked over, with a broom, with a handle behind him, there was a vase on the table, and he knocked it over by mistake.

And the disciple saw that, and the disciple, with a slight smile on his face, asked the master, is perfection possible in this, for a human being? And the master said, yes, the perfect human being allows imperfection to be there. So it's not really imperfection, it's the nature accepting the nature of phenomena.

But it's interesting to see, no matter what you do and where you go, something will come in, and it seems there's a little element there that wants to spoil it. But it's not really. When you no longer demand anything, there's simply the acceptance of the continuously fluctuating dance, then that is fine too.

So now what we are really talking about is the state of aligning yourself with the is-ness of this moment, which is the dance, not demand that it should be different. When is the world going to make me happy? Nothing can make you happy for long, but when you know yourself, there's an abiding, alive sense of peace.

We could call it joy, just because there's such aliveness there. Peace coupled with aliveness really is joy. Joy is an alive sense of peace.

That is the joy of being, of being who you are. And it is there continuously as the undercurrent. That is the joy of knowing yourself as the very life essence before phenomena, the very awareness.

That knowledge is joy. And you then enjoy both the birth and the death of phenomena, which happens continuously. The end of this retreat is a kind of death of a particular experience, and you enjoy that.

But if you only have this experience, you might get sad about leaving this place, because the experience comes to an end. And then you project yourself, oh, in two days I'll be there, back. And you miss the here.

So there's that which doesn't end, being, the awareness, and knowing yourself as that. And then things happen. And you participate.

And in the background, there's a witnessing presence, and you watch yourself talking and doing. Sometimes you watch emotions. The Buddha saw all that already.

He said, no matter where you go or what you do, whatever condition you find, whatever situation you find yourself in, he said, it will have three characteristics. Any situation, any condition, and they are expressed in the Pali language, which is a kind of similar to Sanskrit. Anicca, anatta, and dukkha.

I don't use foreign words very often, but it's nice to see the truth expressed everywhere. Anicca means impermanent, it passes. Any condition, wherever you go, it has the characteristic of impermanency.

Anicca means impermanent, passing, fleeting. And the strange thing is, even yesterday, it's gone. Last week, it's gone.

Your childhood is gone. Not very different from a dream, because the forms are there for a while, and then they dissolve like mist or vapor. Was it all a dream?

And sometimes it happens, even to people, they look back on something, just, was that a dream or did it happen? It may even be to you when you're traveling back to your usual way you live, and suddenly the Holiok experience recedes, and then suddenly you're back in your old familiar surroundings, and you, okay, was that a dream, the whole

Holiok thing? No, it was real, but it's gone just as if it were a dream.

And so this is, all sensory experience has that nature of anicca, and it evaporates, and it's amazing, and it's a fearful thing when you have to hang on to these things, because you're looking for yourself in it somewhere. Oh, it's coming to an end again. Or a relationship can be devastating, a relationship coming to an end again.

As a friend of mine once told me when she had a relationship, and it came to an end, and she said goodbye to him on the train, the relationship, of course, finished, and she said, God, this time you've gone too far. And that is another, people have that, they have an issue with God. You shouldn't, you should know better.

Phenomena shouldn't come to an end. Why did you arrange things in that way? Everything should last forever and be completely static.

So that's the truth of impermanence. And if you expect the impermanent to be permanent, that is the other characteristic of all phenomena, of all situations, conditions, that the Buddha called dukkha, suffering. If you expect the impermanent to be permanent, it's the suffering, dukkha, dukkha.

And the element of suffering then is the unsatisfactoriness that comes in because of the transient nature of phenomena. Dukkha can also be translated as plain misery, unsatisfactoriness, suffering. And the third characteristic, and again, we've already been talking about it, anatta, every situation, every condition, not self.

It is not self. And if you're seeking yourself in it, again, you're back in dukkha, suffering. Anatta, not self.

Whatever situation you're in, if there's self-seeking, an enhanced seeking, an enhanced sense of me through identification with this or that, you're back in suffering. So every condition, every situation has those characteristics. There's no self in it, it is impermanent, and if you don't know it, it's suffering.

And once, this is the truth uttered, he may have been the first human being who saw the truth 2,600 years ago. Wow. And that simplicity then, over the centuries, became a huge religion.

And you have to study years to get it. It is possible that he also taught body awareness. Some people say he did, it doesn't matter.

Vipassana is a body awareness meditation in Buddhism, to feel, be in the body. So Jesus recognized it, the impermanence. That is the realm, the dimension, where moth and rust consume and thieves break in and steal.

So he said, that he described the dimension of phenomena. Moth and rust. Now rust does, it consumes even the hardest of form, metal.

Moth, they are these little things that eat garments, so they, it consumes, it's a nice visual image of impermanence of form. So if you put your attention on form and seek forms, then you, it crumbles. You can see the crumbling.

And thieves break in and steal forms, get taken away by thieves or by life, by God, who shouldn't have. It would be amazing if you could see the world of form, speed it up, as you see in some films, when they speed up the film and you see our flower, this is the bud of a flower, and then it opens. First it comes out of the ground, but flower opens, and then it withers, and it's gone.

And if you saw a human being, you would see something similar. And the human form withers just like an apple that is an apple, and then it's fresh at first, and then it gets wrinkled. Now another amazing thing, if you saw, I saw, I looked at flowers, a flower bed, and I saw this, how these forms, how they come out of the ground and go, the flowers come, open up and go, and then the next ones come.

So it's a continuous, back into nothingness, and really the same flower is coming up again, into existence, out of existence, into existence, out of existence. Humans, I see, I was driving, I don't even remember what city it was, back from the city to the airport, and the whole city is full of people running around. And on the way to the airport there was a huge cemetery, and a few years ago they were all running around the city, and it was so important.

And I also love to look at old photographs that you can buy in antique junk shops, where people, they found photographs in their attic or somewhere, and can't even remember who they were, and so they end up in a shop, and you see all these people, long gone. Not much is remembered, and they were trapped in their world of problems that were so important, and how quickly forms dissolve. Look at a city scene in a photograph, hundreds of people cheering a political leader or something, and everybody's gone.

The political leader and the cheering people evaporated. And it was so important, total, and here we come to the relative importance of all things in phenomena. I'm not saying pay no attention anymore to the world of phenomena, no, honor it, but know that whatever is here in the world is relatively important, but not absolutely important.

The only thing of absolute importance is knowing who you are beyond phenomenal existence. Jesus said that you're concerned about many things, but really only one thing matters. He said to Martha, only one thing matters, ultimately matters.

So to honor the phenomenal world, but not believing that it is so serious. It's not that serious, not that heavy. And there's something very strange when you contemplate the impermanence of everything and just see it.

Don't even need to think about it or formulate a theory or whatever, to just see the impermanence of all forms. And when you stay with that, it is one way of knowing yourself beyond form, because that which sees the impermanence is the awareness. And that's in Buddhism, sometimes they have the practice of contemplating dead bodies.

The monks go and look at dead bodies in the morgue and sit there for two or three hours or a whole day. That's maybe taking it to an extreme, and besides, in the Western world, they wouldn't even allow you to do that. They think you must be weird if you want to see a dead body.

It's not allowed. You have to get special permission, and you probably wouldn't get it. So to see the impermanence, whether in the human form or any other form, you might think that must be depressing.

But if you stay simply with the seeing of it, without coming to any conclusion, you don't need to draw any mental conclusion that, oh, this is dreadful, this is whatever, or even a theory, of course, even to take refuge in a mental theory that, yeah, but reincarnation, one reincarnates into the next. We leave that aside to something more essential. Reincarnation doesn't help you if in your next reincarnation you still don't know who you are.

Simply to see the impermanence, the seeing is freeing. The seeing of it, because that is the awareness. So there is something very strangely peaceful about seeing the impermanence of all forms.

And that is because the awareness sees that. And that is the one thing or no thing that is not subject to birth and death. It is the universal awareness going through this form, moving through this form.

But it is the universal consciousness, the one not subject to birth and death. It sees. And that is why I mentioned that also at some point.

There is something sacred about the fact of death, the disappearing forms. Because whenever the form disappears momentarily, something shines through at that moment of transition, of disappearance. From form into no form, the formless shines through.

And that is the joy of being here also. Because it is a kind of psychological death that you voluntarily embrace here. Who you thought you were dies.

Not that the form disappears. But the belief that this is me, that me goes. Your sense of who you are dies.

And that is beautiful. And suddenly you see how you had limited yourself in an absurd way to a little me and my problems. So one could say it is simply a shift from believing that I am this, or I am that, and I want to be that, to simply go deeper.

I am. To know yourself as the I am presence, which is awareness. Twice in the Bible that occurs, and those are the most profound statements in the Old Testament, when they ask about God, who are you?

What is your name? And God, the one consciousness, speaking of course through a human, somebody wrote that, says, I am that I am. I am that I am.

That's what God says about him, her, itself. I am that I am. The I am, that's the I am.

The innermost identity of each form. So that, everybody senses there's something incredibly precious in me that I don't want to lose when I die. And they mix that up with form in the head.

My story, my life, my identity, that feels so precious. So that gets mixed up with objects in consciousness, not realizing that that preciousness that you sense, if only in an obscure way, those people who haven't realized who they are in the background, they said preciousness, but they believe it's to do with the object in consciousness, the forms, not knowing that this preciousness is their own essence, which is consciousness itself. And this they don't want to lose.

And it's the only thing they can't lose. So the innermost identity, something remained. You were a child, then you grew up, and perhaps your life changed dramatically, almost as if you had gone through different incarnations in one lifetime.

It happens to some people. Other people remain in one incarnation. They stay in the same place, perhaps into the same job, a whole lifetime.

Who knows? That could be how they realize, through sheer boredom, finally. But many people move through, their form seems to change so dramatically.

Suddenly your form is so different in relation to the world. Even with me, this form, it happened. This form was a hermit for years.

Nobody paid much attention except a few people here and there to what the hermit said. And basically it was wonderful being nobody, beautiful. And then suddenly the nobody becomes somebody in the eyes of the world, like a new incarnation.

And nothing has changed in the innermost, absolutely nothing. But externally it looks, oh, there's a new incarnation now. But if you look deep underneath the events and the phenomena, the innermost, the essence of your being is the same.

Deep down, the sense of I-ness underneath the changing phenomena around you is the same. And that is the I am. That is the awareness, the consciousness.

People don't know that. They sometimes get glimpses of that and then it gets mixed up again with the objects that arise in consciousness. So knowing yourself not as arising objects in consciousness, as phenomenal experience or thoughts, but that which makes all that possible.

This is expressed so beautifully in a very ancient scripture, in one of the Upanishads, some of which are even earlier than the Bhagavad Gita, a very ancient Indian scripture, talking about the nature of God or the ultimate or the eternal or the one. And that's what it says is this. I only remember a few lines, not the whole of it.

Not that which the eye sees, but that whereby the eye can see. Know that alone to be Brahman, the eternal, and not what people here adore. Not that which the ear hears, but that whereby the ear can hear.

Know that alone to be Brahman, the eternal, and not what people here adore. Not that which the mind thinks, but that whereby the mind can think. Know that alone to be Brahman, the eternal, and not what people here adore.

That, the one, the underlying consciousness that makes thought possible, thought comes out of it, that makes sense perception possible, the very ground, that not what people here adore. What people here adore is mental images of God, or they make God some external object that they believe will give them salvation, and then they make that into God. Not what people here adore.

That's beautiful. That's the essence. So, I'd like to listen to one more song before we go on to exchanging hugs, if we haven't done that yet.

And just listen, the song is again by Kirtana, and it is called, appropriately, I Am.

[Speaker 2] (46:47 - 52:32)

I Am I am part of everything I see Behind the eyes, beyond the skies, reflecting me At the silent core, and yet before a phenomenon begins Born after it, and after it, I am Many differences separate us on the surface, yes But I cannot find a boundary in consciousness When you ask me, where does awareness begin and does it end? I have to say, I have to say, I've always been Within the body, without the body, not subject to Changing moods, states of health, points of view Without needs, before the deeds and the monuments of man Born after it, and after it, I am Many differences separate us on the surface, yes But I cannot find a boundary in consciousness When you ask me, where does awareness begin and does it end? I have to say, I have to say, I've always been At the silent core, and yet before a phenomenon begins Born after it, and after it, I am No more words are coming, so no more words are needed.

[Speaker 1] (52:36 - 52:37)

Thank you.

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[Speaker 2] (0:08 - 1:47)

Gatim Gatim Para Gatim Para Sangat Puriswa Gatim Gatim You can take it off if you want. Okay.

[Speaker 1] (2:01 - 2:48:32)

Laughter These are called teaching sessions, but there's not really any teaching, but words are limited, we have to find some words to describe it. Teaching would mean that I'm adding something to you, knowledge, information, facts, or an experience even. But that's not what this is about.

It's not about adding anything to you. There's so much there already, more than enough. You have more information than the Buddha ever had.

And of course there are beautiful maps or signposts in existence, and that may be some of the spiritual information that you have, beautiful maps or signposts in the form of ancient scriptures that point the way to the transformation of human consciousness. And here we are not using any of the existing maps or signposts, beautiful as they are, profound as they are, many of which originated in this country, which could be called the birthplace of spirituality. Not that there's anything wrong with those maps, they are beautiful, those signposts.

But every age creates its new signposts that corresponds to the needs of the age. The old ones can still work if used rightly, or they can become a hindrance if used wrongly. Now you may notice I use the word maps or signposts to describe ancient teachings, spiritual teachings, and why?

What is a map is never it. The map is not the territory. The signpost is not the place to which it points.

So all teachings, ancient or contemporary, point beyond themselves. And the essence of all teachings is the possibility of the transformation of human consciousness to a state that is free of bondage, free of suffering, free of conditioning. So the teachings point the way to that.

And they are beautiful because those genuine teachings came out of that transformed state of consciousness. Those few individuals in the past who became free of their conditioning, free of the false sense of self, false me, the egoic identity. They taught out of that state.

The teaching arose out of that transformed state of consciousness. And so it has beauty and power. And it has such beauty often that these ancient teachings drew so much attention to themselves because they are so beautiful and you can compare one map with another, one signpost with another, that people began to study, compare and collect maps and signposts and interpret them.

And from then it was just a small step to forgetting that to which they point because one became so absorbed in the form of the teaching and not only that. After a while when you began to love that signpost so much, that map so much, you had a sense of identity with it. And all those other people also loved this signpost so much.

And you could begin to argue with other groups of people who loved other signposts, forgetting that they point to the same place. And then you could carry, metaphorically speaking, the burden of signposts with you. That has happened, can still happen.

And then it's also possible that a signpost, when there was readiness in a human being, he or she just needed to hear, to look once, twice and immediately realize the truth of it. And it worked as it should. This teaching is relatively neutral culturally.

It's not Buddhist, not Christian, not Hindu. And yet it embraces the essence of all of them. It is not rigid in its form.

There's nothing to believe in. And the essence of this teaching, which is our gathering here this week, is the possibility of the transformation of human consciousness, your consciousness, so to speak. And since all language is limited, form is limited, these words are also signposts, of course, since all form is limited, every word that I speak is also limited and isn't quite it.

It's only one perspective on it. And even if I say the transformation of human consciousness, it's not quite true. No single statement that anybody makes can contain the truth.

It is a perspective on it. This is good to know, once you know it, so that you do not grasp one statement, one perspective, identify with one perspective and say, this is the truth. The transformation of human consciousness, yes, this is one perspective on it, but it implies then that something in you needs to change, become transformed before this new state arises.

Something in you needs fixing. It implies that, but that's not true. Transformation of consciousness also implies that you need time.

For this change to happen. But that is not the case. So what is the essence then of that transformation of consciousness that doesn't need time?

Is that possible? And here we come to the essence. And the only reason why we are here is to know that state of consciousness for ourselves, not as something that needs to be achieved in the future, but as something that is already in you now.

Now, how do you know that beyond making it into another belief? Because you could adopt that belief when you hear certain teachings, they tell you you're already enlightened. And that could be a very satisfying belief to add to the content of your mind.

And then for a while you could convince yourself that this is true. The teacher told me that nothing needs to change. I'm already enlightened.

For a while that adds a little bit to the mind-made identity, the mind-made sense of self, and you feel great. You finally made it. The mind-made sense of self always seeks to improve itself, to add something, to complete itself, to enhance its sense of self.

And if you can catch a belief, a big, powerful belief that somebody gives you, and you can then add it to the accumulated content of your mind with which you identify as your self, then that for a while is very satisfying. You've become big in that. The self has grown to an enlightened me, the enlightened one.

But it's only satisfying for a while. And then life will show you that that wasn't it, and maybe you're not quite enlightened yet. And then there's looking for the next thing to identify with.

Experience, another belief, more knowledge. Then you look for the real spiritual attainment to add to me. And so the striving away from who you already are continues.

The movement towards future continues. The grasping, the continuous reaching out and grasping to complete yourself spiritually, materially. You've gone beyond that, perhaps, and now spiritually.

Relationships, maybe you've gone beyond that. Self-completion, the looking for that. And here comes this strange teaching that says you can never find that in the future.

And yet, don't believe me. If it is already the case, if you are already free, enlightened, in your essence, then what is the difference between you and the spiritual master, if there is such a thing? Well, one could say the master knows this to be true, and you don't know it to be true.

Yes, but how do you know it to be true? How does that manifest? And it's very, very simple.

It's not the case that the master knows more than you. Some masters may do. Other masters may be very simple people, little education.

You know a thousand times more than they do on the level of knowledge. But they know the one thing that matters. And you know many things.

So the answer is simple, and I'll tell it to you now in case you want to leave, go home early. Because I don't want to build up this and say I'm going to tell you the answer on day six. Yes.

The master is totally at one with this moment. He or she does not oppose internally this moment. He or she offers no inner resistance to this moment, to the isness of now, to whatever arises now.

It is not resisted internally. And that is the end of all that is false in you. The entire egoic structure depends on your inner resistance to the suchness of this moment.

It perpetuates itself, the mind made sense of self perpetuates itself basically through its resistance. It is a state of resistance, a state of insufficiency, a state of continuous wanting or fearing the mental projection that you call future. Wanting and needing the future as something that comes towards you to add to me, to complete me.

And fearing that something may arise in that mental projection that we call future that might diminish me. The two movements connected with future, the enhancement of one's sense of self, no matter what form that may take, that is looked for in and through future. That is why there's this enormous mental pull away from the aliveness and fullness of now into future because what is being sought, the seeking is to add more.

The future will complete you. And this is true up to a point. You need future in your spiritual practice.

I'm not completely saying this is all nonsense, no. You need spiritual, for many people, spiritual practice implies a progressive movement, a progressive movement towards the liberated state. But a point comes in your progressive movement where you suddenly realize the fallacy of time as far as the one thing is concerned that truly matters in your life, which is knowing who you are beyond form, finding yourself beyond mental constructs.

Then suddenly you realize the fallacy of future as far as your spiritual liberation is concerned. But before you could realize that, you needed your spiritual practices. You needed time.

You needed suffering. You needed, and spiritual practice is not necessarily spiritual practice in the conventional sense for people. Spiritual practice for many people means suffering.

There are many people who have no spiritual teacher except suffering, and suffering is the greatest, the greatest spiritual teacher. So they needed that because there are two statements that are synonymous when I say you do not need, ultimately, you do not need time. This is not true for everybody.

It is only true for that human being who can listen to that now and realize the depths and the truth of it. And we are only here to explore the depths and the truth of that statement for the whole week, which is time. We explore the timeless state of consciousness here.

Something in you doesn't even like what I'm saying, perhaps in some of you, because you are still identified with time and the movement of time as the me that seeks completion through it. And if only that me, the little egoic self in you listens to these words, it won't like that because its very existence is bound up with time. So it is quite possible that some of you may, if you haven't been here before, may feel a strong impulse to leave.

And there's nothing wrong with that. It simply means there's not yet the readiness to hear the simplicity of this truth and the depths of it that says you don't need time. And there is fear even to want to go more deeply into that statement to see what that means.

There is fear. Who fears that? The time-bound sense of self fears that statement.

And that's fine. That means you do not need more time. It's not true for you.

It means you need more time. It's fine. But this also is connected to suffering.

There's a synonymous statement with you do not need more time. It is the statement, you do not need more suffering, which is the ultimate teaching of the Buddha, the end of suffering. You do not need more time implies you do not need more suffering.

And again, this may be true for you or it may not be true for you. It is not a statement that is true for everybody. So, whatever your spiritual practice has been, whether it's been through teachings or through suffering or a combination of both, the question is whether there is an inner readiness to hear these words and to if only obscurely sense the truth of these words, not understand.

And if you start thinking about it, you won't get very far. You don't need more time. It's true, therefore it's true and not true.

And this is not satisfying to the mind. I will often say things that are true and not true. That pointer may be true for you or it may not be true for you.

The mind doesn't like that it says it is either true or untrue. And in science, this is the case, what has been until recently, until they discovered molecular physics in subatomic particles and see that they behave in such a way that those statements don't apply there anymore either. So the question then, do I need time?

Do we need time for realization? The answer would be you need time until you realize that you do not need time anymore. So all we are doing this week is to go deeper into this statement, to explore where this signpost, which is these words, to explore where this signpost points.

You don't need more time. I don't need more time to be who I am, to be myself fully, completely. How do I know that beyond making it into another belief?

How do I know that beyond me giving you new practices that give you more time to practice, become good at, and then regard as an attainment, once you've become good at it, as an attainment you can add to yourself. It feels a little bit bigger through that. So how do you know it?

You know it and hear through entering into, and I'll say it now, it may frighten some of you, entering here, as this is our only practice this week, only one practice, entering into the surrendered state of consciousness that does not need more of anything. It does not need more of anything. Because if you need more of anything, even spiritual attainment, that is not the surrendered state of consciousness.

If you need more knowledge, that is not the surrendered state of consciousness. If you need more experience, that's not the surrendered state of consciousness, let alone other basic, we know all the other things, status, possessions, money. If you need the psychological need for the next moment, which is deep in everyone, I need that inner reaching out to the next, what's next, what's next, that restless looking towards the next moment, which is part of the normal human state of consciousness, it's all the unsurrendered state of consciousness, the surrendered state of consciousness, and this is vital, and so I have to repeat this, because it's easy to forget, more, you don't need more anymore to complete yourself. The more, more on the level of playing with phenomenal things is beautiful, I need, you need, of course you need more food later today, you need more, more skills, you can learn a few more new skills, that's part of living in this form, but more in the psychological, the psychological need for more, where the self needs to enhance itself through more, you're realizing that is the unsurrendered state, and the last thing that people don't want to let go of is you even surrender the need to understand more, and then you go beyond, you go into the surrendered state of consciousness when you simply welcome the suchness of this moment, whatever form it takes. That at first looks like an absurd spiritual practice, because very often, in fact more often than not, this moment does not look all that satisfying.

So to say I totally surrender to the suchness of this moment, including all the, whatever I feel is not right with me, what I'm feeling at this moment, it may be restlessness, it may be anger, whatever it may be, you mean you want me to be stuck in this moment forever? But of course that's not what it is. And what better place to enter the surrendered state than India?

And maybe this is why this country has produced more spiritual masters than any other. You have to surrender here. India teaches you to surrender.

That is the, even without going to any teachers, it is a teaching in itself. The illusion that you can control the material universe, the illusion that out there there's anything substantial that lasts, which you could have in the West, because you have substantial shopping malls and freeways and everything is, works, it all works. And it gives you the illusion, it gives you the illusion that there's something lasting there.

And this, sooner or later, even there, reveals itself as an illusion. The shopping malls will crumble unless you crumble first, your physical form. It's insubstantial, but the insubstantiality of the physical is more apparent here.

And the only way to be here, unless you want to suffer, is to surrender to what is. It doesn't mean you can't say, oh, could you please heat up this soup or whatever. It's, I prefer hot to cold or whatever it is.

You can say something and do something and initiate action, but in that, be surrendered, because it may not work, and whatever action arises, let it arise out of the state of alignment with the form that this moment takes. Even if it looks unsatisfying. During this week, sometimes the form that this moment takes will be beautiful.

Oh. And then the next moment, or rather the next form that this one moment, the only moment there is, takes, may be not beautiful. So it may be a limitation on your freedom.

For most of you, or all of you, unless you are ascetic practitioners, where you are now is not as comfortable as your home. Facilities, you haven't got, so you have limitations on your life here that you may not have at home. You have others there.

You have limitations on your life here, physical even. The food may be strange. Many kinds of limitations.

And so there is, you can observe the reactivity of the little me that says no to what is internally and wants to be somewhere else, or blames or criticizes or complains in the head about the form that this moment takes. That is the unsurrendered state. That is how the egoic entity survives through resistance.

And it can get very strong here if you don't know how it operates. So our spiritual practice here during this week is just be watchful and alert and ask yourself, observe yourself internally, am I in the surrendered state or the unsurrendered state of consciousness? The unsurrendered state denies, resists, or tries to get away from what is.

The surrendered state has surrendered its need for more, has surrendered its need for this moment to be different from what is, because it has recognized that what is, is already as it is. And it has recognized the futility of resisting that internally. It embraces the suchness of this moment, whatever form this moment takes.

You do not demand that the form that this moment takes should be different from what it is. You do not oppose that. What happens when you no longer demand that the form that this moment takes, and please observe this little signpost I'm giving you when I say, the form that this moment takes, because this moment is eternal.

There's only this eternal one now, never changes. It cannot, it is, remains eternally as now. What appears in it is the world of form.

A form of life appears in the vastness of the field that is the eternal now. In this vastness, forms appear. And they appear, and that is the appearance of this moment.

The form that arises, a situation, a place, an event, a person comes, it's happening now. Of course it's happening now. Nothing can happen that is not now.

Whatever happens must happen in this eternal field of now. We cannot fully understand through the mind what that means, but it is an amazing realization that there is nothing that is not now. To be and now, life and now, are totally synonymous, totally one.

Nothing has ever happened that wasn't now. Nothing will, can ever happen that is not now. How?

Future moment can only appear as now. Otherwise it has no reality except a mental projection. And when is it happening?

Now. And the memory of a past moment, there is no such thing really of a past moment, as there is no such thing as a future moment. There is only form that it takes.

There is only one moment, which is now, one eternal now. Now, the form that this now takes, changes, the form that appears in it, as you go through life, a continuous flux of forms. Now, most people, all they know is the forms that arise in the now.

They have a relationship with those forms, which is either a relationship of desire or a relationship of fear. They want to have these forms or they have aversion towards these forms. And you can observe this, this week, how the good things come to you, how beautiful, the river, the holy river, the sunset.

And the next moment, something dreadful happens. It's the now, it's not really the next moment. Even I use those words sometimes, because language works in that way.

There is no such thing as the next moment. The next, the form that the moment takes, then changes. So, most people, all they relate to is the forms that arise in the now, and their relationship is one of fear or desire.

They fear or desire those forms, aversion or attraction towards these forms, because all they know is the forms. What they don't know is the now, beyond the forms. And this doesn't make sense to the mind either.

This is a signpost that the truth of this cannot be understood through thought, because the transformed state of consciousness is beyond thought. This is where we are now moving. Let's see, what happens when, as is the normal, in the normal state of consciousness, when you resist internally, or deny, or run away from internally, from the isness of now, the form that this moment takes, the reaction against it, the reaction against the form that this moment takes, as an inner contraction, an inner no, an inner running away from it, it strengthens the form identity in you that is the mind-made self, identified with mental, emotional forms, content of your mind.

The mind-made self, the me, with its experiences and its conditioning, its knowledge, it strengthens its form identity through reacting to other forms. So you get trapped in the world of form when you are in a reactive relationship towards what arises in the now. And to be in a reactive relationship, which is desire or fear, is part of the normal state of consciousness.

And the reactive relationship to the world of form is what keeps the me, the egoic entity, going. The more, every time you react against, your form identity contracts and strengthens, as the me, you feel stronger in your sense of self. And you can notice it in yourself when you argue with somebody and you're trying to be right.

And this is a very common example of strengthening your sense of self by identifying with a mental position and fighting some other mental position there. So you're reacting to form. Or an event comes into your life, a person comes, a situation comes, and there's a reaction.

You're strengthening your form identity through the reactivity to form. And that's what keeps the world going. That keeps that state of consciousness going.

To go beyond that, and it only works if you were not ready. You wouldn't even want to listen to this. The fact that you sit here and listen means the readiness is there.

The readiness to go beyond that and enter the state of non-resistance, enter the state of surrender, of welcoming whatever form arises. This is our spiritual practice, and this is the best place to practice it in. We are here.

Welcoming whatever form arises, inner as an emotion, feeling, or outer form. Because it is. It already is.

You say yes to that. You are no longer in a personalized relationship to whatever arises. You embrace what arises through that yes.

It is. Embrace. And what happens when you embrace the form of this moment?

You become who you already are. You become, and I'm only using pointers. The pointers are not it.

Words. You become who you already are and what you already are. You become very deep and spacious as you allow the world of form to arise and to subside in that field of now.

There's a great sense of spaciousness now around this form that arises, this event, this person, this thing. It is not resisted. And suddenly, one could also say there's suddenly a vast peace around it, no matter what it is.

The form itself may not be peaceful. The form itself may be a limitation on your physical form. It may even be a limitation on your psychological form of me.

But it is allowed to be. The limitation is not resisted. Let's say you are trapped in a cold room.

And it's just a simple example. And that form that this moment takes, which is while the body feels, is simply allowed to be. Any condition is simply allowed to be.

And suddenly, there's this vast space around the condition. Anything that is, you could practice that with anything that is uncomfortable in your life. And there may be things here because you would probably be more comfortable at home.

And sometimes you may wish you were at home in your comfortable armchair watching television. Having your favorite drink, a meal. And all this is gone here.

And suddenly, there's a limitation. There is a discomfort that arises somewhere. There may even be pain.

But let's just talk about a little thing like a discomfort that arises. And so you can react. So the discomfort becomes a reaction which leads to mind movements, which strengthens the me.

Because the me has made the moment, the now, into its enemy. And it gets stronger through that. Through the mind movement and the emotional movement that makes the now into its enemy.

And you can complain about it in your head. Why did I ever come here? I shouldn't.

They shouldn't. Why shouldn't? Why don't they?

So you can, so that the discomfort reacted against is denied, resisted. And mind movement begins. Emotions that accompany that mind movement flow into and strengthen those mind movements.

And it's all connected. Your sense of self gets stronger in that. And you're complaining inside your head.

And maybe to somebody else. I'm not saying you can't complain in the sense of telling somebody to change this from here, to do that. But I mean the psychological complaining.

And people, people, many people live in a constant state of that. There are marriages, people living, husbands and wives, who are in a constant state of mental complaining about their husband or their wife. It's so normal they don't even know it anymore.

For 30 years they've been complaining in the head. It's their normal state. But it's with everybody, it's like that.

It may not be in your marriage, may not be like that. But some are, quite a few are. So a discomfort arises.

And instead of the reactivity, strengthening the egoic entity that needs its enemies to feel I'm me. If only the enemy is this little situation that creates discomfort. That will do, any enemy will do, to strengthen the self, the me.

And of course when you complain, you are right. And the situation is wrong. That is the essence of the complaint, the inner complaint.

I am right. Either the person, or it may not be a person, the situation is wrong. That's the nature of complaining.

You're putting yourself in a position of rightness, me, right, a mental position. Then your sense of self becomes identified with that mental position of rightness. And therefore, you're under the delusion, it's all unconscious, that you are more yourself now.

It feels great, I'm against something. And it's unconscious, people don't know that this is how the self, the false self, perpetuates itself. How it loves all the things it complains about.

It needs them. It's looking out for the next thing it can complain about. And then, what happens then if suddenly there is a shift, the discomfort arises, whatever it may be, and is met in that state of, yes, it's allowed to be.

The discomfort is there, it is allowed to be. You actually embrace it. It's all right.

And that continues as a little movement, the discomfort movement. Cold, a little pain here, whatever it may be, pain there. Water is cold, who knows.

And it's allowed. And there the discomfort continues. And you continue to simply be with it.

And suddenly, there is something more than that, or that little me. Then what happens now is not something that one can put into words. Because you go beyond form now.

There is a space around the discomfort. And you can do that with any bodily condition, any physical condition. Just stay with that.

And suddenly there is a sense of spaciousness around it. And there is an enormous peace around that. And the discomfort is still there.

So the discomfort is any form of pain, suffering. You're simply allowing it to be as it is. Allowing it to be as it is.

So use, this is great that we have some discomforts here. Theoretically, one could have a retreat center that is so comfortable. Everything works totally perfectly to satisfy all your needs.

Just the right temperature. The thermostat works perfectly. The water is just right.

The environment is totally soothing and peaceful. You get a massage three times a day. The most exquisite food.

Just the right amount. Some celestial music in the background sometimes. Maybe one day, and it may be in California, they may create such a center.

Wow, wouldn't that be great? And yet, there wouldn't be very much spiritual practice there. It doesn't come in that way.

Here you have the natural things that arise in an environment that to many of you is foreign and strange. And many things arise here. In others, there are schools like Zen monasteries where they consciously make your life as uncomfortable as possible.

Where you get very little food, it's cold. They open the windows and you meditate all night in this painful position. Facing a wall with cold wind blowing in.

And an empty stomach. Then you can watch what arises in the now. And it may perhaps at one point you give up real resistance because you can't stand the pain of the resistance anymore.

There is more to it than the form of this moment. But you're suddenly aware of a vast space around this temporary form that includes the physical body. And that is, some people have described it as enormous peace suddenly around.

In the same awful place, the monastery, whatever it was. And there, in the midst of that spaciousness, there is the physical pain. There is the empty stomach.

There is the discomfort. It's there somewhere. It's not a self anymore.

There is simply, there is that discomfort. There is that feeling of empty stomach. And yet, there is no me in it.

It's just there. So your sense of self is no longer in the form, the psychological form or the physical form. Your sense of self, where is, in some traditions they now say, you have discovered no self.

The self has dissolved, which is true. The false self has dissolved through entering the surrendered state. The false self has dissolved.

And what arises then is, Buddhists may call it emptiness, or it may be called the self, the one, the unconditioned one consciousness, out of which the whole universe comes, out of which every phenomenon comes, that remains, and there it is. It's not known in a subject-object relationship, known as yourself. Not that which arises, but the field in which everything arises is who you are.

You are not that which happens in the now. You are the field of now. That's the depth of what now means, the eternal.

Now is the eternal, unchanging one. And it's so easy to know that as the essence of who you are, and you can see how absurd it is to look for it in the future. The essence, eternal presence, the essence of who you are, to look for it in the future.

So, that's why this spiritual practice does not require time. And yet, and there's always a paradox whenever we speak about it, because all language is to do with time and the phenomenal world. And yet, we are here for one week, which is time.

A whole week exploring that which is beyond time. Sounds paradoxical almost. Why do we need a whole week to explore the timeless?

Well, maybe you don't need it anymore. Maybe once or twice it's happened that people have walked out and later contacted me and said, I'm the person who walked out after 10 minutes of your talk, because I realized the truth of it and I don't need to come anymore. That realization, of course, may be true or false.

If it's only a mind movement, life will soon tell you that, Oh, this is not the surrendered state. I'm shouting and screaming at my wife. Is that the surrendered state?

So, our practice then is allowing this moment to be simple. The rest happens by itself. And there is enormous intelligence in this field of now.

It is the essence of all intelligence. The mind is a tiny aspect of that vast intelligence that is in the field of now. And one more pointer.

As you surrender to now, whatever form this now takes, the incessant mental noise that we call thinking, 90% of which is unnecessary, slows down. Because a large part of the compulsive streams of thinking that most people are identified with, as me, as themselves, completely identified with those continuous streams of thoughts. And the reason why those thought streams have an addictive quality, a compulsive quality, is because your sense of self is in them.

The me, your identification with those thought streams as a me. And the me wants to sustain itself. So it can't stop.

And the me can only perpetuate itself through non-surrender and resistance. And that gives fuel to the compulsion to think, because it's an expression of the non-surrendered state. You're trying to control things somehow.

And so you lie awake at night for two or three hours, trying to work it out, control your life, fear what might come, rehearse something, project fantasies. With entering this surrendered state, the mental noise slows down by itself. When you say yes to what is, mental noise will begin to subside.

Still there to some extent. But you're not in a fighting mode anymore towards the universe. And to be in a fighting mode towards the universe is what creates that enormous momentum that is behind compulsive thinking.

It comes in waves and waves and waves. And there's always a me in it. And so with the surrendered state, that calms down.

So you don't need to stop your mind. That creates another problem. Just be with what is.

Allow this moment to be. Then the mind stops by itself. Because it's not compatible, compulsive thinking, with allowing this moment to be.

And when the mind subsides, that continues stream of thinking, there's the spaciousness. There's the stillness that is underneath the mental noise in everyone. It's already there.

And that is none other than that spaciousness that is there, beyond the form that this moment takes. And that stillness again, every label is so limited. Every signpost is limited.

Stillness. Spaciousness. Awareness that does not need thought.

Beyond thought. Thought can arise in it. But it is beyond thought.

Vast intelligence. Unconditioned. What humans think of as intelligence is the ability of the mind to solve puzzles, to store knowledge, to analyze information.

It's very limited. The entire universe is an external expression in the manifested expression of vast intelligence, expressing itself as form. And most of it comes out of stillness.

The flowers come out of stillness. Exists in stillness. That beauty that no mind could create.

Entire galaxies coming out of vast stillness. They say the universe came about, and scientists say there was a big bang when the universe, out of one point, suddenly exploded into existence. And then they ask, what was before then?

And then their mind stops. Well, it doesn't stop, but thought cannot reach there. What was there before the universe was there?

Before the big bang? That state of the unmanifested is still in you. It's never gone away as your essence.

The big bang happens continuously. The universe comes into existence every moment. Don't think about that.

Ultimately, this is now that there's a strong evolutionary impulse now on this planet that is forcing humanity to evolve into a state that before was the privilege of very few individuals here and there. They were the early flowerings of consciousness. But it is the destiny of all humans to be, to express this flowering, to be openings for this flowering of consciousness to happen.

So where the person, you come here as a person, which is the caterpillar, and then, but you're already ready to go beyond that. Then the person was there, and it's become dense and heavy in its last stages of personal selfhood. And then the person gives way, just as the caterpillar dissolves as caterpillar, and out comes this incredible, beautiful being.

The person gives way to the flowering of human consciousness. Yes, you're still here in a physical form. But something far greater has emerged through this form.

And this is why we are here, to go beyond this absurdly limited sense of self with me, with my little bit of past and my little bit of history, my little story, and a pathetic little bit of future that I think is going to complete me. And there's so little, even for those who are young, it's not much. How can I complete me in those few years?

What can I possibly add to me to make me complete? It's an illusion. So to go beyond that absurdly limited sense of self to the vastness that you actually are, not as a limited me anymore.

You simply then become an expression of that, and it emanates then through this form. And so, this is the only way now the planet can be saved, is human consciousness to become transformed. Until recently, it's been a luxury, that transformation, a few here and there.

And now, we have to. This is why it's happening. And we encounter a state of consciousness that is beyond thought, characterized by deep, vitally alive stillness.

And out of that, thought can still come. And those thoughts that come out of that are inspired thoughts, new thoughts, realizations. Thought is form, and this is the formless.

Knowing yourself as the formless. And then move through the world of form, and enjoy that. This is the first time.

It's only when you know yourself to be beyond that, not through some idea, but through being in the surrendered state, it's only then that you can enjoy the world of forms, truly. When you are no longer in a personalized, reactive relationship to the forms that arise in your life, in the now, of course, then you no longer desire nor fear any particular forms. You enjoy the dance of form.

And you may contribute to it. You may create new forms. They come out of presence, not because of egoic need to complete itself.

So a completely different doing happens. Completely different motivation for doing. No self-seeking through doing.

Not trying to get to some future point where you're going to complete yourself, and if you don't get there, you'll be unhappy. And if you do get there, you'll also be unhappy. Of course, many of these things, they've been pointed to in ancient teachings.

There's the Bhagavad Gita, a beautiful, one of the most beautiful signposts. The path of surrendered action. Where this, the action, the doing is not a means to an end.

That is surrendered action. The doing is not inferior to some mentally projected result that you want to achieve, and thereby enhance your sense of self. Surrendered action is never a means to an end.

It is sufficient unto itself. So your practice is, be watchful of this moment. It's always this moment.

A limited way of putting it would be to say, what is your relationship with this moment? That's, in ultimate terms, you don't have a relationship with this moment, you are this moment. But in a limited, more limited, from a more limited perspective, you could ask yourself, what is my relationship with this moment or the form that this moment takes?

Surrendered or resistant? And you watch. And as you watch, many times you can watch non-surrender arising.

And then you watch non-surrender as a physical contraction, as an emotional movement, or as mental judgments. Often the three go together. Physical contraction, the emotion, and some mental judgment that says something about now, or a total projection away from now.

And you see yourself in your favorite restaurant at home, having a meal there. And suddenly, you come back to, oh. If you observe yourself in a non-surrendered state, that's all that's necessary.

And allow that to be. Physical contraction. Oh, look at that.

Nothing personal in it. It's the human state. Allow it.

So it's as whenever a no arises in you, a no to what is, and you suddenly see it, accept it. So the yes, you bring the yes into the no, always. You cannot fight non-surrender through more non-surrender, or trying to achieve a surrendered state.

It's enough to know that you are not surrendered. That is the arising of presence. That is the arising of the unconditioned consciousness.

And there you can allow, it allows that. And then, something happens to the non-surrendered state, because it is not compatible with surrender. Of course, many teachings speak of surrender to God.

And of course, this is what it is. You can only surrender to God by surrendering to the form that this moment takes. When you ask, well, God couldn't possibly have created this dreadful form that this moment takes, this situation.

It's a limitation. It's a limitation. I want to know myself as unlimited, and here I'm faced with limitation wherever I look.

That's the form that this moment takes. The form that this moment takes cannot not be a limitation. Even if it looks like great, after a little while the great has become a limitation on you.

Look at the West, it's become very wealthy and prosperous, and at first it means, I'm now unlimited, I can buy whatever I like. And then you buy more and more, and another visit to the shopping mall, and another visit, and another, and suddenly all the things that you have bought have become a limitation on you, and everything is suddenly, buying doesn't fulfill you anymore. And then you walk around the shopping mall depressed.

So in the world of form, what looks sometimes like, now this form has come and freed me, always turns out to be another limitation. Because it is form, and all form is limitation. So to project some situation mentally where you are going to be free of all limitations is absurd.

But it is not in the nature of the world of form to be free of limitation, it would be a contradiction in terms. Form is limitation. So wherever you go, you encounter limitations, and every time you think, now this will free me, this person will make me happy, in other words, unlimited, then this very person that was supposed to make you happy will be the greatest limitation on your life.

So it's not seeking where it cannot be found. So it's not by running away from the limitations, but by finding a new relationship towards the limitations. And that new relationship towards the limitations, not that you can't take action to improve things and paint your house, but a new relationship towards the limitations in your life, from one of feeling bad about them and thinking there must be some other situation that's better than this, well, maybe try another one, and then the same arises again.

Okay, try some other place, you can live somewhere else, and then after a while the same arises. Okay, well, now just say yes to this. The very limitation becomes an opening through the yes.

That's the beauty of it. And what before looked like a universe that was there to frustrate you, how could God allow this? The universe was there just designed to frustrate you.

And that's how some people live in such a reactive relationship, they're so angry. Everything is just designed to make my life difficult, that's how it seems. And then your relationship changes towards what is.

And you allow it. And there's the limitation, whatever it may be, big, small, discomfort, a little discomfort here, a little cold there, a present cell around you, fairly big limitation, physical condition of the body limiting you, can't move anymore, can't move fast anymore, who knows? Sooner or later, limitations will come.

Big ones will come too. Form, it's form. And so it's not resisted anymore.

Then something opens up where there before was limitation, becomes an opening into the formless and the unlimited. You've walked through the limitation by yes. This is the cross, the meaning of the cross, crucifixion means limitation.

That highest degree of limitation. Can't move anymore. Totally limited.

And then surrender happens. In the face of the unacceptable. And suddenly the cross becomes a symbol of the divine.

The torture instrument becomes a symbol of the divine. And there's deep wisdom, no matter, you don't have to be a Christian to see the wisdom that is embedded in that. Deepest, one of the deepest symbols of humanity.

And in most churches, they don't understand it at all. They don't understand the depths of it. They make it into some formal belief structures.

But the depths of it is to see that the non-duality that is there of the divine and the world of form, of the limited and the unlimited, they are one. It's through the world of form that the divine is reached. By going through it, not running away from it.

So, to know this is our spiritual practice. To go deeper and deeper into this is our spiritual practice this week. Use, of course there's great beauty here too, and there are limitations on you.

Use them wisely in your practice. Use this moment wisely, rightly. It's precious.

It's the only one there is, ever. We will meet again. The hands of the clock will have shifted and show the 3.30 position. But it will still be now. We may also have, as we go into this week, periods of silence. That's the wake-up call.

I'm not implying that anybody here is asleep. Wake up, awakening. The normal state of consciousness is the normal state of consciousness, which is thought.

The normal state of consciousness and then there's the state of sleep. And what the normal state of consciousness is relative to sleep, the awakened state of consciousness is relative to the normal state. The normal state, in other words, and this is why for thousands of years the term awakening has been used, the normal state of consciousness compared to the awakened state of consciousness is very much like sleep, or rather dreams, dreamland.

So the awakening is simply the awakening out of the dream of thought, out of being totally immersed in that dream. Not that thought does not arise. It still can arise and does arise, and yet you dwell beyond thought in the state of presence stillness, alert, awake stillness, in which nothing is known and yet everything is known.

So we've looked at a portal this morning, a portal into that state in which you're no longer trapped in thought. Then that portal is surrender to what is. There's another portal that is continuously here and that is the state of consciousness out of which these words come, nothing personal about it, nobody's achievement, nobody's attainment.

That would be to create another form, identity around that which is beyond form. There's a state of consciousness out of which these words come. You can tune into that, so to speak, I'm using language loosely, you can't use concise terms here.

You can be receptive, tune into, become sensitive to the state of consciousness that could be described, because you might ask how become alert and aware of an underlying field of stillness, one could say, out of which the words come. The sound comes, it's gone. They're all pointers, point out of.

And usually when you sit here only identified with thought, you would only be interested in that which arises, which is the words, and you would always be a little bit impatient for the next word to come, the next sentence, the next concept, the next idea. And you would find that we are not proceeding fast enough. The flow of information is insufficient for the mind.

So you can detect, if you can detect within yourself a certain impatience or restlessness, which implies not enough, more please, more. That is trapped in mind, trapped in thought, trapped in a thought-based sense of self, looking for more and not getting enough here. And if, on the other hand, a state of alert presence of just being here in that open, spacious alertness, if that arises, then you become attuned to that field out of which the words come, the unconditioned consciousness.

Then, of course, every word carries some past. Words come, words are old, every word is old, and yet something of the unconditioned flows even into the words, and then the words have a certain power that goes beyond any informational value that they may have or not have. So a portal that is continuously here, but it could elude you if you only look for content during these talks.

If you only look for the content in these talks, then you would be missing that dimension that really matters here. The content is only a relatively small part of the talks. So you become attuned to an underlying field, one could say.

Another way of putting it you become aware of an underlying stillness here, whether you perceive it as external or internal, or don't know where exactly it is, a certain stillness. And you notice that underneath the words and in between the words there is a field of stillness. That noticing, and you might, at first it might appear that that field of stillness is in this room, which to some extent is true.

It might appear that that field of stillness is within, comes from this form. Which to some extent is true, but really the moment you notice it, it's in you, because it can only notice itself. It can only know itself.

Not through thought can you know or even notice that field of stillness. Because that field of stillness is beyond thought and beyond form. And thought is form.

So through thought you have no access to it. And this is why the miracle happens. The moment you are aware of it, you have gone within yourself beyond thought.

And you have entered a dimension of consciousness that is unconditioned. Whereas the whole realm of thought, or the mind, is the conditioned. Consciousness has taken form as thought forms.

The conditioned consciousness. What arises here is the dimension of consciousness that we could call unconditioned. And it is there.

The moment you notice, become aware of, not so much, one could say, what is there, but you become aware, and this is a slightly mystical statement, you become aware of what is not there. And ordinarily, in this world, nobody is aware, not very few, are aware of that dimension that underlies the conditioned. The vastness that underlies the conditioned, that is not separate from who you are.

That is who you are. But you can never know it in the conventional sense. People look for self-realization and believe it is a state of knowing something about themselves that they hadn't known before.

It is not a state of knowing something in a dualistic subject-object relationship. I know myself. You've already split yourself into two.

In that sense, you cannot know that I'm conditioned. It cannot be known as it cannot become an object of knowledge. So you cannot, because it is ultimately you, you cannot become an object of knowledge to yourself.

Because whatever you can know in the conventional sense is knowing something about yourself, which is the form in which you appear. And so you would know something about yourself if you underwent 10 years of psychoanalysis. You would have a lot of knowledge about yourself, things you didn't know before, going back to childhood, reactive patterns, all kinds of very interesting things.

And so, after 10 years, the psychoanalysts might say, we have come to the end of our treatment sessions, your self-knowledge is now complete. And he would hand you a file, a huge file, containing all the self-knowledge. And you would then know a lot about yourself.

And you could say, I know everything about myself. And then you might think, okay, I must be self-realized. But you only forgot when you said, I know everything about myself, you forgot about the I.

Who is it that knows? And what is it that it knows? It knows the conditioned.

It's forgotten the knower. The knower. Can the knower be known?

No. No. The knower is the knowing itself.

It cannot know itself. It becomes very hard to talk about these things. Because all language moves in the realm of duality.

Even every sentence structure has a subject and an object. This is why sometimes in teachings, paradoxical statements are used, or metaphor, or symbols. It's never it.

It's maybe a little bit like that. So here, we enter, or we allow to arise, that dimension of consciousness that is the prerequisite of all knowing. Before any, before you can know any object of knowledge, there's the field of knowing.

And the miracle is, be careful with words. Don't think that they are the absolute truth. The miracle is, you can know yourself as that, not in a dualistic sense.

Let's forget about this now. Let's return to becoming simply alert to an underlying dimension of stillness. So that your total attention is not absorbed by that which arises, the words.

And of course, no word is ever going to satisfy you on that level. So when you are fascinated by sense objects and mind objects that arise, not one is ever going to satisfy you. And you would always, any statement that I can make wouldn't be quite enough yet.

There must be more. That's not the ultimate answer. Yes, and then what?

What? So you're no longer simply fascinated by that which arises. Here it's the words.

Your total attention is not drawn into that. In other words, you're not, your incarnation into that form is no longer total. Because you reincarnate, so to speak, in a wider sense.

Every time you identify with a thought stream totally, you have reincarnated into that thought stream. Your sense of self is completely in it. So you continuously reincarnate into arising phenomena.

It could be external things, experiences, and you're totally, it matters absolutely. And so one could say the deeper sense of coming to the end of reincarnation is to no longer reincarnate into identification with form, into seeking yourself or believing that yourself is in a form. And here we are speaking at the moment primarily of thought forms.

So to this compulsion to reincarnate always into the next thought stream, to be totally fascinated by it, and always needing the more to make your reincarnation complete and never getting there. That's, we are moving, that is being trapped in that normal state of consciousness. And that is still the majority on the planet is still trapped in that, but very powerfully something else is arising now, and it's arising here.

So the words, you give them attention, but they no longer have your, they no longer have your total attention. There's some attention that you give to the words, but you also give attention to the underlying stillness, even as you listen. And of course, the moment you do that, the unconditioned consciousness is there in you and your mind becomes still without losing consciousness.

You're fully aware, you're aware of the silence, but what really is that silence or rather that stillness? The stillness is the unconditioned consciousness, awareness itself. And you're aware of that.

Now that sounds as if it were dualistic, but it's only because I'm using language. You're aware of awareness. When you are aware of stillness.

And the moment you pay attention to stillness, you've become still. And that might at first be like a phenomenon outside of you that you are attentive to, oh, and you may notice there is a certain alertness that comes with that awareness of stillness. And you cannot be aware of stillness through thinking.

Thought, stillness does not exist for thought. Thought can come in subsequently and say, oh, that stillness, how nice. Or it can say, oh, you see, you've lost it already.

I had it, I had it only a moment ago. How can I get back to it? That was such a wonderful experience.

And it's not really an experience because it is, the stillness is always there. So, during these days here, learning what that means, to be aware of that underlying dimension, not only in these sessions, and then when you leave here, become totally absorbed again or reincarnate again totally into rising thought streams and sense perceptions. But, carry that awareness, awareness of underlying awareness.

I'm speaking of things that you can't speak of, that's why it's sometimes a little funny. You carry that with you, not only here, although you can perhaps sense it more powerfully in these sessions, but then you walk out into, out there, into the gardens and the river. And there, certain perceptions arise.

And you're aware of those perceptions, and some of them will be very beautiful. And occasionally some may be ugly. This is the world.

And you watch, and you, underlying the sense perception, is a field of alert, still presence in which the sense perception happens. And that means the compulsion to reincarnate into another thought stream is suddenly not there. You're happy not to reincarnate for a while into another thought stream.

The true joy arises out of that state of presence. There is a very subtle joy in that, which in some teachings been called happiness, but I wouldn't use that word. It might even be a wrong translation.

That joy is in essence an intrinsic aspect of yourself. I sometimes call it the joy of being. And so it does not depend on what forms are arising at this moment.

So there is, you enjoy the play of forms, but the joy does not come from the forms. If the joy comes from the forms, it's not joy, it's pleasure. Pleasure is something you derive because a new form has come in and makes you feel good for a while, and then it leaves you and makes you feel bad, or the good turns into bad.

So if a form gives you joy, it's not really the deepest, the true joy that is an intrinsic part of your self nature. It gives you pleasure. But pleasure exists in the realm of opposites, and what gives you pleasure will also give you pain, either because it leaves you or because it turns into its opposite, such as in a relationship, marriage, divorce, pleasure, pain, or in business, gain, loss.

And so Ramana Maharshi said, and of course that is a translation and it may not be absolutely correct translation, happiness is your true nature. I would re-translate it, and perhaps in the original what he said is closer to that. Joy is your true nature.

But don't look for joy. You would create some new object, mind object. You don't need to look for it.

No. Simply do not reincarnate continuously. And it's so simple.

These sessions are helpful, and they are helpful beyond words. The words are helpful pointers, but there's much more to these sessions than the words. And so be alert here to that dimension that is beyond the words, because that dimension is also beyond thought.

And that is where we are going, to know what that is, which one could describe as consciousness free of thought. Wow. And this is the next step.

One could say in the evolution of human consciousness, which until now we've just come to the end of thought, which means humanity, human consciousness being totally dominated, run by, identified with, thought. It started, as the myth tells us, in the Garden of Eden, which one could say is a symbolic representation of the arising of thought. They ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, evaluate, judge.

The arising of thought, loss of Eden, and I'm told the translation of that word, Eden is place of joy. Thought arose and it was a great thing. And gradually, over many, many thousands of years, identification with thought came in.

Self and thought became one. Mankind had to move through that. Now, that state of consciousness has become more and more dysfunctional.

Look at the history of the 20th century. Dreadful. Madness.

So the dysfunction becomes apparent now because we are arriving at the end time. You may have seen people walking around, I don't know, it may not happen in India, but in the West with placards, the end is near, the end is nigh. We have arrived at the end.

And perhaps they don't realize how right they are when they say we have arrived at the, well perhaps they should put a little another word in, we have arrived at the end of time. Because to be identified with thought totally is also to be governed by time, past and future, to live exclusively through memory and anticipation and all that that implies. So, and to completely limit it in false sense of identity.

We are moving out of that. A new state of consciousness is emerging. This teaching would be pointless, nobody would even hear it if it were not emerging already.

So, this form is no more than a midwife, a mid, mid husband, mid man? I don't know. Simply to help along the birth process.

And not, I'm not here to make it happen. That would be frustrating. Why aren't and you are not here to make it happen in yourself.

That would be equally frustrating. And you would come to the end of the six days or seven days here and say I was looking for this great spiritual experience and somehow it didn't happen. I was looking and looking and looking because you were looking for something and you missed nothing.

So you were looking to reincarnate into some experience and didn't get it. Or if you got it, maybe you got it or had such a great experience there and then you are back wherever you live and then a few weeks later it's wearing off. Oh, I wish I could get that back.

Why is it now? That was so great. And then you think maybe I need to go back to India.

Back to India. That's where it is. So the essence of this gathering is very simple but also very subtle.

It easily eludes you if you are too much in your mind. So not only here but also out there be there as a field of alert presence. That which you sense here, the underlying field and know what it means, the beauty of this to be free of thought.

But don't look for that state. It comes by itself. And in one moment you are free of a million years of conditioning as the unconditioned arises.

Because if you had to undo the conditioned bit by bit you would never see the end of it. There is so much. So the unconditioned arises as the state of consciousness that is free of thought that all the great teachings, not so directly, point to.

Some directly, some indirectly. When Ramana Maharshi was asked how do we measure our progress on the spiritual path, how do we know if we are making progress, they asked him. And he said and some people don't like this, they say, no, no, he didn't really say that, but it's there.

The degree of absence of thoughts is your measure of progress on the spiritual path. It's as simple as that. And then some people say, no, what he really meant was who is talking?

Thought. Trying to convince everybody else that that's not what he said. But be careful here.

Not to make the state that is free of thinking into another future state to be achieved. Because you can't achieve it in that way in the future. Not as something to be added to you.

It is an enormous, the greatest renunciation and the only ultimately true renunciation is not so much the renunciation of worldly things, the renunciation of sexuality, the renunciation of possessions, the renunciation of certain kinds of food, whatever it may be. The ultimate renunciation is and I'll say it to renounce thought. And thought it says tries to convince you that in that renunciation you would become you would revert to the state of the cabbage, the vegetable.

And it says this is not a desirable state. And that is true. You don't want being a cabbage is beautiful for the cabbage.

But the cabbage lives at one with the totality all vegetative life all nature lives totally in the state of oneness still. So it's totally right for the cabbage to be the cabbage. But it is not the destiny of humans to revert to the vegetative or animal stage, although compared to humans nature and animals are very very sane compared to most of human life.

There's enormous sanity there because they have not left they haven't gone out into more and more highly differentiated form and form identification. They haven't left the source they haven't gone that far from the source as humans have. And so yes, there's great every animal is so rooted in being still compared to neurotic humans.

Wow, just look how animal moves and is itself, completely itself. Not trying to be something it is. But we are not going back there.

The animal also is free of thought although occasionally the beginnings of thought movements can be observed in certain animals. We go beyond thought. One could say we are rising above thought where we do not lose the ability to think.

Simply means we are no longer reduced by thinking. We are no longer trapped in thought. We can now use thought.

Thought will operate when it's needed. It will be applied to a particular situation. But whenever even a situation that needs to be resolved, a challenge that arises, and it can only arise in the now, before thought arises attention is given to it.

And that attention is the state of thoughtless awareness. You are looking at the totality of the situation in stillness. Alert, alive, stillness.

There is a looking. In that looking enormous intelligence operates. And I'm looking in a wider sense.

It may not necessarily be through the eyes. Attention is giving to this to the situation. Complete attention in stillness.

And then perhaps either spontaneous action or thought that then leads to action arises. Spontaneous realization, perhaps in the form of thought, what needs to be done, or action without the intermediary of thought arises, and it's right for that situation. So thought can still operate.

It already does in all creative people, people through whom, who create in whatever their field of activity is, they become highly creative and many of them don't know that they have the ability, even if only, it may only last for a few seconds, to be in the state of thoughtless awareness. That is the creative state. And there are many people, those who are creative, relatively few compared to the majority, they don't even know that this is how they create, and some of them do know it, that it arises out of the state of still, alert presence, which is the higher intelligence, the unconditioned intelligence that operates.

And then the insight comes, or the doing happens. But we are going beyond that. We are not trying to do something with it.

And those people have access to it in the limited field of their activity. The moment they move away from that, they are just as neurotic as everybody else. So we are moving beyond thought, not back, we step beyond thought.

This is humanity's destiny. And it's urgent now, not in the sense of, oh, we must get there. It's urgent in the sense that there is an intensity now to the arising consciousness, because the madness that is the dysfunction of the old consciousness is also getting accelerating.

It gets worse, and at the same time, the new is already arising. The two movements, the old still not even having reached yet the end of its madness, and the new arising at the same time. The old is still much more visible in this world, the madness of the old state of consciousness, with its need for conflict and problems, and the violence that arises out of that state, and the immeasurable suffering that humans inflict on each other and on themselves out of that state.

That madness is continuing on the planet. You only need to watch the news on TV, or read the paper. That's a continuation of what we have seen in the 20th century and before that, and the new is arising, not so much visible on the surface of things yet.

Rarely mentioned in the media. Occasionally it is mentioned already here and there. This is why we are here, simply not to make it happen, but to allow it to happen.

We are simply opening the door wider so that less and less we are not offering resistance to that anymore. So, your practice here is continuous, but don't make impossible demands upon yourself. Of course you will get drawn even here back into mind streams, yes?

You may reincarnate into a reactive mind stream, and then a moment comes when suddenly there is an awakening out of that. Oh. As you can see, how clear, how obvious the difference between the states of the awakened state.

A moment ago, you were in that heaviness, that dense energy. And suddenly, you step out, and it's almost like having left when you're on the plane, it goes through the clouds, and suddenly the clouds are underneath you. And there's vast clear space, infinite.

And the clouds are still there, but you're not in them anymore. Oh. And so, as you walk here, through the gardens, along the river, see if you can be in that state where the sense perception does not absorb your attention entirely, nor the mental labels that arise to do with those sense perceptions, or to do with something totally different.

They don't absorb your attention totally. Attention remains free as the field of attention. In other words, you perceive in and through stillness, without needing to label everything immediately through the mind.

Of course, you know you're looking at this flower. You know it's a flower without having to tell yourself that this is a flower. You know it's beautiful without having to tell yourself that it's beautiful.

And so you realize that there is vast knowing beyond mental labels and concepts. And then you know far more than you could ever know through labels or concepts because you sense there is a depth to that which we call flower, and an aliveness to that which we call flower. That mystery that is not explained by the label flower at all.

That mystery that is covered up by the label flower and gives you the delusion that now you know what it is. Just a sound. You've made a sound that has come out of your mouth or you've uttered the sound in your mind, and that gives you the delusion that you know what that is.

Children are told that when they learn a language, the delusion is reinforced every time you tell a child that's called such and such I have forgotten the names of flowers. What's that? Gladioli.

This is a gladioli if that's what it is. And the child will believe you. Dreadful.

So what can you do? Do you tell a child don't call it anything that doesn't work either. But you might say to a child well, look at it smell it, touch it look and then as an afterthought after thought, yeah you can say oh, by the way, we call it such and such instead of saying it is such and such then that creates some distance from the label so that the child doesn't totally believe in that label because then you get more and more trapped in concepts and labels until you reach the age of then finally at 18 you're totally impresent you've been through the system that has done it even more to you and you're totally impresent in a conceptualized reality of mental labels that concern both the world around you and they're all conditioning all the surrounding culture has conditioned you with whatever mental labels they've put into you and you inhabit a conceptualized reality not knowing how dead your universe has become how dead and deadened your reality has become and you live in equally in a conceptualized sense of self you make yourself into mental concepts and so this is the essence of not knowing who you are that's the essence of this false self once you have a false self, nothing is seen as it is and everything is misinterpreted through that conditioning everything is distorted and deadened through that conditioning and that's how people live and that is our entire civilization has come out of that and is it surprising how mad the civilization is of course it's not surprising considering the state of consciousness out of which it has come so we are stepping out of that the compulsion to label continuously and so you move here you walk through the gardens and along the river and what arises is the state that is free of the need to label and should a label arise in you as you walk which is a thought you recognize it as just a thought and not it and then it arises and passes and you're back in just and then perhaps another compulsive label comes ok and then somebody comes towards you on the path walking and some mental judgment comes in concerning the form of this being and you recognize it as a thought no more you no longer completely believe in it you're not completely in it anymore you allow that to be also so gaps arise in which there are no labels in which seemingly you no longer know anything and that's why it's a little bit frightening for some people to enter that realm because it seems at first as if you no longer knew how can I know what's going on here I need to judge it in some way classify it in some way no and you see how beautiful, powerful intelligent and deep that state is of not labeling and great intelligence operates here but it is not the limited intelligence of the human mind it's only a small aspect of the vastness of intelligence that ultimately you are so it's a little bit like you become like a child who is just whose mind is not yet totally burdened by labels but a child who is already very much looking at everything because everything is new but hasn't got many accumulated labels yet, that child looks in a state of great awe and wonder because everything is so alive and new it hasn't got enough labels yet to deaden the entire world and the child is open and alert and again this is only to give you a little pointer we are not going back to that we are going beyond where it has certain similarities with that state that a child is in whose mind is not yet totally burdened by labels it has certain similarities with the state that an animal is in who is in a state with great connectedness with the one the whole of plant life exists in such deep connectedness with the totality and such deep stillness being totally and completely and utterly itself the tree and this is why Jesus said truly I tell you you must become like little children if you want to enter the kingdom of heaven it is similar to the state of that child at that age and yet it is beyond because you have already moved through thought and you have come out the other end but that one could say that innocent perception fresh, new, alive and there you can enjoy the play of phenomena and such a wonderful play of phenomena in this country such multiplicity of forms and life forms and human beings amazing so you walk as just an aware presence, a field of aware presence and you know yourself as that awareness not conceptually you perceive through stillness with occasional interruptions of labels and there is not a problem because you know there is mind movement and then it subsides space again another mind movement subsides not a problem and then perhaps a big mind movement comes and for one hour you are completely in it perhaps it got triggered by something that wasn't quite right in your room or something that in your room something happened and and then finally it comes to an end I must get out of here yes you can get out or you can stay whatever it is it's fine if you stay you can surrender here if you get out you surrender there so the awakening this is what it is out of a million years of conditioning out of mind and that's where the teaching comes from otherwise I would have to prepare what I'm going to tell you that would be a lot of work I have to feed them information for six, seven days no it comes out of the stillness it does the teaching I don't have to do much and it's possible to live in such a way that whatever you do is almost one could say being done for you you're no longer in a struggle and conflict relationship with the world needing to complete myself by getting somewhere achieving something becoming someone and suddenly it's done for you and this is why Jesus used the term awakening many, there are quite a few parables about staying awake not going to sleep Buddha Buddha the root of the word means awake one who is awake there's a beautiful title a book by Krishnamurti called The Awakening of Intelligence and of course that is what it is it is the awakening of true intelligence not the limited ability to solve IQ puzzles nothing wrong with that either but much greater vaster than that beautiful we have the teaching of Krishnamurti that points to the same not quite as directly because he liked to teach through negation so he asked can we let's inquire can we get there through thinking can we get there through thought is it possible to have so he asked more and more questions about whether thought can get you there and of course it can't and he wouldn't agree with it of course but the entire teaching tells you don't think rise above thought but that would be a positive teaching his tradition was negation which is a powerful teaching also now in those of you in whom this is arising strongly already those of you and in some of you it is arising very strongly already in others it's just beginning to arise in those of you in whom it is arising strongly you are able to say no to thought by saying yes to what is no to thought to simply by choice say I'm not thinking this is not willpower it doesn't work to suppress thought through sheer willpower can work for a little while but the kettle will continue to boil you're holding the lid down and suddenly thought will erupt again more strongly than ever so that doesn't work but in those in whom it is arising strongly you can simply choose to step out of thought and say ok and this is why Nisargadatta Maharaj the teacher defined the meditative state and he was only talking he must have been speaking to one or two people at the time he defined the meditative state as the radical refusal to harbor thoughts and when you look at a photo of his you can see how radical he is he was speaking at the time to certain people this does not yet apply to everyone it's the arising presence is not yet strong enough in everyone to be able to say this is true for me that I can simply radically refuse to harbor thoughts not having any thoughts, that's it now that looks like an act of choice and then of course you come into conflict with those teachers who say there's nobody there to choose and so on and so on of course it looks like choice because it still looks as if there was somebody here there is a form here and that form does something and from the perspective of form it looks like an act of choice I refuse to harbor thoughts and then you walk through the gardens refusing to think that looks like choice doesn't it because you could choose to think but you choose not to think but how is it that you can make that choice you can only make that choice because presence is arising in you and it's only because of the arising presence that you can say I'm making that choice so who is choosing if presence were not arising there would be no choice presence is beyond the person presence is the evolutionary impulse of the universe moving through you the totality, the one so of course we have the relativity of language on one level it is true to say you have a choice on another level it is not true at all to say that you have a choice seeing no statement is absolutely true ever you have to see where it is at what perspective, what level so both statements you have a choice and you have no choice are equally true and the mind doesn't like that this is so wonderful to be part of the evolution of consciousness on the planet through this little form it wants to flower and you thought you were a little person needing this and needing that and protecting myself against this and that now as the unconditioned arises as the stillness arises through which you perceive the world and allow it to be this moment allow it to be that realm of stillness, that dimension of consciousness is also the dimension of the sacred this is the only dimension where the sacred is and dwells it's always there but it's concealed the sacred, the dimension of the sacred is always concealed in now why is it concealed?

because you are not in the now, the now is obscured to you by mental noise but the moment your attention enters now you realize the now is always sacred no matter what form it takes the sacredness doesn't lie so much in the form although it includes the form there's a greater vastness to now and that is the realm of the sacred that space of now so there's a sacred river here when you go down there you can honor the sacred river by being by perceiving it and being with it in the state of still alert presence not conceptualize it label it

[Speaker 2] (2:51:26 - 2:55:27)

thank you music music music music music music music music music music music music music music music music music music

[Speaker 1] (2:56:37 - 3:11:18)

music so the normal state of consciousness which is being immersed in thinking is replaced by the state of attention. And that means the now is more important than past or future. Because you realize it is life itself.

In the normal state of consciousness, certainly past and future are more important than now. So the normal state of consciousness, which is unconsciousness, is characterized by that. The implicit assumption or belief that past and future are more important and more powerful than now.

And then a moment comes when you realize the now is all there ever is. In truth, life can only be now. Then you honor life by honoring this moment.

And then, whereas before, the now existed in some obscure region on the periphery of your life. You were only peripherally aware of it because you were so absorbed in past and future. Now, past and future become peripheral.

Yes, they still have, to some extent, they are needed to move in this world. You, as this form, you can't get out of that where you seem to be flowing in that stream of time, which is like a train you're on. And it won't stop.

You can't get off. I recently saw people that I hadn't seen in 15 or 20 years. 20, I think it was.

It's a little shocking what time does to the human form. On that level, yes, it seems to exist. And I almost felt inclined to say, my God, what did time do to you?

Yes. Yes, on the level of form, you, as this form, you are subject to time and subject to the impermanence, which implies time, short-lived, fleeting, all forms. Everything, every form is quite fleeting.

When you're totally identified with a form, you don't really know that. You only exist in a state of fear and desire because you're identified, you don't know. And it's an amazing realization when you realize how fleeting all forms are, that knowing is already the beginning of liberation, not as an intellectual fact or belief, but to see how short-lived all forms are.

And when you grow older, you see very clearly when you reach the age of 60, 65, 70, 75, people around you begin to die, one after another. My mother says there's nobody left now that I know. They're all gone.

And then, of course, you see it everywhere, every natural form. Now, the seeing of that, when you see it, you realize it, that is already liberating because that seeing arises from that which is beyond form. If the entire world were green, the color green would not exist because there would be nothing to differentiate it from.

If everything were fleeting, you wouldn't even know it. But the fact that you know means there's something that is not fleeting. And that is why to contemplate the short-lived impermanent nature of all forms is already liberating.

And when it's contemplated and allowed to be, and this may mean at this moment, a form that's right in front of you shows signs of the passing of time. It's become wrinkled. It could be a mango.

It could be an apple, or it could be the human form. It's very similar, what happens to an apple is what happens to the human form, what time does to an apple and what time does to a human. Very similar when you look at a fresh apple and a fresh, young, 20-year-old.

All shiny and healthy. And then time does its work. And 50 years later, which isn't very much, it's all wrinkled.

But with humans, there's the potential in that for the flowering of consciousness through the fading form. Now, I don't know about the apple. The apple can only speak for itself.

But I know that for humans, that is a great potential is hidden here. And there's another portal here into the liberated state. And that portal is this form that is moving towards dissolution.

Of course, all forms are. And suddenly you see it, not only here, you see it everywhere. And when there's no reaction, you allow that there's something incredibly peaceful in watching the form arise and dissolve.

And that which knows that is beyond form. That is why there are certain works in literature, they never talk about anything that is beyond form, but they show you the impermanent nature of life. And they are spiritual works.

It is already spiritual. You don't need to talk about anything that is beyond the impermanent nature. Just to show you the impermanent nature is spiritual because it makes you into the seer of that.

So there are those Shakespeare sonnets talk a lot about how beauty fades, how quickly, what time does to it. And to read it can be a spiritual experience because it puts you into the position of seeing impermanence. And even something that is not, you might think it's just entertainment and no longer it is.

Even there's a film like Titanic where you see what all these forms that die and at the very end they appear again like actors on stage. They've played their role. And you see how death, it's you're watching death.

So one could say what we really talk about is death. A form dissolves, death. Now there's a saying in a sacred scripture which says die before you die.

And there's deep truth in that. And in a way, this is another perspective on why we are here, what this gathering is about. One could put it like this.

Death will find you. It's found you already because we're all slowly dying. Huh, huh, huh.

[Speaker 2] (3:11:18 - 3:11:23)

Huh, huh, huh. Huh, huh, huh.

[Speaker 1] (3:11:23 - 4:01:22)

And eventually it'll catch up with you. Now find death before it finds you. And that's the essence of spiritual practice is finding death, embracing death, which is the end of identification with form.

The end of deriving your sense of self, identity from form because that is the normal state of consciousness. And the identification with form is twofold. The physical form, identifying with the appearance of the body.

And some people have that very strongly that a large part of their sense of self is to do with identification with the physical form. And then you have the psychological form that you identify with as thought structures and emotions that accompany those thought structures, accumulated content of the mind, images of who I am, what the world has told me about who I am, the surrounding culture has told me about who I am. Or I may have reacted against what the surrounding culture has told me about who I am, but I'm still not free in that because even the reaction is a conditioned reaction.

So there's the psychological form of me, which is me and my story, which may be a mostly a personal story. It may be mixed up with a collective story of us, me and my tribe, my nation, my religion. It's the story of me that is the psychological form of me.

And everybody has their story that is the me and everybody knows that the me lives in a state of dissatisfaction with its story. It is a characteristic of the story not to be at ease or fulfilled for very long. It is not in the nature of that story-based identity to be at peace, fulfilled or free.

The very structure of it goes against that. The very structure of that kind of identity doesn't allow it. It's based on fighting something or someone, being at odds with something or someone.

It's based on a sense of separateness. It needs that. So the identification with the body, sometimes they become very much mixed.

You may identify with the appearance of the physical body and that may, the mental images may form as me as such and such. So especially people who have a beautiful body or good appearance, their psychological me is strongly bound up with their mental image of body. And for a while that gives people a very pleasant sense of self.

Sense of self always is comparative, whether it's to do with body or with other identifications. You will compare yourself to others and then see where you fit in in your identity. There is an attempt to be more than others in the story-based.

And if you cannot be more because you're better, greater, no more, look better or stronger, whatever, if you cannot be more there, then what's left to you, you can be more miserable than others. And that also works. And some people have that strongly.

If they can't make, if they can't create a satisfying identity in having more knowledge or more beauty or more physical strength or more money than others, then at least I can feel more miserable and have a self-image of one that has been treated unfairly by life. That's very satisfying. And then you seek to confirm that story-based, image-based identity by selectively interpreting life around you.

You see only, you begin to see only those things that conform with your sense of identity. There's selective interpretations of reality and selective perception. And everything that you perceive as you move about real life is totally filtered and distorted then through the self-image of me.

And only those things that conform to it are allowed in that strengthen the self-image. And so everything is interpreted according to that. And you think that's reality, but it's the conditioned heavy filters through which you interact with people.

And then, so it becomes like a script in here that's been put into here and you act it out. And that becomes then your life situation, your life drama, your life story. And you go through the movements looking for more of you through more, adding more, more future, never finding it.

And then it could happen that you're suddenly confronted with death close to you, someone close to you, or the possibility of imminent death that might happen to this form, or you're suddenly confronted with great loss in your life, which is another form of death, something you had identified with, status, possessions, relationships, great loss. And suddenly forms dissolve, forms in which there was the self. The self was in those forms and those forms dissolve through some disaster, some form of death.

And sometimes it affects even the mind forms with which you had identified, because the trauma and the shock is such that it shakes the mind, rigid mind patterns that before were running you and pretending to be you. And suddenly those also die. You don't know who you are anymore.

You can't explain it anymore. Before you thought you had these ready opinions when people asked you, you would put out your opinions, you knew it all. And suddenly something comes and suddenly the explanations don't suffice anymore.

Death, that wasn't supposed to happen. Some religious people begin to doubt their beliefs when somebody close to them suddenly dies. That wasn't supposed to happen.

I had a contract with God and he was supposed to, there was not supposed to be any death. Form dies, thought forms die. And the whole story-based identity can come to an end in the face of great loss or death.

Your whole story doesn't make sense anymore. Any great loss or death in your life has that potential, but not always is that potential realized. It can also happen that great loss or disaster can make the story more heavy, more miserable and more unhappy.

But the greatest potential is always death and wonderful portal is when a form dissolves. Or you see the dissolving form, it may not have dissolved yet, but it's moving there. So the portal is beginning to open.

And suddenly a form is gone and it leaves a hole, an emptiness. Someone close to you dies. You lose your entire possessions, whatever it may be.

A hole is left. There was a beautiful fabric of your existence, your life story. Maybe it was all in place because some people for a few years in their lives, they have it all arranged so neatly that you look at their lives and says, how is it possible?

Everything in his or her life seems to work so well. It's rare, but occasionally you see it. It's like a picture book, a family, two children, both doing well, happy marriage, beautiful house, good job, promotions, status in society, maybe two or three big cars.

It's too much. Usually when you scratch and look beyond the surface, you find something else. But let's just say that, yes, they are happy in that they have neatly arranged their life situation in such a way that everything seems to be working.

And it's only a question of time before something in there collapses. Because the structures that they have created that look so solid, all these life insurance policies, huge corporations are sustaining me with billions of dollars behind them and I have shares in that. Surely my life is now secure and my family's life is secure.

There's a true foundation. And then time does something to the seemingly solid structures. It's such a shock when the disaster happened on September 11th.

This huge structure, so solid, and it took only a few madmen and they collapsed. And so to some, it's only a question of time before something comes in and somewhere the solidity of those structures will reveal itself as illusory. It'll start to crumble somewhere.

And if you've had 10 or 15 years living in the illusion that these things are so solid, then it's a great shock. You're not even prepared for it. That was supposed to happen.

I was walking in the north of Los Angeles in a little park and there was an old building that had burned down. It was part of an estate and it burned down 40, 50 years ago into a wild garden. There were only the ruins.

Beautiful wild garden had grown up around it. Trees growing inside the building and this is, nothing is solid. No, here in India, it's much easier to realize that.

That's why we are here and that's why this country has produced so many sages and enlightened beings because it's so obvious that things are not solid and that it's so obvious that the physical structures are short lived and there isn't that sense of solidity around you. So I was walking there and there was actually the city council of Malibu had put up a sutra and as you entered the garden and the sutra wrote, danger, all structures are unstable. So I read the sutra and said, thank you.

And then to walk there was a teaching to see it's deeply, a deeply spiritual thing to walk around a decaying structure. It's returning, but it was form once, differentiated and it's returning into oneness. It's halfway between form and no form.

Anything that is decaying is halfway between form and no form. And that's why when you are there and allow it to be and watch, it's liberating, it liberates you from form. So what could also liberate you from form is the realization that your own physical vehicle is subject to that.

It may even be eminent and that is a great portal to know that you have little or no future as this form identity. Of course, there's great fear in that. It can be potentially you could contract totally in a state of fear, but the potential is there for it to become an opening and what arises, what then flowers through the decaying form is unconditioned consciousness.

The form is decaying and the flowering is there. So I've seen it, there was a beautiful being in Vancouver, Joyce Frazee passed away recently. She had come to many of our gatherings and she herself had become an effective teacher.

And her form through an illness began to dissolve and as it began to dissolve and she found it more and more difficult to move, she would still come to our gatherings. More and more, the light of consciousness was shining through the fading form and looking into her eyes was beautiful. I hope somebody took a photo of her so that you can look into her eyes and see that the light of the unconditioned was shining through her eyes and through her entire form, it was shining through.

And that is the beauty, that is the death, when death comes, that's the greatest portal and she was able to surrender to that, so it was open wide and it didn't matter anymore how much longer this form would be here, the flowering had happened. The fulfillment, consciousness flowering through this form, it happened. It doesn't need more time, it's flowered.

The whole evolutionary impulse of the universe is towards that somehow and I cannot explain it in words, it's beyond, we don't even attempt to fully, to really understand what is behind that, it's far beyond understanding, but just to say that there is the evolutionary impulse of the universe is behind that. Consciousness wants to flower through the form, the human. It will flower through any form, it doesn't say you are more worthy than this, I will choose this form because you are more worthy.

It should, it flowers where there is a transparency, where the form, the rigid mind structures give way, they die first, identification with that me, mind made self goes that and this is why we're here because as you sit here, you're finding death before death finds you. And these, the heavy, the mind structures that you identified with as me, the thought forms die. So the flowering is happening here before death finds you, you embrace death already.

But it doesn't matter when it happens. And consciousness will move through, it could be a criminal, killed several people, inflicted suffering on others, and of course on himself and in that midst of hell, in his cell, waiting for execution, suddenly, suddenly, inside, the entire structure of the self, mental, emotional structures dissolves because the suffering is unbearable. And suddenly, something shines through.

And now he doesn't care anymore whether the execution happens or not. And there have been cases like that. There was a woman in Texas two or three years ago who had killed two people with an axe.

She had been a prostitute, a drug addict, and with her lover, killed two people with an axe. And she was on death row for several years. And at some point, something happened in her and surrender happened.

And suddenly, there's a being of great softness, beauty. So, there was not, the strange thing is, there was not even guilt anymore because guilt is still to be identified with unconscious movements as me, to derive your sense of self from the movement of unconsciousness and saying, I did that, that was me. She saw the dreadful nature of that, but it no longer disturbed her peace.

That wasn't her at all. That was not the consciousness that had now emerged. And then she was executed.

She interpreted it in a Christian sense, I believe, because that was her surrounding culture. When this happens, sometimes when people speak about it and tell others about what happened to them, they may use certain words that correspond to their language or culture. But when you look beyond the words, you will see that they all point to the same.

And there are some of those to whom it happens who can't even speak about it. They just look at you and you look at them. They may be uneducated.

They may not have much to say. And yet you look and you see there's something that shines through that is deeper than a person and any person could be. The personal dimension has given way to that.

And so it is always, it is sacred when that happens. But so far it's been relatively few human beings to whom this has happened. No longer the case now.

It is the destiny of all humans to go through that transformation. It is certainly your destiny, otherwise you wouldn't be here. The purpose of your life is to enable that to come through you and it's happening already.

So we embrace the death that is here when you surrender to the power of your heart. To what is, that's the greatest death. The resisting me entity gives way.

You can surrender through suffering or you can surrender through voluntarily through the yes to what is, which as we saw yesterday, takes you beyond the form. You're no longer reactive to a form. So the yes, that simple thing, takes you beyond form.

And I pointed out yesterday, often that which you say yes to is some form of limitation because it's form. And that in other cases, that which you say yes to may be some form of death, some form of loss. And that is particularly powerful.

For example, any kind of loss or death leaves an emptiness behind when a form is no longer there. And you don't run away from that empty space. And it's an opening into the formless.

One could say every form obscures God. And the death of the form enables God, which is the formless one life to shine through. Therefore, death has been long been recognized as sacred in ancient cultures who had not denied death.

Whereas the modern culture, modern Western civilization denies death. It's not, they don't know it's sacred. They don't even want to talk about it.

They don't want to see a dead body. You can't, it's not allowed. It's illegal to see a dead body.

They would send you to a psychiatrist if you're asked to see a dead body. There must be something wrong with you. So death is hidden because the Western culture is totally identified with form, with mind.

So the worst possible thing for it is death. Oh my. And even in hospitals, they not know anything about death.

Where death happens continuously. Old people's homes. Every old people's home, if there is such, potentially would be a spiritual center.

The greatest ashrams would be old people's homes because that is the potential of old age. But it's not recognized yet. So they would be the most sacred places.

So there's ancient cultures have recognized the sacredness of death, not knowing perhaps why. Intuitively, they knew it to be sacred. But now you can see why it is sacred.

Because the formless shines through where there was the form. And that can happen when there's physical death, but it can also happen when you die psychologically to the me. That is the spiritual transformation.

And that can happen through intense suffering or through the power of a spiritual teaching or in many cases, a combination of both. And I suspect that in many of you, it's a combination of both. You've had the suffering, otherwise you wouldn't have come.

And now there's the power of spiritual teaching, which tells you, you don't need to suffer anymore. And you don't need any more time before you can enter the surrendered state. Why would you need time to enter the surrendered state?

Do you need more knowledge before you can enter the surrendered? Yes, but before I enter the surrendered state, I need to understand the universe completely. You've had many pointers already.

Everybody here has read scriptures, beautiful pointers. No, I have not yet fully understood the nature of the universe. I need a few more years, says the mind.

And the amazing thing is a deep understanding happens, not in the way that the mind imagines it, a deep understanding of the universe happens as you enter the surrendered state. There is a deep knowing there that is beyond concepts or labels, and knowing that the mind knows nothing of, and knowing that can even inform the mind, and the mind then can give spiritual teaching because it is linked into that, the unmanifested, the unconditioned, the seed of all intelligence, preform before it becomes a thought, it's there. And then there are other things I need to sort out my life situation before I can surrender, because my life situation does not look balanced.

There's so many loose ends, I need to sort it out. I have so many problems to deal with, I cannot surrender yet, and you don't realize that the act of surrender deals with all problems beautifully, because in surrender, you enter the state that is free of problems. And yes, you still have a life situation, but you don't inhabit a conceptual identity based on your life situation.

Yes, you have three court cases against you. Yes, your wife has filed for divorce. Yes, you're on your way to meeting your lawyer to file for bankruptcy.

At this moment, you are at the bus stop, waiting for the bus, knowing that you have court cases, your wife, divorce proceedings, and you're going towards your lawyer for bankruptcy proceedings. Potentially, you could be very unhappy. You could be, because your story isn't going the way it was supposed to go.

It has deteriorated. And potentially, you would carry the burden of an extremely unhappy conceptual sense of self based on your life circumstances, your life situation, and you derive all your identity and your sense of self from that. Your me would be very unhappy and very heavy and dense, and you would be talking to yourself as you stand at the bus stop and saying, this is what it had to come to.

Now, 30 years of work, all for nothing. The whole marriage has been an illusion. She's left me.

She's probably been unfaithful for years. It's all turned out to be for nothing. I've lost it all.

All that work that I've put into it, I even have to give up my credit cards. Can't, what, who am I? Nobody would want to talk to me.

You're talking, you are confirming to yourself that your life situation is very bad, and your sense of identity is derived from the story, the deteriorating story that you are telling yourself, and perhaps you start telling others the very dreadful story of you and what happened, and they will confirm to you that, yes, you have a right to be very unhappy. Surely, destiny has dealt you a dreadful blow, and you should be unhappy, or you could be standing at the bus stop and allow your attention to move into this moment, and with that, a certain alertness arises. In that alertness, you feel yourself breathing.

You become aware of the totality of this moment as the sky above you, the air you are breathing, the ground you are standing on, the moving energy forms that go past you called cars, and there's a tree, and there's the field of alert attention in which all those things arise. And there comes the bus. The doors open, and you get in, and you sit, and then the bus moves, and in that state of alertness, you look out of the window, and the wonder of phenomenal existence goes past you, all these forms of life, and you are there as an alert field of presence.

And you still remember where you're going, but you're fully there. Your identity is not derived anymore from a story you're telling yourself. That is a conceptual identity.

You're not denying that there are situations that you need to deal with because you're dealing with it already. You're sitting on a bus going somewhere to deal with it. You're dealing with it already, and this is a beautiful moment.

You're sitting there, perceiving, and more than perceiving, being the still field through which the universe is being perceived. And when you're as that alert, you can sense the entire body as alive. We may have come to that also.

And then you get off the bus, and then you walk into a door which says attorney at law, and you sit down, and then you say, okay, this is the situation, he says. Your bank balance is zero. Your debts are $5 million.

I recommend that you file for bankruptcy. Okay. And then you hand over your American Express Platinum cards.

You've lost your cards, and perhaps your sense of self was somehow in each card a little bit. Because whenever you paid in expensive restaurants with the American Express Platinum cards, they respected you. So.

That is satisfying. You are getting that confirmation that you are somebody. But in a strange, but as you hand over the American Express and other cards, that leaves a little bit of an emptiness.

And as you accept that emptiness, it feels incredibly peaceful not to have these cards anymore. They're gone. Not that you formulate some kind of new belief that says it is more pure not to have credit cards.

I am now more pure, because that's you creating another thought structure to reincarnate into and derive a new sense of self from somebody who is now so spiritual that he has no credit cards anymore. That's worse than having credit cards. No, that's not how it is.

You simply allow the loss to be there. And that is suddenly the peace that you were already in deepens. And then you might have to give up your big home.

And again, there it is. In the next moment, you have to sign something and it's gone. And then you might live in a trailer for a while.

And as you sit there, this moment is still sacred and beautiful. It doesn't really matter so much anymore the forms around you, because you don't need the forms to reinforce or enhance your sense of self. Where is your sense of self?

It is the field of alive presence. You know yourself to be that still alive. Field of attention.

The forms, you don't need them for an identity anymore. So the trailer, of course, it's not as comfortable as the big mansion. The space around you is smaller, confined.

It makes a noise when it rains at night on the roof. Yet all it means is there's a different scenery around you. You're still sitting somewhere, a little less soft than before.

Less, a bit less. Not that much space. But what do you do?

You just have to step out and you have a lot of space. I'm seeing when your sense of self is not story-based anymore, you can accept the ups and downs, the gain and loss that come with every life story. As the changing forms around you, the comings and goings, the play of opposites, gain, loss.

Fine. And there's peace in that. And the strange thing is, great, you are now aligned with the totality.

Before, you had tied yourself into a little knot of the me. Life cannot flow very well through a knot. It can flow a little bit, but it's not a free flow.

And that knot was the me. Then the knot gets untied. Not that anything gets destroyed.

Simply the illusion of that little me against the universe goes when the knot is untied. Energy is just the flow of energy. The difference is two people running to catch a train.

It's moving already. One is in great stress because he needs to get there, catch that train. The other one is running and enjoying the movement of energy as he's running to catch the train.

He's more likely to catch it than the other one. And not to fall off. So that suddenly helpful factors come in that you didn't even know about were there.

Suddenly they are there. But it all, the strange thing is, the state of completion is already here. No matter what form your surroundings take, the completion of you is already here.

The self does not need more anymore. So any more that comes into your life is simply the play of forms. They come and you say, nice.

If more comes again, it may be a year later you have another mansion. Maybe. But you won't be the same.

You will move in that mansion, not feeling that this is mine. Not sense seeing that as my achievement. Simply seeing, yes, another beautiful structure around me.

Of course it won't last. A beautiful structure around me. So the world of form doesn't give you that satisfaction anymore that it gives you, which of course is short-lived.

When you need it for yourself, your sense of self, the satisfaction that a big mansion would give you when your self is in that, it belongs to me. And then you invite others and they come into the mansion. It's an extension of you.

You feel, okay, you're coming to visit me. This is me. Look at me.

That doesn't happen anymore. There's simply an innocent enjoyment of the forms, but no link of the self with the forms. Because you can see the whole idea of owning something is a fiction.

How can you say that I own this house? What does that mean? It's a fiction in the mind that others agree with.

That means you own it. If others don't agree with it, it's a delusion only in your mind, which could say, I own this ashram. Okay, you can live with it.

If that delusion gives you a sense of, an enhanced sense of self, you can live with that and say, I'm not telling anybody, but do you know the truth? I own this place. Nobody knows.

Now then, people would call you deluded, but there are people like that. But then if others agree with your delusion, they will actually sign papers to tell you that you're right, you own it. They all agree with me now, I own it.

But it's the same delusion, except that others agree with my delusion. It means nothing. But this is how, of course, as humans move into a time, we'll come, of course, when ownership will become totally meaningless.

They try to do it with communism without going through a transformation of consciousness first. And of course, that didn't work. So the whole idea of me in that structure becomes absurd.

You can enjoy the physical structures, knowing it's just that it's not going to last. It's fine. And so you move into a mansion and then perhaps one day you walk out, you don't even want to be in it anymore.

It's possible. It makes no difference. So it's the changing scenery around you no more.

The circumstances of your life that change, the passing of time, means simply the scenery around you is changing. And it's fine. You actually enjoy that.

And you realize, yes, the famous sutra of Malibu, all structures are unstable. That was, reading that was so, oh yes. Did they know what they were saying?

[Speaker 2] (4:01:23 - 4:01:23)

I don't know.

[Speaker 1] (4:01:53 - 5:03:15)

My suggestion is that we introduce some silence into our retreat. Of course, there's already an underlying silence here. But in addition, that we spend some time on the external, it looks like spending time, keeping silence.

And those of you who want to keep silence throughout, of course are free to do so. I may recommend certain periods of time when we all keep noble silence. Those of you who beyond that want to be in silence are free to do so.

We may set aside a section in the dining hall for those who don't want to speak. It was suggested along the wall, by the walls. You don't have to face the walls as they do.

That's a Zen practice. And so, if that is your choice, then if somebody approaches you, you can just go. But don't make sure that you don't discriminate to whom you do this.

If you do it, you do it to all. Now, when there's a period of silence, then of course you're alone with your mind. And that's fine.

Recognize thought as thought. The thoughts that come. Recognize thought as mental noise.

Recognize every thought as a particular perspective on things, a limited perspective, a limited position. Every thought can only give you a fragment of what's there. Any thought concerning another human being that you may have is fragmentary.

And the opposite statement about that human being is probably also true, except it hasn't manifested in time yet. There's no absolute truth in any judgment that thought makes. Every thought is some form of judgment, some form of interpretation.

And so you don't totally believe in everything that comes up because it's a conditioned mind. You recognize that. So, in other words, as thoughts come to you, especially during the silent period, your spiritual practice is not to stop them, but simply not to take them that seriously.

That's all. To have a relationship to thought that doesn't take thought all that seriously. Thought, of course, wants to be taken seriously.

Every thought says, Give me your complete attention. I matter. I am the truth.

Believe me. Every thought wants to draw your attention in because through that it grows and it can proliferate into more thoughts, related thoughts. That is to be trapped in the stream of thinking.

That is to be trapped in form. Every form wants to persist in its form. Every thought wants that also.

But, of course, what is happening here, on a beyond the personal level, is that consciousness is moving out of its identification with form. Consciousness has played the dream of form for a long time. It's become this universe.

The beautiful dance of form. And now consciousness says, Okay, it's waking up out of that beautiful dream and what is happening in you. Whereas before, consciousness was thought.

It was in every thought. Now consciousness is moving out of the thought forms. This is only a relative way of looking at it.

You can't really explain it. So it's freeing itself from the disguise of form. And that is the unconditioned consciousness that arises.

And that happens with the simple thing of not taking your thoughts that seriously. Okay. And so then thoughts pass through more quickly.

If you don't take them that seriously, they come and go. They're not fueled by identification with them. And then you will find yourself sometimes being in the state of simple, alert presence.

In which you can perceive without labeling. You just allow this moment to be so completely that the need to interpret it mentally isn't there anymore. And yet there's a deep knowing here.

But to the mind it looks like unknowing. A beautiful work written in the Middle Ages in Europe is called The Cloud of Unknowing. It's a mystical treatise by an anonymous author written in the Middle Ages in England.

How to know God. And he says you know God not through knowing, but through entering the state of unknowing. Non-interpretation.

Because every interpretation that you have is conditioned. So to say yes so completely that you do not need to interpret whatever form this moment takes. That may include a human being that comes into the space of now.

And the enormous freedom that comes with not interpreting other human beings through mental judgment, which is thought. Allowing that human being to be as he or she is. Giving him or her, one could say, space.

That true love is allowing each human being to be without imposing labels and interpretations. Whatever label or interpretation you impose on another human being through the mind tells you nothing about who that human being truly is. It only tells you something perhaps at best about their particular conditioning, form of conditioning, behavior that they display which is due to their conditioning.

At best. At worst, it's no more than a projection of your own mental conditioning. And in many cases it's a mixture of the two.

Which accounts for a mixture of what you see is the conditioning of the other person through the eyes of your own conditioning. And usually that is what creates human interactions and the conflict in human interactions. So to be with a human and that just allow them to be.

And when you speak again, they speak to you. During those periods when we speak, you may be speaking in the dining hall, you may be speaking in the gardens, while another human being speaks to you, be in the state of alert attention which is the state of listening totally. Giving total attention as you listen to the words.

Complete attention. Not preparing the next statement or interpreting what the other person is saying. Just give complete attention.

Maybe you won't say anything, maybe some words will come. Who knows? That is bringing the unconditioned consciousness into human interactions.

So in the meantime, while you are alone with your mind, don't take the mental noise too seriously. It isn't all that serious. Don't carry around with you the burden of your life situation and start thinking about what you left behind, all the unsolved stuff that you left behind, things you'll have to face when you get back home.

Where is it now? If it has any reality, it must be here now. Yes, you'll face it when you get back home in the now.

But you can't face it now. You can only make a dream world of thoughts around it and an unhappy identity. So don't carry the burden of a conceptualized self in the head and walk around to this beautiful place with that burden of a me and what's going to happen to me.

Nothing is happening to me. This moment is all that there is. So to start with, I recommend that we keep noble silence between now...

Spider wants liberation. ...that we keep noble silence between now and our next meeting and then we'll see after that, see how we feel. So we keep noble silence between now and our gathering this afternoon and then let's see what happens after that.

You don't need to know that. Of course we will also have time for questions during this week, later on in the week. Not that any question really matters, but...

...because it will be thought trying to understand that which is beyond thought. Anyway, we will have questions. We've been speaking about portals.

Which is, of course, only a metaphor. Access points into a state of presence. Of course you don't linger inside that portal.

A portal is there to go through. Or one could another way of putting it is that the unconditioned comes through it, emerges through it. Just a matter of perspective.

Even surrender, after a while, disappears. The portal disappears as a portal because it becomes your natural state, non-resistance as your natural state. Surrender is the transition between resistance and non-resistance.

You relinquish resistance and that's surrender. When resistance doesn't arise anymore to what is, there's no surrender anymore. And even the present moment, which is the main portal, one could say, becomes simply the state of presence.

And it's not so much needing to not move to the past and future because that movement doesn't occur anymore. There's simply the timeless now. So you use as your practice here, of course always the main portal is the now, and then surrender takes you into now.

Every portal takes you into now. Death takes you into now. The inner body, which we may address this afternoon, takes you into now, into the state of attention, awareness, aware presence, in which thought becomes secondary or disappears altogether.

In any case, thought no longer dominates you. Thought loses its power to make you unhappy. Because you don't take it that seriously anymore.

Do you remember our practice for today? Not taking thoughts that seriously anymore. And then you see that what has, to a large extent, what makes you unhappy is not that situation or that place or that person, that life situation.

It's thoughts about it. And every life story consists of thoughts. And that's where people's identity lies.

And those thoughts tell you something. Those thoughts interpret something according to their conditioning. And there's never...

Suffering doesn't arise from pain, it could happen, but suffering is never in the situation. The situation is as it is. Even several...

Shakespeare saw that already. Nothing is either good or bad, but thinking makes it so. That, of course, started when they ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the beginning of thought.

So, the interpretation may still happen, but you don't take them that seriously anymore. And then you realize, in any situation, the unhappiness arises out of thought, out of the story, that you weave around the simplicity of this moment. And often this moment doesn't fit into the story.

So there's a clash between where you, as the story-based me, want to be, where you want to be, who you want to be, what you want to be, who you want to be with, what you want to be doing, as the story-based entity, me, and where you are. That clash. Who you are, where you are, who you are with, what you are doing.

I'm not supposed to be doing this. It doesn't fit into the story of me, how it's supposed to unfold. So this is the great renunciation, compared to which other renunciations are quite insignificant, secondary, and often don't work.

Renounce material possessions. Renounce sexuality. You can renounce all kinds of things, status.

But very quickly, a new mental image forms, as me, the one who has renounced. And that happens very easily. It happens so insidiously.

The ego comes in through the back door. You can go and shave your head. Renounce your name.

Adopt a spiritual name. Put on robes. And the idea behind it is beautiful.

It's letting go of your whole form identity. But since the ego is so insidious, it comes in through the back door, and now that you've put on the robes and shaved your head, and walked with an alms bowl, if you become a Buddhist monk, it could be many other things, very subtly, an image forms of, you have a new identity. Of course you have.

You're a respected Buddhist monk. And people, well, if you live in the East, in the West they wouldn't care less. So if you come with your alms bowl in Thailand, they will put things in that show their reverence, and then that could enhance your sense of self in a very subtle way.

Or if you go to the West with your alms bowl, they might say, why don't you work for a living? So that doesn't feed your ego that much. So very easy to renounce can very easily create a new self image and a new story now.

You've become the renunciant. It's shifted. And there's a me that feels in some way special.

It can happen. It doesn't always happen. It can easily happen.

But the ultimate renunciation, there, those things cannot happen, because now you renounce the very root of the false self. The very root is renounced, and that is the need to think. Thought itself is renounced.

And then you see how addictive thought is. It is not easily renounced. It comes back in waves.

Thought waves come back. And what can you do? You watch the thought waves come back.

You may get drawn in, lost in thought again, until you come out. And then presence is there for a moment. You're awake, alert.

And then another thought wave may come. And you may still be there as the witness of the thought wave, not totally taken over, in which case it subsides quickly. If you get totally drawn in, it will linger for much longer, a whole thought movement.

Now, this isn't something that we are trying to do. It's something we are allowing to happen. If you get into the position of trying to do it, it becomes problematic again.

And the me comes back in. We are not trying to become free of thought. But the state of presence is emerging already and wants to emerge.

We simply allow that to emerge. We cooperate with it. So, a great help here, especially here, because there is such enormous momentum in the human mind, is to, again, I prefer to use the word allow, is to allow your attention to sink into the body rather than being totally head-centered.

You allow your attention to sink down into the field of body. And that becomes an anchor for staying present. And there are ancient meditation methods that are designed precisely to take your attention out of thought stream so that all your attention is absorbed by thought streams, which is the normal state, and take attention into body.

And so I believe the ashram is offering a meditation tonight, which I have not experienced personally, but I'm told it puts you in touch with the body, so it must be good. And it's probably related in some way to the old Buddhist meditation called Vipassana, which some of you know, which takes attention into the body. Here, I'm not making it into a technique as such.

Simply, I'm pointing to the possibility of sensing, as you sit here, sensing the aliveness inside your body. And then the body becomes a portal. And at first it appears that, yes, the body, at first you might sense certain feelings, and then you go a little deeper, and there's simply a sense of spaciousness.

So the body becomes a portal. At first it might appear as if the, what I call the inner body, is another object that arises in your awareness. But as you move deeper, and the observer and observed merge, there's no longer a sense of me up here, sensing the body down here, but the two becoming one.

So there is a generalized sense of aware presence that pervades the entire body. So one could say that that aliveness, it's not confined to the body, because the whole world comes alive when presence arises, and you're not deadening everything through conceptualization. But you sense great aliveness, and that is in the entire energy field of the body, and you dwell in that, you are that.

Then the mind hasn't got your attention any more. It can't manufacture thoughts continuously because your attention is here. You also connect a vast field of intelligence that is the beginning of that vast intelligence, the one intelligence, out of which the whole universe has come, that manifests itself as the flower, the tree, the planet, the sun, the galaxies, and is also brought into being what appears to be a physical body temporarily, which contains great intelligence, every cell, every organ.

No human mind could control the functions of the human body. They put all the computers together in the world. It couldn't control the functions of a single body because it requires enormous courage to coordinate thousands of functions.

And this happens continuously through that intelligence that indwells here, not thinking the body, it doesn't think about how it's doing it, just as the flower doesn't think about how to become a flower. It happens. And so, you already, by entering that portal, you have access to that vastness of intelligence.

So, sensing that aliveness, at first you may feel certain parts of the body more strongly than others, hands or feet, and that's fine. And then sense a generalized aliveness in here. And that's where part of your attention is, within.

Some people feel, as I said, certain parts more strongly. Some people feel the belly. Some people feel hands or arms.

Eventually you will sense a generalized aliveness. You cannot locate necessarily any particular part of the body anymore, nor do you have to. If you see certain Buddha statues, you'll see, I'm not talking now of the Chinese Buddha with a huge belly, but other Buddhas, they have a slight belly, very slight, and the Buddha is resting here, in the body.

So there are practices that can take you into the body. What I'm suggesting here, a lot of these are helpful, I'm suggesting you can do it without needing to go through any practice, although if you have an additional practice, that is helpful. I may take you into the body, today or at some point, and make it almost into a meditation.

We may do that. But I want to avoid giving you techniques as such, and sensing the inner body is beyond technique, it's too simple for that. And see how much easier it is, when you inhabit the body with some of your attention, to be here in the state of simple, without awareness.

And so there is, you're aware of what arises in your sense perceptions, the words in this case, and you sense the energy field of the inner body, and there's no thought arising anymore, or very little thought. And you can do that as you go out into nature, you sit on a bench, on the grass, you use the portal of the inner body, and then start looking around. Beautiful practice.

And you look at all the different forms of life around you. And you just look at each form, in that innocent perception, that does not interpret or label what is being perceived. And now it becomes easy, because your attention is anchored here.

So that's perhaps the greatest, if you can, that transition from needing to interpret, and needing to label, to being free of the need to interpret and label, not that you have lost your ability, you don't know what things are anymore. No, the need is gone. You have the freedom not to think.

The freedom not to label, not to interpret, to allow to be. And in that, a greater intelligence comes in. It's almost as if, through your eyes, that greater intelligence were looking at the world of form, and enjoying it.

Knowing deep down to be a manifestation of itself. Knowing the world of form to be a manifestation of itself. So, it sounds at first insignificant, to be sitting there and to simply practicing watching, without interpretation, is the greatest shift in consciousness that can happen to you.

That simple thing of sitting somewhere, and we are starting with an easy situation, you are not being challenged. A different matter arises, we will address that, when life challenges you, and then thought will rush in. And then all the patterns of thought and emotion will rush in.

Want to rush in. We'll put that aside for a moment. Let's first of all see in situations that are helpful, non-challenging, this of course is one, and being in the ashram here is another, and here, to be able to sit somewhere, stand somewhere, connect with the inner body, and perceive free of thought, or not perhaps entirely free of thought, perhaps labels will come and go, and then there is a gap before the next label arises.

You are not fighting any thought, if it comes, it's allowed, nothing important. Sometimes thought will want to take you out of that, and pretend any thought will want your attention back. The mind will try, and it's very clever, the human mind is clever, it will try to get your attention back, through some interpretation to do with your sense perceptions, or something totally different, that you really must give your attention to now, right now.

You must think about this, it's really important. So the mind will attempt to get, to draw your attention out of the now, out of the body, back into itself. Once you know that, you can watch it and think, oh, there it is, and then you are back in presence.

You can watch the river, you can sit by the river and watch it, connect with the inner body, and be there. The miracle then has happened, you are not perceiving any longer, through the conditioned mind. And the need to think isn't there anymore, the compulsion, you are free not to think.

The only thing that I have achieved in life, although it's not an achievement at all, is I don't need to think. Somebody some years ago asked me, what have you achieved, and at that time I hadn't written a book yet, so I hadn't achieved anything. And all I could say was, well, I don't need to think anymore.

This is not highly regarded in our culture. But it's not the case that you cannot function anymore, although at first it is a new way of functioning, it took me some years to function in this world, in that state, because I had no guidance and no teacher. So that state at first overtook me, and I lost all interest even in functioning in this world.

And then gradually the ability to function in the new state came back. But you have better guidance than I had, and so you do not need to become dysfunctional as the new state of consciousness arises. It's happened to people.

Ramana Maharshi became, one could say, dysfunctional, because he didn't even put food in his mouth anymore. So in western terms, certainly it would be called dysfunctional. But fortunately, in India they recognized here that there was something there that was of great value, and so they didn't put it away.

In the west they would have. So as the new arises, of course it's a new way of being in the world, a new way of interacting, a new way of perceiving. Of course, first it's strange at first.

So I'm suggesting become familiar with that and allow it to happen at first, especially as you contemplate nature, the world of nature, whether it be the river or the trees, and enter that state of perception that is free of labeling. And you can sense the alertness that is there, underneath the perception, the alertness that makes the perception possible, the presence through which the perception happens, as you sense it as that underlying stillness that fills your entire being. But it's also all around.

There's a field of stillness, and there are the phenomena that you are perceiving. And you are the field. And that includes this.

And so it's not really the body. The body can give you access to that field, as a portal. And then when you go through that portal, a vastness opens up.

So you don't become confined in the body. And so you sit and watch the movement of the river, perhaps, the movement of the little animals, and perhaps the movement of people. And there are always the two dimensions, as you watch that which you are perceiving, and that which makes the perception possible.

The field. The spaciousness. And so you have, you dwell in both worlds, the world of form, and the formless.

Or rather, you dwell within the formless, and can still interact with the world of form. So, this is how you can use these surroundings here. And the river.

And then everything one could say that you contemplate, is teaching you, especially in nature. Stillness. Especially the river.

And you bring something to it. Your perceptions complete it. I don't want to go into any kind of philosophical speculation, or say anything that requires belief on your part, but I'm only suggesting, would the river even be there if you were not there?

Perceiving it. Being conscious of it. Are not the two needed, for the river to be there?

And that sacredness, is that not both within and without? Would the sacredness be there without anybody knowing it? And the same you practice in your room.

Now, almost certainly, the room that you are in here is not as comfortable as home. Unless you are an ascetic monk, or nun. And there are certain things that you may dislike.

It's not functional, it's not good enough. But you can sit there also, and contemplate the things in the room, sit on a chair, just for a few minutes, 10 minutes, 15 minutes, 20 minutes. And you contemplate, and allow it also to be as it is, at this moment.

And no labelling. Nothing is labelled. I was surprised by that state, one morning when I woke up, after dreadful suffering during the night, during which the mind made self, dissolved.

It couldn't sustain itself any longer. It had created so much suffering, that it self-destructed. When I couldn't live with myself any longer.

And the self that I couldn't live with, dissolved suddenly. And what was left was I. Presence.

I am presence. Nothing in particular. Just that.

And so I woke up, and I opened my eyes, and I looked at the room, for the first time, without labelling anything. And I knew without labelling it, that everything was alive. And I was astonished.

And I walked around the city, in that state of non-labelling, and I didn't even know that I wasn't labelling. I knew nothing. All I knew was, there is so much peace suddenly.

Even in the city, so much, the peace is everywhere. I didn't know why. I didn't know that my mind had virtually stopped.

Later I realised it, when a Buddhist monk had talked to me, and talked about the cessation of mind, I said, oh, that's what it is. And now I'm suggesting that this is not something that happens only to a few. There are many human beings that I have met, that have come to the teaching, who are already stepping out of mind identification, and entering that state.

Not all at once, in most cases. That's relatively rare. But, it happens.

It means not all at once, do they dwell in that state continuously. You can only enter it now. But dwelling in it continuously, may take a little while.

That's where time is still needed. Time is not needed to enter that state. It's now.

So that's the renunciation of thought. And an enormous depth opens up, suddenly. You become very deep.

And you realise how deep and mysterious every phenomenon is, every natural phenomenon. How you have been reducing it to something, to an abstraction, by labelling everything, interpreting everything. So this is the practice that I suggest to you in the days to come.

To be here as the observing presence. To invite that state that is free of thought. And if thought arises, you simply recognise it as thought.

Without making it into a problem. So, then we come, this is perhaps the main practice, and use it then also when you move. Not just when you sit.

First when you sit, then you start, you move between here and your room. And there are steps. And be there with every step, and watch as you walk.

Without making it into some formalised thing. In Buddhism there is a walking meditation practice, but it's very heavily formalised. So you walk, the foot goes down, left foot touches, and then goes...

right foot lifts up. You cannot practice Tai Chi and be looking forward to the end of your movement. Then wouldn't this...

bad practitioner. So that is again a helpful practice, but if it's confined to your practice and the rest of your life you go back to the mind identified state, it's not helpful. It can be a helpful additional practice.

Moving. In Tai Chi your hand moves from here to there, let's say. I've never learnt it.

I don't know Tai Chi at all. I only know presence. So the hand moves, and usually in every movement you want to be at the end of the movement.

It's the mind projection of wanting the end result. Of wanting, of making this moment a means to an end. Even when you reach out for a glass, you want to be there already.

And then when you gasp the glass of water, you already want it to be here. And before it's here, you want the water already to be in your stomach. It's always looking to the...

You're being pulled by the mental projection of future. That's how most people live. The future pull, which is the mental projection, determines their actions.

They're being pulled. They're pursuing always the mental projection in every movement. And so to bring presence into a movement means at no stage is this movement a means to an end.

You don't need to arrive, you're here already. You're here, here, here. And so you can practice little things like picking up a glass of water and drink it in the state of pure awareness in which this moment is not a means to the next moment.

So if it's a means to the next moment, it would go like... Now, what's the next thing? And you can see that is the grasping quality of it.

And the next thing might be a magazine or the TV because the mind seeks reincarnation into the next stream that it can identify with. Pick up the phone and talk to someone. Unnecessary, but gives something to do.

And then there's the possibility of simply picking... At first you might slow down a little when you do it like that where you use the space, the physical movement from here to there as a space of awareness. That movement while the glass travels to your lips, you're simply present with the movement sense everything how you touch the glass, the temperature and even as you drink be so present that there's no thought around this activity and then it travels back and that is still another space of simple, pure, aware presence.

Not just very beautiful and a different quality flows into that doing than when you're being pulled by a future projection. Or a simple thing like walking across your room from one end to the other. A state of simple presence.

Not needing to get there. Nothing is going to change when you get to the end of the room. It's still the now.

Not needing or walking up the stairs. Beautiful. Present at every step.

Is your life going to be more fulfilled when you reach the top of the stairs? No. It's just another place.

It's the now again. Any movement so you bring in little you can only do it Now this looks, you might mistake it as if you were trying to bring something about in you but the only reason why we are pointing to this, the only reason why you are able to do it is because presence is arising and then it manifests as somebody who is picking up a glass in the state of thoughtless awareness. It's only happening because presence is arising in you but from the limited perspective of you as this entity, it looks as if this entity were doing some spiritual practice.

So this is vital this little awareness in there and it wants to come in.

[Speaker 2] (5:03:21 - 5:03:34)

We sit on the floor when we are eating and the plates are on the floor and we lift the spoon up and I was thinking that might be a good opportunity Yes, that's quite a long way.

[Speaker 1] (5:03:39 - 5:31:34)

That's a good and it's an unusual for most people an unusual way to eat so you might have had some mental complaints about that in your head so you do that that's any situation allow the presence to be there so you do simple things at first and of course here it's arising as you sit here and then during those times when you interact through words here with other people there comes the first challenge the first real challenge you get small challenges even when you sit in nature it's your own mind but the first bigger challenge comes through human beings because in most cases human being means human mind the conditioned mind and the moment you speak words the mind is there very strongly very strongly concepts, words and you get drawn into a mind stream reactive mind stream conversation and you lose the underlying awareness totally dragged along by the mind stream don't know that you are being dragged along you are just being dragged along completely in it so here again as you interact with other people the most helpful thing so that you don't get dragged along by the mind stream and into reactivity listen giving complete attention as you listen to the other person so you make listening your practice but listening combined with sensing the inner body as you listen and giving complete attention in that state of listening not many people can do that because they are all immersed in mind they are not really listening to you they are listening to their own minds and they want to get in what they have to say or they are interpreting what they are listening to labeling so the ability to truly listen is the ability to be still as you listen that's the only way you can listen to listen in the state of stillness which is the state of thoughtless awareness that is listening nothing else is true listening and that ability comes almost by accident to certain people who work with others as counselors or psychotherapists after years of being with people some of them develop the ability to be in the state as they listen and it's only then that they become truly effective in their profession because it's only then that a greater intelligence is taking over not the limited accumulated knowledge that they are trying to apply to you by labeling your condition and calling you this or that and putting you into some kind of pigeon-holing category and sometimes after years of listening and applying accumulated knowledge after a while they get tired of applying the accumulated knowledge and they begin to just be there and the state of attention arises and the spaciousness that is there that is the state of thoughtless awareness arises and then the other person comes into that field and then true transformation and healing becomes possible because it's now that that intelligence that is unconditioned can begin to operate it might not even come through you because there is the field through this form, the field is there of pure spacious presence that means it could come through the other person when the field is there it could even come through some external factor that at first doesn't seem to be connected at all to this so listen whenever you interact with somebody be in the state of pure listening pure attention and to dwell in that sense the inner body as you listen so you're almost listening with your whole body and you're giving total attention it doesn't matter that much anymore what is coming out of the other person's mouth you're not only reacting to that which is coming out of the other person's mouth because in that state of thoughtless awareness you are connecting with that dimension in the other person you are able to penetrate through the screen of mind that may still be coming at you and touching that unconditioned consciousness that is there underneath the mind stream in the other person and not only that, often it is the case that through that, that unconditioned is being awakened and begins to come forward and of course that's the essence of spiritual teachings and to a large extent this is also what is happening here when you are in that state of pure listening miraculous transformations happen in people around you so you're no longer your attention isn't absorbed anymore by the words that are coming out of the other person's mouth that still, yes, the words are there you listen to the words also but there's more there's the entire field, the spaciousness so you're looking through the conditioned person and at first again this is a new way of being and at first you may feel a little awkward because you haven't prepared the next thing to say and the fear comes in that I've got nothing and then the other person may stop talking well, it occasionally happens that people stop talking or ask you a question and then you experience at first perhaps suddenly an answer comes unprepared, unrehearsed and often it will be just what that person needs to hear and you may be surprised what comes oh, that's good I said that I must write that down so that's because here you are interacting there are these dimensions of interaction especially here, anywhere there is the world of nature around which includes plants, animals, river, sky and then you interact with humans the world of humans so how to be with those two dimensions the human one of course is more challenging than the world of nature humans are difficult they are here to challenge you you may find when you wake up in the morning you open your eyes for many people so that is a natural no thought moment when awareness is there but thought hasn't come in yet and there are other times when naturally that state arises in you as it does in many people who don't even know it it arises naturally naturally whenever you see beauty there is a moment of no thought and there is a deep inner response to the beauty it arises naturally when there is a moment of danger and immediate action is needed and there is no time to think to work out mentally what you are going to do and so there can be a sudden shift into awareness from thought to awareness and right action happens immediately and this is the reason why some people seek out danger they don't know why in biological terms they use this expression they get an adrenaline high that is a by-product perhaps but what really happens they are in the state of thoughtless awareness and they have never felt more alive before and so the only place where they can find that is through seeking out danger where any mind movement would not be able to cope with that situation so mind cannot work it needs to subside and presence takes over while you are climbing up the wall of a mountain and every movement you are totally present in every movement one movement of no presence and you are gone that is the hard way of learning presence but catch those times when presence arises naturally as when you wake up in the morning and you open your eyes and there is simply a field of awareness and be aware of that awareness before the mind starts coming in you can often see it in people when they first wake up and two minutes later the mind has started up and then for the rest of the day that is the state that I am now expressing through this they are not here they are trying to get somewhere and of course years and years of that wears out the body of that contraction you may wake up in the middle of the night here strange surroundings not your comfortable bed and thought may come up and thought often wants you to be somewhere else and then you imagine being in the warm bed at home so soft why did I ever leave?

I could be in my soft bed at home and then that becomes a thought stream and soon turns into unhappiness and so as you wake up in the middle of the night immediately connect with the inner body and you lie there intense aliveness and there you are in the state of thoughtless awareness continuing to dwell in here whereas before the mind was telling you your problems the favorite place and time for the mind to tell you what your problems are and to try and solve them is the middle of the night you step out of that into simple presence and the longer you are sleepless the better you welcome that because it's awareness is there when you go to sleep here you lie on your bed sense the inner body and just be there, present alert, aware and go to sleep from there from that state not only here, at home that's helpful too the worst place you can go to sleep from is TV the second worst place is reading unless it's a spiritual a book that was written from presence then any one statement can take you into presence and then you put the book down so what I'm saying now is there is enough presence in you and so far this afternoon we are only addressing minor challenges we will also look at major challenges that come sooner or later in life and sustaining presence there but if you can't be present in your room then how to be present when a big challenge comes unless it's a life threatening challenge then sometimes it arises anyway so what I'm saying here is what some teachers would disagree with but I'm saying it there is sufficient degree of presence in you now for you to choose to dwell in the state of presence rather than in the state of mind identification and so you only need to remember that you have that choice of being identified with mind or stepping out of mind and I can hear one mind here asking the question who is choosing and the answer is of course it's not really you who is choosing presence is choosing to emerge through this form and from the perspective of this form it looks as if this form were choosing but that is a helpful perspective that is why I say you can choose presence don't try to work that out through the mind very often the truth the deepest truth can only be expressed through paradox not through some neat logical statement that says this is how it is and that's how it is not that's the fragmentary way of how thought happens and when you create thought systems they may look spiritual but they may be belief systems and you have a very neat way of putting it this is how it is and there is no contradiction here everything is logically explained be suspicious when you encounter a teaching that is totally logically consistent that has no contradictions it's a mind structure here we are going beyond there are only different pointers to take you beyond mind identification and whatever pointer is helpful will be used the pointers are not there to contain the truth to convey the truth and any absolute truth they are only temporary means, that's all so you can choose the state of presence that is a helpful perspective and all you need is to remember that that you have that choice and then you exercise that choice at that moment presence has chosen you one could say so there come these philosophical questions when you listen to different teachings there is a doer, there is no doer and then people identify with one of these perspectives they go to one teacher who says there is no doer and then they repeat that perspective mentally and start arguing with people saying no, no, there is a doer and the mind loves that because then the ego itself has reincarnated into some new belief and has adopted a new mental position and says this is me now and I'm telling you there is no doer and you are doing a lot while you are saying that if questions arise you are welcome to leave them here and you can if you like write a question on a piece of paper and tomorrow or the next day we will look at questions I don't promise that there will be an answer but we will look at the question avoid questions that are speculative because they are not all that helpful avoid questions that are too comparative comparing signposts but vital questions concerning your own practice avoid questions that try to catch me out in some contradiction which this morning you said that and in the afternoon you said that which one is true I had a question not long ago a very powerful mind wrote a very elaborate question and said in your book you say you are here to enable the divine purpose of the universe to unfold that is how important you are and then on page so and so I found that you say no form is important which one is true they can't both be true but they are so if you ask me do you consider yourself important I would have to say not at all not at all this form this teaching only happens because this form knows its own nothingness its complete unimportance that's why the transparency is there the teaching can come through when you think you are special the transparency isn't there and it can't come through it's completely unimportant that's why this teaching is so important just a suggestion close your eyes for a moment and just listen to the sound of the bell allow the sound to arise and be aware of the field in which the sound arises and the field into which the sound subsides and then the sound subsides and there's left the field of awareness the field of awareness is left and even while you listen to the sound you listen to the sound and at the same time you are aware of awareness the underlying field form and formless close your eyes if you can

[Speaker 2] (5:33:02 - 5:37:39)

you are aware you are aware you are aware you are aware you are aware you are aware you are aware you are aware you are aware

[Speaker 1] (5:37:39 - 7:03:06)

the reason why there's silence and I don't speak one way of putting it is the reason why I don't speak for a while is because I don't know what to say potentially that could be a very uncomfortable state if I don't know what to say and I'm looking for something to say it becomes uncomfortable when I don't know what to say and think I should know that's uncomfortable I don't know what to say and feel bad about not knowing what to say it's very stressful but to be comfortable with not knowing is a state of creativity and depth and then you have access to a deep knowing and that's not just the case with a spiritual teacher it applies to you you're also a teacher to become comfortable with not knowing then by itself a deeper knowing arises out of that when the not knowing is not resisted you surrender into the state of not knowing and it is the most beautiful state of deep inner connectedness then whatever needs to be known at this moment truly needs to be known not satisfy mental curiosity what truly needs to be known or done is known right now when it needs to be known and there's a lot that does not need to be known but what is truly needed is always there out of that state in which you seem to disappear as a an existing entity that I know and then all you realize that all thought knowledge all knowledge that's derived from thought is kind of pseudo knowledge because in thought when you call it something you think you know when you have a label for something you think that's what it is not realizing that every label is an abstraction it's called it's not it the state of not knowing of course is also the state as we talked about yesterday when you walk around or sit and perceive without interpretation without labeling and again that's the state of not knowing and yet of a deep knowing that is beyond mind so as the awareness the unconditioned consciousness arises separative knowledge which is of the mind because every label separates you from that which you label it becomes a barrier that separative knowledge is replaced by a unitive one could say knowing which does not separate you from that which is known and you can see how that transforms how it transforms your relationship with nature and how it transforms your relationship with other human beings because so far 90% or more of human interaction has been through separative attaching labels onto people interpreting judging not realizing that every interpretation and every judgment is no more than a very limited perspective one standpoint one small perspective no more once you know that you no longer get deceived by the mind and you believe that one perspective contains the truth that one thought that you express could ever contain the truth it is a small perspective no more it is a fragment no more so the recognition of the relativity of all thought and we are moving towards a different kind of knowing in which the sense of separateness does not arise that knowing is also loving it is one because love is obscured through the delusion of separateness love as the realization of your oneness with all that is is obscured by the labeling interpreting the knowing mind and then whatever you look upon in that state of not knowing from the point of view of mind is looked upon with love, compassion they are all aspects of that state of deep knowing that to the mind looks like not knowing at all and you can imagine how that changes human relationships when you can be with another human being in the state of not knowing which either means you are totally present, totally still allowing this form the form that this moment takes the form of this human being to be completely or it could mean that certain thoughts still arise about that human being who they are that they should be doing this should not be doing that should not matter they are this, they are that but thought is recognized as thought you don't believe in it totally anymore and you recognize it's a fragment it's only a thought and you allow it to pass then you re-enter the state of not knowing you don't get tricked anymore by the mind and so there is continuously that dimension of aware presence that may be all there is or it may be the undercurrent and on the surface of it there are mind movements that's fine sense perceptions also, all sense perceptions are surface phenomena ultimately in themselves not all that satisfying they are never satisfying for long nothing here in the world of form satisfies for long even if it's beautiful initially you can come to an exotic place like this because for many people who've traveled here this is very exotic it's not exotic if you live here and it's not exotic if you spend a few weeks here then the exotic is no longer exotic it's just, oh it's no longer satisfying for a little while the new forms satisfy and then that's not enough I need some new experience some new forms you may already have reached the point where it isn't satisfying because it never is you might have had a mental projection an ashram in India, me in an ashram in India that would add something to the story of me and make it much more interesting and then whenever you encounter the reality, very soon when the novelty wears off, which could be after a day it's not all that satisfying the world of form, there's always something that wasn't supposed to be there that was supposed to be oh and that wasn't supposed to be there and the spider in my bed or worse sooner or later and usually sooner you hit upon that unsatisfactory nature if all that you know is that and the unsatisfactory nature of your own mind and with its knowledge so neither the external world of form and experiences is ever enough nor is your own mind with its accumulated knowledge ever enough so life becomes frustrating a continuous search in many people it manifests as a continuous, almost continuous desire to be somewhere else when you were at home you wanted to be in the ashram now you're in the ashram you want to be home does that sound familiar? you may have counted the days to your trip to India and now you're counting the days to your departure so just that seeking through form either the external forms or through mental forms it's never satisfying and so the search continues you could try another ashram or maybe a retreat center in California would be so much more comfortable or you say I'm done with spiritual things if that's spiritual I don't want it and so I very rarely use or refer to old pointers or maps, signposts but what very much applies here is a very powerful signpost one of the Upanishads ancient scriptures they contain some very powerful signposts and I'll just this is very relevant to what we've just been looking at I'll just give quote to you the first few lines approximately what it refers to is nothing that you see or hear or think is it nothing in the world of form is it is satisfying ultimately if you look for satisfaction through that which is ultimately yourself because the only ultimate and true satisfaction you can ever find is finding and being totally yourself that's the true satisfaction that everybody's looking for through this or through that so the Upanishad this Upanishad says not that which the eye sees but that whereby the eye can see know that alone to be Brahman the eternal and not what people here adore not that which the ear hears but that whereby the ear can hear know that alone to be Brahman the eternal and not what people here adore not that which the mind thinks but that whereby the mind can think know that alone to be Brahman the eternal and not what people here adore it gives a few more examples but it all points to it's not in the form not that which people here adore it could even be the idea of God think about it and again that is not it that which makes all perception possible that which makes thought possible that is the eternal and why is that already here as the essence as the now that's what it is the eternal that never leaves you the now you are one with it so the ultimate secret about now is that you are that you are the now of course you are it's the only thing that has never left you always was the same it's always been now and people have that sense of something very precious and they think it gets mixed up in their mind with their story and they call it their individuality their individual sense of individual existence I don't want to lose that there is something so precious that I feel inside me I don't want to lose that that gets mixed up with identifications, mental identifications with stories and that story based sense of self but if you look deeply at your innermost sense of I your innermost sense of who you are then you realize it has nothing to do with the story of me you could forget your story you could forget your name and in fact it would be there you would sense that innermost sense of I-ness more strongly as the essence of your being and this is why sometimes people find it when everything collapses in their lives the sense of identity becomes mixed up with all kinds of identifications mental identifications that suddenly through great loss or death things collapse in their lives the structures, the forms collapse external and internal external as physical structures, the seeming solidity of my life crumbles internal belief structures the whole story of me falls to pieces and then it can happen that innermost I it suddenly can shine because it had been covered up by multiple and multiple layers of identifications and suddenly when they break then you realize what was shining through the only thing that gave life to the story of me the only thing that illuminated it was the innermost I and you mistook the formations physical and mental formations for I because the light of I was shining through those structures but you didn't know the essence of that light you only knew it was shining through these forms and suddenly the forms collapse and what is there then in its fullness and purity is the innermost sense of I or I am no longer this or that simply beingness, presence unconditioned is suddenly there it's all fallen away and so people in the midst of great disaster in their lives suddenly stood there and said this is incredible where does this peace come from enormous peace they didn't understand it the peace that is beyond understanding and of course this is why suddenly all that was obscuring the forms that were obscuring that innermost I gave way and it can happen in the case of death we pointed it out yesterday a person slowly dying everything melting and it can happen as the result of being in the presence of presence spiritual gathering the energy field of presence that also is being drawn out the unconditioned is shining through the conditioned and the conditioned is becoming more and more loses its density even as you sit here becomes more and more transparent in a way dies one could say the conditioned I the sense in which people usually use the word I the most frequently used word in the English language or any language the word I the way in which people usually use the word I what they refer to is me and my story the conditioned entity ultimately the fiction that I identify with as me is I that's what people when they say I they refer to that but there is a deeper meaning to I that is the delusion of I that's the delusion of self but I is a sacred word ultimately I is on the level of normal human consciousness expresses delusion which is what the Buddha recognized when he saw the delusion of self he referred to that I and he saw through that and so when that delusion is recognized that recognition already originates from the unconditioned consciousness the delusional entity cannot recognize its own delusion so the recognition of it already is the light shining through from underneath so to speak from there arises the recognition of the delusion of the story based form based, mind based identification based identity so and this is what Jesus referred to when he said before Abraham was I am not before Abraham was I was already there is no was nor will be in I, it is eternal presence eternal nowness and this is what the Upanishad refers to it is the formless, the unconditioned it is known never in a subject-object relationship it cannot be known in such a way so one could say it cannot be known at all you can only be it realize that you are it but cannot know it as you know an object in consciousness so people have been for thousands of years trying to make God into an object in consciousness the idea of God the image of God statements about an object in consciousness and this is why the Upanishad says not what people here adore that is not God, not that which you see not that which you hear, not that which you think not that which you believe in because it's thought, belief is thought you believe in God that also is not what people here adore it is a mental idol ultimately it is an ideology you believe in God and the person next to you believes in communism two ideologies so it's not what people here adore not that which the mind thinks not that which the mind believes but that which makes all thinking, all believing all sense perception possible the formless out of which all forms arise and that is the innermost I, the essence of what gets mixed up in your life with forms and it flows the self gets mixed up with forms the deepest, the innermost self and here the blessing and the grace is it in this energy field it is one could almost say being pulled out of you from underneath all the formations all that that in you responds because it recognizes itself in what seems to be the outside and so that state of still alert presence emerges in the absence of that the only thing that could get you there is suffering and disaster the breakdown of forms which had obscured the formless and this is the grace of the spiritual teaching it saves suffering it saves a lot of time too because suffering implies time eventually you would get there through more suffering but the suffering that you have had has been enough to get you here without it you wouldn't have come so it's worked, it's worked suffering works, no doubt but it can take time before it really works for a long time suffering can lead to increasing egoic delusion increasing contraction increasing density but the point is always reached when it becomes when the auto destruction happens the density and the heaviness of it cannot sustain itself anymore it goes it's like layers and layers fallen off and then sometimes those beings who realized that they looked back on their suffering and said what a nightmare and then they talked about it and realized how strongly it resembles a dream all the suffering that they have been through now that they are awake what a nightmare that was and so when they start teaching they sometimes speak of the delusion of suffering, the unreality of it from their position, from where they are their realization, this is true it may not be true when you are in the middle of it of course you could make it into another belief you go to a teacher and he says all suffering is an illusion and you say ok, I believe that and then you carry on suffering and you say it's an illusion but it's a pointer suffering is an illusion, it's a pointer and one day the little pointer may hit something the planet is heavy with pain human pain in the energy field of the planet a long time of creating pain out of that egoic delusion each human creating pain for themselves a painful form identity not knowing who you are is suffering not knowing who you are beyond form is suffering and so they created a whole world out of that state of consciousness and they created a lot of pain out of that primary delusion because that delusion flows into whatever you do and think and experience is colored, distorted by that delusion and sooner or later it always turns into pain so humans have been in the collective energy field of the planet there is an enormous heaviness which is human pain and every human carries part of that in addition to the pain they've experienced in this form as children residues of pain that people carry inside pain body, I call it which is partly personal, so to speak ultimately nothing is personal, it's nothing to do with who you are but only in the sense that it comes from your childhood your past, past of this form residues left by suffering that you've gone through in this form and another large part of it is the collective energy field the collective pain that is in the human unconscious, the heaviness of that and that when I began to teach I pointed out when I began to understand this inner transformation that had happened to this form I began to see that it's intimately connected with surrendering it's intimately connected with the surrendered state that is totally aligned with now, and I began to teach that and as, of course it is the ultimate, the root cause of suffering is the state of non-surrender which humans have been in for thousands and thousands of years so I began to teach that there's no need to suffer anymore and gradually I saw that even those who were able to totally surrender to now still experienced wave movements of pain in their lives even though they were surrendering and then I began to learn about the human pain body as I observed that and realized that every human carries his or her share of collective human pain that's ultimately what the pain body is it is the manifestation of human unconsciousness and humans carry it in here in the body it is an emotional an energy field that is not flowing life energy that is stagnant, trapped and manifests either as anger or as great fear or as the heaviness of depression so it's an energy field of pain that humans carry and sometimes they don't even know it's there it's dormant at times and life works beautifully you surrender to now and you might even think that's it, I've come to the end of it and then suddenly a little trigger happens a little thing goes wrong or even a little thought comes into your head that suddenly proliferates and becomes a trigger for an enormous influx of pain in whatever form anger, fear, heavy heaviness or sadness suddenly you are completely overtaken by that and it flows into your mind it energizes all the mind structures of the ego it energizes and amplifies the story all the identifications and so the me, the self the mind made self becomes extremely empowered through that, the delusion becomes empowered through that pain, human pain and you start thinking all thoughts reflecting the energy field of the pain body so the pain body has moved into your mind and is governing controlling your thought processes and actually feeding on each thought you strengthen the pain body through those thought processes because each thought corresponds to the energy vibrational frequency of the pain body if it's anger, it will be thoughts of anger and that's how the pain body renews itself and so the pain body becomes a self it becomes, you identify with it as self, you think it's me it is you really it possesses you so to speak and it feeds on other people if it could speak openly it doesn't say that openly it wants to make somebody unhappy and it wants somebody else to make me even more unhappy and usually it succeeds because one active pain body during its active period, once it's fed on your mind and other people's reactions it will subside, go back to the dormant period, the dormancy but during the active period it will feed on your mind and on people around you and it will easily awaken other people's pain bodies if their pain body is at a stage of readiness to come out of the dormant state and so one pain body can easily awaken several pain bodies in its vicinity you can notice it in families it sometimes happens at work in your workplace, anywhere where people gather a committee meeting, one heavy pain body in a committee meeting can awaken every other pain body that has been dormant in that committee and you get big drama and so to it's wonderful to watch how it works and if you go outside if your pain body is active and it may be active for an hour it may be active for a whole day in some people it could be active for several days it varies a lot for some people it's only a few minutes but those tend to be people already becoming more conscious so it cannot linger, it's recognized sometimes before it can really get hold of your mind we'll come to that but if you go outside and your pain body is active you also attract other active pain bodies because active pain bodies recognize each other so if you then any situation that you walk into with an active pain body you may be hiding it at that moment it will be in your mind yes, it's active, it's using your mind but you're smiling and suddenly somebody attacks you verbally or in whatever way and that was somebody whose pain body recognized yours and said, oh, here's food and then you go away from that and then you go around the corner and it happens again, somebody else attacks you and the whole world seems to be hostile because every pain body unless they are totally dormant in certain people, maybe they've just gone through the active period and they just don't want any more pain they haven't digested the pain yet but every other pain body recognizes you and they like to meet each other and feed on each other and for some people the pain body is associated also with the opposite sex that's a strange thing that is not that uncommon and that is but often the case when, not necessarily always you've had a painful relationship with a parent then your relationship with a man or your relationship with a woman is associated with pain body and it is not uncommon for people to choose their partner through their pain body unconsciously of course to choose when you fall in love quite often the pain body has a part in that and this strong attraction you feel is partly the attraction through your pain body to somebody else's pain body who perfectly compliments yours and so you feel drawn to that person very strongly and we all know people, perhaps even ourselves who who again and again are drawn to the same kind of person that creates the same kind of pain for them and they're doing it again and then they say this time I'm not choosing a partner with a pain body anymore I want somebody conscious and so you choose somebody who is who practices meditation who is a vegetarian and then and surely he or she must be conscious and maybe you forgot that Hitler was a vegetarian too and then and then you start living together and then you realize oh suddenly it's happening again the same I've fallen into the same, I've married the same man again that's because the attraction was there through the pain body so many marriages are like that made in what's the expression?

made in heaven marriage made in heaven and this one is made in hell so pain bodies recognize each other pain bodies do not want to be recognized in themselves for what they are they don't want the light of your attention on them, they want to flow into your mind renew themselves renew themselves through using your mind and using other people they can only continue to renew themselves if you don't recognize them for what they are if the recognition isn't there each time you get overtaken totally and immediately it's become self it's become the me an unhappy me so to break that is simply to be alert enough and of course you cannot make yourself be alert enough that the alertness the presence that is required to watch the pain body you can't make through effort make yourself alert enough it's either there or it isn't there in your case it's there because you're here that is a clear sign that enough presence is there for you to meet the pain body with alertness and watch it if possible the moment it arises as an enormous energy impulse and to watch that maybe you can't stop it yet you don't need to stop it just watch as it if possible catch it before it becomes a thought catch it on the energetic level just as it begins to move into your mind now that is easier to do with certain pain bodies than with others if your pain body's frequency is predominantly heavy enormous heaviness and density so when it takes you over you go slow and heavy thought processes how dreadful everything is just completely pointless and dreadful and the whole world is just dreadful now those are easier to catch because they arise more slowly oh there it is and then there are other pain bodies that contain a great deal of fire, anger and they come and that's very hard to catch them because there's virtually no gap they arise as an energy phenomenon but before you know it's an energy phenomenon it's already become a thought and you're shouting at somebody or if nobody's around you're shouting in your head and so the pain body has already taken over your mind and so the most difficult one to catch is if it's predominantly angry and you may not be able to catch because the gap between seeing the pain body as an energy phenomenon and it becoming a thought and thereby a me a self, the gap is too short or almost non-existent in that case all you can hope for is that in the middle of that somewhere an observing presence watches you in motion oh and so from underneath the pain body there is a witnessing presence but it may not happen yet it may be that you wait until it subsided and then very quickly the awareness is there and you suddenly realize that was the pain body there it was, it just been feeding on my mind and on this situation and the more consciousness there is the sooner you wake up after it has subsided you can wake up as the anger subsides there is sometimes a gap when the energy field goes down the pain body begins to leave your mind it begins to withdraw because it has been feeding enough it begins to withdraw from your mind and there at this point when it begins to withdraw you can sense it as an energy field ok you haven't failed you are there now at any time you are there as the presence it's fine now other pain bodies you can catch as they arise as an energy phenomenon there it is and you watch it you allow it to be, this is the key you allow it to be you cannot fight it the key is even here even here to bring in the yes because it is it is, what can you do it's right here, it is it is the suchness of this moment and so you embrace it that implies that there is a witnessing presence so you embrace it you allow it to be and the amazing thing is when you begin to realize that there can be even in the case of the pain body there can be a spaciousness around it even in the case of an angry pain body which fumes and shouts and suddenly you know it and allow that to be there there is suddenly a little bit of space around it freedom arises when you see the non-personal nature of the pain body when you see the non-personal nature of the emotional pain ultimately, although anger doesn't recognize itself as pain you see the non-personal nature of all those energy movements that we call pain body movements they are recognized as human pain they only become personal when they amplify and energize a story in my head that is my story and that is me and that is the fictitious self that is an illusion that it is a personal matter and you suddenly when you allow the pain body to be there as an energy phenomenon it's no longer a personal matter and you realize it's very similar in every other person it's basically the same anger is anger, human anger fear is fear human fear and sadness the heaviness of depression is the sadness and the heaviness of human sadness there is no person there and so it's an enormous liberation to see that this is not who I am, it's not me it's human pain flowing through me it's the human condition and here it is and what can you do with the human condition which is the condition of the unsurrendered consciousness for a million years you bring surrender to that the human pain body is only there because of a million years of non-surrender of egoic delusion and so you simply bring surrender into that and with that act of yes it's impersonal nature is revealed and it's not feeding on your mind anymore because it can only feed on your mind by pretending to be you it's only when you believe when it becomes a self the pain body energizes the mind structures that we call the self the mind made self amplifies those mind structures then it's feeding if the pain body does not flow into that it cannot gain new energy and the energy that is there through allowing it becomes dissipated not that you can't kill it there's nothing there to kill it's life energy, but it's trapped it becomes the heaviness or the anger all it means is enormous amount of life energy at a particular frequency trapped and then you bring acceptance to it and presence they are one and suddenly that transmutation could be described as the pain the energy, the vibrational frequency that was in the pain becoming transmuted into the much higher vibrational frequency of presence it becomes consumed and it becomes conscious presence and this is why many people with extremely heavy pain bodies more people with heavy pain bodies have become liberated than people with relatively weak pain bodies that's why it's often in people where you would say he hasn't got a chance, not in this lifetime look at his pain body I mean, just and you could be very wrong so my pain body was extremely heavy the pain body of this form it was only through it becoming unbearable unbearably heavy that it dissolved all at once and it became consciousness for most people the dissolving happens over a period of time this does not mean that you cannot already be free of suffering now because when you no longer identify with pain body as a personal matter as a me, a self when you simply recognize it as an energy movement within yourself you recognize that you bring presence to it you allow it to be then it cannot renew itself the transmutation has already started with that you don't need to do anything as such to become free of pain body no doing can do it one could say to be free of pain body the opposite of doing works and the opposite of doing is allowing but allowing implies that you are there as the witnessing presence because if you are not there as the witnessing presence you cannot allow it and the very essence of the pain body is that it doesn't allow anything it is the essence of not allowing so so no doing to become free the key is allowing it to be there and this applies on the inner realm to the pain body it ultimately also applies to certain situations on an external level that you have been stuck in for a long time or repeatedly you always find yourself in a similar situation and you try to get out new place, new country, new partner and you are back in the same in those cases also no further doing can get you out of that it is only through allowing this moment to be totally as it is, in other words the surrendered state that change will happen and it will happen quickly through surrender so there are certain situations where of course you need to take action to do something about it to remedy a certain situation but particularly situations where you find yourself in a stuckness and you find yourself experiencing the same again and again, it calls for surrender you can't run for the rest of your life run away from something run away from your partner run away from that partner or wherever you live or whatever relationships you are engaged in so both on the inner level the inner realm and the outer realm they are one and again the greatest power for transformation lies not in doing but in allowing and allowing then implies another perspective on this it is the ability to look I'm using it metaphorically not necessarily with the eyes to look at your pain body to bring attention to it you have to allow it before you can give it full attention giving full attention is allowing it if you don't allow it, you cannot give full attention so this is the power of presence and you give attention similar this is why we talked yesterday as a preliminary to this about the simple and relatively easy act of giving your full attention to a sense perception a tree, a flower people moving giving pure attention watching it allowing it totally no needing to interpret it and now we bring attention to that and that's the unconditioned consciousness vast intelligence is looking vast intelligence is at work in Chinese terminology the Tao is there and you are totally aligned with it and it's looking that the one intelligence is there and the looking is enough to initiate the transformation of that situation the looking is enough no analysis required through mind how can I get rid of my pain body how can I get rid of this problematic situation that I've been in for 15 years and I've been thinking about it for 15 years and I've been analyzing it and I've tried this and I've tried that but what you haven't tried is to look simply to look in that field of alert presence and allow it to be and see what happens but the looking, when I say see what happens that could be misunderstood there's no expectancy of some future result in the looking there's simply the looking the watching, the giving attention the allowing it to be and there's enormous power in that far greater intelligence is now released than is in the limited human mind even the greatest human mind and again, because everything is connected we started our gathering today with pointing out the power of not knowing and so when you look at something you don't feel that you know so this is another aspect when you look even at the pain body there's nothing much that you need to know about it there's just the looking in the state where no further knowing is necessary and whatever is needed now comes it can come in many forms a sudden transformation from within the situation it can also come in the form of a sudden thought and suddenly that thought is a realization oh, ok a sudden insight it can come as an external factor or event suddenly coming into a situation and changing it completely it can come as a spontaneous impulse from within you and you do what is needed without any doubt whatsoever the right action happens so in many forms the transformation can manifest itself but the basis for it is not to bring the conditioned mind to it and try to solve it through the extremely limited knowledge even in the greatest mind limited knowledge of the conditioned mind and what we call the greatest minds on the planet those great people we put on pedestals they are the greatest minds they are not really the greatest minds they had some access to that they had some ability perhaps only in their field of endeavor to be in that state of pure attention, of pure looking and that's where Einstein looked perhaps as a mathematical formula with all these scribbles on the blackboard which of course was mind stuff but there were certain breakthroughs there were insights that came to him that nobody could have worked out through the mind he had the ability and other creative, great creative minds as they are called and to look and he has made statements that are deeply mystical so he had deep insights he had access to that dimension he even said once I want to know the mind of God the rest is details in other words I want to know God the rest is details in other words he said I want to know that which is beyond and time and form the rest is the world of form details so that power is your own power the power of the universe in you so look at your pain body in that way and whatever you look upon in that way is embraced alright look at the worst conflict situation the world is full of dreadful conflict situation and anyone that comes into your field of attention now people in conflict can't work it out look give it full attention bring that alertness there people discussing and arguing and you sit there and then suddenly something happens suddenly maybe they stop talking or you say something a decisive thing that nobody had thought of and that changes everything anything could happen you don't know beforehand how that intelligence deals with the situation but it deals with the situation powerfully any person in turmoil who comes to you this has happened that has happened and he did to me and then he said to me and then see what happens I've told this story before when I first time I realized not long after the inner transformation an extremely excited woman came to me with a very strong ego talking about her drama you must do something you must help me come talk to the lawyers do this and for 15 or 20 minutes I listened to that pain body heavy pain body and of course she as the pain body wanted me to confirm the reality of the story the reality of the situation the reality of the problem please confirm that this is real and for 15 or 20 minutes I gave her attention that was just allowing that and that was the first time subsequently it happened many times when I realized the power the transformative power of that when suddenly she stopped talking looked at all the attorneys papers around her hundreds of papers and lawsuits that she had been involved in for years and suddenly she looked at me and said and all the papers and said this isn't important at all is it and I said no it isn't and then she just sat there for a few minutes and said alright I'll go now thank you and the next morning I saw her and she said what did you do to me last night last night was the first night in 20 years that I slept well what did you do to me her ego was back a little bit and there was a suspicious look on her face you did something to me and from then on she believed that I had hidden powers but if you believed that that power was your power it would very quickly become obscured and blocked to realize there is no me in that whatsoever if you ever made a me out of it and the ego could come back through any back door the ego will come back in and claim some attainment I healed that woman that night it's possible the ego could come back which means the portal is closing again the openness is gone the little egoic identity has come back and claimed some attainment I did that you did nothing it happened because you were not there it happened because you were transparent you were open, you were an opening that's why it happened, not because you were there because you were not there beware of this little thing in the head the little egoic entity where's the back door it says I need to get back in somewhere and it's happened even with spiritual teachers enormous power coming through them and then at some point there was the claim of specialness I am the one you are also the one but not quite as one as me so that's of course something to watch in oneself claims of specialness because every ego every egoic entity is special very special my problems are very special much greater than yours my knowledge greater than yours my misery much more than yours I'm much more ill than you you have a headache I've had a headache for years I'm much more ill than you

[Speaker 2] (7:03:17 - 7:06:13)

you have a headache for years

[Speaker 1] (7:06:13 - 8:21:07)

I've had a headache for years I've had a headache for years of course, you have long given up waiting as a state of mind so you're not waiting for anything I talked about the impersonal nature of the pain body.

We looked at that. And just as impersonal, really, is the stream of thinking. It's thought.

Nobody's personal problem. Well, that's a relief. It's not my problem.

The fact that my mind won't stop isn't my problem. It's the human mind. And then it stops.

Because you've given it space. Let's look at a few questions. I'll start with the smallest piece of paper.

It's a short question, so let's go. By dissolving the ego, won't I be dissolving my self-esteem? Do I not need self-esteem to love myself and others?

Yes, self-esteem. Many people seem to have a problem with that. Lack of self-esteem.

I read a while ago that when the Dalai Lama was younger, he was meeting with a group of Westerners, and they were talking about the lack of self-esteem. And he just couldn't understand that, what that was. And they tried to explain it, and then he went around the group and asked everybody, do you have that?

And most people said, yes. It's very strange, self-esteem. Now, the human species, it's the only species on the planet, of course, that has a relationship with itself, where you have a relationship with yourself.

That's normal. But the cat doesn't have a relationship with itself, or the bird doesn't have a relationship with itself, or the tree doesn't. So, birds, cats, trees, monkeys, flowers, none of them have a problem with self-esteem.

And even the most ugly looking cat wouldn't have a problem with self-esteem. It hasn't created a secondary, an image self, mind-created. And once, of course, that's created, it walks with you, like next to you, behind you, or wherever it is, you always walk with a mental image of me, and you have a relationship with that.

And often, you don't like what you see, that image self. That's poor self-esteem. And then you may be in conflict with it, with the self.

You may be talking to yourself in the head, telling yourself something about yourself. Some people talk to themselves in the first person, but many more people talk to themselves in the second person, as you, you see. You failed again.

You see, you are not as good as, you see, you, why can't you? And then at times, perhaps, the self feels suddenly great about itself. Some people predominantly have low self-esteem, in other words, feel bad about the mind-made image me, feel bad about that, and then realize that...

Some realization comes in when they realize that it is mind-created. And they realize, and usually in the West, it's connected with New Age teachings, and they realize that they can do something about their bad self-esteem, their image. You can actually change your thinking about yourself.

First, you discover that the thinking about yourself is predominantly, or to a large extent, negative. And then, you see, a little bit of presence is arising, it must be, because you are able to stand back a little bit and watch and see what you are creating with your thoughts. And then the possibility comes of changing your thoughts, your self-esteem, through workshops, affirmations, visualization, and all those practices.

And then after a while, that image looks a little bit more comfortable, and you feel more comfortable with that thing walking alongside you. But since everything in form, all mind creations, thoughts, are subject to polarities, you can't walk with a high, continuously with high self-esteem, and feel great about yourself. There's always a polarity to it, and it's usually bound up with what happens or not happens in your life, what feedback you are getting from others.

And it is usually comparative. The self-esteem is comparative. How do I rate myself in relation to others?

And that gives you the indication of where you are on one to ten, or whatever it may be. So self-esteem is connected with a mind made me, lack of it, or in a good self-esteem, but it exists within polarities, even if you spent a whole year affirming continuously that, I love myself, I love myself, and maybe until now you hated yourself. And your house is full of little stickers.

And wherever you look, you see, I love myself. And you look in the mirror, and look into your eyes, and repeat that, I love myself. To some extent, it works.

To some extent, you have a better relationship with yourself. But there's always a downside. It's hard to sustain that, because the other polarity will manifest also in your life.

And you go through life when, in order to know how you feel about yourself, you need to compare yourself with others. And then you say, oh, I'm actually better looking than this person, so I actually feel quite good about myself. I'm actually much more educated than that person I feel good about.

Or whatever you can get. Well, this person is ill, and I'm healthy, so that's good. So you need for self-esteem, if you look, you need relativity, and you need comparison.

And ego is always comparing itself. Is it possible to live without having a relationship with yourself? Neither good nor bad.

Is it possible to be so completely yourself that the mind-made image of me dissolves? Yes, this is why we're here. This is the essence of our gathering.

The mind-made image is connected to thought, to continuous thinking. It's fueled by, perpetuated by, upheld by, the continuous thought processes, many of which are about me and myself. And so I have, through thought, I have a relationship with a thought-made entity, which sometimes feels quite comfortable and sometimes feels not pleasant.

Don't want to live with that person. And of course it's true, many people live with a self that is very unpleasant, that creates a lot of trouble, a lot of problems, a lot of suffering, that continuously criticizes them, that continuously blames them, that continuously tells them they're not enough. And they live with that entity, mind-made, conditioned mind-movements, conditioned in such a way that they attack you continuously.

And that's the self that they have a relationship with. They would never live with a person like that. You would run out of the room.

You couldn't live with a person for more than a day. If your partner, somebody you live with, did that to you, what your self-image is doing to you through thought, you would have filed for divorce long ago. But you can't do that with that because it's on the mind.

It walks with you. And there you have this complaining and whining and accusing and, oh, get away. And a large part of that is because you're identified with thought.

There isn't the ability to step back from thought and watch thought, watch that. And here, the mind-made entity, because that self that you have a relationship with is part of the story-based self, the me. That was the self that I had a very unpleasant relationship with for many years.

I had a very extremely painful relationship with myself. I couldn't live with myself anymore. And so I somehow said, that's it.

I can't live with it anymore. That's it. But that was so total that I no longer sustained, fueled the self through thought.

I didn't know anything about it. It just happened. So the mind-made image dissolved.

The self that I couldn't live with, that was so heavy, dissolved. And what was left was simply I. So the I shifted from, whereas before when I said I, I was referring to myself, the unhappy, dense I, the story-based I, that dissolved.

And then the true I emerged, had always been there. Presence, I am, nothing in particular anymore, a simple sense of presence or beingness. And for the first time I could walk and be without having a relationship with myself.

And that, there is something so precious in that I or presence, so, it's beyond words. You could say it's like a diamond, something extremely, very, very precious. That's why perhaps Buddhism sometimes has the image of a diamond.

But this is not comparative. It's not a sense of that deepest self, not the mind-made self, is so precious that it has, it knows itself to be that in a non-dualistic way without needing to compare itself to others. It has nothing to do with a form or any mind-form.

So as presence arises, you don't need self-esteem anymore, you don't depend on that anymore, because what dissolves is the mind-made entity with which you have a relationship. And it's, so self-esteem is an intermediate thing that for a little while makes your life more pleasant. It's fine.

And then after a while you see the unsatisfactory nature even of that, because you cannot uphold continuous self-esteem, it's hard work, all these affirmations. And then things come into your life that tell you the opposite, inevitably, sooner or later. So then suddenly you don't love yourself anymore, nor do you hate yourself, because there's no self to love.

There's simply the state of this, which is love. It emanates. But you don't create a fiction that now you have a good relationship and love.

So that is moving beyond self-esteem. And now we see why the Dalai Lama couldn't understand, he only learned about that concept when he met Westerners who have a highly developed mind and ego, not others also have ego, but even more developed in the West perhaps. But he was surrounded perhaps by monks and not quite as highly developed mental image.

And perhaps he himself maybe never had it, I don't know, but anyway it was new to him, self-esteem. How strange. And I write about it in the book, there's a little paragraph on that.

The end of having a relationship with yourself. You don't need to arrange certain thoughts in your head that you feel good about it. So self-esteem is replaced by something deeper and more real.

I have found that I'm able to surrender to many things, but there are some things that I still struggle with. In particular, my pain body still reacts vigorously to injustice of all kinds, particularly abuse of power and cruelty to animals. And people who still insist on saving seats here at the front of the hall with their books or clothing, despite being requested not to do so.

And it's always the same people. I won't talk about the last part of the question, it's enough that I read it. But the first part...

Reacting to injustice of all kinds, particularly abuse of power, cruelty to animals. Well, wherever you look on this planet, you will find it. In one form or another, you will find violence and cruelty and injustice and abuse of power and corruption perpetrated by humans against other humans, against children, animals, against nature, against the planet itself.

Just, you would be overwhelmed if you knew what is happening on the planet, even at this moment, what humans are doing to other humans, even at this moment. And it's been going on ever since anybody can remember recorded history and beyond. And, of course, there are certain pockets where that is particularly pronounced or marked.

So wherever you look, you see that unconsciousness, humans, so identified with their form that they're totally trapped in it, so identified with the mental form of me that other forms are dead. But they have deadened their sensitivity through identification with mind-made images, so they don't know what they are doing to other humans because they have reduced other humans to mere labels, mental labels. They have attached judgments, images, and labels onto other humans.

And now, anything is possible, any act of violence through conceptualizing other human beings. And what you do to others, you do to yourself. So in the case of certain, let's say, and this is only one example, terrorists is one example, but respectable scientists working on chemical weapons and so on, there's no end to it.

But let's just, how can a terrorist commit an act, kill thousands of people? Well, before he can do it, he has to reduce those human beings to a mental concept. He has to attach a label to them, and that's what he does.

In the case of Muslim terrorists, and it's not confined to that religion, Christians did many similar things a few hundred years ago. They would kill anybody who they could label as heretic or whatever label they had. Didn't quite believe what we believe.

Kill him. And the terrorists, just to put the label of unbeliever onto a group of people, for some who are so identified with mind, that just that simple label already deadens, they have reduced these human beings to a mental concept, and they're now called unbelievers. Once you have reduced human beings to a concept, you can do anything to them and won't sense and feel it anymore.

It's a tiny example. And so you're so identified with a form, totally identified with a form, that all other forms are alien to you. And you can do anything to them, to use them, or in fear, try to kill them because they might do something to you.

So really, it's a total identification with conceptual identity, which you manufacture for yourself and for others. And so you don't know the aliveness that is there. You don't know that anymore.

Because you inhabit a conceptual reality. And that conceptual reality is amplified, the madness of that is amplified by the pain that you carry inside, that's been there for so long, the pain body, that energizes and amplifies the already mad conceptual reality. So all the pain flows into those mental concepts, and then any act of violence is possible or exploitation.

What you're doing to the planet, they don't know. When they see a forest, totally identified with mind, it's immediately labeled as they see only timber, perhaps, and how much it costs. They look at it through their mental conditioning.

Wherever you look on the planet, humans are manifesting that degree of unconsciousness. That's what it is. Now, of course you could feel angry about it, you could feel sad about it, you can feel upset about it.

It's only normal, isn't it? But you look through it and see also here the impersonal nature of what is being done. Not to manufacture an identity for those people or groups of people or tribes or religions, doesn't matter, not to make an identity out of the manifestation of unconsciousness and say that's who they are, they are evil.

That is their nature. It may look like that when you look at it on the surface, but ultimately all evil reveals itself as total identification with form, which implies total identification with mind. Complete, complete absence of an observing presence, witness, not the slightest gap, you're totally in mind.

And so, of course, it is tempting to make that into an identity. You can do it for yourself too because you can look back on your life at a time when you were less conscious than you are now and you may have done certain things in your life when you were younger to other people. You may have failed to do something that you should have done, perhaps in relation to your children, whatever it may be.

So you may have done something or failed to do something that now you see as bad. It is very tempting to incorporate this, which after all was only the manifestation of human unconsciousness through this form. It's very tempting to make an identity for yourself out of that and say, I did that, that was me.

Then it's going to incorporate it into the unpleasant story of me and it becomes part of the mind-created image of who I am. And the ego will hang on even to that. Anything that gives food to strengthen your identity, your mind-made identity, the ego, which is the mind-made self, will grasp that.

And it will happily grasp at guilt because guilt is to identify yourself with the movement of unconsciousness that happens through this form and say that was my identity, me. I did that, me. So it gives you, it strengthens enormously your mind-made sense of self.

And this is why it's hard when you are, you do not look through that mechanism. People find it hard to get rid of guilt, the feeling that I am bad because I did that. And so they don't see, they make an identity for themselves out of something that was the expression of human unconsciousness.

And the same thing for others. You can do it to others and say that is who they are. And then you may begin to want to fight those people because you must fight evil.

And so you get drawn into having enemies. You create enemies and it looks so just. It is a just cause.

But you are attacking. And without knowing it, you get very subtly drawn into unconsciousness through attacking unconsciousness, manifestations of unconsciousness. Very subtly you get drawn into that yourself.

It does not mean that you cannot take action in order to remedy certain manifestations of unconsciousness. But all that is secondary to getting to the root of human unconsciousness, which of course is in each one. Getting to the root of it in yourself as mind identification.

Becoming free of that. Then you can also, of course, you can at the same time also do good where you see it's needed. Help people, yes.

But being careful that you don't create enemies to fight. This will draw you into unconsciousness. And before you know it, you do the same things that those people that you're fighting against.

So to see them also here, the non-personal nature of human dysfunction, of human madness, they are simply through those forms what is being expressed is the human condition in its present evolutionary stage, which is coming to an end, this stage, fortunately. But you see it still everywhere. So don't make it into an identity, nor an identity for yourself about something that you did once, nor something that you observe in others.

And that's called forgiveness. Forgiveness means not to mistake human unconsciousness for who that human being is. The opposite of forgiveness is to make that mistake.

So forgiveness is simply to see through that and see the true meaning of forgiveness, that there is nothing to forgive. That is the true meaning of forgiveness. It's all contained in, because we have this beautiful, that image of the cross and Jesus that contains so much wisdom, that you could, all contained in that image.

And it's all contained in the last words of Jesus, which were, forgive them for they know not what they do. He did not make an identity for those people out of what they did to him. Now, they know not what they do means, in modern terminology, they are unconscious.

So if he had lived now, he probably would have said they are completely unconscious. It's okay. They don't know.

So forgiveness arises as you stop manufacturing mind-created identities for people. And then you become a manifestation of a different consciousness in this world. And your presence is then enough to change the world because that transformation of consciousness has already happened within you.

Very tempting, that non-forgiveness is very tempting and its mind and its ego. Similarly, your parents, you might find you may still have some resentment, some of you. They expressed human unconsciousness.

They didn't have a choice. It looks as if they had a choice, but that comes only in with presence and that's the choice to be free of mind. When you talked about the new consciousness arising, even as the old is getting louder in the world, can it also be on an individual basis?

I find the stronger presence gets in this room, form, the more dramatic the pain body gets when it arises. Could you talk a little about this? Yes, I've encountered this quite often, that as presence arises, you experience your pain body more acutely, almost it feels sometimes as if it came up all at once.

And of course, the pain body is trying to sabotage presence. We are not making the pain body into an enemy, but this is what the pain body tries to do, so you simply see that this is what it tries to do. So it will create, it can be so much so that I'm tempted to say almost that it can be to such an extreme that it looks as if you were being faced with your entire karma all at once.

But ultimately, it comes up to sabotage, but the fact that it comes up is the opportunity for it to rise up into the light of consciousness and be transmuted there. And it is right and good that it should come up because there is sufficient presence, although it tries to sabotage presence, there is enough presence in you to meet it in that state of attention and allowing. And that's an accelerated transmutation that many people now experience, especially those people in whom presence is arising very quickly, who come into contact with this or other teachings that in slightly different ways point to the same.

So as presence arises, the transmutation of all that accumulated pain also accelerates. So you are right, there is an equivalent movement that what you see in the outer world, the old and the new, the old becoming more mad, even as the new arises, to the extent that you know how usually television expresses only the old consciousness, but it's relatively rare that anything new comes through that is a manifestation of the liberation, the liberation from mind, to the extent that this teaching was on national television in Canada in the evening news for three minutes.

All the other news were, of course, about the violence in the Middle East and this and there and the killings there and the uprisings there. And suddenly there was, oh, and then there's this teacher here. How did this get into the news?

And then I hadn't realized how closely the two go together. This would have been inconceivable even a couple of years ago to have something that isn't news. I've always been saying this is underground.

This is happening underground. It's not news and yet it's appearing even in the media that it filters through here and there. Yes, of course they had to have a little thing to make it appear as if it were newsworthy and they said, who is this teacher who stills the minds of the rich and famous?

Oh, that's news. But the producer actually knew what he was doing and he knew that he needed that little thing to get it in there otherwise his boss wouldn't have allowed it in. So he had to get this in and it got in.

It's there. It's no longer totally underground. And then the equivalent thing within human beings, the madness is still there even as the new arises.

And at times the wave of madness which is both mind identification and the amplified mind through the pain body can come in very powerful waves and you can feel and yet there is a reason why this is happening. The transmutation is accelerating. It has to come up into the light of presence.

The pain body cannot be transmuted if it doesn't come up into the light of presence. Now the pain body wants I talk about the pain body as if it were an entity and it's a perspective on it. The pain body really wants to sabotage it to get food back from your mind.

It wants to take your mind over again. So it comes up very strongly but there is it doesn't know that there is a greater, larger reason why it's coming up and that is because it's transmuted and perhaps deep down it wants to become transmuted. Trying to sabotage really is wanting to dissolve wanting to become dissolved into consciousness.

So you're faced sometimes with waves of pain or madness in your life and just what can you do? Sit there if you can and watch that and occasionally you will get lost in it. That's part of it too.

And then you wake up out of it again. And perhaps next time a witnessing presence remains even as the wave sweeps through you. And if there is a witnessing presence even if only in the background the wave will move through more quickly.

If there's no witnessing presence it gets lodged in here and it can hang on. Through witnessing presence the pain body comes up perhaps very strongly and you will experience it as an energy movement through you which may even you may even shake with anger or fear as that happens. The body may shake as this energy comes up and you meet it in the state of acceptance and surrender.

There's a fear and you allow it to happen allow it to be even as the body shakes. One could say you are suffering if you can even call that suffering because if there's an observing presence it's just pain. So you're getting through the end of suffering are you still suffering?

A little bit. And you suffer consciously by allowing that pain movement to be there you suffer. It's okay.

That's enormously powerful to bring that acceptance into the suffering and then it's not suffering anymore it's simply pain. Suffering requires an entity a me with a story with mind activity around it and a story around it a suffering entity. But now you realize the pain body is simply energy movement non-personal nobody's it's not you.

So that's the so when it comes in those of you in whom it comes strongly welcome it as it comes. If you lose yourself in it it takes you over okay that was it and next time see if you can be there as it arises and accept it. Is it beneficial to the practice of being present to live in an ashram or monastery?

If so are there any you recommend? Well I visited quite a few and everywhere they seem to be struggling with the same things whether it's in the monastery or in the outside world they're having the same conflicts and the same struggles in the utopian communities and you look underneath the surface and you find it's the same as the board meeting in the corporation when they get together so you can go to a monastery or ashram realizing it's fine you can surrender there or you can surrender in everyday life as a householder surrender there it doesn't really matter where you surrender of course there are certain monasteries or groups where people come together in order to be present with varying degrees of success it helps to be with people who are also going through this transformation entering presence sangha to have a community it doesn't necessarily have to be a place where you live but to get together occasionally in the state of presence either in stillness or listen to a talk that comes out of presence and then go into stillness that can be helpful often people ask me when are you going to have your center and I said well it may be happening it hasn't happened yet who knows in any kind of organization ashram whatever it may be you will find unless the people are already free they will bring in their mind structures even if the reason for being there is freedom they still carry with them the mind structures and there have been many examples of utopian communities who degenerated very quickly into the same madness that you see in the outside world their intentions were good the whole of communism the intentions were good behind it equality, justice no ownership wonderful but they hadn't they thought the answers were in some organizational structure change that not realizing whatever you create out of your state of consciousness is a reflection of that state of consciousness and they hadn't looked at that so communism created a world a future projection first they had to kill about 10 million people in their own countries in order to get there future salvation was in the future and the moment the now was a means to getting there and if the now is a means to getting to a mental projection of future the now becomes hell and you can do that to yourself on a personal level or you can do it collectively if you as a group need to get to a future projection so I would recommend that you visit some monasteries and see how it goes visit see how you feel there Buddhist whatever it may be Hindu, Buddhist, Christian am I ever going to have a center?

I don't know what's it going to be like? I don't is it going to generate into egoic madness? who knows surrender wherever you are wherever you are now is the right place for your practice of surrender that is the primordial truth not seek a situation that is more conducive to surrender seek a situation that is more conducive it may change your external situation is more likely to change if you surrender now if presence arises now then it's more likely to change but to say the external change is a prerequisite for my practice that is a fallacy wherever you are whatever condition whatever state surrender to that no demand that this moment should be different that this place should be different a total alignment with what is and then who knows perhaps suddenly an ashram grows around you before you know it especially in India this is easier to happen in India you just need to sit under a tree and if you are if you are present and surrendered of course there are many who pretend also I know that there are many who pretend because it's a living they couldn't do that in the west because whether you are real or not but here if you sit under a tree or in a cave somebody will find you and somebody will know be drawn to you to the state of consciousness that you embody and they'll come with some food and then two years later somebody else will come and then two more and then some more people sitting under trees around you and then before you know it there's a little ashram all that doesn't happen in the west it's beautiful it's unstructured there's nobody saying ok let's have a planning committee you are in charge of that you are in charge of that whereas here organically it suddenly comes into being and that's beautiful less egoic intervention not that some egos will get in there too of course they will and then if you are unlucky a western person will come and write a book about you and then they'll transport you to the west and then the problems start so I'm joking a little it is wonderful that so much of the essence of the spirituality of this country has spread now throughout the world beautiful phenomenon this like India has been like a seed you blow and all the seeds go and that's happened fairly recently very quickly and that's part of that transformation that ancient wisdom that was there had been there for thousands of years now it's flowing there and it's still the same and yet there's enormous intensity to it now because of the evolutionary stage that we are at on the planet one could almost say that thousands of years were preparation getting ready for this evolutionary transformation on the planet and we have come a long way in just half a century I read recently I picked up Paul Brunton's book In Search of Secret India through which Ramana Maharshi became known in the west and in the introduction he's trying very hard to convince the reader that India has something to offer which was maybe 1930 or whenever it was written trying to convince that it's something valuable and now you don't need convincing anymore nobody needs convincing anymore and then we have this strange phenomenon which is very recent western spiritual teachers unheard of that they haven't existed since the middle ages the last spiritual teachers were the Christian mystics in Europe and after that all you had was institutionalized religion mind stuff of course maybe a few accidental realizations here and there but they were quickly killed or shut away and now it's like appearing everywhere western spiritual teachers and you can't spiritual teacher to many is a meaningless term what do you do for a living spiritual what's that and yet it's growing and that's for many of them the seed was here they were seeded here this teacher this form it happened I was drawn to certain expressions of Indian spirituality through Ramana Maharshi and Krishnamurti and I realized through them what had happened to me and there was a strong immediate sense of connected deep connectedness if not to say oneness so all then people asked me often have you been to India and then they were surprised and I said no I've never been to India what you haven't been to India and you are a spiritual teacher and I said I carry India in here because India represents the inner dimension and the west represents the outer one could say and so I always felt drawn to that I never felt really not after the transformation that feel like a westerner India is the the inner not that it does not manifest also human madness that is universal on the planet of course you have manifestations of human madness in different forms here that is universal and yet it's the cradle of the transformation of consciousness attention to the resistance of the present if powerful enough will dissolve that resistance and a state of presence will emerge what will dissolve the central core of the self so that it doesn't create endless waves of resistance can we explore the nature of the realization that is necessary what will dissolve the central core of self so that it doesn't create endless waves of resistance central that so what is the central core of self the mind structures the mind movements that are the mental image of me with its accumulated content plus the pain body the two incorporation form the central core of self so what will dissolve that of course that's easy surrender only now surrender it's too easy isn't it it's too simple surrender to whatever form this moment takes then the self cannot survive in the state of surrender to what is it's as simple as that the pain body cannot renew itself when you surrender to the fact that there is a pain body and so surrender I'm not telling you from now on you need to be in continuous surrender for 24 hours a day oh no it's not that difficult it's only this moment that you need to surrender to not just just this just this whatever form this takes it's always this and that you meet in and through surrender that you can do you can't surrender for 24 hours a day that's a problem but just this it's only now and so the egoic self nor the pain body can survive in surrender and so and then the question may arise well how long is it going to take before the central core of self and my pain body have dissolved and that question implies that surrender is not yet complete is this moment that bad that you need to get to a future one where you achieve a certain state to realize the goodness and depth that is already here and only through surrender you realize that who you are already you are greater than in your wildest egoic dreams you could ever be you are already greater than you could ever be even if the wildest egoic dreams of achievement became realized now already you are that and you are not going to be closer to God at some future point than you are now and God is yourself the deepest level of your being you are not going to get closer than you are now you are already so close that you are not even two nor is anybody closer than you are to God if you want to be in silence for the rest of the day feel free to do so tomorrow you will do your own thing or do nothing we may have a complete day of silence on Thursday in the meantime every moment is now and no matter where you go or what you do whether you stay here tomorrow in silence or go out and experience this or that see this or that don't walk around as a heavy person just a field of presence and perceive through that beautiful stillness that is there in you if you go somewhere perceive the multiplicity of forms the beauty of it be as much free of mental labeling as possible surrender to this moment

[Speaker 2] (8:24:50 - 8:24:56)

if you want to be in silence see this or that don't walk around

[Speaker 1] (8:27:46 - 9:30:10)

This flute that we just listened to, Japanese, shakuhachi, the essence of that music is of course not in the sounds, but in the spaces between the sounds. So when you listen to music like that, it's helpful to, one could say, almost pay more attention to the spaces than to the sounds.

So the sounds point to that, and that is similar in some paintings, Japanese, Chinese, where you see a little rock in one corner, a branch somewhere in some other corner, and it's mostly empty space, nothing much there. And so the contemplation of that can, if you pay attention to empty space instead of paying attention to the little that's there in the empty space, and talk about that, but acknowledge, be aware of the empty space, which you can only do through the empty space within yourself. To be aware of the empty space, either the space in the music, or the space in the painting, the emptiness there, to acknowledge it, to be aware of it, is through that within yourself.

Not, never through thought, because the empty space is the formless, thought is form, and the formless is your essence identity. And then of course you have a temporary form identity, physical, psychological form, but only knowing yourself as the form identity is bondage, is ignorance, is delusion, no matter how clever the form identity is, no matter how much knowledge the form identity has, no matter how many experiences the form identity has accumulated and identifies with as me, it is ignorance only to know yourself as the form, physical body, mental form, psychological form of me, the mind made image me. And then in the truest sense of the word, you don't know who you are, and who you think you are is an illusory entity, and because it's illusory, it's never at ease. You can never be yourself through the illusory entity.

And then the illusory entity seeks, because it knows its own incompleteness and lack, and then it seeks to strengthen the illusion. It seeks to add more to the illusion, believing by adding more to the illusion, finally you arrive at something substantial and true and permanent and lasting, beyond decay, and can never find it, because you don't know yourself as the formless. So we are here to know ourselves as the formless, and in any situation, as you move about this world, which is the world of form, the world will exert its pull upon you.

In any interaction with another human being, the question is, is there space in the interaction? Or is the interaction entirely through form, mind? And I'm often sometimes surprised, sometimes people who are already able to allow that stillness that is intrinsically one with the formless to arise, when they get challenged by the world, they get totally drawn into whatever form the challenge takes and the reaction takes.

They get immediately lost and believe that something out here, or in their minds, which is also out here, they believe that something out here matters, is vitally important. And so the world seduces you, that includes of course the mind, the world seduces you into believing that this matters absolutely and you must give me your total attention. And so you get lost in your reaction, which is also a form, a conditioned form, and you are totally in it, and then you are talking to someone, it's very serious, very serious, you must listen to me.

This is what happened, and now what are we going to do about it? Or there's fear, oh, what's going to, this is dreadful, it's all, your whole self is drawn into the, space is lost and all you have is form. So that means you get lost completely in the form, and this is when you, the whole civilization is lost in that, when you listen to the news, there's no sense of space.

The news reader is very serious, and reads out all these things that matter so much, and everything is very problematic, because if it's not problematic, it doesn't reach the news.

It doesn't need to be deep or meaningful or whatever, no, it needs to be problematic, there must be something here that is news, so those people who are themselves lost in form, they select the news for you, and then it's presented as it matters. These problems are so important, and the potentially redeeming dimension, redemptive, redeeming, whatever, they don't know it, there's no space around it whatsoever.

So you get seduced by the world, into believing that that's all there is, and then the world becomes more important to you than God, to use theistic language, you might say, no, all I want is God's realization, whatever, liberation, self-realization, all I really want is that. And five minutes later, what you really want is, this situation matters absolutely, you get drawn into that, and then, so the question is, when you say I want God, self-realization, it's true, when you say it, it's true. But five minutes later, you don't want it anymore, you want the world, because to say I want God means I'm willing to enter the surrendered state of consciousness now, I'm willing to enter surrender, and nothing else matters.

It's also saying I want peace, and that is my main, the only true thing that I want is peace. And a little later, the world comes in, and then you want something else. In the text called The Course in Miracles, which was a channeled teaching, there are the beautiful lines, I want the peace of God.

To say these words means nothing, is nothing, but to mean these words is everything. Nobody can mean these words and not be healed, which means, of course, not be whole, not be yourself, to truly want it. So, we have the two, when you are not in the state of surrender, are you, people say, I just, I can't, I can't surrender, I can't.

Is it that you can't or that you're not willing? You have to look, they're two perspectives on the same thing. I'm not able, or perhaps if you look closely, there's something in you that doesn't want to surrender, that wants the non-peace.

And to see that, that there is a movement in you that is very deep, that is true, that wants realization, wants peace. There's another movement in you that does not want it, and that can very easily obscure the deeper essence within yourself that wants peace. It's important to realize that there is a conditioned movement in you that wants problems and conflict rather than peace.

Once you know it, it's fine, and once you can see it, even as it comes up and operates, and that may include, of course, the pain body, but it is a conditioned mind movement that is one with the egoic sense of self, which periodically and very frequently needs to enter the state of conflict to sustain itself. The mind made egoic self cannot live for very long without entering conflict and inhabiting a world of problems. It needs to create that to sustain itself.

If you don't know that, you get lost in that compulsive need, which could also be called in humans the addiction to suffering. And you need to see it within yourself that that is there, and it's not personal. If you think it's a personal problem of mine, then you get trapped even more deeply.

The addiction to suffering, the need for conflict is unconscious, and it is how that separate identity that is mine, the egoic identity, keeps its boundaries intact. The boundaries between me and all those others, all those out there, other people, my enemies in the form of people or situations or places, or this moment. Occasionally you get a relief, and then for a little while you're, ah.

And then the need, the addiction to suffering comes back, and when you don't know it, you believe that the world around you is making you suffer, is doing it to you. And that is the essence of unconsciousness. You then believe that the world is basically out to put obstacles in your path.

This is how most people experience life and the universe. It seems like I can never be at peace for long, and suddenly the world putting obstacles in my way, it's happening again. Why does it always have to happen to me?

And then you react. So it looks as if the world were doing it to you. And you don't realize that you, that need comes from within, that's already dysfunctional, it's normal, and it's not personal.

Then you take the dysfunction a little bit further, and then we can see that it's actually insane. The belief that the world is doing something to me becomes then paranoia, or paranoid schizophrenia. And when you take it just a little bit further, then you can see, oh, it's actually quite mad.

But even before it's diagnosed as paranoia, it's already mad. And so if you're diagnosed with paranoia, then you can tell yourself, just because you have paranoia doesn't mean they're not out to get you. So it is liberation already, it is liberating to see in oneself that movement that we could call the addiction to suffering.

The need for conflict, to see it, that's already, you're becoming free in seeing it in yourself. Because the seeing, what you are seeing is the conditioned, that which sees the conditioned is the unconditioned that just looks. And so you can see in your life how periodically, maybe once or twice or three times a day, or who knows what frequency, that comes in.

And then any situation will do, and certain situations bring it up even more, that need. Many people coming here to a strange environment, India is challenging. And so it is, you can watch what comes up, all the reactivity, the reactive patterns that come up, that bring a heaviness to something that is just a situation out there, and the reactivity flows in and becomes very heavy.

The condition that is simply a condition becomes heavy through the reactivity. So that's important to know, and so all that implies there's no space when that happens. You get drawn totally into form, because when you react against something, you react against some form which strengthens your own form identity.

That's the form identity loves its reactivity. So in any interaction, in any situation, the question is, are you lost in that situation? Which means, lost in the mind formations, the reaction, the mind stream, the words that are coming out of your mouth, the thoughts that are going through your head, and you're completely in it.

No space. Where's the space? There's no space.

It's just that. And then you talk to someone, and just say, it could be any kind of talking, it could be gossip, it could be fearful, it could be angry, it could be, we must get something done, we can't allow this to happen, or whatever it is. It could be sad, but you're completely lost in that, and there's no space.

Sometimes when people come to me, and they talk to me, and I can see they're totally lost in the mind interaction, I just wait until they come to an end, and that could take a while. And when they finally stop, then I just wait and look at them. And it sometimes happens that at that moment, some space comes back in them, and then they wake up.

And then the strange thing is, you can see that no situation is really that heavy when there is space around it. It's only a situation. It's only different forms, limitations of forms appearing in some way.

It's only one more situation expressing some form of limitation. Of course, it's the world of form. No more than that.

And that no situation truly has that density and heaviness to it, unless you give it to it. The world, actually, the world of form isn't that heavy and bad. It's the, what you add to it makes it dense and heavy, and incredibly magnifies what is there as the simplicity of some kind of situation.

But through that which you carry inside, which is the need for suffering and for conflict, then magnifies, blows up that situation into something very big. And it's all ultimately constructs, it's all ultimately illusory entities being created. But it can look very big, so big that it might reach the evening news on TV, and then you know it's really heavy.

If people knew that in certain places where this unconsciousness is particularly pronounced, there are certain parts in the world where there's enormous heaviness of conflict, they're just very simple situations which could be resolved by sitting together for a few minutes around a table with space around it. It's not the outer situation. The outer situation is simple.

It's always simple. It's what people, and that is the essence of karma. What flows into the situation is used as an excuse.

And that's not confined to Northern Ireland or the Middle East, in everybody's mind. It's the same. It's simple.

It's always so simple. It's always just the now. And then you, through that conditioned reaction with its need for conflict, why is this need for conflict?

To strengthen my sense of self. That is the illusion. Why are the Middle East and Northern Ireland, they're in conflict because they are defending and attempting to strengthen their sense of identity, collective sense of identity.

In Ireland, they have several times a year, one faction has to march through the other religion's district. They've been doing it for 300, 400 years because there was a battle 400 years ago where they killed more than the others. And so they have to assert themselves by marching through whatever Protestant, Catholic, and they ask, why are they doing this?

What is the point? Well, it gives them their sense of self. They don't have no other.

And the conflict sustains it. So to see that whatever life situation you may be in, it's simple. It is always simple.

It does not have the heaviness. The heaviness comes through the projection, which is the need to enhance yourself through problems and conflict. It is the addiction to suffering, which is connected to having no identity beyond the little me.

So it uses the world and makes it into a very heavy place. And the limitations that are inherent in the world of form become a very problematic life situation and a very problematic me. And slowly, the world turns into hell.

And so it's the little, just the little thing, is their space. Now all that people are, when they are lost, they are lost in form, mind form, physical form, reaction, conditioned reaction. They are all conscious of all these things, the forms.

Now what we could call, one could say, I'm just offering you one more pointer. If one doesn't work, the other one might. One could say space consciousness rather than object consciousness.

The whole, almost everybody goes through this world totally occupied, totally dominated, totally identified with object consciousness. It's all this, and every object matters because you have nothing beyond it. Every object, including every mind object, which is every thought, including every emotion that comes with the thought, is object consciousness.

And you're in it with your sense of self, each one. And space consciousness is absent in most people. The one thing that could redeem you, they don't know it.

And it's so simple. It's all that is the essence of this teaching is to teach space consciousness. Not to get lost in form, not to get lost in mind.

And what ultimately that is, I cannot explain. I'm doing the best, perhaps, that anybody can through language. It's a miracle that one can even talk about it.

Because, of course, it eludes language because language is form. It eludes thought. You cannot fully understand it.

You can only get approximations of it through thought. It also would not be helpful to continue to elaborate and differentiate more and more the concepts and vocabulary that I use to describe that consciousness. That would take you, give you the illusion of understanding it if I differentiate it more and more.

Create new words to get another, and it would become a mental construct again. So I'm going only so far as to give you enough pointers, and that's it. The rest is, one could say, a direct transmission.

Not that I am doing anything, it just happens. It's a direct transmission of presence or space consciousness, whatever you want to call it. And that is why I pointed out at the beginning of our retreat to be conscious of that dimension here that is beyond the words.

So all that the words do, they point to that. But the essence is that dimension. Now whether you call that space consciousness, whether you call that presence, or you call it stillness, or you call it the unconditioned consciousness, or you call it pure awareness, it doesn't matter.

These are just little pointers. Or you call it consciousness without thought, or you call it pure intelligence, just another pointer. The pointer is not it.

It's beyond the words. It's beyond the world, and yet it's here. It's beyond form, yet it's here.

How does it come into this world? Who knows? It's here.

So to be open to that dimension as we sit here, which perhaps you can't say much about it, and yet it arises as the ability to just sit here in that alert stillness, that sense of spaciousness. And know for yourself at first hand what it is to be conscious without thought. Even if thought happens as occasional movement within that, it's fine.

There's space around it. Space. And that is the only absolute.

Everything else is relative in your life. Everything in your life matters relatively, whether you succeed in the world, in the eyes of the world, whatever that means, which means the world is telling you that you've made it. Does that matter?

Well, it matters relatively. If you need the mad world to tell you that you've made it, okay. Whether you are poor or rich, it matters relatively.

Whether you live in a tiny little hut or a huge mansion, yes, it matters relatively. All the outer circumstances of your life, even whether your health is good or not, yes. But not absolutely.

There's only one thing that matters absolutely, and that is whether you know yourself. Whether you know yourself beyond form. If you don't know yourself, none of those things that matter relatively can save you.

To be important in the eyes of the world can't save you, doesn't give you peace, doesn't give you anything ultimately. To be wealthy doesn't save you. To live in a mansion doesn't save you.

Mansions are full of unhappy people. Looking, still looking for themselves. They thought through the mansion they would find themselves, because the self suddenly expanded into this huge mansion.

And oh, they didn't find themselves in it. Only one thing matters absolutely, and that is this. Then the rest becomes very much secondary.

It changes anyway. You can't rely on anything out here. You can't trust the world, you can't trust any form, because it's going to leave you.

Or you leave it, it dissolves. True trust is something else. Not to trust in anything that is form.

But the state of absolute trust is the state of presence, where no form is needed to complete you. And no form can threaten you. So we are learning here what space consciousness is, but we're not really learning it.

We are unlearning all those conditioned habits. We are relinquishing looking through all those conditioned habits that obscure space consciousness. Obscure presence, which is already here.

It's strange, there are some places where particularly spiritual seekers are drawn. And this is one of them, for thousands of years they've been drawn here. And many of them remain seekers.

They're looking for themselves in some, perhaps some experience, or perhaps a vision, or something to be added. And don't know that the very seeking obscures what's already here. So remember what I said before.

Space consciousness, you can bring it into any interaction, and it is your job to do that. Because that's how the world changes. The world consists of human interaction.

You can bring it into any interaction through being in the state of attentive listening. That is the space. And then the problem may come when you start speaking.

Then the tendency is, as the mind stream arises, it has a pull. And to get pulled, soon after the mind stream starts, to be completely pulled into it. And be completely dragged along by the mind stream as you speak.

Words compulsively coming out of your mouth. And it'll be some kind of problem. Or whatever, some kind of criticism, some kind of complaint, something that matters.

And so identified with comes out that you believe it to be the truth. A thought being the truth. It's a fragment.

Relative perspective. One of innumerable possible perspectives on a situation, on a person. And you take it to be the truth.

So the mind stream, and this is not your personal problem again. It's the collective human mind. We talked about the pain body not being a personal matter.

Nor is the whole stream of thinking a personal matter. It's the human mind. There was a philosopher in the first half of the 20th century, who made the strange statement, we don't speak, language speaks through us.

Perhaps to take it a step deeper, what he meant was, we don't think, thought thinks us. He actually said, sorry, language speaks us. So we could say thought thinks us.

It is a movement, an energy movement, an energy formation, collective, human. And the momentum of it is enormous. So the moment you might be in a state of listening, you're listening to another person, space.

Then you start to speak. At first it may be fine, there's still space around it. And then it can happen that before you know it, you get drawn into complete identification with that mind stream.

And it pulls you along. And then of course you completely believe in what you say. There's no perspective anymore.

You're lost in the one little perspective. This could even be, even if you don't speak, it can happen. Thoughts going through your head, and you're totally lost in that.

In whatever they say you totally believe in, about yourself perhaps, about somebody else. So you're lost in the mind stream. And it could be a while before it comes to an end.

Because it will proliferate into another one, into another one. And it might need somebody to hit you on the head before you suddenly go, ah! As presence arises, there's the ability in you, even when the mind stream comes in, in the middle of being dragged along the mind stream, still to know that this is what's happening.

And that's all that's needed. To know that you're being dragged along by a mind stream. That means consciousness is beginning to free itself from being totally trapped in thought.

Just the little knowledge that you're being dragged along by a mind stream. A tiny witness in the background. That, hmm, oh, ah.

The moment that arises, there is the arising of space. It might be very small at first. But that's all that's needed.

So you don't need to fix yourself, change yourself, knowing, oh, I must get rid of my mind. No, know it when it's there. That's all that's needed.

If you had to fix yourself, it could take a long time. Just to see the conditioning as it operates. Oh, oh.

And then it cannot sustain itself for that much longer if the witnessing presence remains. The unconscious mind stream will soon come to an end because when consciousness comes in, it's hard for an unconscious movement to sustain itself. So instead of trying to rewire yourself through this or through that, and there are many people who promise to fix you.

I don't. Instead of that, allow the awareness, the aware presence to be there. And that, of course, is not something you can make happen.

It's either there or it isn't there. But the fact that you are here means it's there because it's only that that made you come here. If you came here by mistake or because of some illusion that this was about something else, as it happened occasionally, people came when I, for a little while, I called this, when I gave some talks, I had the title, Freedom from Time.

And once or twice people came by mistake because they thought it was a seminar about time management. That happened twice. One person who came for the seminar on time management walked out and told the organizer, I'm sorry, this is meaningless to me.

I've come for time management, and I'm sorry it was a big mistake. And the other one who came was a doctor who needed to sort out his time problems. And he sat there in astonishment for three hours.

And he said, I've never heard anything like this before. And I had come for time management, but this is so much better. So presence, you cannot, this is something you can't make happen whether the witnessing presence is there or not.

I'm speaking to you and saying that you, because I know that it is arising in you. If you should have come here by mistake, believing it was about something else or believing that this was here so that you could acquire more spiritual knowledge or more beliefs or expecting something else, emotional experiences jumping up and down, who knows. And then you've probably already left.

Or you're sitting here in a state of bitterness and resentment and loving every minute of it. And that certainly gives you a strong sense of self. And when you are in that state, of course it also implies that the entire world is wrong and you are right.

And you have a right to be in that state because they are all wrong. Now you know who you are. So you cannot make, presence is not something you can make happen through anything.

It is perhaps grace and if it is grace, it's happened to you. And perhaps your mind doesn't even know it. It says, has it happened to me?

I'm not quite sure if it's happened to me. Or the mind might say, no, you're wrong. It's not happening to me at all.

And yet presence can happen without you knowing it through the mind. It's happening to certain people in the world who have never read a single spiritual book. And it can happen in them.

And they can't say anything about it. When it happened to me, I knew nothing about it. If somebody had said, presence has emerged in you, I said, what's that?

I knew there was peace, yes. So that's a helpful, there's some peace there. It's emerging already.

And this is why I'm saying to you, and I can't say this to everybody, that in the middle of the mind stream, there's now the possibility that space consciousness or presence is there as the witness. Because there's enough presence in you for this to be possible. And that's all you need.

Now once it has began to emerge, it is perhaps in Ramana Maharshi's terms, it's a current of unconditioned consciousness, a current of awareness that has nothing to do with thought structures. It just arises. Once it has arisen, it's not going to stop.

It can again become obscured temporarily. And then it's there again. If it became obscured for a longer period of time, through some heavy identification in your life, it would break through.

It would make room to crack the shell of ego. But it's already cracked. But if the ego does a self-repair job, which it can do, the crack could disappear again for a little while.

But then presence emerges more. And so if you need a disaster, for the final crack, you'll get it. And that is also grace.

Very often people don't realize that the disaster in their lives is the greatest grace possible. So grace sometimes is, as there's a book, a new book by Ram Dass, the spiritual teacher who suffered a stroke, and his new book is called Fierce Grace. So it's already there.

You don't have to really, for once I agree with those teachers who say you don't have to do anything. Allow it. It's not really a doing.

Allow it to emerge. That's the opening. Rather than feel I have to make it happen, you can't.

You allow it. And so you surrender until there's no further need to surrender. Until surrender disappears.

Surrender is detecting non-surrender. Watching non-surrender dissolve and entering surrender. Surrender is the bridge between resistance and non-resistance to life.

Resistance and non-resistance to the present moment, to the form that this moment takes. So this is why it is our practice. It's the bridge.

And use that bridge. No other bridge is needed to find yourself. The egoic structures cannot sustain themselves in surrender.

That's the beauty of it and the simplicity of it. So people ask, how do I get rid of ego? How do I get rid of self?

Just this. Everything happens then. Thought, compulsive thinking subsides.

And with that, the egoic structures weaken because they are thought. Everything happens. As the compulsive thinking subsides, the mind becomes less noisy.

You sense a stillness that arises in this now. And it's, is it within, is it without? It is space consciousness.

And it arises. And then the miracle is it can act upon even the situation that you have surrendered to, the form of this moment. And that's presence, which is the unconditioned consciousness, can, is the intelligence that then begins to operate outwardly.

And that's a miracle. And that is only a byproduct of that. That's not why you do it.

It's beautiful when suddenly the forms change and become more harmonious, change very quickly. Helpful factors come into your life. You don't know how, where from.

Coincidences happen because the totality, you're connected with it now. It's moving through you. But all that is only icing on the cake.

There's a question. I didn't bring, we'll look this afternoon at more questions. One question that was asked was if consciousness moved through those human beings who became liberated, created the circumstances that are right for liberation to happen, why isn't consciousness doing it to everybody right now?

What's the delay? I'm paraphrasing the question. Why can't consciousness do it now if it did it for Jesus, or if it happened to this form or whoever?

Of course the answer is, it is happening right now. You are in the midst of an evolution.

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[Speaker 1] (0:07 - 2:07:00)

You're in the midst of an evolutionary transformation on this planet. Not only in the midst, you're an essential part, a cell within the totality of the human organism, because humanity one could consider as one organism with billions of cells. And this collective organism, which goes beyond the physical, is going through a transmutation as that organism.

And part of the organism is still untransformed, and it's beginning its transformation. And what you perceive as your person is a cell in that organism that is going through that transformation. So from the limited point of view of the person, that is the greatest gift, the greatest adventure, the greatest purpose in your life.

That greatest purpose is not in the future, but it's already being fulfilled at this moment. People occasionally still come and say, what is my true life purpose? This.

The outer form is secondary. Am I destined to live here or there? Am I destined to move in this way or that way?

Or what words are destined to come out of my mouth? All that is the world of form, and that will look after itself. But what is the true purpose is the transformation of consciousness, which is now.

And there are people who are already in the midst of it, and their little mind still says, I'm looking for my life purpose. And then the outer will reflect the inner. You will teach.

In one form or another, you may be teaching already. Your very presence then becomes a teaching, because the good news is that just as unconsciousness can be contagious, unless you're very present, one unconscious person can create drama in an entire room full of people, can pull everybody just by starting to fume and shout, can pull everybody into reactivity until the whole room is totally unconscious and they're all shouting. And just like that, presence is also contagious.

Presence spreads. Presence transmits itself beyond whether you speak or not. Your mere presence is the transmission of presence, space consciousness, and it will transmit itself to those who are ready.

And so it means you're teaching. Additionally, certain words may come out of your mouth. You may have some formal teaching function in this world.

It's secondary what form it takes. It may be no form at all. The beautiful thing with many Indian teachers was there was almost no form to the teaching, no structure.

They just sat under a tree or in a cave and it happened. There was no time. They didn't say, we will meet from such and such.

Of course, the drawback is they might not be there when you get there. Or they've just run away somewhere and you have to find them. That's a drawback, but we live in the world of polarities.

So here you have the beauty, you know I'm going to be here, unless the universe has other plans. You know I'm going to be here at a certain time. But then we have almost too much structure.

And then there's the totally unstructured way of teaching. And that has its great beauty. In a way, it's nicer than this.

And yet, on the other hand, he may not be there. Or he or she may have gone away. Or you have to hang around for hours and hours for him or her to make some appearance.

Finally, at four o'clock in the morning, he comes. So it doesn't really matter what the outer form of the teaching is. You will be teaching and you are teaching already.

As the Course in Miracles puts it, you are a teacher of God. Not through pointing to the Bible. And the beauty with teaching is that you don't have to do it.

It does it. Your responsibility is to remain open, surrendered to it. So that what was a dense personal self becomes more and more transparent.

And then it can move through you. And that is the purpose of your life. And you are becoming transparent even as you sit here.

Less heavy as the self-structures dissolve, the heaviness of me goes. Spiritual weight loss program. I spoke of the ability that comes with presence to look at a situation.

To look without analytical interference through the mind. And that brings in the intelligence that will deal with the situation. Whatever form that will take.

It will deal with it through an external factor or it will deal with it through this form. And prerequisite for this looking, and I'm using the word metaphorically in a wider sense, of course prerequisite for that is you must have surrendered to this moment before you can fully look at this moment. Fully give it your complete attention.

Your attention cannot be complete if you have not completely surrendered to the form that this now takes. Then that intelligence can operate. But even the slightest resistance to what is will obscure, impair the ability to simply give attention to a situation, a person, a thing.

The greatest transformative agent there is, but you need to have opened the doors first.

The portal of surrender must be open and the looking. That's the greatest miracle is that.

I suggest that we spend today in silence. Alone with your mind. Allow the thoughts to be there if they come.

Don't take them too seriously. Remember that they want to be taken seriously. They pretend that they matter absolutely and no thought matters absolutely and no thought contains the absolute truth.

So there's a compassionate relationship that you now have with your mind. You just see its limitations. Which in themselves are not a problem.

They are the limitations of form. So you allow those limitations to be there. And there's the space around thought, in between thoughts.

Compassion and allowing go together. So when we speak of compassion, it's intrinsically linked to allowing what is to be. That is compassion.

And that has great power. Even your pain body. We looked at it yesterday.

What can you do? You allow it to be. There is space around it.

At first it seems very little space. And then a bit more. And so your relationship with your pain body is also one of compassion.

Allowing other people's minds. There is no really other people's minds. It's the human mind coming through this form.

Allowing that. Not demanding that they shouldn't manifest the human mind. Not demanding that they should be enlightened by now.

Why aren't you? You shouldn't behave like that anymore. You should be enlightened.

Compassion with human unconsciousness. What's unconsciousness? Complete identification with the conditioned mind.

Is unconsciousness. Wherever you go, you'll find it. Wherever you meet humans, you'll find it.

If you demand that it should be otherwise, you're in for big problems. Because wherever you go, you'll meet all those people who are unconscious. And you'll start complaining about it.

Saying they should be more conscious. And in that, become unconscious yourself. So you bring in consciousness through allowing, which is also compassion.

That transforms. So compassionate through allowing with the human condition. Which is in yourself and in others.

Not making, we looked at it yesterday. I put slightly different perspective on it. Not making the human condition, which is unconsciousness.

Which is the human condition in its evolutionary, present evolutionary stage. Which is coming to an end. But it's still the predominant human condition.

Identification with mind. Unconsciousness. Pain body.

Identification with pain body. Not making that into an identity for people. That's the opposite of compassion.

That is called judgment. Now judgment means to mistake unconsciousness for someone. To mistake the manifestation of human unconsciousness for a person.

There is no person. There is simply the movement of human unconsciousness. So judgment, you confuse the being, the identity, the true identity of that being.

With the behavior that they manifest through manifesting human unconsciousness. And of course, there can be no compassion there. It is judgment.

You can do it to yourself too. You look back on what you did yesterday, and it was unconscious. And then you say, that was me.

I'm bad. Useless. Nothing to do with who you are.

So wherever you meet unconsciousness, allow it. Nobody there. Not a person.

That is the transmission of presence, that allowing. So you don't have to do anything to change them. The change happens.

More questions? This afternoon we may look at some. So we keep noble silence for the rest of the day.

At least until after dinner or beyond. We may look at some questions later today or tomorrow. If anybody wants to ask verbal questions, you're also welcome.

Either we do it today or tomorrow. You will find the answers to most questions, if they are vital questions, within yourself. Or the solution to any problem in the stillness.

Take it into the stillness. And even when you're engaged in thought, trying to solve something, a problem or a situation, step back from thought periodically. Thought has its place.

It is more important to step back from thought and to look. After a while, thought comes back. Perhaps with an insight or a solution.

Or the problem itself dissolves. Or other factors come in and you don't know how they got there. This question I referred to this morning.

I mentioned it briefly. We'll just have a quick look at it again. Question since childhood.

If God consciousness was able to realize itself through you, Jesus, Buddha, etc., why doesn't it save itself all the time it takes for the rest of us and just do the deed, whatever set of circumstances it took to create it, Jesus, Eckhart, whoever. Just those same circumstances in the rest of us. Boo hoo.

Boo hoo. Many answers are possible depending what perspective. The very thing that's being asked is actually happening.

This is the best possible circumstance and the best possible moment as far as liberation is concerned. It's already happening. Or you can change the question slightly.

The question starts with if God consciousness was able to realize itself through you, Jesus, Buddha, why doesn't it save itself all the time? You could put I instead. If I realized myself through that form, why am I taking all this time to realize myself through this form?

Why am I giving myself, if I am consciousness, why am I giving myself all that time? Why not now? And be done with it.

If you want it completely, it's here now. But it's not wanting to do with willpower. Wanting nothing else.

Now at the moment, perhaps you might say, yes, I don't want nothing else. But in 10 minutes time, you may want something else. You may want to be identified with a mind stream.

Surrender now. It takes no time. This spiritual practice takes no time.

That's the beauty of it. So, a lot of time is saved in that way. Because surrender, which is the doorway, takes no time and requires no particular circumstances even, except what's here.

What's here is already ideal. Within the totality, what's here, the totality has brought that which is here into manifestation. It is connected with everything.

This moment, the form that this moment takes, is connected to everything. It couldn't even be otherwise. The totality has brought it about.

And so you recognize the perfection of it, not through some mental concept that says it really is perfect. I'm trying to convince myself. It really is perfect.

But through surrender to this. So all you ever need to do is get this moment right in your whole spiritual practice. Get this moment right, not the rest of your life, just this moment.

You get it right by recognizing the rightness of this moment. Why are so many seekers women and so many teachers are men? It is true that in many gatherings there is a higher percentage of women than men.

I don't know about here, it's maybe equal here. But in many gatherings, sometimes you had 70% women. And I speak about this in the book that consciousness now moves more quickly through the female form.

And what the questioner says was true until very recently. But it's no longer the case. Even within the last year or year and a half I've met more women teachers than men teachers.

They are arising. Yesterday I met a woman teacher who has an ashram nearby, Shanti Mai. And I met even within a year, I met Catherine Ingram in the United States.

I met Byron Katie, I met Gangaji. There are many. It's always wonderful to meet them.

And everywhere now the female form is becoming more and more of a vehicle for that. Until recently that was not the case. Not that women didn't become liberated, but it wasn't recognized in what was mostly patriarchal societies.

Even those women, they were not readily recognized by the established patriarchal structures of whatever their religion was. And we may come to a time soon when there are actually more female teachers than male teachers. There are some Indian female teachers also.

And many of those women are destined also to become teachers. We all teach in some way, teacher in a more conventional sense, actual spiritual teachers. Perhaps quite a few of those present here will become teachers if you are not already doing it in one form or another.

And even in Tibetan Buddhism there are now some women teaching through a form that before had only allowed the male. Three questions which I may all read before any answer, all concerning sexuality and presence. I'm a man stuck in a man's body and would like to understand more about sexual addiction, which seems to come as part of the package of this form.

Is it just a primal instinct and can I ever truly evolve beyond it? Is celibacy required? Helpful?

I oftentimes hear people speak of Krishnamurti's sexual life. I don't think there was very much of that, but there may have been some. And so people say, I was a student of his until I heard about his sexual life.

I feel he had to be writing from that place of presence to write what he did. And it touched me deeply. Can you comment or is this too hypothetical?

Do we have too many judgments around sexuality? Why is a great teacher so judged and negated when it appears he falls out of the parameters? I have some confusion because I want to defend him and yet...

Well. Is celibacy required or helpful? These questions are kind of connected.

Yesterday evening I stepped out onto the lawn outside and I saw two monkeys engaged in procreative activities. It lasted for a few seconds. And then it was over and the male monkey was eating.

And the thought came into my mind, this monkey has no problem with sex. Is celibacy required or helpful? That depends.

It can be helpful or it can be a hindrance. It depends on the one who practices celibacy. Let's talk about the hindrance first.

If celibacy is the result of adopting a certain mental position, a thought, a perspective on what sexuality is and it is this thought attaches something to sexuality, from that perspective it is called perhaps impure or unspiritual. That is one of many possible perspectives. It's a thought.

It's a fragment. It may contain a little bit of truth. The opposite thought may also be true.

It is divine. But if you are a practitioner and the basis for your practice is identifying with a mental position, a perspective, a concept in the head, if that is the motivating power because you want to make your life conform to the mental concept that you identify with, that the position that you adopt and identify with. And then you attempt to make your life conform to that mental position.

And so then celibacy becomes your practice and whenever sexual feelings arise, they will immediately of course be judged from that mental position. As impure or as not spiritual. And then a time may come when you need to even deny to yourself that you have those feelings if you are very extremely identified with those mental positions because they clash with the mental image that you have of yourself as pure and spiritual.

And so you have the reality, a sexual feeling arises or sexual thought arises and it clashes with the mind made image of me. And it may go so far as to require you to deny completely that you even have it. Or if you don't deny it completely to yourself, feel guilty about it because you're not living up to the high standards that you have set yourself, mental concepts.

So you are not living up to your mental concepts. And so the feelings that arise are not happy ones. And that further creates a problematic self image as the struggling me who is still impure and hasn't made it yet.

Guilt arises, perhaps self-doubt arises, self-hatred may arise. All strengthening your false sense of self. The ego doesn't mind.

It loves feelings of guilt and not good enough because it strengthens your sense of self. It doesn't mind whether it's the sense of self is of the great, the master of the universe or not good enough. If I can't be the master of the universe, at least I can't be not good enough, mental concepts.

Or you may deny altogether that you have sexual feelings because they would shatter the image that you have of yourself as an advanced spiritual practitioner, having reached level seven already. And at level six, you go beyond sex. And so if you deny to yourself even, and this has happened in Christianity in the past, happened often, you can't even admit it to yourself because it would clash with that image, then it is totally suppressed.

And if that is totally suppressed, which is a vital force, somehow, somewhere, it will come up again. And then it'll overpower you completely. If you're lucky, only in wild dreams while you're asleep, and then you wake up, oh, dreadful, and then you may have some interpretation that the devil put some dreams into your head.

Or they may come as suddenly a sexual obsession or some obsession to do with sex that you can't get rid of and it becomes totally overpowering. And so you become extremely unhappy. So here we have then somebody who practices celibacy and is making it into a hindrance.

Through it, he, she is strengthening their false sense of self, is strengthening the identification with a mental position and a perspective and a judgment, believing completely in the absolute truth of that particular thought or judgment. And that person can practice celibacy for the lifetime and all it will do is strengthen the false sense of self. At some point, maybe sexual feelings may not arise anymore.

And then that person may continue to build a mental image on top of that and say, I finally made it. I am pure and spiritual, but it may only be old age. My father called me up three years ago.

He is now 85. So at 82, he called me up and said, I have finally transcended sex. And said, I don't know why people are interested in such things, it's so ridiculous.

I need to add that he's, all his life was very interested. And I said, that's good, congratulations. And last year he called me and said, I was wrong.

And he was very happy to tell me that he had not transcended yet. So I said, congratulations. And then there could be celibacy that arises naturally in your life situation.

And that enables you to observe, to bring presence to what is usually an enormous force that pulls you into great unconsciousness, an enormous life instinct. And celibacy could be helpful. A period of celibacy is good in anybody's life, but not artificially created.

Be open to see whether it naturally arises out of your life situation. And then you can observe, make it into spiritual practice. You can observe the relationship, which can be a very powerful one between your thought processes and sexuality.

And it is often the case that even in people who are letting go of identification with mind, as a last resort, the mind will link into sexuality. And that can give renewed energy to mind activity. And the mind knows that.

So there's a very strong link in many people between the incessant mind stream and for a great number of people, a considerable part of the mind stream is connected with sexuality, fantasies, images. And that link between sexuality and thought processes can keep thought processes going for a long time. So you can bring presence to the feeling, the sexual feeling without it identifying with it, allowing it to rise up into the mind and again becoming part of the psychological form of me.

So that you have then sexual feelings that are not denied because you do not adopt a particular mental position towards them, neither good nor bad. There it is. And you can watch how beautiful it is when a sexual feeling does not even turn anymore into sexual desire that wants more than what is here now.

You can bring presence into the feeling so that the feeling doesn't become a desire. There's simply, there's beauty. It's a manifestation of aliveness to simply acknowledge a sexual feeling, directly feel it, sense it.

It is part of, yes, being in this form which is limited. The form, the physical form in which you come has certain limitations and it's male or female. It's one half.

It's never the whole. So that half always has a longing for completion and completeness. And that's the sexual longing.

Now you cannot, of course, achieve that completeness through the sexual act. It gives you a momentary sense of completeness, but it's very short-lived. But the enormous desire behind is at the root, we could say, of sexual desire, which is to do with the incompleteness of this form of being a half of the whole, either this or that, wanting union with the opposite polarity that is a primordial spiritual impulse.

I would go so far as to say that everything is ultimately a primordial spiritual impulse. Even when an animal devours another animal, it is the most primeval expression of love, merging with, becoming one with. And it looks dreadful from our perspective.

So not adopting a particular mental position towards what is. Use sexuality, whether you practice celibacy for a period of time or not. As long as celibacy arises out of the right motivation, it can be helpful.

It can easily become a hindrance. So you need to be very careful with that. Can one ever transcend sexual addiction is the question here.

That's a purely human thing, of course. Addiction means the mind has come in and the mind wants to build a psychological me on top of your sexual exploits. The mind wants to repeat a past pleasurable experience when the body may not even want it.

And then anything can turn into an addiction, whether it be food or sex or any activity. Watch and see how the mind tries to link in with the sex center and how it uses that device to keep itself going. So, and if you practice sexuality, bring consciousness to it.

That's the essence of Tantra so that it becomes not a means to an end, but you are totally present with the feeling as it arises. You can do that whether you have a partner or not. You can simply allow the feeling to be there and watch it and it doesn't turn into thought anymore.

So you bring presence to that. You're not denying it. You cannot transcend anything by denying it.

And transcending does not mean that it is not there anymore. It means to go beyond. You transcend thought.

Thought still operates, but you have gone beyond it. You transcend sexuality. Sexuality, as long as there's a physical form, has its place and it's embraced.

Accept it. You're not creating a mental image around it. Allow Krishnamurti the little that he had.

If you allow Krishna, and he was so liberated sexually, wasn't he? If you allow Krishna to be so free, why not Krishnamurti? Beware of mental judgments and mental positions.

That is the greatest hindrance. Anything connected with thought and sexuality creates problem out of sexuality. The monkey had no thought around it.

That's why I was so impressed. That it is no longer addictive when the link between sexuality and thought is not there anymore. And then it's simply to be enjoyed, whether you practice it or not, if it arises, it is a manifestation of this physical form.

And that's what it is. It is completely non-problematic. Only through mind does it become problematic.

The belief that there is something in me that I need to change, that is not right yet, I need to transcend, transcend keeps you stuck immediately in that very position that you seek to transcend. It's bringing acceptance into what is, including the limitations of this form. Then you truly transcend, you go beyond, whether or not celibacy is then your way of life, is a secondary question, it doesn't matter.

Yesterday on the bus tour of hell, I think some of you must have been on this bus. Yesterday on the bus tour of hell, I was confronted with the fear of my death. This is not uncommon in Indian traffic.

I realized that I do not fear my death for myself, but for the great suffering it would bring upon my children. Last night, that suffering came back. As I tried to embrace it, it got bigger.

The suffering wasn't only mine, but the suffering of all the mothers on earth. It got bigger and bigger. I could not embrace such suffering.

A thousand mothers could not embrace such pain. What is there to do? How can a mother be a mother without the pain that goes with it?

First, of course, the thing to realize is that you didn't die. You just thought you might. And the thought was just as bad as if it had happened.

The thought itself, the possibility of loss, creates the mind, says this is the real possibility of me dying before we get to this destination. And the possibility of loss, that is a mental projection, often creates corresponding reactions that are just as painful, more painful in many cases, than if it had happened. So, nothing actually happened on this bus except that it was unpleasant, I assume.

I assume. So, we can see how the mind already creates a situation that might happen, and then the entire body reacts as if it had happened. And this is a typical example of how the pain body gets triggered by something relatively small, or only a thought of a loss that might occur.

And then the mind projects itself into that and sees your children as destitute already. I'm dead, and now my children... And then it's already basically happened in the mind.

And then you experience the emotions that would go with that, and worse. And it triggers the pain body. So you experience not just the pain that is connected with that projected non-existing event, but in addition, an enormous amount of pain that is totally non-personal, that is part of humanity's pain, perhaps part of female pain connected with child loss, part of the female pain body.

So the first thing, of course, sitting on this bus, to realize a mental projection is being created. The reaction happens as if that event had already happened. So that you don't get drawn into further mental projections.

But it happened, and the pain body was there. Far more pain than would be warranted by that situation in which nothing really happened. You didn't lose your life.

So there it is. The mechanism of it, you can see retrospectively, how the mind, through fear, projected loss, which is fear, fear created that, and then you had far more pain than your own personal pain, and far beyond that. And you couldn't embrace it.

But you survived. So somehow you must have embraced it. And perhaps you were not totally identified with it.

There was a witnessing presence. You realized perhaps that it was far more than your own pain, or your own, the personal part of the pain body. Many children lose their parents, and quite often parents lose their children, which is worse.

Both look dreadful, and yet each human being, sooner or later, will be confronted with death. And to some children it happens that they become confronted with death at an early age. And they survive.

And that becomes a very early spiritual teaching. And those to whom life gives that insight, they are ready for it. It may not look like that on the surface.

But to experience loss at an early age, is very painful. But potentially, that is already the beginning of spiritual realization. That no form lasts.

Perhaps even more painful than that, is for parents to lose their children. And if that is your lesson, and there may be some of you who had to go through that, and that may be one of the reasons why you are here. The suffering that you went through at that time, when the fabric of your existence suddenly no longer was solid.

But watch your mind to see whether it is creating future loss, possible loss. This is the essence of anxious thought. The essence of worry.

The essence of projections. In a dangerous situation, see if you can relinquish past and future. Sometimes it happens naturally.

Relinquish past and future. Renounce past and future. Use the dangerous situation to push you into presence.

When we arrived in India, we got picked up at the airport. And for the first time, we experienced the traffic. And all you can do is go.

Any thought movement would tell you, I will be dead in one minute from now. And there is so much grace here, that so many people survive. After any trip, you say, by the grace of God, I survived.

So it's certainly a great teaching. This is one of the many teachings here, where you can practice total surrender. And if you don't, you'll be very miserable.

I talked to my mother last night. She said, Do you take a train? Isn't that dangerous to go back to Delhi?

Isn't it better to go by car? And I said, You cannot imagine in your wildest dreams, what traffic here is like. Has being itself different aspects or qualities?

It seems that even humans, who are supposed to have no ego or personality, newborns and so-called enlightened masters, have different energies or vibrations. That is true. When the unmanifested, even though the form through which it filters, is quite transparent, otherwise it wouldn't shine through.

It's still shining through some form. And there is a slight influence of the form. So when it finally reaches the outermost layers, which can be simply in the form of a silent emanation, it can reach the outermost layers as spiritual teaching through words.

It can reach the outermost layers through actions done by a teacher. This is where it differs according to certain configurations of that form. So it's slightly or considerably changed by the lampshade through which it shines.

And the lampshades are slightly different. So it comes through some as very extremely gentle and soft, and yet powerful. And it comes through others as fierce.

You might almost be afraid of it. And in some teachers, it may come predominantly in one way, with occasional the opposite also expressing itself. So the fierce teacher can suddenly be extremely gentle.

And you don't know what's happening anymore. And the gentle teacher can occasionally be very fierce. So you have on the one hand, the Zen master who may attack you, or attack your unconsciousness to crack it, may insult you, or hit you, shout at you, but the other aspect of being is always there underneath.

If the fierce teacher expresses fierceness, there is a softness underneath the fierceness. And if the soft teacher expresses softness, there is a fierceness underneath the softness, the gentleness of being, which is as challenging, it might be, or you might think, oh, I'd rather go to a gentle teacher. Well, this is perhaps why you're here.

There are other teachers who are known for being extremely uncomfortable to be with.

And that's the Zen tradition. And yet Ramana Maharshi had a gentle, silent emanation of being, very different from Zen.

And yet that is equally challenging when you ask a question and all you get is silence. It can be very challenging, as challenging as somebody who attacks the ego that perhaps was behind the question. So these qualities exist, and usually you would be drawn to a teacher that is right for you.

And some people are drawn to aggressive teachers. And that is right for them. They love it.

They love being hit over the head. Now, there are certain teachers who are aggressive without realization underneath it. And so they will attack your ego in order to strengthen theirs.

And they may not even know it. But any teacher that you come to is right for you, even the false teacher. That's the beauty of it.

Because the false teacher means there's ego, and perhaps draws your ego. And you'll be learning something about ego. Suffering will arise sooner or later, and you will be learning exactly what you need to learn.

So it would be futile to say to somebody, don't go to that teacher if that person feels drawn. Learn what you have to learn there. And the same when spiritual teaching comes out in the form of language and thought, there are great difference between the ways in which it's being expressed verbally.

And again, that differs even astrologically. It might have an influence. The Pisces may teach in a different way from a Leo.

Basically, it's the same underneath that. But the form that the teaching takes. When one is enlightened, awake as you are, does the pain body still exist?

Do you have one? I don't seem to have one in here, but I can feel the human pain body. And sometimes I feel it so much, the collective pain body that I cry.

I can feel that the pain that is in the collective field, the collective unconscious of humanity. And so it happens sometimes that I cry, and then if somebody sees me, they might think, oh, you must have a pain body. In a way, I do, because there's still this physical form.

The physical form is linked to the planet and to all humans. I have read your first book, The Power of Now, six times. That's not uncommon.

Each time I go deeper with it, the book seems to vibrate with energy. Even when I first saw it in a bookstore a year ago and knew nothing about you, period. Your second book, a condensed version of your first book, seems to lack energy.

Will you write another book that vibrates, a book that reflects your teaching as it evolves? It's true that it contains, as all spiritual writings do, that come straight from presence, they contain an energy field that goes far beyond the words or the informational value of the words. The value of the words as information may be valuable, but the function of a spiritual, truly spiritual text, as well as the function of spiritual discourse, verbal discourse, always goes far beyond the information that the words convey, because the words arise out of presence.

They carry the energy frequency of presence. So they reach you. Of course, they go into your ears.

Then they go through the filter of the brain where the meaning is extracted from the words. It's decoded because it's only sounds that go into your ear. Then they're translated into nerve impulses.

Then they reach your brain. Then the brain decodes the nerve impulses. And then usually that is the end of you hear something, you've decoded it, and that's it.

With spiritual discourse, the same thing happens. It is being decoded, and then it continues to work inside you even after the meaning has been decoded. The energy moves in and awakens presence within you.

It touches that which is beyond the conditioned mind. And that is the true power of spiritual teaching, which goes far beyond what the words mean. And that applies both in verbal teachings as in written teachings.

In verbal teachings, it can be even more powerful. And I must admit, I have no idea how it gets into the written word. I didn't do it as such.

It just happens. How it happens is a mystery. How does it get, how is it possible?

It's only words on a page. It's only symbols. And yet the text contains an energy field.

And that is wonderful. And this is why people can read it many times. And that's the power of spiritual teaching.

Everything else is only information. Now, most books you read, you buy in bookshops. Even spiritual books, probably 90%, are information-based.

And then there's 10% of books that contain power. If you read the words of Ramana Maharshi, you can see that they also contain power, spiritual power. And you can read them many times.

And they're always fresh and new. And there are other books, ancient ones too, certain ancient texts. Now, it can happen in people who are totally identified with mind.

They pay so much attention to the meaning of the words that the words reach the decoder in the brain and never go beyond it. The net is there of thought that holds them is so strong. All they get is the information that the words convey and it doesn't reach them.

This doesn't apply to you, any one of you. It applies to people who have very dense mind structures. They would come and only listen intellectually or read from the point of view of the intellect.

And then they might say, that was quite an interesting talk. He had quite a few ideas. I liked his ideas.

Not bad. Now, what's the next thing? Where's the next book?

So it's beautiful when it works for you and this is how it should. It is also helpful because once you can sense that, all you need to do is pick up a book, open, read half a page or one page or a few lines and you will know whether this text carries power or not. And increasingly, you may not want to read, especially spiritual, other things, information is useful, but spiritual books, you may not want to read any more spiritual books that simply give you more facts, stuff, even more signposts perhaps, but didn't come out of presence.

And you can save a lot of money that way. Just go into a bookshop and then you put it back. Okay, I don't need this book.

So am I going to write? I don't know about the other selections from the book. Some people say it works well for them.

Other people say it doesn't carry the same energy because it's not a unified whole that varies from person to person. So if it works for you, fine. If it doesn't work for you, fine.

Are you going to write another book that vibrates? A book that reflects your teaching as it evolves? It is true that the teaching evolves.

It's already gone beyond what is in the book and continues to evolve. It is possible that after this long trip I may sit down and focus on writing again. And some people are preparing edited transcripts of talks and retreat talks, and so I'm going to look at that.

And that may become the basis for a new book, which, if it works, is also going to vibrate. Let me know if it vibrates. I have heard many stories of how people found the book, how the book came to them.

Quite amazing. One could write a book about these different stories. And it is an energy field of its own, multiplied many, many times, and it gets into the strangest places all over the planet.

Amazing. How can I free myself from my enormous desire and longing for a spiritual love relationship with a man? Although I do understand my desire for such a relationship, after 25 lonely and painful years of marriage, during which I could not give myself nor my ex-husband the love and acceptance that we were both longing for, I feel at the same time that this desire is the biggest trigger of my pain body.

Even during this beautiful retreat, my pain body is sometimes active for this reason. I'm aware of that. Since a long, long time, I feel a huge attraction towards a man.

I hardly talked with him. I feel a strong attraction towards a man. I hardly talked with him, because this attraction freezes me and makes me feel uncomfortable, because it feels almost unspiritual to have this earthly longing.

Anyhow, these are the moments which keep me away from the now. Help needed. In brackets, ha ha.

I'm very grateful to be with you. Thank you. That longing is in everyone.

And as I mentioned earlier, it's to do with being this incomplete form. And this form wants to unite with the other half to complete itself. So you, as this physical form, may never be quite free of that longing.

But as you go beyond identification with a physical form and the psychological form of me, that longing becomes an almost peripheral manifestation in your life. No longer makes you unhappy if it is not fulfilled. The psychological me uses that longing as a substitute for surrender.

The belief that through some relationship I can complete myself. That the psychological sense of self, which also is not complete, the physical is not complete, because the physical is one half of the whole. The psychological is not complete because it can never be.

In its essence, it exists in a state of lack, of not enough, of insufficiency, of needing to add more. And the one thing that the self, the psychological self, believes often will make me complete is the relationship with the partner, the ideal, the one. And that can keep you going, that search can keep you going for a long time for the one human being who is going to complete me.

On the physical, that pull remains. On the psychological, that longing for completeness is transcended, is gone beyond as you no longer identify with a mental image of me, as you step out of identification with the mind-made self, which is always incomplete and will project its incompleteness, in many cases, onto that one thing that says, if I only had a partner, I would feel saved, totally myself, complete myself through him or through her. And if you should find a partner for a while, that may work.

And then you find you cannot complete yourself through any form whatsoever. So what leaves you through surrender to what is, and which in your case might mean the feeling of great lack, the feeling of aloneness, the longing for him, you may not know who, and there's this great lack at the center of your being, and what do you do with that? That feeling of loneliness?

If you're not vigilant, it becomes mind movements. It adds more to the story of the incomplete me who needs, and you can think about it, project, imagine, and that only strengthens that. But if you allow what you feel to be there, let's say it's called loneliness, feel it, don't resist it, that you may not even label it anymore.

Simply be attentive. Look at it. No analysis.

Just bringing presence to it. That feeling that you never wanted, that you want to get away from, that otherwise would continuously turn into thinking. Now you're saying, there it is, and it has a certain feeling quality to it, and you can give it so much attention that you're not even labeling it anymore as loneliness.

Your attention that you give that feeling is just complete, and your acceptance of that feeling is complete because it is now. It is the form that this moment takes. So you surrender into that, say, all right, embrace it, and see if it kills you.

It won't. It's not going to kill you. It's not going to consume you, but it might consume the ego if you surrender into it.

And then, suddenly, you will see it has turned into something else. I don't want to put any ideas into your head and say this is what it's going to turn into. You surrender into that.

The longing becomes intense aliveness itself. The longing, if totally accepted, and that is even the longing for God, which says, I want God so much. On the other side of the longing, God is already hiding.

It's a misinterpretation through the mind. It says, you don't have it. It's not here.

And the beloved is on the other side of the loneliness. You then go, you suddenly experience a sense of completeness because you've surrendered totally into that feeling. And then, you have gone beyond the need, to the psychological need for a relationship to complete you.

There may still be a physical need on the level of physical body, on the level of sexuality or emotion that if you're a man wanting close to you the female energy field, if you're a woman wanting the male energy field, this form may have that, but that is relatively minor. It's a very small movement. But deep down, there's already such completion and completeness that that's a very minor surface movement of the form.

It doesn't make you unhappy anymore. And then it is quite possible that you meet someone because you don't need him anymore. And then it is more likely that the relationship may work quite well because the need for this person to make you complete, which no human being could ever fulfill, it's an impossible task and an impossible demand, every human being will fail, will not make you complete.

So the need and the demand that this human being should provide that completion for you isn't there anymore. And that is why it is likely that the relationship may work quite well when the need, the psychological, deep-seated psychological need is gone. Then, if it happens, you welcome the relationship.

If it doesn't happen, that's fine too. It's beautiful too. It's not everybody's destiny.

And that's beautiful too, to be alone. Solitude is beautiful. Loneliness is not.

Solitude is to be alone and to be surrendered into that aloneness. Solitude, beautiful, even sacred. Loneliness is to be alone and hate it and not wanting this.

When you surrender into aloneness, it becomes solitude. And solitude even becomes more than that. It becomes a deep sense of connectedness with being itself.

Because you have really been looking for God through somebody else. And it's only through surrender that you can find God. So this is your spiritual practice, to work with that.

Not to find him. That's not your spiritual practice. These are the moments which keep me away from the now.

Because that sense of incompleteness and lack still tends to become mind movements. So it keeps you away from now. But it doesn't have to be like that.

The very feeling that you experience, let it bring you into the now. Give it attention. Embrace it.

No need to run away from it. You welcome loneliness. And then it turns into something else.

Beautiful. We may have some more questions next time we meet. Maybe also one or two verbal questions, if people prefer that.

Gradually questions accumulate. I keep them all. I have a huge collection of questions.

Enough for a few more books. Each question is valuable. And I like the funny ones too.

A few questions may be a little bit abstract. But if we have time, we'll even get to those. This flute that we just listened to, Japanese shakuhachi, the essence of that music is of course not in the sounds, but in the spaces between the sounds.

So when you listen to music like that, it's helpful to, one could say, almost pay more attention to the spaces than to the sounds. So the sounds point to that. And that is similar in some paintings, Japanese, Chinese, where you see a little rock in one corner, a branch.

It's helpful to look upon this week here and realize that everything that happens during this week is part of the retreat and is helpful, even if it doesn't look like that on the surface. Include everything and realize that it's all part of the teaching. That includes the bus trip from hell.

It includes discomforts, strange food that you are not used to, bugs that you may encounter here or there or other animals, and your physical body. Some of you are experiencing limitations of that here. And whatever condition arises, inside or outside, it's part of your practice.

One can live like that. At the moment I'm just saying, make it part of your retreat here, where nothing is denied or resisted, including physical weakness, physical pain, or physical discomfort. Just relax into that.

Only the condition of this moment. Otherwise, you may go home frustrated and say, I went to this retreat expecting to encounter spiritual liberation, the limitless, the transcendent and eternal, and all I encountered was sickness, strange food, bus trips from hell, bugs. That wasn't supposed to happen.

Of course, you also encountered other things, but it's easy for the mind to focus only on that. In other words, limitations all around. And when you get home, you may encounter the normal limitations of everyday life again.

So here we, there's no, it would be pointless to try and eliminate the limitations. We looked at it before. Use the limitations as the doorway.

It's easy to forget. There's a little spider. On its journey somewhere.

So every limitation becomes a doorway when you don't turn away from it, criticize it, blame it, judge it, good, bad, usually bad. So whatever it is, I put it like that in the book, whatever this moment presents to you, accept it as if you had chosen it. That is a totally new way of living and totally contrary to the old conditioned consciousness.

Accept this moment, no matter what it brings, as if you had chosen it. I'm not saying that you did choose it. Maybe you did.

If I say you chose it, that would require belief on your part. You can believe it or not believe it. And some of you would say, I definitely did not choose this, I know that for sure.

So although in some New Age teachings you hear, whenever you come to a person who has read these books and been to workshops, and you come and say, this is what's happening to me, and that's happening to me, they will ask, why did you manifest that? And then you already begin to feel a little bit guilty. Oh, I must have made some mistake somewhere, I manifested this.

Not good enough yet. So I don't say you chose it. It's enough to say, as if, accept as if you had chosen it.

[Speaker 2] (2:07:00 - 2:07:01)

Oh.

[Speaker 1] (2:07:02 - 2:31:40)

And immediately the limitation becomes a doorway into peace. That's the miracle. No matter what condition you surrender to, accept fully, that very condition takes you into deep peace.

But if the condition is on the surface, appears on the surface, totally unacceptable, then the surrender would have to be correspondingly deep. The depths of surrender reflects the condition. So a little condition may be a discomfort in your stomach.

In larger conditions you're confined to bed, can't come to the talks anymore, you're missing out on the whole thing. And yet, here the surrender will have to be a little deeper. And then you can encounter conditions that seem dreadful on the surface.

Nobody could accept that. An illness that immobilizes you, forever perhaps suffices, what the doctors say. Death of loved ones all around you, loss of everything, prison.

And then the surrender, the yes to this moment, will be very deep. And so the peace that then comes, if you find that deep yes in the face of seemingly unacceptable conditions, and to some people the threshold of unacceptable isn't very high. They very quickly reach the unacceptable.

Some of you may have a few times during this week reached the threshold of the unacceptable, and yet it wasn't that much, but the reaction was as if it were huge. Perhaps it was huge, if you had used to an extremely comfortable existence. And this is why it has happened.

Certain people who were faced with the unacceptable, even when they'd never had any spiritual teaching before, they entered the surrendered state of consciousness, and the yes arose in the face of the unacceptable. And yet the yes had to be so deep that that peace, all the reactive structures of the egoic self, collapsed in that one deep yes. And the peace then never left them.

They dwelled in that eternal peace. Those were the first, thousands of years ago, the first spiritual teachers that arose. They didn't have teachers, because they must have started somewhere.

The first spiritual teachers that arose were those people who were faced with the unacceptable, great suffering, and then a deep yes. The depth of that yes reflected the depth of the suffering and of the limitations that they encountered. And that was the shift.

And then after a while, people came and said, there's something strange about you. I don't know what it is. I feel drawn.

What is it that you have something that I don't have? I want that. And they said, well, I don't know.

And then gradually, some teaching started coming out of their mouth. A few pointers, gradually. And later on, perhaps, they had an insight into what had happened to them.

And then the teaching says, you don't need to go to the depths of despair to an extreme form of limitation or suffering. Surrender can happen as a voluntary yes. You don't have to be pushed into it by life, although eventually life would push you into it.

Time. All that spiritual teachings do is they save time by the grace of God. Otherwise, you get drawn out.

Goes on and on. All the old patterns playing themselves out again and renewing themselves, including the pain body. So if you bring in continuous little acts of surrender in the face of relatively small limitations, then gradually you enter the surrendered state.

With every yes, there's a deepening. With every yes, there's a weakening of the egoic mind structures. So everything is included.

Whatever arises now is part of this retreat. And when you go away from here, it's part of your spiritual practice. There's nothing that is not part of it.

Oh no, not this. This. No, give me something else to surrender to.

This one, no, I don't want. I need a more secure life situation so that I can start my surrender practice. And the mind saying, and this is also a subtle thing, I need to understand more before I can surrender.

Please explain more about surrender. I have accumulated enough knowledge about it.

Okay, just one more question now about surrender.

Oh, well, the answer comes, hmm. But then on the other hand, what about, ah, hmm. Of course, there's no end.

Now surrender is the doorway into presence. May I also suggest not only that you work with whatever happens, apply the yes. Remember the beautiful statement by the Roman emperor, Marcus Aurelius, that I quote in the book.

Marcus Aurelius was this very strange case of a wise man who had also worldly power. It's very rare that these two go together, extremely rare. So he said in his beautiful little book that is now called Meditations, written 2,000 years ago, accept all that comes to you woven in the pattern of your destiny for what could more aptly fit your needs.

Whatever comes to you is woven in the pattern of your destiny with the pattern of the totality of the cosmos. It appears as the form that this moment takes. What could be better?

What could more aptly fit your needs than that which comes to you woven in this pattern of the totality, which appears as now. And so whatever it is here, and if you cannot come to a talk, that will be greater for you than the talk if you surrender into that condition. But then you can observe the complainer.

I'm missing out. Here I am, spend all this money on this long trip, and here I'm in bed. It's not even comfortable.

And the self-talk continues. It's even happened, last year we had a retreat in Costa Rica, and one person who had come from the other side of the planet to come to this retreat, halfway between where he lives and where Costa Rica is, he got arrested. And they put him in prison for two months.

Later all the charges were waived, but he didn't know that then. That was his retreat. And it was better than the retreat in Costa Rica would have been.

Far greater deepening happened. First, much more suffering than could ever have been generated, even by the most uncomfortable retreat. And then in the face of the suffering, surrender happened.

And then he realized later, not immediately, that that was the best that could ever have happened to him. So that's this enormous power that is released through welcoming now. And then it becomes uncompromising.

An uncompromising welcoming. It has both a feminine and masculine aspect to it, that welcoming. The feminine aspect of welcoming, whatever arises, is what you sometimes see in statues of the Virgin Mary, Quan Yin perhaps also, the arms like that, which is the feminine principle of embracing all.

So that is one aspect of welcoming. Another aspect of welcoming, what is, is you have to become the one that embraces all. You realize yourself as the field that allows this to be the space.

And then welcoming also has a fierce, another, one could say, more masculine aspect, which is like that. It has a certain fierceness to it also. It is uncompromising, the yes to what is.

The two combined, it seems impossible, but they merge into one. And with that you meet whatever arises in your life, with that gentle fierceness you meet and face whatever arises in your life. And of course it can only arise now.

That's all there ever is. Whatever arises in this field, with that gentle fierceness is embraced, received, met. And then enormous transformation happens.

First the entire state of consciousness shifts from resistance, ego, to complete openness, where the self, the one self, not the limited little mind-made self, that one consciousness then becomes free-flowing, so to speak. And it acts for you, speaks for you. Life unfolds.

Life suddenly seems to carry you, where before you struggled against it, now you're floating, so to speak. It comes always as a surprise to somebody who learns to swim, that at first it's a great struggle to keep yourself above water. This is the egoic condition, so to speak.

You're always struggling to keep your head above water. When is it ever going to end? I can't take anymore.

And then suddenly you realize that the water is actually quite friendly. It can carry you and you can just breeze in, lie on your back and you float. Just a few movements and you become one with the water.

You're no longer struggling against the water. The water becomes friendly. And this is how life can become, when the shift happens from the resistant state to the surrendered state, that suddenly the universe is no longer experienced as hostile.

In the egoic state, mostly, the universe is a place to be feared and a place that you also hope someday is going to deliver to you what you need. Of course it won't. So it's the uncompromising.

Yes. And so you don't need to be worried about thoughts, how do I get rid of mental noise, there's so much going on in my head. The uncompromising, yes, does it.

Mental noise subsides. It has a certain momentum for a little while, it's still there, and then less. And the noise that's still there is no longer a problem.

Just a little bit of mental noise occasionally, okay. But watch the deep-seated pattern of the mental noise, the deep-seated pattern associated with the egoic mind structures. They have enormous momentum behind them.

Patterns of resistance. Watch particularly the two very important ones, and you will notice them very easily, as now that there's so much presence in you, you can notice how your mind operates unconsciously. There are two very important aspects of the pattern, the resistance, the continuous resistance patterns of the egoic mind.

And this is what usually creates so much suffering in relationships, so much friction and conflict, continuous source of conflict in relationships. Two of the main aspects of the resistance pattern is identification with mental positions and defensiveness. And you can watch that as you interact with people, how the arguments in your relationship, how many of them are to do with unconscious identification with positions of the mind that you identify with.

It could be opinions, viewpoints, beliefs, ideas, perspectives, and this identification with this mind position as me. And then your partner has another position that conflicts with yours and identifies with that. Both totally have their sense of self in their mental position.

So the two things in relationships that usually bring about conflict in relationships is identification with the pain body and identification with mental positions. And often the two go together. The mental positions can become amplified by the pain body.

Hell, it's called. So watch it even in a simple discussion, a simple conversation. Before you know it, you've put forward some position or belief or opinion or idea and then the other person says, no, no, that's not how it is.

And then you're beginning to defend yourself. That's the beginning of unconsciousness. It's nothing to do with you, but you believe it's you because you have identified with mind.

And the moment you identify with a belief, an idea, any mental position, a perspective on something, now you have to defend, you have to fight for your very life. And it's unconscious. And you can see it everywhere.

So to know, especially as you interact with people, it's simply a position, it's a mental position. There's no self in it. It's just a perspective.

And then comes defensiveness. It's totally automatic. Defensiveness comes in whenever your sense of self, which is mind made, is threatened by something.

Something somebody says. You did that. You didn't do that.

You failed to do that. And you can see how automatically the self goes into protection and defense. And the enormous emotion that comes with that.

And you go, if you feel the body, you feel it's totally contracted. I never said that. I never did that.

You did. You're the one who's unconscious. What are you telling me?

It's... All you need to do is watch it in yourself. If the unconscious movement still operates.

How quickly and automatic the process of defensiveness is. So you're defending yourself, but an illusory self. Part of that is the need to be right.

Very closely associated with needing to keep your sense of self intact. Because your sense of self is identified with a position of rightness. And so the spiritual practice is, on the one hand, to observe this as it arises.

If you can. Or you observe it just after it's happened. The whole episode is over.

And then you say, oh, there it was again.

[Speaker 2] (2:31:40 - 2:31:40)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (2:31:42 - 3:51:44)

And then perhaps next time, in the middle of it, you can suddenly see it. That you are trapped in defending an illusion. Put beautifully in the Course in Miracles, which says, whenever you become defensive about anything, know that you have identified yourself with an illusion.

Whenever you become defensive about anything, you have identified yourself with an illusion. And that means your sense of self has become associated with thought movements. Which is the illusion.

And then a time comes, and I suggest it is now. Now? It's not for everybody, but for you, it's now.

When you can relinquish a position. Or allow it to be there without a self in it. Say, that's the position.

And that's your position. Oh, okay. When you can relinquish defensiveness, and realize you're still alive, even if you don't defend yourself.

You are still alive, even if you're not right. And if you say, oh, yes, you're right. I was

wrong.

You're enormously liberating to suddenly say, oh, yes. That's how it is. And then, already, a great freedom arises when you give up the automatic self-repair programs of the ego.

And there's so much in this world that could damage the mind-made self. As you move through every day, you have to watch out continuously. Even the slightest remark from somebody can damage the mind-made self.

And even when you're driving along, the driver shouting something at you doesn't feel good. You idiot, where did you get your license? The driver shouts something.

And usually, and this is a very simple example of how one's self-image, mind-made, immediately jumps into repair, because that shouting, you idiot, has injured your mind-made sense of self. Because you fear, you don't want to, you're not an idiot, I'm not an idiot. And so, immediately, the self-repair thing is you shout something back, even louder, perhaps.

And on its own level, it works, because you feel a little bit better. The damage has been repaired. You've shouted back, and it's been patched up.

Okay, the self is intact again, and so you drive on. And this is a little example. And how often do things like that happen through criticism, somebody telling you this or that, you're not, and then you occasionally get the opposite, you lap it up, you say, you are so good.

You're so great. The world may tell you that for a little while, until it changes its mind. But to observe the automatic self-repair mechanism that immediately come into place.

And that, of course, can even degenerate in very unconscious people. In other words, people who have very much complete absence of a witnessing presence. That need to be right, in very unconscious people, and there are many on this planet still, can degenerate into physical violence.

Physical violence, even between nations, is the need to be right, and the other to be wrong. Or when you're driving, you can see just a phenomenon, I don't know if it happens in India, probably not, but in the West, road rage, where it doesn't, it's not confined to a physical shouting match, they actually get out of their cars and start physical violence. But it's simply a continuation of the self-repair mechanism.

And so the final triumph in a very, very unconscious person, and there are many, is you have killed the other person. The self is now, the fiction, the illusion of self is now totally repaired. And then they put you in prison.

But at least you have triumphed as the self. And at that moment, when you're engaged in automatic and unconscious self-repair, you would go to prison for the rest of your life, just to triumph in that moment. It's all worth it, says the self.

But then, life is very generous. It then allows you 50 years of spiritual practice in the prison cell. So when you're talking to people, watch that, whether there's identification with mental positions, defensiveness in yourself.

And then the enormous freedom comes when you don't need to defend anymore. The otherwise unconscious need to defend your sense of self is relinquished. And then, to go back to the simple example, somebody shouts, you idiot, when you are driving, and you just, you look, and you drive on.

There's nothing to repair. And then he'll shout again because he thinks you're deaf. And that's an enormous liberation because it's the liberation from thought.

It's the liberation from ego. Or the need to be right. Or just saying, I don't know.

Some people can't say, I don't know. They must know. So you can play with that.

There's enough presence in you. You can play with it. You can watch those movements when they are still there.

And you can play with, hmm, relinquishing that. They just fall away. It comes with the arising presence.

And of course, that's the arising of spaciousness. You did that and that, but you have to... Oh, maybe they're right, maybe they're wrong.

But there's space. I did. And then you look into it.

Did I do that? And you say, no, I don't think I did that. That's how you see it.

But it's a misinterpretation because that's what... Or you say, you're right. I did that.

And you're free. All reactions, all reactivity in yourself is egoic. And all reaction is always some opposition.

Then you go from reaction to response. You respond out of presence to the situation. Jesus used extreme examples to teach this, which is the state of non-reactivity.

And he used the extreme example in his parable of turning the other cheek. Somebody hits you on the cheek. Now, the normal reactive pattern is to immediately hit that person back.

That's normal. Of course, it's a parable. It's used as a metaphor.

And so he says, when somebody hits you on the cheek, you offer the other cheek. It's a very extreme example of non-defensiveness and non-reaction. Not necessarily to be taken literally, perhaps.

But it's a parable. Another beautiful parable, which I've told some of you know it, from Zen Buddhism. The Zen master, with a high reputation, who lived in a town in Japan, was accused by a 16-year-old girl who was pregnant of being the father.

So this girl was pregnant and told her parents that the Zen master whom she had visited some months ago was the father of her child. The child she was carrying. She told this to her parents.

The parents ran to the Zen master, accusing him of having seduced their daughter, of being a false teacher, of being a fraud. And he listened. He said, You fathered this child she just told us.

And he listened. And they kept talking. And all he would say was, Is that so?

Yes, you are the father of this child. Is that so? Yes.

And then the child was born. And the parents didn't want the child. So they brought the baby to the Zen master and said, Here's the baby.

You look after him. We don't want it. It's your child.

And the Zen master said, Is that so? And so the parents went back home. And the Zen master, nobody would come to see him anymore because he lost his reputation.

All he had to do is look after the baby. And he did that because it was there. And he welcomed the form that this moment took.

He didn't live through a mind-made self. So a lost reputation didn't become a mental story in his head that he derived his continued sense of identity from. The only fact was, Here's the baby.

Nobody's coming to see me anymore. There's nobody here. And that's fine.

Nobody is not a problem. Whatsoever. Just there's a baby and empty space.

It's beautiful. There's no mind-derived identity which says, All what I've built up, my reputation is gone. My life is in ruins.

What did they do to me? They did that to me. Nobody did anything.

He just non-reacted, welcomed this moment. A year later, the daughter became more mature and confessed to her parents that the Zen master was not the father but the boy next door. So the parents ran back to the Zen master and said, Can you please forgive us?

We just realized that you are not the father. And the Zen master said, Is that so? And then they said, Yes, and we'll have the baby back now, please.

And he said, Oh, is that so? All right, here's the baby. Nothing happened.

It's an extreme example of a life lived in the state of non-reactivity and the complete absence of drama, which is egoic, in such a life. The others may be playing their drama, but in the surrendered consciousness there is no drama. It cannot arise.

And this is the amazing thing. His life remained clear, simple, totally unproblematic because his sense of self was not derived from mind-created identifications and stories. His self, his sense of self was derived from presence, the presence of now, the spaciousness of now, the field of now, the unconditioned consciousness.

What problem could there be in that? So, through non-reactivity, one could say, to use a, an old expression, the buck stops here. Otherwise, and this is the end of karma, when there's non-reactivity, karma immediately evaporates.

It's only through reactivity, because karma is action, reaction, action, reaction. Through non-reactivity, karma, which is surrender, karma dissolves. It may come at you, human karma.

And this is the only way karma can dissolve. It doesn't dissolve through more and more time. It renews itself through time.

It's only through the timeless that it becomes dissolved. So that's the power of all the teachings show that Jesus, in Buddhism, the enormous power that comes with non-reactivity, which is surrender. The end of all drama in your life.

How could there be? All right, that's how it is. It's just this.

It remains clear, unencumbered by problems, the field of now. And it doesn't, don't let the little mind tell you that then you become a doormat. I will become a doormat.

I don't want to be a doormat. It's not that there is enormous strength and power in that non-reactive state. Totally non-defensive, but enormous strength and power go through you.

There's also a story about the Buddha traveling from town to town and village to village. And occasionally he encountered people who abused him because they had certain mental positions. And they would shout at him.

He would always, people would ask him, why doesn't this bother you that people are shouting at you and abusing you? And he said, there's nobody here to abuse. They think they're abusing somebody, but there's nobody here.

It's, I cannot, so it passed, it just passed through him. There was no mind-made entity that, where this abuse was received and held. It passed through.

In the absence of a mind-made sense of self, somebody shouting, you idiot, there's nobody there to hold on to that. And it passes through. Idiot?

Where? Who? So, nothing can prevail against the power of presence.

Yes, don't underestimate the momentum that is there in the collective human mind and its patterns. But it's nothing compared to the power of presence. Yes, don't underestimate the madness of the ego, but it is nothing compared to the power of presence.

The Course in Miracles says, do not, the ego is insane and do not underestimate the extent of its insanity. And this is very true. It is very insane.

Look at human history. Watch the news. Don't want to become more personal, but it's in everyone still, unless it's already dissolved.

But they are operating less in you now, the structures, those structures are becoming more, less solid, beginning to, as presence arises, they begin to fade. They still operate, but with less momentum. The same old patterns you will often observe have their momentum in your life.

But as the witness is there more and more, the witnessing presence, these patterns have less force to them. So gradually they fade, become transmuted. But just taste, all that is required is just get a taste of the unsurrender, of the surrendered state and see the beauty and power that lies in that.

So people ask sometimes, how do I get rid of thousands and thousands of years of conditioning, of all the accumulations, all the collective conditioning, that you carry inside. And it's all simple. Surrender.

And as this transformation happens in you, people around you, you will find, are being affected by that. And others will leave you. Who are not yet ready.

You're no longer interesting to them. You don't participate in the drama anymore. They can't use you anymore.

What's the point? They leave you. He's not playing anymore.

If you have a partner, then as the shift happens in you, the shift in consciousness, it will frustrate, if it's not yet happened in your partner, it will frustrate those patterns, the conditioned mind patterns, including the pain body in your partner, that need your cooperation to keep themselves going. The reactivity needs something to react against. The pain body needs another pain body to feed on.

It needs your reactions. So in the absence of that, there's frustration. And then there could be a shift in your partner.

It's happened. It's enough for one partner to enter the surrendered state. And then there's disorientation in the other partner for a while.

And then either the openness is there and the shift will happen or you will separate. But it will be loving. You would separate in love.

And it's sometimes the most unlikely people that are suddenly open. And all it requires is to come into your presence. You might say a word or two and their lives from then on, that's the trigger that awakens that which was already underneath all the mind structures.

As somebody wrote to me whom I met a long time ago at university, he said, I wish I had never met you. My life would be simple. I would be conventional and normal Of course, he doesn't know that it's not true.

He would be very unhappy like everybody else. One more thing about physical conditions because some of you, I'm told, are having certain physical limitations here. Limitations of the physical body.

For some people have been their only teacher. And some had needed no other teacher but some continuous pain or continuous disability in the body. And it drove them to the point of surrender.

The very same condition in other people drove them into more and more egoic contraction and misery and unhappiness. So you can see and I have, you can see one person in a wheelchair who is filled with anger, resentment and bitterness. And you can see another person in a wheelchair and I have met people and there's a light shining through their eyes and complete openness and no unhappiness and no misery.

Just and even occasionally you might encounter people in India where many people who in the West would be shut away they are actually visible in the street. So people who may have only one limb or lost several limbs and occasionally you find that complete this peace in them it happens and they smile at you so the physical limitation then drove them into the state of surrender. If you surrender otherwise it will drive you into more contraction.

I met my brother again after three years my half brother at Christmas and he is now only 32 or 33 years old and I had observed I would see him occasionally how his ego was growing and growing and becoming more and more rigid over the years during his 20s the roles complete identification with the roles he was playing with mental positions and rigidity setting in and well that's how the ego grows and then he encountered a serious illness in his late 20s and he had a very major operation and then as the result of that operation he would for even now almost every night he wakes up in acute pain abdominal pain and so his sleep is interrupted almost every night by acute pain for one, two, three hours and that is almost to some people that would be called unacceptable never getting enough sleep always this pain and then I met him after three years at Christmas and I could see his ego had diminished greatly and there was enormous sweetness openness softness gentleness coming through and then he only then he told me I said what I said wonderful I didn't say it I thought this is beautiful the rigidity is gone there is a light coming through him now which means the conditioned somehow has is no longer totally dominating him and the unconditioned is filtering now through the conditioned somehow it must have happened and then he told me that every night he wakes up in pain and then I realized that was his teacher and that still is his teacher it is that that drove him into surrender and the moment surrender happened all the conditioned structures begin to weaken now the beauty of this is you don't have to be pushed into surrender now by life it's the voluntary embracing of surrender that's the beauty of the spiritual teaching you can choose the yes voluntarily you choose the kingdom of heaven you don't have to be dragged into it kicking and screaming no, no I don't want this perhaps you were pushed up to this point through some suffering or some condition pushed you here and from now on it's a voluntary embracing of what is now that's all and that is an acceleration of the emergence of presence you don't need more suffering because this could be misunderstood because I've been talking about the beauty of suffering that it can become a teacher and push you into surrender suffering the very thing that's generated by non-surrender eventually brings about the transformation of consciousness you see how it's all connected even the suffering that is generated through ego it's very purpose is the transformation of consciousness it's even that is one with the liberation but I'm not saying that you need more suffering now you don't need anymore suffering now suffering has been your teacher until now or recently and now that doesn't need to be your teacher anymore your teacher is whatever form this moment takes and it's easy it's always easy this moment this moment is always easy when you bring the yes to it remember the Zen master whatever comes into now he goes oh so that's it oh alright that's it is that what you did ok oh oh and this is the goodness of now so deep that it has no opposite good and bad on the surface of things the future cannot hold a greater good than now and then you can renounce the future easily for practical matters it still works that's ok but you renounce it as a psychological need and that's a very easy renunciation when you realize the depth and goodness of now and so you renounce the future before the future is taken away from you that will happen anyway oh oh oh oh oh oh oh oh somebody just told me that some people bought a little photo of this form and if you did it needs to be used with great care and rightly oh oh oh oh Somebody just told me that some people bought a little photo of this form. And if you did, it needs to be used with great care and rightly.

It's not to be used as the photo of somebody. It only works if, when looking at it, you sense a deeper connectedness, presence with yourself. So you need to know that you are looking at yourself.

The light that shines through the form is yourself. The form is completely unimportant. And you recognize it when, as you contemplate the photo, peace arises within.

And then it's good to close your eyes or remove the photo, so you don't get attached to the form, because it's a reflection of yourself. And somehow that, when the unconditioned comes through a form, even on a photo, you can see it. It's still there for some reason.

It took me a while before I said yes to that, that people could have a photo, because it can so easily be misleading, can be misunderstood. So that is always the case with a teacher. You're drawn to a teacher and the power of the teaching, which is the emanation, which is more important than the words, and you recognize that.

That in you that recognizes it is the same as that which is recognized. Presence, whatever you want to call it. If it were not in you, you wouldn't recognize it.

So that there's no attachment to the form. The form serves its purpose when it takes you to the formless, because the formless shines through the form. And then the form has served its purpose.

And that's the case also with your body, the person. It doesn't necessarily mean that your life comes to an end as this form, when the formless shines through. But the fulfillment is already there.

Then the fulfillment that is already there can manifest further in this world of form. There are two or three questions here that ask, is that really all entering the now, and then nothing else happens after that? Is there no further advancement or progression?

Is there no further development? Is that the end of all spiritual practice? Is that the end of ever having a spiritual teacher?

Well, most likely, yes, it is the end of having a spiritual teacher, because you're connected with the one teacher. You are that self. But it doesn't mean on the level of form, the formless cannot express itself and even flow into the forms that then you create, or are being created through you.

And that evolves through time, because the world of form is connected with time. So it took years for this teaching to evolve out of the initial realization. Many years.

The initial realization and the state of peace, that's the same state 25 years ago already, it was there, the state of peace. But nothing had manifested, there was no teaching that hadn't manifested out of that. That took time.

And during those 25 years, there were periods of time when I also sat there and said, is that all that I'm meant to do in this world? There's deep peace, occasionally a person comes to see me, occasionally little groups, once a month, twice a month, and that was good. But is that all?

So for years I was sitting there in seclusion, relative isolation, which I had chosen to live in the country. And that would have been fine too. But the totality had other plans.

And one morning I woke up with a realization. And the realization was, I need to move to the west coast of North America. Didn't know why.

And so I moved. And then later, much later, I realized that I needed to be in that energy field for the book and the teaching to come out of me. And then it unfolded from there.

So it's not that everything stops on the phenomenal plane. One could say it all begins, your true life begins when the illusion of the self dissolves, the mind made little me self. Then the true life begins.

And then it unfolds from within. It's not so much me living my life, but life living me, through me, through this form. And the goal of spiritual practice is not the now, the now is the portal.

The goal of spiritual practice is the end of the false self, the fading away of the egoic structures. And that is the flowering. And then it flowers and flowers and flowers.

So the fading away of the false self, the dissolving of the false self, I talked about it this morning, just to encapsulate what I said this morning, could be encapsulated by saying that what you can practice as you go through life and even here, is not to resist the diminishment of your sense of self. In whatever form it comes, whether somebody insults you, or somebody disagrees with you and doubts that your position is the right one, whatever it may be, any time when your sense of self feels injured, and normally the automatic repair mechanism would come into operation, to be so aware that you simply step back and not resist it, that is contained in many teachings, the diminishment of self is not resisted, and then the need to be right is relinquished, for example, in an argument. You're quite happy not to be right.

And then immediately you can sense peace comes up, you haven't died, only the false has now given way, there's an opening and you can sense immediately an influx of peace. So it's the opposite of death, but I wouldn't tell that to a child, it is the destiny of humans to have to go through the growth of self, and then go beyond that. To go through, so a child needs to go through the stage, and it takes years, where the child says, begins by saying, my daddy has a bigger car than yours, and, or, this is mine, my toy is nicer than yours, look at me, I can do it, look me, look me.

So it would be futile to say to a child, don't say that, forget about me, you mustn't talk about yourself, it won't work. So that the child wants attention, that stage is there, and at other times doesn't want attention, but that's already, there's a self-image arising, self-consciousness, and gradually that mind-mate, meant companion, begins to walk next to him, you have the, the child begins to have a relationship with itself, he's maturing, she's maturing, becoming an adult. And then the suffering begins, because you're trapped now in that, your sense of self is trapped in that, and then through the suffering, you go beyond.

So it seems that humans so far, at least now, they need to go through that stage, the self-ego structures, and then the suffering. But perhaps now humans can go through this more quickly, so perhaps that the egoic structures can dissolve at a much earlier age. It sometimes happens that self-realization of the unconditioned emerges, there's another question concerning that here, I may come to it, or we talk about it anyway.

It can sometimes happen that the, the unconditioned emerges through a form that is not yet, where the structures of the self are not yet fully there, like a very young, a young person. And then sometimes that works also, there's no general rule which says you always need to go through this. In the case of Ramana Maharshi, he was extremely young, hardly developed a self, there was a self, and that died, but not a very strongly established one, and he was only 16 or whatever it was, 15 maybe.

But it can happen also that the unconditioned emerges and the form through which it emerges doesn't know what to do with it, and becomes totally dysfunctional, even to the point of appearing mad. And so there are people in India that have been called, when they wander around, I suppose naked or, and they look a bit mad, and sometimes they are called God-intoxicated. And it is possible that has emerged, but through a form that isn't ready for it, one could say.

In the West they would be in a mental home, and here they are God-intoxicated and they are free, which is preferable. Strange things are possible, it can also emerge before the egoic structures have dissolved. So they are, they just give way, but they are still there.

And then mistakes happen that you identify with the enormous power of presence and realization, and say that's me. The mind comes back in and claims some achievement, and this has happened even to teachers. And you can see it, they claim, I am He, the One, none other but me.

And the teacher then, and this is very strong pull to the ego in the follower, the claim of a teacher, that I am the avatar of all ages. That is an enormous, what is being pulled, the ego responds to that very strongly, because by being close to The, you grow in your sense of self also. So always references to specialness, to me as the One, and also be careful when a teacher makes you special.

And there's a question here about that, I seem to be answering the questions without looking at them. It says here, aren't you making people special by saying it's happening through you, this transformation of consciousness? Isn't the ego going to come back in and it could happen?

Yes, the ego can come back in and claim something. An improved image of yourself, one of those who have been chosen to be here, then that feels better than the previous image. It replaces a more defective self image.

Very subtle, it can come in, but I don't, it can, I don't see a lot of that happening here, I'm not looking into everybody's eyes, but really what happens as you sit here, I'm never telling you that you are special, and this form is certainly is not special. It's only because of that, that the teaching can happen. If this form thought of itself as special, there would be no true spiritual teaching.

So, you've been sitting here during these days, feeling less and less special. A diminished sense of self, mind made self, the possibility that in one or two of you, the ego comes back through the back door, of course that's possible, but it's likely that you will notice it after a while. A sense of knowing it all, of little superiority, of just ask me, and you can witness that if it happens.

Whenever you witness ego operating in yourself, that's great, you're witnessing it. And it operates in hundreds and hundreds of subtle ways, just simply each little one designed to add a little bit to your sense of identity. And it operates even in the tiniest things, like telling somebody what has happened, do you know what's happened, the latest news, do you know what he did, and the other person says for a moment, no.

And at that moment, you are superior, it's very subtle, you feel a little bit bigger than the other person, and that is the great thing about gossip, because the other person doesn't know yet, but you know, and you are telling. It's a very subtle movement, and when you can criticize somebody, again, a very subtle sense of, you are of course higher than the one who is being criticized, or made fun of, or gossiped about. Of course the implication is that you are, and that's all that underlies ego, even to the absurd things like silly jokes that say what is green and climbs up the wall, and then the person you are talking to says, I don't know, ah, now let me tell you.

I don't know, I can't tell you. So in hundreds of subtle ways, the ego tries to add something to itself. And when you are vigilant and present, you can watch that.

We all know things like name dropping and all, but this is just, one could have a list, maybe in the next book I'll make a list of ego strategies, minor and major. Even things like somebody has just died, in your vicinity, and you get the news, and you say, oh, that's dreadful. And if you look very deep inside, there's a little exhilaration, very subtle, which says, I'm still alive.

Not, I haven't died yet, I'm still alive. And you feel good for a moment because it wasn't you. It's very interesting to watch.

Any kind of complaint in your head or verbal, unless it's something you're telling a person something to change something, a person who can do something about a situation, you're saying, please don't put this there, put that there. You're not, that's not complaint, but complaint just for the sake of complaint, which is part of everybody's normal egoic mind functioning, which goes on in people's self-talk, and verbally in many people also, in addition to the self-talk in the head, complaining about whatever is going on now, a person, a place, a situation, a thing. Fault finding, looking for the one fault to complain about, and then focus on that, and then the ego gets strong in that.

There's a beautiful carpet, but you're looking for the tiniest stain there, and say, oh, look at that. I've told that before, I don't know if you've heard, the last year I talked to my publisher, and he said, he often gets letters of people writing in about how books that they've published have changed their lives, so he got one letter, and he read it, this book really changed my life, and it was great, and it went on and on, and on page two of the letter, it suddenly said, but then there was a serious spelling, this typo, spelling error, misprint on page so-and-so, and that spoiled the whole pleasure of reading my book, that book, and really, if you show so little respect for the books you published, you shouldn't be in the business of publishing books, and you can see how the ego, how good it felt to the ego, whatever is bad to you, feels good to the ego, how good it felt to the ego to be writing this, and how it got stronger and stronger, the self in criticizing that, now I know who I am, so subtle, and obvious at other times, so I've already answered a few questions, they just came in, and here's a big one, your words are like my own heart talking to itself, yes, there is this threat of eternity that is always present, this substratum of being out of which all states arise, waking, sleeping, and dreaming, in India this is called Turiya, Turiya, the fourth, in your experience, how and why does Turiya arise out of the absolute unmanifest? So that question refers to the arising of, because I use different signposts from those, although of course it's all the same, the arising of the state of presence out of the unmanifested, which is connected with the whole reason why we are here, and the universe is here, so this question is so big, what it's really asking, it's about the whole purpose of the universe, why and how.

Now language consists of five vowels, A, E, I, O, U, these are sounds, plus the other ones, what are they called, can't remember, consonants, and they are produced not through vocal chords, but through his air being under pressure and being let out of. Now a combination of these five sounds produced by vocal chords are A, I, E, O, U, plus a few hissing sounds, how could I explain through that the entire purpose of the universe? One could give little stories to a very distant approximations of it, or you could have a philosophical system and think now you know it, but it would only be a combination of those sounds, vowels and diphthongs, in a certain sequence, hoping to capture the vastness of that in those little sounds.

This is, you cannot understand through the mind the vastness of that, you can only be part of it as you are, knowing it directly, but not knowing it as a subject knows an object, it is impossible to know it through the mind in that way. How does it happen and why does it happen? What can give distant approximations the world of the unmanifested God-Spirit moving into matter, the whole universe becoming transformed into Spirit, perhaps that's a distant approximation, but that would reduce it to something, a fragment, that's not it either.

It's the illusion of knowledge that arises when the moment you speak and formulate words and concepts, and they're helpful as pointers, but so the vastness you cannot understand, you can't understand presence, I've said it before, don't try to understand, you can understand a little bit about it through the mind, through formulating concepts, and I'd never talk about presence for you to understand what presence is, but simply using words to point to the state of presence, and then as presence arises, you know what presence is, but can you talk about it? It's very difficult, and whatever you say about it is limited and reduced, so very wisely the Tao Te Ching says the Tao that can be named or spoken of is not the true Tao, and the rest is simply little pointers.

In that one statement he has said that nothing that I say is the truth in itself, it only points, so it cannot really be spoken of, but self-realization is not, that means, doesn't mean you know more about yourself, or know more about anything, it's being one with that, and understand it through being one with it, but then there may not be much that you can say about it, there is a knowing in that, but it goes beyond words, there is a deep knowing, but it is not, it cannot filter through the mind, it cannot, it's totally inadequate for that, so one could say you cannot know yourself at the deepest level, you can only be yourself. In being it, you know it, but not as a subject knows an object, and with that comes also there's a humility, and part of this is, you may remember, and it's vital, entering the state of not knowing. In which a deeper knowing resides, but it is the state of not knowing.

I'm always happy when people come to me and say, I don't know who I am anymore. Oh, that's great, because for a long time they thought they knew exactly who they were, they're not quite happy with it, but they knew who they were, and now they don't, and now the only step to take is to become comfortable with that, not knowing, and not feeling I should know, and of course with that comes a deep humility also, not I know, I don't know. When you say I don't know, you disappear, and the strange thing is that all these words come out of the not knowing state, and remember that is the state that you are in when you walk along here and watch sense perceptions, listen, see all the different sense perceptions, and you don't interpret, you relinquish interpretation, and yet you know what you're looking at, and yet you don't know what you're looking at. It is not, no labels arise anymore, or if they do, they are recognized as mere labels, and then they subside, and there's again a space of not knowing. All the label is, is the illusion of knowing.

Please.

[Speaker 4] (3:51:55 - 3:53:23)

It's very nice to see you. I heard about you many years ago, about six years ago, and it's very nice to be in your presence, and you are this. A number of years ago in Bihar there was a prince, two thousand five hundred and forty six years ago, and in his awakening he knew how the whole of manifestation arose, and he said, Mara, I have seen how you build this house of samsara.

I have broken your rich pole, never will you build this house again. In the words of the great sage Ramana Maharishi, he said there is a final truth, nothing has ever existed, nothing does exist, nothing will ever exist. This is the ultimate finality.

In awakening there is an inherent wisdom that is beyond mind, as you say. There is a knowingness that is beingness, that is beyond doubt, beyond any deceit. All these great masters say the same thing.

This is all illusion. It does not exist now, and it never did exist, and it will never exist. Is this your experience?

[Speaker 1] (3:53:23 - 4:14:56)

Yes. I'm not telling you that in those words, because they only become true for you as you realize that for yourself. If I told you that, half of you would go home.

This is, is it, I only tell you what works as a pointer into that state. Certain realizations come out of that state by themselves that are deeply true, but do not work as pointers into that state so well. So there are some sages have uttered those words, and for a few isolated individuals they may work as pointers, and perhaps they were talking to certain people who they realized could see the truth of those words, so they worked as pointers.

But for most in the teaching that comes through this form, certain pointers are used and others are not used. There may be very deep truths that you will realize only through that inner knowing, and then it becomes true for you. So, yes, this is the truth, but I've never said it like that, and I may not say it again unless you ask me directly, in which case I would say yes.

Yes, that's right. Now, it may well be that I'm, one day I may find myself with one person, and those words will come out of my mouth, because there's never any prior intention before a word comes out of my mouth, and then that will work as perhaps the final pointer for that being, and those words suddenly will be true. Otherwise, if I said it, those words could easily be used by the mind and become a concept, and so this is why the Buddha also said certain things and refrained from saying other things, because he realized how easily words are grasped by the mind and made into conceptual knowledge.

So, that is the beauty of teachings. They come in slightly different forms, and some statements you may find in some teachings and not in others. Buddha, as we all know, didn't speak of God wisely, because that is the greatest concept that the mind can grasp at and add to itself, and create images out of, and identify with, and of course it's been misunderstood, because Western intellectuals started studying Buddhism, professors at universities, and immediately, because they only saw those pointers, and they completely misunderstood and said, this is an atheistic religion and it is totally nihilistic, it is life-denying, they said. So they wrote PhDs about Buddhism. You could become a professor on Buddhism without knowing anything really about Buddhism.

That's how easily the mind can misinterpret. So, this is the truth. Whether in this form it will come out of my mouth again, I don't know.

How to deal with the unconscious of your own people, especially your own children? That is hard for many people to accept, that your children need to make mistakes, do what they do, create suffering for themselves, and you can watch it, how they're doing it. In front of your eyes, they're going, they're creating suffering for themselves, making mistakes, as you call it.

And then you want to save them from the suffering. You want to save them from making mistakes. In other words, you want to stop them from evolving and learning.

You want to stop them from suffering. And no human being can go through this life without, it's an essential part of being human, and then going beyond. So, to realize if you had your way, you would create, if you were omnipotent, of course, you would create an ideal situation for your children, an ideal environment, everything right.

They're good at school, they do well there, isn't that great? And they go on to university, and they're brilliant minds, and then they meet this beautiful partner, and they have beautiful children, and a nice house, and everything is working so well, beautiful, they're making no mistakes, they're not suffering. What would the end result be?

It would be a very superficial family, to say the least, that arises. They would be happy doing their shopping. No suffering has ever crossed their path.

They haven't made any mistakes. And yet, it's all every human being's destiny to make mistakes, and there are no mistakes, only from a living perspective there are mistakes. You never made a mistake in your life, you're here.

Whatever you ever did, what do you hear? Well, you hear the message of liberation. So there are no mistakes, only if you adopt a particular perspective, then it's called a mistake.

It's limited, it's a fragment of the truth, it's a thought. So of course you would want to spare them their suffering, their self-inflicted suffering, and some suffer more deeply than others. I've had parents come to me with extremely tragic stories of what their children did to themselves or others.

Dreadful. To the point of saying no human being, no parent could live with that. And yet, they do.

And there's the learning. And if your child creates suffering for others and ends up in prison, there's the learning. So it's the acceptance of that allow them to make mistakes, allow them to be unconscious, allow them to create their own suffering.

But you can be there not being drawn into it, making it, giving more fuel to that. Allow it. Some children are addicted to drugs, can be very hard for a parent to have a child, and great suffering can be there until finally, and you've tried it all, you've tried everything many times, and it happened again and again.

And finally, you surrender. And then great love is there, but you allow that movement of unconscious. You've done everything on the external level, and then finally, you surrender and you allow them to be unconscious.

You still help, but there's an inner allowing. So if people close to you are creating great suffering for themselves, are in states of great resistance, inner resistance, it may be that they cannot surrender. Even the word surrender or acceptance, when you say that, you say, what?

Are you mad? You're insane, acceptance, they don't hear, it doesn't go in. And so, in those cases, you surrender for them, so to speak.

It could also be to do with a parent, it's not always children. Often it's the parents who are in great suffering. And so, what do you do?

Your mother, your father, you surrender for them. You don't demand anymore that they should be more conscious. You don't demand anymore that they shouldn't be doing what they're doing.

You don't demand anymore that they should understand you. You surrender, and then you visit them for Christmas or Thanksgiving, and for the first time, it's not a source of great conflict having to be there for a whole day or two or three days. Oh my God, not another Christmas with the family.

In the surrendered state, no demands are made. Your father, your mother, they display whatever behavior they display and have been displaying for 50, 60, 70 years. Maybe they have the same conversations they had 50 years ago, 20 years ago.

It's fine, it's the human mind, nothing personal. And you are simply there as a surrendered entity. So the, this is already the beginning of, to come back to the your question, which I don't talk about usually, this is already the beginning of the end of the world.

Because when you identify with form, all the forms are extremely heavy. There's the heaviness, solidity of the world of form. And as you surrender, the world of form loses its seeming solidity.

It's not solid at all, but it feels and looks very solid. And it loses, and that, I'm telling you that because that is already something that you can know for yourself, how all the structures lose their heaviness, including the human beings. So there is a, the forms become less substantial.

And that includes the form of my father, my mother, my child, which before was heavy in its egoic density. Very much there. And then in surrender, something happens.

It's not, it's a lighter. And that's the beginning of the end of illusion. That's as far as I'll go.

So it's allowing, even people close to you, allow them to be who they are in their present. It's not who they are, but to manifest whatever they manifest. And often the change will happen then.

Suddenly. How did that happen? I didn't demand anymore that he or she should understand me, and suddenly at Christmas dinner he asked me, so tell me a little bit about these strange retreats that you go to.

And he always said before that, why are you involved in these weird cults, you should go into business for yourself, do something real, do something with your life. He's been repeating that for 20 years. And you felt angry about that.

Why doesn't he or she, he understands nothing about me. And then surrender happened. And suddenly, oh, or not.

Doesn't matter. I have given up many addictions in my life and the last addiction, it seems, is the addiction to food. Last night I sat with the craving I felt, the energy in my body, without attaching a story to it.

What happened was I experienced an incredible amount of fear as I glimpsed the power of being free. Please talk more about this. Yes, fear can arise, and that is the egoic fear.

It fears its own death. And it's not real. And what do you do with fear?

As you enter the surrendered state, you may encounter the region of fear, because the ego fears surrender, because it knows it to be its own end. So as you surrender to a certain condition, inner or outer, and then suddenly there's a pulling back. Don't go there, don't go there.

And then you do surrender again, and huh, oh, and then you don't allow the fear to push you out, but you can then allow the fear also to be, and it won't kill you. And so that also, so then you've dropped into that, and when you accept it completely, the very fear turns into aliveness, and you drop down. So whatever arises, there's that.

There are many addictions, yes. It's an external manifestation of the mind needing to add something to me. Now it does that on a psychological level a lot, but that's not enough for the mind.

It will use the body to add to the incomplete sense of self. That's the unconscious impulse behind addiction, and you can see addiction operates in the tiniest things that are not recognized as addiction, yet you can't stop eating the potato chips. And if you watch the movement, they don't do much, and it goes, it's an adding, you're not not a lot of nutritional value, or it could be other kinds of junk food, you see.

Smoking. So food is a big one for many people. It's the, you don't only reincarnate into thought streams, you can reincarnate into food.

And for a moment it seems to work. You feel a little bit more complete after eating a box of chocolates. I spoke to one person who has a big problem with weight, and he said the mind, he began to observe his own mind, and it always, he came up with one thought that always, the main thought that would justify his going to the fridge and eating was, you've had a rough time, you deserve a break.

And of course every day he was having a rough time, and then he observed that mind movement, oh, and next time it came, he allowed that mind movement to be there, and he just sat there with it, without moving to the fridge, because he recognized that. Kindly throw light on the following two points. One, why one form loves the other form even when the other form does not love the first form.

I know what you mean. We know what you mean. Why is love not reciprocated?

Why does one way love traffic situation arise? I'm placing my aching heart before you. Please operate.

[Speaker 4] (4:15:07 - 4:15:08)

Thank you, thank you.

[Speaker 1] (4:15:11 - 4:39:11)

All right, I will begin the operation. Now, one form loves and the other form doesn't reciprocate. Why is that?

And the pain that comes with that, great pain for many people, this enormous pain. Now, you know that the basic condition of the self, of the egoic self, is one of a very deep-seated sense of lack, of not enough, of not complete, and then it tries to fill through strategies. The mind-made self tries to fill that lack that it knows and feels almost continuously except for brief moments when something has been put in there and then for a moment the lack is not felt, never lasts long.

So it looks for the next thing and it looks to the future, it looks to add to me, to fill that hole that is always there, where I'm not myself, I'm not complete, I haven't, I'm not home, I haven't arrived. And so all kinds of strategies are there, but in one of the main areas where it looks to fulfill that lack is in the area of relationship, the other person, he or she, and then when that happens the entire focus of the self becomes focused on one other person who is perceived unconsciously as the one who is going to complete me, make me whole, he or she is the one. And so almost an obsessive attachment forms to that image, that form of that person, and that is called falling in love.

And sometimes if you're lucky the other person feels the same about you, that you are going to complete him or her also. And of course that is great, you both feel that you are going to complete each other, and then probably you will want to get married, sign a contract just to make sure that for the rest of your life you're going to complete me, and you're not going to leave me, because that would have dire consequences if you broke that contract and left me. Don't you even think about that.

And then you marry, this is where the films end, the director says cut here, but life goes on, and you marry, and after perhaps even during the honeymoon the first doubt comes into your mind whether this actually works, whether the other is going to live up to that enormous task of fulfilling and completing you, and then you start an ordinary existence, jobs, family, and gradually it doesn't seem to be working anymore, the completion, the sense of lack comes back, he or she isn't behaving in the way that he or she should to make me feel complete, make me happy. You read it in ads, I don't know if you read it in India, looking for man or woman to make me happy. Oh, wow, who could live up to that, and nobody can, and then the lack that was covered up by the temporary delusion that this person was fulfilling you, this person who has a pain body, but you didn't know that, the temporary delusion that this person should be fulfilling you, that suddenly the sense of incompleteness, aloneness, fear, not being as re-emerges, but now through your mind you attach that to the other person and say he or she is the cause for what I feel. You're feeling again the basic egoic condition, you're feeling it more strongly now because for a little while it was covered up by the love relationship, and so gradually the love then periodically turns into hate, and every time the person is not fulfilling his obligations or her, the love turns into aggression, hostility, withdrawal, complete withdrawal, what's wrong with you, nothing is wrong, just don't want to talk, whatever, or throwing something, whatever they do, and then the relationship fluctuates, for a while it works again, and then it doesn't work, it works again, it doesn't work, and then it becomes, the periods when it doesn't work become longer, and you feel, it feels bad, the happiness of marriage turns into the unhappiness of just co-existence, the happiness of the honeymoon becomes the divorce, and they're all one really, so it was an attempt to fulfill you through some form, some outer form, and then all that happens in the end, you sense the unfulfillment more strongly, and then you blame that form for causing you that pain, it's egoic pain, this is the pain that arises out of love-hate relationships. Now, the questioner, of course, is not at that stage, because it is one-way traffic, as he puts it, that great love is felt for this form, but it's not reciprocated.

What do you do then? Then you feel that lack even more strongly, and it's painful, and there's a tendency for the mind to weave all kinds of fantasies around it, all kinds of stories, and the self gets in there and becomes a very painful self-image of me. And it can then, if it goes on, it can happen that that attraction turns into hate, can happen, I'm not saying it will happen in your case, and then you see it never was love in the first place.

So what is called love is that deep-seated need of the ego. It focuses on one form. So your opportunity now is to feel what you feel as much as possible.

Get out of the mind weaving stories about it, fantasies, images. Be more interested in that unpleasant, painful feeling. And here is where you surrender.

What you're really feeling is the egoic state, the egoic condition. And then the image will come up occasionally of that person, and focus on the feeling. Surrender into that.

Accept that suffering. And any suffering that you accept in that way will work for you. It transmutes ego.

Any suffering that is accepted completely transmutes ego, resolves ego, and also transmutes the suffering itself. So it's an opportunity. If not now, you would have to practice it.

If your love were reciprocated, you would have to practice in a couple of years. You would have a year or two of illusion. That's nice.

Second question. This form realizes that some actions are wrong. Still, the form does these actions knowing that they are not right.

Why? That's the movement of human unconsciousness. Conditioned, egoic mind structures operate, and they have such momentum that they still operate The question is, is there a witnessing presence as they operate and those actions are being performed?

Or does the witnessing presence come in after the action has been performed? And initially, as presence arises, it will come in after it's happened. You've gone through an unconscious movement.

You've said something to someone. You have done something, and it was totally egoic, totally conditioned, perhaps done it many times before. And millions of other human beings are doing or saying the same thing that you are at this very moment on the planet, performing the same action that you are performing because it's basically the same human conditioning.

In other words, there's nothing personal in it whatsoever. There's no you who did something bad. You is the arising presence, and you watch the movement of unconsciousness, the conditioned.

If you watch at first, you can only watch it after it's happened, and then you can fall into the trap of feeling guilty about it and calling yourself bad. The ego loves that. If you can't call yourself good, we said it before, it'll be very happy calling yourself bad because at least you know who you are.

I'm no good. Oh, okay, now I know who I am. Better than not knowing anything, says the ego.

So you can watch that and know it is human unconsciousness, and then as presence arises, you will wake up in the middle of it, and that may happen next time, the same action, the same speech coming out of your mouth, and in the middle of it coming out of your mouth, there is a witnessing presence. And you can see it's like a script, an actor who has been conditioned to perform, to act out that script. And you've seen that many times before, the same strategy, and now there's a witnessing presence there.

And that is the beginning, this is now when those structures weaken, become less heavy. The moment the witness arises, those otherwise very heavy structures that you could never hope to get rid of, unless you enter a different consciousness, a deeper, non-conditioned, suddenly they could weaken, and then it happens again, it may not be the last time, because there's a momentum to that. And all those other things that you know are there to enhance your sense of self and diminish somebody else's sense of self, very favorable, one of the favorite ego strategies, delusions, through diminishing somebody else's sense of self by criticizing, accusing, saying something to hurt.

You know it's wrong, it happens, and then in that moment the self feels bigger because it has diminished somebody else's self. A lot of suffering in human interactions is caused by that, and it's a form of delusion, of course, because you've only strengthened the delusion in yourself through that. And then suddenly, at first you see it after the event, and then you see it as it happens.

And you look through it, you see the madness of it, that you have only strengthened an illusion. And all those things that are connected with ego structures, envy. Envy means you feel diminished in that illusory self because somebody else has, or is able to do, more than you.

Has more of this, is better at that, has a nicer looking that, more knowledge, better appearance, you compare, and then you feel diminished, and then you feel hostility towards that entity that seemed to diminish you. It's all total madness, total illusion, but it operates as motivating factors in people's lives. And then you try to add something to you to make somebody else feel envious, and then feel the self has grown.

Are they looking at me? Is she seeing it? Is he seeing it?

Or more subtle, as in knowledge, spiritual knowledge, even that can be used. Quoting scriptures, you little one, you know nothing, let me tell you. So all this, always the attempts through mad strategies to enhance one's sense of self.

And all those things, I assume you're referring among those, so you hurt other people without knowing it. Create suffering for others in the service of self. And it always seems to work for a little while, and then you feel even worse, and you have to do it again.

So the only way to get out of that, and I believe that's the question, so I've just explained why you do these things, that was the question, and that's really all you need to know, and just be there when it happens. You can't be there when it happens, be there just after it happened, and don't create an additional identity out of that, and just watch. You're not, it has nothing to do with who you are, you're watching unconsciousness in motion, the human condition.

And so more presence arises, even in the midst of it you'll be present, and that is the fading out of all those movements and structures. That's the beauty of it. One more question.

The Enneagram, Enneagram, is an old Sufi model of the different aspects, qualities of soul, spirit, being, and their relation to different personality types. Have you studied it? I haven't studied it, but I've looked at it.

Somebody gave me a book about it. And there are certain models, certain frameworks, there's another word, it's not coming to me, grids through which you look. Astrology is another one, and there are others, many others.

And you can look, and if they work, and some of them are quite helpful, they highlight those areas in which this particular form is particularly, where the concentrations of unconsciousness are greatest. And although I only looked briefly, I spent maybe an hour with that book, and I found it very interesting. So it can be helpful, because it highlights areas where unconsciousness is particularly, this is the impression I got without really having studied it, the areas where there's particularly strong blockages, unconsciousness, particularly concentrated here, there, there, in those areas.

So by applying that, it can be helpful, you can perhaps see in yourself where you need to look most. So there's not one of these that you cannot do without. As presence arises, you will see those things anyway, but it can be a helpful additional tool.

And eventually, you have to let go of that. There's always the danger with any tool that people use that they become attached to the tool and believe a way of looking to be some kind of ultimate truth. To mistake a particular, perhaps a temporarily helpful perspective for the truth, particularly if it seems to work for you, then you get very much attached to it.

But any system through which you interpret reality could be temporarily helpful, and then let go. This evening, we are receiving a visit from Shanti Mai, who has an ashram. She's an American-born spiritual teacher and lives here now, has an ashram nearby, and she's coming with some of her people to perform songs for us, devotional songs, that may be quite beautiful.

That reminds me, there were some questions about devotion, but we may come to them tomorrow. Devotion. What's true devotion?

All these words, but they really, they're all aspects of one state. I have a strong feeling of devotion continuously, there's devotion, not to any one particular thing or form, but when you know your own nothingness, you're in a state of devotion. It's hard to explain.

[Speaker 2] (4:42:53 - 4:46:30)

Satsang with Mooji London, UK Satsang with Mooji London, UK Dimensions here.

[Speaker 1] (4:46:33 - 5:07:51)

You're listening to the sounds. And one could say the sounds, they're dancing on the surface of the silence, the stillness. And simultaneously, be aware of both dimensions.

Manifested, unmanifested. And that stillness, that is the unmanifested, is presence, divine presence. Sometimes the stillness, as it is now, is there also externally as silence.

But if there were no silence externally in this world, often you may not find that externally. There's the stillness within, the aware presence, and whatever phenomena happen to be happening. So the awareness of the stillness that underlies all sense perception and all thought is freedom from thought, consciousness without thought.

It's the essence of who you are. The awareness of stillness is not two, it's one. It is self-aware awareness.

Only through language does it appear to be two. Stay alert. You immediately, whatever arises, you allow the condition to be.

Now there's the sound. Some of the external stillness is lost, it seems, and yet there's the stillness through which you listen to the sound. So the stillness cannot really ever be lost.

Silence can become obscured. Stillness can also become obscured within, never lost. In the busiest and most insane mind, underneath all that noise and turbulence, the realm of stillness is there.

Unconditioned. And there's a relaxed alertness in this state of awareness. That's the essence of our retreat here, the only teaching.

All the words really pointed to that state. And that's the one thing that doesn't come to an end when you leave here. The experience as the external form of all this comes to an end as all experiences do.

Sooner or later, mostly sooner. Fleeting. It evaporates as an experience, the form of it.

And when you wake up the first morning when you're back home, and then you wake up in your own bed again, and you open your eyes, and maybe for a moment you don't know whether this India retreat was a dream, or did it happen? What a strange dream that was. I was on this bus.

Facing death every moment. And many other strange things. Monkeys were climbing up buildings.

Chanting going on at all hours. It must have been a dream. So there isn't very much difference between a passing experience and a dream.

In that sense, this as an experience evaporates as all experiences do. And on level of form, all you have then to prove to you that it actually happened, is maybe some photos or videos. And then the form of that was captured there.

And you see, oh, there it is. That's where I was. And in 150 years, one of your descendants will be looking at this and can't make out anymore what these figures are on the photo.

It's all fading. It must have been one of my ancestors, perhaps. But I can't recognize the face anymore.

It's quickly fading. And then that's gone too. The only thing that doesn't leave you is the essence of this gathering.

It's now. It's the now. As yourself.

A walking now. And you won't need to hang on to the form of this. Feel nostalgic.

Or if I may predict, at first you might feel a relief that you're back in your comfortable place. And a little bit later, you feel nostalgic about being here. That's the human mind.

And all these are states of mind that may come, and that's fine. And they happen within the spaciousness, which doesn't change. So you are simply a field of aware presence.

Not a person. Although you still pretend to be a person. The world wants you to be a person.

You don't have a new concept in your head that says, I am now a field of aware presence. That means you're a person again, with a new concept about who you are. The field of aware presence has no concepts about who you are, or who anybody is, or who anything is.

And there's no need to announce to your friends and relatives that now that you've been on a retreat, you're a field of aware presence. There's no need to announce through emails that I am now liberated. It could be misunderstood.

And resented. And what's that need to say it? Where does that come from?

What did you learn on the retreat? Maybe they'll ask you when you come home. And you say, nothing.

Maybe you could say, I got rid of some accumulated ignorance. But I didn't learn anything. Anything that there's self-identification with is ultimately ignorance.

It might look very clever from a human viewpoint. Because the deepest meaning of ignorance, the true meaning of ignorance, is not uneducated. It has nothing to do with that.

There are many highly educated people who are ignorant. And this is not a judgment. It's simply seeing that this is not the essential nature of being ignorant.

They are trapped in the delusion and they don't know who they are. Not knowing who you are beyond form is ignorance. The one basic ignorance.

Ignorance means not knowing who you are, the one essential thing. But then to seek it as an object of knowledge is further ignorance. To seek for your true self as if it could ever become an object of knowledge takes you into more ignorance.

So any identification is ignorance. Oh, they'll give you a microphone.

[Speaker 2] (5:07:58 - 5:08:25)

I know I am beyond this form. I can feel it. But as this form right now, I am a mother.

And I do identify to that. But I know that if I do identify to that, there will be some suffering. I am willing to accept that suffering.

Is that ignorance? Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (5:08:36 - 5:37:47)

The form as which you are here is also honored. It's not rejected. The form is honored.

And even the limitations, we saw that, the limitations that you encounter, because you are a form, being a mother, also imposes limitations on you. That's all connected with assuming this temporary role. And it is honored, allowed to be.

You can't get rid of form as long as you move here. All that's needed is the spaciousness around the form. Then the form moves within the spaciousness and does what it has to do as that form.

You are better than any form could do that is self-identified with a form and there is complete lack of spaciousness. And you are totally and only the mother. Then there comes in delusion.

The form will act. All those essential things that people want and are looking for can only come in if there is not complete identification with form, but you surrender to the form and there's a spaciousness. And then truly love flows in.

Love does not come through identification with the form. It comes through the realization of yourself as the space around the form. You know that.

And then love can flow into the form. Otherwise you get the typical love of the mother or the typical love of the lover that we talked about yesterday. And the typical love of the mother is very clinging because it's only form clinging to another form.

It looks like great love and what happens to many mothers and then they can't let go. The form grows bigger. 18 years, 20, 25, 30 and they can't, there's the clinging because you only know yourself as form.

You only know your child as form and there's the clinging. The mother still loves and doesn't realize that she's now stifling through her love because and that's again ignorance. So all the functions that pertain to this temporary form whatever its temporary role in this world may be the way in which they are being performed when you totally identify with form there will be dysfunction flowing because the basic ignorance will be flowing into your actions whether you are a mother or a lover or whatever form it is the basic ignorance of not knowing who you are beyond that will flow into it and that accounts for the dysfunctional way in which people behave and interact largely. So there's already an awareness that this is a role.

This is a function, a form and you honor that but there's not total self-identification with that. You already know that this is a function. So there is the spaciousness around it and then you perform your duties whatever duties in a wider sense that's not maybe a nice word whatever you have to do as this temporary form you will do more beautifully with those essential ineffable qualities flowing into whatever you're doing that don't come from you as the person or the form love, compassion, gentleness, joy many mothers think they're wonderful mothers and they're totally neurotic about and that's just one example of many other forms so the forms are honored the limitations that come with form are accepted and we saw, we've been talking about how the limitations of form actually become a doorway, an opening not attempting to find some situation that is free of limitation of course you can exchange one situation for a nicer one but that won't be free of limitation either it may be a nicer house a nicer this, that's fine and then you will encounter different kinds of limitations there and they will one way or another you will find them and so you don't run away from them but accept, surrender to what is so continuously that which is beyond the form is there as an underlying knowing an underlying awareness, presence spaciousness, whatever pointer works not denying the form at all it's honoring, honoring it and so there was a question we may look at some more questions I have a backlog of questions some questions, I've read some questions this morning, one questioner asked why do we blame form? no, we are not blaming form at all we are thankful to form because the form and that which is beyond form are ultimately one it will take you there and that implies for example if your mother the mother that is totally identified with form can't even truly listen to a child that mother will tell the child what the child needs to do and worry but even if you can sit with a child and listen to a child the stillness is there the awareness, the aware presence is there and there the child is talking and there is a spaciousness and then from there you can allow we talked about it yesterday allow the child also to manifest the unconsciousness that is part of the human condition the suffering that comes with that inevitably and you help as much as you can and then you allow the child to learn whatever he or she has to learn through that another example of a form, a function, a role you may have a job that is not interesting that you dislike try to get away from of course you can look for another job but maybe you have been stuck in it maybe you have looked maybe you are a waitress in reality you are an actress but since there are not enough jobs you have to work in a restaurant for a while and then there could be resentment you don't feel you feel bad about having to fulfill this function, this role and here is an opportunity to simply not to surrender to saying ok I might as well accept that now I am a waitress you are adding concepts to your mind you are not a waitress I might as well accept that I am poor nothing to do with surrender you are adding more concepts to the mind I might as well accept that I am a failure more concepts to the mind nothing to do with surrender acceptance is only of now now I am carrying a plate from the kitchen to the table that is the function I perform at this moment and that is that I give my attention to surrender to just this movement and then I talk to the customer and I give attention to this person is there anything else you would like? and there is a true question not a formal do you want anything else?

there is a true interaction because when the moment is honoured whatever form this moment takes is honoured and the form that this moment takes right now is the customer in the restaurant and he or she is honoured and will sense something even only very deep down and you ask is there anything else? I can bring you there is a true interaction because the moment is honoured the now the form that it takes you don't carry a self-concept in your head that you dislike and you fight a battle inside yourself me against my self-concept and it gets more and more complicated nobody could even work it out you need years of psychoanalysis to get through that there is a part of me that resents the image I have of myself and then there is another part that has enormous complexity and then you carry that and the whole emanation is of you don't want to be where you are and you don't like the form that this moment takes and you don't like this customer even if you are smiling and the customer can sense that and then you shift from complaining about some conceptual identity as me as a waitress and being unhappy about some illusory because conceptual identity you simply honour the form of this moment and there you are and you say is there anything else I can give you and each time the customer comes there is that openness and the flow and who knows it's there that transformation happens in one way or another when the openness is there to the suchness of the moment suddenly the doors are open and where the change will come from we don't know you don't demand change anymore for your happiness and then one day you ask maybe just one example can I bring you anything else and he says no what's your name here is my card and you say oh Steven Spielberg and he says there is something about you I don't know what it is and then three years later you are the world famous actress no longer working in the restaurant and you realise that you cannot step out of your house without creating a riot wherever you go they want something from you and they all come running and it's mad you now encounter the limitations of that situation can't go anywhere anymore without bodyguards can't go out anymore for a walk each situation has its new limitations everybody wants something wants to enhance their ego through being in contact with you where is true human interaction new limitations and it doesn't mean that now you run away from that you recognise that each situation brings its new limitations and you surrender to that otherwise you will be unhappy as the actress and if despite your unhappiness you become famous you will be unhappy there too complaining trying to get away this isn't it it's never it if you resist the form of now so with that the beauty is your inner state of being is independent of external conditions the actress the waitress and the famous actress basically one could say two different incarnations of the same person deep down they feel the same the famous actress still feel the same that I was because I was surrendered then and I'm surrendered now the inner state is independent of fluctuating forms conditions that means you're free of the world needing it for something to give to you and the main thing that people want looking to the world for is a sense of self you're free of that and of course many other things are possible the waitress who knows what happens to any human being who is in the surrendered state and suddenly something totally different may appear and she's not an actor or actress at all that might have been an egoic delusion doesn't matter so not carrying the weight of conceptual identity in your head always back to this conceptual identity needs past and future it's heavy suffering comes and then you go just this honor this surrender to this always simple always normal always fine even in the midst of death it's fine I don't know if Bhakti spoke to you about meeting each person face to face did you talk about that? Kim did?

so you talked about that and that's the I love hugging but hugging is only the external form of that encounter the essence of that encounter is always beyond that and so as I'd like to meet each one and simply look and that's a strange thing if you're not comfortable with it it's fine too there's a great beauty in looking into the eyes of another person in the state that is free of thought that is without sounding too esoteric there is always there is a transmission of presence in that look that is free of thought the unconditioned consciousness it is not one way whatever you look upon through stillness especially looking at another human being through stillness that is a transmission of the state that we call presence and it awakens in your case it doesn't need awakening because presence is already awakened in you but it calls forth also from underneath your mind even if your mind is active at that moment while the other person looking through stillness it calls forth the unconditioned within you and then strengthens that it's a two way process but that is not the only way presence is transmitted in many ways simply through the field of stillness itself in this room presence is even transmitted through words through sounds if the sounds arise out of that some of that fragrance or energy field of presence is still in the words we talked about that so the words become have transformational power not because of what they signify but because of the space out of which they arise presence can be transmitted even through a work of art, great art arises out of the state of presence the artist becomes still and it happens the greatest works of art were not created by persons human beings they always have something sublime there in form, yes, the form is limited, every work of art is limited and impermanent but something within that form still has an energy of that which is beyond form and that's what makes it into a great work of art and in some strange way people can recognize it and they sense something but don't know what it is presence could be transmitted through touch, through anything can flow into that simple sitting here also a song a sound then those become carriers or simple stillness and this is now your function more and more in this world your function is to be there as the field of presence one could say you redeem the world not through thinking I'm doing it through being the field of presence that does something to whatever and whoever you come into contact with it lessens the illusion of materiality of form there's the form and there's the formless and the more noisy it gets out in the world and some lives are very noisy in many different ways the more you can sense the stillness if there were only stillness there would be no knowing it so perhaps and I don't take this to be the truth it's only sounds coming out of my mouth so one could say God perhaps seeks to know him, her, itself and so enters the world of form identifies with form disguises itself as form plays the dream of form and then wakes up out of the dream of form and in that waking up there's a self knowing before you forget about it now this is just a little approximation it's not the explanation there is no explanation and in your life the two are beautiful the form which is noise in one way or another and stillness the manifested the unmanifested ultimately they are one I'd like you to yes please another question

[Speaker 4] (5:37:57 - 5:38:38)

part of my question you have answered in your previous sentence still that is bothering me for the last three days the question is are the presence and the form related if yes why blame the form if no how can the form exist without the presence can you just I didn't understand the first are the presence and the form related if yes why blame the form if no how can the form exist without the presence

[Speaker 1] (5:38:38 - 5:41:16)

all right thank you they are one I'm going to talk about myself what happened when I was in deep suffering for many years I only knew myself as the suffering entity consciousness was totally identified with the forms but it was consciousness consciousness was appearing in the disguise of forms thought forms, material forms a mental form of me consciousness appeared in that disguise and only knew itself as that form and then something happened and consciousness knew itself suddenly as both within the form and totally beyond the form consciousness suddenly knew itself as consciousness the forms were still there none other than the appearance, the essence that was in every appearance so in both all that, the difference between what presence means in the way in which we use this term here and in this teaching because there's no universal meaning what presence means in this teaching is self-aware awareness awareness that knows itself whereas consciousness embraces the totality when the totality when that becomes self-aware then consciousness becomes presence but it's all consciousness so this is the limit to which we can go through words further questions may arise if you start thinking about it but they won't get you any closer to freedom alright, the microphone is traveling there yeah

[Speaker 6] (5:41:31 - 5:42:20)

now it's here I've been to other retreats one in New York and one of the challenges I have when I go home is the desire to sustain the presence that I feel when I'm here because I notice people I'm around a shift in them when I have that higher presence and then it seems to and I feel bad about that what can I do ok

[Speaker 1] (5:42:25 - 5:48:28)

one could say that when you notice that there's loss of presence there's actually presence again it's there it's only when you no longer know that there's loss of presence then you're lost as long as the knowing is there there's presence it can be very subtle in the background there's a knowing that you're not present but in that moment of knowing that you're not present you're present unless it's just a thought I'm not present I'm never present why can't I ever be present what's wrong but there is there can be a knowing there's no presence oh, there's presence the knowing arises out of presence so as long as you know you're not present, you're fine now another level of answer another answer on another level use whatever means you have as helpful pointers to presence and well, there are many possible means one of them implies again that you know it am I in suffering in any way am I immersed in some form of suffering and suffering can take even impatience irritation is a minor form of suffering whatever form it takes suffering can be an alarm clock that tells you you've lost the now because if you hadn't lost the now there would be no suffering there isn't enough space the now is so small for suffering to arise here in this form, suffering requires past and future and a me just this, a challenge can happen but no problem problem needs past and future and a me that thinks about it and identifies with the situation has a reactive and personal relationship to the situation that's a problem so, suffering, lost the now I must have lost the now, where is it? oh, here and the shift happens from mind identification to at first you may become aware of sense perceptions suddenly again your inner energy field is back and then you sense the underlying field of awareness so that's how even suffering can be a pointer, can take you there and then you can use other things open the book occasionally or any other book that has come out of that state read a few lines and then it's enough very often to be present again listen to tapes occasionally don't get attached or dependent on anything wisdom is required to use help without becoming attached to the form that the help takes the help is of course always pointing beyond the form not getting attached to the teacher the form of the teacher not getting attached to listening to tapes not getting attached to books not getting attached to a photo and yet being able to use them as openings as long as they're needed so you can any photo taken of someone in presence is helpful looking at that for brief moments and put it away listening to tapes not excessively but occasionally nature, use anything natural and bring your attention to anything that is nature because there is no mind activity in nature it's an expression of consciousness but not thought anything in nature place attention on it auditory, visually acknowledge its being let it take you into presence you can do that more easily than a man-made human-made thing most human-made things are mind-made things especially in cities you're surrounded by the externalized human mind in all the forms around you in a city but even in the middle of a city you can look at the sky or there may be a flower somewhere so use what you get but remember knowing that you're not present if it doesn't then immediately degenerate into thought which says, you see, I'm never present because that knowing can easily immediately degenerate into thought from the knowing that you're not present you can formulate a concept or judgment or thought that says, you see, I've lost it not realizing how do you know you lost it?

there was a moment of knowing

[Speaker 6] (5:48:34 - 5:48:49)

I think what I start judging is the strength of the presence how strong it feels and because it seems to always be that knowing the knowing is that it's not as strong than the desire to want it

[Speaker 1] (5:48:49 - 5:49:26)

but if the knowing is acknowledged, the knowing is suddenly, you notice that there's a knowing then it deepens by itself thank you alright, the microphone is traveling there hello?

yes

[Speaker 5] (5:49:27 - 5:50:50)

well I sent something to you that I woke up at 3 o'clock in the morning yesterday before the bells went off and just some thoughts came into my head and I wrote them down and I sent them to you yesterday and I'd like to read it to you before we end the session I just call it with you when time has ceased its wheels turning and that space between the breath of in and out has become my bed you were there to see me go a smile so warm it filled my heart fully and eyes that would call my soul to play your kindness keeping safe the joy I treasured till now when I become all that ever was joy oh greatness thanks be, you were my servant of sweetness, my bearer of warm tidings, with wood from the boda tree that has carved this space in my heart for leaving on this day has caused me no sorrow for you who stayed, that clear bell ringing this way, this way thank you so much for everything oh, thank you beautiful, thank you

[Speaker 1] (5:50:54 - 5:50:56)

thank you, thank you

[Speaker 4] (5:51:06 - 5:51:12)

Eckhart, could you tell some words about prayer I am

[Speaker 6] (5:51:14 - 5:51:24)

my experience when I am struggle in mind stream and non acceptance of suffering

[Speaker 1] (5:51:24 - 5:51:28)

I am when I remember

[Speaker 4] (5:51:28 - 5:51:45)

that God can do the work that I cannot do it it put me in a open heart and I feel like that prayer pray God can be very helpful

[Speaker 1] (5:51:47 - 6:02:08)

thank you for many people of course prayer is asking for something or wanting something but we talk now about a different a deeper kind of prayer where you are not making demands seeking some kind of fulfillment adding something to me give me that, give me that so we talk about a different kind of prayer that is also can be a very powerful pointer that you use for yourself to point to the surrendered state which is the non dualistic the non dual state so the dual which is still exist whenever you pray there is still a sense of duality between me and God and I am not saying do not pray there is a place for that the dual can take you into the non dual if it is a pointer so use prayer, mantras also can be helpful again only a signpost to take you into that state expressions of openness of surrender of not demanding so whatever words come to you they can take you to the edge there is a whole book which I like it very much the Course in Miracles that was channeled it is a book of spiritual teaching and that the whole book almost the entire book is written within the dimensions of duality always you address God you even call God He in that book which is the old way God is seen as masculine and so it has the limitations of all that the limitations of form but it that is not usually what I teach because this teaching is non dual teaching but for many people it is helpful for those who feel drawn to it a text like that it meets you where you are it comes to you and you live inhabit a world of duality and it starts with a duality of you and God and gradually through the lessons it is a little bit like a psychiatrist who joins the patient instead of rejecting the delusion of the patient and saying no you are not Napoleon this is silly just get this out of your mind and then some psychiatrists have tried to accept the reality of the patient and saying ok so that's who you are and then you meet suddenly there is a meeting you meet the patient in his delusion ultimately duality of you and God is the last delusion beautiful delusion beautiful so the psychiatrist joins the patient and then suddenly they can talk and from there it can happen that the psychologist takes the patient by the hand metaphorically speaking and they walk out of that delusion together but first he had to meet him there so texts or teachings there are some that seem to move within the realm of duality only to take you out of it so they are like the psychiatrist who meets you in the realm of duality in order to reach you so many people are reached in that way they would not yet be ready perhaps to listen to this teaching and so they are reached and at the end of the course in miracles he says you move into non-duality very slowly, very subtly you move into that so this teaching again is more direct non-dual but if you still need the duality, use that wisely simply as a pointer so that after prayer, move into the stillness whatever prayer it is let the prayer be a stillness after the prayer has been uttered whatever it may be go into stillness from there and the stillness is the realm of the non-dual but prayer can point you there beautiful the whole teaching here is a pointer too so as long as you feel you love it, you need it you can use that wisely it's beautiful and then observe the silence after you have uttered the prayer so many still in this world need to be reached in that way and then they come and then they are maybe ready to listen to this teaching and even this teaching there are certain things that I don't say because it would be meaningless to you this comes as realisation your own realisation but there is nothing important here that has been omitted there is nothing that you need to know that I haven't given you nothing has been withheld as far as liberation the possibility of liberation is concerned absolutely nothing now we need to meet those of you or some of you face to face as a brief meeting the way we usually hug is that people come up, we stand face to face, look at each other and there is a hug this time for those of you who want it others can just stay and sit it's part of a beautiful meditation and we simply here stand face to face in a sacred encounter and then at the end I will greet you in this beautiful greeting that is used in India that acknowledges that you are God in your essence no matter what the outer form is but before we do that since we listened to a lot of music yesterday I'd like to listen to just one more piece of music and this is interesting all the devotional music that we listened to yesterday of course arose from India with so much spirituality and now there are things that arise that are devotional and point to the truth that even arise in the west and that's a wonderful thing to see that those things just as spiritual teachers now are arising in the west because there is the transformation of consciousness even beautiful sacred devotional songs and music are also arising now in the west so it's wonderful many of you know it sometimes the singer comes to talks that we have and sings there and maybe we could just listen before we meet face to face and this is a meditative listening, listen to just one song of hers Kirtana many of you may know it but it's always fresh and new because everything that comes from there is always fresh and new Who You Really Are if we could just listen to that one song, it's only a few minutes Who You Really Are by Kirtana Track 6 Can we turn it up a little?

Can we go back to the beginning? Always Up a little? Could there be more to this life we call mine

[Speaker 3] (6:02:46 - 6:03:07)

Because who we are begin with breath, depend on form or end with death, strip away these rules these names and tell me what remains

[Speaker 2] (6:03:10 - 6:03:20)

Who you really are

[Speaker 3] (6:03:31 - 6:04:39)

measure success these two shall pass as hard as we try inherent in this dance of form is the chance to see what's yet unborn the choice to throw this chance away caught up in

[Speaker 2] (6:04:45 - 6:04:53)

who you think we are

[Speaker 3] (6:05:03 - 6:05:46)

this is your lifetime your attention where is your prayer, where is your song fortunate lives are called to be from the cycle of bonding aside

[Speaker 2] (6:05:52 - 6:05:57)

wake from the dream finally

[Speaker 3] (6:06:16 - 6:07:03)

so before the final seed is passed see the screen on which see what's seen is to be who you really are

[Speaker 1] (6:09:41 - 6:25:51)

When you listen to this kind of music you're very alert that you can notice a sound at the point where it ceases, the fluid the sound of the fluid and then it dissolves, there's a little point where the sound comes to an end and weakens and then disappears all together so if you listen to this kind of music with complete attention that's a particularly beautiful point because that's where the manifested merges with the unmanifested the sound dies and so and with the master sometimes it's a very subtle thing to be to allow the sound because the masters don't they allow they dull the consciousness to play the instrument through them and so there's a very subtle movement towards cessation the sound weakens for a very short instant and then nothing so it's the interplay between almost something and nothing and that's your entire life talking about music there's a beautiful poem I believe it's by Hafiz the poet and he says about himself I am a hole in a flute that the Christ's breath moves through listen to this music note that he didn't say I am a flute that Christ plays that's nice too, but no I'm a hole in the flute and that's the same with all spiritual teaching it arises in that way and you come to realize that you also are a hole in the flute and perhaps before you thought you were the flute and before that you thought you were the player of the flute and yet you are all these things also this is the last session of the retreat not that that means very much but only the form we may look at a few written questions today but always at retreats and so on there are more questions than one could get through although I keep them all one day you may see the question that wasn't answered here in a book answered by then you won't need the answer anymore and you may have forgotten that you asked it because in a way you didn't the human mind asks questions and a few questions are helpful pointers other questions take you into speculative regions some questions are helpful other questions could be distractions but all questions are interesting I like reading them now you may find if your question is not answered here that you have a you may not have known it before that you may have a personal relationship with your question you may feel why didn't he answer my question it was so good and why did he answer all those there were such silly questions that he answered and mine he didn't answer mine and then you feel diminished in your sense of self or you feel reactive angry with me which is designed to strengthen your sense of self or combat the diminishment and so we talked about the deeper sense of reincarnation and so it means you are reincarnated into your question and that means your sense of self became entangled in a thought because the question is a thought so the sense of me self, identity became entangled in the form of that thought you derived some sense of selfhood from that and you may also derive it if a question is answered and maybe I said this is a good question oh I asked a good question I am not talking about any particular person here because I am this is how the mind works so if this happens to you and there is a sense of self in your question it is more important more useful far more vital to observe that in yourself than to receive an answer you learn much more from that inner observation than from any answer you could get we in this last session we are moving to this point where we allow questions to subside and we could also observe the inner impulse to ask more know more and watch that Ramana Maharshi was a great master although he did answer certain questions beautifully but many questions he didn't answer there were far more questions that he didn't answer than he answered probably answered five percent of questions that people asked him and so most questions were met with silence stillness silence than any answer could be and then you learn something about attachment to a form and to a thought as a me a very subtle temporary form of me so we allow these silent spaces here we don't need to fill them with another question although I may shuffle some papers we allow the silent spaces the mind may come in when we have a silent space now and say this is my chance get your question in there now before it's too late it's always nice to have a funny question too, so here's a funny slightly funny I find some people get on my nerves without any particular reason and although I do some serious surrendering and being present they still get on my nerves on top of it I can't get my eyes off them it's almost as though I love hating them is there any redemption for me? and by the way where did you get those fabulous sounding bells? the bells were given to me a few years ago I may have had them for 7 years or 8 years and I've seen somebody the Dalai Lama gave them to somebody who then had them for a few years and then they were passed on to me to be used in here otherwise the person knew they were used for this purpose so it was beautiful to let go of that gift it's rare the sound is of a very rare purity so the people that get on your nerves that's a an aspect of how the ego keeps itself going critical complaining judging and then it loves that it loves those states and all you have to do here is observe that in yourself observe the people observe the reaction observe the addiction almost addiction to those reactive states observe them in yourself and from this the slightly humorous note of this question makes me feel that there's already some sense of distance from it because when you begin to observe those patterns in yourself they don't want to let go of a resentment a reaction a grievance and get in there and hang on hang on and you begin to observe it that means there's spaciousness around it quite often at some point you begin to smile and you see how like a dog that won't get won't let go of the bone you won't let go of that grievance or that reaction or that resentment and

[Speaker 2] (6:25:51 - 6:26:02)

now the dog

[Speaker 1] (6:26:02 - 7:05:11)

although the dog of course is lives beautifully presence is a different matter it's extremely rare for a dog if it ever happens to have spaciousness around a bone maybe a very old dog and so that dog can then say I have transcended and perhaps when you look into the eyes of a very old dog there's some distance there some almost wisdom dog wisdom arising however most animals have to act according to their form whatever corresponds to the form very rare there's any spaciousness around that but humans humans for many thousands of years have been the same no spaciousness totally conditioned and now that possibility is there to transcend the conditioning which does not immediately mean to exterminate the conditioning the conditioning then weakens so just watch yourself getting irritated and enjoy it rather than thinking this I'm not perfect I'm far from perfect I need to achieve a completely different state this is not the state of perfection of enlightenment that's a projection of the mind a state should be achieved any state will do if you only allow it it's enough when insights come when I feel connectedness with you teaching here and with other spiritual teachings a sometimes overwhelming need to cry rises in me why not joy, bliss is this identification with the pain body maybe it is joy why label it at all let that be let the tears come I cry not often but it happens and I don't know what label to attach to it it's not sadness it's not pain it's more like joy but it never even occurred to me to ask myself what is that it was beautiful to simply allow that when I listened to the song there were some tears this morning I didn't ask myself why am I crying what label do I attach to these tears it was beautiful to simply allow without the need to find some position with regards to them adopt some mental perspective on them and if you don't adopt a mental perspective deep down it's all joy it's a beautiful thing not to label states that arise anymore if that doesn't it's not possible then just recognize a label as a label and then it doesn't overpower you so you can be in that state of allowing no need to call it good or bad I want it, don't want it it's here how will this happen to us what has happened to you when will we be fully realized the answer to that is the last answer in the book The Power of Now which is when you no longer need to ask that question because even that question is an obstacle put there by the mind and is a way of not fully accepting this if ego gives superiority complex is inferiority complex being opposite preferable to superiority complex inferiority complex might look like ego getting lesser but it's not the case it's just as strong in both cases you have a mental image of yourself and patterns associated with that image inferiority complex means not as good as superiority complex means better than both are mental identifications identifications with conceptual sense of self and the superiority ego the superior ego has underneath its apparent superiority the underlying fear of not as good as and the inferior ego despite its apparent sense of inferiority has an underlying desire to be more than greater than bigger than just waiting so in either case you are trapped in mind and how to get out of that and you know that already attention to this to what is surrender to this moment the end I've said it before but I have to say it again because it's easy to it's the end of conditioning or egoic conditioning whether it's superiority complex or inferiority whatever it may be most people actually move between the two maybe this is a slightly speculative question but the answer can be short the probability of intelligent life on other planets outside our solar system is generally accepted after all it is a conceit to think we are the only form of intelligent life in the cosmos assuming there are other forms of this intelligent life elsewhere would they also be a part of this supreme consciousness or be enlightened or working towards enlightenment as we are in this case under your guidance as we are doing well any form this is the one principle of liberation which surely because as above so below everything is reflected it applies to the entire life of form no matter where it cannot not apply to that so any wherever consciousness appears in the disguise of forms consciousness will also be awakening out of that play out of that disguise so wherever it may be it will be the same the awakening of consciousness out of the dream of form of matter must be the same anywhere no matter how distant the galaxy may be and I would say this it happens simultaneously here and in many other parts of the cosmos one could say the entire cosmos is awakening out of that dream and now don't believe that this is the ultimate truth that I'm telling you it's only a little pointer an approximation a distant approximation or helpful as that not the final explanation I cannot give a final explanation of the cosmos by making sounds it's not possible so treat any words with care the entire cosmos must be awakening otherwise we would not be awakening as above so below so this is a cosmic event that is happening here it might look like a person becoming free of suffering and unhappiness on a personal level but it goes far beyond that and who knows perhaps there are some visitors in a non-human non-visible form in this room listening in teaching maybe technologically incredibly advanced and yet they come to this primitive planet because they hear the possibility of liberation and so on we could continue talking about this or write books about it can you assume the heavenly pleasure we have been feeling in your valuable presence and how we will be feeling after we depart question mark in which way and how we can fully carry that peace and completeness till it blends with our life I wish the world was full of echoes it would have made realization easier and faster with regards at your feet thank you the answer to this if it is a question maybe here last night I experienced poignant sadness I allowed this sadness and observed it with my presence the first part of the sadness was due to the end of the teaching until I realized that you have introduced me to the eternal teacher within me and I felt peace the second part of the sadness was in leaving my dear friend and teacher Eckhart until I realized that a part of you will always reside in my heart and I felt gratitude a part of not just a part of me but the whole is in your heart as yourself and this morning when I met many of you face to face I was meeting myself different forms but it's always myself

myself so I know you very well without needing to know very much about you there is an enormous difference to the mind when the mind says I know you what the mind means is I know a lot about you and this is different when I know you not through mind I may not know anything about you and whatever I know about you isn't very important because the about means it concerns the world of form it concerns your past it concerns your story it concerns the content of your mind it concerns your conditioning it's all about but it's not you so there is this beauty and of course people believe that when they know about they know, they don't there are innumerable people living together as couples who don't know each other because they don't know themselves you cannot know anybody else except through knowing yourself and it is not through thought of course that you can know anyone, all you can know through thought is about and that doesn't only apply to human beings, it applies to anything that you have knowledge about nature, plants the world, any aspect of the world of form is knowledge about it's form knowledge not essence form knowledge always has a sense of separateness to it because it's known through concepts which is more form form knowledge has its place occasionally it's helpful occasionally it's needed to be trapped in form knowledge is a dreadful form of bondage not knowing anything beyond form knowledge is bondage no matter how much how knowledgeable you are about things the world, people so form knowledge needs to be balanced with the essence of knowing which is not through thought not through mind which only arises when the mind subsides and of course in this world so far we haven't had this balance everybody is lost in form form knowledge schools it's all they teach so one could say they teach everything except the one thing that truly matters and at universities they know about everything proliferation of knowledge and increasing specialization so that PhDs are now written about a strand of hair it gets narrower and narrower the area of specialization so the mind is moving into greater and greater fragmentation and you can have people in the same field, whatever it may be biology and that's now subdivided into little areas fields fields and so people go through these systems, become conditioned a good friend of mine at university graduate school was writing a PhD on the inner ear of the field mouse and that is three years or four years of intensive research and study at a huge volume and I'm not saying this is bad but this is how much fragmentation we have gone and there is a great longing in humans for truth for true knowing especially strong now in societies that have moved very much into fragmentation and proliferation of both mind and things the proliferation of things in the highly developed world accompanies the proliferation of mind so many things everywhere so here we are concerned with something that perhaps at some point as more humans become conscious the main subject at school will be this what we have been dealing with this week it will be the most natural thing that will be the central core of every curriculum at school around which all the others revolve and then it's fine acknowledge and honor this field of external silence and inner stillness it's enough to notice it and then you honor it and think how could this leave you when you leave here you don't really leave anywhere just changing sense perceptions around you like a stage set you know in some theaters so that they don't have to change the scenery the stage moves it has already prepared that stage set for the next act and so the whole stage moves around and suddenly you find yourself in different scenery nothing has changed and this will happen to you of course when you leave here the scenery changes suddenly of course it's now always now it's actually the most enjoyable thing to allow the scenery to change to allow the impermanent nature of all things the continuous flux the short-lived nature of all experiences so fleeting and allow it see it and I mentioned it briefly before a few days ago allowing it, seeing it they go together and they imply that there is something that is beyond time change birth and death eternal the simple fact that you can see the impermanent nature of all phenomena and all forms that you can know it and see it not through mind by calling it this or that simply see it means there is something that is beyond if there were nothing beyond you wouldn't see it I gave the example before if the entire world were green the color green would not exist there must be something that is not green for you to see green there must be something that is not subject to impermanence for you to recognize the fact of impermanence that's the seeing that's the consciousness the unconditioned that sees without calling it anything that is the eternal still presence that sees and that's why Buddhist monks in some countries visit morgues where dead bodies are kept and sit there for a few hours watching the dead bodies and contemplating impermanence from a western point of view it's insane what are they doing there but there is deep wisdom in that the contemplation of impermanence and the greatest way in which you contemplate impermanence is to contemplate death as it arises it always arises sooner or later in the now some form of it the end of this retreat is a form of death beautiful every end, every farewell is a little tiny death that's why people have that need to say see you soon because they feel it's a little death here so we must make sure that this is not final but you just allow it I don't say at retreat see you at the next retreat I'm very happy not to see you you don't need to come beautiful if I see you, it's beautiful too don't be long see you next time I will ring my fabulous bells and it's a call to presence to awakening out of mind blessings to you on your journey through space and time and more importantly your journey into the now ever more deeply your journey into the now the timeless and that statement already contains a little paradox and that's how it is

[Speaker 3] (7:07:02 - 7:07:11)

before horror phenomenon begins born after it

[Speaker 2] (7:07:11 - 7:07:23)

and after it I am many differences

[Speaker 3] (7:07:24 - 7:07:58)

separating us on the surface yes but I cannot find a boundary in consciousness when you ask me where does awareness begin and does it end I have to say

[Speaker 2] (7:08:00 - 7:08:02)

I've always been

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[Speaker 2] (0:05 - 5:02)

Gathe Gathe Paragate Parasangate Gathe Gathe The reason why there's silence and I don't speak, one way of putting it is the reason why I don't speak for a while is because I don't know what to say.

[Speaker 1] (5:19 - 38:52)

Potentially that could be a very uncomfortable state. If I don't know what to say and I'm looking for something to say, it becomes uncomfortable. When I don't know what to say and think I should know, that's uncomfortable.

I don't know what to say and feel bad about not knowing what to say, it's very stressful. But to be comfortable with not knowing is a state of creativity and depth. And then you have access to a deep knowing.

And that's not just the case with a spiritual teacher, it applies to you. You're also a teacher. To become comfortable with not knowing.

Then by itself a deeper knowing arises out of that when the not knowing is not resisted. You surrender into the state of not knowing. And it is the most beautiful state of deep inner connectedness.

Then whatever needs to be known at this moment truly needs to be known, not satisfy mental curiosity or whatever. What truly needs to be known or done is known right now when it needs to be known. And there's a lot that does not need to be known.

But what is truly needed is always there out of that state in which you seem to disappear as an existing entity that's, I know. And then all you realize that all thought knowledge, all knowledge that's derived from thought is kind of pseudo knowledge. Because in thought, when you call it something, you think you know.

When you have a label for something, you think that's what it is. Not realizing that every label is an abstraction. It's because it's not it.

The state of not knowing, of course, is also the state as we talked about yesterday when you walk around or sit and perceive without interpretation, without labeling. And again, that's the state of not knowing and yet of a deep knowing that is beyond mind. So as the awareness, the unconditioned consciousness arises, separative knowledge, which is of the mind, because every label separates you from that which you label, it becomes a barrier.

That separative knowledge is replaced by a unitive, one could say, knowing, which does not separate you from that which is known. And you can see how that transforms your relationship with nature and how it transforms your relationship with other human beings. Because so far, 90% or more of human interaction has been through separative, attaching labels onto people, interpreting, judging, not realizing that every interpretation and every judgment is no more than a very limited perspective.

One standpoint, one small perspective, no more. Once you know that, you no longer get deceived by the mind and you believe that one perspective contains the truth, that one thought that you express could ever contain the truth. It is a small perspective, no more.

It is a fragment, no more. So the recognition of the relativity of all thought, and we are moving towards a different kind of knowing, in which the sense of separateness does not arise. That knowing is also loving.

It's one. Because love is obscured through the delusion of separateness. Love as the realization of your oneness with all that is, is obscured by the labeling, judging, interpreting, the knowing mind.

Then whatever you look upon in that state of not knowing from the point of view of mind, is looked upon with love, compassion, they are all aspects of that state of deep knowing that to the mind looks like not knowing at all. And you can imagine how that changes human relationships when you can be with another human being in the state of not knowing, which either means you're totally present, totally still allowing this form, the form that this moment takes, the form of this human being to be completely. Or it could mean that certain thoughts still arise about that human being, who they are, that they should be doing this, should not be doing that, should know better, they are this, they are that.

But thought is recognized as thought. You don't believe in it totally anymore. And you recognize it's a fragment, it's only a thought.

And you allow it to pass, then you re-enter the state of not knowing. You don't get tricked anymore by the mind. And so there is continuously that dimension of aware presence that may be all there is, or it may be the undercurrent, and on the surface of it there are mind movements.

That's fine. Sense perceptions, also, all sense perceptions are surface phenomena, ultimately in themselves not all that satisfying. They're never satisfying for long, nothing here in the world of form satisfies for long.

Even if it's beautiful initially, you can come to an exotic place like this, because for many people who've traveled here, this is very exotic. It's not exotic if you live here. And it's not exotic if you spend a few weeks here, then the exotic is no longer exotic, it's just, oh, it's no longer satisfying.

For a little while, the form, the new forms satisfy. And then, that's not enough, I need some new experience, some new forms. You may already have reached the point where it isn't satisfying, because it never is.

You might have had a mental projection, an ashram in India, me in an ashram in India, that would add something to the story of me and make it much more interesting. And then, whenever you encounter the reality, very soon, when the novelty wears off, which could be after a day, it's not all that satisfying, the world of form. There's always something, oh, that wasn't supposed to be there.

The art that was supposed to be, oh, and that wasn't supposed to be there. And the spider in my bed, or whatever, or worse, sooner or later, and usually sooner, you hit upon that the unsatisfactory nature, if all that you know is that, and the unsatisfactory nature of your own mind, and with its knowledge. So, neither the external world of form and experiences is ever enough, nor is your own mind, with its accumulated knowledge, ever enough.

So life becomes frustrating, a continuous search. In many people, it manifests as a continuous, almost continuous desire to be somewhere else. When you were at home, you wanted to be in the ashram.

Now you're in the ashram, you want to be home. Does that sound familiar? You may have counted the days to your trip to India, and now you're counting the days to your departure.

So that seeking through form, either the external forms or through mental forms, it's never satisfying. And so, the search continues. You could try another ashram, or maybe a retreat center in California would be so much more comfortable.

Or you say, I'm done with spiritual things, if that's spiritual, I don't want it. And so, I very rarely use or refer to old pointers or maps, signposts. But what very much applies here is a very powerful signpost.

One of the Upanishads, ancient scriptures, they contain some very powerful signposts. And I'll just, this is very relevant to what we've just been looking at. I'll just give, quote to you the first few lines, approximately.

What it refers to is, nothing that you see or hear or think is it. Nothing in the world of form is it, is satisfying ultimately. If you look for satisfaction through that, which is ultimately yourself, because the only ultimate and true satisfaction you can ever find is finding and being totally yourself.

That's the true satisfaction that everybody's looking for, through this or through that. So the Upanishad says, this Upanishad says, Not that which the eye sees, but that whereby the eye can see. Know that alone to be Brahman, the eternal, and not what people here adore.

Not that which the ear hears, but that whereby the ear can hear. Know that alone to be Brahman, the eternal, and not what people here adore. Not that which the mind thinks, but that whereby the mind can think.

Know that alone to be Brahman, the eternal, and not what people here adore. It gives a few more examples, but it's all points to it's not in the form. Not that which people here adore.

It could even be the idea of God. Think about it. And again, that is not it.

That which makes all perception possible, that which makes thought possible, that is the eternal. And why is that? Already here, as the essence, as the now, that's what it is.

The eternal that never leaves you, the now. You are one with it. So the ultimate secret about now is that you are that.

You are the now. Of course you are. It's the only thing that has never left you.

Always was the same. It's always been now. And people have that sense of something very precious, and they think it gets mixed up in their mind with their story.

And they call it their individuality, their individual sense of individual existence. I don't want to lose that. There is something so precious that I feel inside me.

I don't want to lose that. That gets mixed up with identifications, mental identifications with stories. And that story based sense of self.

But if you look deeply at your innermost sense of I, your innermost sense of who you are, then you realize it has nothing to do with the story of me. You could forget your story. You could forget your name.

And in fact, it would be there. You would sense that innermost sense of I-ness more strongly as the essence of your being. And this is why sometimes people find it, when everything collapses in their lives, their sense of identity has become mixed up with all kinds of identifications, mental identifications.

That suddenly, through great loss or death, things collapse in their lives. The structures, the forms collapse external and internal. External as physical structures, the seeming solidity of my life crumbles.

Internal, belief structures, the whole story of me falls to pieces. And then it can happen that that innermost I is suddenly can shine because it had been covered up by multiple and multiple layers of identifications. And suddenly, when they break, then you realize what was shining through.

The only thing that gave life to the story of me, the only thing that illuminated it was the innermost I. And you mistook the formations, physical and mental formations, for I, because the light of I was shining through those structures, but you didn't know the essence of that light. You only knew it was shining through these forms.

And suddenly, the forms collapse, and what is there then in its fullness and purity is the innermost sense of I or I am. No longer this or that. Simply beingness, presence, unconditioned, is suddenly there.

It's all fallen away. And so people in the midst of great disaster in their lives suddenly stood there and said, This is incredible. Where does this peace come from?

Enormous peace. They didn't understand it. The peace that is beyond understanding.

And of course, this is why. Suddenly, all that was obscuring, the forms that were obscuring that innermost I gave way. And it can happen in the case of death.

We pointed it out yesterday. A person slowly dying. Everything melting.

And it can happen as the result of being in the presence of presence, in a spiritual gathering, the energy field of presence. That also is being drawn out. The unconditioned is shining through the conditioned, and the conditioned is becoming more and more, loses its density even as you sit here, becomes more and more transparent in a way.

Dies, one could say. The conditioned I, the sense in which people usually use the word I, the most frequently used word in the English language, or any language, the word I, the way in which people usually use the word I, what they refer to is me and my story. The conditioned entity.

Ultimately, the fiction that I identify with as me is I. That's what people, when they say I, they refer to that. But there is a deeper meaning to I, that is the delusion of I.

That's the delusion of self. But I is a sacred word, ultimately. I is on the level of normal human consciousness expresses delusion, which is what the Buddha recognized when he saw the delusion of self.

He referred to that I. And he saw through that. And so, when that delusion is recognized, that recognition already originates from the unconditioned consciousness.

The delusional entity cannot recognize its own delusion. So the recognition of it already is the light shining through from underneath, so to speak. From there arises the recognition of the delusion of the story-based, form-based, mind-based, identification-based identity.

So, and this is what Jesus referred to when he said, Before Abraham was, I am. Not before Abraham was, I was already. There is no was nor will be in I.

It is eternal presence. Eternal now-ness. And this is what the Upanishad refers to.

It is the formless, the unconditioned. It is known, never in a subject-object relationship. It cannot be known in such a way.

So one could say, it cannot be known at all. You can only be it. Realize that you are it, but cannot know it as you know an object in consciousness.

So people have been for thousands of years trying to make God into an object in consciousness. The idea of God, the image of God, statements about an object in consciousness. And this is why the Upanishad says, Not what people here adore, that is not God.

Not that which you see, not that which you hear, not that which you think. Not that which you believe in, because it's thought. Belief is thought.

You believe in God, that also is not what people here adore. It is a mental idol, ultimately. It is an ideology.

You believe in God, and the person next to you believes in communism. Two ideologies. So it's not what people here adore.

Not that which the mind thinks, not that which the mind believes. But that which makes all thinking, all believing, all sense perception possible. The formless, out of which all forms arise.

And that is the innermost I, the essence of what gets mixed up in your life with forms. And it flows. The self gets mixed up with forms.

The deepest, the innermost self. And here, the blessing and the grace is it. In this energy field, it is, one could almost say, being pulled out of you from underneath all the formations, all that.

That in you responds, because it recognizes itself in what seems to be the outside. Oh! And so that state of still, alert presence emerges.

In the absence of that, the only thing that could get you there is suffering and disaster. The breakdown of forms which had obscured the formless. And this is the grace of the spiritual teaching.

It saves suffering. It saves a lot of time, too. Because suffering implies time.

Eventually you would get there through more suffering. But the suffering that you have had has been enough to get you here. Without it, you wouldn't have come.

So it's worked, it's worked. Suffering works, no doubt. But it can take time before it really works.

For a long time, suffering can lead to increasing egoic delusion, increasing contraction, increasing density. But the point is always reached when it becomes, when the auto-destruction happens, the density and the heaviness of it cannot sustain itself anymore. It goes...

[Speaker 2] (39:01 - 39:02)

Oh!

[Speaker 1] (39:04 - 39:10)

It's like layers and layers have fallen off.

[Speaker 2] (39:11 - 39:12)

Oh!

[Speaker 1] (39:13 - 58:32)

And then sometimes those beings who realized that, they looked back on their suffering and said, What a nightmare! And then they talked about it and realized how strongly it resembles a dream. All the suffering that they have been through, now that they are awake, they say, What a nightmare that was!

And so when they start teaching, they sometimes speak of the delusion of suffering, the unreality of it. From their position, from where they are, their realization, this is true. It may not be true when you are in the middle of it.

Of course, you could make it into another belief. You go to a teacher and he says, All suffering is an illusion. And you say, OK, I believe that.

And then you carry on suffering and you say, It's an illusion, it's an illusion. But it's a pointer. Suffering is an illusion, it's a pointer.

And then one day, the little pointer may hit something. The planet is heavy with pain, human pain, in the energy field of the planet. A long time of creating pain out of that egoic delusion.

Each human creating pain for themselves, a painful form identity. Not knowing who you are is suffering. Not knowing who you are beyond form is suffering.

And so they created a whole world out of that state of consciousness. And they created a lot of pain out of that primary delusion. Because that delusion flows into whatever you do and think and experience.

It's colored, distorted by that delusion. And sooner or later, it always turns into pain. So humans have been in the collective energy field of the planet.

There's an enormous heaviness, which is human pain. And every human carries part of that, in addition to the pain they've experienced in this form as children, residues of pain that people carry inside, pain body, I call it, which is partly personal, so to speak. Ultimately, nothing is personal, it's nothing to do with who you are, but only in the sense that it comes from your childhood, your past, the past of this form, residues left by suffering that you've gone through in this form.

And another large part of it is collective energy field, the collective pain that is in the human unconscious, the heaviness of that. And that, when I began to teach, I pointed out, that when I began to understand this inner transformation that had happened to this form, I began to see that it's intimately connected with surrendering. It's intimately connected with the surrendered state that is totally aligned with now.

And I began to teach that. And as, of course, that is the ultimate, the root cause of suffering is the state of non-surrender, which humans have been in for thousands and thousands of years. So I began to teach that there's no need to suffer anymore.

And gradually I saw that even those who were able to totally surrender to now still experienced wave movements of pain in their lives, even though they were surrendering. And then I began to learn about the human pain body as I observed that and realized that every human carries his or her share of collective human pain. That's ultimately what the pain body is.

It is the manifestation of human unconsciousness, and humans carry it in here, in the body. It is an emotional, an energy field that is not flowing, life energy that is stagnant, trapped, and manifests either as anger or as great fear or as the heaviness of depression. So it's an energy field of pain that humans carry.

And sometimes they don't even know it's there. It's dormant at times. And life works beautifully, you surrender to now.

And you might even think, that's it, I've come to the end of it. And then suddenly a little trigger happens. A little thing goes wrong, or even a little thought comes into your head that suddenly proliferates and becomes a trigger for an enormous influx of pain in whatever form, anger, fear, heavy heaviness of sadness.

Suddenly you are completely overtaken by that. And it flows into your mind, it energizes all the mind structures of the ego. It energizes and amplifies the story, all the identifications.

And so the me, the self, the mind-made self becomes extremely empowered through that. The delusion becomes empowered through that pain, human pain. And you start thinking, all thoughts reflecting the energy field of the pain body.

So the pain body has moved into your mind and is governing, controlling your thought processes and actually feeding on each thought. You strengthen the pain body through those thought processes because each thought corresponds to the energy vibrational frequency of the pain body. If it's anger, it will be thoughts of anger.

And that's how the pain body renews itself. And so the pain body becomes a self, you identify with it as self. You think it's me, it is you really.

It possesses you, so to speak, and it feeds on other people. If it could speak openly, it doesn't say that openly. It wants to make somebody unhappy.

And it wants somebody else to make me even more unhappy. And usually it succeeds. Because one active pain body during its active period, once it's fed on your mind and other people's reactions, it will subside, go back to the dormant period, the dormancy.

But during the active period, it will feed on your mind and on people around you, and it will easily awaken other people's pain bodies if their pain body is at a stage of readiness to come out of the dormant state. And so one pain body can easily awaken several pain bodies in its vicinity. You can notice it in families, it sometimes happens at work, in your workplace, anywhere where people gather, a committee meeting, one heavy pain body in a committee meeting can awaken every other pain body that has been dormant in that committee, and you get big drama.

And so it's wonderful to watch how it works. And if you go outside, if your pain body is active, and it may be active for an hour, it may be active for a whole day in some people, it could be active for several days, it varies a lot. For some people it's only a few minutes, but those tend to be people already becoming more conscious, so it cannot linger, it's recognized.

Sometimes before it can really get hold of your mind, we'll come to that. But if you go outside and your pain body is active, you also attract other active pain bodies, because active pain bodies recognize each other. So if you then, any situation that you walk into with an active pain body, you may be hiding it at that moment, it will be in your mind, yes, it's active, it's using your mind, but you're smiling, and suddenly somebody attacks you, verbally or in whatever way, and that was somebody whose pain body recognized yours, and said, oh, here's food.

And then you go away from that, and then you go around the corner, and this happens again, somebody else attacks you, and the whole world seems to be hostile, because every pain body, unless they are totally dormant in certain people, maybe they've just gone through the active period, and they just don't want any more pain, they haven't digested the pain yet, but every other pain body recognizes you. And they like to meet each other, and feed on each other. And for some people, the pain body is associated also with the opposite sex, that's a strange thing that is not that uncommon.

And that is often the case when, not necessarily always, you've had a painful relationship with a parent, then your relationship with a man, or your relationship with a woman, is associated with pain body. And it is not uncommon for people to choose their partner through their pain body, unconsciously, of course. To choose...

When you fall in love, quite often, the pain body has a part in that. And this strong attraction you feel is partly the attraction through your pain body to somebody else's pain body, who perfectly complements yours. And so you feel drawn to that person, very strongly.

And we all know people, perhaps even ourselves, who again and again are drawn to the same kind of person that creates the same kind of pain for them. And they're doing it again. And then they say, this time I'm not choosing a partner with a pain body anymore, I want somebody conscious.

And so you choose somebody who practices meditation, who is a vegetarian. And then, and surely, he or she must be conscious. And maybe you forgot that Hitler was a vegetarian too.

And then you start living together, and then you realize, oh, suddenly, it's happening again. The same, I've fallen into the same, I've married the same man again. And that's because the attraction was there through the pain body.

So many marriages are like that, made in, what's the expression, made in heaven, something, marriage made in heaven, and this one is made in hell. So pain bodies recognize each other. Pain bodies do not want to be recognized in themselves for what they are.

They don't want the light of your attention on them. They want to flow into your mind, renew themselves through using your mind and using other people. They can only continue to renew themselves if you don't recognize them for what they are.

If the recognition isn't there, each time you get overtaken totally. And immediately, it's become self, it's become the me, an unhappy me. So to break that is simply to be alert enough, and of course you cannot make yourself be alert enough, that the alertness, the presence that is required to watch the pain body, you can't make, through effort, make yourself alert enough.

It's either there or it isn't there. In your case, it's there because you're here. That is a clear sign that enough presence is there for you to meet the pain body with alertness, and watch it.

If possible, the moment it arises as an enormous energy impulse, and to watch that. Maybe you can't stop it yet, you don't need to stop it. Just watch as it...

If possible, catch it before it becomes a thought. Catch it on the energetic level just as it begins to move into your mind. Now that is easier to do with certain pain bodies than with others.

If your pain body's frequency is predominantly heavy, of enormous heaviness and density, so when it takes you over you go... slow and heavy thought processes about how dreadful everything is, just completely pointless and dreadful, and the whole world is just dreadful. Now those are easier to catch because they arise more slowly.

[Speaker 2] (58:33 - 58:36)

Oh, there it is.

[Speaker 1] (58:39 - 1:00:14)

And then there are other pain bodies that contain a great deal of fire, anger, and they come... and that's very hard to catch them because there's virtually no gap. They arise as an energy phenomenon, but before you know it's an energy phenomenon, it's already become a thought and you're shouting at somebody.

Or if nobody's around, you're shouting in your head. And so the pain body has already taken over your mind. And so the most difficult one to catch is if it's predominantly angry.

And you may not be able to catch because the gap between seeing the pain body as an energy phenomenon and it becoming a thought and thereby a me, a self, the gap is too short or almost non-existent. In that case, all you can hope for is that in the middle of that, somewhere an observing presence watches you in motion.

[Speaker 2] (1:00:17 - 1:00:17)

Oh.

[Speaker 1] (1:00:19 - 1:27:08)

And so from underneath the pain body there is a witnessing presence, but it may not happen yet. It may be that you wait until it's subsided, and then very quickly the awareness is there and you suddenly realize that was the pain body. There it was.

It's just been feeding on my mind and on this situation. And the more consciousness there is, the sooner you wake up after it has subsided. You can wake up as the anger subsides.

There is sometimes a gap when the energy field goes down, the pain body begins to leave your mind, begins to withdraw because it's been feeding enough. It begins to withdraw from your mind, and there, at this point when it begins to withdraw, you can sense it as an energy field. OK.

You haven't failed. You're there now. At any time you're there as the presence, it's fine.

Now, other pain bodies you can catch as they arise as an energy phenomenon. There it is. And you watch it.

You allow it to be. This is the key. You allow it to be.

You cannot fight it. The key is even here, even here, to bring in the yes, because it is. It is.

What can you do? It's right here. It is.

It is the suchness of this moment. And so, you embrace it. That implies that there is a witnessing presence.

So you embrace it, you allow it to be, and the amazing thing is when you begin to realize that there can be, even in the case of the pain body, there can be a spaciousness around it. Even in the case of an angry pain body, which fumes and shouts, and suddenly you know it and allow that to be there, there's suddenly a little bit of space around it. Freedom arises when you see the non-personal nature of the pain body.

When you see the non-personal nature of the emotional pain, ultimately, although anger doesn't recognize itself as pain, you see the non-personal nature of all those energy movements that we call pain body movements. They are recognized as human pain. They only become personal when they amplify and energize a story in my head that is my story, and that is me, and that is the fictitious self.

That is the delusion that it is a personal matter. And you suddenly, when you allow the pain body to be there as an energy phenomenon, it's no longer a personal matter, and you realize it's very similar in every other person. It's basically the same.

Anger is anger, human anger. Fear is fear, human fear. And sadness, the heaviness of depression, is the sadness and the heaviness of human sadness.

There is no person there, and so it's an enormous liberation to see that this is not who I am, it's not me, it's human pain flowing through me. It's the human condition, and here it is. And what can you do with the human condition, which is the condition of the unsurrendered consciousness for a million years?

You bring surrender to that. The human pain body is only there because of a million years of non-surrender, of egoic delusion. And so you simply bring surrender into that.

And with that act of yes, its impersonal nature is revealed, and it's not feeding on your mind anymore, because it can only feed on your mind by pretending to be you. It's only when you believe, when it becomes a self, the pain body energizes the mind structures that we call the self, the mind-made self, amplifies those mind structures, then it's feeding. If the pain body does not flow into that, it cannot gain new energy.

And the energy that is there, through allowing it, becomes dissipated. Not that you can't kill it, there's nothing there to kill, it's life energy, but it's trapped, that's all. It becomes the heaviness or the anger, all it means is enormous amount of life energy at a particular frequency, trapped.

And then you bring acceptance to it, and presence, they are one, and suddenly that transmutation could be described as the pain, the energy, the vibrational frequency that was in the pain becoming transmuted into the much higher vibrational frequency of presence. It becomes consumed and it becomes conscious presence. And this is why many people with extremely heavy pain bodies have, more people with heavy pain bodies have become liberated than people with relatively weak pain bodies.

And that's why it's often in people where you would say, he hasn't got a chance, not in this lifetime. Look at his pain body, I mean, just... And you could be very wrong.

So my pain body was extremely heavy, the pain body of this form, and it was only through it becoming unbearably heavy that it dissolved all at once, and it became consciousness. For most people, the dissolving happens over a period of time. This does not mean that you cannot already be free of suffering now, because when you no longer identify with pain body as a personal matter, as a me, a self, when you simply recognize it as an energy movement within yourself, you recognize that, you bring presence to it, you allow it to be, then it cannot renew itself.

The transmutation has already started with that. You don't need to do anything as such to become free of pain body. No doing can do it.

One could say, to be free of pain body, the opposite of doing works, and the opposite of doing is allowing. But allowing implies that you are there as the witnessing presence, because if you are not there as the witnessing presence, you cannot allow it. And the very essence of the pain body is that it doesn't allow anything.

It is the essence of not allowing. So, no doing to become free, the key is allowing it to be there. And this applies on the inner realm to the pain body.

It ultimately also applies to certain situations on an external level that you have been stuck in for a long time, or repeatedly. Situations, you always find yourself in a similar situation, and you've tried to get out, new place, new country, new partner, and you're back in the same. In those cases also, no further doing can get you out of that.

It is only through allowing this moment to be totally as it is, in other words, the surrendered state, that change will happen. And it will happen quickly through surrender. So there are certain situations where, of course, you need to take action to do something about it, to remedy a certain situation.

But particularly situations where you find yourself in a stuckness, and you find yourself experiencing the same again and again, it calls for surrender. You can't run for the rest of your life, run away from something. Run away from your partner, and another partner, and run away from that partner.

Or wherever you live, or whatever relationships you're engaged in. So both on the inner level, the inner realm, and the outer realm, they're one. The greatest power for transformation lies not in doing, but in allowing.

And allowing then implies another perspective on this. It is the ability to look, I'm using it metaphorically, not necessarily with the eyes, to look at your pain body, to bring attention to it. You have to allow it before you can give it full attention.

Giving full attention is allowing it. If you don't allow it, you cannot give full attention. So that is the power of presence, and you give attention similar, this is why we talked yesterday as a preliminary to this, about the simple and relatively easy act of giving your full attention to a sense perception, a tree, a flower, people moving, giving pure attention, watching it, allowing it totally, no needing to interpret it, and now we bring attention to that.

And that's the unconditioned consciousness, vast intelligence is looking. Vast intelligence is at work. In Chinese terminology, the Tao is there, and you are totally aligned with it, and it's looking.

That, the one intelligence is there, and the looking is enough to initiate the transformation of that situation. The looking is enough, no analysis required through mind, how can I get rid of my pain body? How can I get rid of this problematic situation that I've been in for 15 years?

And I've been thinking about it for 15 years, and I've been analyzing it, and I've tried this, and I've tried that. But what you haven't tried is to look, simply to look in that field of alert presence, and allow it to be, and see what happens. But the looking, when I say see what happens, that could be misunderstood, there's no expectancy of some future result in the looking, there's simply the looking, the watching, the giving attention, the allowing it to be.

And there's enormous power in that. Far greater intelligence is now released than is in the limited human mind, even the greatest human mind. And again, because everything is connected, we started our gathering today with pointing out the power of not knowing.

And so when you look at something, you don't feel that you know. So this is another aspect, when you look even at the pain body, there's nothing much that you need to know about it, you just, there's just the looking. In the state where no further knowing is necessary, and whatever is needed now comes.

And it can come in many forms. A sudden transformation from within the situation. It can also come in the form of a sudden thought.

And it's suddenly, that thought is a realization, oh, okay. A sudden insight, ah. It can come as an external factor or event suddenly coming into a situation and changing it completely.

It can come as a spontaneous impulse from within you that, and you do what is needed without any doubt whatsoever, the right action happens. So in many forms, the transformation can manifest itself. But the basis for it is not to bring the conditioned mind to it and try to solve it through the extremely limited knowledge, even in the greatest mind, limited knowledge of the conditioned mind.

And what we call the greatest minds on the planet, those great people we put on pedestals, they are the greatest minds, they're not really the greatest minds, they had some access to that, they had some ability, perhaps only in their field of endeavor, to be in that state of pure attention, of pure looking. And that's where Einstein looked, perhaps as a mathematical formula, which all these scribbles on the blackboard, which of course was mind stuff, but there were certain breakthroughs, there were insights that came to him that nobody could have worked out through the mind. He had the ability and other creative, great creative minds, as they are called, and to look, and he has made statements that are deeply mystical, so he had deep insights, he had access to that dimension.

He even said once, I want to know the mind of God, the rest is details. In other words, I want to know God, the rest is details. In other words, he said, I want to know that which is beyond time and form.

The rest is the world of form, details. So that power is your own power, the power of the universe in you. So look at your pain body in that way, and whatever you look upon in that way is embraced, is alright.

Look at the worst conflict situation. The world is full of dreadful conflict situations, and anyone that comes into your field of attention now, people in conflict, can't work it out. Look, give it full attention, bring that alertness there.

People discussing and arguing, and you sit there, and then suddenly, something happens. Suddenly, maybe they stop talking, or you say something, a decisive thing that nobody had thought of, and that changes everything. Anything could happen.

You don't know beforehand how that intelligence deals with the situation, but it deals with the situation powerfully. Any person in turmoil who comes to you, this has happened, that has happened, and he did to me, and then he said, and I... Oh, and then, see what happens.

I've told this story before, when the first time I realized, not long after the inner transformation, an extremely excited woman came to me with a very strong ego, talking about her drama. Oh, you must do something, you must help me, come, talk to the lawyers, do this. And for 15 or 20 minutes, I listened to that pain body, heavy pain body.

And she, of course, she, as the pain body, wanted me to confirm the reality of the story, the reality of the situation, the reality of the problem. Please, confirm that this is real. And for 15 or 20 minutes, I gave her attention.

There was just allowing that. And that was the first time, subsequently it happened many times, when I realized the power, the transformative power of that, when suddenly she stopped talking, looked at all the attorney's papers around her, hundreds of papers and lawsuits that she'd been involved in for years. And suddenly she looked at me and said, at all the papers, and said, this isn't important at all, is it?

And I said, no, it isn't. And then she just sat there for a few minutes and said, all right, I'll go now, thank you. And the next morning I saw her and she said, what did you do to me last night?

Last night was the first night in 20 years that I slept well. What did you do to me? Her ego was back a little bit and there was a suspicious look on her face.

You did something to me. And from then on she believed that I had hidden powers. But if you believed that that power was your power, it would very quickly become obscured and blocked.

To realize there's no me in that whatsoever. If you ever made a me out of it, and the ego could come back through any back door, the ego will come back in and claim some attainment. I healed that woman that night.

It's possible the ego could come back, which means the portal is closing again. The openness is gone. The little egoic identity has come back and claimed some attainment.

I did that. You did nothing. It happened because you were not there.

It happened because you were transparent. You were open. You were an opening.

That's why it happened. Not because you were there. Because you were not there.

Beware of this little thing in the head. The little egoic entity trying to... Where's the back door, it says?

I need to get back in somewhere. And it's happened even with spiritual teachers. Enormous power came coming through them.

And then at some point, there was the claim of specialness. I am the one. I am the one.

You are also the one, but not quite as one as me. So that's, of course, something to watch in oneself. Claims of specialness.

Because every ego, every egoic entity is special, very special. My problems are very special. Much greater than yours.

My knowledge, greater than yours. My misery, much more than yours. I'm much more ill than you.

You have a headache? I've had a headache for years!

[Speaker 2] (1:30:12 - 1:30:18)

Satsang with Mooji What is the state of mind?

[Speaker 1] (1:33:16 - 2:15:14)

Of course, you have long given up waiting as a state of mind. So you're not waiting for anything. I talked about the impersonal nature of the pain body.

We looked at that. And just as impersonal really is a stream of thinking. It's thought.

Nobody's personal problem. Well, that's a relief. It's not my problem.

The fact that my mind won't stop isn't my problem. It's the human mind. And then it stops, because you've given it space.

Let's look at a few questions. I'll start with the smallest piece of paper. It's a short question, so that's good.

By dissolving the ego, won't I be dissolving my self-esteem? Do I not need self-esteem to love myself and others? Yes, self-esteem.

Many people seem to have a problem with that. Lack of self-esteem. I read a while ago that when the Dalai Lama was younger, he was meeting with a group of Westerners, and they were talking about the lack of self-esteem.

And he just couldn't understand that, what that was. And they tried to explain it, and then he went around the group and asked everybody, do you have that? And most people said, yes.

It's very strange, self-esteem. Now, the human species is the only species on the planet, of course, that has a relationship with itself, where you have a relationship with yourself. That's normal.

But the cat doesn't have a relationship with itself, or the bird doesn't have a relationship with itself, or the tree doesn't. So, birds, cats, trees, monkeys, flowers, none of them have a problem with self-esteem. And even the most ugly-looking cat wouldn't have a problem with self-esteem.

It hasn't created a secondary, an image self, mind-created. And once, of course, that's created, it walks with you, like next to you, behind you, or wherever it is. You always walk with a mental image of me, and you have a relationship with that.

And often, you don't like what you see, that image self. That's poor self-esteem. And then you may be in conflict with it, with the self.

You may be talking to yourself in the head, and telling yourself something about yourself. Some people talk to themselves in the first person, but many more people talk to themselves in the second person, as you. You see, you failed again.

You see, you are not as good as... You see, you... Why can't you?

And then, at times, perhaps the self feels suddenly great about itself. Some people predominantly have low self-esteem, in other words, feel bad about the mind-made image me, feel bad about that, and then realize that... Some realization comes in when they realize that it is mind-created, and they realize, and usually in the West, it's connected with New Age teachings, and they realize that they can do something about their bad self-esteem, the image.

You can actually change your thinking about yourself. First you discover that the thinking about yourself is predominantly, or to a large extent, negative, and then, you see, a little bit of presence is arising. It must be, because you are able to stand back a little bit and watch and see what you are creating with your thoughts.

And then the possibility comes of changing your thoughts, your self-esteem, through workshops, affirmations, visualization, and all those practices. And then, after a while, that image looks a little bit more comfortable, and you feel more comfortable with that thing walking alongside you. But since everything in form, all mind creations, thoughts, are subject to polarities, you can't walk continuously with high self-esteem and feel great about yourself.

There's always a polarity to it, and it's usually bound up with what happens or not happens in your life, what feedback you are getting from others, and it is usually comparative. The self-esteem is comparative. How do I rate myself in relation to others?

And that gives you the indication of where you are on one to ten, or whatever it may be.

So self-esteem is connected with the mind made me, lack of it, or good self-esteem, but it exists within polarities. Even if you spend a whole year affirming continuously that I love myself, I love myself, and maybe until now you hated yourself, and your house is full of little stickers, and wherever you look you see I love myself, and you look in the mirror and look into your eyes and repeat that I love myself.

To some extent it works, to some extent. You have a better relationship with yourself, but there's always a downside. It's hard to sustain that because the other polarity will manifest also in your life.

And you go through life in order to know how you feel about yourself, you need to compare yourself with others. And then you say, oh, I'm actually better looking than this person, so I actually feel quite good about myself. I'm actually much more educated than that person I feel good about, or whatever you can get.

Well, this person is ill and I'm healthy, so that's good. So you need for self-esteem, if you look, you need relativity, and you need comparison, and ego is always comparing itself. Now, is it possible to live without having a relationship with yourself?

Neither good nor bad. Is it possible to be so completely yourself that the mind made image of me dissolves? Yes, this is why we're here.

This is the essence of our gathering. The mind made image is connected to thought, to continuous thinking. It's fueled by, perpetuated by, upheld by, the continuous thought processes, many of which are about me.

And myself. And so I have a, through thought, I have a relationship with a thought made entity, which sometimes feels quite comfortable, and sometimes feels not pleasant, don't want to live with that person. And of course it's true, many people live with a self that is very unpleasant, that creates a lot of trouble, a lot of problems, a lot of suffering, that continuously criticizes them, that continuously blames them, that continuously tells them they're not enough.

And they live with that entity, mind made, conditioned, mind movements, conditioned in such a way that they attack you continuously, and that's the self that they have a relationship with. They would never live with a person like that. You would run out of the room.

You couldn't live with a person for more than a day. If your partner, somebody you live with, did that to you, what your self image is doing to you through thought, you would have filed for divorce long ago. But you can't do that, with that because it's on the mind.

It walks with you. And there you have this complaining, and whining, and accusing, and, oh, get away. And a large part of that is because you're identified with thought.

There isn't the ability to step back from thought and watch thought, watch that. And here, the mind made entity, because that self that you have a relationship with is part of the story-based self, the me. That was the self that I had a very unpleasant relationship with for many years.

I had a very, extremely painful relationship with myself. I couldn't live with myself anymore. And so I somehow said, that's it.

I can't live with it anymore. That's it. But that was so total that I no longer sustained, fueled the self through thought.

I didn't know anything about it. It just happened. So the mind made image dissolved.

The self that I couldn't live with, that was so heavy, heavy, dissolved. And what was left was simply I. So the I shifted from, whereas before when I said I, I was referring to myself, the unhappy, dense I, the story-based I, that dissolved.

And then the true I emerged, had always been there. Presence. I am.

Nothing in particular anymore, a simple sense of presence or beingness. And for the first time I could walk and be without having a relationship with myself. And that there is something so precious in that I or presence, so, it's beyond words, you could say.

It's like a diamond. It's something extremely, very, very precious. That's why perhaps Buddhism sometimes has the image of a diamond.

But this is not comparative. It's not a sense of that deepest self, not the mind-made self, is so precious that it has, it knows itself to be that in a non-dualistic way without needing to compare itself to others. It has nothing to do with a form or any mind form.

So as presence arises, you don't need self-esteem anymore. You don't depend on that anymore because what dissolves is the mind-made entity with which you have a relationship. And it's, so self-esteem is an intermediate thing that for a little while makes your life more pleasant.

It's fine. And then after a while, you see the unsatisfactory nature even of that because you cannot uphold continuous self-esteem. It's hard work, all these affirmations.

And then things come into your life that tell you the opposite, inevitably, sooner or later. So then suddenly you don't love yourself anymore, nor do you hate yourself because there's no self to love. There's simply the state of this, which is love.

It emanates. But you don't create a fiction that now you have a good relationship and love. So that is moving beyond self-esteem.

And now we see why the Dalai Lama couldn't understand. He only learned about that concept when he met Westerners who have a highly developed mind and ego. Others also have ego, but even more developed in the West, perhaps.

But he was surrounded perhaps by monks, and not quite as highly developed mental image. And perhaps he himself maybe never had it, but I don't know. But anyway, it was new to him, self-esteem.

How strange. And I write about it in the book. There's a little paragraph on that.

It's about the end of having a relationship with yourself. You don't need to arrange certain thoughts in your head that you feel good about it. So self-esteem is replaced by something deeper and more real.

I have found that I'm able to surrender to many things, but there are some things that I still struggle with. In particular, my pain body still reacts vigorously to injustice of all kinds, particularly abuse of power and cruelty to animals and people who still insist on saving seats here at the front of the hall with their books or clothing despite being requested not to do so. And it's always the same people.

I won't talk about the last part of the question. It's enough that I read it. But the first part...

Reacting to injustice of all kinds, particularly abuse of power, cruelty to animals. Well, wherever you look on this planet, you'll find it. In one form or another, you will find violence and cruelty and injustice and abuse of power and corruption perpetrated by humans against other humans, against children, animals, against nature, against the planet itself.

Just... You would be overwhelmed if you knew what is happening on the planet even at this moment. What humans are doing to other humans even at this moment.

And it's been going on ever since anybody can remember, recorded history and beyond. And, of course, there are certain pockets that is particularly pronounced or marked. So wherever you look, you see that unconsciousness, humans so identified with their form that they're totally trapped in it, so identified with the mental form of me that other forms are dead.

They have deadened their sensitivity through identification with mind-made images so they don't know what they are doing to other humans because they have reduced other humans to mere labels, mental labels. They have attached judgments, images and labels onto other humans. And now anything is possible, any act of violence through conceptualizing other human beings.

And what you do to others you do to yourself. So in the case of certain, let's say, this is only one example, terrorists is one example, but respectable scientists working on chemical weapons and so on, there's no end to it. But let's just, how can a terrorist commit an act kill thousands of people?

Well, before he can do it, he has to reduce those human beings to a mental concept. He has to attach a label to them and that's what he does in the case of Muslim terrorists and is not confined to that religion. Christians did many similar things a few hundred years ago.

They would kill anybody who they could label as heretic or whatever label they had. Didn't quite believe what we believe. Kill him.

And the terrorists just to put the label of unbeliever onto a group of people for some who are so identified with mind that's just that simple label already deadens, they have reduced these human beings to a mental concept and they're now called unbelievers. Once you have reduced human beings to a concept, you can do anything to them and won't sense and feel it anymore. It's a tiny example.

And so you're so identified with a form totally identified with a form that all other forms are alien to you. And you can do anything to them to use them or in fear try to kill them because they might do something to you. So really it's a total identification with conceptual identity which you manufacture for yourself and for others.

And so you don't know the aliveness that is there. You don't know that anymore because you inhabit a conceptual reality. And that conceptual reality is amplified the madness of that is amplified by the pain that you carry inside that's been there for so long the pain body that energizes and amplifies the already mad conceptual reality.

So all the pain flows into those mental concepts and then any act of violence is possible or exploitation. What you're doing to the planet they don't know when they see a forest totally identified with mind it's immediately labeled as they see only timber perhaps and how much it costs. They look at it through their mental conditioning.

Wherever you look on the planet humans are manifesting that degree of unconsciousness. That's what it is. Now of course you could feel angry about it you could feel sad about it you can feel upset about it it's only normal isn't it?

But to look through it and see also here the impersonal nature of what is being done not to manufacture an identity for those people or groups of people or tribes or religions doesn't matter not to make an identity out of the manifestation of unconsciousness and say that's who they are they are evil that is their nature. It may look like that when you look at it on the surface but ultimately all evil reveals itself as total identification with form which implies total identification with mind complete absence of an observing presence witness not the slightest gap you're totally in mind and so of course it is tempting to make that into an identity you can do it for yourself too because you can look back on your life at a time when you were less conscious than you are now and you may have done certain things in your life when you were younger to other people you may have failed to do something that you should have done perhaps in relation to your children whatever it may be so you may have done something or failed to do something that now you see as bad it is very tempting and to incorporate this which after all was only the manifestation of human unconsciousness through this form it's very tempting to make an identity for yourself out of that and say I did that that was me then it's going to incorporate it into the unpleasant story of me it becomes part of the mind created image of who I am so you're and the ego will hang on even to that anything that gives food to strengthen your identity your mind made identity the ego which is the mind made self will grasp that and it will happily grasp at guilt because guilt is to identify yourself with the movement of unconsciousness that happened through this form and say that was my identity me I did that me so it gives you it strengthens enormously your mind made sense of self and this is why it's hard when you are you do not look through that mechanism people find it hard to get rid of guilt the feeling that I am bad because I did that and so they don't see they make an identity for themselves out of something that was the expression of human unconsciousness and the same thing for others you can do it to others say that is who they are and then you you may begin to want to fight those people because they you must fight evil and so you get drawn into having enemies you create enemies and it looks so just it is a just cause but you are attacking and without knowing it you get very subtly drawn into unconsciousness through attacking unconsciousness manifestations of unconsciousness very subtly you get drawn into that yourself it does not mean that you cannot take action in order to remedy certain manifestations of unconsciousness but all that is secondary to getting to the root of human unconsciousness which of course is in each one getting to the root of it in yourself as mind identification becoming free of that and then you can also of course you can at the same time also do good where you see it is needed help people yes but being careful that you don't create enemies to fight this will draw you into unconsciousness and before you know it you do the same things that those people that you're fighting against so to see them also here the non personal nature of human dysfunction of human madness they are simply through those forms what is being expressed is the human condition in its present evolutionary stage which is coming to an end this stage fortunately but you see it still everywhere so don't make it into an identity nor for an identity for yourself about something that you did once nor something that you observe in others and that's called forgiveness forgiveness means not to mistake human unconsciousness for who that you human being is the opposite of forgiveness is to make that mistake so forgiveness is simply to see through that and see the true meaning of forgiveness there is nothing to forgive that is the true meaning of forgiveness it's all contained in because we have this beautiful that image of the cross and Jesus that contains so much wisdom that you could all in contained in that image and it's all contained in the last words of Jesus which were forgive them for they know not what they do he did not make an identity for those people out of what they did to him now they know not what they do means in modern terminology they are unconscious so if he had lived now he probably would have said they are completely unconscious it's okay they don't know so forgiveness is what arises as you stop manufacturing mind created identities for people and then you become a manifestation of a different consciousness in this world and your presence is then enough to change the world because that transformation of consciousness has already happened within you very tempting that non forgiveness is very tempting and its mind and its ego similarly your parents you might find you may still have some resentment some of you they expressed human unconsciousness they didn't have a choice it looks as if they had a choice but that comes only in with presence and that's the choice to be free of mind when you talk to consciousness arising even as the old is getting louder in the world can that also be on an individual basis i find the stronger presence gets in this room form the more dramatic the pain body gets when it arises could you talk a little about this yes i've encountered this quite often that as presence arises you experience your pain body more acutely

[Speaker 2] (2:15:16 - 2:15:16)

more

[Speaker 1] (2:15:18 - 2:48:11)

almost it feels sometimes as if it came up all at once and of course the pain body is trying to sabotage presence don't we're not making the pain body into an enemy not but this is what the pain body tries to do so you simply see that this is what it tries to do so it will create it can be such so much so that i'm tempted to say almost that it can be to such an extreme that it looks as if you were being faced with your entire karma all at once but ultimately it comes up to sabotage but the fact that it comes up is the opportunity for it to rise up into the light of consciousness and be transmuted there so it is right and good that it should come up because there is sufficient presence although it tries to sabotage presence there is enough presence in you to meet it in that state of attention and allowing and that's an accelerated transmutation that many people now experience especially those people in whom presence is arising very quickly who come into contact with this or other teachings that in slightly different ways point to the same so as presence arises the transmutation of all that accumulated pain also accelerates so that you are right there is an equivalent movement that what you see in the outer world the old and the new the old becoming more mad even as the new arises to the extent that you know how usually television expresses only the old consciousness but it's relatively rare that it anything new comes through that is a manifestation of the liberation the liberation from mind to the extent that this teaching was on national television in Canada in the evening news for three minutes all the other news were of course about the violence in the Middle East and this and there and the killings there and the uprisings there and and suddenly there was oh and then there's this there's this teacher here how did this get into the news?

And then I hadn't realized how closely the two go together this would have been inconceivable even a couple of years ago to have something this isn't news I've always been saying this is underground this is happening underground it's not news and yet it's appearing even in the media it filters through here and there yes of course they had to have a little thing to make it appear as if it were newsworthy and they said who is this teacher who stills the minds of the rich and famous? Oh that's news but the producer actually knew what he was doing and he knew that he needed that little thing to get it in there otherwise his his boss wouldn't have allowed it in so he had to get this in and it got in so it's there it's no longer totally underground and then the equivalent thing within human beings the madness is still there even as the new arises and at times the wave of madness which is both mind identification and the amplified mind through the pain body can come in very powerful waves and you can feel oh and yet the there is a reason why this is happening it the transmutation is accelerating it has to come up into the light of presence you the pain body cannot be transmuted if it doesn't come up into the light of presence now the pain body wants the pain body I'm talking about the pain body as if it were an entity and it's a perspective on it the pain body really wants to sabotage it to get food back from your mind it wants to take your mind over again so it comes up very strongly but there is it doesn't know that there is a greater larger reason why it's coming up and that is because it needs to become transmuted and perhaps deep down it wants to become transmuted trying to sabotage really is wanting to dissolve wanting to become dissolved into consciousness so you're faced sometimes with waves of pain or madness in your life and just well what can you do just be there if you can and watch that and occasionally you will get lost in it that's part of it too and then you wake up out of it again and perhaps next time a witnessing presence remains even as the wave sweeps through you and the if there is a witnessing presence even if only in the background the wave will move through more quickly if there's no witnessing presence it gets lodged in here and it can hang on through witnessing presence the pain body comes up perhaps very strongly and you will experience it as an energy movement through you which may even if you may even shake with anger or fear as that happens the body may shake as this energy comes up and you meet it in the state of acceptance and surrender there's a fear and you allow it to happen allow it to be even as the body shakes one could say you are suffering if you can even call that suffering because if there's an observing presence it's just pain so you're getting through the end of suffering are you still suffering a little bit and you suffer consciously by allowing that pain movement to be there you suffer it's okay that's enormous powerful to bring that acceptance into the suffering and then it's not suffering anymore it's simply pain suffering requires an entity a me with a story with mind activity around it and a story around it a suffering entity but now you realize the pain body is simply energy movement non-personal nobody's it's not you so that's the so when it comes in those of you in whom it comes strongly welcome it as it comes if you lose yourself in it it takes you over okay that was it and next time see if you can be there as it arises and accept it is it beneficial to the practice of being present to live in an ashram or monastery if so are there any you recommend well i visited quite a few and everywhere they seem to be struggling with the same things whether it's in the monastery or in the outside world they're having the same conflicts and the same struggles in the utopian communities and you look underneath the surface and you find it's the same as the board meeting in the corporation when they get together so you can go to a monastery or ashram realizing it's fine you can surrender there or you can surrender in everyday life as a householder surrender there it doesn't really matter where you surrender of course there are certain monasteries or groups where people come together in order to be present with varying degrees of success it helps to be with people who are also going through this transformation entering presence Sangha to have a community it doesn't necessarily have to be a place where you live but to get together occasionally in the state of presence either in stillness or listen to a talk that comes out of presence and then go into stillness that can be helpful often people ask me when are you going to have your center and I said well it may be happening it hasn't happened yet who knows in any kind of organization ashram whatever it may be you will find unless the people are already free they will bring in their mind structures even if the reason for being there is freedom they still carry with them the mind structures and there have been many examples of utopian communities who degenerated very quickly into the same madness that you see in the outside world their intentions were good the whole of communism the intentions were good behind it equality justice no ownership wonderful but they hadn't they thought the answers were in some organizational structure change that not realizing whatever you create out of your state of consciousness is a reflection of that state of consciousness and they hadn't looked at that so communism in order to achieve a better world a future projection first they had to kill about 10 million people in their own countries in order to get there future salvation was in the future and the moment the now was a means to getting there and if the now is a means to getting to a mental projection of future the now becomes hell and you can do that to yourself on a personal level or you can do it collectively if you as a group need to get to a future projection so i would recommend that you visit some monasteries and see how it goes visit see how you feel there buddhist whatever it may be hindu buddhist christian am i ever going to have a center i don't know what's it going to be like i don't is it going to generate into egoic madness who knows surrender wherever you are wherever you are now is the right place for your practice of surrender that is the primordial truth not seek a situation that is more conducive to surrender seek a situation that is more conducive it may change your external situation is more likely to change if you surrender now if presence arises now then it's more likely to change but to say the external change is a prerequisite for my practice that is a fallacy wherever you are whatever condition whatever state surrender to that no demand that this moment should be different that this place should be different a total alignment with what is and then who knows perhaps suddenly an ashram grows around you before you know it especially in India you just need to sit under a tree and if you're present and surrendered of course there are many who pretend also I know that there are many who pretend because it's a living they couldn't do that in the west because whether you are real or not real they won't recognize you but here if you sit under a tree or in a cave somebody will find you and somebody will know that be drawn to you to that to the state of consciousness that you embody and they'll come with some food and then two years later somebody else will come and then two more and then some more people sitting under trees around you and then before you know it there's a little ashram all that doesn't happen in the west it's beautiful it's unstructured there's nobody saying okay let's have a planning committee you are in charge of that you are in charge of that now let's go and do it whereas here's organically it suddenly comes into being and that's beautiful less egoic intervention not that some egos will get in there too of course they will and then if you're unlucky a western person will come and write a book about you and then they'll transport you to the west and then the problems start I'm joking a little it is wonderful that so much of the essence of the spirituality of this country has spread now it's flowing there and it's still the same and yet there's enormous intensity to it now because of the evolutionary stage that we are at on the planet one could almost say all those thousands of years where preparation getting ready for this evolutionary transformation on the planet and it's we've come a long way in just half a century I read recently I picked up Paul Brunton's book in search of secret India through which Ramana Maharshi became known in the west and in the introduction he's trying very hard to convince the reader that India has something to offer to the west which was maybe 1930 or whenever it was written trying to convince it is something valuable and now you don't need convincing anymore nobody needs convincing anymore and then we have this strange phenomenon which is very recent western spiritual teachers unheard of that they haven't existed since the middle ages the last spiritual teachers were the Christian mystics in Europe and then after that all you had was institutionalized religion mind stuff of course maybe a few accidental realizations here and there but they were quickly killed or shut away and now it's like appearing everywhere western spiritual teachers in the west it's still you can't spiritual teacher to many is a meaningless term what do you do for a living spiritual what's that and yet it's growing and that's for many of them the seed was here they were seeded here this teacher this form it happened accidentally but after that I was drawn to certain expressions of Indian spirituality through Ramana Maharshi and Krishna Murti and I realized through them what had happened to me and there was a strong immediate sense of connected deep connectedness if not to say oneness so all then people asked me often have you been to India and then they were surprised when I said no I've never been to India what you haven't been to India and you are a spiritual teacher and I said I carry India in here because India represents the inner dimension and the west represents the outer one could say and so I always felt drawn to that I never felt really not that after the transformation that I feel like a westerner India is the inner not that it does not manifest also human madness that is universal on the planet of course you have manifestations of human madness in different forms but that's here that is universal and yet it's the cradle of the transformation of consciousness attention to the resistance of the present if powerful enough will dissolve that resistance and a state of presence will emerge what will dissolve the central core of the self so that it doesn't create endless waves of resistance can we explore the nature of the realization that is necessary what will dissolve the central core of self so that it doesn't create endless waves of resistance central that so what is the central core of self the mind structures the mind movements that are the mental image of me with its accumulated content plus the pain body the two in cooperation form the central core of self so what will dissolve that of course that's easy surrender only now surrender it's too easy isn't it it's too simple surrender to whatever form this moment takes then the self cannot survive in the state of surrender to what is it's a simple as that the pain body cannot renew itself when you surrender to the fact that there is a pain body and so surrender i'm not telling you from now on you need to be in continuous surrender for 24 hours a day oh no it's not that difficult it's only this moment that you need to surrender to not just just this just this whatever form this takes it's always this and that you meet in and through surrender that you can do you can't surrender for 24 hours a day that's a problem but just this it's only now and so the egoic self nor the pain body can survive in surrender and so before and then the question may arise well how long is it going to take before the central core of self and my pain body have dissolved and that question implies that surrender is not yet complete is this moment that bad that you need to get to a future one where you achieve a certain state to realize the goodness and depth that is already here and only through surrender you realize that who you are already you are greater than in your wildest egoic dreams you could ever be you are already greater than you could ever be even if the wildest egoic dreams of achievement became realized now already you are that and you're not going to be closer to God at some future point than you are now and tomorrow you will do your own thing or do nothing we may have a complete day of silence on Thursday in the meantime every moment is now and no matter where you go or what you do whether you stay here tomorrow in silence or go out and experience this or that see this or that don't walk around as a heavy person just a field of presence and perceive through that beautiful stillness that is there in you if you go somewhere perceive the multiplicity of forms the beauty of it be as much free of mental labeling as possible surrendered to this moment now thank much

[Speaker 2] (2:49:52 - 2:51:17)

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2002-Eckhart Tolle Choose to Awaken Now

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 2:36:42)

Welcome to this afternoon we are spending together. As I was sitting in the back room just now, at five to one, a voice came through the loudspeaker and said, this is your five-minute warning, show time in five minutes. That's what they do in theaters.

So this must be show time. But of course it's not a performance, there may be an association in your mind of theater, stage, well there's no curtain but there could be, an association in your mind of this kind of setting with performance, but it's been canceled. And instead all you get is a man sitting in a chair speaking.

And not even someone who has very much of a stage presence. So if you expected a performance or even if you expected a lecture, that's not what you're getting. You're getting less than that and more than that at the same time.

The focal point this afternoon is not here on the speaker, the main character in this non-performance is sitting down there in that chair. And the words will always point you back to that. If you think there's something interesting out here, there isn't.

If you expected food for thought, you probably won't get very much. So just a few words I'd like to say about how to be here this afternoon. Because if you don't know how to be here fully, very quickly it's going to get boring and uninteresting.

Because you're not getting enough stimulus for thinking. And in an event like this with so many people, it's inevitable that a few are going to walk out after 20 or 30 minutes. They knew not how to be here fully.

They were not completely present here. They were absorbed in the stream of thinking, which is normal. One reason why we are here is that you're being taken out of the stream of thinking and realize that you haven't disappeared, that when you step out of the stream of thinking, consciousness is still there.

You're fully conscious sitting there listening. It's awareness that doesn't need thought. This is the new level of consciousness that's arising in human beings.

Otherwise so many people wouldn't be here. Certainly not to experience this speaker hasn't got that much to offer. But something is happening within you that corresponds to these words.

The words point back to that. And the words and that which is beyond the words here in this field pulls that level of consciousness, which I sometimes call the unconditioned consciousness, out of you, so to speak. But it is already arising in most of you.

Otherwise you wouldn't be here, with the exception perhaps of those who came here involuntarily because of insistence of their husband or wife. You must come to this. Okay.

I might as well check this guy out. Okay. And then after 20 minutes, what's he talking about?

I can't, I just can't figure out what it is that he's talking about. And then restlessness comes in because not enough stimulus is being given to the mind. It's often starts with a twitching leg that was designed by universal intelligence to wake you up.

Nothing better than waking up a little shock. And life tends to do that to us. The little ego says, please, no, I don't want any of this.

But it happens. So there's the twitching, restless, and finally, can't stand this anymore. So there may be quite a few of you who have never come to a talk like this.

So just a few pointers of how to be here, not just as a mind or as a head attached to a body. And you know, when you're a head attached to a body, you're always uneasy and waiting for the next thing. When is he going to say something meaningful?

Some interesting new theory that I can believe in or disagree with even better. That keeps it going. I disagree completely.

So one thing we surrender here this afternoon is this inner need, which is the human mind. This enormous inner need, usually unrecognized because it's so normal. This enormous inner need for the next moment.

When you look at people, you can actually see they're looking for it. They are overlooking always this. And they're looking there, the next moment.

And with that comes that continuous state of unease with this moment. This moment becomes a hindrance to where I need to get, to the next moment that's going to fulfill me or do something for me. Let's get there.

Where is it? That's the normal human state. And if you cannot step out of that, you will not be able to survive this afternoon here.

So how do you step out of that momentum of the thought processes that are always moving towards the next thing? Move your attention into this moment. First thing that it means for many people, when the attention moves out of thinking into presence, they become more acutely aware of their sense perceptions, their surroundings.

A certain alertness arises, as if you had been away and now suddenly you're back. And it is true, you had been away, your attention, your whole sense of identity was absorbed by thought processes, most of them problematic. Another problem to solve before I can be free.

So why we are here this afternoon is to experience at first hand what many of you are experiencing already and know it. And many others who are present here experience already without knowing it. And I will be pointing to that to see that you can recognize that this state of presence is already probably arising in you, even if you don't know it yet, because it is not recognized by the movement of thought.

It is not recognized by the mind made me. It recognizes its problems, it recognizes its need for the next moment. It cannot recognize the state of awareness, the arising presence.

But we are here in this field to enable that state of consciousness to arise more fully. So your attention moves into the field of now. And a very helpful thing that I may be pointing to quite a few times during this afternoon as you sit here is to feel a certain connectedness with your inner energy field, the inner body.

To sense that you are alive. To have a, to feel, to sense a little bit the inner energy field of your body, hands, legs. There is a certain aliveness there.

Usually you would not be aware of it because all your attention is absorbed by thinking. Now you place some attention away from thinking into the sense of aliveness in the body as you sit here. That provides an anchor for staying present here.

And this, you'll be able to listen much better when you are present here. Anchored within the body. Inhabiting the body as you sit here.

And feel a certain aliveness. Maybe you cannot feel it everywhere yet, but a certain aliveness is there. That's enough to have some attention there.

Then the rest of your attention is on the sense perceptions, especially listening and seeing. So being present here, it is an amazing shift in consciousness. And yet, to the mind, it is meaningless.

It is insignificant. It doesn't even recognize it. It says, so this can't be important.

My problems are important. How does it solve my problems? It does.

What is coming to an end, what has to come to an end on this planet very soon, is a state of consciousness that is totally identified with thinking. Where you only know yourself as thought processes. And you're totally identified with whatever happens and experience the corresponding emotions that go with those thoughts.

That is the egoic mind-made entity, me, with its little story. With its unsatisfactory story. Never satisfying for long, the story of me.

Always something comes in to sabotage the story the way it should be going. And certainly it hasn't gone the way it was supposed to go, this story of me. But I still have some future to make it work.

The mind-made entity, conditioned by its surroundings, its past, to only know yourself as that, that is coming to an end as the normal human state of consciousness. Because that excessive identification with thought processes prevents you from knowing who you are at the deeper levels of your being. You remain a surface phenomenon, an uneasy ripple or wave movement on the surface.

Just here, always never sensing that deep connectedness with who you are underneath the movement of thought. And that leads to dreadful madness on the planet. The madness that we experience in interpersonal relationships.

The collective madness on the planet. There are certain focal points on the planet where you can see the collective madness more clearly than others. But it is everywhere.

And when you get to the root of it, all that which creates this enormous amount of violence and suffering on the planet, and is even threatening the survival of the planet, what is at the root of that, what one could only describe as dysfunction, human dysfunction, of which we have seen so much in the 20th century, and what we are seeing now is a continuation of it. What is it that lies at the root of all that? But that is also within ourselves still, although the new is arising, the old consciousness, the mind-identified state is still there, it comes in waves.

There was an article written last week in the New York Times by an Israeli writer about the madness in the Middle East that we are witnessing there. And he used an interesting expression, he tried to get to the bottom of it. What is it that makes people behave in such a way?

And he came up with a very interesting realization, but perhaps did not realize himself how profound the implications are of this realization that he came up with. What he said was, the people who are involved in this conflict do not seem to have the ability, now he used an interesting expression, the ability to accommodate a competing narrative. Narrative means it is the story that you are telling yourself and others which interprets your life situation.

A narrative can be a personal narrative, that is the story you are telling yourself and others about who you are. And a narrative can be a collective story, that is the story that everybody who is part of this nation or tribe is telling themselves and others and is reinforced continuously, which is their interpretation of how things are. And each side has its narrative and then there is a competing narrative that is the opposite of my narrative.

Every narrative is a story, every story is mind movement, is thought structures. Every story is the movement of thought which becomes, certain thought structures become deeply lodged in the mind and they hang on in there. This is how it is.

And your sense of self, your sense of identity, your sense of who you are becomes entangled with that narrative. Now people do that on a personal level, in their own personal lives and in some places more than others, less so in countries like the one we are. But in certain countries the collective narrative still has enormous hold on people.

The collective mental conditioning overwhelms the mind and every personal sense of self, it really is predominantly dominated by the collective us and our story, our narrative. This is how things are and you find that collective identification very strong in all those places where there is an enormous amount of conflict and violence. And so there is the seeming inability to see what is happening that I am identifying with a particular way of interpreting reality.

And I am mistaking a thought or a set of thoughts for the truth of how things are or the truth of who I am, if it's on the personal level. So people do it collectively and personally to themselves. Certain ideas form in your mind who you are, conditioning, parents told you, society tells you.

Or you react against what parents told you and society tells you of who you are and it's also conditioned. Then your sense of self is in the movement of thought and there are certain repetitive thought movements that then provide you with your sense of self. Personal, predominantly personal or predominantly collective.

And there is the inability to see the limitations of thought. The inability to see that ultimately no thought that you have concerning anything or anybody, yourself, a situation, a place, truth, it cannot encompass the truth. A thought at best will give you an aspect of the truth.

Every thought that you think about anything or anybody is a temporary perspective. When you know thought to be a temporary perspective, thought is beautiful. Thought enables you to do many things.

When you forget, when you do not know that every thought that you have about anything or anybody is one of many, many possible perspectives on this person, on this situation, on this place, whatever it may be. When you don't know that, you mistake an interpretation, a thought, a judgment. Jesus used the word judgment a lot.

What he's really talking about is thought because ultimately every thought is a judgment. As long as you know that, it's fine. You can use thinking, thinking arises, but the illusion that anything that you can express through thought can embody the absolute truth is not there anymore.

That means when your sense of who you are is totally identified with the story that you are telling yourself and others, that is an illusory sense of self and most people are trapped in it. Not just the people in the Middle East or Northern Ireland or wherever there may be long-standing conflict that's been going on for in some places hundreds of years. In what used to be Yugoslavia, they've been fighting for hundreds of years.

Every generation absorbs the same mental conditioning, identifies with the same thought structures that says we are right, we are that and that, and they are totally mind. Then you are a mind-made entity. You don't know who you are beyond that and all your entire life then is designed to strengthen that ultimately illusory entity, me and my story or us and our story.

That entity is a thought form consisting of different thoughts that come together and that entity says me, I or us, we and them. And because that sense of identity is so fearful and fragile because deep down you don't feel that you really know yourself, so it has to be reinforced by having the other to fight against. I define myself when I am trapped in a mind-made thought-based sense of self, whether collective or personal or a mixture.

I am trapped in an illusion that seeks to strengthen itself, that seeks to strengthen its boundary, me and my mental position, my story, my truth. Of course you don't call it my truth, you call it the truth. And it needs the other to define itself through, it needs some kind of conflict or enemy out there because then that state of self that is mind-made feels stronger for a moment and then you need some more.

You can see it in your personal life as the need to be right in an argument. The enormous need to be right that has a lot of emotion with it. You have expressed your thoughts, somebody else says the exact opposite and says you're completely wrong.

What do you mean? And people usually in a situation like that become totally unconscious. What that means, I'm not saying that they faint, they become unconscious, it's almost like fainting, they become unconscious in the sense that they are totally identified with thought.

That spiritually speaking means unconscious, totally identified with thought processes and the emotions that go with them. And that happens when there's total identification with thought as me, a mental position as me. And you can see in relationships, partners, how very easily they start arguing and each person identifies with their mental position.

This is how it is. No, it's not. And this has been going on for many thousands, thousands, hundreds of thousands of years and even intensifying that identification with thinking, intensifying.

It was a necessary stage in human evolution. It all started with the apple. Because the apple came from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

It is the arising of thought. Yes, no, right, wrong, yes. You can tell the difference between this and that.

Thought is the ability to separate, to cut up into little pieces, to analyze. And we had, humanity had to go through it. It was an evolutionary stage and I'm saying it was, although we are still in it to a large extent, but we are coming out of it.

And as this evolutionary stage reaches its end, the dysfunction increases. Because, simply, it's coming to an end. When it no longer works, that's all.

It doesn't work anymore for survival. For a long time, it helped humans to survive. They could think about how to make a trap and do this.

And then it has served its purpose. It becomes dysfunctional, just as the caterpillar becomes dysfunctional just before it becomes a butterfly. Life doesn't work anymore as a caterpillar.

It's getting too hard. I can't crawl anymore. But of course, something in the caterpillar says, no, I'm not going to change.

That's just what I am. Oh, it's fearful. What's going to happen to me?

So this, the conflict in the Middle East, is just one example of a dysfunction in the human mind, which this writer expressed in those words, he called it, the inability to accommodate a competing narrative, which means to see another perspective and see all. And to recognize thought, every thought, as a fragment, not the truth, a fragment. So this, whenever you see, whatever you can say about another human being, is a temporary truth, a temporary relative fragment.

You can say, he's a dreadful, he's the worst criminal I've ever met. Okay, this is one perspective. Maybe true at this moment.

But you may not have seen him interacting with his child. You may not have seen him at the age of six. You may not see him in twenty years' time when he's enlightened, become free through his suffering.

But thought fixes everything. It wants to fix things. This is how it is.

Conclusions, premature conclusions that you draw concerning people, events, situations. The mind is looking out for that. It's waiting.

Whenever this mind-made entity meets someone, it's already beginning to judge. How does this person fit into my thought structures? And then five minutes later it has an opinion.

And often then that opinion is there, it's fixed. And then it's repeated to others. And then people cling to their opinions.

It's part of who I think I am, me as mind. So the movement that is happening in human consciousness, happening now for the first time on a wider scale, because it has to happen for the species to survive, is a movement out of thought. Out of identification with thought.

The arising of something within you that is deeper than thought. Now what is thought? Thought is one of the many forms that consciousness takes.

Consciousness in humans manifests to a large extent as thought. Consciousness manifests, the one consciousness manifests as an entire universe. Flowers, trees, the planet, animals, temporary formations, galaxies.

And in humans it becomes thought. And to realize the vastness that is there underneath thought. And that is the arising of a new dimension of consciousness.

It doesn't mean that you are not going to think anymore. Thought still comes. But complete belief in every thought that comes, that doesn't happen anymore.

In other words, as this begins, you are beginning to have a new relationship to thought. You can see thought that happens inside you. The reactivity of thought, very strong.

The reactivity of the thought made me. What's the next thing I can react to? To strengthen myself.

To have a little enemy, at least for a few moments. And in having a little enemy, which can be a situation that I'm complaining about, a person, having a little enemy for a moment, makes me feel more strongly I can sense who I am. You did that to me.

It is satisfying to the entity, the egoic entity for a moment, it feels stronger in its sense of self. Every time it complains about something, there's a contraction in my sense of self and also a strengthening of the mind made entity. And then it's looking out, what's the next thing I can react to?

It's a wheel. It sits behind a wheel in a car. Some people habitually, they carry their waiting for the next thing to react to and you might think it's always another person.

That is, everyone to some extent carries that inside. This is not a personal shortcoming. Of yours.

It is not a personal thing at all. It is collective conditioning of the human mind. It is a collective structure.

The need to react, the need to have a problem, an enemy somewhere, it's unconscious. When you make it conscious, when it happens, you see it. You see it.

I'm right. And you feel the emotion that goes with being right. With your partner, wherever.

And it's an amazing thing when you watch that in yourself. You can see it in others more easily, of course. Look how unconscious he is.

I can't believe how unconscious you are. To see something in oneself, a reaction, a identification with a mental position, and suddenly to see it, perhaps in the middle of it, is enough. And not even to say, oh, I shouldn't be having that reaction.

I'm an advanced spiritual person. I shouldn't be having that, something is wrong here. But there it is.

And the advanced spiritual person, how does one become an advanced spiritual person? Does it require a lot of knowledge or some arduous practice of self-denial through beating yourself up or sitting in the cold for hours, meditate? I'm going to get there.

I'm going to get there. The advanced spiritual person is the person that allows this moment to be. Is that it?

Allows this moment to be because... Why should I allow this moment to be? Because it is.

Because it always is as it is now. Yeah, but it shouldn't be. But it is.

Yeah, but this is not how it should be. It still is. And then you see that you go through life, or you have been going through life, a lot of your life has been an inner no.

No. And the egoic mind-made entity thrived on the no. It thrives on having enemies.

It doesn't need to go as far as to make you into a suicide bomber. It could. That's an extreme manifestation of the same thing.

It thrives on that. And then, of course, it says, I can't allow this to be. There are so many things in this world that should not be.

There are so many things in this world that are unjust, unfair. So much suffering, so much... Yes, of course, that is true, that there is an enormous amount of suffering in this world.

And in yourself, suffering is present in every human being in different forms. In the affluent West, there is an enormous amount of suffering too, not perhaps on the material level, mental, emotional suffering. And the illusion is to believe that when I allow this moment to be, I will become ineffective, I will become passive, and nothing is going to change anymore.

I will be stuck with this dreadful moment for the rest of my life. So to get rid of this dreadful moment, I've got to fight it. And then, of course, the next moment, which is the same as this moment, dreadful again.

That state... And here we have an approach, another perspective on what it means to be fully awake here and now. We pointed already to the helpful fact that you can feel the inner body as you sit here, even now.

That takes you out of the stream of thinking and thinking. And then you can become conscious of this moment instead of running away from it, or internally denying it, fighting it. You can become conscious of how things are right now.

This is how things are. And you allow. And what is could be a reaction inside yourself.

It could be an old... And then you see it, and don't make it into a problem, and you watch the emotion that comes with it. There it is.

You allow that. So you don't become an advanced spiritual practitioner by achieving something, total control of all my inner states, and total control of external conditions. I am in total control of my life.

This is of course the ego field. I need to lie awake in bed all night because I have important problems to think about. If I don't worry, my life is going to fall apart.

I'll be irresponsible. Or as one famous actress said, I read in the paper some while ago, who by the way is always ill, she said about some situation, she said, I wouldn't be human if I didn't worry myself sick about it. And worry is identification with thought.

And useless thought, a lot of it of course, even psychologists who are not interested in spiritual matters have recognized that 95% of our thinking is pretty repetitive and useless. And one way of stepping out of it, that entire conditioned movement needs reactivity, needs opposition, needs resistance. It's the mind made entity.

So when now the possibility arises of living in a different way, and if it were not happening already, I could not make it happen to you. The fact that you are here and recognize something, some truth that you already know, that is already happening inside you, that means you don't need convincing, you recognize the fundamental truth of living, that there is the possibility now, perhaps there wasn't before for most humans, that there is the possibility now of living in alignment with the suchness of this moment. Inner alignment.

And that is the state out of which, amazingly, effective action comes. Because an intelligence that is greater than the conditioned movement of thought is suddenly able to operate in and through you. And so that state of complete alignment with what the Buddha actually called the suchness of things, which is always what is here and now.

I call it the form that this moment takes. This moment, of course, is the only moment there is. Is it?

No, I don't agree with that. There is a next moment. Okay, that was somebody's mind.

There is only this moment ever. Nothing could be outside of it. Nothing could happen outside of it.

It has to be now for anything to be. Being is now. Life can only be now.

You could remember something that happened. How was it possible that this happened? It happened in the field of now.

It happened when it was now and I remember it now. Now is the only reality it has. And the future, there seems to be so much of it, until there is very little.

And that can be frightening. Your future shrinks. Your past grows.

And you are gradually pushed out of your life. On one level, past and future seem so real. Time, past and future, on one level, yes, you can't deny it.

That there is such a thing. Time, everything passes so quickly. It's fleeting.

Gone. Gone. My childhood.

Gone. My first marriage. Gone.

Gone. Second marriage. Gone.

And so there is... Please stop, you say, to time. I don't want to be dragged along this stream of time towards my inevitable doom.

But you can't stop it. So on one level, time seems to dominate everything. And yet, on another level, past and future don't exist.

There is only now. Always now. One can't really argue with that.

That your life is always this moment. Your life cannot not ever be this moment. So on one level, you have what appears to be very real, and yet, it's always now.

Let's stay with that fact, because this is a practical session, not philosophical. Discourse on time belongs somewhere else. There's a practical fact that it's always now.

And if I'm never in alignment, or extremely rarely in alignment with now, then that means I'm out of alignment with life itself. Which means the power that is inherent in life the intelligence that is inherent in life the beauty that is inherent in life cannot fully express itself through this contracted entity that spends most of its time, its nows, needing to get somewhere else. The next moment.

Which is really only a thought. Future is a thought. A mind movement.

So when we see that, and we also see another strange fact that first we see there is only ever this moment. So you might as well make friends with it, since you haven't got anything else. Hmm.

But then a strange thing happens. People believe that the now is very short-lived. They think a now is only a brief thing.

I think in one of the leaflets about this afternoon together it said spend an afternoon in the now. That will be the longest now you've ever experienced. But of course, yes, this is what this is about.

Now, the fact that change happens continuously doesn't mean that there are many different nows. The form that this moment takes changes. Continuously.

The field of now remains. Often things happen that are challenging in the now. It is very strange that when you allow whatever form this now takes to be as it is, the deeper level of your being opens up.

This is a miracle. When you see it in your life, how your life changes as you live in alignment with what is rather than against what is, that is the end of hundreds of thousands of years of conditioning and you are stepping out of thought. Because it is the movement of thought that judges continuously what is as not enough, not good, or needs more than this.

The movement of thought, the thought-made entity always needs more. I'm not full enough yet. Not complete yet.

It never is. Where is the next thing that I can identify with? That's why people look so uneasy a lot of the time.

Because they are looking for the next thing to make their sense of self a bit more complete. A bit more, please. Okay, more.

And the more is supplied by the next moment, which doesn't exist. It's a dreadful way to live. And you see another fact.

For thousands of years the Buddhists have already recognized that everything in this universe is interconnected. And now physicists also see that ultimately there are no isolated events or isolated phenomena. There is a web of interconnectedness that is the entire cosmos.

It is all connected to everything else, not what appears to us as an isolated event is connected to the totality on deeper levels. And that is good to realize. And this brings us to the strange fact of the inevitability of this moment.

Because the totality of the universe has brought this about. It happens because it cannot be otherwise. And then you allow it.

You see that connectedness and you allow what is to be. You bring a yes to it. Suddenly, and now I'm using words to describe something that is really beyond words.

With this yes to what is now, something opens up which I can only describe and many of you already know have had glimpses of it or it's already very strongly present in your life. I can only describe as there is a sense of space around what happens when you allow it to happen. A spaciousness in which this event, and that is an inner sense of space, a spaciousness in which this event is happening.

It could be, for example, the obnoxious behavior of some person close to you. She is doing it again. He is doing it again.

Before it brought up the inevitable and suddenly you see the inevitability of this moment. And suddenly you allow and so the event comes and there is the... or something breaks down and you go, oh, it's allowed.

That's strange. There is the event or let's say some dreadful noise happens suddenly and usually there would be reaction. Oh, this shouldn't be, they should, why don't they?

And suddenly you allow it. Oh, suddenly there is a space around it, a space around what happens. One could also call it a peace around what happens.

And you can notice it particularly when you do this, when something so-called unpleasant happens and you allow it. There is suddenly a space around it, a larger context in which that happens. And that space is a space of peace around it.

Some people had to be driven by life to an extreme form of suffering before that happened to them spontaneously inside. And in the midst of hell on earth, in the most dreadful conditions, something inside them stopped resisting this moment. And there was a vast sense of peace and space despite the appearance of evil or badness in this moment.

That is the inner shift. It's not when you demand that the world should change. People have been demanding that for a long time.

But allow the is-ness of things and see what happens then. Because the allowing is the arising of the new state of consciousness. If it were not arising in you, these words would be meaningless.

You would not understand even what it means when I say allow this moment to be or you would feel threatened by it, shout something and run out of the room. And so that is what in spiritual language is sometimes called surrender. What really is alignment, inner alignment with what is.

Now, what that really means is for thousands and thousands of years human beings have been totally absorbed in what I sometimes call object consciousness. Their entire attention goes into thoughts that arise often in reaction to things that happen. Every thought is an object in your consciousness and takes up your entire attention.

And so people inhabit their entire life is crammed full with thoughts, object consciousness. Now let's think about this, and then the next thing, and then the next thought comes. Each thought absorbs your attention.

Each thought is connected to the me thought form. No space. Complete absence of space.

Just one thing after another, one thought after another. And what arises with the yes to what is, is space consciousness. Another word for that is stillness.

Inner stillness arises through the simple yes to now. And that is the new dimension of consciousness. And that is the essence of who you are.

So you are, on the one hand, something that is manifested in form. You have a form identity. A life situation.

Every person here is somehow, one could almost say, trapped in their particular life situation. Most of them problematic to a larger or lesser degree. The more the new consciousness is arising in you, the more the problematic nature of your life situation lessens.

Not that life does not present challenges anymore, but you no longer perceive your life in terms of problems. So there is your life situation, and that differs for each one of you. Some are asking themselves what their life purpose is on this planet.

What am I going to do with my life? Others may not have that much future left. In some of you the body may not be healthy.

In others there may be some very problematic configuration of events in your life. Life situations differ. Some are rich, some are poor.

Some are important in the eyes of the world. Some are not important in the eyes of the world. Or some of you may be important today and unimportant tomorrow in the eyes of the world.

I was unimportant for many years. Now I'm important in the eyes of the world. And then, who knows, next year I may be gone in the eyes of the world.

That sense of who you are that's derived from your life situation, which is in the corresponding thought forms, we are going beyond that. We respect that. Yes, you are in this particular situation, in those relationships.

These are things that you cannot deny. There is the story of me. There is the story of my life.

And it's not going to come to an end this afternoon. No, the story of me continues. Because that is part of my form identity.

And some stories are happier than others. But there is a strong element of unsatisfactoriness and unhappiness in every story. Not just yours.

The element of unsatisfactoriness is built into the very structure of this mind form that is the story of me. But it is only unsatisfactory as long as you are looking for some self-fulfillment, some enhanced identity through improving your life situation or the story that you are telling yourself about who you are. Then it's always unsatisfying.

But when you realize that on that level you are never going to be satisfied, on that level true completion is never reached, you can never truly know yourself no matter how much you add to yourself through knowledge, possessions, relationships, whatever experiences, even spiritual experiences, wanting them to add to me. There are many people here who have had many great spiritual experiences. Come.

Okay, let's hang on to that one, that was good. And you can tell yourself the story, I had a great insight once. I had a vision and now it's left me.

But I hope it's going to come back. That's the, on that level to seek something, it means to seek something that the world, because the story is the world, can't give you. The demand to be made happy through some rearrangement in your story is an impossible demand.

The demand to be made happy by the world. Make me happy, I have a right to be made happy by the world. It is true, one could say that you have a right to the state of joy as your natural state of deep inner connectedness when you know who you are beyond thought.

It's not even that you have a right, that's a conceptual thought, it just is. But the world isn't even here to make you happy. Oh, that means, oh, if it's not here to make me happy, then what is it here for?

It's to wake you up. One could say the world is here to make you conscious. And to make you conscious until a certain point is reached, the world makes you suffer.

Because you make demands and you have expectations that the world cannot meet. And you suffer. The story becomes the story of the poor me.

And even if the story temporarily becomes victorious, I made it. And then a little while later, the up has become a down. What now?

You can make it become President of the United States and then forget that you even were President of the United States. And that's, it's not, it's half fleeting. A former President of the United States is suffering from the disease that many people, older people now have loss of memory.

He doesn't remember that he was once President of the United States. That was me. That is half fleeting, but it's not different from any other life.

You can become an old man or woman and then you're 95. And then you, was that a dream? Or did that all happen?

You wake up in the morning, did I dream my life? Or did it all happen? And it's not much difference.

Not very much difference. The only question is, are you waking up out of that dream? Which ultimately is, the entire world of phenomenal existence has a dream-like quality to it because everything evaporates so quickly.

And then you still hang on to thought forms, but it's gone. And for many people, this dream-like existence has been somewhat of a nightmare. And that is good.

Because only a nightmare will want you to wake up. Will make you want to wake up. I can't stand this dream anymore.

Then for a while you demand that this dream must change. And for a little while you rearrange it and it becomes a little bit more pleasant. You have a new identity.

I'm now rethinking myself. A new me. You can tell yourself some new story, but it's another story.

So the waking up is knowing yourself, who you are beyond the story and that cannot be defined through any concept or word. You can only know it at this moment. And here, as the aliveness, the alert presence in which what you are perceiving at this moment is taking place.

You are perceiving the voice, the room, the man on the chair, allowing it to be as it is. And you become aware, one could say, of your own presence as the field in which that perception happens. So you are the presence that makes this possible.

And at the deepest level, one can say, you are the now in which everything happens. And that is the arising from within of something that has nothing to do with your life situation. It has nothing to do with whether you have another 50 years to live or another 5 months to live.

And nothing to do with whether the world is telling you that you are important or the world is telling you that you are unimportant. What difference does it make? It's a story in the head.

And what remains is always the aliveness, the incredible aliveness of this moment, which you don't even know when you are running away from it, deny it, resist it. The incredible power that is hiding behind whatever is happening at this moment and that is not a power that is separate from who you are. It is consciousness itself, which is the essence of your being.

Not the form that it takes, that's temporary. So you could be sitting on a bus in a state of, yes, beautiful underlying sense of aliveness as you watch the streets go past you, people come in, sit next, and you are there as an alive presence. And then the dreamlike nature of the phenomenal world becomes actually very enjoyable.

All these life forms, the continuous flux of beautiful life forms coming together, separating, even the traffic can be beautiful when the mind isn't saying, this shouldn't be. It's all energy movement. Some of it may be a little mad, but that's because humans don't know who they are, so they create a somewhat mad civilization.

But you don't contribute to the madness anymore, you allow that also, and through the allowing, something that is not mad arises. It can only arise through you. Can't wait for others to wake up.

I'm not waking up unless you do. You go first. So you sit in any situation, or you are standing at the bus stop and the rain is blowing in your face and it's windy and it's cold, and it is.

And there's, in the absence of the story which says, I'm 45 years old and I'm still standing at the bus stop, I don't have a car, or I had a car and it's gone. This is what my life has come to. Look at those greedy people driving around in their big cars, I hate them.

Life just isn't fair. And the story goes, and very often the story of me clashes with the form that this moment takes. This shouldn't be, but it is.

So there can be two people standing at the bus stop, perhaps two people who have had similar experiences. They had, they became wealthy, and they were married, and then they lost it all. Went bankrupt, the wife left, the children don't want to see them anymore, and they're standing at the bus stop.

One person is standing there with a story running through his head, and it's miserable.

Getting wet, because that adds to the story. The wind.

The most miserable existence. And the other man experienced the same thing. And he's there.

Hmm. Cold, yes, getting a bit wet here also, yes. Wet is wet.

There's no suffering in wet. And then he notices, because he allows this moment without imposing a story on it, the air still smells good, or the sky, the cloud. First of all, he will see some beauty somewhere, even in the city, but more importantly, he will feel an underlying aliveness, an underlying goodness that has nothing to do with what form this moment takes, and nothing to do with the mental story that you're telling yourself about your identity.

This means your identity has shifted, when you are no longer invested, investment of self in the story, your identity has shifted from a narrative, from a story to something much more real. Presence. You are a conscious field of presence at this moment.

And you discover an underlying power and aliveness and goodness to this moment, even if the external form that it takes isn't all that great. And the miracle that happens, because you are now connected with the greater intelligence, with the power of life itself, even on the external level, life tends to become more supportive and helpful, because you are not fighting life anymore. Helpful factors come in, coincidences happen more, it no longer matters that much, because this moment is as it is.

And in knowing that it is as it is, a goodness reveals itself to you that was not apparent when you only saw the surface appearance of this moment. That goodness is not passive. That goodness is an active power that then comes through you, manifests through you.

And it may well be, to carry on with the analogy of the two men, you might say something to the man who is burdened with his unhappy story, just a word or two, and perhaps there's a beginning of an awakening in him, a tiny moment where he steps out of his story. And so you become, when you no longer, yourself is no longer in your story, you become, one could almost say, a blessing on this planet. Because something that is deeper than the person, a force, a power, that is you and yet deeper than you, can express itself through you.

And then it becomes your life purpose to be an expression of that whatever form that may take externally. But for this to happen, it is necessary that you step out of your identification with a storyline and see, yes, of course you have a history, but to not tell yourself that story at every moment, but to be here, take your attention out and be here. And when you notice suffering arises, it's resistance, the story is back, the suffering me is back, and you can step out again.

So an alertness comes every time you step out of the story. And a dreamlike thing happens when you fall back into identification with what you're telling yourself in your head about yourself. It's like really, you can see now why in spiritual language the term awakening is used, because it is truly an awakening out of thought.

And when you fall back into thought and into the story, you can see the difference in consciousness of falling back in into... You're asleep. Maybe not snoring, but almost.

Almost. And so that presence, that is the key that as you go through your life, frequently step out of the story, because the story is happy and unhappy and happy and unhappy, or in some cases unhappy, unhappy, unhappy. The intervals of happiness and unhappiness vary, but unhappiness will come again if it's not here now, if you're there in the story.

You could have a perfect existence, good job, beautiful husband or wife, loving, beautiful, faithful, plenty of money too, beautiful children, all doing so well, nice house, two cars, everything is so great. It can't stay like that. Something will come in eventually.

Life does that. And if it stays like that for a very long time, the greater the shock when something does come in. That means some kind of loss somewhere, some interference, something not going as it should, and the awakening begins.

Let's be grateful for your sufferings, because you wouldn't be here otherwise. Let's be grateful for the unhappiness, the story that you had to live with. It worked.

The unhappiness worked because it took you here, and here made the realization that the unhappiness and the suffering has served its purpose, has taken you into awakening. And once the momentum of awakening has happened, suffering becomes optional, and you are able to choose presence, to choose the yes to now, to choose to walk on the narrow, this very narrow path that is now. And more and more past and future are only there when you need them to refer to, make an appointment for next week, arrange to meet someone, say I'm going to study this for the next three years, okay, practical, then you're back to now.

If the next three years you're going to spend every moment hoping to get to the end of the three years, then every moment is reduced to a means to an end. Life loses its aliveness, loses its power, loses its beauty. A continuous stepping back into now, out of time, out of identification with thought, into the fullness of now.

And some people had to go through enormous suffering to learn this, more suffering perhaps than anybody here, suffering to the point where they couldn't stand it anymore. And suddenly the shift happened, and there was an inner yes to now. Oh, what's happened?

Can't explain it. Suddenly there's a vitally alive peace. That's the peace that passes all understanding and can be there no matter where you are in your life situation.

It can be there whether it's good or bad at the moment. If it's very good, you're more likely to be drawn back into the dream world. Oh, it's great, let's have another drink until the next shock happens.

So we are becoming familiar here with the state of presence. Alert, an alert acceptance of what is. With little things, big things.

And if you fall back into reactivity, you fall back into a no, then you recognize it. Oh, there goes another no. Okay.

Except you're unhappy, which means the story in your head, telling yourself why you are unhappy and have every right to be unhappy and could not not be unhappy. Everybody would be unhappy in my situation. One of the thoughts I had since childhood that went on until the age of 29, whenever something went wrong in my life, the thought came, oh yeah, it's got to always happen to me, bad things always happen to me, always.

And they did. That was a, at least I knew who I was, or I thought I did, an unhappy me. And I could have told you many reasons why I had every right to be unhappy.

Perhaps everybody in this room could do that. And yet most of you have stepped out of that already. But occasionally you get drawn back into the story.

So the only teaching this afternoon is presence. Is that state of consciousness. The state of yes.

Yes to life. That's all. Yes to life.

No matter what, yes. And where is life? Here, now.

Now, you can wait for the next challenge, or you can do it now. And that's an enormous shift. You no longer need a challenge to wake you up.

You are choosing to wake up. Ultimately you are not separate from the totality, so you cannot choose. Okay.

There is no separate entity, but you can. We have different perspectives, different levels of looking. It is a helpful way of looking at yourself and realize that you can choose to be present now.

You can choose to step out of the story of me. You can choose to step out of the heaviness of my past and the anxiety of my future and constant preoccupation with that. You can choose to say, no, I'm not having this, I'm having this.

Because only this is real. This is now. And so that choice is there.

If you look more deeply, it may well be that when you perceive this as having choice, at that moment, something greater than you, and yet not separate from you, ultimately you, is moving through you and expressing itself. And then you say, okay, I choose presence. Good.

And then every challenge that comes into your life, suddenly instead of pulling you back into reaction, which it does usually, you can hold presence when nothing is happening, everything is fine. As somebody wrote to me, I can be spiritual when I'm sitting alone in a room. But the moment I start interacting with people, I lose it.

And by divine grace, it is a fact that people are difficult quite often. They're also wonderful if you look deep enough. Beautiful.

But you often have to look deep underneath the surface. First you have to go underneath the surface in yourself to reach that which is underneath the surface in others. If you haven't gone deeper than the surface self in yourself, you will be relating to another surface self.

One story relates to another story. And the other story of me may be a competing narrative. And whether you have a big argument, or whether you get out a machine gun, it's only a question of degree.

So this afternoon is the arising of that here. And the mind says, I don't know if it really is arising. How can you be sure that it is arising?

Can you prove that it is really happening? Because, of course, it cannot be understood through thought. The very essence of this arising is something is arising that is deeper than thought.

And in the intermediate stage of this, thought becomes less heavy in your life. Thought loses its capacity to make you unhappy. Thought for a while still goes on with its old records or CDs.

I used to say records and then one editor crossed it out and put in CD. I hadn't realized that things had changed. But it comes to the same thing.

Better sound quality doesn't make much difference as far as this is concerned. I can now hear myself much better. The unhappy story is much more clear now.

So the old records come back sometimes. But an interesting thing happens. You might notice that you are not totally in it anymore.

The same thoughts may still come, but there is a little bit of space between you, in fact you are the space, and the thought. Is this the old thought? Oh yeah, that is happening to me, all the bad things that happen to me.

And then you may find yourself smiling occasionally when an old thought, an old interpretation happens of yourself or someone else. So as this shift happens, thought loses its heaviness and ultimately its capacity to make you unhappy because nothing really ever makes you unhappy than a thought. And so you have a space between yourself and thought, or to put more accurately, more and more you sense yourself to be a deeper and vaster spaciousness in which occasionally thinking happens.

And then you will find that new thoughts occasionally come in that are actually creative, fresh, alive, and have a positive contribution to make to this world, as an insight, something you say to someone. It just comes out of you. There was no intention.

You just say the one thing that this person needs to hear and it comes out of you. And so that happens more and more. Thought loses its power to make you unhappy and the thought that does occur tends to become inspired and helpful.

It is no longer self-invested thinking. You've stopped looking for an enhanced identity through constructing some new thoughts, through identifying with some new thought form, whether it be a flashy car, which you want to add to myself as a thought form. It's not the car that is added to yourself.

It's the thought form that matters, which says, It's me, I am the Rolls Royce. It's mine. It gets incorporated into the story of me.

And then I got the Rolls Royce. I made it. I made it.

Until after six months, it's not fulfilling. You're sitting there driving, it's not fulfilling anymore. Maybe that wasn't the right car.

Maybe too many other people have Rolls Royces. Well, in London they do. You have to think of something else.

I need a different thought form to make me really feel special. Ah yes, I thought it was in my ear. Let's wait until it goes and accept that it's here right now.

It works. One person is not quite accepted yet somewhere in the room. It's an amazing thing when this is just a sound, of course.

But even that can be disturbing when you are looking for something to be disturbed by. And even with a little thing like that, it's amazing to see that that which was disturbing when it's no longer resisted is surrounded by peace. And that applies to small things, like that sound.

It also applies to big things. One could almost say anything can take you there. Anything can take you into peace.

Any condition that arises now that is not resisted. And very often if it is unpleasant or not harmonious, very often it will quickly disappear. And many of you have experienced that in your own life.

That things that you did not want but were there didn't go away until you completely accepted that they are there. And suddenly they were gone. And similarly something that you want in your life, many of you have also experienced that already, when the wanting goes, wanting implies future and so on, suddenly it's there.

When your inner, your sense of self no longer depended on it, it's there. So miracles happen through surrender. Incredible miracles, both small miracles and big miracles happen through surrender.

I recommended a film called Groundhog Day, which shows the human condition as one man is forced to relive the same day again and again and again. And he hates it. And he can't get out of it.

And he hates it even more. And he tries to commit suicide and he kills himself many times and every morning he wakes up again in the same day. Until finally he doesn't resist anymore.

Finally he allows that to be. And that day from being the most dreadful day becomes transformed into a nice day. He helps so many people because his resistance is gone.

That day becomes beautiful, wonderful and in the end he doesn't want to believe it anymore. Let's stay here, he says. And then he's out of it.

A beautiful parable. And so although in the media to a large extent the old consciousness is still reflected, occasionally these days you can see the new consciousness coming through here and there in films. They may not even be on the surface spiritual.

We call it spiritual as such. And yet something is coming through the new. Whether it be a film about playing golf, the legend of vagabonds, a film about stillness and connect with animals, which I saw recently, although it's quite old, the horse whisperer.

Somebody who is able to enter the state of stillness and communicate with horses through stillness. And even American Beauty is a film that brings in something, a new consciousness comes in, what is possible. That last one I mentioned is a film where you are shown a piece of paper being tossed about by the wind.

And you watch that for two minutes and it's beautiful. It's miraculous. It's something nobody would look at twice.

Every moment when you give it your attention has a beauty sometimes on the surface, sometimes hidden underneath the surface. On the surface in nature, how your perception of nature deepens when you are present as you walk in nature. The depth that a flower has that it didn't have when you labelled it mentally immediately because you relate it to a mental label, not to a flower.

Oh, look at that beautiful so-and-so, blah, blah, blah. No, truly look. And then the beauty that is hidden, hidden even and particularly in the face of disaster, loss and death, which everybody sooner or later will face, in him or herself, and will also face with people close to you.

And there the beauty is not apparent immediately on the surface of things, on the surface of that moment. And the thinking mind can only see the surface and reacts to the surface phenomenon of this moment. And at this moment something or someone may be dying.

And the mind calls it dreadful, bad. If death is dreadful, bad, awful, then all of life is dreadful, bad, awful. Every form is destined to die.

Each one of us in this room could have a date of death imprinted on his or her hand. And you look, oh, what's my date? Well, it'll happen.

When it happens, it won't be tomorrow, but now. So if death is bad, then nothing makes sense. The whole of life is misery because everything is already condemned, the moment of birth, everything is already condemned to death.

What a dreadful, tragic, cruel world that is if death is bad. But it's a fact, it is. And what it conceals is beautiful and sacred.

And I want to point to this without giving you any explanation, mental or conceptual thing that explains it somehow so that you can rearrange in your mind the way in which you judge death. Maybe it's not so bad after all. You'll have another incarnation.

It can go on. You'll have another opportunity to be miserable. To look more closely at death without taking refuge in concepts, beliefs.

Because you may believe or not believe that there's another incarnation coming. I'm not saying there is or isn't because we are not dealing here with belief. If I say, yes, you will reincarnate, some of you will say, great, I knew that already.

And some others will say, oh, I don't think that's true. And it would require belief. Nothing here requires really belief on your part.

So we'll stay with just the fact of death which comes sooner or later, which also comes in other forms in your life as loss, great loss of one kind or another, of physical ability, of social status, of a partner, somebody leaves you, something leaves you, and of course the actual death of a human being or the sense of your own approaching death. And usually this is regarded as so dreadful that you can't even talk about it. In hospitals, even now, they don't mention it ever.

Oh, no, you're not going to die. No, no, nobody dies here. And so facing what is becomes very powerful when that which is, is death.

And you face death without seeking refuge in some explanations. Just face it as you would face a flower or anything that appears, takes form in this moment. But when something dies, one could say it's not that something is taking form at this moment.

It's more beautiful than that. It's beautiful if something takes form at this moment. You could call that birth.

But death is something loses form at this moment. The form of life dissolves. And when that is faced completely, that which is beyond form shines through the dissolving form.

And that is why although the present moment is always sacred and you know that when you move your attention into it, it could be anywhere, and I don't need to define further what that means. Only the mind would ask, please define sacred. I don't understand.

You know what it means directly at this moment when you hear that this moment is always sacred but you don't know this unless your attention moves and you become aligned with it. It's always sacred, but it is more deeply sacred at the moment of death, which could be your own death or death of somebody close to you. Even the death of not necessarily a human being but the death of some form that contained your sense of self, it dissolves.

And more people have realized the truth of who they are and the truth of life through death, through facing death or some great loss, which is the equivalent of death, more people have realized it through that than through any spiritual teaching. Something that was defined in form loses its form. And if you've ever been with someone, I've spoken to many people who sat next to someone who died and also one or two people who actually died and came back.

And whenever that fact of death was not resisted, it was realized as a moment of incredible depth and sacredness. A woman I met witnessed how her son, 30-year-old son, died in hospital. She was sitting next to him.

And she said that was the most sacred moment of her life and she was never the same after that. And that acceptance only, in her case, lasted for two minutes. After that, thought came in.

And the emotions that come with those thoughts came in and it was called dreadful. But for two minutes, she was in the state of acceptance and that was at an incredible depth in sacredness. And even if you have seen people that were approaching death, sometimes you can see, already before actual physical death happens, the form is already becoming, one could say, transparent almost.

And something shines through that is almost described as light. And what that is, is the unconditioned, the essence, consciousness itself, shining through the dissolving form. So the most sacred thing in life is that which is most feared by the egoic entity.

Because the egoic entity is form, is identification with form as me, is identification with the physical form as me, in the psychological form, the story of me. And that goes. In some cases, when people know they are going to die soon, it can happen, that before the physical form dissolves, the psychological form of me doesn't survive in the face of death when it's accepted.

So already the me entity that perhaps they were controlled by, identified with throughout their lives, shortly before death, it could be a few days, a few weeks, a few months, already dies. And then a flowering happens through that human being. It's the realization of who they are beyond the form.

They realize it, not as some intellectual realization, a deep experiential realization, as deep peace. And a knowing beyond needing any kind of proof that there is no death, that it is a form dissolving. And people have realized it in the face of great loss when some form that they had invested with self left them.

It could be the loss of a partner, it could be the loss of all your possessions in the stock market crash. In the stock market crash, they happen occasionally, some people jump out of the window. They cannot separate, this is famous in the 30s or whenever it happened, many people apparently lost all their money and many jumped out of the windows.

They could not separate from their story-based sense of self. And the story-based sense of self was deprived of their main ingredient. But it has happened to others who in the face of total loss, which is a kind of death, experienced a sudden inner opening up, a sudden space.

Why was there a sudden inner space? Because the inner form that they had identified with in their psychological form identity, dissolved, died. When a form dissolves, that which is deeper than form shines through the hole that it leaves, the opening.

This is an amazing thing. And it applies to every kind of death. An opening appears, one could say, in the fabric of phenomenal existence.

For a moment, that opening appears in what before was a dense fabric of phenomenal existence. And suddenly, within that density of the fabric of phenomenal existence, a little thing there dissolves. And for a moment, just light comes through.

Whereas before it was filtered through many layers of texture. And so the deepest spiritual thing is death. And that is good to know because each one of you will face it sooner or later.

But the amazing thing is, this is death here. Because the form identity, that which I thought I was, the thought form of me, you realize is not me. It dissolves as a me entity.

So here, and this is the beauty of true spiritual teaching, in the presence of true spiritual teaching, which is not of a person, the teaching that is happening here, if you even call it teaching, is arising out of this energy field. And each one of you contributes to this teaching. To have a true view of it, you would look upon it as if it were, these words are arising out of your own consciousness.

There is no separation. And so a true spiritual teaching is similar to death. It also is an opening where suddenly spaciousness appears where before there was only form, identification with form.

So you lose your fear of death here because you are dying already. It's voluntary death. And it's beautiful.

And you realize, of course, people think life and death are the two opposites. Of course they are not. Birth and death are the opposites.

One can't exist without the other. Life has no opposite. Life is beyond form.

And it's that realization. When a thought subsides in your mind, even if only for a moment, that's death, ultimately speaking, because as one thought subsides, the next one has not appeared yet. There also is an opening.

And so this becomes a state of permanent connectedness as long as you still walk around in this form, a state of permanent connectedness with that dimension of the formless one life that you are, the one consciousness that you are. That is the essence of all life forms that could be anywhere in the universe. The essence of that, the one intelligence, the one consciousness manifesting as billions of life forms.

One of them, the appearance of a person with a name, a little history, a little past, a little future, and then that form dissolves. And to realize that which is beyond form frees you from identification with form, which is the world. And do you realize it?

Here, now, when thought subsides. And in many of you, spaces, although really one should only use this word in the singular, but I'll just for a while use it in the plural, spaces in many of you of pure awareness, pure presence, are arising already in your life. So that is the beautiful death that is already happening, which is the transformation of consciousness.

You don't have to wait for physical death to come close to you. When it comes, it's beautiful. But you don't have to wait for that.

You can embrace that now. And that is the transformation where you are no longer identified with a form. The form is still there, yes.

The story is still there, but it's not who I am. My life situation is still there. It might be good, it might be bad.

It's not who I am. Who am I? I am that which is prior to all form.

Is that a belief? No, any belief is form. How do I know that?

I know that in the stillness of presence. I know that when I can look upon something, whether it be a flower, a tree, or even a man-made thing, although nature is more conducive to this realization, you look upon something without the old compulsive need to immediately label, interpret, or call it something, or see how you relate to it, how it fits in with me and my story. You just look and there is a clear space of awareness and it can happen in this moment as you sit here.

You're perceiving the words as if they were coming out of yourself. You're perceiving, perhaps, a body sitting on a chair. You're perceiving peripherally the rest of this room.

It's there. And the amazing thing, those perceptions are arising in awareness. They are not labeled, interpreted, judged.

You don't need to find a personal relationship to those perceptions. They are allowed to be. They are now.

They are allowed to be. So what you have at any moment, the one moment, no matter what form it may take, the moment always has two dimensions. And this is so important.

It should be what children could learn at the age of six, the first thing at school, the one important realization in everybody's life is this. There are two dimensions. Now usually humans are only conscious of one dimension, the world.

The dimension of objects that arise in consciousness as sense perceptions and thoughts and emotions. That is the world that most people inhabit, the world of object consciousness, sense perceptions, and of course you get drawn into them and then immediately the mind comes in with thought objects to find how thought relates to that perception and that perception. That is the world.

That is the human mind. That is the only world that people know and it's a fearful world because objects are not reliable. They come and go.

It's form. They are born, they die. So you have to hang on, something leaves you here, leaves there.

You inhabit only object consciousness and your whole sense of self is object consciousness. You have a self image. You have a conceptualized sense of self, of me, and every concept is a thought.

Every thought is an object in consciousness. That's the world people inhabit and they are looking for something to free them from that dilemma which everybody perceives with a life that human existence is a dilemma and everybody is looking somehow to get free but they are looking for freedom from the dilemma of human existence and the pain of human existence. They are looking for freedom in the realm of object consciousness.

Where can I find that thing that's going to free me finally? It could be a person, it could be some achievement, it could be some money, or it could be the idea that I have of spiritual enlightenment. I've just got to get there.

And then spiritual enlightenment becomes an object in your mind and you say, I need to have that. That will free me. I tried the two million dollars, didn't work, didn't free me.

I've tried the relationships, I've tried knowledge, but now another object in consciousness. So that's the world, and it's a world in which I'd like to quote, because that is the world of the collective world and the personal world of each human being consists of that because what is in the individual manifests as the collective, the collective of human history, which as I've quoted many times before, I love that quote, Churchill defined human history as one damn thing after another. And he's right.

And for many people in their personal lives, they could say that too. How's your life? Or how has your life been?

One damn thing after another. Just when I thought I made it, something else cropped up and didn't want that, or then I lost it again, or I thought it would make me happy, but it made me unhappy. As the old saying goes, there are two ways of being unhappy, getting what you want and not getting what you want.

And so looking, looking, looking, not realizing what they are looking for as if it were something external to them, as if it were something that can be obtained at some future point that never comes, instead of looking, the one where they are not looking is what they were looking for, that which frees them from that dimension, although you're still in it, but frees you internally, is quite simply the realization of the other dimension. So what I called object consciousness is the dimension of the manifested world, things everywhere, and the other dimension is the dimension of the unmanifested, and we could call that space consciousness, to realize that space is already here within you, and a few people have realized it through death, when something important in their object consciousness dissolved and left behind a gaping hole. And they faced it, somehow, for some reason, they just sat there and didn't run away from it, and didn't seek refuge in explanations, and just sat with it as the woman sat with her dying son, and the hole appeared, and it was the most sacred moment in her life and changed her forever.

And that is already here now, and it's here, it begins to arise in the simple, the moment you look at a flower and perceive it, clearly, without any mental commentary. So at that moment, the two dimensions, you are conscious in the two dimensions, you are conscious of the manifested, and you sense that field of stillness, of presence, in which that perception happens, is the underlying unmanifested. It's the essence of who you are.

And perhaps then it's gone again, perhaps after a few seconds words come in, and then again another moment comes when you look upon something else, a stone, and there's the sense perception, and the old, deeply ingrained habit of automatic compulsive labeling is relinquished. And in some of you, in many of you, I know this is already happening spontaneously, and you may not even notice it, except as peace coming into your life occasionally. And then once you notice it, you can consciously contribute to it by more and more existing in this world, especially when no demands are being made, and often during the day, there are times when you can just be, you're waiting for something, standing somewhere, sitting somewhere, and simply perceiving, looking, hearing, whatever, what other perceptions there may be, and the perception arises in a field of simple presence or stillness. This is an amazing thing, but to the mind, the mind is thought, that is insignificant.

It says, what? It's not interesting. What's the next thing?

Okay, you've spoken about stillness, now let's go on to the next thing. It doesn't recognize it. What happened to me spontaneously, to this form, overnight there was a letting go of compulsive labeling.

There was deep surrender, and suddenly the next morning there was simply allowing everything to be as it is. The need to label was gone. Labeling could still happen when it was needed, but a lot of the time it wasn't needed, it isn't needed.

So I would walk around the city, especially the first few days or weeks, because it was totally new, and maybe some people thought I had taken something, and it is true that some people get a glimpse of that when they take a drug, and for a moment they are forced into presence, because their sense perceptions become so acute that they can't think anymore. And it can be a realization for some people of what life can be like without the constant noise in the head, that there can be space, but this doesn't last, the drug won't last, this is much better. The expression seen this, done that, or been there, done that, or whatever the expression is, that means it's all old, and for many people the older they get, the more lifeless their world becomes.

They get older, they have seen it all, they have done it all, nothing new, so the world becomes stale, not the world, but their state of consciousness, which is heavy with past.

And so breaking through that, that happened to me spontaneously, and I walked around in that state of every sense perception happened within a field of peace. And that was just amazing, I was walking around Oxford Street in London, one of the least peaceful places, a million people walking along, trying to do their shopping, buses and taxis in the middle with fumes, and I was walking around, it's peace, all the sense perceptions arising in a field of stillness.

And I didn't realize until much later, when I talked to a Zen monk, a year later, who said one sentence, he said, you just said, Zen is to stop thinking, that's all, that's what it is. And I, oh, that's what it is. I didn't know that I had stopped thinking.

And this is, I know, that this is the shift in consciousness that is destined to happen and is already happening on the planet. I know that many of you already spontaneously experience those kinds of perceptions, when you can simply look, here, just to mention the two main senses, the perception arises in an alert spaciousness, peaceful stillness. So you are not perceiving as a person anymore, as a me with a history, and the person, of course, wants something from the object of perception.

There's always some kind of relationship that the person is seeking to make with the object of perception. Either the person wants it, or the person fears it, or somehow trying to figure out how this object of perception fits into me. Is it important to me?

How can I, am I going to be more of me when I add that to me?

[Speaker 3] (2:36:42 - 2:36:43)

Hmm, hmm.

[Speaker 1] (2:36:44 - 2:40:15)

Yeah, okay, I want that, yeah. And then you, the flower that you were looking at, you pick it, because now you can take it home. It's mine.

Just a small example, it happens on all levels. You meet another human being. Again, how can you be with that being and look at that human being, listen to that human being, allow this moment to be, this human being that appears here in front of you at this moment, and just listen, just look without the person.

Is it possible to do that? Yes, it's possible, because it's time for that. And people are telling me it's already happening in their life and then it becomes obscured again and then it comes again.

But now that you can see it, you can contribute to it also by simply choosing presence and becoming aware of the underlying field, which is the deepest level of who you are. As the song that Kirtana sang at the beginning, the title of that was I am. Not I am this or that, because that would mean identifying with an object in consciousness.

But when you identify, what remains is consciousness, I am. The innermost sense of who you are that got mixed up with identification with objects in your consciousness, the innermost sense remains. That which you are really fearful, that which you have a feeling as something of great value, something precious here, and I don't want to lose that, I don't want to die, but this precious sense of beingness, of aliveness, of presence, in the usual state, gets entangled with objects in consciousness, identifications.

And so you derive your identity from the story, the accumulated objects in your mind. But if you look to the essence of that sense of self, there is something real there, but it's not the story. At the core of it, there is something real, and that's consciousness.

Even the greatest illusion, the greatest dream, hallucination, in every illusion or hallucination, there must be something real in it, or otherwise it would not be. If it is, it is a form that consciousness has taken, temporary form. A hallucination is a form that only you see and nobody else agrees with.

The rest is this world. Everybody more or less agrees on what they see. In ultimate terms, one could say, it is also similar to a shared hallucination, especially the nightmare world of the ego.

[Speaker 3] (2:40:17 - 2:40:19)

Oh, dreadful.

[Speaker 1] (2:40:20 - 2:51:59)

So the simple thing, what looks so insignificant to thought, you can walk around the city, wherever you are at home, walking between here and your car, and simply be there, as an aware presence. The person, what do you need the person for? When you need to remember something, it will be there.

When you pick up the phone, you don't say, this is the nameless presence. Or as one man said, who wanted to teach me a lesson, when I asked him, when were you born? He said, I was never born.

Oh. Oh, sorry I asked that question. He is right, of course, although the way he said it was wrong.

It was an ego thing, but ultimately that statement is true. The essence is, who you are was never born. So the shift now is from being a heavy person, every person is heavy, there are degrees of heaviness, I am not talking about physical heaviness, psychological heaviness, there are degrees of heaviness, some persons are heavier than others, some are very heavy, wherever they step, nothing grows.

Humanity as a whole is heavy, the collective person that humanity is, and see what humanity is doing to the planet, one could almost say that somewhat humorous comment I made, could apply to the whole of humanity, nothing grows where they step, and that is the heaviness of the collective, unconsciousness. And so the shift then is from personal, exclusively personal sense of self to realizing yourself as aware presence, and be that. And you will find, because we are at a transitional stage in the shift of consciousness, it is possible that you may walk away from here, and never again fall back into resistance to what is, never again fall back into identification with thought movement, and be present for the rest of your life, which after all is only this moment ever, but always is possible.

More frequently it happens that you shift back and forth from being a person, and totally believing that you are a person, this means drama starts, you become an active participant in the drama of your story, and then suffering comes, and then you remember, oh, I forgot the now. Any suffering that arises in your life, it must mean you lost the now somewhere. I lost the now.

And then you go back into now, the space of now is OK. Whatever appears in the now I can face that. The now is never that complicated.

It comes, you face it, and action arises, or non-action arises, if there is nothing you can do. That's always simple. Even if you think there is a choice in this moment, should I do this or this or this, when you let go of trying to figure out through thought, you just face the situation.

Should I jump this way off, or should I jump that way? You just face it, and then you find yourself moving this way or that way. And that comes out of presence.

And so you face this moment, and your life becomes non-complex. And of course, the power is always there that arises out of consciousness or presence, the power to face what is, is always there. The only thing you can never face is the fantasies that the mind constructs of what might happen to you, or what you might lose, or what you might not get, or a situation that may arise.

What's going to happen? What am I going to say? What's going to happen to me?

Am I going to make it? And when? Am I going to make it before it's too late?

Have I missed it already? Is my whole life wasted? I've probably missed the boat already.

There's not much I can do now. So many mistakes I made. Oh, I could have achieved this and that.

Why didn't I? If only my parents had been different. Many people have this story and the story of their life has been a failure, wasted, not silly story.

Every story is unsatisfying. Even if it looks great for a moment, you get miserable again. It's built into every story.

Step out. Step out of it. We are just presence.

And then life is miraculous. Even the city. The dance of life forms.

Birds flying. You just look. Clouds.

Nature has depth to it because you don't go through it with a strain of mind. It's just there. Human beings, and this is so important, when that dimension, when that dimension of what I call space consciousness is present in your interactions with other human beings, that's what really everybody is waiting for, is for that dimension to arise.

They are waiting for you, one could almost say, every interaction. You can bring that. Who are you?

On the surface, you are a person. In your depths, you are consciousness. So you interact with humans in the same way that you look at a flower, allowing them to be.

They are what is at this moment. You look. Perhaps you sense the inner body so that you don't get drawn into mental stuff about them.

And you listen to them. And you listen without preparing the next statement mentally. You just listen.

You don't know. People used to come to me for counselling, whatever they called it, spiritual counselling sessions. And in the past, many people came with problems, sometimes heavy problems.

I didn't know the answer. I don't know the answer to these heavy problems. How could I know?

So all I could do was sit there with them and listen. And becoming comfortable with not knowing. Because that's part of it.

And the little egoic entity doesn't like that. It says, I need to know what this is all about. I need to know what you are about.

What are your motivations? What do you want from me? Whatever you can figure out about another person.

Is their conditioning combined with your conditioning? And it's a shared hallucination. And then you can be with someone and they're telling you their heavy problems.

And you know that you don't know. And you are comfortable with not knowing and allowing that space of simple listening to be there. But it's alert.

It's not a listening that goes to sleep. It's an alert listening. Relaxed alert.

So the words appear within that spaciousness that comes through this form. That is the dimension that most humans are not conscious of. The unmanifested space consciousness.

And when that dimension is present in this dimension, they're not really separate because they're intertwined. There is space consciousness even in... Let's leave that aside.

And suddenly within that space, things happen. Realizations happen. The person may stop speaking as sometimes happens.

The story suddenly peters out and they look around and suddenly feel there's a peace. What's this? One woman came with a heavy story and talked to me for half an hour or an hour about it.

And just spaciousness was there. I didn't know the answer. The problems were so complicated.

Nobody could have solved them. And after 30 or 45 minutes of talking, she stopped. And it was like waking up.

She had all these notes that she needed to all the problems and she put that... And she looked at me. And the next...

Her statement was a miracle. I couldn't believe it. She said, There's only love, isn't there?

[Speaker 3] (2:52:04 - 2:52:04)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:52:19 - 2:56:11)

Thank you. Goodbye, she said. At other times it happened that some answer came through me, just suddenly said something.

It just came out. Just like this talk comes out. It's not rehearsed.

It just comes out. Or something suddenly... Words come out of the other person's mouth.

It suddenly reveals something. But they arise because there's a space of presence. And that space is intelligent, vastly intelligent.

That is true intelligence. And it's only when you're connected with that, that love can be present, even in this world. Because it arises out of that.

It doesn't arise out of the object consciousness. That's the message. You know all that.

You recognize it. So your mission is clear. To be, to know yourself as awareness, as presence.

And to put up with the person, yes. Honor it also. It's the world of form.

You honor the world of form. You don't say, I don't want nothing to do with the world of form. All I want is God.

But you're still here. And the world of form will keep bothering you. We are talking, of course, of God's realization as the essence of your being.

I would like Kitana to come and sing her last song, which is my favorite song. If I cry, don't worry. I sometimes cry when I listen to that song.

And the title of that song refers to exactly what we have been talking about this afternoon, pointing to what we have been living, experiencing this afternoon. And it's nice sometimes to hear the same teaching, slightly different words, expressed again. So the title of that song is Who You Really Are.

And that's what this gathering is about. Knowing who you are beyond concepts, beyond the conceptualized sense of self. It's the end of the dreadful thing that is a conceptualized sense of self, the burden of that.

Listening to this is a beautiful meditation in itself. Thank you, Kitana.

[Speaker 2] (2:57:06 - 3:01:20)

For a storyline, more to life than the body can sense, than the mind can conclude from experience. Does who we are begin with breath, depend on form, or end with death? Strip away these roles, these names, and tell me what remains.

And who you really are, who you really are, we measure success by the things we accrue, or the bonds that we form, or the deeds we do. But these too will pass, as hard as we try to hold on to form. Form will die.

But inherent in this dance of form is the chance to see what's yet unborn, and the choice to throw this chance away and be caught up in the play. Of who we think we are, who we think we are. This is your lifetime, it could end at any time.

Where is your attention? Where is your prayer? Where is your song?

In a fortunate life comes a call to be free from the cycle of bondage and misidentity. To wake from the dream and finally realize the truth of one's being before the body dies. So before the final scene is passed, see the screen on which it's cast, see what's seeing this me and you, and then you will see who you really are.

[Speaker 3] (3:01:23 - 3:01:37)

Who you really are. Who you really are. Who you really are.

2002-Eckhart Tolle Companion to Power of Now Audio Tape

[Speaker 2] (0:13 - 0:26)

Sounds True and Namaste Publishing present Living the Liberated Life and Dealing with the Pain Body with the author of The Power of Now, Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (0:41 - 1:52:29)

It seems almost paradoxical we are going to spend some time together tonight in order to explore a dimension of consciousness that is beyond time. We are spending time together to move more deeply into the present moment and to experience a dimension of consciousness that opens up when your attention is completely present in this moment. And there are two levels of teaching, if you call it that, it's not really teaching.

There are the words and there are the silent spaces in between the words. Usually people don't pay attention to the silent spaces between words and in our civilization there actually aren't many silent spaces anymore. In your head there may be an almost continuous dialogue unless you are beginning to encounter within yourself a dimension of stillness.

What happens when you pay attention to a gap between sentences or between words, the silent space, immediately there is some stillness inside you because it's only through the stillness that you can listen to the silence, to become aware of the silence, of the gaps. Now what does stillness mean? That's just a word, we could use other words, I sometimes use the word presence to describe this state of consciousness that is now emerging collectively on this planet, although at the moment only relatively few people are able to access it, but there is a state of consciousness that is emerging on the planet that is very different from the consciousness that has been dominant throughout human history and compared to that new state of consciousness that is emerging, a state that has been pointed to by many teachers in the past but has always been misinterpreted, the original purity of all those teachings has been misinterpreted by the human mind and completely misunderstood. So what does it mean, stillness? The human mind says stillness isn't interesting enough, it's a state of consciousness that is free of thought and yet you're fully alert, fully awake, fully present.

It doesn't mean you will never think again, thought will come in again, but you will always be rooted in that state as you learn to live in that state and this state emerges more fully and us sitting here together this evening, what's really happening beyond the personal level is that this state of consciousness here is emerging. On a personal level it might look as if I were telling you useful things, how to live free of problems, free of suffering, free of conflict, but it goes far beyond the personal level and the main, the essence of what I speak about and point to, you cannot actually understand through the mind because the essence is precisely beyond the mind. And by mind I mean thought activity, mental noise.

Most humans are trapped in that continuous mental noise and identify with the mental noise as themselves, as me, and there's a continuous monologue or dialogue going on in the head and that grows already when young children start to develop it. And gradually you identify with the mental noise, an image arises as this is, that's me, and you're completely trapped in this continuous stream of incessant thinking and that is, your sense of self, of me, gets identified with that, so my problems, my suffering, what about me, what's going to happen to me, it's a mental image of a sense of self that is never really at ease, never feels really at home, is always trying to get somewhere but never quite gets there. Many times it thinks it's got there but then realizes, oh no, I'm not there. It tries to get to some state, some relief, some state of happiness or fulfillment, completion, perfection, in whatever way, no matter, the bank robber is trying to get there in some way but he's robbing a bank in order to get the money because he believes that the money will eventually enable him to feel a more intense aliveness, a more deeply rooted sense of self, of identity, and that's of course an illusion, but even the spiritual person who is practicing certain techniques for years is trying to get somewhere, a state of perfection, a future, this mind-made sense of self is always reaching out to the future because it believes there's salvation there somewhere for me, at some point in the future I'm going to make it, whether the making it is becoming wealthy or the making it is becoming a spiritual master or enlightened, basically it's the same mind structure still at work.

So to be condemned to an almost continuous state of unease, something's never quite right, I need to get somewhere, this moment is never quite right, or very, very rarely, only when a desire has just been fulfilled there's a moment of relief and then immediately something else arises. That's something to observe in oneself, that state of unease with what is the present moment, that's part of the old consciousness, it's embedded in the very structure of the human mind, so no matter what you do you can't get rid of it on the level of mind, and then gradually all this mental noise becomes self-serving, it simply is there to, it reinforces itself, you go round in vicious circles, and all we're doing here is allowing a deeper dimension of consciousness to emerge because it wants to emerge, otherwise there wouldn't be much chance, you can't make it happen, but you can allow it to happen. The very fulfilment of your existence as a human being on this planet is the flowering of consciousness, stepping out of the conditioned self, the conditioned mind, all the mental noise is conditioned by the past, stepping out of conditioned sense of self, my history, my story, me, equating your sense of identity with your story, your history, all that's the conditioned, and it is possible to step out of that, and what is there beyond the conditioned little me, that little sense of self derived from the past, and that needs the future for its fulfilment, and at the same time feels threatened by the future, because the future is going to kill it, so it's a double-edged sword that continues running towards the future away from this moment, seeking fulfilment, at some future moment I'm going to get there, but at the same time feel deep down the future is also going to kill me. So humans live between these two fear and desire movements, and for most people all their motivations, all their actions arise either out of fear or desire, they're all connected with future, and that also is embedded in the very structure of the human mind. It's interesting to observe it in oneself, even to observe that you're not at ease in this moment, even to observe that just ten seconds ago you were thinking about your dinner tonight, or the problem that you're going to have to face tomorrow, even to observe that is already the beginning of another consciousness emerging.

If you can observe what the mind is doing, that is not part of the mind, you're not judging it, you're simply watching that. That is the stillness emerging in you, that is the dimension of consciousness that is deeper than the mind, vaster, of infinite potential, it contains infinite vast potential, and once you access that, you will find it amazing that humans have lived for thousands of years trapped in a sense of self that was so limited to see themselves as a little person with a little history and a little future, and to be trapped in that sense of self is such an illusion, and it's so, it's a prison. So just to watch, even at this moment, is, am I at ease, or is there some part of me that wants to be somewhere else?

Do I want to be in the future, or am I trying to get away from this moment? That's always, that is the essence of the old state of consciousness, and when you observe it, that's the beginning of a new consciousness. It's sometimes called the witnessing consciousness.

You observe what the mind is doing, so you're not totally trapped in it. And that is only the beginning, that is only the beginning, and then it emerges more deeply, more fully, as the state of stillness, which you may get glimpses of even here, and perhaps at this moment, when the mind is not moving anymore. You're alert, completely present, completely open to the aliveness of this moment.

And most humans are completely, totally unaware of that, that the fact that there is an infinite source potential for aliveness concealed in what looks like so insignificant to the mind, and that's this moment. It's like the atom, the tiniest of things contains vast energy, once it opens up. So the very life energy, the energy that sustains the whole universe, you can have access to it through the little doorway that opens up when your attention moves into this moment.

And it always means you become very alert, very present. That's stillness. Stillness, alertness, presence, they're all one.

So stillness, don't misinterpret stillness as meaning you're going off to sleep, or the kind of stillness you have when after a few drinks you might drift off a bit in life, you can't remember your problems, so you feel a little bit better. But even drink can sometimes mean, people sometimes drink to get rid for a little while of the torture of their mind, telling them what their problems are, the problematic sense of self, the me. So they drink, and for a moment they don't remember their problems, but of course there's a price to pay, because you go, there's a lowering of consciousness, so you go lower towards the vegetable realm.

And what we are doing, we are not moving in that direction here. It's fine for a vegetable, plant life has unbelievable beauty and aliveness to it, and in many ways it's more enlightened than humans, because it doesn't inhabit a world of problems. This flower has no problems, and even by the time it comes to die, it's not a problem, it just dies.

And yet there is an aliveness there, and it's also an expression of consciousness, a beautiful expression of the divine consciousness, just as you are. So we are moving beyond thinking to a more awake state, a more alert state, a more present state, compared to which the thinking state is a dream-like state. To be immersed in thinking, this mental dialogue, you're only peripherally aware of your surroundings, because you might be walking in the woods, in the most beautiful surroundings, but you're thinking about your problems, my problems, what about me?

You're not there. If then something happened that would give you a little shock, you would suddenly, for a moment, enter a state that is present and alert. If you were suddenly confronted with a bear, you would come out of your thinking state, out of your problems, and there would be the bear.

And that's not a problem. It's a situation that requires, probably, some action. Either you move away, or you make a noise, whatever.

But the difference between that state is so, and this is a state that can happen to some humans accidentally in certain situations. You're driving, and suddenly something goes wrong, and you know an accident is imminent in two or three seconds. And you've been driving for two hours, immersed in a world of problems, stress, this, that, to deal with, and suddenly all that drops away.

This is an example when the state of consciousness that I'm pointing to emerges accidentally, and many people have reported they knew an accident was inevitable within two or three seconds, or five seconds, and they suddenly found themselves in an inner state of extreme calm and serenity, and they were totally there, totally alert, all fear had left, and later they survived to tell about it. Said, this was amazing, how could this be, because it's such a dangerous situation, and I felt so serene suddenly. There are many reports, many similar examples.

So this state of consciousness can sometimes emerge briefly, usually, accidentally. Some people seek it out through dangerous activities. It's the only way they can be free of the burden of their mind, the burden of the personality, of the me, the burden of this problematic me that they think that's their reality, because when they're climbing up the wall of the mountain, they can't think about that.

They have to be present, totally alert in the now. But when they come down, they get back in their car, they re-enter the world of problems. So they can't be in the state, they think they need to be engaged in that activity to be in that state, but that is not the case.

You can choose that state now, if you're sitting here. What I'm saying now might not yet apply to all humanity, but if you're sitting here, there's enough consciousness in you to choose a state that is free of the problem-making mind, and to realize when you enter the now, that there is no problem ever in this moment. There may be a situation that you need to deal with, that is never a problem.

Anything that comes into the now, you may need to take action, do this or that, and you do it. It arises out of that state of consciousness, of presence. But dwelling mentally on situations, invest in the situations with a sense of me, self, and going around in circles, lying in bed at night, sleepless, and wherever you go, you can't stop this machine, the noise machine in the head, because you don't remember where the button, the off switch is.

That is torture. The most wonderful realization is that in the state of consciousness that I call presence, there are no problems. Perhaps challenges, but they never turn into problems.

If you cannot take action, everybody in this room has certain, is involved in a certain life situation. Some better than others. Some life situations are relatively good and comfortable.

Other life situations may be problematic. There may be shortage of money, there may be health problems, there may be relationship problems, work, and many kinds of completely fictitious problems created by the mind, what if this happens, or that happens, or I lose this, or I don't get that, or he leaves me, or she leaves me. So another level of problems is total fiction.

It comes about through the incessant mental noise. It's a very radical reversal of the normal way to live. Take your attention, whenever you think you can't stand, you have problems anymore, and it's getting too much, and you wake up in the morning and say, oh, not another day.

No human is meant to live like that, waking up in the morning and saying, I can't face another day. And nor in nature, that doesn't happen. The flower too, when the sun rises, the flower opens up, because it responds to the sun, and no flower has ever said, I can't face another day.

No animal has ever said, I can't face another day, except perhaps animals that are suffering deeply because of what humans have done to them. But no animal in the wild would, an animal wakes up, and a plant, a flower wakes up and immediately is in a state of aliveness. And you can see it.

Jesus talked about it when he often would say, look at the flowers. And when he said, look at the flowers, he meant it. He wants you to really look and see the incredible beauty and aliveness.

If you look deeply enough, you will see that they are actually celebrating life. And this is how life is meant to be. Humans are meant to celebrate life too, in a completely different way.

They also are an expression of the divine consciousness. Now we impose our world view also on nature. So whatever world view you have, gets projected.

So humans these days say, the whole of nature is a struggle for survival, because that's their own life, that's their own mind. If you were free of that mindset that says everything is a struggle for survival, you would actually see that most of the time, nature is celebrating life. And the moments of struggle are very short.

Animals mostly live in a state of ease. When they get hungry, they might kill. That's a very brief moment compared to most of their existence.

So to carry this burden of problems, which is the mind, which is the mind, which gets heavier as people grow older, often the burden increases. Past gets heavier and heavier inside. You carry a heavier and heavier burden of past.

But even young people, young people carry a heavy burden of future. And gradually, you can no longer feel life. You can no longer feel the aliveness that is in the very depths of your being, because of the mental noise.

It covers up an incredible deep sense of vitality and aliveness that is life itself. But it's covered up by mental noise. Jesus talked about it.

He said, I want you to have life and more abundant life. I want you to have more abundant life. I want you to have more abundant life.

He didn't mean more abundant consumer goods. He didn't mean more shopping malls. He was not talking about the things in life.

He was talking about life itself, the aliveness of life itself. And if the only place where you can be in touch with that is through the stillness underneath the mental noise, the vibrantly alive stillness presence underneath the mental noise. There you get, because the stillness is also a feeling of intense aliveness.

That's the place where you are connected with something much vaster than the little me. When you touch that incredible sense of aliveness, the only place in time where you can do that is now, when you touch that, a vastness of life is there. And as you have access to that more and more, that begins to be in your life, not just as a glimpse, but for longer periods you dwell in the state of connectedness, as I sometimes call it, connectedness with being, where life feels good.

It feels good to be alive. This is the most simple terms I could, even a child would understand that. It feels good to be alive.

But in that goodness that is life itself, out of the goodness that is life itself, things emerge. Out of the vibrantly alive stillness that is in your very being, things emerge out of that. Thoughts may come suddenly out of it, but they will be creative, new thoughts, not the old gramophone records that you've been thinking about for 10 or 20 years.

Insights, realizations come out of that, because that's the source of all creativity. So you're touching life itself, not the manifest, the life before it becomes something in its original form, or rather no form, the formless life that you are. That is your essence, to be connected with that is to become free of the world, of attachment to the things of the world, of grasping and clinging and needing.

And there's an incredible sense of, you suddenly know how precious you are as that life. No matter whether on the external level, or on the spiritual level, you are an important person, or a non-important person, that's the world telling you you are important, or the world telling you you haven't made it, that has nothing to do with finding that place within yourself where you become free of that, and you no longer believe what the world is telling you. Because after all, the world is insane.

And if you believe it, you believe what an insane world is telling you. If you doubt that the world is insane, pick up a history book, or switch on the news. It may not be 100% insane, but let's say 90%.

So you're allowing an insane world to tell you, either that you are important, and believe that, and a few years later, the same world will tell you that you are no longer important. You've lost your position, and somebody else is chairman of the board now. And you thought that was your identity.

And you might even have to return the American Express Platinum card. And that is painful. If your sense of identity was in that, something that is funny, really, to that person would be very painful.

My God, I'm nobody again. And I thought I was somebody. How can I survive without the Platinum card?

And then somebody else believes it when they tell you, you are no good because you haven't made it in the world. Oh, I failed. Life has treated me unfairly.

I've missed out on life. I never had a chance, or had a chance, but I didn't use it. So the world telling you, the insane world now telling you, you are not important, or you are nobody.

Look who, who is regarded as important in the world. Actors, singers, whatever, politicians. And most of them are miserably unhappy, with a facade of happiness.

And those are the idols of the world. So your sense of self is no longer derived from that. And that's a wonderful liberation.

You don't, what the world is telling you becomes completely irrelevant. Because your aliveness has such depth to it, you know that nobody could take that away from you. And you need nobody's confirmation that your life is incredibly valuable.

And self-esteem, you no longer need to tell you that you are good enough when you are in touch with the very goodness of life itself. Until that it may be helpful to have little affirmations telling you that you are good enough. Then you move beyond.

When you are in touch with the very goodness of life in yourself, then you no longer need mental concepts of who you are. And this is what Jesus meant when he said, I have overcome the world. Not that he had any worldly power.

So that is, that depth of aliveness is here in you at this moment. But you need to be open to that. A very helpful point of entry, and many of you are living it already, is to feel the aliveness that is in every cell of your body at this very moment.

Every cell is vibrant with life throughout your being. And to feel that, to be connected with that. You don't have to, and you'll notice when your attention moves into the body, the inner energy field of the body, I sometimes call it the inner body, but you could also call it the joy body because there is deep joy in that aliveness.

When your attention is there, you're not, the noise suddenly subsides in the head because the attention has moved from the head into your being. And you're then rooted in the now. You're rooted in your being.

And so it's almost as if your whole body were coming to life suddenly. That's what Jesus meant when he said, your whole body will be filled with light. That is the light of consciousness.

And then there's still plenty of consciousness left to perceive the world. As you sit there and feel the aliveness in your being, you're rooted in the now. You're rooted through that, that's the opening, that's the doorway.

You're rooted in being. Everything is an expression of the divine consciousness, one form or another form. Every organ and cell, DNA and so on, has vast intelligence that the human mind could never understand.

Even a thousand years we'll still be exploring how the body works. It's so easy to be connected with an intelligence that is greater than the mind. Simply feel the aliveness of the inner body and you will soon come to a place of, feel there's joy there.

The joy of life itself. And it doesn't depend on what's in your life as the circumstances, because circumstances come and go. They may be negative at the moment, they may be positive at the moment, they rarely remain the same.

If they're positive now, they may be negative next year. There are constant fluctuations out there, but there is a place that is free of that. And people in prison who have written to me are practicing that, and living that, and finding an intense joy and aliveness despite the dreadful conditions of their external circumstances.

So those external circumstances I call that, that's your life situation. Good, bad, indifferent, it changes. You lose things, you gain things.

Life situations continuously fluctuate. And even the greatest success story eventually will move into old age, loss of beauty, or loss of wealth, or loss of the ability to move. On the external level, nothing lasts.

The Buddha discovered that. Everything is impermanent on the external level. And yet there is a place where you're free of those things.

Those things can no longer influence, affect your state of being. So you become free of the world. And it doesn't matter, if you're homeless now, you might think, okay, first I need to find a home, and then I will practice going within and going deeply into the now.

Because there's a fear, which is the mind's conditioning, if I go deeply into the now now, I will be stuck in this now that I don't like, that I'm in now. It's a very subtle thing, a very subtle resistance. I don't like my life circumstances, the mind says, so I'm not going to go into the now, because I don't want to be in the now.

I want to get to the future, and once I get to the future, then I'll go into the now. Perhaps the American Express Platinum Card will take me into the now. And of course the miracle is, you do it now.

No matter what the circumstances of your life are, there's no excuse for not doing it. And the quickest way out of undesirable circumstances, homeless, even prison, penniless, or even physical condition, the quickest way out of that, is to do it now. Is to enter the present moment and connect with the vast aliveness that is there, just waiting for you to touch it.

And then, that vast aliveness, you're not just practicing that when you're sitting still in your room, it's not just a meditation practice, it's a way of being, so you begin to dwell in that state of connectedness, and you will notice how suddenly there's more creativity in your life. There are more insights, realizations of what is the right thing to do. You will wake up and suddenly know, oh, this is what I have to do.

Because they arise out of that state, life itself begins to live through you and move through you. The little person struggling to make a living or to be a success or to make it, is not really needed anymore, the struggling little me. So life itself begins to move through you, and it does it much better than you could ever do, because ultimately you are alive.

By you I mean the fictitious little me in the head. And then, very quickly, life situations actually improve, because you bring to every moment that deep sense of aliveness of being there, and you can honor this moment fully. That means immediately a sense of deep care flows into what you do, all your interactions.

When you're completely there, you give your complete attention to whatever task is at hand, and even if you were in a job that the mind tells you is boring and you want to get out of, the quickest way out of that, and you might have been stuck in it for years, thinking I need to get out of it, is to bring a different state of consciousness to it, giving care even to the tedious things that you have to do and bring that to it.

That is meaning, that means, the resistance to the now suddenly goes. And the resistance to the now is an essential aspect of the conditioned human mind. It is always fighting this moment in one way or another.

No, I don't want to be here. I need to be somewhere else. When the resistance to the now goes, then life can move freely through you.

Then problems disappear. And of course nothing is made into a problem. Challenges still come, but they respond to them in the now.

Out of that sense of presence and aliveness, you see, what can I do about this situation now? And you become still, and then action arises out of that state. No longer the agonizing, oh, me and my problems.

And you never again will wake up in the morning and say, I can't face another day. It's a dreadful condition, but many humans are in that. You will then wake up and you will open your eyes, and the mind is not going to start immediately and tell you what your problems are, so immediately the burden descends on you of, oh, I can't face it anymore.

You wake up and immediately connect with the aliveness that is in every cell of the body and hold that state. It feels good to be alive, and the mind hasn't...why does it feel good to be alive? Because the mind hasn't started up yet and reminded you of your problems.

Because underneath that, it always feels good. Life is always vitally alive and beautiful. And so life becomes a celebration continuously, not a needing to get to some future moment to become happy or become somebody, or to make it.

And the miracle is that everything flows with greater ease then. And you're even likely to be more successful as if it mattered. Because whatever you do in that state is done with care and even love.

You honor the now. You honor life itself. You open your arms to life itself.

That is love. That is a deep sense of care that you give to whatever arises in the now. Yes.

How can life not be cooperative if that is your state of being? And how can life be cooperative if you continuously say, no, I don't want to be here. I want to be somewhere else.

Or even I want to be somebody else. So it's like being closed, resisting the now, denying the now, running away from the now. Anything but this, the mind says.

And then the shift happens. You honor life. Then life can help you.

It's been trying to help for years. You just can't get through. The sun tries to shine.

It doesn't mean you are big and powerful so you can keep out even life. You're not separate from life. If you keep the shutters closed in a room, the sun just won't come in.

It would love to come in. But if you keep the shutters closed, the sun doesn't really mind, but it would love to come in. So that is the state of non-resistance to the present moment.

The most miraculous transformation of consciousness as you enter that state is there. And there's always, as we started off by pointing to the stillness, when you do not resist what is, the incessant mental noise slows down, subsides, huge gaps arise in the mind stream, because almost all the mental noise is continuous resistance. So you open yourself up to just this moment.

That is the ultimate spiritual practice. And nothing could be more simple, and yet it seems so difficult because of the conditioning of the mind. So the sense of power or aliveness that dwells there, this is what they talk about in Trust the word Trust, trusting in life, to have to trust.

It's hard to make yourself trust when your primordial condition is fear, which is the primordial human condition in the mind-identified state. Fear and trust can't go together. Trust is simply the absence of fear.

So you cannot make yourself trust, or even affirmations won't do it. You can even repeat affirmations and put them on your bathroom mirror. I trust in life.

I trust that life is supporting me. But you eventually have to go even beyond the affirmation. And the trust arises naturally where you actually don't need any more affirmations, because you're there, the reality of it is there.

Affirmations are maybe a transitional stage when you haven't quite arrived at the reality of it. Then you say, I'm wealthy, but when you have 50 million in the bank, you can take off the affirmation from your bathroom mirror. It's obvious, you know you're wealthy, you don't need to say it anymore.

Bill Gates doesn't have the affirmation on his bathroom mirror. And that's only external worlds. Now he's not, this is not going to save him, even with that, he cannot buy peace.

But just giving that example to see when you have, when the reality is obvious, and it's there, then you don't need the signpost anymore, because every affirmation is a kind of signpost that points you in the right direction. But there comes a point when the signpost isn't needed anymore, because you have arrived. So the trust, trust, when you feel, you go into the inner body, and then you feel that there's the first very subtle, and then you feel increasingly, more intensely, the power, the aliveness, the stillness, and yet the incredible energy behind that.

And then you know, that is actually, that is most, on the most fundamental level, that's, I am, I am, I am, I am, I am, I am that. I am not the little me in the head. And that is going to, that lives, and acts through you.

That power is there. And when you know yourself as that, that's trust, then you suddenly, trust is your natural state. No longer something you need to figure out how to get there.

Trust is your natural state, so that even the concept trust disappears, because it's all natural, you don't even have a word for it anymore. Many concepts disappear when the reality to which the concept points arrives. The very mental concept of it is not really necessary anymore.

I rarely talk about love, although I did this morning, but I don't talk about it too often. It arises naturally out of the state of presence, and you don't even, you don't need to keep the concept in your head, and tell yourself that I'm loving, a loving being. It's not needed anymore.

I sometimes surprised when people tell me things, and say, oh, people sometimes, because I'm kind of present, and people say, oh, you're so patient. Oh, I'm so patient? I didn't know I'm patient.

I hadn't thought about it as patient. It never occurred to me that I'm patient. I didn't have this concept at all, because patient still means that you're trying hard to be here, there's some kind of effort involved in being patient, but when true patience is there, you don't even know you're patient, you're just present.

Patient still means you're halfway, you're half there and half not there, you're practicing to be patient. Okay, I'll be patient for another half hour, but then I will have had enough. So it's wonderful when all these concepts are not really needed anymore.

But there is a stage when they may be helpful. There is a stage when the affirmation on the bathroom mirror is okay. But there also comes a time when you go beyond that.

You wouldn't want to be staring at a signpost. If you want to get to Rome, you wouldn't be staring at a signpost for years that says Rome, that way. And then there are the collectors of signposts.

They have a whole bunch stored up and then compare them, this compares to that one, and this tradition, and he said that, and he said that, and this. And if you become a collector of signposts, then it's hard to let go, because you have a precious collection. In a way, all teachings are signposts, and you don't need to even identify with any particular form of teaching.

There can be certain traps on the spiritual path to identify with one particular form in which a teaching comes. And then he says, okay, I'm a Buddhist. And the other says, no, I'm a Sufi.

And the other says, well, I'm a Zen Buddhist, and you are Theravada. Zen is actually superior. Again, images come in, and they can be obstacles when you identify.

Ego on the spiritual path can creep in at any stage, so to look out. Now ego means a new image has formed again in your mind of who you are. Ego is a very subtle thing you can observe in yourself.

Comparison. Ego likes to compare itself. Comparison is an ego device.

So ego compares itself to others in a subtle way, and whenever ego is a feeling of inferiority or superiority arises as against others, both the feeling of, okay, I may not be as good as that person, or as knowledgeable or as spiritual as that person, that's ego, or feeling I'm more spiritual than that person, I've been practising for longer, or my tradition is better than that person's, then that's the superior ego coming in.

Even to have an image of yourself as spiritual, that the ego goes into that. Trying to live according to an image in your head, trying to be spiritual, to see yourself as spiritual, that's another ego trap. And then you become more unconscious in a way.

Ego means unconsciousness has returned, and despite your meditation practice, then you find there are lots of things that if you have an image of yourself as spiritual, then there are lots of things you can't, you have to deny that arise inside you and that would be, if you looked at them openly, they would be telling you, oh no, you're not that spiritual. You have to push them aside. Anger, whatever comes up, if it no longer fits your self-image, you push it aside, and then it goes building up momentum like a boiling kettle, a boiling pot, you have to put the lid on, and the steam is building up, and then suddenly you get an outburst or a wave of depression.

In Christianity, often they have tried to live according to what it's like to be a good Christian, trying hard, and anything that doesn't fit the self-image of me as a good Christian has to be pushed aside, and then you can't push it aside forever. At some point, the unconscious will again emerge and overwhelm you as rage, as anxiety, as depression, a mood, dark mood suddenly, and then you have a new energy coming in. And so presence is to live free of self-images, because that's mind, it's conditioning, free of needing some image to tell you who you are.

You don't really need that. And this is why I said you learn from animals, although animals have no self-image, they are themselves. They act naturally, spontaneously, or rather life acts through them.

They have of course the limitations of their particular form, and yet they are more deeply connected to the Source than humans in their normal state. So that's again, that's why it's so helpful to learn to watch an animal, it doesn't live through a self-image. It is itself.

It's the natural state. And what we are returning to is the natural, in India they sometimes use that expression, the natural state that humans lost a long time ago. So that's wonderful, you're returning to that.

So simply observe when some new self-image has formed, or some old self-image has returned, look so often, be aware of comparison. Comparison as an ego-device, as a self-image, as a self-image in a subtle way, you're feeling better than, or not as good as. There's the ego.

Better than, not as good as. Another sign that you're living through a self-image is defensiveness. Defensiveness arises when somebody questions your beliefs, questions a statement that you've made, doubts this or that, that you associate with your self-image.

So observe defensiveness coming in, and it's always, you're always defending an image, because who you truly are doesn't need any defense. It's so powerful, cannot be attacked, cannot be, it's totally beyond anything that could be injured or attacked in any way. It doesn't need any defenses.

So observing when it happens, when you observe it, you're no longer trapped in that unconscious movement. When you observe that an image has arisen in your mind, and you've become identified with that, at that moment, oh, that's the, again, the unconditioned has come in. You're suddenly aware of it.

When you're observing that you've become defensive about a position you have taken, may even be something spiritual, my mental position, it's, you've identified with a position, which means an image has formed in your mind of me, and that needs to be defended. Therefore, the Course in Miracles says, it has some wonderful statements, whenever you become defensive about anything, know that you have identified yourself with an illusion. Whenever you become defensive about anything, know that you have identified yourself with an illusion.

But the knowing is not part of the illusion. That's the beauty of it. The moment you know that you have identified yourself with an illusion, the knowing is not the illusion.

You have recognized the illusion, and in that knowing, you are free of the illusion. So the more illusions like that you discover in yourself, the better. Because every time you discover a mind pattern, an old mind pattern acting itself out, a self-image, defensiveness, grasping, clinging, the moment you become aware of patterns, the awareness or the knowing is not part of that.

That's why it's so wonderful, the more you discover that's unconscious in you, the better. It doesn't mean that you have failed. Discovering it is, this is how it works, to recognize it.

To recognize illusion as illusion is not illusion. You have recognized. The recognition is not part of the conditioned mind.

The recognition is the unconditioned. It sees. It just sees there.

So this is the wonderful thing that means you can afford the luxury of allowing whatever arises inside you to arise. You don't have to deny anything when we do this work, if you want to call it work. You don't need to deny anything which you need to if you live through a self-image.

Anything that doesn't fit the self-image is denied. But in this work, whatever arises, you allow it. Emotional patterns, mind patterns arise, and there comes the recognition as they arise.

When I say allow whatever arises to arise, you might ask, well doesn't everybody live in that way? No, they don't. The allowing implies that there is an awareness, and the awareness is not part of the conditioned.

When I say allow, it implies there is a presence that observes the pattern as it unfolds, either in your head or externally as a behavior pattern when you're talking to someone.

So just watch. The more you see, the more consciousness grows.

The more unconscious patterns you discover in yourself, the more consciousness is growing. So it doesn't arise anymore to say, oh I shouldn't be feeling this, I shouldn't have that thought, I shouldn't, this doesn't arise anymore. The deep, the allowing of inner states, the wonderfully liberating practice.

And then you know that there's no inner state that is actually you, no inner, no conditioned state is who you really are. That's why you're free to allow them. Otherwise, if anger comes and you identify with it and say, oh I shouldn't be that, I've been on the spiritual path for so many years and I'm still getting all this anger, I shouldn't, then you want to repress it or deny it or say, no I'm not angry, I'm just, I'm never angry.

Don't accuse me of being angry. You are angry. The typical ego interactions.

Me unconscious, you are the one who is unconscious. And observe how mechanical defensiveness is, the mechanical nature, the condition, it arises almost like clockwork, almost automatically. Somebody pushes a button and the reaction comes.

And when people know you, after a while, if they want a reaction, they just push the button. It's like a robot. A few months ago I was walking in Stanley Park in Vancouver by the pond.

Just an example, I'm always watching around me because one can learn so much by simply watching people. Now I don't mean, animals of course are deeper learning, but you can learn about dysfunction by watching people. There was a man, an old elderly man, feeding the ducks with breadcrumbs.

And then two youngsters, teenagers on bicycles, 16 year old, came up and they were wearing a badge, some voluntary workers, ecological voluntary working brigade or something. And they talked to the man who was feeding the ducks and said, oh, do you know that feeding the ducks is actually bad for them, feeding them breadcrumbs, because it fills up their stomach and doesn't give them enough nourishment. And he was feeding the duck.

And then he said, yeah, yeah, I know. And he continued to feed the ducks. And then they said a bit more, and then the defensiveness came up.

He actually admitted that he knew it was bad for them, but somehow perhaps it gave him pleasure, maybe it's the only interaction he has in life to feed the ducks. So the pleasure he derives from feeding the ducks was greater than knowing that it's actually harmful for them. And then he said, okay, I'm not stupid, nobody's going to tell me what to do, I'm not stupid.

So ego reaction came like clockwork, and he started talking angrily and defending himself. Didn't make much sense, because you can't defend behaviour that you've just recognised as wrong. But the ego doesn't care, it was an automatic defence mechanism, and he talked for several minutes, getting more and more angry, defending.

Now what was he defending? A mental position, a mental image, his ego. And finally the youngsters who were perhaps, were present, seemed quite present or well trained at least, they said, thank you for listening to us, bye bye.

And then the man walked on, and I walked on, and to 50 yards further on I could see him, he was again feeding the ducks. But it's, now let's just see if presence had been there in him at that moment, let's say, let's replay the same scenario. He's feeding the ducks, the youngsters come, say, do you know it's harmful, and he's, perhaps the first statement was actually true, he said, yes I know.

And then he would say, I know you're absolutely right, it just gives me so much pleasure, I can't help it, I just feel that I need to feed the ducks, but you're right, I'll stop now, or I'll just give them the rest of what I have, but I know you're absolutely right, but it's just, I love the ducks so much, and it gives me so much pleasure to feed them. Now that is, that is, his true power would be to feed the ducks, it would not be arising where the ego would have said, no, this is, you become annihilated, this is weakness, defend yourself. But if he had honestly expressed that, not needing to defend an image, then a true power would have arisen in him.

His true power would have come forth, and to the ego that looked like becoming vulnerable, like becoming vulnerable, but it's not, it's true strength. And the whole interaction, the quality would have changed with it, there might have been a true communication between two human beings, the youngsters and the old man. There might even have been love.

It could have been a wonderful encounter, but the ego didn't allow that. It needed to defend itself. That's, you get, people get more and more trapped in that, and this is just a tiny example.

Now imagine somebody living like his whole life in that way, and most people are. Not so much perhaps, perhaps everybody in this room recognises a little bit of that, sometimes more than a little bit in their own lives, but most people in this room are not totally, nobody in this room is totally trapped in those ego patterns. Everybody who sits here, there's some already areas of freedom where you go beyond ego opening up, otherwise you wouldn't be here.

And the ego wouldn't have allowed you to come here, or if you had come anyway, it would have become too painful, you would have gone home by now. Now the interesting thing, when this, when presence, the dimension comes in, and you observe defensiveness, then, oh God, there it is, and then sometimes through the simple fact of observation, you go beyond it, because that's the power that is, where you don't need the defensiveness anymore. And then there's the shift, suddenly.

And always the mind will tell you, dangerous, dangerous, defend yourself, protect yourself. So you learn by observing other human beings, and then observing yourself, of course. The spiritual teaching or teacher, if it is true, says, okay, do you realize that you don't need to suffer anymore?

Are you fed up enough with suffering? Or would you like to hang on to suffering? Anybody who has come here today, has already suffered enough.

Otherwise you wouldn't be here. So in a way, your suffering has been wonderful, because it's taken you to this point. I know that I wouldn't be sitting here without having had dreadful suffering and pain.

So it's, it's taken you here, and now the message that comes is, further suffering is not necessary if you voluntarily step into the new state of consciousness. You choose the kingdom of heaven. Life doesn't have to drag you into it, kick you into the kingdom of heaven, it's painful.

It did that to me. But now my job is to tell people that you don't have to wait for that to happen to you. Choose the new state, and you're able to do that.

I wouldn't tell this to anybody, but not anybody comes here. If you come here, your level of consciousness, the new consciousness is sufficiently emerged already for you to understand what I mean when I say you can choose to live in the state that is free of suffering. You can choose the state in which suffering is not possible anymore.

Unhappiness does not arise. Not a state in which you close yourself and you become, okay, nothing can touch me anymore. Protective shell, nothing to do with that, because if nothing can touch, if you have a protective shell around you, that means all the beautiful and good things can't touch you anymore either.

That's not what it is. It's a state of complete openness, a state of such intense presence that unhappiness has nowhere to cling to anymore. Because unhappiness can only cling to a mentally made sense of self, a little me, past, which moves continuously in past and future and continuously ignores the now.

So the realization that in the now there are no problems and there is no unhappiness. And the unhappy me that lives through past and future dissolves as you become present. That's the teaching.

That's the very same message that the Buddha gave 2,600 years ago and a few people got it. And then misinterpretation started because the mind started getting in there and say, okay, let's work this out. What does it really mean?

How can we categorize it? How can we make a system out of that? So a heavy superstructure of mind stuff arose on top of the beautiful teaching.

So this always happens. The mind tries to get in there and so the heaviness of religion arises on top of the purity and simplicity of the original teaching. And this is the simplicity of the original teaching.

We're going back to that. Freedom from pain is possible now. Now first that means you understand how pain arises.

It arises by not being present to this moment, by running away, by fighting, by denying, by running away internally from what is. So that's how pain arises always. When you accept what is, the new state of consciousness immediately is present.

So you can't separate acceptance of what is from the new state of thoughtless awareness. The moment you fully accept what is, the new state of thoughtless awareness is present. The whole mind stuff is resisting what is.

Its very existence, the very ground for its existence is the continuous state of resistance to what is. So resistance to what is and the old consciousness go together. So our practice is to not resist what is and thereby access the power of life.

And yet that may not immediately free you of all pain and suffering because humans have been in that state for many thousands of years and there is an energy field of pain that every human being inherits simply by the very fact that you are born into the human condition into the unenlightened painful human condition and ultimately mad human condition up to this point. You are born into that so every human being has a share of human pain that comes even from very, as you are born into this world you are already born with a burden of pain. So this is a very important part of our practice and realization.

This is not a facile thing of saying okay from now on we can all be happy. It goes deeper than that and we are not running away also, we are not running away from the fact that in you there lives an energy field of residue of past human pain on a personal level, pain from childhood that leaves residues, energetic residues, different things, painful things have happened to you in childhood and of course far beyond that in time. But let's just talk from the level of your present existence in this form, pain that is carried over from your childhood and beyond and leaves, doesn't go away completely, it leaves residues of pain and energy fields, everything is energy.

Then those energy fields get together because they feel, they vibrate at the same frequency so emotional pain gathers into one mass of pain, contracted energy that isn't flowing freely, an energy that I call the pain body that humans carry inside, an energy field of pain. And if you don't recognize that, no matter how much spiritual practice you do and even what we are doing here, if you do not see, if you do not recognize how the pain body operates, it will trick you every time and you will lose consciousness through it. So I want to address it now.

So first we realize there is an energy field of pain in me that may manifest either as turbulence, anger, heaviness like depression, tightness, fear, whatever way it manifests, it's not pleasant, it's painful, it's past pain, residues, but very much alive still. You carry it inside. But you're not always conscious of it and I talk about it briefly in one chapter of the book, so we go into it a little bit more deeply now and now there's the added energy of presence that we take into the pain body.

The pain body is sometimes dormant and sometimes active. It becomes active when you suddenly feel it very strongly, when it needs to feed on further experience of pain. As it always has to do regularly, like it's a little entity almost, it needs feeding temporarily on the experience of further pain.

And you will know that this has happened when a relatively insignificant trigger produces an incredible outburst reaction of pain. A minor thing goes wrong or somebody says something or your partner does something or says something and there's suddenly a deep or even a thought comes in and suddenly it serves as a trigger for an immense, the arising of deep emotional pain. At that moment, the pain body, this energy field, has come up out of its dormant state.

It is ready to feed on more pain. It produces an enormous amount of pain. There are two ways in which it produces, it feeds on the further experience, because it's all you can feed on.

The pain body consists of that energy of pain it needs. Please, where can I get more pain? It feeds on your thoughts when it's ready to rise up, and it feeds on your thoughts.

It will control your thinking. It rises into the mind, and the mind, which is your thought activity, becomes aligned with the pain body. Every thought you think is destructive and painful.

And the pain body loves it. It gobbles up the energy of every thought that you think, every destructive and deeply negative thought. It eats it up, so to speak.

And it's having a good time. It's feeding. And at that moment, one way of putting it is, one could say that that is the addictive quality of human pain.

Addictive because it loves its pain. When the pain body has taken you over, and has succeeded in pretending that that's who you are, all your thinking is completely aligned with it. And it's feeding on it.

At that very moment, the least thing you want, the last thing you want, is to be free of pain. At that moment, pain is what you want, because at that moment you are the pain body. And anybody who tells you that, if I came into your life at that moment, and gave you this message, that a life free from pain is possible, you would hit me over the head.

Because the pain body would be there, and I would be talking to the pain body, and the pain body would be talking back at me. So the pain body needs to come in periodically. And you will all, you all have experienced it, with partners, finding the ideal partner, and after a few weeks, feeling that there's another side to them, that periodically they become a little monster.

And then thinking, oh, I must have made a dreadful mistake. You haven't. Everybody has a pain body, including yourself.

But it's a bit more difficult to see the little monster coming up in yourself. Now, the pain body will use your thinking, it will feed on your negative and destructive thinking. It can go on.

Now, how long the feeding time lasts of a particular pain body varies greatly from person to person. It could be a brief one, a pain body that feeds very quickly, could be an hour or two. Some pain bodies have a feeding time of several weeks, even months.

That's extreme. But the pain body is extreme. And in very extreme cases, there are some pain bodies that have virtually no dormant stage.

They are continuously feeding and active. But that's more rare. Much also happens.

You sometimes meet people who are, and you look into their eyes, and you can see they are, the pain body is looking at you through their eyes, and they are waiting for an excuse to have more. They want you to give them a painful reaction. They want you to be angry with them.

They want you to attack them. That's people who are totally possessed by the pain body. So, level one, pain body feeds on your thinking.

Level two, pain body feeds, it might even predominantly use somebody else's reactions. In relationships, when the pain body is ready to arise and feed, it will provoke a reaction in your partner or the partner does it to you, pushes the right buttons, because it wants pain. The pain body loves the drama.

This is why drama is an essential part of most relationships. The pain body needs feeding, and you could be saying, suddenly it comes in. At the slightest trigger, there it is.

So it feeds on the other person's reaction, and that's where drama arises in the relationship. And it will give me more pain. And the mind is aligned with it, so the mind will find wonderful ways of rationalizing why it will add to it, through heated discussions or shouting matches.

And then the other person's pain body awakens, and the two feed on each other, until feeding time is over. And the two pain bodies subside, go to sleep, digesting food, and then the relationship for a while is harmonious again. And then the cycle starts again.

So pain body feeding on thinking, pain body feeding on other people's reactions. Now I mentioned the unhappy me, a mind pattern that people are identified with, an unhappy sense of self. This mind pattern, when the pain body is active, becomes amplified, its energy, the energy of the unhappy me, when the pain body moves into that mind pattern, that already has been telling you, your life isn't good enough, and so on, and you may not make it, and life has passed me by, and so on.

Now the pain body moves into that mind pattern, and its energy gets amplified 10 times, 20 times, 50 times, 100 times, in other words, the unhappy me, when the pain body arises and flows into that mind structure, the emotion flows into the mind structure, the unhappy sense of me becomes dreadfully unhappy, and loves its unhappiness. That's what it consists of. Now all that it is, it is not a foreign body that lives in you, it is, there's nothing that is not life energy, even the pain body is life energy, except that it isn't flowing freely, it's got stuck somewhere.

And when energy gets stuck and cannot flow freely, pain arises, like a river, if a river cannot flow, the water accumulates and pressure accumulates. But it's really it's beautiful life energy, the water is still beautiful, but there's pressure accumulating inside. That's what the pain body is.

Now, as we bring presence, this consciousness, into the pain body, it no longer, can no longer fool you into completely identifying with it. The presence, as the pain arises, from now on, you, and many of you do, you are already practicing that, pain arises, the pain body comes up, and at that moment you will recognize it as the pain body. That's the beginning of freedom from it.

The recognition, when it comes, slight trigger, provocation, even a thought, deep pain arises, in whatever form, in some people it's a very active pain, active, aggressive pain, in other people it's a passive form of pain, poor, little me, victim pain. Doesn't matter which pain bodies have different qualities, in different people. It may be turbulence or heaviness or tightness or constriction, it doesn't matter what it is.

As it arises, you will know there is a witnessing presence. And you watch, oops, there's the pain body. And you feel the energy field of it in your body.

Often you can feel it in the solar plexus or stomach area, sometimes in the belly, as a dreadful sense of, oh, heaviness, or some people perceive it as a big hole, some gaping hole inside, or it may be intense anger. But whatever it is, if you watch it, this is why sitting here is so helpful, because the witnessing presence, which is part of this new state of consciousness, gets so much strengthened simply by sitting in this energy field. So the watcher will be there, watching the pain, so the pain cannot use your mind anymore, it cannot feed on your thinking, because you are watching it directly, it cannot creep into your mind and then become an unhappy me.

So all that's left of the pain is an energy field of turbulence or heaviness, but the pain has not become an unhappy me, an unhappy sense of self, of who you are. That's the beginning of the end of the pain. But our practice is allowing what is to be, and that also applies as long as the pain body is there in you, allowing the pain that is there in you also to be.

That is a very powerful practice. So I'm not saying we are not fighting the pain, we are not even trying to get rid of it. You bring the consciousness, which is a very compassionate state of allowing what is its very powerful state, it implies your present, as the one who is able to allow, you are the one who is able to allow the pain to be.

You know you're not creating this pain at this moment, because you practice accepting what is. So it's not pain that you are creating, it's old pain. You bring the acceptance to the old pain.

This wonderful state, this powerful practice, it does not just concern what happens to you externally, allowing this moment to be as it is, it includes the arising of pain and the pain body. You watch it, feel it, allow it. So you bring presence into it.

You meet the presence meets the pain body. Here's the pain body, and there comes the silent space of presence. Okay.

And you hold the state of presence as the turbulence happens. Then the pain body is not replenishing itself. You've cut the link between the pain body and your thought processes.

It's not feeding on your thinking anymore. You're watching it. Now the best time to catch it and watch it is as it first arises in you, as you first notice it arising, to immediately become very alert with every cell of your body and feel it.

There it is. And stay alert. Stay present.

Continue to watch. This is the beginning of the transmutation of pain. The more you watch, the less it can feed.

It loses its energy charge every time you stay present as the watcher of it. It's not gaining new energy. In fact, it's losing energy as the pain body, but the very energy that was trapped in there as the pain body becomes part of the aliveness of who you are.

Many people's life energy is, to a large extent, trapped in their pain body. They have little access to their aliveness because the pain absorbs so much of their aliveness and it's all trapped in there, in a big unhappy me. And nothing is flowing.

There's no flow whatsoever. There's only a big, huge contraction. Many human beings are one big contraction.

It's amazing. The egoic state is one big contracted, nothing flows. And as the energy becomes freed that's in the pain body, there's an incredible increase in aliveness and vitality.

And of course, pain goes. It won't, it will not go the very first time you do it. You will have to do it many times.

Many times it will try to arise again and it will arise. Many times you will lose it. You will lose yourself in it again.

That's all right. It's all part of this. There will be times when it will take you over again.

And afterwards you remember, oh, there it was, and I missed it completely. You might have gone through three hours of drama with your partner and afterwards you say, oh, that was the pain body. I missed it completely.

That's all right. Next time maybe you'll catch it and know that it's there. The good thing is that the pain body becomes actually your ally in your presence practice because without it, very few people would have enough motivation to enter the new state of consciousness.

Every time the pain body comes, until you know this fact, the pain body will trick you every time and you will lose consciousness every time. But now that you know this, whenever it comes, it becomes incorporated into your practice of presence. So the more often it comes, the better it is.

You're lucky. If you have a strong pain body, you're lucky. It's good for your practice.

It can become a great teacher. That is the most, actually the most powerful part of your practice is to work with the pain body and see how quickly the transmutation happens when it no longer is an unhappy me. It's simply pain.

Not pleasant, but you can allow it and there's an incredible intensification of presence every time you bring it to the pain body. Now those of you who have very dense or heavy pain bodies will need more intense presence. Most people who, that I know, who have gone to become almost free of pain, and not yet many who are completely free, but they will be, are people who have very dense pain bodies because their motivation is stronger to be free.

[Speaker 2] (1:52:39 - 1:53:36)

This concludes Session Two. Our program continues with Session Three. Sounds True and Namaste Publishing present Living the Liberated Life and Dealing with the Pain Body.

Session Three with Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (1:53:51 - 2:09:15)

In Eastern terms we are talking about karma. Karma really ultimately is all the conditioning from the past, including the past pain, that you mistakenly believe is who you are. Karma is to be identified with all past conditioning and to be condemned to relive and act out continuously your past conditioning.

So pain body is an aspect, an important aspect of karma. So what we are addressing here is going beyond the unconsciousness that is karma. What we are talking about here is actually the dissolving of karma.

There would be no end to karma otherwise because it renews itself. That's why it's often likened to a wheel. It renews itself continuously.

This is an end to pain, an end to suffering. Use your relationships in your practice and realize that no matter who you choose as your partner they will have a pain body. Don't look for the ideal partner without a pain body.

And that's good. And use the relationship because it's so much easier to become aware of your own pain body in a relationship than if you live alone. Great opportunity for practice.

If both of you understand how it works, you could have an agreement that you will help each other when the pain body arises in the other person so that the other can stay very very present instead of going into reactivity. Stay very very present. And if the partner gets taken over by the pain body, stay so present that you allow it without reacting and thinking that that's who that person is.

Allowing it. If your partner doesn't want to cooperate, you just do it for yourself. It only takes one person ultimately to be free.

It's great if he or she does. For many women, pain body arises as the approaching menstrual cycle comes. I mentioned it briefly in the book.

Because there is so much collective female pain, there is a cause. One aspect of pain body is collective human pain. Now collective may be the pain of a nation that you belong to.

Certain nations have more of a heaviness to them than other nations. The new world has relatively less heaviness to it than the old world. Because the old world, Europe, Asia to some extent, there is so much past there.

There is so much. The heaviness of past and the heaviness of past pain is very much apparent. Certain countries, you just get off the plane and if you are sensitive, you feel the energy field of the collective pain body.

Eastern Europe, in many countries you can feel it the moment you step. Germany, I feel it the moment I step off the plane. Russia.

And every individual who lives part of their pain body is a part of the collective pain body. So it's not just a past. Pain body is never a personal problem of yours.

It's the human condition. It's your share in the human condition. Not a personal problem.

There are no personal problems. Every pain that you have in your life is your share of the human condition manifesting in a particular form. So there is one aspect of the collective pain body is the nation, the national.

The United States has some pain body, but less karma. There is less karma here than European states, and certainly some European states. And even such a thing as a relatively short-lived, like Vietnam War or something, adds a bit to the collective pain body experience.

Fifty million men, fifty thousand men killed in some distant country, and the Secretary of State at that time in his autobiography now says, well, in retrospect it was probably a mistake. Human madness, just one more manifestation of human madness. But if you, and some of you were actually, I know, had to go there and suffer pain there, then that's fine.

You work with that now. Now there's also female collective pain body, just as there's a male collective pain body. The female collective pain body that every woman partakes in has to do with dreadful pain suffered particularly through women being treated as slaves and as worthless property for thousands of years.

Not always, there was a time before that when women had their rightful place, but for thousands of years in most countries, women became victim of the patriarchal, mind-dominated state of consciousness. So that becomes particularly pronounced when the menstrual cycle starts, the very thing that is the femininity in you on the biological level is very painful. It awakens the female pain body just as it happens.

And this is, in the old traditional teachings in Buddhism they say, no, women can never make it. They can't become enlightened because every time they go through their cycle they lose consciousness. So they say, okay, we have to exclude women.

And they did. And so it's become more and more lifeless by doing that. And it's become more and more mind-dominated.

The very fact is that the opposite is true. If women can use that, knowing that that is the time particularly when the pain body arises, and become present at that time, it will be through that that women become very quickly now free of their pain body. By bringing presence into, especially when the pain body arises at the approaching menstrual cycle, bring presence into that and become very alert.

Watch the pain arising. Watch it, allow it to be. Be compassionate towards it, which is what the allowing is.

Be compassionate, the compassionate one who allows the pain to be, and who is able to hold it, to hold the turbulence. The state of presence is always a gentle embracing of what is. It's bringing a gentleness to it which is a very powerful gentleness.

Bringing the gentleness to it and embracing what is, and holding it in that embrace. And you stay present as you hold your pain, the pain, and watch the turbulence of it. Hold it.

The more you hold it, the stronger, very, very quickly your sense of presence grows much, much stronger as you hold the pain. And the pain will slowly lessen. But it no longer matters because your acceptance of the pain is so total, you're not making that moment into a means to an end because I want to get to the end of my pain.

Your acceptance of pain is complete and that's where your spiritual power lies, in fully accepting it. But of course now it hasn't become you. It hasn't become an unhappy me.

You are fully there, you are fully present with it, you fully accept that there is the pain body vibrating in you. And you may have to hold that pain for quite a while when the cycle comes, it can go on for a few days, and hold, bring presence to it. You may occasionally lose it and then remember again and be present with it again.

By losing it I mean it may succeed in moving into your mind and control your thinking again. And then suddenly you'll remember and you hold it, holding it. So that pain becomes incredible teacher and every time it happens you bring the presence to it.

That's why women are going, it's already, there's always more women coming to consciousness groups than men. Women will move forward more quickly now than men. I've seen it, I'm seeing it all the time.

And part of the reason is that they'll be able to work with their pain bodies, which up to now has looked, has been a great obstacle, now becomes a great help as you bring the presence to it. Men still have, are less in touch with their bodies, more, women of course are also in the mind, but men even more deeply entrenched in their mind structures. So there's a different, they of course also have pain bodies, but the predominant thing for men is identification with their head.

The predominant thing for women is identification with pain body. So that's, these are just the focal points. Wonderful practice and I'd love to know, those of you who have already been practicing after reading the book, how you're doing and how it's, what ought to be the obstacles there are, where it is becoming difficult, or any questions that arise out of that.

But it is, it is so, this practice is so easy and so wonderful and so powerful that it's amazing that it's taken humans so long to get to this point. But transformation can be very quick now, very quick. So make your pain body into your ally.

Your pain body is not your enemy. When you make it into an enemy, that's the old mind thing starting over and making even the pain body into a problem. How can I get rid of it?

Forget about getting rid of it. Just watch it. That does it.

And then, at first the pain seems overwhelming. And the more you bring your presence to it, you realize how powerful your presence actually is. And that the pain ultimately is a, just ripples on the surface of the vastness of who you are.

All human pain ultimately is surface ripples, or little waves, pretending to be very big waves. And when you realize the vastness of your being, then very quickly you realize it's only, ultimately it's just a little bit of pain, but it blew itself up to gigantic proportions. That's the practice of liberation.

It doesn't take long. People ask me sometimes, well, how long do we have to do that for? And that can vary from person to person, depending on the density of the pain body and other factors.

It doesn't really matter. The practice itself is beautiful. But I have seen people with extremely heavy pain bodies going, reducing the energy charge of their pain body by about 80 to 90% in two years of practicing this.

Now, that's people with incredibly dense pain bodies. So, that is possible. It is not that you need a lifetime of practice to become, or even as some traditional teachers may tell you, you will make it, you will need, some teachers may tell you, okay, you need five more lifetimes.

Or, you will make it in your next lifetime. Or in 20 years time, I will give you liberation, if you, after you've given me all your money. Let's ask a question if one arises.

Would you want to ask a question? Is the microphone going there? While the microphone travels there, we are present, not waiting for anything to happen.

[Speaker 3] (2:09:26 - 2:09:51)

I'm wondering how you handle when two people's pain bodies collide. Oh, yes. For example, there's, well, my wife, who I love very deeply, there's my raging pain body, and then there's my pain in the ass body, which sometimes rages back.

And I'm wondering how one handles that.

[Speaker 1] (2:09:54 - 2:21:32)

Now, use the relationship as an essential part of your practice. The pain body is not there continuously. As you know, it arises at times.

And it will start arising in one person, either you or your partner. Be there as it arises in yourself. Watch the beginning of it, the beginning of pain.

That implies I wouldn't be telling this if you did not have the necessary degree of presence to be there as the witness. But you have now, if only after sitting here for three hours, there is enough presence for you to be there as the witness of the pain as it arises. If you catch it at an early stage, it's easier to stay present, and it won't take you over.

If it arises so quickly, and that happens in certain pain bodies whose energy field predominantly is anger, anger has a fiery quality to it. And an angry pain body, as opposed to a heavy depressed pain body, an angry pain body, you have virtually no time to watch it arising, because it arises like an explosion, and is there fully fledged in one second. So if it's an angry pain body, it's very hard to watch it arising, because it arises explosively.

If it's a different pain body, a heavy one, fearful one, it's easier to watch it arising and trying to get into your mind. So being there as it starts, the partner can be very helpful, because you may already at an early stage become identified with it and start to argue, and of course the arguing will already be energized by the pain that lies behind the mental rationalizations and arguments. And your partner may still be present, and become intensely present, and watch as your pain body arises.

Your partner watches the arising. If you can't watch the arising of your own pain body, which sometimes you may not be able to yet, your partner can do it for you almost. That's how wonderful the relationship can work.

Your partner becomes the witness. If you lose the witness, your partner becomes the witness. This can be a very powerful practice.

So what then happens, if I'm with a partner, I can see the pain body arising and already creeping into her mind, wanting me to react, enter the state of intense presence, which is also a state of great openness. And you feel immediately every cell of your body vibrates with life. And you hold that state of complete openness and presence, and you watch the arising of the partner's pain body going through the mind.

Now it will try every trick to pull you into unconscious reaction to the pain body. Pain bodies have extreme cleverness. Your partner will try every trick, it will try, it will push buttons that have worked in the past every time in making you unconscious, say just the right thing that he or she knows is going to make you unconscious and give an emotional reaction.

And you stay present. Do it for them. If they lose themselves in the pain body, you hold the presence and watch how the pain body tries every trick to get you, to pull you into unconsciousness.

And that presence is always, it emanates as an energy field around you. So if you're with someone, if you stay intensely present, there's an emanation of presence around you. It's very hard for a pain body to remain active for long in the energy field of presence, even if it comes from another person.

Now it may be that the pain body will remove itself, the person will run out of the room, or jump in the car and drive off, or there will be a sudden, and this can happen and it's miraculous, in the middle of being taken over by the pain body there's an awakening and there's a sudden aware presence that suddenly is able to watch the intense pain taking place. It could even happen in the middle of a shouting, you're shouting at your partner, and at that moment presence arises. And what that feels like is like you're waking, you're an actor, and you're on stage acting out a script, a very powerful script, forgotten that you're acting out a script, and suddenly there's a remembering that this is just acting out, an acting out of a conditioned pattern.

And there's suddenly a watching presence there. That's amazing. So you help each other, if the other person loses him or herself, you stay present.

Presence never means that you withdraw or protect yourself. And you need to be, this is why being here is helpful to become familiar with the state of presence. Some people mistake it for a state of aloofness, when let's say you're being attacked by your partner's pain body, and then you go into withdrawal, it looks like this.

That's not presence. Even the little me can say, okay, I'm beyond such, I'm not touched by the pain body. I'm beyond such unconsciousness.

So presence is open, complete, it's the allowing, you allow your partner to be where he or she is. It's a deep allowing, a vast power comes with that. And again, you're embracing, whether you embrace your own pain, or you embrace your partner's pain, and you can remain in a state of love, and you realize there's the movement of pain.

And you don't need to point it out through words, that probably wouldn't work anyway at that point. But also be careful that the pain bodies are very cunning, and it is possible that your pain body may be arising and projecting something at that moment and saying to your partner, there's your pain body. All kinds of things can happen, but if you're present, that'll be fine.

I know of some couples who give themselves a secret signal when the other notices the pain body arising in the partner. And for some that works, a little hand signal, or the, just, but it can be, sometimes it doesn't work at all when the pain body hasn't, it can, the pain body is already there, and it's being told something, and of course the reactive force can be very strong then. One signal that definitely doesn't work that somebody suggested to me is, so it is helpful sometimes after you've had an interaction governed by the pain body, to talk about it and see where it started, where it came in first, how it used the mind, how it used arguments and mental positions of me being right and you being wrong, how it moved into those mind structures, and talk about it afterwards. It's a good practice occasionally to retrospectively bring presence into an event when you got completely taken over by it.

So after consciousness has returned, you kissed and made up and had a nice meal, or whatever else you have afterwards, and then talk about it, and isn't that, that was the pain body, did it start in you or in me? Let's see, let's trace it back to the beginning. There it was, the beginning movement when you didn't phone me to let me know you were going to be late, or you didn't put the garbage out.

It can start with very insignificant things. So retrospectively to bring presence into the whole growth of it, and then next time see if you can be present as it happens. Wonderful practice.

And whenever you lose it, afterwards see where you lost it. Not in some kind of, oh I have failed to strengthen the little me that isn't good enough. No, just looking at it objectively, see that's where it started.

That's where the whole pain movement started. That's good practice too. So see, talk to your partner and see, so you can help each other in it.

It makes it easier if you help each other. Because it's always one partner when it comes into one person, the other will still be for a little while conscious. So that's a great advantage.

Next time I come, let me know how it's going. The mic is coming.

[Speaker 5] (2:21:36 - 2:21:47)

I wanted to ask you about consciousness in children and if we can prevent them from having the pain movement.

[Speaker 1] (2:21:47 - 2:24:10)

Oh that's a good question, yes. Asking about consciousness in children and if we can prevent children from having or developing a pain body. Now many children absorb pain body at an early age from their parent's pain body.

That adds greatly to, some pain is already present in every human being, even as they come into this world, but that adds greatly to the personal pain body. You absorb the pain. It happened, my pain body grew very quickly in the first six, seven years of my life because my parent's pain bodies were both there with great intensity.

Many homes are like that. So children absorb their parent's pain body. Now, of course, you're asking the question for the people in this room and they're all, there's consciousness moving in.

The most helpful thing you can do with children is to bring consciousness into your own pain body. Or if you live with a partner, you do it, both of you do it, so that you don't emanate and act out continuously pain body and then they absorb it. Now, but even those, even children where parents are not getting lost in their pain body, they will still have a certain amount of pain.

And many children, even four, three or four year olds, you can often observe how an angel, within a few seconds, can be transformed into a screaming monster. It's a very powerful thing. The transformation is so amazing, we take it for granted that that's normal.

This beautiful being, light shining out of his or her eyes, not much mind started yet, the egoic me is not very strong yet, so there's still a lot of being flowing through their eyes. And suddenly they go into dreadful contraction and throw themselves on the floor and start screaming.

[Speaker 7] (2:24:13 - 2:24:15)

That's the pain body.

[Speaker 1] (2:24:18 - 2:29:23)

And it's relatively short lived with children because it doesn't, their mind isn't developed enough for the pain body to hang on in their mind for a long period of time. So it goes through quickly and believes them, it subsides again quickly. Now, the greatest thing you can do for children is to point out to them that there's something happening after an event like that, a screaming fate, or what other children may do, other things, extreme withdrawal or something, to say what happened when this energy, do you remember yesterday when you had the screaming fate?

What happened there? Who was that? I see by talking, by pointing out that there was an energy movement in the child and perhaps giving it a name, you can help the child to stay present and watch it as it arises.

You can't do it in the middle of it, you have to do it afterwards. You can't talk to a screaming monster. But when the angel is back, you talk to the angel and say, who was that monster?

Not to induce any guilt or anything like that, in an interested way, isn't that funny, where does that come from? Has he got a name? And then next time it happens, just as it arises, oh, there, so-and-so is back.

You can say it even while it's happening, although of course that won't wake them up at that point, but a little bit of awareness will be there at that point. And after it has subsided, you say again, oh, it was again, wasn't that funny? And if you can catch the arising of the pain body in the child just as it first starts, you can say, oh, it's coming on, can you feel it?

That means very quickly the witnessing presence in the child will grow and they can actually watch the movement of the pain body in themselves. And that is wonderful, that's something that every parent, everybody who sits here can do easily. So you're not trying to get rid of it, it's almost like it's a phenomenon that you and the child together contemplate.

And you have to admit openly if your own pain body has taken you over, you can say, you know what, that was the same thing happened in me. What happened this morning, you talk to the child, that was mine. And a point may come when the child may tell you, oh, there's your pain body.

It is a truly functional home when that happens. And children can do that. And they would love to be there as the watcher.

It's like a game, it's fun. Here's something to surrender to. Now, even with something, before we ask the next question, even with something like that, this is a minor irritation, unless your pain body is ready to awaken, in which fact it could be a big irritation.

Oh, unfortunately it's stopped now. Anything like that, you can practice even with little irritations, practice, see if you can be in complete acceptance of that, what was up to this point irritating, just completely allowing it, allowing it totally. So you work with it, whatever it is, you work with it, allowing it totally, and see what happens.

Anything that you allow totally takes you into peace, into the state of peace. Great peace. It's amazing.

Anything that you allow completely. So that's the work with children, it's wonderful.

[Speaker 4] (2:29:34 - 2:29:49)

All of us have pain bodies, as you point out, and most of us go to...

[Speaker 1] (2:29:49 - 2:40:14)

Now, at work, usually you go into an environment that is dominated by little me's and egos, and big ego structures, unconsciousness at work, many big objects, and so on and so on. Many organizations are still run, there are maybe a few exceptions, but many organizations are still run by that consciousness, that state of consciousness. So, a great help is not to expect others to be conscious.

Not to expect consciousness where there isn't consciousness. You will be very often, as you do this practice for yourself, you will very easily observe unconsciousness and pain bodies arising in other people at work, being acted out through their mind, and it will happen continuously, in some companies more than in others. And it's the same practice because it's basically a relationship, it's bringing presence into relationships.

When pain body arises in somebody else, don't go into the reactivity that would be the little me fighting somebody's pain body, which can easily trigger your own pain body, and you get a big argument. The practice is relinquishing the reactivity of the little me, so you allow unconsciousness in the other person. Doesn't mean you give in every time.

There's a great, it's getting hold of the state of presence and bringing presence into your work, to the conference table, to the committee meeting, and as you sit there, little egos having their battles all around the table, you watch, and perhaps for a moment you remember this moment, and that brings back the state of presence, and then you sit there in the state of, you feel intensely connected with the body, and you watch everybody's contribution without mental judgment, you bring presence to the conference table, to the committee meeting, not the reactivity of the me. You may find yourself making a contribution to the state of presence, and it'll bring a different quality to the whole interaction. There's one person there who brings in a different consciousness, and then see what happens.

So instead of, there's nothing you can do to change others as such. And most of the world still lives in unconsciousness. That's how it is.

Don't expect it to be otherwise. So it's allowing, it's in the allowing people their unconsciousness, this by the way also implies to your relationships with other people, like long-standing relationships with parents, which to many people, or children, grown-up children and parents, for many people it's a very problematic area, because there's so much past in there. There's often so much unconsciousness and dysfunction in families.

So the most beautiful thing happens when you can, let's say it's your parents, when you can allow your parents completely to be in who they are, you give up, which is really the little me, you give up the desire to be understood by them. The little me says, you need to understand me. They won't.

But the weight, you will feel a weight being taken off your shoulders when you, there's a relinquishing of the need to be understood by your parents. Oh, that's a relief, they don't need to understand me. And then, there's a letting go, and this all comes with presence, there's a letting go of wanting them to be different, wanting them to behave differently.

Accusing them of having done this or that, or having failed to do this or that. There was nobody there to have failed, there was just unconsciousness in motion, nothing personal in it. They did what they could do, according to their level of consciousness.

Really, there was nobody there to ever have done anything or not done anything. It was unconsciousness playing itself out. That's why Jesus said, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

When you realize, they didn't know any better. There wasn't enough consciousness. If Jesus had lived now, he would have said, forgive them, for they are completely unconscious.

That's what it means. It's just unconsciousness playing itself out. And then, even that drops away, the feeling that they should have done something differently.

And the more presence arises in you, the more you realize nobody ever did anything to you. The presence, it's only the little, the identity of the little me feels hurt or injured. When the dimension of presence arises, presence always remained totally pristine, totally pure, totally fresh, and nothing ever happened to it.

The reality of who you are, nothing ever happened to that, no matter what pain was inflicted on you in your childhood. As presence emerges, you realize there is a dimension in you that was never touched. And then forgiveness happens automatically.

You don't have to try to forgive. As long as you try to forgive, it's not really working. Oh, I should be forgiving because I'm spiritual.

You cannot really make yourself. Forgiveness happens naturally as presence arises and you feel the vastness of who you truly are, beyond the little me. Forgiveness is just there, you don't even have a word for it anymore.

So it's really, towards all relationships, whether at work or with parents, between parents and children, the most powerful tool, the most, is to allow everyone to be who they are, which is an aspect of allowing this moment to be as it is. On the canvas of this moment, very often people will appear in it. Very often this moment will come to you as a person.

It may come to you as a person's pain body, coming out of this at you. Okay, the practice is, allow it to be. That's where power flows through.

The mind says, no, you can't allow it to be. You should be doing something about it. The most powerful transformation happens through allowing to be.

So when I say, allow the present moment to be, very often that means, allow this person to be. Allow the unconsciousness to be there. It's fine.

It's fine. It's fine. And then you will notice relationships with your parents improve dramatically when you give up the desire to be understood.

You don't need that anymore. You realize there was nobody there who ever did anything to you or failed to do anything. So you can see miraculous transformations in situations through allowing.

That's where the vast power comes through. Whether it's at work, or this, you can try it out. What's coming up soon?

Thanksgiving? Wonderful place to practice when all the family gets together. For some people it's agony having to go through that.

Now, this time, see if you can bring in complete acceptance of what is. Everybody around the table happens to be part of this moment then. Allow this moment, including the turkey dinner and whatever it is, people acting out their conditioned behavior.

You can predict what they are going to say next because they said the same thing ten years ago. Allow it to be. And then your next practice will be Christmas.

They get together again. It's always, that's always a good, and the ultimate test is parents. You may, Ram Dass said his famous statement, if you think you're so enlightened, go and spend a week with your parents.

[Speaker 6] (2:40:24 - 2:40:33)

Can you say a little bit about the intense pain of losing somebody through death, somebody who you're really close to, or the pain of a marriage dissolution?

[Speaker 1] (2:40:34 - 2:48:02)

Yes, thank you. Now, the pain of great loss, either loss of a loved one through death or loss of a relationship, which is also a close relationship, is also a kind of death. There may be some situations where surrendering to what is seems impossible.

Some situations are intrinsically so painful that you just, no matter, you may have been successfully practicing surrendering to what is, but suddenly something happens and you just can't and intense pain arises. And this is the second level of surrender. The first level of surrender is surrendering to what is.

That's the most perfect surrender. The second level of surrender is to surrender to what you feel. So if pain arises, because you couldn't surrender on level one to what is, it just wasn't possible, if pain arises, you surrender to the pain.

You accept the pain. And that is a strange thing at first. Everything inside you says, no, this is dreadful.

I don't want the pain. The pain may flow into your mind. But if you surrender to the pain, that can be a wonderful opening, the pain of loss, deep loss.

Feel it and accept the pain that you feel so completely that almost as if there's not a person there anymore who is suffering the pain. There's only the pain. And there's a complete acceptance of that.

At first it's very, it seems unnatural to do that. But as you continue to accept it and be with that pain, instead of running away from it, you will, after a while, something happens and the pain turns around and there's suddenly a vast peace underneath the pain, which is not a denial of the pain. It's only by going into the pain and allowing it, you touch it suddenly.

Whenever there's loss, whether big loss or little loss, it's an opportunity. You're the fabric of your existence, but suddenly a hole appears in it. Something vital is gone.

That is an emptiness. Great loss leaves a feeling of great emptiness. And that great emptiness at first is deep pain, because there's a reaction.

The emptiness is painful. The reactive me reacts. Oh, now if you allow the emptiness to be, that is there where there was, that being is gone, there's a hole.

The winds of grace blow through that hole that is left when there's great loss. There's an incredible opportunity there if you only allow it. In the absence, whenever there's an absence of something that had been greatly valued, it leaves a nothingness.

The nothingness is at first very painful. As you surrender into the nothingness, there's a fullness that is hiding underneath, behind there. And some people have done that.

They have had, they lost everything all at once. There have been reports of people losing their position, their family, and their homes all at once. It's almost as if the fabric of your existence has only holes in it now.

And at first there was an influx of incredible, unbearable pain, and then there was complete surrender, and suddenly there was what Jesus calls the peace that passes all understanding, coming out of what was intense pain through surrender. And so that, when somebody dies close to you, surrender to the pain, surrender to the feeling of the pain, and see how it becomes transformed. And what happens after that, it is, there's such an intense depth of peace and aliveness, if it could speak, of course it doesn't speak.

If it could speak, it would say, all is well, there is no death, if it could speak. That's what it feels like. But you don't even need the words.

And it will happen to everybody. Some loss, some great loss will come into everybody's life. Somebody close to you will die.

Another great loss will come. Your own death at some point will come approaching. And you can see, oh.

And by, perhaps everybody in this room by then will have already gone beyond identification with the little person and the little me, and already has access to a dimension that is beyond death. The reality of who you are that is beyond death. I don't want to give you any belief.

That's why I don't want to talk about it too much. It's, we are here to experience, to be the timeless consciousness, the timeless state of consciousness that is beyond birth and death, that is your reality, and everybody else's reality. It is often through pain that you have access to it.

And here it's an easier way. But if pain is happening in your life at this time and coinciding with being here, that is wonderful. Life has given you this at this time.

The two come together. And that's beautiful. So anything you cannot accept externally and pain arises, or something, whatever arises as a feeling, accept.

Surrender to what you feel. Surrender to what is. If you can't, surrender to what you feel about that.

[Speaker 2] (2:48:17 - 2:49:16)

This concludes Living the Liberated Life and Dealing with the Pain Body with Eckhart Tolle. Music by Stephen McNamara. For further information on lectures and workshops with Eckhart Tolle, you may visit his website at www.eckharttolle.com.

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Thank you for listening.

2002-Eckhart Tolle Entering the Now 2 Audio CD

[Speaker 2] (0:11 - 0:18)

Sounds True and Namaste Publishing present Entering the Now with Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (0:40 - 1:00:04)

Welcome to our retreat. I trust everybody can hear me. I also trust that nobody is waiting for me to start, because everybody here knows that we are here to give up waiting as a state of mind, normal state of mind, and that there's another state of mind, or rather no mind, in which you're not waiting for the next moment.

That's why we're here, to discover that state of no mind, awareness, you could call it, or deepen it. We are not here to add anything to what we know. We know enough, enough to have come here.

So we are here to discover that thinking is not the only possible state for humans, and not the highest state. And as we go through the shift from thinking to awareness, thinking, first of all, loses its predominant place in our lives. And as a side product of losing its predominant place in our lives, it actually becomes more effective.

Thinking becomes more effective, less destructive, not destructive anymore. So no answer here is going to come if you're looking for the answer on the level of thinking, or on the level of adding something to your mind. The answer lies in stepping beyond thinking, simply by allowing what is, which is now, allowing what is to be as it is, because it is.

And you discover that the compulsion to think is to a large extent connected with not being willing to allow what is to be as it is now, because there's a little mind-made entity, consists of thinking and accumulated thought patterns, that thrives on resistance to what is, and on reactivity, and is always looking for the next thing to get a little bit bigger. It's never quite enough. This little me is never quite enough.

Most of you have come here because there is at work within you something that goes far beyond the personal, something that is an expression of the evolutionary impulse of the universe. On the surface level, it looks as if a person had chosen to come here. But it is also possible that one or two have come here expecting something they're not going to get.

What's that? More. More experiences, more knowledge, more beliefs, more opinions.

So if there are one or two who have come here expecting more, then they might want to leave. As soon as they discover there's no more. Or they suddenly, after, if they can endure the discomfort that arises when the need for more is not met, and don't run away immediately, they can endure the discomfort, they may be able to break through that mind pattern.

Please pay attention, not just to the words, but to the silent spaces between the words. That's where the shift happens. In that alertness that is required to acknowledge or to listen to that dimension of stillness that underlies the words and is in between the words.

That is why we're here. And that's not an adding to, because that is discovering something that's already there but had been ignored. Just as I was coming here this beautiful night, in this incredibly beautiful place, I took off my shoes and I looked up at the sky.

A clear sky, stars, brilliant points of light. And there is something when you look up there, there's something that is so easily overlooked, but should be obvious to anybody who looks up there. It can tell you something about the nature of the universe.

When you look up, what do you see? You see little points of light, you see, basically, there are two dimensions there. Objects, celestial objects, suns, planets, the moon, galaxies, billions, trillions.

So there are celestial objects, things, objects in space, and there's space. The universe consists of things. You can look, it's so obvious.

There are things in space and there's the vastness of space. The things are that which is manifested. But when you look up, what produces the feeling of awe, of the feeling of infinity, is the vastness of space.

The depths of it, which is inconceivable, has no end. It is such that even our neighboring galaxy, our next door neighbor in terms of galactic neighbors, the Andromeda galaxy, if you traveled at the speed of light, which is very fast, 300,000 kilometers per second, which is the distance from here to the moon in one second, is the speed of light. If you traveled at the speed of light to our neighboring galaxy, and there are billions of galaxies, the closest one to us, it would take you 2.3 million years to reach it. At the speed of light, 2.3 million years. Such is the depth, the vastness of space. And what is out there applies also, the so-called external universe, applies also to the so-called inner universe.

There is also within you things, let's keep it simple, things and space in your life. Now, things, it is obvious that your life is surrounded by things. There are many things in your life, physical things.

In many people's lives, there are so many physical things to deal with that they are constantly running after the next physical thing that they need to deal with. They may have a house, they may have this and this, and everything demands attention. Their entire attention is absorbed by the things that surround them.

And it's just at the moment, just talking about physical things. This is needed, and that's needed, and that. And then there's the belief that there are not enough physical things yet.

I need some more, because I don't feel quite complete yet. And then there are other things in a wider sense, all the things that make up your life situation, conditions of your life, events. Things are constantly happening, and constantly new things pop up.

Oh, thanks. So it's not just physical things. All kinds of things make up your life situation, what people call my life.

But I say it's only your life situation. They don't know what their life is. Their life situation consists of an accumulation of events, things happening, situations, demanding attention.

Everything saying, this is important, give me attention. So there's the pull of things, not just physical things, the pull of situations, of demanding. So it's the world, your world, consisting of things that need to be dealt with.

And it's never quite enough time to deal with it all. And when you've dealt with one thing here, there are three more things cropped up there. And so people go through life with that pull into the world of things.

It doesn't leave you alone for long. And on a primordial level, on a basic primordial level, all the world of things starts with thoughts. Because all the things, whether they are physical, or events, or situations in your life, really only exist in you as thought.

Nobody knows whether actually there's anything out there at all. Because what reaches you, they say, sense perception happens, visual, auditory, and so on, is translated into nerve impulses that reach the brain. And those impulses are decoded.

And then some kind of world picture emerges. Oh, this is what's going on. Nobody actually knows what's out there beyond the impulses that are being received and decoded.

And so some kind of world picture is put together. So that some philosophers have even doubted that there's anything out there at all. And it could just be a dream.

And there are certain indications that it is a dream. It's in the nature of dreams to be fleeting, to evaporate very quickly. It's in the nature of situations in your life, whatever condition, any situation, everything is fairly fleeting.

It's there. One moment, it has gone the next. Where was yesterday?

What happened yesterday? When you first wake up in the morning, you might think, was it a dream, or did it happen? And then you meet some other people who agree that it did happen.

But it could be that these other people are part of your dream. So all the things that seem to be out there, the world of things, is really an inner phenomenon. It's to do with mind.

It's to do with thought. We don't need to take any position here. We don't need to say, yes, the external world exists, or no, the external world does not exist.

But very often, the answer is both or neither. The answer is not yes or no. From one perspective, it's yes.

From another perspective, no. So most people's life is filled up with things, which on the most basic level means thoughts, mind movement. One could say objects that appear in your consciousness, one after the other.

And sometimes they are battling for one thought, another thought. So people's lives are crammed full with that mind stuff. And you can see it in people's faces, the way they lead their lives, the way they interact with others.

What you can see is very often the absence of space. Well, it can't be absent, but they don't know it's there anymore. All they know is things that appear.

The any sense of space is gone. And so they experience their life as a continuous stream of, I'm quoting Churchill again, as I love to do, who defined history as one damn thing after another. And if you ask many people about their personal lives, they might give you the same answer.

How's your life been up to this point? One damn thing after another. And the next damn thing comes just in the moment when you thought, now you've made it.

Success at last, recognition. Everybody loves me. And then everybody wants something from you.

Now, fortunately, I have nothing to give on the level of things, although sometimes people demand things. That's not what I have to give. And no spiritual teacher has to give things.

No true spiritual teacher is here to give you things, anything on the level of, but simply to show you the possibility of living not obsessed with things. And I'm using that now in a wider sense. I don't just mean obsessed with physical things.

It's a tiny aspect of it. Obsessed with things also means possessed by things, and it means possessed by thought. Totally in the grip of thought.

One after another, and after another, and another, and another. And to derive your entire sense of identity from that stream of one damn thing after another. Me.

There's a me in every thought. There's a me in every emotion, in every reaction. There's a sense of me.

And my relationship to the world is a me against the rest of the world. That's the battle I have to fight. Defending me, completing me, and looking out for more things, either to defend myself against or to accumulate, to take on this part of me.

So to show the spiritual teacher is here, and the spiritual teacher is not separate from you. This event here is happening in your consciousness. You don't know that I'm actually here.

Outside of your consciousness, I'm in you. So that voice that you hear is arising within you. Of course it is.

There may be nothing out here. It could all be an illusion, but the voice is there. It's arising in you.

And so it's pointing to the possibility of living in a different way. A life that is not a burden and a continuous seeking and continuous conflict. The possibility of being aware of inner space.

In which, yes, in which the world of things still happens. In which, yes, thought still happens. And yet to be aware of a dimension of consciousness that we could call space consciousness.

Because as we saw, and as you can verify when you look up into the sky tonight, there's objects out there and there's space. That's basically what the world consists of. And the two dimensions are within you.

And humans have become lost in one. So we are here to realize that dimension. And I'm not saying you are going to realize it.

It cannot be realized in the future. It cannot be made into an object of a search. Because it's here now.

The moment you're looking for it, you create a future. Now what is future? It's a thought form.

Apart from that there is no future except as a thought form. It cannot come except as now. So it's now the arising of space consciousness or the realization of space consciousness is here now.

For example, it happens when you acknowledge not only the words that you hear. Acknowledge simply means pay attention. Notice.

Easy. It is not a big thing. Just notice.

Just as noticing here there are two dimensions, just the same as when you look up into the sky at night, you will find there are two dimensions. There are the words here and there's a silent space or stillness in which the words happen. There are gaps in the words occasionally, little gaps.

And even as the words are spoken, there's an underlying still, silent space. The simple act of noticing that, that's all that's needed for space consciousness to be present in you. And you cannot grasp it and say, now I have it.

Because it becomes an object again. It's an underlying field. So simply, the simple awareness of the spaces is space consciousness.

And you notice it's still and it doesn't involve thinking. It is a short interval of not thinking. When you notice a silent space, just noticing it.

It is not through thought that you noticed it. It is possible that after a second later, thought comes in and says, oh, there was a silent space. But then you're not noticing it anymore.

It becomes a memory. It becomes a thought. And it becomes, it's transformed by thought into an object.

So this is very simple. This is something to practice. And even practice isn't the right word.

It's too simple to say practice. It's a way of being aware of two dimensions. Manifested, unmanifested.

And if you can move through life, being aware of the two, not losing touch with space consciousness, then life, even the life of things, things, even the manifested life, becomes quite pleasant. Not that you can totally escape from the polarities that are inherent, the polar opposites of the universe, the manifested universe, which means a thing that makes you happy today can easily turn around and make you unhappy tomorrow. And that which makes you unhappy today can turn around and you suddenly see, oh, it's led to something great.

The other polarity came. And any situation you go into in this world, which is the world of things, will have one side to it, an upside and a downside. Anybody who has made it in the eyes of the world knows that making it has a downside, considerable downside.

Or you make it and then you lose it. But that is no longer the source of suffering as it is when you only know the world of things. You have an expectation from everything, every situation, every person in your life.

You have certain expectations, which deep down, if you look at it, is saying, complete me, give me what I need, make me happy. And then it doesn't. Nothing, no thing in this world can do that.

Thing in a wider sense, no situation, no person, no condition can make you feel complete. As long as your entire sense of identity is trapped in object consciousness, me, my story, what can I add to it to make it more complete, to complete me? You can temporarily add things that feel great.

I have achieved, I'm now the greatest this or that. And then you see it doesn't take long before you experience the downside of being the greatest this or that. And even a deeply spiritual person like Einstein, he didn't walk around thinking, I'm the greatest.

People had this projection. They said, you are the greatest genius that ever lived. And he said, this is very strange what people, the opinion that people have of me.

I didn't really, and he felt his life wasn't complete. He had missed the most important thing. He couldn't quite up with the final answer, whatever he called it.

I can't remember. Unified field theory to explain the entire universe. Here it is.

But Einstein was a rare phenomenon. He had breakthroughs into space consciousness. And that's where he's the realization that did come to him, came from as all creative thought comes to those who, even if only for short moments, can break through into space consciousness, into stillness, into that empty space, the inner space, which empty is a misleading word.

It's intelligence itself. So we are here for that to arise within. Because the world can't go on in its deluded state, it's lopsided, unbalanced state for much longer.

It would simply self destruct. And then that's fine. Space is fine.

You can't do anything to it, no matter how mad the world is. And mad means only knowing one dimension, not knowing the other dimension. That's all.

And so it begins as we sit here, being aware of spacious stillness and the words. Then you're not looking for the next word. Because you're rooted in something that's deeper than object consciousness.

And the words don't come from accumulated knowledge. They actually come out of space consciousness. It's almost as if space consciousness were saying, come home.

Because the essence of your being is that. What Buddhists call emptiness, or what Hindus call the self, not the little self, the one self, the kingdom of heaven. They all point to that.

Nothing else matters here. Thought, whatever thoughts come into your head while you're here, are not that important. They will want to be important.

This is, you need to ask this question now. Ask this question. Ask, ask.

And I'm not saying don't ask. There will be questions. But many questions start with, have a compulsive quality, which is the importance of this mental position.

And they may start with, yes, but, so what are you saying? I mean, I still don't understand what you mean by space consciousness. Of course not.

Do you think I understand it? As the Zen master said to his disciple, do you understand Zen? And the disciple, no master.

And master says, neither do I. Now, many understandings arise out of that state of connectedness with that unmanifested dimension. But you cannot understand that dimension in itself.

It would be absurd. It trying to understand the unmanifested. The manifested, which is a tiny temporary form, trying to understand the vastness of the infinite.

Of course, but many realizations, understandings, insights arise out of the state of connectedness, yes. But in itself, you will always remain totally ignorant of that in itself. It cannot be known whatsoever as you know an object in consciousness.

It cannot be known because it is the essence of all knowing. You can't make it into an object. And so that is the strange thing then is what appears is that state of connectedness with that unmanifested dimension appears to the human mind, to object consciousness, it appears as a state of ignorance, as it appears as a state of not knowing anything anymore.

And yet, that is not the case. You cannot know that state. But as you enter that state, all language, by the way, arises, is derived from object consciousness and is itself object consciousness.

Therefore, whatever we say, when we point to the unmanifested, already contains an error built into it. Because it contains a limitation. And all language and all thought does that.

That's why the great sage Lao Tse, who wrote the beautiful and profound, one of the most profound books, the Tao Te Ching, the first line, the Tao that can be spoken of is not the true Tao. Of course not. Or if you want to find a modern translation, if you can't talk about it, that's not it.

But knowing that, it's fine to talk about it. And that's why Lao Tse continued writing the book when he said you can't talk about it. But once it's been pointed out, then you don't mistake the words for it and you find some little contradiction in the words.

Of course there's contradiction in the words the moment they point to the unmanifested. So you have to look beyond that. And so this is only one way, in many ways, as we spend our retreat here, in many ways the dimension of the unmanifested, which we could call the divine, which we could call God.

I don't use that very often because the moment you say God, you have an object in consciousness, a concept. A little bit better, a little bit less confining would be to say the infinite. God is a closed concept.

It's God is here, I'm here, God is here, and the table is there. The infinite doesn't have clear boundaries around it. Where does it begin and start?

And you can't claim possession of it so easily. You can say my God and your God, but my infinite and your infinite doesn't work. So when you use a different term, you can see how absurd it is to say my God and your God.

So in many ways, that dimension, the infinite, arises here. And this is only one way that I suggest. Pay attention, not just to the words, but to the underlying field.

Notice it. And as you go into nature, that is another way, and we will be going into that again in more detail. Also there, you can be aware, I don't know if you noticed when you first arrive here, maybe when you get out of the car, or I came on this little seaplane, and the moment the engine stops, and it comes in, and your pilot opens the little door, it's so still here.

Of course, there are a few noises, birds and occasionally some human noise, but not often. And little noises here and there, water splashing, insects buzzing. But mostly, it's so still, so still.

And that's why it's very helpful to be in a place like this, where on a simple auditory level, you're not bombarded with things, noisy things. And so it's so easy here to be aware of that vast stillness, to simply notice it. And certain people who are totally trapped in mind, when they are in stillness, they are looking for some kind of noise to interpret through their mind.

And if they can catch a bird and then say something about it, they feel very lucky. Ah, there it is, I'm not dismissing all knowledge. But here, we don't need it.

There may be a place for that kind of thing. But here, you can notice, if you're totally trapped in mind, you're looking for some, the stillness would be unbearable almost, and you would want to try and ignore it, and look for some noise that you can have a relationship with, or interpret, or talk about, or think about, or compare, or classify. And some so-called nature lovers, who know a lot about insects, and birds, and flowers, they miss.

If they cannot free themselves from their knowledge and enter the state of not knowing, at least temporarily, just least, then they don't know that. So here, the wonderful opportunity is simply to notice that dimension. And it is, I can't say it often enough, the simple fact of noticing is enough for that to arise, because that is the arising of it.

And in that moment of noticing that field of stillness, there is no movement of thought in that moment. And I am certain that in many of you, in your ordinary life, that dimension of consciousness already is arising. And you may not even know it.

It seems strange that you cannot, you may not even know it. The mind, to the mind, it's totally insignificant. It's nothing, that, so it doesn't, it will immediately deny it.

The mind means thoughts. A strange thing happened when a shift of consciousness happened to this person, what looks like a person, a shift of consciousness happened, and I walked around this city, which happened to be London, after being totally burdened by an endless obsessive stream of problematic thinking, mostly concerned with me, suddenly there was freedom from that. And I walked around the city, just looking at everything, and feeling very peaceful.

Blissful. Such deep peace. And only a year later, I'm saying this because I just said you might not even notice that this is arising in you, only a year later, all I knew is deep peace.

Why? I didn't know. It was wonderful, but I didn't know why.

I saw a Zen master, and he just said a little thing about Zen is simply stop thinking. The ending of thought is no thought, that's it. Oh, no thought.

And then I realized that I actually had had not much thought since then, since it happened. That's where the peace came from. But I didn't even know that thought had come to an end.

Not completely. When it was needed, it was there. So in many of you, moments of pure awareness, another way of putting it, are there.

And you may not even know it. But now you can be more aware of that process, that shift accelerates and deepens as you become aware of it. And this is very subtle.

We'll go into the subtleties of that shift during this retreat, how it is connected with sense perceptions, and so on. We'll also, during this retreat, spend some time in silence. I'll let you know.

I highly recommend it for certain periods of time here. Whatever thought comes into your head, don't take it too seriously. Because even thinking then exists within that spaciousness.

There's another silly thought. Oh, and another one, and another. And then you'll notice thoughts that you've had for years.

Same thing. Okay. It's fine.

And the thought says, yes, but this, this is how it is. It's not how it is. It's a thought about it.

And we realize that all thought is limited, relative. A little perspective, one of many, many possible perspectives on anything, any situation, any human being, yourself, tiny perspective. And then another perspective is also true.

And another one is also be true. So you don't totally believe that any one thought can hold the entire truth about any situation or person. It can't.

So thought becomes, you have a spacious relationship to thought. So when the thought comes into your head, what a creep this guy is, then you don't totally believe in it anymore. Perhaps that is one perspective, but every human being contains the possibilities that are inherent in the whole of humanity.

The creep is also a may not, perhaps not yet manifested. It's there. So you don't totally believe in that anymore.

It's one perspective on this human being. And when you go to sleep tonight, go to sleep. There's no television here.

So I don't need to say, don't watch television. Don't even read a book, let alone the paper that you brought. Let's just see how the stock market is doing.

Just go to, when you are in bed, lie, take attention away from the stream of thinking, place it into the body. There's a space of the inner body. Be aware of that.

Sense that. At first sight, that might appear an object that arises in your consciousness, but it's actually deeper than that. You can go through that doorway into space consciousness.

The aliveness that you sense in the inner body, and you go to sleep from there, not from thinking. And if you wake up in the middle of the night, some silly thought may come into your head. What am I doing here?

So much stuff at home that I should be dealing with. This isn't getting me anywhere. Thoughts, recognize it as thought.

So the thought is within spaciousness. And then sense, feel the inner body. And you don't take thoughts that seriously.

Now, I will officially open this retreat with a ceremony, minimum ceremony. Thank you. You may just want to sit for just a little bit as this body moves away.

And then when you feel ready, you will find yourself getting up, moving to your room as a walking field of awareness.

[Speaker 2] (1:00:26 - 1:01:18)

This concludes session one of Entering the Now with Eckhart Tolle. Our program continues with session two. Sounds True and Namaste Publishing present Entering the Now.

Session two with Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (1:01:38 - 2:17:05)

Somebody gave me this morning, I don't know if I put it in my pocket, a calendar leaf from today. It's by Ernest Hemingway. And if there is not any such thing as a long time, nor the rest of our lives, nor from now on, but there's only now, why then now is the thing to praise, and I'm very happy with it.

Maybe he forgot that later. It's easy to forget that there's only now. Not a personal fault of yours, if you forget.

It's the human mind. And ultimately there's nothing personal in it. It's the human mind.

And when you forget, something else takes over, obscures the aliveness, the awareness, intelligence, the joy that is inherent in now and in life, which are one. Then your life situation becomes more important than now. Assumes an importance that ultimately it doesn't really have.

And the life situation exists within the polarities of high, low, good, bad. And its characteristic is also that it's incomplete. Something needs to happen before I can be myself, is the belief.

And when you suffer, that's a good indication that you've lost the now, so to speak. You can't really lose it, but it can be lost to you. It's still there.

You don't know it. And the deep meaning of now is one with what we sometimes call presence, or we sometimes call space consciousness. Because the now is deeper than what happens in it.

And the now is not separate from who you are. The one factor that remains the same throughout your life, it's now. And so the ability is there in you now to step out of the stream of mind.

That's your life situation, what I sometimes call object consciousness, the story, the narrative, which is problematic. There's probably not a single person in this room whose life situation is not to some extent problematic. And if isn't problematic today, wait until next week.

You may have a little interlude of not, life is leaving me alone for a moment. And that is fine. It's in the nature of phenomenal reality to be like that.

Atoms coming together, colliding, coming apart, the dance of form. It's only problematic from a personal sense of self, from the perspective of a personal sense of self. And your whole personal sense of self is bound up with problems and things to be worked out.

Need to think about this. It's so easy, as it probably happened to Hemingway, to see the truth, to have limited access, perhaps, to the dimension of space consciousness. Hemingway was a creative writer.

So within that field, he had access to that, and he had insights. And then it's easy to lose that, and your entire attention becomes absorbed again by object consciousness, the story. So here, presence arises from within you.

It's being pulled out of you as you sit there. It responds to something that it recognizes here, which is itself. That essential consciousness where we are all one, the unconditioned recognizes itself.

And that feels good. It likes that. It comes forward.

And you're now able to step out of the stream of mind in your everyday life, the moment you notice that suffering or unhappiness have taken over, or fear or stress. They're all forms of suffering. That little ability to step back into that space of now, that space of now, the moment you notice you've gone away, and that you will go.

Of course, you will go astray sometimes for a few hours. You could even go away for a few days. Unlikely, though, anymore.

It could happen. And it's always waking up the qualitative difference of being present compared to being immersed in compulsive thinking is enormous. It is like waking up out of a dream.

That's the dream of thought. And that is a wonderful thing to discover that possibility in your life, to step out of that dream and awaken. Perhaps, probably now, without the need for some challenge, because that can be very helpful, too, to wake you up when you've been drifting along and suddenly something happens.

Life presents you with a big challenge. Space consciousness is back as the alert, aware field of presence. And that is the determining factor in any human relationship, whether space consciousness is still present, whether there is space in the relationship, whether there is space in you in the relationship, or whether you are absorbed totally in object consciousness.

And that's any kind of relationship. The question is, are you there as space? Is there a depth, a space from where you relate?

It begins with the ability to listen to the other person. That is very closely related to being present, to listen in that alertness, no matter what words are coming out of the other person's mouth. And whether it's in business relationship, or whether it is in your personal relationship, or whether it's in a relationship that is very fleeting, very short encounters in an elevator, maybe just a few words are spoken in a shop, in a restaurant with a waiter.

And it all comes down to a moment of no thought, just alert, spacious presence with your partner, listening to him or her, somebody who comes to you with, in an agitated state, totally absorbed by some life situation. Ah, ah, ah, this just happened, you can't... And the world will draw you in, want to draw you in to complete identification again with things.

You remember we mentioned the word things, meaning not just physical things, but including physical things. Some people's attention is totally into physical things. Their belongings, their house, their car, their dog, their...

That pull is very strong, and that's the challenge. The world wants to, and the world is ultimately the human mind, becomes externalized as the world out there, wants to draw you back into total identification with object consciousness, objects. This matters.

This matters. This is so important. And I'm always amazed what kind of things people make important in their lives, how ultimately insignificant the things are that they make important, more important than their state of consciousness.

They're more important than peace, more important. The tiniest things can assume an importance, that you give the power away to things. You give them the power to make you unhappy.

And what kind of things people give that power to is just amazing. Ephemeral, fleeting things and situations that are here one day, gone the next. Things that would pop even if you discovered you had a serious illness, or you have an accident, which sometimes can be a great awakening.

Things that would pop like a soap bubble, and their unimportance would be revealed if somebody told you you have a serious illness, and you had to be concerned with all that. Suddenly it has no significance whatsoever. The heavy problems that you had been carrying around dissolved at once.

This is why for some people a serious illness is the great awakening, out of total immersion in object consciousness. There is no guarantee that the illness will awaken you, because it could add a further heavy object to your mind. The concept of me being seriously ill, which would add a further heavy thought form to identify with to your mind, that is possible too.

But potentially an illness has the ability to awaken you, and to reveal to you that which is at best relatively important. And the truth is, anything in this world of form, of things, is relatively important. And your career, your possessions, your relationships, what you have achieved or not achieved, what you know or you don't know, things that people derive their self sense of self from, all relatively important.

Yes, it's relatively important whether I live in the street, sleep on park benches, or I have a nice home. Yes, it makes a difference in the realm of relativity. But you can be awake on the park bench, as you can be awake in a nice home.

And some people awakened precisely there, after losing things, things to identify with. So only, there's only one thing that matters absolutely in one's life. Then the rest of your life is recognized as relative.

It's not that you ignore it, but you recognize that the importance is only relative. And the one thing that matters, and Jesus used those words too, there's only one thing that matters. He said to Martha, in the story of Mary and Martha, two women or two sisters, he's visiting and one is extremely busy.

This, let's get this done and that done. We have to get the meal ready. Look, he's here, he's visiting us.

He's, come and help me get the meal. This needs to be done. Peel the potatoes, do this.

And Mary wasn't doing any, she was just sitting there looking at Jesus. And Martha says, why don't you tell her to help me? And Jesus wasn't really concerned whether the, when the food would be on the table or whether it would be on the table.

He said, Mary has, there's only one thing that really matters. This is a free translation. And Mary has chosen that one thing that really matters.

Now, when you look, modern theologians, they can't, they can't tolerate that statement and they do whatever they can to reinterpret that. He didn't really mean that. Another simple way of putting it is, you forget that the only thing that really matters is your state of consciousness, nothing else.

If that's, if that's not right, nothing out there is going to be right. And you're not going to be of much help to anybody. To see what is primary, it is, that is not selfish, far beyond it.

It's the opposite of selfish to recognize that. And then, what is so important to have the power to make me unhappy? The Course in Miracles puts it this way.

In any situation, it says, ask yourself what your purpose is in this situation. What is really my purpose in this situation? The mind will tell you, well, I need to get this and achieve that out of it.

And I need to keep, get hold of this or not lose that or get that. Often it's, I want something and the world wants something else. The source of great suffering.

I want something, but the world, in whatever form the world comes, wants something else. What is really my purpose in this situation? And the Course in Miracles puts it this way.

It's, peace is my purpose in this situation. And one of its lessons is, I could see peace instead of this. I could see peace instead of what I now see in this situation.

But how? How could I see peace in a, what looks like a conflict situation? You step back from object consciousness and you do it.

There are different ways in which you can step back from object consciousness. The moment you notice that object consciousness is creating suffering, because you've become totally drawn into it, have lost your rootedness in the unmanifested. So you're drawn into just, you're in the manifested.

How? There are little ways, and you know them, but I'm saying it again, of stepping back out of complete identification with object consciousness. And one of the ways is the yes to what is.

The inner yes to this moment. And that is, it's surprising that that is a way of stepping out of object consciousness. So you step out of object consciousness by allowing the objects that are here, manifested in this moment, to be there as they are.

And often the way in which the objects that are the manifestation of this moment, very often, the particular configuration of objects that make up the external form of this moment, may not be what your mind wanted. What your mind would have said, this is how I wanted this moment to be. More often than not, it's something else.

So, but you cannot find peace or yourself by working exclusively on that level of object consciousness and trying to rearrange the configuration of objects in my life in such a way that it all fits neatly together, and then the life picture, the life situation suddenly is complete and works beautifully. And then I can be at peace. This is the attempt that people make when they try to, it's not, it never stays for very long.

It's not in the nature of phenomenal reality to do that. Things continuously move and are in flux. And any situation you go into, no matter how wonderful, there's another, there's always another side to it.

It's the entire, the whole phenomenal existence, they would not exist without the pull of the polarities. Hot, cold, high, low, birth, death. So there's the, there's a futile attempt to rearrange, not that you cannot honor that dimension of your life and do the best you can on the level of things.

Yes, you do the best you can on the level of things, but if that's all there is, no matter how you try to do the best you can, it will never be good enough. Because you haven't left the level of object consciousness, you're only there. And so there are people who are, who try so hard, and then always, that wasn't supposed to happen.

There are people, they're wonderful people, who perhaps do, dedicate their whole lives to helping others, perhaps as social workers, or go to third world countries. It's beautiful, but, but many of them, after a few years, experience burnout. They get depleted, because there's so much suffering, and there seems to be no end to it.

And then, of course there is. Since they, they exclusively operate on the level of object consciousness, and it can happen easily, very easily, you can be drawn into that. So the key then, is finding the one, that dimension of space, that is beyond the polarities that are here in object consciousness.

Not expecting the polarities of object consciousness not to be there, or hoping that one day it'll all be fine. This can happen, it can all be fine, but not in the way that the mind thought it could be fine. It can be fine at this moment.

It is already fine at this moment, but you don't know that. All the, allowing the particular configuration of objects in your life to be as they are, even if it looks problematic, and it usually does, allowing this moment to be as it is. That allowing takes back your identification with object consciousness.

It's a stepping, allowing is a stepping back. And when you step back, a space opens up around the particular events, situation of this moment, the particular configuration of how things are at this moment. There's a space around it.

It's the stepping back. At this moment there may be a screaming human being in front of you, accusing you, you did that. The unconscious impulse is to say, how dare you say that I did that?

There's an acceptance of, suddenly there's a space around the turbulence. And that's, at first it's a very subtle thing, the space around a turbulence. And then you realize how deep it is.

And then you could be in the middle of great external turbulence in your life, even tragic events at this moment, even in the face of death, and through inner alignment with the suchness of this moment, allowing the forms to be as they are, go beyond form, go beyond identification with form. It's through allowing forms that the deeper dimension is there. And then you're free of dependence on the world of form, as far as your inner state is concerned.

You can still experience, on a surface level, which is a wave movement, you can still experience happiness and unhappiness, but they are minor movements on the surface of your being. I compare this to lighting a candle in a dark room. The candle is lit, and then suddenly the candle is extinguished.

That makes a big difference if you sit in a dark room, whether the candle is lit or whether the candle is extinguished. But now open the shutters, the windows, and sunlight is streaming into the room from all sides. And there's the candle, and sometimes the candle is lit, and sometimes it's not lit.

Happiness, unhappiness. It's lit? Oh, nice.

It's not lit? But there's the sunlight, it's filling the room, so it doesn't matter that much, only if, in the absence of that, then your life situation matters absolutely, and it will make you happy one day, in this strange, this ecstatic happiness sometimes. It's all worked out for me, finally.

Or sometimes people, the gestures they make when they've made it, they go, oh yeah, I've made it. It's almost the ego saying, I've triumphed over the universe. Thank you, I saw it on TV.

And then a week later, they go, they don't win the match. So you're at the mercy of the wind, the wind of phenomena. And so this is a stepping back.

So the one, perhaps the easiest, the most simple thing is to remember the yes, the possibility of the yes to this moment. That takes you out of the story into now. The Course in Miracles puts it this way, you single out this instant.

You take just that, because that is ultimately your life. This is not the depth of it, it is the form it takes, is the external manifestation of your life at this moment. The depth of now is your life, is life.

You single out this instant and recognize it as timeless. And you stay with this instant only, particularly when things get heavy in your life situation. It is a signal to step back into the alertness of now, of presence, of space consciousness.

And if your life situation is very heavy, it could be, let's say you're faced with an illness which may or may not bring about an early end to your physical existence. You may be faced with that. That immediately erases all other problems that you thought you have and reveals them as fairly insignificant.

But it's possible that you still recognize that, see that as a problem, which it isn't. It can push you into intense alert presence. Only this moment exists.

One can live in such a way that the life situation never again takes you over completely. Another way is, surprisingly, bring your attention back to sense perceptions. Because sense perception can help you to connect with now.

And you will notice when you are not connected with now, you're hardly aware of your surroundings. Your entire attention is in thought processes. And then you can bring attention back to, you suddenly look around.

This isn't so bad. This moment isn't so bad. My life situation may be dreadful.

But if I single out this moment, that's not so bad. I'm sitting somewhere, breathing, and there's a wall there, another one there, and a window with baths on, and a little bit of sky. And you look around and then there's little graffiti on the walls.

And suddenly, in that alertness, there is more there than that which you see, although the perceptions brought you to it. They were the beginning. Those pain perceptions were there suddenly.

But you also realize an intense aliveness underlying your sense perceptions. An intense alertness underlying your sense perceptions. A spaciousness underlying those forms that you see, which are limited forms.

And limiting forms, limiting you perhaps. And yet it doesn't matter. When you discover the depth that is within you in any situation.

But first you need to come into now. And then now reveals its depths to you. How deep now actually is.

And if you go deep into now, there is peace there. There is even joy there. That doesn't depend on the ups and downs of object consciousness.

The joy is the sunlight that is there. The ups and downs of object consciousness are the flame of the candle. Sometimes it's lit, sometimes it's not lit.

That's how things, this is how it is. Sense perceptions. This is why we placed importance here on perceiving.

And the amazing thing is, you perceive without trying to fit the sense perceptions into your narrative. If you're sitting in that little room with barred windows, and if you looked around, you would be relating your sense perceptions to the narrative in your mind, the story of me. This is what the world has done to me.

They have put me here. Even when I was a child, the world was unfair to me. And they treated me badly.

And now they have put me here. They did that to me. This is where I've ended up.

And all the details of my story. Every sense perception would, you would try to fit into the story of me. It's an unhappy story in that case, and in many other cases.

It's an unhappy story. And even if it's a happy story, you're sitting in a limo, a chauffeur-driven limo. It's picked you up from the airport.

And you can tell yourself a story there too. And that looks like a happy story. You see the drinks there that are arranged.

You can take any bottle. You can, air-conditioned, everything is. And you say, I made it.

You have another story. And again, stories have the tendency of being satisfying for a while, and then changing, or no longer working to satisfy you. The next time you could be sitting in the limo, feeling how empty that is, to be sitting.

It's no longer fulfilling to my story. After a while, it's normal, and you need something else. And this isn't doing it anymore.

Or you might even do the opposite. Why am I sitting in this limo when everybody else is so poor? I shouldn't be here.

Again, some new story develops, and you suddenly feel guilty about sitting in this limo. Another story, they change. Let's go back to the man sitting in a little room with barred windows, who is then attempting to fit the sense perceptions into the story.

And that's, of course, not presence. It's to stay with the perceptions without the story in that alertness. There's just this.

And it's enough. Without the projection of your personal self onto them. Because when you project, you have a personal and unhappy relationship with the present cell that you're sitting in.

If you have a personal relationship with the present cell, it's a very unhappy place. Or whatever place. But if you can take the story out of this moment and just be with the simplicity of this moment, even the wall of the present cell has an aliveness and a beauty to it.

And you see it directly without needing thought processes to convince yourself that it has an aliveness and a beauty to it. You see it directly. And people have gone through that transformation in present cells.

I'm using that as an example of what would usually be called an extremely undesirable life situation. But you can take any situation. Are you completely in the story as you're going from A to B?

Or are you present to your sense perceptions? And by being present to your sense perceptions, the sense perceptions too, auditory, visual, become a portal into something that is deeper than the perceptions. When the alertness arises towards sense perception, then that alertness reveals itself as very deep.

And that takes you out of the story, which has a past and a future. Heavy past and future. So you discover the beauty of living to a large extent, if not a hundred percent.

If you only live fifty percent free of the story, or less. Fifty percent of your life, thirty percent. You live while you go from here to there, while you sit at home, while you wait for something to happen.

Stepping out of the story and just be with this moment. And discover the depths of this moment, the aliveness of this moment, both within and without, and the beauty of this moment. This could happen while you're seriously ill and might be waiting in a hospital room for treatment, and you become totally and utterly present.

And there's a little potted plant with leaves, intensely alive. Which you see when you don't bring in mental labels. Which you see without the personal relationship, just that.

And in that alertness, there is also a stillness. When the story isn't running through your mind, that dimension that is space and stillness is suddenly there. That frees you from you as the story-based sense of self.

So you can step out of it by using, one could say, various exit points. It's a good thing that within your life situation, the dream that is ultimately your life situation, as Shakespeare said, we are such stuff as dreams are made of. Here one day, on the next fleeting events.

Within the dream of your life situation, if you look here and there, you find little doors, they'd say exit. And you are more likely to look for them when you get unhappy within your life situation than when you're happy. But that changes quickly anyway.

The unhappiness comes after an interlude of happiness. Suddenly the candle isn't lit anymore. And then you start looking, you can start looking for the exit signs.

Wouldn't that be wonderful in a nightmare, if you remember that in that nightmare, all you have to do is look for the little luminous sign that says exit. And you find one sign is the exit that says sense perception exit. Another sign is the exit written underneath, it says yes.

And then another sign, there's an exit where it says inner body. You can take any. And if you go, it doesn't matter which exit you go through, you end up in the same place.

Another exit that's not yet available for everybody, but for some, for some of you that is already there, for some it's not yet there, but that's okay. That exit says stop thinking. Just that.

Stop thinking. When you discover that, but you discover it through, first you use the other exits. But then you discover within yourself you can actually choose to simply be present with what is, without the interference of thought.

You choose presence. You choose to not think. The whole dream has come to a stop.

And the strange thing is, no matter what exit you use, through it you access that which is beyond the phenomenal. And miraculously, it influences the fact that you are rooted in the unmanifested with one foot in it, miraculously influences the way in which the manifested unfolds for you. That means to say, the way in which what you call your reality, your life, your world, the way in which you experience life on an external level, changes, is influenced strongly by the fact that you are rooted in the depths of your being, in the spaciousness of presence and the stillness of presence.

That does something. It's not that the two realms are totally separate. They are not.

Something from the unmanifested flows, and this may sound paradoxical, but that's how it is. It's when we use language it begins to sound paradoxical. Something from the unmanifested flows into the world of manifestation and makes it more benevolent.

The way in which it unfolds has a benevolence, it is more benign. Yes, there are still polarities, but what is lost is the harshness and the violence that otherwise is inherent in the polarities. And so, the phenomenal then unfolds with more gentleness, and yes, this is the only way in which what that really means.

Love flows from that dimension into the world of form, because love is never derived from anything in the world of form. It doesn't come out of form. It comes from the formless.

And so, that's the only way in which love can come into your true love. And that true love is to look upon anything without thought is the flow of love. The yes to what is, is love.

Byron Katie, a spiritual teacher, has a book out. It's called Loving What Is. A yes to what is.

But the love, people are looking for love or try to be loving, never having gone beyond object consciousness. And they have an object in their mind, which is a me, which says, I need to be more loving. And they try hard.

It doesn't work. I've tried so hard to love, but he let me down. Now, letting down is an interesting expression.

And it can be applied to anything in the world of object consciousness. Belief system, for a while it's great. It's your support in life.

It's all, I believe, this is how it is. And suddenly something happens and you can't explain anymore why this should happen to you, because you believed all the right things. Thought structures let you down in the end.

Things let you down because they don't give you the satisfaction that you thought they would give you for a while, and then they let you down. Situations that you go into that were great, one moment great, and then it let me down. I became a CEO and then you get so stressed that you need hospital treatment.

The situation let you down. You were looking for something better in it. And people, he let me down, she let me down, everything.

It's in the nature of things to let you down. Because letting you down means you had an expectation that they can't fulfill in the world of form. You wanted something from the world of form that is only in the formless.

You wanted something through future in the world of form, which is already here now. Places too. You can look at the most ideal place and then you buy some land there and you build a house there, and at first it feels great.

And then as you sit in that house, it wears off after a while. The beautiful view from the window is still beautiful, but it wears off. It's not that fulfilling inside after a while, if you operate within object consciousness.

So even the most beautiful place will have certain drawbacks also that you only discover when you move there. Now this does not happen if you stay with what is, because there's a freshness to every moment. But it happens when you are immersed in a story-based sense of self.

So it's stepping out of that. Use the exit. If you can, some of you can, the exit I just mentioned.

Stop thinking is one that is available to some of you already. Presence arises with such intensity that thought doesn't come in anymore except a few little fragments here and there. So I've probably mentioned to you before, somebody asked me once what my main achievement in life was.

I hadn't written the book yet, so there was nothing much for many years on an external level. And so I said, I don't need to think anymore. That's enough.

The compulsion to think is gone. That's all. Now the world doesn't value that too much.

But that's okay. If I went to an enlightened employer and said that, I would, he or she would give me the job. Because they would know how well you function in that state where you don't have to think.

Can think, don't have to. And then a greater intelligence operates. That is the intelligence that is deeper or higher, whatever perspective you want to use, than thinking.

Not separate from it. Thinking is an aspect of universal intelligence that operates through humans. One could say that the intelligence that operates throughout the universe, when it gets filtered through the brain or focused through the brain, becomes thought.

One way of putting it. So in humans there's a tendency of that intelligence to become expressed as thought. But humans also have the ability to transcend thought.

And that's an evolutionary transition. If not to say leap for humanity. Humanity has been thought-based probably for a million years.

And now that cycle is coming to an end because it's becoming self-destructive. All cycles come to an end. It's an evolutionary cycle.

Our gathering is part of that evolutionary impulse that is now in many humans to go beyond that limited consciousness that is identification with mind as a me. That limited sense of self. And that evolutionary impulse is in many human beings.

And there are many who don't allow that yet because the old structures are still very dense. So there is an enormous push, one could almost say, within them towards transformation. And yet there's a refusal to let go of the old structures, which is the old structures themselves hanging in there.

And so then it often is the case that humans need to experience some disaster so that the structures break open. That's the grace of disaster. If it breaks open, heavy mind structures, the shell is cracked open.

So there's grace. Look at it from a deeper level. There is grace in every disaster.

From a limited point of view, you can't see that. That's the beauty of it. Divine grace is there also.

And those who are open to that evolutionary impulse, as you are, don't really need the disaster anymore. That's good. Or you may need a final little disaster as the final push out of identification with mind.

Maybe a little disaster will be enough. A beautiful saying of Jesus, take no thought for the morrow. It's the old translation.

For the morrow will take thought for the things of itself. No thought. That's the old translation.

The modern translation says, don't be anxious about tomorrow. The really one, no thought is better, because to be anxious and to be thinking are very closely related. The entire teaching of Buddhism, the entire teaching of Zen, what they call the state of emptiness, what the scholars think about, what did he mean by emptiness, and what the scholars call a nihilistic, life-denying teaching, what the scholars call an atheistic teaching, they're looking at that from the point of view of thought and totally misperceiving the emptiness of Buddhism is simply this clear state of pure awareness of no thought. Just this unconditioned consciousness.

What is there to think about, to understand it? You can't understand no thought, and now you become intelligent. True intelligence is there.

And then thought may come in occasionally to translate something into words. It comes from that level of no thought, realization, and you're connected with the totality through that. The separation goes, the screen of mind, of conceptualization, the conceptualized sense of self, the me, goes.

And then you don't manufacture a conceptualized sense of self for the people in your life that you meet. That's the most dreadful thing that happens in relationships, that happens through mind, that you manufacture for other human beings as you have done for yourself. You manufacture a conceptualized sense of self consisting of objects in consciousness, thought, movement, judgments, views, opinions, and you fix the human being as you fixed yourself into a little story.

And then you fix the other. And that's what humans do to each other. And when you fix the other, all you see is what comes back at you from the other human being is confirmation that your conceptual identity that you imposed is correct, because now all you can see is evidence for your projection.

And this also applies for people who have a strong conceptual worldview, as most have. This is how the world is. This is how humans are.

Some people have manufactured a conceptual identity for humanity, and they might say that they are all greedy and deceiving. That is how humans are. Some people have that view.

Maybe as children they were deceived by their parents, who knows what happened to them, and they developed concepts of how things are. And that filters out everything else that doesn't agree with the concepts. All you meet then are greedy and deceiving human beings, because all you have is your concept.

A loving human being you wouldn't be able to see, because you see reality through the screen of conceptualization. And that screens out a lot. It doesn't fit into that screen.

And this is what humans are trapped in. That's the human condition. That's what the Middle East is trapped in.

That's whatever they are fighting, tribal warfares and religious wars. A totally conceptualized identity for themselves and others. Trapped in thought.

Completely trapped in thought. And so you can do anything to another human being, because you've already reduced that human being to a lifeless concept. If you can impose the concept non-believer, let's say you are Christians used to do it, now Muslims tend to do it, some of them, not all, a few.

Non-believer is enough of a concept to reduce that human being to a lifeless mind object. And then killing a non-believer is totally justified, because it's not a human being, it's a non-believer. It's a concept.

And Christians used to do it. You don't believe exactly what we believe? Okay, we're going to kill you.

Such is the human condition. And if you don't kill them physically anymore, you kill them in different ways. You have already killed them by imposing a conceptualized identity on them to yourself.

That is the primordial act of violence. And other kinds of violence come out of that. And it is the human condition.

And we are going beyond it, we are coming to the end of that. You can see how closely it is all related to thought, and to knowing nothing beyond thought. It is the end of the dimension of thought, to be trapped in that.

Humanity is coming to the end of that. And if it doesn't happen soon enough, they'll be gone. It was a little experiment in consciousness.

Fine. It worked while it worked. And then consciousness moves through other channels.

It has, you know how vast the universe is. Any channel, it will flower through. Who knows?

Other life forms, other planets. But there's a good chance that humans will make it, because we are here. That's a good sign.

Another good sign is that vast numbers of people seem to be interested and drawn to and open to the power of now. I'm using that in a wider sense. I'm not just speaking of the book, but the power of now as the new consciousness.

They are drawn to that. And it's happening more quickly than I could ever have realized. So there were places on the planet where already the new consciousness manifested, they came up as a wave, and then subsided.

And then there came another wave of the new consciousness arising. And sometimes there were, within one century, many people in different traditions bringing in something new. There is a readiness.

It's been there once. It leaves something behind. It's everywhere on the planet now, that openness.

So that's good. But what really matters is you. You cannot try to be free of thought.

That would bring in thought. But you could say, let's see if I can allow myself to be free of thought. There's no trying.

Can I allow? Or maybe not yet. That's okay.

Between this tree and that tree, there's a space of just walking. And it's maybe a few steps, but you don't count the steps because there's only one step. So between the two trees, that physical space has become inner space of no thought.

You're looking at that tree and walking. And then there's another tree, a space of, as you're walking between the two trees, a space of no thought. It's beautiful.

Every time that happens, there is a burning up in you of past, of past mind structures, of accumulations of past, even of past pain. Because in presence, which is the state of presence, the past becomes burned up in you, the accumulated past in you. And so the accumulated past in you in the East is called karma, the unconscious identifications and deriving a sense of self from them.

And it's becoming burned up even more strongly as we sit here, being consumed in the fire of presence. And that's a wonderful thing. There are a few people who are not yet ready for it.

And it sometimes happens that somebody runs away from a retreat. I'm not quite ready yet to be burned up. I want to keep the past.

I'm not saying, of course, that you're losing your memories. That's not it. But past as the conditioning, identification with the conditioning of your mind, the conditioning has less intensity to it.

Still conditioning, still the same conditioning, but it begins to fade out like a photo after a few years, fades out gradually. Any of the exits, of course, takes you to no thought. You can go there directly.

No thought can be considered as an exit in itself. But any exit takes you there. The yes to what is, is the end of compulsive thinking.

Because compulsive thinking is a denial and a resistance to what is. The inner body takes you out of mind, out of thought. Acute awareness of sense perceptions takes you out of thought.

They all do that. And then a time comes when you go there just directly. The final thing that some of you may know, you told Ramana Maharshi, the great sage who lived in the first half of the 20th century, a great teacher.

Somebody asked him, how can we know whether we are making any progress on the spiritual path? We don't know if we're making progress. And he said, oh, that's easy.

The degree of absence of thought is the measure of progress on your spiritual path. Oh, that doesn't give you much to think about. Could there be a next question after that?

Huh.

[Speaker 2] (2:17:08 - 2:19:59)

This concludes Entering the Now with Eckhart Tolle. Music by Stephen McNamara. Entering the Now is published in collaboration with Namaste Publishing.

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2002-Eckhart Tolle Gateways to living in in the now

[Speaker 1] (0:20 - 1:01:59)

GATEWAYS TO LIVING IN THE NOW The dilemma of humanity is and has been for a long, long time that we identify almost exclusively with mind activity. If you look at the nature of the human mind in a very basic way, the first thing that strikes you is that it is extremely active. It goes on and on.

It hardly ever stops. There is a continuous stream of thought that goes through one's head. It is a noise that you don't seem to be able to switch off.

The vast majority of our thoughts is repetitive, completely repetitive. And a large percentage of that is unnecessary. Thought is not being applied specifically to a particular purpose.

It does not address anything specific that needs to be done now. It is just there. It's mental noise.

Whether you want it or whether you need it or not, you are condemned to living with a noise machine in the head. This is so normal that hardly anybody ever questions that you can't stop thinking. Some thoughts are fine and there may be a few nice thoughts, but most thoughts are problematic.

You can look at your own mind to see how often thought is concerned with problems. And in most cases, it is not a problem that is here, now, that is actual, real. It is a problem that is generated in and through mental noise.

This is the case, for example, when you worry. You're in bed, warm, protected. It's all quiet, you're breathing.

But you're worried. Mental noise is in a state of hyperactivity. All this is so normal.

And if that were all, that would be bad enough. To be continuously trapped in mental noise and not being able to get out of it. But there's more to it than that.

Because mental noise these days starts at a very early age. After a while, your whole essence of who you are, your sense of self, of identity, your essential sense of me, is bound up with thought activity. When you tell yourself who you are, a mental image comes into being of who you think you are.

A me. You will find that a lot of the thought activity that goes on has to do with me. The me in the head.

The image of who I think I am. Me and my problems. A lot of thought focuses on me and my problems.

And how I'm going to get out of them. How I'm going to solve them. Thought does not realize that its activity itself, to a large extent, creates the problems.

It says, no, I'm thinking so hard and I'm worrying about this because I need to be responsible for my life. If I don't worry anymore, if I don't continuously think about me and my problems, what's going to happen to me? My life will collapse.

Seeking one's identity in and through thought is normal. When you speak the word I, which is perhaps the most frequently used word in the language, when you speak the word I, it usually refers to me. The mind-based sense of self.

The me that I think I am. Me and my story, which I dwell on almost continuously. There's the famous statement from the philosopher Descartes.

He wanted to examine to find out what the most fundamental truth of human existence is. And he concluded, I think, therefore I am. He equated thought with being.

So even at his time, it was already normal to equate who you are with mind activity. Is the essence of your identity, of who you are, the content of your mind and the corresponding emotions that reflect in the body the content of your mind? Is that the essence of who you are?

You are listening to this now because you want to explore whether there is something deeper to you than thought and emotions. A life story begins in childhood at the age of one and a half or two. Whenever the child starts to speak, one of the first things the child learns is to speak their name.

The question that the parents ask a child is, what is your name? The child learns to repeat their name and comes to equate the name with who they are. That sounds pretty harmless.

And of course, it is inevitable. I'm not saying don't tell a child their name. But you can see there's a transition there from a state of the one year old in whom the mind has not started up yet, but who is already conscious of others and conscious of surroundings and conscious of sense perceptions.

But thought processes, conceptual thought, has not yet started. The child has not yet accumulated words in the mind. The mental accumulations haven't started yet.

You can look into the eyes of a one year old and see something that is of such purity and aliveness and light looking at you. There is consciousness looking through those eyes at you. Now the name is not enough.

More things now need to accumulate that are connected to the name. You can look at your name as the receptacle or basket that provides the container for further content, mental content, with which you identify as yourself. Experiences, opinions, your parents' opinions of who you are, that is very important content of who you are.

So if your parents tell you that you are a slow learner, you add that mental content to the basket that has your name on it. Once the content is in the basket, it is very hard to get rid of it. Other content, experiences, knowledge, sufferings, people that you know, cultural background, many things form the content of your mind and around it there is the name that holds it all together.

The content is added to the name. Your identity of me gets stronger. After a few years of accumulating content, then you think you know who you are.

But it is never quite enough yet, and not only for a young person. As you grow older, you will find that your sense of self very rarely really feels complete, and then only for a few brief moments. I'm not enough yet.

That's the essential belief of a mind-based sense of self. And on the level of doing, of course, it's true, because there's always so much more that you could do. There are innumerable things that you could do, but there just isn't enough time.

Even if you lived for a thousand years, you couldn't explore all of the possible things that you could do. So, eventually, you choose one main course of action or several main activities and with these exclude many others. Or you try to get to some projected goal, the pinnacle of your profession or whatever it is.

I need to get there to be myself, to be fully myself. I need that recognition. And for years, you work towards that.

Maybe you get there, and maybe you don't. Many don't, because not everybody can triumph. You can only make it, in other words, enhance your sense of self in the eyes of the world through making it, only if many others don't make it.

Otherwise, it doesn't make sense. It doesn't work anymore. Making it would then become meaningless.

Of course, you want to tell yourself in the mind that you have made it. And perhaps others will confirm it to you that you have indeed made it. But if you can't make it, then you can gain a specialness through failing.

Who were me who failed, who didn't make it? Because the world treated me unfairly and life circumstances were hostile, and I had a bad start in life. In this way, an image of me can be formed of somebody who has been wronged, and so you can add that to the content of your mind.

That is one of many possibilities. Being wronged by the world, or by a particular person, or your parents. That can create a very strong sense of self too, a sense of having failed.

I have failed in the eyes of the world. I had a few chances, or I never had a chance, and somehow it didn't work out and I didn't make it. A very unhappy sense of self, a miserable sense of self, gives you an identity too.

You can talk to others about why you are miserable and what the world has done to you, or whatever it is. In this way, you can strengthen your poor me-identity. And others are likely to confirm it.

They listen and say, yes, you are right. A woman came to see me whose main story was how unhappy her marriage was. She was continuously thinking about how difficult her husband was to live with.

She was always reacting to his behavior. Whatever he did was irritating to her, the way he ate, the way he sat there, the way he spoke. Her sense of self was based on that reactive irritation and all the mind activity around it.

After a few months, I pointed out to her that she can either leave him, or she can observe that particular reactive mind pattern with which she was identified, and actually allow him to be, instead of reacting. There was a moment when she saw the possibility of freedom, of stepping out of that mind-based sense of self. And then she said, but if I let go of that, what have I got left?

Her feeling was, I need that. Who am I without it? A pattern that I've been identified with in the mind for 10, 20, or 30 years.

If I let go of that, who am I? If I let go of my sad story, and this applies to quite a few people, who am I without that? Once a particular sense of self has established itself in the mind, there's a great reluctance to let go of that.

Every therapist knows how strong the compulsion is to sabotage awareness. How strong the compulsion is to hang on to the sense of self. One person who thinks they have made it, and the other who thinks they have failed, are two extremes.

Most people fluctuate between the two. For a few days you think you're fine, and then suddenly some critical remark by somebody diminishes your sense of self. It's important to see that no matter how successful you've been in the eyes of the world, the sense of self that is mind-derived, thought-derived, is never at ease and fulfilled for long.

It is in the nature of the mind-based sense of self to feel a sense of lack and unfulfillment. It's a very common mistake to believe that through adding certain things to the image of who you are, accumulated knowledge, recognition from other people, a beautiful wife, a rich husband, a new home, or an expensive car, that you will be able to complete yourself through that, to finally arrive, to have found a happy ending to your story. But you cannot find out who you truly are by using future to add further content to the me, and in that way find completion.

I'm not saying that you shouldn't add more knowledge or more expertise to your life. That's all wonderful. Of course, you need future to learn new things, to acquire new knowledge.

For all that, you need future. But seeking an enhanced or strengthened or more complete sense of self through that is very frustrating, and it is futile. You never arrive at that sense of self, even if you add more content endlessly.

It is never enough. It may feel enough for a little while, but soon you'll again realize, oh, that wasn't quite it. You may form a mental image of success in material terms and try finding fulfillment through adding more things to your life and identifying with them.

They feel good for a while. You have the car and the big house, all the trappings of material success. It feels good to have these things for a little while.

At first, when you sit in your big car, it feels good. Others notice you. But after a while, it wears off.

After a while, it becomes just you sitting in this thing. It has four wheels, and it takes you from A to B. Yes, it is more comfortable than other cars, but really not fulfilling anymore.

See the fallacy of seeking yourself in the future. See the fallacy of seeking yourself outside yourself. The one thing that is inseparable from life itself is the field of now.

Life is always now. Nobody could argue with that. And then to miss the now almost continuously by chasing after some mental abstraction of future, what a life.

To do this is to miss the one thing that is real for a mental projection. The very thing you've been looking for in the future, yourself, you find where you hadn't been looking all of that time. You find that it is already here, now.

So on a deeper level, there is already that sense of ease, of aliveness, and of, yes, love. That all the things you've been looking for are already, and it does not require the completion of your story in the head. Your story will develop in some way, of course.

But it does not require completion. It's strange, but when you no longer need your story to work out, it actually works quite well. Jesus said, know the truth, and the truth will make you free.

He wasn't talking about some abstract truth, but a more vital truth, the truth of who you are, the essence of your being. That will make you free. And then his disciples said, but we are free already.

We are nobody's slaves. You have to look here beyond the terminology, beyond the words. No, you are the slaves of sin, Jesus said.

The original meaning of the word sin, as used in the Bible, means missing the mark, missing the mark of human existence. I would translate sin as unconsciousness. So you are slaves of unconsciousness.

You are slaves of that. You are slaves of the conditioning of your mind. There's nothing personal in this, since it is the state of humanity based on thousands of years of human conditioning.

Spiritual traditions speak of liberation, freedom, salvation, end of suffering, self-realization. Freedom from what? Freedom from mind.

Freedom from an obsession with time, with past and future. Freedom from suffering. And freedom from a mentally derived sense of self, which forms the story in the head.

I am here to tell you the good news, that there is the possibility of freedom from that absurdly limited sense of self. It is in the now that you become aware of your true identity. God, or love, is the essence of who you are.

God is not an entity that somehow is in space and controls everything. God is the essence of your being. If you go deep enough, you find that essence.

And the wonderful thing is that you don't need time for that. In fact, that's the one thing you don't need to know who you are. You can only know that now.

And that arises in a state of consciousness that I call presence. That is a state in which thought can operate but is no longer compulsive. In order to truly know who you are beyond name and form, you need to enter the now.

You can enter the now through a number of gates or portals. You can enter through your inner body. You can enter through stillness.

And you can enter through non-resistance to what is. A gateway is simply an opening. You can't get good at walking through a gateway.

You either walk through it or you don't. There are a number of gateways or entry points into the now. And in a sense, whichever gateway you use includes the others.

To walk through a gateway into the energy field of the present moment, nothing needs to be added to who you are already. That's the beauty of it. And that's very strange to the mind.

You mean that nothing needs to be added to this little me with its unsatisfying story, this me who hasn't quite made it yet? There is still so much that is not right with my life situation. How could it be true that nothing needs to be added?

As I mentioned earlier, I'm not talking about adding something on the level of the person. You can add things on that level to your store of knowledge or expertise. You can learn a new language or learn to use a computer.

Or you can add an activity like learning to ski. They may be enjoyable, but you don't need them to fulfill yourself. And if you're no good at them, that's all right too.

It doesn't really matter. But on a deeper level, as far as who you truly are, the amazing fact is that to be present, nothing needs to be added. This is not something to believe in, but something to realize as a liberating thing that affects your entire being.

This realization is that the state of presence is already within you and is simply covered up by mental noise. And covered up also by the mind-created self that says, No, this is not true. I'm not enough yet.

I need more of this or that for my identity. But you don't need more for your identity. You need more for other things, but not for who you are, the essence of your being.

After the music, I will be introducing three gateways into the now and show you how easy it is to walk through them. These practices are so simple because they take you to your natural state and are immediately recognized by your true self. To connect with the essence of your being, it is essential to inhabit your body.

Because the body is a powerful opening into presence. To find that gateway, you sense and feel the energy field in your inner body. You feel the aliveness that is undoubtedly there, because the body is alive.

The other two gateways we'll look at will also put you in touch with that inner sense of aliveness. There is an enormous intelligence that operates throughout your body. You can't see it, but there is an organizing principle in the body that controls and regulates thousands of functions simultaneously.

The human mind would not be able to do that. It couldn't keep the body alive for two seconds. It is far too complex.

You would have to be aware of a thousand or more things at the same time. Every cell embodies intelligence. The mind is just a tiny expression of that vast intelligence.

Most humans are unaware of the aliveness in their body because their entire attention is trapped in thinking, in continuous mental noise. From their head, they look down from above at their body as if it were some alien object. That's why people say, I have a body.

A much truer statement would be, I am the body. Then you don't have a split of a me that says, I possess this thing that I call body. When you split yourself off from the body, it is problematic like everything else that you have.

And you are not satisfied with it just as you are not satisfied with anything else either. The mind says it's too simple to just feel or sense the body. It thinks that can't work because it isn't complicated enough.

But to be able to sense the field of aliveness, the very life that is the body, is a gateway into the state of presence. There is an increased aliveness as soon as you inhabit the body, which means your attention is not exclusively on the outer world and your sense perceptions. As well, when you inhabit your body, your attention is not exclusively in thought.

Some of your attention dwells in the inner energy field of the body. The most important thing is that it takes your attention away from the otherwise continuous mental noise. When you inhabit your body, then you are rooted in your being.

You are present with your entire energy field. One could almost say every cell is present. You feel a global sense of aliveness of body.

That is an amazing thing. By doing this, you connect with an intelligence that is far greater than the human mind. And even to say connect is not totally right, because ultimately you are that more than you are the mental noise.

The inner body then becomes an anchor for staying present. This aliveness that you can feel doesn't depend on whether the body is 20 years old or 55 or 90 years old. It doesn't change throughout your life and it doesn't grow old.

Only the external vehicle grows old. This portal of the inner body is so near and so close to you, closer than your hands and your feet. Someone once said, God is closer to you than hands and feet.

And if you look at that, what could be closer than hands and feet? They are pretty close. But inside your hands and feet is even closer.

It is not a sacrilege to say, the nearest that God is to you is in your body. Everybody has been asking, where does God exist? God is the very life that you are.

But when you are only a mind-based entity, God becomes a mental image that you identify with, and then it becomes a belief or belief system. And inevitably, sooner or later, you will be in conflict with others who have a slightly different belief system. So as you listen to this, feel the inner body.

How, some people ask me, what does that mean, feel the inner body? Let's conduct a little experiment. Without moving your hand or touching anything, with your eyes closed, simply ask yourself, is there any way I can know whether my right hand is still there or not?

Without looking, without moving your hand, is there any way you can know whether your right hand still exists? That question will draw your attention away from mental noise and thinking. The mind will say, well, no, I don't know if I have a right hand or not.

The question is meaningless anyway. What's the point? I've got far more important things to think about than this.

Does that solve my problems? That's what the mind does. And I know one or two minds listening to this are now saying that.

You simply ask yourself the question, how can I know whether my right hand is still there? Is there any way I can know? That question draws your attention away from your mind, and your attention moves into the hand, and suddenly you can feel it.

Not very strong, perhaps, but there is a certain field of aliveness there. Once you inhabit your hand, then you know what it means to inhabit the body. Then you can inhabit the other hand, the left hand.

First you inhabit the right hand, and then the left hand. And now comes the strange thing. You can do it with your eyes closed or open.

Feel both hands at the same time, and feel them so completely that there is the feeling of hand. Not so much anymore a mental image of two hands, just a feeling of hand. And then even that hand disappears, and there's just a sense of aliveness.

It is subtle and quite beautiful. It is alive. Then you learn to hold attention there.

Effortlessly. You can see how your thought stream immediately slows down because there isn't enough consciousness now in the head to make thoughts out of, because your attention is moving into the body. At the same time as you feel your hands, you feel the inner aliveness in your feet.

Isn't that amazing? If you can now feel hands and feet together, this is how gradually you bring together the feeling of inner body into one single feeling of aliveness. You feel legs and arms, and the rest of the body then becomes part of that.

There's a sense of aliveness throughout the whole body, so it becomes a single field of energy that you sense. If your eyes are closed, for a little while it may still seem as if you were observing that feeling of inner body. But then allow yourself to merge with that feeling, so you are the feeling of inner body.

It is then no longer a head observing the inner body. You are present as much in your feet as you are in your head. The center of gravity of who you are is no longer just in the head.

It's all over your body. It is everywhere equally. It is possible that some people feel a particular area more strongly than other areas, but that doesn't matter.

You don't need to go through some particular technique or movement. They can be helpful to get you into the body, but being in the body is not to be confined to performing particular movements. They are helpful, but being in the body is your natural state.

The main thing is to be able simply to walk through that gateway. The moment you enter the body, you have stepped out of identification with mental noise. And if your eyes are not closed now, close them just for a moment and hold attention in your body.

There's no effort involved. You're not trying to get anywhere. There's no trying.

Just feel yourself being rooted within, inhabiting the body and holding that feeling. That increases enormously the aliveness throughout your body. And the amazing thing is you open your eyes and you begin to perceive again visually and you're still feeling the inner body even as you perceive what is around you.

You look around and of course you hear my voice or you see the objects or people around you or you see the totality of the room where you're sitting. You continue to feel the inner body, perhaps not as strongly as when your eyes were closed, but you're still present within. And you can then perceive without interference or at least very limited interference by the conditioned mind.

Suddenly there's a clarity in your sense perceptions because they are no longer distorted by your mental noise and by all the labels that the mind throws up continuously. So by sensing that global feeling of body, you are anchored in the now and you're free of thousands of years of collective mental conditioning. You have simply stepped out of the stream of compulsive thinking and you perceive without past.

Everything is fresh and new and alive. There's an alert sense of presence, a high degree of wakefulness that pervades your entire being. It is an aliveness, an alertness in which there's no tension.

You can see the difference in quality between that state and the state of labeling things and of being immersed in continuous thought and continuous past and future and looking for yourself there. Stepping out of mental noise is very simple. The only thing that can hold you back is believing the mind when it tells you, no, you must not step out, you need to think about this now.

It's four o'clock in the morning and you need to think about this, it matters, I want your attention. Remember that all of this that we are doing is regarded by the mind as insignificant or a hindrance to what you really want or it is boring or, no, I've done that, I've done meditation for 20 years, give me something new. So see that the mind will not regard this as important because it says your problems are important, not this.

That's what your mind says. But then you know that it's fine when the mind pretends that your problems are more important than this. You recognize that.

Oh yes, that's what the mind does, that's okay. Because this is too simple to be interesting to the mind. It loves complexity.

Give me something that I need to work out and I can think about. I'm pointing this out because otherwise if you don't know that, the mind can draw your attention back completely. As you listen to the music now, continue to hold attention in the body, being present within and without at the same time.

Listen to it with your whole body. GATEWAY OF SILENCE Now we move on to another gateway which is not separate from that of the inner body. It is the gateway of silence.

Usually when you use your listening faculty, you listen to some sound. You listen to this or you listen to that. Listen to the silence.

Acknowledge the dimension of silence. There may happen to be some silence in the room where you are now. It may not be total, but still there is an enormous amount of silence in the room.

This is, so to speak, the background to the sound. The sounds that arise always arise out of the silence. How do we acknowledge silence?

Simply by noticing it. To acknowledge means to notice. An interesting thing happens when you suddenly notice that there is silence.

Your alertness increases. Because without alertness, you cannot notice silence. You can notice sound with relatively little alertness because it imposes itself.

You don't need alertness for sound, unless it is a very faint sound or a sound that is becoming faint and ends in silence. Then you need an increasing alertness. So simply notice that the dimension of silence is there.

That means that you pay attention to it. That means you listen to the silence and to the mind that is meaningless because the mind says, well, there's nothing to listen to. And that is precisely the point.

When you notice silence as an undercurrent, a background, it's there in the most unlikely places. But you usually wouldn't have been aware of it. The noticing of silence is insignificant to the mind because there's nothing going on in the silence.

The mind looks for something. The mind would never look for silence. The mind is noisy, so it resonates with noise, external noise.

It likes that. By the way, that's the reason why our civilization is the noisiest ever on the planet. This civilization produces an enormous amount of noise through machines and artificially generated noise because it is the most mind-identified civilization.

What happens inside you when you notice silence? You can be aware of silence only through increased alertness. And that increased alertness is an inner stillness.

When you notice silence, and you may notice it only for one second, but at that moment the mind is still, it is only with inner stillness that you can be aware of outer silence. You cannot be aware of outer silence with thought. Thought may come in after you've noticed it, but in the moment of noticing, of being aware of it, there's no thinking.

Perhaps two seconds later you say, oh, it's so silent here. Or the mind says, yes, I noticed it. And then the mind says, okay, we've done that.

Now what's the next thing? You can see that only when you are fully present can you notice silence. Now I'm going to ring a Tibetan bell.

The sound of the bell will gradually subside. Just follow the sound with your attention until it subsides. You will notice that to follow the sound when it becomes weaker, a greater alertness is required than at the beginning of the sound.

What's left after the sound subsides is simply a field of alertness, which is stillness. And now as you listen to the sound, be aware not just of the sound, but of the alertness, the awareness through and in which the sound happens. And now to deepen it, listen to the sound with your whole body, so to speak.

Listen with every cell of your body so that the field of alertness is your entire energy field. You listen and you're aware of the field of alertness and that which arises in it, which is the sound in this case. What remains is simply the field of alertness, of alert presence.

And the same can happen when you perceive visually. You look and you see sense objects in your visual field. Usually the objects, the forms, are all that people see.

And the forms draw in your attention completely. Whatever is in your visual field, there's also the underlying field of alertness in which the visual perception arises. And that is inseparable from the feeling of the aliveness of the inner body, the global alertness.

When you live like that, there's now a dimension there that you were not aware of before. You are now aware of the essence of your being, which is the field of now. You are aware of what we could call spaciousness that is around things and that pervades everything.

The gateway of silence and the gateway of the inner body cannot be separated. They are really one. Both portals bring you into the state of presence.

As you listen to the music that follows, listen also to the silence in between the sounds and the silence that is there underneath the sounds. GATEWAY OF ACCEPTANCE Accepting each moment as it is is perhaps the most direct gateway to inner peace. And you will see it is also connected to the gateways of the inner body and of silence.

When we say each moment, we mean, of course, this moment, now. Because that's all there ever is. The word yes takes you through the gateway of this moment.

Say yes to this moment. And immediately you can sense an increased aliveness in the body. Accept this moment the way it is.

Why? Because when you argue with what is, you suffer. You are not at peace.

With a yes to this moment, no matter what this moment brings, you are out of the prison of the mind which lives in and through denial of this moment. The thinking mind lives through no to the moment. So this is the gateway of yes to now.

To walk through the gateway of now, you have to be in inner alignment with what we could call the suchness of this moment. If the yes is full and uncompromising and the now is embraced fully, there's a sudden heightening of alertness. And through that increased alertness, your sense perceptions become enormously more acute.

It's not just that the colors and the shapes have an aliveness. It goes beyond sense perception. You sense the deep aliveness of everything.

You sense it in the world of nature, but you even sense it in so-called inanimate objects. Even they emanate an aliveness. Sometimes what arises in the now may be unpleasant.

There may be noise or drama, things breaking down, loss or illness of some kind, or things collapsing all around you. This will happen because the forms of life continuously disappear and dissolve. Forms don't last for very long.

So I'm not saying the now is always fine and just be happy. That doesn't work. There are things that are dreadful that happen in the now.

At this very moment on the planet, many, many dreadful things are happening, although they may not be in your field of consciousness. All you can do is simply to surrender to the now and whatever appears in your field of consciousness at this moment. That's where the power arises.

And even if it is awful, you don't even call it awful anymore. You allow it so completely that something deeper than the appearance emerges as the goodness beyond opposites. So you don't become happy when something nice happens and unhappy when something bad happens.

That distinction goes. There is simply the is-ness of now. There's no longer the calling it this or calling it that, a me saying, yes, I like, I want, or no, I don't like, I don't want.

The me dissolves by simply allowing the now. That is the process of dissolving illusion through the simple act of allowing the is-ness of this moment. Loss always happens in one's life.

Loss of possessions, loss of a human being, loss of some position or status. When this happens, the me says, I'm no longer in control. Who am I now?

Any kind of loss would usually increase unhappiness. But it is always a great opportunity for surrendering into what really is a sense of space left by the form that just dissolved. That spaciousness is painful to the mind.

It is like a limb is being torn from your body and a big hole suddenly appears. It could be the loss of somebody close to you, either through somebody leaving you or somebody dying. And that is painful.

But spiritually, there is a great opportunity if you can accept and surrender to the simple fact that all forms of life dissolve sooner or later. Every form of life leaves you sooner or later. Knowing that, when a form goes, you are able to allow it, offer no resistance.

Before you are likely to be able to accept a major loss in your life without resistance, you can practice accepting with little things. You dropped a dish and break it. It is as it is.

You pick it up and throw away the pieces. You are stuck in traffic. Allow the traffic jam to be without reacting to it.

It is as it is. The car is not moving. It is a fact.

No matter how much I fume, it won't move any further. This moment is as it is. So start by allowing and surrendering to little things.

Some people learn surrender when they travel to India because very often things don't work as they should there. So they have to practice allowing because if they don't allow, they become very unhappy. But you don't have to go to India.

It happens everywhere. The mind insists, Forms should not dissolve. People should not die.

There should be no loss. If I ran the universe, these things would not happen. So first they surrender in little things, and then something may happen that requires a big surrender, death, great loss of one kind or another.

With every kind of loss, you surrender to the emptiness that the form has left behind. If you can accept that totally, there is a deep peace. When a form has dissolved, there is a spaciousness, an emptiness.

This is why through dreadful loss some people have gone through this inner transformation and found the peace that passes all understanding. Some of those people lost everything all at once, one hole after another until nothing was left but holes, emptiness in their lives. Business collapsed, wife and children left, car gone, credit cards gone, and even the physical body may be no longer working.

Everything gone, and suddenly they woke up out of identification with content. They woke up out of identification with form. In the midst of all of that loss and emptiness, they suddenly realized, Oh, I feel so peaceful.

Such deep peace and aliveness. What is this? They couldn't understand it.

This must have happened to Jesus. Maybe it is not reported in the Gospels. The peace that passeth all understanding.

He didn't understand it either. The mind cannot understand it. The origin of suffering is not accepting what is in your life now.

So practice allowing this moment to be as it is. This is a simple but radical spiritual practice. It's a practice that leads to inner peace.

We are coming to the end of our time together, so let me summarize these gateways to inner peace. The body loves to receive your attention. When you enter into the inner body and abide there, it is as if each cell is singing a song of gratitude.

Each cell is enjoying increased life because you have given it attention. One of the most powerful and preventative practices for overall health and well-being is to be with your attention in the inner body. You can see how the three gateways to inner peace I have presented here are all really the same.

And with all of them there is an immediate increase in alertness. It's like a dimmer switch. It was turned on at the lowest, and then you turn it up to the highest.

Silence brings you to stillness, to a state of thoughtlessness that is worry-free. It is a deeply restful state that replenishes one's whole being. Acceptance of life as it is presenting itself to you in the now means nonresistance to life.

It brings an ease to living and countless benefits. Use these gateways. Make them part of your daily practice.

Once you become familiar with that state of spacious presence, you notice the difference between that state and the normal human state. Consider normal up to now, that is. As you abide in the now, more and more you will realize that your home is the state of presence you experience in this timeless dimension.

The now is your home. You cannot fall out of that. You don't need to search for yourself anymore.

You are safe. You are home. As you abide in the now, you are aware of your essence which is beyond name and form.

This is self-realization. And it is so simple. When you know who you truly are, the false in life falls away.

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2002-Eckhart Tolle Portals into Now

[Speaker 1] (0:44 - 2:14:39)

Is it possible to be here so completely, you're no longer waiting for the next moment, that you don't have a psychological need for the next moment. One could say that the psychological need for the next moment, which is so much part of the normal human state of consciousness that we looked at last night, is an essential part of that sense of self that we looked at last night, that is ultimately very limited and a mind made sense of self. And that sense of self, we saw that last night, has a deep need for future to complete itself.

And it never arrives there at that state of completion as long as it's looking to the future. So tonight, there may be a little bit more information coming, but the essence of this evening is to go more deeply into the new state of consciousness that is emerging, to go more deeply into it. That's why we're here.

The level of information may be useful and helpful because every word, information is a little pointer towards it no more. Information in itself would never get you there because then you would simply be looking at different pointers to, let's say, you want to get to Rome, and then you're looking at a signpost, which points that way. And one signpost is designed in a particular way and another signpost just looks different, but they all point to the same place.

But if you are only here as a mind, as a mind-made entity, only looking for the next thing that the speaker is going to say, then you would be missing something more essential. So the pointers are useful, but don't become a collector of signposts. Perhaps some of you have been collecting signposts for a long time.

And perhaps even that could have become part of, of course, a signpost in the sense that we use that term here, is to do with the accumulated content of your mind. And you may have a wonderful collection of signposts of different additions, a lot of knowledge, and it's even possible that your sense of who you are has gradually also become identified with that accumulated spiritual knowledge that you have. That's how it works, the sense of identity.

And so there's a reluctance to let go because ultimately when you move beyond, you have to, you leave the signpost behind. And there can be a reluctance to leave the signposts behind because there's this, the need of the mind is to have more of that, more, add more stuff, content, signposts, collect more, to be, to become more. So we look at the psychological need that is so deep seated for the next moment.

What's next? Okay, there's only the now. We know that now.

What's the next bit of information? This happens when you're just here as an, only as the mind. Tell me more.

Now, in the normal human state of consciousness, you're condemned to spend most of your life waiting because the psychological need for the next moment is a state of waiting. You're, when you have a need for the next moment, you're waiting for the next moment. The waiting can be passive.

When are things going to get better? When am I going to find the one person or situation or whatever that's going to fulfill me, make me complete? When I'm just, when are they going to discover me?

When is that person going to come who sees that I'm the greatest potentially? I'm, it's got to be coming. That's the passive waiting.

And then there's a more active waiting that is an actual compulsion. I need to, that's not waiting in the conventional sense because you're actually trying to push towards future. It's also a kind of waiting in the sense that you don't want what you have, which is this moment, and you want what you haven't got, which is the next moment.

That one could say is what waiting is about. You don't want what is, you want what will be. And it's not arriving yet.

And so in that gap between what is and what the mental projection of future is what will be, there is waiting. And in the passive waiting state, it's a state of maybe impatience or, and the active waiting state is that you're running towards the future, internally or even physically. And if you're running towards future internally only, then of course that is a stressful stress.

The stress is created and stress is the big thing in our civilization. Everybody almost is stressed or they're completely bored. So it's, you can see those people who have got the good jobs and are making money and got the cars, they are stressed.

And then there are the others. They may be on welfare or whatever. Life is passing them by and they're bored.

Nothing's happening. And so stress is so normal. What is stress is the mental projection of a future moment that I need to get to.

And the fact that I'm not there yet. There's this, so you're being pulled towards future and that is stress. The mental projection, you throw it there and I'm running towards it, whatever form it may be.

Projection means it's, I believe from Latin, you throw it, project. So you mentally project a future moment you want to get to and then you're running. And if you're only running physically, that's not so bad.

At least energy's moving. But in most cases, it's an internal running and that burns up enormous amounts of life energy. The stress that is internally when you're sitting in your car and you're running only internally because the car isn't moving.

That's enormous, the body suffers enormously in that state. And energy is being, because it's a state of contraction of highly diminished flow of life energy, there's such contraction in every cell of the body when there is stress. So that, and after a few years, then it's more likely that things will go wrong in the body because life is no longer flowing, that is one thing.

The life, the stream of aliveness is no longer flowing freely because of the contraction, almost continuous contraction. And people don't know that that's what they're doing. It's so normal.

And enormous amount of life energy is being burned up in that, and stress is often associated with hyperactive mind, frantic mental noise, because you're projecting yourself mentally and emotionally into the future. And there's always a possibility you might never get to that projected point. What if I don't get there?

At least you won't get there in time. And so millions of humans living in that mindset create the civilization that is a stressful civilization, whereas a very noisy civilization, a very nervous civilization, a civilization where not that many people are happy. Unhappiness is more or less normal.

And for some people, it is so habitual, the state of unease, of dissatisfaction, of living only through anticipation, always anticipating what's going to, but basically it is a dissatisfaction with what is, fear and desire, both strongly connected with needing the future and fearing the future at the same time. And that's the normal human state. And for many people, it is so habitual, that state.

If you ask them, are you unhappy? Because it is not a state of happiness. It is an unhappy state.

But when unhappiness becomes habitual, you don't even know anything else. Perhaps from childhood, from school onwards, that was the normal state of denial of the fullness of life that potentially is here now, that the fullness of life that you are underneath the mental images, underneath the mental noise, the fullness of life that is the essence of your being, they don't know that. So if you ask them, are you okay?

Are you happy? I'm fine, I'm okay. When I was starting many years ago, when I was starting to see people who would come for spiritual teaching or whatever, it wasn't called that then.

I didn't know what it was. And sometimes I made the mistake of asking people, how do you feel inside? And often, yeah, fine.

They've been out of touch with inside for years and unhappiness with their normal state. And so that's fine. So then after a while, I realized that I stopped asking them.

So to see how that operates and that creates the civilization, and it seems to anybody who lives as part of a civilization, that that's how things are because they couldn't be otherwise. That's how they are. And yet they can be otherwise.

A different state of consciousness is possible, not in the future though, only now. And that's why we are here, to allow that state to emerge. In that, the emergence of that state, the understanding about it mentally plays a secondary role.

What you can understand about that state is relatively limited because it is a state, the state that we call the state of presence, is not a state that you can dissect mentally or to get there through increasing your understanding of what that state means. You can only go that far. And we've almost reached the limit already.

We talked last night and even last night, we talked more about recognizing the normal state of consciousness and the dysfunction of the normal state of consciousness. That was a greater part of what we talked about last night. And the relatively small part of what we talked about was understanding what the state of presence means.

You can understand up to a point, these are the pointers that point you to the state of presence. And then further pointers would no longer be a help. They would become a hindrance.

When you've read a certain number of spiritual books, this can be helpful, pointers are helpful. Then there comes a point when further spiritual books don't add any more. If you've read, the essence is not that complicated.

And you've seen the essence in many forms expressed already. Okay, that's it, those are the pointers, you've got enough. Understanding the normal mind-identified state is helpful, not so much understanding to see it, to see how it operates.

And that's what we mainly did just last night, to see how the mind-identified state operates, to become aware of how it functions. And by seeing it, already entering dis-identification. Because the seeing of the conditioning of the mind and how the conditioning of the mind operates, the seeing, when you see it, the seeing is not part of the conditioning.

There's already a new factor that has emerged. When you see your own mind, there's a witnessing presence. For example, you may suddenly see that you've been trapped in mental noise for the past three hours, completely identified with trying to get to some future, trying to anticipate something in the future, you're completely in it.

And suddenly you see there's an enormous stream of mental noise going through your head. And you see it's all connected with needing the next moment, at the same time fearing the next moment. Torn between these two, needing the next moment and fearing the next moment, that's the egoic dilemma.

And this has been pointed to traditionally in spiritual traditions as desire and fear. The two motivating factors in human beings, as long as they live exclusively through the egoic state. Whatever you do is motivated either through desire, which means you need something in the future, and I need that, get there.

I'm not there yet, but I'll get there. And then there's the fear, oh no, I might not get it. Or something may go very wrong and I may even die in the future.

Something may leave me that I already have added to who I think I am, an identification, and something may leave me, it may abandon me, I may lose it in the future. And there comes the fear of, I may become diminished in the future. I want to become enlarged in my sense of self, through future, this is the egoic need for future, the desire for future.

But I fear that I may become, this could happen perhaps, I may lose something that is essentially part of who I think I am, and then I will die. How do I get out of that? Well, if that question arose, that will already be the beginning of the spiritual dimension.

How, even to see the possibility that you can get out of that dilemma, out of that state. For those who are totally identified with the state, the question, how do I get out of that state, doesn't even arise, because they're completely, they embody that, they are that mind-identified state. But so even to ask the question, how do I get beyond this, that's already, this means there's already an opening.

And in each one of you, of course, there's already more than that, there's a huge opening. You would not be able to endure three hours here if that opening were not there. I can guarantee that this meeting, this gathering, would either be threatening to your sense of self in the head, or so boring that you couldn't stand it anymore.

So there is already an enormous opening into the state of presence. It is, I'm amazed how many humans are now open to it. Truly amazed.

I began this evening with asking a question, is it possible to be here so completely in this moment, in this now, the one now, the only now that there is, that the psychological need for future is no longer operating? Now, to be here so completely, the mind may ask, how do I get to that state? And the mind may want a technique.

Can't you give me some technique so that I can get to that state? Well, of course there are techniques. The danger and the drawback with any technique is that you're trying to get somewhere with the technique.

In a very subtle way, future comes back into the technique because you're trying to become good at practicing the technique, become a good meditator. That takes a while. And so in a very subtle way, often the need for future can come back into your practicing technique to be present, but the need for future in a subtle way flows back into the technique and into your practice.

So I don't really have techniques to give you as such. I do have something that I call portals into the state of presence. And a portal is simply an opening.

You can't get good at walking through a portal. There isn't enough there. You either walk through the portal or you don't.

And so I want to look at some of these portals. Now, each portal takes you there. It doesn't matter which one you walk through, but in a sense one can say whichever portal you walk through somehow includes also the other portals.

You will see that more clearly. So what is the portal that we can walk through that takes you into presence? Or even that is perhaps a little bit misleading.

Words are so misleading. One could say perhaps more accurately that presence is already here. Presence is already within you underneath the mental noise.

So it's not so much how to get you to the state of presence, but how to realize that the state of presence is already here, both within and without. So nothing needs to be added to who you are. That's the beauty of it.

Nothing needs to be added to who you are already. And that's very strange to the egoic mind. You mean me, this little me with this unsatisfying story and I haven't quite made it yet and my life is so much, it's not right with my life situation.

How could it be true that nothing needs to be added? I'm not talking about the level of the person there. You can add things.

I mean, I'm going to add things to that level. I still haven't mastered the computer, how to use it. One of the last people.

So at some point, I will add that to my store of knowledge or whatever it is, expertise. Then I may be able to do word processing or use the internet. I tried once or twice, but it didn't work.

But I may try again, that's fine. Or some new activity, maybe one day I'll learn to ski or something, which I haven't done yet. It may never happen, but why not add a few things, but not in the sense of that I need this to fulfill myself.

Maybe a nice thing to do, enjoyable. And if I'm no good at it, that's all right too. I may fail, it doesn't matter.

It's playful, that's fine. So on a deeper level, as far as the who you truly are, the amazing fact is that nothing needs to be added. And this is not something to believe in.

See if that's all you realize this evening fully, not just with a head as a belief, but realize it as a liberating thing that affects the entire being, the realization that presence, the state of presence is already within you, simply covered up by mental noise and covered up by the egoic mind-created entity that says, no, this cannot be true. I'm not enough yet, I need more. This and that for my identity.

And that's not true. You don't need more for your identity. You need more for other things too.

Yeah, not for who you are, the essence of your being. So the portals into the state of presence. One powerful portal is to inhabit the body.

To sense, to feel the energy field in your inner body, the life, the aliveness that undoubtedly is there because the body is alive. Most humans are unaware of that because their whole attention is trapped in thought and mental noise continuously. So their whole attention is there.

They are only, they look at their body as if it were some alien object and they look down from above their body. So that's why people say, I have a body. And a much truer statement would be, although this goes against conventional spirituality, and I'll explain, a much truer statement would be, I am a body.

Then you don't have a split of a me that says I possess this thing that I call body. I have it. And it's problematic like everything else that I have.

And I'm not satisfied with it, like I'm not satisfied with anything else either. So I'm not satisfied with the body that I have. Not many people are.

And those that are satisfied with the body that they have, they form an egoic identity around it, that's how satisfied they are. And so your sense of self becomes identified with your strong or beautiful body better than most other people's. And that works for a while.

It works for 20, 30 years, 40 years, 50. And then one day you look in the mirror and say, the basis for my identity is dissolving. What do I do now?

Extreme unhappiness can arise when my sense of self was based on my appearance or my physical strength or beauty. Fortunately, that wasn't the case with me ever, but I had other identifications. My egoic entity was based on accumulated mind knowledge.

I know more than you. I may not be more beautiful than you, but I know more. And that's of course much more important.

All this, the rest of it, all this superficiality of appearance, I'm not interested in that. The ego manages always in some way to be special, better than, and those egos that have neither knowledge, nor beauty or physical strength, or know the right people, or enough money in the bank, or social recognition, got any of that. And well, then an image forms of poor little me who hasn't got any of these things.

And then some justification may come for why things have gone wrong in my life. And you tell yourself your sad story and tell it to others too. And that becomes just as strong an identity.

The miserable little me, or the angry and miserable little me, what the world has done to me. And I'm going to get even, perhaps, whatever it... You can't escape.

The ego will form its identifications and it'll use whatever is most convenient and most obvious in your life. So the body, the I have a body, the in the head, the entity says, I have a body. So there's already a split.

The truer statement is, I am a body. Well, isn't that, aren't you now identifying with your physical form, which of course is not going to last for that long. And if you say, I am a body, this statement only becomes true if you inhabit the body.

It is not true as far as the external appearance of your body is concerned, but the animating presence, the intelligence that lives in the body. We spoke last night of the one intelligence that expresses itself through billions of forms is born into form, temporary forms. And how it must enjoy that, because otherwise the universe wouldn't exist in its billions of life forms.

And on the planet alone, millions or billions of different life forms. So the universe or the one intelligence obviously enjoys the play of multiple forms. So it expresses itself as the flower, beautifully, unproblematically.

It expresses itself as the physical human body. And of course there's enormous intelligence that operates throughout the body. You can't see it, but it is the organizing principle in the body that controls, regulates thousands of functions simultaneously.

The human mind wouldn't be able to do that. Couldn't keep the body alive for two seconds. It's far too complex.

How could you would have to be aware of a thousand things or more at the same time. And every cell embodies intelligence. The DNA is just a physical representation of intelligence itself.

So the body is the external physical body is simply the outer expression of a field of intelligence, of consciousness, expressing itself temporarily as what we perceive as the physical body. That's the one intelligence that is not separate from the human mind. The mind is a small part of that, just a tiny expression of that.

So by inhabiting the body or sensing, and this to the mind, what I'm saying now, the mind says, this is too simple. This can't work. This isn't complicated enough to be able to sense the field of aliveness, the life that the very life that is the body that is a portal into the state of presence.

And you are then present with your entire energy field. One could almost say every cell is present. And there is an increased aliveness as soon as you inhabit the body, which means your attention is not exclusively on the outer world and your sense perceptions.

Your attention is not exclusively in thought. Some of your attention dwells in the body, the inner energy field of the body to sense that a global sense of aliveness of body, to sense that it is an amazing thing. You connect by doing this, you connect with an intelligence that is far greater than the human mind.

You connect with it. And it's not even to say connect is not totally right because ultimately you are that more than you are the mental noise. So, and this then becomes an anchor, the inner body.

And that doesn't change. It does depend on whether the body is 20 years old and it's the same aliveness that you can feel when you're 85 or 90. That doesn't grow old.

Only the external vehicle grows old. So, and it is essential to inhabit the body and any of the other portals, which we will look at, they will also take you into a sense of aliveness of the inner body. They will, that will always happen.

So, this portal is so near, so close to you, closer than hands and feet. As the saying goes, I don't know if it's in the Bible or somebody else said it, God is closer to you than hands and feet. And if you start to look at that, what could be closer than hands and feet?

They are pretty close. Inside your hands and feet is even closer. So you, and it is not a sacrilege to say the nearest that God is to you is in your body.

And everybody has been looking, projecting, where does God exist? The very, the very life that you are, and then God becomes a mental image that when you're only a mind-based entity, it becomes an image that you identify with and say a belief or a belief system. And inevitably, sooner or later, you'll be in conflict with others who have a slightly different belief system.

So as you sit here, feel the inner body. How I hear one or two minds, what do you mean? I'm not moving my hand and I'm not touching anything.

My eyes are closed. Simply ask yourself, is there any way I can know whether my right hand is still there or not? Is that without looking and without moving my hand, is there any way I can know whether it still exists?

That question will draw your attention away from mental noise and conceptualization because the mind will say, well, no, I don't know if I have a right hand or not. The question is meaningless anyway. What's the point?

I've got far more important problems to think about than this. Does that solve my problems? Okay, that's what the mind does.

And I know one or two minds have been saying that. So you simply ask yourself the question, how can I know whether my right hand is still there? Is there any way I can know?

That question draws your attention away from mental noise and your attention moves into the hand and suddenly you can feel it. Not very strong perhaps, but there's a certain field of aliveness there. And once you inhabit your hand, then you know what it means to inhabit the body.

Then you can inhabit the other hand, the left hand. And that doesn't seem enough either for them. Well, okay, where do we go from here?

And, but it is enormously important and you don't need a particular, go through some technique or movement. They can be helpful to get you into the body, but being in the body is not to be confined to performing particular movements. They are helpful.

But being in the body as your normal state, left hand and right hand, and now comes a strange thing. You can do it with your eyes closed or open. Feel both hands at the same time and feel them so completely that there's the feeling of hand, not so much anymore a mental image of two hands, just a feeling of hand.

And even that hand disappears. There's just a sense of aliveness. Subtle, quite beautiful.

It is alive, isn't that amazing? And then you learn to hold attention there effortlessly. And you can see how thought stream immediately slows down because there isn't enough consciousness now in the head to make thoughts out of, because your consciousness is moving into the body.

And then you can feel your feet at the same time. Isn't that amazing? At the same time as you feel your hands, you feel the inner aliveness in your feet.

And then gradually, if you can now feel hands and feet together, this is how gradually you bring together the feeling of inner body into one single feeling of aliveness. You feel their legs and arms. And the rest of the body then becomes part of that, a sense of aliveness throughout the body.

So it becomes a single field of energy that you sense. Now, if your eyes are closed for a little while, it may still seem as if you were observing that feeling of inner body, but then allow yourself to merge with that feeling of inner body so you are the feeling of inner body. It's no longer a head observing the inner body.

You are present as much in your feet as you are in your head. So the sense of gravity of who you are is all over. It's no longer in the head.

It's everywhere equally. Now, it is possible with some people that they feel a particular area more strongly than others, than other areas. So after a while, you may feel that more.

It doesn't matter. The essential thing is to be able simply to walk through that portal step. The moment you enter the body, you've stepped out of identification with mental noise.

And now, if your eyes are closed, if they are not closed, close them just for a moment and hold attention in the body. There's no effort involved. You're not trying to get anywhere.

There's no trying, just being rooted within, inhabiting the body and holding. It's a life that increases the aliveness enormously of throughout your body. And then the amazing thing comes, you open your eyes and you begin to perceive again visually and you're still feeling the inner body even as you perceive what's around you.

So you look around and of course you hear my voice or you see the flowers, you see the totality of the room. And you continue to feel, not perhaps as strongly as when your eyes were closed, you're still present within. And you can then perceive without interference or very limited interference by the conditioning of your mind.

Suddenly there's a clarity in your sense perceptions because they are no longer distorted by the conditioning of your mind, by your mental noise, by all the labels that the mind throws up continuously. So by sensing that global feeling of body, you're anchored in the now and you're free of thousands of years of mental conditioning. You've simply stepped out.

And you perceive, oh, without past, everything is fresh and new and alive. And there is, and that is part of this sense of inner body, there is an alertness to it, an alert sense of presence. A high degree of wakefulness.

And you can then, you can feel the qualitative difference between that alertness that pervades your entire being. It is an aliveness, an alertness in which there's no tension. You can see the qualitative difference between that state and the state of being immersed in thought and continuous past and future and looking for yourself there.

Bring that, that is simple. Stepping out of mental noise. The only thing that can hold you back is believing the mind when it tells you, no, you must not step, you need to think about this now.

It's four o'clock in the morning and you need to think about this now. It matters. I want your attention, the thought says.

And so holding attention, being present within and without at the same time. And then this, you contemplate, let's, we'll continue to be in the body. Now, let's, I will, another portal, but they're all connected.

So we are not leaving the body when we now look at another portal. Now, remember, before I say this, all this we are doing is regarded by the mind as insignificant or a hindrance to what I really want or as boring, or it is, no, I've done that, I've done meditation for 20 years, give me something new. It's, so to see that the mind will not regard this as important, the mental noise, because your problems are important.

Not that, that's what it says. Okay, knowing that is fine. Then when the mind pretends that your problems are more important than this, you recognize that, oh, yes, that's what the mind does.

That's okay. Because this is too simple to be interesting to the mind. It loves complexity.

Let me, give me something that I need to work out, meant I can think about. It needs, so I'm pointing that out because otherwise, if you don't know that, the mind can draw your attention back completely. Another room, and not separate from this one.

Usually, when you use your listening faculty, you listen to noise. You listen to this, you listen to that. Listen to the silence.

Acknowledge the dimension of silence. Now there happens to be some silence here. It may not be total, but there is an enormous amount of silence in this room.

That is, so to speak, the background to the sound, the sounds that arise. They arise always out of the silence. Now, how do we acknowledge silence?

Simply by noticing it. To acknowledge means to notice. Now, the interesting thing happens when you suddenly notice that there is silence, your alertness rises.

Because without alertness, you cannot notice silence. You can notice sound with relatively little alertness because it's all, it imposes itself. So what a sound is, you don't need alertness for that unless it's a very faint sound or a sound that is becoming faint and ends in silence.

Then you need an increasing alertness. So to simply, we can use, I'm using different pointers because some will be more helpful to others. You notice the dimension of silence.

Simply, you notice that it's there. That means you pay attention to it. That is, that means you listen to the silence and to the mind that's meaningless because the mind says, well, there's nothing to listen to.

And that's precisely the point. What happens inside you when you notice silence? The moment you notice silence, and it's silence as an undercurrent, a background is there in the most unlikely places, but you wouldn't usually notice it.

You notice the moment it is, the noticing of silence, which to the mind is insignificant because there's nothing going on in it. It looks for something. It doesn't look for nothing.

And silence seems to be nothing, no thing. So the mind would never look for silence. The mind is noise.

So it resonates with noise, external noise. It likes that. That's the reason, by the way, why our civilization is the noisiest ever on the planet.

And then the civilization produces an enormous amount of noise through machines and artificially generated noise. Because it's the most mind-identified civilization. So the moment you notice silence, you can only notice it through the increased alertness.

And that increased alertness is an inner stillness. When you notice silence, and you may only notice it for one second, at that moment, the mind is still. It's only with the stillness that you can notice, be aware of, outer silence.

You cannot be aware of outer silence with thought. Thought may come in after you've noticed it. But the moment of noticing, now, there's no thought there.

Perhaps two seconds later it says, oh, it's so silent here. Or the mind says, yes, I noticed it. And then the mind says, okay, we've done that.

Now, what's the next thing? So let's see. This is a portal.

Only through the state of presence can you notice silence. And now I will ring this bell and you will notice two things. The sound, the sound gradually subsides and just follow the sound with your attention until it subsides.

And you will notice to follow the sound when it becomes weaker, a greater alertness is required than at the beginning of the sound. What's left after the sound subsides is simply a field of alertness, which is stillness. And now as you listen to the sound, be aware not just of the sound, but of the alertness itself in which the sound happens, the awareness through and in which the sound happens.

And now to deepen it, listen to the sound with your whole body, so to speak, with every cell of the body. So the field of alertness is your entire energy field. That is the field of alertness.

So you listen and you're aware of the field of alertness and that which arises in it, which is the sound in this case. And what remains is simply the field of alertness, of alert presence. And the same can happen when you perceive visually.

You look, you see sense objects in your field, your visual field. And usually that's all that people see, the forms. And they draw their attention in completely.

Whatever is in your visual field, also there's the underlying field of alertness in which the visual perception arises. And that's inseparable from the feeling of the aliveness of the inner body, is the global alertness. So in all, imagine living, don't imagine, living like that so that there is now a dimension there that you were not aware of before, because otherwise all that there is, is the forms of life.

That's all that, the world in other words, to use traditional spiritual language, all that people are aware of is the things of the world, the objects that arise in your consciousness. What they are not aware of is consciousness that makes all the world possible, the essence of their being, that field, the field of now, whatever you want to call it, whatever pointer, the spaciousness that is around things that permeates, pervades everything and is around everything, a sense of spacious presence, the formless life that is prior to the world of form, of birth and death, and yet the forms exist within it. So you're aware of the essence and that is the awareness itself.

And there's a beautiful Upanishad, the ancient scripture of India written thousands of years ago, I'm not good at memorizing things, I'll just see if I can get the essence of it, that points to exactly that. It says, not that which the eye sees, but that whereby the eye can see. Know that alone to be the eternal and not what people here adore.

Not that which the ear hears, but that whereby the ear can hear. Know that alone to be the eternal and not what people here adore. Not that which the mind thinks, but that whereby the mind can think.

Know that alone to be the eternal and not what people here adore. Points to that what people here adore is the forms, the objects of consciousness. It could be they adore beliefs, they adore external things.

Even God becomes an object of consciousness, a belief, a mental idol, and that's not it. So this is the essence of spiritual realization. And it's so simple.

The portal of silence, the portal of the inner body, all the same. The portal of this moment. Of course, they're all really one, but this moment is the most powerful portal, and embracing it.

You walk through it by, yes, the word yes takes you through the portal of this moment. Yes to this moment. And immediately you can sense an increased aliveness in the body.

So you can see they're all connected. With a yes to this moment, you are out of the prison of the mind, which lives in and through denial of the moment. It lives through no to the moment.

So this is the portal of yes to now. And immediately, if the yes is full and uncompromising and the now is embraced fully, there's a sudden influx of aliveness. And you sense suddenly your entire body.

And there's suddenly an inner stillness. You can see how all the portals are really the same. So you awaken into the now.

And that's the portal of now. And with all the portals, there's an immediate, enormous increase in alertness. It's like a dimmer switch.

It was at the lowest, and then you turn it up. And there's not only an increased sense of inner aliveness the moment you walk through the portal of now, and you walk through it, you have to utter the magic word, yes. Otherwise, they won't let you through.

There's a big hound guarding the portal. And without the yes, you just can't walk through it. And so there's not only an increased, enormous increase in alertness, which affects the entire body, but alertness in every cell.

And aliveness, there's also, it's not just on the inner plane that there is an increase in aliveness. The moment you walk through the portal of now, there's an increase in aliveness around you that you were unaware of. Not that there's an increase in aliveness around you.

It was always there, but not to you, because all your attention was in the mental noise. So the very aliveness of the universe to you wasn't there. And suddenly, so when I say suddenly there is an aliveness, it doesn't mean that it wasn't there before, but this aliveness is new to you.

And that means when you walk through the portal of now, and we are walking through together now, I'm not just talking about it, this is now, suddenly, your sense perceptions, you are amazed how heightened they become and how what you look at, let's talk about the visual sense, how alive everything suddenly is. Even nature, of course, has an enormous presence suddenly. But before you said, oh, aren't these flowers pretty?

No depth to it whatsoever. Yeah, beautiful, look at these colors. Just mental noise.

And suddenly, you truly see the beingness or presence of what we call flower, and that's an absurd reduction of the reality of this miracle. To even say that you know what this is and call it flower and think that now you know what it is, it's absurd. It's just a word, but you don't know anything when you utter, or you know the name of every flower, that means you have more labels about it.

On some levels, the labels may be helpful, but not to truly know what this is. The miracle that this is and the enormous presence or beingness that it emanates, it's alive. So by walking through now your sense perceptions, just as through the increased alertness, your sense perceptions become enormously more acute.

And it's not just that the colors and the shapes have an aliveness, it goes beyond sense perception. You sense the aliveness of everything. You certainly sense it as far as natural things are concerned, the world of nature, but you even sense it in so-called inanimate objects, even those emanate an aliveness, not as much, of course, as nature.

Nature could almost be regarded as a portal in itself. Perhaps we don't see that. So suddenly you inhabit a universe that is alive, whereas before, when you were trapped in mental noise, the universe was basically dead, threatening, yes, perhaps, or certainly, but there was no aliveness to it.

You couldn't sense the aliveness of anything around you. So it's always, every portal is an awakening. And that is the increase in alertness with the entire being.

And every portal takes you into now, of course. So, and then once you become familiar with this state of presence, you notice the qualitative difference between that state and the normal human state, so normal until now, up to now. And more and more, you will realize that your home is the state of presence.

And in the state of presence, you're already home. You're at home in the now. The now is your home.

You can't fall out of that. You don't need to look for yourself anymore. Now, the strange thing is, and this is important for you spiritual seekers, those of you who are still seekers, many of you are no longer seekers now.

That's wonderful, of course. Those who are spiritual seekers, you may still be trying to understand more about who you are, because you may have heard about the term self-realization, and you may have heard that there are certain masters who are self-realized, and they must know a lot. Not necessarily.

Most of the self-realized masters knew much less than you on the level of mind knowledge, on the level of data, on the level of information. They probably knew relatively little. Yes, but they must know themselves.

They must have that self-knowledge, and I'm looking for the self-knowledge. Well, we, last night, we already, I gave you the little story of the person who had psychoanalysis for 20 years, and then a huge pile of self-knowledge accumulated, which the psychoanalyst handed to this person, and said, now, this is yourself. You know yourself now.

This is the knowledge of content. This is the knowledge of what makes up the content of your mind, and that is not what we mean by self-knowledge in a spiritual sense, of course. So, in the state of presence, where is the self-knowledge?

And the amazing realization comes, you cannot know yourself, because whatever you know is an object of knowledge, an object of consciousness, but you cannot make yourself into an object. You can only be yourself. You can only be the very field of knowing, through which knowing happens, all-knowing.

You can be the I, the I that says, I want to know myself, the I that claims, I know everything about myself. That's the I that you cannot make into an object of knowledge. You are that I.

You are the knowing. You are the one consciousness through which everything is known. And that cannot know itself, it is itself.

There is nothing to know beyond that, and yet all-knowing arises out of that. It is intelligence itself. All-knowing arises, but it cannot know itself, nor does it need to.

It cannot make itself into an object of knowledge, of consciousness. So you cannot become an object to yourself. That was the very reason how the egoic identity arose, because mentally you made yourself into an object.

That's me. We talked about it last night. You then begin to have a relationship with yourself, and that's the beginning of trouble and problems, because the relationship with yourself is problematic.

And the moment you have a problematic relationship with yourself, because you have created a mental image of me, all your relationships become problematic, because once you have created an image of me, you create an image for everybody else, and you project an image onto people. This is what spiritually is called judging, judgment, what Jesus called judge not. You're only judging yourself if you judge another.

That's what he said, more or less, which means you become more trapped in your own labels the moment you impose a label on somebody else. Judgment is label. So the amazing thing is that the state of presence looks, from the point of view of the mind, as if you didn't know very much anymore, or you don't know anything anymore.

It's not the case. You're connected with intelligence itself, not connected. You are that, and wisdom and insight and realization, they all arise out of that state.

But it looks to the mind like a state of nothingness. That's why in some spiritual traditions, it is called emptiness. Buddhism speaks of emptiness, and this is true from the point of view of the mind.

It looks as if, well, don't know anything anymore. You become actually, the last obstacle that arises here for you is you become uncomfortable with the state of non-interpreting and non-labeling. I don't know what's going on anymore.

And then you become comfortable with not knowing. And one good area where you can experience that is another person comes into your field of consciousness and sits there and is in trouble, needs something, needs healing, needs advice, needs whatever guidance comes to you, and you enter the portal, become present. You're fully in your body, and you listen in stillness.

The words arise, and you become comfortable with not knowing the answer to this person's problem. If you become comfortable with the state of not knowing the answer, a far deeper answer will come than you could ever have figured out through your knowledge or through the mind. And you cannot know in what form that deeper answer will come.

It may be words that suddenly come that you speak, and they are inspired. They have an energy charge to them. It may be that words come out of that person's mouth that suddenly are not repetitious of the little me telling its story because that person entered that field of presence that you, so to speak, provided.

You held the field of presence. So to become comfortable with not knowing, which is the state of presence looked at from the point of view of the mind, and then see how a deeper intelligence operates. The moment you no longer think, I should know the answer.

How can I help this person? What can I say next? I've got to say something helpful now.

And this is only one example of how powerful the state of not knowing is in which everything is known. So the portal of the inner body, the portal of silence, listening to the silence, the portal of this moment, and the key, the yes that takes you through. One could also say the portal of nature.

Anything in nature teaches stillness, teaches being completely one with itself. Not a flower doesn't have a relationship with itself. A flower is itself.

A cat doesn't have a relationship with itself. The cat is itself. That's why Jesus often talked about flowers and said, look, they are teaching you something very important, something very vital, but it requires you to look.

He, Jesus said, look at the flowers, look at the lilies. Look. He didn't say think about them, just look.

And that looking is the true looking in that state of alertness and stillness. So nature too can become a portal. And the amazing thing is whenever you become present, to now, this is now, step out of mental noise, there's always a sacredness about this moment.

There is a field of sacred presence. It's always there. And you can most easily sense that perhaps through nature, that there is more to nature than what appears.

What appears may be beautiful, it is beautiful, but there's something deeper in this flower and around this flower. There's more than what you see with your eyes and certainly more than what you could know through mental labels. And that is, there is a sacredness to everything that you perceive when you're present.

In other words, the moment you enter the now with your attention, you realize that it is sacred. In other words, you realize that life is sacred and of course life is now. And I'm not going to define what sacred is because no matter how much I define, the mind won't understand it anyway.

And you know it already because you are sacred. Otherwise you wouldn't see sacredness. The essence of your being is sacred.

Thank you. We'll move our bodies for a little while and according to the clock, we'll be back in 15 minutes. Yeah, thank you.

You may have left the body while you were talking to somebody and so, and this may happen quite often. You may find yourself getting drawn back into a mind completely, especially when you start talking to someone. Mindstream takes over.

Your complete identification with the mindstream and then you notice it. The moment you notice it, you're no longer completely identified with mindstream. When you don't notice it, you are the mindstream.

You are the thought. You are the words that are coming out of your mouth, the argument or whatever it is, the viewpoint. You are the viewpoint.

You are the belief. You are the mental position and the momentum that's behind that, you are the very momentum of the mind when you don't know it. The moment you know it, you've already stepped out and at that moment, presence is arising and witnessing presence and then you can use a portal, so to speak, feel this, start with one part of the body since they take you.

As long as you realize that you want to be, you want to step out of mind. When you, this is what it looks like at this. I want to be free of mind.

I know I have a choice. I can be identified with mind or I can be present. My choice is to be present.

This is what it appears to be. Ultimately, that's of course not your choice. If presence were not arising, you couldn't say that that's your choice.

Presence arises. It wants to arise. You are presence.

There's not really a separate me that chooses presence but that's what it looks like on the surface and that's okay. We talked about the portals. Now those are all voluntary portals.

There's also involuntary portals but at first, the involuntary portals don't look like portals at all. They look like the opposite of portals. A portal is an opening.

The opposite of portal would be the closing. Any kind of loss is potentially a portal. Any kind of loss in your life is an involuntary portal.

Any kind of death in your life is an involuntary portal opening up but usually not recognized as a portal. It's taken to be a closing. It's resisted.

Those in the absence of a spiritual teaching or teacher it's through an involuntary portal usually that the transformation of consciousness occurs. It's through some death or loss in one form or another in your life. Some form of diminishment of your sense of self.

Painful as long as it's resisted. A big loss or several losses all at once. Somebody dies.

Somebody leaves you. Something you had identified with leaves you. You lose it.

And when you see the absence of a form that was essential to you, that you had identified with, suddenly a form is removed from your life that you had identified with and it could even be just a mental belief and suddenly you don't believe in your own belief anymore. You suddenly doubt. It happens sometimes people who are devout Christians or whatever, that goes very well and suddenly something happens.

Somebody dies close to them and they lose their whole belief suddenly. I've seen that happen as if they had a contract with God and say, nothing bad is going to happen to me because we have a contract. We have a bargain.

And death is not going to happen around me. And then it happens. So a belief structure can crumble.

That's a loss of form, thought forms. A person can leave you, either dies or leaves you. And any death or loss is actually, you can just see it's so clear that it is a portal because it is an absence.

Before there was something there, a human being or something. $10 million, doesn't matter, something. And suddenly that something is no longer there.

It's been removed. And that something was part of the content of your mind. You had identified with it as part of your sense of self.

So a big chunk has been torn out of your sense of self through deep loss or death. And so it's the sudden absence of something, of a form. And you can see that, of course, it's a doorway.

It's an opening. It's an opening into nothingness, it seems. There's suddenly a hole.

It's a hole that appears in your life. The fabric of your existence suddenly has a hole in it. Or several holes all at once.

This has happened, for example, in war situations. It's happened to people. They lose their home.

They lose their loved ones. They lose all their possessions. They lose everything.

And suddenly the whole fabric of the existence consists only of holes. This is potential for the most dreadful suffering, for hell. And sometimes it just turned into hell.

It is also potential for presence to arise, for suddenly resistance to become relinquished. And at that moment, this dreadful closing, your whole life seemed to be collapsing around you. And suddenly you just cannot resist anymore because the pain is too much of fighting what is.

The pain of no is too much of the inner no to what is. And on some level, you recognize that, perhaps not conceptually. And then something within suddenly gives way and the no dissolves.

And there's a yes, not so much in words. There's the inner opening. You're no longer resisting this hole.

And then it becomes a portal. And so in the absence of a spiritual teacher or teaching, you depend on involuntary portals. And of course, sooner or later they will appear.

And for many of you, that was already your main teacher, that you wouldn't even be here if you had not experienced that diminishment of your sense of self through death or loss. You wouldn't be here. So, and now it's easier to voluntarily walk through a portal because it's also a form of death.

The present moment is a form of death. What dies is me and my story. What dies is who you thought you are.

What dies is a sense of self based on me and my past and my story. And that's a joyful death. And so those people who didn't have a spiritual teacher or teaching, at first they depended on an involuntary portal and it came.

And at some point they gave up resistance. The suffering was getting too much. So what does that mean?

Suddenly something opens up, a form dissolves. This is what death is. A form of life dissolves.

What is left when a form of life dissolves? Formless nothingness. From the point of view of the mind, you're left with nothing, no thing.

The formless one life, the one consciousness prior to birth and death, to the arising of form is suddenly there because there's the opening. So there is a sacredness, which addressed sacredness before through entering the now. There's a great sacredness to death, any kind of death, because the formless one life is present.

As soon as a form dissolves, God shines through the emptiness that's left, the formless one life. But you have to say yes to the absence of that form. Then it becomes a portal.

And so there have been people who have experienced deep loss, unbearable loss, and suffered tremendously. And at some point, the yes arose. And suddenly there was that great peace that they couldn't explain, that passes all understanding.

Despite, it looked like the peace is there almost despite of what's happening. And yet there is a connection, not a direct causal connection. It's the death as a portal.

And then death is no longer fearful. Once you have surrendered to one form of death in your life, death is actually quite beautiful and sacred. So say yes to death.

Not necessarily the big death. Death comes also in little, very little ways. Any diminishment of your sense of self is a little death.

Any loss, even minor loss, is a little death. And instead of resisting it, all right, a diminishment of your sense of self comes with such an insignificant thing as somebody insulting you. If somebody insults you, your mind made sense of self feels less.

It's a diminishment. Therefore it is, even an insult, is a form of death to the egoic sense of self. Now, usually there's the compulsion to immediately compensate for the diminishment by, in the case of an insult, shouting back something at the person who insulted you.

So you insult that person in turn. And so to the egoic sense of self, that works because you have just repaired it. You have recreated a balance, something you've been diminished in your sense of self through the insult, and immediately, automatically, unconsciously, you threw back an insult at that person.

And so on the level of egoic identity, that actually works. You feel a little bit better because you have restored your sense of self. That's how it works.

So you have, the diminishment has immediately been repaired or restored. It's the compulsion to react. Now, as a little experiment, provided there's enough presence in you at that moment, when somebody insults you, you can try, what happens if I do not compensate for that?

Just as a kind of semi-scientific experiment, what happens if I do not repair my diminished sense of self and simply let it be, let the diminished sense of self be? You could practice with it when you're driving and somebody shouts, you idiot, where did you get your license or something? And you'd look back and you sense your inner body.

Now, this is an amazing difference. If you, at that moment, you're in your inner body, it doesn't matter because your sense of identity is no longer in the image, the mental image of who you are in the head, which if it were totally in there, that would be, somebody calling you an idiot, would be a diminishment. But if your sense of self is within this energy field that no matter what sounds are coming out of this person's mouth, doesn't really matter.

And there is a diminishment only on the level of the mind. And you accept that, it's a little experiment. It's not, I don't recommend it to people who are very timid because, and it's not to be confused with a fearful way of not reacting out of fear.

Some people habitually don't react because they have a fear of confrontation and they don't want to, so to those people, I don't recommend this practice. There are other practices for you, but a normal sense of self, except because if you're a little, if you've never spoken up for yourself, then really that has become your egoic sense of self and you would have to go the other way as an experiment. But any diminishment, accept it and see that nothing actually has been diminished.

And when you completely accept a diminishment of your sense of self, suddenly what looks like a moment of weakness, there's great strength suddenly underneath. You haven't died, you haven't disappeared. And there's enormous strength there and peace.

And this you could also practice in an argument. You're trying to be right with your partner perhaps. And suddenly, perhaps, oh, right, okay, but maybe I'm not right.

Maybe you're right, I think you're right. Instead of defending a mental position, if you can practice it when you can see that your partner is actually right and see how the compulsion is to deny that, not because you're fighting for the truth, you don't want the truth, you want to survive in your sense of self. So you will distort the truth no matter how strongly you distort the truth, you'll do anything to survive in your sense of self.

And this is what happens when partners argue. And instead, drop the, okay, you're right.

I did do that, or I failed to do that, and I usually fail to do that, or I always do that.

You're completely right. You're right. That's an enormous, suddenly there's enormous strength from the point of view of ego looks weakness.

It's also a little form of death and not to resist that. And this is the whole meaning of Jesus is when he says, has this strange story of turning the other cheek. He simply say, experiment with non-reactivity without automatically defending your sense of self and see the enormous strength that is there when you no longer take the mind made sense of self for who you are.

So that's, I remember when my, I have a younger half brother and he was, his ego grew, he was 16. And I noticed, I didn't live with him, but sometimes would visit him or he would visit me. And I noticed his growing ego and manifested as an inability to ever say, I don't know.

He just couldn't get himself to say, I don't know, because to the ego, and this is not just, it's an egoic trait, even to say, I don't know, feels I'm becoming weaker, I must know. So he couldn't say, I don't know, and I observed it. And sometimes when somebody asked him something or asked him a question, he would come up with the most absurd explanation, just to cover up the fact that he didn't know.

And then I suggested to him, next time, if you don't know something, try to say, I don't know, and see what happens. Just try as an experiment. What happens if you say, I don't know?

And then the time came and I asked him something and he was just about to come up with a fictitious answer, a complete fantasy. I raised my finger to remember, and he stopped for a moment and then said, I don't know. And that felt, he couldn't almost, couldn't get himself to utter these words.

And I said, Auroch, and you're still alive. You haven't died. He looked at me strangely.

The amazing thing is, yes, you haven't died. You don't need to be right. Occasionally you may be right.

So that's the diminishment and that life does that to you. So the compulsion to defend yourself, which is your sense of self, the defensiveness that every ego carries as its shield, the defensiveness then doesn't operate anymore. You don't need the defensiveness anymore because you're too strong for that.

In the Course in Miracles, which is a book that was channeled many years ago, has a nice sentence that says, whenever you become defensive about anything, know that you have identified yourself with an illusion. That is the illusion, of course, of the self. So that's, and you cannot not observe these patterns that arise in you that are the egoic self patterns.

Defensiveness arises and suddenly there's a witnessing presence. So you become free simply through observing very often the patterns of the self, of the mind, trying to survive, trying to make it. So you don't need to be totally free of mind from now on and you have failed if you are not.

It's enough to know it, to see it, to be there as the witness. And then you're there as the witness also of, and this is something that, as many of you know, the generic, one could almost say, the generic emotion that human beings carry, the residue of past human suffering, the generic field of pain, emotional pain, that every human already comes into this world with, created by thousands and thousands of years of living through mind-made sense of self, which has created enormous suffering on the planet, humans inflicting enormous suffering on themselves and on each other for thousands and thousands of years, as long as the ego has been there. So, and that suffering becomes, I'm sure if we could examine the DNA in more detail, we would find that every DNA has also a programming in it that is emotional pain that's simply been inherited.

And this is something that humans, that it is this generation, this presence arises in you can become free of. But nobody, very few human beings are already free of that. Most humans still carry the pain body as an inherited field of emotional pain inside.

Even those who are very conscious already, even if you're no longer resisting what is, you are aligned with the present moment, you're no longer uttering the mantra of the ego, which is no, you live in the yes and in alignment with what is, and yet occasionally you will still experience an influx of emotional pain, sometimes caused by relatively minor things, bringing up enormous amount of either anger or fear or sadness, whatever form your pain body takes. And that's, can easily obscure the arising presence if you don't recognize it.

If you don't recognize it and if you personalize it, then it becomes, the emotional pain that you carry, which is sometimes dormant, sometimes active, when it becomes active, flows into your sense of self, the mind made sense of self. The emotion energizes your mind made sense of me and it's unhappy story. And an unhappy story energized by the pain body becomes extremely unhappy because your human pain is flowing into me and my story.

You don't recognize that it is human pain, you think it's me, the happiness of me and my life and my story is unbearable. And so, and the pain body loves it. The pain body could be also described as the innate tendency, a human addiction to pain because the pain body is a field of emotional pain, which simply means energy, life energy that is not flowing freely, it's tight and stuck, constricted, painful.

I describe it almost as an entity that lives in you, an emotional entity, nothing wrong with that. Everything is an entity, when you think a thought, the thought is also an energy form and an entity for while it lasts. So that is the pain body that humans carry and when it feeds periodically, when it needs more pain, it will move into your mind and control your thinking if you don't recognize it as the pain body when it comes up, often as a reaction to something relatively minor.

When it's ready to come up and feed, its dormant state has come to an end and the pain body enters the active state, which is feeding time. Then what arises is it goes into your thoughts and feeds on your thinking. Your thinking is aligned with the feeling, the very painful feeling that you feel.

So you're feeding the pain body and the pain body loves it and you love your pain because at that moment you've become the pain body temporarily, your sense of self is one with the pain, and it's your painful story, energized by the emotion and you don't know what's going on, you just know it's dreadful and it's feeding also on, it's feeding on your mind and it will attempt to feed on other people around, especially your partner. When it needs the feedback of further pain, push the right buttons, give me pain, please. So after it's in relationships, you can see it in the almost compulsive, acting out periodically of drama, something in both partners needs that, they love it.

Well, the pain body loves it. So this is an addiction one could almost say to pain, the pain body renews itself, then it becomes dormant again for a little while and you can be more present again. So pain body will obscure presence unless you can recognize it for what it is and continue to watch it so that you cut the connection between the emotional field of human pain and your thought processes.

So the pain body is observed directly in your body. This is why another reason why it's so important to enter the body with your attention, to inhabit the body. It is also important for this reason that then you can much more easily be the witnessing presence when the pain body arises and allow it to be because what else can you do?

It is. There is the yes to what is. If what is is pain inside you, anger, fear, sadness, whatever form it takes, this is the isness of this moment and you say, yes, there's the pain and you allow it to be.

By allowing it to be and just watching it almost as a physical thing, you've cut the link between the pain body and your thought processes. The pain body is no longer using your mind and feeding on your thinking. It still has a momentum, of course, but that momentum is no longer added to by your thoughts.

So this is how gradually the energy charge of the pain body becomes weaker. Simply by bringing witnessing presence to it and acceptance and watching that turbulence or watching that heaviness or watching that tightness that you feel. And so that's how gradually the pain becomes transmuted.

The more you bring the presence to it, the more it actually feeds presence. It's like a fire. The energy that was trapped in there, when you bring presence to it, feeds more presence.

And then after a while, you notice every time the pain body comes up, you become very alert. Not that it might still be there for a while, but there's great alertness as it's there. And you watch.

The alertness is actually being fed by it. So the pain body becomes, you could say your teacher. It teaches you, it pushes you into presence, whereas before it pulled you into unconsciousness, identification with it.

And then you observe other pain bodies. Some people don't have the cycle of dormant pain body and active pain bodies. Some people have a pain body that is continuously active.

Some cases just underneath the surface and waiting for an excuse. Or when your pain body is active and you encounter somebody with a pain body that's just underneath the surface waiting, you will get some attack from that person because the pain body recognizes another pain body. It senses the animation in you.

If your pain body is active, you come into contact with a person whose pain body is simply just waiting to be fed. And pain bodies recognize each other very, because other pain bodies recognize themselves and it works. So that's, it's an amazing thing to watch pain body.

You can watch it in other people. You can watch it in your partner and you can watch, you can see the sudden influx of pain body, how the energy field within a few seconds or minutes can become totally transformed of that person. And suddenly they embody the pain and the pain body looks through their eyes at you and it wants trouble.

And any excuse will do. Whatever you say, you cannot utter more than three sentences and you will have said something wrong. And then the pain body will get in there.

And that's wonderful as part of your spiritual practice. What you, when you sense the pain body in yourself becoming active, sometimes triggered by a thought only, sometimes triggered by a little event around you or what somebody else has said, and you watch it and feel other parts of the body that have not been affected by the pain. For hands, sometimes arms, they are still alive.

Your feet, not many pain bodies move into the feet. Your feet are still there. So you have a sense of aliveness around the pain body.

And that becomes part of the spaciousness that I mentioned earlier, that you sense around events, around whatever happens. Whatever happens, happens within the field of spaciousness. And to sense the inner body, pain body tends to be here, solar plexus, stomach, sometimes belly, chest, around here.

And around it, you sense there's still an aliveness. And that kind of holds, that becomes the beginning of the sense of spaciousness around the pain. It's not easy initially with that strong pain to still have a sense of spaciousness around it.

But that is the, comes with the allowing. It is. So no longer, through the, no longer personalizing it.

It's no longer me, the unhappy me. It is not even unhappiness anymore. It's simply pain.

And not even pain. It's simply heaviness, turbulence, tightness. That's what it is.

So this is the beginning of the end of human pain. And what you do in yourself has enormous effect on even on people that you don't come into contact with because whatever happens within one human being affects many others. And there's a, there are collective pain bodies.

There's huge pain bodies still in the collective human psyche. And everybody's personal pain body, the personal aspect that the pain you suffered as a child that added to the pain that was already there when you came into this life form, the pain that your parents had, your parents' pain body, all that is added, of course, to the pain body. And that becomes a personal aspect of pain body.

And then there's an enormous collective aspect. It's, in some places you can sense it even when you enter a city or a country, some certain locations, certain, where people come together or live together, certain have a stronger pain body than others. And sometimes you can sense it all around you, the heaviness of human pain.

Some countries have a heavy collective pain body and every inhabitant, some of their pain body will be part of the collective pain body. So you feel that and you can see how pain body is used by people who want to make money through the media, through films, and you will see that probably 80% of films that they make are designed to feed people's pain body. That's why they're so successful because there's so many pain bodies longing for more pain.

So they go, they pay money to watch pain, humans inflicting pain on others. They pay money to watch that. Who, why do they, who, what in them is it that wants to see that?

There must be something that loves pain, otherwise they wouldn't possibly pay money to watch that. And of course there is something that loves pain in humans. It feeds on that.

And it's not that the people who make these films are evil. What Jesus said, his final words apply here, forgive them for they know not what they do. At least I don't think they do.

They know not what they do. They simply know this is what makes money. So we have a whole industry, large part of which is designed to feed the human pain body.

[Speaker 2] (2:14:40 - 2:14:41)

It's mad.

[Speaker 1] (2:14:47 - 2:34:33)

Once you see it, you can see how mad it is. And they can talk endlessly politicians about we must no longer have all this violence on TV. As long as the pain bodies demand it, it'll be there.

They will no longer make violent films when people stop paying money, when pain bodies have diminished in their energy charge and humans are no longer identified with it. Nobody would want to see these things obviously without the addiction to pain, without the need for further pain. But so this is the beautiful practice of living with your pain body, of allowing it to be there, of bringing witnessing presence to it and a sense of spaciousness around it.

It's okay, it's not that bad. And it's not me, it's human pain. Not my problem, it's not my personal problem, that would be heavy.

If I make human pain, thousands of years of it into my personal problem, oh, that's heavy. So you dissolve human pain in yourself. The only place where you can really dissolve it.

Most of the violence that is being inflicted on humans by other humans is actually pain body violence. That's how it works. So let's welcome even that because it is.

It is. Not resist it, not fight it. It won't go away like that.

Welcome it because the welcoming is a very gentle energy field. Whenever you say yes, there's a gentleness and the pain body is the opposite of yes. The very core of pain body is a big no to life.

It's the emotional part of the egoic state of no to what is, the contraction. So how to become free of the no is to bring the yes into the no. So even that is welcomed in yourself.

And then you often will find it in others, the pain body arising in others. And it requires great presence, not to be drawn into reactivity when a pain body demands to be fed by you. And pain bodies are very clever, very cunning.

They know how they can get you to feed them by reactivity. And it requires great presence not to be drawn into feeding somebody else's pain body. And presence does not mean that you shut yourself off, that you build a wall around yourself and encapsulate yourself and say, your pain body can no longer touch me.

That means you've cut yourself off from that human being. I am beyond pain body now. No, that's not, presence is an openness and the alertness, great intensity of presence, which is alertness, is required to stay present when you're being challenged by somebody's pain body.

If you recognize it, again, it's easier. If you recognize it for what it is, it is easier to say, right, there's the pain body speaking. And then you, if you can be in your body, and here again, how vitally important this is, when you're being challenged by somebody's pain body, if you can be intensely present within the inner body, there's no tension in that, just intense aliveness, every cell present, alert, alive, and there you are.

And that alertness that is throughout your entire being, that's how to face somebody else's pain body. And the alertness never opposes, it is open, and yet it is a frequency that is so much higher than pain body, it's just the pain body cannot touch it. If there's nothing there for the pain body to get into or to be fed by, so that's beautiful practice.

And that, of course, means you're in the state of non-reactivity, pain bodies demand reactivity. If I hit you, will you be kind enough to hit me? Please, you're not suppressing a reaction, it's not that.

If there's not enough presence, you will react. And then you can watch that, so nothing is lost. Watch your reaction, oh, you're already in the middle of shouting something back, and then you watch that.

Oh, I'm feeding his pain body, okay. Then you know, so you're no longer completely trapped in that. And sometimes pain body has, they have their momentum, and even if you know it, it's still playing out its momentum, and you're just the witness in the background.

Well, that's good enough, and gradually, the witness intensifies. And one could almost say that then even the pain body becomes a portal into presence. It looks as if the pain body were a monster standing in front of the portal at first, and yet when it's no longer resisted, when you bring witnessing presence to it, the monster that seems to be standing, blocking the portal, becomes a portal in itself.

And this is why many people with very heavy pain bodies have become free, because they couldn't stand it anymore. I was such a person with an unbearably heavy pain body. And when I said the words that night, which I mentioned briefly in the introduction to the book, I cannot live with myself any longer, the self that I couldn't live with was enormously energized by my pain body.

My pain body was an essential part of that self that I could not live with any longer. And that then, for some reason, dissolved, popped all at once, and what was left was I. Not the self that I couldn't live with anymore.

The I was left. Presence. The story collapsed.

And this is happening to each one of you, not perhaps all at once, that's relatively rare. It sometimes happens by grace, but it is happening increasingly, you become free of identification with the self, that mind-made self, because you don't want that anymore. What remains is I, a sense of simple beingness, I am-ness, a field of alive, spacious presence, alertness, I'm using all these words because each word is a pointer to the same thing, or rather, no thing.

You are the field of alertness, of aliveness. I am, I am presence. And presence is, I usually avoid these words, but presence is divine presence.

Presence is the presence of God in this world. That's what the true nature of presence is. And presence comes through this form.

The presence of God comes through this form. That's the beauty of it. Remember the portals, inner body, silence, the now, really all one, nature, and the involuntary portals, loss, death, diminishment, involuntary portals, and then even the pain body becoming a portal because it pushes you into presence.

It's an adventure. What could be greater than to be part of the transformation of human consciousness? What else could be the purpose of your life?

What could you possibly think of as the purpose of your life, except for the transformation of human consciousness to happen through you, the only true purpose? You're aligned with the purpose of the universe then, the one purpose, the greater purpose, which is consciousness. Consciousness wants to flower.

It's already flowering here in this form, and it wants to flower through humans. Before flowers appeared on the planet, there were millions of years of plant life without flowers. Isn't that amazing?

And one day, the first flower opened. Consciousness manifested suddenly in a new form, the flowering of plant life, and now consciousness manifesting in the flowering of human consciousness. And the rest, what you do on the level of your story doesn't really matter.

What you do doesn't matter, but the energy that flows into it, that matters. How you do it matters. State of consciousness in which you are while you do what you do is what matters, and that transforms what you do.

Or if what you do is not compatible with the arising consciousness, you will be removed from what you do, and there will be something totally new, and that'll happen. Or you will remove yourself. One morning, you wake up and say, I'm removing myself from here.

It could happen. Or life will take you and put you somewhere else. Or you stay where you are.

That's possible, too, and what you are becomes transformed because now what you do is only an excuse, really. The external activity becomes an excuse for something deeper. You just go through the motions, and you do it with care and love, but the love that flows in, the joy, the aliveness, the presence that flows into what you do is the real reason for doing it, and these human beings that you encounter as part of your activity, they're not really encountering them because they want to buy something from you or whatever they do.

That's only the surface. That's only the excuse for your meeting as a transmission, because the good thing is that presence spreads. It transmits itself.

You don't have to do it. It transmits itself. So each one of you becomes a field of presence, not less and less of a person with its heaviness and its problems.

Of course, you have a past, and that's fine, and a little bit of future, that's fine, but something far greater is moving through you, and so instead of walking out of here as a person, you're simply a field of alive, aware presence. That's the S. That's who you are, and you don't have to tell this to anybody in words.

Just be it. That's the teaching. Occasionally, words will come too.

When the moment is right, you will say to somebody, can you feel your inner body? And they will say, what are you talking about? I want you to listen to my problems, and you say, can you feel your hand?

Does it feel alive? And say, oh, yeah, just feel. Oh, yeah, and so gradually, little perhaps with practical things, show them something.

Oh, that's new. So that's the, enjoy the adventure. Don't demand that you should already be perfect, because you are already perfect underneath the story, but I'm saying don't demand that you should be continuously present and then criticize yourself when you're not.

That's the mind again. You should be, by now, you really should. And when that happens, observe it as mental noise.

There is no future state that you need to achieve. When I speak of the transformation of human consciousness, the mind can misinterpret it and say, okay, I need to achieve a state that I'm not in yet. That's, again, that's the error.

You do not need to achieve a state that you're not in yet. Be fully with this moment and immediately your spiritual master, mistress, master, I don't know what they're called. Be completely aligned with this moment, totally, yes.

That's it. Beyond that is nothing that you need to achieve. The spiritual master is totally surrendered to what is, completely one with that.

That's all. Doesn't demand that I should be perfect by now. On the level of form, you will never be perfect.

There'll be little, you have your little idiosyncrasies and this and that. Not to demand I should be totally, totally pure, totally this, totally that. Every form has many limitations.

Those are the limitations of form. That's fine. That's in the nature of form to have many limitations.

It is. That's how it is. So the perfection that is already in you emerges, so to speak, when you give up the search for perfection on a level where you can't find it ever.

What a relief. It's been wonderful to be with you, what really ultimately means with myself. Thank you.

2002-Eckhart Tolle Retreat Essence of NOW 6 Audio CD

[Speaker 2] (0:00 - 0:01)

Lesson one.

[Speaker 1] (0:07 - 1:45:56)

Welcome to our weekend retreat. Retreat, the word comes from Latin, re always means back, treat probably means step back or pull back, step back. You're retreating, not so much from the world because the world is always here, the external world with its limitations, but from the mind.

Step back from the stream of thinking. And there's only one thing to learn here. One thing to get.

And that is a particular state of consciousness. That state of consciousness is free of thought, unlimited, unconditioned, formless. Thought is form.

Identification with thought is identification with form. So we are here to learn, not so much to learn because there's nothing to acquire, to discover within ourselves that state that is already there. That state of pure intelligence prior to thought, before thought arises, after thought has subsided, there is a state that is unconditioned and you can't acquire it or get it in time, in future.

If you look to the future for that state, you'll never get it because it's already there as your natural state, as it's sometimes called. So we are simply allowing that state to emerge, to be there. How?

By entering the stillness that is inseparable from that state. A state of knowing, but not knowing through concepts or labels or images. Pure knowing.

The teaching is not just in the words. The state itself is teaching itself. The state is here and all you have to do is be open to it.

Sitting here for a whole weekend is not interesting to the mind. To the mind it's tedious and boring because there's not enough there to feed it. Not even knowledge.

Our weekend retreat is not knowledge-based. Nobody here needs more knowledge. Nobody here needs to add more content to the accumulation of content that's already in the mind, the human mind.

That is sometimes called a person. It's full of content, ideas, opinions, belief systems. Full.

Some true, some not true. Nothing ultimately true. No thought can be ultimately true.

There's always another polarity. Any statement you make about anybody or anything is only partially true. It's a perspective.

Thought is always a no more than a perspective, a tiny fragment. Thought is always fragmentary. If we are totally identified with thought, we ourselves become fragmented.

The state of wholeness is lost. And we are here for the state of wholeness to emerge. Awareness, consciousness, unconditioned.

And to the mind that is not an interesting topic. Because the mind is form. It's only interested in form.

What can you feed me with? What can I absorb here? Nothing.

So occasionally you may find a wave of restlessness, of impatience, of total absence sweeping over you. And that is the momentum of the mind. Boredom, perhaps.

In boredom, there's a looking for something, but it can't be found. It's a frustrating state. The mind is looking to feed on something, but not finding it.

That's called boredom. And then you will drift off into some dreamland fantasy about past, future, imaginary situations, past situations. See yourself next week back in the office.

At least that's interesting. And then at times, the mind wave may subside. And there's simply, and there's a state now that is not recognizable by thought, is not recognizable by the mind.

So don't look to the mind to get, it can't, to the mind, that state is completely uninteresting. That is the state of simple and pure and still alert awareness. In other words, consciousness without thought.

Not that thought will never operate again. Thought comes out of that, goes back into that. But to know the vastness that is there beyond thought, and then gradually dwell in that.

Rather than dwell in the stream of thinking, you dwell in that unconditioned vastness. And that means quite often you will be walking, sitting, especially sitting here, moving, and there's simply a state of clear, alert presence. And you know without labels.

You know without thought. A deep knowing. That's the unconditioned.

Then thought operates much more beautifully when it operates out of that creative inspiration. And then again, you fall back into the stillness. And it's only a, don't mistake the word for it.

It's vaster than any word. Be still and know that I am God. The most profound statement in the Bible.

Be still and know. So there is a knowing in the stillness. But not knowing according to the mind.

To the mind it is a state of not knowing. To the mind it is a state of ignorance, and it doesn't like it. Because it has no position anymore.

And that's the only state of deep, vibrantly alive peace. That then surrounds whatever happens in your life as a manifestation of form, thought forms, emotional forms, external forms, come and go. And all those are then embedded in a field of stillness and peace.

So much so that field becomes more vital than whatever happens in it. And in other words, we are coming to know what the now means. The deeper meaning of now.

The most enigmatic thing. No thing. The one thing that's always there with you.

It's always now. That is the field in which the entire manifested world happens. And it's consciousness itself.

So during our weekend, one thing to remember is, there's very little here to remember, whatever goes through your mind is thought. And it doesn't really matter that much. Let it arise, if it's there.

Stand back from it, because it's a retreat. Stand back from thought. If you want to get back into thought in the office, that's okay.

But probably after this, you will want to stay back from thought as much as possible. And you see the relativity of all thought, that there's no ultimate truth in any thought. A fragment.

A position or a perspective. If you don't know that, you are trapped in thought. Completely identified with thought.

A mind-based entity. Always looking for more to add to your mind, because it's never enough. The entity is never complete.

No mind-based entity is ever complete. It never feels complete. So there's the search for more to add to the accumulation of content.

More. In whatever form. So whatever thoughts go through your head this weekend, it's only thought.

It's mental noise. Okay. You don't completely believe in it anymore.

It's just a thought. Comes and goes. And we are learning here, as a first step, and the last step is always the same, to perceive the world, sense perception, in a state of such clarity and alertness that the labeling process of thought does not arise around the perception.

There's the key. If you can look, no matter what you're looking at, you can look at this form sitting here on the chair, you can look at any other form, look at the flower, at a tree, the sky, a chair, it doesn't matter what, you can look in a field of stillness without the need to label. At some point perhaps the label will come.

Even if the field of stillness is only there for two or three seconds, it's good enough. There's a depth to your perception which before wasn't there. Because there's no depth in thought.

If you look at something and immediately the mind labels it, which is the normal state, there's no depth. You're mistaking the labels for its pseudo-knowledge. You could know, you look at a tree, you know the name of the tree, and now you think you know what it is.

Just because there's a little sound attached to the sense perception, that little sound, which can be internal, or you speak it, or you hear it in your head, is mistaken for knowing what that is. Everything is totally shallow when you're trapped in labels. And that's the normal state of consciousness.

The world is not alive. A world of deadened conceptualization. For everything there's a little noise in the head.

And so the aliveness, the depths, and the miraculous nature of the universe gets covered up by that. Not only the universe of yourself. You do it to yourself.

You have a set of viewpoints, and perspectives, and opinions, and beliefs about who you are. Partly feeding on what the world around you tells you who you are. Not good enough, the greatest, the most miserable, for most people it's in between, they fluctuate.

So you get trapped in a conceptualized reality, a conceptualized sense of self. And that, in its essence, means not knowing who you are. When you live in and through a conceptualized sense of self, consisting of thoughts and images about me and my story.

And the roles that I play, which is more thought, identifying with that. Concepts in the head. And the whole of the aliveness of the world around you, and the depths of who you are beyond the deadening world of concepts is completely unknown to you then.

And then the rest of your life is in the service of improving and adding to the delusion of a conceptualized sense of self. I need to strengthen that delusion. So I'm looking for more to add to the delusion of who I am, to make it a little bit better, more secure, bigger.

Add a bit more to me. New beliefs, new this, new that. And it is surprising if that is the normal human state of consciousness, that human history is so mad.

Such insanity, not just history, just switch on the TV, which, by the way, I recommend that you don't do this weekend, to learn about the insanity, the extreme manifestations of insanity, whoever, the terrorists, the scientists, manufacturers, chemical weapons, biological, all madness everywhere. They're just extreme forms. It's the same form of madness wherever you look.

And they're all looking for themselves, for completion. Never find it. So there's a pseudo-knowledge of mind.

And this is fine for practical purposes. It works quite well. We needed a little bit of mind to meet here.

It's useful to speak, too, to communicate, although there are other ways of communicating. When the mind, when you know the stillness that is prior to mind as the ground of being, then the mind is quite helpful, as it is helpful at this moment. It comes out of that still ground.

The words that come out of that have a certain quality, a certain aliveness, very different from words that come out of the mental accumulations stored up stuff in the mind that's repetitive, not alive. So even what the mind produces has an aliveness because you know that depth of stillness. As you speak, you sense that.

It speaks. You don't speak. So it begins with a simple thing like sitting here and listening in a state of such receptivity and alertness that little or no thought arises.

And then, now that I say that, perhaps the mind comes in and says, Oh, yes, there I was without thought. That's okay. The next step in human evolution and our gathering here, small as it may be, is part of that.

The next step in human evolution is rising above thought because we cannot stay in thought. It's mad. It's become mad and self-serving, a vicious circle.

If we stay trapped in thought, we would destroy ourselves because the madness of that state has now become more and more apparent and increasing madness. And that is because humans are approaching an evolutionary transition. And when you come to the end of one evolutionary stage, that stage of evolution which is thought, to be totally identified with thought is a stage of human evolution.

And when you reach the end of that stage as we are now, that state becomes and appears more and more dysfunctional. Just as the caterpillar just before it becomes a butterfly becomes dysfunctional as a caterpillar. Whereas before there was nothing wrong with caterpillars.

They were fine. Thought was fine. So there's nothing wrong from the highest and deepest perspective.

There's nothing wrong with even the madness on the planet. It is part of the evolution. But we need to recognize it as madness that is part of the caterpillar recognizing that it's come to the end of an evolutionary stage.

So you need to recognize how mad your own mind is. The never-ending stream of thought. 95% of it completely useless and futile.

The rest 5% is helpful to deal with practical things. And then you have a civilization that thrives on mental vibrations. All the media, the TVs, noise, noise, noise.

And madness is not a personal matter. When I say your mind is insane I'm not making a statement about you as a person because it's not your mind. It's the human mind manifesting through this form.

So there's really not a person there at all. That sense of person is part of inhabiting a conceptualized sense of self that's the person. The person is concepts in the head.

So what is changing now as we move beyond identification with thought a totally new sense of identity arises. We have lived in a sense of identity or self that's been delusional. Self delusion or the delusion of self.

Self is the conceptualized sense of self. I'm using slightly different words. Even 2600 years ago the Buddha recognized the primary delusion as the self.

In other words, a false sense of self. That was the beginning of a new stage in human evolution. It looks a long time ago, 2600 years and we still haven't made it.

Even 2600 years ago he talked about it and we're still not there. That's very little time. He was a flower, an early flower of consciousness.

And then a few more here and there. And then the mind came in and looked at the flowers and said, oh, I wonder what that is all about. Flowers of consciousness.

And then it made it into belief structures and further conceptualization and then it became philosophies huge volumes theology and organized religion. The saving grace about organized religion is at the core of it there's often a little jewel, a light shining through. Often you can't see it anymore but at the core of it there is the original flower whether it be Buddhism or Christianity or any Hindu teachings there yes, it's there heavily covered up by mind stuff.

And mind stuff means you derive your sense of self from that conceptualized world the egoic sense of self so religion is in the service of strengthening the egoic sense of self instead of leading to the realization of oneness which is the original teaching unity, unitive realization of oneness which is love instead of that it does the opposite it's separative it creates a me and the other and the enemy and the egoic sense of self likes that it feels stronger when it has an enemy so the religions, they need their enemies the other religion they're fighting not even the other religion even within the religion they're fighting all part of the madness and so we are coming to the end of that and it starts with a simple thing sitting here or in your room or in the restaurant or walking and being able to look without the arising of labels the mind says, no you can't do that that's pointless two seconds is enough if then the label comes ok, then you know it's only a label and then perhaps it subsides again and there's more space or spaciousness around the perception the spaciousness in which the perception happens and then perhaps another label comes another thought, and that subsides and then you may find yourself walking from here to the door in a state of clarity and stillness and an amazing thing when you can be with another human being in that state of spacious stillness then you are bringing the new consciousness here it comes through you into this world, so to speak and all it requires is when you listen to somebody you listen from stillness just listen as a little anchor for that state I often recommend sensing the aliveness in your body that takes your attention away from the stream of thinking so as you sit here sensing that the body is alive not thinking about the body is alive but feeling the aliveness that is in every cell of the body and as you have some attention in there that is the anchor for staying present then it's easier to sit here if you sense that and perceive free of thought rooted within and listen free of thought be careful, thought will try to make this into some kind of future goal some kind of future aim to achieve where you need to get to and then it will get frustrated because it can't get there it's not a state that we need to achieve that state is already within you that's a miracle so it simply emerges so to speak every word is never totally true it can't be every word I say is a little pointer it's not the totality the state emerges it's already there because it's the unconditioned consciousness thought is the conditioned thousands and thousands of years of conditioning thousands and thousands of years of delusion but the good news is it doesn't take thousands of years to get out of the delusion it does not take time to get out of the delusion the mind doesn't like that it says, what, no time? it can't be true surely it must take considerable time and effort to get up what, you're telling me no time? I've been meditating for 30 years for nothing?

I have accumulated all that merit and here I am with people sitting with people next to me for whom the Power of Now was the first spiritual book they ever read and you are saying I'm not further along the path than this person yeah, that's quite possible the transformation of consciousness is not a cumulative thing where you accumulate merit or points or whatever they do at university and finally you make it if it were that neat and tidy that would be great but it isn't or in fact it wouldn't be great it can happen at any moment to anyone even the criminal in prison it can happen to him and sometimes it does and it may not happen to the monk in his cell who's been meditating for 30 years or it may and you can be very wrong you can look at a person and say well, she surely won't make it this lifetime you could be very wrong or about yourself feeling either that you are worthy or you are not worthy two delusions you make yourself special in both cases you make yourself special in your worthiness and you make yourself special in your unworthiness surely I don't deserve that there are so many better people than me further conceptualization a further strengthening of the delusional sense of self the delusional sense of self will feed on anything good or bad conceptualize the miserable me the greatest me doesn't matter whatever it can get hold of it will take that, identify with that so here we are becoming familiar with that if we call it state every word, don't get attached to any word we're becoming familiar with that state and that is a state that is free of the psychological need for future in the normal state of consciousness the conceptualized sense of self there is an enormous need for future which implies I'm not complete, I need more and of course I need the future to give me the more to add to who I am so there is this enormous psychological need for future that drives everybody in that state that drives an entire civilization why are they all running around? Hong Kong, New York, wherever they need to get to the future as fast as possible of course they have their different things if you stop them and ask where are you going they say I'm going there and there I need to get there, don't talk to me now but it all comes down to they are rushing towards the future every human being is being pulled continuously into future and that creates of course a mad civilization and it's so normal that nobody questions it anymore everybody is rushing towards the future because there is a psychological need for completion in the future where I complete my conceptualized never enough sense of self so the psychological need for future comes to an end not that future no longer has its place in the practical realm we have future here we know that tomorrow we are going to meet here unless we don't nothing is certain probably tomorrow we are going to meet here and probably on Sunday eventually we will go home there is future there probably you will go to bed at some point tonight future in the practical realm is fine we needed it to meet here would have been difficult otherwise to get together it was future and now it's now ok, it works like that it functions in this realm phenomenal realm it's necessary I even have a watch sometimes people say you have a watch Mr. Power of Now as a watch that can't be right but that's only clock time or watch time quite helpful, I don't keep people waiting I can be there in time we are talking about psychological time this is the drive that pulls you towards future psychologically and that comes to an end and then of course you live in a state of presence that is another little word the new state of consciousness is a state of presence the old state of consciousness one could call a state of absence because you are trapped in conceptualization presence and you don't need future psychologically to complete yourself and with that comes an enormous ease to be where you are I'm already home for years lifetimes maybe I've been running towards home looking for not knowing that the place I'm actually at home in the now the now is my home people have been looking to the future for their home by home I mean a sense of deep sense of aliveness and completion and fulfillment being fully yourself being fully maybe let's leave out the yourself being, the state of being to be and you look to the future to get to being being is inseparable from now nothing can be that's not now how could it? so home that completion is already here, now on the deepest level there's nothing you can add to you and nothing that matters you can add lots of things that don't really matter that much that's fine, that works in the phenomenal realm you can learn a new skill, you can learn a new language you can explore new countries you can add this or that to the content of your mind in the phenomenal realm that's fine, you can and why not add it's part of living in the phenomenal realm where these things happen you add and then of course you lose and some things come and some things leave you but none of that really matters whether you acquire this great skill what matters means it cannot complete you you cannot find yourself through it in that sense it doesn't matter if you're looking to yourself through this or that acquisition that's further delusion it never works you never find that completion you can become the greatest this or that and if you meet the greatest this or that and talk to them you'll find they're not complete they wake up in the middle of the night in a state of fear the one thing that matters on that deepest level you are already yourself the completion is already here you are home in the now living in that way imagine a totally different world would be created out of that state of consciousness you can't even imagine what form that world would take nor am I asking you to imagine it it would be very different from the world that the mind has created so that's the greatest news you don't need to look for yourself not even here in the sense of you're sitting here and trying to acquire something or add something you'll be frustrated on Sunday you'll go home in frustration I haven't added anything to me the good thing is that many humans are now becoming ready for the emergence of that state of consciousness you can't make it happen you can't make it happen you can allow it to happen that's why we're here we're not making it happen we're allowing it to happen how are we allowing it to happen? we're allowing it to happen by allowing this moment to be as it is allowing this moment the only one to be as it is that means allowing that state to emerge that is also true surrender the deepest meaning of surrender and surrender is the key not surrender where the mind says no I don't want to surrender I want to triumph true surrender is the key and true surrender means simply people talk about surrender to God how? what does he want?

or maybe it's a she how do I surrender to God? and then thoughts will come into your head and say this is God speaking and then doubt arises maybe it's not God at all this is the madness surrender to God means allow this moment to be as it is embrace it welcome it action may happen then through you but you allow the isness which is the totality expressing itself as this moment the form that this moment takes could not be otherwise the totality of the universe has brought it about everything is totally interconnected so this moment could not be otherwise but the conceptualized sense of self lives in opposition to it it strengthens itself through its opposition to the isness of this moment the self grows through every reaction against what is the self the illusory self strengthens itself it loves its reactivity and in that reactivity there is a contraction in that contraction the illusion of self gets stronger and then you are against it no matter what happens it's the now and you don't like it you're trying to get somewhere else to the future madness and sanity arising allowing this is a revolutionary way of living allowing this moment to be as it is completely totally aligned internally aligned with the isness of now because since it is now it could not be otherwise the universe has brought about the form that this moment takes so who are you to fight it so you become aligned you don't become lethargic and all that, the mind says nothing will ever change I'm going to sit in my armchair or couch potato for the rest of my life I will become a couch potato if I allow this moment to be as it is but that's not the case it's a very dynamic state it is an uncompromising yes to what is dynamic, not passive and that also takes you to the end of incessant thinking and identification with thinking because if you look at thought activity a lot of the compulsive nature of thought is to do with not allowing this moment to be as it is a lot of the mental noise and the compulsion to think continuously is to do with denying trying to get away from being in opposition to the now and so allowing this moment to be as it is, is a little it's a doorway into the state of spaciousness stillness that is prior to thought compulsive thinking is not compatible with allowing this moment to be as it is so simple so the mind wants to create a problem and say how do I get to that state I'm not there allow this moment to be as it is and no matter what form it takes that changes continuously and more often than not the form that this now takes as an appearance of a situation a person, a condition more often than not you will encounter some limitation in the now something will come in and you allow that to be as it is the body itself is a limitation so you might catch this or that situation is never totally as it should be as the mind says something always gets in there to spoil it any situation something, at first it works for a little while and something has to get in there to spoil it that's what the world is for to frustrate you not to fulfill you in the course of this weekend of course there will be time perhaps for questions maybe tomorrow not that any question matters that much use the time that you're not here as much as possible be aligned with now yes, bring the yes to the now observe the psychological need for future when it arises observe identification with mind when you talk to somebody and you are now going to express your opinion your viewpoint, your mental position and observe identification with that mental position and just watch that oh, hmm allow that to be allowing is so wonderful because allowing brings about the spaciousness before there was only the thing that happened there was only the thought that you were identified with there was only the situation that you reacted against and that filled your whole life and now, yes, there is still a thought there is still a situation perhaps but the allowing of it creates something not doesn't create it makes you aware of a space around whatever happens a peace around whatever happens through simply allowing this moment there is suddenly a spaciousness around events around even difficult people most people are difficult Jean-Paul Sartre went so far as to say hell is other people he hadn't looked at his own mind so through allowing there is suddenly a sense of space around and that is the space of pure awareness unconditioned consciousness the ground of all being and that's who you are not the little self in the head be still and know who you are and don't look for the stillness that creates another problem it's already here allow this moment to be as it is if it's totally noisy what, there's no stillness, I want stillness allow the noisy moment if it is noisy to be as it is allow the turbulent moment to be as it is, the turbulence in whatever form it takes instead of standing in a reactive relationship to the turbulence and thereby strengthening your own illusory form identity allow the turbulence to be and sense the spaciousness that's around it there's peace around it so you could be in the midst of mayhem and completely mad environment through completely allowing suddenly there would be peace and the strange thing is first that peace is encountered as an inner phenomenon but eventually that peace does something even to the situation that you totally accept it that's miraculous so our practices this weekend are very simple they are so simple that the mind would say well, that's not enough the spiritual practice is that allowing this moment to be as it is see if you can be and perceive, perceive without labels and the strange thing is that's already in almost everybody here you're already doing it but it's a little bit so short that you don't quite catch it and the mind comes in after a second or two whenever you look at something that suddenly comes into your field of vision something new suddenly arises for a second or two you're simply looking then some kind of interpretation comes in learn from the cat when a cat walks now a cat can teach you, like any animal can teach you to be free of thought the cat is pre-thought you are moving post-thought, beyond thought nevertheless, the state that is free of thought which is a state of connectedness with the totality unproblematic the cat's state of consciousness is unproblematic the liberated human state of consciousness is unproblematic only the mind-identified state is problematic very problematic and very heavy so animals can teach you although we're not going back to that we go beyond thought but we meet the animal in that state of connectedness to the totality watch how a cat walks when a cat enters new territory goes up the hill or around a corner how it looks it just looks, there's no mental labels and then it usually does the right thing it either doesn't go further or it does and then it walks it's not in a hurry then it stops beautiful no problems, no conceptualized sense of self no role-playing no psychological need for future or the bird, how it moves flies, looks, totally present so that is the state of no mind we are moving beyond mind the animal is pre-mind although television is very useful if you want to learn about human madness I recommend that you don't switch on your television this weekend unless it's a spiritual practice needless to say alcohol would not be advisable while you're here it can too easily pull you back into mind and unconsciousness when you're completely conscious when it's completely emerged that state, it doesn't matter anymore not that you would drink very much so you refrain from that newspapers, no are you missing something important, no books, well perhaps reading one page or two pages in a book that has come out of presence is okay not a book that feeds your mind a book that when you open it up you read a page, half a page even a few lines and immediately you enter the state of presence those are the kinds of books that you could occasionally open if you have one but other kinds are not needed this weekend eventually you will be your budget, book budget will become greatly curtailed when you don't need to buy useless books anymore you just go into the book shop and open a book and read a few lines and then you'll know we will also have some periods of stillness or silence, noble silence and I would suggest that nothing here is compulsory this is a very easy meditation retreat not a boot camp I would suggest that you refrain from speaking for the rest of the evening just a suggestion when you go to bed, connect with the inner body you lie on your back instead of being in here in thought, in the head sense the entire energy field of the body as you lie there no problems there so attention is taken away from thought some thoughts will come here and there it's presence every cell of the body participates in the state of presence present with every cell of the body alive and then at some point you may go to sleep from that state and when you wake up in the morning first thing, connect with the inner body and stay there for a while when you talk to people at breakfast listen, sense the inner body as you listen so that you can listen in the state of stillness what a gift that spaciousness you're receiving that other human being seemingly other human being in the field of spacious stillness perhaps you'll say something suddenly words will come out of your mouth out of that state some people noticed that more often than not when we have retreats the weather is bad it's amazing most of the time that seems to be the case often it improves on the last day one or two people said that not until the last person surrenders totally does the weather improve bad weather, so called bad weather there's nothing really bad about it is more helpful for all purposes than good weather bad weather means nothing to do, can't go anywhere here we are trapped no TV even no newspapers this is dreadful and I came, says the mind half way around the world in some cases to be trapped here in this place in bad weather I was looking for spiritual experience unlimited realization and what do I find limitation wherever I look could be worse you could be in a Zen monastery sitting there facing a wall meditating meditating or sitting in front of a bare wall in an unheated room on an empty stomach extreme limitation but this is enough what we have here why is that helpful bad weather and we can expand that bad weather, using the term metaphorically most people have become liberated at a time of bad weather in a wider sense not of sunshine and all wonderful and great and let's have some fun and let's have a good time and go out there they didn't become liberated when they've just won 10 million dollars US in the lottery maybe more likely when the bad weather came and they lost their 10 million dollars a lot of people's motivation in life is to escape from limitation and continuously they encounter more limitation because they are here as a body that's already a limitation they were born as a body and no matter what situation you go into where you go sooner or later and often sooner you encounter some form of limitation and that's to do with moving in this world of form as a form now many people believe that enough money would eventually free them from limitation because you can hop on a plane go anywhere, do anything buy anything and so if they achieve that sooner or later some other form of limitation will come into their lives to do with a physical body to do with relationships to do with the world of form that takes up all their attention because they have to keep their money making going so the search for freedom through that can in itself become an extreme limitation the very thing that you were seeking to make you free keeps you in bondage you become involved in business enterprise the aim is freedom of course, unlimited being knowing yourself as that and then you get trapped more and more so you can continuously watch as you move here as a physical form how you encounter different kinds of limitations in life and what do you do with the mind it seeks to escape from it because the limitation is encountered in the field of now and the mind therefore seeks to escape from that it seeks a future that is free of limitation when the future comes it comes as the now with its limitations of form that's not taught at school the most primordial fact of human existence nobody seems to know it so if you are continuously running away from limitation into the future that becomes very frustrating you never get there how do you know yourself as unlimited which is in essence who you are consciousness unlimited finding itself suddenly trapped in this little physical form surrounded by other forms that impinge upon this form other physical bodies, structures, weather and everywhere you knock into something and so that is called suffering and why is it when you go to a say a monastery or whatever kind often they impose even more limitations on you can't do this, can't do that food limitations drink limitations, sleep limitations dress limitations relationship limitations sexual limitations what is a little known fact the limitations that are part of being here as a form are potentially that which takes you beyond form not seeking to run away from them when they come to embrace them fully I sometimes use the expression surrender to what is more often than not what is is some form of limitation so surrender to the isness of this moment which is the form that this moment takes which is because it is form some limitation so to seek for your unlimited essential nature away from the world of limitations of form doesn't seem to work because you would continuously be projecting an ideal state to be achieved that you want to reach never quite getting there that ideal state of enlightenment or liberation eludes you liberation ahh and what is a little known fact is liberation is not outside of the world of form some imaginary realm of perfection but the doorway into liberation is precisely through the limitations of the world of form otherwise the universe would be some malevolent place that is here to make your life difficult if not impossible and it's not it's not fair wherever I go there's something that's not right that limits me it's not fair God must be enjoying the suffering but the purpose in all that is liberation the hidden within the limitations that you encounter is the doorway and so I use the expression surrender a slightly different perspective on this an early 20th century teacher used the expression suffer consciously suffer consciously if you can't surrender totally which would be the end of suffering at least you can suffer consciously say yes to the suffering if suffering arises it could be a physical condition it could be you're trapped somewhere take an extremely simple example you are in a lift, elevator to some of you and suddenly air stops in between floors a relatively insignificant example of limitation unless you run out of air and it's the time of your death and it becomes more significant you're trapped in an elevator of course you take the necessary steps to get out you ring the bell maybe there's no answer and there you are fear perhaps arises contraction is there enough air in here how long can I survive in here and then suffering that's one form of limitation and how do you bring consciousness to that it means you accept the condition, internal and external of that moment, including the pain, whatever form it is that you feel and face it and embrace it fully not wanting to run away from it the very fear your heart beating you're suffering consciously and that's an enormous change, the whole situation is now generating inside of you is generating consciousness the resistance is being transmuted into awareness, consciousness that's amazing it's through the trap it's actually the doorway what looks like the greatest obstacle in your life is the greatest doorway and if in some people's lives there seem to be many little and major, little and not so little obstacles, all kinds of things that impinge upon you in other people's lives they may encounter at some point in their life one big limitation it could have something to do with your body it could have something to do with your life situation or your finances losing everything, your home some big limitation in your life suddenly and that goes on for a long time that is the one overriding limitation in your life it looks the one thing that is making your life miserable and unprofitable and you can't get out of it that is the potential that is the real doorway suffer consciously so it's through totally accepting the limitations of form when they come that you know yourself as the formless one that is beyond form formless consciousness form is there to drive you to that state of surrender form is not there to please you to make your life happy if you've lived for long enough you will know that no form can do that for very long make your life happy make you happy no person no condition no situation no place can do that for long and for some people it's the physical body for others it's their financial condition for others it's relationships that appear appear as the greatest limitation so in a Zen monastery what life really does to you here to everybody they try to intensify that because they have seen the mechanism how liberation works it works through encountering extreme limitation and then total surrender suffer consciously or surrender totally so they want to produce a situation where you encounter extreme limitation facing a wall cold, hungry, nothing to do normally this would lead to feeling very miserable and many people in Zen monasteries are feeling very miserable and rarely it works even there it's rare the greatest obstacle is although the setting is right the greatest obstacle is there's somebody sitting here who wants to achieve a particular state there's somebody sitting here who wants to get somewhere and he or she is the obstacle the situation is already ideal for liberation but then there's somebody here who wants something still wants something and so even there it's rare you may have seen some people in India sadhus who impose extreme limitations on themselves at first it looks a bit mad some may be mad they might stand on one leg for 10 years one hasn't lowered his left arm in 12 years whatever it is self-imposed extreme forms of limitation suffering and at first sight it looks, this is mad, why are they doing this and occasionally even there, rarely that can also work rarely because usually there's somebody who builds an identity around it another conceptualized sense of self is the sadhu, me but this if the extreme limitation is totally embraced suddenly you know yourself is unlimited this enormous, vast, deep peace that comes with that that is the state of non-resistance to the limitations internally externally you do what you have to do you're in the lift and you press the button to get out but in the meantime you're there that's the reality of this moment non-resistance and there's a stream of enormous power suddenly so especially on this retreat welcome all the limitations and most of them will be little although one or two people are unwell here so there's a little bit more of a limitation this body itself wasn't well yesterday and today is recovering another limitation and welcome whatever form limitation you encounter in this moment thank you the more the better, but you don't need to say that it does not matter it does not mean that you lose balance in your life that you now become totally passive you are still here as this form and as a form identity yes, you can try to improve your life you can try to learn new things you can explore new things improve your life situation your home your job your skills there's nothing wrong with that the only thing where it doesn't work is to fulfill you never for long and no matter where you improve your life and how you improve your life this is fine everywhere you encounter some new form of limitation once you know that it doesn't matter anymore, it's fine oh, here's another limitation it will come your very success will limit you in some other way I encountered the same as this form years ago all the teaching was very personal I answered the phone people would talk to me I would talk to them for an hour on the phone one on one people could come at any time then the phone started ringing more and more and I realized the limitations of this form if I answer all the phone calls I'll be on the phone 24 hours a day and then people wanting to see me alone more and more and if I see them all, it's impossible there's the limitations of this form there were other limitations then there was no money I couldn't travel from here to there I had to stay in one place I couldn't buy a computer to write my book not even a second hand one not that I would have known how to use it but I might have learned so the book had to be written with a pen that was fine but people said, how can you do that it would be so much easier if you had just a computer to do so much well, that was the limitation and then when you move into another situation the teaching has expanded it's expanding continuously but as a form identity the very expansion will confront you with other limitations your very so-called success becomes a limitation in another field and that is inescapable as long as you are here as a physical form doesn't mean do nothing anymore no, go and do explore phenomenal existence the dance of it participate in the dance of phenomenal existence it never stops but know its limitations realize the realm of the unlimited is not to be found here it's within and whereas before the world of form was a frustrating place as you now accept the limitations of form it becomes quite a pleasant place quite nice not a place that can excite you I've made it and then, oh no gain and loss no, quite pleasant ok the dance of form, they come and go but your the greatest spiritual teaching teacher that you have is the limitations that you encounter you encounter them anyway and when you sense perhaps for the first time an incredible inner freedom from outer conditions let's go back to the simple or trivial example of being stuck in a lift and suddenly you say totally yes to that moment perhaps there's still a wave of suffering and that is faced totally and suddenly there's an enormous sense of spaciousness and freedom and a sweetness and a peace and there you are in this little box and you smile

[Speaker 2] (1:45:58 - 1:45:59)

wow

[Speaker 1] (1:46:02 - 3:26:18)

this is strange the mind won't understand that how can I be so joyful in this situation and I've seen people in wheelchairs who couldn't move a limb anymore who had surrendered and there was a light shining through their eyes no suffering entity left their greatest limitation became the doorway into freedom freedom ultimately from external conditions so embracing suffering consciously surrendering or embracing suffering consciously erodes the false conceptualized sense of self in you it is a resistant sense of self it cannot survive when there is non-resistance the egoic sense of self it's so simple and people say how do I get free of ego you get free of ego now this moment embrace it whatever form it takes embrace it internally and externally embrace what is externally and internally welcome it that's the end of ego that's the end of the false self the end of self in Buddhist terms that's all so the end of ego, the end of self is now can only be now not some future state to be achieved through hard work but because really the ego gets back in there and says I need to achieve to become the biggest liberated and most enlightened ego in the world I have a younger half-brother he is in his early thirties and as he was growing up we would occasionally meet we never lived together but I would often see him once or twice a year I could see how his ego developed how his sense of self became more and more rigid because he had to play roles in life he thought there was no other way so he became more and more identified with the roles he was playing and the rigidity came in and an uncontinuous unease normal in other words normal existence but I could just observe how that grew and then he didn't want to get into relationships it's too complicated don't want to know I'm beyond that didn't want to get too involved in life either no, I'll stand back I'll just do what I have to do and then suddenly he encountered a huge serious illness in his late twenties life threatening so an enormous limitation was suddenly there the operation was successful but the operation left behind certain dysfunctions in the body so that although the operation was successful he now wakes up almost every night in the middle of the night he wakes up in acute abdominal pain because they had to rearrange his intestines somehow they don't fit together anymore so well so almost every night he's awake for 2 or 3 hours in extreme pain and they can't do anything about it and that goes on and on and then I met him again not long ago, in December and a change had come over him there was a simplicity and a sweetness and an openness where was his ego? it was on its way out the rigidity was gone there was great openness and lightness and then he told me about the pain and then I knew that that pain was his teacher and at some point he must have started to surrender to it and it's in other words he suffered consciously when you surrender to suffering you suffer consciously and that very quickly eroded the ego the false self it cannot survive when you suffer consciously when you surrender for some people that's the teacher it might be physical pain miracles of healing also happen when total surrender happens so it may go away a point may come when suddenly it's gone because it served its purpose and it's gone in the meantime it's there and it works as a physical vehicle you will never escape the limitations as the physical form the Buddha, so the story goes died of food poisoning and that must be true because it's not a flattering story there are many legends around the life of the Buddha that came over the centuries to make him into a supernatural super human being but this is so unflattering that it must be true because he was a human being who achieved liberation and yet there were the limitations of the physical form still there it didn't matter anymore I believe the story even says that he knew that this food was no good that somebody offered and yet he said yes again there's a little symbolic teaching here I'm not saying do that embracing suffering consciously and what other is the image of Jesus on the cross the very central image of Christianity is to embrace at first it's an extreme form of limitation the most extreme you could possibly envisage to be nailed to a cross the most extreme form of human limitation and then there is the total surrender there's the conscious totally conscious suffering total acceptance of that limitation pointed to in the words I surrender well it's not my will but thy will be done the will of the totality not me, a little me and so whether you're a Christian or not doesn't matter I'm saying there is wisdom embodied in the central image of Christianity and that is suffer consciously the most extreme limitation is the doorway so the cross is the symbol of torture but also the symbol of freedom of the divine they have taken the worst thing that seems the worst obstacle and made it into a symbol for both liberation and bondage one not separate so that wisdom could not be expressed in words nobody would have understood now people do but a thousand years, two thousand years ago if you had said liberation and bondage are one they would have said what's that, what's bondage, what's liberation the wisdom was embodied in the image and it's very powerful so there is a transcendent truth there too, it's everywhere wherever you look that is the truth and so there is an expression Jesus used the expression take up your cross and follow me follow me is go the same way as me enter the same state of consciousness take up your cross willingly I would add that's what he said it's not there, they forgot that word take up your cross willingly and then you follow me take up your crosses, embrace suffering as it arises and then it's transmuted suffering becomes consciousness limitation becomes the unlimited so here unfortunately we only have very small forms of limitation bad weather it's clearing up as we surrender another strange thing that happens is with complete acceptance of limitations they change very quickly they only stay around as long as you resist them and then they go away and then perhaps at some point another one comes life always will test you so to speak but as you surrender the biggest limitation very often dissolves but that's not why you surrender then it doesn't work because you want it to go away healing the most powerful healer is the state of surrender does not mean you surrender to the idea that you are ill a conceptualized idea in the head you simply surrender to the form that this moment takes pain, discomfort, vomiting whatever it is that's the form that this moment takes and it is and healing happens quickly through that a byproduct no more so conditions in your life are always ideal for spiritual practice always in the now surrender takes you beyond suffering as long as there is suffering bring consciousness to it it's a very powerful practice the person who used that expression for the first time was called Gurdjieff early 20th century teacher who used that expression suffer consciously and he was a strange man did strange things he made people work for hours on end digging a hole and then filling it up again and then digging another hole that was the way he was teaching to suffer consciously that's not my way fortunately use what life brings to you that's enough if you seek out suffering the ego is back in some subtle way it wants something through it so use what life brings to you in this moment and accept beautifully put I quote him in the book the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius who lived 2000 years ago one of the rare examples of enlightened rulers or kings he wrote he said accept all that comes to you woven in the pattern of your destiny for what could more aptly fit your needs accept all that comes to you woven in the pattern of your destiny woven as a fabric of interconnectedness of the whole and the form that this moment takes is the only form it could take for you at this moment it is the whole expressing itself as this at this moment the totality including the whole of the past history has brought this moment about so there is a web of interconnectedness that's what he meant woven in the pattern of your destiny and this this now is part of the web of interconnectedness of the entire universe for what could more aptly fit your needs than whatever is happening at this moment there is a total correspondence between what you need and what is happening to you laughing oh no this can't be right no no there's one spiritual teacher who she taught me she developed a new mantra that she teaches her students and that mantra is this too this also this too whatever appears is included in the surrender practice otherwise the mind would come in and say everything but not this this too as things arise this too beautiful mantra and then what arises is the state of peace alive peace that is freedom from good and bad out there the fluctuations of the world of form and the limitations alive the peace that you cannot understand through the mind and it's come not because limitations left you that peace is not the true peace if you have for a little while in your life limitations leave you and you feel great that could be mistaken for enlightenment you say I'm enlightened now I made 20 million dollars US of course everything is going well my life is flowing freely I can go anywhere, do anything I'm happy every morning for a little while you could fool yourself and then some form of limitation will come in so it is caused by some temporary relief of no limitation for a little while and then you feel great of course that's not it it comes in the midst of limitation and it often comes in the midst of loss which is another form of limitation you lose something that was important to your sense of self you lose possessions that were important to your sense of self you lose status in society that was important for your conceptualized sense of self, very painful I'm nobody, suddenly I was somebody now I'm nobody or you lose certainty your philosophical system in the head suddenly doesn't explain the universe anymore somebody close to you dies that wasn't supposed to happen some suffering comes in some loss comes in and you can't, for some people it happens when there's collective disaster September the 11th collective disaster and suddenly we can't have explanations anymore how do we explain how does it fit into my philosophy so that could collapse also in the face of loss loss or extreme limitation disaster or death which is everywhere part of human existence in the face of that systems of explanation belief systems even suddenly don't work anymore so there's a loss of that some religious people lose their belief when suddenly something drastically goes wrong in their lives I don't believe in God anymore I had a contract with God I went to church every Sunday and he was supposed to look after me there was no disaster wasn't supposed to happen loss is not supposed to happen I signed the contract with God but it doesn't work it's a very limited and childish way of relating to God you can't relate to God anyway because you are the divine so something suddenly is the loss that which gave you your sense of self goes shaky first it's shaky and then crumbles the greatest blessing in your life is that that which is regarded as the greatest curse that which everybody everybody fears that someday I will have to face that of course you will someday, great loss, great limitation I'm going to have to face that yes, this is the physical vehicle at some point it will crumble it'll wither like a flower and then and the whole construct of your life situation also with it the story of me suddenly winds down the film has come to an end and probably not a happy ending just suddenly somebody cuts the greatest that which everybody fears great loss is the greatest opening if you know what to do with it so you work on all levels on the little levels, even of bad weather and then larger things, larger limitations that come to you continuous if you work on the small levels with bringing surrender and acceptance or suffer consciously then the larger will be very much easier when they come they may not even come in drastic forms anymore because life only gives you what you need and here you involuntarily embrace the end of the false self as you sit here you came here voluntarily even if somebody dragged you here somehow you must still have said on some level OK, I'll come and this is a voluntary embrace of what otherwise people only encounter through disaster great limitation severe loss that which redeems humans from the human condition is that which is considered very bad and you can see again how good and bad are one the cross, good, symbol of bondage symbol of liberation, one Shakespeare pointed out nothing is either good or bad but thinking makes it so the oneness so you no longer divide life into good and bad just one the bad is good the good is bad one it is a return to oneness how did we get thrown out of paradise Adam and Eve according to the myth they ate of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil that was the end of paradise that's what it says they ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil good, bad the arising of thought which at first was nice enormous evolutionary advance and then gradually getting trapped in thought in a conceptualized world and then going beyond as the next stage because all thought is judgment, good, bad and when I speak of suffering consciously accepting what is all that is also the ending of compulsive thinking the ending of being trapped in a continuous stream of thought we are moving beyond thought true intelligence is not within thought thought is a limited expression of intelligence very small there is vast intelligence beyond thought and most of that operates in stillness forms are born out of that a flower or a galaxy a galaxy, for those of you who don't know astronomy is millions and millions of suns and planets forming an island universe billions of suns luminous vast and there are millions and millions of galaxies in the universe and that also is born out of that infinite intelligence gives birth to that expresses itself as form or a flower if you went into outer space in outer space there is not a single noise there the noise is on the human level mostly deep stillness even if a star explodes it explodes in total silence there is no sound there the flower grows in silence and stillness the tree grows in silence and stillness and it's beautiful and that is the one intelligence that you are, the essence of your being so there you are as a galaxy as a flower and the doorway into knowing yourself as that is to accept the limitations of form totally that transformation of consciousness if we can call it that that's why you are here for this flowering to happen through this form everything else is secondary in your life and it doesn't matter that much what life situation you are in as it happens you could be sitting in a palace or prison cell it can happen there prison cell more likely than the palace but palace, possible too or you could be sitting on a bus or in a Rolls Royce it's irrelevant your life purpose is to know yourself as that one intelligence but you can't know yourself as subject-object relationship in the way that you know another person or flower or tree you know yourself there's no duality in that the essence it is you are the essence of all knowing it makes thought possible it makes sense perception possible it's the consciousness formless here, now as it says in the Upanishads not that which the mind thinks but that whereby the mind can think know that alone to be the eternal Brahman not what people here adore not that which the ear hears but that whereby the ear can hear know that alone to be Brahman, the eternal not what people here adore not that which the eye sees but that whereby the eye can see know that alone to be Brahman, the eternal not what people here adore what people here adore is a form what you can see or hear think but that which makes seeing and hearing and thinking possible that which underlies the entire universe the unmanifested one the sound of the bell follow the sound with your attention and then when the sound has subsided there's simply the field of alertness left stillness was there before the sound stillness is there after the sound and stillness is there during the sound so while you listen to the sound and the sound is only one example for your entire existence because this is form, the sound is form and now what is the relationship between form and the formless that's the only true question knowing, now almost everybody is lost in form they see only the forms they think only the forms, which is thought forms they react to the forms they live in a little form identity, a me so people are lost in form they are lost in their mind mind forms, thoughts they are lost in the forms the physical forms, they're so important everything is so important they fear these forms, they want those forms they know nothing but form and even God, those who believe in God know God as an idea in the head a form, a thought I believe, and they have a few little other beliefs around that another form this is why in the Upanishads it says not what people here adore what people here adore is some form, some mental image of God or they might have even a physical image so they don't know God God is the one formless unmanifested life and people it's the essence of each form but people don't know it so here we have this bell the sound of the bell is form that arises and even while you listen to the sound be aware of that which is listening or let's put it in another way be aware of the field in which the sound happens the space in which the sound happens the being underneath the existence of the sound existence is to do with the word of form to exist, from Latin means to stand out to be a form exist, stand out everything that exists exists as a form being is prior to existence so while you listen there is the field in which the sound happens and the sound or there is the alertness the alert attention and the sound if in any experience that you have you are aware of the field in which the experience happens then you are not trapped in the world of form you allow it but you are free when this becomes your normal state one could say that what's there is always less important than what's not there an enigmatic statement what is there is always less important than what is not there to put it in other words slightly less enigmatic there is a peace around everything that happens and you are not dependent on what happens or doesn't happen of course we are speaking we never speak of anything else but God realization I don't use that word very often because it's associated with a mental image a mental idol and if you are a Buddhist the word God may be distasteful to you that's alright that's a limitation also of course when I ring these bells while you listen to the sound you can also be aware and I'll put it in slightly I often talk about the same thing you might have noticed using certain words and then certain other words because some words work for some people different perspectives on the same when I ring these bells usually you would be aware of the sound if you are lucky if you are trapped in thinking the sound would be peripheral that's the sound but without awareness there would be no sound the essential ingredient here to make the experience of the sound possible is the awareness awareness is the field in which the sound happens awareness is you the essence so what we have here when you know that you know the sound and you know yourself as the aware presence in which the sound happens in other words you are becoming aware of awareness now when this is expressed through language it sounds dualistic but it is not another way of putting it is awareness becomes self-aware awareness of awareness and as that deepens that field of presence or awareness which is unmanifested becomes vaster is vaster than anything that happens in the world the world is a surface phenomenon ripples I sometimes call it ripples on the surface of being and this being there is an acceleration of consciousness happening what you are hearing here in two hours or a few hours you would have had to spend 40 years in a monastery before to get it and once a year the teacher would make one enigmatic statement and here you are getting the cream of it concentrated that's what's needed in this mad world now this teaching is not only the words that's the manifested part of the teaching and then there's the unmanifested part of the teaching and that is one could say the energy field of presence it's not where it has no form there's the energy field out of which the teaching comes that's the real teaching nothing personal in that it's there in the absence of the illusion of a person it's there spiritual realization is nobody's attainment it's there because the person has seen itself as a delusion and therefore has become transparent the density of the delusion is gone so it's not the delusion will try to claim perhaps some attainment that's not how it is so it's becoming more and more transparent to consciousness the unmanifested God we will meet again when the hands of the clock indicate 3.30 and it will be the now again same field as this just the same the sun is coming out surrender has happened I'm told that you've been eating a lot more more the retreats, most of them have become very big this one is still relatively small here the last one in New York we had 350 or 380 people for one week it was no longer possible to hug everybody but here it's still possible those who want it and so tomorrow that will be part of our retreat hugging is more than a physical meeting it's a sacred encounter every encounter is sacred when the heaviness of the person is out of the way the density of the mind created person and you're always encountering yourself don't make a form identity out of the transparency that means when you live in surrender every moment you become transparent to the light of consciousness it shines through that is nobody's form identity it's not something other than you when you recognize in what seems like another person you perhaps feel drawn to it what you're really recognizing is your own essence reflected back to you it's never the other there's nobody greater than you or less than you in essence it's only a question to what extent that divine essence is obscured nobody is more or less divine closer to god but it may be obscured by mind mind identification and the mind made self so even the great scientist Albert Einstein who was also a mystic said the value of a human being is determined by the degree to which he or she is free of self so in any teacher is a reflection of yourself when you look at the photo of a teacher sometimes that can put you in a state of presence it's strange it's only a piece of paper a photo and if that photo shows a form that is transparent it can bring you into that state that you are contemplating but you're not the mind may make it into another identity, somebody who is higher than you or more advanced than you that's not how it is it's you so here we have the beautiful truth it seems to contradict buddhism but it doesn't there's only one self buddhism says there's no self but it speaks of the false sense of self there's only one self appearing in many seemingly a multitude of forms underlying the multiplicity there is the one and that does not only apply to human beings any form is a manifestation an expression of the one and you begin to know that oneness when you look upon a form without the interference of conceptualizing and labeling thought that separates you thought creates the sense of separation you have labeled it you have judged it you have adopted a perspective a position towards it a me and it's harsh the judgments of the mind are harsh but when you look upon something in that simple thoughtless awareness there's a gentleness which is an aspect of love because whatever you look upon you recognize as in essence yourself so you encounter yourself in essence so you recognize the oneness inherent in all forms oneness with who you are that is the true meaning of love you then look lovingly upon the world and act lovingly interact lovingly with the world and with other humans free of seeking either to protect or enhance your illusory fictitious sense of self conceptualized in the head if that motivates you self-protection and self-enhancement then there is no love you might talk about it but that's not it's the opposite as my friend

Katie says personalities don't love they want something they may pretend that they love and this is beautiful when the need to protect yourself the psychological me or to feed it strengthen it through adding more through other people things, ideas making them part of your sense of self that need isn't there anymore and you are free you don't fear the world and you don't need the world psychologically so that's the end of fear and desire what all the teachings speak of Buddha, desire, the end of desire that there cannot be the end of desire if you continue as a mentalized conceptualized sense of self and try to be free of desire you'll never reach there that's why so many people get stuck trying to get somewhere in their spiritual practice not knowing that what they are really trying to do is enhance their sense of self and the spiritual practice itself becomes more desire to add to me and all they have forgotten is the now and the completeness and the fullness of life that is already here, now but they fear it the now, because in the now the false self collapses don't look at now just as they don't look at now they don't look at death don't talk about it it doesn't exist because the now is the death of the false self and here we are submitting to that death even as we sit here that's no merit of yours it's an evolutionary movement an evolutionary impulse that's why it becomes possible now no personal merit in it somehow, for some reason the evolutionary impulse moves through these forms here and of course it is more than just becoming free of unhappiness just becoming free of the unhappy me the burden of self with its continuous problems problem making the heaviness of that it goes beyond that it is in essence sacred the true realm of the sacred the sacred is the present moment nowhere else and when your attention moves into the present moment away from past future then you notice there is a sacredness about the present moment then you notice and I use these words very rarely and don't hang on to the words God is present here and now there is divine presence the divine is within and without no matter what form the now takes even if death is happening in the now which the mind would judge as bad it's sacred very sacred death is the transition from form to the formless a doorway a form dissolves that's called death every form is destined to dissolve and that moment of transition is called death and in that moment that which is beyond the form even in the heaviest of forms let's say a person who has never all his or her life was totally self-obsessed in the moment of death something shines through of the formless as the form dissolves God shines through the form even the heaviest form in the moment of death the most sacred thing about life is death not only the death of the physical form more beautifully even the death of the psychological form of me the death of the self this is why our gathering is beautiful because we are celebrating that death here or dying before the physical body dies that's why it is said I believe it is the Koran or another book close to it it speaks of die before you die sometimes translated as find death before death finds you because it's looking for you and rather than run away from it you say, oh, there you are it's a little bit like when you are in a nightmare a monster is running to catch you you are running away from some monstrous presence and suddenly you turn around and face the monster and it's transformed into a benign figure because it's faced and death is the same face death now die before you die and find that there is no death only forms become dissolved the essence is deathless so it's important to realize that life is eternal life is beyond forms of life life is one life is eternal and life has no opposite people believe that death is the opposite of life of course that's not the case death is the opposite of birth not life surrender is facing death consciously it could be a little thing you have a little illness and you surrender into that not the illness the condition now you don't surrender to an illness that's a concept in the head well I'm ill and I might as well accept that I'm ill you are just strengthening more belief systems and you get trapped in no, what you surrender to is the condition of this moment relax into it even if it's pain or discomfort so conscious suffering in this way very quickly takes you beyond suffering transmutes you're dying the self is dying it's not protesting anymore so it's dying it's not complaining anymore so it's dying it's not running to the future anymore to grasp things, to add to itself to make itself bigger so it's dying and then in that death and to some people it comes violently so dreadful loss the most dreadful thing that a human being could encounter and there suddenly it happens and to you it's coming gently you may have had your disasters already that's why you've come here in order to complete your dying you may already have started to die through some disaster or other in your life through some great loss or other in your life and you come here to complete that process of dying to the false self even before you're completely dead as a false self already a light shines through you there's already the beginning of a transparency I could see that I mentioned earlier when I saw my brother again a month ago after three years the pain that he suffers almost every night that he surrendered to has started to erode his false self the process is not yet complete but the light is shining through already and so you regain as that shines through you regain your state of original innocence original sin means the human madness unconsciousness that everybody inherits nothing personal even in that it's original sin it's just one way of looking at it it could be called unconsciousness it could be called delusion it's the same now each human being carries still within the remnants what's left over of original sin within the collective of humanity the entire planet there's a heaviness enveloping the planet that is connected with human pain over thousands and thousands of years pain that humans inflicted on each other in their madness in not knowing who they are in seeking to enhance their delusory sense of self often collective sense of self which is even more mad than the personal sense of self us against them a collective ego is only one thing more mad than the personal sense of ego that is a collective sense of ego if you look at the evil in the world what's perpetrated by criminals is negligible it's almost nothing compared to the evil that collective groups nations, tribes, religions inflict on each other and they're all respectable citizens it's negligible what criminals do compared to what ideologies do an ideology is a head construction it's part of deriving your sense of collective identity from a mind-made sense of self which includes its mental positions and its belief systems and from that you derive your identity as us and then it seeks to kill the others to strengthen itself in some way it needs to remain in a position of right and wrong we are right, they are wrong a total inability to see any other perspective than the one mental perspective that you have identified with and so that's the madness of the world egoic madness and you don't even know what you're doing anymore in that madness completely unconscious you could kill a million people and you will conceptualize it you will label those million people that you kill put a label on completely deadened now to the reality through mental conceptualization you deadened yourself all things like racism are based on putting labels on so that you deadened yourself to the aliveness of that being and your own so that's the madness of the planet yes anybody who looks at human history and the more recent the more mad in terms of numbers of people killed if you look at human history you would see this planet must be mad not totally but about 90% and that is the dysfunction the unconsciousness which is becoming more and more apparent but as we are approaching the end of this evolutionary stage we have to go through it it's fine but that is left over on the planet and in each human being a residue, an energetic residue of human pain many of you know this already from your own life what I call the pain body is human pain that you carry, emotional pain that is not yours as such it's human pain the heaviness of that your share of that pain and that's what humans carry inside and that's what comes up periodically and tries to feed on more pain something in you wants more pain so that's another way of looking at it is there is in you it's not there all the time periodically it comes up periods come when it seems it looks as if you wanted a painful experience it looks like an addiction to pain you can easily see it when you look at couples how they live two people living together how periodically they are forced to reenact painful drama in their relationship almost you could time it in some relationships it's every three days in others it's every two weeks once a month or three times a day pain body is dormant or active it cannot stay dormant for too long it needs to feed on more pain pain body is the energetic residue of human pain created by egoic madness over millennia and what we see as the pollution of the planet poisoning of nature everywhere is only the external manifestation of that underlying heaviness and pollution in the collective human psyche so most of you will know that the pain body is in you periodically needs to feed it will then look for a trigger so that it can come up a thought or somebody around you says something or does something and it uses that as a trigger or an event, something goes wrong a little thing but there's a huge pain reaction to that little thing so whenever there's a huge pain reaction with a relatively insignificant trigger you can be sure that that is the pain body a thought is enough when the pain body is ready to awaken one thought will trigger it about yourself me and my unhappy story and then the emotional field moves into the mind into the brain and feeds on your thinking negative thinking fearful thinking angry thinking whatever the predominant energy vibration of the pain body is it will feed on that kind of thinking it energizes and amplifies the conceptual sense of self in the head which is problematic and unhappy anyway but becomes even more problematic and more unhappy when it's energized by collective human pain that lives in you part of it is of course added to in your childhood all things get added to that there's a personal aspect and a collective aspect but then that flows into the sense of self the sense of self becomes extremely heavy and extremely charged with human pain and that's what people live with and then they act it out it feeds on your thinking and it will try to feed on other people in other words you're trying to get some pain back from others it's not enough for you to be unhappy you want others to be unhappy too nothing personal in it it's a mechanical thing and usually it works in a relationship you can feed on your partner's reaction he or she also has a pain body so one pain body can easily trigger another person's pain body so it renews itself through other people and their reactions and it also renews itself through your thought processes if you're a hermit it can only renew itself through your thought processes so periodically you go through depression about being a hermit and say my life is pointless why did I ever become a hermit this is dreadful self talk how dreadful it all is most people are not hermits so the pain body spreads to others an interesting fact is when your pain body is active and it can remain active in some people for a few hours even a few days in some people before it has taken on enough food to go back to its dormant state when it's active you could walk into a shop and you're not saying much you're just buying something and suddenly the shopkeeper is aggressive towards you because his pain body recognizes your pain body and suddenly they interact because pain bodies recognize each other so a walking pain body will very easily attract pain into his or her life because it is recognized by other pain bodies and there are many people in the world who are walking pain bodies who perhaps even 50% of the time have an active pain body or more up to 100% but that is close to madness but not uncommon and then you come back from the shop I don't know what happened there I got into this huge argument he just attacked me he said he was rude and that was because your pain body was emanating, it was active and was emanating that vibration and it draws in the same unconsciousness from others it's also dangerous, especially with certain pain bodies when the pain body is active you're in more danger of being attacked or even having an accident because a walking or driving pain body many pain bodies these days are behind wheels a driving pain body wants he doesn't know that he wants the accident to happen because it's pain and all that it requires many accidents happen when two pain bodies meet at an intersection and neither of them is going to stop and it works beautifully they can feed on that for a long time and also since criminal so-called criminal activity most of it is perpetrated by walking pain bodies so when your pain body is active you're actually much more vulnerable to being attacked by other unconscious people who are possessed by their pain bodies so I would therefore recommend that when your pain body is active you don't go out alone at night how do we do about this? it is human pain you carry it, you share that what can you do about it?

of course bring presence to it so that it cannot use your thought processes and feed on your thinking watch it, sense it, feel it the turbulence, the heaviness, the tightness there it is anger, fear depression, sadness and it wants to become thought because that's what it feeds on the vibration frequency of anger wants to become angry thoughts the heaviness, the sadness of depression wants to become depressed and sad thoughts about me, of course or what others did to me the angry energy field which wants to become angry thoughts what I'm going to do to them or could have done to them will do one day so you watch it directly as an energy field so that it doesn't become a story in the head it doesn't become an entity, a me an unhappy me so you simply bring attention to it and of course acceptance here we come back to the primordial lesson it is there it is allow it to be it's not that bad it's a vibration, it's a contraction it's a heaviness all right that is an aspect of conscious suffering it's a pain body and you there it is and feel it allow it to be it's not feeding anymore it's already beginning to become transmuted the pain that's trapped in there is already being transmuted into consciousness through conscious suffering conscious suffering is not it's unconscious when you identify with a suffering entity as me that's unconsciousness a self arises out of human pain the mind manufactures a self an unhappy self most selves are unhappy at least never happy for long so that's unconsciousness and that's how it perpetuates itself continuously really that is karma the continuous perpetuation of action reaction perpetuation of unconscious patterns that you identify with as yourself inherited from the past, unconscious patterns that pretend to be a self and because they pretend to be a self they can perpetuate themselves when you recognize the non-self in the pain when you recognize the selfless nature of the pain human pain or just pain no self then the pain cannot perpetuate and feed again and again so you need to look through the pain as non-personal without rejecting it or denying it but realize that there is no self in it the pain body will want to try to get you to identify with it so that it can feed again freedom is the recognition of no self in that pain oh it's not me and then what do you do with it? you allow it to be the great transmuter if that's even a word let's use it, if it doesn't exist then recreate it the great transmuter of pain is allowing is the yes to what is because the root and the beginning of all pain and it happened a long time ago was the original no self contraction and that was the beginning of the separation from the totality so we bring the yes so that is amazing how easy it is to come to the end of the vicious circle of having to reenact again and again human pain because you believe that's a self

[Speaker 2] (3:26:20 - 3:26:21)

so

[Speaker 1] (3:26:23 - 4:30:48)

next time the pain body comes oh there it is you welcome even that you remember the mantra this too this too if you are in a relationship or you live with other people for a while I lived in a commune some years ago and I could sometimes some of the people in the commune had heavy pain bodies and occasionally when they would come down for breakfast I could already hear the sound of the steps coming down there was a pain body coming down the stairs and then the pain body was at the breakfast table looking for somebody to blame or attack a person preferably a situation and if they couldn't find anybody they would attack themselves me, not good enough failed again at everything failed at everything self-talk and then the next day the same person would come down the stairs pain body had spent the whole day feeding on other people in the commune and then the next day great, I feel great and of course it wouldn't last so what does that look like when more consciousness comes in that person might walk down and say I can feel my pain body today it's active I feel it here there it is I feel it's angry or it's turbulent or it's heavy can you see the enormous difference between being it and allowing it to be it seems a small thing but it's enormous to step out of it and say there's the pain body and that's how it is you recognize it allow it to be and that's quite it's not feeding it will look for a moment when you are less conscious so that it can get you of course, the pain body is not stupid it survived for so long because it's clever and cunning and it knows the right moment to come in when you least suspect it sometimes a bad film on TV is enough to pull you into unconsciousness after two hours of watching rubbish or violent nonsense the pain body has already become a little bit active or very active and that's enough just two hours of TV and you are more likely to be unconscious other people watch movies to feed their pain bodies maybe 70% 75% of the entertainment industry is financed by pain bodies they pay to see the violent films why would anybody want to watch pain on the screen humans inflicting pain on other humans who would want to watch that pain bodies, they love it and the cinemas are full and the producers and the strip writers they don't know what they are doing they just know this sells and the script writer is in the the pain body is responsible for the script it writes it so watch out once the pain body has linked into your mind and your thought processes it's not so easy to dislodge because you have already identified with it it's good if you detect it just as it first arises if it's already taken over your thought processes it's not so easy to get out at that time because you already identified still possible, but not so easy more possible now because there is more presence in you now but if you can catch it just as it arises and then allow it to be before it starts using your mind and your thinking it can come in, for example when there is a reaction an unconscious reaction there is a tiny opening so the pain body can flow in there even the slightest reaction you drop something or you knock into something I'm choosing the most insignificant example seemingly trivial example you drop an object it breaks and you go and at that moment if the pain body is ready it will use that little hole that opening to go in there and then suddenly there is much more than that thing that is broken or you knock into something with your elbow and I'm just...

these are tiny trivial examples but this is the mechanism you knock into something and suddenly there the pain body flows from there it carries on and it deepens and the next thing that happens then is bad also and then you are already the pain body looking for the next bad thing and it will come because now you are attracted alcohol, also a favorite way for the pain body to gain entrance when you lose consciousness through drinking one whiskey is fine the second whiskey you feel better because your mind is no longer so active and then the third you are pulled gradually into more unconsciousness and then suddenly the pain body says this is my chance as you know for many women menstruation is associated with the arising of the female pain body the pain body having a collective aspect to it a strong collective aspect female suffering, the suffering of women for thousands and thousands of years comes up at that time and you know that I addressed it in the book briefly this is a time when great presence is required so that you can stay conscious when it comes not identify with that movement alcohol triggers many male pain bodies especially in certain countries it's more part of the collective pain bodies associated with that there are many men who become violent after a few drinks then there are pain bodies the collective aspect is also countries regions in certain countries the greatest pockets of extreme unconsciousness on the planet are where the collective pain body is most active they are pockets of enormous unconsciousness and total identification with pain body and collective mental positions and you can imagine when a collective mental position is energized by hundreds or thousands of years of accumulated pain how mad that is and just as one personal pain body can pull others around it also into unconsciousness a pocket of unconsciousness on the planet can pull potentially a large part of the planet into its own unconsciousness that's the challenge the collective challenge on our planet because as consciousness grows on the planet the madness also intensifies the two movements it's getting better and worse at the same time when you watch TV it's only getting worse but there's an underground movement and we are part of that of consciousness emerging rarely on TV I'm not going to say again it's not going to be on TV because it actually was on TV after I'd said it many times this gathering is not going to be on TV national television in Canada came to film a gathering that we were doing so I was wrong but it's still very rare for this to be on TV mostly what you watch on TV is the manifestation of unconsciousness in the news, whatever pain body the greatest teacher is the pain body it is fuel for consciousness suffering is fuel for consciousness when you suffer consciously which means accept that what you feel, accept yes like fire consuming it so you work with your pain body it's your friend, not your enemy you have no enemies an essential part of the evolution is human pain body it happens through that it seems to be the obstacle but really everything is one it's the obstacle and that which enables you to go beyond just like the cross in other words it happens in complete stillness in that field of spaciousness so you don't have to learn a technique for that just give your complete attention to any action first choose short things don't say I'm going to be attentive for the next hour and then a minute later you're gone back into the head little things and this sounds insignificant even placing an object from here to there takes perhaps 5 seconds you can do that without making that movement a means to an end there's a spacious presence drinking a glass of water usually it's a means to an end you want the water to get down here as quickly as possible into the body and then you look for the next thing and the next thing might not actually be eating or drinking it could be some other absorbing something else and if you observe the mind it looks always for the next thing to absorb so you've had the water and then maybe a sandwich and then you go to the magazine or the newspaper it's still mind stuff a lot of overeating the greed of the mind transferred into the body of more the need of the mind for more not enough and then a magazine you go flick the pages and then comes the next thing some noise switch something on to make noise and then the big one the TV and the amazing thing is often when you watch TV your mind comes to a halt and you simply switch into the group mind that takes you over some people get a little bit of relief from watching TV because the personal level of mind comes to a stop at least they're not thinking about their problems but they're switching into the drama on the screens the group mind is taking over so my mind is switching into that and then you're living out other people's dramas whatever they do on the TV screen and so you can be in the state of hypnosis for hours and then go from one channel to another and very hard after a while wanting to be in the body to be rooted in here because your attention is flowing out continuously particularly not helpful by the way if you're ill and you watch TV that delays your healing because your attention is flowing out it belongs here in here the greatest healer is awareness, inner body awareness and now through TV it flows out and out children do it that's why their minds become so restless even at an early age looking for the next stimulus stimulus there are already one or two books out for children that contain the truth of pain body a child would very easily recognize that it just needs to be pointed out children already have pain bodies and they can very easily recognize their own pain body if it's pointed out to them what happened to you just now when you went through this tantrum what was that? who was that?

strange so gradually they begin to develop the ability to look at it give it a name perhaps not a fearful one they begin to observe their own pain body this would be subject number one at school before they even learn to read and write observe some children are listening because their parents are continuously listening to tapes of talks they are listening continuously to these tapes and some of these children they take it in because it's so simple they understand most of it they understand and what comes out of them sometimes is profound they respond to the truth presence awareness alert attention thoughtless awareness so you meet the pain body with that alert presence and that alertness is important there is a it's almost fierce in its alertness but it's also gentle both and you also meet external situations that are manifesting the earth drama you also meet that in that field of alert presence don't wait for a challenge to become alert bring the alertness in when you are not being challenged into normal sense perceptions normal activities so that nothing that you do is a means to an end there is an alertness in this movement in this now so presence grows manifests, emerges more fully then when the pain body comes there is enough presence there to meet it not to fight it to meet it in the field of alert presence without the alert presence pain body will pull you into identification with it so choose presence I say that it's not ultimately true because you are not separate from the totality choose presence whenever you can whenever you remember but you can only choose it because presence is emerging through you but that's a different matter choose presence whenever it's a perspective no perspective has the entire truth choose presence whenever you can if you only are present in extreme challenges then life will give you that if that's what you want, fine life threatening challenges then there are many people who have never heard of presence who suddenly become present when they are told they haven't got much longer to live for example or they become dreadfully unhappy or that suddenly an inner shift happens or you become present when you are engaged in some dangerous activity for some people it's the only time when they feel alive when they are climbing the mountain or behind the wheel of a racing car completely present alive the person is gone, the self is gone but it's risky bring presence into normal activity that alertness meet the world in the state of alertness even when you are not being challenged and then you can meet the challenges which may come from within as the pain body or from without as some kind of manifestation of the madness of this world you can't run away from that it will come at you you face it somewhere in your life on this planet you can go into the monastery and you will encounter also the ego of course it's there the ego doesn't say I'm not going into the monastery so you'll encounter it and that is don't wait for the challenges but challenge can then intensify it when it comes, it's beautiful any challenge, inner or outer, is beautiful because it intensifies presence once a certain degree of presence has been reached before a certain degree of presence has been reached the challenge will pull you into unconsciousness reactivity of the self acting out conditioned patterns reacting out of those conditioned patterns to the situation and making it worse of course contributing to the unconsciousness of the world creating more madness and more pain and complaining about other unconscious people in the process so once a certain degree of presence is reached any challenge will intensify presence before that any challenge makes you more unconscious once the challenge intensifies presence then really it means nothing bad can happen to you anymore because whatever happens brings about more presence but choose presence even in the absence of challenges and see how that also is vital because it transforms the way in which you relate to the world around you to people, to nature how it deepens all that when you bring presence to your sense perceptions look listen sense, feel in that clear still field of alertness the depth and beauty that is there when you contemplate nature in that state of consciousness at the sacredness remember the Zen master who only taught by raising his finger when asked what is Zen he became famous because he never gave any explanation except this that's all I haven't done this for a while can you please explain to us the meaning of Zen and how it's related to other spiritual practices and particularly Buddhist schools and blah blah blah blah some people got it thank you and others asked did you hear my question and then they went home and said he gave me no teaching at all nothing to say that is the essence of our gathering is that state of consciousness in which you know yourself as the awareness that makes the whole world of form possible you know yourself as that field directly and now the world is secondary awareness is primary that means you are free you are free of the world and now you can interact with the world in a very different way when you are free of the world you become a blessing in the world only those who are free of the world are a true blessing in this world of form because they don't need it anymore and they don't fear it anymore awareness as the underlying field that's who you are the rest is the world of form including thoughts including your life situation as it unfolds from past to future like a little drama, film comings and goings the identity isn't in that awareness so the rest is details as Einstein said I want to know the mind of God Einstein said the rest is details and what does that mean the mind of God, I don't know what he meant by it he had deep mystical insights the mind of God is consciousness now whether he really knew what he was saying or whether it was simply an intuitive thing that came through him who knows but it is the truth he knew what matters perhaps he was still looking for an answer in the realm of thought largely and of course in the realm of thought you cannot know the mind of God because all thought is form temporary awareness nothing is separate from that thought is not separate from it but you have to know it directly you cannot know it through something if there are any questions left we may look at them this evening there may be no questions left I know you are not impatiently waiting for me to speak because the psychological need for future is going away the rootedness in now place of great power and aliveness the psychological need for the next moment is gone of course the next moment comes not as the next moment it comes as the now psychological need for the next moment to be home then nothing is a means to an end you don't reduce any action any movement to a means to an end it is not inferior the now to some future moment in the service of some future moment it's mad that's how everybody lives they make the now inferior to an imagined projection mental abstraction they want to get to the only place where life is is reduced to a means to an end all dealings with people become mostly means to an end business transactions there is nothing wrong with business as such you can bring to a business transaction the field of presence there is the transaction I give you this you give me that and there is the field of aware presence in which it happens you are aware of that awareness of that field that's what really matters and in it that movement happens otherwise you lose yourself in the movement in the doing, in the action and that's how everybody lives and then when you lose yourself in the doing you give it an importance that it doesn't have you give the world an importance that it doesn't have so what that means really is you bring a stillness into all interactions because when it's not a means to an end stillness arises and that's the most important part of the business interaction if it is a business the meeting not the little thing that's happening the vaster space in which it happens that's what is honoured and then the rest is easy in fact your business will improve that was the wake up call no session is complete without at least one wake up call thank you even on the level of form everything improves when you are not totally consumed by attention to form even on the level of doing the doing there is a qualitative difference that comes into the doing so this can be tested in a simple interaction you hand an object to someone or if it's business you hand a cheque or a coin a banknote you hand it or you hand something what I'm talking about one can't really talk about so I'm doing the impossible and you are aware of a space of presence in which this action happens that is sacred action and your whole life can become that it's also non-karmic action it doesn't produce further suffering, further karma further unconsciousness whenever an action is a means to an end it's karmic produces more of that somebody comes to you with big drama you know what happened, he did, he said he did to me, I said he shouldn't, they shouldn't and you listen the field, mental emotional field of the drama wants to draw you in to feed also on you on your participation and you're simply there listening, watching alert so even around the big drama there is an even bigger space in which that little turbulence happens well come on, are you going to what do you think and then perhaps you say something it's not reactive, it comes from a deeper place disaster somebody comes and says it's gone, it's all gone whatever it is and you sense the space around the event aren't you upset you should be upset maybe it is sad, maybe you cry and there's a space around that maybe a child has died how can you not cry and there's a vast space around that that's the end of you as a reactive entity it only happens in the realm of form nothing in that realm matters absolutely it matters relatively not absolutely and all forms dissolve eventually some suddenly so one of the many ways in which we could speak of this gathering here and its purpose is to say we are getting acquainted with spaciousness in a way that's the only teaching here spacious presence there are many things in the universe millions and millions of galaxies each galaxy containing millions and billions of suns but compared to the vastness of space what's in the space is very little there's always much more nothing than something and even the essence of everything that's there is space form is emptiness emptiness is form one of the ancient Buddhist sutras and yes, I haven't used the word emptiness, I don't want people to run out of the room that is the there's a Buddhist term, emptiness which is not a very encouraging promising concept and that's why the Buddha used it so that you can't make it into a concept because emptiness denies itself nobody can possess it because then you're nobody and yet even emptiness does not exhaust its true meaning not at all even emptiness is only a pointer and even that pointer only shows a fragment of what's there or is not there you see, we're getting into paradox because we're using language to speak of that of which one cannot speak the first sentence in the Tao Te Ching the Tao that can be spoken of or the Tao that can be named is not the true Tao and then he continues to talk about it just as I do but he's given a warning the words, that's not quite it don't get attached to that that's what the mind does that's how the truth becomes a religion the mind attaches itself to the signposts mine, ours hang on to that one I believe so be there wherever you go not so much as a person anymore although the form is still there let the form become transparent through surrender to the suchness, the isness of this moment and then be there as the spaciousness be there as the space which is what you are in truth in your essence not as a person the person is a peripheral thing a temporary form that consciousness takes playing the game of form and you bring spaciousness you're not consumed by this temporary form and think it matters dreadfully what happens to this form I've got to make it work can't it's destined to collapse both the physical vehicle as well as the entire story that it's trying to build up eventually it all comes to nothing pop another soap bubble gone when you're there as spaciousness spacious presence you're also there as peace only the knower of spaciousness can bring peace as long as you're well-identified with one particular form there's no peace and love certain words I don't use too often God, love they've been used for so long by the ego in a moment if any question arises you're welcome to ask particularly if it's a question that is practical speculative is not that helpful what is the ultimate purpose of the universe how does what you say compare with sutra number 365 he says the opposite to what you say must be something wrong here if there are questions then after the questions I will start meeting with some of you and exchange a few hugs not everybody all at once and some more tomorrow also tomorrow we have a session of course in the morning after lunch we'll just meet together informally I can sign some books whatever people want to do some more hugs photo sessions anything goes as long as there's a spaciousness around it now if you ask a question I don't know if there are any I don't know if there will be an answer the spaciousness it all comes out of that Ramana Maharshi had a beautiful way of answering certain questions with silence in which ultimately all questions dissolve do we have a microphone for questions it may be better because we are recording it otherwise your question can't be heard it's coming

[Speaker 2] (4:30:51 - 4:30:54)

how do I stop my mind wandering off into the future

[Speaker 1] (4:30:57 - 4:31:09)

question number one thank you and then it's coming to you

[Speaker 2] (4:31:13 - 4:31:20)

you mentioned a couple of children's books that had pointed to the truth I'm wondering if you could tell us what they are

[Speaker 1] (4:31:20 - 4:56:29)

thank you so first there's the question about the mind wandering off into the future well it's in the nature of the mind to do that bringing greater acceptance to this moment greater yes to this moment a little mouse wants to learn about presence I suggest a few things in the book of course there are certain techniques like virtually any meditation technique is there to bring your attention into the now so you could take up some meditative technique that is a helpful device it's a good starting point to bring your attention into the now as part of your meditation now awareness is the essence of meditation awareness which is now awareness present moment awareness the only obstacle with meditative techniques sometimes there are perhaps basically two obstacles one is some techniques give you too much time they have too many steps that you need to master to finally become good at it and that is closely related to the other obstacle in any meditation technique and that's the meditator who is trying to get somewhere with his technique trying to achieve a state through the technique so the technique may be beautiful and the meditator is using it in the service of some future goal to be achieved unknowingly because that's the mindset that the meditator brings to his or her meditation especially the western mind well most minds these days are western minds it's always goal orientation needing to get somewhere this energy going into I've observed some western meditators they are sometimes admired by eastern meditators because they look so perfect in their meditation so committed so they can sit for 5 hours oh good meditator well I should be I've been doing it for 10 years and so and then you can see surrender has not happened through it it's an imposed technique that for a little while keeps the lid on the boiling kettle and the boiling kettle the lid blows off the boiling kettle until the moment the meditator gets up from his meditation and interacts with his wife and children so some meditations are beautiful very simple there are meditations on your breath ancient meditations where you observe your breathing very gently you could learn that in 5 minutes observe the inflow and outflow of breath without needing to get anywhere without needing to become anything to achieve some state you are not present then you would be using a beautiful meditation in the service of future simply observe how the breath happens and then after a while there's the breath and there's the spaciousness simple or you can practice meditating on the inner body through vipassana beautiful meditation structured slight drawback can take time but nevertheless simple can be powerful too if practiced rightly and then you could use a mantra meditation that reduces the mental noise to a single noise and then you drop that one don't forget to drop the mantra eventually and then there's still the main meditation once you become acquainted with what that is the mind becomes calm a spaciousness arises then the importance is to bring that into everyday life but it's often through meditation that many people become first acquainted with it others become acquainted with it through suffering and through surrender that happens in the midst of suffering they've never meditated surrender just suddenly happens they may not be able to talk about it and so then you bring that into everyday life where usually, as you know everything is a means to an end because you need to get to the future the mind is projecting itself continuously trying to control the outcome rehearsing the next moment and anticipating the next moment and working over time labeling, commenting working something out and there you can consciously make yourself a cup of tea and every movement is complete filling up the kettle the sound of the water you feel the pot starts to boil this was later formalized in the Japanese tea ceremony it simply means bringing awareness total awareness to an action then later after centuries it can become a formal procedure and you can become quite good at it without having the essential ingredient of awareness that's quite possible but the true meaning is to bring total consciousness total presence to an action where not the slightest not even a fragment of any movement is a means towards some future point in other words it happens in complete stillness in that field of spaciousness so you don't have to learn a technique for that just give your complete attention to any action first choose short things don't say I'm going to be attentive for the next hour and then a minute later you're gone back into the head little things and this sounds insignificant even placing an object from here to there takes perhaps 5 seconds you can do that without making that movement a means to an end there's a spacious presence drinking a glass of water usually it's a means to an end you want the water to get down here as quickly as possible into the body and then you look for 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and then you're living out other people's dramas whatever they do on the TV screen and so you can be in the state of hypnosis for hours and then go from one channel to another and very hard after a while of wanting to be in the body to be rooted in here because your attention is flowing out continuously particularly not helpful by the way if you're ill and you watch TV that delays your healing because your attention is flowing out it belongs here in here the greatest healer is awareness, inner body awareness and now through TV it flows out and out children do it that's why their minds become so restless even at an early age looking for the next stimulus stimulus so there are meditation methods they're good if used rightly and then use everyday life bring some space in I mentioned getting into your car if you have a car you shut the door and don't make the next movement don't let it be automatic because usually people are dragged along by a stream the stream of mind becomes a stream of doing you sit in the car for 10 seconds and observe your breath or just be but here too the practitioner, we can even call it a practice could pervert this practice and say, ok, I'm giving myself 10 seconds and there's an inner push you're just waiting for the 10 seconds to be over because you read in a book that it's a good thing to do and then you go on look occasionally at anything natural a tree, a flower, a cloud, water plant and stay with it for a minute or two and just look and you'll be amazed how deep and beautiful a flower can be when you don't immediately label it or want something from it or want it so you give yourself a chance so that presence comes in and the mind says no, you have no time looking at a flower, I've got too much to do tomorrow I'll look at the flower one minute it would only have to be one minute 10 seconds after closing the door of your car no, I haven't got the time can't do it now often the mind will tell you, no, no, not now it always says, not now I saw a nice bumper sticker in the States which said procrastinate now and this is what the mind does as far as presence is concerned I have no time to be present now too much on my mind children's books I saw one recently unfortunately it was in Italian and I forget the title now and it had big pictures of a child just a few, 20 pages or so each page a picture and it had big pictures of a little child going through a pain body attack visual image of it first the child comes home in a bad mood runs up to his room, doesn't want any food and then out of his mouth he gets red and out of his mouth comes this big monster and fills the room and then the monster picks up all his toys and throws them about the room until the little child says, what are you doing? and then the monster suddenly gets smaller and the child puts the monster in a little box and then he opens the door and is sweet again his sweet nature is back he says, is there anything left for dessert?

so the picture book shows the pain body attack so a child who watches that sees that, reads that can identify with that so by observing it you can see the child can become the witness of the pain body but I'll have to get back to you if I could give you the title I know that the original was written in French and somebody sent me the Italian translation and some people have written to me and said they are working on a book for children several people seem to be working on it and I recently received a letter from the widow of a man who died two years ago who wrote the most famous book on bringing up children Dr. Spock's Guide to Childbirth and Child Education a huge book, 50 million copies sold and she wants to bring in some of the teaching into the next edition another miracle so it's really the truth the essential truth is beginning to get out there and I know many teachers who are now bringing this teaching into their classroom situation they teach presence they teach from presence and so the subject matter becomes secondary and that of course doesn't only apply to schools subject matter being secondary applies to your entire life whatever your life is about whatever your life situation is about which is the subject matter of your life it's little dramas high and low up and down losing and gaining fears, desires that are part of the drama the life situation is the subject matter of your life it is ultimately passing, secondary not primary primary is being spaciousness, presence consciousness the field in which it happens not what happens so imagine teachers teaching like that quickly the world becomes transformed that way there's a noise here the mind may call it disturbing but an interesting practice and if the moment the mind calls it disturbing it builds up further mental activity around it an interesting practice meet anything that's disturbing like a noise with complete acceptance not a trace left of resistance and suddenly there's space around it and suddenly there's peace the very thing that was disturbing has taken you into peace because you fully accepted it that works for little things and big things but it's amazing when you just practice it with a little thing like a disturbing noise it's almost as if any noise then became transformed into om om it's beautiful any more questions ok the mic is coming oh one here and then two here

[Speaker 2] (4:56:30 - 4:56:40)

you spoke about growth through pain and suffering but what about other ways how about growth through happiness and joy

[Speaker 1] (4:56:40 - 5:05:57)

that's what we're doing here there's no pain and suffering here unless you have physical discomfort the beauty of spiritual teaching and the truth that is in every spiritual teaching and that's why it's there is you don't need it anymore you've had it enough you can only truly listen to a spiritual teaching truly be open to it when you've had enough suffering and then you reach a point where you no longer need suffering your further evolution no longer happens through suffering the essence of this teaching also although I do not deny suffering is you don't need anymore now and so everybody who is here has been through a certain amount of suffering enough for you to be here and to be able to listen and the teaching is no further suffering is necessary some pain you may still experience as the accumulated pain inside you but it doesn't need to turn into suffering some pain you may occasionally still experience in the body toothache, this or that, could happen it's not suffering suffering implies on top of the pain there is a resisting complaining, whining entity that derives sustenance from its complaining and whining so that's how pain turns into suffering you can be free of suffering from now on why not? because you have seen the mechanism of suffering you see that all suffering is resistance to what is is how suffering arises you see that the end of suffering is surrender uncompromising nothing that happens can make you suffer anymore if suffering arises even that will arise within a field of peace it seems almost contradictory if you have a child and the child dies yes, there will be sadness there will be tears but there will also be a very deep peace in that total acceptance there is an undercurrent when the spaciousness is in your life there is an undercurrent of what one could call joy that has nothing to do with what's happening or not happening in your life situation very subtle I sometimes call it the joy of being in translations of certain teachings you may sometimes find the word happiness used there for example, Ramana Maharshi says happiness is your true nature I don't know what the original word is that he used I prefer to use the word joy to talk of this, it's the same thing and the way I use those words happiness and unhappiness occur in the phenomenal realm something good happens you feel happy you lose something you feel unhappy so the way I use those words happiness and unhappiness are conditioned states Ramana Maharshi when he used the word happiness, whatever the original word was I don't know whether it was translated well was pointing of course to that deeper state of the joy that is there as the joy of being of aliveness of presence and undercurrent I don't often talk about it because as the false falls away from you that is there if I talk about it, you're going to look for it perhaps through my future just as I don't talk about love so much because that is there also as your natural state when the false falls away joy and love are really a single one single thing or no thing one diamond facets of one diamond of course you have the beautiful Satchitananda facets of that diamond being consciousness bliss being one knowing yourself as consciousness is Ananda bliss but when bliss becomes your normal state it doesn't stand out anymore as bliss it's not a high you're not on a permanent high otherwise one talks about it and people now look for a permanent high you can't have a permanent high because high implies low the Buddha was a great master at not mentioning certain things that's why when western scholars first encountered Buddhism they called it life denying nihilistic atheistic they didn't understand they only saw what he talked about and they didn't see what he didn't talk about but pointed to through not talking about it and so you could get PhD's in Buddhist philosophy not knowing a single thing about Buddhism did you have a question?

yes ok, I'll come to you

[Speaker 2] (5:06:01 - 5:06:04)

Eckhart, it seems that so much of our human interaction

[Speaker 1] (5:06:04 - 5:06:19)

is your illusory self interacting with another illusory self using illusory words about matters that as you say aren't that important could you tell us in your thoughts

[Speaker 2] (5:06:19 - 5:06:28)

how we can learn to share presence and communicate with each other without bringing that into the interaction

[Speaker 1] (5:06:28 - 5:21:40)

yes, thank you that is quite simple and that is to bring stillness into the interaction and the best place to bring stillness into the interaction is whenever you are listening to another person be there in that alert listening there is the field of attention it's not just the listening what arises is the field of attention and you give that person complete attention there is the field of mind and you listen completely and at first it might seem strange it's a new way of interacting and perhaps not immediately the conversation may not at first flow as it did before when there was continuous mind interaction and it is certain that you will speak less than before but what you say if it comes from there will be qualitatively different not just nervous fearful or grasping mind interaction and you need a little bit of trust that the right words will come without rehearsing beforehand so usually when people listen while they are listening they are commenting they are already denying they are already contradicting in their heads in preparing the next sentence what they really want to get out is what they have to contribute to this they are not really interested in listening to you they are interested in their opinion voicing it and by voicing it, it's not just that it's asserting yourself as an identity and your opinion is an essential part voicing your viewpoint voicing your mental position is an important part of standing out as somebody and so it's at first very strange not to be in that state of stillness in which you don't need to be anybody and then the words come not self-assertive words that are designed to strengthen your sense of self either because you are right and the other person is wrong because you are always right and the other is always wrong that's obvious that's how right and wrong works so become acquainted with words that are unprepared and arise spontaneously out of stillness this is strange at first people sometimes may come to you for help more likely that they will come to you as more presence arises in you many people will intuitively sense that there is something there that they feel drawn to and so they come to you expecting perhaps some help or guidance maybe they come with their drama but they want and then if you want to prevent yourself from being there as a help try to figure out in your mind while they are talking to you how you can help them try to fix them I'm going to fix you then that doesn't work the greatest help is to be there as the spacious presence and listen and when you are just listening you are not buying into their drama either you are not feeding that if it is drama you listen that is already a form of healing true listening, because true listening implies spacious presence and some psychiatrists psychologists counselors who work with people after years of practice through the mind gradually begin to be able to simply listen and it is only then that they become effective as healers as counselors, as therapists they are no longer using the accumulated knowledge of the mind that has its place but true healing comes from a deeper level and there are even psychoanalysts psychoanalysis being a very mental thing you talk, you know the psychoanalyst you lie on a couch and the psychoanalyst scribbles continuously the stream of mind that comes from the patient and then after years of scribbling more and more often sorry if there is a psychoanalyst here there are some very effective psychoanalysts because after years of practice they begin to listen truly and then they put down their notepad and suddenly a spacious presence arises so into interactions you bring the stillness whether it is a normal interaction or somebody comes for guidance or help you can't do anything I can't do anything if I thought I had to do spiritual teaching it would be a burden I would be stressed it happens through the stillness, presence, spaciousness first it's strange when you find words coming out of that bring the stillness into the slightest interactions I often mention buying something in a shop handing your money doing that in a field of stillness in other words I mentioned it briefly before the interaction becomes secondary the field is primary and it's a holy encounter the other person may not know what's going on nothing is going on but may love you, like you for some reason, doesn't know why and it's nothing to do with you feels more him or herself in your presence and it's nothing to do with you feels a peace and it's nothing to do with you Mike is coming I want to ask how to handle chronic illness which occurs daily how to get out of it and get joy out of it the chronic illness chronic illness don't try to get joy out of it it doesn't work like that don't build an identity around the illness me as this ill person that's the tendency of the mind let the illness drive you into the now don't give it time the illness of course has a past and has a future as an illness but the reality is only the condition of this moment the condition of this moment is what it is there could be physical pain there could be disability there could be physical discomfort whatever the condition is the illness is the condition of this moment so more and more you allow the illness to push you into the now and you surrender to the condition of this moment no inner resistance you relax into the condition one could say even if it's pain it could be other forms of illness there are some illnesses you don't have a symptom necessarily you know you have a serious illness but no symptom has appeared yet you've just been told that you have it be totally present with whatever condition is here relax into the condition completely and then you are using illness for consciousness it becomes your teacher I mentioned earlier today my brother experiencing acute pain almost every night and the strange thing is it can go either way pain or illness is only potentially a teacher it could go the other way and it can strengthen the ego in which case there is more and more contraction happening more and more resentment, bitterness, unhappiness happening through the illness potentially however it can be the opposite it happened to my brother that instead of contracting through the condition of the illness he surrendered at some point he began to surrender to that simply the pain and a strange thing happens when you completely surrender into pain don't even label it pain anymore very strange you only have to find that out for yourself and so the illness or rather the condition of this moment drives you into surrender and so what arises is presence, consciousness through that condition so I've seen people in wheelchairs no trace of unhappiness and I've seen other people in wheelchairs for years people who are confined to a wheelchair who look miserably unhappy and bitter and resentful and angry why me? why should this happen to me?

and others surrendered to the condition

[Speaker 2] (5:21:43 - 5:21:44)

oh

[Speaker 1] (5:21:51 - 6:33:19)

light shining through their eyes they have a good spiritual teacher of course it's that condition and when complete surrender happens often healing happens but complete surrender surrender is never in the service of something else it is not a means to an end ok I'm going to surrender because I'll become enlightened I'll make more money if I'm surrendered yeah you probably will but a doctor wrote a big book on healing and prayer and healing and relationship and he found that a common thing running through all the cases that he studied the most effective healer is I don't think he used the word surrender acceptance not fighting the western mind which is the human everywhere these days you know the western mind is always fighting something fighting an illness western medicine is geared towards fighting and of course creates a lot of karma a lot of secondary suffering a lot of secondary illnesses through the treatment it's fighting don't get this wrong you do not surrender to an illness illness is a concept you only surrender to the condition of this moment and so you welcome the condition whatever it is let's return there may be time for some more questions tomorrow now I'll exchange hugs with a few people and then with some more tomorrow if you're not exchanging hugs there's no compulsion of course you can just sit here and take it as a meditation while I exchange hugs or you may have some other business if anybody leaves early tomorrow then of course come up tonight for hugs here thank you so here we are the retreat is getting closer to its end like every experience fleeting before you know it it's gone then you wake up at home was that retreat was that a dream or was I there or at the moment of your death what was all that like cloud formations they don't stay for very long and if then at the moment of your death you're still looking for yourself somewhere in those experiences by holding on to or identifying with that's very fearful at the moment when even the dream dissolves the dream of form evaporates trying to hang on to something or here trying to hang on to this experience and feeling sorry when it's over but of course it's not the essence of this isn't the experience because this experience points beyond itself just as the words that are part of this experience point beyond themselves it's not to be accumulated as an experience well some people will want to take photos they did that last year that's ok but not really to be accumulated as an experience everything here points to something that is beyond the experience the experience and your life is a constant stream of experiences arises in consciousness an object arises in consciousness an event or thought a sequence of events places and the usual way people live is to be identified with the object that arises as an experience as a thought, as an emotion an event well one could summarize it as experience because even a thought I'm experiencing a thought I'm experiencing a happy thought I'm experiencing a painful thought I'm here, I'm there I'm experiencing this so usually normal state of consciousness you're identified with the experience and although you say I am experiencing you might not even say it in regards to thought because you're so completely that thought even to say I'm experiencing this thought there's a little bit of standing back from the thought most people can't even say that they are the thought and they are their experience and then whatever happens to them as an experience they have a relationship to it which is one of repulsion or attraction they feel aversion towards it or they feel desire towards it you have a relationship towards whatever experiences arises fear, desire want it, don't want it so objects an experience is an object that arises in consciousness so most people are in a reactive relationship to that and an identifying relationship all they know is the object that arises in consciousness although they may sometimes say I, they don't know the true meaning of I I becomes reduced to a story, a me a collection of experiences retained in the mind around which you draw a boundary and say that's me, conditioning mental content, mental-emotional content a bundle of content, experiences held together usually when people say I they refer to that entity that mind-made entity but the depth of I the true meaning of I is very different from that so for most people the I they have made themselves into an object in consciousness so this is why people have a relationship with themselves many people hate themselves and then gradually you progress you read new age books and then with the help of affirmations on bathroom mirrors and other places you learn to love yourself but even then you still have a relationship with yourself and so you still made yourself into an object in your experiences as if you were walking with another one next to you I hate you, do I hate you? I love you, do I really love you?

and the thing is every object has certain limitations because it is a limited form even a thought a thought form about yourself is limited every object is there because it has a polarity so if you feel great about yourself it cannot be sustained for too long because it's a high it can't exist without a low and then you come down and you feel you have suddenly a bad relationship with yourself so people make themselves their identity into an object of experience and so try to improve that get rid of the undesirable aspects of that object in your experience and add desirable ones and so you can work trying to improve yourself nothing wrong with trying to improve yourself on the phenomenal level nothing wrong with adding something but you can't find yourself by improving yourself that's the only place where improving yourself doesn't work the rest is fine it's a nice thing to do one of its primary limitations is that it doesn't last that's a big one it doesn't last for that long an experience comes and goes and then it has a polarity but life is so frustrating and such a burden to most people because they seek in that accumulation of objects in their experience they seek themselves completion they seek themselves as an improved object in their experience or even a healed object a completely healed entity and so then you look out for more to complete you doesn't work and then it's a huge realization that no object of experience is you and although you've been using the word I for a long time I is probably the word that most frequently perhaps the most frequently used word in the language and certainly the central concern of most people the center of the universe I and the rest of the world although it's the most frequently used word they don't know the depth of I of what that really means because they use I with reference to an object or an accumulation of objects in consciousness and they don't realize that the true depth of I is not that which arises and of course subsides evaporates the true depth of I is not the object in consciousness but the space of consciousness so one could say that to use an analogy you are not an object in space you are space now this may be nice as an idea in the head oh, I'm space and it could if it remains that of course it doesn't liberate you because even that can become an object in consciousness as an idea that you get attached to and then you can have an argument with somebody else who does not believe that you are space I am telling you that I am space now the question how do you shift from that being a pointer to actually working as a pointer not to be accumulated as a pointer as further content, further object in consciousness but how does that work so that a signpost is supposed to take you there not to be accumulated and so of course what I'm talking about now is a kind of summary of what we've been talking about very slightly different perspective again on the one subject thing, no thing that is the essence of the gathering how do you actually know this to be true that you are space beyond an idea in the head and of course the perpetuation of the state of identification with objects in consciousness to a large extent happens through the reactivity of the mind made entity towards experiences the personal reactive relationship towards experiences that arise and through the reactivity you get trapped in that illusory entity the illusory entity strengthens itself through having a personalized and reactive relationship to everything in life including what you see as yourself the mind made self you react even to yourself I don't like myself I'm beginning to love myself I'm not so sure about myself anymore I don't feel good about myself I feel great about myself and that fluctuates continuously according to what experiences you encounter so what the that self or false self the superficial I cannot do is to be in a non reactive relationship to experience to allow experience so the key is then we've seen it the key is allowing the experience that is happening now because it can only happen now allowing the experience to be the object that arises to be not to disallow another word then for that is the word that some people dislike surrender to that which is then action happens not as a reaction the doing happens as a response to the situation not to strengthen the false self or to protect it and of course there was a question last night how do I stop my noisy mind and that's a primordial question meditation helps but the most powerful meditation is a little like a little crutch, a stick that before you use it helps, can be a help the greatest the most powerful way to stop your mind is not by doing anything is simply by being in a relationship of surrender to what is often detecting the state of non surrender and then saying oh look here is a state of non surrender and so you bring surrender when you detect a state of non surrender you bring surrender to that you cannot fight non surrender through more force so as this to put it in words the new state of consciousness arises many times you will detect within yourself the state of non surrender contraction, emotional negativity thoughts about complaining often containing the word should and things the talk in the head and suddenly now it will be easier to detect that mechanism and so you say oh there is the state of no to what is you've recognized it this is stepping back there is a contraction ok so you always bring the yes into the no and then at times you will be surprised there is suddenly a complete openness whereas before there was reactivity to the similar situation there is suddenly the absence of reactivity there is suddenly simply a sense of space it happens nobody is there to react to it the same old thing maybe in your husband wife relationship hundreds of times it's been a trigger for reactive what he said or she said and suddenly for the first time there is the absence of a reaction you simply allow it you also begin to see the futility of reactivity that it doesn't change what is because it is already and it doesn't bring about true change the reaction empowers that the state against which it reacts the very condition against which it reacts becomes empowered through the reaction and then you discover the enormous power that is contained in surrender that you were cut off from before because the egoic little me the little I has been saying you must fight for power control the universe fight, fight the power of surrender is the power of consciousness itself and then that intelligence that is in consciousness that is unconditioned can express itself through you perhaps only as an emanation of peace and joy if nothing else happened and the rest of your life nothing changed in your life you did the same thing lived in the same place didn't improve your life anymore on the phenomenal level no raising salary anymore all the same if all that happened was an emanation of that spaciousness through you would be quite enough but it's hard for things not to change because for a start people are drawn to that all those in whom there is only the slightest opening are drawn to it so if you are a hairdresser suddenly you get an influx of customers provided you are reasonably good at it but if you are not good you will be good because presence qualitatively improves any doing because it's not a means to an end and anything that you do that is not a means to an end is of high quality so that then this I call the flowering of consciousness is when the little I gives way to the I and you can't predict how that will affect your outer life not that it doesn't matter not that it matters that much anymore what happens in your phenomenal existence but it's precisely when your phenomenal existence becomes of secondary importance to you that it improves greatly it's a by-product but when your phenomenal existence is of primary importance it's frustrating very frustrating existence and you never quite make it on that level so this frees you from being bound determined by your phenomenal existence what I sometimes call your life situation and most people are totally absorbed by it they are that and the way I put it in the book is I say life and your life situation life is deeper than your life situation and people forget life is the unmanifested one consciousness the I not any object that arises in consciousness so your life situation or your phenomenal existence as the sequence of arising objects is recognized as not yourself and that's called liberation on the level of form you still seem to be limited yes you might even have diarrhea and it's very limiting the greatest emperor becomes a worm through diarrhea the master of the universe suddenly reduced to a little worm and yesterday you thought you were the master of the universe and that's the world of form it has beautiful things built into it that often remind you of your limited nature your insignificance as form and that becomes beautiful too when you know yourself to be beyond that the very limitations are to be enjoyed as the play of phenomenal existence formations you enjoy the clouds you don't say don't move or just like that so the quickest way out of being completely trapped in that continuous stream of arising and subsiding thoughts that keeps people that's the primary trap is surrender to what is and standing back from thought the recognition of thought as thought as fleeting as mental noise there's a spiritual teacher in the states Byron Katie who has certain questions that she asks people in sessions when people say something complain about something one of the questions is can you really know this to be true they have expressed a thought every thought is a perspective a limited viewpoint no thought encapsulates the truth and then after a while people realize that they can't really know anything absolute through thought so gradually there's a disidentification from thought thought still happens but you don't completely believe in every thought anymore it's recognized as thought that also is the arising of spaciousness the recognition of thought as thought is not thought the recognition of thought as thought is already arising presence arising spaciousness only from there can you recognize thought and to some extent allow it to be it's the human mind the noisy human mind is not your personal problem it's the human mind and to some extent thoughts will continue but when you allow thought even thought, but know it as thought the compulsive nature of thought subsides thoughts still come and go but there are spaces in between and thought loses its power to make you feel unhappy because you don't completely believe completely in every thought because all unhappiness arises through self-talk nothing is either good or bad but thinking makes it so Shakespeare recognized that so that's what makes you happy and unhappy not the event but the thought about the event a personalized relationship to the event which is a thought and then you recognize the limited nature of that that it is only a perspective a personalized reactive relationship and then it's recognized as thought and you don't completely believe in it anymore oh the same old thoughts the same old reactions there they are again so what do you do with that there they are there it is so this arises in you now it cannot not arise in you after having sat here for so long but if it were not arising already you wouldn't even have come here the ability to recognize thought and to stand in an allowing relationship also to thought not saying I must stop my mind for a little while you can put a lid on it but the kettle keeps boiling and finally it blows off you sometimes see it with spiritual people I mean spiritual people who are trying to be spiritual it's peaceful and then suddenly something triggers the wife says something or just something or the husband and they blow up there was a lid on the kettle so suppress you can't really suppress thought but we can be there and know it as thought the knowing is not thought because the knowing is the witnessing is the space around thought is presence don't underestimate the force behind those patterns mental emotional patterns that you carry inside that are part of humanity no need to condemn yourself if it still happens occasionally just know it for what it is as it happens maybe just after it's happened oops ok so nothing personal in any of this need to be said again don't attempt to achieve a state of consciousness it doesn't work don't use future use future for practical things catching a plane making an appointment planning a trip but don't use future for enlightenment liberation doesn't work the only thing you can use for enlightenment liberation is now your relationship to now your openness to now your yes to now ultimately you don't have a relationship to now in the deepest sense you are the now because the now is consciousness is the field in which objects arise and subside so when I say your relationship to now it's a relative way of speaking not the absolute truth you're open to now that's the place there's then a shift if you have been a spiritual seeker which implies future because every seeker must look to the future because search implies that there's a future you can't seek without future it's somewhere else in space or time or space and time the search so the seeking you may have heard some teachers who say abandon the search there's absolutely nothing you can do go home why do you even come here there's absolutely nothing you can do and again there's some truth in that but no thought has the entire truth and to get to the truth sometimes you need to hold two seemingly opposing perspectives without eliminating one or the other or identifying with one or the other hold them both then you get a little closer to the truth there's nothing you can do and there's everything you can do it's a paradox one seems to deny the other and yet the truth is beyond what can be encapsulated by thought you hold them both now how can I say there's nothing I can do what doesn't make sense and the way I sometimes put it is if you have been a seeker and there has been a strong impulse and there are other teachers of course the opposite of those teachers who say go home there's nothing you can do and they say if you are not determined if you don't seek in the same way that a drowning man wants air if there's not the same determination in you for spiritual liberation that a drowning man would have for air then you won't get there that's the other teachers tell you that who is right who is wrong they both have an aspect of the truth how do we reconcile them if that is even possible I could put it like that there has been perhaps in you an enormous impulse towards spiritual liberation or enlightenment and then you suddenly hear somebody say nothing you can do I say continue to be a seeker seek with the same determination that you have been seeking but expand on the meaning of the word seeking where seeking in its conventional sense implies you are seeking elsewhere in space or time bring your seeking into the now and what that means bring that intensity that was in the seeking and that became future bring the same intensity into that alertness that is here when you are totally facing the now that which had become time becomes presence the same intensity that became time and mind time is mind the same intensity becomes intensity and the alertness of presence that the Zen master pointed to with his index finger the meaning of Zen is that intensity of presence seek in the now bring that intensity that was the search into the now but then suddenly you find you are not really seeking anymore there is simply an intense conscious presence in the now and then seeking and finding are suddenly one the seeking is the finding the intensity of presence is already that which you had been seeking the very force behind the seeking is it so of course there is nothing you can do and there is everything you can do because you are already it how could you do something to become it uncompromising acceptance of what is can that be called doing yes and no because really it is uncompromising allowing can allowing this moment to be be called doing in a way everything else is doing but that is not doing you see how language is very limited how easily you can mistake the signposts for the truth I am just showing you the relativity of signposts they can work if used rightly never attach yourself to any one and then you have arguments there is a doer no there is no doer I am telling you he said there is no doer so you will find yourself frequently stepping back into now lost in mind step back and every time it is good you get back no matter how often you get lost in mind in objects of consciousness and suddenly step back back again every time you step back into now you realize it is actually quite a good place so to speak hell was in here, up here in the head the now is actually fine more than that it is mysterious, it is wonderful when you are alert to it because there is always more to it than what appears on the surface all the forms that happen now there is always more to it and that more is the now itself the space of now so when you step back into now it is not just that you become more aware of your surroundings, more acutely aware of sense perceptions more here there is more that happens there is that sense of presence or space and that is the sacred dimension of now no matter where no matter what form the now takes there is always sacredness in now the sacred dimension of it and once you know that it is everywhere the same it doesn't matter that much anymore where you are when you are in the now and it is miraculous when you find that in the most unlikely places turmoil all around you so liberation is this liberation from mind liberation from past and future, time liberation from the world of form and nothing is denied liberation from a false sense of self or we could say from the self it is all one that is the essence of our gathering here not the external experience of it and the essence of this gathering cannot leave you because it is your very essence so to be back here at any time re-enter the now and you are back here the essence of this is always there as your essence, as the essence of now so if you go back home next month or next year and one day you think, oh that was so nice or whatever you think it's still there, the essence of it not the external form of it that doesn't matter the form you may have captured on a photograph but that will fade eventually, sooner or later and that's gone too so much so that as you dwell in that state of consciousness every time something an object dissolves in your life death in one form or another it's beautiful enough words the signposts have served their purpose no need to collect them and we'll continue this sacred gathering with a sacred exchange of hugs if you're not stepping forward I invite you to remain seated and just sit in the energy field

2002-Eckhart Tolle The Time is now

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 25:17)

Welcome to our evening together. I understand that the past few minutes presented to some of you a wonderful opportunity to surrender to what is. Life does that, always.

And if you didn't surrender to what is, you can now surrender to that. And if you're still not surrendered at this moment, if there's a little voice inside you complaining, a voice that may be familiar to you, what do you do with that? Recognize that there is a voice inside you complaining, complaining, a familiar voice, and accept that.

And there may be an emotional field behind the voice. The voice may be empowered, fueled by an emotion of agitation, upset, anger. And the complaining voice in the head may be supplying new fuel to the emotion.

And for many people, that's all there is. That's me, they say. That's their sense of self, their identity.

And so they're trapped in a very limited self. So it's for you, the opportunity is there every moment to observe your inner state. And yes, accept your inner state.

What else can you do? It is already the case. The emotion is already there.

The voice is there to complain, complain, complain. Some people, in some people, that voice is stronger than in others. But everybody has some of it.

For some people, it's their entire identity. Remove the complainer and there isn't much left. Who am I?

So we are here to find, to access, to realize that there is more to you than the patterns, mental, emotional, reactive patterns that perhaps for a long time have succeeded in pretending to be who you are. In other words, complete identification with those patterns. And now have a look again inside yourself.

The voice may still be there or it may have subsided. And the emotion that goes with it may still be there as an energy field inside you. Cannot be denied.

What do you do with it? It is as it is. This moment always is as it is.

And so you surrender to the way it is. And with that comes what one could call a very different state of consciousness into this world. And this is why we are here, to access that within ourselves, to deepen it in because in many of you, that deeper state of consciousness that is not conditioned is already emerging.

It is, yes, it is a transformation of consciousness. When that emerges in a human being, it is an incredible transformation of consciousness. When you're identified with the patterns, sooner or later you will encounter conflict.

You will make yourself suffer. And everybody who makes themselves suffer, they make other people suffer too. And then comes violence.

Physical is the last level of violence. Before it comes to physical violence, come other levels of violence, emotional, mental violence that you do to yourself and to others. Am I saying you shouldn't be doing it?

That doesn't work. The patterns have their momentum. You cannot fight them head on.

You can only transcend them by, so to speak, taking a step back and allow whatever is to be, externally or internally. With that simple act, and it is so simple, that simple act of inner alignment with now, that simple act of saying, this is what is. This is how it is.

And very often, it is not the way it should be. Life is very challenging. The world of form in which you move is very challenging.

It never leaves you alone. One challenge after another. So one way of putting it is, we are here to find the dimension of inner peace.

Not the peace that goes towards sleep. Not the peace that comes when you drift off into sleep or have had a few drinks. Or the peace that comes when the doctor has given you an injection before an operation.

In that case, it would be better to stay in suffering and at least be relatively conscious in conventional terms, unconscious in spiritual terms. But a peace that is highly conscious, a peace that is alert, present, aware. A peace that is inseparable from the unconditioned intelligence that dwells in you.

That is far greater than even the most learned professor. Far greater than anything the human mind could accumulate or know. And when you look at the world situation, you see how urgent the transformation of human consciousness has become if we are not to be drawn into a cycle of continuing cycle of self-destruction.

And so this is why we are here. A few words on how to be here this evening so that you derive the full benefit from being here. If your main interest as you sit here is on the speaker, then it won't be long before you find yourself restless and bored.

If you're not restless and bored already. If your main interest or the focus of your attention is on the words that are being spoken, also for a little while, that can keep you going. And then after a while, the mind says, okay, what's he really saying?

Is he saying anything at all? And you will soon notice that on an intellectual or conceptual level, our gathering is not very satisfying. Of course, if you wanted that, you could have gone to UCLA where they have many satisfying lectures, intellectually satisfying.

Even on an emotional level, it's not all that satisfying to be here. The kind of thing you get at some, with some preachers, building up a wave of emotion. So it could appear that there isn't much happening here, not much being said.

And that's because your attention is either on the speaker, maybe somebody dragged you here, check this guy out. And you come here and then you check this guy out and you find not much there. And you could be sitting here all this time, forgetting the most important person in the room.

And of course, so if you could be here, aware, not only of your sense perceptions, visual, the words, auditory sense perceptions. Yes, you hear the words, you see the person on a chair. But if you could also be aware of yourself as a presence, a perceiving presence, it helps to feel the aliveness in your inner energy field as you sit here.

To feel somehow, to sense that every cell within your body is alive, to feel the aliveness in your hands, your legs, your entire body, to have some of your attention there. With the rest of your attention, you listen and you see. And that suddenly you might feel it feels good to be alive.

And the need for stimulus, intellectual, emotional, sense perception, experiential, the need for stimulus in order to make you feel alive then begins to disappear because you have a deep sense of aliveness already. When you're not in touch with a deep sense of aliveness, then you need a next stimulus and nothing can keep your sense of aliveness for very long. You need continuous food for thought, food for experiencing, food for more of this, more to feel that I'm still alive.

Drama, you even need drama. So as we sit here, be in touch with the inner energy field of your body. Even if you can only feel it slightly, it's fine.

And even if you can only feel it in your hands, it's enough. But usually if you can feel that a certain aliveness in your hands, you can also feel it after a while in other parts of the body. So I call that the inner body, which can become an anchor for staying present in the now.

The only place, the only time there ever is here now. So instead of running away from now or complaining about now, you move into now. You take your attention into the field and then you may notice it's actually good to just be sitting there, listening, not even needing to look forward to the next sentence.

And you may notice the stream of thinking slows down, but you don't lose consciousness. You're highly alert. That is the unconditioned intelligence within you that otherwise is completely obscured by the conditioned mind, by the voice in the head and the emotions that accompany the voice in the head that to most people is who they are.

And the voice often complains and is not happy with what is. That's a normal state. It looks to the next thing.

He wants to get this out of the way. If he doesn't condemn it completely, at least he wants to be done with it. Be done with it.

Where's the next thing? Come on, let's get on with it, one mind is saying. Get on with what?

Well, is it possible to live in such a way that your attention, instead of being absorbed continuously by this stream of thinking, that your attention is there meeting the now, whatever form the now may take, that changes continuously. You arrive with your ticket, no chair to sit on, a little challenge. The habitual reaction, you know what that's like.

Is it possible to meet that moment in a state of just attention? Here I am, we don't have enough chairs. Oh, but I have a ticket.

Can you get more chairs? Yes, we are trying to find some. Okay, I'll stand here and wait.

And to realize that that moment isn't really bad unless the mind judges it. You're standing somewhere instead of sitting somewhere for a few minutes. But the strange thing is one sense of identity, one sense of self gets strengthened.

The self that is derived, the sense of self that is derived from mind, it gets strengthened if you react and complain because then whenever, this is not a personal matter. If you did it, don't feel that this is a personal shortcoming of yours. It's the human mind.

It's nothing personal in it whatsoever. If you make it personal, then it becomes a problem. You become a problem to yourself.

And you say, you see, I'm not spiritual yet. It's a relief to see that all those patterns are mechanical. They're not personal.

They operate in every human being unless they've already gone completely beyond it. There are more humans who are now going beyond that. So the reactivity and the complaining is used in the service of being right.

If you can be right, that implies that someone, a person or a situation or a place or the weather is wrong. Whenever you mentally, you complain about something, you put yourself in a position of rightness because obviously you know better. That's why you're complaining.

And I'm not talking about telling somebody to remedy something. That is not real complaining. That is passing on information.

Please, this is not what I ordered.

[Speaker 2] (25:17 - 25:20)

I ordered soup.

[Speaker 1] (25:21 - 2:21:57)

I didn't order pudding or whatever. Or you say the soup is cold, but it should be hot. This is the, I ordered a hot soup.

That's fine. You're giving information so that somebody can do something about it. But are you using that situation in the service of being right, which is a mechanical unconscious pattern that you can observe in yourself?

Why is that happening? And why do so many people live in such a way that as they go through their day, they go from one situation like that into another, into another, into another? Because the me, the mind made sense of self gets stronger every time you go into reactivity and complaining, because it is a position of imagined superiority towards that which you are complaining about.

And that strengthens the fictitious me, self. You can notice that if you observe yourself, you can notice that after you've complained for a moment, you feel a little bit expanded in your sense of self. You may also notice that you feel a kind of shell around you that has hardened.

And you may also notice a certain contraction in your energy field. And if you are very alert and in touch with your body, you can notice that although you seem to be enjoying yourself doing what you do, but you're not really, it's suffering, but it's not recognized as suffering. The egoic entity, the mind made me, likes it because it strengthens itself through that.

Your body doesn't like it at all. And if you could see what it does to your body going into that state, you would be shocked what it does to the energy flow in the body, what it does to every aspect of the functioning of the body. So the body feels injured by this because it is, yes, it is a form of violence.

The ego is like that. And it's not a personal thing at all. It is a wonderful thing to observe these patterns in yourself.

There's the tendency then of the egoic entity to say, you see, you are no good. It makes a problem out of it. How do I go beyond all my patterns?

Don't even try. Just be with whatever pattern arises in you at this moment. Place attention on it.

Look at it and allow it to be the most powerful transformer is that. It transforms your consciousness. Now, this sounds as if you could do it.

I'm saying this is something that you can, can I do that? Can I allow this moment to be? Yes, if you are sitting here, you can do it.

Not everybody yet can do that. There are still many in this world who are so completely identified with their mind and emotions, to say that allowing this moment to be would be meaningless. And you become very effective because an intelligence that is greater than the accumulations of the human mind suddenly emerges.

And here's a situation in the field of now, and you place that attention on it that has no reaction in it, because you receive what is like this. You say, I allow this moment to be because it already is. And then there's a flow of attention.

And in that attention, there's enormous intelligence, greater than the conditioned intelligence that is the human mind. And that if action is required, action then comes out of that intelligence that is already in you, in everyone, simply obscured by the conditioned, by the human mind, by the stream of thinking, the continuous mental noise. So in everyone, that dimension of consciousness that in the ancient teaching sometimes called enlightened is already present within you.

And for so many years, spiritual seekers thought they had to achieve or attain a state of consciousness that they read about or heard about in the teachings. I need to become enlightened. I need to become free, liberated.

And so what they did was the old mind patterns came in and transformed the original teaching into future, which is how the mind operates when you're totally identified with it. The next moment is always more important than this one. That's how people live.

The enormous psychological need that is in everyone for the next moment, that is so normal that most people don't even notice it. Everybody lives like that. Whatever you see on TV, everybody lives.

Continuous stress towards where's the next missing, the only thing that ever is, which is now. For some conceptual reality that is future, because the future is no more than that, a thought in your mind. Past is the same, a thought form.

Apart from a thought form, past and future have no reality whatsoever. And is that something that you need to believe or can you verify that for yourself? I would say you can verify that for yourself because if past and future had some reality, you would find them somewhere.

Nobody has ever lived in the past. This is, we tell ourselves, yes, the ancient Greeks lived in the past, but the ancient Greeks didn't live in the past. They lived in the now, the only place where they can live.

And how is it that you can even say that, or think that the ancient Greeks lived in the past? Because you're saying it at this moment, it comes out of the field of now, comes the thought, the ancient Greeks lived in the past. Well, they didn't.

And out of it also comes the thought that you have a future. Something is going to happen to you tomorrow. But of course it can't.

And you are worried about what might happen to you tomorrow when nothing can happen to you tomorrow, because tomorrow can only come as this moment. Why don't people realize that? And what an insane way to live, to disregard the only thing, no, no thing that has any reality whatsoever, which is now.

Your life, the one thing that never left you is now. Cannot leave you, it's always. Life and now are inseparable.

The essence of who you are, because you are life. You are both a form of life, a temporary expression, but you are also on a deeper level, you are life taking on a temporary form. We could also say you are the one life, the one consciousness that takes on form as a thought, as an emotion, as the entire universe.

But the essence of who you are is life, unmanifested in your essence, timeless. And life and now are one, which means maybe I should have kept this for the end of our talk, otherwise you'll go home. Which means you and now are one, because life and now are inseparable.

Now the mind says, does that actually mean anything? But when I say you are the now, if you try to think about that, you won't get very far. But if you allow that statement to be there as one could say a pointer, a signpost, something that points beyond itself, that is not a statement that is supposed to explain something, but to take you to a realization.

So if you then say, I am the now, you can't think about that, but you can sense something there. And now that no matter what happens never leaves me, that is one with who I am. And now you come to a strange thing.

I said, I am, those are very, very mysterious words. I, I am, the most misused word in the language, the most used word in the language, I. But usually when people say I, they refer to me and my story.

They refer to their fears, their ambitions, their desires, their memories, their reactive patterns. Me, I, but there is a deeper sense to I that has nothing to do with your story or your reactive patterns, your memories, your stream of thinking, a deeper sense of beingness, presence, I amness that always is, was, will be the essence of your feeling of who you are. And because it's a very strange thing when you look inside yourself, what is it that makes up your sense of who you are?

That is the one thing that people think is, feel is so precious. There is something in me that the me, I don't want to lose that. It's what there's such fear of death because I don't, they feel like, they can't imagine the world without me, a world without me, is that possible?

So what is the, now when, to most people, me is their story. So when you meet somebody, when they talk about themselves, they say, I, I, I, what do you do? What do you, I, I, I am this, I am that.

But when you, they believe that their identity lies in their story, their history, their story, their reactive patterns. And that identity is, feels incomplete to almost everybody. Everybody, in fact.

An identity derived from a story feels incomplete. So you need the future to complete me and my story. That's how people live.

That's the desperate need for future. And the future never completes your story. No matter what you add to the story of me to make yourself finally have arrived, your whole life is made, suddenly it all makes sense.

And they always lose ends, even when you finally make it, everything is there. And then sooner or later, another form crumbles close to you, because forms do that. No form is very stable in this universe.

So you arrange your life circumstances, try to get it all into place. Career, working beautifully. Relationships, working beautifully.

This is the story of I. Careers, relationships, money, health, body, healthy, strong, everything. Beautiful place to live.

Car, intelligence, learning things, knowledgeable, experience all kinds of things. And all, great, it's all arranged. All the building blocks of my life are now in place.

And if, as long as nothing moves, that means I finally, I finally made it, everything is arranged. And in some films that you see, that illusion is perpetuated, that it can all come, that the story of your life can come to a happy conclusion. And you can see that when you read a book of fiction, you get the so-called happy ending.

When you read a book of literature, which has a certain depth, then you're never quite sure when you reach the end. It won't be a, this is it. It leaves an openness.

And so in reality, as long as your sense of I is derived from the circumstances of your life, the story of me, it is never satisfying for very long. And that's an amazing realization. And it's continuously things go wrong in it, which isn't wrong at all, but they seem to go

wrong.

Things suddenly leave you, or things come in that don't fit into the story of me. It shouldn't be there at all. And there are many people who feel that their entire story has gone completely wrong.

They are working where they shouldn't be working. They're in a relationship they shouldn't be in. Their financial situation isn't what it should be.

Their car isn't what it should be. They don't feel they know enough or are enough, or in fact, in other words, it's just hasn't worked out at all. I am, and the feeling that they have is I'm not yet myself.

I'm not yet me, yet fully. I have some idea that of what I could be, but it's an idea in the head. And you might live with the delusion that I had for many years, that one day the world is going to recognize you.

And you finally get the recognition that you deserve. Throughout my 20s, I lived in that delusion. Is somebody going to finally recognize me?

And of course I was continuously unhappy and unrecognized. And then a strange thing happened. I recognized myself.

And then the need to be recognized by the world disappeared. And after many years of being nobody in the eyes of the world, suddenly the world thinks I'm great. Finally, they recognize me.

But unfortunately, there's no real satisfaction in that anymore. Because I know that they don't recognize me at all. They recognize themselves.

And that's so much better. They don't come to see me. What for?

It would be absurd. But when they come, they can, something that is there points to their innermost reality, beyond story. That's why it's, there is that, wow, that this self-recognition, self-realization, who you are beyond the story, who you are beyond the circumstances of your life, which perhaps until this point provided you with your sense of self.

So people confuse what I sometimes call their life situation with their life. And their entire, all their attention is absorbed completely by their life situation, by the things of this world. And this is when you look around you as you go through your daily life, this is how most people live, with their attention entirely absorbed by things in a wider sense, in a narrow sense and in a wider sense.

Their attention, their conscious absorbed by things in a narrow sense, the conventional sense of the word, people's constant preoccupation with objects, possessions, this and that, identification with it, seeing, compare myself to others who have more or less than me, unconscious processes. And then, but in a wider sense, things are anything that has form. Thoughts are things, they are not things, not physical things, but they are a form that consciousness temporarily takes, a thought form.

Thought comes, thoughts are very much like clouds. A thought comes, then it goes. Another thought comes, or streams of thoughts usually.

The only difference between thoughts and clouds is that clouds are never the same. And thoughts, 95, 98% of it are very repetitive. And so the sky would look very boring if it were, like, it's the same clouds again.

It's the same clouds as yesterday. And the next day again. I'm stuck in Groundhog Day.

And this is how life is for most people because they are stuck with their conditioned thought processes. So, they are for years, same. And thought processes incorporating, part of that is reactions, reactivity.

So you're stuck with that. And so you, no matter what situation you go into, you meet the situation with the conditioned processes of your mind. You judge it, you interpret it, you react to it.

Out of the conditioning, which is the me, the I, the story me. And so you repeat the same things again and again. Even if you go into a new relationship, many of you have experienced going through the same pattern in the relationship.

Same pattern in whatever. You could go to another planet with the conditioning of your mind and recreate the same situation, living amongst aliens on another planet. Nothing would change if that remains in place.

If identification with the conditioning, which is just the stream of thinking, the emotions that go with it, the reactive patterns, the judgment patterns, the ways you interpret things, immediately saying, this is how it is. And commenting on whatever happens out of the old conditioning, every event, every person you meet, immediately is judged, commented, put a few dental labels on. Now I know who he is.

Because you've called him something. You've called him this, this, and this, and this. That's who he is.

Next time you meet that person, you don't meet that person at all. You're meeting the screen of mind, the labels that you've put on that person. You say, hello.

You're not meeting a human being. You're meeting your own mental labels. And then you react with, you interact with that human being through the interpretations of your mind already.

And so you recreate same experiences. And that's me. That's me and my story.

And so you can add more of the same kind of, then whatever fits into your story, you will then add to the story. You won't add something that doesn't fit into your story. So many people have a story of, oh, poor me.

That's a story that has a strong aspect of poor me to it, unfairly treated by life. So if, this is only one possible, stories of different kinds of stories, but basically they're all stories. If it's poor me and unfairly treated by life, you will select those things that conform to your story already, things in your experience.

You will almost recreate that. And so, yes. And you will interpret things that are maybe totally neutral as having been unfairly treated.

You go to a restaurant, the waiter ignores you completely. It's happening again. Because your mother ignored you the first 10 years of your life.

And then you have a very strong reaction. And then you can tell a story about it. I went to that restaurant and he looked, I could see him looking at me, but he didn't come over.

He wanted to, and so you've added more, and the story grows. And what's the actual, in most cases, the situation is quite neutral. What you add to it out of your story gives it fuel, karmic fuel.

So as an innocent thing of somebody not acknowledging you, to some people who have a different story where that is not an important ingredient, is meaningless. To somebody else, somebody doesn't return your call. To someone who has a story that has other issues, but not acknowledgement issues, it's fine, he didn't call me, okay.

But to someone else who has a story that's associated with not being given acknowledgement, attention, out of the past conditioning, there'll be an enormous reaction. How dare he? Who does he think he is?

He let me down again. Everybody, all women let me down, all men let me down, whatever. You know, the ways in which you interpret reality is through the conditioned story of me.

It's a heavy way to live. And then you don't see that the innocence that is actually in situations, when you do not impose an interpretation on it, when you do not attempt to incorporate a situation or a person or an event into the story of me, or do not attempt to push it away because you can't fit it into the story. This shouldn't be in my life.

Why am I in this office? This shouldn't be happening. So you try to push, see how automatic the process of labeling, interpreting is, and see how simple life can be if you can allow this moment to be as it is without imposing the heaviness of a story on it, to try to fit it in or reject it because either it will enhance your story or it will make your story somehow doesn't fit in at all.

It shouldn't be happening. It's one of the two. So, oh.

And so there's the conditioning that people live with a whole lifetime, a whole lifetime, a lifetime, never being able to go beyond a limited sense of I. Is that who you are, the circumstances of your life that are not complete yet, never will be, the story that you tell yourself or others, a few reactive patterns, living your whole life trapped in that tiny little shell. And even if for a while the story seems to improve greatly, it's never satisfying for that long and things then tend to go wrong again.

It might suddenly improve financially and then relationships collapse. Or you have great marriage, but you're poor. Career taking off and you lose privacy.

You lose personal relationships. The world of form is always limited. One way or another, you encounter limitations, whatever you cannot arrange forms around you that are all perfect.

And so when you see that, it's quite a relief to see that the feeling that you are not complete yet, the feeling is not a personal matter at all. Everybody has it. Don't believe the magazines when they tell you with glossy photos that these are the people who made it.

Their stories are complete. They're not. They are just as unhappy as everybody else.

And ultimately it doesn't matter whether you're unhappy in a mansion or unhappy in a little room. It's the same inner state. Unhappiness is ultimately inseparable from deriving your sense of self from that limited story of me.

Unhappiness is even a necessary ingredient for that sense of identity. That sense of me needs its unhappiness and its conflict and its problems because it's through that that it can define its boundary, me and my problems, that which impinges upon me. Me and my enemies.

It loves its enemies, the me. It needs its enemies. Enemies can be people or situations.

And usually the enemy is the present moment. And there's a continuous state of contraction of reactivity. So this is how people live.

They make the present moment into their enemy. The only place where life is, the only place where all there ever is, they are against it. Not aligned with it internally.

Out of alignment. A strange way to live. Suffering.

Great deal of suffering arises. And so this, the mind made me is a suffering entity ultimately. Occasionally it gets a few pleasures but they never last that long.

Occasionally it gets a high. You add a thought form to me. Just bought a BMW.

The car is not important of course. The thought form that is imbued with self is important. My car as a thought form is what makes that car so important.

It's not the car at all. It's the fact that the thought of my car, that thought has self in it. So you have, and then you cling to that.

You add that thought form to the collection of thought forms that make up who you think you are. And for a while it's satisfying. I have expanded because I have added this big thought form.

This self in the thought, me. And if you can add a big house or a mansion in Beverly Hills, mine. And then you look at it and say you feel, yes, you have grown.

And then after a little while, the thought form doesn't quite fulfill its function anymore. It wears out. And it's just a car.

And then you just sit there and you realize you cannot sit in more than one room at a time. So you have 25 rooms there, but you can't be in all of them at once. And you can only sit in one chair at a time.

And then the thought form of mansion isn't all that satisfying anymore. And if you have made it in the eyes of the world, you've reached a dangerous point now because you can't think of anything else to add to me. You have it all.

There may be a few people here who have reached that point and have also seen the unsatisfactoriness that is even there. Otherwise you wouldn't be sitting here. You would be enjoying.

And it is not to say that you cannot enjoy the world of form. It is beautiful. It is to be enjoyed.

So many beautiful forms around you. It forms become heavy when there is a self in them, a sense of me, self. Then they become problematic.

And then you begin to suffer and be unhappy. So why not have a mansion? Am I saying renounce all your mansions, move out of Beverly Hills?

No, it doesn't really matter. You can enjoy that. Why not?

Beautiful forms around you. And if the mansion should collapse and leave you, you may suddenly find yourself sitting in a cabin somewhere else, still feeling the aliveness within you and the fullness of this moment. Step aside as the me and be in the state of surrendered, aware presence, the state of attention, the state of looking, looking at a canvas, looking at a piece of paper, looking at whatever you may, even a scientist using thought for a while and then come arriving at an insoluble problem and then looking.

Thinking comes to an end for a moment and is replaced by what we could call pure attention or pure awareness. And in that moment, an intelligence that is greater than the accumulated intelligence of the mind operates. And in that moment, the creative impulse comes and the creative impulse always comes from beyond the little person, the little me.

And the little person subsides when you allow this moment to be completely and give it your full attention. The two go together. You allow what is to be and you give what is your attention.

That is the awakening of unconditioned intelligence in you. And that is when your life suddenly shows enormous capacity for transformation and renewal that goes far beyond what anybody could have predicted when they looked at the conditioning of your mind, far beyond what any psychoanalyst could have predicted after analyzing the content of your mind for 12 years, because that would be moving within the realm of the conditioned. And so for those humans who do not move beyond the realm of the conditioned, both personal, in a personal sense, and the vast collective conditioning that you inherit that is to do with the culture you live in, the time period you live in, the genetic conditioning, the very fact that you are a human already means you're conditioned in many ways.

You have a mind, a human mind, which is collectively conditioned already. So those, and then comes your personal conditioning from your childhood and your life experiences. So those humans who don't go beyond their conditioning, you can predict more or less within this realm of relative certainty how their life is going to develop.

Yes, things may change on an external level, but you can more or less predict their relationships, the problems they're going to have, because it's all already there in the conditioning. And the conditioning may be, in some cases, in some humans, it's better, relatively better than in others. You could say, although all humans have the basic collective conditioning, they are burdened with a mind that never stops thinking.

They are burdened with the pain of humanity that each human carries inside as the pain body. That's the collective that each human has. On the personal, there are variations.

Some humans come into this world and say, they've all, they've got it made already. When they're 18, they already drive the Ferrari. Everything they ever wanted is given to them.

Well, if you look at their lives, you may find it wasn't all that great to have that. Others come into this life, we could say every human comes with a, like it's a, as given a block of, piece of wood, and say, see, that's your conditioning. And some blocks of wood look already quite nice.

He says, oh, I can work with that easily, can make that. And other people get blocks of wood, they said, what is this? They are born into totally dysfunctional families.

Everything is the entire, everything seems to be designed to make their life hard and difficult. And yet they may end up in prison. And yet at some point, at some point, humans, it happens to some humans and it's happening to more and more human beings on the planet now.

At some point, something arises that cannot be explained from the conditioning of your mind. Something arises in a human being you could have never have predicted that this person, the criminal, who all his life committed crimes, ended up in prison, spent 10 years in prison, and suddenly through the suffering became so unbearable, suddenly the story, the life, the I that is identified with me and my story collapsed through surrender because the suffering was too much. And there was simply the is-ness of this moment.

And I'm sick, I have received quite a few letters from people in jail who have experienced this very same thing. Suddenly becoming free of the me, of the heaviness of identifying with me and my story and what's left then, a field of aware presence. Yes, there is a, they're still sitting in a prison cell, but they are no longer deriving their identity from the story that says, this is what they have done to me, or this is what life has come to.

This is what, how life has treated me unfairly. This is what these bastards have done to me. They've put me in here and I have to, I've been in here for 12 years, I'm going to be in another 20 years.

And the story that is around, I have failed, everything failed. My whole life is totally awful. It's an unpleasant story.

And some stories have to become very unpleasant before they collapse or not necessarily collapse before you withdraw your identification from it. So it happens to some people that so many things go wrong that the story of me becomes more and more unhappy. One thing, and this is how traditionally people have had the spiritual realization of who they are beyond the story.

It's only when the story collapsed or became so unpleasant and heavy that they could not bear it anymore. And suddenly something happened and something emerged from within that has nothing to do with the story, a deeper sense of I, which was always there, but it got mixed up with the story. So when you look at your life, you may find that when you were in your teens, early twenties, your life was very different from the way it is now.

You may have gone through tremendous changes already, totally different life situation perhaps, but there was always that underlying at the deepest level, the underlying sense of I that didn't change. If your story changed completely, if you're poor now and a few weeks from now, you're extremely wealthy and the whole, let's say you're poor and in the eyes of the world, unimportant, totally meaningless thing anyway. It's wonderful to be unimportant in the eyes of the world.

You're poor now and unimportant in the eyes of the world. And suddenly in a month's time, they discover you. It could be true because there are so many actors in LA.

And so that they suddenly a month from now, you're sitting in this cafe and a man comes and says, give me a call, here's my card. And you read and says, whoever, famous director. And a few months later, you move from your little room to Beverly Hills.

And then you sit there in Beverly Hills and you think, wow. It's like, she's like a new and completely different incarnation from being a waiter or a waitress only a few months ago. And now the world suddenly, I'm on the front page of magazines and you look at yourself, wow.

And then if you look deeper, although the story has changed, you find the sense of I hasn't really changed. On the surface, the changes happened, but the I am-ness hasn't changed. No matter what happened on the surface of your life.

So people confuse that deep sense of being-ness of presence with a story. So if you can step out of the story and feel that directly, the sense of being-ness or presence. Nothing to do with your life situation your past or your future.

Nothing to do even with your name. There is an underlying field of presence of being-ness. And that miraculously is inseparable from what now is in its deepest sense.

So what does that mean? It means consciousness itself before consciousness takes form. That is the deepest part of who you are.

You are consciousness itself. You are not what you are listening to right now, not what you think right now, but how is it, what is it that makes the listening possible at this very moment? What is it?

Awareness, consciousness, however you want to put it, there's a field, I sometimes call it the field of now. The field of now, and then things happen in it. They come and go, the form changes.

If you could live life in such a way that you do not lose touch with the field of now, then whatever happens in the now will not overpower you. And you will realize there's a far greater power inside you than there could possibly be anywhere in the world of form. The world of form, which is the physical universe, looks sometimes so overwhelming, but it's nothing compared to who you are in your essence, the formless one life, one consciousness out of which all forms come.

And so just little, one additional pointer to this, as you realize this, you realize that there are, one could say, don't take anything too literally because they're only pointers. There are inside you, could say two dimensions. Just, this is very, very simple.

This could be explained to a six year old. There are two dimensions inside you as, and this you can verify because as within, so without, there are also two dimensions outside. What does that mean?

Right, it's very simple. When you look around, and I suggest you go do it at night, the sky is clear, you look up at the sky and you see, of course, you still see what's on around you, the houses and so on, and then you look into space. And then you realize when you look into space, you realize that whatever is out there, there are two dimensions, and it's almost too simple.

There are things in space, galaxies, billions of planets, galaxies of suns, there are things in space, and there is space when you look outside, that is obvious. And when you look into space, the vastness of space is almost, it's beyond anyone's comprehension. When you look out into that vastness with a few things in it, so-called things, you see, it is awe-inspiring to look out into space.

And when you truly look, your mind becomes still. You can't explain space. They've tried, but they didn't get very far.

And then as soon as you start speaking about space, you ask questions, well, okay, how far does it go? Well, then some say, well, it goes on forever, forever. And what's behind that?

And others say, well, it curves back upon itself. And then you think, okay, but then what is outside this thing then? There must be something outside if it curves back.

Impossible, totally incomprehensible. But what you can think about is the things in space. Oh, you can actually get a telescope and look, oh, there's stars that's in such and such a star.

And then you can collect data about it. You can think about it. You can measure the light frequency that comes from it.

You can work out how big it is, how many light years it is away. That you can think about. Space, you can't really think about.

So when you look outside, there is space and things in space. And even here in this room, there are things in this room. And another, what is easily overlooked, there is space.

Without it, nothing could be here. And the strange thing is the same is inside you. There are things inside you which are thoughts.

Perceptions, thoughts, emotions. You look, there's a sense perception. The sense perception becomes a nerve impulse.

A nerve impulse is decoded in some way that nobody understands. And then something is recreated in your mind as a thought form, which is the sense perception, a thing. So whatever you see is a thing, it's an inner thing.

A thought that you think is also a thing. Anything that arises inside you is something. And for most people, that's all there is to their lives.

All they know is the things inside them with which they are identified as me. What they don't know is just as outside there are things and there is the space in which the things appear, the same is inside you, there are things. And there is a vast space or spaciousness inside you also, which is actually as deep and as vast as what you see out there and cannot think about.

And that space, we could also call it stillness, an inner field of stillness in which thoughts happen because a thought is a thing. When you allow the things in your life in this moment to be as they are, also allow the things inside you to be as they are, thoughts come, emotions come, you perceive whatever is in the field of awareness now. When you allow something spacious becomes, is realized inside you, a sense of space opens up inside you and you realize there is in you what we could call object consciousness, which is the continuous stream of thinking, me, my story, my this, my that.

And there is also inside you space consciousness. And in many of you, that dimension is arising in your life. The unconditioned consciousness, not a form.

It's just like space, it's not a thought. You can't think about it and yet all thought comes out of it. So we are speaking of a sense of inner spaciousness that is there when you allow the form to be as it is, because allowing is space.

Without allowing in your life, everything is crammed full with objects. One after one, damn thing after another. One damn thing after, why doesn't life leave me ever alone?

And one thought comes after another and another. And the same history of humanity, as many of you know, I've quoted it a few times. One damn thing after another was Winston Churchill's definition of history.

And it's the same still, switch on the TV. Oh, they're doing it again. Wasn't the 20th century enough?

The horrors of that. Didn't they learn? No.

One, and there's no end to it unless something shifts in here. Unless something shifts in here in a sufficiently large number of people on the planet, otherwise it can only get worse. And so this is why we are here.

If this shift were not happening, why would so many people be here? Would so many people respond to the book, the power of now and other forms in which the new consciousness comes in? By the new consciousness, I mean space, the unconditioned.

It's not new, it's timeless, but we call it new because most humans up till now had no idea that it existed. So they were like people walking around destitute, not realizing that they have a bank account in Switzerland with $10 million in it. Please give me a dime.

Didn't you know that you are, this is a, these analogies are always a little defective because a million dollars wouldn't save you at all, wouldn't make any difference. So people not in touch with that dimension, not realizing that who they are in their essence is not anything, is not anything they had hitherto identified with as me, is not anything that happens in your life. People have been looking for themselves in things.

This is how thoughts become invested with self. So they're looking for themselves in situations as an enhanced sense of self through adding a few more things. It doesn't have to be material things.

Some never go beyond the level of needing to add more material things to finally feel that I am now fully myself. Others graduate, they move beyond material things and then try to add other things to themselves. Still the same pattern may operate, become knowledgeable, add more of that in a search for me.

Experiences, as many experiences as possible. I'm a collector of experiences. I'm looking for the next thing to experience.

Ah, where's food? Again, it's not food. The body doesn't want the food.

It wants only what's needed. But the need for more gets translated into the physical realm. The body doesn't want unlimited sex.

Occasionally it wants sex. It's part of the natural functioning of the body. But it's the obsession with sex or the obsession with food is the need for more, which is in the human mind to add more.

I feel so incomplete. Okay, let's have some more sex or let's go to the fridge. And so the need for more, which is deep seated in the human mind, more.

This is the need for future. The need for the next moment can become translated into the need for another sandwich or a piece of cake. And for a little while you feel, ah, ah.

And then again comes the feeling of lack, not enough. Ooh. Okay, where can I get more now?

TV, another experience. You watch violence on the screen. Anything to avoid spaciousness.

I will do anything to avoid spaciousness in my life. Okay, where's the next thing? And this is how people live.

And we have an entire culture, an entire civilization, an entire industry designed to a large extent to fill up people's, to satisfy people's need for more, to fill up people's inner space with more things. And it is rare, but it happens because there is a shift coming. It is rare that anything you see in the media, in films, for example, that that dimension comes in.

And sometimes it does, and it's wonderful to see it when the dimension of space comes into a film that is a mainstream film. And suddenly you have, wow, there's something there. And people may not know what it is.

And so they may find, they may say, oh, it's a great film. And something within them may recognize it, something there. So I don't see films very often, but occasionally I watch and it's wonderful.

I saw an old film recently, I only saw it a few months ago, The Horse Whisperer. And that is a film that has space in it. People don't realize when you watch it, and there are some other films, when you watch it, certain space arises inside you also, a stillness, there's certain instances.

And so I could probably name a few, but you will see it, you'll know it when you see it. It's beautiful when it comes through the mainstream media and a different dimension comes in. So, but to a large extent, it's still, let's avoid that.

Let's just not find your reality, not who, I'm afraid. So the egoic entity which consists of thought forms and emotional forms doesn't want to look at space because it consists of form of things. So, okay, I want just more to action, but it can't do much because there is a vastness inside you and no matter how disturbed, no matter how non at peace, not at peace, a human being is, in each human being, that dimension, we could call it space, we could call it stillness, we could call it peace, it cannot be destroyed.

No matter what happens to you in your life, and there may be some of you to whom dreadful things happened, perhaps in your childhood, because many dreadful things happen in this world at this very moment in many parts of the planet. Not only the obvious things, also where you don't see it in families everywhere. No matter how dreadful things, whatever dreadful things happened to you in your life, that dimension could never be destroyed or harmed, affected in any way.

There's a temptation when something dreadful happened to you in your life to continue to identify with that image that something dreadful happened to you. It is good, of course, to acknowledge the pain you feel. It's very important to allow it to be.

That's very important. Not to carry an identity around with you. I'm such and such.

That is heavy. See, realize who you are beyond that. And it also applies if you did something in your life to someone, because you were unconscious, you couldn't help it, this is humanity.

Don't carry with you the self-image of someone who did that. It was one of the expressions that human unconsciousness can take. And what is human unconsciousness?

Unconsciousness is complete identification with a conditioned mind, that's all. And there's nothing ultimately personal in it. It is not who you are.

It gets mixed up with the I, with the now. So we are, the world is in a, seems to be deteriorating, but it's deteriorated for a long time. The unenlightened state of consciousness, of unconsciousness, what we don't see, especially these days on the news, is that something is emerging at the same time.

And it often happens that the old unconsciousness deteriorates as the new arises simultaneously. So you, for example, you cannot, even a limited example, there was a spiritual awakening that's here in the 60s. There was an enormous influx suddenly of people disidentifying from things that they had hitherto identified with.

In other cases, they identified with something, some new image, yes, that happened also. But there was some space arising, a little bit, and then become obscured again, but there was an arising of that which was not conditioned, which occasionally, yes, turned into conditioning also, but that's fine. And that coincided, there was the Vietnam War, which people said awful things.

But at the same time, there was the unconsciousness which became so obvious. The unconsciousness that is in the human psyche became so obvious when you look at what it is doing. And you can look at the whole 20th century and see what humans have done to other humans throughout the 20th century.

Incredible suffering, oh God, no. Don't fall into the temptation of believing that what you see on the TV screen is all there is. When you watch TV, I recommend that you don't watch all day long, especially these days.

When you watch the news or anything else, you may, don't underestimate the importance of your state of consciousness at that moment. I'm not saying don't do anything. Whatever you do, you will do, but let the doing come out of the unconditioned, not the conditioned.

So when you watch images on the screen, death and destruction, even without a wall, many images on the screen of death and destruction that you see in the news, and if that were not enough, they recreate, the fictions on the screen are death and destruction, amazing. It's not enough to watch the news, then you watch a film that shows the same thing. When you watch the news, don't underestimate your state of consciousness as you watch and be aware.

Yes, there may be, you may feel emotions arising in you as you watch, but be prior to the emotion. What or who or what is watching those images? Who or what is feeling those emotions at that moment?

Sense, can you sense as you watch the field of presence, of now, of consciousness, of awareness that you are and allow those things to be there, not saying they are good, they are at that moment. In other words, be there as awareness, which is what you are, as you are at this moment. It may be a little easier at this moment to be sitting here and to, let's put it this way, this is the ultimate secret, to be aware of awareness in yourself.

And when we put that into language, we have already created a non-existent duality because it's not that you are aware of awareness. That seems there's two things here. There's not you and awareness.

You are awareness. You are consciousness prior to form. Without that, this would not be.

Even when you dream, you wake up and you say, oh, it was all unreal. It was only a dream. Well, not the dream wasn't totally unreal because without consciousness, there would have been no dream.

So the consciousness in which the dream happened was the one thing that was real in the dream, not the forms that were happening in it. Ultimately, they were like smoke, like clouds. And here, ultimately, the one thing that is real is your consciousness, the essence of who you are, which is one with the consciousness, to know yourself as consciousness or awareness.

So the way I put it just now is as you sit here, yes, there are things in your field of perception yes, seeing happens, hearing happens, an occasional thought comes. What am I going to have for dinner tonight? What's going to happen tomorrow?

Because most thoughts are about future or sometimes about past. Yes. Is that all there is?

Haven't you overlooked something? Oh, consciousness, stillness, space. Inner space within which it all happens.

Oh, that is the deepest meaning of now beyond the forms of now. Because the forms are not always what you might choose through the mind. But if you can be aware of awareness in your daily life, that is the unconditioned is then alive in you, so to speak, words are all limited.

And then you go into a situation and there is a power in you that is greater than anything that you have learned. It is also a space of no thought. And that's essential to realize because otherwise you may be sitting here still after all this trying to figure out the essence of what we are talking about.

And that is the one thing that you cannot figure out through the mind. The essence of this evening is not something that you could work out through the mind. So what is the essence?

The possibility of being in a space of no thought. And many of you, you may not know this, the state of thoughtless awareness in which there's no loss of consciousness, very alert, deep knowing, but not conceptual. That state in many of you is already arising.

You may not even know it because to the mind, it is completely insignificant because the mind is thought and thoughts are forms, objects in consciousness and objects in consciousness don't know about space consciousness, consciousness itself. So you may find when you wake up in the morning, there may be, you open your eyes and there is simple spacious awareness for a few seconds. Then you may find when you lift a cup of coffee or tea in that moment, there's no thought.

There is a simple awareness of the movement and just a field of awareness in which it happens. There may be many instances, you may be sitting at a traffic light in your car and there's a moment of no thought. And then thought comes in again and say, oh, remember your problems.

You must think about this now. Now, you have great problems. There is no person by the way, who does not have problems because problems arise out of identification with things, with objects and objects are short lived.

They're not reliable. They let you down, situations let you down. People let you down.

Sooner or later, every object lets you down. Every situation lets you down. You could become famous and then you're not happy.

It let me down. I thought this was going to be it. And that is amazing.

This is, and then you may find yourself looking at a tree and there's a space of no thought in which the perception happens, which is a stillness. A life stillness. And to the mind, it's not significant.

How does that help me solve my problems? It transcends problems. Problems are to do with identifying with thought forms.

There are no problems. What do you mean there are no, look at the world situation. Isn't that a problem?

No, it's not a problem. It's suffering. It's happening now.

Problem is thought form. In the now, you may have a challenge, never a problem. A challenge you meet by giving it attention.

And if you give it thoughtless attention, which is, you look at it. And out of just that small space of no thought, just pure aware presence, comes the right action if it's needed. That's a challenge.

And that's how some people have found the amazing shift that happened inside them in a moment of an accident, last few seconds before an accident. The car was coming towards you at 100 miles an hour. And suddenly, no thought, a sudden disidentification from thought forms, consciousness moving out of thought forms into its pure state of consciousness, looking.

And then they survived. And then they said, a strange thing happened to me. The car was coming towards me.

I knew there was going to be an accident. And it seemed as if things slowed down and there was no fear. I felt incredibly peaceful.

Although I knew I could die, just that incredible sense of peace, wakeful, extreme alertness in that peace. That's what they said, couldn't explain. And other people in extremely dangerous situations went into that state and they acted out of that state.

In other words, totally unpremeditated, spontaneous right action happened when the situation occurred that thinking, the conditioned mind could not possibly have dealt with. It doesn't know enough. It's not fast enough.

It doesn't have the information. It cannot deal with true emergencies. Thinking, so sometimes it happens that naturally thinking steps collapses and something takes over that is far more powerful than thought, not different from thought.

Thought is an aspect of the vastness of consciousness, but this is when the unconditioned takes over and it's always still, alert, present. And out of that, the act or action happens. There's no doer in the doing.

And then the situation is over. And then the old, usually the old mind patterns come back. But sometimes something is left in that person, an opening is left in that person that faced death, for example, it was death, faced death and looked death in the face and suddenly the shift happens.

So for some, it becomes an opening that then becomes the transformation of consciousness. And the same in the moment of creation in an artist and even a scientist, the creative impulse, the realization comes out of no thought, still aware, alert, presence. And that is grace.

This is when space comes into your life, grace comes into your life and you are then supported by life. The struggle of me trying to make it goes away. It's like somebody who is learning to swim.

When I first learned to swim, I remember the struggle of keeping myself above water. And then somebody said, try this. I don't know if you can do this.

I learned in the Mediterranean, which has a lot of salt in it. He said, try this, breathe in and then you can just float. And I did and, oh, the water carries me.

Space and grace happen to be similar in the English language. And that's beautiful. Grace means something beyond the form that as which you appear temporarily.

Here comes in something that's beyond that, the greater intelligence. And also the word that has been misused so much, love, true love, not the egoic love that says, I want you, don't you ever leave me. It's one of, in the Spanish language, there are two words for love.

The usual one, the one that's mostly used is to do with the certain wisdom sometimes embodied in language. Te quiero means I love you in its normal way, the egoic, which really translated means I want you. So in Spanish, I want you and I love you are the same.

And then there is a deeper, which is very rarely used. They say it's poetic, which would be te amo, I love you, which is the love that is beyond ego. That is the love that can only be there when there is space.

It is inseparable from space. So how does that operate? A human being comes into your life.

It may be just a brief encounter or someone you've known for a long time. Here you, there's an encounter. What the Course in Miracles calls, whenever two human beings meet, it is a holy encounter.

I would add, it is only potentially holy. And when that potential is realized, a meeting of two human beings is beautiful. Even if they are pretending to be engaged in some superficial interaction, like somebody is buying a newspaper and say, I'll have a copy of the LA Times, please.

If you still buy it in shops. And then you, how much? Okay, keep the change or I'll have the change.

But there's a moment of, are you meeting that human being? Or is that human being reduced to a form identity, a function, a role? Is that what you're doing to them?

That's not a holy encounter. Holy encounter is when you can look upon a human being, no matter how briefly, in a moment of spacious, aware presence. Just, there's no thought in it.

It's just consciousness perceiving. Knowing yourself as the perceiving consciousness, not concept, you might not, this is just one way of putting it. I lived like that for years.

But after the shift happened in me, and I couldn't have said what I'm saying now, if somebody had said to me, oh, you now know yourself as unconditioned consciousness, I would have said, what do you mean? I don't know what you're talking about. All I knew was peace.

There's such peace. Wherever I go, it's peaceful. Whoever I meet, there's peace as an underlying field.

The middle of traffic, there's peace as an underlying field. That's all I knew. For years, I couldn't say much about it.

So what happened to you? I said, well, I was always in turmoil. It was dreadful.

And suddenly, I've been at peace ever since. Very deep, beautiful peace. Don't know.

That's all I can say. And then after years, I talked to other masters, teachers, masters, and they said, zen, zen, a few zen people. And they said, one master said, zen?

What's that? No thought. That's how they talk sometimes.

No thought. And if you don't get it, they may hit you. And he said that, and I said, oh, my God.

I realize now that for the past few years, I haven't been thinking very much at all. That's where the peace comes from. Well, I didn't know.

And then some others added a few more things. So gradually, I could say a little bit more about it. And then I recognized it when others, no matter what traditions came, whether they were Buddhists or mystical Christians or Hindu or any Sufis, whatever tradition, I recognized whenever the truth was being pointed to, I said, oh, yes, that's what they're talking about.

Oh, it's so simple. It's everywhere. So two human beings meet and there's a flow of, one could almost say a current of awareness that is there as the sense perception happens.

And another aspect of that, of course, is allowing this moment to be as it is. And this moment is taking the form of this human being, forms change continuously. So you allow this form to be, and there is the outflow of attention, of awareness.

And now there is a true, you are meeting beyond the roles that you play on the surface level of this world. Because on the surface level of this world, you meet humans playing their respective roles. One person plays the role of customer and the other person plays the role of employee.

Or you play the role of doctor and the other one is the patient. Or you play the role of father or mother. Dangerous roles, if you completely identify with them.

If you completely identify with father or mother, you will continue to play the role even when your children are 30 and 40. Does that sound familiar to some of you? Completely identified with being a mother.

I know what's best for you. When they're 50, the mother's still... It's beautiful to play the role of father or mother, but to be identified exclusively with any role is a dreadful limitation and brings suffering.

So I can be a mother, but can also be there as space for the child to be, to give the child space, to be able to look at the child without some movement of thought that says, you should be doing this, now do that. Why didn't you do that? To just look, to just give attention, to listen.

Listening and looking, that I'm using these conventional words, meaning the flow of awareness which can flow into listening and looking, but it's not, the looking itself isn't important. The listening, the words themselves are not that important. The child may be talking about what happened at school, but there is space.

And that's the greatest gift that frees you of the roles you play. Not that you don't play them anymore, but they have become spacious. There's a lot of space around the roles.

And then you become much more effective even in the function, even in the roles you play. You become a much better mother or father or employee or boss or doctor, no matter what the roles are when you are not exclusively identified with a role. Imagine meeting a doctor who is just, and there are many of these days who are just doctors because they are so identified with, their mind is crammed full with stuff.

They've been conditioned like that since childhood. So they don't really, they're not there. You are the case history.

Okay. Take that five pills a day. This, that, this, this, this, this.

They hardly look at you. They're so burdened, one patient after another. Okay.

Next. And then there's a doctor who may be equally busy, but gives you attention just a moment. And so goes beyond the role and is there as aware presence.

And you feel suddenly, oh, it's so good. There's space here. And as another human gives you space, space arises within you too.

And it feels good to be there. And then the doctor just makes one or two little remarks, which were not premeditated, which came out of that space, that stillness in him or her, which help you greatly. He said something.

I know some doctors who work in that way. They are enormous blessing to all their patients. Not that they neglect their form identity.

The form identity becomes incredibly enhanced through going beyond form. Ah. So you honor the world of form, but are not trapped in it, not consumed by it.

Awful what it does to people when they don't know themselves as spacious awareness. What forms consume your life completely. My God, just keeps the space.

And then no matter where you go, there's always inspiration comes through that. Spontaneous action comes through that. Realizations, a sense of oneness with whatever you perceive, which is not there when whatever you perceive is immediately labeled and interpreted and given some form identity.

Not that you don't think anymore, thought still comes. You're no longer exclusively trapped in thought. So you can look at a tree and there's a moment of spacious awareness as you look, the perception happens.

Stillness, you look in and through stillness. And then perhaps your child asks, dad, mom, what's this? What's that?

That is the age when children start, that the human mind demands labels and you must satisfy it. That's the evolutionary stage of the child. The human mind wants the labels.

Dad, what's that? And the dad would normally, or the mom would normally say, it's an oak tree or it's a tree. And already the dad or the mom didn't realize that the prison is already forming for the child because the next time the child looks at a tree, the looking will almost not be because immediately it will recognize it, classifies it as, oh, a tree, tree, a tree.

But if the father or mother could say when the child says, what's that? Says, look, touch, see that? It moves in the wind and encourages the child to give more attention before the label is given.

And then you could say, we call it a tree. And then after you say it, encourage again to look. Look there, the movement of the leaves.

These are leaves, but now look, listen to the noise the leaves make and then listen. Don't get lost. In other words, don't get lost in abstraction.

Don't get lost in a totally conceptualized reality. It's a nightmare. A conceptualized reality.

You walk around with a conceptualized sense of self in a conceptualized reality. What a way to live. And then of course, it's not surprising when millions and millions of humans live in that way, what they create externally.

And all that is great in human beings, when you look, yes, a lot of human history is complete insanity, but also here and there, there are great and wonderful things that have come through human beings. Creations, artistic, otherwise, or sometimes just acts of great love, helping, great insights, great. Whenever this has come into, it's always been through that, not through the accumulations of the human mind.

The human mind may have come in at a later stage to give expression or form, but the insights, the greatest, greatly inspired things, the great works of music, of art, all came from the deeper level of the unconditioned. So one could almost look upon human history as a case history. If the whole of humanity were a human being, that human being would presumably be in a mental home, but if you looked at the case history of that human being, it would be a case history of insanity with a few lucid intervals, beautiful lucid intervals here and there.

And those are only pointers to what is possible, but lucid intervals are no longer enough now. Humans need to enter that state, and that's a limited way of putting it, and it is happening, they are doing it, it is happening, the doing and the happening are one. Because sometimes people ask me, well, isn't it happening anyway?

Yes, it is, but you still have to do it. Your doing is the happening. So what do I have to do?

Nothing. Allow this moment to be as it is. Well, isn't that a doing?

No, not really. Everything else is a doing, just this. And naturally, the aware presence is already there.

It doesn't need to be brought about. It is only obscured, that's all. So it is very true when some of the, you may have read some of the Buddhist masters, they sometimes say, you are already enlightened.

And that's a strange thing to say, but it is true. It is not true if that becomes a thought form in your head, then it leads to more trouble. If you walk away and say, okay, I'm already enlightened.

But in a deeper sense, of course, it is true that the consciousness that is unconditioned is already here in you now. Just, so the quickest way to it, it's so quick that it doesn't require time at all. If time comes in, that will be the obstacle.

The surrendered state of consciousness that says yes to what is, that's all. And then there's space. The yes brings the space or makes you realize the space that's already there.

Have space in your life or realize that what happens in your life or what does not happen in your life is not absolutely important. Relatively, yes, but not absolutely. Your state of health, your finances, your work situation, your relationships, your home situation.

Those are the usual levels that bring problems or those things are relatively important. It is good to honor all of those. This is the level of form, but perfection is not to be found there.

You get one right and the other one leaves you. Nothing that happens in your life is that important and nothing can give you yourself or take away yourself. No gain in life can give you yourself and nothing that you lose is really significant as far as who you are is concerned.

So there comes a freedom with that, a space between you and what happens also. And here too, a little paradox comes in. What happens tends to be more benign, more benevolent when there is space in your life.

As I said earlier, grace comes, support comes. You are no longer living your little life. You are lived by the greater life, by the one life.

That's the only way the world can change when humans realize that. And the most important change is in you now, not the next moment. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

2002-Eckhart-Tolle-Mumbai-Bombay-Talk-Power-of-Now

[Speaker 1] (3:00 - 4:06:41)

We were welcomed in all those places that we visited in India very warmly with great openness. It's now my turn to welcome you here to this gathering, not lecture, not workshop, just a gathering. Not that long ago it would have been inconceivable, absurd even, for a western form person to give a spiritual talk in India.

What could he possibly teach us, he would have said. We've been at it for so long. The cradle of human spirituality is here, sublime scriptures, sages.

But the truth always finds new channels. And the truth is now emerging on this planet as never before. And one could consider it an advantage that this speaker has little knowledge of ancient scriptures.

So the truth needs to seek new channels to express itself through. And sometimes new channels can have a power and an immediacy that the old maps or signposts, beautiful and profound as they are, not always have because they've been there for so long. And then suddenly you see the truth again, you hear it, and you recognize it again in perhaps the scriptures that you have been reading or reciting for so long.

And it has renewed power also. So what is this truth? And that truth is the only subject matter of this gathering.

I'm not talking about many things, only one thing, today and tomorrow. All the words point to that one thing, and it's not even a thing, but language is limited. All the words point to the possibility of the transformation of human consciousness.

And if that's a little abstract, all the words point to the possibility of that transformation within yourself. Not in the distant future, but here and now. And so that is also the essence of all scriptures, the possibility of human transformation.

A completely different state of consciousness from the one that has dominated human history up to this point. The most profound question, the only vital question to ask yourself, of course, is the question, who am I? And that's the question, the primordial question of all spiritual endeavor has been that question.

Am I more than what I appear to be? More than this temporary physical form? More than my past, which is not very much?

My future, which is not very much either? And the story of me that is the conditioning of my mind? Is there more or is that it?

And a few beings who discovered who they were beyond the form, the physical form and the psychological form of me, they pointed the way towards that realization. But in most cases, it became belief. You believed that you were more than that, and that's a little bit comforting, but ultimately not liberating.

How can I know who I am beyond the psychological form of me, the content of my mind that I identify with, and the physical temporary vehicle? How can I know that beyond doubt? And this is what this gathering is about, knowing yourself at the deepest level.

There are two levels here of teaching, if you can call it that. It's not teaching because I'm not adding anything to your mind. There are two levels to our being together here, the words and the energy field out of which the words arise.

One could say the words, they all point us to that, nothing else. Not meant to be explanations so that you understand the universe more completely. That wouldn't free you.

And whatever thought you could add to your mind would only be one further fragment, a further perspective, never the complete truth. All thought is a fragment and a perspective. So not to get attached to anything that you hear and believe that it in itself contains the truth.

It is only a signpost or a perspective, it's never it. So don't expect too much from the words. The mind expects too much and says, please define further, you haven't quite defined yet.

You go into further and further differentiation, which is very satisfying to the mind, but I won't give you that. We will keep it very simple. Therefore, it is helpful as you sit here to allow the words to be there, but pay some attention to the gaps between the words.

Brief silences, an undercurrent out of which the words come. Just acknowledge that, not through thought, but through the simple act of being attentive to that. And what is that?

One could say, being attentive to nothing, the nothing that underlies the things, the words. Pay attention to that. In other words, that requires you to be in a certain state of alertness, relaxed alertness, as you sit here.

Because only if there is this relaxed alertness can you be attentive to the underlying stillness. And you may notice, if you are attentive to that, it's only through the stillness in yourself that you can become aware of that underlying field. And here we are already getting to the essence, before I've explained anything.

The essence of this gathering is here every minute. I'm not building up to the climax, the final explanation that you are going to receive at the end, tomorrow evening. It's already, the essence is contained here every moment.

So, as you sit here, see if you can pay attention to that and observe what happens within yourself as you pay as much attention to the words as the gaps. The moment you pay attention to a gap, there's a gap in your own thought stream. Because it's only that that can be aware of the stillness.

And there already is arising that in you that is not conditioned. It's the possibility is there every moment for that to arise. We are going to see here the absurdity of looking to the future for an answer to that question, who am I?

So, what this is about is that state of consciousness in which you know yourself to be the unconditioned, pure consciousness. Not anything that forms the content of your mind. And to sit here is a little bit frustrating for the thinking mind.

Because our gathering is not thought-based and is not meant to add to the accumulated content of your mind. There's enough there already in everyone. More than enough knowledge.

More than enough noise. Now, you may have noticed a characteristic of human beings and that is that they live with a continuous stream of thoughts that move through their minds. Very rarely in normal existence do you encounter a gap in that continuous stream of thinking.

And that is the only species humans have that characteristic. Flowers don't have that problem because it becomes a problem for most people. Animals don't.

So, when you look at the world of nature, there's often a very surprising contrast between the insanity to a large extent of the human condition and the sanity that is there in an animal or in a tree. The rootedness in being. Being completely itself.

Every animal is still rooted in that. Very few humans are themselves. They are an image of themselves.

Mind-created, associated with a continuous stream of thinking. The accumulated content of the mind that humans identify with, which means derive their sense of self from their thought processes. So, the beginning of not knowing who you are is when you think you start to learn who you are.

You're being taught your name. Certain sequence of sounds the child is taught. And their parents say, that's you, you are...

Oh, first identification comes with a thought, which is the name, as me. And now to that primordial thought, many other thoughts will cling to that me that ultimately is just a thought. It then collects experiences that stick to it.

Knowledge, viewpoints, opinions, all kinds of personal and collective conditioning, your surrounding culture. Other thoughts come in there, other forms of mental conditioning. And finally, institutions do it to you.

They act to it very strongly. And then you emerge triumphantly, having graduated from university, thinking you know who you are. And then society gives you a particular function.

And that becomes you, again a mind image, no more. And that becomes your sense of self. Whether it's a work, family relationship, mother, father, brother, this, that, you play a role.

The surrounding culture tells you who you are. You accept it or you react against it, which is another form of conditioning. So what you have then is basically a mental story.

That is who you think you are. Me and my story. Me and my past.

And you need to, the compulsion to think, which is in every human being, which is so normal that nobody even questions it, derives from the fact that you derive your sense of self from thought. So to stop thinking would be threatening to that sense of self that is derived from thought. Then me, the little me, as I sometimes call it, my story, the script in my mind that has been put in there, and this is the limit of self-knowledge for most people.

And even that they don't know much about. It just operates through them. They are forced to act out their conditioning.

They go through their lifetime simply acting out the conditioning of their minds. And that is what all the great teachers recognized as a fiction. That is what the Buddha simply called the self, not the self.

There is another self that is the unconditioned. But in Buddhist terminology, that is the false self that the Buddha recognized as an illusory entity. So here we have a sense of identity that is derived from the accumulated content of my mind.

Me. Now, what kind of a sense of self is that? Is it satisfying?

Is it at ease? Very rarely. Is it happy, in a state of joy?

Very rarely. There are brief interludes in that sense of self when you feel things are going fine. They never last for very long.

Problems arise continuously. Conflict situations arise continuously. In other words, that sense of self is not satisfying, not fulfilling.

Underlying that sense of identity there is a great sense of insufficiency, of lack, of not enough, of not being fully myself yet, of not having arrived yet. Unease, something missing, something vital missing. And many people are not conscious of that directly.

It only expresses itself through them as a continuous compulsion to seek self-completion through adding more content to me in order to make myself complete. So there is the search, the compulsive search in that state of consciousness for more in order to find that fulfillment, that sense of being fully, truly myself. The strange fact then is that that sense of self that is mind-based in no human being feels complete, feels fulfilled for long.

All you can get is brief moments of the illusion of fulfillment, the illusion of having arrived when you've just added something to your sense of self, you've just added it. A good example of that is you win a lot of money suddenly, you add all that. Surely with 10 million dollars I'm free now, surely.

And for a little while you feel complete and then very soon you realize that didn't complete me either. The same problems that I had in my life now become magnified in a bigger mansion rather than in a little house. I experience the same problems again, the same relationships.

And then you add a possession for a moment. You drive a big car and your sense of self has expanded into the car and you feel, oh, it's fulfilling. Other people admire the car, which means you, they admire you because the self has flown into that.

You might try a big house, so the sense of self gets even bigger, flows into that. Me, surely now I have arrived with a mansion. And sooner or later the same sense of lack or dissatisfaction comes in again.

And you sit in the big house, it wasn't quite, maybe it's not big enough. Others have similar big houses. Or maybe it's simply a relationship.

I could add that there must be a man or woman here on this planet that is destined to complete me. And so you start looking for the one or whoever who is going to complete, to fulfill that longing, the ache for being fully yourself. So everybody, you're engaged in looking for yourself through this, that, that, attempting to add more content to the mind, because it's the mental image that does it.

It's not the car. The car is there, but it's the mental image that you have of me and my car. The house is there, but it's the mental image of me and my house.

And so you meet someone, you fall in love. And again, a brief moment of feeling, yes, that's it, I'm free. And a few weeks, months, maybe a year, unlikely, but later.

The first doubt creeps in. Was that the right person? Is he or she going to complete?

It doesn't seem to be working that well anymore. You signed a contract. Why don't you do what you're supposed to do?

Make me feel complete. And no human being can do that. No situation can do that.

Nothing can do that. So the search continues, the compulsion to reach out. Now where do you reach when you need to add more to me in the search for finding yourself?

You're reaching out to the future, continuously, because it's only the little me says, yes, you're not enough yet. I haven't arrived yet, but you have future. You have enough future left to make it.

So the overriding concern of that sense of self is now with future. On all levels, the next moment, if you are trapped in that illusory sense of self, which still almost everybody is, the next moment is always regarded as more important than this one. So there is a continuous, and this is so normal, nobody even notices it, is that reaching out must get there, the next.

Just that continuous pull of that mental projection that is future. The whole civilization is built on that. Everybody is rushing towards future in the big cities of the world.

And seeking myself ultimately. Completion, knowing myself fully through this, that or that. And then you realize the dissatisfaction.

You're not arriving. And then you become a spiritual seeker. And you begin to seek for completion of your sense of self through adding something in a more subtle realm of spirituality and experience.

You begin to project a state to be achieved. And this is the danger when you come and listen to talks like this one. Because the speaker might say, speak of the possibility of the transformation of human consciousness, a state that is liberated from conditioning.

And then the little mind, the me, the mind-based self comes in and says, this is what I've been looking for all my life. This is good. Now, just tell me how to get there.

Tell me what steps I need to take to get there. In other words, the little me is asking to be given more future to complete itself. So the same mindset still operates in many spiritual seekers.

They don't realize that they are still under the compulsion to move into the future and grasping at a mental projection that is there. So you need to watch that in yourself, that continuous movement towards the next moment. The psychological need for future to complete me.

This is how the egoic self attempts to arrive to make it, so that the story of me becomes complete. So you're looking for that and you're making even spiritual search into an attempt to add something to me. And after 20 years or 30 years, you become frustrated there too.

You say, I've been engaged in spiritual seeking and still haven't arrived. Again, many times perhaps an experience came and it was good and then it was just another experience. And then you're ready to listen to this message.

Everybody needs time, paradoxically, to listen to this message. And the message is, you do not need time to know yourself, to be free, to enter the transformed state of consciousness. How does that work?

Is that another belief? You can then go home and say, I believe what he said. I'm enlightened already.

I don't need time. And for a little while that illusion, you can hold that illusion and sooner or later, probably sooner, life will show you that, no, suffering arises again. How do we realize this truth directly here and now?

You need to look at the main characteristic of the egoic self, how it avoids this truth continuously. And the main characteristic of that mind-made sense of self is that it lives in a state of continuous denial and resistance of the present moment, of now. Because it is under the delusion that only through future can it fulfill itself and get the more that it needs to add to itself.

So it's not interested in this moment ever, because this moment is not offering the more. This moment, in fact, more often than not, is a limitation. It's not giving you the more that you think you need for self-completion.

So you look to the future and you attempt to get away from this moment because it is regarded as an obstacle to your self-completion. And this is unconscious. But if you look, you can see how, most of the time, that mind-conditioning is operating, that the present moment is regarded as an obstacle that I need to get beyond.

It works on all levels, the smallest level, even when you're just busy doing something. It's always an obstacle because you want to be doing, get ready, get to the end of that doing, on all levels, on all scales. So an essential aspect of that false sense of self is it has a hostile relationship with now.

Now, since the now is all there is, which that egoic self doesn't know, it's a conceptualized sense of identity that only lives through past and future, it ignores the vital fact that all there ever is in your life is now. Your life is never not now. Everything now is inseparable from life or from being.

It never was not now. It will never not be now. And to the mind-made self, the now is an enemy.

It makes life, the only place where life can be, it makes that into something that internally it resists, denies, reduces to a means to an end and runs away from continuously. If that is not the essence of dysfunction, what is? And so, of course, when you look at human history, you can see if humans produced this madness that is human history, there must be a deep fundamental dysfunction in the human mind.

There must be a deep current of madness to produce the madness that is human history. And so, all teachings have seen the truth, that deep dysfunction of the human mind and called it suffering, Buddha, wherever you go, you find suffering because you're carrying the structure of suffering in your mind. It is the essence of suffering to deny the now.

To live not in alignment with all there is, which is now, is the essence of suffering. You can call it illusion, you can call it sin, you can call it unconsciousness. They've all pointed to that as a fundamental dysfunction and they also all pointed to the way beyond it.

Now, the way beyond it to which all teachings and teachers point has been incorporated by the dysfunctional mind in order to add to the content and make it into belief structures that I can identify with and make myself feel bigger through the identification. Instead of using these beautiful signposts, you've identified with the signposts, started to believe in the signposts or worship the signposts or collective signposts, comparative study of signposts. All you need is one.

How does this post, this says Rome and that says Rome, how does the... And then you have egoic identification with our belief structure and yours because a further madness of the egoic sense of self, it loves to be in conflict with something or someone because conflict defines its limited sense of self. It strengthens the sense of me, which is always looking to enhance itself and protect itself because it's so insubstantial, that illusion.

So the illusion not only lives in a state of hostility towards now, it lives in a state of needing conflict in order to make itself feel stronger. If I have an enemy in the form of a situation or a person, I feel more strongly who I am. And this is...

the main enemy of that sense of self is the now. So you can see, built into the structure of the human mind is that which it is always trying to run away from. The sense of lack, of not enough, of need conflict, it needs that to keep itself going.

So it may be personal or it may be collective. This is how, if you derive your sense from a collective egoic identification such as nation or religion, you can see how they need their enemies to define more strongly who they are through the enemy gives you a stronger sense of us or me. So the little egoic me says, I'm looking for peace, I'm looking for liberation, I'm looking for happiness.

But in reality, it doesn't want that. It couldn't tolerate peace for very long. It's looking for the problem.

It's looking for conflict to enhance itself. It's looking to be right, which requires somebody else to be wrong. It's looking to diminish some other being out there, because in its delusion, it feels that if I can diminish that person, I'm now myself.

And so that self that you walk around with is that conceptualized self in the head with emotions that accompany it. That is the essence of limitation of not knowing who you are. How do we step out of so many thousands of years of conditioning?

How do we become free? Now we've said the possibility of the transformation of consciousness is here now. How can that be true if every human being carries all that conditioning within?

Now the good news is this transformation of human consciousness goes beyond the personal, goes beyond. It is, one could say, a planetary or cosmic event. And it wants to happen.

For the first time, it wants to happen urgently. Because if the old conditioned mind, egoic mind, lives on this planet, controls, dominates this planet for another 100 years, it would be the end of the planet and the human race. All we would see is an increasing acceleration of madness and dysfunction, an increasing destruction of the planet and of the environment, increasing madness and conflict with ever greater powers of destruction through science and technology, which to a large extent simply amplify the dysfunction that is already there.

So for the first time on this planet, that transformed state of consciousness wants to emerge through humans, through the human form. The flowering of human consciousness wants to happen now. In the past, a few flowers appeared here and there, rare flowers.

The Buddha, Jesus, ancient sages of India, here and there, never on any large scale. Now for the first time, that possibility is there because there is no way out anymore. We are running out of time.

And that's the good news. The fact that the planet and humanity is running out of time. The one thing that the egoic mind wants and needs, the worst thing that could happen to it, to any egoic entity, would be to tell them, you have no more time.

And it happens to some people when they go to the doctor. Only half a year? Surely that is not enough to complete myself.

This is awful. Only half a year left? Some people are told that.

And it is dreadful news to the egoic self to be told, you have no more time. And here on the planet now, it is a fact that we are running out of time. And that is not bad news, but good news.

Because that transformed state of consciousness does not happen through time or through future. There is now the possibility, because it is already emerging in and through human beings, millions potentially are now able to undergo that transformation of consciousness. And only one little thing is required for that to happen.

The future is of no use for that. There is one little thing that is required for that to happen within you now. And that little thing is to welcome the now, instead of resisting it internally, running away from it, or reducing it to a means to an end, to actually make the now the central focus of your life and internally align yourself with it, which is the end of the entire mind-made, fiction-based, story-based, conditioned sense of self.

Because it can only keep itself going through resistance, through making the now into an enemy, reducing it to a means to an end. The transformation of consciousness happens the moment you enter into a friendly relationship with the present moment. And that is, again, many egoic entities say, no, this is not what I want to do, this is not good advice, I have no desire to enter into a friendly relationship with this moment because I don't like it.

The egoic self therefore says, okay, I need to get out of here fast, out of this now that limits me so much, that gives me all this that I never asked for. Get me out of here. And so running towards the future again in the hope that the next moment is going to be better.

But when it comes, oh, it's this now again, this isn't what I want. You run away again, internally. And this is such a...

every human who is trapped in that madness. But so the little egoic entities say, this is not good advice. You're telling me to become friendly with this place that I don't want to be in.

And so when I do that, I will be stuck in this moment that I don't want to be in forever. And of course that is a delusion. If you run away internally from now, you get stuck in the unsatisfying now forever.

No matter where you go, you will find some form of limitation very soon. Some form of dissatisfaction again. Oh no, that wasn't it.

I'm going to look for a better moment. Maybe then I can accept and say yes and become friendly. I wait until the story of me has improved.

Better conditions, better relationship, better surroundings. Because when I make it and when the story of me has completed itself, then I will become friendly with the now. However, the story of me never completes itself.

And the time of becoming friendly with now never arrives when you're waiting for that.

Oh, so are we then saying that the very place, the very limitation that appears in front of you in this moment, that you should become friendly with that and not do anything about it or not try to change the situation? No, you do what you have to do.

If you fall into the water, you don't say, okay, this is where I am. I will make no attempt to get out. I accept this now.

Acceptance doesn't mean that action doesn't happen anymore. Action happens, but it doesn't arise out of dissatisfaction anymore. It arises out of a different state of consciousness.

And very effective action happens when you don't resist the now. And immediately action arises. But no longer through the conditioned entity of me.

No longer conditioned action, but action spontaneous that arises out of the unconditioned intelligence, out of which the whole universe has come, that expresses itself, manifests as this universe in form. That can then act through you. Very effective action.

But before that can happen, you need to open the portal. And you open this portal into now simply by allowing this moment to be as it is, which the egoic entity cannot do. At that moment, a vastness opens up within yourself through the yes to what is.

And you realize the futility, even madness, of arguing with is. How can you argue with something that already is at this moment? The suchness of it is as it is.

It always is as it is. So why not align yourself with that suchness instead of resisting it? Yes, but it's limiting me.

I'm in a prison cell, for example. My body isn't doing well. I find it hard to move.

I have so many limitations on my life. And how can I? Of course, most of you are not in prison cells, although there may be some who are listening to tapes, as they are, who are in prison cells.

But you will have other limitations in your life. There's no human being that does not. To have a body, to be this form, is already limitation.

Every form is limited. Every form is limitation. So what we are speaking of when we say to accept internally, completely, the suchness of this moment.

When we speak of that, what we are saying is to accept the form that appears in this moment. The condition of this moment. The person that's in front of you at this moment.

The place you find yourself in at this moment. Just this moment. Not a conceptual identity that you accept.

Not to say, okay, here I am, working in this boring job in a factory for 12 hours a day. I might as well accept, I have to accept it, that I am a poorly paid worker. No, no.

That's a conceptual identity in the head. It's an egoic story. The story that I am such and such is a conceptualized sense of self.

The very stuff out of which the egoic entity is made. All you accept is this moment, not some situation, some storyline in the head. That could be called resignation, which has nothing to do with what we are talking about.

Resignation is, I might as well accept that I am poor and I live in this dreadful place. That's my lot in this life. Okay.

Okay. No, no. You're just strengthening your mind-made sense of self.

It doesn't mind whether it's positive or negative. If you can have a sense of self that tells you I'm so miserable, in fact more miserable than most humans, that works quite well too. To give you an illusory identity, a conceptualized me.

We're not talking of this at all. Resignation or anything like that. No.

Acceptance of this moment. So the same person that said, okay, I might as well accept that I'm in this prison for the next 20 years and there's nothing. No.

Well, just here, I'm sitting on this chair, breathing. There are walls. There's a wall there, a wall there, a wall there, and another one there with a little window.

And there's the floor. And there's a little mat on which I sleep. And there's a bucket of water.

And there's a certain feeling of emptiness in my stomach. And this breathing is happening. This is this moment.

This is how it is at this moment. And I say yes to this moment as it is. Any form that this moment takes, and more often than not, it is some form of limitation, perceived as some form of limitation on your life because it's form, that you accept the very limitation.

I'm not saying you can't take action. We've seen already, action can arise. But in the meantime, it is as it is, even while I take action.

I've fallen into the water, but I'm in it now. Then action happens and I'm totally in that. No inner resistance.

Enormous power suddenly flows in that couldn't flow in when you were trapped in an egoic little entity. You've tied yourself into a knot in the totality of existence, which could be a beautiful part of that. There's this little egoic knot in the fabric of existence.

And the little knot says, me, me. And what is happening here? We untie the knot.

That's all. So you single out this moment. Give it attention.

Look at it. Looking literally, but metaphorically in a wider sense. Give this moment, in whichever form it appears, complete attention without needing to label it.

Because any labeling, which is mentally calling it this or that, is associated with the story of me. The story of me seeks to somehow find a label for this situation. Either it goes well with the story or it doesn't fit into the story.

But in either case it will label it as, great, good, I'll have that. Or in many cases, no, this is not what I wanted. But it's called this, it's called that, it's interpreted, it's labeled.

And it's not faced. You face this moment in whatever form it appears, completely. By giving it full attention.

Looking at it. Just looking. Not analyzing.

Not interpreting. Not labeling. Not making some further storyline out of it or trying to figure out how this fits into the story of me.

You simply give it your full attention. You can only do that if you have said yes to it. That the portal is now open.

That yes to the form that this moment takes opens the portal, so to speak. And suddenly what comes through this portal is unconditioned intelligence itself. And through that you look.

Not necessarily through the eyes. You give attention to the form of this moment. That attention is not thought.

Thought may come at some later stage. When suddenly a realization arises of what you have to do. And you do it.

And often realizations come. But first there is the ability to give your complete attention to this now. To the form that this now takes.

And that is an enormous thing. And that attention that you give has nothing to do with the story of me. It has nothing to do with whether this story of me, my life situation, my life circumstances, regardless of where you are in your life situation, you may be in an up or in a down, because they fluctuate.

Gain and loss. You may be in a palace. You may be in prison.

You may be sitting in a Mercedes. Or you may be sitting on a crowded bus. Regardless.

It has nothing to do with this ability to give attention. Which a prerequisite for that is to welcome this moment. The form it takes, even if it is a limitation.

And then you realize that there is more to the now than you could ever have suspected. And you may begin to realize the form that this moment takes changes continuously. But the form that this moment takes, the now, is not the now.

The now is deeper than the form as which it appears. Most people don't know that. They think that each day and each hour consists of many moments.

But that's not true, because there's only the now. It's always now. But they think there are many nows, because the appearance, the form that it takes changes continuously.

So your present now is you're sitting here, listening to these words. Then the now, when you're at home, the now will be you're sitting in a different environment. Different form.

Different humans. But it's still now. It's always now.

So by surrendering to the form of now, you go beyond form. This is the opposite of the way in which the conditioned egoic entity lives. Continuous opposition to now.

So you surrender, yes, surrender, to the very limitation that appears in this now. Surrender simply means you don't offer inner resistance to it. Yes, it is as it is.

No arguing with that. If you resist the form that this moment takes internally, through the resistance you strengthen your own form identity, the psychological form of me. Every time you resist or deny or run away from now, there's a contraction.

And most people live continuously in that state of unease and inner contraction. Because they are fighting. They are against it, this now.

And that strengthens the illusory sense of self, which is your form identity, the mental, psychological form of me. So you react to a form, a situation, a place, a person, whatever appears in the now. If it's wrong, it tends to happen a lot, so to speak.

If it's wrong, the mind says, wrong, wrong. If it's not wrong, it is as it is. And now, through non-resisting this form, that which is beyond form within yourself arises.

Through the simple act of surrender, of unconditional acceptance and giving it, what flows then through this portal that has just opened up is a field, a current of aware presence. And that current of aware presence looks, is the attention that flows out, is the unconditioned intelligence. And this is the, any situation that you look at in this way and face completely will be immediately dealt with by the unconditioned intelligence.

That the going mind has struggled against for a lifetime, or a hundred lifetimes, and it didn't change. And suddenly, as the unconditioned intelligence operates, immediately the situation changes. And that change comes about sometimes through spontaneous action that then happens through you, right, totally right action for that moment.

Or it comes through a sudden realization that comes, takes then the form of thought, but it came out of that state. And then it comes in the form of a thought of, oh, this is what I have to do. Or it comes as an external factor coming from you don't know where that suddenly does something to that situation.

Because you are now connected with the totality, the one consciousness. You are no longer a little knot, so it cannot flow very well through a knot. The current of life cannot very easily flow through a knot.

It's trying to, oh, I have to get through. So, of course, there's a little bit of intelligence coming through the human mind, but it's hard work and it's effort because there's an egoic knot there. And life is a struggle and you have to somehow make it.

And then you untie the knot. So it's the transformation. The essence of it is of such simplicity that the egoic mind, the story-based entity of me says, this can't be it.

I don't want to listen to this. Let's think about your problems, how to solve them. It doesn't want to listen to this.

If I gave it a complicated series of exercises and practices that in 10 years' time you can become good at and in 20 years' time will take you beyond your conditioning, then the little egoic entity would be very happy and go home from here and say, now I've really got something. He even handed out a folder and this lists the 20 steps I need to take, which would take me 20 years, but it's worth it. I can finally complete myself.

Great, I've got more time. But unfortunately, it's not getting there here. To see the simplicity of entering what we could call the surrendered state of consciousness, unconditional acceptance of whatever form this moment, the now, takes.

Then it no longer matters what form it takes. That will change quickly anyway, but you don't need it to change anymore. So, we asked the question initially, the only true question, who am I beyond that conditioned entity that I think of as myself that only consists of accumulated thoughts that I identify with as me?

Who am I beyond that accumulation of thoughts? And now, the thought-based entity would like to have an answer that it can add to the accumulated content and take home. Oh, he told me who I am, so you can add that.

Okay, now I've got the one big chunk of content that I've been waiting for and can add that to my mind. But of course, it doesn't work like that, because who you are beyond thought, beyond mind, cannot be found in the realm of content. And it is precisely here, as we surrender to the suchness of this moment, that that which is beyond form, because all thought is also form, that which is beyond form, that which is the essence of who you are, arises as, one could say, but be careful with any word that I give you, on a little pointer, a current of aware presence, which is very still, completely still, and totally alert and conscious.

And now you can look that it is that which then looks, works, flows through this form. Yes, it is a stillness, and far more than that. Yes, it is alive, vibrantly alive, and very still.

It is, as it is sometimes called in teachings that have arisen in this country, they have sometimes called it the self. Not to be confused with the false self that the Buddha recognized as an illusion, that is the story-based, mind-based entity, but the deeper, the one self. And it is there where you are one with the One.

It is there where you are one with the Source. One with it. The Source of all life.

And yes, there is deep peace, but vibrantly alive peace, in the recognition of that oneness. And you have always, already, been it. You have always, already, been saved.

One could say it has happened already. You just didn't know it, and there was a dream-like state of delusion. There is nothing that needs to happen to you, because it has happened already.

How could you look for that in the future, which doesn't even exist? Looking for yourself in some mental abstraction. So, in that deeper sense, of course, you may have heard certain teachers say, you are already enlightened, you are already free.

It's true. But not as a belief. Don't make it into mental content, then it's another illusion.

So, the surrendered state is that state of consciousness that is now arising. Maybe not all at once. Yes, it can only arise now.

The saying yes is the saying yes to now. But the momentum that is there, that comes from ages and ages of human collective conditioning, the wake-up call, a cell phone. Waking up is what this is, of course.

It is the awakening in which you realize that you have been immersed in a dream-like state, which is the state of self-identification with the stream of thinking and the emotions that accompany it. Your self was in that, in every little thought, this sense of me, me, me. In other words, continuous rounds of incarnations.

Incarnation, I'm using that in a slightly different sense from the conventional sense. Whenever you identify with any content, thought, you reincarnate into that thought, because your sense of self is now in it. So, you reincarnate.

That means finding your sense of seeking, your sense of self in a form. And each time you seek your sense of self in a form, you reincarnate into that form. So, people ask me, do you believe in reincarnation?

Is there such a thing as reincarnation? Every minute. Every minute you reincarnate.

It is definitely a fact. And that continuous compulsion to reincarnate into identification with form is the essence of delusion. Is the essence of that dream-like, trance-like state that is normal human consciousness or unconsciousness.

It's identification with that. And suddenly you hear the wake-up call, and the portal opens into now. And now the now is not resisted, interpreted, labelled.

It is as it is. The whole compulsion that is behind thought comes to an end with that act of surrender. Compulsive thinking is connected with resistance, resisting what is, that keeps it going.

And then thinking is not a problem anymore, because your self isn't in it. Thoughts still arise occasionally, and they are recognised as thoughts. Mind movement, wave movements.

Within that spaciousness that is presence, that is the current of awareness that flows through you. The wonderful spacious peace and stillness. And within that, occasionally, waves, wave movements, ripples come.

Thoughts, emotions. Fine. Not problematic anymore, because you don't reincarnate into them anymore.

You now know who you are. Not as a new label. You know yourself as the awareness, the spaciousness, the stillness.

Of course. You are never not it. And no matter how mad a human being looks on the surface, how mad, and mad means, the more you are totally identified with that, the more mad you become.

And no matter how mad a human being looks, underneath all that noise and turmoil is always the spaciousness. And it can sometimes be touched when that flows through you, through the acceptance of what is, that current. Sometimes, and quite often, that pierces through layers of mind and mental conditioning in the other human being and awakens that stillness and spaciousness.

It calls it forth. To some extent, this happens in this gathering, which is more than the words. It is, one could say, an energy phenomenon.

So that spaciousness has this power to awaken it in others. And that is an act of suddenly, and at first you think you are seeing something in this other person. You don't know what it is.

It feels good to be in the presence of that person. But it has nothing to do with the form of that person. It is because you recognize your own essence there.

But that is already the awakening of it. Because it is only because it is awakened from underneath layers of conditioning that this recognition can be there. So you always come to a teacher, not to meet the teacher.

Who would want to meet another? What for? You come to a teacher to meet yourself.

Just a reflection of the unconditioned state that you are a teacher just happens to be. You have become transparent through complete surrender. The self, the entity has become transparent and this is happening to you also.

This is just one way of putting it. You become open, transparent to that and you become an opening. And so suddenly you know who you are and who you always have been.

And you couldn't even call it anything. I am attempting to put some words there to use as pointers. But they are all inadequate.

Now this is important to realize. From the point of view of the interpreting, accumulating, labeling mind, from that perspective, as you enter this state of pure aware presence, which is to a large extent free of thought. Thoughts can drift in and out, but they become insubstantial.

And that state of such complete presence, through which you look, it is attention itself to the mind which only knows labels and judgments. That is a state of ignorance. It misinterprets that, it doesn't recognize it and says, but I don't know anything anymore.

It says, I don't even know who I am anymore. But it is not a state of ignorance only from the ignorant viewpoint of the limited conditioned mind. Is that a state of ignorance?

It is, in fact, a state of true intelligence. But the limited mind doesn't know that. This is important to point out, because otherwise the mind may trick you by throwing up certain thoughts and saying, don't go there, you become stupid.

You won't know what's going on anymore if you don't interpret it and call it something and categorize it and see where it fits into this or that, the story of me. If you don't figure out what this is all, you'll be lost. The opposite, of course, is true.

You've been lost for lifetimes. But be careful with the little thoughts that come up, which the mind throws up and suddenly you believe in a thought again that comes up through the mind. And the thought might be saying, oh no, don't go there.

Here you've worked so hard at judging and interpreting and you've worked hard at it for 50 years. Now to give all that up? Don't do that.

I've invested so much. And then you recognize it as a thought. And increasingly, as the aware presence arises, there is the ability in you to recognize thought as thought without getting drawn into each thought and completely believing and thinking that some thought can actually give you the truth.

And then you get lost into a little perspective which every thought is a tiny perspective on something. And you believe that this tiny little perspective is the truth. And then you identify with this tiny little perspective and say, this is how it is.

Let me tell you how it is. And then you give your judgments and interpretations. So you're completely lost, totally reincarnated into a tiny viewpoint of this mental position, not realizing the truth is so vast.

You could express the opposite mental position which would also be true. And then another one which would also be true. And the truth is only if you contain, able to contain, all mental positions without saying, there's the truth.

It's not in any one. And even spiritual discourse. There is not one statement that you can make that contains the entire truth.

It's just a perspective on it. And then you have to look at the abilities there to hold in that vastness all possible perspectives, allow them to be. So you can say, this is one that's quite nice, this perspective.

And then you look, oh, that one is also true. All thought is just a fragment, it's form, it's limited. So you don't get lost in thought anymore.

So it's no longer a problem, then thought is quite nice. It's no longer a troublemaker. But the thought that you identify with is troublemaking.

You know some people when you meet them in the morning at breakfast table and when they come to you and say, you know, I've been thinking. You know there's going to be trouble. It's some problem that they dwelt on during the night.

I've been thinking, oh. So if we make it here in another day called tomorrow, perhaps we will. We will meet again in this field that is the eternal now.

And in the meantime, there will be ample practice, opportunity for you to practice alignment with what is. For many Western travelers who come to India, some of them learn a deep lesson here. Especially in India, if you're not aligned with what is, you'll be very unhappy.

It's true anywhere, but especially true here. And maybe that is the simple reason why this country has produced more liberated beings than any other. Thank you.

No session, no talk is complete without the wake-up call of cell phones. Have a look inside yourself and see if you're waiting for me to speak. Perhaps even some impatience arising.

Irritation. Or your mind is taking you to some completely different place and time. Tonight, later, tomorrow.

We saw last night that in the normal human state of consciousness or unconsciousness, there is a very deep, deep-seated need, psychological need for the next moment, for future. That's always there. Everybody is waiting for something.

It's the next moment or some point in the future. That is an intrinsic part of the normal human consciousness, which is identification with a stream of thinking, which is inhabiting a conceptualized reality, a conceptualized sense of self in the head, consisting of thought movement. A conceptualized sense of self, story-based, mind-based, past-based.

And that conceptualized sense of self inhabits a conceptual reality, because everything is then being perceived through the conditioning of that accumulated conditioning of the mind. Whatever you perceive is perceived through that and is conceptualized through the compulsive, automatic, mechanical labeling of every experience and sense perception that happens every moment. And through the automatic, mechanical labeling process, a veil appears between you and that which is being perceived, between you and the other human being.

It becomes deadened through the continuous mental label-making, continuous judgments. And it's mechanical, it's automatic. Very few people on the planet are even aware of it as yet.

Something else is arising powerfully, but as yet very few human beings are even aware of this mechanical process because they are totally identified with that mechanical, compulsive, automatic process. And that is the essence of unconsciousness. You are lost in a world of content and your sense of self is in there.

Then everything you perceive is perceived through that sense of self that is mental, mentalized, conceptualized. And then whatever happens to you, every experience, every encounter, every perception, every place that you go to, is seen through that filter of that ultimately fictitious, false me, sense of self that adopts a personalized position, a reactive position towards whatever happens. And it interprets it according to that deep-seated conditioning.

And so life becomes very problematic because nothing is seen clearly, nothing is simple. Everything is complex, conflict-ridden and problematic through the labeling process. And that is the self, the mind-made self.

That is the egoic entity, the me, the little me. And as we saw yesterday, never at ease, except very brief moments, a little while, never sensing a sense of completeness, a true, deep aliveness, rootedness, free of fear. Fear is an inevitable companion of that state of unconsciousness.

And so you're always waiting for completion in the next moment, to add something to me. We saw that yesterday. The need, the compulsive need to add more content to me.

So we are stepping out of that. This is why we are here tonight. Not to add more to all those identifications, to all that content.

But to allow a different state of consciousness to arise that is unconditioned. To step out of a conceptualized sense of self, out of the story of me, to see an infinitely deeper and vaster sense of who you are that is already there underneath all the mind movements, underneath the story of me with my past and suffering. Underneath the grievances that the ego loves so much.

Underneath the reactivity that the egoic entity thrives on, just looking for the next thing, for the next problem. The complaints that it loves. Complaining makes up a large part of many people's mind movement.

If you look into it clearly, how much of that incessant stream of thinking is actually complaining. Some form of complaint in your head. About this person, this situation, this place.

And that movement of carrying grievances, the need to be reactive, adopt a reactive relationship to everything that happens. The complaining, the pattern of continuous complaining and looking for the next thing because it strengthens that never enough sense of me. And people don't realize it through complaining mentally or verbally.

And I'm not saying complaining to tell somebody, please don't step on my foot. Remove your foot from my foot. You're not complaining, you're telling somebody to do something about it.

That's not complaint. To say, we are using it in another sense here, to tell somebody, please, the soup is cold. I ordered a hot soup.

Take it back, please. It's not a complaint. It's just telling somebody to do something about this situation.

So we're not talking about you becoming a doormat and let everything happen. We're talking about a mental, useless, pointless, futile, conditioned movement that thrives on complaining. He shouldn't, they shouldn't, why don't they?

This is dreadful. If you see the percentage of your mind activity that is some form of complaint, you would be amazed and there's nothing personal in it. It is not your personal problem.

It's not that, oh, I'm not good enough. I'm always complaining. It's nothing to do with you.

It's the collective human mind. It is a collective mind pattern that the egoic, mind-based entity loves. Because the sense of self, through any kind of complaint, and a lot of that happens in people's minds.

They're complaining. They may even be complaining about themselves. Not good enough.

You see, you've failed again. You see, you're always mad. Mad.

And people are so immersed in that, they think all the problems that they are complaining about have an actual reality out there. And don't realize that every situation is very simple. If you don't add all that to it, it is simple.

So to watch that need to complain, it is there so that the egoic entity can feel a little bit stronger. Why does it feel a little bit stronger in that mind movement? Because whenever you complain about something or someone or a place, you adopt a position of rightness.

Me, right. You, wrong. Because that which you are complaining about is obviously wrong.

The complainer, the me, the mind-based entity is obviously right. That is the essence of every complaint, that I am right and the situation or the place or the person or the condition that I am internally complaining about obviously is wrong. So some people move through life complaining about the world, the God.

They have an issue with God. He should know better. Why does he allow that?

If I were running the universe, I would do a better job. If the universe or the earth or the planet or the world, the question arises, if the world were a reflection of your inner state, what kind of a world would it be? So to watch these deep-seated mind movements, and even here it may arise, the mind looking for one thing to complain about so that you don't have to listen to the rest.

And then the mind can focus on that one thing, I disagree with that statement. And for the next hour, you have a mind movement around that disagreement and you are hoping that there will be an opportunity for you to get up and say, I disagree very strongly with you because it's wrong. What you said is wrong.

That's very satisfying. Now this is easy to do here. Because in spiritual teaching, spiritual teaching, the purpose of it is not to present a philosophy, a consistent view of the universe, a system of thought with an inner consistency.

That is then, you can then adopt one more thing I can identify with and say now this mental edifice, all those explanations, this is now what I believe in. But a spiritual teaching is not like that. The purpose of the words is not to help you understand the universe.

The purpose of the words is simply to point to the state of liberation. So the words may point to bondage so that the awareness arises of the mental prison that you inhabit. Now that awareness is the arising of freedom.

The simple fact of seeing the bondage of identification with the mental noise, this continuous mind movement and its reactions and its grievances and its complaints, to see that in oneself is already the arising of something that is beyond that which you see. The seeing, which is the aware presence, and this is why we're here, is unconditioned. It simply sees.

It sees the false. It sees illusion. This is why, as this arises here, and all the words are only designed to be pointers to the liberated state of consciousness.

But if that liberated state of consciousness were not already arising in you, this is the only reason why you've come here. Well, except for one or two who got dragged here by somebody else who didn't want to come. But it's unlikely that they will stay unless suddenly something opens up within them.

That's possible too. But for most of you, you came here by your own free will, probably. Yes, it is possible that one or two came for the wrong reasons.

Perhaps thinking that this was a lecture on philosophy. Of playing around with thoughts. Finding some new interesting thoughts.

And then, perhaps after half an hour or an hour, it won't be satisfying here to sit here anymore, and then you would go. And that's fine. You need a little bit more time.

The universe is very patient. Time goes on and on. There's a lot of it.

It doesn't matter. But most of you, if you are able to sit here, it's quite a long evening. The physical body may occasionally move a little bit.

It's very hard here. And yet, if you are able to sit here during all this time, this means already a state of consciousness that is unconditioned is arising. And that is what I am addressing here.

This is what is being touched, pulled. All words are limited, one could say. Almost, it is being pulled out of you.

And the first step in this process is the recognition of that which is false. Which is identification with all the conditioned thought movements as a me, a self. A story-based entity with a little past and a little future.

A past that didn't go quite the way it should have gone. Oh, and you thought that was your personal problem. It's everybody's.

It didn't quite work out the way it was meant to. It wasn't the one I married. I must have made a mistake.

He wasn't the prince that I married. I thought I married. He turned out to be a human.

No story-based me has a totally satisfying story. And many story-based identities are actually unhappy ones. Very unhappy ones.

That tell themselves internally, almost continuously, their unhappy story in order to revive it. What he did to me, and the world did to me, and my parents did to me. Unfairly treated.

What God did allowed to happen to me. So some of these identities are very unhappy ones. And the egoic entity loves that also.

Because at least you think you know who you are by repeating the story to yourself mentally. It gives you the illusion that you have an identity. And you have an identity of sorts.

It's a storyline. An unhappy one. And you can carry the grievances and the complaints associated with the unhappy story of me.

And they keep the sense of self going until you finally are on your deathbed. And maybe your last breath may still be a complaint. Why did life do that to me?

That was my incarnation, my life. It should never have happened. It was one big mistake.

And it's amazing how many people carry a very unhappy identity based on their past. Hoping vaguely that somehow the future is going to free them. And somehow make this unhappy story turn around into a happy one.

But how could it? Because your sense of self is now totally wedded to the unhappy story. Your sense of self lies in the unhappy story.

How could it ever turn around? You don't even want it to turn around because your sense of self is the unhappy one. You feel comfortable with that.

Of course it's unconscious. If you made it conscious and looked at it and see that you are actually, you love your unhappy story. And every story has elements of that.

Some stories are very unhappy. But every story has strong elements of that. And then you can see how much there is a refusal to let go of that.

Mind movements, all those mind movements. And on the surface, those mind movements might say, maybe my life will get better. You might visit clairvoyance to find out if the story of me is going to improve in the next few years.

Is there going to be a change? And the clairvoyant says, yes, I can see a change coming next year. There is somebody coming into your life.

And he or she is going to make you happy. Everything will turn around. But you carry the unhappy me.

And even if that wonderful being should come into your life, you will interact and react through your unhappy story. And you will make that relationship, you will incorporate that into your unhappy story. And so then you try another clairvoyant.

So it is amazing the presence that people have constructed for themselves. That they inhabit and even are addicted to the pain of that. Because it is better than not knowing who you are.

At least you have an unhappy sense of self, better than no sense of self. So every story has strong elements of that. And to see that even if your story is not totally unhappy, maybe it is half-half.

But to see it did not go the way it was meant to go. But of course you still have future. It can all work out.

It won't of course. Dissatisfaction, unease, problems, fear, anxiety. They are all built into the very structure of that mindset.

It is within the structure of the mindset when you identify with mind movements. When you derive your sense of self from a story. You can never get there.

On that level of complete your sense of self, find yourself fully. The fullness of life. So, and we are here to see it.

And already you may see it is. You might say, you might think, well it must be, isn't it very depressing? You are telling us a very depressing story of how our lives are.

No, you may detect in yourself a certain recognition. It is quite nice to listen to this. And you recognize something there.

And you see it. And the seeing is already freeing. And all the words that arise here.

And this is the case with every true spiritual teaching. Are not to explain the universe. And are not even going to be consistent.

A philosophical system may be consistent, otherwise it is deficient. But a spiritual teaching, be very suspicious of a spiritual teaching that is totally consistent internally. Where everything makes absolute sense.

It is likely that you are mistaking a philosophical system for a spiritual teaching. Spiritual teaching in its very nature contains contradictions. Because the truth of who you are, and it only points to that.

It points to the false, you begin to see the false. And then it points to that which is beyond the false. But seeing the false is already that movement of the real.

Who you are beyond that conditioning, to see that is already the arising of that. So the spiritual teaching points to that which really is very hard to talk about. And no single thought could capture, encapsulate the truth of who you are.

And the truth of spiritual liberation. And it is very tempting for the mind to get hold of one statement and say this is the truth. And the other statement is not true.

But in spiritual teaching you may hear two contradictory statements and they are both true. For example, last night I said, nothing needs to happen. Freedom is already here.

Underneath the movement of the conditioned mind, there is already in you the vast spaciousness, stillness and depth of the unconditioned. So there is nothing that needs to happen as such. And yet, in the course of this evening, I may point out certain things that look as if you could do something about it.

For example, I might say, enter the state of surrender to what is this moment. So you want me to do something. What I thought you said, it's not an happening.

There's nothing you need to do. Well, maybe surrender is not a doing at all. It's an allowing.

But it looks, when one speaks of it, as if you could do something. Many statements, the timeless, we are entering the timeless state of consciousness. Because the conditioned state is totally linked to time.

It operates, this conditioned entity, the mind-made self, operates entirely through past and future. It knows only past and future. And the future is a repetition of the past.

The redemptive power of now is totally obscured. The only place of freedom is obscured by that mind movement that is only interested in past and future. But that basically means it is only interested in repeating the past.

And that is what usually happens. So, we are here to step out of that. All the words only point to the state that is timeless, the state of consciousness that is timeless.

And we are entering that together. At the moment, I've mostly been speaking of the bad news. But that is important.

The bad news, the illusory entity, and the suffering that is created by that, we need to see that fully. That is already the beginning of liberation. But it looks on the surface as if I were talking only about bad news.

And if you don't listen from the depths of your being, if you only listen through the story entity, I'm not addressing the story-based entity, but there may be one or two of you here who listen to these words only through the mind-made story-based entity. And it will feel insulted by these words. How dare you suggest that my grievances and my complaints are not justified and real?

How dare you say that I have no right to complain, to suggest it's an illusion? My complaints are so real and I have a right. This is the entity.

And so one or two of you go through this reaction. Who is reacting? When I point to illusion within yourself and there is a reaction, who is it that is reacting?

The illusion. It doesn't like to hear that. It's a great insult to suggest that perhaps the unhappiness that you carry as part of your sense of self could perhaps be an illusion, an illusory identity that you cling to.

But many of you are still sitting here. One or two are going to walk out. Maybe three or four, five or six.

A small percentage. That means those words are not reaching the deeper level of your being, are not being received by that. They only hit the conditioned.

And the conditioned doesn't like what it's hearing because I'm threatening its very survival. Let's get out of here. And perhaps even shout something as the last triumph of the conditioned entity.

It's happened once or twice in meetings. Absolute nonsense. And the door slams.

So the words, something within you, if you're still here, recognizes, recognizes the truth. And it actually feels good to see the false as false. Once you're ready, no longer totally identified with those mind movements through that seeing.

So the pointing to the false and the pointing to the real, which are both part of this teaching, may very well use seemingly contradictory perspectives. The timeless state of consciousness, we are entering the unconditioned or timeless state of consciousness is emerging here. So that you don't derive your sense of self anymore from the conditioned mind movements, but from that which is beyond time.

The still, alert, vibrantly alive presence. Vast, intelligent, that is there underneath all that. But we have another contradiction here because as we are entering the timeless state of consciousness and we are spending three hours on this time.

Yes, there's a little paradox here, but it's fine. You could say, well, why don't we only need one moment? And we travel deeper into that state, which is another paradox.

Because to say deeper implies time. But let's, instead of resolving the paradox, just leave it because it's not an explanation. They are simply pointers.

So to see the false in oneself, to observe those mind movements, to recognize that your story, your identity, your sense of self is not the only one that didn't quite work out. Sometimes people are under that illusion that other people's stories have worked. None of them works for long.

Meet famous people, rich people, go beyond the glossy surface that you see in magazines. Talk to them, meet them and see enormous sense of dissatisfaction, lack, fear, not enough. So they need more, even more.

You could become a great leader, leader of this country. And then you might think, oh, I finally made it. My life has now become free of limitation.

I'm all powerful. And two years later, you find yourself in prison. If you're lucky.

And you have another limitation. So there's the movement of thought. There's identification with the movement of thought.

And there's the arising of the awareness of those thought movements. And then as the awareness arises, you see a very, we've already pointed to grievances. We've pointed to complaints.

We've pointed to repeating the story in your head to reinforce it. We've pointed to perhaps, or maybe we didn't. It's also to repeat your story to other people to reinforce it.

Please confirm to me that my problems in my story are real. Listen. Oh, yes.

You truly have been treated unfairly by life. You are right that you're feeling sorry for yourself. You're fully sorry for myself.

Self feels bigger in that too. So we've seen many of those very predominant movements associated with living in and through a false sense of self. And now there's one more fundamental one that we need to address.

I pointed to it last night. That it needs to obscure the now because it can only function through past and future. So as we saw last night, if you live through that false sense of self, your relationship with now, which is all there ever is, which means with life, life itself, life and now are inseparable, your relationship with now is predominantly a hostile one, a resisting one.

One that denies the now, tries to get away from it, resists it internally, complains about it mentally, or makes it into a stepping stone to the next moment, which the little me in the head says is a more important one, because there it's going to be a little bit better when I arrive there. So the relationship that you have with now, which is the real relationship with life, is then one that is problematic of conflict, basically. You are in conflict with now.

You deny now, you resist now, you complain about now, you project yourself away from now, and now is life. And so you're condemned to living in this abstract reality, never knowing the depths of now, the depths of life, the fullness of life, that can only be here in the space of now. The only place where life is, is now.

So you can see the mind movement that seeks to deny that, a very fundamental one. In seeing it, freedom arises. And seeing it is the arising of presence, a state in which the now is not resisted.

And that is the beginning of the collapse of the conditioned egoic entity and the story-based identity. The now is not resisted anymore. You are able, as presence arises, to welcome this moment as it is.

We saw that yesterday as the primordial spiritual practice that requires no time to align yourself with now, to make it your friend, unconditionally say yes, because you see the madness and the futility of saying no to the is-ness of now. To deny is, is to deny the universe. The form that this now takes could never be otherwise, because whatever form arises at this moment is totally interconnected with the whole.

It's only through our limited perspective that we think there is an isolated event here that shouldn't have happened. But that seemingly isolated event is simply... there's a web of interconnectedness with the totality of this seeming isolated event.

There isn't even an event. So whatever appears in the now is as it is and could not be otherwise, which doesn't mean that action cannot arise through you to respond to the need or the challenge of now. But the now, the is-ness of now, is as it is.

The totality has brought it about. So to be not aligned with that is to... you tie yourself into a little knot in the fabric of existence and that little knot says no.

And it claims a separate identity for itself. Me, and here's the rest of this threatening and dreadful universe that seems to conspire against me and put obstacles in my path continuously. But I am going to make it.

Just... I'll show them. And now here we come now to the essence and then we go even deeper.

We saw last night that more often than not the form that this now takes as an event, a seeming event, a personal situation, a place, a challenge is only the form of now. It is not the now. The now is eternal, timeless, spacious, pure consciousness.

And it is you. Nothing that takes form is you. The essence of unconsciousness, the essence of bondage, the essence of suffering is to mistake who you are for some form.

Thought movements, identification with this and that. But ultimately it all goes down to identification with thought and emotions that arise together with thought, which are energy forms. And you have to seek yourself in it and seek completion through adding more forms to the content of your mind.

What else can I identify with to make my story better? Or if you're deeply trapped in an unhappy story identity, unconsciously you're saying, what else can I identify with to add to my bad story? In other words, you're looking for the next bad thing because only a bad thing will fit into a bad storyline.

A good thing doesn't fit into my story anymore. If I'm identified with a bad mind-based identity and story, I'm looking for the next bad thing. I don't know that, of course.

I'm saying, I'm looking for happiness. And then you seek exactly the thing that gives you more unhappiness. So, form.

So it's a search through some added form to find a bit more of myself. And that is the essence of delusion and bondage and suffering. Because suffering is, whenever you're identified with form, suffering arises because every form is limited.

And the limitation of that form, and it's short-lived. So the two factors that every form is limited, every thought, every physical form, everything in form is limited and, as the Buddha put it, impermanent. In other words, fleeting.

And as the Buddha also put it, unsatisfactory. Beautiful. He saw it.

He saw it so clearly. And what did people do? Constructed a huge edifice of philosophy, Buddhist philosophy.

The simplicity he saw identification with form is, in the Pali language, I very rarely quote strange foreign words, but it's so beautiful, in the Pali language, the essence of human existence in the deluded state is dukkha, anicca and anatta, suffering, impermanence, not self. You're seeking a self where you cannot find a self in form. Suffering, it's impermanent, it's not self.

Whatever condition you encounter, try to identify with, it brings you suffering, it's not self, it's fleeting. And so you move looking. It is not only the essence of suffering, this identification with form, it is also the essence of what we could call evil, people doing dreadful things to other human beings or to other life forms on the planet or to the planet itself.

And it's identification with form, how does that work? What happened two days ago, not far from here, people burned a train, 58 people were killed, burned to death traveling on a train. How does that connect with what we are talking about?

These people, they belong to two different religions and each group of people derives their sense of self, of me or us, which is a mind-based sense of self, from a conceptualized accumulation of certain beliefs that they identify with as me or us. There are mind movements, belief systems. This gives us our sense of who we are.

It's a conceptualized collective identity. And the others have a different conceptualized sense. So they need their enemies to strengthen this very tenuous sense of identity that never feels strong enough.

So they love having enemies to feel more strongly who they are through being able to fight someone else, strengthens to be able to enter a position of rightness because both factions believe that they are right. They are totally identified with one mental position. Their sense of self is in this form of that mental position.

A total inability to see another position and not recognize it is only a position, a mental position. There's no self in it. But there's the delusion of the identities in it.

And so it's easy to kill somebody because you have desensitized yourself to the aliveness of another human being by labeling it. You put a few mental concepts on another human being or group of human beings, whatever that concept may be. You could say, unbeliever.

That label can be enough to justify killing a person. An unbeliever is no longer a human being. It's conceptualized.

You inhabit a conceptualized universe. And as a concept, you can no longer sense what you are doing. Or you can say, American.

You can say, or the others say, Muslim, or this or that, communist, capitalist, this, that. These are labels. You put them on and they've deadened the universe, conceptualized it, and then any act of violence is possible because there's only a concept there.

This is the essence of prejudice also. In addition, the enormous amount of pain that humans carry inside flows into that delusion. And this accounts for the collective human pain.

We may address that this evening also. That accounts for violence, warfare. So this is thousands, thousands, thousands of years of conditioning humanity.

Not knowing who they are, seeking a form identity which is never enough and always reveals itself to be not it, not me. So, identification with form, deriving your sense of self from form, which means basically mind forms, is delusion. Deriving your sense of self from mind movement is delusion.

Now, those mind movements and the entity that is based on mind identification continuously reacts. That's part of its complaining. It reacts to the form that this moment takes as not enough, not fulfilling me.

This moment is not fulfilling me. Maybe the next one will. This moment is actually limiting me.

I'm trying to get away from it. The form that arises in this moment is resisted because it's never enough for me. It even is trying to obstruct me.

It limits me. And this is how people go through life, seeking a better now in the future, seeking a completion of themselves in the future, ignoring this because this seems, looks like an obstacle to completely myself. And that is the core of the delusion.

The thing that looks like the greatest obstacle to finding myself is the only doorway into the liberated state. That worries me so much because more often than not it is the case. How could it be that this is the doorway?

It looks like a wall. It looks as if I had to run away from that. And so the secret of human existence is, and for some peculiar reason, it's to a large extent still a secret.

Almost nobody talks about it. Liberation and where to find it. Conspiracy of don't mention it.

Liberation, look for it somewhere else. That's okay, but nowhere it can be found. How can it be that this seemingly very often unsatisfying present moment now, the form of it, how can that be the doorway and how does it work?

The egoic entity loves resisting the form that this now takes because it's never enough, it doesn't fit into its story and the resisting itself strengthens it. In other words, you resist to a form that arises in the now and strengthen your own mental form of me. You disagree with now, you have an issue with now, you're hostile towards now, so it puts you in a position of rightness and the now in a position of wrongness.

So you have strengthened your mind-created sense of self. That's why it's so satisfying to deny the now. And you can see how mad it is.

When you recognize it, the possibility of freedom comes in. When you recognize that deep-seated, non-personal, collective human mind pattern, when you see it in yourself, in others, there's suddenly the arising of freedom and the unconscious movement collapses because anything that is unconscious when it comes to the light of consciousness and is seen, there's an awareness now of that movement, the compulsive nature of it. When it rises into awareness or awareness looks at it, so to speak, the unconscious movement loses its power and begins to dissolve.

Unconsciousness, all those automatic processes require your unconsciousness. The complainer, all the things we've been talking about, it's only when you're totally identified with it and you're trapped. When you see it, you're no longer trapped.

And now you see this and now the possibility comes of reversing and it happens by itself, it's not that you have to do it. A reversal happens so that instead of resisting the now and having a hostile relationship with it, you open yourself to now and welcome it no matter what form it takes, even if it is a form of limitation, which often it is, even if it looks not very satisfying. And suddenly, when you not resist the form that appears in this now, that which is beyond form arises within yourself.

The form identity is not strengthened anymore through resistance. That which is beyond form within you, the unconditioned consciousness, the light of the divine, whatever pointer, arises in the moment of relinquishing resistance to a form. How does it arise?

Anything that you accept completely, internally, unconditionally, embrace it, no matter what that condition is, takes you into deep peace, vitally alive peace. And you can try it out. The next thing that irritates you, that you complain about, suddenly you're aware of that automatic movement and you say, OK, I'll welcome it instead.

I've been complaining about the now for 48 years, 50 years. I'm now ready to welcome this, even this. And all internal resistance drops and you're simply that form of this moment, the condition.

And you will notice enormous peace arising, a stillness arises that is not of the mind. And for the first time, that unconditioned intelligence can move through you as a channel, which before was obstructed by continuous resistance. And now the ability arises because you've opened the door, which is the act of surrender to what is, the suchness of this moment.

You open the door. That which seemed a limitation is not internally resisted. And so suddenly the unconditioned intelligence moves through you and is able to simply be.

There's a flow of a current of awareness that flows through you, so to speak. And moves into that situation that looked like a limitation, a problematic situation, because most situations are problematic when you are trapped in a reactive mode. And you can simply, suddenly, and it's not you anymore, not the little conditioned entity, but a deeper intelligence, can look at the form of this moment, allow it to be totally, and that is the movement of the true intelligence that suddenly flows into that situation.

There's no mental labeling or judging anymore. The allowing. You allow it to be so the mind relinquishes its need to label.

The egoic entity that lives in and through labeling subsides at that moment. It may come back, but at this moment it subsides and you allow this. The allowing is the key.

The allowing this moment, that opens the portal. Then vast intelligence flows through and looks at whatever form this moment takes. But that look is not so much a concentrated beam.

It's a vast spaciousness that penetrates that situation and surrounds that situation. A spacious field. You can sense surrounding the little limitation and that spaciousness around that situation that before the little entity contracted and complained about it and suddenly you allow and you become vast as you sense a space around that seemingly limited situation.

And that is the, one could say, I don't use that expression usually, but occasionally a new point has come, space consciousness arises. Not... Most humans, all they are ever aware of is objects that arise in their consciousness.

They are aware never of another dimension. All they are aware of is thoughts and not aware of, identified with. They are in a position of, they want to attract or have aversion to objects that arise in their consciousness.

Sense objects, perceptions. They know nothing else beyond the arising objects, thoughts, emotions, sense perceptions. And now it is all form and as you allow this moment to be as it is internally, no matter what form it takes, a vast peace and spaciousness opens up.

And for the first time, you know the meaning and not through the labeling mind, know directly what the meaning is of consciousness. Because before you only knew consciousness in its various disguises, appearing as form. But you never knew consciousness itself.

You were looking for yourself in some form of consciousness. Thought movements, emotions, experiences. Where am I?

Well, how can I have more forms? And now for the first time, through the act of allowing the form of this moment to be as it is internally, that which is beyond form, which is consciousness itself, is known. But it is not known in the same way that you can know an object in consciousness.

There you have a subject-object relationship. I know this flower. Well, I think I do because I have a label for it.

And I repeat this label in my mind and then I think I know what this is. That's mind knowledge, subject-object knowledge. And so it's not true knowledge.

It has its place in this phenomenal world. It's useful for certain things, this knowledge, which is labeled knowledge, concept knowledge. But there is a deeper knowing.

But the essence of that knowing is to know consciousness directly, not as I know it, but knowing it as I am. It. A knowing that is not dualistic.

A knowing that is being, knowing yourself as that. Conscious, let me put it in another way, you become conscious of consciousness itself. And now when I say that in words, that limits it and distorts it because it immediately creates again a dualistic relationship.

Knowing that, the limitation of words, I'll say it again, this is not the truth because the words are limited. But they are a pointer. They can work as a pointer, not as an explanation.

You are conscious of consciousness as an underlying field of presence, which is also peace, which is also stillness, which is also vast intelligence which is also deep aliveness and joy, very subtle, not what the mind knows as joy, which is some short-lived pleasure. It is, of course, being itself before it becomes something, consciousness itself before it becomes a form, life itself before it becomes a form of life. So you know yourself as life, not some form that life takes, the one unconditioned, unmanifested life that out of which the entire universe comes, which, of course, is God.

If God means anything at its deepest level, that is God, of course. And again, people have been looking for God as a mind object, as if God could appear as an object in consciousness, whereas God is the essence of all that appears. It inhabits it as its essence, yes.

So you know yourself as that vast spaciousness with the simple act of allowing this moment to be as it is, and that is suddenly. The very limitation has become a doorway into the divine. The very thing that looked like almost the devil putting obstacles in my path becomes an opening.

So the form becomes no longer an obstacle to God, but a doorway into God if resistance is relinquished. And, of course, that fundamental truth of human existence is expressed and contained beautifully in the Christian image of the cross, which most Christians don't understand in its depths. They have a superficial interpretation of it.

But in its depths, you have Christ on the cross, nailed to the cross, an image of total limitation, the absolute of limitation to be nailed to a cross. And the cross, of course, is the form that limits, and it is a form that this moment takes. And suddenly, and this is contained in the words of Jesus on the cross, not my will, but thy will be done.

Jesus aligns his will with the will of the one. In other words, resistance to what is is relinquished totally. And now, that dreadful thing, the cross, the torture instrument, the ultimate in limitation, becomes a symbol for the divine, because the cross is both.

It is the symbol of limitation, and it has a dual nature, symbol of torture, of limitation, and a symbol of the divine. So there is an image here, and you don't need to be a Christian to see it. In fact, if you are a Christian, you probably don't see it.

There is an image here of great depth and enormous wisdom. It tells you that the secret is contained in that image of human life and the possibility of human life, because you are the one on the cross. Each human being is that, is Christ on the cross, facing the limitations, sometimes dreadful, as dreadful as there.

And the possibility is there of that reversal where the very limitation becomes the doorway into the divine. So the form is not really an obstacle to the formless or to God, because otherwise it looks as if the whole world around you were conspiring not to stop you from finding yourself or from finding God or from realizing yourself as limitless, as the unlimited and the unconditioned and free. And it looks, how can I possibly, surrounded by all those limitations, how could I ever find that?

Through the limitation, not away from it. And then the form and the formless are actually recognized as one. God and the world are also seen as one.

God is hiding in each form, in each limitation. Expressed beautifully in the Buddhist, famous Buddhist sutra, which says, form is emptiness, emptiness is form. Of course, in Buddhist terms, emptiness is the unconditioned, the vastness.

Form is emptiness, emptiness is form. Expressed also, I'm now told to just point to one or two things. What I'm now putting in relatively neutral language as an immediate possibility that, of course, the beautiful ancient scriptures, they point to it.

My favorite Upanishad, I can't even remember what it's called, starts with these lines, not that which the eye sees, but that whereby the eye can see. Know that alone to be Brahman, the eternal, not what people here adore. Not that which the ear hears, but that whereby the ear can hear.

Know that alone to be Brahman, the eternal, and not what people here adore. Not that which the mind thinks, but that whereby the mind can think. Know that alone to be Brahman, the eternal, and not what people here adore.

What people here adore is an object in consciousness. What the eye sees, sense perception. What the ear hears.

What the mind thinks, a thought. But it's the consciousness that makes all seeing possible, all sense perception possible, the one consciousness that makes all thought possible. They don't know that.

Why don't they know it? Because they are trapped in identification with form. They react continuously to the forms that arise.

And now the way out is so simple. It is so simple. And that's the reason why so few people got it.

They tried... They surrendered to state of consciousness. It's here.

Here. You don't need time to surrender to the now. But if you do need time, which means also you need more suffering, it's there for you.

Because the universe will allow you more time and more suffering. I'm not quite ready yet to surrender. A little bit more time, please.

Okay. Please, as much as you like. Infinite, vast stretches of time.

And suffering. Or you see it, and this is an insult also to some spiritual seekers who are strongly identified with the thought movement that you need time for liberation. And perhaps you've already invested 30 years in that.

Great. It got you to this moment. And suddenly you hear, yes, but it doesn't agree with the teaching that I believe in that says you need many lifetimes.

Perhaps this is true. I'm not denying that you may need lifetimes or plenty of time, but you need it until you realize that you don't need time anymore. You needed time to get to that point of realization.

And for many of you, that realization is now. You needed time to hear it, otherwise you would have heard it a long time ago. So you hear it, and even if it's not yet operating in your life, you have heard it.

And perhaps you need just a little bit more suffering for you to finally say, ah, I say yes to what is, unconditionally embrace this, the form of this moment, the limitation of this moment. Or you've had enough. You've had enough suffering.

Humanity as a whole has had so much suffering. All, of course, produced through the egoic condition. If you are trapped in a false sense of self, you are going to create suffering for yourself and others.

And so humanity has been suffering, so much suffering. Look at human history. You weep when you go beyond the words that you read when you see what humans did to other humans throughout history.

What for? Well, it is the dysfunction of the egoic condition. And so, humans have suffered so much that there is a readiness now in many human beings to embrace this truth.

And many human beings are coming to the end of suffering, which means to the end of time. Psychological time is no longer important. Clock time is still works okay.

Tomorrow at eight o'clock, I'm going to see you, whatever. That works. But when I say coming to the end of time is the end of the psychological need for future.

So as you enter the surrendered state, the present moment, the now becomes primary in your life. What you give attention to, what you honor, that becomes the primary focus of your life now. On the periphery of your life, yes, there is still past, you remember what you did last year, 10 years ago.

There is still future in the realm of practicality. You can still embark on new projects, learn new things, even make money perhaps, but not because you are seeking your self-fulfillment through that, simply because it happens through you and it'll be an expression of the unconditioned consciousness. It is not a passive state, the state of surrender.

This could be a misperception. The state of surrender has a very dynamic quality to it also. And this is very important.

The action that arises out of the state of surrender is enormously empowered. It is intelligent action. It is not action that seeks some future result for completion.

It arises out of a state of joyous aliveness. And that is infinitely more effective than action, and which is still normal in human life. Most of human action arises out of dissatisfaction, out of fear, and out of desire, all to do with the egoic condition.

And that can look powerful on the surface. You could create a huge business empire out of the state of great dissatisfaction, not feeling enough, not feeling that others give you enough recognition. Your sense of self needs that, and so you're out of that dissatisfaction, even anger with the world.

I'm going to show them. I can make it. I can get there.

And then 30, 40 years later, you've built up a huge empire, corporation. And you'll be very unhappy. And the body will be very unhappy.

And the thousands of people that are working in it perhaps they're all making money, but they're stressed, diseased through stress, continuous infighting and intrigue, and until finally you die in the state of dissatisfaction. And the seemingly solid structures that are created by those egoic entities, which is most of the world, are not that solid either. Many of them are going to crumble as the old consciousness gives way to the new consciousness, the liberated consciousness on this planet the transformation of human consciousness on this planet which is now a necessity, not a luxury anymore for humanity to survive, the planet to survive.

God doesn't mind whether the human form survives or not. Wherever there is non-resistance wherever there is transparency the divine moves through. It doesn't ask, are you worthy?

Are you good enough? Have you accumulated enough credits? It sometimes moves to the seemingly most unworthy forms because that unworthy form created so much suffering for itself that something self-destructed and surrender happened.

And then it can move, the divine can move through the criminal. It may not move through the monk after 50 years of meditation because the monk may be, it may do, but it may not. The monk may have an image of himself as pure.

The last mind image of me as pure is the one last obstacle. Me. So you are in the midst of, this event is part of, it goes far beyond the personal.

It is part of the transformation of human consciousness on the planet. It will go unreported in the news tonight. It happened once that they did report it on the news, but mostly not yet because there are more important news, the mind says, the budget and the violence, much more important.

This is what matters. I hope I'm not offending anybody who is interested in the budget. If there's no self in it, it's fine.

Anything is fine. The world of phenomenal forms becomes a beautiful place to be enjoyed as the play of form when you no longer resist the forms or are looking for yourself in them. Then it's quite pleasant to see how the forms come into your life, situations, places, gain and loss, people, recognition, non-recognition, victory, defeat, how this continuous flux of forms moves in and out of the space of now.

Quite beautiful, even beautiful to see the fleeting nature of all the forms that come. Nothing lasts for that long. Even solid structures could go before you know it.

It's dissolved. In India, to see the insubstantial nature of the material world is easier. In the West, the delusion that the mind-created, man-made, egoically mind-created world, the illusion that those structures are solid and lasting is greater because they look more solid.

And so you people there might say, my life is totally, I've got all my shares there and I've got my house there and this is the corporation where I work and this is the big car and everything is looked after, my pension scheme and my investments with Enron Corporation. And it's all so solid and suddenly, before you know it, it crumbles. Where has it gone?

So, the doorway is now through the form of now, acceptance of that. The end of time as a psychological need, future especially as a psychological need, past also as a psychological need to continuously refer to it to enhance and strengthen your sense of self. Don't need that.

So there's past you can let go with much greater ease. Remember what you need to remember, but no self-seeking. Future, psychological need for it goes.

So one could say, the end of psychological time. This is part of the transformation of consciousness. The primary focus of your life is now, not a story in your head, not a conceptual sense of self.

Now, as you allow this moment to be, the ability arises in and through you to relinquish the otherwise compulsive and automatic labeling and interpreting process of the human mind. And that is an unbelievable liberation. And many of you already finding that this is coming into their lives and some of you from now on will find that as you move through the world, you find that as you allow the form of this moment to be, which is a beautiful, gentle embrace, whereas before there was a resisting little spiky entity.

Now there's a gentle compassion comes with that. Let's leave that aside for a moment. There is no compassion unless you allow what is to be.

With that also great compassion arises. But for the time being, let us address a different aspect of that state of consciousness. It is the ability to move through life free or to a large extent free of the compulsion to interpret and label everything and comment mentally on what you are seeing, which is a conceptualized reality.

Through allowing you can, let's take, as you sit here, you can sit here where you are and allow this moment to be so completely that the compulsion to call it anything isn't there. So what does that mean? It means you perceive, see, hear, feel perhaps a little bit, sense perhaps your body as you sit here, but it is not, it does not become words in your head.

So there's the ability to perceive through stillness in a state of great alertness, but still alertness. And for the first time then, you perceive the world no longer through the conditioning of the mind, but through the unconditioned consciousness. And suddenly that which you perceive, it could be here, perceiving this form, perceiving the sounds, and you just allow it to be, there's no additional mind movement.

So the perception happens within a field of spaciousness, of stillness, of peace. And everything is suddenly seen as so much more alive than it had been when you deadened it through the compulsive labeling process. To become free of that is an essential part, of course, of this transformation of consciousness.

And it is so beautiful to be able, let's say, sitting on a bus, or, well, if you're lucky, you're sitting, you may be standing, or hanging, or riding on the roof, it doesn't matter. Just an example, you're on a bus, human beings all around you, it's moving, other human forms, streets, houses, and you're simply looking. No entity is saying, this is awful, whatever, or whatever it is saying, I wish I were home, he looks dreadful, I wish he wasn't standing next to me.

Continuous. You simply allow it and it is as it is, and there is a peace around the sense perception. Water change.

There's also a depth to that which you are perceiving. It's alive, and it is as it is. And you could sit somewhere, on a bench, in a park, and you watch and to the mind it looks an insignificant event.

The mind even says, sitting there, this isn't solving my problems. The mind will try to come in and remind you of what your problems are. Sometimes, the old movement tries to come back in, and you see that, you come back to the freedom of being free of the conditioned.

Now, you may sometimes, especially as this state begins to arise in you, maybe short-lived at first, before mind comes in again, or as you sit there in that state, certain thoughts may drift in and out. And they are recognized as thoughts, perhaps labels again, but you are no longer totally in it. You allow it to be.

You recognize it as just thought. It's no longer a problem. And then there's a space again between the next thought, between that thought and the next thought.

And so we are talking about this right now in the context of a neutral, non-problematic situation. You're in a park, or you're sitting at home in your familiar room, and you're sitting in a chair, and you simply look around in the state of clear, innocent, non-labeling perception. And then something else happens.

You suddenly realize two dimensions. One is the objects that are appearing in your consciousness, the sense objects. And the other And then you sense the field of aware presence still, but awake, highly awake, the field of aware presence in which those sense perceptions appear.

You are aware of that and that which appears. In other words, you are aware, conscious, of awareness, conscious of consciousness, and that which appears in consciousness. Consciousness.

Knowing that none of that which appears in consciousness is the essence of who you are, but consciousness itself is who you are. But in every form, that essence is also concealed. So the other statement, the seemingly contradictory statement that everything you see is you is also true.

This is how it works. They are both true. None of that which appears in consciousness is you and everything is you.

But the essence of you, of I, is the field of aware presence. And you are free to know yourself as that. Then, the world is not threatening anymore, the world of form.

Nor is it that attractive anymore. It's just as beautiful as it is. But it doesn't threaten your sense of self nor does it promise to enhance your sense of self anymore.

Or you can actually, you can relax with the world because you don't feel threatened by it or enhanced by it because you are beyond it. And this is why, funny story to illustrate this, the spiritual teacher J. Krishnamurti who taught for many, many, many years, once in the middle of a talk he stopped talking and said, do you want to know what my secret is?

And everybody listened up. Some people had already gone to sleep because they'd been coming to see him for 30 years. Yes, that's what we've been waiting for.

What is your secret? Okay, I will tell you what my secret is. And he said, I don't mind what happens.

Yes. That was his secret. But now you can see, I don't know how many people got it when he said that.

He didn't explain, as far as I know, further. But in the context of this, you can see the depth of what that means. I don't mind what happens.

Because what happens is a form that arises in consciousness. And when you know yourself as consciousness, it doesn't matter that much. And the strange thing is, you might think, okay, then your attitude then towards the world will be one of not caring anymore.

It sometimes happens that people who, in whom this transformed state arises suddenly, they go through a period when they don't pay attention to any of these forms anymore. They lose interest in the form entirely. They get so drawn, so identified with the formless, with being, that existence becomes uninteresting because being is unmanifested life.

Existence is form because the very word means ex means out, systems, it stands out as a form. This happened to me also. Total lack of interest for several years in anything in this world.

And then a balance establishes itself. This doesn't need to happen to you. It tends to happen to people who without any teaching stumble upon this truth within themselves seemingly accidentally.

Nothing is accidental. But seemingly accidentally they stumble upon this and suddenly the unconditioned is there fully all at once. And then sometimes the world kind of becomes totally peripheral until finally you learn to live in the world of form again.

With most of you a different process happens. It is a more gradual realization. Not that surrender takes time but to dwell in the state of surrender as a continuous state can take time.

Not the surrender itself because you can only surrender to now. But what happens is that the resistance movement which is conditioned collectively will reassert itself and it leaves. And so you fall back into the state of egoic identification with mind back in the state of resistance and denial of now and then suddenly you see it and then you re-enter.

So it's a gradual entering of that so that until it becomes the place where you dwell that state. And you don't need to lose yourself in it because it is gradual. You can learn to incorporate it into your life.

Not that you have to do it. It happens by itself. And the misperception could arise that then don't you become careless towards the world, the things in this world?

And strangely the opposite is true once you, the balance is there everything that you look upon is actually great care flows into that to which you give attention. That attention is the unconditioned. And in that movement of the unconditioned that looks upon the conditioned whether it looks upon a thought or an emotion or a sense object external there is a gentleness, a care and compassion and love with which you perceive things and allow things.

That's the beauty of it. You don't misuse the world of form in the service of self. You don't misuse the form that this moment takes in the service of some mentally projected future moment.

If you make this moment into a means to an end you're using it in the service of a false sense of self that seeks to complete itself through future. And whatever comes into the now is self-serving and often it's a human being you meet a human being and somehow you're just using that human being because you are using the present moment as a means to an end. So anything that appears in the now becomes a means to an end if the now is a means to an end to arrive at some future which is the egoic state.

So in the egoic state love is not possible because in the egoic state you want something from the other person or you fear something from the other person. And what you want from the other person is sometimes called love. I want you to complete me and I want you to sign this contract.

Don't you dare leave me. In the old sense it's been mad for a long time but there are many qualities that flow through a human being but not when the conditioned mind operates. So at first now we become free of the movement of the conditioned in simple situations that you're just allowed to be.

Not particularly challenging situations. You're in a restaurant in a cafe drinking a cup of tea and an unlearnt presence arises and you simply watch, see in a field of stillness. That is the arising and then the challenges come because as you know you can't go through life for very long perhaps not even a single day without some challenge appearing.

Some situation that doesn't seem to go the way it should have gone. Something going wrong. Some kind of loss and particularly in India one can experience things don't go the way you expect them to go.

This is a great lesson for many people who come here. It's easier to learn surrender here. I said that last night and this could be the reason why the great sages far greater numbers than any other country liberated beings lived here produced by India so that it seeded the entire world became through the enormous wisdom that arose here the insight into the human condition.

It's a miracle. So the challenges come and then the temptation is for the old reactive pattern to flow back in. So you get drawn back the moment you're faced with the slightest challenge.

Before you sat on this park bench beautiful occasional thoughts but you're perceiving in a field of stillness. And then the first challenge comes and then either that unconditioned stillness presence deepens or you get drawn into the old reactive pattern and the unconditioned becomes obscured again through identification with the conditioned. The little me is back reacting, fighting, complaining, shouting whatever it does it does its thing.

The reaction is the old reactive pattern. Once a certain level of presence which is another word I use to describe the unconditioned consciousness that arises once a certain degree of presence has been reached what happens is that a challenge simply intensifies presence instead of the old reactive pattern coming back. So a challenge comes and it is faced completely without resistance in a field of intense alertness.

That is the movement of incredible intelligence that goes into that situation that is challenging. It is not mentally analyzed at some point mind movement may come in but it could be more likely to be an inspired thought of what is needed unless what is needed comes a spontaneous action which also happens in that state. The challenge is faced completely in a state of alert attention and there is the movement of the unconditioned intelligence which the Chinese call the Tao is suddenly operating through this form.

So what is now dealing with the challenge is not the limited conditioned mind with its conditioning. What is dealing with this situation is the one universal intelligence and you will be amazed how quickly situations resolve themselves through the simple act of giving full and complete non-interpreting non-judgmental attention clear space. Of course that is only possible if the portal that is the act of surrender is open if you have accepted unconditionally whatever this challenge is the form of this moment.

So that is how greater intelligence comes in and resolves it through action that then arises through you or another spontaneous event that seems to come from elsewhere because intelligence is everywhere the one intelligence and it will operate beautifully. So that's the creative human beings those few human beings who are very creative in artists musicians composers painters sculptors some of the creative scientists or any creative endeavor those human beings have the ability in the limited field of their endeavor to enter that state of total looking clear unconditioned attention and then a movement happens and the creative act begins and they know that they are not doing it as the form it moves through them and when you look at some of the great creations the redeeming feature of humanity it has enormous madness there but also some very great things the greatest of course is the teachers of truth they are the sublime achievement of humanity is to see beyond delusion but then come also those that created incredible depths and beauty through some form and use music or through even through words but there is an essence there that is beyond mind and you say how could a human being create such sublime such a sublime work and the answer is it's the little human being didn't create it it was there was an opening into universal intelligence and so those creative humans in their limited field enter that state and it happens and in most cases those humans when they move into back into ordinary life away from their creative field are possessed again by the normal human unconsciousness and so it's mostly with those people only in that moment that act of creation in their particular field are able to enter that state Einstein was able to enter that state and this is where the great insights came that no mind could have worked out there is a leap here that sudden insight that is not the result of thought activity it is the result of the cessation of thought activity and then suddenly the insight came so that is but here we are going we are not attempting to become great artists although it may happen this arises in humanity now as a continuous state of being so your whole life becomes a work of art even if you create nothing externally so the challenges are extremely important that come which is again the limitations that appears in this moment and not to turn away from it to walk through it face it fully say yes to it and then see what happens so that there is one more seeming apparent obstacle that many human beings encounter as the new state even as the new state of consciousness arises and that obstacle is due to the fact that collectively humanity has created vast suffering for itself on this planet and there is within the energy field of the planet there is a residue of pain human pain and in the collective in the collective consciousness of humanity or unconsciousness of humanity there is an enormous amount of human pain and every human being has a share of accumulated human pain that they carry inside almost something it's an energy field residue of pain from your personal life in this lifetime children very few children don't suffer great pain after all you live in a relatively mad world but more than that human pain accumulated over thousands of years that is passed on in many ways even genetically and so if you are not aware of that it can happen easily that you are overwhelmed taken over periodically by the movement of human pain in you and it can easily obscure the arising presence the unconditioned when the pain comes I call that the pain body that human beings carry inside and that pain body is that needs to be seen for what it is it can only continue to operate in you if you remain unconscious of it and mistake it for who you are this pain body and many of you know this already I spoke of it in the book many of you already working with your pain body bringing presence to it but we need to point out that this pain body which we look upon as if it were an almost independent entity that lives in you and again don't take this to be the absolute truth it is a pointer a helpful very helpful perspective it's quite close to the truth but not the truth so let's be aware of the limitations of any perspective and yet we use that perspective because it's helpful so we say that it is like an entity that lives in you it is a residue an emotional field which is energy that has become stuck cannot flow freely constricted tight it lives in humans although most humans it is in most human beings it is not continuously active it is sporadically active the pain body has a dormant period when all you have to face in life is your mind and the mad egoic mind structures which is problematic enough but then periodically the pain body awakens out of its dormant state because being almost an independent entity it needs to take in some food renew itself it needs further experience of pain and it usually happens when you can notice it when a relatively minor often not always but very often a relatively minor situation event even thought can suddenly bring about an enormous influx of emotional pain be it anxiety fear extreme fear be it extreme anger often totally out of proportion to the triggering event you suddenly or the fear or its deep sadness and heaviness the the makeup of pain body differs from person to person some are predominantly angry some are predominantly heavy with deep sadness others are predominantly fearful and anxious and many others are a combination of these and so suddenly there is an enormous movement of emotion painful emotion and the first thing that the pain body does when it awakens it is seeking food it seeks food in two places one is in your mind and it will attempt to use your thought processes so the emotion is so strong that it overpowers your thought processes and every thought process then reflects the painful emotion that you feel so you begin to think thoughts that reflect the pain that you feel in here and with every thought you feed the pain body that means at that moment you are identified with the pain body and this is an important aspect of the egoic sense of self this is what makes the egoic sense of self so far we've only spoken of the egoic sense of self as mind movements but now we see there is an additional factor to the egoic sense of self which makes it even more mad and even heavier than it already is as simply mind movements conditioned that you identify with so we have an influx of human pain that flows into those mind movements that are egoic and are bad enough even without the pain body problematic enough and yet now as the pain body moves into it amplifies enormously the egoic mind movements what that means is when the story of me which is what most people derive their identity from becomes amplified by the pain body the story becomes huge drama heavy drama angry drama fearful drama of enormous proportions and it the mind is working overtime it's active anyway all the time but now it's doubly ten times fifty times more active thinking all those thoughts angry depressed fearful fearful what's happening it's happening to me angry oh what I'm going to do I'm going to kill him I'm going to what you

[Speaker 2] (4:06:41 - 4:06:42)

know

[Speaker 1] (4:06:42 - 4:32:53)

I don't need to and every thought feeds the pain body and you love it because at that moment you have become the pain body that is the addiction to pain that every human being carries inside pain because bodies love pain and when you identified with that movement identified means your sense of selfiness is in it during while it's active at that moment you because you have become the pain body you love the pain and you will do everything to keep it going but your mind is only one level on which one of where the pain body feeds it feeds on other people so it will attempt to provoke or make other people equally unhappy the pain body is very very unhappy and when it becomes through mind movement and identification with it it becomes a self the delusory self amplified now by thousands of years of human pain that are genetically and in other ways passed on and the delusion is that that is me my problem my pain my story you don't realize that my identity so and then this unhappy identity seeks to make others equally unhappy to feed on their unhappiness their emotional reaction of unhappiness in other words it's looking for drama and for trouble from someone and usually it gets it it succeeds in drawing in awakening the other person's pain body this is particularly prevalent in partnerships husband wife it can be seen in the periodic need to act out their drama and it repeats itself you might have noticed every week every few days you go through the motions in many cases it's almost exactly the same as last weeks and in other many cases it is the same as 20 years ago it's amazing as if they were forced to act something out like somebody has put something in there a script programmed you and you're forced same again but every time it actually works because through that the pain body renews itself and after a while a few hours maybe a whole day in some cases two days or in more chronic pain bodies longer periods of time and then it will go to sleep for a while and the relationship is a bit more harmonious again and sooner or later it's back and it it looks for an opportunity especially as more consciousness arises in you presence it looks for moments when you are less conscious it will attempt to come in then when it's ready to awaken it is clever it is cunning it's lying in wait it's looking for the best moment in which to suddenly jump in and rise up into your mind before you know it and immediately you start and suddenly ten minutes later you might realize you're feeding the pain body with extremely negative thought processes when did it start?

oh my god I've been in that for ten fifteen minutes half an hour it may be even too late by then you're so identified that if somebody pointed out to you that you are possessed by the pain body you would say you would shout something don't give me that nonsense about pain body this is very real the pain body sometimes if the pain body is active and you have to step outside you're going you're going shopping you're going to your workplace but you have the pain body is active of course it's not being expressed at that moment but you're walking there you're a walking pain body and you're then at far greater risk of being attacked verbally even physically there's a greater risk but more likely verbally by some other walking pain body so you go into a shop to buy a loaf of bread and suddenly the shopkeeper is extremely rude and there's an enormous amount of negativity flowing what did I do because his pain body recognized yours and says oh and many pain bodies these days are sitting behind wheels so there are people they are driving pain bodies and often accidents happen in that way all that is required for a very high likelihood of an accident is two driving pain bodies getting close to each other because the pain body wants the drama the pain body wants the pain the pain body wants the accident because the accident will give it more pain that is totally unconscious of course but it's a bit frightening to realize that there are many drivers out there who are looking for the accident through the pain body totally unconscious of course so it's amazing that I have met people spiritual seekers who already the state of presence arises in them beautifully but they have not been aware of the movement of pain body and each time they lose it completely totally identified with the pain movement and then wake up again okay it's time to meditate again and when the pain body is ready to awaken it could happen in the middle of a meditation and then it will wait for the slightest provocation a little the door opening leave me alone can't you see I'm doing my meta meditation for god's sake get out of here so there is a cycle here of human pain becoming a self the delusion of self and through becoming a self identification with it it renews itself so the simple how do you get out of it was composed predominantly of fear energy so I would wake up in the middle of the night shivering with fear and mind movements to accompany that all the dreadful things that are going to happen to me see the movement of pain for what it is human pain watch it as it arises so as it arises it may arise quickly particularly if it's anger that is the predominant energy field it can be as quick as an explosion not easy to watch it if it goes wrong you have to be there as it goes wrong so what and then it's there so what do you do with it say go away no it is the form that this moment takes human pain this moment then takes the form of that pain fear anger heaviness depression and what do you do with the now you allow it to be and you allowing implies that there is an awareness because the awareness and the allowing are really one you allow it to be so you see it and you allow the movement of pain then it cannot use your mind because you are watching it directly if when it cannot use your mind it cannot renew itself so it will simply be the expression of old pain but it's not you are not adding to it by unconsciously identifying with it and making it into a self and so that is the beginning of a gradual transmutation of the pain gradually the trapped energy that was there becomes freed and it is strange fact that in those human beings very often who have the densest pain bodies the heaviest pain bodies liberation can happen very quickly because the suffering becomes almost unbearable and so you recognize what you then do is this was the case with me I could not live with myself any longer that night when the pain reached a climax I just this thought came into I talk about it briefly in the book I cannot live with myself any longer and that thought became a koan in zen koan as many of you know is a kind of riddle that has no logical answer that you could work out so the koan that spontaneously arose was that sentence that phrase I cannot live with myself and suddenly I saw self and the pain of self I said I there are two here I and the self the that I cannot live with what's that self it's painful self it's a story it's a painful story that's what I can't live with who am I who is I I at its deepest level is the unconditioned consciousness the one I the superficial I in the way the word I is normally used in everyday usage and it's probably the most frequently used word in the language because of course everybody is the center of the universe I usually refers to I and my story my story self my painful self my pain body story self this is when people say I they refer to the illusory identity of self that was the self that I could not live with I so and that is the miracle of transformation is when that happens and fortunately the pain that is created by that delusion is also that which makes you realize who you are beyond the form one could almost say that self created pain drives you out finally of the form that is one way of putting it and then by the grace of God the divine the one a spiritual teaching or teacher comes in and points to the fact that you don't need further pain you've come to the end to awaken out of identification with form you don't need more pain the one the pain that you have had and really I'm talking not so much to you as an individual person I could say that to humanity because you are humanity the pain that you have had has been enough and that was already 2600 years ago that was already the message of the Buddha because he summarized the entire teaching which is sublime of sublime simplicity and power summarized it as I show you suffering and the end of suffering and this is exactly what we have been engaged in here this evening I showed you suffering and the end of suffering the same teaching the same teacher there is only one spiritual teaching and there is only one spiritual teacher and that one teaching one teacher comes in many forms but it's only one and here that appears again with an added one could almost say urgency or intensity to it because at the time of the Buddha human madness had not yet developed to the point where it threatened survival of the very planet it's taken 2600 years since then for the human mind to become that powerful and increase through science through technology in the amplify the madness that was already there and not that there's anything wrong with that ultimately that also is part of what has to be and had to be put beautifully expressed beautifully by the Buddhist saying if there were no delusion there would be no enlightenment so all is as it is and it is right everything from the highest deepest perspective even though I have been speaking of human madness even that is a fragmentary perspective nothing I pointed out before nothing that thought can think or words can speak is the entire truth so even to say that humans are mad there's dysfunction on the planet yes it's true but it's not the entire truth there is a larger picture within which that also is as it should be totally right so this is the message of salvation liberation from that prison but it's been beautiful it worked the madness worked the suffering worked it is all right from the highest perspective there's nothing that is amiss there's so you all go away from here greatly diminished in your sense of self story this has not been a personal growth seminar the opposite that which is true is not is emerging if it were not you wouldn't be sitting here anymore and now that presence the unconditioned transmits itself fortunately your practice is of course the practice of surrender to now the old movements of resistance will come back periodically and you then recognize them you will not get lost for too long in the old egoic reactive resistant movements occasionally you get back in and then oh there it was again and it's never a personal problem thought processes yes you may get drawn back into identification with mind streams and you become absent in dream world and then you awaken again out of it and then you realize oh I was in a dream world of mind identification again for the past three hours that's right you're awake now that's all that matters it's not a personal problem the whole movement of thought is not a personal matter just as the pain body is not a personal matter the pain that it is human pain and mind movement is the human mind it's nobody's personal problem so the old

[Speaker 2] (4:32:53 - 4:32:54)

comes

[Speaker 1] (4:32:54 - 4:34:13)

the new and slowly the new arises and that one could say may take some time but the one decisive act of surrender never takes time because it can only be now that is the message ever the same since the first human being realized the truth but more intense now more urgent thank you

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[Speaker 1] (1:35 - 1:04:25)

We don't have a lot of ritual here, just a minimum, these bells, I'll ring the bells before I start. It's a call to attention, to be present here, completely, instead of being lost in the mind, in the thought. Alert, completely here, not needing to be somewhere else.

As you sit there, it helps to be in the body, to feel the inner energy field of the body, inhabit the body as you sit here. Some of your attention is in the aliveness, the animating presence of what on the surface looks like a physical body. The rest of your attention is on sense perceptions.

And now in that state of alertness, something miraculous happens. It doesn't look significant at all from the point of view of the mind, but in that state of attention, you can be here fully awake, fully alert, without needing to interpret this moment mentally, without needing to label what's happening. You can be so aligned with this moment that thought is no longer needed, and you haven't gone to sleep, you're more awake than you would be if you were thinking.

Just an alert presence. We could call it the awakening of intelligence. One more time.

The undercurrent, as we sit here and words come out of my mouth, the undercurrent of this is always the state of attention, the state of presence. The words may refer to certain obstacles to the state of presence that arise, the conditioning of the human mind, ways in which the state of presence can easily become obscured. I may talk about that, who knows?

And yet, no matter what words come, what matters here is the undercurrent of presence. In other words, what really matters is the silent field underneath the words, which you can become aware of. For example, in the gaps between the words, there the silent field emerges, so to speak, it doesn't really emerge.

You can become aware of it. Just the small gaps between words. And when you're aware of a gap between two sentences or two words, there's a gap in your thought stream, because you're paying attention to the gap of stillness, and that is the new state of consciousness that is now emerging on the planet, emerging in you.

A state in which you're no longer trapped in mental noise, and a state in which you no longer have your sense of who you are in the mental noise in the head. You don't derive your sense of identity any longer from thought, from the story that your mind is telling you who you are, the storyline of me and my life. We're going beyond that narrow, confined, personalized sense of self, which humans have lived in for so long.

So it's a shift in identity that's taking place here. Humans have been trapped for many thousands of years in an egoic sense of self, and that consists of an accumulation of mental content. Humans have been a content-based species.

That means deriving their sense of who they are from the content of their mind, whatever the mind accumulates from an early age. It begins with your name. Your name, I call that the basket into which further experiences, further content is thrown, and in which it accumulates.

And then that basket, that is, the basket is the name that you think you are, that your parents gave you. That becomes the receptacle for experiences that are accumulated, knowledge that is accumulated, successes, defeats, sufferings, relationships. All those things gradually form a whole that is the me that is a mentally derived sense of self.

I'll just ask you for a moment to imagine that you don't have a name. What that feels like. If you don't know who you are on the level of concepts, that is.

Let's just for a moment, if that is possible, imagine that basket doesn't hold together anymore. What is there if you are not the name and that which is accumulated in that receptacle? And of course, the name is just sounds.

It's just sounds that come out of your mouth. And if it's not pronounced, it is an image in the head. And that's me.

And what is there when that goes? So you can't remember your name. And you are comfortable with not knowing your name.

Then the experiences that have been accumulated, all the conditioning doesn't quite hold together anymore. It's still there, but it's not a me. Things have happened where this form is.

Things have happened to this form, but it's not, it's no longer a person there. Simply a field of awareness which is what you are. And the story that you have been telling yourself in the head of who you are becomes unimportant.

It does not give you an identity anymore. You don't derive your sense of self anymore from the story in the head, which is accumulated experiences. Accumulated knowledge and a sense of self derived from that accumulation.

Content of the mind. And every experience is content. Everything that happens to you, some experiences become stored up.

They become part of the accumulation and they strengthen the sense of self. They are accumulated to enhance the sense of self. So when you live in that way from a fictitious sense of self, you are always looking for things to enhance your sense of self.

To strengthen it or to protect it. That sense of me. Because some of the content you might lose or you want to add to who you are.

Not the sense of not being complete is an essential ingredient of the fictitious sense of self. Everybody has that. And everybody interprets that as a personal problem.

That very sense of not being complete becomes part of who you are and who you are striving to be. And even those people who are being told by the world that they have arrived, have the feeling that they haven't arrived yet. And there's something wrong with it.

The world must have gotten it wrong. They're telling me that I have made it and I can feel that I haven't made it. And then you read about people who have everything, fame and fortune and good looks.

And then they can't stop drinking and they need to go from one psychiatrist to another. Have they made it? And in our culture they are shown as examples of, this is, you too can achieve that.

And everybody, yes, everybody swallows that. And then the message that is there in the culture is that, yes, you can make it because look at those people, they made it. If you meet them, you'll realize that they haven't made it at all.

And some of them actually will come, they read the book, there are some famous people who loved The Power of Now because they saw very clearly that what the world was telling them was not true. And I said, well, if I've read it, what for? If you've made it, you don't need spiritual transformation.

So it is wonderful, a few of those people who have achieved all possible worldly success realize that's not it either and I still don't know basically who I am and I wake up in the middle of the night in a state of dread and anxiety and my relationships are continuously in chaos. And to see that the attempt to complete yourself, to find a more complete and more fulfilled sense of self on the level of the story, that attempt is futile. Because on the level of the story that you're telling yourself in the head of who you are, you're not going to make it.

No story has a happy ending. A few false happy endings, such as a wedding, that used to be the traditional happy ending on films and plays, but we all know that's a false happy ending. There's no happy ending because all your achievements are going to dissolve and you're going to die.

And then no matter how many millions you have in the bank, it becomes meaningless. And what is left of every story is the two inch gap between your date of birth and date of death on your gravestone that contains all the sufferings, all the drama that was part of me and my story. And somebody derived their sense of self from all that.

They thought that was who they were. It's sad. They never realized who they are.

They were trapped in a fiction, their sense of identity trapped in a fiction for a whole lifetime. Maybe if they were lucky, shortly before their death or on their deathbed, the whole story collapsed and something else emerged and that happens occasionally. Occasionally, as death approaches, maybe it's only a few minutes or a few hours away, there's suddenly, and some people who have been sitting with a dying person have reported that in certain instances, something shines through suddenly.

It's almost a light that comes through and that happens when the mentally made sense of identity, the fictitious sense of identity dissolves because it heavily obscures the light of consciousness that is underneath. And it can happen shortly before death that that fiction dissolves and suddenly it's like a flowering. There's an enormous light shining through as if a flower had just opened.

And it could have opened before, but it just, it opened only a few minutes before death. But at least it opened. One could say the purpose of that life is fulfilled.

But the message here is that you don't need to wait for your death approaching before you can know who you are beyond a mental image of who you are. You don't have to wait for death to approach because you might not get it even then. You may be trapped in that image even as you die and that means you would die in terrible, terrible fear and anxiety because that image is dying, the me is dying.

The transformation of consciousness that is happening to each one of you is that kind of death, but it is not the physical death. It's the death of what I call the me or what in some spiritual traditions is called the self, which is a mind made sense of self. That is dissolving.

So really why we are here is to undergo that death voluntarily. Well, partly voluntarily because if you hadn't gone through great suffering already due to being trapped in a mental image of me, which is a suffering sense of self, a sense of self that is unhappy a lot of the time. So you've been trapped in a suffering sense of self and the suffering has become so acute that something within you said, this is too much.

There must be something else. I can't go on like this. I'm saying this because that happened to me.

So it looks as if you had chosen to come here and that's fine. That's one perspective on it, but really you were driven here because you want to die. You want to die that death of the self, the little me in the head, because that's not who you are.

Now the little me doesn't want to die. So there are two movements inside you. One is the movement towards liberation and it's a very strong and increasingly powerful movement to become free of that.

That something far vaster is emerging in you than even the heaviest and most dramatic story of me, than even the heaviest me could be that thinks, oh, I'm so heavy. You can sometimes see people and you say, well, there's no chance that they would ever become liberated in this lifetime if you look at the heaviness of their drama and their total identification with the drama of me. But you might be wrong because very often the most unlikely people suddenly step beyond.

And perhaps the monk who's been practicing meditation for 30 years hasn't stepped quite beyond yet. But there's still a me and mental image of me as the spiritual one. And there might be a criminal here in a prison cell whose mentally made sense of self suddenly dissolves.

And what emerges is great joy, aliveness, and peace, and a state of connectedness with being, a vastness, which is not separate from you, is one with who you are. Can only expressed in paradox, it is you and yet much greater than you. So we are here to connect with that vastness that lies underneath the storyline of me.

And we are allowing the story of me to come to an end. Your sense of identity is no longer derived from the content of your mind. Whatever thoughts go through your mind, you are no longer a thought-based entity.

Thoughts still happen, but thoughts don't give you an identity anymore. Then thought is not problematic. The continuous stream of thinking is only problematic because your sense of self is trapped in it.

That makes life extremely problematic. And every thought tells you how problematic your life is. I'm not complete.

I need, I want, I must have. Where is it? To complete myself, I'm looking for myself, I want to add something to the content of me.

It might be acquisition, it might be material things, it might be relationships, or it may be in higher developed human knowledge. It is still the search, nothing wrong with knowledge, but here we are speaking of the self-seeking through knowledge, to seek a stronger sense of me through knowledge. And we've all met people whose sense of self is primarily identified with all their knowledge.

If you go to universities, you meet many of them. I was there. In other places, the content that primarily gives you an identity might be appearance, it could be anything.

It is amazing what that sense of self can use and does use to strengthen itself. From the smallest to the biggest, it's like an animal, maybe a pig that will eat almost anything and absorb it, and that's me, me. And it's not, anything, even a miserable experience can be added to my basket of miserable experiences.

And when my sense of self is predominantly unhappy, as is the case with many, with others it's half-half, happy, unhappy, happy, unhappy. In others, it's predominantly unhappy, and they're telling everybody or themselves in their head their unhappy story and how they're trying to get out of it. For years they've been trying to get out of their unhappy story of me.

But their primary sense of self, the content with which they are identified in the mind and in the emotional field, mental-emotional content, is misery. So when that is the case, what they're looking for to strengthen their sense of self is a further piece of misery, because other things wouldn't fit in that basket, they would not be compatible with all these things that are in the basket. If it's predominantly misery, I'm looking for more misery, my self gets even stronger, a more miserable self.

But the ego loves that, that ego feels stronger in that. So the world is full of people who are looking for further unhappy experiences, mad as it might seem, to strengthen their sense of self. And you can sense it when you have certain sensitivity and presence, when you meet someone who has that very heavy sense of self that is predominantly identified with misery.

And that, of course, the pain body comes in there, which we may address a little bit later. So it wants more of that. It will use anything to strengthen itself.

You've all, the tiniest things, you all know these things that everybody does it, it seems, things, name dropping, that's just a tiny example of, I want to add something to who I am. Or I spoke to such and such, that famous man, the other day, whether it's true or not, in many cases it's not true, they just, why is that? Because they want to add a bit more content to, maybe I can come a bit bigger, I can, they're really, it's all a search for yourself.

And it's a never ending search on that level. And then you might come, when you go beyond name dropping and go beyond deriving a sense of identity from your car, perhaps all of you have gone beyond that, well, some. Then you may come to, the search may continue on another level, the search continues then on the spiritual level, which is also a search for acquisition to add to the sense of who I am.

It could be in the form of greater knowledge, I want to understand the universe, what's it all about, the mystery. And I want to, and then image forms of me, the one who's gone beyond material things, the spiritual one, and you've all met people who are. And this happens so easily, because that tendency of image making and of needing to add to the content of me is so strong.

Even seeking for answers means I want to add more content. There's nothing wrong with investigating or examining, but I'm speaking here now of doing that in the service of a self, to derive a greater self from that. And that's the delusion.

So everyone is trapped in that seeking for a deeper, greater, stronger me, sense of self. It's never enough. It definitely, who you are now, your story will tell you, who you are now is not enough.

The basket isn't full yet, or what it contains isn't good enough. I need to add better things to my basket, other things. And so I need the future.

Without the future, I cannot be myself, is the delusion. I can only complete my sense of identity through having more future, enough future. Please give me more future so that I can know myself.

Please give me time so that I can know myself. That is the mind pattern. Because for everything else you need time.

Please give me time to make money. You need some time. Please give me time to learn a language.

Give me time to find a mate. Give me time to make a cake. Everything requires time.

And on that level it's fine. You need it. Of course you need time for all those things.

But then, if you then step into knowing who you are, give me time to know who I am, is the delusion. That's the beginning of the delusion, that you need time to find yourself. And when that is the delusion, your whole life then, once the delusion that you need time to find yourself is firmly established, and it happens quickly, then all further activities, all further action, all further thought, all further aims, are coloured and distorted by that delusion.

So they're all an expression of the delusion of needing to find yourself. All the desires and fears that dominate a person's life, that provide the motivating power behind what people do, the desires and fears, the basis for that is that mentally made sense of self. It fears that it may never become complete, or it might lose the little it has.

And it desires more content in whatever form, some form, some content. That's why spiritual traditions speak of desire, let go of desire. But I'm not saying let go of desire.

Let's leave that for a while. Just look at desire. Why make another problem and say you should let go of desire?

Just look at it and see how it operates. So there's, and then you have what operates on the personal level, operates collectively. So that personalized sense of me that isn't complete and fulfilled and needs something, never happy with what is, it's not enough.

Never happy with this moment, it's not enough, not good enough. The me is not complete. Always at odds with something or someone, which it likes because then it feels I know more who I am when I'm at odds with something or someone than when I'm at peace.

It doesn't like peace. It likes to be in conflict in one way or another. Because then the me gets stronger in any kind of conflict or opposition.

It's, that's the contracted state of me. And it, so you're, these days many people have stress. What does that mean?

It means you're in conflict with this moment. And that's again part of the whole civilization is a stressful civilization because it's, the whole civilization is an externalization of the human consciousness. So everybody is under stress, which means they're in conflict with what is.

They don't want to be here because they need to be in the future, that's called stress. I need to be there. And you can actually see the reaching out, how stressful it is, it tears you apart.

Uh, uh. Never quite getting there. That reaching out.

And it's in people's faces. They can't be here because they need to be there urgently. And this, that sense of self likes that.

Because it feels stronger in that, in that conflict, it contracts more. And then you have a pseudo substitute sense of self that, at least now I know I am. Because you're in a fighting mode with life.

You're in a fighting mode with the present moment, which is life. Whatever it is, I'm against it. What do you think about the present moment?

I'm against it. It shouldn't be. And then that sense, you can see how it's so deep seated.

That the discontent, the unhappiness that's part of that, the self. And if the self does not want to be free of that, that's not where the longing for freedom comes from. The longing for freedom does not come from the self.

The self speaks of freedom, but then sabotages it continuously. It says, I'm looking for peace. And then creates conflict.

And then you can see how it operates collectively. The same mindset operates collectively. Let's have another peace conference.

And in the meantime they produce more and more massive amounts of weapons. So, let's talk about peace. The peace process.

They're still talking about peace process, and they're continuously throwing grenades and machine gunning. The peace process. Talk about peace.

Peace, they don't want peace. Because the mindset depends on non-peace for its survival. And so whether your sense of self is predominantly a personalized sense of self.

Or whether it's predominantly a collective egoic sense of self. A religion, or a nation, or a racial thing. Then that can be even stronger than the personalized.

It's actually exactly the same principle at work. Exactly the same mechanism at work. But can be even more mad than the personalized sense of self, which is mad enough.

But you can see how mad humanity can become when they identify with a collective me. That's the height of madness. And what they are capable of doing when the egoic sense of self is a collective one.

Then all the respectable citizens become monsters. And the criminals are harmless compared to that. And the crimes against humanity, criminals are not committed by criminals, they are committed by respectable citizens.

And still are. Nationalistic, religious, whatever they are, whatever their mindset, whatever their mental image is. The mentally made sense of self, of us.

They need their enemies. They need fighting. They need to be at odds with another nation, fighting another religion.

Then I know who I am when I'm at odds with something. So it operates on all levels. Hence the madness of human history.

And the madness of everybody's life. Just as my life was completely mad. I mean, when you look at the surface, it looks okay.

They look as if they were sane. Well, I mean, if you look at big cities, the running about like frightened chickens, it's not all that sane. But it's still just, when you look, you see that everyone's life is dominated by that conflict.

So there's self-seeking through this, that, the other, to strengthen the sense of who I am. And that is the madness. Self-seeking through future.

There's the madness. So if we can see the madness, we already, that is the beginning of freedom. We already have one foot in freedom when we see the madness of self-seeking through future.

So of self-seeking through further content. And that includes any question that arises in your mind at this moment. I want to know something more.

Because in this transformation of consciousness, your understanding is relatively unimportant. The little that you need to understand, you've understood already. I just pointed you to simply see the madness.

Beyond that, what emerges, that state of consciousness that is emerging, you cannot really understand or figure out through the mind what that presence is. What do you mean by presence? Because that is a state of consciousness that is not based on content.

The presence is, as I sometimes describe it, a spaciousness, a sense of space that surrounds whatever content there is in your life. Thoughts. Emotions.

Sense perceptions or experiences. Even sitting here and listening. The truth is not in the words.

The words only point. So don't accumulate the words. You can't take the truth home with you.

Nor do you need to, because you are the truth. So the words only point to that spaciousness that is inside you. That spaciousness you bring to every sense perception.

That spaciousness is there. You don't really bring it. You realize it's already there.

For example, when you look at something, let's say it's the flowers. When you look at something and there's no mental noise around it, there's simply this perception of that. I recommend that practice highly, to look at a flower in the state of such alertness, relaxed alertness, that you don't need to label it in any way.

The first thing you notice when you do that is how still a flower is. And I'm sure you never noticed that before when you looked at it through the mind. The mind has no knowledge of stillness.

The mind is noise. So when you look at a flower, an amazing thing happens. The first thing you feel, of course you see the beauty.

There's the color and there's the light shining through the petals. It's very beautiful. But you notice more than that.

You notice that it is very still. And anything in nature, you suddenly notice that there is an essence beyond that which you see. It lives in a state of deep stillness.

And when you notice that, what does that mean when I say now you notice that? It means at that moment that deep stillness is there in you, when you notice it in a flower, that a flower lives in that state. The noticing it is the arising in you of that state of stillness.

And that is a state of great sacredness and aliveness. And beauty, but deeper than the beauty of form. It is the formless that arises in you.

The formless consciousness. So that is what I mean when I use the word spaciousness.

Perhaps you didn't quite know what I meant.

So we are gradually getting there. I'm giving you a few more pointers to what that means. There's a wake-up call.

Nature here is so alive. All plants that have good karma come to California. And there's such profusion of plant life here.

So anything to truly... A flower, a plant could be... You wouldn't need any more spiritual teachers.

Any flower could be your teacher, and you wouldn't need any other teacher if you can truly be with a flower and be alert and watch. So the intelligence that created that flower and that beauty operates in complete stillness. It doesn't need noise.

It doesn't need to have a committee meeting to find out how we can create a beautiful flower. Let's discuss it. Let's feed the information into the computer and let's talk about that and let's break it up into little mathematical formula.

Okay, let's create something incredibly beautiful. Let's bring the most intelligent minds here on the planet and let's create something incredibly beautiful. And after a lot of noise making, they would never be able to create something like that.

And it's... So the greater intelligence operates without noise. Only the human mind is an aspect of the vast intelligence, a tiny aspect that is noisy.

And that's fine too if you're not seeking yourself in the noise. If you're seeking yourself in the mental noise, it's torture, it's a prison, it's awful. Otherwise, okay, the mind is a particular expression of intelligence and it is noisy.

There's no problem there. And that's not who you are. It operates in you, no problem.

It's useful for certain things, it's helpful. For many, many things you need the mind except for knowing who you are. In other words, except for the most important thing in your life.

For everything else, it's fine. And when you truly notice that a flower exists in complete stillness, it not only is still inside, you almost sense that it's surrounded also by stillness, a field of stillness, everything in nature. And it's beautiful.

It's alive, but it's not noisy. So the noticing of that dimension is the spaciousness that is around the content in your life. And I've only given the example of the flower so far, but you will see that it applies to all the content in your life, to all your experiences, they happen.

Let's now shift from the flower to a traffic jam. You're sitting in a car, stress. You need to be there, but you're not moving.

So that is an experience. There's an experience of stopping, no movement. The same spaciousness that is, of course, easier to become aware of when you contemplate a flower, that event that we call the traffic jam, you can also notice it, notice that it is surrounded within the spaciousness because that spaciousness is always the now in which it happens.

So what you become aware of, there's the traffic jam, which otherwise would have irritated you tremendously and brought up anger or frustration, made the unhappy story of me even more unhappy. Instead, there's the traffic jam. And how do you find the spaciousness around that event?

Simply by allowing that moment to be. The moment you say yes to anything that happens completely, instead of fighting or resisting what is, you become aware of a dimension that is deeper than the event. Now, whatever label I use for that, it doesn't matter.

Every label is just a little pointer. I can call it a spaciousness around it. A stillness in which it happens.

And that, now, next time there's a traffic jam, see what happens when you completely say, right, here I am, the car is not moving, it is as it is. And suddenly there's a stillness around the content. And then your next practice will be an emotion arising, anger arising.

Maybe you didn't catch the traffic jam in time, so you became angry. Anger comes up. And here too, you can allow that, say, there's anger, here it is.

Anger has a lot of energy to it. It is as it is. There's the energy that we call anger, trapped energy, like something trying to get out.

It is as it is. Now, it's not so easy here. It's easier to see the spaciousness, the silence around a flower than the silence and spaciousness around anger.

But the same principle is at work. You can, anything that you allow, any form that arises, that you do not resist because you see the futility of resisting a form that has arisen, it is, what can you do? Of course you can, then action is possible, but in the meantime, it is.

So, whatever arises in the now is completely accepted. And through that, a deeper dimension suddenly reveals itself to you. And that I sometimes call the spaciousness around things, the spaciousness around whatever the content is.

And then you can take the whole story in your head of me and my past and my life situation and see also that it's surrounded by spaciousness. Another word for that spaciousness is the now. What that means is, you become aware of the now in which everything happens.

Undoubtedly it does. It cannot happen anywhere else. Nothing can happen outside that field of now.

Mostly people are not aware of the field. They're only aware of what happens in the field. Not only are they aware of what happens in the field, they are identified with what happens in the field of now and they react to what happens in the field of now in their search for a self.

In their search for a self, whatever arises in the field of now, they cling to or they run away from. There's an identification with content that happens. And there's complete ignorance of the vastness in which it happens.

So you get trapped in form. And by reacting to every form that arises in the now, your own form identity gets stronger. The illusion that you are this psychological form with its story and this physical form gets stronger with every reaction to another form that arises.

This is the secret of life, the mystery. When you see that, how that operates, and then you can see why the self needs the reactivity for its continued life. It perpetuates itself through reactivity because every time you react to something, there is a strengthening of your form identity, the psychological sense of me.

You can see how the me loves discussions, how the me loves to be right. And so you react to this person's opinion. You react even spiritually.

Maybe it happened to you this weekend. Somebody said, gave an opinion, and there was a reaction saying, no, you're wrong, I know better. Maybe you do, but there's a self-seeking there.

And there's a strong energy behind it, the reactivity. So most people go through life in that mode of reactivity. And whatever arises in the now, they react to, and most of the time it's a no.

A form arises, or there's a subtle turning away from it. So to see that is the beginning of freedom. And then you see the miracle that happens when whatever form arises, it is not resisted.

It's allowed. And that form could be an event, an external event. It could be a thought that comes in, or an emotion that goes through you.

It's simply allowed to be. Because what's the point in saying no if it is? It's allowed.

[Speaker 2] (1:04:26 - 1:04:26)

Hmm.

[Speaker 1] (1:04:27 - 1:46:57)

And there it is. That is the key word. Allowed means you're no longer a reactive entity.

It doesn't mean that you cannot respond to what, if action is required, you respond, but not react. React is the conditioning is playing itself out. The self is strengthening itself through the reaction.

Response is, action arises that is totally right for the situation, but it doesn't come unless you first say yes, and then action comes. There's enormous power in that yes. It is the power of life itself, the power of consciousness itself, that is there the moment you say yes to life, then the power of life is there, and flows through you.

Not egoic power that I want to know, I must have, and all that. A deeper, not power over some other form, but the power of life itself is suddenly there when you say yes to life. And saying yes to life is saying yes to now, this moment.

Instead of going through life and reacting to the content that arises in your life continuously, new things, thoughts, emotions, external events, people, places, the scenery around you changes continuously. That's all content. Instead of reacting to content, the content is allowed to be, and then you're aware of, instead of just being aware of, identified with what arises in the now, you become aware of the now itself, beyond the phenomena that arise in it.

That is the miracle of transformation of consciousness. What does that mean? You become aware of the now itself.

You become aware of an undercurrent of stillness in which everything happens. You sense it. Not only that, even that's not quite correct.

You realize that you are it. And then it's so easy, once you realize you are that deep undercurrent of stillness. The world is no longer problematic.

That moment you know yourself to be that, whatever content there is in your life, including the story in your head of me, is no longer problematic. It's simply the story of me, but you don't get your identity from it anymore. What's left are simply your photo albums, either physical photo albums or the photo albums in the head.

Those things that happened to me. Okay. Or video, video thing.

These days people record things on video film, so you may have a collection there of two years ago, five years ago, ten years ago. That was me with my first wife. That's me with my second wife.

And there's the third wife. You're not saying, no, that is all illusion. Of course there's your first, second and third wife or husband.

But it's simply, okay, you're no longer in a reactive relationship to those events that took place in the past and are now remembered now in the field of now. Where else can they be remembered? They're remembered in the field of now.

You're no longer in a personalized and reactive relationship. You're not seeking yourself in your reaction to your three ex-wives or ex-husbands. Just one example.

So those stories go, it's more than you know what he did to me or she did to me and I'll never forget what he did and said and so on. It simply is things that happened in the past. Not me.

There's no identity in it. You don't need it anymore for an identity. And the future is fine too.

Of course you need future for many things. Nobody denies that. But you don't look for yourself anymore in it.

You can't find yourself there. So it's no longer problematic. It's no longer threatening the future.

Nor is it all that promising. It just is. And you deal with it.

You make arrangements for next week to do this or that. Next year, going this or there. Make appointments for the future.

Work out something that you're going to do. Without seeking an identity through it. Simple, effortless doing.

Not straining. Effort means really you're seeking yourself in something. Everything when you're seeking yourself in it is effort.

And it's strain and it's stress. Then after that, life is so simple. And why is it so simple?

I'm not saying no challenges will ever come anymore. Of course they come. Challenges are wonderful.

But they are simple because they're only now. There's nothing that big that can come into the field of now. And the power is there to deal with it now.

When you allow whatever arises to arise. And if it needs a response. If it needs dealing with.

There is vast power that immediately flows through you. And action. You take action.

A few people have experienced that in emergency situations. Who suddenly did just the right thing. And people say, how could you have been so courageous to have done that?

There was no thought involved. There was a greater power that took over. So, and then those people say, well, I don't know, I just did it.

I don't know how it happened. They don't think they did anything great because there was no me involved in it. Your whole life can be like that.

Simply. By continuously. By dwelling.

With your attention. In the field of now. The field itself.

And let it happen. Let the world happen. It's great.

Let the forms come and go as they will. No form stays for that long. Every form that comes.

Comes and goes. Let it come. You enjoy the play of form around you.

The fear of loss is no longer there. Because why is there the fear of loss? Because there is an identification with some content.

And there is the fear that if I lose that, I lose part of who I am. It's the fear of loss. Whether it's fear of material loss.

Any kind of loss. That goes. It's the end of fear.

And you can see what a miraculous transformation that is. When humans no longer live dominated by fear. My God.

You can actually live in a state of joy and aliveness. Continuously. No matter what arises.

Because what arises isn't that important. It's a form. It's short lived.

It's a play of phenomenal existence. The universe playing with form. Consciousness playing with form.

Let it play with form. You yourself become a participant in the play of form. You can create without self-seeking.

And then you create beautifully. But when you create and there is self-seeking in it. There is a negative energy field in that.

I need. I want. I must have.

Without that I'm nobody. Oh, I mustn't lose that. And then there is competition.

I need to fight him and her. Because he might get there before I do. All the things that create our civilization.

Goes. And the power of consciousness itself flows through you. It loves to create.

So it will create through you. Who knows what. You don't need to know it now.

Let it flow. And then all there is left really in your life. Is the simplicity of this moment.

And it's always quite simple. When you are no longer seeking yourself in past and future. Then you can honor this moment.

And honoring embrace the now. Because it is life. It's an expression of life.

You embrace what is. Yes. Through that embrace.

You know the spaciousness that is around the form that is there. Ah. This is the new state of consciousness.

That is arising in humans. This is the end of a personalized sense of self. So you're only a person now on the surface.

Just as a matter of convenience. And for practical purposes. You are still a person.

On the surface. But there's not an identity in that person. There's not a sense of self anymore that I need.

Because you realize that. There's the surface of you as a person. And you can keep your name even.

Don't. You don't have to say. I'm no longer using my name.

Nor do you have to say when somebody asks you what's your name. Would you say. I have gone beyond name and form.

Because self-seeking can come back in through the back door. And when you tell somebody that you have gone beyond name and form. You are actually telling them.

I am very special. I am more special than you. You still have a name.

A while ago I asked somebody. I don't know why I asked it. I don't usually ask.

When were you born? Or where were you born? And he said.

I was never born. Of course it's true. But when he said it.

It wasn't true. So you don't become special. You become quite ordinary.

As that new consciousness arises. It doesn't say. Look at me.

Quite ordinary. The need to be special. Which is part of the mentally made sense of self.

And that's an essential ingredient of it. Please let me be special. If I cannot be special.

And be a great success. At least let me be special in my misery. Please let me be more miserable than other people.

The need for specialness goes. It's wonderful. You can be quite.

You don't need to be anybody in particular. You are the field of now. It's vast.

It's alive. You are the spaciousness around phenomena. What you don't.

The need to stand out. To make an impression. Isn't there.

Even to have an. To strengthen your identity. Through having an opinion.

And telling somebody. You can still. Words of course will still come out of your mouth.

Self seeking mode. The need to. Be someone.

Look at me. That's the egoic need. Or it gets inverted.

Some egos don't like to be looked at. Don't look at me. But.

Really they want to be looked at. It's just the reverse. It is so simple.

You. You can. You sit here and you get it.

And once you get it. What that really means is that. It arises.

And you have even a taste of it. You can never go back to the original madness for long. Because even to have a taste of this.

Means. Or that means it. It has emerged.

Of course it can become obscured again temporarily. And then you are back as a little me. In the head.

And with its problems. And you can easily see when you look in the mirror. Or you look at somebody else.

The moment it becomes obscured. A veil. Goes down.

In front of your eyes are like. Suddenly veiled. And there is a.

People. There is a deadness suddenly that comes over people. When they are trapped again in mind.

And what the expression in their eyes is telling them. I don't want to be here. It's a basic ingredient.

I want to be somewhere. This isn't it. Let's get somewhere else.

Let's get to the future fast. Trapped in thought. Trapped in mental noise.

Now. Mental noise. Of course it will still be there in you.

Mental noise has a momentum. It's been there for. Half a million years.

It has a certain momentum. So occasionally your mind may still be noisy. And then you see.

There is so much noise. Look at all that noise in the head. You are no longer trapped in the noise.

Even there. There can be a spaciousness. Around that.

I am full of mental noise. And that's okay. Even that.

You can allow. If that's the case at this moment. All right.

Let there be mental noise. Go on. Let there be mental noise.

And you'll be amazed how quickly. You go beyond it. Beyond anything.

That you allow completely. Oh. Oh.

I'm so unhappy with my life. Okay. Be unhappy.

Let me be unhappy. I say okay to my unhappiness. It's fine.

I allow myself to be unhappy. I'm unhappy. I say yes to my unhappiness.

It's not that bad to be unhappy. See what happens. If you do that.

I don't mind being unhappy. That is the. It's miraculous.

The power of surrender. That really what it is. The power of the yes.

That you bring. Into. The no.

The no is still has a momentum. The no to what is. Predominantly.

And it has a momentum. So it will appear. And reappear.

Inside you. Unless. The miracle of radical transformation.

Happens to you here and now. As you sit here. That's possible too.

In some cases it happens. That once and for all. The no.

Dissolves. And never returns. It can happen.

It's very rare. Usually you have to suffer dreadfully. For that to happen.

So you're not suffering. Perhaps quite enough here. Mostly.

The no. Still has a certain momentum. And you will know.

The no. When it happens. You will be able.

Because presence is arising. All that is required. Of you.

Is to see. That you are in the no. Modality.

In the no mode of consciousness. In any moment. Tightening.

There's an inner contraction. And there is. A monologue.

Or a dialogue. In your head. That complains.

About this moment. And says. This shouldn't be happening.

This. No. No.

No. No. I don't want this.

Or the no is a more subtle thing. It's disguised as. Okay.

Well. There's something more important. That I need to get to.

This isn't the moment I'm interested in. I need to get to. I need to get there.

Not interested in now. I'm interested in then. There.

In the no. Because it's not an obvious no. It's simply a denial.

Of now. Because the future is regarded. As more important.

Whether it's the next minute. Or tonight. Or this weekend.

Or in a few years. When I will have made it. It doesn't matter.

The future is regarded as more important. And that is a subtle no. A disguised no.

Again. Of course. It's connected with the self-seeking.

I need to become somebody. In the future. Some bigger self.

Some presence. You cannot see it. You become the no.

As most people still are. In this world. They are walking no's.

But there's enough presence in you. You've many no's. Many of you have been here the whole weekend.

And presence is arising anyway. There's enough presence in you. To recognize the no.

When it happens. And not to fall into the error. Of superimposing.

Another no. On that no. And saying.

You see. I shouldn't be feeling. I shouldn't be in that contraction.

I'm doing it again. You see. It just doesn't work for me.

No. That would be a no on top of the no. When you see a no.

In whatever form it comes. To this moment. You see.

You recognize it's a no. And you recognize it's some form of. Tightening or contraction.

And what do you do then? You say. Oh okay.

That's how it is. There's the contraction. Let the contraction be.

And see what happens. So you always. You bring.

The yes. Into the no. The yes.

Into the no. That is. That's all you need.

It's very simple. Nothing is rejected. And denied.

Or complained about. Nothing that is. Inside or outside.

And then. More and more. You know.

Who you are. Beyond. That.

Which arises. In the now. You're no longer looking for yourself.

In that. Which arises. Whether it be an event.

A thought. A sense perception. Anything.

You know yourself to be. The field. In which it arises.

All the spaciousness. Around. All the content.

All the events. In your life. You are that.

And that's the state of. Peace. No matter what happens.

There's always. Because that undercurrent. Is peace itself.

And it's you. It's not. It is the essence.

Of who you are. Which is not separate. From the essence.

Of. Your partner. Your person next to you.

Anybody. Or any. Form.

And the miracle is. Once you know. Who you are.

And. You cannot necessarily say. Anything about it.

It's a miracle that. I can say so much about it. Something that cannot be spoken of.

Once you know who you are. You know. Your own essence.

And you know the essence. In every other form. Life form.

Because you are one. In your essence. With every other life form.

And then you look at the flower. And recognize. Your own essence.

In the flower. And then you look at a. Cat.

And recognize. Your own essence. In the cat.

And then you look at. Another human being. And recognize.

And. You may have to pierce through. Layers of.

Mental. Ego stories. Mental noise.

The veil. And you pierce through it. Just stay alert.

And you look. You can ignore the story and all that. You look.

And then you know. The essence of that human being. Is who you are.

Every life form. As yourself. Manifested.

In a different form. Because the universe. Or consciousness.

Likes the play of form. That's the beauty of the manifested. Universe.

And you know yourself. To be the unmanifested. One life.

Before it is born. Into a form. The one life.

Before it becomes something. Or someone. The one life.

After a form. Dissolves. The timeless.

One consciousness. If God has any meaning. That is what it is.

So. Self-realization. And God-realization.

Of course. The same. The only place God can be known.

Is. In yourself. As.

Your own. Essence. Not separate.

As Jesus already said. The kingdom of heaven is within. It's not.

There. In space or time. So you know.

God. That's. How it is.

If you don't like the word. Drop that word. It's only a word.

Don't get. Entangled with any word. And so.

When you know. Each life form. As yourself.

That is called. Love. And that is.

An essential. Part of the new consciousness. You are then continuously.

In a state of love. Not the egoic. So-called love that says.

I can't live without you. Don't you ever leave me. Not that kind of love.

That's clinging. No. The love that knows the other.

As yourself. It's so simple. And.

Love. Your neighbor. As.

Yourself. Because the teaching of Jesus. Only exists in fragments.

That if people have written down. Jesus was pointing. To a state of consciousness.

That is possible for humans. That is emerging here now. Which he sometimes called.

The kingdom of heaven. And if. And what he said was.

I wasn't there. But I know what. The essence is timeless.

It speaks the truth. No matter. It's always the same.

Once you know the essence. You know what they said. Even if you get a mistranslation.

You still know what they said. When the essence speaks. In that new state of consciousness.

You know your neighbor. To be yourself. You love your neighbor.

As yourself. When you know your neighbor. To be yourself.

So you love your neighbor. Not. He didn't mean as you love yourself.

But as yourself. Because your neighbor is yourself. And of course people have been trying.

To love their neighbor. Because. As.

Unsuccessfully. For so long. Because they didn't realize.

The depths of the teaching. They thought all we have to do. Is to obey a few commandments.

And do as he tells us. But the depths was that. It was pointing to a.

Completely new state of consciousness. And you cannot practice. The fruit.

Of the new state of consciousness. In the old state of consciousness. And that's why the discrepancy comes.

That Christianity has. Is a history of violence. Amazing.

But the truth is there. Hidden. Simple.

Very simple. This is the now. It hasn't changed.

Never will change. We are moving beyond. Thought.

There's a book by Krishnamurti. Which is called. The awakening of intelligence.

And really. This is what it is. But intelligence.

Not as defined. By academic textbooks. Not.

It's not the intelligence. That you can be measured in IQ tests. All that IQ tests measure.

Is your ability to solve little puzzles. Intelligence is so much. Vaster.

Than that. And that is what is arising. Here and now.

Intelligence that is. That operates. Noiselessly.

That does not exclude thought. The vastness of it. Includes thought.

But it's far beyond thought. Thought is small. But thought.

Even thought. Can be. Inspired.

Informed. And energized. By that vast intelligence.

When thought is no longer. Trapped. Within itself.

When a self. Is identified with thought. Thought is like a knot.

K-N-O-T. You have tied yourself into a knot. Intelligence cannot flow through.

Freely. This is the untying. Of the knot.

In both senses of the word. The no to life. And the knot.

Is being untied. Then the vast intelligence. Can move through.

And it can even express itself. Through the mind. You can speak.

From that state of still presence. It then will. The energy of that field.

Then flows into the words. And the words are empowered. Of course they are not new.

Very rarely does it happen. That one creates new words. Nor is it necessary.

Every word is old. It has a history. There's nothing you can do about that.

Every thought. Most thought is conceptual. Words.

It's old. It has a history. And yet.

If thought. The prison of this. A little mind.

Self serving. Mind. A mind that is now.

Open. To the influx. Of the greater intelligence.

Then. It can be. The mind can also be inspired by that.

It can then give form. And it will come. Creative forms.

Similar. To the forms that the mind. Then gives birth to.

Because. The mind becomes. Aligned.

One with. The vastness of intelligence. As it did with every creative person.

In the world. Every creative person. Somewhere in their field of.

Creativity. Were aligned with. The greater intelligence.

But here. Our whole lives. Are becoming transformed.

By that. So I've been speaking. For a long time.

Words have been coming out of my mouth. This mouth. And yet.

The words came out. Of the field of presence. Of course they are old words.

But there is a power to those words. That goes beyond. The informational value of the words.

That has its place too. The words point to the truth. They have a certain informational value.

You can then see. Where madness is. And you can see where the end of madness is.

The informational value of words. But the words that come. That are spoken from presence.

Have an energetic quality to them. Which. Comes from the vastness of presence.

Or consciousness. They are so to speak. Charged with the energy of that.

And that's why it's beautiful to sit here. And listen to the words. That come.

That are spoken by presence. As. The words.

You listen to the words. The words are being. Decoded by your mind.

The mind extracts the meaning. From the words. But that is not the end of the words.

Then the words. Go deeper into yourself. And what's left of the words.

Is the energy. Of presence that they carry. They become carriers of that.

And then. They awaken. The presence in you.

They go in. So you can drink in. When words come.

Are spoken from presence. After a while. You cannot even bother anymore.

With the information level of the words. That's why some people. Come to all my talks.

They don't hear anything new anymore. Nor is it necessary. But there is an awakening.

Through the energy quality. Of the sound of the words. Of presence.

And that's the beauty. Of spiritual discourse. And that's the power.

Of spiritual discourse. Spiritual discourse. Does not come from a person.

Does not come from accumulated knowledge. And you know it. When you hear it.

You can sense the power. Something within you responds. It is a self recognition.

The words. Have an energetic. Quality to them.

That's why we've been here. And you've been listening. Now if you were only here.

As a mind. If the stream of mind. As you are sitting here.

Had been so. Dense. That all that you could get.

From sitting here. Was the informational value. Of the words.

But the stream of minds. Might have prevented. You from.

Allowing these words. To sink more deeply. Into yourself.

Then. Perhaps. I could have read this in books perhaps.

Yeah it was interesting. But what's the next thing. Where's the next.

Interesting bit of information. That's the mind. Let's go on to the next bit.

There's a little gap now. Gaps are good. Whatever arises.

In you. As sense experience. As you go out of here.

Things that arise from within. Allow it all. So completely.

That you can sense. The now. Itself.

In which it happens. As yourself. That's the secret.

The open secret. Thank you.

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[Speaker 1] (1:44 - 1:08:54)

In the ancient scriptures of India called the Upanishads, there are some beautiful lines that illustrate what we've been talking about. And it goes something like this. Not that which the eye sees, but that whereby the eye can see.

Know that alone to be Brahman, the Eternal, and not what people here adore. Not that which the ear hears, but that whereby the ear can hear. Know that alone to be Brahman, the Eternal, and not what people here adore.

Not that which the mind thinks, but that whereby the mind can think. Know that alone to be Brahman, the Eternal, and not what people here adore. It goes on a bit, I've forgotten the rest.

And that's a beautiful illustration. Not what people here adore. Not God or your essential nature is not something.

Not content. Not form. The best description through words is to say not what it is not.

And then you're left with what it is which cannot be named, but can be known. But cannot be known conceptually, because every concept is again a name and a form. It can be known simply, easily, in the silent space of stillness.

Which is in everyone. Underneath the mental noise, no matter how heavy and turbulent the mental emotional noise may be. No matter how heavy the egoic sense of self is.

In everyone, as their essential nature, is the stillness of pure consciousness. Your essential nature. The essence.

Your essence. Not separate from the essence of the universe. Are these just words?

Yes, the words point to that. They cannot encapsulate that. They cannot explain, don't even attempt to explain.

If a question arises in you that says, please explain a bit more, I don't quite get it yet. It is not possible to, these are pointers. The analysis of pointers is pointless.

But the mind wants to have content, so it will ask questions about the pointers, instead of allowing the pointers to point. It wants to analyze the pointer, the signpost. Let's look at this signpost.

Let's examine it. Let's get out the microscope. So, what I'm saying, the mind cannot get, allow the statement to work in you as a pointer.

Not as an explanation of the universe, because there can be none. But it can work. Like those beautiful words of the Upanishads, or whatever words arise here, pointing to the dimension of the formless one life.

That is you. So, what really it is pointing to, all these words point to, is that dimension of stillness within. That is vibrant with life, but still.

Extremely awake, but still. Underneath thoughts, in between thoughts, in between words, is the canvas on which the whole phenomenal existence is painted. If you try to understand it, you won't get it.

You have to relinquish, even that, the desire to understand it. Because that is an obstacle. That is still the mind.

You're getting deeper. Where you give up trying to understand. You give up even the pursuit of knowledge.

The desire to analyze. To possess another piece of knowledge. And then, as Gangaji said yesterday, and then put it away somewhere in a drawer.

Okay, now I've got the mystery of the universe. What's the next thing? And that stillness is not ignorance.

It only looks like that from the point of view of the mind. It looks as if you were moving into a realm of ignorance and not knowing anything anymore. And that's why the mind doesn't want to go there.

The egoic sense of self doesn't want to go there. And yet, this is the new state of consciousness that's emerging. And it's not ignorance, it's intelligence.

Silent intelligence. And our whole civilization, one could say, is trying to run away from that. From the stillness.

Because it's threatening. Threatening to the mentally created sense of self, the image of me. It is noise.

It's noisy. It's telling stories. It's identification with form.

There's a question here. I have more than 50 questions. It says, if space is the body of God, as I use that pointer in the book somewhere.

No more than a pointer. If space is the body of God, what's the devil? Is there such a thing?

Or another question there is a question about the nature of evil. Is there such a thing? There's identification with form.

It's that. If evil is anything, it's simply the ignorance of not knowing who you are. And identifying with a temporary form.

And therefore, fighting other forms that you think are also separate forms around you and threaten your form. Or you want to dominate other forms or get something from other forms. Identification with form, the psychological form of me.

The story in my head, the image, self. And identification with me as this physical form. That is not knowing who you are.

And that creates whatever then action arises out of that state of illusion. Creates suffering for yourself and others. And we could call that evil.

It's also ignorance. Jesus on the cross didn't say, you evil ones, what did you do to me? He said, they know not what they do, forgive them, they know not what they do.

Whether you see it as factual or symbolic, it doesn't matter. The truth of crucifixion would be, the essence of evil is there, it seems. And yet, Jesus doesn't call it evil.

He says, they know not what they do. So ultimately, what we perceive as evil arises out of the ignorance of who you are. Which is ultimately the ignorance of not knowing God.

And that's one and the same. I'll start with one or two questions that can be answered quickly. They're not really in order.

I may not be able to answer 50 questions. There's enough here for another book or two. If your questions are not answered, then buy the next book.

It may be that. And if you derive some sense of self from whether your question is answered or not, you can watch that. Buddhists talk about true realization as emptiness, while you use the term being.

Are you not speaking of the same realization? Yes. That was an easy one.

I sometimes, more recently, have been using also, as you know, the word spaciousness. Which gets close to emptiness. Emptiness.

Ultimately, emptiness is consciousness without thought. Beautiful. This really is what stillness is.

The most beautiful state of being, which I call sometimes presence, simply being present. And we talked earlier about watching a flower in that state of simple presence. And then stillness arises.

You realize that flower is so still and very alive. And the whole beauty of it has come into being through the stillness. It's even surrounded by stillness.

If you approach it with your mind, you can't know that. So you bring a stillness into your perceptions. You perceive through stillness, especially nature.

You miss the sacredness when you do not perceive nature through stillness. You miss both the sacredness that is in nature and your own sacredness when you bring the noisy mind into nature. And when you bring all your knowledge into nature.

That has its place. For certain things, your knowledge is necessary. But not for what really matters.

To be able to put aside the accumulated knowledge. And simply enter that state of alert presence that is still and yet awake and alert. And so you bring, you perceive the world through stillness.

Not all the time perhaps. But often the stillness will be there. And there's a depth now to everything.

Even to what you perceive. Because you perceive a deeper essence in every form. Because the stillness is what the Buddhists call the emptiness.

What I sometimes call the spaciousness. It is being before it becomes beings. And a blessing comes with whatever is perceived.

A blessing falls on everything that you perceive through stillness. And we can do that right here. To be here in a state of such simplicity that even the desire to understand is put aside.

The mystery cannot be understood. It can be known beyond concepts as yourself. But it cannot be understood or become an object of knowledge.

There's only one thing here to learn. Not even to learn because learn would mean as if you had to acquire something. The state of presence.

The state of thoughtless awareness. The state of stillness. In which you are connected with intelligence itself.

But you no longer need to rely on accumulated knowledge. It can be used still of course. But you are connected with something much deeper and more vibrant.

With yourself ultimately. You are yourself. Instead of running to the future to find yourself, you continuously dwell in that sense of being.

It is fulfilled and fulfilling every moment. I'm giving you now a positive teaching as opposed to the negative. What you are not.

It is fulfilled and fulfilling every moment. The aliveness even goes into the body. You feel the aliveness in every cell of the body.

The joy of aliveness and of being. And often times there will be no need to think. What is there to think about?

There's so much aliveness and beauty. Be connected with that stillness. And look at the beauty around you.

Or simply all the beauty that's within you. The essence of beauty that is an external form is in you as being. As the essence of being.

So even if you were in a prison cell and you can't find any beauty. Or you would probably see beauty even in the wall. But essentially you would find the essence of all beauty within yourself.

In your very being. It's the joy of simply being. Stillness.

Alert. Presence. What kind of civilization would humans create if the majority of human beings lived in that state?

It would be a kind of heavenly realm. The same planet which potentially is heaven. It's only with the humans that have put so much concrete and poison on it.

That it's almost becoming hell. But it still is potentially heaven. So all you learn here is either to get a glimpse of that state.

Or to go deeper if in many of you it has already emerged. And it's simply a question of a deepening that happens. To dwell there more fully, more deeply.

Or to allow it to emerge more fully. Whatever perspective you choose on it. What did Jesus say?

Take no thought for the moral, for the moral shall take thought for the things of itself. Take no thought. That's the old translation.

In the new translation it says don't be anxious about tomorrow. In the old translation it says take no thought. And I'm told that in old English to take thought meant to be anxious.

It's very wise. Because the majority of thought is problem making, worry. What's the next?

To be free of thought. The compulsion to think. Not the ability to think.

You can think beautifully and clearly when you're free of thought. When you're free of thought that means you're no longer run by thought, by the mind. You're no longer dominated.

Your sense of self is no longer in thought. And then thought can operate beautifully when it's needed. But only when it's needed.

The rest of the time there's that simplicity of stillness and occasionally fragments of thought come in, never problematic. Like clouds passing by. Just a little bit of noise.

Passing through. A little bit more. And yet there's always the stillness.

We are here simply not to learn anything new. To encounter that dimension in ourselves. And many of you are encountering it now.

And some of you not yet. And to those of you who are saying well it all sounds very nice. But how do I get there?

Use a portal which could be the feeling of your inner body. Which takes your attention away from thought. Remember when you're not thinking you are more intelligent, more awake, more alive than when you're thinking.

The difference is such that the thought state, the state of thought identification is like sleep or dreamland. And then you awaken out of thought. This is why traditionally in many spiritual traditions the term awakening is the key word.

In Buddhism the very root of Buddha means the one who is awake. In Christ's, Jesus' teaching many parables are about being awake. To be free of, more recently there are spiritual teachings, Krishnamurti's teaching.

I can be summarized in two words, which he never did. He must have had his reasons. I love Krishnamurti, a great love for the teaching and the power of the teaching.

It was extremely important in the evolution of consciousness. And really what's happening here is the same continuation, no more, no less. Oh yes, summarizing, he never said it, but really, don't think.

All he said was let's investigate the nature of thought, can thought take us there, let's look into it. Because he taught in the negative tradition like Buddhism, for those of you who know. Many of the teachings take you, even the Course in Miracles, which some of you know, which is the one channeled work that I love, maybe one or two others.

It consists of words, words, words, pages and pages of script. And yet all designed, when you get towards the end, to take you into the region of stillness, when words are no longer needed. So it meets you where you are in the noise and then takes you by the hand out of the noise.

And for some people it works. But here there's not even a method, there's no practice, there's no exercises here. There's simply the power of presence teaching directly, presence emanating.

And that works for those who are ready for it. And then you don't need the intermediary step of a practice or a teaching. If you have one, it's fine.

But presence is emerging directly now. Thoughtless awareness. Ramana Maharshi, who many of you know, who lived in the first half of the 20th century, highly respected great Indian teacher, when asked by someone, how can we judge whether we are making any progress on the spiritual path?

How can we know it? He said, the degree of absence of thoughts is your measure of progress on the spiritual path. And this is an insult to the mind.

Sitting here is an insult. The mind says, how dare you? I've been cultivating thought all my life.

I have two degrees. My whole identity is lodged in thought. I'm so much more clever than most people.

And you're telling me to stop thinking? You're telling me to be stupid? Now, you cannot make yourself stop thinking, unfortunately or fortunately.

It doesn't work. You can't make yourself stop thinking, unless presence that arises in you is already of such power that thought simply stops. And then it looks as if you were making yourself stop thinking.

This presence, the mind stops. But the quickest way to thoughtless awareness is, and it always comes back to that, to surrender to the now. Because the whole compulsion to think is to do with not surrendering to now, to life.

That's why the mental noise, the mind is so active. It really is always trying to get away from the now. Why?

To uphold the mind-based sense of self. Accept this moment completely. Very quickly, a stillness and a peace emerge, no matter what this moment contains.

Whether you live in a palace, or in a prison, or in a mansion, or in a little hut, makes no difference. Or whether your life situation, as I call it, the external circumstances of your life, whether everything is just crumbled around you, or whether you've just won the lottery, makes no difference. Although it's more likely that you will get it when everything is just collapsed around you than when you've just won a million dollars.

Because that can prolong the illusion a little bit more. Not a lot more. I avoid the now by sleeping.

I'm the one that snoozes, snores, in the room right now. Can you help? Please speak loudly.

Well, I don't know if you're awake at this moment, but you could give the person sitting behind you your permission to be a Zen master and hit you when you drop off. That's what they do sometimes. The Zen master walks around with a stick.

And after you've been hit, you go, Thank you. Whatever works. Yes.

Staying awake. Many times this question has been asked in some one form or another. If we just allow, how will anything get done?

Is that... What about initiate? Thank you.

Now, this is a frequent misunderstanding of the state of allowing what is to be. Allowing the now to be, instead of complaining about what is, having an inner resistance to what is, trying to deny or get away from it, not facing what is fully. And it is true that most action that takes place is because people need to get to some future point where they hope to find salvation by being fully themselves when they reach that point in the future.

So they're trying to get away from now. That's the motivating force behind most activities in our civilization is to try and get to the future, to some other point where it's going to be better, I will be more fully alive, myself will have found myself. Ultimately really it's finding God or myself and yet they are missing the now.

So out of dissatisfaction and discontent and denial of what is, which is life itself, inseparable from now, they run towards the future, to an imagined or projected now that is going to be fulfilled and better. And that provides the action for building up a whole civilization. And then that is karmic action because every action that arises out of that state of dissatisfaction and denial of life is, one could say, almost poisoned.

And that's why in our activities, in creating all that wealth on the material realm, we have also created an enormous amount of poison. It's strange, isn't it? If you look at it in a fresh way, there are humans and they are continuously producing so much poison, poisonous substances.

Everywhere on the planet these poisonous substances that's because every action they take is tainted with the dissatisfaction and the denial of life now. So, and then it looks as if when I accept fully the now, am I able to take any action? Or am I going to be completely stuck in this moment the way it is if I don't resist it in some way or another?

And I give the example in the book of somebody who is stuck in the mud. Can't get out of this mud. Now you could be in a state of great unhappiness and then you would be struggling and getting angry about being stuck in the mud and it becomes part of your story in the head.

It's just the last straw. This is what I needed. Getting stuck after all this.

It's typical, isn't it? It always happens to me. I'm repeating what my mind used to do, by the way.

It just always happens. These things always, all the bad things happen to me. And so there's anger and in your anger you're struggling and you're getting even more deeply into the mud.

And then there's the state of, okay, this is what is. I'm here, stuck in the mud. No denying that.

It's the simplicity of this moment is here I am, stuck in the mud. All right, that's how it is. Now I don't want to be stuck in the mud for the rest of my life so now I start moving.

Oh, yes. Completely different energy comes because you've said, yes, the power comes in and perhaps you will see a way out. There's a branch hanging there and you pull yourself out of the mud which you hadn't seen before.

Just a small example. Suddenly life will become supportive and cooperative because you haven't denied the now. You will get out more easily, more quickly without it becoming incorporated into an unhappy me story.

So the action you take on the basis of acceptance of now is far more powerful than action that arises out of denial of now. Action that arises out of denial of now is poisoned and will have many karmic effects. Action that arises out of the state of acceptance has no poison to it, no side effects and it's far more powerful.

So this operates on all levels and you always look, what is it that is required? What does this moment require? Okay, I'll initiate that.

I'll apply for a job. I'm sitting here. I'm running out of money.

$10 left in my pocket. Okay. And you go into stillness.

That's how it is. There's $10 and here I am breathing, feeling my inner body. Okay.

What action can I take? And then action comes. Let's look.

Let's look at the paper. Let's do this. Pick up the phone.

Make a call. It comes not out of fear or a need to... Simply, it arises out of a peaceful state.

Peaceful action is much more powerful than angry action or self-seeking action. So you will not become a passive vegetable by accepting the now. Vegetables are beautiful but it's not for humans to revert back to the vegetable realm, of course.

Vegetables exist in no thought. The whole vegetative realm as well as animal realm are all beautiful expressions of consciousness but without thought, without the mental noise that humans are trapped in. So it's beautiful for them.

They exist prior to thought, one could say. We cannot return to that. We cannot revert back to pre-thought.

We sometimes try to. If we can't stand the torture of our minds anymore, we try to go back to pre-thought by having five whiskeys. And that often works.

It takes you gradually below thought. So there is a kind of liberation there too but it's not where humans are moving to. I'm sorry.

The state of presence is you rise above thought in which thought can still operate beautifully when it's needed but you no longer have your home in thought. This is an important question here. Many of you may have that or similar question.

What suggestions, if any, do you have for individuals who are working in a profession or occupation where left brain, rational thinking is constantly required? Well, I was in such a profession and I must admit that I left. Perhaps it wasn't absolutely necessary.

I didn't have a teacher so I just thought I was working on a PhD as heavy mind stuff and it became completely pointless. So it abandoned me or I abandoned it and then I went to I spent two years on a park bench. Now, this is not the way you need to go.

Don't be frightened. I've heard of several people who have read the introduction to my book where I mentioned the park bench but I don't want to read anymore. Many people have to work with computers these days which also stimulates thought and left brain activity and it pulls your attention out of the body onto the screen.

A lot of energy goes out of your eyes. Energy loss. If you stare at the screen for several hours a day the question is whether your present occupation, profession, activity is compatible with the state of presence that arises.

And many activities are compatible still with the state of presence. Even the use of computers is compatible with the state of presence if you simply remember to take enough space or spaciousness during the day. You have moments when you withdraw attention from the screen or from whatever activity or you might be on the telephone a lot talking about the stock market or whatever is it going up or down and points and so on.

And the energy field that surrounds you may be agitated which is very normal these days. There's the nervous energy field in which you may have to live every day. Let's get to the next thing.

Where's the next thing? It's whole and even in places there should be places of healing they are dominated by this mad nervous energy like hospitals and schools hospitals everybody running around and there's the tension the anxiety even in jobs that used to be the most comfortable jobs you could get like school teacher nowadays the most stressful jobs you can find. So there's the level of agitation nervous tension and stress has been increasing.

The question is can I bring presence into that? Can presence emerge even here? In many cases it can especially and this is why and I will be going into it there are several questions about being in the body use that during the day this means attention is taken away from thought and when you feel the inner body you feel that there is a spaciousness in the body and for a moment mind activity subsides you connect with the inner spaciousness and aliveness that's in every cell of the body and you do that for a minute or two and then you go back to your normal activity and then you withdraw again after a little while maybe once an hour it doesn't matter whatever possible when you're going up and down the elevator bring in gaps so that you're not dragged along by a mind stream an agitated mind stream whole day long dragged from one thing to the next one thing this needs doing and now this and now that and you're always catching up and never quite managing to catch up this is how most people's working life is so you don't get dragged along by a mind stream which is externalized the collective mind stream of your company or your institution your workplace so if you can bring presence into that by periodically withdrawing for brief moments into the body and then gradually learning that you can be engaged in certain even left brain activities and still have some attention in the body for example when you listen to someone on the telephone attention in the body could be you may not be able to feel the entire energy field of the body in an agitated work environment just it sounds too simple to be true but just take your attention into one part of the body and hold some attention in there while you listen on the phone for example and the hand is for many people the quickest access point to the body there are two good access points that operate for most people one is entering with your attention enter the hand left or right and for those of you who don't even know what I'm talking about because your attention has been in the head for so many years if you hold your hand and you can tell this to anybody who is asking you and even people who have no interest in any spiritual book many people will be ready to listen when you talk to them about connecting with the inner energy field of the body you don't even have to tell them that it takes your attention away from thinking they might become frightened just say it's good for you it's good for the body it feels good which is all true it's very healing which is all true to inhabit the body you begin to inhabit the body by simply feeling the energy field in one of your hands and you can hold it up if you can't feel anything yet the quickest way to feeling the inner body is holding up either your left or right hand not moving it closing your eyes and then asking yourself a question and the question is without opening my eyes without moving my hand how can I know whether my right hand is still there now the mind may try to find it may say come up with some conceptual answer and say well I don't know but you have to go more deeply how can I know that question draws your attention into the right hand because to find out how you can know your attention will go from thought thinking about your right hand to sensing your right hand from within and after a while with your eyes closed you say oh yes I can feel something there is a certain aliveness there that must be my right hand it feels quite good it's actually alive and you can then learn to hold your attention there for a while hold it in your right hand that means you've entered the body and then say ok let's see the left hand I can also feel that yes left hand is there no doubt I can feel that also and then you bring together the feeling of left and right hand into a single feeling of hand you no longer have an image in your mind of left and right because your attention is completely on that feeling of aliveness and you bring together left and right into a single feeling of hand first you feel them simultaneously eyes open or closed doesn't matter and then you bring it together to bring it together it's easier with your eyes open simply there's a sense of hand and then even that label drops and there's simply an aliveness there and so if you can be in your hands you can be in other parts gradually from there put your attention into arms not quite as strong the feeling but it's there and your feet aliveness there your legs there's an aliveness there so gradually you bring together different parts into a single sense of aliveness you inhabit the body that means your mind is slowing down considerably because attention is being taken away from thought and there's a spaciousness in the body and that simple thing can be your anchor for presence when you are in an environment that is nervous and agitated and mind dominated as much as possible go into the body you might be walking into a committee meeting with lots of egos around and whatever people demanding this or that and you sit there you listen to their demands and you are you feel an aliveness either in the entire energy field of the body that comes after a while or just one part is enough feel your right that can that can keep you sane simply feeling your right hand can keep you sane in a mad environment you're bringing in presence and so instead of leaving let this world be transformed by people as if possible bring presence into where you are and so the world instead of people leaving although if you have to leave you will leave if you find it impossible to bring presence into that environment you will have to leave there is in most places now I would be able to just be present no matter what but there are few places I know I wouldn't stay I don't want to give any examples if I worked in a I'll give one if I worked in a in a discotheque for six hours every night being bombarded by heavy noise I would leave that wouldn't be the job if I if somebody chained me there to that place I would surrender and there would be deep peace but if I'm not chained to that place I would leave so if as presence arises it's not so much anymore of trying to figure out what you need to do as presence arises what you need to do will become obvious as a sudden insight with which you may wake up one morning and you know what it is that you need to do and you do it there is no longer any doubt it is so clear those insights arise out of presence so whether you have to leave or change whatever it may be you will know what you have to do beyond mental agonizing mental decision making and doubt should I shouldn't I on the other hand if I but what if then how am I going to make a living many of you will be taken out of your habitual surroundings presence will take you out and others will stay where you are and transform your environment because you are then there as a field of presence in your family or in your relationship some of you will you will walk out of the relationship if the partner is not ready for presence you will walk out or he or she will leave you but you cannot predict whether or not your partner is ready for presence the most unlikely people seemingly unlikely are ready for presence so who knows the beautiful thing is that presence will begin to operate in your life and it will transform what is around you either take you away or transform where you are you are transformed and this could be your family environment too because just as many workplaces are agitated and nervous energy fields many family many homes are equally agitated and nervous energy fields if you walk into some homes they are like mad houses with screaming and shouting and never a sense of allowing this moment to be every member of the family is out of their bodies completely trapped in thought and trying to get away from the now imagine a family living in that way and you still teach children what presence is not by words by being present by giving them space by surrounding them with space when they come in shouting this and that you know what happened in school you welcome that moment in which this child appears and you embrace this moment and the child appears in this now and this as I call it sometimes you give him or her space to be you allow this person to be and you listen in that sense of spaciousness just listening oh ok alright not wanting to change anybody and here pain bodies are important as several questions here about the pain body pain body as you know is accumulated emotional pain from the past it is an aspect of the self pain body is an aspect an important aspect of the egoic sense of self pain body is not always active pain body has dormant periods and active periods when it is dormant the sense of self you can live with it's still it's still a troublemaker yes it's still problematic yes you are still a nuisance to yourself and others yes but you can live with it but then periodically that sense of self becomes energised by the accumulated pain from the past that every human comes into this world with that is inherited genetically passed on because of human madness there is a vast amount of human pain in the collective energy field and this accumulation of pain part of which is collective part of which is personal through your present incarnation accumulated in childhood through parents and emotional pain and the pain body is a field of contraction aliveness energy contracted trapped tight and it has a life of its own almost although it depends for its existence on you it is a temporary life form that lives in you and like all most life forms sometimes it's asleep and sometimes it's awake so when it's asleep okay you have a self still have problems but it's okay you can deal with things then periodically the pain body becomes active it moves into the mind structure that we call the self and it energises all those mind structures of the ego the egoic self and then you become a deeply unhappy self and you are trying to make others unhappy a deeply unhappy self will try to make others unhappy because it will also feed on others unhappiness and emotional reactions so that its job is when it flows into the egoic self the pain body moves in it is looking for food and it will get food through your mind by feeding on your negative thinking about me and my life my dreadful life or all the dreadful people around me that shouldn't be here what am

I doing here my dreadful life situation and my dreadful story and it's awful the pain body may either be anger predominantly or it may be deep sadness or it may be a great sense of heaviness or it may be an agitation of fear and then the fear moves into the mind oh what's going to happen to me what's he going to do if he leaves me or that happens I lose my job or that all night you worry energised mind structures mad mind structures made even more mad being energised by the pain body and the pain body loves it it gobbles up every negative thought and it can go on for hours it's feeding on the energy of your mind until it's had enough and then so that that means you've gone through the pain body attack or feeding time whatever you want to call it is over and you feel relatively ok again in the meantime you've made many people unhappy around you because the pain body is not just feeding on your thoughts it's feeding on other people's reactions if anybody is around you it will try to get something from them a painful something to give me more pain please so it's I want you to be unhappy because when you're unhappy you will feed me your emotion emotional reaction I will absorb that and it will feed me so I will push your buttons that is part of the madness of the self the artificial mind created sense of self because it periodically becomes energized by collective human pain and you think you're having a personal problem there's nothing personal about it it is human pain not and it wants to be there the pain body is having a great time it's become you it has taken possession temporarily you're acting it out and children have it because humans are born with a pain body some heavier than others so children you can see the transformation in a child very quick from angelic to monster but it doesn't last as long as with most adults usually children's pain body attacks are much over much more quickly and it's gone again and it's amazing when you watch the transformation from a human being into a pain body and back to a human being so when you have children family tell them about the pain body use a different word but so that a witnessing presence grows in them from where they can watch what's happening to them make it into a game begin by explaining it after the pain body attack not in the middle don't say this is your pain body you must watch or get rid of it you shouldn't have a pain body no you allow and then when the child has come back to full consciousness say what was that what was it that came over you what did it feel like and did you remember yesterday it also came in the morning didn't it

[Speaker 2] (1:08:54 - 1:08:55)

yeah

[Speaker 1] (1:08:55 - 1:45:10)

isn't that funny what does it feel like maybe even temporarily giving it a name so that it helps a little bit in witnessing it and next time it happens in the middle of it you call out there it is again the child won't want to listen because the pain body is in charge but something will be there a little bit of witnessing will be there and then the child will quickly discover that you also have a pain body and so you work together and I know of families they've told me that often their children tell them oh what's that it's your pain body mum or whatever you want to call it and that's wonderful witnessing comes in so the pain body cannot use you anymore it cannot continue to feed on the cycle of unconsciousness of becoming you and then feeding on your mind and on other people's emotions and reactions so simply making it conscious is part of making the structure of the self the false self conscious so that when you make it conscious it no longer dominates you you watch it for a little while you watch it in action it's still there but there's a witnessing presence and that is the presence that grows and it grows even as you sit here from now on not a single person in this room will not have grown in presence through being here and the ability to witness what otherwise is the most difficult thing to witness in yourself which is that enormous amount of human pain your ability to witness it will have grown even that applies even to those of you who have very heavy pain bodies you are the most promising candidates for liberation those who have heavy pain bodies because their longing to be free is greater can't stand this anymore I had a dreadful pain body and so I couldn't stand it anymore gone evaporated all at once which is relatively rare so it's a gradual gradually it loses energy its energy charge it's fine it doesn't turn into suffering anymore it's simply emotional pain suffering requires a self a mind made self suffering requires a me and a storyline without a me and a storyline you no longer suffer because there's nobody there to suffer because only if you have a story in your head of who you are and what your life is that is suffering what is left is simply pain and even that is a word that we might not even need anymore there's simply a certain energy field there that is feels a bit agitated or tight or heavy or and you allow it to be just as you allow whatever arises in this moment to be allowing to be implies of course you're there as the witness you watch it you allow it yes there's there's the anger there's the fear fear is a very common thing in most every pain body has even if it's not predominantly fear an essential ingredient of every pain body is fear there's fear somewhere even if it seems to be anger mostly underneath it you will find fear and of course there's the desire not to want to feel it it's the most normal thing in the world is not to want to feel fear the most normal thing in the world is not to want to face it let's think about something else so that I just don't want to feel what I feel but you can't because the feeling will catch up with your mind and then it will go into your thoughts and you will think fearful thoughts and by thinking fearful thoughts about what's going to happen to you you're feeding the pain body so you can see that how you can allow the pain body to be there and face it not harshly but allowing is a gentle thing not face it by opposing it or say okay let's see who is stronger you or me no you simply just as you would allow an event that takes place externally to be you allow the pain body to be it is it is there's the fear and then you don't even need to call it fear anymore there's simply that movement and you lie there it's four o'clock in the morning you've been it's used your mind for a while and then you woke up out of identification with it and all that's left now is that vibration that before you called fear but now is simply a vibration it's not that bad when it's no longer an unhappy me it's only a vibration now and you allow you can certain words may be helpful in your mind just as little pointers and the words that may be helpful may simply be it is or I allow it to be it's what is in the field of now let it be there it's there so let it be there and that what then develops is even around the pain a spaciousness through the allowing and that at first it's only a hint of spaciousness around the pain and then it grows you allow more you continue to allow and there's still the vibration but the sense of spaciousness around it gets larger and that may begin with simply being able to feel the space in your body where there is no pain body the pain body may be the vibration of it may be here but in your arms or legs there's simply there's still a spaciousness an aliveness and you feel that that becomes part of the space around the pain body and so you sense the field of spaciousness in which the vibration happens and gradually the shift happens from you realize the spaciousness is so much vaster than the pain that's happening in it before there was only the pain and I was the pain it was dreadful dreadful and now the pain is no longer I it's no longer a self it's no longer an unhappy little entity it's simply a vibration and around the vibration because you allowed it to be there is a space and then the space the sense of space grows the allowing becomes deeper and then the little smile comes it's only a vibration it's not that bad at all it's okay it's just life vibrating something was trapped in here and through accepting and realizing the space that is around it that energy then becomes freed that was trapped in the pain body and becomes aliveness ultimately consciousness it contributes to your sense of presence like putting something into a fire and then the fire consumes it it grows stronger so the pain body becomes fuel for your presence and then there's a vast sense of spaciousness and remnants perhaps little remnants of pain still appearing here and there that's called freedom that's called liberation it's a simple process so it is it is a process of depersonalizing pain of realizing that there is not a person in it it is a fiction to believe that my identity is that suffering me it's human pain the whole transformation of consciousness that we are involved in is a sense of depersonalizing your sense of identity so that your sense of identity is not trapped in an image of me the little person the personalized sense of self this narrow personalized me with my past and my future both of them very problematic and when that goes you are no longer a problematic entity and the little self says who would I be without my problems oh I don't know if I want to let go of all of that so many years invested step out into the unknown so familiar with the miserable little me but you are stepping out and it is dissolving that's the beauty of transformation and the simplicity of it and the pain body is your greatest asset in your in the arising of presence because it is the pain the energy that is trapped in the pain body will fuel presence presence will transform it into itself so if you have a heavy pain body you are lucky if you have a light pain body there is still hope for you too humanity has come to the end of suffering that is with the end of the old consciousness humanity has come to the end of suffering and you see the suffering has been unbelievable the madness of it self-inflicted most of it self-inflicted suffering we are coming to the end of suffering we have suffered enough as a species you have suffered enough no further suffering is needed to become free you've had enough enough to be here are we feeding the insanity of mind and the planet by watching violence on the news TV or movies yes and who is watching the violence the pain body who is financing all these violent films pain bodies who makes these violent films pain bodies make them pain bodies watch them pain bodies love them pain bodies pay to watch them so I forgot to mention that another way in this culture in this civilization in in ancient times we didn't have the TV and movies so all the pain body had to feed on was your mind and other people's emotional reactions but now we have a whole industry designed to feed pain bodies why else would anybody watch violence on a screen and pay for it and sit there and love feeling bad oh dreadful dreadful but they pay to get in because it feeds the pain body there is a whole industry designed to feed the human pain body amazing and no talk about let's abolish violence politicians say let's abolish the violence on TV they won't because there is a great demand for it who is demanding pain bodies they love it and as long as they are there they'll produce those things it's amazing it's one doesn't see the madness of our civilization because we are so used to it but when you see it it's actually it's almost funny when you see it's a tragic comedy but it turns into a comedy begins when you watch it when you watch your own tragedy and realize it as a story when you watch your own drama and realizing as a mind created fiction designed to give you a sense of identity in the absence of any true sense of identity ok I'll hang on to the miserable one it's when you see it the drama your own drama as illusion then you either laugh or smile and then you begin to laugh and smile a lot more when you see it around you there was a time when I would see people privately a lot and people would come in and many people then I don't see people rarely see people privately when I do not many people tell me their stories anymore but there was a time when they did and often as I sat there simply in a sense of allowing this unhappy me to be there and a great sense of presence and peace and aliveness and while they told me their drama I couldn't help but I had there was always a smile on my face no thought just a smile and then sometimes they got angry and said you're laughing at me I'm telling you all this it's serious stuff and you're laughing at me and then I had to explain no no I can see that this is an illusion what do you mean it's an illusion yes and it feels so good to just be here the presence is so wonderful that's why I smile it's nothing to do with your particular story and some left at that point the teaching hadn't developed quite yet that fully so I wasn't able to explain as well as I explain now and some just left another interesting event is sometimes when pain bodies arise while people sit in a group situation and the pain body is being addressed and something inside quivers let's get out of here somebody's looking at me pain bodies don't like to be looked at I'm using looked at as almost a metaphor which means to put the light of attention on it they because they thrive in in non-attention in-attention if that's a word they thrive in in and through unconsciousness when you become conscious and look at the pain body directly it shrinks it withdraws it tries to get away it might become extremely dormant pretend that I'm not here anymore but it's waiting just like a fox would be very clever with waiting for better moment and so sometimes sitting here is not the best moment but some heavy pain bodies have reacted in a group because they couldn't stand it anymore they were being addressed directly and suddenly they became agitated and one person gets up and stomps out of the room or even shouts happened once shouts something this is all a load of rubbish somebody in England once shouted it's all a load of rubbish and there was a there was a pain body speaking it was such a perfect illustration it was just such a just a small group I had then 15 people or so but it was such a perfect illustration of what I had just been speaking about that other people thought I had engaged an actor to illustrate so the question to yes you are feeding the pain body when you watch violence but I probably your desire to watch violence will be greatly diminished if it's still there simply by being conscious of that process you may still occasionally feel that in you which wants to watch it maybe still but then you can oh there it is and news of course news is also mentioned in the question there are few people in few offices around big cities and they choose what they give you feed you as news they choose this matters this is important we are going to feed them this and that and that and they what they choose is an expression of their state of consciousness and often the pain body is an important part of their state of consciousness so what you watch is not actually the wild news is what a few people who embody a particular state of consciousness and usually it's not the new one choose as significant and you can imagine what they choose and you know what they choose there's a lot happening that they wouldn't choose and yet even there occasionally even into television where there's relatively little consciousness which usually pulls you into unconsciousness but even there there are few sometimes consciousness moves into that channel also it happens through a few programs that bring in more awareness even a few films and I got a letter recently written by a TV station and the interviewer the person who interviewed said I would like to ask you if you want to be interviewed for TV Canadian National Television CTV but I very much doubt that you will agree to my request because of what you said and then he quoted something that I had said in the letter which is if you want to find out about the insanity of the human condition I recommend that you read a history book or you watch TV tonight so he said I know it's unlikely that you will give me an interview but I just want to ask anyway I am very happy if consciousness I don't reject TV as a medium if consciousness moves through it it's beautiful and perhaps this will happen increasingly there are some programs that are expressions of Oprah is doing very great work has already transformed many people's lives and a few others so there is something there that is moving towards an awakening so I may say yes to the interview and the amazing thing is they want to put it out as part of their news program this is a miracle I've been saying for years in groups I've been saying for years our meeting here is not going to be on TV tonight because it's not significant enough for the people who choose what is significant in fact it's extremely significant it's one of the most significant events on the planet is this gathering it goes beyond the personal because it's about the transformation of human consciousness and often times I've said in groups like this you see but they're not going to put it on TV tonight and perhaps soon they will that would be another miracle so what is your identity Mr. Tolley are you not a man a spiritual teacher a knowledgeable person a successful author in other words do you not have goals and desires how else would you have achieved your present status quote unquote or position quote unquote as a teacher I'm just looking at the one two three four definitions yes a man that's part of my form form identity happens to be that it's been like that since birth but a spiritual teacher a knowledgeable person or successful author that's fairly recent I wasn't even a few years ago well at some point somebody called me a spiritual teacher and that was probably the beginning but for many years when I left my normal existence behind I was really nobody I didn't have a job occasionally if somebody people would come to talk to me or ask questions or little groups here and there small groups people would come but I had no identity on an external level not even spiritual teacher certainly not a successful author a knowledgeable person I was at once but most of the knowledge I had acquired at university has disappeared I wouldn't be able to pass a single exam now and even the spiritual books that I've read there's not that much that has been retained a few things not a lot a successful author yes my mother is very happy now because for many years her the what made her existence so hard was to know that her son had failed in the world her son hadn't made it and that's many mothers would have failed it in her position because on a worldly level I hadn't made it nobody really not an important position no position at all so she said what a pity you've had so much intelligence and you've thrown it all away and now it's too late and then suddenly the book came and it became successful and now I am a successful author and my mother is very happy now because the world is telling me and her that I'm somebody there's no difference at all before the world was saying it wasn't even saying I'm nobody it wasn't saying anything that's even worse the whole basis of the teaching is not to be not to be to to honor your form identity yes you're a man or you're a woman and you have a certain job of course you honor your form identity but to realize that who you are is not that your essential nature is not being somebody your essential nature is being nobody or nothing a no thingness your essential nature is not content is not object there is a no thingness to your essential nature that is the whole teaching and to see the beauty and the peace and the aliveness of that no thingness that is the essence of your being that's the teaching I'm not denying that you also exist as a form a temporary form which will go but while it's there you can honor of course also that temporary form and you will but not derive your sense of identity from that you simply know it as the form that you are clocks are strange things it seems to me that no time has passed and yet it's exactly the same now but the hands have moved strange and I have another forty three questions I do keep all the questions and I may use some of them I may also use some of the answers that I gave here but I do value all your questions and I thank you if they were not answered here most of them were not now what I'm saying now don't take it as a personal insult no question is that important no answer is that important it's fine to have these questions but really why we are here is to go beyond the need to figure it all out beyond the need to know and contact that deep sense of knowing that is there when the need to know is no longer there in that presence whatever you truly need to know at this moment you will know essential knowledge vital knowledge not the distance between here and the moon or something like that no vital essential knowledge if there is anything that you truly need to know out of all you need to become still enter that allowed stillness drop the question you've asked the question then you drop the question enter the allowed stillness if you truly need to know the answer it will come sooner or later you will know not perhaps immediately suddenly it will be there whatever it is you take it into the stillness many things will dissolve in the stillness or many questions dissolve in the stillness but if an answer is needed it will be there but the transformation of consciousness that you are going through that is happening through that form is not based on answers no answer to a question could help you and you don't need that because the transformation of consciousness is happening already you don't need to understand more about it on the mind level than you do now I don't understand more about it than what I have said on the level of concepts there is a deep knowing but there is not mental understanding that is more than what I have said I read something from a physicist recently who described human beings as patches of consciousness floating in space little patches of consciousness that's what you are there is only one consciousness expressing itself as this particular patch of consciousness so you are leaving here very soon no longer with that heavy personalized sense of self but greatly diminished in your sense of self if it worked for you so this has not been a personal growth seminar but a personal diminishment seminar thank you

2003-Eckhart Tolle Retreat Realizing The Power Of Now-Audiobook

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 59:36)

Welcome to our retreat. I trust everybody can hear me. I also trust that nobody is waiting for me to start because everybody here knows that we are here to give up waiting as a state of mind, normal state of mind, and that there's another state of mind, or rather, no mind, in which you're not waiting for the next moment.

That's why we are here, to discover that state of no mind, awareness, you could call it, or deepen it. We are not here to add anything to what we know. We know enough, enough to have come here.

So we are here to discover that thinking is not the only possible state for humans, and not the highest state. And as we go through the shift from thinking to awareness, thinking first of all loses its predominant place in our lives, and as a side product of losing its predominant place in our lives, it actually becomes more effective. Thinking becomes more effective, less destructive, not destructive anymore.

So no answer here is going to come if you're looking for the answer on the level of thinking, or on the level of adding something to your mind. The answer lies in stepping beyond thinking, simply by allowing what is, which is now, allowing what is to be as it is, because it is. And you discover that the compulsion to think is to a large extent connected with not being willing to allow what is to be as it is now, because there's a little mind-made entity, consists of thinking and accumulated thought patterns, that thrives on resistance to what is, and on reactivity, and is always looking for the next thing to get a little bit bigger.

It's never quite enough. This little me is never quite enough. Most of you have come here because there is at work within you something that goes far beyond the personal, something that is an expression of the evolutionary impulse of the universe.

On the surface level it looks as if a person had chosen to come here, but it is also possible that one or two have come here expecting something they're not going to get. What's that? More.

More experiences, more knowledge, more beliefs, more opinions. So if there are one or two who have come here expecting more, then they might want to leave. As soon as they discover there's no more.

Or they suddenly, after, if they can endure the discomfort that arises when the need for more is not met, and don't run away immediately, they can endure the discomfort, they may be able to break through that mind pattern. Please pay attention. I often say that at the beginning of talks, especially retreats.

Please pay attention, not just to the words, but to the silent spaces between the words. That's where the shift happens. In that alertness that is required to acknowledge or to listen to that dimension of stillness that underlies the words and is in between the words.

That is why we're here. And that's not an adding to, because that is discovering something that's already there, but had been ignored. Just as I was coming here, this beautiful night, in this incredibly beautiful place, I took off my shoes and I looked up at the sky, clear sky, stars, brilliant points of light.

And there is something, when you look up there, there's something that is so easily overlooked, but should be obvious to anybody who looks up there. It can tell you something about the nature of the universe. When you look up, what do you see?

You see little points of light. You see, basically, there are two dimensions there. Objects, celestial objects, suns, planets, the moon, galaxies, billions, trillions.

So there are celestial objects, things, objects in space, and there's space. The universe consists of things. You can look, it's so obvious.

There are things in space, and there's the vastness of space. The things are that which is manifested. But when you look up, what produces the feeling of awe, of the feeling of infinity, is the vastness of space.

The depths of it, which is inconceivable, has no end. It is such that even our neighboring galaxy, our next-door neighbor in terms of galactic neighbors, the Andromeda galaxy, if you traveled at the speed of light, which is very fast, 300,000 kilometers per second, which is the distance from here to the moon in one second, is the speed of light. If you traveled at the speed of light to our neighboring galaxy, and there are billions of galaxies, the closest one to us, it would take you 2.3 million years to reach it at the speed of light. 2.3 million years. Such is the depth, the vastness of space. And what is out there applies also, the so-called external universe, applies also to the so-called inner universe.

There is also within you things, let's keep it simple, things and space in your life. Now, things, it is obvious that your life is surrounded by things. There are many things in your life, physical things.

In many people's lives, there are so many physical things to deal with that they are constantly running after the next physical thing that they need to deal with. They may have a house, they may have this and this, and everything demands attention. Their entire attention is absorbed by the things that surround them.

And it's just at the moment just talking about physical things. This is needed, and that's needed, and that. And then there's the belief that there are not enough physical things yet.

I need some more, because I don't feel quite complete yet. And then there are other things in a wider sense, all the things that make up your life situation, conditions of your life, events. Things are constantly happening, and constantly new things pop up.

Oh, thanks. So it's not just physical things, all kinds of things make up your life situation, what people call my life. But I say it's only your life situation.

They don't know what their life is. Their life situation consists of an accumulation of events, things happening, situations, demanding attention. Everything saying, this is important, give me attention.

So there's the pull of things, not just physical things, the pull of situations, of demanding it. So it's the world, the world, your world, consisting of things that need to be dealt with. And it's never quite enough time to deal with it all.

And when you've dealt with one thing here, there are three more things cropped up there. And so that's, people go through life with that pull into the world of things. Doesn't leave you alone for long.

And on a primordial level, on a basic primordial level, all the world of things starts with thoughts. Because all the things, whether they are physical, or events, or situations in your life, really only exist in you as thought. Nobody knows whether actually there's anything out there at all.

Because what reaches you, they say, sense perception happens, your visual, auditory, and so on, is translated into nerve impulses that reach the brain. And it's then, those impulses are decoded. And then some kind of world picture emerges.

Oh, this is what's going on. Nobody actually knows what's out there beyond the impulses that are being received and decoded. And some kind of world picture is put together, so that some philosophers have even doubted there's anything out there at all.

And it could just be a dream. And there are certain indications that it is a dream. It's in the nature of dreams to be fleeting, to evaporate very quickly.

It's in the nature of situations in your life, whatever condition, any situation, everything is fairly fleeting. It's there, one moment, it has gone the next. Where was yesterday?

What happened yesterday? When you first wake up in the morning, you might think, was it a dream or did it happen? And then you meet some other people who agree that it did happen.

But it could be that these other people are part of your dream. So all the things that seem to be out there, the world of things, is really an inner phenomenon. It's to do with mind, to do with thought.

We don't need to take any position here. We don't need to say, yes, the external world exists, or no, the external world does not exist. Very often, the answer is both or neither.

The answer is not yes or no. From one perspective, it's yes. From another perspective, no.

So most people's life is filled up with things, which on the most basic level means thoughts, mind movement. One could say objects that appear in your consciousness, one after the other. And sometimes they are battling for this.

One thought, another thought. So the people's lives are crammed full with that mind stuff. And you can see it in people's faces, the way they lead their lives, the way they interact with others.

What you can see is, very often, the absence of space. Well, it can't be absent, but they don't know it's there anymore. All they know is things that appear.

That any sense of space is gone. And so, they experience their life as a continuous stream of... I'm quoting Churchill again, as I love to do, who defined history as one damn thing after another.

And if you ask many people about their personal lives, they might give you the same answer. How's your life been up to this point? One damn thing after another.

And the next damn thing comes just in the moment when you thought, now you've made it. Success at last. Recognition.

Everybody loves me. And then everybody wants something from you. Now, fortunately, I have nothing to give on the level of things, although sometimes people demand things, but that's not what I have to give.

And no spiritual teacher has to give things. No true spiritual teacher is here to give you things, anything on the level of... But simply to show you the possibility of living not obsessed with things.

And I'm using that now in a wider sense. I don't just mean obsessed with physical things. It's a tiny aspect of it.

Obsessed with things also means possessed by things, and it means possessed by thought, totally in the grip of thought, one after another and after another and another and another. And to derive your entire sense of identity from that stream of one damn thing after another. Me.

There's a me in every thought. There's a me in every emotion, in every reaction. There's a sense of me.

And my relationship to the world is a me against the rest of the world. That's the battle I have to fight. Defending me.

Completing me. And looking out for more things, either to defend myself against or to accumulate, to take on this part of me. So to show the spiritual teacher is here, and the spiritual teacher is not separate from you.

This event here is happening in your consciousness. You don't know that I'm actually here. Outside of your consciousness, I'm in you.

So that voice that you hear is arising within you. Of course it is. There may be nothing out here.

It could all be an illusion, but the voice is there. It's arising in you. And so it's pointing to the possibility of living in a different way.

A life that is not a burden and a continuous seeking and continuous conflict. The possibility of being aware of inner space. In which, yes, in which the world of things still happens.

In which, yes, thought still happens. And yet, to be aware of a dimension of consciousness that we could call space consciousness. Because as we saw, and as you can verify when you look up into the sky tonight, there's objects out there and there's space.

That's basically what the world consists of. And the two dimensions are within you. And humans have become lost in one.

So we are here to realize that dimension. And I'm not saying you are going to realize it. It cannot be realized in the future.

It cannot be made into an object of a search. Because it's here now. The moment you are looking for it, you create a future.

Now what is future? It's a thought form. Apart from that, there is no future except as a thought form.

It cannot come except as now. So it's now, the arising of space consciousness or the realization of space consciousness is here now. For example, it happens when you acknowledge not only the words that you hear.

Acknowledge simply means pay attention. Notice. Easy.

It is not a big thing. Just notice. Just as noticing here there are two dimensions just the same as when you look up into the sky at night.

You will find there are two dimensions. There are the words here and there's a silent space or stillness in which the words happen. There are gaps in the words occasionally, little gaps.

And even as the words are spoken, there's an underlying still, silent space. The simple act of noticing that, that's all that's needed for space consciousness to be present in you. And you cannot grasp it and say, now I have it, because it becomes an object again.

It's an underlying field. So simply the simple awareness of the spaces is space consciousness. And you notice it's still and it doesn't involve thinking.

It is a short interval of not thinking. When you notice a silent space, just noticing it. It is not through thought that you noticed it.

It is possible that after a second later, thought comes in and says, oh there was a silent space. But then you are not noticing it anymore. It becomes a memory.

It becomes a thought. And it becomes, it's transformed by thought into an object. So this is this very simple.

This is something to practice. And even practice isn't the right word. It's too simple to say practice.

It's a way of being, of being aware of two dimensions. Manifested, unmanifested. And if you can move through life, being aware of the two, not losing touch with space consciousness, then life, even the life of things, things, even the manifested life, becomes quite pleasant.

Not that you can totally escape from the polarities that are inherent, the polar opposites of the universe, the manifested universe, which means the thing that makes you happy today can easily turn around and make you unhappy tomorrow. And that which makes you unhappy today can turn around and you can suddenly see, oh, it's led to something great. The other polarity came.

And any situation you go into in this world, which is the world of things, will have one side to it, an upside and a downside. Anybody who has made it in the eyes of the world knows that making it has a downside, considerable downside. And, or you make it and then you lose it.

But that is no longer the source of suffering, as it is when you only know the world of things. You have an expectation from everything, every situation, every person in your life. You have certain expectations, which deep down, if you look at it, is saying, complete me.

Give me what I need. Make me happy. And then it doesn't.

Nothing, no thing in this world can do that. Thing, in a wider sense, no situation, no person, no condition, can make you feel complete. As long as your entire sense of identity is trapped in object consciousness, me, my story, what can I add to it to make it more complete, to complete me?

You can temporarily add things that feel great. I have achieved, I'm now the greatest this or that. And then you see, it doesn't take long before you experience the downside of being the greatest this or that.

And even, even a deeply spiritual person like Einstein, he didn't walk around thinking, I'm the greatest. People had this projection. They said, you are the greatest genius that ever lived.

And he said, this is very strange what people, the opinion that people have of me. I didn't really, and he felt his life wasn't, he had missed the most important thing. He couldn't quite up with the final answer, whatever he called it.

I can't remember. Unified field theory, to explain the entire universe. Here it is.

But Einstein was a rare phenomenon. He had breakthroughs into space consciousness. And that's where his, the realization that did come to him, came from as all creative thought comes to those who, even if only for short moments, can break through into space consciousness, into stillness, into that empty space, the inner space, which empty is a misleading word.

It's intelligence itself. So we are here for that to arise within. Because the world can't go on in its deluded state, its lopsided, unbalanced state for much longer.

It would simply self-destruct. And then that's fine. Space was never, space is fine.

You can't do anything to it, no matter how mad the world is. And mad means only knowing one dimension, not knowing the other dimension. That's all.

And so, it begins, as we sit here, being aware of spacious stillness and the words. Then you're not looking for the next word, because you're, you're rooted in something that's deeper than object consciousness. And the words don't come from accumulated knowledge.

They actually come out of space consciousness. It's almost as if space consciousness were saying, come home, because the essence of your being is that. What Buddhists call emptiness, or what Hindus call the self, not the little self, the one self, the kingdom of heaven, they all point to that.

Nothing else matters here. Thought, whatever thoughts come into your head while you're here, are not that important. They will want to be important.

This is, you need to ask this question now, ask this question, ask, ask. And I'm not saying don't ask. There will be questions.

But many questions start with, have a compulsive quality, which is the importance of this mental position. And they may start with, yes, but, so what are you saying? I mean, I still don't understand what you mean by space consciousness.

Of course not. Do you think I understand it? As the Zen master said to his disciple, do you understand Zen?

And the disciple, no master. And master says, neither do I. Now, many understandings arise out of that state of connectedness with that unmanifested dimension.

But you cannot understand that dimension in itself. It would be absurd. It would be space conscious, object consciousness trying to understand the unmanifested.

The manifested, which is a tiny temporary form, trying to understand the vastness of the infinite. Of course, but many realizations, understandings, insights arise out of the state of connectedness, yes. But in itself, you will always remain totally ignorant of that in itself.

It cannot be known whatsoever, as you know an object in consciousness. It cannot be known, because it is the essence of all knowing. It can't, you can't make it into an object.

And so that is, the strange thing then is, what appears is that state of connectedness with that unmanifested dimension, appears to the human mind, to object consciousness, it appears as a state of ignorance, as it appears as a state of not knowing anything anymore. And yet, that is not the case. You cannot know that state.

But as you enter that state, all language, by the way, arises from, is derived from object consciousness and is itself object consciousness. Therefore, whatever we say, when we point to the unmanifested, already contains an error built into it, because it contains a limitation. All language and all thought does that.

That's why the great sage Lao Tse who wrote the beautiful and profound, one of the most profound books, the Tao Te Ching, the first line, the Tao that can be spoken of, is not the true Tao. Of course not. Or if you want to find a modern translation, if you can't talk about it, it's, that's not it.

But knowing that, it's fine to talk about it. And that's why Lao Tse continued writing the book when he said you can't talk about it. But once it's been pointed out, that then you don't mistake the words for it, and you find some little contradiction in the words.

Of course there's contradiction in the words the moment they point to the unmanifested. So you have to look beyond that. And so, this is only one way, in many ways, as we spend our retreat here, in many ways the dimension of the unmanifested, which we could call the divine, which we could call God.

I don't use that very often, because the moment you say God, you have an object in consciousness, a concept. A little bit better, a little bit less confining would be to say the infinite. God is, is a closed concept.

It's God is here, I'm here, God is here, and the table is there. It's, the infinite doesn't have clear boundaries around it. Hmm, where does it begin and start?

And you can't claim possession of it so easily. You can say my God and your God, but my infinite and your infinite doesn't work. So when you use a different term, you can see how absurd it is to say my God and your God.

So in many ways, that dimension, the infinite, arises here. And this is only one way that I suggest. Pay attention, not just to the words, but to the underlying field.

Notice it. Hmm. And as you go into nature, that is another way, and we will be going into that again in more detail.

Also there, you can be aware. I don't know if you noticed when you first arrive here, maybe when you are, you get out of the car, or I came on this little seaplane, and the moment the engine stops, and it comes in, and your pilot opens the little door, it's so still here. Of course there are few noises, birds and occasionally some human noise, but not often, and little noises here and there, water splashing, insects buzzing, but mostly it's so still, so still.

And that's why it's very helpful to be in a place like this, where on a simple auditory level, you're not bombarded with things, noisy things. And so it's so easy here to be aware of that vast stillness, to simply notice it. And certain people who are totally trapped in mind, when they are in stillness, they are looking for some kind of noise to interpret through their mind.

And if they can catch a bird and then say something about it, they feel very lucky. Ah, that is, it's such, not, not, I'm not dismissing all knowledge, but here we don't need it. There may be a place for that kind of thing, but here you can notice, if you're totally trapped in mind, you're looking for some, the stillness would be unbearable almost, and you would want to try and ignore it, and look for some noise that you can have a relationship with, or interpret, or talk about, or think about, or compare, or classify.

And some so-called nature lovers, who know a lot about insects and birds and flowers, they miss. If they cannot free themselves from their knowledge and enter the state of not knowing, at least temporarily, just least, then they don't know that. So here the wonderful opportunity is simply to notice that dimension.

And it is, I can't say it often enough, the simple fact of noticing is enough for that to arise, because that is the arising of it. And in that moment of noticing that field of stillness, there's no movement of thought in that moment. And I am certain that in many of you, in your ordinary life, that dimension of consciousness already is arising.

And you may not even know it. It seems strange that you cannot, you may not even know it. The mind, to the mind, it's totally insignificant.

It's nothing. So it doesn't, it will immediately deny it. The mind means thoughts.

The strange thing happened when a shift of consciousness happened to this person, what looks like a person, a shift of consciousness happened, and I walked around this city, which happened to be London, after being totally burdened by an endless obsessive stream of problematic thinking, mostly concerned with me, suddenly there was freedom from that. And I walked around the city, just looking at everything, and feeling very peaceful, blissful, such deep peace. And only a year later, I'm saying this because I just said you might not even notice that this is arising in you, only a year later, all I knew is deep peace.

Why? I didn't know. It was wonderful, but I didn't know why.

I saw a Zen master, and he just said a little thing about Zen is simply stop thinking. The ending of thought is no thought. That's it.

Oh, no thought. And then I realized that I actually had had not much thought since then, since it happened. That's where the peace came from.

But I didn't even know that thought had come to an end. Not completely. When it was needed, it was there.

So in many of you, moments of pure awareness, another way of putting it, are there, and you may not even know it, but now you can be more aware of that process, that shift accelerates and deepens as you become aware of it. And this is very subtle. We'll go into the subtleties of that shift during this retreat, how it is connected with sense perceptions, and so on.

We'll also, during this retreat, spend some time in silence. I'll let you know. I recommend it, highly recommend it, for certain periods of time here.

Whatever thought comes into your head, don't take it too seriously, because even thinking then exists within that spaciousness. There's another silly thought. Oh, and another one, and another.

And then you'll notice thoughts that you've had for years. Same thing. It's fine.

And the thought says, yes, but this, this is how it is. It's not how it is. It's a thought about it.

And we realize that all thought is limited, relative, a little perspective, one of many, many possible perspectives on anything, any situation, any human being, yourself, tiny perspective. And then another perspective is also true. And another one is also be true.

So you don't totally believe that any one thought can hold the entire truth about any situation or person. It can't. So thought becomes, you have a spacious relationship to thought.

So when the thought comes into your head, what a creep this guy is, then you don't totally believe in it anymore. Perhaps that is one perspective, but every human being contains the possibilities that are inherent in the whole of humanity. The creep is also a saint.

May not, perhaps not yet manifested. It's there. So you don't totally believe in that anymore.

It's just one perspective on this human being. And when you go to sleep tonight, go to sleep. There's no television here, so I don't need to say, don't watch television.

Don't even read a book, let alone the paper that you brought. Let's just see how the stock market is doing. Just go to, when you are in bed, lie, take attention away from the stream of thinking, place it into the body.

There's a space of the inner body. Be aware of that. Sense that.

At first sight that might appear an object that arises in your consciousness, but it's actually deeper than that. You can go to that, through that doorway into space consciousness. The aliveness that you sense in the inner body.

And you go to sleep from there, not from thinking. And if you wake up in the middle of the night, some silly thought may come into your head. What am I doing here?

So, so much stuff at home that I should be dealing with. This isn't getting me anywhere. All, you know, but thoughts.

Recognize it as thought. So the thought is within spaciousness. And then sense, feel the inner body.

And you don't take thoughts that seriously. Now, I will officially open this retreat with a ceremony, minimum ceremony. Thank you.

You may just want to sit for just a little bit as this body moves away. And then when you feel ready, you will find yourself getting up, moving to your room as a walking field of awareness.

[Speaker 2] (59:48 - 1:00:07)

This concludes session one of Realizing the Power of Now with Eckhart Tolle. Our program continues with session two.

[Speaker 1] (1:00:35 - 2:13:33)

If the microphone comes close enough, maybe words will come out. We can't have an empty tape. So we could.

Space consciousness. One hour of space consciousness. That, of course, is presence.

Another word or signpost. Occasionally I switch, without any intention, any prior intention, signposts. They all point to the same central core.

But sometimes one signpost works better for certain people. Oh, space. Inner space.

The possibility of knowing that inner space. Not dualistically. To become aware.

This sounds almost like a paradox. To become aware, not only of all the things that happen in awareness, such as sense perceptions, thoughts and emotions, including all the events and the drama and so on, earth drama. To become aware, not only of those things that come up continuously, one thing after another.

Everybody's aware of that. And everybody's drawn into that and fascinated by that and desires that and fears that. All the things that are coming up.

But also, the possibility of becoming aware of the space of awareness itself. That is, ultimately all techniques, meditation techniques, are designed to bring you to that awareness. They have built into them a counterproductive drawback, no matter how wonderful they are, in that every technique places itself between you and the essence of who you are.

So it's the belief that through this technique I reach the essence of who I am. And so you've placed something there, which is not really necessary, saying this without wanting to take away from you any techniques that you are using. But techniques tend to create time.

And to find the awareness that underlies every thought, out of which every thought comes, out of which every sense perception comes, that space is the very essence of all that appears, out of which it comes. It can only be here now. Why create steps towards it?

It's here now. It's to be recognized now, at this moment, as the space of awareness. It recognizes itself.

Because when I say, you become aware of awareness, creates the idea of some dualistic thing. I become aware of awareness. No.

When we speak about it, it sounds dualistic. Language structure is like that. Every sentence has a subject and an object.

But what happens is, self-awareness is what happens. Awareness becomes aware of itself. Whereas it had been only aware of the ways in which it manifested as form.

And that is a kind of dream. Awareness maybe wanted to dream the dream of form and totally identified with form. And then suddenly, oh, there's a spaciousness.

And that is an amazing thing, when you even get a glimpse of inner spaciousness. And it could happen here, at this moment. And you can't grasp it, and you can't understand it, and not even memorize it.

I remember space. It doesn't work. Because there's nothing to remember.

I once had it. That's an illusion, too. And then I lost it.

That's another illusion. And so that is, at first it's so subtle, perhaps, that you hardly notice. But then it can be suddenly very intense.

The Indians in India called it, it is blissful to be aware of that. It is the bliss of awareness, of being, of consciousness. Being, consciousness, bliss, satchitananda.

They string the three words together as one. In ordinary life, this can arise. Here, and is already arising in you, but perhaps so short-lived, still, that you don't, it's immediately obscured by object consciousness.

Object consciousness, as opposed to space consciousness. They're not different consciousnesses, it's a different manifestation of consciousness. The manifested, the unmanifested, one consciousness.

Now you may notice something interesting, and you can pay attention to that, particularly here, as you walk through nature, and you look at many different beautiful things, beings, plants, trees, animals, blades of grass, flowers, clouds, the sea. All this sense perception happens. And if you're alert, you will notice the moment something new enters your field of vision.

Let's say your head is moving, and suddenly you make contact with the flower, or whatever it may be. Whenever something new suddenly arises in your field of vision, we're just talking at the moment about visual perception. There is a space, when it first enters your visual perception, there is a space in which it is not being labeled or interpreted.

There is a space of clear awareness in which the perception happens. The mind hasn't had time yet to work out what it all means, to call it something, to find some relationship towards it, with it. It hasn't had time yet to retrieve from its data bank all that it knows, or all the associations that it has that are connected with that sense perception.

The first one is the name of that thing. The name hasn't been retrieved yet. It's working hard to retrieve it.

And then the associations. My Aunt Mary had that flower in her garden. That hasn't happened yet.

So whenever something new arises in your field of vision, there's a moment in which the sense perception arises in a field of pure awareness. In other words, we could say within a field of stillness. And you know what it is that you're looking at without having any labels for it.

You don't reduce it to a label, a name, call it this or that. There is a mystery remains, but there is a deep connectedness with that which you are looking at, a oneness, when it's not labeled yet. It's not interpreted yet.

And so if you are alert, you can see that this is naturally that space consciousness already is there in you arising. Now, there may be certain people who are so burdened with dense mind movements. They don't, they can look at a flower and not see it.

They can look at a tree and not see it. The tree happens in the distant periphery of their awareness, distant. And all their awareness is being absorbed by thought processes.

And that's where they are. One could say they are absent completely. Their entire awareness is being made into thinking.

Thinking uses up that. It looks as if they were looking, and they may be looking, but they're not seeing. There's a kind of blindness.

And many people who go for walks every day go in that state. But they're entirely in their thought processes. For them, it would require a shock to bring them to a point of awakening.

Awakening means always awakening out of the stream of thinking, so that some awareness comes out of thought, is retrieved from thought, is taken back from thought, and is there as pure awareness, formless consciousness, unconditioned consciousness. So for people who are totally immersed, it requires a shock. For example, it could happen they're walking through the woods, thinking about the stock market, and what's going to do, and what's going to do to me, and what it has already done.

And suddenly, well, if you're in Canada, it could happen, a bear suddenly appears in front of you. And then immediately you stop thinking about the stock market, because you realize the bear is much more important than the stock market. And suddenly there's an alertness.

And thought stops, because you can't, what can you think about it? And if thought does not come back again, there's a good chance that it will remain, thought will remain out of the way. Then you will take action, whatever action is needed, you will find yourself doing it.

It doesn't arise out of thinking, spontaneous. It comes out of, you cannot afford in emergency situations, you cannot afford to be thinking, hmm, I could do this, or that, or that. And sometimes it happens that people who are totally immersed could get other kinds of shocks through great loss in their lives, bigger shocks than just a bear appearing in front of you.

Bears are usually harmless. Most bear and human encounters are fine, except when humans carry guns. Other bigger shocks may come to shake the edifice of object consciousness.

The way in which my life had been arranged neatly, and the explanations and interpretations, ways in which I interpret my life, through some disaster, personal, they're all personal or collective, which means it happens, one disaster happens to a large number of people at the same time. So, as witnessed last year in New York, but continuously on the planet in other places, similar things also happen, collective disasters, great loss, some form of death. Death means something in object consciousness dissolves, an object in consciousness dissolves.

Something leaves you, and you might have associated that with a sense of self. So that's why it feels like death. Something that was part of your sense of self dissolves suddenly.

Life does that. It does that to humans. It's there to do that.

It's not there to keep you happy in the dream world. It takes things away. It's suddenly, it's gone.

And anything you lose leaves behind an empty space. Anything you lose in your life, it could be a simple thing like a belonging, or a greater, a deeper loss. The deeper the loss, the greater the space that it leaves behind.

And if you've never encountered space, inner space before, that is a dreadful shock, when for the first time in your life, you encounter deep loss, or the possibility of imminent loss. But if you are already somewhat familiar with space consciousness, you recognize that, which is left behind, where once there was something, or somebody, now there's nothing, or nobody, an emptiness, a space. And this is how quite often people who have never had access to spiritual teaching have gone through a shift in consciousness, through encountering great loss.

And somehow they couldn't run away from it anymore. It was just, they had to, they were speechless, couldn't explain it, interpret it, fit it into some kind of philosophical framework, where it still, it all makes sense, even that collapsed. And there was just the empty space, and suddenly they felt great peace.

Couldn't explain why. It didn't seem to make sense. Because space consciousness suddenly comes through that opening.

And so that is, you can say you find God through loss. That's one way. And initially loss is painful, suffering.

So indirectly you could say you can find God through suffering. Or the easier way, you can come to here. And encounter the space, inner space.

And you can look at a tree and realize you don't need to label it. That is an enormous shift in consciousness. And you can sit here and listen to the words without needing to label, just let them be.

And be aware of the space at the same time in which the words happen. Presence, beingness. A field of alertness.

A field of just presence. And they are the words. Otherwise the words will be analyzed by your mind, and it will be stuck on the level of signposts or words.

And then the mind might say, this sometimes happens when people come to write an article or something, because they need to, what's this all about? And then they say maybe, his teaching is a mixture of Buddhism, Advaita, Vedanta, and mystical Christianity. Oh, that is the illusion of knowledge.

And if you write that in an exam, you will get high marks. It's the illusion that when you have found a few labels, you know what it is. And that same illusion, of course, is everywhere in one's life, of mistaking mental labels for true knowing.

This applies to the flower, and you think you know when you can call it something, and the depth and mystery of that incredible being escapes you, because you think you know. And then, in human relationships, it gets even worse. Because when you think you know another human being, or yourself, through some accumulation of labels in your head, and then you do it to other people, and you do it to yourself, you mistake a few sounds in the head for the reality.

And that's what you relate to then, a screen of labels. That's Mary. And you know all about her.

Let me tell you about Mary. I know her so well. And John, oh yeah, I'll tell you what he's like.

And me, let me tell you my story. And again, deriving your sense of self from a story, a storyline in the head. So, you see how vital it is to discover the possibility of looking at a flower or a tree without interpreting it, because that's the beginning, that's the shift.

And sitting here, and listening, and looking, being aware, auditory perceptions, visual perceptions, and being aware of the space, the silent gaps in which all this happens. It's an amazing thing to find that inner space in which this happens. I mentioned noticing the gaps, noticing the silent spaces here between the words, the underlying field, which is consciousness.

I don't even want to use that label because the label is not it. There's always any word, there's a danger that now you know. Consciousness.

You are consciousness. Oh, now I know. But you only know yourself as consciousness if you can become comfortable with a state of not knowing.

There's something in you that loves that. The state wants to arise, and there's something else in you that says, no, don't go there. You won't know what's going on anymore.

And another way of inviting that state, if we can even call it that, is the beautiful little or big portal that is called, above the portal is written, allow. The portal is the present moment. So if you allow this moment to be as it is, then this moment, no matter what form it takes, they shift continuously.

No matter what form it takes, this moment becomes an opening for what I now sometimes call space consciousness, unconditioned to arise, which is peace also. The form that this moment takes may look like an enormous obstacle to the possibility of space consciousness or peace. Oh, I can't allow this, this dreadful situation, this.

Yes. Whatever it is, if it is internally not resisted, and you recognize that there's ultimately no arguing with is, because whatever is already is. And so whatever is is also part of the totality with the web with which it is connected to the whole.

It couldn't really be otherwise. It is as it is because the totality has brought this moment about, the form that it takes. There are no isolated events.

They appear to be isolated events, but what looks to the analytical mind like an isolated event is connected to everything else in the cosmos. The cosmos doesn't consist of isolated bits and pieces. It's a web, a oneness.

It is, one could say, one whole. It is an organism, at one totality, all connected. Physicists know that now.

Buddhists have known it for a long time, that all is connected to everything else. So the is-ness is as it is because there is a certain inevitability to this moment. And that is good to see, because the mind says, no, this shouldn't be, or should not have been, didn't have to be, but it is.

I don't want it to be, but it is. So when you see that, it is perhaps a little easier to walk through the portal that is called the portal of this moment. And then, no matter what form it takes, they might have crucified you.

You're on the cross in agony. And then you say, okay, not my will, but thy will be done. Thy, not addressing an entity of many other entities, but thy is the one, the totality, the one intelligence.

And so they surrender complete acceptance, complete allowing of this internal non-resistance and internal alignment with is. This looked, how can I, the most dreadful thing to be crucified is a symbol, one of the deepest symbols of humanity, which you don't have to be a Christian to understand it. Most Christians don't really understand the depth of it.

They understand a surface. That's not it. And so in the beautiful image, what seemed like an obstacle to peace, to the arising of space consciousness, not here, not now, surely can't do it here.

And yet suddenly with that, yes, the allowing, the cross becomes a symbol for the divine. And the cross is any situation that you encounter that looks bad, bad. And you allow it because it is, and you don't interpret it.

Allowing means you also relinquish the interpretation or if an automatic interpretation is still running in your mind, you recognize it as the tape that is still running in your mind or the CD that is still running. Same thought, better sound. Doesn't make much difference.

And so you recognize that thought movement has a certain momentum and the same words may still arise in your mind. But yet you recognize that that is a thought movement. So there is a spaciousness that is there even as certain thoughts still happen.

You have a spacious relationship then to your own thought processes. You are no longer hanging in there with your entire sense of self in every thought, believing in every thought, which is only a tiny fragment, any thought you can have about any body or anything. It's a tiny fragment.

And believing that it contains the truth. That's the root of all the dreadful wars and senseless violence, is to believe in my interpretation of this situation. And not recognize it as my perspective or our.

It's the same collective ego. Our interpretation, this is how we see it. No, this is the truth.

And then whoever doesn't share your mental position becomes the enemy. And that happens on a personal level and it happens collectively. A complete absence of space around the thoughts.

And somebody realized that. I mentioned at the talk in Vancouver last week, I read in the New York Times, an Israeli writer was writing about the madness that's happening in the Middle East. And he saw something there.

Perhaps he didn't quite see the depths of what he saw, the deeper implications of what he saw, but he saw something that is the beginning of the root of all that suffering that humans are inflicting on each other. And he called it an inability to accommodate a competing narrative. What he calls narrative, of course, is an interpretation or a story in your head.

And so in those people who are involved in deeply entrenched conflict situations, and this doesn't have to be collective, it can be on a personal level too, there's the inability to accommodate a competing narrative, which is another story, another perspective, another fragment. So we can say a complete absence of space around the thought, a complete identification with the thought as me, as a self. Complete self-identification with thinking.

And that creates the other. It creates the enemy. It even loves the enemy, that mind-made me.

Because the boundary around the me gets strengthened through having the other who is against me. My mental position gets strengthened through having to fight some other mental position that strengthens my own mental position, and the contraction that goes with it. And we feel stronger then.

Our sense of identity, the more we can fight with others, the stronger we feel in our sense of self, the more we suffer, yes, but we don't see that. The more unhappy we become, yes, but to the egoic, this entity, unhappiness is great. It confuses pain and pleasure.

It loves pain. Because while you are fighting, you think you know who you are. The delusion gets strengthened.

So you can see how deep this goes, how vital it is that humanity goes through this shift in consciousness now, because you see this, what we are addressing here lies at the root of this dysfunction that is on the planet now. The collective human mind and what it has done and what it is doing on this planet, the enormous destruction and suffering. So we are here because within each of us, the evolutionary impulse is at work, to make the shift from one level to a different level.

It's the possibility has always been there, even 3,000 years ago, with Buddha, one of the first, perhaps, who saw with Jesus and others, the possibility was there, but not yet the necessity for humanity as a whole to make the shift. And now, yes, this teaching is not different from the truth that the ancient teachings are pointing to. And yet, there is an added intensity to it.

There's an added power behind it now. On a personal level, it may look as if maybe you had come here because you couldn't stand the suffering anymore. As you know, through suffering, it can happen too, because suffering is resistance.

When you can't stand it anymore, you suddenly allow what is to be. That's one way. And for many of you, that has already worked in your life.

You've done it. You've had the suffering. Maybe still do sometimes.

In waves, it comes. A wave. And resistance is there.

And suddenly, you can't stand it anymore, and there's a relinquishing of resistance. You allow. And suddenly, peace is there.

In the midst of, perhaps, turmoil. Resist not evil, says Jesus. A deep truth.

And on the deepest level, there is a goodness that is beyond what we perceive on the surface as good and bad. What we thought the mind cannot comprehend that. So here, we step out of the cage, the trap of object consciousness as much as possible.

That is the opportunity here without suffering. If suffering comes here, fine. That's fine too.

Occasionally, it may happen, even here. In the midst of paradise, it could happen. A little thing isn't going the way it should be going, even in paradise.

This isn't how it should be. I want to have my own room. I wanted to have my own room and not having somebody snore next to me.

I haven't come here for that. If I'd stayed at home, I could be more peaceful than here. These are thoughts that can go through your mind.

Do you completely need to believe in those thoughts? No. They're just thoughts.

A little perspective, not the truth. And you can often then smile when certain thoughts come. Many of the strong thought movements are reactive.

You react to something in your environment. And it may be good to know that there is, even though in all of you, the unconditioned space consciousness presence is arising, there is still, maybe dormant right now, there is still a little egoic entity, a little me, that maybe now is not very much in the background. It's connected to accumulated pain from your past, the pain body, the emotional pain that humans carry from long, long ago, racial pain, humanity's pain.

Every human carries some of that. And the little mind made egoic entity, which is a story of me, derives a lot of its force from its link with collective old human emotional pain. So that entity and the pain body, as I call it, go together.

They are really one. And that may be dormant now, but it's not gone completely. You might think it's gone completely until something happens.

It is very often what it is looking for is something to react to. And it can do that even in the middle of a beautiful retreat place like here. It can find something, certainly, to react to.

And that can then, the mind movement and the emotional movement associated with the reaction, can obliterate paradise. And you become a reactive entity. And you may think of going home.

I'm saying that because it might happen to you. And so knowing that it might happen, you could catch it when it happens. Catch it doesn't mean that you catch it and hold it down.

So catch it with your attention. Catch it in the field of awareness and see it. Otherwise, it might take you over and you may not wake up until you're already on the ferry.

And then the next reaction will come. And the next thought movement associated with pain will come. And it'll say, you see, you have failed miserably.

You've wasted an opportunity for enlightenment. Can't win. First it finds a perfect excuse for leaving and blaming.

And then it blames the next thing. That's you. So see if you can catch it when it comes.

And it's sometimes the most insignificant things become the trigger. It obliterates everything else that can happen. So catching it is a wonderful thing.

Catching it, you might lead you into the era of believing that this shouldn't be happening to you. But that's not the case. It's wonderful that you can see it happening to you.

If you can't see it happening to you, you become it. Well, okay, you're asleep. And you have to just wait until you wake up.

But the likelihood of you catching it is much greater here. Catch the reactive movement. So this is something to watch in yourself and also in others.

Because another way of reacting is to react to somebody's reaction. That's a favorite way of reacting. Just watch that also.

Because somebody close to you may be reacting to something. What do you do then? You shouldn't be.

Wake up! You shouldn't be here if you're so unconscious. How did you even get here?

So, and then you just remember the portal called allow. The form that this moment takes. And the form is this human being, this situation.

And suddenly there is space around that also, that other person's reaction. That is the space that comes through you, one could say. Ultimately, there's not you and the other.

But from a limited perspective, one could say that you, what you bring to the situation is space. And perhaps the other person doesn't have the space at that time. At that moment.

And you bring it by allowing this to be as it is. Whatever way this moment manifests. And that's a beautiful way of changing the world.

Not that you ever think, okay, I'm now going to change the world through space. It doesn't happen like that. There's no intention behind it of me doing something to you.

That's not space. That's object consciousness. I will heal you.

Maybe it works, but it's object consciousness. If it works, it's a very limited healing. It's simply allowing this to be.

And then you become the bringer of space into that situation. And in that space, wonderful transformation happens. Healing also, whatever level it may be.

What a beautiful job for you, if you realize that your main function in this world is not what the little egoic me told you that your function is, whether it be president of the company, or whether it be the road sweeper. This is a temporary form. This is on the level of form you perform certain actions.

Temporarily. But deeper, your function is to be there as clear space in any situation. The space of awareness, the space of presence.

And then you, the situation is here, and you are no longer there as a reactive entity towards the situation. The little me is the reactive entity, the mind-made self, what Buddha calls the self, which is recognized as an illusion. That is not you.

So the illusion is recognized, where once was the self, there is an opening. There may be remnants of self along the borders of the opening, but there's the space. This is what you bring into, even into nature.

There are levels you can bring that into nature, you can bring it into human interactions. When you bring it into nature, a wonderful thing happens when you perceive in and through the clear space of just awareness, looking at a tree, listening to a bird, looking at a flower, the forest. At that moment, the tree that you are looking at knows itself as it has never known itself before, through your awareness.

Because ultimately there's no separation between you and the tree. It only looks like that. So when you bring that awareness to anything you perceive, that which you perceive is no longer separate from you, and it recognizes itself, its own beauty, its own sacredness, through that aware perception.

So it's almost, one could say, a circle completes itself. And there's a line in the New Testament, which is that everything in nature, all creatures are waiting for humans to awaken. And you become the bringer of that, and nature then loves you.

So you can almost sense that the tree, the flower, want to get closer to you. That's perhaps what even Saint Francis did. We have pictures of Saint Francis.

They say this is a wrong interpretation. He was always close to, animals would always come to him. He had an enormous, it had been missing for a while in Christianity, the practice Christianity, but he brought in an enormous love for the created world.

Not the creature in itself, but he loved, he saw in every creature what he called the creator, which is the one life, the one consciousness. And so everything came to him. He always, you have pictures of him surrounded by birds.

The way they interpret it is saying he's preaching to the birds. He never preached to the birds. The birds don't need preaching to.

But he brought that presence, that complete openness. That was his whole life, was his whole life. I visited Assisi in the spring.

His whole life was an opening into space consciousness. We were sitting in the tomb where he's buried, which is an underground chamber. And continuously there's a stream of people.

They come in. Some kneel there or kiss the tomb and they walk around it. A continuous stream of people from all over the world come in the tomb of St. Francis. They walk around it. And I could feel it was, they're walking around an empty space. His very life was such denial of self that his very life became an opening of just space.

And it's almost like a black hole. His tomb is an opening. Similar scene we had.

We were in India earlier on the same trip. The tomb of Ramana Maharshi. The same thing happens.

People come in every evening. They walk around it several times. They say it's great merit.

You get enlightened more quickly the more often you walk around. But again, it's left behind. It's not an entity.

It's an opening that they leave behind. They leave behind a space. That's the beauty and the sacredness of that.

So that is your destiny also. More and more to become that space. And you can still interact whatever you do.

So you go, nature is vital here. Bring that light. As you walk through nature, one step at a time, you're there as an aware presence.

As a spacious field of awareness. Innocent. There's an innocence in that looking.

Because everything you look on is fresh and new if you don't label it. One step at a time. And then you stop.

You look. Occasionally thoughts will come in and out, yes. It doesn't matter.

And then notice what I mentioned earlier. Every time your vision shifts to something else, there's a moment where there's very definitely no thought. As you explore visually that new object that arises.

That's beautiful. That moment. And when you become conscious of it, it may become longer.

The space of no thought gets longer. Then perhaps at some point the mind would say, oh you see, no thought. It doesn't matter.

That's okay. And then you just go back. Anybody who is a master at anything, whether it be a craftsman or an artist who has the ability to look in such a way at whatever they are working with in that clear space.

And then something that is more intelligent than you, deeper than you, the surface you, ultimately you, takes over. And it does it. It moves whatever it is.

The piece of wood or the stone or the canvas. The movement then, it comes out of that looking. Any mastery in which there's no thought, even if you're a writer.

Now you might think, well surely if I'm a writer, I need to think. Not really. I picked up a book.

Somebody wrote, I unfortunately don't remember the name. It was last week. I was visiting somebody and I picked up a book.

It was about how to write. And the writer had been trained in Zen. And I was amazed to read what her advice was.

Above all, don't think when you're sitting down. You must allow that suddenly, yes, suddenly a thought appears by itself. It comes at some point, yes, a thought arises.

But it doesn't arise through the process of thinking. What am I going to make happen here? What am I going to happen, make happen to this character?

What could I make happen? Let's see, I could do this. You can write in that way, but it won't be great.

Maybe many books are written in that way. Maybe that is the difference which nobody can explain between fiction and literature. There is a difference, but nobody can quite tell you.

And there are some books where you don't know. Is that just fiction or is it literature? With some you can clearly say, this is just fiction.

And there is a depth that is lacking when it's just fiction. It's a surface thing. Every character is a surface character, cardboard, one-dimensional, because it's all produced by the mind.

The deeper dimension is lacking. So when true writing happens, the writer enters that state of receptivity, awareness, no thinking. Then suddenly it comes.

Then at the last moment it becomes a thought, but that arises from the depth and then it goes onto the paper or the screen or whatever. There are many books about literature and what it means. Maybe nobody has discovered this yet.

If anybody is writing a book about literary criticism of literature, might be put that in. Any creative endeavor can only come from there. And a little by-product of that shift is that it frees you from suffering.

Oh me, my story is so unhappy. I suggest, so that we can truly be in that space, that between now and our next gathering, we keep noble silence, to use the words of the Buddha, to keep noble silence. And perhaps beyond that, we'll see.

At least for now, between here and this afternoon is the space of noble silence and there's simply always this. Just this is enough. This moment is enough.

Let this moment be enough, at least between now and this afternoon. You can bring back complexity later. For the time being, let this moment be enough.

And it always is this moment. This is enough. It's never complex.

Can't be. There's not enough room. This moment is not complex.

Complexity arises through leaving this moment. I'll use the bells. When you hear the bell, sound arises.

This is auditory perception. And then the sound reaches a point where it subsides, very slowly, because these are wonderful bells. So that sound takes a long time to die, but eventually it does, as every form does.

So the sound lingers a long time, and then follow that with your attention. A certain alertness is required to follow the sound with your attention. Follow it into death, where it's gone.

There also is a little opening into space consciousness. This is what they know when they play, I believe last year, maybe this year also, we will listen to the Japanese flute. When the tone of the shakuhachi bamboo flute merges with the silence, every time one note comes to an end, it takes you into that space where there's only what's left when the sound dies.

The sound was manifested. It dies into the unmanifested. What's left when the sound dies?

Just spacious awareness. Just consciousness is left with nothing in it. So you can follow, use the death of the sound, the birth and death of the sound, can take you there also through simply alert listening.

[Speaker 4] (2:14:50 - 2:14:51)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (2:15:11 - 2:15:20)

This concludes session two of Realizing the Power of Now with Eckhart Tolle. Our program continues with session three.

[Speaker 1] (2:15:46 - 3:27:20)

That forest trail that leads up to this building, that would be enough. All you need, walk it consciously four times a day. What else do you need?

Enough. Walking it consciously means one step at a time. Means perceiving without labeling beauty, even without labeling it beauty.

The depths, you're walking the depths in which the perception happens. And the step you're taking at this moment is not a means to an end. If you're walking along the forest trail in order to get here, this could happen.

Every step that you take is a means to an end. And that's not conscious. The end is mind.

Mind projected future. I need to get there. So it could happen, especially if you're late.

Maybe hurrying. Maybe he started speaking already and I'm missing something important. But you're missing that step, which definitely is more important than what the speaker is saying at that moment.

The amazing thing is you can actually walk fast also. You're not reduced to walking slowly always now, to walk consciously. You could even hurry to get somewhere and you're really, maybe there is little time.

Maybe you need to catch a train or whatever it may be. And maybe you need to very quickly now, you have five minutes to pack your suitcase. And that can be very beautiful to still be present even when there's fast movement and enjoy every movement of that, the energy movement of it.

It's an energy dance. And there you are going through your drawers, picking this and that. And not even without, when you're present, thought is just an interference.

Because all you do in the state of presence is you see, you look. And in that perception, the looking reveals to you what is needed. Without going through the complicated and complicating process of thinking, certain things, yes, thought may be required, but you may be surprised for how many things.

Thought is actually more of a hindrance than a help. The ability to just look in that clarity of clear, the clear space of awareness, you look at any situation. In that looking, again, it's the same kind of looking that we are pointing to here when we speak of looking at a tree, looking at a flower.

But if there's pressure on you due to some external challenge, it could be something as simple as needing to get ready, it's late, or more of a pressure, some situation, then you may find that the alertness that is there as you look intensifies. So facing an imminent danger coming towards you, that looking would intensify. And out of that, action then comes.

So it could be a simple thing like needing to see what is it that I need to pack. I only have five minutes. And then you simply look, and you take what, you know beyond thought what is needed, and you take very effective way of handling things.

If you started to think, you would become stressed. I only have five minutes and I have to work out what I'm going to pack. And you're projecting yourself to the end of the five minutes when you need to be ready.

It's so much pressure produced, but there's only this movement now. So any situation, clear looking at any situation that may appear complex, reveals to you what is needed. If anything is needed, if any action is needed, you will find yourself doing it, or you will find yourself not doing anything.

There are situations that are better left alone in one's life. And knowing what situation requires action, and what situation is better left alone, you could agonize over that if you start thinking for a long time. Should I or shouldn't I?

If I do, on the other hand, but so the ability to come to a situation and simply see, that is, there's a space of awareness. It is intelligence operating, but it is not intelligence as most humans know it. It is not the intelligence that does the crossword puzzles, the intelligence that is good at solving IQ tests, although it may come in even there, I don't know.

It hasn't in my case. It is an intelligence that works not analytically, it doesn't break things down into bits of information, because the human mind has certain similarities with a computer. It analyzes, breaks it down, the thinking mind.

But then there's another, there's a depth there also, there's a greater intelligence than the personal mind. And that is there when awareness arises and becomes part of the perception. That is silent intelligence operating, unconditioned consciousness operating in your life.

Things get much easier then. Needing to work things out, a lot of that falls away. So how it's so important, we started with such a simple thing like looking at a tree and allow the perception to arise in this place of awareness.

And then situations, you're not always in such peaceful surroundings as here. Some people would say it is easier to be present here, because you're not being challenged. That may be true for some, quite a few.

For others, it is true that they become more present when they are challenged. Some people are drawn into unconsciousness the moment the first challenge comes into their lives, which could be leaving here and stepping onto the ferry, or missing the ferry. And so they could be at this peaceful four days, five, whatever it is, here.

And suddenly a little thing goes not the way it's supposed to go, and the reactivity, it comes back, could do. Oh my God. Or it could be that the first challenge comes, whatever it may be, and you go, oh.

You recognize immediately the is-ness of that. It's the suchness of that, missed the ferry, and that moment is good. Your retreat can last a little longer.

Cooperate with the movement of life internally. Always. Great power lies in that.

Behind anything that goes wrong, if you cooperate with that movement that the mind calls wrong, cooperate internally with that movement that the mind has labeled bad, you can be sure that it turns around or something reveals itself that is of a greater good than the good that you seem to have lost in that situation that you call bad. There's always hiding something underneath that which the mind had labeled bad. When you continue to be trapped in that labeling mind, you don't even see that.

Most of the time it can then not reveal itself to you. You wouldn't even see it, because you've already decided that this situation is bad, and then the good that's hiding, more often than not, you would not even see. Or it cannot even come through.

So we are going back now to the forest trail, where it all starts, where you take one step at a time. There's such beauty in walking. Not surprisingly, Buddhists have developed walking meditation to simply bring awareness into something that otherwise would be reduced to something meaningless, a means to an end, automatic.

Anything you can bring awareness to that otherwise, that is often with you, or always with you, but usually you wouldn't even know it because it's always there, or it's usually an unconscious movement. And those are beautiful meditations. There's no real technique here.

You're simply bringing consciousness to what's already there. So I recommend for the rest of the time that particularly when you walk here, between your room and the beach, or on the beach, or between here, along the trail, to be conscious of walking, of each step. You don't need to change the way you walk.

When Buddhists learn walking meditation, it's fine. They do it their way. You do it very, kind of, every walk is a kind of very careful movement of the foot.

The heel goes down, the rest of the foot goes down, and the heel goes up, and then the foot lifts up. Let's keep it more simple. To simply watch, that's the way the walking that's taking place now.

The other one is fine too, but here let's just do the normal walk, and be conscious of each step, the simplicity of each step, and the beauty that's in there. Where does that beauty come from? Is it in that step?

Well, to some extent, but it really arises out of the awareness, that sense of aliveness, that sense of beingness, of presence that is there with every step. It's not the step in itself. It is because awareness arises, and the step happens within that spaciousness of awareness, and that awareness is beauty beyond form.

That awareness is sacred, and every step is sacred that you take. There is something that you cannot describe that is there, and there is a quality in every step, an aliveness, and that's only walking. And of course, as you walk, you also perceive.

There's that, and you watch. It's the end of believing that all you are is a person, an exclusively personalized sense of self. A walking, to use the expression of that writer, one could almost say you're just a walking narrative story with your memories and thoughts.

Heavy. And so, you're walking as consciousness, a field of consciousness, perceiving you are a field of consciousness. It is a lessening, this is why we are here, as you spend time here, there's a lessening of the personal dimension of your life.

Not that you lose it completely. If you lost it completely all at once, it would be very disconcerting. So, that doesn't usually happen.

It's happened to some people, but probably not to you, and it's not necessary. There is a lessening of deriving your sense of self from your personal life, and having to carry that around with you and remember it all the time, me and my story. And it hasn't worked out yet, it hasn't quite completed yet, so there's the future constantly hanging over your head as a threat.

Oh God, what is going to happen to me? If you walk around like that, it's a burden just to be alive, and you can walk in the forest with a threat over your head of your future. Of course, it can come in when you fall back into mind.

You realize the future is uncertain. Oh my God, maybe I'm not going to get what I need to complete my life. Or maybe what I have now might be lost, and so on.

So, that exclusively personal me, this becomes transparent as awareness arises. And more and more, you go through life, and you go into situations, not just when everything is fine, you will find it arising, we may address that in more detail, arising also in when situations are difficult. And you may find that whereas before, any challenge or difficulty in your life, and the world is full of that, you go back into the world, and before you know it, it will face you in one day with five challenges, ten challenges, often in the form of people.

Occasionally, it's a missed ferry, but it's in the form of people more often than not, and the challenges come. And you may find what before you, the challenge pulled you back into reactivity, and the miracle is when a certain level of presence has been reached within yourself, there comes a point when it is less likely that a challenge will pull you back into unconscious reactivity. Then you complain, you are a personal self complaining that the world is not complying with your wants and desires, complaining in your head or out aloud, the world is not doing what you want it to do.

Basically, that's the challenges are, it's not going the way it's supposed to go. And so there's the complaining, and that's the reactivity of the egoic sense of self, and fear. And when a certain level of presence has been reached, which may be the case with most of you, you will find a change happening, and that change is that the challenge could still pull you into, yes, occasionally it still pulls you into unconsciousness, but there's a different tendency now, and that is for the challenge to intensify the alertness that is that state of spacious presence, that is the non-reactive state. And so there, now there's the ability to look at the challenge or the situation in that clarity of awareness, and you have accessed an intelligence that is greater than the accumulated intelligence, and that intelligence is not confined to your head. That intelligence is connected to the totality, so it can even operate and seemingly come in as an external factor.

Once you have accessed it, it not just operates from within you, that intelligence, it also operates from without, and that often happens as just the right thing happening for that situation, such as is the case in synchronistic events and so on, or just simply at the right moment what is needed is suddenly, suddenly it appears, and sometimes almost it won't fall down from the sky, but it sometimes, you see, how could that have happened?

So just where did that come from? And the intelligence operates both ways. This is the beauty of that intelligence.

You have accessed the totality, you are no longer cutting yourself off by tying yourself into a little knot within the web of the whole, the little knot claiming an independent existence for itself, and it's called me. And the rest of the web of the interconnectedness of all things, that's the rest of the world, and it is threatening to the knot, but the knot has no independent existence. It's a good analogy to say a knot, because it is in the nature of a knot that it has no independent existence.

You can untie it. There never was a knot, not as a separate thing. So the, one could say the personal sense of self, the egoic sense of self, is a knot.

You tie yourself into a knot, and that is not a personal shortcoming of yours. It is a collective pattern in humanity to do that. The illusion of me, a separate me.

And so you can see how when you're as a knot, you're cut off. Things don't flow easily through a knot. When you tie a knot into a hose, not much water comes through, and the knot says, well, that's me, and I'm not going to change because I'm a knot.

I always say, no, that's why I'm a knot. It's true that the nature of knottiness, which that is a word, it comes from the continuous no to what is. And the untying of the knot comes with the yes to what is.

Then you're not a knot, but that means with the yes, the exclusively personal sense of self also dissolves. You can still operate as a person. That's okay.

And yet, increasingly, your sense of self is discovered, is realized to be consciousness, the field of aware presence, the alertness that is here at this moment. As you sit there, there's a field of alertness that cannot really be defined in concrete terms because you would make it that which is beyond form into a mind form if you defined it. And that is such a relief, that shift from that little thing with its little problems, even though they may look big, they're all little.

It's such a shift from that to realizing that who you truly are is awareness, presence, that field. And that is the end of the little self, and the arising of the great self, or as the Buddhists prefer to say, no self. They'd like to put everything in negative terms, which is a good thing because then if you put it in negative terms, you can't form a concept out of it.

No self. At this moment, it's not something, I'm not pointing to anything that is, that cannot be within the realm of your experience at this moment. Now, when you are in that state of alertness, you don't remember your past.

If you want to, you can, but in that state of alertness, you don't need to remember your past. You don't even need to remember your name. Don't worry, you'll still know it when you need it.

But you don't need to, as you walk through the forest, you don't walk as John Smith, a nationality, a past, or whatever John Smith is doing with his life. You don't walk as that. And what would be lost at this moment, if you could not remember your name?

Would the sense of who you are be lost, the deepest sense? No, that's never lost. Just imagine for a moment, you have no name.

It's gone. This, and maybe even your whole story is gone. You can't remember anymore.

And yet there's an intense presence or aliveness here now. That's consciousness, awareness, space consciousness. That which you don't remember, briefly, is object consciousness.

It's still there if you need it, but it's not running your life. It's not burdening you, because object consciousness is heavy. You carry a lot around.

This is shift from personal to something greater. And then you live with one foot in one dimension, the other foot in the other dimension. And that's a beautiful way to live.

One foot in the unmanifested, spacious awareness. Awareness. That's the source, the ground of all being.

The other foot is in the world of manifestation, object consciousness, including thought, including emotions, sense perceptions, the entire world out here, which has a depth to it when you have one foot in the stillness, the spacious stillness of consciousness. Then even the world of form has a depth and an aliveness, because you recognize in each form that you perceive, it could be here in nature, but also in other human beings, in each form you perceive, you recognize that which is beyond form as the essence of that form. And what is that?

Again, the unmanifested consciousness, pure, unconditioned consciousness, the essence of every life form, even what we call so-called inanimate life is not inanimate. There is an essence, a faint essence in all forms, even the stone. There's a rudimentary consciousness there.

The atoms are alive, very alive. If you looked at the atomic structure of a rock or a stone, you would find not only intense aliveness and movement, you would also find 99% empty space between the atoms. And it looked so heavy, that stone, from the level of our sense perception, that stone looked so heavy and dead.

But when you look at that stone, not labeling it, then you can sense the aliveness that is in that stone. There's an ancient scripture that was not Christian, that was not included in the New Testament, because they found it later, I believe, the Gospel of Thomas. And there Jesus says, he doesn't say, I'm the stone, but he said, lift up the stone and you will find me there.

Anywhere you will find me. And who is that? He speaks not as a personal me, he speaks as consciousness.

Consciousness speaks, and wherever you look, you will find me. And that is the meaning of loving, because that recognition of the essence of who you are, you have one foot in that, you're rooted in that, and then you interact and perceive the world. You interact with it, and you perceive it, and then you perceive, in Christian terms, you perceive, I believe it may have been Saint Francis who said it, the creator in the creature.

The creator is consciousness. And that is what is in every creature, but in every form that you see, there is an essence. And you sense that when you have one foot.

So, the universe is alive. It's alive, and you love it. You love it, because you recognize yourself in it.

Because ultimately, all love, it sounds a little strange to say that, all love is self-love. And that is fine, because ultimately, there's only oneself. So, you recognize the other, which to the personal sense of self is the other, the dreadful thing, the other, frightening that there are others in this universe.

I've quoted before Jean-Paul Sartre, hell is other people. I believe in the French, he said, the others, les autres, or something. And this is true from the point of view of the egoic mind.

Hell is other people, more often than not. And even those people who seem to give you heaven, more often than not, after a little while, it turns into hell. Well, you may remember your first marriage.

So, the heaven that is here, when you are not rooted in reality, which is what it is, the heaven always lets you down. Sometimes you think you found heaven here. And invariably, it lets you down.

The things, all things, all forms, anything in object consciousness will let you down. Because you have expectations that you place upon that they cannot possibly fulfill. But if you are rooted in the formless, then you don't place those expectations on the world of form.

Make me happy, complete me, give me what I need, complete my sense of self. You don't, they can't do that. Stay with me and don't leave me.

Nothing and nobody can do that. Forms come and go. And even if you have a wonderful marriage for 60 years, eventually one of you dies.

That's rare. I mean, a wonderful marriage for 60 years, but it can happen. So, these impossible expectations that you place on the world of form, then always leading to frustration with the world of form.

It is so frustrating to be alive in this world of form, if you only know that. Oh, for God's sake, when, it's always things leave me, go wrong, and I lose them, and nothing stays. And then the great things turn out not to be great.

What is this? And so, some people reach despair, even. I've seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and just striving after wind.

It's all, that's the Old Testament prophet translated into modern language. It's all so pointless. What's the point?

And so, then you could reach that state, which is a state of sarcasm and bitterness and resentment. It's life hasn't played its part, has treated you unfairly. You become a victim of the whole world.

Much more common than you may realize that deep-seated belief that the world has prevented me, if you're old enough, it has prevented me, it's too late now, has prevented me from being myself. Or the belief that the world is preventing me now from being myself. And everybody I meet is some kind of obstacle to being myself, although sometimes I think they're going to help me to be myself, and then they turn into obstacles.

It's a weird universe. When you are not rooted in that which is beyond, it's a very weird place indeed. And beautifully, the weirdness of it all, expressed beautifully in certain works of art in the 20th century, like the novels of Franz Kafka, or the theater of the absurd, to see the absurdity of ordinary existence, it is absurd.

And so, and it could take you to despair. If you laugh about it, there's already some freedom, there's already something arising that doesn't identify with form. So humor is a good sign.

When humor comes in, you start laughing, which means there's some disidentity, and suddenly everything collapses around you, and you start laughing because it's all you can do. That means, and sometimes through laughter, that can arise, the disidentified consciousness, because you go, it's all gone. It's all gone.

It can be very liberating, but not everybody does that. Some weep and wail up to the very end, and die in the state of bitterness. Something went wrong somewhere.

And so, yes, to see the absurdity of it, the pointlessness of it, you can have all kinds of meaningful personal goals, what I am going to achieve, and when you achieve them, it's not, it won't be it. It won't feel that great, and then after a little while, it turns around into a burden more often than not. So there is a different way to live, and that is realizing that which is always here, has always been here, as the very essence of all life, and yet you overlooked it because all your attention was absorbed by object consciousness through thought processes, the things.

That's what we spoke of last night also. All your attention was totally absorbed by object consciousness. Running after this, running after that.

And so, space was always there. You just didn't notice it. That inner space can never be destroyed, even in the most, the person who thinks, my life cannot possibly be fixed anymore.

Maybe there are one or two people here who believe that or have believed it. My life cannot possibly be fixed anymore on whatever level. I've made a mess of it.

Such a mess. It's not unusual. And then to realize that it matters not at all, the space cannot be touched by whatever mess you make.

You can't destroy inner space. That space consciousness cannot. It's totally indestructible.

It's as indestructible as outer space. You can create any kind of havoc in this room. You can play heavy metal music for 24 hours.

At some point, it has to stop. And then the stillness and space are intact. Nothing happens to that.

And within you, that dimension remains. And this is why people who, you would say, have made a total mess of things, have created dreadful suffering for others and themselves, who ended up in prison because they murdered someone, a few of those realized space consciousness and realized what we could call an original innocence that is part of that, that is never touched by anything that ever happened to you or can ever happen to you or anything that you ever did to anybody. The original innocence is there even in a mass murderer. That remains.

There are heavy layers, dense layers of illusion, of mind, of pain body. Yes. But that, this is the beauty and the miracle that remains.

And it can be discovered no matter what your life situation is. That is grace. That is the redeeming factor.

Of life. And that possibility is always here. Some get there through suffering.

And some get there through sitting here. Or a combination. That's probably most true for most of you.

You're being worked on, on different levels. You're being worked on, yes. And the amazing thing is you may not immediately become free of all pain, even after this.

That's surprising. You may even find that there could be more pain suddenly. And that happens because it wants to be dissolved.

It needs to be dissolved. You haven't got lifetimes anymore in which to work out your karma. As presence arises, you may find your pain body also comes up at times very strongly.

It comes up into the light of consciousness because it needs to be transmuted for the shift in consciousness to happen. And there isn't that much time on the planet, which is great. It is a good thing that humanity as a whole is running out of time.

That's great. That's great for any human being. It's great on a personal level.

Imminent death, running out of time, looks dreadful from the point of view of the personal self, but is actually wonderful. And some people have realized it. I have known people who ran out of time, and it happened.

Enormous transformation happened. An incredible flowering happened. So we are running out of time, and that is good.

The transmutation needs to happen quickly. So as presence arises, the old accumulated pain can also come up more strongly in waves. So you have spaces of pure presence, beautiful spaces, and then suddenly the wave movement comes.

The pain body comes up very, very strongly. And the mind says, I've lost it. It's all gone.

It's all... And then it says it was all delusion anyway, because the only reality is pain. It will tell you, you lived in some kind of dream world with these silly retreats.

This is real. You've been... You've been fooling yourself.

Now I know what's real. This is it. And the pain, of course, the pain body, it comes up.

The old tendency is for the pain body to want to feed. But as it comes into the arising presence, it may not be that easy for the pain body. Yes, it comes up strongly, but it becomes more difficult for the pain body to renew itself through you, because for that it requires your unconscious cooperation.

And your unconscious cooperation is to start thinking along the lines of the energy field of the pain body. In other words, the pain body then occupies your mind, controls your thought processes, and feeds on your thought processes. They all reflect the energy of the pain body.

It feeds on. That's the old way. And that's how karma renews itself.

And you probably would never get out of it, because karma is a cycle. It's a circle. It's a cycle.

It goes on and on. It's only through the arising presence that it can stop. So the pain is still there, but it is met with presence.

Not even all the time. At times, it still uses your mind. At times, it still feeds on your thinking.

At times, it still feeds on your partner's reactions, or your family's reactions. It feeds on that. At times, the old process still works for the pain body.

And at other times, you can be there and watch it. And those are the important times you bring some acceptance to the pain that you feel. It's not translated into a story in the head.

Your unhappy life story. Or the story of what others did to you. Of what others, how others made you into a victim and have caused you this pain that you now feel.

Others could be, you see, others again. Others, other people, caused you this, what you feel now. This is not true.

They may have been the trigger for it. But what you feel now is humanity's pain. It's old.

It goes back a long time. Or you may be blaming a situation. You may be blaming a person or a group of people.

Or you may be blaming a situation as those who have, you did it to me. And this becomes part of the story. This is a narrative in the mind that you totally believe in.

And that explains why you feel the way you feel and projects it outward. The source of the pain is out there in that situation and in those people who are doing that to me. And that's the story, that is the narrative that you totally believe in, that is running through your mind.

With all kinds of associated thought processes, all connected to the central belief is that the world caused you this pain, did that to you. And so you're feeding the pain body. It becomes a story.

It becomes an unhappy entity, an unhappy person, an unhappy me, a heavy and unhappy entity, psychically heavy. Oh, that's the pain body. Or it is met, and this happens more and more now.

Yes, it will come up strongly and it is met with awareness and acceptance as an energy field of pain that you feel at this moment. You are not running away from it. You say yes to it because you cannot deny that it is here now.

You don't attach a story to it. It's enough. What you feel is enough.

This is what you feel at this moment. This is, oh, all it is, it's an energy movement, contracted energy, explosive energy. The yes becomes almost a welcoming of it because it is part of the isness of what is now.

With which you are cooperating, which you are not denying. And that's a strange thing. One could almost say you embrace suffering at that moment, but without making it into a mental story.

And this is why we could call that to suffer. I believe the expression was first created by Gurdjieff, to suffer consciously. And that's an enormous thing happens when you suffer consciously.

It does not mean you make it into a story. It means to directly feel, sense and accept that suffering. It's not really suffering anymore.

It's just pain. Suffering requires an entity that says, I am the unhappy me and the world did something to me. Just that.

And that, bringing that acceptance to it, then the old pain becomes like a fire. It burns up the ego, the mind structure that we call the egoic entity. It burns it up.

This can even happen, it happened to some people who became very ill and then simply accepted, did not accept their illness. That's not acceptance. Acceptance is illness because illness is a mental concept.

All that there is, is the condition of this moment. What I feel at this moment, the condition of the body at this moment. Illness means there's a past to it, a probable future to it, a probable outcome.

Illness is a heavy mental concept. It's a belief structure that can become very deeply, it's a universal belief structure. So all, this is not what you accept when you accept illness.

When illness can become that fire, what you accept is the condition of this moment, which could be pain, physical pain. And that also is a fire. If you surrender, who is saying it's easy?

I'm not saying it's easy. The act of surrender may not be easy. Once you've surrendered, it's easy.

The transition from non-surrender to surrender is quite something. I'm not going to surrender. The condition of this moment could be physical pain, it could be weakness, it could be a disability in the physical body, a loss of movement, whatever it may be.

And there's simply acceptance of what is at this moment, only at this moment, this you say yes to. And I've met quite a few people whose main teacher, that which transformed their consciousness, was an illness. That's one way in which pain can manifest.

Although when we speak of pain body, we speak mainly of emotional pain, but emotional pain and physical pain are also closely linked. So there's the surrender to the pain that you feel, without feeding it, without feeding it. Then the pain becomes a fire that burns up the ego, the me.

And that's a beautiful thing. And then the energy that was trapped in that pain, the field of emotional pain, becomes transmuted into presence. And this is why some of the people who have broken through to that level of consciousness, that is the destiny of all humans, most of them broke through intense suffering.

It happened through intense suffering. It happened through the night of the soul, for many. This is no longer an absolute requirement now, because humanity is reaching a different level of evolution.

The night of the soul is still one way that works. If Hollyhock doesn't work, the night of the soul will work. But some of you may already have had the night of the soul, and you don't need another one.

And all that happens here at Hollyhock is a deepening of that which has already happened. Just that, that's all you need. So you've already had the night of the soul.

So please, I can hear a few minds saying, oh my god, I haven't had my night of the soul yet. You may not need it. Not any...

in the past I would have said, wait, it will come. But there is such intensity to the arising consciousness now, that not everybody needs that anymore. The suffering that you have had, which undoubtedly you have, otherwise you wouldn't be here, the suffering that you have had is probably enough.

It's taken you here. It's taken you to the possibility of voluntarily stepping out of the old consciousness. Voluntarily embracing that which is beyond object consciousness, the inner space, step out of that, of a million years of conditioning.

And so it worked. It brought you here. All the suffering which the mind says, all that was so senseless all my life hasn't...

Why did I make so many mistakes that created so much suffering? Why couldn't I realize this earlier? Well, you couldn't.

You didn't. Otherwise you would have. The suffering was needed, but it may not be needed anymore.

I'm not saying that pain will not come, but suffering as an entity that says, I am the unhappy one and you did it to me, that does not need to come back. The pain that is left is beautiful. You can welcome it as the fire of transmutation.

Beautiful. Conscious acceptance of pain is a very quick transmutation that happens. Sometimes you can experience, when you really accept emotional pain that arises, pain body, and there's full acceptance, it can sometimes happen that you experience in one moment how that pain shifts into intense aliveness.

And that means a big chunk of pain body has just been transmuted, so to speak. It could happen even with, let's say, one way in which the pain body manifests is anger in some people. It can be other manifestations too.

That fire, this intense energy in anger. Now usually it is linked to the mind, it's projected outward and says, you did something to me. Then suffering doesn't help you.

It renews itself. But if you can stay with the fire of the anger and totally accept that intense energy that is running through you, anger is very close to fire, and then you may suddenly find a shift in one moment from anger into incredible aliveness and presence. It's turned around, it's been freed, the trapped energy has been freed and transmuted simply through complete acceptance.

And that is the beauty even of the pain that you still carry inside. Even that has a beauty and has its place. And when you see that, all that remains is gratitude.

Even for that which before you would have condemned and rejected. That's the beauty of transformation, the transformation that's happening now. You can, I'm not suggesting, or maybe I shouldn't say that, but Marina last year, or the year before, who was here from Italy, she would swim every day.

It was quite cold, probably colder than it is now. And I asked, oh, is the water cold? She said, no, because I didn't have any labels in my mind for it.

It wasn't, I didn't call it cold. I just went in. There was nothing, the mind was still and didn't say it's really cold.

There was just total acceptance of this. It wasn't cold anymore because cold is a thought. And she went in and she said she felt it wasn't cold at all.

It was enormously, it felt so alive. What before was cold felt enormously alive. So I'm not suggesting that you should do that, but any discomfort that you endure and completely accept can give you a little taste of what that means.

The simple observing of a craving, this is very similar to conscious suffering, because a craving that is not met is suffering. So if you have a craving, whatever it may be, big or small, for ice cream or chocolate or coffee or a cigarette or something heavier, if you have a craving, just to sit with it as a little experiment, accept that feeling of whatever that is. Craving is a strange thing.

It has a strange feel to it. It's a form of suffering, yes. To simply allow that to be there for a while without acting upon it.

And that is not called repression. It is not, it could be mistaken for repression, but repression is very different. Repression is, says, I will not have a cup of coffee.

And with that comes a contraction and there's willpower involved. I will not move from here. And something in you wants the coffee.

Allow it to be. Then suddenly there is a spaciousness around it. And that also is a nice way, just a little experiment with craving.

It's not really important whether a little bit later you do it or you don't. It doesn't matter. But that was an experiment in consciousness.

Just stay with that. That's beautiful. But the essence of what we are speaking of then is the acceptance of pain.

The end of suffering is the acceptance of pain. Suffering requires an entity, a me. Consciously embrace pain, really.

That's what it is. Although Gurdjieff called it suffering. It's just a question of how people use words.

Conscious suffering, conscious pain. Beautiful shift happens then. And so if there's still pain in you, use it in that way as a fire.

I suggest that we keep noble silence for a little longer. It is good to keep noble silence. It's the Buddhist expression, noble silence.

Why noble silence? Why not just silence? Well, keeping silence means not speaking.

Keeping noble silence is not speaking and being aware. There's the added dimension of awareness that makes the silence noble. Anybody can be silent.

There are some monasteries that are mostly silent, but they haven't looked within and they're all fuming. And they hate each other. Not all, some, some.

So noble silence is awareness. And please use for your consciousness practice, awareness practice, the beautiful trail between here and the main building. Walk on it.

It's a kind of sacred walk as you walk in silence, one step at a time, in that immense incomprehensible mystery that is nature. So let's keep noble silence for the rest of the day. Just sit in the stillness for a little until you find yourself getting up.

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (3:27:42 - 3:27:51)

This concludes session three of Realizing the Power of Now with Eckhart Tolle. Our program continues with session four.

[Speaker 1] (3:28:19 - 4:43:44)

Somebody gave me this morning, I don't know if I put it in my pocket, a calendar leaf from today. It's by Ernest Hemingway. And if there is not any such thing as a long time, nor the rest of our lives, nor from now on, but there's only now, why then now is the thing to praise?

And I'm very happy with it. Maybe he forgot that later. It's easy to forget that there's only now.

Not a personal fault of yours, if you forget. It's the human mind. And ultimately there's nothing personal in it.

It's the human mind. And when you forget, something else takes over, obscures the aliveness, intelligence, the joy that is inherent in now and in life, which are one. Then your life situation becomes more important than now.

Assumes an importance that ultimately it doesn't really have. And the life situation exists within the polarities of high, low, good, bad. And its characteristic is also that it's incomplete.

Something needs to happen before I can be myself, is the belief. And when you suffer, that's a good indication that you've lost the now, so to speak. You can't really lose it.

But it can be lost to you. It's still there. You don't know it.

And the deep meaning of now is one with what we sometimes call presence, or what we sometimes call space consciousness. Because the now is deeper than what happens in it. And the now is not separate from who you are.

The one factor that remains the same throughout your life. It's now. And so the ability is there in you now to step out of the stream of mind.

That's your life situation, what I sometimes call object consciousness, the story, the narrative, which is problematic. There's probably not a single person in this room whose life situation is not to some extent problematic. And if isn't problematic today, wait until next week.

You may have a little interlude of, life is leaving me alone for a moment. And that is fine. It's in the nature of phenomenal reality to be like that.

Atoms coming together, colliding, coming apart, the dance of form. It's only problematic from a personal sense of self, from perspective of a personal sense of self. And your whole personal sense of self is bound up with problems and things to be worked out.

Need to think about this. It's so easy, as it probably happened to Hemingway, to see the truth, to have limited access perhaps to the dimension of space consciousness. Hemingway was a creative writer.

So within that field, he had access to that. And he had insights. And then it's easy to lose that.

And your entire attention becomes absorbed again by object consciousness, the story. So here, presence arises from within you. It's being pulled out of you, as you sit there.

It responds to something that it recognizes here, which is itself, that essential consciousness where we are all one. The unconditioned recognizes itself. And that feels good.

It likes that. It comes forward. And you're now able to step out of the stream of mind in your everyday life.

The moment you notice that suffering or unhappiness have taken over, or fear or stress, all forms of suffering. That little ability to step back into that space now. That space of now.

The moment you notice you've gone away. And you will go, of course. You will go astray.

Sometimes for a few hours. You could even go away for a few days. Unlikely, though, anymore.

It could happen. And it's always waking up the qualitative difference of being present, compared to being immersed in compulsive thinking, is enormous. It is like waking up out of a dream.

That's the dream of thought. And that is a wonderful thing, to discover that possibility in your life, to step out of that dream and awaken. Perhaps, probably now, without the need for some challenge.

Because that can be very helpful, too, to wake you up, when you've been drifting along. And suddenly, something happens. Life presents you with a big challenge.

Space consciousness is back as the alert, aware field of presence. And that is the determining factor in any human relationship. Whether space consciousness is still present.

Whether there is space in the relationship. Whether there is space in you, in the relationship. Or whether you are absorbed totally in object consciousness.

And that's any kind of relationship. The question is, are you there as space? Is there a depth, a space, from where you relate?

It begins with the ability to listen to the other person. That is very closely related to being present. To listen in that alertness.

No matter what words are coming out of the other person's mouth. And whether it's in business relationship, or whether it is in your personal relationship, or whether it's in a relationship that is very fleeting. Very short encounters in an elevator.

Maybe just a few words are spoken in a shop, in a restaurant with a waiter. And it all comes down to a moment of no thought. Just alert, spacious presence.

With your partner, listening to him or her. Somebody who comes to you with, in an agitated state, totally absorbed by some life situation. And the world will draw you in, want to draw you in, to complete identification again with things.

You remember we mentioned the word things. Meaning not just physical things, but including physical things. Some people's attention is totally into physical things.

Their belongings, their house, their car, their dog, their... That pull is very strong. And that's the challenge.

The world wants to, and the world is ultimately the human mind, becomes externalized as the world out there, wants to draw you back into total identification with object consciousness, objects. This matters. This matters.

This is so important. And I'm always amazed what kind of things people make important in their lives. How ultimately insignificant the things are that they make important, more important than their state of consciousness.

They're more important than peace, more important. The tiniest things can assume an importance that you give the power away to things. You give them the power to make you unhappy.

And what kind of things people give that power to is just amazing. Ephemeral, fleeting things and situations that are here one day, gone the next. Things that would pop even if you discovered you had a serious illness, or you have an accident, which sometimes can be a great awakening.

Things that would pop like a soap bubble and their unimportance would be revealed if somebody told you you have a serious illness and you had to be concerned with all that. Suddenly, it has no significance whatsoever. The heavy problems that you had been carrying around, dissolved at once.

This is why for some people a serious illness is the great awakening. Out of total immersion in object consciousness, there is no guarantee that the illness will awaken you, because it could add a further heavy object to your mind. The concept of me being seriously ill, which would add a further heavy thought form to identify with to your mind.

That is possible too. But potentially, an illness has the ability to awaken you and to reveal to you that which is at best relatively important. And the truth is, anything in this world of form, of things, is relatively important.

And your career, your possessions, your relationships, what you have achieved or not achieved, what you know or you don't know, things that people derive their self, sense of self from, all relatively important. Yes, it's relatively important whether I live in the street, sleep on park benches, or I have a nice home. Yes, it makes a difference in the realm of relativity.

But you can be awake on the park bench as you can be awake in a nice home. And some people awakened precisely there, after losing things, things to identify with. So there's only one thing that matters absolutely in one's life.

Then the rest of your life is recognized as relative. It's not that you ignore it, but you recognize that the importance is only relative. And the one thing that matters, and Jesus used those words too, there's only one thing that matters, he said to Martha, in the story of Mary and Martha, two women or two sisters, he's visiting and one is extremely busy, get this done and that done, we have to get the meal ready, look who's here, he's visiting us, he's come and help me get the meal, this needs to be done, peel the potatoes, do this. And Mary wasn't doing anything, she was just sitting there looking at Jesus. And Martha says, why don't you tell her to help me?

And Jesus wasn't really concerned whether the food would be on the table or whether it would be on the table. He said, Mary, there's only one thing that really matters. This is a free translation.

And Mary has chosen that one thing that really matters. Now when you look, modern theologians, they can't tolerate that statement, and they do whatever they can to reinterpret that. He didn't really mean that.

Another simple way of putting it is you forget that the only thing that really matters is your state of consciousness, nothing else. If that's not right, nothing out there is going to be right. And you're not going to be of much help to anybody.

To see what is primary, that is not selfish, far beyond it, it's the opposite of selfish, to recognize that. And then, what is so important to have the power to make me unhappy? The Course in Miracles puts it this way, in any situation, it says, ask yourself what your purpose is in this situation.

What is really my purpose in this situation? The mind will tell you, well, I need to get this and achieve that out of it, and I need to keep hold of this, or not lose that, or get that. Often it's I want something, and the world wants something else.

The source of great suffering. I want something, but the world, in whatever form the world comes, wants something else. What is really my purpose in this situation?

And the Course in Miracles puts it this way, it's peace is my purpose in this situation. And one of its lessons is, I could see peace instead of this. I could see peace instead of what I now see in this situation.

But how? How could I see peace in what looks like a conflict situation? You step back from object consciousness, and you do it.

There are different ways in which you can step back from object consciousness. The moment you notice that object consciousness is creating suffering, because you've become totally drawn into it, have lost your rootedness in the unmanifested. So you're drawn into just, in the manifested.

There are little ways, and you know them, but I'm saying it again, of stepping back out of complete identification with object consciousness. And one of the ways is the yes to what is. The inner yes to this moment.

And that is surprising, that that is a way of stepping out of object consciousness. So you step out of object consciousness by allowing the objects that are here, manifested in this moment, to be there as they are. And often the way in which the objects that are the manifestation of this moment, very often, the particular configuration of objects that make up the external form of this moment, may not be what your mind wanted.

What your mind would have said, this is how I wanted this moment to be. More often than not, it's something else. So, but you cannot find peace or yourself by working exclusively on that level of object consciousness, and trying to rearrange the configuration of objects in my life, in such a way that it all fits neatly together, and then the life picture, the life situation suddenly is complete and works beautifully.

And then I can be at peace. This is the attempt that people make, when they try to, it's not, it never stays for very long, it's not in the nature of phenomenal reality to do that. Things continuously move and are in flux, and any situation you go into, no matter how wonderful, there's always another side to it.

It's the entire, the whole phenomenal existence would not exist without the pull of the polarities. Hot, cold. High, low.

Birth, death. So there's the, there's a futile attempt to rearrange, not that you cannot honor that dimension of your life, and do the best you can on the level of things. Yes, you do the best you can on the level of things, but if that's all there is, no matter how you try to do the best you can, it will never be good enough.

Because you haven't left the level of object consciousness, you're only there. And so, there are people who try so hard, and then always, that wasn't supposed to happen. There are people, they're wonderful people, who perhaps do dedicate their whole lives to helping others, perhaps as social workers, or go to third world countries.

It's beautiful, but many of them, after a few years, experience burnout. They get depleted, because there's so much suffering, and there seems to be no end to it. And then, of course there is.

They exclusively operate on the level of object consciousness, and it can happen to easily, very easily, you can be drawn into that. So, the key then, is finding the one, that dimension of space that is beyond the polarities that are here in object consciousness. Not expecting the polarities of object consciousness not to be there, or hoping that one day it'll all be fine.

This can happen, it can all be fine, but not in the way that the mind thought it could be fine. It can be fine at this moment. It is already fine at this moment, but you don't know that.

All the allowing the particular configuration of objects in your life to be as they are, even if it looks problematic, and it usually does, allowing this moment to be as it is. That allowing takes back your identification with object consciousness. It's a stepping, allowing is a stepping back.

And when you step back, a space opens up around the particular events, situation of this moment, the particular configuration of how things are at this moment. There's a space around it. It's a stepping back.

At this moment, there may be screaming human being in front of you, accusing you, you did that. The unconscious impulse is to say, how dare you say that I did that? There's an acceptance of, suddenly there's a space around the turbulence.

And that at first, it's a very subtle thing, the space around the turbulence. And then you realize how deep it is. And then you could be in the middle of great external turbulence in your life, even tragic events at this moment, even in the face of death, and through inner alignment with the suchness of this moment, allowing the forms to be as they are, go beyond form, go beyond identification with form.

It's through allowing forms that the deeper dimension is there. And then you're free of dependence on the world of form, as far as your inner state is concerned. You can still experience on a surface level, which is a wave movement, you can still experience happiness and unhappiness, but they are minor movements on the surface of your being.

I compare this to lighting a candle in a dark room. The candle is lit. And then suddenly, the candle is extinguished.

That makes a big difference if you sit in a dark room, whether the candle is lit, or whether the candle is extinguished. But now open the shutters, the windows, and sunlight is streaming into the room from all sides. And there's the candle, and sometimes the candle is lit, and sometimes it's not lit.

Happiness, unhappiness. It's lit? Oh, nice.

It's not lit. Hmm. Oh, oh.

Oh. But there's the sunlight is filling the room, so it doesn't matter that much. Only if in the absence of that, then your life situation matters absolutely, and it'll make you happy one day, in this strange, this ecstatic happiness sometimes.

It's all worked out for me, finally. Or sometimes people, the gestures they make when they've made it, they go, oh yeah, I've made it. It's almost the ego saying, I've triumphed over the universe.

Thank you. I saw it on TV. And then a week later, they go, they don't win the match.

Oh, you're at the mercy of the wind, the wind of phenomena. And so, this is a stepping back. So the one, perhaps the easiest, the most simple thing is to remember the yes, the possibility of the yes to this moment.

That takes you out of the story into now. The Course in Miracles puts it this way, you single out this instant. You take just that, because that is ultimately your life.

This is not the depth of, it is the form it takes is the external manifestation of your life at this moment. The depth of now is your life, is life. You single out this instant and recognize it as timeless.

And you stay with this instant only, particularly when things get heavy in your life situation. It is a signal to step back into the alertness of now, of presence, of space consciousness. And if your life situation is very heavy, it could be, let's say, you're faced with an illness which may or may not bring about an early end to your physical existence.

You may be faced with that. That immediately erases all other problems that you thought you have and reveals them as fairly insignificant. But it's possible that you still recognize that, see that as a problem, which it isn't.

It can push you into intense alert presence. Only this moment exists. One can live in such a way that the life situation never again takes you over completely.

Another way is, surprisingly, bring your attention back to sense perceptions. Because sense perception can help you to connect with now. And you will notice when you are not connected with now, you're hardly aware of your surroundings.

Your entire attention is in thought processes. And then you can bring attention back to, you suddenly look around. This isn't so bad.

This moment isn't so bad. My life situation may be dreadful. But if I single out this moment, that's not so bad.

I'm sitting somewhere breathing and there's a wall there, another one there, and a window with baths on, and a little bit of sky. And you look around and then there's little graffiti on the walls. And suddenly in that alertness, there is more there than that which you see, although the perceptions brought you to it.

They were the beginning. Those pain perceptions were there suddenly. But you also realize an intense aliveness underlying your sense perceptions.

An intense alertness underlying your sense perceptions. A spaciousness underlying those forms that you see, which are limited forms. And limiting forms, limiting you perhaps.

And yet it doesn't matter when you discover the depth that is within you in any situation.

But first you need to come into now. And then now reveals its depth to you, how deep now actually is.

And if you go deep into now, there is peace there. There is even joy there. That doesn't depend on the ups and downs of object consciousness.

The joy is the sunlight that is there. The ups and downs of object consciousness are the flame of the candle. Sometimes it's lit, sometimes it's not lit.

This is how it is. Sense perceptions. This is why we placed importance here on perceiving.

And the amazing thing is, you perceive without trying to fit the sense perceptions into your narrative. If you're sitting in that little room with barred windows, and if you looked around, you would be relating your sense perceptions to the narrative in your mind, the story of me. This is what the world has done to me.

They have put me here. Even when I was a child, the world was unfair to me. And they treated me badly.

And now they have put me here. They did that to me. This is where I've ended up.

And all the details of my story, every sense perception, you would try to fit into the story of me. It's an unhappy story, in that case and in many other cases. It's an unhappy story.

And even if it's a happy story, you're sitting in a limo, a chauffeur-driven limo. It picked you up from the airport. And you can tell yourself a story there, too.

And that looks like a happy story. You see the drinks there that are arranged. You can take any bottle.

You can air-conditioned. Everything is... And you say, I made it.

You have another story. And again, stories have the tendency of being satisfying for a while and then changing or no longer working to satisfy you. The next time you could be sitting in the limo feeling, how empty that is to be sitting.

It's no longer fulfilling to my story. After a while, it's normal. And you need something else.

And this isn't doing it anymore. Or you might even do the opposite. Why am I sitting in this limo when everybody else is so poor?

I shouldn't be here. Again, some new story develops. And you suddenly feel guilty about sitting in this limo.

Another story, they change. Let's go back to the man sitting in a little room with barred windows, who is then attempting to fit the sense perceptions into the story. And that's, of course, not presence.

It's to stay with the perceptions without the story in that alertness. There's just this. And it's enough without the projection of your personal self onto them.

Because when you project, you have a personal and unhappy relationship with the prison cell that you're sitting in. If you have a personal relationship with the prison cell, it's a very unhappy place. Or whatever place.

But if you can take the story out of this moment and just be with the simplicity of this moment, even the wall of the prison cell has an aliveness and a beauty to it. And you see it directly without needing thought processes to convince yourself that it has an aliveness and a beauty to it. You see it directly.

And people have gone through that transformation in prison cells. I'm using that as an example of what would usually be called an extremely undesirable life situation. But you can take any situation.

Are you completely in the story as you're going from A to B? Or are you present to your sense perceptions? And by being present to your sense perceptions, the sense perceptions too, auditory, visual, become a portal into something that is deeper than the perceptions.

When the alertness arises towards sense perception, then that alertness reveals itself as very deep. And that takes you out of the story, which has a past and a future. Heavy past and future.

So, you discover the beauty of living to a large extent, if not a hundred percent. If you only live 50 percent free of the story. Or less.

Fifty percent of your life, 30 percent. You live while you go from here to there, while you sit at home, while you wait for something to happen. Stepping out of the story and just be with this moment.

And discover the depth of this moment, the aliveness of this moment, both within and without. And the beauty of this moment. This could happen while you're seriously ill and might be waiting in a hospital room for treatment.

And you become totally and utterly present. And there's a little potted plant with leaves, intensely alive, which you see when you don't bring in mental labels. Which you see without the personal relationship, just that.

And in that alertness, there is also a stillness. When the story isn't running through your mind, that dimension that is space and stillness is suddenly there. That frees you from you as the story-based sense of self.

So, you can step out of it by using, one could say, various exit points. It's a good thing that within your life situation, the dream that is ultimately your life situation, as Shakespeare said, we are such stuff as dreams are made of. Here one day, on the next fleeting events.

Within the dream of your life situation, if you look here and there, you find little doors that say exit. And you are more likely to look for them when you get unhappy within your life situation than when you're happy. But that changes quickly anyway.

The unhappiness comes after an interlude of happiness. Suddenly the candle isn't lit anymore. And then you start looking.

You can start looking for the exit signs. Wouldn't that be wonderful? In a nightmare, if you remember that in that nightmare, all you have to do is look for the little luminous sign that says exit.

And you find one sign is the exit that says sense perception exit. Another sign is the exit written underneath. It says yes.

And then another sign is there's an exit where it says inner body. You can take any. And if you go, it doesn't matter which exit you go through, you end up in the same place.

Another exit that's not yet available for everybody, but for some, for some of you that is already there. For some it's not yet there, but that's okay. That exit says stop thinking.

Just that. Stop thinking. When you discover that, but you discover it through, first you use the other exits, but then you discover within yourself you can actually choose to simply be present with what is without the interference of thought.

You choose presence. You choose to not think. The whole dream has come to a stop.

And the strange thing is, no matter what exit you use, through it you access that which is beyond the phenomenal. And miraculously, it influences the fact that you are rooted in the unmanifested with one foot in it miraculously influences the way in which the manifested unfolds for you. That is to say, the way in which what you call your reality, your life, your world, the way in which you experience life on an external level changes, is influenced strongly by the fact that you are rooted in the depths of your being, in the spaciousness of presence and the stillness of presence.

That does something. It's not that the two realms are totally separate. They are not.

Something from the unmanifested flows, and this may sound paradoxical, but that's how it is. It's when we use language it begins to sound paradoxical. Something from the unmanifested flows into the world of manifestation and makes it more benevolent.

The way in which it unfolds has a benevolence, it is more benign. Yes, there are still polarities, but what is lost is the harshness and the violence that otherwise is inherent in the polarities. And so the phenomenal then unfolds with more gentleness.

And yes, this is the only way in which what that really means. Love flows from that dimension into the world of form, because love is never derived from anything in the world of form. It doesn't come out of form.

It comes from the formless. And so that's the only way in which love can come into your true love. And that true love is to look upon anything without thought is the flow of love.

The yes to what is, is love. Byron Katie, a spiritual teacher, has a book out, it's called Loving What Is. A yes to what is.

But the love, people are looking for love or try to be loving, never having gone beyond object consciousness. And they have an object in their mind, which is a me, which is, I need to be more loving. And they try hard.

It doesn't work. I've tried so hard to love, but he let me down. Now, letting down is an interesting expression.

And it can be applied to anything in the world of object consciousness. The belief system, for a while, it's great. It's your support in life.

It's all, I believe this is how it is. And suddenly something happens and you can't explain anymore why this should happen to you, because you believed all the right things. Thought structures let you down in the end.

Things let you down because they don't give you the satisfaction that you thought they would give for a while. And then they let you down. Situations that you go into that were great, one moment great, and then it let me down.

I became the CEO and then you get so stressed that you need hospital treatment. The situation let you down. You were looking for something better in it.

And people, he let me down, she let me down, everything. It's in the nature of things to let you down, because letting you down means you had an expectation that they can't fulfill in the world of form. You wanted something from the world of form that is only in the formless.

You wanted something through future in the world of form, which is already here now. Places too. You can look at the most ideal place and then you buy some land there and you build a house there and at first it feels great.

And then as you sit in that house, it wears off after a while. The beautiful view from the window is still beautiful, but it wears off. It's not that fulfilling inside after a while, if you operate within object consciousness.

So, even the most beautiful place will have certain drawbacks also, that you only discover when you move there. Now, this does not happen if you stay with what is, because there's a freshness to every moment. But it happens when you are immersed in a story-based sense of self.

So, it's stepping out of that, use the exit. If you can, and some of you can, the exit I just mentioned, stop thinking is one that is available to some of you already. Presence arises with such intensity that thought doesn't come in anymore, except a few little fragments here and there.

So, I probably mentioned to you before, somebody asked me once what my main achievement in life was. I hadn't written the book yet, so there was nothing much for many years on an external level. And so, I said, I don't need to think anymore.

The compulsion to think is gone. That's all. Now, the world doesn't value that too much, but that's okay.

If I went to an enlightened employer and said that, he or she would give me the job, because they would know how well you function in that state where you don't have to think. Can think, don't have to, and then a greater intelligence operates. That is the intelligence that is deeper or higher, whatever perspective you want to use, than thinking.

Not separate from it. Thinking is an aspect of universal intelligence that operates through humans. One could say that the intelligence that operates throughout the universe, when it gets filtered through the brain, or focused through the brain, becomes thought.

One way of putting it. So, in humans, there's a tendency of that intelligence to become expressed as thought. But humans also have the ability to transcend thought.

And that's an evolutionary transition, if not to say leap, for humanity. Humanity has been thought-based probably for a million years. And now that cycle is coming to an end because it's becoming self-destructive.

All cycles come to an end. It's an evolutionary cycle. Our gathering is part of that evolutionary impulse that is now in many humans, to go beyond that limited consciousness that is identification with mind as a me.

That limited sense of self. And that evolutionary impulse is in many human beings. And there are many who don't allow that yet, because the old structures are still very dense.

So, there is an enormous push, one could almost say, within them towards transformation. And yet, there's a refusal to let go of the old structures, which is the old structures themselves hanging in there. And so then, it often is the case that humans need to experience some disaster so that the structures break open.

That's the grace of disaster. If it breaks open, heavy mind structures, the shell is cracked open. So there's grace.

Look at it from a deeper level. There is grace in every disaster. From a limited point of view, you can't see that.

That's the beauty of it. Divine grace is there also. And those who are open to that evolutionary impulse, as you are, don't really need the disaster anymore.

That's good. Or you may need a final little disaster as the final push out of identification with mind. Maybe a little disaster will be enough.

A beautiful saying of Jesus, take no thought for the morrow. It's the old translation, for the morrow will take thought for the things of itself. No thought.

That's the old translation. The modern translation says don't be anxious about tomorrow. There really one no thought is better, because to be anxious and to be thinking are very closely related.

The entire teaching of Buddhism, the entire teaching of Zen, what they call the state of emptiness, what the scholars think about what did he mean by emptiness, and what the scholars call a nihilistic, life-denying teaching, what the scholars call an atheistic teaching, they're looking at that from the point of view of thought and totally misperceiving. The emptiness of Buddhism is simply this clear state of pure awareness of no thought. Just this unconditioned consciousness.

What is there to think about, to understand it? You can't understand no thought, and now you become intelligent. True intelligence is there.

And then thought may come in occasionally to translate something into words. It comes from that level of no thought. Realization.

And you're connected with the totality through that. The separation goes. The screen of mind, of conceptualization, the conceptualized sense of self, the me, goes.

And then you don't manufacture a conceptualized sense of self for the people in your life that you meet. That's the most dreadful thing that happens in relationships, that happens through mind, that you manufacture for other human beings, as you have done for yourself. You manufacture a conceptualized sense of self consisting of objects in consciousness, thought, movement, judgments, views, opinions.

And you fix the human being as you fixed yourself into a little story. And then you fix the other. And that's what humans do to each other.

And when you fix the other, all you see is what comes back at you from the other human being is confirmation that your conceptual identity that you imposed is correct. Because now all you can see is evidence for your projection. And this also applies for people who have a strong conceptual world view, as most have.

This is how the world is. This is how humans are. Some people have manufactured a conceptual identity for humanity.

And they might say they're all greedy and deceiving. That is how humans are. Some people have that view.

Maybe as children they were deceived by their parents, who knows what happened to them. And they developed concepts of how things are. And that filters out everything else that doesn't agree with the concepts.

That's all you meet then are greedy and deceiving human beings. Because all you have is your concept. A loving human being you wouldn't be able to see, because you see reality through the screen of conceptualization.

And that screens out a lot that doesn't fit into that screen. And this is what humans are trapped in. That's the human condition.

That's what the Middle East is trapped in. That's whatever they are fighting, tribal warfares and religious wars. And a totally conceptualized identity for themselves and others.

Trapped in thought. Completely trapped in thought. And so you can do anything to another human being.

Because you've already reduced that human being to a lifeless concept. If you can impose the concept non-believer. Let's say you are christians used to do it.

Now muslims tend to do it. Some of them. Not all.

A few. Non-believer is enough of a concept to reduce that human being to a lifeless mind object. And then killing a non-believer is totally justified.

Because not a human being. It's a non-believer. It's a concept.

And christians used to do it. You don't believe exactly what we believe? Okay, we're going to kill you.

Such is the human condition. And if you don't kill them physically anymore, you kill them in different ways. You have already killed them by imposing a conceptualized identity on them to yourself.

That is the primordial act of violence. And other kinds of violence come out of that. And it is the human condition.

And we are going beyond it. We are coming to the end of that. It is, you can see how it, how closely it is all related to thought.

And to knowing nothing beyond thought. It is the end of the dimension of thought. To be trapped in that.

Humanity is coming to the end of that. If it doesn't happen soon enough, they will be gone. It was a little experiment in consciousness.

Fine. It worked while it worked. And then consciousness moves through other channels.

It has, you know how vast the universe is. Any channel, it will flower through. Who knows?

Other life forms, other planets. But there's a good chance that humans will make it. Because we are here.

That's a good sign. Another good sign is that vast numbers of people seem to be interested and drawn to and open to the power of now. I'm using that in a wider sense.

I'm not just speaking of the book. But the power of now as the new consciousness. They are drawn to that.

And it's happening more quickly than I could ever have realized. So there were places on the planet where already the new consciousness manifested. They came up as a wave and then subsided.

And then there came another wave of the new consciousness arising. And sometimes there were, within one century, many people in different traditions bringing in something new. There is a readiness.

It's been there once. It leaves something behind. It's everywhere on the planet now, that openness.

So that's good. But what really matters is you. You cannot try to be free of thought.

That would bring in thought. But you could say, let's see if I can allow myself to be free of thought. There's no trying.

Can I allow? Or maybe not yet. That's okay.

Between this tree and that tree, there's a space of just walking. And it's maybe a few steps, but you don't count the steps, because there's only one step. So between the two trees, that physical space has become inner space of no thought.

You're looking at that tree and walking. And then there's another tree, a space of, as you're walking between the two trees, a space of no thought. It's beautiful.

Every time that happens, there is a burning up in you of past, of past mind structures, of accumulations of past, even of past pain. Because in presence, which is the state of presence, the past becomes burned up in you, the accumulated past in you. And so the accumulated past in you in the East is called karma, the unconscious identifications, and deriving a sense of self from them.

And it's becoming burned up even more strongly as we sit here, being consumed in the fire of presence. And that's a wonderful thing. There are a few people who are not yet ready for it.

And it sometimes happens that somebody runs away from a retreat. I'm not quite ready yet to be burned up. So I want to keep the past.

I'm not saying, of course, that you're losing your memories. That's not it. But past as a conditioning, identification with the conditioning of your mind, the conditioning has less intensity to it.

Still conditioning, still the same conditioning, but it begins to fade out like a photo after a few years, fades out gradually. Any of the exits, of course, takes you to no thought. You can go there directly.

No thought could be considered as an exit in itself. But any exit takes you there. The yes to what is, is the end of compulsive thinking.

Because compulsive thinking is a denial and a resistance to what is. The inner body takes you out of mind, out of thought. Acute awareness of sense perceptions takes you out of thought.

They all do that. And then a time comes when you go there just directly. The final thing that some of you may know, you know Ramana Maharshi, the great sage who lived in the first half of the 20th century, a great teacher.

Somebody asked him, how can we know whether we are making any progress on the spiritual path? We don't know if we're making progress. And he said, oh, that's easy.

The degree of absence of thought is the measure of progress on your spiritual path. Oh, that doesn't give you much to think about. Could there be a next question after that?

[Speaker 2] (4:43:53 - 4:45:29)

This concludes session four of realizing the power of now with Eckhart Tolle. Our program continues with session five.

[Speaker 1] (4:45:56 - 4:54:59)

There may be some questions this afternoon, unless they've all dissolved. I would encourage practical questions rather than theoretical questions. That would start like, I'm curious to know whether, just a little bit to add to what we were talking about yesterday.

Sitting with a craving, feel that craving on an energetic level without acting upon it, but simply allow it to be there. And that craving could be anything. There could be the craving to avoid some kind of suffering that is here now, the wanting to run away from it, if only into thinking, into making a story out of it.

But to just stay with that, allow it to be, and then something happens. A space develops between the craving and you. A space around the craving develops as you sit with it.

And that's the space of consciousness. So it is a very helpful practice when something like that comes to use it as a meditation. And when you sit with it and accept it, and after a little while you notice that acceptance of the craving, or the craving is a strange energy form inside you, very strange.

You don't even label it craving anymore. It's a strange, a pull, a wanting, a needing. And so you watch that, allow it, and through the allowing, consciousness comes about that is around it.

So one could say this kind of practice can, if done rightly, generate consciousness. So if suffering is used rightly, it can generate consciousness. It ceases to be suffering also immediately.

Suffering nearly needs somebody to complain about it. Then it's suffering. Then the pain is left.

Or perhaps craving could be called a form of pain, some form of pain. And even that, perhaps we don't need the label for that either. Pain, craving.

No, there is something there that we don't need to find a concept for, a pull. You can feel it without making a concept, and sit with it and see it's not going to kill you. And be with that for a while, and feel the force behind it.

You don't need to find things to create pain as they used to do, and in some places still do. We've talked about that, these certain ascetic spiritual practices, depriving yourself of food, and you feel the craving for food, and you sit with that. A lot of the time that doesn't work, because there's somebody doing it, wanting to achieve something through it, and very often claiming some kind of achievement, that I managed to sit here without food for a week, or whatever it is.

And feeling enhanced in what is ultimately an enhanced conceptual sense of self, as me, the great ascetic. And if you live in the right country, like India, they might admire you, because they know that sometimes that actually works. It's rare.

In the West, you don't get much admiration if you sit as a yogi. They will probably lock you away. So that's, it's not so satisfying from an ego point of view.

Austerities in the West are not highly regarded anymore. But there is a, there's an underlying truth there, although when it's practiced, it doesn't work when you try to make, produce suffering in order to generate consciousness. Better leave that alone.

The suffering that comes naturally is much better to work with. And then you find the right attitude to suffering, and you get down to the most basic level of suffering, which is just what you feel right now, on an energetic level. And allow that.

Then, yes, through the allowing, that generates consciousness. And that is the beginning of the end of the pain as suffering. Conscious suffering is the beginning of the end of suffering.

It could start with a little thing, like you feel unhappy. There's this feeling inside you that the mind calls unhappiness, sadness, whatever it may be, some, or a mood you wake up with. And then you notice it.

And there is, it's an energy field. A mood is an energy field. There's a weight on you.

And then you watch that, and allow that, and accept that. Okay. Bring acceptance to it.

Immediately, a little bit of space you notice is around it. Space consciousness arises. And as you sit with it, more space, it deepens.

Until there's more space than whatever manifests there in space. The space becomes much vaster than that which appears in it. That's called liberation.

And then you could still, you could have some energy field inside you, temporarily, like a mood. Maybe it's coming through external influences, passing through. It won't linger for very long, if it cannot use your mind.

And then you feel that. And so you use those things, and they generate, one could say they generate consciousness. And that's beautiful.

Pain can do that. And that's the beginning of the end of it. So, if you're lucky enough to have some cravings left in you, you can work with them.

Let's see if there are any questions.

[Speaker 2] (4:55:04 - 4:55:34)

Well, I don't know if this is a practical question or a theoretical question, but I've had energy release work done on me. And I actually, there's a noticeable difference in my continence, I guess. And that was mostly, I think, from this lifetime.

Would it be helpful to find a person to help with past lifetimes, thousands of years ago, or something? Or would just sitting intensely present do the same thing, or a combination of both?

[Speaker 1] (4:55:34 - 5:17:11)

Okay, thank you. Thank you. The focal point, if it is to work, the focal point of any work to do with energy release is bringing presence into what is now.

So, whatever is there from the past will manifest, can only manifest at this moment. So you work with whatever manifests on an energy level at this moment. The origins of certain energy fields, such as pain body, may go back a very long time.

They go back a very long time, whether you look at it from the perspective of your personal life or past lifetimes, or they go back a very long time also from the perspective of the collective human experience of pain. So certainly, everyone carries inside an accumulation of pain from the past that may go back a long way. How long?

Who knows? Perhaps it goes back to when you lived in the sea and were eaten a million times by some other sea animals, and finally you made it onto land with as yet undeveloped feet, and then were eaten another million times. Could be.

The pain goes back, and then certainly when humanity, through the increasing dysfunction of the human mind, created an enormous amount of pain for itself. So that is there. It sometimes happens that you remember something that happened in the past that contributed to the pain that lives in you now, still on an energy level.

A flashback, a memory may come, an image may suddenly appear in your mind, and that could be from your childhood, it could be from another lifetime, it could be, who knows? All humans are so interconnected, and basically whatever happens to one human happens to the organism that is humanity. One could look upon humanity as one single organism.

On a deeper level, there's only one of us. And all the pain, if you believe in reincarnation, I'm not saying yes or no, because I don't want to bring up anything here that requires belief on anybody's part, then of course that means you have gone through all possible human experiences, including very painful human experiences already, if you have had many lifetimes. If you don't believe in reincarnation, then you have inherited genetically, by the simple fact that you have a human past, are born on this planet, you have inherited genetically pain that many, many other humans suffered.

It comes to the same thing, that many humans have suffered it, and it is from the past. The essence of the release, of bringing presence to it, and acceptance, is not the memory of the origin, of where it all started, because nobody knows where it all started, but to be present with what manifests at this moment. The pain body will manifest because it is triggered by something that happens now, and then the past comes up in you, and it is here now, and this is where it needs to be addressed directly.

Directly on an energetic level, not even on a thought level, but placing attention on it directly. Attention is the key, because attention is presence. Just to look at it.

We spoke of developing the ability to look at something, such as a tree or a flower, in the state of spacious awareness without labeling, the ability to look in that clarity of awareness, in which, from the point of view of mind, you neither know nor understand what you are looking at. And yet, a deeper knowing is there in that looking, and a greater intelligence is there that operates when you face it and look. And in the same way that you can look at a tree or a flower, or that you can listen to a sound in the space of awareness, without interpreting, without labeling or making some kind of personal reference point, without really a personal relationship to that which arises in your consciousness, to simply be there as consciousness, witnessing that which arises in yourself, in that field of consciousness. And in the same way you are there as consciousness, the conscious witness of that which arises, in the same way that you witness an external sense perception, you witness an inner arising of whatever that may be. And that witnessing, even the conceptual label of calling it by a name, even the name pain body, is not really necessary.

All that is needed is looking. Now, looking becomes, we're now using it, of course, metaphorically. It's no longer an actual visual looking, but it is a feeling, a sensing, a bringing of awareness to it.

In that sense, you're looking at it and be with it. And in there you don't need any labels. The looking is enough for the transmutation to happen.

The ability to give full attention, which is the light of unconditioned consciousness shining upon something, this works with yourself, giving full attention to something that arises within yourself, it also works with other people, people who come to you with whatever, whether you are professional worker, whether you work with people professionally, or whether people are drawn to you seeking this or that, because they may recognize something in you.

And at that moment, as they come to you, as they sit there, are you able to give the fullest attention, which means focus awareness without the interference of thought, of concepts, of judgments, of conclusions or interpretations, just the space of awareness. That is the space that you bring, not as a person, not even as somebody saying, I am going to bring space. No, it happens.

And so that is the greatest, really the only true healer on the deepest level, using the term healing in the widest sense, it is that. And of course, people have done little experiments. You probably read about, they had plants there, some plants were given attention, other plants were not given attention, but all the food and water they needed.

And the plants that were given attention thrived much more. They even did, it was a long time back, nowadays, it would be, nobody would be allowed to conduct such an experiment, but they did, many years ago in an orphanage, all the babies were divided into two groups, some were given all the care they needed on a physical level, but little or no attention, and the others were given plenty of attention. There was an enormous difference in the way that they grew and developed, intelligence, physical, on all levels, a vast difference.

And those people who did that probably didn't have that much awareness. When they were focusing on the baby, there was probably 90% thought and 10% attention, and yet even that was enough to effect that transformation. And so imagine the power that lies behind that, when there is little or no interference by thought.

Really, this is what our entire gathering is about, is to see that that can arise from within you. We've called it by different names, presence, space consciousness, as opposed to object consciousness, spaciousness, awareness, these are all just little pointers. It all comes down to this simple thing, to fully be with something or someone.

I mentioned nature loves that, it loves to be noticed by humans, not to be thought about, but to be truly seen, perceived, experienced. It responds to that. Animals love it, they come.

The more you can be in that state of pure attention awareness, the more animals will want to be close to you. The cat comes, and the cats even come to humans who are burdened with thought. Well, just not to all, they're careful.

They look first, and sense. If there's any wanting in you, the cat won't come. Because as you know, cats never do what you want them to do.

But there's simply an availability. You are there, and you might show that you're there. You may kneel, and just go, then, especially if you're still.

Even wild animals sometimes do that, if you're still enough. They come because there's nothing to fear. Animals really can sense the human mind, and they fear it.

And they can also sense that the human mind, to a large extent, is insane. They can feel the violence that is in the human mind. They can feel the violence that is in thought, in someone who is totally obsessed with thought, possessed by thought, and walking through a forest.

And so they run away. They run away because animals, and trees, and nature lives in no thought. It lives in that state.

It's prior to thought. We are moving past thought. And so when we say, stop thinking, it's not to do with falling back to a level that is pre-thinking, the level of an animal or a plant, which is beautiful.

It's free of the burden of conceptual thought, therefore lives in a much greater harmony with the whole. Everything in nature does, lives in much greater harmony than humans with the totality. Humans don't live in harmony with the totality.

But we can't go back to that. We can see that there is a harmony in nature, but we can't go back to that level that is pre-thinking. Although we try, many humans try to go back there because they can't stand the torture of their minds anymore, so they might drink.

Drink takes you to a pre-thinking level if you have enough of it. One glass already does it a little bit, a little bit less, and another, and another, and gradually you get numb or you get anesthetized. And it feels good for a while because the mind slows down.

A few beers, the mind slows down, unless you're unlucky and because you lose consciousness, your pain body awakens, which also can happen with alcohol. Or certain drugs that kind of free you from the mind temporarily. Sex as an obsession of seeking, becoming addicted to sex, because momentarily you're free of mind through that.

And then the mind is back. So the same thing happens when you drift off to sleep or you watch television for a few hours. A certain anesthetic is there then, and the mind becomes numb and you stop thinking.

And finally you're half awake and half asleep, and at least you're not burdened by your problems at that time. You're falling below thought. And there are people who exist on that level, and in some ways they are wiser than those who have already reached thought, which is the majority.

In some ways there is such an archetype, one could almost say, as the wise idiot. And they have examples of that in literature, and the fool, the wise fool. We have examples of that in literature and in films I've mentioned before.

Forrest Gump is an example of somebody who is pre-thought, but lives in greater harmony with the whole, and the whole supports him, always gives him what he needs. In that sense he's enlightened, except that he hasn't gone beyond mind, he's remained below mind, below thought. Being There, played by Peter Sellers, a long time ago.

Again, a human who lives in a state of connectedness because thinking hasn't arrived yet. He can hardly put a few words together, and life just gives him what he needs. It's a little bit humorous, of course.

And at the end of the movie and the book, he's about to become president of the United States. Everybody thinks he's incredibly wise. He says very little, compared to the politicians who speak a lot.

Everything is well in the garden. Oh, you mean the economic situation is picking up? Yes, when spring comes, the buds open and new growth happens.

Oh, okay, the stock market goes up. So this is just a beautiful example. They point to something.

How life can be when there's nobody claiming me, some achievement. So this is not our path. We can't go back there, although we may have tried in the past, to numb ourselves against the pain, and it hasn't worked, not for long.

So humanity is to step beyond being trapped in thought and mind, stepping beyond that. This is what is happening. This is why we're here.

And so, in some way, you arrive at the same place, because you find that place that is free of thought. Not that thought never happens again, but you're no longer trapped in thought, and there are beautiful spaces of no thought in your life that get bigger and bigger, deeper and deeper. And an intelligence then operates that is unconditioned, nothing to do with the accumulated knowledge of your mind.

And that operates then, and that is the awareness that shines. That is that which heals and transforms. It's the space in which transformation happens, within and without.

So here we have the answer then, of course, is the focal point is here, now, presence. Anything else that may come up as a memory, as a visual image, is fine, is to be acknowledged also. But not to seek there as seeking in past.

Thank you. What seems to happen to me is, I get to a state where I seem to be expanded, very few thoughts, and then I find I'm asleep. And that has happened to me over and over again.

So what do we do about that? Good point. I'm sure you're not the only one.

That can happen easily. The state of no thought is, first of all, relatively new for most humans. It's unfamiliar.

And you rise above thought into presence. And before you know it, it can happen that you have fallen from presence into pre-thought, which means almost sleep. And this is beautifully expressed.

I always love it when the truth of this gets through and through the media and through movies. Ninety percent of it is still the old consciousness. But occasionally it comes through, and it's beautiful when it does come through in movies.

So there's this movie about playing golf, The Legend of Bagger Vance, it's called. And there's somebody who is learning to be present, to learn how to play golf again. And the archetype of the teacher comes, the caddy or whatever it's called.

So he teaches. There's one line in the film, it's worth watching the whole film for that. And also to see when he's actually in the state of presence, how his face changes and the clarity that comes.

No thought, and he lifts up.

[Speaker 3] (5:17:24 - 5:17:25)

Beautiful.

[Speaker 1] (5:17:28 - 5:30:14)

And his teacher says to him at some point, this I believe it's a background narrative, he's learning to stop thinking without falling asleep. He's learning to stop thinking without falling asleep. This is what we are learning here also.

And it may well be that you still fall asleep at times when the mind stops for a little while and gone. That can happen. We are transitional, at a transitional stage between two levels of consciousness.

Another thing that was mentioned to me this morning, I can step out of mind for a moment and then very quickly mind is back. Of course, that happens to everybody. And you may have to step out of mind a hundred times, a thousand times, ten thousand times.

That stepping out is the transformation of consciousness. It doesn't matter if you can stay in the state of clear presence for ten seconds or one minute at a time. The important thing is you have stepped out of mind.

That is the process of transformation. There's no achievement here. It is more important how often you step out of mind than for how long you can stay in the state of presence.

Because ultimately the state of presence is a timeless state anyway. You can't even measure it in terms of time. So that's a relief to know.

More important how often you step out than how long presence can be sustained. But there tends to be a certain reciprocal, if that's the word, movement. The more often you step out, it tends to happen that you stay in it a little bit longer, a little bit longer.

But it doesn't matter how long. And if you catch yourself being immersed in thought and suddenly you see it, and then you use what we called earlier the exit doors that take you through which you can go to step out of identification with thought, which could be total acceptance of this moment as it is, puts an end to thought. Or feeling the inner energy field of body takes attention away from thought, the aliveness in every cell, feel that.

Or bring full attention to sense perceptions, visual or auditory or tactile, and realize the power of attention that is behind the sense perception, this presence. So these are ways in which you can step out of thought. Or the direct one, you may remember, the direct exit door, which is not yet accessible to so many, which simply says stop thinking.

But they all take you to the same place. So once you notice, then you can step out. And then perhaps a moment later you're drawn back into the same, through the same door, thought draws you back by the sleeve, it's still got you.

And something else is important again, that is not now. Some thought assumes an importance, such importance that your whole sense of self goes back into it. And you're thinking this important, heavy thought.

If anybody observed you from the outside, you could see so clearly the difference in your eyes, or anybody who is sensitive, you don't even have to be a psychic, to sense that the emanation that comes from you, when you are possessed by thought, how different that is from the emanation that comes from you when you are clear. You just look into a person's eyes and see that the moment they are identified with thinking, it's like a veil has descended. They are here, but not really here, because their attention is in thought movement.

They may be looking at you, but they're not really looking, they're looking at their thoughts, they're in their thoughts. Not even looking at their thoughts, they're in their thoughts while they look at you. And you think they may be listening to you, they're listening to their own thoughts, they're in their thoughts preparing what they're to say to you next, or judging what you are saying to them immediately, classifying it, comparing it to what they know, or their opinion, or their mental position, or trying to figure out where you're coming from, what makes you tick, to work out something through the mind. And so there's the veil, they are not looking, it looks as if they were looking, but they are not, because there's a veil across their eyes. And then, when that veil goes, you step out of thought and it's gone, suddenly there's almost a light that shines through.

And someone that dwells in presence, not even as a habitual state, but who's found already his or her home in presence, such as sometimes happens to people who go through, death is approaching, it can happen to those people very quickly, that they become transparent, they become very, very, very present. All the mind forms are dying already, all the object consciousness, and there's just light shining through. So that's, you can see that in people, and in yourself, notice the difference, the feeling tone of those states of consciousness, mind and awareness.

Object consciousness, obsessed with things, outer things or inner things as thought, and possessed by things, and then space consciousness. So, be patient with yourself, you may get drawn back into thinking many, many times, and then you step out, you may fall asleep, and what you're learning is to stop thinking without falling asleep. And in the meantime, you fall asleep a few times, that's okay.

Don't attempt to stay present for too long, and not just in the state of presence. Bring presence into doings, then you're less likely to fall asleep. Bring, of course you could be present by just sitting here, sitting, closing your eyes, that's dangerous, because that takes, that's a signal, it's been there for a long time, that means sleep.

Or keep your eyes open, helps a little bit, and look around, okay. But why not bring presence into some move, where there's movement, presence as you take off your shoes, you're not making it your means to an end. This movement is not a means to the end, which I want to get this shoe off, but to be there with every movement, fully there with your attention, so there's the movement, and there's the attention, the spaciousness in which the movement happens.

And then the other shoe, and you put it down. Any little movement like that, bring presence into that, then sleep isn't a problem there. Walking, I mentioned, from this tree to that tree, be there in every step.

Drinking a cup of tea, no, your whole life will not be that, there will be perhaps 80%, 90% is still the normal way, things are a means to an end, let's get this done and this, but then more and more there are things that are done in awareness, with awareness. So all the repetitive things that one does in daily life, many of those can be used beautifully to bring presence to. I mentioned a few in the book.

You get into your car, if you have a car, the door shuts, and there's a moment of 10 seconds enough. It's how many times can you break the stream of thinking? How many times can you find a gap in the stream of thinking?

That's what matters. Not how long the gap is, how many times can you find a gap? So it's better to have mini meditations, maybe in one day you might have 10, 20 mini meditations, it's probably better than one long meditation, towards the end of which you go to sleep.

And I've seen many monks going to sleep in meditation, especially at four in the morning. Another thing that happens when you find gaps in the mind stream, the mind stream itself loses some of its force. It's the enormous pull that it has, the enormous gravity of thought.

Thought loses its hold over you. It becomes a little bit loose. There's a space, because the gap is space, the gap in the mind stream is a space that arises, where space consciousness comes through, awareness unconditioned.

And so even the thought that still happens, you'll find more and more is recognized as thought, even as it happens. So there is some space even around the thought, which means your total identification with thought is going, is disappearing, is dissolving. Which means you no longer totally believe in every thought that comes.

You recognize it as just a thought, a fragment, a perspective, not the truth. All right, any more? There may be some more questions.

[Speaker 2] (5:30:17 - 5:30:35)

I have a question about what is called performance anxiety, like giving a speech or playing a musical instrument in front of people. And I get coaching from my music teacher, because that's where the struggle is right now, to use positive imaging.

[Speaker 4] (5:30:35 - 5:30:39)

I've heard this recommended for golfers too.

[Speaker 2] (5:30:40 - 5:30:46)

And it seems to me like if I start, I'm getting anxious right now because I'm reproducing the symptom.

[Speaker 1] (5:30:47 - 5:46:19)

And so if I image myself not having the anxiety, it doesn't seem to work. It's like there's a little battle going on between all I'm creating the duality of doing it right and not doing it right. I just wondered if you'd comment on the situation.

Thank you, thank you. Yeah, that's also an interesting question. Performance anxiety is not confined to performers, or rather one could say that every egoic entity, every mind, to invite us, just addressing is to start in a wider sense, performance anxiety.

Every egoic entity, which means every mind-made self, every story-based sense of self, me, image of me, self-reflected image of me, people have conversations with themselves a lot of the time. They address themselves as you. So you walk around with a phantom sense of self, and you say, that's me.

You're splitting, split into two. So you have a relationship with yourself, which is very strange. And cats don't.

So to some extent, every egoic entity plays a role. It's a conditioned role. It plays a role, many kinds of roles.

The role of man or woman, the role of your profession, the role of whatever the conditioning may be, your nationality, the role of your religious belief structures, the role of mother, father. Adult, even being an adult with that seriousness that goes with it, it's a role that you learn to play when you reach a certain age. It's about time to become an adult, get serious with life.

And then more and more, you're pushed into that role. You behave as a self-importance. And people get trapped in the roles completely, which is, of course, mind-conditioned mind structures.

And so there is underlying a continuous anxiety, which is performance anxiety in a wider sense. Because you have to, now you have to go into a new situation and you're rehearsing beforehand, what's going to happen? What am I going to say?

How is I going to react? You see others reacting to you, and you split yourself there. It's a projection of the mind, seeing yourself, self-consciousness arises, which is to see yourself through the eyes of others.

So what is, how can we put an end to all that anxiety and all that fear that comes with believing that you need to perform? And so it is strange when one gives talks not to know what's going to come out of one's mouth beforehand, which could be a source of great anxiety, potentially. What am I going to say?

Are they going to like it? They expect something. There's only one way out, and that is not specific to being a performer, and that is hold attention in the present moment.

And that is not easy if you're backstage waiting to get on. I was backstage a week ago in the Orpheum Theatre in Vancouver to give a talk in the back room where they usually, the actors sit in front of the mirror getting ready. And there's a loudspeaker, and 15 minutes before the time was due for me to speak, a voice comes through the speaker and says, performance starts in 15 minutes.

Now that would be enough to create anxiety in anybody, that I have to perform. I didn't realize I had to perform. And five minutes beforehand, the announcement was even worse.

It said, five minutes left, five minutes to show time. And when I listened to that, I could feel a wave of anxiety running through my body, because I didn't know that was show time. But it also meant that I had to perform, and I had to do it in a way that I could It passed through, and then I remembered that I wasn't going to give a performance at all.

And when I remember, oh, there's no performance. Oh god, that's good. The probably the most effective way of anchoring yourself in now and preventing the projection ahead, where you are going to be on stage performing, being watched by thousands of people, or hundreds of people, or some 10 people might be enough, is to use the anchor of the inner body.

So very, place attention in the inner energy field, as you sit in that room backstage, if that's what it is. Be fully present in here, in every cell. Your attention moves completely into the body, which is so beautiful and invigorating and enlivening to feel, to consciously inhabit the body, to feel the aliveness that is there in every cell, in every part of the body, and feel it as a single whole, and remain anchored there with your attention.

Then the mind cannot create images of yourself on stage, being watched, performing, which is the anxiety-producing mental image. So that is much more effective than what didn't work for you, creating an image of yourself performing well, or with confidence, or something like that. That may be a little bit of, can be occasionally a help to some people, but that's not the real thing.

That's just turning around the anxiety and trying to make it into something nice, but even behind that image of yourself performing well, there's hidden the anxiety still, because you never know what could happen. And so inner body awareness is a very powerful anchor for staying present, especially in such a situation. If you are fully present, the anxiety does not arise.

And that's, you can test it out next time, but it is better if you practice first, so that you don't just do it before some performance, but do it when there's nothing much happening right here at this moment. Why not to sense the aliveness that is within you now, in your hands, your feet. It's beautiful.

And occasionally there may be the mind will want to come in when you do that, especially before the performance. You will feel, as your attention is in the body, you will feel the pull of the mind can be very restless there, because the mind says, think about the performance, what's going to happen? And you will feel the pull of thought wanting you to think about that performance.

There's almost, you can almost physically feel thought wanting attention back, and wants to pull your attention out of the body. And you can, sometimes you may get fragments of thoughts, and you're over half back in thought. Anxiety comes back, and then you return fully into the body.

I remember I was someone in the more distant past. I felt performance anxiety just walking into a room in which there were five people, four people, a casual social gathering. And there was a hesitation before I opened the door.

What am I going to say? And then you open the door, and then you sit down, and the performance then starts. You say something clever, or whatever, you quote someone, or or something witty, or you say something about somebody else that's exaggerated, so that everybody laughs, and so they feel accepted.

They have made a joke, and they all laughed. It's all performance. It's very normal.

But underlying it all, there's this continuous anxiety of, I'm not performing well enough yet. What a way to live. It's so normal.

You are performing if you detect a difference, and this you can do as presence arises. It'll be easy to see. Your power of self-observation deepens with the arising of presence.

If you detect in yourself a difference in the way in which you interact with the person who cleans your office, and the CEO of your corporation, then you are performing. If you detect a difference in the way in which you interact with the Pope, should you meet the Pope, and the roads to the street sweeper, then you are performing in both cases. And there's nothing to feel guilty about.

It's simply something to notice. And in the noticing, already there's the arising of freedom, because the noticing is the arising of awareness. You don't need to condemn yourself for the fact that you are still performing.

You're just noticing, performing. There's a nice story of, it's somewhat related to this. There was the abbot of a big Zen monastery in Japan a long time ago, and the monastery was about to receive an important visitor.

The governor of the state or the province was about to arrive. The abbot stepped outside to receive him. The abbot received the governor.

The governor stayed for a while. The abbot left. And in the evening, the abbot resigned.

And he went to become the disciple of another master in another monastery. And he was a disciple of that master for another 10 years. What had happened?

While he was waiting for the governor to arrive, he noticed the palms of his hands were moist. He was anxious, some anxiety. There was some moisture in the palms of his hands.

There was no moisture when anybody else came. So to him, that meant, the depth of my realization is not deep enough yet. So he left.

For 10 years, he was the disciple of another master. And then he returned to the monastery and became abbot again. And that needs, it's a very subtle awareness is required to just, wow.

Now, you don't need to take such drastic actions. Besides, you're not abbot of any monastery, so you don't need to do that. Just noticing.

Just noticing. The noticing is beautiful. Anything you notice in yourself that is mechanical, anything you notice in yourself that is performance, that is conditioned behavior, is to be welcomed.

You could fall into the era of saying, you're not there. You're obviously not there. Look at yourself.

This is not the case. To see, it's beautiful to see it. Whatever it is that you see in yourself, the seeing is freeing.

In Zen, they go to extremes in their practice, and that's fine for them. It was fine for this abbot. It probably would have been enough to notice the moisture.

Is there any other questions? Feel free.

[Speaker 3] (5:46:22 - 5:47:18)

Along those same lines, I can see that when I'm doing a presentation or when I'm teaching, I kind of condition myself so that I have all of my notes, my presentation, I have everything. I know what I'm going to say. And they're available, so if I need to glance at them, I can do that.

And I'm very aware that if I could just allow myself to tap in more often to existence and inspiration, that it would be phenomenal. And I know that this is my safety net, and I guess it keeps me from the anxiety of what you once said about dreaming that you would be on stage and not know what to say next. So can you give me some guidance?

I want to move into that uncharted territory.

[Speaker 1] (5:47:18 - 5:58:44)

Good point. I remember the first talk I was asked to give. It was in London.

I met someone at a dinner or something. And at that time, I was already seeing people individually, occasionally, informally, people would come to me. We would talk, just being there, present space.

And I talked to that man at the dinner, and he worked at the Theosophical Society in London. And we talked for five minutes. He knew nothing about me.

And he said, I'd like to invite you to give a talk to the Theosophical Society. We need people like you. It's okay.

And so that was the first kind of formal talk. And that was a little strange. So the date was arranged, and it had to have a title.

That's how it works. It needed to sound interesting. And I believe the title was The Spiritual Dimension of Psychotherapy, or something like that.

And about 35 people were going to come, or 40, I don't remember. And so it was an unusual situation for me to give a talk with a title, because when people came to me in sessions, I never knew beforehand what this was going to be about. And that's beautiful.

But there, my mind came and said, okay, now you better write something down, because you need to give a talk about this. And so I got one sheet of paper, and I wrote down, okay, Spiritual Dimension in Psych, okay, that 0.1, 0.2, 0.3, 0.4, 0.5, and then that looked too big. And then I took a little scrap of paper and reduced them to smaller points.

But I thought I needed that. So I walked in with this little piece of paper. That was my safety net.

And I put it on the desk, and I started to talk. And people listened. And then I came, their pause happened.

And then I looked. And that moment, the entire energy field in the room dropped, because mind came in. And I started to talk again.

It took a little while before presence in the room returned. And then it happened again. I came to the end of what I had to say.

People became restless and coughing. And so that was my learning at that time. That safety net didn't work for me.

And I realized afterwards, even if I'd forgotten three out of five of the most important points that I wanted to talk about, it would not have mattered ultimately. And so the next talk, there was quite a gap before anybody invited me to give a talk again. And the next talk was without a scrap of paper.

And it was strange to sit there, not knowing what to say beforehand. I never knew what to say beforehand when people came one-on-one. That was normal and beautiful.

But to be in a formalized, formal setting and not knowing what to say, they had to have that external structure of somebody's going to give a talk. That is a little strange, just as it was strange even now to hear through the loudspeaker saying, showtime, strange. And so just sitting there, and nothing came for a while, and then the words came.

And maybe I believe in the next talk later, I just said, okay, so here we are. That must be true. Here we are.

And that was, it's the rest came out of that, of being here. Here we are. Nobody could argue with that.

And then I've later heard many accounts where people have told me, people who were speakers, what they said when they abandoned their script, either because they lost it or some pages were missing. They were going through their speech and suddenly they found they must have fallen out. And so they were forced to address the audience directly.

Or people who suddenly, for some reason, the script wasn't there and they said, the performance came to an end. Something went wrong in their performance. They had to stop speaking.

For the first time, they were not performing and they were saying, I'm feeling very anxious at this moment because I don't know what, I've lost my script and I don't know what to say next. Okay. Now you've connected with the audience truly because that is the truth of how you feel at this moment.

People love to hear the truth. The moment you speak the truth, there's a connection. And then they found what they said was much more powerful than what could have been in the script.

Even if they missed some important details, that didn't matter anymore. And so my recommendation is to just go in without the script, without the safety net, to trust and if there's fear, allow that fear to be there. And maybe even say, this is the first time that I'm conducting this workshop with no script whatsoever.

What you need to know, there are two levels to the work you do. There are certain things that you may need to know that you do in your workshops. You know that anyway.

That's there. The more important level is that which arises intuitively out of that moment. And that can only come fully, it probably comes to you even with the safety net here and there, it comes through.

But it comes more fully when you let go of the safety net of the script. Then it truly comes because it has to come. And it doesn't come fully until it has to come fully.

There is the need for it to come fully. As long as the need for it to come fully isn't there, it's not coming fully. And so it is also the case with people who feel called upon to teach in a wider sense as some kind of spiritual teaching.

And very often I hear people say, I don't feel ready yet to teach. And you'll never feel ready to teach. Because the beauty is, you don't need to do it.

Just be there as all you need to do is to open up the space for the teaching to happen. You don't need to teach as long as you think you need to teach. That's dreadful.

I would live under continuous stress if I thought I had to teach. Another retreat. And each time they expect me to say something.

Great stress. But fortunately, I don't need to teach. Space consciousness, pure, the field of awareness is there.

And out of that, the teaching comes. The words come just right for that moment. So a person is never ready to teach.

And if a person thinks he or she is ready to teach, no. It's an illusion. There's some big ego that says, I am going to teach.

The person doesn't feel ready, but the depth is ready. Who you are in your depth, that's ready. And that's you and not you.

It's you and yet deeper than you. Because your ultimate essential identity is space consciousness, the unconditioned consciousness. In that sense, you teach.

And so that's the beauty. The same with healing. It's not healing.

A beautiful line in the Course in Miracles says, the healer does not heal. He lets healing be. And this can be applied to perhaps any activity in which there's mastery.

A teacher doesn't teach. He lets teaching be. He lets it happen.

Jesus said it. I'm not doing it. I'm not saying it.

The Father, he used this term, Father, so that the people in his culture would listen to him. He had to use patriarchal language in a patriarchal culture. Father was an authority figure.

So that people could even understand him and not run away. He would say, the Father is speaking through me. But all that it means is, something greater than me is speaking through me.

And so let me know what happens. It will be beautiful. I know that.

Very beautiful.

[Speaker 2] (5:58:45 - 6:00:16)

This concludes session five of Realizing the Power of Now with Eckhart Tolle. Our program continues with session six.

[Speaker 1] (6:00:18 - 6:57:20)

I may ring this bell a few times during our meditation. The bell is a call to awakening. Awakening out of thought into presence.

The shift from thinking to awareness. That's why we're here. Noticing the silence.

That in you which notices the silence is not thought, is not thinking. It is stillness. Presence.

If or when thought still comes, you can recognize it as the movement of thought, without being completely drawn into it. Allowing this moment to be as it is, takes you out of thought. Noticing silence takes you out of thought.

Feeling the aliveness of the inner body takes you out of thought. And even noticing a simple thing like your breath takes you out of thought. Just noticing that you are breathing.

And the thinking that does still happen is just a surface phenomenon. Wave movements. A few sense perceptions are still there.

The voice that you hear. Some noises in the room. Not very much.

A few sense perceptions. Perhaps a few thoughts. Objects in consciousness come and go.

You could say that's the foreground which is what occupies most people's attention completely. And we are interested in the background. The space of awareness itself.

You can't know it. You can only be it. Can't make it into an object.

It's the I, the I am that remains when the story goes. The story of I am. Not trying to achieve a particular state.

That's a fallacy of the mind. Whatever state is there is good enough. It's enough to accept what's there internally, externally.

Nothing else is required but to accept what's here now. Mind is still active. So what?

Let it be active. That's what is. That's okay.

Whatever you accept you go beyond. That's a miracle. If you fight it, you're stuck with it.

Most meditators are attempting to achieve a particular state. Not happy with the state they are in. It's not the perfect state.

The perfect state is the acceptance of now. Yes, but I can't accept the now. Translated that means I'm not willing to accept the now.

And then you accept that you're not willing to accept the now. The universe doesn't mind. Why should I?

Not willing to accept the now. That's good enough a state. It's interesting.

Drama comes out of it. All soap operas come out of it. Just being with what is.

Being at ease with is. And there's space around is now. The now is a strange thing.

Has no form to it. Becoming aware of now. Beyond what's happening now.

Of now itself. What's that? I don't know what it is.

Impossible to understand. It's not within the realm of thought. Being aware of now is the arising of space consciousness.

Object consciousness happens within it. Thoughts, perceptions, emotions. It is a sacred moment when there's a meeting beyond the person.

And there's a meeting beyond the personal sense of self. When there's no thought as you look into the eyes of another person through awareness. Not through thinking.

And then the meeting is sacred. Because that meeting is the realization of not two, but one. Not two, but one.

The two arises out of thought. The sense of separation. It comes from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and bad.

Good, bad. Good, bad. You, me.

So the realization that we are not two does never come through thought. It can be translated into thought. But the thought is not the realization.

You can believe in it. That's quite a nice belief. I believe that ultimately we are one.

To know it, you have to step into awareness and meet the other person, so-called other person, in the field of awareness. In the spaciousness of awareness. And that's the true meaning of love.

The realization that we are not two, but one. Oneness. The most beautiful thing with your partner, your child, your parent, friend, is occasionally to look at them in that spacious awareness where there's no thought.

You may have to hang on to your inner body while you look. And you're rooted in being. Without space in the relationship, the relationship is condemned to conflict.

Any conflict that should still exist within the relationship is beautifully contained by the space. If there should be. But there will be far less.

And eventually none. And whenever you look at someone, if only briefly, and they may not even know it, in the state of no thought, of pure awareness, that awakens that state of consciousness in the other person. They may not even be aware of that either.

Something within responds. They may interpret that as liking you very much. As feeling good in your presence.

Because they're meeting themselves. And it's an amazing thing to realize that whenever you meet anybody and interact, that potential is there for this to happen. Just meet them.

In awareness. Not through the labeling mind. You surrender that.

If the mind should still label, you recognize it as mere labels. Don't believe in them completely anymore. And that one could say almost there's a transmission that happens then of presence.

And that transmission in which there is no intention in the sense that I am now transmitting something to you. I'm not doing anything. There's no intention of transmitting anything.

It simply happens. If there were an intention, I would be wanting something. I would be wanting more mind.

And that transmission awakens. It's beautiful. Of course, the transmission has already been here throughout these days that we met here.

Beyond the words, in this energy field of presence, it's happening. And now the added little thing of just briefly meeting face-to-face. If you're still sitting, you may want to sit there for just a little while contemplating the empty chair and realizing it's all within you.

It's always wonderful when a teacher goes to a class. Because then you realize that the essence of the teacher is here. The question that somebody just asked, how to step out of thought, how to transmute the pain body without using willpower, the answer lies in the alertness that is here at this moment, in which there's no violence.

Willpower is some form of wanting. One desire is stronger than another desire and overpowers the weaker desire. For example, somebody uses willpower to stop a craving for food, perhaps because their desire is to stay slim and attract a man or woman, which is a stronger desire than the craving for food.

I can't do it. Sometimes it works, but then you're still there with a burden of this very strong desire. The pain that sometimes comes, that every human carries within, willpower to some extent and for a limited period of time could work.

And then inevitably, the pain will break through even the strongest will. That will is based on wanting to be enlightened, wanting to be a strong wanting, and that conflicts with what is there. You sometimes see it in western people more than eastern people, when they meditate, that there's a lot of will.

They do it so well. They sit there for so long. And if you look, there's a someone who wants something out of this meditation.

I'm going to get there, which prevents you from seeing that you're there already. A conceptualized sense of self comes in here that you want to reach. Now this question, I believe that you already know the answer to this question deep down, but your mind doesn't.

Trying to understand through further explanations, the meaning of presence, the meaning of yes to what is, in which there's no willpower, just an alertness that is both gentle and fierce at the same time. It reconciles the opposites. It seems impossible that there could be an energy field that is both gentle and fierce at the same time.

But that is how it is. It is both all embracing, all containing the field of space consciousness, of presence, of stillness, all embracing, all containing, allows everything to be. And another aspect of it, it cuts through time, mind.

Past and future fall away. Past on the left, future on the right. There's an alertness there that is totally free of wanting, and yet it is very fierce.

Wanting, of course, always implies future. You need, you want to get there. Wanting always implies here reducing this moment to something inferior to where you want to get, which is, of course, future, which is, of course, a mind form.

Because beyond the thought of future, there is no future. Where? You can't possibly find it or meet it.

During these days, the words that were spoken were signposts. Then there was the energy field, and as there still is, of presence, continuously here. Now, the mind cannot quite understand what that is.

And this is very helpful advice, perhaps, for all spiritual seekers. And that is to seek further differentiation of signposts. And that is, of course, something that the human mind does.

And many spiritual seekers get stuck there, especially those whose minds are highly developed, who are able to analyze, differentiate, think about, evaluate. They want a more differentiated signpost. And that is satisfying to the mind, but there is a point when the signpost needs to be enough.

Further explanation will not get you there. A more elaborate signpost will not get you there. So, some teachings are very simple.

Zen are signposts that are really like a block of wood with a few something carved in. It takes one minute, a little sign. There it is.

And this is why, when you get a Zen answer, the mind can't quite follow. Is that it? And it's often happened that when Zen teachers gave an answer, then there was, I mentioned before, the famous Zen teacher whose only answer, whenever he was asked about the meaning of Zen, now this is the most rudimentary signpost you can imagine, is the only answer he would ever give when asked about the meaning of Zen, is he would raise his finger and look at you.

So, the learned professors, Buddhist scholars would come to him. They'd studied hundreds of sutras and ancient scriptures. And please, they come to the great master.

He was famous. Why, what is, can you please explain the depths of it? What is the meaning of it?

And some people who were very much in their minds, they even then said, did you hear my question? They didn't even see the signpost. And then you have teachings that also point to the truth beautifully.

For example, some of you may be familiar with the teachings of John Klein, a spiritual teacher who passed away a few years ago. Those are beautiful signposts also pointing to the truth that are as differentiated as you could ever find, except for some abstruse scriptures. But these are as differentiated as you could ever find, almost too differentiated, because they satisfy the mind.

Hmm. Krishnamurti, halfway, sometimes almost true signposts, they point to the truth, but almost too much satisfying giving in to the need of the mind to understand. And this is why many, Krishnamurti became quite, well, probably not depressed, but frustrated almost, sometimes, because so few people seem to get it.

Why don't you get it? He said during his talks. You come to listen to me for 30 years.

Why don't you get it? So to watch the mind and see that often it demands further differentiation, and this is not necessarily helpful, but just to look more deeply at the signpost and allow the space to arise. The signpost here would be a few words aligned with now, a yes to what is, the suchness of this moment.

Each of those statements is a signpost. And to look more deeply at any one, and as you look more deeply, not through analytical thought, but simply to look, then a space arises, because that's what the signpost points to, and that is the answer. And you've stepped beyond mind.

So observing in oneself this tendency, the mental tendency, to seek more, because this is perhaps really what it comes down to. It is a characteristic of the human mind to always want more. It's not never quite enough yet.

And this can also manifest in the spiritual seeker as needing to read more books, and another, and another, and another. Maybe the answer is in that one. And so, to see when it's time to stop.

You can see that for yourself. Sometimes the teacher points it out to you. As now, it's time to stop the seeking process of the mind, look more deeply at what is already here.

Not analytically, just be with one signpost, with one statement, and see where that takes you. Then it works as it should. If there's any further question, then that comes from your mind.

Which may be formulating the next question. Nothing personal. That's what it does.

All you need to do is see that this is what it does. And then in the seeing, there's a freedom arising from it. It's formulating another question.

There's one other question somebody wrote to me on a note. Somebody who is not yet free of suffering, not quite getting there yet, and mentions the fear of loneliness. This person experienced loss of a relationship.

And most of the suffering seemed to derive from that fear of loneliness. This is what the note says. So you'll notice it.

The suffering does not arise from loneliness, but the fear of loneliness. That's a mental projection that says you are going to be alone for the rest of your life. And it's added to the story of me, the one who is now without a relationship, completely alone.

That gets incorporated into the conceptualized sense of self. And then you can think about how lonely it is not to have a partner. You probably won't find anybody ever again.

Staying with what is, is to single out this moment, just this. You may be alone, but not lonely. Lonely is a concept.

It's a story. You can't be lonely without a story. You can be alone without a story, but not lonely.

Lonely is already, even the word lonely is already a little story. I am lonely is a story. I'm alone is a fact.

And the fact is neutral. It's fine. I'm alone here.

And even that is not absolutely true, but relatively true like any thought. It's not absolutely true. You're not really alone on the deepest level.

You're one with all that is, but on a relative level, it's true. But no thought is more than relative. But I am lonely is already the beginning of a story.

And just to see that, and then simply always returning to the simplicity of this moment. And if at this moment, you should feel within yourself a sense of a little hole inside, like a lack, where once there was the partner, now there is a little empty feeling, a little hole inside. What could be almost a craving for someone, perhaps this is what it is.

It's hard to define what it is. Something big is missing in my life. It's just the feeling of it.

And that is something that then people construct thoughts out of that. Unhappy thoughts, unhappy me. Now what happens if, okay, if this is what you feel, stay with that, without demanding that you should not be feeling that.

And see what happens if you completely say yes to that feeling of lack. Completely say, well, there it is. It's there.

This applies to any feeling. It could be fear, a very common feeling. There it is.

Now fear is usually something people want to run away from internally. And so they may run away into thinking. Then fear becomes a fearful story, but at least the fearful story, you don't have to feel it directly.

The fear can become translated into a story. So you construct your nightmare out of the feeling. But the feeling itself, well, what happens if I say, just stay with that and accept totally that this is, it's here, that is.

Don't even need to label it anymore. Just feel that. It is.

See what happens to anything that you don't resist at all, don't run away from at all, that you face completely now. Face completely. See what happens.

I'm not promising anything. You find out for yourself what happens when loneliness, fear, whatever it may be, is faced completely. The fact being alone is faced completely.

The feeling of lack of something missing is faced completely. And then you'll see. So no promises, just something to find out for yourself what happens.

This is an ancient thing in fairy tales, and you may have found it in dreams. A monstrous presence in dreams, also sometimes it's an archetypal thing in fairy tales, is only monstrous as long as you're running away from it. Perhaps we've all had nightmares where you're running away from something that you can't quite even see what it is, but it's dreadful.

And you're running away from it. And it occasionally happens that people stop and face it. And more often than not, the moment it's faced, it reveals itself to be quite benevolent.

A shift happens in the monstrous presence when it is faced completely. So anything that you feel, see, if you accept and face it completely, see what happens to it. And so it's a beautiful truth.

I'm saying this, but you need to find it out for yourself. Because anything you accept completely, you go beyond. It's quite amazing.

So watch out for the mind's tendency to want to construct a storyline, to add to the story of me, out of, especially out of feelings that you don't want to face. The mind doesn't want to, the egoic entity doesn't want to face. But then the feeling becomes a story.

The fear of what's going to happen, what the world will do to me, could do to me. Many of you are going home today. Well, not really, but you're either home already, or you won't be at home even at home.

Home already means home at home in now, to be at home in this moment, not to feel an alien here to this moment. Where is my home? It must be in some future moment, somewhere.

See, this is your already home. And then also the fear of losing your home, isn't very, because that's only an external structure. But that's all people have in the absence of truly being at home within themselves right now.

All they have is the external structure that they call home. And then even when the little thing like having to move home is called one of the most stressful experiences that a human being can face, after death, divorce, comes moving home. So as I often point out, you're not really going anywhere.

You don't really go anywhere, ever. Something remains. The scenery changes, different stage set around you as you move.

That's quite enjoyable. When you're not at home in now, you get attached to the external form of now. It could be then a feeling that now you have to leave this external form of now.

And it's painful. Or you've been longing to get away. Longing to get to your own bathroom again.

Your own bed, bedroom, your own kitchen, not having to line up for food anymore. And then the strange way that the mind works when you finally get home to your own kitchen, then you suddenly think back and think, oh, that was so nice. A whole pizza.

You can observe your mind and laugh. So the essence of our gathering cannot leave you, of course, because it's the essence of yourself. And then you begin to enjoy the flux of forms around you instead of fearing it.

And to enjoy any place. Why not? Different, even an airport can be enjoyable.

If you don't have the mind form, the thought structure that says, this is an awful place. I wish I were somewhere else. Peace arises anywhere.

Anywhere that you bring the yes to. Your journey continues in two dimensions. Of course, your journey through space and time continues.

You're moving through space. The clock runs. Tomorrow comes and somehow, not really, but it seems to.

So you continue on your journey through space and time. And more importantly, on your journey, this is the horizontal dimension. And then the journey that has no time to it.

Why we call it journey, I don't know, because language is so limited. The journey in the vertical that goes deeper into now. The deepening of that.

[Speaker 2] (6:58:49 - 7:00:13)

This concludes Realizing the Power of Now with Eckhart Tolle. Music by Stephen McNamara. For further information on lectures and workshops with Eckhart Tolle, please visit the website of Namaste Publishing at www.namastepublishing.com or call 604-224-3179 or write P.O. Box 62084, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, V6J 1Z1. To learn more about Eckhart Tolle, please visit his website www.eckharttolle.com. And if you would like additional copies of this audio learning program or to receive a free catalog of audio, video, and music for the inner life, you can contact Sounds True at www.soundstrue.com or call toll-free 1-800-333-9185 or write the Sounds True catalog, P.O. Box 8010, Boulder, Colorado, 80306. Thank you for listening.

2003-Eckhart-Tolle-Practicing-Presence-Retreat-Guide-for-Spiritual-Teacher-and-Health-Practitioner

[Speaker 1] (4:27 - 3:36:07)

Welcome, it's good to feel that nobody's waiting for anything to happen since everybody here is an advanced practitioner of presence. However, it is miraculous to be in that state of not waiting for the next thing to happen. It's always miraculous.

And the deep seated mental habit of waiting for the next thing to happen may still occasionally come up from within you as impatience, restlessness. Get on with it. What's he waiting for?

We're wasting time. We have a lot to get through. We only have a day and a half.

But the good thing is we don't have anything to get through. The central core of this gathering, the gathering of friends, is, one could say, to deepen the state of presence. But language is so limited, it's never entirely true what one says about it.

Presence is already deep. Another way of putting it, we are here to recognize the inner space that's already as deep as it can be. And to recognize that there are basically two dimensions, one could say, in life, in your life.

And that's space and things in space. Now, things, I'm using that in a wider sense than the conventional sense of the word objects. That's also things.

But every thought is a thing. Every emotion is a thing. Not quite as clearly defined in form as a physical thing.

And yet, it has form. It's an energetic form. Every thought, every feeling, every emotion.

Sense perception, even a sense perception is something that arises, a form that arises within you. Because the entire room arises within you. The perception of this room, the auditory perception of the voice, the visual perception, is happening, one could say, within you.

Certain sense data being transmitted via the nerves as impulses. They reach the brain in some strange way, and then they're reassembled in some strange way that nobody completely understands. And then you get this image of this room in which you are sitting, listening to somebody.

Nobody really knows whether there's anything out there at all. Because to you, it's all within. So all these things arise within you, and then thoughts come as you sit there.

All these things, things. So the world consists of things, forms, and that to most people is all there is. That's what they identify with, certain forms.

They identify with every thought that arises, every emotion that comes. They are that. Every thought is completely captured by the thought that arises.

That implies that they believe in every thought completely. It's madness, of course. They believe that a thought could tell you what's real, can express some ultimate truth.

This is how it is, how he is, how she is, how they are. So that's to be absorbed in things. To lose yourself in things.

Many people in advanced countries, so-called, are obviously on one level. Everybody can see that they are lost in things because they're so concerned about things, material things, things that happen or don't happen, and then come the inner thoughts, the emotions, and everything draws people in. Things become invested with a sense of self, especially thoughts and emotions.

And then when you identify with something, that means you're seeking a self in it. You identify with a possession. The possession in itself is nothing.

The thought form that arises is important to you because it's invested with me and my. So most people's lives are absorbed by things in a wider sense. And you can see it, there's no ease.

They're never at rest because their life consists of one damn thing after another. And things never leave you alone. And for a moment, perhaps, it happens.

And then the next thing comes up and demands your attention or provokes you into identifying with it. It could be a thought that arises from within you or something that comes at you from someone else or some situation. And the world and the human mind, yes, it's there to provoke you to try.

You know what you see in films. I have not much personal experience with it, but in films when you see people want to fight, they go, come on, come on. And in a way, that's what the world does to you.

Come on, let's have a fight. Take me seriously. So easy to be lost in that.

I sometimes call it object consciousness. Every thought, the entire stream of thinking, the human mind, is one object after another. Sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions, object consciousness.

One comes one after another. I must think about this. Oh, what's that?

Oh, reaction. Consumed by that. Not realizing that there's a dimension in you that is vast, spacious, in which, yes, these objects float around.

And for some people, the first glimpse they have of that is when somehow the world went too far, provoked them too much and they just can't keep up anymore with reacting. And they say, I give up. That's how it is.

It's all collapsed. And that's how it is. The first taste of surrender to what is, which too many people come when they can't stand what is anymore.

The pressure of pain gets too much. They can't stand themselves anymore because what they think of themselves is a bundle of thought forms and emotions, objects, content of your mind, identifying with the content of your mind as a me. And I can't stand the content of your mind, my mind anymore.

It's torture, which means I can't carry the burden of myself anymore, the burden of self. I can't. It's heavier.

It gets heavier and more and more painful. And then comes a point where you get the first glimpse of, I can't fight it anymore. Can't fight what is, so I might as well accept what is.

Accept this moment. Ah. And suddenly, there's space.

The simple thing of accepting what is now, suddenly there's a space around that which you accept before there was no space around it. Well, there was, but you didn't realize it. There was no space around events, no space around sense perceptions, no space around reactions, no space around thoughts, crammed full with objects.

And suddenly, when you surrender to what is, there's a sense of depth in you. There's the event, whatever object there is, the thought, the emotion, anger, sadness, the story in the head about me and my life. All right.

And there's space around it suddenly, through the simple acceptance of the is-ness of this. And that's often through pain. Many of you had your first glimpses through suffering, couldn't stand yourself anymore, and perhaps didn't even realize what happened inside you.

And then you heard a teaching, a spiritual teaching came, perhaps pointed to it also. Yes, we could also call it stillness. The cessation of being absorbed by objects.

And so, you become who you always were, but didn't realize it. You become the space, the stillness, not that which happens, that which underlies what happens, always. And then you meet.

One day it happens that you meet someone, you come to an encounter, a human encounter, and you're meeting that person in, not as a bundle of thought forms, a me that wants something, or fears something, but as still, spacious presence. You're meeting another human being in that state of openness that is just spacious presence, where they're simply looking, listening, stillness. And that means you have become a teacher, in a wider sense than the conventional sense of the word.

What the Course in Miracles calls a teacher of God. What we could call here a teacher of space. And of course, usually teaching means you're adding something to the other person.

Facts, information, knowledge, but you're not adding anything. So it's teaching in a different, different from the conventional sense. Something, one could almost say transmits itself in that encounter.

There is the arising of a unifying field of aware presence, a still, aware field. And that, I say unifying, because when you met humans through the thinking mind, which immediately labels, judges, compares myself with them, expects something, demands something, fears something, wants something, you're not really meeting anybody. You're just creating the barriers of conceptual thought are there between you and that human being.

And the other person does it to you. So you become a teacher of presence the moment you meet someone in stillness. Not the stillness that is below thought, that you sometimes find when you drift off towards sleep.

And the mind gradually stops only to start up again the moment you start dreaming. That, it happens too that people experience a little bit of peace when they drift below thought towards sleep. They've been tortured all day long thinking about their problems.

And then you become peaceful as you drift towards sleep. But that's not where we are going, or that could happen to one or two of you. The stillness is not the stillness that is the stillness of the flower, or the stillness of a flower is beautiful for the flower.

The stillness of a tree, the stillness of an animal is beautiful for the tree, for the animal, and has a deep connection with the stillness that arises in you as you go beyond thought, in which there's no loss of consciousness. There's a great awareness, alertness, wakefulness in that stillness. And that is how you meet the other human being.

This is where listening becomes so important. To listen, because mostly when you meet another human being, they'll be speaking. Because human interactions are almost completely dominated by words.

So almost always when you meet somebody, they'll be saying something. And now let's just assume for a moment they're not provocative. They're not demanding an emotional reaction from you, which also happens a lot.

They're just saying something. This needs to be discussed. We need to talk about this.

This is a matter, and that's the matter, and some other matter. And you are listening without getting drawn into the mind stream, which is object consciousness. You are there as space consciousness.

Spacious awareness. And that space that arises somehow is not confined to this form. There is a spaciousness that contains the entire interaction when you meet someone like that.

The entire interaction, there's suddenly space in it, even though the other person may not notice it as space, may not perhaps notice it at all at first. Because the mind stream may be so overpowering that they're totally in the grip of it, because they are talking to you something that really we need to deal with this now. This is quite normal state.

Some people live like that continuously. Next thing, and the next thing. An entire civilization run by, like, with that energy.

And what a grace if somebody comes in and embodies space, spaciousness, and there's somebody who is trapped in object consciousness. At first, they may not notice anything as, but it does, little miracles you will see begin to happen around you as you begin to teach. Not formally, or informally, any encounter.

That's how every encounter, as A Course in Miracles puts it, is a holy encounter. Potentially. This is not in actuality.

Encounters are not holy. They have the potential of being holy. Most human encounters are totally dominated by mind.

And even if two priests meet, they will be totally dominated by object consciousness, and they will be talking about God. And there will be nothing holy about it, because it's concepts. But the moment that you are there as space, then a deeper dimension opens up.

And that is why we are here. To recognize that. To see that.

To be that. And yes, some of the things that are going to be said here are almost paradoxical, because we are using language that every word comes from object, the world of object consciousness. It's almost impossible to talk about space consciousness, because words are object consciousness.

So it's inevitable that paradoxes will come in when we talk about it, and then the mind might say, no, that can't be right. No, of course it's not right. The words, you need to have a lot of tolerance for words here, when words are used as pointers, not as explanations, or as the ultimate truth.

Simply pointers. They point beyond themselves when they are used in spiritual, true spiritual discourse. Not a new philosophy, not an explanation, not the ultimate truth, not something to believe in, more object consciousness.

No, just pointer. So be peace-tolerant, have space around what you listen also, instead of getting in there and hanging on to a string of words and saying, no, I don't agree with that, that can't be right. You're right, it's not right.

It's only an approximation to the truth, a distant approximation to the truth. It points to it. The famous Buddhist saying, the finger pointing to the moon.

And you know, and then you look at the finger. Dogs do that, because they're not at home in the conceptual universe. The dogs will look at your finger.

Dog owners don't never learn that. They say, they go to their dog and say, it's there, there. And the dog looks, of course, at your finger.

And some people have had dogs for ten years and they're still doing it. So we are here to, to be, every word I say is wrong, but it's just, to learn to be that, which you already are completely, to learn to be that more fully. And you don't need time for that.

How can I learn to be it if I don't need time? I can't learn anything without time, says the mind. But that's the miracle.

That's what's happening here. So words are wonderful wisdom. The first line of the Tao Te Ching, which in my free translation is, reads, if you can talk about it, that's not it.

In more conventional translations, the Tao that can be spoken of is not the true Tao. That is a deep truth and that has to be said at the beginning. So important.

That is the first statement and that you need to remember throughout. And then he continued to talk about it. So we are here to, when you see how inadequate words are, you almost want to shut up.

I'm not going to say anything anymore because it's all wrong. Well, I'll say a little bit more. Now to, to realize that inner spaciousness, or just let's just say spaciousness, that is already your essential reality fully.

So you cannot add to spaciousness, because whatever you add to spaciousness will be an object. And even to say, I need to become more spacious isn't quite right. Because you're already as spacious and as deep as can be.

It's simply to see, to realize who you already are, or what you already are, or that which you already are, in the depths of your being. And of course, as a bundle of content, a content in your mind, which for many people is still their identity, and which you also still have, even though you realize the deeper dimension of space, there is still the content of your mind. It doesn't become totally eradicated all at once.

It's the, the content of your mind is still there. But it's recognized as content. So it doesn't absorb your sense of self into it.

Then the content of your mind becomes heavy and problematic. Without having your sense of self in it, the content of your mind is just the content of your mind. And on the level of content, your life is always, will have loose ends, will have things that go well here, and something you gain here, but something else you lose there.

There's always the coming and going of things. There's never a final happy ending on the level of content. It can't be, because things continuously come and go.

So to look for some kind of working out of your life on the level of content is futile. All you can do, the best you can do, is to do your best to play with it. Yes, honor it, because that also has, it is, and it is to be honored for what it is.

Things are to be honored for what they are, and things in the wider sense, but starting with objects, they also can be honored for what they are. And every object has beingness, has certain presence. When you truly give it attention, then you can notice that it has being also.

And it's, you honor that, but that's the object without seeking yourself in it. You become obsessed with objects when you seek self in objects, then you become obsessed with possessions and whatever the objects might enhance your sense of self. So to honor the world of object consciousness, even to honor your emotions, of course, also to see them for what they are, an energy movement, not a personal me problem, my human emotion, nothing personal, an emotion.

And if you, that's fine. And then you see it, and there's space around it. But you're not looking for some kind of ultimate perfection, working out, or some limitless state in the world of objects.

Some, I'm looking for the ideal place to live, the ideal climate, the ideal partner, and job, and car, and my ideal status in the world, so that everybody recognizes how great I am. Ideal, maybe like, yes, arrange the world of things in such a way that it's completely satisfying to me, and fulfills me, and makes me happy. It doesn't work.

You can honor it, yes, but not to seek that which it can't, can never give you, and see that you already are completely and fully yourself, without needing to add anything. You can add, it's a game, no more. You learn a new language, it's a game.

Are you going to have a greater sense of self through it? No, just maybe a greater ego, if you identify with acquired knowledge. Now you speak three languages, whereas he only speaks one language.

You can add, and that gives you the ego a little boost, a satisfaction. Now I've mastered,

mastered another language. I've mastered this, and mastered that, and it doesn't satisfy for long.

And so, as you teach, you're also not trying to sort out somebody else's life on the level of objects, on the level of things. I'm going to sort out your life. Then you, then this is, especially as you begin to teach formally, more formally, when you say, okay, somebody comes to you for a session, or you give a talk, rather than teaching informally, without any structure, just meeting someone.

That's how I taught for years, meeting people on park benches, in little cafes. And then, that's, I didn't know it was called teaching, so it wasn't really teaching, until somebody unfortunately said, you are a spiritual teacher. And somebody else said, who are you?

I said, I don't know. It's just, it's good to know, not to know who you are, because whatever you know is an object in your consciousness. So as you meet people, more formally, teaching, that very structure can become a hindrance, because the structure is already a limitation to it.

That applies to every structure. And that limitation then can be inside you also. Because then there comes the feeling, okay, I need to teach.

And you notice something strange inside you. There are two things to be aware of that are dangerous. One is the feeling that I'm not ready to teach.

I don't know enough. I'm not quite there yet. I'm not ready to teach.

Not yet. I'm not ready to see people. Not yet.

Not quite. That's one danger. The other one, the other danger, is to feel, I'm finally ready to teach.

And then you could become like, sometimes those people want meats. And don't feel offended if you did it once or twice. People want meats, and so you meet someone, and they say, oh, there's obviously something wrong with you, because by the way you walk and hold your body, there's a lot of obstruction there, I can see.

Let me just sit down here. I'll touch, I'll manipulate your spine, or do whatever they do, or I'm a healer, just sit. Or somebody who wants to give things, now they have found the truth, and they are so enthusiastic, now they want to tell it to you.

That's how it, there's only the present moment. Why don't you believe that? And then you might teach, you get into arguments when you teach.

You're completely wrong. Let me tell you how it is. So it's dangerous to feel that you are ready to teach.

It's the ego, hidden, very often. And the other polarity, I'm not ready, is also the ego, hidden underneath. And so the truth of it is, of course, in a deeper sense, you're not ready, nor do you need to be ready.

Because when you say, I'm not ready, you're really referring to the content of your mind. You're still identifying with the content of your mind, and you say, this content is not quite enough yet. I need just a few more workshops, maybe we'll do it.

There's something still that I haven't quite understood, and it's called the secret of the universe. I'm still working on it. But when I have that, then I will start teaching.

So the truth is, you're never really ready to teach, nor do you need to be ready to teach, because you are not teaching. It's not you. Not you as the accumulated content of your mind is teaching.

Space. Space is already in you. Nothing needs to be added to it.

Space is already the essence of who you are. Spaciousness, stillness, whatever pointer works best for you. Pure consciousness, a little bit more abstract pointer.

Dangerous. The more abstract they get, the more dangerous they are, because you can then start to believe in pure consciousness. Space is a little bit better.

I can't do very much with that. And even better is the Buddhists' emptiness. Can't do anything with that.

And that is already fully in you. You don't need, it's, all you need is to recognize that it's already there. How do I recognize?

Surely I need time to realize myself as emptiness. No, time is the one thing that stops you from realizing yourself as emptiness. That's all.

The one thing that you thought you needed is the one thing that stops you. And so comes the beauty of renouncing. There's a lot of talk about renunciation in spiritual circles, and usually that you renounce possessions, you renounce food or certain kinds of food, you renounce sex, you renounce status, although there's a lot of status in being a renunciate, at least in some parts of the world, maybe not in New York.

But if you go to India, you can see how much status you have if you just dress in yellow robes or nothing at all, and don't shave anymore. And immediately you have high status. Not in the West, of course, you have to do something else for status.

But you have a very high status in India, because there's an ancient tradition of honoring and respecting the spiritual. And there are many imposters, there are many jewels in India too, true beings. And there are many who make a living out of playing the role of renunciate, and they get their food, that's how it works.

So renunciation, there are many kinds, but the ultimate renunciation is, one could say, you renounce time. And so then future loses a lot of its importance, because you're not looking for yourself anymore in there, in that dimension for future. Then there's immediately an opening into space when you renounce time.

One could also say, and that's just another way of putting it, they go together, they're one. And don't be afraid when I say it, renounce thought. Because by renouncing, they're one, because time is no more than a thought form.

Past and future is what time is, and past and future are thought forms. Nobody has ever met past and future except as a thought form. A memory, you remember, but you read the now to remember it, a mental projection of something's going to happen, but only can project it now.

So they're thought forms. So thought itself and time are really one. To renounce thought is to realize how deep you are beyond thought, how spacious, how still.

And that's all that's required to be an effective teacher, to use a very limiting term, is that. And it is good to feel that you are not ready. But need to add a little bit more here.

It is good to feel that you are not ready, and then that becomes great power, but you need, I haven't added the little bit here, to feel that you are not ready, and become comfortable with that. Completely accept your non-readiness. And you're not knowing the answers.

In fact, the more you go into not knowing, the deeper the space that opens up, and that's only language that's already deep. The more you go into not knowing, the deeper you become. Well, you're already deep, but...

And so it's, there is such beauty in then meeting another human being, let's say in a more formal teaching situation, you're supposed to give a talk. What are you going to talk about? Well, I have my agenda here.

Point, seven points towards this or that. Fourteen steps to full enlightenment. We'll get through that this weekend.

But with no, then of course it's all object consciousness. You're feeding, and people will sometimes find it satisfying, because you fed them all through the weekend, information and things to remember and feel good about, and sometimes they even get a folder to take home, full of things. It's really been a great weekend.

So there are many people who teach like that, and they do, on their own level, whoever comes to them is drawn to, is right for them at that time. And so there are people who, there are people who teach you, they may teach you theoretical Buddhism, and that may have its place. You may not be ready for more than theoretical Buddhism.

Maybe you haven't suffered enough. All I'm ready for is theology. Give me the theory.

Something to believe in, to identify with. I'm a Buddhist. What about you?

I'm a Christian. Well, you got it all wrong. Or maybe not quite as obvious.

You say, well, we Buddhists respect all traditions. You also have the truth in your own way, and one day you will become a Buddhist also. The beauty there is in not knowing.

In formal teaching situations, and become comfortable with it. Like a little child. Become comfortable with not knowing what's going to be said next, instead of preparing what you think you should be saying next.

Or looking through the archives in your mind for some kind of relevant thing to say to this person, to help them, make them feel better, to teach the truth. And instead, be there as space. And space doesn't know anything.

And then see what happens. There may not even be any words. But that state of not knowing is already a state of powerful, a field, one could say, of intelligence.

Very still. We think intelligence is mental noise. And the better you are at mental noise, the more intelligent you are.

But that's a very limited view. True and deep, the true intelligence is very still. And every creative insight comes out of stillness.

Whoever is creative in any field must at least occasionally become still. Because nothing creative could ever come otherwise. And there are people who are considered great in this world, who are perhaps still 3% of the time.

And that's enough for great insights to come. But here we are, this is, we are going beyond 3% here. So to feel that you are not ready, you don't know the answers, is beautiful.

It becomes power, spiritual power, when you no longer feel uncomfortable about not feeling ready. No longer feel uncomfortable about not knowing. Then comes great wisdom.

And you find yourself speaking, if it's a formal situation, and saying things that you didn't know before. Who is speaking? Stillness is speaking.

Consciousness is speaking. I'm not speaking. And yet I am that.

The tonight, tomorrow, which is a thought form, the time here, see if you can go into this creation to renounce time, to renounce future, to burn up time, one could almost say, burn up past and future, and just be here as spacious awareness, as presence. Yes, occasionally time will come in, a wave of time will come in, which is a wave of mind. And then it'll be gone.

And before the next wave comes, you notice space. And maybe the next wave will wait a little. And even while the wave is there, you might notice suddenly a little bit of space around it.

And the wave could come as an emotion from within. It could come as anxious, something anxious about what's going to happen to me. And you notice the emotion.

And let it be. Accept the is-ness of this moment, within and without. And suddenly there's a little bit of space around the anxiety.

Because you let it be. You allow it to be. Even our anger about some insignificant thing here that isn't right, something's not quite right, how it should be.

There, there's this little stain on the carpet. I didn't come here for that. Maybe a slight exaggeration, but not only a slight exaggeration, how sometimes the mind operates in order to draw you in again and to feel right and righteous and give you a sense of self again.

Me against that. With all the things that have happened to me, that life has done to me, surely I need 15 years of psychoanalysis just to, well, just to see what's there. Just whatever movement is there, it'll be some kind of content.

Some kind of content, some kind of form, emotional form, thought form. And simply to see it and allow it to be. Because the fastest way to space consciousness is to allow the forms that you encounter in the now, nowhere else, to be as they are.

So the fastest way to the limitless and formless essence of who you are is not to fight the forms. To fight the forms keeps you trapped yourself in form. Because every reactivity, every reaction against any form that arises in your life, within or without, strengthens your own form as the me.

That's why the ego loves that fighting movement, that reacting movement, that righteous reactivity, that shouldn't, should, he shouldn't, they shouldn't. And so to allow the forms, especially now as we practice intensely here, wherever you go, the forms in your life will have certain limitations. So your room may have certain limitations, the food may have certain limitations, how you feel inside you may have certain limitations.

You've come here for inner peace and shouldn't, why can't I feel that? Well, what is it that you do feel? Well, I feel this, this turmoil that's been there, it hasn't left me, it was supposed to go because I'm on a retreat here.

Okay, what, what does it feel like? Well, it's this movement. Okay, what do you do with it?

I don't know, I should go. Well, is it as it is? Well, of course it is as it is.

Well then, all you have to do is accept that it is as it is. Because it is already, it is, that is. Okay, is it that bad?

Well, no, well, it, but you can't argue with the fact that it is. And then, notice a little bit of space around the turbulence. One, and space for you, I'd also call that a little bit of peace around the non-peace.

Words are limited, we're using words for something that goes beyond the objects. A little bit of peace around the non-peace, because you accepted the non-peace. And it's a little bit at first, and then you may realize that it is vast, that the peace around the non-peace is vast, and that the non-peace is relatively insignificant.

But it wants to be taken very seriously. And this is what you teach, nothing else you teach. Whenever you meet anybody in any teaching situation, that's what you teach, no matter what form the teaching takes, that ultimately, that is the essence.

So here, be with what is completely, simply within or without, just be with that. And so, nothing needs to be different from the way it is right now, because it already is. That takes you beyond the limit, seemingly limiting forms in your life, because that's what form is, the nature of all forms to be limiting.

Every thought limits you, every thought that you think, especially if you identify with it, limits you completely. You're trapped in a tiny little thought form, and you think you're speaking the truth. That's how it is.

And you've seen a tiny perspective, the totality is vast, you've taken a tiny fragment out of the vastness, and that's how it is. Every form is limiting. You meet somebody, you have a relationship, that is limiting in some way, also, always.

And then you don't want any relationships, you live alone, you're very limited there, too. No human interaction anymore, very limiting. You can't do anything without encountering limitation somewhere.

It doesn't mean that you cannot play around in the world of form and find a nice, beautiful mansion to live in, without expecting to find the limitless, which is ultimately yourself, there. Then playing, it's a play. And improve your life on the level of form is beautiful, too, but not expecting something through that, that it can't give you.

So the limitations you find here, the little ones, suddenly it starts raining, you get wet, you feel cold, that feels limiting, you contract. Why did I come here? You have a limiting thought.

You lie in bed and say, I should have, should be at home, would be more comfortable, and have so many things to deal with there. Why did I come here? Whatever you encounter limitation, or you have a, suddenly have a pain in the body as you get up, allowing whatever form this moment takes, to be as it is, takes you beyond form in yourself.

Not fighting the form. Allowing. So the formless is hidden in the form.

People think, I need to get rid of all this to finally find freedom. And you find some other forms, some other limitation. If you're poor now, you might think great wealth will free you, and when you have great wealth, you will find that has its own limitations.

You suddenly are a different kind of prisoner. If you seek something there, on the level of form, yes. And then you've realized forms are to be accepted as they are now, just now, just this.

Not some story in the head about, I'm poor, so I have to accept that I'm poor. No. This moment, you're not poor at this moment.

You're sitting on a chair. You're breathing. There's a little table.

There's a mattress on the floor. And there's a window. And a little potted plant.

That's the reality of this moment. And perhaps the room is small. And there's two, three coins on the table.

That's your capital. And that's the, and perhaps the hungry. That's this moment.

That's how it is at this moment. It's actually quite beautiful. Even that, when it's fully accepted, this moment.

Or you're sitting on a park bench. No room anymore around you. Just this.

Now if you have an idea in your head, this is what my life has come to. I'm ruined. I'm poor.

Look at these bastards in their expensive cars. Stories going around the head. Because every story is a search of an identity.

If you can condemn these bastards in expensive cars, you have added a little bit to your sense of mind-made identity. Because I'm right and they are wrong. That's how the ego works.

No, so it's not accepting I'm ill or accepting that I'm poor or accepting just this moment as it is. Not some idea around this moment. Just this moment.

And then enormous things happen when you don't expect anything to happen anymore.

That's the end of conditioning. It's amazing.

It may be good to keep noble silence for the rest of tonight. Stay just a little while with the empty chair when this form is gone. We'll deal later today, if there is such a thing as later.

There isn't really, but in conventional terms. This afternoon we'll address any questions that may arise. Some may be here already.

Others may be there. In the meantime, we're here. And it's very still here, which is wonderful.

In most places there's always some humming of this or that machine or air conditioner or heating, but here it's still very still. You're already aware of the beautiful spiritual practice of listening to silence when it's there. And in the moment of listening, you will realize that you're not thinking.

Now you may not be able to listen to silence for very long, but in the moment of noticing silence, you're not thinking. That's an amazing thing. And of course, also, since you're not listening to anything, when you listen to silence, silence is nothing, not a form, not a thing.

We talked about things last night, but silence is not a thing. It sounds like a thing when we call it silence, but in itself silence is formless. It is nothingness, one could say.

It's no thingness. So you listen to something that is only a space. And in that, you become aware of that which is formless, which is awareness itself.

Not in a subject-object relationship, but awareness becoming aware of itself. The field of attention, one could say. Another way of putting it, you are becoming aware of yourself as awareness.

I am. The deepest I am-ness underneath the stories. It gets mixed up with the stories.

So I said in a little book that I wrote recently that's coming out in the summer, it's called Stillness Speaks, that if you lose touch with inner stillness, you lose touch with yourself. And when you lose touch with yourself, you lose yourself in the world. You lose yourself in your mind.

You lose yourself in your thoughts, in your emotions, in your perceptions, and in your experiences. Looking for yourself, but not never finding yourself. So that's the world, is all those things.

And you lose yourself in that when you lose touch with inner stillness. And then you're looking for yourself, continuously being lost. This is why in India they call that state delusion.

You're not really lost, but you think you're lost. It's like a dream. And so the challenge is, it's relatively easy here.

There's the helpful silence around you that you can notice. But the challenge is, when you meet the world, which is the world of things, of forms, including your thoughts, we talked about it, including physical things, and all those demands that the world makes upon you, when you meet the world, you walk out of here, and the world arises again. Even if we have a period of silence, you walk out of here, and it's more likely that the world, even if you don't speak, in the form of even if your cell phones are switched off, and there's nobody you can say, you must listen to this, this is what happened.

But the cell phone is switched off, but there are other cell phones in the head, and the thought comes, you must think about this. It's the same. So the world arises as your own thoughts in you.

So the art of living, one could say, is not to shut out the world and say, I don't want anything to do anymore with the world. I've had enough of it. More than enough.

I'm becoming a hermit. I'm going away. I don't want anybody to bother me anymore.

They're all mad. The whole world is mad. Leave me alone.

But even then, you would still carry the whole mad world with you in your head. And your pain body that you identify with that becomes thought. And after a few days or weeks of relative peace, perhaps, if that, the world will arise again inside you, even in the hermit.

And then the doubts come in, which is the world also. Why am I here? So the art is to deal with things, the things of the world, including your thinking and your emotions and your relationships and your experiences, without the loss of that sense of space or spaciousness.

To have the spaciousness while you play with the world. And I'm saying play, because it's when you have the spaciousness, you can play with the world. Not in a flippant sense, not in a play, as a beautiful, you're engaged in a dance or play in the world of form.

Not play in the sense of I'm superior to it or whatever. No, control or anything like that. No, you participate in the play.

It's only, but you can only do that when there is not a complete loss of awareness of space, or awareness of awareness, which is the same space. So the question at any moment in your life is, where's the space at this moment? Am I totally getting drawn into object consciousness, into things, into reactions, into thoughts, into emotions?

So that a vital question at any moment is whether you have lost the space, and you have lost yourself in things in the world. And that's very easy to happen. You all know that, how easy it is, because the world seems to have such an enormous gravitational pull, the things of the world, including the inner world.

And so there are quite a few people who can be very spiritual, which means still inside and present and aware, can be very spiritual when they're not being disturbed. When they're left alone, they're sitting alone in their room. Or out in nature, it's beautiful too, it's very helpful.

And that's good that you have at least there, at least there you can be still, and even the majority of the population don't have that. They can't, even when they're alone in their room, they're tormented continuously by their minds. So they're never, at least you have that, but then at some point you have to come out of your room, or you have to leave nature and go back into the human world.

And there we go again. And then how quickly do you lose all sense of space or spaciousness? How quickly do the things of this world pile up?

And then your inner space is crammed full with things. No sense of space left. So many things to think about and deal with and to react to.

So this, the art then is, one could almost say, to be, to live in two dimensions simultaneously. As long as you are here as a form, a physical form, you are also in the world of form. You cannot prematurely leave that.

And there's a reason why you're here. It's actually through facing the dilemma of finding yourself disguised as a form, consciousness disguised as a form, and then forgetting who you are through that dilemma that you encounter of being here in the world of form. It's only through the dilemma that you go deeper.

So you don't find the dimension of the formless through removing yourself from the world of form. But through the form itself becomes an opening when you are in a right relationship to the forms. So that's the art that everyone here is here to master.

One could say your purpose is to be a bridge between two worlds, the formless world of consciousness and consciousness manifested as form, a bridge between that. And that's the dance. And what, if you lose the dimension of stillness, formless, the world becomes a place of misery, on suffering, sooner or later, with brief episodes of delusion, delusional happiness.

I often cite as a typical example of delusional, brief happiness, the honeymoon experience. But that's only a, one could say, a metaphor for many different kinds of honeymoons when some form comes into your life and seems to suddenly fulfill you for a moment. So that's, at any moment then in your life, especially in relationships, but one could say you're always in relationship with something or someone.

Even one could say you have a relationship also with your mind, with your thinking and your emotions. So the question is, is spaciousness being obscured at this moment by things? Or is there still a sense of spaciousness while you deal with things, while you speak, while you answer the phone, talk to people that see what needs to be done, give attention to this person, to that person, or to this matter that needs dealing with, or driving, or waiting for this or that.

And even while your mind produces thoughts, are you completely lost in the thoughts? Or is there still in the background a certain stillness, a certain sense of space? And that is there when you, you're aware of the kind of thoughts that go through your head and you're not totally absorbed by each thought, then there is space.

You no longer totally believe in each thought. That means there is space beyond the thought in you. It's those people who totally believe in each thought that comes into their head, they're lost in the world, lost in thought.

And then you act on that, on a partial and extremely relative truth that this thought expresses, a tiny perspective, and then you take action. And you can, what that leads to, you don't see that this thought is only a relative truth. The action arises out of a relative viewpoint.

And of course, it brings more suffering. It's not the totality acting through you, because sometimes action is required. But true action doesn't come out of this mental decision making, comes out of becoming still, finding the space, being the space.

And then action comes, or the right word comes out of that, unpremeditated. Sure. Another way, because it's good to give you a choice of pointers, a choice to apply in your life.

Another way of asking yourself that question, whether there is still space in you, in any situation, at any moment. You could ask, where is the now? Because the now is space, the space in which things happen.

Now is not what happens. It is the space in which whatever happens, happens. So the now is just another perspective on it.

So if you become aware of the field of now, that's called present moment awareness, one could say, aware of awareness again, of the field of now, then that's the space. There's the space. And there's then what happens.

Then what happens becomes, you can, when you have mastered the art of living in the two dimensions, then you realize the primordial dimension is the dimension of space, of being, because that is the source. Or whatever happens comes out of that and goes back into that. And so whatever then happens on the level of events and happenings is always of secondary importance.

That is called liberation from the world. Free. That is what Jesus referred to when he said, I have overcome the world.

Who was he to say, I have overcome the world? He didn't have worldly power, armies to command, bank accounts, nothing, and said, I have overcome the world. So he was talking, of course, about this, to realize then that whatever happens on that level of form is secondary in importance.

It is relatively important, perhaps, healthy, sick, rich, poor, gain, loss, relatively important, happy, unhappy, just got something, just lost something, relatively important, but none of that is absolutely important. When the relative masquerades as absolute, then life gets heavy and serious. And so it's only when you recognize the relative as relative, then really, one could say it is the end of suffering, because in the truest meaning of the word, suffering is mistaking the relative for the absolute.

It doesn't mean that you cannot experience physical pain anymore, or certain things may happen on the level of form, which are part of the level of form. On the level of forms, occasionally, things collapse. Occasionally, things dissolve.

It is in the nature of form that occasionally it crumbles. All forms, whether it be situations, or material structures, or relationships, whatever on the level of form, or some philosophy you arranged in your mind that explains it all, as they do, people who believe in dogmas do, and so you've rearranged. And at some point, something will happen, and even that will crumble.

Many people, you may remember, may have read when the communist regime in East Germany collapsed, and the collective belief in dogma collapsed, and that was a country where every, I think every fifth person was a government informer. They had buildings full of piles and piles of information on people. Later, it was open to public access, and people were amazed.

They had information about everybody. What for? Mad.

You can't explore madness any further. You can only say it's mad. And many people, there was a very high rate of suicides when it collapsed, because the philosophies that they had arranged, the way in which the universe, the world, they explained it to themselves, didn't make sense anymore.

And because they were lost in the relative, all what was left was to kill themselves. Life didn't make sense anymore. Completely lost in mind, in the relative.

They say in Japan sometimes, maybe less so now, when people lost their jobs, because a job was a lifelong identification with your company, they would often commit suicide. Again, being lost in the relative. When the stock market crashed in the 30s, maybe it still happens now.

The famous visual image that we still have is people jumping off skyscrapers, because their life didn't, was empty now. Their stocks reduced to nothing. What's left?

Nothing. Nothing left. Nothing left.

So there, there's the fine, the beautiful balance. So ask yourself then, where's the space? Or where's the now, whatever pointer?

And that can awaken, that little pointer, that pointer is not it, but that pointer points to the, it can awaken you. Even if you have to have a little external sign for a little while, don't get attached to it. On your door, as you go out or come on your office door, desk, where's the now?

Or something like that. But don't use it for too long. It's always good after a while to discard pointers, because they can become little deities.

And the moment people start building the church of now, you know that they've lost the now. So there's the walking. And that's, this is really the purpose of being, is to learn that.

And then the beautiful liberation is that whatever happens in your life is secondary. Relatively important, perhaps, but never absolutely important. And that includes what doesn't happen either.

It includes not winning the lottery, or winning the lottery, or making it in the eyes of the world, which is a meaningless thing anyway, but it's how people think. Making it in the eyes of the world, or not making it in the eyes of the world. Just little stories that people tell.

When you finally make it, you realize it, it's not a big thing. Making it is quite meaningless. It's a fiction too.

So whatever happens, or doesn't happen, may be important, but not absolutely so. To know that, not as an intellectual belief, but to know that, to know that within yourself, within the very cell structure of your body, to know that. To dwell in space consciousness, to be that.

To derive your identity from that, which is so different from the egoic identity that the Buddha called it no self. So that you don't confuse it with something that is not like that at all. That deepest I, or I am, that has nothing to do with form, and nothing to do with time, is confused with identification with I am Mr. So-and-so. I am the accountant, the managing director, the street sweeper. I'm the mother, the father. I am the one who made it, the one who failed, the one who made it, whatever.

All these form identifications. The greatest illusion lies in the most frequently used word in the language, I. That word contains the greatest illusion and potentially the deepest truth.

Usually when it's used, it refers to the greatest illusion of I. And that's what the Buddha referred to when he talked of the illusion of self. A fiction in the mind, a story.

Identification with forms, with things, with thoughts, with emotions, a bundle of thoughts. That's me, my past, my future. So the most frequently used word in the language, I, is the core delusion.

But that potentially, that word, I, also speaks of the deepest truth of who you are when there is, that is the I prior to identification with forms. I am not this or that. The deepest sense of beingness or presence that is the space, that is the inner stillness.

And to have that even as you speak, to let, in the background, so to speak, it's there, as you answer the phone, saying, this check didn't clear, you wrote a check, and there must, something must have happened, the bank, I got it returned, now whatever I was going to do, I have to pay my credit. Oh, okay. Well, let's see what we can do.

Always have a little, bring in, helps to, little gaps. Let's see what we can do. We could do this.

I could call the bank manager, or maybe I could write you another check. So action arises, but there's space around it. Thoughts arise, but there's space around the thoughts.

Not, but the, the world, especially in the form of the human mind, has this pull, it provokes you, it wants you to interact with it on its own vibrational frequency. It doesn't want you to interact, but it doesn't want the space, it wants you to be equally nervous and agitated. So the person who is speaking to you, because that person is not, is lost in the world, is lost in the mind, so there isn't really anybody there, there's just the frequency of the human mind, and the frequency of the human mind wants you to, what's the word, interact on it on its own level.

It wants you to even feed it, to contribute to that frequency, come, so it wants you to be nervous also, to be agitated and upset. Now the, the person who is talking to you doesn't know that, because it's all unconscious, there's nobody really there, there's only the, the mind stream there, and the mind stream says, come on, give me more of this, this is so important, surely you must agree that we should all be very anxious about this. It's not saying that, but it's implied.

So then it loves when you can, you can react on the same level, then it increases, it gets even stronger, then if you can draw in other people, that's even better, make another phone call, you know what happened? Oh no! And, and then you can get on the emails.

And if you happen to be powerful, if you have worldly power, you could go to such an extreme as that you pick up the phone and say, send in the army. And they don't realize there's no space left whatsoever, there's just that. And that is the same, this art, the two dimensions, living in the two dimensions, it applies also when you, of course, when you, many of you work with people, some of you are doctors, nurses, body workers, social workers, quite some of you are teachers, you work with people, and there's a form in which you work with people, there's a modality of working, whatever is the existing, the pre-existing modality of what you do. And so the question is, does the modality or the structure tend to obscure space consciousness?

Does it tend to obscure presence? Or can it, is it a vehicle for presence? Can presence and that sense of spaciousness flow into the modality?

Or does, is there a tendency for the modality to obscure space, for the modality to be totally mind-dominated? And if it is, then the question arises, is there any way that this modality that I use and I work with, is there any way that this modality can make room, is there room in it for space? So for example, if you are a body worker, then there is great room for space, because mental concepts don't come in very much, and words don't come in very much.

So easily, that sense of spaciousness, of stillness, can flow into your movements, the touch, and so on, works beautifully. However, if you are a doctor, there are certain requirements on the level of form that have to be met. Doctors need to take notes.

They listen and they take notes. And here we have, that is the world of form and of thought. So is it possible for you not to become totally drawn into that?

Not saying you can't take, you have to take notes, yes. Is it possible to take notes with space? Is it possible to, while you are not scribbling something, to listen to that person in spaciousness, spacious, still awareness?

Then step from the stillness into, back into thought and write something down. Then step out of thought again, as, and look at the past. So you step in and out of thought, and after a while you notice even while there is thought, there is still a spaciousness in the background, or around it.

So words are always limited. So you can see, and I know some doctors are already mastering that. Some still have difficulty with it, of getting drawn into that.

And perhaps this afternoon, some of you may want to say something about it, how it is for you. You may be a psychoanalyst. Probably not, but...

Now the typical picture that we have of psychoanalysts is they sit a little bit behind you, the patient lies on the couch, they still do it. And there's something good there too, but they still do it. But they're writing continuously, whatever the person, the, all the content of the mind that comes up, they write it all down.

And so they have glasses and... And then what happens? And then what, and then they speak, they speak, they speak, the content of your mind, repressed content comes up, and the psychoanalyst fills volumes and volumes of scribbles with...

And then it can happen after 10 or 15 or 20 years of scribbling, as the psychoanalyst finds that for longer periods he's not scribbling, he's just listening, and he scribbles a little less, and may not know quite what's happening. And it could, can happen that in people who work with people, the spaciousness arises without them even ever having heard about it. It arises naturally, it happens to some.

So after a while, they become much more effective in what they do, because they have gone beyond the form, beyond the mind structures that are associated with whatever they do, and something that is deeper than mind comes in, even though they may to some extent still be using certain structures. That's beautiful when that happens. But you don't have to wait for 20 or 30 years for it to happen naturally, which perhaps it would, to see whether it is possible to bring presence into this very, the structures that you have to use.

And if you're a teacher, there are certain structures there that are of course created by the mind, and they're not created by the mind that is in touch with spaciousness. Most of the structures of the world, if you go into companies and institutions, government institutions, corporations, in most cases, there are a few enlightened companies, but in most cases, the structure is entirely the product of thought, of mind. It doesn't allow for space at all.

So that is why when you go into certain corporations, many, many, it doesn't feel so good. There's a, everybody's fighting against everybody else. And their little power groups here, they, us against them, and even within the little groups there, it's a, it's a nightmare world.

And yet, even there, the question is, is it possible to bring space? And of course, in most cases, it is. Schools, many schools are very agitated and nervous places.

There are some alternative schools that may be different. And again, is it possible for you to use, of course, the demands being made upon you as a teacher, that they have to learn this, they have to pass an exam, you have to evaluate and judge them, each one, and perhaps what really matters, the system, the structure has no place to evaluate whether a student has an inner stillness or not. You can, when you write the reports, the end of term reports, there's no section that speaks of inner stillness at all.

So, again, in many cases, the world can actually probably change from within those structures if more people bring in spaciousness or presence. And it is a challenge, especially heavy, mind-dominated structures can be a big challenge, but it can be done. And if it cannot be done, you will find yourself being removed from where you are.

That's beautiful, too. You will find yourself, either you suddenly, one morning you get a letter that says, we do not require your services anymore, or you yourself write the letter. So bringing in, into whatever you do, bringing in, bringing the space as the most essential factor in what you do, not the external structure that needs to be honored, also.

But it is not the most essential factor. It's never the most essential factor. So there's always, and the space is a, is greater than you.

It is, in essence, it is you, but it is greater than the little, far greater than what the little me could do. All healing arises from that. All true transformation arises out of that.

And it's very rare for human beings, for people who work with others, to have no structure whatsoever. So that's, of course, it's beautiful when it happens. This is how typically in India, spiritual teaching happens in many cases, that there is an almost complete absence of firm structure.

In other words, the teacher doesn't, well, some teachers have techniques, but the true teachers, they just sit there. And you come to them, and if you're lucky, they're there. If you're not lucky, they've gone.

They've gone somewhere, nobody knows when they're coming back. And they just sit, and there's nothing, all that there is, is presence, beingness, spaciousness. And that's the most powerful thing.

It transmits itself. And there may come a time for you too, there may come a time, there doesn't have to be, when all structures fall away, the ways in which you interact with people. And then people ask you, can I come and see you for a session?

And you say, okay. And they ask, well, what do you do in a session? I don't know.

Just come and see. I don't know what I do. I don't do anything.

And it's not just a clever answer. You truly don't know what you do, because you don't do anything as such. Just that.

Or you continue to use whatever form it is, and presence flows into it beautifully. It becomes a vehicle for that spaciousness. In other words, this stillness becomes an essential part of even the form.

A typical example of that would be the simple thing of a simple movement that you make. Picking up a flower, putting it in a vase, without any interference of thought, just that. And without saying, okay, now this flower has to go to that particular place there.

It goes where it needs to go by itself. It knows where it fits in relation to the totality. So there's an intelligence then that comes into play that is far greater than, and that can, so this is just a little example how presence, spaciousness, whatever you're aware of, flows into, can flow into the doing, into a movement, as every artist knows.

But it's not confined to art. It can flow into every step that you walk. Drinking.

A certain quality then comes into what you do that is absent when there is no spaciousness in the doing. If there is spaciousness as you do, and the quality, it's hard to explain what I mean by quality, but I believe that you know, you can sense what is meant by that word, quality, that flows into what you do out of spaciousness. There is presence in the doing, which means the future is not more important than this moment.

When the mind is there and spaciousness is lost, the next moment is always more important than this one. That's always how the mind, because it needs to get to the end of it already, because then there's the next thing to do. And that means when people come to you, you don't want the next moment, which is, I want them to get better.

I want them to awaken. I want them to be happy again. That is also an obstacle and a hindrance, because that prevents you from being fully there in presence, in spacious presence with them.

Because you, yes, you have good intentions, but those good intentions prevent the deeper intelligence that dwells in the presence, that is the presence, that is the primordial intelligence, from coming into that situation and resolving it from within, rather than somebody coming in from the outside saying, I'm going to rearrange that situation to make you better. It's a very natural thing to feel that you want to help someone. But if it becomes a wanting something that is not here now, wanting something to be different, instead of a deep acceptance of what is, that's where the deepest, the true healing comes in through that.

Because the mind will tell you, I can't accept that this person is so miserable. I can't accept that this person is suffering so much. No, of course, on the human level, you can't, perhaps.

You go beyond that, and it is the deepest surrender to this moment as it is. And that's where a power comes in that you could never, the mind, totally beyond what the mind could ever devise systems or techniques for this or that. It comes from within.

And so that you are the provider of that space. It comes through you and you are not separate from the space. We have to use language, unfortunately.

So not even, not wanting this moment to be different from the way it is. And then the deepest and true change happens. It's almost a paradox.

In the deepest acceptance, it happens. Because if you don't, then you're saying in some way that the universe is perverse. It doesn't, it shouldn't have done that to you.

But it is as it is. Always. And the totality of the universe has brought it about.

The totality. And we cannot understand through the mind why an event that seems senseless, that has happened to somebody, to make a person say, why does that happen to me? Or why does it happen to this person?

It doesn't make sense. This person had a whole life ahead of them and now they've fallen ill and they might die prematurely, or so the mind says. This shouldn't be happening.

Or even the worst is a child falling ill. It's the most difficult to accept if a child dies. It seems that it's against the entire law of the universe that life should be taken away from somebody who has hardly started to live.

So it seems so natural that when you meet, let's say a child who is very sick comes to you, that you feel this shouldn't be happening. And you really want that child to get better. But nobody, the human mind cannot understand why certain things happen within the totality.

But it can understand, especially now since of modern physics, the human mind can understand that there are no isolated events. Everything is connected with everything else. It's only through our superficial sense perceptions that we isolate something and say this is an event.

But an event is part of the totality of the cosmos. And it's probably connected even to things in other galaxies. It's so one.

The entire universe is one organism, one being. And everything there is interconnected. So there are no separate or isolated events.

But we cannot possibly understand through the human mind what function a seemingly senseless event has within the totality. And that includes the worst things that humans have done to other humans, created hell on the planet, the worst things, concentration camps, world wars, people building chemical weapons, chemical and other devilish things that even in your wildest dreams you couldn't even think of. And they make them to inflict suffering on other humans.

It all seems, and then, why? And even that within the totality has a function. But we cannot understand because all we see is a fragment.

If you had a huge painting and you took a tiny fragment out of it, just a little pigment, it would, you would say what's, that doesn't make sense. I just, what is this? It's only when you, if you could see the totality, you can see that's where it fits in.

It's one, sometimes one can get a glimpse of that, just a glimpse of it, when you see a seemingly negative event, a seemingly something that shouldn't be happening. At this time you have this crisis, Iraq and so on. In the 60s you had Vietnam.

Let's look at that just for a moment, just a glimpse. On the one hand you have a, this war which was later recognized, even by the people in power, as probably a mistake. As Robert McNamara, the then defense secretary, wrote in his autobiography, probably a mistake.

Unfortunately 50,000 young Americans died in it and many more Vietnamese. Probably a mistake, great suffering inflicted, yes. And it's, but at the same time, there was an enormous awakening on the planet, especially coming from America and the West Coast, a spiritual awakening, a great movement of spiritual awakening.

And somehow that seemingly negative event cannot completely be separated from the awakening, because the awakening was seeing the madness of the collective human mind. The seeing of the madness of the collective human mind was actually part of the awakening of many thousands and thousands and hundreds of thousands of people, disidentifying from collective forms that they until then had become completely identified with, the collective structures stepping out of that. And so the seemingly negative and the awakenings, and I'm not explaining it away, just saying there's a, you can get a little glimpse of to see how sometimes that fits.

And for humans to see what they have done in the 20th century, what they, what humanity has done out of the madness, which is the madness of being lost in, in things, in the world of mind, in the world of form, totally identified with forms, the egoic, collective egoic mind, and then what it does. This moment is as it is because it cannot be otherwise. That's all we know.

And the more deeply we know this, the more even the world of form of things changes. And this is, we now come to something we've been speaking about, living in the two dimensions. But when humans or when a human being lives in the two dimensions, the form, the world of things, and the formless, stillness, spaciousness, that stillness does something also to the way in which you experience the world of form.

It's something flows into the world of form that does not remove certain polarities that are always inherent in the world of form, and yet makes the world of form a more benign, softer place. With polarity still there, yes, forms do still dissolve and crumble here and there, but without the harshness and the incredible suffering that is there when the deeper dimension is absent in a human's life. So that's where the world becomes a more benevolent place, which it already is.

It's the human mind that creates hell. The planet itself is a beautiful a jewel of unspeakable beauty. And humans are poisoning it and destroying it and madness.

It is what is. You see it. The more humans see the madness of it, the more change comes.

And that's happening. Wow. It's mad.

It's mad. And you can't fight madness. You become mad yourself.

And this is an interesting truth. If you fight madness, you become mad. You get drawn into the madness.

If you fight unconsciousness, you have to, you will be drawn into unconsciousness. So just to see it is enough. You can point it out, yes.

You can write your newspapers about it without the fighting spirit behind it, because then you personalize unconsciousness. You make an identity out of it, and you call certain people or groups bad. They may be bad because they're doing dreadful things to the planet, but that's not their identity.

They embody human unconsciousness. So here also, surrender and acceptance of what is to see the madness is a very powerful thing. Wow.

So the beauty is, as you bring space consciousness into the world of form, the world of form becomes a more benign place. You encounter more love, because what we call love, what we call joy, or what we call compassion, compassion only flows out of the space, not out of the movement of thought. Love is not produced by the movement of thought, and not by the movement of emotion either, because the emotional love is, I want you, and then I hate you, and I want you.

It's deeper even than emotion. And so love, joy, compassion come out of space. They are inseparable from that inner spaciousness.

And so then, yes, a world is possible, not a world that is totally free of polarities, because there would be no world anymore. The entire universe would implode, and all that would be left would be the one, God, the unmanifested, one left. All polarities are gone.

No high and low anymore, no good and bad anymore. But as long as the world is there, the polarities are there, and that also is accepted. When you accept the polarities, they are actually quite beautiful too.

You accept loss when loss comes, you accept gain when gain comes, you accept the bad weather when the bad weather comes, and then the bad weather isn't bad weather anymore. It's only called bad weather because so many humans didn't accept it. So they called it bad when it rains.

They called it bad weather. But there's nothing bad about rain. In fact, if last night you listen to it, you can see how beautiful it is.

Well, the mind say, okay, it was beautiful because I was in bed. But it wouldn't have been beautiful if I'd been stuck outside and getting drenched. Well, you have to try it.

Be outside and get drenched and don't call it bad. A friend of mine did that years ago. I wasn't a teacher then.

I was still just talking to people at university. We hadn't been talking about the weather, but one day he came one morning and said, you know, we're talking about yesterday, acceptance and so on. He said, this morning I was on my bike, got totally drenched in the rain.

And he said, and you know what? I became a duck. And it was great.

He felt he was a duck. Now, that may not have been a totally accurate image because ducks don't actually get wet, but it doesn't matter. It worked for him because for him being a duck meant not resisting, feeling wet, just feel wet.

Normally calling it good or bad, it is as it is at this moment. It doesn't, you don't change it by calling it bad. And you, of course, you do what you have to do.

You might seek shelter or you might go home and take off your wet clothes. And there's a beauty in all that. There's a beauty in many, many things that the mind would have called bad in its habitual state of resistance.

There are so many things that are habitually called bad. If you drop something, it breaks, you call it, oh. And that's an habitual movement.

And then an amazing thing happens when these things, and you become so present that you drop something and you just look. And there is a beauty even in that broken cup. There's a beauty in that when the mind doesn't call it anything because that's where the world of form goes.

All forms eventually, one way or another, have to go that way. So why say this shouldn't have happened? At least not yet.

I wanted to enjoy this cup another 20 years. Who knows? Your body may be gone in a year.

So the, yes, the polarities are there, but then they become actually quite pleasant polarities. They're actually to be enjoyed. You don't hang on to one polarity.

So this is what I want and that's what I don't want. So this is perhaps the arising of getting lost in thought, getting lost in mind, that was what in the Bible is described, of course, as eating of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. Like, dislike, good, bad.

And then this became the state of humanity. At first it was a great thing. They could do things that animals couldn't do.

And then thousands and thousands and thousands of years passed and then they got taken over by that thing in the head and lost space, beingness, source. And then it's the destiny of humans to find it again and then find it at a deeper level than when they lost it. It always happens when you find something, there's a deeper dimension than when you've had it, you didn't even know you had it.

Then perhaps this is what in the Old Testament, in the book of Genesis is hinted at when we read of the, there's not only in this garden, there's the book of the, there's the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. There's another tree that is mentioned briefly, and that's the tree of life. And so, I don't think God ever said they mustn't eat of the tree of life, but that's what it says there.

There is the tree of life also available for humans. And so perhaps the next step is to eat of the tree of life. And perhaps this event is part of that.

One could say that the inner body is the doorway into spaciousness. So to feel that, that the life within the body, to feel that is the opening into spaciousness, because it is ultimately, or the body is form, and even the invisible energy, that which animates the body, is also form, not as clearly defined as a physical form, but more fluid form. And then you go into that, and then it merges with the, into the form, as we're using words for something that cannot be described through words.

But it's enough to say that it's very helpful if you don't want to be drawn continuously into object consciousness, things, to feel the inner body, the aliveness, as the anchor for presence, and as the doorway So when the world comes at you, or the mind comes at you, either from within as your own mind, or from without as somebody else's mind, it's the same human mind, or even the collective mind, you're watching the news on television, staying connected with the inner body. And then you're meeting the world through stillness. And then that has an effect even on that which you perceive, anything that you perceive, that you meet through any situation, even the world situation, watching the news through stillness.

And the news is designed to agitate you, to everybody there's having a good time, having a bad time. A question here on the world situation, as is sometimes asked. It seems that the momentum of insanity is growing stronger in the world these days.

Any pointers to help us be intensely alert and present as the insanity grows and grows?

As you notice, the answer is already in the question. And then whatever you do on the external level can come out of that.

It doesn't mean necessarily that you're inactive. You may take part in a demonstration in stillness, or you may go and join the war in stillness. Well, it's unlikely that that would come out of stillness, but who knows.

It has to be like that, a simultaneous movement of the old consciousness, totally identified with form, with ego, collective egos, personalized egos. That has to run its course, and it has to get more and more mad. That's its natural course.

And so on the surface, there seems to be a deterioration. And at the same time, there's also an acceleration of the arising presence of new consciousness, which you don't always or very rarely see on the television, very rarely. But it's there.

You can get little hints of it if you look carefully. For example, you may have seen the past weeks or months, the power of now got into famous bestseller lists. And in some publications, they only divide books into fiction and nonfiction.

And in those, a few times, I saw together the power of now and another title that is popular at the moment, Bush at War. And they were at one week, it was one was ahead. It seems a safe prediction, however, to say that in one or two years time, Bush at War probably won't be available anymore in the bookstores, because those books tend to disappear quickly.

They're no longer current. Some historians may still look at them. And the power of now will be around for as long as it's needed.

And then it will disappear. And that's good. So just one or two little hints before we look at some questions.

First, whenever you interact with the world, notice when you're being dragged along by a mindstream. Notice how some other mindstream, which is ultimately all one mindstream, wants to drag you along and how very quickly your own mind links into that mindstream and drags you along and you're in it. Even a simple conversation, it doesn't have to be a heated argument.

If you're alert, even in a simple conversation, you can notice how you get into the mindstream and there's no gap anymore, no space. And expressing your viewpoint, opinion, nothing seems quite harmless. It is harmless in itself, but you're lost in mind and very easily it can turn into conflict and often does.

So to notice being lost in a mindstream, in a simple conversation, so that you bring gaps, space, even into a simple conversation. And that is when you have uttered a statement, come to the end of it, let go of the statement, step out of the mindstream, into step, one step back into no mind, step back, and there's a moment of no thought, just presence. You've said what you had to say and step back.

And the other, it doesn't need to be long, the other person may not even know that, may not even notice it, doesn't have to be a noticeable, could just be two seconds, three seconds, stepping, always stepping back. And then you make another statement, perhaps, stepping back. It's always stepping so that you don't get dragged along.

So there's continuous spaciousness opening up within the conversation, within the interaction. There are spaces, little spaces. And then as you become familiar with space, so to speak, how could you not be familiar?

It's the essence of who you are. As you become familiar with space, then after a while you will notice, even as you speak, you are not totally in the grip of that which is being said. It is being said, but it doesn't, it does not absorb the whole of you.

It does not absorb your entire consciousness, those statements. There's consciousness and that, and that initially it helps just to feel the body, even as you speak, the inner body, the aliveness that anchors you. So some attention is there.

It's the opening into spaciousness. The doorway is the inner body, one could say. Words don't really work here.

And so there you play with form and formless. You play with form and are rooted in the formless. And that's a, don't wait for a critical situation to practice spaciousness.

In the most normal interactions, bring in spaciousness. That's your teaching. That's ultimately being, what being a teacher, a spiritual teacher means.

Ultimately a spiritual teacher has nothing really to teach on the level of form. He may have, he or she may have a few pointers on the level of form, but the teaching, the essence of the teaching is space. And if you look for anything else in a spiritual teacher, you're going to be sooner or later disappointed or let down, because you're looking to some form to do something for you.

But if you know that, then it's beautiful. Then it's, one can be grateful for the offering, because ultimately you're only getting a reflection of the essence of who you are, which is space. So all a teacher has to offer is to be there as space or spaciousness.

And that is also when you teach the case. If you think that there may be peripherals, there may be certain things that you apply, the modality, as we called it this morning, the modality of whatever work you do may be there, and yet the essence is space. That is what you bring.

And then whatever the modality is, you become very effective. And people might think it's the modality that's doing it. Whatever technique you're using, whatever you do, they might think this is the great thing, without realizing that that's not really it.

That which has power, the power to transform, the power to awaken, is space. So that is your function, is to be there as nobody. Somebody gave me a nice little passage on specialness, and this is very true.

The ego wants to be special in one way or another. If it cannot be special in victory, it can still be special in misery, as long as it's special. And so to be there as nobody special, or no, because that means is nobody, simply as spacious consciousness, a field of awareness.

That's the essence of the teacher, the teaching, and that's really all that you need. If you have that, the form will come, or maybe there'll be hardly any form, or some form may come for a while. But that's the essence.

So Freud, I think, got it a little bit wrong when they, although it's fine, when they asked him, how do you qualify to be a psychoanalyst? And he said, you must have interpreted your own dreams. Well, that's useful too.

But what is the essence of being a successful therapist, a healer, counselor, body worker, anything, is you are the bringer of space. And then it could happen that people confuse the space with a form when they come to you. It can happen too.

And they think the form is very special, because they feel so good when they come to you. Why do they feel good? Because they're meeting themselves.

Ultimately, the essence of space is being reflected back. And so they feel, of course, it feels good to be yourself. It's the ultimate satchitananda, being, consciousness, bliss, to be yourself, the being, being itself.

Of course, that is, it is beautiful to be yourself, to be enjoying yourself, enjoy in yourself. And so they may come and tell you that you are very special. And that's a, and then comes another little temptation to you through that, because there still may still be remnants of egoic consciousness in you, just waiting for that kind of thing.

And then somebody else tells you the same, same thing. And more people confirm that, yes, indeed, you are powerful and special. And then something inside you begins to believe that.

And what happens? Form identity comes back in a subtle way. And the more form there is in you, the less space there is, or rather, the space becomes, so to speak, obscured again.

And then, after a while, they don't come anymore. Or by then, you might have built up a reputation, which means many people have in their heads an image of who you are. And then they might come to you because their own image of who they are becomes enhanced through being close to you in your company.

So they may continue to come, even after space has been obscured again, for reasons of ego enhancement. This is how things can work when it's, it's good to know that, and then to see when it happens. See, you can be a teacher, even without having totally gone beyond ego.

There are people who are very effective in what they do. They may be doing body work, they may be doing counseling, they may be doing teaching in some form. They can be, they can be very helpful and remain totally clear in the teaching situation.

It happens. But when they go home, into their home environment, they get drawn into the old reactive. And two hours ago, they were totally, and it might not even have been an act, it could have been real.

Sometimes it's an act, but that you can notice. A funny story. My publisher told me he was calling up a very famous spiritual, of course, I won't mention the name.

He was calling up a world-famous spiritual teacher. The office secretary answered to discuss something about publication. And in the background, he could hear screaming.

And he said, what's that? Well, that's so and so, that's the teacher, he says, and the secretary, that goes on here all the time. I can't stand it anymore.

But I know that this teacher is doing great work. I've listened to some talks and read some books, and she's doing beautiful work. Not at home yet.

Not in the office yet. Maybe that comes last. So it's only when certain areas that are connected with egoic identity are touched, then that could interfere even with a teaching situation.

For example, if you were giving counseling sessions to your investment advisor, and the stock market is going down, and the ego needs someone to blame, many people have fear around those areas. So then you would lose presence in the counseling session. Alertness helps greatly to be alert within yourself.

And if you notice ego in yourself, just the noticing of it, or some egoic reaction, some needing to be special again, and before you know it, it's come out of your mouth. Before you know it, you dropped a name to somebody, just to show that you know these important people. And you didn't even, it wasn't planned, it just came out.

And then you notice it. Or you may notice some reaction in the middle of the reaction. You may suddenly notice what's going on.

There's an ego movement here, an old egoic reaction. The moment you notice ego, it's not really ego anymore. It's only a conditioned reaction.

A conditioned reaction, certain conditioned reactions may linger for quite a while inside you, and come up when the appropriate triggers come, the egoic, the reaction comes, the conditioned reaction comes. The moment you see it as a conditioned reaction, it may be anger, it may be some kind of automatic mechanism to either protect your self-image or strengthen your self-image, usually one or the other. And the moment you notice it, it's not really ego anymore.

It's still a conditioned reaction, totally identified with it anymore. It's only when you're totally identified with a conditioned reaction, then it's ego. When you're not totally identified, it's a conditioned reaction, it's not really ego anymore.

So that's, and then without the self in it, then the conditioned reaction loses its energy force after a while. It's not being replenished. So these are interesting things.

Teaching situations have, will bring their own kinds of challenges, as every spiritual teacher knows. And quite a few spiritual teacher have succumbed to the challenges. And well, what does that mean?

Does that mean what they taught was never true? No, it doesn't mean that. What they taught came through space consciousness.

That the unconditioned consciousness is nobody's property, and it's nobody's attainment. Even to say he has attained enlightenment is a delusion brought about by language. We say he has attained as if that were something anybody could attain, like now he's got it.

It's, it is there in the absence of him or her, in the absence of the egoic person. It shines as the natural state shines. And just as the sun can also be obscured by clouds again, and it doesn't, the sun doesn't mind, and it doesn't mean that the sunshine was all delusion.

So, and then the clouds come back, so, and then people say, well, can, has he lost it? Well, he never had it, or she never had it, so he can't lose it, because he can't have it. It's there as you become transparent, so to speak, to it.

The density goes of form, identification with form. So those questions are really irrelevant, they don't make sense. And people say, once you're enlightened, can you lose it again?

Well, no, you can't have it, so you can't lose it. So it's happened that people, then after a while, the teaching lost its power, because it didn't arise out of space, out of the stillness anymore. And then for a while, they might still teach from memory, but it loses already, it loses power through that.

And then, and then all, there may still be the books there, and there may be power in the books that happens. It's fine. So it's not equating realization, spiritual realization, and who the essence of who the teacher is, with a form, with a personality that has attained something, or could lose it.

And so that's important in your relationship with a spiritual teacher, and as many of you are destined also to be, some of you already are, in some ways, in a wider sense, each one of you already is a spiritual teacher. And in a more formal sense, some of you already are spiritual teachers. And many others are destined also, because that's the one field where there are many job vacancies.

There's a huge demand. So get out of Silicon Valley, or wherever. It's not, they're not making, not producing more vacancies, more.

And some people may be here because they lost their jobs there. And so when you teach, then just be very alert, because the egoic patterns in yourself may want to use that in the service of a newfound identity. So just alertness.

There's a question here, and then we'll have some questions or comments on perhaps what we talked about this morning. Presence, bringing presence into working modalities, or, oh, I forgot to bring the letter that some somebody gave me. Somebody sent a The Power of Now to Prince Charles.

Thank you very much. And the office wrote back. The letter was here this morning.

Thank you on his behalf for The Power of Now. Whether he's going to read it, I don't know. But, well, he seems to be open to spiritual truth from the little that I know, which is a miracle in itself.

Somebody like that, who is not totally absorbed in their identity, that it is a miracle that there is an openness remains without even having gone through extreme suffering, except his marriage, of course. I'm one of those people who feel safe and still in nature or in soft countries like India. Here in the USA, my heart seems limited to accept the noise and constant chatter, which is normal everywhere.

I feel helpless by its force. You mentioned bringing spaciousness into this, and I am wanting that and accept the challenge. Yet there is some hatred that interferes, keeping me stuck and paralyzed.

Can you comment? Well, I suspect the answer is already in this one also, because it is in surrender to whatever is around you and whatever you feel inside yourself. If you feel, if you can't accept where you are, and of course, you can choose a softer part of the States.

Some parts of this country are softer than others, to use this term, of course, but you probably won't find India here. But beyond that, if you cannot accept what is around you, first of all, examine that and see whether it's true. When you say, I can't accept the harshness of this, I can't accept the noisiness of this place, the harshness of this place.

And when you say that, or when you think that, stop for a moment and see whether that is true, or whether that is a conditioned thought that tells you something that you believe in. I can't accept this. And then, as you believe in that thought completely, that I cannot accept this, you have the corresponding emotion that comes with not being able to accept this.

What is the hatred or anger? And that may start from, first of all, not looking clearly with alertness at a mind movement inside you, and which may not be true when you say, I can't accept this. And if you look closely, then you examine perhaps, what about I'm not willing to accept this?

Could that be more true? And very often, when you look closely, you see that what the mind called, I cannot accept this, translated means, I am not willing to accept this. And that is a great excuse for the ego to feel stuck in resistance.

I can't. But if you saw that what it really means is I'm not willing to accept it, then a door opens. Because then the possibility arises for your willingness to accept what it is right here.

Doesn't mean you can't move from Detroit to a little town in California or New Mexico, or from Manhattan to Taos, where everybody is into spiritual things. Those places will be softer, but maybe not soft enough for you. But see the shift from I cannot accept this, and I'm not willing to accept this.

Usually, that's what it is. And if you don't see the truth of it, and your mind insists that no, it's not unwilling, it's just, I can't. Well, what you do then is have space around that.

Have space around the fact that you cannot accept it. Have space around the anger or the hatred that you feel. It is as it is.

So by saying, accept that, then, it seems almost impossible. How can I accept the fact that I cannot accept? But you can.

You can accept that this is how you feel, and this is what your mind is saying. And so, what can you do with that, with the anger you feel of having to be here? I'd rather be in India, not here.

This is a harsh and noisy place. I hate everybody. And you're not being released.

You could go to India, but for some reason, you're here. I don't know the reason, but for some reason, you're not being released to go to India. If it were of overriding importance, somehow you would manage to go and live in India and be happy forever after.

Now to some people, the opposite happens. They are happy here, and when they travel to India, they can't wait to get out. And then they say, I can't accept this.

It's awful. Similar, often what people learn there is they are not willing to accept it, so they suffer. So whenever that arises, I can't accept, see which statement is more true.

I can't accept, or I'm not willing to accept. And if after investigation, you find that I cannot is still true for you, then accept that. And whatever emotions go with it, that's what is.

And then you have space around it. That space is India. That's the essence of really what India means to you, and means perhaps on a universal scale, India stands for the inner dimension.

For space. America stands for, one could say, the outer, doing, getting things done, creating on the external level. So you have the two polarities.

So when you have space around something, so you have India with you around it. So you could have America being contained by India. And then, just a little bit of that, is at first you might not get much sense of space around it, just a little.

And then you notice there's actually quite a lot of space around. Whatever you feel, whatever thing you react to, or whatever the reaction is, there's actually quite a lot of space there. India is actually quite big.

And then you come to a point where you don't need to go to India anymore, because you are in India. India is here. America is there.

Please offer guidelines on doing private sessions. Well, that's what really we've been doing here all the time. The best private sessions are those that come by themselves, organically.

You're sitting somewhere, somebody comes, asks, what time is it? You exchange a few words. And then, somehow, he or she feels impelled to say something, ask you something.

And then you say something. What do you mean by that? A few words, an encounter, seeming chance encounter.

If that, that is a beautiful, the most beautiful way to, for it to happen by itself. But if you feel you need to have something more formal, put an ad in the paper. Space, sessions on space.

There are no guidelines as to how to conduct a session, obviously, because you are there as space. What comes out of that, who can predict at any moment? What form it'll take, if any, nobody can predict.

Your only responsibility is to be there as spacious awareness. And then the rest, it, it, it, you don't do it. You don't have to do anything.

Just be there as space. And that's a great relief. As long as you think you have to do something that's troublesome, you get stressed.

Before a person arrives, you will get into stress. If you think you have to do something, or before you give a talk, you'll be in great stress. What am I going to say?

Are they going to like me? Am I going to transform them? I may have mentioned before, the very first talk I ever gave, formal talk to a group invited in London, Theosophical Society invited me to give a talk.

And since I'd never given a talk, my little mind said, you better make, take some notes before the talk. So I had a piece of paper, which I brought with me, put it on the table. There were maybe, I don't remember, 35 people.

And I talked on spiritual aspects of psychotherapy. That's the kind of thing they wanted. And it went well.

And I came to a halt, a beautiful pause space. And then the mind said, you better have a look at the paper now. And at that moment, I could feel the entire energy field in the room going from presence to mind.

So I looked and then I started again. It was still in mind. It took five minutes before presence arose again.

And then it happened again. I came to a stop. The mind said, okay, what's the next point?

That was the first and last time I think I ever had a piece of paper. It would not have mattered if I'd forgotten eight out of 10 vitally important points. It would not have mattered.

So you will also, I know some of you are also teaching, doing workshops, and it's often the question of structure, to what extent to adhere to the structure, which might already be working for you. And to what extent to step into the unknown, the unknowable. To what extent you step into that space where there's no foothold, no scaffolding.

And of course, that's where the truly powerful teaching arises. Not that you cannot do useful work, but the ultimate awakening, that which has the power to awaken, can only come from presence, stillness, spaciousness, only from that. The other can have the power to make your life a little better, to improve your life here and there.

But it won't be the awakening, unless you happen to have somebody in your group who is so ready, like a very ripe apple, so ripe, that all it requires is a gentle breeze, and it falls. And then it could happen that even you might just be giving a quote of the Buddha, and that'll do it for that one person. That was the last thing that that person needed to hear.

And then that person might say, I awoke in your workshop, when I heard the words, all things are intrinsically one. When you quoted those words, I awoke. I thank you forever.

And you say, oh, well. So that can happen. But this is, would be more rare.

The power, that which has the power to awaken comes from, you have to step beyond any agenda. You can still use agenda as the external framework, but within that, have the courage to step out into the unknown. And then you could have a, you could still use the name that you use.

I have a workshop, you could say you have a workshop on, you could use any, anything to, and the hidden teaching will be different. You could do a workshop on creating abundance in your life. And that could be the outer framework, but the hidden teaching in there could be something deeper, because the depths of what abundance is, is such it ananda.

It's the realization of joy of the joy of being. So you could take that, and then the truth. But it is essential to step out of crutches, scaffolding, whatever you want to call it, into this, the openness of space.

Step into not knowing. Such beauty in that. To sit before a group with no idea in your head what you're going to say.

Now this could be some person's nightmare. But when you become comfortable, it's beautiful. That openness in which there's nobody there.

When you don't know anything, you're nobody. Not have the feeling that you know more than these people. You don't.

I know I don't. I know that many people in my audiences definitely know more than I. They have read more books, gone to more workshops.

I'm sure there are many, don't know what the percentage is, who know more than I. So it's not that I definitely don't know more than they. So it's the less rather than the more.

I know less. In fact, I know nothing in that state of spaciousness. And it's not only in teaching situations.

You can live your life in that way. As an open space and a spaciousness rather than a person. And then there's still on the periphery, yes, there's still a person.

There's still a few characteristics left. There may be a particular way in which you walk, a way in which you gesticulate or speak. That's only the remnants.

On the external level, a few of these things remain. But the person has become transparent. And that's the only way to be an effective teacher, to be nobody, to know nothing.

And then words come. That also means refraining from interpreting, this excessive interpreting that people do in their lives. Whenever they come and meet somebody, go into a new situation, they quickly have to come to some kind of conclusion about this person or this situation or how they're related to their life or their story.

Quickly pronounce judgment upon something or someone. That's how it is. And you've limited yourself to a tiny thought form.

It might be true, relatively speaking, but then many other statements would also be true. So to refrain from that excessive interpretation as you go of places and situations and people, just let them be as they are. What for?

Why having to put it in some box with a label on it? And so then remain, that spaciousness then remains with you. Not just, it's beautiful if you can be spacious and open in a teaching situation, but it is not enough.

Otherwise you'll be like the famous teacher who is shouting in her office and probably shouting even more at home, because home is even more challenging than office for many people. It is very rare in the West to have a teacher who uses no words. They exist in India, people who don't speak at all.

You just come into their presence and they look at you. And when you look at them, you know there's nobody there. Not a person is there.

Not an identity. Just spacious consciousness. And so there are people who just sit there all day long.

Whoever comes, they look at them. Some of them may speak occasionally. Some don't speak at all.

And that's enough. If you are open, just need to sit there, look, and transformation happens. But Western people come with a very dense ego.

Indians also have ego, but the Western ego is particularly strong. Often Indian egos collapse when they come to a spiritual teacher. Temporarily true, but they go, oh.

Even people who are in their work may be full of ego. They come to a teacher and they go, oh. There is that openness there.

Now, it may be that a Westerner is a much harder nut to crack, as some Indian teachers found out too, especially when they came to the West. They got cracked and they didn't crack the West. But there is a teacher, there's Mother Meera, I believe, an Indian teacher living in Germany, who very rarely, I think, speaks.

She may look at you or give you a hug. And many people come to her. How many people become transformed?

I don't know. Perhaps many. But the West also, the Western ego, I believe, needs to be looked at, needs to be seen for what it is, needs to be recognized.

And that is why one aspect of this teaching is to point to the ego and see how it works, so that you recognize it when it comes. All those conditioned mind movements. In India, very often, they ignore it completely.

And sometimes that works. The ego doesn't like that, of course. Some teachings challenge the ego.

Some Western teachers do that. Occasionally, in Zen, it is the tendency. Zen would challenge the ignorance, that is ego.

A few Indian teachers have done it too, but it's more common in India to ignore it. Some Westerners also, they challenge the ego. Now, what, when you teach, whether you become one of those teachers who challenges the ignorance in someone else, which merely means identification with conditioned patterns, which is ego, and you challenge that, and you attack, if you notice ego in someone, somebody gets up to ask a question, and you notice it is an ego-motivated question, perhaps the person wants to be special, perhaps the person wants to be right, wants to show that you are wrong, or knows more than you, or knows somebody who is better than you, has met some other teacher, whatever, or some other subtle forms of ego.

And so, there are certain teachers, when they notice ego in someone, they will attack that person. They're not really attacking the human being. They're attacking the ego form.

But it appears to be a confrontational teaching, and that sometimes works for some people. It can crack open the shell of ego, and for others, it doesn't work at all. I look through the ego, ignore it, and look through it, and others might challenge it.

Usually, people are drawn to whoever teacher they need. Some people need the confrontational teacher. Their ego shell is so hard, there's only two choices left for transformation.

Either you go to a very harsh teacher who is almost going to hit you, or actually hits you, or you suffer a lot to crack the shell, if ego is very, very dense. Either intense suffering will do it, and perhaps a harsh teacher. Suffering works better, usually.

Or a combination of the two. You suffer and suffer, and then finally, you get to a teacher who doesn't leave you any room for silliness. Ego, silly, cuts through.

The Zen teacher hits you with a stick, when the mind comes up, can you explain again, what did you mean by, and I didn't quite understand your concept of, and that awakens you out of the mind stream. The mind loves to play around with concepts, words, then a question leading to an answer, leading to more questions, and another question, and figuring out. Any questions?

Now, nobody wants to ask a question. You have a question? No?

Did you? Okay.

[Speaker 2] (3:36:14 - 3:37:13)

I didn't know I was going to be able to ask it. In your writings, you say the key is to be in a state of permanent connectedness with the inner body, and to feel it at all times. When you're talking about spaciousness, are you creating that spaciousness by feeling your inner body?

And, how can you get to the point, I mean, it's been about three years every day, trying to feel the inner body, and I can go for brief periods, even a couple of hours sometimes, but very rarely. Are you feeling energy flowing at all moments?

[Speaker 1] (3:37:15 - 3:37:16)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (3:37:17 - 3:37:27)

When you had this change, when you woke up that morning, you just felt energy flowing?

[Speaker 1] (3:37:28 - 3:44:50)

Yes, to be, now the inner body is the opening, it is not an object as such, it is an opening. So, when, because we're using language, it appears as if we were referring to an object that you need to be in touch with, and that's because of the use of language, because every word, whatever you attach a word to, makes it into something. Now, we are talking about a dimension that is not the dimension of things.

So, words are never quite right. So, even to say to be in permanent connectedness with the inner body, I'm glad you asked that, isn't quite right. It was an attempt to say something.

It's to be in connectedness with that to which the inner body is an opening, spaciousness. So, that is always there in the background, so to speak, and sometimes in the foreground, but it's always there as peace, one could say, a permanent, it's another way of putting it, a permanent field of peace that is not related to whatever happens or doesn't happen out here. So, and yes, there is an aliveness that is there also, part of that, throughout the entire energy field of the body, but it's deeper than that.

It's not just feeling an aliveness as I sit here and speak, as the words come, to feel, yes, there is an aliveness in every cell of the body also, but that's not all. There is, every word is not quite right. There is beyond that a spaciousness, a sense of space, and it's, I didn't know that at first.

If you had asked me when it first happened, the word space never occurred to me. The only word that occurred to me was peace. I saw it as inner, a deep inner peace.

So, it's good to not get attached too much to one pointer, because then that can mislead you. Peace is just as good, a permanent sense of inner peace. Now, what is peace?

Is it just peace, just the absence of conflict? No, it's, peace is something deeper. Peace is a, really, an alive sense of joy, alive, still, joyful stillness, peace.

All these things, the words separate things. That's why in India, to describe that state of connectedness with being, with being present in India, they string three words together as if it were a single word. Sat, cit, ananda.

Sat, being, because it's the joy of being. Cit, consciousness, presence. Ananda, bliss.

Sat, cit, ananda is because if you separate it into three words, people think there are three things there, but it's one. So, we could say, space peace, or joy space peace, so that, because one pointer usually is not enough and somehow gives you wrong, take several pointers and then forget them. So, yes, there is, I sense the aliveness, as even as I speak, there's an aliveness in the body, but there's also a deeper peace behind it, deeper than, even deeper than the aliveness of the body.

There's a deep sense of alive peace, and that's always there. But you don't need to look for it. You don't need to look for it.

Just looking for it is, will stop you from finding it, because looking for it creates a movement away from what is. It's to just, to be totally accepting of what is, then it's there. So, if you don't have it, you totally accept that you don't have it, and it might not be true at all.

It might be a mind movement that tells you, you don't have it, you don't know where it is, or the mind says, I can't feel the inner body. Is that true? I can't feel the inner body, not now.

I'll try again tomorrow, maybe. I can't feel it now. Is that true?

And very often you find it's not true at all. I can feel it. So, not, you don't need to look for peace or joy or even space.

You couldn't, you can't really look for it. It's, it is there when you look for nothing except what is now. I was totally miserable, and I stopped wanting it to be any different.

So, there wasn't a surrender to what is, including everything, unhappiness, just it is as it is. And then suddenly there was more. It wasn't just that, there was space, but I didn't call it space.

So, all really that is required of you is to just be with what is right now, accept what is. Yes, if you can feel the body, feel the body right now. And usually that's very easy to do.

Be careful with the mind. The mind is always looking for something else. Don't look for anything else except what's already here.

And if you can just feel the aliveness in your hand, it's enough. Don't need to look for more. Don't look for anything.

Can you feel as you stand there, can you feel an aliveness throughout? Yes. That's enough.

Stay with that.

[Speaker 2] (3:44:51 - 3:45:00)

Also, I'm particularly conscious when there's any tension. Yes. It's more noticeable than it was years ago.

[Speaker 1] (3:45:00 - 3:45:10)

Yes. Tension is usually unconscious, and when you make it conscious, its lifespan is considerably shorter.

[Speaker 2] (3:45:13 - 3:45:14)

Thank God.

[Speaker 1] (3:45:18 - 3:47:32)

So, tension is always produced unconsciously, because usually a person doesn't say, I'm going to make myself really anxious and tense now. You could, in fact, you could do it as a practice if you wanted to, to know what it really feels like to be tense. Some, there's even a technique that whatever state you're in, the practitioner will ask you to take it to an extreme.

So if the person comes and says, I'm so angry, the practitioner says, you're not angry enough. Be more angry. Take it to an extreme.

Be really angry. Or if the person comes and says, I'm so, I'm so depressed and sad, he says, be more depressed. Be more sad.

Take it to an extreme. And it is true. Anything that you take to an extreme will collapse eventually.

So people usually stay unhappy because they don't go to the extreme of unhappiness. They come to a modus vivendi with unhappiness. But if you take unhappiness to an extreme, you cannot actually live with it.

That happened to me, fortunately. Unhappiness became so extreme, I couldn't live with it. If it's not extreme, then you can, for the rest of your life, you can be unhappy a lot of the time, and be happy being unhappy.

The ego quite likes that. So any state, it's something you could play with. I rarely say it.

Taking it to an extreme often makes, but it may not be possible to really consciously take it to an extreme, make yourself even more miserable. Maybe not. Life is enough.

Life does, gives you what you need. Can you feel the inner body?

[Speaker 2] (3:47:34 - 3:47:35)

Yes. Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (3:47:36 - 3:52:05)

It's good while you sit here, to just, there's not much else to do. Be in that. And then you can see that some people feel it more here.

That's fine. That's good. There may be certain parts of the body that are more prominent, and that's fine.

And then you, so they are perceiving, and then the miracle is, some of you have been experiencing this miracle sitting here. You can be here, present, aware, be here as the field of awareness, perceive, without the interference of thought. Except occasional little things floating in and out, but mostly just a clarity of perception.

And it's a miraculous thing to be able to sit here and perceive this body, this voice, the flowers, the room, and not calling it anything, not interpreting it, letting it be as it is. This means not really being here as a person anymore, just as a consciousness, a field of consciousness, a field of awareness. That's the shift.

And you may notice that shift happening in your life more in strange, in the most unlikely situation. Sometimes you have the shift from being a person with a past and some needy future and thinking, and suddenly there's a field, even you might be sitting in your office or in your kitchen, and simply a field of aware presence. And then somebody comes into the room, and you're still a field of aware presence.

And that person is talking, you're still a field of aware presence. And then suddenly words come out of the field of aware presence. And they'll be, they have a different quality, even if you just say, would you like a cup of tea?

It's different. That is love, to see the world like that, to relate to the world like that, to interact like that, is love. I rarely mention love because it's unnecessary.

Space comes out of that. It's dangerous the moment you mention it, the mind has a new concept. Okay, I need to be more loving.

How can I be more loving? As if you needed to become more loving when the essence of who you are is already that. And the mind says, okay, I need to find, how can I be more, I'll try.

I have to try and be more loving with this person. It's tough. And then for a while you try, but it is not quite right.

And before you know it, there's an outburst of anger. Oh, I wasn't loving at all. What have I done?

You see, then another of these many voices that go on here, another little voice says, you see, you can't, you can't be loving. You're a fraud. All that, your spiritual stuff is a fraud.

See what you're doing. You know that little voice? And it's just a little voice.

That's how it operates. It loves doubt. It loves to create doubt.

So you don't need to be more loving or more peaceful. You are already that.

[Speaker 2] (3:52:19 - 3:52:45)

Thank you. Eckhart, how does it happen that we are healthcare professionals here today? Far larger numbers of people are touched by other occupations.

And ours seems to be a system which is dissolving.

[Speaker 1] (3:52:52 - 3:52:58)

This is the mainstream healthcare system you're referring to. Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (3:52:58 - 3:52:59)

In America.

[Speaker 1] (3:53:00 - 3:53:00)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:53:00 - 3:53:02)

I don't know about Canada.

[Speaker 1] (3:53:02 - 4:33:32)

Yes. Well, in the entire Western world, it tends to be similar. And most of the world these days is the Western world.

So, yes, then this is only one of the many, thank you, the many systems that are manifesting increasingly in signs of dysfunction, where things just don't work anymore. Maybe it worked once. It was fine once.

And the entire human mind is in that way. The human mind had its place. It was an evolutionary stage we had to go through.

But the products of the human mind, all those things that the human mind produced from its state of disconnectedness with space consciousness, with the stillness, are becoming more and more dysfunctional. So there is the mainstream healthcare system, the pharmaceutical industries, which are producing more and more things and totally dominated or largely dominated by the profit motive. If they found a miracle cure, which didn't, that is, didn't promise profit, they might not even produce it.

And that's only, it's only, there are all these institutions and organizations and corporations, economic, political, social, educational, universities. There are many, many signs of dysfunction where things just don't work anymore. And that's because we are coming to the end of an evolutionary, evolutionary cycle, which is thought to be exclusively based in thought.

And when you come to the end of an evolutionary cycle, any species that comes to the end of an evolutionary cycle, the end will show increasing signs of dysfunction. And that's the simple reason is that you're approaching the end of a cycle. It doesn't mean that there's something wrong with the human mind.

It doesn't mean it never should have happened. No, it was right. It happened.

And what is happening now is also absolutely right. But we have to see, and then, then the dysfunction is there in every individual. It's not just in the, the structures, the external structures created by the human mind.

In every individual, those who do not now step beyond as you are, but there are still many who are totally trapped in egoic consciousness. There are young, some young people, especially those that are born to relatively conscious parents already are born perhaps with more awareness than we ever had when we were born. But that is still a minority.

There are still many young people who are born into the ego-dominated environment, and who are begin at a very early age to manifest signs of great unhappiness, of impatience, of continuous restlessness, of hyperactivity, of aggression, even violence or emotional violence. So they are, they are the, the, in each individual, the dysfunction manifests, unless that individual has already stepped beyond, has already gone, is already going through what humanity is destined to go through as a whole. But this is only you are the beginning.

But it's happening very fast. The power of now is read by many, many people now that I could never have foreseen that it would grow so quickly. And it's so many people respond now.

Even that is still a minority. Yes, but it's enough. It's growing fast.

But we need to see the dysfunction is not only in the external structures, but also within each individual. But it's all manifestation of one dysfunction. It's not just in your field where you work.

It's in people. It's in the governments. It's in the economy.

It's in the corporations, which are just extensions of ego. Nobody to blame, really. Oh, well, it's a pity.

It feels so good to blame these, the greedy CEOs of these corporations, what they, what are they doing? Yeah, of course, they are doing it. It just happens.

And you can replace by any other ego and they would be doing it. It's the same with corrupt governments. Then they have a revolution and they say, this is the end of corruption.

Finally, the people are liberated. A new government moves in, which just means other egos. And two or three years later, the same corruption, exactly the same, maybe worse.

And so there's the ego's need for more in the corporations. All they're interested in is, they don't know what they are there for anymore, except they need to produce more.

More.

So the dysfunction then is only beginning on the external level. It's only beginning. And we will see it more and more, many institutions and organizations and corporations not making it anymore.

And increasing, yes, increasing conflict and violence as the old consciousness is still playing itself out. Increasing disorientation in individual human beings, increasing unhappiness, violence, depression, confusion, madness, identifying with mad mind structures, collective belief systems, whether they be religions or political systems. All that happening, different manifestations of the end of a cycle.

And that's fine. It cannot be otherwise. And as that happens, the new is already arising within the crumbling structure where you and some of you work.

This is very beautiful. Within the dissolving, crumbling structure where things don't work anymore, something new is already arising, and that is your consciousness is there. Whether, to what extent the old structure will have to collapse, and to what extent a transformation from within is possible so that it changes from within without a total collapse, we don't know yet.

It depends from case to case. In some cases, it'll collapse completely before anything new arises. In other cases, a somewhat more gentle transition, although the dysfunction will be there, but a somewhat more gentle transition may be possible as it changes from within.

And as those who represent the old consciousness leave, that could happen. So we cannot predict from institution to institution, corporation to corporation, what form it'll take, whether there will be a collapse or a transformation from within. All you can know and be responsible for is yourself this moment, in a space at this moment, and respond to whatever this moment requires.

You will be there as long as you are needed there. And if there comes to be an incompatibility between who you are and the vibrational frequency of your being, as presence arises, the vibrational frequency changes. And if there is the incompatibility becomes too great between the surrounding energy field where you work and the vibrational frequency of your own, then it may happen that you will be chucked out, remove yourself or be removed by life from those surroundings.

But if the surroundings are capable of transformation, then you and others who also have gone or are going through that inner transition, then will draw others in too. And you may remain then, and as the world around you becomes transformed. So it will be interesting to watch what happens.

Don't get drawn into fear, anxiety. You cannot underestimate how vital your state of consciousness is in what you experience as the world around you. What a vital part of what you experience as the world your consciousness is.

How important that is. To such an extent, the Course in Miracles even says, although don't try to understand that statement, when the question is asked, how many people are needed to save the world? The answer is one.

And it's you. You are a microcosm of the entire world. So that's, there is, that which is within you, that power, that is the power of the unmanifested, the source of all, is infinitely greater than anything in the manifested realm, than any structure in the manifested realm.

And some of the structures look pretty big, but it's nothing. They're just, they're dust. Dust, well, not really dust, molecules temporarily arranged as certain structures.

But nothing in itself, it can crumble just like that. And many of them will. Gone.

Communism looked so deeply entrenched that a totally immobile system, and even the people in it, they were all, you could see the presidents of Russia, the Politburo people sitting there, totally entrenched and immobile. And they were, they seemed to be saying, here nothing is going to change ever. The power structures are so deeply entrenched here, nothing here is going to change.

Here we are. And then the armies went by with huge rockets and tanks and soldiers, and they greeted. And when you looked, you said, oh, nothing is ever going to shake that.

And within a few years, it crumbled. What was that? Gone.

And so you look, and then you can look at all this, whatever humans have produced in the manifested realm, it looks, can look overpowering, but in itself is nothing. The Jesus said, there's a little account in the Gospels where they are visiting a town, and the disciples of Jesus say, oh, look at this temple. Look at these huge boulders, these huge stones on which the temple is built.

And Jesus, I don't think the words have come down to us quite accurately. Jesus said, it's, this is nothing. It's just dust.

It can crumble in three days. It can crumble in three seconds. And so there's, it's so easy to become misled into believing that there is a power out there, and perhaps a power that is too overpowering for you, or a power that is threatening you, or that you couldn't possibly change or do anything about.

It's nothing compared to, because that which is within you is the very source essence of all life. You are that. And nothing in the manifested realm can be greater than that.

Anything manifested is like a dust of smoke, just a whoosh, or a soap bubble compared to that. And so when you see how fleeting, how ephemeral and short-lived the structures are of the world, and now it's becoming easier to see. If you lived in the 19th century, the structure still had a certain heaviness, and there was a certainty in people that their beliefs were correct.

There was a certainty. Scientists were certain that they'd solved most of the problems. They knew how the universe worked.

Einstein hadn't arrived yet. Newton was there. And they knew that, yes, when the gravity, the apple falls, there's certain laws.

Science has all the answers. And before that, there was the religious certainty, and there was a scientific certainty. There were the monarchies, there were the institutions that people believed in, that countries they believed in, and then certain things happened.

And those beliefs crumbled, the institutions crumbled, and now there's the uncertainty. Everything is crumbling, and that's beautiful. That's wonderful.

So let it crumble. Nothing, it's simply a transformation, and then eventually a different manifested world will arise, reflecting a different state of consciousness in humans. And it'll be different.

I'm not, I wouldn't say, I promise you paradise, but it is likely that it will be a more gentle, more loving place, not devoid of polarities, no, but a benevolence to it. So, you can actually see what, before you had to travel to India to become aware of how fragile the physical structures are, because in India, the physical structures are quite loose. Things on the physical level don't work as they should usually, and then even building structures, they seem to be a little bit shaky in many cases.

And so people had to travel to India to get a sense of how shaky the material world, the physical universe actually is. In the West, for a long time, we thought all these structures are unshakable. Material foundations are unshakable.

The structures that we have built up are permanent, unshakable. So the illusion of solidity was very easy to live in. That illusion, if you lived in the West, especially in the so called highly developed countries, the solidity of the world, and you had your pension plan and your life insurance, and until something happened and you became aware of your own mortality, and for many people that came as a shock.

That's why even now in the Western world, death is a taboo to a large extent. Don't talk about that. Let's not talk about death.

But then it came to everybody and suddenly some great shock came. I'm going to die. The world is not as solid as I thought.

But often it came quite late in life. Now, as these man-made structures are beginning to show increasing signs of dysfunction, even in the West, we can begin to see that these things are not lasting. We can begin to see how fleeting the physical realm, the phenomenal realm is, how short-lived all structures are.

The collapse of the two towers was almost a symbolic thing of that great achievement collapsed completely. There was a similar symbolic thing at the beginning of this century, before the First World War, and it was a big ship that sank, Titanic. And people said, this ship is unsinkable.

It is a triumph of technology. And its first voyage, it sank. And so to see, when you see that now, more and more around you, that things dissolve and crumble, that is a, when you accept that that's how it is, it is in the nature of the physical realm to do that, when you accept that, that is another way of finding, of discovering space consciousness.

The awareness of the impermanence of all physical structures, of all, the awareness of death, one could say. And when you accept that, what is it that remains when something dissolves? Space.

So that's why simply to, just to contemplate the fleetingness of forms, to the egoic mind, it's fearful, because the egoic mind itself is form. So it's fearful, it doesn't want to look at death, because it sees its own death in it, when it looks at something that dies or a structure collapses. But if you can accept that, then you go beyond the egoic reaction, and you are with the fact of the impermanence of all structures.

And to accept that, suddenly an inner peace arises, when you face death without turning away, without finding some kind of mental explanation for it, but face it completely and see how short-lived everything is out here. Even things that looked so solid, how short-lived, and face that fact. And then, in the background, you sense a peace.

What really should have been a fearful thing, the ego would say, to face death, isn't that a dreadful thing? No, it's beautiful. Buddhists have known that for a long time.

That's Buddhist monk, Buddhist monks in some traditions, regularly they visit the morgue, where dead bodies are kept, and then they said, bring out the dead bodies. And they bring out the dead bodies in the room, and then the monks sit there in meditation for two or three hours, contemplating the dead bodies. Not thinking about death, just facing death directly.

It's one of the deepest meditations, the contemplation of death, of impermanence. And it could be the death of a structure, it could be the death of a body. There's a certain, when you visit a ruin, maybe an old ruin, maybe when you go to Rome or Athens, and that's another, there's a strange sense of peace there, when you step into a ruin that perhaps was a building 2,000 years ago, and it's hard now, mostly collapsed, just a little bit left.

Peace, a dissolving form in an advanced stage of dissolution. And the more advanced, the more the formless shines through the form. And that's why it's so peaceful when you're truly present to step into an ancient ruin.

I mentioned before in a talk, I visited the ruin of a house that burned down maybe 40 years ago in a little park near Malibu, and a nature reserve, beautiful surroundings. And at the, just at the entrance into the garden, which is also overgrown, and there's the ruins of the house, I saw a little sign, the city council of Malibu had put it up, and the sign read like an ancient sutra, a holy saying. It wasn't meant to be.

It said, danger, all structures are unstable. The first word was unnecessary. All structures are unstable is enough.

It's not really danger. And that is contained in the word, Cause and Miracles, which at the beginning is summarized in a few lines. And if you understand those lines, you can forget about the cause.

And those lines are, nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God.

Nothing real can be threatened. Any form, of course, can be threatened. But ultimately, the form is not ultimately real.

The life within the form, yes, the unmanifested, but that cannot be threatened. And when it says, herein lies the peace of God, means in knowing this, in this realization, lies the peace of God. The peace of God is the peace that is not derived from form.

But from the formless. I'm a few minutes late because I stopped a few times to look up at the sky. It's a magical night.

The vastness of space. The moon is full or almost full. It's so obvious.

The truth is so obvious. If you look around or you go out, it's the vastness of space. Infinite space.

And then there are a few things in space. So what we talked about, the two dimensions, it's so obvious. As within, so without.

As without, so within. As above, so below. When you look around you, what you see is things in space.

What you usually don't see, or you can't really see it, is space. But these two dimensions make up the world. This is very simple.

Probably a four-year-old could understand that. And I said somewhere in the book, and I'll say it again, this is a statement of a somewhat mystical nature that cannot be verified through intellectual or scientific analysis. Nor does it have to be.

When you look into space, it's really your own depths. It's the infinity that you seem to see out there. It's your own inner space externalized.

It's the world. Don't try to understand that. I don't.

But it's so clear. And even that can be an opening to go out at night, a clear night, and simply to look at space. You can't see space.

You only see the things that are in space. But there's this incredible mystery of space itself. And when you bring awareness to space, not trying to understand it or think about it, the inner space is there.

That was my first meditation. I didn't realize it was a meditation when I was in my teens, 13, 14, 15. We had just moved to Spain where the sky is often clear.

And so I would lie on the terrace and look without thought into space. Occasionally thoughts then came in and out again. The thoughts that a 13, 14 year old has would come sometimes.

If aliens come now, should I go with them or not? For a long time that was a dilemma. So after our session, I recommend that you acknowledge that dimension out there.

And at the same time within you. Of course, we're acknowledging it here too. Within.

In the right hand side, outside pocket of my coat, there are a few written questions. I may have lost one or two on the way.

[Speaker 3] (4:33:35 - 4:33:36)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (4:33:58 - 7:11:29)

Start with a short one. If nothing matters, why should everything be honored? Two small corrections in the question.

It's not so much that nothing matters, but that nothing matters that much. It may matter in relative terms, but it doesn't matter absolutely in absolute terms. And another little correction.

Why should everything be honored? There's no should. And what does that mean to be honored?

To be acknowledged, to be given attention. What you honor is a term that I would not normally use. And I will modify it somewhat.

But it comes from Christian teachings. That is what you honor or what you love is not the creature or the created, but you love and honor the creator in the created. I wouldn't call it creator because that brings up the idea of some external agent.

That creates things. But there is a truth hidden there to honor the life essence, the one consciousness within each form. Although the form is short-lived as all forms are.

So to honor it is to honor that. But really what that means is there's a recognition there. You can't really honor it unless there's a recognition.

The recognition comes when you approach something or someone or any life form without the conceptual barriers created by the thinking mind. When you approach it without that, there comes a recognition that is not on a conceptual level. A sensing, a knowing of the other as not different from you.

A sensing, a knowing of the other as ultimately yourself. And when that is recognized, then you honor everything in the manifested realm. Because you recognize yourself.

And that honoring is also love. So when we say to honor, it's really to love it, to recognize it as in essence one with yourself. But should doesn't work.

So you should honor. Why should I? Why should I?

But it comes naturally in that recognition, the honoring of life. Even of life, the forms of life. Although yes, they are short-lived, but they are honored also.

The life within the form, the great mystery. The unmanifested within the manifested. And then on the level of form, whatever shapes and forms come and go, when that which is beyond form is recognized, then whatever happens on the level of form is recognized as only of relative importance, not absolute.

And then one could say, it matters, but it doesn't matter that much. What really matters is for you to know that essence around you in the other. So that ultimately there are no others.

And so the essence of egoic consciousness, the root of suffering, and also the root of evil, what we call evil, is complete identification with form. So that any other form is reduced to a mind object. Its life is not recognized because you are so identified with this form, both physical and psychological of the form of me, or even worse, the form of us, a group, a tribe, a group that only recognizes, that completely identifies with this, our belief, our form, our history, us.

And the more complete the identification with form is, the more suffering arises. The more suffering you create for yourself and others, the more suffering you create in the world. And so if sometimes people ask about the nature of evil, and it is only that, completely trapped in your own form.

And then the opposite is true, that the recognition comes that you are in all forms. No longer trapped in that little bubble. Physical form, of course, you're somehow trapped in there for a while.

But then the bubble of the psychological form of me. And then from there you look out into a threatening world. Start from a short question, we go to a longer question.

But sometimes the answers may not be, there may be a long answer to a short question, and a short answer to a long question, or no answer at all. I don't know. It is so wonderful to see you again after such a long time.

My spiritual trip, journey, has taken some interesting and confusing turns since one and a half years ago. So I have a complex question. It is probably not a good question for live on tape.

But I will let you decide. We are doing it. Don't need to switch off.

So my question is, it seems that what motivates most of us in our study of your teachings is to achieve enlightenment, to reach the state that you are continuously describing. You're also advising us to do the techniques, look for the space, surrender to the moment, and so on. And yet you and many other enlightened people didn't wake up doing these techniques.

It's true. No doubt these techniques help end suffering or at least lessen suffering. But you woke up due to your suffering.

You have even said yourself that these techniques will not lead to enlightenment. So why do we do them? And just to lessen suffering?

They are very good at that. But it seems like they don't lead to enlightenment. So you can see the paradox that I'm struggling with.

Yes. So first, the relationship between suffering and freedom, realization, enlightenment, whatever, awakening. And so I want to honor, we've been in the last question talking about honoring.

I want to honor the suffering that you and I have gone through that has brought us here, without which we wouldn't be sitting here. I wouldn't, probably most of you wouldn't. Now one could say, when you look at how suffering arises, that a lot of that suffering is self-suffering.

Through egoic conditioned patterns, you create your own misery to a large extent in life.

But that's the conditioning. Nothing personal in that, and it's not your fault.

And life becomes heavy and serious. And then it becomes so heavy and serious that you can't stand it anymore. And that could already be the beginning of a movement in which, one could put it this way, consciousness is beginning to be forced out of identification with form through suffering.

Because the suffering was the complete identification with form. We saw that just now. Suffering was the complete identification with thought forms, with emotional forms, with reactive forms, with the body form, the me form, the egoic form, dreadful state.

And then suffering becomes such a heavy burden that it reaches a certain boiling point of intensity, when your consciousness begins to be, and this is really the best way I can find of putting it, your consciousness is beginning to be forced out of identification with form. You're being forced out. And that's, but the suffering in the first place was created by egoic consciousness.

So, what's happening now? And that's the beautiful, yes, it is a paradox, I think, question, paradox is mentioned here, or dilemma, if you understand that. First of all, egoic conditioning, collective conditioning, creates suffering.

And it, in many ways, it loves its suffering. It loves its identification with form. It loves the heaviness that comes with it, the problems that come with it, the conflict that comes with it, the fighting and the reacting.

And then it strengthens its form in those movements, so it wants that to continue. But that has already built in its own self-destruct mechanism through the grace of the divine. The ego, built into the ego, is a self-destruct mechanism, so to speak.

And so a point comes when it creates so much suffering that it, something awakens, as if the nightmare of identification becomes unbearable, and then you suddenly begin to wake up. And you may, you're still half in the nightmare, and then half awake. And it could be, you begin to wake up because the first time you hear a phrase from a spiritual teaching, you might hear, that could be it, or nothing at all.

It may not be that. It may just be the suffering itself. And so there's the beginning of a movement of consciousness removing itself out of the dream of form.

And then it drifts back into form. And then, but once it's started, that has a certain, begins to have a certain momentum. It is the the initiation.

So some, many people are initiated into that through suffering. And it's, it is rare for people to have such intense suffering that consciousness is forced out, totally out of identification with form, once and for all. It can happen.

But for most, it's a more gradual process. And that's awakening through suffering. And then comes a realization.

Once that movement has started, there comes an insight into the mechanism of suffering. You cannot have that insight from within the conditioned thought patterns that make up your suffering. The insight into the mechanism, the mechanical nature of how suffering is created for yourself, how you create it for yourself, how the mind creates it, the pain body, the part the pain body takes in it, that realization comes only because there's some consciousness that is no longer trapped in identification with those suffering forms.

Some, and through that little bit of consciousness that has freed itself, from there, you see the mechanism of suffering. How you do it to yourself is one way of putting it. How your mind does it to you is another way of putting it.

And so, then you see that at the end, that is a critical threshold, where for the first time, the possibility of living without suffering comes into your life. And the beginning of perhaps the realization that suffering may no longer be necessary for you. But you would never have reached that realization if you hadn't suffered up to that point.

So this can be would be beautifully expressed in the paradox which I may have mentioned once or twice before. Suffering is necessary until you realize that it is unnecessary. And so people have awakened, some people have awakened through suffering, but suffering is everybody's spiritual teacher.

There's nobody on the planet who does not have a spiritual teacher. And for 95% of the population, it's suffering. That's their teacher.

And that works. But then there's a growing minority in the population where some another factor comes in. And but even for that factor, for you to be receptive to that, which is the factor of the power of spiritual teaching, to be receptive to that, usually, you must also have suffered enough even to be receptive to that.

And often the receptivity and the openness to a spiritual teaching coincides with the first movements within yourself of your consciousness being forced out of identification with form. And then that little bit of consciousness recognizes the truth in a spiritual teaching. And then the process can accelerate when you've had the suffering plus the spiritual teaching.

That's a beautiful coming together. And it's often the case. And you can and then what you then experience is a, what many people here have experienced and are experiencing, is a considerable lessening of the heaviness in your life.

A considerable lessening of the suffering in your life. Like a burden falling off your shoulders. Not that there's, in most cases, it's not a complete end.

And it can well happen that periodically you get completely drawn back into identification with some egoic movement that produces suffering again. A wave comes and drags you along again. But then you come out again.

Once that movement has started, you will come out again. And then it's ah. So you move in and out of the dream or the nightmare and then come out.

And then the times when you're out may become a little longer. The clarity. So, of course, you've been coming to these talks and have been in contact with the teaching for maybe four years.

And you yourself, if there had been no inner change, I'm sure you wouldn't have come back after a year. If it's pointless, why come back? So you yourself know that something is happening and has happened.

Even though at times the mind may not want to even recognize that. Especially the egoic mind. Nothing is happening.

But you know it's happening. You wouldn't have come back. It's like something is shining through the conditioned forms and at times becomes obscured again.

And that is the awakening. Now, techniques. It is very true that nobody awakens through the application of a technique.

They may have their place. They may be helpful for a little while on your path. But ultimately, a technique creates some distance where there is no distance between your being and where you want to get to.

Because through some techniques, you want to get somewhere. And so you've created a distance where there is no distance. You've created perhaps even future.

Because you need to get good at practicing the technique. So you've created a future in order to find yourself. You create a distance in order to be yourself fully.

To be who you are. And so if you practice a technique, eventually you would have to drop it. Now, I don't think there are techniques here.

What we do is so simple. It is simply a redirecting of attention into the body. If that's a technique, I'm sure that the cat lives like that most of the time, sensing the aliveness within.

And any animal and the tree senses its own life. That's why animals and plants don't have that fear of death. They can, and when great danger comes, they withdraw deeper within.

Did you know that a cat purrs not only when the cat is happy? I was told by a vet that sometimes cats purr when they are afraid. And I thought, how strange.

And then realized, of course, they withdraw deeper, to a deeper place within. When their form is threatened, they go deeper within. This is what an animal does.

It withdraws from the external world. And so it unites with life itself, with the essence, the formless life essence within. And that is blissful.

And so it purrs even when there's danger sometimes. And that the cat is not practicing a spiritual technique. It's a natural way of being.

I'm simply redirecting attention to something that is very natural, and that is sensing the life within. And you're not creating any distance, and you're not creating any time. You sense it now.

Now it is possible that even a simple thing like that can be misinterpreted by the mind and used in such a way that it becomes a technique to you. And then the mind says, I must get better at feeling the inner body, or I'm not quite there yet. I'm not feeling it fully enough.

I need to practice more. Whatever you can feel now is fine. You're feeling it.

It's there. The mind will create time. It will create some distance and will make it into a technique.

Now another one that could be, some people call a technique, is to accept what is. That's how everything in nature lives. It's aligned with what is.

That's not a technique. Now the mind might say, it's when the mind comes in, the mind can make it into a technique. Because with mind comes ego.

With ego comes needing to become something. And so it might say, I'm not yet good enough at accepting what is. I need to practice more.

I need to become better at accepting what is. So immediately it creates future. And then it makes what is a simple, a very simple thing, the most natural way to live, makes it into a technique.

And then you have time and distance. And you already have the beginnings of a problem. There's the beginning of a problem there.

Because then the very technique can become a problem to you. What is the opposite of all problems, to surrender to what is, can be transformed by the mind also into a problem. There's nothing that the mind cannot make into a problem, and won't make into a problem.

And there's nothing personal in this. It's not your mind. It's the mind.

Every mind does that. And so instead of looking for enlightenment, or complete enlightenment, or liberation, somehow it seems it is more helpful to speak in, we'll use the terms that the Buddha used, who did not give you a promising little apple or carrot dangling in front of you, saying enlightenment. This is your ultimate goal.

He had more, a more modest, used more modest terms, in a way more helpful. And he just called it the end of suffering. That's enough.

Another term he used is even less inspiring, and it's called emptiness, or nirvana, or nothing. But the end of suffering, the Buddha characterized his teaching as, I teach you suffering, which really means the origin of suffering. I teach suffering and the end of suffering.

And the end of suffering is enlightenment. Now the mind may have strange concepts about what it is. The end of suffering is the end of identification with form.

And that's it. And if there's already a lessening of suffering, then you must be on the right path. The burden is less.

Now the question often arises, true, nobody, we've already seen the technique doesn't get you there. So we're not really practicing techniques, although they could become techniques through the human mind. Some awaken through suffering only.

Some awaken through suffering plus a spiritual teaching. And the acceleration has already come into your life. It is a slow process that disidentification for most people who only have suffering as their teacher, unless they suffer tremendously, it's a slow process, gradual.

And they have to relive more and more the same dramas again, and again, and again. And there's the third marriage, the fourth marriage, and the fifth marriage. Just one example.

And then maybe other lifetimes, the same stuff again, not much better. And they still don't know who they are. I wrote a little line in the new book, which says, reincarnation doesn't help you.

If in the next lifetime, you still don't know who you are. And some found it not a technique. There was this spiritual teacher, Nisargadatta, who wrote this wonderful book.

Well, he spoke it, I Am That. And how did he awake? Well, he must have had his share of suffering that somehow must have gotten him, we don't know much about his suffering, but that must have gotten him ready.

So when he met this spiritual teacher, the spiritual teacher said to him something like, I don't remember the exact words, you are consciousness, you are unconditioned consciousness, that's who you are. And didn't say much more. And then he saw him one or two more times.

And then he continued selling his cigarettes at a stall in the street. One wouldn't say, doesn't even seem a karmically very auspicious occupation. And all, and that little pointer went through his mind, that is still a thought form, of course, a pointer.

I am consciousness. I am consciousness. And he must have been so ready that that was all what was needed.

I don't know how many years passed, not many, a few years, when the realization to which those words pointed, began to arise in him. And he realized the truth of it, what the words pointed to. And that's how miraculous sometimes a spiritual teaching can be.

But even him, it didn't come in one instant. There was a period of time during which that kept working in him, the pointer was working. And then it came.

Ramana Maharshi, the other, another beautiful teacher, teacher, he was only 17 when he was lying on his bed, imagining that he was dead. That was, it happened by itself. A disidentification from form happened.

That's just happened to him. Most have to suffer up to a point. Humanity has been through enormous suffering as a whole, which each human, each one of you carries his or her share of human suffering.

And there comes a point now, and we are approaching it, we may already be there, where suffering becomes optional for humanity. Because humanity as a whole has suffered so much already. And there are now children coming into this world who, and often they are maybe born into a relatively conscious family.

And that's a new phenomenon in itself. In my generation, there was no such thing as a conscious family. Well, almost non-existent.

There may have been one or two examples. But I don't know, knew anybody who came, was born into a conscious family. They were all deeply unconscious.

Even the term conscious was meaningless to most people. Probably didn't start until the 60s, with a few exceptions. But the main thing is you, the realization which many of you have, that for your further evolution, awakening, so that consciousness moves out of identification with form, you may not need more suffering.

That's the grace of the spiritual teaching, that through the grace of a spiritual teaching, in fact, you see that that's not what you need. But should it come, then that's fine too. And you can see very soon, you probably won't be in it for that long when it comes.

Because whenever it comes, it will mean you're back identified with form. You're back lost in time, lost in mind, lost in pain body, lost in some reaction. But it's always identified with form.

And that's why you suffer. Not knowing yourself as the formless. And you're resisting something which strengthens you.

It is the identification with form. It strengthens the form. It's a dream.

It's so clear that it's a dream. When you see people move into that, and especially people who move in and out, you see it's just so clear one day. Beautiful, alive, vibrantly alive, peace, aliveness, joy.

And the next morning... I observed that when I was living in a commune. It's incredible changes in people, how they become, they became, they were all into spiritual, how they became free at times, free.

And then you would, but you would never know who would come down the stairs in the morning. And when you observe that in another, it becomes so clear that they are moving into a delusional dream world of that, which is identification with form. And then they have their theories about life, about themselves, about you, about other people, about the world.

They've all their interpretations, which are all totally distorted through form identification. And then they're telling you their story. They're telling you who they are, who you are, what's wrong with them, what's wrong with you, what's wrong with the world.

And then at some point they wake up again. If presence has reached a certain degree of intensity in them, it is sometimes possible to awaken them in the middle of the dream. Not easy.

You wake them, watch what's happening, what you feel, watch, be alert, what is there, what do you feel? If you're lucky, it works. But that requires already a considerable degree of presence that has been pushed out of the way.

I love that what they use in Buddhist monasteries, when people get drawn back into their mind, or even people when they talk a lot, they will say, when in the outside world they would say, why don't you shut up? They say, watch your mind. Watch your mind.

That's now considered an insult in a Buddhist monastery, because you're implying that they're totally unconscious. That's the greatest insult. Watch your mind.

Watch your mind. You watch yours. You're telling me to watch my mind?

Look at your mind, what you were going on about yesterday, all that stuff. Who is talking? The mind.

But of course, it is a powerful, very powerful, and we call it a technique, to watch your mind, to be present as a witness to your mind. Is that a technique, or is it a way of being, a beautiful, awakened way of being? Is it a technique?

The mind will make that into technique too, and then I'm trying to watch my mind, but it's not working. A very powerful thing to watch your mind. Interesting too.

And then you see that it doesn't matter that much what goes on in there. It wants to matter, but it doesn't. Lottery.

We will also have more time for questions tomorrow, of course. I'm looking for something short now. Could you please talk about devotion?

Is there a devotional state that arises naturally out of presence? Yes, that is, it does. Devotion, which is strongly connected, very intimately connected with other things, other words we could use.

They're really all one. Devotion, gratefulness, and honoring. So when we used honoring before, that is an aspect of devotion.

Devotion really means to recognize the divinity within the form. Now, when through some misperception, you recognize it only out there, perhaps in a teacher or a guru, you recognize the divinity in him or her, through a misinterpretation of the mind, then you could be devoted to something external and believe there's the center of the universe, there's God, or there's the embodiment of God. So with devotion, sometimes there's the danger that devotion is directed exclusively to the external and you forget the source, which is within you, you forget yourself.

So it's the recognition of the divinity simultaneously, within and without. And then, of course, that devotion arises naturally out of the state of presence. It may not be immediately obvious or apparent as devotion, because people associate devotion with certain, perhaps even certain gestures or certain...

When we greet each other like this, this is very beautiful. We are not imitating some eastern thing, which some people might think. This is a very beautiful greeting that says, I greet God within you.

The God within me greets God within you, the one, the recognition of the one. I honor that. And sometimes you may go like that.

And this is what people associate with devotion, perhaps, or prostrating yourself. That's not necessary, but if you do it, if it comes naturally, that's beautiful, too. Not perhaps as a something that you should be doing, but if it's a natural thing, it's very beautiful, prostrating yourself.

When, if it should ever come to you, it's a beautiful gesture, not to anything really out there, just as an act of complete surrender to the totality, to the one. And so there is the honoring that is devotion, the honoring of life in all forms. And even the deluded life in the form of humans, deluded into thinking they are this or that, egoic delusion.

And that is sometimes humans are the most difficult life form to honor, because there's so much in the way. Nature is so, the being is so much there. And with humans, there's the density of mind and pain.

But that also is accepted and honored, and becomes transformed through that. Even you accepting it in another is the beginning of the transformation. It's healing.

It's healing to come into the presence of someone who totally accepts you as you are. You're already being healed. That person isn't doing anything at all.

If he wanted to help you or change you, he would be doing something. But that's the deep healing comes with that. And of course, becomes greatly accelerated when you do it to yourself, you're accepting yourself completely as you are, including the pain body.

The quickest way beyond pain body, there's a question here says, please explain again how exactly the pain body works and how we get beyond it. Well, I'll summarize. Old pain, humanity's pain, and pain from childhood, maybe pain from many childhoods, you carry inside an emotional field of contraction, heaviness, turbulence, residue of emotion is added to as you go through life, through experiences that are not fully faced, not fully lived through things that are accumulated inside you.

You don't want to face this, don't want to face that, you don't deal with an emotion, don't feel it fully, then it gets stored, it gets becomes part of the pain body. Not only that, the universe consists of fields of energy. And there are energy, everything is an energy field.

The flower is an energy field that we happen to perceive in this way through our senses. It's a vibrating energy field. Every human being is a vibrating energy field.

And there are other energy fields that we don't even see with our senses. So those things can also happen, this energy field comes into you, because it feels drawn to, it recognizes something that at that moment is active in you, a vibration of pain perhaps. And there may be an energy field produced perhaps by other humans, there's so much stuff, heaviness on the planet, that joins with the pain body, it feels drawn, oh, I recognize something here, says this floating cloud of energy.

And then an unhappy person becomes even more unhappy. And then pain is then translated into thought, a painful story of my life and what life has done to me and others have done to me. And that pain came into you, joining your pain body temporarily, because it says, oh, here I can feed.

It's a very normal thing. It's, the nature is full of things like that, where things feed on other things everywhere in nature. It's all the same happens in the unseen realm.

And we personalize it, we think this is me, this is my pain, this is me, this is my story, my pain, my unhappy life. When it's simply an energy movement, it came because it resonated with something in you. I wrote that originally in the book, but it was considered a little spooky, so we took that out.

But it's not really spooky. And there are other energy movements that sometimes will give added energy to your pain body. It could be a simple thing as a certain astrological configuration, and so that movement suddenly comes.

But we personalize it. It could be an entire energy stream that somehow you've linked into hundreds of thousands of people living in your state or in your city, who are producing a certain energy field. And because you're receptive, your pain body happens to be active, it is receptive to that, and then becomes magnified through that.

And it's nothing personal in it whatsoever. But it wants to become personal. It loves you to live under the illusion that this is me, my pain, my unhappy life, my suffering, mine, me.

So it wants your identification with it. This is another aspect of identification with form. And when that identification is broken, you can see it for what it is.

You can feel it, you can sense it, you can be there and witness it. That's all that's needed. The seeing, the recognizing, feel it.

So it is not personal. It is human pain. And even pain is a label.

It is some kind of energy, whatever it feels like. That's all it is. And you feel it, bring attention to it.

And that implies you cannot fully feel it unless you accept it. You accept that this is what is. So this is the transition from an unhappy person to being the witness of an energy movement inside you.

It's a huge transition from an unhappy me to being the observing presence of some contraction or some turbulence that you sense. That's not such a huge problem, is it? A turbulence that you sense.

It's weather, inner weather, a thunderstorm, lightning. And that's all that's needed for it not to feed anymore on you, on your thoughts, or on drama that otherwise you're forced to act out continuously. So you become, you're much more accident prone if your pain body is active and you're identified with it.

Because the pain body wants something bad to happen. It doesn't matter what, as long as it's bad. It wants turmoil and drama in your life.

And it will, if you are identified with it, it will create, it will move into the mind, and the mind will interpret your life in such a way that it is the most dreadful drama you can imagine. So that's the pain body doesn't like to be looked at. When it's, even here it can happen that a certain restlessness can come into you the moment we address pain body.

And that's nothing personal. It's the pain body, human pain body. So the world is full of them.

When you go out into the world, a certain percentage of people will be there with an active pain body. The others dormant for the time being. Maybe tomorrow it'll be active.

And they are identified with it. Some 10% of the time. I don't know what the average is.

30%, 25%, who knows. In some people it's 80 to 90%. And in some it's 100%.

Imagine a continuously active pain body. And some of these people have important jobs in the world. The pain body got them there.

They pushed everybody out of the way. And they're getting things done. And in the meantime, they're making everyone unhappy.

CEO of the corporation. And then suddenly he dies. The body couldn't tolerate it anymore.

And where does the pain body go then? A question here that is often asked, and a very good question. How to explain to children, or how to help children understand or become conscious of.

How could you please speak about sharing this way of being with children and teenagers? The best way of sharing it with children and teenagers is living it yourself. That's the primary way of sharing it.

Whether or not you say anything is secondary. So the being is primary. And only you can know whether there is a moment when words are appropriate.

So you living it means that in your family, in your home, or if you work with children as a teacher or some other capacity, that when you interact with the child or the teenager, you are present. There is stillness when you look at them, when you listen to them. There is space.

Giving them space, one could say. Give them space to be. And then they will do something, say something.

But the giving of space, being there as space for them. And then they come into that space that you are as you look at them. As they come in shouting, is dinner ready mom?

Now in most households, when you observe, there is an incredible lack of space. When you observe how the various members of the family interact. Their life is crammed full with things.

Thoughts, things to do, next thing to do, get this done, do this. Why haven't you done this? Everybody is continuously in a hurry to get to the next thing.

And when they are not in a hurry, they are watching TV or playing the video games, what many children grow up with these days. So they go from there to, and finally there is nothing to do anymore, and then they go to, and then they go to bed. An uneasy sleep.

And then they wake up with somebody shouting, come on, let's get it, it's late. Come on, get ready for school. Have you done your homework?

What? You haven't done your homework? And then they run, and the school is the same.

One thing after another. This and this, the next thing, the timetable is crammed full with things to do. Not one moment must be unoccupied.

It's dangerous. No space. But so it's, just to have space at home in the family, to bring space, not to be consumed by doings, comings and goings, and things, to be consumed by just mental interactions only, one mind thing after another.

It doesn't mean that you can't get things done anymore, but just acknowledge their being and your own. Just looking and listening is enough. Giving attention.

Not interpreting or saying, not the kind of attention that the mind says, okay, what have you done today? Have you done that? You still have to do that, don't you?

Have you put this on? Have you washed that? Have you put away your things?

They think that's giving attention. Or how do you feel? Is there something wrong with you?

Do you have a pain? Where is it? And again, they think they're doing good, but it's continuous.

It's fear-dominated. It's nervous tension-dominated interaction. Just look, listen.

That attention. Spacious attention. And you don't have to tell them, calm down, become present now.

Now, don't go into the future. Now, I want you to be present. Have you been present today?

And not even as a formal thing, that the mind again says, okay, now, the whole family from now on we are meeting in the dining room at 8 o'clock and between 8 and 8.15 we are present together. That's a technique. Then presence becomes a technique.

And the children won't like it. They say, this is dreadful, I'm moving out. But you'll be surprised at the transformation that happens in children only through you living it.

That's all that's required. And if additionally, at an appropriate moment, you mention a little bit to the child about pain body, that can be helpful. Wait for an appropriate time when there is space, you are interacting, talking, and perhaps start with pointing to yourself, something that they may have just witnessed in yourself.

You know what you just saw, what I did this morning? That was old stuff inside me. There's still a lot of that.

And depending on the age of the child, of course, you use the words that are right for their age. So it's very easy for children to understand, even five and six year olds can understand about pain body, even though they may not, you may not use that term for them. But they can see it because children have pain bodies, some stronger than others.

And if you can show a child to be present as the witness, that's an incredible thing. And then you can save a lot of suffering for the child because then the pain body is not growing into an even bigger pain body. It will begin actually to lose energy the moment the child is able to observe it.

Usually after the event, when they've understood the basic principle of pain body, you can see that little green monster that was there again, wasn't it just now? Yes, it was. What did it feel like?

Well, it felt there was this, it didn't feel good at all. It felt there was this stabbing, almost a pain in my stomach. It felt really, I felt sick.

Well, yeah, that's a little green monster. And occasionally, and then it goes to sleep, and then it wakes up again, doesn't it? And somebody produced a children's book, which I somebody showed me a couple of years ago.

All in, maybe it's all drawings with very little writing, just short book with big draw big colorful drawings of a little boy get coming home in a very bad mood. I'm not, don't want anything to eat. He goes up to his room and then he feels worse and worse and he turns into red and green.

And then this huge monster comes out of his mouth and fills the entire room. And the child and the monster starts throwing things around in the room, throwing around his toys. And he loves it, watching it, because he is it, he's doing it.

But then the monster touches one or two of his favorite toys and throws them out. And suddenly the boy says, why are you doing that? That was my such and such.

You're destroying it. And then that's the beginning of a recognition of that energy movement. And then the monster suddenly begins to shrink and then jumps into a little box.

So that is helpful, but to living it is the teaching. Especially words about presence will hardly be necessary when you live it. Children are usually a little closer to the truth than adults anyway.

So you don't even need to tell them, this moment is all there is. They know that already. And if they don't know it, that's an early age, they've been reconditioned to forget that, conditioned to forget that.

And that will be an important part of the transformation of consciousness, of course, is for children now to very quickly grow into conscious beings. Without having to go through what all the stuff we had to go through, many of them won't have to do that anymore. Some still will.

I'm talking still about a minority of the population, but it's growing. When you step outside, the sky, if it's still clear, look up for a while into the vastness of yourself. What a beautiful sound.

And the most beautiful thing about the sound is not the manifested sound, but the stillness that's listening. And this is how sense perceptions can also become a doorway, an opening. There's the manifested, to the mind, it's only the sound of rain.

It could explain it scientifically, how the sound is produced. But if you listen in stillness, then you're aware of the unmanifested, you are the awareness in which the sound happens. And any sense perception can be an opening into that when you're aware not only of that which is being perceived, but also of yourself, not the egoic self, but of yourself as the consciousness in which the sound happens, which is stillness.

And that's where this, that which you cannot analyze or define or explain mentally, that's where the peace comes from that is there. You're aware of yourself as consciousness. Consciousness is aware of itself.

Language is strange. And especially sense perceptions that are of anything that has not come into existence through human intervention, those things are particularly helpful. Or anything that comes into existence through human intervention usually has some mind to it, it could stimulate mind more easily.

But even there, if you're really present, you could watch a car like that also, but the rain takes you there more easily. And there's great beauty in going into nature and being the perceiving consciousness, a peace in which all that happens, to look at a tree and be aware of yourself as the awareness. And you might not put it like that, you can just, some person, somebody might say, it's just, there's deep peace in that, it's enough.

And at some point, you could even watch the TV news and be there in the peace and things get transformed through that. There's a suggestion in one of the questions, before we conclude, it says, could we visualize peace in the world? Let's see.

We're doing that already at this moment. Before we disperse, I wonder if this group could spend a few moments visualizing peace in the world. I feel such power in our deepening presence.

So that's happening already. And then be aware of that awareness, even when there's turmoil that you watch around you. There's a core of peace in the midst of turmoil.

And that transforms the world. The turmoil is ultimately a dream, the collective dream of form, the collective dream of clashing forms, all identified with form, lost in the dream of form. And not to give that dream absolute reality and say, this is dreadful, dreadful.

A question about presence, the state of presence. This seems to be a state that requires effort to maintain. The one that comes and goes, that people avoid life in order to maintain.

Please describe the difference between this apparent state and our true nature. How can the inquiry, who am I, be brought into our sessions with people? Well, we just practiced the who am I when we were listening to the rain.

Not in those words. And when you're sitting with someone, who am I is one of those pointers that you could use. In itself, it's nothing, but it points you back to the awareness that you are.

And at some point, you don't need that pointer anymore. You don't need to continue to ask yourself, who am I? You know yourself as the awareness.

When you're still inside, you don't need to ask yourself, who am I anymore, of course. It's just a, who am I is a thought, the last thought, hopefully. Now, is effort required to be present?

It sometimes may sound like it, but effort is not really compatible with presence. Because effort implies reaching out towards something. That's effort.

It's always a, you're not quite there. I have to get there. Where are you trying to get to the present moment?

I have to stay present, stay present. Ah, I lost it. So it's not really effort that is required.

When the mind looks at what we are doing, it might think, okay, now I have to make, really make an effort to be present. But it's an effort implies some point in the future or somewhere else that you need to get to. So it's not that.

But there is an intensity there in presence that the mind could mistake for effort. And what is the relationship then between the natural, as the questioner says, your true nature and that state of presence, if it is a state, and state may not be a good word. But does a state come and go or is a state permanent?

I don't know. A condition comes and goes. A state could be permanent.

Words, words. Your true nature is already the case. The flower, the tree, the animal, they are at home within themselves in their true nature.

And so are humans. But they have the dream of not being at home. But that's all very good.

And then humans wake up to their true nature. They realize, they become conscious of their true nature. Something that before was already there is now becoming conscious.

You can go to sleep. And in dreamless sleep, you merge completely with the unmanifested. And you are merged with that anyway.

And then you wake up again into the dream of form that you identify with and take that to be absolute reality. Our task as humans is to know our true nature, to consciously go into sleep, one could almost say, which is the stillness. But effort doesn't get you there.

It wants to happen. That's why you, from an external perspective, why we seem to be engaged in doing this practice, which isn't even a practice. We are engaged in this because this very event, us sitting here is part of the emerging consciousness that comes through humans where the universe is becoming aware of itself.

And whatever we say in language is a limited perspective. It's not, no words could contain the absolute truth here. Just a few helpful hints.

There's an evolutionary impulse at work. And us being here is part of that. There is an emerging consciousness.

There is a freeing of consciousness from the dream of form. There is an universal awakening happening. There is no end to the questions that the mind could then ask about it.

To what end? And what happens after that? And what's the purpose in that?

And then what? So up to a point, it's helpful to see a few things and then leave that behind, this continuous search for explanations, because that keeps you on the level of mind. That has its place.

You have to know when it's time to step beyond further questioning, trying to typical questions where you get stuck is, I want to learn more about presence. Can you explain a bit more? I haven't quite understood it, not fully.

Of course not. As the famous Zen dialogue goes, disciple asks the master. No, the master asks the disciple, Do you understand Zen?

Disciple says, No, master, I don't. And master says, Neither do I. Now there's something that comes that the mind does not like at all.

At some point, you give up trying to understand. And for many spiritual seekers, that can be the last obstacle or one of the last, sometimes the last. Trying to understand.

I have to understand before I can teach. I have to understand this fully. No, you don't.

You can't. But then how can I explain if people ask me questions I won't know the answer? If the answer is needed, if it's a true question and a vital question, then the answer will be there the moment the answer is required.

But that is a, it's a great thing when you realize it is time to give up trying to figure out and to understand the universe, myself, my relationship to the world, what I'm even, what I'm here for. You don't, it's so vast, you can't possibly understand it. The vastness even that you are, you can't possibly understand it, being it, yes.

And so that's a, it could, it's a relief. You don't need to understand. When I became peaceful, suddenly, I didn't understand more.

In fact, one could easily say that I understood much less than before when I was in turmoil. So that is the great renunciation also, to renounce having to understand. And then, out of that, something does arise.

A deep knowing that is beyond concepts, that is not easy to put into words, or you can't put into words. So this is, it is the shift from being based in thinking to being based, and of course, just language, in awareness. The shift from thinking to awareness.

It's one way of putting it. That is happening in humanity. The evolutionary leap that is going to save humanity if it happens, and it is happening.

The evolutionary leap from thought, mind-based creatures to creatures rooted in awareness. And it is quite possible that a day comes on the planet when humans, I'm not going to say much more about this, but I don't, I've got to go into that kind of thing. But if any of you are science fiction writers, you can take, pick it up as an idea.

It may not be easy to write about this because a time may come when humans on the planet don't think anymore. Neither do they speak anymore. They, an intelligence that is greater than the limited mind with its thought forms, its conditioned thought forms, then operates.

And they walk about in complete stillness. And whatever they need to communicate is immediately transmitted, but not through concepts. Now, I don't know how interesting a film would be about that.

The film would only become interesting if some unenlightened being arrives in that world. Because then there can be some drama. When I wake up in the morning, I feel so happy and blissful that I have no desire to go into the world and achieve things.

I've put up a list of goals next to my bed and that helps. But I'm so happy just as I am, it seems like a problem. I could lay there for hours.

Sometimes I do. Well, I can't see the problem. If I remember correctly, in ancient Greece, to be a member of the Senate, one of the requirements was, I don't know the exact number of years, one of the requirements was not to have done anything for 10 years or so.

There's great wisdom in that. Now, imagine writing that in your resume. 1990 to 2000, did nothing.

It sometimes happens, particularly in those humans in whom that peace that comes with the awakened consciousness comes suddenly. It sometimes happens that they find it difficult to continue to operate in the world. It's so sudden, that change from being run by desire and fear, which is what keeps people going mostly in this world.

Fear drives you to do things and the wanting drives you to do things. I want that, but I fear that, so I have to be active so that this doesn't happen. I need the security, I need to...

And when that goes, it seems the motivation for action has disappeared. If it happens suddenly, this happened to me also. And I spent quite a few years doing nothing and miraculously survived.

I'm not saying that this is what you should do. In most of you, the arising is more gradual. So you have time to find a way of incorporating the new state into being in the world and finding a way of being active that is not dominated by fear or desire.

A new way of doing that does not have the underlying energy field of fear or fearing or wanting. And of course, that implies that kind of doing comes out of the joy of being. There is joy in that kind of doing when it's not run by fear and desire.

So you then learn to do what is needed in this world, not no longer the obsessive doing, the obsessive and excessive doing that most people are engaged in because they need to become somebody and add more to me and that, not that kind of doing, but doing that is part of being here as a form and that involves being engaged in some kind of activity without loss of peace. In fact, activities into which peace flows, joy that is peace, peace and joy are one as the most essential energy in the doing. And so if presence arises very suddenly in you, then you may need some, need to wait.

You may need, may take years before you can fully live again and interact with the world in that new state. Maybe not, maybe if you have the help of a teaching, you can more quickly incorporate it and then begin to live it in this world. It took Ramana Maharshi many years before he could operate normally again.

He couldn't even speak or had no desire to speak anymore. He didn't even want to feed himself anymore. What for?

And so he just sat immersed in the bliss of being for years. It was his great luck that it didn't happen to him in the West because probably he would have spent the rest of his days in a mental home. But he was there in India and people came to feed him.

They left him, but somebody always would come and feed him. And gradually he would start putting food in his mouth. And showing some interest in the external, never an excessive interest, but just looking.

And then people would ask questions. And at first there was no answer. And then at some point he started scribbling an answer.

And then he was able to speak again. And then became quite, could function quite normally, but always, of course, with great stillness. And something happened to me that is similar, although not as extreme, fortunately.

Otherwise I wouldn't be here, would still be shut away. The complete loss of interest in future, the complete loss of all ambition, of achievement, of doing anything that lasted for a few years. And then gradually the ability came back to do, but in a very different way, doing with peace and joy.

With most of you, it arises more gradually, so you can more easily find a way of incorporating that into your life. But for some people, there may come a time when you feel it's pointless to do anything because it's so good to just be. Or maybe you just do the minimum.

There are people to whom this has happened who gave up great jobs in the world and became gardeners or things that was, they could easily stay, very easily stay present. They did manual jobs. They gave up the reputable job and just did the minimum of what was required.

All these things, there can be no predicting what will happen as this shift happens within you, but it is possible and it is beautiful. You are not condemned to passivity now. In fact, as you learn to live in that beautiful state, then whatever you do, when you finally do, has the creative spark to it.

It has quality to it, whatever it is, whether it's a simple movement of picking up garbage in the park and you're an enlightened park attendant. Hopefully you don't have a conceptual identity about yourself as that, because you're nobody, of course. If you are somebody picking up garbage in the park, you'll be unhappy.

But if you're nobody picking up garbage in the park, every movement is beautiful and there's a quality to that. Wonderful. Or whatever it is.

So some people feel called upon to let go of their complicated life and do something more simple. It's possible. Or perhaps you can somehow introduce that simplicity into your complexity and transform the complexity and make it all more simple and then become an attorney at law that does things differently.

Is that possible within the structures? I don't know. There are people who have companies who do things differently.

My publisher does things differently. It's not, it's a company where everybody has a share in the profit that's generated. Every employee, New World Library.

And they are all very happy. They all have a lot of fun. But it is possible.

Some of the structures are still capable of change if conscious humans are in there. And other structures are so rigid that they are incapable of change. So what happens to you as this arises?

Just you will make it. You will survive. Even if you do nothing for a while.

If that is what you are called to do or not to do. Be careful with the mind making it into a problem. My mind had given up by then.

And the only remnant that was left of problem was an innocent question that the mind would sometimes ask when I was sitting there on park benches. And the question was, how can you be so happy? I don't understand that.

It doesn't make sense. But fortunately, the mind didn't pursue it any further. It asked the question and then it gave up.

If the mind had pursued it further, it would have become a problem. I don't understand. I need to understand.

And even now, in my life, there are always periods when I do nothing. It is very beautiful.

I sit in my room, maybe an hour, two hours, or out in nature.

It's just being. There's great beauty in that. In just being.

Or sit in the car. If there's a traffic jam, beautiful. Just being.

Nowhere to go. Nothing to do. Just such aliveness.

Waiting at the airport. Of course, if you go into mind, then comes, this is preposterous. What do they think they're doing?

A couple of questions about money or charging when you see people. Whether to, what is the right way? Is it right to charge money for spiritual teaching?

Can you charge money for space? How much is space? The first thing to remember about this, this is one of the favorite ways of the mind of adopting a position.

Because many people have an issue with money because it's connected with survival and me surviving and making it. And so when you talk about it, to be aware that the mind will use it as a wonderful opportunity to identify with a mental position about it of right and wrong. An emotionally charged mental position.

And when you notice it in yourself, that's enough to notice it. And you're not trapped in the mental position. So I could speak to you for the next 10 or 20 minutes on why you should certainly not charge.

And it will make complete sense why it is right not to charge for spiritual teaching. And then I could speak to you for 20 minutes to say why it is right that you should charge. And neither one nor the other is right.

They are both right. There are two ways. There are ways of doing things to do with the world of form.

No more. And the mind can use it as a wonderful opportunity to focus on something on the level of form to avoid the formless. In this teaching, for maybe 10 or 12 years, all the teaching I did was either by donation or with a minimum charge.

Now, for the past few years, there has been a charge. And the strange thing is the average number of people who came to my intensives when I was charging donations was 15. Now the cycle came of charging for the teaching.

And the charging is to do with the form, not with the essence of the teachings, to do with the needs on the physical level of structures, physical structure, where one lives, where one meets, tapes. Everything has a physical aspect. Even when a spiritual teaching comes into this world, it somehow must have a physical aspect.

There's a book. Everything, this mic is physical. The room is a physical structure.

Mailing lists are physical. Tapes are physical. People are traveling.

I, this body travels from here to there. So inevitably, that comes in and money is connected with the world of form one way or another. There are organizations, spiritual organizations.

You can, they offer free teaching, and that's beautiful. Very often, at some point, as you become associated with the organization, you will realize that, yes, there is an expectation that you should contribute part of your income to keep the external form of it going. And the Buddha was given land so that the monastery could be there, that was form.

And yet, how easy it is for the form to take over and obscure the essence of the teaching, which has also happened in many organizations. The form, which was just there to enable that which is beyond form to get out into the world, grew and obscured the essence of the teaching. And everybody was only concerned with the institution, the external structures of the form.

And even money was then became part of it. So there's the danger, of course, that this can happen. Personally, I feel that there are certain cycles.

There was a cycle in this teaching where things were free or at a minimum. There is a cycle that came, it was this, when great numbers of people came and there was a charge and it worked beautifully. Thousands and thousands and thousands were reached and are being reached.

And yet I feel that here too a transition is coming. And I cannot tell you yet what form the teaching will take in the future. All I know is that right now that there's a transitional point that's being reached in the form that this teaching takes.

It's been perfectly fine up to this point, but I do feel that coming. So when we meet again, then perhaps we'll know what it is and what external form the teaching takes. Will it be free?

Who knows, perhaps. And so only you can know what is right for you, what feels right. And you will always meet somebody else who questions that.

I felt wonderful about not charging for many years until I met somebody who came. I told the story in the last practicing presence retreat when the same question came up. Somebody called me up and said, can I come to you for a session?

Yes. Said, how much do you charge? Said, there is no charge, donation only.

Said, oh, oh, okay. And then she came and said, I almost did not come because you obviously don't value your work. You don't value what you do.

I said, oh, how is that? Well, you don't charge for what you do if it's valuable. And then she talked to me for an hour about that I was wrong not to charge and left without leaving a donation.

Spiritual teaching is something new for the West. The West has had institutionalized priests and so on. But spiritual teachings, especially that are not really part of an institution, is something, a spiritual teacher is something new in the West.

There's not really tradition of spiritual teachers. Maybe the last spiritual teachers they had were the Middle Ages, the mystics. But even the mystics were somehow associated with the church or the church didn't like them at all.

And so there is no tradition of that in the West as there is in India. Where in India, people are naturally generous. They provide for the livelihood of the spiritual teacher.

The few Indians who have come to me in the West, when I first started teaching in the West, I was always amazed that you don't need to, they don't even ask how much you charge. They assume that you don't charge and they give very generously. And it's beautiful.

And a friend of mine is a spiritual teacher who now lives in the West, an Indian woman, does doing good work. And she had a guru in India and she visited the guru in India. And her guru in India said, somehow she must have mentioned to her that she charges for her work in the West.

And her guru said, this is absolutely wrong. You must not charge. You are a prostitute if you charge for spiritual teaching.

Stop charging. She went back to the West and then called up everybody and said, I'm not charging anymore. This is it.

You can leave donations if you like. And so people continued to come and there was no charge anymore. And she's funny story.

Her income was dwindling and paying the mortgage was getting difficult. That's the world of form. She was not being sustained by an institution.

She lived alone. And one day a woman came and she knew she was wealthy and she just said, she showed her, she just bought these two or three beautiful dresses in some, look at that. Isn't that great?

And it only costs $500 per dress. And then she left a donation. She didn't see this.

My friend explained to me, she didn't see the discrepancy. She left, I don't know how much, 10 or $20 after a wonderful session. She said, oh, this was so beautiful.

You've given me so much. And then my friend, the teacher said, and I felt angry, she said. And then she started chanting again.

There is no right or wrong here. You need to feel what is right for you at any, and what is right today may not be right tomorrow. There are cycles in life.

There are ways of doing things. And there are cycles. Then in my life, there was a cycle of inactivity.

And there was a cycle of activity. There may again come a cycle of relative inactivity on the external level. And there can be cycles in the world of form where you do things differently on the level of form.

So let's wait and see what happens. On the level of form as far as this teaching is concerned. Beware of emotionally charged, as I mentioned at the beginning, emotionally charged positions around money.

As many people have. They're very spiritual until it's to do with business. Until it's to do with their investment, meeting their investment advisor and the collapsing stock market or the real estate deal that's not going through.

And they lose it. It's to do with fear and survival. And the need for position.

I enjoy the relative abundance on the external level that is in my life now. There's money in the bank. Which has never happened before.

And so it's a new experience. It's enjoyable. But that's enough.

I've had the experience now. I never felt poor when I had no money somehow. From an external viewpoint, people would have said, this person lives below the poverty line.

And if I had known that, I might have felt bad about it. And occasionally I lived in places when people visited me, they were shocked. How can you live like that?

Like what? Well, the mattress on the floor and an old table and a chair. How can you live like that?

What's wrong with that? For 15 years, my means of transportation in my adult life was a bicycle. Beautiful.

I cycled around London for years in the midst of traffic. I enjoyed it greatly. One day my father arrived and he saw my bike.

He was in the hotel. We were looking out of the window. I said, do you see down there?

That's my bike. He said, what? He felt sorry for me.

It was dreadful. I must give you some money. I said, why?

You're reduced to riding a bike at your age? Now I drive an SUV. And some people say that's definitely not the car that Jesus would drive.

Maybe I'm using up my environmental credits accumulated during 15 years of cycling. But sitting in a nice comfortable car doesn't really feel any better than a bicycle. They're both beautiful.

Just equally enjoyable. Or walking. There's great beauty in walking.

So it's to just enjoy whatever comes to you in the phenomenal realm. And things change all the time. So certain things come for a while.

The forms come. And yes, you experience the forms. You play with it.

Abundance is not really to do with how much you have on the external level. I felt so abundant sitting on a park bench. True abundance comes from being out of being.

Being is abundant. It is the fullness of life. Jesus talks about it, the fullness of life.

Sometimes he calls it, it's translated as abundant life. Not many things. He never talked about accumulating things.

So it's not accumulating. Don't need to accumulate anything. But things may come to you.

Why not enjoy what comes? And then things may leave you or you leave them. That's beautiful too.

The Buddha left everything behind. Walked away. And later things came to him again.

It didn't matter anymore. But even on a material level, there were possessions. The monastic order was given vast amounts of land, beautiful gardens.

That came, it didn't matter at all. But enjoyable, yes. Any egoic remnants that are left in you, money is a favorite way of activating those.

They activate themselves again through that. And this is why the gurus, many gurus have fallen, especially gurus who came from the East, unused to the ways of the West. They came to the East and were confronted with money, sex, and power.

The three things that can easily reactivate the ego. Do you have any suggestions for the family members of or the persons with Alzheimer's disease where the loss is progressing relatively gradually? That is a strange thing.

The loss of memory. Being with someone, if the loss is happening slowly, directing attention within, away from mind, because mind is going anyway by itself. So directing attention away from thought into the aliveness that is within.

That's a beautiful thing you can do with a person when you sit with them. And instead of trying to remember things that you could eventually that will go, it's a very peculiar phenomenon. I don't have very much personal experience with meeting people who have that.

The mother of a friend of mine has Alzheimer. And in her particular case, he told me his mother was unhappy all her life. Tortured by thoughts about her miserable life.

Interpreting everything negatively. And he said when she was beginning to lose her memory, she was happy for the first time in her life. This doesn't happen.

Some Alzheimer patients are not happy. I know that. And there may be, it may also be that the pain body comes up more strongly.

But in her particular case, as the thinking faculty diminished, she experienced freedom from the burden of thought. But of course, with Alzheimer, you're moving towards, you're moving below thought. It can be a way, it is perhaps a way of the organism to free itself from the torture of the mind.

The body says, I have had enough. We are going to switch that thing off. I can't stand this anymore because the body has enormous intelligence.

And the body does things sometimes to just, that's it, I've had enough. And so the greater intelligence said, no more of this. And it finds the off switch.

I have no scientific proof for this. But I would suggest that as you find inner stillness, it is less likely that this will happen to you because you voluntarily step out of mind. The body doesn't have to do it for you.

You voluntarily step out into stillness. And the body loves that. The body does not love the mind.

It creates so much havoc in the body. An interesting study was made some years ago by a psychologist connected with Alzheimer disease. Usually these things these days, the way they study them is on the level of brain chemistry and so on.

Because medicine, even psychology is to a large extent addresses the material aspect, the physical aspect of illness. Even the mind is studied in that way. But a psychologist did a strange study.

There was a large convent somewhere in the States. And some of those nuns who lived all their life in that convent developed Alzheimer, a certain percentage, normal percentage. And what he did, he studied the initial letters that each young nun wrote when they applied to be accepted in the convent.

And he could predict, he could tell from the way, not the writing, but the way in which the writing, the letters were written with a great degree of accuracy who would develop Alzheimer and who would not develop Alzheimer. And what he looked at was originality of expression, whether the writing had a spark of creativity to it or whether it was a conventional use of language without the spark that comes, the creative spark that comes into writing when you are connected with something within you that is deeper than the mind. So those that had the creative spark in their writing did not develop Alzheimer.

So I don't know whether he came to that conclusion that I drew from it or whether he left it at that. So those who were already connected with even perhaps in a small area of their lives and perhaps only a tiny opening into the unconditioned consciousness that is beyond the conditioned mind, those that had that did not develop Alzheimer. They had the connection to perhaps there was the stillness there, a link, not perhaps totally.

And those that didn't have it, he predicted, were much more likely to develop that. That's a very interesting study. So I believe that it is far less likely to happen to you as you voluntarily exit the stream of thinking, so to speak.

Then you won't have to be pushed out of the stream of thinking or the stream of thinking doesn't have to be switched off for you. So we do not know what awareness remains in those human beings to whom it happens. I have briefly observed some of them have never had a long interaction.

In some, there was definitely an aware presence still there without the memory. There's a beautiful story in a book that I was given recently. I don't remember the title, Small Graces or something like that, where he visits an old people's home, the author, and meets an old woman.

And all she does, she spends her time looking out of the window. She can't move very much anymore. And he comes into her room, whether she has Alzheimer's or not, or early stages, I don't know.

And she looks out of the window and he came to her ready to feel great pity for this person, who is reduced to staring out of the window. And she directed his attention to look at the tree, look at the clouds. Look at the sky, how beautiful.

Just look and you're right. Her life had become reduced to a window and it was enough because she went so deeply into that perception. She needed no more.

She taught him he was ready to feel pity for her. And he learned a beautiful lesson of looking without thought, just looking. So wonderful to be here with myself.

There may be some questions that haven't been answered, but I keep all the questions. So at some point, you might see an answer somewhere. By then, you would have forgotten the question.

On the formal level, every ending is a little death. And there's great beauty in that because all it happens, it ends on the level of form. This particular form comes to an end, the gathering.

The essence of the form does not.

2003-Eckhart-Tolle-Reality-of-BEING-Illusion-of-One-Life-Story

[Speaker 1] (1:58 - 3:11:45)

If you've been to a talk or retreat before, you know that I often point out at this stage that you should check within to see if you are waiting for something to happen, waiting for the talk to start. What does that mean, waiting? It means there's a little bit of inner strain, a slight, very tiny inner stress that pulls you away from here and now.

Expressed facially, it could be like, and when you notice that, then you know something about your relationship with the present moment. You lost it. The end of the relationship.

Now, did he or she leave you, or did you leave him or her? He or she doesn't leave you, you left. The waiting is so subtle and so all-pervasive as one's normal state of consciousness that most people don't even know that they're in an almost continuous state of waiting.

That's how normal it is. Once you detect it in yourself, it's a slight tension, strain, stress. Sometimes there's a little bit of irritation mixed in, a thought mixed in.

Come on, let's get on with it. We only have a couple of hours this morning, come on. But if you notice it in yourself as a mental energy field, and even some emotion may go with it.

Irritation is an emotion. Thoughts go with it occasionally. The moment you notice it, something has arisen that is not part of that deeply conditioned mind pattern.

The seeing of it is not part of it. The seeing of it, and that's the seeing of any pattern in yourself, is not part of the pattern. And the seeing, the recognizing of it, requires you to be present, aware at this moment, awake.

So when you see a pattern in yourself, mental, emotional, conditioned, of course. Now the waiting is a collective pattern, almost everybody has that. There may be other patterns in you that you detect that are to do with your personal life.

It doesn't matter what it is, it could be the simplest thing. When you see a man with a beard and dark hair, you feel anxious, and then you realize that maybe he looks like your father, and you didn't have a good relationship with him. Any pattern, collective or personal, when you detect it, there's something more at that moment than that which you see.

There is the seeing of it. Before, the pattern absorbed your consciousness completely. You wear it, you become it.

You are the waiting, anxious, somewhat irritated person. There's no space around the irritation, around the stress of that moment. There's no space around it, you are in it.

And then suddenly you see it. And one could say it is a stepping back, perhaps the deeper meaning of retreat. Because you are retreating not only from the world that you usually move in, you have to retreat also from the world in your head.

You step back. And something arises that is not conditioned, and that is pure, simple, pure, miraculous consciousness, awareness, presence, whatever you want to call it. And that is the part in you that is not conditioned.

Everything else is conditioned. The seeing, that is an energy field, I'm using seeing metaphorically, it's not necessarily with your eyes. The noticing, the seeing, you may feel it, but there is the presence in which it is felt, which means suddenly there is space around that.

And so it could be anything that you notice in yourself. It could be compulsive behavior, this or that, compulsive reaction. Almost everything is compulsive.

Well, everything is compulsive when you are not there as the witnessing presence. Your entire movement of thought is compulsive. You can't stop, or you think you can't stop.

And the mind loves to tell you that you cannot stop, and make a problem out of that, which leads to further thinking. Why can't I stop my mind? What's wrong with me?

I've been doing meditation for years. And I still can't do it. There's no point in going on, is there?

And then you believe in every thought. There's no point in going on. I might as well chuck it all in.

And then suddenly you step back and you watch those thoughts. So this is the arising of something new in you. New in the sense that you hadn't noticed that dimension in yourself before.

It was there all along, waiting underneath all the conditioned mind movements. But you didn't know it was there. And suddenly it arises.

It kind of, at this time in the evolution of the planet and of humanity, that is pushing through from underneath all the conditioned collective stuff that people carry and identify with as themselves. Something else is pushing forward from deeper, a deeper dimension within you. It's almost like the eggshell needing to break.

Something wants to come out of there. And so there comes a time when the shell, which is really the shell of that egoic sense of self that consists of identification with thought, needs to break. There is an evolutionary impulse in the universe towards consciousness.

And that has been playing itself out on the planet for millions of years. Consciousness expressing itself in ever-changing forms. And through humans, consciousness now wants to come to a flowering that hasn't happened before, never on a large scale, only to a few isolated individuals.

And what humans did to them, well, either they ignored them completely, or they killed them, or they made them into gods to be worshipped. And those were only the few individuals in whom this came through almost prematurely, but they were necessary precursors of what was to come, a deeper change. Now, I'm not telling you, of course, to wait for some change to happen on the planet.

You know, there are many, many, many times in the history, groups of people have waited for the end or some drastic change. We are not waiting. I'm just pointing out that this gathering here is already part of this transformation, this flowering of consciousness.

And anybody who in a so-called future moment, which doesn't exist, listens to this, it will be in the now, nobody could ever listen to this anywhere else except in the now, is also part of that transformation of consciousness, because as you listen, something new arises. There is more here than the words. There is that which the words point to, which is here as an alive presence in you, an inner arising.

There's more here than the words. If there were only the words, it wouldn't be that much. So consciousness then wants to flower through the human form.

Whether it fully will do that on a large scale, we don't know yet. Although it is happening here, there's also the dysfunction of the old form, which is no longer working, similar to a caterpillar that comes to the end of its lifespan as a caterpillar. And the closer it comes to the end of its lifespan as a caterpillar, the more difficult it gets to continue to...

Suddenly the crawling doesn't work anymore. Things don't work anymore. The caterpillar existence becomes dysfunctional.

It was fine before, because something new is destined to emerge out of this thing that is bound by gravity, can't even lift itself up one inch. And now the evolutionary transformation, when it happens, is not a progressive thing of getting better and better at doing something in a certain way, but a complete leap to another dimension. So in the case of the caterpillar, it doesn't mean that he gets better at crawling, faster and faster.

No, that is left behind completely, and something emerges that is a different being. Suddenly something comes out of it, and it has the most beautiful wings, and it flies off, has almost no weight at all. It has completely transcended the gravity of the planet.

And in the case of humans, what does that mean? Humans have been immersed in thinking for thousands and thousands and hundreds of thousands of years. The arising of thought was a necessary stage in the evolution.

Of course, it had wonderful sides too, to be able to think and speak, which is connected with thinking, words, form words and concepts. And yet gradually, humans lost through that, became totally entangled in it, and they lost their connectedness with something deeper than thought. They perhaps once had it, a deep connection with life, not life of form, the formless one life that is the essence of who you are, the one formless life.

But that connection humans had in the way that everything natural still has that, but they didn't even know it. It was so natural, they couldn't imagine anything else. They had that deep connectedness in which there's no fear of death, because there's a deep knowing that there is no death, only the form dissolving.

The leaf, all the millions or billions of leaves that we see around us now are all dying. And there's such beauty in their death even. And they are not afraid of death, they just die beautifully.

So in humans, thought gradually captured their consciousness, so that their whole sense of self became entangled in thought. And then gradually thought itself became more dysfunctional. It created a dysfunctional world.

From the beginning of recorded history, if you read history and are alert, if you had just come here from another planet and you are reading human history for the first time, you can see that a large part of the human suffering, that is history, is inflicted on humans by other humans. All the wars and murder and cruelties, continuous warfare, except brief interludes, because they got exhausted for a while. And then the most dysfunctional century, the 20th.

A hundred million dead, killed by other humans. And this is a continuation, the 21st century. So on that level, the old continues.

The caterpillar is still trying to have its way. And it's getting more and more difficult. Similarly, we could compare it to the flowering of plants, this incredible beauty that has arisen on the planet through flowers.

Consciousness expressing itself through this ethereal form of flowers that humans have always recognized as very special. And all flowers have had a significance. Well, perhaps the first thing in humanity that was not utilitarian, that you couldn't really eat or do anything with it.

And yet they valued that beyond anything that they could do with it. Because deep down, in a very, very deep, distantly, they recognized perhaps beauty there for the first time, when the first human discovered beauty. Ah!

But flowers came much later than plants. There were 100 million or 200 million years of plants before the first flower ever opened. I'm told that was about 230 million years ago, the first flower opened on the planet.

But many millions of years before that, plants already covered the planet. Now plants, certain plants flowered, others chose not to flower. And perhaps it will be the same with humanity.

Perhaps only part of humanity will go through this inner shift and the other part will say, no, we're okay as we are. But it only requires part of humanity to go through this flowering for the entire energy field of the planet to be transformed. So what humans then are not doing is to continue perfecting the old way, the caterpillar trying to crawl faster and faster.

If we use this metaphor for humans, then that would mean humans develop the thinking mind more and more. This is what, of course, they've been trying to do. Let's analyze this, more and more analysis, more and more getting facts and thinking.

Okay, how can we solve the problems that we've got, seem to have a proliferation of problems on the planet. They seem to get more and more, I don't know. Let's get together and think and see how we can solve this and analyze this problem, cut it into bits and pieces.

This is what they do at universities. They cut the subject matters into tinier and tinier pieces. 100 or 200 years ago, it was more satisfying still to be engaged in intellectual endeavors because you had a wide field.

Everybody at university had a huge amount of knowledge. Even the scientists had great knowledge. They knew Latin and Greek and had knowledge of classical culture and everything.

And nowadays, they have knowledge of a tiny segment of their speciality. They can't afford to study anything else. So it's not all that interesting anymore.

You can write a PhD on the leaves of the tree, the leaf of the oak tree. It's this wonderful phenomenon, of course, the leaf, but to see it in isolation. So everything, the mind cuts it up and it doesn't solve anything.

Any solution that it comes up with creates more problems. Okay, now we'll invent a medicine to combat the side effects of this medicine. And then another one to combat the side effects.

So humanity has really come to the end of the road as far as one particular line of growth or development is concerned. And now the shift needs to happen and is happening to something entirely different, which means thinking will become no longer primary but secondary. You can still think beautifully, but you're no longer trapped in thought.

Something arises that is deeper than thought, and that is the butterfly. It's like something suddenly emerging that's so different from what was there before. And some of you have already experienced that in yourself, that shift.

From there was once this anxious, depressed, whatever, angry, stressful little me. Something else has come and there's been an opening. And a spaciousness that wasn't there before, or was there, but had been obscured continuously.

That is the new. And it's from there that you see the old in you, which of course still has its momentum. It has its momentum both on the external level, when you see the news and read the newspapers, then you can see how strong the momentum of the dysfunctional consciousness in humanity still is.

And you can see it in yourself occasionally, that the old reactivity, the old reactions, or the waiting for the next thing, the denial of what is, in various ways of running away from the present moment, all these old movements also still periodically come as wave movements. And sometimes even the seeing is lost. Even in those in whom the new is already arising, sometimes they get lost totally in the old, deeply conditioned, collective, personal mind movement.

And wake up a few hours later, a few days later, you might even be lost a few weeks. I've heard of people who got lost for a whole year, and then they couldn't stand the suffering anymore, and finally, through the suffering, they got woken up again. It's like being in a nightmare, when it gets so bad that you can't stand it anymore, suddenly you go...

and realize that you're in a bed, a warm bed. And this is a very significant term, waking up. And of course it has been used for thousands of years in spiritual teachings.

Awaken. Because everybody knows what awakens means on one level, because everybody wakes up every morning out of sleep. And you know what that is.

So there's dream, sleep, and dream. And then they go... So it's used as a kind of metaphor to describe something that is similar to waking up from sleep.

But of course it's not that, because in spiritual terms, ordinary human consciousness is a kind of sleep also. To be identified completely with one's conditioned thinking and emotion, that movement, to be totally identified with that is a kind of dream. Conditioned.

And so most humans are still in it, but many, many more than ever before are now waking up out of that. But to see in yourself, to verify it in yourself that it is a kind of dream to be in that. Because, and it creates a certain reality that corresponds to your conditioning.

You interpret through the veil of this dream, through the old interpretations and reactions, you interpret the events and people and situations around you. So everything, it gets incorporated into the dream world. So you see nothing then as it is, because you impose your dream on it.

Human beings that come into your life, situations that you are in, you don't see it as it is. You only see your story about it. And so, and then a moment comes when you wake up and you see the possibility of relating, of being and relating without the otherwise compulsive mental interpretations that you have.

Sometimes when we speak of allowing this moment to be as it is, which is the essential spiritual practice, people think what we are talking about is allowing their interpretation of this moment. They cannot distinguish between this moment and the way in which they interpret this moment, how they personalize it. So you could be sitting on a park bench and you may have heard this teaching that says allow this moment to be as it is.

And then you think, okay, I'm a former CEO of that company who lost his position due to evil people around him and then soon later was left by his wife. His children don't like him. So this man is saying, okay, this moment, what I need to accept is that my life is in ruins.

It's come to nothing. Here I sit penniless on this bench, 30 years of hard work, nothing to show for it. It's all gone.

So what I need to accept now is that my life is a complete mess and totally in ruins. That's a story. So the man is confusing a story with this moment and he is imposing a story on this moment.

That's one story. There are many other possible stories. The reality is always much more simple than the story.

The story is this bench, this energy field sitting here, sensing the aliveness in the inner body, the trees, the birds, the clouds, the air, the sound of the leaves in the wind, the aliveness of it all, vibrant, without needing to tell yourself anything, you sense that, you see it. This moment is the simplicity of sitting here on the park bench and watching the aliveness all around. What do you need to interpret?

You accept this moment as it is and then you put your hand in your pocket and you pull out two dollars. That's what I have here, two dollars. All right.

You accept that. What else can you do? That's what is.

So the whole story of ruined and all come to nothing and we're never going to make it anymore, all that mind movement is not really part, is not part of the simplicity of now. So don't confuse when we speak of accept what is don't confuse a story with the simplicity of what is. What is, is just this here, sense perceptions, feeling the inner body and most importantly, something that's usually ignored, to be aware of, it's very hard to use words here, to be aware and as I speak, there's the possibility that this is now seen, experienced by you here.

As you sit here, what is the reality of this moment? You let go of the stories in your head about who you are or what your life is. That's your life situation, not your life.

That's past. So what's, and it's all a story. It's the story of me in the head that you tell yourself.

I'm not talking, if it's memories are fine, but to identify with memories, then you personalize, it becomes a me. Your memories become a self. What's the reality of this moment?

Here, sitting here, there are sense perceptions, auditory, the humming sound and the voice, visual sense perceptions of the room, the person sitting up here, other people in the room, the ceiling, the lights, sunlight coming in, flowers up here, and you can feel perhaps your inner body also, the aliveness that is there in your inner energy field. And underlying all that, even deeper than anything that you experience or notice at this moment, is the alert attention, the field of alert attention in which this seeing, this hearing, this sensing is happening. One could also call it a field of stillness.

There's a field, an alert stillness in which your sense perceptions happen. That alert stillness is always there. Otherwise, there would be nothing for anything to be.

There needs to be consciousness in which the experience or the thought or the perception happens. So that alert underlying field is consciousness itself. And it is a revolutionary thing for a human to become aware of that, but it is also very, very subtle.

It is not something that you can grasp. The mind will try to make it into some new object, and the danger, of course, is there when we talk about it. We make it into an object of consciousness because we put it into words.

We make a thought out of it, out of something that is far beyond thought. So the mind thinks there is something here to grasp and hang on to or to achieve or to hold, but there isn't. It is all-pervasive, the only real power in the universe, and at the same time, it is so subtle that most humans miss it entirely.

They don't know that dimension. They only know that which arises in consciousness. They know it, but they identify with it.

They react to it. What arises in your field of consciousness are sense perceptions, experiences, thoughts and emotions. Sense perceptions, experiences, things happen, situations, which is also really sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions.

And so they are identified with the objects that arise in consciousness, completely identified, never knowing that deeper level that is the very condition for the arising of anything comes out of that. And one could describe that as stillness. The word limits it somewhat, but it's a pointer.

So one could say there is in you the dimension of stillness. Has never not been there. Is not something that you need to acquire or achieve, that you could achieve in the future, in time.

If you're looking to the future to achieve that dimension, enlightenment, whatever you want to call it, if you look to the future to achieve that dimension, that very looking to the future prevents you from seeing that it's already the very essence of your being now. So many humans are looking to the future to look for fulfillment or enlightenment or liberation in whatever way, through a million dollars or through spiritual enlightenment. They look to the future for that.

And the moment you move away and look to the future for it as if it were something that you could get, from someone or through some experience, you've gone away from it. Mentally, you've gone into the old conditioned mind movement which is looking to the next thing. This is why I spoke yesterday of the vertical dimension that we are going into here.

So the dimension of stillness, let's for a moment use that pointer, and let's never get attached too much to one single pointer because then you make it into some kind of belief. And the concept satisfies you for a moment. And then you could even say, I believe in stillness.

You don't believe in stillness? You're wrong. And then somebody else says, No, no, it's presence, it's not stillness.

There is in you that already, the stillness underneath all the mental noise and the emotional fluctuations, there is that realm of the unconditioned pure awareness, pure consciousness. And that is, on the one hand, you could call it, it is the non-personal dimension of you. It is where you transcend the personal sense of self.

And then you might say, Ah, no, I don't want to lose myself. Ah, but what you hadn't realized is, you think that yourself is the story of yourself. But that is no more than thoughts.

If you look very deeply and closely into what you mean when you say, I don't want to lose myself. I can feel there is something precious here that I do not want to lose. And you think, that sense of something precious that I am, I cannot imagine that I am going to die.

The world, me dead, and the world without me, can't be. So there is something, one feels there is something precious, and people, the fear of death comes, because people believe this is going to be lost. That sense of precious, if you look closely at what that really is, you see that it is something that has become mixed up with the story that you tell yourself about who you are.

About the name, the psychological form of me, all the things associated with that, the story of me, the beliefs. And something has become mixed up with that, and that is the sense of I, a deeper sense of beingness, that got mixed up with the story. And when you touch, even touch the realm of stillness in yourself, that is the deepest fulfillment that could be, and you realize who you truly are, is that, that is the essence of your sense of I, I, I, I am.

It has nothing to do with the story, it just got confused with the story. Sometimes people discover that whose story is destroyed by life. Life does something to you, that you cannot, the story becomes totally unbearable, everything collapses around you, so you cannot uphold the story anymore of me, as somebody who has done this or has done that, or has achieved that, it has all left you.

Maybe the body has become ill, is collapsing, things around you are collapsing, there is nothing left that you can claim anything about, make any claim about, possession, this or that, it is all gone. I don't know who I am anymore. Some people experience that realization in prison, when they are stripped of everything.

Everything has left them, the story has collapsed, I don't understand anything. Some people experience it when there is a usual, a sudden great disaster in their life. Suddenly, all their explanations don't work anymore, the way they had explained, they had all figured it all out, how the universe works, and my place in the universe, and the importance of my life, my work, what I have achieved and done.

And suddenly, your whole career suddenly crumbles, maybe something crumbles around you, and with it, that. And in the last moments of this physical form, suddenly all that leaves you, your story collapses at the same time as the world around you collapses, you might be on a sinking ship, or building collapsing, and at that moment, there is a corresponding inner collapse of the mental edifice of the story of me. And what is left, when that collapses, is what was always there, you touch the stillness, and you touch the deepest sense of being of I am.

That has nothing to do with your physical form or your psychological form of me. Nothing to do with form. And there is a moment of peace and stillness.

And many people who have touched death and survived miraculously, many tell the story of suddenly encountering a realm of great serenity and peace. All fear leaves them. And then they come back, and many of them have never feared death again, because they have already faced death.

And so death is when the structures crumble, not only around you, but the inner structures. One way is through disaster, and another way is through, the more gentle way, is through sitting here. And you have chosen that one.

Other people choose the disaster, and that works very well too. And even if there was only a moment before death comes and that is realized, that is the flowering. Your life has flowered.

Consciousness has flowered through this form and realized itself through this form. For the first time, well, not the very first, but on this planet, it's still a very rare phenomenon for this to happen. Consciousness, one could say, no, it is only a little, almost a parable, that consciousness itself is dreaming the dream of form and enjoying the dream.

The entire universe is. Look at the planet of the billions of life forms. Any form, whatever you could imagine, exists or has existed at some point as a life form.

Look at the oceans, how many incredible life forms live in the oceans alone. Every form that the wildest imagination could come up with, it will be somewhere in the ocean. The most, wow, this comes out of somebody's dream, maybe they're on acid.

So am I saying that the universe is on acid? Well, something like that. Because there is obviously some wild creation going on, some incredible dream of most gigantic proportions, and that's only in one ocean on one planet.

And then on land, millions of insects, different forms of different plants, and then on the level that you cannot see, the microorganisms, it's just unbelievable. And that's only one tiny planet of trillions, trillions, the vastness of the universe, and everywhere there is the game of form. What a gigantic dream.

But built into that dream, because what is in each human is a microcosmic version of the entire universe, so the awakening of humans is also the awakening of the universe, because you cannot separate the human from the entire universe. They need each other. They are totally one.

There would not even be a universe without the perceiving consciousness. The one consciousness that comes through humans creates the universe as perceived by humans. Other forms perceive a different universe.

It's all the same, and yet it's different. The one consciousness dreaming innumerable dreams. Impossible to understand.

But what we see when we look at humans, they are immersed in a kind of dream also, when you're totally in, totally identified with your reactions, and you play out the drama of your life in relationships, at work, and you go, oh, oh, oh. And you get elated. Oh, it's great, I made it.

And a few months later, you go down, you lost it again. Oh, it's a stage. All the world's a stage.

Shakespeare saw that. And all men and women are merely players. And this is the stuff that dreams are made on.

So humans can wake up out of that dreamlike existence that they are otherwise immersed in, where there is no sense of who they are apart from the script that they act out, the inner script. Complete identification. And then there's the possibility of awakening, becoming aware of that which underlies the script, without which there would be no script, there would be nothing.

There's a vast realm of still, aware presence from where you can see the dream world without being immersed in it. The body is still in it, but there is a seeing. You can see your own drama.

You can see yourself playing out your own script. And gradually, the awakening is, ah, something arises that is not part of the play of form, but that can see the play of form. And if that can arise in you, it means it is a universal movement.

So through you, the universe not only wants to experience this gigantic dream, there's something else built into the dream, and that is the need of the universe to awaken out of the dream. It loves that even more than the dream. And that is, so what we cannot even begin to conceive of the magnitude of what looks only like some people in a room, sitting, listening, speaking, that this is part of a much larger movement that's connected to even the most distant galaxy is part of something that is happening in the universe.

It is an event created by the one life that is the universe. So you think on a personal level, it's good to sit here because your life becomes lighter, free. So you feel a relief on a personal level, suffering, less and less suffering, clarity arising, stillness arising, a sense of connectedness, of beingness, a deeper sense of I, I.

But that is all a huge event of cosmic proportions. So the awakening is the awakening of the totality through this form. That is the purpose of your life, to be that.

So you align yourself with the larger purpose. The secondary purpose is whatever you do in your life, and you can bring the opening into anything that you do, almost anything. If you can't, you leave it.

Some things have to be left, and other things are fine. It happens wherever you are. So this is what we temporarily call stillness in you, becoming aware that that dimension is already there, coming to the end of identification with thinking, and realizing that you are more fully yourself when you do not think.

Without trying not to think, there are many here who already experience the state of being free of thinking without even knowing it. You may be walking and looking at a tree and seeing the magnificence of that spectacle of the dying leaves and all their beauty, and you are perceiving that in and through stillness. And perhaps a minute later you might say something to a person next to you and say, isn't that wonderful?

And you may not realize that for a minute or ten seconds or five seconds you have looked at that, and there was a deep sense of response, of oneness even with it, but no interpretation. And then you notice something strange. Whenever you look at something for the first time, if you are very alert you will notice that, when you glance at something for the first time, whatever it is, your head shifts, your vision, your field of vision shifts, it goes, shhhh, and it is, here there is a lot of nature around here, it may be a tree, a flower, the sky, or it may be something man-made, whatever it is, but nature particularly is helpful in this practice at first.

You notice the first moment of looking at something, there is always a space of no thought. It may be one second. It may be two seconds.

Now most human beings are not aware of that, and with some human beings the space of no thought is so brief that they can't capture it, because immediately thought comes in after half a second. But there was half a second. There is always a space before thought can come in, there is a looking, a seeing, and with you that space will now become larger, and in many of you it is already quite spacious.

In other words, the spaciousness around your sense perceptions. So notice that it is already there, but as you become aware of it, the spaciousness grows around your sense perceptions. So, and now comes, this is a magnificent thing, it's a great mystery that in past ages people had to spend 25 years in a monastery to be told this.

The master would say, OK, you work with me for 20 years, and then ask me again that question. But now things are speeding up, we haven't got that much time, in a good sense, on the planet. We are running out of time, and that's wonderful.

It's shrinking. So when you see something, there is a sense perception, can you be aware both of what arises in your sense perception, what you are looking at, or it may be listening, and can you be aware of the awareness, which is the stillness, in which that sense perception happens. And that stillness, that awareness is, one could say, the space around it.

So there is a spacious field, and there is a sense perception. And you are not interpreting what you see for a while, there is no need. There is a deep knowing, but there is no interpretation.

There is not conceptual knowing, not that you have lost your ability to have concepts, but when you need them, they will be there. Words, concepts, thoughts. But you are no longer compulsively trapped in concepts.

You are exiting, exiting a conceptualized reality. Oh, that is the awakening. You are stepping out of inhabiting a totally conceptualized universe, which is mental conditioning.

Everything is called something, interpreted, labeled, named, and so a great freedom arises of perceiving through the unconditioned consciousness. And this is, you are here to experience that, and to see that it is already, that movement is already happening in you, that freeing yourself from compulsive conceptualization is already happening. And it is happening when you look at a tree or a flower or another human being, and it enters your field of vision, and in that moment there is pure perception and no labeling it in any way.

Just a field of stillness. And it may be that it is only there for a few seconds, but see if you can capture that space, and that is not perhaps a very good way of saying it, because you cannot capture stillness. It is, see if you can be attentive, and see if you can notice that, and that noticing is vital, because as you notice the stillness in which your perception happens, the space or the stillness expands.

So as you perceive things, you are now inhabiting two dimensions. One is the dimension of form, which is all around you, continuously fluctuating, and they may be outer forms or they may be inner forms, as emotions, thoughts. And the other dimension is the dimension of the formless, consciousness, pure consciousness, pure awareness.

The other is the dimension of the object consciousness, things. So you inhabit the dimension of the manifested without being lost in it, because you also dwell in the unmanifested. You dwell in the realm of stillness.

And even if at first the spaces of stillness don't last for very long, it's good enough. Three seconds of looking at a flower with no thought is good enough. And as you become aware of, there's not only the flower, I'm naming it now, but the awareness is not the naming, you become aware of the flower, and you become aware of the field of awareness or the stillness.

And this looks like a dualistic thing, but it isn't. It only becomes dualistic when we speak about it. When I speak, when I speak about becoming aware of awareness, it looks like two things.

Aware of awareness. But that's only because we're using language, which has a subject and an object in a sentence. What is really happening is self-awareness.

You're becoming aware. Awareness is becoming aware of itself. So that is the dimension.

And it's hard to talk about that. And in a way, the author of the Tao Te Ching is right when he says at the beginning of this book of wisdom, the Tao Te Ching, if you can speak about it, that's not it. The words have to be seen as for what they are, just pointers.

So this is a beautiful practice here. Walk around wherever you are. Sit, stand, lie, walk.

Be aware of yourself as the aware presence, as the stillness in which everything is seen and heard. And so you become like a little child. It's not for nothing that Jesus said, you must become as little children if you want to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Now what he is pointing to, and he's not saying exactly that, it's always just an approximation. It does not mean you return to that state because there is only that quality that a little child has in whom the conceptual reality has not yet developed. And when that little child in whom the accumulation of words and concepts in the mind has not happened yet, that little child looks at the universe, and you sometimes can see it when you see a one-year-old, one and a half, before language takes possession of their minds, the way they look is thoughtless awareness.

And then they smile at you, there's the pure joy of being. And you can see that which shines through is magnificent. And then gradually the veil descends because the child is programmed to ask, the mind of the child is programmed to ask, Daddy, what's that?

And then Daddy says, that's a tree. And then the mind says, tree, tree. Next time the child sees a tree, that open, complete openness is no longer quite as open because then the child looks at the tree, and then the mind says, oh, tree!

And two years, three years later, the mind is already possessed with concepts. So when Jesus says that, it's pointing as little children, you walk around in that state of openness, of non-labeling, the state of original innocence, which replaces the dysfunction, the collective dysfunction of the human mind that we could call original sin. If we go beyond the habitual interpretations of sin, there's no doubt that there's a dysfunction in humanity.

Look at human history. That's why they talk of original sin. Sin means missing the target.

The original Greek word translated means missing the target. That's what sin means in the original. And in other words, you miss the point of your whole existence.

And if you miss the point of your whole existence, you suffer. And that eventually works too. It wakes you up eventually.

So it seems insignificant at first to the human mind to say you can look at something and notice whenever you first look at something that there's a moment of spacious presence before the mind comes in and calls it something. And if that can be sustained, not through effort, not through wanting, not through some kind of act of willpower, but if

that can be sustained simply by noticing that space of aware presence when it arises. And then even as a human being comes into your field of vision, walks in through the door, appears in front of you, you look and there's a moment of non-labeling.

Let's say somebody you have never met before comes and you look and there's not a single thought in your head for perhaps five seconds. But if you notice that, that in the first moment there's a field of awareness in which the perception happens before the labeling comes in, you may find that it expands and you could still be in the state of just looking a minute later. And you can even talk.

And every time a sentence has come to an end, you re-enter the state of spacious awareness. A word has been uttered and you're back in space. And then your words have a different quality too because now they come out of that dimension.

They have an aliveness. They will touch the other human being. What you say has the essence of that freshness of being, not the old stuff that otherwise is your mind.

A minute later after meeting a person, you tell them the old story of me. So what do you do for a living? Well, blah, blah, blah.

You can talk about that also and then step back knowing that's not who you are. So who are you? You are the stillness.

That's where your true sense of I am comes from, of beingness. So this is the opportunity as you sit here to be in that state. You don't really need to think as you sit here.

I certainly don't think as I speak. The words are heard. As they come out of the mouth, I hear them.

As you do. So there's nobody teaching anybody. Do I know more than you?

No, of course not. Probably less than most of you. What I know is the realm of stillness.

And that's not anybody's personal achievement because everybody has that as their essence. So what I know is your essence. That's why it's nice to sit with me because otherwise why would anybody come?

What you enjoy most is to be with yourself. But in the true sense, not the mind-made self, the deepest self. Now ultimately you don't have to go anywhere.

This is just a temporary stage in the evolution of humanity where you have to travel somewhere to be with yourself. Now some of you have traveled to India and perhaps you already know you don't have to go to India. And so Omega is a little closer.

And the next stage is you don't have to go to Omega. Sorry. Oh.

You may go for the enjoyment. I sometimes enjoy listening to spiritual teachers who may be using different words. And yet the truth is there.

And it's a wonderful, deep joy in hearing it in a slightly different form. When you meet a human being and don't label them, or if that is not yet possible, at least not for more than a few seconds, and then compulsive labels come into your mind, what you can do, however, is to recognize the labels that come into your mind as just that, without believing in them completely. Because the mind is the compulsion to interpret everybody and everything.

It does that to other human beings. You form judgments. You meet them and you look at them.

And the more you're identified with your mind, the quicker you are in your judgments of the other human being. You know them exactly. It might even be true occasionally.

You may have seen something that's actually there, but what you have seen and thought that this person is is some conditioning in the other person, not who that person is. Or you have completely imposed your own condition, perception on that person. But you can recognize any thought you have about a human being as just a thought and a perspective and one of many possible thoughts and not the ultimate truth.

So you recognize the relativity of your thinking. The relativity of your thinking. There's one spiritual teaching that works entirely with that.

It's a particular... Byron Katie has this teaching that whatever thought comes into your head about another person, about yourself, or about your situation, you look at the thought and you ask yourself, Can I really know that this is so? Can I really know that this is true?

And if you really look at the thought and you say, I can't really know that this is true, this thought that I have about this person or this situation. So it's a stepping, a continuous letting go of identification with thought. And then gradually the thought, the compulsive thoughts arise less and less.

And as the compulsive thoughts arise less and less, more space is there. That's why we are here, for the arising of space, stillness. And in many of you, it's already happening as you sit there.

But there are some, I can see or sense, a few, not many, fields of restless energy here and there. Or others go... You may want to try feeling your hands as you sit here.

Because you are restless, because your entire attention is still lodged in the head, in the mind. And the mind must feel either restless or anxious or totally bored sitting here. So if you cannot get out of that, the body really is the...

If you can, simply begin by feeling the inner energy field in your hands and that there is, yes, there is an aliveness there. You can feel that there is a hand, not externally, but internally. If you closed your eyes and somebody asked you, is your left hand still there?

For a moment, you would have to internally, so to speak, look for it. And then you would say, you would feel something. Yeah.

And then the question is, how do you know that it's still there? Because it's not touching anything, you're not moving it. And then, of course, you will know, because I can feel it.

I can feel this energy. That's how I know that the left hand is still there. Not a memory, that it was there when I last looked.

And then your answer comes from the memory. Yeah, it's still there. I saw it a minute ago.

And again, these things to the mind seem insignificant, but they are of tremendous significance to begin to inhabit the body, which takes you out of inhabiting the mind exclusively. If you can feel your left hand or your right hand, you can also feel other parts of the body. You have to just start somewhere that becomes the entry point into the body.

I'm speaking particularly to those, to all of you, but to those who are either bored out of their minds. Well, if you were bored out of your mind, you would be okay. But those who are still bored in their minds or are feeling restless and are thereby missing the essence of this gathering, get into your body.

Get in there. Feel the legs, the feet, the hands, the arms. So if you can feel one hand, you can feel the other hand simultaneously.

You feel them both at the same time. The feeling of hand. Feet.

You can feel both feet also as you feel your hands. Subtle at first. Some people feel almost like a tingling sensation.

Some people feel a warmth. And then can you feel the trunk of your body, the belly? Sometimes to feel the belly, the belly is very helpful to be in there.

Taking one deep breath or two or three deep breaths and following the breath with your attention and feel the belly or the abdomen. It's a more polite word. Feel the abdomen rising as you breathe in, into the belly.

And for a moment, there's a cessation. The belly is full and then breathe out. So breathing a few times into the deep, take the belly breath, which means you have to follow.

It's not just a practice, an external practice. The essence here is that you follow the breath with your attention and then you move into the belly. So the attention leaves the head and moves into the body.

So you breathe into the belly. And there you could say, this is the center of the body, around here, solar plexus also, but belly is a beautiful center. And once you've breathed in a few times into the belly, you can actually feel the energy field of the belly here and you rest there.

And from there radiates out energy into the rest of the body. Hara, the center, as the Japanese call it. So here, and you may notice then, when you look at not only the images of the Chinese fat Buddha with a huge belly, who laughs all the time because he has no problems left, toothless old man with a huge belly, whatever you say to him, come with your problems, he will laugh at you.

But you may also notice that the Indian Buddhas and other Southeast Asian Buddhas, most of them have a very slight protrusion in the belly region. So there's the belly, there's a little bit of slide, because they rest here. Their center of gravity is not in the head, as it is with modern humans, Western especially, but the whole world has become Western.

So the center of gravity is not in the head. The center of gravity is in the center of your physically perceived body, but it goes beyond body. So you rest there.

And so to sense that field of aliveness is beautiful. It takes you out of the head. Your attention moves down here.

You unite with the all-pervasive intelligence that is beyond the mind that inhabits your body, that is only an expression of the one intelligence. It's the intelligence that lives in your body as the life energy that regulates thousands of complicated functions, complicated from the point of view of the human mind, that regulates, coordinates thousands of functions in the body simultaneously. Everything is just right.

If one thing was slightly maladjusted, the body would die immediately. You would collapse. Temperature, heart rate, lung circulation, innumerable things that you could spend the next 5,000 years analyzing how the human body works, and you still wouldn't get to the end of it.

And that's only the outer body. So there's an intelligence at work that is vast. So if you can feel your body, that is an entry point into that vastness.

And the deeper you go, if you do it for yourself, you can do it with your eyes closed at first so that you become familiar with inhabiting the body and realize as you go deeper that it's not really about the body. It's about sensing that vast spaciousness that is here. Vast spaciousness.

So you enter the spaciousness through the body. And then everything comes to life. Once your body comes to life, and then you look around and open your eyes without losing the inner sense of body, then you feel everything is more alive suddenly.

It participates in that because you are not deadening it anymore with mental abstractions, concepts, labels. It has always been alive. You couldn't see it anymore, couldn't feel it anymore, sense it anymore.

So I recommend that each one of you spend some time going into nature and being perhaps with... choose something like a tree or a flower or a patch of ground or a landscape, maybe the lake, the little lake we have here, whatever, or a rock with moss growing on the rock. There are some trails here, beautiful moss growing over ancient rocks.

And just be there. Be with it. And as you look, feel the energy field of the inner body at the same time.

That makes it much easier to look without mental interference, to have a space of stillness as you look. So you are present within and without, and you look from there. The inner body becomes a root, that which roots you in the present moment, anchors you in the present moment, and takes you out of mind.

And if then mind starts working again, anything, if you are doing anything creative in your life, becomes still first. Before the act of creation, there needs to be stillness. Nothing creative can come out of the accumulations of the mind.

The mind can be an instrument to give something form, but the inspiration, the creative impulse, comes from a deeper level. It comes from the stillness, the presence. So go into the body and feel that.

You don't need to think anymore. And then you look, and then at some point a thought comes, or a creative movement comes. It may be dance, whatever.

It may be a word that you speak, words that come out of your mouth, but they come out of the stillness. So getting in touch with that is a simple and beautiful way of entering the realm of no thought. And then thought can operate beautifully and is not going to create problems as it usually does, because most of your life problems are created by thought.

Life only has challenges. The only place where a challenge can come is in the now. Apart from a challenge that comes in the now, there is no problem except in the head.

The power to face challenges is always there in the now. But you cannot face problems because they have no reality. Always use as the criterion to tell you whether your problems are real, or ask, what's the problem at this moment?

What can I do about it now? Nothing. I'm lying in bed.

It's four in the morning. Then go into the body. Okay.

Ah, it feels good to be alive. And I thought I had problems. At nine o'clock in the morning when you enter the office, you open the door and there sits this man who you were thinking about all night, who is creating problems for you.

And his mouth opens. Words come out of his mouth. And you bring an alert, aware presence to it.

And you look and listen. And then words come out of your mouth. They won't be reactive anymore.

There will be a response, not an old reaction. And the words will be true. They will be just right for that moment.

And they're not rehearsed. Or no words come. You may look at him and walk out.

Nobody can predict. Right action. Buddhism sometimes talks of right action, right speech, right this, right that.

I've forgotten the list. I can't remember things. But those things, they come out of right presence.

You have to be present. Otherwise you cannot manufacture or try to bring about right words, right speech, right actions. Okay, I'm trying very hard here to say the right thing.

I'm trying hard to do the right thing. It's not working. You can't try to do the right thing because the right thing comes out of a particular state of consciousness.

Spontaneity, intuition, realization comes out of stillness. So in this shift, thinking loses its capacity to make you unhappy. Thoughts for a while still arise, but they're not that overpowering anymore.

You're not totally in them anymore. And then space arises. The ability to not think arises when there is nothing much to think about, when life would be far more joyful if we are not interpreting this moment.

And if you live in alignment with this moment, a lot of the time, you're better off not interpreting this moment. Let it be. It is.

And out of that state, necessary action comes. On doesn't. If it's not necessary, it doesn't.

So the evolutionary and revolutionary shift in human consciousness is to enter that dimension where compulsive thinking comes to an end. Compulsive thinking comes to an end to transcend thought and realize that you are more fully yourself and more intelligent when you are not thinking. And when thought then comes in, should it be needed, it will be more effective, more powerful, more creative.

So you are here to be able to learn to enter that realm of great power, the realm of pure awareness. And it's not just the words that are pointing to it here. As you said, it arises because that realm itself is here in the energy field of this gathering.

And it is very helpful, even if your mind is saying, OK, I'm not really getting this. Of course it's not really getting it. The mind cannot get the essence of it.

So the most helpful thing about this gathering is the energy field of stillness or presence that works, comes from within you, but is also here in this field. That's the essence. And that's what works most powerfully, that transforms you.

The words are additional helps, additional pointers, and also to keep you entertained while you sit there in the energy field. So practice, practice again is the wrong word because it implies some kind of effort almost, but it is effortless, but pure seeing, pure listening, become aware. Whenever you look at something, at first there is a space before thinking happens.

As you become aware of the space, you may find that it expands. What that means in relationship to other humans, we will look at, if you can relate to other human beings, what it does to human relationships. I suggest just for a little while you stay here when this body has moved away.

Just stay until you feel the impulse to get up. Just stay for a little while in this energy field, in the stillness, and see that the body on this chair here is not really needed. That's enough what's there.

On a day like this, maybe you'd rather be somewhere else. If the weather weren't so wonderful, I would be happy to be here in this canal, but it's so nice out there. There was a Zen master walking with one of his disciples out in the country, and they sat down under a tree, and the disciple didn't quite get it yet what Zen is.

He'd only been there for six years. So the master was sitting there just being, watching, listening, and the disciple was thinking. Then he said, Master, I've been thinking, how do I enter Zen?

The question means, how do I enter the state of consciousness that is Zen? And there was a long silence before the master said anything, and then the master raised his finger and said, Can you hear the sound of that mountain stream? And the disciple said, he at first couldn't hear anything, and then, Yes, I can hear it.

Suddenly he heard the distant mountain stream, and master said, Enter Zen from there.

Oh, and for just a little while the disciple was there, attentive, alert, listening, and then, a few minutes later, the face of the disciple changed again from the openness to, Master, I've been thinking, now what if I had said, No, I can't hear the mountain stream. What would you have said then?

And the master raised his finger again and said, Disciple, Yes? Master said, Enter Zen from there. So it's, the mountain stream is beautiful, more beautiful and deeper is the state of consciousness.

If he hadn't heard the mountain stream, it would have been the same. He would have been in the state of alert attention, and might have said, I can hear nothing. And the master says, Enter Zen from there.

So here, I take this as a little signpost, teaching story, for you also to work with sound here, because there are beautiful sounds here, in this place, and to be attentive to the sounds that you hear. Today, I will remind you again tomorrow, when we may spend the day in silence, particularly good opportunity to be attentive to the many subtle sounds that you hear here. From the crunching of gravel, or little stones as you walk, to crickets, frogs, the leaves moving in the wind, many sounds that are beautiful and subtle.

To hear them requires a certain degree of alertness. That's why Zen masters often raise their finger. That symbolizes, not, I'm telling you, you better believe me.

No, not that. It says, be alert. Awake.

So that's the state is required. So when you listen to a sound, there's a field of attention that is actually more important than the sound, no matter how beautiful the sound is. But the sound can draw your attention out.

And then you learn to not just hear the sound and then immediately label it and then are done with it, but stay a while and remain attentive to that sound, or it might be a sequence of sounds, if it's crickets or birds. Be attentive and remain there. And let the sound be there.

And then you have what we mentioned this morning with reference to the visual, where you have the sense perception, the visual sense perception happens against the background of stillness. And now also the auditory sense perception happens also in the field of stillness. Or against the background of stillness.

So to every sense perception, there is a background. We could also call it the ground. In ordinary consciousness, humans are not aware of the ground, which is awareness.

The background. The entire substratum, to use a term from theology. So as you listen to the sound, which is in the foreground of your consciousness, you're also aware of the background.

And the background is very hard to describe in any way because it is not something. The sound is something. And as it is something, it is born and eventually it dies.

The background is not born and dies. It's always there, unchanging. So you are lost in a surface world of external appearances and things when you do not know that dimension, the background dimension, that could also be called the unmanifested.

But I'm using a somewhat different pointer. Some pointers can be more helpful to certain people. So there is the background.

And to see that as you sit, stand, you listen, there's the sound. Do I have a bell here? It dissolved.

I want you to demonstrate how a sound comes into being and then goes out of existence, slowly fades out. But we have something even better. The entire bell has faded out of existence.

So to be aware of that is amazing. One can also call it a field of peace that underlies your perceptions. A background peace.

And imagine having that background peace in human interactions. How that changes everything between human beings. Let's put that aside for a moment and stay with just the sounds.

It's a little easier. Humans are complicated. And you will notice that when you fall back into the dream state of being identified with the stream of thinking, all the subtle sounds around you, you don't even notice.

You don't hear them. Your attention is elsewhere. Your attention, your consciousness, is being absorbed by thought continuously.

There isn't much left for anything else. There isn't also much left for creativity or anything new to come in. It's all repetitive.

And so here you are making space inside you for there's no other way for something truly new to arise in your life. Something truly that comes out of the freshness of the unmanifested. The freshness of being itself and takes on form.

A thought, a word, an action, some creation perhaps, a work of art, a work of this or that, or simply a way of being with others that has a different quality than the normal way of being with others. So that's the only way something truly new can come in. Because no matter how your life changes on the surface, it's not a true change.

If your bank account is empty now and you win 10 million dollars, on the external level, things will change. But that's not very much. The same set of problems that you have now or a very similar one will arise again.

The fear of not enough is not going to go away, perhaps for a few weeks. And again, it might become magnified because you have a bigger scenario to play out your drama. And if you're rich and famous, then they can write about you and your drama.

That's all. And it looks bigger, but it's just like everybody else's. It's just when the drama is played out between the two famous actors in a mansion, it looks interesting.

It's not interesting at all. It's the same drama that happens everywhere else. And there's nothing new.

It's repetitive. And then they get a divorce and marry somebody else and it starts again. So for something truly new to arise, you need to find, not create as such because it's already there, you need to find, one could say, that dimension of space.

One could say you have to make space. Yes. In one way, that's the space already wants to come through, the spatial consciousness.

In another, one could say it requires your cooperation. You have to make room. Then it's a beautiful, more harmonious emergence.

If it pushes, it wants to come through and there's a heavy egoic structure, it may still come through, but it has to create havoc in your life first because the shell has to break. And then you're struck by some disaster that breaks the shell of ego, whatever it may be. And so there are people here who have already experienced some kind of disaster in their lives, some great loss, where their life is threatened or where everything collapsed, and something began to come through that.

Otherwise, there was no space there because there was all the mind objects that one had identified with as oneself covering up the vastness, the infinite possibilities, the infinite potential that is there in the unmanifested, in the background, in the space consciousness. So these are two beautiful pointers that there is in you object consciousness, which is thought, which is mental images. Anything that has form is object consciousness.

For most humans, all they ever experience in their life is object consciousness. Their entire life experience consists of a succession of arising and subsiding objects. And they try to hang on to a bundle of mental objects that they think, that's me, mental images, names, labels, what they think of me, what has been taught to think of who they are.

But what are all these things? They are thought forms that you hang on to and you put some, you wrap it with something, cling wrap, whatever, that holds it together, a very fragile structure. And this is, that's me.

And it consists of mental objects, many of which are the mental counterpart of material objects or material achievements. So there's the shiny, new, flashy car, which in itself, of course, is not important because it's going to rust in a few years, it'll be gone. And all it can do is take you from A to B.

It's nice, yes. We can appreciate these things. But if they become an object, then a mental form arises, which is not just car, it's my car.

My is the important thing because then the thought object of car becomes invested with a sense of self. It's not just a car. I relate to it.

I'm looking for myself in it. So the mind object, the thought object car becomes very important to me. And if somebody scratches your car or even dents it accidentally, it feels, if you identify with that as my car, it feels you are being injured personally.

And anger arises because somebody is attacking you or let them say that somebody says, well, this may be a nice car, but my uncle has one that's much bigger than yours. Can't be. And you feel diminished in your sense of self.

That's how people play their ego games. One little ego tries to diminish another little ego by claiming that my uncle has something bigger than you. I don't have it, but it's enough.

It's my uncle, so there's some association. Because it's my... So it's an indirect thing that I can identify with.

Of course it's absurd and funny, but a lot of human interaction works in that way. And so you identify with... you may then identify with other things that are a little bit more subtle.

Other people's opinion of you, which becomes also a mental image, knowledge, acquired knowledge, a certain skill that you have. You may be extremely good at hitting a ball, and it's a great thing. If you are a master at hitting a ball, one way or another, then probably in that field of activity, if you are truly a master, you're probably present at least during that time when you're hitting the ball, when you're playing the game, when you're in the zone.

You're not thinking. You're not planning. There's no decision-making.

Right action happens every moment, and there's a power, and then people love to watch you. But then what happens? When you stop playing the game, you re-enter the normal state of consciousness.

And then you identify with that skill. It becomes a mind object. You are better at it than anybody else, and the world is telling you that.

So that is something also. And then somebody else suddenly comes who is even better than you, and they chuck you out. You're no longer captain of the team or whatever it is.

Oh no. And that's very painful. When a mind object, something you had identified with, is taken away, dissolves, great loss, great pain.

So most humans only know themselves as objects, objects in the realm of object consciousness. Such a pity when there is so much more to human life. There's an entire realm that's always been there, and humans just haven't looked at it.

They've been so seduced by the world of objects, both the external objects in their world, as well as the inner objects in their mind. They've been so seduced by the world of objects, so fascinated by objects, so completely identified with the things of this world, that they forgot that there is an entirely different other dimension to their being than that, which has never gone away. The great thing is that you cannot destroy space consciousness.

You can ignore it. You cannot know that it's there underneath the accumulated object consciousness. Yes, but it is there.

You cannot even in the most obsessed person, obsessed with thinking, and you see it's not a moment of continuously one next thing and the next thing, one damn thing after another. Churchill's definition of history, one damn thing after another. But we could also define the human mind as that.

It comes one thing after another, and never aware that there is this vast realm within them that would free them from dependency on the world of things, which includes their mind, because it's objects, object consciousness. That vast realm is there and they never know it. It's like a beggar sitting, trying to get a few cents from someone who's going to give, and he's been sitting on a box filled with gold.

I gave that example at the beginning of the book. He's been sitting on this box filled with gold, but he's never looked. He's only looked out there.

Or we could say a more modern version of that. He's been sitting there and never realized that he has a bank account in Switzerland that has a hundred million dollars in it. Now this is a somewhat deficient parable, because even if somebody truly, if the beggar had a bank account in Switzerland with a million dollars in it, it wouldn't really make that much difference to his life, because it's so much deeper than that.

But it's a parable for people who can think you've already gone beyond it, but I put it at the beginning of the book, because most people know only the realm of objects. So a box full of gold works as a metaphor for a while, but it's not ultimately the right metaphor, because it's so much greater than any entire gold in the world. And so that space consciousness is in you, has never gone away, but been ignored, the peace, the stillness.

And I'm presenting here, apart from the fact, which is more important, that as we sit here, it arises from within you, even if you didn't want it. But I'm also pointing out little entry points into it. We've already seen bringing a yes to the present moment is an entry point when you accept the form.

Form is a thing, is an object. When you accept the form that this moment takes as something that happens, or an inner form, an emotion that arises, when you do not resist the form that arises, and the normal state of consciousness is almost continuous denial or resistance of the form, because you want another one in the next moment, a better one, a different one, a more fulfilling one, not this form of the present moment. I want a different form.

Or if I don't have it, at least I can think about it, so I don't have to look at this. I imagine the next moment is going to be better than this one. It won't if you haven't fully acknowledged this one.

So when you accept the form that this moment takes, that is the miracle, the form of this moment becomes an opening into the formless within you. And the worse, the more challenging the form that this moment is, and you accept it, the deeper it takes you into the unconditioned space consciousness, or into peace. So if you were faced with a dreadful disaster in your life, it arises at this moment.

Everything has collapsed. And you face it and see that the is-ness of this moment just is as it is. You look death in the face.

You accept the form that this moment takes completely. And suddenly you sense something that cannot really be described. It's a spaciousness or peace around that dreadful event.

It happens within a field of peace or space. And I wouldn't use here the word happy. You're not happy when that happens.

Nor are you unhappy. It is beyond happiness and unhappiness. There's a serenity and a peace that come.

But you can experience even with little things. Surrender to a little thing, a little form that this moment takes, a little challenge, and you find a little peace. Oh, nice.

You surrender to the cold soup that I mentioned yesterday, and you find that the cold soup is giving you a little peace. It's not the soup. It's changed your state of consciousness.

It's gone, oh, OK. You make room for it to happen. You allow it to happen.

You make space for it to happen. Humans don't make space for things to happen. They want to remove space from things.

So now, if something is happening and you make space for it, you become the space. So, and this is the grace that is hidden underneath so-called bad events. Now, bad events have a scale of they start with a cold soup, very little, and go on to some dreadful accident, disaster, imminent death, or everybody around you died, or you lost everything, or somebody tells you you only have three more weeks to live.

You have the scale. Something dreadful, something so-called bad, happens in your life, and then there's a scale. Cold soup is easy, but for some, that's a challenge too.

And so, for some, it sets the whole pattern. They have a cold soup, and the rest of the day is spoiled. They don't make room for events.

They don't allow an event to be. They argue with reality. I saw a cartoon once.

It's hard to describe, but I'll attempt it. It showed people wearing placards. It's become some kind of protest march.

And the placards contained only horizontal lines. And the entire surroundings, the street and the houses, were drawn in vertical lines. So, the message is, we are against it.

Whatever it is, we are against it. So, if you make room for something to be, it can only be this moment, because nothing can be apart from the now. You make room for something to be.

It already is. So, why not allow it? Allow it to be.

And this act of allowing is easy to do when you face something beautiful. I allow this beautiful tree with the magnificent colors to be. That's easy.

And then you walk one more step, and suddenly your right foot goes right into the mud. And there comes a minor challenge. Can you immediately say, oh, it already has happened.

It is already. Not much you can do except, of course, pull your foot out and walk on. But usually, of course, it would lead to a reaction.

Some words may then come out of your mouth. Contraction happens. And maybe there could be an immediate attempt to blame someone.

This is what the ego likes to do. Something goes wrong, I go, who can I blame, says the ego. They should have warned people about this.

Or if you are in the States, then the favorite thing is go to a lawyer and sue them. So, and this is a beautiful practice, the many things that in quotation marks go wrong in your life are actually the greatest things. In a way, even greater than the beautiful trees, because they can take you deeper.

And so, to a large extent, the world is here for you to experience things going wrong. And that is the challenge of the world. And if you still think otherwise, you may have lived on this planet for 50, 60 or 70 years and still expect things not to go wrong.

Now, the illusion that you can have things not going wrong, you can still live in that illusion if you live in an advanced industrialized country perhaps. Travel to India and you can no longer live in the illusion that things around you are solid and that you are in control. You are not.

Nothing that you plan is going to work out. Everything is going to be totally different from the way you expect it. And things will constantly challenge you.

The world forms and wherever you look, the world is not as solid as it seems to be here. Wherever you go, there are old people, dying people in the street. Are they not...

Where are the old and dying people here? I don't see any. They are shut away.

We mustn't look. Just pretend that they don't exist. We put them away there.

The old go here, and the dying, we put them there. And the dead bodies never look, must never see a dead... It's very hard, unless you have a very close relative, if you ever want to see a dead body, they won't let you.

They say, you're mad. But if you are in India, you see dead bodies very easily. It's normal.

And so you get a much better sense of the fragile nature of the world of things, objects and forms. How insubstantial this world actually is. And it's only in the West that you have the illusion that the world of form is very substantial, solid, and is going to last.

It's there. It has a solidity and permanency. It doesn't.

And when sometimes a gigantic man-made form collapses, like two years ago in New York, that comes as a dreadful shock to people, because it looked so solid and it collapsed. So the world of objects isn't as solid as it seems to be. The world of bodies isn't as permanent and solid as it seems to be.

It is very, very fragile, fleeting, insubstantial. So if that's all you know, then you are in this fleeting, insubstantial universe, and there's nothing. And of course there's constant fear when you identify with that.

Even though they try to just... It's very, very much like the Buddha, because the story goes that he was born into great wealth and his father did not want him to see that there is poverty, that people grow old, and that people die. So he had already reached fairly advanced age.

He was, I don't know, I can't remember, 25, 30, whatever, and wasn't really aware that there's such a thing as ill, old, and dying people. Because he lived in, it seems almost like the West these days, that's shut away. And one day he saw it.

His father didn't want him to see it because it had been predicted he would either become a great king or a great spiritual teacher. And he didn't, the father didn't want him to become a spiritual teacher. He wanted him to be, to carry on the business of being a king, the family business.

And so, but the father had made the biggest mistake he could have made. He waited for so long when finally he did go out. It was such a shock when he saw that people were lying in the streets, dying, and ill, and old, and he saw dead bodies.

He said, what is this? Does this happen? What happened to this man?

He's not moving anymore. He said, he is dead. Dead?

Yes. And that happens to everyone? And what's the point in anything?

And soon later he left everything behind. In the middle of the night, the story goes, when everybody was asleep, and this is a beautiful metaphor, everybody around him was asleep, and he walked out. If that's all there is, so his search then was for that dimension, is there something else to life than just that?

And it lasted a few years. And he tried all the practices, tried to achieve a state of perfection. He got very good at all the practices, and yet they didn't take him to the realization of space consciousness.

And one day he almost starved himself to death, when he said, I've had enough. This is my translation of the sutras again. He said, enough is enough.

Give me some food. And they brought him some food. Most disciples left him.

He said, oh, he's lost his way. He's eating again. And then he ate normally, and he sat under a tree.

And suddenly something happened. All resistance collapsed. He was no longer looking for anything to happen.

There was surrender to what is. Not looking for some state anymore. And there it was.

The last thing that in this film, The Little Buddha, which has some nice things in it, although it's too much about the legendary Buddha, but there's still beautiful scenes in it. The last thing that disturbs him is when he's sitting under a tree, and he sees his reflection in a little pool of puddle of water. Self-reflection.

And he sees his face in the little puddle of water next to him, and he's fascinated by that suddenly. And suddenly an arm comes out of this pool of water and tries to pull him down. This is...

And he frees himself, and then the reflection is gone. This is the last attempt by the ego to be there as an object in his consciousness. To see himself as someone.

To remain there as an object in his consciousness. A mental object. Making himself into a mental...

This is normal consciousness. Making himself into a mental object, and then have a relationship with it. I love myself.

I hate myself. Now, do I really hate myself? I must remind myself on the bathroom mirror that I love myself.

I love myself. You have a relationship with yourself. Of course it's better to love yourself than to hate yourself.

It makes life a little easier. But when you love yourself, there's always, on the other side, the possibility that you might also hate yourself. Better to go beyond loving and hating yourself by not having a relationship with yourself at all.

By simply being yourself, and you can only be yourself as space consciousness, not as an object. So anything that goes wrong in your life, a form that appears, and you allow it to be, that form becomes an opening into the formless within you. So, your spiritual practice is whenever something goes wrong in your life, and luckily enough, it happens a lot.

Not saying that you cannot improve your life. You can improve your life greatly. You can create a much better reality for yourself, which is nice.

You can create through applying the power of thought and action and visualization. You can improve your life considerably. You can live in a bigger, more beautiful place, feel better about yourself, and so on.

But you cannot escape from the other, from arising sooner or later. Another polarity, no matter what situation you go into, and I'm not saying you shouldn't improve your life. It's great.

But do not expect it to be free of the other polarity, which will arise. Even in the mansion, something will go wrong. And that's what the gossip magazines are all about.

The gossip magazines are about things going wrong in mansions. And that makes people feel a little bit better about things going on in their little houses. But it's the same.

And they love reading about famous people, things going wrong in their lives. Oh, isn't that great? Their lives are all collapsing, just like mine.

So you... One thing that usually happens that when something goes wrong, it pulls you into the old... it strengthens the reactivity of the old mind structures.

It's complaining and running away and shouting and fighting. But there's the possibility, when you recognize the little thing, big thing going wrong, so to speak, that it isn't really wrong, you work with it. You work with it by not resisting the is-ness of what...

of the suchness. Buddha has this beautiful expression, suchness. And you work with that rather than resisting it, allowing the suchness of what is right now.

The form that this takes. And if the form that this takes should be a limitation, may seem a limitation on your sense of freedom. Your freedom of movement.

A limitation on what you want to do. A limitation on where you want to get to. And suddenly something rises up in front of you.

A door, a wall. You're trying to go that way and suddenly there comes... there's a closed door, metaphorically speaking, or literally speaking.

Once we arrived at a place to give a talk, rented a hall. There was already a long line up outside. Nobody had the key.

And there was nobody there. They'd all gone home. So, 200 people were lining up.

Some were getting angry. I arrived. Can't get in.

So you're actually faced with a wall. So, what do you do? Do you then start shouting?

No, of course you take action. Can you call somebody? Maybe somebody somewhere has a key.

Maybe they can come. Okay, somebody did that. But in the meantime, here we are.

What was there to do except to cooperate with that moment? So I would just go and say, greet everybody in the line up. And everybody was very happy.

And almost by the time I reached the last person, somebody had arrived with a key. As if it had been planned. Now, the strange thing is when you cooperate and allow something to be that initially looks like an obstacle, initially looks like something has gone wrong, both little and small, when you allow it to be, it becomes an opening into something that you cannot predict what that is.

It changes its face from hostile to benign and helpful. The very event that seemed hostile turns around on the external level very frequently. Even more importantly, on an inner level, the shift happens.

But you cannot really separate what happens on the outside from what happens on the inside. The inner shift happens and then the significance of that situation changes also. So that really is the true spiritual practice is to work with all the little and big things in one's life that seem to be obstacles or blockages.

Whatever arises in the now, I'm not talking about some mental formations in the dream world of thinking, actual obstacles, actual things going wrong, losing this, missing that, meeting somebody and it's the wrong time, it's the wrong place. And don't try to figure out why this has happened. It's very often, more often than not, it's impossible because you may not think there must be a deeper reason why this has gone wrong.

That's a secondary thing. If you are to know the deeper reason, you will suddenly be staring you in the face. You can't miss it.

But in the meantime, you don't even need to figure out what the deeper reason is. It's enough to allow what is to be and then see what happens. It doesn't prevent you from taking action.

If you can take action, you take action. But in the meantime, the form that this moment takes is given space to be. And there's the key.

Then, that which had looked like an obstacle, a blockage, becomes an opening into space consciousness. So the archetypal image of that that humanity has is the cross. And people misinterpret it and even Christians don't fully understand the deeper significance of the cross because the cross is the worst thing that could possibly happen.

It's an archetype of suffering. The man on the cross is humanity. The cross is the archetype of suffering.

The cross is a torture instrument. The cross means complete helplessness, complete extreme pain, but also it means surrender. Not my will but thy will be done.

Thy will is the will of the whole that has brought about the form that this moment takes. And then surrender happens. And it's strange that the torture instrument is a symbol for the divine at the same time.

And it turns into a symbol for the divine through the act of surrender. Somebody once said, I don't know who, but it is very wise, that which stands in the way is the way. And I said in this book, Stillness Speaks, that which seemed to deny the existence of any transcendental dimension to life becomes an opening into that dimension.

Because it sometimes happens that a grave, a serious illness, a dreadful disaster in your life, something going dreadfully wrong to someone close to you, it seems to deny any meaning. It destroys often people's belief. Christians sometimes come to me and say, I've lost my faith because this or that has happened to me or to my wife or to my children, my son.

And I can't just... How could that happen? They don't realize that they were still at a childish stage in their faith.

They had some deal with God. If I do the right things, nothing bad... Okay, do we have a deal?

I do all the right things, then nothing bad will happen. But that's not how the universe... Because what they're saying is no form will ever dissolve in my life.

I will not encounter death or the accidental dissolving of some form. And so they came and it was good that they lost their faith because then they went deeper. After losing their faith, they realized that that level of faith was childish, although for a while it helped them, and then it didn't work anymore.

So they had to lose and then go deeper to something far more substantial than that and learn to... the deep lesson that is there when you totally accept any form of death in your life. Because very often it is that something dissolves, something leaves you, comes to an end and it looks bad.

And then you allow it to be. Now you may not be able to allow it to be immediately. The pain that you feel, the emotional pain may be there and there's nothing you can do.

You weep. But then you allow that to be. It does not matter where you begin to allow what is to be.

Ideally you allow the form at this moment to be as it is totally, and so there's no rising of any pain. But that is not always possible yet for humans. So sometimes an event like the death of somebody close to you, the death of a parent, the death of a sibling, or even more hard, more difficult, the death of a child, it happens.

Forms dissolve in their own time. There's no predicting when a life form, the form will dissolve. And so pain will come.

You may weep and you may experience that's the sadness. And there you can allow that to be so that it comes to be space around what you feel. There's a deep allowing of the sadness that you feel and then there's space around it.

And that's how you may feel that the sadness, underneath it, you've already touched the peace underneath the sadness. It's already there. But you have to allow the sadness.

Not saying, I shouldn't be feeling sad, I should be feeling peace. I shouldn't be feeling sad, I should be allowing this moment. No, but that's not the fact of this moment.

The fact of this moment is what you feel at this moment. So the yes to what is, the primary yes is to whatever arises. The secondary yes is the yes to whatever you feel about that which arises.

In the smaller example, you're on the road, the car breaks down, a little thing goes wrong, depending what country you're in. In some country your life may be threatened if you get stranded by the road, or in some big city in North America too, in some parts of big cities. So it could be a big thing or a relatively small thing.

And again, you may just, you may succeed in this not-so-big event to say, that's how it is. And then you face it completely and say, okay, what action can I take? You become still and then action happens.

But it's possible also that you look at the engine and you go, oh, but no, this is not again. And suddenly you become conscious of what you feel, the anger that arises. And then you go, ah.

And you, what can you do? You have to, it is what is. At this moment there's anger.

And then comes the secondary allowing. You allow the inner, what is on the inner. You give that space.

Because the amazing thing is, whatever emotion is passing through your system, there's always far more space than the emotion. You just have to find it. There's a vast spaciousness in you that is greater than any emotion that can hold any emotion and allow it to be.

It's there. So there's suddenly some space around the anger. You've stepped back from the anger into space.

There's always more space than things in space. You can verify that tonight. The sky may be clear tonight, still be clear.

And you look up into, you go away from the few lights that there are. You can see vast stars, suns, most of the stars that you see, except for the few planets, are suns at great distances. And you only see a tiny fraction of the infinite vastness of the universe.

And when you look, you can see there are two dimensions. There are things in space and there's space. So easy.

There are things in space and there is space. But that which is awe-inspiring about when you look up there is not the things in space. What is awe-inspiring is the vastness of it.

Infinite, unimaginable vastness of space. Billions, not just billions of suns, billions of worlds of galaxies. Each galaxy consists of billions of suns.

Vast! And it stops your mind when you truly look. Unimaginable vastness.

Yes, the suns and whatever else is there is beautiful to look at, but that sense of sacredness, of unimaginable vastness is the space that you look into. And this is just the external version of what is within you. Within you also, because you're only a microcosm, microcosmic version of the universe, in you also there are things, objects in your consciousness, and there is the vastness of consciousness itself.

And the uncreated, Buddha calls it the unborn, the uncreated, the unformed. He doesn't, and this is so wise to put it like that, because by saying that, it is almost impossible to make it into a mental object. Because the word itself denies itself as an object.

It denies itself by saying the unborn, on the one hand, you have a word that is an object in consciousness, but the object in consciousness denies its very existence as an object. This is why the Buddhist teaching is so profound. So he says to his monks, there is, oh monks, that's how he addresses his monks, in the translation, there is, oh monks, an unborn, uncreated, unformed, unmanifested.

And then it goes on, it's a little bit stylized sutra, if there were not an unborn, uncreated, unformed, unmanifested, there would be no escape from the world of the born, the created, the formed, and the manifested. Beautiful pointer. So, isn't it amazing that you encounter it not by running away from the world of forms around you, not by attempting to escape the limitations that the world of forms seems to impose on you continuously, and there is this longing for freedom in every human being.

And most human beings look at their life situation as a set of limitations around them. It usually is, because every form is limited. Even if you were extremely wealthy after a while, that would become a limitation on you.

You have to have walls around your big house, and need bodyguards to go out. And then there are the limitations that the body at some point becomes a limitation on you. No matter how fit it is at this moment, eventually you'll grow old, and it may be a little more difficult to get up.

Oh, my back hurts. Or a more serious limitation, and many limitations happen because form is limitation. And there is a longing in humans for freedom from limitation.

Freedom. And people believe that this freedom can be found in some situation. This is not to say that you cannot improve your life situation.

It is wonderful to do that. Work to improve your life situation. Live in a nicer place.

But not as in believing that that will free you. It's nice because when you play with the world of form, it's nice to have beautiful forms around you, if you can, but don't depend on them too much. Because you juggle these forms, and then one drops.

And then, before you know it, another one drops, and then somebody throws you one more. Okay. So the escape from limitation is not the escape from the limitations of form in your life.

It's through the seeming limitations. By allowing the form of this moment, which quite often seems to be a limitation on your life, by allowing it internally to be as it is. So one could almost say you walk through the limitation, not away from it.

You don't run away from it. You face it. And as you face it, allow it to be, it's no longer a limitation.

That's inner freedom. So you find inner freedom often in the worst of circumstances people have found it. They found it in prison camps.

They found it through serious illness. They found it through serious disability. They found it through loss of everything that they had and identified with.

And suddenly, they were driven into acceptance of what is. And then the very limitation around them became an opening. And so some people in prison are living this teaching also.

I get more and more letters from people in prison who have become free in prison. And some reported, a couple, that they got released prematurely and they were not even up for parole. Suddenly it happened.

But it was a secondary bonus. The miracle is that often a difficult situation, even on the external level, changes and shows a more benign face. But that is a secondary bonus that you get as you surrender.

And that it is truly miraculous what you can experience as there's a shift in that consciousness, how quickly an external situation can turn around, how quickly help can come in, because you now cooperate with life, which is now, never not now. You cooperate with this moment. There's no resistance to life, which is now.

And then life can help because the entire universe is a field of intelligence. Nothing is dead. Everything is an expression of that intelligence, that consciousness.

It's in the very space in this room. And then it gets through the human, it becomes focalized, but it's all pervasive. The human is like a magnifying glass that you hold, there's the sunshine, and then you have, it concentrates it.

But it's everywhere. And then life becomes helpful in sometimes miraculous ways. Suddenly the right person comes, the right event comes, the right thing comes.

But this is not, this is what Jesus calls the things that you need will be added onto you. It is secondary. The inner shift is primary.

What Jesus describes as finding the kingdom of heaven, which is here now, not over there, some other place, some other time, that is primary, that shift. And then what happens in the world of things is secondary. But miraculously, more often than not, a shift in the world of things will reflect the inner shift.

And if it doesn't, the energy that you bring to it will change it. So, in other words, maybe they won't release you yet from prison, maybe you're still there, and yet you become a factor in that place that usually would be called bad, that is healing and brings enormous help and healing to all, to those around you. There are people who are now teach, who are in prison and teach this already.

So they are exactly where they are meant to be. It's amazing how either the situation changes or that which you bring to the situation changes, and so the quality feel of the situation becomes different. And so the work then is you can now see to welcome the moment no matter what form it takes, particularly if it looks not good on the surface.

That's where the power, your work, if you can call it work, I don't like that word, particularly when this work becomes powerful, when applied to all those many events in your life that look not right, wrong, shouldn't have happened, it's not what I want. There you apply becoming friendly with what is. Then the limitation of what is becomes your portal into freedom from the form.

Your dependency on the forms. Your inner dependency for your sense of who you are, your sense of well-being, of peace on forms. That goes.

And so, then you can say what Jesus said, I have overcome the world. He said. People didn't understand what he was talking about.

Maybe one or two understood. How can he say I've overcome the world? He has no power at all.

Where is his army? He doesn't have, he's powerless. He was talking about the inner realm.

Dependency on things for his inner state. Because all these, the teachings of humanity, the deep teachings, they do not come from a person. They are nobody's possession or achievement.

They come when someone, a person, a human form becomes transparent in their personal selfhood. The objects become loose and let through space consciousness. There are still some objects in the mind.

Yes, this and that. But not self-identification with the objects, so they don't form this crust of self that blocks that which is underneath. So it comes through.

You become transparent to that spaciousness. And then something comes through you into this world. It may be through words.

It may be through action. It may be through a simple invisible emanation of your being that does something to, even to this world of things. It changes things here too.

It makes it more harmonious, a more benign place to be, a less harsh place. Yes, where polarities still exist, but in a more benign way. In other words, you become an instrument for healing, in a very wide sense of the word, for peace.

Peace comes through you into this world. And it is the peace that you cannot understand, that Jesus didn't understand either, because he said the peace that passes all understanding. So in other words, he didn't understand it either.

His mind didn't understand the way it comes from the depths of it. You become a field of peace in this world. It's almost as if something from another dimension came through you into this world of form and affects the world of form.

So the, this is your destiny also to become that transparency as you, as the crust of identification with mental objects breaks up, dissolves, something shines through. And so, in many of you, you already bring, as you go out into the world, you bring peace into situations, simply by being there, by not stepping out of the old reactive consciousness. We'll be talking again what that means in relationships in more detail.

So when you allow the form that this moment takes to be, your own form, the psychological form of me, becomes somewhat transparent. When you resist the form that this moment takes, your own psychological form, the form of me, becomes more solidified, rigid, impenetrable. And you can actually feel that in yourself.

When you go into a situation and you have contraction and resistance, you argue, you need to be right, and you can see in that need to argue, to be right, to win, your own psychological sense of self contracts and becomes more hardened. The me, you get a stronger sense of self, stronger sense of who you are, but it's the illusion of who you are. When you can triumph over somebody and show them that you are right and not they, or that you have more than they, or you know more than they, or can do more than they, or you are more miserable than anybody else, it works either way.

As long as it's more, you are ill, I've been ill for years, I have more than you. I may not have more money than you, but I'm more ill than you. And this is the madness of the human condition.

When you resist what is, the form hardens the self. And when you allow what is, it softens. And as it softens, it becomes transparent and something shines through that is spacious.

You become spacious. And I am sure it also does something even to your physical form. Although scientists don't know, haven't discovered what that is, maybe they haven't examined a surrendered human being yet.

Maybe they haven't heard about it yet. And as humanity begins to live in this way, or a larger part of humanity, of course, it is likely that the physical organism will also undergo changes. Perhaps there will be even more space than there is already.

Already you consist of 99% empty space. Scientists know that. The atoms, the space between the atoms that make up your body is so vast that you are more than 99% empty space.

In Zen, in Zen Buddhism, they have Satori. Satori is a sudden flash, a sudden realization. Not always lasting, but it's there, sometimes accompanied by shouting or laughter.

And then you have the Chinese fat Buddha, who never stops laughing. Continuous Satori. Tomorrow evening, when it comes, of course, it won't be tomorrow.

Tomorrow evening, I believe there is a film that you can go and see that is a very good film. It's called Fierce Grace, about the life of Ram Dass, and his stroke, and how that changed him, and the meaning of adversity and pain. It kind of illustrates also what we have been addressing here.

Also, if any questions need to be asked, there is no... I don't want to devalue questions. No question, however, is ultimately vital.

Many questions arise from the mind, but there are some questions that you feel you truly need to know the answer to, and it may not have yet come through you. If you become still enough, the answer to any question, the answer if you need it, it will come through you. But if there should be questions, you can write them on a little piece of paper and leave them.

There may be a basket or something like that there tomorrow, after the session tomorrow. And I'll look through them, and maybe a few will jump out and address them. A few may be questions that are very helpful to everybody.

And questions that are purely mental, I may not have time to answer, nor may I have the answer to them. For example, can you describe the lives of the future Buddhas? Or who were the past Buddhas?

Or what about the life on planet so-and-so? It's not vital to know that right now for your liberation. So use whatever the moment presents, both the beauty that is out here and anything else that may happen.

They're all openings. The beauty too is an opening. The beauty that you see, the beauty that you listen to.

Remember what we started with today. Enter then from there, from this moment, whatever it is, pay attention, be alert. If you resist this moment, you cannot be attentive to what is.

Remember to work with the sounds, bring awareness to the sounds around you and sense the awareness itself as yourself. So you are that awareness, you are that consciousness, and the personal appearance, the appearance of you as a person is a temporary disguise of consciousness. Hide and seek.

Let's pretend that I'm a human, a person. Oh, that will be fun. And let's play some dramas.

Yes, but for the dramas, you have to forget completely who you are. Okay, then let me forget completely who I am and play the drama. And then you get tired of the drama after a few hundred thousand years.

And then after we've played, let's wake up.

[Speaker 2] (3:11:45 - 3:11:58)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (3:14:17 - 4:26:13)

The bells returned to the manifested realm, refreshed. The ringing of the bells traditionally is a spiritual wake-up call, preceded usually by the alarm clock. That's another kind of waking up.

As we are speaking of waking up, I hope the people in Austin and Hollyhock are fully awake also. They are over there where the camera is. Yes.

I'm sorry you have to get up so early. But you're here. This is the day that we spend in silence.

Except for this person up here. Well, not really. Although the words are there, there's still the dimension of silence, of stillness is present.

More important than the words. So if you can be attentive to both the words and more importantly that which is between the words, which to the mind is nothing. And indeed it is no thing.

And yet it's an energy field. The wonderful thing is you cannot become attentive to that without the same field of stillness being activated within you. The very fact that you notice the silent gaps in between words or in between sentences means the very same silence, the very same stillness at that moment is in you also.

Otherwise you wouldn't even notice it. And you may also be surprised to find that in the moment of noticing the silent gap you are not thinking. You may also find that if the gaps become too long you notice it at first and then you start thinking again.

That's okay. Or you may not. But that is the most significant thing that can happen to you in this lifetime on this planet where you've taken temporary form as a so-called person.

Of course you are consciousness. The most significant thing is this cessation of thinking without loss of consciousness. From our normal perspective the perspective of the normal everyday mind the perspective of thought it looks like there's nothing there.

There's nothing there that can be grasped or understood. And yet it's the ground of all being. The very ground of your existence.

Existence is the manifested. Being, the way I use these words is the unmanifested life that you are. Underneath the form.

The background, we can also call it. So to be aware here, continuously of the background to all this the field of stillness. The field of aware presence.

Of self-aware stillness. And also be aware of that which arises in the stillness. Words, sense perceptions bodily sensations.

But to have your roots to be grounded in the stillness. And here all you have to do is be aware of the gaps between the words. Now there's something that cannot be manufactured.

Something that needs already to be there in you. A readiness. The ability even to be aware of the gaps.

We could call that ability alertness. And that's the true meaning of waking up out of the dream of thought. Of being identified with a continuous stream of thought.

So most of you or almost everyone here has this ability already. There's enough presence in you so that you can notice, be aware of the silent spaces. And in that awareness the awareness of the silent space really, what is a silent space?

It's the absence of something. Where before there was a word, the word has returned, the sound has returned into nothingness. Before there was something, now there is nothing.

So what is the silent space? It's the absence of something. Of the thingness of life.

So when we say you are aware of the silent space, it's a strange way of putting it, it works as a pointer, but what does that really mean? You are aware, first you are aware of a word, your attention is on the word. Then the word disappears.

And it is not replaced by inner words arising in you, because attention remains, the word disappears, and so when we say you are now aware of the gap, what's really happening is you have become self-aware. Awareness or consciousness has become, has recognized itself. Without the object is gone, just the field of bare attention remains.

And that's that is a realm of also of great peace, the silent peace that's always there in the background, and as you realize that, it seems to become stronger. It seems to grow inside you. That's probably a perspective only, but it seems to grow and become stronger.

So as you sit here, you don't grow in knowledge very much, except a few Zen stories, but you grow in awareness. However, any words that we use to describe it are already somewhat misleading. Perhaps a better way of putting it is to say that as you sit here, you shrink.

The person shrinks. The personal sense of self that's identified with thought diminishes. And something else emerges.

And so I've pointed out before, maybe not here, this is not a personal development group. Sometimes I say that when I arrive at the airport and the immigration officer says, what are you going to do here? What do you teach?

In order to reach him at all, I sometimes say personal development and know that it's not true. But if I said personal shrinkage, he wouldn't let me in. Now the person remains, but what gradually happens is there comes a shift.

The transcendent dimension in you becomes stronger and stronger than the personal. The personal can still be used. Your name, the conventions that are to do with the way of interacting with others.

But more and more something else flows into that. And we could call that stillness, but not stillness as just an absence of noise, but stillness as an alive presence. So stillness flows into your sense perceptions.

It flows into your looking. That's why you've been looking at things in nature and realize that it becomes so much more alive when you don't label or interpret it. So it flows into your looking.

So the stillness is also a tension. It's a stream. One could call it a current of awareness.

Where before there was thought, very different energy frequency, thought. When you approach anything or perceive anything through thought, very different frequency. You can see when you look at a person, whether he or she is perceiving you through thought or through stillness.

Or when a person is looking at something, you can see whether they are classifying it, interpreting it, finding some kind of personal relationship to it. People do that with trees and flowers too. Some people have the compulsion to pick flowers because they need to enter into a personal relationship with a flower.

Not realizing that they could be in a much deeper relationship if they went beyond the personal that says, I would like to have that. Or even if you don't pick it, you might think, how would that look in my garden? In my backyard?

Or have some kind of comparison to it. Put it in some kind of comparative category. It's not even necessarily to do with yourself.

But it's still a... I overheard a man saying he was looking at the sun, at the sky after sunset. Or was it after sunrise?

And he said to his companion, look at that Turner sky. Turner is a British artist who lived, I believe, in the 19th century who painted beautiful paintings of light, sky, just light. And finally he had...

Yes, he was looking, but it also had to be compared to something. You can look more deeply if you don't classify and compare it to anything. And it is likely that Turner himself looked at the sky in the state of complete open presence.

With reference to nothing else. Not to another word, to a word, or anything else. And sometimes you find people who are walking in nature and it's beautiful and lush.

But the mind comes in and for a moment they look and then they say to you, oh, you should go to Hawaii. It's even more lush there. And then they start telling you about Hawaii while you carry on walking.

So this current of awareness flowing through you into your sense perceptions, your seeing, your hearing, but it also flows as a kind of emanation, because every human being has a certain emanation. Now most humans have the emanation of mind. And many humans, in addition, have the emanation, frequently, of pain body.

Many humans have a very nervous emanation. Tense. Where is the next thing?

They want to get to the next thing and at the same time feel threatened by the next thing that's going to come. So let's see what they emanate with the whole being. And that's the entire civilization.

To a large extent, big cities have that energy field that's generated by millions of people.

There are certain other countries where at first it feels ah, there's less nervousness here. But then you realize that actually the energy field, although it may not be nervous, is a little sleepy.

Instead of going beyond thought, they're drifting below thought. And so you tend to see lots of people sitting or lying around street corners in a state of semi-sleep. And yes, it feels, I've just arrived from New York, it feels great for a while.

And you also sometimes find human beings who seem to be more peaceful, and you yourself may find that in certain situations or conditions you're not as nervous after a few drinks. After taking this or that substance. And it's great, it's a glimpse of what it means not to be thinking.

That's how alive you can feel. But in many of these cases when you've taken a few drinks, yes, you're beginning to step out of thought and you feel better. Oh, it feels good, I must have another drink.

Oh, let's have another. And before you know it, you're going towards unconsciousness and sleep. Yes, you have stepped out of this dream of thinking, but have stacked, one could say, in evolutionary terms, you're stepping back.

That too can be a relief. But this is not what's happening here. From this dream of thinking, we are stepping beyond.

We do not go back to sleep when the mind no longer thinks. We are more alert, far more awake than when we were immersed in thinking. So there comes that quality, that's the way we are going.

Yes, we are transcending thought. Not back to where we came from, but rising above thought. Now that state of rising above thought, where you can still use thought beautifully, powerfully, when it's needed, but you are no longer possessed by thought or consumed by thought.

Thought, useless thinking, burning up a lot of your life energy. Not going anywhere, just going around, just like the car is in neutral, you're pushing down the accelerator, not going anywhere, just vroom, vroom, vroom, for hours and hours and hours. So going, stepping beyond thought into that clarity and alertness that is both gentle and fierce.

There are two aspects seemingly contradictory. It's very gentle, that energy field of alert presence, but also has a fierceness. It needs to have a fierceness because it needs to cut through thought.

That substance that, and thought is heavy, dense. So to cut through that density of thought, coupled with the density of the emotional field that goes with the thoughts, you have the two layers. The density of thought, the density of that emotional field, pain body, and they cling together as two layers of density.

And then comes presence, and in this case here it comes from two directions. That's why it's possible for this to happen. From within you, that dimension of presence emerges, pushes forward.

But it might not have enough in the absence of extreme and agonizing suffering that cracks it open from above. It may not have enough power to cut through the density. So all you feel then is an extreme restlessness, something wanting to happen, and there may be searching and something wants to almost be born here, but it can't be born.

It's not because the shell is not cracking. But here it's being also pierced from here, from the energy field that is here in this room that comes through this teaching, which is more than the words. So that the presence is cutting through from within you and from without.

So it's just the way they built the channel tunnel from two ways. They started in England and in France, digging. And finally they met in the middle.

And they had cut through these layers of seemingly impenetrable rock. So if it were not already happening from within you, it would be meaningless and it wouldn't work for you to be here. So the layer of thought that stream is being cut through and when you leave here, there will, we trust, be enough presence in you so that it can happen without the external help.

Although occasionally it's still helpful to listen, to be reminded, to open a book and read just a few lines that have come out of presence. That's helpful as long as you need it. But the there is enough presence in you now so that you can use it as a sword.

And I'm now talking about the active side of presence. Because presence is both fierce and gentle. It has an active aspect and a passive aspect.

It depends from what perspective you look on it. So when we say that allow this moment to be, in that there is an arising. There's surrender and presence go together.

Surrender to what is is one side of presence and that looks passive. But that is not the full picture. You cannot surrender to what is.

It would not work if there were not also a fierce aspect to presence. An active, very active aspect to presence. So on the one hand, it's very gentle and allowing but it is also, it acts like a sword that cuts through accumulations collective of the collective human mind and pain body.

So there comes this attention. When the Zen master raises his finger and looks at you, there's a fierce look on his face. We see it in old drawings of Zen masters.

You wouldn't want to meet them in a dark street. Eyes come bulging out of their heads. So they represent the fierce aspect of presence.

Underneath it, if you look closely, if the artist who draw this drawing of the Zen master was in tune with the Zen master's inner state, if you look closely you will find also hidden there underneath the fierceness the gentle aspect of presence. It's hidden. If you look into the eyes they both are present there.

So allowing what is to be needs to come together with a sword like aspect. Almost what seems, the mind would say irreconcilable but they're not irreconcilable. Perhaps only from the point of view of the mind.

So how does that work? This moment something arises. This moment takes form as an event that appears in front of you.

A person or an event. Now allowing this moment to be as it is in whatever form it arises requires you to face fully what is. Not opposing.

Facing in an open way. Not facing in a as if you were fighting a battle against something. You face it in an open way like this.

You have your arms extended like this. So this is the gentle and yet at the same time you look it straight in the eye, so to speak. Whatever it is.

This is the gentle. The receptive. And the attention is the fierce.

So you have, you welcome what is but there's a fierce attention that flows through you onto whatever it is that's happening. Not fighting anything. Just its fierce alertness.

And that cuts through the old reactions that otherwise would that are all accumulations in the reactive mind. They can then not operate anymore. And intelligence itself which is attention.

Attention is great intelligence. But very different from the accumulated so-called intelligence of the human mind that is a limited aspect of the greater intelligence. A limited form that this greater intelligence can take, which is fine too.

It's only not fine anymore if that is all you know. And all you think you are. If you're good at solving IQ tests, well that is an aspect of the limited intelligence.

And that's fine if you're good at that. If you get your identity from that, it becomes problematic. I'm a member of I think it's in England they have Mensa, which is all the people who have very high IQs can become members of that.

And some people let that flow into a conversation just casually. Now if I'm offending one or two people here, I'm sorry. That is beautiful.

Why not? If you can use your mind in such a way, it's a beautiful thing to do. If that becomes an important part of your sense of self, then you get trapped in an illusory identity.

And you probably have a few more things to add to it. And that is part of identifying with the realm of content. I don't qualify to become a member of Mensa.

Unfortunately. The mind doesn't work in that way anymore. I think it never did.

I could never solve mathematical problems and I always admired people who could. I can't even see where the problem is. Applause Laughter Applause Laughter Laughter Laughter When I was at school, after the age of 13 I stopped going to school.

I couldn't stand it anymore. But I still had all these problems that you had to solve. I couldn't even, my mind would go blank after reading the first few lines.

A man has five sacks of potatoes and then he takes two away and takes half of that content out and puts it into another sack. How much is left? Laughter And that's okay for a problem to solve if there actually is a man.

Laughter Laughter Laughter So we are conditioned to create problems for ourselves. That lies in the conditioning of the mind. And so often when you think you have a problem, really your mind is creating a problem for yourself.

If it isn't happening at this moment, if there's no action you can take right now and so comes the fierce aspect of presence. Oh I've got so much on my mind. So much what is the expression?

So much on my plate. Laughter Laughter Laughter Laughter Laughter And so you need to remember the the sort of presence. What's the problem at this moment?

Can't find any. Laughter Yeah, but it's not this norm, but tomorrow when I get there, what's going to happen? When I when this or that when the moment comes, there's more than enough power in you to face it and to take right action when right action is called for because you will face the challenge when it's true in that state of welcoming attention and look it straight in the face.

And in that moment there is no thought. When you face a challenge truly, there is no thought. There is just the looking and it may be an actual looking or metaphorically speaking, you're looking looking at the situation, the totality of what has arisen at this moment.

What needs to be solved responded to dealt with at this moment. And you look. And in that looking that is fierce and gentle at the same time there is an activation of a greater intelligence than what you have learned.

Whatever you may have learned. Now what you have learned may eventually come into play also because eventually perhaps you will take action part of which is to do with certain things that you have learned to do. Or you will speak words, which is to do with using language that you learned in the past.

But that will be only an instrument of the inspired use of whatever form comes into play when you deal with it. But there is always the moment of alert, aware presence in which there is no thought and there is just the looking. And any master does that in any field has the ability to look for a moment and then respond out of that the greater intelligence responds out of that.

In the same way that great sportsmen play their sports no tennis player great tennis player thinks, well I think the ball is going to come there next so I better move to the left now. Now I have got to get ready for the other side to jump to there. Now I have to two meters forward quickly it would be impossible through conceptual thinking in the mind there is no thought.

And if thought interferes they are not playing well today. And they all have days when they are not playing well. And very great sportsmen actually enjoy tremendously the flow of energy and realize that they are not doing it.

But their ability to just be there so this is the non-conceptual intelligence in you, the non-conditioned unconditioned intelligence in you that becomes activated. And that deals with problems beautifully, true problems or rather true challenges because there are no problems. Problem arises when you are either imagining something happening to you now, it is not happening, you are somewhere else it is not happening now.

You are dwelling mentally on some possible situation because even if you had an illness that is very problematic you don't know the outcome will I survive or will I not survive? Of course eventually nobody here survives as the form how much longer will I survive? Is that now some people to some people that becomes a dreadful burden to know that you have a condition that you may not survive which of course everybody is suffering from it in a wider sense it's called, it's an incurable disease called mortality the diagnosis is fatal mortality apparently always ends in death so some people who see their life span they cannot, they don't know how much future they have it can become an enormous problem because you think I have not fully lived my life if you are 90 and the doctor tells you you only have two years maybe that's not so bad but even then some people say oh no, I need a bit more time but if you are 30 it seems more problematic or if you are 20 and the doctor says you may not have much time left and then comes panic and then comes a sense of unfulfillment in some sense I haven't even started yet I haven't fulfilled what I've come here to do all the things that I potentially could do I won't be able to do them you become a huge problem suddenly enormous suffering arises but in some cases it happens that the uncertainty about how much future you have or seeing that you have very little future left future is removed from you forces you more deeply into the present moment so I know some people who have a so called serious so called life threatening illness of course life is eternal but it threatens the form that you are the so called life threatening illness and they have become enormously present because they have no future to escape to anymore it's just always they live totally in the now the future is so uncertain there may be nothing there so there's no point in even projecting anything there's just and some have become spiritual teachers and become transparent through this enormous current of awareness goes through them and they smile and they occasionally waves of fear may still come even to them and then it passes and they're back in presence and they realize no matter what they could have achieved in or through time, because that has it's place as long as you have what looks like time, why not do things in time of course you learn a skill, you learn a language you learn to do this or that you travel here or there, see new places have new experiences, all these things time is good for well, nothing helps you if you're always in the future, no matter what you experience so that is where usually you seek fulfillment of your life, by adding more things that only time can give you because more implies more time I need to add more to me to be fully myself on the level of form that is true, if you are twenty, you haven't started living you haven't learned anything perhaps you're just learning to become a pianist or a great computer expert or whatever and you suddenly get interrupted on that level it seems your life has come to nothing but your life is not your life there isn't even you and life there's only life of which you are a temporary expression there's only the one consciousness of which you are a temporary expression and if that flowers when you are twenty and the true flowering is not the achievement of this or that sometimes a flowering happens indirectly through an achievement which doesn't help the person either if they still identify with it as a formal achievement but the true flowering is the arising of presence in you when you become transparent and that can happen at any age and it doesn't matter where you are in your life situation it doesn't matter whether because there are some people here who have succeeded in the world and others who in the eyes of the world have not succeeded there are others here who have succeeded years ago and then failed and others who have failed miserably up to this point and in a year from now they'll be rich and famous all it all happens I was a failure in the eyes of the world ten years ago eight years ago now the world thinks I'm a success completely meaningless completely meaningless but it doesn't matter where you are at what life situation you're in at the present time the ultimate purpose of your existence is for this form to manifest that which is beyond manifestation to become an opening for the unconditioned for the stillness, the awareness that energy stream that frequency so to speak I believe it was Ramana Maharshi who sometimes used the expression a current of awareness that flows through you that is non-conceptual intelligence and intelligence, even that's a limitation it's more than that it's love too the first time that's why I'm using this word here because some words you have to be careful with words like God words like love because the reality to which these words point is so far greater than the word that it's usually misleading to even say it but now I've said it what flows through you when we call it intelligence or great power that deals with any problem any challenge there is no problem that arises it's not just that that which flows through you is also love that energy stream that hope that is there when that openness is there and it doesn't matter what your life situation is or how much future you have left if that is there even an hour before you die that is the flowering of your life there's no thing as your life we're just using it as an expression it's the flowering of consciousness through this form it's the birth of that into this world and then the mind comes ok then what happens after that it wants to know what comes next what comes after it has flowered maybe there's a question in the basket about it ok let it flower first and then see what happens extreme challenges have the ability potentially to push you into the state of presence to force you into the state of presence little challenges which are the majority of challenges usually pull you into unconsciousness unless you now know that you can actually use whatever so to speak goes wrong in your life as your spiritual practice ah great here's another one and then you bring the allowing to it and the attention and you look you look at the cold soup you look at the the lost bell that was here oh my bells I've had them for years a friend of mine gave them to me and the Dalai Lama gave them to my friend and they are gone somebody must have taken them oh no can't be and instead you look where the bells were before there's now an empty space well now they are back but there was an empty there was an empty space now there's something deeply significant about the empty spaces that are left behind by any kind of loss for example these are the bells you may get back to your car or where your car once was and in the parking lot there's only an empty space and here it is vital if you can stop and face that empty space without running away from it or cursing the empty space or immediately going into reactive this is very strange and this is one example the empty space can also be left by relationships the wife, the partner, the husband one day you get home and there's a letter which says I'm gone I'm out of here and if you can again at that moment what the form that this moment takes we use that expression here and here we come to something very significant the form that this moment takes sometimes is an absence of the form that was there a moment before and because suddenly there is a no form where there was a form before that is an enormous opening into the deeper awareness of the formless consciousness unconditioned formless that you are, if you can not run away from it, if you can face this death because the loss of anything is a small death the loss of the bells that you've had for years is a small death because the form is gone the loss of your BMW is a death the Rolls Royce an even bigger death and of course there may be an actual death and this is an amazing thing the person that was here every day in this room used to sit in this chair that's the armchair that's where the desk where they sat and one day the message comes they're gone passed away and then you look at the empty chair the person it was so real it seemed so permanent to have that personality sitting in that armchair doing its thing, its work talking, having its opinions how is it inconceivable that suddenly that person is where is he?

dissolved just dissolved like a soap bubble gone and so most people this is the empty space that is left behind by death whenever a form dissolves in your life it may be an actual death it may be the loss of something that had been important to you if you can face that hole that is left behind by the form that is no longer there it's a temporary hole into the dimension of the formless now one could almost say God we're using that word again the formless one life the formless, timeless one consciousness that underlies all manifestation momentarily shines through whenever there is a hole in the tapestry of physical existence it's kind of the tapestry of forms and in this tapestry of forms which is gigantic regularly all the time holes appear if you were watching, let's just use the metaphor and say the entire physical universe sense perceived universe imagine it as an extremely complex tapestry woven, huge of course and you look at it and then you see continuously here and there little things suddenly disappearing and temporary holes being there opening up in the tapestry and then suddenly there and there, so part of this tapestry it's continuously coming and going out and into form no form in this tapestry remains for long and so holes open up continuously in it and then are replaced by something else but if you can be aware of the holes, the openings something shines through them that is not to do with form but the essence of all form and that is enormously peaceful there's enormous peace and aliveness there and that is the grace that lies concealed in any kind of death accidental death seemingly premature death any kind of death and any kind of loss there is a grace there, potentially but it does not help you if you deny it or run away from it no, don't want to see that hole and you cover up the hole with reactions immediately so that you don't have to face the emptiness so when emptiness comes in your life that is a beautiful potentially a beautiful opening in which you can actually find yourself you find yourself by not resisting that and so the you begin to welcome death when it comes because it is an inseparable part of this world of form and when we look at death we judge it from the point of view of the an identity a sense of self that is identified with form and from there, death looks horrible it looks dreadful that's why nobody dares speak about it in western culture which is the most identified with egoic forms nobody dares maybe one of the few countries left where death is still natural is India where it's in the street you can go to the bonfires where they burn the dead bodies every day, you can watch a very deep meditation if you can be there in a state of complete openness and just watch that's the destiny of every form is to dissolve again quickly and when you watch contemplate the dissolving of forms that which is beyond form arises in you you are in touch then with the formless in you that's the grace of death which is not the opposite of life it's only the opposite of birth people think life and death, it's a question of life and death no, it's a question of birth and death life is eternal life cannot be destroyed forms, yes even physicists know that no energy is destroyed ever and in a wider sense as you live in the present more and more it's a continuous dying as the expression goes, you die to the past every moment you let go and this moment is always fresh you can of course you remember what you need to remember but you let go of any personalized attachment to a memory there's nothing wrong with memories you need it you wouldn't be able to find your way back to your street your house memory of course you need but self-identification with memory you don't so as you live in presence there's a continuous dying to this continuity of me which is an accumulation of more and more things that I identify with the continuity and that could be anything you die to the past, when the bell is gone it is gone it has disappeared it is the past and this moment remains fresh oh there is a freshness even in when something has dissolved one could go so far as to say there is a breath of fresh air metaphorically speaking comes into this world of space-time this world of physicality whenever a form dissolves there is

[Speaker 2] (4:26:13 - 4:26:15)

ah

[Speaker 1] (4:26:17 - 4:50:12)

there is a lightness ah and with that you welcome death wanted to last a little longer stillness is the death that you enter voluntarily if you are ready for it to relinquish your attachment to the structures of thought to step out of the stream of thinking is death because thinking is form primordial form to step out of that is death the arising of stillness is your death the death of the little me of course it is and there are still many humans on the planet who are not ready for that they want to stay entangled in form they want a continuation of the drama of form they don't want an end to the drama there are humans, many humans still on the planet who are not ready for the end of suffering even if the possibility were presented to them they would run away in fear it would seem like no, the end of suffering would seem like a kind of death the end of my drama I don't want that but there are many humans also who are ready to stop suffering to come to the end of suffering it's an evolutionary development now for this to this shift to happen to you there is one requirement and we can put it in simple language you need to be fed up with suffering not run away from it not avoid it but be fed up with it you've had enough I've had enough and if you are in psychological suffering and all suffering is psychological suffering the rest may be pain toothache whatever it may be you can ask yourself at any moment when you can see that you are in suffering is that suffering is that what I want is that what I'm choosing at this moment is that what I'm creating at this moment humanity as a whole is coming to the point where the suffering is just too much it's been going on for so long and for most of you it is true you have suffered enough but it needs to be true for you that realization needs to come to you so that no situation nothing that happens to you is converted into drama and suffering anymore and the quickest way out of that, out of converting events, situations interactions with people into drama and suffering is to be present moment centered not story centered, not thought centered not imposing interpretations and stories on the present moment allowing the moment to be as it is I gave a simple example of what is what the mechanism that makes up the manufacture of drama and suffering in people's lives the mental mechanism, the mechanicalness behind it I gave a brief example in this little book, Stillness Speaks where in one entry one entry starts with three statements one statement says what a miserable day the other statement says he didn't have the decency to return my call the other statement says she let me down then the text explains a little bit that these are stories that you impose on situations events and people in your life and those are simple, very simple examples but even the complicated drama basically works according to that same principle it's just that the stories that you impose become more complex but this is where they start and the stories are imposed in many cases one of their main reasons for being there is to enhance your egoic mind made sense of self to be right because if you are right if you can complain about this miserable weather unconsciously the mechanism behind it is you've made the weather wrong and yourself right you are in a superior position because you are complaining about it what a dreadful weather just dreadful if you can say he didn't have the decency to return my call it implies this is unconscious that you of course are morally superior in every way to this person this is the position that you are coming from and identify with I'm not saying you do not see that certain people do very unconscious things you see it but the story then personalizes it you find a reactive and personalized relationship to somebody's perhaps unconsciousness and then use it to enhance your mind made sense of self it doesn't mean you don't see dysfunctional behavior for what it is but you do not have a personalized reactive relationship to it anymore you allow that to be also there is no person there, there is only human unconsciousness you don't enter into that personalized relationship that is story based she let me down she wasn't there I was there she was not that's the event without the story it's raining that's the miserable day without the story he didn't call that's the event without the story he didn't have the decency to return my call it's amazing how simple things if you take away the story the simplicity of what is without the personalized story around it, how simple life then becomes how simple this moment always is without imposing a story on it which is in any case only there in the service of being right, in the service of feeling superior to the situation of the person in the service of enhancing your always deficient mind made egoic sense of self this is all madness, dysfunction if you look and see how people complicate their lives for nothing, for an illusory identity and then what is left then is things are as they are at this moment, people do what they do at this moment beautifully illustrated in the story that you may have heard perhaps through this mouth before in the story of the Zen Master some of you probably don't know it, but it's such a beautiful story, the Zen Master who had an excellent reputation as a great teacher in a town in Japan and one day was accused by the 17 year old girl next door of being the father to her child that had just been born, the parents asked who is the father, they were shocked that she was giving birth to a baby and she finally said it was the master next door I went to see him 9 months ago for a spiritual counseling session and then that's when he did it to me and so the parents got extremely angry and started telling everybody about it and they ran to the Zen Master and with the baby and put it there on his floor and said we know what you did you are responsible, now you look after the baby, we don't want anything to do with this baby anymore you take it, you are the father, we know it all now the Zen Master looked and listened and when they said you are the father of this baby he said is that so? and then they said yes and we are leaving this baby here you can look after him is that so? then they left the Zen Master lost his reputation nobody came to him for counseling sessions anymore nobody wanted to hear him anymore all he had there was the baby so that was the present moment, he picked up the baby and started getting some food sent off somebody to get some food and spent one year mostly looking after the baby that was there a year later the girl was a little bit more mature and calmly confessed to her parents that the Zen Master was actually not the father it was the son of the butcher next door was the father so oh my god, they ran to the Zen Master and said please forgive us that is all a big mistake we just realized that you are not the father the Zen Master looked and is that so? and they said can we have the baby back now please we now want the baby we'll look after it so we want the baby back is that so?

ok and off they went this is an extreme example of the good that comes only good when no story even stories that other people try to impose on you is accepted no story is taken on and this Zen is an extreme example of it's a teaching story it's an extreme example of non-reactive relationship to life and a non-story imposing relationship on life they had their story they had to do they had to make the Zen Master wrong the Zen Master refused any kind of story any kind of he wasn't a victim of circumstances he didn't say I can't look after this baby what do I do I can't spend my time no, he did what was there to do at that moment so the baby had the best possible start in life because for one year grew up in this energy field of great peace with the Zen Master but then the Zen Master did not cling did not have a clinging relationship to that he was able to in the moment let go of the past and relinquished the baby and responded to this moment the parents now he so genuinely wanted the baby back she was going to marry the butcher's son so this is an example of the simplicity it may be a little bit extreme you can of course say no, I am not the father there would be another possibility that is still not a story no, I am not the father but if that is what you believe I cannot help it again, you are not buying into the story but if you had your own you have a story to counteract their story and so on, the stuff out of which drama is made so look at your life and see are you facing situations as they are are you imposing and mixing up something here stories on the simplicity that is always there in this moment so that is it is good to know that because the mind will always try to manufacture stories and the biggest one of course the most intriguing story is the story of me me and my life that is so interesting and if you can't tell anybody else about me and my life then you can tell yourself about me and my life the story of me the most fascinating story and the story of me is part of the ego, the egoic sense of self not saying that you do not remember what happened to you of course you remember what happened to you not saying don't have the photo albums anymore you still have the photo albums but to derive your identity from a story and when you look at the story of me they can see that a lot of the identity that is derived from the story of me is to do very often with making other people wrong and see how right you have been in that situation and how wrong those people have been or situations or God, him, her or itself God itself has done something to you and so attached to the story are certain emotions resentments the story is enormously energized by resentments and anger sadness they did to me they did to me kinds of things can you look through the story and die to the story not lose your memory but die to the story as a self reference as giving you your sense of self so where does your sense of self come from then if you let go of that if you die to that and see that's not who you are and you die to the unconsciousness of manufacturing further stories even complaining, let's go back to the example of the cold soup complaining about the cold soup is another story, the moment you complain about it, I'm not saying heat it up please, that's not complaining but the inner complaining or the outer verbal complaining which implies making something or someone wrong, that's the story so drama people unconscious people are waiting just for the next thing out of which they can manufacture drama the egoic identity in conjunction with the pain body is just looking out for the next thing out of which to manufacture their next dramatic episode now the kind of dramas that people are drawn into vary a little, some people have the victim drama, somebody is always doing it to me, other people have other kinds of drama they get very angry with situations and people others may get very sad poor me well that's the victim I can't remember what else, there's quite a few laughter laughter laughter and then you see how they use the tiniest events to add a little bit to incorporate into their dramatic story so if you can see that in others, that's already great you can see it in yourself it's even greater when it happens see it and so you see what that is some people have a greater amount of a denser a denser ego and a denser pain body than others but the basic principle is there in everyone to some extent, greater or lesser but it ceases to operate the more you step into presence, then there's still only remnants of that that occasionally come in and then your life becomes simplified so simple simplify simplify said one famous writer Thoreau I think it was simplify, simplify now people talk about simplifying their lives and they think it's to do with not indulging in excessive consumption and so on, which of course is good too but that happens naturally the true simplification happens on the inner level let go of the stories pay more attention to this moment than anything else this is the day that we spend in silence the day that we spend listening always just this moment it sounds like a big thing if we say we'll spend the whole day listening, watching being alert attentive, alert to your surroundings and alert on the inner level the more alert you are to sense perceptions, the more alertness you will also have within stay for a little while with the empty chair

[Speaker 2] (4:50:23 - 4:50:24)

thank you

[Speaker 1] (4:52:52 - 5:14:34)

still here I've never had so many questions at a retreat and I'm not here to flatter you the best question of course is no question but I have never had as many good questions so it's difficult they all are most of them are good questions direct, alive questions I've never thrown away any questions yet I keep even the silliest questions might come in useful at some point I will dip my hand in the basket in a second one question that came three or four times there are a few recurring questions can we sit with you in silence for a while yes you're not dependent on external stillness of course when you're just listening there's stillness inside you no commentary so don't miss the stillness that's actually there even when the words are spoken here both in you and in the speaker there's no thinking in between sentences or words so whenever a word has been uttered the stillness is there again who is speaking not this person or this little mind stillness is speaking it's not personal not my stillness or your stillness and as I said before this person is listening the same as you to the words this person doesn't know what word is going to be spoken next as little as you know what word is going to be spoken next it's not prepared to trust in life enough for this to happen to trust in life means to trust in this moment the power of this moment that whatever this moment requires will be there there were also two or three questions by people to whom the stillness is yet only a mental concept and so they ask it's great to hear about it but I've never experienced the stopping of my mind my mind is continuously noisy compulsive it continuously worries and thinks so what can you tell me they ask there are also a few questions on meditation the use the purpose, usefulness or otherwise of meditation and I'd like to bring the two together, the two questions especially if the mind is incessantly active, even here as you sit here if you cannot notice the gaps if you cannot be attentive to the gaps now make sure that this is actually the truth because you may actually notice the gaps for a moment there may be a momentary cessation but because you're so used to listening to your mind, the mind is saying no nothing is going on I don't get it maybe you do briefly however it may be if your mind has such overpowering momentum meditation is a wonderful thing there is a meditation, there are different methods one could say of course that being in the body is a kind of meditation, feeling the inner body, directing attention into the inner body is a kind of meditation the way it's presented here is in a non-formal formalized way I just feel that and it may be that people whose mind is extremely active may need a somewhat more formal approach to being in the body and so there's a beautiful meditation technique Vipassana that directs your attention slowly and gradually into the body so that would be a good thing to take up the practice of that there are also mantras if used rightly they should stop the mind and replace all the various mental activities with just that the mantra and eventually of course the mantra needs to come to an end and then the stillness is there Buddhism has designed for hopeless cases the counting meditation not hopeless no where you count mentally from 1 to 10 and 10 to 1 or maybe you start at 100 I don't remember but you just count backwards and forwards and backwards and forwards and then that gives your mind something to do but at least it becomes more focused and once the chaos of the mind has become a more focused kind of noise it's easier eventually to drop it once the chaotic noise has become focused noise you can more easily drop once the noise has become focused then you could drop the chaos it's hard to drop the chaos except in great suffering the aim of all meditation of course is presence eventually any technique needs to be let go of if there's anybody here who feels angry at that statement it's a good sign that it's time to let go because there's a new identification with form my method that I'm so good at that I've spent 20 years getting better at so vipassanā is excellent they claim and it may well be true whether they have some sutras to prove it but who knows how old they are but it may well be true that vipassanā is one of the original meditations taught by the Buddha but it seems that the Buddha also taught another meditation that is breath awareness and that can be practiced not just as a meditation that when you sit in a particular way but to be aware of your breathing is related already to being in the body because the breath flows into the body to notice your breath to feel your in and out breath is helpful it does bring you into the now when you do it for any length of time you soon encounter the threshold of boredom because observing your breath is not interesting and then if you stay with it you will pass through the threshold of boredom and then observing your breath is quite peaceful the coming and going and you notice great subtleties about your breath you notice, for example that at the end of each out breath, there is a momentary cessation in breath hasn't started yet you are neither breathing in nor out and that's a point of great peace if you can notice that a very peaceful, and also the end of the in breath, there is a momentary cessation before the out breath starts, you can watch that nature does it they say the whole universe breathes in and out, if that is true it may well be, because it's as above so below they say the entire universe expands maybe it does and then comes together again into one and then it happens again and the heart does that and the seasons do that this season is a kind of out breath fall autumn nature is breathing, it comes to the end of the out breath, and sometimes even when you get warm days in autumn they are maybe the same temperature almost as summer it has a different energy quality to it it is stiller it's moving towards cessation nature has come to the end of the out breath fall is the out breath and the end of the out breath is the equivalent of death and that's why the autumn days can be so peaceful sometimes you can even sense the stillness in the air nature becomes is ready to rest so everywhere you have this the in and out breath each time you breathe out it's a little death so you go into that death and realize when you reach the point of death the end of the out breath you haven't disappeared it's the deepest peace there so that now to come to another question these just happen to be a few that I remember a few questions on how to bring awareness into the everyday world some people say when I'm out in nature it's wonderful there's stillness when I'm sitting here in the group it's wonderful stillness arises but the moment I go back into the city and my usual activities it's gone how to bring it into that and of course when you're in nature your mind is not being stimulated because you're not surrounded by mind made things when you're in the city everything around you is made by the human mind and there is a collective energy field that is nervous mental activity that's why cities are so noisy the inner noise becomes externalized and then manifests as machines and amplifiers producing so called

[Speaker 2] (5:14:34 - 5:14:35)

music

[Speaker 1] (5:14:38 - 5:20:33)

very hard to find a restaurant these days where you're not bombarded with noise and when you say would you mind turning it down a little?

what's wrong with you? and then there's your workplace probably dominated by nervous mental energy like most workplaces are even places that could potentially be places of great peace and healing they're very nervous hospitals are very nervous schools are very nervous they're getting more and more nervous school teacher the most stressful of all jobs only 50 years ago it was one of the most comfortable jobs it was great so bring in little returns to presence into the noise as you go about your activities how to do that? just little things you can even make a list of 3, 4, 5 things that you can do each day, periodically simply to bring some return to presence you may put next to your computer a little card that says can you feel your feet? can you feel your hands?

or you may put in the bathroom if they let you in the office take 2 or 3 conscious breaths when the phone rings don't jump to it let it ring twice and then answer it and during that time don't be in an inner state of okay I'm just holding back before I answer it but no allow it to ring it wants to ring, that's what it's doing so you actually watch or listen to the ringing you allow it, it goes whatever sound it makes these days and there you are you look at the phone and you hear the sound you've created a spaciousness inside and that which drove you deeper and deeper into mind and into noise is reversed, every time it rings it becomes an instrument for some space, just a little bit of space to rise inside you and nobody would even notice that it took 2 more rings before you answered it if there are steps you can walk up and down the steps consciously instead of making each step a means to an end in other words, you're already where you want to be mentally you're being pulled by the next moment to the next thing you take the opportunity to take one step at a time you don't even have to slow down after a while you can actually walk fast without being pulled to where you need to get without being pulled away from this moment that's extremely enjoyable it doesn't mean now you bring presence into everyday life that you necessarily have to slow down at first it may slow you down a little because it's an unusual way of doing things but after a while you realize that there's no need to slow down if you actually something needs to be done fast you suddenly see your hands are moving fast you're putting this here packing your suitcase to get to the airport you're running late and yet suddenly there's only each movement and looking what it is that needs to be put in without even noise because there's only the looking now there's an opening of a drawer you see this is right action that comes out of presence you don't think ok, what do I need you can actually look and it happens and then you walk fast and you enjoy the energy of that and then you shut it and then you run down the stairs still without being pulled because if you're pulled away from the now into the future that is the mental projection so the mind projects itself there and says I need to be there and then you're being pulled out of yourself and it's called stress and so you know when but they also speak of stress in metal which stress means there's one pull this way and one pull that way and eventually it breaks there's too much stress in metal so humans live in continuous stress in this mad world and stress is a form of fear

[Speaker 2] (5:20:33 - 5:20:34)

I need to be there

[Speaker 1] (5:20:37 - 6:08:50)

so you bring in first into little things presence there's the phone you could have a flower next to your computer screen there's a flower, I always make sure there's a flower there and something natural because everything else if you're in an office is mind made there's a flower there and periodically you look at it truly look just half a minute, a minute the mind will tell you that you cannot spare 30 seconds to look at the flower you just don't have the time this cannot be true everybody has 30 seconds occasionally if you can enter the body easily, feel that in your place of work a great opportunity if you can do that it's the most wonderful transformation whenever somebody speaks to you on the phone or in person while you listen to that person feel the aliveness in the inner body and now what is speaking to you is the human mind it will try to get you entangled in what it's saying but now you're rooted here you listen from there and can you function in that way?

yes can you still reply intelligently or are you just going to make unintelligible sounds no, you may be surprised that intelligible words come out of your mouth if you need to reply they may be more intelligent than you would have said otherwise any time there's a meeting dreadful things, meetings committee meetings conference tables everybody has their agenda everybody has their power positions everybody's fighting everybody else or two temporarily get together to fight those other two and all that madness around the table if there's only one human being who is in the body it's often enough to change the entire energy field of the meeting even if it isn't even if it doesn't do that it gives you a degree of peace while you sit there you will probably speak less but when you speak it is more likely that people will listen because at last somebody is saying something new and meaningful it does not come from ego so in that sense healing is taking place through you through, not the personal you but through this form healing is happening so you're not doing it just for yourself because if one person becomes transformed in that way and brings in a different vibration vibrational energy field then things will change around them if they are capable of change some structures are so heavy old mind made human structures certain organizations some may be too heavy they will just have to crumble eventually and they will sooner or later probably sooner many other structures are still capable of change because there are humans in there they are basically all mind structures if you need to escape from the office go to the bathroom shut yourself in there and sit there for two minutes not complaining about the mad world but perhaps being aware of your breathing and this is another little one that you can introduce anywhere, being aware, watching the breath as you go up and down the elevator wonderful who says that you cannot watch your breath when you are in the elevator if that is at your workplace and you yourself will come up with little things on how to introduce spaces into that which seems to make it impossible to have space those surroundings and yet it's not impossible I will dip my hand in the basket now take a few there was a big one here maybe that's it works another big one got blown away by the wind sometimes it doesn't when I let go of my story I feel less alive what is the value of going to a place where I feel less alive it is true better than to be dead is to have a dramatic story better than not feel any aliveness is to have some drama, something interesting going on in your life and so you see often in relationships the partners feel if they are not going through their periodic drama they don't have a relationship anymore it feels the aliveness is going out of it but the story is a secondary kind of aliveness the drama that people get involved in yes it's a way of feeling some life in the absence of feeling something much deeper and more genuine you have to step out of the story temporarily to find that and a good starting place is going into the body not just for a minute but make it into a daily practice for a while and go deeply within and sense the enormous amount of vibrant life that is already there in the body bring attention to your sense perceptions and notice the enormous power of your conscious attention so it's a question of leaving your habitual world where you felt at home and entering something new and at first the new you may not recognize it happens also when people first encounter some stillness and it's such a strange place that they feel they want to run back to the mental noise and they say, well I encountered some stillness but it felt completely empty and I don't see why I should go there I compare these people to someone who just spent four hours in a noisy discotheque and then steps out and the heavy doors close behind and you're out in the countryside with only very subtle noises of the night going on and a breeze but at first you step out you hear nothing and it will feel dreadful, that silence because you're so used to that noise so you might even in fear run back into the discotheque at least that's familiar you have to stay for a while with the stillness because the power of that is more subtle it's more powerful but also much more, it has a different density to it than the density of the mind a different frequency so you become attuned to that frequency so you stay in the emptiness for a while and then realize the emptiness is also fullness now the desire to step out of your story only comes really when the story becomes too unpleasant to want to dwell in it so it may be that some people have to wait a little bit longer until their story turns into something that they don't want to be in anymore and eventually that will happen there is greater aliveness, true aliveness outside of the story what determines the intensity of a person's wish to be in the present moment what one could perceive as the wish to be in the present moment is the arising of presence in you in that sense, there is nothing you can do about it when the wish appears, presence is already arising it's not separate from it but can you make it arise? No so what determines whether or not presence is arising in you we could say grace evolution how much you've suffered maybe they're all the same in any case it is not something that you can want to happen and you wouldn't you wouldn't even want to be present if presence were not arising you wouldn't even ask the question how to be more present so it is it is arising the wish to be present is the arising of presence, it's ultimately not personal and yet from a personal perspective where language comes from and where we have to speak from a lot of the time we can say that you can help the arising of presence being receptive to it but it's all really something that the universe is doing through you when you think you are doing it and it's great to believe that I can choose to be present I can choose not to answer this phone and let it ring twice that's what it looks like but how is it possible for you to even do that if there were not enough presence you couldn't know what you want to do it you would say what is the point in waiting I mean it's ringing, answer it and maybe that's what your boss will say when he sees what you're answering ultimately it's not you because you are not separate from the totality of the universe it just seems that way but it's good to feel that you can choose ultimately the universe is choosing to be present through you nobody else can choose there's an interesting question maybe it's connected with this you've given us many portals to the stillness within but I find that in day to day life my mind is in 100% control and does not want to be free of itself how do we become aware when we don't want to when you don't want to you don't want to but there is something hidden in the question which to me signifies that something in you does want to otherwise you would neither be sitting here nor be asking that question you'd be watching TV somewhere I get discouraged when I think well Eckhart didn't awaken through the practice of presence he awakened through a sudden act of grace that completely erased his mind's habit of resisting the present moment and so did many other teachers I know of presence was the result of your awakening but it wasn't the method are you sure ordinary people are you sure ordinary people can dissolve their ego through the practice of presence when that's not how you did it I worry that I'm trying to break down the boulder of my ego with a pocket knife when what I really need is a stick of dynamite sometimes it happens with a pocket knife but this isn't a pocket knife this here is a sword now it may well be that even the sword is not enough and it may be that you need a stick of dynamite in the form of some disaster and if you need it you'll get it if you truly need it life will provide life provides what you need and then you will see the grace that is hidden there when it comes and another part of the question implied is it something we can do or is it something that just happens to us the doing and the happening are really one when you think you're doing it's also happening to you but it's good to feel that you're doing it that's meant to be part of the happening the mind can't figure that out because the mind says it's either this or that the mind likes to separate that's how the mind works it cuts it into two it's this or that, how can it be both but it is something else that this touches on a sudden liberation from being possessed by the mind or a gradual becoming free through perhaps some applied spiritual practice what is true that ultimately spiritual practice or technique let us say as such I don't know of anybody who has become liberated by a technique but they may have become liberated when they dropped the technique the technique may have had its place as a ladder that they then dropped or as a raft Buddha uses the analogy of a raft crossing the river you use it to cross the river when you've reached the other side you do not continue to carry it around with you, the raft it remains my raft not all teachers not to all of them did it come all at once many, yes for example many of you know the teachings of Nisargadatta who wrote one of the greatest spiritual books well he didn't write it he spoke it I am that and he was at a stall in Bombay selling handmade cigarettes one would have thought this is not very good karma, you're making other people ill and he smoked quite heavily apparently and he just visited a guru a teacher who said well, just remember that you are consciousness just be aware of the I am in whatever you do, feel yourself as consciousness oh, ok and then he went off back to his daily business and he applied can we call that a technique? it's too simple to be called a technique all he was he remembered is I am consciousness and he felt attempted to feel the I the deeper I that underlies all experiences awareness itself and a few years later it had emerged fully it didn't come all at once but it didn't take very long and then suddenly he started speaking wisdom a cigarette seller almost illiterate suddenly people would come and ask him questions and intensely alive and wise answers came out of his mouth something had come through the form and so the cigarette seller became Nisargadatta Maharaj in India they like giving people names Maharaj means the great king spiritually of course so this is one teacher to whom it came not suddenly although it didn't take very long after a few years it became a continuous living presence presence was continuous continuous in him now as it is becoming a more widespread phenomenon and this is happening many people experience at first as a lessening of suffering a considerable lessening of suffering in their lives they can breathe there is some space there may still be drama occasionally but there is space also to many people it is coming gradually and to others it is coming in an accelerated form in this culture these days it often happens through an illness AIDS cancer and I know quite a few to whom it came in that way and I could see and I told them you are on an accelerated course what otherwise probably would have taken much much longer is happening now through your illness that is forcing you into presence and others don't need an illness it's happening I cannot tell you whether you are better off with an illness or without it if you choose presence and this is only a limited perspective, it is not the ultimate truth then it is less likely that you will need to be hit over the head in order to crack the remaining shell if you die to the past every moment and return to just the freshness of this don't carry personal past, the past in relationships, the past that you have with people yesterday they said that meet a person as if for the first time, look at them be there as a presence not as a heavy personal past be the attention be the attention that is looking at them because that's what you are be the consciousness that flows through your eyes as you look at them and listen to them you are that and then you the beautiful expression in the Course in Miracles that is used for the present moment is the holy instant to realize the only place that is sacred in life is this moment if you only pay attention to it you notice the sacredness of whatever form it takes even if it looks horrible at first, because what looks horrible at first will be some kind of death some kind of breaking down and there also is sacredness we already pointed to that particularly there How can I get over or release the outrage I, among others feel about the political situation in the United States Bush and his policies which led to the invasion of Iraq the dismantlement of the US social services and civil liberties should I really let go release this outrage outrage I assume is a kind of anger there are many places where you can look in this world countries places institutions governments and you see varying degrees of human unconsciousness at work wherever you look you see the manifestation of human unconsciousness unconsciousness of course I am not saying they are totally they are identified with the mind and the old patterns of the mind the collective ego and wherever you look still you see because the change that is happening in humanity to a large extent is on the inner it only slowly reaches the outer levels where you can actually detect it it takes a while before it reaches an institution before it reaches a politician before it reaches somebody in a position of power but occasionally it already happens Russia had a relatively enlightened human being after having had succession of leaders who seemed you didn't even know whether they were alive or dead when you saw them when they were having their and there was actually speculation there was is whoever Brezhnev or whoever the names were is he still alive or did they just put a puppet there that went and some others speculated that it was an actor acting because they didn't dare say that he had died so they gave an actor the role to play and this may have been true we don't know and that's one form of unconsciousness and the entire structure of that regime was started from an ideal the mind saw something beautiful we must have equality no personal possessions but nothing had changed in the human mind the structures were still in place so we got that instead and then suddenly there was Gorbachev who compared to the previous leaders was a Buddha in consciousness yes I remember once a remark he made on television when he was still president they asked there was a little scandal about some western spies and eastern spies had been thrown out of the country some the usual thing and what about this scandal about the russian spies and the russian embassy and he said well as the wise man said this too will pass and it did however it is rare for this shift that is happening in human consciousness to reach the outer forms the institutions, the political the government the institutions whatever it may be the outer forms, business business is the way businesses are run companies in most cases they are dominated still by the old egoic consciousness and I have spoken to some people who are who work in corporations who say there is so much infighting and useless power struggles going on within the corporation, it is a miracle that anything gets done at all and everybody lives in fear and they are not happy so wherever you look in the world you will find still on the surface of things varying degrees of unconsciousness and only occasionally something else comes through already here and there, it does even on television sometimes you see it you see there is some conscious being speaking or a film that has a message pointing to conscious awareness or pointing to stillness it happens maybe it happens more now it is happening more it is always wonderful, I love it when I see a film that points to the truth and there are quite a few now not the majority yet, of course but there are so many things that you could feel angry about if you personalize human unconsciousness if you make it into an identity then you say these dreadful bastards, look what they are doing human unconsciousness Jesus saw it clearly when he said they know not what they do in other words they are unconscious and so a country sometimes also can vary a country can be pulled into unconsciousness to some extent by an unconscious leader, Germany is a best example of what happened there a country that compared to others on the planet was one of the most highly developed cultures scientifically literature, culture, philosophy music and all that to no avail they dropped right down into unconsciousness back but this wouldn't have happened if there had not been a strong enormous amount of collective pain body still in the country and an enormous amount of collective ego despite the so called cultural achievements so when you see it as unconsciousness you are less likely to feel angry about it because anger does not really fulfill a very useful purpose it doesn't really change things it contributes more you are being pulled into unconsciousness through anger, you become unconscious yourself, see it for what it is and then the next step is what can you do, you have to accept that this is so which does not mean there is nothing you can do once you have accepted that there is still a considerable amount of unconsciousness here on the planet wherever you see it wherever you feel it's mostly you feel called upon to do something in this or that area it could be the destruction of nature it could be the polluting of oceans and rivers it could be on the political scene American politics other politics, Middle East great focal point of unconsciousness just look at the situation there there is no stop no pause to the fighting between the two and they are both victims of the other and they are both totally convinced that they are victims of the other so when you see it then you can point out certain things write, speak to people have a website that says the truth about such and such, so and so and just state the facts as they are, this is how it is if you want to you can stand at a street corner and hold up something, a sign a few people may start talking to you they are more likely to listen if you are not angry but simply explain, look, this is how it is they are more likely to watch your website if it doesn't have this screaming anger about it you are not convincing anybody who has the opposite view to yours who says Bush is the greatest leader that has happened to America in a long time you are not going to convince them with your anger that you are right anger will their own position will become more entrenched and so if you are right then state the facts this is how it is explain you can see the futility of anger it's more likely to drop away and there is something more powerful then you can speak with passion without anger, but passion about what you feel is true be aware, very careful with identifying with mental positions though when you do that identifying with a position that's me or us against be very careful with making wrong others groups of people or individuals because it draws you back into unconsciousness don't personalize it in that way when doing projects of any sort, large or small I find I must keep my intent fiercely in mind or I end up doing something else by employing this fierce focus am I actually being counterproductive in the long run or in the big picture the focus when you have a project that needs to be done, finished now the questioner is saying keeping my intent fiercely in mind now the intent I assume is where you want to get to the finished project the point that you want to arrive at to get it done so my intent is getting to that point where the project is finished my intent is drawing up a plan a business plan the architect does the building draws up a huge high rise office building or whatever or maybe a project of any kind that you need to finish there's the intent and that's very much I compare to a journey when you're traveling from here to there, maybe you're walking let's say the rudimentary form the early form of journeying of being on a pilgrimage or journeying tourists didn't exist at that time it was unknown the people would journey because they had to leave their country or they went on some kind of army expedition or pilgrimage spiritual journey that was perhaps the most common journey that individuals would undertake pilgrimage you know where you need to go the question is what is it that takes up most of your attention the place that you need to get to or the step you're taking at this moment what's more important now in many cases these days what people are obsessed with is the outcome where they need to get to that causes the stress I need to get this done finished over with and I'm on a limited time scale here can't waste any minute it needs to get done so there's an excessive projection to the finished end product the point in the future that I need to get to and then the doing itself it is done in a hurried way there's the energy ok, come on, what's the next it doesn't matter what you're doing let's say you have to complete something that you manufacture with your hands but this thing has to be ready by tomorrow the world is mad these days it always tells you you have no time you have to do it by tomorrow and so you become excessively focused on tomorrow, I have to get this the finished product or you're thinking that I can sell this when it's finished I can sell it so it's done quickly with the end in mind the end takes over your mind occupies your mind more than the present moment and you reduce the present moment to a means to an end that's how a lot of doing happens these days and all that doing is of low quality any doing that reduces this moment to a means to an end, to a future moment is not high quality doing and you can observe that when you observe how a person works whether they are totally attentive give total attention to whatever they are doing at this moment which does not mean that they don't know where they are going to in their project that is peripherally in their field of attention the point they want to get to is peripherally in their field of attention like a traveler who is walking towards Rome let's say and they are taking this step and are fully conscious of each step they are taking but peripherally they know where they are going it's over there, it's a long way away a long way but they know it's over there so the focal point of there is the quality of your step at this moment, because if you are not careful you will stumble, you will never get to Rome the quality of each step is what matters and the getting is secondary it is on the periphery you have the goal in mind also but it does not occupy your mind it does not overpower you and so then the present moment is not a means to an end, you give your full attention to this moment, I have seen a few not many and some of them are highly so called effective and successful people who did not become successful through strain and stress some did and they are very unhappy and won't be around for long but I have observed a few who, whoever they meet whoever they talk to or whatever is presented to them they are totally there with it if you come to them and ask them a question they may be high up so to speak in social terms the CEO of this or that corporation and somebody comes to them and there are a few not many who will give you total attention no matter who you are and that is wonderful everybody loves doing what they tell them to do because they feel so valued because attention is the greatest gift you can give full attention you are acknowledging that human being beyond the roles that they play in the world so they are giving everything their fullest attention and they are extremely effective at what they do others look as if they were effective but everything they do is contaminated with extremely stressful raw energy that is really a form of suffering and they spread unhappiness so it is possible to work effectively in fact more effectively by focusing on what it is at hand here right now to do without losing in your peripheral vision the place you need to get to that remains

[Speaker 2] (6:08:51 - 6:08:52)

here, there

[Speaker 1] (6:08:52 - 6:21:45)

one step, Rome is there but this step is here and this step is more important whenever you see any work of quality that's been made by a human being it means some attention must have gone into it, some human attention somewhere there must have been someone who did not reduce the moment in which that was being made to a means to an end so you have works of art that have that quality handicraft things made by artisans in the original way, not under stress of having to produce because attention is also loving care another aspect of attention is whatever you give attention to there is a loving care that flows into the doing so if you give attention to a human being that comes into the now the field of now and this is so beautiful to give each human being that comes into your field of vision to you with this or that demand or question or whatever it may be give them full and complete attention that doesn't mean you get drawn into their story, you don't give attention necessarily to their mind stream and energize that you simply give attention, there is a spaciousness, there is the awareness, the current of awareness flows into the same way you look at a tree you hold and that is beautiful so see how things work in that new way and observe if you can find anybody who is present in doing something, observe them, it's wonderful to watch somebody at work in that way and it won't really be perceived as work by them, it's joyful this is one question that has appeared about 10 times in different forms how would you suggest imparting these teachings to children I assume that either you live with children or that you work with children or that you may have the desire perhaps to write a book for children whatever, if you live with children or work with children then of course primary in imparting the teachings to children is not through words but through living living the teaching specially applies if you have children at home if you live presence if you embody living presence then they will catch it from you and you don't need to say that much but there may be moments when they are receptive and perhaps a word or two may come out of your mouth pointing to presence because the children live in a culture that knows as yet nothing of presence it is most likely that they go to a school that is dominated by nervous mind energy unless you have chosen already a relatively conscious school for them, they do exist here and there but if not if they are still part of the mainstream culture then in a way you need to counteract that at home that otherwise they will be very nervous children because school is making them tense, stressed and nervous so most homes lack presence and when you go in there you see in many cases it's a mad house it's your job to bring in presence and again we come back now to what we just spoke of in the previous question giving your children your fullest attention is the greatest gift many parents these days never listen to their children because it's the next thing already that they need to do and they are busy anyway how was school? ok, ok and what do you have to do now? ok when in the listening it doesn't matter so much what the children are telling you what matters is the space that arises as you listen the spacious presence that arises as you listen to the child giving them space to be that's how the teachings are imparted by living it in that way perhaps also certain things if you have very young children where the mind is just starting up in them to see if you can keep them aware that words and concepts are never the reality are not everything particularly at a stage when they demand to be fed with words and concepts when they are at the age where they ask what's this? what's that for? what's that?

and a hundred times a day they ask what's that? because they are quickly the mind is absorbing it needs to do that it seems the mind is absorbing words it wants to know but the openness also disappears so when you teach new words or show them this is that, what's this? there's so much you can say about this leaf to a child instead of saying it's a leaf as you say it you put it in the child's hand you encourage the child to look so that the child does not stop looking the moment he or she has learned the word because that's what the mind does the true looking isn't happening anymore the word takes the place of the reality it becomes immediately a screen and so that to reduce that when you explain as much as you can you may not be able to do it all the time but when you explain something stay with the reality and perhaps instead of saying it's a leaf say we call it a leaf because it's not a leaf this is the illusion that when you attach a word to something you know what it is you have no idea what it is you've just attached a word to it and that's how people live they live in this make-believe world that they know all they have is a collection of labels and so that that doesn't happen to the child as you teach language and words and concepts see if you can keep the child in touch with the reality that is more alive deeper more mysterious than any concept and here you can teach so much you can teach the child can you see the colors can you see the shadings here isn't it beautiful can you feel that yes it's called a leaf but can you feel it can you see the colors and do you know what's happening to it no, why is it so beautiful what's happening to it it's dying it's dying soon it'll be gone and then the child may ask another dying, what's that well I'm not saying what words will come out of your mouth because you will be present at that moment but then through this little thing where before you said that's a leaf or you might even know what tree it is so you have attached another label to it so you can give labels the mind needs it but there's far more always remind the child point out that which is beyond the words and concepts and so that would be wonderful for a child to grow out grow up in that way so that the mind is not totally possessed by words and concepts so it remains, the seeing remains the hearing remains you hear a bird and then encourage the child to hear more to hear, can you hear encourage and children will be receptive to that of course there are many things in our culture that are there to stimulate the mind to draw them out of their body to teach a child to feel the body they are very ready to feel that make it into a little game can you feel the inner body can you feel the aliveness that's there and they can and they will love it and then if possible reduce the amount of gadgets they play with because they all work on the level of abstraction computer screens video game screens TV pulling them out of their body pulling their attention out into some hypnotic trance that gives them a secondary feeling of false aliveness the video game so much so that when they stop playing they don't feel alive anymore I need some other fix now this is what the culture is doing to the children I need another stimulus another fix, otherwise I will feel dead and then they look for the next thing and there's plenty of things switch something on put headphones on and then you teach the children about the pain body children have them too some more than others so when the child goes into a rage or a streaming fit or maybe the pain body will take a different form the child totally withdraws into a corner and doesn't want to talk anymore the slightest thing might provoke the pain body it's the same with adults and there's then far more pain than you could ever have imagined coming out of that little situation some children become screaming monsters for a few minutes

[Speaker 2] (6:21:49 - 6:21:49)

whoo

[Speaker 1] (6:21:52 - 6:40:45)

in the middle of it you can't say anything but when it's subsided you can say what was that? where did that come from? what did that feel like?

does it feel good? and so you can direct attention within when the pain body is not active and then say do you think it may happen again? so we will see if it happens again and we can catch it just as it starts the next time you can see the child starts is it back?

maybe it has a name the red big monster back? oh, can you feel it? at that point whether they say they can feel it or not depends to what extent the pain body has already taken possession of their mind if they scream at you when you ask can you feel it then it's too late to feel it or they throw something and then again afterwards you say what was that?

it was back, wasn't it? and then you say did you notice that mummy or daddy also has that? do you remember the other day when mummy screamed at you or mummy dropped something and started shouting and screaming at daddy threw him out of the house that was the same thing mummy didn't catch it then either and so how wonderful if a child can grow up in a conscious environment family surroundings that way not necessarily totally enlightened just conscious not necessarily a family with continuous and permanent peace throughout so that is imparting the teaching to children present moment direct their attention redirect their attention to present moment to looking to listening to touching away from how you reduce the amount they spend addicted to the screens and electronic things you have to somehow do it and replace it with something more vital, more alive and they can feel that it's more vital and more alive pain bodies have an enormous capacity to pull you in even the pain body of a child has that already when it starts screaming it wants a negative reaction from you that's what the pain body always wants give me more pain and so it requires considerable presence to hold the space and many parents just are completely flabbergasted when the children the angel turns into a monster what is going on here and then they react the more unconscious they are the stronger, the more violent their reaction will be their own pain body reacts they know not what they do there are several questions there is just one here and about 6 or 7 others on prayer the use of prayer how to use it whether to use it at all now that word can mean many different things it can mean going to church and saying, please God let me have that job I promise I'll be good if you only let me have that job I practiced that as a child please let there be some peace but the peace in my family didn't work so from somebody who went to church every Sunday then at 12 I must have decided that there was no point anymore but there are many different kinds of prayer there are petitionary prayers you would like something they may sometimes work but you never know whether it was a prayer you would have gotten it anyway there are more effective ways if you really feel that you need or want something but be careful it won't make you happy but that's another story if you really feel you want something you can use affirmation and visualization and when you get it enjoy it don't look for yourself in it don't look to it for deep inner fulfillment or some kind of permanently enhanced sense of self or permanent happiness nothing that you achieve can give you that knowing that you can play around with the world of form and Jesus already explained how to pray for something and that is when you pray for something feel as if you already had it as if it had already been given so you are not saying I want something because if you say I want something it affirms a lack it says on the other side the unexpressed side I don't have it so when you say I want it you are also stating that you don't have it so you are praying at the same time not to have it if you affirm and visualize that it is already here and you feel as if you had it that the feeling that you want to get from it you already have that feeling and that's the truth because you are imagining that it's going to give you feelings of peace or happiness which is always in you already if you just go inside deep enough but I don't want to discourage you from playing around in the world of form so why not try it out visualize that it is already yours you have it and you feel what you feel as you have it thank you for giving me that it's beautiful whatever it may be the house you are already in it, feels good thank you, it's nice to have that house thanks it's already there it's more likely to manifest in that way and then you move in and you go from there then you sit there you feel, oh great, I've got it and then the old mind patterns come up in the new house then there are other prayers that are used in different religions and they can be called pointers they are more advanced prayers they are pointers to a particular state it's not that uttering those words produces magically the state what matters when you utter certain words or prayers and most of them are short is really the stillness that comes after that Buddhism for example has the metta meditation which is a kind of prayer which starts with I believe may everybody on this planet be well and happy and then after you've uttered those words there's a stillness and then it says may everybody in this country be well and happy metta means loving kindness and then there's a stillness may every being in this city be well and happy stillness may everybody in this house be well and happy may I be well and happy and it takes you into a stillness and the being of well and happy is already there in the stillness it's there it spreads you could become still it would spread anyway even without the words because whatever state of consciousness you are in affects the totality and in turn is the totality manifesting through you we have the beautiful Christian prayer by Saint Francis I believe let me be an instrument of thy peace where there is hatred let me sow love and so on where there is injury pardon and so on and those prayers are openings they open a door and they always take you into stillness and they are beautiful most prayers operate still on the level of duality even when you say let me be an instrument of thy peace you are still using the language of duality there is me and thy presumably is God there is me and there is God so God is perceived still as something or someone separate from me nevertheless it's a beautiful prayer and if stillness follows the prayer in the stillness you have transcended duality there is some of you are familiar with the Course in Miracles many of those lessons are a kind of prayer and most of the lessons in it operate on the level of duality speaking of God as He and addressing God as something or someone outside of you Course in Miracles meets you where you are on the level of duality but as you reach the end of the Course without you noticing it the lessons become more non-dualistic and in the end you end up in stillness and it says the use for words is almost over now towards the end of the Course so it meets you where you are and takes you by the hand it only works if you can get hold if Christian terminology is appealing to you to some it is not and then there are many other ways don't use something that you don't like the form of which you don't like so most prayers are dualistic and then you can have although the metta prayer in Buddhism is may all beings be well and happy is fine there is no duality really there although you are still saying there are many beings ultimately there is only oneness but what can you do, you are using language and then there are short things that are almost like mantras just single words peace for example the word itself doesn't produce peace but it is a pointer stillness one of the most beautiful pointers to be found in the Old Testament be still and know that I am God and this is why if we can call that a prayer it is a kind of prayer it is a prayer where duality is transcended and it is a miraculous prayer the words of which it consists are all synonyms for one single thing be still know I am God be being one being in Sat in Sanskrit being and stillness are one it is the stillness of being itself before it comes into existence as something be still know in the stillness that is being there is a deep knowing non-conceptual a deep intelligence not words, not thoughts deeper than thought because it is the primordial seat of all intelligence be still know I am it is the innermost sense of beingness or I am God, the Divine the Source, the One and you put these words together each word signifies also the other they are all one be still, know I am God miraculous so those advanced prayers and powerful they put you in touch be still and know that I am God is one of the most powerful and beautiful pointers to the truth and one of those rare ones that uses language without taking you into duality please talk more about the pain body and how to transcend it we already spoke a little bit but there are so many questions about the pain body that we may in tomorrow's session talk a little bit more about it unless something else arises than that now last one perhaps because they are cutting off the satellite dish as someone who has done a lot of yoga and body work for many years I always felt there was some correlation between spirituality and good posture then I saw you

[Speaker 2] (6:40:45 - 6:41:12)

what a shock

[Speaker 1] (6:41:12 - 7:00:21)

what a shock you know my first thought was how can somebody with your posture be so blooming spiritually and wouldn't you be even more spiritual if you did some corrective body work my second thought was that I am a blooming idiot can you tell us how you experience the body and if it ever feels like an impediment to you that reminds me of I talked to Gangaji the spiritual teacher a couple of years ago and she was telling me she was doing some kind of body work years ago in I can't remember what kind but at that time she heard of Ramana Maharshi and became interested in the teachings and read a book and then she saw a picture, a photo of him and she saw that and said a man who has such bad posture can possibly have nothing to teach me he will certainly have nothing to teach me if he walks like that and it took her several years to transcend that belief and then she saw that it didn't matter anymore sometimes if the body has gone through a lot of suffering, either physical suffering or psychological suffering it leaves traces in the body in the very bones of the body it leaves traces in some cases it's in the face I knew one spiritual teacher I won't say who who said look at my face I always look unhappy even when I'm happy I look unhappy and that is because I was unhappy for so many years he didn't really, he only looked unhappy if you saw the external features of his face, if you looked more deeply you could see he wasn't unhappy but you could see the lines in his face that showed, that were the traces left behind by unhappiness but something else was now shining through it through that the form that had been affected by the suffering and that's the same here people are surprised when I tell them it's very rare that I ever feel any pain in the body only two years ago I was at Omega I had a back pain I don't know what that was to do with maybe the events in New York I don't know but usually there's there's no pain the body feels fine and it's not it doesn't seem to be a problem at all and something else shines through it so the body has fulfilled its function of being an opening for that now I'm not saying that in many other cases body work is a wonderful thing to free emotions that may be stuck there even the pain body it's beautiful it's not ultimately it could happen to anyone at any moment it could happen to somebody who is totally crippled and that has happened too there was a famous enlightened poet a teacher who hundreds of years ago who wrote the Indian scripture called the Ashtavakra Gita and he said to have been a cripple and it didn't matter anymore that was his suffering traces left behind by the suffering and then the body simply became something through which presence shines I'll put these back in the basket I'm sorry your question hasn't come up yet there are many thank you thank you stay a little while both here and if you are still there Austin, Hollyhock stay a little while with the empty chair or the empty screen thank you we've had the alarm clock for the first awakening and now comes the real awakening for some people at Hollyhock good morning that may also be the alarm clock because it's 7 o'clock in the morning there Austin I don't know it's 8 or 9 o'clock there maybe half awake here everybody is fully awake in one sense and perhaps also in another sense of the word as you may have noticed laughter was an important and is an important part of our gathering it's very liberating particularly to laugh at the human condition and to laugh at one's own mind patterns because it implies that you've taken one step back retreat and have seen your own patterns or your own drama that's produced by the mind patterns and when you recognize drama as drama it becomes also funny awakening so is not a serious business laughter if you make it serious then you've gone astray somewhere and the mind is trying to do something awakening a synonym for that of course is enlightenment another beautiful word which in the English language as it so happens implies two things, there's light in there, enlightenment it implies light the light of consciousness, the clarity the awakened consciousness the clear seeing and it implies lightness in the sense of lack of heaviness gravity weight which includes seriousness because the mind made me the egoic self takes itself very seriously it also takes itself very seriously in its attempt to become enlightened so humor right humor not egoic humor, egoic humor also exists, it might be to laugh at somebody else and think, oh I'm much by comparison I am much more intelligent than this silly person laughter frees you up inside and I hadn't realized until I read some of the questions to you yesterday that every question also seemed to have a funny side, I didn't realize it until everybody started laughing I'm not waiting for the next sentence to come and I hope you are not either if we were waiting I would be under stress and you would be impatient and perhaps you now realize how enjoyable it is when I'm not speaking we will look at a few more questions including some questions on the pain body this is by someone who is sleepless at night my wife snores my now at night is miserable I have tried electronic gadgets and earplugs to no avail how does one respond and not react signed awake but only at night

[Speaker 2] (7:00:35 - 7:00:36)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (7:00:56 - 7:00:58)

P.S.

[Speaker 2] (7:00:59 - 7:01:00)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (7:01:07 - 7:01:22)

I have tried your cold soup analogy sweetheart, would you please stop snoring laughter it doesn't work laughter

[Speaker 2] (7:01:34 - 7:01:35)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (7:01:45 - 7:03:54)

no, of course the cold soup method is not going to work here because snoring is an involuntary process it just happens I hope at home you have separate bedrooms laughter but here well any situation that you cannot change and there are situations of that kind or situations that you cannot change at this time perhaps change will be possible at some point but right now, at this moment there is nothing one can do whether you are in prison or metaphorically speaking in prison or have some other condition some life situation now if there is truly nothing you can do or there may be something you can do but there are certain important reasons why perhaps you cannot take action right now if that is truly so if you cannot change the situation there are only two options left you remove yourself or you surrender oh yes, I forgot the third one you suffer

[Speaker 2] (7:03:58 - 7:03:59)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (7:04:11 - 7:50:34)

and that's always the case it's your choice which of the three you choose yes surrender in this case is surrender to the fact that you get woken up several times during the night and then perhaps feel sleepy during the day but just surrender to yes, there you are awake again and then you might use this opportunity and just go into the body what else can you do or shake her and then it starts again or you rent a tent and move into a tent laughter the thing that doesn't work and that which generates suffering is complaining mentally about the situation about a situation that you can do nothing about right now complaining mentally or complaining also to others, anybody who is prepared to listen to you you can complain about the situation and if you observe closely, you see that something in you likes that something in you feels strengthened by the complaining and that's the false sense of self whenever you complain, it strengthens the false me because you are right the complainer is always right when is tolerance enabling and or masochism you may remember we talked about yes to what is is not always a yes it depends on the verbal, external level it's an inner attitude an inner state that you bring to the situation and out of that inner state of openness and alert attention which goes with the yes to what is alert attention which is intelligence out of that, the right response always comes for that situation and the right response for that situation is not necessarily the word yes or yes go ahead yes hit me over the head is not necessarily what comes out of your mouth out of that it's quite possible that the word no comes out of your mouth, no that's not right that's not it I'm not going there so it's be careful not to mistake that state of because the yes to what is is a state of consciousness it's not the literal sometimes it is but it's not always a literal yes that you agree with whatever somebody is doing somebody maybe at this moment committing an act of violence and it is within your field of possibility to do something about it and then you will see the situation and you will act perhaps to stop what's happening nobody can predict what you will do out of presence but it will be right so there is great strength in the yes to what is very great strength whenever you have said what you had to say in any situation step back into stillness otherwise the mind will take over and it will become a non-ending stream of words you have all witnessed that in other people and perhaps in yourself people can go on and on about the same thing they are dragged along by a mind stream ok enough enough ok and then they are quiet for 20 seconds just one more thing and while they are quiet for 20 seconds you can feel the energy built up in them and that dissolves only through again bringing alert attention from where you can observe the mind rather than be it your speaking then becomes more powerful any words that you say become more powerful because they always come directly out of the stillness strange thing is you may have noticed almost all the questions the answer to all the questions always takes you back to the same point the same origin it's always the same answer in a way different aspects and basically all the questions are the same question and once you've gone very deep into the answer which is in yourself that's the end of the questions there's another question on this sheet of paper how can you witness and feel your feelings at the same time one could say you cannot really feel your feelings until you witness your feelings because until you witness you observe bring awareness to your feelings you are your feelings so you don't feel them you are them you act them out and most importantly your feelings and your thought processes are linked feelings energize thought processes that reflect those particular feelings and the thought processes the story adds further energy to the feelings and this is how certain feelings survive in the body long after an event has passed which feelings that in a an animal would just pass through in humans gets associated with a story that you can keep telling yourself and others so you can keep the feelings alive in a vicious circle so you're not really feeling your feelings, you are so immersed in them that you are the feelings so it's called identification and so when you bring awareness there is a place from where you can truly feel the feelings and as you do that the story is taken out because awareness replaces thinking there's a shift then from being identified with a story in the head the thought processes to being the aware presence so you are no longer fueling the feelings with stories in the head and now you can watch and feel them directly whatever it may be feel it as an energy field in the body but also be aware of yourself as that which looks, sees, feels the field of attention in the same way that you look externally at a tree, you are aware of sense perceptions flowers, trees, you listen bring awareness to sense perceptions that is an enormous help in bringing awareness to your feelings the more awareness you bring to sense perceptions the easier it is to bring awareness to what you feel inside because it's simply a shift from externally directed awareness ultimately nothing is external because the entire universe takes place inside you but let's just put it like that externally directed awareness and inner directed awareness so you are present within and present without the enormous importance of being present without also as far as your inner life is concerned because it's one awareness if one could ask a similar question how can I witness eating an apple see what the question was and feel this how you are eating the apple at the same time it's only when you truly are present as you eat the apple that you can truly feel and taste the apple before it's a process that is semi-conscious or even totally conscious eating is a goes back to a very long time ingesting substances and you can observe certain humans engaged in intelligent conversation at a dinner table and the moment they put something in their mouth they go completely unconscious they are totally and they are not really tasting the food they are just gobbling it down and then when they have swallowed they wake up for a moment again and then they talk about literature or philosophy but to really eat an apple consciously is a wonderful thing then you bring something that is usually unconscious you make it conscious maybe that's called tantra if you do it with sexuality but it could be any activity that would usually be very unconscious, that is an animal impulse in humans and you bring consciousness to it, witness it observe it it then has a different quality it becomes beautiful and then you can truly taste the apple and be present but there is always more than that which you witness there is the witnessing presence who is that, what is that that's you some people call it the I am one person an early 20th century spiritual teacher Gurdjieff some of you know spoke of self remembering and really what he meant was to remember who it is that is doing this or experiencing this or perceiving this, not the story based entity not saying, ok, I am John Smith and I am eating an apple no that's not it no, John Smith is eating an apple at this moment no, to sense that which knows that which is aware that in you that is aware that there is eating at this moment so there is awareness of something and at the same time self awareness of the deepest sense of I and so that is in any whether you are eating an apple watching a tree engaged in some kind of action or activity or watching an inner feeling there is always the manifested and the, one could say the unmanifested we call it sometimes the background and the foreground and the foreground is what happens and the background is the field the I am the deepest I am in which whatever happens is happening now it can happen that the background that what we call here the background or the ground which we could call being, the ground of being it can happen that that ground is so intensely felt realized that what is occurring, one could almost say is a shift and this is how a deeply awakened being experiences the world and that shift is what as you are just awakening what is foreground becomes the background and that which you perceived as the background as you were awakening becomes so it's realized in its vastness that that becomes the foreground in other words your sense of beingness the spacious field of presence is so vast and all fulfilling that whatever is happening is just a little, sometimes I call it a ripple on the surface of the ocean is the event and you feel your own being or being so strongly that that occupies the entire foreground and any event is a background a little background event and so that is from that place certain Indian teachers say the world is unreal it's absurd if we take that as a philosophical proposition and then start believing in it, it doesn't make sense you can claim a hundred times that the world is unreal but the next moment something happens and you react so where is the unreality of the world?

but if the world upsets you so much it was only an idea in the head but they talk from that place where to them whatever happens is like a dream-like structure they can see how quickly it appears how quickly it disappears any event, anything it's fleeting, of course it is right now you're here in another now on the same date totally different surroundings this has dissolved already what hasn't dissolved is that which is aware so some Indian teachers then from that place where the vastness of the sense of I am or being is present, the stillness could say is so vast the I alive stillness that is becomes the foreground and any events become the background but for many of you as this is beginning to emerge it could be better described as you sense it already coming in in the background and that's wonderful it's more than most human beings on this planet now or in the past ever experienced it's a wonderful thing and it's from that place of the background having become the foreground that Jesus could say I have overcome the world and it's from that place perhaps also that Krishnamurti once in a talk he was already quite old said to his audience do you want to know my secret? and they'd been coming for 30 years waiting for the secret laughter and they all said yes please ok here it is I don't mind what happens laughter I believe this question here has just been answered you speak of using the senses to outer presence what about going deeper and going beyond the senses laughter if everyone around you is complaining and building their story, what do you do?

say is that so all day? laughter comment on their complaining or spend less time with the unconscious people some days you would practice all day the last statement is partially true and not just some days you will practice all day laughter well is that so is not necessary to say the story is the momentum of the egoic mind it will try to draw you in, in some way to make you part of the story the story very often in people is energized even more by their pain body and the story can be quite a violent story laughter so there is a story but it is energized by enormous emotion which is past emotion to a large extent not necessarily generated by this little event that was the triggering event but the emotion is far deeper it is human pain that has lived in each human being for millennia and has built up it is inherited human pain but that what we call pain body this energy field this residue of past emotion of past emotional suffering that lives in humans tends to use the mind to renew itself to feed on your thinking and that becomes the story that is energized by human pain at other times it may just be the mind pattern without the energizing effect of the pain body but even that has a strong pulling power your greatest weapon, so to speak is stillness stillness as you listen to the story and you will notice that is not a weapon that you can fight actively with because the moment you fight the story in someone you have become part of it even if you say you are in a story you are telling the moment you start talking that will become a story, your story will be that they have a story and they will insist no, this is the reality and they will tell you no, you are in complete denial of reality no, I am not in denial of reality so the most vital thing is simply to be there as a still presence and is that easy? yes and no it is easier if you are connected with the inner body as the stories happen around you as you are listening so you are rooted here deep within and that keeps you still keeps your mind still and from there you there is attention that flows out and in that attention you are aware not only we come back to the same again you are aware not only of that which is arising in this moment which is the story that you are listening to you are also aware of the field of attention and as you are aware of the field of attention it becomes easier to connect with something in that other human being that lies underneath the story so you can sometimes to some extent bypass the story and connect with that human being at a deeper level where there lies their own stillness it's not what is stillness but just put it like that where lies their own field of stillness so you can miraculously sometimes connect from the stillness within you to their stillness and then on top you have floating the story and sometimes that can actually dissolve the story in the other person or at least shorten it because otherwise it goes on and on and on some people have stories that they live with for years and years and just things get added to it new episodes in my story latest episode in my story it is not surprising that people love watching soap operas because they all have their own one going too and then they feel better you see these people on TV they have theirs too so it must all be very real but at least when you are watching it on TV you can feel, oh at least that's not my problem it does require a high degree of alertness not to be drawn into somebody's story not to become part of it now they may already have made you part of it in a way they have already decided that you have your assigned place in their story and there's nothing you can do about that but not make it the story continue in your mind and then link into theirs almost anything you say in a situation like that is too much there are questions about the pain body again please say something about the pain body especially in reference to rage and anger how does one witness this intense energy when it does need to be energetically moved through the body and somebody else or the same person probably it's all the same anyway there's only one could you talk about what you do exercise or idea when a pain body comes on so very quickly and with such intensity I'm left feeling overpowered by it and I wonder if you have an idea to pop me into the moment in a flash my pain body manifests as anger anger is the quickest pain body there is no exercise or technique that can help you here because any exercise or technique requires time and that's what you don't have here ok well I didn't have time to practice my technique I'm angry already if you're very alert you may catch the arising of anger which could happen in one second that's coming up if you're very alert you may catch it there you may not be able to stop it catch it means simply stay aware watch it and then already it's gone into your mind and then perhaps before you know it words have already come out of your mouth but you may still be there although the energy may still be so strong that you can't stop it don't even try to stop it if you try to stop the pain body it's the same as trying to stop flowing water or stop a kettle from boiling and so this question rightly asks how to witness this intense energy when it does need to be energetically moved through the body when you don't witness it when it goes into your mind and uses your thinking then it doesn't really move through the body because it just stays there it gets lodged can stay for a long time when you witness it it moves through more quickly at least that particular wave movement of the pain body if you cannot catch it as it arises at what point you become conscious of what is happening to you depends on the degree of intensity of your presence and that will be interesting to observe as a little experiment at what point if a pain body takes you over and it could be anger or it could be something else do you actually realize what's happening and are able to feel and watch the energy movement and even be aware of your thought processes that cooperate with the energy of the pain body that bring up justifications and reasons why you are so deeply unhappy about this particular situation and if you look more closely you can see that this particular situation is actually a very little thing and your unhappiness or the pain that you feel about it is far greater it's so great that there's really no correlation between a relatively insignificant, tiny event and the amount of pain you feel and for other people whose pain body does not get triggered by that particular type of trigger that same event would be absolutely nothing I've had sometimes people call me but because there are so many calls and messages I now tend to not reply otherwise I would be replying all day long to phone calls it's just the limitations of the human form but I do listen to it in a field of stillness and peace and some people they don't get a reply, they try again and sometimes I do reply but it could take a long time and some people are fine some people say, ok, I've left two messages and I know you must get so many calls and if you do have a moment I'll be happy, but if you can't answer, that's fine too and to others, who perhaps have a pain body that has a particular orientation towards being that gets triggered by not being acknowledged, perhaps as children they were not acknowledged or ignored that particular pain body gets triggered by that particular trigger they leave two or three messages and then the fourth message it's I am totally and utterly disgusted with you laughter and the amount of pain is enormous have I caused this pain I could feel guilty about this but I know that I did not cause it, there was this trigger that caused it and so to one person it is fine, a relatively insignificant thing and to another person it is a source of extreme pain the apparent source of extreme pain it is not, it's only the trigger of extreme pain, because the pain was already there, just waiting for the trigger and this is another aspect of pain body the pain body even the dormant pain body in humans dormant means when it's not it is a time when it is not actually actively using your mind it's just in the background somewhere you might not even know it's there but people with relatively heavy pain bodies, even their dormant pain bodies, they are like dormant cats now if you have observed dormant cats, sleeping cats they are amazing because a sleeping cat is not totally asleep, never a sleeping cat always knows what's going on and it can tell familiar things that are not threatening, from the slightest noise that is unfamiliar or that could be a mouse and so a cat is there, and you can wash the dishes and slam doors and then there is the tiniest rustling sound or something and so pain bodies there are many pain bodies when they are dormant they are like a dormant cat all kinds of things can happen around them, it doesn't trigger them sometimes could even a big thing they are waiting for something that triggers them, an event or a trigger, that pain body responds to, but they are actually waiting for it to happen the pain body is actually scanning your surroundings or other people's remarks in a conversation or reactions just to and the moment somebody says something are you accusing me of no, I just asked if you had put the garbage out are you accusing me of being lazy are you saying to me I'm a liar the cat is awake the cat is awake yes, they are cunning little creatures so certain pain bodies in certain cases are associated in a person's mind with a particular story it happens that sometimes pain body predominantly is associated with one particular kind of story in the head and it could be something like this is what people always do to me and whoever you meet the pain body will be looking out for that kind of thing and it may not be that at all, it will be happy to misinterpret something in order to transform it into a trigger so that it can awaken so how do you

[Speaker 2] (7:50:35 - 7:50:36)

this

[Speaker 1] (7:50:37 - 8:27:30)

cunning creature, how do you defeat it because it's maybe it's even more like a fox is often used as a symbol for cunning and in a fox it's quite beautiful and even in a human the pain body is an expression of yes, an expression of unconsciousness, an expression of energy that is somehow not flowing freely temporary formation a temporary energy field formation of energy that has become somehow trapped in the body and yet that also is life energy it consists of it is energetic but how do you free that so there's no point in fighting it you would be fighting life but freeing it, that would be good so that this energy can flow freely again but freeing it of course implies that it will no longer persist the energy will no longer persist in this particular form of pain body the aliveness yes it will start flowing again and become transformed and then it can sometimes happen you may have experienced an attack of anger and if you totally accept what you feel which implies being there as the observing presence and allowing it to be there and that anger can no longer use your mind then because instead of thinking you're the witnessing presence you're aware, you're watching the thinker which is the story of why I'm angry which is not why you're angry at all, because you're angry because of the pain that you've been carried in there for thousands of years but the story says I'm angry because of this, or you it's that and if you, then a shift happens from being the thinking entity you are the witnessing presence and the witnessing presence allows that energy to be there and you can feel it fully now and if you allow anger and you sever the link through alert attention you sever the link between the anger and your thought processes that explain why you are angry and justify it and blame and accuse all that being part of the story and thus by doing that feed the pain body again and again you can become so alert that you're simply there watching the energy and then you will know there's a pain body and you this is the suchness of this moment it is as it is, this moment and as such you allow it to be there the allowing means you feel it fully and that means you're bringing an aware, a space to it, you are there as the space in which the anger happens then it is possible that what was intense anger in a flash becomes transformed into intense energy and intense aliveness. I've met people who have told me that this is what they experienced one moment was intense they allowed it and watched it and suddenly it became freed and all they could feel was a sudden burst all over the body of intense energy it wasn't anger anymore, one could say it was bottled, it was bottled up inside a plastic we use modern analogies plastic wrap and suddenly it bursts and the anger, the energy is freed and is suddenly experienced that intense aliveness and they start running suddenly or moving, don't know what to do with it, it's so much energy and some people have reported they were able to do it with they could even then channel it into creativity it is better to see that it flows freely so it's not anger but it becomes transformed into intense energy before you channel it into creativity otherwise you create an angry work of art which when people watch it will perhaps trigger the same feeling in them and you may be very successful can be very powerful too but there's even greater power in something else and that could have originated in anger became transformed now if that happens once it does not mean that the entire energy field of your pain body has now become dissipated, it could but probably not, it is one particular wave movement that came and that's it's very hard to describe in visual terms because one cannot actually see the pain body unless you are very psychic some psychics may be able to see energy fields in the body but you can certainly feel it even if you are not psychic in yourself and you can also feel it even if you are not very psychic in another person you can actually feel it even if the other person says to you I'm perfectly fine and if you should meet anybody in the street whose pain body is also just underneath the surface often this is how people meet and get into an argument very quickly or get attacked by somebody I didn't do anything he just came up to me and started shouting I was just walking along or he just came up and started accusing me of this or that I don't know pain bodies recognize each other so if you are if your pain body is active at any time and you go out into the world or even if it's just underneath the surface the likelihood of meeting other pain bodies is much greater interacting with others because they are looking for others because they strengthen itself not only through using your mind but also mutually through other people's reactions so there are people in this world, many they look quite normal on the outside but what they are really looking for is more pain they are walking pain bodies where can I and then they they choose the right one that's most likely to give them what they want they are looking for trouble so when that is very strong you can actually without being a psychic see the pain body through people's eyes the raw emotion of it and the frightening thing is many of them are driving cars there are no statistics yet as to how many accidents are caused by driving pain bodies probably 80% so because the pain body is so cunning you need great alertness you need we used this analogy before you need the sword of presence to be able to be present as it arises in yourself or somebody else so you can watch it in yourself most importantly the most beautiful thing in a relationship is if you can say to your partner I can feel my pain body right now when you said that that got triggered that means you are conscious you may not yet be free of pain body but you are conscious with it and that's beautiful so you could use relationships where the pain body gets triggered so frequently in that way yes it does require enough presence in you to see that this is what's happening and then there is no blaming or accusing it's just saying you did that and when you did that I felt and I still feel this anger or I feel the fear fear deep sadness big paper only one short question which is very nice how does one not resist resistance well that sounds almost paradoxical all that it means is that you notice that at this moment you are resisting what is noticing it means bringing awareness to the resistance awareness implies you are allowing what is to be even the resistance because you notice it maybe even as a physical contraction in the body as an emotional field and perhaps as thoughts going through your head you are aware of these right suddenly oh I am resisting this moment so you feel it and so at this moment this is what is the mind may want to come in and say you have failed you see you can't do it it's no use anyway you might as well give up become normal again and resist like everybody else so when you witness it that implies you accept that it's there so in that sense one could say you are bringing acceptance into non-acceptance so you could say I am angry, upset this is awful okay and you notice what you feel there is the upset that's what is I am so unhappy about this thing here that's right here I am so unhappy about it which is thought movement accompanied by an emotion really unhappy and a little story because even to say I am unhappy is the beginning of a little story I am so really unhappy about this okay and so suddenly you are you take one step back and then you watch the mind saying this is dreadful, I am unhappy about this I really feel unhappy with this okay that's what is you feel unhappy and the acceptance in this case if it were put into words would be so what so you are unhappy or in other words I don't mind being unhappy that's what is I am unhappy so let me be unhappy you may be surprised to find that when you don't mind being unhappy unhappiness cannot last very much longer I am not talking about indulging in some kind of story or I am so unhappy because that means you are believing in some kind of story and you do mind because the entire story is based on the fact that you do mind very much but if you said I don't mind being unhappy that's just what is you are bringing you don't mind into a story that is based on I do mind so in that sense you are bringing acceptance into non-acceptance and the amazing thing is if you don't mind being unhappy you can't be unhappy for that much longer it's the end of the story because if you don't mind what can you do the story collapses I live alone and experience I live alone and experience an intense loneliness that is extremely painful almost intolerable well the primary thing is to look at this on an inner level the secondary is to look at what one can do on an outer level but on the inner the primary surrender to this moment as it is means letting go of any concept you have about this moment any interpretation you have about this moment in the head and that includes the concept of me being alone in the head of me being lonely of me not having anybody in my life and simply be there not as a person but as consciousness as an intense conscious presence so the pain of loneliness is similar to other kinds of pain or events that are painful it can actually force you, allow it if you allow it force you into presence because being with yourself becomes intolerable living with this lonely me becomes intolerable as part of my unhappiness and depression I also experienced frequently painful loneliness and I have a vague vague memory of what that feels like yes there can be great pain so allow it to force you into utter and complete presence so that the concept of me as being lonely the conceptual identity in the head I'm a lonely person I have no one they all have somebody, other people they all have someone, says the lonely me I don't have anyone so that that is no longer what gives you your sense of self allow it to dissolve the person this is what pain can do when it's used rightly when it's allowed it dissolves the personal sense of self and all that remains is presence at just this moment sense perceptions energy field in the body and the field of awareness just this and you look around do things walk watch and then out of that you may find that on an external level some action may come that you had not thought of before that hadn't because you were trapped in a kind of conceptual prison it's always the same so you may find yourself stepping out if that is possible we don't know you may find yourself helping other lonely people talking to other lonely people pointing out to them certain things the world is full of them they're everywhere there have never been more lonely people than now loneliness perhaps is a relatively recent phenomenon even for humanity in the past one's identity was very tribal and if you were expelled from the tribe you would die being expelled from the tribe in most cases meant death not just physical psychologically you would die and then later on when they were not tribes anymore but social groups those lonely outsiders very often were those through whom breakthroughs came into this world because they were forced to go deeper those who didn't fit in for one reason or another those who felt so lonely that they were forced deeper into the vertical dimension within rather than seeking some kind of solution on the horizontal dimension in more relationships or whatever so there's great possibility in loneliness let's look at the Buddha and that's just one example you can take the many artists, writers people through whom new insights came into this world they became outsiders misfits in a way the Buddha was totally lived totally surrounded by his family society supported him and then through not through force of circumstance but through his own decision he made himself into an outsider he left and I'm sure part of his path was also loneliness and through acceptance one could say loneliness becomes transformed into solitude solitude means being alone and it's quite beautiful being alone loneliness means you're alone and you don't like it when you can be at ease with being alone which can only come through surrender and alert presence then it is quite possible that change happens in your life and then the words of Jesus come true again that which you thought you needed for your happiness will be added unto you including perhaps the relationships when you don't need them anymore helping others can be a wonderful thing and that may come but you can't really help others when you're there as an unhappy lonely person trying to combat your loneliness by helping other lonely people maybe a little bit of relief because you can make conversation but you're still trapped in that conceptual prison one more question it's so wonderful that all questions and all answers are the same my lover has ADD attention deficit disorder and his mind continually jumps from one thing to the next with no spaces this happens even while he is sleeping which can be disturbing do you think it is detrimental to my evolution to be so intimately involved with a mind like this yes I have been meditating and working for over 25 years to slow down my mind that is the irony of life it says here to be so intimately involved with a mind like this and that this is I'm certain that you're not really having your true relationship is not with your lover's mind but with your lover with the being that is underneath the mind that's why the love is there that you feel I don't believe that you love his or her mind the mind is there on top of the being as a turbulence a continuous turbulence what you love is what's underneath there and it's your love that keeps you there the love of what is underneath the turbulence that's why you haven't left yet so when two humans are together one human has already has already touched the stillness or lives in it part of the time or most of the time the other still most of the time perhaps is identified with mind has no space inner space hasn't found it yet of course has plenty of inner space as much as anybody else but hasn't found it or is intimately identified with the pain body it's the love that keeps you there and for a while it is good to be there and it may well be that you will draw your lover into space also through your love which is acceptance and which is the ability to look through what looks like him or her but is only the mind or is only the mind plus the pain body and then after a while it may happen that space arises in him or her also if it does not happen it could happen that you get you begin to lose your spaciousness in the relationship you can either go that way you get drawn back into unconsciousness or the other gets drawn into consciousness if no change happens at some point you would separate but the fact that there is love means there is a good opportunity that you will meet in the peace and in the space that is there in him or her also underneath all that in a way you have already met there so stick around for a while and the right what is right will emerge out of presence not through some decision making it will come out of the presence that you are no form persists for very long the form that this moment takes is beautiful and of course like all forms it is about to dissolve next week all you will have of this or even tomorrow or tonight what's left of this gathering on the level of form will be stored as a memory trace in your mind and as images probably digital these days on your camera and then you can look at that you can revive the memory in your mind, oh that was nice or who knows, you might say oh I am so glad to be back home in my own bed or that was nice I wish I was still there or you look already on the computer screen you look at the pictures you took and it's become a memory which of course you can only remember it now it's always now and suddenly remember that it's always now and suddenly remember that the essence of this gathering was that the fact that it's always now and that hasn't changed at all the now hasn't left you at all the essence of this gathering has never left you can't leave you so you don't need to make it into some kind of memory it's unimportant the essence of it stays as yourself because this whole gathering was about yourself we said that at the beginning you had to travel here to be with yourself that is the irony at the moment of humanity but that's how it works and so it is timeless there's no need to think back oh it was so peaceful there where did you feel that peace how do you know it was peaceful I felt it inside and where is that now oh it's gone I can't feel it anymore well of course you can't feel it with here because you're talking from here now can't feel it are you in the body no I can't go into the body now I've got too much on my mind and then perhaps suddenly you remember not to believe every thought that arises in your mind and after your mind has said I can't go into the body there's too much going on and then you suddenly go into the body

[Speaker 2] (8:27:30 - 8:27:31)

oh

[Speaker 1] (8:27:37 - 8:33:21)

alertness returns suddenly you're aware of your surroundings again and suddenly the phone rings and then you remember the gaps and the spaces and you don't jump to answer it and as you let it ring you smile will you answer the phone or not I don't know in the stillness speaks book it says that every ending is a little death whenever a situation comes to an end because the form of that situation dissolves and rather than resisting that allow the form to dissolve because the form is never it and the form is not who you are who you are is always hiding underneath the form or deep inside as the formless essence of this form and when that dissolves it's beautiful because the essence shines through even more so as this gathering dissolves the essence of this gathering if you allow the ending to be there shines through even more some people find that when their spiritual teacher dies, although I don't know when this body is going to go when their spiritual teacher dies, it's a beautiful thing because suddenly there's only where there was the form, there's only an emptiness and that emptiness is more powerful a more powerful opening even than the form and the great teachers leave behind an enormous space in the fabric of existence when they pass away they leave behind a black hole I saw that very clearly within a space of two weeks or so I was in India in Tiruvannamalai the ashram of Ramana Maharshi where I watched the pilgrims every evening circumambulate I think that's the word it means going around the samadhi the place, the burial place or whatever of Ramana Maharshi where they built a stone sculpture as if he were still sitting there unfortunately but they get drawn and they were all going around it, it's quite a large space hundreds of people walking around and around and around two weeks later we were in Assisi where Saint Francis lived and there in the basement of the church there's his tomb also they built a similar structure and there was a continuous stream of people walking around and around and around and I saw the similarity and I saw the image of their walking around the black hole that was left behind and opening into the formless they were phenomena that opened up the fabric of phenomenal physical, sense-perceived existence to make room for the divine to shine through the formless one life one consciousness but ultimately it's everybody's destiny to be that opening and so we use the expression that you are becoming transparent to that and the best way to becoming transparent to that is through surrender resistance creates more density in the form surrender makes you transparent, so the power of the universe moves through you, you become less as a person less of a person and more who you truly are and it's better to leave that nameless thank you also people in Austin for being here with us in Hollyhock, here blessings on your journey into yourself, the journey without distance into the now

[Speaker 2] (8:33:26 - 8:33:27)

thank you

2004 Eckhart Tolle - Enjoying Every Moment FULL Movie edited and compiled by LeeHamster [w9o-l3t FBw]

[Speaker 3] (0:08 - 0:10)

And you're able to enjoy every moment.

[Speaker 1] (0:11 - 0:17)

Yes, I accept what is. And that's why life has become so simple.

[Speaker 3] (0:18 - 0:37)

He is Eckhart Tolle, originally from Germany, and he's sold 10 million books. Tolle granted us a rare interview to talk about how people can achieve this sort of spiritual awakening or inner calm that he claims to have achieved. How did you get this way?

How did you awaken?

[Speaker 1] (0:38 - 0:54)

I was so unhappy that I couldn't stand it anymore. I was several times close to suicide, and imagine living your whole life like that, where always this moment is never quite right, not good enough, because you need to get to the next one. That is continuous stress.

[Speaker 3] (1:01 - 1:08)

Tolle says he can teach people to tame that voice in their head and live in the present through what he calls awakening.

[Speaker 1] (1:08 - 2:59)

It's a state of consciousness, not some weird belief system that we need to adopt. It's much more fundamental and much more simple. I'm not asking you to believe anything, but I'm inviting you to have an open mind and be open to the possibility that there may be a deeper level to who you are.

There is another way in which you can live that does not create suffering. Suffering is a wonderful teacher, and suffering deepens you. It gradually erodes the ego.

First of all, I'd like to suggest that you make sure that you're still breathing, because in the moment of checking whether you're breathing, you're not thinking. Between now and now, where are you thinking? Can't stop thinking.

It's like can't stop drinking, can't stop smoking, can't stop eating, can't stop thinking. Thinking is the greater addiction than any of these. A lot of the overactivity of the mind is an attempt to get away from the is-ness, the simplicity of the present moment.

Continuously, when I observe people, how easily they lose themselves continuously in whatever arises. And primarily, they lose themselves in their mind, in their thinking. I have to think about that.

I have to deal with that. I have to make that phone call. So in the absence of presence, there's only repetitive mental noise that is hoping at some point in the future it will no longer be problematic.

[Speaker 3] (3:00 - 3:04)

Don't you ever get annoyed, irritated, sad, anything negative?

[Speaker 1] (3:05 - 3:07)

No, I accept what is.

[Speaker 3] (3:07 - 3:12)

And you're able to enjoy every moment, even if I start asking you a ton of annoying questions.

[Speaker 1] (3:12 - 7:18)

Yes, that would be fine. So it's really... Don't tempt me.

And that is the place of stillness, where you get out of the mental noise. And that is the source place of creativity. And if you touch that in yourself, you no longer contribute to the conflict in this world because the conflict is only created by all those humans who don't know that level in themselves, who they are.

So that's what the world needs, to be saved. But don't say, OK, I need to save the world. No.

Peace is your priority, not saving the world. That comes, that follows from that. Welcome.

It's good to feel that nobody's waiting for anything to happen, since everybody here is an advanced practitioner of presence. In Zen Buddhism, they have satori. Satori is a sudden flash, a sudden realization.

Not always lasting, but it's there, sometimes accompanied by shouting or laughter.

[Speaker 5] (7:40 - 7:44)

So would you kindly enlighten us as to what your journey was?

[Speaker 1] (7:45 - 11:10)

Well, it kind of goes back to my early 20s. I'll just briefly tell you a psychological transformation that I went through at that time, virtually an overnight transformation. I'd just been awarded a scholarship, a research scholarship for Cambridge University, so I'd been doing quite well on an external level.

Everybody considered that my life was successful, but inside I was suffering from very deep depressions and continuous states of anxiety, and I had been suffering from that for years. So I was actually miserably unhappy, while everybody else around me thought that I was a very successful person. So there was one night when I reached a kind of depth of depression, and a thought kept reoccurring in my mind that I can't live with myself any longer.

The pain of this dreadful unhappiness is too much. I can't take it anymore. I can't live with myself any longer.

And that sentence became a trigger for a transformation. I cannot live with myself any longer, and suddenly I thought, what does this mean? Who is the I, and who is the self that I cannot live with?

There was a kind of separation that occurred at that moment. I separated myself, my sense of identity separated from the unhappy, depressed, and anxious person, and suddenly there was me here, observing that unhappy self. So there was a disidentification, and I thought, how is that possible?

I can now observe the unhappiness as if it were in me, but not essentially me. I describe that in a little bit more detail in the book. When I woke up the next morning, I was in a state of very deep peace, and that lasted for several months, and it never really left me, but that deeply blissful state lasted for several months, and I didn't know what had happened to me.

How is it possible that from one day being a very anxious person, I could suddenly become transformed into a deeply peaceful person? It was only years later that I understood what actually had happened to me at that time. What was it?

It's a realization that the suffering me is ultimately a fiction of the mind. I had created a mental fiction that I believed in and identified with. You could call it the ego, and through the pressure of suffering, I separated from that fiction, and when I separated from that fiction, it collapsed as if a plug had been pulled out of an inflatable toy because it ultimately wasn't real.

I realized then that the suffering self wasn't ultimately real. It was a fiction, and in a way that's also the basis of the book. When I later started to work with people, very often people came to me who were in some kind of suffering, some form of pain, and what I'm trying to convey and teach is that it is possible to live free of suffering, to go beyond suffering.

[Speaker 6] (11:16 - 11:23)

You were there on a park bench for two years, and you slept on the park bench?

[Speaker 1] (11:25 - 11:32)

Rarely, but I did spend most of the days on park benches in parks, different parks in London.

[Speaker 6] (11:35 - 11:36)

Did you eat three meals a day?

[Speaker 1] (11:37 - 14:11)

No, no. One meal a day if I was lucky. As you sit here, is it possible for you to simply watch what's happening around you without adding any interpretation to it, to just be present with what is, and you get a taste of what it's like to be on a park bench with nothing further needing to be added to this moment?

The sounds, sights, people, the sound of the water, the light, just allow it to be as it is. With that comes peace. You don't get continuously drawn into events and thoughts and emotions and reactions.

You're the wider space in which all these things happen. You're the awareness behind it without which none of this would be here. It would just be atoms and molecules in space.

You are the awareness that enables this entire world to be. And so knowing that that is who you truly are, not through a concept, but through the actual realization of stepping back and allowing the phenomenal world to be as it is at this moment, allowing this moment to be as it is, that takes you deeper into yourself. And you may notice there's a certain peace in the background that happens.

An alertness is required for this. You need to stay alert to what is, to sense perceptions and the energy behind sense perceptions, which is the consciousness. The alertness is there.

Without the alertness you will drift off into thinking. And then you think about the next, what's going to happen to me tomorrow. There is a place for making plans, but not right here on the park bench.

This isn't the place for thinking about tomorrow because you miss all this beauty and aliveness around you.

[Speaker 7] (14:14 - 14:18)

And then you're cold. You don't even think about it as a cold.

[Speaker 1] (14:18 - 15:48)

No, it just is the sensation of it. You don't even need to call it cold. And then that's okay too.

It's okay. There's no, the reactivity goes out of life against, always against something, of wanting to clutch at something. What about the search for meaning?

Now, you notice that just a moment ago you were in that state of alert presence. And it never takes long for another thought to come in and ask a question. Because thought cannot tolerate the state of presence.

So it will always come in and say, yeah, but what about, I don't quite understand yet. Can you tell me, what does it all mean? So it wants to add something.

It wants to control in some way by understanding what this all means. Now, if you can let go just for a moment, not for the rest of your life, just for this moment, let go of the need to understand anything so that you're truly present in this moment. So you don't need to do it for the next hour or the next ten minutes, just right now.

Just what is. But don't forget yourself because you are the consciousness behind it. You are the space.

[Speaker 6] (15:51 - 15:52)

The presence.

[Speaker 1] (16:12 - 20:17)

Can you feel that your body is alive? Yeah. So stay with that feeling and then perceive It's easier to perceive without interpretation when you can feel that your body is alive.

You feel the inner aliveness throughout your body. So some attention, some of your attention is there. The rest is on the outside world.

That roots you in the present moment. It anchors you in the present moment. And if a thought comes into your mind, you can watch that also, just the same way as you watch a dog walking past.

You can watch a thought arising in your mind and you don't have to follow it to where it wants to go. So you simply watch the thought that arises in your mind and let it go in the same way that the dog walks past you. Or if you choose to, you can follow the thought and then you can say, I just thought of another question.

You can do that too. But you see the possibility that also, in the same way that you observe the outer world, here as you sit on the bench, you can also observe the inner world, the world of thoughts and emotions. Thoughts want to arise continuously and that's fine, that's what they do.

But there's no need to get drawn into each thought that arises and immediately go with it to where it wants to go. Otherwise you're always following every thought, like a dog following the scent. Does it matter which...? No, it doesn't matter. You can experiment. You can experiment with thoughts, you can follow some thoughts and you can watch other thoughts. You find out for yourself.

You can play. You can see that you are bigger than your thoughts. You don't have to be dominated by your thoughts because thoughts create lots of problems too, unnecessary problems, and they can obscure the aliveness of life at this moment.

There are many people walking around here who are thinking about other things. They're thinking about the next one, they're thinking about tomorrow. But this is not the place for that.

There is a place for planning and thinking about tomorrow, but why spoil the beauty of this and the aliveness of this? We're thinking about the next moment. Is that going to be better than this one?

This is it. It's not going to get that much better. What could be more beautiful than this?

It's the awakening of something within you that is deeper than thought. That's really the main thing. And that's already there.

You just didn't know it. Why didn't I know this? It's a deep-seated habit of being totally identified with thinking.

It's the human condition, which could be described as lost in thought. Because up to now, evolution has been unconscious. It was automatic.

But now evolution is consciously chosen by a species, and that's a revolutionary thing. And you are part of that.

[Speaker 6] (20:26 - 20:29)

So I can still make movies, I can still have a girlfriend, even if I'm conscious.

[Speaker 1] (20:29 - 20:44)

Yes, it's beautiful. It's a playground. You play around with the world.

You take action. You relate. But you're not lost in it.

Most humans are lost in it.

[Speaker 6] (20:48 - 20:53)

What about pain? I mean, physical pain or emotional pain of losing someone?

[Speaker 1] (20:54 - 25:22)

Most of the human pain is psychologically created. There's an enormous amount of psychological pain. Suffering, I call that.

When suffering goes and there's a possibility for humans now to live without suffering, that is a possibility, there may still be some physical pain. It may be that you get toothaches or bodily pains from time to time. Suffering is another level that lies on top of the pain.

Suffering implies a story, a little me that is unhappy, a mentally constructed entity, a little me that has an unhappy story that is its identity. And that creates an enormous amount of suffering. Not only do you make yourself suffer, you make people around you suffer.

To be at one with life is to be at one with the present moment because that's the only place where life can be found. You cannot leave the space of now that stays with you whatever you do and wherever you go. Your life has never been not now and will never be not now.

Are you making the present moment into an enemy in some way, internally, through thinking about something that has nothing to do with now? I need to figure something out. Well, first of all, be here fully.

And then whatever is needed in your life comes. It comes out of the power that dwells in the present moment that most people overlook. There's an enormous power here, which is the power of life itself.

And most people look for something and ignore this. And the power of life itself is inseparable from who you are in the depth of your being. Many times you will forget, but the moment you realize that you forgot, there's the possibility of saying, Ah, yes, I lost the present moment.

And there's the possibility of choosing to re-enter the present moment. The first thing that happens when you re-enter the present moment, you become more aware of sense perceptions. There's a greater aliveness.

And then you become more aware of the aliveness in your body. You feel the life within. It's like the entire vibrational frequency of your body shifts when you become present.

It's a different state of consciousness. Ah, more alert, more alive. And many times you will lose it.

And then you'll remember, Ah, that's good enough. Now, they don't believe the mind when it tells you, Oh, you can't do it now, you've put too much on your mind. You can't be bothered with the present moment.

Those are just thoughts. There's no need for you to follow those thoughts. Just watch them.

They're thoughts that the mind throws up. You don't need to believe in them because they're not true. When the mind tells you, You can't be present now because you've got too much on your mind, then, OK, you can say, OK, let's see if that's true.

Then you feel, There's an aliveness in my hand. There's an aliveness in my body. There's beauty all around.

And you become present again. The alertness returns. And when there is time to think, then you think.

Then you sit down and say, OK, let's think. What plane am I going to catch tomorrow? What time do I have to go to the airport?

What do I have to do now? Pick up the phone, make a phone call? Fine.

That's beautiful. You're not losing yourself in future. That's practical matters.

And once you've done the practical matters, you've thought about, you've planned your next week, then you come back to the now. The inner transformation is not really about finding lots of answers to your questions, but finding a new relationship to thought, where not every thought seduces you anymore. And if a beautiful girl runs past and you find yourself following her, you don't have to think, oh, I shouldn't be watching this girl because I'm spiritual now.

[Speaker 7] (25:23 - 25:23)

No.

[Speaker 1] (25:25 - 25:48)

If you can let go, just for a moment, not for the rest of your life, just for this moment, let go of the need to understand anything so that you're truly present in this moment. It's just right now. Just what is.

But don't forget yourself, because you are the consciousness behind it. You are the space.

[Speaker 6] (25:51 - 25:52)

The presence.

[Speaker 1] (26:33 - 38:25)

Life wants to support you, but first you need to be open to life. I can just suggest to you three or four entry points into that state of consciousness, and after I've done that, we can carry on the conversation. A very simple entry point, and this is why my first book is called The Power of Now, is the realization that your entire life consists of the present moment and only the present moment ever.

Now, most people, perhaps they don't realize in some abstract way they know that, but they cannot sense or feel the truth of that, and I'd like to invite you to actually sense and feel the truth of what I'm saying, which even if there's a great philosopher here, he cannot possibly argue, he or she cannot argue with this statement that whatever you experience ever is present moment. Your entire life unfolds in the present moment. That's all you ever have.

Most people don't live as if this were true. They live as if the opposite almost were true, as if the future moment were more important always than the next one. And that happens because of excessive identification with thinking, because usually thoughts about the next thing, and the next, and the next, or what could happen or might happen.

So, if you can just come to this realization, well, this is all, all I ever have and ever experience is this moment. This is undoubtedly true. There is nothing else ever.

And at that moment, when you fully realize that, you can only realize that an alertness arises in you. Wow. You become alert to, one could almost call it, the presence of the power of this moment, of the power of life itself in this present moment, which consists of, yes, it consists of sense perceptions, but it also consists of, well, let's look, what is this present moment?

This present moment is this room, what we perceive here, what we visually, what we see here, the lights, the totality of the room. So, let's become alert so that we can really perceive that. And beyond that which we perceive in this room, is there anything else about, that we could call the present moment?

Well, if you look deeply enough, yes, there is also the inner energy field in your body that you can actually feel, that you are alive, in your legs, your arms, your feet, that's also part of the present moment. To sense the energy field that pervades the physical body, that's also something you can feel. So there's external sense perceptions, and there's the feeling, the aliveness inside your body.

And if you're totally in thinking, you can't feel that at all, you don't feel alive, you're only alive in the upper story of the house, your head. The entire house you don't inhabit then. So you inhabit, you begin to inhabit the entire body.

This becomes part of your experience of the present moment. So, sense perceptions, yes. And there is an aliveness even to artificial light.

Of course, you might say I prefer sunlight, okay, me too, but there's a beauty and aliveness even to artificial light. And there's a beauty and aliveness that is usually overlooked, that's in the texture of this arm, this chair here, or whatever you're wearing, and certainly the flowers. And suddenly you become aware of that, and that's not all yet, we're just going into the present moment.

So you have that, externals, and you suddenly appreciate the aliveness of all the things that surround you. Other people have to take acid to get there. So you don't need that.

You know with acid people, sometimes they look at a teapot and they say, wow. Oh my God. But you don't need to do that, just be present, and then you appreciate the beauty even of a mass-produced teapot.

If it's handmade and hand-painted, even nicer, but even a mass-produced teapot has a presence there. It's there, and it's an alive energy field. Every physicist will tell you it's not a dead teapot, it's molecules and atoms in continuous movement.

Everything is vitally alive, and you miss that if you're totally trapped in the mental noise all the time, taking in information. So present moment, sense perceptions, so the inner energy field of the body, and then what else is there to the present moment? Then you have to go, become really alert, and the next thing that you notice about the present moment is really at the deeper level of the present moment.

It's not something that arises in your consciousness, as does the table and this room, and even the inner energy field of the body. These are all things, objects that arise in your consciousness. But if you go deeper even into the present moment, what you encounter is the most incredible secret of human life, which is you encounter the fact that at the bottom of it all, you are conscious.

There is the presence that you are, without which you couldn't perceive anything. You couldn't perceive this room, and you couldn't feel the body, without that consciousness that you essentially are, which Jesus, by the way, called the light of the world. He said to his disciples, you are the light of the world.

And these disciples were not special people, they were fishermen, so certainly he wasn't telling them that they are VIPs. They were the opposite of VIPs, and yet he said, you are the light of the world. He also said it about himself, but he also said it about others.

And so you suddenly discover that essentially, at the most essential level, the essence of who you are is consciousness. But consciousness isn't something you can say, ah, there it is. Because consciousness cannot become an object to itself, it's the eternal subject.

The I am that I am of the Old Testament, where when God is asked for his or her name, God says, I am that I am. That is the essential identity of all beings. So when we talk about the present moment, we talk about different levels of the present moment, from sense perceptions to the feeling of aliveness in the inner body, to the realization that ultimately, what we call the present moment and the light of consciousness are one and the same.

Because that's the thing that always remains. And that consciousness, you can sense it as yourself, right now, the presence that you are, even beyond the physical presence. And that is the alertness, that is the realization that is sometimes called awakening.

And that is the place of, also of stillness, where you get out of the mental noise. And that is the source place of creativity. That is intelligence that is non-conceptual.

It's primordial intelligence. And if you touch that in yourself, then at first as glimpses, as brief realizations, and then gradually integrated into your daily life, then you can live from that place, the source, and be not only a more productive human being, but also a more peaceful human being, because then you no longer contribute to the conflict in this world, because the conflict is only created by all those humans who don't know that level in themselves.

They don't know who they are. And again, to call Jesus again on the cross, he said, forgive them, they know not what they do, and why do they know not what they do? They don't know who they are, essentially.

So this, I've talked about this, and in the hope that as I'm speaking, there is an experience in you of really the depths of the present moment. Because the present moment, people think its present moment is what happens. And of course, because what happens changes all the time, people say there are many present moments.

If you look more deeply, of course there are not many present moments. There's only ever this present moment. There's only this ever.

So there are not many present moments. There's only the space of this moment. So there's what happens in it, and there is the space in which it happens, and that space is consciousness.

And that is who you are. And when you realize that, you become free of the false sense of self, which your mind tells you something about who you are, which has to do with your history, and your successes, or your failures, or what other people tell you who you are, a little prison. So that's really basically the essence of spirituality, which is very simple, but for some reason, it's not taught at school.

All kinds of inessential things are taught at school. But what really matters, the very foundation of human life, and it's not some belief structure. I'm not saying indoctrinate children.

The children must believe. It's not belief at all. It's an experience.

It's a realization. That's what needs to be taught. That needs to be subject number one at school.

Who am I? And everything else is easy once you have that.

[Speaker 4] (38:30 - 38:32)

Well, I'm not sure I have any more questions.

[Speaker 2] (38:41 - 40:30)

There was a great analogy made, getting to what you were earlier talking about, which is you can't let yourself out of prison unless you actually know you're in prison. And I think that's really the key. So if your environment, it completely surrounds you, and you're always there, you don't even have a recognition that you're not there.

It's interesting because, for myself, and Eckhart and I were talking earlier about, and he was just talking about this event where he woke up, but if you think about what happens to a number of people who have engaged either in chronic negative thought, often manifested by negative behavior, they get so down, and this is like an attic, right? They finally get to the very bottom, and it's either they're going to die, or there has to be this transformation, or there has to be this transformation. And this is when you see these sudden, I think, breaks that can give you insight, or unfortunately sometimes can lead to death, but I think we talk about these techniques to learn these things, to how to separate, if you will, that ego or that negative talk, and one is certainly mindfulness, but really one of the things that's really interesting is how is it that the brain is able to do this in this one instant, and this is one of the things that I think, looking at the neuroscience of this, we're trying to learn, because you have spent, I know, and continue to spend many hours in introspection, and we have monks who spent 10,000, 20,000, 30,000 hours, but I don't think many of us have the ability to spend 10,000 or 20,000 or 30,000 hours trying to get there.

[Speaker 1] (40:38 - 51:21)

This is illustrated in the story of a wise man who won an expensive car in a lottery. His family and friends were very happy for him and came to celebrate. Isn't it great, they said.

You're so lucky. The man smiled and said, maybe. For a few weeks he enjoyed driving the car.

Then one day a drunken driver crashed into his new car at an intersection and he ended up in hospital with multiple injuries. His family and friends came to see him and said, that was really unfortunate. Again the man smiled and said, maybe.

While he was still in hospital, one night there was a landslide and his house fell into the sea. Again his friends came the next day and said, weren't you lucky to have been here in hospital. Again he said, maybe.

The wise man's maybe signifies a refusal to judge anything that happens. Instead of judging what is, he accepts it and so enters into conscious alignment with the higher order. He knows that often it is impossible for the mind to understand what place or purpose a seemingly random event has in the tapestry of the whole.

Why is love not reciprocated? Why does one way love traffic situation arise? I'm placing my aching heart before you.

Please operate. Thank you. Thank you.

All right, I will begin the operation. Now, one form loves and the other form doesn't reciprocate. Why is that?

And the pain that comes with that, great pain for many people, it's enormous pain. Now, you know that the basic condition of the self or the egoic self is one of a very deep-seated sense of lack, of not enough, of not complete. And then it tries to fill through strategies.

The mind-made self tries to fill that lack that it knows and feels almost continuously except for brief moments when something has been put in there, and then for a moment the lack is not felt. It never lasts long. So it looks for the next thing and it looks to the future.

It looks to add to me, to fill that hole that is always there, where I'm not myself, I'm not complete, I'm not home, I haven't arrived. And so all kinds of strategies are there. And one of the main areas where it looks to fulfill that lack is in the area of relationship, the other person, he or she.

And then when that happens, the entire focus of the self becomes focused on one other person who is perceived unconsciously as the one who is going to complete me, make me whole. He or she is the one. And so almost an obsessive attachment forms to that image, that form of that person.

And that is called falling in love. And sometimes if you're lucky, the other person feels the same about you. That you are going to complete him or her also.

And of course that is great. You both feel that you are going to complete each other. And then probably you will want to get married, sign a contract, just to make sure that for the rest of your life you're going to complete me and you're not going to leave me.

Because that would have dire consequences if you broke that contract and left me. Don't you even think about that. And then you marry.

This is where the films end. The director says cut here. But life goes on.

And you marry and after perhaps even during the honeymoon the first doubt comes into your mind whether this actually works. Whether the other is going to live up to that enormous task of fulfilling and completing you. And then you start an ordinary existence.

Jobs, family. And gradually it doesn't seem to be working anymore. The completion, the sense of lack comes back.

He or she isn't behaving in the way that he or she should to make me feel complete, make me happy. You read it in ads. I don't know if you read it in India.

Looking for man or woman to make me happy. Oh. Wow.

Who could live up to that? And nobody can. And then the luck that was covered up by the temporary delusion that this person was fulfilling you, this person who has a pain body.

But you didn't know that. The temporary delusion that this person should be fulfilling you, that suddenly the sense of incompleteness, aloneness, fear not being just re-emerges. But now through your mind you attach that to the other person and say, he or she is the cause for what I feel.

You're feeling again the basic egoic condition. You're feeling it more strongly now because for a little while it was covered up by the love relationship. And so gradually the love then periodically turns into hate.

And every time the person is not fulfilling his obligations or her, the love turns into aggression, hostility. Withdrawal. Complete withdrawal.

What's wrong with you? Nothing is wrong. Just don't want to talk.

Whatever. Or throwing something. Whatever they do.

And then the relationship fluctuates. For a while it works again. And then it doesn't work.

It works again. It doesn't work. And then it becomes, the periods when it doesn't work become longer.

And you feel it feels bad. The happiness of marriage turns into the unhappiness of just co-existence. The happiness of the honeymoon becomes the divorce.

And they're all one really. So it was an attempt to fulfill you through some form, some outer form. And then all that happens in the end, you sense the unfulfillment more strongly and then you blame that form for causing you that pain.

It's egoic pain. This is the pain that arises out of love-hate relationships. Now, the questioner of course is not at that stage because it is one-way traffic as he puts it.

That great love is felt for this form but it's not reciprocated. What do you do then? Then you feel that lack even more strongly.

And it's painful. And there's a tendency for the mind to weave all kinds of fantasies around it, all kinds of stories. And the self gets in there and becomes a very painful self-image of me.

And it can then, if it goes on, it can happen that that attraction turns into hate. It can happen. I'm not saying it will happen in your case.

And then you see it never was love in the first place. So what is called love is the deep-seated need of the ego. It focuses on one form.

[Speaker 4] (51:31 - 52:02)

I understand how you can be in the moment and that when it's a calm, peaceful moment, it's much easier to enter into a state of stillness. For somebody who's in a state of severe or prolonged psychic or physical pain, what is the process by which they learn to find some kind of stillness within that when it's so all-consuming what they desire is for it to pass more than anything else? Yes.

[Speaker 1] (52:02 - 1:17:42)

Thank you. Sometimes people just haven't heard of the possibility of acceptance of what is. The largest part of the population of our planet is not even aware that such a possibility exists, that you can accept a situation that usually would be called unacceptable.

And so a person really, either it happens spontaneously, there is a letting go of inner resistance because you cannot stand the pain anymore. And very often the large part of the pain is the resistance to whatever is the case. A large part of the pain is the psychological pain that says, this is dreadful.

The last few years of my mother, for example, she was, occasionally I was able to bring her into stillness, but very quickly she was drawn out again by her mind. And 90% of her suffering, which was intense the last two or three years of her life, 90% of her suffering was psychological. Yes, her body was no longer working normally.

She found it increasingly difficult to walk. Then she had to walk with the help of this device, a walker, and then her eyesight was beginning to fail. So those, but she did not have physical pain, but she had physical discomfort and it became increasingly difficult to move from here to there by herself.

That in itself would have been yes, not pleasant, perhaps it would have been uncomfortable, the eyesight failing, yes you can't see very clearly anymore, but that you can live with. What you cannot live with is the enormous amount of psychological suffering that then she generated unconsciously for herself, which said, what if I go blind completely? And she spent hours and hours in terror at this thought of going blind completely.

What if I won't even be able to walk anymore? And so she spent many more hours thinking, what if I'm going to spend my last few years in bed, and I can't go to the bathroom by myself anymore, what if that happens to me, because that seems to be the way I'm going. Enormous amount of suffering.

And again, I tried again and again to say, if this is not what is now, it's just this, what you're experiencing now is just this. For brief moments she got it, and she was free of the what if extrapolation of what if this continues. A further area of suffering was since she had always been identified with her external appearance, what are people going to think of me?

Now they see me walking with this walker. She must be dreadful for somebody to whom other people's opinion had always been very important. So there was an enormous amount of psychological suffering there also.

So she every day was consumed in intense psychological suffering. So very often, a large part of the suffering is psychic, psychological, emotional suffering, generated unconsciously by the mind, and then there is the actual physical suffering at times that is there in the form of pain, or in the form of extreme discomfort, or in the form of weakness. The message is there is a way of going beyond unnecessary suffering, which really is to say, of going beyond all suffering, because suffering is, the way we use the term here, suffering is the superstructure on top of what is the mind-created baggage.

There is a way of being free of that. But not everybody is ready to hear this. Those who hear this message, which is in essence a spiritual message, but not everybody is yet open to this spiritual message.

There are some people who don't even need the spiritual message, to whom the realization of letting go comes spontaneously. That happened to me. So it came because the suffering, the psychological suffering became so intense there had to be a letting go, otherwise I would have had to kill myself.

There had to be a letting go and some, the intelligence, the greater intelligence within, on some level must have realized that what it did that night, it realized that I was doing it unconsciously. I can't live with myself, and who is the self that I can't live with? It's the unhappy superstructure that has been created.

So to some people it happens by itself. You sometimes see people in poor countries, people who certainly wouldn't have never attended a workshop, who would never have bought a spiritual book, and perhaps never come into contact with any spiritual teaching, perhaps beyond the traditional religion of their country, which in most cases is just a formal thing. And yet, sometimes you see people, and they may even occasionally be a beggar you see, who has gone through no suffering anymore.

You can see a light shining through their eyes. The body may be unwell, but they have gone into that inner acceptance of the is-ness of this moment. And then something else has come through.

Not everybody is ready. Whoever is ready for it, it will happen for them. Whether it comes spontaneously or with the help of some so-called spiritual teaching doesn't really matter.

If you are ready for it, either it will happen to you spontaneously or it will happen to you with the help of a spiritual teaching, and you will suddenly hear it, and suddenly see the possibility of what the Buddha called the end of suffering. The whole teaching of the Buddha has that purpose to bring about the end of suffering. But neither at that time nor now is everybody ready to hear that.

So there are millions of people still on the planet who have never heard anything of the end of suffering. And if they heard it, they still wouldn't hear it. It still wouldn't sink in.

So sometimes people pick up a spiritual book, whatever it may be, Power of Now or any other spiritual book, somebody has sent it to them, says, you really need this book. Sometimes people tell me they send it to a friend, they send it to a relative, an uncle, their aging parent, or the other way, the aging parent sends it to their young daughter. You must read this book.

You need it. And so the recipient gets the book, opens it, says, what does that mean? It means nothing.

At best they put it on the shelf and it gathers dust or they may even get angry. They get angry. Some people whose ego is so strongly entrenched, who don't want to let go of the suffering that's associated with ego, they get angry when they see this.

In the office, Eckhart Techings, one day apparently, I don't, I didn't see it, but a new earth arrived in a package and somebody had put it through a shredder and returned it to the office. So this person was not ready. You cannot force it on people and you cannot, like, if the apple isn't ripe, then there isn't, it just won't happen.

So there needs to be some degree of readiness and then either it happens spontaneously or it happens with the help of a teaching and then it happens. So all the spiritual teaching does is that it saves time, which is not real, but it's on this level. You have to see levels beautifully expressed in the Course in Miracles where it says delay does not matter in eternity, but it is tragic in time.

Different levels. So it just, it saves time in suffering, that's what spiritual teaching does, because in the absence of a spiritual teaching, you still have your suffering. That's the teaching and the teacher.

Everybody has that. That's the main teaching and the main teacher. Even if you never come into contact with any spiritual teaching, then your spiritual teacher is your suffering.

And then eventually it'll wake you up. Eventually. It could take time.

Of course the awakening itself does not take time. You can only wake up now. One more quote from the Course in Miracles.

I haven't quoted that in a long time. It has taken time to misguide you so completely, but it takes no time at all to be who you are. Instead of going through life and reacting to the content that arises in your life continuously, new things, thoughts, emotions, external events, people, places, the scenery around you changes continuously.

That's all content. Instead of reacting to content, the content is allowed to be. And then you're aware of, instead of just being aware of, identified with what arises in the now, you become aware of the now itself, beyond the phenomena that arise in it.

That is the miracle of transformation of consciousness. What does that mean? You become aware of the now itself.

You become aware of an undercurrent of stillness in which everything happens. You sense it. Not only that, even that's not quite correct.

You realize that you are it. And then it's so easy, once you realize you are that deep undercurrent of stillness, the world is no longer problematic. That moment you know yourself to be that, whatever content there is in your life, including the story in your head of me, is no longer problematic.

It's simply the story of me. But you don't get your identity from it anymore. What's left are simply your photo albums, either physical photo albums or the photo albums in the head.

Those things that happened to me, okay. Or video, video thing, these days people record things on video film, so you may have a collection there of two years ago, five years ago, ten years ago. That was me with my first wife, that's me with my second wife, and there's the third wife.

You're not saying no, that is all illusion. Of course there's your first, second and third wife or husband. But it's, you're no longer, it's simply, okay, you're no longer in a reactive relationship to those events that took place in the past and are now remembered now, in the field of now.

Where else can they be remembered? They're remembered in the field of now. You're no longer in a personalized and reactive relationship.

You're not seeking yourself in your reaction to your three ex-wives or ex-husbands. Just one example. So those stories go, then you know what he did to me or she did to me, and I'll never forget what he did and said, and so on.

It simply is things that happened in the past. Not me. There's no identity in it.

You don't need it anymore for an identity. And the future is fine too. Of course you need future for many things.

Nobody denies that. But you don't look for yourself anymore in it. You can't find yourself there, so it's no longer problematic.

It's no longer threatening the future. Nor is it all that promising. It just is.

And you deal with it. You make arrangements for next week to do this or that. Next year, going this or there.

Make appointments for the future. Work out something that you're going to do. Without seeking an identity through it.

Simple, effortless doing. Not straining. Effort means really you're seeking yourself in something.

Everything when you're seeking yourself in it is effort. And it's strain. And it's stress.

Then, after that, life is so simple. And why is it so simple? I'm not saying no challenges will ever come anymore.

Of course they come. Challenges are wonderful. But they are simple because they're only now.

There's nothing that big that can come into the field of now. And the power is there to deal with it now when you allow whatever arises to arise. And if it needs a response, if it needs dealing with, there's vast power that immediately flows through you and you take action.

A few people have experienced that in emergency situations who suddenly did just the right thing and people say, how could you have been so courageous to have done that? There was no thought involved. There was a greater power that took over.

So, and then those people say, well, I don't know. I just did it. I don't know how it happened.

They don't think they did anything great because there was no me involved in it. Your whole life can be like that simply by continuously by dwelling with your attention in the field of now, the field itself. Then let it happen.

Let the world happen. It's great. Let the forms come and go as they will.

No form stays for that long. Every form that comes, comes and goes. Let it come.

You enjoy the play of form around you. The fear of loss is no longer there because why is there the fear of loss? Because there's an identification with some content and there's the fear that if I lose that, I lose part of who I am.

That's the fear of loss, whether it's fear of material loss, any kind of loss. That goes. It's the end of fear.

You can see what a miraculous transformation that is when humans no longer live dominated by fear. My God. You can actually live in a state of joy and aliveness continuously no matter what arises.

Because what arises isn't that important. It's a form. It's short-lived.

It's a play of phenomenal existence. The universe playing with form. Consciousness playing with form.

Let it play with form. You yourself become a participant in the play of form. You can create without self-seeking.

Then you create beautifully. But when you create and there's self-seeking in it, there's a negative energy field in that. I need, I want, I must have.

Without that I'm nobody. Oh, I mustn't lose that. And then there's competition.

I need to fight him and her because he might get there before I do. And all the things that create our civilization goes. And the power of consciousness itself flows through you.

It loves to create. So it'll create through you. Who knows what?

You don't need to know it now. Let it flow. And then all there is left really in your life is the simplicity of this moment.

And it's always quite simple. When you're no longer seeking yourself in past and future, then you can honor this moment and honoring embrace the now. Because it is life.

It's an expression of life. You embrace what is. Yes.

Through that embrace you know the spaciousness that is around, the form that is there. Big paper, only one short question, which is very nice. How does one not resist resistance?

Well, that sounds almost paradoxical. All that it means is that you notice that at this moment you're resisting what is. Noticing it means bringing awareness to the resistance.

Awareness implies you're allowing what is to be. Even the resistance, because you notice it maybe even as a physical contraction in the body, as an emotional field, and perhaps as thoughts going through your head. You're aware of these quite suddenly.

Oh, I'm resisting this moment. Oh. So you feel it.

And so at this moment this is what is. The mind may want to come in and say you have failed. You see, you can't do it.

It's no use anyway. You might as well give up, become normal again. And resist like everybody else.

So when you witness it, that implies you accept that it's there. So in that sense one could say you're bringing acceptance into non-acceptance. So you could say, I'm angry, upset.

This is awful. Okay. And you notice what you feel.

There's the upset. That's what is. I'm so unhappy about this thing here, that's right here.

I'm so unhappy about it. Which is a thought movement accompanied by an emotion. I'm really unhappy.

And a little story, because even to say I'm unhappy is the beginning of a little story. I'm so really unhappy about this. Okay.

And so suddenly you are you take one step back and then you watch the mind saying this is dreadful, I'm unhappy about this, I really feel unhappy with this. Okay. That's what is.

You feel unhappy. And the acceptance in this case if it were put into words would be so what? So unhappy.

Or in other words, I don't mind being unhappy. That's what is. I'm unhappy.

So let me be unhappy. You may be surprised to find that when you don't mind being unhappy, unhappiness cannot last very much longer. Laughter.

I'm not talking about indulging in some kind of story. Or I'm so unhappy because, no, that means you're believing in some kind of story. And you do mind, because the entire story is based on the fact that you do mind very much.

Laughter. But if you said, I don't mind being unhappy, that's just what is. You're bringing the you don't mind into a story that is based on I do mind.

Laughter. So in that sense, you're bringing acceptance into non-acceptance. And the amazing thing is, if you don't mind being unhappy, you can't be unhappy for that much longer.

Laughter. It's the end of the story. Because if you don't mind, what can you do?

The story collapses.

[Speaker 3] (1:17:45 - 1:17:46)

Eckhart Tolle, ladies and gentlemen.

[Speaker 7] (1:18:14 - 1:18:15)

Laughter.

[Speaker 1] (1:18:47 - 1:44:51)

Jim has been teaching me facial expressions. Laughter. Different versions of the ego.

Laughter. Well, thanks to our preceding inspiring inspired and inspiring speakers. You're still awake.

Laughter. I've given many talks in the now, but never in the one o'clock morning now. Laughter.

Applause. Yesterday, John Ratz was telling me that in his experience, lots of people at this time are going through intense challenges. Financial, relationship, work situation, emotional challenges.

And in my experience, I've also noticed that. So there's an intensity around at the moment that seems to be part of the shift that's happening on the planet. And when these challenges come to us, often we complain and we think that's not how it should be.

It's supposed to be all peaceful and harmonious. Why is this happening? Let's shift to movies for a moment, which of course are a reflection of life.

If you look deeply at the substructure of almost every movie, and you ask, what happens there? What happens in that movie? You would have to say, well, there are these people, this man, this woman, whatever, and then you would always have to say, and then something goes wrong.

And if you look at almost any movie, that's the very lifeblood of the movie, is something happens that's unexpected and something goes wrong. Otherwise, you wouldn't want to see the movie. You don't want to see.

Nothing goes wrong in the movie. How can that be? You would have to watch, imagine watching three hours of a transatlantic crossing, where all the people in first, second, and third class are all quite happy enjoying this crossing.

And then finally, it arrives safely in New York, and the ship is called Titanic. So, when we see it, we actually enjoy the challenges that the characters are faced with, and what the characters do with the challenges determines whether it's a bad movie or a good movie, and a good movie is a transformational movie that does something as you watch something in you changes. So, the vital thing is then, how do the characters respond to that which goes wrong in the movie, and in bad movies, there's a simple change on the external level.

There's no inner change in the characters. So, it's... Thank you.

Was that a midnight vampire cry? That's okay. They also need to listen to this.

So, in a movie that's is not transformational in any way, it may still be interesting to watch. You may even get some relief because the bad guy finally gets eliminated, but it operates solely on that level of karmic retribution. Yes, it gives you a little bit of catharsis, because when some injustice is being done, because often in movies when something goes wrong, it means some injustice is being done, and often they build it up, and build it up, and you get more and more this karmic pull that you feel for retribution gets stronger and stronger.

And finally, you get the famous, just as one example, the famous scene in the Clint Eastwood movie long ago, where he finally says, Make my day, punk. And that precedes the final resolution of the movie, in which he shoots the bad guy, and it gives you some catharsis, and perhaps in some way, some of your negative emotions that you carry with you perhaps temporarily also become liberated as you finally feel, Ah! Justice has been done.

Perhaps this is what the Greeks meant by catharsis when they talked about Greek tragedies. But then you see the shift, let's mention Clint Eastwood again, it perhaps reflects also a shift in his own evolution and development. Many years later he made a film called Gran Torino, a somewhat silly title, but a great movie.

And in that movie, I won't tell you what it is, if you haven't seen it yet, I recommend it. It is resolved in a very different way. It is resolved in a way where the central character undergoes a shift in consciousness, and his ego subsides, and then he does something to resolve the situation, which is very different from what that person did thirty years before.

Dirty Harry, I think it was called. So, then how the characters deal with that which goes wrong determines whether it's a bad or a good movie, and how you deal with the challenges that arrive in your life also determines whether your life can be compared to a transformational movie or a bad movie. And for many people, they still experience their lives as really a bad movie.

They are attempting to solve these problems, to use the quote, I never know who said this first, some people say it was Carl Jung, or other people say it was Einstein, but it doesn't really matter because there's only one consciousness talking. So, a problem cannot be solved on the same level of consciousness that created the problem. And so, that really is the determining factor when you are faced with the challenges of life.

How do you react, or how do you respond to that which arises in your life, in the present moment, of course, because there is nothing else. And so, here we need to look at what is your inner attitude towards that which arises continuously in your life in this present moment, because the one thing that never changes is your life is always now. That's never always the case.

Then what arises in this space of now changes continuously. The question is, can you, and let's just get to the central core point before it gets too late. Not only tonight, but also too late on the planet.

We need that shift in consciousness to happen. It is happening, that's why we are all here. Are you able to be that underlying space of consciousness from where you can allow whatever arises in that space of now to be as it is, and from that fundamental acceptance take action.

So instead of having a hostile confrontational relationship with life, which many people still have on this planet, basically they are against what happens most of the time, and complain about it, and would rather be somewhere else. They put even stickers on their car, I'd rather be fishing. I'd rather be golfing.

But if they are fishing and golfing, they'd rather be somewhere else. It's the human mind. I visited Ram Dass in Maui a few months ago, and his car was parked outside his house, and he had the bumper sticker on his car, which said I'd rather be here now.

So, as we become friendly with the present moment, because that's really what it is, a shift takes place inside us. The egoic self, which thrives on resistance and complaining and negativity and denial of what is, what is... I hope Jim is watching me.

As you come into inner alignment with the simple is-ness of the present moment, a shift happens inside you. And really, that is the key of the transformation of consciousness, is to realize quite simply, the present moment is all there is, it's all I ever have, my entire life consists of the present moment, therefore, what is my attitude towards the present moment? Am I making the present moment into an enemy, or a friend?

Usually, you can't think of purpose without bringing up the idea of future, because it seems to imply that purpose is there, and I'm here. Purpose is where you want to get to. And whether or not you get there determines whether there is success or failure.

So, what I'm suggesting is for you to realize that there is another kind of purpose, which is primary purpose, secondary purpose involves time, and we will get to that a little later. But primary purpose we can't get to a little later, because primary purpose is to do with realizing what the purpose is for your life, is without time. And the first thing I can, first little pointer we can use is to say, okay, I can tell you what the purpose is, the primary purpose is to sit here in that chair.

And my primary purpose is to be sitting here and talking. Your primary purpose is to sit there and listen, but the listening and the talking isn't that much different, because I can say I'm very, I'm listening to the words that come out of this mouth, so it's the same thing basically. Your primary purpose is to sit here, to be sitting here.

The entire, the universe has conspired to put you here. The totality of all the molecules and atoms that are floating around the universe, some of them temporarily gathering together and manifesting what looks like a person, they've come together, and the atoms and molecules in your body, at some point they were in stars, they were forged in the furnace of stars, and in this weird way it's all coming together, and the totality of life has suddenly put you here, as everything is connected to everything else, it's all timeless, it's only when we look at it through our limited perspective it appears that things, all these things happened in the past, and finally they brought you here. But ultimately, it's all happening in the timeless present, and that whatever is at this moment, is because it cannot be otherwise.

The totality has manifested the form of this moment. And so, this is what has manifested, I'm sitting in this chair, and my purpose is that. This is my primary purpose.

Now, the mind says, that sentence doesn't actually make sense, because you're already here, so how can it be your purpose? Your purpose is to be here fully, to align yourself with this moment internally. And to realize that wherever you are, is where you're supposed to be.

And whatever you are doing in the now, is what you're supposed to do. It doesn't mean you can't do something else. In this moment, I'm doing this.

And I'm supposed to do it this moment. I'm drinking a glass of some water, this is my purpose, right now. Now my purpose is to put the glass back on the table.

In what way is that different? If I know that this is my purpose, in what way is that different from the normal way of doing it? Thinking about something else while I do it.

The normal way of drinking a glass of water is you want to get there already. While you pick up the glass, you already want it to be here. And while you're sipping the water, you want the water to be already in your stomach.

And while it's traveling back towards the table, you already want it to be there, even while it's still here. And this is only a tiny example of how people spend their whole life not really wanting to be with what they're doing, because every doing is a means to an end. And so they are not fulfilling their primary purpose at all.

They are missing the whole thing. If every action you take, or almost every action, or 95%, 99%, whatever it is, even 90%, whatever you are doing is really a means to an end. And where's the end?

In the future. And where is the future? It's a thought in your head.

So that is the fate of humans, which is the fate of humanity right now, although some are beginning to step out of it, to live in such a way that is extremely frustrating. And gives rise to continuous discontent, stress, anxiety, fear, and all kinds of things, because you're not fulfilling your primary purpose, which is to be aligned with the now, the only thing there ever is. Internally aligned with the now, instead of reducing whatever you are doing in the now, or wherever you are in the now, never being fully where you are, because your thoughts are taking you somewhere else, and never fully being in the doing of what you are doing.

So the doing is a means to an end. This is the fate of humans who are trapped in the mind, who are trapped in thinking, because it's by being, it's because you are trapped in thinking that you live always for the next thing, because the next thing is a thought. So your purpose is to live aligned with what is, so that nothing that you do is a means to an end, but is an end in itself.

That's the primary purpose. The secondary purpose is, yes, it's also a means to an end, but it's unimportant as such. My primary purpose, I'll do it again.

The glass is traveling, and it's fine, it's a beautiful moment. But the next moment is not going to be better than this one, when the water reaches my lips. It's fine.

It's fine. And it's beautiful to hold this glass, the shimmering water, see the aliveness of it. Of course, if you're in the thinking mind, you don't see it.

It's a glass of water, what are you talking about? If you're trapped in the thinking mind, you inhabit a conceptual universe that is dead. Because everything you label, and you have concepts for everything, that's a glass of water, there's nothing miraculous about this.

No, because you have never really looked. You've never really experienced it, neither when you're swimming, nor when you're in the shower, nor when you're drinking it. You've never actually, truly experienced water, because mind thinking was always interfering and creating a phantom, conceptual universe that most people are completely trapped in.

So they don't experience the aliveness of the universe around them. One could say they are not present, they are not where they are, and they are not total in what they do. Because every doing is a means to some end.

The end is in the phantom dimension called future, which never arrives. I'm describing the human condition. It's painful.

Suffering, the Buddha called it. It's suffering. It creates continuous suffering, either low-level suffering, as discontent, irritation, or more acute forms of suffering.

So, primary purpose is to be here fully, and to be total in whatever you do, so that it does not become reduced, so that the preciousness of the present moment does not become reduced to a means to an end. And there, already you have your life purpose, primary. That's the very foundation, foundation of your life.

And, many times, you forget your primary purpose. But now, at least now you know it. I haven't told you anything new, because when you listen to these words, you say, oh, of course.

I knew that. It's so obvious. It's so obvious.

You don't need convincing. You knew that. Of course I knew that.

So why didn't I live it? Wrong question. The question is, am I living it now?

Okay. And that's the continuous practice of being in the present moment. Many times, probably, you lose the now.

You lose sight of your primary purpose. And you fall back into some form of dysfunction, which the world calls normal behavior. Normal existence.

And you can watch films, TV, video, whatever, films, video, and they're all manifesting the same normal dysfunction. That's what it's all based on. Occasionally you get little glimpses here and there.

That's always wonderful to see. Glimpses of sanity coming into the insanity of normal existence. So primary purpose has nothing to do, for example, with how old you are.

Secondary purpose is to do with what you do as a so-called individual. And it's secondary. So we're not going into this right now.

It's, as I said, a little later. Primary purpose, you could be 95 years old. You could have only one more day to live, one more hour to live.

Primary purpose would still apply. Even if you have one minute to live, or a few seconds to live, you can be totally fulfilled your primary purpose. And enter presence.

[Speaker 5] (1:45:35 - 1:46:00)

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2005 Eckhart Tolle On the edge of Awakening

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 1:21:40)

As we are approaching the end of the weekend, the weekend of awakening, I wonder how many questions have managed to survive in your mind. You may feel a pressure, almost a kind of pressure inside your mind of a question or questions wanting to be asked, needing to be answered. And when those questions are answered, there'll be more because every answer will generate further questions.

And so there's no need, there's no end to the number of questions you could ask about awakening. It is true that certain answers can be helpful. They can take you up to a certain point of understanding.

Up to a certain point, understanding can be helpful. One could say it's like understanding how do I get from here to the edge of the cliff? And to know how you get from here to the edge of the cliff, to know that, certain signposts may be required to point you in the end of understanding.

Up to a certain point, understanding can be helpful. One could say it's like understanding how do I get from here to the edge of the cliff? And to know how you get from here to the edge of the cliff, to know that, certain signposts may be required to point you in the direction of the edge, that way or that way.

And when you have reached the edge, signposts are not necessary anymore. In fact, they become a hindrance. An essential part of the process of awakening.

And that is something that the human mind and the human ego look upon as almost an insult. An essential part of the awakening is letting go of the need to understand more. And to realize that ultimately, awakening is not to do with understanding more.

And finally, when you have reached complete understanding, you're awake. And the great surprise or even shock that comes, that has come to those who have awakened, they didn't know more when they awakened. If anything, they knew less.

So if we can participate here this afternoon, as you sit here, participate in what we could call renunciation, not renunciation of sugar or sex or material possessions or whatever it is that people try to use to become free, a deeper renunciation. Because all those that I mentioned and many others are surface renunciations that could actually and very often do strengthen your conceptual identity as the one who has renounced, the one who is superior because he or she has renounced sugar, money, sex, whatever. And realize it is not through thought that you can awaken.

It is not through adding more to the accumulation of thought in your mind that you can awaken. It is not through any adding to yourself in any way, whether material things or thought forms or ideas or beliefs or experiences. It is not through adding more to yourself, to the content of your mind that you awaken.

It is not through adding more thought to the huge accumulation of thought forms that each human being, including yourself, already walks around with and derives their sense of self from, the me. And the momentum that this accumulated thought structure that most people identify with as themselves, that accumulated movement of thought with all its accumulated content, thought forms, knowledge, experiences, memories, all thoughts, that has enormous momentum. And an essential part of that momentum is that it needs more to add to itself because the thought structure of yourself, the mind made self, believes that it is not yet complete.

It needs more and that more could be more understanding it says, I don't yet understand the purpose of the universe. And it might say, I've come here, listened to all these speakers and I still don't understand the purpose of the universe and how it all works and how I fit into it. What's my place in it?

That's the most important question. What about me? There's all that, but this is more important in a deeper sense that is true.

In a superficial sense, it's an illusion. So there is this need in the mind that is the mind to accumulate. And if you are here this weekend, that means you have gone beyond the base forms of accumulation, well, more or less.

And that is needing to accumulate material possessions and thus by, and again, it's not the material possession that is ultimately what counts to the mind. It's the thought form because you don't know what's out there. You only know it as a thought form.

That's what it wants. Identify with another thought form, the mansion, mine, the car, my car. A thought form becomes invested with self.

And so it is added to the accumulated thought forms that make up the me. And so you have already gone beyond to a large extent, although it may still linger a little bit, those base forms of identifications. You may also have gone beyond of needing to add to yourself other thought forms, the thought forms of people think that I am great.

The thought forms of getting recognition. Oh, aren't you great? Aren't you great?

The thought form that needs to feel that you are famous. You've made it in the eyes of the world. The world tells you, yes, yes, you are important.

The phone rings all the time. Everybody wants to talk to you. I am important.

And that's a nice thought form. And many of us longing for that, that need in millions of people, particularly in Western culture, that longing of, I haven't made it yet. Once I make it, then I will be complete.

And that means once I have added further thought forms to me, further mental images of who I am, which other people will tell me, that's who you are. Ah, you are such and such. Satisfying mental labels, president of so that.

So you may have gone beyond status or status. For many years, English pronunciation is status. Status here so that you understand what I say.

Status, it's that you've gone beyond that probably. But the movement of needing to add more to yourself may still be there, but it may have moved to more subtle dimensions. And the more subtle dimensions could be the dimension of knowledge, dimension of accumulating thought forms as knowledge, spiritual knowledge, perhaps, having read many spiritual books, attended many workshops, retreats, Buddhist monasteries or other monasteries.

Or you may have come here also in that search of more, adding more to me. And perhaps that more, the most subtle of all mores was the more spiritual realization, the ultimate attainment. I can add that and then I'll be finally complete.

And you look for it then in the realm of understanding more, which is mind. And that can keep you trapped in the subtle realms of needing more for the rest of your life. And that is the fate of being a spiritual seeker for the rest of your life.

In itself, not such a bad identity, spiritual seeker. It's better than many others. But the seeking movement is there.

The not yet having found is there because there has not been a renunciation of the movement of thought because it's the movement of thought that is the momentum behind the search for more. So when we speak of renouncing thought, we are not saying that you are never to think again. It is the awakening out of the stream of thinking with which perhaps you've been identified all your life as a me.

And the possibility of stepping out of that movement of thought is always here now. And it is here now as you sit here. Listen, you can sit here with a burning question at the back or the front of your mind.

I'm going to ask him, when the moment he stops speaking, I'm going to ask him that question. Doesn't make sense what he's saying. Or you can sit here as a field of alert, aware presence in which the words are being perceived almost as if they were coming from within yourself in which all the other peripheral perceptions are taking place, visual, man sitting on a chair, flowers.

I'm labeling the perceptions right now, but as you perceive in that spacious field of presence that you are, you perceive through that, the need to label, the compulsive need to label what is going on around you at any moment, to work it out, to interpret, I need to know. What's the speaker going, what's he going on about? That compulsive need is renounced.

Now that sounds as if you could do something, as if you could, when I say this, it sounds as if you could choose to step out of that continuous stream of thinking into spacious awareness. And from one perspective, you can, it is true, but it's only a perspective. And whatever words say, it's only a perspective because words are thoughts.

These words, these thoughts that have become words point beyond themselves, they are pointers. In themselves, they are not really helpful. If you can never go beyond the signpost, like the dog that continuously looks at the master's finger and the master says, the stick is there, there, I threw it there.

If you can't go beyond the signpost, then you go home with a few more accumulated signposts. Not enough yet, of course. So is it true that you can choose to step out of the identification with that stream of thinking and be present?

Yes, from one perspective, but how is it that there are other people in this city who didn't come here, and if they were here, they would say, what the hell is he talking about? It doesn't make sense at all. I occasionally, because now so many people read The Power of Now, occasionally it gets into the hands of people who are not quite ready for it yet.

And occasionally I get emails that say, your book makes no sense whatsoever. So when I say you can choose to step out of the stream of thinking, this may not be true for everyone. But how is it that you can do that and somebody else in this city who may be engaged in other activities right now cannot do it?

Well, perhaps they can, but they don't know they can. Somehow the apple is not ripe yet. And so here we come to the limits of language because it's ultimately not you doing it.

It's a way of putting it. It's a way of looking at it. But when you feel that, yes, I can step out of presence, which is still a thought, that's not it, of course.

I can step out of identification with thinking to experience the peace that is there when you can be without the need to think. And the thoughts that may still arise are not that important anymore because there is space around them. You can do that because it's happening here through you.

It wants to happen. There is an illusionary impulse at work in humanity. And to say that you can step out of identification with mental noise, identification with concepts, identification with the seeking entity, the me, to say that really means when you feel, yes, that unconditioned consciousness is suddenly there.

It wants to flower through this form. If it didn't want to flower through this form, you couldn't do it because you and it are not separate. Only language creates the separation.

So whatever we say about it, do not believe that there's any absolute truth in anything that words can say about it. So a shift, an inner shift from thought to awareness, presence, and then the miracle happens and it is happening for many of you here now of being here as a field of awareness rather than as a person. And the miracle is there when you can look upon this room, listen to this voice, and let it be so completely allow it to be as it is so completely that there's no need to add mental commentaries to it.

You can look at the flowers and perceive it through what we could call stillness, alert, aware stillness. And that is the arising of an intelligence far greater than the limited human mind, which is only a small aspect of the vastness of intelligence, the one intelligence. And that's, again, a very limited word.

The arising within you of non-conceptual intelligence. That is what Krishnamurti called the awakening of intelligence. And that is there when you renounce thought.

Thought subsides. It can still happen. And when it's needed, it's there beautifully, not problematically.

When self, a sense of self is invested in thought, thought becomes problematic. And the self that almost everybody lives with is burdened with that sense of self is in itself problematic. You cannot separate problematic from yourself.

You can, they are indistinguishable. To walk around with a mind-derived self is to be problematic, is to live in a problematic life situation and to experience your life as problematic because you live mostly then in past and future, which is problematic. Whereas this moment is not problematic ever.

There's no room for problematic here. Here, how can a problem survive here? It only survives as a thought form in the head that is invested with self.

What's going to happen to me? That's the ultimate question. Am I going to make it?

Or is the universe going to defeat me? And so you get, this becomes the antagonistic attitude towards life. The fight against this or that, the fight against violence.

Oh. Oh. Hatred.

And then you get the fight against illness. We are going to get you. Problematic.

So to step out of all that so that your self, your sense of self is no longer in the movement of thought, that's all that it is. There's still a movement of thought. Your sense of self is not invested in every thought that arises.

This way, you're pulled this way and then you're pulled that way. Or you may have deeply lodged thoughts that never leave you. Obsessions, convictions, beliefs, this is how it is.

Just ask me, I'll tell you how it is. Deeply entrenched thought forms that many people walk around with. And they say, that's me.

They don't see it as thought forms that they walk around with. They are the thought forms. They are the convictions.

They are the one who is looking for somebody to disagree with, to strengthen their sense of self. They are their thoughts. So stepping out of that is the great liberation.

It's the renunciation. And to some people, the renunciation of that thought comes because they can't stand thought anymore. It becomes so painful that finally they renounce.

And what they do then is they, the renunciation of thought, of course, is also the renunciation of past and future. Except for practical things, that's okay. But as that overwhelming concern with me and my future and things that happened in the past, things that are going to happen to me or not going to happen to me, renounce that and recognize that past and future are only thought forms, no more.

They have no existence. Time, which is past and future, has no existence except as thought. You cannot encounter past and future.

Nobody has ever met the past, touched it, seen it, lived in it. You may think people lived in the past. How can they live in the past?

The Romans, they lived 2,000 years ago. That sounds plausible. But of course they didn't.

They lived in the now. And so unless you create a thought form of past, there's no past. And the moment you can only create a thought form at this moment, out of the fullness of now, which is consciousness itself, oh, is that what it is?

Yes. The now is unconditioned, pure consciousness itself. Primordial intelligence.

And out of that arise forms, thought forms. And they become the conditioned form consciousness. And then thought forms become material forms.

So we have thought, which are objects in consciousness, sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions. They are all objects because they become, you perceive what you call a flower. It's somehow the image goes through your eyes, becomes a nerve impulse, whatever they say, then gets reconstructed in the brain, which nobody, the greatest doctor has no idea how it works.

And then you get an image arises of a flower. It's a thought form too. An object in consciousness, not conceptual thought, sense perception, conceptual thought.

Objects in consciousness and consciousness. Most people walk around identified continuously with objects in consciousness. They don't know themselves as the underlying space, space consciousness.

Here we have another pointer in case you didn't get the first one. Ultimate terms, objects in consciousness are things. Because we are speaking of form.

So most people's lives consist of things that they are concerned with. Thoughts are things, material things, that comes first. And that's from large part of the population of the planet.

The entire existence is consumed by concern with material things. And that applies both to the poor part of the world and to the wealthy part of the world. The poor are concerned with material things because they may not have enough to meet all the needs of the body.

And the wealthy are concerned with material things because nothing is ever enough to the me. I need more, it's the unconscious movement of more. So there's one level on which one's life, one's entire existence is concerned with things, objects.

And then it's things in a wider sense are anything that arises in your mind as an object. Thought forms, experiences, knowledge. One thing after another arises inside you.

It's a burden to live in such a way, one's life being consumed by one damn thing after another. You know how life is, it never leaves you alone. Next thing comes and it demands your attention.

It can be a thought that demands your attention. It can be a phone call, which is also a thought. This is important, this is what's going on.

And when you've solved one thing, another one comes up from behind. So you may have noticed the world of things doesn't leave you alone. It always has something, always some new thing comes up to demand your attention.

You're surrounded by things and not only outside, unfortunately, and then you carry the accumulated content of thought forms inside you, which is object consciousness, we could say, and you are burdened with that. And this is how people live, how they at work, in families, that continues one thing after another. What's the next thing we have to do?

And another, another. And when they're not concerned with things, they go into the hypnotic state of switching on some entertainment device. First consumed by things, and then finally click.

What a life. What a life. It's living in a room crammed full with things.

You can't even move in it anymore. And then you step out of identification with thought forms. How do you do that, says the thought form.

Give me a technique, says another thought. And okay, there are seven steps. That will take you seven years.

Now, if we did that here, this gathering would be more satisfying to the mind because you could go home and tell your family when they ask you, what did you come away with? What did you learn? And you could say, I learned seven steps and it'll take me seven years.

Oh, that's great, you got your money's worth. And so it's satisfying to be given more time to the mind because it has that need. It loves it.

It's just waiting for something like that. And it's frustrating to the mind to be sitting here and saying, okay, yeah, but how? We can say, renounce thought.

We could say, renounce time. But even that is still maybe a little bit abstract. To put it even more simply, we could say, renounce the next moment because you notice that most of your life, you're more interested in the next moment than in this one.

A deeply conditioned movement. Renounce that need for the next moment, the psychological need for, okay, what's next? And be completely with this, what is now.

Completely allowing this moment so precious, not precious because it's fleeting, that's a superficial way of looking at the present moment. Sometimes people say, this moment is so fleeting, just, you know, it'll be over soon. Just, it's so, just hang on to it and remember it, remember it, take a photo of it.

No, it's not precious because of that, because the present moment is not fleeting. The forms are fleeting that arise in the field of now, come and go. But when you enter the now with your attention and don't take it too literally, it's just a pointer.

When you enter the now with your attention, then you renounce the next moment. And a completely different quality of being arises when you become present to what is, instead of denying it, running away from it, making it to a means to an end. And it is at that moment, the mind falls away.

And then you realize how vast the space is inside you and how relatively insignificant anything in object consciousness is compared to the depths, the spaciousness within you, the stillness. How relatively insignificant any thought that comes into your mind is, relatively insignificant. How relatively insignificant anything that happens or doesn't happen is, you see the relativity of whatever happens in the realm of object consciousness, in the realm of things.

Okay, it's nicer perhaps to live in a beautiful place than to live in a beautiful mansion than to live in a little hut or a little room on the surface. Yes, it might be nicer. But if you have not found the dimension that is beyond object consciousness in yourself and live in a mansion, the mansion is not going to do that much for you.

And if you have found it in the little room, whether you are in a little room or a mansion, doesn't matter that much anymore. Because there's such aliveness to the field of now, it doesn't really matter where you go, what the things are that surround you, it's relative, they matter relatively, but not absolutely. And then the universe around you is recognized as playful.

Forms that come and go, experiences, different places come and go. It's a bit like when you are rooted in the now, you are rooted in being, you are rooted in yourself. And there's such fullness to now, it is the fullness of life itself.

Because before life becomes a thing, before life becomes an object, before life becomes a life form, there is life, consciousness, whatever word. And to know yourself as that is the ultimate liberation. What is liberation?

What are you liberated from? You are liberated from the world of things, from obsession, from being consumed by things, which includes thoughts. You are liberated from time, also as an obsession that you are consumed by.

And you're liberated from a very heavy sense of self, a me, what the Buddha called the self. Oh, all that. The key then, the little opening into what we might call space consciousness.

This is not from science fiction. Space consciousness within yourself, the unconditioned consciousness. How do I get from being consumed and identified with object consciousness to recognizing myself as space?

Ah, it doesn't work by trying to run away from the world. It's through allowing whatever form this moment takes, the world of form, the world of objects, allowing whatever form this moment takes, internally allowing it to be as it is. External forms, inner forms, thoughts, emotions, feelings, allow the suchness of this moment.

No longer make the now into an enemy. The moment you allow what is to be, there is what one could call a sense of space around what is. It could be an event that usually would trigger in you upset or impatience or anger.

And you'd simply say yes to it because it is. And suddenly there's space around the event. That's just a little pointer.

And this is a beautiful thing to discover, the space around things. So why should I allow something to be? Because it is, it already is the case.

Yeah, but it shouldn't be happening, but it is. At this moment, the mind says nothing will ever change if I allow this moment to be as it is. The deeper truth is if I internally am antagonistic towards this moment, ultimately nothing is ever going to change because that is the old consciousness, which it keeps itself in place, the egoic consciousness, the mind identified consciousness, the object identified consciousness keeps itself in place through fighting what is, the me.

How could one argue with the isness of this moment once you realize that the entire cosmos is connected, interconnected, everything in the cosmos is totally interconnected. Physicists know that. So nothing that happens is isolated, an isolated event.

It is connected with the totality. And within the totality, it makes sense. In many, many cases, you could never work out through your understanding, mental understanding, how an event that on the surface looks senseless or looks as if it shouldn't be happening, you could never work out through intellectual understanding how the totality has brought this event about.

Because no mind, no human mind can even understand a fragment of the totality. It would be presumptuous to an absurd degree to believe that through the human mind, you could understand the totality of the universe and then explain it through words, using five vowel sounds, A, I, E, O, U. Five sounds are the basic sounds.

And then there are the others, I can't remember what they're called, consonants, I think. They are sounds that are produced through air pressure, produced by shh, poof, shh, poof. So you have the five vowel sounds plus a few noises produced through air pressure.

And we believe that we could explain something, the universe. So you see how useful it is to give up trying to understand. But what we can't see, and this is confirmed not only by the ancient wisdom traditions of humanity, such as Buddhism, but also even through recent discoveries in molecular atomic physics, the interconnectedness of all things that we can know.

Yes, we don't know how, we can't understand how in what way, but we can see, yes, it all is ultimately one. The universe is one. It is one both at the unmanifested level, the primordial one, the unconditioned one, the unborn as the Buddha called it, the unborn, the uncreated, the unmanifested.

Beautiful saying of the Buddha, he said, there is amongst, that's how the translation goes, there is amongst the uncreated, the unborn, the unmanifested. If there were not the uncreated, the unborn, the unmanifested, there would be no escape from the born, the created, the manifested. So to, yes, we can see it, the universe is one, both as the unmanifested, obviously, and it is one as an organism, even in the manifested realm, it is one organism, which has many different cells to it.

One cell in the organism is humanity. Humanity also is one organism. And what humans are doing to each other is a diseased organism in many ways.

So the universe is one organism, whatever happens has its place within the totality, even if it seems completely incomprehensible. And many things do happen that say, why is this happening? And just to simply see what one could call the inevitability of what is within the context the larger context of the whole, to see the inevitability of whatever form this moment takes in your life.

Whatever happens could not be otherwise. Oh, you do not need to understand it. Occasionally it happens that after an event, you can get a glimpse of understanding, only a glimpse if you're lucky, tiny glimpse.

Some of you may have experienced something seemingly negative and incomprehensible happening to you, life doing something to you, making you ill, a serious illness, losing everything. So it doesn't make sense anymore. I went to church every Sunday and I worked my off and I lost it all, this wasn't supposed to happen, I don't understand anymore.

And years later, you sit in the Inner Directions Conference and suddenly say, wow, if that hadn't happened, of course I wouldn't be here, I would still be slaving away in the corporate office. If those bad things hadn't happened to me, I would never have gone beyond the conditioning. So occasionally you might get a glimpse, but in many other cases, you may not get a glimpse of why.

But it is wonderful to see that yes, there is an inevitability to whatever form this moment takes. And so if you do not resist the form that this moment takes internally, you are no longer trapped or imprisoned by the form that this moment takes. Because very often, that's what it looks like.

That's why people always try to get away from this moment. It's very often, it looks like a limitation upon you, upon your life. That's not what I want.

But what am I doing sitting here in this office, in this place, in this relationship, in this, that, this, that, the other? Whatever form this moment takes to align yourself with it. The moment you do that, and it's not a doing, only through language it creates the illusion that you're doing something.

It's, one could say it's the opposite of any doing. To internally align yourself with what is is the opposite of, okay, I have to do something. You don't have to do anything, just this is as it is.

Always recognize that there's no doing involved. This, it is as it is. You align yourself with a form that you don't fight the form.

The moment you fight the form, the form of me gets strengthened in yourself. The me that is based on my thought forms gets stronger through the struggle, the reaction, the reactivity against what is. Ultimately, you could say the illusion of me gets strengthened through fighting what is.

And you can verify that in your own life when you are resisting whatever situation or in disagreement with someone. This shouldn't be reactivity to see how your sense of self feels a little bit inflated through that. And you can see it when you watch angry people who are fighting.

There's some people who live almost continuously in angry opposition to what is. The entire universe is against them or they are against it. The world is their enemy.

And they're just looking for the next thing to get upset about. And you can see how that strengthens, how that inflates the egoic sense of self, the reactivity, the fighting what is, the complaining pattern in the mind. Oh, and every time you complain, you strengthen a little bit the form identity of me, the complainer, the thought form, the reaction.

And the egoic identity inflates a little bit through the complaint, because every complaint means that you are right and what you're complaining about is wrong. Situation, a person, a place, you are superior to that which you are complaining about. That is the illusion, how the illusory self entity inflates itself continuously through that.

It doesn't never last for long and I need something else. But once you watch that process in yourself or in another, it's a little bit easier to see it in somebody else. How the self importance grows through every complaint.

The imagined superiority of me as compared to that which you are complaining about. And some people complain about the world. Of course, it's a mad place, but complaining doesn't help very much.

They complain about humans, people. People are so unconscious. Oh God, what is wrong with you?

You should know better, but they don't. So to see how that fighting what is strengthens the thought made me and accepting what is, allowing it, surrendering to this moment, the form that this moment takes. That's all that ever changes.

This moment never changes. It's always now. Saying yes to the form doesn't mean you can't take action.

If action is needed, it comes out of the yes instead out of the no. Totally different quality of action that comes out of saying, well, this is how it is. Here I am, two coins in my pocket, wet, not much food in the stomach.

That's it. That's what is at this moment. Okay.

And you go beyond the form of this moment and there is suddenly a peace from deep within. And there's a beauty even to that moment, the form of that moment, but the beauty may not be in the form, but it comes from a deeper place of the formless, the formless life that you are, the very life that you are underneath the form as which you appear. And here you know it not through rejecting the forms, but through accepting the forms.

So the magic formula then is, but it doesn't work if it remains a thought form, the forms that seem to limit you in your life are the concealed openings into the formless. The conditions that seem to limit you are the portals into the unconditioned, that which you are in your essence. And some people have experienced extreme forms of limitation in their life, physical, material, physical, through the body not working properly anymore, physical limitations, prison camp, some other awful limitation.

And some people have experienced, have realized when they let go of resistance to this moment, even in the most dreadful situations, the most dreadful limitations, they suddenly realized the formless space that they are, peace. So if you can look upon your life and see where is it that life seems to limit you, what is the area where you feel hemmed in by life, the forms in your life, your life situation. It could be relationships, could be a place where you live, the people you live with, the physical structures around you, the house or the work situation, whatever it may be.

And so almost everybody experiences some form of limitation in their life, some form of limitation and see if there, and then you might notice also that you are in an almost habitual resistance to those limitations, those forms in your life. And see what happens if you let go of the resistance to what is. Use that and see what happens if you let go of the no to this moment.

You may be surprised how quickly things change, how quickly the stuckness gets unstuck when you surrender. And some of you have experienced it already in certain areas of your life. How quickly you become free of the conditioned, not by trying to reach some point of the unconditioned in the future, the limitless, but by not offering inner resistance to the conditioned.

With that deep acceptance of what is comes what a word that I usually avoid because it can easily become a thought form and it is so been misused so much. With acceptance of what is comes love. You love what is.

That goes, we don't even need to say love. It's there when you, there's an allowing of whatever form this moment takes, love arises. So the secret is not to turn your back upon the limitations and trying to reach some point in the future where you realize yourself as unlimited.

Once you've sorted out your life situation, it's never going to happen. Not for long. Then some new things, something else crops up.

Instead of looking for some liberation at a future moment, the more limited you are in your life situation, there are degrees of limitation. Very limited, for example, would be if your body may not make it for that much longer anymore. They might have said you may have two months, two more months.

You may be limited in other areas. You may be listening to this on a tape and find yourself in a prison cell. Those extreme limitations are the most powerful openings, the most powerful openings into presence, into space.

When you surrender to that, and so it happens in some people's lives, there is one big thing, one, what Christians used to call or still do, your cross. One big thing in your life that is a dreadful burden or seems a dreadful limitation. Most of you have many little things.

That's fine too. That works too. But the one big thing works even better.

If you're lucky enough to want to have one big thing in your life that's, oh, oh, absolutely unacceptable. Nobody could accept that. Well, that's what the mind says.

And then surrender happens. For many of you, it will be a case of little surrenders. Even today, as you leave here, there may be an opportunity for a little surrender in some situation.

What is a little surrender? What is surrender? It's the shift from no to yes.

Surrender is detecting an inner no to what is and then saying, ha, ha, there it goes. And then to see, well, but it is. And then you look upon what is.

Hmm. Acceptance means it's not judged anymore. It's allowed to be.

And there's a field of attention. There's your prison cell, which you've been extremely unhappy about for the past 10 years. And even more unhappy because you know you have another 15 years to go.

And then you listen to the tape. And then you sit there and you look upon the walls that surround you and maybe a little window with bars on and an uncomfortable place that you sit on. And there's light shining perhaps through the window.

Oh yes, and your body is alive. It feels alive. Every cell is alive.

And yes, even the wall has aliveness to it. Why didn't I see that before? Because I was looking at the wall through a screen of mental concepts.

Why couldn't I feel the aliveness that is in every cell of my body before? Because I was preoccupied with the thoughts in my mind, mindful objects in my consciousness, one after another, all saying, this is dreadful and unacceptable. This is what my life has come to.

This is what the world has done to me. It's telling yourself the story in your head again and again and again. So you couldn't feel the aliveness.

You couldn't see the light. And you couldn't sense the stillness and the peace that were always there as inseparable from spacious awareness, the essence of your being. Was always there, never knew it.

And this is how surrender to one big thing can take you where once and for all. Surrender is no more than surrender to this moment as it is. No other spiritual practice is required.

But if you're happy with other spiritual practices, that's fine too. But every spiritual practice ultimately points to that. So why not do it now?

What beauty in welcoming the only thing there ever is, which is now. What beauty in welcoming the form that this now takes, whatever the form may be. And realize yourself as that which is deeper than any form.

Stillness, peace, space. Not that which happens, but the space in which it happens. That's who you are.

And so when you look at night into space, the vastness of outer space, vast, infinite, infinite depth, that's the external version of who you are. And then you also notice when you look there, you see, oh, well, it's so simple. There are basically two things in this world, space and things in space.

It's as simple as that. The world consists of space and things in space, or rather things in space are the world. Let's change it slightly.

Things in space are the world and space is that, which goes beyond anything that words could say. But it's so obvious, even if you look through the senses, that there's basically even this room. There are things, bodies, chairs, flowers, lights, and there's space.

The space usually nobody notices. And usually nobody notices the inner space, the stillness that is underneath the noise, the incredible spaciousness that is there within you. So you are the bridge between the inner space the object world and the formless unconditioned, the one.

And you move through this world, interacting with form still, your body is form too, thoughts still happen occasionally. You interact with other forms and the play of forms continues all around you and you are rooted in the formless, which is peace. And the world is then the play of forms around you, so to speak, so to speak.

And nothing in the world of form matters that much anymore. And it's only then that, and this is almost a paradox, something that is not of this world, which is the world of objects, something that is not of this world shines through this form into this world. And the formless, a certain transparency happens through surrender to what is, a certain transparency happens and so the unconditioned shines through into the world of form and the world of form then is experienced as a more benign place.

When that comes through you and it transforms how you experience the world of form also. Not that the world of form will lose its characteristics of having polarities, it has polarities. The world of form will always have certain polarities, otherwise forms could not survive, high, low, hot, cold.

But the manifestation of the polarities of the world of form will become more benign, not the harshness. So one could say love comes into this world and love is not of this world. That's how the world changes.

Not that it matters that much anymore, whether or not it changes. And you certainly, as you surrender to what is, you relinquish the need for the world to change and then it changes. And that includes the need for your world to change, your situation, it must change.

Well, first accept what is and then see what happens. Thank you, thank you.

2005 Eckhart Tolle video The Simple Truth interview with Danish Journalist Anne Hjort

[Speaker 2] (0:00 - 0:20)

Yes, I'm going to start with, I'm aware that you are not, that you don't find personal history important, but still I would like to ask you some questions about your life and your background. So how did you grow up, where did you grow up and in what kind of family?

[Speaker 1] (0:21 - 3:19)

I grew up in northwest Germany up to the age of 13. My father was a journalist, my mother a housewife. Then my parents got divorced when I was 12 and my father dropped out of conventional life and society.

You see, he was an early dropout before the term dropout even existed and he went to live in Spain. So my parents got divorced, my father left to live in Spain and I was very unhappy at school so at 13 I refused to go to school any longer. That was my only act of rebellion as a child.

I was on the whole a very meek, obedient child, but something within me prevented me from going to school. I just couldn't do it anymore, so I stopped. My mother didn't know what to do with me, so finally it was decided that I should join my father in Spain, who had remarried, and lived a very unconventional life.

He lived on his savings for a few years and then he started working there. So I spent my teenage years from 13 to 19 in Spain, so the Spanish language became my second language. I was taken out of the culture that had surrounded me for the first 13 years of my life and then placed in a completely different environment and culture.

And that probably was a good thing because if one spends one's whole life in one particular cultural environment, one tends to become conditioned by that particular culture without knowing it. So by experiencing different cultures as a child that somehow perhaps made the cultural conditioning less deep, less rigid. And my father was always a very unconventional person.

Some people would call him eccentric. So when I got to Spain, he asked me, do you want to go to school here? And of course I said no.

And so he said, okay, then don't go to school and do what you like. And that's what I was able to do. I was reading certain books that I liked to read, studying, I began reading some literature.

I went to language classes in the evenings and afternoons and studied some other subjects that I was interested in like astronomy and so on. So I grew up without, especially in my teenage years, without the pressure that most youngsters experience. And then at 19, I went on my own to live in England.

[Speaker 2] (3:21 - 3:23)

And then you started to have an education in England?

[Speaker 1] (3:24 - 18:50)

Yes, in England I was offered a job, although I didn't have any formal qualifications. Miraculously, somebody offered me a job and I was actually teaching German and Spanish for a few years at a language school. And then a kind of quest started.

And what also started at that point was already the beginnings of depression that I would experience periodically and living in a state of increasing anxiety, a kind of generalized anxiety. And I was looking for some answer to the dilemma of life and living, and I was looking to philosophy and the intellect for an answer. So I began to read a lot and then I thought the answers would probably be found at the universities, the professors would know.

So I took the exams that I needed in evening classes to get to university and then I went on to London University where I did languages and literature. And increasingly became more and more unhappy and continued to search and absorb more and more knowledge and gradually beginning to realize that they didn't really have the answers to life's dilemma. I remember there was one professor at London University that I liked very much and I would go to his classes and admired him, very knowledgeable.

And one day we arrived on a Monday morning and we were told that he had just committed suicide. And that shook me inside and I realized that certainly these people that I looked to for an answer didn't have it either. And so my depression intensified and I did very well in the degree examinations because I studied so hard out of fear really.

I was driven by anxiety. And then after graduating from London University, I didn't do anything for about a year and that was the year in which I became even more unhappy and depressed and when an inner shift suddenly happened inside me. It was in my 29th year, I woke up in the middle of the night and this was not uncommon for me, waking up in the middle of the night and feeling intensely depressed and in a state of great fear at the same time.

And that happened again that night and the thought occurred to me, I can't live with myself any longer. And that thought repeated itself in my mind, I just can't live with myself. And then suddenly I looked at the thought, I kind of stood back from that thought and looked at it and said, that's a strange thought, I cannot live with myself.

Am I one or am I two? This thought seems to show that there's two people here, I and the self that I cannot live with. I didn't have an answer to that question, it's just that question, that puzzle arose in my mind.

And much later it reminded me of koans that they have in Zen that are puzzles that are designed to stop the mind. For example, what is the sound of one hand clapping is a famous koan and it doesn't have an answer on an intellectual level and so the question that arose in my mind also didn't have an answer on an intellectual level, who am I and who is myself that I cannot live with? But that question triggered an inner shift, something inside me that I didn't understand it at that point must have disidentified from the self, the unhappy me as I later called it.

So a kind of an inner disidentification happened, the I am, which I later recognized as the consciousness that I am, separated itself from the conditioned entity, the conditioned consciousness that provided me with my sense of identity, the self. And that consisted largely of an unhappy story. So then I felt I was like being drawn into some kind of vortex of energy as if I were disappearing in that and there was still a moment of resistance and I heard something almost like a voice inside me that said, resist nothing.

So I gave up resisting the feeling of, almost the feeling of disappearing into nothingness. And so that, don't remember very much else of that night. All I know that the next morning I woke up and I opened my eyes and I looked around the room and everything seemed as if I was seeing it for the first time, fresh, new, alive.

The light coming through the windows, familiar objects on the table, they looked fresh, new and alive. So I got up and went out for a walk and I looked around and everything seemed so peaceful. Even the traffic in the city seemed so peaceful and I knew something strange had happened.

There was suddenly, everything was filled with aliveness and peace and I didn't know why. And so, and that went on and then this inner peace as the background to all experiences and the background to all sense perceptions, even as the background to my thinking, that then never really left me again. But it took me a long time to understand it, to be able to put it into words.

And so a little later I started investigating other spiritual teachings, for the first time Buddhism, Christianity and more contemporary spiritual teachings. And very quickly I recognized the truth that is in many cases hiding underneath sometimes centuries of cultural additions, interpretations and misinterpretations. And I could see the truth that's in Buddhism, that's in Christianity, the original teachings.

And in turn, they shed light on what had happened to me. For example, I picked up the New Testament and I read Jesus' words, the peace that passes all understanding. I said, that's exactly what I feel.

I have this peace and I don't understand what it is. So he must have had the same experience. Peace suddenly arose which was not causally related to anything in the external world.

It wasn't caused by something wonderful happening in my external environment. So it didn't seem to have a cause, an external cause. And then later I visited Zen teachers and so on.

And again, I recognized the truth of Zen immediately. But they also helped me to understand and put what had happened to me into a wider context. For example, I remember talking to one Buddhist monk who said, who talked about coming to the end of always having to think, thinking.

And he said, Zen is about not thinking ultimately. And I immediately realized something that I actually, strangely, I hadn't realized before, that my thought processes, ever since that happened that night, had become reduced by maybe 80%. So I wasn't actually thinking that much anymore.

And that's why there was so much peace. So I realized the continuous mental noise, as I now call it, which is the compulsive and largely useless thinking that most people are continuously engaged in, that had come to an end. There would still be some thought, and I could use thinking when I needed it, and occasionally thoughts would come in and out.

But there were huge stretches of no thought. And in those long gaps and intervals of no thought, there was that wonderful experience of inner peace. And I realized that inner peace had been there before, even when I was still anxious.

But it had simply been covered up by the anxiety, by the hyperactive mind. And so this then gradually developed into a spiritual teaching. So the spiritual teaching now attempts to show people that they have within themselves already what they perhaps are looking for on the outside.

The aliveness, the peace, the sense of deep inner fulfillment is already present in every human being as their innermost essence. So it's not a question of needing to obtain or acquire something new, which is often what spiritual seekers are looking for. Everybody is looking to acquire something to fulfill him or herself.

They may be looking for it on a material level, or on the level of experiences, or on the level of accumulating knowledge, or accumulating wealth. Or spiritual seekers want to add more spiritual experiences to who they are, or find themselves at some point in the future. And you can't, because if you're looking to the future to find yourself, you're missing yourself already, the essence of your being, which you can only find in the now.

So my realization that night took me years to understand, and in the process of understanding it, at the same time people would already come to me occasionally and ask questions. So gradually I was able to talk about it, and I was able to recognize in others what I had been through. It's the same dilemma, perhaps with the exception that I was suffering from it more acutely than many others, that's all.

I was even more deeply immersed in the mental noise and the emotional turmoil than would be normal. But the same mechanism operates in everyone. So the teaching now is to point out that there is a dimension in you that is deeper than what you normally identify with as yourself, that is deeper than the me, the personal history that most people believe is who they are.

And so the recognition of that dimension comes when you make room inside yourself for the present moment, because it can only come out of an inner alignment with now, as I call it, which is life itself. The stream of thinking is always concerned with past and future. So for most people who are identified with thinking all the time, every thought is invested with a sense of self and me.

Every thought grips you completely and you are in it. This is what identified means. Every thought that arises becomes a me, and you think it and you're in it.

And so most people are dragged along all day long by this mind stream, one thought after another. And within that mind stream there is a mind-made sense of self, a me, consisting of past memories and experiences and things that my mind has identified with and that contribute to my identity. They are all thought forms.

For example, my possessions, my knowledge, my experiences, or what people have done to me, what I have done to people, or things that whatever you identify with and then hang on to in your mind becomes a me. And that was really the self that that night I recognized as not really me. So there is the mind stream, there is identification with the mind stream, and there is the possibility of stepping out of the mind stream by accessing the present moment.

Now to most people the present moment almost doesn't exist, because what they are really interested in is the next moment or the one after that. So they live always towards the future. They live towards the next moment.

And unconsciously they regard the next moment, the next point in the future that they need to get to, unconsciously they regard that as more important than this moment. Not realizing that the future moment that they so desperately want to get to, tonight, tomorrow, whatever, or in any activity, needing, wanting to get it out of the way as quickly as possible, needing to get to the end point, on a small scale, on a large scale.

[Speaker 2] (18:52 - 18:53)

Yes, yes.

[Speaker 1] (18:55 - 24:33)

And so they don't recognize that the future has no existence except as a thought form. So when you always live towards the future, you live your life trapped in the conceptual reality of thought forms, which assumes a greater significance for you than the immediate reality of life, which is always now, because your life consists entirely of the present moment. And to most people that's, if you truly realize the significance of that statement, your entire life consists of the present moment.

Your life is never not this moment. Even when you remember the past, you can only remember it now. And when you think about the future, you can only think about it now.

But people live as if the present moment were an obstacle that they need to overcome in order to get to some better point, which never arrives. So that's a mad way to live. And it makes living hard.

It makes living into an effort. We've been conditioned over thousands of years, the human mind, which was a wonderful thing, the ability to think at some point, a long, long time ago, must have arisen in humans. The ability to conceptualize mentally.

And this has opened up a whole new dimension for humanity. And of course, it has made humanity the most powerful species on the planet because humans are not physically the strongest species, but they were able to dominate all the other species because of their ability to think. And so that developed slowly.

Probably in a mythological form, it's expressed in the story of Genesis at the beginning of the Bible, when they eat this apple that comes from the tree of the knowledge of good and bad to differentiate this, that. That comes only through the ability to think, to analyze, to separate. And so that gradually developed in humans.

And at first, it wasn't a problem. It opened up new possibilities. Then over thousands and thousands of years, the thinking mind became stronger.

It grew and grew. And gradually, they lost connectedness with something that is deeper and more essential within themselves. We could call that being, the sense of aliveness, a deeper intelligence, even, that is more than just the thoughts that go on in your head.

So gradually, humans, because of the growth of the thinking mind, lost their ability to sense their deeper connectedness with life. And now we have arrived at a point where our whole sense of who we are is caught up in the mind and in thought. So we have been through an evolutionary stage, which was a necessary one for humanity, and we could call that the stage of mind, the stage of thought.

And to such a point now that we are completely possessed, I use that word, we are possessed by the mind without knowing it. We cannot stop thinking, it seems. We can, but for most people, that's not yet a reality.

They have to think, the compulsion to think, and to derive your sense of self from the movement of thought. We are arriving at the end of this whole evolutionary stage, and for humanity now to go on, it needs to transcend the mind, no longer be possessed by the mind, to go beyond the compulsion to think into a deeper level of being. So it's almost like regaining what they have lost.

But when you regain something that you lost, you regain it with a deeper awareness. And this is the process that we are involved in now, that humanity is involved in now, because an evolutionary transformation, a transformation of consciousness, really is no longer a luxury, so to speak, is no longer optional for humanity. For the first time in the history of humanity, a transformation of consciousness is a necessity if humanity is to survive, because we are creating havoc on the planet.

We are creating hell, to a large extent, on a planet that potentially is paradise.

[Speaker 2] (24:35 - 24:47)

Is that why you... I mean, you could have chosen just to stay on your own, and being on your own, but you chose to be a teacher and to go out and teach. Why is that?

[Speaker 1] (24:48 - 26:48)

Yes. Being a teacher was the response to a demand that came to me. So it was not so much...

It wasn't a conscious choice that, oh, I want to teach or I need to teach. It simply arose out of, first of all, individual people coming to me and asking questions or wanting some kind of help or becoming drawn, becoming interested in what I had to say and experiencing an inner shift after coming a few times. And so being a teacher that developed organically without me ever deciding I want to be a teacher.

And so from seeing individuals, it gradually developed into occasionally meeting in small groups, and that went on for a few years. And out of all these meetings with individual people and small groups, I took notes after meeting with people often because things that I said in those individual sessions or group meetings were things that were new to me also. They came out of that moment.

They came out as a response to a person's question. So I would often take notes, and I had a collection of notes after a few years. And some of those notes later became incorporated into The Power of Now, the book.

And so The Power of Now is in part the result of my work with people over a number of years, and in part the arising of also a new teaching in the process of writing it.

[Speaker 2] (26:50 - 27:00)

I read in an interview you gave that for a lot of years you were only absorbed in being and you were not doing anything.

[Speaker 1] (27:00 - 27:01)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (27:01 - 27:05)

And it was a kind of unbalance in your life.

[Speaker 1] (27:05 - 27:05)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (27:05 - 27:07)

Could you describe that?

[Speaker 1] (27:07 - 30:04)

Yes. Well, after the transformation happened that night, my external life for a few more years went on as if nothing much had changed on the external level. I went on to do graduate work.

However, my heart was never fully in it anymore, in intellectual pursuits, in analytical work. But my external life had a certain momentum, so it went on for a few more years, and then that momentum came to an end. And a point arrived when I was at Cambridge doing graduate work and some teaching, and suddenly I realized this has come to an end, and I simply walked away from it all.

And after that, two years followed in which I did very little, and I didn't have a home of my own. I would drift from here to there, spend most days just sitting. When it was warm enough, I would sit outside on park benches or walk around.

I was then in London at that time. And I was so deeply immersed in the peace, almost the bliss of the simple experience of being, the simple feeling, the goodness of life every moment, that I lost interest in future completely. There were no ambitions, and I wasn't even interested in doing anything.

So from an external viewpoint, one could say my life for a while became unbalanced. I became so deeply immersed in being that I lost interest in doing. One could almost say I lost the ability for a while to be active in the world.

And then gradually, the ability to be active in the world came back. So a balance after a while reestablished itself. So I'm now able to be active in the world and at the same time be rooted in being.

One does not exclude the other. But for some reason, I had to go very deeply within for a while, perhaps even on a larger scale. It may be that some people for a while have to go very deeply into being simply to provide a balance on the level of the collective consciousness because most human beings are totally lost in doing.

So it may require a few humans who go very deeply into being to provide a balance. Although on a personal level, it might look as if they were unbalanced.

[Speaker 2] (30:06 - 30:14)

Are you always in presence now? Don't you get relapses? Don't you ever get angry or frustrated?

[Speaker 1] (30:16 - 31:48)

No. I live in a surrender to the present moment. And so that is always there.

Whatever happens right now, I recognize that it is futile to argue with whatever is happening at this moment. So emotions occasionally still come. If I see human suffering, I sometimes weep.

I can cry. And yet even then, there's a deep sense of peace in the background even though I may cry externally if I see especially humans inflicting so much suffering on other human beings and on animals and on nature, on the planet. So sometimes tears come.

And yet deep down I know that ultimately life is timeless and indestructible. And I know that death is not the opposite of life but only the opposite of birth. Life is beyond the forms of life.

Life is timeless and immortal. It's that which underlies the entire manifested world. And that dimension is present in each human being.

[Speaker 2] (31:52 - 31:55)

So what is your life like today? Do you have a family?

[Speaker 1] (31:56 - 36:41)

No. My life is now very different from what it was before, especially before the book came out. I was already teaching before the book came out.

But soon after the book came out, the book grew very quickly. At first through word of mouth for one year. And then other people discovered it and started writing about it and speaking about it.

And then it accelerated. So soon after the book came out, the teaching developed a momentum that was almost overwhelming. And it turned my external life around completely from living a very sheltered life, a very quiet life, almost a hermit-like life.

Suddenly everybody wanted me to teach and demands for this and that were coming in, invitations flooding in from all over the world and so on. And then I responded at the beginning to almost every invitation. And then I realized it's impossible.

I can no longer respond to every invitation. So nevertheless, my life is now almost public. And the groups become bigger and bigger.

In the United States, the average number for talks is 2,000 people now. And so I'm very much out there in the world. And this is not something that naturally I would have chosen for myself.

My natural inclination would be to be withdrawn, not to be known. I like to be invisible in public places, not to be noticed. And that becomes more difficult now.

And yet I accept the fact that this is how it is. So there's a lot of traveling. And there's been so much in the past few years that now I feel I need to cut back for a while.

And I believe, my feeling is, that the cycle of going out into the world, which has lasted now for six years, may be coming to an end, and there may be coming a cycle of withdrawal for a little while, in which another book may come into being. And so I've had to surrender to the fact that my external life changed completely. It's been wonderful, too, to see how many people are being reached by the teaching, the book, and the talks and the retreats, how many people are open to the message.

And that was the greatest surprise after the book came out, because when I was writing the book, the book wrote itself, one can almost say, my feeling was that only people who had already been on the spiritual path for a long time would respond to the book. And that was not the case. People responded to the book, both people who had been on the path for many years, they responded, but also people who had never read a spiritual book in their lives, who had never had access to that dimension.

They suddenly wrote to me and said, my life has changed. This is incredible. I've read this book several times already, and it's fresh and new every time, and there's so much peace in my life suddenly.

So the book seems to have reached all kinds of people, no matter what their background is. Also education doesn't seem to matter very much. Some highly educated people are open to it, and others who are not are equally open, because it's not difficult to understand on an intellectual level.

And yet, not everybody is open to the books. There are some people, there are people who wrote to me and said, I bought a copy for a close friend, and he found it completely meaningless. He read two or three pages and said, it doesn't make sense to me, and so they put the book on the shelf.

And it may well be that in 10 or 20 years' time, they take the book down from the shelf again, and suddenly there's an inner readiness. So many people are open, but certainly not everybody.

[Speaker 2] (36:42 - 36:58)

I have some more questions about this new situation of yours. I mean, you have become a success, and your books have sold in millions of copies all over the world, and you have become famous, and you're making a lot of money. How do you handle that?

[Speaker 1] (37:00 - 39:27)

I'm not very good at handling the external things like money. So basically it hasn't made very much difference to my life, and I haven't really paid much attention to it. Most of my attention is absorbed by teaching or answering questions and so on.

Yes, I live in somewhat more spacious surroundings now than I used to, but that's really all. So that hasn't made very much difference. I'm hardly aware of it.

For a large part of my life, I lived with very little money, and probably people would have said I lived below the poverty line, as they call it, and yet I never felt poor. I always felt I had quite enough, and now I don't feel wealthy any more than I did then. So it's exactly the same feeling.

So it's a very abstract thing, the fact that now there is more wealth in my life on the external dimension. It's only an abstract truth to me. It has not affected me inside at all, and it's only very slightly affected my external life.

I walk around cities and look at shops, and I sometimes like to look at things, but very rarely do I actually feel the impulse to go and buy something. It's enough to look at a beautiful object and then walk on. So I don't know what to buy with it.

There is the possibility at some point that there may be a center, a spiritual center coming into being. So if that happens, then some of the income from the book may flow into that. That is something that I'm not actively planning now, but I have a feeling it may happen.

[Speaker 2] (39:30 - 39:44)

And I also imagine that many people want to have something from you, and maybe they are admiring you or putting you in a place of a guru. And how do you relate to that? Do you need to protect yourself?

[Speaker 1] (39:44 - 42:37)

Yes. Before, it used to be the way that people, anybody who wanted to see me, would just call me or talk to me on the phone. I would talk to them and say, Can I see you?

Yes, come. And then after the book came out, that became impossible because the phone kept ringing. And so in one sense, when I was only reaching a small number of people, however, there was the satisfaction of having close personal contact with people who came to me.

Now, the close personal contact, because the numbers have grown so much, that has become lost to a large extent. And yet, the teaching is reaching far, far, far more people than it did before. So really, and this is very much the same in any situation in life, every situation has its own limitations.

There were certain limitations to my life on an external level when the teaching was not yet reaching many people. The teaching was very limited in that sense, although it was very satisfying. Now the limitation is that people cannot access me personally very easily.

I have to have several people in between me and the world, simply because on a practical level, it's the only way I can live. I cannot reply to every email or answer every letter. And thousands and thousands of letters come in all the time, and emails.

And I cannot just pick up the phone and answer. It's harder for individual people to reach me. It's difficult, if not impossible.

And that's simply, I need to accept that that is a limitation that's unavoidable. Knowing, however, that the teaching is reaching far more people than ever before. Yes, it's a pity.

I still sometimes have a little group at home in Vancouver of people I've known for a long time. Even before the book came out, they used to come to see me. So occasionally we get together as a little group of 20 people or so in my living room.

And I enjoy that very much. So that's how it is. It's always a question of surrendering to whatever the present moment presents you with and whatever limitations there may be at this moment.

There's no situation that is free of limitation of one kind or another.

[Speaker 2] (42:39 - 42:46)

Do you have an explanation why your teaching applies so much to modern people?

[Speaker 1] (42:47 - 47:24)

Well, the terms used, the words, the terminology that is used in the teaching, the words that are used, which are no more than pointers, not philosophical explanations, they are relatively neutral. They don't carry the weight of centuries and centuries of past as they do in ancient teachings. So they are not culturally conditioned in that sense, relatively neutral.

And so they can reach many people no matter what their background is. People who may have a religious background can be reached if they are open enough. Because I don't deny that there is deep truth in every religion.

This is why I quote in The Power of Now from Buddhism and Hinduism and Christian teachings. And even people who have no religious background whatsoever can be reached by the teaching. This is one reason perhaps why it has reached so many people.

And another reason is that The Power of Now was written, it came out of that state of consciousness that it points to. So it came out of a state of inner stillness and receptiveness, spontaneously. The writing was a spontaneous act although I incorporated some of the writings that I had done in previous years.

There was an enormous, very strong creative impulse that flew into the writing. It flowed into the writing. So the book contains an energy, this sounds perhaps a little mysterious, but many people have said it, that when people read the book the words go beyond the mere informational value of the words.

This is why one can re-read the book many times and still feel it's fresh and new. And every time you read, and maybe it may just be one or two pages, the reading of it can put you back into the state that I call presence. Because whatever the book speaks about it ultimately points to that inner state of alignment with the present moment.

So people can just pick up the book, read a couple of pages and feel the mental noise slows down or subsides and they become awake again, alert, present in the now and they can sense some peace inside. And so that's what it's all about. So that is at work in the book and it is also at work in the group sessions because in the group sessions nothing is ever prepared.

I don't come with a script. I don't even come with any idea in my head what we are going to do today or talk about today. When I sit down on the chair I have no idea even a few seconds before opening my mouth what's going to come out.

So in that sense you can say it comes really out of the immediacy of the present moment. And so what words come out depends very often on the energy field of the group. And so there is an interaction between the teaching, the teacher and the taught.

There is an ancient Eastern saying that says the teacher and the taught together produce the teaching. And that's how it is. And that's why the teaching has great power because it doesn't come from the accumulated knowledge of the mind but it comes out of the immediacy of the present moment.

It's not prepared. And even on a retreat that lasts for three, four, five days sometimes there is absolutely no pre-planned structure to the retreat. It all grows organically out of the present moment.

[Speaker 2] (47:29 - 48:04)

I have one question. At least one more. You talk about surrendering and you talk about suffering as one path to surrendering to presence.

And you say that some people don't need the suffering. But anyway, surrendering is beyond will and wanting. So what does it take?

And what about grace? I imagine that it takes grace also. Could you comment on that?

[Speaker 1] (48:05 - 52:57)

Yes. You won't surrender, which means, surrender means only accept this moment as it is. But you won't be able to surrender unless you're completely fed up with suffering.

You've had enough suffering. And at some level you recognize that most of your suffering is self-created. It is created out of resistance to what is.

It is created out of an interpretation of something that is. It comes from a thought, from an interpretation, not from the situation. So you realize really that I've had enough suffering and only when you've truly had enough suffering in your life are you able to say, I don't need it anymore.

Suffering is a wonderful teacher. Suffering is most people's only spiritual teacher. And suffering deepens you.

It gradually erodes the mind-made sense of self, the ego. And for some people the point arrives where they realize I have suffered enough. And that, for example, is the case with almost all the people who come to a retreat.

If you ask them, they've all had their share of human suffering. Otherwise they wouldn't be open to the message. They've had their share of human suffering.

And they've reached a point where they are ready to listen to the message that says there is another way to live. There is another way in which you can live that does not create further suffering for yourself. Because to a large extent humans create their own suffering.

And so, when you are ready to hear that message, and that's really the message that is in every religion, that's the message, the central message of Buddhism is the end of suffering. And even the central message of the teaching of Jesus is finding the pearl of great price, finding the kingdom of heaven that is within you, here and now, as Jesus says. And that, of course, is the end of living in a state of suffering.

So, one could say that you need suffering for you to realize, for you to come to a point of realization that you do not need to suffer anymore. There's a paradox here. If I had not suffered, I would not, this teaching would not exist.

So you could say it has come partly as a result of intense suffering. Because as a human being I would not have evolved spiritually if I had not suffered. So suffering was my main teacher, and suffering is for many people their main teacher.

But then some people when they are ready, they come into contact with a spiritual teaching or teacher. And that can speed up the process of realization that you don't need to suffer anymore. You're ready to hear that.

So that was, the Buddha talked about nothing else already 2,600 years ago, that there can be an end to self-inflicted suffering. And when you don't inflict suffering on yourself anymore, and remember it's the thoughts, your thoughts make you suffer more than anything else. It's not usually the situation, it's your interpretation of the situation, of how dreadful it all is.

And so when you see that, then you see there is another way to live in which I no longer mentally argue with what is. And that's the end of self-inflicted suffering. And if I no longer inflict suffering on myself, I no longer inflict suffering on others because the two go together.

[Speaker 2] (52:57 - 53:09)

But what will make me or somebody else take that step? Is it just acceptance?

[Speaker 1] (53:10 - 54:46)

It's acceptance, but acceptance won't come unless you've reached this inner point of readiness. And this is why I never try to convince anybody that what I'm saying is true or they should practice something. I never say you should do this or try to convince somebody who doesn't want to believe it.

That is pointless. Only if you are ready internally for it. And so one way of putting it is to say if you have suffered enough, then you're ready.

Then you're open to it and you immediately see the truth of it. You immediately see that you ultimately make yourself suffer. It's not the situation, it's the mental interpretation of the situation, which in most cases is a form of resistance.

And that creates the suffering. And so you need to, when you hear these words, if you don't immediately recognize the truth, if there's an inner arguing, that's fine. There's no should here.

There's no... The teaching never says this is how you should live. It's only if you can hear the truth of it, it will make sense to you and then it can help you.

So it can only help those who have an inner readiness. But there are many, many people alive now in whom the readiness is there. They are able to hear it, to truly hear it and immediately recognize, yes, this is true.

Convincing never works.

[Speaker 2] (54:48 - 54:53)

But being in the present, I mean, is it a possibility for everybody?

[Speaker 1] (54:55 - 55:01)

Being in the present moment is a possibility for those who are ready for it. Not yet for everybody.

[Speaker 2] (55:02 - 55:10)

What if we were all living in presence? I mean, what would happen? Would we have electricity?

Would it work?

[Speaker 1] (55:10 - 56:58)

One thing is certain that the world would look very different from the way it is now. We can't possibly imagine how the human world would look if everybody lived in a different state of consciousness, in a state that is predominantly a state of inner peace. What kind of civilization would we create out of a state of inner peace?

It's impossible to predict. All we can say is that probably it would not be as complex as it is now. People would not be running around continuously engaged in largely pointless activities.

It would probably not be such a noisy civilization as it is now, because no civilization has ever been as noisy as this one, and that's simply because whatever human beings create externally is a reflection of their inner state. So we are polluting the planet simply because our inner selves are being polluted by an enormous amount of negativity, of continuous resistance. So the outer is always a reflection of the inner.

So if the inner is predominantly a state of inner peace, we create a peaceful world on the outside. What exact form that would take, we don't know. We'd have to see what it is.

It would very probably be a much more simple world, more harmonious and beautiful. Nature is beautiful already, but I'm speaking of the human-made world.

[Speaker 2] (57:02 - 57:07)

Is it possible, in a few words, to say what is the essence of your teaching? Is that possible?

[Speaker 1] (57:09 - 1:00:02)

Well, the essence is very simple, and the essence could probably be taught, and perhaps one day will be taught to very young children at school. And children are very close to it anyway. The essence is, I could put it in the most simple terms, because the most simple is often the most powerful.

The essence is to make the present moment into your friend, not your enemy. To always ask yourself, what is my relationship with the present moment? At this moment, of course.

What is my inner relationship with the present moment? Is the present moment, am I friendly towards the present moment, or am I hostile towards the present moment? Is the present moment my enemy?

And then that would be enough to bring about a change, because when you realize that you are making the present moment into your enemy, and you also know that that's all you ever have in life, then you realize it is a mad way to live, to treat this moment as if it were an obstacle to where you want to get to. And you never get there, because it's always now. Then your relationship towards the present moment changes.

It changes, and your relationship becomes one of yes rather than no to what is. It does not mean that you become passive, or that you will never do anything again. It simply means that the foundation for any action you take is the state of yes to what is.

And if there's a state, the inner state of yes to what is, that is the state of inner peace. And inner peace is much more powerful as a foundation for right action than the state of resistance and negativity. So that is the essence.

Find that state of inner alignment with the present moment, which comes with a yes, and then see what happens. See how your world changes as you no longer resist the is-ness of this moment.

[Speaker 2] (1:00:05 - 1:00:23)

Thank you. You concluded the teaching about your role as a teacher, and you said something about you have nothing to teach to nobody, something like that. Could you just state that, how you see your role as a teacher?

[Speaker 1] (1:00:25 - 1:03:05)

In conventional terms, teaching means that I give you information that you didn't know. I add something to you. So a student absorbs new information, accumulates new information.

But in spiritual teaching, the teacher just points to the truth that is already in every human being, and also points to the way in which that truth that is already in every human being is covered up. And anybody who is ready can immediately recognize the truth of the teaching as if they had already known it, because on some level they already knew it. And that's why I say I don't really have anything to teach in the sense of adding information to you.

There's nothing that you need to add in order to find yourself and be yourself. You can add on an external level. It's nice to learn new things.

It's nice to explore this or that. And yet on an essential level, the essential level is the level of who you are, your innermost sense of self. It's the level of being.

On the most essential level, no matter where you are at in your life, what your life situation is, on the most essential level nothing needs to be added to who you are. So the spiritual teaching is not an amour. It's not an addition.

It's simply a pointing towards that which is already there. And those who are ready then suddenly recognize the truth of it. Recognize means they already knew it.

It's almost like remembering. Ah, yes. And then there's no question about it.

Convincing is not necessary. It's immediate realization. Then spiritual teaching works as it should.

So that's how it operates. And that's the difference between a conventional teaching and spiritual teaching. In some sense one could say the spiritual teaching is almost the opposite of the conventional teaching.

If anything, it takes something away from you. It takes away that which covered up who you are. But it is not taken away by the teacher.

It's taken away by yourself when you see it and become conscious of it.

[Speaker 2] (1:03:05 - 1:03:12)

That's very clear. Yes. Thank you very much.

Thank you. Thank you for your time.

2005 Oprah Winfrey Soul Series XM Radio Early interview with Eckhart Tolle , Author of Power of Now, A New Earth, Stillness Speaks

[Speaker 7] (0:04 - 0:05)

Welcome to soul series.

[Speaker 2] (0:07 - 4:02)

Welcome back to my soul series, our weekly half hour to be able to delve into, you know, all things really spiritual to challenge the status quo. That's what this show is all about to connect to higher ground and thereby elevate the value of our experience here. And now, uh, the here and now, you know, that's an expression that's achieved in almost, um, you know, cult-like status in our lexicon, but as in any case, when phrases are used and over used in a culture, sometimes they tend to lose their influence and their impact.

And people just sort of toss about the here and the now as a reference in time without actually considering, I think the magnitude of what those words really represent. Today, right now, I want to share with you somebody who has helped me along with millions of other people to really understand just why that phrase, the here and particularly the now is not only vital, but is really all that there is. My guest today should be called, I guess, the father of the now because Eckhart Tolle is, um, widely recognized as one of the most original and inspiring spiritual teachers of our time.

I personally think that, uh, you are a prophet, Mr. Tolle. And I was, uh, first introduced to your teachings back in the year 2000 when, uh, actress Meg Ryan was on my show and she told me about this book. We're in a commercial break.

I don't even know how the subject came up, but she mentioned the power of now and how it was really, uh, having a big impact on her life. And so I went right out and I got the book right away and, uh, I put it in my magazine as one of on the old list. And I, I think I even listed as a favorite thing for Christmas for all of our viewers, the power of now a guide to spiritual enlightenment would have to be one of the most transformative books in my life.

It's always by my bedside, no matter where I am, I carry it with me. I was just saying before I was introducing you at cart that I wished I had my original, original, original copy, because I bought so many copies since the first copy, but my original, original copy, I had so many, um, uh, yellow markings in it for highlighting every sentence. I just thought, well, why don't I just finish reading the book instead of highlighting everything?

Welcome to, to our soul series. Thank you so much for joining us. Well, uh, there's so much I want to talk to you about.

Uh, I know we're not going to get to all of it. So I just want to tell all of our listeners now, those of you who are, um, big supporters, uh, seekers and, and fans of his book, the power of now that this conversation will be continued, uh, next week. Uh, so today's discussion is really, I'm going to try to focus it on the now and the book, the power of now I was so moved in the book when you said you very, in the very beginning of the book, you said 29 years old, having pondered suicide, you were thinking this quote, I cannot live with myself any longer.

This was the thought that kept repeating itself in my mind. And then suddenly I became aware of what a peculiar thought that was. Am I one or two?

If I cannot live with myself, there must be two of me, the I and the self that I cannot live with. Maybe I thought only one of them is real. I love this because it's really one of the first times I thought, yeah, that's right.

When you say I'm going to tell myself something, who is the I and who is the self? That's the fundamental question. Is it not?

[Speaker 1] (4:03 - 7:17)

Yes, that's right. The, um, most people are not aware that they have a, a little man or woman in their head that keeps talking and talking. So there's a voice in the head.

That's the internal dialogue that most people are completely identified with. And in my case, and in many people's case, the voice in the head is a predominantly unhappy one. So there's an enormous amount of unhappiness that is continuously generated by this unconscious internal dialogue.

And in that moment, that night, a separation occurred inside me between the voice, which is the incessant stream of thinking and the sense of self that had become identified with that voice in the head, and a deeper sense of self that I later recognized as essentially consciousness itself. Rather than something that consciousness had become through thinking. So that night, the separation occurred.

And when I woke up the next morning, I was completely at peace for the first time since my childhood, without understanding why. The understanding came much later. So the important point here is that it's essential for people to become aware that their thought processes and the sense of self that is derived from their thinking, which includes, of course, all one's memories, all one's conditioning.

One's sense of self is a conceptual one that is derived from the past. So all the stream of thinking really is a form of conditioning of the past. It's essential for people to recognize that this voice is going on inside them incessantly.

And it's always a breakthrough when people for the first time realize, here's my thinking, here are all the habitual thoughts that I've been having, repetitive thoughts, very often recurring negative thoughts. And they suddenly realize, and here I am, knowing that these thoughts are going through my head. So the identification is suddenly broken.

And that is, for many people, the first real spiritual breakthrough. Spiritual, as I see it, is not believing in this or that, but it's stepping out of identification with a stream of thinking. So you suddenly find there's another dimension deeper than thinking inside you.

I sometimes call that stillness. It's an aware presence, just that. It's nothing to do with past or future.

And that we could call also, it's like waking up. That's why traditionally in many spiritual traditions, they use the term awakening. So many people would tell you, well, what do you mean awakening?

I'm awake already. But what is meant by awakening is that you wake up out of the stream of thinking. And when you wake up, you become present, a completely different dimension of consciousness is suddenly there.

[Speaker 2] (7:17 - 7:44)

Well, I recall in Stillness Speaks, you talk about the awareness. Stillness Speaks, the book Stillness Speaks, is all about that awareness. And I love the line where you say, once you recognize, I'm paraphrasing, of course, that voice and that you are the observer of that voice, that that very awareness is you.

[Speaker 1] (7:44 - 8:16)

That's right. And not the voice. So you recognize as essentially there's something inside you that has its place.

It's the stream of thinking. It's connected with the past. It contains all your memories.

It contains all reactive patterns. It contains old emotions and so on. They're all part of that.

But essentially, it is not essentially who you are. And that's an amazing realization. Now, the mind, of course, may then ask, well, then tell me who I am.

[Speaker 2] (8:16 - 8:23)

That's the big question. I'm talking to Eckhart Tolle, author of Power of Now. So what is the answer to that question?

[Speaker 1] (8:23 - 9:32)

Well, the answer to that question is who you are cannot be defined through thinking or through mental labels or mental definitions, because it is beyond that. It is the very sense of beingness or presence that is there when you become conscious of the present moment. It's intrinsically one with what we call the present moment.

You, I sometimes say, for example, you might find this a little strange, but in essence, you and what we call the present moment at the deepest level are one. Because you are the consciousness out of which everything comes. Every thought comes out of that consciousness that you are.

Every thought disappears back into that space of consciousness that you are. So essentially, you are a conscious, aware space. And all your sense perceptions, all your thinking, all your emotions happen.

They come and go in that aware space.

[Speaker 2] (9:32 - 9:48)

Yes. Well, did it feel like, Eckhart, when this happened to you, that moment of realization, where you realized the voice was separate from the awareness, that moment that you speak about in the beginning of the book? Did it literally blow your mind?

[Speaker 1] (9:49 - 10:44)

Yes, it did. But I didn't understand it. I just realized suddenly the next day I was at peace, and I remained at peace.

There was a deep sense of inner peace, although externally nothing had changed. So I knew something very drastic had happened, but it took me some years to actually understand what had happened. Some years after, three years after this transformation, I was talking to a Zen monk, and he was telling me, he said, well, Zen basically is very simple.

It's, you don't rely on thinking anymore. It means to go beyond thinking. And I suddenly realized, oh, this is what has happened to me.

That state that I felt was a state of inner peace was also a state of far less thinking than I had been doing before. All that unhappy thinking, all that repetitive thinking wasn't happening to me anymore.

[Speaker 2] (10:45 - 11:02)

And so you have often said in all your books, you characterize thinking as a terrible affliction, even a disease, and that it's the greatest barrier to the power of now. But isn't to think to be human? I thought that's how we are different from other animals.

[Speaker 1] (11:02 - 12:39)

That's right. Thinking can also be a powerful and wonderful tool. It only becomes an affliction if we are totally identified with thinking, and we derive our sense of who we are from the stream of thinking.

In that case, you're telling yourself continuously what I call sometimes the story of me. And in many people's case, it's an unhappy story. So they are continuously dwelling on the past, and there's nothing wrong with the past, but if there's complete self-identification with memory, then all your sense of who you are, your sense of identity, is then derived from the stream of thinking.

And that's a dysfunctional and unhappy state. So when you step out of identification with that, and you realize for the first time, I'm actually the presence behind thinking, then you are able to use thinking when it's helpful and needed, and it can be a wonderful thing. But you're no longer, I'll put it in extreme terms, but it's true, you're no longer then possessed by the thinking mind.

The thinking mind is then a servant or a helpful tool which you can use. It's useful for many situations in this world, but you can't find yourself in there. And also, if you can never be on the thinking mind, it interferes with relationships.

It creates continuous conflict in relationships if there is no sense of space in the relationship.

[Speaker 2] (12:40 - 12:43)

Say that again. If there's no sense of space.

[Speaker 1] (12:43 - 13:51)

No sense of space. That spacious, aware presence that you can bring to the relationship. For example, when you listen to someone.

You listen to your partner, or you listen to a friend, or just an acquaintance. Can you be there as the aware space that is listening? Or are you, while the other person is speaking, continuously thinking, preparing the next thing you're going to say?

Are you judging and evaluating what you're hearing? Are you just interested in your own aims and purposes? Or can you be there as the space for the other person?

And I would say that's the greatest gift you can give a person. It is especially important to parents and children, but also very important in intimate relationships. Can you be there as the space, the aware, conscious space for the other person?

For example, while you listen to the other person, can you listen in that simple state of alertness in which you're not judging what you're listening to? You're then there as a presence, rather than as a person.

[Speaker 2] (13:52 - 13:52)

Right.

[Speaker 1] (13:52 - 13:57)

So there's a deeper level of awareness is there, and that's what I call the space.

[Speaker 2] (13:57 - 14:06)

I was going to say, you offer them that space in which you allow yourself to be connected to whatever it is they are offering.

[Speaker 1] (14:06 - 14:32)

That's right. There's no judgment in that space. That's right.

You're not defining the other person, and that's an enormous gift that you can give to another person. You're not imposing mental labels, judgments, definitions on the other person. The funny thing, as you know, so many people love their pets, and there's for many millions of people.

[Speaker 2] (14:32 - 14:34)

So many people, I would be one of those people.

[Speaker 1] (14:34 - 14:35)

Yes, me too.

[Speaker 2] (14:35 - 14:35)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (14:35 - 14:58)

Now, for many people, that's the only area where they realize they can communicate and relate to another being, and that being is not judging them, because the dog accepts you unconditionally as you are. I don't know if you've heard the saying, please God, make me into the person my dog thinks I am.

[Speaker 8] (14:58 - 14:58)

Mm-hmm.

[Speaker 1] (15:00 - 15:32)

So, people feel that sense of freedom when they relate to their pets, because they are not being judged. Now, the animal, of course, is at a state prior to thinking, so that's why the animal can be there as the simple natural presence. But when a human being is there, the human being has moved beyond thinking, and that's the state of awareness.

Well, but both these states are free of definitions and judgments. Jesus, of course, also talked a lot about the importance of not judging another person.

[Speaker 2] (15:32 - 15:52)

Well, you know, since the power of now, so many people have been introduced to this very idea that you presented to us in this book, and, you know, are stimulated by the idea, and even I have had glimpses of that space.

[Speaker 1] (15:53 - 15:54)

Oh, I'm sure you have.

[Speaker 2] (15:54 - 16:01)

Yeah, glimpses of that space, but how can you live in that space? You seem to live in that space.

[Speaker 1] (16:02 - 16:56)

Yes, well, first of all, it's important to acknowledge and to be grateful for the glimpses of it when they happen, and then you can actually not just wait for the space to happen almost as a kind of grace that comes into your life, which sometimes does happen, but you can also invite that space simply by bringing more presence into your life, which means more present moment awareness. For example, I recommend that people use little everyday activities that they do every day unconsciously and bring a conscious presence. When you wash your hands, when you make a cup of coffee, when you walk across a room, down the stairs, you're in the elevator, waiting for the elevator, these are all opportunities for, instead of indulging in thinking, being there as an still alert presence.

[Speaker 2] (16:56 - 17:16)

Yes, like a lot of people, you know, take showers in the morning, they're taking the shower, but they might as well already be in the office because they're thinking about, you know, getting in their car, and what am I going to do today, and what, you know, what is my to-do list, instead of being present in the shower, feeling the water, the essence of the water, the moment, whatever.

[Speaker 1] (17:16 - 17:52)

That's right, so it's bringing little spaces into your everyday life, as many spaces as possible. I say, for example, when you get into your car, shut the door and be there for just half a minute, feel your breathing, perhaps feel the energy inside your body, look around, the sky, the trees, it all it takes is half a minute, and the mind might tell you, I don't have time, that's the mind talking to you, but I would suggest that even the busiest person has time for 30 seconds of space, when they sit in their car, for example, or many other occasions.

[Speaker 2] (17:52 - 18:23)

Well, I will have to tell you that, I think, yes, it was the year 2000 I first read this book, and many, many, many times this book has saved me. I mean, the theories in The Power of Now have saved me, and today, as a matter of fact, I had, you know, one of the most hectic days, but I remember waking up this morning thinking, oh my God, I'm going to be so stressed, I'm going to be so stressed. I let that go, I let those thoughts go, and just thought, I will just, for every moment of the day, be present now.

[Speaker 1] (18:24 - 18:44)

Yes, it's a continuous refocusing on real, what really matters, what matters most in anybody's life, which is always now, the present moment. People don't realize it, that that's really, that's all there ever is. There is no past or future except as memory or anticipation in your mind.

[Speaker 2] (18:44 - 18:55)

But that's what throws me, though, in the book, when you say there's no past. Of course, there has to be a past, because there are all of our memories, there are all these ways we defined ourselves, that's our past.

[Speaker 1] (18:55 - 19:14)

Yes, on one level, you could say, nobody can argue with the fact that there is such a thing as time, there is such a thing as future. Of course, we use time to meet here. We agreed on this particular time.

We said we are going to meet on this day, at that time. Otherwise, it would have been difficult. We might never have met accidentally.

[Speaker 2] (19:15 - 19:25)

And you are hard to find in all the different countries. I'm talking to Eckhart Tolle, the author of Power of Now. But we agreed on this time, and we are here, because this is now.

[Speaker 1] (19:25 - 19:39)

That's right. So, time, then, is something that we cannot do without. We could even say, time is what dominates this entire life that we experience here.

[Speaker 2] (19:39 - 19:41)

This illusionary plane that we're on.

[Speaker 1] (19:41 - 20:28)

That's right. I call it the surface level of reality. Got it.

It's completely dominated by time, which is the past and future in the continuous stream. And people look to time very often for expecting that time will eventually fulfill them, time will eventually give them what they need, time will eventually give them happiness. And sometimes, of course, it does for a while.

But essentially, the true happiness you cannot find by looking into the future, because it is intrinsically one with living deeply in the present moment. So, it has been said that two ways of being unhappy, one is not getting what you want, and the other is getting what you want.

[Speaker 8] (20:29 - 20:29)

Right.

[Speaker 1] (20:29 - 20:55)

Because if you think, this, that, or the other is going to make me happy, even when you get it, and you haven't realized that the present moment is all you ever have, you will again be focusing on the next moment. And always expecting, because it's a mental pattern that is very deep-seated, always focusing, always expecting something in the next moment, never being fully in this moment.

[Speaker 2] (20:55 - 21:26)

Well, another thing that changed me when I read The Power of Now over seven years ago was your comments about the fact that all of our stresses, every stress that you have is based upon, for the most part, thinking about what happened in the past or what should be happening in the future. That if you're able to take a deep breath, no matter what crisis is going on in your life, and look at what is happening now, in this moment, right now, I'm okay.

[Speaker 1] (21:26 - 23:25)

That's right. Another way of putting it would be to say, when many people identify their whole sense of self with problems, problems, they're continuously involved in problems, and so for many people, their whole sense of identity is intimately bound up with the problems they have, or think they have. And often, just as a reality test, I tell people, just a moment, I say, just say, what problem do you actually have at this moment?

Just focus, see what problem you have at this, not in an hour's time or tomorrow morning, but what problem do you have now? And sometimes, people would suddenly wake up when they hear that question, because they have to realize, at this moment, I don't actually have a problem. What you might have is a challenge.

If something, a danger arises, a wild animal jumps into this room, that's a challenge. And then, of course, it's not a problem, because there's no time to make it into a problem. So, for a problem to exist, you need time, and you need mind activity, repetitive mind activity.

In the present moment, there may be a challenge, that is true, there may even be pain, there may be an emotion, but not what we call problem. So, when people think, how do I get out of my problems? I suggest, go into the present moment and see, what is the problem now?

And then, you will always have to admit, well, right now, I don't actually have a problem. And people got that, even people who are in prison. I've had letters from people in prison, some are in for life, they've written to me and said, I understood your message, and I have become free.

And they meant free inside. Free of problem making.

[Speaker 2] (23:25 - 23:31)

Wow. Yes. Yes, similar to Viktor Frankl and Man's Search for Meaning.

[Speaker 1] (23:31 - 23:31)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (23:31 - 23:48)

Yes. Free of problem making. I want to ask you, you know, as I completed the book and have read and re-read it many times over the years, portions of it, all of it, listened to the tapes, I often wonder, do you live like this all the time?

Are you always in the now?

[Speaker 1] (23:48 - 24:31)

Yes, I'm basically in the now, surrendered to what happens. Occasionally, if I see, for example, somebody inflicting pain on somebody else or something, an emotion may come, anger may arise very briefly and then pass through. It doesn't blink into the brain and creates an enormous amount of useless thinking.

So emotions can come and go, but I'm basically in that state of surrender to what is. Because what is, is always already the case. So you can't really argue internally with what is, because if you do, you suffer.

[Speaker 2] (24:32 - 24:41)

Well, what about having, does it leave you passionless for life though? Because whatever is, is just going to be.

[Speaker 1] (24:41 - 25:15)

No, no. In fact, you're more passionately alive when you are internally aligned with the present moment, which means you let go of this inner resistance, which on a mental level is judgment and complaining, and on an emotional level is some kind of negativity. So these two go together.

Many people have an enormous amount of complaining going on continuously in their mind. Some people do it out aloud all the time.

[Speaker 2] (25:15 - 25:20)

And usually the complaining is about what was or what they wish was.

[Speaker 1] (25:20 - 25:43)

Or what should be, but isn't happening, and this shouldn't be happening, and you shouldn't do this, and I don't want to be here. And so they always find something to complain about. And so these are ways of denying the present moment, and that's a very dysfunctional state, because you're basically denying life itself, because outside of now there is no life.

[Speaker 2] (25:43 - 25:52)

All right, then how do we plan for the future? We're all told that we should plan for the future. We shouldn't just be passive about the future.

[Speaker 1] (25:52 - 27:10)

No, you should plan for the future, and you don't need to lose yourself in the future. If you plan for the future, you can actually enjoy saying, okay, let's say I'm planning a trip, or I'm planning a course of study, and you write down what you have to do, the various steps, and you enjoy that. The question is, are you losing yourself in the future, or are you simply using time and future on a practical level, where it's fine, it has its place on the practical level?

But if you think that some point that I'm going to reach in the future, now it might be the next vacation, or it might be when I find the ideal partner, or it might be when I get a better job, or better place to live, or live in a more pleasant city, or whatever it is, then I will finally be happy. And so, yes, a continuous projection mentally away from the now, that's where you lose yourself in the future, and that's the dysfunction. Using planning is actually fine.

There's nothing dysfunctional about that. And that's the difference, you can say, between, as I call it, clock time, which has its place in this world, and psychological time, which is the obsession, continuous obsession with past and future.

[Speaker 2] (27:10 - 27:26)

When you say have its place in this world, do you feel that, you know, even now in the human body, which is often, for a lot of people, the pain body that you call it, do you feel that you're straddling both worlds?

[Speaker 1] (27:28 - 28:07)

Yes, you could say that. There's a, it needs to be a balance between dealing with things in this world, which involves time and thinking, but not being totally trapped on this level of time and thinking. Not being totally trapped in time, and totally trapped in the stream of thinking, so that there is a deeper dimension inside you that is actually outside of that stream of time and thinking.

And that's the inner stillness. That's the inner peace. And that is a deep, vibrant sense of aliveness.

So you're actually very passionate about life in that state. Wow.

[Speaker 2] (28:07 - 28:32)

That's what we're looking for here. I just love talking to you. One of my favorite books all time in the world, The Power of Now at Cartola.

Thank you so much for joining us this week. And we'll talk next week about one of my favorite things to discuss, the ego, which you speak so profoundly about in your book, A New Earth, Awakening to Your Life's Purpose. We'll join you again next week.

Thank you so much, everybody, for listening.

[Speaker 1] (28:32 - 28:32)

Thank you.

[Speaker 7] (28:40 - 28:41)

Welcome to Soul Series.

[Speaker 2] (28:43 - 30:09)

Hi, welcome back to my Soul Series. So excited again, because I get to talk to Eckhart Tolle. Last week, we spoke of The Power of Now.

He's a preeminent spiritual leader. I think he's a for our time for the 21st century, who believes that we are here to enable the divine purpose of the universe to unfold in us. That's in the beginning of his book, The Power of Now.

And he's the author of that breakout bestseller. If you don't have it, it's one of the books that should be a part of your, you know, personal library forever. I can't even tell you how many copies I've bought for everybody.

And if you were to come to my house right now, and you were going to spend the night in either bedroom at my house, it doesn't matter which bedroom you would go to, you'd find a copy of The Power of Now. Sometimes two or three, because when people leave, they like to take it with them. The Power of Now, A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment.

And he's back to discuss his latest release, A New Earth, Awakening Your Life's Purpose. The inspiration for that title came from a Bible prophecy in both the Old and New Testament, where it speaks of the collapse of the existing world order and the rising of a new heaven and a new earth. For those of you who are Bible readers, well, The Power of Now is one of the most comprehensive and enlightening books, as you heard me say, Eckhart, I've ever had the privilege to read.

Why did you feel the need to write a follow-up? You really didn't have to write another word after The Power of Now.

[Speaker 1] (30:10 - 31:11)

Well, that's true. The teaching evolved in the years after The Power of Now came out. I would travel around the world giving talks.

And what happened then is this, some new approaches came, new perspectives on the same basic truth. It's not a different truth. It's focusing on the same basic truth, but new perspectives towards it.

And also, I felt there was still something to be said about that which blocks the arising new consciousness in most human beings. So there's quite a bit in the book A New Earth about that in us which tends to block the awakened consciousness, the consciousness that wants to arise now. And one way of putting what that is, is to describe it as I do in the book, it's the human ego.

[Speaker 2] (31:12 - 31:20)

This is my favorite thing to talk about, the ego. You say the ego is destined to dissolve.

[Speaker 1] (31:20 - 31:29)

How so? Well, first we need to see clearly what the ego is, because sometimes people use that word and they mean different things.

[Speaker 2] (31:29 - 31:31)

Yeah, they mean you're being arrogant.

[Speaker 1] (31:32 - 34:08)

That's right. It's a much wider thing. It's not just being selfish or being arrogant or thinking yourself superior.

That's a small aspect of ego. Ego is basically a self-identification with the stream of thinking. So that collectively, I would say the beginning of ego is actually described at the beginning of the Old Testament, where there is the famous story of the apple, which everybody knows, even non-Bible readers.

So it is said there that they ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge and good and evil. And that was when they lost that state that is externalized in the Bible and called paradise. What does that mean?

To me, that means it is the arising of the ability to think and to differentiate between things. This is good. This is bad.

To make statements like that, to make judgments like that, which is to be able to tell good, is basically the ability to think, which is a myth. So this is a mythological description of what happened to humanity. And at first, the ability to think was not entirely bad.

They lost something. They lost a deeper state of connectedness. But I don't think that deeper state of connectedness with being was lost immediately, as it's described in the Bible.

I believe it took a long, long time of increased thinking until people reached a point where they derived their entire sense of who they are from the stream of thinking. So what that looks like in a person's life is there is a almost, one could say, a mind-made entity which is made up entirely of memories and past conditioning and mental concepts. And this entity, which really is all made up of thinking, people derive their sense of who they are from this mind-made entity.

So it's a mind image of who I am. People have split themselves in two. They think there's me and there's myself.

Me and my story. The ego is the story of me that people identify with.

[Speaker 2] (34:08 - 34:18)

You say in the New Earth, ego is no more than this, identification with form, which primarily means thought forms.

[Speaker 1] (34:18 - 34:21)

Yes, that's right. That's what the ego is.

[Speaker 2] (34:21 - 34:35)

And you say if evil has any reality, and it has a relative, not an absolute reality, this is also its definition of evil, complete identification with form, physical forms, thought forms, emotional forms.

[Speaker 1] (34:35 - 34:36)

That's right.

[Speaker 2] (34:36 - 35:15)

And that this results in a total unawareness of my connectedness with the whole, my intrinsic oneness with every other, as well as with the source. And this forgetfulness is original sin, suffering, or delusion. And when I heard that, I thought, yes, you're right.

For every evil act we've ever heard described, or when we think of people as doing sinful things, it is because of a complete and utter disconnection, a lack of understanding that I am that person that I am attempting to violate. I am that which I am jealous of. I am that.

[Speaker 1] (35:15 - 36:23)

Yes, yes. It means you cannot sense the aliveness anymore that is in the other person. So, you have desensitized yourself to the aliveness.

Now, you can only do that if you've already done this to yourself, because by living through mental definitions of who you are, you desensitize yourself to the deeper aliveness of who you truly are beyond thinking. So, you become, what arises then is a conceptual identity. I'm this, that, or the other.

And then, once you are trapped in your own conceptual identity, which is based on thinking and image-making by the mind, on your past, then you do the same to others. And this is the beginning of that, is always when you pronounce judgments on another person, and then you believe that judgment to be the truth, calling people, attaching labels to people. That's the beginning of desensitizing yourself to who that human being truly is.

[Speaker 2] (36:23 - 36:50)

I'm having a conversation here with Eckhart Tolle, who is author of The Power of Now, of course, and A New Earth, Awakening to Your Life's Purpose. So, if you are not your story, and most people, I do believe, think that they are. We live in a world where people believe, I am my story.

I was born in this family, and this is where I was raised, and these are the things that happened to me, and this is what I did. If you are not your story, then who are you?

[Speaker 1] (36:50 - 37:04)

That's a very good question, because you cannot deny, of course, that these things exist, your memories of the past, things that you suffered, perhaps even things, suffering that you might have inflicted on others.

[Speaker 2] (37:04 - 37:07)

And even not all suffering, my family connections, the people I love.

[Speaker 1] (37:08 - 38:11)

Yes, you have a so-called past, you have relationships, all that is fine. It is not problematic unless you become totally lost in that dimension alone. So, you have no access to a deeper sense of aliveness or beingness beyond the stream of thinking, because really, all that is based on memory.

All your past, how do you experience your past? You experience your past as memories. And what are memories?

Memories are thoughts in your head. And there's nothing wrong with that. But if you are totally identified with all these thoughts in your head, then you are completely trapped in your past history.

There's no sense of anything beyond that in your life. So, the important thing is, am I more than my personal history?

[Speaker 2] (38:12 - 38:33)

Well, you speak in A New Earth, you speak about how advertisers are counting on us to believe in the labels, and that we identify with, particularly in our society, exclusive labels. And the more exclusive the label, the more we identify with it.

[Speaker 1] (38:33 - 40:56)

Yes, that's right, because the ego wants to be special, one way or another. Every ego wants to be special. And if the ego cannot be special by being superior to others, the ego would also be quite happy with being specially miserable.

So, you may have seen business people who are saying, one person says to the other, I have a headache. The other person says, you have a headache? I've had a headache for weeks.

So, people actually compete who is more miserable, you or me. It's just the ego that does that is just as big as the ego that says, I'm superior to you. Because the ego always wants to be special.

So, if you recognize in yourself that unconscious need to be special, then you already are free. Because when you recognize all the patterns of the ego, and specialness is one pattern of the ego, another pattern of the ego, it wants to be right all the time. Another pattern of the ego is, it actually needs, it loves conflict with others.

And that's an amazing thing. Of course, it's unconscious, because the ego defines itself through a boundary that it draws. This is me, and that is the other.

And that's an important word, because you need, the ego needs to emphasize the otherness of the other person. And that happens on a personal level, when people are suspicious of other people's motives, and so on. And there's a need for enemies, which is deeply built into the ego.

The ego needs enemies, because it defines itself through emphasizing the otherness of others. And nations do it, religions do it. The believer, if you identify with one particular religion, and for many people, religion is only a mind structure, not in its deepest sense.

But for many people, a religion is an ideology that they identify with. And then they need the non-believer, the other, because by having the other, they feel their own sense of identity more strongly.

[Speaker 2] (40:56 - 41:20)

Right. And they need the other in order to feel their own sense of identity. Yes.

More strongly. Yes. They need enemies.

I thought you did such a great job of explaining this, because you say, it first starts with a baby, when the baby first reaches for the toy, and realizes, and the toy is taken away, or not given to them, and they say, no, that's mine.

[Speaker 1] (41:20 - 41:25)

That's right. That is mine. That's the beginning of identification with things.

[Speaker 2] (41:25 - 41:33)

Identification with things. And that what happens is, is that we all just grow up, and we just get bigger toys, different toys.

[Speaker 1] (41:34 - 42:20)

That's right. Yes. So it's always, ego is always identification with one form or another.

It could be a physical form, as a possession, my house, my car, and so on. So when you, when you're identified, your sense of who you are is in that thing. So, and if that thing then is criticized, for example, by somebody else, you will become, you will become extremely defensive, or aggressive, because you're feeling, your very sense of self is being threatened.

And then there are other forms of identification, for example, my opinions, mind forms. Right. People have very strong identification with their mental positions.

And I am right. I am right. And that implies, of course, that somebody else has to be wrong.

Right. So that I can continue to be right.

[Speaker 2] (42:20 - 42:35)

But tell me this, then, I'm thinking this, that, you know, as long as we are in this dense human form, perhaps we must need the ego. Otherwise, why would we have it? Otherwise, we would have evolved out of it.

[Speaker 1] (42:36 - 43:29)

We are now evolving out of it. The ego has been there for thousands of years. And as you say, the fact that it was there, has been there for thousands of years, means it has its place in the evolution of humanity.

So, I'm not saying it should never have happened. The ego had its place. It was the ability to think, develop more and more, so that gradually we became so identified with thinking, that we lost a deeper connectedness with life, which is described as the paradise in the beginning of the Old Testament.

That deeper connectedness with life. We are now, I believe, at an evolutionary transition, where many human beings, far more human beings than ever before, are able to grow out of, go beyond ego into a new state of consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (43:29 - 43:36)

Yes. You say that we face a very stark and daunting choice, and that is to either evolve or die.

[Speaker 1] (43:36 - 44:12)

Yes. This is the point where the evolution of consciousness, the awakening of humanity, is no longer a luxury. Because now, we've reached a point, if we don't grow out of the dysfunction of the ego, because the ego is now being amplified, the effects of this dysfunction are being amplified by technology.

Right. So, what we are doing to ourselves, to our fellow human beings, and to the planet, is becoming more and more destructive and devastating.

[Speaker 2] (44:12 - 44:24)

Yes. I had a conversation with Elie Wiesel yesterday. He was saying that this will be known as the 6th century.

Sick century.

[Speaker 1] (44:24 - 44:24)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (44:24 - 44:31)

Yes. In our ability just to do the most evil and sickest of things to one another.

[Speaker 1] (44:31 - 44:41)

Yes. I mean, look at the 20th century. It was dreadful.

The worst ever in terms of human suffering inflicted on humans, by humans, on other humans.

[Speaker 2] (44:41 - 44:58)

Yes, but we were saying that it doesn't seem that we learned. We didn't learn. We didn't learn.

It seems to have gotten even worse, and you were right, because of technology, because there are even greater bombs, guns, and ammunition that can kill from further distances.

[Speaker 1] (44:58 - 45:28)

Yes. Now, the question is, sometimes people ask me, are things actually getting better or worse? And my answer is, at the moment, things are both getting better and worse, which means there are two streams in existence now.

One is the old stream, the old consciousness, the unenlightened, the unawakened egoic consciousness, which is actually still continuing. You can see it a lot of the time when you watch the news in the evening.

[Speaker 2] (45:29 - 45:31)

That is the consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (45:31 - 45:36)

That's the old consciousness, which is still just as mad as before, if not more mad.

[Speaker 2] (45:36 - 45:41)

Well, the fact that we just repeat all the bad things that are happening in the world.

[Speaker 1] (45:41 - 46:10)

That's right. That's one stream. The other stream is us sitting here now and talking, because that represents we are part of, I'm not saying we are special, but the fact that we are addressing this, and the fact that many, many people are listening to this, and it is meaningful to them, means that there is another stream here, which is the stream of humanity awakening.

And both are present at this time on the planet.

[Speaker 2] (46:10 - 46:34)

And as we choose to evolve, you and I sitting here, and everyone else who's listening to us, and this conversation hits a nerve, or has a moment, and I call them aha moments, or they just find the conversation interesting, and will cause them to look at life differently today. As we do that, are we actually creating a new earth?

[Speaker 1] (46:34 - 48:16)

First of all, what happens is a new state of consciousness arises. It's not so much that we now need to get busy and create a new earth, because that would be premature. Many times, humans have tried to create a new society, or a utopia, and they all failed miserably.

So, look at communism. It started with a good idea, everybody is equal, and see what it did. Millions of people were killed in the name of communism.

So, first of all, the important thing is that we are open to the transformation of consciousness that is happening now. Out of that transformed consciousness, which in essence simply means we are no longer completely identified with thinking. We realize that inside ourselves, there is a dimension in which I am conscious, I am present, I'm awake, I'm alert, but I'm simply an aware space.

That's presence, I call it presence. You can have other words for it, awareness, unconditioned consciousness. Stillness.

Stillness. That arises now in many human beings. And so, as that arises and gradually replaces identification with thinking, and replaces relying on thinking exclusively to run your life, there's actually, in that stillness, in that awareness, there is a higher, far greater intelligence at work.

[Speaker 2] (48:16 - 48:26)

I know you say, I love how you say, let us allow nature to teach us stillness. If you want to understand stillness, you know, stand beside a tree or watch a tree.

[Speaker 1] (48:26 - 49:39)

Yes, that's a great help, just watching a tree, a plant, and be there, just watch it, be there as the aware presence that perceives the flower, the tree, the plant, the animal. Nature is always very helpful for people who want to connect with the stillness. Man-made things very often generate more thinking, because they are made through thinking.

So, go to nature, and then eventually, it's important, of course, that you also are able to sustain the state of stillness, even in the midst of a city. I actually enjoy, I'm in New York at the moment, I enjoy walking along the busy, busy streets with infernal noise and people rushing about, and feeling actually in the background, a deep sense of stillness. And actually, I can even enjoy all that movement.

And it's wonderful to be able to be there as the stillness, and not completely get drawn into some reaction. It's like being in the world, but not of it. That's exactly what it is.

[Speaker 2] (49:39 - 50:10)

Being in the world, but not of it. Yes. So, tell us how we can get to be more like you.

How can we not allow ourselves to be dominated by the ego? I know it's a lifelong process, but just for those who are listening now, who are going to read A New Earth, and read The Power of Now, and come away thinking, okay, I'm inspired by that, stimulated by, what can I begin to do today to not to have myself dominated by my ego? Yes.

[Speaker 1] (50:10 - 50:37)

Now, the ego cannot survive in the stillness. That's important to realize. So, that means, invite stillness into your life.

Now, that does not mean that stillness is something that you need to get from the outside, or somehow create for yourself. It's realizing that everybody underneath the stream of thinking already has the stillness.

[Speaker 2] (50:37 - 50:40)

Right. So, you don't have to go to Hawaii and sit on a mountaintop.

[Speaker 1] (50:40 - 53:01)

No. And you don't have to do anything to create it, because essentially it's already there. And if you look very deeply into yourself and see, where does my sense of I-ness, when people say I, they have this sense of I am essentially the deeper I, where does that sense of I-ness come from?

And then, if you look very closely, you'll find, it's actually intrinsically bound up with this, the dimension of stillness. So, that's why I say in my book, Stillness Speaks, you are never more essentially yourself than when you are still. So, you invite stillness into your life.

You can do it by taking a few conscious breaths many times during the day. Just observe your breath flowing in and out. Another way of bringing stillness, or finding the stillness that's already there, is feeling the aliveness of your body from within.

I call that the inner body. And that immediately takes your attention away from the stream of thinking, a lot of which is repetitive and useless, and bring it into the body and feel, is there life in my hands? And then you feel it.

Oh, yes, very subtle, but it's there. Is there life in my feet, my legs, my arms? And then you feel that your entire inner body is pervaded by a sense of aliveness.

And then that can serve as an anchor for remaining present, when your attention, or part of your attention, remains in the inner body. Even at this very moment, for people who are listening to us, they can practice it, and they can see that even while they are conscious of the words that they hear, they're completely following what we are saying, but it does not need to take up a hundred percent of their attention. They can have some of their attention, even as they sit there or stand there and listen, in the inner energy field of the body, and feel there is an aliveness in every cell of the body.

And that's a wonderful anchor for stillness and for presence. It doesn't mean you turn completely away from the external world. It actually brings balance into your life between being still and still being able to deal with things out here.

[Speaker 2] (53:02 - 53:04)

It's finding the space in between.

[Speaker 1] (53:04 - 53:04)

That's right.

[Speaker 2] (53:05 - 53:17)

It's finding the space. It's like when you're reading the book, I remember reading the book Power of Now for the first time, and you were saying it is the space in between, it's the awareness of what's on the page, and the space in between that awareness.

[Speaker 1] (53:17 - 53:45)

Yes. And you may also find, talking about the space in between, that you may sometimes become aware, when a thought has come to an end in your head, that between two thoughts there is a short silent space. And when you acknowledge that, which means you suddenly become conscious that for a moment there's no thinking, then it becomes a little longer.

And so you have a longer gap of stillness.

[Speaker 2] (53:46 - 53:51)

And then... But if you become aware for so long, you start thinking about it and then you lose it.

[Speaker 1] (53:51 - 53:57)

Then you lose it. The moment you say, oh look, I'm not thinking, then you're thinking again, of course. Right, right.

[Speaker 2] (53:58 - 54:05)

Is there anyone on earth at this time who you think is free of the domination of the ego? First of all, are you free of the domination of the ego?

[Speaker 1] (54:05 - 55:19)

I'm not identified with my thinking, which means I'm free of domination of the ego. And there are many, many people right now who are going through this process. They may not yet be 100% free, but they are going through the process in which they become gradually disidentified from the stream of compulsive thinking.

I'm getting letters, emails every day from all over the world of people who are telling me how their lives have changed, sometimes just by reading the book, and how they become free of identification with their mind. They are not yet totally free, which means sometimes they fall back into ego. Sometimes they fall back into obsessive thinking, compulsive thinking, addictive thinking, because for many people thinking is basically an addiction.

And then suddenly they wake up again. So it's a process that many, many people are now undergoing. I cannot tell you exactly how many, but my intuition is that in the Western world, about 10% of the adult population are at the beginning stages or a bit further, some further advanced of this process.

[Speaker 2] (55:19 - 55:41)

Well, I love also how you say in the book, we're talking about, you know, the whole tone of the book is about awakening your life's purpose. A New Earth is awakening your life's purpose. And you say that there are a lot of people who realize that how spiritual you are has nothing to do with what you believe, but everything to do with your state of consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (55:41 - 55:55)

Yes, and that's, again, it's the stillness that's the spiritual dimension. It's not any thought. Thought in itself is not spiritual.

Thought can be sometimes helpful because it can be a pointer. For example, when we say...

[Speaker 2] (55:55 - 55:56)

And beliefs are not spiritual. That's what I learned from you.

[Speaker 1] (55:56 - 56:10)

No, because beliefs are thoughts. No, some beliefs can be helpful, but only as pointers. I mean, even if we say, find the stillness that's already inside you, that's still a thought, but the thought is pointing beyond itself.

[Speaker 2] (56:11 - 56:22)

I love what you say at the end of the book, that the foundation for a new earth is a new heaven, the awakened consciousness, because what did Jesus tell his disciples? That heaven is right here in the midst of you.

[Speaker 1] (56:22 - 56:38)

Yes, that's a wonderful thing Jesus said. Heaven does not come with signs to be observed. You can't say, ah, there it is, or look, here it is, because it is essentially already within you, in the midst of you.

The stillness. The stillness.

[Speaker 2] (56:39 - 57:04)

All right. Can you believe another... We're out of time again.

Next, those of you who've been so intrigued, so empowered by words that you've heard and read over the years, and not just from listening to us, will have an opportunity to ask questions of Eckhart Tolle here on our Soul Series. Thank you again. Our listeners get to talk to you.

That's gonna be great.

[Speaker 1] (57:04 - 57:05)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (57:05 - 58:10)

Thank you. Welcome to Soul Series. Glad you can join me again on my Soul Series.

This week, I've been hogging Eckhart Tolle, author of The Power of Now, to myself, and he's kindly been indulging my many questions. I could really spend a day and a night and a weekend. Boy, would you be great for a slumber party.

But since this is talk radio and you're listening to me on Oprah and Friends XM 156, I thought it would be really great to open up the lines and have him share his wisdom and indulge in your questions. I placed a brief paragraph on my website, oprah.com, soliciting people who'd read The Power of Now and who had questions of their own for Eckhart, and I knew we'd get a great response, but I was blown away by the volume and the intensity of those responses that so many of you sent in. You know, Eckhart, well, you do know this, that you've literally transformed the lives of so many people.

What does that feel like to you?

[Speaker 1] (58:11 - 58:51)

Well, I don't feel that I did it. Something happened through me and that's how the book got written, and that's when I give talks or answer questions. I also feel not so much that I am doing it, but it's a process that happens when you become still.

I always begin the answer to every question or the beginning of every talk I give is entering the stillness and becoming comfortable with not knowing. And out of that being comfortable with not knowing comes the knowing. And I don't feel I don't identify with that which comes.

I just allow that to come.

[Speaker 2] (58:53 - 59:06)

Wow. Well, that's called, well, yep, you said to us last week you weren't dominated by the ego, so you don't feel either it's great or not great or isn't this a great thing and isn't this wonderful? So many people are reading my book.

You don't.

[Speaker 1] (59:07 - 59:27)

No, I remember my old ego, of course, would have loved it. But it really doesn't, I don't have that sense now of even having achieved anything as such. It's just being open for it to happen, being an open channel for the consciousness to evolve.

Gee, I love that.

[Speaker 2] (59:27 - 59:48)

You know, I can't say that I am not dominated by my ego, but I do feel that sometimes when people will say to me, I've watched your show, your show, I just was coming across the street here to radio and there were three women standing on the corner and said, your show changed my life. And, you know, I was wanting to feel something about it, but I just sort of thought, well, okay.

[Speaker 1] (59:48 - 59:58)

Yes, because I have a feeling with you also that is happening, that many things that you do and say are actually come from a deeper place than the ego.

[Speaker 2] (59:58 - 1:00:01)

That's right. I'm just, that's what I'm supposed to do.

[Speaker 1] (1:00:01 - 1:00:01)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:00:01 - 1:00:09)

That's how I feel about it. Well, this is exciting. Wendy Graham is on the phone.

Hello. Hello. How are you, Oprah?

Hi, Wendy.

[Speaker 6] (1:00:10 - 1:00:11)

Hi, Eckhart. How are you?

[Speaker 1] (1:00:11 - 1:00:13)

Fine. Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 6] (1:00:13 - 1:00:32)

Thank you so much for your work and sharing your life with the world. I am so grateful. And the question I have for you this evening is, how do you embody what you talk about?

You being free of the domination of ego. Can you please share your experience of living in the here and now?

[Speaker 1] (1:00:33 - 1:06:32)

Well, thank you, Wendy. Thank you. The, basically, life becomes very, very simple.

So I don't inhabit a world of problems because my primary interest and the primary focus of my conscious attention is always in the present moment. It doesn't mean that I'm not aware that there is a so-called future. I may be aware I have to go to this or that place.

I have to be there in an hour or two hours or tomorrow I'm going there. On the periphery of consciousness, there's always the knowledge of what needs to be done on that level. But the primary focus is always on the present moment.

And so life becomes basically very simple. And it could also be described as a state of surrender to life, which is always the now. So my relationship with the now is a very friendly one.

And I sometimes actually suggest to people that they can also, if they inhabit a life full of problems, they can actually also change their relationship to the present moment. So that's a very important question to ask yourself at any time. What is my relationship with this moment?

And then you need to be alert and see, am I making this moment into an enemy? Am I treating it as if it were an enemy? Or am I treating this moment as if it were an obstacle that I need to overcome?

For many people, the present moment is always some kind of obstacle because they think they always need to get to some other moment desperately, but it's always this moment. Or am I reducing this moment to a means to an end, just a stepping stone to get to the next moment? These are all ways of denying the present moment, a means to an end, an obstacle, or even an enemy.

So become aware many times during the day and see, how am I relating to the present moment? When you do that, what you're really asking is, what is my relationship with life? Because the present moment is essentially your life.

It's nowhere else, never, ever. Your life, you can only encounter your life in the present moment, nowhere else. So it's a vital question to ask yourself what your relationship is with life.

Because if your relationship with life is one of hostility, which is when you make the present moment into an obstacle or an enemy, then life always reflects back to you your predominant state of consciousness. So when you are treating the present moment as if it were something undesirable, your life experience will then reflect back to you that state of consciousness, which means you experience life as hostile. One bad thing after another, one problem after another.

But what if you really do have problems? You have to always start, enter the present moment with your attention, so that you find that space of now in which actually problems cannot survive. In the now.

In the now. And out of that, because then that moment you contact a deeper intelligence than the conditioned thinking mind. That is the place out of which intuition comes, out of which creative action comes.

It's the place out of which knowing comes, wisdom comes, right action comes. So you find, first of all, go deeper into now, so that make sure that you are one internally with the present moment, so that you're not in a state of negativity to do with the present moment. Because that is a dysfunctional state.

Now, you could, of course, take action on the basis of negativity. For example, you might feel very unhappy with having little money. And then you become angry even.

And then you work extremely hard. And finally, after five or ten years, you become wealthy. But all that action is contaminated by the negativity if it comes out of anger.

And it will create further suffering for yourself and others. So the important thing is, am I aligned internally with the present moment? No matter what it is, you say, this is what is.

And you open yourself to that. And no matter what the situation is, you can always find something to be grateful for. Because great gratitude is an essential part of being present.

Because when you go deeply into the present, the gratitude arises spontaneously. Even if it's just gratitude for breathing. It's gratitude for drinking a glass of water.

It's gratitude for that tree that you see there. Gratitude for perhaps the aliveness that you feel in your body. Gratitude is there when you acknowledge the aliveness of the present moment.

The power of life wants to come through you, but it can't. Only a little trickle, perhaps, if you're lucky, comes through. So the most vital thing for anybody who wants to even change their lives is, first of all, come to a relationship with the present moment that is one of openness, friendliness, acceptance.

[Speaker 2] (1:06:33 - 1:06:37)

Even if something is going on in that moment that is making you uncomfortable?

[Speaker 1] (1:06:37 - 1:06:43)

Yes, even if it looks externally, the mind would usually judge it as negative.

[Speaker 2] (1:06:43 - 1:06:48)

You are very highly enlightened. Because that's hard to do when you're in the middle of a crisis, I got to tell you.

[Speaker 1] (1:06:48 - 1:06:59)

It's hard to do, but it's something for people to find out whether they can do it. Okay. And sometimes the mind will tell you, oh, there's no point in even trying.

All right.

[Speaker 7] (1:07:09 - 1:07:10)

Welcome to Soul Series.

[Speaker 1] (1:07:12 - 1:07:32)

So, very often the thought that says you can't do it, or the thought that says you can't be present now because you've got too much on your mind, says the mind. So, you don't necessarily have to believe every thought that comes into your head. And you see, oh, there's another thought that says I can't be present.

Yes. And then you're present.

[Speaker 2] (1:07:32 - 1:07:38)

Just keep going back to what we were saying on a previous show. In this moment, right now, I'm all right.

[Speaker 1] (1:07:38 - 1:08:03)

Yes. So the question was, how do you do it? How do I live?

And that's how I live. But I'm saying the important thing is not so much how I live. The important thing is how you live.

And the essence of this transformation of this way of empowered living is to make the present moment your friend. That's the foundation for all of our empowerment. Okay, Wendy.

[Speaker 2] (1:08:03 - 1:08:04)

Thank you, Wendy.

[Speaker 6] (1:08:04 - 1:08:06)

Thank you, Oprah. Thank you, Eckhart. Thank you so much.

[Speaker 2] (1:08:07 - 1:08:35)

All right. That's Wendy. I know Wendy.

Wendy's my daughter. That's how she got the first phone call. She's my life partner's daughter.

So I've watched her grow up since she was a child. And we talk about these all the time, this subject all the time. And when she heard that you were going to be on, she was like, oh, please.

I called her and I said, I would send the tape. And then I said, you know what? Do you have a question?

And so she's been planning her question probably now for six days. That's great. All right.

Thanks, Wendy. I'm getting on to Anthony. Anthony, hello.

[Speaker 5] (1:08:36 - 1:08:37)

Hi, Oprah.

[Speaker 2] (1:08:37 - 1:08:37)

How are you?

[Speaker 5] (1:08:38 - 1:08:39)

I'm good. Hi, Eckhart.

[Speaker 1] (1:08:39 - 1:08:40)

Hello, Anthony.

[Speaker 5] (1:08:41 - 1:08:45)

My question has to do with human relationships.

[Speaker 1] (1:08:46 - 1:08:46)

Yes.

[Speaker 5] (1:08:46 - 1:08:59)

As evolving spiritual beings, how do we stay in touch and connected with other people, particularly family members and close friends that are highly unconscious?

[Speaker 1] (1:09:00 - 1:09:44)

All right. Yes. Thank you.

Good question. That's many people will be able to relate to that question. When you feel that you are becoming more conscious, you're waking up out of identification with the mind, then in some cases you find family members, close friends, relative, they are still totally immersed in identification with ego and with thinking.

Your primary thing, of course, primary purpose is not to expect others to be conscious. So first of all, you need to drop your expectation that others should be conscious or should behave consciously.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:45 - 1:10:02)

And also there's a little bit of, I remember when I first started many years ago, becoming more aware, there's a little cockiness that comes, which is obviously your ego. I know that now, where you're kind of like, I know this and you don't. So you have to put that in its place also.

[Speaker 1] (1:10:02 - 1:11:37)

That's right. Yes. Because at many stages of one's awakening, the ego can come back in.

Right. And say, and claim some kind of specialness. Yes, because I know and you don't.

Yes. Yes. Because the moment you say, I know, and you don't, that you have identified yourself with a mental position, which I know, and that's the ego.

Yes. So first of all is you accept other people, you accept where they are at in their evolutionary development. So first comes the acceptance of others.

And then you may find as you continue to practice presence, as you continue to grow in awareness, you may find that certain people around you are also beginning to change. Some will, some won't. If there's the slightest readiness in a person close to you, then something that is happening inside you will transmit itself, so to speak, and also trigger another person's awakening.

If there is an opening in the other person for that. So what people usually find as they awaken spiritually is that some people around them awaken with them, and then you're on that journey together. And they also find that other people, friends, drift out of their lives gradually.

Those who are not ready to awaken.

[Speaker 2] (1:11:37 - 1:11:39)

Because don't you attract like frequency?

[Speaker 1] (1:11:40 - 1:13:01)

That's right. So, and you also, you attract very often, as you say, new people into your life that correspond to this new frequency. That's arising within you.

Now, one other point here is that there may be certain family members, people who will remain in your life. And it's quite possible that they may not awaken. And your spiritual practice is to surrender to the fact that they are who they are at this moment.

Wow. This is not expect them to be different. The moment you drop your expectation of, let's say, your parents, they should be more conscious, or what other kinds of expectations that people have is, my parents should understand me.

But they don't. Why should they? So you drop the should, which is a thought, and you accept your parents the way they are.

And the next time you visit them, maybe your father says the same thing to you. He says, you should have listened to me 20 years ago. You would be better off now, whatever the old story is that you've heard so many times.

And instead of reacting in the same old way, you can simply allow him to say that and just be there as an open presence for what, for those words, for what he's saying.

[Speaker 2] (1:13:01 - 1:13:11)

I got it. I just had an epiphany. You surrender your attachment to.

Your expectation of what any outcome should be. Exactly. Yes.

I got that. Did you get it, Anthony?

[Speaker 5] (1:13:12 - 1:13:14)

I did. I very much did. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:13:14 - 1:13:25)

Wow, that's great. You just, you know, and you've said this, Eckhart, about how you move through life, surrendering to the now. You surrender to what is.

[Speaker 1] (1:13:25 - 1:13:25)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:13:25 - 1:13:35)

And then that's what you were trying to explain to him. You do the same thing with all other situations and obstacles with people or whatever your expectation of them should be.

[Speaker 1] (1:13:35 - 1:14:35)

You surrender to that. That's right. So because very often when we talk about surrendering to the now or accepting the now as it is, very often it means a person that is there in front of you in the now.

Right, right. So you accept whatever this person says or does will be a reflection of their evolutionary stage. And you accept it as it is.

The amazing thing is when you completely accept a human being as they are right now, without demanding that they should be different or they should be more conscious, if you completely accept them, very often change happens which otherwise would never have happened. Wow. If you had resisted or if you had demanded or expected this or that.

There's an enormous power behind that acceptance, because the moment you accept another human being completely, a deeper consciousness comes into play, because that's another way of contacting the space or the stillness inside you.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:35 - 1:14:44)

I got it. I had another epiphany because I was just going to say, when you accept them, it changes the frequency. It changes the energy.

It changes the space.

[Speaker 1] (1:14:44 - 1:14:44)

Exactly.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:45 - 1:14:46)

The whole frequency changes.

[Speaker 3] (1:14:47 - 1:14:47)

That's it.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:47 - 1:14:48)

I got it.

[Speaker 3] (1:14:48 - 1:14:51)

Okay, Lisa, how are you? Hi, I'm good. How are you?

[Speaker 2] (1:14:51 - 1:14:53)

Good. Your question for Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 3] (1:14:53 - 1:14:54)

Yes. Hi, Eckhart.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:55 - 1:14:55)

Hello, Lisa.

[Speaker 3] (1:14:56 - 1:16:04)

I seem to be a little bit backwards in terms of really understanding the power of now. I am an artist. I am very familiar with being in the moment, and I feel like I embrace that and live it fully as my calling.

As you two mentioned earlier, I have a sense of being in this world but not of this world, so when I get a compliment on the painting, it doesn't actually feel like I've done the painting. It's a compliment for... Yes.

The big picture, whoever the powers that be. And what I aspire to is having more of that kind of experience in my daily life, in the mundane tasks, which seems to take up a lot of time. Yes.

And so I'm wondering, what does life look like when you're fully engaged and you're cleaning the cat box or you're doing the bills or you're...

[Speaker 1] (1:16:04 - 1:16:04)

Yes.

[Speaker 3] (1:16:05 - 1:16:05)

Grocery shopping.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:06 - 1:16:12)

Okay, yeah. So you are able to be present when you do your artwork.

[Speaker 3] (1:16:13 - 1:16:16)

Yeah, and also when I'm driving, oddly enough.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:16 - 1:16:25)

Yes. And now what happens when you go shopping or do other tasks at home? You lose the presence?

[Speaker 3] (1:16:25 - 1:16:27)

Frustrated and bored.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:27 - 1:16:28)

Ah, yes.

[Speaker 3] (1:16:28 - 1:16:28)

Bored, yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:28 - 1:17:03)

Yes, yes. Okay. Okay.

Good. Let's see. You have to become very alert to look at your inner state at that time.

And when you say, I become frustrated or bored, you have to become alert and see what that actually means, what happens inside you when you become frustrated or bored. And you may find that a whole train of thinking arises that is either negative about what you're doing or about some problem that you may have.

[Speaker 7] (1:17:05 - 1:17:07)

Welcome to Soul Series.

[Speaker 1] (1:17:09 - 1:19:16)

What is boredom? Boredom is the thinking mind is looking for some kind of stimulus and it's not finding enough because the cleaning job, like the cleaning that you're doing is not enough for the thinking mind. So, it gets very bored and restless.

It says, I want something more interesting to feed on. So, basically, it's the mind begins to be active inside you and then the opportunity arises of being the awareness that observes what your mind is doing at this moment. So, your mind is complaining perhaps about what you're doing or doesn't like it and has certain judgments about it.

And then you may also observe the emotions that you have that come with those judgments when the mind says, I don't want to be doing this. I would rather be doing something else. What emotion do you have when the mind says that?

Because to a large extent, the emotions you experience are a reflection of your thought processes. So, you observe the two levels, thinking and the emotions as a reflection of thinking in the body. And then you ask yourself, okay, you become aware of the thoughts and you become aware of the emotions, the restlessness, the anxiety.

And then you ask yourself, who am I at this moment? And you will realize you are not the thinking. You are not the emotions.

You are the awareness behind them from where you can see, observe the thinking and the emotions. And the moment you realize that you are the awareness, you're actually in a different state of consciousness. And you're not bored anymore.

You're not bored. You're totally present again. So, you are present as the witness or the observer of your mind and of your emotions.

So, the important question is, at this moment, who am I? The thoughts, the emotions, or the knower, the awareness behind?

[Speaker 2] (1:19:17 - 1:19:17)

The observer.

[Speaker 1] (1:19:17 - 1:19:24)

The observer. And you realize you are the awareness. You are the presence.

And then that's your present.

[Speaker 2] (1:19:24 - 1:19:28)

So, we get bored because we're looking for more stimulation for the ego.

[Speaker 1] (1:19:29 - 1:20:02)

Yes, that's right. The mind looks for more food for thought. It's not finding enough food for thought.

So, the one very important point here is, you do not need to get rid of certain thoughts. It's enough to be the awareness behind the thoughts. Then the thoughts, all the dysfunctional thoughts, lose their power.

And the thoughts that remain when you are aware actually come out of awareness. And they tend to be more creative and empowered thoughts that are not negative.

[Speaker 2] (1:20:03 - 1:20:06)

All right. I hope that helped, Lisa. It did.

[Speaker 3] (1:20:06 - 1:20:07)

Thank you so much.

[Speaker 2] (1:20:07 - 1:20:13)

All right. I'm going to go to Connie now. Is Connie there?

Let's go to Connie. Connie, how are you?

[Speaker 4] (1:20:13 - 1:21:21)

Thank you both very much. You've given me many new perspectives today. I'm 49 years old and recently divorced after a 21-year marriage.

And for the first time, both of my sons are in college. And before, I was a computer programmer. And now, I have an opportunity that I love, teaching senior citizens how to communicate using computers.

But I'm under tremendous pressure to make more money and to go back to corporate America because my alimony is on a declining structure. So, my question is, will I always... I can get into the now and I have been practicing this for over five years with yoga and what have you.

But will I always or does one always go into a pain body or a fear body or a mind awareness and then come back out? Do you think it is ever possible to live peacefully in the now or is that too much of a lofty goal?

[Speaker 2] (1:21:22 - 1:21:27)

I love that question. Can you explain pain body too as you answer that question, Eckhart?

[Speaker 1] (1:21:28 - 1:24:54)

Yes, the pain body, as I call it, is an accumulation of past emotion that still lives inside you. A lot of it comes from childhood, many painful childhood experiences. And children often need to cut themselves off from emotional pain because they cannot endure it.

And that's normal for a child who suffers emotional pain. And most children these days suffer pain, one form or another. So, pain leaves remnants in the body.

And those remnants of emotional pain, I call the pain body. They are an energy form consisting of old emotion. And one way of looking at it is to look at it as almost an entity that lives inside you, an emotional entity.

It has two stages. One is dormant and one is active. So, for certain periods of time, you don't even know that you have a pain body.

And then regularly, at regular intervals, something happens and your pain body will get triggered. It will come out of its dormant state and it will move into your thinking mind and start to control your thinking. So, a very powerful negative emotion suddenly invades your thinking mind and then controls the internal dialogue, all your thinking.

The pain body has then woken up, so to speak, and it does that periodically because it needs to feed on negative energy, which can be in the form of your thoughts or it can be in the form of other people's reactions. So, the pain body will often try to provoke a negative reaction in your partner so that it can feed on the negative reaction from your partner. So, many people who are in relationships can recognize that in the periodic need for drama in relationships.

So, if you are able to observe that in yourself, then you don't get completely drawn into the pain body and then the pain body cannot renew itself through you. So, it's vital to be there as the awareness when it happens and realize, oh, there's my pain body or there's my partner's pain body. So that you don't confuse it with who you are.

So, you remain there as the awareness. Now, the question is, can we ever be free of the pain body? Can we ever be free of negative reactions falling back into all that?

This question, I would recommend that we simplify the question and rather than asking, can we ever be free, which is a huge amount of future time, can I be free at this moment? It's really the only question that you truly need to ask yourself. Because the only place where you can ever be free or need ever be free is this moment, not the rest of your life, just this moment.

Because when you look more closely, you'll see that this moment is all there ever is. So, I would recommend that you rephrase your question. Don't ask about ever or for the rest of your life, but be content with simply addressing this moment at any given time.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:54 - 1:24:56)

And what's the answer? Can you be free right now, Connie?

[Speaker 4] (1:24:59 - 1:25:02)

I'm closer to it than I have ever been before.

[Speaker 1] (1:25:02 - 1:25:06)

Yes. Yes. Thank you.

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:25:06 - 1:26:10)

Eckhart, this has just been one of the great joys of my career to be able to sit down and talk to you. I mean, I thought about this time that we've shared together on this radio show. I've thought about this for so many years, like what would it be like?

What would it be like? And it has been more than I could ever imagine. And so, I was wasting my time.

I should have just waited for the now, thinking about what it could be like. Thank you for all of your encouraging inspiration that has allowed myself and so many other people who've read your works, The Power of Now, Stillness Speaks, New Earth, have allowed us all to see our own lives differently and to see the possibility of an awakened consciousness. Thank you so much.

Thank you, Oprah. Thank you so much. Thanks for joining us on XM 156.

I hope you enjoyed this edition of our Soul Series. These are some of my favorite conversations.

[Speaker 7] (1:26:10 - 1:26:18)

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2007 Eckhart Tolle Freedom from the World 2007 Retreat Part 1 of 2

[Speaker 2] (0:10 - 1:35)

Om Namo Avalokiteshvaraya Om Namo Avalokiteshvaraya Om Namo Avalokiteshvaraya Welcome to our retreat.

[Speaker 1] (1:35 - 20:59)

You made it. You are here, despite everything. And if you are here, and if you are still here a week from now, that means that you are already undergoing a transformation of consciousness.

I'm saying if you are still here a week from now, because it's possible that one or two people could be here for ego reasons, but they wouldn't be able to stand it, not for a whole week. It would become unbearable. You wouldn't be able to stand the stillness.

And most of all, you wouldn't be able to stand yourself. Because whoever is still under the control of ego is running always somewhere else, is not at ease with who they are, where they are, and what is. Never at ease.

And so they won't be at ease here either. If the pattern inside your head is to be ill at ease, how could you be at ease here? And very quickly you would find reasons to justify to yourself and others your state of not being at ease.

If you're looking for excuses for not being at ease in the now, the only place there is, you can always find them wherever you go. You could say, I didn't come here for bad weather, not knowing that by attaching that label, that thought, you've taken the weather out of the totality. Because within the totality, the so-called bad weather, which isn't bad at all, is inseparable from the beauty that surrounds you here.

It feeds it. But mind takes it out and separates one little fragment and calls it something, unaware that it is part of the totality. And weather is only a tiny example of that.

You take anything that happens to you, any condition that arises, is part of the totality. And when you judge it, call it this or that, and even call it good. Even good weather, why call it anything?

It is as it is. If you call it good, then you must have bad weather, because you can't have good weather without bad weather, because otherwise the word good doesn't make sense anymore. And I'm only taking weather as a small example.

So these are conditions that arise continuously, if you want to use them, if the mind, the egoic mind wants to use them for its own purposes, which is to be right, to make something or someone wrong, to enhance your sense of self through resisting and complaining. You can always find excuses, reasons, but they are never the true reasons. There's a beautiful lesson in the Course in Miracles that says, I'm never upset for the reason I think.

I am never upset for the reason I think. So that, of course, means to be upset is part of the structure of the egoic mind. You're not in touch with the depth of who you are, the essence of your being.

You're not in touch with the depths of the present moment, which is inseparable from the depths of who you are. And that's why you're upset. And then little things happen, and then that permanent state of being upset comes out.

It's just waiting to say, ah, that's why I'm upset. Now I know why I'm so unhappy. There's a bug in my bed.

So these are... Now I'm not saying the fact that you're already, you're here because you are undergoing the transformation of consciousness does not necessarily mean that you are entirely free, entirely free yet, of those mind structures, egoic structures. Because your ability to be rooted within the depths of being, which is the depths of yourself and the depths of the present moment, inseparable, your ability to be, to dwell within yourself, to rest within your very being, that's the only thing that could redeem you from the state of being upset, unhappy, fearful.

That may still, in some of you, occasionally become obscured by mind waves and by the old structures which still have a certain momentum within you. They are collective human mind structures, been around for a long time. And so you may find yourself occasionally, during this week that we are here together, you may find yourself, or you may already have found yourself in the short time that you have been here, becoming upset with this, that, or the other.

And that's nothing personal. You don't need to feel, oh, he caught me. It's nothing personal.

And it is quite possible that from time to time, you will find yourself entering the state, I'm using that word that is used in the cause of miracles, you're upset one way or another, fearful, anxious, complaining, sad, doubting, emotions and mind waves come and say, this is, I feel that because of this, this is doing this because of that. And then perhaps you remember, I'm never upset for the reason I think. Oh, and then it's a little pointer.

It works like a bell. And so sometimes the bell that I occasionally use is a spiritual alarm clock. It says, step out of your state of being identified with thinking and emotions.

Step out and be present and see your thoughts and emotions. That's the spiritual alarm clock, because awakening means to awaken out of the old mental emotional patterns. And so a bell can fulfill that function.

That's why in some monasteries, they use it quite a lot. Or a stick that the master in a Zen monastery uses to hit you, that can work too. Or a little pointer like, I'm never upset for the reason I think.

And then you suddenly, that wakes you, awakens you out of your identification with the reaction, the mental emotional reaction that was ego, that was me. And then you see it. And then you see the situation isn't really that important.

And you see, the real reason why you're upset is you've lost touch with yourself. Or another way of putting it, you've lost touch with the present moment. You're not fully aligned internally with what is now.

So, and not being aligned internally with whatever form this moment takes, means not being in touch with life. Because at this moment, life is taking this form. It's not going to last.

Forms never last. But at this moment, life is taking this form. To be aligned with a deeper life that is beyond form, you need to be first of all aligned with the form that life takes, instead of rejecting the form and saying, I'm looking for the real life, but not this.

So that's a little secret. And that's something to be particularly practiced, to be aware of here, to be aligned, to be in touch with being who you are, or what you are, beyond the conditioned entity, conditioned by the past, mentally-emotional conditioning, a bundle of mentally-emotional conditioning. That's, to most people, that's who they think they are.

They speak out of that. They react out of that. They interact, and so on, and are upset a lot of the time out of that.

So to be aligned with who you are beyond that, the unconditioned, the being that you are, that which is so hard to put into words, because words come from this world of forms, and we are now pointing towards the formless dimension in yourself. Not the form, not the physical form, and certainly not the psychological form of me. It's a temporary formation.

Nothing wrong with it. It's a temporary formation, like a cloud, or a snowflake. No human is the same on the planet.

And they say, when they look at snowflakes through the microscope, not one snowflake is the same as any other snowflake. And yet, it only survives for a short time. So to be aligned with who you are, and that's the only thing that can free you from the state of being unhappy, which is structural, not caused ultimately by conditions, because I have met people in the worst of conditions, physical or otherwise, who were absolutely at peace inside.

So it's not that. Life. Jesus said, I want you to have life, and I want you to have it more abundantly.

True, abundant life, which is not to do with quantities, forms of life, but life itself. To be in touch with the life that you are, which is one with the life that is at the heart of the universe. You could also call it God, if the word had not been misused so much.

To enter life, you have to first of all enter, and life by life we mean here, not a form of life, but the formless, timeless one life, of which you are a temporary expression. To know that, that is the purpose of your being here, that is the purpose of the universe, it wants to know itself through you. To know that one life that you are, a condition for that is not being at odds with the forms of life, the form that life takes at this moment, because that's the only place where life can take form.

So to bring an inner alignment to whatever condition arises at this moment, either an external condition or internal condition. Oh, this is how it is. Doesn't mean you can't take action.

If you're in bed, cold, your pajama isn't slick enough, you thought you were coming to a warmer climate. Well, if you arrived, by the way, if you arrived this evening, you'll be surprised how hot it is tomorrow morning. That's how it seems to go every day.

Of course, you can ask for a blanket. You can say, okay, I need to accept this moment, I'm not going to ask for a blanket. If there's something you can change, let's you take a step, but the action that you take already arises out of an inner alignment, not out of being upset, because if you run to the reception or wherever you go and you're already upset because the egoic entity used the fact that you were not warm enough in your bed or in your tent, used that as some another justification for being upset, just its normal condition came up again and said, this is why. Of course, it's not. It's only a blanket, or it's only a little cold.

And then you go, and then they will either tell you, yes, here it is, or they tell you, no, we've run out of blankets. There are too many people here. We don't have that many blankets.

And then you go, ah. Now, you can see the egoic entity would have another reason for being even more upset. And in that strengthens its sense of self, which is a total illusion.

Its illusory sense of me gets strengthened through the upset. And then it runs and you talk to your next one, you know what? They don't even have enough blankets.

And then perhaps at that moment, if you remember, I'm never upset for the reason I think. And of course, I'm never upset for the reason I think means I'm upset because I've lost the present moment. I'm not aligned with the form that this moment takes.

That's all. If I were aligned internally, if I said, that's how it is, I've taken action that didn't work, and then I can ask somebody else about some blankets, or find some other means of covering myself, or I find nothing and I'm simply shiver in bed. And that is not that bad either.

If you lived in a Zen monastery, you would shiver for years.

[Speaker 2] (21:03 - 21:09)

And they can't complain.

[Speaker 1] (21:09 - 1:08:59)

Well, they can not only in the head, but they can't go to the master and complain. You idiot, go out! And he's not insulting, he's hoping to break your mind identification.

Sometimes it works, but most of the time it doesn't. So you work with whatever arises. That's the raw material for our retreat.

Whatever condition arises, external or internal. And so, if you couldn't find the place to just to stay for one moment with that situation, you then spend a night feeling a little cold. And then that's a good opportunity for not mentally labeling it, and not even saying, I'm cold.

That makes it far worse. And you are feeling upset, and in that you feel good. The ego feels good about that.

The strange thing is that the ego, what is bad for the organism, being upset, the body doesn't like it, it interferes with the flow of energy through the body. But to the ego, it's great to be upset. The more upset, the stronger I feel.

And so, whatever condition arises is as it is at this moment. Nobody could argue with that, except the ego. Whatever arises at this moment is as it is.

And if you can recognize that fact, suddenly life becomes very simple. Because it's the simplicity of the present moment, which you can always deal with. It's always really quite simple.

Either you take action, or you let it be. If action is necessary or possible, action happens. But it doesn't arise anymore out of the ego, which really is looking to enhance itself through the action, to make itself right and somebody else wrong.

If action is possible or necessary, it happens. If no action is possible, there's a simple, beautiful acceptance of this moment as it is. And that is the inner alignment with this

moment.

So confusion leaves you, because confusion is to do with being out of the moment and trying to work something out about your past and your future and how they two hang together. How can I make it work, my life story? And I've got, okay, then you're like, I may have 20 years left and I've got to make it work.

And you neglect the primary where life is found, the present moment. So people are trying to make their life work or find their life purpose in terms of future. Where is my life purpose?

And then automatically you look to the future for your life purpose. That is your secondary life purpose. The future is your life purpose to do with this temporary form, whatever function this form fulfills.

And yes, that also exists. It has its dimension also. But primary is the purpose of, it is your purpose to be internally one with life.

And that can only be found in the present moment. And if you miss that because you're looking for some greater purpose than this, you've missed the primary, the very foundation of your life, this moment, and looking for some greater life in some future moment, which doesn't exist except as a thought. So we are here to go deeper into this.

It is the depth. It's to do with depth. That's why we may briefly touch upon what you do externally with your life.

Of course, that's, that also, that is a dimension that is a temporary one, you as form. But nothing, it is nothing compared to the importance of being one with who you are in the depths of your being. What purpose could you possibly find if you're not one, if you're looking to the future to find that state of being one with who you are?

Who you are, not who you will be. One with being, life, God, the now is the portal. But you, the formless dimension, but you cannot reach the formless dimension.

I'm saying it again. I will repeat it many times. You cannot be aligned with the formless eternal life that you are as long as you reject or resist or are at odds with the form that life takes at this moment.

Then the form that life takes as your life situation or as a condition that arises becomes a wall, a big obstacle. You have made it into it. It isn't.

But you would, you have, you make then whatever situation or condition arises in your life and you look upon it as an obstacle. Like, oh no, this is not what I want. Oh no, oh no.

Something, oh no, not this again. That's not supposed to happen. That shouldn't happen.

He shouldn't do that. They shouldn't. I shouldn't.

Oh no. And so you create, it's that which separates you. You're looking, there are people who are looking for spiritual enlightenment away from what is here.

They're in some, and that's, these are people who love abstract, some abstract mental constructs about what enlightenment is. And they study it for years. And then you get divisions.

You can divide in 15 this and 25 that and 100 this and oh. So the form that is the condition, the form of this moment, that this moment takes, if you're internally aligned, it becomes an opening. The worse it is, the wider the opening really.

So you, we work with that, this, these days that we are here, bringing particular alertness, particular attention to whatever arises outside or inside. Notice your reactions. See if you can be in a state of immediate oneness with the form that life takes at this moment, immediate inner oneness.

Whenever you are in immediate inner oneness, you're already a master, spiritual master. Maybe only for that minute. Maybe the next minute you're no longer at one, but that's fine.

You don't need to be a master for the rest of your life. It's enough to be master of the present moment because that's all there is. Otherwise the mind comes in and says, but yeah, but I'm not going to able to sustain this for the So the mastery of life doesn't mean that you exert, exert total control over everything and everybody.

Mastery means to be one with the totality, the total, the cosmos, the Tao, the flow of the universe. It's all, it's all one. It's all interconnected.

The web of, the web of the one world, universe, reality. To be one with that, that's being a master. One, so master is master of the present moment.

That's all. And suddenly life becomes, is very simple. The present moment is primary in your life at any moment.

And whenever you forget that, you become upset. And so you're not upset for the reason you think you're upset because you forgot what really matters. That's all.

And so it's interesting to see how many times this week you forget what really matters. Forget yourself, forget being, forget the present moment. And the moment you realize that you forgot the present moment, you forgot what really matters.

The moment you realize that, you haven't forgotten. It's only when you don't know it, then you've truly forgotten it. Because then you're immersed in the reaction, in the old mental emotional pattern.

That means you've truly forgotten. That means you're truly asleep. Spiritually speaking, you're asleep.

And then you need a stronger dose, perhaps, of a stronger alarm clock. But here, of course, there are probably many because we meet here quite often. And it'll be hard to stay asleep here.

If you're deadlocked and your door's off, that's another matter. Externally, what you do here, there is more freedom on this retreat than on some other retreats that you may have attended. If you have been on other retreats, not our retreats, but some other, there's some retreats, meditation retreats that are like boot camps, where you have to, you have to, you sit for 10 hours a day, and you meditate, and you walk, and you can't even look at anybody.

And I'm not saying that's bad. That could be great too. It's just, this is different.

Forms are different, that's all. That could take you into being too. And here, the form is somewhat different.

And to some extent, it is up to you whether, on the external level, you want to have a retreat and refrain from speaking, in which case, whenever anybody approaches you, you could go. And then they know that you want to be on a silent retreat. I would also like to, at some point for probably two or three days, we will endeavor to be silent together for a whole day or two days, whatever it may be.

But in addition to that, you may want to, those who want it, can be silent all the time. There's some silent tables set aside in the restaurant. Or you can reduce your amount of verbal exchange to a minimum and not engage in a lot of chit-chat.

But that's up to you. I'm not saying you should. Or you can engage in normal chit-chat and still be present and observe the chit-chat coming out of your mouth.

There it goes. If you are one of those people who want to continue to chit-chat, that's fine. But something that will help you observe the chit-chatting entity, it helps to be, while you chit-chat or listen to somebody else chit-chatting, to be in your body, to feel the inner, the aliveness in your body while you sit there and chit-chat.

That's not immediately easy, because what tends to happen is the stream of chit-chatting draws all your attention in, and the old stories come out. And you can actually see how they pull you along. They pull your consciousness.

Your consciousness is pulled into these words, and the words go one string of strings of words, like coming out of you like some long string. And there's no end. It's like a magician.

And as that happens, can you be in the body, or at least can you feel your hands, the aliveness in your hands while you talk? You are not really talking. It's the mind is talking.

Can you feel the aliveness in your hands? Or when you listen to the other person chit-chatting, can you feel the energy in your body? And while you listen, can you at least listen to the other person without engaging in preparatory chit-chat?

What are you going to say next? Or some clever remark that's waiting on the tip of your tongue. So to be in the body, and that's useful also for those who decide to have more of a monastic retreat and refrain from speaking altogether, because that doesn't help you.

If that thing up here is continuously busy, and perhaps even more busy than it would be if you were talking to people normally, because it gets so frustrated not being able to talk. And then it talks even more in the head. And so being in the body is important, no matter whether you're having a social retreat or a monastic retreat.

It being rooted here means some of the attention goes away from... The mind hasn't got all that much attention anymore. The attention is in the body.

And it's beautiful to rest, to have attention in here while you do things, especially while you listen to others. Or if you are having a silent retreat and you're sitting at a silent table, you can hear other people talking. And can you be the silent listener while others are talking?

Or is somebody else talking in you and saying, look at these people, they're supposed to be on a spiritual retreat and they're talking, not me. Ego can use all kinds of disguises and forms. And when you think you got rid of ego in one form, it appears in another.

So it's essential to watch, be there, watch, be alert. So it's up to you then what kind of a retreat you want to have. But these we meet here, that's a given.

Observe doubts that come into your mind, because mind is doubt. If it's not doubt, it's some kind of obsession or so-called conviction. It's probably worse than doubt.

This absolute conviction that this is how it is. And I've had it for 20 years and this is how it is. Or it goes, well, what if, but on the other hand, I shouldn't have come here, should I?

Yes, no. Oh, that reminds me of the presidential come. There were these two who seemed to embody, they say one was going from one to the other and the other has an absolute conviction.

Two forms of mind that the mind can take. So doubt may come in that you, perhaps you shouldn't have come here. Often people tell me that on the second or third day, they start thinking of leaving.

The mind gets suddenly very active and says, nothing is happening here. And the same people often tell me that they haven't left. But then they tell me towards the end of the retreat, the mind comes in and absolutely says, I don't want to leave here.

So you can observe that also. So that's a wonderful thing to be there as the observer of your mind, what it does, what it says, its reactions, because you're also observing the ego. Ego is no more than mind, mental, emotional forms that you have identified with that carry a sense of self.

That's all. Being in the body. I recommend it tonight.

When you go to bed. If you're traveling with a friend or partner. When once you lie down, at least then stop talking.

And going to sleep lying flat on your back first, and enter the inner energy field of your body. And of course, you will still listen and you will listen much more acutely to the noises, the night insects, the beautiful sounds. And you will be able to listen to all that.

Because as you enter the body, the mind, the mental noise will gradually calm down, or dissolve completely. And only then can you truly listen. We'll be talking about that.

So you lie on your back, hands either on your legs or by your side, and you lie in the energy field of your body. And so the compulsive thinking subsides, the thinking entity subsides, and there's simply spacious aliveness. And go to sleep from there.

Don't go to sleep from mental noise. You're lucky here that there's no television, so you can't watch the latest talk show or whatever it is. There's no magazines, at least I haven't seen any.

If you brought them, put them away. Newspapers, put them away. Because these are addictive things to the mind, which is always searching for more, more stimulus, more of this to get its teeth into.

And so you may find, not only tonight, but also in the next few days, certain symptoms of withdrawal symptoms. Because the mind is addictive. The mind, everybody's mind is an addict.

And so even if you're not addicted to drugs, it's still an addict. And if you can't sing, even if you don't watch TV and read papers or ever, the mind is still addicted. And its main addiction is thinking.

God, to think. But there's nothing to think about. You're in bed in this beautiful place.

What is there to think about? What could you add to this moment by thinking about some other moment? You can only obscure the moment by thinking about something else.

So this is another aspect. We won't go into this this evening. It's transcending having to think.

And if that is, if you achieve nothing else in your incarnation here, your life is fulfilled. Consciousness has flowered. No matter whether the world tells you that you are important or not, consciousness has flowered.

And if you wake up in the middle of the night, and soon after you wake up, usually the mind starts saying something. It will be about past or future or complaining or whatever. And then simply go back into the body, go into the body.

Use it. Don't say, oh, I should be asleep. No, you're not asleep.

Or say, I can't sleep. I'm going to be tired. I'm going to fall asleep tomorrow in the session.

We don't know what you're going to fall asleep. You're not asleep. No, that's all you know.

And that is what you are internally aligned with. I'm not asleep. Okay.

And then you go into the body. And it's beautiful not being asleep in the body. You're in the body then.

And then not being asleep is not a problem. In fact, it's very enjoyable. And say, oh, this is good.

Little fragments of thoughts may come in. This is good. Feels good.

Alive. And then you listen. Subtle noises.

Beautiful. And you feel an intense aliveness. And then perhaps at some point, you will go back to sleep.

And in the morning, fortunately, there's no radio here to switch on. Can't listen to the news. Don't know what's going on.

It's always the same anyway. I listen to it too. But I know it's always the same.

Just not in the morning, though. Like the first, keep that freshness of the first. As you wake up, that freshness.

Keep it fresh. And instead of going immediately into thinking, go back into the body before you get up. Just five or ten minutes.

And then you get up. That's a good start. It was a good end to the day.

And it's a good start to the next day. So that you don't go into sleep from thought. And you do not go from sleep immediately into thought.

You have a space. And then remember the next, when you interact with people, be in the body as much as you can while you interact. So that you feel.

And if you can't be in the body, feel just the hands. Be there in here while you listen. If you can't feel the whole body.

So that is important, no matter whether you're quiet or whether you talk on the retreat. We'll address this again when we have our silent days. Something else that you may want to do.

There's one sense that's a little bit neglected. The primary senses for human beings are visual and auditory. Smelling.

At different times of the day, the air smells different here. And so you can take, also as you get up, you put your head out of the window or the door. Or you walk out of here.

Or you walk out of the restaurant. Always take, smell the air and see the fragrance. Smell that.

Always subtly different. But there's more here than the smell. Notice that in the moment of smelling the air, there's no thought.

Because if you were thinking, you couldn't smell it. In the moment of smelling the air, there's no thought and there's an intense sense of aliveness. Then afterwards, after that smell, perhaps thought comes in.

And then you notice that. But a great thing is if you can notice, and that perhaps you've been doing for years. Perhaps if you're not totally identified with the mental noise, you have occasionally, when you're out in nature, you've taken a deep breath and said, this is good.

But you didn't say this is good while you were smelling. You came afterwards. While you are conscious of that, there's no thought.

And there's more to it than that. But I'll leave it at that right now. So use that.

Senses will become very important this week as we practice presence. Senses will become sharpened as more awareness flows into all the senses. We'll address that tomorrow.

But we already have enough for tonight and the night and tomorrow morning. Remember the slightest upset for whatever reason. I'm never upset for the reason I think.

I lost the present moment. I lost the internal alignment with the present moment. And at that moment of realization, the possibility of being aligned with the present moment is there.

It is your decision or your choice. Do I want to continue being out of alignment and feel upset? And then perhaps the ego says, oh yeah, I'd love to feel even more upset.

No, you see, that's a funny question. Because when you make it conscious, you can see that it's insane. And so the pattern will collapse when you make it conscious.

And if you ask yourself, is this what I want? Do I want to continue to be upset about this? Or does this, am I enjoying feeling upset about this?

Or is it possible to, now that I've realized I'm out of alignment, I can choose to say yes to what is and be in alignment with what is. It's your choice then. Choice comes in at that moment.

The universe chooses through you to be conscious. And if your mind said, oh, I'd love to carry on being upset, you would start laughing. It doesn't work anymore.

Because you've made it conscious. No matter how hard you try, you can't be upset anymore. That's no fun anymore, says the ego.

Life just isn't fun anymore. Notice your left leg is moving. That's an emotion.

Be aware of it. I'm not saying stop it. Just watch it.

And you're not the only one. I always see people whose leg or arm moves slightly. It is an emotion in the body.

All you need to do is be conscious of it. And suddenly it'll stop. It's something that is, you're not fully in here yet.

There's something. Be conscious. Watch it.

And then it stops by itself. If your attention is in here, it stops. If your attention is in here, the body goes, get in here.

Be in here. Your consciousness has to go in here. And that's, then the body becomes a portal.

You go, and eventually you transcend body. But you go, first you go in here. It's essential to leave that, to get out of that while you're here.

Not to become unconscious, but to transcend that, the thinker. And then there's not only the thinker, there's the emotional field that accompanies the thinker. That's been there for years.

There's the pain body that's been there, not just your pain body, humanity's pain body that's been there for years. So there's the thinker in alliance with the pain body. They together form the ego.

The emotional field, old emotion, and that. And that feeds that. And the emotion feeds the thinker.

And the thinker feeds the emotion. So consciousness, and watch if there's a movement in here, simply watch that. Internally, not externally.

Internally. Feel it. Now one more thing.

There is something in perhaps everyone, and that is the emotional, mental emotional entity, that is simply a form that consciousness has taken, that you confuse with who you are. And that egoic entity does not want to be here. It may occasionally arise as you sit here and manifest either as intense thought movement in the head, you're not listening to a word anymore that's being said here.

Intense thought movement, whatever it is, I don't know what about, could be anything, past, future, dreamland, anything, fantasy, or what your problems, or your life, or what somebody did to you, or you're going to do to them, or what you should have said and didn't say, whatever. It can, as you sit here, there can be a reaction. It can be very intense in the head, or, and, or, in the body as an emotion, so much so that you just can't stand it being here anymore.

And then sometimes I can see people, they start looking around when it happens, and they, some look for the door. And again, just when it happens, you can watch that. I may, without offending, wanting to offend you, if I occasionally see somebody who is engaged in it, I might point it out.

So there's nothing personal about thoughts or emotions. Oh, well, that takes a lot of steam out of my story. And if you cannot stand it here, if the impulse comes to leave, to go home, I'll just recommend one thing.

Do not immediately obey the impulse, but watch the impulse to go, wanting to go home. Allow it to be there, watch it. You may watch it, and it may subside, and an hour later you may find you love it.

Or it may well be that the impulse comes continuously, or doesn't go away, and then you may find yourself, you have no choice, you have to, you do, you cannot stop yourself, you have to go, then you, if you have to go, it is not wrong to leave here. You are not wrong if you leave here. It just means consciousness will arise in some other way in you, or through you, somewhere else, in another situation, perhaps while you're traveling home, or when you arrive home, or 50 years later when you're near deathbed.

We don't know. It is not wrong. Although when you, those who do leave, the egoic mind will attempt to make everybody else wrong.

That's normal. And that's not personal either. And when it happens, you can watch that in yourself.

All these people, I'm not going to stay here. Okay, they're all wrong, and I'm right. Yes, that's how it is.

It's okay. Spiritual alarm clock, but much nicer than any alarm clock. Quite a few people apparently arrived after the moral meeting last night.

And for those who did, let me summarize what we said last night. Your only job here is to be present.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:03 - 1:09:03)

That's it.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:18 - 3:26:24)

To be present is a reversal of the normal way in which people live. Normal means unconscious, normal means insane, dysfunctional, and so on, of course. So we don't want to be normal.

The result of normal you see when you watch the news on television. That's normal. The arising of presence goes beyond the personal realm.

It seems to happen to a person. But at the same time, it's only happening because the personal dimension is becoming relatively unimportant. It's still there, remains there, but it becomes far less significant than it has been before.

Your whole personal sense of me, of selfhood, of story, my story, any kind of my mind, my history, my story, my future, my purpose, my... The normal way is that the present moment is on the periphery of your consciousness because you've got better things to be worried about. So the attention is normally mainly on past or future.

Probably more future for most people than past, except very old people when it shifts to past. And so they talk about the past all the time because they haven't got much future left to think about. Not knowing that old age is an incredible opportunity for entering the timeless dimension that is presence when you haven't got much future left.

So this is our training ground for living in a different state of consciousness where your primary attention is always on the present moment. Peripherally, you're still aware, of course, of your life situation, which has a past and probably a future unless something happens. You never know.

Nobody knows. So that your consciousness is not completely absorbed any longer by your life situation. Every life situation is to some extent problematic.

But there's nothing problematic about the present moment. That's the amazing thing. And every life situation is just greater or lesser extent complicated.

But there's nothing complicated ever about the present moment. So instead of deriving your sense of self from your life situation, derive your sense of self from the present moment. The depths of the present moment, which is the depths of who you are, which is not what happens, but it's underneath what happens.

But only when you are aligned with what happens, can you get to that which lies deeper than what happens, which is the form that life takes at this moment. You can never get to the formless dimension as long as you reject the form internally. In another teaching, this has been expressed by somebody.

I don't know who, I can't remember. Somebody asked, how can I become free of the world? And that teacher said, when you love the world and everything in it.

And to be aligned with the present moment is really no more than that. It's to not to accept what is this, the form, and that openness towards the form that arises is really love. This allowing, and that's our practice here.

Probably only little things will arise on a retreat, a relatively protected setting. Although occasionally it happens that some people go through enormous drama, even on a retreat. The shift in consciousness happens when the present moment becomes primary.

That's all. You realize how important, how much incredibly more important this is compared to your life situation. And to live rightly or to get your life right is totally pointless, even to make plans.

There's nothing wrong with making plans, but if it's like building, constructing a building, there's nothing wrong. If you make plans without, you think, okay, I have to get my life right and order, and you're making plans and all is all mapped out. That's where I want to get, and this is how I'm going to get there.

And if you forget what is primary, the present moment, it's like building a big building without the foundation or crumbling foundation, because your relationship with the present moment isn't right. You're hoping that when you achieve all the things that you have planned, then your relationship with life will suddenly fall into place, and you would totally fit into life, and life will be working for you. But if you carry inside the mind structure of non-alignment with the present moment, then no matter what you achieve, that which you want to achieve through whatever you achieve, you're never going to get.

So we're not saying don't make plans, but this is about the very foundation. To get your life right is getting this moment right. Your relationship to this moment, and that's not the ultimate truth because if you go even deeper, you realize you, who you are in your essence, and what we call the present moment beyond the form that this moment takes, is there one.

But let's for just for a moment use that approach and talk about your relationship to the present moment. No, this is not the ultimate truth, but it's an approximation towards the truth. If your relationship to the present moment is not right, nothing can ever be right in the future, because when the future comes, it's the present moment.

And your habit, your mental emotional habit, is to have a dysfunctional relationship with it when it comes. And so when it comes, it's never quite right, and it's never enough. There's always something missing.

And for a little while, there's an elation when some new form arises that satisfies you for a moment, takes away the needing and wanting. And you get a little bit of glimpse of the fullness of being, not because the $10 million suddenly arrived in your bank account, but because for a moment, the $10 million removed the wanting, the next thing. For a moment, the $10 million removed the mental emotional wanting and grasping to where's the next thing, the more that I need to fulfill myself.

For a moment, the $10 million arrives and the wanting seems to be satisfied. For a moment, it subsides. And because of that, the joy that you feel is not because of the $10 million that arrived in your bank account, but because for one moment, the incessant wanting future subsided, and then the joy of being came through.

And you confuse that and believe it's caused by the $10 million. And that can happen with big things or little things that they give you suddenly enormous satisfaction. But what you really feel is that for a moment, the wanting has died down.

And when that mind structure, which is the future, looking to the future to find for then being the aliveness, the essence of who you are, the joy of being comes through. But never for long, and then it reasserts itself and there's renewed wanting. And then you get the sense that there's something missing even with the $10 million in your bank account.

And the same dysfunctional relationship with the present moment arises again, except that before, you were living in a trailer, and you had a dysfunctional relationship with the present moment. And when the $10 million arrived, you live in a mansion. And there you have a dysfunctional relationship with the present moment.

Ultimately, it doesn't make much difference where you are unhappy. You might say, I'd rather be unhappy in luxury than in poverty, but it really makes little difference.

Recognizing what is primary and getting, observing your relationship with the present moment.

And this is a training ground while we are here. We bring attention to that, what, and we ask, and again, that's a little pointer. We had one last night from the Course in Miracles.

I'm never upset for the reason I think that's true. And I pointed out why you're upset, because you're not in touch with the life that you are, the depths of your being. And anything out there can upset you, but it's not that, it's that.

You're not in touch with the present moment. Another pointer now, ask yourself as often as possible, what is my relationship with this moment, the present moment? And observe the witness, the relationship with the present moment.

And you may observe that it is not a friendly one. And that's enough to know that, because that's an unconscious habit. To have an unfriendly relationship with the present moment is an unconscious habit.

The moment you make an unconscious habit conscious, it begins to dissolve. So the simple recognition that my relationship with this moment is unfriendly, or even hostile, or I'm running away from it. I want to be somewhere else.

I resist this. Interesting. Don't fall into the trap of self-condemnation, because if you condemn yourself for not being in a good relationship with the present moment, you have added a further dysfunctional relationship with the present moment.

You see, I'm no good. I can't do it. I've done it again.

You see all the internal dialogue. Sometimes you talk to yourself as you, you address yourself as you. That's what the mind does.

You see, you can't do it. There's no point. You're just not good enough.

Or you say, that teaching doesn't work. I have to try some other teaching. It obviously isn't working for me.

And that's just a thought. Don't believe any thought that comes into your head. Just watch.

And this is particularly important on this retreat. Thoughts that come into your head are just thoughts, no more. Don't give them an importance that they do not have.

You can allow them, it's there. But don't completely believe in every thought that comes into your head. So examining your relationship with the present moment as often as possible.

And that's not an analysis. You don't need to analyze. You simply watch, mental and emotional.

Am I judging this moment mentally? Am I calling it not good enough? Am I running away from it?

Am I projecting myself elsewhere? Am I resisting it emotionally? And that's enough to see it.

The moment you see it, the unconscious pattern begins to dissolve. But in addition, that's the, that happens by itself. But in addition, you can actually choose to be fully present.

The moment you realize you're not present, you don't have a friendly relationship with the present moment. And that moment, you can also choose to be present. You can choose, or you can choose, as we said last night, you can also choose that you want to continue to have an unfriendly relationship with the present moment.

I'd like to continue to be unhappy. That's a choice too. But it's unlikely that you would, if it makes conscious, that's an unconscious egoic choice.

Yes. The choice to be unhappy, humans make that all the time. But they're not conscious of it.

But consciously, it would even be absurd if you even said to yourself, I love that, this unhappiness. I really enjoy this. The moment you said that, you're making it conscious, and you would start laughing.

It just doesn't work. A dysfunctional pattern, when you make it conscious, can't work anymore. It doesn't work anyway, because it's dysfunctional.

So to be able to observe your relationship with the present moment, of course, requires some presence. Very unconscious people simply react unconsciously, and they don't have that choice. They cannot observe their relationship with the present moment.

And this is not something that you can bring about. Precondition for being able to observe your relationship with the present moment, is that there is enough presence in you from where you can observe your relationship with the present moment. And this is not something that you can make happen.

This is the grace. By grace, there is enough presence in you, so that you can be conscious of your relationship with the present moment, and of the present moment itself. You can be conscious of the thoughts you have.

You can be conscious of the emotions that go through you. Very unconscious people, they are their thoughts. They are their emotions.

They're completely in the grip of their thoughts and emotions. There's nothing you can do. To tell them, observe your thoughts and emotions, or be conscious of your relationship with the present moment, is pointless.

They don't even know what you're talking about. So that is not something that is up to you to choose. By grace, presence is arising through this form.

And because presence is arising through this form, you are able to say, I choose to be present. And that is good. Now you can say, I choose to be present, because there is enough presence in you to do that.

So really, what speaks in you, what chooses, is presence itself. Presence is arising, and it looks as if a person were choosing to be present. And this is because you are going beyond the personal realm, beyond that you transcend the limitations of being no more than a little person with a little past and a little future.

And that's why we are here, to see that it is possible to live much more beautifully, much more effectively and joyously in that way. So your primary attention, while we are here, this is a protected setting. It's a training ground.

It's a greenhouse or hot house for consciousness. But it's not as much as a hot house as some retreats. Some retreats are so structured, and you have to meditate 10 hours a day, and you don't speak at all, although we will have periods of not speaking, that they become a real hot house.

And the consciousness can develop very quickly in an extremely structured and protected setting. And then you become very present after 10 days, a week, and everybody goes, it's beautiful. And then the retreat comes to an end.

And then they go out, and the first they go back into the traffic, they go back into the city, they go back into their normal life, and they feel it's all... And the hot house plant isn't used to normal conditions. The moment you take the hot house plant out of the hot house, and it stays for two or three days, and then...

So here we have a, in some way, normal life, but also something else arising. We continue to interact to some extent, but not as much as in so-called ordinary life. So we bring consciousness into the ordinary, into relating.

Now, this is very important, the choice to be present. You are able to make that choice. And ultimately, but this doesn't matter, it's a philosophical question, it is not you as the person who chooses presence, because you as the person would never choose presence.

Because the person is the old conditioning, is the ego. You as the person don't want to be present. So when you choose presence, it is not the person that chooses, it is the deeper dimension of the, that which is beyond the conditioned, that chooses to be present.

And occasionally, you may find the obstruction of the person coming back in. It doesn't say, I don't want to be present, it says something else to distract you, to pretend that something else is more important than being present. The person is also the conditioned thought patterns is part of the person.

The whole, all the conditioned thought patterns in the head are part of the person, the me. And identification and the thought patterns are clever. They will come up with some thought that draws you out of presence and that it doesn't say this is more important than presence, it implies that this is more important than presence.

And I need to think about this, this thought is... And off you go. So you may observe that also, the person reasserting itself, which is the old pattern, the old thought, and you disappear.

You disappear into the conditioned. Consciousness goes back to sleep. Consciousness identifies with form, thought forms, emotional forms.

Consciousness identifies with forms and continues to dream the dream of form, and which is the dream of that you are no more than a person. And then everything, everything that is in form in your life has an enormous importance in that dream because you know nothing beyond the dream. So everything that happens in your life is so terribly important.

Everything is... That's why you get upset so much. And things happen continuously in the dream to upset you more.

Consciousness dreaming the dream of form, one of the ways in which that manifests is as a person. And if consciousness were not ready to awaken, nobody would be awakening. It is only because consciousness is ready to awaken out of that dream that we are sitting here.

And for many people, it is not until the dream becomes very unpleasant that they begin to awaken. It's only when the dream gets, oh, you just can't stand it anymore, and then that suffering, that pain wakes you up and suddenly you become present. Some people are forced into presence.

Many of you were forced into presence because you couldn't stand the dream anymore, the dream of past and future, the dream of me and my story. And that's why you're here. So choosing, you choose to be present.

And you may have to choose that many times, particularly when you notice the dysfunctional relationship with the present moment. Now, what happens the moment you say, I choose presence? That's just a thought.

That's not yet presence. It's a pointer. I choose presence is not presence.

Otherwise, and that's the... Traditionally, the mistake of religion is to confuse the pointer with that which it points to. And so if that ever happens, you'll know that this has happened when we start having prayers about presence.

We choose presence. Or even worse, we believe in presence. And if you don't, then you're wrong, or worse.

Now, what happens? I choose presence to be present. You enter the present moment.

What happens as you enter the present moment? When you observe another person going through the shift from dreamland, which is being identified with thinking and emotions and their problems and their future, and suddenly something wakes them up into presence, and you observe, you can see both the difference in their face and in their eyes, and also the energy emanation that changes, and it goes like this, or or into, suddenly you wake up out of the dream of thought. And for some people, it happens that the first thing they notice when they become present is their surroundings.

As if they had just arrived. And then they may notice certain noises that were there. One man reported, I read about it, became present at home for the first time.

He had lived there for several years, and he heard distant but clearly audible church bells. It was somewhere in Europe. He had never heard the church bells before, because he was too much, his consciousness was too much absorbed by thought.

For the first time in years, he heard church bells ringing and was amazed. And you may see colors, you may see light, you become aware of the space in the room. And the next thing often that happens is you sense more the energy field, the entire energy field in the body.

That is Picatto, because it's presence within and presence without. And you feel there's an aliveness in the body, whereas before you didn't, the body wasn't really, even if you did physical exercises, still you were not in the body. You were still, even while you're on the treadmill in the gym, you're either thinking about your problems, or you're watching a TV screen.

That's what people do. It's quite draining, because you're, you know, the attention goes out there. So even people who say they're looking after their bodies are not necessarily in the body.

It can be still in here. And so most people live in the upper compartment, or the, in the loft or the attic. And there's the entire building inhabited by weird, by weird people.

All kinds of emotions live in there and go, ooh. And anybody can come in, because you're not there. You're only, everybody, they all know that you're only up there.

And then the emotions, they make a lot of noise, and then they take over the thinker. And the thinker doesn't know what's happening. So presence means first, usually, ah, you become present without and within.

There is an alertness that is suddenly there. And thought is not important, is no longer primary when presence arises. Another word for presence, of course, is stillness.

Because whenever you are present, the movement of thought subsides. Occasional thoughts can still come in, but there are space, suddenly there is space. There is suddenly the space of no thought.

But I'm reluctant to call that a relaxed state. In a way, it is a relaxed state, but it is not to be confused with what is normally called relaxation. In the mind-identified unconscious state, there's the, it has relaxation.

When you go, you're hanging out. And that's good, at least for a while you're free of the torture of the mind. And then there is the high energy state, which in the egoic state is stress.

Use some kind of, let's get it, let's get something done. Okay, we've got so much to do. Come on, let's get on with it.

That's the high energy state. And then occasionally they lapse into the so-called relaxed state, perhaps only after a few drinks, or then they just, let's hang out. Or veg out is the expression in front of the TV.

Vegging out in front of the TV. And with the TV, the nice thing is that you don't have to think your own thoughts anymore. The thoughts, and that's a, it's a small liberation from yourself, but you're, unfortunately, you link into all the stuff that you see in there.

You think their thoughts, whatever thoughts they want you to think. You switch on into that, you link into that, and then you don't have your own problems. You just live their problems.

But at least it frees you from your own for a little while. But that's not a liberation, really. It's just a shift from one mind form to another mind form.

But for some people, that's like, they relax a little bit then in front of it. And if you have a can of beer, it's even better. And then the next morning, you go back into the high energy state.

And with the briefcase or whatever it is, phone calls. Is there something that is neither this nor that? Yes, and that's the state of presence.

I'm reluctant to call it relaxed because of what I've just described. What is normally called relaxed is losing consciousness, drifting towards sleep. And what is usually called high energy in the mind state is quite a stressful state.

And it's not the body doesn't like it, but the ego says, I've got to be responsible. I've got to be stressed to be responsible. If I'm not worried, I'm not responsible about my life.

And as the man called, the boss calls the employee into the office, into his office and says, I've told this joke before, looks at him grimly and says, the boss says to the employee, you are the only person in this company not suffering from a stress related disease. How come? So that's, there is another way to live.

That is neither the state where you hang out all the time, nor the state of high, so-called high energy that is stressful and ultimately harmful to the body and harmful to everybody around you because it is a state of dysfunction ultimately. You can go into some companies and everybody's unhappy. They're all running around fighting against each other as much as they're fighting against the competition.

Uselessly, the energy is being uselessly burned up in fighting and fighting against this and against that and have their positions and their little cliques with their positions. Totally absurd and they're all anxious, intense. Insane.

Presence is very different. It is a state of high energy, but there's no stress in it. And there's no sleepiness in it whatsoever.

In fact, it is extremely alert. And that's the, then you become very effective not that you have, you're not forced into activity when there's actually nothing useful to do. You're quite happy with not doing without losing the high energy of presence.

You can just sit and be without falling into the vegetative state. You could sit for an hour or two and it's beautiful. And more and more you would enjoy the simple state of being present, the joy of being, of being present with yourself, of feeling your own presence.

Your own is the way of putting it. It's not yours. It's presence.

And when activity is required, presence can flow into doing. And you give all those people, many people who are, those people who are success, very successful in whatever field they of endeavor, those who are very successful and not unhappy, have touched presence in what they do. Now there are others who in the eyes of the world are successful, but really they're very unhappy at the same time.

And there's no point in that, no matter how much money you make. What's the point in making money to making your bodies ill? Everybody else unhappy, including yourself, and then you die.

So you can actually, it is a very different energy energetically than it's a new, that's presence is not, the ego knows nothing of that. That it is possible to be, to put enormous energy into something that you do without stress. If that's what's needed, presence is clear energy, and it can flow into action.

Some sports people know that. They enter the so-called zone, as they say. And when they're in the zone, right action happens and it's joyful.

And every, this is why people watch. They watch because it is beautiful to watch somebody performing an action in the state of presence. Because a little bit of that transmits itself.

It's also joyful to be with somebody who is not active in the state of presence. To some extent that happens here. It is joyful to sit here because also a kind of transmission happens.

But here it is not through action, but through simple being, non-action. Something that transmits itself and awakens that dimension within you. Not that it comes through this form into you as if you didn't have it yet.

No, it is here and something in you recognizes it. That's why it's nice to be here. And the moment it's no longer nice to be here, you've come back into a mind.

As long as it feels good to be here, you're present. When it doesn't feel good to be here anymore, you're absent again, you're back in. So we could say it is as present as relaxed alertness.

If you look at two breeds of dogs, you could say, let's say there's the German Shepherd dog. And some German, quite many German Shepherds, they're excellent guard dogs because they are a little bit nervous. Not all, but they are bred to be nervous, to be alert.

And they go, they look when a visitor comes, they're a bit suspicious and they look at you. And then there's the St. Bernard dog. Now, if you could crossbreed these two, you would get a present dog.

Now, maybe I've given somebody an idea for a new business. And of course, my favorite example of that with human beings, which some of you already know, you have the Buddha. And then you cross the Buddha with the character played in most films by Clint Eastwood.

You cross the two and you have presents. Now, it's not only that the moment you choose presents, you become conscious of sense perceptions for your surroundings. It is also sense perceptions themselves.

When you pay attention to sense perceptions, can help you to enter the state of presence. To become very conscious of sense perceptions, not to lose yourself in sense perceptions. Now, we'll see the difference in a second.

To become very conscious of sense perceptions and in this setting here, highly recommended. And sense perceptions here are mostly beautiful ones. And that's good.

It's more nature. Mostly what you see here is nature and humans, which is also nature. Let's talk about nature for a moment.

To become conscious of sense perceptions is to look or listen or smell. I mentioned last night to smell the air, which changes. It's a different smell in the morning from the way it smells after it's rained.

If it does in the evening, it is alive. And notice that at the moment of smelling the air, there's no thinking because you cannot smell the air and think. While you smell the air, there's no thought.

Perhaps afterwards the thought interprets the smell or maybe some poem comes into your mind about the air or some haiku or whatever. That's thought. And sometimes thought that comes after presence is more likely to be original and inspired when it comes.

And even a brief stretch of presence is enough sometimes to give rise to an inspired original thought. Not a thought that is of the ego that makes you unhappy and creates more stress and more problem. No, an inspiring, original, alive thought may come.

Not that it has to come, you're quite happy without it. And then you take another breath and smell again and there's no thought. And then you look and in the perception, you look at a flower, a tree, or just a one leaf moving in the wind.

Not necessarily to look at what's spectacular or there's so much here that is spectacular. So much beauty. All the potted plants that in colder climates we have at home and they're little.

And here they're all out there and huge. And there's a lot that is spectacular and that's good to see too, but not just look at the spectacular, huge tropical flowers and so on, but also look at relatively insignificant things. One leaf and there's a slight breeze and the leaf is moving in the breeze.

It's quivering. And stay with that for whatever, a minute, two minutes. This is just one example of many ways in which you can observe the little, the seemingly insignificant.

And as you observe, there's the perception against the background of stillness. There's no labeling mentally of what you're observing because then you would lose the sense perception. You would go into thought.

So you can play with that yourself. See if you can be present with the sense perception without going into thought. And if you go into thought, observe the thought and then let it go and go back to the sense perception.

And so there's more than that. There's not just, at the moment we are talking about visual sense perception. There's not just the sense perception.

You're not just conscious of the leaf moving, quivering slightly. And poets have done that and great artists. They are able to watch in presence and then out of that a poem may come and they talk about some great beauty that came out of the state of presence.

And if it's a great poem, can put you back into the state out of which it came in the author. That's why it's called great. Nothing is called great and humans can recognize it.

That means they're not as insane as they seem to be. Something in humans recognizes the greatness of great art or great poetry or great literature. What is it that makes one work great and the other one is mere fiction or one painting is great and the other one is mere colors put together?

It is the state out of which it came. Was it put together by the mind trying to think of something clever? And a lot of modern artists like that.

Let's try and think of something clever and we make some abstract statement through that. It's fine, but it doesn't touch people in here. It can stimulate the mind.

That's okay on that level. It doesn't touch you here. If it touches you here, it awakens presence.

But you can go directly to that which inspired many artists and poets, which is nature. Go directly to it and watch the quivering leaf and be still as you watch. Otherwise you have to be, otherwise you can't watch it.

Be with it and notice there's the form, whatever it is, the leaf moving in the wind. Is there anything else there apart from the form? Now you could lose yourself in that form.

You could just go into, and then you fall off the chair. Or you can be there and see that, but also be conscious of that which makes the perception possible. We could say of yourself, not yourself as the person with the history, but of yourself as the consciousness, the attention, the stillness that makes the perception possible.

And that is not something that you can, this is formless. You can't touch it. You can't see it.

You can't say, oh, there it is. Because that which says there it is, is it. So you can never make it into an object of knowledge.

This is an object of perception. But as you perceive, there's more than the object of perception, but the object of perception helps you to find that. The world of form helps you to find the formless, which is that in you, which is beyond form.

So you watch and you're aware of the form, but you're also aware of the background stillness, the alert background stillness that is, you could also call that the I, the I am, which has nothing to do with a person. It's the consciousness itself through which the perception happens or in which the perception happens, which is the formless dimension of who you are, the eternal, formless, timeless dimension, who you are beyond the form, beyond the physical form, beyond the psychological form of me. To be trapped in form is the most dreadful fate.

To go through your whole lifetime and never know who you are or what you are beyond form is dreadful. It's like being in a prison for the whole of your life. So how is it that something seemingly so simple as observing a flower, observing a leaf moving in the wind, observing a blade of grass or a little patch of ground, whatever it is, or a tree or even a distant landscape, the wholeness of it.

It is amazing that that can be an entry point direct perception, an entry point into who you are, the formless. And these are incredible things, but just watch and be aware of the watcher, not only what is being watched, but also feel, sense, be the being, the consciousness that makes that flower possible. Or watch the sky that changes probably this afternoon as it has done in the past few days.

In the afternoon, clouds start coming in and the light changes and you can watch that and you can watch the movement of the clouds. And as you watch, be aware of the presence without which there would be no cloud movements. Do you think there would be the movement of clouds coming in if you weren't watching it?

Of course not. There are no clouds. It requires a consciousness to see, otherwise they're only atoms.

There's the game, the play of atoms and molecules. There are no clouds, atoms and molecules playing. And through you arises a whole world.

And so you're not, be conscious of that essence in you, which is consciousness, the I am presence, that makes the whole thing, all this possible. And so sense perception is vital. It is much closer to who you are than thought.

Thought is much further removed. So, and in most humans, sense perceptions are only peripheral because there's so much thought in them that there isn't much time for listening or watching. They hardly ever, they just listen or watch enough not to have an accident or to bump into something or, and sometimes they're even that, there's so much thinking that they do have an accident because they're not present enough.

And of course, when you perform a dangerous activity, then you have to be present. When you're in something, certain dangerous activities require absolute presence and one thought and you're gone. And I had a very, the actor Christopher Reeve died recently.

I was in the state of Chicago when it happened. And I saw on television, they showed an interview with him that was done just a few months before he died. And as you know, he, as they rightly pointed out in the interview, he became a superman after his accident before it was just a role.

But then he was confronted with the incredible limitation of form and it seems that he became quite peaceful. But we are not, we do not need to seek out danger to be present. Some people believe that that's what they need to do.

And so they get addicted almost to an activity because it is so liberating compared to their normal state. It is so liberating, you feel so much more alive when you are present that they need to go back and then climb another wall and another and another. And perhaps one day a thought comes in at the wrong, just as they grasp for the next ledge on the rock and that's it.

Oh, so here we, sense perceptions are also an opening into presence. And that's an important practice while we are here. Sense perceptions as an opening into presence, if done rightly.

So there's always two dimension to a sense perception, that which you are perceiving and that which is perceiving. The form and the formless. And then you go to auditory sense perceptions.

Beautiful. And again, there's no calling it of good or bad. It's all equal.

When you are practicing sense perception, you allow whatever sense, whatever noise is there to be there. So there may, there's a bird song, many different birds, the crickets, whatever they are at night. That's a beautiful chorus.

Wonderful to just listen to that. There is the leaves in the wind. All different noises.

And that's modern humans don't, cannot listen to it anymore. There's too much thinking. And as you listen, be aware of the noise and of the background.

The perception is the foreground. The consciousness, the stillness, the presence is the background. And it is you.

It is the formless you. And this is at this very moment, you can be in that state. You can listen to the voice.

You can also see the room. That's the visual. But you can also sense there's an underlying stillness.

And that is yourself beyond form. The I am presence has no form. And when you are in touch with that, you no longer mind when the form doesn't stay or when the form isn't the most pleasant of forms, like occasionally a heavy truck comes up the road here.

And it goes. And you can listen to that also and continue to feel the background where that arises. Unaffected by the form, the more you are rooted in the background.

I'm saying, whenever we use language, we create a duality. I say, you are rooted in the background or I say, you are conscious of the background. That's not how it is.

But the moment we form a sentence, we have a subject and an object and we have duality. What really happens is you become conscious of yourself. It is self-awareness.

It is self-realization. It's not that you are conscious of consciousness because that's what it is. Consciousness is conscious of itself.

And it's you. You cannot become an object to yourself. You can't make yourself into an object.

Self is eternal subject. All these different beautiful sounds and you have the sound and the inner stillness. There's one bird here somewhere that sounds like a cell phone.

Maybe you'll hear it. I saw one man who was looking around for his cell phone. That's the conditioning from out there.

So we have visual sense perception. And so sometimes look at something small and at other times, it may be good to practice visual sense perception, looking at a totality of a landscape, either looking out there or looking at a group of trees or growth or bushes. Take in a larger space.

Practice with different ways of looking. The tiniest to larger to the spaciousness of the sky. There may be a little beetle crawling on the floor in your room.

And there are lots of little beetles. And sometimes when they hear this, and then you can watch that. And again, be conscious, not lose yourself in it.

Just watch. And you may want to pick it up either on a piece of paper and put it outside. But watch it first before you put it outside.

It crawls. And if it notices your presence, the beetle stops. And sometimes the head goes in.

And then if it notices that you are getting closer, you're touching it, all its legs go in. Also it becomes a little, almost a ball. And it will stay like that for minutes.

It can wait longer than you can. That's why it survived for millions of years. Simply because it can wait.

And there's a beauty there too. And it's this life or consciousness appearing in that particular form. And you appear as a form, also appear for a little while, not much longer than the beetle.

Beetle is maybe a few weeks or months. And you are a few years, that's all. You appear also as a form, a physical and psychological form for a little while.

Unique, perhaps more unique than the beetle. I don't know if every beetle is unique or whether you can't tell the difference. At first sight, you can't tell the difference.

One beetle looks very much like any other beetle. But probably to the beetle, the humans look the same too. But we are probably safe to say that there are subtle differences.

No two forms are ever totally the same. We mentioned snowflakes last night. Or human beings, you with your particular physical form.

You could recognize a close friend. But all the billions of humans on the planet, there's not one that looks the same. You would always be able to pick out somebody that you know well.

Or your father or your mother. Nobody's quite the same. So there is a uniqueness to the form.

And yet it evaporates very quickly. And it's gone. That uniqueness is gone.

And if that's all you know, then it's a very sad thing. And then the universe doesn't really make sense. Why create something unique and then destroy it?

Well, because the universe is playing with form. It's when you watch, if you saw life forms being born and dying and speed it up on a film, you would see that it is a play. You would see plants.

And sometimes they have made films like that, where you can see a plant coming out of the soil. And you speed it up over several days with seed in one minute. And it goes.

And then it withers. And then if you speed it up even more, you see hundreds and thousands of different plants and trees going. And humans coming out of the womb and growing and running around here and there.

And then shrinking, becoming wrinkled, shrinking and gone. And then, but at the same time, others are already on their way. They're coming.

So it's a continuous. Something, nothing. Form, formless.

The two dimensions. And finding that, yes, although you are unique, not only your appearance, but also your life story. Nobody has quite the same life story as you.

Basically, in their deeper structure, they're all very similar, if not the same. The deep structure of a life story, any life story. In any life story, for example, something goes wrong.

That makes it interesting. If nothing went wrong, there would be no story. Look at any film or any novel.

The deep structure in every film or every novel, I can't think of any exceptions, but there may be one or two. But to watch those, you would have to be really present. If nothing goes wrong, it's not interesting.

It's the moment something goes wrong, the story starts. Any novel or any film, look at it. It doesn't matter what.

You can always say, okay, what happens? Well, at some point, she leaves him. He dies.

They lose something. They become ill. Something, or they, whatever.

Something starts going wrong, and that's why it's interesting. And that's the life of form. That's how it works.

And if you had a holiday in which absolutely nothing goes wrong, it's conceivable, although unlikely, but it's conceivable, you wouldn't remember nothing. But if something went very wrong, you would remember it for the rest of your life. And you could talk about it.

You remember that happened. That's the life of form. So there's the uniqueness of your story.

On the one hand, it's unique. Nobody has quite the same life story as you. And yet, deep down, it's not that unique.

And yet, also yet, it's destined to dissolve very quickly, just like a cloud. Every cloud is unique in that particular form. But as you look at it, it's already dissolving and changing.

So we honor the uniqueness of the form. We honor the form that we are, not in essence, but as we appear, our life circumstances and the physical form without becoming trapped in that. So this is why we are here, to touch the formless within ourselves, to be it, to recognize it.

And what do we use? We use the form as an entry point. We're not saying, although I'm not condemning that, it's another way.

When in some spiritual traditions, they say, do not look at beauty. Do not look at anything. Avert your eyes.

Don't be seduced by sense perception. They say, just look at the floor. All this, they might say, they do it in some Buddhist traditions, and I love Buddhism.

It's beautiful. All this is illusion in some way. Of course, that's true.

It's all destined to dissolve very quickly. And we form in that sense. It is an illusion.

It is a dream. So don't look. Just don't get into sense perceptions.

Just be conscious of consciousness. That may work too. It's another way of entering.

This perhaps is more accessible for humans that are alive now, perhaps. It's at least for those who are here. But beauty is hiding in every form.

And beauty is not the external appearance ultimately, but the essence in each form, which is the same essence that you discover when you are conscious of the consciousness that you are, that is perceiving. Then you realize the same essence of consciousness is in that form, taking temporary expression as that form. And so it is the beauty lies in that the true essence of beauty is always beyond the form appearance.

It's something that shines through the form. And that is the same in humans. True beauty in humans is not of the form.

It shines through the form. You can sometimes see it in, even in people whose body is crippled. You can sometimes see if they have surrendered, you can see beauty shining through the form.

Or people who are close to death, that light shines through. So sense perceptions as an entry point into yourself. So not only do sense perceptions keep you present, they are also an opening into the formless dimension, which of course it is presence.

Presence is formless, unconditioned consciousness. And then we have touch, neglected sense perception relatively, probably the first one in the evolution of the species. Probably the first sense perceptions was touch when little worms crawling.

And that was the beginning of a world arising. That was a very little world at first. So to occasionally pick something up and feel it fully, it's beautiful.

And again, you cannot feel it fully unless you're completely attentive to what it feels like. And there's no need to label it, just feel. And who is it or what is it that feels?

Who or what is it that makes the sense perception possible? Your presence, consciousness itself, who you are, the stillness in the background against which the sense perception happens. And that if you can live like that in the two dimensions, you are a master and you are a blessing on the planet because a human being who can live in the two dimensions, not being seduced by form into believing that that's all there is and not yet disappearing into the formless and saying, I'm not going to be bothered with anything anymore.

I'm not going to wash my hands even anymore because it's all form. No, be here as a bridge between the two dimensions. The formless and the entire world here is lost in one, in form.

We don't need to improve. This is not a workshop where we try to improve the world of form. And there's a place for that also, that's good.

But what the world needs is for humans to find that hidden dimension, the spiritual, because that's what spiritual is. Spiritual is not a belief. Spiritual is the formless dimension in yourself.

And that's not something to think about. It's something to experience at this moment. Sense perception, background, the I am presence.

It has no attributes. It's not big or small or young or old. It has no age or time to it.

And if you can go into the world and live and be in the two as a bridge, then you affect the world of form. Anybody who is rooted in eternity, in essence, will deal with and relate to the world of form in a different way and will affect the world of form. So it's not just the two dimensions are not separate.

They hang together. And anyone being in touch with that will change the world without needing to change it or wanting to change it. He cannot or she or he or she cannot not change the world.

So you become a blessing when you are in touch with that which ultimately means yourself. And then relate to people and continuously sense the background in any interaction. Sense the background of yourself as space.

And then in any interaction, there's the spacious background of consciousness. And there's the form, there's the words that come. There's the sense perception.

There's what you're talking about. And you're not losing yourself in what you're talking about. Words come, but as the words are spoken, there's still a consciousness of consciousness, stillness in the background.

There must be a very important message out there. Maybe what he's saying is it's time to wake up. Humanity needs to wake up.

He's so excited. I think that's what he's saying. Okay.

Follow the sound with your attention until only attention remains, which is presence. The sound is form, that which is there before and after the sound and underneath the sound is formless. And now as you listen to the sound, be aware of that which is listening, that which makes the listening possible, the I am presence.

Form and formless. And the loudspeaker out there represents the world, which says, this is so important. You must give attention to this.

This really matters, absolutely. And that's your challenge, not to lose yourself in that. You really have to drink Coca-Cola.

You must vote for this person. You have to allow it. You can't fight that because they're all fighting.

That creates the whole thing. You can only watch it and be there as the watcher. And then it changes without you wanting it to change.

Thank you. Thank you. Just sit in the stillness just for a little while until you feel the body's getting up.

With some kinds of music, particularly this kind, the sounds always point to the silence. So when you listen to this kind of music, the silence, what is not there is more important and more powerful than what is there. It's not music that emphasizes the form.

In the case of music, the form is sound. So this kind of music does not emphasize the form as a lot of music does, especially Western music. That can be beautiful too.

Forms can be beautiful too, but this does not emphasize the form. There's only a bare minimum of form and your attention is being drawn to the formless, the silence in between the sounds and underneath. That is when you listen to that, you can listen, instead of listening to the sounds of the flute or whatever it is, listen to the silent spaces to which all the sounds point.

Then the act of listening becomes a meditation and you enter presence because the moment you pay attention to silence, there is stillness in you. And stillness is consciousness, formless, unconditioned, the essence of you. So one could say that kind of music brings out, if you listen rightly, brings out you, the essence of you.

Traditionally, that kind of music has been played by meditating monks. And then later musicians took over and they became good technically, but very often the essence wasn't quite there anymore because in a subtle way, it only seems to work when the person who is playing is in that state. So that, for example, the way in which the sound of the flute subsides, dies, very subtle, it goes from being manifested into unmanifested and then it takes you with it into the stillness.

Now, this is one example, but amazingly, the same thing operates in any human encounter, interaction, or relationship. We already pointed to it yesterday. Is only the form there in the encounter, the form, the thought forms, are they interacting or is presence present in the interaction between you and another human being?

That is a qualitative difference that's enormous. Sometimes you may hear an interesting talk announced, dialogue between two theologians about something. It's a very interesting topic and say, the sacred in modern civilization or something like that.

And then you go and listen and you are disappointed because they're talking about it, the sacred, but it's all form, but the sacred isn't actually present there. They're only using words and concepts and yet the essence is not there. There's no stillness.

And that's the case with a lot of even spiritual discourse. Sometimes people tell me they read an interesting book and then the author comes into town and gives a talk and they go there and then they're disappointed because the book was more interesting than the author. And the author didn't seem to embody what he talked or she or she talked about in the book.

And at other times they do, it happens too. But often people tell me that it wasn't, it didn't, it wasn't, the presence wasn't there. And so that's the whole point of us being here is to access presence in ourselves, access it, deepen it, live it.

That new dimension, not new in terms of time because presence is timeless, but new in the sense that new on the planet. It's a relatively recent phenomenon, maybe only started a few thousand years ago with isolated humans who accessed that dimension within themselves and then attempted to show it to others. They immediately realized it is in everyone.

They immediately realized they are not special. They realized I am not because presence manifested through this form. It does not make this form special.

It does not make this person special. In fact, the opposite is the case. It's because this form, this person has lost the illusion of specialness that it could come through.

And sometimes people ask strange questions. They ask, an interviewer asked me once, how do you explain that it happened to you? Why did this shift happen to you?

Can you explain, don't you feel very lucky that it happened to you? And of course, there's already an error hiding in the question. It's because the you recognized itself as insubstantial that it happened.

The you was not, the me became transparent, recognized it's nothingness. It's really all.

The it's non-specialness means nothingness.

Specialness is always ego. Specialness means the form wants to emphasize itself in order to survive, in order to have an identity of me one way or another through identifying with this or that. And then at some point, the recognition comes that that is an illusion.

So the awakening doesn't really happen to anybody. It's when the no-bodiness is recognized, then it's there. It's simply an illusion dissolving.

And of course, in some spiritual seekers, there's still the unconscious need to be special. And the projection is that once I attain enlightenment, awakening, then I will be special and finally be myself. And yet, as long as that entity is there, wanting to obtain something in the future, the specialness that you are, that has nothing to do with the ego specialness, the sort of knowledge, I'm changing the terminology for a second.

You are very special, but not more special than anybody else. There is something absolutely precious at the core of your being. Maybe that's what the Tibetans refer to in the famous mantra, Om Mani Padme Hum, which speaks of the jewel in the lotus.

And that specialness is the very life, the very consciousness that you are. And it is, if anything is divine, if we use the term divine for anything, it is that. It is the formless essence of your being.

It is the indwelling God essence. And really apart from that, everything else is simply, has a dreamlike quality, dreamt by the divine, a divine dream, a dream of form. So that can actually, one can feel the true specialness that you can only sense when the pseudo specialness goes.

The pseudo specialness says, I am more special than you, or at least I'm trying to be. The pseudo specialness can take strangest forms. It can hide in many new forms.

When you think now you've left it behind, even that belief can already be a new specialness. When you finally give away your Rolls Royce and your mansion and get on your bike, and then all the other big cars go past you, and you feel quite superior in a subtle way, more subtle than before. The ego, and the ego operates, and you can observe it in those rare instances when the ego still operates in you.

There's always a subtle comparison of me with others. And there's always, so a comparison implies inferior or superior. You regard yourself as either inferior or superior compared to others.

And the ego is constantly on the lookout to see where it fits in. It wants to be superior, but often that doesn't work. Then it considers itself to be inferior with this strange unfulfilled longing to be superior.

And both are equally strong ego. So somebody who feels inferior does not have a weaker ego. People think ego, people with strong egos are people who feel bigger than anybody else.

People who feel less than anybody else have an equally strong ego. And people who feel too timid to speak up or maybe they don't have a strong enough, no, their ego is very strong. They just don't want to be, they fear what happens to their ego once they speak up in public.

They fear what others may think of them. The image that others have of them may not be what they want, what they desire for themselves as the image that they want for themselves. So when you observe it, it's good to observe the ego in oneself because the ability to observe it in yourself means you're not totally in the grip of it anymore.

So it doesn't mean you have failed. The moment you observe the ego in yourself operating, you may have just thought something or said something and suddenly something takes, ah, ego. And where does that realization come from?

Not from the ego. It comes from presence, the arising presence. It's only from the witnessing presence that you can be aware of a conditioned ego pattern.

And whatever you discover, the more ego you discover in yourself, the more successful you are in awakening. And one could even say that the moment you have recognized the ego in you as ego, it's not ego anymore because it's only truly ego when you are totally identified with that pattern. So for example, when you are discussing something with someone as a group after dinner, discussing some spiritual topic and somebody puts forward their opinion and then you feel strong emotion coming up because you clearly recognize that that opinion is wrong, at least from your point of view.

And so there's immediately an identification with your mental position, which is ego. A mental position is a thought form. This is how it is, an opinion, a thought form.

So identification with a mental position is there, which means the self has gone into the thought, has incarnated one more time. And it's already done that hundreds of times during that day. Has incarnated, you have reincarnated one more time into another thought form.

So instead of having broken the cycle of reincarnation, you've readily gone into another one. And then you put forward your opposing point of view, not in a detached and relaxed way, but with inattention that wants to show that you truly know, but that person does not know. And it's possible that at that moment or a few seconds later, you recognize what's happening.

Can't even say that you recognize what you are doing because you're not doing it. It happens. The ego has a life of its own.

It's a pattern, collective pattern. You are not doing it. The ego happens.

And the ego only happens when you are asleep. And it happens. It's a collective conditioning.

Nothing personal. And then suddenly you see it. Oh, or in the middle of an argument, you see how strong the emotion is that goes with defending your point of view.

And sometimes even the voice goes up. You raise your voice, become very heated argument, they call it. This is how it is.

And that's just a tiny, the ego wants to be superior. It wants to show it doesn't, it's not enough to be superior. You need to be seen to be superior.

And so there's the constant, it's an uneasy existence as an ego. Because even a superior ego goes around fearing that it might be inferior in some way, even if it thinks it's superior. One could go on for hours and days and weeks talking about the ego.

And all that's really needed is to see it. And then what's left is only a pattern that still has a certain momentum, but is no longer renewing itself. So ego is a mixture of mind patterns and emotions.

And so they form an entity, an emotional, mental, emotional entity, one could say, that shifts, it identifies. Sometimes it takes things on board and sometimes it gets rid of things that it just tries to, doesn't want. So what it identifies with can change, but the core of it are certain basic identifications.

They vary from person to person, but basically they only vary slightly. It's basically identification. So it's basically the same.

So you could, you can identify with, sometimes one can observe the ego, can identify one moment it competes with a person and the next moment it identifies with that person. I knew a mother who, whenever the mother was talking to other people about her daughter who married a rich husband, she would incorporate her daughter into herself image. And as soon after she met somebody would mention that her wealthy daughter and the mansion and so on and the yacht.

So, and so you couldn't meet this woman for five minutes before she had mentioned her wealthy daughter and that's all. So she incorporated that into herself image. But when she actually visited her daughter, she competed, she resented that her daughter had married this rich husband, but she hadn't.

And so there was a competition with her daughter and a lot of hostility. So when she was with her daughter, the ego was competing against the daughter. When she was away from her daughter, the ego incorporated her daughter and it's always identification with something that you are not, but you're hoping that by adding it to who you think you are, that you can grow in your sense of self.

And it works in the sense that you can grow in your sense of self, but only in your illusory sense of self. And so the ego traditionally, there are only two ways. For the ego to be transcended and that is it gets knocked out of you by life through the suffering or through the coming into contact with the spiritual teaching.

And usually the two go together, but sometimes suffering is enough for some people and they don't need a teacher anymore. Life doesn't leave you any identifications. It takes them away from you and then you're left with nothing.

You don't know who you are anymore and there you sit. Everything has crumbled around you and maybe you don't even have much longer to live. It's possible too.

Even future has been taken away and there you sit, not knowing who you are anymore because all identifications have been removed. And now this is no guarantee that now the ego is transcended because you could even there, the ego could still form a new image of itself as someone who has been dreadfully wronged by life. No person has had a worse fate than me and there you have another ego.

Life has taken away all identifications and you have escaped into, you have suddenly immediately invented a new story for yourself which says you're the greatest victim of all of life. And from then on you can have resentment against everything and everybody. Look at all these people.

I hate them. And God, what you did to me, I'll never forget that. And yet at other times it can happen that a new story is not invented.

The ego has come to an end and those people suddenly wake up and say, where does that peace come from? I feel so peaceful. That's often the first question.

And they smile and they don't know why they smile. And then somebody comes and say, why are you smiling? And say, I don't know.

There are some humans coming into this world now. Some still have a heavy, they inherit as I did, as many of you did. They inherit all the heavy ego structures that have built up over thousands and thousands of years.

And then you have to, it's painful. You create suffering for yourself. Believing that life does it to you.

And then there's so much suffering that finally it dissolves. You can't stand it anymore. I can't live with myself anymore.

And you suddenly realize it's all self-created. But there are some humans coming into this world now who have relatively little ego here and there. So they may not have to go what we had to go through.

And that's good. Some may be born into relatively conscious parents, background, environment. Some may come to talks at an early age.

And some don't need that at all. And yet they are still in conflict with the surrounding culture because they're at school somewhere. They're living this mad world.

And they may not necessarily be able to adjust to this world. But they'll survive. And the world won't.

They are part of what is stronger than the mad world that is arising now. So ego, one way of transcending ego is simply to recognize it in yourself. That's already a transcendence.

The other is to be very conscious of the thoughts that go through your head because ego is thought, identification with thought plus the emotions that accompany those thoughts. And that is our practice here. It's not only recognizing ego when it appears.

It's also to be very much conscious of the root of ego. And the root of ego is thought and identification with thought, with thinking. And ultimately the ego cannot go away.

It can perhaps disappear for brief moments, but it cannot dissolve unless you go beyond compulsive thinking. And that is our task so that we can more and more live in the state of no thought. We've already suggested ways of entering the state of no thought, which is called presence.

We can call presence, we can call awareness, we can call stillness, alert stillness, not asleep stillness. Asleep stillness means you're falling below thought. But to transcend thought is to rise above thought.

And then you realize whenever you think there is a diminished degree of alertness compared to the state of no thought, where you have risen above thought. When you look at a flower, when you take one conscious step, when you perform one conscious action, conscious meaning you're totally there without the interference of mental labels, without making something into a means to an end. That's conscious, completely present.

There you are awake and then thought comes in and you can sense the diminished degree of wakefulness as the moment thought identification with thought comes in. And you can actually feel in yourself or observe in somebody else how they go from clarity to a dreamlike state, which often means there's a problem that you need to solve, there's a memory, there's a future situation that you're thinking about. You're moving into away from what is.

So we've suggested ways of sustaining without making an effort. It's no effort. You can't make an effort to be present.

A way of sustaining presence for more than a moment by conscious looking, by conscious self-sense perception, by conscious action, by conscious listening, by consciously being in the body. These are all ways of exiting the noise machine in the head. And there's another one that will work for some of you, but not for all.

And we cannot call it method. It is the most direct way. It's not a method because method implies there's a little bit of distance.

The most direct way is simply, and some people will tell you you can't do that. Of course they tell you that because they couldn't do it. One way is simply to stop thinking because you decide that you want to stop thinking.

Now, that's an interesting one. That requires a considerable degree of alertness, sustained alertness. If you can sustain alertness, this is what people try to do when they practice meditation techniques.

But here I'm saying, examine the possibility of entering that state without any technique and without any method, simply by allowing yourself to be present and alert. And effort is not involved, and yet you need the attitude of a warrior. You need the, I occasionally use the expression, the sword of presence.

And with that sword, you cut through time because time is and thought go together. If you remove time, thought collapses also. If you remove thought, there's no more time.

There's only this moment because all past and all future are thought forms. If anybody else knows the greater truth, you can tell me now and can tell me that you have actually touched the future, have experienced it. Some might tell me, yes, but I foresaw the future.

Well, when did you foresee it? In the now, surely. So you both, if you have the ability to foresee the future, when does that happen?

You foresee it at this moment. And when it comes, it's also this moment. That's not philosophy.

It's too simple to be philosophy. It is self-evident. So anything that's self-evident cannot become philosophy.

So I'm not saying that it is not possible to predict what we call the future, but it's still always now. That's all we need to know and recognize. It's still always now.

So past and future only exist as thoughts in your head because in your experience, actual experience, direct experience, all you have is the present moment ever. That's all.

So past and future are abstractions, mental abstractions.

The moment you stop thinking, there's no past and future. There is the enormous aliveness and vitality and intelligence of the present moment. The power of life itself is there.

And the present moment before, when you were absorbed in past and future and thinking, the present moment seemed totally insignificant because you were concerned with the vastness of past and the vastness of future and me in the middle of all that. And what looked like the smallest thing, the present moment, is really, it's like splitting the atom. Present moment recognition means you discover that in the tiniest thing is concealed the most enormous amount of energy.

The atom is the present moment and it suddenly splits and reveals it is the very core of all energy, the very heart of all life energy, emanates from now, the present moment. And before it seemed so insignificant, the tiniest thing. So here we are splitting the atom, but it's not going to be made into a weapon.

It's simply a, because it cannot be a weapon. Weapon means always separation, me against you. So here we are recognizing thought and time go together.

We abolish time, we abolish thought. Doesn't matter where you start. If you say there's only this moment, automatically thinking subsides and you enter presence.

Or if you say, okay, there's nothing to think about. I'll just be still, that's it. And alert, that's it, that's it.

No past, no future. And enormous energy, but subtle energy, not gross, it's not noisy energy. It's not that energy.

So is it possible, for some people it is, they may not have realized that it is possible to simply stop thinking. The entire message of some spiritual teachers is to stop thinking. Some of them never said it openly.

Perhaps they didn't want to shock the audience. The entire teaching of Krishnamurti can be reduced to don't think. And the entire spiritual teaching, if anybody, can be reduced to don't think.

But Krishnamurti went about the roundabout way and said, let's investigate, can thought solve our problems? Now let's think about that. No.

And there was one teacher whom I love, my favorite quote by that teacher, Nisargadatta Maharaj, who wrote, I Am That. Well, he didn't write it, he spoke it. His definition of presence or meditation, which is the same.

What is meditation? What is presence? And he was a radical teacher.

He was very much like a Zen teacher. He would shout at you. And so his definition was simply, the radical refusal to harbor thoughts.

Now this is not, I inviting you, that is one way, but it's not for everyone. There's another related way that is open to more people. And that is the discovery that already in your life, there are many moments of no thought.

You just hadn't noticed. Because if there were not many brief moments of no thought, you would be on the verge of insanity, if not insane. It is out of the brief gaps of no thought that a sense of aliveness arises that is still there, even in people whose mind is very active.

Where a sense of occasional glimpses of joy arise, occasional glimpses of peace arise. And there are humans who don't have these gaps anymore, because their mind is continuously annoyed and they are very, very unhappy. And some go insane and some commit suicide.

It's not that they don't have the stillness, it's covered up continuously. But in still the majority of humans, there are gaps of no thought and they never noticed. And the wonderful thing is when you make that conscious, you notice that there are gaps of no thought.

Then the gaps become longer. They become conscious. Because one is so, humans are so identified with mind, to the thinking mind, the gaps when you're not thinking are totally meaningless.

It doesn't even know they're there. And it cannot do anything with them. So you cannot remember that you had gaps of no thought, except sometimes perhaps when they were extremely more prolonged than others.

You might remember that once you climbed a mountain and it took you four or five hours to get to the top. And the exertion, the physical exertion was such that you just couldn't think anymore. And when you finally arrived at the top, there was total stillness.

And at that moment, the sun rose and there you stood. And you remember it for the rest of your life, the incredible sense of aliveness that you experienced there. And you experienced it because there was complete stillness.

But I'm not talking about these great realizations that also of course come and go, but the little ones. For example, every time you look at something, every time your glance falls upon something, whatever it may be, a person, an object, a tree, a flower, the sky, at the first moment of perception, there's no thought. There is always a gap.

When you first perceive something, there's a gap of about a second, sometimes two seconds, before some kind of naming comes in, which is thought. And most people are not aware that that is there. If you become aware that the moment you start to listen to a sound before the mind names it, there is a gap of pure perception.

And that is there. And it is out of these gaps during the day that you still find life worth living. It is not because your thought is justifying to yourself, well, it's still worth living because I might still make it.

That is a very, it's a secondary, and that doesn't really work that well. And a point comes when the mind will tell you, it's too late now, I'm not going to make it. So you cannot, life cannot be made into this fear that it's worth living by some kind of mental justification.

Why you should still be here. It works for a little while, it's a substitute. But to realize that life is worth living, that life is good beyond the forms, because when you look at the forms of life, you might draw the conclusion that life is not good because all the forms die sooner or later.

So, but to realize that life is good in essence, and that in essence, there is nothing that is not life. And the realization that death is not the opposite of life, that life has no opposite, only birth has an opposite, and that's death. The realization that there is a goodness to life, despite the fact that everything around you dies.

Despite the fact that even your physical form is already condemned to death, everyone. Despite the fact that somebody close to you might disappear at any moment, including yourself. You could slip on a banana skin when you walk out of here, and that's the end of it.

You don't know, or I could. And does this mean that life is bad? The fact that forms are impermanent, that they're not reliable, that all structures are unstable, that the stability of the physical universe is only a delusion.

When you go into big cities, which is the big buildings, oh, that's going to last forever. No, not at all. It could dissolve any moment.

Occasionally we see that when huge buildings collapse and everybody's dreadfully shocked. That looked so permanent. And yet, underneath that, so here we have the impermanent nature of all the, it's a, it's a universe in flux.

It's not stable. It's the world of form. And it's, it's a dance, a dance of form.

But hiding underneath all the forms of life is life. The one unmanifested, still, ever present essence. And you, that reveals itself.

The moment the forms, the primordial forms, which are thought forms, subside, then the clear sky within is suddenly visible. The clear sky, the still space of presence. And so that is to be realized.

And then you realize, out of, and from that comes that spaciousness within, out of that comes an intense sense of aliveness, beingness. And there lies the realization that life is good, despite appearances. And there comes the realization that even death is part of the goodness of life.

And death is no longer the great monster that lurks somewhere that you need to shut out and don't, mustn't think about that and hide all the dead bodies. That's what our civilization does. They, they not only hide the dead bodies, they even put makeup on dead bodies.

[Speaker 2] (3:26:25 - 3:26:50)

And it's, life is good.

[Speaker 1] (3:26:51 - 3:42:20)

That realization comes when you realize, it's actually wonderful to realize how impermanent all the forms around you are. To watch dissolving forms means the formless comes up in you. It's only from there that you can watch that and not react.

That is the deathless. And that the deathless is there when, in the moment that thought, which is primordial form, subsides. And so the goodness of life is felt the more you have space inside you.

I mean, everybody has equal space, but the more you know it, the more you realize it. Because if the fact that everybody has exactly the same space within as their essence, even within and without ultimately is meaningless. It doesn't, it's very much like saying everybody is tremendously wealthy, but some people have forgotten their bank account number.

And if you've forgotten your bank account number that has a hundred million dollars in it, you're poor or are you wealthy? It's a question of perspective. This is not a good analogy because a hundred million dollars would make no difference to you really, to the joy of life, whether you know that life is good.

So be aware that already that space of no thought is already in you many times during the day. And again, be aware of sense perception and see when you first listen, when you first look at something, even when you first touch something, there is a brief moment of no naming, simply a still perception. And that's where truly there's direct experience at that moment.

The moment you start thinking and naming, it's no longer direct experience, it's an abstraction. And you've brought in the past. Now, thought can still operate in you, but it is no longer self-serving then.

It still operates when it is needed. And those humans who can think well, there are not many humans who can think well, most are simply burdened with noise in the head. Those humans who think creatively, who have original thoughts, not deep thoughts, they don't exist.

Deep thoughts don't exist, but an original thought can come out of the depths of stillness. Not every thought is a form, it can point to the depths, but in itself, it cannot be deep. No thought is deep.

So humans who can think originally, original thinkers, creative thinkers, inspiring thinkers, the way they think is they enter the state of alertness and many of them, they don't even know that that's what they do. They enter the state of alertness and they step back into no thought very briefly and then the words come. When they have uttered a certain sequence of words, they step back into no thought.

Briefly, you may not even notice it. It's not that they become still and suddenly start meditating. They step back into no thought.

There's a brief, it could only, might be only two seconds and some of them may feel the inner body and they don't even know it. They just feel alive and then out of that aliveness come words, but that aliveness is still vital. It is still and vital.

And there's the primordial intelligence there that is consciousness itself that they touch and that's also artists create out of that. They become still and then it happens. So people who think creatively, it simply happens.

It's not even they don't think. It's something that happens by itself. It's a beautiful process.

Normal humans who don't, they are burdened by totally repetitive thoughts. Always the same kind of thing go round and round in the head and there are many humans who have not had one original thought in 20, 30, 40 years. Why not?

Because they cannot step back, not for a moment, out of the noise machine, out of the continuous formation of thoughts and repetition of the same thoughts, cannot step back into stillness and for even five seconds and then if they did for the first time, they would have an original, an alive thought. I was amazed some years ago when my mother came to visit me and my mother, like everybody else, is burdened with a noise machine in the head. She came to stay with me for a couple of weeks and first I was shocked because there's so much noise talking and continuous and it's always, and it's not personal.

It's not because my mother is deficient. It's simply the human condition and I just, all I could do was sit there and be and listen and allow her to go through the motions of speaking and it's always the same. It is normal too and then I was still and I was still, still, still and at some point after a few days, she became suddenly still and she didn't speak for about a minute and then suddenly came in, what she said then was, I found amazing.

What she said then is the beginning of all spiritual seeking, is the beginning of all philosophy, lies at the very beginning of all that and she said, isn't it strange? We are born and then we die. That was an original true thought and that came perhaps because some of the stillness was activated for a moment, that dimension in her and so on.

So even the noisiest and that question is more important than the answer. Just to dwell with that question. You don't even need to answer it on a conceptual level.

Just have that question there and allow the strangeness of birth and death to be there. Why do we need to explain it? You can arrive at a knowing that is beyond concepts by simply allowing the mystery of life to be there.

We are born and then we die. So to be creative, a creative thinker, it's a continuous moving back and forth between nothingness, emptiness, you dissolve into nothingness and then form comes back. Nothingness, no thingness, thingness.

No thingness, thingness. Because every thought is a thing, not a physical thing, but it's a form and a form is a thing. So discover that is how to think creatively.

But it's essential here for you to discover that already that dimension is present in your life. It may be there when you open your eyes in the morning. You wake up and there's a moment of when you haven't remembered, you're not remembered your past and you're not thinking about the future and you haven't remembered your problems.

There's simply aware presence. Ah, there it is. Now it is whether or not you achieve mastery in this or that doesn't really matter.

Some people achieve mastery in kicking a ball or throwing a ball. And in there they have, if they are doing it well, they're doing it without thought. In other words, they are not doing it at all.

It's happening. They link into a greater whole that is performing through them. A greater intelligence is acting through them.

To see that in action is always beautiful. And most humans love watching it. They don't know why.

I always say, why otherwise would they watch people either kicking or throwing or hitting a ball for hours and hours? Well, ego comes in too because you identify with a particular team. And then the team loses and you go, you're depressed for three days.

Our team has lost. We have been defeated. So there are different approaches to the same.

You can look simply for where the spaces already are in your life. And as they become conscious, more conscious, they become deepened and prolonged. And then if that works for you, but to simply, as Nisargadatta said, the refusal, the radical refusal to harbor thoughts, don't misunderstand that.

It does not involve willpower as such, as we know it. It does not involve opposing something. It does not involve fighting thought.

You cannot fight against a thought. You could for a little while, you could suppress a thought. But while you suppress the thought, more and more thoughts accumulate behind that one.

And eventually the lid will blow off. You could say, I'm not going to think. And you will notice your body will become tense and you may stop breathing.

And it may work for a little while, but that's not it. It's not the arising of presence. It is thought trying to suppress thought.

And then the slightest thing happens while you're doing that. Somebody knocks at the door. Leave me alone.

Can't you see I'm meditating? So that's, it can be misunderstood. That's perhaps why Krishnamurti never said it.

There is no effort involved and yet there's intense energy there. Your body is quite relaxed in that state, but you are present throughout the body. Every cell is alive with presence.

Every cell alive with presence. And you sense the entire body. And it is simply the alertness that does it, not some kind of willpower, not some kind of wanting.

The alertness is there that is such that it doesn't allow thought to come. And if thought does come, it comes into the field of alertness, which is so bright. This is an analogy.

It's so filled with light that the thought comes and the moment it reaches the alertness, it dissolves in it. It goes... And sometimes you can notice the thought coming up and you can, you know that the eyes and the brain are very closely related.

They say the eyes, the cells of the eyes are the same as the brain cells. I don't know if that's true. You can blink.

If a thought tries to creep up into alertness and you notice that the thought is creeping up, you blink once and you blink it away.

[Speaker 2] (3:42:21 - 3:42:21)

It's gone.

[Speaker 1] (3:42:24 - 4:13:09)

It's a strange... That's a wonderful practice is to be practiced with your partner or anybody that you know well or once you get used to it, even anybody that you don't know well, is to look into each other's eyes. It's not called staring.

It's called gazing. Because staring is the... I'm going to outstare you.

Staring is ego, who can last longer and so on. No, it's... We could call it gazing.

In some spiritual circles, it is done a lot. In some spiritual circles, it is overdone. But there's a beauty to it when it happens naturally or as together with your partner, someone you look into each other's eyes for a long time and the point of it is to share the space of thoughtless presence where you merge beyond thought.

The point of it is not to think about the other person or yourself but simply to abide in no thought while the looking happens and that you merge virtually because when thought doesn't operate, there's no thought of me and the other anymore. There's simply a oneness that arises, a space of presence arises between you. And if thoughts do come in, you can either recognize them as thoughts and say they're not important.

It's just a thought and you allow it to pass through or you can blink it away just once or twice. Blink. One blink is enough usually.

A little thought comes, one blink, it's gone. Or it comes and it drifts away. And to realize thought always pretends to be important and so you have to recognize its non-importance which is actually the case most of the time.

So this is a beautiful practice with anybody but there needs to be usually an agreement with the other person. Sometimes in some spiritual circles or meditation play or retreat places a newcomer comes and they've never been there before and the first person they meet they say, hello, my name is such and the other person goes... It can be very beautiful and it can also, like everything else, it can degenerate into something that you feel you should be doing to fit in or to be spiritual or whatever.

Anything can become that. And then also once you can actually... The same happens when you look...

Once you practice thoughtless, present looking, you can actually do it with people who don't know that you're doing it but not in the way I just described. It's briefer when they talk you go to the supermarket or the store and they say, okay, that'll be $10.50 and you look at that person and for three seconds there's no thought. They never know it.

They think you're working out in your head whether this is correct or not. And many times or you meet somebody and you shake hands and for a moment it's two seconds, three seconds, there's simply... There's an energy that comes with that.

And don't... The ego can get in there and say, I'm going to do something to you and immediately that's not it at all. That's immediately mind energy.

So the ego can come in and say, I'm going to make you present or it can say, I'm going to heal you or give me three seconds and I'll heal you. No, there's no wanting in that. There's no...

I don't want anything. I don't even want the other person to be more conscious. It's simply joyful to join with that person in presence.

Yes, of course it has an effect but there's no wanting in it. I don't need that person to change and that's why I'm doing it. It is a joyful thing.

It is a joining and it's joyful. And that changes all your interactions. Once you are able to look at another human being and remain free of thought, if only just briefly, enough.

A completely different energy comes into the interaction which has nothing to do with thought energy, mind energy. Yes, and then you speak. Another way, very important now again to bring that dimension into your life, to invite it into your life, not to create it.

You don't create stillness or spaciousness because it's already there. You already discover it. That's...

So don't think you need to bring it about as such. It's there. When you speak to someone, usually it consists of several sentences.

It's a mind stream. You're telling something that something needs to be done or this or that. Come to the end of that particular mind stream as soon as possible and then step back.

Otherwise you go on and on or the other person takes over and then goes on and then you take over and then she takes over, he takes over. And some people don't even need the other person. They are happy to be engaged.

They are happy with a monologue or all they want is somebody to be there they can talk at. And it goes on and on. But it's very easy once you're in a conversation with somebody for the mind stream to take over the interaction completely and then you talk and talk and talk and talk and then the other person says, oh yeah, you're right.

That's it. Then he takes over and then you go... No space.

So to bring to... Also step back here. The similar thing that you do when you wish to think creatively.

Stepping back when the mind... You've said what you had to say. Why carry on?

Step back into presence. You've said your bit. Step back into presence.

If only for three or four seconds, then you speak again. But it's also there. Finding the gaps.

Finding the gaps of no thought in any interaction even when you go to Christmas dinners and talk to your family and so on. Back to no thought where you're simply... Then you look at the other person again.

And in the looking, there is a stillness and there's presence. Very different energy. So that's important so that you don't get lost every time you open your mouth.

As somebody said to me, I can be very spiritual when I sit alone in my room. But the moment I start dealing with people and talking to people, I lose it. And of course, that's when you open your mouth, then the mind stream gets even stronger in many people because it reinforces itself through the other person.

So it's always a stepping back into the no thingness that is the essence of who you are. And then you're back into form. It's a dance.

Life is a dance between form and formlessness. Well, that's how life... That is how when life is lived as it could be lived beautifully, it is that.

For most humans, it's not a dance between form and formless. For most humans, it's being lost in form and feeling the burden of that. They haven't found yet the secret of stepping back because if you know the secret of stepping back into the no thingness, into stillness, into presence, then the world of form, which before was a very frustrating place, awful place really, because things go wrong continuously in the world of form.

And if there's nothing beyond form, you cannot depend on anything out here. You can't trust anybody or anything and everything lets you down eventually because nothing lasts. Every situation lets you down because it's not fulfilling ultimately for a little while.

Every person lets you down because either they leave you or they die. So you can't... In the world of form, on the level of form alone, it's not that reliable, the world of form.

Of course not. It's not meant to be reliable. That's not how it works.

But when you are able to step back, then it's actually a place that you can enjoy because your sense of self, your identity, your sense of beingness, your peace, your aliveness does not depend on it anymore on the forms in your life. You enjoy them, but you don't depend because the very aliveness that you sense and feel and are derives from the formless. So from there, you can enjoy the world of form.

It's a beautiful place too. You could also reject it and then go totally into the formless, but as long as you have a physical body or seem to have, why not enjoy the world of form while you're here? And it's wondrous and beautiful and you don't need...

no longer need to demand that the world, which is a world of form, should satisfy you or make you happy because it won't. You make me happy. The world owes me.

No, it doesn't. The world doesn't owe you anything. The world is supposed to make me happy and give me fulfillment.

No, fulfillment cannot be derived from anything in the world. It is derived directly from the essence of your being at this moment. Then all the things of this world will give you a secondary fulfillment that will be enjoyable because you don't depend on them.

You can enjoy them. You can enjoy the Rolls Royce. You don't even have to give it away, but if you decide to give it away, you can enjoy the bicycle without needing to compare in any way.

The fact that you drive a Rolls Royce doesn't mean you're superior in any way to the next person on a bicycle or the other way around. And you help the people that want to make a difference. This is a great thing.

The main thing in this life is I want to make a difference in this world, but you cannot really make a difference as long as all the mind structures in you have not transcended the collective mind structures that have been running this world for thousands of years. And you can see what that produced by reading a history book or watching TV tonight. Well, not here, but at home.

So you can see what kind of world that has produced. You can only make a true difference by changing inside, by accessing that, by going through that shift in consciousness. And then no matter where you go, you make a difference.

You go into a supermarket, you make a difference there. You go, you make a difference at work. You make a difference at the conference table.

You make a difference wherever you are. Your very presence makes a difference. And what in addition you do actively, that varies from person to person, whether you actively go and help people on one or the other level.

That depends. One person is called upon to do this. Another person is called upon to do that.

You might be drawn to go to some country where people are starving and help there. Or you may continue to have your hairdressing salon and everybody who comes to you feels better when they leave, not because they look better, because they feel better inside. We are entering the phase of silence from now, except for this person on the chair and except for when perhaps tomorrow morning, tomorrow afternoon, we may ask questions here.

Or if you go and have a session with someone, if you need to say a few words, that's fine too. But I would recommend to observe the silence between now and Wednesday morning when you get up. That's one day and two nights.

Now, one thing for those of you who are not experienced retreatees, retreat attendants, participants, you may find it at first very awkward to sit at a table in the dining hall and nobody is speaking. You may find it awkward if you are sharing a room to be with one or two or three people and you can't talk to them. And you can sense that awkwardness perhaps.

It's the same awkwardness that you feel when you're going to a small elevator and somebody else steps in and you're both standing there and it's going... And usually one of them will break the silence because they can't stand it anymore. You cannot endure 10 floors of silence.

And usually one person will break it and will make a comment about the weather. That's the first thing. It's wet today, isn't it?

Ah, and the other person is relieved and says, yes, it is. And I think it's going to rain even more. Okay, that's it.

It worked. So if you feel the awkwardness and feel... What do you do then?

Very simple. Watch the feeling of awkwardness and allow it to be there so that you become the space around the awkwardness. There's the awkwardness and there's, oh, I feel awkward.

And then you feel it. You feel what it is that you feel. So you bring consciousness to it.

And you allow it. You don't say, oh, I shouldn't be feeling awkward because he talked about it. No, I'm not saying don't feel awkward.

I feel, say, when you feel awkward, know that you're feeling awkward and say, it's okay to feel awkward. I allow myself to feel awkward. The allowing also brings the space.

Whatever you allow, there's immediate allowing any condition, internal or external, saying I allow it to be there because it's here now. What can I do? It's the present form of this moment.

You allow it. The allowing means immediately there's a space around it. And you are the allowing space because space contains it all.

Space allows everything to be there. And that is another way of, of course, accessing spaciousness or presence. No matter what the condition is, the moment you allow the condition, what external, internal, awkwardness, whatever, the moment you say, oh, there it is.

I can feel it and it's okay. The moment you allow it, you have transcended the condition because you've become the consciousness in which the condition appears. Whereas before you were trapped in the condition and you were a little limited by the condition.

Your self was in the condition, your sense of self. You incarnated into the condition. And now you step out of the condition and allow the condition.

You have the space for all conditions. And that's beautiful. So, and once you allow it, you transcend.

And that means when you transcend a condition for a little while, it's still there. And then usually it dissolves because you're not feeding it anymore. If you were resisting, if you want to prolong a condition, you resist it.

External or internal. If you want to prolong it, you create inner resistance or some mental resistance. I'm feeling this, but I shouldn't be.

Unnecessary. Allow this moment to be as it is, no matter what form it takes. And if you do that, that alone takes you to the formless.

That alone would take you to the formless because the formless is the allowing, the space that is there the moment you allow. It's a stepping back from the condition. Stepping, one could almost say you take the self out of the condition.

You take the self out of the condition. And the self is recognized as space, not as something. The self is recognized in its essence as no thingness.

That is the self that the Hindu teachings talk about, the great self, the one self. And then there's a little self that identifies with a condition, a thought, an emotion, a form, a car, whatever. That's the little self.

And that the Buddha recognized that as an illusion. Buddha said, there is no self. What people regard as themselves, as their self is an illusion.

There is no self. And he's right because he was speaking about the self as form. Any form is not who you are.

Any condition is not who you are. So although the Hindu teachings and the Buddhist teachings seem to contradict each other, they're talking about the same thing. They're just using different terms.

Because all that can be verified in your immediate experience. They are not abstract notions to believe in. For many people, they are.

They say, the Buddhist says there is no self. And then the Hindu scholar comes and says, yes, there is a great self. Krishna said.

They, it's so, find out for yourself before you discuss. So the awkwardness will go away if you allow it to be there, if it's there. And then actually it's quite nice to be in silence together, in stillness together.

And to eat your meal one spoonful at a time and taste it perhaps even more. Don't make a ritual out of anything. Don't say, I'm going to chew 25.

When you are in silence, the mind will sometimes invent games to keep itself busy. It'll devise its own crossword puzzles in the head. And then you start counting the people in the room and you become Mr. Bean. Mr. Bean is so funny because there's always a basic truth of how the mind operates and he just exaggerates it a little. And talking about crossword puzzles, don't go into your room and get the crossword puzzles out. Watch the mind, as the Buddhists say.

The Buddhists in Buddhist monasteries, when they want you to shut up, they say, watch your mind. So while we are in silence, watch your mind. Be the watcher of your mind.

Be the witnessing presence, not only of the thoughts. And you recognize the thoughts as thoughts. And one thing too, especially while we are silent now, don't take your thoughts too seriously.

They are only thoughts. When you take them seriously, then they get bigger and bigger. When you recognize a thought as a thought, it comes and goes.

It's harmless. There's no self in it. If there's no self in thought, every thought is quite harmless.

Nothing wrong with it. Doesn't really matter. Let it drift in, out.

Be in the body as much as possible. Sense perceptions. Look, watch, listen, smell.

Be an alert presence, not a heavy person walking through the gardens here. A heavy me with a heavy past and a heavy problematic future that you carry all of them in your head. Be simply, be an alert presence.

Be consciousness. Be a field of consciousness that walks through the gardens. And there may be one or two rebellious people here who are saying, I'm not going to be told what to do.

And when you see them in the dining hall, they say, okay, I'll have some juice now. Or they address you and say, what did you think of this afternoon session? Did you get anything out of it?

To which the correct answer, of course, is nothing. Didn't get anything out of it. And so when we talk again, it'll be Wednesday morning.

Well, we will talk here. It'll be Wednesday morning. Yes, tomorrow is Tuesday.

We'll be meeting here twice tomorrow. In the afternoon, we may ask questions that may involve words. Usually it does.

The most pointless talk, by the way, especially on retreats or anywhere, is talking about presence. What it is. What I think it is.

You're either present or not. The mind cannot, can never really understand what presence is. So don't try to.

Sometimes there was a retreat two years ago after a week. Finally, one mind, which is always, it's a human mind, so it's nothing personal, asked me, would you please define in more detail and more clearly what presence is? We had practiced presence for a whole week.

Now the mind demanded a clearer definition of presence so that it can put it in its pocket and take home. A set of concepts and say, okay, now I know what presence is. Now what's the next workshop I can go to?

If your body wants to move, I believe there's a movement class following this. And you can be present. Body can be present.

I can feel that my body wants to move, but I may not come to the class. Tai Chi is a beautiful thing. Some people say that Tai Chi originated when thousands of years ago, some people watched the movement of animals and imitated the movement of animals.

That's one theory, but this may be correct. Another possibility is, because nobody really knows, another possibility is that it originated as spontaneous movement in a human being who was totally present. And then a spontaneous movement happened.

He or she didn't know why. Simply the body went into a slow dance-like movement to express the joy of presence. This is how I see it started.

I can't... Who knows? It happened to me once.

And it happened to Kim. I observed her. She suddenly started moving and she had never studied before when she did that, never done Tai Chi before.

And it was better than Tai Chi because it was totally spontaneous. It came out of presence. Maybe it's in her genes.

It came out of presence and there was that spontaneous, that movement. And then that was thousands of years ago when perhaps the first person went into that in China. And there were probably some bystanders said, what's that person doing?

It looks incredible. And then perhaps it happened again. The same bystanders came and looked and those bystanders became the first practitioners of Tai Chi because they said, we want to learn that.

And then they got a piece of paper, if they had paper or whatever they had, and said, okay, left arm goes up now. Now the right leg raises, goes up slightly and then it goes down again. And then they start later, they started teaching it.

And miraculously, even though that was turning it around, it still worked in some way. So it works both when the movement comes from the inside out as a spontaneous expression of presence, joyful presence. And it also seems to work from the outside in.

If you do these movements, you enter presence. Seems to work both ways. Well, if you do them rightly and you're not thinking while you're doing them, of course, if you're thinking, okay, my arm needs to be there now and you're not present in that movement because you're already there.

[Speaker 2] (4:15:19 - 4:15:20)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (4:19:39 - 5:46:07)

As we sit here, let's see if we can be aware of, let me speak as you, see if I can be aware of the presence that I am at this moment. See if I can be aware of the essence of my identity, which is not my past, which is not my thoughts or my emotions or what happened to me, but something deeper, that which is hiding in my story as the sense of I, but usually gets mixed up with my story. It's like one could say it is the light of consciousness and that light, that pure light gets mixed up with form.

One could use the analogy of a film projector. The light is behind the film and there are forms that obscure the light in one way or another. And everybody, this is a strange thing, everybody is aware of who they are, of their innermost sense of self or identity, but through the distorted form of their story, their life, their thoughts and emotions and memories and identifications which are thoughts.

So when we ask, who are you? Usually you mention the identifications that consciousness identified with. I am, that you give your name and then what you do, your, or what you have or own or status or whatever it is that you identify with and then you present that as who you are.

I am a such and such. I am a somebody. I am a self-made millionaire.

I'm a spiritual seeker and the self-made millionaire, the spiritual seeker, or I'm somebody who failed miserably, another story, all the stories. And then in there somewhere is hiding the sense of me, of self. And that is precious.

Everybody knows that there's something precious that's to do with who they are and that people are so afraid that they lose themselves at some point. And so hiding in the story is the I am that is nothing to do with time, beingness, presence, consciousness itself, before it becomes something. It's born into a form, a thought form, an emotional form.

And so one could ask, what is it in your life or in my life, talking as you, what is it in my life that I can be absolutely sure of? And some philosophers have asked that question. What is it that I cannot doubt?

And they realized, and scientists also ask that question, and they realize that almost everything you can doubt, you can doubt whether this room exists, the people in this room, because you have no direct experience of it, because there's an optical, your eye is a lens, and so it's like a camera lens and that the picture that it captures is projected onto a screen behind it, is then translated into nerve impulses that are sent to the brain, and then in some strange way, the brain reassembles certain nerve impulses that come through the senses in some way and forms a world out of that, a reality.

Now, what relationship does that have with what's actually out there? We don't know. Nobody really knows whether there's actually anything out there or whether it is simply something that is being dreamt.

The brain creates its dream, or we share the same dream, but we don't want to degenerate now into philosophy. All I'm saying is you can doubt everything, including that the whole life up to now that you experienced as your life ever happened. It could be a dream too.

It's very similar to you wake up in the morning and sometimes just before you're completely awake, you remember the day before and you might think, was that the dream or did that happen? But everything in the past is of the nature of a dream that dissolves and then you say, was that real or did I dream that? When you arrive home after this retreat, you open your front door and then you put your luggage down and you look around and say, did I ever leave?

Did I dream all that? Because everything dissolves so quickly, it's in the nature of a dream. So you can doubt everything except one thing, that you are.

Because if you were not, the dream could not arise. The dream can only arise in the field of consciousness. There needs to be a consciousness that enables the dream to be, if it is a dream or that enables your life to be.

There needs to be a, some, a dreamer. A dream, when you wake up in the morning and you remember a dream and you say it's unreal or it's only a dream. Well, there must be something real in it.

The consciousness that enabled the dream to be, that was real. The light in which the dream appeared, which is the light of consciousness. And so your innermost, who you are, you can doubt on the level of form, everything, except that you are, there is beingness or presence there.

You don't know what you are, perhaps. You don't know what that is. But without it, nothing could be the light of consciousness.

I am. So that is the, I am that is hiding in the story. The story says, I am this, or I am that.

You identify with this, you identify with that. That's form. And you can doubt all that and it all passes very quickly.

But something that you cannot doubt is that you are. You may be dreaming all this, but you are. And you may not be able to name what you are or who you are, because in the moment you name it, you have given the formless form.

So can we remain as the formless sense of I am at this very moment to sense your beingness or presence that has nothing to do with your past? In fact, let's pretend for a moment that you have no past and no name, because it's ephemeral anyway. What is the name?

It's a sequence of sounds that your parents invented for you. And then you believed in it. So let's pretend for a moment that you have no past or you can't remember it, because if you don't remember it, it's gone anyway.

And you don't have a name and remain with a bare sense of being. And that is what underlies all the forms in your life. No name, no past, no future.

Do you know who you are? No. That's self-realization.

You have to become happy with not knowing who you are. So you enter the unknown dimension of yourself. All you know is that you are, but you don't know what or who you are.

Because if you think you know what or who you are, you've already limited yourself. You remain as consciousness. And even that's too much to say that, but I say it anyway.

Because if we call it something, we've already limited it. But as long as you're aware that it's only a pointer, I cannot explain it by saying consciousness. I cannot explain who you are by saying you are consciousness.

That would only be... It's only a pointer. Consciousness is only a name.

Somebody else calls it Tao, somebody else calls it something else. It is better to let that be nameless. Simply...

It is simply knowing that you are, but not knowing what or who you are. And not needing to escape immediately or again into knowing. And that's the great...

People find it hard to live with not knowing. They need... And this is why there's the compulsion to name as soon as an experience appears in front of you.

You need to name it. It's the mind that needs to feel secure by interpreting it and saying what it is. So...

And so we are becoming familiar here first, basically, with not knowing who we are. Because you cannot know yourself as an object of knowledge. Not the essence.

Because you are that through which everything is known. You are the knower itself, the very basis for knowing. And that you cannot make into an object.

And from the point of view of the mind, that sense of beingness or presence is a state of not knowing, of ignorance. But only from the point of view of the mind. But the mind and the egoic mind, that's associated with...

which is to do with mind identification, is afraid of that. It thinks you will lose yourself. But you don't.

And once you're comfortable with not knowing who you are, but simply realizing that you are, that is what we described earlier as the background to all your experiences and perceptions. The I am, which, if we want to describe it, to give you another pointer, it is a sense of spaciousness. Space also you cannot describe.

You cannot grasp. An inner spaciousness, the I am-ness, beingness, presence. So when you look at it, we talked this morning about sense perception, looking at a plant, a blade of grass, a tree, a landscape, the clouds, listening to the rain, listening to the birds, whatever it might be.

And knowing yourself as the background or the stillness, which is the same as the I am. One could say that's the another analogy. It's the screen on which the world of form temporarily appears.

So when people meditate, then they attempt to get to that realization, not through the sense perceptions, which is another way. They attempt to get to that directly, to sense the presence that they are as consciousness. And here we are doing it with our eyes open while somebody is speaking.

It's not somebody, but there's a voice. And that's an enormously, even a glimpse of that gives you a sense of intense aliveness, because what you are getting a glimpse of, by the way, whenever we talk about it, we are distorting it and recreating a duality where there isn't one. You are not getting a glimpse of it.

It gets a glimpse of itself. You're getting a glimpse of it. There's a sense of aliveness, subtle, but strong.

It has nothing to do with the form, whether the form is 20 years old or 95 years old. It has nothing to do with that. Nothing to do with your achievements or non-achievements or what you have identified with.

Direct sense of aliveness, the joy of being, beingness. Everything else that people seek in the world of form is a substitute, because they haven't found that themselves there. They haven't found the life, what Jesus called eternal life.

They haven't found that, their innermost sense, the consciousness that they are, and that's obscured by forms. And so they look for more forms. They're looking for that, for themselves in the world of form.

And that's why living in this world, for most people, is such a frustrating experience. Because the world cannot give you what you are looking for, ultimately. And they don't even know that that is what they're looking for.

They think they're looking, when I have accumulated those forms, then I'll be full and complete, not realizing their very search for the fullness and completeness in the world of form is obscuring the fullness and completeness that's already there at this moment, as their very life, their very essence, their very consciousness, their very search for it obscures the reality of it now. The search for it in the future obscures the reality of it now. And so this is why, as I said this morning, sometimes when you obtain something that you thought would fulfill you, for a moment, it does seem to fulfill you.

If you thought your life would be fulfilled when you own your Rolls Royce, or whatever it is, or the mansion, or finally appear on the front page of People magazine, then for a moment, when you see your picture on the front page of People magazine, you will feel you have arrived and that you might feel joy. And that's because for a moment, you're not looking for something more in the future to add to the search for more forms to find yourself through, has for a moment subsided. And there you are.

And that won't last long because if you open People magazine and start to read what they write about you, you will soon come down from that state. Because it will be completely distorted. They will have created an image.

First they build somebody up and then they enjoy tearing them down. That's how it works. And that's why people love reading it because their emotions get stimulated by it.

It's another substitute for the true feeling of aliveness. It's another substitute for their true being, their true reality. And so a large part of our civilization is there to provide people with substitutes to give them a second or third hand sense of aliveness, of beingness, of who they are through this and through that stimulus.

It starts when young children and we become more and more clever at devising stimulus because people, there's more and more demand for stimulus because the restlessness and the discontent and the unhappiness are growing. And so they said, okay, we must find something. All these children are unhappy.

We must give them video games to keep them busy and give them stimulus. So they, at a young age, they get already addicted to that input. And it gives them, it's a drug.

It gives them a, it's a substitute feeling of aliveness. The moment they stop playing, they become restless again and the body twitches and then they go to the TV. That's the, this is what our civilization has come to.

Loss of forgetfulness, we could say, of being. There cannot be loss of being because the essence of who you are cannot be lost, but we could call it forgetfulness of being. And then large part of the civilization is engaged in finding substitutes, substitute stimulus, drugs, things, proliferation of things in this world.

Promises that through this or through that, you will feel better, you will be more, more complete. You will define your identity through this or that possession. And people unconsciously buy it.

They buy it in both senses of the word. Entertainment, industry. A lot of it is violent, so it feeds the emotion, the old emotion, the pain body.

Substitutes. So here freedom is only in finding that which everybody is seeking in the wrong place, future. That everybody is seeking through some form.

The formless through some form. And it's right here. Of course you will function differently when that becomes a living reality in your life, which we could call, which we could call the feeling of yourself, the sense of your very being.

We could call the space in the background, the stillness within, all the same thing, the same normal thing. Of course, how you conduct your life will be different when you are connected with that dimension. You have one foot in that dimension, the other foot in this dimension.

And in any situation, there's a question. And here's another pointer. We had, I'm never upset for the reason I think.

We had, what's my relationship with this moment? And another pointer now, is there space in my perception or my relationship or in what I'm doing at this moment? Is there space?

What does that mean? We already have touched upon this when we look at something. The space, the still space, is the background to the looking and to sense that as yourself while you look.

The form, and the formless, that is the light of consciousness itself. And now to sense the still background that you are is very subtle at first, because the mind may look for it and you can't find it like that. It's in the background as a simple nothingness.

That's why the Buddhists call it emptiness. It's perceived from the point of view of mind and form as the nothingness in the background, the no-thing-ness in the background. That's always the same.

In everyone, even in the most insane person, the no-thing-ness is there in the background. It cannot be destroyed in the same way that the space in this room cannot be destroyed, no matter what you do to this room. You cannot destroy the essence of this room, which is space.

You can destroy the walls, but you can make a lot of noise in here. And yet at some point, you'll have to stop making noise and the stillness and spaciousness of this room is immediately there again. So it's always, don't think you have lost it, or too much has happened in my life, I've done too many bad things.

It cannot be, can neither be destroyed nor marred in any way the essence of your being. But it is from the point of view of this gross material reality and even gross mental and emotional reality, from that point of view, it is elusive, subtle, can never grasp it. And yet it's always there in the background as the stillness.

And it's there when you look at a plant and you can sense there's a stillness looking. It's not me as a person looking at a plant when there's no thought movement, there's simply a field of stillness against which the perception of the plant arises. And it may sometimes happen that you sense, I'm not just talking now, as I talk, you can actually sense that.

It may sometimes happen that that sense of stillness against which a sense perception happens, you feel that much more strongly than the sense perception itself. It is almost, it can happen that the sense perception recedes, becomes, well, even although it may be very beautiful, the beingness can be very beautiful. It can be so overwhelming that all sense perceptions become surface phenomena, ripples on the surface of being, because the vastness of stillness that you are is so great that the entire world of form is no more than that, ripples.

Imagine being being a ball, it's not because it has no shape, and there's a stillness pervading the entire sphere, but on the external surface of the sphere, there's a ripple movement continuously changing. That's the world of form. And in the depths of the sphere, there's the eternal timeless stillness.

And so, most people are lost on the surface of things. It's the world, we call it the world, Jesus calls it the world. They are lost in the world, which is the surface layer of reality, we could say.

And that's all there is. And then life becomes dramatic and frustrating. And ultimately, are very unfulfilling.

So much that you want to get out, not realizing that you really want to get in. So when you look at a landscape, a tree, a flower, the flame of a candle, whatever it may be, you may sense sometimes that we talked about it in terms of two dimensions, you may sense that the dimension of stillness becomes so vast that what you are looking at or what you're listening to is relatively insignificant. It's just a little ripple.

And then you may sometimes want to close your eyes and be more completely one with that. But it's not yet time to completely disappear or merge with it, because for a while, we are here with a physical body, what looks like a physical body. And we are here meant to be a bridge between the world of form and the formless.

So the question is vital, not only in your sense perceptions, space, is there space? Where's the space? Can I sense the space?

It's a little pointer. And then that's the I am. It is vital in any activity that you do.

Now, so far, we've spoken about it in terms of what we could call passive perception, listening, seeing, touching, smelling. But it is vital in any activity, because that is something people not only lose themselves in sense perceptions, they lose themselves even more in doing, in what they do. So in any activity, whether it's a manual activity, then it's easier to stay present.

If it's manual, easier to have a sense of beingness and presence while the movement happens. And if that is there, then the manual activity, whatever you may be doing, crafting something, doing gardening, some artistic creation that you do with your hands, anyway it may be. And there, if you have the two dimensions, then whatever you are creating, whatever activity it is that you're engaged in, will reflect that dimension.

If you are in touch with it while you do, while there's a spaciousness, there's not, there's only little thought, there's simply aware presence that flows into the doing. Then whatever you're producing is of high quality. Not only the end product is of high quality, the doing itself is of high quality.

And if somebody watches you, they will want to watch you more, because it is beautiful to watch somebody being engaged in an activity that is not a means to an end, where the mind has created a future end that it wants to get to. And in the meantime, it's just the activity is complete in itself. It's not a means to something in the future.

It's this tremendous enjoyment in the doing when there's the space is there with the doing. But many things in this world do not involve manual things. You are involved in abstract, in an abstract world, mental abstractions.

Consisting of computers, of telephones, of letters, and documents, and papers, and screens, and devices, gadgets, all abstract things that stimulate the mind that were created by the mind and stimulate the mind. And it seems you can only run them if you use your mind. Can only operate these gadgets if you use your mind.

And to some extent that is true. I have remained to this day computer illiterate. Now, if I truly had to, I would learn it and surrender to it so that perhaps could even enjoy it.

But I'm not going to try. I prefer the pen and paper for writing. It's more tactile, more immediate, and it seems to work.

So in any activity, you need to say, is there space in what I do? The loss of spaciousness is the worst thing that can happen to you no matter what kind of activity you are involved in. And it is the most common thing for people to lose that.

The entire civilization, one could almost say, has lost it. People are so obsessed with the doing that all sense of spaciousness is lost. So the world pulls them in.

Whatever they are doing pulls them in completely. And they always need to look to the next thing or the end of it that they haven't reached yet but they want and need to reach. I need to get to the end of that because there's another thing waiting for me that I have to do also.

The loss of spaciousness in doing. And so that needs to be regained. Once you know what spaciousness is, you have glimpsed it, you have glanced it, you have experienced spaciousness here, or many of you already have it in your life, and now it's a question of not just having it while you look at a beautiful tree, it's relatively easy, but having it while you are engaged in any kind of doing.

Mechanical, whatever it may be. Is there standing back and observing what it is that you are doing so there is still a background of spaciousness, although you may be, I sometimes describe in this world, you need to, everybody's in a hurry for some reason, that's the civilization that we have created. And there's always little time to do whatever you have to do, it seems.

Even with me, the publisher says, we need a quote for this, but it needs to be in by tomorrow evening. Can you write a testimonial for that, but we need it at maximum two days, it's going to print day after tomorrow. This always seems to be, I don't know why, and there's always the time, there's very little time.

Okay. And then you sit down and then the testimonial is a piece of paper. If it comes, it comes.

First you enter spaciousness, become still, present, pick up a pen, and then something may come or it may not come. Sometimes it does, sometimes it doesn't. But I refuse to be driven mad by the world, and this means some things get done and others don't get done.

And the world does not collapse when some things don't get done. It's better to do a few things with high quality than many things low quality. And if they sack you because you're now producing few high quality things and not many low quality things, then that's for the best.

Or it may be that you, that others see how you work and then they catch it and they also start doing it the same way. A constant alertness to see have I lost the space? This is really another version of asking have I lost the present moment?

Which really means have I lost awareness of the present moment? And what is awareness of the present moment other than awareness of the underlying stillness? The I am-ness.

Because awareness of the present moment is not awareness of what happens in the present moment. That comes, that's a surface phenomenon. But that's indirect awareness of the present moment.

That's awareness of the form of the present moment. But awareness of the present moment itself is spaciousness. Is awareness of the underlying stillness in any moment no matter what happens.

And that is so the question is there space in what I do? Or have I lost the space? It's the same as asking have I lost the present moment?

Because the present moment is that. Is the space in which everything happens. Is the background.

Is the stillness. Is who you are in your essence. And the question have I lost it is not an absolutely correct question because you cannot lose it but it simply points to the fact that it has become obscured.

But let's just put it that way. Have I lost it? Have I lost and the moment you have lost it or think you have lost it there's the opportunity the opening for re-entering the space.

And that is a little skill that you can acquire here if you have not acquired it already. The skill of re-entering presence, spaciousness when you notice that you lost it, lost in quotation marks. The re-entering, the possibility of re-entering spaciousness the moment you realize it's gone.

That realization is already the re-entry of spaciousness but if you don't know that the mind will immediately come in and form a judgment. Out of that realization it will make a judgment and say you lost it not realizing. How do you know that you lost it?

Because you just realized that you lost it and that realization is presence. But the mind uses that realization and misuses it for its own ends and makes a mental judgment out of it and say you see you lost it again what's the point in doing it? Or whatever the mind says.

So to realize the moment you know that you lost it that knowing is the re-emergence of it because if you had truly lost it you wouldn't know it you would be completely immersed in the unconscious movement the unconscious thinking the unconscious activity the unconscious reaction. So to know that you lost the present moment it is there in the knowing is the awakening already. And then you stay in the knowing and that is the state of alertness that is suddenly back and you suddenly feel the inner body again.

And the first thing as I mentioned earlier the first thing that you often notice is your surroundings again sense perceptions. Ah, ah, space is back. And then you go into you continue doing what you're doing with a sense of space.

Now, the place where you most easily lose it is when the mind is active and especially when the mind is interacting with other minds. Talking, discussing something. That's where you most easily get completely drawn into thought forms.

Your consciousness gets totally drawn into thought forms and you are totally in every thought and so you can observe it when you watch maybe not here because perhaps everybody's present now but when you watch two people talking to each other or just listen to two people talking to each other you can also often notice that lack of presence that lack of space in the interaction. Well, and then you said I really think that wasn't quite the right thing. Well, no, you're not quite it's just forms one form after another.

There's never a not a standing back from the mind stream. It's being immersed in the mind stream and that's so seductive. And especially when you're dealing with something that the world calls a problem we need to deal with this this is so important what are you going to do about this?

That's how the world functions one problem after another. So then to lose yourself not only in the mind stream but to lose yourself in whatever the world says matters this thing is so important we have to get sort this out. What do we do?

And you get everybody's frustrated and there's thinking and everybody's it's so important no sense of space between it and yourself you are not there really as the space. You get absorbed by the problem you get absorbed by the activity you get absorbed by the mind stream and then you suddenly you notice oh and there's a waking up again I lost the space. And then the space is back and you stand back and for a moment you don't participate in the interaction the discussion whatever it is and suddenly immediately there's a different energy field there and if you then start speaking again the words will not feed the mind they may be words but the words then come out of presence and it may be that for the first time somebody says something sensible for the first time somebody presents a real solution to the situation and that is the world is the world has two aspects the world in your head and the world out there which is I don't mean nature by world I mean the civilization that the mind has created so you have the inner world and the outer world which are really one the whole civilization almost everything is mind creation very little in it contains presence occasionally here and there there are certain things yes but it's rare so the world has incredible momentum the world in here primarily and the world out there but primarily of course in here and everything it's easy to lose yourself in that because of the pulling power of the mind the inner mind and the externalized mind as the world and the world will it's not only that the world wants to pull you in every other mind every human who is only there as a mind wants you to contribute to his or her mind stream and wants to convince you that this really matters this is very important whenever you think something matters absolutely in this world you have lost space whenever you behave as if something was deadly serious and mattered absolutely and for some people it can be the tiniest thing just even getting the right the right buying the right kind of thing in a store i got that he told me the wrong kind of what does it matter and you see what people get upset about absurd things completely irrelevant and unimportant and they say it matters they believe it matters it's completely meaningless in the larger scheme and the larger scheme can only be seen from the perspective of space so the tiniest thing people lose themselves in and get upset and angry about and tell others about and yet you might ask yeah but what about the big things because sometimes big things go wrong in this world there can be somebody close to you may suddenly die or die prematurely you may suddenly experience great loss something may suddenly go drastically wrong in your life and there's no human life in which this does not ever happen it all happens to everyone sooner or later things go wrong and even there yes of course you weep when someone close to you dies you may feel sad when somebody leaves you because it's a kind of death or your business empire collapses 30 years of work down the drain says the mind it's just a thought not a reality yes a form collapses as they do all the time and they may well be weeping you may find yourself weeping but if you know if you're in touch with the life that is beyond form at a deeper level there's also a peace and that will be there particularly once you already have touched space spaciousness or as i sometimes call it space consciousness the rest is object consciousness then if something in the world of form including physical forms human forms suddenly dissolves dies leaves you there is you as the form identity may feel sad and may weep because one aspect of you a small one is form the physical form and the psychological form of me and the the depths of yourself you will feel that more strongly the peace will be stronger that is underneath the weeping for those who have already who are in touch with that dimension within when great loss happens to you and so that really means nothing in this world which is the world of forms matters absolutely because every form of course is destined to dissolve sooner or later and nobody can predict you cannot have a business contract that says if i do the right things then my form is going to survive for a hundred years doesn't work every form is destined to dissolve sooner or later and the question is are you in touch with the deathless dimension in yourself the formless deathless dimension deathless is a term the buddhists sometimes use the deathless realm buddhists like to use negative terms they don't like to give some buddhist schools do also have positive terms but originally the whole of buddhism is expressed in negative terms so that you don't substitute mental idols for the actual reality so buddhism does not talk about eternal life like jesus did but they point to the same thing it speaks of the deathless realm amarabhati the realm of the deathless and that is exactly what we are pointing to here and isn't it amazing that that begins with looking at a flower in stillness that is the beginning of the arising of the timeless and deathless and formless dimension of who you are when you are in touch with that even what the world calls dreadful disaster yes you may weep on the surface where you also are a form temporarily will i'm not saying will not touch you in the depths of your being it will touch you but very differently it will touch you in the sense that the peace that you feel will only be stronger when things around you collapse that's i experienced that many years ago for the first time and i couldn't understand it when things went wrong in my life the peace was stronger i said that doesn't make sense i just lost that and the peace is more is deeper it's almost like something within that to compensate for the the loss of a form the formless was shining even more so that begins with spacious perception the next step is spacious doing the next step is spacious interaction with other humans and then meeting the world and whatever the world demands with the sense of space so that it doesn't draw you in completely and realize only one thing matters absolutely and that's not a thing everything else is in the realm of the relative it matters relatively but not absolutely absolutely exactly the same truth jesus expressed in the famous parable of martha and mary two sisters he was visiting two sisters martha was busy about the house cooking and cleaning and preparing the meal for jesus and getting used to get this so much to do before lunch is ready got so much and mary was listening to jesus sitting at his feet looking into his face and going and martha said come on jesus tell her we've got things we need to get on with things here we have so much to do tell her to help me i can't do it all by myself i'm going mad here and jesus said martha martha you are worried about many things but only one thing is needful and she has chosen that one thing now modern theologians are not very happy with that they try to reinterpret it in some way he didn't really mean that now is he saying we should never it's not saying we should never do anything anymore but get a sense of perspective and see what really matters and that choose that first and if then the lunch is not ready on time so be it but it may be ready too but nothing matters more than finding yourself which is one with finding god a word i rarely use because of its misuse nothing matters more and so if things don't get done they don't get done and then after a while you you can you see you can there's a balance you can do things beautifully without losing touch with being with presence teaching used to be enjoyable and nowadays at universities and schools many teachers say the administrative work and the burden of that is is is almost impossible to carry and so see what is primary and that is presence you choose that first uncompromising and uncompromisingly so that you don't get seduced into believing that something in this world matters more that something in this world matters absolutely nothing matters absolutely except finding yourself and then you do what you can in some cases the world around you will catch on if you start living in a different way some other people may become interested and may watch you and may ask questions or just your presence may be enough to change an environment that's sometimes possible the presence of one conscious person can sometimes change an unconscious environment in other instances if the unconsciousness is too heavy too deeply entrenched that may not be possible and then there will be a separation you will separate yourself from that unconscious energy field or they may want you to leave anyway as we said in the joke that I mentioned you will get the sack because you're not suffering from a stress-related disease space vital use that here while you interact with people space in an interaction means first of all the ability to be there as spacious presence while you listen that means the words of the other person are being received in a field of alert stillness that's how you do not how not to get drawn into the mind level of that vibrational frequency of mind because the mind wants you to join it the other person's mind will attempt you your mind to draw it out and to join it so that they can unite and reinforce each other mutually on that level of frequency of mind so the mind come on surely you must have an opinion about this don't you think that was a dreadful thing I thought it was absolutely what about you well can you listen even to somebody who wants you to an emotion maybe part of it too often the ego is a mixture of mind and emotion an entity a mental emotional entity come on and to be able to listen in spacious presence now that requires a high degree of alertness on your part not alertness has nothing to do with tension of course alertness is free of tension it is relaxed remember buddha and clint eastwood together in one it's that you but if you are not alert then you will lose yourself in that person's mind stream and join it with your mind stream so the person is speaking or they may just be making some innocent remarks but even there while the person speaks the ability to listen not to listen as a mind or to listen as a person but to listen as spacious presence to be there as spacious presence for the other person so the words are being received nothing now it means you are not mentally seeking anymore to either agree or disagree with that person because that's usually what the mind does it will immediately say yeah you're absolutely right there they should do something about it or the mind says no you're completely wrong you're just absolutely you don't understand this at all let me tell you how it is so you either the mind usually looks for either a dissent i think is the word or assent either wants to agree or disagree and here you neither agree nor disagree nor are you preparing the next thing that you're going to say if ever you prepare mentally the next thing that you are going to say whatever it is that you're going to say will only function on the level of mind and it will be uninspiring it will be of low quality only that which comes out of your mouth and i'm not saying it's an emotion that suddenly bursts out because that's possible too no if it comes out of presence out of first there's the stillness and then that person speaks and then that person stops perhaps if you're lucky and says now what do you think and at that moment you're not thinking anything yet and then there's a moment of stillness perhaps but it may not be long the other person may not even notice that it's stillness and then some words will come out of your mouth there's no nobody can predict what will come out but it will be more vitally true than anything that the mind could say and it's possible that the words that come out of your mouth are i don't really know to be comfortable with not knowing not to prepare mentally the next statement the next objection the next question the next clever thing that's coming out of your mouth but to simply be there as spacious stillness and if three people are talking it's even more important and that's even more seductive or four people being in the body helps feeling the inner body as you listen i learned that lesson at my first public talk i ever gave many years ago i met somebody in london where i was living at some dinner and he said i work for the theosophical society i just spoke to him for 10 minutes he didn't know anything about me well nobody did and i didn't either and he said can you come and give a talk to our theosophical society we need people like you the first time anybody ever asked me to give a talk and i said okay what shall i talk about he said you just find a title it doesn't matter and then let me know and then i'll in three months time you can come and give the talk so when the time came close to the talk one morning i woke up and my mind said you better prepare something i already knew that to speak the truth that must come from presence not from anything that is prepared and yet my mind convinced me that i need to prepare something so i got a piece of paper at least i already knew that writing a whole script that would not be possible but i had a piece of paper not big with all the points 10 points that i thought needed to be mentioned to make the talk complete one to ten and so i arrived there may be 30 or 40 people were there and he said here is Eckhart he's going to talk about i can't remember what the title was spirit yes spiritual dimensions in psychotherapy they liked a complicated title and i already knew the first two points that i wanted to talk about by heart so the piece of paper was there started to talk and everybody was it was a presence was beginning to fill the room everybody entered presence and i came to the end of point two and then the mind said now have a look at i picked up and the moment my i looked at the paper and read now point three i could feel the entire energy field in the room going they'd all left me they'd all come back into their little minds and i had gone back into mine and when i looked up again i saw two people were looking at their watches and then i started to talk about point three and presence returned and then i'd come to the end of point three and then it happened one or two more times it took me a while to learn i looked collapsed energy field collapsed and that was the last time i ever used a piece of paper in a talk and i realize now even if i had forgotten five or six out of the ten points even if i'd only mentioned the first two points and couldn't remember anything else it would not have mattered because the essence of any true talk is not in the words the essence is in the space out of which the words come the rest you can go to universities for that's okay it's that's what matters and even at university i experienced it once when a lecturer the only one who spoke spontaneously who didn't have notes that they'd used for 10 or 15 years read the same lecture notes there was one lecturer who spoke you just opened a work of literature or poetry and he would look and then spontaneously talk never had any notes that was at the university i was taught in london few years later i was at another university where he got invited as a guest speaker and he had come with notes i had told everybody he's great you must listen to him and when he got up he had a pile of notes and every time he read partly and 75 percent of his talk he read from notes and everybody was okay and 25 percent occasionally he looked away from the notes and started to speak ah that was fresh that was new that was alive and it wasn't in the words the words were there yes they had a certain significance but where there was something present in the room beyond the words that was that would make the talk vitally alive and so after the talk we went to a pub and i asked him why did you bring notes he said well i thought that was it it was cambridge here and they expected something more than just so it's very rare at university to find that dimension extremely rare a few geniuses there who miraculously survive within that structure yes but mostly it's it all the entire thing is mind and therefore there's it is not a place universities are not usually places that that are where you feel true aliveness they are dense energy fields of some more than others but here and there they're always they're managed just as in medieval times you had a few great mystics teachers who miraculously survived within the catholic church that somehow they were tolerated or they hadn't discovered yet what they were really talking about and they miraculously survived within that structure and so even at universities there's some alive beautiful beings who miraculously survive within that otherwise totally mind-dominated structure so the ability to speak from presence not to prepare the next thing that you're going to say and that is to speak from space is there space in this interaction no relationship can thrive without space that's the most vital ingredient in any relationship and space is the formless dimension of who you are the stillness is there stillness is another question is there stillness in this relationship and stillness is to be able to listen in stillness to be able to look at your partner in stillness the wind is sweeping away all the old mind structures we had a retreat here four years ago and on the last night there was a violent storm several tents collapsed and the roofs the tiles got blown off the building i'm not predicting anything you may remember the jesus saying truly i tell you whenever he says truly i tell you in the old translation it says verily i tell you whenever jesus says truly i tell you he's saying now listen up unless you become like little children you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven so in many ways living in presence is like living like it's living like a little child there's a sense of openness of wonder of all of continuous newness the only difference is when presence arises in an adult human there is the same openness that you have in a child in whom the mind has not taken over yet with an added dimension of knowing of depth not only are you in touch with that dimension you know that you are in touch with that dimension without formulating any thought you just know it there's a knowing that has nothing to do with concepts and that knowing will play an increasingly important part in your life and gradually substitute the conceptual knowing that people think they need they cannot live without it will gradually substitute that in non-conceptual knowing and that already is there when you look at a plant you know that it is a plant but you're not limiting this life being to that by imposing the label plant on it you also you leave untouched the mystery the unfathomable dimension of every life form you don't fall into the error that you can explain the mystery that is hiding in each life form that can never be known through any mental concept but can be known as a reflection of the essence of who you are so the mind is to a large extent a pseudo-knowledge it believes that you know the moment you've called it something nothing, you don't know anything if you call it something you just have given it a label or a sound you've attached a sound to it it's such and such a plant now you think you know nothing it remains as mysterious as before except now you have the illusion that you know what it is the world is a complete mystery and it should remain a complete mystery that's the beauty of it it cannot ultimately be known conceptually it can only be known yes, as a reflection of your very being and yet even there that remains a mystery the modern world has lost all sense of sacredness because sacredness and mystery are intimately connected holiness or sacredness when the mind labels everything there's no sacredness left because there's only pseudo-knowledge left sacredness is there the moment there is space and that's why you go into certain places that are considered sacred where people who are attuned to it can still feel something and it's always there is great spaciousness in those places there's always a sense of space whether it's a temple or a cathedral an ancient cathedral and preferably you go in when they're not doing something in there when there's just the empty space there's sacredness or certain in nature there's the space between two hills or the space of a cave a sense of there's always there's no sacredness without space and the primary realm of the sacred is your own self the space that you are there goes a thought and that's fine an externalized thought noisy smelly again to remind you tonight when you are in bed lie in on your back and go into the body go into sleep from inner body awareness when you wake up go back into the body rest in there so that the mind doesn't immediately take over and then all the little things here sense perceptions hearing seeing maybe smelling occasionally touching doing little doings bring presence into little doings walking one step at a time no need to arrive at the last step you'll get there anyway at the moment you're at this step this is the step you're taking doing little things hand lifting a cup of coffee a cup of tea juice just presence with the movement so that presence flows into what you do it's not a means to an end it's simply the moment of drinking isn't better than the moment of reaching for the glass or the moment of the glass traveling to the lips it's good can this movement happen against a backdrop of space in other words can you lift the glass and put it back without the interference of thought simply alert stillness so any movement you can do like that is it possible to perform this little you have to find out for yourself can you perform this movement in spaciousness put this from here to there how long does that take to put something from here to there it takes about three seconds but that doesn't matter it's three seconds of presence and no thought just alert presence that's a little spiritual practice i don't think anybody i don't know if anybody's ever suggested that you pick up a little thing and put it from here to there space and that's not asking a lot but it's an enormous thing because what comes into your life then is space it's thoughtless presence alertness the ability to do things without the interference of thought but not unconsciously with great consciousness but without the interference of thought so walking from here to there don't make it a very long distance don't say okay i'm now going to attempt half a mile without thought it's enough between here and the next tree every step i'll just be present with every step and okay then you're there you can then try in the next tree or forget about it

[Speaker 2] (5:46:10 - 5:46:12)

and then you say

[Speaker 1] (5:46:13 - 5:49:55)

i've forgotten what my problems are we will have a communal silence probably starting tomorrow evening and go on until wednesday morning tomorrow evening that's monday evening until wednesday morning i will suggest that we be silent together and particularly at that time many things you can practice like that because nobody's going to interfere and ask you questions or tell you their opinions or if they do will you tell them to quiet we're talking about movement there's there will be movement classes apart from the yoga classes that you have in the morning those who feel awake enough early in the morning can go to yoga if that's the kind of movement your body likes or holding and kim is doing movement classes the first one after this after sitting for a long time it may be helpful i believe it's not outside today but in the lila lila hall lila is the indian language for divine play in the lila hall so you can move the body there and here's exactly what we were talking about to bring presence into movement i talked about little movements that you may do in your everyday life and then there's also the possibility of being present with any kind of movement it could be a spontaneous movement or it could be a movement that you have learned as in tai chi where you move you move just one movement while this arm moves from here to there to move it to be a high quality movement you need to be present and not wanting to be there while you're still here and not being here while you're already there with your mind to just be there at every moment so you cannot do movement well if you're not thinking you have to be present so movement can be a great help for the arising of presence and beautiful when you listen to that wind can you sense the stillness underneath it the listening presence that you are being and that's a beautiful contrast because in a way wind just seems the opposite of stillness it's enormous movement and yet it's happening against the background of stillness

[Speaker 2] (5:52:22 - 5:56:17)

um Om Namo Bhagavate Namo Bhagavate Om Namo Bhagavate Namo Bhagavate Om Namo Bhagavate Namo Bhagavate Namo Bhagavate Namo Bhagavate

[Speaker 1] (5:56:41 - 6:35:52)

Somebody once asked me, why are you quiet before you, why do you wait for so long before you start speaking?

And the true answer of course is because I don't know what to say. Now that could be very uncomfortable. If I thought that I should know what to say, that would be a nightmare.

And some people have these nightmares. You dream that you sit somewhere and suddenly the curtain opens and you're in front of a large audience and you don't know what to say. But it's only a nightmare because you think you should know what to say.

If you were comfortable with not knowing what to say, it would be fine. So there are two states of not knowing. One is not knowing and thinking that you should know.

And the other is not knowing and being at ease with not knowing. Then the not knowing is actually a very deep state of knowing, but not conceptual. But it's covered up as long as you think that you should know or trying to know or trying to figure out or interpret.

Or you should know what the next moment, what's going to happen the next moment. So by thinking that you should know or by attempting to project yourself to the next moment, you cover up the depth that's in you that we could call not knowing, but that really is simply non-conceptual intelligence, formless intelligence, primordial intelligence. It's not something we can measure.

Sometimes people think they can measure intelligence, but all they can measure is form, thought form, solving little problems or puzzles, which is a tiny fraction of true intelligence. To be comfortable with not knowing in a conceptual sense is part of living in the state of presence. And it's not only when you're in front of an audience, because you may or may not be, but also be comfortable with not needing to interpret the situation or another person.

As the old 60s Beatles song went, Let it be. There it is, Let it be. Why have to figure out what it is?

Why? Of course, because the ego feels better. It feels it.

It has control over life. If you can figure it out, interpret it, judge it, then the ego feels it's in control. It's not.

It's an illusion. And the more the ego feels in control, the more deeply you're immersed in dream and illusion. And then comes a point, after a few years of doing that, and you inhabit your own conditioned, illusory reality.

And that you experience then as the world. And what you react to is then not actual situations, but your view, your interpretation of the situations. And then you recreate the same thing.

It's a vicious circle. I could talk about it a long time. But this is essential that you feel at home with leaving things alone, leaving people alone.

That's a great gift. The greatest gift is to leave them alone. When the ego says, Yeah, but I need to protect myself.

Who knows what he wants from me? There is a knowing that's not conceptual. And you'll find yourself doing the right thing, saying the right thing.

You know, as the Buddhist thing goes, I can't remember all the, right action, right speech, right this, right that. And I love Buddhists. I mean, Buddhism.

I think they start from up there. You cannot generate right speech, right action, and so on, without being in the right state of consciousness. It flows out of the state of presence naturally.

As long as you're not present, you can try hard to practice right speech and right this and right that, but it's hard, and many times you won't get it right. So I don't believe the Buddha ever said you should start up there. I'm sure he said start with the foundation.

And he didn't explain all that much conceptually. That came later. He might have said be in the body, or said take a conscious breath, observe your breath, or something like that, which of course means stop thinking.

You can't observe your breath and think at the same time. If you think, you either think or you observe your breath. That's another way of space arising, space, observing your breath.

You can do it as a meditation where you sit down and light a candle and light the incense, or you can observe your breath at any time, at any moment, just one breath at a time. Brings in a space into your life. One breath at a time.

And observing simply means following it with your attention, feeling it, sensing it as it enters the body, the air enters the body, and even noticing the tiny gap when the in-breath has come to an end, and then observing the breath as it leaves the body, and even being conscious of the tiny gap after the out-breath has come to an end. And that's a very simple thing, but it requires alertness, and it brings in space. So it's just that one little thing which is also closely related to being in the body, because as you observe the breath, it takes you into the body.

So almost without wanting to, you begin also to feel the body at the same time. It takes you out of mind. It creates space.

And it doesn't matter. It would be more helpful to remember 50 times during the day to take one conscious breath than to sit for very long periods in meditation, bring it into normal living, just one breath at a time, or if you can, maybe two. But people say, I haven't got time for meditation.

That's fine. Then don't meditate. Just take conscious breaths during the day.

Have little reminders next to your computer, in the bathroom, or wherever. Just take one conscious breath. And there's nobody in this world who does not have time for one conscious breath.

And then people might say, yeah, but 50 during the day? And that is space arising. Spaciousness.

Just that. And then out, that is presence. And then out of presence comes right speech, or no speech.

Could be even better, many times. Unnecessary speech drops away. Also arises right action, if it's needed.

And unnecessary action drops away. A lot of the action generated by egoic consciousness is unnecessary. They're all running around like mad.

But of course, some action is necessary. And then you'll know the difference. Becoming acquainted with space consciousness, which is not from science fiction, but it's to do with inner space.

We call it inner, but ultimately everything is inner. The whole world is inner. That is an inner phenomenon, because where else does the world arise?

So you could say there's nothing that is not inner. There was one Zen master, little known. One of his ways was he would call a disciple in the monastery, he would call their name when they were nearby, as if something very urgent was happening.

He said, John! Yes, master. And then they looked at him and he didn't say anything.

And so the new monks or nuns, and some of the old ones too, they tried to figure out, he's trying to tell me something. What's he trying to tell me? He's not trying to tell you anything.

The interesting thing is it's not about content. These disciples or monks, they expected content to come from the master. And all the master pointed to was space.

Content doesn't matter to him. He's got nothing to say. What can he put in there?

All he's interested in is space, not content. So all the master wants is your attention, your wakefulness, your alertness, your spacious awareness. He doesn't want to fill it with anything.

And that's such a shift when you shift from a life, a content-based life, which is normal, and normal equals insane, as we know, content-based life. Almost everybody lives a content-based life, a life entirely dominated by content, their situation, the so-called external content, the things they, that start with physical objects that they own or that are in their life that they have to worry about. That's physical thingness, content.

Content is then the situations that arise, the relationships, the problems that arise, life situation. Content is your own body and your concerns about that, other people that you meet, your work, your financial situation, the drama, whatever. All that is the content of your life on the external level that absorbs people's attention and for most people the entire attention is in the content of their lives, what's going on in my life.

And then there comes the inner content with thoughts one after another. Ultimately, of course, it's all inner, but just for the time being we divide it into outer and inner. The thoughts which they are identified with and which are related, of course, to the life situation and so on.

And then there come the emotions, both the emotions that are generated now by egoic thinking and the emotions that have lived in you for a long time, accumulated from the past, pain from childhood, pain from the more distant collective past of humanity that comes up periodically. We may talk about that in a little bit more detail, but for the time being just to see all that is content and that absorbs people's consciousness virtually a hundred percent, their thoughts, their emotions and the things that are going on in their lives. And that's how there's nothing else, a content-based existence.

And then comes the realization that there is another dimension without which content would not even be possible. There wouldn't be no content just in the same way we couldn't put any furniture or bodies in this room if there were no space here. But it's easy to forget that the essence of this room is space and it's easy to forget that the essence of yourself is equally space, the space of consciousness.

But that space is so crammed full with content that you can't see it anymore, you can't sense it. So it's almost as if content obliterated space in people's lives and then it's life becomes a burden and then what they try is they try to rearrange the content of their lives in such a way that finally their life works. But a content-based life cannot work because the most vital essence, the very aliveness of life, is missing.

The essence, which is space, which is not content, which is not form, the formless essence of all life, life itself, is missing. And then no matter how you rearrange the content and some people are obsessed with rearranging the content of their lives, they think just a different configuration of furniture will change everything. Furniture meaning content.

And it doesn't. Many times you might think, okay, now I've made it, that's it. New relationship, new place to live, new job, new climate, everything is perfect now.

And it's not. And soon you find out, well, that wasn't supposed to be here. And that is what the Buddha says, means, when he talks about dukkha, suffering, which can also be translated as just plain misery.

And so he said, wherever you go, whatever you do, you will encounter suffering. Misery. Or it can also be translated as unsatisfactoriness.

Not quite fulfilling. Not quite it. So it's the degrees of dukkha.

Just unease is already dukkha. Irritation is already dukkha. And then it gets more.

And so he was talking about a content-based existence. And so primary is not rearranging the content of your life, but finding that which lies beyond content. And to do that, you don't need time or future.

And you don't need to have the content of your life in a particular way so that finally you have time to find. You don't need time. I need time to find myself.

I can't do it. Not here. I need more space.

I can't share a room with three people. I need space. I wish I had stayed home.

I could have done better meditations at home. I could have done my own retreat at home. And then I had to wait for the bathroom.

That's all. These are not ideal conditions. I can't practice in them.

Observe your thoughts. Don't believe in them. The best place to start, the only place to start, with finding space is at the very conditions of this moment.

The three people in the room, one of them snores, waiting for the bathroom, and then observe the thought that comes in and says, I can't do it. I need space, my own private space. And observe that as a thought and let it be.

Then the thought doesn't grip you anymore. It doesn't have that hold on you where your whole sense of self is in that thought and you actually 100% believe in what that thought, which is a thought form, which is content, says. So the thought form, the content says, I can't find the space now.

Of course it says that because it is form. It wants to be there as form. Every life form wants to persist in that form.

It has a certain momentum, including thoughts. So it's only by observing the thought and then saying, okay, why believe in it? I can't, I need more space.

The thought comes and goes. You allow it and in that moment you have the space. Or you have a reaction, emotional that goes perhaps with the thought.

And then you observe that. You step, oh. And you also allow it.

Okay. And there's the space. The moment you allow something, there's space.

You step back out of it. We could call that consciousness disidentifies from form. You step out of a thought or an emotion.

You don't deny it. You don't push it down. You don't repress it.

You simply step. You were in it and then you step out. And really what's happening is on a cosmic level we could almost say you look like a person but you're not a person.

It's just a temporary appearance. Consciousness disidentifies from form or another way of putting it it's the end of the dream that consciousness dreamt. The dream of forms steps out and realizes itself as space.

So it's always there. The thoughts will come in and then you simply allow the thought to be there and especially there may be we talked yesterday about the possibility perhaps of simply being so alert that thoughts don't come in anymore only as little fragments. Some of you may be able to do it or you may be able to do it for short periods of time that just depends on how much presence is coming through.

But one could say even more important than that is to find a spacious relationship to thoughts the thoughts that are still there. That's fine, that's enough really. To find a spacious relationship this is just one way of putting it to find a spacious relationship to the thoughts that are still there that come.

Thoughts are only problematic if your self is in them because then the thoughts become a me an ego. When the thoughts are free of self and that happens every time you step back and say, there's the thought or the emotion then the thoughts lose their heaviness you know the heaviness that otherwise people carry around with them as themselves which are their thoughts plus the emotions that go with the thoughts. It's always the next thing to be offended by and complaining about or then one thing attracts your attention and then it disappoints you and lets you down and you can complain again or at first something is just great this is the greatest thing on earth but it's form and so then it lets you down it could be a spiritual teacher it could be anything he's the greatest and then the form of the teacher does something that then oh no he's not he burped after dinner and of course the content obsessed mind loves to idolize other forms before in many cases before it gets let down by them and then tears them down and complains about them it loves to idolize form because it mistakes the essence the formless one life one consciousness with form and that is when it idolizes persons and of course there's the Buddha and Jesus yes they also burped occasionally after dinner of course they did because they had a physical body and other things probably and yet something was shining through them the formless and the egoic consciousness confused that with the form because it knew nothing of formless or in a very remote way it had some inkling that there was something there that's divine of God so there's a distant recognition but so distant that the mind obscured it, came in and misinterpreted it and this can also happen to yourself and it has happened to some people in whom presence has arisen who became transparent enough present enough for space the formless consciousness to shine through the form the psychological form especially the psychological form lost its density the egoic density which consists of an incessant stream of thoughts and emotions and so when it lost its density there were increasing gaps in that and suddenly the power of the divine if you want to call it which it is was able to come through the form but there is still the form is still to some extent operates and so it has happened and can happen that the form consciousness the object consciousness that is still operating although there are increasing gaps is now interpreting the power that is the power that is totally non-personal it's nothing to do with this form it's there because the form has become transparent but this content consciousness misinterprets that and identifies with the power that flows through and says that's me and then it what tends to happen that these are spiritual teachers who suddenly start saying I am the greatest who ever lived I am greater than and no greater will ever come after me form identity has reasserted itself the power was there and may still be for a little while be there so you can sometimes have the discrepancy in certain teachers there is an ego which sometimes can be quite mad because it gets there is an enormous power there suddenly and the ego doesn't know misinterprets it and claims and says it's me and when this happens usually it's the case when the teacher has certain claims of uniqueness that greater than this one or that one or that one greater than a comparison which is always the ego an ego device comes back in so be careful when you go to teachers who say no greater has ever been or will ever come or something like that or I am the greatest at the moment on the planet there may be a greater one once I am gone but not while I am here and so that's not only in teachers also something to be aware of in yourself the ego can easily misinterpret what is happening in you to you in you the process of transformation the ego doesn't understand it in some ways the ego is afraid of it or at other times it might have a different approach the ego can identify with almost anything now what happens once the teacher has claimed his or her unique power and often it's the disciples who do it to the teacher and the teacher may just say nothing because the teacher rests in the form and the disciples say he is the greatest because he is our master I don't care and some masters allow people to say and do whatever they like they don't care if you think I am the greatest you can think what you like especially Indian teachers have that attitude which is quite nice do what you like I don't care so it can happen and it can also happen if there is still content consciousness left in the teacher the tendencies the egoic tendencies may have become dormant and yet they are still waiting and they can then be brought back to life by projections of specialness from people around you and so others believe that you are very special and then that awakens the dormant tendencies of the ego and suddenly one day you wake up they are right I am very special and then you get the weird thing in teachers that they begin to speak truth and half and non-truth is mixed together and that can be quite confusing at that point it is better to go away and take a conscious breath because that is all you need really and then it often happens that the space becomes obscured again in the teacher the power of the teaching is lost and the words that are being spoken are just from memory accumulated knowledge and some of the disciples may never notice it because they are so identified with their viewpoint of who the teacher is which is mind they are so identified with their thoughts their mind that they don't even notice that the vital vitality of the teaching the true aliveness of the teaching isn't there anymore because they are just stuck in their minds but here the important thing is in yourself the ego often comes in and you need to be alert and be conscious of specially any idea of specialness some people suddenly get the idea that they are Jesus when spirit and the spiritual power that comes through is true it's the same power that came through Jesus but it doesn't mean that they are the form identity of again the mind's misinterpretation is of course you are Christ in essence you are Christ because the very same life consciousness that came through him is in you as your own essence in that sense you are of course everybody is Christ the Christ but that's not what they are saying they are saying I am and you are not or they say I am and you will be in ten thousand years time space consciousness simple thing remember the just a breath brings in space it's worth more than a hundred spiritual books a conscious breath practiced throughout the day whenever you remember and then more and more the space is there because every book is content now it may well be that if it comes from space if the book comes was written from presence then within the content is hiding space and so when you open a book like that you read a few lines and you transcend the content because the content always points towards the space the entire content of your life then becomes of secondary significance and that's called freedom from the world and that means whatever happens events or things that don't happen but you thought they should whatever happens in your life is only content and it never again matters absolutely or one hundred percent not that it is not honored the world of form is also honored but whatever happens to you or in your around you in your life never loses the power to take away your peace to shake you the power to draw you in totally and not that you now have a separation between you and what happens no, there is a sense of openness but you are not dependent anymore on what happens because you have something better which is yourself which is the space that you are, the stillness whatever you want, the pointer you want to use and then you notice it for the first time when things that used to upset you now just happen and you allow them

[Speaker 2] (6:35:53 - 6:35:54)

oh

[Speaker 1] (6:35:56 - 6:37:54)

because you are rooted in being you allow what happens that in itself can be a practice for space allowing being aligned with what happens allowing it because it is there anyway, it is happening anyway it is an event, there it is and there is the space Krishnamurti described the secret of his life once in a talk let me tell you my secret he said and and everybody thought finally he is telling us we have been waiting for 30 years for it come to every talk and every talk was like sand running through their fingers there was nothing there to grasp of course there wasn't because he was pointing to something that is beyond content so people were hoping to take something home after a talk and then they went back home and I said what did he talk about he said I don't know, it's gone this may happen to you also especially since you are not getting a folder with 100 steps for the next 10 years so this is what we did so he said you want to know my secret

[Speaker 2] (6:37:54 - 6:37:55)

yeah

[Speaker 1] (6:37:58 - 7:17:22)

I don't mind what happens that's it so most of the people didn't get it because they thought what next he is going to say something else so but what does that mean I don't mind what happens my life is not based on content the content I described that in the book as your life and your life situation and what most people call my life what they are really referring to is their life situation that's what they call my life their divorce or their next marriage or the relationship they have now and their job situation and their health situation and their living situation and their financial situation that's my life what else is there so basically it boils down for most people to these things the physical situation healthy or not healthy their age their relationship, marriage, divorce their financial circumstances the place where they live the work that they do this work situation their function in society how society sees them what society tells them about them whether they are important or not and the weirdest most insane people are important in this world and many wise people are not important that's all totally mixed up totally irrelevant of course it has nothing to do with your importance but that's how people see their lives when I go to LA there are many people who are desperately wanting to be famous actors the city is full of people who want to be famous actors and it's just in the nature of things that only a small fraction of those can become famous there's just not there can't be that many famous actors because otherwise if everybody is famous it's meaningless it won't serve the ego anymore and so many of them if they don't go beyond fortunately some of them come to our talks and then they see beyond that and go beyond that but if they don't go beyond that many of those their life is condemned to be frustrating and what they would see as a failure a failed existence I could have become a great actor but nobody discovered me and then they miss hundreds of other things that they could do or could have done but primarily they would miss who they are beyond the content of their lives so all that is the content and that is what happens or doesn't happen and the moment the moment you become still or the moment you allow the content of this moment to be as it is not what I regard my life situation but simply the content of this moment just this moment to allow that, you don't allow your life situation, it doesn't work because your life situation is an abstraction, it's a story so the story says my life has failed up to now but maybe I can still make it it says I've lost it all, there's no point in starting again, I might as well accept that because Eckhart says we should accept but that's a story in your head it's an interpretation and it's totally meaningless to say that your life has failed, that you can't make it these are all stories that's not what acceptance is about you're not being asked to accept a story in the head but that you're telling yourself and others about your life acceptance is only to do with the form that the present moment takes so if you're in prison then it's the acceptance of that you're sitting here and there's a window with bars and there's a little bunk bed and whatever the situation is around you and you're breathing this is how it is at the moment there, that that, yeah and it could be very unpleasant maybe you're cold, maybe it's noisy maybe it's hot, maybe you're still hungry, it is but it is as it is at this moment it is as it is not the story I'm going to be in here for another 10 years that's a story the acceptance is only needed for this moment and if you accept this moment as it is because there is never anything else the rest is abstraction there's only this moment and then it's an uncompromising facing the reality not the story with which you interpret this moment but the direct reality of this moment and people confuse that with a story they tell themselves about it here I am, my life has failed I'm just giving the example of prison because that is usually interpreted as a very undesirable life situation it could also be an illness, it could be a physical disability, it could be some great loss that has suddenly happened to you, whatever it is I'm just taking a more extreme situation that usually people would invent stories about and would make you very unhappy if you are sitting in prison and telling yourself stories about your life you become very unhappy but if you stay with just this moment at that immediately the prison becomes for you a monastery no matter how unpleasant it is and then monasteries can be pretty unpleasant almost as bad as the prison some of them and in Tibet they even have the practice, some of the monks they go out in the middle of the night the temperature is sub zero and they meditate naked or they put a wet blanket on you that would be called torture you stay with this just this moment and the worse your life circumstances get the stronger the motivation your motivation will be once you know have a glimpse of the truth the stronger your motivation will be not to leave this moment does it mean you are not facing reality? no, it means you are for the first time facing reality because reality is the form that this moment takes let's stay in prison for a while there is your sitting on the floor on a hard chair there is your metal dish with the gruel or whatever you have just eaten there are the bars this is how it is at this moment there is nothing you can do unless you decide to escape in which case that is what you do at this moment but if there is no possibility you stay with what is and you face it for the first time because any story that you invent about my life which is your life situation is thought is an abstraction and that is not facing reality so the only way you can face reality is always to face the reality of just this moment and the worse it gets the more strongly motivated you will be not to leave this moment, because the moment you leave this moment you will become very unhappy the moment you start thinking about my life because there is no such thing as your life there is only this moment you are life experiencing consciousness experiencing the form of this moment but you are always deep down untouched by anything the space itself in which things happen the moment you allow things to be as they are at this moment only you realize yourself as the space in which things happen and not as what happens you are not what happens you are the space in which it happens and at that moment you have stepped out of content of your life particularly when the content becomes so called unpleasant it is vital that you step out of content but only by facing the content directly, not by running away from it internally it's again it's by facing the very limitations of the life of form at this moment and one of the greatest limitations is to be in prison another perhaps even greater limitation is to encounter the limitations of your physical body when it happens, you can't move anymore or find it hard to move or the body is getting so old or diseased to face directly not to invent a story around it, but to face the condition directly this is how it is the very limitation when it's faced and totally allowed to be becomes an opening into space consciousness and that's the miracle of the turning around the turning around the worst thing in your life can be the doorway and will become the doorway but you don't have to wait for the worst thing to happen to you it may or it may not well death will come eventually sooner or later, sometimes sooner, sometimes later you don't have to wait until they put you in prison or until the body fails or until the stock market collapses and the real estate market collapses or even that's gone, who knows I'm not predicting you don't have to go around and sell your shares but the world of form is unstable you don't have to wait for anything just work with every little thing by choice face this moment at any moment directly and bring an uncompromising yes to it that's not, it is passive and active at the same time the passive seems to be that you say I allow this moment to be as it is but you cannot allow this moment to be as it is unless you bring an uncompromising this is how it is that's the sword that you can see in the face of the Zen master it cuts through time through every mentally constructed story to the reality of just just this then on the periphery of your life you still have, of course you have a past a kind of past, you remember it and you have a future but it's not heavy anymore, it's on the periphery of things so here we your life situation and your life your life lies underneath what happens your life even that's a mistake to say your life because language immediately creates illusion that's why some teachers never talk and for some reason some are mad enough to talk laughter my life is an illusory statement even when I say your true life is not the content even that is not your life because there is no separation between you and life you are life, you are life both in the unmanifested timeless, eternal essence of all life is in you as pure consciousness and you are a temporary expression of life in this form so there is no such thing as my life because you are life manifesting temporarily as this form so where is my life? you are life I am life experiencing the world of form as like this at this moment and then it will change and then it will change again so I don't have a life and you don't have a life because the moment you say I have a life or my life you separate yourself from life and you think there is something there is me and there is life who is talking? life is talking you cannot be without life your very being is life so how can you lose your life?

it's only through mental abstraction that you can have the illusion that you can lose your life there is not you and life or could there be? who is that you talking without life? nobody could say me or my so isn't it great that you cannot lose your life because you don't have one?

so how deceptive language is and of course language is thought thought that becomes sounds very basic sounds we are hoping to understand the universe through that how could you? just a few sounds absurd so there is not it cannot take you to reality and it doesn't have to it's good really what it's good for is basic things give me please a glass of water that works I am thirsty or whatever or please come here that works and that's how language originated it's to reproduce to find symbols for things and then symbols for actions and there are still many words that are there that are simply originally imitated the sound of an action and then become like knock knock whistling whistle whistle there are many onomatopoeic sounds that imitate actions no more no more than that so let's go from one level of discourse you say your life situation and your life that's one level of discourse on that level it is helpful let's look at it for a moment from that perspective there is your life situation and there is your life and your life is vital eternal your life situation is content and your life is space the formless unmanifested one eternal life that expresses itself in form temporarily as the content that's one level of discourse if you want to go even more closer to reality even that's not true to say that it is your life it's just a helpful pointer it's not the truth language cannot encapsulate the truth so when we say there is your life circumstances and there is your life it's a pointer ah so all the stuff of my circumstances are not my life they are just the content of my life my fifth marriage my sixth divorce my bankruptcy my children getting into trouble someone close to me dying all content of life and then there is life so and now let's say that's your life your life is to find your life go to face this moment directly the form of it the content but not the story just this and then by facing it directly and accepting it go beyond the form if it's a limitation and usually form is some kind of limitation because even if you moved from a cabin or a trailer to a mansion at first it would look like a liberation and then you find the mansion has its own kind of limitations different kinds of limitations you need staff to look after it there is always somebody around if it's in a good climate little ants may come in and basically it doesn't make much difference what kind of bed you sleep in whether you sit in a comfortable chair or not so comfortable chair it's not that's a big deal it's only when you associate it with me and the story it becomes a big deal my life situation my life and then it's not really your life because it is life you are it so we go from that level of discourse to even deeper and say you don't even it's not even your life it's life and you are it or even better because there is no ultimately on that level you and I it's not that you are it I am it I there is only one ultimately Causing Miracles puts it beautifully I believe it's there there is only one of us there is only one primordial I it is the I of all beings the life essence in each form of life the space in each form of life which even physicists are beginning to discover because when they look at forms then they see that every life form including so called inanimate life because there is no such thing as inanimate life the table is full of pulsating it's a pulsating energy field it just looks inanimate through our senses physicists will tell you it is an energy field it's pulsating, there are atoms moving atoms and molecules but the atoms and molecules that make up the table or the physical body or the flower they are so they are so few that both the table and the physical body consist 99.99% of empty space so much space is not only between the atoms even if you look inside the atoms you find even there it's almost exclusively empty space so you can see how the physicists view of the reality and the spiritual realization of what the essence of all beings is coming together and you can see the truths of the ancient buddhist texts before there even were any physicists they were already writing that emptiness is the essence of all things it is in form form is emptiness, emptiness is form that there is ultimately although we are talking here in terms of difference between form and emptiness ultimately they are one because the essence of every so called form is emptiness itself also it is one and we cannot understand through sequences of sounds what that emptiness, because emptiness does the sound, emptiness so don't fall into the mistake of now believing that you know what it is, that's the mind you say emptiness oh yes and then your child asks what is the essence of all life if you have an enlightened child and then you say emptiness ah, ok now I know it's the same many times when children ask daddy why is this like that, why do the birds, how do the birds know where they are flying at the end of the summer they fly 6,000 miles 10,000 miles to another how do they know where to go they land again where they first were born how do they know where that is yes my child let me tell you it's instinct ah ok and people who can reproduce that kind of knowledge tend to do well academically and there are many other children who may not do so well academically because they are too deep and the schools don't recognize debts they are not there to recognize debts they are there to recognize and promote shallowness and so even Einstein who could think quite deeply, if thinking could ever be called deep, it's not really, but he could think better than many other people only because he had access to stillness he was considered a little bit dim at school he was considered considered a little bit slow not promising material and it's only when they left him alone the system left him alone and he got a job in Switzerland at the patent office that he was able to do he was slow he had to go within he had to go into stillness, he had to listen there and then thoughts came then he had to go back into stillness and then, ah and then one day he was lying in his bath and he went very still oh, relativity and that changed the entire view of the universe that we had up to then and then he came up with deep spiritual insights because he went into the stillness where it all resides and he said the true value of a human being is determined by the degree to which he is free of self I thought he was a physicist but he knew because all knowledge doesn't matter what form it takes it came out of his ability to be still and the realization came out of that and he said the way we view reality as separate things and separate bodies and everything separate which of course thought contributes to separates he called it an optical illusion of consciousness that's our view of the world you know what an optical illusion is when you see something that's not there and so it's an optical illusion of consciousness so great all that's required is to go beyond the pseudo knowledge of the mind not that you never use it again in this world of form for practical purposes it's fine but to find yourself or the meaning of life or the ultimate purpose of things cannot be found in that realm of form but it's there in you as yourself no time is required to be that to find who you are to be who you are just stillness just presence just allowing this moment to be as it is the form of it don't fight the forms of your life because you want something better go through it by facing directly looking that's how it is there it is and so you burn up gradually the story of me becomes insignificant only remnants remain little memories that are helpful because it's good to remember people's phone numbers or your past husbands or wives what you did it's fine there's no problem there there's no self in it but not base your life on the content of your story and that's how the ego disappears as thought identification is relinquished ego goes because ego is thought identification that's all ego is thought plus emotion together egoic entity stillness presence dissolve ego and you don't need to ask questions like how long will it take before my ego is dissolved it doesn't matter just this moment is enough all you ever need to be concerned about is this moment that's all there is so it's not necessary to be present for the rest of your life or the rest of this retreat because if you told yourself I need to be present for the rest of this day for the rest of this retreat I need to be present that's difficult because you've created future in your mind and then you have a problem already am I going to make it and already you would begin to forget whether you're present at this moment worrying about whether you can sustain presence just this is enough just this the present moment is always enough that's the secret of life it's all you need it's enough because there's nothing else it looks as if the present moment were trapping you in form because it takes some form and people want to get out of it to the unlimited I want freedom, I don't want this and even if you have a mansion eventually it will feel like a prison and you sit in there and you look at the walls I want to get out of here the same thing that came when you were sitting in the cabin and then you travel again hoping to find yourself somewhere else the world of form is always some kind of limitation because form means it's limited, it's form no matter what situation you go into it's some kind of limitation it does not mean that you cannot try to improve your life on the level of form but not hoping that you find some ultimate fulfillment in that play around with form, it's great I'm not saying if you're in a cabin you should not try to live in a mansion no, why not try it? because you're playing in the world of form but if you hope that the mansion will free you from unsatisfactoriness that's not going to work but if you're already free sitting in the cabin and cabins are great I've lived for periods of time people have put me up in cabins and it was great, it's one of the greatest places I love cabins probably prefer them to a mansion so there's nothing wrong with it, but if you think you would like a change this world is there to be played with and then you try ok, I'll make money and then I can live in a mansion and we'll try that not that it makes any difference so you're already rooted in being in the cabin then you can go out and play but if you're not rooted you cannot go out and play because it will be a desperate struggle to get somewhere and when you get there it won't make you happy either but once you're rooted within if you want to play in the world of form participate in the world of form and you'll enjoy whatever you're doing because you don't need it and yet you can great energy can flow into it you don't need a particular result and enjoy what you're doing tremendously and then you'll probably get a good result, not that it matters to you so it varies one person maybe say it's so peaceful why should I move out of my cabin, it's great here and all you play with is flowers you go around, you water the flowers whatever you do little movements may be enough for you or you may say, ok, now I'd love to experience some other form and then you play and go out of your cabin and into something else fine it differs the way in which the state of presence manifests in humans differs some are happy to remain where they are they're home, inside you're home inside you don't need the psychological need for future goes because that's so strong in the egoic consciousness, you need the next moment because you're not fulfilled in this moment why are you not fulfilled in this moment? because you're not in it the only reason why this moment is not fulfilling is because you're not honoring it you're not there the depth of it remains hidden all you see is the external form of it and you're running away from it if you're not running away from the external form of it but face it, direct and say yes, then the form gives way to the depth of the present moment which is the formless inseparable from who you are in your essence so life is a great adventure what you do on the surface of things, because everything is the surface of things, whatever happens situations is up to you you don't need to be things to be in a particular way to fulfill you, to find yourself through, finally they'll recognize me, when I live in a mansion they will all come and want to be with me and then you would encounter the limitation of being extremely wealthy you attract all kinds of people who are only interested in the mental image they have of you, if not in your money they want to add something to their mental image I had tea with this and that person rich and famous that surely must add something to who I am don't you think?

I've grown a little bit bigger by having had tea with such and such he called me the other day I had a talk on the phone with I guess I was saying to the Dalai Lama the other day thought I'd just let that slip in I didn't, so don't worry the ego loves that that's fine we may have questions this afternoon if any questions remain sounds coming out of one mouth and other sounds coming out of another mouth if no questions remain we'll be happy very happy without questions and if somebody does not want to make sounds they can write their questions on a piece of paper and we may look at it on Thursday afternoon for written questions some people don't like to make sounds in public because you never know what might come out what are they going to think of me? I don't need to mention because you know it already that life can be very enjoyable when you are rooted in space the space consciousness the unmanifested it is only then that the world of form can be enjoyable because it doesn't matter that much anymore and then you can enjoy but if it matters it's hard to enjoy it that's it

[Speaker 2] (7:18:24 - 7:23:19)

thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you

[Speaker 1] (7:23:35 - 7:57:33)

we often experience interesting weather on retreats as you know there is no such thing as bad weather nevertheless let's use that word for a moment bad weather is more suited for awakening than good weather the worst conditions for spiritual awakening would be ideal conditions but life is merciful and generous so usually you get what's right what works make sure you are in the body present not waiting for anything at all you may sometimes experience even on retreats one could perhaps say particularly on retreats in some cases the pain body coming up how do you know it's the pain body and not something else as we know pain body is old accumulated emotion from the past that lives in you and that is as long as you are identified with it part of the ego because the ego is whatever you identify with so when you don't recognize the old pain that comes up for what it is it becomes it becomes part of the mind structures that we call ego and it fuels the thinking of the ego and derives nourishment the pain body derives nourishment from the negative thought processes that are working over time once the old emotion has taken possession of the mind this is called the vicious circle how do you know it's the pain body and not an emotion that's being created at this very moment by some kind of thought the pain body is usually recognized by the fact that the emotion is out of proportion to the event the triggering event it's overblown reaction and everybody can see it except the sufferer and if you're taken out of your everyday life where there are lots of reasons lots of triggers the pain body which has a dormant state and an active state when it's ready to become active from its dormant state your everyday life has plentiful triggers that the pain body can use and react and then awaken through it because in one's normal everyday life all kinds of little things don't go the way they should throughout the day and the pain body will react which will use a trigger which could be anything a pain body that's ready to awaken can use anything but it doesn't know that this is the trigger and if something truly drastic should happen to you somebody dies you get home and your partner left you just left a letter or you get home and all your possessions are gone or you suddenly find yourself in the street because the president of your company has disappeared with the money and your pension fund is gone too and then of course the form on the level of form physical, psychological form you will probably experience a certain degree of turbulence unless you're so deeply rooted in being that no matter what happens you just go and say ok somebody dies and say there is no death but that's not necessarily a desirable state because you're still here as form also the form aspect of you will react to things that happen on the level of form but the difference is when you are in touch with being with yourself beyond form, with the stillness within the turbulence that you experience the emotional turbulence does not touch the core of who you are there is always a core of peace and even if someone close to you dies, let's say a child perhaps the worst death for someone to experience is not so much the death of a parent when they reach old age but the death of a child that seems inexplicable and it seems we cannot find an explanation for it it seems premature and something like that will affect you you will weep but if you already live in surrender the deepest core within you will shine at that moment with an enormous power and externally you are weeping and externally the emotion is there and underneath the emotion you feel deep peace, deeper than ever before I mentioned that before that is always the case, the worse things get out there on the level of form could affect your emotional level also the more strongly the the deathless the formless one life shines within you and the deeper the peace and anything that happens to you can then only strengthen that so you do not become callous or indifferent, no you can still weep in fact that is these are the two sides of true compassion that you have empathy with the suffering of form but you are also in touch with the formless that is beyond suffering and you know that as you may the course in miracles has before it all starts on page one before page one as a short summary of the course, just three or four lines these lines summarize the whole course and that is all you need to know if you know that you don't need to open the book or any other book no doesn't mean no as a concept but no in here living knowledge nothing real can be threatened nothing unreal exists herein lies the peace of God that's the summary it's the summary of all teachings nothing real can be threatened what does that mean that ultimately what appears as a form can of course be threatened but the form reality is not the ultimate reality it is only a temporary reality that can be threatened but it is not ultimately real within each form is concealed the formless that gives life to the form the formless one life gives life to the form appears as a form which seemingly can be threatened but nothing real can be threatened nothing unreal exists herein lies the peace of God means in knowing this lies the peace of God so if something drastic should happen to you there may well be we can't predict there may be a turbulence of emotion and underneath it a peace particularly if something has died around you something that was part of your form identity however you are no longer totally confined to something has died now death means dissolving form a form dissolves where there was a form there is now a whole that's what death is whether it's literal death like somebody dying and that's an amazing thing when you go somebody that perhaps you've seen everyday and suddenly in the same building, the same house the same room where you used to be with that person he or she is gone it's gone, the armchair is empty the desk there's suddenly an absence where there was someone and the next day completely gone and that is the actual death and then there are other kinds of deaths that also leave a hole in your existence your partner suddenly disappears who knows it happens, fallen in love with somebody else gone or something that was part of your identity on the level of form your reputation you did one silly thing and your whole reputation ruined everybody is laughing about you or whatever or criticizing you and that also leaves a hole where there was a form reputation is something it's a thought form, a collective thought form people tell you that you're great and then you take mmm, me, great thought VIP, me and suddenly the world changes its mind maybe you haven't even done anything maybe just some newspaper people thought they'd said enough good things and now to make it interesting they'll invent something and suddenly the reputation is destroyed true or untrue who knows again, it's a kind of death there was a form that was part of who you thought you were hopefully you were not limited to just that dimension because if you were, life gets very unhappy when a form dissolves what it leaves in whatever case, whether it's actual death or a kind of death it leaves a nothingness an opening a space where there was someone or something and to most human beings that's extremely frightening they're extremely afraid of the hole that's left in your existence when someone or something around you dies, it feels painful to someone who has never had any glimpse of the dimension of the formless particularly to someone who has never had any glimpse of that dimension because someone who has never had a glimpse of the formless death, which is the eruption of the formless into ordinary life which is concerned with content it is the sudden removal of one important piece of content from your life is the most frightening and painful thing that can happen to you, to a human being especially if they have not never touched that within that is beyond form if they've already touched it not even perhaps as a continuous realization but if they have touched it perhaps here perhaps wherever if they have had glimpses then those initial glimpses that they have had of the formless within will become strengthened when death comes into your life or rather takes something out of your life when death takes some content out of your life and then it happens that some humans have grown enormously through death and they say it's because of that great loss that I went deeper within, I had to something something within said it doesn't say anything but it said there is no death it's the knowing that only the form dies and so death is the great opportunity of the formless dimension shining through into your life because it leaves the hole so you can think of a person's life as consisting of content, they have a fabric constructed of things they put together like a tapestry a tapestry this is my life they say that consists that's my wife, they're my children and this is my job there's my savings and the stock market investments and my dog and it's all part of the tapestry of my life and that's all everybody has that that's the content of your life and suddenly and it happens sooner or later this nice where everything is in place my life is ok and suddenly something gets torn out of the tapestry it's violent and you have a gaping hole in that here's my life and there's a gaping hole in my life but there's a grace hiding there cause it's through that seeming absence of the form an enormous amount of peace if you can be with it without rejecting internally running away from it an enormous amount of peace can come through the sudden eruption of the formless into your life which is death and that is only really happens if you don't run away from it if you face it and this will be easier if you've already it is your practice to face what is any moment because the form that this moment takes changes continuously and one day will come a moment will come, always the same moment, but a form of the moment will come that is death it must come someone close to you will die, unless you die first, you will lose something, somebody will leave you one way or another, they die or they leave you, or you die or you leave them and so if you're ready this is beautiful, the practice of facing what is and then you face that and you look and don't try to explain or interpret and if you're not identified with mind, it's easier to step out of the mind, because the mind will go berserk because it thought it had figured it all out, the mind thought it had figured out your whole life and then something happens that doesn't make sense that shouldn't, that doesn't fit in at all into this, what I have constructed and also it's a dreadful shock to the ego, which is the mind because it shows you I'm not in control ultimately I'm not in control so death why is death so is it taboo still in our civilization because humans know only form only content they're afraid of that which is hiding behind form which is the formless, which is God if it has any meaning God is the formless one life that is the essence of every form and it shines more when there is death that's the grace that is concealed in every death whether it's a loss which is a kind of death or whether it's actual death there's enormous grace in every death the greatest grace that can come into this life is through death one could almost say that every life form has a certain degree of density and it obscures the light of the source, the one source of all life and depending on its density it obscures it more or less it is our purpose here to become transparent so that that can shine through which really means to find death already, before it happens, before the form dissolves, to find death before death finds you because it will find you, it's only a question whether you find it first and so what is death and it is the formless one life, death is not the opposite of life it's the opposite of birth the moment you are born, you are condemned to death and everybody in this room will experience the moment of death one could almost say it's already printed on you somewhere a date and it's hanging over your head we don't realize how fragile how unstable our life is on the level of form how quickly what looked solid can dissolve not only the body, structures, anything and our civilization is trying to conceal that, we mustn't just pretend that everything is okay everything is lasting there are some civilizations where people are still more comfortable with death dead bodies are not hidden, and in the past it was the case in virtually in every civilization death was normal, a normal part of life but as the ego grows in collectively death becomes more and more unacceptable I've actually heard somebody say that totally unacceptable so what we are doing here is we are finding death which is really what is that, to find that which is beyond form that's all and death is hiding in everyone ultimately it's the god god in you that's death because it's the formless one life, and we cannot explain why death comes to a human being at a certain time, we cannot understand it, but everything is connected to the totality, and in that sense there's no meaningless event, because there's no separate event every tiniest event is not an event, it's only when we think about it, it's a separate event but everything that happens is part of the web of the totality, there is a reason why it happens it would be futile to try and figure out what that is, you can't very rare instances can you get a glimpse of that it actually made something that looked bad make sense but it is enough to simply realize and accept the fact that whatever happens is part of the web of interconnectedness that's the entire universe and then you get something like that drastic event in New York a few years ago when the towers collapsed why did this have to happen to those people who were there seemingly unprepared we don't know but everything is there is a web in which everything is connected and ultimately only the form dissolves, nothing real can be threatened, do we know how many people realized the formless a few minutes before they died on that occasion how many of those we don't know probably quite a few every second somebody dies on the planet no no no no continuously they are dying and continuously someone is born no no the born goes a little bit faster no no so we really here we are becoming familiar with death in a deeper sense we are dying to our form identity not that it doesn't exist anymore our form identity continues as long as we carry around this form or walk around as this form but we are dying to identification with it, exclusive identification with it and that is a death because we are dying to form and the death is the entry point into that state which is also the state of life what Jesus called eternal life, which doesn't mean it goes on and on, it means timeless he always talked about eternal life you will taste eternal life, you can taste eternal life, timeless life not millions of years that is within you, concealed in the present moment formless, the formless one life the rest is forms of life they are all hiding the formless one life carrying it as the innermost essence within which we could even say is the equivalent of the state of the universe before it became something the beginning of time, some people call it they say that before the universe came into being it was one now nobody can possibly imagine, figure out or explain what that one point was out of which the whole universe came they call it an explosion the big bang but before the universe was what was there? and of course no scientist can answer it, nobody can answer it all you can say is there was nothing and out of that nothing everything came and is still coming because we are still part of the explosion, the original explosion its manifestation out of the unmanifested but every life form that has come out of it carries the origin of the entire universe still within as the unmanifested, formless one life so the point before all life started is still within you that which is prior to all form and that which is there when all forms are gone as yourself as God you are that if God has any meaning, it is that not an entity somewhere in space or time but the life within all beings the intelligence the life that lives within the recognition of that in another is love the recognition of God in the other, the formless which is death really it's almost shocking to say death and God are one I saw it in a film some years ago I think it was called Out of Africa about a farm in Africa and suddenly one night the whole farm goes up in flames and the black servant of the owner, who is a European comes running and says God has come, God has come it's all going up in flames there's a deep truth there and there's nothing more beautiful than the voluntary death that you are dying here and it's quite it's not painful it's joyful and when death comes it's not anything to be feared anymore and you will still weep when somebody close to you dies and feel peaceful at the same time because you have tasted the deathless within or eternal life

[Speaker 2] (7:57:33 - 7:57:34)

life

[Speaker 1] (7:57:39 - 8:05:22)

you die every time when you step out of a thought or an emotion step back, disidentify and allow it to be out of the form into the formless and realize that's who you are the formless was disguised was hidden in the form you die every time when you accept this moment as it is the egoic entity dies in the state of acceptance of what is that's why it hates it that's why it always finds something to be unhappy about because I've got to find something here that I can be I can complain about find personally offensive whatever it is and so it sometimes happens on talks or retreats although as you may have noticed there's very little that is being said here that anybody can disagree with because everything is so self-evident the truth is so self-evident but occasionally a word or two may come out of this mouth that somebody could disagree with and with some people it happens that when they hear something like that they cling suddenly something within them gets a hold of that statement and then they wait three days later when question time comes not realizing that 99% of it was the truth that was self-evident that they also knew within this thing spoils it all for me you said that and that's not right because I'm an expert and I can tell you that was quite wrong it's probably true but it's probably also not very important it's always wonderful I walk a lot in the forest at home untouched and when you look around the forms around you almost half of them are dying they are dead or dying in the process they are decaying tree trunks leaves everywhere forms are entering the state of death or have died so half of what you see in the life of the forest is death and the other half is life at first sight and at second sight you realize the life of the forest comes out of the dying forest the dying forest is part of the life of the forest even on that level there is no death there is just changing life forms even on that level the dead tree trunk isn't dead at all it's full of life so wherever you look life does not have an opposite on whatever level and the life essence is one with death so ultimately death and life are one or the one life that we could also call God that's quite amazing I'm amazed myself I've never quite said it in that way but the truth is always the same of course but always comes out in a slightly different way because it's always fresh and new if you can completely accept the death of someone close to you then you can find deep peace in that enormous aliveness and yourself in it a woman told me that she sat next to her son who was 30 years old as he died of an illness that's painful it's probably more painful for a parent to witness the death of a child than it is for the child or the adult grown up child to see the death of a parent and she sat with him and suddenly she was able to go into the state of pure presence and that was a few moments before he died and she said when he died during those few minutes when it happened the entire room was bathed in divine grace she felt an enormous grace coming out of the dissolving body filling the entire room and she had never felt so peaceful and at that moment she knew that death is actually also a benediction it is not something to be feared and some of that stayed with her forever but then she said five minutes later the mind started to become active and it said things about how dreadful it was and then she started then, only then she started weeping and screaming and couldn't accept but she had witnessed that in the state of presence and it had transformed her although she seemed to have lost it shortly afterwards, something remained within her and it is always grace when that to accompany someone who dies if there are any questions perhaps we can ask there may be there is one person there and one person there

[Speaker 2] (8:05:22 - 8:05:48)

Can you share your views about your thinking about monogamy and responsible non-monogamy and commitments made in the past and how they apply in the present and if you're not with the one you love do you love the one you're with?

[Speaker 1] (8:06:06 - 8:14:05)

This concerns your life on the level of form and there is not on that level there is not right and wrong there is not one way that is correct and the other way that is incorrect commitment and responsibility primary commitment is to be true to life to live rightly at this moment it is your commitment to this moment does that mean that whatever emotion comes in can suddenly change everything no if you are committed to this moment you bring presence to this moment and presence provides continuity in your life also it doesn't mean that you jump from one thing to the next because of this moment I'm suddenly falling in love with somebody else this happens too but if you are with someone if there is more than a connection on the level of mind and emotions if the other person reflects back to you your own essential reality the formless one life which can only happen when you are still you can be still together can only happen when stillness is an important part of the relationship that is all the commitment you need to be committed to the stillness in your relationship it doesn't even mean that you need to every day sit together and meditate for two hours it doesn't need to what that is on the level of form doesn't matter maybe you don't meditate but you are able to be with the other person and not invade the other person with words you are giving space to the other person and the other is giving space to you, you allow your partner to be your partner allows you to be there is spaciousness in the relationship the only real commitment you need is to the spaciousness in the relationship if you lose that nothing makes sense you might have signed a contract that you are going to be together for the rest of your life but that contract will then be broken it will suddenly become meaningless the ego wants of course something like that because it says I need to be in control and I need to have security and I need to feel that we are truly committed so we have to sign something and that may work if you are committed to spaciousness and stillness in the relationship then the signing could be a nice part of that if you are not committed to spaciousness and stillness in the relationship no matter how many contracts you sign they won't work and because fluctuating emotions will take over the mind will take over mental positions will take over and you will be battling out your battles with your respective mental positions one against the other identify with your positions identify with the emotions that go with mental positions make the other wrong periodically have to act out the pain body every week or two have to feed the other's pain body until finally you've had enough and say that doesn't work for us anymore and then something comes you forget about the signed contract and then try to find a way of undoing it so the commitment is meaningless unless there is a commitment to spaciousness stillness spacious stillness in the relationship that's the primary commitment now that commitment being there what you do on the level of form doesn't really matter whether you sign a contract or whether you say we don't need to sign a contract we are committed to spaciousness and beyond that if on the level of form a time should come when we realize that somebody wishes to part for whatever reason it would be done in the peace of spaciousness somebody would say I need to go away who knows what form that will take that doesn't matter anymore you may be together for the rest of your life spaciousness does not guarantee that the relationship will necessarily be there for the rest of your life because everything has a has a much some relationships work, mature, everybody grows through them and then it's time to separate and perhaps something else another constellation another arises in this world of form this can happen that's all on the level of form so whether on the level of the two forms a relationship is permanent or not is secondary ultimately on the level of form nothing is permanent so if you don't leave each other one or the other will die so you don't really you do whatever you feel inclined to do with the partner formal agreement no formal agreement whatever it may be all of that doesn't ultimately matter all that matters is the primary commitment and responsibility which is your responsibility to life to be true to life which is not lose yourself in the world of form because then there is no space and all you have is two people with their mental content their mental emotional content trying to somehow make it and somehow they make it to the end until somebody dies but there is no lasting relationship without the space so that is the question to ask then commitment is absolutely necessary but it is the commitment not to something on the level of form it is the commitment to the formless in the relationship then it will work out even if it doesn't last it will work out ok

[Speaker 2] (8:14:07 - 8:14:36)

so could you speak about choice so you are being still in the stillness and then there is what comes and what is choice in terms of well just that but then also in terms of creating a life situation

[Speaker 1] (8:14:47 - 8:55:30)

in the unconscious stage which of course means to be identified with one's conditioning, the mind the mental emotional conditioning from the past which is the ego it is obvious that in that state there is no choice because whatever you do and whatever you think is conditioned by the past you have not woken up in that state so you are simply acting out past conditioning no choice pain body completely identified with that acting out past pain and not knowing that it is past pain no choice so there are still many humans on the planet who simply have no choice who do what they do because they are still immersed in the dream called total conditioning of the dream and then gradually something happens in humans and suddenly there is a realization that they have a choice and that often starts, often it comes through great pain the pain is generated by the unconsciousness the unconscious living the unconscious living becomes painful, you generate enormous amount of suffering for yourself and others and then the suffering for many people suddenly wakes you up it's like dreaming a nightmare and you can't stand it anymore and you and then you go back oh it comes for some people as the realization that they are having certain kinds of thoughts and they have had certain kinds of thoughts in their head for years without knowing it and in many cases these thoughts were very negative thoughts about themselves, about other people repetitive thoughts and you suddenly look at your own thoughts and see that is a dreadful world in my head and you suddenly realize if I lived with a person who speaks what I think it would be hell if I lived with a person who criticizes me as much as my mind does it would be dreadful I would have left a long time ago and where does that realization come from, that comes from not from thought, it comes from the suddenly emerging ability to stand back and see what kinds of thoughts are going through your mind and that's the beginning of an awakening and that is the beginning of choice because first of all you also see that there is a relationship between your inner state and your external circumstances and you can see that to a large extent your thoughts create what you experience as the world your world, your reality so some people are stuck in a dreadful world they haven't looked at the root of it they think all the evil is out there so they are fighting with machine guns and bombs not realizing that the dysfunction is not in others it's in them they haven't woken up yet so you wake up out of identification with thoughts, for the first time are able to see the thoughts and then you can actually say I can change my thoughts I can think different thoughts not as easy as it seems some thoughts are very deep seated you can change sometimes the surface of a thought but other thoughts are linked to emotions and they are not so easy to change so it requires a great deal of presence and alertness to get in there and to sense also the connection between your thoughts and the old emotions in you that are still fueling old thoughts but if you get in there and bring alertness to it you can, yes you can change the structure of thought and yes things like new age things that are actually good come in that are things like positive thinking things like visualization things like wanting to achieve something change your life and imagine that the change has already happened you see already the desired reality as reality and you feel as if it were already there that's how to however we have come to a little obstacle here and that's called the ego you do not need to be free of ego you can, you only need a relatively limited degree of freedom from ego to be able to change your thoughts, some degree yes because totally in the grip of ego means totally identified with thoughts so it's nothing you can do you can step outside and change the thoughts that you think and the ego is still operating you can then, the ego will attempt to create a life that it feels will provide you with ultimate fulfillment or satisfaction, will give you yourself and I know quite a few people who have done that they realize the power of positive thinking they realize the power of visualization which of course needs to be coupled with action but if the two go together it can be very powerful creative visualization positive thinking repetition and after a while they feel better and they create a better reality and I've met quite a few people who have done that and they created a better reality and a few years later or a couple of years later they came back and said I'm unhappy again and it's just I've got everything I wanted but it's not fulfilling it's not it and I want to get out of it it's imprisoning me now I got the place I wanted I got the business I wanted and now it's eating me up I want out so we have and many people are at that level where you have partial freedom from ego but you're basically still serving the ego, the ego still has wants and needs and positive thinking can be used to fulfill the wants and needs but they can never be fulfilled so you always end up with not feeling quite, that's not it and then comes a higher degree of externalizing what is within and that is not from the perspective of a limited unfulfilled me that needs a certain change in my life situation in order to find myself, to feel fulfilled to feel complete to be happy it doesn't arise out of that need something comes that is one with the purpose of life itself and that can work through you and create something that is not there to fulfill the ego but is there to fulfill the purpose of the universe itself and when that happens it still sometimes looks from the outside as if you were using creative thinking or visualization but it's different let me tell you how it happened with the power of now I've lived for years a relatively secluded life in the countryside in England in a little house and sometimes people would come to me for counseling occasionally people would invite me to little groups I would travel to a weekend workshop and it helped people, some people changed it's basically what I do now but instead of several hundred people, ten people came sometimes three once I had one person came for the workshop and at one talk I had to talk to myself laughter on the level of my external situation my life did not seem fulfilled although a few people were deriving benefit and were waking up, not many, very few and I knew surely there's more that is possible but it just wasn't happening I was not unhappy but there was a puzzled sense of there must be more reach more people so I said use me to life which I am I'm open use me, I'm here and one day I woke up and I had the vision of a book and I had the vision and the vision came as if it already existed and I wrote it I drew a circle on a white sheet of paper and this is the book and then I wrote translated into 25 languages read by millions of people changing the life of millions of people changing the consciousness of the planet and I knew that book was virtually already there or it was in the unmanifested and that was on my desk for about a year and a half and this was this was something this was not something that I wanted to bring about, it was a deeper knowing that this would come and this tends to happen when life moves through you I had asked for it it's good to ask for it and so life came moved through, not immediately the thing was on the desk for more than a year and nothing happened a year and a half approximately it was on the desk and I looked at it it's coming, but where? laughter so the life was moving through and one morning I woke up and I didn't know that was part of that realizing I need to leave England why? I don't know I need to leave, I need to move to the west coast of North America it was so strong that there was no question that I had to leave it that was life moving me away I had to move to the west coast I immediately started selling things putting things away, giving up my home took a few months buying a ticket I knew two people, one in Vancouver one in California went off to the west coast I sat on the plane, where am I going and what for?

laughter I don't know, life is taking me arrived in Vancouver stayed for a few weeks traveled, took a Greyhound bus to California had one contact there then I needed to find somewhere to stay that wasn't expensive, somebody offered to put me up I went to a meditation meeting and somebody said, I have a spare bedroom and again life had arranged in such a way I suddenly see everything fall into place to go towards the original vision, but I didn't know that yet, it has anything to do with the original vision that person who put me up was a complete hermit had never any visitors, no social life, and he was out all day working in his office, and then he came home, I was just sat there, surrounded by just walls didn't know anybody, couldn't go anywhere what am I doing here? one day I got out my old writings I had done, after each workshop little works that I had done, I often would take notes what I had said, what had come out that wasn't a book as such, it was a collection of notes I had that with me, I looked through and I read it for the first time before I just wrote it, I never read it and I said wow wow I knew it wasn't a book yet, and then I put it aside, and the next day I bought a notepad a yellow notepad in a shop, and then I sat down again next morning and an enormous energy stream came through and I wrote what is enlightenment and I knew these lines were written, that was the book and enormous power came through, nobody ever disturbed me because he was a hermit after a few weeks I left him and somebody else invited me I didn't know that before, and she was also a total hermit no social life, no visitors no phone calls, I was totally undisturbed, life put me from there to there and every morning for four hours, five hours the flow would come, occasionally things that I had written were referred to, but also a lot of new things, there was a powerful energy stream that lasted three months then I had to travel back to England and after the jet lag, got out my notepad to write more I stayed in a commune then, because I didn't have a home anymore nothing happened, couldn't write nothing is coming through all I could do was a little bit of editing, when I got a new visa went back to the west coast immediately the flow started then I realized life had to take me away from there because the energy field was not right for the book to come out I asked for it at the beginning so there was nothing to complain and then you have to one more time it happened I had to leave, get my visa renewed, back to the west England, it didn't happen I love England, England something within me resonates deeply with this piece of the English countryside and the emanation of that and yet the book couldn't come there it needed the more dynamic energy field, the more open, dynamic with less burden by the past of the west coast and that's where it happened so life I became a channel for the purpose of life to come through me, so it wasn't so much as me wanting this particular thing but suddenly having the vision of this would be, but without knowing how and this tends to happen when you leave egoic goals when you no longer believe that something that you might achieve out there will make you happy I never thought that that would make me happy but I felt there is more that is possible I'm open do what you want I was talking to myself because I am life as are you and after that everything fell into place always the book was written it was published without ever needing to look for anybody to publish it and very quickly two years after it came out I found that old sheet of paper in my luggage and I looked at it and saw it's all come to pass every little thing that it says here has already happened and more and more millions of people undergoing an inner shift and that was the vision, so it was not so much a wanting a particular outcome but realising this is it and then it comes now you ask why and always every new situation, if I had believed that the new situation would make me happy fulfill me I would have been disappointed because I had no idea when you become well known how many limitations there's, new limitations this brings up in your life it's not that great on the level of form so and the demands that are made upon one's time but the innumerable demands, all worthy requests demands bombarded with I had asked for it but no longer being able to have one on one contact when there are groups, it was so wonderful when there were ten people there was a one when two thousand people come to a talk I have to be ushered in and ushered out because otherwise I can't get out of there for two or three hours it creates a separation new limitations come in I had, that's, if I had thought this new thing would make me happy I would have preferred oh no, that wasn't it and that, so it doesn't depend it needs to, yes there is more that you can do you know that and all that is required is for you to be open, say there's more, use me and then see what comes but remain the essence is to remain rooted not to lose the present so that you are rooted that you do not come from a state of dissatisfaction and create out of a state of dissatisfaction, which you could do you're not quite as powerfully, but you could say ok, I've got to create it won't make you happy and perhaps not anybody else either, so there is the egoic creation, which is you can try out it works up to a point and there is the creation when life creates through you, and all you need is the openness for that ready to be used and don't complain later when we find many new limitations because no matter where you go on the level of form you will find new limitations and once you know that, it actually doesn't matter that much but if you expect it liberation through some new life situation that's not going to happen the liberation is already now from form, the liberation so that you are not dependent on form and on outcome internally then it's much more only then can life work through you if you are dependent on some form that arises if you are not happy where you live now you have to be first get through the resistance now, if you are living in a tiny place or wherever, and you are not for some people it's a life situation for some people it's where they live or work they do, whatever it is this comes to purpose what is my purpose here it goes back to that what is my purpose here and this purpose is twofold two dimensions, that corresponds to the twofold nature that you are formed and formless your primary purpose is in the previous question the earlier question I called commitment the primary purpose is your commitment to the now to be true to life by being true to this moment that's primary purpose there's nothing to do with anything else it's your commitment to life and then no unhappiness is generated this is what is it's an uncompromising yes to this moment so you are committed to the formless one life that can only be accessed if you accept the forms of this moment and that needs to be uncompromising your commitment to life, now this is your primary purpose, no matter what happens on the level of form primary purpose comes first commitment to that the rest is, the next is secondary but also you can apply purpose to that now, having fulfilled or rather fulfilling the purpose of my life at this moment and every moment the only moment there is fulfilling, having committed myself to this, being a permanent commitment to now then you can look and see what is the secondary purpose of my life and that operates on the level of form, now that's the mistake that people make, is they look to the secondary and think it's primary the primary it is quite possible that in some way the secondary may not even function for you anymore you may only have a few more weeks to live you may have some other limitation like being in prison there isn't much that you can do on the secondary, there may be something perhaps you can talk to other prisoners and tell them about the present moment so primary comes first and primary works even if you only have one hour to live now you've fulfilled the primary purpose of your life, surrender to now good enough, your life is fulfilled, but as long as you have time, and some of us still have some time there also comes the secondary purpose of your life what do I do on the level of form now the more you are rooted in the formless which is primordial intelligence itself the more likely it is that you will know either as an insight as happened to me it may only be partial knowledge because I didn't know why I had to move England I had very partial knowledge but I know what I had to do without knowing why that's a kind of knowing too, sometimes you only know a bit but it comes as a realization, it doesn't come through decision making process which is the mind you suddenly know what it is that you have to do and that is much more likely to come when you fulfill the primary purpose of your life, because you are connected with the non-conceptual, unconditioned intelligence of life itself, and then you will know what life wants from you the so-called you in this form and that can come either as a realization and then you have to obey it, you have to, you can't say well I have this strong impulse to move to the west coast of North America but I hardly know anybody there and I haven't got that much money, and what do I do, I have to give up my home it doesn't make sense and fear comes in oh I can't do that I didn't have much to lose fortunately, I didn't have a career or pension plan, so it was easier so that it comes, but make sure it comes from the deeper level it comes out of the peace it doesn't come out of an emotion that says oh, now I have to do that see there is a power and a peace that comes with that when you know what it is that you have to do it's a peaceful but powerful knowing, it is not a turbulent knowing, that's an emotion created thought and I wouldn't necessarily do what that wants you to do or if you are in doubt wait a little, become present again go within, and then you'll know if it stays, then you'll know it's right, if it's only a passing thing then the next day you suddenly have a different emotion so it may come as a realization, it may also come as an external event that you don't know why just the right person or event person comes into your life or event happens that corresponds to your purpose on the outer level of form and that is sometimes called coincidence or whatever word you have for that, and you can't explain and many people have told me miraculous events and happenings, how is it that I met this out of millions of people I met the one person who actually fit it into opened this door for me but it works many many times I've seen it so if it doesn't come from within it comes as an outer event or a person or it can come as something that at first sight looks negative, it can come as a loss if you said I'm here use me, be careful, it could come as a loss of something that you thought was your security was in reality holding you back and if you react with hostility if you react to what happens when that loss comes if it is loss for you, in some cases it is, loss often must precede the new if you then resist the loss and become negative about it, then you block the whole flow again the loss was life removing the obstacle for you and if you then complain about it and feel you are a victim of life, then you are creating a new obstacle, the obstacle that life removed for you you replace it with some thought that is complaining so be ready then for anything on the level of form even if it looks negative you will see when you accept it, how it quickly turns into positive and some people had to lose all their possessions before they could do the work they were meant to do on the level of form but that's not necessarily the case so you don't need to run away it is miraculous what happens when you are aligned with primary intelligence which is yourself but don't block it so what could block it is resistance when change does come into your life and it's not what you could have envisioned and your mind says that's not what I wanted well, your mind doesn't know enough to know what it is that you really need that's not what I wanted then you have to be uncompromising except it could be the end of a relationship it could be anything it may not necessarily be any kind of loss or end you can't predict what form it takes but all we know is life begins to work for you when you are true to life which is known then life becomes cooperative most humans on the planet do not yet experience life as cooperative they experience life as hostile, it's a struggle it doesn't have to be like that life can be cooperative benevolent empowering but you have to contact life first find the life that you are first and only here can you find it than now so here we have primary purpose which applies no matter how old you are or what your life situation is that needs to be referred out of the primary purpose if you still have enough time comes secondary purpose to do with your life in form and it works beautifully don't judge when things happen accept what comes then change comes more quickly accept what comes with the acceptance life speeds up with non-acceptance, life is being held back accept whatever comes to you as the enlightened Roman emperor perhaps the only political leader who was ever enlightened Marcus Aurelius who lived 2000 years ago said accept whatever comes to you woven in the pattern of your destiny for what could more aptly fit your needs and there lies therein lies enormous power in the acceptance of whatever comes because when you do not accept what comes to you, you are saying no to life and the mind says I know better, I want something else accept whatever comes that is part of being true to life now then the power comes through the acceptance the non-rejection so that's primary then the secondary purpose unfolds with ease and there's no struggle now the fact that there's no struggle does not mean that there may not be an enormous output of energy sometimes when I say there's no struggle people think well it's going to mean there's going to be there can be high intensity of energy output such as happens here in our meetings and it's joyful such as happens if you should do writing there would be great intensity that flows into the writing but not struggle but intensity when the book was being written even my voice changed and became kind of more focused and people said what happened you have a different voice I said I don't know it's an energy stream that's coming through it's that's what's doing it so cooperate cooperate with life so that life becomes cooperative because what face you show to life will be the reflection you get if you don't cooperate welcoming to life whatever form life takes that is true to life then life cooperates with you it works beautifully so primary purpose secondary purpose and that applies to everyone except to those who are going to depart from this world of form shortly which could be anybody then primary purpose is enough for life to be fulfilled as long as you have time on the level of form secondary purpose will come in also there's the secret of human existence thank you now as you know tomorrow if there is such a thing only in the mind of course is echo adventure day and you may well ask what has echo adventure got to do with a spiritual retreat and I'm sure one or two minds have been complaining about that first of all you don't need to go on echo adventure you can stay here and be quiet just be still and walk around or sit and meditate nobody needs to go on the other hand you may find it enjoyable to go on an echo adventure and to bring so that the retreat is not separate from life so that you bring together normal living or echo adventure is not exactly normal but it's a little bit closer to normal than here so you bring your presence into that I don't know what you do you're going down the river on a little boat and you have to be really present apparently what do they call it water something water rafting white water rafting something like that well that will keep you present our silence still applies until tomorrow morning so we remain in silence until tomorrow morning those of you who don't go on the echo adventure may want to be silent for the rest of the day tomorrow also if you're here you might as well be silent but that's an option one more thought has come in don't become impatient if your secondary purpose does not unfold immediately that would also block it stay true to life every moment that's enough the universe doesn't know much about time in the way that the human mind does don't become impatient because you would lose impatience means you've lost the present moment and one thing you can be sure of at this moment there's only one you are where you are meant to be that is always true at this moment you are where you are meant to be and then life unfolds if you remember that and know that continuously that at each moment the only one there is you are where you are meant to be this doesn't mean you're stuck in it at this moment you are where you are meant to be and if you know that if change is destined for you it will happen much more quickly you can never be anywhere else than where this is the best place for you to be right now and this makes true at this moment doesn't it it's not always obvious but it's always true

[Speaker 2] (8:58:18 - 8:59:28)

this is the best place for you to be right now this is the best place for you to be right now this is the best place for you to be right now this is the best place for you to be right now this is the best place for you to be right now this is the best place for you to be right now this is the best place for you to be right now this is the best place for you to be right now this is the best place for you to be right now this is the best place for you to be right now

[Speaker 1] (9:00:07 - 9:30:10)

this is the best place for you to be right now this is the best place for you to be right now this is the best place for you to be right now this is the best place for you to be right now this is the best place for you to be right now this is the best place for you to be right now attention So this story is in the sense of And then what?!

If it doesn't It is not a good then story And of course The key to the story Is that And then what? That has no answer And nothing that follows it But you can also See in this story the desire of the disciple to have something tangible, in form, to carry away, to take away with him. He wrote this down for me and is not getting it.

Or tension, of course, it simply means presence. The light of presence or the space of presence in which yesterday's echo adventure, for those who went on an echo adventure, that light of presence or space of presence in which that appeared. The same light in which this room now appears.

Temporarily, the only thing that's timeless is the light in which things appear or the space in which things appear. The now, we call that the now sometimes. And you may have noticed the echo adventure is already receding.

It's receding. It's beginning to dissolve. As an actual experience, it has already dissolved.

Now it remains in that form has already dissolved. Now it remains as a thought form, perhaps until you die. And it may remain in your camera as a, on film is also a form or a digital, however that works, but I know that it's form too.

Don't know how exactly that works. And I know that that's not permanent either. Eventually the digital record will also go or the photo will turn yellow at the edges.

That's maybe after you die and then your children may still remember what that was and who that was. And then if the photo survives, which is, after a while, the photos, something happens to them and your grandchildren look at it and say that, I think that was my great-grandfather. And at some point they lose it and it gets into somebody else's hands.

And then they look at it and say, these are two people on a raft. And then maybe they find them in an antique store and then they've written down approximately 2004, somewhere in Latin America, maybe. Don't know exactly where, it looks tropical.

But nobody knows anymore who these forms are on sitting on the raft. Now, even if you had written a famous book or something and then people remembered, oh, that's that person who wrote that book, it doesn't help very much either because that doesn't survive that much longer either, maybe another few hundred years. And it's only a thought form.

It's beautiful to see how everything evaporates. The end of our gathering is not here yet. I'm not saying that.

But you can see it on the horizon. And then the whole experience of being here, it's suddenly it's a past, a thought form. And the essence is the space in which it appears.

And the more you contemplate how quickly things dissolve, the more you're rooted in that which is not subject to time. The still point at the center of it all, but it's not a point, the still space. All words are wrong, but just.

Needing an experience, which is a form that hasn't happened yet, or hanging on to something that's already disappearing, that's the normal way to live. Or fearing something that's coming. There's always the movement between hope or anticipation of an event.

And then there's the fear. If it's seen as something good, that's going to add something to me, there's anticipation, oh, it's coming. And then you want to hang on, and you can't.

Or it's something that's perceived as some loss. Oh, the retreat is coming to an end. Then it's seen as something fearful.

And yet the essence of this retreat lies not in any experience that you have here. But in finding that which underlies all experience. So the echo adventure is not, no matter how much fun it was, is not the essence of this retreat.

Even the beautiful flowers and plant life are not the essence of this retreat. Even this room and the people in this room and the words that are being spoken are not the essence of this retreat. Because all these things are going to leave you or you are going to leave them.

And it's not the essence why we're here. So if that, if your mind clings to the outer form of this, which is the experience of the form of the retreat, then either you'll be happy that it's over because you go back to your own bed and nobody snores in your room except yourself, and that's okay. Or it's something that's just, it doesn't seem good because it's coming to an end and it was so nice.

But that's not it. To see the essence of this, why the very reason why we are here, of discovering that which underlies all experience. And now the presence yourself, the stillness within, in which it all appears and disappears.

And so this retreat you carry within. The essence of it is eternal because it's yourself. And then you enjoy the rest of your life, which isn't yours because you don't have one.

Going beyond form and identification with form, beyond ego. When you don't know the essence, then you're trapped in form and you identify with form, and that's ego. Your life purpose is the transcendence of that.

That's the primary purpose. And it can only be transcended at this moment. The beautiful discovery that thinking and emotions are only a tiny fraction and not who you are.

That there's a depth in you that goes beyond me, the person. A temporary form. Variously described by different teachings and teachers as eternal peace, the deathless realm, the timeless dimension of consciousness, Buddha nature, Christ within.

And now you can see the story of your so-called life, the so-called your life, from the perspective of the eternal. And from the perspective of that which is not touched by time in yourself, you can see and realize it doesn't matter that much what happens. You rise above dependency on what happens, and that's beautiful.

And even if you have to go back to a big city and don't see a single tree anymore when you look out of the window, that's what is at that moment. And you can feel the essence of yourself as that in which that appears. Because within you, you carry the essence of all trees.

Because what is a tree other than a manifestation in form of the one life that you in essence are? The being that you are. So the tree, a temporary manifestation, beautiful.

All manifestations are ultimately beautiful because at their core lies the essence of all life. And that's why they're beautiful. Sometimes the beauty is not so apparent.

You have to look deeply to a concrete wall when you look out of your window, if you should live in a big city, and that's your view. You have to look deeply and allow it to be and find that even there, there's a beauty. But only, can only find that if you have found it within the essence of life within.

All the trees are an externalization of that. And even if you should never, if they should put you in prison and you should never go out into nature again, you are the divine nature out of which everything comes. So it is there in unmanifested, no form within you.

Life itself, to know yourself as life prior to form, timeless, still, present, formless, that's the liberation. The demand that the life of form should satisfy you can then be dropped because very often, the life of form seems to refuse to satisfy you. If you've lived for long enough and you don't need that long, then you can realize that, although some people never realize that the life of form does not have the ability to satisfy you and they carry on seeking.

And when they're 85 or 90, they still look in the jewelry window to see, that's a great ring, I'd love to have that to add to me or whatever it is. Not that you cannot appreciate beauty when you're 85 or 90, you can appreciate it deeply, but I'm sick to identify with a particular form and wanting to make it me and mine. Is seeking to be satisfied by the world of form.

And the more rings you accumulate, in this tiny example, the more fearful and unsatisfied you would feel. So the beautiful thing is to be able to drop the demand that the world of form should satisfy you. And you can only drop that, you cannot make yourself, okay, I shouldn't expect anything from the world of form, that doesn't work.

I shouldn't expect because it doesn't work, but it's only if you touch that. Sometimes the seeing is enough to touch that in you that does not need to be satisfied by the world of form because it is prior to the world of form, it is the being itself, the life itself. And sometimes for some people, it's enough to see how impermanent and passing and fleeting and ultimately unsatisfying everything in this world of form is, as long as you seek something there, only as long as you seek something there.

So for some people it's enough and they suddenly say, wow, it's all like dust and smoke and I'm trying to hang on to something or make it mine. And they see suddenly the impermanence. For some people it's enough for somebody, so if it's one big loss or somebody close to them dying to see the whole thing in that one event of the unreliability, the fleetingness of all forms and it hits them once and that's enough and it awakens in them that which is beyond form.

And that's the liberation. The liberation from form is the liberation from the world because the world equals form. It's the world of form.

Not needing a particular configuration of forms in your life anymore. It doesn't mean that you cannot play. You're not condemned to a totally passive observer of the world of form from now on, but the observer is always there.

Even while you participate in the world of form, the observer remains no matter whether you are passive at this moment and simply sit there or stand there or walk there and watch and let it all be and see the beauty of it. Or whether you participate in the world of form and in the midst of activity and people around you are running this way and that when you're trying to build a house or build this or build that or create this or create that. And even while you're in action, not to lose yourself in the action because the action also is form.

The doing, people so easily lose yourself in the doing. The doing also is form. So see that you don't get lost.

You'd see how easy it is. The moment you start, okay, what do I need to do now? Even with little things and most of life consists of little things.

They're not that many big things. 99% of your life consists of little things. Even if you're a famous person, it still consists of little things.

After they acclaim you and you get a standing ovation, you go back home and drink a cup of tea. And then you say, okay, now here we are. Or a cup of tea is brought to you.

And then you miss out the beauty of making it, of putting on the kettle, the little movements. But it's still, it's little things. People wait for the big things.

They're rare and they're not that great either when they happen. The wedding. And of course the wedding is inseparable either from the divorce or the funeral.

The big trip that's coming. And then on the big trip, you always are where you are. You're sitting in airline and aircraft seat, looking out of the window.

And then you arrive in the hotel and then you move your body from here to there. But it's always just this moment. It's not, it's only an idea in the mind, the big trip.

The big trip consists of one little moment at a time. And that's again why there's something people, the dissatisfaction, because there's always a clash between the mind forms that are generated by the egoic consciousness. It's the big trip coming and it's going to be great and it's going to fulfill me.

And when it comes, it consists of ordinary things. And the rafting, okay, that's so for a moment, you get that stimulus of ha ha ha. But you could have that all the time if you were present with every little thing, just that.

And then you don't depend it on fun anymore. Not that you can't have fun, but it means that every moment is fun because fun means you feel alive. If fun has any meaning, it's if you feel more alive and people make fun a goal in their lives because most of the time they don't feel the aliveness.

So they think, okay, where's the fun in my life? And there's no fun in my life. Then they're looking, I need a trip or whatever it is, another relationship, maybe that will bring some fun in.

And not realize what do they mean by fun? They want to feel more alive, I suppose. What else could it mean?

They want to feel the life that they are, the aliveness of themselves. And it's hard if you're looking on the level of form, you don't get it that often. And some people spend their whole life pursuing fun through drugs and then they go out and go listen to as loud music as they can.

It even affects your hearing after a few times. At least I feel a little bit alive here. Yeah.

And then always fly after a few hours, you have to walk out of the discotheque and then comes the, oh, you go down again. And then even worse, the emptiness, not the true emptiness, but the emptiness of what now? And where's the next thing?

And that worse thing after a while, fun. So many people feel they're missing out on life. And some people, no matter what age they are, 40, 50, 60, when is it all going to start?

Some people call it the big break. I'm not whenever I'm getting my big break, the big time. The big time is now.

Now, if you don't realize that the big time is now, you're never going to find it because when you think you have found it, it will turn out not to be it. So to all fun seekers, the fun is the aliveness of life is here in this moment and you know to get in there to find it, not away from it to find it. Get in here to find it.

And then you realize the very aliveness of yourself is the fun that you were looking for. And so does that mean I can't have fun anymore? No, you're having fun already.

Now, what does happen, of course, the dependency on experiences goes. So the almost compulsive or addictive search for more experiences also goes. In that sense, you're no longer a fun seeker in the same way in which you are no longer a spiritual seeker when you leave here or now.

I hope nobody leaves here and continues to be a spiritual seeker because you don't want that. And if your identity has been that you're a spiritual seeker over the past 30 years, it's time to step out of that and be a finder and not a fun seeker either, but a fun finder at this very moment. And you may find, and some people have come to me concerned, they say things, we don't get fulfillment.

I don't get fulfillment anymore through the things that I used to enjoy so much. And that all they mean is the external stimulus, things don't stimulate them anymore to such an extent because they don't need them as stimulus. They're already alive now.

So then you can go into an experience that before was great, like a ride on a roller coaster. Now, why people love that? Because it forces them into intense presence and then they scream.

And then one person actually gave that as an example and said, I loved it so much. And the last time I just walked past it and watched the people and said, I didn't need that anymore. And he got worried.

He thought, I'm no longer, I can't have fun anymore. You can, or you may, or you may not go into the roller coaster but there's no need to be concerned when you walk past it and just leave it, let it be, let them scream because you don't need the stimulus anymore. But if you can enjoy it, why not enjoy that?

And that's the same with all experiences. Sex, the need for it, that's an enormous need, one of the great needs. Of course, it's built into the body.

The body is programmed to seek it because it wants to perpetuate itself. It wants to produce other bodies that's built into the very genes, it's nature. So it's nature for the body to seek that.

And that in itself is not problematic. As you know, when you observe animals, the sex that animals have is never problematic because they don't have an ego that gets in there and want something.

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[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 59:14)

When you observe animals, the sex that animals have is never problematic, because they don't have an ego that gets in there and wants something. If they have sex, it's fine, if they don't, it's fine either. Of course, they try very hard to find a mate, if it's time.

There's an enormous, it is almost, you can see, once I made the mistake of not having a cat, a male cat neutered, and you can see the enormous force that drives that cat out at night, and it travels for miles, and when it comes home, it's totally exhausted. And then it just drops. And later, when I talked to a vet, the vet told me that unneutered male cats have a much shorter lifespan.

But also you can sense the enormous force in them that forces them to go out and seek a mate. And it's getting more difficult these days in many countries because unsplayed females are hard to find, so they have to travel long distances, and sometimes they get lost and they never come back. But even that, which is almost, I almost felt it, the cat is suffering.

I almost felt there's suffering in there, not needing it and being driven. But there's no psychological suffering as such in a cat because the cat doesn't have a self-image, an unhappy me that does not have a mate. Because it's only that self-image that creates the psychological suffering that humans have.

And so for humans, there's not only the sexual urge that's built into the genes that you have, at least when you're young, and then gradually it becomes less, but to some extent it's still there, but not this overwhelming thing anymore. And then maybe when you're 80, you can finally claim to have transcended it. But to see that with humans, that is a great source to feel alive, the stimulus is not only the sexual act itself, it's also the whole thing that goes with it.

The adventure of meeting someone, the games that are being played, the roles that they play. It's rare that they are themselves when they, male and female, meet. It's the dance.

Animals, some animals have their dance too. They dance around each other. And then finally, so some humans are addicted to that also.

It's not that it isn't in everyone, of course, but there comes the addiction. It's a psychological addiction to this. It's I need, and it becomes part of the story of me, I need.

There's far more need in the mind than in the actual physical realm. The neediness of the egoic mind is far greater with its stories, because even when you're not feeling sexual, you have this idea in the mind, I need a mate, I need a mate. You do at this moment, you're fine, aren't you?

But the story creates an enormous layer on top of the true needs, which are really, they come and go, they pass. They are either met or they are not met. They come and go, they pass.

So the fun, for some people, fun, a large part of fun is that. And so they seek far more than what their physical organism really needs, because it becomes part of the psychological need of me. I need the fulfillment.

I have the memory, I want to repeat the memory of it, and so on. The feeling I'm not complete without a mate. Of course, on the level of form, I mentioned it briefly in The Power of Now, on the level of form, there may always remain a sense of incompleteness or a longing for the other polarity, because on the level of form, you're only one half of the whole, although you have the other half built in too.

But you are male or female, although every male has a female, also like, you know, the symbol of Yin-Yang. The opposite is also in that. But yes, there is the longing on the level of form, and it can never be truly fulfilled except in sexual union, and that's very brief, no matter how much you practice.

Relatively speaking, brief. So, there's the, you can actually, you can observe that, yes, there may be the longing to have just male or female energy close to me. Yes, you can sense that.

That in itself is part of the form, as form, and you can take one step back and allow that longing to be there. And see, there's the longing for that. You don't even need to formulate it.

You just take a step back and watch the longing. Then there's space around the longing. And you are that.

You are not the longing. The longing is nature. It's the physical nature, part of that.

But you are the divine nature, the formless. The physical nature is form. So you can watch that, and you can allow it to be, or you can go out into, like the cat does, and you can watch yourself doing that, and give space to that.

And you sit in a bar where they meet, where you meet people, and then you can watch yourself drinking. Don't drink too much, because then the water may get lost. And then you watch a male or female at the other end of that room, and one or two people have asked questions about that, and you can feel you're being drawn to that.

And you can watch that. You're almost taking a step back. And then you always have more choice than before.

You have the choice. You can just carry on and watch. You can watch.

Perhaps you can even watch the awakening sexual desire without needing to act on it. You have the choice. Why make it into something for the next moment?

And now I need the next moment. One form of tantra would be to sit there and simply watch a slight sexual desire and allow it to be, and then go home. I'm not saying go home.

You can do what you like. But it doesn't matter what you do. But the thing is, you don't need to be pulled into the next moment, into the next thing.

You can actually enjoy at any stage. You can enjoy looking at the form of a man or a woman. Why do you need to do that?

Why not simply enjoy that? Notice that you're enjoying looking at it, and still take a step back from where you can enjoy it. So you're no longer obsessed.

You're only obsessed when there's no space around it. And then it's a bit like the cat goes, Now, you cannot tell a cat to have space around that. It doesn't.

The cat is not, and that's just not how it works for cats. Or it could be, if you go, food is another one where people, some people have a strong sense of fulfillment through that. And there's a similar, there can be a very intense longing, and there too you can observe that at any stage.

You go past a window, there's a beautiful display of exquisite food, and then you can stop and watch, and you can feel the longing inside. An enormous, in some people it can be enormous. I saw a Japanese, they have some weird things on TV sometimes, where they have these games, and so if people hadn't eaten for a long time, they would put these wonderful plates in front of them, and they had to exert, have willpower not to eat it, and they were sitting with this plate of food there, and going, And if you, then the person with the strongest willpower finally would get the first prize, and others would suddenly go, Now, of course, that's not it, because willpower is one part of you, the formal, one thought, mental, emotional form of you battling another mental, emotional form of you.

Say, which one is stronger? Presence has nothing to do with willpower. Presence means at any moment you allow whatever arises at this moment to be there.

So if it's an enormous longing for the food that you're looking at, you become conscious of the depths of what now is this. You allow the longing to be there. And you can, there it is, and you can feel it.

Well, I imagine that it's not one longing that I ever had, but I had others. And then there's a space around it, and with the space comes choice. There comes a choice, okay, you allow the longing, and then you can actually make it anything that before was an obsessive reaching out to be fulfilled through it, whatever it is, anything like that can become your spiritual practice.

And that's tantra in the widest sense, because tantra means ultimately, I would say, making something that before was unconscious, conscious. So there are many movements in humans that would draw you normally into unconsciousness. The desire for food, the desire for sex are two strong ones, for example.

Even breathing. Breathing is usually unconscious. And one way of becoming conscious is making breathing conscious.

Similar, anything that is usually unconscious, and you bring consciousness to it, that is beautiful spiritual practice. So, and it doesn't mean that you need to change anything from what is. You don't need to change what is.

At this moment, the longing is there. The mind may call it fun. The mind might have a little, and there you need to be there too, to see what the mind is saying when you feel the longing.

You feel the longing for food, and the mind is saying, it's the evening, it's another scenario, you're at home, you have a big fridge, well stocked, and even though you've had dinner, you had dinner a couple of hours ago, suddenly the longing comes. And you walk over to the fridge, and you open the door, and at that moment you become conscious of the longing, the neediness inside, I need to fill myself with this. But that's not what the mind is saying, because that means you're making it something conscious.

The mind is saying, you've had a hard day, you deserve a break, you deserve something. Now, if you're not present, then you cannot see that thought as a thought. Then you are that thought, and then, of course, you will reach out, and the whole thing will be unconscious.

But if you recognize that thought, you've had a hard day, you deserve something, because nobody else has given you anything. I'm going to treat myself now. Nobody has given you, so you give it to yourself.

Also, again, you're not in touch with yourself, you think you need to give something to yourself, because nobody else has done it. If you were in touch with the being that you are, you would see that the neediness is already fulfilled. It is not to do with food or sex.

Not that you're never hungry or want sex again, but there is a psychological neediness. At any moment, stop and see, when you feel, make it conscious, any fun things, especially sex, food, what else is fun? The vicarious enjoyment of entertainment, also addictive for many people.

Again, you need the stimulus, and in many cases it's violent, because otherwise it doesn't work anymore, because gradually you become dulled to stimulus, and you need stronger and stronger doses. You might have noticed in cinemas these days that the sound in most films is exertly exaggerated. You almost need to bring earplugs to films.

Why? Because it seems that people want the stimulus of... What for?

And it's usually films that have no other merit except exaggerated sound and exaggerated violence. And then every movement makes this enormous sound. Somebody goes...

Stimulus, you feel alive while you're watching it. And then people come and tell me, I'm a bit concerned, I don't enjoy these films anymore. Well, that may be a good thing.

Some films are still beautiful, but they don't need the exaggerated sound effects and the violence. That has no purpose, it doesn't show the origin of violence, the consequences of violence, but simply violence as if it were a normal thing, and of course it is normal in this world. At any moment, bring attention to it, attention to that moment and see what it is.

And then you see you don't need to be pulled into the next moment. At any moment, even a longing is fine. You can feel that.

It's quite interesting to sense that in yourself. If you feel hungry, you sense that. Now, it may not be physical hunger, it may be mental hunger, psychological hunger.

Sense that. Sexual desire, you can sense that. Act or not act, but you have choice, and it's nothing to do with willpower.

Just by having space around whatever condition arises at this moment, whatever the condition is, external or internal condition, to have the space around it, by allowing it and being there as the one who says, there it is, step out of it. Consciousness is then free. And that's the beginning of transformation.

Many things that before were unconscious, that had you, that were controlling you, begin to transform. Any kind of addiction, smoking, drugs, drinking, sex for some is addiction. Observe the urge to smoke.

Observe the urge to reach out for a bottle. And some of you, I know that there's Alcoholics Anonymous, they have done quite useful work, very useful work with people, although there are one or two things that I would correct. Just to do with your identity.

But some people have become conscious through an addiction. It woke them up. It created suffering and it forced them into being the observer, into being the conscious witness.

So any addiction, watch it. Watch the force of it, the force behind it. And give it, give yourself, let's say if it is smoking or drinking or a drug, make it into a spiritual practice and say, OK, I'm so lucky to have that, now I can make that into my spiritual practice.

Give yourself a space, let's talk in terms of time, five minutes in which instead of reaching out for the bottle or the cigarette, it's so unconscious, most people don't know that they're reaching for a packet of cigarettes. When they know it, they're already halfway through the cigarette and then they realize, I'm smoking. Do you see how conscious it often is?

And other people, they're halfway through a sandwich or have already consumed the sandwich when they realize that they have been eating a sandwich. That's how unconscious it can be because while they're eating a sandwich, they're immersed in thinking. So when you feel, give yourself a space also in terms of time in which you simply allow the longing to be there without acting on it.

You don't suppress it, you allow it to be there. You don't say, I shouldn't have this longing. You say, there's the longing and here I am.

And you continue to feel it. Give yourself a few minutes and there you sit in front of the fridge or the bottle or the packet of cigarettes, if that's what it is, and bring consciousness to what you sense. Now you may find that the enormous neediness or longing subsides as you bring consciousness to it.

Not necessarily always. It may also be that after five minutes it's still there. But you are also still there.

And because you are also still there, you have a choice now. You have a choice. You can still reach out and light the cigarette.

You can still open the bottle and pour yourself another drink or whatever it is. You can or you cannot. The longing is no longer all-consuming.

Now if you are truly addicted to a powerful drug, then you would need enormous presence and you probably need help in the form of somebody next to you or close to you who can sustain with you the presence that you need to counteract, if it's like say you're addicted to heroin or some very powerful drug that pulls you into unconsciousness, then it's quite possible that at first there's not enough presence in you to counteract the enormous pull of that addiction. But somebody with you who can then at that moment when it comes and sit with you and you can both sit together in a state of intense presence can get you through that particular wave of addiction because it comes in waves.

And then that you may need for a while to be with someone who can hold, sustain the space of presence with you because when you're sitting with someone in presence there's an energy field in which you are joined as of course also happens in this group here. There is an energy field of presence that arises that is a unifying energy field and it's extremely helpful to be with someone who is rooted in presence and he can sustain it. So if there's a powerful addiction in you, you may need help initially until there's enough presence in you so that when the wave of addiction comes you can sit there.

A strong addiction is almost similar to pain body and often associated links into the pain body and it lives in you almost as something that possesses you and it will attempt to use your mind and you will think thoughts to justify that the substance that you are taking now, they are totally justified. Whatever the thought is, the thoughts will then, because the addictive force will have moved into the mind and will control the thoughts and with that you very easily justify, you tell a little story why it's right to do this now, whatever it is. If you're not there as the observer of your mind then the thoughts will take you over and you will act on those thoughts and you'll do what the thoughts tell you to do not realizing that the thoughts are being controlled by the addictive energy field.

So it's vital that you are there not only on the level of what you feel, the force behind the addiction, but that you're also there as the witness, the observer, the presence behind the thoughts of the thoughts that arise out of that intense longing because otherwise the thoughts will fool you every time. And I know some people for years they've gone through the cycle. Many times they've been to rehabilitation centers and so on and yet it's still there.

It still takes over their minds. But some of them gradually, through that dreadful affliction, gradually their presence grows more. And there are some people who are destined, the world calls them addicts, but some of them are destined through their addiction to rise to intense presence.

And that's a painful way of spiritual realization and development. But that's, for some people, how it is. There is a spiritual teacher, I believe, who was Stephen Levine, I think, who was, I believe, addicted.

And that was, for him, part of his path. The addiction turned out to be his teacher. And so it can be like that.

The worst thing in your life can turn out to be the greatest. The very thing that awakens you. And so it is often also that very sensitive human beings in this world, they live in this gross environment and they cannot stand the pain of it, of this world.

And so many very sensitive people become addicted to drugs at a young age because the world to them is so painful. And they can't stand it. And they don't have the spiritual guidance at that age.

There's nobody around them that could easily explain to get in touch with what they already have. But all they know is that the world is dreadful and is painful and they can't stand it. And so they need to dull, they believe they need to dull the pain.

And you take one and you take another and then that's... But often hiding behind the external appearance of the so-called addict, which is another mental label, lies a spiritual being that perhaps is an enormous ready for awakening, often more ready than the well-adjusted humans. But we were just talking about extreme forms of addiction.

But remember, every human being, unless they are already truly rooted in the formless life that they are, is to a greater or lesser extent addicted, if only to the great addiction that every human carries, which is thinking. And then you wake up at night and you say, I need to think a bit more. Can't stop thinking.

What is that? It must be surely an addiction if you can't stop thinking, can't stop it. No, I must have more thought.

Now, if you ever said that to yourself, you would immediately become conscious. Thinking doesn't even say I must have more thought. It just creates more thought.

So that addiction, of course, is going away. That's the primordial addiction in humans, the addiction to thinking. And it is that addiction that prevents you from accessing the deeper dimension that is below thinking, out of which thinking comes, but is far vaster than thinking.

So work with, if there's whatever is in your life, it's fine. Whatever it is, if you bring presence to it, it's your teacher at this moment. It's whatever condition it is.

One mistake that spiritual seekers make is that they believe that they need to reach perfection on the level of form as the human being that they are to become totally... And that doesn't work, because the level of form must have always some imperfection. There's always one or other little quirks that perhaps in the unconscious state would be an addiction, but you still have certain things.

You may continue to like coffee. You may occasionally have a drink. It no longer matters.

When you're rooted in presence, you could have a drink, and it doesn't make you unconscious. You can enjoy anything and be present. You don't need it anymore to give you the sense of aliveness.

But little quirks remain. Some spiritual teachers remained smokers. And then the people came and said, That doesn't make sense.

Why do you need to smoke? And he said, Well, I'm talking, of course, of Nisargadatta. And he just enjoyed it.

It didn't matter anymore if he could smoke or not smoke, probably. But he enjoyed it. The body enjoyed it.

Well, that's how it is. Sometimes people come up to me at Starbucks and say, You drink coffee? You shouldn't be drinking.

Why do you need coffee? I say, I don't need it, but I sometimes enjoy a cup of coffee. Now I wear hats.

Talking about limitations in different life situations. So, on the level of form, there's always been this or that. You don't need to become perfect as a human being.

Not a perfect human. There's no such thing. Because the perfect, the dimension of perfection resides within you as the formless.

Now, that is perfect because it is beyond form. But nothing that is in form is perfect because form means limitation. So you can be good there, but that means you're not good there.

Because form means limitation. So not to seek perfection where it cannot be found. However, when the formless shines through the form, then the form, who you are as form, is a relatively benevolent entity.

Although it's not perfect. But it is a relatively benevolent entity. So it is not a form that creates hell around itself.

And wherever you go, there's a certain blessing that comes with you. It's not through the form, not because you as a human are perfect, but because the perfection shines through the form. So giving up that, and so you don't need to feel that you are not there yet because you still do this or you still do that.

You may continue to do it, who knows, until the body goes. And that's fine. You don't make yourself suffer anymore.

And that one reason is because you don't demand that anything should be different from the way you are. You give yourself the form, space to be also. And then you don't suffer and you create a superstructure and say, I should be different.

If you allowed all the imperfections and you are the space, then you would already be a master with your imperfections. And also, as just mentioned briefly, because you know that, there's not a future state for you to achieve. If you still believe that you need to become enlightened, in other words, to achieve the state of enlightenment as if it were something that you can add to yourself or something that will suddenly transform you into a miraculous being, which you already are, but you won't know it if you think that is going to come in the future.

Enlightenment or let's call it the egoless state. Okay, I want to achieve the egoless state. And, of course, the egoless state cannot be achieved in the future or in time.

It is only by looking through it now that the egoless state is here now. A state that you want to achieve is a mental concept in which that's endowed with self. And as such, you can never reach it because it's an abstract concept of who I want to be, not realizing you are it already.

So the egoless state, it does not lie in the future. It has nothing to do with future. You cannot make it into a goal.

You cannot make, whether you call it the egoless state or whether you call it enlightenment, you cannot make it into a goal. Goal implies future because the very entry point into the egoless state or the enlightened state is the present moment. If you make it into a goal that you want to achieve, you miss the entry point because you are looking to the future because goal implies future.

And that is the dilemma of all spiritual seekers because they listen to spiritual talk or read a spiritual book and say, there is such a thing as the egoless state or the enlightened state and perhaps I can achieve it too. And immediately they make it into a goal, project it away, it becomes mind, a mental image of who I want to be, future. And not realize that their very search to actualize that image prevents them from being it now because the entry point is here, this moment only.

The ego can only be transcended through accessing the power of the present moment. No other way. Enlightenment is only in the power of the present moment.

Nowhere else. So it's only humans who give up the search who realize it's already here. So you have to, one way or another, either because you are totally frustrated with the spiritual search or because you suddenly see the truth of it, give up the search as if it were future.

Now there still seems to conflict with certain teachings that say basically there are two conflicting spiritual teachings. One says, that seems what I've just said but it's not quite it, one says there's nothing you can do and you might as well totally relax because you can't bring it about. There's absolutely nothing you can do about it.

So let go, forget about all, some teachers say that, forget the whole thing, just have fun. The other teaching says if you do not want enlightenment as intensely as a drowning man wants air, you're not going to get it. Now what I just said seems to be more towards the other, that you cannot make it into something to want or to get.

But really the truth is hiding, you bring the two together, and how does that look? How can you bring those together? On the one hand there's nothing you can do, that's true, and on the other hand an intensity is required.

You bring the two together, the very intensity that is mistakenly interpreted as an intensity that's driving you towards a future goal can become an intensity that is driving you into the present moment. That's the uncompromising intensity of this, only this moment. And yes, there's an intensity there that takes you deeper into this.

It's not an intensity that drives you into future. There's nothing you can do, it's true, in the sense that if doing requires future and time, that doesn't help you. And of course going into the present moment and becoming internally aligned with the present moment isn't really a doing.

In that sense there's nothing you can do. You can only allow the present moment to be and go deeply into it. It's a question of how you use language.

So in that sense they are right, there's nothing you can do. And the others are also right. The intensity is required, the intensity with which you embrace the now.

So there's the point. No future state. You're not becoming something that you are not now.

And so you may have heard some spiritual teacher saying you're enlightened already. And that's deep down, that is true. Every human being is already complete within.

On the level of form there are all kinds of things that perhaps you could still do and play around with and add to yourself and learn or experience. But in the depths of who you are, your essence identity is already totally complete. It doesn't require more time or more things to be added to who you are in your essence.

And really that is what matters. In that sense only future can only prevent you from being it, finding it and being it now. So it's for some people hard to get rid of this idea because it's no more than an idea in the head that I need to achieve something, become something.

But it's not really true. So it's truer to say you are already it, you just need to realize it. That you are already fully yourself.

You are already fully yourself. You don't need more time or more of anything to be who you are already now. You're already divine, timeless, eternal in your essence.

Everything else is on the level of form and it's a dance, a game, a play of form. There sometimes you get more and then you lose again. You can play.

So no more spiritual seeking. Intensity, yes. But the intensity that drives you into the now.

Not an intensity that wants to actualize an imagined state. Me as the enlightened one, which you already are. There was one psychologist many years ago who lived, I can't remember the name, he talked about self-actualizing and self-image-actualizing.

I don't know if this is exactly what he talked about but most people live in the realm of self-image-actualizing. They have a self-image that they want to actualize. That's the realm of delusion.

And that prevents them from the self-actualization that is right here now. Now it's a pity that you have to drop the idea of me as an enlightened one. We can now see by Meister Eckhart in the 13th century, the mystic said, he used the term God quite often.

Of course God is the essence, the formless essence of all life that you are. The greatest obstacle to God is time. Now we can be thankful for the ego.

Because it was a necessary stage in the evolution of humans and in realization. As some Buddhists say, if there were no illusion, there would be no enlightenment. It was a necessary stage.

Was it fun? No. No.

It was a search for fun. So questions such as, but when will I finally be free of this or that? The ego, this, when?

You don't need that future moment. Just this is enough. You're already free now by being that which allows whatever condition is here now to be.

As that, you're already free. By not losing yourself in the condition, you're free. That's freedom.

And then what condition arises doesn't really matter that much anymore. Some may be called good, some may be called bad, but also here from that space, the spaciousness that is there once you allow the condition, you don't depend so much on the good and bad of conditions anymore. There's a liking and a disliking of what, I like that, I dislike that, I like that, I dislike that.

And you can just, it is as it is. You can still do things to change conditions. That's part of it.

But in the meantime, is always is, even while you change, is. And all, whatever it is, little things or big things. If your body is ill, now, illness is already an abstraction, is already a mental concept.

So don't lose yourself because when you, then if you lose yourself in the mental concept, I am ill, that's already a double illusion. What is the reality of the illness at this moment? And at this moment, it may be you feel pain, you feel perhaps a disability, you feel weakness.

That is what is at this moment. Or it may well be that you have an abstract knowing that somebody told you that you have an illness but you can't feel it yet. That's possible too.

So it would not be the reality of this moment. What is the reality of this moment, the condition of this moment, bodily, physical condition? You feel what you feel at this moment, like weak or pain or whatever it is, discomfort.

That's the reality of it at this moment. And what can you do? You allow because it is.

Now, that doesn't mean you cannot take any action to get better. But the primordial action is the non-action of allowing what is. And that we come again to the primary and the secondary.

The primary is to allow whatever condition is here now to be as it is. Then you can seek. There may be something you can do.

You may have to see someone, a doctor, a healer. You may want to change your diet, which could be that. Something may be required on the level of form also.

That's secondary. But the primary is... And so any action that arises out of the primary is then present action.

And you are more likely to take the right kind of action if you are present first, so the action doesn't arise out of fear or out of anger with what has happened to you or out of depression or sadness because it's become a story in your mind. You say, that's not fair. You become a victim.

Life has done something to you. These are all mental stories. Always staying with what is.

What's the condition now? That's what is. And somebody who wrote a book about healing some years ago said spontaneous healing, which does happen, and is much more likely, he found that out through actually experimenting and talking to people, many, many people.

He was a doctor or is a doctor. Those people who have accepted first were much more likely to be healed than those people who had strong... It goes very much against what our culture tells you, which makes the illness into an enemy because it makes everything into...

The ego makes everything into an enemy. So you need to fight the illness, make it into an enemy. That's not how healing happens.

Healing comes first with allowing because there's some imbalance there, that's why the illness is there. And to some extent, certain imbalances may always be there as long as you live in this mad world. And so, see, don't fight it, don't make any condition into an enemy that includes illness.

The illness is not an enemy. So healing comes with allowing. The condition, whatever it is, which doesn't mean that you accept that you are ill.

That's a story in the head. Well, I have this illness and I might as well accept it. No, that doesn't work.

It's a story that you have created. Acceptance refers to the direct and immediate condition of what is, not something you tell yourself in the head. So you don't accept an illness.

You realize illness is a concept. Accept this. It even happens sometimes that the concept and the medical system doesn't know about this yet, but some people are beginning to realize it, that the very concept of certain illnesses creates many more of those illnesses because you have a mental concept now.

And so there are far more illnesses now than there were before because we have more mental concepts of illnesses, different illnesses. And suddenly, so many more people, you have suddenly discovered a new illness and suddenly everybody, not everybody, but many, it appears everywhere. Oh, that's strange how the mind and that are connected.

It becomes more and more differentiated. It is true that some things are also new, they develop, but the more you emphasize the concept of it, the more of it you see, you find. And of course, some have taken that to extremes.

There are some religious practitioners who can totally deny the reality of illness. There are some churches, I believe, science, can't remember the names, Church of Religious Science. They have some truths there.

They have touched a truth there. They read, ultimately, it's an illusion, which is true because everything on the level of form is ultimately an illusion. So they totally deny the existence of any illness, which, if it's done truly, can be very powerful healing.

I suspect that very often it remains still on the level of mind. So being with what is, remaining, and that's true change comes then when you bring presence to what is. You don't want, you don't demand that this should be different, whatever the condition is.

And amazingly, then it is different, it changes. And action you can take that is intelligent, that doesn't come out of denial, that doesn't come out of anger or out of fear, much more likely to be intelligent action. You go to the right person to help you, or you do the right thing, or you stop doing the wrong thing because you suddenly see that you've been doing something that's created it.

This afternoon, which at the moment is only a mental concept, we'll address some further questions in written form unless something else happens. We don't know. As they very nicely add, often here in Spanish-speaking countries, si Dios quiere, if God wants.

They always add, when they say, we're going to do something, you add, si Dios quiere. That's true, because you don't know what's going to happen. The ego thinks I'm in control, we don't know.

The word that I use a lot, that some people get irritated by, is maybe. And then Kim says, did you tell him that you were going to do this when he asked you to do it? He said, you told him yes.

And I said, no, I said maybe. Because there's nothing more than really you can ever say, you're not in control, whatever the total, what the universe wants. Yes, this is going to happen at four o'clock.

It's going to happen. Maybe. In some countries where they have an innate wisdom and not so much ego yet, they use that word a lot too.

There are some countries where people tell me, people always say maybe. And other countries where people are not quite as unhappy yet as in the West yet, like Indonesia or Bali, people tell me that the language they speak there doesn't have a past tense or future tense. It's all present.

Well, that's a little help. However, the Western mind, which is the egoic externalized, is creeping all over the planet. It's everybody's destiny to go through it and then transcend it.

But this can be done more quickly now. Don't need another thousand years. I sometimes put a beautiful line in the Course in Miracles.

I sometimes quote, It has taken time to misguide you so completely, but it takes no time at all to be who you are.

[Speaker 2] (1:00:59 - 1:04:44)

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[Speaker 1] (1:05:03 - 1:51:31)

Satsang with Mooji As usual, I don't know what to say. But there are lots of questions waiting. Usually there are more questions than answers.

Not only on retreats, also in the human mind. There's no end to the questions the human mind can ask. One of them is, And then what?

Enlightenment. What happens next after that? After enlightenment, then what?

We already addressed, strangely, some of the questions when I looked through, that were asked this morning, to some extent. Especially questions to do with wanting to become enlightened. And some questions wanting, connected with sex and things like that.

Entertainment, fun. But we may come back to a different perspective on those. So I hope the two or three questions that are to do with, I really want to be enlightened.

And so I believe this morning, I already gave the answer to that. It's not a goal in the future. If you make it into that, that's a sure way of not being enlightened.

Also some questions are very similar. They are duplicated, two or three or four of them. So we'll see.

But the questions are quite good, by the way. Very many good questions that are helpful to everybody. But don't feel personally offended if your question doesn't come up.

It does not mean it's not good enough, or you are not good enough because your question hasn't come up, or whatever the mind can think of. Why mine hasn't come up. If you have any true vital question, a vital question is different from a mind-made question.

A mind-made question is curious about this and that. Speculating, like theories. A vital question concerns your very being.

And if there's ever a question that you truly need an answer to, if you become still, the answer will come. Or the question disappears in the stillness. And that's often the case.

Sometimes people traveled long distances to see a teacher with prepared questions in their head. Such has happened to Paul Brunton, who discovered, so to speak, for the West, Ramana Maharshi, and visited, saw him. His very highly trained mind had prepared some extremely intelligent questions.

And when he came into his presence, Ramana Maharshi just looked at him and suddenly he said, all the questions dissolved in presence. They became unimportant, secondary. So he didn't need to ask those.

It's maybe some later point he asked a few, but right there, when he met him, he realized the relative, the only relative importance of any question. So any vital answer, you already know it. You just have to be still enough to access the knowing.

The knowing is not necessarily conceptual. It may not even come as a thought. There is a knowing that is deeper than thought.

There have been some awake humans who were in that state of deep knowing but could not express it through words. It just didn't translate into words. So all they could do is just sit there.

And in India, there are always a few teachers who are that way. I mean, there are thousands of teachers, but relatively few true ones. And of those few true ones, there are always a few who simply sit there.

And that's enough. Some even lie on the sofa or bed. And that's enough.

Now, they don't reach that many people because a video of somebody lying on a sofa isn't... It's not that interesting. The knowing, the very source of all knowing, is in you.

And anything that is being said here, has been said or is being said, is immediately recognized by the source of all knowing that is in you as you sit here. It's as if you were speaking to yourself. That's how it works.

Occasionally, the mind may interfere and say, Is that true? Is the distance from here to the moon really... He said the distance from...

If I gave some fact, and the fact happened to be not right, that's possible. Then the mind might come in and say, Oh, that's not quite right. And then the ego may come in immediately after and say, He's wrong.

I must tell him that he's wrong. I must tell him that I know better. And then you would lose the rest of the words.

But the vital words, you know, they're recognized immediately. That's why it's pleasant. It is...

You feel deeply alive as you sit here because your own truth is there. It is not separate. It just happens to come through this form.

The form is transparent, relatively speaking, and so it comes through. But you are transparent enough to recognize it. If you were dense, all these words would be totally meaningless.

What's he talking about? So, the recognition, the sense of, Ah, yes, yes. You listen to the talk just as I do, this form.

It's the same. As you don't know what the next word is going to be, I don't know what the next word is going to be. Not that it is channeled in a narrow sense of the word, not that I feel there's an entity, but it is consciousness.

There may be some helpful entities, too. Thank you. Better be careful.

But these entities, if they're helpful, where do they derive their wisdom from? From the one consciousness. So it always goes back to the source.

If there should be an angel next to you, then what is that? A manifestation of the one source. This is a short one.

And what of the new earth? The new earth. I'm writing a little bit more these days, and that may turn into a book, it seems.

The provisional title is A New Earth, but it's only a provisional title. The new earth, of course, the words come from the Bible. They appear in the book of Revelations, which is also called the Apocalypse, which tells you about everything collapsing, the whole man-made order of things collapsing.

That's what it is about, symbolically. And then, when it's all collapsed, the writer says, and I saw a new heaven and a new earth. Out of the collapsed world rises a new world.

So that's, in a way, where the title comes from, a new earth. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, that's what it says. And the way I see that is a new heaven is a new consciousness that is arising.

This is causal in humans. It's the transformation of human consciousness. It's the inner.

Heaven is the inner world. A new earth is the outer manifestation of the transformed consciousness. So the question, and what of the new earth?

The answer to that is we don't need to be concerned about the new earth. All we need to be concerned about is the new heaven. And that's why we are here, because heaven is the inner.

The inner transformation of consciousness. The outer, the externalization of that as a different world that humans create once the shift has happened, that is obvious, that politically, economically, socially, in every respect, the structures, the man-made structures, and even the buildings and the cities, and so on, everything will be very different from that which the egoic consciousness creates. So our gathering here is the arising of a new heaven, the inner.

The rest comes automatically. When it comes to making choices about life situation, are there some decisions that are wrong and some choices that must be avoided because they will lead into greater selfishness? In other words, are some choices absolutely wrong or will eventually all choices bring us to wakefulness?

What then is the basis for making choices in the relative world? Now, to some extent, the answer is already here in the second question, and that is all choices eventually bring you to awakening, even if they appear wrong. If they are wrong, now wrong means they lead you into more delusion, they lead you into more ego, they lead you into more suffering for yourself and others.

Perhaps usually they go together. If you make yourself suffer, you make others suffer. So if they are wrong in that sense, then, yes, they bring about suffering and delusion, and eventually suffering wakes you up.

So there is ultimately nothing wrong as such. You cannot say that anything is wrong, any choice that you make, because if it is, you will suffer and then the suffering will wake you up. And that's a relief to know that eventually every road that you take will get you there.

But some are longer than others. Some go the roundabout way, a bit more pain, a bit more time and suffering. The basis for a right choice, of course, is presence and to become still, so that it comes from the deeper level of intelligence and not the conditioned mind or an emotion that you are suddenly overcome by and immediately act upon.

So there are always, you can make choices, should I stay here or should I move? Should I marry this person or not? Should I leave this person or stay with him or her?

Should I leave my job? Should I leave everything behind and move to India? Should I go and help the needy in a poor country?

Should I... many choices. And whatever you choose, if you bring presence to it, then you're fine and you've made the right choice.

The best choice, the realization of what it is right for you to do does not come through thinking. That is the main thing. So in a way you could call that the basis for making choice in this relative world, for making choices.

You can think for a while, you can even write down the pro and cons of this choice or that choice, if I do that, but then on the other hand, but even that won't give you a definitive answer. The true realization, and usually when it comes out of presence, it comes as a ready-made realization of this is what I have to do. But don't mistake a strong emotion for that because that could be, but the next day it'll be gone.

That remains, the realization remains. You can wait a few days and it'll still be there. You can wait a week or two or three weeks and still it remains, whereas emotion will fluctuate.

So don't mistake a sudden or even a thought coupled with an emotion for it, if it's very strong. Some thoughts have enormous energy behind them. I have to get out of here, I have to get out of here.

Just okay. Now this could be mistaken for something that comes from, and it could be, but it may not be. Just okay, wait, see how you feel.

Let sleep and then get up in the morning and see if that's still true. If it's true, it remains true because it comes from a deeper level. When the realization came I had to leave England, it remained with me.

I woke up in the morning and I had to go to the West Coast and then okay, that was it. The next day it was still there, the next day it was still there, the next day it was still there, and a week later it was still there. And then I knew, yes, that's it.

It was not arrived at through decision-making because decision-making is limited. It involves thinking. Thinking always involves opposites.

If it comes from presence, it's almost like a ready-made answer. Ah, this is what I... So really choice means there is no choice in a way.

Suddenly something comes and you almost have no choice anymore. That is a true choice. There is no choice.

And even there the ego can still interfere and it can say, oh no, you shouldn't do that. What about your pension plan? What about this?

What about that? So those are wonderful when it comes. The stiller you are, the more likely it is that a realization of what is right, if you are at a crossroads or feel they have to...

what is right will come suddenly. Ah, yes. I mentioned also yesterday that sometimes the answer comes in the form of an event when you are present.

Sometimes it comes from within as a realization. But when you are present, the answer to what is needed, if there is a choice in the external, may sometimes come as an event that suddenly comes into your life and that clearly opens a door where before you didn't know and suddenly the door opens here. So you have to also be alert to see what kind of events are happening while when you need an answer you become still and then see what...

The answer may come from without, so to speak. It may come through a person also, an event, a person that you meet, an event that suddenly happens. And even a so-called bad event can sometimes be part of the answer.

But ultimately, there are no mistakes. There are only temporary learning situations. Because just look back on your life.

Well, if there is something to look back on, I'd like to... I've been told that the youngest person here is 12 years old, I believe, and it's wonderful. Thank you for being here and so present.

You're certainly more conscious than I was at 12. And I believe the oldest person is 91. Is that right?

91 or something like that. So it's... And that's exactly...

It's wonderful to see those are where consciousness needs to enter. The incredible opportunity of old age for awakening and the wonderful thing when already at a young age that new consciousness arises. It's beautiful to see.

So if there is... If you look back on your life... If you're 12, there isn't that much to look back on.

And you haven't had time to make many mistakes. But if you look back on your life, you will probably discover many mistakes, so-called mistakes. That was the wrong choice.

That took me there and I did that for years and then I realized it wasn't it. And then I chose the wrong partner in some cases. And another wrong partner.

And yet, it's all taken you to this moment. It's all taken you to this moment of presence. And so it worked.

One could almost say retrospectively, the meaningless jumble of events of your life becomes meaningful because presence arises now. The arising presence now gives meaning to the seemingly meaningful past because it's taken you here. All the mistakes and all the chaos has taken you here.

If I look back on my life, it was one mistake after another. Really, one mistake after another. The whole university thing was a mistake.

Many things that I tried turned out to be mistakes. And until the book was written, if somebody had only looked at the externals of my life, one would have said, this person made too many mistakes. That's why he didn't get anywhere externally, from an external viewpoint.

And some of my family and relatives took that viewpoint. And yet, something suddenly came out of that. It's almost like the lotus flower is a symbol of the consciousness in Buddhism and it grows out of the mud.

It has its roots in the mud. And then, suddenly, out of the mud comes that incredible beauty. Out of that...

So, be glad about all your mistakes. They were not mistakes. They might have been before, but they're not now because presence is arising.

It's taking you into presence. That's what it was supposed to do. Or, if you need a few more, then, okay.

For the first time, I understand true compassion, but only in my head. When I am presence, one life doesn't come to me. I believe he means, when I am presence, he or she means, when I'm presence, the realization of the one life doesn't come to me.

So, the person understands compassion mentally, but has not yet experienced it, especially in certain cases, like, I don't feel one with a snake, a spider or George Bush. Am I doing something wrong? No, it doesn't quite work like that to feel that when you're present and you watch a snake, you immediately feel compassion or you see somebody on television and you immediately feel compassion.

Compassion first arises, first you need to remain present and look. It's not just, okay, I don't feel, you need to be able to look at a being, a life form and continue to look. And then, well, usually presence first arises is not when you see the intact life form.

Compassion arises when the life form, the form begins to become broken. And at that moment, when you're present, compassion arises. Because at that moment, you see the dual nature of that life form, whether it's an animal or a human or some other life form, being one with the dual nature of yourself, the form, the impermanent and fragile form being broken.

And out of that, the opening that is there when the form breaks, and it could be not necessarily death immediately, it could be a serious injury, an animal that is injured or a human that is injured. And then, when you are present and you contemplate the form, the fragile nature of the form and that which is beyond the form can then come through more clearly and that is what resonates with the formless within you. And then it can happen that there may be a human being whom you did not like at all in ordinary day-to-day living, maybe somebody at work.

If I say, who is the person that you least like in your life can think of that person. And then if you imagine that person suddenly having a serious accident and you are there witnessing it and lying there. All the, that which is not essential in that person, all the conditioning of that person that you have mistaken for who that person is, all the unconscious conditioning that became the person that you disliked and the dislike strengthened the dimension of person, egoic person in you, all that suddenly becomes irrelevant or collapses completely.

And if the person had a strong ego, a lot of role-playing and posturing and suddenly that person has a serious accident, all that would collapse and you would see something shining through that is not the conditioned unconsciousness, that is the ego. And the same would happen in an animal, a suffering animal, even if the animal you didn't like or even feared, but when it begins to be, the form breaks up, then compassion arises. And that is when you experience compassion fully and for the first time.

And when you, the more you become rooted in the formless, the more you feel it, then at times suddenly you may realize you feel it even when the form is still intact. And all the form and all the behavior patterns and thoughts that are manifested by this form that are only temporary formations, not who that life form is in its, his or her essence. And so you can look through it and you can still see, yes, you can see the unconsciousness of the form, the animal, the scorpion or whatever it is, but they do what they have to do.

According to their form they have certain limitations and certain animals will, if you approach them, probably bite you. Maybe not miracles happen if you're totally present, they may not bite you. We don't know.

But for the scorpion to bite, we can't help it. And it's in the nature of humans to do similar things. They're not yet conscious enough, they go, there was a story, I don't quite remember the details, there was a spiritual teacher and a scorpion, that scorpion fell in the water or something and the teacher took it out and he got bitten and the master took it and the disciple said, why do you take, can't you see that you get bitten every time?

He said, well, it's in its nature to bite and it's my nature to save. So you don't, it's the limitation of the form and that applies to humans and also to animals. Now animals are usually much easier to like than some humans.

Because there's less, the being shines through, there's still more, despite the limitations of their form, they're still closer to being than humans. There's not the density of mind that's in the way, there's not a mentally constructed person that's playing a role. Usually animals don't play roles except for very few dogs and cats that have lived with roleplaying humans for too long.

They get a little bit of roleplaying. You see the beginnings of an ego in some pets that have lived for a long time with people with strong egos. Then they get, oh, there's a little developing ego in that little dog.

But most of the time animals remain amazingly sane despite the humans they live with and so that you look into the eyes of a cat or a dog and there's so much goodness. Yes, the cat has its limitations and the dog has its limitations. The cat, when it sees a bird, it goes, the mouse quivers.

They look at a bird and the mouse goes. Now the cat cannot yet be the witness of that. So there are the limitations of form in humans and animals and they're more pronounced it seems in humans even in some ways.

So it's look at first compassion then you learn what compassion is by witnessing when the form is no longer fully functioning. It begins to break up in one way or another and then if you truly watch then you'll feel no matter who it is that is having the accident or is close to death or whatever it may be you will feel compassion arising because the essence begins to shine through and you recognize it through the presence which is the light from your essence and whether it's George Bush or whoever it doesn't matter or a snake or whatever. That just comes from the question.

So and then compassion as presence deepens in you you will be able to look through the limitations of form in animals and humans in the snake in the scorpion in human beings you can look through that and you can have compassion with unconscious people because you recognize that what they do comes out of their conditioning it's ego, it's collective it's the collective unconsciousness of humanity there's not anybody there really it's an expression of the collective fault as such and yet of course yes, they make themselves and others suffer through unconsciousness the consequences of unconsciousness are suffering and that's how awakening also happens a person with a strong ego and everybody sees they're playing a role if a little thing happens to that person they slip on a banana skin and they just it's a minor fall everybody laughs the stronger the ego the more people will laugh because there's the discrepancy of the role and suddenly showing they're not in control in what happens to them but if something drastic happens nobody laughs anymore because immediately all that evaporates you would run and even save your enemy because at that moment you realize that was all in the realm of relativity nobody is your enemy in essence and it's compassion so with everyone you share with every life form you share the precariousness of the form and the eternal and when you weep when a life form dies that's because you share you recognize that's you also you see yourself there also you share the fleetingness of the life of form and you can weep and the peace that you feel at the same time is the realization that both you and that life form are ultimately only temporary expressions of the one eternal life and that's where peace emanates from that realization put the two together and that's compassion I'm visited by an uneasiness or anxiety that what I'm doing to increase moments of consciousness is not enough a feeling something is lacking blocking the way if I listen to a musical or listen to another tape a shift will come occur this panic wakes me in the night several times a week is it a result of psychological makeup or disposition of a warrior or is it a message from unconscious realm to be listened to or is it fear and then it says at the bottom I believe there is one little mistake in the question a slight misperception it's in the first sentence I'm visited by an uneasiness or anxiety that what I'm doing to increase moments of consciousness is not enough this may be the anxiety that you experience here under these circumstances there is simply the condition of fear or anxiety and the mind according to your circumstances attempts to find an explanation for the anxiety so here the mind says I'm feeling anxious because presence isn't arising or it's not enough yet I feel I need more and that's why I'm anxious it's likely that in other circumstances or at other times in your life that also came or will come and will take a different form but the anxiety and the fear are there and usually the anxiety or fear are misinterpreted by the mind in the same way that in a dream often you have an underlying emotion that gives rise to an emotion and then suddenly you dream a dream that is the illustration of that emotion and it seems that the dream is causing the emotion in the dream oh I felt fearful because I dreamt that there was a monster running after me but it wasn't the monster was created by the mind to explain the fear and in normal wakefulness there are primordial emotions and fear is the most primordial emotion that humans carry inside that the mind interprets in different ways and says I fear because there's not enough money in the bank my job is not secure I don't know how much longer I'm going to live my health is unstable my relationship may collapse I fear because and then comes whatever it is in your surroundings not realizing the primordial condition that everybody has inherited that is part of everybody's pain body is the condition of fear every ego lives in a state of fear even if they look big at night they have nightmares and in the morning again they play the role and then the fear comes also at other times but disguises itself in different forms it can come as anger so anger is usually the disguised form of fear so it's the fear is there and let's just see allow that to be there and see it for what it is it's fear and even that's a label it has a certain meaning to it and you can observe that with your inner eye so to speak in other words feel it feel what the fear feels like and maybe not even call it fear anymore it's just a mental label it is something, yes it's something in here that I feel and there it is at night you wake up and you feel that and then the mind will quickly come in and it might think I'm feeling fear because I'm fear that I'll never be present enough or it might think I'm fearful because I have to go back home soon whatever it is so instead just be with the fear directly and say that's the condition of this moment a turbulence a shaking a quiver a kind of dread that's what I had it wasn't quite fear but it was a kind of dread of everything of life itself because I only knew the life of form and it became more and more alien and there was a dread of the whole world as described in Jean-Paul Sartre's book Nausea aptly entitled Nausea of the World and he described I read that book later what I felt the dread of even looking at an object even looking at the walls at night makes you feel almost sick

[Speaker 3] (1:51:32 - 1:51:33)

oh

[Speaker 1] (1:51:35 - 2:38:52)

and so it's tempting for the mind to find an explanation and my mind did that for a long time it explained my life situation is so insecure I'm never going to make it I'm miserable everybody thinks I'm nothing all kinds of stories and yet there was the primordial condition of dread and so can you if that arises it is the condition of this moment the form that this moment takes you're in bed if it is for many people it's in bed at night particularly because there seems to be something and so you lie there and you have fear can you not escape into thought when that happens because if you go into thinking then you're leaving the emotion you're not there witnessing it you're moving into you're escaping from what you feel and your thought processes will be only a reflection of what you feel some explanation so can you stay with that feeling and simply say give it space almost when you say step back from it or endure it by surrendering to it sometimes there was one teacher who called that practice conscious suffering you surrender to what you feel and don't run away just stay with it and feel it if you allow it to rise into your mind and you go into thinking it might kill you it has done that because it might drive you to the bridge and then you jump off but if you face it directly it's not going to kill you and so you stay with it and the more you allow it the more that which is no more than trapped energy begins to transform and it's the consciousness that initiates the transformation of it so any kind of pain physical or emotional that still arises but you have to look to see whether it's being created by a thought that you're thinking at this moment in which case you can see the fallacy of that or whether it's old and the fear that most humans carry is old fear to control the future you think about the next and the next moment that you can't control it creates more and more fear but if you stay more present live increasingly in presence then you are not creating new levels of fear on top of the old that's already inside you as part of the pain body you don't create new fear the more present you are the more you realize that it's created by the conceptual reality in the mind that creates future and it's always uncertain therefore fear comes mixed up with hope sometimes they go together you don't know what it is are you hoping for the future to come or are you fearing because it could be good or bad so anything painful physical or mental but be alert to see don't create it now it's old it just comes you wake up and there it is stay with it allow it to be give it space and then it becomes if it's physical pain it consumes the ego quickly it has done that in some people who have suffered acute physical pain prolonged physical pain it drove them to surrender and that is called surrender to whatever it is that you feel at this moment then it becomes like a fire it's beautiful some teachers and this is not what I advocate here so don't get me wrong it's not part of this teaching is to generate some kind of discomfort or pain and then stay conscious as it's there you disidentify from the feeling from the form that feels the yogis do that in India sometimes stand on one leg for six years and these are considered holy men in India and there is some truth hiding there we see it this looks so mad and yet it is one way of being the witness anything that you allow to be don't run away from and surrender to completely brings about presence but in many cases of course in India there may be a few real true ones in many cases it's an ego device to get recognition or money for a woman but some of them are real so they do the most the weirdest things to inflict pain for years and years some sit in the same place for 20 years or sit on painful you know the famous bed of nails but there is there is a truth hiding there too not that you need to do that because life gives you enough to work with you don't need to generate additional pain life is very generous it always gives you exactly what you need and that's all you need to work with but it's called conscious suffering when it does come it's the condition of this moment and you can't surrender to that and there is space around it light space there is a disidentification from the condition and it's beautiful could you please help me see clearly about this I find this week when I have been more still and less mind activity than ever before I have deliberately not read the trains of thought that I am experiencing a numbness an inert kind of inactivity but it feels more like dullness than aliveness the thought comes I would rather have the highs and lows than this blankness and neutrality I'm not sure I want a life that is so tranquil it seems too uneventful and uninteresting what is the switch that brings in the aliveness joy, exhilaration, etc this seems all yin with no yang now of course life the manifested life the world won't leave you alone anyway so it will continue to be interesting because the world will come in and challenge you and that makes life interesting the question is will you lose yourself in that and it's no longer interesting it just becomes a burden it becomes depressing it becomes a place of fear when you lose yourself in it but yes why not have an interesting life in the world of form you don't have to give that up now presence is not interesting that's true that we'll see but one thing is true presence is not interesting because interesting can only apply to the world of forms where you can look at and say ah, isn't that interesting look at that and look at that and then you work something out and the more you work it out the more interesting it gets there are many things in this life that are beyond interesting nature if you truly look at it if you look at nature from the point of view of mind only it's interesting because then you analyze the different species of birds and how they behave and you start writing things down and look it up in books and see how the trees work and what kind of leaves and compare the leaves to other leaves what families they belong to that's all interesting if you look at nature from no mind it suddenly becomes completely uninteresting but yes it is alive sacred beautiful but you couldn't call it interesting if you watch the sunset if you watch the sunset and you have a camera and you have measuring devices to see the intensity of the sunlight where you write it down then the sunset is interesting and then you can watch the sunset and just allow it to be see the majesty the beauty and the mystery of it you can no longer call it interesting it's of incredible beauty and vastness but it's not interesting because interesting means little bits and pieces interesting means you're cutting it means forms different forms in different pieces and the more you cut the world into little bits and pieces the more interesting it becomes and the more active the mind gets oh isn't that interesting let's talk about this let's talk about the sunset now now that level has its place for certain things in this manifested life that level may be useful for certain purposes but if that takes over your life then your whole life becomes reduced to the dimension of interesting which means it's the dimension of mind that cuts things up can never see the wholeness of things and that's a dreadful reduction so if your job is interesting and many jobs these days are extremely interesting then that's what you do but make sure that the other dimension is present in your life that which is not interesting so that you're not trapped in interesting which is trapped in the mind so yes the dimension of presence certainly is not interesting you're right there but it's alive I recommend to the questioner particularly to associate the state of presence more with being in the body and to sense the aliveness that you are as a body in the body the unseen aliveness that is it that dwells in every cell of the body certainly it's not interesting but certainly it's alive it's full of life and so presence can deepen presence is not a head phenomenon it includes the head of course but presence is not generated by the head the entire body and every cell in the body where you're present is alive it's alive with presence aliveness so it's a whole body phenomenon presence and then you will no longer feel that it is just a kind of lifelessness uneventful and uninteresting yes that's true but you have enough interesting in the world that's not going to leave you lots of interesting things more than you want you can say leave me alone I've had enough I've had an interesting life for too long so that's guaranteed but the state of presence although not interesting is deeply alive so go deeper within and realize presence the body feels more alive the world around you also has an increased aliveness an increased I say for many people who are totally identified with mind the world that surrounds them is dead because they reduce the entire reality around them to concepts mental concepts they make everything interesting other human beings they talk about them all in terms of concepts they make themselves into concepts they inhabit a conceptual reality and they call it that's me they have concepts about who they are and that really means dead the whole world becomes dead to you it may still be interesting but it lacks the vital aliveness so you inhabit a deadened reality and so they walk through nature and all they see is concepts the more knowledgeable they are the more concepts they carry in their head trees, what they are how they work and they know it all and then what comes after years of living in concepts life becomes old because they're always the same concepts you cannot experience because you've been there done it oh that's another one of those trees I've seen so many of those many, many because it's reduced to a concept and human beings so I've met that kind of person many times I know exactly what they're like somebody made me a compliment once a woman with an enormous ego although occasionally she said I know whenever I meet anybody I immediately know almost everything about them I know what they're like I know what they're like in bed I know everything I know everything she had so much knowledge of people and on her level it was actually true she knew she could look through but all she ever saw but often on the level of ego she was often right and quite often also wrong because ego projects a lot also and so she's talking to me I know them all and then she looked at me and said but you I don't know it all can't work you out that's because I was not interesting just present and she always often looked at me suspiciously just trying to catch something that's interesting there maybe an emotion or a thought but I immediately I experienced presence as sometimes intense and sometimes as a peace a peaceful space in the background so that can vary it's always the presence is there sometimes it obliterates almost the entire world but other times it's the background peace and whenever she came into my field of awareness I could sense an incredible heightening of presence I could feel so this was the question about interesting and so on go into the body and find that yes presence is alive but not interesting you're right there but you have the whole world that's there for interesting and your mind that's still there sometimes it happens that people walk out of talks sometimes people come for the wrong reasons or because a friend said you must come to this talk it's really interesting and then they come to a talk and after ten minutes they just can't stand they have to walk out because they realize they're on that level and if they cannot access that in themselves that's beyond interesting then they can't stand it it's just too boring you have often said that if it were not for drugs and alcohol human beings would be insane or driven to suicide yes I believe I've said that imagine taking away alcohol drugs and television what would they do?

would they run around mad in the streets and all the children the poor children who are addicted who are addicted to television who are addicted to the video games suddenly no more TV and no more video games all interest being taken out of life and all they're left with is the trees and the flowers for many years of my life I tried to save my sister from herself by attempting to prevent her from killing herself until eventually it became clear to me that her soul, spirit or inner presence was no longer accessible it was as though she had surrendered to everything outside of her inner being her life situation was promising substantial financial means a loving supporting family two beautiful young boys my question should I have clearly knowing her suicide was I can't read the next word becoming a reality should I have continued to prevent her passing knowing she was choosing her destiny fully in some cases you do all you can and at some point you need to surrender to another person and I believe it seems that that's what you did you do whatever you can but there is something in some human beings that is so heavy there is so much pain in some human beings it seems that for some reason that we cannot explain through the mind they just need need to be allowed to go through it they go through their hell they seem to nobody can understand it they are creating their own hell so it seems and something within them seems to be driving them there may be times when there is some consciousness and your hope comes up you can be reached for a little while and then they fall back and you reach them again they fall back sometimes it's somebody close maybe somebody close to you maybe a child maybe a brother or sister in your case but some parents have had similar questions that their children went into drugs and so on to save them they tried everything and finally they had to release them you can still help but you can see that there is not more that you can do so there is no need to feel that you failed in any way we cannot understand often the purpose of certain lives of humans why they need to go through that they need to experience the pain sometimes the awakening comes just before they die it can come a moment before they die the awakening may come after they die the life, the form the energy field no energy is ever destroyed or lost the life form that temporarily is a physical form with the one life it's only a little ray or spark of the one life and eventually every life form which is only a cell within the totality of the one life another way of putting it eventually every life form realizes its oneness in the early stages the oneness is natural nature lives in natural oneness with the one and then gradually as life forms evolve life gets more and more difficult because the oneness seems to be lost the realization of oneness and the individual me becomes more and more pronounced and then life gets more and more difficult problematic because so it seems and then comes the return journey the return journey for the evolved life forms does not come until there is suffering and some have to suffer more than others and so it is the suffering that is the destiny of every evolved life form that is prior to finding the way back to the conscious realization of oneness and the suffering if you look at your own suffering you can see that it has its place it has had its place it has deepened you you probably wouldn't be here without it you would be watching TV or something like that so you can see that it has produced the deepening and so it will produce the deepening in every life form so the release when there is nothing more you love the essence even though the essence may be heavily obscured you know it's there and it may still occasionally shine through and the glimpses and you love that as yourself but as far as actually helping them there may come a point when you see I've done everything should they come because it's a surrender that also helps them it doesn't help them on the visible material or physical form reality but in many ways you can surrender for them they cannot surrender they are in intense pain you surrender for them which means you accept that that is where they are at at the moment that is their due and do we call it choice or do we call it unconsciousness it's not really choice it looks as if they were choosing suffering but there is nobody really there who is choosing it's the suffering that is simply perpetuates itself the pain body wants more and more pain and so when that reaches you or in this form but the energy that you are goes through metamorphosis that's a continuous metamorphosis of energy and it's not it seems wasted it seems that a lifetime is wasted but it's not that's a strange thing nothing is ever wasted but you may not know that until the awakening comes as we said earlier that which seemed meaningless and full of mistakes suddenly makes sense has meaning because it took you to awakening and that's the case with every life form and so for some humans their existence here is a kind of crucifixion and they don't it seems in this lifetime they don't experience the surrender and the transformation of the cross from a torture instrument to a symbol of the divine and the ascension which is symbolic the realization of who you are there's one question here it may even be the next one one concerns the suffering of a human being and this question concerns the suffering of an animal in all forms one can say yes, the human probably suffers more intensely am I projecting my own misery and suffering on the dying baby puppy lying right outside of the door of Pura Vida by wanting to hold him help him and save him while everyone ignores him if you can save save it's a beautiful thing to do and then of course you have to also recognize the enormous amount of suffering that's still happening on the planet in human forms animal forms and the human madness inflicting an incredible amount of suffering on the animals also beyond the suffering that is there the animals are more can suffer better than humans unless the human just beautifully burns you up but animals have die better than humans and suffer better than humans they are closer to the unmanifested within them you can see when two animals one animal is about to devour another at some point the animal that is dying becomes very still one could almost say they've already died millions and millions of times they've already died so many times it's so familiar the animal is able to withdraw to a deeper place that is where it touches the formless and when death comes the animal goes there and humans can do that too we are going there, here you draw away from the form into the formless and you touch that and that's the reason why sometimes cats one of the most beautiful sounds there are a very healing sound a purring cat if you are unhappy just put a purring cat on your stomach or belly and although I lived with cats for a long time or had cats for quite a few years I rarely experienced cats the cats around me were usually ok I rarely experienced cats in distress but when I talked to I visited a vet and there was a cat there very fearful of the vet and the cat suddenly started purring so that extremely fearful cat suddenly started purring I said to the vet why is it that this cat can't be happy because obviously fearful cats in great fear often start to purr the vet had some explanation for it but I don't believe it was the correct one I believe that when cats see a threat to their life to their form they withdraw to the formless the being underneath the formless they touch the formless and then they purr and on the outer level they still fear but the fear makes them go in so deeply that they touch that and so that's the what is hiding whenever the form is in suffering whether it's human or animal form there's always that but it's there it's quite possible that your sister accessed it just as she died as the form dissolved she may have accessed that and suddenly seen the whole suffering took her to the point of death may have touched it very deeply we don't know but it is the destiny of every life form to return to that the early life forms still are in touch with it gradually they lose it and then you return so if you whatever we can do we do to help and save if there's a puppy you can take the puppy home or feed it but there's an enormous amount of suffering still on the planet and if you think about it you'll go mad suffering at this very moment to humans animals you would go mad you have to be everywhere and a lot of the human suffering as well as the suffering of animals that are caused by humans is caused by humans that comes out of the madness of the unenlightened human egoic consciousness about 85% of humans of human suffering is generated by humans for themselves they make themselves and others suffer and so we have to look also beyond that the suffering form for some reason that's what it is now and even that has a purpose within the evolution of the whole the whole is beyond the forms if you callously say oh it's all good yes it is all good but at the same time you may weep that's compassion because you can empathize empathize is that the word with the suffering form but at the same time if that's all there is that's not true compassion you have to go deeper and see that ultimately nothing real can be threatened and nothing unreal exists I will save some questions perhaps for what we call tomorrow I have some more in my room too that may come there's some more here some have flown away but there's some more here and I'll put them in also questions somebody asked me about a Marshall Plan for economic assistance to poor countries is that person here thank you maybe tomorrow I can mention that I saw that may require a little bit more one person that I know quite well is on the list of people Peter Russell I may have a word with him and see what we can how we can help in that way that's also there's always the level of form on which it's good to help on the level of form wherever you can never losing touch with the deeper level otherwise you'll burn yourself up on the level of form as many therapists know as many social workers know as many people who work in third world countries know if you're not rooted here you will burn yourself up because there seems to be no end to it so the balance needs to be there between being rooted in being and helping on the level of form and then it's a different kind of help too there's more than just material help I believe the questions that have blown away have already been answered some of you will be here tomorrow morning some will go away again for a while on another adventure it's good to try out presence when you go into when the external absorbs your attention a bit more and to remain present when things happen like a bus or whatever that's good practice there's movement after this for those who whose body need presence flowing into movement not only in the movement class but also we mentioned that briefly when you do little things little everyday actions bring presence see if you can perform it with such alertness that the action is not a means to an end but an end in itself do little things all that you do naturally you have to do them anyway so why not bring presence into them washing your hands drying your hands walking from the living room to the bathroom walking up the stairs in your house putting the cup on the table taking it from the kitchen and then on the kitchen top counter top and put it on the table the cup travels to the table and that's the space of presence any lifting something picking something up a pencil, a pen just that movement you associate a certain spatial movement with presence that's a great help to associate a spatial movement of your hands that's of course also to do with what the movement meditative movement is also about but also to practice it in everyday life in some buddhist meditations they have the meditative walk the walking meditation which can look a bit strange if you and they do it very slowly sometimes it's overdone a bit but I would suggest a bit more natural walk but slow enough so that you don't make the way you want to get to as more important than the step you are taking now that's the main thing to be conscious of the step you are taking now just a little few steps here in the garden picking up the phone your hand reaches out drops, grasps the phone and then it goes to your ear and putting it down little so your the thingness of life becomes interspersed with spaciousness and you get absorbed by the thingness if you don't bring space in so you bring the space into the thingness of life otherwise it's one thing after another and there's never any time for meditation I can't even think of meditation well, bring it into the very thingness so that the thingness doesn't take over

[Speaker 2] (2:39:51 - 2:45:45)

Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji

[Speaker 1] (2:46:13 - 4:12:59)

Not quite as stormy as on last day and on the last night to the last time we were here, and nevertheless, it's quite windy today. Sweeping away the accumulated stuff of thousands of years of conditioning.

What was a nice idea to start with? Thinking. And worked for quite a while.

It made life more interesting. And then gradually, it got out of hand or became dysfunctional because it approached or is approaching the end of its lifespan, evolutionary stage of being identified with thinking. Always critical when an evolutionary movement comes to an end, and something new is about to come out of the seeming collapse of the old.

Always a critical moment because you never know whether the new is coming. Well, it seems to be coming here. It is coming here.

It's always a critical moment, and just as those of you who saw the butterfly, butterflies in the, well, you see them flying around here, but in the, where the waterfall is, they have a whole house full of butterflies, and so many are hatching, and some are still waiting. Well, they're not waiting. They're just there.

Transformation is coming. The butterfly becomes a caterpillar, and then the transformation happens. And I've said it before, the caterpillar at some point becomes dysfunctional before it becomes a butterfly because it's the end of its lifespan in that form, just as humanity has become dysfunctional in many ways because this is the end of something.

Nothing new is coming. The caterpillar is not going to go much further. That seems, it must be apparent to everybody.

If there's no change, what new is there going to come out of that state of consciousness? So the new tends to arise not within the structures that were created by the old consciousness, although here and there it happens too, but it comes outside. So the new consciousness arises not within, not usually out of the organized religion, although there are some, like a few exceptions, some churches have a certain openness, and it can arise there too, but as a whole, the new is not arising out of the existing structures that are mostly reflections of the egoic consciousness.

So you don't find anything truly new to a transformational arising in the universities. They get bogged down in further and further analysis, cutting things up into further, smaller and smaller pieces of mind knowledge. Universities, the established traditions of writing, there's no spiritual writing.

People don't know how to classify it in some old bookstores. I remember in England, that was 20 years ago, in the main academic bookstore, it was a huge place in Cambridge. They had a little section where you could find things like the course in miracles, and other works to do with the changing consciousness.

And they just didn't know how to label that section. It didn't fit into anything they knew. So they labeled it phenomena.

Ha ha ha. Ha ha ha. And many people living in this world don't quite know where they belong and fit in anymore.

Before it was relatively comfortable. All the structures were rigid and established. Everybody knew where they belonged.

And now it's, where do I belong? Because the structures that are there don't seem to be that, it's not where I belong. So where do I fit in?

And many people feel they're misfits. Others are functioning within the established structures and bring the new consciousness in from within. They are underground.

They are undermining the existing order, which isn't really an order. It's something that has become dead. They are undermining it from within.

That's good too. I'd like to look briefly at just a few more questions. Because almost every question concerns everybody.

I'll start with my favorite here. I no longer have any questions. Thank you.

Ha ha ha. Ha ha ha. Ha ha ha.

Ha ha ha. Ha ha ha. Ha ha ha.

Ha ha ha. Ha ha ha. It is coming more naturally to see all else arising from one without mind or position.

The clearer this knowing, the stronger the fight I seem to be exerting. It is like my ego wants credit for witnessing it all instead of being one with it all. Ego wrestling ego.

Knowing the futility of this does not help. The process is getting very tricky. Ego witnessing ego, witnessing messy business.

Ha ha ha. Any words of advice in deepest gratitude for speaking truth? Thank you.

It's true that sometimes the ego, which is no more than a thought that you identify with, the ego is no more than a thought that you identify with. Then it becomes an egoic thought and becomes part of ego. When you recognize a thought as a thought, it's only a thought and it's not problematic.

Thought becomes problematic when you become it or it becomes you or it pretends to be you and it's ego. So yes, the thought may come in and say, I'm so present or look, now I'm really there. That's possible.

And that's not, doesn't matter that much if you recognize it as a thought, no more. Now, this is important not to have a right relationship to your thoughts, a relationship as if you were relating to a little child. Comes up with all kinds of nonsense and occasionally the child says very wise things that can happen too.

And yet it's just a thought and it comes and the mind goes, listen, okay. You pat your mind on the head. Now thought wants to be taken seriously, but as you may remember on probably our first day here or may have been, or maybe it was another retreat, I don't remember.

We said one of the things to remember here as a kind of mantra or rather as a kind of pointer is don't take your thoughts too seriously. They like to be regarded as a problem because the more you regard your thoughts as the problem, the more thoughts is, the more thought is generated. So if thought can pretend that you are faced with a problematic situation, I just can't get beyond my ego.

I don't know what's going on left. Then that generates more thought and more thought. The ego is no more than that, the unobserved mind.

That's all. So always bring back when you think, just the ego is getting hold of me again. I don't know how to get rid of it.

Just a moment. Where's this moment? What about this moment?

It's the, we've already pointed, awakening into this moment, back into this moment. What is the reality of, what's the problem? What's the problem?

Well, my ego is playing up. Well, where is that? What's the problem?

Take one conscious breath, one conscious look, conscious listening, perhaps even some other senses, conscious being in the body. That's the present moment. That's the beginning of it.

And then it's, there's a depth. There is no problem except the movement of thought. So be in the body, be in the senses, be in the breath, and then allow, if there's any thought left, allow it to play.

Don't show too much interest. The thought, look, I matter, I'm so important. And then, no, you don't need to show that interest.

It's a thought, that's it. That's it. I'm always back, what's here now?

What's the present moment? And then first you come to the form of the present moment, sense perceptions, breathing. And then you begin to go beyond form and you go into the inner body because it's the entry point into the formless.

And then the inner body and presence merge as one. And then you're present with every cell of the body. And there's a field of spacious aliveness underneath all the forms in which there's no problem ever.

And that's the present moment, the direct present, the present moment in its essence, the formless now. And then there must be a manifestation of now which includes your thoughts. Always come, look for the now.

Look for the now. When you think there's a problem, look for the now. If there is a problem in the now, it's not a problem, it's a situation that you need to deal with.

And if you face it, the ability to deal with it, the power to deal with it is there. It comes out of presence. If it's a true situation or a challenge now, look at it, face it and say, what do I have to do, what action is needed?

And then you become still and then action arises. You might not even ask the question. The action arises, may arise spontaneously.

So there are no problems. They're all mind manufactured. Challenges, yes.

Challenges can only be in the now. If there's a situation that their mind carries around, it's not here now. When the time comes, you deal with it.

Or maybe you have to think about something now, but that's not a problem. Which flight am I going to catch to go home or something like that? That's good, that's practical, just right.

And that you think about it and then it's done. Get out of problem, there is no problem and you are not problematic. Now that's very important because the ego loves to, especially as presence arises, the ego loves to pretend that you are a problem to yourself and you can get stuck in that for years.

Something that I need to work out, but you don't really need to work out, just presence cuts through rather than works out. Work, you know, there was this knot in ancient Greece, the Gordian knot. Somebody had tied a big piece of string, it seems, into a huge knot and nobody could undo the knot.

That was thousands of years ago. And there was a prophecy that whoever would undo the knot would become the most powerful person on the planet, something like that. So everybody tried, they all went to the knot, which was too complicated.

And then a young man came and he looked at the knot and he drew his sword and he cut through. And they say he became Alexander the Great or something like that. And he conquered most of the known planet.

That's the sword, to undo, yes, but not through trying to work out the complicated me, cut through the sword of presence. So the knot of you is undone. And every ego is a knot.

The mind has tied itself into a knot. And then energy cannot flow very well through a knot. If you take a tube and you tie it into a knot, the energy, this is why the ego is not an open channel for life because the energy finds it very hard to get through because each thought blocks it, the me thought, the future thought, I must have, I need, I want, I should, I should, I shouldn't.

Every thought blocks life, the full flow of life. And then that's reflected in the emotions that tie themselves into a knot. That's the pain body, life energy that is no longer flowing.

And so people who have strong egos, in other words, are very identified with mind and emotion, you can see them, they're walking knots, whatever the predominant energy of that particular manifestation of ego is, it could be. So cutting through, you are not a problem. Don't believe the mind when it tells you that you are a problem or even that you have a problem.

One conscious breath, let's see if you can bring it down. Take one conscious breath, bring it back to, ah, where am I? Oh, oh, oh, I'm alive.

I have experienced the presence now without ego during a 24 hour period of time. However, when I awoke after a night's sleep, the extreme sense of presence was gone. I achieved this state by asking myself the question, who am I and who is the I that asks the questions?

The same question and contemplation does not work anymore. And the brief moments of the now are so short. Am I stuck in comparing?

The problem is that I know what I'm not experiencing. Do you go in and out of the now or are you always present? First part of the question.

It sometimes happens either through a shock, danger, great loss, or sitting in a retreat that in some people there's a sudden eruption of presence and they're in amazement to suddenly, ah. And usually it doesn't stay. Occasionally it does, but it's rare.

Usually that eruption is like a flash and then it dies down. And then after that, you still get glimpses as pointed out. But, and then the mind comes in very strongly and says, I want that back.

And the mind says, I lost it. Or it says, when is it going to come back? How is it going to come back?

It is, it's not uncommon for something like this to happen, the sudden eruption of intense presence. And it's not uncommon for it also to subside after a while. And then what you're left with is the seemingly insignificant present moment.

And you have to go back to that. You have to go back to the seemingly little insignificant this. And then presence comes again, but this time in a different way.

Whereas before it came like, presence comes gradually creeping up from behind, so to speak, from the background. At first it's, you don't know, hardly there. And then there's a, there's a, from the background, you send something in the background, which is yourself, which is called the conscious you, the consciousness that you are, the unconditioned stillness in the first, you hardly notice anything.

It's just the present moment. It's fine. So presence comes more slowly, seeps in gradually, no longer drastically like a flash of lightning.

That can be a prelude to a more permanent emergence of presence. And then gradually there's the background. You are there as the background piece.

At first, a distant background piece. And then gradually the sense of background piece becomes stronger. And so that's a, and then it's, that tends to be a more lasting emergence of presence.

And the flashes are beautiful. They're interesting when they come. And even there, as it emerges, there may even be a flash again of intense presence.

And then it, and then it becomes a permanent, not an experience, because presence is the very foundation of all experience. So presence sometimes is seen as if it were an experience. For example, what happened to you, one could consider that as an experience, but it isn't really, because what came in was the very background of all experience.

It came in so strongly that it almost obliterated the foreground. And that happens to some people. And to one, occasionally it happens, it comes and never goes away.

And that's not even the greatest thing because it could complicate your external existence when it comes so suddenly as it did to Ramana Maharshi, who kind of, he was just lying on his bed and experiencing, so to speak, his own death. He had disidentified from form completely when he was 17 years old. And then it took hold of him and he left.

He took a train to some distant temple and he sat down by the temple or later in a cave and didn't want to move anymore. The sense of presence was so overwhelming, the being, he disappeared in the being of presence. And for years, he said people had to put food in his mouth.

And then it took years to adjust so that he could function again, start eating. And after years, start speaking. He was not given medication because he was lucky enough to live in India.

And that happens to people in the West, okay? It's not recognized. Everybody would say this is a symptom of a mental breakdown.

If you go to a doctor, unless you happen to find a conscious doctor, there are more, there are conscious, there are some doctors here who are bringing consciousness in so if you're lucky enough, yes, or a conscious psychiatrist. But often these, something like, if you could go with something like that, imagine what you wrote here, go to see your doctor about that. Unless he or she knows.

So don't try to repeat an experience. It wasn't an experience. It was something very powerful.

It gave you taste, a kind of satori. Satori doesn't last, but it's a taste. But what now comes is the gradual from behind.

The last part of the question, are you always present? Do you go in and out of the now? No, the now remains, presence remains.

The only variation is the intensity of it. It's sometimes in the background as a peace, a peaceful field in the background of all experience. And sometimes it comes more strongly.

There's the, it's really life is a play between the background and the foreground. The foreground is what happens. Any happening, including thoughts and events and sense perceptions, anything to do with form is the foreground of life where things take place.

But how is it possible for these things to take place? How is it possible for these things to be? What is the light in which these things appear?

What in what light do they, what is it that gives them life? What is the life that underlies it all? That is the background.

That is essentially who you are in your formless dimension. And knowing it, that frees you from being trapped in the foreground of your life, which is a dreadful fate because then you're trapped in what happens or doesn't happen, continuously dependent on events and people and what things, what these people say and what they do and what happens or doesn't happen, needing, wanting, all that is trapped in the foreground. So the background is the light, this in which it all appears.

But so to speak, you could have, I gave the image already of a film projector. There you have the film. Behind the film is the light.

The light doesn't change. The film is there and it's only through the light that the film comes to life. Then you see all these figures being projected, which are all different ways in which the light is obscured.

That's what you are as the form. You're a way in which God is obscured, every form. Now, if you identify with only that, then that's a very, very limited view of who you are.

Now, if the figures that are being projected as actors, whatever they do on the screen, they go through drama because usually a film is to do with interesting things. And so that they go through the motions. And they repeat the same.

You run the same film again and it's like humans. And now imagine that a character in that one of the projected images becoming self-aware. While all that happens, suddenly, who am I?

And that question would draw him or her back to the origin. I'm no more than the light, a projection of that light. The essence of me is light.

So the character would suddenly, would perhaps for a while continue to play, but no. And then the kind of play would also change because he would no longer play out the old. There would be something new.

The play would become maybe less interesting, but deeper, more beautiful, more harmonious with an enormous depth of aliveness to it. So presence is there. And sometimes presence can almost obliterate.

The background can come in as being, the sense of being can be so strong that it obliterates almost the foreground, sense that shapes become so events. Everything in form is almost so tiny because it feels like, and I'm talking about this so that when it happens to you and I know too many, it's already happening. It's like there's a, you are a sphere.

I may have said that already. You are a sphere, a ball, and you sense the innermost essence of that sphere. And everything else in your life is the surface of that sphere, the wave movement on the surface of being.

All events, all happenings, all sense perceptions, all thoughts, all emotions, the wave movement. So sometimes your consciousness goes more into the form without losing awareness of the center within the still. And at other times it may shift more towards the being itself and then the forms look quite irrelevant.

So there's a shift. Sometimes certain situations bring out more presence. I mentioned if you're facing a critical situation, you would either fall into complete identification with old reactions or you would become more intensely present.

Now that there's quite a considerable degree of presence in you, it is likely that any challenge will pull you into a greater presence rather than pull you back into unconsciousness, which would be the normal thing that a challenge does to a human being. They become more, they're pulled into unconsciousness. The fear comes, the egoic fear and so on.

Facing a person with a heavy pain body, facing a person with a strong ego, also like the lady I described yesterday, you would become suddenly feel intense presence because you have to. The ego otherwise would pull you into identification. The pain body would pull some emotion out of you, would push some button somewhere.

As this lady said, I know exactly how people function. I can look through them. And of course, she also knows their buttons, which the pain body in her knows exactly what the right thing to say to get a response of emotional reaction.

And it can then feed and amplify it and feed it back to them and then get it back. So sometimes you face humans and when you look into their eyes, what you see is their being, their liveness is being obscured more than usual by heavy emotion, an emotional entity that wants something from you. It might attack you.

It might whatever, who knows what it wants, but it wants a reaction. And it's just waiting for a reaction. Sometimes you meet people in the street with heavy, I call them walking pain bodies.

And they're just waiting for an excuse to get angry at you. And when you look into their eyes, you have to be the sort of presence and then miracles are possible. Then it can happen.

And I have experienced that quite a few times that the sort of presence, even in a heavy pain body can cut through, cuts into the, through the pain body and you reach the essence of that person. And for a moment, the pain body subsides and there's a true communion, a true meeting. And then you walk away and probably the pain body will come back.

But that person will have experienced something that they won't forget. They have touched something that perhaps they hadn't touched before within something true. And they might mistakenly associate that with you as a person.

They might think you did something to them. They might, the ego might even, the ego, the suspicious ego might even think that he must have done some magic tricks on me. I don't know what he did, but I can't trust him.

I can't trust him. There's one long one and I'll have the short one first. How can we concentrate to lessen the all around the planet fear?

The plan, the fear all around the planet, almost paranoid that has arisen since

September 11. How can we concentrate to lessen the fear? Almost paranoic, collective fear.

Better not to ask how you can lessen the fear, but how not to be drawn into it because you lessen it by not feeding it, by not contributing to it. So many things that you watch on TV and so on, and in the media are produced by the egoic mind which lives with continuous underlying fear. And really this event has brought it out more, brought it out more to the surface, the collective egoic fear.

So not to be drawn into it. It's the fear of death, but really it's only the fear of death of the ego. So when you listen to the media, when you listen to the politicians, you listen to the reporters or whatever, whoever they are on TV, radio, read the papers, don't, you have to be as conscious there as you are when your mind goes because it's no more than the collective aspect of mind.

It's somebody else's mind. And you have to be present while you listen to the news, as present as when you listen to your own thoughts. You have to be there as the witness of the human mind, particularly when you watch television and realize that there's the human mind in its egoic state and it goes.

It says why you should be fearful. It tells you why you should be fearful. I saw a nice science fiction episode on TV last year.

They visit some other planet and the people who live there have no technical gadgets. They live totally simply in little huts. And then there's some evil race that's threatening to come to this planet and invade the planet.

And the people from us want to save these seemingly innocent people who have nothing. And the main character of the earth people is talking to one of the elders of the people. They have this long hair and talk very little and have the ability to be invisible when they want to.

But he says, these evil people are coming and they're coming to get you. We must, you have to do something. We can help you.

Let us help you. And the elder says, we are not afraid. And the earth character says, then be afraid.

And then towards the end of it, episode three, finally they give up and say, we can't help these people. What do we do? They'll be destroyed.

Okay, you go ahead, they'll destroy you. Okay, we have to go now. And then finally the elder, the end starts to leave earth people, look up there and she goes.

And suddenly they look up in the sky and they see a kind of a shimmering city of light floating in the sky, which is usually invisible. And suddenly the earth people realize that these people are a hundred times more advanced, not only than the earth people, but also more than these technologically extremely advanced evil ones. And they function, they have no ego whatsoever.

And of course, no fear whatsoever. And because they have no ego, it's easy for them to be invisible. And the entire civilization is invisible to the grosser energy vibration.

But of course the punchline is in the film is be afraid. So the ego wants you to be afraid. It lives on that, the ego itself means a sense of separation.

The otherness of others needs to be emphasized by the ego. The fact others want to do something to me. That's what the ego lives by because that's creates a separation between me and the others, the other or the others.

It always emphasizes the otherness and then fear arises at the otherness. In ancient, in primitive villages where people have had little contact with the outside world, usually they're afraid of strangers. That's also already even, they also have ego.

There's the fear, what are they going to do? Anybody who looks different, speaks differently, behaves differently, look through the human mind. When you watch TV, be present, observe what's behind what they say.

Don't get drawn into the detail. What are the assumptions behind what they say, which are all ego-based, unconscious mind patterns. So not to be drawn into it, to be there as a witness of the TV news.

So you don't watch the TV news like, oh no, you have to be the background to the TV news as you are the background to your mind. And then you don't feed the collective, that's enough. That is your contribution to not feeding that level of unconsciousness on the planet.

And more and more people realize that, then it won't grow anymore. It needs unconsciousness. Yes, paranoia is the right word here.

Paranoia means everybody's, the enemy is everywhere. It's an interpretation of the other as the enemy, is paranoia. What does he want, what do they want?

What are they plotting? And it's everywhere, you're going to companies, big corporations, everybody's afraid of everybody else, plotting against us, we little groups here, little groups there. So watching TV, especially the news is good spiritual practice.

And it might even be good even for enough people to watch the news from that state. Influences, because your inner state is connected to every other human. Humans are connected at the level beyond form to each other, of course.

And so your inner state influences, even if you don't speak or meet others, it has an influence, it strengthens that in others. When you enter fear, the fear of the whole of humanity enters you and strengthens your fear. You link in, you tune into the fear of the entire collective on the planet.

And when you go beyond, presence arises also, you link into each other human who is present. And that's the beauty of it. There's an enormous strengthening through that.

So whenever you watch the news, just sit there as a presence. And then more and more others will also sit there. And eventually the news changes.

That comes later, that's the outermost manifestation. The outermost manifestation is there. Politicians are also the outermost.

They come, they'll be the last to change, except for occasional miracles, they are possible too. This is long, but it's relevant, relevant. Two days ago, I had a massage and I relaxed so much that something new to me happened.

I became a kind of presence and I experienced my thoughts only as disappearing shadows, like a big bang in reverse. There was nothing for them to hold onto. I felt like I was dying, somehow slipping away.

Then yesterday during my echo adventure, I fell out of my raft in the river. The water was rushing into my mouth and nose. I got very dizzy and was carried into some rocks, still more water inside of me and everyone seemed so far away.

I thought I was dying there in this river. I never saw before. I cried later, I cried after my roommate fell asleep.

People were so kind to me. I feel like death is so close that I'm afraid suddenly. My chest hurts.

I'm still crying today, thank you. Yes, the vital, the two incredible initiations you had. One, the massage when the mind made structures subsided and that was a kind of death.

And then a brush with death on the river, physical death. And you're right, what we say here, death is so close and that's true. And it's good to remember that death is close, very close.

Because death is actually, you look at it from the perspective of form or the foreground, what looks like death. When you say death is close and I'm afraid of it, you're looking at death from the perspective of the foreground. From the perspective of the background, death is life.

So here you can see death, ooh, I'm afraid of what? Of life, the one life, timeless, eternal, myself. Just shift, be the background, that's death, there's death.

The formless, death is no more than the transition between form, from form to formless. And it's beautiful. So it's a great, life is miraculously arranged it in such a way that you had two wonderful encounters with the reality of yourself.

To reverse what the character in the TV film said, don't be afraid, there's nothing to fear. But don't try to explain, to convince yourself that there's nothing, there's nothing to fear. I shouldn't be afraid.

Go deeper where you realize that there's nothing to fear. Become still, there's nothing to fear. Because there's no death, it's only a perspective.

Please address recognizing egoic thought from action and words which arise out of presence. For example, write a book, move to the West Coast of North America, and so on. How do you know where something comes from?

How to recognize egoic thought from something? Now, in a way, the answer is already in the question, as is often the case. How to recognize egoic thought, how to tell the difference between egoic thought from action and words which arise out of presence.

Egoic, the answer lies in the word thought. The ego consists of thought, and it's a thought that arises. It may be a strong thought, it may be an obsessive thought.

It comes again, and again, and again. It may be a fleeting thought. One day you think, this is what I have to do, and then the next day you think, oh, maybe that's not it.

So it could be, or it's an obsessive thought that gets hold somewhere in a corner of your mind, like an old record that's stuck, and it plays it again. You should be, yeah, you should, yeah, yeah, yeah. How to, so you recognize it because what arises out of presence, the outer manifestation of that may also be a thought, but there is a deep inner knowing, a non-conceptual knowing that is not thought.

So the energy behind it is very strong, and it's always a peaceful kind of energy. It's not, it's never jarred. It's not turbulent in the emotional sense.

There's a powerful knowing, a realization comes. There's no question about it. And then the outer manifestation, oh, that's it.

And you can't argue with that. It's, you know it. So it's direct and immediate knowing that tells you the difference.

It's good always to just feel what's the feeling quality. Is it just a thought in my head, or is there a deeper power underneath it out of which the thought comes, a peaceful, silent power out of which that thought comes? That's presence.

And action also, action can come out of that. And action that comes out of ego is either is premeditated, wants to achieve something through it, is some kind of agenda, wants to enhance or protect the me. So that's, if in doubt, it's probably just an egoic thought.

But time helps in that sense, just wait, because thoughts come and go, and they wait and see. The next morning you may have a different thought, but that means before there wasn't that feeling quality behind it anyway. So that's to watch out for, what's the power out of which the thought comes.

It usually, it feels good. It feels just right. And then the thought, there's a rightness, the rightness to it, yes.

And the energy that comes, it is deeper than emotion. It may touch on an emotion also, because everything is connected. It may touch an emotion, but it is deeper than emotion, the rightness of that, of that, yes, that's it.

Let's just take, as you know, questions go on and on. But I must tell you, I've never thrown away a single question that I have received on retreats. I have a collection, huge amount of questions on pieces of paper.

And when I take them out, they're all, most of them are great. Maybe another book will arise, a book of questions and answers. Not that you will need that anymore, but there may be some others.

Don't wait for another book, you don't need that. What kind of language can I use to help my child understand presence, the brain, body, and thought? As far as presence is concerned, the language is not very important to help understand your child.

May even be completely unnecessary. To help your child, your child doesn't really need to understand presence. Your child needs to see what presence is for him or herself by being with you and by recognizing that he or herself has that also, has already been born with that ability that just becomes obscured in our civilization at a very early age.

Your presence teaches the child to be present. That's the teacher. Words are not really required.

You don't need to tell your child, look at me now, that's called presence. So the state of consciousness that you are in, in the home environment teaches presence and the child absorbs that and something within the child responds to that. And that will counteract the madness of the world in which the child probably still finds him or herself.

Maybe if the child is lucky, maybe you go, the child is at a school that's more enlightened than the normal school. That's possible. And even there, you cannot be in this world and not come into contact with madness.

Even if the child is relatively protected, the madness is there. So it comes, you have to all the, you have to counteract all the massive influence of the mad egoic collective mind, the media, the television, the video games, without making the child feel that the child is missing out on something. No TV here.

In some places, cases that may work. There will come a point when the child feels there's something mysterious there called TV and I need to know what it is. But your presence is the teacher.

The pain body is somewhat different. The pain body may, and I've spoken that, I've addressed it a few times already in groups, and just say briefly now, the pain body, which the child will also have, either greater or lesser. Some children come into this world with strong pain bodies, others relatively weak.

Some develop this pain body very quickly, especially if they live in a very unconscious environment, which is not the case with your child because you are here. So the child will have a pain body, strong or not so strong, but the child will have, and at times the pain body will come, and it comes when something minor provokes this very strong emotional reaction of pain. Withdrawal, complete withdrawal, screaming and weeping, throwing things, throwing themselves on the floor, hysterical fits in some cases, or long weeping attacks.

Sometimes some babies you can already recognize, strong pain body. Ah! And you can feel when you listen to the crying of a baby, and you've given the baby everything and it's still crying.

Some babies cry because they want the attention, and the moment you give attention, they stop. It's better than to keep the child close as they do in other ancient civilizations. The child stays close to the mother's body for a long time.

That's an enormous help. The separation from the mother's body at birth is the most dreadful thing, that immediately the pain body grows because at first the baby was one with the mother, and then the people, they take the child away and put him somewhere else. Oh, dreadful!

So, but perhaps slowly we are learning the importance of that, of the child retaining contact with the body of the mother. And then that's already, that will lessen the development of the pain body because then it's a gradual separation from. So, if your child has a heavy pain body, it doesn't mean the child is spiritually less advanced.

Many spiritually extremely advanced humans have heavy pain bodies. That's their teacher. It all works.

If I hadn't have a heavy pain body, I wouldn't be sitting here. If you didn't have or had not had a heavy pain body, some of you, you would not be here. So the child will have pain body attacks, and if it's a heavy pain body, then they're very, very noticeable and maybe frequent.

Yes, then words can be helpful, but presence also comes first for you to stay present while it happens. Because even the child's pain body wants you to draw you into a reaction. At that moment, each pain body wants more pain.

So the child's pain body, when it is active and playing up, it wants any form of pain, even physical punishment. It would want it, yes, more pain, more. And some very unconscious parents punish the child physically then because they cannot resist the pull of the, emotional pull of the pain body.

They are not conscious enough to see that in themselves. And their own pain body awakens and complete unconsciousness. So it's for you to stay present, not being drawn into the drama, to see it, to recognize it, that's the pain body.

That's all you need. You can't say much at that point. The next day, a few hours later, or the next day, or two days later, then it's the time when the child is relatively present.

Then you can talk, what happened the other day? What did that feel like? When does it, what was that thing that came over you?

I'm just suggesting the questions will come from you out of your presence. What was that thing, what is it came over you yesterday when you threw yourself on the floor and couldn't stop, wouldn't stop screaming? How did it all start?

What does it feel like in you? Does that thing have a name? That's one, it's a temporary way of stepping out of identification with it.

If you ask, does it have a name? And then the child might say, no, it doesn't have a name. And then you could ask, if it had a name, what would be its name?

Oh, does it, what does it, does it have a color or no? If it had a color, what color would it be? And so gradually the child begins, develops the ability to observe, to step out.

And then, so you do it afterwards. Next time it happens again, you can just point out when you just, as it starts, you say, is it coming back? Is that, by then it might have a name or a color.

Is it coming back? And then in the middle of it, you can say, there it is. Now the child probably won't hear you because the pain body is there and it will scream even more when you say, there it is.

So you have to say it gently, but something behind the pain body will be hearing that. There will be a small amount of presence even while the pain body's going on. And then after it's subsided again, you again let some time pass.

And then you say, it was again, and point out if you still have a pain body, do you remember what happened to me last week when I started shouting at you or at mom or at dad? That was my thing and same thing in me. And so gradually the child learns to be present while it happens.

And that means the pain body is not being added to, it's not deriving more food from, it's not feeding on anything anymore. So that's a beautiful way and children will very quickly learn to observe it. At first they cannot, they can't be there while it happens, but after a little while, you notice there's a growing awareness in the background while the pain body happens.

And then that's a gradual coming to an end, a gradual shift will then happen. The pain body is no longer renewing itself and it's gradually becoming transmuted. And that's beautiful.

So that's the way in which presence itself requires no words. Pain body requires a few pointers, but even their presence is the prerequisite for dealing with the pain body in yourself or in others. The world of form.

Yes, the world of form. Another helpful thing is just one more, not to let the child slip away into the, at an early age into the conceptual realm and believing totally in words and concepts. I've said that before, I'll just mention it briefly.

There comes a time when the child demands to be fed words and concepts. What's that? Those are the questions.

What's that? What's that? At that stage, they want concepts, words.

They want the names of things. What's that? And what's that?

At some later point, other questions come. Why? The questions that adults, and sometimes they're very interesting questions that the adults stopped asking themselves those questions a long time ago.

And when the child asked why, the son said, I don't know, forgot to ask that question. But let's stay for a moment with what's that. That's a tree.

That's a flower. That's a car. That's this table.

Names of things. Instead, don't say that is, say that's called. Because if you say that is, the child will confuse the word or the concept with the reality, which is infinitely deeper.

It loses touch with the actual direct experience of reality. And as it accumulates words and concepts, it begins to live, it begins to believe that when it says this is a tree, that it actually, that's all there is to know about the tree. And later, it might go to biology class, and then you get a few more names to attach to the things that happen to the tree or are in the tree, or the names of different trees.

And then that's it. Immediately, the depths of that tree recedes and what is replaced by a dead, a relatively dead thought form, tree. And so, that's how language and concepts deaden the aliveness.

So, when you teach a child language, the child should stay in touch with the actual thing. So, you say it is called, not it is, and encourage the child to continue to look, look at it there, to continue to touch, to feel, to look, to listen, to show him, look there, touch, look, so that it doesn't always, it's not obscured, everything is obscured with words and concepts. Stay with the reality, and the child also stays with the now, here, there, look, there.

Listen, look, so that some of the direct experience remains for the child, so that, because we had to go through the way that most of us, we were deadened by concepts and then later had to break out, or the world of concepts got just, life shook it so much that it started to crumble a bit and we could start living again. So, all the, whatever you teach the child is always, see, there's always more beyond the word, so that the child knows that, there's always more beyond the word, the reality beyond the word. Your name, you can say, the name you are, that's the name we've given you, John.

You are not John, that's the name that you have, that we chose for you. That's not, you are not your name, it's just a name. The world of form, which could also be called existence, because existence is anything that stands out, X means out, stands, from Latin, stand, standing existence is the world of form, and it stands out as a thought, as an emotion, as something.

The world, the existence is about to change for you as it always does, because this form is coming to an end. The being, which is timeless underneath existence, being, existence. Existence flows out of being.

Being, however, remains untouched. It's timeless, it's who you are, essentially. That was the essence of our gathering, and it cannot leave you, because it's one with who you are.

This form was only an opening, an opening for you to get a reflection of your essential reality, no more. So that's why I said, when you took the photos, yes, it was a nice window, relatively insignificant window frame, but nice not because of the frame, there's nothing special to the frame. It's the light that comes through the window.

It's not the, so don't get attached to any window frame. It's essentially being with yourself. That's why you're here, not with me as this form.

It's essentially, you are here to be with yourself, because we have been, the world has gone, as A Course in Miracles says, it has taken time to misguide you so completely. The world has gone such a strange ways that, yes, it seems strange that you had to travel to be with yourself. But, miraculously, it worked.

And then, sooner time comes, maybe already here, well, there's no need to travel to be with yourself. And yet, if that is what you enjoy, if you get an even stronger deepening of yourself when you see it and you sense the reflection through some other window frame, that's fine too. Then you can travel, not that you need it anymore.

You don't need it, because you're already one with yourself and you can feel yourself. And that doesn't change. So what changes is the periphery of your life, the stage setting.

You know, when they change the scene, we go from act one to act two, they move the furniture on stage, they create a new... So here you are as the consciousness. And then you see, suddenly, the whole thing, Pura Vida, disappears.

Somebody pushes it aside. And then you see there's an aeroplane seat and somebody puts some plastic food in front of you. And then come familiar surroundings.

Oh, and a little doubt in the head, did that actually happen? But you can feel something here that confirms that yes, something did happen, but not really. The essence of that which happened was not in time because it's still here now.

And then life may change the stage setting and many suddenly could happen again in more drastic ways. Suddenly, oh, you can move here, move there, or you stay where you are. It's the periphery.

Whatever happens is the periphery and you can participate in it. You're not just a passive observer of the periphery because you also act upon the periphery. But you act from, the more you act from here, from being in touch with the background and the intelligence and the power of that flows into the periphery, the foreground, then that is called, in Buddhism, right action.

So you're more likely to act, to do the right thing, knowing that ultimately you cannot do the wrong thing because you can only learn. And as we said the other day, every choice will eventually take you to the same place, which is yourself, the awakened you. Some choices just go round and round and request.

Tips about surrendering. Surrendering is so simple, but the mind doesn't know that. It says it's the hardest thing to do, to surrender.

Yes, it's true that it goes against the habit patterns of the mind. The habit patterns of the mind are to live in resistance. Just little pointers are enough, allowing.

Allowing this moment. Surrendering only concerns this moment. That's something, you do not surrender to a life situation.

You cannot surrender, it's pointless and even counterproductive to say, I might as well accept that I'm a poor little so-and-so, that I have failed. I might as well accept that nobody loves me. I might as well accept that I'm going to be lonely for the rest of my life.

I might as well accept that I live in this little hole and I'm not going to get out of it. I might as well accept that I'm stuck in my big lifeless mansion and nobody comes to see me anymore and all the people come just want my money. I might as, and so on, there's so many life stories.

You do not surrender to a life situation because a life situation exists in time. All you surrender to is this moment. So you have to single out this moment out of the life situation.

It's like cutting the segment of now out of your life situation. So I gave the example before, you sit in prison. Your life situation is that you did something or maybe you didn't even do it, it's even worse.

They put you in and you were innocent. You did or did not do something, but the fact is that they gave you 25 years and you've been in for 10 already. Then you have another 15 to go.

That's your life situation. And then you say, I might as well accept that my life has really been destroyed. There's not much, when I get out, I'll be too old to do anything.

I made some dreadful mistakes or the world did something dreadful to me and I might as well accept that it's all come to an end and a pointless existence. No, that's a story. That's a sense of self based on a story.

You have to, out of the story, you cut out the segment that was called now. And now what do you end up with then? You end up with breathing, looking, whatever the perception is there, there's a cell, chair, bed, if you have one, chamber, pot, whatever it is.

Or more, maybe you have to share the cell as some of you know, the owner of this place spent some years in one of the worst prisons in Florida and that's where he woke up, sharing a cell with 25 or 30 violent men who were listening to loud music all the time. There was no air conditioning, almost no air coming in through the little windows. The cell was meant for six or seven people and there he was stuck, hell on earth.

And then at some point he was left with the present moment because if he left the present moment, it was dreadful. Just this cut out, there's just what arises at this moment, the noise, the heat, discomfort, but it's not even discomfort is already the beginning of a story, it's just what you feel. This is what I feel.

That the uncertainty of we might not wake up the next morning because often people would, inmates would kill other inmates, which is one other way of life removing future from you. They had taken away all his possessions, threatened to put his child in a home, nothing left and then surrender happened, but only there was just this cutting out, what is the reality of this moment? Or whatever condition arises at this moment, that I say yes to because I cannot do otherwise.

And that is surrender. You take any, you get out of, cut out of your life situation, the segment that is now. Then you, first you have the form of now.

The moment you say, you bring a total yes to the form of now because you see the absurdity, the madness of denying it, how it creates pain, how it creates suffering, how it strengthens the false me that lives on suffering. The moment you see that, that the only sane way to live, even in the midst of insanity, because it's up to you to break the insanity. You can't wait for the world to become sane, the world around you.

I'm just, people are so unconscious. I'm just complaining about how unconscious other people are. And even spiritual people, they're just talking about, they're all unconscious.

I just, it's all, what about you? Why, what are you complaining? Who is it in you that's complaining?

What's wrong with this moment? Go in here now. This is what is.

A yes, an uncompromising yes because everything else is futile and insane, creates suffering. That's the end to ego. It cannot survive anymore in the uncompromising yes.

It's a sword. Surrender has a passive aspect and the active aspect. The passive aspect is I allow this moment to be as it is.

And if there's a gesture that goes with that, it's your hands in the same way that some female deities, it embodies the essence of the power of the female, Virgin Mary, Kuan Yin, the allowing, embracing what is, embraces. I allow this moment to be as it is. The other aspect of surrender is the sword.

And they both, in a way, it seems almost like a contradiction. In order to allow, you also need the sword. This is what is, and the sword is the uncompromising yes to what is.

So the surrender is both masculine and feminine in one. And then that's the form of this moment is no longer judged, is no longer complained about. The form that this moment takes is as it is.

That's the sword and you embrace it. It always is as it is already. And with that unconditional yes, something opens up within that is deeper than the form.

You have gone through the form, not by fighting it, but by surrendering to it. What looked like a wall in front of you suddenly opens up. What looked like the greatest obstacle to your awakening becomes the opening for your awakening.

That's the miracle. That's always non-opposition, non-fighting. That is the secret of surrender.

And you don't need to wait until they put you in prison or you are in hospital or an earthquake destroys everything you have, although it may happen too. There is little surrender and big surrender. In ordinary life, what you practice is continuous little surrender.

And surrender, what is surrender, even surrender is temporary. It's a temporary device. Surrender is the shift from no, an inner no, to an inner yes.

Then you may have to do that many times during the day. All the little surrenders, all the little things that happen. There's a little, shouldn't be, I don't want to be here, they shouldn't do that.

So many times, little surrender. And then the more that is practiced, the more surrender becomes your normal state. When surrender is your normal state, it's not surrender anymore, because surrender is only the shift.

You don't even have to think about surrender anymore. It is natural then for you to be in alignment with what is. It's a natural way to live.

And then somebody says surrender, I say, what is, what's surrender? Then even surrender disappears. It's a temporary thing because it's a shift.

Yes to no, it's that surrender. But for a while, that is something that you bring into your life, until surrender disappears. Then you live, one, in alignment, inner and outer are no longer in conflict.

And that surrender is no longer even spoken about. And there it is. That's the simplicity of it.

And that is all of us to surrender until we come even to the end of that, to the end of surrender, and live in natural alignment with life. That's all. Natural alignment, natural state, natural alignment.

Beautiful. Simple, not living like that is the difficult way. That's the simple way.

Although the mind will tell you no, no, it's the other way around. Simple. Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you.

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[Speaker 2] (0:20 - 1:09)

Sunrise, another new morning, we celebrate, we are the new man. Sunrise, over the mountain, spreading your light, over the land.

[Speaker 1] (1:32 - 12:58)

I trust that nobody is in a hurry to start. Welcome to our retreat, your retreat, from the world, especially the world in your head. Taking a step back, retreat.

You've come here, not alone, you've probably come with your mind. The mind has come with you. But be thankful because the mind allowed you to come here.

Some people didn't make it. A few always cancel at the last minute. I wonder if we should go now, I don't feel like going.

What's the point of another retreat? Whatever the mind can say. And then you completely believe in whatever thought the mind throws up.

Yeah, no, I'm not going. Or maybe I should. And with some of you it was touch and go whether you would make it or not.

I'm sure it happens. And yet, there was a stronger impulse in you to come than the resistance to coming here, which you may have felt also. Or which you may feel, even though this is not a long retreat, even though it's only three days.

But you may feel this resistance even while you're here. You may already have felt it. The mind, the thinking mind, the stream of conditioned thinking.

The egoic entity that arises out of that. Maybe looking for an opportunity to get your way from here. From time to time it may come up.

It may focus on something that is not absolutely perfect in your environment. In whatever situation you're in here. Because there's no such thing as a perfect situation.

Unless you live in complete surrender to what is, in which case every situation is perfect. But from the point of view of the mind, of course you can always find something that isn't right. That you could complain about.

And the mind says, this situation is not as it should be. This shouldn't be, that shouldn't be. Yes, but it is.

So you work with the limitations that are here, even here, at a retreat centre. Certain limitations, different ones from the ones you find at home. Less privacy perhaps, you can complain about that.

Not warm enough. This or that. The person you're sharing the room with is not according to the expectations of the mind.

Not spiritual enough. Or even worse, more spiritual than me. Oh, he must have been at it for a long time.

So, in any situation, you don't have to wait long before some kind of flaw in the external situation will come up. What looks like a flaw. Which means there's a clash between the expectations and demands of the mind and the simple suchness of this moment.

And some egos love to be personally offended when these things happen. So, how can, to me, it's a personal something. They should, why don't they?

He should, she should. She shouldn't, they shouldn't. The weather should be warmer by now.

So, you observe the talking entity in the head as you're here. Which occasionally may try to talk you out of being here. Either by physically removing you from here and you run away.

Or by taking you away from here by observing you. By absorbing all your attention into a mind stream. And physically you're then still here.

And mentally you're somewhere totally different. Past, future or dreamland. And you can see then that presence, there's no presence, there is an absence.

Now, of course, this retreat is not called the art of absence. But the art of presence. But absence may, does not require art.

Absence happens easy enough. So, you may detect occasionally yourself becoming absent. Which simply means your attention is no longer here.

It's being drawn into a stream of thinking. And usually can tell easily by looking at a person. Whether they are present or absent.

Of course, there are degrees of absence. You can be totally absent, which means you don't hear a single word. Or you can be absent in the sense that you are commenting on what you hear.

Which means you're not really fully absorbing. You are more interested in your own standpoint. Opinion or mental position.

Than in what is being said. And often you believe that your standpoint is of course the right one. There's identification with the mental position.

And that's a form of absence also. It's not total absence, but you're not really fully here. That may happen, for example, to people who've been, who are very knowledgeable about spiritual matters.

Have read lots of books. Which can become a hindrance too. If you carry them in here.

So if you feel the impulse to leave here. That's of course another way the mind may succeed in getting you away from here. If you can, don't just run off at the first thought that comes into your head.

With an accompanying emotion of disgust. Disgust. Back home to my privacy, my own bed.

Why did I leave that? I could be more peaceful there than can I be here. And the moment you get home you say, I should never have left.

[Speaker 2] (13:00 - 13:01)

I failed.

[Speaker 1] (13:08 - 54:02)

And the torture continues. But in all of you, something is arising. That is a relatively new thing.

At least the fact that it's arising on a wider scale now is a relatively new thing on the planet. And that is a state of consciousness that we could call presence. And to deepen that, that's why we're here.

To deepen the ability to be fully present with what is. The ability to respond to life. Which is now, always now.

Out of that state of presence. Not out of conditioned mind stuff. Conditioning of the mind.

Sometimes I use strange expressions like, you grow in presence. Presence grows in you. Presence arises more fully.

Excuse me, says a mind somewhere. You haven't defined presence yet. I don't understand what you mean.

In the course of the retreat, you may get a few definitions, a few pointers. Never enough to satisfy the mind, of course. Especially as regards presence.

Because through thought, you cannot possibly grasp what presence is. Because thought is always grasping at concepts. And then, oh, I've got it now.

I've defined it. There it is. I've given it form.

But presence is vast. It has no form. Thought, each thought is a thought form.

It's born and then it goes. Or it sticks around for a while. Or it takes over for a while.

Thoughts, every thought is a little entity, a little being, a temporary energetic entity. So I'm not right now defining presence because it is unnecessary. As you said here, presence deepens.

Because presence is, to a large extent, the unspoken dimension of this gathering. If you're here thinking that the words that are being spoken are the central point of our retreat, that would be an error. It's not the case.

The words are secondary. What else is there? And you may notice the mind is always waiting for the next word.

Or it's busy thinking about the last one. Is it possible to be here without thinking about the last word? And without waiting for the next one?

And without going to sleep? Because that's one way of not thinking about the last and not waiting for the next. But that's not the way here.

You can do that at home. You can fall below thinking at home easily. A cup of drinks, TV.

You're drifting towards unconsciousness gradually. And you may feel a little better than the torture of your mind. There too there is some relief from the daily torture of the mind, yes?

But that's not the way we are going. It's not the way back to the animal realm, the nature realm, the mineral realm. You can go all the way back.

And it's wonderful for the animal realm in itself. It has a perfection that the human realm does not have. Even the mineral has a perfection that the human does not have.

Because humans are transitional beings. They are neither one nor the other. So we are not here in an attempt to fall below thinking.

But to rise above thinking, so to speak. We are not becoming less awake, less alert, less alive. But more alert, more awake, more intensely alive.

So here you have the level of thinking. It's been the human dimension for thousands and thousands of years. Below it you have the dimension of no thought.

Instinctive no thought, natural no thought. And above it you have the dimension of presence. You have transcended thought.

How? By not thinking about the last word. And not waiting for the next one.

And not even trying to work out what I've just said. Not making presence into some new thought form. Can one live like that?

In a state of relaxed alertness? Which is presence. Not the state of alertness that comes from mind and ego.

Which is not real alertness, which is really a state of fearful tension. No. It's open, not closed.

Completely open. And you're able to look, to hear, to feel, to touch. Sense perceptions.

Against the background of stillness. Which is another aspect of presence. Alert stillness.

Sense perceptions happen here. And when you're not thinking about the last moment. Or looking to the next one.

And after you've heard a sentence, a string of words. There's simply spacious stillness. Just as in the speaker, this form sitting on a chair.

There's stillness between the words. I don't know what the next word is going to be. How could I know?

And there's no need to know. You may have noticed already. We don't have an agenda here.

A big folder, which tells you what we're going to do this weekend. We're going to get through these 20 points. In other words, there seems to be a lack of structure.

And that is true. There is a lack of mind-made structure. And yet, a different kind of structure is growing organically out of the present moment.

And it knows where it's going. So you may have realized already. How important.

The stillness is. In this room. The external stillness.

Which we could call silence. And there's a lot of it. Despite the words.

And the inner stillness. Which simply means... What does that mean, inner stillness?

It means, and this is the secret. Consciousness. Conscious.

Without thought. A state of great intelligence. Not that thought is not going to operate ever again.

But that becomes your home. Your... The foundation.

What you're rooted in. Is that dimension of inner stillness. That is there.

In the background. It is the background to everything that happens. And that's already in you, of course.

But most humans are so identified with what happens in the foreground of their existence. Sense perceptions, events, experiences, thoughts, emotions. Everyone drawing attention.

Everything that happens externally draws you. The world does that. This matters.

And you believe that. It matters absolutely. And then the next thing matters even more.

And then the phone call comes along. This is really serious. And mostly every thought likes to matter.

Take me seriously, says every thought. Think, think. And even psychologists who are not interested in presence or anything like that have examined the human mind and realized that 99% of our thinking is totally repetitive.

And yet, it's serious. So that's being lost. When only the foreground, whatever happens in your life, and the foreground of your life includes thoughts and emotions, and external things, when that absorbs all your attention continuously, one thing after another, or as one of my favorite quotes says, Churchill said, one damn thing after another.

He was talking about world history, but he could have been talking about the human mind. It's the same. The outer reflects the inner.

One damn thing after another. One damn thought after another. And of course, nobody can argue with the fact that this is true, because if you read world history, you can see that it is one dreadful thing after another.

And if you look at your own mind, when you're lost in it, it's not a pleasant place. Occasionally pleasant thoughts can happen, and then quickly they turn around and have another face. Like, dislike.

Honeymoon, divorce. So being lost is a normal state. Lost out there, lost in here.

There's only that dimension then to your life. We could call it, what happens. I'm only interested in what happens.

And complaining about what's not happening where it should be happening. Of course, it's not happening in the right way, ever. And yet, there is in you a dimension that frees you from total identification with the world, which includes the mind.

And when you become conscious of that dimension, that's presence. When I say conscious of that dimension, language creates a duality that isn't there. That's what language does.

Because you become conscious of that dimension as yourself. As the essence of who you are. So that's not two, but one.

And this begins simply by acknowledging, as we sit here, the dimension of silence, which is inner stillness. Simply to notice that there is, apart from the words, there is silence. In other words, the words are the foreground, the silence is the background.

And when you notice that there is silence in between and underneath the words, that moment of noticing is the arising of presence in you. The moment you notice silence, you become still inside. It's only because you became still inside that you can even notice that there is silence, apart from the words.

The strange thing is, thought cannot even notice that there is silence, because thought is noise. So if I ask you the question, can you find out if there is silence in this room, apart from the words? If you want to truly answer that question, you have to go, yes.

But while you went, you were not thinking, there was an alert presence. Then, of course, when you said yes, that was thought again. That's all right.

So whenever you notice, and not only as we sit here, but you may already have noticed, and if you have, that's a clear sign that presence is arising in you. You may already have noticed that there is quite a lot of silence around here, even if you step outside. Especially if you've come from a city, you may notice that strongly, that there is, or in your room, oh, it's very silent here.

And if you didn't notice that, it means how could you have noticed it if you'd not, for that moment at least, that's enough. There was no thought. If there had been thought, continuous stream of thinking, which is still the destiny of many humans, their fate, you would not even have known it, or without knowing it, you would have felt uncomfortable, very uncomfortable.

And you would have jumped to the TV set, if you have one in your room. By the way, I recommend strongly that you don't use it. You would have jumped to the TV set and put it on.

Ah, it's nice. And you didn't even know why you felt uncomfortable. But if you noticed it, who noticed it?

Not you, the mind-made entity, the egoic entity. No. Something deeper in you or presence, the stillness in you noticed it, otherwise you would not have noticed it.

Someone was visiting Thailand. He told me he was visiting monasteries and he climbed up this hill a long, long way from any city. On the hill he saw a beautiful monastery.

He climbed up this hill. He arrived at the top of the hill, entered the monastery. Silence, absolute silence.

Monks walking around. He said, this is paradise. I'm going to stay here.

And suddenly, cheap loudspeakers started coming on that were hidden in the trees with the Thai version of kind of pop songs. He said, this cannot be. This cannot be.

And he ran to a monk and said, what is happening? He said, we're expecting a group of lay devotees from Bangkok and they become very uncomfortable when it's totally silent here. So to make them feel better we put on that music.

So my friend, the pilgrim went on to it wasn't paradise. It never is external. If you look at it externally.

So the people from Bangkok complained. There was so much mental noise. It became uncomfortable.

So one of the things here during our retreat essential absolutely is to notice the silence. Not only while we come together here. Also when you walk from one building to another.

When you're in your room or going for a walk in nature. Notice the background of silence because in nature you have some yes, beautiful gentle sounds and you hear those you pay attention to that. But you also pay attention to the underlying silence.

Then that dimension arises in you. And you can walk there as a field a walking field of stillness. A large stillness.

And no longer walking there carrying the heaviness of your mind the noise factory and the heaviness of your personal history that you need to think about while you're walking in nature. Your problematic life situation. The dilemma of your existence.

There's no life situation that is not problematic and if it's not problematic right now wait a little and it will turn problematic again. Because whenever you're only identified with that level, that dimension everything is problematic. And if it's not now it will become problematic.

I gave the example of the honeymoon. The honeymoon is not problematic and a little later it turns into problematic. The great job that you've just got with a big paycheck is not problematic and a year later you become sick with stress.

Or there's so much infighting that it becomes hell. Or in many ways in which situations can turn around and become problematic again and that's the one damn thing after another. And that's the truth of Buddha who said wherever you go whatever you do whoever you meet whatever situation you go into whatever place, whatever anything, it's dukkha, suffering.

If it's not suffering now it's dukkha. And of course he talked about being lost in the world. So one our practice here to notice the silence.

And noticing is enough. Then thoughts come back and then again there's more alertness. You'll notice as you'll hear a continuous shift probably between thoughts arising and presence.

And if it's only if it's 90% thoughts and 10% presence that's great already because we're in an evolutionary shift. So the new is arising in you. But as presence arises the ability to witness thoughts so that thoughts don't overpower you completely grows.

Before in the absence of presence every thought has you completely in its grip. And the emotion usually comes with it that goes with that thought. And then as presence arises comes the ability to notice your thoughts in the same way that you notice a noise, an external noise.

And then you may notice oh there's a lot of noise up here. The noticing comes always from presence from the stillness. So when you notice that your mind is noisy wow it's noisy how do you know that?

Because you have some access to the emotion that is unconditioned the consciousness that is unconditioned which is presence the unconditioned consciousness that is presence. And from there you can see oh what your mind is doing. And the mind then is no longer a serious business you can even start to smile at what it does.

It's mechanical. After a while you look through the main strategies of the mind how it tries to get your attention and so on. There you are again there it is.

And it's no longer your personal the mind becomes depersonalized. Before the mind was me. The mind and the accumulated memories that make up my personal history was me with my unfulfilled history unfulfilled and unfulfilling not enough.

And whatever strange thoughts were associated with that life passed me by unfair it treated me unfairly I missed it. Whatever thoughts you have about your personal history something went wrong in 1984 it shouldn't have happened that's why I cannot be happy now. Or you carry an identity based on an unpleasant experience that somebody did to you you survived and that's wonderful yes it was dreadful because as long as humanity is unconscious totally identified with mind they do many dreadful things so you cannot come onto this planet without experiencing dreadful things some are more dreadful than others and you suffer there's no child that doesn't suffer and yet to build an identity on the basis of past pain is a dreadful limitation to have a painful story that is the story of me and needing to think about that because you can't all think about it gradually you might even forget and need to talk about it continuously and then see yourself as this or that you have a label for it no matter how tragic it was at the time and some awful things are happening at this very moment in certain parts of the planet no matter what it is the fact is you survived and yet the mind used it because it's always looking for a stronger sense of self it's looking for an identity it's looking for a stronger me and it can use something like that something very bad that happened to me or the other way around something very bad that I did to someone so that's guilt you identify with something that you once did and you wouldn't do it now but there you didn't know any better that's why it happened it's called unconsciousness so if you identify with unconsciousness either that came through you or what other unconscious humans did to you there you create a heavy painful sense of self a story but everybody has their story even if there's not one big traumatic event in their lives they have their own story and how liberating it is to see that it is no more than things that happened that ultimately that is not who you are you are not the accumulation of those memories or emotions that's there, yes so as presence arises you recognize that was never who you are your personal history has its place undoubtedly it happened you may have old photos to prove it it really happened and the photos at some point begin to fade even I I haven't yet reached old age but even I have photos from my childhood that are already beginning to fade they're going yellow the story is dissolving wouldn't it be strange if photos faded more quickly than the human body and after 10 years you open your photo album and there's nothing left wow, that feels good and yet there is a dimension in every human that was never really touched by what happened the eternal, timeless state of consciousness that is presence who you are underneath the form that your life takes your life situation as I sometimes call it the dilemma of your life situation you mean other people also have a dilemma I'm not the only one surely no life situation can be more problematic than mine no story is that fulfilling if you look behind even those who in the eyes of the world have made it success, fame, wealth if you look behind the facade you see there's unhappiness sometimes greater than with other people because they still think they can make it so here we are the dimension of form as this retreat center this gathering the people including also your mind the thoughts that come the emotions also comes and goes no form lasts that long before you know it this retreat is over first you look forward to it and then it's there but since the world of form is governed by time which is ultimately illusion just as form is ultimately illusion life is like an express train it never stops, you're on it and so one event goes past there's the retreat it is it's over already it's Sunday and it's time to go home and that's what form if we could see truly see reality external reality so called we would be shocked deeply shocked by truly see I mean the way we perceive it is as if the world around us were solid the buildings the structures economic companies corporations, political even the people have their job and their pension scheme and everything is in place and it's very solid reality and it's sometimes another example of solid reality is that death is a taboo even now in western culture because it would show you that human bodies are not solid they dissolve continuously around you but you mustn't look at death it's forbidden to see dead bodies we say no, it wasn't death and when it comes to people they react as if they never knew that such a thing existed

[Speaker 2] (54:03 - 54:04)

he died

[Speaker 1] (54:17 - 1:06:18)

and nobody told them that it was some abstract strokes in the head everybody does, ok everybody does but they live as if that were not the case at all it's sometimes helpful to travel to India where they don't have a taboo and you see dead people openly and it's the same here they're dying everywhere but they're shut away don't look pretend that nothing is happening another way why India is so wonderful to go to and it's spiritually beautiful experience is that the world of form is less predictable there here you have timetables and the trains run and everything but here it's what's going on nothing goes as planned and it's miraculously in the end it works as one Indian man said to me we live by grace he was talking to an Israeli person and the Israeli person they asked what do you live by asked the Israeli no, can't remember who asked the first question the Indian man asked the Israeli man what do you live by and the Israeli man said we live by guts and then he asked the Indian man oh, no, we live by grace and there you see that the structures of the external world are not that stable after all and of course it's the same here it's an illusion the stability is an illusion and sometimes a structure that looks so permanent crumbles whether it's the communist system or whether it's a building or you lose your job or your corporation suddenly the multi-billion dollar corporation collapses with your pension plan and everything now if you what we see is a kind of frozen view frozen view of the external world if you saw a more realistic perspective a speeded I would suggest a speeded up version on film you sometimes see it how a flower opens they speed up the film withering and disappearing and if you could see in that way a human existence baby and then running around for a few years and then growing wrinkles come like a fruit or flower that grows old and then just a little bit longer it would take before so-called physical heavy physical objects would also dissolve and become dust this room if you saw it speeded up first the bodies would go and then you have to just wait a few more seconds and then gradually you see cracks appearing things start falling down from the ceiling and then the ceiling collapses and then there is only dust left and then the wind comes so you see everything is already in the process of dissolving continuous birth and death and humans are stuck in there somewhere this is reality here now when you watch when you see that fact in the sublime teaching of the Buddha called impermanence you are astonished when you see it and you allow it to be it is liberating to see that to the egoic entity it is a dreadful thing don't be so negative don't talk about these things and yet if you allow that and you see how forms come and go how the entire universe is that play of forms and everything dissolves as that form something in you feels good feels very peaceful to see that how is it even possible to see it to witness that I talk about that briefly in Stillness Speaks the book if the entire world were blue you would not see the colour blue not blue so that you can recognise blue if everything were impermanent you wouldn't even know it how can you know impermanence because there is something in you that is not impermanent but it has nothing to do with your form the form is impermanent and that's the beauty of death it frees that which was trapped in the form and that is the beauty of watching and allowing the impermanent nature of the world to be even to witness death puts you in touch with the deathless formless one life one consciousness that you are so I perhaps one of these days this just came to me a film project it could be one of the most spiritual films ever made that shows how quickly things dissolve you have to it might take a few years to film it the human body the animal body flowers more quickly and conceivably one could do it artistically so that you see even the entire planet is born and dies the sun is born and dies although it looks eternal compared to the human existence presence is the only thing in you that is not a thing presence is the formless in buddhism the closest buddhism gets to using a positive term it never really uses positive original teaching I don't think ever used a positive term so that you can't form a new concept in your head the deathless realm the deathless is the term sometimes used the mind wants a more accurate definition and it says are you talking about god here? because the mind wants ah god there it is it wants to hold it hold it as a concept it's too vast you cannot hold it and then it attaches the word my to god my god or even worse the word our not yours so our practice here if you can even call it that life living life is doing it is presence begins with being attentive to silence both here and outside that dimension tonight in your room doesn't matter how long you can be aware of it you're aware of it you lose it you look at the TV screen and wonder what's going on and then you're back again present and then you look at something else that's fine in, out and our practice of course is to work with the present moment as much as possible you can go back to your normal existence when you go home you can just stay with simplify your life while you're here and pay more attention to whatever this moment presents then past and future just this there's always just this just this to be able to do that alertness is required without the alertness you cannot have just this you'll be past, future past, future is the sleep, dreamlike state of being identified with thought and then there's

[Speaker 2] (1:06:23 - 1:06:24)

oh

[Speaker 1] (1:06:30 - 1:21:50)

you wake up so you wake up twice you wake up in the morning and many times during the day you wake up out of the stream of thinking and the ability arises more and more to perceive without the interference of thought thought is there when you need it don't need to be concerned about that when you need it it'll still be there in fact it'll be much more powerful when it's truly needed for whatever purpose it is when you're not overpowered by thought you can use thought for certain purposes and inspired thinking will happen more and more because inspired any new thought a new form a new insight a new realization can only come if you access the state of no thought out of that spacious stillness ah so life is always this moment never not this moment and so that instead of having that as an abstract truth yeah I know that life is always now and so what's next so when it's an abstract truth you say okay I've done that there's only the now okay exam question one is there only the now or is there there's only the now okay so not as an abstract as a living truth or realization wow this is actually the fullness of it this is life this moment is the fullness of life it takes because the fullness is the fullness that is there when who you are is no longer obscured by thought forms the little limited me so our practice is as I sometimes put it becoming friendly with what is what is whatever form this moment takes okay okay what does that do inside you it frees you from the form that this moment takes if you react to the form that this moment takes another form is created in you as a thought or an emotion that strengthens your being lost in form and that's why the ego likes to react because the ego is the form me if you do not react respond is a different matter to whatever is needed in this moment but your habitual state becomes allowing whatever form this moment takes to be then if action is needed it comes out of that state of intelligence which is allowing the now to be allowing life to be becoming one with life one with life which is now can only be now one with life and life lives through you and life is intelligent so when you do not resist the form that this moment takes but you allow whatever form this moment takes as the temperature in your room or the stain on the carpet or even forms that before you would have complained about it is, you can't dispute the fact that it is right now so it is you can if it needs to be changed it can be changed you talk to someone but even then there is an inner allowing of right now it is maybe I can talk to somebody and we can change it repair the heater if there is no heat but right now that's it in the most powerful spiritual practice the inner allowing you do not strengthen your own form anymore that's why the ego doesn't like that and what arises is the timeless and formless essence of who you are that's why surrender is so powerful surrender to life where is life?

here there is an ego that looks like weakness and yet that is true power, intelligence aliveness and more in many ways you can speak of it so that is perhaps two levels of practice silence noticing that and noticing what happens and be one with it rather than against it no matter what this is a relatively simple setting but also there will be challenges things will come into the know that you could complain about you could argue about be offended about feel it's a limitation but it is there is no future state if you come here hoping that by Sunday morning you will have achieved the particular state you may be disappointed because you cannot achieve something that is already the essence of who you are and that you can only discover in the present moment a few more practical things this retreat center has a few temptations that other retreat centers may not have one is the TV set leave it alone if you can it stimulates the mind once you are truly in many of you a delicate flower arising a delicate flower needs a little bit of careful treatment once presence is fully arisen you are rooted in presence you dwell in presence it doesn't make that much difference anymore you can watch TV and the same applies to alcoholic drink that is available here and I would recommend that you don't indulge this weekend once presence is firmly established then it doesn't matter anymore not that you would want to drink large quantities then alcohol can easily the good feeling that you get after a couple of glasses is to do that you are beginning to go below the thinking level and suddenly you feel a bit more alive and the little egoic entity doesn't have that grip on you anymore it gets a little bit more loose so you are a bit more free so it gives you a sense of liberation pseudo liberation and then comes another one and another and gradually you move more and more towards unconsciousness and so this is why I don't recommend it here that's all another thing that I don't recommend you may have seen there is a big chess board out there somewhere with huge chess pieces and I would recommend there is nothing wrong with chess it's an incredible game but it does stimulate the mind there may be great chess masters who are still while they play, I don't know but when I play it it stimulates my mind I don't know it very well ok, this one is going to jump there and then you have to think three draw a head for those who want it there is a meditation and a class that incorporates movement by Kim this tomorrow morning and in the evening so you can structure your own retreat in some ways you want that as part of it some of you may want to remain silent there is a room dining room for those who do not want to speak and for those who don't find a place in the dining room where they do speak and so they have to be silent whether they want to or not we may also move into some silence perhaps spend a whole day in silence gradually reduce the amount of words that come out of our mouth more important is what goes on in the noise machine in the head you may have noticed this retreat doesn't move from beginning to more advanced and more advanced the whole essence is there every moment the rest of the retreat is not based on more I have already told you everything the rest of your retreat is deepening it's not a horizontal dimension it's a vertical dimension just sit for just a little while when this body has gone there is an empty chair here empty chairs are very beautiful so stay with the empty chair and yourself just a little while

[Speaker 2] (1:26:54 - 1:27:43)

Sunrise over the mountain spreading your light over the land Sunrise I trust that everybody is here

[Speaker 1] (1:27:44 - 1:28:44)

not just the body entire being many of you have heard the Zen, famous Zen saying chopping wood carrying water Zen is beautiful like that it doesn't explain things they say that's the Zen life chopping wood carrying water it's not surprising that many people study Zen for 20 years and still can't figure out

[Speaker 2] (1:28:44 - 1:28:45)

what it is

[Speaker 1] (1:28:54 - 1:31:47)

now, nowadays in the western world there are not that many people left who chop wood and carry water if you want heat or want to cook something you turn on the switch and for water you turn on the tap but for hundreds of years that was one of the main activities they would repeat themselves every day especially in the Zen monastery or anywhere in the world but to describe the life of the Zen monk or nun ordinary activity and discovering the extraordinary in the ordinariness of life by bringing awareness or presence to the ordinary by being aware of another dimension to the ordinary and this is something we can embrace this weekend particularly because in many ways this retreat is ordinary we are not jumping up and down or screaming in ecstasy or it could happen nor are we taking a little pill called ecstasy unless you do but you don't need it here on a similar vein somebody recently wrote a book called After the Ecstasy the Laundry I don't think he was referring to the pill but to the state of ecstasy that can sometimes come in spiritual

[Speaker 2] (1:31:49 - 1:31:50)

oh yes

[Speaker 1] (1:31:52 - 1:39:53)

and then you look around and there's the laundry put it now you may not wash it by hand anymore you put it in the washing machine so that takes the place of chopping wood and carrying water and of course there's another way of chopping wood and carrying water or putting things in the washing machine I'm fed up with chopping wood I can't stand chopping wood and carrying water anymore it's the same every day and is this going to go on for years for the rest of my life do I have to chop wood carry water do my laundry for the rest of my life I've been doing it for years already I can't stand it anymore and then you still chop wood and carry water but it doesn't feel good and you'd rather be doing something else you're not there you're trying to get elsewhere your relationship to the present moment is one of almost hostility and you carry in a simple activity you carry a lot of time past because you're complaining you've been doing it for so often for so long and future because you carry projection will I have to do this for the rest of my life and so that interferes with what could be a moment of great fullness and depth because you're carrying time into this and you're carrying a self into it a complaining self a me that separates itself from the now is not one with it so the meaning then of chopping wood and carrying water is not to carry past or future into this moment and even if you've chopped wood and carried water for 25 years it's never happened before if you don't carry the memory of 25 years of chopping wood into this moment this moment is totally fresh and new and it's alive and there's a depth to it that you hadn't seen before of aliveness in the ordinariness and this of course is another Zen saying which this little saying is to explain the meaning of Zen again and it's very short what is Zen? they asked the master doing one thing at a time that can't be all but there's great depth and power if you're able to do one thing truly one thing at a time first of all it implies there's no past and future in the action it also implies that the action is not a means to an end in the normal state of consciousness you chop wood in order to light the fire with the wood so in ordinary consciousness mentally you're already on the desired outcome the present moment of chopping wood is your stepping stone that enables you to get where you want to get which is light the fire to cook the food and of course once you have lit the fire and you're cooking the food you're not there either because you're already eating it mentally you're already waiting for the moment when you can finally eat it and so on you're never there always the next step ahead always the moment is a means is reduced in value reduced in aliveness to a means to an end and the end is always a concept in the head so you get your whole life becomes reduced through becoming imprisoned in a conceptualized reality because that's all that future is a mental concept a word a thought future has no reality nobody has ever seen it touched it smelled it nobody has ever been there and nobody can ever be there when it comes it's always the now so in the service of a mental concept called future you reduce what could be the fullness of life to a mere stepping stone you reduce its value its aliveness to that because you're interested in the next moment so you're chopping wood and carrying water but really you're not there doing it you would rather get this out of the way in order to arrive at the next moment that's the normal way to live and that is not doing one thing at a time because you're already mentally elsewhere the other thing or many a sequence of things that you will have to do later even worse you're doing one thing and in your mind you already have not only what where you want to get with this one thing because that will have to lead to that and that and that and the whole you have piled up in your mind the things that you have to do today and each one clambering for importance so your attention is absorbed by that and the minimum of it flows into what you do and that's called stress stress stress means one thing pulls this way the other pulls you can have stress in metal when there's a pull one pull this way and the other pulls that way and that happens inside people continuously the future pulls you away and it hurts it hurts the body if the body could speak it would say what the hell are you doing what are you doing to me are you insane and sometimes the last resort of the body is the body says i have to make this guy ill because he will never stop and finally your only chance of recovery is to become ill

[Speaker 2] (1:39:59 - 1:40:04)

so and so

[Speaker 1] (1:40:07 - 1:49:37)

chopping wood carrying water points to the possibility of not neither bringing past and future into this present moment also not making whatever you're doing right now into a means to an end where the end result that you want to achieve becomes more important than what you're doing now and realize there is no future there's always only the now and to reduce that to a means to an end is insane ultimately is already a form of insanity and when millions of people live like that what kind of a civilization do they create and the whole civilization is based on that dysfunction so millions of people are running around hyperactive stress increases every year in society everybody talks about it they even feel guilty if they're not stressed maybe I'm not doing enough stress increases every year and everybody's running around there's never enough time not enough time to do it all a piling up of future things and the children are conditioned at an early age to live in the same mad way as their parents come on let's get on with it and if you stop anybody ask them what's the whole purpose of your running around like mad well nobody really knows or they would tell you well explain the situation where are they running to internally or externally running well I have to achieve this there's a deadline I've got deadlines to meet I mean I can't even talk to you don't stop me now this is normal the world is full of deadlines these days I sometimes have to write little things here and there and there's always but you only have two days you have to do it in two days often I don't either they wait or it doesn't get done Kim is nodding her head I'm not allowing this world to drive me insane because the world will do it because the world is the externalized human mind so here can be used this situation this weekend for our practice of discovering the depth that is concealed in the ordinary moment seemingly ordinary moment it can be used this weekend and see if we can in whatever we do and what we do is not it's bound to be simple here because there isn't much that you can do that is to the mind really important your business or whatever it is hopefully you've switched off your cell phones so they can't get at you the world can't get at you and in the little things that we do here see if we can bring so much attention to it there's no strain in it just to that we don't reduce it to a means to an end whatever we do and that's a reversal of ordinary consciousness and that begins for example with when you walk from here to another building or when you go for a walk in nature you walk from here to your room or you walk from here to the door or even in your room where you walk to the door to the bathroom and so on there's a step walking implies a sequence of steps and usually when people walk even in that little seemingly simple way mentally they are where they want to get so there's already the projection so you're being pulled away by future and you're always running after the next thing where the mind has projected itself and there's another way to simply be at the step you're taking at this moment now at first it's a strange way to become aware of yourself walking you don't have to call it a meditation although there is such a thing as walking meditation they do it even more slowly you can do that but just ordinary walking it may well be yes that you walk more slowly than you would normally do a bit more because normally you're okay so you just simply awareness in each step and it's always one you can only take one step at a time ever so even to say each step is not right because there is not each step there's only the one you're taking at this moment ever in life and to become aware of that one step that something happens then and we could call that quality and that's very hard to define that word came to me many many years ago I saw a Buddhist monk who lived in presence and he was walking up and down and he said oh I can see there's so much quality in his walking ordinary consciousness is concerned with quantity and the entire civilization is concerned with quantity more need more quality is rare because the next moment is what matters you've got conveyor belts churning out things and quality implies full attention and then there is there's also peace that comes with each step yes as you practice walking in that way you may find yourself walking a little bit more slowly than you would normally do and then you realize it does not really depend on speed once you are able to bring presence into the step the one step you're taking at this moment the speed doesn't matter it doesn't matter when the step it's always one step and if you have to run which may occasionally happen you may have to catch a train and you're late and you have to run then you see you feel the enormous energy of that moment as a joyful movement without the pull of I need to catch that train no, I'm just running it's beautiful and there's high energy or you can let's stay with walking for a while

[Speaker 2] (1:49:39 - 1:49:48)

before you do something else laughing

[Speaker 1] (1:50:01 - 1:53:39)

and that's you will be amazed how peaceful it is to be aware of the step that you take at this moment and then you walk also in nature out there and then you learn to have some awareness there and some awareness in other sense perceptions the walking can keep you present with each step and you look around and there you have another teacher this weekend which is called nature because nature is present in the now one with life everything in nature is one with life and so you bring awareness to nature as you walk around now nature that surrounds us here is of a particular kind some forms of nature are overwhelming huge gigantic mountains raging streams or the sea shore with gigantic waves and a storm coming in and sometimes nature can be so overpowering overwhelming that it sweeps away your thinking you can't think anymore it's so gigantic that it sweeps away your thoughts and it forces you some especially if you there is some danger involved you are at a precipice and it's stormy and there are gigantic mountains there and clouds coming this way and your mind stops wow and there is an enormous sense of aliveness suddenly so occasionally it can happen that nature forces you into presence but here nature is of a different kind the other kind of nature that I just described is almost like taking LSD which I tried once because there the sense perceptions become amplified it's as if everything sounds visual sense touch smell as if they were all shouting at you overwhelming you get bombarded by heightened sense perception so much that for some people it's the first time their first experience of not thinking because you are so bombarded with sense perceptions you can't think anymore it can be an opening you are not growing in consciousness but it can be a glimpse of something what how alive the world can be and so people go and they look at a teapot and say

[Speaker 2] (1:53:39 - 1:53:39)

wow

[Speaker 1] (1:53:45 - 2:01:14)

or any ordinary object even a bare wall it's almost pulsating with life and the mind stops and you feel what I lived in in some kind of prison all my life and so the world is alive and then gradually it wears down what was all that for some people that becomes an incentive to for some people that has been the beginning of their quest there is more than my mind there is greater depth to reality than my mind and so you have nature that can sometimes stop your mind because it's so overwhelming but here this is not the case and here this brings us back to chopping wood and carrying water nature here is beautiful but relatively ordinary it's the trees of medium height it's not like a forest in Canada where you go oh my god when you reach the seashore it's not the open ocean so the waves are not that huge they're just little waves so it's not it's not a place where there are extremes maybe the Buddha would have liked it here so you bring and this is an opportunity for bringing presence to the ordinariness beauty but also the seeming ordinariness of nature and then look for what you would normally have overlooked what the wind does to the blades of grass when you look what it does to the leaves in place where the branches and the leaves might make a slight sound now to notice that you need alertness to notice a chunk a gigantic chunk of ice falling from a glacier in the Swiss Alps you don't need very much presence there's an explosive sound and it comes tumbling towards you but for that subtleness greater alertness is required otherwise you'll miss it and so there's such alertness that you're not interpreting what you see you're not saying the wind is playing with the grass no it's just what is and there's a depth and a beauty there and a stillness in it that you can't explain nor do you need to and then you look at a patch of ground right in front of you grass and perhaps two or three kinds of flowers some are yellow some are white some are red that take a few hours before they open completely after sunrise because at night they go when the sun comes it takes two or three hours before they're completely open and you watch that also some movement there and you discover things that you haven't seen before that there's enormous life even in one square metre and you bring awareness presence to that and then you walk and you see a grove of trees or whatever it is and you perceive the totality of that landscape as a total field in which intense aliveness is happening so to bringing that to nature then what nature is teaching you is the state of no mind no thought although nature is pre-mind it hasn't arrived at mind you are post-mind but you meet in the state of no mind it has similarities nature is one with itself and with the totality every animal is one with itself it doesn't separate itself out of the totality it says me maybe there may be a few exceptional mad dogs that lived for too long with humans and go to take them to the hairdresser and when they walk around you can see there's beginnings of an ego there and ego of course means having a self image me like a phantom self walking next to me and then you're aware of others how they react to me and that becomes incorporated into me i want others to think well of me to admire me to to feel that i'm better than they are if possible with a continuous fear that i may be less than they so but nature when

[Speaker 2] (2:01:14 - 2:01:15)

it's left alone

[Speaker 1] (2:01:16 - 2:29:36)

is free of that and even most pets are still free of it miraculously or they've lived with humans for so long miraculously they're still sane and they are what keeps many humans sane if they didn't have their pet it's their only access to being because anything else their mind is in charge they meet other humans their mind is in charge for the rest of their life they're burdened by themselves and for some humans their only area of freedom is when the pet comes and they go they don't have to they're not playing a game with their pets they're just themselves because they know that the pet accepts them the dog does not criticize you the dog accepts you accepts the most insane master i have a little saying god please make me into the person my dog thinks i am and of course the dog doesn't think if it thought it would be the beginning of a problem so nature everything in nature the flower which jesus i'm sure said many many times he said look at the flowers they're not concerned about tomorrow they're not making effort they're not stressed they're not worried they live in the now unfold in the now and life supports them beautifully and why do you live when you live you're mad learn from the flowers how to live and he said look although in the bible it says consider the lilies i'm sure what he said was look and then something transmits itself and that is the state of being aligned at one with life the integrity that is there in nature in an animal and in a plant and even in a mineral although mineral seems more distant from humans but humans have all that within themselves still the integrity integrity that word means being one with one being rooted in being not existing as a separate fearful entity that feels disconnected from the universe and that the ego it's me and there's the rest of the universe and of course then the universe is a fearful place because it's so much bigger than me although i'm trying to get bigger so nature teaches to be now when you be when you enter being it has an added dimension of intensity and depth because you've been through thought for thousands of years you've gone through the level the consciousness level we call it thought you then go beyond thought and you touch being again but this time you know it before you lost being you never really lost it but it became obscured before you lost being to be at one with being was like every animal and every plant it's natural there's nothing else so you didn't really know that you were in paradise because it was the only there was nothing else the state of oneness was natural and then it got obscured or lost you could call it and then suddenly you come to the end of this evolutionary cycle and you touch being again and this time you know it the depth of it consciously you enter being and yet nature can teach you being not that you become the same as a vegetable there's nothing wrong with vegetables but it's not the destiny of humans to become vegetable again the vegetable is beautiful more closer to the source than an ordinary human has no problem with dying and no problem with living the only unhappiness on the planet is the human mind yes the human mind causes suffering to other life forms pain that is right but the human mind is the only source of unhappiness on the planet nature exists in the state of unity and so nature teaches us not through any concept simply by placing awareness on anything natural you become still animal ground clouds flowing water or still water or sea whatever it is even a rock a stone a pebble but you have to give it a chance to teach you stillness by allowing it to be without interfering with its being through conceptualization by looking or listening completely then also the separation between you and it which was created by excessive thinking disappears and there is a sense of connectedness or oneness with whatever you perceive so that's what nature teaches you and then you meet and you add something to nature when you become conscious of it something completes itself because you become aware of enormous beauty and aliveness and sacredness that is there even a blade of grass and so through you because there is ultimately you are not separate from anything everything is connected to everything else through you nature becomes aware of its own sacredness and beauty so when you look at a tree and really look you add something to the being of the tree and that's awareness of itself and that's the function that humans have on the planet as they become conscious through humans nature becomes conscious of itself it's been waiting for you and finally the first humans fully developed humans humans arrive and they are only just arriving one could almost say humans have been in embryonic state for a long time and the birth is really of true humanity does not happen until there is the arising of presence there are still a few humans left on the planet who are not yet lost in mind and ego just a few in a few very distant cultures that have not been destroyed by so called civilization but their destiny also I believe is to go will have to travel the same way as you through the thinking mind so it's the destiny of all humans to lose it and then regain it now you are lucky because you all belong to those who lost it and me too I had to lose it lose myself to find myself and know myself for the first time we spoke of walking petals falling we spoke of walking we spoke of being with what looks like unremarkable nature and yet is very remarkable let it teach you and related to that is as our practice this weekend other simple activities that you do here that usually would be a means to an end that you would washing your hands lifting a glass of water to your mouth and putting it back there can be quality beauty and consciousness in that that means that it's not a means to an end and during that space while the glass travelled from the table to your mouth it's a space of no thought just clear awareness so the background to that action is stillness alert stillness so that action happens against that background of alert stillness just as the perception of the tree or the little flower happens when you truly look against a background of alert stillness that means there is a peace in the background to what happens in your life to what you see and what you do now we start with very simple things that are not challenging that are actually helpful nature and little actions then we come to things that are more challenging let's see that first we'll stay with non-challenging things in life simple actions not making them to a means to an end lifting something putting something from here to there wiping the top of the table against a background of stillness that means peace flows into what you do so you have to see putting on your shoes tying the shoelaces if you have shoelaces and again being fully there not a means to an end the moment of having your shoes finally on your feet is not more important than the moment of putting your shoes on that's a delusion that the next moment is more important it's no difference whether I have my shoes on or off it doesn't improve my life to have the shoes on another thing is eating eating is a primordial activity that even very early life forms engage in even life forms that can't that have relatively undeveloped organs of perception they are eating already and sometimes it's the only thing they are interested in and so many human beings become completely unconscious when they start eating even you can have I've seen intellectuals at universities professors talking the most complex concepts and then they start eating and then they finish and then okay now let's get back to the problem of existentialist analysis of Immanuel Kant theory of the critique of pure reason so to bring consciousness into that primordial activity and sometimes to just be conscious of chewing food and swallowing food and again not wanting to arrive at the end because that's another needing some people have a so called problem with eating it's not really a problem but they eat more than they need to eat and that's usually the it's the egoic mind needing more and that can translate itself into taking in more food it could be other things often it's other things so just if you have a problem with eating so called problems many humans have that these days it's helpful to well the impulse to eat comes in between meals to simply notice it now at what stage you catch the impulse and it's not only eating this would apply to any so called addiction smoking at some point the impulse comes and it's an unconscious movement I need to take something in it's with smoke smoking or drink and the impulse comes to there's a lack here I need and you have to observe it on an energetic level inside yourself don't detach yourself by some thought really feel the grasping of it the neediness of it I need and now how soon you catch that impulse no matter what it is depends how alert you are at the moment at that moment how present you are because the impulse very quickly can pull you into unconsciousness and some people wake up after they've taken the big sandwich out of the fridge and eaten it and then they realize they've just been eating a big sandwich and while they were eating the big sandwich the mind was somewhere completely different and then as you become more present you can catch yourself the moment your hand is in the fridge and then you feel the grasping the impulse and then you stop for a moment and observe that you don't stop and think oh I shouldn't be eating another sandwich no that doesn't work you simply observe the feeling behind it the lack the sense of needing to be filled that is behind it and that needing to be filled is not a physical thing it may appear as a physical thing but it is a psychological thing and it's created by the ego which is always in a state of not enough and others may be running after other things and for some people it becomes food maybe other things for them also they need more of something to fill that which feels unfulfilled so I need to more and then you have the hand in the fridge and and then for a moment you can stop and feel it observe what what is behind that impulse isn't that interesting and you spend a minute or two being present with that and after that you may still eat it or you may not sometimes it's gone the desire is gone because you become conscious at other times maybe it's still there and you still can't stop yourself but you have brought presence to it and each time you bring presence to something that before was unconscious presence grows even if on an external level you might say I did not succeed I did have to and the cigarette comes saying if you need to smoke for a moment you observe the wanting behind it and what the wanting behind it feels like and how it's almost something that lives in you that wants you to grasp at this now and you there's a gap and you bring presence to that and then whether you smoke or not or eat or don't really is secondary the success is really determined by whether you can be the witness of your inner state at that moment that's all what you then do externally is always secondary you cannot not change if you bring presence to whatever is there so you don't need to work on the external level as achieving particular kind of behavior it's enough to observe what is here now and so for some people that is the beginning of their spiritual path the beginning of their spiritual path can be an addiction food drink drug and then creating suffering in their lives because it gets the body becomes ill and then forces them into awareness so any such thing in your life is also helpful it's not a hindrance anymore and it's included in what is now what can you do that's what you feel at this moment it is it's included in your bringing a yes to this moment an enormous longing for another drink that's what is and you watch and there is suddenly a dimension another dimension to it the watcher the presence the formless consciousness and there is the form that impulse that desire that thought that emotion and the space around it that's who you are so the more you accept that it's there the more the space around it grows so to speak spaciousness comes into your life so our three practices it's more than that we'll just give it a little structure our three practices the walking there's a teacher whose name I can never pronounce Tick that town or something like that who has this beautiful saying the miraculous thing something like that is the miraculous thing is to take one peaceful step peace in every step that's truly that is the not what we imagine miracles are this is the miraculous thing of bringing peace into this step that I'm taking this moment there's never anything else so that's what we work with nature and simple actions including eating handling things getting dressed undress not a means to an end an end in itself the next moment is not more significant than this one this one is the only one there is and so you become a field of presence which is peace and that flows into what you do and that does something to how you do it to your actions the way you walk the way you put something from here to there something flows into the doing that is a different energy from the energy that flows into it when you reduce it to a means to an end the doing becomes more intelligent this is the real meaning of right action that we have in Buddhism right action is not something that you need to or can practice but something that flows out of being present with what is if you are not present you can try to have right action for the rest of your life for another 50 years I am trying right action just as Christians say I am trying to love my neighbor it's hard

[Speaker 2] (2:29:36 - 2:29:36)

very hard

[Speaker 1] (2:29:36 - 2:35:25)

just have to try right action or loving your neighbor as yourself comes out of the state of presence naturally flows out of that and the state of presence is to be with what is don't make it into a means to an end surrender to now surrendered state of consciousness one with life and as I may have mentioned yesterday the little question that you may sometimes want to ask yourself the question doesn't point to the ultimate truth but it's an intermediate stage what is my relationship to the present moment ultimately you are one with it but what is my relationship to the present moment you can even if you like things like that you can put it on as a little sticker on your bathroom mirror and the bedroom so that when you wake up and your fridge the TV set right on top on the screen and so when you go towards and then of course you may notice because you just wanted to switch on the hypnotic machine what is my relationship to the present moment I want to get away from it away from myself and again what I described the impulse that comes when there is some kind of so called addiction TV can be very addictive and again there comes the impulse that you can observe in yourself that needing to watch more both the impulse to go there and switch it on the moment you arrive home and the and you can observe the resistance to switching it off once it's on you can observe the mind's desire for more expressing itself as when you say ok it's time to go to bed and then you pick up the remote and instead of pressing the off button you say ok let's just try the other that channel and then that draws you in for a few minutes and then it goes to the off again ok let's try just that one and then another and just flick through it's a need the mind wants more stimulus and you can observe that you can observe when you go to a waiting room at the doctor or the dentist and you pick up a magazine the hungriness the hunger behind looking through the pages and you can observe it in others more easily than in yourself when they flick the pages they are consuming the magazine the mind is consuming the magazine hungrily they stay with each page for a few seconds occasionally there's a little thing that catches their attention for a minute and it's very helpful if you can observe that in yourself it's all to do with the mind grasping for more that this moment isn't full enough I need to put something some more into me I saw a few newspapers around here maybe better to leave them alone but observe the desire to go there and open it or if you're lucky it's in Danish and some of many of you don't know Danish so that's okay I observed a man not here he was picking up a newspaper really enormous interest and beginning to read it and suddenly he threw it away in disgust and I said what's wrong?

he said it's yesterday's paper I just saw the date on it

[Speaker 2] (2:35:42 - 2:35:43)

completely worthless

[Speaker 1] (2:35:56 - 2:37:11)

so modern humans have become consumers of all kinds of things the mind they don't only they consume on every level they consume the news they consume entertainment the big one entertainment a word that was even unknown not long ago entertainment but again in the romantic industry occasionally you get the truth shining through some of it is rare but it can happen but a lot of the time it's pain body entertainment this is so bad I love it that's the pain body this film will make you feel really bad and then they all come to watch it to feed their pain bodies through watching dreadful things films made by pain bodies for pain bodies

[Speaker 2] (2:43:05 - 2:44:01)

we are another new morning we celebrate we are the new man sunrise Over the mountain, spreading your light, over the land, sun

[Speaker 1] (2:44:01 - 3:34:09)

Tibetan bells, spiritual alarm clock. I know most of you are awake already, but it is after lunch. In the morning you wake up, and then during the day you wake up many times.

Into presence, out of thought, into presence. As we sit here, as you sit here, can you sense your own presence? That's not a very good way of putting it, because it's not your own.

You don't even exist as a separate entity. As separate from the totality. Can you sense, but let's just for the moment put it like that.

Can you sense your own presence? Throughout the body, because presence is not a head phenomenon. Head is part of it, but so are the toes, and the entire energy field.

But presence is a whole body phenomenon, or it transcends the body, and it's not part of the phenomenal world. But whatever words we use come from the phenomenal world, so it's okay. So there is something that one cannot grasp.

So here it is, because if you say here it is, you've made an object out of it, in consciousness. A concept, an idea, here it is. And yet presence is consciousness itself, so you can never say here it is, always saying here it is.

All you can say is here I am, as presence. There's also, presence is not confined to the inner, ultimately it's just an artificial division between inner and outer. There's presence in the room, a field of presence, so it's within and without.

So this is an entry point into presence, is the feeling of your inner energy field. Alive, cells are alive. When you feel that, you can't think very much.

The moment you start to think, you lose that, because consciousness moves up, and you're up here. It's quite possible that body awareness was one of the original teachings of the Buddha. Some people claim that, nobody ultimately knows.

There are some sutras that point to that. As is probably the awareness of breathing. They are closely connected, because if you follow your breath with your attention, your attention moves into the body.

And you can then feel parts of the body as you follow your breath with your attention, as you breathe in. It seems almost as if the breath were reaching even into your legs or feet, although science would probably tell you, well you're not actually breathing into your legs. But if the attention moves there.

Whenever you are tortured by obsessive thoughts, or any kind of thoughts, a never ending stream of pointless thinking, which is most of the time. Use the entry point, use the inner body as an entry point into presence. And you may notice, the first thing, if the mind is very active, or you're faced with a challenging situation, and the mind wants to react out of its old conditioning.

The mind will say, I can't be present in the moment, not now, I can't be present now, not now. Wait until I feel a little better, until things have changed, I haven't got the time now. Can't even think about it, can't be present now, and then you do it anyway.

Feel your hands, arms, feet. Take a few deep breaths, and follow the breath with your attention into the body. And quickly you feel an aliveness in the inner energy field, and there's your anchor or presence.

And then presence becomes a globalized sense of aware aliveness. And there you are. And a few minutes ago the mind told you that you can't do it.

If you believe that thought every time it comes, then you'll never go into the body, because faith, I'll do it some other time. I have too much on my mind now. And there you are.

So this is to practice. Also when things are easy in your life, like now, relatively easy, except for one or two people who may have an ache or a pain. And that's okay, somewhere in the body, the other parts of the body that are fine, there's still the global feeling of aware presence.

So there is sensing yourself as that presence here. Then you are, your awareness is then partly here, in here, so to speak, and partly on the outer world. Which at this moment is not challenging, it's helpful, that's good.

You can hear the words, you can perceive the room perfectly well, you can see the flowers, the lights, aware of everything. But aware also of the presence that you are, without which nobody would be aware of this room and this voice. It wouldn't even be there, it would just be atoms and molecules floating around, with mostly empty space in between.

So you create this world as the conscious presence, every moment. But don't lose yourself in the creation. But since that has happened, that also had its place and its purpose.

God as yourself, the one consciousness, the one life, must have wanted to lose itself in the creation and then wake up. And then know him, her, itself. It's a cosmic thing, not just a little personal, it's huge, we are part of something huge.

So as you sit here, some awareness is within the aliveness, the presence that you are, as the consciousness in which whatever you perceive appears. And that means you are deeply rooted in being. And the rest is existence.

Being is that which is not manifested as a form, the underlying one life. Existence is that, the word already tells you that, it's that which stands out. Ex is from Latin, stands out, ex, out.

So that which exists is a form that comes out of the unmanifested and manifests. As a thought, as a body, as a solar system, a galaxy, or blade of grass, or microbe. So existence is whatever you can perceive with the senses and beyond.

There are other things that you cannot perceive, it's also existence. Spirit presences also exist. Devas, nature spirits, exist, although most humans can't sense these things, see them anymore.

Gods probably exist. Gods, beings, angels, whatever you want to call them, all kinds of entities. And yet they are also, they exist, they may be deeply rooted in being.

They may not be under the illusion that they are separate little entities. And yet they also exist, they perhaps, they can be and exist at the same time. They can be rooted in this one source of all life, and be out as an acting agent in the sense-perceived world.

And we are learning that also. Nature, which we mentioned this morning, also is rooted deeply in being, but at an earlier stage. Natural connectedness with being without yet knowing it fully.

So this is a very powerful way of connecting with being, connecting with your body. It's more than body. The invisible life that animates the body, the intelligence field.

And then it's so much easier to go about this world without needing to label everything immediately. As soon as it enters your field of perception, some automatic thing comes into motion that comments on it, and interprets it immediately to fit into what I need and what I want and what my story is and what my likes and dislikes are, and immediately you have a running commentary on everything you see. It's a bit like the, almost like the robot from the future in some of these films by our friend Arnold.

And so this robot from the future comes, and then sometimes the viewer of the film looks through his eyes, and whenever he sees a new situation, his field of vision is like a computer screen, and then the computer screen analyzes the situation. Male weighing such and such, height approaching at such and such a speed, carrying a submachine gun, level of threat nine, and all kinds of quick analysis. Now if anybody had to do that, they would be very slow.

If you had to analyze analytically every situation, imagine driving a car like that. That's why even the most powerful computer in the world cannot yet drive a car from A to B in a small town. Just can't do it.

And a human doesn't need to be particularly intelligent, it seems, to be able to do that. But this breaking it down into little bits of information is almost how the human mind, the conditioned mind, when you are lost in it, how it operates. You meet somebody, and immediately you start formulating opinions and judgments, and see, compare him or her with yourself, and see where he or she fits in.

Are you better, higher, more spiritual, more wealthy, better looking, stronger? Or you feel inadequate, or feel better. There's this game, and perhaps I can add her to my sense of self.

I can make her my wife, and she'll look good next to me. It sounds absurd, but that's how the mind works. And of course you're not meeting anybody at all, you're meeting your own thoughts.

Continuously you think you're interacting, you're having relationships with other human beings. You're only having a relationship with your mind. And then you marry her or him, and she has the same problem.

A little later, they can't stand each other anymore. Two minds meeting. So that compulsion to go about the world, and according to your conditioning, immediately interpret everything, and immediately have an opinion about it.

I'm always perplexed when, after somebody asks me, what do you think of this person, such and such, but perhaps I have just an edge, or whatever. Nothing. What is there to think?

If you think about their conditioning, whatever conditioned behaviour they manifest, that's only a bundle of conditioning, there's nobody there. That's not who they are. So ultimately, whatever you can think about in the other person, that's not who they are.

What you cannot think about in the other person, that's who they are. And who you are. So you don't do it, you do it to yourself, you conceptualise yourself, as an entity that consists of mental positions, and mental images, and concepts, me, story of me, and then you do it to others.

So being here as an alive presence, the pull is much less, is greatly reduced, the pull to label everything immediately. When you sense, when you're in the background, the presence that you are, the entire being that you are, you sense that as the presence, and then you perceive. Then the need to label is hardly there, still occasionally little thoughts may drift in and out, that's OK.

But to a large extent you will be able to be there as a higher intelligence, because that's what it is, the unconditioned intelligence, that is presence. And not be there as a little personalised entity that says, me. No matter how intelligent, how developed my mind is, you're still a little egoic me, wanting something, or fearing something.

And so that is particularly when you meet human beings, because we've been talking about being present with nature, being present with a tree and a flower, and look without needing to call it anything, unless you have to say something to someone. But in the act of perception, there's the background of aware stillness. And that's relatively easy, nature is not actively thinking, it's not conducive to thought, becomes more difficult when you meet humans, because most humans are noisy minds, that's who they think they are, they're walking around with nice noisy minds.

And immediately it's very challenging to meet another human being, because you're meeting, in most cases, an egoic entity, they don't know who they are, they think they are their story, and they think they need this and that to confill themselves, and they fear all kinds of things, and they interpret you through the eyes of their conditioning. And so in the interaction with humans, it's essential to be there as presence and not as a labeling mind. And so if you can sense the inner body, when you're facing another human being, somebody you've never met before, somebody you know already, it doesn't matter, somebody you're meeting very briefly, and there's a moment in which, perhaps you ask, can you tell me where such and such a street is?

I'm stopping a stranger in the street, can you tell me where such and such a street is? And he or she says, it's over there, go that way. And there's a moment of perhaps three seconds in which you just look at him, and he says, thank you.

In that looking, there was stillness, just, thank you. There was no judging, at all. It was just a field of presence.

That means you truly met another human being, you connected at a deeper level. It's only possible when you are not lost or react to the world of form, the form of that person, which is either the person's body, or the person's external appearance, or the person's psychological form. And then you say, whatever, I don't like the way you spoke to me, or I like, I don't, a space, a space of no thought, a space of consciousness, in the interaction.

Just looking, or listening to what he or she says. But of course the awareness goes beyond the looking and the listening, there's actually the flow of energy between you. There's a totally different energy interaction that would be there in a normal interaction would be mind energy, just two minds.

And here you have a very different frequency between two humans. It's peaceful, a peaceful, alive energy field that connects them, in which they momentarily become one. And even if the other human has no idea what's going on, he or she may simply feel that you are such a nice person.

Because the human mind would then personalize it. In your presence that human being felt suddenly free, not judged. Him or herself, a bit more than usual, felt you didn't impose what normally humans impose on other humans.

Similar to a dog or a cat, but better. And so they may even invite you for a cup of tea. Come home with me for a cup of tea.

I'd like to be around you, but they may not say that because the mind is fearful of true relationship. And depending what country you're in, when you meet a stranger, you will encounter varying degrees of protectiveness, self-protectiveness of the ego. In some countries it's more open.

And this often has very simple causes, like how cold or warm it is. Because if in a cold country, generation and generation in a cold country become tight and there's tension in the body. They have to protect themselves, not only psychologically, but also physically if the two get mixed up.

And so in some countries, you talk to a stranger at a bus stop, they take two steps backwards. He's talking to a stranger. And there's a suspicion immediately, he wants something from me.

Because that's the ego thinks in those terms, he wants something from me. Smiling, in some countries it's frowned upon. You're smiling at somebody.

In some places where there's still a little bit less mind identification, they smile more. I had a friend from the Philippines and she came to England for the first time when I was living there. And the first few days and weeks, she had great difficulties because when she was walking along the street, she smiled at everybody.

And she was quite good looking, so the cars screeching to a halt, she said, come in. She didn't want to come in, she was just happy. So I had to tell her, you can't smile here.

And that's meeting strangers, being there. And then, even more challenging, meeting humans with whom you share a lot of past. The more past you share with them, the more the old behavior patterns will want to come back in.

You know that when you're in a relationship with meeting your parents, your wife, your husband, after many years of marriage, patterns get very established of who you think he is, who he thinks you are, and the way in which you interact. Or more difficult, meeting your ex-husband or your ex-wife. And be present then and there.

And be in the body. So meeting human beings without past. Not that you cannot remember certain things they did, but not to bring the past as an active operating principle into the interaction.

Meeting everyone without past. Just in this moment, through the power of this moment, which is the power of presence, which is who you are. And not meeting the other person as a walking personal history.

And that is an enormously liberating thing to do when you can meet even your mother and father, with whom quite a few people, some people have children, some people have a wonderful relationship with their mother and father, which is beautiful. Some grew up in a relatively conscious family. And many in this world did not grow up in a conscious family.

Their father and mother were manifesting varying degrees of unconsciousness. And resentment built up over the years. So many, between adult children and parents, often there's grievances, resentments, complaints.

He doesn't understand me. I get criticized all the time. He doesn't even want to understand me, my father, my mother.

And the same reactions happen every time you visit them. And then you have a fight and then you leave. And next time it happens again.

And then one day you meet them, you arrive at the doorstep and you look at them and feel the inner body at the same time. And then you come in and you sit down and you still, you look at them, still feeling the inner body because now it's vital that you're anchored. Now it's vital that you're anchored in the now.

And then you get the old thing. Your father says, are you still involved in that spiritual airy fairy nonsense? Still haven't got a job, have you?

I told you years ago you should do this and that. And then you have to be very present. And just sit there and simply say, well, yes, I'm still doing that.

But then he, if it's your father or she, if it's your mother, after a while will feel a slight disorientation because you are not feeling the old patterns anymore. You're not reacting. And his or her ego will feel there's something missing here.

And so it will be hard for them to keep up that playing out that script if the other one isn't playing anymore, isn't reacting anymore, simply stating this is how it is. And you don't even expect anything anymore because expectations that he or she should behave in a particular way to make me happy is to do with being identified with certain thoughts. That's how things should be.

He should understand me. So that I can be happy. The whole thing is an illusionary edifice.

You won't be happy even when he understands you. He won't make any real difference to you. Now he understands me, so now what?

What has changed? Nothing. He doesn't understand me, so the same, nothing.

You become free of that which you thought you needed when you were identified with thought. In presence you don't really need anything psychologically speaking. You don't need psychological this or that.

And there you are, and then you can see the patterns in your mother or father crumbling. And for the first time perhaps he or she will ask you a genuine question. What are you really into?

What is that? This has happened. People have told me these miracles happen.

And if they don't, that's fine too. It doesn't really matter. So there comes a with presence comes an acceptance, a compassionate acceptance of what is, which very often means what is, is the human being in front of you.

Be compassionate, giving them space to be, because presence is you have found your inner space or spaciousness, formless consciousness, peace, so that's the great practice is human beings with whom you have a lot of past, you share a lot of past, and maybe whether old grievances, old resistances, old judgments going on for years, and then forgiveness doesn't even need to as it becomes unimportant, you don't need to think, I want to forgive whoever it is, but I'm just trying, I just can't forgive. Or you feel, I definitely, I can't forgive him, I'm not going to forgive him, I'd let go of the most precious part of my identity if I forgive him.

The grievance, this grievance has kept me going for years, provided 50% of my mind activity and 30% of my verbal output. Grievance related to grief, related to grave, related to heaviness. Strange how words, words will tell you already, the heaviness of the grievance, the lifelessness, and the grief.

And when you're faced with a challenging situation, this happens sometimes in life, you face the situation fully as presence. And you're able then to look and out of that flow of, one could almost say current of awareness that flows, there's the situation, the current of awareness that flows into the situation is intelligence, it activates whatever it is that the situation requires. It activates it from within you as a response, action perhaps, words, action.

It also activates the totality of the energy field, the total energy field that is the world, that is intelligent. And so things happen suddenly that are helpful factors because the one, the greater intelligence is operating. Just the right thing happens.

Not that the external world can ever provide you with absolute limitless comfort and joy, that's not its purpose. That is only in the formless consciousness, not in the world of form. So it's in the nature of the world of form that it will, according to the mind, go wrong frequently.

It's not wrong at all. The mind calls it wrong because I expected something else. And some situations need action.

Others need simply to be totally accepted. But even situations that require action need to be accepted first as the is-ness of this moment. Can't argue with that.

And then, out of that acceptance, the energy of presence, whatever answer is required, comes. This is the same energy that in a very limited area great master sportsmen use when they do their sport, whatever they do. They are in a state of thoughtlessness.

What they call the zone. That's maybe a recent expression. They are in the zone.

The zone means in that state where they are at their best because they are not doing it. Power is moving through them. But only in their limited field of hitting that ball.

It's usually not in the rest of their life. You may become extremely good at hitting a ball. Big ball or small ball.

But I believe this is the reason why people become fascinated with watching certain games like tennis or whatever for hours in which after all not much is happening. It can go on for hours. And yet to see how they out of presence play can be a joy.

There's nobody there playing. They are at one with the game. Totally at one with the process.

There's no separate entity. And it's a joy to see it. But one can live like that.

It's the same. We've all seen martial arts movies. And if they are good then you can see that the action arises suddenly out of alert stillness.

There's absolute alertness in which there's nobody there as a person. There's only the looking and the alertness. And action arises and immediately back into stillness.

They don't get taken. They just happen and back. A wave of action and it's gone.

The master martial arts master never gets angry. That would be an egoic reaction. It would be a diminishment.

It comes out of stillness. Out of no mind. No mind.

So that is our destiny is to live in that way. Not that we don't think anymore. Thought operates still.

It operates when it is needed for certain tasks. It also operates in a harmless way as clouds of thought drifting in and out of your field of awareness as you go about your life. With nice spaces in between.

And there comes a thought. Thought the fundamental thing that has changed there is no longer self in your thoughts. Self a me a sense of self.

The self goes out of thought. Whereas before thought was full of self. Every thought was my was you were so identified it became you.

And if somebody argued with some thought that you held you felt personally attacked somebody doubted your opinion said no that's not quite right what do you mean it's not right? You identified with a mental position. Thought had self in it.

And if thought has self in it it's a painful business. It's a painful trap. And thought becomes serious and problematic and creates a problematic life.

And there comes the seriousness of every thought that you hold has a heaviness to it because you're totally in it and you totally believe in it. They all believe in their little stories and interpretations even the collective ones. That's how we see it.

We are they are attacking us no we are defending ourselves they have all their own story we are the victims no they are both the victims they have their own story and they are totally identified with their interpretation. There is no other this is the truth. It's self it has a collective self in it or it has a personal self in it.

And it has a heaviness because there is the delusion of self in thought. And when thought is free of self because your self has turned out to be a salt bubble that there was nothing much there and the true self is presence the power of presence the aliveness of presence the intelligence of presence the stillness of it is who you are but not whatever thought comes into your head or the emotion that goes with it those are temporary energy fields. So as you live in become rooted in presence thought loses its seriousness and its heaviness and so the thought that remains is either empowered which you might use to create this or that in the game of creation not to fulfill myself as to be really fully myself expecting through it to gain fame and recognition and wealth and blow myself up I mean they both

[Speaker 2] (3:34:09 - 3:34:12)

go together first you blow

[Speaker 1] (3:34:12 - 3:39:32)

yourself up and then it pops so thought can be very powerful for creation it always before something comes into material form there is a thought form but humans will not be allowed to fully utilize the power that is in thought or creating as long as they live in egoic illusion because what they would create would be hell out of ego if every ego could create it would be hell it's already half hell with a limited power of creation of thoughts thought loses its seriousness and it loses its capacity to make you unhappy because you are not totally in it anymore so little thoughts they are recognized as there goes a thought no more it doesn't get hold of you grasp you and you don't get hold of it and then thought is fine it's not a problem it's still there but it's not the basis of your life anymore of who you are no self as long as there is self in it there is suffering and I believe this is probably what the Buddha talked about 2600 years ago there is no self in anything that is the doctrine of anatta no self don't look for yourself in any form thought form or other form anatta no self because if you look for yourself in form that is suffering and so the question is people ask is there such a thing as reincarnation yes there is every day every time you identify with any form including a thought or an emotion and you are totally in it you have incarnated into a new form it's become a me and then comes the next you incarnate into that you identify with that a reaction you incarnate with the emotion that rises and what you say you are totally possessed by the thoughts another incarnation so the question is how many times each day do I reincarnate and so of course reincarnation is a fact and when does it end the end of reincarnation can only come at this moment when I don't identify with the form that arises I let it be the emotion the thought some external form and say this is mine don't you touch that it's bigger than yours even children have that already my dad is stronger than yours so they talk of the end of the need to reincarnate the cycle the continuous cycle of birth but that cycle ends of course if you live under the compulsion to reincarnate every day it's more than likely that the compulsion will continue this little entity that believes itself to be separate consciousness having entered the dream of form and that's fine from a larger perspective needs to have more incarnations because it wasn't satisfied with the thousands of incarnations it had in this lifetime where is the next one I need another body

[Speaker 2] (3:39:33 - 3:39:34)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (3:39:39 - 3:41:05)

and the drive the wanting to perpetuate myself as a form is still there wanting to stand out as someone be someone exist again and which is the egos the egos need to stand out what about me me and even if an ego is timid and doesn't want to it's just the reversal of that hiding underneath that is the need to to stand out a timid ego that doesn't want to stand out simply it is afraid that it's will be criticized when it does stand out and it cannot it'll suffer defeat it's afraid of standing out but it wants to stand out every ego wants is that need to be someone special ultimately extraordinary special more than it's always part of that you can notice it even as giving an opinion some of these people are talking and what they're saying is obviously nonsense so now you begin to speak

[Speaker 2] (3:41:07 - 3:41:09)

let me tell you

[Speaker 1] (3:41:09 - 3:53:52)

how it really is with presence you become quite from the ego's point of view quite ordinary the need to be special goes oh that's a big relief if you don't need to be extraordinary anymore to make you special in order to feel that your life is fulfilled I'm extraordinary and then you discover your true extraordinariness is hidden in absolute ordinariness and you can see that in some humans who are connected deeply with being and perhaps create out of that perhaps a great master painter or composer or whatever they do and those in whom the ego hasn't come back and claimed it's me I did that that happens also others remained humble very humble and simple and this when you talk to them you say they don't need to prove anything they don't need to be anybody special they're just so ordinary if you had met Einstein you would have felt that he remained throughout his life totally ordinary and humble he couldn't even understand what people said of him he said the discrepancy between what people think of me and who I am is just ridiculous that's what he said so he never there was no claiming anything I so when you don't need to be great anymore and then you are great life is full of paradox present as you sit here in your body do that when you watch television television can draw your attention out of the body easily it can put you into a kind of hypnotic trance where you are no longer concerned you momentarily forget your own thoughts that's a little bit of a relief and you switch into the collective thought movement of the TV screen but it frees you for a moment of your personal story so when you watch TV can you feel the body at the same time the inner can you feel the presence that you are and watch from there beautiful you feel so alive when you go about the world sensing the aliveness that you are in a conflict situation at work or at home a committee meeting or whatever discussion people arguing taking up mental positions be there it's doubly important that you can stay present within it's easy to be pulled out particularly if you are surrounded by several unconscious people by the way unconscious as you probably know means completely identified with thought it's ugly no matter how clever you are or how knowledgeable or intellectual you could still be totally unconscious and probably are if you are so much if you have so much investment in thinking this is a heaviness up here so unconscious humans can have a certain there's an energy field of unconsciousness that pulls you can have a pull they can either pull you to their same level and you start reacting and playing the game again or you stay present and if you stay present in an environment that is not present whether it's one other human being or more than one the change will come about sooner or later and probably sooner either the entire energy field of the interaction will change because there's one field of presence that can make others more present without wanting anything simply being there by looking and being alert brings in a different energy or it will change because either that person or those people will remove themselves from there because they don't like to be in the presence of presence they'd rather be unconscious or you find yourself removing yourself without any decision making process involved you may find yourself getting up and saying goodbye change will happen when you are present your job can you be present in your job in that environment you may ask can't be they're all unconscious around me you don't know that yet whether you can be present you have to live it and see but if you do live it be careful change will happen one way or another they may sack you they may sack you because you are not suffering from a stress related disease like all the others if you can't be doing your job you are not ill be present when you watch the madness on TV that is in the news it's no more than what's been happening for thousands of years the same madness except that it's magnified through technology and a good thing is that everybody can see it on the street that's one good thing that comes out of TV there may be one or two others that everybody can see what's happening it's hard to doubt the madness of it when you see it right in front of you the first time that happened in the history of humanity was Vietnam early 60s mid 60s when for the first time war was in everybody's living room and everybody saw the madness of it and that was also a time of spiritual awakening both in America and in Europe when suddenly a huge influx of Eastern teachings came to the West because the West suddenly became receptive why did they become receptive? an entire country United States millions of people for the first time disidentified from the collective consciousness that before even in the 50s everybody was still totally identified except for a few rare individuals and suddenly they saw we are mad too it's not that we are right and they are wrong always the madness is in us too they disidentified from the collective forms the collective ego they stepped out and a huge alternative movement developed you can't even separate the increasing madness and the awakening and that's the strange thing that's happening even now they go together the old consciousness plays itself out and becomes more and more visible on the surface you can see it so clearly and part of the awakening both on an individual and collective level is to recognize madness as madness that's already part of the awakening when you see we are mad that is mad and so that's the intensification of the egoic consciousness and the coming in of the new they work hand in hand they go together so the world becomes more dysfunctional more mad and at the same time consciousness is transforming in humans before that reaches the outer levels of the world which are corporate structures and entities and the humans that run that and the outer most which is political entities and the humans that run that there is a certain delay before even it reaches the media or it reaches the media here and there already for the most part what you still see in the media is the old consciousness the manifestation of that and it's getting worse on that level and that's how it is and at the same time the awakening happens it will be a while before that reaches the screens on a large scale but already you can see little signs here and there it does happen I had said for many times in talks this talk is not going to be on the news tonight and I had been right for a long time and suddenly somebody came and they wanted to film part of a talk and put it on the national news in Canada and they did I was wrong I was very happy I was wrong it wasn't it was only 3 minutes and yet it was there that was a miracle in itself because this is not something you would normally see on the news because we are not smashing anything up we are not we are not blowing ourselves up or throwing bombs and yet it was on the news

[Speaker 2] (3:53:52 - 3:53:53)

so

[Speaker 1] (3:53:57 - 4:14:13)

in bed tonight go into your inner energy field be there as an alive presence not a thinking little being thinking about the end of the retreat what you are going to do be there less and less don't activate so much the concern with your life situation whenever when you truly need to think about it and take action then you will be present with that but don't revive whatever personal life situation you have and everybody has one don't continuously revive that in your mind because that will absorb everything your life situation which is thought forms past and future my story absorbs most people's entire life they are continuously lost in their life situation they miss life it is now so make life the focal point of your life and life situation is on the periphery you deal with it when it comes not revive and think oh I have so many problems you do show it to me where is it where is the problem well here my bank account whatever is zero all I can see is a figure on a piece of paper just a cipher I lived for many years not knowing where the next day or the next week income would come from and it always came from somewhere it wasn't a problem I didn't feel poor in the eyes of the world I was poor probably lived below the poverty line for several years and then it improved somewhat but still was just a minimum and that was fine even for two years when I didn't have a home or a job or an income life looked after me because I trusted in life which is the present moment don't let your life situation absorb your attention completely especially when you are in bed at night go into sleep from the beauty the power that is you inhabit the body as you lie there in bed it's best if you do it lying on your back and feel the intense aliveness that is in every cell the presence that you are and sleep go into sleep from there and if you wake up in the middle of the night and the movement of thought wants to start immediately notice it and say okay I'll go into the body and you within an instant you can change what would have been a sleepless restless night with agonizing thoughts useless thoughts because there is nothing you can do right there and you are not threatened you are just in a state of fear because you have fearful concepts in your head you are in bed you are not being threatened by anything but the concepts in your head are threatening you what's going to happen what could happen what do I do if that happens what do I do if I lose that I don't get that and all those concepts that you then identify with are very threatening they are like little animals in your head and you take them to be real you go oh no it's unreal it's like phantoms that the mind creates fear thoughts and always to test the reality of the situation what is the reality here and now what is the problem here and now none or if it is if it has reality then there is something you can do about it or you can surrender to it well the problem is I am in prison ok break out apply for parole or surrender to what is and if you are planning to break out or planning to apply for parole you still have to surrender first otherwise you will be unhappy there may be certain illnesses some people have advanced illnesses and whether healing or not is possible you don't know but it is more likely in the state of non-resistance books have been written about it even medical research has shown that in those cases where spontaneous healing happened it did not happen when people were making the illness into an enemy it happened through acceptance deep acceptance with which comes peace and it is only the peace that is the healer the inner peace is the healer I remember a story about Byron Katie a spiritual teacher in the States she was visiting a woman suffering from advanced cancer throughout her body maybe only a few more weeks to live and she can be quite radical in the way she expresses herself this teacher but straight cutting through mind so she visited the woman and the woman looked of course extremely unhappy and suffering and Byron Katie said to her I don't see a problem and the woman the woman got angry and she took off the cover of her bed and she showed her her right leg was three or four times the size of her left leg it had already swollen to a gigantic because of the disease and she said you want to see a problem I'll show you a problem said the patient and she said look at this and Byron Katie said oh I see your problem is that you think your right leg should be exactly the same size as your left leg and at that moment for the first time in a long time the patient laughed because at that moment the patient disidentified from thought structures thought structures that were saying this should not be this should be otherwise and what was ultimately causing the suffering there may have been physical pain but suffering was caused by the thought structures in her head that could not accept what is that argued with it and said no so the suffering always comes out of thought suffering is thought made pain is possible physical pain yes but the two are of course they are related suffering can end before physical pain ends suffering can end a few days before you die of some disease you can come to the end of suffering and you will have fulfilled the purpose of your life on earth the flowering has happened the liberation has happened you stepped out of identification with mind the flowering of consciousness has happened for the flowering of consciousness to happen you don't need a lot more time you don't need any time really and if it should be so for you that you are not sure whether you are going to live a few more months which by the way nobody knows in this room whether they are going to live because forms are unstable we just don't know but if the likelihood in you seems to be greater for some reason that you may not survive for more than a few months allow that to one could almost say force you into presence because life has taken time away from you life has taken future away from you which to the ego is the most dreadful thing that could happen to anybody but is in fact the most wonderful thing that could happen to anybody that future is taken away the mind cannot seek refuge anymore in future so you are forced you are either in intense suffering or you are forced into intense presence and I know some people to whom this has happened one passed away two years ago I know another friend of mine to whom who is in that situation now and the friend who passed away two or two and a half years ago became radiant in the last few weeks months of her life as the body wasted away she simply could almost see light coming through her and peace and her eyes were clear became totally clear what greater thing could happen to a human being than that so if that happens of course to everyone here in this room it will come sooner or later the impending end of this form and even if you are only 25 now there is no guarantee that you will go on to 95 or 100 you may you may not so don't wait for life to take future away from you although when it happens it's good relinquish future as a psychological thing not on a practical level on a practical level you say okay tomorrow I'll catch a train tomorrow we'll meet here at 9.30 again practical level no problem practical future no problem psychological future is the problem and on that level you relinquish future needing to become someone and so on a practical level you can do all kinds of new things explore new things learn new things create things play around with creation create this or that but foundation for creation is the inner state of alignment with life then what you create is more empowered and will be for the good and not create more suffering because what you create out of the egoic state creates more suffering karmic so you could build a gigantic corporation out of feeling inadequate I'll show them who I am and it has happened people have built gigantic enterprises and become multi billionaires and then collapsed of stress and before they collapsed they looked and said what was all that about and in the meantime the thousands of employees also were ill with stress and unhappy so what you create out of the state of alignment will be different from what you create out of ego and it will be more empowered and it will be different because it will be in alignment with consciousness where the whole cosmos is going and what it is we don't know it depends on you some may not create anything you may just be happy sitting there and talking to whoever comes to you or you may continue to do your job but it becomes just just a cover for consciousness you could do the most the simplest job like handing out tickets in a cinema and every person you look at you look at through presence here you are enjoy the film here you are and you're in continuous meditation and maybe you'll stay there and change many people's lives you contribute to something new a seed can come even there to anybody who has some readiness even a minimum degree of readiness that moment can be a trigger and it will be for some they will never know it perhaps that moment was the trigger for an inner change or it may be that you do that for a while and then life takes you somewhere else and suddenly you have a group in front of you and say well here we are which is always a good way to start on a purely practical level I hesitate to use the word tomorrow and as you know tomorrow never comes except as the now we may have questions if there are any unless something else happens you never know we may have silence for a large part of the day unless something else happens we don't know that yet in the meantime it's our job to deepen presence just just this to accept what is to be friendly with what is and if on the surface of things what is doesn't look so great you can use a little mantra that a friend of mine came up with when something happens that so it goes wrong this to to T-O-O this also meaning it is my job to say yes to also to this this to if it looks as if something that you cannot accept this to it's always wonderful when little things go wrong during the day they always do one way or another it's beautiful because then every time you can find a space you know there it is again oh there it is again and you smile when it happens sometimes you get a sequence of four or five things not working as they should and there was a buzzing sound on the recording tape the recording today oh here we go Kim surrendered oh that's how it is space and then the next thing and the next you have a spacious relationship to things that happen then spacious compassionate even towards things that happen or don't happen as they should happen compassionate towards life

[Speaker 2] (4:19:04 - 4:19:41)

we celebrate we are the new man sunrise over the mountain spreading your light over the land

[Speaker 1] (4:20:32 - 5:09:09)

so since yesterday morning and before you've been chopping wood and carrying water one way or another being total with whatever you are doing at any moment or rather in the expressed also in another Zen saying that a master once answered when his disciple said they talked to him of another master who could walk on water and he said he can walk on water what can you do and he gave the famous reply when I'm hungry I eat when I'm tired I sleep doesn't everybody do that what he means is he does nothing else at that moment he has no stuff around eating when he eats and no stuff around sleeping when he goes to bed no resistance no demands this moment is just as it is there's no self that moves into the action whatever he's doing no expectation this moment is enough not expectation always implies you're hoping that some future moment will be fuller through this moment through doing something at this moment but if you haven't found the fullness of this moment you can't find the fullness no matter what the next moment contains because the next moment is this moment always when it comes so carrying the burden of self into what you do greatly reduces your sense of aliveness greatly reduces your intelligence intelligence not IQ intelligence true deeper intelligence and makes life heavy because yourself the sense of me with its unfulfilled expectations of this or that or its complaints about what's not happening now or whatever it may be that's the heaviness that then flows into what you do because every self is heavy there's then no lightness you could even have stuff around sitting here this moment not totally wanting to be here complaining about this or that carrying some memory from the past into here or a very common thing would rather be somewhere else so you're not total not truly fully here because there's self the burden of self which is mind stuff it's a self a conceptual self and it's in its very nature that it cannot be fulfilled in the present moment it looks always to the next moment its state is unfulfillment and that's not personal and the strange thing is the sense of being unfulfilled makes up a large part of what people conceive of as themselves their personal sense of self all it is it's a mind pattern collective human mind pattern and it's mistaken for me my dilemma my sense of not enough and perhaps it was the Buddha 2600 years ago who was the first human I don't know who realized the illusion of self who realized the truth of no self in any form any thought any emotion any external form or internal form he realized the truth of anatta there's no self in it and if you're looking for self there's dukkha suffering so there's only suffering if you're looking for self in thought or self in an emotion if thought is in doubt with a sense of self and every emotion is in doubt with a sense of self is not recognized as just a human emotion passing through thoughts passing through or external situations where I'm looking for myself through something or other through some external possession through fame through recognition whatever it may be through my father or my mother understanding me so you cannot find yourself anywhere and all the Buddhists have this strange expression no self as the essence sometimes even called and it's frightening to the ego emptiness all it means is stillness a still mind or rather no mind emptiness and yet what is there when the mind is still there's something there but you cannot define it because it has no form something not even a thing any word you use is wrong because every word derives from the world of things remember to be here in touch with your inner energy field otherwise you'll become restless and start thinking when you become restless you've moved you've lost touch with a deeper sense of being and moved into the head and then unconscious body movements can sometimes happen emotions are also a restless thing but you're not usually conscious of it I can sometimes tell when people are not fully here their legs or feet start shaking their eyes go drifting they're looking for somewhere else some other place they've moved into the head in the meantime the legs go and it's quite normal many people spend a lot of time sitting like that if an animal did it we would have to take it to the vet because imagine your dog doing that then it would be obvious there's something wrong with the dog but with humans it's normal and when you notice it then something another dimension has come in there's an awareness suddenly that your leg is shaking the restlessness and suddenly you notice it you notice certain involuntary movements or whatever it is and that's very significant the noticing because awareness is there presence is there it's only then you can see what's going on inside you when there's no presence you don't know what's going on inside you because you're so identified with what's going on you are what is going on you don't know what's going on you have to you're acting it out you're an actor who has forgotten that he or she is acting out a script you're totally in it and it's all conditioned and then people's behavior becomes predictable you can tell from people relatives and so on that you've known for a long time that most of people's behavior is predictable you can even predict what they're going to answer when you say something what their reaction is going to be predictable reaction but whatever you can observe in yourself means you're conscious enough to observe something in yourself and that's all that's needed you don't really need to change anything as such because then you have another dilemma and that dilemma is part of many people's sense of self and that is there's something wrong with me and many people have that there's something wrong with me and I need to there's something I need to repair whatever it is now you could either say there are two statements we can make here and just two different perspectives on it and they're both right in their own way there's nothing wrong with you and there's something wrong with everybody as long as there's no presence of course there's dysfunction but the moment you notice that there's nothing wrong awareness is all that's needed presence is all that's needed for example when you become conscious of your legs shaking soon after it'll stop shaking because it will only shaking because you are unconscious of it it would be rare for a human to consciously shake their legs and say okay I'll just carry on shaking this leg they don't do it oh and then after a while it dies down because your attention was there it's flown into there and you see that and then it slows down and goes another one is to notice that you are unfriendly towards the present moment and that's does that mean there's something wrong with you?

no, it's something supremely right with you because you you are conscious you are aware that you are unfriendly with the present moment that's all that's needed if there's something wrong with you truly wrong you don't even know it so those humans with whom there is something wrong they have no idea they think there's absolutely nothing wrong those who are the most extreme manifestations of human unconsciousness those human beings who go around with bombs or machine guns or throw whatever they throw they don't think there's anything wrong with them nothing wrong with me there's everything wrong with them there so when you notice something hostility towards the present moment in whatever form there's nothing wrong the presence is there the very purpose of your life on earth is fulfilling itself at that moment the arising of consciousness so what could possibly be wrong?

and yet the egoic identity the egoic self insists in many cases there is something wrong with me and it can sometimes obscure the awareness when you observe something in yourself such as hostility towards what is the present moment at that moment the mind can come in again and obscure the awareness that was there for a moment and formulate some kind of judgment it is a new thought and that judgment for example would say you see you're not good enough you can't do it you've been to the retreat plus 50 workshops before that and you see you still can't do it there is something wrong with you you see you're no good look, they're all present you're the only one who can't do it you might as well give up so when you observe something in yourself the mind may then come in obscure the presence that was there for a moment and make a thought out of it that has to do something with yourself to add something to your sense of self and so the heaviness of self can increase even there because when you become aware you become aware you come of so many ways in which you create heaviness in your life in which you resist the present moment in which you add stuff to the chopping of the wood and the carrying of the water and a mental commentary while you carry the water oh this is this is awful how much how much longer it feels much heavier than yesterday why do I have to do this why don't they carry the water they should be stuff around all kinds of mind stuff am I getting weaker all kinds of whatever it is I shouldn't be carrying water I've been doing it for ten years it's other people's turn now nobody nobody acknowledges me that I'm carrying this water they don't even thank me hard work carrying that water is hard work but eighty percent of the energy that is expanded on carrying the water is actually mind stuff the heaviness that the mind produces otherwise it would just be that it might be a heavy bucket but it's not really it's just easy so it's wonderful to realize there's nothing wrong with you and the more things you discover in yourself that had been unconscious the more you are fulfilling your destiny on the planet which is you become a manifestation of consciousness arising you go beyond the merely personal the delusion of a form identification the heavy thing for many people is the pain body which is the reason why many people think there's something very wrong with them because periodically they suffer an influx of heavy emotion painful emotion negative emotion fear deep sadness or very dark mood anger all kinds of forms of upset and even those who in whom consciousness is already arising presence is already arising they still find themselves in many cases at the mercy of the temporary the periodic arising of their pain body which is past pain remnants of past pain that are still alive and have accumulated inside you as a little entity personal plus collective part of it is collective pain body it could be the collective pain body of your family that's part of your personal pain body or the collective pain body of the part of the world you live in could be some are heavier than others and certainly it will be also partly the suffering of humanity the collective pain body of humanity and everybody has his or her share of that and that is a little energy form in you and that's obviously that's what it is because everything every form is an energy form every thought is an energy form the table is an energy form it just looks solid it isn't there was an amazing realization from physics it's 99% empty space but it looks solid same as the body 99.999% empty space so the pain body is energy an energy form one could say almost like a little entity made up of emotion an emotional entity I saw in a film recently a character that got closest to what the human pain body looks like and it's in the film Lord of the Rings a little being I can't remember the name Gollum but yet sometimes if you look it's very well done sometimes when you look into his eyes you see there's a being hiding in there even there there's a sweet being hiding in there somewhere and just the same the pain body is energy life energy trapped that's all created by the ego by thousands of years of living through an illusory sense of self and creating a reality on the basis of that illusion living in a world of enemies because that's the ego's world creating enemies wherever you go not being able to live without them making the whole world appear hostile towards you having to fear every little thing of course that creates a lot of pain and even though presence may be arising in you and in all of you it is you may still find yourself being taken over by that thing when it wakes up from its dormant stage might be dormant for a week or two or three or four and then at some point it wants to experience more pain it wakes up and then it tries to find out what's going on in your life right now it looks for an opening where it can go in into your mind and so that could be a slight upset with something while you are driving traffic a driver cuts across and there is a slight oh and at that moment the pain body uses that as an opening and flows into that little upset and then before you know it the little upset has developed into a stream of negative thinking about the world and in general and yourself and other people and the stupidity of them all and before you know it the little thing has grown into something a huge field of heavy negative energy oh that's the pain body it used that little it was waiting for it and of course pain bodies help each other so the driver who cut across you was probably possessed by his pain I'm going to show him the phenomenon that's called road rage where two drivers stop their cars and start attacking each other physically means when two active pain bodies happen to meet on the road that can happen not only two active pain bodies but two active pain bodies in two humans in whom not the slightest trace of presence has yet arisen they are totally identified with that and they can't help it they're driven to it so the pain body becomes part of the self it amplifies the already heavy and dysfunctional self even without the influx of the heavy past emotion that is in the pain body so even in at the best of times there is a heaviness to the self to that sense of self of me but that becomes amplified through the old emotion of the pain body it uses the structures the mind structures of the egoic self and flows into them and then they become it's like putting higher voltage into the into the heaviness of the ego and the dysfunction of it you plug it into and so there they have all the egoic structures plus an enormous amount of emotion raw needing desperately to experience some more drama or pain wanting more pain and one way of looking at that is that is in human beings the addiction to emotional pain that's the pain body and if you ever discover that in yourself that at that moment you're loving it indulging in negative thinking for example which is one way in which the pain body renews itself feeding on your thinking your thought every thought feeds it and the emotion fuels the negative thinking the thinking feeds the emotion the emotion fuels the thinking the thinking feeds the emotion vicious circle can go on and it's great don't want to get up then at that moment you don't want to get out of your pain so if the pain body may be feeding on your thinking may be feeding on other people's reactions and at that moment you don't want anything else you want that because you are the pain body at that moment there is an addiction to emotional pain so if you get drawn into a stream of negative thinking about life about other people about yourself about whatever it may be or one person which could be yourself or your partner or your father or some politician not mentioning any names and whenever you the image of that person comes into your head there is an enormous influx of pain so but again we could easily misinterpret the pain body as being personal and as unconsciousness being the personal shortcoming of someone but all that if it's a politician or your partner or whatever but all that is there is the expression of human unconsciousness and the pain body wonderfully expressed in the words of Jesus they know not what they do forgive them for they know not what they do or in the modern translation it hasn't been published yet they are completely unconscious and when that is the case they create suffering and when you react as if there were a person there who knows what he is doing you also become unconscious the reaction can make you unconscious the reaction can take you over and then your own pain body suddenly is there so and the pain body contributes to the fact that many people believe there is something wrong with them and there isn't it's the human pain body and the heavier it is in you because people have varying degrees of density in their pain body the more likely it is that it will drive you into consciousness because the pain gets too much I can't live like that anymore and then suddenly you notice it when it arises the first sign of it you may be able to catch a little event triggering an enormous reaction so what's that and you notice that emotional movement inside you your present what then happens we don't know the pain body may still arise depending on your degree of presence strange thing happens when the pain body comes up it uses an opportunity we mentioned the car could be your partner who makes a remark or comment that the pain body can use as an opportunity to arise what did you mean when you said that were you accusing me why are you accusing me I wasn't accusing you yes you were accusing and to observe it then as it arises whether you can do that depends on your degree of presence and it's quite possible that you can detect it for most people it works like this they become conscious just after it's happened a pain body episode has happened a pain body came up a drama developed perhaps with your partner or at work or some other member of your family or even with a stranger drama developed there was perhaps a lot of shouting and fighting and then pain body fed itself on the emotional pain and then subsided and went back to its dormant state and then consciousness some consciousness comes back what was that what was all that about sometimes partners can do it after the drama they can both say what was all that about and then you think how did it start we can't even remember what the whole thing was about in some cases they can't even remember how it all started it was about nothing in many cases much ado about nothing Shakespeare's play and then they become conscious there was our pain body or there was my pain body that was it ok well let's see if next time we can catch it a little bit sooner and then usually it arises in one person before it triggers the reaction in the other so it can sometimes happen that one partner remains conscious and observes the arising of the pain body in the other and then perhaps can either point it out or if that's too dangerous can can simply be intensely present in the body and simply be there as an aware presence a non-reacting presence but that is requires great intensity of presence because the pain body is clever very clever it knows the weak points where you're most likely to react or if you think it's all too much for you you can quietly walk out of the room but who knows what happens after that of course as you know it's easier to see it in others than in yourself and if you're genuinely present and say there's your pain body it's starting the other person may become at that moment and say yeah, you're right or the pain body may already have taken possession of their thoughts and so the person can no longer see it and the pain body then will never admit that he or she is the pain body of course if you ask are you the pain body they would not admit to it but they would probably tell you that you are the pain body or throw something at you or deny the whole thing all that nonsense about pain body so pain body is a great challenge it is not personal it does not mean there's something wrong with you usually as presence arises the gap between the ending of the pain body episode and the arising of conscious presence when you recognize what has happened gets shorter and shorter at first you might need an hour or two after an episode or even a day and then you look back at what happened yesterday oh, that was and then that shortens and then you may be able to be present either when it's not yet either has not fully arisen yet in its very early stages of an emotional reaction trying to move into your mind and you may be able to catch it there and watch it or you may be able to catch it as it begins to subside the episode is coming to an end and gradually you're getting tired of the drama it's exhausting of course and in that moment the pain body is still partly there you catch it and say oh, I can still feel it it often happens very frequently that the it also happens very frequently that the pain body when it needs to feed on more pain comes up and you are there very present very alert and you see it so it meets presence the light of presence and usually it may stick around for a little while to see if it can get through there somewhere presence by the way is not holding it down presence never exerts any effort on anything it never resists anything presence never holds the pain body down in any way that is a dangerous thing one could do that through will power I have no negative emotion because I'm spiritually advanced I'm just not seeing them I'm just not they don't exist and of course then they'll come out in very strange ways so you cannot hold the pain body down you can for a short while and then it'll come up in strangest ways and you do the weirdest things including physical violence or you inflict cruelty on people and don't even know it or you make your body very ill the pain body is no other outlet it can become very destructive an unexpressed emotion churning around you for years so presence never pushes it down it's simply a light into which it comes that's all the light of presence the light of awareness the light of consciousness the pain body comes into the light and the strange thing is it doesn't like the light so it will either try to obscure the light so that it can continue to pretend to be you it can take you over and become you for a while and live through you the emotion wants to live again through you another form of reincarnation the emotion wants to live again through you it wants to relive what it already knows what it makes up its energy field and so it cannot do that when there's presence when you are there you are actually there as the consciousness that watches then it can't do it so it may for a while it will try you can see it comes up the little entity and there's a light shining on it and then it may try again coming up and you're still you watch it and then it tends to shrink back into a little dark corner it waits for a better opportunity it's a and that's it's fine that's how the whole this is how consciousness works it doesn't mean you're now totally free of pain but it does at that moment it's gone down it's you're too conscious can't come in the evening perhaps it'll find a better opportunity when you lose consciousness through watching a certain politician on TV or your partner comes home late from work where have you been?

some upset happens one drink too many and there's his chance or her chance in certain it's more in males there are quite a few I don't know the percentage of the population it is frequently happens that in certain males the pain body comes up particularly when they drink too much and so they lose the their level of consciousness that they normally have which may not be that high even at the best of times but when they get drunk it goes down considerably and so often violence is associated with being drunk for from in this perhaps 10% of men they become physically violent when when they become unconscious through alcohol and they do dreadful things and then when they are sober again how could I have done such a thing I don't know what came over me and some have that cycle in in their with their partner physically abusive and so of course when they are little bit more conscious they always promise this is the last time it won't happen again now that's not the pain body speaking that's them speaking when there's a little bit more consciousness and of course it will happen again unless presence truly comes into their lives so in some cases you may have to physically remove yourself from a destructive pain body if change otherwise is not happening or would take too long you would not survive two more years with that person perhaps in that case you cannot stay around it would be too dangerous that person will then go its own his or her own way and evolve in their own time so pain body meets presence shrinks back then waits for a better opportunity but as presence arises there's even the possibility that you could detect an active pain body in you even in the midst of it even in the midst of it it is possible to wake up and suddenly realize what's happening you are acting out old emotional pain and at that moment there happens a dissociation between that entire emotional field and yourself it's like stepping out of a of a role out of an energy field you were in it and suddenly you step out of that phantom self you step out and there you see it it's still there active still in you still doing what it does maybe still you're waving your arms about or whatever it is at that moment there may still be words coming out of your mouth

[Speaker 2] (5:09:10 - 5:09:11)

you, you

[Speaker 1] (5:09:21 - 5:40:08)

and at that moment you see it wow and then it cannot last for long very much longer at least not right there it doesn't mean it's gone forever but then it will quickly shrink again back because it cannot consciousness and pain body cannot coexist for long and every time you bring presence to it the pain body cannot renew itself so it can only play out its old energy when you the more you can be present with it the less can it use you to renew itself and so it what happens then to the pain body the energy becomes freed that was trapped in there and many people have carried so much pain that they can't do much else in their lives they haven't that absorbs so much of their aliveness that they have little left to live their life the emotional pain and this is in the case of dense pain bodies the emotional pain is so much that it consumes them it's like a parasite it consumes them all their aliveness and as you bring consciousness to it that trapped energy becomes freed it was trapped at a low frequency if you could hear it something like that you wouldn't want to listen to a radio station for too long like that and so that becomes freed but it is with life energy it is aliveness ultimately and there is an increasing sense of aliveness that you feel because the energy leaves it's trapped in the pain body very much you could compare to I sometimes compare to a piece of heavy wood that's been burned so or coal the coal is transmuted into fire the flame of consciousness first it was it was a heavy substance dark and heavy substance and suddenly the dark and heavy substance burns and becomes a flame it becomes a transmutation into pure energy beautiful so that's and that is the beauty of it why ultimately whatever is is just fine as it is or even the human pain body has a function and that is that it provides fuel for consciousness the pain it makes ultimately it becomes your spiritual teacher one of your spiritual teachers and for some people their main spiritual teacher I would say for me it was my main spiritual teacher because I couldn't live with him any longer so I couldn't live with myself any longer and a large part of myself when that realization came to me as a thought I cannot live with myself any longer a large part of who I felt myself to be consisted of emotional pain and that just became unbearable and that's why I'm here now so the the mechanism there of ultimately what is ego induced pain pain induced through unconscious living through ego pain body egoic living creates pain suffering it even needs the continuation of pain because the ego and the pain body they both need conflict they both need further pain the ego needs it to define itself through the other the enemy the not me it needs the boundary around itself it needs to create opposition in order to feel itself it needs somebody to disagree with me for example so that I can feel that I'm right he's wrong and in being right the illusion of who I am grows a little bit I need that if everybody agrees with me in everybody I would begin to lose my artificial sense of self my mind made sense of self so religions often the collective identity that is in certain religions largely consists of the unbelievers those who are not us give us our identity we define ourselves through those unbelievers they give us our sense of who we are now if suddenly they all became believers we would be at a loss who are we now they are all in possession of the truth now so we lose our identity as the possessors of the truth if everybody is in possession of the truth who are we if we are at peace with everybody we don't have enemies who are we if we don't define ourselves through our enemies not only collectively also personally people define themselves through their problematic life situation all the problems in their life situation make up my life me and my life so that artificial artificially induced sense of self disappears pain body pain is not who you are it's simply an energy that lives in you for a while and then becomes transmuted become friendly with your pain body may not yet be thankful for it I'm thankful now but at that time I wasn't thankful become friendly with your pain body this is the most powerful transformative tool so to speak because very often what manifests in the present moment is the pain body in you so if you are not making the now into an enemy if you become friendly with the now that will mean at times you have to become friendly with the pain body because you are experiencing that emotion now it's part of what is now and that is becoming friendly with it simply accept that it's there there it is I can feel it that implies of course that you know it's there which in turn implies of course that there's enough presence for you to see it you cannot become friendly with the pain body if you don't see it and the pain body's nature is not being friendly in itself so when you are the pain body you cannot become friendly with the present moment that's not what the pain body does so you see how it connects it's based on presence if there's presence in you then you can accept it then you can be friendly with it if there's not enough presence you can't be friendly with the pain body because then you are the pain body and the pain body is not friendly but once you are able to detect it and that's all that's required to know it's there then you can bring acceptance to it and say there you are there it is whatever or simply just watch feel it wow feel the raw emotion of it feel even the need to wanting somebody else to draw in wanting someone else to draw in and make him or her part of that emotion feel what it feels like directly what does it feel like in you as an energy field amazing so you are watching it that's all that's all that's needed so you cannot really watch it internally if you don't fully accept it and you cannot fully accept it if you are not there as the witness as the watcher of it and that's all that's needed so pain body nothing wrong with you human humanity in it's present evolutionary stage you can't escape that the present evolutionary stage of humanity has pain body nothing personal not a problem not your personal dilemma and by the way there's nothing personal in presence either the whole idea of person ultimately goes out of the window as you probably know the word person comes from latin is based on the mask that actors used to wear in the early forms of theater persona the mask the image of me so presence isn't personal either and yet it's I am it's the essence of being of your being you and being are one the essence of what obscurely shines through the egoic story of me you feel there's a somewhere in there there is an I am in there somewhere but the I am gets mixed up with thought forms and memories and patterns in the mind it gets mixed up with a story there is something precious in the story but it's not the story it's the consciousness in the story even in a dream people say a dream is totally is unreal yes it's unreal but if there were not something real in there the dream couldn't even be for a dream to exist there must be something there that enables the dream the forms that make up the dream to exist what is it that enables the dream to exist consciousness it appears in consciousness what is it that enables the dream the story of me to exist what is the essence of who I am somewhere hidden in that story I'm looking for myself in the different forms of the story and yet each form of the story concealed as the essence of that form is I am a sense of presence of beingness that's I'm hiding everywhere but hiding so well disguised that I can't even recognize myself so it's a walking around in everyone is God in heavy disguise so you can say I am God in disguise and the other person says oh I hardly recognized you or you could say you certainly did fool me and I fooled myself for a long time so everybody feels there's something precious to have and that is true but it's not really in the forms of my story or in the form of anything but hidden in the form the essence of each form of each thought that I have of each emotion that I have the essence that enables it to be is always the same is always the one is the divine one self so that solves the dilemma the philosophical dilemma of whether the world is unreal or not so if anybody was planning to ask that question this afternoon you can drop it the world is obviously as real as a dream that you have it has a certain reality yes and yet just like a dream the forms that make up the world change continuously they don't stay around for that long this continuous flux things come and go very quickly every experience everything is fleeting it's like a dream and then it's gone you see some people even don't know was occasionally they'd say did I dream that or did that happen because it's gone it's a it was a fleeting experience and it's dissolved as that experience what was that all about always one the Chinese emperor who woke up from a dream and became very worried because he dreamt that he was a butterfly and then he suddenly thought maybe I'm a butterfly dreaming that I'm an emperor and it comes to the same thing the story of yourself is being dreamt by consciousness you could say how could it be otherwise and why is it happening because consciousness wants to dream that dream it's enjoying it on some level but consciousness also wants to wake up no otherwise we wouldn't be here this is not to provide the ultimate philosophical explanation of the universe because it would be impossible to do that through words or through thoughts but it's a slight hint of what it's all about it can only give a distant approximation of what it's all about never try to figure out through the mind what it's all about that's very heavy there's a knowing that comes when the need to figure out the universe is relinquished and you are happy with being alert and still and not knowing the answer if you become comfortable with not knowing then there is enormous wisdom and knowing in there how much of that you could ever put into words who knows maybe not very much how much of that will ever find expression who knows maybe only a tiny fraction and that's okay so it's knowing finding who you are not as a character in the story of me not as a character in the dream but as the dreamer you're not a character in your own story but that's what the ego believes you are of course the protagonist the main character the one character that really matters all the others have supporting roles in the story of the ego supporting cast and then and then the rest of humanity and then the protagonist me and the me consists of a bundle of thought forms memories and then it dissolves sometimes it dissolves before the body dies when it becomes too painful to continue to be me sometimes it dissolves when a very serious illness comes or a very serious disability comes and the image of me cannot hold itself up anymore and then you realize you are not the character you are the dreamer of the character creator of the character the consciousness behind it all I've made it all up and it was never deadly serious it's only deadly serious it may be relatively serious but it's not deadly serious because it's only deadly serious if the forms that consciousness takes in the dream are all you know then every form is heavy and deadly and death is always around the corner and it's frightening but knowing yourself as the consciousness that changes the nature of the dream also it doesn't mean that the dream will immediately evaporate the dream actually becomes a more pleasant dream when you know when you are not totally lost in it you can continue to move in this world of form even your personal life continues the story of me of course continues you carry on doing certain things you've been doing that continues and yet there is a deeper dimension present now you no longer totally believe in the absolute reality of these forms you know they all come and go quickly you're not looking for yourself in the dream anymore that's the relief so you let the dream unfold it's fine but you're not looking for a stronger me or a more complete me as that character in the dream that's the dream can't really do that for you and so it may well be and here we come to another cosmological viewpoint only a tentative not to be taken as some absolute statement the universe ancient teachings and more modern findings both point to the possibility that the universe may be expanding like a heartbeat they say there was a big bang maybe maybe not maybe it's happening every moment and the universe came out of one point of nothingness nobody can actually explain that and suddenly manifestation happened and then it expanded and diversified and we may be still part of that and then at some point things come together again multiplicity rising out of oneness and yet the beauty is the oneness is never lost the point that was there before the universe ever came into being is still present in every being the timeless moment the timeless fullness of life unmanifested life that never really disappeared at some point the journey home begins for the entire universe back to oneness the journey home and what else is this gathering and the journey home so this may reflect something on a very small scale but it's all connected that's happening on a very large scale the beginning of the journey home to oneness because you discover the underlying essence and oneness of all life of yourself and we couldn't do that if that were not part of a larger movement within the cosmos and we are simply an expression of that awakening out of the dream of multiplicity perhaps the dream had to be dreamt so that God can know him her itself as God only after losing itself in form and then waking up and it's so beautiful that waking up that is built into the dream the need to wake up and that's why the dream is meant to become unpleasant after a while because the unpleasantness of the dream, the dream turning unpleasant is the built-in alarm clock in the dream preordained built-in alarm clock that's the unpleasantness and after that has rang another character appears in a dream called the spiritual teacher and the spiritual teacher says as the character in the dream don't you realize this is the dream and that you can wake up even while you're still dreaming this dream you can wake up and know who you are even in the dream and continue to play that character without totally believing in it anymore without losing yourself in the character this temporary form and then you see how much more pleasant the dream is and that may also you may know that all the very ancient myths in so many cultures have the story of the golden age the very distant beginning of things when there was when beings lived in harmony in total harmony India has that story of the yugas the original beginning of things was when things perhaps were still closer to oneness and the more you get away from the oneness into diversification the more difficult things become the harder it gets because every form believes itself to be separate and then there's the promised return the return to the state of oneness so things start with the golden age so called and then they deteriorate continuously but in the process of deterioration there's also a lot of learning of forms we learn what all the things that make up the universe and then comes the return and as you go back to the source back to back home things the dream improves again but this time with consciousness with knowing so we paradise regained as one ancient literary work is entitled paradise regained and that is the purpose paradise regained is not quite the same as the original paradise it's conscious the original was natural natural oneness and then conscious oneness so this gathering here is part of a huge thing it's not an isolated phenomenon it's not even relegated to just this planet it must be connected with everything else in the cosmos otherwise it wouldn't be able to exist here as a gathering we wouldn't be sitting here talking about this and realizing this if you can become still whatever you truly need to know you'll know out of that stillness the answer suddenly comes the answer to every vital question is already in you not the answer to non-vital questions I recommend that between now and dinner time we keep noble silence as the Buddha called it noble silence is to be present with people otherwise it's just noble silence between now and dinner time we don't know of course what happens to the voice in your head we'll see

[Speaker 2] (5:44:03 - 5:44:50)

sunrise another new morning we celebrate we are the new man sunrise over the mountain spreading your light over the land

[Speaker 1] (5:44:51 - 5:52:54)

the wind is getting a little warmer now out there it's beautiful I trust you've been going for walks one step at a time alert relaxed looking listening feeling being caressed by the wind what could you add to that by thinking about it questions maybe we will look at some questions this afternoon remaining rooted within feeling your presence and if you can feel your presence it's not your presence it's just the way you're speaking because it's intimately you that's why I call it your presence you are presence language always creates a separation but that's how it is feeling yourself as your own presence if then any question survives in your head you could either ask it or wait for the answer within yourself and when you are present within non-vital questions won't survive in the head they are recognized as not truly alive abstract in medieval times the mind created abstractions how many angels can dance on the head of a needle or something like that or abstractions that created the religions not the original creator but subsequent developments the church split into two can't remember when one and a half thousand years ago over the dispute whether the holy spirit emanated from the father or also from the son getting lost in thought and they could kill you if you didn't agree with them so vital question concerns you perhaps your suffering if there is any left or if anybody wants to ask or wants to say anything about something that happened here a realization or whatever it is you're welcome pain body questions are usually helpful to everybody I don't mean questions that are asked by the pain body they would be very angry questions but questions concerning what you have observed or maybe someone very close to you occasionally you get questions asked by the pain body in one group we were talking about the pain body and if the an active pain body if there is a pain body in any member of the audience who is at that moment active that doesn't feel good because the pain body so occasionally it happens that somebody runs out of the room when we talk about the pain body and they're not going to the toilet and in one group we talked about the pain body and an angry voice in the back said I have a question when do we start meditating if we may start with one question somebody asked me yesterday and I didn't quite give a whole answer if we could start with that person who asked me yesterday about fear arising during meditation fear and fearlessness if I remember correctly hello

[Speaker 2] (5:52:56 - 5:53:50)

yesterday I experienced during the meditation a shifting between anxiety and somewhat fear and fearlessness and I realized a connection I realized I was going deeper into a problem that I also face in my everyday life somewhat I get sometimes I get this anxiety seems to coming out of nowhere and sometimes I feel yeah absolutely nearly fearless for even very difficult situations so I hope that you could give me some ideas about that and how I can work with it also give me some truth about that and also how I can work with it in daily life when I experience it

[Speaker 1] (5:53:51 - 6:21:47)

thank you fear is the universal condition virtually everyone unless they are very deeply rooted within experiences some form of fear there are different forms of fear anxiety even stress is a form of fear stress of I'm not going to get there in time nervousness and more extreme forms up to panic dread most pain bodies contain I would say really every pain body contains fear as part of its make up but fear is not always immediately recognizable as fear fear can be can shift and be translated into something that looks very different for example anger if you look behind anger you would always find fear I saw a little puppy at a dog training class that I attended with our with our dog and there was all the puppies were running around playing and then a new one came in whose behavior was clearly dysfunctional because he was quite he could see how aggression and fear go together he would always run into a corner and then if any dog came up to him he would suddenly become aggressive and try to bite and you can see fear and anger they go together even in an animal an animal is not really anger but something almost like anger so in everyone there is residual fear no matter what your thoughts are even if you are free of thought it can still be there that is part of the stored up old emotion of fear then there is the fear that is created by certain types of thinking any type of future thinking my life situation or my problematic situation even one thought coming into your head I would like to get to know that person and very uncertain anything could happen to me so of course when you project yourself into future you immediately meet the uncertainty the complete uncertainty you could lose something very important to you including your body so the fear is created new fear is created through not being present because in the present moment there is usually nothing to fear you can usually check that for yourself most fear is created through leaving the present moment mentally projecting yourself into a possible future which doesn't look good hope is the opposite of that you project a future and that same thought can quickly shift into maybe it's not going to work out and so you can experience almost the same thought that gives you hope for a moment while you lie in bed at 4 o'clock in the morning and then it shifts it flips oh, maybe it won't happen I won't get that and fear immediately comes the gap between I believe it was the founder of gestalt therapy who said anxiety is in the gap between now and then because that is the so we have the that's a mind created gap and the mind which is compulsion to move into the future creates a continuous undercurrent of fear it tries to control the future it can't and so it's fearful it tries to cope with the future an imagined situation you can't you don't have the resource to cope with the future nobody does because it doesn't even exist so life does not give you the resource to cope with the future the strength or whatever knowledge you need the insight, the realization people have piled up in their mind a sequence of things that are problematic could go wrong might not happen should happen and then of course you can't cope with the future it doesn't exist you can always cope with this moment this moment is always simple if it's an emergency it's very likely you will be forced into a presence and you will do something without needing to think something else takes over some people have experienced that when accidents were about to happen suddenly an inner shift occurred all fear was there initially and then suddenly just as it was about to happen all fear left them there were many reports and there was a sense of being alive and out of that if action was possible action came so are you adding to the residual fear that is still in you that's question one am I adding to the fear by identifying with some kind of thought about the future or it could be a thought about somebody else that I feel close to and whose actions and whose life it could be a child and grown up child or teenage child could be anybody else close to you you don't know where they are and what they are doing or you know they are engaged in dangerous activities and so many parents have the need to control the lives of their children they want to protect them from possible harm and even after they are grown up they still want to they get extremely worried about what they are into and yet what they want to spare them suffering and now if you could truly do that if you were omnipotent and you could spare your child or the grown up child suffering there would be no development in the child whatsoever up to a point the arising of consciousness happens through suffering through making mistakes the most unprofitable life would be a life in which no mistakes were made it's impossible but only theoretically possible so suffering is the spiritual teacher until you reach the point where you are now when you suddenly realize I don't need suffering anymore because you choose presence up to that point in your life which is consciousness through suffering most of it is self-created that's how it works and so you have to allow other humans you can help of course as much as you can you help a very young child you have to prevent from getting too close to the window to allow other humans to make mistakes to do what they feel it's right to do even if you know very well this is wrong and will lead to suffering instead of lying awake all night worrying about what they are doing there's nothing you can do so the fear can arise because you have thoughts about somebody close to you or yourself and when there's enough presence and you can recognize that as I'm creating fear my mind is creating fearful thoughts and you believe in every fearful thought and then the corresponding emotion comes many people shake with fear in their warm bed in the middle of the night to bring you back to reality the reality test is a useful question that I may have mentioned before you could put it in your room now what is there to fear at this moment because if it's not now where is it?

and then you open your eyes you look around the room or switch on the light where is the monster where is the dreadful event in my head and then there's the residual fear that you still carry even if your mind is not creating it it may suddenly come up it could be an isolated emotion perhaps drifting up from the pain body and you are not even thinking about future and it can come in meditation it often does because meditation is going deeper into yourself and what the ego fears most is its own end it fears your presence so when there's a letting go into the present moment a relaxing the tightness the contraction with which the fear was being held down opens and often what comes up is fear it's the fear of the end of the egoic entity the fear of the end of my problems the fear of the end of me as a mind made entity so when it happens whether it's a thought about future or whether it just seems to come by itself if it's created by a thought you can see the fallacy of the thought it's about future then you don't believe in the thought anymore and you bring attention back into the body or to your breath and then the fear also goes but if it's not associated with the thought it's present so you feel it fully instead of thinking about it instead of thinking how can I get rid of this or what can I do about it or I don't want to feel this are you arguing with the present moment what is is at this moment inside you and if there's a quiver of fear say that is the fear and then you don't say anything anymore you simply allow it to be there it doesn't feel pleasant but it won't kill you it has killed some people but not people who were aware of it and allowed it to be but people who were totally identified with it completely identified with that emotion then it could kill you but if you are aware of it and notice it's not going to kill me it may not feel pleasant it's like feeling almost a physical feeling of unwellness there it is and you feel it and you may sometimes feel that it wants to become thoughts the emotion wants to become thoughts or the mind is attempting to explain the fear that you feel by creating some image and it's also the residual fear that is in you sometimes the mind doesn't know what to do with it why do I feel fear?

and then it creates some explanation or some image why you feel fear that works the other way around so fear can be created by a fearful thought but a fearful thought can also be created by the residual fear in you that's already there you may have dreams nightmares when you feel intense fear in a dream and you may believe that the image that you are dreaming is creating the fear the monster that you are trying to get away from in the dream is creating the fear it's not the fear is the residual fear that lives in you probably associated with the emotions that are together to form the pain body so what you are experiencing is the residual fear and the mind needs to somehow make sense of this so it attempts to find an image to explain it and in the dream it becomes a nightmare in a very unconscious person or in somebody in whom the fear in daily life can turn into so called paranoia which is a complete misperception of reality in which you see other people or groups of people as your enemies who want to do you harm so you interpret what the ego this is only a more pronounced form the egoic state is very suspicious of other people it wants to use them it also fears them it misinterprets very often their behavior so there is element of paranoia in every ego the fear of others even the need to have enemies to make them into enemies and then it's more pronounced than it's recognized but what is it? it is the mind's attempt to explain the intense fear that I feel and therefore it says it cannot explain it but the mind wants some explanation so it creates a reality that seems to explain the continuous fear that I feel a fearful reality it doesn't know that the fear that you feel is here at the present moment for it so it's an attempt of the mind to explain and it becomes unreality so the quickest way beyond fear yes detect if it's created by a thought you can see the thought and then you can drop the thought or your belief in the thought and come back to the present moment or the residual fear that is in you that wants to become thought too and if possible watch the fear as an energy that lives in you so that it doesn't turn into thinking so you watch it directly it doesn't feel good but it's like bad weather inside no more so bad weather outside is not that bad it's actually quite nice when you accept it when the mind says this is dreadful weather it's dreadful but when you allow it to be even so called bad weather is quite beautiful so you allow the fear to be as it is you give it space to be because that's the form that this moment takes you give it space to be so to speak it's almost a metaphorical way of putting it the space around the fear gets bigger and then you notice there's actually a vast space the more you allow it the more you become aware of space around it inner space around the fear the more there is a distance between you and the fear and there is the fear what before was overpowering you didn't even want to look at it or feel it suddenly is realized as a tiny energy movement compared to the vastness of space around it and that happens when you allow it to be and watch it it becomes transmuted even the residual fear from the past becomes transmuted you're very much aware of the fear influencing your thinking controlling your thinking you remember the two movements fear creates can create when you're not very present fear creates certain thoughts fear thoughts or the other way fear thoughts create fear the residual fear creates also more thoughts when you're not very present people talk about trusting in life they say how can I learn to trust in life you can't learn to trust and that's the greatest thing if you have no trust in life then you're a little fearful entity running around continuously in fear you have no trust how can I learn to trust what is trust trust is simply this it's no more than the absence of fear trust is your natural state fear obscures your natural state when fear is gone trust is there it was always there trust is I trust in life where is life here, now and then you notice that the enormous gap between what the mind imagines life to be which is fearful and the reality of what is reality compared to what the mind creates as my mind made reality reality is very benevolent the mind reality is very harsh what the mind creates as its reality so when you look at people's lives the suffering is derived from thought believing in all the thoughts that the mind throws up about situations my life and so on without that there would only ever be the benevolence of life at this moment and at this when you trust in this moment which is trusting in life life looks after you it's like learning to that you don't need to struggle to keep above water when you learn to swim at first you panic you think you have to move as fast as you can to keep above water and many people live their whole life like that trying to keep their head above water they never learn all you have to just breathe and the water actually carries you you hardly need to move at all you just go to the flowers and say they are not anxious about tomorrow they are not struggling they are not making effort and yet life when he said father it means the one life the one consciousness life looks after them if they can live like that surely you can live in the same way where you feel you are not struggling to live or to make a living but realize and are open to being lived by life to become to be an expression of the one life not a little entity trying to make it and so life lives through you how else could it be and then without the separation between me and life life comes to an end when that separation comes to an end between me and life I am life there is not me and life so work with the fear that is still there always bring acceptance to it don't make it into a problem don't try to figure out how to get rid of it be present with it it is just like as if a dark cloud just watch it and then it wants to create it wants to move into your mind you watch it keep it where it is it is here and then it tries again and the mind says I don't understand this why am I so fearful never mind just watch it there is another question

[Speaker 3] (6:21:50 - 6:23:09)

hello thank you very much I have a question that awoke me at 3am this morning and I am hoping you might answer it so I am not woken up again it was triggered off by comments you made on presence you mentioned about presence being connected with the feeling of our aliveness and then you talked about feeling as you walk across the grass perhaps out in nature and I wondered whether you think it has anything to do with a sense called the kinesthetic sense which apparently means motion feeling the feeling of motion and how deeply presence is connected with the kinesthetic sense and you also mentioned listening to silence and I wondered apparently there is a vestibular sense or proprioceptive sense of movement against the eardrum and I was wondering whether you think that the kinesthetic sense the proprioceptive sense is deeply rooted in our ability to sense our own presence to tune into presence thank you

[Speaker 1] (6:23:10 - 6:23:24)

and then what happened that night at 3 o'clock did you leave that thought and re-entered presence I re-entered presence and I felt

[Speaker 3] (6:23:24 - 6:23:45)

that what I was feeling I was feeling my I believe I was feeling my own presence but I then felt that what I was feeling was movement and then my mind took over and said well presence is feeling motion and then my presence was disturbed by the thought that it is feeling motion

[Speaker 1] (6:23:55 - 6:52:54)

and I don't know if I can give an answer but we'll see the mind tries to understand what presence is because that's what the mind does the mind tries to figure things out to work it out to get a hold of it to grasp it somehow so that I can understand what presence really is and unfortunately it can't ever it can only understand certain things about it when the mind talks about presence through thought you can talk about it the most the mind can do is point to it by saying this or that that's fancy in the right direction but it cannot understand what presence is so this is the reason why because presence is the essence for example of Zen Buddhism and this is why many people study Zen for 20 or 30 years and still don't know what it is this is why an otherwise extremely interesting writer philosopher Arthur Koestler traveled I believe in the 50s to Japan to write a book about Zen Buddhism he had a highly developed mind so he interviewed and spent several months there and finally he wrote a book which was not his best probably his worst some of his books are very good but very intellectual but penetrating analysis of certain things but he could never understand Zen at all because he tried to understand it through the mind and he finally came to the conclusion that it was absolute nonsense with which the Zen monks were only too ready to agree yes you're right it's absolute nonsense nonsense and a great hindrance in the arising of presence is a developed mind like yours trying to figure out what it is and not being able to step beyond the stream of thinking because presence is the cessation of thought without loss of consciousness now you have a definition the cessation of thought without loss of consciousness wow where do you go from there? more thought?

so that takes you to the edge and whatever you say beyond that it can only be more thought but not the cessation of thought not presence the alertness that is there when thought subsides whatever else can be said about it is peripheral about not it you can talk about it so you can talk about yes you could write a PhD but it would never touch presence would it take anybody into presence? I don't know maybe there would be one page you say this page or page 300 of my PhD is the edge read up to there and then throw it away so you could ask what is the relationship between presence and the senses what is the relationship between presence and perception between presence and the feeling of one could say presence can flow into anything presence can flow into the auditory sense so let's see what it is like on a practical level you are listening you are listening so intensely that no thought arises because any thought would diminish your ability to listen you are listening to the parable that I believe Jesus used you are somebody is going to arrive you don't know when he is going to come the master is going to come home the servant is waiting he has to be alert so that he can hear the master when he comes he may be very quiet so he remains awake listening already presence is there then a noise arises the door opens space and an object in space the object here is an auditory object it could be a visual object it could be an inner object like a thought but what we call listening really wasn't really listening because when you were listening for a long time there was no noise to listen to it's like being in a completely dark room and trying to see but intensely looking but there is nothing to see or looking at the sky that's totally blue the vast expanse of sky and it has no object in it perhaps the sun is just behind you on the horizon but the entire sky is so clear and you are looking up into the sky and there is nothing there to see for you so nothing there is no object consciousness or you are listening and there is no noise no object arises no auditory object arises in the space the space that is presence the vast space that is presence the vast stillness that is presence or it could be that you are listening a sound arises and subsides so anything that arises in presence is an object in consciousness whereas presence is consciousness itself doesn't matter what feeling or whatever it is bodily feeling, whatever arises you have two dimensions object consciousness which is a normal state for most humans which means they only know themselves through objects that arise in their consciousness every thought every emotion every sense perception every experience is a form, an object in the field of consciousness now it happens to some human beings who suddenly realize another dimension in themselves and when it happens accidentally it is usually because an object in their life that they had identified with dissolves we call it disaster or death the great loss the big enterprise that I built up collapses the wife dies the child dies the house crumbles everything collapses under me the object that I had identified with dissolves and that leaves a hole in their life a big gaping hole now some people cannot fill up that hole quickly enough it is too active again the enterprise collapses ok, I am going to build up a new one another 20 years or you allow that to be because it drives you into surrender something disappears from you the fabric of your existence has a hole in it and often it happens to people through a great loss or death in their lives suddenly an inner shift happens and there is suddenly enormous peace serenity, aliveness and they don't know what happened to them it is because the space what we could call space consciousness which has no form which is consciousness itself came through that hole of death and destruction death and destruction which look dreadful from the point of view of the human mind the ego are also ultimately benevolent because through death and destruction a hole appears in your existence which consisted of objects, my life this is my life there may be some of you who experienced that suddenly things all collapsed around you and so through that there is an opening and through that comes what Buddhists call the deathless which is the realization of the formless dimension of life which is consciousness itself the space that you are the consciousness that you are so to some it comes through disaster and death and to others it comes through realization through the help of a spiritual teaching and to many it comes a combination of great loss in your own life plus a spiritual teaching and the two come together this is why many of you are here there are quite a few I am certain of that who experienced this or that disaster in their lives and for many people that creates the first opening so we have the dimensions of consciousness object consciousness thoughts one thing after another experiences things that are all important every object is so important and then what is it that makes that whole thing possible space the underlying formless pure consciousness that you are stillness presence it becomes presence when you know it when it recognizes itself but you can't not through thought what I have just said recognize it presence is the famous explanation that the Zen teacher gave who became famous because he never explained anything what is Zen they asked him and he would just go that's also the best answer to your question did you want to ask a question?

thank you can you explain to us are there any differences between male and female that are easier for men and which are easier for females? thank you I'm stuck in a male body for a while but I already from what I have observed and what I also mentioned briefly in the power of now one difference is that first of all both men and women have very active minds both men and women have pain bodies generally speaking the major obstacle and it's not ultimately an obstacle because once you work with an obstacle it becomes a help the major obstacle let's use that word for a moment for men is mind identification with head mental mental the major obstacle for women and against many exceptions is the pain body they are related it's not to say that in some cases identified excessively with thought women have that too but men have it even more an active pain body men have that too very much and women even more women have also the collective female pain body because for thousands of years women have been put in a position of almost slavery by men but the shift from female oriented society to male oriented society happened several thousand years ago very earlier societies most goddess god figures were female and then the shift happened because it happened because humans moved more and more into thinking and then the shift of the divine was then began to assume a male form and they wanted to need to exclude the female so female was then subjected to considerable suffering as simply because they were women almost sold they could be sold and bought and used there are teachers that we know from the past not anymore now there are many female teachers and more and more are coming but most of them that we know from the past seem to be male probably not because the realization came only to men it's because society wouldn't even recognize the female as a teacher there may be some exceptions to that also at first Christianity tried to exclude the female altogether so instead of having as a kind of representation the father, the mother and the son they had the father, the holy spirit and the son and the holy spirit is probably male too and it's only later that the female goddess figure of Mary became in some parts of the church very important and so the female was brought back that way although originally Mary was not important at all those head dominated people they were all men who tried to figure out what we need to believe in they wanted to exclude the female or the female so it came back so in some places virgin Mary is more important than Jesus people are much more interested in Mary than in Jesus it's a representation if you know so when it is expressed when presence expresses itself first there is the formless emanation of presence that is a male or a female body there that comes through stillness the formless emanation of presence whether there is a woman or a man here in the stillness the two merge into one stillness is the oneness but as soon as presence flows into words which is how a spiritual teaching happens out of the field of presence come words and the words carry the energy of presence still that's why they are not just information the words that come are charged with presence so to speak and that's hard to figure out through the mind but that's how it works and they already they flow into the form of the words there may be a difference now many humans who live who are rooted in presence you can hardly say whether they are male or female of course biologically they remain either male or female but their energy field is quite balanced quite balanced in many so the the pure femaleness the pure maleness there is a balance between male and female in many spiritual teachers and in some when they get older you can't even say is that a man or a woman can't tell anymore the main thing is the to see a woman needs to be very conscious of the the female the pain body because there is the accumulation of female pain the pain body has a share in the collective female pain and that's why it comes when the nature of your form as female is most pronounced during the time of menstruation which could be a joyful time but for many women it is not not yet it is when the female pain body becomes activated often and that is something to work with for a woman to know to become particularly alert as it is about to happen and many women are doing that now so they bring alertness to whatever feeling they have they notice the first impulse when it comes the first and then wants to become a thought and watch it so ultimately the basic nature of humans is the same the emphasis may be different between male and female women are more connected with their body so often body awareness is easier for women than for men they have that natural another aspect of it is that in the universe is the receptive principle is the allowing principle it is a principle that is expressed through a gesture that you find sometimes in Mary or other female figures from other cultures the gesture of like this holding, nurturing allowing and so as such it should be easier for a woman to allow what is to be and to contain it in that space of aware presence to be the container for what happens so I may have mentioned briefly in The Power of Now that in some ways one could say it should and could be easier for women and this is happening now there is quite an acceleration in the development of women that sometimes surpasses that of men here perhaps the number of men and women is equal more or less but there are some groups in which two thirds not uncommon of course are female many many teachers are arising now female teachers as that is wonderful to see and there is a great demand for that the female principle on the whole of course will come back very strongly it is part of what will save the world from an over emphasis on mind it is ultimately not our destiny to recreate female deities that can be a little temporary way of reaching that which is beyond form but it is not our destiny to recreate that but really it is both for the man and the woman to find within themselves that which is beyond male and female temporarily yes but finding that which is beyond where the two are one at some point they split and one became two the big bang male female one became two two you may know the teaching the Indian teaching about two non-duality there is only one quite a beautiful teaching as long as it doesn't become an intellectual game or debating society but otherwise a profound teaching that ultimately there is one there is only one the essential nature of life is oneness and duality is has nothing to do with the manifested world the sense-perceived world not ultimate reality there is wisdom embedded in language so if you look at Advaita A, the syllable A I don't know very much Sanskrit but A means no it denies Dvay comes from the Sanskrit two which is the German word Zwei Danish may be similar I don't know for two comes from old Sanskrit because many words in our European languages go back to India nobody knows how and why Zwei is two and related to that Zwei are other words like Verzweiflung Despair Zweifel Doubt these are all words that are based on the number two so you can see with duality comes despair comes doubt comes me and the other the separation and it's amazing how to see that certain words contain wisdom

[Speaker 3] (6:53:01 - 6:53:28)

I would like to ask on the matter of emotions you've been talking about it today but I would like to ask about the expression of emotions from my own personal history I can say that I believe I'm better at presence after I've started being able to express anger for instance and I see my children they are very present and then they get angry and away it goes so you've been talking

[Speaker 1] (6:53:31 - 7:00:12)

about emotions thank you, good question there are quite a few people who do not express emotions fully or don't express them at all perhaps even more so in northern countries the further north you go the less they express their emotions that's how it seems to be maybe it's too cold to express your emotions now the practice I describe of observing your emotions allowing them to be for somebody who habitually does not express emotions it is not usually the best way to try and observe his or her emotions because they may not even know what emotions they are having they may be so much pushed down so particularly for those people who have been suppressing emotions it is very helpful to express the emotions if possible without injuring anybody or yourself to allow yourself to express emotions and witness that at the same time the expression itself would not free you because emotions if they are not observed tend to renew themselves through renewed thinking because there is this vicious circle between emotion and thought processes so the expression alone is not enough because you would simply be stuck with it and express the anger because the anger dissipates somewhat as you express it but if you are not conscious of the relationship between your thought processes you get renewed anger and so you would be going to the same or other therapists and hitting the pillows for 20 or 30 years not realizing that through your thought processes you are continuously recreating emotion and you are identifying so much so without the presence expression is better than repression repression can make you ill but you can feel it and present and watch it as an energy field so that through the watching it becomes depersonalized so that you don't feel you are not totally stuck in it and then you can express it hit something not a person if possible the pillow if it is anger or scream and it feels good perhaps and feel the raw energy of it like fire and feel it wow and if you allow it completely and express it it can even very quickly turn around and then you can do something useful you have enormous energy and suddenly it gets turned around and it's just it can shift from anger to just being intense energy ok now I am going to clean my room not angry anymore simply with energy you could also clean your room still being angry but that's not good cleaning because you would be cleaning on a material level on an energetic level you would be polluting your room and so to become free for a while some people need to express fully and then a time comes when there is enough presence and you have expressed it then you can gradually more and more work on the inner level and bring presence to it on the inner not that you ever hold it down if it wants to and needs to express itself you may do something maybe you can transform it into physical movement vigorous movement or whatever it is and watch but always be there as a witness at some point you may find that you have a choice emotion arises you can express it or not express it and it can simply be transformed or transmuted to bring presence to it you will know in the moment whether it needs to express itself or not if you have never or rarely expressed emotion then by all means allow yourself to express it without indulging and without personalizing it recognizing it as energy no more just as energy and watch yes northern people English German Scandinavian are not usually that outgoing I heard a little joke I hope nobody is offended by it it concerns one of the Scandinavian countries doesn't matter which and it says it's a famous joke I don't know they are like ketchup bottles you know like Heinz ketchup you have to shake first nothing comes out and then it comes all at once

[Speaker 3] (7:00:24 - 7:00:40)

there is a little four letter word that hasn't been mentioned at all throughout this weekend and that is love

[Speaker 1] (7:00:42 - 7:00:43)

thank you

[Speaker 3] (7:00:44 - 7:00:51)

if I can just turn that into a question rather than a statement in the position of witness where is love

[Speaker 1] (7:00:51 - 7:11:24)

thank you love together with a three letter word God maybe those two are the most misused words of the language now I may have mentioned the word God once or twice here in some gatherings that word also is never mentioned I believe I said you are God in disguise so I usually avoid both love and God because they are naturally present when you are present because your presence is the presence of God in this world the light of consciousness is the light of the one and love is what naturally arises out of the space of presence when the other is no longer seen as other when the separation that comes from being identified with thought that sense of separation between me and the other being trapped in a form and identifying with a form then you cannot recognize the other as ultimately one with yourself and when you cannot recognize the other as deeply deep down one with yourself all you see is the otherness that's the egoic state all you see in other humans is their otherness and that's why and that's not a pleasant reality that's why Jean-Paul Sartre said hell is other people it's the ego speaking so when you are identified with form you see only another form there is no realization of connectedness or that you are the realization that you are an expression of the same one life the same one consciousness in another temporary form you don't know all you can see is the other and so the more deeply you are identified with form the more suffering there is and if there is such a thing as an abstract thing you could say it is complete identification with form and that is no more than the complete absence of the realization even an inkling of oneness now there are many humans who are identified with form but not totally there is an inkling there is some sensing sometimes selflessly help someone or feel the other person's suffering have empathy with another human being so love is of course the realization that there is no other love arises out of the recognition of one really love is the realization one we are one ultimately and you cannot do that when you apply when you meet another human being through thought because thought separates, divides classifies so our entire gathering is about the arising of a state of consciousness in which love becomes possible as a natural and an integral part of that state of consciousness love is comes out of the spaciousness when you realize you are not the form but the formless one life and everything else also is not the form it is only a temporary appearance it is the formless one life meeting it yourself that's love meeting the other as yourself and so the only reason why we haven't used the word is that it's been overused and it's there naturally it is possible that the Buddha never used any single positive term like stating something like peace at the moment we don't know he may not even have used that nobody knows exactly which sutras actually reflect his words but probably he only pointed to the end of suffering maybe he said emptiness he didn't need to say more what's left? what is emptiness? why is it that the Buddha always looks so peaceful the emphasis that Buddhism puts on it is really inseparable from love because compassion is also the realization of oneness it's just a different aspect of it so love and compassion are really one they are inseparable so Buddhism looks at it more from the point of view of compassion because it reduces it to something that's not quite as profound of what real compassion is mid-light is suffering with another person but true compassion does not mean that you suffer with the other person true compassion and I mentioned it briefly in the power of now arises from the realization of oneness the empathy with the suffering as this form because you yourself are a form and you have experienced what suffering is so you have empathy with the suffering of other life forms because you yourself have known suffering maybe still know it from time to time that's you as the form and then you are in touch with that and that presence in presence there is no presence does not suffer and you bring that to this encounter with another human being the two come together the empathy with the suffering of the other human being which comes from identifying with form always goes back to that and allowing that to be the oneness of all life and that ultimately who they are in the depths of their being cannot be touched by the suffering perhaps it is the suffering that will actually get them there so compassion and love are one there is no wanting in love the misuse of love that is expressed very nicely in the Spanish language where the word for I love you is the same as I want you and of course that's very true as far as the ego is concerned so there is love you look with love with gentleness with compassion upon the world stillness you look upon a tree you love that tree it's reduced if you say oh I love that tree it's deeper than it's so much it's so much deeper than that it reduces it because I love is used so much in so many superficial senses I love ice cream I love suffering love is the essence of our gathering in order not to reduce it to a concept I didn't mention the word there was another second question

[Speaker 2] (7:11:28 - 7:12:10)

a lot of western therapeutic practices focusing focuses on establishing a healthy sense of self now according to a lot of spiritual teachings including your own the whole notion is a construction can you does that that's question number one does that make is that so and two does that then make therapy and therapeutic practices in general futile

[Speaker 1] (7:12:10 - 7:32:04)

thank you there are of course a lot of therapeutic practices that do not get you beyond getting back to normality so that you can function relatively well in this world they may cure you of a neurosis or whatever it is and cannot they want the normal state and normal means ultimately insane so they bring you back to the normal state to normal insanity and then you can go back and be a useful member of the organization but the question is interesting do we need to do we need to go through the development and growth of ego before we can go beyond and it does seem that yes we need to go so far it's been the case that most humans needed to go through the ego state but at what stage of life that varies you could say well do we need to develop a fully functioning and healthy ego and then leave it behind I don't believe that's the case because a fully functioning and healthy ego ultimately doesn't even exist because dysfunction is part of the ego but it does seem to be the case a child grows up at a certain age two years old one and a half years old I don't know when something starts to develop in them before when they were one year old they looked at you and beautiful there was a light shining through their eyes there were no concepts yet there was no me image yet and perhaps although there was a light shining through it was pure being pure and you look back into their eyes and you go wow this is such a pure being here surely this baby is already fully enlightened and you meet this baby again a year later just as it's screaming and say that's my toy not yours give it back to me it seems that the concept of mine their name identifying with the first object the toy experiencing suffering when it breaks or it's taken away from them because the ego is already growing I've identified with the first identification it's my toy here it's mine mine and then can you tell a child at that stage of confusion the toy is not you must let go of ego it seems that humans have to move through they have to develop an ego and they do is it a healthy ego is it a well functioning ego of course some egos are more dysfunctional than others that is true but ultimately if you remain stuck in ego you will manifest considerable dysfunction in your life and if you do not manifest considerable dysfunction in your life then somewhere something else is already coming through that is not ego it is the function of the conscious therapist no matter what stage that human is at to bring another dimension first I'm going to sort you out and then we'll go beyond that but as that person comes with whatever problems they have you can still apply what you have learned the apparatus of your therapeutic tools or skills but if there is any true power to your therapeutic tools or skills that power is hiding and this flows into whatever you do with that patient and it may be that you touch them some people work with the body and the mind together and they touch they may touch the patient or do body work at the same time and what is the state that you are in as you touch that human being intense presence then something happens that is the therapeutic touch as a listening presence and there are some psychoanalysts and psychoanalysis as you know is the Freudian school that is still in use here and there and is quite intellectual quite mental and quite judgmental it classifies things symptoms and calls them this, that, that and very impersonal so very much intellectual and yet even there there are some psychoanalysts who have become great healers not because of their what they apply but because after 20 years of practice they learn to sit still and listen and in that healing happens in whatever form so you can break through the egoic consciousness one could say at almost any stage you can break through from being a criminal which means a dysfunctional ego to suddenly embody the arising presence you can even break through from a mental disorder it has happened and become present you can hear voices and become so present that you simply remain there as the witness and then the voices become tired and subside I've known one case where a person was deeply disturbed because he could hear voices that were telling him to do things and sometimes he acted on them and did mad things and then it was pointed out to him that there is no need to act he can simply be there as the witness of the voice without reacting to the voice and that's what he did and the voices carried on they were angry in many cases and after a while they subsided and became still a similar case in the film that you may have seen A Beautiful Mind which is about a psychiatrist who is insane he has a mental disorder he says hallucinations at some point he realizes that what he sees is not real and he is able to it's not actually said so in the film he is able to witness it and that's the beginning of his healing he realizes that these things actually get strengthened through reaction so he allows them to be and he knows there is a knowing now and the ability to witness and to watch of course there are cases where the mind is so disturbed that it seems there is nothing you can do this person needs some healing on another level there may be people who are continuously talking with so many forms paranoia that I have personal experience with because somebody in my family suffered from that illness so I observed it very closely miracles are always possible in some cases it seems a person needs to be treated in a conventional way to have a semblance of normality some people cannot be reached anymore through words so there are all kinds of cases but I would not say that you need to develop a fully functioning ego before they can go beyond it for most people who are not clinically insane only normal insane they are at some point the ego has its dysfunctions and it is already a form of insanity and at some point you can jump off it means simply from mind and emotions to be able to bring a witnessing ability to mind and emotions that's the greatest healer and sometimes the most people that you would never have thought could do that can do it as a therapist your main healing device is yourself that's all I know secondary comes whatever you have learned but the main healing is the presence that you embody as you sit there with that other human being who is no other ultimately and so there is one beautiful school of therapy called Rogerian therapy and very few masters very few humans can truly practice and Roger says all that you need to do is not judge and simply listen be there as a listener and they try to learn that and most patients I have met some people who have visited Rogerian therapists and they said he seemed completely uninterested in what I was saying and he hardly said anything I'm not going back to him and yet potentially it's the most spiritual of all schools of therapy because it emphasizes stillness and presence as the only true healer and even if you are confronted with an insane person who may perhaps to alleviate temporarily extreme symptoms you may have to give medication because some symptoms are absolutely insane even there don't forget the main healer is yourself the presence that you embody and some doctors know that also although they are still functioning as doctors whoever comes into their space first of all there's a complete current of attention and awareness that flows out of that whatever is needed comes and it may incorporate what you have learned or it may come from a level that is beyond what you have learned and that's all I know that that is the healer no matter where you are at that level a fully functioning ego no, because that would mean you're trying to create something that is impossible because it's only to the extent that you go beyond ego that you become a fully functioning a true human being it seems however that every child has to go through the development of ego as a still presence while that happens and occasionally point out a few things for example when the pain body comes to the child point it out not while it happens but afterwards ask the child questions about it what it felt like when he or she was throwing him or herself on the floor screaming ask questions about it so that the child can begin to become aware of it witness it talk about your own pain body to the child and then if you have children they will grow up in a more conscious environment will they still develop an ego? probably it seems that they have to go through that all the way to the age of 50, 60 or 70 until finally things in their life collapses things around them begin to collapse and finally a big chunk breaks off the egoic structure and so it's wonderful to see I've had people coming who are 18, 19, 20 already responding to presence and yes it's often not to the point of clinical insanity but often very dysfunctional egos are also those that can suddenly wake up the murderer in prison some have become spiritual masters we may need to end this session now tomorrow which never comes there's another session perhaps some more questions we'll see what happens we don't know what the now will present us with beautiful rain is falling you may get wet as you walk out of here and you can practice non-resistance a friend of mine was very proud it was years ago many years ago I talked to him about the possibility of not resisting what is and he said this is wonderful I did what you suggested I could do and I got totally drenched he said and I simply imagined that I was a duck now for him that worked I didn't tell him I didn't want to spoil this because I didn't tell him that a duck never gets drenched hence the expression water off a duck's back because they remain always dry but it worked for him he became one really what he was saying he became one with that moment which was the wetness there wasn't me and the wetness he became one with the water there Deva Premal and Mitten are giving their concert tonight which is not really a concert as you will see but a meditation presence through sound and the absence of sound

[Speaker 2] (7:36:08 - 7:37:42)

It's a brand new morning We celebrate We are The new man Sunrise Over the mountain Spreading your light Over the land We are still here

[Speaker 1] (7:38:03 - 8:29:31)

Make sure you are not half gone already Are you going back into reality or unreality? Be careful that your life isn't reduced to becoming to being no more than a bridge between past and future always coming from there and going there and being pulled along the stream of time as often as possible break the continuity of past and future the stream of time access the timeless dimension in you by singling out this moment mostly If you stop anybody anywhere go to a big city and you ask them what are you doing? They'll tell you the story of where they've just come from and where they are going to complete that movement I've just come from this important meeting I'm on my way to the airport and catch a plane to go to an even more important meeting and what you get or whatever other answer it may be I'm going to spend another boring day in the office to keep myself and my family alive or you can ask somebody sitting on a bench and he says my whole life has gone to pieces and there's no point in carrying on that's why I'm just sitting here There too the story absorbs your life and if you could single out what is your effectiveness in this world but brings in a liveness and a higher intelligence yes, you're on your way from that meeting to the other even more important meeting but what about now? this moment the car stopped at a traffic light window is slightly open bird is sitting on the branch of a tree and you can see that the sunlight feel yourself breathing and the aliveness inside you the presence that you are and the reality of now always exists outside of the story that you carry which is no more than the sequence of thoughts in your head yes, that is there also of course it's one dimension of life but if that's all it's one dimension of concepts it's very much like an inferior work of fiction that exists only for its structural tension but no deeper content in it you know works that are very interesting to read what's going to happen next but once you've read that book and you know what happens in the end you would never go back to it it would be completely pointless because you now know what happens in the end it exists without any depth only you're reading it with a structural tension is pulling you along you want to know what's happening next or if anybody told you before you got to the end of the book what happens in the end would have destroyed the whole thing for you and that is just a work of many works are just fiction to keep your mind busy and to give you a reflection that you won't die except for this character no don't tell me that you've swiped it all because beyond that there's nothing on the page except the tension towards the next moment but the character lacks depth every description lacks depth so there's no point in reading it again if you read a true work of literature there may be some structural tension also there on one descriptive passage of a character or whatever for a long time you can go back to it read it many times the outcome is not that important there's the depth every moment and that means it's a work of literature that nobody knows exactly where the borderline is and in some works you say well there's some depth there you know is it just fiction and so your life is it cheap fiction if you're only interested in the next thing it becomes cheap fiction lacking any depth and unfortunately many lives people's lives have become that what's the next thing and of course you die it all resolves itself eventually all the problems finally get resolved they have to because everybody who's involved in the fiction is going to die including yourself oh it all works somehow but that is the reduction of one's life you live on the surface it's just the surface of things so that's another question you can ask yourself what is the story at this moment of me you see the story and then you go beyond the story underneath the story now the story is a sequence of thoughts it's always the next, the next, the next now thoughts are quite far removed further removed from being than the immediacy of for example sense perception sense perceptions in themselves of course are also fleeting are forms that arise in your consciousness and there are some spiritual schools that despise sense perceptions even beauty say don't look it's all impermanent it's all really unreal don't look, no beauty just be totally within but there is a beauty in sense perceptions but the beauty that you see if you are present isn't really the form in the form even the beauty of the flower beauty is always something that you is deeper than the form in whatever you look at it's not just the external form there is and you can only see beauty if you see it through that in you that is deeper than the form which means the form is thought so when you are only thinking immediately thinking about what you see you don't really see beauty you attach labels to something there is no response you cannot and that's why true beauty they are not present enough to see it they may superficially glance as they are walking through a park oh pretty flowers a momentary they haven't really looked they must have a distant memory maybe once as a child they looked at a flower and realized it was beautiful oh the nice pretty flowers ok what's the next thing I have to think that's nice it's a fraction and even in that fraction they are not really seeing it or hearing it or feeling it they are the senses certain senses are very much neglected of course for contemporary humans the predominant senses are seeing and hearing and the other senses are touching or even tasting not many people are truly aware of the food the taste of the food smelling you can smell the freshness of the air you have to be present touching touch something and feel the touch of a fruit of any object in your hand another human being and be simply present with the touch you are closer to being through sense perception than you could be through thinking that's why the first step towards being is to go from the abstraction of thought to the immediacy of perception and then from there it's only a little step to realizing what's there that makes the whole perception possible the depths of presence of beingness of I am of ultimately yourself as the one who is perceiving you feel yourself as the field in which the perception occurs so to become conscious of sense perceptions including the neglected ones smelling smelling the air if you observe a dog which I've been doing more often recently you realize they inhabit quite a different reality it seems that 70% of their reality consists of smells it's the first thing they go to when they go out about things and people whatever is there the first thing they go to is smell it out and then probably the next one is hearing and the third one maybe seeing and many animals are like that so they perceive the world differently the predominant perception is smell maybe we had it once we can't retrieve that we can be happy enough if we can smell the freshness in the air the moisture after a rain shower like yesterday the moisture that rises from the ground you smell the earth the aliveness of it so as much as possible step back out of the story the past and future unfolds the story of me between past and future there is the movement of time that eventually consumes you as that form does something to you like some dreadful disease the flux of time eventually you shrink and get old and you wither and it looks as if everybody were suffering from this what is the name of the disease what are you suffering from time it's been diagnosed as fatal it's only a question of time when it's going to end or as one man wrote to me the other day he worked out mathematically he had this image of somebody jumping off an inconceivably high cliff and then falling and the fall takes 80 years or 85 it's the average age before he or she hits bottom and he works out how many kilometers he falls in 80 years I don't remember the figure but as far as the form is concerned which includes your story you begin to hit the ground eventually and all problems are suddenly solved but there's more to who you are fortunately if that were all and everybody deep down knows that that is not all otherwise they would all be jumping out of the windows already what's the point of watching a film even to observe that and to acknowledge that and to see that wow this is amazing that is already a spiritual thing to do the simple awareness of mortality the awareness of impermanence the awareness of the fleetingness of all forms there's already a spiritual dimension present I saw a film recently whose main subject matter seemed to be death it was about three women different ages one a novelist one a temporary woman who is reading a novel I can't remember the details but it was basically about impermanence and death and some people say this film is depressing no if you truly see it it's already spiritual anything that puts you there as a witness of the impermanence of things and some films can do that or some works of literature do that you become the witness of things the short lived nature of human sins and when you are there as the witness of that without even ever having to say or think about anything else the spiritual has already arisen in you because it's the awareness that is formless the formless in you is the aware presence that is aware of the short lived nature of all forms that's why the contemplation of death has to be of course on one level something in you says and when you imagine yourself that you are in free fall and you don't know how many kilometers thousands of kilometers you are away from the bottom nobody knows and yet when you contemplate that it's almost liberating to see that it's all very insignificant because it's all destined to dissolve quite soon and then the entire world becomes only relatively important it loses its heaviness because it's all smoke it's all like clouds temporary formations and clouds are very temporary you watch a cloud for a moment and then a different shape and then it's gone so as much as possible step out of the conceptual world past, future forms all that which is destined to dissolve soon anyway go into the immediacy of sense perception yes, whatever you are hearing, touching smelling, seeing whatever the awareness the presence that enables you to perceive is the formless within the form that you perceive the attention, the alertness so in every sense perception there is hiding something that is deeper than the perception we mentioned that even in a dream that looks unreal there must be something real there and of course, yes it's the consciousness in which the dream happens and the question is the world real or unreal should not be asked on an intellectual level that will just lead to a lot of philosophy with no final answer or beliefs your own life what is real about my life ultimately I can know for sure Descartes, the philosopher he asked that question what is it that I can know for sure he never stopped thinking and so he thought it's thinking I'm always thinking but if he had gone a step deeper he would have realized the sense of beingness or presence that is deeper than thinking the question that you are you can doubt anything but you cannot doubt that you are because you're not it's life itself I don't know what I am the form may be short-lived but the fact that there is something here that knows that the form is short-lived there is no doubt that that has reality there is something in you that is there is no doubt about that I am, that I know what I am, I don't know because that is the what is to do with form I appear as a body for a while and then perhaps I appear as a flower I appear as whatever form perhaps the I am is in every form what I am is the one I am there is no doubt that my own being the beingness that is here of course it is it's the life that I am is beyond doubt and could that be the same life and the same being and the same I am that is in every form of life the formless essence of all life and so if you can be aware that you are aware then that's enough aware of being of presence presence being self-aware through you you are it and then what you are is the temporary roles that you, disguises that you go into I am a successful businessman for a while until you hit the ground or the stock market collapses then the psychological entity hits the bottom I am a failed writer whatever I am a failed another concept in the head I am somebody who is missed out on life life passed me by where is life?

here, now it passed me by it's long since gone didn't give me what I needed so stepping out of the story the structural aspect of your form life life in form as much as possible then you access something that is deeper than past and future than the form than that which dies yourself and the world the temptation of the world is it pretends that that's all that matters matter is all that matters so it's a continuous for a while waking up out of being totally identified with the structural aspect of your life the story of me where it's coming from and where it's going and giving an ultimate importance to that relative importance yes, you do what you can now, can only do it now can only do at this moment what I can do at this moment can't go beyond that past and future lose their heaviness and the new comes in something that is fresh and new is always present you remain fresh and new like a day that's just like today this morning that beautiful song that morning has broken like the first morning no past blackbird has spoken like the first no past absolute presence and if you carry past into that perception it becomes obscured it even disappears and the morning is no longer fresh and you are no longer fresh and alive and the longer you live identified with form and with your story the more burdensome it gets and the world becomes feels stale and old and weary expressed in a character I believe in Shakespeare maybe it's Hamlet who is considering seem to me all the uses of this world weary, stale like bread that has become stale weary, stale and unprofitable meaning pointless, useless that's how it becomes you don't want to end up there and part of that is not reducing the magnificence as the song said last night not reducing the magnificence of this moment the depth and the aliveness of this moment that's all you ever have to a means to an end which is the story make it just into a stepping stone so that I can reach the next chapter the next paragraph in the cheap fiction of my story of me so that simple thing bring the alertness wake up become aware of sense perceptions and that which underlies every sense perception yourself the perceiver the perceiving consciousness the attention in which there is no tension sensing the inner body the aliveness of being there and becoming alert to this moment it's no longer a means to an end it has a depth to it that is sufficient unto itself and you to know that you don't need to sit still you may be sitting still but it's not necessary to sit still you can be involved in movement and be fully present with fast movement slow movement be fully present in the movement enjoy the energy movement of this and be there also as the witness of it and yet you are doing what you have to do no, you are not in a hurry this is why you can do something fast if you have to because of that hyperactivity of the human mind perhaps there are fewer things that you need to do really fast but occasionally it is called for you may have to move fast and you are totally present in the movement enjoying that without needing to arrive at the next moment this moment is good enough I'm running to catch the train it's good, it feels good but you have to catch yourself that's why I have in Zen another famous saying hurry slowly hurry is maybe fast on the external slow means the stillness remains inside even though you are fast on the external so if you have to you can be very fast you look at martial arts they can be if they have to be fast they are very fast without losing the rootedness in being so it doesn't pull you out of being and then when you sit quietly in your room the dynamic aspect of being remains the stillness is also dynamic in you which means you don't feel the stillness remains vibrantly alive so in the stillness there is a vibrancy and in the external activity there is also a stillness so you have the two polarities or as I sometimes call it Buddha and Clint Eastwood character and the present moment not remembering it's not a means to an end give it fullest attention and enjoy it enjoy the doing you can't enjoy the doing if the next moment is more important than this enjoy whatever it is that is required of you at this moment the aliveness of it the external is allowed deeply and then the form so even if on the external it looks unpleasant I'm wet and cold and it's windy and I want to get home okay and then you bring a yes to it as we talked yesterday if you become a duck or wet poodle or whatever it is and the wet poodle is not complaining he's just wet he's a duck if he could speak some of you found the morning meditations very helpful the movement being present in every movement you can live like that and just to try a slow movement and be present is a beautiful thing to do just because it's not a means to an end when this arm is here it's not trying to get there it's just here and it's just here and just here here, here, here not I'm trying to get there here, beautiful so you can do that either by practicing Tai Chi or Kim's movement practice called Kim Fu Chi which a few years ago I saw her performing spontaneously for the first time in a retreat what is happening it's simply presence expressing itself as joyful movement and there was a slow kind of dance and I saw her doing it and I said what is this where does that come from it came out of presence the joyful expression of presence and in that moment I thought maybe what I'm witnessing is the early origin of Tai Chi perhaps that's how it started with someone allowing him or herself to express spontaneously the state of presence in movement some people believe that Tai Chi originated when people observed the movement of animals and tried to imitate that but I believe it was a spontaneous expression of presence although of course if you watch animals you see a certain similarity between that being present in every movement and for example the movements of a cat a cat walking amazing to watch that and a monkey too they're not in a hurry just present they just watch and when they watch they just watch they're not thinking what's going on there they know what's going on without having to conceptualize it and then movement continues and suddenly there's an energy built up and they jump you could never think and then they're still again you could spend hours watching so if you practice movement it's a beautiful way of learning to be not to make this moment into a means to an end just a simple movement because in the ordinary consciousness every movement through it you want to get somewhere that's more important it could be spontaneous it could be a sequence that you follow but the important thing is this presence at every step and if you're disabled and can't move very well it would be enough to move your hands dance with your hands and you can make some activity into a movement that is present a dance wiping a table cleaning your shoes putting on a shirt and whenever that happens you are interrupting there's a gap in the continuity between past and future in your life there is a gap in your life in the story of me of presence a gap of presence and the more gaps of presence you have the more alive you are does the story suffer can you no longer think of me no, you can but it will become literature your life from pure cheap fiction soap opera that's of course why people love watching on TV the so called soap operas because it's a reflection of their own life oh that's good they all live like that it consumes a depth becomes and the outcome doesn't matter anymore it's just like the work true work of literature it's peripheral the outcome is on the periphery of your life am I going to make it or not well you may make it for a while and then you hit bottom so on the level of form this is dissolving about to dissolve the form here an energy field created by many humans being present an energy field of stillness and the form of the surroundings the nature here, the stillness that surrounds this place you don't need to feel sorry that you are leaving it because that's only the external form of our gathering this gathering is not separate from who you are without that it wouldn't be much it wouldn't be much so there's nothing really that you leave behind that is of any consequence because the essence is alive in you the essence of this gathering it's not separate from who you are so when you're sitting in your next the next thing in the story of me the next thing becomes a little less important as you feel the aliveness of the present moment even as you're sitting on the bus when the moment of arriving at the station is not that important this is the same as the gathering and then you check inside is it still now? you have to you never know it might be in the next moment is this still the same now? yeah, it is the form has changed but it's the same now and then wherever you go you have to check occasionally is it still now?

yeah, it is because the mind is still so you remain alive not only remain alive you deepen the being there's depth to who you are regardless of the form of your story because if everybody is let's say a walking fictional work of fiction similar the life story of each person of you you could write your own book as it unfolds every day a new chapter wait for the next installment that suddenly has far greater depth to it and just as in great literature what happens to you or what does not happen to you as the story unfolds is secondary the now in the external form of your life of course at times you add things to your life things come to you it seems to go very well and then something happens and it becomes a period of loss of reduction of letting go that's all part of living it can't go up and up and up it doesn't make sense getting better on the level of form you can't get better and better as a form better and better and then you hit bottom present, yes that's better to be present now so it gets as the qualitative the improvement of your life is to do with the quality of the moment not quantitative what the drama is of your life or the problematic things that haven't resolved themselves yet and you don't know in the next few weeks or months of your life these problematic things your divorce proceedings whatever people get involved in as part of the soap opera the divorce proceedings are happening I don't know how is it all going to end am I going to survive the divorce proceedings or the acquisition of a new mansion somewhere it's all form ultimately not fulfilling and ultimately not even threatening there's always the aliveness of this death is guaranteed to the form oh that's okay that's a relief the essence of the so called teacher which is just a form is yours it's one with who you are the truth that has been spoken is your truth you recognized it as the truth as if you were listening to yourself because on a deeper level you were listening to yourself the voice arose in the field of consciousness as you listened to it I listened to it that's all there was no pre-planning now I'm going to teach them that there's nothing to teach them there's a oneness in the process there's nobody to teach anything consciousness speaks and you were still enough to listen that's all so this is not the end of anything really just changing forms in the field of consciousness

[Speaker 2] (8:31:52 - 8:35:18)

thank you in the new morning we celebrate we are the new man sunrise over the mountain spreading your light over the land sunrise another new morning we celebrate we are we are the new man sunrise sunrise over the mountain spreading your light over the land sunrise sunrise another new morning we celebrate we are the new man

2007-Eckhart-Tolle-Joy-of-Being-Retreat-Awakening-to-Your-True-Identity in-Denmark Part 1 of 2

[Speaker 1] (2:19 - 7:26:40)

Welcome. Nobody's in a hurry, I assume. We can take our time, or no time.

Everybody has arrived here from somewhere, today or yesterday. No matter how the journey went, you're here now. That's a fact.

I just wanted to remind you of that. Otherwise, you might be sitting here and carrying some sticky substance that's still pulling you, it's called the past, or today, yet the past is still here, sticking to you. That can happen if you forget that you're here now.

And that seems such a simple statement as to be almost meaningless. The mind says, of course I'm here now, but of course the mind isn't here. If you can truly feel what that means, I'm here now, you've already gone quite deep.

And perhaps that's the theme of our retreat, to remember that I'm here now. When I say remember, I don't mean that that becomes a memory, but to feel, to sense the presence that you are beyond the personal history that usually you identify with and take to be yourself. When you are your personal history, when that's the basis for your sense of self, identity, you're not here now.

Then the entire entity, to use a word that some spirit guides use to describe humans, then the entire entity is really a form of conditioning from the past. As one Buddhist monk that I spoke to many years ago put it, to me, said, there are no people, there are only karmic formations. That's how he looked at everybody.

There goes the karmic formation. So let that be the thread or the theme running through our retreat. I'll remind you quite often, I'm here now.

How do you know that you're here? Not through thinking. The moment you think, you're not here.

Only through sensing the presence, that which underlies is deeper than the person. That emerges, and the person becomes less dense. That's why we're here.

That emerges, who you are in the timeless dimension, comes through into this world of time. For this to happen, the person needs to lose its density. Density means continuous stream of thinking that you're identified with.

Every thought becomes an I, I. I'm upset. I'm sad.

I can't stand it anymore. That is density. If you believe in every statement that comes up in your head.

I shouldn't have come here. The weather is dreadful, and the emotion that corresponds to that thought. Why can't we have a retreat in Hawaii?

So we are here in northern Europe, and the weather is, as it is, perfect for our purposes. It's easier to go within when it's rainy and windy. So it's perfect.

But if the mind says it's dreadful and you believe it, of course it's no longer perfect. So part of the practice, our retreat, is to be there as the awareness when your mind starts saying things as it will, maybe already has done since you arrived here. It's normal.

The teaching, for lack of a better word, on this retreat, takes place on different levels. There are words. There's the energy field.

And equally, if not more important, are the conditions that you encounter while you're here. By conditions I mean whatever appears there in front of you as an event, a person, a situation. It's the condition of this moment.

And there lies a great teaching. And the person doesn't know that, because the person itself is a condition no more. And it reacts to other conditions.

And through reacting to other conditions, strengthens its own condition of personal selfhood. Unconscious, of course, not a personal problem of yours. Particularly important is when conditions arise and the mind has other ideas.

Starting, for example, with the weather. It's a relatively harmless thing, of course, but the mechanism is the same even when there's a huge amount of suffering. So we start with little things, complaining about the weather.

There's the condition, and there's the mind that has some other idea about how the weather should be. And then forcefully expresses that idea, thus putting himself in a position of being right. It's dreadful.

So you've pronounced judgment, and so your sense of, pseudo sense of self, has temporarily become inflated. And then after a while it deflates again. And then the mind made self will look out for some other condition that does not agree with the mental expectation.

And of course, it never has to wait for very long. Now, it would be possible, perhaps, to find a retreat place where everything is as near as possible, near perfect as possible. Perhaps in Hawaii or Bali.

Southern California, not at a retreat center, but at a spa and resort. I don't know about Europe, but in North America, many hotels, even little crummy hotels, are becoming spa and resort. They put in a hot tub, and a massage room, and some exercise equipment, buy some oils that you can buy, put on display.

Now the hotel has become a spa and resort. However, there are spas and resorts that are actually very grand and luxurious. And one would have thought, okay, if we had a retreat in a place like that, having near perfect condition for meditation, for being still, for going within, for enjoying the beauty of nature, if you satisfy your tastes with delicate, healthy, wonderful-tasting food, and the best juices and freshlings and smoothies.

And every participant gets three body treatments a day, with honey all over your skin, and rose petals on top. And the next treatment is a facial with caviar. And in between, you listen to wonderful spiritual teaching.

And after that, you go to the beach, palm trees, and then later you go to bed. Linen or silk sheets, a warm breeze coming through the window. So what are we doing in Northern Europe, in Denmark?

What the mind tells you are ideal conditions are necessary, are not necessarily ideal for awakening. It's precisely when things happen that go against the preconceptions, the ideas, the expectations that the mind has. It's precisely when the personal me starts playing up, because it finds a condition it disagrees with.

That's the learning, the moment when you can become aware of all that. This does not mean that we need to choose the worst possible conditions for retreat. It did occur to me, I must admit, a few times, to choose a retreat place where everything is planned to go wrong, as the teaching.

So whatever you expect to find, you'll be disappointed, and it's just everything is going wrong against expectations. That would be a tremendous teaching, but we don't need to go to such an extreme. But to stay with that idea for a moment, there would be a great opportunity, of course, for learning.

Now imagine that you went on such a retreat where everything is planned to go wrong. Now imagine if I had told you before the retreat that everything, all the conditions you encounter are going to go wrong, and that's your teaching. Well, how would you experience that retreat then?

Very interesting. You would experience everything with a certain amount of detachment, because you know, oh, this condition is there to teach me, he told us. So already you would go, your inner state would be quite different.

Instead of demanding that conditions should satisfy you, your expectations, your mind, your personal self, you would be in a state of surrender to conditions, because you would already know that the conditions are there to wake you up. Well, then it might not be the real thing anymore. And on some retreats, occasionally you get one or two difficult people.

Well, one can almost say out of a hundred, at least two will be very difficult. Oh, is that me? One could even pay some actors on a retreat to play the part of difficult participants.

But if you knew that, of course, you would be very detached if they start shouting and fuming and saying, this is terrible, I'm going home. Okay, he's the actor. And of course, every difficult and other person too, is an actor in a way, acting out the script, the conditioned mind.

Some have a more dramatic script than others, that's all. And so we work on the retreat, not against the conditions that arise, but with the conditions that arise. What is my relationship to the condition that arises at this moment?

Is it possible to be in alignment with conditions? Which does not mean, of course, as you know, that you necessarily cannot take action to bring about some change, if that's what you choose to do. We're talking about an inner reaction to conditions, not whatever action you take externally.

You could say, my mattress is too hard or too soft, and can I have another one? Maybe they have another one. But if they don't, what do you do then?

Then that's the condition, the mattress then is the condition. And then the mind says, I can't possibly stay on this retreat with a mattress like that. And is that completely true?

Or is that something that is part of the script? Are you there as the awareness that observes the conditioned response or reaction? Or are you the reaction?

That's part of the teaching here. So the conditions of this retreat are another aspect or element of the teaching or learning. Very important part.

What the mind thinks are ideal conditions for my spiritual growth, are not necessarily the ideal conditions for your spiritual growth. This time we came here to Europe on a boat, from America to Europe. And that's a little bit like a resort and spa.

Good food, entertainment, all kinds of treatments. But I observed closely at the end of the six days, conditions were as near as perfect as you can get. The sea was not too rough.

But I observed closely the people, and I don't think anybody got enlightened through that crossing, but everybody gained a few pounds. Now, if that boat had hit an iceberg, there would have been an opportunity for some people to become enlightened, to disidentify from the form, to wake up, either just before they die or they survive and wake up. If not wake up totally and forever, at least this could bring about a deepening, so that you're no longer identified with the surface level of yourself.

But fortunately, the boat did not hit an iceberg. So you may want to remember occasionally on this retreat, what I said, and just as a little device to get you into the state of alignment with the present moment and whatever condition arises in the present moment. If you just use it as a temporary device, if you find it hard to come into alignment with the present moment.

Okay. What if this is all he planned it all for us like that? What if this very thing that's happening now is part of the plan of this retreat?

That makes it, this little device makes it a little easier to step into. Oh, and now I'm telling you, not that I planned it, of course, but the totality, of course planned it. The universe has brought about the appearance of this moment.

Of course, so it was planned for you to encounter now. So please remember, I didn't plan it personally. Why did you do that?

But that is, it is any condition that arises is you can take action to improve it. That's fine. That's the external level.

What matters is the internal. What energy do you bring to the action that you take? If there is a possibility of taking action, what is the energy that flows into the action you take through words or through taking this or walking from here to there, talking to somebody, what energy flows into that?

Do you get smaller in the contracted in the action in your sense of self, or is the action freeing? And it could be that the same words are coming out of your mouth, but a totally different energy behind them. So you can experiment with that.

See if action can be not just as effective, but much infinitely more effective. If it comes out of a prior alignment with the suchness of this moment, that's the teacher. So always that's the teaching comes always through the now.

So prior means, first of all, I'm going to be in a state of uncompromising yes to what is, which means you face it completely. That is the situation, the condition, and facing it completely is not forming a judgment about it. There is a moment when the mind is not operating.

And there's simply a field of aware presence that looks visually or otherwise at the situation. That means already the conditioned script in your mind, the person has already dissolved temporarily. A different level of consciousness is there now.

That's intelligence, true intelligence. And then action may arise, or it may not, it may just be that, see, that's how it is. There's not much that can be done right now.

And then you suddenly experience the miracle of being free internally of reactivity against towards external conditions. Other words, outer conditions no longer have the power to determine your inner state of consciousness. That's could be called freedom from the world.

It implies also that your mind, which is part of the world, which is part of the conditions that you encounter, because every thought is an internal condition, similar to an external condition, that also implies that the thoughts that go through your mind no longer have the power to upset you because you recognize them as conditioned thoughts. After a while, quite a few thoughts may not even come anymore. In the meantime, you recognize thoughts, and especially forceful thoughts that we call reactions or reactive patterns, you recognize them as part of the conditioned, the script.

You're the actor, and you see yourself acting out, either in your head, or if you catch it a little later, while you are talking to somebody, you, you, whatever. So the practice is being there when it happens, and conditions are useful, very useful on that. And so here we set aside a period of a few days when we practice on a relatively small scale, because although we have experienced on retreats in other places, earthquakes and hurricane-force winds, in Denmark that is less likely, because everything here is in moderation.

It's a very peaceful place. It's not likely that there will be an earthquake or hurricane, and yet, there will be conditions arising while you're here. And if an earthquake does hit, then that becomes our practice.

Even if it has to be at the last moment of your life, you suddenly wake up. Yeah, that's it, free. In the meantime, we work with unsatisfying bathrooms, mattresses, small things.

The mechanics are the same, no matter whether it's small things or big things. So here we practice with the small things. So we've set aside a few days for practicing, seeing how we can work with the conditions that arise.

Instead of desperately trying to make the conditions fit 100% our expectations. Yeah, we can fix that. Oh no, that's not right either.

That's hard work. And once you put one picture up there, another one falls off the wall there. Now, there are certain teachings, spiritual teachings, that say that the human being can become the master of all conditions, can master external conditions, so that no undesirable conditions arise again.

I don't want to go into that too much, but I would suggest that you will by experimenting with what we're doing here, by transcending conditions, that is what it is all about. We are learning to transcend the conditions that arise. And we're practicing in these days here and later in life, you have to do the same, of course.

Life comes at you as this condition or that condition never stops. It comes at you and doesn't never leave you alone. You think you've dealt with one thing and then the next, the phone rings, oh no.

So you deal with the conditions as they arise. And the practice is to face them completely and see that it is. Is is the key word, if you want to use it, or as the Buddha, I believe, says the suchness of what is, of this moment, it is.

And then there's a certain, two aspects to this acceptance of present moment conditions. One is, it looks almost passive, because you say, I welcome this moment as it is, because it is. The other aspect of that state of consciousness is sharp.

And it says, it is as it is. It's like a sword that cuts through time and says, I refuse to become an enemy of life, because life is now. I refuse to become an enemy of the present moment, which means I'm not going to be an anti-life being, because it's mad.

So there's a sharpness. Every condition, you look at it in absolute, alert presence. You also welcome it.

So it's a gentle and it cuts through all the stuff that comes from here. So the practice is transcending the conditions, rather than believing, as the world does, that the conditions in your life are here to satisfy you. And continuously demanding that they should satisfy you.

And therefore always needing some condition that's not here yet, because the present one doesn't satisfy you. So there's a need for the next thing to come because the present one is not satisfying. And then the mind complains about it or gets depressed.

Transcendence of conditions. And then you may encounter, if that becomes your life, you transcend the conditions. Internally, you are free of the reactivity of the person.

There is an openness. And as transcendence becomes more prevalent in your life, many people report that they experience an improvement in the general conditions. In that sense, one could say you become a master of conditions, but not in the sense in which the ego imagines it.

You become aligned with the very evolutionary impulse of the universe. And that that movement, if it wants to manifest something through you, it'll do that when you're open to life. It's not that you are separate from it.

When we use language, it sounds as if there was the consciousness. And there's you know, you are that you become, you realize that you are that what exactly does it want? I don't even ask.

I'm open to what it wants at this moment. Which is this? What plans does it have?

I don't even ask. I'm not that interested in what plans the universe has. I respond to the need of this moment.

And that's fulfilling. And then it unfolds. I never feel that I'm the master of all conditions.

And occasionally things still happen. I miss what happens. I miss the bus.

Anything can happen. It's secondary. What happens becomes of secondary importance.

And once you reach a certain state of consciousness, even if you could create anything you wanted, you wouldn't have to want to create that much. You don't need that much. So we are here to learn transcendence of conditions, rather than demanding fulfillment through conditions.

That's where you can become powerful. Anybody who fights conditions or whatever, whoever is engaged in any kind of fight is not powerful. Not that is not power.

So we have so far the three levels of teaching on our retreat. One is words, verbalized. It's not a teaching, they're little pointers.

And really everything that you hear in words, you know already. And if you don't know it, then there's a density in the mind. The mind continuously says, that doesn't make sense.

That can't be right. What's he talking about? He's repeating himself again.

He says, there's only the now. He already said that five minutes ago. So if there's a certain density, then it's hard to be here because there's no attempt here to convince you of anything.

Everything is so simple. There's nothing to believe in as such. So there's no attempt to make you believe in anything.

It's nothing to do with this. Everything is so simple and self evident. Just try it out.

I say try out working with conditions. The words point to that. And there is the energy field here as we sit together.

Now that is something that some people are familiar with. And other people who haven't read many spiritual books or gone to spiritual things say, oh, this is spooky energy. But of course, that's an important part of the teaching here.

If you sit here and feel, it feels good to be here. There's a certain brightness and presence. If there's little mind activity in you, as there is in me, there's virtually no mind activity apart from the words, no mind activity.

And you can feel the energy of presence. And everyone contributes to that. And occasionally, in one or two people here and there, it could be one person, one minute, another person, the next minute, the mind may come in, trying to interfere.

It gets uneasy and fearful. For example, you start thinking about your problematic life while you sit here. All the problems you left behind, which are waiting for you when you get home.

I shouldn't have come. I'm trying to deal with so many things. And then perhaps you hear a word and you suddenly wake up again, you hear the word now.

And suddenly realize there is no problem right now. No matter how many problems you left behind, and you call it my life, consisting mainly of problems, no matter how many problems you left behind, I don't think you could argue with the fact that at this moment, you don't have a problem. And not if you'd say you have an ache here or there, that's an ache, not a problem.

Even if you say you're in a serious situation, and you don't know how much longer you're going to live, nobody knows, of course, for themselves. Is that a problem? Now?

No. Only when the mind comes in, becomes a problem, you start thinking, me and my life, me and my life, I might lose my life. I lose my life.

Impossible. Because you are alive. You can't separate yourself from life.

So you can't lose something that you never had. There is no problem at this moment. Is that true?

Yes, you have to be, I can't see any. And if suddenly a bear comes bursting in here or whatever, well, there are probably no bears here, but a wild dog running towards me, then people would say, well, then you would have a problem, wouldn't you? No, because there's no time to make it into a problem.

Either I'll grab the dog by the neck, or I'll run off the stage, who knows? But there's no time for it to become a problem. It's a challenge.

If there's an earthquake suddenly, it's not a problem. Nobody would say, now we have a problem, because there's no time. To have a problem, you need time to ponder, to dwell on it.

Oh, an earthquake, that's a... It's just a situation, but not in the sense that it's used in American disaster movies, where they use the word situation meaning a problem. They say, we have a situation here.

That's not it. A situation is not a problem. Okay, so I'm talking to the person who left behind many personal problems.

And that person realizes at this moment, that at this moment, he or she does not have a problem. Unless you start thinking about your past, or your possible future. But in this moment of presence, there's no problem.

Okay. And then the mind says, yes, but the moment I get home, I will have the same problems again. It's true that there's no problem now.

But the moment I get home, it will be there. And that you can only verify and test in your own experience, by waiting until you get home. And that moment you open your door, you walk into your house or apartment, and start and then see where the problem is.

Oh, my husband or wife waiting for me. Maybe that was the problem. Whatever it is, some situation will be there, which traditionally you've called my problem or problems.

But there you have to separate again, this moment. Always to test whether you have a problem, you need to get rid of, push out time, past and future. Look at now, the only thing there is, by the way.

Look at now, this moment. What problem do I have right now? And even in the midst of so-called problems, you never have a problem now.

Just this moment. Even if you're at the lawyer, some difficult court case is coming up, they want this from you, and they want that, and they want to take away my house. And you sit in the armchair talking to three lawyers, and the phone is ringing.

Okay, what about this moment? Now this moment, you're sitting and breathing, and looking out of the window and feeling the aliveness in your body. And the phone rings and some voice is talking.

There's no problem at this moment. There's a problem because you project mentally, if all if it all goes wrong, what's going to happen to me? But this is this moment, isn't it?

And that's an amazing thing to realize. And you can start with a simple setting, like our retreat here, to realize that there is no problem. And we started with a simple sentence, I am here now.

And you remember, I am here now. That's a very powerful pointer. It puts you in touch with a dimension where there is no problem, where no problem can survive.

And only then does it become true. The saying, are you part of the problem? Or are you part of the solution?

And if you don't live in such a way that you realize that there are no problems, if you don't live in such a way, you will always be part of the problem. Only the one who realizes that at this moment, there is no problem, only a situation which may require action or not. Only the person who realizes that is not part of the world problem, as some people might call it.

So the solution is not on the level of mind, because it is the mind, the identification with mind that has created a world of problems. Mind itself is fine, but when mind has assumed a position of master rather than tool or servant, then it becomes a big problem. And then you don't create new problems.

And that's an amazing contribution you can make to this world, amazing, because the millions of people who are complaining about the world's situations if they have not gone, if they are not in the process of going through this shift of consciousness, if that, they are part of the problem, even if their intentions are good, because the shift has not happened yet in them. Temporarily they can do a few good things, and then they get drawn, the good things that they do, then something happens, becomes another area of problems. It's wonderful to do good things, but the primary thing is the state of consciousness out of which they come.

So what a wonderful contribution to this world if you are no longer a maker of problems. First, of course, you become free. And then what a relief for people around you.

God, how many people live in this world whose identity is virtually being a problem? And it spreads. Some teachers these days are doing wonderful work at school.

They're already bringing in the new consciousness, some despite the system. Others are still possessed by their mind and by problems, and that's what they teach. They teach that the children to be a problem, because they themselves, that's how they live.

If possible, tonight, go into sleep consciously, rather than, if you're not already practicing it, rather than in the usual way. Bring as little past into our retreat as possible. And when thoughts about my life, which is the past and the future, comes up, recognize it as just thought that says, give me attention, I am important.

It has a pulling power. You need to think about this now, 2 o'clock in the morning, in bed. It's very important.

I have to go back to sleep. When you lie in bed tonight, use the inner body as an anchor for being present. Feel the aliveness within.

And then not that much thought, not very much thinking comes when you're anchored within. Present with every cell of the body. And if a condition arises during the night, which is possible, somebody's making a noise, somebody's snoring, then that's the condition of that moment.

And you look at it or you listen. You may want to take action or not. That's secondary.

But observe thoughts that arise. Any kind of thoughts. I can't be present in these conditions.

A thought. No more. I should have stayed home.

Would it be more peaceful than here? At least I have some privacy. Another thought.

I have my own bathroom at home. So you become the spacious presence for your thoughts. That's fine.

You don't fight the thoughts. But know that they're there. If you don't know that's a thought, the thought becomes your reality.

And then you react accordingly with emotion that says, that's the reality. And you may even then meet the world or other people believing that the thought is the reality. And often it becomes the reality when you meet other people.

But you already have a judgment about somebody. You believe in the thought. You react to this person as if the thought were true.

Then if that person is not fully conscious, he will oblige and the reaction you will get from that person will confirm that your judgment was true. The mechanism of unconsciousness, unconscious relationships. If you want one simple example, you're accusing somebody of being unconscious.

That person feels deeply hurt, is upset, and starts behaving unconsciously towards you. Confirming that your initial judgment was correct. We're becoming free of the madness.

So tonight in bed there's you and there's the thinker in you. And see what kind of relationship you have with the thinker. Maybe he'll be very quiet.

Maybe he'll say, I'll wait for a better opportunity. He or she is too conscious now, can't do anything. I'll wait until that other guy starts snoring.

Then I can come in. So go into sleep using the body as an anchor if you want. Or you use sense perceptions as an anchor for presence.

Be very alert, listen to the noises, the wind, the rain, whatever it is. And if you wake up in the middle of the night, again immediately go into present alert. Feel the inner body, sense perceptions, and a field of spacious alertness.

And you wake up in the morning, same thing. Of course fortunately there's no TV here, I hope, or radio to get your mind going. Lie in bed for a little while, if only a minute or two or longer.

Again, entering the day, being present. Many people are present for a few seconds after they wake up. They wake up, 10 seconds, 20 seconds, and then the machine starts working.

And two minutes later they look like this. I have to get on with things, I have to get on with things now. Gone, gone.

Thank you. Good morning. I'm here now still applies, I assume.

Do you have to check for yourself? No, what does that mean? How can you check for yourself?

It's not the thought that says, of course I'm here now. You can see how superficial every thought is. I'm here now has a deeper meaning.

We know what that is. We cannot know it through explanation or thinking about it. You can only know what I'm here now means by being here now, which is to be the presence that you are, the conscious presence that's the essence, without which this room wouldn't be here.

That was once called, somebody called it once, the light of the world. You are the light of the world. I am here now.

It's the realization of that. And that I am has no past and no future because it's out of time. And a shift happens rather than being a person, which you continue to be for a while anyway, there's nothing, don't need to be concerned about losing that.

But it's about transcending that rather than being primarily a person, you are primarily a presence, a person, of course, has a particular form. It is life having assumed a form. The presence that you are has no form.

Therefore, it cannot be defined in any way. And this is why up to now, so few people ever got it, realized it. You cannot apply your usual consciousness, which is the object consciousness that grasps and grasp presence in that way.

In other words, presence cannot be an object of consciousness because it has no form. Now, spiritual seekers, for some reason, didn't realize that. And still, even nowadays, often don't because the habit, the mental habit of looking to a form is very powerful.

That's how the mind works. So it attempts to make the, that which cannot be really even be spoken of, it makes it into a form, an object of consciousness, God, for example. The moment you say God, you've made that which cannot be spoken of, that which transcends all knowledge, but is the very basis for all life, is life itself before it is born into this or that.

That makes that life into an object, but it is the unmanifested, of course. So all human beings have done that to themselves. They have made themselves into an object of consciousness.

And then you have a relationship with that. Myself. Sometimes a nice relationship, sometimes an unpleasant relationship.

Sometimes you like yourself, and sometimes you can't stand yourself, or you dislike yourself, or you think you're inferior. And the next day, you think you're superior, underneath fearing that you might be inferior after all. And that's a weird thing to do.

You make yourself into an object, and this is the particularity of the human stage of the evolution of consciousness on this planet, probably on others too. The natural world hasn't done that yet. Your dog does not have a relationship with him or herself, or the cat, or the deer, or the tree.

That's why their life is relatively unproblematic. They are rooted, much more rooted in life still than humans, rooted in being. But we are realizing something very important here, and to realize that, it seems that we had to go through that stage of making ourselves into an object.

Which perhaps is described, well it's described in various myths from around the world. Narcissus was a man in ancient Greek mythology, who looked into a pool of water, and of course at that time they didn't have mirrors, he looked into a very still pool of water and saw his own reflection there, and fell in love with himself. I can't remember what happened to him after that, but it wasn't good.

The myth says he fell in love with himself, but I would say really what happened, he became obsessed with the image self. And then it became everybody's destiny, for a few thousand years, and that's what very nicely expressed by the New York philosopher Woody Allen, who said when asked about his religion, he said, I was born into the Hebrew religion, but when I grew up, I converted to narcissism. And of course, this is very true, it's everybody's religion.

And we are here to go beyond that illusion, that you are an object in consciousness. And the mind will continuously attempt to make yourself again into an object, or it will try to find the ultimate and immediately make it into an object, to grasp it. So what that really means is you cannot know yourself, because the moment you say I know myself, you've made yourself into an object of consciousness.

At the most, what you can know is all the content, all the forms that make up the personality or the person. All the hidden desires and motivations and pains and things that were not looked at in childhood. It's interesting, fascinating.

You can go on for many years looking at yourself in such a way and discovering new layers of complexity. I am so interesting. And the more you look, the more you find.

I'm not saying that kind of knowledge is totally meaningless. It has its place too. And primarily, the place that it has is for it to realize that that's there, but you are not it.

And to realize what it is in you that stands in the way of realizing who you are beyond form. To look at all the forms that are blocking your realization of the formless, the mechanical patterns of your mind. And some people have devised systems which have a usefulness, temporary usefulness, enabling you to look at really what stands in the way.

How is it, in what way do I continuously block myself? And of course, these things are not personal. They are conditioned collective mind patterns, and I often talk about them.

Many of you know the principle patterns of always looking to the next thing, of identifying with every thought that arises. We express them here in more, in terms that are not personal, because there you can see that your personal characteristics are really an expression of the collective conditioning. So, you cannot know yourself.

That's an amazing realization. All you can know is what you are not. You can know a lot about yourself, but you can't know yourself.

About yourself means your story and your form. You can examine not only the psychological self, you could also examine the body. If you consider that yourself, which is the physical form, another aspect of the form self.

And if you started examining the body, you can go on for hundreds of years, because we've only scratched the surface of the complexity of the human body. Even the great experts know only a little. Nobody really understands how the cells work and the brain, anything works.

And you can always look deeper. It's very complex. So we are not here to understand the form completely.

It's enough if we know that which blocks us from getting the deeper realization of the essence. You cannot know yourself. You can only know about yourself.

So then what is the so-called self-realization? It does not mean, although it could, that you know all your past lifetimes. That would just mean that you know more stories than just one story.

I know you only know one story, but I know many. I apologize if one or two of you are particularly attached to your past lifetimes. So a complete reversal happens, because the self-realization, it would be more accurate to define as not knowing yourself.

Because no form arises in your consciousness when you realize who you are. The very fact why you realize who you are is that you're not making yourself into some form. So the formless, that which underlies all form, the unconditioned consciousness itself, knows itself.

When we speak about that in language, we use words, it sounds again as if when consciousness knows itself as consciousness, when we talk about it, it sounds as if consciousness had again made itself into an object, but that's not the case. It's only the case because we're using language, and the structure of language is such that a sentence has a subject and an object. When you get to a point where you get this feeling, I don't know who I am anymore, then you're getting close to self-realization.

But when at that moment your mind comes in and thinks that you should know who you are, then you're suddenly in a state of confusion and bewilderment. I don't know who I am, but I should know. But if you can become comfortable with a simple not needing to define yourself anymore, to yourself, and of course to others, that's implied, but primarily to yourself, you do not define yourself anymore through thought, formulating all kinds of judgments about yourself and opinions, then the self emerges.

It is formless. And it's there, not in any thought, but in the consciousness out of which every thought of course comes. And that is the presence.

Presence is formless. That's the I am. Not I am this or that.

That's again the person, but I am. And I am, of course, is only the words I am are the pointer. Sensing, feeling, not the right word, but we don't have right words for this.

The presence. That is prior to all sense perceptions, but make all sense perceptions possible. That is prior to all thoughts, but makes all thoughts possible.

Prior to all emotions, makes all emotions possible. Prior to all forms, but makes all forms possible. The presence, the original state before the universe was born.

The original state, timeless. And the amazing thing is, the state before the so-called Big Bang, what scientists say is the beginning of form, never disappeared. The original state actually survives in every being as the essence of every being.

So in every being, the essence of being is still untouched. In every being, the essence of being itself is present as presence. So the art of living in this world is to live here as the form that you seem to be temporarily.

At the same time, not lose remaining conscious of yourself as consciousness. And which sometimes one could call, I sometimes call the stillness in the background. An alive, alert stillness.

Or spaciousness in the background. In the foreground, your life unfolds. Conditions, remember, talked about last night.

Conditions. Thoughts, which are also conditions. Emotions.

Form. Most beings are lost in form, especially humans. Pre-humans still have some connection, but they're not conscious of it.

It's just that there is more peace and greater ease to life than for humans. We've gone through the stage of delusion. Now, the new stage is the recognition.

The awakening. And when it looks as if humans were awakening, it really is consciousness is awakening through this form. None of these words is the ultimate truth.

Such a thing cannot be expressed through words. So every word is just an approximation or distant approximation or pointer for you to remain in the realization. There's a world of form.

And there's the I am presence. When you accept the conditions that arise, as we talked about last night, the conditions that arise anywhere, here, anywhere in your life, any moment, the moment, then the formless can shine through more easily. When you're aligned with the form that life takes, then the life that is prior to form, the one life, can be sensed more easily in the background of all phenomena.

When you resist the form that life takes, the various forms, you yourself become more trapped in a form identity, and who you are in your timeless essence is obscured. And that's called suffering. The Buddha called it suffering.

And that's what it is, because you create suffering. The world becomes a heavy, painful, problematic place where you inflict suffering and problems on yourself and others. You become part of the madness.

Because not to be in touch with who you are in essence is very dysfunctional, and it is a form of insanity. And a species that for a long period of time remains, any form that remains out of touch, the species is at a precarious stage where its very survival is at stake. Because if consciousness cannot evolve through this form, it'll be very happy to do without that form.

You know how abundant nature is when a tree, seeds come, thousands of seeds, the tree drops in the fall. And consciousness is awakening. If it's awakening here, it's awakening everywhere, through thousands of forms.

So a better motivation for finding the ultimate in yourself than wanting to become enlightened, or wanting to find God, is actually to want to become free of suffering. The rest is implied. You cannot become free of suffering without finding that dimension in yourself.

But if you're looking for God, the very search already contains an error, because at the beginning of the search you already have a mind object, an object in consciousness that you're looking for. Or even if you're looking for your true self, at the beginning of the search is already the error. How can you be successful if at the beginning of the search you've already gone wrong?

I'm looking for myself, believing you can find some kind of enhanced version of yourself at some future point. The enlightened me. I'm going to get there one day, I'm going to get there.

What happens if I don't get there? So if you're looking for the enlightened me, or God, whatever it is, that's the beginning of your search. It's like looking at a map that's wrong, and then you start your journey.

Or you look at a signpost that's pointing that way, and you walk in the direction where it's not, it's this way. And that's why so many spiritual seekers are a bit lost out there. Becoming comfortable with not defining who you are anymore to yourself.

That is a kind of innocence then that comes. In some way, like a little child, but with a depth of self-knowledge, a deeper knowing that the child does not have. And yet it has certain things in common with a childlike state where the child looks at the world through non-judgmental eyes and has not yet defined him or herself.

It just is present. The one-year-old baby, especially before the words come and the screen of mind starts getting more and more dense, there is an opening and nothing was more beautiful than looking into the eyes of a baby. Especially a baby that hasn't learned to speak yet or only knows a few words.

And you know when you look into the eyes of the babies, you are not being judged. And normally when you look into the eyes of a human, there's some... Who are you?

I know who I am. Of course, the very reason why we are here, the only reason, is to access that state of consciousness. Not to learn anything new as far as content of your mind is concerned.

So it is easier for you to be yourself. Be yourself. Interesting expression with many levels of meaning.

It can be a very superficial thing that means fully express your conditioning. Don't hold anything back. Could be one meaning of be yourself.

Or the deeper meaning could be to be nobody in particular. Be being. Don't be anybody.

Be being. Be consciousness. Be yourself.

Again, very important point. Do not resist the objects that arise in the space of now. Because the space of now is another word for who you are.

Now is another word for who you are. The space in which all things arise, that which never goes away, without which there's no life. It is the unmanifested life itself.

And within it, all things manifest. And then demanifest. Do not resist the forms that arise.

But be open to whatever the present moment presents. Then the spaciousness that you are beyond the form opens up. You don't have to look for it.

Through the simple bringing a yes to the present moment and the conditions, you become spacious. But you already were spacious. You eternally are the space.

But then you begin to sense it. And what that means in daily life is that in the background, as you move through your life experiences, in the background, there remains something untouched by the experiences. There remains a field of peace.

But in some strange way, that flows also into the world of form. So any human who carries that realization in daily life begins to be a influence in this world of form. It's almost as if the unmanifested entered, seeped into the manifested.

You can't quite see it. You can't say, there it is. And things change.

But that's not the reason why we are engaged in this. We are not here to change the world. That's a byproduct of realization.

If your purpose, life purpose is to change the world, you're again starting with the wrong map. And the only place where you can truly know another human being, the eternally true relationship, is there when only, when that dimension is present in your life. It's not through definitions or attaching yourself to some form that love arises in this world.

As you know, the conventional meaning of love is some kind of one form attaches itself to another form, hoping to find some kind of fulfillment or become more complete or bigger through that. But true love is something else. It is a self-recognition.

When you have not defined yourself to yourself and you look at another human being, then the compulsion to define the other human being through thought is no longer there. Because it is only through the defined, mentally defined sense of self that the compulsion to do the same, what you've already done to yourself, to do that to others arises. So when Jesus says, do not judge or love your neighbor as yourself, it has a deeper meaning.

I believe that he explained it in a bit more detail, but all that we have of his teaching are really fragments because they didn't have tape recorders at the time. And the things were written down many, many years after the teachings. Of course, when you see those statements, you recognize they point to the truth.

But of course, the people who wrote them down didn't understand themselves. So they were already distortions in the moment of writing them down or omissions. So you have not defined yourself.

You no longer rely on self-definition for your sense of identity, your sense of who you are, which is a normal state. It doesn't mean that the form, you say, I must forget my name. No, you know your name and all those things, you know them, but you don't define yourself anymore.

It's just the phenomena. You don't define yourself, then the compulsion to define others, to judge others, and then believe in every statement the mind makes is not there. And it's only then that a relationship becomes something wholly meaningful.

Because there is a coming together, there's a recognition of the one. You recognize the undefined essence of yourself in the other. And that is love, and it is nothing to do with what the world thinks love is.

It's the recognition of that oneness. It only needs one. It is not a requirement that the other human, when two humans come together, should also be in the state of self-knowledge, which really a better word from the point of view of the mind would be self-ignorance.

Because the undefined self from the point of view of the mind is the state of self-ignorance. Because it's not the self that the mind can know. So it is not a requirement that the other human should also be in that state of spacious presence.

You don't say, I'll recognize your oneness if you recognize mine. Or you complain, you say, he or she doesn't know me in my essence. My parents don't know me.

They don't know who I am in the timeless dimension. And then you go to them and explain them while they watch their TV program. You don't know the timeless I am.

What? So you don't demand that the other should be in the state of freedom. It's enough for you to be free.

And this, even that's not the right expression. There's nobody there to be free. Because again, then it sounds as if you had achieved something.

I have achieved freedom from the world. A new self-definition. It could be.

And it is often at that moment of me two humans meeting, regardless of the situation, maybe they just exchange one or two words or no words in an elevator. Maybe it is some other short lived situation or some longer coming together. It is wonderful if you can recognize yourself in the other.

Very often you will be able to look through. It's like having almost, don't think that anything we say is literally true. Just using some words, the most appropriate words.

If you had a very strong spotlight, a light, and the other human had a dense layer of fog in front of them, which most humans have. Well, it's inside them, but let's just externalize it. They had a dense layer of fog consisting of continuous streams of thoughts and emotions, swirling fog.

So you can't see who is beyond there. All you can see is the form of this fog. It's like some kind of horror movie.

The fog has actually got a face. And if you were identified with the form, you would think that's the person and he's not very nice. Or who is that?

Or you define the swirling fog. And then if you are present, there is, you are the presence that you are that can often shine through the dense fog, like a very strong light. And it reaches the same dimension in the other.

And it sometimes happens often that something that, I'm just using words, it's not the ultimate truth, just approximation. Something in the other responds because the very same dimension, the unconditioned recognizes itself. So there's in the other, something underneath the fog, often something happens.

And it comes forward to meet the presence that you are. And something of the density suddenly goes. There may still be some fog, but suddenly in the other person, a light shines.

You might even see the eyes change from being dull and lifeless if they're very dense or angry. Suddenly a change comes and some light comes through. And it often happens that the behavior of that person also changes.

They don't know what's happening to them. And then they go off and say, strange what happened just now. And then often the density comes back.

Not necessarily, but usually. But they've had a glimpse. Something happened.

First time I experienced that many, many years ago with somebody who had a very dense mind identification and emotion. That was shortly after the shift happened within from suffering entity to freedom. I sat with her.

She talked incessantly for 20 minutes. And then she stopped talking and says, this isn't important at all, is it? And while I was listening to her, there was only spacious listening.

Just space. And all I said is, when she said, this isn't important at all, I said, no, it isn't. Something happened in her.

The next morning, she was a neighbor of mine. Next morning she saw me again and said, that night was the first night in years that I slept well, like a baby. What did you do to me?

Nothing. I didn't do anything. It's nothing to do with doing.

So that was a glimpse. Perhaps the beginning of a transformation. Once you've had a glimpse, it's easier for it to come back to again.

In some traditions, it might be called initiation. But that's too big a word. Too big a mind object that you can attach yourself to.

Another area to work with, to bring, to be conscious of yourself in a deeper sense. I believe the Gurdjieff had the expression, the teacher lived in early 20th century, self-remembering. And of course it can be misunderstood, but he meant being the presence while things happen.

Knowing yourself as the presence while things happen. Now, know yourself as the presence in this retreat situation. When you are not being challenged by any condition arising.

There too, of course. But here you have nature. Whether it's wet or dry, it doesn't matter.

It's beautiful. It's nature. Use nature and bring to it as you perceive.

The leaves in the tree, moving the leaves. Trees quivering leaves, branches moving, blades of grass moving, birds, clouds. Sensing, perceiving nature.

And again, if as much as possible, not defining it through words. Perceiving nature, sense perception, flowers, and be alert, present. And then be aware that there is a dimension.

It's not just the two dimensions here. There is that what you perceive. Yes.

And that which makes the perception possible, which is your presence or the presence that you are. You sense the presence, the underlying presence when you perceive nature. Then you have the formless and formed coming together.

And then you see that the form has a depth to it that before wasn't there. A depth and an aliveness that wasn't there when all you saw was the form through your mind, through your mind. Then the form is relatively lifeless.

It has no depths and no true aliveness to it. And that's why people go around nature and they're not really there. Their mind is still active.

Either they're thinking about something totally different, the stock market, while they're walking through a beautiful forest or grove or beach thinking, my shares, what's going to happen to them? Hedge funds are in a critical condition. And there's all the beauty or the best of cases, they're going and defining everything they see.

Oh, isn't that interesting? And they have the knowledge to do it. Now there are two types of, you know, in some countries, bird watching is a, some people have that as a hobby.

Now most, it's of course the most exquisite thing to watch a bird, but most bird watchers are bird definers so they're very knowledgeable about birds. And in many cases, they are trapped in their definitions of birds. So they never really see the incredible grace and beauty and sacredness of that creature, the perfection of the form, how it flies, how it sits, totally one with the totality no decision-making like humans.

It doesn't sit on a branch and says, should I fly off or not? We have a problem here. What if I don't reach that branch?

And then there's a gust might come. It's just beautiful expression of oneness. But you miss that when all you have is the definition of that bird and you repeat it in your mind.

You don't really see it. I believe it was Krishnamurti who said, teach the child the name of the bird and he will never see the bird again. That's putting it strongly.

But there's some very fundamental truth here because the moment you teach the child the name of the bird, there will be a seeing for a second and then there will be the arising of the definition. Oh, that's a such and such and that's it. No further connection unless the parent encourages further connection.

Says, look, don't encourage perception, spacious perception. Don't dismiss the perception the moment it has been labeled. So here we go about perceiving and at the same time not losing awareness of your own presence.

Let's rephrase that. Not losing awareness of the presence that you are. Let's rephrase that.

Not losing awareness of the awareness that you are. So there is a field of awareness is there without which there would be no perception. There would be no bird.

Would anything be there? That's a question for philosophers. Put that aside.

There certainly would not be a bird if there's no perception of the bird. You can start if you want to pursue that in your philosophy. You start with a rainbow and say, if you look at a rainbow, you say, okay, if I was not standing here and no other human either, would that rainbow be there?

Because rainbow has no actual existence as an object. It's light coming through, filtered through water, crystals or whatever and broken up into, but if nobody sees it, it doesn't happen. So you can start from there and then complete your PhD in philosophy ten years later.

Awareness then is there as another word for it, the undefined yourself, undefined self or the space of now that you are. And how, this is how nature can be helpful to us here and as a, in this period that is set a time, set as part for practice and it requires a certain alertness. You need to really look and then sense who it is or what it is that's looking.

There's not only what you're looking at, there's also who is looking and that's not a question that requires an answer. You sense that which is looking as yourself and that is always peace, a vibrantly alive peace in the background. And to go through nature in such a way is just wonderful.

I would even go so far as to say that you add a very important dimension to nature when you perceive it through the depths of your being because ultimately you are not separate from it and as you perceive it, nature knows itself through you, its own beauty, its sacredness and everything is more than what you see. You can sense then that there isn't, what you see through sense perception is only a surface and for you to see beauty, you need already to have gone a little deeper within yourself beyond the form of the form. If you say, oh, that's a pretty flower, that's not seeing beauty, it's a mechanical, mental thing.

Oh, what a pretty flower, I wonder what it's called. That's the surface world. I think I'll take it home.

It won't look good in my living room. So here we use, then we have another level of teaching here, which is the natural world that surrounds you. You can go for walks, I'm told.

You have to find out where the footpath trails go. There's a beach somewhere. There's nature everywhere.

And what really, what beauty is, is just to sense the depths, but the depths that you sense out there that you're in. So we have so much teaching happening here. Every moment, becoming comfortable with, also with being, simple being.

You don't always need to do anything here. Be, can you be with yourself? What does that mean?

Just sit, just stand, or lie. And there's nothing particular happening. And feel the being or the presence that you are.

And to know yourself in such a way is, in a deeper sense, joy. The only true joy, which again is very different from what one calls joy or pleasure. That's I believe the title for our retreat is the joy of being.

That's what it is. It derives really from knowing yourself as consciousness. And that is the being that you are, which in Indians, Indians have a word, certain words for things that we don't have words for because there's such an ancient tradition of self-realization there.

Sat, being is the word, is sat, I believe. It's the realization of being. Which is consciousness.

Cit, which is joy or bliss, ananda. And that is a single thing. That's why they string it together, make it into one word almost.

Sat, cit, ananda, is that. And it is no more than being in touch with the undefined self.

The Buddha never wanted to say that because he was very aware that the moment you use a certain word, you make it into an object of consciousness.

So the self, the Buddha denied because he wanted to discourage humans from making the formless reality and timeless reality of who you are into a mental object. So he said, there is no self, it's an illusion. And of course, what he talks about is the form self.

But he didn't want to use the word self either for the ultimate because that would make it into an object in your consciousness. So this is a so-called negative tradition of teaching where you simply deny the reality of form. And what you're left with is the formless, but you never name it.

Very clever, very wise because you know what has been done with other teachings that used positive statements, the kingdom of heaven, pointing to the same dimension but it's so easy to misinterpret that. And then you put it elsewhere and into the future and it's ours and so on. So the denial, the teachings that deny the reality of form can be very powerful if they are understood but can be also misleading if they're only approached with the mind that the mind looks at the teaching and the mind says this is a nihilistic religion.

As the Western intellectuals and professors when they started studying Buddhism called Buddhism nihilistic, life denying religion. Is it? Then why is the Buddha smiling?

Because all the good Buddha statues have a slight smile and the bad ones look serious. Why is the Buddha smiling? Because he's in touch with the formless which he called emptiness.

Then the world of form loses its heaviness and seriousness and that's why the Buddha is smiling. And that's why you smile whenever that is present, you are present, externally or internally, the seriousness and heaviness disappears from the world. Things may still be important but never absolutely important when you're in touch with the unmanifested or as the Buddha called it, the unborn, the uncreated.

I love that teaching because it's just, it's so hard to make that into a mind object. You just can't. The unborn.

Wonderful. So if used rightly, it can be a very powerful pointer to the truth. Realizing the unborn, the uncreated, the unmanifested, the unformed.

Buddha said, there is, oh monks, the unmanifested, the uncreated, the unborn, the unformed. If there were not the uncreated, the unmanifested, the unformed, there would be no escape from the world of the manifested, the created, the born, and the formed. That's more or less how the sutra goes.

Continuous practice in our situation, this retreat, use every moment. Remember to be here now and what that means in its steps. Being, I am, I am implies be.

I am here now. That's really all you need. I am here now.

One other thing we, another level of teaching that we may look at the next session is the humans in our situation here. The human interaction and the condition patterns that arise very easily the moment you open your mouth and start talking. To finish, just one simple demonstration of form and formlessness.

Sound, follow the sound with your attention. Consciousness became a form. It was born into a form, auditory perception.

Follow the sound with your attention again. And when the sound has subsided, be aware of the presence, the attention itself. Aware of awareness.

Now be aware of that before the sound, during the sound, and after the sound. Thank you. I suggest you just sit here for just one or two or three minutes and just be with the empty chair up here and yourself there.

I am here now. Thank you. As we talk or as you live this in your daily life here, questions may arise and in the second part of the retreat there will be opportunities of course to ask questions should there be any questions left by then.

You may have realized or be realizing that this is a very revolutionary shift in consciousness from the viewpoint of spirituality it is a new spirituality let's put it like that for a moment without an object not without God without God as an object. Now that was already had been attempted 2,600 years ago by Osamu Siddhartha the Buddha a very brave attempt and of course Buddhism is still alive and an influence in the world but as far as 95 or more percent of Buddhists are concerned the Buddha the messenger has become the object has taken the place of God although he is not called God in daily life that's how they practice it for all intents and purposes the mind could not tolerate spirituality without an object because the mind lives in and through making mind objects I believe there's a better chance now for this to spread it's another wave coming and this time I'm sure the messenger is not going to be made into a God thank God so it is spirituality without an object which does not mean spirituality without the transcendental dimension that would be absurd not mean without God but not God as that thing there or that entity there God as the formless one formless timeless one life that you are in your essence and every everything is in its essence an expression of that so it is revolutionary from that point of view it is also revolutionary from another point of view because it is about an entirely different way of being in the world where that which has dominated human existence for thousands of years no longer does so and what is that thinking thought which has been primary now becomes secondary is replaced by presence awareness as this happens many changes happen externally and internally this looks takes looks after itself you don't have to do anything the teacher Krishnamurti was convinced that the brain cells would be undergoing a mutation as this different consciousness comes in and he would always say what is needed is a mutation of the brain cells because of course he saw how mad the human mind is a brief mention something that may have occurred to one or two of you now we do not want to get into philosophy or into science I know a little bit of philosophy most of what I've done is new I've forgotten fortunately but I know very little about science so we can't talk about that that's good what is the relationship just a brief moment looking what is the relationship between the brain and consciousness now there are quite a few scientists around who will even deny the existence of consciousness because you can't see it or measure it because they're always looking out there to find consciousness they don't realize that which is looking through their eyes and through their mind is consciousness they are consciousness looking for itself through the microscope or whatever it is of course it's not there you can never find it the same as the spiritual seeker can never find it because looking for an object a mind object or if the spiritual seeker wants to realize him or herself he's looking for another mind object me, me the perfect version of me in the future so they're all doing the same thing and therefore of course they don't find the scientist doesn't find consciousness and the spiritual seeker doesn't find liberation or God or himself because there's an object they're looking for however we cannot doubt the fact that seemingly if a brick falls on your head you lose consciousness or if somebody puts something in your coffee or tea some drug you might lose consciousness or you take something that affects your consciousness and suddenly you behave in a weird way so there are chemical things seemingly that affect consciousness so is it then the case as some scientists would say that consciousness is a by-product of chemical reactions in the brain and ultimately does not exist but some kind of illusory thing that they don't know what it is that happened accidentally we're getting into some very weird territory now or is it perhaps that the that consciousness itself took part in making the brain in order to come into this world in a focalized way and when you seem to lose consciousness a brick falls on your head or whatever it is perhaps all that happens then is that the one consciousness that pervades everything no longer expresses itself through this channel into this world it withdraws it can't go through that channel anymore and it's fine nothing is affected so one could look upon the brain as a kind of lens that you have in the same way that you can take a magnifying glass and hold it up in the sunlight and then it gets very sharp ray you can even light dry grass or paper with it but the sunlight is everywhere it pervades everything this is not an ultimate explanation but an intuitive intuitive perception so the question then was does consciousness does the brain make consciousness or does consciousness make the brain and the brain of course is the most subtle the least understood of all the organs of the body of unbelievable complexity we may know little even about other parts of the body how they ultimately function but about the brain we know very little indeed nobody knows what a thought is I'll start so then if the brain makes consciousness how did the brain make itself now we're getting into philosophy I'm just putting that question there because of course we see that incredible intelligence was already needed to make the brain that intelligence is prior to that to any form and this applies to anything that you see in nature or in the universe it's an expression of the one the temporary expression of an underlying life that is formless but all this I only give to you to satisfy a few questions that may arise in the mind that otherwise could block you now it's important to realize that the mind will never stop asking questions most of which are irrelevant to awakening so even as we are talking now in some minds here more questions have popped up yeah but then what about and if we started going into it there would of course be no end because it is the nature of the mind to doubt and to ask questions and to analyze and to cut into smaller and smaller segments we are not here for that we are just here to give the mind enough so that it doesn't go completely mad and runs out of the room and carries the body with it this is not about feeding your mind of course just enough to keep you here so that the mind doesn't say this doesn't make sense I can't balance so the revolutionary thing then is that this this shift of consciousness that is taking place and you are at the forefront of this because you are here but please don't make this into a new identity for yourself this shift is the revolutionary one it means that from now on you will be thinking less and less still able to use your mind when needed but no longer run by it completely different energy takes its place of a completely different vibrational frequency and of as you know we temporarily call it presence awareness pure consciousness I say temporarily because what we call it doesn't matter what we call it is not it you cannot know what it is by listening to a word about it you can only know what it is by being it and that's why we are here not for explanations or philosophy but by being that change and whatever we say here points to that and is meant to be helpful so that this person on the chair here facilitates this birth and the birth process can be can take a while it is a process in some cases it can be quick in others in most cases it's a process of a gradual disidentification from the stream of thinking and the emotions that go with it and then a frequent slipping back into the old many people are telling me that at least often it happens they go back and are just as unconscious as they were twenty years ago for a while and then they wake up again presence returns and that is fine don't believe the mind when that happens at the moment you wake up again and have just realized that you've fallen back into an old reaction an old pattern of behavior an old way of thinking repetitive thinking when you wake up even then the mind will still come in and then tell you that there's no point in even trying to be present because it's obvious that you're no good at it it may sound familiar to one or two of you the mind will immediately you become present and even then the mind will try to come in again and the very fact that you've become present says you see you can't do it because you've just been unconscious for two days so and again here it is again the question of not believing your thinking just having a spacious relationship with your thoughts so not like before you and here's your thought and here's the I consciousness and before it was one I and thought one the I asleep dreaming the dream of thought and then there's the separation that's the awakening and then occasionally you fall back and then you go again and there's thought even after you've separated from thought thought may continue and say what it says but you know it you have a spacious relationship with thought your thought it's not really your thought it's thought when it's not fed by identification it loses its strength it can't create havoc in your life anymore it can't make you unhappy anymore because a lot of what it says is either false or a partial truth it's not the whole truth no thought can encapsulate the whole truth so that's the separation and that's why we're here continuous we're like a new species that's just beginning to live in a new way not in any case it's not yet very good at it just as the first fishes that started to crawling on land can't have been very good at it for some reason they had to I would say the waters there must have been a vast expanse of water that was gradually receding cut off from the rest of the ocean a vast and then the fishes rightly what do we do the water is diminishing we have to do something else this is where humans have arrived at we've created so much havoc on the planet we have to do something else now what do we do there is a moment of crisis survival is threatened and it's only then that the fish wants to see ok let's see get out of the water and then it starts the first the first attempts this is the first attempts in humans of living free of thought and then of course just as the fishes did you quickly run back into thought however I know that many of you are already more advanced than that you have already developed little things that are going to be legs and some can even run but occasionally you may still like to jump back in the water the old way which the mind says is so much easier which of course is another of the lies of the mind it's so much more difficult to live in that way thinking identified with thinking deriving your sense of who you are from thinking dreadful place so you use now everything in your life experience to see if you can approach it in a new way we mentioned nature where you become alert and spacious as you perceive even the smallest detail the subtlest thing and you sense an underlying peace and aliveness as you contemplate nature it's a beauty there and it has no form the form is only very superficial so it gets you in touch with yourself and you're not thinking when you contemplate nature and as you know one of the main practices I have to repeat it because it's easy to forget meeting what arises in the present moment without resistance there also the spaciousness that you are the formless arises and you lose it the moment you react against something that arises in the present moment the moment the old because all reactive patterns are old I'm not talking about response response is something reaction comes out of presence a challenge comes in you look you face it completely being absolutely present and if something needs to be done response happens action happens reaction is an old conditioned behaviour pattern that many situations trigger and they are usually dysfunctional because they come from the past so you meet the present through the past and it never quite works so reaction and it's always against something so that is fundamental one first the most important way of accessing the new consciousness is to meet what arises in the now without inner resistance to allow it that implies many things other human beings that's about probably the most challenging thing in your life the fact that there are other humans and many of them are difficult so far as to say as some people feel that actually as you know I've quoted it before Jean-Paul Sartre said hell is other people in the original French hell is the others and of course that is as far as the ego is concerned to a large extent is true except of course to make it even more difficult is that the ego needs the others as well as hates the others it means that you drop many thoughts that you had before about other people as unnecessary as blocking the space consciousness in you and you see people behaving in certain ways according to their conditioning and you no longer formulate some kind of judgment and make their conditioning into their identity you just don't you see it and yet nothing arises which means you don't give it any power whatsoever the unconsciousness I mean if you don't if you give the unconsciousness in another person power by calling it something and equating it with who that person is you immediately become trapped also in a narrow object consciousness because you believe in your judgments so the thing has come the I and the thought have come together again and you reinforce the unconsciousness in the other and because in miracles it says something like what you see in another you strengthen in yourself I would formulate it slightly differently that is what you react to in another you strengthen in yourself what you judge in another you strengthen in yourself because no matter who you meet in this world at some point their behavior will have certain elements of ego in it not surprising the ego has been dominating humanity for thousands of years so that is not a personal deficiency of anybody that they have ego you still have an ego I don't want anything to do with you so so you look through that or rarely it may be helpful to point out when you do this don't step on my toe every time you walk past or something like that that's fine to say your behavior in some cases if they are very obnoxious you could say this behavior is not acceptable so maybe I'll remove myself or maybe you should remove yourself it's fine and again there's no condemnation and those are extreme cases in most cases these are little things that otherwise get blown up and the next thing is you talk to a friend about what he or she had said or did or failed to do or failed to say and then the next thing things the origin of gossip one could write a book about that the origin of gossip and the ego is back the ego is mind identification and it feels superior if you can say something critical about another it may be true but it's only the ego and the other it's only unconscious it may be true or it may not be true maybe it is a misinterpretation another source of enormous conflict in human relationships the mind misinterpreting what somebody else does then acting as if my misinterpretation which is a thought were the reality so let's take something very simple but one can take very complex examples of that somebody in the street you say hello and he goes past you and doesn't greet you who does he think he is how dare he I was very friendly I said hello how are you he looked straight ahead walked right past me I can't believe it I always knew he thought himself superior to others and then you talk to your friend about it and then your friend says you know last year he did the same to me I know he can't be trusted and then you know something else he did two years ago and the truth is this person is very much in his mind and when he walks in the street he doesn't even know where he is going he only has peripheral awareness of his surroundings because he is so much absorbed in his thinking so he doesn't see people easily even if they come close to him and say hello 90% of his attention is in thinking and he is walking along the street has just enough attention outside not to bump into things and that's why he didn't greet you and out of that is I'm choosing a simple example but many large part of human relationship is based on misunderstandings mental interpretations that you believe in that are not true or mental interpretations that blow up a tiny thing into something big so what you don't need the awakened person says hello and the other person doesn't say hello and he will pass this it's fine I don't need you don't need the hello to make you feel better it was good that you said hello you don't interpret it because you know there are many ways of possibilities of why you didn't say hello why even venture an interpretation you allow this person to do what he does or to fail to do what he does it's fine another small example of egoic reaction in everyday life because you can see it if you just see the mechanics underlying one simple situation same mechanics apply to the power struggles in the board room or wherever people are meeting and engaging in dysfunctional behavior which is everywhere organizations committees the people who laugh have some experience of committees some people find driving stressful some people some people and they complain about other drivers it never occurred to me to complain about another driver because another driver is just like a gust of wind or rain or shower that comes down if necessary you take evasive action if you can it's no more than that and if another driver shouts you idiot as they sometimes do the egoic the normal egoic reaction would be to immediately shout something back and then it might proliferate from there road rage it's called so it's the ego wants to repair itself because it feels injured when somebody criticizes you you idiot seems to take a whole chunk out of your self image so the ego has to go into instant repair modality and it does that by shouting back something worse than idiot and then it feels a little bit better it has repaired itself you've taken a chunk out of me and I've taken a bigger chunk out of you out of the image however it may not stop there because then the drivers may stop their car and want to fight it out this is just one little relatively insignificant unconsciousness but everywhere similar patterns happen it is because people are identified with their active patterns and with thoughts that come up in their mind lack of spaciousness lack of being there as the space and you're just there as the object fragile trying to defend yourself against other objects so as far as human relationship is concerned you in the new consciousness it is easier to overlook the unconsciousness in others don't strengthen it by dwelling on it as a spiritual teacher called Swami beyond ananda says he's a he lives in states in California I think he's very humorous and occasionally very quite wise too he says if you see a fault he's in California so there are many geographical faults if you see a fault this is his message to the people in California if you see a fault don't dwell on it very true so you overlook or you look through the unconsciousness in others thus not strengthening the unconsciousness in you because the tendency to judge is unconscious it's a mechanical mind pattern relationships of course are the greatest practice and always tell you where you are at in your spiritual awakening they give you good feedback if you remove yourself from relationships human relationships it's very easy to fool yourself that you have attained ultimate liberation because you're avoiding all contact and sit alone in your nice garden all day meditating somebody brings the food it's always healthy and good somebody else gives you massage treatments and so on no challenges just as long as you don't have a relationship with anybody so you have to pay somebody to bring the food pay somebody to give you a massage and then it's fine but you can only really know yourself because your unconsciousness or otherwise is reflected in your relationships with others they reflect back to you where you are at so if conflicts are frequent in your relationships if the main source of problems in your life are the relationships then use that as a mirror because that will tell you here you are not conscious here you are creating conflict oh no it's the others who are creating conflict it's always it's them people are dreadful especially spiritual people I have enough with spiritual of spiritual people they talk about spiritual things and behave unconsciously so the only person whose awakening is important as far as you are concerned is yourself now since we are in this retreat setting I suggest you start in our retreat setting you may have occasionally conversations with others that's fine you meet people that's good first of all see if you can step out of the usual patterns of saying things and that starts with the practice of listening to another human being when they talk can you listen in that spaciousness presence where there is no thought but just the space of awareness and you are looking at the person and listening not concerned with your own thing that you want to get out the person saying something about politics or spirituality or George W.

Bush and you are just waiting to get your thing out and you can feel the pressure that's building up not realizing that the person who tells you he loves George W. Bush was an actor paid by me to challenge you just kidding there was a Zen master who said don't seek enlightenment just let go of your opinions what he said literally was just cease to cherish opinions that's all you need stop looking for enlightenment that is silly stop cherishing your opinions cherishing really means believing in them completely and being having your sense of self in your opinion then you cherish it as yourself you love your opinion as yourself and what is an opinion an opinion a bundle of thoughts so you are in love with a bundle of thoughts in your head and you are equating the bundle of thoughts with who you are and then your opinions have an enormous force behind them it's the force of the I identification now the egoic I wants two things it wants to grow expand and if necessary defend itself from the opposite shrinking so the opinion is important in both regards because the moment the opinion comes out of your mouth the ego grows and especially because you know so much better than those people who have just expressed their opinion which is entirely erroneous now you are going to put them right and that will teach them a lesson or maybe it won't maybe it will harden and strengthen their opinion which will then come back at you so here self-observation is very helpful let's say somebody you are at a table somebody says this or that and you feel a strong impulse to get in there with your opinion it doesn't it makes no difference to the situation because the situation is not about what are we going to do now so your opinion has no actual influence on anything that you do as a group or as two people it's just there it wants to get out observe the pressure behind it and it may well be that you know better than the nonsense that these people have just been saying and yet observe the impulse behind it and so you have a relationship with your opinion rather than being it feel the mental emotional push that wants to get out and then you may practice with see if I can just let it be this is the opinion but it already doesn't need don't put pressure on it don't say okay I know it wants to get out but holding it in I mustn't say what I really think that's another weird expression what I really think you're talking about the conditioning of your mind what I really think is overvalued because it's really it's the conditioning of your mind that makes you think what you really think so it's not such a great precious thing what you really think so have a relationship with the mental emotional movements rather than being them so that they exist then in the space that you are you step back for a moment there it is you feel it but then you are the space in which this thing exists and then you have a choice you can speak it and if you speak it then it will be different you can still explain that the ego force won't be behind it you can still speak forcefully in fact you are much more likely to get across your viewpoint if it is free of ego if you are simply stating the facts but there is an enormous difference between stating the facts and having an ego behind the facts that wants to triumph and survive through this and that's of course unconscious when you state the facts with ego you are not saying to yourself ok my ego wants to you don't know what's happening that's why we call it unconscious an enormous difference and so you can actually communicate reach people the chances are much greater of reaching a person with your communication when it is free of the force of ego that wants to triumph or protect itself has identified with a mental position is challenging the other person's mental position two mental positions persons another word for it battling it out no space whatsoever in the relationship and here we come to the crux of what the essence of a true relationship is the essence of the true relationship is space in any even the shortest relationship the fundamental question is is there space in this relationship and you have to ask that question no matter whether it's you are just meeting a person for a few seconds it is still important or is are you acknowledging the consciousness that you are the presence at this moment of interaction thus also acknowledging the other person's essence beyond the function of that other person because many relationships in this world are to do with different kinds of functions that people have so they meet because he has this job he wants to sell you something and you want to buy something for example so he is the the seller and you are the customer or whatever just one example of a function so can you meet the other yes the function operates but is that the main thing in the relationship well for most egoically trapped people it is the other person is the customer there is no human being there there is a mind form customer we already talked about how a mind form becomes the screen that prevents you from really really communicating and being with the other person so you are relating to this mind form you are not interested there is no human being there for the egoic self when it has made another person into a mind form there is just a deadened thing that thing there and that is relatively harmless in a relationship between customer and client client and sales person but the same mechanism would function somebody who wants to kill you because he calls you this or that he has reduced you in his mind to a lifeless abstraction he cannot feel his own reality and so he cannot feel yours before the violent person inflicts violence he has already reduced the other to a mental abstraction but before he has reduced the other to a mental abstraction he has done it to himself or herself so remaining open here you practice it as you talk to people listen spacious listening when the other person is talking if a strong charged opinion comes up you are spacious with that you observe that you could might express it then freely without the ego or you might say there is no need to express it you can just let it be it doesn't matter you have not shrunk by not expressing your opinion the ego thinks so you have not become less by remaining silent you have become more in essence because the depth of who you are is present and that brings us to an important point there are the the ego wants to be it wants to stand out there is always one way or another the ego wants to assert its existence and even an ego who feels very very shy it's just a reversal of that the shy ego is afraid of other people's reactions so it doesn't want to stand out but it's a hidden desire to stand out too I'm just too afraid to speak up because others might criticize me so some egos may keep silent because of that but there is the desire is still there the ego wants to stand out in one way or another and expressing your opinion when nobody has asked for it is just one way of course of doing that the space consciousness is the opposite movement the ego wants to be a mountain the space consciousness is the valley so as we bring a balance into our lives and invite the space consciousness in as opposed to the object consciousness we become a valley that expression is used in the Tao Te Ching the ancient Chinese book where it says be the valley of the universe it says things like for example the great river the great powerful river is so great and powerful because it lies lower than all the other smaller rivers that flow into it so because it has taken the lower position it is so powerful and there is a big secret hidden there a way of living that aligns you with the power of the universe and there you see that even the biggest mountain is really a form of weakness the need to say me, me look at me or even says don't look at me not needing to be anybody in particular and you become a valley not needing to assert yourself but be there as a quiet power lie low quiet no thought that is the power of the Tao as described in the Tao Te Ching the valley spirit it's called and that is just another way of speaking of this fundamental reality of being the space rather than being the form and that implies that things many things change in your life the unconscious compulsion for example to defend yourself mechanically is not there you don't immediately go there is more you can allow things nobody can take anything away from who you are in your essence no matter what they say about you they can only take something away from the egoic self image and if you are hurt by a comment that somebody makes only the egoic self image can be hurt the consciousness that you are cannot be hurt by it it is totally invulnerable not invulnerable because it has put up a barrier invulnerable because it opposes nothing so you can go go right through any comment passes through so if somebody says you fool if there is an egoic being there then it will hit the shell of the ego that's what it feels like it's like somebody is getting a hammer and says you fool you are your pain body is so huge and of course the moment says your pain body is so huge it will trigger your pain body and then there is the other way of simply being there as presence and then somebody says you fool nothing happened it went straight through so now let's just one slightly again the same as you might have noticed I talk about only one thing all the time because nothing else matters it's just different approaches sometimes I come from here or from there or from there or from there and so it sometimes might look like different topics but it isn't really now to put it bluntly what this is all about is to go through life and think little or not at all a lot of the time you are on your way towards that in the meantime you have a more spacious relationship with thought already otherwise you couldn't stand being here you have already a spacious relationship there are already periods in your life it doesn't matter how long when there is presence and you're not thinking even if you don't know it my mind stopped to a large extent not completely but 80 percent 85 percent of mind activity when the inner shift happened mind activity got reduced I knew that only later by about 85 80 percent 85 percent and suddenly there was peace and aliveness and it was every moment was wonderful why? because the mental noise was gone it took me 3 or 4 years to realize that that was the reason why there was so much peace suddenly so I didn't even know that thinking had slowed down significantly become reduced significantly I knew it only as peace and my mind did not recognize the absence of thinking because the mind only recognizes mind so don't look to your mind to tell you how free you are of thinking don't look to your also being free of thinking is not memorable so you can't remember it as such the mind remembers things so I'm quite sure that there are several of you whose mind is telling you that you are never there but that without knowing it you have significant moments when you are not thinking but you just don't remember it it all all it means is in those moments you feel alive and there's a joy that arises and you're fully present you don't know that you're not thinking but you're not thinking now this is fine but if you actually can know that at that moment you're not thinking now how do you know that?

you can't know it by having the thought oh now I'm not thinking this could happen too and that of course puts an end to it now that knowing is not a conceptual knowing through mental formulation it is a knowing that is post conceptual not pre conceptual that's how the dog knows you pre conceptual this is post conceptual knowing where you simply you know that now there's no thinking but you're not thinking that you can sense that you can sense the presence and know and some people first get a glimpse of that suddenly get very enthusiastic and that can be a little dangerous too because oh I'm not thinking and sometimes they become spiritual teachers too quickly before that is fully fully established before this state pervades the entire being they're not thinking ok I've got to write a book about this somebody was telling me about a spiritual teacher they met who came visiting from India and he must have been new to it I assume a recent spiritual teacher and he was so enthusiastic about being in a state of no mind he would tell people now watch me closely he said when I clap my hands I'll be in a state of no mind bum this is the state of no mind and he was right he was in the state of no mind that's it so catch the gaps as they arise and be conscious of the gaps without labelling them just so they arise spontaneously and then at other times you can actually consciously not perhaps yet everyone so I'm just saying this this is for those for whom it is true now already you can consciously choose not to think now the philosophers among you will say who is choosing and so on and I will tell you of course the universe is choosing not to think through you you are not separate from that it's just a perception let's say you choose you can choose to be free of thought when it's not needed thought is not needed and there are many instances and situations where thought is not needed this is not a good thing connected with willpower it is presence presence is not not force force is against something presence is never against anything presence is not against thought willpower if you exert it and stop your mind through willpower you would be against thought and then thought would only become stronger while you are holding it back you could while you are holding it back it just grows like the boiling kettle I'm not thinking and then finally when you breathe out a reaction comes somebody comes into the room you shout leave me alone leave me alone the kettle is boiling over presence is never against anything it's not against thinking it's vast it contains everything so you choose presence and in presence thoughts may occasionally drift in and out but there are stretches without thought consciousness without thought now some people who are good at certain sports or certain dangerous activities may have a certain familiarity with that state mountaineers among you climb rock walls or mount everest or know that in the moment of climbing the wall you're not thinking because if you were thinking you probably wouldn't be here now you would be and sports people when there is mastery in that moment of performance and it moves through you beautifully expressed in a not so well-known film the legend of Baga Vance where somebody is learning to play a person who is very good at golf then he goes into the war and through negative experiences he loses it and he comes back and then he wants to learn again how to be good at golf and he gets a teacher the caddy he's a hidden spiritual teacher and he teaches him how to play golf again but in reality he's teaching him to be present and you see a few shots of what it means to be present when you play golf the thoughtless look the absolute presence in which the thing happens and it's even formulated what he's teaching him it says in the film is how to stop thinking without falling asleep that's his teaching how to stop thinking without falling asleep how to stop thinking so this is another aspect of what this is all about this is meditation not as a separate activity but pervading your entire life and if presence is your practice whether or not you meditate or continue your practice if it is your practice it doesn't matter anymore because you bring it into every moment you choose to be free of thinking when thinking is not needed which is just amazing a lot of the time thinking is not needed and something else takes over do you become stupid? no you become intelligent you were stupid before the normal state is stupid every every egoic mind is basically stupid they may have PhD's but basically stupid that's why the world is in such a mess it's basically stupid unintelligent or as Buddhists sometimes call it unskillful action unskillful action so the not thinking is vital in relationships because the not thinking brings space into the relationship without it there is no space in the relationship and without space in the relationship soon there will be conflict so in any human encounter remember to just ask or to sense is there space here and this depends on you whether there is space or not am I bringing in the space am I here as space or am I here as a little me am I here as space or am I here as somebody a person who wants something who feels uneasy who needs more of this or more of that who needs to protect him or herself who either likes or dislikes the form of the other person vital question at any moment when you are relating to somebody especially of course important also in your if you have an intimate relationship partners marriage whatever is there space there it's up to you you are the bringer of space and what is that stop thinking when you for example when you are listening to your partner that means you are truly listening and when you are truly listening your attention is yes on the words of the other person but the larger part of your attention is on the field through which the listening happens you are there as consciousness primarily and then the words are there this is what happened today and then he said to me and then I did that and then he threw me out and then that happened and I said okay you are listening but you are not drawn exclusively into the words which are forms verbalized thought forms you are not drawn into each thought form and thus feed it and contribute your own thought form to it because then you get you are back in the level of mind so in that situation yes you know you listen to the words but they are always secondary you are aware of the awareness of yourself you are the listening the field that is the space and of course we are mentioning relationships here it is not just in relationships in any encounter in any situation whatever condition arises you need to be there primarily as consciousness and secondary as a person and then you are free and you bring freedom to others the space of no thought of course every creative person knows well even if they don't know it creativity comes out of that gap any new creative insight whether it is just an original idea whether it is a joke because even the joke requires some connection with the space out of which all creativity comes I saw an interview with Woody Allen where he says really the only thing I can do is tell jokes but he is so good at it and even during the interview one joke after another comes spontaneously out of him he has some connection with some area in him where there is space and the jokes come out of that ready made and he contributes a certain amount of freedom to the world through laughter and a person like Beethoven has a space out of which a whole ready made symphony comes and he just writes it down as if it had always existed and the great all the great things they are so strange it is almost as if they had always been there and some people only have a moment an entire lifetime at the moment of creativity five minutes and they produce something that survives but that I am just mentioning is one of the ways in which presence can operate that it is not the ultimate purpose to create some symphony or to create something that survives you some people do some people don't it is not what is essential what is essential is that you bring in this energy field the new energy into this world whether or not you will become an instrument of some form of creation is a secondary matter some do some don't it is not of primary importance there was a case of a man in South Africa I think it was perhaps in the thirties or forties he was a musician he had a band and he had to find some new composition and for the next day and he was there at night and then suddenly this tune came to him and so that was played and being in a black person in South Africa he had very few rights so after a couple of years he sold this tune for 3 or 5 dollars to a company and then it turned out 30 years 40 years later recently last year I think it was he had died already and finally his widow will get millions and millions and millions of dollars because that tune went all over the world it came out of one moment of presence it goes the lion sleeps tonight the lion sleeps tonight and it has it has something there this survives because it has there is an essence it comes out of it is out of the creative space of life itself that's why it's spread all over the world you can feel the essence of it in any creative work that comes out of that you can feel it but the most creative thing is to be here as an agent of transformation through the way in which you live and through the energy that you emanate through your behaviour and your very being your relationships and so on so what the form that the new consciousness takes varies from person to person it expresses itself in different ways the essence is the same spacious presence what comes after that varies and I'm not concerned with that because that looks after itself spacious presence the essence and this applies whether you are going to live for another 50 years or whether you are going to live for a few more days this teaching is equally valid because it is the truth of who you are finding that has nothing to do with time any teaching that is true must be true no matter where you are at in your life it must be true for somebody who has only one more day to live or for somebody who has still got their whole life in front of them ahead of them it must be true in all cases if you get some kind of teaching that gives you requires you to have time it's not the spiritual teaching and as you might have noticed your past is irrelevant here as the new arises whether your past was painful or not is irrelevant whether your past was chaotic or not is irrelevant here as you awaken it has fulfilled its purpose when the awakening process begins your past suddenly becomes significant and meaningful and before the awakening process started all that it was was chaos in some cases in other cases it was fine you built up a career and you had a family and you did all the right things and then began to realize that that wasn't it either you succeeded in everywhere and then realized well that's not it what is this all about or you messed up everything possible too and then it's taken you to this point no matter what it is it doesn't matter anymore and retrospectively it's fine now because it's taken you to this point so what before was meaningless suddenly is meaningful and you become thankful for whatever happened because it's taken you to the point where you are ready to awaken or you are already awakening also your life situation does not matter that much whether it is dreadful or has been dreadful whether you have had intense suffering or a moderate amount of suffering or very little suffering it's possible not it's quite rare but possible it doesn't matter as you arrive at this point your sense of who you are is no longer in your personal history and even your present situation I'm not talking about the present moment but your present situation as a life situation does not matter by that I mean the outer circumstances of your life outer circumstances includes the physical body it is the life situation where you live job that you have relationship that you have whether the body is healthy or not all these things also are secondary because the very purpose of human existence is already happening in you despite in most cases despite your life situation not because of your life situation because almost every life situation seems to be against awakening and it's happening anyway and the strange byproduct of awakening is an improvement in the outer circumstances of your life I only mention that in passing because that is not the main purpose why we are here we are not here to improve the outer circumstances of our lives nor are we here to improve the world those two happen but they are byproducts of awakening we are here to awaken the other thing is the what Jesus called the adding on all those things that you had been seeking will be added on maybe not all because some were pretty silly but some will be added on to you but you don't need them anymore that's a paradox pity isn't it things that before would have been great for your ego now it doesn't mean very much but it's there all the ego would have loved that so some of you are beginning to have a spacious relationship with your thoughts not completely identified not believing in every thought others are already able to choose not to think when they don't want to think without forcing anything just through presence obliterates compulsive thinking presence obliterates dissolves compulsive thinking so you choose presence who is true am I to choose presence presence chooses presence consciousness awakens through the human form and it looks as if somebody were choosing it and that's why I'm saying you can choose it's a perspective no more ultimately it's happening when you think you choose it's happening but for it to happen you have to choose it so the advanced if you're already advanced on the way of no thought then you can do as Nisargadatta Maharaj recommended the spiritual teacher from India who says right meditation which of course is presence right meditation what is it they asked him and he said in his usual forceful way meditation is the radical refusal to harbor thought that would stop your mind a wonderful way of putting it the radical refusal to harbor thoughts I refuse to have thoughts and for a while the addiction to thinking will come creeping back because the compulsion to think is a form of addiction you are addicted to thinking as if it were a drug so you may have some withdrawal symptoms at first but soon you realize that the state of no thinking is infinitely more vitally alive and intelligent and peaceful than thinking could ever be and as it arises more in you that you realize that's your home the home ground and the rest is not really where you belong so to any addict I would always recommend observe the compulsion that comes back wanting don't believe your mind when it says you need to think about this it's important what am I going to do with my life what's going to happen to me am I going to make it you only say my life as long as you're still trapped in thinking when you step out of thinking you don't say my life anymore because then you become life and I'd like to change the American expression get a life I would change that to be life become life be who you are be the life that you are do you remember the spiritual teacher who taught in the tradition of Zen and when people asked him to explain the meaning of Zen all he would ever do is raise his finger and look at you what's the meaning of Zen could be no better explanation than that some people got it most didn't so when he went they looked at him did you hear my question when you observe somebody else immersed in their mind what do you do tell them I don't think so you would only challenge the ego you're so identified with your mind right now can't you see that me, how dare you say that or do you go no you could try it here I don't know if you would become popular no, the only thing you can do is not do anything but accept allow that moment to be as it is and be the space for that person's mind because that person can't yet be the space for their mind and if you are the space for that person's mind that may help them without feeling that I am helping him or her no but sometimes that that state transmits itself and if you are the space then the possibility arises for that person also to be the space for their mind right and this great wonderful thing you can do in quotation marks because you are not doing anything for in quotation marks other in quotation marks people in quotation marks and it brings about a deepening in you so it's not you are not giving anything that you don't have it's not giving and taking it's being that's called also is an aspect of compassion not that you think of yourself now I am going to be compassionate you can even do it for a group of people who are immersed and identified with their mind so coming back to committee meetings those of you who still go to committee meetings it's only you can bring the change in there if you still choose to go you may not want to go anymore but if you go you can be the space for everybody hold them all in that space of acceptance of what is and presence and you just watch as they the various karmic formations go through their stuff and even when you listen to the news it would be helpful to just be the space for the madness doesn't mean that you go along with it it's just there it is to see it for what it is to see it without even calling it anything just see one last little hint for today when you are in your room tonight or out in nature alone or silently walking with someone or in your room tonight become aware of the stillness just notice it it's there and the moment you become aware of the stillness you become still in other words you're not thinking just noticing the stillness means you stop thinking the moment you start thinking you don't notice the stillness anymore you only have a memory and say oh it's still but you're not noticing it anymore so tuning into stillness is a very quick way of for space consciousness the spacious essential being presence to arise only the stillness in you can be aware of the stillness outside thinking cannot be aware of stillness it doesn't even know it's there only retrospectively after there's been a gap in thinking and you've noticed the stillness the mind will be able to say oh it's very still here but it's not through the mind that you know it and so you do that in nature you do that in your room tonight when it's very still and once you do it through the external stillness you can also once you you contact it then you can find even the stillness if there's still some noise and there's still a little bit of stillness in between and you pay attention to that with certain types of music flute perhaps when we listen to the music on Saturday you will be able to do in between the notes there's stillness music consists of of form and formless coming together thank you for a moment I felt that we were in India in a sense we are in India because the geographical east on our planet what we call the east of course once you're there it's not the east but let's just call it the east corresponds to the inner dimension the west is more interested in the outer traditionally things are changing computers are big in India and spirituality is becoming big in the west tomorrow or to use a conventional term tomorrow as you know it doesn't exist as tomorrow we'll just use the convention of language we start addressing questions questions you may have been told already questions can be spoken or questions can be written and left somewhere questions could also be unspoken inside you where either they dissolve or out of the space an answer comes you can try that too so we have three possibilities and that is for those in whom there are still questions that's fine remember only what we said recently the mind itself will always have one more question and every answer will lead to another question or two and many questions start with yes but in the meantime here and now where I am we continue to open ourselves to the unconditioned space of consciousness within and as I suggested last thing yesterday there are many ways of quite a few ways of accessing the that state of consciousness and one is simply to notice the silence outside and that very moment there's no thinking there's the stillness when you read the Christian scriptures there are some statements that are without any doubt being transmitted without falsification and you can sense the power of those fragments that have come down after the shift of consciousness that happened to the so called person here everything is wrong in language but it doesn't matter couple of years later I was visiting my mother and there was a new testament and I picked it up I hadn't had for many years before then not much relationship with that kind of thing couldn't relate to it I picked it up and I saw one line which said the kingdom of heaven does not come with signs to be observed he knows does not come we need to retranslate for modern humans with signs to be observed of course means with signs that you can observe so the kingdom of heaven what's that ancient language kingdom means realm realm means modern time dimension okay so we replace heaven with kingdom with dimension heaven another strange word which in some languages is the same word as the sky German or Spanish maybe also Danish I don't know the word heaven and the word sky are the same word now whether that's a good thing or not I don't know because the first thing for many centuries Christians have looked up into the sky looking for God because of that word and and you see many pictures of saints ancient paintings and the the eyes are always going up because of the word heaven and sometimes they're even pointing upwards it's not really the right direction as if they were pointing at something whereas the formless essence of who you are is not something everything else is something except you who you are in your essence your essence identity is not something and God which is one with your essence identity is not something or some body or some being or some entity it is the formless timeless which can be known but which cannot be known in the same way that you know an object and so Jesus said it cannot is not does not arrive does not come with signs to be observed so he's saying you cannot know it there are no signs it says and then he goes on to say you can't say ah there it is look there it is I'm quoting it's a free translation I'm giving you because I can't memorize scripture he says you can't say oh look there there it is or here it's here that's what he said so he's saying it's not an object that at some point when you are evolved enough will appear in your field of consciousness because the kingdom of heaven is right here in the midst within you in the midst of you within you but then he used the word heaven which in many languages is the same as sky so on the one hand it led people to look away from themselves although he had said it's within you in another sense the word sky could be quite useful because when you look at the clear sky it is formless it is just space so when you look at the sky you don't get something you get a spaciousness unless it's cloudy and of course that's the same in humans if it's cloudy with thoughts you cannot sense the spaciousness that is beyond the thoughts so if here at the moment it's cloudy some lot of the time so you may not be able to sense the spaciousness because the clouds are something sometimes you can see individual clouds but it's certainly or sometimes they hang together so much that all you see is one big cloud and that's again true for human beings if the density of the mind is extreme it's like carrying inside you one big cloud and that prevents you from sensing what is beyond but what a powerful statement and they read it in church they never really look at it what the depth of it so you have the equivalent of the sky the empty clear sky within and that's the thoughtless realm our destiny is to enter this thoughtless realm and know it consciously we've come from there already everything in nature still inhabits that realm of connectedness with being and you lose the connectedness or seem to lose it and then you regain it at a much deeper level and you know it or rather it knows itself we have suggested here various ways of entering the kingdom of heaven i don't usually use that expression you know you know what it is or rather well you don't know what it is but you have a sense of what it is you can't know it it's not an object it's always been there it's a rediscovery of what you have always been so when i say now kingdom of heaven you realize the reality of that another powerful way of entering it is to contemplate the impermanence of all life forms without judging it to contemplate means to look at it that can begin with seeing a flower that welds or a leaf that falls off the tree or something that i personally enjoy sometimes look at old photos especially group scenes people in the street running about their business taken in nineteen twenty twenty and realize all these people have dissolved and they look so real in the photo or political demonstration around that time and it's all gone but it was so important so important important if you can look at impermanence without shrinking back withdrawing even calling it anything be with it and the space within opens up because when you see how short-lived the form is then and your life but unfortunately your life consists of suffering and unhappiness unless the other dimension is there also in your life so if you just get on with what conventionally is called your life which is an error already because you don't have a life you are not then it's just this conventional existence and it is as the Buddha called it dukkha suffering is the translation or another translation is misery or another translation is unsatisfactoriness and so if you just get on with your life and don't think about death then you always encounter that because your life is not enough if that dimension the transcendental dimension is not in your life your life is a little prison cell even if you live in a palace and even if you have enough money to go anywhere you want to go and do anything you want to do it's a prison cell because you are present within the confines of object consciousness within the confines of your personality the conditioned self within the confines of things both external things and mind things thoughts no space inside you that is dukkha suffering so all these practical people are not really that practical this is more practical the other conventional practicality is practical unhappiness unhappiness how to be unhappy then just follow the norm of how the world lives this is the recipe for it so conditions in themselves we started the retreat with talking about the conditions that arise and of course you continue to practice with the conditions that arise here conditions in themselves are always sooner or later turn out to be unsatisfactory they can't fulfill you for long situations other people things that you achieve or things or negative conditions certainly then you immediately see the unsatisfactoriness but even in so called positive conditions for a while they're fine and then the positivity of the positive conditions wears off and then the positive condition no longer satisfies the big house that you move into after making it so to speak in the world at first satisfies because you have expanded into it it's my house so it is satisfying to have an expanded ego because you can actually see it you have lots of big rooms not just two or three rooms to walk through now you can walk through 15 rooms and you don't have just three sofas or two or one sofa now you have seven sofas and accumulate other things too that confirm to you that you are somebody you have grown and then at first that is satisfying and then you need to invite people in to confirm because without other people it doesn't work it works for a very short time you can't just sit there after a few days the condition would wear off so you need to invite people and pretend that something important is happening it's a big social event and then they all arrive and admire your place and that gives further nourishment conditions and then the party is over and they go home and then you sit there going okay let's plan another party trying to get as much out of the conditions as you can trying to keep away what deep down you can already sense which is dukkha the unsatisfactoriness that is hiding in every condition don't look at it but then after a few years you get tired even of the parties and dressing up twice a week isn't satisfying anymore either or if it's still satisfying then you have to wait a few more years until the body gets older and when you look in the mirror it doesn't look that great anymore and then dukkha comes as my father who had sometimes a great sense of humor said when he reached the age of 80 mirrors the quality of mirrors seemed to have deteriorated so that any condition you will find sooner or later it comes so now when the physical body begins to deteriorate or get old which it will or is already doing then it gets very hard for those who have been totally identified with the form and dukkha really starts but it's also an opportunity but if it's not too late for you if you've been identified with objects for 70 years then you may be so trapped in object consciousness that all that happens in old age is a hardening of the shell of the egoic self and increasing resistance to what you see as approaching annihilation of me and then you get bitter and a cranky old man or woman leave me alone and your opinions that you've always expressed get very hardened and whatever comes in you already know the answer everything you close down missing the great opportunity that appears even to those who have not been open throughout their lifetime to the transcendental dimension old age is still your chance now before you reach extreme old age i suggest that you become acquainted with impermanence by looking at old photos i also enjoy old films and then often look in amazement realizing all the people running around famous people sometimes whatever their names are the big stars of the screen they've all dissolved but there are still running around falling in love falling out of love being happy one day unhappy the next and they have like smoke they have dissolved like smoke into where are they now somebody showed me a wonderful tv commercial perhaps the most spiritual one that i've ever seen normally tv commercials are not spiritual because they are about objects that you should be identified with that are going to make you happy but this one was about it may have even have been swedish or scandinavian i'm not sure it was a language i wasn't sure what language there were only two words a few words in it of all things it was an ad for beer but you didn't know that until the very end it starts with it's a kind of cartoon with a lifelike character it starts with a woman pregnant and suddenly she gives birth to a baby this is a cartoonish thing but lifelike the baby doesn't come gently out of her womb it shoots out the baby shoots out into the sky and as it travels upward into the sky it begins to grow when it reaches the highest point the baby is a fully grown man and then the descent starts so it all takes place within 30 seconds the baby comes out and screams then it reaches the high point and then the descent goes and as it goes down you see the man is getting older and older and older and finally hits the ground and goes right in and a gravestone pops up and the whole thing is one scream now you might ask why this is an ad for beer well at the end it says life is short drink such and such if you disregard that advice at the end which is there to desensitize you to the fact that life is short it's a deeply spiritual thing to watch that and i couldn't get enough of it i want to see it again because it shows the reality of human existence and that's also the reason why i greatly enjoy walking going for walks in cemeteries especially old ones where even the name on the gravestones you can't decipher anymore even the name has been borne out so all you have is a gravestone without a name on it and again there's no there's a deep peace when one walks through there because facing impermanence opens up that which is beyond impermanence that in you which recognizes impermanence as impermanence is beyond that it is the timeless consciousness and through the acceptance of the fact of impermanence but you need to see it in front of you not just as an abstract concept in your mind which sometimes if you study Buddhism you say yeah that makes sense Buddha has said life is impermanent that's another thing he said apart from the fact that it's suffering life is impermanent it's true he was right but you haven't really you haven't felt what that means because you have to look at death in the face to sense what that means it only then does something open up within you and it becomes very powerful when you are faced with death either that is coming towards you as impending you know your days may be numbered or your years or your months or your everybody's years are numbered it's not that long that's left or somebody very close to you suddenly dies and then you have to be for this to become a deeply spiritual thing you have to be open also to the initial pain that you feel when your father or your mother or your child or your brother or your sister or your husband or your wife or somebody very close to dies somebody who's been in your life perhaps for long long time and suddenly there's an emptiness there and yes there will be pain even for those who are deeply connected with the with that which is beyond death within them still silent space within and yet or even even if there are which you should face because it's a condition of this moment that is a very potentially deepening experience where the space the spacious timeless dimension within you can really open up if you do not deny the suffering or the pain that you feel so you look death straight in the face and then you learn the reality of impermanence with every cell of your body it's not enough to know impermanence with the head and you really when you really really I experienced a great depth when I my parents passed away last year both of them within the space of four months each other or they didn't even live together and the moment the deepest moment when I saw how the nothingness when I felt with every cell of my being the nothingness of what the world calls important you have to feel the world calls important that it is ultimately nothing and the whole identification to form with form is ultimately nothing and I I had always known that I had always known that I had always known that I had always that I always known that I had always known that I had always known that I had that had that I had always known that I had always known known that known that I had always known that I had always known that I had to your ego, nothing personal. And it all comes to that sound.

It dissolves in that moment, what's the final pronouncement on identification with form, the final pronouncement on what is the real significance of this. And I cried, although I know all this. But it was still, and underneath the crying, that the peace was deep and wonderful.

So it's only in the face of death, because death is when the fabric of our existence comes apart, a hole. And even not just your own death, but a death of somebody very close to you, there's suddenly a hole. If you imagine your existence, your life as a fabric, I mean the life of forms as a fabric, and suddenly it tears apart.

There's a big tear and a hole appears. And it goes. A little bit of your life is lost, because people, when they say of my life, they incorporate into my life, of course, the people close to them.

They're part of what people call my life. Somebody close to you dies, and suddenly something in this fabric of my life is missing. And so a hole appears.

And to the object-identified, form-identified consciousness, that is extremely painful. And in many cases, it doesn't even want to look at that hole that has just appeared. In some cases, strangely enough, the ego gets angry when somebody close dies.

I've seen several cases of people getting angry when somebody close to them dies. That's very strange, isn't it? But it is normal in many cases.

It is a denial, a rejection. It's a defense mechanism of the ego. Through anger, you don't see the hole.

You cover it up with your anger. Then perhaps after the anger, people who work with that, they say that mourning has stages. I can't remember what they are, but that's how, ideally, you should come to acceptance eventually.

But some people never really face it. If you can look at that hole, then you realize this really what has appeared in your life, the so-called my life, is a space where before there was somebody that filled or occupied that space in the fabric of my life, suddenly there is an empty space. And to the object consciousness, empty space is highly undesirable and painful.

It doesn't want to see it. It is afraid of that dimension because deep down it realizes that that dimension, if it comes into your life, will invalidate all the things that it considers important, that it considers absolutely important. But if you can be with the empty space that is left, and what I'm saying now is not something abstract.

Each one of you has already experienced this. And if you haven't experienced it, it won't be long before you experience this. There is suddenly the space, the hole.

And if you really look at that, you look death in the face. The form is dissolving, leaves a nothingness, no thingness. And through that empty space suddenly comes the formless because it is the formless shining through.

And in the state of deep acceptance of impermanence, that transcendent space is suddenly there. You realize it within yourself. And that is the grace that is hiding behind what we call dreadful, the death of form.

So not to run away from it, resist it. And even sometimes remember that it will come to you too. Often people who are weeping and crying when they go to a funeral, as if something totally out of the ordinary and incomprehensible had just happened.

Some of them themselves are close to death. They may be in their eighties, but they still don't seem to realize very soon I'll be there too. Well, the physical form coming to terms with that as soon as possible in your life.

So death is also a point of access into the formless. Within you, if it is not resisted. There are other forms of death that are also very helpful.

They're not necessarily the physical death in your life, but great loss or disaster in your life. And some of you would not be here if great loss or disaster had not happened in your life. The deepening then that has brought you here and the deepening that enables you to recognize the truth of this would not have happened.

And you know that these words are true. You would not be here if those dreadful things or that one dreadful thing had not happened to you. And there again, there are many kinds of deaths in one's life.

When the form becomes threatened or some form that was important to you dissolves. It could be your possessions. It could be your position in society.

You lose your, everybody thought you were great and suddenly something happens. Maybe you did something silly or people say you did and you lose your reputation and everything crumbles. But what crumbles?

Only the mind made self, a little death. Or somebody, your child died. Or you did something in a state of unconsciousness that the world calls dreadful.

Or a disability in your life. One thing that has afflicted your life from the beginning that would conventionally be called the worst thing that could happen to a person. And there comes a point when you realize the worst thing that happened to you was the best thing that ever could have happened.

Because through that, it forced you into a disidentification from form. You had to, because if you continue to be identified with the dissolving forms or the deeply unsatisfying forms, you would continue to suffer dreadfully. So this disaster of whatever kind potentially can force you out of identification with form.

Perhaps half the people here or more have experienced disaster of one kind or another and it forced you out of that. And others have experienced a series of smaller disasters called normal existence. I like to quote Churchill here.

What he said was about human history, but he could have said the same about a normal human life. And he described it as one damn thing after another. One damn thing after another.

Life does not leave you alone. And so the amazing thing is you start being grateful even for, or particularly for the so-called bad things. Because you now realize what the mind called bad is not bad.

The mind, the egoic mind does not know what is good for you. What it thinks is good for you is bad and what it thinks is bad is good. I have seen people, for example, just taking one example, suffering physical disability so that you have to be in a wheelchair.

And I've seen people in wheelchairs. I've met people in wheelchairs that looked angry and bitter at the world and what had happened to them and envious of every person who could still walk. He's walking, he's dreadful.

Why is he walking and not me? All the mind's story stuff was going, and this is the mechanism of unhappiness, telling yourself stories and being angry with God, with life, with other people, feeling the victim of whatever the mind invents, the victim of circumstances, life, God, fate. So to be a victim, you need to tell yourself the story of victim.

Otherwise you can't be a victim. So you need to tell that. And the more you tell yourself the story, the unfair, unjust fate that has afflicted you, and you don't have to be in a wheelchair to tell yourself such a story.

The unjust fate that has afflicted you. And of course, the telling and retelling of that story, of the unjust fate that has afflicted you creates emotions. The body reacts with certain emotions that correspond to those thoughts, because the body believes that what you are thinking is reality.

So the body thinks you're being tortured at this very moment. You are being the true victim at this very moment, and you're being tortured. It doesn't realize the only torture is the torture of your own mind.

It takes the thoughts to be a reality. The emotion then you experience is deeply negative. Whatever it is, anger, hatred, bitterness, and so on.

Despondency. So I've seen people in wheelchairs who were in that state. I describe, I believe I describe one in a new earth, who was a person who was deeply angry when I was visiting a restaurant.

And then I have seen people in wheelchairs who looked, I just glanced at them, and immediately I said, I looked at them again, and the eyes were clear. The victim had dissolved. They were not telling themselves the story of poor me anymore.

They had come to a point of surrender, of acceptance. And what happens in surrender is that you don't tell yourself stories anymore about me and my life. Almost all stories that you tell yourself have some element of victim in them.

Even on a relatively superficial level, what somebody said about me to somebody else, or my parents, or this and that. It's always, you're always right and somebody's wrong. This is a very common element in the storytelling in the head in most people.

I'll come to a minute to a slightly different example. You're always telling somebody's right, you're always reaffirming your rightness. And so when there's already the touch of being a victim of others who are wrong and are doing something to you that's wrong.

The reversal can also happen. You can tell yourself a story where you are always wrong and everybody else is right. And that's another form of ego.

It says, I can never do anything right. Whatever I do is wrong. And everybody's know so much more than I and they're all so much better, I can't do anything.

I'm no good at anything. Another story. And it could have started with such a simple thing as your mother, deeply unconscious too, was already telling you when you were three and you knocked over a glass.

You said, oh, you were no good at anything. You can't even keep the glass on the table. And this is how unconsciousness breeds unconsciousness.

So the afflicted person in the wheelchair who was free of the victim story, you can see some space consciousness had opened up because they had let go of identifying with object consciousness, with thoughts about me and my life. They had come to some point of surrender. And that's the case also with old people.

You get, when you get there, basically there are two kinds of old people. I briefly mentioned it before. The cranky old and the peaceful old.

It's a generalization. Some people have elements of both. The cranky old remain trapped.

The peaceful old, a light begins to shine through. They no longer believe that anything that happens is that important anymore. And so they become representatives of the unconditioned and it begins to open up in them.

They die before they die. The ego personality dissolves, maybe just a few months or a few years before they die, maybe just a few weeks before they die. Something in them that before was hanging on to the things of this world, thinking things were important, something dissolves and something makes room for space.

And then there's the dissolving form and there's the light and emanation shining through. And that is the fulfillment that to some people comes at a very late stage. And it is coming here already without the need for the body to grow old.

That's the beautiful thing. You see, you are dying already to the illusion of the self, the object self, the mind made self. Some people need more time and they may not die until it's very, they're very close to the end.

Or some people who have already been deeply engaged in spiritual transformation, then in some cases the final step happens as the body begins, gets ready to dissolve. And then suddenly the final breakthrough comes into complete presence. And that's the flowering of consciousness, self-realization, realizing who you are beyond form.

But to us here, it's coming already without having to wait for death to come. So in a way we are experiencing a kind of death here, but it's not all that painful. You have already experienced several kinds of small deaths and that's why you're here.

And now, and those were involuntary. They were initially involuntary, inflicted upon you by some malignant power with the ego thought. And now comes the voluntary surrender of identification with the egoic personality and all the things that make up the object consciousness.

So this is a wonderful thing. People who voluntarily embrace that. And that's the meaning of the old saying.

I don't remember what tradition it comes from. It may be Sufism. Find death before death finds you because death is going to find you.

But if you find death before death finds you, that is a miraculous thing. And that is the fulfillment of the purpose of human existence. And when you find death in that way, you realize that it's not ultimately real.

There is no death. Only the form dissolves. And that's why Buddhism has a beautiful expression when it talks about this, the deathless realm that you find within you, the deathless realm.

Amara. Mara would be death. Amara is deathless, the deathless realm within you.

We emphasized in the previous session the importance of going beyond thinking. Now, when you relinquish thought, when it's not needed, and simply remain alert and present and here as spacious consciousness, that also is a kind of death. It's relinquishing the unconscious need to assert your form existence through continuous thinking.

It is through continuous thinking, which in almost everybody has become compulsive, even addictive. It is through continuous thinking that you continuously assert the absolute reality of your form identity, because you're identified with every thought that comes in. Every thought is a thought form.

And you find the me in there, an I, because you become one with the thought. So hence the compulsion to think, to keep yourself going, the object self, the mind object self. And the mind is afraid, of course, of letting go.

It cannot even recognize that which is beyond the mind. So whenever you relinquish thought, you embrace death in a deeper sense. You die to the defined sense of self.

You die to the definition of me, which before you needed to hang onto because I need to remind myself who I am and I need to tell myself the story of me. And it keeps you going. Plus the emotions that go with it.

So when you stop thinking, you let go also of the defined self. You don't define yourself through thought anymore. That's gone.

And that's the kind of death because what is left when you don't define yourself through thought anymore? What's left when the reactive patterns begin to dissolve? I remember working with a woman who was complaining about her husband all the time.

She was in her late 60s or early 70s. And she was in continuous state of resistance and anger and irritation because she couldn't stand her husband anymore. This had been going on for 25 or 30 years.

Everything disgusted her about her husband. His very presence, his breathing, everything, his eating, his coughing, everything disgusted her. And so she was in continuous state of contraction and he was telling me the story of how dreadful he was.

Then I pointed out to her that these were thought patterns and reactive patterns. And it was possible for her to relinquish these and then see how she feels. If she doesn't tell herself stories and she observes the reactive patterns as they arise in her.

And there was a moment of awakening and she looked in puzzlement. And then the mind came back and she said, almost shouting, but if I let go of that, what have I got left? And that was a big teaching for me because I realized now I learned so much from observing the ego.

What have I got left? So there was such attachment to the reactive pattern and to the story. And she realized that her whole sense of self was already, was in that.

She was this complaining entity. She had become a continuously irritated and complaining person. And the irritation and the complaining had become part of her identity.

And the miracle was that the mind could see that and then said, what have I got left? If I can't complain anymore, it's the last, it's the only thing I have. Now in her that had become conscious, in most people that is an unconscious resistance to letting go, to dying, to the me.

Dying to the me in the head. Now, the mechanism of this is the same in everybody. It may not be quite as extreme in you, certainly not in you because you're.

Although the laughter seems to indicate that you recognize it. Laughing at human unconsciousness, especially your own, of course, is a form of liberation too. Because when you see it in front of you, when you really see it, you have to laugh or you could weep or both at the same time.

So there's something in you to have still also that does not want to go, that may still be occasionally here and there from time to time, an attachment to old reactive patterns, an attachment to my story, my interpretation of my life. And it comes back. It doesn't want to go.

It has a momentum behind it, an energy. It is an energy form. Everything is energy.

And so the mind made self is also an energy form. And every energy form wants to remain in existence. It doesn't want its own end.

And you cannot fight it. You cannot fight identification with the mind. The moment you fight it, you create more of it.

And it's only through knowing it that you can go beyond. Knowing it means being the space for that. Being the space for that implies accepting what arises.

But to know a thought that arises, there needs to be a gap. And here's the awareness and there's the thought. And sometimes the gap, as we pointed out, disappears.

You become the thought that can happen to you, even to you still sometimes. You become the thought. And then usually a great, a good sign that identification is back is some form of suffering will follow soon after that.

When you have to be back in identification with a thought. Some form of suffering, it may be a small or more significant form of suffering will come. It could be an irritation, which is a small form of suffering.

It could be stress. It could be restlessness. It could be boredom.

It could be anxiety. It comes. And when you notice, again, it'd be easier.

There's more conscience. You can notice that you're in a state of suffering or unhappiness. And when you notice it, there's unhappiness in me in one form or another, then you know also immediately, okay, I was identified.

The noticing means you already, for a moment you're out because it's only for being out, you notice it. There's a little bit of awareness that has come in and you notice you're in a state of suffering. Not extreme necessarily, but suffering.

You notice, you notice it. And that is often used that as an awakener whenever you feel you're being taken over by something that is not aligned with now means. Suffering means you've become identified with some kind of mind form or reactive pattern.

It also means that you've lost the present moment. And that is very helpful when dysfunctional states come back into you. The moment you notice it, you also know that you have lost they are there because you have lost the present moment.

You have not opened yourself up to what is. And when you've lost, you notice you've lost the present moment. I'm unhappy, I must have lost the present moment.

Okay, it always applies. Now the mind will try to prolong that state and tell you that you can't possibly get back into the present moment right now. That's very common thing the mind will do.

So when you notice it, there is a spark of awareness because it's only from that spark of awareness that you can notice that you're in a dysfunctional state. And immediately the spark of awareness will be used or misused by the mind, which will then say, okay, you've lost the present moment, but there's no way you can get back into it now. There's just too much going on in my life now.

I've got just really, I've got far more serious things to deal with than the present moment. And that is functional to stay very close and related with that is when something that happens in your, it arises in your life situation, and you believe it, you give it so much importance that everything else disappears. It could be insignificant thing, a bill that is wrong, whatever, some paper arrives and they've made a mistake there or whatever, and you go in, what's this?

And you go, this shouldn't have happened. Now, to the mind, this is a normal and good way of dealing with things. It doesn't realize that that is a dysfunctional state.

Something that is, if anything of very relative importance pretends to be absolutely important and you treat it as if it were absolutely important, you lose yourself in it completely. You lose yourself in the reaction towards it and in the mind stream, and you start talking, you can't stop talking about it and thinking about it. And then you call up a friend, you know what happened?

This thing went wrong, I. You can recognize another way of calling that is complete loss of inner space. It's completely gone.

All you are is just crammed full with thought. So the, and I'm mentioning it because it will make it easier for you perhaps to recognize it when it happens again. And you don't realize any situation you deal with it with so much greater, more effectiveness if, yes, you may have to apply your thought.

There's something wrong with this bill. They've overcharged me by $25,000. But instead of going into, you say, okay, we have to take some action here.

The question is, is there even then, this is relatively important, but not absolutely important. Nothing in this, the world of form is absolutely important. What is absolutely important, whether there's still some space in you and you can sense that.

As you deal with a situation, is there still in the background, a sense of spaciousness, even while you pick up the phone and says, you need to look into this, you've overcharged me by $25,000. And then they say, okay, I'll see if I can find my superior. And then there's a pause.

And then you go into not thinking. Then there's, if you can. When we use the word detachment, what it really implies, detachment means there is some space still somewhere.

There's some detachment from the situation. Detachment means here's the situation and here's the consciousness and there's a space. A little bit, any situation that you deal with, the vital question is, is there still some detachment there in me, some space?

Even while I take action, is there some space? Otherwise you lose yourself in the action, in the thought stream, in the reaction. And then you get a counter reaction.

And so you get totally lost in the world because you believe that the world is absolutely important. And of course, it's always easier to see it when it happens to somebody else. You say, oh, there it is.

That's what he was talking about. And you don't have to wait for long. If you live with people, just a little bit, something will happen and they will go through this motion.

You can see it most clearly in people who are still a lot of the time, perhaps already present. And there you can see the contrast most clearly. People who even in the good times are completely identified with the mind.

And even when they're out on top of a mountain, they're still identified with their thoughts. There you can't see the contrast so clearly when they go into reactive mode. And because that's their normal modality is being identified with optic consciousness.

But people who are already transitional beings, there you can see it much more clearly, the enormous shift from being present and suddenly a trigger comes, something happens. And the whole, the energy field completely changes. It's like you had a clear sky, and within five seconds, enormous clouds come in and cover the whole sky.

So there's a learning, you can see it in others around you, and then perhaps even detect it in yourself if it still happens. If it's happening to somebody close to you, you cannot at that moment say, let me tell you what's happening to you now, because there's nobody there to listen. You would be addressing the egoic consciousness.

And that won't hear what you have to say, it can't. It doesn't even, it's totally meaningless when you address the ego about the ego. It's absolutely meaningless to the ego.

And you will get some answer back that will tell you as much that what you're saying is complete rubbish. And to the ego, it is. It's incomprehensible nonsense.

This is serious, what I'm dealing with right now. This is serious, don't come with that nonsense now. Self-observation, vital.

But now there's growing presence in you, so it'll be easier to be there as the witness when certain states come into you. Presence, embrace presence when there's relatively no challenge, little challenge in your life, and then wait for the next thing. Then use presence in the small challenges that come.

And then some people actually go the other way when something really drastically bad happens, they are present, perhaps more present than before. But when all the little things go wrong in their lives which make up normal existence, they lose it all the time. So this is another pattern that can be fairly common.

When something drastic goes wrong, you say, what does it matter? It's fine, we'll do this, see if we can remedy it. The house has collapsed, let's make a phone call.

Call the insurance company, we'll talk to them. Meantime, we'll go into the hotel. There it is, it's not the end of the world.

The Dukkha talked about impermanence, and there it is. So they are able to transcend big conditions that are so-called bad. And yet, when something little goes wrong, why didn't you take the garbage out last night?

Was your turn to take the garbage out? It's over, I'm always the one who's taking the garbage out. Normal in a married relationship.

Or then you're stuck in a traffic jam. For God's sake, why isn't the traffic moving? I need to be there in 10 minutes.

It'll take at least a half an hour now to get the body contracts. Come on, come on. They lose it in the little things, and in the big things, they have it.

That's also fairly common. Or the reverse, with the little things you're okay, but when something really bad happens, somebody close to you falls ill, whatever, then you lose it. So it depends, it varies from person to person where you lose presence.

But the good thing is that life will challenge you with a big thing or a small thing. And the small things, of course, are virtually continuous. Even in such a wonderful place as here, the small things will challenge you always.

Any trip you take, any trip, you'll probably get some challenge on going to the airport, at the airport, on the plane, or whatever it may be. Little things can all be transformed into spiritual practice. You are no longer then at the mercy of conditions.

Your inner state is not determined by conditions. And then comes the practice with people, the hardest practice. Somebody's angry, are you going to be angry back?

That's the reactive pattern. Then can you remain present and spacious in the face of anger? That's quite a big challenge.

You need to really be there and allow this moment to be as it is in the form of an angry person. Otherwise, you're pulled into unconsciousness. And that can happen easily that an unconscious person will pull you into a reaction.

So when faced with a person that is in a negative, dysfunctional state, especially if it's directed towards you, blaming you, accusing you, calling you this or that, whatever it may be, you should have, why didn't you? So you fail to then to be not to immediately, not to go into reaction or automatically defend yourself. Remaining spacious in the face of an unconscious person.

It can happen. One unconscious person, if there is a group of people, one unconscious person can pull the whole group into unconsciousness. One negative person can pull a whole group into unconsciousness.

Even in the collective, one group of unconscious people can pull a whole nation into unconsciousness. And then it, so that means you're being pulled to the same level as the triggering group or event such as probably was the case with terrorists and the American administration's reaction to terrorism. One unconsciousness pulling you into unconscious reactivity.

And that happens on a personal level also. And it happens on the collective. So something going wrong, to use a wider term, which applies, can apply to people in your life, situations in your life that should not be happening according to the mind.

Something going wrong, there's always the two possibilities. Either it pulls you into, makes you more unconscious or it makes you more conscious. You can go either way when things happen in your life, things that shouldn't be happening according to the mind.

And so when you're attached to the thought, it shouldn't be happening, the normal automatic thought, you're already on your way into unconsciousness. When you identify with the thought and this shouldn't be happening, but it's happening, you're going towards unconsciousness. Or you can use things that don't go, that are going wrong in your life as awakeners.

So every time a little or big challenge comes, it makes you more present. And a little challenge makes you a little bit more present. And a big challenge, it makes you much more present.

So in a, and that's a function of challenges in life. So a little thing goes wrong, you miss the plane. And so you go, oh.

Or you're on the plane and it looks as if it's going to crash and then you go. No thought, absolute presence. Could happen and it could awaken you forever.

However long ever is. So that brings us to the statement that we started the retreat with, which is conditions are not here to satisfy you, but to wake you up. They are here to awaken, not to make you happy.

And then comes something that is even deeper than happiness. It's a continuous background of peace. A writer once expressed that in a book.

That's the best beginning of any book I've ever read. It is so good, the first two sentences, that I never read the rest of the book. The book is called The Road Less Traveled.

And the beginning of the book is something like life is hard or life is difficult, and that's a fact. But when you know that life is difficult, it's no longer difficult. When you really know it, he's really talking about conditions.

When you know and accept that life is difficult, it's not difficult anymore. It's the beginning of the book, because it's only the saying that this shouldn't be, things should always be as I want them to be. Then you don't know that conditions are not here to make you happy.

But when you know that conditions are not here to make you happy, and because they can't, then conditions are no longer considered as obstacles on your path, your life path, because that's how most people live. They think the conditions that arise are blocking them one after another. And then you come to regard the present moment itself as an obstacle.

I want to get there, but I'm stuck here. Life is putting obstacles in my path, but every obstacle is a hidden door into yourself. As long as you think it's an obstacle, it's not.

But when you know that, every obstacle can become the doorway. And the bigger, the bigger the door. Thank you.

Just ask yourself, am I here now? Just to make sure you never know. The question should lead your attention deeper within so that you feel your presence or the presence subtle.

Now, even that's not quite correct, because when you feel the presence, you don't feel the presence. The presence is the presence that feels its own presence. There's no longer, as you move deeper within, there's the division disappears that is characteristic of the ego state of having a mind made self that you relate to an image, a division, me and myself.

So as you go deeper, there's only what remains is a sense of conscious presence, very subtle, can't be grasped, even remembered. It underlies whatever happens in your life, whatever thoughts arise, whatever emotions arise, they all arise out of that. Forms come out of the formless, and yet in their essence, still are the formless.

And that is the present moment, the now. So another way of putting it is to say, you're aware of the now as yourself, the formless self. So another way of putting it then to put the two together, the secret of life then for us humans is to be aware not only of what happens in the now, everybody's aware of that, in fact, drawn into that, reacting to that, identified with that, not only be aware of that, which is normal, not only be aware of what happens in the now, what arises in the now, but also of the now prior to what arises in it. Then you have the two dimensions, form and formlessness.

And then the forms are not as rigid or impenetrable or heavy or serious as they are in the now. When you are unaware completely of the formless dimension within yourself, of the now as the space, when you're unaware of that, the world of form is, every form is a heaviness and is dense and impenetrable and somehow threatening or there's a neediness. A form either is against you or you think you need that form, identification and reaction.

When the other dimension is present, visually you still see this more or less the same thing. But the way in which you experience the world or the things of the world changes. There's a certain lightness and the heaviness is gone and the things become almost transparent.

You sense the aliveness that is hiding in the form, which before you didn't know in other humans, in yourself, of course, primarily, in other humans and in all other forms. Even if you look at a rock, there's a hint of presence hiding in the rock, in every form, not only the forms that we call alive because ultimately everything is alive. And the essence of the rock also is formlessness.

Even physicists, scientists are beginning to get there because the deeper you penetrate into the form of the rock, the more space you find. And when you go very deep, the physicist discovers the rock is virtually almost 100% space. And the rest, they don't know exactly what it is.

Even that is not something. So that's the recognition of the formless in yourself, in all other forms. So in that sense, the forms become somewhat transparent, not visually transparent, but to your inner perception.

That enhances the aliveness and the beauty of the forms. The beauty is then, because the beauty really, deep down, what beauty means, it's not the external. It's something shining through the form.

Now with a flower, one can see it more easily. Even if you are relatively, mind, form identified, you will perhaps for a second, see beauty in a flower. And then immediately the mind gives it form and says, that's beautiful.

What a pretty flower. Of course, then you don't see it anymore. But with a rock, you don't see it immediately.

You need to have, be in touch with the inner space to see the beauty in the rock and to see the beauty everywhere. Meaning the formless, the timeless, the essence shining through. In some Buddhist traditions, they call that Buddha nature.

Everything they say has Buddha nature. That's another way of putting it. Does the cow have Buddha nature?

The master was asked, and the answer was, no. By using that as the answer, the master removed the concept of cow and encouraged you to look directly without concepts. Then it's easier for, when you let go of the mental form projecting onto the physical form, it's easier for the formless to come through, to sense that.

This arises in this moment, the so-called tea. It's a teaching, and it's entirely new. I have that strange feeling that I've never said anything like this before.

And yet I'm sure your mind knows that it has been said before, but it's always so fresh and new when it's said, because listening to it is the realization of it. And if you're able to be there, still enough and listen. Let's look at some questions.

Britain. In Copenhagen, you said, the next moment will not be better than this moment. My reaction.

So why am I sitting here then? Very good point. Because of course I came in hope to become wiser, so my life will improve.

And you write about improvements that will happen when a person stops identifying with thoughts, stops living in the future. So for me, there's a paradox here I can't solve, and I'm looking forward to your answer. Well, the paradox is not only there for you, but for me too, it's a paradox.

Another example to prove that the mind might think that the next moment can be better. The weather has improved today, it seems. Okay, so yesterday it wasn't as good, it was colder and cloudy, and now it's imposed so the next moment can be better.

When I say the next moment is not going to be better than the next one, first of all, we are addressing a deep seated, unconscious, collective mind pattern that believes unconsciously that the next moment is always going to be better. That's not entirely true perhaps either, because sometimes it fears that the next moment might be worse. But in either case, it always projects forward to the next moment and believes it is more important, even if it's worse.

The fear that you feel is there when you project yourself mentally into an uncertain future situation. The fear that you feel is there because you believe that future moment, the next or the one after that, to be so important that it obliterates this moment where there's nothing to fear. So there's the mental projection to the next one where it says something might go wrong, happen to me, I might lose this or that.

And then fear arises. And again, based on the unconscious assumption that the next moment is more important than this one, it's always considered so important that you're already reacting as if it were happening and you're ignoring the present moment where there is no fear, nothing to fear. So whether you think the next moment is better or worse, you're living for the next moment.

That's the mind pattern. And of course, on the surface, the next moment sometimes is better when it comes as the now. And then you compare it to a minute ago, a minute ago, I was, can't think of anything, cold.

I was cold and hungry. And then suddenly somebody gives me a warm coat and a piece of bread. And suddenly I feel, oh, this moment is actually better than the last one could happen.

On the surface, there's continuous change. To understand what this moment means, you have to go deeper beyond the surface appearance of this moment into the space of this moment. And really that's what it's all about.

If you go deep enough into the space of this moment, that's how we started again today, the space, going deeper into the space of now, then the external appearance of now, the condition of now is of less importance. It is only of relative importance. And that is going beyond this deep seated mind pattern that believes the next moment is, if not better, more important than this moment.

That is a mind pattern. So you are learning, we are learning to go deeper into this moment where there is a deep sense of peace and aliveness that has nothing to do with conditions. And that's the depth of this moment.

Now, that is the depth of where there is the formless life in the world of form, time also applies. Time and form go together. So when you bring the two together, you use language, which is derived, of course, from the world of form, is itself form, comes from thought, is itself form, and then you talk about the formless, immediately you get into some kind of paradox because the formless is the timeless dimension.

Form is time and you have a body and you move in this world of form always. So even for me to say there is only, in essence, only one moment ever already, six seconds have passed while I made that statement in the world of form. So on that level, you cannot deny on this level here that there is such a thing as time or there seems to be.

I can only really say there seems to be such a thing as time because things change. You can say if you wait a few more days, the flowers will wilt. If you wait a few more years, these bodies will wilt.

And wherever you look, there's time. We talked about impermanence that is everywhere in the world of form. That is, one could say, one could put it like this, time is consuming every form.

It's the poetic way of putting it or burning up. Time is burning up every form, consuming. Like a, it pulls you and you can't get out of that pull on the level of form, you can't.

But the strange thing is, all you can ever know for certain experience, tangible reality, it's always now. So on the one hand, time seems to consume every form, including yourself. And yet, whenever you are here, it's always now.

So time can be compared to a criminal who leaves behind dead bodies, but you can never catch the criminal, only the evidence. But it's all indirect evidence. You never have it, ah, there it is.

So that's the paradox of time. You can never experience time, you can only ever experience the present moment, now. It's always now, your life is always now, so there's no time.

And yet, when you look in the mirror in the morning, and then you hold up a photo of yourself 25 years ago, you see a difference. Time did that to you, but the criminal can't be caught. So perhaps here's an idea for those of you who are writers of fiction for some kind of novel on the criminal called time, can never be caught.

So because of that, some kind of paradox remains when you talk about time, and that does not disappear until you go within and realize it's always now, and actually sense the underlying now as yourself, which is always there, no matter whether the body's getting old or not, it's there. And, well, as we mentioned already, the contemplation of what time does to the world of form, that in itself can take you deeper if you contemplate it without judging it in any way. That's the contemplation of impermanence.

Impermanence means what time does to things. Yes. In that sense, time is very helpful if you use it in such a way, can take you beyond time.

Do you believe that enlightened people reincarnate in some future moment, presumably, they reincarnate? The Zen master was asked what happens after a death, and he said, I don't know. Why should I know?

He said, both, you're the master. He said, but I'm not a dead one. Perhaps we can slightly modify this question and make it more vital.

I'll transform the question into what is reincarnation and do I reincarnate? What does it mean to say I reincarnate? What is all that?

Reincarnation can only be understood now. It's not as a belief, but as an actual experience. Reincarnate, to incarnate means to go into form, to be born into a form.

And every time you identify with a thought that arises, or a condition, external condition that you want or reject, and you are identified with the reaction of desire or fear, or an emotion arises and it takes you over, train of thought takes you over, you are born into a form. Your sense of timeless being is lost and you become a limited form. So in essence, reincarnation means birth into form and loss of consciousness, identification with form.

So every time you lose presence, or presence, you can't lose it as such, but presence becomes obscured. You lose yourself in some form and that is the continuous rebirth into form. And what we are engaged in here is awakening and awakening means realizing who you are beyond form through stillness, presence.

The unconditioned space, knowing yourself as that. Then you stop reincarnating. Everything else is the dream of form.

So you get lost in, again, in the dream, with whatever it is. So you can experience every day, you can probably many times experience reincarnation. And some people are reincarnated permanently in, well, not permanently, but for a long time in the personality form with all its conditioning.

And there's never any space that is unconditioned. They are forced to act out script, their conditioned mind, emotional, mental entity is acting out whatever the conditioning is. It's like a script, they're actors, and they don't know it, acting out the conditioned script of their minds.

They are totally incarnated. There is no space where they are free of that identification. And for us here, we are stepping out of this compulsion, the dream of form, the continuous reincarnation into form.

That's what it is. If you want to extrapolate from there, I'll leave that alone. After you leave the body, the desire to reincarnate might survive.

And where's the next form I can be born into? No. The pull into form.

There's also the pull, part of that is the pull for sensory experience. Some people have that very strong. Another one is the pull, the addiction to thinking.

It's the addiction to sensory experience, which is another version of incarnating into the form of that experience. I need something. Where's the next sandwich?

Chocolate cake. I need to experience in this new form. It will fulfill me.

The next chocolate cake will fulfill me. Reincarnation into a chocolate cake. Chocolate cake came to mind because we had one yesterday.

One brief, another brief addition to this, another very common way of incarnating is when people talk to each other and a mind stream arises and it pulls you along. The conversation, one thing leads to another and another and another and you're in the mind stream and not again, loss of space to, and then the other mind reinforcing the mind stream. So you're being carried along and it could get on for an hour.

They never stopped talking. It's very easy. The moment you start to speak that the energy of words, thoughts and words takes you over and you're completely in that stream and you're lost again.

There's no space. We've all experienced that. If not in ourselves, you've seen others do it.

You all know the situation where you want to say, I need to go now, but you can't because they don't stop talking. You're waiting for a gap, but it doesn't arise. And sometimes all you can do is you have to just get up and say, okay, I have to go now.

So watch one to be aware of one's own mind stream as you talk is already being free. If you're aware of it, you're not totally incarnated. There is some freedom there.

And then you can carry on a conversation without getting lost in the conversation. And particularly powerful, it becomes when their opinions are being expressed that you identify with. The Buddha talked about the thicket of opinions.

Can't get through heavy stuff. So people are incarnated into their favorites, their pet opinions. And just if somebody touches that, where there's a sensitive spot in you, we are very much identified with an opinion that brings up, let me tell you what this is really about.

Incarnated into this energy field. How do you explain Diksha, Diksha? It's an Indian word, I believe.

And it's to do with transmission of energy, which happens all the time, of course, on different levels. And I believe also in India, it's recognized that we can be many kinds of Diksha for healing, for other purposes, for realization. Different vibrational frequency of energy that is transmitted from one person to another.

On the most fundamental level, Diksha is if I give you an apple or a piece of bread, because there's energy in it. Just on the physical, there's energy. You eat it and then you get energy.

Okay. And then you have another level of less tangible frequency of energy, where I talk to you or I give you attention. And that happens very frequently.

It is always an energy exchange when people talk. And we perhaps all have met people who love to talk about their problems to you, kind of trying to draw you in, expecting some kind of solution from you. And you, you're doing your best to find some kind of solution to this person's problem.

And say, well, why don't you, you could do that. Why don't you change your life and do that? And they say, oh, yeah, that may be a good idea.

And you talk for an hour. And after the hour, you feel depleted. The other person feels much better.

And you feel, oh, but hopefully you've, at least you've helped the other person. And then they come back two weeks later and nothing has happened. So they get addicted.

Some people are addicted to energy, mental energy coming from others. They don't want to change in their life. They want to, it's unconscious, of course.

They want you to listen to their problems and give them attention. So it's, there can be an energy transfer on that level. A child is vital to give attention to a child.

And that could mean just talking to a child or looking at a child is a form of attention. It's as vital to a little child, almost as vital as food to be given attention. It's, there is an energy flow.

So the energy can come from different levels of yourself. It can be mind energy and it can come from a deeper level. In this situation here, there's also an energy flow.

That's a very fine energy. This, it comes directly out of stillness. It is still, it has no form.

It is formless. Source energy, and that can activate that very same dimension in you. And that's what it does.

And that's Diksha. It activates the same frequency in you. And this is the formless source, the unmanifested.

Now we can almost say, but is that possible? How can the unmanifested come into this world? Does it not become manifested?

And then it's no longer the unmanifested. But that's philosophy. All we know here is this is what happens.

So it activates that in you, or in many cases, that dimension in you, so to speak, has already been activated. And that's the very reason why you're here. So what, all that happens here is a deepening.

And that's why it's very pleasant to be here. The energy of presence deepens. Now, in between the unconditioned and the physical and then the mental, there are other energy frequencies.

There's a big range of energy that is also not physical. The energy that animates the body, chi, shakti, whatever. And that's halfway between the formless and the world of form.

It's the bridge between the formless and the world of form. And some people have access to that level of energy. And even that bridge between the forms and the form can be closer to form, and it can be closer to the formless.

Even that chi can come in different frequencies. Now, sometimes chi also comes together with the source energy, or may also have an element of chi in it. So there is the source frequency.

And as it comes into this world, there's also elements of the other frequency. And that can be even up to the physical. So as you sit here, some people have physical symptoms in their body.

It could be an intense aliveness, or it could be the removal of certain blockages in the physical system that happen even as they sit here. And that could be experienced as temporary pain or pressure. So the source energy can also activate as it comes in other frequencies at the same time.

Doesn't always do it, but it can. And there are other situations where the main energy that's being transmitted is chi, is called chi. And that you don't have to be enlightened or totally free of ego to transmit chi.

Some are, some are not. So chi is something that some people have access to within themselves, and they transmit it. It can be in the service of the one, of, it can also be used in the service of ego.

So that can vary from person to person. There are people, everybody knows charisma. There are certain people in this world who have great charisma, and that is an outflow of chi energy that is in most cases used by the ego.

That's very interesting. Some people have access to chi within, but the ego can use it for its own purposes. And they don't know that this is what they do.

So people feel very much energized in the presence of somebody who has a lot of chi. Doesn't necessarily mean that this person can help you to become free of ego. It is an energy experience.

It can even have beneficial effects. The danger would be that it is being put in the ego. So a very interesting example of that would be a person who has enormous energy that's totally in the use of ego, like Hitler.

When Hitler spoke, he had charisma, and there was an energy outflow. And I believe that happened to him accidentally because early in his life, he was a normal person without any great ambitions. He wanted to become an artist.

He wanted to get into art school. He couldn't get into art school. Then he was in the First World War, where something happened to him there.

There was a big explosion very close to him. And after that, he went blind for a period of time. I don't remember how long, a few days or a few weeks.

He was blind. I believe that created in him a hole that enabled him to have some access to a flow of chi energy. It created a hole in the ego structure, but the rest of the ego structure remained intact.

And then when he recovered from that, a transformation happened, and there was an enormous influx of chi and that charisma going into him when he spoke. But the ego was still intact, so it used that for its purposes. So you need to see the level of frequency can be, and I believe you, all of you know, can tell the difference between an energy stream that arises directly out of stillness and an energy stream that has more of a vibration to it.

Here, Diksha happens naturally, not that I ever feel that I give you something. It is not me who gives you something. It happens because there is the openness.

It happens by itself. And that energy is in you, not because I have given it to you, but because it has been deepened or activated in you. Now, how much of that is still present when you leave here depends on many factors.

I cannot say that everybody who leaves here will be able to also transmit that to others. Some do, some don't. It depends on how the mind returns, perhaps the ego returns, identification with thought might return and obscure it again temporarily.

But once it's been activated, there's no going back. So in every situation when this spiritual teaching happens, in one form or another, there is a transmission of energy, sometimes through stillness, sometimes through looking. It can be through the touch.

It can be through words, because words that come from out of the stillness still carry an energy so that their power goes far beyond the informational value of the words. If they only had informational value, it wouldn't, there would be not much power in the words. They might still be helpful as pointers, but there's an additional energy to words that come out of that.

And some of you know that already because some of you have been yourselves in teaching situations when somebody came up to you and asked a question or said something and an answer came suddenly through you. And you might have been surprised yourself what, how you, what response came. And some of you have experienced people coming into contact with you, going through a transformation as a result.

Some people feel drawn to you because they recognize something that very obscurely, they also recognize in themselves, perhaps even without knowing it. But when they, when a person is drawn to someone who embodies to a greater or lesser degree, the unconditioned, the space, there's always something already becoming active in the other person. That's why he feels drawn.

So it's not that ever that you give something to someone, that feeling itself can be misleading. I can give it to you. Some people who discover that they have certain ability to heal to some extent, when they first discover it, they can come very enthusiastic and almost whoever they meet, they say, I can see what's wrong with you, but I could heal you.

So it's not so much that you do it, but it happens through you when this openness is there. And when it's, the openness disappeared, it doesn't happen anymore. Doesn't mean you've lost it.

It's there. Nobody can give you complete freedom from ego. Nobody can give you enlightenment as such.

Things can be helpful, very helpful. But if ever it happens that it looks as if a person or a teacher had given you, given someone enlightenment, those cases are extremely rare. And in those cases, the readiness of the person was such that almost anything would have triggered the last thing, the last, the apple would have dropped anyway from the tree.

And if they'd slipped on a banana skin, they probably would have become enlightened. Yeah. So things, many things are helpful.

And it's a question of using the help that is offered without becoming dependent on anything in the external world, not even dependent on any teaching, but always as quickly as possible, not dependent on any teacher, but still able to use the teacher because the universe is offering that to you, but always realizing ultimately it is in I. I am the answer to all my questions. I am the answer to the search.

I am what I'm looking for. I am what I'm looking for, what I have been looking for, for a long time. Sometimes that get misinterpreted by the mind and then the mind says, I am Eckhart.

Or Eckhart is the one. Always very careful if there's any teacher or teaching that implies or openly says there are many different kinds of spiritual energy, but mine or ours is the one that really works. Then there is some ego there.

Any claim of specialness you have to look out for. There's hiding some kind of ego. Some teachers say, I'm the only one at the moment on the planet.

Follow me because there's no other true teaching. Now, this is very satisfying to some part of you. If I said, I'm the only one, follow me, there would be a part in some of you, there would be one part that feels enormously strengthened and it would even feel good for a while, but it would be part of the ego because of course the ego wants to be part of the only one because it will make itself special by being associated with the great special one.

So claims of specialness or any ideas that you are special, the only one, the greatest, there's ego hiding. Also the strong compulsion to dismiss other teachings or teachers often is a concealed form of ego I welcome any form of spiritual teaching and always try to look for that in it, which is helpful. Some have things in it that are helpful and then other aspects that could be misleading, but I like to look at that which is helpful.

There's a book out called The Secret, which many people find helpful and other people don't like. I like to look at something in the book that is actually great and this is, it talks about gratefulness, gratitude, that is the very foundation for everything in your life. And that of course you can't have without being aligned with the present moment.

Gratitude arises naturally. There may be other things in the book that could be misinterpreted. For example, you could believe that by manifesting many big things in your life, you're going to be happy.

No, but if that is your path, then why not manifest the house, the car and so on and then realize it doesn't make you happy. So that has a purpose too. It all works.

And if you feel drawn to a teacher who has a big ego and you follow that teacher for a while and suddenly you're disappointed and you realize the teacher and you feel in a moment of deep crisis, then that is the most wonderful learning experience also for going beyond your ego. So it all has its place and its purpose. Whatever teacher or teaching you feel drawn to is right for you and you will learn.

It's fine. So again, just look out for the specialness, either making someone special or through making someone special, making yourself special. Special meaning superior in some way.

That's called a spiritual ego. More advanced. And groups, where group develops an ego, that is a very common thing in almost every sect, so-called sect, the collective ego of the group.

Usually, in a sect, it needs to see itself as the only ones. That's the power of the sect. That's the ego power of the sect.

And it's enormously stimulating for the ego. You feel, wow, I'm part of this only thing in the whole world. But you've cut yourself off.

It's always good after you've said what you had to say in any conversation to come back to a point of rest and stillness. Even in a little conversation, always step back. That means there are spaces.

You're not taken over. You're not incarnating into a mind stream. You're coming to the, continuously coming to the end of incarnation, or even better, not incarnate at all, which means there's still a presence in the background even as you speak.

Incarnate means to lose yourself in the form that arises. You can be part of the world of form without incarnating into form, which is losing yourself in form, in thought, in reactions, and so on. Presence, stillness, alert, spacious presence is also very powerful in dissolving conflict.

Discord in the world. If you should go into a situation where there is conflict, and there are many situations like that in this world, meeting it in this state of absolute presence, it could, it is also a form of healing that you do not, somebody comes healing in one way or another emotional healing, physical healing, mental healing, the healing of situations, the healing in a wider sense is not being drawn to the same level as the conflict.

The conflict is thought-generated and emotion-generated, and you bring in this alert presence, and you simply are there as that. And you're not trying to figure out how to solve the situation. You don't go to that level.

You're simply there as an alert presence. You're the bringer of space into the situation. And that is the most wonderful thing.

And then something happens, and what form that takes can vary. It could be that somehow the conflict dissolves. One person says something that leads to a sudden resolution, or you find yourself saying something that was not premeditated, that brings about a solution in the situation, or the energy field shifts, and the whole thing is recognized as nothingness, which most conflicts are nothingness.

Or as Shakespeare puts it, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. Full of sound and fury. It's nothing because time, impermanent.

Go to the graveyard and see where it all ends. All the turmoil and all the drama. Nothing.

So you already need to recognize it as nothing, and that knowledge, the no thingness you bring into this dimension of thingness, you bring the dimension of no thingness. And then situations become healed. Not that you feel, I am healing it.

It happens. There was a spiritual teacher and healer called Joel Goldsmith, and he was also a great healer, and he taught how to heal by nothing-guising, so to speak, situations and conditions. So a person would come to him or telephone, say, I've got this or that condition, and immediately he would go into absolute presence and stillness, in which there is no person and there is no condition to heal.

There's only absolute fullness and presence. Emptiness and fullness are the same thing. It's the same no thing.

There's only fullness and presence. There's nobody to heal. There's absolute perfection, timeless stillness.

And that's how many healings happened. He never recognized the reality of any condition. And this is one of the functions of space consciousness that you can bring.

Many of us here have been blessed with children. We seem to lose contact with the form of consciousness space we pursue here. Even early in childhood, we already seem to lose contact.

Do you find it advisable to introduce or reintroduce the ideas of not identifying with the thought, the mind, spacious listening, and so on, to the children in some form? And if yes, how would you do this in practice apart from the attempt we all make to influence the world by practicing this awareness on a personal level? Children.

Now, the last part of the question, of course, already mentions the most important way of teaching children is to live it yourself. Living it is teaching it. The primary teaching of it is that how spacious are you at home with your child?

How spacious are you at home with your husband or wife or partner? Is your life consumed by one thing after another that you have to do? There's always, what's this thing?

What do you have to do? Have you done this? Have you done that?

We need to do that. Do you ever truly listen? That is the teaching.

If you can listen to your child while the child talks to you, that is the teaching. Your own presence is the main teaching. Apart from that, you can perhaps pay attention so that the child does not become totally drawn into the madness of this world by excessive television watching or video game playing, whatever they do, which takes your attention out of the body, and you become, it's a loss of energy, and even young children begin to focus on the screen where they play this or that.

Completely out of connectedness with being, with their body, the inner body, out where they become dependent on continuous stimulus to feel alive. And then withdrawal symptoms happen when they stop playing after half an hour or one hour. The restlessness remains.

Where's the next stimulus? And then they can't focus on anything anymore because the television teaches them that the attention span, the normal attention span of a TV image is about four seconds these days. The images change so quickly on television, they go, chup, chup, chup, chup, chup, chup.

It's amazing madness. You never have, you can never focus on any one. It always goes, and the next, and the next, and the next.

When I was a child, there were two channels on TV, and there were long moments of stillness between programs when they showed just a still picture. Who would do that nowadays? You could look at a picture, a landscape, for three minutes until the next program started, and sometimes with nice music in the background.

And the images were much longer, not bombarded by flashing images. The child needs to, don't let the child get lost in concepts when you teach language to a child, when you teach what things are called so that they get trapped in the labels. Continuously direct the child's attention to the actual perception or experience of the thing so that the child just goes beyond just naming it.

If you have a tree, let the child touch the tree. Let it point, take the child's attention to it. Look at this, look at that detail.

Can you feel that? Can you smell that? Can you be present?

So it's not so much you need to teach the child to be still, but you teach the child not to get trapped in words and concepts excessively. You have to teach what things are called, but that's not it. If this is not a tree, we call it a tree.

This is not a sparrow or swallow, we call it, and then you continue to look after it has been named. Touch. Breathing.

Feeling the inner body, children can do that easily. You can introduce to a child the aliveness. They have it originally as a natural way of being, but they lose it very quickly in this world.

So pointing out to a child that they can feel that they are alive is relatively easy. And another one is pointing out to the child the pain body, because most children have pain bodies too already. And then I talked about it in a book somewhere.

The, so you point to a child, after the child has had a pain body attack, either through hysterical screaming or throwing things or shouting or withdrawing, going into complete withdrawal. After that, you talk to the child the next day and ask what happened yesterday, not in any way judging or condemning, but in a curious way. Encourage the child to be curious, to find out what that energy that the child experienced when he threw something at the wall or threw him or herself on the floor or started screaming.

And, I want this ice cream, I want ice cream, I want it. Wanting can be enormously powerful already. I want, and then enormous amount of pain comes in.

Oh, dreadful. Sometimes when you look at a child, dreadful pain for nothing and ice cream, it's the pain body. It's more than just the ice cream that it's not getting.

There is an old pain that's come to life again. And at that moment, you just have to allow it and be the space for it, for the child. Not react, some parents get suddenly very anxious and, oh, stop, stop, stop that, stop that, stop screaming.

I can't stand this anymore. No, that doesn't work. You have to be the space for it and don't, now this pain body wants some reaction from you.

It wants more pain. It wants you to shout back. It almost wants you to hit the child.

I wouldn't recommend it because that's exactly what the pain body wants. It wants more pain. It wants to provoke you and provoke you and provoke you so that finally you give the pain body more experience of pain.

And so, of course, you have to be there as the presence, the space for it. That's the most wonderful thing you can do when your child gets drawn into that. Be the space for it and don't give in to the demands of the pain body, but in a very gentle way, be the space.

Don't, after you've said no three times to the third eye scream, and that is what becomes a trigger for the pain body, and then if the pain body screams enough at you, don't say, okay, then have the third eye scream. That teaches a very dangerous lesson to a child and that what it teaches is the more unhappy I get, the more likely I am to get what I want. And if that lesson goes into adulthood, when the child complains and shouts and screams enough, finally you give in just to keep it so that you don't have to listen to the screaming and shouting anymore.

When the child grows up, the pattern is inside. Unhappiness gets me what I want. A very dysfunctional, it was true for the child, unfortunately, but the adult still unconsciously believes that unhappiness will get me what I want.

And then whenever they feel dissatisfied, there's enormous influx of unhappiness in the unconscious belief that the world or some God that's hiding somewhere, if you just show that you're unhappy enough, will finally give you what you want. And of course, in the world, the opposite is true. You can be sure that you're not going to get what you want because unhappiness blocks everything.

So you don't teach the child unhappiness works. So be there as the space for the pain body. And the next day or a few hours later say, what happened to you when you threw yourself on the, or you couldn't stop screaming?

And then you ask just a few questions so that an awareness comes in retrospectively in the child that looks at what happened. What did that feel like? Ask questions to encourage awareness arising that a witness that can look at what it felt like.

And do you remember two weeks ago, the same thing happened? Wasn't, was that the same thing? What is that thing?

Does it, does it have a name? Could ask, what's it called? If it had a name, if it doesn't have a name, if it had one, what would be its name?

For example, but the questions will come through you, the right questions. What, does it have a color or does it this energy? What, what is that?

What do you feel? And then the child just says a few words about it. And the next time it happens, it doesn't mean it won't happen again.

But the next time the pain body returns, triggered by some thwarted wanting, some unfulfilled desire, the next time there may be a remnant of awareness in the child that is able to know that that's what's happening. And again, after it's happened, you again talk about it. And then a time may come when in the middle of it, you can say, oh, that is again, isn't it?

And some part of the child, the awareness will hear what you're saying. If you had not prepared the child for it, there would only be the pain body and the pain body would not hear what you're saying. There it is would be meaningless to the pain body.

So there's a growing, you encourage, you help the child to have that aware presence in the background. That is until the child, there's enough awareness in the child for the child one day to say, oh, mom, that's your pain body right now, isn't it? And are you present enough to say, yes, you're right.

The main learning, however, is always your interaction with a child and your interaction with your partner, if there is a partner at home, husband and wife, partners, whatever. The interaction that is the most powerful teaching and how you interact with the child, how you listen. When the child tells you what happened, give him or her space, give him or her space, listen in spacious awareness.

That applies, of course, to every relationship, your wife, your husband, your partner, give them space. Keep, you are the giver of space, really. That's your main function.

If you want to transmit Diksha into this world is to give space, to be there as space. That's the transformation of the world. And then, yes, you're also a temporary little person still, of course, sometimes the person is there more strongly, but gradually, the space makes the person more transparent.

In the space, the person becomes transparent. This looks like a long letter, but I don't think it is that long. I've been studying medicine for eight years with several breaks.

The finals are coming up next summer. I'm challenged. I find it hard to stay present when I'm opening the big books filled with mind-stimulating scientific discussions.

Could you give a few pointers on how to stay in presence while studying? Thank you, in mind and out of presence. What I, this is to do not only with studying, it's to do with any intellectual work and computer work, which is mind-stimulating.

Bringing spaces into your work is essential, little spaces. When you shut the book, go and feel the inner body. Look at the sky or the tree for one or two minutes, three minutes, four minutes.

Even in the middle of a book, after reading a few pages, be aware of the presence underneath the mind, the body is very helpful when you're very much immersed in mind to get back to the presence, go via the inner body and feel the aliveness in the body. After that, go to sense perceptions, become alert and look at things without labeling them. If you hold onto the inner body, the need to label them isn't there.

So you step from mind, okay, shut the book, or switch off the screen, or go and look away from the screen and go into body. Then you start, once you can feel some of the inner body, don't believe the mind when it says, I can't do it now, it's not enough time anyway. There's always time for two or three minutes of feeling.

And then using the inner body as an anchor, look around in still, aware presence at things, wherever, whatever it may be, choiceless attention. And you listen to their sounds, sense perceptions, no labeling. And that's for just a few minutes.

And then open another book or go back to the screen. But even while you are still studying on a page, there's no reason why you cannot occasionally break chapter, after a few chapters, two or three chapters, look up, take three conscious breaths. Conscious breath means your attention observes as the air moves in and out of your body.

Now, a conscious breath means you can't be thinking at the same time because then you can't observe your breathing. That was one of the Buddha's favorite meditations, breath awareness. Another meditation that probably, nobody knows for sure, that the Buddha taught was the inner body.

He didn't call it inner body. Can't remember what he called it. Maybe vipassana, it's feeling the inner energy field.

Some scriptures, it's in some of the old scriptures. So the Buddha never said, stop thinking. He said, observe your breath.

And of course, you can't think at the same time. So two chapters, three conscious breaths. Actually, your mind works better in that way too.

We're less confused. You intersperse, so your mental activity becomes interspersed with space. So you bring little spaces in there.

Never believe the mind when it tells you, can't do it now. Yes, you can. Some people find it helpful to have a flower next to the computer or next to their books.

And when they look up, go into the body, then look at something natural like a flower or plant. One person told me that he had my photo next to his computer, which at first, I didn't like that very much. And then he said, well, what I do is I look into your eyes and then I can feel my being.

Well, if that's the case, then it's okay. If you realize this is not what you're looking at, isn't important, but if it puts you in touch with the presence that you are, then it could work that way. So you're not feeling that he's going to help me.

No, I, he is I, the one I. So he can put me in touch with the I, not as an external presence, not as an external help, but as helping me to be who I am. I am here.

So the, if you look at the photo and it reminds me that, oh, I am here, then it could work in that way. Another way is if you look at a, if you have a favorite photo of some spiritual teacher, it's very helpful to sometimes, if that works for you, you look at the photo and once you feel the presence that you are, then you put it away or you close your eyes, dismiss the form and just be with the formless. Otherwise you continue to think there's something out there that's going to help you.

The help is here. There's a wonderful photo of those of you who know Ramana Maharshi, that somebody took a photo of him and just a beautiful look. I still have that at home and I sometimes look at him, but I never think that I'm looking at Ramana Maharshi.

I'm looking at myself. I feel the very, the being. That was the photo when he, the photographer came and Ramana said, maybe there's not enough light.

Photographer said, you are the light. You are the light, he replies to. You are the light.

Jesus said it, you are the light of the world. What does that mean? You are the consciousness that gives rise to the world.

Without that, there would be nothing. Do you keep a scrapbook? I'm not quite sure what exactly that is.

I think it's little memories or photos or things that you put in a book. That was last year's retreat, a little. No.

No. Well, that was easy. There are many more interesting questions, probably, but right now we let go of the questions.

Being in touch with a place within where there are no questions. There is that place.

[Speaker 2] (7:34:14 - 7:38:36)

Oh You You

[Speaker 1] (7:40:47 - 8:06:36)

Conditioning Is dissolving it's wonderful to see that you can actually recognize it in people When something else shines through a presence Shining through the person and that's what have what's happening to All of you You're losing weight Psychic right here the heaviness Of the person the psychic heaviness of the person And here you're learning Becoming familiar with the state of not thinking In the sessions and outside as you practice Here we practice a lot listening And that's the transmission if you want to use those words Of a state of consciousness That's the state of consciousness out of which the words come In that sense The stillness between the words is more important than the words At first it may appear that Your life is becoming reduced When thinking no longer dominates your life Internally one could say Not that much is happening anymore And some of your friends may not invite you anymore to dinner parties After a while you go say, okay, I'm not thinking but now what It is a new energy it is very very subtle compared to the usual mind energy It is so subtle that At first it seems like a nothingness You could compare it to Imagine spending a whole night six hours in a noisy discotheque And then after six hours you step outside The doors close behind you and you're out in the middle of the night In the countryside in the near forest And all the noises there are very subtle And as a stillness, but you've been deafened by the noise because you just spent six hours in a disco so at first Withdrawal symptom And of course now you've spent a whole lifetime or a thousand lifetimes With a mental noise So at first you may not detect the subtle Joy that is in the simple state of stillness or being Because It's too subtle and Fine compared to the mind generated things including mind generated pleasures But then As you get used to that new energy you can sense an underlying Goodness the joy and the liveness A sense of well-being in the background The real joy is the joy of being yourself It is derived not from something that happens Or some object But from the very essence of your being so the joy is to know yourself The being That you are the consciousness That is unconditioned to know yourself as that is Joy But even that's not the right word Because all words Refer to the sense-perceived object consciousness Peace But even that's not quite right One sign that this is happening is that you enjoy Little things more than big things You enjoy Relatively insignificant things Making a cup of tea watching The leaves in the tree Listening to the rain Watching people one of my favorite activities or rather non-activities I don't have many favorite activities Is sitting in a corner in a cafe And watch the people Sit and walk in and walk out And not Having any labels upon anybody Simply being there as the space for all those people And there's a great joy enjoying all the Countless Life forms so many different human beings all slightly different and yet the same And And enjoying that all that that movement of the human forms And you are there as the space for that Then as a practice you can go into a noisy place and see if you can be the space for that A place where usually you would say it's not nice. Let's get out of here And usually if you can get out why not get out but as a practice Stay there for a while and see if you can be the space for that Experiment with different things maybe the noisiest part of the city where you live Stand or sit there Can you be the space for that in other words can you perceive all that And still feel the background of stillness I used to do that a lot when I lived in london different parts And it's a very enjoyable thing to do even on the underground the tube as it's called Not a place that's particularly pleasant So it's not a pleasant condition, but the practice is Can I be the space for this condition too? In my case it just happened naturally I didn't ask the question can I be the space for this I just was the space for this But as if you're a transitional being then you can make it into a practice and say oh, let's see Can I be present here And all the activities that one normally does not enjoy, but you just have to do them So that usually would be a means to an end Can I be the space for that going shopping for food? Can I do that with little interference of thinking experiment with that instead of thinking what do I need You just look at the shelves And then as you reach out for something you're in your body and you feel whether the body says yes or no The mind says this is the best chocolate there is I loved it last week when I had it and your hand reaches out and suddenly As you feel your body you feel a contraction The body doesn't want chocolate right now And then you let it stand there And another very very helpful practice is An unpleasant condition That comes into your life naturally Well all that you create This could be anything let's see Well think of indian yogis some yogis stand on one leg for 20 years Now you would think you don't have to do that, of course But if you there is a reason behind that it may they may be taking it to an extreme But the reason behind it is to detach from the discomfort that arises or even the pain So that you become the space for it So in the west some of these people would regard it as mad But in india, they are revered because perhaps somehow people Sense that there is something there even no matter how mad it looks That there's something there But you can practice that with little things slight discomforts even as you're sitting here Or if you meditate you're sitting with your legs crossed and the pain comes in can you be the space for that Some discomfort comes in can you just stay with it instead of immediately changing Can you just stay with that and be the space for that? You can even try standing on one leg for just two minutes instead of 20 years And see that certain discomfort arises and you want to change and you just carry on So there there's a space in which that's allowed to be That's quite interesting to Experiment with that and when a habitual reaction comes You can also be the space for that the reaction that says I don't I hate this place And can you stay two minutes longer in this place and be a space for it then you can go So But instead of become being the immediately being the reaction be the space for the reaction if you can't be the space for the condition Your second opportunity is being the space for the reaction So you always get another chance Your second chance is If you miss the awareness of the condition and be the space for that be the awareness of Behind the reaction and be the space for that or the judgment in your mind and be the space for that So There are enough little unpleasantnesses in one's life that one can practice with you don't have to seek things out Or you could just little things not nothing big.

I'm not telling you to do anything dangerous or big Just small discomforts and just instead of immediately withdrawing stay with it just for a little while Hand in cold water, for example, okay, you want to pull it out. Okay, but I believe it in for 20 seconds And be the space for that there's a coldness and there's the space And then don't leave your hand in then take it out If an ache comes or pain in the body you can practice it You don't have to do what medieval people did or in some other cultures inflict pain Don't recommend that But pain comes naturally sometimes And instead of reacting and creating another level of resistance to the pain, which is path suffering Surrender and be the space and then go to the doctor if you have to but while you go there Be the space for the toothache Which can be excruciating And Or whatever it is Pain here pain there in the back in the head And so you become deep Not that you become it you realize that you are deep there is a depth Not a shallow shallow entity Okay Danish or scandinavian people are already normally a little more quiet or northern peoples. Maybe it's a little easier for them. I don't know To be the space I remember seeing a film many years ago I was in my early 20s Backman a swedish film in black and white There was a man Going through the forest and he lost his way and he saw a woodcutter.

He was cutting And he said to him it was his subtitles in swedish Do you know the way to such and such a place and the woodcutter went? Finally he put down his axe And he said to him it's Over there go that way I was very impressed by that I have now realized before we come to the questions why the danish people are so peaceful Now, as you know, a thousand years ago, it came to me in Copenhagen in a cemetery. A thousand years ago, the people who went out from here, they were very aggressive, it's unimaginable.

Swedish, Danish, the whole area, they were wild people and they got on these boats and then they invaded England and northern Germany and France and just smashing everything up in their path. And so my theory is that all the violent people left Denmark and in northern Germany became the Prussian army much later. And in England, their descendants became football hooligans.

So now this is why it's so wonderfully peaceful here. Let's see if there are any more questions or perhaps they have already dissolved. Just one or two words about questions.

Vital questions are more important and more helpful to everybody than curious questions or very abstract questions. Besides, I probably won't know the answer to those. So abstract questions about the subtleties of Buddhist philosophy or curious questions about my breakfast this morning or whatever.

And even questions like, but what would you say to somebody who is suffering from such and such? And he comes to you and, well, is that you? I can't really, I can't answer it if it's hypothetical.

It has to be vital. So to do with your presence practice or somebody very close to you in a relationship or your pain body, if you still have one. Now, there is a microphone somewhere which will travel to the questioner.

However, I can only see vaguely the people. I can see this side better than this side because of the light. So I can't necessarily see people raising their hands.

So somebody else may help me and choose one or two people to ask questions. So if you can just put up your hand. If there are no questions, don't invent some questions.

I'll be very happy if there are no questions too.

[Speaker 2] (8:06:45 - 8:06:58)

Can you speak about sleep and dreaming?

[Speaker 1] (8:06:59 - 8:22:03)

Thank you. You may find that as presence increases in your life, the dream activity at night decreases. A lot of the dream activity at night is processing of things that were not fully faced.

It is the expression of underlying emotional states for which the mind is seeking an image in order to explain the already existing emotional state. So when you dream of a monster, for example, let's say you have a nightmare, you're running away from a monster and you experience anxiety or fear. The reason why you experience anxiety or fear is not the dream.

The dream is the mind's attempt to form an image that explains the fear that you feel. So the dream does cause the emotion, but the emotion causes the dream, the dream image. And that is, by the way, the case with many forms of unconsciousness also.

For example, because when we talk of dream, one level of dream is what happens when you sleep. Another level of dream is what happens you are so-called awake, but not really awake because you are run by the conditioned mind. So there you also experience something very close to what we just described in a dream.

The mind attempts to find an explanation, for example, for fear, which is a very common underlying state in many people. And so when people are very suspicious of others, which is a very normal thing with ego, the others, other people are always, you never quite know what they want from you. And you're thinking of what's, why did you say that?

What's the motivation behind that? You're trying to figure out and then finding some kind of motivation. This is quite normal.

It's only if you take it to a little bit further, when the person becomes so-called suffering from paranoid schizophrenia, that you realize it is the same pattern, seeing an enemy and finding explanations for things that are quite fictitious. Because the mind is trying to explain the terrible fear. It just cannot understand the fear that in some egos is very, very strong.

So it projects, it creates a story about people wanting to hurt me or they're after me that is fictitious, people in your life or around you in the street. This is one of the symptoms of paranoid schizophrenia is to form fictions that create fear, but they don't really create fear. The fiction is the mind's attempt to excite some kind of explanation for what you feel.

So it creates a fiction and it says, you see all these people in the street, they are observing me. They want to take something away from me. They want whatever they want, whatever the story.

And so everybody can recognize that as it's a dreamlike state, but it already exists in the normal egoic state. And there are many other examples one could have for this. So if we come back now to the actual dream, as more presence arises in your life, the processing dream or the dreams in which unpleasant emotional states become dreams, the mind's attempt to interpret them gradually becomes lessened because you have fewer and fewer painful emotional states as presence arises.

So there's less chaotic dream activity in your life. There may still be some dreams, but not particularly chaotic or painful dreams, some slight remnants from what was left from the day. And then there are those rare dreams when suddenly you have an insight or realization.

They may still happen. They could even happen more in certain people's lives as more presence comes. So you have dreams that actually tell you something in symbolic form.

For some people, there comes a period in their lives when they have that particularly, and then sometimes that period comes to an end. That was the case with me for about a couple of years. I had very vivid dreams of a symbolic nature, in one of which, for example, I saw many, many years ago, I saw books lying on the table, and they had the name Eckhart on them, and I knew I had written them, but I hadn't written anything yet.

And at that time, my first name wasn't Eckhart. The dream was one of the reasons why it became that. So in the dream, I saw these books, and I knew I had written these books.

And that was a simple image, but many other things happened. It was a time of getting messages, coming out of presence. And so the book was telling me that that was my destiny.

I didn't quite realize that at the time. I just thought it had something to do with the name. So they already point us where to go.

So in that case, those dreams are of a completely different quality from the emotionally charged dreams, or the dreams that are simply processing dreams. So they have a particular power, and often the characters that you see in that dream are not characters from your daily life. So those are dreams that are sometimes of an archetypal nature.

So during those two years, I had often very vivid dreams, some of them pointing to what I was meant to do. And if at that time I had been in Jungian analysis, the analyst would have been delighted with all that dream activity. Another thing, of course, if you become interested in your dreams, if you write them down every morning, what you can still remember, then you begin to remember more.

And so it can be very nice to keep a dream diary for a while. The more you attempt to remember, even just a fragment, you honor it, you write it down. And for most people, working with dreams is, as it was for me, and I know others too, it is a period in your life.

And then the time comes when you go beyond that period, and dreams no longer become all that meaningful. So that's, it's for some of you, this will happen. For some, it may not happen, that dreams become meaningful.

So if you want to, if you have one or two deep dreams, then write them, by all means, write them down. I still, at that time, I did write down quite a few of the dreams. Sleep, it is important to go into sleep consciously, and to come out of sleep consciously.

That will also affect the number of dreams you have, or the kind of dreams you have, or you may even have almost no dreams. Going into sleep consciously is certainly not stimulate the mind with watching television in bed. But if you want to read in bed, it's fine, but then you put the book aside, and then the last few moments as you go into sleep, it's important to be present.

And if that keeps you awake, so much the better. Be in your body. If the mind uses this, for many minds, there's a habit of when you go into bed, and you switch off the light, it starts thinking all kinds of weird things, all kinds of weird stories, and things could happen.

And that's often leading to feeling upset or fearful. So let that be a period as you go into sleep, let that be a period where you first of all embrace the state of awareness. Be in the body.

If the mind wants to think, observe that, and then you can let go. No thought is important at that point. Even the thought, tomorrow I have to do this.

You're here now. I'm here now. I'm here now.

Breathing, feeling the inner body, lying in this energy field of every cell. Lie on your back preferably, every cell present. And that's extremely, extremely wonderful to lie there in that presence, with every cell of the body present.

I loved that so much for a while that I never wanted to go to sleep anymore. So I would drink two or three cups of coffee so that I could be awake all night. And fasting in the morning, very important, where you have a little gap when you don't remember your problems.

After you wake up, you don't remember your history or your problems. All you, there is an alert space. You wake up, and then bring in presence there so that you delay a little bit the onset of the huge engine in the head.

When I saw the film to the Titanic, the engines of the Titanic, that's for many people, that's the human mind. They go, there were steam engines at the time. And that takes a long time before they start up, and it takes a while before they stop.

And that applies to the human mind too. So the engines of the Titanic start up for most people very quickly after they wake up. So let waking up be also a space of awareness.

You're still in bed, and immediately go into the body. And so you get into presence rather than into mind. And then you can get dressed or go into the shower, continuing to be present rather than being totally lost in the shower.

Don't even know anymore whether it's the end or the beginning of your shower, because you're so immersed in thinking. You're in the shower, conscious of every sensation. Avoidance of media at that point is particularly important, because if you switch something on at that point early in the morning, it is madness.

Because all it tells you is, we have a problem there and there. There's a big traffic jam, a huge problem there, and another huge thing going wrong there, and an accident happened there. And then you get the world news even worse.

If you have to listen to the news, I recommend it at a later time. And before you do, come into the body and then switch on and be the space for that. Maybe there's another question.

Maybe I should wear sunglasses.

[Speaker 2] (8:22:08 - 8:22:33)

I just wanted to ask you, you that you have spoken about schizophrenia and bipolarity, is there something else you can tell us about this illness that are proliferating a lot nowadays? And they cause a lot of suffering.

[Speaker 1] (8:22:33 - 8:22:35)

Bipolar? Bipolar.

[Speaker 2] (8:22:36 - 8:22:37)

Bipolar condition?

[Speaker 1] (8:22:37 - 8:22:44)

Yes. Which used to be called manic depressive.

[Speaker 2] (8:22:44 - 8:22:44)

Manic depressive.

[Speaker 1] (8:22:44 - 8:22:47)

Manic depressive, and it's bipolar, yes.

[Speaker 2] (8:22:47 - 8:22:59)

That's right. And there's not a cure yet for those sickness of the mind. Yes.

Do you have some news if it's possible?

[Speaker 1] (8:23:00 - 8:46:58)

Now, again, that's an extreme form, but many so-called normal people also have that to some extent, and that's called, in a very small degree, but it's still considered normal, it's called happy one day, unhappy the next. Now, bipolar, of course, is taking it much, much, much further. So they lose, this is a very good example of losing oneself in an arising condition.

So in the exalted phase, when you feel enormous influx of energy, and then the energy takes you over, it runs your mind and makes you do things that are a little bit unwise. For example, what people do in that phase of that illness, mental condition, they might go out and buy the most expensive they love. Oh, that's a great thing to buy.

How much is it? Only $5,000. I'll have that.

Here's my credit card. Yeah. And then they, or they have sex relationships, five a day, just one after, that was so great.

I feel so alive. Where's my next bar? So the condition takes you over, and then after a while, when it subsides, you look, you've got all this havoc you've created.

And then you may be taken over by the opposite condition, a very depressed state. You can't get out of bed. So minor forms of that are present in many normal people.

It's part of normal existence. And you only see the, when it goes to an extreme, you see that there is an element of insanity also in normal existence. That person, when that person is in between, there is such a thing as a interlude between the states, that person can then learn what it means to be present.

The cure for that would be to remain as the observer the moment you feel the onset of a particular state. And already there needs to be a considerable amount of presence, a considerable degree of presence in that person, not to be taken over by the enormous influx of that particular energy movement. So you need to detect the very first signs of it as an emotion, wanting to move into the mind, or as a thought, and then be there.

It doesn't mean that immediately these things won't happen anymore, but there is a chance, if you can remain there as the observer, that gradually the condition will not overpower you totally. At first it may still happen and will just become slightly, the intensity of it may be slightly decreased. And then gradually you may be able to sustain the presence as the condition passes through without having to act it out, without incarnating into the condition.

So the key would be presence. Now, presence cannot be, you cannot learn presence while you're in the midst of one of the two polarities. The moment to embrace presence and practice presence is to build it up when you're in between the two phases, build up a presence.

And building up presence is of course what we are doing here, building up presence. You do for yourself whenever you choose to be in the body, to be free of thinking as much as possible in daily life, to be aware of your sense perceptions, presence is building up. So the key to many dysfunctions of the mind, normal and abnormal, there are many normal dysfunctions.

Normal itself is a dysfunction. If it, because human history is created by normal people. And so if you read it, you realize it's insane.

Therefore normal equals insane. So the normal is also insane and it requires the awareness to get to, so that the conditioning no longer overpowers you, the condition no longer overpowers you. So that's a huge challenge.

If you are burdened with such a thing as bipolar disorder, it's a huge challenge, but it is often the case that the greatest challenge in your life becomes your greatest blessing because it is the greatest challenge in your life that forces you into awakening. So what I just said applies also to many, many other things. Depression, there was a question which we didn't get to, a written question on depression.

Somebody periodically says, I lose myself in a depression. And here again, you need to be there, see what is, to what extent your mind participates in the depression, how it, whether your mind feeds it, you feel the energy of it, which is very heavy. I remember it from a kind of distant past.

When I talk about it now, I get a kind of distant memory of what depression feels like in the body. And I know what the mind does. The mind says, it's all, what's the point in getting out of bed?

It's completely, the whole thing is completely absurd. Why should I get out of bed? Why should I wash and get dressed?

What for? There's nothing out there for me. Absolutely nothing.

All this world is insane. Nothing. I'm staying in bed.

Mind activity, identified with that, and the enormous heaviness in the emotional field. And so depression also starts at some point. For many people, it's, they go through phases of depression.

It's very helpful if in any condition, if you can be there, detect it as it starts coming on. Because when you're already in the middle of it, there may not be enough presence left. But if you can detect it at the beginning, as it arises, whatever the condition may be, you can watch it.

The thoughts that usually, the habitual thoughts that go with it. There, there they are. There it says, what's the point in getting out of bed?

There the thought is. What's the point in getting dressed? No point.

Dreadful out there. It's another thought. So you, something is there that is the space for it.

It does not mean the depression will not happen, but it will be less overpowering and probably pass through more quickly. And then you have to practice again. This also applies to addictions of whatever kind, which many people are burdened with.

Addiction to a, addiction to a substance, addiction to food, addiction to whatever it may be, whatever people are addicted to, television watching, television, internet. I tried it a few times and I can feel, yeah, it is addictive. Go on to the next thing and the next thing and the next thing.

And I've heard of people who spent the whole night in front of that screen. And that's the mind going in there, stimulus. Television is equally addictive.

It takes away for in many cases, it takes away the person's power to push the off button. So they get, they take the remote in their hands and say, okay, they've, I've seen enough now. And now they know the off button is there, but the other channel button is here.

And instead of going there where you wanted it to go, the finger goes to the next channel. There just might be something, you know very well, there's nothing interesting there, but there just might be something, but no, there isn't. Now what the next one, let's just go through again.

I might be missing something very important. Now the great relief with television, it relieves you of the burden of your own mind, because a lot of the time you might notice, unless you watch politicians talking, in which case your mind may be commenting something. But a lot of the time when you watch television, your mind is actually not active by itself.

It links into the TV mind. So the mind is taken over by the words and the images on the TV, but it frees you. That's why people say it's so relaxing to watch TV, because you get away from yourself, the mind's made self.

So you switch into that, the collective mind, which is just as mad as your own mind, because your own mind is only a collective, a personal version of that. But at least it's not your story you're watching, you're watching somebody else's story. So it puts your personal mind to sleep and then something else takes over.

Another mind takes over your mind. So it's so relaxing. And that's why it's so addictive, because for a moment you are free of yourself, but you haven't become more conscious, of course.

It's a form of hypnosis. And so it becomes addictive. And there you can also observe your inability to switch off the TV as an energy.

Okay, I'm going to switch off now, and then observe the resistance, observe the wanting more, which is the mind saying, I want just a little bit more, more. And then you allow that, feel it, and then switch off. Food or drink.

Okay. I want to, late at night, the impulse comes. I need to eat, need something.

I had dinner, but I still need to eat something. A strong impulse to, this feeling of some kind of void. And that's interpreted as hunger.

The mind says, oh, that's hunger. It's not. It's a normal void of the ego that the sense, the lack feeling, there's something missing here.

The mind interprets that as I'm hungry. And then observe that as an energy impulse inside you. Be the space for that.

Experiment with it. Feel the impulse to go to the fridge and grab whatever it is you have in there. The cake, or piece of cheese, or whatever it is.

Instead of immediately walking to the fridge, feel the push, the pull that wants to go there. And don't say go away. No, that doesn't work.

Be the space for it. Then after a couple of minutes, you have more choice. There is the possibility of not going.

Or it may still be very strong, and perhaps you say, okay, I'll go anyway. At least you brought in some space. And perhaps next time, there will be enough space for you not to have to act it out.

It's the space that weakens the dysfunction of the condition. It's of course possible that the impulse comes so suddenly that you don't know it. It's so unconscious and so sudden that it's only in the middle of eating the chocolate cake, you realize that you're eating the chocolate cake.

This is not uncommon. It's quite amazing. Or in the middle of drinking a glass of whiskey, you realize, oh, I must have poured myself a glass of whiskey because I'm drinking it now.

Or smoking another cigarette. How did that get in my mouth? At some point, I must have lit it.

It's amazing. So the impulse can be so overpowering that it makes you completely unconscious, and you become a sleepwalker, and at some point you wake up and say, oh. And there you can say, okay, let's just experiment with stopping smoking for a second, and you put the cigarette, put it down, and observe.

What does the so-called addiction feel like? What does it feel like? Investigate its feeling quality inside you.

Investigate how the addiction uses your mind, what kind of thought it produces in order to justify itself, and in order to make you do what it wants to do. In some way, you can look upon as an addiction as an energy field, which is especially the case in very powerful addictions, for example, to heroin or something like that. It is as if those people carried something inside them that has become a sub-personality.

It is such a powerful energy field. The addiction itself uses your intelligence when it wants to come up, and there's nothing they can do about it. It's so overpowering.

So here, we talk about, I think there is something one can do, but heroin would be the worst, the most difficult case, probably. So here, what you can do is observe it. If you're in the middle of it, stop and feel the feeling quality of it.

Be aware of how it uses your mind. For example, somebody told me that, who has a problem with overeating, and he said to me, he observed what his mind says every time before he goes to the fridge or into the kitchen when he's not really hungry. And so his mind has this sense, and for years he believed in it, because he was identified.

His mind said, you've had a rough day, you deserve a treat. And at other times, his mind said, well, what is the only thing you've got left, and the only pleasure you have left in your life? Go ahead.

What else do you have? And he believed in those thoughts, identification with thought, not realizing that the energy of the addiction was creating those thoughts. It was the voice of the addiction speaking in his mind.

That's why the disidentification from the mind is so important. As we all know, this also happens, by the way, when the pain body comes up. The mind activity that you have when you're under a pain body attack is the voice of the pain body using your mind.

And whatever thoughts you have to interpret the world or other people or yourself while you are in possession of the pain body is the voice of the pain body, the emotional field that temporarily has taken possession of your mind. It's the pain body speaking, or it's the addiction speaking. It has taken possession of your mind.

So his freedom came when he realized you've had a rough day, you deserve a treat, was a habitual thought created by the addiction. And according to the addiction, every day was a rough day. And every night he deserved a treat and more than one.

And according to the mind, it was the only pleasure he had left in his life, a complete lie, but he believed in it. So it's the stepping back from the condition being is the key. What we are doing here is the key for all those things.

So whatever it is that is still a burden in your life, it is not by fighting it usually that you are able to become free, but by being the aware space for it. We started talking about bipolar conditions. It's not easy.

I'm not saying it is easy to be the aware space for something so overpowering. And many times you may fail. You may be there in the initial stage and then get overpowered again, but at least you were there in the initial stage.

And perhaps it's not much more short lived than before. There will be some progress as you bring in the aware space, be the space for the condition, which is also an acceptance that this is what I feel, or this is the feeling that is in here at this moment. And there comes acceptance is a vital part of being the space for it.

This is what I feel, the enormous pull towards this or that. So the freedom lies in not fighting the condition, not wanting to get it out of the way, but being space. One more thing, if somebody else cannot be the space, they get become overpowered by whatever condition it is, perhaps somebody close to you, then you have to be the space.

We mentioned it briefly before. You have to be the space for them. You have to accept that this is their state at the moment and be the space.

You do whatever you can on a practical level to help, of course, but there's always only so much you can do on a practical level. And don't let yourself be drained of energy by somebody who comes to you continuously with problems, but they refuse to change. They don't want presence.

They want a different kind of energy. They want your mind energy and your emotional energy and your psychic energy. They want to say, help me, tell me what to do.

I'll tell you what my problems are and you tell me what to do. Just listen, give me your attention. And then they go away, feel better, you feel worse.

Then they come back, nothing has changed and it starts again. So this is, now there is attention that has an object and that is attention that goes through thought. It is attention that says you should do that.

Why don't you try that? Attention that has form and there is formless attention that is presence. Presence, it cannot really be used addictively.

So presence is simply being there as the space. So when somebody tells you their problems and you are the space, you are not feeding them. In fact, they may become disenchanted with you because they don't want the space.

They want to be fed with your psychic energy. Another question. At the back, I see somebody, I see several hands.

I don't know.

[Speaker 2] (8:47:05 - 8:47:18)

Hello. You are often talking about the conscious shift in the human and I wonder what is your opinion about why is this happening?

[Speaker 1] (8:47:19 - 9:00:10)

Why? Why is the conscious shift happening? Ah, thank you.

It's happening now to more than a few isolated individuals here and there, as it used to be the case in the past. It's happening now on a much larger scale for the simple reason that it has to happen for our species to even survive on the planet. And we've reached a point, a critical point, where the normal human consciousness has created so much destruction on the planet and has become so dysfunctional that there is not only one way in which humanity would destroy itself, but there are six, seven potential ways and each one of them would be enough for humanity to destroy itself.

So it is happening now for the first time on a large scale because it is a necessity before the shift in consciousness was a luxury, so to speak. A few people, isolated flowers, I call them, here and there appeared, but there were very few flowers, very few. Now you might ask another why question because why questions are interesting.

Every why question usually leads to another why question, but let's just answer one more why question and then after that we'll come to the end of why. Now you might ask, of course, and I'm sure it has come up in your mind, why is humanity so dysfunctional? That would be a good title for a book.

Let's see if we can keep a very long story very short. For example, the myth in the Old Testament about the apple and Adam and Eve, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, I believe describes the arising of the ability to think and differentiate. They ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

They can now, because thinking is this thing, this is that, that is that, judging, thinking. The arrival of thinking also meant that they lost their natural state of connectedness with being, which was the so-called paradise. Also, in many other myths of different cultures, there is a very frequent myth of the golden age that once existed for humans.

And also in India there is the myth of, at very early times, the golden age and then a progressive deterioration. So thinking was, on the one hand, a wonderful thing to happen to humans. It enabled them to do many things, to become many things, a new evolutionary stage.

And the loss of connectedness with the oneness of life was very, very gradual. At first, thinking wasn't a problem. It was just interesting.

New things could be done. And it developed very, very slowly at first, very slowly. It probably took a thousand years to think of something new, a little tool or something, or a new tool.

And a thousand years later, somebody else thought of another tool to make. And then gradually, building up, building up. And as thinking increased and the activity of the mind, it absorbed more and more consciousness.

Consciousness, which in the state of connectedness with being existed largely in an undifferentiated state of oneness, of formlessness, but natural in the same way that an animal senses its natural rootedness in being. Humans felt this natural rootedness in being, which they gradually only left as more and more of the formless being became forms made into thought. And as this became more and more differentiated, of course, the world outside which humans made become more and more complex and differentiated gradually.

And then it built up the momentum. And then the rate of change increased and mind activity increased at first very slowly. And then as it reached 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th century, acceleration more and more.

And that was also the acceleration of finding your entire sense of identity bound up in mind activity. So you have humans totally dominated by the ego with all its dysfunctions, an entity that is ill at ease at the best of times, that is always wanting something that feels always not enough. Why?

Because it's not rooted in anything deep. It's a superficial entity. So it creates havoc, looking to complete itself through acquiring as much of stuff as possible from others, through a fictitious sense of power over others, through creating as many enemies as possible, because in fighting against others, you get a stronger sense of who you are, of your own fictitious identity.

And not feeling, not sensing anymore what you are doing to other life forms. The ability for empathy with other life forms got lost. We are now regaining it because the shift is happening.

But if you look at the dreadful cruelty that humans inflicted on each other, though they still do it, but gradually there are many people now have much more empathy than 200 years ago. Look at the history, history books, see what they did then. People would watch people being burned, not to 300 years ago, whatever, being burned to death.

It would be a spectacle. Then nowadays, at least around here, it would not, not be happening. So empathy is growing.

Gradually, the ego is receding and being replaced by a completely new level of consciousness. But the critical period is when one way of being reaches the final stage, because as it reaches the final stage, that way of being, which is the thinking way, totally thinking-based way, becomes more and more dysfunctional. It becomes dysfunctional because it's the final stage of it.

So the closer you get to the end, the worse conditions become. And the history of the 20th century is a prime example of that, the dreadfulness of that. So that is the madness.

The dysfunction is such that it is mad in the same way that a caterpillar becomes dysfunctional just before it becomes a butterfly. There is a stage in the life of the caterpillar when it can't crawl anymore. Life gets more and more difficult as a caterpillar, because it's not meant to be a caterpillar anymore.

And suddenly, his whole existence as a caterpillar disintegrates. And out comes this beautiful, totally, how could that beautiful thing with wings that takes off and flies come out of that? And how could this beautiful consciousness that arises from humans come out of this mad species?

But it's happening. I'm just as amazed at this as I was when I bought the cactus last year. And I went on a trip, I got home, and it had flowered.

How could this thing that looks so hostile, that says, don't you dare get close to me, how could that suddenly produce something so soft and gentle and beautiful and almost ethereal as that flower? And that's a miracle when it happens. So we are experiencing this miracle of the arising of a new consciousness.

At the same time, the old has not quite come to an end. It is ending, which means the madness is accelerating as the new comes in. Both movements are present now.

In that sense, it's true to say that things are getting worse and better at the same time, which is true. If you look at us here, if you look at how many people are open now to spiritual teaching, things are definitely getting better as far as a new consciousness is concerned. And at the same time, if you look at a lot of the things that you see in the news and what politicians talk about, it's still the old getting worse.

If it's not getting worse, it's at least as bad as before. It's a repetition of the same madness. The old consciousness has not learned a thing.

It can't, because it can only produce an external world based on its own deficiencies. It can't learn anything. Only the new can bring about a new world.

The old consciousness will not learn. It's a repetition of the same stuff again and again and again. The only thing that happens as science and technology increases, the destructive power of the insane old consciousness increases too.

And that's why we arrive at such a critical stage. The magnification of human madness through the means of science and technology. If it weren't for that, human madness would be relatively harmless.

It wouldn't destroy the planet. And even human species would not be, survival would not be at stake. But now with that, it amplifies the madness.

[Speaker 3] (9:00:13 - 9:00:15)

It started with especially the first.

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[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 1:36)

And even human species would not be, survival would not be at stake, but now with that, it amplifies the madness. It started with especially the First World War and suddenly it wasn't a normal war anymore. They had the most dreadful weapons and it was the most dreadful thing.

They just stumbled into it. Millions killed. But consciousness is evolving through the human form.

As long as it can evolve through the human form, it will. Now the why, we can have more why's, but I think that's really enough that we need to understand. Just this is the general, situation that we find ourselves in now.

Perhaps one more question, perhaps here. Oh, is that a microphone?

[Speaker 3] (1:36 - 1:46)

I want to know when you're ready to initiate people. I'm ready.

[Speaker 1] (1:47 - 1:47)

When?

[Speaker 3] (1:52 - 1:54)

20 minutes a day would be wonderful.

[Speaker 1] (2:02 - 1:34:36)

The question is, if I understood rightly, when will you initiate people? 20 minutes a day would be enough. Thank you.

I would suggest that you look upon our gathering as an initiation. The changes that take place inside you are perhaps greater than you realize at the moment. So it may not be the usual thing that usually one understands as initiation, but that really is what's happening.

The shift in consciousness. Either you're being initiated, or you might have been initiated already by life, and then it's a deepening. Some people get initiated by life, and others by a teacher, and often the two work together.

It's only people who have already been opened up by life, they come here, and then the rest happens. So it doesn't need to be a formal thing. It's happening already.

you always the case you have to know it sometimes people ask how can I learn to live in the present moment and of course the answer is you've never been anywhere else you just don't know it so it's not really learning to live in the present moment is realizing that you are never have never been and never will be anywhere else everybody is already living in the present moment because there's nowhere else to live so if you think you have to learn it then things get difficult can you give me a method for learning for living in the present moment can you give me a method for finding myself and if you get a method that comes in between you and the present moment which hopefully will take you to the present moment or if you get a method for finding yourself that gets in between you and yourself who you are already a technique please give us a technique for living in the present moment it's just the realization that you haven't never left it except in imagination for many years I lived in London traveled on the underground or tube or subway as it's called in America every day and some stations on the underground deep below the surface streets level some stations are not straight they have a slight curve and when the train comes in the doors open now there's a little normally the train and the station almost next to each other but there there's a little gap between the train and the platform so when those trains come in at those few stations where it are slightly curved there's a recorded announcement it comes in the moment just the train comes in and it's been there as well as long as I can remember always the same voice must have been recorded 50 years ago or longer and it's a continuous repetition like a religious mantra and if the voice says mind the gap mind the gap mind the gap and tourists are perplexed some don't even know what a gap is mind the gap now for you for your mantra as you go back into the so-called world I would just like to change the first letter of this mantra from the London underground the instead of the M put an F in find the gap and that's the the mantra you can go away with and it's a helpful signpost to carry around with you no more than that or signpost in your mind still a thought but pointing beyond itself find the gap in any situation always find the gap within the still space where you are the space not what's happening the space a little space in the situation and it's in you and it starts with being on a bus later today moving the body from here to there if you find the space in any condition you're on permanent retreat so the essence of this retreat is not the external events but the inner realization that there is a space in you and in any situation if you look for it it's there there is a little stillness there underneath all the movement that's the retreat that you carry with you it always doesn't depend on any physical location and the smallest gap gives you a little bit of freedom already from the world and from your mind a gap in the stream of thinking on the stream of reactions where there is an alertness that arises in that gap formless attention the rest is form formless just attention even the smallest gap frees you from being totally run by the conditioned personality the conditioned mind and so on and then the gaps may in some place some situations the gap maybe suddenly get much bigger and then smaller again sometimes it's lost and then the mantra is helpful find the gap if you get overwhelmed with things no time for anything anymore find the gap now because this person sitting up here is being used by life in a strange way it's almost like I've become a walking gap with a little bit of personality on the edges that's very weird and that's the reason why people who look to me for something other than space always kind of disappointed I don't reply to emails or people want some personal thing like there's some the walking gap can't do much else except as you leave here not yet some point in the now another way of looking at it it's the same thing you're not really going anywhere ever but the sensory shapes and forms around you change it's like being on a stage let's say this is a theater stage and as you know the sets change different act one act two different places let's say you're on the stage and you remain on the stage and then suddenly the whole stage that around you starts revolving and you have it suddenly in a different place first you're in a room meditation room retreat room and then suddenly I'm on a bus now and it's the stages and and then you arrive at some other place maybe your home or some other transportation first and changes again now I'm there and then you're at home in your familiar surroundings something however remains well you could call it the space the awareness doesn't really move things move around it your entire life some movement the space is there for the movement to happen so that it can happen around it itself it doesn't go anywhere it just seems to and as you know perhaps this retreat was not about personal development at all it was more about personal elimination I must admit that sometimes when certain people who know probably not much about these things they ask me what are you doing for example immigration the entire country well you should United United States they take a photo fingerprints what are you doing in the States well it's a rich teaching giving talks what about what kind of talks and then I must admit sometimes I say personal development and and even my mind knows it's not true and the mind says that's a lie however if I said personal elimination they would keep me there for a long time yes we will also spend some time of course in stillness together as some people have asked now you believe it or not I have at home a collection of all unanswered questions that I got on retreats and other situations of higher that high nothing is ever thrown away well not questions perhaps one day the best will be selected for a book or the silliest ones for humorous book everybody knows by now that the answer to any one question is not essential but some questions can be helpful the answers to vital questions can also come from within you unless the question dissolves if it's vital if you need to know some truly what then after a while you get the answer it may not be in the moment when you're looking for it but if you allow take the question if it's a vital question take the question into the stillness so you have the form which you hold in your mind that you have formulated the question you ask it and then it's like a pebble that you drop into this lake a still lake and then just become still where the question now disappears and at some point either the question will dissolve and it will no longer matter or at some point the answer will come not necessarily when you immediately after you've set aside this moment of stillness but at some point the answer come from within from without if it if you truly need it the it's always within you if you can access the gap vital answers come out of there other answers disappear is the story of the writer called Paul Brunton lived in the 30s I think for 30s 40s at that time there wasn't much knowledge of Indian spirituality in the West India so he traveled to India and he visited holy teachers and to ask them questions for his book and then he reports in his book that he wrote later he visited Ramana Maharshi with his list of questions and when he looked at him he didn't have any more questions they all the questions dissolved in presence so what Ramana Maharshi taught him was the vital thing about spiritual transformation is not to get explanations or answers but it's a place where the mind forms dissolve and the formless arises and that's how Ramana Maharshi became famous through that book that Paul Brunton wrote where he said that level but that he thought was the most important one finding answers to questions was not the most important one in search of secret India is the title of the book a couple of people have written here about serious physical conditions that they are afflicted by and of course I cannot do anything directly about any physical condition these two these people have seen many doctors and so on what I do the moment I read that or is to for a moment hold that person or the name of the person and the condition as described hold that in awareness and then I so all is the same that you do with a question you then let it go and you got to a place of stillness where the form which is the condition that the person seems to be suffering from and the name of the person you take them into stillness that's what I do when I read something like that and that's what I did and I will continue to do with those two people for the as long as it's there in the awareness the next few days weeks the form when you take it into the formless you realize that there is already the inherent perfection hiding underneath the seemingly imperfect form that brings about a healing on whatever level sometimes it reaches the physical level but healing of course is a deeper thing healing is the realization of wholeness so I take that into that space that's all I can do in fact it's not a just when we talk about it it sounds like we're doing something and you could also as much as possible do it for yourself where there's the the condition is not there's only one absolute reality which is the formless essence of your being and you contact that and then healing happens sometimes it reaches the physical but it's always you become restored to wholeness to oneness that's it fundamental healing it's only on that level that you are already and always have been whole and perfect on the conditional there's always you gain something here you lose something there it's always that.

Somebody last night mentioned that at the center here things don't seem to be recycled so we'll look into that for the next retreat my impression was that Denmark has a highly developed awareness of ecological matters we will see that that doesn't happen on a retreat if that's the case oh this is a long question well Eckhart you point to the problems to the negative things which happens as hidden which happen as hidden doors to awakening and of course they are they can be used for that about the good things the lucky things the country that word pleasant presence the beauty the ecstasy the love don't you think that they can be used the same way I don't think they necessarily will get you bored don't you think the thankfulness could open you up to maybe even more or just equal consciousness as the bad events the challenging things are hidden doorways if they're used rightly through non-resistance but those things you mentioned here the good things it's not so much that they take you into the presence they come out of the presence so when there's beauty in your life it means the awareness of beauty already means that you have some access to that deeper dimension where you recognize the depths that is there where you perceive something as beautiful the recognition of beauty means there is some stillness in you somewhere from where you can look deeply into something because beauty is looking deeper than just the form if you just look at the form of a flower of whatever it is it's very superficial and the judgment is equally superficial when you say that's a pretty flower that's a pretty flower you're just on the surface you don't really see the beauty it's like a many mechanical reaction to truly see there is a moment in the moment of seeing and responding to beauty there is stillness it might only be a second or two seconds but there it is maybe then the mind comes in and says something about it but the inner response to beauty comes out of the gap comes out of the stillness and there are people in this world who are so mind run by their minds that they don't see anything beautiful anymore there's no the depths isn't there they haven't found the gap they haven't found the depths within themselves that enables them to see beauty and respond to beauty because when you respond to beauty there is an aliveness suddenly there's one question I think I saw this morning so what is aliveness that's your mind talking of course the mind doesn't know what aliveness is because it's abstract concepts please define aliveness so that I can feel more alive nothing personal in this it's the mind not your mind the mind the human mind when you respond to beauty there is an aliveness there it comes out of the space of being present if only for a second or two so it's not it's different similarly you mentioned love here true love which is the recognition of not one but two almost could say a self-recognition of the essence of yourself in the other life form comes out of presence so they have these are very different from the so-called bad things the bad things are hidden doorways and these so-called good things you mentioned are actually there because there's already that dimension in you so they come out of they don't take you into the challenging things take you potentially into that state but they are hidden concealed doorways and these things arise out of presence and of course that's wonderful when they happen but again it's not looking the the highs come occasionally beauty love intense aliveness but not looking you don't need to look for the highs they come when they come you can't be and don't have to be on a continuous high you would get very tired and so when the when the highs are not there there's just a little low hum of I'm reluctant to even call it anything this hum of the background peace whatever it's a background it's a it's a neutral state of peace and then again the variations in the intensity but not looking for the highs not looking some people are looking for joy and seem to believe okay suffering being present puts an end to suffering the psychological suffering okay the end of suffering but where's the joy the joy is much more subtle and even if we call it joy it's not quite right the word but it's so subtle that it takes a while to see or feel the subtleness of that the joy of being is it's not the joy that you get from not like a pleasure it's relatively gross compared to that a pleasurable thing like a cream cake it's very different so if there is love in your life and beauty and intense aliveness which you describe as ecstasy these things come out of presence how can we keep the meditation state of mind in which kids children new kids are born well you can't because you've lost it already because you were you grew up and you lost it and then this is the process of regaining that paradise lost paradise regained but when you regain something that's lost there's an a new dimension to it this is very similar also to our connectedness with nature the connectedness with nature that ancient cultures still have it's natural totally natural to them they have a connectedness with nature and they don't even know that they have a connectedness with nature because if you have nothing else if that is all you know then you'd in you're in that state unknowingly it's your natural state it's only if you have experienced and state of disconnectedness from nature that you become aware that there is such a thing as a state of inner connectedness with nature and this has happened to us we've all become disconnected from nature on the planet and from our own beautiful nature as the being the formless being itself not the being but being the formless one life we've come become disconnected from that the moment we became disconnected from that from our essence we became disconnected from nature then everything gradually became more and more lifeless our own sense of who we are became more and more superficial the way we looked at the natural world became more and more superficial so that the natural world gradually only became something to be used for utilitarian purposes and so or to be fought against and so that's been going on for a long long time and then as the new awareness began to rise and it's intensifying now humans suddenly found a renewed a they regained what they once lost a long time ago there are many people now who have a very deep connectedness with nature and awareness they know how precious and fragile it is now not everybody who is into ecological awareness necessarily can is there can really sense the aliveness of nature some of those people may still be trapped in their minds so this the essence is to feel the sacredness of nature which you can only feel when you have access to that dimension within yourself it's from there that you feel it not through the mind you cannot make yourself feel it by convincing yourself that nature is sacred you have to come to that place the deep stillness within the gap within that's where all sacredness resides in the formless it's the formless shining through the form that is the sacredness and that's what you recognize when you look at nature when you contemplate nature when you relate to nature and now humans are regaining that but now it's regaining with full awareness so you regain the lost state paradise lost paradise regained but with that added dimension of depth and knowing and on an evolutionary level only somebody who is lost it can go to that depth so that seems to have been our destiny to have it and to lose it and to regain it it seems to be part of a necessary cycle of evolution and if you see it in that point of view the whole madness had its place too it must have otherwise it wouldn't have happened everything has its place the madness and the waking up out of the madness so that was the question about yes children now do all children even children that are born now do they still need to lose that innate awareness that they have the natural state that they are still born with that may depend on the environment in most cases they still do but in some cases if parents are conscious they may not have to lose it I know of some children now been born recently or a few years ago ten five years old ten years old who haven't lost it and so there's a new possibility now that we no longer need to go through into the ignorance ignorance not intellectual ignorance but true ignorance and lose that again and again my general I still had to lose it and many of you had to lose it and are coming back now it's that's the process of evolution how can I be spacious when somebody ignores me well that's a great opportunity for being spacious somebody does not affirm to you your identity as somebody now to the somebody the form identity the mind made self that is not very pleasant if somebody does not affirm even my existence it feels the form me feels diminished he completely ignores me as if I didn't exist so the natural reaction is you could might get angry or you might be feel very hurt or you might feel sad or the or you may feel diminished in your sense of self because you're being ignored diminished in your sense of who you are but on what level diminished on what level diminished on the level of the form me the form wants to stand out and say I'm here and please confirm my existence I'm here it's normal so but a great opportunity if you're being ignored is to allow yourself to be ignored and perhaps participate in that and ignore yourself so that from beings somebody then suddenly we mentioned the other day the Tao Te Ching mentions talks about being a valley rather than being a mountain so the the mind made egoic self wants to remain defined in and through form and it needs others to keep the form identity going if there were no others in your life it would be very hard to keep the form identity going so you need the constant reassurance and recognition from others that your form identity is real it has an actual existence and it wants if possible to have positive things so that it can take these on and identify with the positive statements about you if it has negative statements the form identity feels threatened and it gets angry or it runs away or gets very upset but a great practice is just as an experiment initially to see what happens if I don't attempt to affirm that I am somebody what if I don't demand that people should pay attention should see me what if I you're sitting around a table everybody expressing their opinion what if I just let go of mine and don't express it because that's another way of being there as somebody what happens if I just drop the need to express an opinion and just be there as an empty space and if everybody ignores me why not enjoy that because it's an opportunity for being there not as somebody but for being there as the space and another similar practice would be as it's the Bible recommends it I think Jesus said it when people attack you it says don't defend yourself it verbally and even he used the parable of of course of the other cheek this is to describe the state of non-reaction not necessarily a physical thing just let don't defend yourself they say you did this and that and that in some cases of course you have to say something it depends on the situation but in some situation you can experiment with just letting it be so that the form that continues wants to preserve itself if you just let it be and don't try to preserve the existence of the me which ultimately is a mental construct so when somebody attacks it or just let it be and then you become the valley you become the space and that's extremely there's an you think you become the ego thinks you become powerless but there's a vast that is the power of the Tao the universal consciousness which you only access when you become the valley you kind of disappear as from the point of view of the egoic self so that's a beautiful practice so the how can I what was it how can I be spacious when somebody ignores me it's a wonderful opportunity for being spacious but it can happen if you if you the question is about living with someone a relationship there is a kind of ignoring that has is not just an ignoring if your partner is angry with you and doesn't talk to you that's more than ignoring you because there you don't just have a somebody not paying you attention there's a negative emanation of anger wordless you can sense it so I don't know if that's what you mentioned that's a somewhat different matter and but again here you can either accept that or you can remove yourself the need I want to be somebody special I want to be here to be seeing seen as somebody special that is a deep-seated thing wanting that's kind of specialness to stand out from the crowd and be somebody but ultimately it that's not the way to go you find the specialness through becoming the valley rather than the mountain and only there is the specialness but not not more special than anybody else the specialness that doesn't it doesn't need comparison could you please give comments or advice on this situation two people living together one consciously trying to maintain a state of presence rooted mainly in being with occasional lapses and the other a self-confessed skeptic who lives mainly in the mind and is controlled by the ego for the most part where is the common ground how does the present one deal with this perhaps this could have been asked by many people here in this room quite a few now from this question I assume the questioner is the present one the present one with occasional lapses now the answer of course he is very simple and that is that the the present one just has to be remain present and then he she will know what to do I cannot tell anybody what to do but if presence if you remain in presence then various things can happen one is against all expectation the mind-dominated partner may change suddenly perhaps something will happen to him or her something that cracks the shell of the egoic mind because some people need to be hit with something by life for the crack to appear that can happen but there's no guarantee that that will happen you can also remain and use it as a surrender practice you may find after a while if you remain surrendered and you are the space for the partners mind activity and ego very likely that something some change will happen it may come from you or it may come from the partner if the partner does not change sooner or later perhaps sooner suddenly the partner may remove him or herself from you or meet somebody else who is more compatible who is also mind dominated or you wake up one morning and say that's it I need to remove myself that's not to do when it comes out of presence it's not a decision-making something arrived at by decision-making process should I stay or should I go well on the one hand and they can make a list of if I stay then if I go then pros and cons now the the true that what comes out of presence doesn't come like that it comes as a ready-made knowing one morning when I say morning it could come in the evening too and you suddenly know there's no question about it that's what I have to do and then you do it it's a deep it comes out of peace that's how you recognize it and you can distinguish it from some other impulse that is an emotional impulse that comes up and has a show very short lifespan it there's a realization that comes out of presence is peaceful it may be it is powerful but there is peace in it so you don't run away because you're so angry you can't stand it anymore that doesn't come out of presence that's an emotional impulse or mental impulse but the the realization comes with peace and then you would leave in peace but with power you would not leave with nodding and screaming but with peace so that is how the realization that comes up from the deeper level is recognized because sometimes people don't know where is this where is it coming from this what I feel while you are still there it's your spiritual practice because any condition that you encounter in the present moment is either a pain in the neck or your spiritual practice you complain about it it's bothering you to making your life difficult or it's a nice condition so you attach yourself to it and hope it won't change but it will or you attach yourself to the nice condition and then after a while it no longer satisfies it wears off so it changes and becomes a pain in the neck it becomes the what before made you feel great now it's boring I knew somebody who bought a wonderful car Ferrari something and it made him feel more alive and after a few months six months it no longer it became his normal car and even though the children were still pointing it in saying wow it wasn't the new thing anymore every time he would meet a few children who would come up and he would tell me yes have a look that's my car and then that wore off and then okay it's not working this isn't the right car and so then he bought an Aston Martin and that worked it was a much better car he felt more at ease and a few months passed but he had still had his Ferrari then he parked the Aston Martin wasn't that satisfying suddenly people didn't look at it that much and then he got the next one and he had three cars standing there until he realized it wasn't the cars he was looking some through the cars some satisfaction that they could never give him so then they were standing there the three cars and he realized it doesn't matter it's that's not the way no car can give you that's or any condition that's just using it as an example of expecting some fulfillment through a condition now this doesn't mean you cannot enjoy the conditions you can only in truly enjoy the conditions life the external life if you are not dependent on the conditions you can enjoy a nice thing in your life you can enjoy a beautiful object or beautiful place it is what you don't need you don't deny it you enjoy it but only when the neediness is gone of needing something from it some self-satisfaction through it then it's enjoyed and it's not going to last and that's enjoyable in itself too and when it's time for it to go or it gets destroyed or somebody steals it or you give it away it's fine because it's the dimension as Jesus calls it where moss and rust consume and thieves break in and steal nice expression he's describing this dimension of conditions and of objects in this world where moss and rust consume moss are the little things they eat clothes and rust consumes even the most solidly seeming thing iron you leave it for and gradually something is eating it up it dissolves and thieves break in and steal so circumstances sometimes actual thieves or whoever take things away from you circumstances if your heart is in that dimension you suffer all the time if you're expecting something from it if you expect nothing no fulfillment you can enjoy the fulfillment is pre-existent to conditions and then the conditions can be enjoyed because you don't demand what they can't give oh here's a similar question how do you decide whether to or to leave a very stressful job situation with too much work to do an intense pressure and too little time oh there's the word decide here so it's not through deciding but it's through realizing what is right for you now as you describe this I know what would be right for me in this situation I can feel it already can feel myself walking out even if I have to sit on a park bench for the next two years I'll walk out there's nothing wrong with a park bench breathe look around now of course this is an interesting point that this world the the structures of this world reflect the madness of the unconscious human mind that the unconscious human mind has created all the economic structures the office structures the companies the corporations the governments the bureaucracies and all the the way in which people behave in those places these are collective behavior patterns and what do you do as a person who is waking up if you're in the midst of the madness and there are always two possibilities one is bringing the sanity into the madness so that at least from you you don't participate in that anymore it so it spreads from you you are the field of presence and it spreads from you to others in quite a few situations that will be possible and then there's a change comes from within and that's of course wonderful from within the world to change little things the old consciousness then is being undermined it's a good thing the structures that protect the madness don't understand this otherwise the CIA would be coming here and listening in but it probably wouldn't make sense to them because the eye in the CIA is not the true eye if anybody's here from the CIA I apologize oh it's a short question two words what's intuition well of course and knowing a realization that is not arrived at through thinking it comes out of not thinking not a logical progression ready-made so it is it comes from the non-conceptual intelligence that is the consciousness prior to form stillness the aware presence is intelligence itself conceptual intelligence which is a thinking mind is a tiny manifestation of the underlying non-conceptual and formless intelligence that pervades the entire universe but you access it within and out of that intelligence comes ready-made knowing ready-made realization so and then you don't know how you know it but you know it you don't know how the realization how you arrived at the realization because it just arrived it comes and you know so there is a knowing that the mind knows nothing of and a knowing that to the thinking mind looks like a state of not knowing the state of formless intelligence the thinking mind cannot recognize it and now and because the thinking mind has devised IQ tests it can only measure itself it's limited abilities through IQ tests the thinking mind cannot measure the formless intelligence so I've never seen an IQ test for intuition or maybe some enlightened psychologists maybe they'll come up with something but IQ tests measure a very limited range of intelligence which isn't really intelligence at all it's one particular skill how to use your mind that this society encourages and values and the rest is still not recognized in schools children who have access to the formless intelligence tend to be much slower than others they are not recognized and in many cases considered a little bit behind slow stupid even but even if you use your mind it has to you can only use constructively if you want to use your mind in a fruitful way it has to link into the the deeper stillness otherwise the mind is a mad thing if the mind is left alone without the link the conscious link into the stillness it's a mad entity but if you link then you can even become a fruitful thinker if you have that the gap if you find the gap and it doesn't have even short gaps is enough so that you can have a few original ideas now many people in this world have no original ideas not that original ideas are of absolute importance but they are nice occasionally a new thought oh nobody had thought of that before even a new joke is original and some people have that ability they must have some access some little gap somewhere and out of that comes the ready-made jokes spontaneously that's spontaneous intuition same thing arising that's why I mentioned Woody Allen is just one example of somebody you know who spontaneously creates dogs now you might think by looking at him well he is totally mind identified because that's how he looks kind of worried all the time but somewhere inside him there must be a little gap and out of that comes the jokes and so that's it comes out of that's the gap intuition comes out of that non-conceptual intelligence Einstein is regarded to have had a highly developed mind but it was only Heidi it wasn't really a highly developed mind he was just slower than all the other minds that he grew up with at school he wasn't particularly good at mathematics and physics after he graduated graduated he was the only one who couldn't get a job they don't know he's not that bright he's very slow because he was in touch with stillness although his mind worked he was in touch with stillness and then the best thing that could happen to him he didn't get a job so he had to get a boring position in the patent office in Switzerland he was too highly qualified but couldn't find anything else and that left him time to go deeper and then thoughts didn't come immediately he was looking deeper at certain things conditions in the physical universe and so they always said he was the world left him alone long enough for the very interesting and talked very original theory of relativity to come out of him if he had gotten a job with the neutral stress associated with the job might never have come but he was too slow the world didn't recognize first okay he just doesn't look very bright and of course that brightness does not come from him it comes from a deeper level of being the true intelligence what the other intelligence is the undisconnected intelligence and people can have PhDs and they create havoc in the world and they all have their degrees and PhD they've gone to great universities and they become politicians and they create havoc in the world because every decision they make is not rooted doesn't come from being it reflects the madness of the disconnected mind I've heard that sound somewhere before how can one differentiate between being at peace with what is and suppressing emotions especially with people one would like to love parents partner best friend how do you recognize being at peace and accepting what is with super and to differentiate it from negative emotions that you may be hidden or you're suppressing them now there are people who think they should behave and be nice to others and on the surface it works and yet there's a turmoil of negative emotions that in some cases they don't even know they have because they cannot disconnected from the deeper level they are not in their body they don't feel the emotion they just think they are being nice people and trying to be nice to everybody and of course it's a nice thing to trying to be nice to everybody but after a while something will come out of you that is not nice you suddenly go oh where did that come from I'm such a nice person how could I have done such a thing and in some cases of cases people are very unconscious they try to be nice and suddenly they become violent even a violent thing comes out oh my god oh I don't know where that came from they say when they go to court and and everybody says we don't understand he was such a nice person how could you have murdered five people and the mother says my son would never do anything like that it's you haven't looked so how do you when you're not when you're cut off a very helpful thing is to make it a practice to take attention into the body the more you take attention into the body the more you begin to feel what is going on in the body because an emotion is the body reacting to your thought processes and then feeding your thought processes so the circle and then you know you can actually feel when when there is something that is a contraction in the emotional body or turbulence in the emotional body when you're not totally up here then you can begin to feel what's here and then you know the difference between accepting what is truly or suppressing an emotion but once you discover an emotion inside you for example you are upset but you're trying to be nice at the same time because you mustn't show people to that you're upset because you're a nice person and they might get upset if they realize that you are upset so you try to be nice but that doesn't work you have to at some level either be the space for the upset and say there it is I can feel it and accept in the acceptance comes transmutation or you might even express it depends on the situation and who you're with sometimes if you express it consciously it doesn't mean you are putting it on to the projecting it onto them you're only projecting it if you're unconscious then you will attack them in some way or suddenly it becomes a sharp criticism that is quite a knock would not me at all how I don't know what's just came into sorry about that it was you wasn't if you're looking if the person is relatively conscious next to you can say you know when you let's say the person did something to create it said when you said that this morning or you did that I felt upset and I can still feel it now isn't now this means it's not a projection this can if the person is conscious enough you have to see who you're talking to that can be a wonderful thing to say what you feel when you did this I felt that you're not accusing this is consciously looking at it and then it can very quickly be resolved but you can only do that with somebody who is relatively conscious there may be other situations in the world you might be sitting at some formal dinner with the head of state and it would not be appropriate perhaps to say to the Queen of England this this morning when you gave your speech I felt a negative reaction then you just have to be with it and know it's there and accept that there's a negative actions through the acceptance you're not perfect in form and never will be the perfection lies in the formless you will never be a perfect personality or human being don't even try to make yourself perfect be perfect when Jesus said be perfect as your father in heaven is perfect the real translation of that is behold as the wholeness is whole be a be one with the wholeness this is a formless not the surface level yes you're not perfect and there's an emotion that arises it's human the human form and you accept that you bring you because you couldn't accept the situation that created the emotion that's why the reaction came in and you remember we talked about the two opportunities to two chances you can accept what is if you miss that chance what is will create some negative reaction and then you then realize there is a negative reaction your second chance is to say that is you become the space for that so that is so the Queen of England you would simply say okay that is and maybe that if you do it for yourself it's sometimes the energy field then changes well the moment it's accepted it decreases the moment it's accepted for what it is it decreases then suddenly where there was a negative emotion peace and even the Queen can suddenly feel oh I feel a bit more alive it spreads and suddenly her smile comes from a deeper level we are still here I am still here I am here I of course means the I sitting in that chair I am here now unless my feet are moving towards the door but you still you're always here now that doesn't the changeless space and then the world changes we sit here for a little while in stillness

[Speaker 2] (1:36:30 - 1:50:19)

thank you

2007-Eckhart-Tolle-Oprah-Winfrey-Soul-Series-Webcast-Podcast

[Speaker 2] (0:01 - 4:15)

Welcome to my Soul Series. Soul Series is part of Oprah and Friends, exclusively on XM Radio Channel 156. And you can listen to the entire Soul Series collection on xmradio.com slash Oprah. If there was one individual I know I was supposed to talk with on my Soul Series, hands down, it would be the man that I've dubbed the father of the now, Eckhart Tolle. When I first hosted him on Soul Series back in September, I saw that dream begin to manifest. This is where it all came together for me, because for decades I've known that I wanted to hold a class that would benefit and inspire people across the globe.

So I invited Eckhart on our Soul Series to discuss his seminal work, The Power of Now. It's one of the most transformative books most people have read, and it absolutely changed the way I looked at my life. Eckhart was in New York at our XM studio, and I talked with him from our studio here in Chicago.

This conversation was when I was first introduced to A New Earth, and the rest is history. After reading A New Earth, and naming it our book club pick, together with Eckhart, we launched our worldwide classroom web event. And whether you've joined our webcast or you're just starting your exploration, you don't want to miss this Soul Series.

This one. Now. It's uplifting, enlightening, truly powerful.

Welcome to Soul Series. Welcome back to my Soul Series, our weekly half hour to be able to delve into, you know, all things really spiritual, to challenge the status quo, that's what this show is all about, to connect to higher ground, and thereby elevate the value of our experience here and now. The here and now, you know, that's an expression that's achieved in almost, you know, cult-like status in our lexicon.

But as in any case, when phrases are used and overused in a culture, sometimes they tend to lose their influence and their impact, and people just sort of toss about the here and the now as a reference in time, without actually considering, I think, the magnitude of what those words really represent. Today, right now, I want to share with you somebody who has helped me, along with millions of other people, to really understand just why that phrase, the here and particularly the now, is not only vital, but is really all that there is. My guest today should be called, I guess, the father of the now, because Eckhart Tolle is widely recognized as one of the most original and inspiring spiritual teachers of our time.

I personally think that you are a prophet, Mr. Tolle. And I was first introduced to your teachings back in the year 2000, when actress Meg Ryan was on my show, and she told me about this book. We were in a commercial break.

I don't even know how the subject came up, but she mentioned The Power of Now and how it was really having a big impact on her life. And so I went right out, and I got the book right away. And I put it in my magazine as one on the O-list, and I think I even listed it as a favorite thing for Christmas for all of our viewers.

The Power of Now, A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment, would have to be one of the most transformative books in my life. It's always by my bedside, no matter where I am. I carry it with me.

I was just saying before I was introducing you, Eckhart, that I wished I had my original, original, original copy, because I've bought so many copies since the first copy. But my original, original copy, I had so many yellow markings in it for highlighting every sentence. I just thought, well, why don't I just finish reading the book instead of highlighting everything?

Welcome to our soul series. Thank you so much for joining us.

[Speaker 1] (4:15 - 4:16)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (4:18 - 5:36)

Well, there's so much I want to talk to you about. I know we're not going to get to all of it, so I just want to tell all of our listeners now, those of you who are big supporters, seekers, and fans of his book, The Power of Now, that this conversation will be continued next week. So today's discussion is really, I'm going to try to focus it on the now and the book, The Power of Now.

I was so moved in the book when you said, in the very beginning of the book, you said, 29 years old, having pondered suicide, you were thinking this, quote, I cannot live with myself any longer. This was the thought that kept repeating itself in my mind. And then suddenly I became aware of what a peculiar thought that was.

Am I one or two? If I cannot live with myself, there must be two of me, the I and the self that I cannot live with. Maybe I thought only one of them is real.

I love this because it's really one of the first times I thought, yeah, that's right. When you say, I'm going to tell myself something, who is the I and who is the self? That's the fundamental question, is it not?

[Speaker 1] (5:37 - 8:51)

Yes, that's right. Most people are not aware that they have a little man or woman in their head that keeps talking and talking. So there's a voice in the head, that's the internal dialogue that most people are completely identified with.

And in my case, and in many people's case, the voice in the head is a predominantly unhappy one. So there's an enormous amount of unhappiness that is continuously generated by this unconscious internal dialogue. And in that moment, that night, a separation occurred inside me between the voice, which is the incessant stream of thinking, and the sense of self that had become identified with that voice in the head, and a deeper sense of self that I later recognized as essentially consciousness itself, rather than something that consciousness had become through thinking.

So that night, the separation occurred, and when I woke up the next morning, I was completely at peace for the first time since my childhood, without understanding why. The understanding came much later. So the important point here is that it's essential for people to become aware that their thought processes and the sense of self that is derived from their thinking, which includes, of course, all one's memories, all one's conditioning, one's sense of self is a conceptual one that is derived from the past.

So all the stream of thinking really is a form of conditioning of the past. It's essential for people to recognize that this voice is going on inside them incessantly, and it's always a breakthrough when people for the first time realize, here's my thinking, here are all the habitual thoughts that I've been having, repetitive thoughts, very often recurring negative thoughts, and they suddenly realize, and here I am, knowing that these thoughts are going through my head. So the identification is suddenly broken, and that is, for many people, the first real spiritual breakthrough.

Spiritual, as I see it, is not believing in this or that, but it's stepping out of identification with a stream of thinking. So you suddenly find there's another dimension deeper than thinking inside you. I sometimes call that stillness.

It's an aware presence, just that. It's nothing to do with past or future. And that we could call also, it's like waking up.

That's why traditionally, in many spiritual traditions, they use the term awakening. So many people would tell you, well, what do you mean awakening? I'm awake already.

But what is meant by awakening is that you wake up out of the stream of thinking. And when you wake up, you become present. A completely different dimension of consciousness is suddenly there.

[Speaker 2] (8:52 - 9:18)

Well, I recall, in Stillness Speaks, you talk about the awareness. Stillness Speaks, the book Stillness Speaks, is all about that awareness. And I love the line where you say, once you recognize, I'm paraphrasing, of course, that voice, and that you are the observer of that voice, that that very awareness is you.

[Speaker 1] (9:19 - 9:51)

That's right. And not the voice. So you recognize as essentially there's something inside you that has its place.

It's the stream of thinking. It's connected with the past. It contains all your memories.

It contains all reactive patterns. It contains old emotions, and so on. They're all part of that.

But essentially, it is not essentially who you are. And that's an amazing realization. Now, the mind, of course, may then ask, well, then tell me who I am.

That's the big question.

[Speaker 2] (9:51 - 9:57)

I'm talking to Eckhart Tolle, author of Power of Now. So what is the answer to that question?

[Speaker 1] (9:57 - 11:06)

Well, the answer to that question is who you are cannot be defined through thinking or through mental labels or mental definitions because it is beyond that. It is the very sense of beingness or presence that is there when you become conscious of the present moment. It's intrinsically one with what we call the present moment.

You... I sometimes say, for example, you might find this a little strange, but in essence, you and what we call the present moment at the deepest level are one. Because you are the consciousness out of which everything comes.

Every thought comes out of that consciousness that you are. Every thought disappears back into that space of consciousness that you are. So essentially, you are a conscious, aware space.

And all your sense perceptions, all your thinking, all your emotions happen, they come and go in that aware space. Space, yes.

[Speaker 2] (11:07 - 11:22)

Well, did it feel like, Eckhart, when this happened to you, that moment of realization where you realized the voice was separate from the awareness, that moment that you speak about in the beginning of the book, did it literally blow your mind?

[Speaker 1] (11:23 - 12:18)

Yes, it did. But I didn't understand it, I just realized suddenly the next day I was at peace, and I remained at peace. There was a deep sense of inner peace, although externally nothing had changed.

So I knew something very drastic had happened, but it took me some years to actually understand what had happened. Some years after, three years after this transformation, I was talking to a Zen monk, and he was telling me, he said, well, Zen basically is very simple, it's you don't rely on thinking anymore. It means to go beyond thinking.

And I suddenly realized, oh, this is what has happened to me. That state that I felt was a state of inner peace was also a state of far less thinking than I had been doing before. All that unhappy thinking, all that repetitive thinking wasn't happening to me anymore.

[Speaker 2] (12:19 - 12:36)

And so you have often said in all of your books, you characterize thinking as a terrible affliction, even a disease, and that it's the greatest barrier to the power of now. But isn't to think to be human? I thought that's how we are different from other animals.

[Speaker 1] (12:36 - 14:13)

That's right. Thinking can also be a powerful and wonderful tool. It only becomes an affliction if we are totally identified with thinking, and we derive our sense of who we are from the stream of thinking.

In that case, you're telling yourself continuously what I call sometimes the story of me. And in many people's case, it's an unhappy story. So they are continuously dwelling on the past, and there's nothing wrong with the past, but if there's complete self-identification with memory, then all your sense of who you are, your sense of identity, is then derived from the stream of thinking.

And that's a dysfunctional and unhappy state. So when you step out of identification with that, and you realize for the first time I'm actually the presence behind thinking, then you are able to use thinking when it's helpful and needed, and it can be a wonderful thing. But you're no longer, I'll put it in extreme terms, but it's true, you're no longer then possessed by the thinking mind.

The thinking mind is then a servant or a helpful tool which you can use. It's useful for many situations in this world, but you can't find yourself in there. And also, if you can never be on the thinking mind, it interferes with relationships.

It creates continuous conflict in relationships if there is no sense of space in the relationship.

[Speaker 2] (14:14 - 14:17)

Say that again. If there's no sense of space.

[Speaker 1] (14:17 - 15:25)

No sense of space. That spacious, aware presence that you can bring to the relationship. For example, when you listen to someone, you listen to your partner, or you listen to a friend, or just an acquaintance, can you be there as the aware space that is listening, or are you, while the other person is speaking, continuously thinking, preparing the next thing you're going to say?

Are you judging and evaluating what you're hearing? Are you just interested in your own aims and purposes? Or can you be there as the space for the other person?

And I would say that's the greatest gift you can give a person. It is especially important for parents and children, but also very important in intimate relationships. Can you be there as the space, the aware, conscious space for the other person?

For example, while you listen to the other person, can you listen in that simple state of alertness, in which you're not judging what you're listening to? You're then there as a presence, rather than as a person.

[Speaker 2] (15:26 - 15:26)

Right.

[Speaker 1] (15:27 - 15:31)

So there's the deeper level of awareness is there, and that's what I call the space.

[Speaker 2] (15:31 - 15:41)

I was going to say, you offer them that space in which you allow yourself to be connected to whatever it is they're offering.

[Speaker 1] (15:41 - 16:06)

That's right. There's no judgment in that space. That's right.

You're not defining the other person, and that's an enormous gift that you can give to another person. You're not imposing mental labels, judgments, definitions on the other person. A funny thing, as you know, so many people love their pets.

For many millions of people...

[Speaker 2] (16:06 - 16:08)

So many people, I would be one of those people.

[Speaker 1] (16:08 - 16:09)

Yes, me too.

[Speaker 2] (16:09 - 16:09)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (16:09 - 17:06)

Now, for many people, that's the only area where they realize they can communicate and relate to another being, and that being is not judging them, because the dog accepts you unconditionally as you are. I don't know if you've heard the saying, please God, make me into the person my dog thinks I am. So people feel that sense of freedom when they relate to their pets because they are not being judged.

Now, the animal of course is at a state prior to thinking, so that's why the animal can be there as the simple natural presence. But when a human being is there, the human being has moved beyond thinking, and that's the state of awareness. But both these states are free of definitions and judgments.

Jesus, of course, also talked a lot about the importance of not judging another person.

[Speaker 2] (17:07 - 17:27)

Well, you know, since the power of now, so many people have been introduced to this very idea that you presented to us in this book, and, you know, are stimulated by the idea, and even I have had glimpses of that space.

[Speaker 1] (17:27 - 17:28)

Oh, I'm sure you have.

[Speaker 2] (17:28 - 17:35)

Yeah, glimpses of that space, but how can you live in that space? You seem to live in that space.

[Speaker 1] (17:36 - 18:30)

Yes, well, first of all, it's important to acknowledge and to be grateful for the glimpses of it when they happen, and then you can actually not just wait for the space to happen almost as a kind of grace that comes into your life, which sometimes does happen, but you can also invite that space simply by bringing more presence into your life, which means more present moment awareness. For example, I recommend that people use little everyday activities that they do every day unconsciously and bring a conscious presence when you wash your hands, when you make a cup of coffee, when you walk across a room, down the stairs, you're in the elevator, waiting for the elevator. These are all opportunities for instead of indulging in thinking, being there as a still, alert presence.

[Speaker 2] (18:30 - 18:50)

Yes, like a lot of people take showers in the morning, they're taking a shower, but they might as well already be in the office because they're thinking about getting in their car, and what am I going to do today, and what, you know, what is my to-do list? Instead of being present in the shower, feeling the water, the essence of the water, the moment, whatever.

[Speaker 1] (18:50 - 19:26)

That's right. So it's bringing little spaces into your everyday life, as many spaces as possible. I say, for example, when you get into your car, shut the door and be there for just half a minute, feel your breathing, perhaps feel the energy inside your body, look around, the sky, the trees.

All it takes is half a minute. And the mind might tell you, I don't have time. That's the mind talking to you, but I would suggest that even the busiest person has time for 30 seconds of space, when they sit in their car, for example, or many other occasions.

[Speaker 2] (19:26 - 19:57)

Well, I will have to tell you that, I think it was the year 2000 I first read this book, and many, many, many times this book has saved me. I mean, the theories in The Power of Now have saved me. And today, as a matter of fact, I had, you know, one of the most hectic days, but I remember waking up this morning thinking, oh my god, I'm going to be so stressed, I'm going to be so stressed.

I let that go, I let those thoughts go, and just thought, I will just, for every moment of the day, be present now.

[Speaker 1] (19:58 - 20:18)

Yes. It's a continuous refocusing on real, what really matters, what matters most in anybody's life, which is always now, the present moment. People don't realize it, but that's really, that's all there ever is.

There is no past or future, except as memory or anticipation in your mind.

[Speaker 2] (20:19 - 20:29)

But that's what throws me, though, in the book, when you say there's no past. Of course, there has to be a past, because there are all of our memories, there are all these ways we defined ourselves. That's our past.

[Speaker 1] (20:30 - 20:48)

Yes, on one level, you would say, nobody can argue with the fact that there is such a thing as time, there is such a thing as future. Of course, we use time to meet here. We agreed on this particular time.

We said we are going to meet on this day, at that time. Otherwise, it would have been difficult. We might never have met, accidentally.

That's right.

[Speaker 2] (20:48 - 20:59)

And you are hard to find, in all the different countries. I'm talking to Eckhart Tolle, author of Power of Now. But we agreed on this time, and we are here, because this is now.

[Speaker 1] (20:59 - 21:13)

That's right. So, time, then, is something that we cannot do without. We could even say, time is what dominates this entire life that we experience here.

[Speaker 2] (21:13 - 21:15)

This illusionary plane that we're on.

[Speaker 1] (21:15 - 22:29)

That's right. I call it the surface level of reality. Got it.

It's completely dominated by time, which is the past and future, and the continuous stream. People look to time, very often, for expecting that time will eventually fulfill them. Time will eventually give them what they need.

Time will eventually give them happiness. And sometimes, of course, it does, for a while. But, essentially, the true happiness you cannot find by looking into the future, because it is intrinsically one with living deeply in the present moment.

So, it has been said that two ways of being unhappy, one is not getting what you want, and the other is getting what you want. Because, if you think, this, that, or the other is going to make me happy, even when you get it, and you haven't realized that the present moment is all you ever have, you will, again, be focusing on the next moment, and always expecting, because it's a mental pattern that is very deep-seated, always focusing, always expecting something in the next moment, never being fully in this moment.

[Speaker 2] (22:29 - 23:00)

Well, another thing that changed me, when I read The Power of Now, over seven years ago, was your comments about the fact that all of our stresses, every stress that you have, is based upon, for the most part, thinking about what happened in the past, or what should be happening in the future. That, if you're able to take a deep breath, no matter what crisis is going on in your life, and look at what is happening now, in this moment, right now, I'm okay.

[Speaker 1] (23:00 - 24:59)

That's right. Another way of putting it would be to say, when many people identify their whole sense of self with problems, they're continuously involved in problems. And so, for many people, their whole sense of identity is intimately bound up with the problems they have, or think they have, and often, just as a reality test, I tell people, just a moment, I say, just a sec, what problem do you actually have at this moment?

Just focus, see what problem you have at this, not in an hour's time, or tomorrow morning, but what problem do you have now? And sometimes, people will suddenly wake up when they hear that question, because they have to realize, at this moment, I don't actually have a problem. What you might have is a challenge.

If something, a danger arises, a wild animal jumps into this room, that's a challenge, and then, of course, it's not a problem, because there's no time to make it into a problem. So, for a problem to exist, you need time, and you need mind activity, repetitive mind activity. In the present moment, there may be a challenge, that is true, there may even be pain, there may be an emotion, but not what we call problem.

So, when people think, how do I get out of my problems? I suggest, go into the present moment, and see, what is the problem now? And then, you will always have to admit, well, right now, I don't actually have a problem.

And people got that, even people who are in prison, I've had letters from people in prison, some are in for life, they've written to me and said, I understood your message, and I have become free, and they meant free inside. Wow. Free of problem making.

[Speaker 2] (24:59 - 25:05)

Yes. Yes, similar to Viktor Frankl and Man's Search for Meaning.

[Speaker 1] (25:05 - 25:05)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (25:06 - 25:22)

Free of problem making. I want to ask you, you know, as I completed the book and have read and re-read it many times over the years, portions of it, all of it, listened to the tapes, I often wonder, do you live like this all the time? Are you always in the now?

[Speaker 1] (25:23 - 26:05)

Yes, I'm basically in the now, surrendered to what happens. Occasionally, if I see, for example, somebody inflicting pain on somebody else or something, an emotion may come, anger may arise very briefly and then pass through. It doesn't link into the brain and creates an enormous amount of useless thinking.

So emotions can come and go, but I'm basically in that state of surrender to what is. Because what is is always already the case. So you can't really argue internally with what is because if you do, you suffer.

[Speaker 2] (26:06 - 26:15)

Well, what about having... does it leave you passionless for life, though? Because whatever is, is just going to be.

[Speaker 1] (26:16 - 26:49)

No, no. In fact, you're more passionately alive when you are internally aligned with the present moment. Which means you let go of this inner resistance, which on a mental level is judgment and complaining and on an emotional level is some kind of negativity.

So these two go together. Many people have an enormous amount of complaining going on continuously in their mind. Some people do it out aloud all the time.

[Speaker 2] (26:49 - 26:54)

And usually the complaining is about what was or what they wish was.

[Speaker 1] (26:54 - 27:17)

Or what should be but isn't happening and this shouldn't be happening and you shouldn't do this and I don't want to be here. And so they always find something to complain about. And so these are ways of denying the present moment.

And that's a very dysfunctional state because you're basically denying life itself. Because outside of now there is no life.

[Speaker 2] (27:18 - 27:26)

Alright. Then how do we plan for the future? We're all told that we should plan for the future.

We shouldn't just be passive about the future.

[Speaker 1] (27:26 - 28:44)

No. You should plan for the future and you don't need to lose yourself in the future if you plan for the future. You can actually enjoy saying okay let's say I'm planning a trip or I'm planning a course of study and you write down what you have to do the various steps and you enjoy that.

The question is are you losing yourself in the future or are you simply using time and future on a practical level where it's fine it has its place on a practical level. But if you think at some point that I'm going to reach in the future. Now it might be the next vacation or it might be when I find the ideal partner or it might be when I get a better job or a better place to live or live in a more pleasant city or whatever it is.

Then I will finally be happy. And so yes, a continuous projection mentally away from the now. That's where you lose yourself in the future.

And that's the dysfunction. Using planning is actually fine. There's nothing dysfunctional about that.

So that's the difference you can say between as I call it clock time which has its place in this world and psychological time which is the obsession, continuous obsession with past and future.

[Speaker 2] (28:44 - 29:00)

When you say have its place in this world do you feel that you know even now in the human body which is often for a lot of people the pain body that you call it, do you feel that you're straddling both worlds?

[Speaker 1] (29:02 - 29:40)

Yes you could say that. There needs to be a balance between dealing with things in this world which involves time and thinking but not being totally trapped on this level of time and thinking. Not being totally trapped in time and totally trapped in the stream of thinking so that there is a deeper dimension inside you that is actually outside of that stream of time and thinking.

And that's the inner stillness. That's the inner peace. And that is a deep vibrant sense of aliveness.

So you're actually very passionate about life in that state.

[Speaker 2] (29:41 - 30:06)

Wow. That's what we're looking for here. I just love talking to you.

One of my favorite books all time in the world, The Power of Now, Eckhart Tolle. Thank you so much for joining us this week. We'll talk next week about one of my favorite things to discuss, the ego.

Which you speak so profoundly about in your book, A New Earth Awakening to Your Life's Purpose. We'll join you again next week. Thank you so much everybody for listening.

[Speaker 1] (30:06 - 30:07)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (30:09 - 30:19)

I hope you enjoyed this edition of our Soul Series. These are some of my favorite conversations.

[Speaker 5] (30:20 - 30:28)

To hear more, sign up for a free 30-day XM Radio trial by going to www.xmradio.com slash Oprah.

[Speaker 2] (30:33 - 32:26)

Welcome to my Soul Series. Soul Series is part of Oprah and Friends, exclusively on XM Radio Channel 156. And you can listen to the entire Soul Series collection on xmradio.com slash Oprah. It's uplifting, enlightening, truly powerful. Welcome to Soul Series. Hi, welcome back to my Soul Series.

So excited again because I get to talk to Eckhart Tolle. Last week we spoke of the power of now. He's a preeminent spiritual leader.

I think he's a prophet for our time, for the 21st century who believes that we are here to enable the divine purpose of the universe to unfold in us. That's in the beginning of his book, The Power of Now. And he's the author of that breakout bestseller.

If you don't have it, it's one of the books that should be a part of your personal library forever. I can't even tell you how many copies I've bought for everybody. And if you were to come to my house right now, and you were going to spend the night in either bedroom at my house, it doesn't matter which bedroom you would go to, you'd find a copy of The Power of Now.

Sometimes two or three, because when people leave, they like to take it with them. The Power of Now, A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment. And he's back to discuss his latest release, A New Earth, Awakening Your Life's Purpose.

The inspiration for that title came from a Bible prophecy in both the Old and New

Testament where it speaks of the collapse of the existing world order and the rising of a new heaven and a new earth, for those of you who are Bible readers. Well, The Power of Now is one of the most comprehensive and enlightening books, as you've heard me say, Eckhart, I've ever had the privilege to read. Why did you feel the need to write a follow-up?

You really didn't have to write another word after The Power of Now.

[Speaker 1] (32:27 - 33:28)

Well, that's true. The teaching evolved in the years after The Power of Now came out. I would travel around the world giving talks.

And what happened then is some new approaches came, new perspectives, on the same basic truth. It's not different truths. It's focusing on the same basic truth, but new perspectives towards it.

And also I felt there was still something to be said about that which blocks the arising new consciousness in most human beings. So there's quite a bit in the book A New Earth about that in us which tends to block the awakened consciousness, the consciousness that wants to arise now. And one way of putting what that is, is to describe it as I do in the book, it's the human ego.

[Speaker 2] (33:29 - 33:37)

I just, this is my favorite thing to talk about, the ego. You say the ego is destined to dissolve.

[Speaker 1] (33:37 - 33:49)

How so? Well, first we need to see clearly what the ego is, because sometimes people use that word and they mean different things. Yeah, they just mean you're being arrogant or...

That's right.

[Speaker 2] (33:50 - 33:50)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (33:50 - 36:25)

It goes, it's a much wider thing. It's not just being selfish or being arrogant or thinking yourself superior. That's a small aspect of ego.

Ego is basically a self-identification with the stream of thinking. So that collectively I would say the beginning of ego is actually described at the beginning of the Old

Testament, where there is the famous story of the apple, which everybody knows, even non-Bible readers. So it is said there that they ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge and good and evil.

And that was when they lost that state that is externalized in the Bible and called paradise. What does that mean? To me that means it is the arising of the ability to think and to differentiate between things.

This is good, this is bad. To make statements like that, to make judgments like that, which is to be able to tell good, is basically the ability to think, which is a mythological description of what happened to humanity. And at first the ability to think was not entirely bad.

They lost something. They lost a deeper state of connectedness. But I don't think that deeper state of connectedness with being was lost immediately, as it's described in the Bible.

I believe it took a long long time of increased thinking until people reached a point where they derived their entire sense of who they are from the stream of thinking. So, what that looks like in a person's life is there is a almost, one could say, a mind-made entity which is made up entirely of memories and past conditioning and mental concepts and this entity, which really is all made up of thinking, people derive their sense of who they are from this mind-made entity. So it's a mind image of who I am.

People have split themselves in two. They think there's me and there's myself. Me and my story.

The ego is the story of me that people identify with.

[Speaker 2] (36:25 - 36:35)

You say in the New Earth ego is no more than this. Identification with form, which primarily means thought forms.

[Speaker 1] (36:35 - 36:38)

Yes, that's right. That's what the ego is.

[Speaker 2] (36:39 - 36:52)

And you say if evil has any reality and it has a relative, not an absolute reality, this is also its definition of evil. Complete identification with form. Physical forms, thought forms, emotional forms.

[Speaker 1] (36:52 - 36:53)

That's right.

[Speaker 2] (36:53 - 37:32)

And that this results in a total unawareness of my connectedness with the whole, my intrinsic oneness with every other, as well as with the source. And this forgetfulness is original sin, suffering, or delusion. And that's, you know, when I heard that I thought, yes, you're right.

For every evil act we've ever heard described, or when we think of people as, you know, doing sinful things, it is because of a complete and utter disconnection, a lack of understanding that I am that person. That I am attempting to violate. I am that which I am jealous of.

I am that.

[Speaker 1] (37:32 - 38:40)

It means you cannot sense the aliveness anymore that is in the other person. So you have desensitized yourself to the aliveness. Now, you can only do that if you've already done this to yourself.

Because by living through mental definitions of who you are, you desensitize yourself to the deeper aliveness of who you truly are beyond thinking. So you become, what arises then is a conceptual identity. I'm this, that, or the other.

And then, once you are trapped in your own conceptual identity, which is based on thinking and image-making by the mind on your past, then you do the same to others. The beginning of that is always when you pronounce judgments on another person, and then you believe that judgment to be the truth. Calling people, attaching labels to people.

That's the beginning of desensitizing yourself to who that human being truly is.

[Speaker 2] (38:40 - 39:08)

I'm having a conversation here with Eckhart Tolle, who is author of The Power of Now, of course, and A New Earth, Awakening to Your Life's Purpose. So, if you are not your story, and most people, I do believe, think that they are. We live in a world where people believe, I am my story.

I, you know, was born in this family, and this is where I was raised, and these are the things that happened to me, and this is what I did. If you are not your story, then who are you?

[Speaker 1] (39:08 - 39:21)

That's a very good question, because you cannot deny, of course, that these things exist, your memories of the past, things that you suffered, perhaps even things, suffering that you might have inflicted on others.

[Speaker 2] (39:21 - 39:25)

And even not all suffering, my family connections, the people I love.

[Speaker 1] (39:25 - 40:28)

Yes, you have a so-called past, you have relationships, all that is fine. It is not problematic unless you become totally lost in that dimension alone. So, if you have no access to a deeper sense of aliveness or beingness beyond the stream of thinking, because really, all that is based on memory.

All your past, how do you experience your past? You experience your past as memories. And what are memories?

Memories are thoughts in your head. And there's nothing wrong with that. But if you are totally identified with all these thoughts in your head, then you are completely trapped in your past history.

There's no sense of anything beyond that in your life. So the important thing is am I more than my personal history?

[Speaker 2] (40:29 - 40:50)

Well, you speak in A New Earth, you speak about how advertisers are counting on us to believe in the labels. And that we identify with particularly in our society exclusive labels. And the more exclusive the label, the more we identify with it.

[Speaker 1] (40:50 - 43:13)

Yes, that's right. Because the ego wants to be special one way or another. Every ego wants to be special.

And if the ego cannot be special by being superior to others, the ego would also be quite happy with being specially miserable. So you may have seen business people saying, one person says to the other, I have a headache. The other person says, you have a headache?

I've had a headache for weeks! So people actually compete who is more miserable, you or me. That's another...

It's just the ego that does that is just as big as the ego that says I'm superior to you. Because the ego always wants to be special. So if you recognize in yourself that unconscious need to be special, then you're already half free.

Because when you recognize all the patterns of the ego and specialness is one pattern of the ego, another pattern of the ego is it wants to be right all the time, another pattern of the ego is it actually needs, it loves conflict with others. And that's an amazing thing. Of course it's unconscious because the ego defines itself through a boundary that it draws between this is me and that is the other.

And that's an important word because the ego needs to emphasize the otherness of the other person. And that happens on a personal level when people are suspicious of other people's motives and so on. And there's a need for enemies which is deeply built into the ego.

The ego needs enemies because it defines itself through emphasizing the otherness of others. And nations do it. Religions do it.

The believer, if you identify with one particular religion, and for many people religion is only a mind structure, not in its deepest sense. But for many people, a religion is an ideology that they identify with. And then they need the non-believer, the other, because by having the other, they feel their own sense of identity more strongly.

[Speaker 2] (43:14 - 43:37)

Right. And they need the other in order to feel their own sense of identity more strongly. They need enemies.

You did such a great job of explaining this because you say it first starts with a baby. When the baby first reaches for the toy and realizes and the toy is taken away or not given to them and they say, no, that's mine.

[Speaker 1] (43:37 - 43:42)

That's right. That is mine. That's the beginning of identification with things.

[Speaker 2] (43:42 - 43:50)

Identification with things. And that what happens is that we all just grow up and we just get bigger toys, different toys.

[Speaker 1] (43:51 - 44:37)

That's right. Yes. So it's always ego is always identification with one form or another.

It could be a physical form, as a possession, my house, my car and so on. So when you identified, your sense of who you are is in that thing. And if that thing then is criticized, for example, by somebody else, you will become extremely defensive or aggressive because you're feeling your very sense of self is being threatened.

And then there are other forms of identification. For example, my opinions. Mind forms.

People have very strong identification with their mental positions. And I am right. I am right.

And that implies, of course, that somebody else has to be wrong so that I can continue to be right.

[Speaker 2] (44:37 - 44:53)

But tell me this. I'm thinking this. As long as we are in this dense human form, we must need the ego.

Otherwise, why would we have it? Otherwise, we would have evolved out of it.

[Speaker 1] (44:53 - 45:46)

We are now evolving out of it. The ego has been there for thousands of years. And as you say, the fact that it was there, has been there for thousands of years, means it has its place in the evolution of humanity.

So, I'm not saying it should never have happened. The ego had its place. It was the ability to think, develop more and more, so that gradually we became so identified with thinking that we lost a deeper connectedness with life, which is described as the paradise in the beginning of the Old Testament.

That deeper connectedness with life. We are now, I believe, at an evolutionary transition where many human beings, far more human beings than ever before, are able to grow out of, go beyond ego into a new state of consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (45:46 - 45:53)

Yes, you say that we face a very stark and daunting choice, and that is to either evolve or die.

[Speaker 1] (45:53 - 46:29)

Yes. This is the point where the evolution of consciousness, the awakening of humanity is no longer a luxury. Because now, we've reached the point, if we don't grow out of the dysfunction of the ego, because the ego is now being amplified, the effects of this dysfunction are being amplified by technology.

Right. So, what we are doing to ourselves, to our fellow human beings, and to the planet, is becoming more and more destructive and devastating.

[Speaker 2] (46:29 - 46:41)

Yes. I had a conversation, actually, with Elie Wiesel yesterday. He was saying that this will be known as the sixth century.

Sick century.

[Speaker 1] (46:41 - 46:41)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (46:42 - 46:48)

Yes. In our ability just to do the most evil and sickest of things to one another.

[Speaker 1] (46:48 - 46:58)

Yes. I mean, look at the twentieth century. It was dreadful.

The worst ever in terms of human suffering inflicted on humans, by humans, on other humans.

[Speaker 2] (46:58 - 47:15)

Yes, but we were saying that it doesn't seem that we learned. We didn't learn. We didn't learn.

It seems to have gotten even worse. And you were right. Because of technology, because there are even greater bombs, guns, and ammunition that can kill from further distances.

[Speaker 1] (47:15 - 47:45)

Yes. Now, the question is, sometimes people ask me, are things actually getting better or worse? And my answer is, at the moment, things are both getting better and worse.

Which means there are two streams in existence now. One is the old stream, the old consciousness, the unenlightened, the unawakened egoic consciousness, which is actually still continuing. You can see it a lot of the time when you watch the news in the evening.

[Speaker 2] (47:46 - 47:48)

That is the consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (47:48 - 47:53)

That's the old consciousness, which is still just as mad as before, if not more mad.

[Speaker 2] (47:54 - 47:58)

Well, the fact that we just repeat all the bad things that are happening in the world.

[Speaker 1] (47:58 - 48:27)

That's right. That's one stream. The other stream is us sitting here now and talking.

Because that represents, we are part of, I'm not saying we are special, but the fact that we are addressing this and the fact that many people are listening to this, and it is meaningful to them, means that there is another stream here, which is the stream of humanity awakening. And both are present at this time on the planet.

[Speaker 2] (48:27 - 48:51)

And as we choose to evolve, you and I sitting here and everyone else who is listening to us and this conversation hits a nerve or has a moment, I call them aha moments, or they just find the conversation interesting and will cause them to look at life differently today. As we do that, are we actually creating a new earth?

[Speaker 1] (48:52 - 50:33)

First of all, what happens is a new state of consciousness arises. It's not so much that we now need to get busy and create a new earth, because that would be premature. Many times humans have tried to create a new society or a utopia, and they all failed miserably.

So, look at communism. It started with a good idea, everybody is equal, and see what it did. Millions of people were killed in the name of communism.

So, first of all, the important thing is that we are open to the transformation of consciousness that is happening now. Out of that transformed consciousness, which in essence simply means we are no longer completely identified with thinking. We realize that inside ourselves there is a dimension in which I am conscious, I am present, I am awake, I'm alert, but I'm simply an aware space.

That's presence. I call it presence. You can have other words for it.

Awareness, unconditioned consciousness, stillness. That arises now in many human beings. And so, as that arises and gradually replaces identification with thinking and replaces relying on thinking exclusively to run your life, there's actually, in that stillness, in that awareness, there is a higher, far greater intelligence at work.

[Speaker 2] (50:33 - 50:44)

I know you say, I love how you say let us allow nature to teach us stillness. If you want to understand stillness, you know, stand beside a tree, or watch a tree.

[Speaker 1] (50:44 - 51:56)

Yes, that's a great help. Just watching a tree, a plant, and be there. Just watch it.

Be there as the aware presence that perceives the flower, the tree, the plant, the animal. Nature is always very helpful for people who want to connect with the stillness. Man-made things very often generate more thinking, because they are made through thinking.

So, go to nature, and then eventually, it's important, of course, that you also are able to sustain the state of stillness, even in the midst of a city. I actually enjoy, I'm in New York at the moment, I enjoy walking along the busy busy streets with infernal noise and people rushing about, and feeling actually in the background a deep sense of stillness. And actually, I can even enjoy all that movement.

And it's wonderful to be able to be there as the stillness, and not completely get drawn into some reaction. It's like being in the world, but not of it. That's exactly what it is.

[Speaker 2] (51:57 - 52:27)

Being in the world, but not of it. So, tell us how we can get to be more like you. How can we not allow ourselves to be dominated by the ego?

I know it's a lifelong process, but just for those who are listening now, who are going to read A New Earth, and read The Power of Now, and come away thinking, okay, I'm inspired by that, stimulated by it. What can I begin to do today to not to have myself dominated by my ego? Yes.

[Speaker 1] (52:28 - 52:54)

Now, the ego cannot survive in the stillness. That's important to realize. So that means invite stillness into your life.

Now, that does not mean that stillness is something that you need to get from the outside, or somehow create for yourself. It's realizing that everybody, underneath the stream of thinking, already has the stillness.

[Speaker 2] (52:55 - 52:57)

Right. So you don't have to go to Hawaii and sit on a mountaintop.

[Speaker 1] (52:57 - 55:18)

No. And you don't have to do anything to create it, because essentially, it's already there. And if you look very deeply into yourself, and see where does my sense of I-ness, when people say I, they have this sense of, I am essentially the deeper I, where does that sense of I-ness come from?

And then if you look very closely, you'll find it's actually intrinsically bound up with this dimension of stillness. So that's why I say in my book, Stillness Speaks, you are never more essentially yourself than when you are still. So you invite stillness into your life.

You can do it by taking a few conscious breaths many times during the day. Just observe your breath flowing in and out. Another way of bringing stillness, or finding the stillness that's already there, is feeling the aliveness of your body from within.

I call that the inner body. And that immediately takes your attention away from the stream of thinking, a lot of which is repetitive and useless, and bring it into the body and feel, is there life in my hands? And then you feel it.

Oh yes, very subtle, but it's there. Is there life in my feet, my legs, my arms? And then you feel that your entire inner body is pervaded by a sense of aliveness.

And then that can serve as an anchor for remaining present, when your attention, or part of your attention remains in the inner body. Even at this very moment, for people who are listening to us, they can practice it and they can see that even while they are conscious of the words that they hear, they're completely following what we are saying, but it does not need to take up a hundred percent of their attention. They can have some of their attention, even as they sit there or stand there and listen, in the inner energy field of the body and feel there is an aliveness in every cell of the body.

And that's a wonderful anchor for stillness and for presence. It doesn't mean you turn completely away from the external world. It actually brings balance into your life between being still and still being able to deal with things out here.

[Speaker 2] (55:19 - 55:21)

It's finding the space in between.

[Speaker 1] (55:21 - 55:22)

That's right.

[Speaker 2] (55:22 - 55:34)

It's like when you're reading the book, I remember reading the book, Power of Now, for the first time and you were saying it is the space in between. It's the awareness of what's on the page and the space in between that awareness.

[Speaker 1] (55:35 - 56:05)

Yes. And you may also find talking about the space in between that you may sometimes become aware when a thought has come to an end in your head that between two thoughts there is a short, silent space. And when you acknowledge that, which means you suddenly become conscious that for a moment there's no thinking, then it becomes a little longer.

And so you have a longer gap of stillness. And then...

[Speaker 2] (56:05 - 56:08)

But if you become aware for so long you start thinking about it and then you lose it.

[Speaker 1] (56:08 - 56:14)

Then you lose it. The moment you say, oh look, I'm not thinking, then you're thinking again, of course. Right, right, right.

[Speaker 2] (56:15 - 56:22)

Is there anyone on earth at this time who you think is free of the domination of the ego? First of all, are you free of the domination of the ego?

[Speaker 1] (56:22 - 57:36)

I'm not identified with my thinking, which means I'm free of domination of the ego. And there are many, many people right now who are going through this process. They may not yet be a hundred percent free, but they are going through the process in which they become gradually disidentified from the stream of compulsive thinking.

I'm getting letters, emails every day from all over the world of people who are telling me how their lives have changed, sometimes just by reading the book, and how they become free of identification with their mind. They are not yet totally free, which means sometimes they fall back into ego. Sometimes they fall back into obsessive thinking, compulsive thinking, addictive thinking, because for many people thinking is basically an addiction.

And then suddenly they wake up again. So it's a process that many, many people are now undergoing. I cannot tell you exactly how many, but my intuition is that in the Western world, about ten percent of the adult population are at the beginning stages or a bit further, some further advance of this process.

[Speaker 2] (57:36 - 57:58)

Well, I love also how you say in the book, where you're talking about the whole tone of the book is about awakening your life's purpose. A New Earth is awakening your life's purpose. And you say that there are a lot of people who realize that how spiritual you are has nothing to do with what you believe, but everything to do with your state of consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (57:59 - 58:12)

Yes. And that's, again, it's the stillness that's the spiritual dimension. It's not any thought.

Thought in itself is not spiritual. Thought can be sometimes helpful, because it can be a pointer. For example, when we say...

[Speaker 2] (58:12 - 58:13)

And beliefs are not spiritual.

[Speaker 1] (58:13 - 58:14)

That's what I learned from you.

[Speaker 2] (58:14 - 58:16)

No, because beliefs are thoughts. Beliefs are not spiritual. No.

[Speaker 1] (58:17 - 58:28)

Some beliefs can be helpful, but only as pointers. I mean, even if we say, find the stillness that's already inside you, that's still a thought, but the thought is pointing beyond itself.

[Speaker 2] (58:28 - 58:39)

Well, I love what you say at the end of the book, that the foundation for a new earth is a new heaven, the awakened consciousness. Because what did Jesus tell his disciples? That heaven is right here in the midst of you.

[Speaker 1] (58:39 - 58:56)

Yes. That's a wonderful thing Jesus said. Heaven does not come with signs to be observed.

You can't say, ah, there it is, or look, here it is, because it is essentially already within you, in the midst of you. The stillness. The stillness.

[Speaker 2] (58:56 - 59:21)

All right. Can you believe another... We're out of time again.

Next, those of you who've been so intrigued, so empowered by words that you've heard and read over the years, and not just from listening to us, will have an opportunity to ask questions of Eckhart Tolle here on our Soul Series. Thank you again. Our listeners get to talk to you.

That's going to be great.

[Speaker 1] (59:21 - 59:22)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (59:22 - 59:35)

Thank you. I hope you enjoyed this edition of our Soul Series. These are some of my favorite conversations.

[Speaker 5] (59:35 - 59:43)

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[Speaker 8] (59:51 - 59:53)

Welcome to my Soul Series.

[Speaker 2] (59:53 - 1:01:17)

Soul Series is part of Oprah and Friends, exclusively on XM Radio Channel 156. And you can listen to the entire Soul Series collection on xmradio.com slash Oprah. It's uplifting, enlightening, truly powerful.

Welcome to Soul Series. I'm so glad you can join me again on my Soul Series this week. I've been hogging Eckhart Tolle, author of The Power of Now, to myself, and he's kindly been indulging my many questions.

I could really spend a day and a night and a weekend. Boy, would you be great for a slumber party. But since this is talk radio and you're listening to me on Oprah and Friends, XM 156, I thought it would be really great to open up the lines and have him share his wisdom and indulge in your questions.

I placed a brief paragraph on my website, Oprah.com, soliciting people who'd read The Power of Now and who had questions of their own for Eckhart, and I knew we'd get a great response, but I was blown away by the volume and the intensity of those responses that so many of you sent in. You know, Eckhart, well, you do know this, that you've literally transformed the lives of so many people. What does that feel like to you?

[Speaker 1] (1:01:18 - 1:01:57)

Well, I don't feel that I did it. Something happened through me and that's how the book got written and that's when I give talks or answer questions. I also feel not so much that I am doing it, but it's a process that happens when you become still.

I always begin the answer to every question or the beginning of every talk I give is entering the stillness and becoming comfortable with not knowing. And out of that being comfortable with not knowing comes the knowing. And I don't feel, I don't identify with that which comes, I just allow that to come.

[Speaker 2] (1:01:59 - 1:02:11)

Wow. Well, that's called, well, yep, you said to us last week you weren't dominated by the ego, so you don't feel either it's great or not great or isn't this a great thing and isn't this wonderful?

[Speaker 1] (1:02:11 - 1:02:33)

So many people are reading my book, you don't. I remember my old ego, of course, would have loved it. But it really doesn't, I don't have that sense now of even having achieved anything as such, it's just being open for it to happen.

Being an open channel for consciousness to evolve. Gee, I love that.

[Speaker 2] (1:02:34 - 1:02:55)

You know, I can't say that I am not dominated by my ego, but I do feel that sometimes when people will say to me, I've watched your show, I just was coming across the street here to radio and there were three women standing on the corner and said, your show changed my life. And I was wanting to feel something about it, but I just sort of thought, well, okay.

[Speaker 1] (1:02:55 - 1:03:05)

Yes, because I have a feeling with you also that is happening, that many things that you do and say are actually come from a deeper place than the ego.

[Speaker 2] (1:03:05 - 1:03:16)

That's right, that's what I'm supposed to do. That's how I feel about it. Well, this is exciting.

Wendy Graham is on the phone. Hello? Hello, how are you, Oprah?

Hi, Wendy.

[Speaker 6] (1:03:16 - 1:03:18)

Hi, Eckhart, how are you?

[Speaker 1] (1:03:18 - 1:03:19)

Fine, thank you.

[Speaker 6] (1:03:20 - 1:03:39)

Thank you so much for your work and sharing your life with the world. I am so grateful. And the question I have for you this evening is, how do you embody what you talk about?

You being free of the domination of ego. Can you please share your experience of living in the here and now?

[Speaker 1] (1:03:40 - 1:06:58)

Well, thank you, Wendy. Thank you. Basically, life becomes very, very simple.

So, I don't inhabit a world of problems, because my primary interest and the primary focus of my conscious attention is always in the present moment. It doesn't mean that I'm not aware that there is a so-called future. I may be aware I have to go to this or that place.

I have to be there in an hour or two hours or tomorrow I'm going there. On the periphery of consciousness there's always the knowledge of what needs to be done on that level. But the primary focus is always on the present moment.

And so, life becomes basically very simple and it could also be described as a state of surrender to life, which is always the now. So, my relationship with the now is a very friendly one. And I sometimes actually suggest to people that they can also, if they inhabit a life full of problems, they can actually also change their relationship to the present moment.

So that's a very important question to ask yourself at any time. What is my relationship with this moment? And then you need to be alert and see, am I making this moment into an enemy?

Am I treating it as if it were an enemy? Or am I treating this moment as if it were an obstacle that I need to overcome? For many people the present moment is always some kind of obstacle, because they think they always need to get to some other moment desperately, but it's always this moment.

Or am I reducing this moment to a means to an end, just a stepping stone to get to the next moment? These are all ways of denying the present moment, a means to an end, an obstacle, or even an enemy. So, become aware many times during the day and see, how am I relating to the present moment?

When you do that, what you're really asking is what is my relationship with life? Because the present moment is essentially your life. It's nowhere else.

Never, ever. Your life, you can only encounter your life in the present moment. Nowhere else.

So it's a vital question to ask yourself what your relationship is with life. Because if your relationship with life is one of hostility, which is when you make the present moment into an obstacle or an enemy, then life always reflects back to you your predominant state of consciousness. So when you are treating the present moment as if it were something undesirable, your life experience will then reflect back to you that state of consciousness, which means you experience life as hostile.

One bad thing after another. One problem after another.

[Speaker 2] (1:06:59 - 1:07:00)

But what if you really do have problems?

[Speaker 1] (1:07:01 - 1:09:39)

You have to always start, enter the present moment with your attention, so that you find that space of now in which actually problems cannot survive. In the now. In the now.

And out of that, because then that moment you contact a deeper intelligence than the conditioned thinking mind. That is the place out of which intuition comes, out of which creative action comes. It's the place out of which knowing comes, wisdom comes, right action comes.

So you find, first of all, go deeper into now, so that make sure that you are one internally with the present moment so that you're not in a state of negativity to do with the present moment, because that is a dysfunctional state. Now, you could of course take action on the basis of negativity. For example, you might feel very unhappy with being, having little money, and then you become angry even, and then you work extremely hard, and finally after five or ten years, you become wealthy.

But that, all that action is contaminated by the negativity, if it comes out of anger. And it will create further suffering for yourself and others. So the important thing is, am I aligned internally with the present moment?

No matter what it is, you say, this is what is, and you open yourself to that, and no matter what the situation is, you can always find something to be grateful for, because gratitude is an essential part of being present, because when you go deeply into the present, the gratitude arises spontaneously, even if it's just gratitude for breathing. It's gratitude for drinking a glass of water. It's gratitude for that tree that you see there.

Gratitude for perhaps the aliveness that you feel in your body. Gratitude is there when you acknowledge the aliveness of the present moment. The power of life wants to come through you, but it can't.

Only a little trickle, perhaps, if you're lucky, comes through. So, the most vital thing for anybody who wants to even change their lives is first of all, come to a relationship with the present moment that is one of openness, friendliness, acceptance.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:39 - 1:09:43)

Even if something is going on in that moment that is making you uncomfortable?

[Speaker 1] (1:09:44 - 1:10:25)

Yes, even if it looks externally, it looks, the mind would usually judge it as negative. You are very highly enlightened, because that's hard to do when you're in the middle of a crisis, I've got to tell you. It's hard to do, but it's something for people to find out whether they can do it.

Okay. And sometimes the mind will tell you, oh, there's no point in even trying. So, very often the thought that says you can't do it, or the thought that says you can't be present now because you've got too much on your mind, says the mind, so you don't necessarily have to believe every thought that comes into your head, and you see, oh, there's another thought that says I can't be present, and then you're present anyway.

[Speaker 2] (1:10:25 - 1:10:31)

Just keep going back to what we were saying on a previous show, in this moment, right now, I'm all right.

[Speaker 1] (1:10:31 - 1:10:55)

Yes, so the question was how do I live, and that's how I live, but I'm saying the important thing is not so much how I live, the important thing is how you live, and the essence of this transformation of this way of empowered living is to make the present moment your friend. That's the foundation for all of our empowerment.

[Speaker 2] (1:10:56 - 1:10:56)

Thank you, Wendy.

[Speaker 6] (1:10:57 - 1:11:00)

Thank you, Oprah, thank you, Eckhart, thank you so much. All right.

[Speaker 2] (1:11:01 - 1:11:28)

That's Wendy. I know Wendy. Wendy's my daughter, so that's how she got the first phone call.

She's my life partner's daughter, so I've watched her grow up since she was a child, and we talk about these all the time, this subject all the time, and when she heard that you were going to be on, she was like, oh, please. I called her, and I said I would send a tape, and then I said, you know what? Do you have a question?

And so she's been planning her question probably now for six days. It was great. All right, thanks, Wendy.

I'm getting on to Anthony. Anthony, hello.

[Speaker 7] (1:11:29 - 1:11:30)

Hi, Oprah.

[Speaker 2] (1:11:30 - 1:11:30)

How are you?

[Speaker 7] (1:11:31 - 1:11:32)

I'm good. Hi, Eckhart.

[Speaker 1] (1:11:32 - 1:11:33)

Hello, Anthony.

[Speaker 7] (1:11:34 - 1:11:52)

My question has to do with human relationships. evolving spiritual beings, how do we stay in touch and connected with other people, particularly family members and close friends that are highly unconscious?

[Speaker 1] (1:11:53 - 1:12:37)

All right, yes. Thank you. Good question.

Many people will be able to relate to that question. When you feel that you are becoming more conscious, you're waking up out of identification with the mind, then in some cases, you find family members, close friends, relatives, they are still totally immersed in identification with ego and with thinking. Your primary thing, of course, primary purpose is not to expect others to be conscious.

So, first of all, you need to drop your expectation that others should be conscious or should behave consciously.

[Speaker 2] (1:12:38 - 1:12:55)

And also, there's a little bit of, I remember when I first started many years ago, becoming more aware, there's a little cockiness that comes, which is obviously your ego, I know that now, where you're kind of like, I know this and you don't. So, you have to put that in its place also.

[Speaker 1] (1:12:55 - 1:14:30)

That's right. Because at many stages of one's awakening, the ego can come back in and claim some kind of specialness. Yes, because I know and you don't.

Yes. Because the moment you say, I know and you don't, that you have identified yourself with a mental position, which I know and that's the ego. So, first of all is you accept other people, you accept where they are at in their evolutionary development.

So, first comes the acceptance of others and then you may find as you continue to practice presence, as you continue to grow in awareness, you may find that certain people around you are also beginning to change. Some will, some won't. If there's the slightest readiness in a person close to you, then something that is happening inside you will transmit itself, so to speak, and also trigger another person's awakening.

If there is an opening in the other person for that. So, what people usually find as they awaken spiritually is that some people around them awaken with them and then you're on that journey together and they also find that other people, friends drift out of their lives gradually, those who are not ready to awaken.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:30 - 1:14:32)

Because don't you attract like frequency?

[Speaker 1] (1:14:32 - 1:15:53)

That's right. And also you attract very often, as you say, new people into your life that correspond to this new frequency that's arising within you. Now, one other point here is that there may be certain family members, people who will remain in your life, and it's quite possible that they may not awaken.

And your spiritual practice is to surrender to the fact that they are who they are at this moment. Wow. This is not expect them to be different.

The moment you drop your expectation of, let's say, your parents, they should be more conscious, or what other kinds of expectations that people have is, my parents should understand me, but they don't. Why should they? So you drop the should, which is a thought, and you accept your parents the way they are.

And the next time you visit them, maybe your father says the same thing to you. He says, you should have listened to me 20 years ago, you would be better off now, or whatever the old story is that you've heard so many times. And instead of reacting in the same old way, you can simply allow him to say that and just be there as an open presence for what, for those words, for what he's saying.

[Speaker 2] (1:15:54 - 1:16:01)

I got it. I just had an epiphany. You surrender your attachment to your expectation of what any outcome should be.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:01 - 1:16:02)

Exactly.

[Speaker 7] (1:16:03 - 1:16:03)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:16:03 - 1:16:04)

I got that. Did you get it, Anthony?

[Speaker 7] (1:16:05 - 1:16:07)

I did. I very much did. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:16:07 - 1:16:18)

Wow, that's great. You just, you know, and you've said this, Eckhart, about how you move through life surrendering to the now. You surrender to what is.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:18 - 1:16:18)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:16:18 - 1:16:29)

And then that's what you were trying to explain to him. You do the same thing with all other situations and obstacles with people or whatever your expectation of them should be. You surrender to that.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:29 - 1:17:28)

That's right. So, because very often when we talk about surrendering to the now or accepting the now as it is, very often it means a person that is there in front of you in the now. Right.

So, you accept whatever this person says or does. It will be a reflection of their evolutionary stage and you accept it as it is. The amazing thing is when you completely accept a human being as they are right now, without demanding that they should be different or they should be more conscious, if you completely accept then very often change happens which otherwise would never have happened.

Wow. If you had resisted or if you had demanded or expected this or that. There's an enormous power behind that acceptance because the moment you accept another human being completely a deeper consciousness comes into play because that's another way of contacting the space or the stillness inside you.

I got it.

[Speaker 2] (1:17:28 - 1:17:37)

I had another epiphany because I was just going to say when you accept them it changes the frequency, it changes the energy, it changes the space.

[Speaker 1] (1:17:37 - 1:17:39)

Exactly. The whole frequency changes.

[Speaker 2] (1:17:40 - 1:17:46)

I got it. That's it. I got it.

Okay, Lisa, how are you? Hi, I'm good. How are you?

Good. Your question for Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 3] (1:17:46 - 1:17:47)

Yes. Hi, Eckhart.

[Speaker 2] (1:17:47 - 1:17:48)

Hello, Lisa.

[Speaker 3] (1:17:49 - 1:18:58)

I seem to be a little bit backwards in terms of really understanding the power of now. I am an artist so I am very familiar with being in the moment and I feel like I embrace that and live it fully as my calling. As you two mentioned earlier, I have a sense of being in this world but not of this world so when I get a compliment on the painting it doesn't actually feel like I've done the painting.

It's a compliment for the big picture, whoever, the powers that be. And what I aspire to is having more of that kind of experience in my daily life, in the mundane tasks which seems to take up a lot of time. Yes.

And so I'm wondering what does life look like when you're not, when you're fully engaged and you're cleaning the cat box or you're doing the bills or you're grocery shopping.

[Speaker 1] (1:19:01 - 1:19:05)

So you are able to be present when you do your artwork.

[Speaker 3] (1:19:06 - 1:19:09)

Yeah, and also when I'm driving, oddly enough.

[Speaker 1] (1:19:09 - 1:19:18)

Yes. And now what happens when you go shopping or do other tasks at home? You lose the presence?

[Speaker 3] (1:19:18 - 1:19:19)

Frustrated and bored.

[Speaker 1] (1:19:20 - 1:19:20)

Ah, yes.

[Speaker 3] (1:19:21 - 1:19:21)

Bored, yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:19:21 - 1:22:12)

Yes, yes. Okay. Okay.

Good. Let's see. You have to become very alert to see, to look at your inner state at that time.

So, and when you say I become frustrated or bored, you have to become alert and see what that actually means, what happens inside you when you become frustrated or bored. And you may find that a whole train of thinking arises that is either negative about what you're doing or about some problem that you may have or what is boredom? Boredom is the thinking mind is looking for some kind of stimulus and it's not finding enough because the cleaning job, the cleaning that you're doing is not enough for the thinking mind, so it gets very bored and restless.

It says, I want something more interesting to feed on. So, basically it's the mind begins to be active inside you and then the opportunity arises of being the awareness that observes what your mind is doing at this moment. So, your mind is complaining perhaps about what you're doing or doesn't like it and has certain judgments about it.

And then you may also observe the emotions that you have that come with those judgments. When the mind says, I don't want to be doing this I'd rather be doing something else. What emotion do you have when the mind says that?

Because to a large extent, the emotions you experience are a reflection of your thought processes. So, you observe the two levels thinking and the emotions as a reflection of thinking in the body and then you ask yourself, okay, there's the, you become aware of the thoughts and you become aware of the emotions the restlessness, the anxiety and then you ask yourself who am I at this moment? And you will realize you are not the thinking you are not the emotions you are the awareness behind them from where you can see, observe the thinking and the emotions.

And the moment you realize that you are the awareness, you're actually in a different state of consciousness. And you're not bored anymore. You're not bored.

You're totally present again. So, you are present as the witness or the observer of your mind and of your emotions. So, the important question is, at this moment who am I?

The thoughts the emotions or the knower the awareness behind the observer. And you realize you are the awareness you are the presence. And then that's your present.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:13 - 1:22:17)

So, we get bored because we're looking for more stimulation for the ego.

[Speaker 1] (1:22:17 - 1:22:52)

Yes. And that's right. The mind looks for more food for thought.

It's not finding enough food for thought. So, one very important point here is, you do not need to get rid of certain thoughts. It's enough to be the awareness behind the thoughts.

Then the thoughts, all the dysfunctional thoughts lose their power. And the thoughts that remain when you are aware actually come out of awareness and they tend to be more creative and empowered thoughts that are not negative. Right.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:52 - 1:23:01)

Alright. I hope that helped, Lisa. It did.

Thank you so much. Alright. I'm going to go to Connie now.

Is Connie there? Let's go to Connie. Connie, how are you?

[Speaker 4] (1:23:02 - 1:24:10)

Thank you both very much. You gave me many new perspectives today. I'm 49 years old and recently divorced after a 21 year marriage.

And for the first time both of my sons are in college. Before I was a computer programmer and now I have an opportunity that I love teaching senior citizens how to communicate using computers. But I'm under tremendous pressure to make more money and to go back to corporate America because my alimony is on a declining structure.

So my question is will I always... I can get into the now and I have been practicing this for over 5 years with yoga and what have you, but will I always or does one always go into a pain body or a fear body or a mind awareness and then come back out? Do you think it is ever possible to live peacefully in the now or is that too much of a lofty goal?

[Speaker 2] (1:24:11 - 1:24:16)

I love that question. Can you explain pain body too as you answer that question Eckhart?

[Speaker 1] (1:24:16 - 1:27:42)

Yes. The pain body as I call it is an accumulation of past emotion that still lives inside you. A lot of it comes from childhood.

Many painful childhood experiences and children often need to cut themselves off from emotional pain because they cannot endure it and that's normal for a child who suffers emotional pain. And most children these days suffer pain. One form or another.

So pain leaves remnants in the body and those remnants of emotional pain I call the pain body. They are an energy form consisting of old emotion. And one way of looking at it is look at it as almost an entity that lives inside you.

An emotional entity. It has two stages. One is dormant and one is active.

So for certain periods of time you don't even know that you have a pain body. And then regularly at regular intervals something happens and your pain body will get triggered. It will come out of its dormant state and it will move into your thinking mind and start to control your thinking.

So a very powerful negative emotion suddenly invades your thinking mind and then controls the internal dialogue or your thinking. The pain body has then woken up so to speak and it does that periodically because it needs to feed on negative energy which can be in the form of your thoughts or it can be in the form of other people's reactions.

So the pain body will often try to provoke a negative reaction in your partner so that it can feed on the negative reaction from your partner.

So many people who are in relationships can recognize that in the periodic need for drama in relationships. So if you are able to observe that in yourself then you don't get completely drawn into the pain body and then the pain body cannot renew itself through you. So it's vital to be there as the awareness when it happens and realize, oh, there's my pain body or there's my partner's pain body.

So that you don't confuse it with who you are. So you remain there as the awareness. Now the question is, can we ever be free of the pain body?

Can we ever be free of negative reactions falling back into all that? This question I would recommend that we simplify the question and rather than asking, can we ever be free? Which is a huge amount of future time.

Can I be free at this moment? Is really the only question that you truly need to ask yourself. Because the only place where you can ever be free or need ever be free is this moment.

Not the rest of your life, just this moment. Because when you look more closely, you'll see that this moment is all there ever is. So I would recommend that you rephrase your question.

Don't ask about ever or for the rest of your life, but be content with simply addressing this moment at any given time.

[Speaker 2] (1:27:43 - 1:27:45)

And what's the answer? Can you be free right now, Connie?

[Speaker 4] (1:27:47 - 1:27:50)

I'm closer to it than I have ever been before.

[Speaker 1] (1:27:51 - 1:27:55)

Yes. Yes. Thank you.

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:27:55 - 1:28:42)

Eckhart, this has just been one of the great joys of my career, to be able to sit down and talk to you. I mean, I've thought about this time that we've shared together on this radio show. I've thought about this for so many years, like what would it be like?

What would it be like? And it has been more than I could ever imagine. And so I was wasting my time.

I should have just waited for the now, thinking about what it could be like. Thank you for all of your encouraging inspiration that has allowed myself and so many other people who've read your works, The Power of Now, Stillness Speaks, New Earth, have allowed us all to see our own lives differently and to see the possibility of an awakened consciousness. Thank you so much.

[Speaker 1] (1:28:42 - 1:28:43)

Thank you, Oprah. Thank you so much.

[Speaker 2] (1:28:44 - 1:28:59)

Thanks for joining us on XM 156. I hope you enjoyed this edition of our Soul Series. These are some of my favorite conversations.

[Speaker 5] (1:28:59 - 1:29:07)

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2008 Eckhart Tolle Retreat Journey Into Yourself Part 1

[Speaker 2] (0:00 - 0:05)

Lesson one, what is your relationship with the present moment?

[Speaker 1] (0:11 - 1:19:38)

Welcome, wherever you are, it'll be here. And now, no matter where or what time it is, despite all the technology at this event, I'd like to point out that this is not a performance in any way, and the good news is I didn't have to undergo makeup procedures that are usually associated with television. Don't be distracted by the technology.

It's good for once to see technology to be put to good use rather than having it in the service of human madness, which happens more frequently. But this is a very simple event, not a big thing. There's a person talking and there's a person listening.

This retreat is not going to feed your mind with information. It's not about learning new things, extending your knowledge. It's not about how to create this and that for yourself in the future.

There's nothing wrong with that. But the focus of this retreat does not lie in the horizontal dimension. So it's neither about your future nor is it about your past.

It's not examining all the things that went on in your past that are now part of your conditioning. It's not looking at the future. It's not to do with the horizontal dimension of your life situation, which is past and future.

My past, my future is my life situation. Everybody here has a life situation. And in most cases, a problematic life situation.

And some of you may believe that it is uniquely yours. The fact that your life situation is uniquely problematic. But that's not the case.

I'm sorry to say. And if your life situation, I'm not talking about your life or this moment. I'm talking about your life situation.

If your life situation is not problematic right now, just wait a little. Because you may have hit the brief interlude between problematic events that sometimes occurs. And then the next thing happens.

So it's in the nature of one's life situation to be problematic and to some extent to be unresolved, to present certain dilemmas. They look like your very own personal dilemmas. But if you look underneath the surface appearance of the apparent personal dilemmas, you find they have a great deal in common with other people's dilemmas.

Only the surface is a little different. Now you can go to many workshops and there's nothing wrong with them. They're wonderful.

They are to do with how to solve your personal dilemmas, how to create a better future, how to achieve this or that. And that's fine. This is not what we are here for, however.

It's not dealing with a horizontal dimension of your life, but something that most people overlook almost continuously. And that is the vertical dimension. One could say the dimension of depths, inner depths.

Instead of going out that way, we are going in more deeply into the vertical, which is inseparable from what we call the now, this moment, all there ever is. The now that is usually overlooked because your attention is almost completely absorbed by the horizontal dimension, which is your life situation, your personal dilemma, your problems, and all the things of this world that demand your continuous attention. This matters, matters.

And you can feel the pull of the world as soon as you step out of the protected space of this retreat center, you feel the pull of the world pulling you this way and that way and saying, give me your attention, this really is important. And of course, it may well be relatively important, relatively important, but is it absolutely important? But even within the space, the protected space of this retreat center, the world does not leave you alone because it also exists in your head.

As the continuous stream of thinking, of thought processes, and of emotions associated with those thought processes, and that is the world that is carried in your head, that doesn't leave you alone even in the protected space of the retreat center. So you could be sitting here and your attention being absorbed completely by your thought processes, suddenly you're gone. Only the body is still here.

And you will be thinking probably about your life situation. Maybe something that you will have to deal with when you get home. Maybe something that you didn't deal with when you left, before you left.

And now you're thinking about it and saying, I really shouldn't have come here, he's not talking about anything important anyway. So that, and then the thoughts have a certain momentum. Each thought is an energy form that has a temporary lifespan and not as long a lifespan as this stone or crystal, but it is a life form, a short-lived life form, not material, not physical, but it is an energetic form.

So every thought has this momentum, it comes in. And that draws your attention in. Someone could say the thoughts absorb your conscious attention almost totally.

And so you go into the thought and then you get lost in the thought. Another way of putting it is you identify with the thought. You are the thought.

And that is a dreadful fate of humanity. They have become their thoughts. They are so identified with thinking, they know themselves only as their thought processes.

And whatever their thought processes are that go through their head, involuntary, most of them, involuntary thought processes, that's who they think they are. Their thoughts are telling you who you are, that's who you think you are. And a lot of the thoughts are telling you what you've learned from other people, what they taught you, who you are.

And that gets absorbed, gets assimilated in childhood, and then it goes on from there. Or your reaction against what other people told you who they are, which is another form of conditioning. So you have all that conditioned mind movement inside you, and that is the world.

A more primordial, on a more fundamental level, that's the world inside you that tells you, give me all your attention. This matters, absolutely. And the emotions that are created by the thoughts and in turn energize thoughts and create more thoughts.

Fear, anger, many things, continuous, it's a vicious circle. Thought, emotion, because the body believes that whatever thought you have in your head is reality. Whereas most thoughts actually are not reality at all.

They're what might happen, could have happened, will happen unless this, that happens. Should have happened long ago. And even that, if you completely believe in every thought, which means I'd be identified with every thought, and you think this should have happened long ago, doesn't feel good.

It didn't happen. This is called a retreat. The prefix re- means back.

Treat, I don't know, maybe it's something to do with. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. The important thing is that it's some kind of drawing back, a treading back or whatever.

It may be a stepping back, a retreat. You retreat, one could say there's the expression you retreat from the world for a few days. You retreat from the external world, your life situation, but only from the external aspects of your life situation.

The question is whether as you are here, you can retreat from the inner life situation, the thought movement. Can you take a step back from your thoughts, your movement of thoughts, instead of believing in each thought? Instead of being totally drawn into each thought, and then every thought proliferates and becomes a stream of associated thoughts.

Choo, choo, choo, choo, choo, choo, choo. And then that comes to an end, and then the next one comes up. And you didn't catch the tiny gap in between the two thoughts, because the mind says that's not important, there's nothing happening there.

That's not, that doesn't solve my problems, the gap between thoughts, says the mind. And yet in the gap, lies the deepening. There's the vertical dimension.

So we are here to allow something to arise inside you, that in many of you is already happening. In some of you it's happening without you really having recognized that it's happening, the arising of something different from the continuous stream of thinking. In many of you it's happening, and you know it, and then you get drawn back into thought, and then it's there again.

In others, and you may only, some of you may only recognize as you sit here during this time, that yes, it has already happened, it's already happening to me, I hadn't recognized it. And in others, this may be an opportunity for it to emerge for the first time. Of course, I haven't defined yet what exactly that is, nor do I need to do that right now, and never mistake a definition for it.

So I've, there are people who it's happening, and they know it, it has already, it's emerging, it's a process of emergence, or it's happening and they don't know it yet, as beginning to recognize it, or it could happen here for the first time, or we have a fourth category of people, it just isn't happening. And if you survive these three days here, when it just isn't happening, then I congratulate you, because it will be very hard to sit through this for three days. What is he talking about?

I could hear one mind asking that question. The arising of a new dimension of consciousness. And when I say that, even that's not quite right, but we have to use words.

A new dimension of consciousness arising in and through you, human beings. Perhaps just in time to save humanity or the planet, perhaps just in time before what has become a form of collective insanity, the beginnings go back thousands and thousands of years, even the Buddha saw the collective insanity already, and said that was 2,600 years ago. And he said, you're in misery all the time.

Why? Why are you so miserable? And even your happiness is miserable, because it lasts such a short time, and then you're unhappy again.

The very thing that makes you happy today makes you unhappy tomorrow. That's why you're miserable all the time. This is my new translation of the Buddhist sutras.

And in recent times, that human mind, that what one could call dysfunction in the human mind, yes, the human mind has created great things too, but whenever it has created something truly magnificent, it's never been just the human mind. It's been the human mind connected to a deeper realm. And then the human mind became an instrument through which it was not where the creativity, the creation came from.

That came from the vertical, the dimension of depths in the artists or whatever they created. Every creative utterance comes from there. Anything creative comes from the depths that is there within you.

The greater intelligence that is concealed in that dimension of depths in you, that is underneath the continuously, the incessant stream of thinking. People don't know what treasure there is hiding underneath that. And the more you, the better you are at thinking, the harder it gets to step beyond thinking.

So it's very hard for a university professor who has continuously used his or her mind and polished it and added more and more to it to step out of that. And they come, what's, okay, define this. What do you mean by that?

It's all just, the mind is trying to grasp something that has nothing to do with thinking. It is deeper. It can then inform thought.

It can flow into thought also. And then thought is a beautiful thing. But when you're not connected to the dimension of the vertical in yourself, thought becomes very quickly barren and dysfunctional because an entire identity arises in you.

Identity means your sense of who you are, your sense of self. An entire identity arises that is based on thought movement, who you are, continuously telling this inner monologue or dialogue that goes on. So you're talking to yourself.

Oh, you're so good. You're not good enough. You should be.

Why don't you? Others are so much better. I love myself.

I hate myself. I don't like myself. I love myself.

I can't stand myself anymore. And yet yourself is the stream of thinking, which you're really saying, I cannot stand my stream of thinking anymore. But you confused it with who you are, which is underneath that, the dimension of depth.

Yes. So that we are here to allow that to emerge that dimension of consciousness, which we could call the unconditioned because the whole stream of thinking is conditioned by the past. And the entire sense of who you are, of identity, of me that is associated with thinking is conditioned by the past.

It's a conditioned entity, conditioned by your environment. If you had been born in Iraq, the structure of your thoughts would be very similar. The content would be different.

It would be working along the same structures. So the content, I believe in this, and I believe in that. The structure is that you identify with a belief.

I am a such and such. You say religion, profession, status in society, nationality, male, female. I am a few words, put them together, a little bundle.

That's who I am. I'm an ex such and such. I'm a so-and-so survivor.

You have survived something, which is wonderful because humans go through dreadful things and they survive. But then make it into an identity or the main, the focal point of your sense of self, you're going into, identifying with a mental image, which is thought. That's who I am.

Some people have grievances, which are thoughts, associated thoughts and emotions going together. They carry grievances towards one particular person, may not even be alive anymore, my ex this or that, or a group of people, or another nation, or another religion, or some other church within your religion, or some other people, some other color or race, or ideology, grievances. And for some, that is the focal point of their sense of self, their grievance against.

So when communism was still alive, well, in some places it still is, in Russia, people got indoctrinated with certain thoughts. And many people, not all, believed those thoughts. And so they believed in, this is who we are.

So their sense of I am a communist, the collective identity was an important part of a person's sense of identity. And then communism collapsed. And I read it that in East Germany, when communism collapsed, they didn't have enough psychiatrists.

There was enormous mental confusion in people, and also suicides. And the psychiatrists, they would have needed a hundred times more psychiatrists than they had to deal with all the people who were totally confused. What all the things that we thought we were is suddenly not true anymore, what is going on?

And the fear that comes with that, I don't know who I am anymore. And that is a dysfunction to derive your identity from a few thoughts, because that's ultimately what it is. A few thoughts that you identify with, and that is the me.

And then that fragile edifice, you try to, because you're deep down, everybody knows that it feels so insecure, this little me based on thought. That's called the ego, by the way. And so the ego looks out for more to add to the insufficient sense of self, because every sense of self that is mind-based is insufficient, even if it looks confident on the surface.

Deep down, there's a sense of not insufficient means not enough, or not enough yet to be myself. I do not have enough yet, have not achieved enough yet, don't know enough yet, have not experienced enough yet to be fully and completely myself. And so with that comes the deep need embedded in every human being that has not stepped beyond, the deep need for more to fulfill me on whatever level.

Some people seek it here, others seek it there. You may seek it on the level of possessions, you may seek it on the level of achievement, on the level of relationships, how many boyfriends or girlfriends or experiences. And people come here perhaps also looking for more to add to me, the sense of self, the mind-based sense of self, which is so hungry.

Overeating is only a physical expression of the need for more, that is basically a psychological need. So this means you eat more than the body needs to fill the deep seated longing for more. And then you can have it, you consume entertainment.

We have whole industries catering to the psychological need for more that fills your mind up continuously with more things going on, events, useless information, continuous chatter, switch on the radio and it goes in an excited voice. What's he saying? Nothing really, he's just filling you up with more thoughts, insignificant.

And so people cannot stand not getting more. Not getting more results in very quick sense of frustration, of boredom, of even fear, which is what you may experience occasionally here because the need for more is not really met in this situation. We are here to discover that to be fully yourself, to feel a sense of rootedness, deep rootedness in life, in being that the world of nature still has because nature does not have dilemmas or problematic life situations.

It may suffer, but it's not a problem. It's not a dilemma. And when an animal suffers, it suffers.

A cat just rests until it gets better, stays very quiet, no complaining. Some animals that live closely with humans become complainers also. They learn that from the human mind, which loves complaining.

But many animals remain sane despite that. And so you can learn from them. You can see how deeply rooted they are in life.

There's a fundamental deep trust in life that humans, most of them don't have anymore. They don't feel truly rooted within themselves, rooted in being, a deep sense of aliveness and peace. The purring of the cat.

The cat is in touch with something very beautiful when it purrs, a sense of delight in being alive, bliss. And humans can have that also. And I'm not talking about a superficial feeling of, oh, isn't that great?

I'm not even talking about being happy all the time. Everything's soft. There are no problems.

And it's not pretending. It's not saying, oh, no, no, it's deeper than that. The possibility of living from a deeper place than the stream of thinking.

And from there comes whatever you need on the level, the external level, even in your future, comes out of that. If you are connected with that, that in a, any word that we use is a limitation, of course, of it. That's why in India, just to get some approximation of what this is, they use three words and string them together as if it were one to describe the state of connectedness with being.

The three words are sat, chit, ananda. Sat means being. Being, the delight of being.

The delight of life, which nature has. But when we look at nature, we don't see, we always see the struggle for survival. Yes, that also exists on the level of form, but there's also the delight in life that everything in nature, every animal and every plant still has.

And I have observed birds, other animals, and I see how they delight in doing, they're not continuously fighting or looking for food. Yes, also, they're also looking for food. There are many times when they're simply delighted.

When the eagle soars from where I live, I sometimes observe eagles high overhead, their wings stretched out, they hardly ever move. They use the air so skillfully that they don't need to make any effort. They can be for 20 minutes without ever moving their wings and just go.

And they are not looking for food. I looked at them. They're not looking for anything.

They're in a state of delight, just watching. Consciousness, the one consciousness expressing itself through this form and delighting in the life of form that it observes, that it is part of. Sat being, the delight of being alive, which is more than that.

This is only one perspective on it. Cit, consciousness. Consciousness, ah, to know yourself not as thought, which is a form that consciousness takes, to know yourself as that which underlies all thought out of which every thought and every emotion comes, that which allows the thought and the emotion to be there, which is consciousness itself before it becomes something, before it becomes a thought or an emotion or a body or a sense of me or a flower or an animal or the earth, the sun or the galaxy, before it is born into form, the moment prior to what scientists call the big bang, which is the birth of form, the universe, before the birth of form, scientists are puzzled. They cannot work out, okay, it all started with a big bang.

Now, but what was there before that? If there was nothing, where did it all come from? If you start thinking about it, you will soon go mad.

How did the whole universe come out of nothing if there was nothing, out of complete empty space? Now, that realm, the strange thing is that which was there before the big bang out of which the entire universe arose was never lost and still dwells in each form as the innermost essence of that form. And the Buddhists call that emptiness.

Form is emptiness, emptiness is form. And that is in you also. Ah, that is the dimension that is unconditioned, timeless, no past, no future, eternal, which does not mean goes on and on.

It means no time, not endless time. Eternal does not mean endless time. It means no time, not subject to time.

Consciousness itself. And all that humans know, most humans, all they know is the objects that arise in their consciousness, which is the world of form, the world of birth and death. They know the objects, sense objects, mental objects that arise continuously.

And most humans are identified only with that, that they know nothing else. So they know only the world of form, the conditioned, time-bound, past, future. On a personal level, all they know is their life situation and the continuous dream of thinking.

That's what a life. Now, if we want to use theistic language, we could say you're totally concerned with the world and you don't know God. God not as an entity, controlling entity somewhere in space, no, but that the unmanifested life out of which the entire world of manifestation arises, the unmanifested that contains everything in a state of oneness.

So your life is totally incomplete, no matter what you achieve on the level of form. And everybody who has achieved great things on the level of the world knows that after a little while, you feel elated for a little while when you suddenly become a VIP and see your picture in magazines or whatever it is. And then after a little while, it feels, hmm, the same old things come creeping back.

Not enough fear, I might lose it. What do they think? My reputation, the stock market, what's going to happen to me?

And deep down, they know that all their achievements are going to leave them unless they leave them first. It's either the question of, I leave the stock market, which means I die before it all collapses or it collapses while I'm still alive. In either case, it's all going to leave.

Oh my God. And the famous actor or actress knows that deep down that my appearance isn't going to last and eventually they won't want to see me anymore. So whatever you achieve on the level of form cannot satisfy for long.

The not enough remains. The sense of insufficiency remains. So you forgot something.

You forgot an entire half of life, one could almost say. You've got the manifested half. This is only a temporary way of putting it.

Don't get attached to it. There's the manifested half and you entirely neglected the unmanifested. You paid all your attention to the world, but nothing to God.

And don't get attached to that, please. Another way of putting it, you could say, if in this room, you see all the objects in this room the people, the ceiling, the lights, and so on, and the objects absorb your attention, this and that, oh, look at that, and that, and that, and that, and then the walls and the ceiling. And you don't realize that the essence of this room is actually not the walls and the ceiling and whatever is in the room, but the space itself.

Without the space, it would be useless. We couldn't, there wouldn't be enough space to sit here. So when people describe the room, they would usually just describe the appearance of the ceiling, the walls, and so on, perhaps give you the measurements, forget to mention the space completely because they were not aware of it, that the very essence they didn't mention.

This room is worthless if you just put together the objects in the room. And so in each human being, there's the equivalent of that. There are the objects that make up your consciousness, all the thought movements and the emotions, chum, chum, chum, chum, chum, chum, chum, chum, chum.

They're born and they die, they're born and they die. And so in most cases, that is what absorbs your attention completely. And don't realize that underneath the continuous movement of thought, there is a spaciousness.

A sense of stillness, another pointer. Stillness, spaciousness, aliveness, delight, ananda, bliss, delight, being, consciousness, bliss, satchit, ananda, is living in connectedness with that. More than that, knowing yourself as that, not as something that arises in you and takes form.

You are the infinite space. The entry point into that is always the present moment. The point of entry into that dimension in yourself is this moment.

Now to be in this moment, truly, you need to allow this moment to be. And that's, for most humans, an unusual thing to do because most people live in such a way and you have to be aware of it if it happens in you. They live in such a way as if, and I'm going to, what I'm saying now, you can immediately recognize as a form of insanity.

They live in such a way as if the present moment were an obstacle that they need to overcome. And a large, most parts of their lives is they are trying to overcome the obstacle of this moment, which means they need to get to the next one where they believe this obstacle will have disappeared. The next moment, which of course never arrives because your entire life can only ever be this moment, which then remains a continuous obstacle that you need to get beyond, but never get beyond.

If that's not insanity, what is? But it's normal. So we don't need to be good at mathematics, which I'm not, to then find the equation, normal equals insane.

Maybe a little bit extreme, but ultimately true. If normal were not insane, human history would be very different from the way it is. If normal were not insane, what you would hear on the news would be different from what you hear every day on the news.

Well, so the present moment then is not an obstacle? Is the present moment is not my enemy? Another way of putting it.

I don't want this. This shouldn't be happening. I don't want to be here.

I don't want to have to deal with this. Why isn't it, why are we still waiting here? When is it going to happen?

What's the next thing you have to do? Have you done that? Why haven't you done that?

Come to the next thing and the next thing. Go into families, see how they talk to their children. The next, they're almost breathless because they're always running after the next thing.

And they're telling their children to do the same thing. Okay, now deal with, have you done that? Come on, do it.

And then if they get totally exhausted, they sit on this, in the sofa and then switch on the screen. And what they watch on the screen is the people going through that same behavior. But for a moment it feels good because it sends you into a kind of semi-trance-like state because they have their problems and they're not mine.

But nobody questions whether to live like that is sane or not, very rarely. Occasionally these days the truth comes through here and there, even through the media, occasionally in certain films, occasionally even on television, occasionally. But mostly it's a reflection of the collective dysfunction of the human mind.

So this moment, this is the theme of our retreat. Throughout the retreat and the times when you're not here are as important as the times when you're here. And that's the only way of putting it because no matter whether you sit here, whether you're walking from here to your room or whether you're sitting in your room or in the dining hall or amongst the beautiful trees, the trails, the lake, it's always now.

I can guarantee and predict that no matter where you find yourself here, it will be this moment. Now, our retreat here is to find out, to be attentive, to be alert in order to know what your relationship is, so to speak, with the present moment while you're here in the moment. What is your relationship to this moment?

Are you embracing it, whatever form it takes? The forms change. A new person appears in front of you.

The mouth opens, speaking happens. Then the person goes, then steps happen. A tree is there, the beautiful colors.

Shoo, and the next thing comes. What is your relationship to this moment? Particularly, see if you can detect any way in which you avoid this moment, where you are ahead of the moment to some future moment.

That could be when you're walking between here and your room, that mentally you're already in your room doing what you're going to do there. And you don't see while you walk this beautiful moment, the incredible beauty around you, you don't see it at that moment because you're already doing in your room what you're going to do there. Or even worse, you're thinking about what you will have to do when you get home, back to your life situation.

And the dilemma or the problems, hmm, where's the now? Uh, what now? No, I need to get home to deal with all that stuff.

What am I still doing here? Ah, and then you wake up at that moment and you discover your relationship to the present moment it was one of denial. Well, you don't exist, you're not important at all.

Something else is more important, it's some future moment. And that's what I need to think about. The future, of course, is only a mind form.

The only place where you can ever encounter the future is in your head. Ha ha. Ha ha.

Ha ha. Ha ha. This is such a revolutionary thought, such a revolutionary realization.

And not even the greatest scientists or philosopher could argue with that. The only place where you ever encounter the future is in your head. Well, yeah, it has to be.

Of course it's true. And this, of course, also applies to the past. The only place you can ever encounter the past is in your head.

And yes, also to some extent, as an emotional accumulation in your body, but even that you can only feel at this moment. But whenever you remember the past, it's only the power of now, your consciousness now, that is bringing it to life. You can only think of it now.

You cannot think of the past yesterday. Ha ha. And what you think of didn't happen in the past because nothing can happen in the past.

You can't. Now is the prerequisite for being, for life. There's no life apart from now.

There cannot be. And now, what this now is, we will go into deeper and deeper here. It's in you.

So what, there's such depth to now. And whenever we talk about now, we have to approach it through language, through language which is based on time. Every word, every sentence.

And so contradictions arise because we are using something from the world of time to describe something that is beyond time. And then even when I say we are going to go deeper into the now, it sounds a little silly. But that's an inevitable contradiction that arises.

It's only because we're using words. But to see, to truly see that there is no future apart from this moment, there is that the future that you think is so threatening or important that you need to sort out has no existence. And if you realize the primordial importance of the present moment, make that the focal point of your life when we start with this retreat.

And you may find that the quality of your life improves so dramatically when you are attentive to this moment and allow it to be. The quality of your life improves so dramatically. And quality is difficult, hard to define this.

Then a quality in everything around you that you perceive, that you do. Even when you speak out of, not out of denial of the present moment, but being fully rooted in the present moment, there's a quality to what you say because the words, which are thoughts that become words, arise from a deeper level that you are now connected with when you say yes to this moment. That's the entire spiritual practice.

See if you can be in a state of yes to this moment, no matter what form this moment takes. And because this moment takes on so many different forms, people have fallen into the delusion to think that their life consists of millions of moments, and another moment, and another moment, and that past moment, future. No, there's only one moment ever, but the form it takes changes, it continuously.

So what is your relationship to this moment? Do you deny it, do you resist it? Are you in a state of inner contraction?

Say, want to be somewhere else in place or time? Mentally, go elsewhere totally, which is denial of now. Miss it, are you missing?

You miss your entire life if you miss the aliveness of this moment. So what comes is an alertness. What I sometimes call the state of presence is a state of alert attention, relaxed alertness.

As you open yourself to the now, as you begin to live in a yes relationship to the present moment, and particularly when something comes in that before you would have rejected, denied, complained about, or run away from internally. In other words, something arises in the now that the mind says, that shouldn't be happening. The soup is cold, it should be hot.

But at this moment, the reality is, I'm giving a very simple example. I could give the most dramatic examples of the same dysfunction. It can become the cold soup that you are complaining about internally.

I'm not saying, by the way, that the soup here is cold, but it's, you could complain internally about, these really shouldn't be, I'm paying all this money and what am I getting here? Cold soup, this is just a neutral example, I think. I'm paying all this, all I'm getting is this cold soup.

They should, I'm going to talk to someone about it, and you're eating it. But there's an enormous amount of complaining about it inside. And something in you loves that.

What is that, that loves going on about it? And if you can find somebody you can talk to, we can agree with you, you can energize each other mutually. Did you taste that soup too?

Wasn't it dreadful? Oh, you're absolutely dreadful. Now, a very different thing is saying, taking it to the kitchen and say, oh, the soup is cold, would you mind heating it up again, please?

No problem. You're not even complaining. You're simply stating a fact.

You're not going, if you go to the kitchen and say, you, you are, how dare you save me this cold soup? You are in a state of resistance to what is, because what is, is the cold soup. And you can substitute anything in your life.

And there are far worse things than cold soup. So you are in a state of resistance to the is-ness of this moment, which is the cold soup. So there is the non-dysfunctional, non-effective way of dealing with it, which is, for example, to complain internally and to someone else to get, to expect, to hope to get some feedback.

Yes, yes, you're right. Which something in you loves, and what is it that loves that? It's the mind-made egoic entity, the me, that consists of thought forms that are never enough.

And because the thought form of me is never enough, what it loves is to be right about something because it can add the position of rightness temporarily to its sense of self. I'm absolutely right about this cold soup. And I have, and now, of course, somebody has to be wrong.

And it's the kitchen staff and the whole place. And it's the people who, all the chefs of the world, whatever madness you can think, somebody has to be wrong. And so it's very, there's something satisfying in living in a state of resistance or denial of the isness of the present moment.

That's why it is so all-pervasive in humans. There must be some payoff when they continuously resist and complain and deny the present moment. And what is the payoff?

It's unconscious, of course. When you make it conscious, you're beginning to step out of it. And this is why it's good here to look at it because it may come up in you, even as you're here, not necessarily the cold soup.

It'll be something else. There's hardly ever a situation that does not bring up certain things of that kind. So the isness of this moment, at this moment, there is nothing you can do about the cold soup because it, you cannot argue with isness.

It is cold. What do you want? It is, is.

So that is, what is your relationship then to the isness of this moment? You reject, you say, this is how it is. It's cold.

Then, of course, you have a choice. You're free. You can eat the cold soup and say, that tastes okay too.

Or you can say, it doesn't taste good, but I'm eating it anyway. Or you can take it to the kitchen and say, could you please heat up this soup? It's cold.

Without falling into the delusion that you are right and somebody else is wrong and attempting to strengthen your sense of self by making someone wrong, how dare you? You personalize the whole thing when you do that. How dare you serve me this cold soup?

Me. And so to the ego, that is very satisfying. It doesn't feel good.

The body knows that it doesn't feel good when you're in that state. The body, if you could examine the physiological things that accompany that state, you would see that it doesn't, it affects the blood circulation. It affects the heart.

It affects your breathing. It affects the entire energy field of your body, which is contracted. And now imagine humans living most of their lives in such states of denial.

What that does to the body also, just a small thing compared to what it does to their well-being. My God. So watch out for the things that would usually create a response of resistance.

And see if you can allow this moment to be whatever form it takes, whether you can recognize the is-ness as something that it would be mad to argue with. And if anything needs to be changed about the is-ness of this moment, very effective action arises out of the state of non-resistance. Far more powerful, far more effective than any action that comes out of the state of denial or resistance of the present moment.

So it's not that you become a doormat that anybody can do anything to you and you say, oh, that's fine. It's not that. It's not that.

Very often a no may come. No, I'm not eating this soup because it is cold. No.

Powerful no. So when I say say yes to this moment, which is our practice here, it's easy to mistake that for believing and then believe that you have to say yes continuously, externally. That's fine.

Can you give me $1,000 right now? Oh, yes, of course. Because I always say yes to the present moment.

And is it okay if I buy drink and drugs with this? Yes, it's fine. Go ahead.

Anytime. Somebody stops, you're waiting for the bus. Somebody stops, you can smell the alcohol and says, you want a ride?

Do you say yes because you say always yes to the present moment? No. You say, no, thank you.

What you don't say is, how dare you offer me a ride? You're completely drunk. You might even say, get out of the car.

You're drunk. And it might work. It will be powerful.

Step out, walk home. Maybe he'll do it. Right action arises out of that.

And sometimes a very powerful no. But it doesn't mean that you resist what is. What you don't, what is, is this person is asking you for money, let's say.

And he's asking you 10 times already. You've given twice and he never gives anything back. And then the time comes, can I have another?

No, I'm not giving you any more. Oh. Internally, you're not resisting that.

You accept the fact that this man is asking for money. That's what he does. That's his conditioning.

He can't help it. That's what he does. So that's the isness of the present moment is this person wanting that from you.

And what arises then out of the state of acceptance of this isness is not some kind of inner rejection of this person even. In a wider sense, when you accept this moment, every human being that comes into the space of now is also accepted as they are, which doesn't mean that you do whatever they want you to do. But they are accepted.

And if their behavior is dysfunctional, conditioned, that's how it is. And you say no, if no arises. No.

And it's a non-reactive no. Powerful no. No.

No. And that's quite beautiful too. So out of the inner yes to what is may occasionally arise an external no to the situation, which doesn't mean you reject internally what is at all.

So you become very, very powerful. You become a power that is greater than the conditioned force that is in the human mind can act through you when you live in alignment with the isness of this moment. Inner alignment with is.

And do not argue with it. You recognize that you cannot. What is is at this moment as it is and cannot be otherwise at this moment.

It doesn't mean you cannot act, change, help. But right now that is. And that what we see as an event, we isolate it by calling it an event, something that happens.

But if you could see on a deeper level that there is no isolated event anywhere in the universe, the entire, the totality of the universe brings about this so-called event. The form that this moment takes cannot be otherwise, otherwise it wouldn't be. It's connected to everything else, all the totality.

So what is is inevitable. It doesn't mean that now you cannot act, that now you cannot help. But you have recognized, first of all, the inevitability of this.

So the action that arises, so the energy that you bring to it is one of enormous empowerment, which you were cut off from when you denied the power of this moment. You denied, when you denied this moment, you denied also the power that lies concealed in this moment. When you deny the form that this moment takes, you deny the enormous power that's concealed underneath it.

And that becomes very obvious and very, so incredible when something really dreadful happens in your life. And it may be that there's no action that you can take. Sometimes you say yes to this moment, but you know that action arises and you do something to change.

You fall into a river, it's cold, and then you get out if you can. And then they're shivering, that's how it is. You don't bring a whole level of psychological suffering onto it.

It's enough to be cold and shivering. Why do you need to suffer on top of that? It's just shivering, it's cold.

But there's nobody in the head complaining about, it's just, the moment you complain, you personalize the whole thing. You become a victim of circumstances in your own mind. You become somebody who needs to be right as against circumstances.

And you strengthen the whole dysfunction. And what kind of action can arise out of that? Further dysfunctional action.

It's called karma. The end of karma is to live in alignment, not to react against the present moment. Respond to the needs of the now, yes.

Not react against the form that this moment takes. Because karma, the word in Sanskrit, means action, action and reaction. That becomes a wheel.

So it's pictured as a continuous wheel. You step out of this wheel of action, reaction, reaction. So what are you reacting against?

The form that this moment takes. I don't like it. There's something wrong with it.

Shouldn't be happening. With that little thing, everything, your entire life shifts when your relationship to the present moment shifts. Then the future, the so-called future, huh, looks after itself because what we call future is just an, is now, it comes out of now, the form.

Jesus tried to get that. He tried, he said, look, why are you concerned about what's going? Look at the flowers, how they live, how beautifully close they are.

Look at the birds. They're not worried. They're not anxious.

See how they live, free of problems, free of dilemma, not concerned about tomorrow. Learn how to live from nature, he said. Look at the birds and the flowers, see how they live.

You can live like that too. And your beauty will be even greater than the beauty of the flower, which is very great. There's a beauty in you that is even greater.

And that, all that emerges. And then all the things that you think you need, they will come to you. The moral, in the old translation of the New Testament, it says the moral will take care of the things for itself.

When you live in such a way, that comes first. It's, people get this wrong. They think, okay, the moral will take care of everything.

Not unless you live in alignment with now. Then your life unfolds. There is an intelligence that comes into your life through you.

And out of that, that also affects the external circumstances of your life. And it even affects your life situation, the dilemma and the problems. Not that a certain amount of change will ever disappear.

Things will come and things will leave you. Things will come into your life and things will dissolve. That must continue in the world of form.

But that can unfold much more harmoniously when you live in alignment with is. And so that's our practice here. Many of you already practicing, you try it out here.

It requires alertness. It requires you to be alert to see what your relationship is to the present moment, at this moment. So you need a certain degree of alertness is needed.

[Speaker 2] (1:19:44 - 1:19:47)

Lesson one continued on disc two.

[Speaker 1] (1:19:47 - 1:40:51)

And so that's our practice here. Many of you already practicing, you try it out here. It requires alertness.

It requires you to be alert to see what your relationship is to the present moment, at this moment. So you need a certain degree of alertness is needed. And so it also implies that your sense perceptions will become sharpened because very often you will find yourself looking and listening with greater intensity, greater clarity as you walk from here to there, as you sit, lie, stand.

And the amazing thing is when you no longer deny this the isness of now, the stream of mental noise that we call thinking that is totally conditioned by the past slows down. And you may encounter spaces of pure alert, aware presence. You may find yourself looking at a tree or a flower or the sky in a state of simple alert clarity.

And you are so aligned with this beautiful moment that there is no need to add something to it by labeling it mentally in any way or interpreting it in any way. Nothing is needed. Nothing needs to be added to the incredible aliveness, the incredible beauty that's already here.

And before you couldn't see it because you could only see it through very obscurely through some screen of that thinking screen. And then you might walk through nature and say, oh, there's a pretty flower. And the mind goes on.

Oh, look at that tree. That must be an old tree. I wonder how old it is.

And then onto the next. And this is so the cessation of the involuntary stream of thinking that most people are totally trapped in comes with the yes to what is. You don't need to say, okay, I have to stop my mind.

That usually doesn't work. Occasionally, people who are in extreme agony of suffering, occasionally that can stop your mind. But unfortunately, that's not your case.

So we have to make do with what we have here. And that is, you've suffered enough. You wouldn't be here if you hadn't.

You've suffered enough because you see what an unsatisfying place the world is when you are not connected with that which is beyond and deeper. But when you are connected, and the portal is now, when you are connected, the world isn't really that unsatisfying anymore because your expectations are considerably lower. Now, that sounds negative, but let me explain.

You no longer expect that some person or some situation or some achievement or some place or some possession should make you fulfilled and happy. You're no longer looking to the world to make you happy, to give you, to add to you, to finally make the sense of self complete. Now I'm full, I've got everything.

Just wait. Either you lose again, or you're so full that you become more and more unhappy again. It's too much.

I'm traveling all the time, first class. I'm eating thrice a day in the best restaurants. I've got all the men and women I want.

They all run after me because I'm so wealthy. I can't take anymore. It's all so unreal.

It's all so meaningless. So when you no longer expect the world to make you happy, the world means what I've just listed, possession, place, person, to fulfill you. Please make me happy.

And when you don't have that expectation anymore, when the world, which really comes down to the form that this moment takes, is allowed to be as it is right now, internally, it is allowed to be as it is. There you are. This is the form that this moment takes.

It is as it is, and it is allowed to be as it is. Then life becomes very satisfying because you don't expect your satisfaction from that form. Your satisfaction comes from the allowing of this form, which takes you to a deeper place, to a place of great spaciousness within.

Because they suddenly, when you allow this moment, there is space around this moment, inner space, one could say. And that is a space of peace and stillness around even the most seemingly unpleasant event. Oh, oh, and that is deeply satisfying.

And it doesn't depend on what happens or does not happen. Another word for this is surrender to life. It doesn't mean you become weak.

The opposite is you're very weak when you are not surrendered to life. When you are surrendered to life, life flows through you with a very intelligence that underlies the entire universe, moves through you and can express itself fully through you. You become strong in surrender, not as a little egoic entity, deeper, not by cutting yourself off, not better than, no, not through comparison, from a deep place within.

Ah, so there is another way to live. A shift is possible, not only possible, it has become absolutely necessary for humanity to step out of the collective dysfunction of the human mind. And that's why we are here and why this teaching, so-called teaching, which isn't a teaching, really, that comes to you from the outside, it arises from within.

If it were not arising already from within you, you wouldn't be here. It's as if you were listening to the truth being spoken from within you. That's really how it is.

And you recognize the truth. It's so obvious. When you look at the dysfunction, it's so obvious.

Denying the now, making it into an obstacle, an enemy, how absurd. And going beyond, it's so obvious that you can live differently without needing, again, not falling into the error that you need to become something that you are not now. I need to become enlightened at some future point.

I will become, I need to work towards that. One day I'm going to make it. And you're falling into the same mental trap again, which is projecting a future self that is seen to be perfect.

Again, you're lost in future, mental projection. For this shift to happen, you don't need future. This is the amazing thing.

The mind will always come back in and say, okay, you need to work on this, get good at it, better at it, or it's not enough yet. All you need is allow this moment to be, whatever form it takes. And this includes inner forms, emotions that come.

What can you do? It's there. Anger, fear, it may come.

Less when you live in alignment with now, you can see how quickly those painful emotions subside, but for a while, they're still there. And they arise. That's what it is.

I can feel this vibration here. Could be called fear, perhaps. All right, that's how it is.

Not resisting, I'm allowing. It is not personal. The more you allow, the more you realize how little personal there is in what you thought was uniquely personal.

Human emotion, that's all. The human emotion. And it ceases to be problematic.

Allow. So the miraculous thing is, you don't need to become anything. Just allow what is there.

So I've sometimes, I've say that people, some people want to become a spiritual master. That's an idea in the head. Any spiritual, so-called spiritual master who has the idea in the head that I'm a spiritual master is already lost.

Because there's a mental image of who you are. Now, I'm a so-called spiritual teacher at this moment. If I walked out of here and carried in my head the image of me, the spiritual teacher, that would become a dreadful burden.

I would be based, again, in thought. I would have to live up to some image, expectation, fear would quickly arise. What are they going to think of me tomorrow?

But not to carry an identity, not a future identity of me as a spiritual teacher, a spiritual master. What is spiritual mastery? Spiritual mastery is to live in alignment with this moment.

What do I need to become a spiritual master? Say yes to what is. That's how a spiritual master lives.

He doesn't resist, he or she doesn't resist what is. And is therefore empowered. The master doesn't demand that the form of this moment should be perfect always.

It's not in the nature of forms to be perfect always. There's an imperfection in almost any situation that you go into. And that's fine and good.

That is no longer a source of suffering when you recognize it's in the nature of form to go wrong here and there. It does nothing wrong ultimately, but to shift, to change. So the most wonderful place will have a downside to it.

Of course it will. The tropical paradise. Friends of mine went to Bali.

They hired a cabin in the most beautiful surroundings, paradise, the air like velvet, the scent of flowers. Whoa. They started cooking a meal.

And suddenly they heard strange scratching noises on the roof and on the windows and there were rats looking in. And then they learned to live with rats. They didn't realize what they had to do to keep them out.

And you come, you don't expect the forms to be continuously perfect. They are not. So here too, you are in this retreat center.

There will be certain imperfections on the level of form in your room, in your bathroom, in the dining hall. Who knows where? The most unexpected places.

Oh no. This is supposed to be my great time off. I've waited for this and now I'm here and this isn't right.

Ah, the world of form. Oh, I've forgotten it's the world of form. And then you can allow it, unless you choose to say something about it.

Can you please change this? Maybe they can, maybe they can't. But it is as it is.

So you live with the so-called imperfections of the world of form. And when you say yes, that's actually not so bad at all. You actually begin to become comfortable with that.

You recognize them again and again. Oh, here it comes again. Ah, and when something leaves you, because things tend to do, you get something and something leaves you again.

Ah, Buddhists sometimes use the word I think it's Anicca, impermanence. Oh, impermanence. Oh, okay, that's how it goes.

So that's the practice. It's so simple here. Just requires a little bit of alertness.

What's your relationship to now? Are you aligned with it? Do you bring a yes to it?

If not, you can notice that. And by noticing that you are not aligned with now, you can easily step, the very noticing is a stepping out of the non-alignment. Ah, okay.

And then you're back in now. Oh, okay. Step back.

We'll also see the inner body, of course, as many of you know, can be used as an anchor for staying present to feel the aliveness in your inner energy field. That becomes an anchor for staying rooted in now. Especially at night when involuntary thought processes come, start playing up.

Oh, oh, oh. And you just can't stop it. It's like a river.

It's like a stream. It goes, oh, oh. And it can be dreadful, dreadful.

Torture. You're not, of course, it's totally useless. You're not arriving at any conclusion.

No possible realization can come out of that. Realize all realizations come out of a moment of space, spacious stillness. Ah, that's what I have to do.

Okay. But not out of that stream. And so you can choose to put your attention, the mind doesn't like it.

The mind, which is the combined thought forms that are happening to go through your head, in your head. They want to keep your attention in there. And you say, okay, I'm going to feel my hands now.

And then you feel the aliveness that is still there, miraculously. And in your feet, there's an aliveness. And in your legs, ah.

And then you can feel the pull of your thinking. You must think about this. No, I'm in my hands.

Feel, feel, ah. Oh, legs. And suddenly, it's good.

All your attention is moved from the head into the body. And suddenly you realize you're not in hell. You're in a warm bed.

And then you realize how benign and benevolent, mostly, not always, the present moment actually is, the reality of now, compared to the hell that the human mind can create and often does create. How benevolent this moment is. And this is just one example of when you lie in bed and your head creates hell.

Thank you. I wish you a pleasant night.

[Speaker 2] (1:41:01 - 1:41:10)

This concludes lesson one. Lesson two, get into your body. Practices for inner body awareness.

[Speaker 1] (1:41:15 - 2:39:21)

If you've been to a talk or retreat before, you know that I often point out at this stage that you should check within to see if you are waiting for something to happen, waiting for the talk to start. What does that mean, waiting? It means there's a little bit of inner strain, a slight, very tiny inner stress that pulls you away from here and now.

Expressed facially, it could be like, and when you notice that, then you know something about your relationship with the present moment. You lost it. The end of a relationship.

Now, did he or she leave you or did you leave him or her? He or she doesn't leave you, you left. The waiting is so subtle and so all-pervasive as one's normal state of consciousness that most people don't even know that they are in an almost continuous state of waiting.

That's how normal it is. Once you detect it in yourself, it's a slight tension, strain, stress. Sometimes there's a little bit of irritation mixed in, a thought mixed in.

Come on, let's get on with it. We only have a couple of hours this morning, come on. But if you notice it in yourself as a mental energy field, even some emotion may go with it.

Irritation is an emotion. Thoughts go with it occasionally. The moment you notice it, something has arisen that is not part of that deeply conditioned mind pattern.

The seeing of it is not part of it. The seeing of it, and that's the seeing of any pattern in yourself, is not part of the pattern. And the seeing, the recognizing of it requires you to be present, aware at this moment, awake.

So when you see a pattern in yourself, mental, emotional, conditioned, of course. Now the waiting is a collective pattern. Almost everybody has that.

There may be other patterns in you that you detect that are to do with your personal life. It doesn't matter what it is, could be the simplest thing. When you see a man with a beard and dark hair, you feel anxious and then you realize that maybe he looks like your father and you didn't have a good relationship with him.

Just it. Any pattern, collective or personal, when you detect it, you can, there's something more at that moment than that which you see. There is the seeing of it.

Before, the pattern absorbed your consciousness completely. You wear it. You become it.

You are the waiting, anxious, somewhat irritated person. There's no space around the irritation, around the stress of that moment. There's no space around it.

You are in it. And then suddenly you see it. And one could say it is a stepping back, perhaps the deeper meaning of retreat.

Because you're retreating not only from the world that you usually move in, you have to retreat also from the world in your head. You step back. And something arises that is not conditioned.

And that is pure, simple, pure, miraculous, consciousness, awareness, presence, whatever you want to call it. And that is the part in you that is not conditioned. Everything else is conditioned.

The seeing, that is an energy field. I'm using seeing metaphorically. That's not necessarily with your eyes.

The noticing, the seeing, you may feel it without, but there is the presence in which it is felt, which means suddenly there's space around that. And so it could be anything that you notice in yourself. It could be compulsive behavior, this or that, compulsive reaction.

Almost everything is compulsive. Well, everything is compulsive when you are not there as the witnessing presence. Your entire movement of thought is compulsive.

You can't stop, or you think you can't stop. And the mind loves to tell you that you cannot stop and make a problem out of that, which leads to further thinking. Why can't I stop my mind?

I mean, what's wrong with me? I've been doing meditation for years. I've been coming to, and I still can't do it.

There's no point in going on, is there? And then you believe in every thought. There's no point in going on.

I might as well chuck it all in. And then suddenly you step back and you watch those thoughts. So this is the arising of something new in you, new in the sense that you hadn't noticed that dimension in yourself before.

It was there all along, waiting underneath all the conditioned mind movements, but you didn't know it was there. And suddenly it arises, it kind of, at this time in the evolution of the planet and of humanity, that is pushing through from underneath all the conditioned collective stuff that people carry and identify with as themselves. Something else is pushing forward from deeper, a deeper dimension within you.

It's almost like the egg shell needing to break. Something wants to come out of there. And if the, so there comes a time when the shell, and which is really the shell of that egoic sense of self that consists of identification with thought needs to break.

There is an evolutionary impulse in the universe towards consciousness. And that has been playing itself out on the planet for millions of years. Consciousness expressing itself in ever changing forms.

Shh. And through humans, consciousness now wants to come to a flowering that hasn't happened before, never on a large scale, only to a few isolated individuals. And what humans did to them, well, either they ignored them completely, or they killed them, or they made them into gods to be worshiped.

And those were only the few individuals in whom this came through almost prematurely, but they were necessary precursors of what was to come, a deeper change. Now, I'm not telling you, of course, to wait for some change to happen on the planet. You know, there are many, many, many times in the history, groups of people have waited for the end or some drastic change.

We are not waiting. I'm just pointing out that this gathering here is already part of this transformation, this flowering of consciousness. And anybody who in a so-called future moment, which doesn't exist, listens to this, it'll be in the now.

Nobody could ever listen to this anywhere else, except in the now, is also part of that transformation of consciousness. Because as you listen, something new arises. There is more here than the words.

There is that which the words point to, which is here as an alive presence in you, an inner arising. There's more here than the words. If there were only the words, it wouldn't be that much.

So consciousness then wants to flower through the human form. Whether it fully will do that on a large scale, we don't know yet. Although it is happening here, there's also the dysfunction of the old form, which is no longer working, similar to a caterpillar that comes to the end of its lifespan as a caterpillar.

And the closer it comes to the end of its lifespan as a caterpillar, the more difficult it gets to continue to, suddenly the crawling doesn't work anymore. It just doesn't, it doesn't, things don't work anymore. The caterpillar existence becomes dysfunctional.

It was fine before because something new is destined to emerge out of this thing that is bound by gravity, can't even lift itself up one inch. And now the evolutionary transformation, when it happens, is not a progressive thing of getting better and better at doing something in a certain way, but a complete leap to another dimension. So in the case of the caterpillar, it doesn't mean that he gets better at crawling faster and faster.

No, that is left behind completely and something emerges that is a, one could almost, it's a different being. Suddenly something comes out of it and it has the most beautiful wings and it flies off, has almost no weight at all. It's not, it has completely transcended the gravity of the planet.

And in the case of humans, what does that mean? Humans have been immersed in thinking for thousands and thousands and hundreds of thousands of years. The arising of thought was a necessary stage in the evolution.

Of course it was, it had wonderful, it's wonderful side too, to be able to think and speak, which is connected with thinking, words, form words and concepts. And yet gradually humans lost through that, became totally entangled in it and they lost their connectedness with something deeper than thought. They perhaps once had it, a deep connection with life, not life of form, the formless one life that is the essence of who you are, the one formless life.

But that connection humans had in the way that everything natural still has that, but they didn't even know it. It was so natural, they couldn't imagine anything else. They had that deep connectedness in which there's no fear of death because there's a deep knowing that there is no death, only the form dissolving.

The leaf, all the millions of billions of leaves that we see around us now are all dying. And there's such beauty in their deaths even. And they are not afraid of death.

They just die beautifully. So in humans, thought gradually captured their consciousness so that their whole sense of self became entangled in thought. And then gradually thought itself became more dysfunctional.

It created a dysfunctional world. So from the beginning of recorded history, if you read history and are alert, if you had just come here from another planet and you are reading human history for the first time, you can see that a large part of the human suffering that is history is inflicted on humans by other humans. All the wars and murder and cruelties, continuous warfare, except brief interludes because they got exhausted for a while.

And then the most dysfunctional century, the 20th, 100 million dead, killed by other humans. And this is a continuation, the 21st century. So on that level, the old continues.

The caterpillar is still trying to have its way and it's getting more and more difficult. Similarly, we could compare it to the flowering of plants, this incredible beauty that has arisen on the planet through flowers, consciousness expressing itself through this ethereal form of flowers that humans have always recognized as very special. And it's all flowers have had a significance where perhaps the first thing in humanity that was not utilitarian, that you couldn't really eat or do anything with it.

And yet they valued that beyond anything that they could do with it. Because deep down in a very, very deep, distantly they recognized, they recognized perhaps beauty there for the first time when the first human discovered beauty. But flowers came much later than plants.

There were 100 million or 200 million years of plants before the first flower ever opened. I'm told that was about 230 million years ago the first flower opened on the planet. But many millions of years before that, plants already covered the planet.

Now the plants, certain plants flowered, others chose not to flower. And perhaps it will be the same with humanity. Perhaps only part of humanity will go through this inner shift and the other part will say, no, we're okay as we are.

But it only requires part of humanity to go through this flowering for the entire energy field of the planet to be transformed. So what humans then are not doing is to continue perfecting the old way. The caterpillar trying to crawl faster and faster.

If we use this metaphor for humans, then that would mean humans develop the thinking mind more and more. This is what, of course, they've been trying to do. Let's analyze this more and more analysis, more and more getting facts and thinking.

Okay, how can we solve the problems that we've got seem to have a proliferation of problems on the planet? They seem to get more and more, I don't know. And then, okay, let's get together and think and see how we can solve this and analyze this problem, cut it into bits and pieces.

Well, this is what they do at universities. They cut the subject matters into tinier and tinier pieces. A hundred or 200 years ago, it was more satisfying still to be engaged in intellectual endeavors because you had a wide field and everybody at university had a huge amount of knowledge.

Even the scientists had great knowledge of, they could all, they knew Latin and Greek and had knowledge of classical culture and everything. And nowadays, they have knowledge of a tiny segment of their speciality. They can't afford to study anything else.

So it's not all that interesting anymore. You could study the, you can write a PhD on the leaves of the tree, the leaf of the oak tree. You can do a whole, it's this wonderful phenomenon, of course, the leaf, but to see it in isolation.

So everything, the mind cuts it up and it doesn't solve anything. Any solution that it comes up with creates more problems. Okay, now we'll invent a medicine to combat the side effects of this medicine.

And then another one to combat the side effect. So the humanity, we've really come to the end of the road as far as one particular line of growth or development is concerned. And now the shift needs to happen and is happening to something entirely different, which means thinking will become no longer primary, but secondary.

You can still think beautifully, but you're no longer trapped in thought. Something arises that is deeper than thought, and that is the butterfly. It's like something suddenly emerging that's so different from what was there before.

And some of you have already experienced that in yourself, that shift from there was once this anxious, depressed, or whatever, angry, stressful little me. Something else has come and there's been an opening and a spaciousness that wasn't there before or was there, but had been obscured continuously. That is the new.

And it's from there that you see the old in you, which of course still has its momentum. It has its momentum both on the external level, when you see the news and read the newspapers, then you can see how strong the momentum of the dysfunctional consciousness in humanity still is. And you can see it in yourself occasionally, that the old reactivity, the old reactions, or the waiting for the next thing, the denial of what is, in various ways of running away from the present moment, all these old movements also still periodically come as wave movements.

And oh, and sometimes even the seeing is lost. Even in those in whom the new is already arising, sometimes they get lost totally in the old, deeply conditioned, collective, personal mind movement. And wake up a few hours later, a few days later, you might even be lost a few weeks.

I've heard of people who got lost for a whole year, and then they couldn't stand the suffering anymore. And finally, through the suffering, they got woken up again. Oh, I tell you, it's like being in a nightmare when it gets so bad that you can't stand it anymore.

Suddenly you go, and you realize that you're in a bed, a warm bed. And this is a very significant term, waking up. And of course, it has been used for thousands of years in spiritual teachings, awaken.

Because everybody knows what awakens means on one level, because everybody wakes up every morning out of sleep. And you know what that is. So there's dream, sleep, and dream, and then they go.

So it's used as a kind of metaphor to describe something that is similar to waking up from sleep. But of course, it's not that, because in spiritual terms, ordinary human consciousness is a kind of sleep also. To be identified completely with one's conditioned thinking and emotion, that movement, to be totally identified with that is a kind of dream, conditioned.

And so most humans are still in it, but many, many more than ever before are now waking up out of that. But to see in yourself, to verify it in yourself, that it is a kind of dream to be in that, because, and it creates a certain reality that corresponds to your conditioning. You interpret through the veil of this dream, through the old interpretations and reactions, you interpret the events and people and situations around you.

So everything, it gets incorporated into the dream world. So you see nothing then as it is, because you impose your dream on it. Human beings that come into your life, situations that you are in, you don't see it as it is.

You only see your story about it. And so, and then a moment comes when you wake up and you see the possibility of relating, of being and relating without the otherwise compulsive mental interpretations that you have. Sometimes when we speak of allowing this moment to be as it is, which is the essential spiritual practice, people think what we are talking about is allowing their interpretation of this moment.

They cannot distinguish between this moment and their, the way in which they interpret this moment, how they personalize it. So you could be sitting on a park bench and you may have heard this teaching that says, allow this moment to be as it is. And then you think, okay, I'm a former CEO of that company who lost his position due to evil people around him.

And then soon later was lost, left by his wife. His children don't like him. He's got, so this man is saying, okay, this moment, I need to, what I need to accept is that my life is in ruins.

It's come to nothing. Here I sit penniless on this bench, 30 years of hard work, nothing to show for it. It's all gone.

This is, so what I need to accept now is that my life is a complete mess and totally in ruins. That's a story. So the man is confusing a story with this moment and he is imposing a story on this moment.

That's one story. There are many other possible stories. The reality is always much more simple than the story.

The story is this bench, this energy field sitting here, sensing the aliveness in the inner body, the trees, the birds, the clouds, the air, the sound of the leaves in the wind, the aliveness of it all, vibrant, without needing to tell yourself anything. You sense that, you see it. This moment is the simplicity of sitting here on the park bench and watching the aliveness all around.

What do you need to interpret? You accept this moment as it is and then you put your hand in your pocket and you pull out $2. That's what I have here, $2.

All right. You accept that, what else can you do? That's what is.

So the whole, the story of ruined and all come to nothing and I can't, we're never going to make it anymore. All that mind movement is not really part, is not part of the simplicity of now. So don't confuse when we speak of accept what is, don't confuse a story with the simplicity of what is.

What is, is just this here. Sense perceptions, feeling the inner body and most importantly, something that's usually ignored, to be aware of, it's very hard to use words here, to be aware and as I speak, there's the possibility that this is now seen, experienced by you here. As you sit here, what is the reality of this moment?

You have, you let go of the stories in your head about who you are or what your life is. That's your life situation, not your life, that's past. So what's, and it's all a story, it's the story of me in the head that you tell yourself.

I'm not talking, if it's memories are fine, but to identify with memories, then you personalize, it becomes a me, your memories become a self. What's the reality of this moment? Here, sitting here, there are sense perceptions, auditory, the humming sound and the voice, visual sense perceptions of the room, person sitting up here, other people in the room, the ceiling, the lights, sunlight coming in, flowers up here and you can feel perhaps your inner body also, the aliveness that is there in your inner energy field.

And underlying all that, even deeper, than anything that you experience or notice at this moment is the alert attention, the field of alert attention in which this seeing, this hearing, this sensing is happening. One could also call it a field of stillness. There's a field.

An alert stillness in which your sense perceptions happen. That alert stillness is always there. Otherwise, there would be nothing.

For anything to be, there needs to be consciousness in which the experience or the thought or the perception happens. So that alert underlying field is consciousness itself. And it is a revolutionary thing for a human to become aware of that, but it is also very, very subtle.

It is not something that you can grasp. The mind will try to make it into some new object and the danger, of course, is there when we talk about it. We make it into an object of consciousness because we put it into words.

We make a thought out of it, out of something that is far beyond thought. So the mind thinks there's something here to grasp and hang onto or to achieve or to hold, but there isn't. It is all pervasive, the only real power in the universe, and at the same time, it is so subtle that most humans miss it entirely.

They don't know that dimension. They only know that which arises in consciousness. They know it, but they identify with it.

They react to it. What arises in your field of consciousness are sense perceptions, experiences, thoughts, and emotions. Sense perceptions, experiences, things happen, situations, which is also really sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions.

And so they are identified with the objects that arise in consciousness, completely identified, never knowing that deeper level, that is the very condition for the arising of anything comes out of that. And one could describe that as stillness. The word limits it somewhat, but it's a pointer.

So one could say there is in you the dimension of stillness, has never not been there, is not something that you need to acquire or achieve that you could achieve in the future, in time. If you're looking to the future to achieve that dimension, enlightenment, whatever you want to call it, if you look to the future to achieve that dimension, that very looking to the future prevents you from seeing that it's already the very essence of your being now. So that's, so many humans are looking to the future to look for fulfillment and or enlightenment or liberation in whatever way through a million dollars or through spiritual enlightenment, that they look to the future for that.

And the moment you move away and look to the future for it, as if it were something that you could get from someone or through some experience, you've gone away from it. Mentally, you've gone into the old conditioned mind movement, which is looking to the next thing. This is why I spoke yesterday of the vertical dimension that we are going into here.

So the dimension of stillness, let's for a moment use that pointer and let's never get attached too much to one single pointer because then you make it into some kind of belief. And the concept satisfies you for a moment. And then you could even say, I believe in stillness.

You don't believe in stillness? You're wrong. And then somebody else says, no, no, it's presence.

It's not stillness. There is in you that already the stillness underneath all the mental noise and the emotional fluctuations. There is that realm of the unconditioned pure awareness, pure consciousness.

And that is on the one hand, you could call it, it is the non-personal dimension of you. It is where you transcend the personal sense of self. And then you might say, ah, no, I don't want to lose myself.

Ha, but what you hadn't realized is you think that yourself is the story of yourself, but that is no more than thoughts. If you look very deeply and closely into what you mean when you say, I don't want to lose myself, I can feel there's something precious here that I do not want to lose. And you think that sense of something precious that I am, I cannot imagine that I'm going to die.

The world, me dead, and the world without me can't be. So there's something one feels there's something precious and people, the fear of death comes because people believe this is going to be lost. That sense of precious, if you look closely at what that really is, you see that it is something that has become mixed up with a story that you tell yourself about who you are, about the name, the psychological form of me, all the things associated with that, the story of me, the beliefs.

And something has become mixed up with that. And that is the sense of I, a deeper sense of beingness that got mixed up with a story. And when you touch, even touch the realm of stillness in yourself, that is the deepest fulfillment that could be.

And you realize who you truly are is that, that is the essence of your sense of I, I, I am. It has nothing to do with a story. It just got confused with a story.

Sometimes people discover that whose story is destroyed by life. Life does something to you that you cannot, the story becomes totally unbearable. It's everything collapses around you.

So you cannot uphold the story anymore of me as somebody who has done this, or has done that, or has achieved that. It's all left you. Maybe the body has become ill, is collapsing.

Things around you are collapsing. There's nothing left that you can claim anything about, make any claim about possession. This or that, it's all gone.

I don't know who I am anymore. Some people experience that realization in prison when they are stripped of everything. Everything has left them.

The story has collapsed. I don't understand anything. Some people experience it when there's an unusual, a sudden great disaster in their life.

Suddenly all their explanations don't work anymore. The way they had explained, they had all figured it all out how the universe works, and my place in the universe, and what the importance of my life, my work, what I've achieved and done. And suddenly, the whole thing, your whole career suddenly crumbles.

Maybe something crumbles around you, and with it, that. And in the last moments of this physical form, suddenly all that leaves you. Your story collapses at the same time as the world around you collapses.

You might be on a sinking ship or building collapsing. And at that moment, there is a corresponding inner collapse of the mental edifice of the story of me. And what is left when that collapses is that was always there.

You touch the stillness, and you touch the deepest sense of being of I am. That has nothing to do with your physical form or your psychological form of me. Nothing to do with form.

And there's a moment of peace and stillness. And many people who have touched death and survived miraculously, many tell the story of suddenly encountering a realm of great serenity and peace. All fear leaves them.

Ah, and then they come back, and many of them have never feared death again, because they have already faced death. And so death is when the structures crumble, not only around you, but the inner structures. One way is through disaster, and another way is through, the more gentle way is through sitting here.

And you've chosen that one. Other people choose the disaster, and that works very well too. And even if there was only a moment before death comes and that is realized, that is the flowering.

Your life has flowered. Consciousness has flowered through this form and realized itself through this form. For the first time, well, not the very first, but on this planet, it's still very rare phenomenon for this to happen.

Consciousness, one could say, no, this is only a little, almost a parable, that consciousness itself is dreaming the dream of form and enjoying the dream. The entire universe is, look at the planet of the billions of life forms. Any form that, whatever you could imagine, exists or has existed at some point as a life form.

Look at the oceans, how many incredible life forms live in the oceans alone. Every form that, and the wildest imagination could come up with, it'll be somewhere in the ocean. The most, wow, this comes out of somebody's dream.

Maybe they're on acid. So am I saying that the universe is on acid? Well, something like that.

Because there is obviously some wild creation going on. Some incredible dream of most gigantic proportions. And that's only in one ocean, on one planet.

And then on land, millions of insects, different forms of different plants. And then on the level that you cannot see, the microorganisms, oh, it's just unbelievable. And that's only one tiny planet of trillions, trillions, the vastness of the universe.

And everywhere there is the game of form. What a gigantic dream. But built into that dream, because what is in each human is a microcosmic version of the entire universe.

So the awakening of humans is also the awakening of the universe, because you cannot separate the human from the entire universe. They need each other. They are totally one.

There would not even be a universe without the perceiving consciousness. The one consciousness that comes through humans creates the universe as perceived by humans. Other forms perceive a different universe.

It's all the same, and yet it's different. The one consciousness dreaming innumerable dreams. Impossible to understand.

But what we see when we look at humans, they are immersed in a kind of dream also, when you're totally in, totally identified with your reactions, and you play out the drama of your life in relationships, at work, and you go, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh. It's, and you get, and you get elated. Oh, it's great, I made it, oh, it's.

And a few months later, you go down, you lost it again. Oh, it's, it's an, it's a stage. All the world's a stage.

Shakespeare saw that, and all men and women are merely players. And this is the stuff that dreams are made on. So humans can wake up out of their dreamlike existence that they are otherwise immersed in, where there is no sense of who they are apart from the script that they act out, the inner script.

Complete identification. And then there's the possibility of awakening, becoming aware of that which underlies the script, without which there would be no script, there would be nothing. There's a vast realm of still aware presence from where you can see the dream world without being immersed in it.

The body is still in it, but there is a seeing. You can see your own drama. You can see yourself playing out your own script.

And gradually there's a, the awakening is, ah, something arises that is not part of the play of form, but that can see the play of form. And if that can arise in you, it means it is a universal movement. So through you, the universe not only wants to experience this gigantic dream, there's something else built into the dream.

And that is the need of the universe to awaken out of the dream. It loves that even more than the dream. And that is, so what we cannot even begin to conceive of the magnitude of what looks only like some people in a room sitting, listening, speaking, that this is part of a much larger movement that's connected to even the most distant galaxy is part of something that is happening in the universe.

It is an event created by the one life that is the universe. So you think on a personal level, it's good to sit here because your life becomes lighter, free. So you feel a relief on a personal level, it's suffering, less and less suffering, clarity arising, stillness arising, a sense of connectedness, of beingness, a deeper sense of I, I.

But that is all a huge event of cosmic proportions. So the awakening is the awakening of the totality through this form. That is the purpose of your life to be that.

So you align yourself with the larger purpose. The secondary purpose is whatever you do in your life and you can bring the opening into anything that you do, almost anything, if you can't, you leave it. Some things have to be left and other things are fine.

It happens wherever you are. So this is what we temporarily call stillness in you, becoming aware that that dimension is already there. Coming to the end of identification with thinking and realizing that you are more fully yourself when you do not think, without trying not to think.

There are many here who already experienced the state of being free of thinking without even knowing it. You may be walking and looking at a tree and seeing the magnificence of that spectacle of the dying leaves and all their beauty. And you're perceiving that in and through stillness.

And perhaps a minute later you might say something to a person next to you and say, isn't that wonderful? And you may not realize that for a minute or 10 seconds or five seconds, you have looked at that and there was a deep sense of response of oneness or even with it, but no interpretation. And then you notice something strange.

Whenever you look at something for the first time, if you're very alert, you will notice that. When you glance at something for the first time, whatever it is, your head shifts, your vision, your field of vision shifts, it goes, and it is here, there's a lot of nature around here. It may be a tree, a flower, the sky, or it may be something manmade, whatever it is.

But nature...

[Speaker 2] (2:39:23 - 2:39:26)

Lesson two continued on disc three.

[Speaker 1] (2:39:26 - 3:23:21)

Here, there's a lot of nature around here. It may be a tree, a flower, the sky, or it may be something manmade, whatever it is. But nature particularly is helpful in this practice at first.

You notice the first moment of looking at something, there's always a space of no thought. It may be one second. It may be two seconds.

Now, most human beings are not aware of that. And with some human beings, the space of no thought is so brief that they can't capture it because immediately thought comes in after half a second. But there was half a second.

There's always a space before thought can come in, there is a looking, a seeing. And with you, that space will now become larger. And in many of you, it is already quite spacious.

In other words, the spaciousness around your sense perceptions. So notice that it is already there, but as you become aware of it, the spaciousness grows around your sense perceptions. So, and now comes, this is a magnificent thing.

It's a great mystery that in past ages, people had to spend 25 years in a monastery to be told this. The master would say, okay, you work with me for 20 years and then ask me again that question. But now things are speeding up.

We haven't got that much time in a good sense on the planet. But we are running out of time and that's wonderful. It's shrinking.

So when you see something, there's a sense perception. Can you be aware both of what arises in your sense perception, what you're looking at, or it may be listening? And can you be aware of the awareness, which is the stillness, in which that sense perception happens?

And that stillness, that awareness is, one could say, the space around it. So there is a spacious field and there's a sense perception. And you're not interpreting what you see for a while.

There's no need. There's a deep knowing, but there's no interpretation. There's not conceptual knowing.

Not that you've lost your ability to have concepts, but when you need them, they'll be there. Words, concepts, thoughts. But you are no longer compulsively trapped in concepts.

You are exiting, exiting a conceptualized reality. Oh, that is the awakening. You are stepping out of inhabiting a totally conceptualized universe, which is mental conditioning.

Everything is called something, interpreted, labeled, named. And so a great freedom arises of perceiving through the unconditioned consciousness. And this is, you are here to experience that and to see that it is already, that movement is already happening in you.

That freeing yourself from compulsive conceptualization is already happening. And it is happening when you look at a tree or a flower or another human being, and it enters your field of vision. And in that moment, there's pure perception.

And no labeling it in any way. Just a field of stillness. And it may be that it's only there for a few seconds, but see if you can capture that space.

And that's not perhaps a very good way of saying it because you cannot capture stillness. See if you can be attentive and see if you can notice that. And that noticing is vital because as you notice the stillness in which your perception happens, the space or the stillness expands.

So as you perceive things, you are now inhabiting two dimensions. One is the dimension of form, which is all around you, continuously fluctuating. And they may be outer forms or they may be inner forms as emotions, thoughts.

And the other dimension is the dimension of the formless, consciousness, pure consciousness, pure awareness. The other is the dimension of the object consciousness, things. So you inhabit the dimension of the manifested without being lost in it because you also dwell in the unmanifested.

You dwell in the realm of stillness. And even if at first the spaces of stillness don't last for very long, it's good enough. Three seconds of looking at a flower with no thought is good enough.

And as you become aware of, there's not only the flower, I'm naming it now, but the awareness is not the naming. You become aware of the flower and you become aware of the field of awareness or the stillness. And this looks like a dualistic thing, but it isn't.

It only becomes dualistic when we speak about it. When I speak, when you speak about becoming aware of awareness, it looks like two things, aware of awareness, but that's only because we are using language, which has a subject and an object in a sentence. What is really happening is self-awareness.

You're becoming aware. Awareness is becoming aware of itself. So that is the dimension.

And you can, it's hard to talk about that. And in a way, the author of the Tao Te Ching is right when he says at the beginning of this book of wisdom, the Tao Te Ching, if you can speak about it, that's not it. So it's not the words have to be seen as for what they are, just pointers.

So this is a beautiful practice here. Walk around wherever you are, sit, stand, lie, walk. Be aware of yourself as the aware presence, as the stillness in which everything is seen and heard.

And so you become like a little child. It's not for nothing that Jesus said, you must become as little children if you want to enter the kingdom of heaven. Now, what he is pointing to, and he's not saying exactly that, it's always just an approximation.

It does not mean you return to that state because there is only that quality that a little child has in whom the conceptual reality has not yet developed. And when that little child in whom the accumulation of words and concepts in the mind has not happened yet, that little child looks at the universe and you sometimes can see it when you see a one-year-old, one and a half, before language takes possession of their minds, the way they look is thoughtless awareness. And then they smile at you, there's the pure joy of being.

And you can see that that which shines through is magnificent and then gradually the veil descends because the child is programmed to ask, the mind of the child is programmed to ask, daddy, what's that? And then daddy says, that's a tree. And then the mind says, tree, tree, that's tree.

Next time the child sees a tree, that open, complete openness is no longer quite as open because then the child looks at the tree and then the mind says, oh, tree. And two years, three years later, the mind is already possessed with concepts. So when Jesus says that, it's pointing, as little children, you walk around in that state of openness, of non-labeling, the state of original innocence, which replaces the dysfunction, the collective dysfunction of the human mind that we could call original sin.

If we go beyond the habitual interpretations of sin, there's no doubt that there's a dysfunction in humanity. Look at human history. That's why they talk of original sin.

It means, sin means missing the target. If you, the original Greek word translated means missing the target. That's what sin means in the original.

And in other words, you miss the point of your whole existence. And if you miss the point of your whole existence, you suffer, and that eventually works too. It wakes you up eventually.

So it seems insignificant at first to the human mind to say you can look at something and notice whenever you first look at something that there's a moment of spacious presence before the mind comes in and calls it something. And if that can be sustained, not through effort, not through wanting, not through some kind of act of willpower, but if

that can be sustained simply by noticing that space of aware presence when it arises, and then even as a human being comes into your field of vision, walks in through the door, appears in front of you, you look, and there's a moment of non-labeling. Let's say somebody you have never met before comes and you look and there's not a single thought in your head for perhaps five seconds.

But if you notice that, that in the first moment there's just, there's a field of awareness in which the perception happens before the labeling comes in, you may find that it expands. And you could still be in the state of just looking a minute later. And you can even talk.

And every time a sentence has come to an end, you re-enter the state of spacious awareness. A word has been uttered and you're back in space. And then your words have a different quality too, because now they come out of that dimension.

They have an aliveness. They will touch the other human being. What you say has the essence of that freshness of being.

Not the old stuff that otherwise is your mind. You're telling them, a minute later after meeting a person, you tell them the old story of me. So what do you do for a living?

Well, blah, blah, blah, blah. You can talk about that also and then step back, knowing that's not who you are. So who are you?

You are the stillness. That's where your true sense of I am comes from. Of beingness.

So we are, this is the opportunity as you sit here to be in that state. You don't really need to think as you sit here. I certainly don't think as I speak.

The words are heard as they come out of the mouth. I hear them as you do. So there's nobody teaching anybody.

Do I know more than you? No, of course not. Probably less than most of you.

What I know is the realm of stillness. And that's not anybody's personal achievement because everybody has that as their essence. So what I know is your essence.

That's why it's nice to sit with me because otherwise, why would anybody come? What you enjoy most is to be with yourself, but in the true sense, not the mind made self, the deepest self. Now ultimately, you don't have to go anywhere.

This is just a temporary stage in the evolution of humanity where you have to travel somewhere to be with yourself. Ha ha ha. Ha ha ha.

Ha ha ha. Ha ha ha. Now some of you have traveled to India and perhaps you already know you don't have to go to India.

And so Omega is a little closer. And the next stage is you don't have to go to Omega. Sorry.

Oh. Ha ha ha. You may go for the enjoyment.

I sometimes enjoy listening to spiritual teachers who may be using different words and yet the truth is there. And it's a wonderful, deep joy in hearing it in a slightly different form. When you meet a human being and don't label them, or if that is not yet possible, at least not for more than a few seconds, and then compulsive labels come into your mind, what you can do, however, is to recognize the labels that come into your mind as just that, without believing in them completely.

Because the mind is the compulsion to interpret everybody and everything. It does that to other human beings. You form judgments.

You meet them and you look at them. And the more you're identified with your mind, the quicker you are in your judgments of the other human being. You know them exactly.

On one, it might even be true occasionally. You may have seen something that's actually there, but what you have seen and thought that this person is, is some conditioning in the other person, not who that person is. Or you have incompletely imposed your own condition, perception on that person.

But you can recognize any thought you have about a human being as just a thought and a perspective, and one of many possible thoughts, and not the ultimate truth. So you recognize the relativity of your thinking, the relativity of your thinking. There's one spiritual teaching that works entirely with that.

It's a particular, Byron Katie has this teaching that whatever thought comes into your head about another person, about yourself, or about your situation, you look at the thought and you ask yourself, can I really know that this is so? Can I really know that this is true? And if you really look at the thought and you say, I can't really know that this is true, this thought that I have about this person or this situation.

So it's a stepping, a continuous letting go of identification with thought. And then gradually the thought, the compulsive thoughts arise less and less. And as the compulsive thoughts arise less and less, more space is there.

That's why we are here, for the arising of space, stillness. And in many of you, it's already happening as you sit there. But there are some, I can see or sense a few, not many, fields of restless energy here and there.

Or other skull. You may want to try feeling your hands as you sit here because you are restless, because your entire attention is still lodged in the head, in the mind. And the mind must feel either restless or anxious or totally bored sitting here.

So if you cannot get out of that, the body really is the, if you can simply begin by feeling the inner energy field in your hands and that there is, yes, there is an aliveness there. You can feel that there is a hand, not externally, but internally. If you closed your eyes and somebody asked you, is your left hand still there?

For a moment, you would have to internally, so to speak, look for it. And then you would say, you would feel something. You say, yeah, and then the question is, how do you know that it's still there?

Because it's not touching anything, you're not moving it. And then, of course, you will know, because I can feel it. I can feel its energy.

That's how I know that the left hand is still there. Not a memory that it was there when I last looked. And then your answer comes from the memory.

Yeah, it's still there, I saw it a minute ago. And again, these things to the mind seem insignificant, but they are of tremendous significance to begin to inhabit the body, which takes you out of inhabiting the mind exclusively. If you can feel your left hand or your right hand, you can also feel other parts of the body.

You have to just start somewhere that becomes the entry point into the body. I'm speaking particularly to those, to all of you, but to those who are either bored out of their minds. Well, if you were bored out of your mind, you would be okay.

But those who are still bored in their minds or are feeling restless and are thereby missing the essence of this gathering. Get into your body, get in there. Feel the legs, the feet, the hands, the arms.

So if you can feel one hand, you can feel the other hand simultaneously. You feel them both at the same time. The feeling of hand, feet.

You can feel both feet also as you feel your hands. Subtle at first. Some people feel almost like a tingling sensation.

Some people feel a warmth. And then can you feel the trunk of your body, the belly? Sometimes to feel the belly.

Belly is very helpful to be in there. Taking one deep breath or two or three deep breaths and following the breath with your attention and feel the belly or the abdomen. It's the more polite word.

Feel the abdomen rising as you breathe in, into the belly. And for a moment, there's a cessation. The belly is full and then breathe out.

So breathing a few times into the deep, take the belly breaths, which means you have to follow. It's not just a practice, an external practice. The essence here is that you follow the breath with your attention and then you move into the belly.

So the attention leaves the head and moves into the body. So you breathe into the belly. And there you could say you're in, this is the center of the body.

Around here, solar plexus also, but belly is a beautiful center. And once you've breathed in a few times into the belly, you can actually feel the energy field of the belly here. And you rest there.

And from there radiates out energy into the rest of the body. Hara, the center, as the Japanese call it. So here, and you may notice then when you look at not only the images of the Chinese fat Buddha with a huge belly, who laughs all the time because he has no problems left.

Toothless old man with a huge belly. Whatever you say to him, come with your problems, he will laugh at you. But you may also notice that the Indian Buddhas and other Southeast Asian Buddhas, most of them have a very slight protrusion in the belly region.

So there's the belly, there's a little bit of just slight because they rest here. Their center of gravity is not in the head as it is with modern humans, Western especially, but the whole world has become Western. So the center of gravity is not in the head.

The center of gravity is in the center of your physically perceived body, but it goes beyond body. So you rest there. And so to sense that field of aliveness is beautiful.

It takes you out of the head. Your attention moves down here. You unite with the all-pervasive intelligence that is beyond the mind that inhabits your body that is only an expression of the one intelligence.

It's the intelligence that lives in your body as the life energy that regulates thousands of complicated functions, complicated from the point of view of the human mind that regulates, coordinates thousands of functions in the body simultaneously. Everything is just right. If one thing slightly maladjusted, the body would die immediately.

You would collapse. Temperature, heart rate, lungs circulation, innumerable things that you could spend the next 5,000 years analyzing how the human body works, and you still wouldn't get to the end of it. And that's only the outer body.

So there's an intelligence at work that is vast. So if you can feel your body, that is an entry point into that vastness. And the deeper you go, if you do it for yourself, you can do it with your eyes closed at first so that you become familiar with inhabiting the body and realize as you go deeper that it's not really about the body.

It's about sensing that vast spaciousness that is here, vast spaciousness. So you enter the spaciousness through the body. And then everything comes to life.

Once your body comes to life, and then you look around and open your eyes without losing the inner sense of body, then you feel everything is more alive suddenly. It participates in that because you are not deadening it anymore with mental abstractions, concepts, labels. It has always been alive.

Couldn't see it anymore, couldn't feel it anymore, sense it anymore. So if I recommend that each one of you spend some time going into nature and being perhaps with, choose something like a tree or a flower or a patch of ground or a landscape, maybe the lake, the little lake we have here, whatever, or a rock with moss growing on the rock. There are some trails here, beautiful moss growing over ancient rocks.

And just be there, be with it. And as you look, feel the energy field of the inner body at the same time. That makes it much easier to look without mental interference, to have a space of stillness as you look.

So you're present within and without. And you look from there. Ah, the inner body becomes a root, that which roots you in the present moment, anchors you in the present moment and takes you out of mind.

And if then mind starts working again, anything, if you're doing anything creative in your life, becomes still first. Before the act of creation, there needs to be stillness. Nothing creative can come out of the accumulations of the mind.

The mind can be an instrument to give something form, but the inspiration, the creative impulse comes from a deeper level. It comes from the stillness, the presence. So go into the body and feel that.

You don't need to think anymore there. And then you look, and then at some point a thought comes or a creative movement comes. It may be dance, whatever.

It may be a word that you speak, words that come out of your mouth, words that come out of your ears, but they come out of the stillness. So getting in touch with that is simple and beautiful way of entering the realm of no thought. And then thought can operate beautifully and is not going to create problems as it usually does.

Because most of your life problems are created by thought. Life only has challenges. The only place where a challenge can come is in the now.

Apart from a challenge that comes in the now, there is no problem except in the head. The power to face challenges is always there in the now. But you cannot face problems because they have no reality.

Always use as the criterion to tell you whether your problems are real, ask what's the problem at this moment? What can I do about it now? Nothing.

I'm lying in bed, it's four in the morning. Nothing. Then go into the body.

Okay. Ah, it feels good to be alive. And I thought I had problems.

At nine o'clock in the morning, when you enter the office, you open the door and there sits this man who you were thinking about all night, who is creating problems for you. And his mouth opens, words come out of his mouth. And you bring an alert, aware presence to it.

And you look and listen. And then words come out of your mouth. They won't be reactive anymore.

There will be a response, not an old reaction. Then the words will be true. They will be just right for that moment.

And they're not rehearsed. Or no words come. You may look at him and walk out.

Nobody can predict. Right action. Buddhism sometimes talks of right action, right speech, right this, right that.

I've forgotten the list, I can't remember things. But those things, they come out of right presence. You have to be present.

You cannot, otherwise you cannot manufacture or try to bring about right words, right speech, right actions. Okay, I'm trying very hard here to say the right thing. I'm trying hard to do the right thing.

It's not working. You can't try to do the right, because the right thing comes out of a particular state of consciousness. Spontaneity, intuition, realization comes out of stillness.

So in this shift, thinking loses its capacity to make you unhappy. Thoughts for a while still arise, but they're not that overpowering anymore. You don't, you're not totally in them anymore.

And then space arises. The ability to not think arises when there is nothing much to think about, when life would be far more joyful if we are not interpreting this moment. And if you live in alignment with this moment, a lot of the time, you're better off not interpreting this moment.

Let it be. It is, and out of that state, necessary action comes. On doesn't, if it's not necessary, it doesn't.

So the revolutionary shift, the evolutionary and revolutionary shift in humans, in human consciousness is to enter that dimension where they, where compulsive thinking comes to an end. Compulsive thinking comes to an end, to transcend thought and realize that you are more fully yourself and more intelligent when you are not thinking. And when thought then comes in, should it be needed, it will be more effective, more powerful, more creative.

So you are here to be able to learn, to enter that realm of, this is the realm of great power, the realm of pure awareness. And it's not just the words that are pointing to it here. As you said, it arises because there is, that realm itself is here in the energy field of this gathering.

And it is very helpful even if your mind is saying, okay, I'm not really getting this. Of course, it's not really getting it. The mind cannot get the essence of it.

So the most helpful thing about this gathering is the energy field of stillness or presence that works, comes from within you, but is also here in this field. That's the essence. And that's what works most powerfully that transforms you.

The words are additional helps, additional pointers. And also to keep you entertained while you sit there in the energy field. So practice, practice again is the wrong word because it implies some kind of effort almost, but it is effortless.

Pure seeing, pure listening, become aware. Whenever you look at something at first, there is a space before thinking happens. As you become aware of the space, you may find that it expands.

What that means in relationship to other humans, we will look at if you can relate to other human beings, what it does to human relationships. I suggest just for a little while you stay here when this body has moved away. Just stay until you feel the impulse to get up.

Just stay for a little while in this energy field, in the stillness, and see that the body on this chair here is not really needed. That's enough what's there. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (3:23:24 - 3:23:32)

This concludes lesson two. Lesson three, using sound as a portal into stillness.

[Speaker 1] (3:23:35 - 3:58:13)

Like this, maybe you'd rather be somewhere else. If the weather weren't so wonderful, I would be happy to be here in this now, but it's so nice out there. There was a Zen master walking with his, one of his disciples out in the country, and they sat down under a tree, and the disciple didn't quite get it yet.

What Zen is, he'd only been there for six years. So the master was sitting there just being, watching, listening, and the disciple was thinking. And then he said, master, I've been thinking, how do I enter Zen?

And the question means, how do I enter the state of consciousness that is Zen? And there was a long silence before the master said anything. And then the master raised his finger and said, can you hear the sound of that mountain stream?

And the disciple said, he at first couldn't hear anything, and then, yes, I can hear it. Suddenly he heard the distant mountain stream. And master said, enter Zen from there.

Oh, and for just a little while, the disciple was there, attentive, alert, listening. And then, a few minutes later, the face of the disciple changed again from the openness to, master, I've been thinking, now what if I had said, no, I can't hear the mountain stream. What would you have said then?

And the master raised his finger again and said, disciple, yes? Enter Zen from there. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

So it's, the mountain stream is beautiful. More beautiful and deeper is the state of consciousness. If he hadn't heard the mountain stream, it would have been the same.

He would have been in the state of alert attention and might have said, I can hear nothing. And the master says, enter Zen from there. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

So here, I take this as a little signpost, teaching story. For you also to work with sound here, because there are beautiful sounds here in this place. And to be attentive to the sounds that you hear.

Today, I will remind you again tomorrow when we may spend the day in silence, a particularly good opportunity to be attentive to the many subtle sounds that you hear here. From the crunching of gravel or little stones as you walk, to crickets, frogs, the leaves moving in the wind. And many sounds that are beautiful and subtle.

To hear them requires a certain degree of alertness. That's why Zen masters often raise their finger that symbolizes, not I'm telling you, you better believe me. No, not that.

It says, be alert, awake. So that's the state is required. So when you listen to a sound, you place it, there's a field of attention that is actually more important than the sound, no matter how beautiful the sound is.

But the sound can draw your attention out. And then you learn to not just listen, hear the sound and then immediately label it and then you're done with it, but stay a while and remain attentive to that sound. Or it might be a sequence of sounds, if it's crickets or birds, be attentive and remain there and let the sound be there.

So, and then you have what we mentioned this morning, when you, with reference to the visual, where you have the sense perception, the visual sense perception happens against the background of stillness. And now also the auditory sense perception happens also in the field of stillness or against the background of stillness. So to every sense perception, there is a background.

We could also call it the ground. In ordinary consciousness, humans are not aware of the ground, which is awareness. The background, the entire substratum, to use a term from geology.

So as you listen to the sound, which is in the foreground of your consciousness, you're also aware of the background. And the background is very hard to describe in any way, because it is not something. The sound is something.

And as it is something, it is born and eventually it dies. The background is not born and dies. It's always there, unchanging.

So you are lost in a surface world of external appearance and things when you do not know that dimension, the background dimension. That could also be called the unmanifested, but I'm using a somewhat different pointer. Some pointers can be more helpful to certain people.

So there is the background. And to see that as you sit, stand, lie, you listen, there's the sound. Do I have a bell here?

It dissolved. I wanted to demonstrate how a sound comes into being and then goes out of existence, slowly fades out. But we have something even better.

The entire bell has faded out of existence. So to be aware of that is amazing. One can also call it a field of peace that underlies your perceptions, a background peace.

And imagine having that background peace in human interactions, how that changes everything between human beings. Let's put that aside for a moment and stay with just the sounds. It's a little easier.

Humans are complicated. And you will notice that when you fall back into the dream state of being identified with the stream of thinking, all the subtle sounds around you, you don't even notice. You don't hear them.

Your attention is elsewhere. Your attention, your consciousness is being absorbed by thought continuously. There isn't much left for anything else.

There isn't also much left for creativity or anything new to come in. It's all repetitive. And so here you are making space inside you for there's no other way for something truly new to arise in your life.

Something truly that comes out of the freshness of the unmanifested, the freshness of being itself and takes on form. A thought, a word, an action, some creation perhaps, a work of art, a work of this or that, or simply a way of being with others that has a different quality than the normal way of being with others. So that's the only way something truly new can come in because no matter how your life changes on the surface, it's not a true change.

You could, if your bank account is empty now and you win $10 million, on the external level, things will change, but that's not very much. The same set of problems that you have now or very similar one will arise again. The fear of not enough is not going to go away, perhaps for a few weeks.

And again, it might become magnified because you have a bigger scenario for you to play out your drama. And if you're rich and famous, then they can write about you and your drama. That's all.

And it looks bigger, but it's just like everybody else's. It's just when the drama is played out between the two famous actors in a mansion, it looks interesting. It's not interesting at all.

It's the same drama that happens everywhere else and there's nothing new. It's repetitive. And then they get a divorce and marry somebody else and it starts again.

So for something truly new to arise, you need to find, not create as such because it's already there. You need to find, one could say, that dimension of space. One could say you have to make space.

Yes. In one way, that's the space already wants to come through, the spatial consciousness. In another, one could say it requires your cooperation.

You have to make room. Then it's a beautiful, more harmonious emergence. If it pushes, it wants to come through and there's a heavy egoic structure, it may still come through, but it has to create havoc in your life first because the shell has to break.

And then you're struck by some disaster that breaks the shell of ego, whatever it may be. And so there are people here who have already experienced some kind of disaster in their lives, some great loss, where their life is threatened or where everything collapsed and something began to come through that otherwise there was no space there because there was all the mind objects that one had identified with as oneself covering up the vastness, the infinite possibilities, the infinite potential that is there in the unmanifested, in the background, in the space consciousness.

So these are two, these are beautiful pointers that there is in you object consciousness, which is thought, which is mental images. Anything that has form is object consciousness. For most humans, all they ever experience in their life is object

consciousness.

Their entire life experience consists of a succession of arising and subsiding objects. And they try to hang on to a bundle of mental objects that they think, that's me, mental images, names, labels, what they think of me or has been taught to think of who they are. But what are all these things?

They are thought forms that you hang on to and you put some, you wrap it with something, cling, cling wrap, whatever, that holds it together. A very fragile structure. And this, this is, that's me.

And it consists of mental objects, many of which are mental, the mental counterpart of material objects or material achievements. So there's the, there's, there's the shiny new flashy car, which in itself is, of course, is not important because it's going to rust in a few years, it'll be gone. And all it can do is take you from A to B.

It's nice, yes, we can appreciate these things. But if they become an object, then a mental form arises, which is not just car, it's my car, my is the important thing because then the thought object of car becomes invested with a sense of self. It's not just a car, I relate to it, I'm looking for myself in it.

So the mind object, the thought object car is becomes very important to me. And if somebody scratches your car or even dents it accidentally, it feels, if you identify with that as my car, it feels you are being injured personally. And anger arises because somebody is attacking you or let them say that somebody says, well, this may be a nice car, but my uncle has one that's much bigger than yours.

Can't be. And you feel diminished in your sense of self. That's how people play their ego games.

One little ego tries to diminish another little ego by claiming that my uncle has something bigger than you. I don't have it, but it's enough, it's my uncle. So there's some association because it's my, so it's an indirect thing that I can identify with.

Of course it's absurd and funny, but there's a lot of human interaction works in that way. And so you identify with what on, you may then identify with other things that are a little bit more subtle. Other people's opinion of you, which becomes also a mind, a mental image, knowledge, acquired knowledge, a certain skill that you have.

You may be extremely good at hitting a ball, and it's a great thing. If you are a master at hitting a ball one way or another, then probably in that field of activity, if you are truly a master, you're probably present, at least during that time when you're hitting that ball, when you're playing the game, when you're in the zone, you're not thinking, you're not planning, there's no decision-making, right? Action happens every moment and there's a power, and then people love to watch you.

But then what happens when you stop playing the game, you re-enter the normal state of consciousness. And then you identify with that skill, it becomes a mind object, you are better at it than anybody else. And the world is telling you that.

So that is something also, and then somebody else suddenly comes who is even better than you and they chuck you out. You're no longer captain of the team or whatever it is. Oh no, and that's very painful.

When a mind object, something you had identified with is taken away, dissolves, great loss, great pain. So most humans only know themselves as objects, object in the realm of object consciousness. Such a pity when there is so much more to human life, there's an entire realm that's always been there and humans just haven't looked at it.

They've been so seduced by the world of objects, both the external objects in their world as well as the inner objects in their mind. They've been so seduced by the world of objects, so fascinated by objects, so completely identified with the things of this world, that they forgot that there is an entirely different other dimension to their being than that, which has never gone away. The great thing is that you cannot destroy space consciousness, you can ignore it.

You cannot know that it's there underneath the accumulated object consciousness. Yes, but it is there. You cannot even in the most obsessed person, obsessed with thinking, and you see it's not a moment of continuously one next thing and the next thing, one damn thing after another.

Churchill's definition of history, one damn thing after another. But we could also define the human mind as that. It comes one thing after another.

And never aware that there is this vast realm within them that would free them from dependency on the world of things, which includes their mind, because it's objects, object consciousness. That vast realm is there and they never know it. It's like the example of like a beggar sitting, trying to get a few cents from someone who's going to give, and he's been sitting on a box filled with gold.

I gave that example at the beginning of the book. He's been sitting on this box filled with gold, but he's never looked. He's only looked out there.

Or we could say a more modern version of that. He's been sitting there and never realized that he has a bank account in Switzerland. And he, that has a hundred million dollars in it.

And he wants, now this is a somewhat deficient parable because even if somebody truly, if the beggar had a bank account in Switzerland with a million dollar in it, wouldn't really make that much difference to his life because it's so much deeper than that. But it's a parable for people who can think you've already gone beyond it. But I put it at the beginning of the book because most people know only the realm of objects.

So a box full of gold works as a metaphor for a while, but it's not ultimately the right metaphor because it's so much greater than any entire gold in the world. And so that space consciousness is in you, has never gone away, but been ignored. The peace, the stillness.

And it, I'm presenting here apart from the fact, which is more important that as we sit here, it arises from within you, even if you didn't want it. But I'm also pointing out little entry points into it. We've already seen bringing a yes to the present moment is an entry point.

When you accept the form, form is a thing, is an object. When you accept the form that this moment takes as something that happens or an inner form, an emotion that arises, when you do not resist the form that arises and the normal state of consciousness is almost continuous denial or resistance of the form because you want another one in the next moment, a better one, a different one, a more fulfilling one, not this form of the present moment, I want a different form or if I don't have it, at least I can think about it so I don't have to look at this.

I imagine the next moment is going to be better than this one. It won't if you haven't fully acknowledged this one. So when you accept the form that this moment takes, that is the miracle, the form of this moment becomes an opening into the formless within you.

And the worse, the more challenging the form that this moment is and you accept it, the deeper it takes you into the unconditioned space consciousness or into peace. So if you were faced with a dreadful disaster in your life, it arises at this moment, everything has collapsed and you face it and see that the is-ness of this moment just is as it is, you look death in the face. You accept the form that this moment takes completely and suddenly you sense something that cannot really be described, it's a spaciousness or peace around that dreadful event.

It happens within a field of peace or space and I wouldn't use here the word happy. You're not happy when that happens nor are you unhappy. It is beyond happiness and unhappiness.

There's a serenity and a peace that come but you can experience even with little things. Surrender to a little thing, a little form that this moment takes, a little challenge and you find a little peace, oh, nice. You surrender to the cold soup that I mentioned yesterday and you find that the cold soup is giving you a little peace.

It's not the soup, it's changed your state of consciousness. It's gone, oh, okay, okay. You make room for it to happen, you allow it to happen.

You make space for it to happen. Humans don't make space for things to happen. They want to remove space from things.

So now if you make, if something is happening and you make space for it, you become the space. So, and this is the grace that is hidden underneath so-called bad events. Now bad events, I have a scale of, they start with a cold soup, very little and go on to some dreadful accident, disaster, imminent death or everybody around you died or you lost everything or somebody tells you you only have three more weeks to live.

You have the scale, something dreadful, something so-called bad happens in your life and then there's a scale. Cold soup is easy but for some, that's a challenge too. And so for some, it sets the whole pattern.

They have a cold soup and the rest of the day is spoiled. They don't make room for events. They don't allow an event to be.

They argue with reality. I saw a cartoon once. It's hard to describe but I'll attempt it.

It showed people wearing placards. It's come some kind of protest march and the placards contained only horizontal lines and the entire surroundings, the street and the houses were drawn in vertical lines. So the message is we are against it.

Whatever it is, we are against it. So if you make room for something to be, it can only be this moment because nothing can be apart from the now. You make room for something to be, it already is, so why not allow it?

Allow it to be. And this act of allowing, easy to do when you face something beautiful. I allow this beautiful tree with the magnificent colors to be.

That's easy. And then you walk one more step and suddenly you think your right foot goes right into the mud. And there comes a minor challenge.

Can you immediately say, oh, it already has happened. It is already. Not much you can do except, of course, pull your foot out and walk on.

But usually, of course, it would lead to a reaction. So some words may then come out of your mouth. And contraction happens.

And maybe there could be an immediate attempt to blame someone. This is what the ego likes to do. Something goes wrong, who can I blame, it says the ego.

They should have warned people about this. Or if you're in the States, then the favorite thing is to go to a lawyer and sue them. So, and this is a beautiful practice.

The many things that, in quotation marks, go wrong in your life are actually the greatest things. In a way, even greater than the beautiful trees, because they can take you deeper. And so, to a large extent, the world is here for you to experience things going wrong.

And that is the challenge of the world. And if you still think otherwise, you may have lived on this planet for 50, 60, or 70 years and still expect things not to go wrong.

[Speaker 2] (3:58:18 - 3:58:21)

Lesson three continued on disc four.

[Speaker 1] (3:58:22 - 4:50:54)

And that is the challenge of the world. And if you still think otherwise, you may have lived on this planet for 50, 60, or 70 years and still expect things not to go wrong. Now, the illusion that you can have things not going wrong, you can still live in that illusion if you live in an advanced industrialized country, perhaps.

Travel to India, and you can no longer live in the illusion that things around you are solid and that you are in control. You're not. Nothing that you plan is going to work out.

Everything is going to be totally different from the way you expect it. And things will constantly challenge you, forms. And wherever you look, the world is not as solid as it seems to be here.

Wherever you go, there are old people, dying people in the street. Are they not? Where are the old and dying people here?

I don't see any. They're shut away. We mustn't look.

Just pretend that they don't exist. We put them away there. The old go here, and the dying, we put them there.

And the dead bodies never look, must never see a dead. It's very hard, unless you have a very close relative. If you ever want to see a dead body, they won't let you.

They say you're mad. But if you are in India, you see dead bodies very easily. It's normal.

And so you get a much better sense of the fragile nature of the world of things, objects, and forms, how insubstantial this world actually is. And it's only in the West that you have the illusion that the world of form is very substantial, solid, and it's going to last. It's there.

It has a solidity and permanency. It doesn't. And when sometimes a gigantic man-made form collapses, like two years ago in New York, that comes as a dreadful shock to people because it looked so solid, and it collapsed.

So the world of objects isn't as solid as it seems to be. The world of bodies isn't as permanent and solid as it seems to be. It is very, very fragile, fleeting, insubstantial.

So if that's all you know, then you are in this fleeting, insubstantial universe, and there's nothing. And of course, there's constant fear. When you identify with that, even though they try to just, it's very, very much like the Buddha, because the story goes that he was born into great wealth, and his father did not want him to see that there is poverty, that people grow old, and that people die.

So he had already reached fairly advanced age. He was, I don't know, can't remember, 25, 30, whatever, and wasn't really aware that there's such a thing as ill, old, and dying people, because he lived in, this seems like almost like the West these days, that's shut away. And one day he saw it.

His father didn't want him to see it because it had been predicted he would either become a great king or a great spiritual teacher, and the father didn't want him to become a spiritual teacher. He wanted him to carry on the business of being a king. The family business.

And so, but the father had made the biggest mistake he could have made. He waited for so long, when finally he did go out, it was such a shock when he saw that people are lying in the streets, dying, and ill, and old, and he saw dead bodies. He said, what is this?

Does this happen? What happened to this man? He's not moving anymore.

He said, he is dead. Dead? Yes.

And that happens to everyone? And what's the point in anything? What's?

And soon later, he left everything behind. In the middle of the night, the story goes, when everybody was asleep, and this is a beautiful metaphor, everybody around him was asleep, and he walked out. If that's all there is, so his search then was for that dimension.

Is there something else to life than just that? And it lasted a few years. And he tried all the practices, tried to achieve a state of perfection.

He got very good at all the practices, and yet they didn't take him to the realization of space consciousness. And one day, he almost starved himself to death, when he said, I've had enough. This is my translation of the sutras again.

He said, enough is enough. Give me some food. And they brought him some food.

Most disciples left him. He said, oh, he's lost his way. He's eating again.

And then he ate normally, and he sat under a tree. And suddenly, something happened. All resistance collapsed.

He was no longer looking for anything to happen. There was surrender to what is, not looking for some state anymore. And there it was.

The last thing that, in this film, The Little Buddha, which has some nice things in it, although it's too much about the legendary Buddha, but there's still beautiful scenes in it. The last thing that disturbs him is when he's sitting under a tree, and he sees his reflection in a little pool of puddle of water. Self-reflection.

And he sees his face in the little puddle of water next to him, and he's fascinated by that suddenly. And suddenly, an arm comes out of this pool of water and tries to pull him down. This is, and he frees himself, and then the reflection is gone.

This is the last attempt by the ego to be there as an object in his consciousness, to see himself as someone, to remain there as an object in his consciousness, a mental object, making himself into a mental, this is normal consciousness, making himself into a mental object and then have a relationship with it. I love myself. I hate myself.

Now, do I really hate myself? I must remind myself on the bathroom mirror that I love myself. I love myself.

You have a relationship with yourself. Of course, it's better to love yourself than to hate yourself. It makes life a little easier.

But when you love yourself, there's always on the other side, the possibility that you might also hate yourself. Better to go beyond loving and hating yourself by not having a relationship with yourself at all. By simply being yourself, and you can only be yourself as space consciousness, not as an object.

So anything that goes wrong in your life, a form that appears and you allow it to be, that form becomes an opening into the formless within you. So your spiritual practice is whenever something goes wrong in your life, and luckily enough, it happens a lot. Not saying that you cannot improve your life.

You can improve your life greatly. You can create a much better reality for yourself, which is nice. You can create through applying the power of thought and action and visualization.

You can improve your life considerably. You can live in a bigger, more beautiful place, feel better about yourself and so on, but you cannot escape from the other, from arising sooner or later. Another polarity, no matter what situation you go into, and I'm not saying you shouldn't improve your life.

It's great, but do not expect it to be free of the other polarity, which will arise. Even in the mansion, something will go wrong. And that's what the gossip magazines are all about.

The gossip magazines are about things going wrong in mansions. And that makes people feel a little bit better about things going on in their little houses, but it's the same. And they love reading about famous people, things going wrong in their lives.

Oh, isn't that great? Their lives are all collapsing, just like mine. So you, one thing that usually happens that when something goes wrong, it pulls you into the old, it strengthens the reactivity of the old mind structures.

There's complaining and running away and shouting and fighting. But there's the possibility, when you recognize the little thing, big thing, going wrong, so to speak, that it isn't really wrong, you work with it. You work with it by not resisting the is-ness of what, of the suchness.

Buddha has this beautiful expression, suchness. The suchness. And you work with that rather than resisting it, allowing the suchness of what is right now, the form that this takes.

And if the form that this takes should be a limitation, may seem a limitation on your sense of freedom, your freedom of movement, a limitation on what you want to do, a limitation on where you want to get to, and suddenly something rises up in front of you. A door, a wall, you're trying to go that way and suddenly there's a closed door, metaphorically speaking, or literally speaking. Once we arrived at a place to give a talk, rented a hall, there was already a long lineup outside.

Nobody had the key. And there was nobody there, they'd all gone home. So 200 people were lining up, some were getting angry, I arrived, can't get in.

So you're actually faced with a wall. So what do you do then? Start shouting?

No, of course you take action. Can you call somebody? Maybe somebody somewhere has a key and maybe they can come.

Okay, somebody did that, but in the meantime, here we are. What was there to do except to cooperate with that moment? So I would just go say, greet everybody in the lineup and everybody was very happy.

And almost by the time I reached the last person, somebody had arrived with a key, as if it had been planned. Now, the strange thing is when you cooperate and allow something to be that initially looks like an obstacle, initially looks like something has gone wrong and both little and small, when you allow it to be, it becomes an opening into something that you cannot predict what that is. It changes its face from hostile to benign and helpful.

The very event that seemed hostile turns around on the external level very frequently, even more importantly on an inner level, the shift happens, but you cannot really separate what happens on the outside from what happens on the inside. The inner shift happens and then the significance of that situation changes also. So that really is the true spiritual practice is to work with all the little and big things in one's life that seem to be obstacles or blockages.

Whatever arises in the now, I'm not talking about some mental formations in the dream world of thinking, actual obstacles, actual things going wrong, losing this, missing that, meeting somebody and it's the wrong time, it's the wrong place. And don't try to figure out why this has happened. It's very often, more often than not, it's impossible because you may not think there must be a deeper reason why this has gone wrong.

That's a secondary thing that if you are to know the deeper reason, you will suddenly be staring you in the face, you can't miss it. But in the meantime, you don't even need to figure out what the deeper reason is. It's enough to allow what is to be and then see what happens.

It doesn't prevent you from taking action. If you can take action, you take action. But in the meantime, the form that this moment takes is given space to be and there's the key.

Then that which had looked like an obstacle, a blockage, becomes an opening into space consciousness. So the archetypal image of that that humanity has is the cross and people misinterpret it and even Christians don't fully understand the deeper significance of the cross because the cross is the worst thing that could possibly happen. It's an archetype of suffering.

The man on the cross is humanity. The cross is the archetype of suffering. The cross is a torture instrument.

The cross means complete helplessness, complete extreme pain, but also it means surrender. Not my will, but thy will be done. Thy will is the will of the whole that has brought about the form that this moment takes.

And then surrender happens and it's strange that the torture instrument is a symbol for the divine at the same time and it turns into a symbol for the divine through the act of surrender. Somebody once said, I don't know who, but it is very wise, that which stands in the way is the way. And I said in this book, Stillness Speaks, that which seemed to deny the existence of any transcendental dimension to life becomes an opening into that dimension.

Because it sometimes happens that a grave, a serious illness, a dreadful disaster in your life, something going dreadfully wrong to someone close to you, it seems to deny any meaning. It destroys often people's belief. Christians sometimes come to me and said, I've lost my faith because this or that has happened to me or to my wife or to my children, my son, and I can't just, how could that happen?

I've been, they don't realize that they were still at a childish stage in their faith. They had some deal with God. They said, if I do the right things, nothing bad.

Okay, do we have a deal? I do all the right things, then nothing bad will happen. But that's not how the universe, because what they're saying is no form will ever dissolve in my life.

I will not encounter death or the accidental dissolving of some form. And so they came and it was good that they lost their faith because then they went deeper. After losing their faith, they realized that that level of faith was childish, although for a while it helped them, and then it didn't work anymore.

So they had to lose and then go deeper to something far more substantial than that and learn to, the deep lesson that is there when you totally accept any form of death in your life, because very often it is that something dissolves, something leaves you, comes to an end, and it looks bad. And then you allow it to be. Now you may not be able to allow it to be immediately.

The pain that you feel, the emotional pain may be there, and there's nothing you can do. You weep, but then you allow that to be. It does not matter where you begin to allow what is to be.

Ideally, you allow the form at this moment to be as it is totally, and so there's no rising of any pain. But that is not always possible yet for humans. So sometimes an event like the death of somebody close to you, the death of a parent, the death of a sibling, or even more hard, more difficult, the death of a child, it happens.

Forms dissolve in their own time. There's no predicting when a life form, the form will dissolve. And so pain will come.

You may weep, and you may experience that's the sadness. And there you can allow that to be so that it comes to be space around what you feel. There's a deep allowing of the sadness that you feel, and then there's space around it.

And that's how you may feel that the sadness, underneath it, you've already touched the peace underneath the sadness. It's already there. But you have to allow the sadness.

Not saying, I shouldn't be feeling sad, I should be feeling peace. I shouldn't be feeling sad, I should be allowing this moment. No, but that's not the fact of this moment.

The fact of this moment is what you feel at this moment. So the yes to what is, the primary yes is to whatever arises. The secondary yes is the yes to whatever you feel about that which arises.

In a smaller example, you're on the road, the car breaks down, a little thing goes wrong, depending what country you're in. In some country, your life may be threatened if you get stranded by the road, or in some big city in North America too, in some parts of big cities. But so it could be a big thing or a relatively small thing.

And again, you may just, you may succeed in this not-so-big event to say, that's how it is. And then you face it completely and say, okay, what action can I take? Become still, and then action happens.

But it's possible also that you look at the engine and you go, oh, but no, this is not a game. And suddenly you become conscious of what you feel, the anger that arises. And then you go, ah.

And what can you do? You have to, it is what is. At this moment, there's anger.

And then comes the secondary allowing. You allow the inner, what is on the inner. You give that space.

Because the amazing thing is, whatever emotion is passing through your system, there's always far more space than the emotion. You just have to find it. There's a vast spaciousness in you that is greater than any emotion, that can hold any emotion and allow it to be.

It's there. So there's suddenly some space around the anger. You've stepped back from the anger into space.

There's always more space than things in space. You can verify that tonight. The sky is maybe clear tonight, still be clear.

And you look up into, you go away from the few lights that there aren't, you can see vast stars, suns, most of the stars that you see except for the few planets are suns at great distances. And you only see a tiny fraction of the infinite vastness of the universe. And when you look, you can see there are two dimensions.

There are things in space and there's space. It's so easy. There are things in space and there is space.

But that which is awe-inspiring about when you look up there is not the things in space. What is awe-inspiring is the vastness of it. Infinite, unimaginable vastness of space.

Billions, not just billions of suns, billions of worlds of galaxies. Each galaxy consists of billions of suns. Vast!

And you look, it stops your mind when you truly look. You go, unimaginable vastness. Yes, the suns and whatever else is there is beautiful to look at, but that sense of sacredness of unimaginable vastness is the space that you look into.

And this is just the external version of what is within you. Within you also, because you're only a microcosm, microcosmic version of the universe. In you also, there are things, objects in your consciousness, and there is the vastness of consciousness itself.

And the uncreated, Buddha calls it the unborn, the uncreated, the unformed. He doesn't, and this is so wise to put it like that, because by saying that, it is almost impossible to make it into a mental object, because the word itself denies itself as an object. It denies itself by saying the unborn, on the one hand, you have a word that is an object in consciousness, but the object in consciousness denies its very existence as an object.

This is why the Buddhist teaching is so profound. So he says to his monks, there is, oh monks, that's how he addresses his monks, in the translation, there is, oh monks, an unborn, uncreated, unformed, unmanifested. And then it goes on, it's a little bit stylized sutra.

If there were not an unborn, uncreated, unformed, unmanifested, there would be no escape from the world of the born, the created, the formed, and the manifested. A beautiful pointer. So, isn't it amazing that you encounter it, not by running away from the world of forms around you, not by attempting to escape the limitations that the world of forms seems to impose on you continuously, and there's this longing for freedom in every human being.

And most human beings look at their life situation as a set of limitations around them. It usually is because every form is limited. Even if you were extremely wealthy after a while, that would become a limitation on you.

You have to have walls around your big house and need bodyguards to go out. So, and then there are the limitations that the body at some point becomes a limitation on you. No matter how fit it is at this moment, eventually you'll grow old, and it may be a little more difficult to get up.

Oh, my back hurts. Or a more serious limitation, and many limitations happen because form is limitation. And there's a longing in humans for freedom from limitation, freedom.

And people believe that this freedom can be found in some situation. This is not to say that you cannot improve your life situation. It is wonderful to do that, work to improve your life situation, live in a nicer place, but not as in believing that that will free you.

It's nice because when you play with the world of form, it's nice to have beautiful forms around you if you can, but don't depend on them too much because you juggle these forms and then one drops. And then before you know it, another one drops, and then somebody throws you on more. Okay, so the escape from limitation is not the escape from the limitations of form in your life.

It's through the seeming limitations. By allowing the form of this moment, which quite often seems to be a limitation on your life, by allowing it internally to be as it is. So one could almost say you walk through the limitation, not away from it.

You don't run away from it. You face it. And as you face it, allow it to be, it's no longer a limitation.

That's inner freedom. So you find inner freedom often in the worst of circumstances people have found it. They found it in prison camps.

They found it through serious illness. They found it through serious disability. They found it through loss of everything that they had and identified with.

And suddenly they were driven into acceptance of what is. And then the very limitation around them became an opening. And so some people in prison are living this teaching also.

I get more and more letters from people in prison who have become free in prison. And some reported, a couple, that they got released prematurely and they were not even up for parole. Suddenly it happened, but it was a secondary bonus.

The miracle is that often a difficult situation, even on the external level, changes and shows a more benign face. But that is a secondary bonus that you get as you surrender. And that it is truly miraculous what you can experience as there's a shift in that consciousness, how quickly an external situation can turn around, how quickly help can come in because you now cooperate with life, which is now, never not now.

You cooperate with this moment. There's no resistance to life, which is now. And then life can help because the entire universe is a field of intelligence.

Nothing is dead. Everything is an expression of that intelligence, that consciousness. It's in the very space in this room.

And then it gets through the human, it becomes focalized, but it's all pervasive. The human is like a magnifying glass that you hold against, there's the sunshine, and then you have, it concentrates it. But it's everywhere.

And then life becomes helpful in sometimes miraculous ways. Suddenly the right person comes, the right event comes, the right thing comes. But this is not, this is what Jesus calls the things that you need will be added unto you.

It is secondary. The inner shift is primary. What Jesus describes as finding the kingdom of heaven, which is here now, not over there, some other place, some other time, that is primary, that shift.

And then what happens in the world of things is secondary. But miraculously, more often than not, a shift in the world of things will reflect the inner shift. And if it doesn't, the energy that you bring to it will change it.

So in other words, maybe they won't release you yet from prison, maybe you're still there, and yet you become a factor in that place that usually would be called bad, that is healing and brings enormous help and healing to all, to those around you. There are people who are not teached, who are in prison and teach this already. So they are exactly where they are meant to be.

It's amazing how either the situation changes or that which you bring to the situation changes. And so the quality feel of the situation becomes different. And so the work then is, you can now see to welcome the moment, no matter what form it takes, particularly if it looks not good on the surface.

That's where the power, your work, if you can call it work, I don't like that word, but particularly when this work becomes powerful, when applied to all those many events in your life that look not right, wrong, shouldn't have happened, it's not what I want, there you apply becoming friendly with what is. Then the limitation of what is becomes your portal into freedom from the form, your dependency on the forms, your inner dependency for your sense of who you are, your sense of wellbeing, of peace on forms, that goes. And so then you can say what Jesus said, I have overcome the world, he said.

People didn't understand what he was talking about, maybe one or two understood. How can he say I've overcome the world? He has no power at all.

Where's his army? He doesn't have, he's powerless. How he hasn't over, he was talking about the inner realm, dependency on things for his inner state.

Because all these, the teachings of humanity, the deep teachings, they do not come from a person. They are nobody's possession or achievement. They come when someone, a person, a human form, becomes transparent in their personal selfhood.

The objects become loose and let through space consciousness. There are still some objects in the mind, yes, this and that, but not self-identification with the objects. So they don't form this crust of self that blocks that which is underneath.

So there's, it can come, it comes through. You become transparent to that spaciousness. And then something comes through you into this world.

It may be through words. It may be through action. It may be through a simple, invisible emanation of your being that does something, to even to this world of things.

It changes things here too. It makes it more harmonious, a more benign place to be, a less harsh place. Yes, where polarities still exist, but in a more benign way.

In other words, you become an instrument for healing in a very wide sense of the word, for peace. Peace comes through you into this world. And it is the peace that you cannot understand, that Jesus didn't understand either because he said the peace that passes all understanding.

So in other words, he didn't understand it either. His mind didn't understand. The way it comes from the depths of it, you become a field of peace in this world.

It's almost as if something from another dimension came through you into this world of form and affects the world of form. So this is your destiny also, to become that transparency as the crust of identification with mental objects breaks up, dissolves, something shines through. And so in many of you, you already bring, as you go out into the world, you bring peace into situations simply by being there, by not stepping out of the old reactive consciousness.

We'll be talking again what that means in relationships in more detail. So when you allow the form that this moment takes to be, your own form, the psychological form of me becomes somewhat transparent. When you resist the form that this moment takes, your own psychological form, the form of me becomes more solidified, rigid, impenetrable.

And you can actually feel that in yourself. When you go into a situation and you have contraction and resistance, you argue you need to be right. And you can see in that need to argue, to be right, to win, your own psychological sense of self contracts and becomes more hardened.

The me, you get a stronger sense of self, a stronger sense of who you are, but it's the illusion of who you are. When you can triumph over somebody and show them that you are right and not they, or that you have more than they, or you know more than they, or can do more than they, or you're more miserable than anybody else, it works either way, as long as it's more. You are ill, I've been ill for years.

Mind, I have more than you. I may not have more money than you, but I'm more ill than you. And this is the madness of the human condition.

When you resist what is, the form hardens the self. And when you allow what is, it softens. And as it softens, it becomes transparent and something shines through that is spacious.

You become spacious. And I am sure it also does something even to your physical form. Although scientists don't know, haven't discovered what that is.

Maybe they haven't examined a surrendered human being yet. Maybe they haven't heard about it yet. And as humanity begins to live in this way, or a larger part of humanity, of course, it is likely that the physical organism will also undergo changes.

Perhaps there'll be even more space than there's already. Already you consist of 99%

empty space. Scientists know that.

The atoms, the space between the atoms that make up your body is so vast that you are more than 99% empty space. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. In Zen Buddhism, they have Satori.

Satori is a sudden flash, a sudden realization. Not always lasting, but it's there. Sometimes accompanied by shouting or laughter.

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. And then you have the Chinese fat Buddha who never stops laughing. Continuous Satori.

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. Tomorrow evening, when it comes, of course, it won't be tomorrow. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

Tomorrow evening, I believe there's a film that you can go and see that is a very good film. It's called Fierce Grace about the life of Ram Dass. And his stroke and how that changed him and the meaning of adversity and pain.

It's kind of illustrates also what we have been addressing here. Also, if any questions need to be asked, there is no, by the way, not don't want to devalue questions. No question, however, is ultimately vital.

Many questions arise from the mind, but there are some questions that you feel you truly need to know the answer to, and it may not have yet come through you. If you become still enough, the answer to any question, the answer, if you need it, it'll come through you. But if there should be questions, you can write them on a little piece of paper and leave them.

There may be a basket or something like that there tomorrow after the session tomorrow. And I'll look through them and maybe a few will jump out and address them. A few will maybe questions that are very helpful to everybody and questions that are purely mental, I may not have time to answer, nor may I have the answer to them.

For example, can you describe the lives of the future Buddhas or who were the past Buddhas? Or what about the life on planet so-and-so? It's not vital to know that right now for your liberation.

So use whatever the moment presents, both the beauty that is out here and anything else that may happen. They're all openings. The beauty too is an opening.

The beauty that you see, the beauty that you listen to. Remember what we started with today? Enter Zen from there, from this moment, whatever it is, pay attention, be alert, watch.

If you resist this moment, you cannot be attentive to what is. Remember to work with the sounds, bring awareness to the sounds around you and sense the awareness itself as yourself. So you are that awareness, you are that consciousness and the personal appearance, the appearance of you as a person is a temporary disguise of consciousness.

Hide and seek. Let's pretend that I'm a human, a person. Oh, that will be fun.

And let's play some dramas. Yes, but for the dramas, you have to forget completely who you are. Okay, then let me forget completely who I am and play the drama.

And then you get tired of the drama after a few hundred thousand years. And then after we've played, let's wake up. Thank you, thank you.

[Speaker 2] (4:50:59 - 4:51:06)

This concludes lesson three. Lesson four, a day spent in silence. Silence.

[Speaker 1] (4:51:26 - 5:17:29)

The bells returned to the manifested realm, refreshed. The ringing of the bells traditionally is a spiritual wake up call, preceded usually by the alarm clock. That's another kind of waking up.

As we are speaking of waking up, I hope the people in Austin and Hollyhock are fully awake also. They are over there where the camera is. I'm sorry you have to get up so early, but you're here.

This is the day that we spend in silence, except for this person up here. Well, not really, although the words are there, they're still, the dimension of silence, of stillness is present, more important than the words. So if you can be attentive to both the words and more importantly, that which is between the words, which to the mind is nothing, and indeed it is no thing, and yet it's an energy field.

The wonderful thing is you cannot become attentive to that without the same field of stillness being activated within you. The very fact that you notice the silent gaps in between words or in between sentences means the very same silence, the very same stillness at that moment is in you also. Otherwise, you wouldn't even notice it.

And you may also be surprised to find that in the moment of noticing, the silent gap, you are not thinking. You may also find if the gaps become too long, you notice it at first, and then you start thinking again. That's okay.

Or you may not. But that is the most significant thing that can happen to you in this lifetime on this planet where you've taken temporary form as a so-called person. Of course, you are consciousness.

The most significant thing is this, cessation of thinking without loss of consciousness. From our normal perspective, the perspective of the normal everyday mind, the perspective of thought, it looks like there's nothing there. There's nothing there that can be grasped or understood.

And yet it's the ground of all being, the very ground of your existence. Existence is the manifested. Being, the way I use these words, is the unmanifested life that you are underneath the form, the background, we can also call it.

So to be aware here continuously of the background to all this, the field of stillness, the field of aware presence, of self-aware stillness, and also be aware of that which arises. In the stillness, words, sense perceptions, bodily sensations, but to have your roots, to be grounded in the stillness. And here, all you have to do is be aware of the gaps between the words.

Now there's something that cannot be manufactured, something that needs already to be there in you, a readiness, the ability even to be aware of the gaps. We could call that ability alertness, and that's the true meaning of waking up out of the dream of thought, of being identified with a continuous stream of thought. So most of you, or all of you, almost everyone here has this ability already.

There's enough presence in you so that you can notice, be aware of the silent spaces. And in that awareness, the awareness of the silent space, really, what is a silent space? It's the absence of something.

Where before there was a word, the word has returned, the sound has returned into nothingness. Before there was something, now there is nothing. So what is the silent space?

It's the absence of something, of the thingness of life. So when we say you are aware of the silent space, it's a strange way of putting it. It works as a pointer, but what does that really mean?

You are aware, first you're aware of a word, your attention is on the word, then the word disappears. And it is not replaced by inner words arising in you because attention remains, the word disappears. And so when we say you are now aware of the gap, what's really happening is you have become self-aware.

Awareness or consciousness has become, has recognized itself without the object is gone, just the field of bare attention remains. And that is a realm of also of great peace the silent peace that's always there in the background. And as you realize that, it seems to become stronger.

It seems to grow inside you. That's probably a perspective only, but it seems to grow and become stronger. So as you sit here, you don't grow in knowledge very much, except a few Zen stories, but you grow in awareness.

However, any words that we use to describe it are already somewhat misleading. Perhaps a better way of putting it is to say that as you sit here, you shrink. The person shrinks.

The personal sense of self that's identified with thought diminishes and something else emerges. And so I've pointed out before, maybe not here, this is not a personal development group. Sometimes I say that when I arrive at the airport and the immigration officer says, what are you going to do here?

What do you teach? In order to reach him at all, I sometimes say personal development and know that it's not true. But if I said personal shrinkage, he wouldn't let me in.

No, the person remains, but what gradually happens is there comes a shift. The transcendent dimension in you becomes stronger than the personal. The personal can still be used, your name, the conventions that are to do with the way of interacting with others.

But more and more, something else flows into that. And we could call that stillness, but not stillness as just an absence of noise, but stillness as an alive presence. So stillness flows into your sense perceptions.

It flows into your looking. That's why you've been looking at things in nature and realize that it becomes so much more alive when you don't label or interpret it. So it flows into your looking.

So the stillness is also a tension. It's a stream. One could call it a current of awareness.

Where before there was thought, very different energy frequency, thought. When you approach anything or perceive anything through thought, very different frequency. You can see when you look at a person, whether he or she is perceiving you through thought or through stillness.

Or when a person is looking at something, you can see whether they are classifying it, interpreting it, finding some kind of personal relationship to it. People do that with trees and flowers too. Some people have the compulsion to pick flowers because they need to enter into a personal relationship with a flower.

Not realizing that they could be in a much deeper relationship if they went beyond the personal that says, I would like to have that. Or even if you don't pick it, you might think, how would that look in my garden, in my backyard? Or have some kind of comparison to it.

Put it in some kind of comparative category. It's not even necessarily to do with yourself, but it's still, I overheard a man saying he was looking at the sun, at the sky after sunset. Or was it after sunrise?

Just that. And he said to his companion, look at that Turner sky. Turner is a British artist who lived, I believe, in the 19th century who painted beautiful paintings of light, sky, and just light.

And finally, yes, he was looking, but it also had to be compared to something. You can look more deeply if you don't classify and compare it to anything. And it is likely that Turner himself looked at the sky in the state of complete open presence with reference to nothing else, not to another word, to a word, or anything else.

And sometimes you find people who are walking in nature and it's beautiful and lush, but their mind comes in and for a moment they look and then they say to you, yeah, oh, you should go to Hawaii. It's even more lush there. And then they start telling you about Hawaii while you carry on walking.

So this current of awareness flowing through you into your sense perceptions, your seeing, your hearing, but it also flows as a kind of emanation because every human being has a certain emanation. Now, most humans have the emanation of mind and many humans, in addition, have the emanation frequently of pain body. Many humans have a very nervous emanation, tense.

Where's the next thing? They want to get to the next thing and at the same time feel threatened by the next thing that's going to come. So that's what they emanate with the whole being.

And that's the entire civilization. To a large extent, big cities have that energy field that's generated by millions of people. There are certain other countries where at first it feels, oh, there's less nervousness here.

But then you realize they're actually the energy field, although it may not be nervous, is a little sleepy. Instead of going beyond thought, they are drifting below thought. And so you tend to see lots of people sitting or lying around street corners in a state of semi-sleep.

And yes, it feels, I've become just arrived from New York. It feels great for a while. And you also sometimes find human beings who seem to be more peaceful.

And you yourself may find that in certain situations or conditions, you're not as nervous after a few drinks, after taking this or that substance. And it's great, it's a glimpse of what it means not to be thinking, that's how alive you can feel. But in many of these cases, when you've taken a few drinks, yes, you're beginning to step out of thought and you feel better.

Oh, it feels good, I must have another drink. Oh, let's have another. And before you know it, you're going towards unconsciousness and sleep.

Yes, you have stepped out of the stream of thinking, but have stepped, one could say, in evolutionary terms, you're stepping back.

[Speaker 2] (5:17:32 - 5:17:35)

Lesson four continued on disc five.

[Speaker 1] (5:17:36 - 6:25:46)

You have stepped out of the stream of thinking, but have stepped, one could say, in evolutionary terms, you're stepping back. That too can be a relief. But this is not what's happening here.

We, from the stream of thinking, we are stepping beyond. We do not go back to sleep when the mind no longer thinks. We are more alert, far more awake than when we were immersed in thinking.

So there comes that quality, that's the way we are going. Yes, we are transcending thought, not back to where we came from, but rising above thought. Now, that state of rising above thought, where you can still use thought beautifully, powerfully when it's needed, but you are no longer possessed by thought or consumed by thought.

Thought, useless thinking, burning up a lot of your life energy. Not going anywhere, just going around, just like the car is in neutral, you're pressing, pushing down the accelerator, not going anywhere, just vroom, vroom, vroom for hours and hours and hours. So stepping beyond thought into that clarity.

And alertness that is both gentle and fierce, that has two aspects seemingly contradictory. It's very gentle, that energy field of alert presence, but also has a fierceness. It needs to have a fierceness because it needs to cut through thought, that substance that, and thought is heavy, dense.

So to cut through that density of thought, coupled with the density of the emotional field that goes with the thoughts, you have the two layers, the density of thought, the density of that emotional field, pain body, and they cling together as two layers of density. And then comes presence. And in this case here, it comes from two directions.

That's why it's possible for this to happen. From within you, that dimension of presence emerges, pushes forward, but it might not have enough in the absence of extreme and agonizing suffering that cracks it open from above. From, it may not have enough power to cut through the density.

So all you feel then is an extreme restlessness, something wanting to happen and there may be searching and something wants to be almost be born here, but it can't be born. It's not because the shell is not cracking, but here it's being also pierced from here, from this, the energy field that is here in this room that comes through this teaching, which is more than the words. So that the presence is cutting through from within you and from without.

So it's just the way they built the channel tunnel from two ways. They started in England and in France digging. And finally they met in the middle and they had cut through these layers of seemingly impenetrable rock.

So if it were not already happening from within you, it would be meaningless and it wouldn't work for you to be here. So the layer of thought that stream is being cut through. And when you leave here, there will, we trust, be enough presence in you so that it can happen without the external help, although occasionally it's still helpful to listen, to be reminded, to open a book and read just a few lines that have come out of presence.

That's helpful as long as you need it. But there is enough presence in you now so that you can use it as a sword. And I'm now talking about the active side of presence because presence is both fierce and gentle.

It has an active aspect and a passive aspect. It depends from what perspective you look on it. So when we say that allow this moment to be, in that there is an arising, there's surrender and presence go together.

Surrender to what is, is one side of presence and that looks passive, but that is not the full picture. You cannot surrender to what is, it would not work if there were not also a fierce aspect to presence, an active, very active aspect to presence. So on the one hand, it's very gentle and allowing, but it is also, it acts like a sword that cuts through accumulations collective of the collective human mind and pain body.

So there comes this attention when the Zen master raises his finger and looks at you, there's a fierce look on his face. We see it in old drawings of Zen masters. You wouldn't want to meet them in a dark street.

Eyes come bulging out of their heads. So they represent the fierce aspect of presence. Underneath it, if you look closely, if the artist who draw this drawing of the Zen master was in tune with the Zen master's inner state, if you look closely, you will find also hidden there underneath the fierceness, the gentle aspect of presence.

That's hidden. If you look into the eyes, they're both are present there. So allowing what is to be needs to come together with a sword-like aspect, almost what seems the mind would say irreconcilable, but they're not irreconcilable, perhaps only from the point of view of the mind.

So how does that work? Look, this moment, something arises. This moment takes form as an event that appears in front of you, a person or an event.

Now, allowing this moment to be as it is in whatever form it arises, this requires you to face fully what is, not opposing, facing in an open way, not facing as if you were fighting a battle against something. You face it in an open way like this, to have your arms extended like this. So this is the gentle, and yet at the same time, you look it straight in the eye, so to speak, whatever it is.

This is the gentle, the receptive, and the attention is the fierce. So you have, you welcome what is, but there's a fierce attention that flows through you onto whatever it is that's happening, not fighting anything, just it's fierce alertness. And that cuts through the old reactions that otherwise would, that are all accumulations in the reactive mind.

They can then not operate anymore. And intelligence itself, which is attention, attention is great intelligence, but very different from the accumulated so-called intelligence of the human mind. That is a limited aspect of the greater intelligence, a limited form that this greater intelligence can take, which is fine too.

It's only not fine anymore if that is all you know and all you think you are. If you are good at solving IQ tests, well, that is an aspect of the limited intelligence. And that's fine if you're good at that.

If you get your identity from that, it becomes problematic. I'm a member of, in, I think it's in England, they have Mensa, which is all the people who have very high IQs can become members of that. And some people let that flow into a conversation just casually.

Now, if I'm offending one or two people here, I'm sorry. That is beautiful. Why not?

If you can use your mind in such a way, it's a beautiful thing to do. If you, if that becomes an important part of your sense of self, then you get trapped in an illusory identity and you probably have a few more things to add to it. And that is part of identifying with the realm of content.

I don't qualify to become a member of Mensa, unfortunately. Unfortunately, the mind doesn't work in that way anymore. I think it never did.

I could never solve mathematical problems. And I always admired people who could. I can't even see where the problem is.

When I was at school, after the age of 13, I stopped going to school. I couldn't stand it anymore. But I still had, they had all these problems that you had to solve.

I couldn't even, my mind would go blank after reading the first few lines. A man has five sacks of potatoes and then he takes two away and takes half of that content out and puts it into another sack. How much is left?

And that's okay for a problem to solve if there actually is a man. So we are conditioned to create problems for ourselves that lies in the conditioning of the mind. And so often when you think you have a problem, really your mind is creating a problem for yourself.

If it isn't happening at this moment, if there's no action you can take right now. And so comes the fierce aspect of presence. Oh, I've got so much on my mind.

So much, what is the expression? So much on my plate. And so you need to remember the sort of presence.

What's the problem at this moment? Can't find any. Yeah, but it's not this norm, but tomorrow when I get there, what's going to happen?

When this or that, when the moment comes, there's more than enough power in you to face it and to take right action when right action is called for because you will face the challenge when it's true in that state of welcoming attention and look it straight in the face. And in that moment, there is no thought. When you face a challenge truly, there is no thought.

There is just the looking. And it may be an actual looking or metaphorically speaking, you're looking at the situation, the totality of what has arisen at this moment, what needs to be solved, responded to, dealt with at this moment. And you look.

And in that looking that is fierce and gentle at the same time, there is an activation of a greater intelligence than what you have learned, whatever you may have learned. Now, what you have learned may eventually come into play also because eventually perhaps you will take action, part of which is to do with certain things that you have learned to do, or you will speak words, which is to do with using language that you learned in the past. But that will be only an instrument of the, it will be inspired use of whatever form comes into play when you deal with it.

But there's always, there's the moment of alert, aware sessions in which there's no thought and there's just the looking. And any master does that in any field, has the ability to look for a moment and then respond out of that. The greater intelligence responds out of that.

You just, in the same way that great sportsmen play their sports, no tennis player, great tennis player thinks, well, I think the ball is going to come there next, so I'll better move to the left now. Now, better, now I've got to get ready for the other side to jump to there. Now I have to two meters forward quickly.

It would be impossible through conceptual thinking in the mind, there is no thought. And if thought interferes, they're not playing well today. And they all have days when they're not playing well.

And very great sportsmen actually enjoy tremendously the flow of energy and realize that they are not doing it. But there's the ability to just be there. So this is the non-conceptual intelligence in you, the non-conditioned, unconditioned intelligence in you that becomes activated.

And that deals with problems beautifully, true problems, or rather true challenges, because there are no problems. Problem arises when you are either imagining something happening to you now, it is not happening, you're somewhere else, it's not happening now. You're dwelling mentally on some possible situation.

Because even if you had an illness that is very problematic, you don't know the outcome. Will I survive or will I not survive? Of course, eventually nobody here survives as the form.

How much longer will I survive? Is that now some people to some people that becomes a dreadful burden to know that you have a condition that you may not survive, which of course, everybody is suffering from it in a wider sense. It's called, it's an incurable disease called mortality.

The diagnosis is fatal. It's always ends, mortality apparently always ends in death. So some people who see their lifespan, they cannot, they don't know how much future they have.

It can become an enormous problem because you think I have not fully lived my life. If you're 90 and the doctor tells you you only have two years, maybe that's not so bad. But even then some people say, oh no, I need a bit more time but if you are 30, it seems more problematic or if you're 20 and the doctor says you may not have much time left.

And then comes panic and then comes a sense of unfulfillment in some sense, I haven't even started yet. I haven't fulfilled what I've come here to do. All the things that I potentially could do, I won't be able to do them.

It's you become a huge problem suddenly is your enormous suffering arises. But in some cases it happens that the uncertainty about how much future you have or seeing that you have very little future left, future is removed from you, forces you more deeply into the present moment. So I know some people who have a so-called serious life, so-called life-threatening illness, of course, life is eternal but it threatens the form that you are.

A so-called life-threatening illness and they have become enormously present because they have no future to escape to anymore. It's just always, they live totally in the now. The future is so uncertain, there may be nothing there.

So there's no point in even projecting anything. There's just, and some have become spiritual teachers and become transparent through this enormous current of awareness goes through them. And they smile and they occasionally waves of fear may still come even to them.

And then it passes and they're back in presence. And they realize no matter what they could have achieved in on through time, because that has its place as long as you have what looks like time, why not do things in time? Of course, you learn a skill, you learn a language, you learn to do this or that, you travel here or there, see new places, have new experiences, all these things time is good for.

Well, nothing helps you if you're always in the future, no matter what you experience. But so that is where usually you seek fulfillment of your life by adding more things that only time can give you, because more implies more time. I need to add more to me to be fully myself on the level of form that is true.

If you are 20, you haven't started living, you haven't learned anything, perhaps you're just learning to become a pianist or a great computer expert or whatever, and you suddenly get interrupted. On that level, it seems your life has come to nothing, but your life is not your life. There isn't even you and life.

There's only life of which you are a temporary expression. There's only the one consciousness of which you are a temporary expression. And if that flowers when you are 20, and the true flowering is not the achievement of this or that, sometimes a flowering happens indirectly through an achievement, which doesn't help the person either if they still identify with as a formal achievement.

But the true flowering is the arising of presence in you when you become transparent. And that can happen at any age. And it doesn't matter where you are in your life situation.

It doesn't matter whether, because there are some people here who have succeeded in the world and others who in the eyes of the world have not succeeded. There are others here who have succeeded years ago and then failed, and others who have failed miserably up to this point, and in a year from now, they'll be rich and famous. It all happens.

I was a failure in the eyes of the world 10 years ago, eight years ago. Now the world thinks I'm a success. Completely meaningless.

Completely meaningless. But it doesn't matter where you are at what life situation you're in at the present time. The ultimate purpose of your existence is for this form to manifest that which is beyond manifestation, to become an opening for the unconditioned, for the stillness, the awareness, that energy stream, that frequency, so to speak.

I believe it was Ramana Maharshi who sometimes used the expression, a current of awareness that flows through you that is non-conceptual intelligence. And the intelligence, even that's a limitation. It's more than that.

It's love too. The first time I'm using this word here, because some words you have to be careful with, words like God, words like love, because the reality to which these words point is so far greater than the word that it's usually misleading to even say it. But now I've said it.

What flows through you, when we call it intelligence or great power that deals with any problem, any challenge, there is no problem, that arises, it's not just that. That which flows through you is also love, that energy stream, that hope that is there when that openness is there. And it doesn't matter what your life situation is or how much future you have left.

If that is there, even an hour before you die, that is the flowering of your life. There's no such thing as your life, we're just using it as an expression. It's the flowering of consciousness through this form.

It's the birth of that into this world. And then the mind comes, okay, then what happens after that? It wants to know what comes next, what comes after it has flowered.

Maybe there's a question in the basket about it. Let it flower first and then see what happens. Extreme challenges have the ability potentially to push you into the state of presence, to force you into the state of presence.

Little challenges, which are the majority of challenges, usually pull you into unconsciousness. Unless you now know that you can actually use whatever, so to speak, goes wrong in your life as your spiritual practice. Ah, great, here's another one.

And then you bring the allowing to it and the attention. And you look, you look at the cold soup, you look at the lost bell that was here. Oh, my bells, I've had them for years.

A friend of mine gave them to me and the Dalai Lama gave them to my friend. And they are gone. Somebody must have taken them.

Oh no, can't be. Can't be. And instead, you look where the bells were before.

There's now an empty space. Well, now they are back, but there was an empty, there was an empty space. Now there's something deeply significant about the empty spaces that are left behind by any kind of loss.

For example, these were the bells. You may get back to your car or where your car once was. And in the parking lot, there's only an empty space.

And here it is vital if you can stop and face that empty space without running away from it or cursing the empty space or immediately going into reactive. Just, this is very strange. And this is one example.

The empty space can also be left by relationships. The wife, the partner, the husband. One day you get home and there's a letter which says, I'm gone.

I'm out of here. And if you can, again, you're at that moment, what the form that this moment takes, we will use that expression here. And here we come to something very significant.

The form that this moment takes sometimes is an absence of the form that was there a moment before. And because suddenly there is a no form where there was a form before, that is an enormous opening into the deeper awareness of the formless consciousness, unconditioned formless that you are. If you can not run away from it, if you can face this death, because the loss of anything is a small death.

The loss of the bells that you've had for years is a small death because the form is gone. The loss of your BMW is a death. The Rolls Royce, an even bigger death.

And of course there may be an actual death. And this is an amazing thing. The person that was here every day in this room used to sit in this chair.

That's the armchair, that's where the desk where they sat. And one day the message comes, they're gone, passed away. And then you look at the empty chair.

The person was so, it was so real. It seemed so permanent to have that personality that's sitting in that armchair, doing its thing, its work, talking, having its opinions, being there. How is it it's inconceivable that suddenly it's that that person is, where is he?

Dissolved, just dissolved like a soap bubble, gone. And so most people, this is the empty space that is left behind by death. Whenever a form dissolves in your life, it may be an actual death.

It may be the loss of something that had been important to you. If you can face that hole that is left behind by the form that is no longer there, it's a temporary hole into the dimension of the formless. Now, one could almost say, God, we're using that word again, the formless one life, the formless, timeless one consciousness that underlies all manifestation momentarily shines through whenever there is a hole in the tapestry of physical existence.

That's kind of the tapestry of forms. And in this tapestry of forms, which is gigantic, regularly or all the time, holes appear. If you were watching, let's just use the metaphor and say the entire physical universe, sense-perceived universe, imagine it as an extremely complex tapestry, woven, huge, of course, and you look at it.

And then you see continuously here and there little things suddenly disappearing and temporary holes being there, opening up in the tapestry. And then suddenly there and there. So part of this tapestry, it's a continuously coming and going out and into form.

No form in this tapestry remains for long. And so holes open up continuously in it. And then are replaced by something else.

But if you can be aware of the holes, the openings, something shines through them that is not to do with form, but it's the essence of all form. And that is enormously peaceful. There's enormous peace and aliveness there.

And that's the grace that lies concealed in any kind of death, accidental death, seemingly premature death, any kind of death, and any kind of loss, potentially, but it does not help you if you deny it or run away from it. You say, no, I don't want to see that hole. And you cover up the hole with reactions immediately so that you don't have to face the emptiness.

So when emptiness comes in your life, that is a beautiful, potentially, a beautiful opening in which you can actually find yourself. You find yourself by not resisting that. And so you begin to welcome death when it comes because it is an inseparable part of this world of form.

And when we look at death, we judge it from the point of view of an identity, a sense of self that is identified with form. And from there, death looks horrible. It looks dreadful.

That's why nobody dares speak about it in Western culture, which is the most identified with egoic forms. Nobody dares. Maybe one of the few countries left where death is still natural is India, where it's in the street.

You can go to the bonfires where they burn the dead bodies every day. You can watch a very deep meditation. If you can be there in a state of complete openness and just watch, that's the destiny of every form is to dissolve again quickly.

And when you watch, contemplate the dissolving of forms, that which is beyond form arises in you. You are in touch then with the formless in you. That's the grace of death.

That's the grace which is not the opposite of life. It's only the opposite of birth. People think life and death, it's a question of life and death.

No, it's a question of birth and death. Life is eternal. Life cannot be destroyed.

Forms, yes. Even physicists know that no energy is destroyed ever. And in a wider sense, as you live in the present more and more, it's a continuous dying.

As the expression goes, you die to the past every moment. You let go. And this moment is always fresh.

You can, of course, you remember what you need to remember, but you let go of any personalized attachment to a memory. There's nothing wrong with memories. You need it.

You wouldn't be able to find your way back to your street, your house. Memory, of course, you need, but self-identification with memory, you don't. So as you live in presence, there's a continuous dying to this continuity of me, which is an accumulation of more and more things that I identify with, the continuity.

And that could be anything. You die to the past. When the bell is gone, it is gone.

It is, it has disappeared. It is the past. And this moment remains fresh.

Oh, it's gone. There is a freshness even in when something has dissolved. One could go so far as to say there is a, a breath of fresh air, metaphorically speaking, comes into this world of space-time, this world of physicality.

Whenever a form dissolves, ah, ah, there's a lightness, ah. And with that, you welcome death. Stillness is the death that you enter voluntarily if you're ready for it.

To relinquish your attachment to the structures of thought, to step out of the stream of thinking is death because thinking is form, primordial form. To step out of that is death. The arising of stillness is your death, the death of the little me.

Of course it is. And there are still many humans on the planet who are not ready for that. They want to stay entangled in form.

They want a continuation of the drama of form. They don't want an end to the drama. There are humans, many humans still on the planet who are not ready for the end of suffering.

Even if the possibility were presented to them, they would run away in fear. It would seem like, no, the end of suffering would seem like a kind of death, the end of my drama. I don't want that.

But there are many humans also who are ready to stop suffering, to come to the end of suffering. It's an evolutionary development. Now for this to, this shift to happen to you, there's one requirement and we can put it in simple language.

You need to be fed up with suffering. Not run away from it, not avoid it, but be fed up with it. You've had enough.

I've had enough. I've had enough. And if you are in psychological suffering and all suffering is psychological suffering, the rest may be pain, toothache, whatever it may be.

You can ask yourself at any moment when you can see that you are in suffering, is that what I want? Is that what I'm choosing at this moment? Is that what I'm creating at this moment?

Humanity as a whole is coming to the point where the suffering is just too much. It's been going on for so long. And for most of you, it is true, you have suffered enough, but it means to be, it needs to be true for you.

That realization needs to come to you so that no situation, nothing that happens to you is converted into drama and suffering anymore. And the quickest way out of that, out of converting events, situations, interactions with people into drama and suffering is to be present moment centered, not story centered, not thought centered, not imposing interpretations and stories on the present moment, allowing the moment to be as it is. I gave a simple example of what is what the mechanism that makes up the manufacture of drama and suffering in people's lives, the mental mechanism, the mechanicalness behind it.

I gave a brief example in this little book, Stillness Speaks, where in one entry, one entry starts with three statements. One statement says, what a miserable day. The other statement says, he didn't have the decency to return my call.

The other statement says, she let me down. Then the text explains a little bit that these are stories that you impose on situations, events, and people in your life. And those are simple, very simple examples, but even the complicated drama basically works according to that same principle.

It's just that the stories that you impose become more complex, but this is where they start. And the stories are imposed, in many cases, one of their main reasons for being there is to enhance your egoic, mind-made sense of self, to be right. Because if you are right, if you can complain about this miserable weather, unconsciously, the mechanism behind it is you've made the weather wrong and yourself right.

You are in a superior position because you're complaining about it. What this dreadful weather's just dreadful. If you can say, he didn't have the decency to return my call, it implies, this is unconscious, that you, of course, are morally superior in every way to this person.

This is the position that you are coming from and identify with. I'm not saying you do not see that certain people do very unconscious things. You see it, but the story then personalizes it.

You find a reactive and personalized relationship to somebody's, perhaps, unconsciousness, and then use it to enhance your mind-made sense of self. It doesn't mean you don't see dysfunctional behavior for what it is, but you do not have a personalized, reactive relationship to it anymore. You allow that to be also.

There's no person there. There's only human unconsciousness. You don't enter into that personalized relationship that is story-based.

She let me down. She wasn't there. I was there.

She was not. That's the event without the story. It's raining.

That's the miserable day without the story. He didn't call. That's the event without the story.

He didn't have the decency to return my call. It's amazing how simple things, if you take away the story, the simplicity of what is without the personalized story around it, how simple life then becomes. How simple this moment always is without imposing a story on it, which is in any case only there in the service of being right, in the service of feeling superior to the situation of the person, in the service of enhancing your always deficient mind-made egoic sense of self.

This is all madness, dysfunction. If you look at, see what people, how people complicate their lives. So for nothing, for an illusory identity.

And then what is left then is things are as they are at this moment. People do what they do at this moment. Beautifully illustrated in the story that you may have heard perhaps through this mouth before, in the story of the Zen master.

Some of you probably don't know it, but it's such a beautiful story. The Zen master who had a excellent reputation as a great teacher in a town in Japan. And one day was accused by the 17 year old girl next door of being the father to her child that had just been born.

The parents asked, who is the father? They were shocked that she was giving birth to a baby. And she finally said, it was the master next door.

I went to see him nine months ago for a spiritual counseling session. And then that's when he did it to me. And so the parents got extremely angry and started telling everybody about it.

And they ran to the Zen master and with the baby and put it there on his floor and said, we know what you did. You are responsible. Now you look after the baby.

We don't want anything to do with this baby anymore. You take it. You are the father.

We know it all now. The Zen master looked and listened. And when they said, you are the father of this baby.

He said, is that so? And then they said, yes, and we are leaving this baby here. You can look after him.

Is that so? Then they left. The Zen master lost his reputation.

Nobody came to him for counseling sessions anymore. Nobody wanted to hear him anymore. All he had there was the baby.

So that was the present moment. He picked up the baby and started getting some food, sent off somebody to get some food and spend one year mostly looking after the baby that was there. A year later, the girl was a little bit more mature and cuddly confessed to her parents that the Zen master was actually not the father.

It was the son of the butcher next door was the father. So, oh my God. They ran to the Zen master and said, please forgive us.

That is all a big mistake. We've just realized that you are not the father. The Zen master looked and said, is that so?

And they said, or can we have the baby back now, please? We now want the baby. We'll look after it.

So we want the baby back. Is that so? Okay.

And off they went. This is an extreme example of the good that comes, only good when no story, even stories that other people try to impose on you is accepted. No story is taken on.

And this Zen is an extreme example of, it's a teaching story. It's an extreme example of non-reactive relationship to life and a non-story imposing relationship on life. They had their story.

They had to do, they had to make the Zen master wrong. The Zen master refused any kind of story, any kind of, he wasn't a victim of circumstances. He didn't say, I can't look after this baby.

What do I do? I can't have spent my time. No, he did what was there to do at that moment.

So the baby had the best possible start in life because for one year grew up in this energy field of great peace with the Zen master. But then the Zen master did not cling, did not have a clinging relationship to that. He was able to, in the moment, let go of the past and relinquished the baby and responded to this moment.

The parents now, he so genuinely wanted the baby back. He, she was going to marry the butcher's son. So this is an example of the simplicity.

It may be a little bit extreme. You can, you can of course say, no, I am not the father. There would be another possibility that is still not a story.

No, I'm not the father. But if that is what you believe, I cannot help it. Again, you're not buying into the story.

But if you had your own, then people, you have a story to counteract their story and so on and on this stuff out of which drama is made. So look at your life and see, are you facing situations as they are? Are you, or are you imposing and mixing up something here?

Stories on the simplicity that is always there in this moment. So that is, it's good to know that because the mind will always try to manufacture stories. And the biggest one, of course, the most intriguing story is the story of me, me and my life.

That's so interesting. And if you can't tell anybody else about me and my life, then you can tell yourself about me and much about my life. Oh, well.

The story of me, the most fascinating story. And the story of me is part of the ego, the egoic sense of self. Not saying that you do not remember what happened to you.

Of course you remember what happened to you. Not saying don't have the photo albums anymore. You still have the photo albums, but to derive your identity from a story.

And when you look at the story of me, they can see that a lot of the identity that is derived from the story of me is to do very often with making other people wrong. And see how right you have been in that situation. And how wrong those people have been to you compared or situations or God, him, her or itself.

God itself has done something to you. And so attached to the story are certain emotions. Resentments, the story is enormously energized by resentments.

And anger, sadness, they did to me, they did to me. Kinds of things. Can you look through the story and die to the story?

Not lose your memory, but die to the story as a self-reference, as giving you your sense of self. So where does your sense of self come from then if you let go of that? If you die to that and see that's not who you are and you die to the unconsciousness of manufacturing further stories.

Even complaining, let's go back to the example of the cold soup. Complaining about the cold soup is another story. The moment you complain about it, I'm not saying heat it up please, that's not complaining.

But the inner complaining or the outer verbal complaining, which implies making something or someone wrong, that's the story. So drama, unconscious people are waiting just for the next thing out of which they can manufacture drama. The egoic identity in conjunction with the pain body is just looking out for the next thing out of which to manufacture their next dramatic episode.

Now the kind of dramas that people are drawn into vary a little. Some people have the victim drama. Somebody's always doing it to me.

Other people have other kinds of drama. They get very angry with situations and people. Others may get very sad, poor me.

Well, that's the victim. I can't remember what else, there's quite a few. And then you see how they use the tiniest events to add a little bit to incorporate into their dramatic story.

So if you can see that in others, that's already great. If you can see it in yourself, it's even greater when it happens. See it.

And so you see what that is. Some people have a greater amount of a more denser ego and a denser pain body than others. But the basic principle is there in everyone to some extent, greater or lesser.

But it ceases to operate the more you step into presence. Then there's still only remnants of that that occasionally come in. And then your life becomes simplified.

So simple. Simplify, simplify, said one famous writer. Thoreau, I think it was.

Simplify, simplify. Now people talk about simplifying their lives and they think it's to do with not indulging in excessive consumption and so on, which of course is good too. But that happens naturally.

The true simplification happens on the inner level. Let go of the stories. Pay more attention to this moment than anything else.

This is the day that we spend in silence. The day that we spend listening. Always just this moment.

It sounds like a big thing if we say we'll spend the whole day listening, watching, being alert, attentive, alert to your surroundings and alert on the inner level. The more alert you are to sense perceptions, the more alertness you will also have within. And stay for a little while with the empty chair.

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (6:25:50 - 6:26:00)

This concludes lesson four. Lesson five, questions and answers. Being present amidst the world.

[Speaker 1] (6:26:10 - 7:46:18)

I've never had so many questions at a retreat. And I'm not here to flatter you. The best question, of course, is no question.

But I have never had as many good questions. So it's difficult. They all are, most of them are good questions.

Direct, alive, live questions. I've never thrown away any questions yet. I keep even the silliest question.

It might come in useful at some point. I will dip my hand in the basket in a second. One question that came three or four times.

There are a few recurring questions. Can we sit with you in silence for a while? Yes.

Yes. When you're just listening, there's stillness inside you. No commentary.

So don't miss the stillness that's actually there even when the words are spoken here. Both in you and in the speaker. There's no thinking in between sentences or words.

So whenever a word has been uttered, the stillness is there again. Who is speaking? Not this person or this little mind.

Stillness is speaking. It's not personal, not my stillness or your stillness. And as I said before, this person is listening the same as you to the words.

This person doesn't know what word is going to be spoken next as little as you know what word is going to be spoken next. It's not prepared. I said to trust in life enough for this to happen.

To trust in life means to trust in this moment, the power of this moment. That whatever this moment requires will be there. There were also two or three questions by people to whom the stillness is yet only a mental concept.

And so they ask, it's great to hear about it, but I've never experienced the stopping of my mind. My mind is continuously noisy, compulsive. It continuously worries and thinks.

So what can you tell me, they ask. There are also a few questions on meditation, the use, the purpose, usefulness, or otherwise of meditation. And I'd like to bring the two together, the two questions, especially if the mind is incessantly active, even here as you sit here, if you cannot notice the gaps, if you cannot be attentive to the gaps, now make sure that this is actually the truth, because you may actually notice the gaps for a moment.

There may be a momentary cessation, but because you're so used to listening to your mind, the mind is saying, no, nothing is going on. I don't get it. Maybe you do briefly.

However, it may be if your mind has such overpowering momentum, meditation is a wonderful thing. There is a meditation, there are different methods. One could say, of course, that being in the body is a kind of meditation.

Feeling the inner body, directing attention into the inner body is a kind of meditation. The way it's presented here is in a non-formal, formalized way. I just feel that.

And it may be that people whose mind is extremely, extremely active may need a somewhat more formal approach to being in the body. And so there's a beautiful meditation technique, vipassana, that directs your attention slowly and gradually into the body. So that would be a good thing to take up the practice of that.

And there are also mantras. If used rightly, they should stop the mind and replace all the various mental activities with just that, the mantra. And eventually, of course, the mantra needs to come to an end, and then the stillness is there.

The Buddha, Buddhism has designed for hopeless cases the counting meditation, not hopeless, no. Where you count mentally from one to 10 and 10 to one, or I think maybe you start at 100, I don't remember. But you just, you count backwards and forwards and backwards and forwards.

And then that gives your mind something to do. But at least it becomes more focused. And once the chaos of the mind has become a more focused kind of noise, it's easier eventually to drop it once the chaotic noise has become focused noise.

You can more easily drop once the noise has become focused, then you could drop the chaos. It's hard to drop the chaos, except in great suffering. The aim of all meditation, of course, is presence.

Eventually, any technique needs to be let go of. If there's anybody here who feels angry at that statement, it's a good sign that it's time to let go. Because there's a new identification with form, my method that I'm so good at, that I've spent 20 years getting better at.

So Vipassanā is excellent. They claim, and it may well be true, whether they have some sutras to prove it, but who knows how old they are. But it may well be true that Vipassanā is one of the original meditations taught by the Buddha.

But it seems that the Buddha also taught another meditation that is breath awareness. And that can be practiced not just as a meditation, that when you sit in a particular way, but to be aware of your breathing is related already to being in the body because the breath flows into the body. To notice your breath, to feel your in and out breath is helpful.

It does bring you into the now. When you do it for any length of time, you soon encounter the threshold of boredom because observing your breath is not interesting. And then if you stay with it, you will pass through the threshold of boredom.

And then observing your breath is quite peaceful, the coming and going. And you notice great subtleties about your breath. You notice, for example, that at the end of each out breath, there's a momentary cessation.

In breath hasn't started yet. You're neither breathing in or out. And that's a point of great peace, if you can notice that.

A very peaceful, and also the end of the in breath is a momentary cessation. Before the out breath starts, you can watch that. Nature does it.

They say the whole universe breathes in and out. If that is true, it may well be, because it's as above, so below. They say the entire universe expands.

Maybe it does. And then comes together again into one. And then it happens again.

And the heart does that. And the seasons do that. This season is a kind of out breath.

Fall, autumn, nature is breathing, has come to the end of the out breath. And sometimes even when you get warm days in autumn, they are maybe the same temperature almost as summer. It has a different energy quality to it.

It is stiller. It's moving towards cessation. Nature has come to the end of the out breath.

Fall is the out breath. And the end of the out breath is the equivalent of death. And that's why the autumn days can be so peaceful.

Sometimes you can even sense the stillness in the air. Nature becomes, is ready to rest. So everywhere, you really have this, the in and out breath.

It's a little death. Each time you breathe out, it's a little death. And so you go into that death and realize when you reach the point of death, the end of the out breath, you haven't disappeared.

It's the deepest peace there. So that, now to come to another question, these are just happened to be a few that I remember. A few questions on how to bring awareness into the everyday world.

Some people say, when I'm out in nature, it's wonderful. There's stillness. When I'm sitting here in the group, it's wonderful.

Stillness arises. But the moment I go back into the city and my usual activities, it's gone. How to bring it into that?

And of course, when you're in nature, your mind is not being stimulated because you're not surrounded by mind made things. When you're in the city, everything around you is made by the human mind. And there is a collective energy field that is nervous mental activity.

That's why cities are so noisy. The inner noise becomes externalized and then manifests as machines. And amplifiers.

Producing so-called music. Very hard to find a restaurant these days where you're not bombarded with noise. And when you say, would you mind turning it down a little?

What's wrong with you? And then there's your workplace, probably dominated by nervous mental energy, like most workplaces are. Even places that could potentially be places of great peace and healing, they're very nervous.

Hospitals are very nervous. Schools are very nervous. They're getting more and more nervous.

School teacher, the most stressful, one of the most stressful of all jobs. Only 50 years ago, it was one of the most comfortable jobs. It was great.

So bring in a little little returns to presence into the noise as you go about your activities. How to do that? Just little things.

You can even make a list of three, four, five things that you can do each day, periodically, simply to bring some return to presence. You may put next to your computer, a little card that says, can you feel your feet? Can you feel your hands?

Or you may put in the bathroom, if they let you in the office, take two or three conscious breaths. When the phone rings, don't jump to it. Let it ring twice and then answer it.

And during that time, don't be in an inner state of, okay, I'm just holding back before I answer it. But no, give it, allow it to ring. It wants to ring, that's what it's doing.

So you actually watch or listen to the ringing, you allow it, it goes, whatever sound it makes these days. And there you are, you look at the phone and you hear the sound. You've created a spaciousness inside.

And that which drove you deeper and deeper into mind and into noise is reversed. Every time it rings, it becomes an instrument for some space, just a little bit of space to rise inside you. And nobody would even notice that it took two more rings before you answered it.

If there are steps, you can walk up and down the steps. Consciously, instead of making each step a means to an end, in other words, you're already where you'd want to be mentally. You're being pulled by the next moment to the next thing.

You take the opportunity to take one step at a time. You don't even have to slow down after a while. You can actually walk fast without being pulled to where you need to get, without being pulled away from this moment.

That's extremely enjoyable. It doesn't mean now as presence, you bring presence into everyday life that you necessarily have to slow down. At first, it may slow you down a little because it's an unusual way of doing things.

But after a while, you realize that there's no need to slow down. If you actually, there needs, something needs to be done fast, you've suddenly seen your hands are moving fast. You're putting this here, packing your suitcase to get to the airport, you're running late.

And yet suddenly, there's only each movement and looking what it is that needs to be put in without even noise because there's only the looking now. There's an opening of a drawer. You see.

There's this right action that comes out of presence. You don't think, okay, what do I need? You can actually look and it happens.

And then you walk fast and you enjoy the energy of that. And then you shut it and then you run down the stairs still without being pulled because if you are pulled away from the now into the future, that is the mental projection. So the mind projects itself there and says, yeah, I need to be there.

And then you're being pulled out of yourself and it's called stress. And so you know when, but they also speak of stress in metal, which stress means there's one pull this way and one pull that way. And eventually it breaks.

There's too much stress in metal. So humans live in continuous stress in this mad world and stress is a form of fear. I need to be there.

So you bring in first into little things, presence, there's the phone. You could have a flower next to your computer screen. There's a flower.

I always make sure there's a flower there and something natural because everything else, if you're in an office, is mind made. There's a flower there and periodically you look at it, truly look, just half a minute, a minute. The mind will tell you that you cannot spare 30 seconds to look at the flower.

You just don't have the time. This cannot be true. Everybody has 30 seconds occasionally.

If you can enter the body easily, feel that in your place of work, a great opportunity if you can do that, it's the most wonderful transformation. Whenever somebody speaks to you on the phone or in person, while you listen to that person, feel the aliveness in the inner body. And now what is speaking to you is the human mind.

It will try to get you entangled in what it's saying. But now you're rooted here. You listen from there.

And can you function in that way? Yes. Can you still reply intelligently or are you just going to make unintelligible sounds?

No, you may be surprised. That intelligible words come out of your mouth if you need to reply. They may be more intelligent than you would have said otherwise.

Anytime there's a meeting, dreadful things, meetings, committee meetings, conference tables, everybody has their agenda. Everybody has their power positions. Everybody's fighting everybody else or two temporarily get together to fight those other two and all that madness around the table.

If there's only one human being who is in the body, it's often enough to change the entire energy field of the meeting. Even if it isn't, even if it doesn't do that, it gives you a degree of peace while you sit there. You will probably speak less, but when you speak, it is more likely that people will listen because at last somebody is saying something new and meaningful.

It does not come from ego. So in that sense, this healing is taking place through you, through not the personal you, but through this form, healing is happening. So you're not doing it just for yourself because if one person becomes transformed in that way and brings in a different vibrational energy field, then things will change around them.

If they are capable of change. Some structures are so heavy, old mind-made human structures, certain organizations. Some may be too heavy.

They will just have to crumble eventually and they will sooner or later, probably sooner. Many other structures are still capable of change because there are humans in there. They're basically all mind structures.

If you need to escape from the office, go to the bathroom, shut yourself in there and sit there for two minutes, not complaining about the mad world, but perhaps being aware of your breathing. And this is another little one that you can introduce anywhere, being aware, watching the breath as you go up and down the elevator. Wonderful.

Who says that you cannot watch your breath when you're in the elevator? If that is at your workplace and you yourself will come up with little things on how to introduce spaces into that which seems to make it impossible to have space, those surroundings. And yet it's not impossible.

I will dip my hand in the basket now. Take a few. There was a big one here.

Maybe that's, it works. Ha ha ha. Ha ha ha.

Ha ha ha. Ha ha ha. Ha ha ha.

Ha ha ha. Ha ha ha. Another big one got blown away by the wind.

Sometimes it doesn't. Ha ha ha. Ha ha ha.

Ha ha ha. When I let go of my story, I feel less alive. What is the value of going to a place where I feel less alive?

It is true. Better than to be dead is to have a dramatic story. Better than not feel any aliveness is to have some drama, something interesting going on in your life.

And so you see often in relationships, the partners feel if they are not going through their periodic drama, they don't have a relationship anymore. It feels the aliveness is going out of it. But the story is a secondary kind of aliveness.

The drama that people get involved in, yes, it's a way of feeling some life in the absence of feeling something much deeper and more genuine. But you have to step out of the story temporarily to find that. And a good starting place is going into the body, not just for a minute, but make it into a daily practice for a while and go deeply within and sense the enormous amount of vibrant life that is already there in the body.

Bring attention to your sense perceptions and notice the enormous power of your conscious attention. So it's a question of leaving your habitual world where you felt at home and entering something new. And at first, the new, you may not recognize.

It happens also when people first encounter some stillness and it's such a strange place that they feel they want to run back to the mental noise. And they say, well, I encountered some stillness, but it felt completely empty. And so I don't see why I should go there.

I compare these people to someone who just spent four hours in a noisy discotheque and then steps out and the heavy doors close behind and you're out in the countryside with only very subtle noises of the night going on and a breeze, but at first you step out, you hear nothing. It will feel dreadful, that silence, because you're so used to that noise. So some, you might even, in fear, run back into the discotheque, but at least that's familiar.

You have to stay for a while with the stillness because the power of that is more subtle. It's more powerful, but also much more, it has a different density to it than the density of the mind, a different frequency. So you become attuned to that frequency.

So you stay in the emptiness for a while and then realize the emptiness is also fullness.

Now, the desire to step out of your story only comes really when the story becomes too unpleasant to want to dwell in it. So it may be that some people have to wait a little bit longer until their story turns into something that they don't want to be in anymore.

And eventually that will happen. There is greater aliveness, true aliveness outside of the story. What determines the intensity of a person's wish to be in the present moment?

What one could perceive as the wish to be in the present moment is the arising of presence in you. In that sense, there's nothing you can do about it. When the wish appears, presence is already arising.

It's not separate from it. But can you make it arise? No.

So what determines whether or not presence is arising in you? We could say grace, evolution, how much you've suffered. Maybe they're all the same.

But in any case, it is not something that you can want to happen and you wouldn't. You wouldn't even want to be present if presence were not arising. You wouldn't even ask the question how to be more present.

So it is arising. The wish to be present is the arising of presence. It's ultimately not personal.

And yet from a personal perspective where language comes from and where we have to speak from a lot of the time, we can say that you can help the arising of presence being receptive to it. But it's all really something that the universe is doing through you. When you think you are doing it, and it's great to believe that I can choose to be present.

I can choose not to answer this phone. And let it ring twice. That's what it looks like.

But how is it possible for you to even do that if there were not enough presence, you couldn't do it, know what you want to do it. You would say, what is the point in waiting? I mean, it's ringing, answer it.

And maybe that's where your boss will say when he sees what you're not answering. Ultimately, it's not you because you are not separate from the totality of the universe. It just seems that way.

But it's good to feel that you can choose. Ultimately, the universe is choosing to be present through you. Nobody else can choose.

Well, there's an interesting question. Maybe it's connected with this. You've given us many portals to the stillness within, but I find that in day-to-day life, my mind is in 100% control and does not want to be free of itself.

How do we become aware when we don't want to? When you don't want to, you don't want to. But there is something hidden in the question, which to me signifies that something in you does want to.

Otherwise, you would neither be sitting here nor be asking that question. You'd be watching TV somewhere. I get discouraged when I think, well, Eckhart didn't awaken through the practice of presence.

He awakened through a sudden act of grace that completely erased his mind's habit of resisting the present moment and so did many other teachers I know of. Presence was the result of your awakening, but it wasn't the method. Are you sure ordinary people...

Are you sure ordinary people can dissolve their ego through the practice of presence when that's not how you did it? I worry that I'm trying to break down the boulder of my ego with a pocket knife when what I really need is a stick of dynamite. Sometimes it happens with a pocket knife, but this isn't a pocket knife.

This here is a sword. Now, it may well be that even the sword is not enough and it may be that you need a stick of dynamite in the form of some disaster. And if you need it, you'll get it.

If you truly need it, life will provide. Life provides what you need and then you will see the grace that is hidden there when it comes. And another part of the question implied, is it something we can do or is it something that just happens to us?

The doing and the happening are really one. When you think you're doing, it's also happening to you, but it's good to feel that you're doing it. That's meant to be part of the happening.

The mind can't figure that out because the mind says it's either this or that. The mind likes to separate. That's how the mind works.

It cuts it into two. It's this or that. How can it be both?

But it is. Something else that this touches on, a sudden liberation from being possessed by the mind or a gradual becoming free through perhaps some applied spiritual practice. What is true that ultimately, spiritual practice or technique, let us say as such, I don't know of anybody who has become liberated by a technique, but they may have become liberated when they dropped the technique.

The technique may have had its place as a ladder that they then dropped or as a raft. The Buddha uses the analogy of a raft crossing the river. You use it to cross the river.

When you've reached the other side, you do not continue to carry it around with you, the raft. It remains. It's my raft.

Not all teachers, not to all of them, did it come all at once. Many, yes. For example, many of you know the teachings of Nisargadatta, who wrote one of the greatest spiritual books.

Well, he didn't write it, he spoke it. I Am That. And he was, had a stall in Bombay selling handmade cigarettes.

One would have thought, this is not very good karma. You're making other people ill. And he smoked quite heavily, apparently.

And he just visited a guru, a teacher, who said, well, just remember that you are consciousness. Just be aware of the I am in whatever you do. Feel yourself as consciousness.

Oh, okay. And then he went off back to his daily business and he applied, can we call that a technique? It's too simple to be called a technique.

All he remembered is, I am consciousness. And he felt, attempted to feel the I, the deeper I that underlies all experiences, awareness itself. And a few years later, it had emerged fully.

It didn't come all at once, but it didn't take very long. And then suddenly, he started speaking wisdom. A cigarette seller, almost illiterate.

Suddenly, people would come and ask him questions and intensely alive and wise answers came out of his mouth. Something had come through the form. And so the cigarette seller became Nisargadatta Maharaj.

In India, they like giving people names. Maharaj means the great king, spiritually, of course. So this is one teacher to whom it came not suddenly, although it didn't take very long.

After a few years, it became a continuous living presence. Presence was continuous in him. Now, as it is becoming a more widespread phenomenon and this is happening, many people experience at first as a lessening of suffering, a considerable lessening of suffering in their lives.

They can breathe, there's some space. There may still be drama occasionally, but there's space also. To many people, it is coming gradually.

And to others, it is coming in an accelerated form. In this culture, these days, it often happens through an illness, AIDS, cancer. And I know quite a few to whom it came in that way.

And I could see, and I told them, you are on an accelerated course. What otherwise probably would have taken much, much longer is happening now through your illness that is forcing you into presence. And others don't need an illness.

It's happening. I cannot tell you whether you're better off with an illness or without it. If you choose presence, and this is only a limited perspective, it's not the ultimate truth, then it's less likely that you'll need to be hit over the head in order to crack the remaining shell.

If you die to the past every moment and return to just the freshness of this, don't carry personal past, the past in relationships, the past that you have with people. Yesterday, they said that or whatever. Meet a person as if for the first time.

Look at them and be there as a presence, not as a heavy, personal past. Be the attention. Be the attention that is looking at them because that's what you are.

Be the consciousness that flows through your eyes as you look at them and listen to them. You are that. And then you, the beautiful expression in the Course in Miracles that is used for the present moment is the holy instant.

To realize the only place that is sacred in life is this moment. If you only pay attention to it, you notice the sacredness of whatever form it takes, even if it looks horrible at first because what looks horrible at first will be some kind of death, some kind of breaking down, and there also is sacredness. We already pointed to that, particularly there.

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Bush and his policies, which led to the invasion of Iraq, the dismantlement of the U.S. social services and civil liberties. Should I really let go, release this outrage? Outrage, I assume, is a kind of anger.

There are many places where you can look in this world, countries, places, institutions, governments, and you see varying degrees of human unconsciousness at work. Wherever you look, you see the manifestation of human unconsciousness. Unconsciousness, of course, I'm not saying that they are totally as, they are identified with the mind and the old patterns of the mind.

The collective ego. And wherever you look still, you see it, because the change that is happening in humanity, to a large extent, is on the inner. It only slowly reaches the outer levels where you can actually detect it.

It takes a while before it reaches an institution, before it reaches a politician, before it reaches somebody in a position of power, but occasionally, it already happens. Russia had a relatively enlightened human being after having had succession of leaders who seemed, you didn't even know whether they were alive or dead when you saw them, when they were having their, and there was actually speculation. There was.

There was. Is whoever, Brezhnev, or whoever the names were, is he still alive, or did they just put a puppet there that went? And some others speculated that it was an actor acting because they didn't dare say that he had died, so they gave an actor the role to play.

And this maybe have been true. We don't know. And that's one form of unconsciousness, and the entire structure of that regime was started from an ideal.

The mind saw something beautiful. We must have equality. No personal possessions.

But nothing had changed in the human mind. The structures were still in place, so we got that instead. And then suddenly, there was Gorbachev who, compared to the previous leaders, was a Buddha in consciousness.

I remember once a remark he made on television when he was still president. They asked, there was a little scandal about some Western spies and Eastern spies had been thrown out of the country. Some, the usual thing.

And what about this scandal about the Russian spies and the Russian embassy? And he said, well, as the wise man said, this too will pass. And it did.

However, it is rare for this shift that is happening in human consciousness to reach the outer forms, the institutions, the political, the government, the institutions, whatever it may be, the outer forms, business, business is the way businesses are run, companies. In most cases, they're dominated still by the old egoic consciousness. And I've spoken to some people who work in corporations who say there's so much infighting and useless power struggles going on within the corporation, it's a miracle that anything gets done at all.

And everybody lives in fear and they're not happy. So wherever you look in the world, you will find still on the surface of things, varying degrees of unconsciousness, and only occasionally something else comes through already here and there. It does.

Even on television, sometimes you see it. You see there's some conscious being speaking or a conscious film that has a message pointing to conscious awareness or pointing to stillness. It happens.

Maybe it happens more now. It's happening more. It's always wonderful.

I love it when I see a film that points to the truth. And there are quite a few now. Not the majority yet, of course.

But there are so many things that you could feel angry about if you personalize human unconsciousness. If you make it into an identity, then you say these dreadful bastards, look what they are doing. Human unconsciousness.

Jesus saw it clearly when he said they know not what they do. In other words, they are unconscious. And so a country sometimes also can vary.

A country can be pulled into unconsciousness to some extent by an unconscious leader. Germany is a best example of what happened there. A country that, compared to others on the planet, was one of the most highly-developed cultures scientifically, literature, culture, philosophy, music, and all that, to no avail.

They dropped right down into unconsciousness. Back. But this wouldn't have happened if there had not been a strong, enormous amount of collective pain body still in the country.

And an enormous amount of collective ego despite the so-called cultural achievements. So when you see it as unconsciousness, you're less likely to feel angry about it because anger does not really fulfill a very useful purpose. It doesn't really change things.

It contributes more. You're being pulled into unconsciousness through anger. You become unconscious yourself.

See it for what it is. And then the next step is, what can you do? You have to accept that this is so, which does not mean there's nothing you can do.

Once you have accepted that there's still a considerable amount of unconsciousness here on the planet, wherever you see it, wherever you feel it's mostly, you feel called upon to do something in this or that area. It could be the destruction of nature. It could be the polluting of oceans and rivers.

It could be on the political scene, American politics, other politics, Middle East, great focal point of unconsciousness. It's just look at the situation there. The instinct is no stop, no pause to the fighting between the two.

And they're both victims of the other. And they're both totally convinced that they are victims of the other. So when you see it, then you can point out certain things, write, speak to people, have a website that says the truth about such and such, so and so, and just state the facts as they are.

This is how it is. If you want to, you can stand at a street corner and hold up something, a sign. A few people may start talking to you.

They're more likely to listen if you're not angry, but simply explain, look, this is how it is. They're more likely to watch your website if it doesn't have this, the screaming anger about it. You're not convincing anybody who has the opposite view to yours, who says Bush is the greatest leader that has happened to America in a long time.

You're not going to convince them with your anger that you are right. Anger will, their own position will become more entrenched. And so if you're right, then state the facts.

This is how it is. Explain. If you can see the futility of anger, it's more likely to drop away.

And there's something more powerful then. You can speak with passion, without anger, but passion about what you feel is true. Be aware, very careful with identifying with mental positions though when you do that.

Identifying with a position that's me or us against. Be very careful with making wrong others, groups of people or individuals. Because it draws you back into unconsciousness.

Don't personalize it in that way. When doing projects of any sort, large or small, I find I must keep my intent fiercely in mind or I end up doing something else. By employing this fierce focus, am I actually being counterproductive in the long run or in the big picture?

The focus, when you have a project that needs to be done, finished. Now, the questioner is saying, keeping my intent fiercely in mind. Now, the intent, I assume, is where you want to get to, the finished project, where you want to, the point that you want to arrive at to get it done.

So my intent is getting to that point where the project is finished. My intent is drawing up a plan, a business plan or the architect as the building draws up to a huge high-rise office building or whatever, or there may be a project of any kind that you need to finish. There's the intent.

And that's very much, I compare it to a journey. When you're traveling from here to there, maybe you're walking. Let's say the rudimentary form, the early form of journeying, of being on a pilgrimage or journeying.

Tourists didn't exist at that time. It was unknown. The people would journey because they had to leave their country or they went on some kind of army expedition or pilgrimage, spiritual journey.

That was perhaps the most common journey that individuals would undertake, pilgrimage. You know where you need to go. The question is, what is it that takes up most of your attention?

The place that you need to get to or the step you're taking at this moment? What's more important? Now, in many cases, these days, what people are obsessed with is the outcome where they need to get to and that causes the stress.

I need to get this done, finished, over with. And I'm on a limited time scale here. Can't waste any minute.

It needs to get done. So there's an excessive projection to the finished end product, the point in the future that I need to get to. And then the doing itself, it is done in a hurried way.

The rest is the energy. Okay, come on. What's the next, next?

It doesn't matter what you're doing. Let's say you have to complete something that you manufacture with your hands, but this thing has to be ready by tomorrow. The world is mad these days.

It always tells you that you have no time. You have to do it by tomorrow. And so you become excessively focused on tomorrow.

I have to get this, the finished product. Or you're thinking that I can sell this. When it's finished, I can sell it.

So it's done quickly with the end in mind. The end takes over your mind, occupies your mind more than the present moment, and you reduce the present moment to a means to an end. That's how a lot of doing happens these days.

And all that doing is of low quality. Any doing that reduces this moment to a means to an end to a future moment is not high quality doing. And you can observe that when you observe how a person works, whether they are totally attentive, give total attention to whatever they are doing at this moment, which does not mean that they don't know where they are going to in their project.

That is peripherally in their field of attention. The point they want to get to is peripherally in their field of attention. Like a traveler who is walking towards Rome, let's say, and they are taking this step and are fully conscious of each step they are taking, but peripherally they know where they are going.

It's over there. It's a long way away, a long way. But they know it's over there.

So the focal point of there is the quality of your step at this moment, because if you're not careful, you'll stumble. You'll never get to Rome. The quality of each step is what matters.

And the getting is secondary. It is on the periphery. You have the goal in mind also, but it does not occupy your mind.

It does not overpower you. And so then the present moment is not a means to an end. You give your full attention to this moment.

I have seen a few, not many, and some of them are highly so-called effective and successful people who did not become successful through strain and stress. Some did, and they are very unhappy and won't be around for long. But I have observed a few who, whoever they meet, whoever they talk to, or whatever is presented to them, they are totally there with it.

If you come to them and ask them a question, they may be high up, so to speak, in social terms, the CEO of this or that corporation, and somebody comes to them, and there are a few, not many, who will give you total attention. No matter who you are. And that is wonderful.

Everybody loves doing what they tell them to do because they feel so valued because attention is the greatest gift you can give. Full attention. You are acknowledging that human being beyond the roles that they play in the world.

So they are giving everything their fullest attention, and they are extremely effective at what they do. Others look as if they were effective, but everything they do is contaminated with extremely stressful raw energy that is really a form of suffering. And they spread unhappiness.

So it is possible to work effectively, in fact, more effectively, by focusing on what it is at hand here, right now, to do, without losing, in your peripheral vision, the place you need to get to. That remains. Here, there.

One step, Rome is there. But this step is here, and this step is more important. Whenever you see any work of quality that's been made by a human being, it means some attention must have gone into it, some human attention.

Somewhere, there must have been someone who did not reduce the moment in which that was being made to a means to an end, where it gave. So you have works of art that have that quality. Handicraft things made by artisans in the original way, not under stress of having to produce, because attention is also loving care.

Another aspect of attention is, whatever you give attention to, there is a loving care that flows into the doing. So if you give attention to a human being that comes into the now, the field of now, and this is so beautiful, to give each human being that comes into your field of vision to you with this or that demand or question or whatever it may be, give them full and complete attention. That doesn't mean you get drawn into their story.

You don't give attention necessarily to their mind stream and energize that. You simply give attention. There's a spaciousness.

There is the awareness, the current of awareness flows into the, in the same way you look at a tree. You hold, and that is beautiful. So see how things work in that new way and observe if you can find anybody who is present in doing something, observe them.

It's wonderful to watch somebody at work in that way and it won't really be perceived as work by them. It's joyful. Here's this one question that has appeared about 10 times in different forms.

How would you suggest imparting these teachings to children?

[Speaker 2] (7:46:23 - 7:46:25)

Lesson five continued on disc seven.

[Speaker 1] (7:46:29 - 8:15:48)

Here's this one question that has appeared about 10 times in different forms. How would you suggest imparting these teachings to children? I assume that either you live with children or that you work with children or that you may have the desire perhaps to write a book for children, whatever.

If you live with children or work with children, then of course primary in imparting the teachings to children is not through words, but through living, living the teaching. Specially applies if you have children at home. If you live presence, if you embody living presence, then they will catch it from you and you don't need to say that much, but there may be moments when they are receptive and perhaps a word or two may come out of your mouth pointing to presence because the children live in a culture that knows as yet nothing of presence.

It is possibly likely that they go to a school that is dominated by nervous mind energy unless you have chosen already a relatively conscious school for them. They do exist here and there. But if not, if they are still part of the mainstream culture then in a way you need to counteract that at home.

That otherwise they will be very nervous children because school is making them tense, stressed and nervous. So most homes lack presence and when you go in there you see in many cases it's a madhouse. It's your job to bring in presence.

And again, we come back now to what we just spoke of in the previous question. Giving your children your fullest attention is the greatest gift. Many parents these days never listen to their children because they have the next thing already that they need to do and they are busy anyway, how was school?

Okay, okay. And what do you have to do now? Okay.

Never, when in the listening, it doesn't matter so much what the children are telling you. What matters is that you, the space that arises as you listen. The spacious presence that arises as you listen to the child.

Giving them space to be. Oh, that's how the teachings are imparted by living it in that way. Perhaps also certain things, if you have very young children where the mind is just starting up in them to see if you can keep them aware that words and concepts are never the reality.

Are not everything. Particularly at a stage when they demand to be fed with words and concepts. When they're at the age where they ask, what's this, what's that for?

What's that? And 100 times a day they ask, what's that? Because they're quickly, the mind is absorbing.

It needs to do that, it seems. The mind is absorbing words. It wants to know.

But the openness also disappears. So when you teach new words and or show them this is that, what's this? There's so much you can say about this leaf to a child instead of saying, it's a leaf.

As you say it, you put it in the child's hand. You encourage the child to look so that the child does not stop looking the moment he or she has learned the word. Because that's what the mind does.

The true looking isn't happening anymore. The word takes the place of the reality. It becomes immediately a screen.

And so that to reduce that, when you explain as much as you can, you may not be able to do it all the time. But when you explain something, stay with the reality. And perhaps instead of saying, it's a leaf, say, we call it a leaf.

Because it's not a leaf. This is the illusion that when you attach a word to something you know what it is. You have no idea what it is.

You've just attached a word to it. And that's how people live. They live in this make believe world that they know.

All they have is a collection of labels. And so that that doesn't happen to the child. See, as you teach language and words and concepts, see if you can keep the child in touch with the reality that is more alive, deeper, more mysterious than any concept.

And here you can teach so much. You can teach the child to, can you see the colors? And can you see the shadings here?

Isn't it beautiful? Can you feel that? Yes, it's called a leaf, but can you feel it?

Can you see the colors? And can, do you know what's happening to it? No, why is it so beautiful?

What's happening to it? It's dying. It's dying.

Soon it'll be gone. And then the child may ask another, dying? What's that?

Well, I'm not saying what words will come out of your mouth because you will be present at that moment. But then through this little thing where before you said, that's a leaf. It's all, or you might even know what tree it is.

So you have attached another label to it. So you can give labels. The mind needs it, but there's far more.

Always remind the child, point out that which is beyond the words and concepts. And so that would be wonderful for a child to grow up in that way so that the mind is not totally possessed by words and concepts. So it remains, the seeing remains, the hearing remains.

You hear a bird and then encourage the child to hear more, to hear, can you hear? Encourage, and children will be receptive to that. Of course, there are many things in our culture that are there to stimulate the mind, to draw them out of their body, to teach a child to feel the body.

They are very ready to feel that, make it into a little game. Can you feel the inner body? Can you feel the aliveness that's there?

And they can, and they will love it. And then, if possible, reduce the amount of gadgets they play with because they all work on the level of abstraction, computer screens, video game screens, TV, pulling them out of their body, pulling their attention out into some hypnotic trance. That gives them a secondary feeling of false aliveness.

The video game. So much so that when they stop playing, they don't feel alive anymore. What's the name?

I need some other fix now. This is what the culture is doing to the children. I need another stimulus, another fix, otherwise I will feel dead.

And then they look for the next thing, and there's plenty of things. Switch something on. Put headphones on.

Whoop, whoop, whoop, whoop, whoop, whoop. And then you teach the children about the pain body. Children have them too, some more than others.

So when the child goes into a rage or a screaming fit, or maybe the pain body will take a different form. The child totally withdraws into a corner and doesn't want to talk anymore. At the slightest, the slightest thing might provoke the pain body.

It's the same with adults. And there's then far more pain than you could ever have imagined coming out of that little situation. Some children become screaming monsters for a few minutes.

Ooh, ooh. In the middle of it, you can't say anything, but when it's subsided, you can say, what was that? Where did that come from?

What did that feel like? Does it feel good? And so you can direct attention within when the pain body's not active, and then say, do you think it may happen again?

So we will see if it happens again, and we can catch it when just it starts. And next time, you can see, the child starts, oh, is it back? Maybe it has a name.

The red big monster back? Oh, can you feel it? Not at that point, whether they say they can feel it or not depends to what extent the pain body has already taken possession of their mind.

If they scream at you when you ask, can you feel it, then it's too late to feel it. Or they throw something. And then again afterwards, you say, what was that?

It was back, wasn't it? And then you say, did you notice that mommy or daddy also has that? Do you remember the other day when mommy screamed at you or mommy dropped something and started shouting and screaming at daddy?

Threw him out of the house. That was the same thing. Mommy didn't catch it then either.

And so how wonderful if a child can grow up in a conscious environment, family, surroundings that way. Not necessarily totally enlightened, just conscious. Not necessarily a family with continuous and permanent peace.

Threw out. So that is imparting the teaching to children. Present moment, direct their attention, redirect their attention to present moment, again and again, this, to looking, to listening, to touching, away from how you reduce the amount they spend addicted to the screens and electronic things.

You have to somehow do it and replace it with something more vital, more alive. And they can feel that it's more vital and more alive. Pain bodies have an enormous capacity to pull you in.

Even the pain body of a child has that already. When it starts screaming, it wants a negative reaction from you. That's what the pain body always wants.

Give me more pain. And so it requires considerable presence to hold the space. And many parents just are completely flabbergasted when the children, the angel turns into a monster.

What is going on here? And then they react. The more unconscious they are, the stronger, the more violent their reaction will be.

Their own pain body reacts. They know not what they do. There are several questions.

There was just one here and about six or seven others on prayer, the use of prayer, how to use it, whether to use it at all. Now that word can mean many different things. It can mean going to church and saying, please God, let me have that job.

I promise I'll be good. If you only let me have that job. I practiced that as a child.

Please let there be some peace in my family. Didn't work. So from somebody who went to church every Sunday, then at 12, I must have decided that there was no point anymore.

But there are many different kinds of prayer. There are petitionary prayers. You would like something.

They may sometimes work, but you never know whether it was the prayer or what you would have gotten it anyway. There are more effective ways if you really feel that you need or want something, but be careful, it won't make you happy, but that's another story. Okay.

If you really feel you want something, you can use affirmation and visualization. And when you get it, enjoy it. Don't look for yourself in it.

Don't look to it for deep inner fulfillment or some kind of permanently enhanced sense of self or permanent happiness. Nothing that you achieve can give you that. Knowing that, you can play around with the world of form.

And Jesus already explained how to pray for something. And that is what he said, when you pray for something, feel as if you already had it, as if it had already been given. So you're not saying, I want something, because if you say, I want something, it affirms a lack.

It says on the other side, the unexpressed side, I don't have it. So when you say, I want it, you're also stating that you don't have it. So you're praying at the same time not to have it.

If you affirm and visualize that it is already here and you feel as if you had it, that the feeling that you want to get from it, you already have that feeling. And that's the truth, because you're imagining that it's going to give you feelings of peace or happiness, which is always in you already. If you go, just go inside deep enough.

But let me, I don't want to discourage you from playing around in the world of form. So why not try it out? Visualize that it is already yours.

You have it, and you feel what you feel as you have it. Thank you for giving me that. It's beautiful, whatever it may be.

The house, you're already in it, feels good. Thank you. It's nice to have that house, thanks, yeah.

It's already there. It's more likely to manifest in that way. And then you move in, and you go from there.

Then you sit there. You feel, oh, great, I've got it. And then the old mind patterns come up in the new house.

Then there are other prayers that are used, they're all in different religions, and they can be called pointers. They are more advanced prayers. They are pointers to a particular state.

It's not that uttering those words produces magically the state. What matters when you utter certain words or prayers, then most of them are short, is really the stillness that comes after that. Buddhism, for example, has the metta meditation, which is a kind of prayer which starts with, I believe, may everybody on this planet be well and happy.

And then after you've uttered those words, there's a stillness. And then it says, may everybody in this country be well and happy. Metta means loving kindness.

And then there's a stillness. May every being in this city be well and happy. Stillness.

May everybody in this house be well and happy. May I be well and happy. And it takes you into a stillness.

And the being of well and happy is already there in the stillness. It's there, it spreads. You could become still, it would spread anyway, even without the words.

Because whatever state of consciousness you are in affects the totality, and in turn is the totality manifesting through you. Oh, we have the beautiful Christian prayer by St. Francis, I believe. I believe, let me be an instrument of thy peace where there's hatred, let me sow love, and so on.

Where there's injury, pardon, and so on. And those prayers are openings. They open a door.

And they always, they take you into stillness. And they are beautiful. Most prayers operate still on the level of duality.

Even when you say, let me be an instrument of thy peace, you are still using the language of duality. There's me, and thy, presumably, is God. There is me, and there is God.

So God is perceived still as something or someone separate from me. Nevertheless, it's a beautiful prayer. And if stillness follows the prayer, in the stillness you have transcended duality.

There is, some of you are familiar with the Course in Miracles. Course in Miracles, many of those lessons are a kind of prayer. And most of the lessons in it operate on the level of duality, speaking of God as he, and addressing God as something or someone outside of you.

Course in Miracles meets you where you are on the level of duality. But as you reach the end of the course, without you noticing it, the lessons become more non-dualistic. And in the end, you end up in stillness.

And it says, the use for words is almost over now, towards the end of the course. So it meets you where you are, and takes you by the hand. It only works if you can get hold, if Christian terminology is appealing to you.

To some, it is not. And then there are many other ways. Don't use something that you don't like, the form of which you don't like.

So most prayers are dualistic, and then you can have, although the meta-prayer in Buddhism is let all beings be well and happy, it's fine, there's no duality really there, although you're still saying there are many beings. Ultimately, there's only oneness. But what can you do?

You're using language. And then there are short things that are almost like mantras, just single words, peace, for example. The word itself doesn't produce peace, but it is a pointer.

Stillness. One of the most beautiful pointers to be found in the Old Testament, be still and know that I am God. And this is why, if we can call that a prayer, it is a kind of prayer.

It is a prayer where duality is transcended. And it is a miraculous prayer. The words of which it consists are all synonyms for one single thing.

Be still, know I am God. Be being, one being, sat in Sanskrit. Being and stillness are one.

It is the stillness of being itself before it comes into existence as something. Be still, know. In the stillness that is being, there is a deep knowing, non-conceptual, a deep intelligence, not words, not thoughts, deeper than thought, because it's the primordial seed of all intelligence.

Be, still, know, I am. It is the innermost sense of beingness or I am. God, the divine, the source, the one.

And you put these words together, each word signifies also the other. They're all one. Be still, know, I am God.

Miraculous. So those are advanced prayers and powerful. They put you in touch.

Be still and know that I am God is one of the most powerful and beautiful pointers to the truth. And one of those rare ones that uses language without taking you into duality. Please talk more about the pain body and how to transcend, question mark, it.

We already spoke a little bit, but there are so many questions about the pain body that we may, in tomorrow's session, talk a little bit more about it, unless something else arises in the now. Last one, perhaps, because they're cutting off the satellite dish. As someone who has done a lot of yoga and body work for many years, I always felt there was some correlation between spirituality and good posture.

Then I saw you.

[Speaker 3] (8:15:51 - 8:16:15)

Oh. What a shock.

[Speaker 1] (8:16:24 - 8:22:46)

My first thought was, how can somebody with your posture be so blooming spiritually? And wouldn't you be even more spiritual if you did some corrective body work? My second thought was that I'm a blooming idiot.

And it's, can you tell us how you experience the body and if it ever feels like an impediment to you? That reminds me of a, I talked to Gangaji, the spiritual teacher, a couple of years ago, and she was telling me she was doing some kind of body work years ago in, I can't remember what kind. But at that time, she heard of Ramana Maharshi and became interested in the teachings and read a book.

And then she saw a picture, a photo of him, and she saw that and said, a man who has such bad posture can possibly have nothing to teach me. He will certainly have nothing to teach me if he walks like that. And it took her several years to transcend that belief.

And then she saw that it didn't matter anymore. Sometimes if the body has gone through a lot of suffering, either physical suffering or psychological suffering, it leaves traces in the body, in the very bones of the body, it leaves traces. In some cases, it's in the face.

I knew one spiritual teacher, I won't say who, who said, look at my face. I always look unhappy. Even when I'm happy, I look unhappy.

And that is because I've been unhappy, I was unhappy for so many years. He didn't really, he only looked unhappy if you saw the external features of his face. If you looked more deeply, you could see he wasn't unhappy.

But you could see the lines in his face that showed that where the trace is left behind by unhappiness. But something else was now shining through it, through the form that had been affected by the suffering. And that's the same here.

People are surprised when I tell them it's very rare that I ever feel any pain in the body. Only two years ago, I was at Omega, I had a back pain. I don't know what that was to do with.

Maybe the events in New York, I don't know. But usually, there's no pain, the body feels fine. And it's not, it doesn't seem to be a problem at all.

And something else shines through it. So the body has fulfilled its function of being an opening for that. Now, I'm not saying that in many other cases, body work is a wonderful thing to free emotions that may be stuck there, even the pain body.

It's beautiful. It's not, ultimately, it could happen to anyone at any moment. It could happen to somebody who is totally crippled.

And that has happened, too. There was a famous enlightened poet, a teacher who, hundreds of years ago, who wrote the Indian scripture called the Ashtavakra Gita. And he is said to have been a cripple.

And it didn't matter anymore. That was his suffering. Trace is left behind by the suffering.

And then the body simply became something through which presence shines. I'll put these back in the basket. I'm sorry, your question hasn't come up yet.

There are many. Thank you. Thank you.

Stay a little while, both here and if you're still there, Austin, Hollyhock. Stay a little while with the empty chair or the empty screen. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (8:22:52 - 8:23:02)

This concludes lesson five. Lesson six, questions and answers. The power of detachment and surrender.

[Speaker 1] (8:23:07 - 8:32:50)

We've had the alarm clock for the first awakening. And now comes the real awakening. For some people at Hollyhock, good morning.

That may also be the alarm clock because it's seven o'clock in the morning there. Austin, I don't know, it's eight or nine o'clock there. You may be half awake.

Here, everybody is fully awake in one sense. And perhaps also in another sense of the word. As you may have noticed, laughter was an important and is an important part of our gathering.

It's very liberating, particularly to laugh at the human condition and to laugh at one's own mind patterns because it implies that you've taken one step back, a retreat, and have seen your own patterns or your own drama that's produced by the mind patterns. And when you recognize drama as drama, it becomes also funny. Awakening, so it's not a serious business.

If you make it serious, then you've gone astray somewhere and the mind is trying to do something. Awakening, a synonym for that, of course, is enlightenment. Another beautiful word.

Which in the English language, as it so happens, implies two things. There's light in there, enlightenment. It implies light, the light of consciousness, the clarity, the awakened consciousness, the clear seeing.

And it implies lightness in the sense of lack of heaviness. Gravity, weight, which includes seriousness because the mind made me, the egoic self, takes itself very seriously. It also takes itself very seriously in its attempt to become enlightened.

So humor, right humor, not egoic humor. Egoic humor also exists. It might be to laugh at somebody else and think, oh, I'm much, by comparison, I am much more intelligent than this silly person.

Laughter frees you up inside. And I hadn't realized until I read some of the questions to you yesterday, that every question also seemed to have a funny side. I didn't realize it until everybody started laughing.

I'm not waiting for the next sentence to come and I hope you are not either. Laughter. If we were waiting, I would be under stress and you would be impatient.

And perhaps you now realize how enjoyable it is when I'm not speaking. We will look at a few more questions, including some questions on the pain body. This is by someone who is sleepless at night.

My wife snores. My now at night is miserable. Laughter.

I have tried electronic gadgets and earplugs to no avail. How does one respond and not react? Signed, awake but only at night.

Laughter.

[Speaker 3] (8:32:50 - 8:32:51)

Laughter.

[Speaker 1] (8:33:24 - 9:05:27)

P.S. I have tried your cold soup analogy. Laughter. Sweetheart, would you please stop snoring?

It doesn't work. No, of course the cold soup method is not going to work here because snoring is an involuntary process. Laughter.

It just happens. I hope at home you have separate bedrooms. Laughter.

But here, well, any situation that you cannot change, and there are situations of that kind, or situations that you cannot change at this time, perhaps change will be possible at some point, but right now, at this moment, there's nothing one can do, whether you're in prison or, metaphorically speaking, in prison, or have some other condition, some life situation. Now, if there's truly nothing you can do, or there may be something you can do, but there are certain important reasons why perhaps you cannot take action right now. If that is truly so, if you cannot change the situation, there are only two options left.

You remove yourself or you surrender. Oh, yes, I forgot the third one. You suffer.

And that's always the case, then it's your choice which of the three you choose. Surrender, in this case, is surrender to the fact that you get woken up several times during the night and then perhaps feel sleepy during the day, but just surrender to, yes, there you are awake again. And then you might use this opportunity and just go into the body.

What else can you do? Or shake her, but then it starts again. Or you rent a tent and move into a tent.

And the thing that doesn't work and that which generates suffering is complaining mentally about the situation, about a situation that you can do nothing about right now. Complaining mentally or complaining also to others, anybody who is prepared to listen to you, you can complain about the situation. And if you observe closely, you see that something in you likes that.

Something in you feels strengthened by the complaining. And that's the false sense of self. Whenever you complain, it strengthens the false me, because you are right.

The complainer is always right. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. When is tolerance enabling and or masochism?

You may remember we talked about yes to what is, is not always a yes on the verbal external level. It's an inner attitude, an inner state that you bring to the situation. And out of that inner state of openness and alert attention, which goes with the yes to what is, alert attention, which is intelligence, out of that, the right response comes for that situation.

And the right response for that situation is not necessarily the word yes or yes, go ahead. Yes, hit me over the head is not necessarily what comes out of your mouth. Out of that, it's quite possible that the word no comes out of your mouth.

No, that's not right, that's not it. I'm not going there. So it's, be careful not to mistake that state of, because the yes to what is, is a state of consciousness.

It's not the literal, sometimes it is, but it's not always a literal yes that you agree with whatever somebody is doing. Somebody may be at this moment committing an act of violence and it is within your field of possibility to do something about it. And then you will see the situation and you will act perhaps to stop what's happening.

Nobody can predict what you will do out of presence, but it will be right. So there is great strength in the yes to what is, very great strength. And then there is, whenever you have said what you had to say in any situation, step back into stillness.

Otherwise the mind will take over and it will become a non-ending stream of words. You have all witnessed that in other people and perhaps in yourself. People can go on and on about the same thing.

They're dragged along by a mind stream. Okay, enough, enough, okay. And then they're quiet for 20 seconds.

Oh, just one more thing. And while they are quiet for 20 seconds, you can feel the energy built up in them. And that dissolves only through, again, bringing alert attention from where you can observe the mind rather than be it.

Your speaking then becomes more powerful. Any words that you say become more powerful because they always come directly out of the stillness. The strange thing is you may have noticed almost all the questions, the answer to all the questions always takes you back to the same point, the same origin.

It's always the same answer in a way, it's in different aspects. And basically, all the questions are the same question. And once you've gone very deep into the answer, which is in yourself, that's the end of the questions.

There's another question on this sheet of paper. How can you witness and feel your feelings at the same time? One could say you cannot really feel your feelings until you witness your feelings because until you witness, you observe, bring awareness to your feelings, you are your feelings.

So you don't feel them, you are them, you act them out. And most importantly, your feelings and your thought processes are linked. Feelings energize thought processes that reflect those particular feelings and the thought processes, the story.

Adds further energy to the feelings. And this is how certain feelings survive in the body long after an event has passed, which feelings that an animal would just pass through, whoosh, in humans, gets associated with a story that you can keep telling yourself and others. And so you can keep the feelings alive, the vicious circle.

So you're not really feeling your feelings. You are so immersed in them that you are the feelings. So it's called identification.

And so when you bring awareness, there is a place from where you can truly feel the feelings. And as you do that, the story is taken out because awareness replaces thinking. There's a shift then from being identified with a story in the head, the thought processes, to being the aware presence.

So you're no longer fueling the feelings with stories in the head. And now you can watch and feel them directly, whatever it may be. Feel it as an energy field in the body, but also be aware of yourself as that which looks, sees, feels, the field of attention.

In the same way that you look externally at a tree, you are aware of sense perceptions. Flowers, trees, you listen, bring awareness to sense perceptions. That is an enormous help in bringing awareness to your feelings.

The more awareness you bring to sense perceptions, the easier it is to bring awareness to what you feel inside, because it's simply a shift from externally directed awareness, ultimately nothing is external because the entire universe takes place inside you. But let's just put it like that. Externally directed awareness and inner directed awareness.

So you are present within and present without. So the enormous importance of being present without also as far as your inner life is concerned, because it's one awareness. If one could ask a similar question, how can I witness eating an apple?

See what the question was. And feel this, how you're eating the apple at the same time. It's only when you truly are present as you eat the apple that you can truly feel and taste the apple.

Before it's a process that is semi-conscious or even totally conscious. Eating goes back to a very long time. Ingesting substances.

This. And you can observe certain humans engaged in intelligent conversation at a dinner table. And the moment they put something in their mouth, they go completely unconscious.

They're totally, and they're not really tasting the food. They're just gobbling it down. And then when they've swallowed, they wake up for a moment again and then they talk about literature or philosophy.

But to really eat an apple consciously is a wonderful thing. Then you bring something that is usually unconscious, you make it conscious. Maybe that's called Tantra if you do it with sexuality, but it could be any activity that would usually be very unconscious that is an animal impulse in humans.

And you bring consciousness to it, witness it, observe it. It then has a different quality. It becomes beautiful.

And then you can truly taste the apple and be present. Wow. But there's always more than that which you witness.

There is the witnessing presence. Who is that? What is that?

That's you. Some people call it the I am. One person, an early 20th century spiritual teacher, Gurdjieff, whom some of you know, spoke of self-remembering.

And really what he meant was to remember who it is that is doing this or experiencing this or perceiving this, not the story-based entity, not thinking, okay, I'm John Smith and I'm eating an apple. That's not it. No, John Smith is eating an apple at this moment.

No, to sense that which knows, that which is aware, that in you that is aware that there is eating at this moment. So there's awareness of something and at the same time, self-awareness of the deepest sense of I. And so that is in any, whether you're eating an apple, watching a tree, engaged in some kind of action or activity, or watching an inner feeling.

There's always the manifested and the, one could say, the unmanifested. We called it sometimes the background and the foreground. In the foreground is what happens.

In the background is the field, the I am, the deepest I am, in which whatever happens is happening. Now it can happen that the background that what we call here the background or the ground, which we could call being, the ground of being, it can happen that that ground is so intensely felt, realized, that what is occurring, one could almost say, is a shift. And this is how a deeply awakened being experiences the world.

And that shift is what, as you are just awakening, what is foreground becomes the background. And that which you perceived as the background as you were awakening becomes so, it's realized in its vastness that that becomes the foreground. In other words, your sense of beingness, the spacious field of presence is so vast and all-fulfilling that whatever is happening is just a little, sometimes I call it a ripple on the surface of the ocean is the event.

And you feel your own being or being so strongly that that occupies the entire foreground. And any event is a background, a little background event. And so that is from that place, certain Indian teachers say the world is unreal.

It's absurd if we take that as a philosophical proposition and then start believing in it, it doesn't make sense. You can claim a hundred times that the world is unreal, but the next moment something happens and you react. So where's the unreality of the world?

If the world upsets you so much, it was only an idea in the head. But they talk from that place where to them, whatever happens is like a dreamlike structure. They can see how quickly it appears, how quickly it disappears.

Any event, anything is fleeting, of course it is. Right now you're here in another now on the same date, totally different surroundings. This has dissolved already, gone.

What hasn't dissolved is that which is aware. So some Indian teachers then from that place where the vastness of the sense of I am or beingness presence, the stillness could say is so vast, the I alive stillness, that that becomes the foreground and any events become the background. But for many of you, as this is beginning to emerge, it could be better described as you sense it already coming in, in the background.

And that's wonderful. It's more than most human beings on this planet now or in the past ever experienced. It's still, it's a wonderful thing.

And it's from that place of the background having become the foreground that Jesus could say, I have overcome the world. And it's from that place, perhaps also that Krishnamurti once in a talk, he was already quite old, said to his audience, do you want to know my secret? And they'd been coming for 30 years waiting for the secret.

And they all said, yes, please. Okay, here it is, he said, I don't mind what happens. I believe this question here has just been answered.

You speak of using the senses to alter presence. What about going deeper and going beyond the senses? If everyone around you is complaining and building their story, what do you do?

Say, is that so all day? Yes. Yes.

Yes. Comment on their complaining or spend less time with the unconscious people. Some days you would practice all day.

The last statement is partially true and not just some days. You will practice all day. Well, is that so is not necessary to say.

The story is the momentum of the egoic mind. It will try to draw you in in some way to make you part of the story. The story very often in people is energized even more by their pain body.

And the stories can be quite a violent story. So there's a story, but it's energized by enormous emotion, which is past emotion to a large extent, not necessarily generated by this little event that was the triggering event, but the emotion is far deeper. It's human pain that has lived in each human being for millennia and has built up.

It is inherited human pain. But that what we call pain body, this energy field, this residue of past emotion, of past emotional suffering that lives in humans tends to use the mind to renew itself, to feed on your thinking. And that becomes the story that is energized by human pain.

At other times, it may just be the mind pattern without the energizing effect of the pain body, but even that has a strong pulling power. Your greatest weapon, so to speak, is stillness as you listen to the story. And you will notice that's not a weapon that you can fight actively with, because the moment you fight the story in someone, you've become part of it.

Even if you say you're in a story, you're telling, the moment you start talking, that'll become a story. Your story will be that they have a story.

[Speaker 3] (9:05:31 - 9:05:34)

Lesson six, continued on disc eight.

2008 Eckhart Tolle Retreat Journey Into Yourself Part 2

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 7:33)

Even if you say you're in a story, you're telling, the moment you start talking, that will become a story. Your story will be that they have a story. And they will insist, no, this is the reality.

And they will tell you, no, you're denying, you're in complete denial of reality. No, I'm not in denial of reality. So the most vital thing is simply to be there as a still presence.

And is that easy? Yes and no. It is easier if you are connected with the inner body, as the stories happen around you, as you're listening.

So you have, you are rooted here, deep within. And that keeps you still, keeps your mind still. And from there you, there's attention that flows out.

And in that attention you're aware not only, we come back to the same again, you're aware not only of that which is arising in this moment, which is the story that you're listening to, you're also aware of the field of attention. And as you're aware of the field of attention, it becomes easier to connect with something in that other human being that lies underneath the story. So you can sometimes, to some extent, bypass the story and connect with that human being at a deeper level, where there lies their own stillness.

It's nobody's stillness, but just put it like that. Where lies their own field of stillness. So you can miraculously sometimes connect from the stillness within you to their stillness.

And then on top you have floating the story. And sometimes that can actually dissolve the story in the other person, or at least shorten it. Because otherwise it goes on and on and on.

Some people have stories that they live with for years and years, and just things get added to it. New episodes in my story, latest episode in my story. It is not surprising that people love watching soap operas, because they all have their own one going too, and then they feel better.

They say, you see, these people on TV, they have theirs too, so it must all be very real. But at least when you are watching it on TV, you can feel, oh, at least that's not my problem. It does require a high degree of alertness not to be drawn into somebody's story, not to become part of it.

Now they may already have made you part of it in a way. They have already decided. You have your assigned place in their story, and there's nothing you can do about that.

But not make the story continue in your mind, and then link into theirs. Almost anything you say in a situation like that is too much. There are questions about the pain body again.

Please say something about the pain body, especially in reference to rage and anger. How does one witness this intense energy when it does need to be energetically moved through the body? And somebody else or the same person, probably it's all the same anyway, there's only one.

Could you talk about what you do, what to do, exercise or idea? When a pain body comes on so very quickly and with such intensity, I'm left feeling overpowered by it, and I wonder if you have an idea to pop me into the moment in a flash. My pain body manifests as anger.

Anger is the quickest pain body. There is no exercise or technique that can help you here, because any exercise or technique requires time, and that's what you don't have here. Okay, oh, I didn't have time to practice my technique, I'm angry already.

If you're very alert, you may catch the arising of anger, which could happen in one second, as coming up. If you're very alert, you may catch it there. You may not be able to stop it.

Catch it means simply stay aware, watch it, and then already it's gone into your mind, and then, perhaps before you know it, words have already come out of your mouth.

[Speaker 2] (7:33 - 7:33)

Oh!

[Speaker 1] (7:36 - 31:10)

But you may still be there, although the energy may still be so strong that you can't stop it, don't even try to stop it. If you try to stop the pain body, it's the same as trying to stop flowing water or stop a kettle from boiling. And so this question rightly asks how to witness this intense energy when it doesn't need to be energetically moved through the body.

When you don't witness it, when it goes into your mind and uses your thinking, then it doesn't really move through the body because it just stays there, it gets lodged. It can stay for a long time. When you witness it, it moves through more quickly, at least that particular wave movement of the pain body.

If you cannot catch it as it arises, at what point you become conscious of what is happening to you depends on the degree of intensity of your presence. And that will be interesting to observe as a little experiment. At what point, if a pain body takes you over and it could be anger or it could be something else, do you actually realize what's happening and are able to feel and watch the energy movement and even be aware of your thought processes that cooperate with the energy of the pain body, that bring up justifications and reasons why you are so deeply unhappy about this particular situation.

And if you look more closely, you can see that this particular situation is actually a very little thing. And your unhappiness or the pain that you feel about it is far greater. It's so great that there's really no correlation between a relatively insignificant, tiny event and the amount of pain you feel.

And for other people whose pain body does not get triggered by that particular type of trigger, that same event would be absolutely nothing. Sometimes people call me, but because there are so many calls and messages, I now tend to not reply. Otherwise I would be replying all day long to phone calls.

It's just the limitations of the human form. But I do listen to it in a field of stillness and peace. And some people, they don't get a reply, they try again.

And sometimes I do reply, but it could take a long time. And some people are fine and say, okay, I've left two messages and I know you must get so many calls. And if you do have a moment, I'll be happy.

But if you can't answer, that's fine too. And to others who perhaps have a pain body that has a particular orientation that gets triggered by not being acknowledged. Perhaps as children, they were not acknowledged or ignored.

So that particular pain body gets triggered by that particular trigger. They leave two or three messages, and then the fourth message is, I am totally and utterly disgusted with you. And the amount of pain is enormous.

Have I caused this pain? I could feel guilty about this, but I know that I did not cause it. There was this trigger that caused it.

And so to one person, it is fine, a relatively insignificant thing. And to another person, it is a source of extreme pain. It's the apparent source of extreme pain.

It is not, it's only the trigger of extreme pain because the pain was already there, just waiting for the trigger. And this is another aspect of pain body. The pain body, even the dormant pain body in humans, dormant means when it's not, it is a time when it is not actually, actively using your mind.

It's just in the background somewhere. You might not even know it's there. But people with relatively heavy pain bodies, even their dormant pain bodies, they are like dormant cats.

Now, if you have observed dormant cats, sleeping cats, they are amazing because a sleeping cat is not totally asleep. Never. A sleeping cat always knows what's going on, and it can tell familiar things that are not threatening from the slightest noise that is unfamiliar, or that could be a mouse.

And so, cat is there, and you can wash the dishes, and slam doors. And then there's the tiniest rustling sound or something. And so, pain bodies, there are many pain bodies, when they are dormant, they are like a dormant cat.

All kinds of things can happen around them, it doesn't trigger them. Sometimes could even a big thing, but they are waiting for something that triggers them, an event or a trigger, that pain body responds to, but they are actually waiting for it to happen. The pain body is actually scanning your surroundings, or other people's remarks in a conversation, or reactions, just to...

And the moment somebody says something, are you accusing me of... No, I just asked if you had put the garbage out. Are you accusing me of being lazy?

Are you saying to me I'm a liar? Are you saying I'm a liar? The cat is awake.

Yes, they are cunning little creatures. So certain pain bodies, in certain cases, are associated in a person's mind with a particular story. It happens that sometimes pain body predominantly is associated with one particular kind of story in the head.

And it could be something like, this is what people always do to me. And whoever you meet, the pain body will be looking out for that kind of thing. And it may not be that at all, it will be happy to misinterpret something, in order to transform it into a trigger so that it can awaken.

So how do you... This cunning creature, how do you defeat it? Because it's...

Maybe it's even more like a fox is often used as a symbol for cunning. And in a fox, it's quite beautiful. And even in a human, the pain body is an expression of, yes, an expression of unconsciousness, an expression of energy that is somehow not flowing freely, a temporary formation, a temporary energy field formation of energy that has become somehow trapped in the body.

And yet, that also is life energy. It consists of, it is energetic. But how do you free that?

So there's no point in fighting it, you would be fighting life. But freeing it, that would be good, so that this energy can flow freely again. But freeing it, of course, implies that it will no longer persist, the energy will no longer persist in this particular form of pain body.

The aliveness, yes, it will start flowing again and become transformed. And then it can sometimes happen, you may have experienced an attack of anger, and if you totally accept what you feel, which implies being there as the observing presence and allowing it to be there, and that anger can no longer use your mind then, because instead of thinking, you're the witnessing presence, you're aware, you're watching. The thinker, which is the story of why I'm angry, which is not why you're angry at all, because you're angry because of the pain that you've been carrying there for thousands of years, but the story says I'm angry because of this, or you, this, that, and if you, then a shift happens from being the thinking entity, you are the witnessing presence.

And the witnessing presence allows that energy to be there and you can feel it fully now. And if you allow anger and you sever the link through alert attention, you sever the link between the anger and your thought processes that explain why you are angry and justify it and blame and accuse, all that being part of the story, and thus, by doing that, feed the pain body again and again. If you can become so alert that you're simply there watching the energy and then you will know this is the pain body.

And this is the suchness of this moment. And it is as it is, this moment. And as such, you allow it to be there.

The allowing means you feel it fully. And that means you're bringing an aware space to it. You are there as the space in which the anger happens.

Then it is possible that what was intense anger in a flash becomes transformed into intense energy and intense aliveness. I've met people who've told me that this is what they experienced. What one moment was intense, they allowed it and watched it and suddenly it became freed and all they could feel was a sudden burst all over the body of intense energy.

It wasn't anger anymore. One could say it was bottled. It was bottled up inside a plastic.

We use modern analogies. Plastic wrap. And suddenly it bursts and the anger, the energy is freed and is suddenly experienced that intense aliveness.

And they start running suddenly or moving. Don't know what to do with it. It's so much energy.

And some people have reported they were able to do it with, they could even then channel it into creativity. It is better to see that it flows freely so it's not anger but becomes transformed into intense energy before you channel it into creativity. Otherwise you create an angry work of art.

Which when people watch it will perhaps trigger the same feeling in them and you may be very successful. Can be very powerful too. But there's even greater power in something else and that could have originated in anger.

Became transformed. Now if that happens once it does not mean that the entire energy field of your pain body has now become dissipated. It could but probably not.

It is one particular wave movement that came. It's very hard to describe in visual terms because one cannot actually see the pain body unless you are very psychic. Some psychics may be able to see energy fields in the body.

But you can certainly feel it even if you are not psychic in yourself. And you can also feel it even if you are not very psychic in another person. You can actually feel it even if the other person says to you I'm perfectly fine.

And if you should meet anybody in the street whose pain body is also just underneath the surface. Often this is how people meet and get into an argument very quickly or get attacked by somebody. I didn't do anything.

He just came up to me and started shouting. I was just walking along. Or he just came up and started accusing me of this or that.

I don't know. Pain bodies recognize each other. So if your pain body is active at any time and you go out into the world or even if it's just underneath the surface the likelihood of meeting other pain bodies is much greater.

Interacting with others because they are looking for others. Because they strengthen itself not only through using your mind but also mutually through other people's reactions. So there are people in this world, many, they look quite normal on the outside but what they are really looking for is more pain.

They are walking pain bodies. Where can I... And then they'll choose the right one that's most likely to give them what they want.

They are looking for trouble. And so when that is very strong you can actually, without being a psychic, see the pain body through people's eyes, the raw emotion of it. And the frightening thing is many of them are driving cars.

There are no statistics yet as to how many accidents are caused by driving pain bodies. Probably 80%. So because the pain body is so cunning you need great alertness.

You need, we used this analogy before, you need the sword of presence to be able to be present as it arises in yourself or somebody else. So you can watch it. In yourself most importantly.

The most beautiful thing in a relationship is if you can say to your partner, I can feel my pain body right now. When you said that, that got triggered. That means you're conscious.

You may not yet be free of pain body but you're conscious with it. And that's beautiful. So you could use relationships where the pain body gets triggered so frequently.

In that way, yes it does require enough presence in you to see that this is what's happening. And then there's no blaming or accusing. It's just saying you did that and when you did that I felt and I still feel this anger or I feel the fear, fear, deep sadness.

Big paper, only one short question which is very nice. How does one not resist resistance? Well, that sounds almost paradoxical.

All that it means is that you notice that at this moment you're resisting what is. Noticing it means bringing awareness to the resistance. Awareness implies you're allowing what is to be.

Even the resistance because you notice it maybe even as a physical contraction in the body. As an emotional field and perhaps as thoughts going through your head. You're aware of these right suddenly.

Oh, I'm resisting this moment.

[Speaker 2] (31:11 - 31:11)

Oh.

[Speaker 1] (31:13 - 52:57)

And so you feel it and so at this moment this is what is. The mind may want to come in and say you have failed. You see you can't do it.

It's no use anyway. You might as well give up, become normal again and resist like everybody else. So when you witness it that implies you accept that it's there.

So in that sense one could say you're bringing acceptance into non-acceptance. So you could say I'm angry, upset. This is awful.

Okay, and you notice what you feel. There's the upset. That's what is.

I'm so unhappy about this thing here. That's right here. I'm so unhappy about it, which is a thought movement accompanied by an emotion.

I'm really unhappy and a little story because even to say I'm unhappy is the beginning of a little story. I'm so really unhappy about this. Okay.

And suddenly you take one step back and then you watch the mind saying this is dreadful. I'm unhappy about this. I really feel unhappy with this.

Okay. That's what is. You feel unhappy.

And the acceptance in this case, if it were put into words, would be so what? So you're unhappy. Or in other words, I don't mind being unhappy.

That's what is. I'm unhappy. So let me be unhappy.

You may be surprised to find that when you don't mind being unhappy, unhappiness cannot last very much longer. I'm not talking about indulging in some kind of story. Oh, I'm so unhappy because...

No, that means you're believing in some kind of story. And you do mind because the entire story is based on the fact that you do mind very much. But if you said, I don't mind being unhappy, that's just what is.

You're bringing the you don't mind into a story that is based on I do mind. So in that sense, you're bringing acceptance into non-acceptance. And the amazing thing is, if you don't mind being unhappy, you can't be unhappy for that much longer.

It's the end of the story because if you don't mind, what can you do? The story collapses. I live alone and experience an intense loneliness that is extremely painful, almost intolerable.

Well, the primary thing is to look at this on an inner level. The secondary is to look at what one can do on an outer level. But on the inner, the primary, surrender to this moment as it is means letting go of any concept you have about this moment, any interpretation you have about this moment in the head.

And that includes the concept of me being alone in the head, of me being lonely, of me not having anybody in my life, and simply be there not as a person, but as consciousness, as an intense conscious presence. So the pain of loneliness is similar to other kinds of pain or events that are painful. It can actually force you, allow it if you allow it, force you into presence because being with yourself becomes intolerable.

Living with this lonely me becomes intolerable. As part of my unhappiness and depression, I also experienced frequently painful loneliness. And I have a vague, vague memory of what that feels like.

Yes, there can be great pain. So allow it to force you into utter and complete presence so that the concept of me as being lonely, the conceptual identity in the head, that I'm a lonely person, I have no one. They all have somebody, other people, they all have someone, says the lonely me.

I don't have anyone. So that is no longer what gives you your sense of self. Allow it to dissolve the person.

This is what pain can do when it's used rightly, when it's allowed. It dissolves the personal sense of self and all that remains is presence. It is just this moment, sense perceptions, energy field in the body and the field of awareness, just this.

And you look around, do things, walk, watch. And then out of that you may find that on an external level some action may come that you had not thought of before, that hadn't because you were trapped in a kind of conceptual prison. It's always the same.

So you may find yourself stepping out, if that is possible, we don't know. You may find yourself helping other lonely people, talking to other lonely people, pointing out to them certain things. The world is full of them.

They're everywhere. There have never been more lonely people than now. Loneliness perhaps is a relatively recent phenomenon even for humanity.

In the past one's identity was very tribal and if you were expelled from the tribe you would die. Being expelled from the tribe in most cases meant death, not just physical, psychologically you would die. And then later on, when there were not tribes anymore but social groups, those lonely outsiders very often were those through whom breakthroughs came into this world because they were forced to go deeper.

Those who didn't fit in for one reason or another. Those who felt so lonely that they were forced deeper into the vertical dimension rather than seeking some kind of solution on the horizontal dimension in more relationships or whatever. So there's great possibility in loneliness.

Let's look at the Buddha and that's just one example. You can take the many artists, writers, people through whom new insights came into this world. They became outsiders, misfits in a way.

The Buddha was totally lived, totally surrounded by his family, society supported him and then through, not through force of circumstance but through his own decision he made himself into an outsider. He left. And I'm sure part of his path was also loneliness and through acceptance one could say loneliness becomes transformed into solitude.

Solitude means being alone and it's quite beautiful being alone. Loneliness means you're alone and you don't like it. When you can be at ease with being alone which can only come through surrender and alert presence then it is quite possible that change happens in your life.

And then the words of Jesus come true again. That which you thought you needed for your happiness will be added unto you including perhaps the relationships when you don't need them anymore. Helping others can be a wonderful thing and that may come but you can't really help others when you're there as an unhappy lonely person trying to combat your loneliness by helping other lonely people.

Maybe a little bit of relief because you can make conversation but you're still trapped in that conceptual prison. One more question. It's so wonderful that it's all questions and all answers are the same.

My lover has ADD, attention deficit disorder and his mind continually jumps from one thing to the next with no spaces. This happens even while he is sleeping which can be disturbing. Do you think it is detrimental to my evolution to be so intimately involved with a mind like this?

I have been meditating and working for over 25 years to slow down my mind. That is the irony of life. It says here to be so intimately involved with a mind like this and that this is I'm certain that you're not really having your true relationship is not with your lover's mind but with your lover, with the being that is underneath the mind.

That's why the love is there that you feel. I don't believe that you love his or her mind. The mind is there on top of the being as a turbulence, a continuous turbulence.

What you love is what's underneath there. And it's your love that keeps you there. The love of what is underneath the turbulence.

That's why you haven't left yet. So when two humans are together one human is already has already touched the stillness or lives in it part of the time or most of the time. The other still most of the time perhaps is identified with mind, has no space, inner space, hasn't found it yet.

Of course has plenty of inner space as much as anybody else but hasn't found it. Or is intimately identified with the pain body. It's the love that keeps you there and for a while it is good to be there and it may well be that you will draw your lover into space also through your love.

Which is acceptance and which is the ability to look through what looks like him or her but is only the mind or is only the mind plus the pain body. And then after a while it may happen that space arises in him or her also. If it does not happen it could happen that you begin to lose your spaciousness in the relationship.

You can either go that way you get drawn back into unconsciousness or the other gets drawn into consciousness. If no change happens at some point you would separate. But the fact that there is love means there is a good opportunity that you will meet in the peace and in the space that is there in him or her also underneath all that.

In a way you have already met there. So stick around for a while and what is right will emerge out of presence. Not through some decision making it will come out of the presence that you are.

No form persists for very long The form that this moment takes is beautiful and of course like all forms it's about to dissolve. Next week all you will have of this or even tomorrow or tonight what's left of this gathering on the level of form will be stored as a memory trace in your mind and as images probably digital these days on your camera. And then you can look at that you can revive the memory in your mind oh that was nice or who knows you might say oh I'm so glad to be back home in my own bed or that was nice, I wish I was still there or you look already on the computer screen and then you look at the pictures you took and it's become a memory which of course you can only remember it now it's always now and suddenly remember that it's always now and suddenly remember that the essence of this gathering was that, the fact that it's always now and that hasn't changed at all the now hasn't left you at all the essence of this gathering has never left you can't leave you so you don't need to make it into some kind of memory it's unimportant the essence of it stays as yourself because this whole gathering was about yourself we said that at the beginning you had to travel here to be with yourself that is the irony at the moment of humanity but that's how it works and so it is timeless there's no need to think back oh it was so peaceful there where did you feel that peace how do you know it was peaceful I felt it inside ok and where is that now oh it's gone I can't feel it anymore well of course you can't feel it with here because you're talking from here now can't feel it are you in the body no I can't go into the body now I've got too much on my mind and then perhaps suddenly you remember not to believe every thought that arises in your mind and after your mind has said I can't go into the body there's too much going on you suddenly go into the body

[Speaker 2] (52:58 - 52:58)

oh

[Speaker 1] (53:04 - 58:45)

alertness returns suddenly you're aware of your surroundings again and suddenly the phone rings and then you remember the gaps and the spaces and you don't jump to answer it and as you let it ring you smile will you answer the phone or not I don't know in the stillness speaks book it says that every ending is a little death whenever a situation comes to an end because the form of that situation dissolves and rather than resisting that allow the form to dissolve because the form is never it and the form is not who you are who you are is always hiding underneath the form or deep inside as the formless essence of this form and when that dissolves it's beautiful because the essence shines through even more so as this gathering dissolves the essence of this gathering if you allow the ending to be there shines through even more some people find that when their spiritual teacher dies although I don't know when this body is going to go but when their spiritual teacher dies it's a beautiful thing because suddenly there's only where there was the form there's only an emptiness and that emptiness is more powerful a more powerful opening even than the form and the great teachers leave behind an enormous space in the fabric of existence when they pass away they leave behind a black hole I saw that very clearly within a space of two weeks or so I was in India in Thiruvannamalai the ashram of Ramana Maharshi where I watched the pilgrims every evening circumambulate, I think that's the word it means going around the samadhi the place, the burial place or whatever of Ramana Maharshi where they built a stone sculpture as if he were still sitting there unfortunately but they get drawn and they were all going around it it's quite a large space, hundreds of people walking around and around and around two weeks later we were in Assisi where Saint Francis lived and there in the basement of the church there's his tomb also they built a similar structure and there was a continuous stream of people walking around and around and around and I saw the similarity and I saw the image of they are walking around the black hole that was left behind and opening into the formless they were phenomena that opened up the fabric of phenomenal physical sense perceived existence to make room for the divine to shine through the formless one life, one consciousness but ultimately it's everybody's destiny to be that opening and so we use the expression that you are becoming transparent to that and the best way to becoming transparent to that is through surrender resistance creates more density in the form surrender makes you transparent so the power of the universe moves through you you become less as a person less of a person and more who you truly are and it's better to leave that nameless thank you also to all people in Austin for being here with us in Holyhawk here blessings on your journey into yourself the journey without distance into the now

[Speaker 2] (58:45 - 58:50)

thank you

2008 Eckhart Tolle-and Oprah Winfrey-New-Earth-Webcast-Full-NoAds

[Speaker 2] (0:00 - 2:15)

Welcome to our very first live worldwide interactive event. We are here tonight breaking new ground. Nothing like this has ever been attempted before.

Right now, you all are online with me from every corner on our planet. Places like Albania, Bolivia, Cambodia, Ecuador, Finland, Hong Kong, China, India, Zimbabwe, Australia, Canada, the UK, and the rest of Europe, along with, of course, all 50 states here in our United States of America. Over 139 countries are represented in our class tonight.

Welcome to you all. So I want to get started. This is the most exciting thing I've ever done.

I've done a lot of things in my life, but I am most proud of the fact that all of you have joined us in this global community to talk about what I believe is one of the most important subjects and presented by one of the most important books of our time, A New Earth, Awakening to Your Life's Purpose. I don't think there's anything more important than awakening and also knowing what your purpose is. And for the next 10 weeks, author and spiritual teacher Eckhart Tolle and I will be here in our virtual classroom here on Oprah.com.

Every Monday, 8 p.m., beyond time for class, 8 p.m. central, we're going to be answering your emails. We're going to be having a conversation about each chapter and taking your calls from around the world and your emails from around the world and seeing some of you around the world through our Skype phones. I'm sure you've already noticed that you can type in your questions on the right side of your screen and send that to us instantly.

And we will, you know, we have a whole team of people here who are ready, waiting, standing by to take your calls and emails. And of course, I'm honored to introduce the author of this great book, A New Earth, Awakening to Your Life's Purpose, Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (2:15 - 2:17)

Thank you. Yeah. Good to be here.

[Speaker 2] (2:18 - 2:18)

How exciting this is.

[Speaker 1] (2:18 - 2:19)

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (2:19 - 4:38)

It's very good. Okay, so let's get class started. The way we're going to work the class is that we will have a conversation and take your calls and your questions whenever we feel appropriate.

First of all, I wanted to just talk to you about how this book came to you. I was introduced to this book several months ago when I was interviewing Eckhart Tolle on XM Radio. I have a show on XM Radio.

Not many people know about it, but it's called The Soul Series. And on that show, I get to talk to anybody I choose. And I choose to speak to people who represent this kind of thinking, this genre of spirituality.

And we talk about the soul. So I was interviewing Eckhart Tolle several months ago about his book, The Power of Now, because that's really all I knew about Eckhart Tolle was The Power of Now. I call you the father of now, The Power of Now, which that book was a life-changing book for me, given to me many years ago, about eight years ago by Meg Ryan, who was on the show.

And the producer, Corny, came in and said, well, as I was preparing, she said, there's this other book he's written called A New Earth. And I just had time to thumb through A New Earth and not really give it its due, because I was focused on reading The Power of Now and talking about that. And after our interview, started to read this book, and it was absolutely, I felt the shift that you talk about, that you say on page seven that this will be meaningless to you or you will feel the shift.

I started to feel the shift. And one of the things that really occurred to me as I was going through various chapters and having aha, aha, aha moment after another is how clear this message is, what a clear channel it seemed to come through for you. It was like I'd never, you know, didn't know you or hadn't met you in person, even through the radio.

We weren't sitting in the same studio. How did this come to be? How did this come through you, to you?

[Speaker 1] (4:39 - 5:30)

Well, it comes out of the space of stillness. That's where all creative endeavor is born. So it's getting in touch with the stillness within where there's no mental noise.

And out of that stillness, when the time is right, sometimes an impulse comes, something a feeling, a strong sense that something wants to be born into this world. I had the same strong sense before writing The Power of Now. That was 13 years ago when I started writing it.

I had left England. I was living in England, and I had this strong impulse one morning, and I was in England still, knowing I had to move to the west coast of North America without knowing why.

[Speaker 2] (5:31 - 5:32)

This is just a feeling you had.

[Speaker 1] (5:32 - 6:20)

Yes, a strong knowing. So it's not through a decision-making process, just the realization I have to move there. I don't know why, but I have to go.

It was such a total, absolutely no doubt about it. So I moved to Vancouver, and then I took a Greyhound bus to California, knew only one or two people, and I said, why am I here? Three weeks passed, somebody put me up in a room near San Francisco, and suddenly this came, I bought a notepad, and suddenly the strong stream came through, and I wrote, What is enlightenment?

The beginning of The Power of Now. The moment I wrote that, I knew this is the book that wants to be born. So rather than me wanting to write a book, there was a book that wanted to be written.

[Speaker 2] (6:22 - 6:26)

It's like Michelangelo says, the angel's in the marble, and he just cuts away the marble.

[Speaker 1] (6:27 - 7:33)

Yes. And I find, I'll come back to that in a second. For most people, that is the approach to what is my purpose, to look at what the greater purpose is.

What does the greater purpose want from me? What does life, or God, want from me, rather than what do I want from life? So that's the starting point.

I know that sometimes in new age you have the question, well, what do you want? But it's fine to ask that question. But a more powerful question is, what does life want from me?

How do I fit into the, what is the totality? What is my place within the whole? So this is how it started, as knowing that this is what life wants from me.

The book wants to be born. And the same thing happened later with the New Earth. Again, a similar sense of, oh, there's another book that wants to come.

I didn't know why, because everybody told me, you've said it all in The Power of Now, why write another book? And intellectually, I couldn't have answered, why am I writing another book? And it happened.

[Speaker 2] (7:33 - 7:45)

And it happened. Were you asking life, universal energy, I don't know, what do you call that? I call it God.

What do you use for that?

[Speaker 1] (7:45 - 7:46)

Consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (7:46 - 7:51)

Were you asking consciousness? Were you saying, what do you want from me? Yes.

[Speaker 1] (7:52 - 8:03)

There was a time for quite a few years, I lived in England, and I just did some spiritual teaching on a very small scale, sometimes little workshops and so on.

[Speaker 2] (8:03 - 8:10)

I read in the paper today, in USA Today, where you said you started out with 10 or 12 people in people's homes.

[Speaker 1] (8:10 - 8:27)

Yes. For quite a while, I would teach in people's living rooms, invited a group of friends. And this was the beginning of informal spiritual teaching.

And as I said to the person who interviewed me, this is coming full circle now, because now I'm back in people's living rooms, just more of them.

[Speaker 2] (8:27 - 8:47)

Just more of them. I think we have more than 10 or 12 joining us this evening. And so the book, would you sit and passages would come to you?

Would you actively get up at a certain time and say, I'm going to write today? Or know what you were going to write before it was written?

[Speaker 1] (8:47 - 9:38)

No, not knowing it beforehand. But every day there was a space for writing. Every morning and until two in the afternoon or so, the space was set aside for writing.

That was the writing space. And there were days when the flow was not very strong. So maybe only a few lines got written or even none at all.

Nevertheless, I always honored that space of, I'm ready for the writing to happen. I'm not saying that the writing happened automatically. My mind was involved.

It wasn't a channeled book as such. It was inspired, but not channeled. So it involved my thinking processes too.

But the thinking process had to be inspired from something deeper. You can't rely on your thinking processes only and produce something that is powerful and original.

[Speaker 2] (9:38 - 10:06)

So already you've shared with us that in order to awaken to your life's purpose, one of the key things we must do is not try to tell life what our purpose is. Not go around even, I don't know, trying to define for ourselves. Because a lot of people say many times, I've done, you know, seminars across the country, and they'll say, I don't know what my purpose is.

You're saying you must ask life, what purpose does it have for you?

[Speaker 1] (10:06 - 10:06)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (10:07 - 10:07)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (10:07 - 12:38)

Yes. And the answer may not immediately come. Very important part of asking life so that you can be ready to receive the answer is to practice inviting moments of stillness into your life so that you are not continuously absorbed in the incessant mental noise that we call thinking, most of which is unnecessary and repetitive.

So to find spaces of stillness is vital if you want to get to the place where the answers are. Potentially. So for quite a few years when I lived in England and did spiritual teaching on a small scale, sometimes I would say, okay, I could do much more.

There's much more that I could do. I said to life, I'm ready. But life just waited and waited.

Answer didn't come for several years until that morning when it said, move. Move. Move.

Move to Vancouver. Yes. And why did I have to move to write it there?

I didn't realize that. Every place, Vancouver and California, that's where The Power of Now was written. I was moving back and forth.

I didn't have a home as such. I stayed with friends, moving back and forth. And so only later I realized I had to move because the energy field on the West Coast, this is what I needed for the book to be born.

The energy field in England, although I love England, I have a deep inner connection with England, the energy field there was not right for, in my personal case, for this book to come out. Wow. So I only realized that after I had to go back to England and then I stayed in a community because I didn't have a home of my own anymore.

And I wanted to continue writing, but I couldn't do very much there because I thought, why can't I continue? The stream stopped. I could only do editing and correction.

That was necessary too. But only when I went back to the West Coast, my visa had expired, I had to go to England and I went back, immediately the flow came back. And I said, oh, now I know why I had to move.

So it's often trusting life when a very strong impulse comes, but you may have to wait. It doesn't mean that you necessarily immediately obey every impulse because impulses can also come from more superficial levels within yourself.

[Speaker 2] (12:38 - 12:42)

But you were wise enough to know the difference. You had discernment.

[Speaker 1] (12:42 - 12:42)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (12:42 - 12:44)

Yes, to know the difference.

[Speaker 1] (12:44 - 12:44)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (12:44 - 13:22)

Well, it's so interesting because you, in the beginning of A New Earth, start out talking about a flower. And I've heard many people who've, because I go on the message boards every day, I'm loving you on the message boards, everybody. And many people are saying that they look at flowers differently now.

I can certainly say that I do. And one of the things that you said that struck me when you said that they are representatives of the spiritual realm, and that when you are still, allow yourself to be still with a flower or a crystal or a bird or really anything of nature.

[Speaker 1] (13:22 - 13:22)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (13:22 - 13:25)

But you used a flower specifically because.

[Speaker 1] (13:25 - 15:06)

Because a flower is, nature on the whole is a beautiful access point into inner stillness, if you can be there, fully present. But a flower is even. You say messengers from another realm.

Yes, like messengers. A flower is very, much more fragile than a plant. It is more fleeting.

Ethereal, I think is the word, more ethereal. So it has less density to it than most other things. And because of the lack of density, it's almost as if spirit could flow through it more freely.

So when you contemplate a flower without too much interference of the thinking mind to actually truly look, this is what Jesus said, by the way. I mean, in churches, you hear Jesus saying, look at the lilies of the field. Yes.

And so when he said that, he wasn't just saying, look at the lilies of the field. He said, look, you really have to look because there is something that they embody something that you also have. But because of all your anxiety about tomorrow and you're thinking, that's what I'm translating very freely now.

Yes. Jesus said, these flowers are not anxious. They are not concerned about tomorrow and see how beautiful they are.

How God clothes them in such beauty. And you can live like that also. So he used this natural realm and flowers to get people in touch with the dimension of depth within them.

[Speaker 2] (15:07 - 16:28)

Well, what's very interesting to me about all of this is that when I read that the first time, I thought it was a beautiful passage. And then I read it a second time and awakened a little bit more and started to look at nature differently. I live in a lovely space where I'm surrounded by flowers, not in Chicago, but in California.

And I always just appreciated the garden. Aren't they lovely and all the different colors and the roses and all that. And then I decided to move into the garden without naming it.

What if I were like a babe? Yes. What if I were a babe, learning what a flower was for the first time?

What if I went out under the oaks that I love so much, but I didn't know it was an oak. I didn't know what to call it. And I shared this in one of our after shows that for the first time, and I've loved trees all of my life and the sense of power and stillness they represent.

But by not naming those things in nature, that I felt a magical presence. I felt a sense of majesty and power and strength and connection that I'd never felt before. Because I didn't give it a name.

[Speaker 1] (16:28 - 16:29)

Yes, that's the key.

[Speaker 2] (16:29 - 16:34)

Yes, I didn't give a name or have a reference for everything that a tree is meant in my life.

[Speaker 1] (16:34 - 16:35)

That's right.

[Speaker 25] (16:35 - 16:35)

Isn't it?

[Speaker 1] (16:35 - 16:56)

That's right. So being present with the perception. And this theme runs, is perhaps the main theme running through the whole book is that state where the compulsive naming of things.

And you start with nature because that's easier to let go of the naming. Later we'll be talking about that in some later sessions.

[Speaker 2] (16:56 - 16:57)

Stop labeling people.

[Speaker 1] (16:57 - 17:42)

Yes, that's more difficult because people invite the labels. Yes. Because there's so much mind in everybody and they label you and you label them.

So, but with nature, this is the starting point to find a different relationship to nature. It doesn't mean that you need to forget what you have learned about trees or about flowers. When it's necessary, you can get that knowledge and use it.

Right. But not to be totally in the grip of what you have learned of mental labels, of interpreting mentally, but being able to perceive, one could call it, perceive the flower, see it through a background of just stillness. Just stillness.

Which is really consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (17:43 - 18:13)

Well, I will tell you, it's an amazing for all of those of you who've tried this. And I know some of you have because you've emailed us and said so. But when you start to walk through a park and or walk in your backyard or begin to, and you're right, it's easier with nature than with people.

And pretend that you don't know or just let yourself be in the space without labeling the things. It's just everything's vibrating and it's like, you know, scintillating.

[Speaker 28] (18:14 - 18:14)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (18:14 - 18:15)

Everything's exciting.

[Speaker 1] (18:15 - 18:16)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (18:16 - 18:17)

Everything's exciting.

[Speaker 1] (18:18 - 18:18)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (18:18 - 18:23)

A walk through the park becomes exciting and it's the same path you've always taken.

[Speaker 1] (18:23 - 18:44)

Yes. And before, when you were involved in your mind, Yes. perhaps you didn't even see it.

Never saw it. I see. Yeah.

And so many people are so trapped in this continuous mental noise that absorbs their whole attention all the time. Every thought absorbs this stream of thinking, absorbs their attention. They don't see that the world around them is vitally alive.

[Speaker 28] (18:45 - 18:45)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (18:45 - 19:08)

So you become, gradually, as people then grow older, the world around them becomes more and more lifeless and dead. Right, right. And that happens to them also.

And why is that? Because... Because you are run by mental abstraction.

All the concepts and the thoughts in that are abstractions. It's not life.

[Speaker 2] (19:09 - 19:16)

So you can't take in the information that's there to be received all around you because you're so distracted.

[Speaker 1] (19:17 - 19:20)

You're in your head. You're in your head. You're not present.

[Speaker 28] (19:20 - 19:20)

All right.

[Speaker 1] (19:21 - 19:35)

So you're lost in thought. I could say that's the human condition is being lost in thought. And people don't...

That, of course, is the famous what we call the voice in the head. The voice in the head. Some people have been asking about.

[Speaker 2] (19:35 - 19:37)

Which we'll be talking a lot about the voice in the head.

[Speaker 1] (19:37 - 19:42)

So some people say, what voice in the head? It's that one. It's that one.

[Speaker 2] (19:43 - 19:49)

All right. So Kelly from Alton, Illinois joins us via Skype. Kelly, hi.

Hi.

[Speaker 16] (19:50 - 19:54)

Hi. Thank you for having me.

[Speaker 2] (19:54 - 20:10)

Well, good. Where are you home? I'm at home.

Okay, good. This is the coolest thing. Isn't this cool?

Crazy. It's crazy. That's what I think.

It's crazy that we're like out here, wherever this is, talking to each other. Okay. What's your question?

[Speaker 16] (20:11 - 20:41)

Well, my question is regarding religion and spirituality. I had a Catholic upbringing. I married a Catholic and we're raising our children this way.

In reading books such as Tully's, I've really, it's really opened my eyes up to a new way of thinking, a new form of spirituality that doesn't always align with the teachings of Christianity. So my question is to you, Oprah, how have you reconciled these spiritual teachings with your Christian beliefs?

[Speaker 2] (20:42 - 24:50)

Oh, the question's to me. I was resting knowing it was going to be about me. I've reconciled it because I was able to open my mind about the absolute, indescribable hugeness of that which we call God.

I took God out of the box because I grew up in the Baptist church and there were rules and belief systems and doctrine. And I happened to be sitting in church in my late 20s and I was going to this church where you had to get there at eight o'clock in the morning or you couldn't get a seat and a very charismatic minister and everybody was just into the sermon. And this great minister was preaching about how great God was and how omniscient and omnipresent and God is everything.

And then he said, and the Lord thy God is a jealous God. And I was caught up in the rapture of that moment until he said jealous. And something struck me just, and I was like, I think about 27 or 28.

I was thinking, God is all, God is omnipresent, God is all, and God's also jealous. Jealous, God is jealous of me. And something about that didn't feel right in my spirit because I believe that God is love and that God is in all things.

And so that's when the search for something more than doctrine started to stir within me. And I love this quote that Eckhart has. This is one of my favorite quotes in chapter one, where he says, man made God in his own image, the eternal, the infinite and unnameable was reduced to a mental idol that you had to believe in and worship as my God or our God.

Now, I think that's very eloquently put by Eckhart Tolle in chapter one, but that is exactly what I was feeling when I was sitting in church that Sunday listening to the preacher. And it's been a journey to get to the place where I understand, as I said on the pre-show here, that what I believe is that Jesus came to show us Christ consciousness, that Jesus came us to show us the way of the heart and that what Jesus was saying, that to show us the higher consciousness that we're all talking about here. Jesus came to say, look, I'm gonna live in the body, in the human body, and I'm gonna show you how it's done.

These are some principles and some laws that you can use to live by to know that way. And when I started to recognize that, that Jesus didn't come in my belief, even as a Christian, I don't believe that Jesus came to start Christianity. So that was also very helpful to me.

And as I said earlier, in the pre-show here, there was a wonderful book called Discover the Power Within You by Eric Butterworth, which helped me reconcile the two. So that might be really good for those of you who are Christian and trying to balance the two. What would you say?

Because one of the things that Eckhart says in the beginning of this book on page six is that this book's main purpose is not to add new information or beliefs to your mind or to try to convince you of anything, but to bring about a shift in consciousness. That is to say, to awaken. He says that on page six.

And one of the reasons why I appreciate him so much is because he truly isn't out to become your next guru. He doesn't want, you know, all of you who are online with us tonight and those millions who will now hear about this book. He's not interested in being your guru, correct?

[Speaker 1] (24:50 - 24:51)

Yes, correct.

[Speaker 2] (24:52 - 25:14)

Yeah. How would you respond to that? That's one of the biggest questions we have coming into our message boards about the same thing that Kelly is addressing here from Alton, about spirituality and religion.

This is not about trying to tell you how to believe. And how do you advise people to reconcile this with their religious beliefs?

[Speaker 1] (25:14 - 26:50)

Well, religion can be an open doorway into spirituality, and religion can be a closed door that prevents you from going deeper. So I love reading the New Testament, and I also read the Old Testament. Sometimes there's some incredible jewels in there.

And when I went through this inner transformation, and for the first time, accidentally, I picked up a copy of the New Testament at my mother's place, and I started reading, and I immediately recognized the deep truth that is there. And I realized the truth that is deeper, that is expressed in what Jesus said, is much deeper than how the church interprets it. There's a depth to it, and it reflects your own depth when you read it.

So there's no conflict between this teaching, which is purely spiritual, and any religion, because if you go deep enough into your religion, then you all get to the same place. It's a question of going deeper. So there's no conflict here.

The important thing is that religion doesn't become an ideology. So it's, I believe this, and the moment you say, only my belief or our belief is true, and you deny other people's beliefs, then you've adopted an ideology. And then religion becomes a closed door.

But potentially, religion can also be an open door.

[Speaker 2] (26:51 - 28:45)

Well, let me share this with you too, Kelly. There is another book by a woman named Elizabeth Lesser. It's called The Seeker's Guide, where she talks about the new spirituality versus the old.

So I just wanted to, this is on page 51 and 52 of Elizabeth Lesser's book called The Seeker's Guide. And she talks about old spirituality versus the new spirituality. And she says, the old was, the old way is the hierarchy has the authority.

Church authorities tell you how to worship in church and how to behave outside of church. The new spirituality is that you are your own best authority as you work to know and love yourself. You discover how to live a more spiritual life.

The old is God and the path to worship him have already been defined and all you need to do is follow the directions. The new is being able to listen within for your own definition of spirituality. Your deeper longings are your compass on the search.

And the old says exactly what Eckhart was saying, that there's only one path. It's the right way and all other ways are wrong. And the new spirituality says that many paths lead to spiritual freedom and peace.

You have a richer way of gems from which to draw illumination. The world's religious traditions, mythology, psychology, healing methods, scientific wisdom, your own experience, and that you can begin to string a necklace all your own. Then she lists, you know, other old and new.

And so it's really a question of what you were saying to us earlier, that this material strikes a chord within you, something in you opens up and once, you know, feels alive and is awakened to that. And yet there is the ideology that says what to you? What is the conflict for you?

[Speaker 16] (28:46 - 29:09)

Um, just the thoughts on the afterlife, things like that, you know, you in a lot of books, such as tollies, we get teachings from Buddhism or Hinduism. And those thoughts don't go along with, you know, what I was raised to believe as a Christian. So that's been the biggest thing that I've struggled with.

[Speaker 2] (29:09 - 29:27)

I think so. Well, I am a Christian who believes that there are, there are certainly many more paths to God other than Christianity. So I'm a free thinking Christian who believes that who believes in my way, but I don't believe that it's the only way with 6 billion people here on the planet.

[Speaker 1] (29:27 - 29:40)

Right. Another author who uses who might appeal to you, who uses Christian terminology, but goes very, very deep using Christian language and Christian teachings, Joel Goldsmith.

[Speaker 2] (29:40 - 29:40)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (29:41 - 29:43)

So any book, Joel Goldstein? Goldsmith.

[Speaker 2] (29:43 - 29:44)

Oh, Goldsmith.

[Speaker 1] (29:44 - 29:52)

Joel Goldsmith. Any book by Joel Goldsmith. I think you would try that and see how deep the Christian teaching can be.

[Speaker 16] (29:53 - 29:53)

Okay.

[Speaker 2] (29:54 - 30:26)

Well, thank you very much. Thanks, Kelly. You're our first Skyper.

Great. I didn't know what Skype was until this. Now we're Skyping all over.

We have a Chicago study group watching our webcast together at Borders. Hello. Borders flagship store right there on Michigan Avenue.

Hi, everybody. Hello. I know.

Listen, we just listen. I know it's my ego, but I just can't keep saying, stop saying how cool this is. I hear that's Ryan.

You're Ryan?

[Speaker 27] (30:27 - 30:28)

Yes, I'm Ryan.

[Speaker 2] (30:28 - 30:29)

Okay, Ryan.

[Speaker 27] (30:29 - 30:29)

Hello, Oprah.

[Speaker 2] (30:29 - 30:31)

Hi. Got a question?

[Speaker 27] (30:31 - 30:59)

Hello, Mr. Tully. Hi. I do.

I have a question for actually either of you. And it relates to the spiritual awakening that you speak of in chapter one. It seems to me that if you look at human history in the past 100 years, and very poignantly, in the past 10 years, that there's been this intensity and speed at which people are becoming more aware of this Christ consciousness.

And why do you think that is the case now?

[Speaker 1] (30:59 - 31:34)

Why is this happening now? It's happening now because we are reaching a crisis point. Very essential things don't happen until there's an absolute need for them to happen.

So we can say, in the past, this awakening has been a luxury. And only a few individuals here and there throughout the ages were able to be awakened. And they try to teach others.

But to a large extent, their teachings became misinterpreted. So we are awakening now.

[Speaker 2] (31:34 - 31:35)

Because Jesus was a revolutionary.

[Speaker 1] (31:36 - 31:36)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (31:36 - 31:38)

Got misinterpreted a lot.

[Speaker 1] (31:38 - 33:15)

Yes. We are awakening now because we have to awaken. If humanity is to make it to a next evolutionary level, we need to awaken because the egoic consciousness will become so...

It's already... It has already become very destructive. It becomes more and more destructive.

We will destroy ourselves and the planet if we do not step out of the egoic consciousness, the collective ego. If you look at the history of the 20th century, it gives you a taste of what it will be if there is no major shift. I wrote in The Power of Now that 100 million human beings were killed by other humans during the 20th century through warfare and so on.

And I recently read in a history book by a Harvard professor that my figure was much too low. It's as much as 160 to 180 million human beings were murdered through warfare and concentration camps and prison camps and starvation, purpose-manufactured starvation because China, Russia, and so on. It's unbelievable insanity when you look at that history.

And so if there's no shift in consciousness, we will go downhill very quickly because we're already in the process of destroying the planet. But there will also be continuous conflict, collective conflict. And eventually, then humanity would collapse.

WINFREY OFFERS So you think we're at a crisis point now? Crisis point, yes. Well, well, Ryan, don't you think so too?

[Speaker 2] (33:15 - 33:55)

I mean, when you were with your friends, you know, obviously you're gathered here at Borders tonight because you are interested in this kind of, this way of thinking. But we all talk about it in some form or another, how bad things are, how, you know, the media, everybody complains about the media and the movies. If you just look at the Academy Awards this year and the kinds of movies that were made this year, and it's all a reflection of who we are.

And you say in the book how we're the species that will go and watch other people on film be maimed and killed and murdered for our entertainment.

[Speaker 27] (33:56 - 34:12)

Yes, yes. It's amazing. And it's noise.

It's all, it's the mind. It's all of that. And my friends and I talk about it.

And it's things where we want to push that out and say, well, we choose not to look at those things. We choose not to surround ourselves with that type of energy.

[Speaker 2] (34:13 - 35:05)

But I just got it. I just had an epiphany, an aha as Eckhart was speaking here. I mean, and I'd read this several times in the book too, the number of people murdered, maimed, destroyed by other human beings during the 20th century.

But the aha for me was, yes, look at what we did in the 20th century. Look at the surge that we've had in tech, in our technological abilities. Look at you right now.

We're Skyping each other. The, the, the advancement in our abilities to create new bombs, new ways of killing each other. So that in the 21st century, if there isn't a shift, if you had a hundred, over a hundred million people killed in the 20th century, God only knows.

And I do mean God only knows what will happen to us unless we start to change this.

[Speaker 1] (35:05 - 35:28)

Yes, because technology amplifies the egoic dysfunction in human beings. So before the dysfunction was the same 2000 years ago, but we couldn't do that much harm because the technology wasn't there. The very same dysfunction still operates and becomes magnified through science and technology.

Does that answer your question, Ryan? It does.

[Speaker 27] (35:29 - 35:38)

And I just, it just makes me think of what could we do if we just focused that same energy on the positive and helping other people. And I feel that that's, that's where we're going.

[Speaker 2] (35:38 - 36:24)

But it's also not just the positive. One of the things that I think we all learn from reading A New Earth, that it's not just about being positive. It's about putting our own egos in check.

Because as we began to move forward in our studies, the next 10 weeks, you'll see that first you have to see, you know, see the voice in your head, see how you're contributing to it. Because I think, you know, for years, we've all heard that we're all, if you're not a part of the problem, you're a part of the solution. I think most of us don't understand.

And I did understand to an extent, but got it even more clearly after reading A New Earth, understand how we're contributing to the problem. And the way we're all contributing to the problem is, Eckhart?

[Speaker 1] (36:25 - 37:23)

Well, you need to look at your own mind. So it's everybody's responsibility to become aware of their conditioned mental processes, how you react in everyday situations, what kind of thoughts go through your head. It's good to not amplify the negativity that you see around you in the world by reacting to it.

You have to be very much aware, of course, of what your mind is doing. So observe your own mind, be there as the witness of your mind, so that the witnessing dimension, which is awareness or presence, grows. You are not your thought processes.

The thought processes are conditioned through thousands and thousands of years of conditioning. And there is dysfunction built into the very structure of our thought processes. And this is how the ego arises.

We'll talk about that in more detail.

[Speaker 2] (37:23 - 37:24)

That's right.

[Speaker 1] (37:24 - 37:39)

But to recognize in oneself, there is, you may not contribute to the murder and so on out there in the world, but it's everybody's responsibility to discover that dysfunction within them.

[Speaker 2] (37:39 - 38:08)

Yeah, so you get that right, Ryan. What he's saying is, is that there is a collective consciousness that he talks about, pages 11 and 12. The dysfunction of the ego human mind has created the situation in the world today, he says, in the new earth.

And what I hear you saying, Eckhart, is that our individual fears, doubts, angers, jealousies, resentments all contribute to the collective.

[Speaker 1] (38:09 - 38:09)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (38:09 - 38:21)

And so in order to begin to change the collective, each one of us has a responsibility to sort of mine that within ourselves.

[Speaker 1] (38:21 - 38:21)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (38:21 - 38:31)

Because that's how we're contributing to the collective. Yes. Yeah.

And it's not just the road ragers. It's however you're holding resentment and anger and jealousy and fear in your own life. That's what you're saying.

[Speaker 1] (38:32 - 38:49)

Yes. What is it that you're putting out into the world? Is there negativity, mental, emotional in you?

Yes. Because that contributes to the collective energy field. So you can only go, so it's up to the individual to go, to step out of the egoic consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (38:49 - 38:51)

Yeah. You got that right, Ryan?

[Speaker 27] (38:52 - 38:53)

That makes a lot of sense.

[Speaker 2] (38:53 - 39:04)

That does make a lot of sense. Thank you. Thank you, Borders.

Thank you. We've got Erica, who lives on a US military base in Landstuhl, Germany.

[Speaker 1] (39:04 - 39:06)

Oh, you're in the middle of the night.

[Speaker 2] (39:06 - 39:08)

In the middle of the night. Hi.

[Speaker 3] (39:09 - 39:10)

Morning.

[Speaker 1] (39:10 - 39:11)

Morning.

[Speaker 3] (39:12 - 39:19)

Hi, Erica. Hi, Oprah. Thank you so much.

This has just been crazy, as you said.

[Speaker 2] (39:19 - 39:27)

Crazy fun. Yes. Landstuhl, Germany.

Never heard of it, but glad to have you from there. Hello.

[Speaker 25] (39:28 - 39:29)

Thank you. Glad.

[Speaker 3] (39:29 - 39:30)

Thank God for Skype.

[Speaker 2] (39:30 - 39:35)

Thank God for Skype. Okay, what is your question or comment to us?

[Speaker 3] (39:36 - 40:14)

Well, my question is for Mr. Toley. I, too, grew up in the Baptist church, just like Oprah and so many others. And you talk about the voice in my head.

And I had a situation where I no longer attend that church because the behavior didn't line up with the teaching. But on Sundays, when I'm at home with my family and we're enjoying a nice day and we decided not to go to church, that voice in my head says things like, you didn't go to church today. That's not how you were raised.

When your mom calls, what are you going to say? Can you help me with that on explaining why we have the voice in the head that says things like that?

[Speaker 1] (40:15 - 40:18)

Yes. Yes, he can.

[Speaker 3] (40:18 - 40:19)

Erica.

[Speaker 1] (40:22 - 43:06)

Now, the voice, of course, is the conditioned thinking. The voice, what the voice says, is conditioned by your past, by your childhood, by your upbringing, by the surrounding culture. All those things condition your thought processes.

And when you, sometimes it happens when you awaken, maybe not completely, but when the awakening process begins, a lot of the old voices in the head, the old thoughts, still come up. They still come up. And the essential thing is to recognize them as conditioned thought processes.

And to see, because the fact that you're asking the question means there's already an awareness there that these are the voices in your head. So you are not totally identified. Because if you were totally identified with a voice, you would say, I feel so terrible.

I really think I should be doing this. But you realize it's the voice in the head that's doing it. And then you can allow it and say, okay, there's an old thought, and allow it to be there and be the awareness behind the thought.

And anybody, this is not just for your particular case. There are many other instances where people have the movement of thought, telling them this or that, interpreting events and people according to the old conditioning. When you meet people, telling you immediately, judging somebody according to your old conditioning with prejudices, with all the old conditioning.

And so it's, the only way you can gradually go beyond the conditioned thought processes is simply to be there as the witness. You don't need to act on it or say, go away. I don't want to be thinking this.

That doesn't work. Would only give it more energy. That's right.

So again, a vital thing, and this will be going throughout the book and the teaching is, as much as possible, be aware of what your mind is saying and realize there's only a small part of the consciousness, the totality of consciousness that you are. Many people don't know that yet. They're totally one with the voice.

They are the voice. They're so identified with every thought that comes. There's no space between them and the thought.

So the essential thing is this, realize there's thought processes and here I am as the space for the thought, as the awareness or the space for the thought. And that the thought is only a part of... A small part.

It's the conditioned part of who you are.

[Speaker 28] (43:06 - 43:07)

Who you are.

[Speaker 1] (43:07 - 43:15)

A more, and that's time bound. It's conditioned by the past. There's a more essential part of who you are and that is the awareness that knows that there's a voice.

[Speaker 2] (43:15 - 43:17)

The awareness of the thoughts.

[Speaker 1] (43:17 - 43:17)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (43:17 - 46:10)

Which we're going to get into in further detail. But also, Erica, let me share this with you. Part of what you and our first caller from Alton, Illinois was also talking about is trying to reconcile the two.

The reason why the voice keeps repeating is because, of course, of what Eckhart is saying, it's conditioned thinking. But also, the guilt is you haven't made a decision for yourself about what is real or true for you. So you're still being led by the conditioned thinking and haven't made a decision.

And for me, that came when I was able to do exactly what Eckhart said earlier. I didn't phrase it the way he did. I asked God to use me.

That has been my prayer for many years. Eckhart says, ask life what is its purpose for you. But I would pray on my knees to God and ask to be used and to be a servant and to allow his spirit to work through me and to not to just be on television, but to be able to use television for a purpose that was greater than my own personality and to collect shoes in my closet.

Didn't mean I wanted to give up the shoes, but I would if I had to. So when I started to ask that question of God, how can I be used? God, how do you want me to live?

How would you have me be? I let go of the guilt of did I make it to church or I didn't make it to church because the majesty and power and omniscience of this force that we call God cannot be contained in a church. You're right.

Cannot be contained in a church and does not just want to be served in a church. But if church allows you to feel like you are being of service, then use it that way. But the bigness is what Eckhart was saying in that quote in the book, man made God in his image, the eternal, the infinite and unnameable force that is God, that is all consciousness, that is universal energy, I don't believe wishes to just be served on Sunday at 11 o'clock service.

And so that's what you're trying to reconcile with yourself. The voice in your head versus what you really should be doing. That's it.

Yeah. So thank you.

[Speaker 28] (46:10 - 46:11)

That's it.

[Speaker 2] (46:11 - 46:35)

You need to make that decision for yourself. Thank you. And start asking that question of God.

Okay. All right. I'll do that.

Thank you. Thank you, Erica from Lundstuhl. We have Adam from Redmond, Washington on the phone with a question.

Yes, hello. Oh, on the phone phone. Hi.

Hi there. Hi. Hi, Adam.

[Speaker 26] (46:35 - 46:37)

Hi. Thank you so much. Both of you.

[Speaker 2] (46:39 - 46:43)

I feel a little like Larry King is the caller there.

[Speaker 3] (46:45 - 46:49)

Little like Larry King. Okay. Go ahead.

[Speaker 26] (46:49 - 47:17)

Oh, God. Yeah. Well, I used your online study group to create a couple of groups out here, which I called Embracing Silence.

And for the purpose of joining together for meditation and study and discussion and to create a field of presence and share with others in that. And I'm curious, what role do you see community or joining with others with the intention of sharing this consciousness playing in the flowering of human consciousness?

[Speaker 1] (47:18 - 48:46)

Good. Good question. Yes.

It's very important. And of course, what's happening here tonight is part of that also, because it is a joining on a level that we haven't seen before. It's the arising presence.

You can access it much more easily as part of a larger community or group of people. So to have in your home, to have a group of people who practice being present, perhaps listen to a spiritual talk or have a little reading, enter stillness, be present, is extremely helpful because an energy field is generated when people come together and enter the state of presence together. And this is happening here also, although people are not physically together.

And yet there is an energy field now that is generated all over the planet of presence, a different level of consciousness being generated. So it's extremely helpful to join with others. Also, it needs to be said not to become dependent on any group.

It is still your responsibility to bring this new consciousness into everyday life. Whenever you go about your business in your family...

[Speaker 2] (48:46 - 48:48)

Once you become dependent upon the group, then you now...

[Speaker 1] (48:49 - 49:26)

Then you always need to go back to the group and you cannot live presence in your daily life. So the important thing is, yes, go to the group to generate more presence, and then your responsibility is to live it in your everyday life, where most of the time, perhaps, you will not yet be surrounded by people who are present. You will be surrounded by the old egoic consciousness.

So there, that is... And this is the challenge for everybody now who is awakening, that, yes, more and more people are beginning to awaken, and yet there's still vast numbers of people on the planet who are not.

[Speaker 2] (49:27 - 49:51)

But I was going to say that when Ryan from Borders was speaking to us and was saying, you know, the need to be more positive and there's all this negative energy in the world. Look, we have 700 and some thousand of us all gathered here this evening, which is a huge positive force in creating the shift. And it's a different kind of community like we've never seen or experienced before.

[Speaker 1] (49:52 - 50:09)

That's right, yes. And then, of course, another kind of community is generated through the internet now and all these things that I don't know much about, but it's happening. So how people communicate with each other.

And again, people are being linked in different ways with each other.

[Speaker 2] (50:09 - 50:13)

This is the arising of a new consciousness that he speaks about, Adam.

[Speaker 26] (50:15 - 50:37)

Well, it certainly is. And it's, you know, it's very pleasurable to spend time with others and sharing this consciousness. You know, like you said, when you were under the tree and you felt that oneness and that majesty, well, imagine if you had someone sitting there next to you to share that experience with.

I think it makes it even that much more sacred.

[Speaker 2] (50:37 - 50:40)

I did have my two dogs, Luke and Layla were there.

[Speaker 26] (50:41 - 50:42)

Oh, wonderful, wonderful.

[Speaker 2] (50:43 - 50:44)

Thanks, Adam.

[Speaker 26] (50:44 - 50:46)

It's a sacred moment. Yes, thank you.

[Speaker 2] (50:46 - 51:23)

Thank you, Adam. That's Adam from Redmond, Washington. Let's see some of the questions that you're sending us now.

Oh, this is cool. On email. Okay, we're gonna check the computer screen here.

Ta-da. Questions are? Nothing's there.

Nothing's there. So I'll keep talking. One of the things that really struck us so was so many people responded to this.

Page 13. You don't become good by trying to be good. You don't become good by trying to be good.

[Speaker 1] (51:24 - 51:28)

And carry on. There's more to that sentence.

[Speaker 2] (51:28 - 51:46)

Yes, there is. I must go to page 13 to find it. You don't become good by trying to be good.

But by finding the goodness that is already within you and allowing that goodness to emerge. But it can only emerge if something fundamental changes in your state of consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (51:46 - 52:39)

Yes. So what that means, if nothing changes in your state of consciousness, the ego has many ideas. It says, I want to be a spiritual person.

I want to be recognized as a spiritual person. I want to be more spiritual than all these people. And I'm definitely more spiritual than you.

So the ego has all kinds of ideas of what it wants to be. It might even say, yes, I want to be good. Because it wants to have a better image of itself.

But on that level, but the essential dysfunction of the ego is still operating. So this is why we have the phrase, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Because no matter how good your intentions are, when you're still trapped in the ego, it will always take you into conflict eventually.

[Speaker 2] (52:40 - 52:43)

So that's why I was saying to Ryan, you can't just think positively.

[Speaker 1] (52:44 - 52:46)

It's not enough. You have to go deeper.

[Speaker 2] (52:46 - 52:53)

You can think positively, but it is not enough. Because eventually something negative will come along to challenge the positive. Right.

[Speaker 1] (52:53 - 52:53)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (52:53 - 52:54)

So you must.

[Speaker 1] (52:54 - 52:56)

It's the realm of opposites.

[Speaker 24] (52:56 - 52:56)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (52:56 - 53:12)

So you have to go deeper beyond the realm of opposites, where there's good and bad, and reach a place within yourself that is unconditioned. That is what I sometimes call the formless.

[Speaker 28] (53:12 - 53:12)

The formless.

[Speaker 1] (53:12 - 54:56)

Formless consciousness. What I call spirit. It's expressed beautifully in the Old Testament, in the little saying, be still and know that I am God.

And that's in the Old Testament. It contains the entire wisdom of religion in those few words. Be still, meaning go to that place where the mind is no longer operating, where you are just conscious without thinking.

And that is the level where the eternal resides. So the eternal, the formless, the spirit, is the essence of every human being. No matter how insane or conflict-ridden they seem to appear on the surface, within every human being, that remains untouched.

There's nothing that anybody could have done to you or nothing that you could have done to others to destroy that. It's always there. It's always there.

And that is the grace of being here. And no matter how much madness there has been in your life, that remains untouched. So it's getting in touch with that deepest place within.

And you can only do that by becoming still. Yes. Now, becoming still does not mean that you go to sleep.

It means you're actually more alert than when you are thinking. It's this... You have to invite the stillness into your life as much as possible.

[Speaker 2] (54:56 - 55:00)

That's why I loved your book, Stillness Speaks. It's only that small, but every page is a gem.

[Speaker 1] (55:00 - 55:01)

Yes. Okay.

[Speaker 2] (55:01 - 55:48)

And also, it's what I was saying earlier, that in order to feel that, the way you feel that, for everybody who's listening to us now, the way you begin to feel that is to look at nature. If you were to go out and just be with a tree, and I don't mean hug a tree. We're not talking about now you got to go hug a tree and eat granola.

But if you were just to be with anything in nature, I like trees because they're so majestic. They're so powerful and visual. And if you're with it for a time, you start to sense the presence of it, the stillness of it, and begin to recognize that stillness within yourself.

[Speaker 1] (55:48 - 55:52)

Yes. So what you sense in the tree is also in you.

[Speaker 2] (55:52 - 55:53)

And it's always in the tree.

[Speaker 1] (55:53 - 55:54)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (55:54 - 55:55)

When the wind is blowing and there's a storm.

[Speaker 1] (55:56 - 55:56)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (55:56 - 55:56)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (55:56 - 56:26)

And that is also a sacredness that is there in the tree. Our world doesn't know much. It's sacred.

It has become an abstract concept. Nobody seems to know what sacredness is, but until you can feel it. Until you can feel it.

When you feel, then you don't need a definition. People ask, please define what sacred is. You don't need a definition of what sacred is because sacred is the essence of who you are.

So it's sensing that, and you can sense it when you're still enough. You sense it in the tree.

[Speaker 2] (56:27 - 56:31)

Now, isn't it interesting that you first came to recognize this when you were about to kill yourself?

[Speaker 1] (56:32 - 56:53)

Yes. Yes. Sometimes you have to reach a limit.

Humans have to reach a limit. The human species as a whole is reaching that limit. But also on a personal level, sometimes people have to be pushed to the limit.

My ego was so obstinate and my pain body was so strong. I had to be pushed to the limit before it cracked open.

[Speaker 2] (56:53 - 56:59)

Well, before we go any further, share that moment that you talk about in the beginning of Power Now when you were about to kill yourself.

[Speaker 1] (57:00 - 57:52)

Yes. Feeling so much pain. Dreadful suffering at night.

I would often wake up in extreme feeling of dread and fear consumed by dread and fear. The whole world seemed alien. And I saw the thought one night I woke up again.

The thought came, I can't live with myself any longer. I just can't live with myself any longer. It's so painful.

And that thought repeated itself a few times. And then suddenly something happened inside me and I looked at the thought. That was, of course, awareness.

I didn't know that at the time what it was. I became aware of the thought and I said, I cannot live with myself. That's strange.

So there must be I and there must be myself. Am I one or two? I seem to be two.

Because if I can't live with myself, there must be two of me.

[Speaker 2] (57:52 - 58:00)

Everybody has felt that not to kill themselves, but everybody has felt or heard you say to yourself, I said to myself.

[Speaker 1] (58:00 - 58:00)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (58:01 - 58:01)

I said to myself.

[Speaker 1] (58:02 - 58:29)

Yes. And of course, the entire what we call the voice in the head, we could also call it self-talk where you talk to yourself. And most people address themselves as you.

So the voices, you shouldn't have done that or you should better. So there's a constantly there's a separation inside human beings, which is the essence of ego. Right.

That there's a here's an image of who I think I am. And then there's a me and they get mixed up together.

[Speaker 2] (58:29 - 58:36)

OK, I'm sorry I interrupted you that thought, though. But you use getting ready to kill yourself said, I can't live with myself any longer.

[Speaker 1] (58:37 - 58:37)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (58:37 - 58:39)

Said that several times in your mind.

[Speaker 1] (58:39 - 59:22)

And then I became aware of the structure of the sentence. And I said, if that's the case, then who is the self that I cannot live with? And who am I?

Wow. And at that moment, a separation happened completely between the essential I, which is the essential consciousness that I am beyond past and future, the eternal stillness, but awake stillness and all my thought processes, which were ego. It was all my thought processes that created the dreadful suffering.

The mind created entity. The unhappy me was continuously fed by my thinking. It consisted of thinking a stream of thinking.

[Speaker 2] (59:22 - 59:26)

So did you just decide that night? I guess I'll wait to see if I will kill myself.

[Speaker 1] (59:26 - 59:46)

No, the the I kind of it was a kind of spiritual suicide. So the ego died instead of me having to jump off a bridge. Fortunately, the ego died.

The ego dissolved. The ego as the unobserved mind dissolved the ego, the false self, the me, the unhappy story.

[Speaker 2] (59:47 - 59:48)

Oh, got it.

[Speaker 1] (59:48 - 1:01:36)

Me as the unhappy, my identity as me and my unhappy story. Died. Died, dissolved because the I behind it suddenly woke up and said, who is that self that I can't live with?

And when you fully look at that self, it actually dissolves because it cannot survive in the light of intense consciousness. Wow. And so the next morning I woke up and I didn't know.

I thought that was strange. What happened? Well, there was still I felt myself.

Were you drinking? No drinking, no drugs, no. I had a couple of sips or something.

Yeah, nothing. Just it just happened. And the I felt like being drawn into a kind of vortex then.

And then I went to sleep. And the last thing I felt there was still some fear. A voice said, don't resist or resist.

Nothing is nothing. Don't resist. Resist nothing.

And so I must have gone to sleep. Then you had your first good night's sleep in God. Yes.

And the next morning I woke up and looked around and looked. Everything looked so fresh. All the old furniture, the pencil, everything looked fresh and alive.

And I could bird song outside. Wow. As if I'd never heard it before.

Wow. Because the mind had become still. And there was simply the beautiful perception of everything.

The sunlight coming through the curtains. Incredible. I said, I've never seen that before.

And sounds like a drug trip. Well, later on, people tell me they ask me, is that like acid? Because some people take acid and they say, oh, we experienced that when we took acid.

They told me many times until finally, I'll tell you in confidence. Finally, I tried acid just for once because I was telling me in confidence here.

[Speaker 2] (1:01:36 - 1:01:37)

OK, good.

[Speaker 1] (1:01:37 - 1:02:17)

I tried it just once just to see if it was the same thing. Yes. Yeah.

It's not quite the same thing because what I experienced was much more subtle and beautiful. The acid I experienced as almost a violent thing where violently the perceptions, sense perceptions becomes so magnified that there was no room for thinking anymore. But I could see why people say, well, for some people, it's a glimpse of what it means to perceive the world without this continuous interference of mental noise.

Yeah. But the trip without acid was much better. Oh, I was.

[Speaker 2] (1:02:17 - 1:02:54)

Well, part of what you're describing is what I came close to that when I I decided to go outside without naming things or labeling things is what I was describing earlier, walking through the park, walking around my house, which is like a park in everything was like vibrating and it was the colors and everything. The sense perception was very different because I wasn't in my mind thinking about it. I was just there to experience it.

So that's how you get to get to that place.

[Speaker 1] (1:02:54 - 1:03:21)

That's right. So when when you're then you're no longer there when you walk through your garden in that or wherever and you're not naming every flower naming and also you're not carrying the burden of a heavy me, a personality, a person with its problems, with its past. We're not thinking about anything.

So you are basically you become a conscious presence perceiving the beauty around you.

[Speaker 2] (1:03:21 - 1:03:46)

Yeah, it's fascinating. Well, OK, we do have an email now. From Kathy in Delta, Colorado, is that where you are?

Well, no, she can't talk. It's an email. How do I shed the years or rather decades of conditioning and distractions, sickness, relationships, work in order to hear and feel the moments of stillness, which is what we're just talking about?

[Speaker 1] (1:03:46 - 1:03:56)

Yes. The good thing is you don't need years and years to undo years and years of conditioning because in an instant. Yes.

Only now.

[Speaker 2] (1:03:56 - 1:03:57)

Only now.

[Speaker 1] (1:03:57 - 1:05:57)

So it's the access point is the present moment is the present moment is the point of power to enter the new state of consciousness. So we need to learn how to how to find in our daily life as often as possible this point of power of the present moment, because if we don't, we get continuously dragged along by the old conditioning of the mind, all the old thought processes, all the old reactions and so on. So there are many little things you can do to access the power of the present moment.

For example, a very simple thing. Ask yourself, am I still breathing? Now, what does that mean?

How to find out if you're still breathing? Your attention needs to move from the thinking into here and you suddenly feel the air flowing into your body and out of your body. Yes, I'm breathing.

At that moment, you've entered the state of presence. Even if it's only five seconds, you've entered that you've become present. In the moment.

In that moment. So another thing I suggest is when you do habitual everyday motions like washing your hands or walking across the room or walking down the stairs or the slightest thing, taking a cup out of the cupboard. Do it consciously.

Do it being present of every how you feel. For example, you wash your hands, feel the water, smell the soap. We have this in one of the workbook exercises online.

Sense perceptions, becoming acutely conscious of sense perceptions, which means looking, hearing, touching also, brings you into the present moment.

[Speaker 2] (1:05:58 - 1:06:11)

How is that going to help me? Because I started doing that going up the stairs. I was going one foot on the stairs.

There's another foot on the stairs. There's another foot. Okay, I'm at the top of the stairs now.

I was present walking up the stairs. What does that do for me, Eckhart?

[Speaker 1] (1:06:11 - 1:06:12)

Were you present?

[Speaker 2] (1:06:13 - 1:06:30)

Yeah, I think I was. There's a foot. There's a foot.

There's a foot. There's a foot on the stairs. I'm just there.

The movement of it, feeling the motion of my body and how many parts of my body have to move to get me up the stairs. Oh, I used my thigh muscle there.

[Speaker 1] (1:06:30 - 1:06:31)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:06:31 - 1:06:32)

I used the back of the leg.

[Speaker 1] (1:06:32 - 1:06:39)

It was present. I wasn't sure from the way you said it. I thought you were repeating mentally, here's one step and here's another step.

But you were not.

[Speaker 2] (1:06:39 - 1:06:44)

No, I was not. I was feeling every part of what it took to get me up the stairs.

[Speaker 1] (1:06:45 - 1:06:45)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:06:45 - 1:06:45)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:06:45 - 1:06:56)

So now the mind says, what's the point in that? Yes, the mind then said, okay, now you were present getting up the stairs. And the mind says, I've got more important things to think about.

[Speaker 2] (1:06:56 - 1:06:56)

Yes, it did.

[Speaker 1] (1:06:57 - 1:07:31)

The mind said, now what did that do you? Now to the mind, that kind of thing is completely meaningless because you're inviting a different state of consciousness into your life, which the mind cannot understand. But this is how you bring in awareness.

This is the end of the old conditioning. Yes. And you bring in a consciousness that is totally fresh and new that comes out of the present moment.

And the more you bring those moments of presence into your life, the more your old conditioning becomes eroded gradually. I see.

[Speaker 2] (1:07:31 - 1:07:46)

So learning to do it with washing your hands. I just got simple things. This is good.

This class is good for me. I don't know about the rest of y'all, but I got it now. Just learning to do the simple things begins to retrain your mind.

[Speaker 1] (1:07:47 - 1:08:09)

Yes. And another thing is most simple things that you do, which actually fill up most person's everyday life because the whole day consists of simple things that you have to do. Right.

They're all relatively simple. Right. And the way most people live is that everything you do is a means to an end.

And the end is where you want to get to the next moment. Right.

[Speaker 2] (1:08:09 - 1:08:11)

So you're never thinking about the moment.

[Speaker 1] (1:08:11 - 1:08:26)

No, because you want to get to the next one. You're washing your hand in order to already do that. Or while you're making a cup of coffee, we really want to be drinking it.

Yeah. Jon Kabat-Zinn says in his book, Coming to Our Senses, that most people, every morning people take a shower, they bathe.

[Speaker 2] (1:08:26 - 1:08:33)

But most people are in the shower, but they never actually get to experience a shower because you're thinking they're already in the office.

[Speaker 1] (1:08:33 - 1:08:33)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:08:34 - 1:08:34)

They're already in the office.

[Speaker 1] (1:08:34 - 1:09:18)

And then everything you do is a means to an end. The end is always the next moment in the future, which never arrives, because all you ever have in life is the present moment. Present moment.

So you're constantly frustrated. Yes. Creating anxiety for yourself.

And stress because you can't just be present now. And the power can only flow into your life when you are present completely, totally with what you're doing now. And this is why most people's lives do not have this power, because they're always living for the next thing.

So they... Trying to get to. They devalue the present moment.

Got it. And so... That's why walking up the stairs, being with the stairs.

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:18 - 1:09:21)

Teaches you how to be present with other things.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:21 - 1:09:40)

Yes. And then gradually you can be present with... Even when you are with other human beings, you can be totally present in whatever work you do, so that the work is not a means to an end, but you're totally there with what you do.

Your attention. Well, I see Cinda from Oregon has been waiting to talk to us.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:40 - 1:09:43)

Cinda, hi, from Oregon. What's your question?

[Speaker 14] (1:09:43 - 1:10:10)

Hello, Oprah. Hello, Eckhart. Hi.

Hi. Hi. Hey, I am so grateful for this opportunity to have Eckhart answer my question.

Thank you for having me participate in this. And Eckhart, I need you to know that I am grateful that when you tried acid, that you preferred enlightenment more than that, because my children are upstairs listening in on this. Because he was going to say, and I interrupted him.

[Speaker 2] (1:10:10 - 1:10:12)

You were saying, I don't recommend it.

[Speaker 1] (1:10:12 - 1:10:25)

No, I don't. Why? Because you will always fall back.

You always fall back to the old state of consciousness. And I experienced it as almost a violent thing being done to me.

[Speaker 2] (1:10:25 - 1:10:29)

Okay, good. I wanted to say that for the children upstairs, Cinda.

[Speaker 14] (1:10:29 - 1:10:30)

Yeah, thank you, Oprah.

[Speaker 2] (1:10:30 - 1:10:31)

Okay, your question.

[Speaker 14] (1:10:32 - 1:11:56)

Well, my question is this. And first of all, I also want to tell Eckhart that his words and his book have moved me to my core. And I am a new person because of it.

And not only because of my internal changes, but the way that I am in the world that I live. And I am so grateful for that. Thank you, Eckhart.

I want to ask a question. It's something that we've already talked about a little bit tonight, but I feel it's important enough to bring up again. And I believe that the way that Eckhart answers this question might just be the catalyst to change that we need in order to save our planet and ourselves.

On pages 20 and 21 in the book, you talk about in an ever-changing world or an ever-changing environment, a species needs to either adapt or they will die out. And then you go on to say, and I quote, that humanity is now faced with a stark choice, evolve or die. My question to you is this.

When you say evolve or die, do you mean that literally, and it sounds like you might, or do you mean that metaphorically, which I hope?

[Speaker 1] (1:11:57 - 1:14:47)

Evolve or die refers to humanity as a whole, whether humanity survives as a species. Even if humanity did not survive as a species, no gain in consciousness is ever lost within the totality of consciousness. So the fact that we are here and consciousness, which is really all that exists, we are only forms that come out of consciousness.

And consciousness is the evolutionary process of the universe. And we are here together as part of this evolution of consciousness, which comes through the human form. Consciousness can use and does use millions and billions of other forms and evolves through that out of the unmanifested.

In the unmanifested, consciousness is already perfect, or God, you could say. Timeless, perfect, eternal, no change. And then you have this so-called manifested dimension, which some ancient teachers have described as a kind of dream, which is what it is.

But for some reason, consciousness wants to come into this world of form. And in this world of form, it evolves. So one could say that gradually, more and more, God, which is another word for consciousness, God comes into this world of form gradually, emerges.

And God comes through you. God comes through me. God comes through you.

Gradually, more and more, the density of form lessens. And this is what's happening. And so even if humanity didn't make it, the gain in consciousness that has already been achieved by those human beings who have become conscious would make consciousness express itself much more easily through some other form.

Because ultimately, we are not the form. We are not the body that we see. You are not the form that is sitting there.

In essence, you are beyond. You are the formless consciousness itself. With a stillness.

Temporarily assuming this particular form. And of course, the form eventually is going to dissolve anyway, because then consciousness moves on. Consciousness is continuous evolution.

Continuous metamorphosis. It's a wonderful process. So there's nothing to be scared of.

Because ultimately, when I say evolve or die, I'm only speaking of humanity as a species. But ultimately, nothing dies. It's only a transformation of consciousness.

A transformation of form. A transformation of form, yeah. So there is no death, ultimately.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:47 - 1:14:53)

But you do mean the end of our human species, as we know it.

[Speaker 1] (1:14:53 - 1:15:27)

Yes, that is a possibility. But the fact that we are here tonight which should give us hope and confidence that humanity is going to make it. Because this is growing.

And not just this teaching. There are other spiritual, alive spiritual teachings. There is an enormous awakening happening on the planet.

So nobody knows. I don't know the answer whether humanity is going to make it. But I do feel confident now, more so perhaps than before, that we are going to make it.

[Speaker 2] (1:15:29 - 1:15:46)

Well, yes. Because that's one of my favorite quotes too, Cinda. That a significant portion of the Earth's population will soon recognize, if they haven't already done so, that humanity is now faced with the stark choice, evolve or die.

Thank you for raising that question in such a beautiful way, Cinda.

[Speaker 14] (1:15:46 - 1:15:48)

Thank you, Oprah. Thank you, Eckhart.

[Speaker 2] (1:15:48 - 1:15:54)

Thanks for joining us. Casey in Asheville, North Carolina is on Skype and has a question also for Eckhart about the secret. Casey?

[Speaker 16] (1:15:55 - 1:16:41)

Hi, Oprah. Hi, Mr. Tolley. I was debating about whether to read this book because it looked very deep to me, to be honest.

And I have a one-year-old and I hang out with her all day and I didn't know if I was ready for it. But Oprah, when I saw your show on the secret and the bubble man and all that good stuff, I thought I have got to read that book because you talked about a new Earth so much in that show. So my question is this, when I put out into the universe, when I ask God for things, for hopes and dreams and material things, and a lot of times I get them, those material things, I think they may be coming from the ego.

And I just wonder, Mr. Tolley, is that wrong?

[Speaker 1] (1:16:42 - 1:18:01)

Okay, well, it's not wrong. You can always easily recognize that something is coming from ego because when you get it, it doesn't satisfy you. That's always a sign that it's coming from ego.

It may satisfy you for a little while and then some, oh, I need more. I need something else. So that's a good learning process.

You can manifest things. And if you see, oh, that's not satisfying, it must have been the ego. So there's nothing wrong with manifesting things.

The only illusion would be to expect things to provide some ultimate satisfaction in your life. Things can't do that. The world of form can't ultimately satisfy you.

You can enjoy the world of form, but the true satisfaction doesn't come from there. The world can't do that. The world can't make you happy.

Things cannot give you happiness because happiness comes from a deeper place within you that you can only access in the present moment. So it's fine to, we live in the world of things. Why not manifest things?

It is part of the game of, in this life, the game of form. But if you expect some kind of satisfaction, then you will always be frustrated.

[Speaker 2] (1:18:01 - 1:18:51)

Which is going to be, yeah, I think we get into that a lot in chapter three. In chapter two and chapter three, not allowing yourself, oh, love chapter two, chapter three, not allowing yourself to be defined by the things, to be in the world and not of it, is how I describe it, to not allow, to have things. You know, I have lots of beautiful things and I love beautiful things.

And later on, in one of the chapters, he talks about when you say that you're not defined by things, what happens to you if you were to lose any of those things? The depth of your, you know, grief, grieving or sorrow or, you know, so-called suffering determines how attached you were to those things. Yes, and for many people- And I say, it doesn't matter to me until somebody steals your car.

[Speaker 1] (1:18:51 - 1:20:22)

That's right. And for many people, that's a very important lesson. When suddenly they do lose something, it can be a wonderful spiritual lesson and then you, perhaps you suffer and then your attachment gets broken and suddenly you go beyond the attachment.

So there have been people who've lost everything and suddenly become free of the ego because the ego had nothing left to identify with. So this can happen. And another important thing to mention with regard to manifestation is the basis for your life is the present moment.

You need to, first of all, the very basis for everything is to come to an acceptance of this moment as it is. Gratitude is part of that. Of course, we will be talking about that in more detail.

So that there's no neediness when you manifest. It's the neediness that there's dissatisfaction, for example, in your life. There's dissatisfaction.

That is not a good place, not a good starting point for changing your life. The ego may tell you that, but it isn't. You need to find a place of acceptance, which is, no matter where you are, come to terms and become friendly with the present moment.

Because if you do not become friendly with the present moment, you're not friendly with life. Because life is only now. If you're not friendly with life, life cannot support you.

[Speaker 2] (1:20:22 - 1:20:30)

But did you just say that being in a place of dissatisfaction, being dissatisfied is not a good time or place to change?

[Speaker 1] (1:20:31 - 1:21:02)

It's first, you can see the totality of the situation. Let's say, I use the example in the power of now, you're stuck in the mud. You're walking somewhere and suddenly you get deep into the mud up to your knees.

Now, you wouldn't say, okay, I'm satisfied with this situation. You can't be satisfied with this situation. And you know that you need to get out.

But you say, okay, I am stuck in the mud and I need to get out. There is no cursing the negative reaction. Yeah, there's no cursing.

[Speaker 10] (1:21:02 - 1:21:03)

Damn this mud!

[Speaker 1] (1:21:03 - 1:21:53)

Yes. Yeah. Or struggle against.

Yeah. Because if you struggle against, you get in deeper. You're just going to get more mud on you.

Yes. Yeah. So, very important, perhaps one of the key things here in this or any spiritual teaching is the question that you need to ask yourself as much as possible.

You can even put it on your bathroom mirror or some other places where you often look. And that question is, what is my relationship with the present moment? And to become very conscious of that.

And then you find out, then you of course need to become alert. Okay, what's my relationship with this moment? Am I, is there negativity?

In which case I'm fighting. I'm making the present moment into an enemy. Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (1:21:53 - 1:21:58)

And what you say is what you resist persists. Yes. So, you must make peace with the moment.

[Speaker 1] (1:21:58 - 1:21:58)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:21:59 - 1:22:01)

Doesn't mean you have to be approved the situation.

[Speaker 1] (1:22:01 - 1:22:01)

No.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:01 - 1:22:05)

But you must make peace with the moment in order to get yourself out of it.

[Speaker 1] (1:22:05 - 1:22:05)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:05 - 1:22:08)

Because resisting is only going to cause more of it.

[Speaker 1] (1:22:08 - 1:22:25)

Yes. And that's absolutely vital. So, peace with what is.

The isness of this moment is already as it always already is as it is. The ego doesn't understand that, but you can't really argue with what is because it already is.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:25 - 1:22:29)

So, you must accept whatever it is first before you can begin to change it. That's what you're saying.

[Speaker 1] (1:22:29 - 1:22:40)

Yes. There must be acceptance. Acceptance of what is first.

First. Then action comes out of the acceptance. It no longer comes out of resistance.

[Speaker 28] (1:22:41 - 1:22:41)

Got it.

[Speaker 1] (1:22:41 - 1:22:52)

Which is a totally different energy flows into what you do when it comes out of an acceptance of this is what is. And then action happens. That is actually empowered by life itself.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:53 - 1:23:23)

Well, I think that explained it, Casey. I think so, too. Thank you so much.

That's amazing. Thank you so much. I just wanted to go back to spirituality and religion for a few moments in the few moments we have remaining because I know that's still such a major issue with so many of you.

And you say on page 17, that the more you make your thoughts or beliefs into your identity, the more cut off you are from the spiritual dimension within yourself. You also say on page 18, how spiritual you are has nothing to do with what you believe.

[Speaker 1] (1:23:24 - 1:23:24)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:24 - 1:23:27)

But everything to do with your state of consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (1:23:27 - 1:24:06)

Yes. How spiritual you are means how present. How present are you at this moment?

Are you in your thoughts or are you there as the awareness behind your thoughts? Which is your spirit. Yes.

Stillness. So often in newspapers and the media, they always ask, well, what do you believe in? That is not an important question, what I believe in.

The important question is, are you present at this moment? Not what your belief structures are.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:06 - 1:24:11)

I think people want to know what you believe so that they can label it and decide whether they're going to like you, accept you or not.

[Speaker 1] (1:24:11 - 1:24:17)

Yes. And they want to know, do you believe the same thing that I believe? Because if you don't, you're my enemy.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:18 - 1:24:20)

Yeah. And you're laughing at that. Okay.

[Speaker 1] (1:24:21 - 1:24:23)

Well, it's mad. It's better to laugh at madness.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:23 - 1:24:32)

Yes. Yes. I just wanted to mention this person, Maria from Doha, Qatar.

I just wanted to say Doha, Qatar.

[Speaker 1] (1:24:33 - 1:24:35)

In? Yes. In what country?

[Speaker 2] (1:24:35 - 1:24:35)

Qatar.

[Speaker 1] (1:24:36 - 1:24:36)

Qatar.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:37 - 1:24:52)

Okay. Qatar. Okay.

She says, do you think that people are ready and willing to set aside time to be quiet each day? Is this possible in a global sense? Would anyone who thinks their life is fine be willing to waste time just sitting in order to raise their consciousness level?

[Speaker 1] (1:24:53 - 1:25:12)

Well, a better, I would change the question a little bit to make it more vital and more relevant is asked, am I ready? The only question you really need to answer is, am I ready? Love that.

To do this. You don't need to know whether other people are ready to do it. Only you can have the answer, am I ready to be still?

[Speaker 24] (1:25:12 - 1:25:13)

Very good, Mr. Qatar.

[Speaker 1] (1:25:14 - 1:25:34)

Am I ready? Let's see. That's the vital question.

And only you can answer that. I can't answer that. Are you ready?

Or are you so fascinated by the things of this world and your mind that perhaps you need to pursue those things for a few more years until you suffer a bit more and then you're ready? Well, yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:25:34 - 1:25:46)

When we were doing rehearsal for this yesterday, we were up on Skype and someone said, I'm 28 years old and I don't think I need to be awakened. So what can I get from this book? I go, don't waste your time.

Go read another book.

[Speaker 1] (1:25:47 - 1:25:47)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:25:47 - 1:25:49)

Yeah. You don't think you need to be awakened then?

[Speaker 1] (1:25:50 - 1:27:20)

No, that's right. So it's the time is not yet there for everybody and that's fine too. What about the people who are struggling, particularly in this first chapter with the book?

The first chapter is a little bit more conceptual than the other chapters and less practical. I wanted to give a general context for where the book fits into the general context of the spirituality on the planet, the transformation of consciousness on the planet. So just read through.

There are already very important pointers in the first chapter. If you can see them, we'll run through the whole book, presence and so on. Just carry on, but not only the first chapter.

Anywhere in the book, don't expect to immediately understand everything. That's not necessary. And besides, understanding the book is not the essential thing.

It's secondary. The first thing is to experience the truth of it rather than conceptual understanding the essence of what's in the book, but in any case, cannot be understood conceptually. For example, presence.

People say, can you explain to me what presence is? I've already given a few pointers. It's pointless to go beyond that and give further definitions.

You can only know what presence is by being present. You must have at least a glimpse of presence, and this is why it's not understanding. That's the essence.

So when you don't understand, just read on. It's a process. Reading this book is a process.

[Speaker 2] (1:27:20 - 1:27:27)

Yes. And this book, as you say, again, as I said in the beginning, this isn't about creating more information for you to believe in.

[Speaker 1] (1:27:27 - 1:27:27)

No.

[Speaker 2] (1:27:27 - 1:27:29)

Yeah. And you don't want to be anybody's guru.

[Speaker 1] (1:27:30 - 1:28:07)

No, no. So it's not through your mind, really, that you can get it. And anybody who finds this book meaningful, and this is the important thing, is already awakening.

If you're not awakening already, this book will be completely meaningless, or any other truly alive spiritual book will be meaningless. You won't understand it, or you say, there's not much there. I don't know.

It doesn't make sense to me. If it does make sense, especially if you feel something from within responding, and you say, wow, yeah.

[Speaker 2] (1:28:08 - 1:28:24)

Well, I think also, too, for all of you who've joined us, there are a lot of people who are expressing, they're getting it, they're awakening, they're feeling more alive and excited, and then you want to go share it with somebody else who perhaps hasn't read the book, doesn't feel the same as you, and then they feel frustrated.

[Speaker 1] (1:28:25 - 1:28:25)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:28:25 - 1:28:31)

And I guess you would say the same thing as you say to the woman in Qatar, just worry about yourself.

[Speaker 1] (1:28:31 - 1:28:33)

Yes. And so if others...

[Speaker 2] (1:28:33 - 1:28:34)

Concern yourself with yourself.

[Speaker 1] (1:28:34 - 1:28:55)

That's right. And if friends or relatives say, doesn't make sense to me, that's fine. That's perhaps in a few years' time, they'll be ready.

We don't know. So it's to accept that it's not yet for everybody. Accept it first.

Accept. Don't demand that, or don't make it into an ideology, and then try to convince people that they must be present.

[Speaker 2] (1:28:56 - 1:30:06)

Right. I got it. Before we say goodbye, I want to thank you for being with me, all of you out there.

This is just the most exciting thing I have ever done. Being able to talk with you all and share this kind of information that allows all of us to get closer to who we really are so that we can do, honor our life's purpose and calling here while we're on Earth. And we'll be here next Monday again at 8 p.m. Central. If you want to experience this first class again, or tell a friend who missed it, our webcast will be available on demand tomorrow for free here at Oprah.com. You'll also be able to update your workbook and get started on chapter two. And if you want to download the podcasts of this class, you can do that too at Oprah.com and at iTunes. Next week, moving out of the conceptual chapter one into the good stuff. Yes. Moving on.

The next week we'll be talking about the ego. Wow. We'll see you next Monday night.

Thank you, Eckhart.

[Speaker 1] (1:30:06 - 1:30:07)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:07 - 1:31:53)

And thank you so much to all of you around the world. Good night. Good morning.

Welcome to our second New Earth webcast. It is one of my greatest joys to unite all of us around the world and share the possibilities of awakening together. Along with a multitude of North Americans, we also have students registered in this class from countries like Afghanistan, Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Croatia, Denmark, Egypt, Ireland, South Africa, and even a few of you from Zanzibar, I hear.

Thank you. Since last week, 1,860,000 of you have streamed or downloaded our first class. I just want you to know it's always available.

If this pioneering effort again tonight should break up and we have webcast problems, you can go to oprah.com tomorrow or iTunes and begin streaming afternoon. Well, for the next nine weeks, author and spiritual teacher Eckhart Tolle and I plan to be right here in our virtual classroom on oprah.com Monday nights at 8 p.m. Central to discuss each chapter and talk with you about it. And you can type in your questions on the right side of your screen and send that to us instantly.

And throughout this class, we're gonna also talk directly to students via Skype, so cool, free software that allows you to make internet and video phone calls all over the world. Welcome again, Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:53 - 1:31:55)

Thank you, thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:55 - 1:32:24)

Well, last week you shared with us how there are tools that we can use to bring ourself into the present moment. And you were saying from that first chapter and throughout this book that there is only the present moment. And you were saying is that if we would allow ourselves to take ourselves out of our mind and just go to our breath, that we could learn presence that way.

That's how you begin to learn presence.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:25 - 1:33:48)

Yes, yes. And I suggest that we all do that right now, which is to say we are taking our attention right now away from where it usually dwells, which is in the head and in the thinking mind. And we direct our attention to our breath.

And the simple question that one could ask is, or you could ask yourself is, am I still breathing? Let's just check if I'm still breathing. Now, how do you find out whether you're still breathing?

You have to take your attention away from the thinking mind and sense yourself breathing right now. And as you're taking attention away from the thinking mind, which always works using past and future, it sustains itself by always generating past and future thinking, you also enter the present moment. When you take attention away from thinking, direct attention to your breathing.

You're always breathing, but usually you're not aware of it. That's right. And now we are bringing awareness to it, which means we are taking attention away from thinking.

So we are not losing consciousness. We are very conscious. But the thinking much less or perhaps not at all.

So let's do this now. This has never been done on television. It's unprecedented, but we can do it here.

[Speaker 2] (1:33:49 - 1:33:51)

Silence is usually not good on TV.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:51 - 1:33:52)

No.

[Speaker 2] (1:33:53 - 1:33:55)

But let's try it for the next 10 seconds.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:55 - 1:33:58)

10 seconds. Just be aware of yourself breathing.

[Speaker 2] (1:34:23 - 1:34:24)

I'm still alive.

[Speaker 1] (1:34:25 - 1:34:26)

Yes. I just checked in. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:34:26 - 1:34:27)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:34:28 - 1:34:39)

Perhaps even more alive when you're engaged in thinking. There's a deeper sense of aliveness there that you're beginning to touch when you get in touch with that, these inner processes.

[Speaker 2] (1:34:39 - 1:34:49)

I think that's pretty cool that all around the world and all of these different countries I just named, that all of us come together in silence for a moment just to give our minds a break.

[Speaker 1] (1:34:50 - 1:34:50)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:34:50 - 1:35:41)

Yeah. Well, this is the most exciting chapter until you get to the next chapter. I think chapter two is the most exciting chapter.

As we said last week, chapter one is pretty conceptual. You would agree. Yes.

You're the one who wrote it. Yes. Pretty conceptual.

But in chapter two, title, Ego, The Current State of Humanity, we get into, I think, a way of understanding ourselves that perhaps so many people were not aware of until beginning to read this. So I would just like to just get right into this chapter. When you say, when you don't cover up the world with words and labels, a sense of the miraculous returns to your life that was lost a long time ago when humanity, instead of using thought, became possessed by thought.

What do you mean by that? Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:35:42 - 1:37:09)

Now, usually, and everybody can verify this in their own experience, we experience the phenomenal world, whatever we experience, we do not experience it directly. It is overlaid with self-talk, which are the mental processes. So as you go about your life, you encounter situations, you meet people, you do your work.

And most of the time, there is a voice in the head, which can be called the self-talk. It can be called the inner voice. But it is the conditioned thought processes.

And they are commenting and interpreting and mentally labeling whatever it is you're perceiving or experiencing. So there's always a running commentary in people's heads. So they don't relate to the world directly and immediately, but through the veil of the self-talk.

And this greatly decreases the sense of aliveness, the sense of how you relate to the outer world, and especially to human beings. For example, if every time I meet another human being, I immediately have certain thoughts and judgments in my head that come up the moment I meet a person. I'm already thinking something about this person.

[Speaker 2] (1:37:09 - 1:37:10)

That's right. You've already labeled.

[Speaker 1] (1:37:11 - 1:37:19)

I'm already labeled. And so I'm no longer really in communication with that person. I'm in communication with my own labels.

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:37:19 - 1:37:47)

And what you said to us last week, and you also say in this chapter, even a stone and more easily a flower or a bird could show you the way back to God and the source to yourself when you look at it or hold it and let it be without imposing a word or mental label. And what you were saying in last week is that if you can learn to do that in nature first, stop labeling things, just feel the essence and presence of things. It allows you then to be able to gradually move into doing that with people.

[Speaker 28] (1:37:48 - 1:37:48)

That's right.

[Speaker 2] (1:37:48 - 1:38:02)

Because so often we don't engage in presence with people. We've already labeled them and labeled the situation. And so we're reacting out of the situations and not out of what's actually happening.

That's what you're saying.

[Speaker 1] (1:38:03 - 1:38:30)

Yes. We've already put people into mental boxes. And so we no longer experience them as in their full aliveness.

We have desensitized ourselves through this continuous mental conceptualization. We have desensitized ourselves to the aliveness of other human beings, because the moment I put a label on another human being, I've already desensitized myself to their life.

[Speaker 2] (1:38:30 - 1:38:48)

So you say the quicker you are in attaching verbal or mental labels to things, people or situations, the more on page 26, everybody, the bottom, the more shallow and lifeless your reality becomes and the more deadened you become to reality, the miracle of life that continuously unfolds within and around you.

[Speaker 1] (1:38:48 - 1:39:32)

Yes. I go for a walk every day in the little forest at home. And often I encounter people who are jogging or friends going for a walk.

And most people, some are listening to things on their headphones, whatever it is, and they're talking to their friends. And very few people are actually truly present there as they walk through this beautiful forest. And this is a spiritual practice.

And I recommend that people, whenever they go out into nature, especially, practice being very alert so that they can perceive the trees, the flowers, the plants, the sky, without too much mental interference.

[Speaker 2] (1:39:33 - 1:39:54)

That's so interesting because when I used to run all the time, I'd have all these people who'd run with their headphones and I'd say, what are you listening to? And even now working out, I like just being and feeling the, you know, my feet on the pavement and, you know, taking it all in. I like just sort of being with myself and I find that the headphones and all that, it's a distraction for me.

[Speaker 1] (1:39:54 - 1:40:17)

Yes. Yeah. Yes.

So that's a great practice. It's a good practice. But you can, even without leaving your home, you can practice even if you have a potted plant at home in your room, look at the plant just for a few seconds, 10 seconds, 20 seconds, and just bring your attention to the sense perception and truly look without mentally saying anything about it.

[Speaker 2] (1:40:17 - 1:40:21)

Well, Heather from Vancouver Island, Canada is on Skype. Hello, Heather.

[Speaker 10] (1:40:22 - 1:40:26)

Hello, Oprah. I'm honored to be here speaking with you today.

[Speaker 2] (1:40:26 - 1:40:28)

I think this is fun. Okay.

[Speaker 4] (1:40:29 - 1:40:47)

Okay, go right ahead. Mr. Tolley, I'd like to commend you on a spectacular book. I found it thought-provoking and questions arose for me.

For example, when we get free of the ego, where does that energy go? Good question.

[Speaker 1] (1:40:48 - 1:42:01)

Good question. Yes, thank you. The energy that was used up by the ego.

Now, what is the ego? Basically consists of compulsive, conditioned thought processes so that we are not aware of. So we identify so closely with our stream of thinking that we don't even know that we are thinking.

So all this energy is used up in continuous, to a large extent, useless thinking. Even psychologists have found out that 90, even psychologists who are not interested in spiritual things, they looked at the nature of human thought and they discovered that 98 or 99 percent of our thoughts are quite useless and repetitive. They're not really needed.

So where does that energy go? That energy that then becomes freed from thinking and becomes presence, which is a new dimension. Well, not entirely new because almost everybody has had glimpses of presence, but it is a dimension of consciousness that most people still don't know exists.

And really, this is the essence of the whole teaching.

[Speaker 2] (1:42:01 - 1:42:26)

And everybody's had glimpses of it. I'm sure you have too, Heather, and everybody who's listening to us. Everybody's had just that little moment where everything is OK, where you have just a moment of bliss, where there's nothing particularly going on that would cause you to feel that.

But there's a sense of an awareness that causes you to have, as you said, a glimpse of something bigger than yourself.

[Speaker 1] (1:42:26 - 1:42:46)

Yes, it can come accidentally. Sometimes it comes into people's lives accidentally, and suddenly you feel a deep sense of inner peace and aliveness. And all rightness.

Yes, and not because something particular has happened. So there's no external cause for it. It's causeless joy, one could say.

[Speaker 2] (1:42:46 - 1:42:54)

That's happened to you, Heather. Has that happened to you? Occasionally.

Yeah, occasionally. Yeah. And then you wonder, how did that happen so I could make that happen again?

[Speaker 1] (1:42:54 - 1:43:45)

Yes, it can also happen when you're engaged in very strenuous physical activity. So that requires all your attention, like climbing a mountain. So you need to be, when you're climbing a wall, you need to be totally present every moment.

If you lose presence and start thinking about what you're going to do when you get down from the mountain, you will probably have an accident. So certain activities, very strenuous activities, require absolute presence. And some people become actually addicted to dangerous activities because they feel much more alive in those moments.

Because you need to be fully present. Yes, the reason why they feel so much more alive is because they're thinking almost nothing at all. Because you have to be present in order to climb a mountain or to do strenuous activities.

Your attention is absolutely there.

[Speaker 2] (1:43:46 - 1:44:08)

All right. All right, Heather, did that answer your question? Yes, it did.

Thank you. Thank you so much from Vancouver Island, Canada, Heather. Well, Heather introduces this whole idea of the illusory self that you talk about on page 27.

You say the word I embodies the greatest error and the deepest truth, depending upon how it is used. What do you mean by that?

[Speaker 1] (1:44:08 - 1:44:48)

Yes, usually when people say I, they refer to what I call me and my story. Yes. Which is your personal history that you identify with as yourself.

So everybody has a story, of course, because everybody has a past. Now, most people are completely identified with the story that is their successes, their failures, things that happened to them. Things that they acquired.

They see themselves as a victim. They see themselves as successful. Whatever it is, there is a certain story that develops.

Because when you ask me, who am I?

[Speaker 2] (1:44:49 - 1:44:58)

That's what I'm going to tell you. My story, my successes, my failures, where I was born, what I did, what my mother did or didn't do. That's who we think we are.

[Speaker 1] (1:44:58 - 1:47:00)

That's right. Now, what I'm saying is, and what all spiritual teachings point to, is that that ultimately is not who you are in your essence. It is no more than a collection of memories.

And of course, memories are thoughts. It is no more than a bundle of thoughts that you identify with and that you believe to be who you are. So that becomes an entity almost, a mind-made entity, a sense of self, like a phantom entity that lives with you, that you then refer to as myself.

So you have me and myself. For example, in Greek mythology, we have the interesting story of Narcissus. Narcissus was a young man who lived, how the story goes.

Mythology, of course, always embodies some truth that goes beyond the personal. Narcissus happened to be walking somewhere and he saw, suddenly he looked down and he saw his own image in a pool of water. At a time, of course, they didn't have mirrors at the time.

So it was a surprise for him to see himself reflected in a pool of water. And the story goes that he fell in love with himself. My view is that actually a better translation of the story is that he became obsessed with himself.

And that to me signals the beginning of the human ego. It is to have a mental image in your head, ultimately, not out there, that's just the story, a mental image in your head that you regard as yourself. And that mental image is the mind-made me that consists of memories, things that happen to you, things, failures, successes, opinions, all kinds of things.

I describe them in the book. Together make up this I.

[Speaker 2] (1:47:01 - 1:47:06)

Well, if I'm not the memories and I'm not the things that happen to me and I'm not my story, then who am I?

[Speaker 1] (1:47:06 - 1:48:24)

That's the question. And in fact, who am I is actually a question that in some spiritual, Eastern spiritual teachings is used as a kind of mantra or pointer that you repeat to yourself in a meditation setting. So you sit down and you ask yourself, who am I?

And you're not supposed to answer that question. You leave the blank after the question. In that blank, in that empty space, if it works, if this practice works as it should, you suddenly get a sense of your own presence that has nothing to do with your thought processes, your own sense of conscious presence, your beingness, your presence, part of which is actually also your physical presence, but as a sense of aliveness.

Every cell of the body becomes part of that sense of presence and aliveness. So as we sit here, we can perhaps see if we can get a little glimpse of that, a glimpse of our own presence, which again is nothing to do with thinking. It is deeper than thinking.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:24 - 1:48:26)

How do we get a glimpse of it sitting here?

[Speaker 1] (1:48:26 - 1:48:46)

We get a glimpse of it. I recommend that see if you can feel the inner aliveness in your body as you sit here. Is there any sense in which you can feel that you're, that there is an aliveness in every cell of the body?

Now, if people...

[Speaker 2] (1:48:46 - 1:48:47)

But isn't my mind thinking that?

[Speaker 1] (1:48:48 - 1:48:50)

Your mind may be thinking, yes, of course I'm alive.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:50 - 1:49:02)

Like in the book, you say feel the aliveness in your hands. When I go to feel the aliveness in my hand, I can't feel the aliveness in my hand unless I had a mind in which to feel that.

[Speaker 1] (1:49:02 - 1:49:18)

No. So if you close your eyes and you hold out your hand like this, and then the question... Feel the vibrating sensation in your hand.

Yes. You ask yourself, for example, I always have this exercise for people who have no idea what I'm talking about when I talk about inner body.

[Speaker 2] (1:49:18 - 1:49:20)

Okay. Well, that would be a lot of people right now.

[Speaker 1] (1:49:20 - 1:50:28)

Go ahead. So you hold your hand and close your eyes and then ask yourself how, without touching anything and without moving my hand, how can I know whether my hand is still here? How can I know that?

Now, your mind might say, of course I know it because I remember seeing it just a few seconds ago. And I feel it right here. But that's it.

You feel the inside is alive. A subtle sense of warmth or tingling, a subtle sense of aliveness. That is the beginning of getting in touch with your inner body, the energy field.

But I need my brain to do that, though. You need your conscious attention to do that, but not thinking. Not thinking.

No, that's the difference. You need attention, which is consciousness. Yes, you need consciousness to feel it.

But the consciousness then moves from where it usually is, just as it did when we started today with becoming aware of our breathing. Now the consciousness moves into the hand. And if you can feel your hand, if you can feel one hand, you can also feel the other hand.

If you can feel both hands at the same time, you can perhaps also feel your both arms.

[Speaker 2] (1:50:28 - 1:50:28)

Right.

[Speaker 1] (1:50:29 - 1:50:32)

And if you can feel the arms, perhaps you can also feel your feet.

[Speaker 2] (1:50:32 - 1:50:38)

Okay. And as I begin to feel that, and everybody who's with us around the world feels that, then what?

[Speaker 1] (1:50:38 - 1:50:47)

This means the inner body, which we also could call, this is what we are doing, is we are practicing embodiment.

[Speaker 28] (1:50:47 - 1:50:48)

Mm-hmm.

[Speaker 1] (1:50:48 - 1:51:05)

This keeps you in the present moment and keeps you present. It keeps you out of your thought processes. Thinking about what I need to do tomorrow.

Yes. And it takes you out of ego because the ego lives in your thought processes, consists of thought processes.

[Speaker 2] (1:51:06 - 1:51:06)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (1:51:06 - 1:51:38)

So the moment you enter the inner aliveness of a body, you sense there is a sense of self that is deeper than thinking. You are that aliveness that you feel. You are that alive presence.

And so, and this applies whether your past or your personal history is a happy one or an unhappy one. For most people, it's a very mixed story, but no personal history is entirely happy. Right.

With very few examples. And then you just have to wait a little while until it becomes unhappy again.

[Speaker 2] (1:51:38 - 1:51:40)

Even the people who say, I had a great childhood.

[Speaker 1] (1:51:41 - 1:52:09)

No, personal histories are all very problematic and it's not people think, oh, it's only me. It's everybody. Everybody's personal history.

Because that's what being a human is. Yes. Okay.

So to be able to step out and find a dimension that has nothing to do with your past and your history or whether you are a miserable failure in the eyes of the world or your thought processes or greater has nothing to do with that.

[Speaker 2] (1:52:09 - 1:52:42)

I love it when you say what you usually refer to when you say, I'm on page 28, is not who you are by a monstrous act of reductionism. Yes. Which is a great way of putting it.

The infinite depth of who you are is confused with a sound produced by the vocal cords or the thought of I in your mind and whatever the I has identified with. So what do the usual I and the related me, my or mine refer to? You talk about when a young child first learns to identify my toy.

[Speaker 1] (1:52:42 - 1:53:24)

Yes, that's the beginning of ego when the child starts to identify with an external object.

And you can see when the toy is taken away from a child after this identification has happened, after the child thought of it as my toy, there's enormous amount of pain in the child. The child will start screaming and saying, it's mine, it's mine.

So the toy has been taken away. Why is it so painful for the child? Because it is the beginning of the ego.

The ego has lost something that it had identified with. It's a misperception of who one is. And so it's very painful.

[Speaker 2] (1:53:25 - 1:53:29)

The child thinks that the toy has something to do with them.

[Speaker 1] (1:53:29 - 1:53:30)

Who they are. It's who they are.

[Speaker 2] (1:53:30 - 1:53:33)

That's the identification. That's why kids go into spasms.

[Speaker 1] (1:53:34 - 1:53:48)

Yes. Over a toy and you're going, it's just a toy. And two days later, they lose interest in it.

Right. So that's the beginning of it. And it's because they think the toy is them?

They think it's a part of them. It adds something to their sense of self.

[Speaker 2] (1:53:48 - 1:53:51)

That's right. And when you take it away, they think it is.

[Speaker 1] (1:53:51 - 1:53:57)

Then they be, it's like losing a limb because it became so much part of who they thought they were.

[Speaker 2] (1:53:57 - 1:53:59)

In the child's mind, that's a part of me.

[Speaker 1] (1:53:59 - 1:54:05)

Yes. And then we grow up. And of course the process continues.

When we grow up, our toys just get bigger. They get bigger.

[Speaker 2] (1:54:06 - 1:54:09)

We cry because I lost my...

[Speaker 1] (1:54:09 - 1:54:25)

External possessions. Yes. But it's, of course, possessions is an important part of all the things that people identify with that become part of their identity.

But there are many other things apart from possessions. Right. For example, social position, how others see you.

[Speaker 2] (1:54:25 - 1:54:39)

Because you say other things the eye identifies with is nationality, race, religion, profession, mother, father, husband, wife, roles they play, opinions they hold.

[Speaker 1] (1:54:40 - 1:54:44)

You can see, for example, But these are roles.

[Speaker 2] (1:54:44 - 1:54:48)

They are actual roles. You know, people are mothers and fathers and...

[Speaker 1] (1:54:48 - 1:54:48)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:54:48 - 1:54:49)

You know.

[Speaker 1] (1:54:49 - 1:54:57)

Yes. And now it's important, of course, to fulfill the functions that you have in this world. And mother and father are important functions as opposed to roles.

[Speaker 2] (1:54:57 - 1:55:00)

Your nationality and your race and your religion.

[Speaker 1] (1:55:00 - 1:55:01)

It's fine.

[Speaker 2] (1:55:01 - 1:55:02)

You identify with those things.

[Speaker 1] (1:55:02 - 1:55:53)

It's fine to honor all these things. But if that's all you have, then you are lost in a surface reality that always turns into, becomes painful and turns into conflict. Okay.

You can see, for example, when people are discussing and if somebody questions somebody's opinion, very often, immediately they become defensive. Right. Sometimes even aggressive or start shouting.

Right. And because opinions, again, is another thing that people... Because my beliefs.

Mine. They identify with the thought they hold, a mental position. And then anybody who questions that mental position immediately becomes your enemy because you believe you're being attacked.

You're not being attacked, but the image that you have of yourself and the opinion is part of that, the ego believes it's being attacked.

[Speaker 2] (1:55:54 - 1:56:16)

So you're saying that whenever you can see that that's what you're thinking, when you can see the illusion of that, the moment you can see the illusion of it, these are thoughts in my head, this is something I've told myself I believe, this is something I've told myself that I identify with, that when you can see that, the seer or the observer is who you really are.

[Speaker 1] (1:56:16 - 1:56:21)

Yes. And the seer or the observer is the presence of the awareness.

[Speaker 2] (1:56:21 - 1:56:23)

So you're saying there's two of us at all times.

[Speaker 1] (1:56:24 - 1:56:33)

Yes. There is the formless awareness and there is the form that a thought becomes. Thought is an energy formation.

[Speaker 28] (1:56:33 - 1:56:34)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (1:56:34 - 1:56:41)

And so that you've just mentioned, the essence is to be there as the awareness when it happens.

[Speaker 2] (1:56:41 - 1:56:45)

All right, I'm going to go to Victoria. Victoria lives in Maui, joins us via Skype.

[Speaker 24] (1:56:45 - 1:57:44)

Victoria, hello. Aloha. Aloha.

Can't wait to get there. Thank you, Oprah and Mr. Toley for this awesome opportunity. I was diagnosed over 10 years ago with systemic lupus and RA.

And I've been a really active person, but two years ago, I gave up my business, my health deteriorated and I got an aha moment in this book on page 51. I never realized that I had unconsciously clinged to my illness and I'm taking this out of the book because I put it to myself because it had actually become the most important part of who I perceived myself to be. How can I undo this identity and how can I stay focused when I'm in excruciating pain from the illness to have the peace constantly and not just fleeting moments?

That's real.

[Speaker 1] (1:57:44 - 2:00:54)

Yes. That's real. Yes.

Now, the most important thing has already happened, which is you have become aware that up to now, you had been identified with the idea of I am a sufferer of such and such an illness. So the illness had become thought forms in your head and you had identified with these thought forms and took them to be who you are. And now the most important thing, your question is still valid, but realize that the most important thing has already happened, which is the awareness has arisen.

So there's a space now between yourself and your thought processes and the image of yourself as a sick person. Now, another thing, of course, in addition you can do is, for example, no longer talk about your illness to other people except when you visit a doctor. Then otherwise, the more you talk about it to your friends, acquaintances, family members, the more you keep that process going.

Empower it. He empowers the disease. That's right.

So if you just take the decision now that from now on, I'm not going to talk about it. And if people ask me about my illness, which they're going to do because they're used, perhaps used to you talking about it, you say, well, I'm doing all I can to find healing in this and I'm making good progress. Go as far as that and don't encourage people to ask you questions and just say, that's how it is.

No more mentioning my illness. So you begin on the external level, not to talk about it anymore, except when, of course, when you need to talk to doctors. And that will have also a certain influence on your thought processes.

And then you can gradually also refrain from thinking of yourself as a sick person and perhaps give less thought to your illness and focus attention more on well-being. Now, you may ask, well, but if I don't feel good, if I feel it, how can I give attention to well-being? You can still do that.

One way is to see well-being around you in nature because nature is just an embodiment of well-being. You have a lot of opportunity to do that in Maui. Yes, you're in the best place.

And also there's well-being, even if certain parts of your body feel unwell or painful. And again, we are coming back to the sensing the inner body. There are always parts of your body where you can still find well-being in your hands, your arms, wherever.

Take some attention into the body and see where can I most strongly feel, get a sense of well-being in the body and then take your attention there. So you choose to direct attention to well-being rather than dwelling on the idea of illness.

[Speaker 2] (2:00:55 - 2:00:59)

That does not mean the pain's going to go away because she said she has physical pain.

[Speaker 1] (2:00:59 - 2:01:45)

The pain may still be there. That's fine. But as far as the pain is concerned, pain unfortunately requires surrender.

You need to see that the pain is there so that you do not generate an additional level of psychological pain, which complains about being in physical pain. Because if the mind starts to complain about being in physical pain, you have two levels of pain. You have psychological pain and physical pain.

WINFREY Got it. DR. SCHNEEBERG Leave physical pain. With physical pain, you just, right now, this is how it is.

It's there. WINFREY Don't resist it? DR. SCHNEEBERG Don't resist it. Do what you can as far as treatment goes, of course. But don't resist it. Don't create psychological pain on top of the physical pain.

[Speaker 24] (2:01:45 - 2:01:57)

WINFREY Are you following that, Victoria? DR. SCHNEEBERG Got it. Yeah, excellent.

Got it. Makes sense to you? DR. SCHNEEBERG You know, it really does. It does, yes. DR. SCHNEEBERG And I do have a little garden in the back that I go out to a lot.

[Speaker 1] (2:01:58 - 2:02:12)

DR. SCHNEEBERG Yes, because there's well-being all around you. And you can almost, one could say, you absorb it from, if you don't, if you can contemplate all these plants and the intense aliveness around you, contemplate that.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:12 - 2:02:23)

WINFREY Well, email us in the weeks to come and let us know how this works for you, Victoria. DR. SCHNEEBERG I will. I will, Oprah.

WINFREY Thank you so much. Victoria from Maui. DR. SCHNEEBERG Thank you. WINFREY We have Anne from Ireland on the phone with a question. Anne, hello?

[Speaker 5] (2:02:24 - 2:02:30)

OPERATOR Hi, Oprah. How are you? WINFREY Hi.

Middle of the night there? OPERATOR It's 1.30 in the morning.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:30 - 2:02:31)

WINFREY Okay. Thank you.

[Speaker 5] (2:02:32 - 2:02:33)

OPERATOR And hi, Eckhart.

[Speaker 10] (2:02:34 - 2:02:52)

This book's been so inspirational. I have three young children, five, seven, and nine years old. And motherhood's one of the things that's motivated me to find ways to be happier with myself, because it's so evident that children are influenced by what they experience with you rather than what you actually tell them.

[Speaker 1] (2:02:52 - 2:02:52)

DR. SCHNEEBERG Yes.

[Speaker 10] (2:02:53 - 2:03:24)

OPERATOR And I see that the stress in my life has even had an impact on their health. And I found the ideas in A New Earth helpful in this way because I'm practicing being present with them and really enjoying my time with them, not thinking about work and thinking about the things I should be doing around the house, but just spending time with them and being with them. And I'm seeing that the individuals that they really are and who I am.

Are there other ways to introduce these ideas to small children like that? DR. SCHNEEBERG Oh, good.

[Speaker 1] (2:03:24 - 2:05:49)

Yeah, that's a very good question. Now, you've already mentioned the most important thing is your own state of consciousness at home because the children absorb from you your predominant state of consciousness. And if you can be present with children at home, present means to give them full attention.

When you are present, you don't want anything from them. You just give them attention, which could be listening. It could be watching them as they play.

Now, many parents don't do that. They give them attention, but it's always wanting something. They say, do this, don't do that.

Now, this needs to get done. So that is, I call that form-based attention. That has its place, of course.

Of course, the children need to brush their teeth. They need to tidy up their room. This is fine.

It has its place, but more is needed. Your child wants to be acknowledged in his or her being. So it is vital to give the child conscious attention at home.

Give the child space to be. Doesn't need to be long, just a few minutes every day. Be there.

Be present for the child. That's vital. Another thing that is important is they come to a stage in a young child's life when they start asking, the mind wants to absorb concepts.

So they start asking what things are called. What's this, mom? What's that?

What's that? And so at that point, usually, of course, you have to tell them this is a tree or this is that and that's that. Yes.

Bird. Yes. Yes.

And the important thing is the child does not at that stage immediately lose him or herself in concepts and then believe that the moment they know that this is a bird, the danger is the moment you know this is a bird, you're no longer really looking at the bird. You have the concept of bird in your head and then you just briefly glance at a bird and immediately the concept bird comes into your mind. And so you've become deadened to the aliveness that is there in the bird.

And that has been the unfortunately the fate of all of us growing up. We became lost in a world of conceptualization.

[Speaker 5] (2:05:49 - 2:05:49)

Correct.

[Speaker 1] (2:05:50 - 2:06:19)

And so that this doesn't happen to the young child. Of course, you have to tell the child what it is called. Right.

But I would suggest, for example, not to say to the child this is an oak tree. Say this is called an oak tree because it's not an oak tree. The oak tree is just a word.

When we lose ourselves in concepts, we mistake a word for the thing.

[Speaker 2] (2:06:19 - 2:06:20)

For the thing.

[Speaker 1] (2:06:20 - 2:06:34)

Got it. When I say this is an oak tree, it's not an oak tree. The oak tree is just a word.

So I lose my relationship with the oak tree when I believe now I know what it is. And every time for the rest of my life.

[Speaker 2] (2:06:34 - 2:06:36)

And when you believe you know what it is, it loses its magic.

[Speaker 1] (2:06:36 - 2:07:12)

Yes, it loses. Its essence. Magic is a good word.

The word loses its miraculous quality and its aliveness. So after you've given the child the concept, encourage the child to continue to experience the tree. Encourage the child to touch the bark of the tree and to look at the leaves, see how the sun shines through the leaves of the tree.

Encourage the child to continuously still experience the reality of the tree rather than dismiss it.

[Speaker 2] (2:07:12 - 2:07:45)

You got that, Anne? You got that? I do, yeah.

I can save it. That'd be really helpful. Yeah, that would be very helpful.

Thank you very much. Let's move on to content and structure of the ego. On page 34, everyone, if you're following tonight's class as we move through chapter two, chapter two is very exciting when you really get these concepts of the ego.

You say that the egoic mind is completely conditioned by the past. Its conditioning is too full. It consists of content and structure.

What do you mean by that?

[Speaker 1] (2:07:47 - 2:10:20)

Content is whatever it is that you identify with and that then you take to be yourself. That varies. Depends what culture you live in.

Depends on your upbringing. It depends on your personal circumstances. And content is different for everybody.

It differs for everybody. Although there are certain similarities in the same cultural field, like there are certain similarities that in America or in France or whatever country you live in, there are certain similarities of things that pertain to that particular nationality that we would identify with. Nevertheless, from person to person, yes, it differs.

The content differs. One person may identify with very strongly held religious beliefs and believe that everybody else is evil who does not hold these religious beliefs. That would be a very rigid ego.

Or another person identifies very strongly with the company they work for. And they feel, I've heard stories in Japan where people, when they got dismissed from their job, they committed suicide. They were so identified with their company that when they lost their job, which until recently was very rare apparently in Japan, you would keep your job for the rest of your life, so it became part of who you thought you were.

And if they didn't commit suicide, they suffered dreadfully because their identity got taken away. All that, of course, is pseudo-identity. It's not who you truly are.

It's part of the ego. And all that is content. The structure of the ego basically consists of identification.

The ego seeks something or things to identify with. What it is doesn't really matter. For one person, one person identifies him or herself with a very positive-looking ego, meaning, I'm the greatest thing that ever lived.

It might be a delusion. Probably is, but it's... Or another person might identify with a very negative ego image, like, I'm the most wretched person that has ever lived.

Life has treated me so unfairly. I've suffered so much more than you. Let me tell you about it.

Many egos are like that. They are just as strong as egos who think they are the greatest. So the ego can be predominantly negative.

It can be predominantly positive. But in either case, it's ego.

[Speaker 2] (2:10:21 - 2:10:30)

Capsulize for us what... I know the whole chapter is about the current state of humanity being the ego. But can you put in a capsule what it is, the ego?

[Speaker 1] (2:10:31 - 2:10:47)

The ego is a false sense of self based on mental concepts. So that's... Identification with form.

Identification with form. These are... Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:10:48 - 2:11:06)

But why do we have it, though? Why do we have an ego? We're all human.

We all have one, right? We all have one. You say yours...

Last week, you said yours died. Does that mean you don't have one? You said yours died in that moment where you wanted to kill yourself.

I am so miserable. I can live with myself no longer.

[Speaker 1] (2:11:06 - 2:11:06)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:11:06 - 2:11:08)

You said in that moment, your ego died.

[Speaker 1] (2:11:08 - 2:11:09)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:11:09 - 2:11:10)

Never came back. It died forever.

[Speaker 1] (2:11:11 - 2:11:39)

Yes. When we say that, it simply means... It sounds like some great achievement or it's not.

All it means is I'm no longer identified with my thought processes. I know when thoughts happen, I know they're just thoughts. I don't look for myself in some opinion that I hold of myself.

Some mental concept, including the concept that I am free of ego. I don't think in those terms because if I had this mental concept, I am free of ego, that would be ego again.

[Speaker 2] (2:11:40 - 2:11:41)

That would be ego again. Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (2:11:42 - 2:11:44)

And this can happen very easily.

[Speaker 2] (2:11:44 - 2:11:47)

So ego is any identification with form.

[Speaker 1] (2:11:47 - 2:11:47)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:11:48 - 2:11:54)

Because what we really are is the awareness that we are identified with form.

[Speaker 1] (2:11:54 - 2:11:54)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:11:54 - 2:12:02)

And the more you can become aware that you are identified with things, you create a space that separates you from the things.

[Speaker 1] (2:12:02 - 2:12:50)

Yes. Because the question is when you're aware that you're identified, who is it that is aware? It's a new dimension of consciousness that comes from a deeper level of yourself.

But how do we live in the world without things? We have to have things. We have to live in a house.

Fine. We have transportation. Nothing wrong with things.

We have clothes. We have to be clothed. Nothing wrong with things.

Nothing wrong with thoughts. Nothing wrong with opinions. But the moment you identify with opinions, then you need to defend them.

They become part of your pseudo image. There's nothing wrong with possessing things. But when you become identified, then first of all, if you lose something, immediately you will suffer.

[Speaker 2] (2:12:51 - 2:14:22)

I love when you say the people in the advertising industry know very well that in order to sell things that people don't really need, I'm on page 35, everybody, they must convince them that those things will add something to how they see themselves or are seen by others. In other words, add something to their sense of self. They do this, for example, by telling you, you will stand out from the crowd by using this product.

And so by implication, be more fully yourself. You say, in so many cases, you're not buying a product, but an identity enhancer. I thought that was so fantastic.

Designer labels are primarily collective identities that you buy into. They are expensive and therefore exclusive. If everybody could buy them, they would lose their psychological value and all you would be left with would be their material value, which likely amounts to a fraction of what you paid.

Interesting, because, I mean, I've been in situations, we even see it in the magazines now, especially for the Oscars or Emmys or whatever, the women are lined up in their gowns. There used to be a time when I first went on the red carpet to the Oscars, people were interested in the movie you were doing. Now they want to, everybody asks, the paparazzi shouts, what are you wearing?

Who are you wearing? Who did your gown? Where are the jewels from?

It's all about the designer label and who got to wear what. And so our whole society, to an extent, is based on this. What do you have?

Yes. And is it exclusive?

[Speaker 1] (2:14:22 - 2:14:43)

Yes. You can see it. You just, I suggest sometimes to look, go through a magazine or watch the TV commercials.

From that point of view, to see how often you are actually identified, hold an identity rather than the emphasis on the identity rather than the product. The identity enhancers. Yes.

Okay.

[Speaker 2] (2:14:43 - 2:15:23)

Let's see some of the questions you're sending us now on email. I have Deborah in Mandeville, Louisiana. Okay.

Who says, I'm having difficulty transitioning from the beauty of my youth to living with a face and body that has aged. How do we let go of that kind of possession or obsession, especially as a woman in a society obsessed with youth and beauty? Fantastic question, Deborah.

Fantastic question. Same thing as being attached to the identity enhancers of clothes and things and cars and having, having, having, having. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:15:23 - 2:16:06)

Yeah. That's a hard, that's harder though. It is hard.

It's particularly hard for people who are good looking. That was never my problem, fortunately, but I had other problems. I had a, I had a huge mind that says I'm the greatest intellectual.

That was my identification. And then I suffered more and more and finally I had to let go. But so you identify with whatever is the most obvious in your life.

So if you have good looks then you're most likely to identify with that. Probably even more so for a woman than a man. And so, and that for...

[Speaker 2] (2:16:06 - 2:16:07)

Particularly in our society.

[Speaker 1] (2:16:07 - 2:16:07)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:16:07 - 2:16:07)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (2:16:08 - 2:16:21)

And so for quite a few years that works quite well. And, but then at some point you realize that the body does get old and time, the monster time does something to the body.

[Speaker 2] (2:16:21 - 2:16:40)

Yeah. I always thought this too. I don't know, Deborah and Manville, but I always thought pretty women would have a really hard time because if you grow up and that is your identity and everybody says how beautiful you are and you're a pretty little girl and you're great and beautiful, beautiful, beautiful, beautiful.

When that starts to fade, then who are you?

[Speaker 1] (2:16:40 - 2:17:04)

Yeah. And this is why it's important even at an early age when you still feel very comfortable with your external appearance to already see if you can bring a deeper dimension into your life so that you don't live the rest of your life trapped in the surface dimension when you equate who you are with your external appearance, which is not going to last.

[Speaker 2] (2:17:05 - 2:17:07)

Well, she says, I'm having difficulty transitioning.

[Speaker 1] (2:17:07 - 2:17:07)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:17:07 - 2:17:11)

From the beauty of my youth to living with a face and body that is age.

[Speaker 1] (2:17:11 - 2:17:16)

Yes. So the question then perhaps is, so what to do now?

[Speaker 2] (2:17:16 - 2:17:18)

Yes. How do we let go of that kind of obsession?

[Speaker 1] (2:17:19 - 2:18:49)

So first of all, again, the arising awareness is important that you had been, and to some extent, perhaps still are, identified with appearance. Right. And then comes in a little thing that we could call acceptance.

Acceptance, when you look in the mirror in the morning, you realize, yes, one can see wrinkles here and there. The skin is not quite as vibrant as it used to be. You can see it very clearly.

And so some of these people who had been identified, they regard that as a personal problem. They see it as if life had dealt them some blow that it's not personal. It's the destiny of every human being to grow old and to, unless they die prematurely, it's the destiny of every human being to experience the gradual decline of the physical form.

So what you're experiencing is the destiny of all humans, all humans that have ever lived on the planet and ever will live on the planet. So I suggest, first of all, to practice a little bit of acceptance. I say that it's not my personal problem.

It's the destiny of humanity. It's just my share in that. And also, with that comes, with any kind of acceptance comes a little spaciousness.

Because here you have the condition.

[Speaker 2] (2:18:49 - 2:18:53)

Yeah, it leaves a space between resisting it. Yeah, wanting it to be different.

[Speaker 1] (2:18:53 - 2:20:17)

Yes, so you have the condition, which means I'm getting old or the body is getting old. And then you accept that this is what's happening. With that acceptance comes a little bit of space around the condition, a little bit of peace around the condition.

And then a very helpful thing. That is, instead of saying, I hate my wrinkles. Yes.

So it's the same process. You can look at a flower. You have a flower for a few days.

And the same thing that's happening to your body happens to the flower after a few days. It wilts. Or put an apple there and see what the apple looks like three weeks later.

It just happens more quickly. It's the destiny of all form to eventually dissolve. So Deborah needs to come to some acceptance.

Acceptance and see that it's the destiny of all life forms to go through that process. In addition, also, especially for people who have been identified with the external body, because it was beautiful for many years, to take attention, even when they're still young, to what we've been doing here. Take attention into the inner body, the inner aliveness of the body.

Because that actually does not grow old. Because you can feel the aliveness when you're 80 is the same way that you can feel the inner aliveness when you're 20.

[Speaker 28] (2:20:17 - 2:20:18)

Mm-hmm.

[Speaker 1] (2:20:18 - 2:20:31)

So instead of always stopping with the external appearance, spend time sensing the inner body rather than always staying with the external.

[Speaker 2] (2:20:31 - 2:20:49)

When you shared the story in the book, I forgot which page that was. The ring story. Oh, the lost ring on page 38.

And you told the story of the woman who was deteriorating and accused her maid. Of stealing the ring. And then you asked her the question.

[Speaker 1] (2:20:50 - 2:21:27)

Yes. I asked, do you feel diminished in who you are now that you've lost the ring? Do you actually feel diminished in your sense of self?

And at first she said, yes, of course I do. And then she stopped. And then she started going to within.

And I asked her, what your sense of self, take your attention. What does it mean to feel yourself? And eventually she was able to go deeper within and feel her sense of presence.

It had nothing to do with the ring. In fact, she felt it more strongly because the identification with the external object had gone.

[Speaker 2] (2:21:28 - 2:21:38)

Yes. And I brought that up, that story up, because you say that as she, her body began to fade. Yes.

That her inner light became more luminous. That she became.

[Speaker 1] (2:21:39 - 2:22:07)

Yes. Almost light, almost like light shining through. I've experienced that several times with people that I have known who got close to death.

They had an illness. They knew they were going to die. And they lived in a state of acceptance.

They accepted every moment. And those people not only became very peaceful inside because they had relinquished all identification with the external form.

[Speaker 5] (2:22:07 - 2:22:08)

All right.

[Speaker 1] (2:22:09 - 2:22:24)

And so, and then something else that was deeper than the form, that all religions really point to that, that in every human being there is a dimension that we could call the eternal or the sacred. The formless. The formless.

[Speaker 2] (2:22:24 - 2:22:29)

Let's go to our Chicago study groups watching our webcast at Borders on Michigan Avenue. Hi, everybody.

[Speaker 25] (2:22:30 - 2:23:36)

Hi. I hear Sharon has a question. Sharon?

Hi, Oprah. Hello, Mr. Toley. I'm so excited to talk to you.

I have a question. I have close relationships to people who suffer from depression. And in talking with them and trying to be useful to my friends when they talk to me about a bout of depression or what have you, I find that there is an inwardness and a strong identity that they have as people who suffer from depression.

And I wonder what role does the ego play in depression and to what extent is it helpful to sort of point them toward this definition of the ego, the content identity and the structural identity? I mean, or is it unfair for me to feel that that should be useful given that, you know, there seems to be a strong identification with themselves as people who suffer from depression?

[Speaker 1] (2:23:36 - 2:23:58)

Yes, that again brings us back to an earlier question where whether the condition is a physical condition that one suffers from or whether it is a psychological condition that one suffers from, there is a tendency to identify oneself with the illness or with the whatever it is. Right. I'm a depressed person.

Yes. And then?

[Speaker 2] (2:23:58 - 2:24:00)

And I'm depressed because I'm identifying with my whole story.

[Speaker 1] (2:24:01 - 2:24:01)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:24:01 - 2:24:03)

My story is sad.

[Speaker 1] (2:24:03 - 2:24:05)

Yes. And that would make me depressed.

[Speaker 2] (2:24:05 - 2:24:05)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (2:24:06 - 2:24:07)

What people are saying.

[Speaker 2] (2:24:07 - 2:24:07)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (2:24:07 - 2:25:09)

Yes. If you are very strongly identified with my sad story, which for many people, yes, the story is sad. I had a sad story for many years until I let go of it.

And you were in depression. You were depressed. I was depressed.

Yes. And until one night I woke up and I realized that this unhappy self is not who I am. I could sense the I am-ness that came from a much deeper level than me and my story and my unhappy self.

And I described that as the self that I could no longer live with. I asked myself, what is that self? Who am I?

Am I that self? No, I am I. I am consciousness.

I am presence. I am. I am.

So the question, of course, is what do you tell your friend? Because it's not easy to tell a person that you are identified with an ego image and very likely you will get resistance.

[Speaker 2] (2:25:09 - 2:25:12)

Correct. They'll say, what is wrong with you?

[Speaker 1] (2:25:12 - 2:25:12)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:25:12 - 2:25:13)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:25:13 - 2:25:58)

They go, what is your problem? I would suggest doing it in a more subtle way. And that is perhaps point out the possibility of becoming aware of one's thought processes, of thoughts that arise.

Instead of being totally identified with the thoughts, perhaps you can tell your friend what you have been doing for yourself. You can tell that it's not threatening to the ego. If you tell something that you have been doing, you've been observing your own thoughts and you are more detached now from your thoughts than you were before.

And you realize that thoughts are only thoughts. They're not who you are. If you can tell them about yourself, that could help.

[Speaker 2] (2:25:59 - 2:26:09)

But many times if you're depressed, I think you're so attached to the story. The story works for you. You know, the idea of being a depressed person works for you.

[Speaker 1] (2:26:09 - 2:26:29)

Yes. So it's good. Sometimes depression comes in waves for some people.

So you go through periods and then a good time is when you come out of it. And then is a good time because then you're more aware than when you're down in the depression. Then perhaps talk to you when you see your friend is at that point.

[Speaker 2] (2:26:29 - 2:26:55)

This brings us to something you were saying at the end of last week's session, though. As you're trying to share this information, everybody, with your friends, Eckhart said at the end of last week's class that the most you can do is ask yourself, are you ready to awaken? Are you ready to be more present, more alive for yourself?

Because you really cannot bring other people along unless they are also ready.

[Speaker 1] (2:26:55 - 2:28:28)

Yes. But sometimes you bring other people along simply because you embody a different state of consciousness, even while you sit with them. They may be telling you their sad story, but you don't buy into the sad story, nor do you question the sad story.

You're just there as a spacious, conscious presence. Right. Nor resistant, just conscious presence.

All right. And sometimes that transmits itself. And suddenly the person wakes up for a moment.

I had that experience. I believe I describe it. I don't remember whether it's in this book or in The Power of Now.

I had a neighbor many years ago who always was close to a nervous breakdown. Whenever I met her, she would come with extremely complicated stories of what other people were doing to her. And she always wanted something from me to join her in her struggle against other people.

One night she was ringing my bell at 10.30 or 11 at night. And through the intercom, she said, Can I come up with something very important to talk about? So she came up in great distress and said something about she hadn't paid the service charge, and so on.

And we had to fight them, and so on. And I found myself going just into a state of alert presence, allowing her to speak, no thinking, just allowing her to say what she had to say, feeling quite peaceful. And suddenly she stopped talking.

And she looked around. And she had brought all these papers to look at all over the floor. OPRAH WINFREY Yeah, to verify her position.

[Speaker 15] (2:28:28 - 2:28:29)

HERBERT KLEINER She heard her story. OPRAH WINFREY Yeah, yeah.

[Speaker 1] (2:28:29 - 2:28:55)

HERBERT KLEINER And suddenly she looked around and said, This isn't important at all, is it? And I said, No. And she said, Thank you.

And she got her papers and walked out. And the next morning I saw her. She came to me in the street.

She said, What did you do to me last night? Last night was the first night that I slept well in years and years. The first night after that happened.

[Speaker 2] (2:28:55 - 2:28:56)

OPRAH WINFREY What did you do to her?

[Speaker 1] (2:28:56 - 2:29:02)

HERBERT KLEINER Now, the thing is, I did nothing. I was just there present for her. So there was no doing.

[Speaker 2] (2:29:02 - 2:29:04)

OPRAH WINFREY And not buying into the story.

[Speaker 1] (2:29:04 - 2:29:05)

HERBERT KLEINER Not buying into the story.

[Speaker 2] (2:29:05 - 2:29:06)

OPRAH WINFREY Not empowering the story.

[Speaker 1] (2:29:06 - 2:29:12)

HERBERT KLEINER And not feeding her thought processes. And not even resisting their thought processes either.

[Speaker 2] (2:29:13 - 2:29:15)

OPRAH WINFREY Thank you, Sharon. Thanks, everybody at Borders.

[Speaker 15] (2:29:16 - 2:29:16)

Thank you, Borders.

[Speaker 2] (2:29:17 - 2:29:24)

We have Kathy from Beijing, China on the phone with a question. Hello, Kathy from Beijing. KATHY OPERON ECKHART Hi, Oprah and Eckhart.

[Speaker 18] (2:29:25 - 2:30:12)

I just want to say this is huge that we can have this one conversation around the world. I'm a girl from Duluth, Minnesota, living in Beijing, China, and I'm talking to Oprah in Chicago and Eckhart. My question is, I lost 30 pounds in the last year.

And for me, it has been spiritual work. It's not just on the surface weight loss. And now my friends are asking me about it and how I did it.

And I'm wondering how to explain that it is this whole spiritual process. It's not just what you eat and how you exercise. But for me, it's been life changing.

And they look at me like I'm mentally ill when I try to explain all of that.

[Speaker 2] (2:30:14 - 2:30:52)

OPRAH WINFREY A friend of mine and I were talking about this the other day, about allowing yourself to be fed from the energy that's already there inside your body. I know what you're talking about. Checking in.

KATHY OPERON ECKHART I know you know. OPRAH WINFREY Huh? Yeah.

KATHY OPERON ECKHART I know you know. OPRAH WINFREY Yeah. Checking in, being conscious, aware of what you're feeding yourself.

And aware of how you are in touch with your body to give your body just what your body needs. And so then it becomes not about the diet and the food and the how many reps you did, but about being aware.

[Speaker 18] (2:30:54 - 2:31:00)

KATHY OPERON ECKHART But most of the world is focused on how it's just the surface, what you eat.

[Speaker 2] (2:31:00 - 2:31:01)

OPRAH WINFREY Yeah. KATHY OPERON ECKHART Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:31:01 - 2:31:18)

It's being in touch with the body helps greatly because the body knows what it needs. Really, the overeating happens because it's part of the ego, the unconsciousness, which seeks a substitute for the sense of aliveness.

[Speaker 2] (2:31:18 - 2:31:31)

OPRAH WINFREY Yeah, I can say that for sure. And you know that too, right, Kathy? KATHY OPERON ECKHART Yeah, now I know too.

OPRAH WINFREY Yes. Yeah. Well, now you know how to explain it to all your friends.

KATHY OPERON ECKHART Thank you. It's so cool talking to you from Beijing. What time is it there?

[Speaker 18] (2:31:32 - 2:31:39)

KATHY OPERON ECKHART It's nine o'clock in the morning, and I am able to watch it successfully this week. I was like others and didn't get it last week.

[Speaker 2] (2:31:39 - 2:32:40)

OPRAH WINFREY Oh, we're still up and out. That's great. I know.

I have all, listen, I have the Skype people and the Limelight people and the Move people and the Oprah.com people. And I just walked through the hall as we started this, and I said to all of them, may the force be with you. And this is my thing.

This is what I'm doing. Hello? KATHY OPERON ECKHART You can make things happen.

OPRAH WINFREY Okay. Thank you so much. KATHY OPERON ECKHART Okay.

Bye. OPRAH WINFREY Thank you so much. I want to go back to the identification with things, because that is an issue for so many people.

The unchecked striving for more, for endless growth, you say, is a dysfunction and a disease on page 37, like the cancer cell whose only goal is to multiply itself, unaware that it's bringing about its own destruction by destroying the organism of which it is a part. I heard we had a shopaholic on Skype. I saw that earlier.

Did we bring her back? Yeah. Isn't that?

JOYCE OPERON ECKHART Yes. OPRAH WINFREY Okay. We have Joyce from Minnesota who is Skyping us.

Joyce, what is your question? I thought this applied to you.

[Speaker 22] (2:32:41 - 2:33:03)

JOYCE OPERON ECKHART Yeah. Yeah, it does. And unfortunately, it applies to my son as well.

Last week, he came home from kindergarten, and I said, I'm so happy to see you, and I'm in such a good mood. And he said, oh, good. Does that mean we get to go shopping?

And I thought, it's rubbing off on him. So what my question is, is how do I reverse that process in him?

[Speaker 2] (2:33:04 - 2:33:07)

OPRAH WINFREY Oh, well, first of all, let me ask you this. You're reading the book, correct?

[Speaker 22] (2:33:09 - 2:33:09)

OPRAH WINFREY Right.

[Speaker 2] (2:33:09 - 2:33:15)

So you've gotten through Chapter 2 already? JOYCE OPERON ECKHART Yes. OPRAH WINFREY Yeah.

So when you read that, did you see yourself in the pages?

[Speaker 22] (2:33:16 - 2:33:29)

JOYCE OPERON ECKHART I did. The one, the aha for me was in seeing of who you are not, and that your real self emerges through something along those lines.

[Speaker 2] (2:33:29 - 2:33:39)

OPRAH WINFREY My favorite quote, and one of my favorite quotes in this chapter, is when you can no longer feel the life that you are, you are likely to try to fill up your life with things.

[Speaker 22] (2:33:40 - 2:34:17)

OPRAH WINFREY Would that be what you're trying to do? JOYCE OPERON ECKHART That was me. I've, since I've started reading this book, I've gotten so much better.

I'm not searching for that thing anymore. I think I was trying to find my identity in things, and since I've stopped that, and I really don't have any interest in that anymore, I've discovered so much more about myself. I'm artistic, and I'm doing sculptures, and just things I never did before.

So it's working out great. I just want to know how to enforce that in my son as well, since he's only five.

[Speaker 1] (2:34:18 - 2:34:48)

OPRAH WINFREY Oh, well. Now the most important change has already happened in you. So you've become aware of the old pattern.

You've gone beyond it, and it's inevitable that now this will, even if you don't say anything, it will transmit itself to your son also. When after a while your son sees that the importance that you give to acquiring things has diminished, then he will also reflect that this is how it works with young children.

[Speaker 2] (2:34:48 - 2:35:11)

OPRAH WINFREY It will take some time. OPRAH WINFREY Because since he's been a baby, you've been a shopaholic. That's the way you described yourself to our producers.

And so that's what he has seen. That's what he's taken in. That's what he identifies with as pleasure.

And when you say, I'm in a good mood and things are going well, well, let's go shopping, mommy, because that's what mommy's always done.

[Speaker 1] (2:35:11 - 2:36:11)

Another thing that perhaps you could do is to point out things to him that are of intrinsic value that you cannot buy. So, for example, the natural world, whatever you see out in nature is of infinite, intrinsic value, and you can't buy it. Don't pick flowers, for example.

Don't encourage him to, because that's the acquisition instinct, the instinct to, oh, I want that for myself. Why not allow the flower to be there and enjoy it for a few seconds as you look at it? So point out things and engage in activities, perhaps, that involve nature and see that is of greater value than anything that you see in the shopping mall.

And it doesn't mean that you don't buy anything anymore. Occasionally, you may come across something that looks truly beautiful, that speaks to you, and you may acquire it, but it's no longer compulsive.

[Speaker 2] (2:36:11 - 2:36:17)

You say we need to honor the world of things, not despise it, but we cannot honor things if we try to find ourselves through them.

[Speaker 1] (2:36:18 - 2:36:18)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:36:18 - 2:36:19)

And how do we honor them?

[Speaker 1] (2:36:20 - 2:37:03)

You honor them by giving them attention. I sometimes, I have a few possessions that I love, and sometimes I just hold them, look at them, they're beautiful to look at. If somebody stole them, that's fine.

Somebody else wants them more than I, it's fine, you let go. There's no identification, but there can be enjoyment in things. You can enjoy a beautiful, you might come across a beautiful picture, and you buy it.

You might come across a beautiful fabric, whatever it may be, you see beauty there. And sometimes it will be enough to acknowledge beauty in a shop window, and say, oh, isn't that beautiful? Of course, I don't need it.

And you walk on, and you can, and that's a lot.

[Speaker 3] (2:37:03 - 2:37:06)

That's a thought I never had.

[Speaker 1] (2:37:06 - 2:37:10)

There's a lot of freedom in that. It's beautiful, let's leave it there.

[Speaker 2] (2:37:10 - 2:37:15)

I can just admire its beauty. What about that, Joyce? It's beautiful, let's leave it in the window.

[Speaker 1] (2:37:15 - 2:37:17)

It's the same as the flower, you don't need to pick it.

[Speaker 2] (2:37:17 - 2:37:18)

That's a thought.

[Speaker 22] (2:37:19 - 2:37:20)

Yeah, that's a good one.

[Speaker 1] (2:37:20 - 2:37:42)

Enjoying, you can walk around. Occasionally, I don't do it anymore, but I sometimes would enjoy walking around a few stores. Or when I lived in London, I would sometimes walk down Regent Street, all these beautiful stores.

Window shop. Window shopping, look in, oh, nice. Would I want to buy it?

No. Even if I...

[Speaker 2] (2:37:42 - 2:37:44)

Just accept that it's beautiful, and let it be.

[Speaker 1] (2:37:44 - 2:37:45)

It's beautiful, and then let it be.

[Speaker 2] (2:37:45 - 2:37:46)

Thank you, Joyce. Thank you, Joyce.

[Speaker 15] (2:37:46 - 2:37:46)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (2:37:48 - 2:37:53)

We have from India, I don't know the name of this country, Priyanka.

[Speaker 1] (2:37:53 - 2:37:54)

Sri Lanka?

[Speaker 2] (2:37:54 - 2:38:10)

No, the person's name is Priyanka from Mumbai, India. When we try to change our bad habits for good, then aren't we trying to resist rather than accept ourselves? When we try to change our bad habits for good, aren't we trying to resist rather than accept ourselves?

[Speaker 1] (2:38:10 - 2:39:08)

Yes. It's not that you change your bad habits. The bad habits drop away when you bring awareness to them.

So it's not me trying to change something inside me. But when you bring awareness to old conditioned forms of behavior or thinking, when you bring awareness to it, those old conditioned forms of behavior or thinking, after a while, they will drop away by themselves. So it's not me trying to bring about a change.

It's the arising awareness, and then change happens. Like the lady we just talked to, she read the chapter on shopping, and that immediately brought her to this point of awareness. And with the awareness, the compulsion immediately lessened.

Eased, eased, eased. Yes. You talk about the illusion of ownership on page 42.

[Speaker 2] (2:39:09 - 2:39:33)

You say the ego tends to equate having with being and lives through comparison. And you use a quote from the Bible that Jesus said, blessed are the poor in spirit, Jesus said, for theirs will be the kingdom of heaven. What does poor in spirit mean?

No inner baggage, no identifications. I never knew that's what poor in spirit means. How did you come to that interpretation of what poor in spirit means?

[Speaker 1] (2:39:33 - 2:40:26)

There was a time after I went through this inner shift, it must have been three years later, I was visiting my mother, and she had a New Testament on her shelf. I picked it up and I started reading. I could suddenly see the truth that was hiding there, and that in many cases, the conventional interpretation was the superficial one of what Jesus had said.

And that was one of the things that I immediately saw when he said poor in spirit. I realized it's to do with not carrying stuff inside so that your spirit is very light. It has no burden.

And so there were many things at that time I read, and I suddenly saw, oh, he was talking about awakening and about living in that free state of consciousness. Wonderful, suddenly to be able to read it, and suddenly it all makes sense, which before hadn't made sense.

[Speaker 2] (2:40:26 - 2:40:36)

You also talk about renunciation of possessions will not automatically free you of the ego, that there are people who have renounced all possessions, but have a bigger ego than some millionaires.

[Speaker 28] (2:40:36 - 2:40:36)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:40:37 - 2:40:44)

So if you take away one kind of identification, the ego will quickly find another. For instance, I'm a more spiritual person than you are.

[Speaker 1] (2:40:44 - 2:40:44)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:40:44 - 2:40:45)

You see this all the time.

[Speaker 1] (2:40:46 - 2:40:47)

Yes. So it's identification.

[Speaker 2] (2:40:48 - 2:40:50)

People use their religion to say, I'm better than you are because...

[Speaker 1] (2:40:50 - 2:41:26)

Yes, or even an image of myself as a spiritual person. I'm more spiritual than you. For example, there could be theoretically, you could have a man driving a Rolls-Royce, and then in the same street, a man riding a bicycle, and it is quite possible, not necessarily, of course, it could be the other way around, but it's quite possible that the man on a bicycle may have a bigger ego than the Rolls-Royce if he thinks of himself as spiritually superior to the man in the Rolls-Royce.

And so the ego compares itself always to others. Yes. In order to find some superiority somewhere.

[Speaker 2] (2:41:26 - 2:41:36)

Yes, because another favorite quote is, is that anytime you feel yourself superior or inferior to anybody, it is always your ego.

[Speaker 1] (2:41:36 - 2:42:08)

Yes. And that's very interesting. You can observe yourself then in many situations because the ego always looks out when you come into a group of people or you meet new people and it wants to position itself somewhere.

Am I better looking than this person or am I more knowledgeable than this person? Or am I more wealthy than this person? Or is this person more wealthy than me?

So it tries to position itself and that then leads either to a sense of superiority or inferiority, and both are ego.

[Speaker 2] (2:42:09 - 2:42:33)

Well, what made me also think about one of the situations in our country in particular, here in the United States, is that people live lives in debt. They're indebted, credit card debt, overwhelmed by debt because of what you talk about on page 46, wanting the need for more. Wanting keeps the ego alive much more than having.

Let's talk about that.

[Speaker 1] (2:42:33 - 2:43:35)

Now, that's again a structure of the ego. Because we've been talking about content and structure and one of the main structures of the ego is it is never satisfied. So for example, when you have attained a goal or attained something that you wanted...

I got a nice house. Got a nice house. Nice things in the house.

And after a little while, it no longer satisfies you and that's always a sign that it was an egoic goal. Because I now need nicer things. Yes.

And I need more square footage. Yes. Yes.

So nothing satisfies the ego for long and therefore it needs to continue to look for more. And of course, and this is to do also with the ego's need for future because it's only by attaching undue importance to the future because it's looking for more in the future moment. It seeks to complete itself at some point.

It wants to attain something in addition to what you already have.

[Speaker 2] (2:43:35 - 2:43:42)

So how do we stop that and begin to be satisfied where we are with what we have and who we are?

[Speaker 1] (2:43:42 - 2:44:51)

Well, first of all, to see the illusion of seeking fulfillment in the future. Sometimes people need to have lived for a while to see that that's actually true. Right.

That no matter what you achieve or what you attain, you're not satisfied for long. So what do we do about this? We realize that the thing that is of prime importance in our lives, we had always overlooked and that's the ego in us had always overlooked that.

And that thing that is of absolutely prime importance in our life is the present moment. The present moment is actually the easiest exit point out of the ego state of consciousness because when you're absolutely present in this moment, the ego can't survive. There's only conscious presence.

The ego lives through past and future. It identifies with the past, but it's not a very happy identity. And it looks to the future where it wants this, that or the other to complete itself.

[Speaker 2] (2:44:52 - 2:45:00)

Well, someone's asked me during the week, someone asked me, what about our past memories that are pleasant? You have happy times, the pleasant memories.

[Speaker 1] (2:45:01 - 2:45:59)

Okay. And when you remember those memories, it's also the present moment. So no matter what you remember from the past, when those things happened, whether pleasant or unpleasant, did they happen in the past?

That's what we say. Okay, these things happened in the past, but of course they happened in the now because nothing can happen in the past. There is only the now.

And when you remember something from the past, when do you remember it? Now. And when you think of something that may happen in the future, when do you think of that?

Now. And when then think that thing actually happens, when does that happen? Now.

So there is no life apart from now. And that is a very important realization for people to have because the ego continuously overlooks the now. It thinks past and future are more important.

It gives much more importance to past and future. And the now is just almost as if didn't exist.

[Speaker 2] (2:46:00 - 2:46:16)

And what you're saying is that if we can learn to recondition ourselves to be present now, then we can be more alive. To do whatever it is going to be in the future.

[Speaker 1] (2:46:17 - 2:46:17)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:46:17 - 2:46:20)

Because even when the future gets here, it will only be now.

[Speaker 1] (2:46:20 - 2:46:26)

Yes. The now is the foundation for the rest of your life. Got it.

The rest of your life will also be the now. Got it.

[Speaker 2] (2:46:26 - 2:46:31)

Madeline from Pennsylvania is 13 years old and is on the phone with a question. Madeline.

[Speaker 19] (2:46:32 - 2:46:32)

Hi.

[Speaker 2] (2:46:32 - 2:46:33)

Hi.

[Speaker 1] (2:46:33 - 2:46:33)

Hello.

[Speaker 6] (2:46:34 - 2:46:50)

On page 47, at the end of the second paragraph, the sentence reads, intense wanting that has no specific object can often be found in the still developing ego of teenagers, some of whom are in a permanent state of negativity and dissatisfaction.

[Speaker 28] (2:46:50 - 2:46:50)

Yes.

[Speaker 6] (2:46:51 - 2:47:02)

By stating this, are you implying that teenagers cannot be awakened? That although I'm reading this book, I may have no chance in reaching consciousness merely because I'm 13 and my ego is not fully developed?

[Speaker 2] (2:47:03 - 2:47:11)

Ah. Go, Madeline. Go, Madeline.

I just think the fact that you could ask the question is pretty darn good.

[Speaker 1] (2:47:11 - 2:47:15)

Yes. Now, the first thing, you are more advanced than I was at 13.

[Speaker 2] (2:47:16 - 2:47:16)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (2:47:17 - 2:47:26)

Then most of us, I'd say, yeah. I would not have been able to read or understand that book when I was 13. Are you reading the book, Madeline?

[Speaker 2] (2:47:27 - 2:47:28)

Yeah. Okay.

[Speaker 1] (2:47:28 - 2:47:29)

That's quite amazing.

[Speaker 2] (2:47:29 - 2:47:30)

That's quite amazing.

[Speaker 1] (2:47:30 - 2:48:16)

So it certainly does not mean that you cannot be awakened because you're already awakening. Because if you are not already awakening, the book would be completely meaningless to you. Okay.

So there's a new generation growing up and there are more youngsters now than before who may not have to go through the extreme egoic delusion that we had to go through in our generation. And you may be one of them. It doesn't mean, perhaps, that your ego will not develop at all.

Your ego will develop, but I don't believe that you will be as trapped in ego as I had to be. I can't speak for Oprah. I know Oprah is fine now.

[Speaker 2] (2:48:16 - 2:48:17)

Oprah was trapped.

[Speaker 1] (2:48:17 - 2:48:19)

She was very trapped, Madeline.

[Speaker 2] (2:48:19 - 2:48:21)

She was very trapped.

[Speaker 1] (2:48:21 - 2:48:26)

So your chances are excellent. You're already awakening. It's wonderful to see.

[Speaker 2] (2:48:26 - 2:48:55)

Let me ask you this, though, Madeline. When you just read us that passage at the bottom of page 47, intense wanting that has no specific object can often be found in the still-developing ego of teenagers. So what you're saying there is that the ego of teenagers is still in the process of becoming.

And also, Madeline, don't you see it in your friends, this sort of intense wanting? Yeah, all the time. Okay.

So I think that's what he was talking about.

[Speaker 1] (2:48:55 - 2:48:56)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:48:56 - 2:48:58)

He was talking about all of your friends, but not you, Madeline.

[Speaker 1] (2:48:58 - 2:49:01)

Now, Madeline, do you detect intense wanting in yourself?

[Speaker 2] (2:49:02 - 2:49:03)

Yeah, occasionally.

[Speaker 1] (2:49:04 - 2:49:04)

Occasionally.

[Speaker 2] (2:49:05 - 2:49:05)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (2:49:05 - 2:49:10)

But you're not totally identified because you know it's there. There's an awareness there, isn't there?

[Speaker 2] (2:49:11 - 2:49:13)

Mm-hmm. Okay. Are you understanding the book, Madeline?

[Speaker 10] (2:49:14 - 2:49:16)

Yeah, it makes a lot of sense, actually.

[Speaker 2] (2:49:17 - 2:49:19)

What grade are you in, actually?

[Speaker 10] (2:49:19 - 2:49:20)

I'm in eighth grade.

[Speaker 2] (2:49:20 - 2:49:30)

Eighth grade. Okay. Well, great to hear from you.

Thank you so much. Thank you. Were you in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania?

That's what I hear. Yeah. Actually.

Well, great.

[Speaker 1] (2:49:30 - 2:49:30)

Good.

[Speaker 2] (2:49:31 - 2:49:32)

Thank you. Keep reading. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (2:49:33 - 2:49:34)

Thank you. Okay.

[Speaker 2] (2:49:34 - 2:49:43)

So we're going to check our live emails again. That's pretty cool, isn't it? Wonderful.

13. I couldn't have listened. I was in so much trouble at 13.

I didn't have- Me too.

[Speaker 28] (2:49:43 - 2:49:44)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:49:44 - 2:50:10)

Okay. As we make our way in the world, this is from Japan, Toyohashi, Japan. As we make our way in the world, being confident, assertive are characteristics that help us get a job, that big promotion.

I realize now that these are traits that are associated with ego. And so the question then becomes, how then does one move beyond the ego? Great question.

How does one move beyond the ego?

[Speaker 1] (2:50:12 - 2:50:14)

Become aware of the ego is the first step.

[Speaker 2] (2:50:15 - 2:50:35)

But can't you still be the biggest jerk on earth and still just be aware of it and say, well, I'm a jerk. Boy, that sure is some big ego of mine. You know, you were talking earlier, thinking, you know, you can be in the moment, still being one of those road raging people, road raging jerk in the moment.

Well- And aware that you are a road raging jerk in the moment.

[Speaker 1] (2:50:36 - 2:50:40)

It's unlikely that at that moment you are actually aware.

[Speaker 21] (2:50:40 - 2:50:40)

Really?

[Speaker 1] (2:50:41 - 2:50:49)

Because if you're aware, then you cannot be totally possessed- By? By the ego, by the form, the thought form or the emotional form.

[Speaker 2] (2:50:49 - 2:50:52)

Okay. If that dimension- Usually that's the pain body that's taken over.

[Speaker 1] (2:50:52 - 2:52:31)

Yes. If the dimension of awareness is present, you are not totally in the grip of ego. And so, but the quickest way out of ego is to practice as much as possible living in the present moment, which means to give more attention to this moment than to the future or the past.

To make this moment the primary factor in your life rather than future and past. Of course, you still use future and past for practical purposes. It helps to make an appointment, to go from here to there.

It's all fine. It works very well. But it means being present- As much as possible, being open to whatever arises in the present moment.

The word that I use, and I think it may be helpful for many people, is make friends with the present moment. Because the ego doesn't come to that. The ego always is antagonistic.

At best, it uses the present moment as a stepping stone because it wants to get to the next moment which promises greater fulfillment at best. But in many cases, the ego actually dislikes the pleasant moment. It resists the present moment.

So if you can make the present moment into the primary focal point of your life and live, then ego will very quickly diminish in you because it cannot survive the present moment. So the ego- That's how you do it. That's how one moves beyond the ego.

[Speaker 2] (2:52:31 - 2:52:31)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:52:32 - 2:53:05)

The ego- Present. So the ego lives as if- People who are possessed by the ego live as if the present moment were their enemy. They're stressed.

They want to get somewhere else. Whenever you need to, they're doing something, but they really already want to be at the end of their doing. Yeah.

They don't want to be where they are. They'd rather be somewhere else. They don't want to be who they are with.

They don't- It's always a striving away from now internally. Yeah. And that's, of course, the dysfunction.

[Speaker 2] (2:53:05 - 2:53:17)

I just had a moment like that today because I was waiting on somebody to get something ready. And they said, sorry, we're so sorry. We're going to hurry up.

We're waiting. And I go, no, I took the lesson from the book. No, I'm just here.

Being with myself.

[Speaker 28] (2:53:17 - 2:53:18)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:53:18 - 2:53:23)

Not waiting on anything. Because if you're waiting, you're in anticipation, and you're wanting to be out of that moment.

[Speaker 1] (2:53:23 - 2:53:47)

That's right. Yes. Waiting means you don't like this moment.

Right. Rather have another moment. So whenever you are waiting, so to speak, why not practice being rather than waiting?

Which means completely inhabit this moment and feel your body, perhaps feel the energy. And that's very pleasant. To feel that you're alive.

[Speaker 2] (2:53:48 - 2:53:58)

All right. We have one last phone call. A question from Michelle in Philadelphia.

Hello. Hi, Oprah. How are you?

Hi. Good, good. Yes.

Hi, Eckhart. Hello.

[Speaker 18] (2:53:58 - 2:54:23)

I'm just like a little bit so excited that you called me. My question was that I'm a little bit confused with chapter two. I understand the quote, if someone takes your shirt, let them have your coat as well.

But where do you draw the line without getting walked all over? I do not want to be an egotistical person, but at the same time, I don't want to get taken advantage of. Good question.

I was having a little bit confusion with that.

[Speaker 28] (2:54:23 - 2:54:24)

Okay.

[Speaker 2] (2:54:24 - 2:54:25)

Good, good, good. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:54:26 - 2:55:36)

All it says is sometimes letting go, there's more power in letting go than in clinging or hanging on to something. So there are situations when you actually become empowered when you let go rather than when you cling. It does not mean that people walk all over you.

In fact, I say there are situations when you have to say no very clearly to a situation or to a person. But even that no can be of two different kinds. Usually the no is very negative.

When you say no to a person, person says, I'll give you a ride home and you see the person is drunk. Of course, you wouldn't say yes just to be pleasant. You say no.

Now, do you say no with negative energy and in a state of resistance, or do you say no that is positive, where it simply means a clear and straightforward, no, I won't do that. This is very different from the resistance no. I call that the no that is not negative, a high quality no.

[Speaker 2] (2:55:37 - 2:56:23)

It's also looking at the reason why you would cling to the shirt. You can have my shirt. I'll give you the shirt if the reason why you're holding to the shirt is because you think the shirt is going to give you more value or you're operating from your ego when you're holding on to it.

So you're saying be able to be in the state of presence and awareness so that you can surrender whatever needs to be surrendered. That does not mean, and surrender does not mean allowing yourself to be walked over, but to be fully present so that you can be conscious of what's always going on. So it means in some cases it's fine to say, here, if you want it, take it.

In other cases, it's not, depending upon what the situation is.

[Speaker 1] (2:56:23 - 2:56:23)

That's right.

[Speaker 2] (2:56:23 - 2:56:29)

Based upon the truth of who you are in any given moment. Yes. Yeah.

[Speaker 28] (2:56:29 - 2:56:29)

Okay.

[Speaker 2] (2:56:30 - 2:56:40)

I got that, Michelle. Thank you for asking the question. It helped me to get it.

So let's close with the piece that passes all understanding that you talk about on page 56.

[Speaker 1] (2:56:40 - 2:56:59)

What is that piece? That piece comes when you live in internal alignment with the present moment, which means what is, whatever is. When you no longer argue with what is, when you don't fight it internally, this present moment already, always is.

[Speaker 2] (2:56:59 - 2:57:00)

Even if it's a situation that you don't want.

[Speaker 1] (2:57:00 - 2:57:48)

Even if you don't want it, it is. You must accept it first. You accept first and then you take action.

That was the mud example you used last week. Yes. Even if you're stuck in the mud.

This is where I am right now. I'm here. And then you take action.

But that action no longer arises out of negativity, which is there when you don't like to be where you are, when you don't like this moment. Always friendly with the present moment. Accepting the is-ness of the present moment.

Then move on from there. Then whatever action you take is actually empowered by life itself. When you're in a state of negativity or resistance, your action is not empowered by life.

So it's not inspired and much less effective than action that comes out of the state of non-resistance. Right.

[Speaker 2] (2:57:49 - 2:58:06)

It's like last week when we were having problems, which neither you nor I knew until we had finished the class. And we were doing a toast to everybody afterwards for all of their efforts. And I say, I'm going to accept it.

I'm going to accept that we had a breakdown on the web. I'm going to accept it. And now let us correct it.

[Speaker 1] (2:58:06 - 2:58:19)

Yes. And it was everybody's lesson whose computer froze up. It was everybody's lesson to say, well, this is what is.

And with that comes an inner peace that has nothing to do with what's happening.

[Speaker 2] (2:58:19 - 2:58:22)

Not resisting and banging up the computer. Oh my God.

[Speaker 1] (2:58:22 - 2:58:22)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:58:22 - 2:58:23)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (2:58:23 - 2:58:38)

And that's the peace that passes all understanding because the peace cannot be explained with reference to external events. It's there because you live in alignment with the present moment. That's the peace.

That is the peace, living in alignment.

[Speaker 2] (2:58:38 - 2:59:23)

Before we say goodbye, I'd like to thank you for being with Eckhart and with me. And we'll be here again next Monday at 8 p.m. Central. Don't forget, if you want to experience this class again or tell a friend who missed it, our webcast is available on demand tomorrow for free here at Oprah.com.

Is that noon, Dean? Beginning at noon? Beginning at noon, you can start to download.

And if you want to download a podcast of this class, you can do that tomorrow at Oprah.com and iTunes. Your assignment for our next class is to update your workbook and spend this week rereading and thinking about Chapter 3. Chapter 3 is all about the core of ego.

So do your homework and we'll see you next Monday night. Thank you again, Eckhart.

[Speaker 1] (2:59:23 - 2:59:25)

Thank you. Is this the coolest? Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:59:26 - 3:01:16)

Thank you so much to all of you. It's been wonderful. Thank you, everybody all over the world.

Good night. Good day. Good morning.

Goodbye. Hello again, everyone. Welcome to week number three of our New Earth web class.

And again, I thank you. Eckhart Tolle thanks you for joining us as we bring students and seekers together to discuss our latest book club selection at Eckhart Tolle's A New Earth. I'm happy once again to see that we've been connecting with readers around the world.

We've gotten questions and comments just this week from as far away as Rotterdam, Rio, Beirut, Casablanca, Greece, Seoul, and even Tasmania. Hello, Tasmania. Thank you for all of your really so thoughtful your emails have been.

And I can tell you, we love hearing from you wherever you are. There've been either 2 million of you who watched our classes live or on streams or downloads. No matter how you're watching, I welcome you to the awakening, the shift in consciousness that's happening really all over the planet.

So I want to get started on chapter three. As you see on your screen, you can type in your questions and send them to us instantly throughout the class. We're going to be speaking with students via Skype.

You know, Skype is that free software that allows you to make internet and video phone calls from all over the world. Welcome again.

[Speaker 1] (3:01:16 - 3:01:16)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (3:01:17 - 3:01:17)

Did you have a good week?

[Speaker 1] (3:01:18 - 3:01:18)

Very good.

[Speaker 2] (3:01:18 - 3:01:38)

Very good. So if we were to summarize, last week we were talking about how the current state of humanity is that we are humans here living on the planet Earth, have an ego, and learning to manage that ego is what this book is all about.

[Speaker 1] (3:01:38 - 3:02:13)

Yes, and going beyond ego at the same time means going beyond what the Buddha described as the normal human condition, which is one of suffering, because ultimately the ego, sooner or later, and usually sooner, always produces some form of suffering. So it's really transcending the ego, going beyond the ego at the same time means going beyond this unconscious urge to generate more and more suffering, both in people's personal lives as well as collectively.

[Speaker 2] (3:02:13 - 3:02:27)

We did something last week that was unprecedented. You said it's never been done before on television, where you just sit there in silence. And I thought a lot of people responded to the sense of connection from that.

So you want to do that again?

[Speaker 1] (3:02:27 - 3:03:23)

Yes. Let's do that again. Yes, yes.

Okay, so you're going to lead us in silence. Okay, I'll just maybe one or two little hints about what to do with your mind when you go into silence, because not speaking isn't complete silence yet, because usually, even though you're not speaking, the mind is still active and producing noise. So how to stop the mind from producing noise or how to reduce the amount of noise that the mind produces is quite easy.

You take your attention away from the mind, from thinking, and we did that already last week, and simply become aware that you are breathing. The air flows in and out, and you feel yourself breathing. Air flows in and out of the body.

And so as we go into silence now for a few seconds, just direct your attention and feel your own breath.

[Speaker 2] (3:03:46 - 3:04:21)

That was nice. Yes. Today's lesson, chapter three, beginning on page 59.

I love the idea that we're all literally on the same page. Everybody, page 59, the core of the ego. Most people are so completely identified with a voice in the head, the incessant stream of involuntary and compulsive thinking and the emotions that accompany it that we may describe them as being possessed by their mind.

My question to you, if we are not that constant stream of thinking, then who are we?

[Speaker 1] (3:04:23 - 3:04:39)

Now, that question usually would be answered by the mind by giving some kind of concept of who we are. Now... Yes, I am female.

This, that. I'm African American. I work on TV.

[Speaker 2] (3:04:39 - 3:04:44)

Yes. My mother was. My mother is.

I live at. My job is.

[Speaker 1] (3:04:45 - 3:04:45)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:04:45 - 3:04:47)

That's how most people, if you say, who are you?

[Speaker 1] (3:04:47 - 3:06:53)

Yes. But beyond that, because concepts refer to who we are temporarily in the world of form. You're a mother.

You're a father. You have a certain profession. A certain, belong to a certain race.

You're a man or a woman. Nationality. All these things.

Now, when you ask, who are we beyond that? There is no conceptual answer to that. That would, no conceptual answer would be absolutely correct.

We can give little hints. We can say, we are the formless consciousness behind all that. We are that which cannot be defined through concepts or words.

So knowing who you are is not, does not mean that suddenly you have some new idea in your head and say, oh, now let me tell you who I am. I've discovered who I am. You get closer to knowing you, who you are.

If you come to a stage where you have that feeling, and I mentioned it in the book somewhere, when people tell me, I don't know who I am anymore because they have realized who they are not. They are ultimately not their profession. They are not whatever function they fulfill.

They are not their nationality. So they're beginning to realize that's not really who I am. But then they enter the unknown and say, well, if I'm not that, now I'm no longer sure who I am.

And I always congratulate people when they say, I'm not sure who I am anymore. Well, that usually connotes confusion. Confusion.

If you still want to know who you are, but if you can become comfortable with not knowing who you are, with not defining yourself to yourself or to others, mainly to yourself, because the ego is constantly a self-definition to remind yourself who you are. You remember your story of your past and so on. You have opinions about yourself.

And so this is the self-definition.

[Speaker 2] (3:06:54 - 3:07:00)

But don't we obviously need the ego, Eckhart? Don't we obviously need it? Otherwise, why would we have it?

Why wouldn't we have evolved past it?

[Speaker 1] (3:07:01 - 3:08:06)

That's, we're doing that now. So it's been a stage in the evolution of consciousness, a necessary stage in the evolution of consciousness. For survival.

Yes, yes. Because? The ego arose because we started to think.

So the ability in humans, suddenly humans developed the ability to differentiate and to think. To me, the beginning of the Old Testament really describes the beginning of the ability to think. Because what it says in the Old Testament is they ate of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil.

The ability to say this is good, this is bad, to differentiate, starting to think. So the ability to think arose in our species, which was a wonderful thing on the one hand. But over many, many millennia, hundreds of thousands of years, more and more, our original sense of connectedness with life and with being, which the natural world still has, animals still have that.

They live in a state of natural connectedness.

[Speaker 28] (3:08:06 - 3:08:07)

And some cultures did.

[Speaker 1] (3:08:07 - 3:09:09)

Some of ancient cultures, that's right. They still have that. A sense of being rooted, being comfortable in your own skin, being rooted deeply within and feel that sense of oneness with the totality of life.

Oneness with life itself. And so we had, humanity had that once. And as you say, some ancient cultures, perhaps there's still remnants of ancient cultures and they still have that.

But humans, as they went into more and more thinking and differentiation, they gradually, their sense of self gradually moved from the center of their being, which I would describe as their heart or the solar plexus, into their mind. Into their mind. And they more and more, they began to identify with the movement of thought.

And gradually, out of this continuous identification with the movement of thought, a thought-made entity was produced, which is the ego.

[Speaker 2] (3:09:10 - 3:09:13)

Yeah, which is what you're saying is being possessed by our minds.

[Speaker 1] (3:09:13 - 3:09:13)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:09:13 - 3:09:28)

Okay. By being possessed by our minds. Okay.

You say this is the egoic mind and we call it egoic because there's a sense of self, of I in every thought, every memory, every interpretation, opinion, and so forth. And this is unconsciousness, spiritually speaking.

[Speaker 1] (3:09:28 - 3:09:53)

Yes, because you identify with thought rather than being, identifying with your inner essence, which is what we lost, which is the state of Eden or paradise, as it's described in the Bible. We lost that. And it's not only in the Bible, there are many ancient cultures where they speak of the golden age that we lost in many different cultures.

[Speaker 2] (3:09:53 - 3:09:58)

And you say egos are all the same on the surface. They differ only on the surface. Deep down, they're all the same.

[Speaker 1] (3:09:58 - 3:09:59)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:09:59 - 3:10:04)

Okay. Now, chapter three is all about the core of the ego, what makes it thrive.

[Speaker 1] (3:10:05 - 3:10:05)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:10:05 - 3:10:25)

And you say that what we react to in another, we strengthen in ourselves. Can you give us an example of that? One of the things the ego needs to survive is reacting against other people.

What you react to in another, you strengthen in yourself, you say.

[Speaker 1] (3:10:25 - 3:11:02)

Yes, that's usually what we react to most strongly in others. And what we most strongly condemn in others is usually something that we also have, a trait that we also have, but that we are unconscious of in ourselves. So when we, for example, we become upset if we encounter somebody who is very greedy or we could become upset about somebody who is dishonest, no matter who, the force of your reaction usually tells you that something in you, you need to look at.

[Speaker 2] (3:11:02 - 3:11:06)

Really? All the time? All the time.

[Speaker 1] (3:11:07 - 3:11:16)

Well, it's for you to find out or anybody to find out in their own lives when you react strongly, have it then become alert and have a look inside.

[Speaker 2] (3:11:16 - 3:11:26)

Okay, you say complaining is one of the ego's favorite strategies for strengthening itself. Every complaint is a little story the mind makes up that you completely believe in.

[Speaker 1] (3:11:27 - 3:12:08)

Yes. Now that's a very common thing. And perhaps until people begin to become more aware...

Some egos survive on complaining. Some egos who haven't got much else to identify with, they can survive on complaining alone. So then the continuously you are condemning other people, you're continuously criticizing, condemning or judging negatively situations that you're in, your surroundings, other people.

So the ego is the identification with those thoughts. It's not necessarily the thought. No, it's the thing that you become those thoughts.

There's no space between you and the thought. Got that.

[Speaker 2] (3:12:09 - 3:12:16)

Okay, all right. So name calling is also a form that the ego defines itself.

[Speaker 1] (3:12:16 - 3:13:20)

Yes, and that, of course, one could say, well, it's relatively harmless. On one level, it's relatively harmless to call a person this or that, to attach a label to a person. But if you follow this up to see, you can actually see how dreadful it is to label another human being or another group of human beings.

Because once you have labeled, you've attached a mental label to another human being, you have desensitized yourself to the aliveness and the humanity of that other human being, because you're relating now to a label. So if you say he's a, whatever it may be, he's a communist, he's this, he's that, any label. And immediately, instead of sensing the aliveness of that human being and have some empathy with that, you have cut yourself off and you have a label.

In chapter four, you talk about that, that role playing, how we do it in temporary ways.

[Speaker 2] (3:13:20 - 3:13:30)

I'm the person who's going in the store, I'm the customer and there's the clerk, the person who labels himself the clerk and I'm the customer, there's a certain defined behavior that we have.

[Speaker 1] (3:13:30 - 3:13:37)

Yes. And then when it's done collectively, the labeling, when an entire nation labels another nation in a certain way.

[Speaker 2] (3:13:37 - 3:13:39)

Yeah, or I'm the boss and you're the janitor.

[Speaker 1] (3:13:39 - 3:13:58)

Yes. Or you're my subordinate. Yes.

All these are forms of mental labeling. So any kind of mental label that you are completely identified with desensitizes you to the humanity and then of the other human being. And then all kinds of things are possible, even violence becomes possible.

[Speaker 2] (3:13:58 - 3:14:25)

Okay, I got it. Everybody, I just got this, you got this. Remember two weeks ago, we were talking about walking under the trees, feeling nature, not labeling the flowers, being able to experience the essence of the flowers.

What you're saying here is, you're labeling people as he's a jerk or he's a whatever. Once you start doing that, you become desensitized to who they really are in the same way that you were when you were labeling things in nature.

[Speaker 1] (3:14:25 - 3:14:26)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:14:26 - 3:14:26)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (3:14:26 - 3:14:27)

All right, exactly.

[Speaker 2] (3:14:27 - 3:14:30)

Okay, we have Bill. Hello, Bill. Talked to you earlier today.

[Speaker 7] (3:14:31 - 3:14:32)

Oprah, how are you?

[Speaker 2] (3:14:32 - 3:14:38)

Hi, Bill's in Connecticut on Skype. Bill and I Skyped on the Oprah show earlier today. What's your question to us now?

[Speaker 7] (3:14:39 - 3:14:53)

Well, first of all, Eckhart, I'd like to say that this book is indicative to the quintessential essence of life. This is incredible reading. I have a very simple question.

Do you compare the egoic mind to the subconscious?

[Speaker 1] (3:14:53 - 3:15:08)

I don't use those terms, but because they're a completely different frame of reference. There is, of course, a lot of subconscious activity in the egoic mind also.

[Speaker 7] (3:15:09 - 3:15:13)

Right, but do they run in conjunction with each other or are they separate?

[Speaker 1] (3:15:13 - 3:16:37)

Essentially, the ego is the ego for the ego to survive, for the ego to thrive. You need to be unconscious of it so the way I see it, I would describe the entire egoic functioning as part of the unconsciousness. And it's only when you become aware of those patterns that operate in your own mind that you are stepping out of the unconsciousness.

And this is why we call it awakening. And when you suddenly become aware, even of initially, perhaps, of just a tiny pattern in your mind, for example, we talked about complaining. If you become aware that often during the day you complain uselessly because it serves no purpose about other people or situations, and suddenly say, oh, there's the complaining voice in my head.

Not only do you say there's the complaining voice, there is a deeper dimension of consciousness that has suddenly come forth from where you can be aware of that voice. And what you're saying is you, we are the awareness. That's right.

We are the awareness. This is essentially who you are. You are not all those things that the awareness can be conscious of, all the labels or whatever.

You are the consciousness or the awareness itself.

[Speaker 7] (3:16:37 - 3:16:38)

You are the awareness.

[Speaker 1] (3:16:38 - 3:16:41)

And as long as you don't know that... Isn't that blow your mind, Bill?

[Speaker 7] (3:16:42 - 3:16:46)

I'm like, I'm just, I'm washed away here.

[Speaker 2] (3:16:47 - 3:17:05)

What is so fascinating? I was sharing this with Eckhart as we were preparing for tonight's lesson that I received an email from you through our message boards where you were talking about how your life was sort of spiraling downhill. You were not communicating with your wife.

You were sort of...

[Speaker 7] (3:17:05 - 3:17:35)

Oprah, I wasn't communicating with anybody. I was just, I was stagnating and I needed a wake up call. And I was on the search.

And when I heard you mention this book, it was the name that stuck, A New Earth. That's really cool. I really have to check that out.

And it took me five weeks to buy the book, but it's my manual for life. It's just, it's an incredible composition. It truly is.

[Speaker 2] (3:17:35 - 3:17:47)

So you were saying on the Oprah show earlier today, many people are joining us this evening who weren't a part of the Oprah show, but you were saying on the Oprah show earlier today when we were Skyping that you sat down, you were gonna give it a couple of hours and then...

[Speaker 7] (3:17:48 - 3:18:09)

Yeah, yeah. I figured, you know, I'll knock off two or three chapters. I got so consumed in this whole wave of writing.

I was like, wow, I can't put it down. And then, you know, 12 hours later, I closed the cover and I went, wow, what an incredible ride.

[Speaker 2] (3:18:09 - 3:18:14)

Okay, and what was the biggest realization? Hey Bill, what was the biggest realization for you?

[Speaker 7] (3:18:15 - 3:19:19)

The biggest realization, you know, the whole book itself was a realization. I didn't have any one chapter or any one paragraph. I went through, it really started on chapter three for me.

From chapter three, it went to the next chapter, the chapter after that, how we're brought up, how we live in a dysfunctional life. And Oprah, let me tell you something. I grew up in one of the most dysfunctional families you'd ever wanna know.

And this is something that we carry with us. Your pain body. I've said that, you know, this is a manual for life.

We're thrown out there, we're not given, you know, we get a manual for our cars, our appliances, our electronics, but we're thrown out there. And, you know, as young adults, it's like, go do your thing. But while we're doing our thing, we're consumed in all of the negativity that is in society, the negativity that's in our families.

And it's, you know, we can take ourselves so far, but this book can take us a whole lot farther.

[Speaker 2] (3:19:20 - 3:19:26)

Well, thank you, Bill. Bill, thank you. Thank you.

I'm glad you were around when I was talking about the book.

[Speaker 7] (3:19:27 - 3:19:55)

I gotta tell you something. You are, I don't know where you came from. And I did read in the book that you were studying a, you never, you know, said what kind of a career you were on in the book.

You just said that you were studying for a lucrative career and you got off the beaten path and went into the spiritual realm. I've got to tell you something, my friend. We need more people like you.

Wow.

[Speaker 2] (3:19:55 - 3:20:13)

Bill, I thank you very much for that. Thank you so much. Thank you.

Where were you? What were you doing? That's a good point that Bill brings up.

What were you doing before? The last week you said that your thing was, you never thought you were so cute. No.

But that you had, that you thought, you thought that you had such a great intellectual mind.

[Speaker 1] (3:20:13 - 3:21:18)

Yes. So what were you doing? Intellectual.

I got into university fairly late because I left school at 13 or 14. And then later when I was 18, I went to live in England. And then I took, suddenly became interested in intellectual things.

I was searching. I was becoming already more and more unhappy. And I thought all the answers would be found on the intellectual level.

So what were you planning on doing? Not being a spiritual teacher, obviously. Or becoming a professor.

And then have all the answers to life. And then after a while, I realized they don't have the answers. Wow.

And I became more and more depressed and unhappy. And then suddenly something snapped inside and this disidentification from my mind happened. Yes.

Which happened to our friend, Bill, while he was reading the book. Because when somebody reads the book and has such a powerful response to it, that means the reading of the book coincides with his own awakening as he reads. But this happens because he was so ready for it.

[Speaker 2] (3:21:18 - 3:21:18)

Because he was ready.

[Speaker 1] (3:21:18 - 3:21:22)

Ready for it. It's wonderful to see when that happens. When that happens.

[Speaker 2] (3:21:22 - 3:22:00)

But okay, we were talking earlier about the ego loves complaining. First of all, loves to believe, loves to identify with the thoughts in the head and believe those thoughts. And loves to complain.

But aren't there some things legitimately worth complaining about? Anybody who's ever gone into a house construction at some point or another is told a story by the construction workers, unless you have the most amazing, that this is going to be finished at a certain time or it's going to be a certain price. And then it often doesn't turn out to be what you expected.

That's a complaint a lot of people have. Isn't that legitimate?

[Speaker 1] (3:22:01 - 3:22:01)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:22:02 - 3:22:09)

Like you talk in the book about my soup is cold. In a restaurant. Yeah, in a restaurant.

My soup is cold. Sometimes your soup is cold.

[Speaker 1] (3:22:09 - 3:22:48)

That's right. Yes. So first of all, the complaining that we are talking about mainly here, the egoic complaining, most of that fulfills no real purpose because it's not meant to bring about change in any situation.

Yeah. Okay. That's complaining and resentment complaining.

Yes. And a lot of it for many people happens only in the head. Sometimes they verbalize it also.

But a lot of the complaining happens in the head alone. But no matter whether they verbalize it or whether the complaining happens in the head alone, in probably 90% of cases, it has no real purpose because it's not meant to bring about change. It's meant to strengthen the ego.

[Speaker 2] (3:22:48 - 3:22:49)

I see that.

[Speaker 1] (3:22:49 - 3:23:41)

And then, of course, there are situations, of course, where something needs to be said in order to bring about change in the situation. And that's a completely different kind of complaining where you say something so that change can happen. For example, the cold soup in the restaurant.

You say, the soup is cold. Please bring me hot soup. That's fine.

You could call that also complaining. And there are also two ways of, as far as this kind of complaining is concerned, that is connected to a real situation and is meant to bring about change. There's one way of complaining with ego in that situation also.

And that is when the ego is attempting to make somebody wrong. A personal element comes into it and there's a negativity that flows into it.

[Speaker 2] (3:23:41 - 3:23:44)

To make somebody wrong because my soup is cold.

[Speaker 1] (3:23:44 - 3:24:06)

Yes. Damn it. That's right.

You're personalizing it. And so you're making another person, almost one could say, into an enemy when you complain in that way. So whether it's somebody who is a builder, who is working on your home.

And so there is a way of complaining. I wouldn't even perhaps call it complaining of simply stating what the situation is.

[Speaker 28] (3:24:06 - 3:24:07)

Stating the facts.

[Speaker 1] (3:24:07 - 3:24:33)

Yes. Without the negativity that flows into it when the ego does it. And so that can be practiced.

And whatever you are stating in order to bring about change is actually going to be much more effective if it's done without the negativity. Because if it comes with negativity, it provokes a negative reaction in the other. And so the whole situation then becomes a conflict situation.

[Speaker 2] (3:24:33 - 3:24:57)

As you say, see if you can catch, that is to say, notice the voice in the head. Perhaps I'm on page 64, everybody. Second paragraph.

Perhaps in the very moment it complains about something, recognize it for what it is. The voice of the ego. And then later you say, the moment you become aware of the ego in you, this is mid paragraph, it's strictly speaking no longer the ego, but just an old conditioned mind pattern.

[Speaker 1] (3:24:58 - 3:25:17)

Yes, because ego means you're not aware of it. So ego means unconsciousness. So a good thing that people can ask themselves when they become aware of this complaining voice in the head or the verbalized complaining voice, is this meant to bring about change in the situation?

And if they look at it clearly, often they will say no.

[Speaker 2] (3:25:18 - 3:25:22)

No, it's just hearing myself complain. Yes. Because it keeps fueling my sense of righteousness.

[Speaker 1] (3:25:23 - 3:25:32)

Yes. And rightness. And what the complaining voice also loves is to get confirmation from somebody else that yes, you're right to complain.

So then two people join.

[Speaker 2] (3:25:32 - 3:25:33)

Oh, yeah.

[Speaker 1] (3:25:33 - 3:25:36)

And then you just fuel it on and on and on and on.

[Speaker 2] (3:25:36 - 3:25:36)

I love it.

[Speaker 1] (3:25:37 - 3:25:37)

That's right.

[Speaker 2] (3:25:37 - 3:25:42)

Doris is Skyping us from outside of London, England. Doris, what's your question? Hello.

[Speaker 4] (3:25:43 - 3:26:14)

Hi, Oprah. Hi, Eckhart. What an amazing day or evening.

The book resonated very deeply within me, I must say. And reading on page 62, the first paragraph, resentment is the emotion that goes with complaining. It started a question within me and I thought like, but where do hurt feelings belong to?

Is this something that my ego tells me to feel or where do they come from, Eckhart?

[Speaker 1] (3:26:15 - 3:26:23)

Can you give a situation, an actual situation? It's always easier to talk about this when you can look at an actual situation where, for example, you experience.

[Speaker 4] (3:26:23 - 3:26:45)

Hurt feelings can have, most of the time, there's some outside. Either way, somebody is telling you something that hurts you personally. But what about sadness?

You lose a person or hurt feelings come from many different sources. Where do they come from? How do they relate to the ego?

[Speaker 1] (3:26:45 - 3:27:23)

Thank you. OK. So often it happens that, let's say, somebody criticizes you and you feel hurt because perhaps you were attached to what you were doing and you feel hurt.

Now, what is it in you that feels hurt? And yes, it is the ego that feels hurt. And so when that happens, all you do is, first of all, you can't say, oh, I shouldn't be feeling hurt and I shouldn't have an ego.

It doesn't work. You simply accept that this is what you are feeling right now and you recognize what it is in you that is producing.

[Speaker 4] (3:27:23 - 3:27:25)

Ah, OK, just take it in.

[Speaker 1] (3:27:25 - 3:28:11)

It's a mental image of yourself that has become hurt because most people think of themselves as good people. And if somebody says you're no good, immediately something feeds. And many people get extremely angry.

They're not only hurt. For many people, that immediately turns into anger. And so the ego wants to immediately defend itself, even driving in traffic.

Often, let's say you're driving and another driver suddenly calls you idiot. That hurts. On one level, it hurts.

It hurts the ego. And usually, immediately, the ego goes into self-repair mode, as I call it, and will shout something back in order to repair itself. But...

[Speaker 2] (3:28:12 - 3:28:22)

I'm laughing at you because, I mean, I'm thinking, you know, if somebody calls me an idiot. Somebody gave me the finger once and I was like, gee, that gave me the finger.

[Speaker 1] (3:28:23 - 3:28:30)

But I don't think, I don't remember being hurt about it. I was so stunned by it. But, but, but yeah.

Many people would be hurt.

[Speaker 2] (3:28:30 - 3:28:30)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (3:28:31 - 3:28:42)

But you were not because you were... I thought, what a bad day he's having. Yes, you were in touch with a deeper level of yourself where nothing is hurt.

Yeah. Where you can't be hurt on that level.

[Speaker 2] (3:28:42 - 3:28:52)

When I used to take taxis all the time, when I'd have a taxi driver in a really bad mood, the worse he, if he was in a horrible mood, I would tip him double extra so that he'd be nicer for the next person.

[Speaker 1] (3:28:53 - 3:28:54)

Really.

[Speaker 14] (3:28:54 - 3:28:55)

That's a good one.

[Speaker 1] (3:28:56 - 3:29:41)

There's a story about an official in Japan, a high government official, went to see a Zen master and he asked the Zen master, can you explain to me what the self is? Self really means ego because they talk about the self in Buddhism. Can you explain to me what the self is?

And the Zen master said, what a stupid question is that? Why are you asking such stupid questions? And immediately the government official said, how dare you talk to me like that?

Don't you know who I am? And the master said, that's the ego. That's the ego.

All right. Got it, got it. Now this, this person got hurt, but in him, he immediately, the hurt turned into anger.

[Speaker 2] (3:29:41 - 3:29:44)

So anytime you have hurt feelings, that is your ego?

[Speaker 1] (3:29:44 - 3:29:44)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:29:45 - 3:30:19)

Okay. Now you say here also, Doris, on page 65, he says, a long standing resentment is called a grievance. To carry a grievance is to be in a permanent state of against.

And that is why grievances constitute a significant part of many people's ego. Collective grievances can survive for centuries in the psyche of a nation, we know that, or tribe, and fuel a never ending cycle of violence. And so I guess all of us need to ask, what are the grievances that we allow ourselves to carry?

[Speaker 1] (3:30:19 - 3:30:19)

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (3:30:20 - 3:30:21)

Family grievances.

[Speaker 1] (3:30:21 - 3:30:22)

Families.

[Speaker 2] (3:30:22 - 3:30:26)

That carry on and you don't even, you forget why you're carrying the grievance.

[Speaker 1] (3:30:26 - 3:30:35)

Yes. Personal grievances, family grievances, grievances between tribes, religious groups, nations, and so on, dreadful.

[Speaker 2] (3:30:35 - 3:30:38)

And so are you saying no grievance has a justification?

[Speaker 1] (3:30:38 - 3:30:53)

That all grievances are based in the, as the core of the ego? It's an essential part of the ego to hold grievances. The ego keeps itself alive.

That's one of the ways in which the ego keeps itself alive.

[Speaker 2] (3:30:53 - 3:31:24)

You also say on page 66 here, Doris, don't try to let go of the grievance. Trying to let go to forgive does not work. Forgiveness happens naturally when you see that it has no purpose other than to strengthen a false sense of yourself.

Forgiveness happens when you realize that being resentful is only to build up your ego. But that resentment is only helping you carry around this false sense of who you are. I got that.

[Speaker 4] (3:31:24 - 3:31:29)

I got that. You got that Doris? Yes, I got it too.

Yes. Thank you very much.

[Speaker 2] (3:31:30 - 3:31:34)

You got it too. Good. All the way in London.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

[Speaker 23] (3:31:34 - 3:31:34)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (3:31:34 - 3:31:41)

All the way over here. Thank you. We have Tim, a retired Air Force officer who lives in

Sicily on the line.

Hi, Tim. Your question?

[Speaker 23] (3:31:43 - 3:31:44)

Hello, Oprah. How you doing?

[Speaker 2] (3:31:44 - 3:31:46)

Good. Good to talk to you.

[Speaker 23] (3:31:46 - 3:32:55)

Hey, good to talk to you. Thank you for this opportunity. It's a real honor to be talking to you and Eckhart.

Okay. Your question. I want to put this in context first.

I'm jumping ahead to page 74, where Eckhart mentioned that sometimes you need to protect yourself against the deeply unconscious. So in that context, my question is, in the case of war, if I protect myself and others via violence, I seem to be part of the insanity that he talks about. But to surrender our lives to any unconscious mass of people seems to push us closer to extinction.

And I guess my question is, are my defensive actions bringing humankind closer to or further away from a collective enlightenment? And then as a follow-up, I would just ask, is it possible, personally, can I fight a war and stay in the present, keep that space between my ego and my true self? Ooh, those are brilliant questions.

[Speaker 2] (3:32:56 - 3:32:56)

Thoughtful.

[Speaker 1] (3:32:56 - 3:32:57)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:32:57 - 3:33:00)

Thank you so much. Thank you. Thanks, Tim.

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (3:33:01 - 3:35:36)

I have personally known people and read accounts of people who actually experienced an awakening in the midst of the turmoil of a war situation, when death was imminent, could happen at any second, and something within them suddenly disidentified. The ego broke down in the midst of the suffering generated by that situation. The ego collapsed.

As it also has happened to people even in concentration camps and prison camps. I regularly get letters from people in prison who tell me that they have suddenly become free. They're still in prison, but they consider themselves free.

So we are talking a bit, perhaps here, not only about war, but any kind of situation that usually would be described as extremely negative and unconscious. And is it possible to awaken there? Yes, it happens.

I'd say that every human being has a spiritual teacher. For most humans, their spiritual teacher is their suffering. And a war situation is an extreme form of suffering.

And ultimately, whatever happens here will lead us to awakening. Even something that looks on the surface very negative, like a war situation. Eventually, even that will lead us into an awakening.

And it's already happening. So yes, it is possible in the midst of war to suddenly awaken. What will happen then, I cannot foretell.

It depends on whatever the situation is. It is also true to say that once you have awakened, it is very unlikely that you will still become part of violence. I'm not saying it could not happen.

Nothing can be said categorically. But you no longer resonate with violence. Now, so that if war will no longer happen, when a certain number of people have, I don't know what the critical mass is, a certain number of people have entered the awakened state, so they no longer generate the unconsciousness, the negativity that produces war.

That's perhaps... That's where we're evolving to.

[Speaker 2] (3:35:36 - 3:35:37)

We are evolving to that.

[Speaker 1] (3:35:37 - 3:36:23)

We haven't done so good in the 20th century, nor 21st. No, the 20th century was dreadful. The most dreadful, almost as if the ego had reached a climax there, the madness of it.

And we can see a lot of that still flowing now into the 21st century also. But at the same time, something is happening in this century that is quite unprecedented. Well, it started in the later part of the last century.

This awakening is quite unprecedented. Well, if you look, for example, at previous war situations, there was very little... Challenges to it.

Yes. It was never challenged by the people. That's right.

[Speaker 2] (3:36:24 - 3:36:44)

And now this is very different. Right. You actually say in chapter four, you talk about how the hippie movement in the United States brought about a shift in consciousness.

The movement itself started to fall apart, but the hippies actually brought a challenge to the status quo as we knew it. The hippies said...

[Speaker 1] (3:36:44 - 3:36:55)

Yes, they also... It was a disidentification from the collective image. Right.

Which until that point, people had very strongly identified with the collective.

[Speaker 2] (3:36:55 - 3:37:19)

Behaved a certain way, did things as they were told, obeyed the status quo. Yes. All right.

You say ego takes everything personally. Back to what Doris was saying earlier. Ego takes everything personally.

Emotion arises, defensiveness, perhaps even aggression. Are you defending the truth? No, the truth in any case needs no defense.

[Speaker 1] (3:37:19 - 3:37:57)

Yeah. So when people argue, usually an argument, often arguments turn into violence. If people are very unconscious, and many of you still are, arguments turn into violence.

So when people argue about something, usually what happens is they are so identified with their opinion... Of being right. Yes, being right, their mental position, that any questioning of their mental position, of their opinion, or their viewpoint, is regarded as an attack on them.

Yeah. And this is how the ego gets confused with who you are.

[Speaker 2] (3:37:57 - 3:39:01)

I will tell you a funny story. I was reading this book, and Stedman and I were at dinner, just the two of us, talking about what are the most important questions in life. And I said, I believe one of the most important questions in life is just to know to believe whether the universe is compassionate or not compassionate.

And he said, well, I disagree with you. I think the most important thing is whether or not you know how to work on your strengths. And I go, well, that's ridiculous, because the most important thing is do you believe that the universe is compassionate or not?

And so we're arguing about whether or not the universe is compassionate or not compassionate. And he didn't agree with my view. And I said, well, you know, I know I'm right.

I ended up clearing the table, leaving the table, and going upstairs, because I don't want to have the conversation anymore. And, you know, a half an hour passes. He comes up and he says, okay, you're right.

You're right. And I go, never mind. I don't need to be right.

I don't need to be right. Um, and then I realized that, yes, that is exactly what happened.

[Speaker 1] (3:39:01 - 3:39:14)

My ego is arguing because it is defending its right to be right. Yes. Yeah.

Identification with a mental position, with a concept in the head. Yes. Can happen so easily.

[Speaker 2] (3:39:14 - 3:39:43)

Right. And we're talking about compassionate issues. Yes.

Or non-compassionate issues. Yes. Well, my friend, Kadada Jones, who I was at her father's 75th birthday party the other night.

Quincy Jones turned 75, everybody. And Kadada was there, his daughter. And we started talking about A New Earth.

And she had so many questions that I said, Kadada, why don't you just Skype us on Monday? And here you are. Hello, Kadada.

[Speaker 20] (3:39:44 - 3:40:12)

Hi, Akard. Hi, Oprah. How are you?

Hi. And your question? Okay.

My question is, this book hits me really, really deep in my heart. And I know it to be the truth. But I have such resistance.

And I feel like if everything in form is an illusion, it feels really disenchanting. And I'm at a point in my life where I have goals. I'm excited about my career.

I want to have kids. I want to meet a great partner. And if it's all illusion, where's the fun?

[Speaker 1] (3:40:15 - 3:41:31)

Is that my ego? You are not meant to believe that all is illusion. For at a stage in your life where you can simply enjoy the play of form.

Eventually, you will come to a point, as every human does, where the forms in your life are no longer completely satisfying. They leave a certain emptiness. They leave a frustration.

But you haven't reached that point yet. That's fine. In the meantime, you enjoy your life.

Be as present as you can. Which means don't project yourself continuously into some future moment that promises more and greater fulfillment. But if that happens, and if you can't help it, that's fine too.

But why not enjoy this moment as it is? Really, that's all you can do. This is not to take the joy out of life.

It's to really deepen the way in which you live, rather than living on the surface of things and expecting fulfillment through relatively superficial things. Going deeper to a place where true joy resides.

[Speaker 2] (3:41:32 - 3:41:45)

WINFREY I know. I think that's a good question, though, that you raise, Kodada. Especially, I've heard this from a lot of people your age who say, so now where's ambition?

Ambition is ambition my ego? KODADA Good question.

[Speaker 20] (3:41:46 - 3:42:03)

WINFREY You want to hit career strides. You want to see things happen. You're excited to meet somebody.

You're going to have a baby that you're going to be madly in love with. And then I hear Eckhart's voice, and I have to remember my ego, remember that it's form. And it just kind of makes me feel a little unexcited.

But I guess it's about being in the moment.

[Speaker 1] (3:42:04 - 3:43:09)

KODADA No, there comes a point when you can see the truth of this very clearly in your own life. Until you can see the truth of it very clearly in your own life, in your own life, the book remains on the conceptual level. And so I wouldn't say that there's anything in the book that you should believe in.

If the book works for you, the truth of it is immediately recognized, like in Bill, who we talked to earlier. The truth of it is immediately recognized. And there's a sense of, ah, yes.

But at 20, I would not have understood the truth in this book. I had ambitions. I wanted to become a great professor.

I wanted to be seen as to be successful. I wanted to show to the world that I can make it. So I was working hard.

If at that point I had read this book, I would have said the same as you. I don't want this right now. I don't need this.

The book really, as long as you feel that you don't really need it, it's fine. You should carry on with what you're doing.

[Speaker 2] (3:43:09 - 3:43:10)

I don't even hear her saying she doesn't need it.

[Speaker 20] (3:43:10 - 3:43:41)

I totally need it. I totally know that this book is real and true. And I'm actually turning 34 in a week.

So it's really, really, really important for me to figure out how to integrate consciousness into this next chapter. I want to approach it in a very conscious way. But there's still probably a little part of me, a lot of part of me that's gripping on to the form.

I live in Los Angeles. I'm in a business where form is at the forefront. It's kind of a hard balance.

I'm just wondering how do you reap the fruits and not identify to the form?

[Speaker 1] (3:43:42 - 3:44:18)

Yes, forms. You can enjoy the forms. And you can really only truly enjoy the forms if you are not completely identified with the forms.

Good. Because if you are completely identified with the forms, there's always an element of fear that the form might leave you, the situation that you have, whatever the form might leave you, or it will suddenly, the form will no longer be satisfying. So the attachment to the form doesn't really mean that you enjoy it.

The attachment to the form produces negativity and produces fear around it, around your life situation.

[Speaker 2] (3:44:18 - 3:44:31)

It's doing, Kadada, what I said, I think, on an earlier class. It's like, especially in Los Angeles, you know, great fun city, City of the Angels there. It's like being able to be in the world but not of it.

[Speaker 1] (3:44:32 - 3:44:33)

Yes, yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:44:33 - 3:44:35)

To be in the world but not of it.

[Speaker 1] (3:44:35 - 3:45:05)

Yes, and a lot of that, the attachment is less likely to be there. The more present you are with any life experience, the more present you are in the moment, then you are not attached. The attachment needs future, needs more looks to the future, either as a threat or hope.

So be as present as you can in every situation in your life, in every moment in your life.

[Speaker 2] (3:45:05 - 3:45:18)

And what you were talking about, I think, in one of the future chapters about being able to be present with your children instead of just sort of going through the motions with your children, being present with your children. Hey, Kadada, great to see you on Skype.

[Speaker 20] (3:45:18 - 3:45:19)

Thank you for having me.

[Speaker 2] (3:45:20 - 3:45:31)

Okay, let's go to our study group who's watching our webcast at Borders on Michigan Avenue in Chicago. Hi, everybody. I hear Jamie is there and has a question.

[Speaker 12] (3:45:32 - 3:45:48)

Yes, hi, Oprah. Hi, Eckhart. My name is Jamie.

My question is on page 83, you mentioned how fame especially is such a downfall for the ego. And I'm just wondering, Oprah, how you manage to keep everything so grounded?

[Speaker 1] (3:45:49 - 3:45:52)

I've been meaning to ask you that, too. Really?

[Speaker 2] (3:45:54 - 3:46:28)

Oh, thanks for bringing that up, Jamie. How do I manage to keep everything so grounded? I can think, I believe that I'm not attached to the fame.

I don't know that to be true since I have been, quote, famous for most of my adult life. But I believe that I really am, that what I do comes from such a, you know, I consider myself blessed. And I'm blessed because I have acquired fame and attention and money by being myself.

[Speaker 1] (3:46:28 - 3:46:31)

That's it. You don't play roles.

[Speaker 2] (3:46:31 - 3:46:34)

Yeah, it's not, I don't have to be anybody other than myself.

[Speaker 1] (3:46:34 - 3:47:01)

And so. And that's very rare on television. Almost everybody's playing a role.

Right. And your success is due to the fact that you are yourself. Right.

You're the same person outside television as you are here in the studio. So, and really, that can apply to anybody. The more you are truly yourself and not playing roles, the more powerful you are.

The ego tells you you need to play some role. But your true power lies in not playing a role.

[Speaker 2] (3:47:01 - 3:48:22)

I will say this, when I first started television, I was a news reporter and never was satisfied. I always felt that I was exploiting people. My whole day was based around finding the worst story possible to report.

And also, I was an anchor woman. And something would happen, Jamie, when the light would come on, like on this camera, there's a little red light on. And all of a sudden, I'd be like talking like I am now.

And the light would come on and I would suddenly go into my newswoman anchor voice and play the role of the newswoman anchor person that I thought I was supposed to be. And one night, I was reading some copy that I hadn't pre-read and I was naming a lot of countries and Canada was on the list and I called Canada Kanata. And I started cracking myself up that I said, did I just call Canada Kanata?

And that was the breakthrough moment for me on television. That was the breakthrough moment where I was able for just a few seconds break through the wall of my facade as an anchor woman who knows all of the different countries and in Kanata. And that moment was such a funny moment for me, I couldn't stop laughing and started the process of me being able to be myself on the air, that first little glimpse of it.

So did you have a question for Eckhart?

[Speaker 12] (3:48:24 - 3:48:48)

With all this webcast and being on Oprah, obviously you've come into incredible fame and I didn't ask you the question because this has been what you've been preaching since you wrote The Power of Now. But do you anticipate, are you just completely self-actualized? You don't expect this to be a problem or how do you expect fame to come in and to play for you at all now?

[Speaker 2] (3:48:48 - 3:50:13)

Yeah, no, this is so funny. Amy Gross, who's the editor of O Magazine, who's also a pretty centered person, we were talking about, Eckhart did an article for us from a conversation that we had earlier in O Magazine and on my issue. And so we were talking about Eckhart coming for the first session a couple of weeks ago.

She says, won't we all be surprised if Eckhart comes in in a fur hat and three pounds of bling wearing sunglasses with an entourage? If Eckhart walks in and go, yo, what's up? No, I don't think it's affected him because this is so funny.

When I first called Eckhart months ago, months and months, I don't even know how long ago it was, to tell Eckhart that I was going to be choosing a new earth as our book club selection. I think it's our 61st selection or whatever. Uh, he was very, he was so calm about it.

Later, one of the producers says, well, did you call him? Did you call him? And I said, yeah, I called him.

And he said, well, was he excited? And I said, I think for him, that was excitement. As I said, I'm choosing a book.

He goes, yes, very good. So anyway, I don't think it's gone to his head yet. And I, and listen, so far, no bling.

[Speaker 1] (3:50:14 - 3:50:17)

When it, when it happens, then you'll know the ego has come back.

[Speaker 2] (3:50:17 - 3:50:18)

Let me know.

[Speaker 1] (3:50:18 - 3:50:20)

I won't know it.

[Speaker 2] (3:50:20 - 3:51:03)

If it's when Eckhart comes in wearing two earrings, I'll let you know. Okay. Let's see.

Thank you so much, Jamie and all the group from Borders. Thank you for being there every week. Yay Borders, Michigan Avenue.

Let's see some of the email questions you've been sending during our class on our computer screen here. This is Melissa from Crab Orchard. Thank you.

West Virginia. She says she's being awakened with worry. My sister's addicted to drugs.

She's been through rehab to no avail. Every day we worry about her. We fear she may die if she continues.

My question is this. How can we live awakened with this major, major distraction in our lives? That's good.

[Speaker 1] (3:51:04 - 3:53:58)

Well, the first thing you need to take responsibility for your own life and your own state of consciousness rather than thinking your primary responsibility is your sister's life and your sister's state of consciousness. That's not the case. You have to start with yourself.

Change can only begin with yourself. So are you taking responsibility for your own state of consciousness rather than believing unconsciously that of course you're worried and there's nothing else you can do? You have to look at what you call the worry in yourself, the continuous mind activity that dwells on negativity.

See if you can enter that state of acceptance or presence and just be with yourself. I recommend to get out of the mind, go into the body several times a day and connect with the feeling of aliveness within. For yourself.

So that the worry, the worry pretends, worry is part of the ego. It's the compulsion to think and it serves no purpose because it doesn't get you anywhere. It's similar to the complaining.

It has no useful purpose. It doesn't bring about change in any situation. No matter how much you worry, it's never the worry that brings about any change in the situation.

The mind may tell you, you need to worry because it has some purpose. It doesn't. So the essential thing is that you get out of that unconscious habit of continuous worrying.

So find a little bit of peace in yourself first to start with and it may be more than a little bit of peace but start with a little. Is there any peace in you underneath this continuous mental noise that we call worry? Is there anything else in you?

And you have to find that you can only be of true service to your sister. You can only truly be an agent for change in this world if something has changed in your state of consciousness. Otherwise you contribute to the turmoil.

So find through meditating, through bringing awareness to the present moment as much as possible, through bringing awareness into the inner body as much as possible, get out of the mind and enter presence and realize the mind may tell you, you're not helping your sister. This is the beginning where you may be able to truly be of help to somebody else.

[Speaker 2] (3:53:59 - 3:54:01)

Because the only thing you can do is really help yourself.

[Speaker 1] (3:54:01 - 3:54:01)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:54:02 - 3:54:02)

That's right.

[Speaker 1] (3:54:02 - 3:54:02)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:54:03 - 3:54:10)

But the mind tells you, I have to save my sister. Yes and that's the... And what you're saying is that is not necessarily true.

[Speaker 1] (3:54:10 - 3:55:22)

No, ultimately your sister is also responsible. It doesn't mean that one human being cannot help another but what is essential when we ask whether you can be of help or not to another human being is there something in you that can bring about change in the consciousness of another human being. Unless some change has happened inside you, it can't happen.

And what this may talk more generally about worry is this is the problem for many, many people. They wake up in the middle of the night worrying. During the day they go about worrying about this or that.

What does it mean to worry? What does it mean? It means there is unconscious mind movement projecting itself usually into the future and you see how dreadful the future is going to be.

What's going to happen? You see outcomes that are negative. Many things of course are never going to happen but worry pretends to be necessary.

You have to see very clearly... Worry pretends to be necessary.

[Speaker 2] (3:55:22 - 3:55:23)

Oh, I got that.

[Speaker 1] (3:55:23 - 3:55:26)

You have to see that it serves no useful purpose.

[Speaker 2] (3:55:26 - 3:55:30)

Yeah, worry pretends to be necessary but serves no useful purpose.

[Speaker 1] (3:55:31 - 3:55:39)

And so once you see that it serves no useful purpose you can sometimes be maybe able to step out of that and see oh and then become present.

[Speaker 2] (3:55:39 - 3:55:56)

Yeah, you can become present if you can step out of the worry for a moment you can become present enough to say what can I do now? How can I be now in this moment? For myself, for my sister, for whatever it is you need.

[Speaker 1] (3:55:56 - 3:56:49)

Yes, and the greatest gift you can give to somebody especially somebody who is suffering like your sister when you are with them what is your state of consciousness? Are you able to bring presence when you connect with your sister or any other human being that you want to help? Can you be present with them?

Can you give them space to be? That's the healing. You can be an agent for healing of another not in the sense that I am going to heal you not believing that would be ego gain.

I'm going to heal you. No, simply be there as a conscious space of presence not wanting to do anything just being there as a conscious presence with another person. That's very hard for people.

Yes. I understand it's very hard. And that's why we call it the shift.

The shift.

[Speaker 2] (3:56:50 - 3:57:17)

And I recognize how hard it is. I'm reading this book now from a guest who's coming on the show called Beautiful Boy. You might have heard of it.

It's the story of the father. The father and the son both wrote a book together. It's going to be on the Oprah show later.

And his son was an addict for many years and very difficult for parents, especially. And as in this case, Melissa, a sister to a drug addict to stand by and watch somebody daily attempt to kill themselves through drugs.

[Speaker 1] (3:57:17 - 3:57:24)

Yes, yes. Okay. So and but acceptance is also an important part of that.

It's at the moment you need to accept.

[Speaker 2] (3:57:24 - 3:57:25)

Stop resisting it.

[Speaker 1] (3:57:25 - 3:57:28)

Yes, not bringing the resistance always into the relationship.

[Speaker 2] (3:57:29 - 3:57:32)

Because whatever you fight, you strengthen and what you resist persists.

[Speaker 1] (3:57:33 - 3:57:33)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:57:33 - 3:57:35)

That's at the top of page 75.

[Speaker 1] (3:57:36 - 3:57:36)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:57:36 - 3:57:40)

Whatever you fight, you strengthen and what you resist persists.

[Speaker 1] (3:57:40 - 3:58:02)

Why is that? Because that's how the by opposing you bring this world. Works in terms of polarities.

So if you strengthen one polarity, you immediately strengthen the other. That's physics. Yes, exactly the same physics.

Okay.

[Speaker 2] (3:58:03 - 3:58:28)

You say, because these days you frequently hear the expression, the war against this or that. And whenever you hear that, you know that it's condemned to failure. There's a war against drugs.

It's crime, the war against terrorism, against cancer, against poverty and so on. And despite the war against all of these things, everything, every one of those things is bigger than ever. That's right.

That's right. Because what you fight, you strengthen and what you resist persists. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (3:58:28 - 3:58:48)

And then the implication, of course, is there is another way of dealing with things, with situations. And that is to make peace with it. Make peace with it.

And then action, take action. The action then comes out of a different state of consciousness. The action comes out of presence.

Presence. It's no longer reaction.

[Speaker 2] (3:58:49 - 3:58:53)

Yeah, it comes out of presence and not out of you being defensive about it.

[Speaker 1] (3:58:53 - 3:59:00)

That's right. I got it. And the action is much more powerful and effective when it's not defensive and not negative.

[Speaker 2] (3:59:00 - 3:59:09)

We have Dana from Monrovia, Liberia on the phone. Hello? Hello, Opa.

[Speaker 5] (3:59:09 - 3:59:10)

Hello, Eckhart.

[Speaker 2] (3:59:10 - 3:59:16)

Hello. Hi, it's Donna. Hi, Donna.

How are you? Oh, we're happy to talk to Monrovia.

[Speaker 5] (3:59:16 - 3:59:19)

Hello. Oh, thank you.

[Speaker 2] (3:59:21 - 3:59:25)

Your question. Can I go ahead? Yeah, go ahead.

My question, thank you.

[Speaker 18] (3:59:25 - 3:59:30)

My question has to do with non-reaction in relationships.

[Speaker 5] (3:59:32 - 3:59:44)

Would it be the same to say that the opposite of love is not hate but rather indifference, considering if one makes that situation not a personal one?

[Speaker 1] (3:59:47 - 3:59:51)

Okay, that's your question. Yes, I don't fully understand the question.

[Speaker 2] (3:59:53 - 3:59:58)

Don't leave, Donna. Reading. Go ahead.

[Speaker 5] (3:59:59 - 4:00:10)

Concerning non-reaction. Would it be the same to say that the opposite of love is not hate but rather indifference?

[Speaker 1] (4:00:12 - 4:00:15)

Now, do you mean that non-reaction is indifference?

[Speaker 5] (4:00:18 - 4:00:26)

Correct. That's what I'm asking. Particularly if one doesn't take it in a negative context.

[Speaker 1] (4:00:26 - 4:00:28)

Okay. I'm not sure which I'll do.

[Speaker 6] (4:00:28 - 4:00:31)

Meaning not letting negative consume one person.

[Speaker 1] (4:00:31 - 4:02:36)

Okay. Well, non-reaction means that you recognize when another human being displays some form of ego behavior, wants to be right or wants you to be wrong or accuses you of this or that, whatever. Many kinds.

The ego manifests in many different ways. You recognize that that is its ego and you don't react to it, which means you don't confuse this behavior with who that human being is. It means you allow the ego to be there without fighting that behavior.

For example, it happened some years ago, it's an interesting example. I had a plumber come in to do some repair at my place. He was extremely aggressive and rude.

The plumber? The plumber. And I treated him as if he were a noble guest, very polite and explained what needs to be done because I recognized that perhaps he had been trapped in this pattern for years.

Maybe it started with childhood when everybody around him was rude to him. So there was a deep-seated pattern of rudeness and unpleasant behavior and of regarding other people as enemies. And I didn't react because I recognized that as a dysfunction in him.

It wasn't him at all. So I simply accepted his behavior and pointed out this needs to be done. After 20 minutes, he was changed completely.

He was suddenly said, thank you. For the first time, perhaps. Somebody was nice to him.

Somebody was nice because everybody else reacted to him in the same way that he acted. He got the reaction. And this is how most human beings encounter their daily reality.

It's a cab driver situation. Yes. And for most people, their daily reality is really a reflection of their own in a predominant inner state.

[Speaker 2] (4:02:37 - 4:02:54)

And so the enlightened part of ourselves after reading this book, being awakened, we realize what you're saying here in chapter three called the ego. You should be able to recognize the ego not only in yourself, but see it in other people.

[Speaker 1] (4:02:54 - 4:02:54)

Other people.

[Speaker 2] (4:02:55 - 4:03:02)

So when you see that kind of reaction from someone, you realize it's their ego. It's not them.

[Speaker 1] (4:03:02 - 4:03:08)

That's right. So one could almost say it's like an illness. It's like a mental...

[Speaker 2] (4:03:08 - 4:03:14)

So the presence in you then gets to respond to, relate to the presence in them.

[Speaker 1] (4:03:15 - 4:03:25)

Yes. You got to be really highly evolved to do that. It's not indifference, by the way.

This is not indifference. You're not indifferent. That's compassionate.

Compassion.

[Speaker 2] (4:03:25 - 4:03:25)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (4:03:25 - 4:03:26)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (4:03:26 - 4:03:26)

Understood.

[Speaker 1] (4:03:28 - 4:03:29)

In fact...

[Speaker 2] (4:03:29 - 4:03:31)

Yes. Thank you for that clarity.

[Speaker 1] (4:03:31 - 4:03:33)

Thank you. Okay. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (4:03:33 - 4:03:33)

Thank you, Donna.

[Speaker 1] (4:03:33 - 4:03:38)

Now, the question is, you say you need to be highly evolved.

[Speaker 2] (4:03:39 - 4:03:42)

Well... Because most people just react.

[Speaker 1] (4:03:42 - 4:04:13)

It is true to say that at first, the reaction is so automatic when somebody behaves unconsciously to react in the same way. It's very automatic. Now, as people begin to become more aware of their egos, usually after it's happened, they become aware that they reacted in the old ego way.

After the event. Then, after a while, in the middle of reacting to somebody's ego, you suddenly become aware that that's what you're doing.

[Speaker 2] (4:04:13 - 4:05:21)

Somebody just told me this last night, and this happens a lot with the airlines, where, you know, my goodness, you can get from point A to point B on commercial airlines these days without losing your luggage or flights being canceled or sitting on the tarmac or whatever. And they were reading the book and in the midst of, you know, everything, you know, schedule for the flight. I'm sure this has happened to many of you.

Schedule for the flight. Everything's fine. You get there and there's no seat.

There's no seat. And people, other people didn't have their seats and people around them were just imploding. And this person said that they decided to remain calm, as my godson, as a matter of fact, and people all around them were going nuts.

And suddenly, out of nowhere, after about a half an hour, not out of nowhere, about a half an hour, the person behind the counter called the names and of all the names they called, they called his, who had been sitting there calm. Now, they didn't know him from anybody else, but, you know, it eventually worked out. Not saying that it always works out, but he realized after reading the book that it makes no sense to get crazy.

[Speaker 1] (4:05:21 - 4:05:31)

Yes, it's not only that, but also it's true that things are much more likely to work out when you are in a harmonious state of consciousness and not in resistance.

[Speaker 2] (4:05:31 - 4:06:07)

Which brings us to page 77. Do you want peace or drama? Yes.

You say we all want peace. There's no one who doesn't want peace, yet there's something else in you that wants the drama, wants the conflict. And whenever you're moving in the drama, you can, as we all can, I think now, a little bit anyway, detach from the thought, see yourself having the thought, recognize that you, the you, the I of I am, is the awareness that you're having the thought.

When you can see all the drama, just detach a little bit, you've done what?

[Speaker 1] (4:06:07 - 4:06:25)

That's the vital thing, to see it in the midst of it, to suddenly become aware that this is an old pattern in you, an ego pattern in you. It may not even stop immediately, but at least there is a, suddenly there is a witnessing presence in the background.

[Speaker 2] (4:06:25 - 4:06:30)

That the ego wants to complain, the ego wants to be resentful, the ego wants drama.

[Speaker 1] (4:06:31 - 4:07:07)

Yes. And to see that in oneself, one could call it almost, there is in humans something that we could call the addiction to unhappiness. When you are unhappy for whatever reason, once you are trapped in that energy of unhappiness, you don't want to get out.

That's right. Because your ego loves it. So there is an addiction to the, you're actually on some level, you enjoy your unhappiness.

And when you can become aware of that, then suddenly you're stepping out.

[Speaker 2] (4:07:07 - 4:07:48)

So let's talk about the power of awareness. You talk about on page 78, a power comes into your life that is far greater than the ego, greater than the mind. All that is required to become free of the ego is to be aware of it.

Since awareness and ego are incompatible. This is page 78, first paragraph. Awareness is the power that is concealed within the present moment.

This is why we may also call it presence. And the ultimate purpose of human existence, which is to say, your purpose is to bring that power or that presence into this world. Yes.

That is why we're here.

[Speaker 1] (4:07:48 - 4:08:18)

Yes, that is the universal, the impulse, the universal impulse is the evolution of consciousness. That is the impulse behind the universe. The universe is moving towards the evolution of consciousness.

And we are one manifestation of the evolution of consciousness into this world. We're one. Yes, there are many others.

Right. Even a plant is a manifestation. Right.

[Speaker 2] (4:08:19 - 4:08:54)

But our ultimate purpose of human existence is to bring that presence, that awareness into the world and to become more aware in our daily lives. So that regardless of what you're doing in your form world, in your form life, that you recognize, as you say on page 79, can I sense my essential beingness, the I am in the background of my life at all times? Yes.

To be more accurate, can I sense the I am that I am at this moment?

[Speaker 1] (4:08:55 - 4:09:35)

Yes. And an easy step towards that is the inner acceptance of this moment as it is without wanting it to be different or rejecting it or resisting it. If you can accept, if you can see that the primary thing in your life is the present moment, there is never anything else.

Yes. It's always now. So you must see if you can have a good relationship with the now because if you don't have a good relationship with the now, you don't have a good relationship with life because life is now.

Yes. So accepting this moment as it is can connect you with that dimension of depth in yourself.

[Speaker 2] (4:09:35 - 4:09:40)

And that is how we begin to quieten or quiet the ego.

[Speaker 1] (4:09:40 - 4:10:06)

Yes. Is by being more fully present now. That's the exit out of the ego.

The now. Yeah. The now is the hidden exit because the ego doesn't want you to know that there is an exit and it's called now.

Exit is the door out of the ego. The now is the door. The exit.

Yes. The now is the exit door. Out of the ego.

Okay.

[Speaker 2] (4:10:06 - 4:10:38)

And so whenever you find yourself complaining, whenever you find yourself, as we said last week, the need to feel superior, you feel superior or inferior to someone else, you know that it's your ego. Whenever you recognize that this is my ego and can bring yourself to the present moment to what is going on now and can see yourself doing it. Yeah.

That is awakening. Yes. Okay.

Ginger is a singer, songwriter living in Berlin and is calling us via Skype. Hello.

[Speaker 10] (4:10:39 - 4:10:40)

Hi.

[Speaker 2] (4:10:40 - 4:10:42)

Berlin, Germany. Hello. Hello.

[Speaker 10] (4:10:42 - 4:10:44)

Hello. Schöne Grüße aus Berlin.

[Speaker 2] (4:10:47 - 4:10:48)

I guess that meant hello, right?

[Speaker 10] (4:10:50 - 4:10:51)

Yeah, exactly.

[Speaker 28] (4:10:51 - 4:10:51)

Okay.

[Speaker 10] (4:10:52 - 4:11:38)

Well, I feel like I am aware of the things that I do that are destructive and I can't seem to stop them anyway. I feel like I label things that are bad for me and then I resist them. Like eating fried food or drinking too much or relationships.

I resist them and I feel like it causes a source of anxiety and sometimes the huge decisions in my life come easily, but these little things, little decisions every day, they pile up and become a source of anxiety. So my question is, how can we get to this inspired action and effortless doing, not only when it comes to the big decisions, but when it comes to making healthy choices in our everyday lives?

[Speaker 2] (4:11:39 - 4:11:41)

Amen. Good question. Thank you, Ginger.

[Speaker 10] (4:11:42 - 4:11:43)

How did... Yeah, because...

[Speaker 2] (4:11:44 - 4:11:45)

Yeah, I was saying this to...

[Speaker 10] (4:11:45 - 4:11:47)

I know I'm doing it.

[Speaker 2] (4:11:47 - 4:12:08)

I just do it anyway. Yeah, I was saying... Yeah, why does it have to be a struggle just to do the right thing in terms of...

For me, it's food always. It's always about food. How can it become effortless?

Isn't that your question, Ginger? Yeah. And are you talking about...

For me, this would be about potato chips. What is this about for you?

[Speaker 10] (4:12:09 - 4:12:13)

For me, it's red wine, french fries. Okay.

[Speaker 2] (4:12:14 - 4:12:16)

A little red wine every now and then.

[Speaker 10] (4:12:16 - 4:12:17)

And a few other things, of course, too.

[Speaker 2] (4:12:17 - 4:12:19)

Yeah. Okay, go ahead.

[Speaker 1] (4:12:19 - 4:12:31)

So you mean when you eat french fries... And she knows that they're not so good for her. And then there's a voice in the head that says you shouldn't be eating them.

Nevertheless, you are eating them.

[Speaker 10] (4:12:32 - 4:12:34)

A tennis match is more like it.

[Speaker 1] (4:12:37 - 4:14:25)

A lot of eating... Overeating has a lot to do with the ego also. Because the ego lives in a constant state of not enough.

It always seeks something else to fill itself with. And usually it's experiences to identify with this or that. Things.

Things. But it's also the need for more, as I call it, that is built into the ego. Sometimes it can get transferred to the body.

And then you experience it as the desire to eat much more than the body really wants. It's to take in more. So really, to eat consciously really is the way out of it.

For example, I would suggest that when you eat your french fries... Make a meditation out of it and eat them consciously without having a secondary entity in your head that says you shouldn't be eating them. Eat them fully and consciously.

And at the same time, feel how your body feels while you eat them and after you've eaten them. Then you bring some presence into it. And you may realize, in some cases, that the body doesn't actually want to eat them.

It was the mind that wanted to eat the potato. So eat consciously. If you eat a sandwich, if you go to the fridge, sometimes people get up in the middle of the night, they open the door and you reach in and there's this need for...

The body doesn't eat it.

[Speaker 2] (4:14:25 - 4:14:26)

You're trying to feed something.

[Speaker 1] (4:14:27 - 4:14:29)

Feed something, yes. And so...

[Speaker 10] (4:14:29 - 4:14:38)

For me, it's also the anxiety that the resistance, not just for food but things that I label as bad for me, seem to cause a lot of anxiety.

[Speaker 2] (4:14:39 - 4:15:38)

What he's saying is stop resisting. Actually, after reading this book, I've been trying this lately, exactly what you said. And this is what you will find.

If you stop resisting it because the french fries are not bad, it's the thought in your head that has told you that the french fries are bad. And if you do what he is recommending, if you sit and you consciously make it a meditation, what you will find is you won't eat, you know, two bags of french fries unconsciously, that you will enjoy every single french fry. And in the enjoyment and the pleasure, if you stop when it's no longer pleasurable, you know, it's no longer pleasurable after three or four or five.

By the time you've eaten a whole bag of them, you don't even taste it anymore. So he's saying, make it a meditation. Be with it.

Feel it. Sense it. Allow your whole body to be with it.

Feel it. Sense it. And when you're done with the pleasure of it, let it go.

That is what you're saying.

[Speaker 1] (4:15:38 - 4:15:39)

Yes. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (4:15:39 - 4:15:40)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (4:15:40 - 4:15:40)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (4:15:40 - 4:15:47)

And that's what the red wine too. Yes. And other things as well, I suspect.

And other things as well.

[Speaker 1] (4:15:47 - 4:15:49)

When I was in... Be with it.

[Speaker 2] (4:15:49 - 4:15:49)

Be with it.

[Speaker 1] (4:15:50 - 4:16:23)

When I was in my twenties, as young people do, I would often get drunk. Nowadays, I still enjoy a glass of wine. Right.

I enjoy it very much. Yes. And I know after I've had one glass of wine, sometimes does my body want another glass of wine?

And usually I cannot drink more than one glass. It's very rare that I would drink two glasses of wine because that's exactly... The body says no more.

If you can sense your body, it will often tell you whether it's right or not to eat or drink.

[Speaker 2] (4:16:23 - 4:16:44)

Well, that's a very good point that you just made. I just had an epiphany because you don't become overweight or even drunk or intoxicated as long as you are acting consciously. It's when you become unconscious that you eat too much.

Unconscious that you drink too much. Unconscious is when you become obsessively indulgent.

[Speaker 1] (4:16:44 - 4:16:48)

Yes. With things. Yes.

All these addictions are unconscious. Are unconscious.

[Speaker 2] (4:16:48 - 4:16:55)

Ginger from Berlin. Love that green you're wearing, girl. That's fantastic.

Thank you. Thanks for joining us.

[Speaker 1] (4:16:55 - 4:16:58)

Enjoy your fries. Enjoy.

[Speaker 2] (4:16:58 - 4:17:34)

Yeah. I have a glass of wine. Consciously.

Page 78, everybody. Bottom paragraph. What is spiritual realization?

The belief that you are spirit. You say no. That is a thought.

A little closer to the truth than the thought that believes you are who your birth certificate says you are, but still a thought. So we're not spirit? I thought we were spirit.

What is that saying? That we are spiritual beings having a human experience?

[Speaker 1] (4:17:34 - 4:18:03)

Yes, that's very good. Yes, but we're not spirit. No.

That when we say we are spiritual beings having a human experience is not yet the realization that we are. It's the belief that we are. Oh, okay.

So there is a step that goes from the belief. Belief is still, it's a mental concept. It's a little closer, as I say, to believing that you are what your birth certificate says you are.

But it's not this realization. No thought that you have about yourself is realization.

[Speaker 2] (4:18:03 - 4:18:22)

Okay, well, this is another thing. You know, a lot of people are still very conflicted about this spirituality and their religion. And what I hear you saying, feel you saying in this book is, is that this book isn't about believing.

This book is about what you come to know for yourself.

[Speaker 1] (4:18:22 - 4:18:23)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (4:18:23 - 4:18:25)

Yeah, what you become to feel for yourself.

[Speaker 1] (4:18:25 - 4:18:26)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (4:18:26 - 4:18:35)

And that what you're saying is that God, in the essence of all consciousness, isn't something to believe. God is.

[Speaker 1] (4:18:35 - 4:18:35)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (4:18:36 - 4:18:51)

God is. And God is a feeling experience, not a believing experience. That's right.

And if that your religion is a believing experience, if God for you is still about a belief, then it's not truly God.

[Speaker 1] (4:18:51 - 4:18:51)

No.

[Speaker 2] (4:18:51 - 4:18:52)

That's what you're saying.

[Speaker 1] (4:18:52 - 4:19:38)

Yes. The best, at best, to believe is a transitional thing. That from there you go on to the realization that there is no separation between you and God, between you and the source of life, that you are one with the source.

And you cannot realize that through believing. It's not a belief. Not a thought.

Not a thought. It's a direct realization within yourself. And it's there in the gap between two thoughts.

That's right. And conceptually, you may not know anymore. You may not have an opinion of who you are anymore.

And yet, at a very deep level, there is a knowing that cannot be put into words.

[Speaker 2] (4:19:39 - 4:20:12)

So what is spiritual realization? The belief that you are spirit? No, that's a thought.

Closer to the truth than the thought that believes you are who you are, that your birth certificate says you are, but still a thought. Spiritual realization is to see clearly. On the bottom of page 78, everybody, spiritual realization is to see clearly that what I perceive, experience, think, or feel is ultimately not who I am.

That I cannot find myself in all those things that continuously pass away.

[Speaker 1] (4:20:13 - 4:20:49)

Yes, so you are the space for all those things. You are the consciousness, the awareness in which all those things, experiences, sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions, come, they appear. Jesus says, you are the light of the world.

That means you are the consciousness in which the world appears, is seen. And the consciousness itself has no form. It is formless and it has nothing to do with time.

It is the dimension of the timeless in yourself. Eternity is the religious term for it.

[Speaker 28] (4:20:50 - 4:20:50)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (4:20:50 - 4:21:30)

For most religious people, when they use eternity, it's a very abstract concept. Right. Eternity, what do I do with that?

Or they believe it's continuous time that never ends. That would be extremely boring. If you were eternity and there's no end to time, it would become very boring.

I wouldn't want two things to go on forever in my life, to go on forever, ever, ever. But finding the timeless dimension is a very different thing in yourself. Timelessness is very different than eternity, as you're saying.

The true meaning of eternity is timelessness. Is timelessness. It's usually misinterpreted as meaning endless time.

[Speaker 2] (4:21:30 - 4:21:31)

On and on and on and on. I got that.

[Speaker 1] (4:21:31 - 4:21:58)

So there is in every human being, underneath all the stream of thinking and underneath the emotions, there is that dimension where timelessness or eternity dwells. And that is the essence of who you are. And that is consciousness itself.

And you can know it by realizing that you are the space for whatever happens in your life. Space of consciousness. Deep.

[Speaker 2] (4:21:59 - 4:22:14)

I must say that's pretty deep there, Eckhart. We're on page 80, everybody. One of my favorite quotes in the entire book, that actually I used in one of our ads in O Magazine, only the truth of who you are, if realized, will set you free.

[Speaker 1] (4:22:15 - 4:22:50)

Yes. Yes. Know who you are and you are free.

But to know who you are doesn't mean that suddenly you have an answer in your head.

There's a stillness. And in that stillness, when you accept that you don't know who you are, as I say somewhere in the book, when you completely accept that you've realized all the things that you thought you were is not really who you are.

And then you come to a point where you don't know who you are. And if you can fully accept that you don't know who you are, you're closer to who you are than you were ever before.

[Speaker 2] (4:22:50 - 4:23:12)

Once you realize and accept that all structures, page 81, forms are unstable, even the seemingly solid material ones, peace arises within you. This is because the recognition of the impermanence of all forms awakens you to the dimension of the formless within. That's what you're calling timelessness.

That which is beyond death. Jesus called it eternal life.

[Speaker 1] (4:23:13 - 4:23:13)

Eternal life.

[Speaker 2] (4:23:15 - 4:23:26)

So you believe what happens to us at death when the body dies? You don't have a belief. I don't give it any thought.

You don't? No. Well, did you ever think about it, Eckhart?

[Speaker 1] (4:23:29 - 4:24:49)

I know that the essence of who I am, which is the essence of who you are, is indestructible. I know that directly on a feeling level. And you can also know it even if you talk to a physicist.

He will tell you that energy never gets destroyed. It can only transform. So whatever it is that animates this physical form, at some point, whatever it is that animates this physical form is going to no longer animate this form.

And that is when you see a dead body. And when you see a dead body, you see, a year and a half ago, both my parents died within a space of a few months. And I saw very clearly, each time I saw my mother's body lying there.

A few months later, I saw my father's body lying in the coffin. And I realized the form was still there. But the essence of that being was not present.

So the essence of that being was never the form. It was gone. It was no longer there.

And then when that which animates the form... The essence of that being was never the form. The essence of that being inhabited the form.

[Speaker 2] (4:24:49 - 4:24:51)

Yes, because... And now it no longer inhabited the form.

[Speaker 1] (4:24:51 - 4:25:32)

So you could see there was only a shell there. Right. And that was such a clear realization.

Yeah, many people who've seen their loved ones in the casket see that. Yes. So that which was the life within that form, was always invisible.

All you could ever see was the form. Maybe you could sense the life within the form. But the life is always invisible.

And the life ultimately has no form itself. And so, you see, suddenly somebody dies. The essence is gone.

The life within the form is gone.

[Speaker 2] (4:25:33 - 4:26:13)

So what you're saying, again, on page 79, is to be able to be in form and be able to sense the formlessness of yourself. Yes. To be in form and to sense that there is an essential beingness or formlessness, the I Am in the background of our life at all times.

And that awareness, that formlessness, is what can hear, see, sense the thoughts that are going on all the time. And there's a little space, just a space, between the thoughts and the awareness of the thoughts.

[Speaker 1] (4:26:13 - 4:26:33)

And that is where we, I, reside. Yes. You are the awareness.

You are consciousness. Appearing as a person for a little while. But in essence, you are consciousness.

And consciousness is... As consciousness, you are timeless. You are eternal in the sense of timeless.

[Speaker 2] (4:26:33 - 4:26:41)

And when the form itself is lying there in the casket, that timeless formlessness has gone where?

[Speaker 1] (4:26:42 - 4:26:53)

Transform to have... Either to join with the source or to go through further experiences of awakening.

[Speaker 2] (4:26:55 - 4:26:58)

In ways that our mind cannot even comprehend.

[Speaker 1] (4:26:58 - 4:26:58)

No. Okay.

[Speaker 2] (4:27:00 - 4:27:25)

Before we say goodbye, I want to thank all of you around the world for making this remarkable experience possible. Eckhart and I will be here again next Monday at 8 p.m. Central. This third class will be available on demand tomorrow for free here at Oprah.com.

And if you want to download a podcast of any of our three classes, you can do that tomorrow at Oprah.com and iTunes. So what did you want to say in conclusion about the core of the ego?

[Speaker 1] (4:27:27 - 4:28:57)

The core of the ego. The ego, sometimes we look at it as if it were an entity. But really, it's just a form of unconsciousness.

It appears to be an entity sometimes. It is not threatening. Never regarded as an enemy or something that you need to get rid of.

It's only to be recognized for what it is. And then the ego has fulfilled its purpose. It has taken you to that point of awakening.

So in order to awaken, humans were in the state of oneness with the source when they first came here. And then they lost themselves. They lost themselves in thinking.

They lost themselves in the mind. They lost themselves in the ego. And then they reached the stage where this state of being lost produces so much suffering that this dream of life becomes a nightmare and they start waking up in this stage that we have reached now.

So as we wake up, we regain the state that we once had that we lost the state of oneness with life. So we're waking up now. Oneness with the source.

But when we regain it, we regain it at a deeper level because we are conscious of it now.

Wonderful. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (4:28:58 - 4:30:23)

Can't wait till next week because, you know, this week we're talking about all the things that form the core of the ego, how the ego loves to complain and it loves to be right and it loves drama and all of that. Next week, we talk about role playing all the many faces of the ego, how so many of us believe that we are the roles that we play. That's next week.

Thanks, everybody. Another night. Welcome, everybody, to week number four of our New Earth web class.

Thank you again for joining us as we come together to study and to discuss our 61st book club selection, Eckhart Tolle's A New Earth. I am just so happy that so many of you around the world are making time. You're giving time to yourself every week to be awakened.

And we're all doing this together. It is really my deepest hope that our collective consciousness will begin to create a powerful transformation, not only in our individual lives, but in the future of our planet. So welcome to you all.

And welcome, sir.

[Speaker 1] (4:30:23 - 4:30:24)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (4:30:24 - 4:30:26)

Yes. A good week for you?

[Speaker 1] (4:30:26 - 4:30:27)

Yes. Very good. Thanks.

[Speaker 2] (4:30:27 - 4:30:31)

Very good. So let's do what we've now started as a tradition.

[Speaker 1] (4:30:31 - 4:31:35)

A moment of silence. Yes. And the question is where to put our attention.

And this time, I suggest we put our attention into the feeling of aliveness within what I call the inner body, to feel that there's actually life inside your hands. A good place to start is always with the hands to feel, yes, I can feel somehow that there is an aliveness in here. The cells are alive.

And that's the beginning of feeling, being able to feel the entire inner body, the energy field as a global sense of aliveness. And just put our attention there rather than have it in the head. And then we can enter actual stillness.

Because stillness doesn't happen until the mind becomes still. Usually the mind doesn't stop until you take attention away from it and put it somewhere else. So we are putting attention into the body.

And so we can go into stillness just for half a minute or so.

[Speaker 2] (4:32:12 - 4:32:24)

Thank you. Let us begin here on Chapter 4, which is a very long chapter. When you wrote this, you must have been at it for a while.

[Speaker 1] (4:32:24 - 4:32:32)

Yes. And in a way, it reflects all the main themes in the book that are actually already contained in that chapter. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (4:32:33 - 4:33:37)

The chapter is called Roleplaying the Many Faces of the Ego. So before we really begin, I'd like to take a moment and talk about one of the most frequently asked questions that we receive by far. So many people who are committed to the book and becoming aware of a new way of thinking, a new way of consciousness, want to know how they can relate to people in their lives who are not yet on this path and don't think they need to be.

Sometimes it's a co-worker or a friend or even a spouse, you all have said to us on many of your emails, and it can feel very divisive. And we got an email from a gentleman who says, listen, my wife isn't interested in this. I don't know what's going to happen to our relationship.

So that question actually came up as one of the last questions from Qatar, the very first session that we had. But it's an ongoing question that a lot of people, the more they become engaged in the book, are feeling and wanted your response to.

[Speaker 1] (4:33:38 - 4:35:31)

Yes. The main thing is that the shift can only happen inside you. So not to expect other people to also change or to expect or say, I cannot change unless somebody close to me also changes.

The main thing is to take responsibility for your own state of consciousness and allow other people, especially people that you are close to, to be where they are. Not to demand that because something is happening inside you and you are beginning to change, not to demand that others should also change. Change does not come about in others by trying to make them change.

The most powerful way of bringing about change in others is not trying to bring about change in the other, but to completely accept the other as he or she is. So that is absolutely vital. There are even schools of psychotherapy that recognize that.

So you give the other person complete acceptance. And that's part of this change that's happening in us is that we step out of the judgmental mind that continuously judges the other. So we step out of that.

And if we step out of the judgmental mind, we are able to simply accept your partner, a close friend, a family member, a relative. This is where they are at right now. They are still going through their old behavior patterns.

What has changed is you are no longer resisting their pattern and reacting to, and by reacting, reinforcing their pattern. That's right. That's right.

So you're not taking part in that game anymore.

[Speaker 2] (4:35:31 - 4:35:45)

So part of your change has to be your willingness not to judge, you know, to sit back and to be an observer in your own life and then to more clearly see the ego in others as you also see it in yourself.

[Speaker 1] (4:35:45 - 4:35:45)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (4:35:45 - 4:35:46)

Don't judge it.

[Speaker 1] (4:35:47 - 4:35:47)

No.

[Speaker 2] (4:35:47 - 4:35:49)

Just know that that's what it is.

[Speaker 1] (4:35:49 - 4:36:14)

Yes. And don't mistake what you're observing, the behavior that people manifest. As them.

That's not who they are. Aye, aye, aye. And that's a vital distinction, because if you mistake that for who they are, then you will perpetuate that kind of behavior.

So that's not, it won't work. Acceptance is vital. Acceptance.

[Speaker 2] (4:36:14 - 4:36:37)

And isn't it sort of like, I mean, all of you who've asked that question, it's kind of like when people join the church or are, quote, born again, or, you know, we've heard about being born again in the church or you find Jesus or you find Buddha or you discover a new way of being for yourself. And now you want everybody to go to Jesus. And you want everybody to believe what you believe.

[Speaker 1] (4:36:37 - 4:36:37)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (4:36:37 - 4:36:41)

That is part of your ego that now wants people to believe what you believe.

[Speaker 1] (4:36:41 - 4:37:05)

Yes. And so that's a trap one can fall into, even with this teaching, which isn't really based on belief at all. So it's not a new belief.

We're not trying to find some new belief. It's going beyond the thinking mind into awareness. But there is always the danger when you discover something new that you want to talk about it to others.

[Speaker 2] (4:37:05 - 4:37:11)

You want to share it with everybody. Well, that's how we ended up with this webcast, because I wanted to share it with other people.

[Speaker 1] (4:37:11 - 4:37:37)

And sometimes it works, because sometimes the other person is totally ready and receptive and say, wow, I never realized that. But they recognize it from within because the readiness is there. Right.

But the readiness is not there in everybody. So some people buy copies of The New Earth or The Power of Now for their friends or relatives and then give them out. And sometimes they are disappointed when the other person says, doesn't make sense to me at all.

[Speaker 2] (4:37:37 - 4:37:37)

Doesn't make sense to me, yeah.

[Speaker 1] (4:37:37 - 4:37:44)

It means they're not yet ready. And that's fine. Maybe they put it on the shelf and maybe 10 years later they're ready.

It's quite possible.

[Speaker 2] (4:37:45 - 4:39:32)

Absolutely. Absolutely. So now for class number, I want to get that question out because it comes up over and over and over again on our message board.

So now we're ready for class number four. Tonight, we're going deeper into identifying the ego in all of its forms. Chapter four, role playing and the many faces of our ego.

Let me start by saying that I think the essence, it's a long chapter. So we have a lot to cover in a short period of time, these 90 minutes. But I think that the essence of this chapter is what you say on page 104, everybody, that you are a human being.

What does that mean? Mastery of life is not a question of control, but of finding a balance between human and being. Mother, father, husband, wife, young, old, all roles that you play, the functions you fulfill, whatever you do, all that belongs to the human dimension.

It has its place and needs to be honored, but in itself, it is not enough for a fulfilled, truly meaningful relationship or life. Human alone is never enough, no matter how hard you try or what you achieve. I just love that sentence.

I loved it so much, I wrote, wow. See, I wrote, wow. Human alone is never enough, no matter how hard you try or what you achieve.

Then there is being. It is found in the still, alert presence of consciousness itself. The consciousness that you are.

Human is form, being is formless. Human and being are not separate, but interwoven. That's the essence, to me, of this chapter.

[Speaker 1] (4:39:32 - 4:39:46)

Yes, and one could say the essence of the whole teaching, in a way, is one way of putting it. And of course, human alone is never enough, no matter how hard you try or what you achieve.

[Speaker 2] (4:39:46 - 4:39:54)

And that is the essence of why people are in such suffering and such struggle and such angst against themselves in life, is it not?

[Speaker 1] (4:39:55 - 4:41:00)

And it's why they play roles, because the ego plays roles, because there's unawareness that within you, there is the source of all power. So people who are out of touch with the power within or the place where all power resides, the aliveness itself, consciousness itself, then they feel a sense of lack. Why are they not in touch with it?

Because they are not present. They're not in the present moment, because the present moment is the entry point into that place of power within. If you're not present, you don't realize that there is a source of power within.

And then you believe that you need to get secondary power from someone or some situation or other people. Then the ego plays roles to manipulate the environment and other people to get what it thinks it needs, not realizing that all the things that it thinks will give it the power that it seems to lack, all that is already within you if you could only be present in the now. WINFREY OFFERS I got it.

[Speaker 2] (4:41:01 - 4:41:09)

Okay. So the question is how not to lose ourselves in the human dimension, how not to, by being present in the now.

[Speaker 1] (4:41:09 - 4:41:16)

Yes. And by realizing that whenever you lose yourself... In the human dimension.

In the human...

[Speaker 2] (4:41:16 - 4:41:19)

That's all the stuff that being human brings with it.

[Speaker 1] (4:41:19 - 4:41:47)

Yes. On the most primordial level, losing oneself means losing oneself in that continuous stream of thinking that goes through people's heads. So it drags you along.

It takes all your conscious attention. Remember, we started today with taking attention away from mind and putting it into the body. Right.

Another thing you can do is take attention away from thinking and put it into sense perceptions and really look and listen and touch things so like an alertness arises.

[Speaker 2] (4:41:47 - 4:42:10)

You know what I found by doing this? I don't know about all the rest of you, but I have found by being more present, just doing that one exercise, putting yourself, if I'm walking along a path in the woods near my house, be there and not be, you know, in my head thinking about what I need to do, just to be there. And what I found is, I don't know if you all are realizing this too, you are just less stressed.

[Speaker 1] (4:42:10 - 4:42:28)

Less stressed. You're just less stressed. You're calmer.

Yes. And you don't carry the heavy burden of a personality or me with a burden of past and future, my problematic future, my problematic past. You're much more, you're light and free when you walk in presence.

[Speaker 2] (4:42:28 - 4:42:37)

Okay, but my hairdresser, Andre, asked me this this morning, so I'm going to ask you, then how do you ever plan for anything if you're not thinking about the future? How do you ever get anything done?

[Speaker 1] (4:42:38 - 4:42:48)

You plan in the present moment when the time comes to plan and the time is not when you're walking in the woods. And when you're walking in the woods, the time is to be present. Unless you want to go to the woods to plan.

[Speaker 2] (4:42:49 - 4:42:50)

You could go to the woods to plan.

[Speaker 1] (4:42:51 - 4:43:17)

Yes, you could. But it's much more likely that your planning is going to be fruitful if it is preceded by a period of presence and stillness. All right.

Any mind activity is much more likely to be beneficial and to be creative if it's preceded by presence and stillness. And then you apply the mind and say, okay, what do I have to do today? And then you make a list.

[Speaker 2] (4:43:17 - 4:43:25)

So if you're going to be in the future, do that as a concentrated event or experience.

[Speaker 1] (4:43:25 - 4:43:25)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (4:43:25 - 4:43:27)

Say, now I'm going to sit and plan.

[Speaker 1] (4:43:27 - 4:44:03)

Yes. And don't think about tomorrow. Once you've done that, then you know this is what I have to do so that you're not continuously in the next moment.

You don't project yourself. You play mental movies about what you're going to say when that situation arises. So you can, you trust in life that whatever it is that you need when the future comes will be there.

So that's the, as far as practical matters are concerned, future is simply something that you use like I call it a clock time. You make an appointment for tomorrow.

[Speaker 2] (4:44:05 - 4:44:07)

And you deal with tomorrow, tomorrow.

[Speaker 1] (4:44:07 - 4:44:17)

Yes. So you don't continuously project yourself away from the now to some future believing that it's more important, going to be more important than the now. It's not.

[Speaker 2] (4:44:17 - 4:44:26)

Because what you say on page 122, anybody who is one with what he or she does is building the new earth.

[Speaker 1] (4:44:26 - 4:44:57)

Yes. That's how you do it. Being one with what you're doing means being total in what you do so that the main focus of your attention is not where you want to get to.

You know where you want to get to. Right. But the main focus of your attention is on the actual doing now.

So this is what, the energy flows fully into this. The energy doesn't, is not diverted from what you're doing now through mental dysfunction because you're wanting to get there because then whatever you're doing will be stressful.

[Speaker 2] (4:44:58 - 4:45:01)

Because whatever you give your 100% attention to is going to be better anyway.

[Speaker 1] (4:45:02 - 4:45:02)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (4:45:02 - 4:45:03)

Absolutely.

[Speaker 1] (4:45:03 - 4:45:31)

There was a Zen master, he was watching somebody in a competition, archery, and a man was trying very hard to win this competition, but he just couldn't make it. And then somebody asked the Zen master, what's he doing wrong? And the Zen master said, his need to win drains him of power.

Wow. And so his need to win is some future, he wants to have some future moment where he's going to be fulfilled.

[Speaker 24] (4:45:31 - 4:45:31)

Wow.

[Speaker 1] (4:45:32 - 4:45:57)

So his attention is not totally in the now. So the now where all power resides, this power that resides in the now cannot flow then into what you're doing. The openness isn't there.

Because to have mastery in any endeavor, whatever it is, you need to be total in what you do. That's what athletes know. The great ones know.

And then when they enter that, they call it the zone.

[Speaker 2] (4:45:57 - 4:46:10)

Yeah. There was this great article this week, as a matter of fact, those of you saw it on Tiger Woods in USA Today, saying that he's perhaps the greatest athlete of all times, because that's what he knows how to do, is to focus and be 100% present.

[Speaker 1] (4:46:11 - 4:46:11)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (4:46:11 - 4:46:12)

It's just him and that ball.

[Speaker 1] (4:46:13 - 4:46:13)

Absolutely.

[Speaker 2] (4:46:13 - 4:46:14)

Yeah. Yes.

[Speaker 24] (4:46:14 - 4:46:14)

Of course.

[Speaker 1] (4:46:14 - 4:46:15)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (4:46:15 - 4:47:05)

Okay. So another question that was on the message boards a lot, last week when Kadada from California called, and was saying, was on Skype, and she was saying that as a young person, she's thinking about the future and thinking about wanting to have a career and husband and so forth. I think a lot of people felt unsatisfied by your response.

I've heard that a lot of people were like, I feel the same way Kadada feels. A lot of people are wondering where the passion goes, where the ambition goes, and how you can relate passion and ambition, which is what I think Kadada was saying, with this new awakening. So do we now just, we're just all so awakened and that we become passive people?

[Speaker 1] (4:47:05 - 4:48:32)

No, the passion is much greater when you are totally focused on what you're doing now. The passion will become stress. The more you're focused on where you want to get to, the more the passion will degenerate into stress.

You may still have a high energy, but there's a lot of negative energy that comes in. So if you want to remain truly in your power, then you need to be total, and that applies to the smallest thing that you do during the day, because even great endeavors consist of small steps, even the greatest thing. You are doing wonderful work, but every day that you spend consists of small steps.

You arrive in the studio, you get dressed, you get ready, you speak one sentence at a time. It all consists of, and one needs to be present as you are, that's where the power comes from, every moment, and not look to some future moment that promises some kind of greater fulfillment. That is the delusion.

It does not mean that you don't have a plan. You can plan, I want to achieve, I want to build up a business, I want to do this or that, but the main focus must be in the doing, and if the main focus is in the doing now, that's the passion is there, and the deep enjoyment is there, and an intensity of energy. An intensity of energy.

Now people often...

[Speaker 2] (4:48:32 - 4:48:35)

Say that again what the Zen master said, that his desire to win...

[Speaker 1] (4:48:35 - 4:48:38)

His desire to win drains him of power.

[Speaker 2] (4:48:38 - 4:48:39)

Desire to win drains him of power.

[Speaker 1] (4:48:39 - 4:48:48)

His need to win drains him of power. Power. So the...

I'm writing that down. Being, yeah, that's the being present.

[Speaker 2] (4:48:49 - 4:48:52)

You just focused on whatever is necessary in that moment.

[Speaker 1] (4:48:53 - 4:48:53)

In that moment.

[Speaker 2] (4:48:53 - 4:48:56)

I'm sure that struck a lot of people that Zen master quote.

[Speaker 1] (4:48:56 - 4:48:56)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (4:48:57 - 4:49:09)

Because you're so... You gotta win, you gotta make it, you gotta succeed, you gotta, gotta, gotta, and that's draining energy from you. Instead, we should be focused on this moment, this step, and then the next step, and then the next step.

[Speaker 1] (4:49:09 - 4:50:10)

That's right. Now you may win if you try very hard or very stressed. Occasionally it happens that you do win, but it's not really worth it because you get more and more depleted, and after a while you lose the joy of life.

If you spend five years of stress and finally you achieve what you wanted, is that worth it? Right. Enjoyment is very important.

Am I losing? Is there joy in what I'm doing? Is there an aliveness and intensity?

That's the question. People believe sometimes high energy in our civilization, when there's high energy in what you do, often people believe there must be stress. They cannot imagine high energy in what you do without stress.

That's how we are conditioned because we're always conditioned to look to the next thing, but there is a much more powerful state of high energy and intensity of energy.

[Speaker 2] (4:50:10 - 4:50:12)

I was going to say where the energy is intense and focused.

[Speaker 1] (4:50:12 - 4:50:14)

No, no stress at all. No stress at all.

[Speaker 2] (4:50:15 - 4:50:26)

Well, let's go to our New Earth Study Group watching our webcast at Borders on Michigan Avenue. Hello in Chicago. Hi everybody.

Hi again. All right, Shireen has a question. Hello, Shireen.

[Speaker 17] (4:50:27 - 4:50:48)

Hi, Oprah. Hi, Eckhart. We're thrilled to be here.

My question is for you, Eckhart. You say on page 126 that constant alertness is required to not let the ego take it over. And I was wondering, are you in a constant alertness yourself and do you ever struggle staying alert?

[Speaker 1] (4:50:50 - 4:51:35)

I'm usually present in the now. The intensity varies according to the situation. If I'm just sitting alone at home, there's just a background of stillness and there may be thoughts arising.

I may be doing this or that. So, and then if a situation arises, the more challenging the situation is, the stronger the sense of presence that arises. That's a strange thing.

I realized that the first time when after this, I underwent this shift. I was actually in a cinema and I was watching a film. It was a Japanese film about the end of the world.

And I saw all these things. Everything was going up in flames. This is on the film?

In the film.

[Speaker 28] (4:51:35 - 4:51:35)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (4:51:35 - 4:53:46)

And I suddenly found, I was becoming more and more peaceful and present inside. Those intensity of aliveness as if inside something was saying inside me, there is no death. There is, but that's an interpretation.

Really, for the first time, I realized when things go wrong outside, presence intensifies. Everything is fine. There's just a background of presence.

And that's wonderful. Because then the challenges that come into your life, two things can happen when a challenging situation or challenging person comes into your life. Either the challenge drags you into old conditioned ego reactions.

Right. For example, an angry person provokes an angry reaction in you. So this means the other person or the situation drags you to their level of consciousness or unconsciousness.

That's one thing that can happen. The other possibility is that any challenge wakes you up more. So you become more intensely present when there's a challenging situation.

And even let's just look at a very simple situation. It's not really challenging, but for some people it is. You're sitting in a traffic jam.

It's not moving. You have to get somewhere, but it's not moving. So many people would go into negativity at that point.

They get stressed. They get upset. The body gets tense.

So that situation, then you react in the old way. And perhaps a few minutes ago, you were at home very still and present, and it felt good. And you were looking at the tree in the glass.

You get in the car. And the moment the first challenge happens in, it can drag you down into unconsciousness. But there's another possibility.

You can be alert and see and recognize that situation as the first challenge of the day. And then you say, OK, here I can either go into a reaction or I can go into more presence. And suddenly you're in the same situation.

Nothing is moving. Fumes, cars. And suddenly you become actually completely present in that situation.

[Speaker 2] (4:53:46 - 4:53:55)

There's an exercise, Shireen, in the workbook that we have for this chapter where we talk about being, there's two, the transparency.

[Speaker 1] (4:53:55 - 4:57:10)

Can you describe that? Becoming transparent. Yes.

When you react against a situation, whatever it is, something irritating. It could be somebody screaming, children screaming, an irritating noise. And when that happens, it's almost as if you were a wall and whatever the irritations were hitting this wall inside you.

And it hurts because something inside you gets hit. Now, as a practice, what you can do is imagine yourself being transparent. So what before was hitting this wall inside you and that was painful.

That was the resistance that this shouldn't be happening. That's painful. Now, imagine yourself being transparent and the irritating thing passes through you.

You can do it. I mean, for example, one of the most irritating noises is perhaps a drill that goes. Yes.

They break up the road. And so practice with that. Become transparent to that.

Feel the noise passing through you. It's wonderful. And suddenly, in the very same situation that before would have provoked a negative reaction in you, you actually become more present and more peaceful.

So the very thing that would have made you react now makes you more present. Makes you more present. Also, you talk about the deep lake, the deep lake effect.

Would you describe that? Yes. So the lake, if you imagine a vast lake, the surface of the lake changes all the time according to the weather, according to the wind.

Sometimes it's rough. Sometimes it's very still. But even when it's rough, if you imagine you are the lake and whatever happens in your life, the external situations of your life are the surface of the lake.

External situations change continuously. Sometimes it's rough. Sometimes it's fine.

It's very still. But no matter, even if they are rough, the surface, the depth of the lake remains always undisturbed. And you are the lake in its depth.

So your external life is the surface of things. Surface reality. Your ego.

Ego for the world of form and included in the surface reality is even all your thoughts. Right. Because what we are talking about as the inner depth is deeper than your thoughts and your emotions.

And your presence is the bottom of the lake. Is the lake. Is the full lake.

And it's wonderful when you begin to realize that your inner state is no longer dependent on and determined by... What's going on the surface. Yes.

Got it. And that's incredible freedom. That's true freedom.

Yes. You can arrive at that place even if you are in a prison cell. And I've had letters from prison.

People have written to me and said, We are free. I am free. I have found that place where my inner state is no longer dependent on what's happening outside.

Of course, the prisoner would still prefer to be outside on that level. Fine. But deep down, there is freedom from external conditions.

[Speaker 2] (4:57:11 - 4:57:13)

Because you are connected to the beingness of yourself.

[Speaker 1] (4:57:14 - 4:57:14)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (4:57:14 - 4:57:15)

The consciousness of yourself.

[Speaker 1] (4:57:16 - 4:57:16)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (4:57:16 - 4:57:21)

And you can use the word being. You can use the word consciousness. You can use the word...

A lot of people use the word soul.

[Speaker 1] (4:57:21 - 4:57:22)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (4:57:22 - 4:57:23)

Or inner being.

[Speaker 1] (4:57:24 - 4:57:24)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (4:57:24 - 4:57:59)

Higher self. The word doesn't matter. No.

The word doesn't matter. Thank you, Shireen and everybody at Borders. Thank you.

Thank you very much. Very alert. So let's get into this chapter.

You say that we can assume that the ego is at play whenever we feel superior or inferior to anyone else. Now, I know this is true. When you see the person who's the biggest jerk out there, you know, people who act with such a sense of superiority and arrogance, I know that that is because they are really feeling inferior.

But still hard to deal with.

[Speaker 1] (4:57:59 - 4:58:00)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (4:58:00 - 4:58:14)

But what surprised me is that you say that often people who are also shy are also acting out of their egos. And you say whenever you feel superior or inferior to anyone, that's the ego in you.

[Speaker 1] (4:58:14 - 4:58:27)

Why is that? Well, if you're shy, then what you fear is to be found wanting. But so you're not.

[Speaker 2] (4:58:28 - 4:58:31)

The fear is that the attention may take the form of disapproval or criticism.

[Speaker 1] (4:58:31 - 4:59:08)

Yes. You're afraid of that. So because you're afraid of that, whatever the disapproval or the criticism would represent an injury of your mentally mind made sense of self, which is the ego.

So it was the image that I have of myself as a capable person or whatever it is that I'm trying to uphold. If I encounter criticism, the ego immediately will be hurt. And so a shy person would not dare say anything because they're afraid of ego loss.

Afraid of ego loss.

[Speaker 2] (4:59:08 - 4:59:09)

Got it.

[Speaker 1] (4:59:10 - 4:59:43)

And so because sometimes that's mistaken for an egoless person, a person who's very... It's not. And deep down inside the shy person or a person who is suffering from this sense of inferiority, there's the desire, the unexpressed desire to be superior.

And inside the person who acts superior, who seems to have a big confident ego, there's always the hidden fear that he might be inferior. And his whole acting out is to compensate for that hidden fear of being inferior. Okay.

[Speaker 2] (4:59:44 - 4:59:47)

Behind every positive self-concept is the hidden fear of not being good enough?

[Speaker 1] (4:59:48 - 4:59:48)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (4:59:48 - 5:00:00)

Behind every negative self-concept is the hidden desire of being the greatest or better than others? Yes. And where does self-esteem fit into all of that?

Where is real self-esteem? What would true self-esteem look like?

[Speaker 1] (5:00:00 - 5:01:12)

Well, first there is the ego self-esteem, which is really... Even if you have high ego self-esteem, as we've just seen, there's always hidden fear underneath it. It's always there to compensate for that fear that you feel of not being good enough, of perhaps failing.

So you need to play a role of being big to compensate for the fear of failure that's deep down. But that's usually the world calls that... The world would say he or she has high self-esteem, people who have big egos.

But the world doesn't realize that that's not true self-esteem. True self-esteem goes much deeper. It's finding the source of power and aliveness deep inside.

We talked about the lake. Realizing that within the depth of your being, there is that continuous source of intense aliveness and power, which is the stillness out of which everything comes. The potential, the unexpressed potential for all form, is there within every human being.

You just have to become still.

[Speaker 2] (5:01:13 - 5:01:17)

So true self-esteem is realizing that that sense of being, that presence is there.

[Speaker 1] (5:01:17 - 5:01:19)

It comes out of the stillness.

[Speaker 2] (5:01:19 - 5:01:23)

That it comes out of the stillness. And that presence in me is the same as the presence in all people.

[Speaker 1] (5:01:24 - 5:01:24)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (5:01:24 - 5:01:31)

And when you recognize that and act from that space within yourself, that is when you have true self-esteem.

[Speaker 1] (5:01:31 - 5:01:38)

That's true self-esteem. And self-esteem then is no longer derived from the belief that you are better than somebody else.

[Speaker 2] (5:01:39 - 5:01:47)

And so you are not attached to the labels or the roles that you play. And you speak about the many various roles that everybody has.

[Speaker 1] (5:01:47 - 5:02:01)

Yes. And then you're no longer devastated by criticism or get very angry when you're criticized, as the ego does. The ego is either totally devastated when you get, or it gets very angry when it gets criticized, the self-image.

[Speaker 2] (5:02:01 - 5:02:14)

You know, there's a role that most women in our society, in all societies play, is that role of mother, which is more than just a role. I mean, it's real. It's not just a role.

[Speaker 1] (5:02:14 - 5:03:01)

Yes. So we need to differentiate between the function that you need to fulfill in this world for a while. Right.

So if you have a child, your function is to be the mother and to fulfill the function of being the mother, which, of course, is looking after the child, sometimes set limits, what the child is allowed to do, and so on. That's all fine. Now, if you become too identified with your function, then the function turns into a role.

And then you cannot let go of the role, and that gets stuck to you. And even when the child grows up, and especially becomes a teenager, you still behave as if your child were small, and you still try to control and try to protect when it's no longer appropriate.

[Speaker 2] (5:03:01 - 5:03:02)

I got it.

[Speaker 1] (5:03:02 - 5:03:14)

Because you're stuck with the role then. Uh-huh. So sometimes when the children become adults, the adult children are still treated by their parents, parents who are stuck in the role of parent.

[Speaker 2] (5:03:14 - 5:03:15)

They can't let go of the role.

[Speaker 1] (5:03:15 - 5:03:23)

Yes, so they believe unconsciously that they need to continue to protect and ultimately control what the child does.

[Speaker 2] (5:03:23 - 5:03:25)

Because you don't parent a child the same at every age.

[Speaker 1] (5:03:26 - 5:03:26)

No.

[Speaker 2] (5:03:26 - 5:03:38)

Absolutely. Yeah. And so they've lost sight of the function that they had as mother to be guide, and to direct, and to correct, and to help, and to protect, right?

[Speaker 1] (5:03:39 - 5:03:39)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (5:03:39 - 5:03:41)

And they want to carry that into the future.

[Speaker 1] (5:03:41 - 5:03:42)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (5:03:42 - 5:03:43)

Because they are attached to the role.

[Speaker 1] (5:03:43 - 5:04:14)

Yes. Okay. And it's not only when the children grow up.

Even when the children already are still small, if you are completely identified with this role of mother, then also it can become obsessive. So you might become too controlling or overprotective. Certain functions become overemphasized.

You go too far in fulfilling these functions. So what was good initially is looking after the child, protecting the child can become too much.

[Speaker 2] (5:04:15 - 5:04:19)

I got it. I got it. Tonight, actress Jenny McCarthy is joining us.

[Speaker 1] (5:04:19 - 5:04:19)

Ah.

[Speaker 2] (5:04:19 - 5:04:21)

Yeah, via Skype. Hey, Jenny.

[Speaker 28] (5:04:22 - 5:04:23)

Hi.

[Speaker 2] (5:04:23 - 5:05:02)

How are you? Do you know that when I was reading this book, Jenny, when I was reading my book, here it is. My book's all kind of torn up now.

When I was reading this book on page 104, I wrote, when I read, as you look at, listen to, touch, or help your child with this or that, you are alert, still completely present, not wanting anything other than that moment as it is. In this way, you make room for being.

In that moment, you're present.

You're not a father or mother. You are the alertness, the stillness. You are the being behind the doing.

I wrote Jenny McCarthy because that reminded me so much of what you had said about your function as a mother.

[Speaker 9] (5:05:03 - 5:06:41)

Yes, absolutely. You know, I read this book when it first came out, and that was one of my big wake-up calls, realizing that when I was with Evan, all I needed to do was just be with Evan. And our relationship bloomed.

Like, you wouldn't believe, the love connection was there. He was getting fulfilled because he knew, even when Evan wasn't able to speak, this was when Evan still wasn't able to use words, energetically, he felt that I was with him, that I was being with him. And I'm so grateful, Eckhart, that you taught me that.

Yes. So did you have a question, or do you- I do. I do have a question.

Okay, it's long, so bear with me. It's not that long, but bear with me. One very common emotion that I have personally experienced, and that I have seen in many mothers, is this emotion called guilt.

Mothers today experience a few different forms of guilt, and I'm going to explain three different versions, where I'm sure moms listening right now, one of them will say, that's my guilt. Yeah. The first one is the nine-to-five working mom feels guilty for leaving her baby with the nanny all day.

The second one is the stay-at-home mom feels guilty for getting bored playing with her, you know, her son or daughter all day long. And sometimes you can only play choo-choo so long, and you can't do it anymore, and you feel guilty for not wanting to do that. And the third and last one being, and this one I can really connect to, the thousands of mothers I've met who have children with autism carry a huge amount of guilt with them.

[Speaker 2] (5:06:43 - 5:06:50)

It's hard for me to get out, sorry. Take your time.

[Speaker 9] (5:06:54 - 5:07:16)

I haven't cried yet in one interview, so I'm sorry, but a huge amount of guilt that it's in some way their fault, our fault that our child became autistic. So my question is, can you offer some insight as to how we can look at things differently from a different perspective and how to alleviate this guilt that we carry as mothers?

[Speaker 2] (5:07:17 - 5:07:29)

Nine-to-five guilt, choo-choo guilt, and feeling guilty because your child has autism or whatever your child has, and that you are somehow responsible.

[Speaker 1] (5:07:29 - 5:07:29)

Thanks, Jenny.

[Speaker 2] (5:07:30 - 5:07:31)

That was so well said.

[Speaker 1] (5:07:31 - 5:08:05)

Thank you. Thank you. Before I say anything, I read your book, while it was still in manuscript form.

You gave it to me, and I was very impressed by what you did with your child, the courage that you had, where other people would have succumbed and fallen into negativity or self-pity. You were able to turn it all around and make it into something very positive, at the same time helping many other people, not helping your child, but helping many other people.

[Speaker 28] (5:08:06 - 5:08:07)

Thank you, Eckhart.

[Speaker 1] (5:08:07 - 5:11:04)

You still feel guilty, of course. That's the structure. Even after all this wonderful work that you have done with your son, it's amazing, isn't it, that there are certain structures in the human mind that operate, no matter how much good you do, they carry the structures, carry on playing themselves out, and they are part of the, what I call, not the content of the ego, but the structure of the ego.

Nobody could have done a better job than you with your boy, in addition, helping many others, writing that book, and yet you feel guilty. It's not that you feel guilty. There's a certain structure in their thought processes that produces the feeling of guilt.

And the other two examples that you gave, there's the mother that has a job, nine to five, the child is with a nanny, and the mother feels guilty about that, cannot accept that this is how it is, and the other mother is at home, playing with the child, feels guilty about not doing more in the world. Whatever it is, if you don't tackle the, recognize the structure in your mind for what it is, then you will always believe that the answer to solving this question lies in the realm of content. In other words, content is the situation.

So if I change the situation, perhaps I won't feel guilty anymore. Then this would be, if you think that this so-called problem is not a real problem, it's a mind-created problem, if you believe that this problem can be solved on an external level by changing something that you do, it will not, because no matter what situation you go into, the guilt will come back. Because in this world you are limited, you can't do everything.

You either do this, or you do that, but you cannot be both at home and at work at the same time. So the mind, no matter what situation you go into, will bring up the same structures. So unless you're very alert and you recognize that these are egoic mind structures, nothing to do with content, then you realize that what the ego, one of the jobs of the ego is to blame others.

Another job of the ego is to make yourself feel guilty. Both of these things strengthen your sense of identity, their negative senses of identity. And the ego loves to have a strong sense of identity, and no sense of identity is stronger than a negative one, where you condemn yourself for something.

And you can see, from an objectively speaking, it doesn't make sense to feel guilty in your case and in many other people's cases.

[Speaker 2] (5:11:04 - 5:11:15)

Yes, because if you have to work 9 to 5 to provide for your child, and make, you know, a safe home for your child, and food on the table for your child, you're doing the best you can.

[Speaker 1] (5:11:15 - 5:11:57)

You're doing the best you can. And your mind doesn't, your mind works according to its old conditioning. So recognize, when those thoughts come, recognize that these are not actual valid thoughts that actually concern a true situation.

They are thoughts generated by the ego. And if you can recognize them as thoughts generated by the ego, structural, not content-based, then in the moment of recognition, they begin to lose their power over you. And they will try to come in.

It's not you can't do it just for once. They will try to come in the next day.

[Speaker 2] (5:11:58 - 5:12:31)

Because you, Jenny, wrote that book. Obviously, I read the book, too, because you were here and shared the book, you know, with our audience. You, you know, refused to take no for an answer.

You fought for Evan. You did the best you knew how to do. And when you didn't know, you sought other answers to figure out the best to do.

So there is a part of you, the part of you that is really you, right, Eckhart? That knows that. Yes.

True, true, Jenny. True. Absolutely.

And that little crazy talk in your head is just that, crazy talk in your head.

[Speaker 1] (5:12:32 - 5:12:35)

That's the correct expression. Yeah, that crazy talk in your head.

[Speaker 9] (5:12:36 - 5:12:44)

It really, I just had a huge awakening moment when he said that within me. So I get it. Absolutely.

Yeah. That's a wow.

[Speaker 2] (5:12:45 - 5:12:47)

That's a wow. Thanks, Jenny.

[Speaker 9] (5:12:47 - 5:12:49)

That's a wow. Thank you both so much.

[Speaker 2] (5:12:49 - 5:12:51)

Say hello to my palsy-wowsy, Jim.

[Speaker 9] (5:12:52 - 5:12:53)

I will. He sends his love to you.

[Speaker 2] (5:12:53 - 5:13:09)

Yeah, he sent me flowers after he was on for Horton Hears Who and said... I know, I made him. Oh, you made him, okay.

His note said, from your palsy-wowsy. Okay, thanks. Thanks a lot.

Dion is calling now from Port of Spain, Trinidad. Dion, what's your question?

[Speaker 6] (5:13:10 - 5:13:13)

Hi, Oprah. Hi, Eckhart. Nice talking to you.

[Speaker 2] (5:13:13 - 5:13:14)

Nice talking to you. Thanks for having me on.

[Speaker 6] (5:13:15 - 5:13:33)

My question is, although I'm now aware of some of the roles that I've played, it's still really easy to slip back into them sometimes. And I'm at this stage where I recognize that I've been playing a role after the moment has passed. But I'd like to know how do I recognize it in the moment before it happens, especially in those unexpected moments?

[Speaker 2] (5:13:34 - 5:13:36)

About playing a role, did you say?

[Speaker 6] (5:13:37 - 5:13:38)

Yes. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (5:13:38 - 5:13:38)

Okay.

[Speaker 6] (5:13:38 - 5:13:46)

So sometimes I'm aware of a role, but I'm only aware after the moment has passed that I've slipped back into some of the roles that I've recognized.

[Speaker 28] (5:13:47 - 5:13:47)

Okay.

[Speaker 6] (5:13:47 - 5:13:54)

I'm just trying to figure out how do I stay in the moment and recognize the role before it happens so I don't slip back into the same role again.

[Speaker 28] (5:13:55 - 5:13:55)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (5:13:55 - 5:15:32)

Oh, yes. Well, this is a very common thing that happens to people as they grow in awareness. At first, the awareness does not reach the many of the conditioned behavior patterns.

The awareness at first, and this applies to many, many people, I've heard this so many times, people in whom the awareness begins to grow, this dimension that we call presence or awareness. At first, the awareness does not necessarily flow into all parts of their lives. There are certain behavior patterns that remain as they are, but the awareness comes in after they have happened.

So in this case, in an interaction that you have with other people, you play a certain conditioned role without knowing it. So you are the role. Yeah.

When it's over and you go away from that situation, suddenly you realize, oh dear, I did it again. I played that role again, whatever the role is. And that is how our awareness at first comes in, in many cases, after the event.

And retrospectively, the presence or the awareness recognizes the old pattern after it's happened. And what then tends to happen, and I believe this is going to happen to you because I've seen it in so many people, the time gap between the event and the awareness gets shorter. So what then happens is the old pattern operates still, you play the role, and immediately afterwards, afterwards you realize, oh, I played it again.

But there was virtually no time gap anymore. Immediately afterwards, you realize it.

[Speaker 2] (5:15:32 - 5:15:32)

That means you're awakening.

[Speaker 1] (5:15:33 - 5:15:33)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (5:15:33 - 5:15:37)

You get closer and closer, so the time gap is shorter and shorter.

[Speaker 1] (5:15:37 - 5:16:32)

The next step, the next thing that happens is in the middle of playing a role, you suddenly realize, oh, I'm playing that role again. So the awareness has come in, you're still doing it, but then you know that you're doing it. An enormous difference.

So you're not just playing the role, there is the other dimension comes in at the time of playing the role or whatever the behavior pattern may be, and you realize, I'm doing it again. And that's wonderful too. And the next step is, it's amazing, it's the same pattern as I've observed in thousands of people.

The next step is, just before you are about to enter into some condition pattern like role-playing, the awareness is there and you can feel the impulse inside you of wanting to play the role. And you can then say, I don't need to play that anymore.

[Speaker 2] (5:16:33 - 5:16:38)

OPRAH WINFREY Well, let's clarify what we mean by role-playing. Thank you so much, Dion. From Port of Spain, Trinidad.

[Speaker 1] (5:16:38 - 5:16:39)

DION ALMAER Thank you, thank you. OPRAH WINFREY Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (5:16:39 - 5:17:00)

Let's clarify what we mean by roles, because I think it's confusing to some people who say, well, listen, I am a doctor, I am a teacher, I am a lawyer, I am a store clerk, I am a that. Those are labels. And what is the difference between the job functions that we have and the so-called, and roles, you know?

[Speaker 1] (5:17:00 - 5:17:14)

And the roles that we play. DION ALMAER I met a woman, middle-aged, and she talked to me in a certain way. And I asked, are you a schoolteacher?

And she said, now, how did you know that I'm a schoolteacher?

[Speaker 21] (5:17:16 - 5:17:16)

OPRAH WINFREY She did that?

[Speaker 1] (5:17:16 - 5:17:44)

DION ALMAER So she was, because she had already, she talks to people as if she were talking to the children at school. OPRAH WINFREY Okay. DION ALMAER So and even when she said, how did you know?

She was pointing a finger. OPRAH WINFREY Okay, okay. DION ALMAER You naughty boy, how did you know that?

OPRAH WINFREY Yes, yes. DION ALMAER Of course, that's how I knew it, because she had become completely identified with her function. DION ALMAER So the role took her over.

She couldn't leave it, she couldn't leave her function behind after work. Even inside her family, she behaved like a teacher.

[Speaker 2] (5:17:45 - 5:17:50)

OPRAH WINFREY You say when you adjust the way you interact based upon who you're talking to, you're playing a role.

[Speaker 1] (5:17:50 - 5:18:00)

DION ALMAER Yes, that also. OPRAH WINFREY So do we talk to everyone the same? DION ALMAER No, most people, if they, but you need to have some power of self-observation, which is another word for awareness.

[Speaker 2] (5:18:00 - 5:18:04)

OPRAH WINFREY We talk to children differently. OPRAH WINFREY Friends differently than we do a head of state.

[Speaker 1] (5:18:04 - 5:18:25)

DION ALMAER Yes, or a so-called important person, and a so-called not important person. OPRAH WINFREY The janitor in a building different than you speak to your boss. DION ALMAER Yes, and this is very interesting to observe in oneself, because you need to observe it in yourself, otherwise you won't know that you're doing it, and you can only observe it in yourself if there's some awareness there that is outside of the role.

[Speaker 2] (5:18:25 - 5:19:17)

OPRAH WINFREY And is this why when you go to a party, or you're at an event, and you don't know people, the first thing they want to know is, a friend of mine, Marlene said to me, who is taking our class every week, hello Marlene, that she was at a gathering recently, and that she was trying to practice the principles of a new earth, and that she was introducing herself around the table, and she was doing that in such a way that she didn't talk about what she had done, or accomplished, or, you know, who she was married to, or where she lived, and that, you know, one of the people at the table said, well, we don't care about who you are, we want to know what you do, we want to know what do you do, and what I realized is, people want to know that so they can determine your so-called value, and to see if you will be of value,

[Speaker 1] (5:19:17 - 5:19:21)

or necessary for them

[Speaker 2] (5:19:21 - 5:19:23)

to play the role with you.

[Speaker 1] (5:19:23 - 5:19:34)

Yes, enhance their ego, or whether you might be a threat to their ego, whether they can use you, or whether they need to be afraid of you, or whether they want to have further contact.

[Speaker 2] (5:19:34 - 5:19:35)

Whether you fit in their circle.

[Speaker 1] (5:19:35 - 5:19:45)

Fit in, yes, and all these things, and then many judgments go through people's minds often when they meet somebody, and they're automatic, you observe whatever...

[Speaker 2] (5:19:45 - 5:19:55)

That is what people mean by what do you do, really, isn't it? For the most part, they want to say, what do you do, let me place it in terms of how valuable that's going to be to me.

[Speaker 1] (5:19:55 - 5:20:04)

Now, when you don't play roles anymore, you don't have to become strange, and then when you go to parties, and somebody asks you, what do you do? You say, I am.

[Speaker 2] (5:20:05 - 5:20:09)

Yes. I am, I am that I am.

[Speaker 1] (5:20:10 - 5:20:23)

That is all that I am. This is the basic truth, but you don't need to say that when you go to a party. You don't.

You can actually talk quite normally without being identified with what you say. If people ask me...

[Speaker 2] (5:20:23 - 5:20:39)

So that's the essence of what you're trying to say to us in this chapter, is that, of course, there are all roles that we are assigned, or labels that we use to identify ourself. What you're saying is, the problem is when you become completely identified with it.

[Speaker 1] (5:20:39 - 5:20:39)

Yes, yes.

[Speaker 2] (5:20:39 - 5:20:41)

And you think that is who you are.

[Speaker 1] (5:20:41 - 5:20:54)

Yes, and you behave and act as if that were who you are. So you get trapped inside that conditioned personality. And whatever you do, then this personality is acting out.

[Speaker 2] (5:20:54 - 5:21:03)

You mention in the book where you play the role of patient. And if you go to a doctor who's playing the role of doctor, he often doesn't see you, the person.

[Speaker 1] (5:21:03 - 5:21:22)

Yes. Because he's playing the role. Yes.

He has become so identified with his function that the function has taken him over and he has become a role. So, and many patients can actually feel that when they go to a doctor, whether there's a human being still there, or whether the doctor has become a role.

[Speaker 28] (5:21:23 - 5:21:23)

Absolutely.

[Speaker 1] (5:21:23 - 5:21:34)

And so when the doctor has become a role, when you go to that doctor, you don't feel acknowledged anymore in your beingness. You feel, he might be very competent as a doctor.

[Speaker 2] (5:21:34 - 5:21:35)

I know.

[Speaker 1] (5:21:35 - 5:21:45)

But something vital is lacking in the interaction when you see a doctor. He might be the greatest expert in his field. It still doesn't help.

Something very vital is missing.

[Speaker 2] (5:21:46 - 5:21:56)

And everybody- And you feel completely, that happened to me recently, where you feel completely dismissed and disconnected because you're thinking, he's just trying to get me out of here so he can get the next person in.

[Speaker 1] (5:21:56 - 5:21:56)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (5:21:56 - 5:21:57)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (5:21:57 - 5:22:01)

Now, if he does that to you, you can imagine what he does that to a normal person.

[Speaker 2] (5:22:01 - 5:22:11)

Yeah. Because usually people treat me pretty nice. But anyway, Dimitri is Skyping us from Moscow.

Hello.

[Speaker 11] (5:22:12 - 5:22:17)

Yes. Hi. Hello.

Hello. Hello. Hello.

Hi.

[Speaker 2] (5:22:18 - 5:22:20)

What time is it there? I'm always curious.

[Speaker 11] (5:22:21 - 5:22:24)

It's about 5 AM in the morning.

[Speaker 2] (5:22:24 - 5:22:29)

In the morning. You're up early. Well, thank you.

Thank you for joining us. You have your question?

[Speaker 11] (5:22:31 - 5:22:47)

I'd like to first thank you very much for your job. It's an unprecedented event when you spread consciousness all around the world. So thank you very much, Eckhart.

Thank you very much, Oprah. Thank you. For being there.

[Speaker 2] (5:22:47 - 5:22:48)

Thank you.

[Speaker 11] (5:22:49 - 5:23:35)

My question is, you know, I do some movement exercises, very ancient ones, and they bring me to stillness. And so I experience stillness when I do these movements. And I lose it when I come to my work.

You know, I do some pauses breathings before I start my work. But when I'm provoked, I'm getting into the power games, especially when I'm criticized. So can you recommend something in this?

Thank you. Okay.

[Speaker 2] (5:23:36 - 5:23:41)

Good. Yes. I like the way Dmitry breathed.

Yes. It was good.

[Speaker 11] (5:23:41 - 5:23:45)

It's so-called panoramic breath when you breathe in all surroundings.

[Speaker 1] (5:23:50 - 5:24:56)

So what would you recommend? Well, you are able to access that dimension of presence when you are not disturbed by external situations, when you're not being challenged. The ego is inactive at those times.

And when you go into ordinary work situations and so on, you begin to relate to people and immediately the ego with its old conditioning comes back and takes you over and you lose yourself in the roles you play and so on. So when do you know? Because we had a question earlier that talked about playing roles and becoming aware of the role playing afterwards, after the event.

Do you become aware at the end of the day or do you become aware in individual instances after like a few minutes after it's happened at work? At what point does the awareness come in?

[Speaker 11] (5:24:57 - 5:25:29)

It depends. If the situation is minor, I'm aware, I guess, five minutes after or maybe into the situation. But when I'm provoked deeply or for instance, when I'm deeply criticized by my boss, I can be in this for a week and only on weekend when I do the movements to change the tense body position into the relaxed one, I can manage to understand, wow, yes, it was again.

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (5:25:29 - 5:27:38)

Another very helpful thing you can do is not just confine your presence practice to those periods at home, but bring in small, very brief moments of presence into your everyday life. For example, I don't know. At work.

At work. No matter where you are, you may be sitting at a computer talking on the phone or whatever it is. Let's, I'll give you two or three examples.

The phone rings. It wants to be answered. Let it ring two more times than is necessary before you answer it.

The phone rings. Normally you would pick it up. Let it ring twice and be present while it rings.

Allow it to ring, but be there in your presence. Use it as a signal to tell you, be present now. So that's one way of bringing a little bit of presence into an ordinary work situation.

Or you're at a computer, put a flower next to your computer and occasionally look away from the screen and look at the flower. It doesn't take long. Just 20 seconds is fine.

30 seconds. Look at the flower and feel its aliveness inside you. It helps you.

Anything natural can bring you back into presence much more easily than things that are man-made. In our body, at work, when you find a moment, turn away from your desk or whatever it is and feel the aliveness. Do your breathing, but not the whole thing.

Just for a few seconds. One conscious breath in and out is a meditation. You don't have to wait for your meditation until you get home.

Bring the meditation into the spaces, into your daily life, as many spaces as possible. Otherwise, the mind has such momentum, the egoic mind, that it will drag you along and you will lose yourself in it. Bringing in small spaces.

[Speaker 2] (5:27:39 - 5:27:45)

Within your daily life. Daily life. Yeah.

In addition to your panoramic breathing, Dimitri. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (5:27:46 - 5:28:24)

That's beautiful. And then you will find that in the midst of situations, the awareness is more likely to be there. And we've already, you may have listened to what I said to a previous questioner about becoming aware after falling back into old conditioned behaviors.

And you will experience the same thing, especially if you practice bringing small, these spaces of awareness into your daily life. Then you will find that gradually, presence will be strong enough, even when the boss speaks to you and criticizes you.

[Speaker 2] (5:28:24 - 5:28:25)

Even when he's on the third ring.

[Speaker 1] (5:28:28 - 5:29:32)

So it's a gradual process where presence goes into every aspect of your life, gradually. It permeates your everyday life because that's what is needed. Even if you were the greatest meditator and you could achieve sublime states twice a day at home when you meditate, it wouldn't help you if presence does not permeate every aspect of your life.

Yes. And because otherwise you'll be like the father who was, in Buddhism they have a meta meditation. It's called meditating on loving kindness.

So you sit there and say, I love all the people in this house. I love all the people in this city. I love all the people.

All the people in this house be at peace. All the people in this city be at peace. All the people in this country be at peace.

And then the daughter comes in and says, Dad, and then the father says, leave me alone. Can't you see I'm doing loving kindness meditation?

[Speaker 2] (5:29:34 - 5:30:03)

Thank you, Dimitri. It goes back to what you were saying earlier. Can I sense my, what you said on page 79, this is in last week's chapter on core of ego.

Can I sense my essential beingness, the I am in the background of my life at all time? That's what you're saying to him. To be more accurate, can I sense the I am that I am at this moment?

Can I sense my essential identity as consciousness itself, even when my boss is yelling at me?

[Speaker 1] (5:30:03 - 5:30:14)

And then perhaps precisely in moments of greatest challenge, there's a greater intensity of presence. Because those moments would be his most sacred moments, would they not be?

[Speaker 2] (5:30:14 - 5:30:15)

Yes. That's how you know.

[Speaker 1] (5:30:16 - 5:30:32)

It's so, it's when your greatest challenges become, instead of drawing you into unconscious reactions, when your greatest challenges intensify your presence, then that's how it works. That's the miracle. And that's how the beauty of this work.

[Speaker 2] (5:30:33 - 5:30:38)

Thank you again for Skyping us from Moscow. Thank you. Thank you very much.

[Speaker 11] (5:30:38 - 5:30:39)

Thank you very much.

[Speaker 2] (5:30:39 - 5:30:40)

Thank you.

[Speaker 11] (5:30:40 - 5:30:56)

I'd like to tell that I'm very familiar with your voice because I have some recordings of your talks. So your voice already permeated me. And thank you very much for bringing presence into the life of this planet.

Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (5:30:56 - 5:31:15)

Thank you. I like all your books in the background there too, Dimitri. It's very nice.

So I want to look at some of the email questions, which there's a question from Grayson Pleasant in California that says, since I've been an owner of a dog, I find myself so much more in the present. My question is, why am I naturally so much more present with an animal than I'm sometimes dealing with people?

[Speaker 1] (5:31:16 - 5:31:48)

Yes. Well, the animal does not provoke thought activity because the dog is not thinking. When the dog looks at you, the dog is not thinking what kind of a person you are.

The dog is not judging you. The dog is at a state of consciousness prior to the arrival of thought. So the dog is, and that state has certain similarities with the state of presence, which is a state of going beyond thinking, where we are going.

In both cases, if you are...

[Speaker 2] (5:31:48 - 5:31:50)

So in that way, the dogs are a little more enlightened than we are?

[Speaker 1] (5:31:51 - 5:31:58)

In some ways, the dogs are more connected with being... With being. ...than we are, than normal humans are. Normal humans are. And so...

[Speaker 2] (5:31:58 - 5:32:00)

That's where they are all the time.

[Speaker 1] (5:32:00 - 5:32:13)

Yes. And I sometimes call them dogs and cats, particularly because that's the pets that for millions of humans are very important in their lives. Right.

I call them guardians of being.

[Speaker 2] (5:32:14 - 5:32:15)

Guardians of being.

[Speaker 1] (5:32:15 - 5:32:33)

Because for many people, they fulfill that function. For many people who are so lost in their minds, so much involved in their thought processes, the only moments they have when they are not trapped in that is when they're relating to their animal, their pet. All right.

[Speaker 2] (5:32:34 - 5:32:44)

I have to get to this quote. Well, I'll get to that in a moment. You say that the role of the parent should not be to spare children from all suffering.

Why not?

[Speaker 1] (5:32:46 - 5:33:29)

Because first of all, you can't. It would be futile to even attempt. Of course, you protect the child as much as you can.

But every human being has to go through a certain amount of suffering. You cannot come into this planet and avoid suffering. Every human...

Because that's what being a human being is. Yes. It's that there's some discord.

Yes. Yes. And that is how we grow.

If there were a human being that could have avoided all suffering, that human being would be totally superficial and totally identified with the external form of things because it's suffering that drives you deeper, drives you within where you need to find...

[Speaker 2] (5:33:29 - 5:33:31)

By suffering, do you mean not getting what we want?

[Speaker 1] (5:33:32 - 5:33:55)

Well, that's one form of suffering, too. There are different forms of suffering. Many forms of suffering, of course, are generated by the ego itself.

These are ultimately unnecessary forms of suffering. But they are necessary for as long as you are unconscious. And another word for suffering would be challenges or difficulties.

Correct? Yes.

[Speaker 2] (5:33:56 - 5:33:59)

Challenges... So you can't be a human being without being challenged.

[Speaker 1] (5:34:00 - 5:35:00)

No, that would be... You would miss the whole purpose for being here. Okay.

So you need to see even your children will not escape. They will sooner or later, and usually sooner than later, they will encounter their form of suffering, whatever it is. You protect them as much as you can, but when you see certain things are inevitable, they may do things, unconscious behavior, they may generate their own suffering, self-generated, or it may happen to them from the outside.

But no matter what, it will happen. And then, rather than going into intense anguish, see, this is human suffering. And every human, you had to go through your forms of suffering.

In my case, for example, I had... My parents had very heavy pain bodies. There was constant conflict at home.

And that was my constant suffering. Pain body, that's next week. Yes.

We'll talk about that. Okay.

[Speaker 2] (5:35:01 - 5:35:02)

No, finish the sentence. I just wanted to say...

[Speaker 1] (5:35:02 - 5:35:31)

So, this, of course, not only applies to children, it also applies to other people that may be close to you and going through their suffering. You do what you can to help them, whatever you can. The important thing is that you don't go into anguish yourself, because by going into anxiety and anguish yourself, you're not helping them at all.

Okay. Because whatever state you are in transmits itself to others.

[Speaker 2] (5:35:31 - 5:35:37)

How does playing a role at work keep us from being powerful?

[Speaker 1] (5:35:40 - 5:36:06)

Well, if you play a role at work, you always have a secondary motive in what you do, because the ego is at work. You are not totally focused on the task at hand, because there is some self-interest there. You want to protect yourself.

You want to get credit for yourself. You want to perhaps eliminate other people around you, or perhaps you want to use other people for your own purposes.

[Speaker 2] (5:36:06 - 5:36:09)

A lot of times this happens when people get promoted to supervisors.

[Speaker 1] (5:36:09 - 5:36:10)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (5:36:10 - 5:36:29)

You know, they were really good in whatever position they had, and then they get promoted to supervisors, have a little more power, means they're not just now functioning at work for themselves, but now they're over other people, and a little bit of power goes to their heads, and before you know it...

[Speaker 1] (5:36:29 - 5:37:13)

That's absolutely right, and that's the ego. If you have a position of little power, then the ego is kind of there in potential. It's latent as far as your work situation is concerned.

The similar situation you have in certain third world countries, where often you find a revolution overthrows the government, and the people who initiate the revolution have the best intentions. They want eventually, they want to do away with corruption, they want the best for their country. The moment they get into power, the latent ego in them, although they had good intentions, comes up and they repeat the same dysfunction that they wanted to do away with.

[Speaker 2] (5:37:14 - 5:37:29)

Happens all the time. All right. Shali lives in Stockholm.

Shali, you were on earlier today. We Skyped you on the Open Word Show earlier. Well, you've been up a long time.

I hear you have a question about raising your three-year-old daughter. Go ahead.

[Speaker 5] (5:37:30 - 5:38:20)

I do have a question about that. A lot of it, I guess, has been answered just by listening to tonight's show, but the question about her is, how do you stay present when you're trying to discipline your child, and she starts screaming and shouting, and she's only three, so I can't really explain to her that it's really your ego that's coming. And I feel like she's learning these roles.

I guess my question is, you know, I want to raise her as a more conscious human being. You know, I don't want her to be awakened at the age of 35 like me. How do you raise a more conscious child, and how do you stay more conscious when you're dealing with conflict?

Because I don't want to set a negative pattern for, you know, when she's 16 and she wants to borrow the car, for example.

[Speaker 1] (5:38:20 - 5:38:43)

Yes, yes. I would suggest that you pay, first of all, pay more attention to your inner state than to what is happening to your daughter. Because I believe you experience, perhaps, your daughter causing you feelings of anxiety sometimes.

[Speaker 5] (5:38:44 - 5:38:45)

Yeah, right on.

[Speaker 1] (5:38:45 - 5:39:48)

You believe that? Now, that seems to be the case, that your daughter, by going through certain kinds of behavior, causes you feelings of anxiety. But ultimately, that is not the case.

You cause yourself the feelings of anxiety. When your daughter refuses to eat, she's not making you anxious. Only you can do that.

So it is vital what state of consciousness you are in, what emotional state you are in, when you are relating to your daughter. Because if you're often in a state of anxiety, you get into a vicious circle. The anxiety that you believe was caused by your daughter's behavior, but is ultimately caused by your reaction to your daughter's behavior, that anxiety then will affect her.

And that is a nervous energy field that will provoke further so-called bad behavior in her. Because children absorb...

[Speaker 2] (5:39:48 - 5:39:53)

I was going to say, a three-year-old is absorbing that and picking up that energy more than even your language.

[Speaker 1] (5:39:53 - 5:39:54)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (5:39:54 - 5:39:56)

They're picking up the energy that you carry.

[Speaker 1] (5:39:56 - 5:39:57)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (5:39:57 - 5:39:57)

Right.

[Speaker 1] (5:39:57 - 5:39:58)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (5:39:58 - 5:39:58)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (5:39:58 - 5:41:41)

So your first... Because that is their language. That's right.

Yeah. And so your first realization needs to... your first interest needs to be in any situation with your child, okay, there's the external situation, there's what the child is doing or is not doing but should be doing, or screaming or whatever it is, or not eating, not wanting to go to bed, whatever children do.

But your first interest needs to be, okay, what's my inner state right now? Am I accepting this moment no matter what form it is? Am I saying that's...

What I suggest is the little mantra that I recommend is to ask yourself whether you can be there as the space for whatever your daughter does. Can I be the space for this? This is a general thing that many people will find helpful no matter what situation you go into in life, at work, at home, wherever.

The present moment, am I able to accept this moment as it is or am I saying this should be different? You should behave differently but she's not behaving differently. She's behaving the way she's behaving right now.

You need to accept that right now she's screaming if that's what she does. There it is. Can I be the space for that?

And then you see her screaming. This is related to the little exercise we had earlier where you felt yourself becoming transparent to an irritating external situation so that you don't have a reactive barrier inside you.

[Speaker 2] (5:41:41 - 5:42:02)

That's hard to do though when your child is screaming because your immediate instinct, I would think, is to stop the child from screaming, to resist the screaming, to try to prevent more screaming. And so the resistance of that, the angst and the anxiety of that creates more screaming.

[Speaker 1] (5:42:02 - 5:42:02)

More screaming.

[Speaker 2] (5:42:02 - 5:42:10)

Because if you could just be calm enough to allow your calmness to then calm the child. That's easier said than done.

[Speaker 1] (5:42:10 - 5:43:02)

Yes, that's your spiritual practice. You don't need any other spiritual practice. Yes, for the next few years.

It's far better than going to a monastery and meditate all day long. It's much more effective. Make that into your spiritual practice and then you will see as you become more peaceful and more accepting of the present moment, more being the space, then that will transmit itself to the child and affect the child.

And the child will absorb your emanation, your energetic vibrational frequency and the change will happen in that way rather than feeling that I need to change her. The change happens when you change.

[Speaker 2] (5:43:02 - 5:43:18)

Yeah, that is to prevent her, but that is to not allow her to do things that are dangerous or to, you know, he's not saying that, but he's saying about adjusting the way you are being, capital B, with her. Capital B. Yes.

Thank you.

[Speaker 5] (5:43:18 - 5:43:22)

Thank you so much, and thank you so much for doing this web seminar. I hope you do more.

[Speaker 2] (5:43:22 - 5:43:34)

Well, thank you. Thank you so much. It's a way of being present for any situation.

And what you were saying is we can apply it not just to children, but to all situations.

[Speaker 1] (5:43:34 - 5:44:53)

Any situation. And it's usually the case, in some people's lives, they have a variety of little challenges. There's other people who have one predominant difficulty in their lives, whether it's another person, whether it's a health situation, or whether it's a work situation or financial problem.

They have one huge challenge in their lives. And usually one would consider the main, this huge challenge in your life as your greatest enemy, almost, the greatest burden, or as Christians would call it, my cross. To bear.

To bear. Yeah. Now this, it doesn't, this can actually be turned around and you can make that very thing that is considered your great...

Your cross to bear. You can make that into your greatest help on the spiritual path. Right.

Because it's precisely there that you can, if you can bring acceptance to that and be the space for that situation, that is usually called, would usually be called bad by the mind, but it is. You can't argue with that. This is the situation right now.

Can I be the space for that? Then that situation takes you into surrender and into presence.

[Speaker 2] (5:44:53 - 5:45:35)

So that, you know, so many people, when they were first talking about purchasing this book on the website, I saw a lot of messages and people saying, I hope this, you know, shows me my life purpose. I want to awaken to my life purpose. And for a lot of people, that they want that to be something grand.

They want it to be, you know, saving starving children in India and Africa. They want it to be some, you know, great description or something. But what you're saying is, is that if we are allow ourselves to be fully present with whatever our chosen function is in life and whatever difficulties might arise, that there is sacredness in the difficulty.

[Speaker 1] (5:45:35 - 5:45:35)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (5:45:36 - 5:45:37)

If we allow it to be.

[Speaker 1] (5:45:37 - 5:45:54)

Yes. And be fully present with whatever it, the situation is now. Yes.

And then go from there. So, because then your inner self changes when you're fully present with the situation, you're no longer putting up internal resistance to life.

[Speaker 2] (5:45:54 - 5:46:03)

Even if there is that thing that you call, there's something that you call background happiness. There's something that happened or needs to happen or someone who did something.

[Speaker 1] (5:46:03 - 5:46:04)

Background unhappiness.

[Speaker 2] (5:46:04 - 5:46:26)

Background unhappiness. There's something that happened or needs it. He refers to that on page 114, everybody.

There's something that needs to happen in my life before I can be at peace. Something happened in the past that should not have happened. Something is happening now that should not be happening.

How do we make peace with the background unhappiness of our lives?

[Speaker 1] (5:46:26 - 5:47:04)

You recognize the background unhappiness as not a content base, but as structural. It's the structure of the egoic mind to create that. We had the same when Jenny asked her question.

We had the similar thing. The guilt feelings that she had was part of the background structure of the ego. And no matter what situation, if you haven't tackled or recognized the structure of the ego in yourself as certain thought forms that repeat themselves, no matter what situation you go into, they will come up in some new form, but basically the same structure.

I got it. I got it.

[Speaker 2] (5:47:04 - 5:47:57)

So the secret to happiness, you say. There's so many people were writing about this on the web. The secret to happiness, everybody, page 115.

There are three words that convey the secret of the art of living, the secret of all success and happiness. One with life. One with life is being one with now, you say.

You then realize that you don't live your life, but life lives you. Life is the dancer and you are the dance. I have to tell you, I love this book, but I was like, gee, I thought life was the dance and I was the dancer.

And there are a lot of people on the web who are saying the same thing. Can you explain how life is the dancer and we are the dance? Why aren't we the dancer?

[Speaker 1] (5:47:58 - 5:48:59)

You are not separate from life. So whatever, any form. Life is the dancer.

Life is dancing the dance of form, one could say. Every human being and everything that exists is part of the dance of life. That which moves you, the very consciousness that animates your being, that animates every cell of your body, that produces thoughts too, the very consciousness that you are is the one universal, the one life.

And that permeates everything. So the entire universe is permeated by that consciousness, by life, which is another word for God. I don't see God as an entity that is in a particular place somewhere.

But as the essence, the intelligence, the animating life essence behind all life forms. It's the eternal. The totality.

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (5:48:59 - 5:49:11)

It's the totality. You see God. You're saying that God is, your idea of God, is the totality of the essence of all life form.

[Speaker 1] (5:49:12 - 5:49:55)

Yes. And ultimately, you are not separate from that. It's the egoic mind that says, my life.

The moment you say my life, you've already separated yourself from life. It's a thought. You have a thought to say, this is my life.

And then you think, oh, I can lose my life. I am not separate from life because I am life. It's only through the structure of language that you create the illusion of separation.

I see that. The dog still knows on a primordial level, the animal, the tree knows that it is one with life. So it doesn't have this fear of death.

And it doesn't see itself as separate from the rest of the universe.

[Speaker 2] (5:49:55 - 5:49:58)

So let me ask you the big question. You have no fear of death?

[Speaker 1] (5:49:59 - 5:50:10)

No. No. The ego has dissolved.

And so only the ego fears death. I know there is no death. You know there is no death.

[Speaker 2] (5:50:11 - 5:50:15)

Oh. OK, tell me how.

[Speaker 1] (5:50:16 - 5:50:18)

I have a little thing at the end of this chapter.

[Speaker 2] (5:50:18 - 5:50:26)

I know you say the incontrovertible proof of immortality. I read that and I went, OK, I read that.

[Speaker 1] (5:50:26 - 5:50:39)

I've done a little thing I did there. Usually when people talk about immortality, they use certain arguments, perhaps from physics. They say the energy gets never is destroyed.

Energy can only become transformed.

[Speaker 2] (5:50:39 - 5:50:40)

That's right, transformed.

[Speaker 1] (5:50:40 - 5:51:18)

So the vital energy that is your life, because energy cannot be destroyed, must survive in some form. That's often the argument for the survival of that life. There is no death.

Only the form dissolves. That's right. That's one way you can approach it.

But what I thought I'd do, I'd look at the structure of this sentence of language that says, my life, or I have a life. Because most people believe that they have a life. And they also believe that they can lose their life.

Now, if you look at that sentence and say, I can lose my life, then I am separate from life.

[Speaker 2] (5:51:19 - 5:51:23)

So there is no such thing as my life, you say at the end of this chapter, page 128.

[Speaker 1] (5:51:24 - 5:51:41)

Because I am life. I am not separate from life. I am an expression of the one life, a temporary expression in this form of the one timeless and formless life.

So I don't have a life because I am life, expressing itself as this form.

[Speaker 2] (5:51:41 - 5:52:00)

Okay, so what happens when you, two weeks ago, talked about your mother and father lying in the casket, and you realized that the life force, or formlessness, that they were lying in the casket, and there were these bodies, but they were not there.

[Speaker 1] (5:52:00 - 5:52:00)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (5:52:00 - 5:52:08)

They were not there. So we're not our bodies. We do know that.

Everybody who's reading this book knows, we're not our bodies. We do get that.

[Speaker 1] (5:52:09 - 5:52:49)

And that's, once you can actually sense that, not just as a, it's not just a belief, you can also see that you're not your body, even if you just approach it logically, and see that when there's a dead body, then that being is not there anymore. There's only the flesh and the bones. Right.

And when the being isn't there anymore, the flesh and the bones very quickly dissolve. When the animating presence isn't there anymore, all the atoms and molecules separate. Right.

And go their own way. Right. Because the animating presence is not there anymore.

Okay, so continuing here.

[Speaker 2] (5:52:50 - 5:53:25)

So there's no such thing as my life, and I don't have a life. I am life. I and life are one.

It cannot be otherwise. So how could I lose my life? How can I lose something that I don't have in the first place?

How can I lose something that I am? It is impossible. So what is happening here is, I just got it.

Hello, hello, hello. I got it. We are confusing the I am life force with our bodies.

Yes, yes. We're confusing that.

[Speaker 1] (5:53:25 - 5:53:27)

Yes, that's right. That's right.

[Speaker 2] (5:53:28 - 5:53:49)

So when this dies and becomes the shell, and dissipates, and the atoms go wherever they go, back into the ground, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, we are confusing that which is the physical form, the human, we're confusing that with the being. Yes, that's right. And they are separate.

[Speaker 1] (5:53:50 - 5:54:00)

Yes. So another way, if you don't like the word life, you can say the universe. People believe that I am here, and there's the rest of the universe.

[Speaker 2] (5:54:01 - 5:54:01)

Right.

[Speaker 1] (5:54:01 - 5:54:58)

I have come into this universe. They don't know from where. Yeah.

I've come into this universe. It would be more appropriate to feel that you have come out of this universe, because you are this universe experiencing itself very briefly. As a human.

As a human. As a human. I got that.

And so it wants to do that. I got that, I got that, I got that. It's wonderful when you realize there's more to you than a person.

You are the universe. Expressing itself. Yes, and experiencing.

As a human. As a human. And it...

Called Eckhart. Yes, for a little while. For a little while.

And then it goes through other experiences. And then where do we go, Eckhart? Could you tell us that?

Well, let's see what happens. Otherwise, you take the fun out of it. You have to...

If you knew the rest of your life, already the fun would be taken out of it.

[Speaker 2] (5:54:58 - 5:55:26)

Oh, okay. All right. Well, before we say goodbye, I know there's lots we did not get to in this chapter.

We could have spent, you know, two or three weeks on this one chapter. But what would you say is the essence of this chapter? The essence of this chapter?

Yeah, the role-playing chapter. What I said in the beginning, that we're humans and beings, and in this body trying to live through the two.

[Speaker 1] (5:55:26 - 5:56:00)

Yes, it's balancing the human and the being, so that you can be function in this world of form, where you have to do things and fulfill your function. At the same time, not lose yourself in that. Be rooted in the depth of being, so that you're not lost in form.

So there's a depth to you and rootedness in that stillness, that aliveness. And then from there, you function out here. And there's always then a peace in the background.

A peace in the background. No matter what's happening out there.

[Speaker 2] (5:56:00 - 5:56:11)

And most particularly, not to be attached to, defined by the roles that we play in life and realize what they are, just roles.

[Speaker 1] (5:56:11 - 5:56:11)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (5:56:12 - 5:56:12)

Yes. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (5:56:12 - 5:56:22)

And relinquish the role when it's not required anymore. When your children grow up, you don't need to be a mother or father. You don't need to play that role anymore.

[Speaker 2] (5:56:22 - 5:56:28)

See, so many people think that that is who they are. And so when their children grow up, they don't know who they are anymore.

[Speaker 1] (5:56:28 - 5:56:32)

Yes. Can be a crisis or people retire. That's right.

They had identified.

[Speaker 2] (5:56:32 - 5:56:33)

They were their job.

[Speaker 1] (5:56:33 - 5:56:35)

Yes. And then who am I?

[Speaker 2] (5:56:35 - 5:56:38)

Yeah, you were talking about in Japan, where it used to be you kept your job for life.

[Speaker 1] (5:56:39 - 5:56:39)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (5:56:39 - 5:56:43)

And you were sharing with us the last time about a man who committed suicide.

[Speaker 1] (5:56:43 - 5:56:52)

But there's been many cases of people in Japan who lost their jobs and committed suicide because they were so identified. Their company was their sense of self.

[Speaker 2] (5:56:54 - 5:58:19)

Well, fascinating. I want to thank all of you around the world for making this. This is really a remarkable experience for making it possible.

Eckhart and I will be here again next Monday at 8 p.m. Tell all your friends, share the book with them. If they say, I don't get it, that's okay. That's really okay.

That's okay. They'll have the book and maybe pick it up a year from now, two years from now, 10 years from now. This fourth class will be available on demand starting tomorrow, just like all the other classes, for free here at Oprah.com.

And if you want to download a podcast of any of our classes, you can also do that tomorrow at Oprah.com and at iTunes. Your homework assignment for this week is to update your workbook. Next week, it's the chapter many of you've been waiting for, chapter five, the pain body.

The pain body. If you feel burdened by your past, begin to learn how to lighten that load. That's going to be really very exciting.

Now, many of you have been asking about our new Earth theme music. The song is called We Are One Earth and it was produced by Harpo Sounds, our in-house music label. Beginning tomorrow, it will be available as a free download on iTunes and Oprah.com.

So enjoy it. Those of you who've asked us for us. This was fun.

This was fun. And so let's just wait to see what happens. Let's just wait to see what happens.

Thank you so much.

[Speaker 3] (5:58:19 - 5:58:21)

See you in class next week. Bye everybody.

[Speaker 2] (5:58:42 - 6:00:42)

Hi everybody. Welcome again to class number five in our webcast series about Eckhart Tolle's A New Earth. We're at the halfway mark and I'd like to thank all of you who are committed to this work and make time every week to share this space with us and to give this to yourself.

As of today, we've hit nearly 11 million streams and downloads of this series. That's really uplifting. So together, I believe that we are beginning to create powerful changes in our lives as individuals and then putting that out into the world.

Before we get started, I wanted to share something with all of you. Our friend Elizabeth Lesser of the Omega Institute sent me a poem that I'd like to share with everybody. She sent it to me this week because I, several weeks ago, was talking about being under my trees and sensing the trees and so she emailed me this poem and said, here's a poem to be with your trees.

It's called Lost by David Wagner and will be on our website for you to get later. So listen to this, Eckhart. It says, stand still.

The trees ahead and bushes beside you are not lost. Wherever you are is called here and you must treat it as a powerful stranger. Must ask permission to know it and be known.

The forest breathes. Listen. It answers.

I have made this place around you. If you leave it, you may come back again. Saying, here.

No two trees are the same to raven. No two branches are the same to wren. If what a tree or a bush does is lost on you, you are surely lost.

Stand still. The forest knows where you are. You must let it find you.

[Speaker 1] (6:00:43 - 6:00:45)

Don't you love that? Oh, it's beautiful.

[Speaker 2] (6:00:45 - 6:00:56)

Yes. So that's my poem to lead us into silence. Would you like to lead us into silence?

Yes. Eckhart has a cold this week, everybody. I told you he's sounding very sexy now.

[Speaker 1] (6:01:01 - 6:02:25)

So when we go into silence, another way of putting it is to say we go into the present moment more deeply. So let's approach it from that angle today and say, let's take our attention right now into this present moment, no matter what it contains on the surface, no matter what you're perceiving or what you're feeling. You bring your full acceptance to this moment as it is, no matter what form it takes.

And that aligns you with now and takes you into stillness. So that's all we do right now. And so we're still, just for a little while, sensing what the present moment is beyond the forms of the present moment, sensing what the essence of the present moment is, because the essence of the present moment is life itself.

So it's sensing that life that is the essence of now, which is more than what you see in the now and what you touch in the now. It's deeper than that. You can only sense it.

The external senses cannot perceive it. So let's do this now and just be with the present moment.

[Speaker 19] (6:03:13 - 6:03:13)

All right.

[Speaker 2] (6:03:14 - 6:03:24)

I'm actually finding it easier. The first time we did this, I was like, oh, boy, we're going to be quiet for 10 seconds. Now I think we're going like 40, 50 seconds.

[Speaker 1] (6:03:24 - 6:03:44)

Yes. And another strange thing is when you actually enter the present moment, it's a holy place no matter where you are. And this connects with the poem you read.

If you bring your attention to it fully, every place you are is holy. So there's a sacredness to life that you become aware of when you take your attention into the present moment.

[Speaker 2] (6:03:45 - 6:04:00)

What I'm finding, too, reading this book and then working with you every week is that everything starts to be sacred. I mean, everything starts to be. You can find the sacred in the most ordinary of things.

[Speaker 1] (6:04:01 - 6:04:01)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (6:04:01 - 6:04:30)

And that there is a calmness and a stillness to almost everything if you can get quiet enough yourself to feel it. Yes. Yeah.

That's what's happening to me. Yes. As so many other people are experiencing whatever you're experiencing, how the reading of this book, The Awakening for you, is taking on whatever form it does in your life, that's what I'm seeing for myself.

Yes. Yeah. But everything's magical.

Yes, yes. You never have to be bored, ever.

[Speaker 1] (6:04:30 - 6:04:45)

No, no. And the need for artificial stimulus goes when people continuously need to, whenever they get home, they need to switch something onto some kind of entertainment. You can still enjoy entertainment, but you're not dependent anymore.

[Speaker 2] (6:04:46 - 6:05:54)

On that to fill you up. Yeah. Well, tonight we're discussing Chapter 5.

So glad we're in the pain body. So I wanted to just start with my idea of an overview of this chapter. You say that in this chapter that the human mind seems to be hooked on me and my story, constant mind chatter that keeps negative emotions alive and personalizes everything.

You say at the beginning of this chapter on page 129, I'm on everybody, that the greatest part of most people's thinking is involuntary, automatic, and repetitive. It's no more than a kind of mental static and fulfills no real purpose. Strictly speaking, you don't think thinking happens to you.

The statement, I think, implies volition, you say. It implies that you have a say in the matter, that there's a voice involved on your part. But really, you say, I think it's just as false a statement as I digest or I circulate my blood.

Digestion happens, circulation happens, thinking happens.

[Speaker 1] (6:05:55 - 6:06:47)

Yeah. So it's becoming aware that thinking happens to you all the time. The key is becoming aware of it.

It's happening to everybody until the awareness occurs. Then you are identified with that voice in the head, with its repetitive thought patterns. And that is what most people are trapped in.

And it makes up their superficial personality with all the continuous repetitive judgments and likes and dislikes and prejudices and whatever makes up the content of their egoic mind. So people are trapped in that and derive their sense of self from that, which is ultimately insubstantial, conditioned by the past, not who they are. Absolutely.

[Speaker 2] (6:06:48 - 6:07:06)

And you say also in Chapter 5, The Pain Body, you show how this addiction to being these thoughts in our head, this addiction to these thoughts in our head, to this negativity, is at the root of humanity's problems. On page 137, you write, we are a species that has lost its way.

[Speaker 1] (6:07:06 - 6:07:54)

Yes. And we are lost. I could say also we are a species lost.

We are lost in thought. We've lost ourselves in the mind. So looking for some kind of identity in the movement of thinking without ever really finding it.

So most important step in any person's awakening is to realize that there is a voice in their head that doesn't stop speaking. When you realize all this, and then you begin to realize what kinds of things the voice is saying, repetitive judgments and so on, negative thoughts about yourself, about other people, about situations you are in, especially all these repetitive negative thoughts that many people are trapped with, you become aware of that.

[Speaker 2] (6:07:54 - 6:07:58)

Yes, and then you become aware that it's really just the story that you've told yourself.

[Speaker 1] (6:07:58 - 6:07:59)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (6:07:59 - 6:07:59)

About yourself.

[Speaker 1] (6:08:00 - 6:08:00)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (6:08:00 - 6:08:01)

And that's all it is.

[Speaker 1] (6:08:02 - 6:08:02)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (6:08:02 - 6:08:03)

All right. That it has no power.

[Speaker 1] (6:08:04 - 6:08:04)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (6:08:04 - 6:08:06)

Yes. And the past has no power over you.

[Speaker 1] (6:08:06 - 6:08:15)

No power. The power comes in with your awareness that there is a voice. Yes.

Because the awareness is not part of it. And that is part of being, becoming present.

[Speaker 2] (6:08:15 - 6:08:30)

Yes. One of my favorite quotes of this chapter is, nothing on page 141, nothing ever happened in the past that can prevent you from being present now. And if the past cannot prevent you from being present now, what power does it have?

[Speaker 1] (6:08:31 - 6:09:06)

Yes. Because many people are so attached to the past that they carry a burden, like carrying a huge sack on your back, a burden. You're identified with that.

And they believe that they're unable to be present because the past prevents them from being present. But it can't do that. You can step out of the stream of thinking, take your attention into the present, and immediately the past no longer has that power over you.

[Speaker 2] (6:09:06 - 6:09:09)

Because nothing ever happened in the past that can prevent you from being present.

[Speaker 1] (6:09:10 - 6:09:10)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (6:09:10 - 6:11:43)

Now. Yes. You say that the core of all of this is the pain body.

On page 141, we read that any negative emotion that is not fully faced and seen for what it is in the moment it arises, does not completely dissolve. The energy field of old, but still very much alive emotion that lives in almost every human being, is the pain body. And chapter five introduces us to the pain body.

Amazing. You know, when I read this, I thought about my childhood. Now, I've shared my childhood with lots of people.

And as a child, I was raised by my grandmother for the first six years. And my grandmother used to whip me often, like I used to get beatings on a regular basis. And it was really a part of our culture.

And I know many of you were raised this way too, that not only would you get beaten for almost, you know, for doing nothing, for you broke a glass or you, you know, spoke out of turn or whatever the adult deemed was inappropriate for you in that moment. But I would get beaten. And then I was never allowed to have any emotion about it.

I remember feeling many times my grandmother would whip me with switches, she would braid the switches together and I'd get a whipping. And then in the middle of whipping me, she'd say, stop your crying, stop your crying. And I'd get whipped until I would stop crying.

And then afterwards she would say, you better wipe that pout off of your face. You better put a smile on your face. So you'd have to now act as though the beating that you just had didn't happen.

And when I read this, that any negative emotion that is not fully faced and seen for what it is in the moment it arises, does not completely dissolve. It leaves behind a remnant of pain. I realized that that pain of not being able to express the emotion of just being able to be angry.

I mean, now I see kids today when their parents say something and they don't like it. The kids can say, I don't like you, or that upset me, or, you know, God forbid, I hate you, which, you know, in my culture was never allowed. You had to suppress that, whatever you're feeling, if you're beaten, wipe that pout off of your face, wipe your tears, stop crying right now.

And so that would be a huge pain body that I would end up carrying, especially as a child, because you say children, especially carry it.

[Speaker 1] (6:11:43 - 6:11:52)

So did you find then that as you grew up, that there was a lot of unexpressed negative emotion in you?

[Speaker 2] (6:11:52 - 6:12:19)

I didn't, it wasn't unexpressed. It was repressed ability to, it's what caused me to have the disease to please for so long, a desire to please everybody, because the ability to say in the moment, this upsets me, or this really bothers me, or what you're doing, I don't like, was not something I felt I could do for the longest time.

[Speaker 1] (6:12:21 - 6:12:29)

So all these negative remnants of negative emotions, they become, they accumulate in the body.

[Speaker 2] (6:12:30 - 6:12:31)

I ate mine.

[Speaker 1] (6:12:31 - 6:14:26)

Yes. And then together they form what I call, because now we need to realize that any emotion that you have is a form of energy that's acceptable, I think, to most people. Right.

Just as every thought you have is a form of energy. Right. Every thought is energy, so there's nothing spooky about that.

So when we say, when I say that the pain body can be considered almost an entity in its own right that lives in you, some people find that's a little spooky, but all that I'm trying to say is here, it's an energy form. Entity is another word for it. So an energy form lives in you that you may not be aware of all the time, because some of the time it is dormant, and it's only active for a certain percentage of time.

So first realization is that there is something in me that seeks unhappiness, that seeks unpleasant experiences, that seeks more negativity, because it feeds on those things. Those things, negative thoughts will feed the pain body. That is one of the favorite ways pain body to feed is on your own thinking.

So this is very important for people to realize, to observe within themselves that periodically in many people, an addiction to negativity arises. And if you can recognize that as it arises, then you're no longer totally at the mercy of it.

[Speaker 2] (6:14:27 - 6:14:29)

Because the awareness dissipates it.

[Speaker 1] (6:14:29 - 6:14:31)

Yes. Yes. Yes.

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (6:14:31 - 6:15:01)

And so back to this point though, whenever there is negativity in your life that you never fully dealt with, that negativity, the energy of that negativity has to go someplace. And you're saying where it goes is inside us. And for me, everybody knows I've struggled with my weight for years.

For me, that's the form that it takes. For a lot of other people, it makes them outwardly angry or negative toward other people.

[Speaker 1] (6:15:01 - 6:15:01)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (6:15:03 - 6:15:07)

But it has to take some form. For some people, it makes them sick, makes them ill.

[Speaker 1] (6:15:07 - 6:15:51)

Yes. And a very frequent manifestation of it, perhaps the most frequent manifestation of the pain body is in intimate relationships where periodically partners have to go through their drama. They have to reenact drama every few weeks.

In some cases, every few days, they go through intense emotional negativity. And usually, the pain body awakens first in one, in either the man or the woman first. And when the pain body awakens, it wants some kind of reaction, negative emotional reaction.

[Speaker 2] (6:15:51 - 6:15:52)

It's seeking that from the other person.

[Speaker 1] (6:15:52 - 6:16:22)

Because it feeds on it. So many people have realized when I've spoken about it, there is, oh yes, this is happening in our relationship. And periodically, the need, the pain body arises, and it then will attempt to push the partner's buttons, as they're called in some form of psychotherapy.

They say pushing the person's buttons means the pain body knows exactly what buttons to push in your partner, buttons that will certainly bring a negative reaction.

[Speaker 2] (6:16:22 - 6:16:38)

Now, is the pain body ultimately this feeling of not being good enough? Is the pain body there because of a feeling of not being worthy, of not knowing its sense of presence or consciousness? Is that why it's the pain body?

[Speaker 1] (6:16:38 - 6:16:41)

It's the emotional aspect of the ego.

[Speaker 2] (6:16:41 - 6:16:41)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (6:16:41 - 6:16:59)

So really, pain body is part of the ego, and it's a very unhappy entity. But because its very existence consists of this unhappy vibration, it does not want an end to its unhappiness, because an end to its unhappiness is the end to the pain body. Got it.

[Speaker 2] (6:17:00 - 6:17:05)

Got it. Linda is Skyping us from her den. Hello.

Hi.

[Speaker 15] (6:17:05 - 6:17:05)

Hi.

[Speaker 2] (6:17:06 - 6:17:15)

How are you, Oprah? Is that a yellow din you have there? Yellow?

Yes. Yes, it's gorgeous. In Silver Spring, Maryland, she has a question about the pain body and her sister.

[Speaker 8] (6:17:16 - 6:18:58)

I do. And thank you, Oprah, so much for this. I first encountered your book, Mr. Chole, in 2005, and have read it at least four times. And so when Oprah picked it, I was so excited. You write on page 148 that the pain bodies love intimate relationships and families, because that is where they get most of their food. And that really resonated for me.

I had a huge aha moment, because I have a sister who has always interacted with everyone in the family in a very dramatic way. And I always considered her to be a drama queen who would rather have a problem than solve a problem. But after reading this chapter, it helped me so much understand more about her and what was going on and why she was interacting with us the way that she is.

My question is, now that I've seen that, of course, I wanted to call her and have her read the book. But you've already talked about how sometimes that's not necessarily the best way to approach people. What is the way?

How can I really reconnect the family? She is separated from our family. She's separated from her children, from us.

And we have no relationship at all. And it's really tragic. And I want to do something to help bring us back together and don't know what to do.

[Speaker 1] (6:19:00 - 6:19:04)

So at the moment, you have no contact with her at all?

[Speaker 8] (6:19:04 - 6:19:20)

She has totally withdrawn everything. I do send her emails every month or so just to check in. Sometimes she responds, but very terse and cold.

Most times not.

[Speaker 1] (6:19:21 - 6:21:10)

Well, I hope an opportunity will arise for you to get together at some point so you can continue to invite her if there's an event at home or whatever and then just be open. But when she does come, it's very important for you not to buy into her drama. I don't know whether this happened in the past, whether she used to draw other family members into her drama.

That's usually the tendency. So now when you meet her again, then you will realize, of course, you will be in a different state of consciousness because you will see that what she is suffering from is the disease of the pain body. And that is not part of who she actually is in truth.

So you can be there as a very compassionate presence. And when the drama arises again, as it will because her pain body will be very active again when she meets you or any family member, when it happens again, it is very unlikely that you will find yourself forced to react to the pain body because you will be present. So you can simply recognize the pain body in her without the need, as that was there in the past, the need to react to it and therefore buy into her drama and feed her drama.

And that will be a very strange experience for her. Somebody who simply accepts her the way she is. And if accusations come at you, whatever she does, you did this or whatever form the drama takes.

[Speaker 8] (6:21:10 - 6:21:11)

You sound like you know her.

[Speaker 1] (6:21:11 - 6:21:58)

I know the pain body. They're all the same, basically. So then you can simply accept that she's suffering from this and simply be there as a compassionate presence without reacting.

Allow her to be in her pain body. And that means the drama cannot sustain itself for very long if only one part, one person plays the drama. It needs two.

So you're not feeding her pain body anymore. And then see what happens. She may be confused.

I've experienced that quite a few times when people came up to me with heavy pain bodies.

[Speaker 2] (6:21:58 - 6:22:14)

It's a story that you tell in this chapter about the friend who comes to your house and she has all the papers and she's complaining. And she doesn't know what to do. And she lays out all the papers and she's complaining, complaining, complaining.

And Eckhart basically says nothing but just listens and is the presence there for her.

[Speaker 1] (6:22:14 - 6:22:14)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (6:22:14 - 6:22:19)

And finally, she picks up her papers, confused, and goes home and the next day says, what did you do to me?

[Speaker 1] (6:22:20 - 6:22:44)

Yes. Yeah. Yes.

But don't underestimate the pain body's ability to draw out some, to make you unconscious again, to push some kind of button and you will find yourself reacting again. Because pain bodies are very cunning, very clever. And they know exactly what will make you unconscious and what will make you react.

[Speaker 2] (6:22:44 - 6:22:48)

You speak of it like it's a creature that's like an alien force inside of us.

[Speaker 1] (6:22:48 - 6:22:50)

Yeah. I don't, yes, that's how I see it.

[Speaker 2] (6:22:50 - 6:23:02)

Really, really. But you see that Linda, that being, that this is, this then becomes your sacred spiritual journey. This is a part of your spiritual journey to not be drawn into the drama.

[Speaker 8] (6:23:03 - 6:23:20)

Well, I, it's so interesting you put it that way over because that's what I've kind of come to the conclusion that this is part of my awakening. Yeah. It's my role in my family is to kind of be the one to help her get out of this.

[Speaker 2] (6:23:20 - 6:23:20)

Yeah.

[Speaker 8] (6:23:20 - 6:23:20)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (6:23:21 - 6:23:28)

And not by judging and not by telling her to, but by being that which you, you know, want, wish to emulate.

[Speaker 8] (6:23:29 - 6:23:37)

Yeah. And that's the hard part is not judging because I guess that's the part of the pain body that she activates in me.

[Speaker 2] (6:23:37 - 6:23:43)

Because your pain body wants to say, who do you think you are? Exactly. I've been there.

[Speaker 1] (6:23:43 - 6:24:35)

And of course, when the pain body takes over a person, the whole personality becomes transformed. And sometimes people are shocked when they marry somebody or they start living with somebody. And this lovely man or woman that they love so much, one morning suddenly he or she turns into a little monster and the total energy shift in them, complete change of energy.

Like it's truly as if they were possessed by a completely different, very negative personality. And that comes as a shock often to people when they start living together. And again, it doesn't mean that necessarily that you chose the wrong person to live with.

It just means for the first time you experienced- The pain body showed up. That person's pain body.

[Speaker 2] (6:24:35 - 6:24:47)

And also what we were talking about in the last chapter, you were playing a role up until then. You were playing the role. I am in love with you.

And often love, you say, is about your own possessiveness.

[Speaker 1] (6:24:48 - 6:25:00)

And so the roles are easy to play. As long as you're not living together, then you can sustain the roles. But when you start living together, very soon the roles cannot be played anymore.

[Speaker 2] (6:25:00 - 6:25:11)

And also that's why I was thinking with the pain bodies, what happens on a lot of holidays, Linda, you've seen this in families. Everybody comes together and you have all those pain bodies in a room.

[Speaker 19] (6:25:11 - 6:25:12)

Oh, yeah.

[Speaker 2] (6:25:12 - 6:25:18)

Clashing. Clashing and reacting to one another and all living in the past- about the past.

[Speaker 1] (6:25:18 - 6:25:18)

Oh, yes.

[Speaker 2] (6:25:18 - 6:25:22)

Because that's what all the- that's what the coming together for families is about.

[Speaker 1] (6:25:22 - 6:25:27)

Thanksgiving and Christmas Day are the best day for the pain bodies because- Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (6:25:28 - 6:25:28)

Really?

[Speaker 1] (6:25:29 - 6:25:33)

Everywhere. And often the families go through the same thing year after year.

[Speaker 2] (6:25:33 - 6:25:38)

Really. Thank you, Linda, for bringing that up. Thank you so much.

[Speaker 8] (6:25:38 - 6:25:42)

And I will listen to the rest of the class. Thank you so much for the opportunity.

[Speaker 2] (6:25:42 - 6:26:05)

Thank you for bringing that up for us. Yeah. And often- yeah.

The reason why all- you have all these pain bodies clashing Thanksgiving on the major holidays that come together. And people have an image in their mind, the courier in Ives, the painting of what they want the Thanksgiving dinner to be. And instead it becomes something different because everybody's bringing their past.

[Speaker 1] (6:26:06 - 6:26:06)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (6:26:06 - 6:26:08)

Living that moment through their past.

[Speaker 1] (6:26:08 - 6:26:11)

Yes. Yes. That's amazing.

[Speaker 2] (6:26:11 - 6:26:14)

So how do we change that this Thanksgiving?

[Speaker 1] (6:26:14 - 6:26:31)

Well, the- it just takes one person to be present and one person not to participate in this. So when next event happens, family gathering, whatever it is, then you will see the usual comments will be made.

[Speaker 2] (6:26:31 - 6:26:32)

That's right.

[Speaker 1] (6:26:32 - 6:26:35)

And the usual reactions will happen.

[Speaker 2] (6:26:35 - 6:26:38)

Can you believe he did? Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (6:26:38 - 6:27:18)

Yes. Or you- or you visit your parents and your parents don't fully approve of you. And then they say, well, you remember 10 years ago I told you you should have done that.

You would be better off now if you had done that. Right. And again, immediately if you're not present, pain body will arise and become defensive.

Anger will arise. So- You're in it. You're drawn into the drama.

Yes. So it requires great alertness not to be drawn in. Right.

So because the- we don't underestimate the pain body's ability to draw in. Sometimes even very present people can still be drawn in.

[Speaker 2] (6:27:19 - 6:27:35)

And you were saying that it happens in intimate situations, in family situations more often than not, because I would suppose is because out in the world, everybody's trying to be at least on their best behavior. A lot of people who are taking this class, are working people who see it in their jobs every day with people.

[Speaker 28] (6:27:35 - 6:27:36)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (6:27:36 - 6:28:15)

Every day. I love on page 134 when you say, although the body is very intelligent, it cannot tell the difference between an actual situation and the thought. It reacts to every thought as if it were a reality.

It doesn't know it's just a thought. To the body, a worrisome, fearful thought means I'm in danger. And it responds accordingly.

Even though you may be lying in a warm and comfortable bed at night, the heart beats faster, muscles contract, breathing becomes rapid. There's a buildup of energy. But since the danger is only a mental fiction, the energy has no outlet.

The rest of the energy turns toxic, interferes with the harmonious functioning of the body. So that's what you said weeks ago about worry.

[Speaker 1] (6:28:16 - 6:28:16)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (6:28:17 - 6:28:17)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (6:28:17 - 6:28:26)

Oh, to see in oneself when worry arises, what we call worry is simply repetitive negative thought patterns.

[Speaker 2] (6:28:26 - 6:28:34)

That's right. And your body doesn't know the difference. And so all of that energy is inside your body, and that's what makes people sick.

[Speaker 1] (6:28:35 - 6:29:21)

Yes. So it's very important to clear up your mind so that you stop the continuous negativity of the egoic self-talk, as we could call it. So recognize it and then step out of that stream of thinking Use any device you can.

I recommend device number one to step out of the stream of negative thinking. Come into the present moment. Take one or two conscious breaths.

You've stepped out of the stream of thinking. Or feel the inner body. Feel the aliveness in your arms, your hands, your legs.

Put your attention there.

[Speaker 8] (6:29:21 - 6:29:22)

Right.

[Speaker 1] (6:29:22 - 6:29:54)

You've stepped out of the stream of thinking. Or look at something and bring your full consciousness to the act of perception. For example, a tree or a flower.

Anything natural is best. Look at anything natural. Give it your full attention.

That takes you out of the stream of thinking. Or any natural sound, a bird, the wind. To bring you back, really.

Bring you back to the present moment. These are all little ways in which you can step out of the stream of repetitive thinking.

[Speaker 2] (6:29:54 - 6:30:14)

In the story on page 137, the duck with a human mind. Love that story. You talk about how the human mind creates a me and a my story that keeps negative emotions alive.

Live and personalizes everything. And it's ultimately led our entire species to a precipice. So tell us the duck story.

[Speaker 1] (6:30:14 - 6:30:15)

Well, I was...

[Speaker 2] (6:30:15 - 6:30:17)

What lessons it has for all of us as humans.

[Speaker 1] (6:30:17 - 6:30:40)

I was writing The Power of Now and writing about accumulated emotions. And then I was taking a break and went into the park and sat on a bench by a pond. And I saw two ducks approaching on the pond.

And suddenly, maybe one duck got too close to the other. Suddenly, they started getting into a fight.

[Speaker 28] (6:30:41 - 6:30:42)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (6:30:43 - 6:31:09)

Lasted for about 30 seconds. And then they both separated, swam off in opposite directions. They were still agitated, both of them.

And then both ducks kind of lifted themselves up on the water and vigorously flapped their wings a few times. They almost stood up on the water and going, and then suddenly they were totally peaceful again and swam off.

[Speaker 2] (6:31:09 - 6:31:11)

They were doing cleansing breath.

[Speaker 1] (6:31:11 - 6:31:11)

Cleansing.

[Speaker 2] (6:31:11 - 6:31:12)

We did from Russia last night.

[Speaker 1] (6:31:14 - 6:32:01)

And I realized at that moment I had been actually been writing about this. And the ducks were showing me how to... how they let go of what otherwise would have become accumulated negativity in the body.

Wow. And so their instinctive natural intelligence takes over. And then I realized they all do it.

All the ducks after a fight do that. And immediately that... It's like clearing their wings.

Clearing. The energy gets dissipated. Wow.

And they are totally peaceful afterwards. And then, of course, they don't have a human mind, which repeats the story of what this duck did to me. And what I'm going to do to this duck next time, or I'm never going to get close to her anymore.

But whatever the story is...

[Speaker 2] (6:32:01 - 6:32:04)

How dare you come over to my side of the pond again.

[Speaker 1] (6:32:04 - 6:32:22)

And then talk to other ducks about what that duck did to you. And all the story making... Because the story making that still goes on in the human mind keeps the old emotion alive.

So you relive it again. The negativity is relived. The body believes it's still happening.

[Speaker 2] (6:32:22 - 6:32:23)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (6:32:23 - 6:32:25)

Because the body believes in what your mind is thinking.

[Speaker 2] (6:32:25 - 6:32:31)

Because although the body is intelligent, it cannot tell the difference between an actual situation and a thought.

[Speaker 1] (6:32:31 - 6:32:45)

Yes. So whatever thoughts you're holding, your body believes that is your reality. And the corresponding emotions will arise.

And the corresponding physical states of contraction will be there.

[Speaker 2] (6:32:45 - 6:32:45)

Wow.

[Speaker 1] (6:32:46 - 6:32:51)

So this is how... That was the duck's lesson. So I put it into the book.

[Speaker 2] (6:32:51 - 6:33:07)

That's right. I mean, and we see so many people... I know I have friends who've been through divorce, and they live and still, you know, hating their ex-spouse, and talking about their ex-spouse, and what their ex-spouse did to them.

You know, years after the spouse is gone.

[Speaker 1] (6:33:07 - 6:33:10)

And so that keeps it alive as if it were still happening.

[Speaker 2] (6:33:10 - 6:33:11)

As if it were still happening.

[Speaker 1] (6:33:12 - 6:33:13)

And there's an addictive quality...

[Speaker 2] (6:33:13 - 6:33:14)

And that's in your mind.

[Speaker 1] (6:33:14 - 6:33:24)

It's in the mind. And it's addictive. There's an addictive quality to that.

You need to see it in yourself to see that it's still the case for some of the people who are listening to us.

[Speaker 2] (6:33:24 - 6:33:28)

So it's like the monks. Tell the monk story. I like the monk story.

The two monks.

[Speaker 1] (6:33:28 - 6:33:28)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (6:33:28 - 6:33:31)

And the one monk picks up the girl on the road.

[Speaker 1] (6:33:31 - 6:34:30)

Yes, that's the story of two monks on a pilgrimage. And they come across, in a village, they come across a young 17-year-old girl with a long kimono, trying to cross a very muddy road, but she's not daring to step into the mud. So one monk picks her up, carries her across the road through the mud, puts her down.

And so the monks walk on in silence for another four or five hours, just practicing noble silence. And then after four or five hours, they're getting close to their destination. One monk says to the monk who had picked up the girl, oh, you know, you shouldn't have done that because we monks are not supposed even to touch women.

So you really, you shouldn't have picked up that girl. You're not supposed to do that. The other monk says, oh, are you still carrying that girl?

I put her down hours ago. So the other monk was still carrying the girl, the event, in his head.

[Speaker 2] (6:34:30 - 6:34:31)

Four hours later.

[Speaker 1] (6:34:31 - 6:34:41)

Four hours, he was walking with this burden. Yes, right. That shows the reluctance of the human mind to let go of the past.

[Speaker 2] (6:34:42 - 6:34:52)

Yeah. So how many of us reading this chapter are not carrying things from four hours ago, but carrying things from four years and 40 years ago?

[Speaker 1] (6:34:52 - 6:34:52)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (6:34:52 - 6:34:55)

People are still holding on to what was done to them.

[Speaker 1] (6:34:55 - 6:34:56)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (6:34:56 - 6:34:56)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (6:34:56 - 6:35:08)

Yes. That's a dreadful burden. It's like carrying a useless weight around with you.

And some people carry it from all their lives. And they even derive some identity from that.

[Speaker 2] (6:35:09 - 6:35:09)

Right.

[Speaker 1] (6:35:09 - 6:35:10)

Right.

[Speaker 2] (6:35:10 - 6:35:21)

I had to learn years ago to let go of what had happened to me as a child because what I realized, you know, my grandmother, the people who took care of me did the best they knew how to do at the time.

[Speaker 1] (6:35:21 - 6:35:21)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (6:35:22 - 6:35:24)

And if they had known better, they would have done better.

[Speaker 1] (6:35:24 - 6:35:47)

Yes. And that is always the case. Whatever humans have done to you.

Yeah. It's always they didn't know any better because they could only act according to their level of consciousness. Nobody can act beyond their level of consciousness.

So you cannot expect your parents, if you believe they did something that was wrong. Right. You cannot expect your parents to have acted beyond their level of consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (6:35:47 - 6:35:48)

Because that's all they knew.

[Speaker 1] (6:35:48 - 6:36:01)

Yes. Jesus on the cross said it all when he says, forgive them for they know not what they do, which means they are unconscious. So when you realize that, you naturally forgive.

[Speaker 2] (6:36:01 - 6:36:02)

That's what Jesus meant.

[Speaker 1] (6:36:02 - 6:36:07)

Yes. If he had lived now, he probably would have said they are unconscious. They don't know.

[Speaker 2] (6:36:07 - 6:36:13)

Okay. Well, Roz is on the phone from Sydney, Australia, and has a question about the pain body and grief.

[Speaker 5] (6:36:13 - 6:37:30)

Hello, Roz. Hi, Oprah. Hi, Eckhart.

Can I start by saying thank you both so much for helping to make my life feel lighter and less stressful? That's amazing. And for taking the time to answer all our questions.

But in regard to the pain body, I'd like to clarify, how do we honor the memory of our loved ones who have died and that we share tears for and not add to our pain body? I'm trying to work out, are we adding to our pain body? Or is this the type of sorrow from the state of being?

You mean when you, the ability to grieve or not? Yeah. Well, the best way I can describe it is, I lost my dad six years ago, and most of the time I think of him and I have a smile on my face.

But sometimes the tears flow for what I think is no apparent reason. Intellectually, I know crying won't bring him back and I can't change the past, but the tears just come. So am I adding to my pain body by doing that?

I feel I'm honoring my father's memory, but I'm sad at the time. So is that a negative emotion? Or is that something deeper down inside that is a natural thing and it's a part of my being?

[Speaker 1] (6:37:30 - 6:40:05)

There's a natural mourning, of course, that happens when a loved one passes away. With some people, that also can turn into pain body. And for example, that would be the case if there's an excessive or exaggerated amount of sadness or depression, some people after a loved one dies go through years of debilitating depression or they develop even extreme anger.

This is also quite frequent that people develop anger when a loved one dies. And those are instances when the pain body becomes activated through the death of a loved one. But that does not seem to be the case with you.

So to allow mourning to happen when it happens can actually be a beautiful thing. Uh, your mind, observe what your mind is doing and what kind of thoughts your mind is generating when you go through these periods of sadness or crying. Maybe your mind is not saying much at all.

Maybe there's just emotion and that can be quite beautiful. Simply to allow this emotion of sadness, which is natural after all, when somebody has passed away or when you remember a loved one, allow this emotion of sadness to be there and then you may actually find that underneath the sadness there's still some peace. When you allow the emotion of mourning to be there, then you realize that underneath the seemingly negative emotion, there's still a deeper peace.

I found that when my parents passed away a year and a half ago, both of them within a few months, the sadness came, some tears came periodically and yet through the acceptance of the emotion, there was an underlying peace that was deeper even than the sadness. And that comes with the acceptance of the emotion and that's important for you. So I don't believe that in your case this is the pain body, but I would suggest that you observe, or perhaps you can tell me now, what kind of thoughts your mind produces when you go through these periods of sadness or weeping?

What does your mind say?

[Speaker 5] (6:40:06 - 6:40:46)

Well, usually at the end I end up smiling again. Just that I wonder whether the tears were a negative thing or no, I don't suppose tears are a negative thing, but there are just times when I suppose it's that sense of loss that comes with it, which I know is in a way is adding pain to your life, but it's something you just, no, I don't know, how do you explain the void you feel inside when you lose someone? Admittedly, I'm not getting depressed about it, thank God, but I just wondered whether, you know, logically I was adding pain to my life or whether it just is something that if you can stay detached and observe, you realize it's just a part of who you are.

[Speaker 2] (6:40:47 - 6:41:46)

I think it is a part of who we are, and, you know, I recently just lost a loved one who happened to be a four-legged animal, my beloved little Sophie I lost. Sophie died? Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

Yes, and, you know, unless you have an animal who's a member of your family, a lot of people don't understand, but she was a member of my, she was as close to me as anybody has ever been in my life, and I will have to say that I miss her little body, and I miss the, as I know you do with your loved one, you miss, I miss the physicality of her because she slept with me every single night, came to work with me every single day, has been at every event for the past 13 years.

So I miss her physical body, but I actually feel closer to her, to the spirit of her, to the soul of her. I feel that the density of the body has allowed the spirit of her to be with me in a way that I never could really fully appreciate or absorb.

[Speaker 28] (6:41:46 - 6:41:47)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (6:41:47 - 6:41:55)

So I actually feel closer to her. I feel the love that she was in a way that I didn't even feel when she was alive.

[Speaker 1] (6:41:55 - 6:41:56)

Yes, yes.

[Speaker 2] (6:41:56 - 6:41:58)

Did you sense that with your parents too?

[Speaker 1] (6:41:58 - 6:41:58)

Yes, yes.

[Speaker 2] (6:41:58 - 6:42:00)

So that's the piece you're talking about.

[Speaker 1] (6:42:00 - 6:42:00)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (6:42:00 - 6:42:20)

And actually she died on the second night that we were doing this on March the 10th, and I went home in the middle of the day. She died early in the morning. I cried all afternoon.

I came here and allowed myself to accept it, to go to that place where, all right, she's gone.

[Speaker 1] (6:42:21 - 6:42:21)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (6:42:22 - 6:42:27)

She's gone. I'm not going to say, oh, why is she gone? Oh, all right, she's gone.

[Speaker 1] (6:42:27 - 6:42:29)

Yes. And that's the acceptance.

[Speaker 2] (6:42:29 - 6:42:31)

And a piece comes with that.

[Speaker 1] (6:42:31 - 6:43:23)

Yes. Because the void is the word, because a void is left when the form that was there, the body that was there, is no longer. And that's the void.

Now the void, when it's resisted, and it is resisted, especially by the ego, the ego hates it. The ego doesn't want the void to be there. But when you can accept that now there is the void instead of the body, Yes.

then something else shines through that void, which is formless. Right. So where the form once was, the formless can now shine through.

Absolutely. And that's the beauty, that's the grace that is hiding behind death or whatever, death of whatever kind. So there's always that, you have to look for that.

I see that. I see that.

[Speaker 5] (6:43:23 - 6:43:28)

Do you see that, Roz? Yeah, that's inspirational. That natural morning makes me feel better now.

[Speaker 2] (6:43:28 - 6:43:51)

And what happens is, what happens is, Roz, if we spend our time, I always say when somebody you love dies, you now have an angel you know. I can call the angel formless or consciousness or being or whatever. But what happens is, so many people are just caught up in the grief of it and the loss of it and resisting and wanting it to be the way it was.

[Speaker 1] (6:43:51 - 6:43:52)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (6:43:52 - 6:44:00)

Trying to hold on to the way it was instead of accepting what is, and they don't allow the grace of the formless to come through.

[Speaker 1] (6:44:01 - 6:44:04)

Then the grace cannot come through. That's right. I got that.

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (6:44:04 - 6:44:12)

I hope you got that too, Roz. Yeah, thank you. That was lovely.

I really appreciate that. Okay. God bless you both.

God bless you.

[Speaker 1] (6:44:12 - 6:44:12)

God bless.

[Speaker 2] (6:44:12 - 6:44:52)

I love when you say that sometimes understanding the science, for me, sometimes understanding the science behind these concepts that you're talking about makes it easier. And you say on page 146, all things are vibrating energy fields in ceaseless motion. The chair you sit on, the book you're holding appears solid and motionless only because that's how our senses perceive their vibrational frequency.

That is to say the increased movement of the molecules. And so we're all vibrating at different frequencies. And the vibrational frequency of the pain body resonates with that of negative thoughts.

[Speaker 1] (6:44:52 - 6:44:57)

Yes, negative thoughts and other negative emotions coming from other people.

[Speaker 2] (6:44:58 - 6:45:56)

And then I love that you say this on page 152. You write on page 152. I think this is great here.

If you were not familiar with our contemporary civilization, if you had come here from another age or another planet, one of the things that would amaze you is that millions of people love and pay money to watch humans kill and inflict pain on each other and call it entertainment. When I read that, I thought, yeah, if you're from another planet, you would think, what is that? So what is that, that people love that?

I mean, the most violent movies, particularly this year for Academy Awards, most of the movies were violent movies, destructive. All those pain bodies up there on the screen. And what is it about a lot of the public that enjoys that?

[Speaker 1] (6:45:56 - 6:46:58)

Well, if it's in some cases, violence may be actually helpful to see because it shows the human madness. If it shows the wider context in which violence happens, if it shows the psychological dysfunction behind violence, and then it can be helpful. But most of these movies contain violence that is actually meant to feed the pain body.

And it is the pain body in the viewers who enjoy those films that enjoys the violence. So it's not actually the people themselves who pay money to see these movies. It's the pain body in them that feeds on the violence that it watches.

So, and the people who produce these movies, probably- Their pain bodies are writing them. The pain bodies write them. The pain bodies write the movies, the pain bodies produce them, and the pain bodies watch them.

[Speaker 2] (6:47:00 - 6:47:09)

Well, this comes from a screenwriter, Lana, who's in her study in Copenhagen and has a question. Copenhagen. Copenhagen.

Hello, Lana from Copenhagen. Hi, Oprah.

[Speaker 3] (6:47:09 - 6:50:34)

Hi, Eckerd. Eckerd, I also have a cold, so I hope I sound as sexy as you do. So, yes.

I like your flowers on the wall, may I say? Did you take those pictures yourself? Oh, no.

I bought it from somebody. Okay, okay, great. Yeah, but I'm a screenwriter, I'm also a producer, and after reading this chapter, it just floored me on so many levels.

I write pieces that involve scenes that may have violence, it may have a death, it may have rape, but I try not to be gratuitous. But after reading this chapter, I wasn't quite sure how to be sure. And one particular experience that I had really kind of put me in a tailspin about how to create content, how to create media projects going forward after reading this book.

I had a few friends over for dinner, Danish friends of mine, and I've learned so much from the Danish people. They're wonderful, wonderful people. And at the time, there was in the news at the beginning of this year, a lot of what they call second generation kids were burning cars here in Denmark.

And a friend of mine made the comment to me, well, I don't understand how people can burn their own neighborhoods. And that hit me like a ton of bricks. And although I was too young to remember the riots after Martin Luther King died, I remember that comment being spoken by Americans.

So here I am in Denmark and kind of hearing the same type of conversation. And I felt like my first response was, I've got to do a documentary on this. And so I started making the phone calls to do whatever I needed to do to talk to traditional Danes and also second generation Danish people.

But then I read the chapter and I wondered whether or not my pain body as an African-American was now entering into this situation and creating something that may kind of negatively affect the pain body of another group of people. So I questioned whether or not I wanted to do this documentary. So what is your question?

What is your question to us? My question is, in this situation that I've just described, the pain body that led me to come up with the idea for this documentary, I think it comes from my experience of being an African-American and that I want to bring people together. I want to kind of not allow a situation that's not necessary to just go unchecked.

And I feel like media can do that. A documentary can open up that dialogue. But I'm wondering if my pain body, since it created this idea for a documentary, is this something that will help both sides or am I just speaking to pain bodies, to other pain bodies?

[Speaker 1] (6:50:35 - 6:51:54)

Well, I don't believe necessarily that your pain body came up with idea of making this documentary about the violence that's happening in Denmark. And I believe that you will probably show the wider context in which this violence happens and the root causes of this violence, not only historical, but perhaps also psychological. And if all these things are included in the film, then to show violence can actually fulfill a useful purpose.

That's why I mentioned in the book that some of the most powerful anti-war films were war films, because those films showed the reality of war, not some glamorized version of war for the pain body to feed on. So if you show the reality and the underlying causes at the wider context, then those films are not going to feed the pain body because they will help people become more conscious and perhaps not prematurely judge the people who are carrying out these acts of vandalism or whatever it is to see perhaps what lies behind it.

[Speaker 2] (6:51:55 - 6:53:38)

Correct. Thank you, Lana. Thank you so much.

I think it's interesting though on page, Lana's talking about what you talk about on page 159, that as there are individual pain bodies that each of us carries because of whatever negativity happened in our lives, and we didn't completely deal with that at the moment, that there is also a collective pain body that nations carry and races carry. And you say the collective racial pain body is pronounced in Jewish people who suffered persecution over many centuries. Not surprisingly, it's strong as well in Native Americans whose numbers were decimated, whose culture all but destroyed by the European settlers, and Black Americans too for whom the collective pain body is pronounced, their ancestors violently uprooted, beaten into submission and sold into slavery.

The foundation of American economic prosperity rested on the labor of four to five million Black slaves. In fact, the suffering inflicted on Native and Black Americans has not remained confined to those two races, but has become part of the collective American pain body. It is always the case that both victim and perpetrator suffer the consequences of any acts of violence, oppression, or brutality.

For what you do to others, you do to yourself. I think that there is not an understanding, and actually, Senator Obama in his speech a couple of weeks ago was trying to speak to this, this collective pain body that America holds. And I think a lot of Americans, number one, don't know it exists and want to deny that it does exist because they say, I didn't have anything to do with slavery, or I didn't have anything to do with the Native Americans.

Correct?

[Speaker 1] (6:53:38 - 6:53:39)

That's right, yes.

[Speaker 2] (6:53:39 - 6:53:43)

And to not to recognize it is what? Is to be in denial of what is the truth.

[Speaker 1] (6:53:44 - 6:53:48)

Yes, and then it continues to be there without you knowing it.

[Speaker 2] (6:53:48 - 6:53:48)

That's right.

[Speaker 1] (6:53:49 - 6:53:50)

So that's...

[Speaker 2] (6:53:50 - 6:53:53)

Because the recognition of it is the beginning of being able to change it, right?

[Speaker 1] (6:53:53 - 6:54:52)

Yes, that's right. And I believe, since you mentioned Senator Obama, there was this controversy about the pastor who was making certain remarks. I believe that the pastor who has probably helped many, many people over many years, occasionally, when he speaks, as far as I can tell, he gets taken over by the pain body.

By the pain body. And then the pain body speaks through him. And it's understandable, and I believe Obama understands that, although he may not use the term or be familiar with the term pain body, but he understands the wider context for those remarks.

And he realizes that arise out of the collective pain. So, and once you see that these things arise out of the collective pain, you can see them in a much wider perspective. And you don't personalize what this person is saying.

It's not personal anymore. He's expressing collective pain.

[Speaker 2] (6:54:52 - 6:55:41)

You also talk about this when it comes to women. Pretty revolutionary. On page 155, you say, the suppression of the feminine principle, especially over the past 2000 years, has enabled the ego to gain absolute supremacy in the collective human psyche.

Although women have egos, of course, the female form is less rigidly encapsulated than the male and has greater openness and sensitivity toward other life forms. If the balance between male and female energies, I found this so fascinating, had not been destroyed on our planet, you say, the ego's growth would have been greatly curtailed. With many people becoming more conscious, the ego is losing its hold on the human mind because the ego was never as deeply rooted in women.

It's losing its hold on women more quickly than on men.

[Speaker 28] (6:55:42 - 6:55:42)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (6:55:43 - 6:56:05)

You know what? Reading this as a female, living in the world today, able to make choices and be my own person and express myself, I had forgotten about the years and years of torture and suppression and, you know, killing of women.

[Speaker 28] (6:56:05 - 6:56:06)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (6:56:06 - 6:56:14)

For the most natural things, because you liked animals, because you were a midwife, because you were a woman who wanted to have a voice. Yes. Tortured, killed.

[Speaker 1] (6:56:14 - 6:56:14)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (6:56:15 - 6:56:16)

Hundreds of millions of women.

[Speaker 1] (6:56:16 - 6:56:20)

Yes. And it's the, what I'm saying is, it's the arising ego.

[Speaker 2] (6:56:20 - 6:56:23)

And that happened because of the ego in the male.

[Speaker 1] (6:56:23 - 6:56:40)

Yes. Yes. So it's not the male as such.

It was the growing ego in the male that had to, that saw the feminine principle and the feminine energy as a threat, because it could not fully establish itself in that.

[Speaker 2] (6:56:40 - 6:56:45)

You believe we would have had a new earth a lot sooner if there had been not the suppression of the female.

[Speaker 1] (6:56:45 - 6:57:31)

Yes, probably. Yes. But the shift is happening now.

And the interesting thing is that there are more women changing, going through the shift in consciousness than men. Men are going through also, but there are, for example, Elizabeth Lesser mentioned at her, the Omega Institute, about 70, 75% of the people who come there for inner work, consciousness transformation, and so on, are women. So women are more open now to the change in consciousness that is happening than men.

I'm not saying it's not happening to men also, but there's a greater openness.

[Speaker 2] (6:57:31 - 6:57:54)

We love it. Audrey in Campbell, California, one of our emails says, I have 20 pounds to lose as a child. My father and brother call me big girl and big fat cow.

Could this be, that's not good. Could this be why, Audrey, that's not good at all. Could this be why I have such difficulty losing the weight?

I've been hearing these words in my head for years and years, and I can't let the words go.

[Speaker 1] (6:57:54 - 7:00:12)

Help. Yes. So, of course, these words have become lodged in your mind, and they have taken up residence in your mind, and now you can't get rid of them.

So they are, again, thoughts are energy formations, and thoughts that get lodged in your mind, sometimes they start in childhood, when parents tell you something negative. For example, some parents tell their children, you are stupid. It's a stupid thing to say.

Yes. It's a stupid thing to say that your kids are stupid. Yeah.

And if told that repeatedly, this thought becomes lodged in their mind. And it's a thought can, if you're not, if you don't bring presence to it now, you won't be able to dislodge it. So the first thing is to realize what has happened to you is that something that you were told years ago repeatedly has now become a thought that refuses to leave.

It's an energy, you're possessed, so to speak, temporarily, hopefully, by a thought. Some of you may have seen a film called The Number 23 with Jim Carrey last year. And that's about a man who becomes obsessed with the idea of the number 23.

And he sees it suddenly, he sees everywhere significance in the number 23. And that's an example of how one thought can take possession of your entire mind. And then through this one thought that takes possession of your entire mind, you interpret the whole universe, the whole of reality.

This is how dangerous it can be, if you're not careful, how one thought can take you over. So realize, the questioner here needs to realize that this is an old thought and realize it's no more than a thought. It is not the truth.

It's an old record that has been playing itself. Over and over in your head.

[Speaker 2] (7:00:12 - 7:00:14)

Big fat cow, big fat cow, big fat cow.

[Speaker 1] (7:00:14 - 7:00:24)

Yes, no more than an old, no more than a tape. So when you hear it again, when you hear that in your mind, you realize there's the old tape again.

[Speaker 2] (7:00:24 - 7:00:24)

That's right.

[Speaker 1] (7:00:24 - 7:00:28)

It loses its power because it's no more than that. That's right.

[Speaker 2] (7:00:28 - 7:00:32)

There's an old tape for the past and the past has no power over the present moment.

[Speaker 1] (7:00:32 - 7:00:32)

No.

[Speaker 2] (7:00:32 - 7:00:43)

All right. I love also when you say that thinking is no more than a tiny aspect of the totality of consciousness, the totality of who you are.

[Speaker 1] (7:00:43 - 7:00:44)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (7:00:44 - 7:01:08)

I had an awakening moment with that thought because we all think that we are up until reading this book. I think so many of us, I was one of those people thinking that we were our thoughts. Yes.

And then to read that thinking, not only are we not our thoughts, we are the awareness of our thoughts, but that thinking is only no more than a tiny aspect of the totality of consciousness, the totality of who you are.

[Speaker 1] (7:01:08 - 7:01:19)

Yes. And the awareness, of course, compared to thinking, the awareness is vast. It's limitless and has infinite potential for anything creative to come into your life.

[Speaker 2] (7:01:19 - 7:01:21)

That's where all your creativity comes from.

[Speaker 1] (7:01:21 - 7:01:34)

Not through thinking. Thinking can become a secondary tool in manifesting something, but not with the creative insight, the creative realization, the creative idea does not come through the movement of thinking.

[Speaker 2] (7:01:35 - 7:01:42)

Wow. Think about that, everybody, that when you have a creative, an inspiration does not come through your thoughts.

[Speaker 1] (7:01:42 - 7:01:42)

No.

[Speaker 2] (7:01:42 - 7:01:44)

It comes through your being.

[Speaker 1] (7:01:44 - 7:01:46)

Yes. And so the space of awareness.

[Speaker 2] (7:01:47 - 7:01:48)

The space of awareness.

[Speaker 1] (7:01:48 - 7:02:21)

Now, to the extent to which you are creative in your life, depends on how much access you have in yourself to that space of awareness, of presence. And it's sometimes enough for brief moments to have access to that. And for some people, that's enough to lead a creative life.

Right. But of course, we want to be more than that, not just have brief access, but to make it the very foundation of your life.

[Speaker 2] (7:02:21 - 7:02:39)

It's like when Quincy Jones was doing the, We Are The World tape, and he brought together all of those artists and he left the door open. First, they had a sign outside the door that said, check your egos at the door. And then they left the door open.

He said, we wanted to leave room for God to walk in the room. I would leave enough space for God to walk into the room.

[Speaker 1] (7:02:39 - 7:02:39)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (7:02:39 - 7:02:40)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (7:02:40 - 7:02:45)

Yes. So you're leaving the space. Leaving the space.

Leaving the space inside yourself.

[Speaker 27] (7:02:45 - 7:02:45)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (7:02:48 - 7:03:17)

So also, if you want change in your life, some people don't know, there will be other chapters when we'll talk about life purpose and so on. But the realization of what it is, for example, what it is that you're meant to do in your life, also comes from that inner space. Are you able to allow the space within become still?

Right. And then whatever it is that you need to know will arise from that.

[Speaker 2] (7:03:17 - 7:03:17)

Will come through that.

[Speaker 1] (7:03:17 - 7:03:35)

Yes. It may come as a thought, but then it will be an inspired thought. Right.

Without the space, without the stillness, without accessing that dimension, thinking cannot be inspired. There is no inspired thinking. The inspiration comes from the realm that is deeper than thought.

[Speaker 2] (7:03:35 - 7:03:38)

I got that. And you're never going to think your way to a purpose.

[Speaker 1] (7:03:38 - 7:03:43)

No. And you're not going to worry your way out of a problem.

[Speaker 2] (7:03:44 - 7:03:46)

You're not going to worry your way out of a problem.

[Speaker 1] (7:03:46 - 7:03:50)

It's impossible. Because worry means to manufacture more problems.

[Speaker 2] (7:03:50 - 7:03:52)

The same thing. You're just continuing the same thought over and over.

[Speaker 1] (7:03:52 - 7:03:53)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (7:03:53 - 7:03:59)

Yes. You need a different kind of consciousness. Wasn't it Einstein that said that?

I don't. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (7:03:59 - 7:04:10)

I don't remember whether it was Einstein or Jung, but he said a problem cannot be solved on the same level of consciousness that gave rise to the problem. That created it. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (7:04:10 - 7:04:21)

We have an email from Judy in Columbia, South Carolina. Could you talk a bit about alcohol and drug abuse in the pain body? Is this an attempt at escape from the pain body, alcohol and drug abuse?

[Speaker 1] (7:04:22 - 7:06:13)

Yes, often it is. And I mentioned that in the book. It's an escape of not wanting to feel the pain anymore.

In some people, the pain body is active almost all the time. And that is a dreadful way to live. And those people in whom the pain body is active almost all the time, often they will seek some kind of escape from it because they can't live with that pain anymore.

The pain body loves it, but it makes your life more and more miserable. But there is also a good chance. And maybe that brings us to what connects us with what I said in the book.

If people who have a heavy pain body, their chance of awakening is also quite great because when life becomes unbearable because you are creating so much pain continuously for yourself, your desire to awaken, to finally get out of this misery is much greater than a normal person's desire to awaken. In other words, you could say when you're having a relatively pleasant dream, you don't mind so much dreaming on. But when your dream turns into a nightmare, then you really want to awaken from that when you can't stand it.

And that was the case with me. I had a very, very heavy pain body that drove me almost very close to suicide until the realization came I cannot live with myself any longer. And that thought was the breakthrough where the separation happened from the consciousness that I am and the ego and the pain body that I had been identified with as the unhappy little me.

[Speaker 2] (7:06:13 - 7:06:18)

Were you really actually going to kill yourself? Did you have a plan to kill yourself?

[Speaker 1] (7:06:18 - 7:06:31)

Yes, I had my first plans to kill myself. I already had at the age of nine and 10. Really?

Yeah. So I had worked it all out, but somehow I didn't quite have the courage yet to do it.

[Speaker 2] (7:06:31 - 7:06:32)

Because the pain body was so heavy.

[Speaker 1] (7:06:32 - 7:06:40)

Already then it was quite heavy. Then it subsided a little bit and then it came back again very strongly in my 20s.

[Speaker 2] (7:06:40 - 7:06:48)

Wow. And what was it? What was it that caused you to feel you felt depressed?

You felt unworthy? You felt what?

[Speaker 1] (7:06:48 - 7:07:04)

It was partly living in almost continuous conflict in the home environment between my parents who were always fighting. There was very little peace at home. I was very sensitive, so it was very hard for me to even be there at home.

[Speaker 2] (7:07:05 - 7:07:10)

As you say in the book, for children who watch their parents fight, it's almost unbearable.

[Speaker 1] (7:07:10 - 7:07:32)

Yes. And that, of course, contributes to the child's growing pain body. So my pain body grew very quickly.

But if this had not been the case, I would never have awakened. I would have been in a relatively pleasant dream. That's right.

[Speaker 2] (7:07:32 - 7:07:37)

If you'd had a nice, happy childhood, you might not be sitting here teaching with us tonight.

[Speaker 1] (7:07:37 - 7:07:43)

Certainly not. No, no. So retrospectively, one is grateful for one's suffering.

[Speaker 2] (7:07:43 - 7:07:44)

Mm-hmm.

[Speaker 1] (7:07:44 - 7:07:47)

Because eventually suffering will wake you up.

[Speaker 2] (7:07:48 - 7:08:07)

You said when I read earlier on page 141 about any negative emotion that's not fully faced and seen for what it is in the moment it arises, does not completely dissolve, it leaves behind a remnant of pain. So when we are faced with negative emotions on a daily basis, we should embrace them. We should go into them rather than resist them.

[Speaker 1] (7:08:07 - 7:08:09)

Yes. Accept whatever emotion.

[Speaker 2] (7:08:09 - 7:08:10)

Accept it.

[Speaker 1] (7:08:10 - 7:08:58)

Accept because it's part of accepting the present moment. Because if a certain negative emotion is part of what's happening in the present moment, what can you do? It's already happening.

So you take it, make sure, oh, there it is. I can feel that anger. I can feel the sadness.

I can feel it. Be the space for it. So accept that it is there.

The acceptance of the present moment, no matter what form it takes, externally or internally, whatever form it takes. Externally, it means whatever situation arises right now, it always is as it is at this moment. You might as well say yes to it.

Internally, it means whatever emotion arises at this moment, it is as it is. You might as well say yes to it.

[Speaker 2] (7:08:58 - 7:09:14)

Well, I know next week we're going to be talking about breaking free of the pain body. But just for now, if every time you can see it show itself and recognize it for what it is, there it is, there's my pain body again, there's his again, that the awareness of it begins to dissolve it, correct?

[Speaker 1] (7:09:14 - 7:09:15)

Yes, yes.

[Speaker 2] (7:09:15 - 7:09:34)

Okay, let's go to our new Earth Study group watching our webcast. Hey, everybody at Borders on Michigan, how are you enjoying the class tonight? Interesting.

All the pain bodies have gathered together. Borders. I hear Courtney has a question.

[Speaker 17] (7:09:36 - 7:10:08)

Yes, yes, I have a question. Hi. I think a lot.

So what I'm curious to know is, you know, when I'm not in a relationship, I obsess that I'm going to be alone. And when I'm in a relationship, I obsess about my career or money or anything. And I think a lot of people my age obsess about this, you know, money, career, finding a relationship.

What you say in the book, Eckhart, makes sense. But what I guess I'm having trouble with is taking that and actually putting it, you know, changing my life in, you know, kind of daily, I guess.

[Speaker 2] (7:10:08 - 7:10:12)

I love the make sense, but. What you say makes sense, but.

[Speaker 17] (7:10:14 - 7:10:25)

It does make sense, but then I just don't know. I guess I'm having trouble putting that into my daily life. How do I not obsess or think about these things all the time and try and stay in the present?

[Speaker 1] (7:10:26 - 7:10:33)

Well, when you say obsess, of course, you're talking about certain thoughts that go through your head.

[Speaker 2] (7:10:33 - 7:10:36)

Over and over and over and over and over.

[Speaker 1] (7:10:37 - 7:11:19)

So are you able sometimes to, while these thoughts go through your head, to recognize the futility of these thoughts? Are you sometimes able to be there as the presence in the background or see, for example, just after they happened for the let's see, for example, realize for the past 20 minutes, I've been obsessing about this or that. I'm having had thoughts about a certain situation that's not here now.

And that's part, of course, of the structure of the egoic mind. It loves to do that. Are you sometimes already there as the presence or are you always totally identified with the?

[Speaker 17] (7:11:20 - 7:11:37)

No, sometimes I am. And in the hindsight, I can go back and realize what I've done. But it's in the moment when I'm doing this and I in my mind just won't stop.

You know, it just keeps going and going and I keep thinking about things that it's hard to stop, I think. And I realize what I will realize eventually.

[Speaker 1] (7:11:37 - 7:12:41)

Yes. Now, something applies that we talked about the other week when we are talking about worry. Worry is another type of that kind of thinking, what you call obsessing.

These thoughts, the way I put it two weeks ago, was these thoughts pretend to be important and necessary. These thoughts want to draw in all your conscious attention. And it's almost as if every thought we're saying, give me your attention.

This is very important. You must think about this. Think, think.

Right. So these, the thoughts have the ability, they have a certain momentum behind them. This is the momentum of the mind.

And so it's not easy to become free of that. But the first freedom is in realizing their futility in the moment they happen. And to realize that it is, they fulfill no useful purpose except to make your life miserable.

[Speaker 17] (7:12:41 - 7:12:49)

Yeah. Because what is the obsessing got in you? So what does it do for you?

Worry. More worry. Yeah.

And it's just kind of an idea of how to be, how to just be.

[Speaker 2] (7:12:49 - 7:12:57)

And also takes energy away from your being. It takes energy away from your being able to be fully present with whatever it is you're doing.

[Speaker 28] (7:12:58 - 7:12:58)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (7:12:58 - 7:12:59)

You can see that, right?

[Speaker 1] (7:13:00 - 7:13:00)

You see that.

[Speaker 17] (7:13:00 - 7:13:01)

Oh, yeah.

[Speaker 2] (7:13:01 - 7:13:01)

Okay.

[Speaker 17] (7:13:01 - 7:13:03)

It's just at the time. Sometimes it's not so.

[Speaker 1] (7:13:04 - 7:14:21)

Yeah. So rather than trying to get rid of those thoughts, because if you, what you resist persists. Right.

So if you try to, if you try to get rid of those thoughts, that will be hard. But if you see they are futile and they are meaningless and they are no more than part of the structure of the conditioned egoic mind, because if you change your situation, you will obsess about something else. You've experienced that already.

So if you're in a relationship, you have then have some other thing to obsess about. If there's no relationship, you can obsess about the lack of relationship. Or if you're making money, you can obsess about perhaps losing it.

Perhaps the financial market will collapse. Right. Or if you have no money, then you're obsessed about how to make money.

So see the futility of all this movement of thought in the moment it happens and realize it actually takes away your power. It's like a little parasite. Egoic thought patterns are almost like a parasitic entity that lives in you, that sucks up all your conscious attention.

[Speaker 17] (7:14:21 - 7:14:27)

You got that right, Courtney? Oh, yeah. It makes sense now.

It's just when I'm going through it, I can't stop.

[Speaker 2] (7:14:27 - 7:14:33)

Well, the thing to do is all of this doesn't happen, you know, awakening doesn't happen all at once.

[Speaker 1] (7:14:33 - 7:14:33)

No.

[Speaker 2] (7:14:33 - 7:14:45)

The whole process is you have to catch yourself doing it more and more often. You start slowly and more and more often you catch yourself and pretty soon or later.

[Speaker 1] (7:14:45 - 7:14:45)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (7:14:45 - 7:14:46)

You'll find.

[Speaker 1] (7:14:46 - 7:14:46)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (7:14:47 - 7:14:47)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (7:14:47 - 7:15:18)

Or another thing that might be helpful is when the mind is not overly active, just normal moments, occasionally choose to take your attention away from thinking. We mentioned it earlier and bring your attention to the present moment. Either use the device of feeling the inner body, conscious breath, sense perceptions, conscious alert, sense perceptions.

So choosing to be present rather than to be thinking.

[Speaker 2] (7:15:18 - 7:15:27)

And what that does is you begin to train yourself. You begin to train yourself to be present with yourself.

[Speaker 1] (7:15:27 - 7:15:27)

That's right.

[Speaker 2] (7:15:28 - 7:15:29)

Present moment training.

[Speaker 1] (7:15:29 - 7:15:33)

Or as you grow and then presence grows in you.

[Speaker 2] (7:15:33 - 7:15:34)

Yes, it does.

[Speaker 1] (7:15:34 - 7:15:40)

But you have to invite it in. Invite it in when the mind is not totally mad.

[Speaker 2] (7:15:40 - 7:15:40)

Right.

[Speaker 1] (7:15:40 - 7:15:48)

And then when the mind does become, then these periods come when it gets totally mad. Then it's more likely that there will still be a presence there in the background.

[Speaker 2] (7:15:49 - 7:15:49)

Still can take a breath.

[Speaker 1] (7:15:50 - 7:15:50)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (7:15:50 - 7:16:14)

I'm getting better at it. I've actually gotten better in the past five weeks. And you will too, Courtney.

Thank you. Thank you. Thanks, everybody at Borders.

Thank you all. OK, somebody asked earlier, there was an email where somebody wanted to know and I didn't get to it, wanted to know whether or not that pain body allows artists and writers and creative people to be more creative. The pain body.

[Speaker 1] (7:16:15 - 7:17:20)

There are, especially in modern art and modern writing, there are some artists who express the pain body in their work. So when you read their work or when you see their visual art, you can see, wow, there's a lot of pain in there. And perhaps that is how they free themselves to some extent of the pain body because they externalize it and make it into an object.

Yeah, you can take that suffering and turn it into something else. Now, whether this will be, whether this is really helpful to many humans, I don't know. To see so much pain on a canvas.

I'm sure it was helpful for the artist. Right. To externalize that.

So I believe that the deepest art goes deeper than that, than just show the pain, the human pain. Right. It goes, it may also include the human pain, but like the great works of literature are not just expressions of human suffering.

They also show a dimension that's beyond suffering. Right.

[Speaker 2] (7:17:21 - 7:18:00)

Well, another question from Mary in Birmingham, Michigan. Politics in the pain body, she writes. Is it a pain body that leads us to be fascinated with others downfall, such as the governor of New York and the mayor of Detroit?

I find myself eagerly watching the news to hear more about the scandals. I find myself wondering what I would do if I were in their place, having risen so high, so successful and fallen so far, fallen so far. That's Mary in Birmingham, Michigan.

Is that our pain body that loves to hear bad things about other people? The tabloids? Yes.

Even watching the news, things that are true, scandals.

[Speaker 1] (7:18:00 - 7:18:01)

Loving bad news.

[Speaker 2] (7:18:02 - 7:18:02)

Yes, loving bad news.

[Speaker 1] (7:18:03 - 7:18:28)

Is also of the pain body. And so there are some, some publications actually thrive on emotional negativity. They actually, they sell a negative emotion.

Some newspapers do it in their headlines and because they have realized the more negative the headlines are, the more papers they sell. Yeah, you were saying the British press. They love it.

Love it.

[Speaker 2] (7:18:28 - 7:18:40)

Yes. And we do too now in our country. Yeah, yeah.

More and more tabloid newspapers, tabloid magazines, following the lives of famous people. People love to see famous people fail.

[Speaker 1] (7:18:40 - 7:18:41)

Yes. Fall. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (7:18:41 - 7:18:43)

And is that's our pain body?

[Speaker 1] (7:18:43 - 7:19:07)

Yes. Whatever, whenever you see in that negativity, the enjoyment of negativity in whatever form or the enjoyment of negative events, the enjoyment of negative things happening to people, the enjoyment of your own negative thinking, all that is, is the pain body. It loves pain.

It lives on it.

[Speaker 2] (7:19:07 - 7:19:09)

And loves drama. It seeks drama.

[Speaker 1] (7:19:09 - 7:19:10)

Drama is part of that pain.

[Speaker 2] (7:19:10 - 7:19:10)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (7:19:11 - 7:19:11)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (7:19:11 - 7:19:17)

Yes. That story you told about going into the restaurant. Oh, yes.

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (7:19:17 - 7:19:19)

Oh my gosh.

[Speaker 2] (7:19:19 - 7:19:23)

Going into the restaurant and this guy is all disrupted. Wow.

[Speaker 1] (7:19:24 - 7:19:51)

Yes. But the, the, it was particularly strange because it happened immediately after I'd had a session with a woman who had a very heavy pain body at home. She came to see me at home and she had carried this pain body for many, many years.

And it was so heavy that one could almost sense it in the energy field in the room. We've all encountered people like that where it's deep, tippy, stark.

[Speaker 2] (7:19:52 - 7:19:52)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (7:19:52 - 7:21:17)

So I had been doing work with her and suddenly she became conscious. She was able to separate, suddenly for the first time in her life, she was able to separate herself from the pain body. And there was an awareness that realized she was carrying this heavy pain body inside.

That was a great liberation for her. And she went, she went off and said, oh, wonderful. Thank you so much.

And that was the beginning of a change in her. And after this session with the woman, I went off to the restaurant and I felt that I was so happy that the pain body had left her, not left her permanently, but the awareness had come in. And then in the restaurant, I encountered a man in a wheelchair at a table nearby who had just finished his meal.

And then I could feel the negative emotion in him building up, becoming stronger and stronger and stronger. And suddenly he started shouting and screaming. And I realized I had a suspicion that the pain body, the universal pain body, because every personal pain body is an expression of the one human universal pain body, that the pain body had come back there to tell me I'm still here.

You thought you got rid of me, but I'm still here. So the pain body got into the person who had the most negativity inside.

[Speaker 2] (7:21:18 - 7:21:29)

Because the person with the most negativity would have drawn it in. But did you, at the end of this incident in the book that you write about and the restaurant owner says, did you do all this? Did you cause this?

[Speaker 1] (7:21:29 - 7:21:32)

The restaurant owner must have had some intuition that there was some connection.

[Speaker 2] (7:21:33 - 7:21:41)

Between you sitting in the restaurant and all this disruption. And so the answer is, did you, did the pain body follow you into the restaurant?

[Speaker 1] (7:21:41 - 7:22:06)

I never knew the answer. It occurred to me that that might have happened. All it means is that the energy that was so heavy in the room, my place where she had come to see me was so heavy with that energy.

But when I left, perhaps it came with me and it's possible. I don't know the final answer to that. Yeah, it's a possibility.

[Speaker 2] (7:22:06 - 7:22:13)

Yes, because as we were saying earlier, you speak of the pain body like it's its own alien force, like a ghost of some kind.

[Speaker 1] (7:22:13 - 7:22:13)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (7:22:14 - 7:22:19)

But it is. It's not a ghost. It's an energy.

It's an energy field.

[Speaker 1] (7:22:19 - 7:22:44)

And it becomes eventually it becomes transmuted, which means it loses its energy for its pain body form and the very energy that was trapped there because of the energy was trapped. It was emotional energy that was trapped inside this shell that becomes freed through presence.

[Speaker 2] (7:22:44 - 7:22:54)

So that's what we're going to talk about next week is how you can begin to free the pain body or any energy that you're carrying from the past.

[Speaker 1] (7:22:54 - 7:22:55)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (7:22:55 - 7:22:56)

And you can free it instantly.

[Speaker 1] (7:22:56 - 7:23:22)

You free it instantly, although not the whole of it necessarily instantly. But in the moment, some of it can become transmuted. And the example I give is like it's like putting a lock into the fire.

The fire is the fire of consciousness or presence. And so the pain body can actually be transmuted and it becomes presence. We'll talk about that next week.

[Speaker 2] (7:23:23 - 7:23:29)

Before we say goodbye, though, let's sum up what we've covered in this class today. What do you want people to know about the pain body?

[Speaker 1] (7:23:30 - 7:24:05)

The most vital thing is for people to be there when it happens. Now, when it happens means it's either happening to somebody close to you at home, your partner or family member or more importantly, when the pain body happens to you. Now, it's easier to realize that the pain body is there when you see it arising in somebody else.

Always easier. You require more presence to see it in yourself. But that's the vital thing is to be there and realize it.

That's the pain body.

[Speaker 2] (7:24:05 - 7:24:29)

Well, the way you know it's in yourself is when you start to tell yourself the story. The woman who was the big fat cow, her family had called her a big fat cow her whole life. When you start to replay the tapes in your head over and over again, my story, my story, my story, identifying with that, anything you identify with is ego.

Yes. Right. That's how you know it's the pain body.

[Speaker 1] (7:24:29 - 7:24:51)

Yes. Or a sudden emotion arises, something your partner made a remark, said something and an enormous emotion arises that is out of proportion to the external trigger. And that could be the beginning of the arising pain body.

So then you think, oh, there's the pain body. Then you already, you're not, you're not at the mercy of the pain.

[Speaker 2] (7:24:51 - 7:25:02)

So let me ask you this. On the night that you had that, you know, the breakthrough where you said, I cannot live with myself any longer. Did you lose your pain body too?

[Speaker 1] (7:25:02 - 7:25:03)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (7:25:04 - 7:25:06)

Well, that just was one happy day, wasn't it?

[Speaker 1] (7:25:08 - 7:25:09)

That's quite rare.

[Speaker 2] (7:25:09 - 7:25:15)

Oh my goodness. You lost your ego, you lost your pain body. What a day that was.

[Speaker 1] (7:25:16 - 7:26:10)

Well, after years of dreadful suffering. So that's the, one more thing to say about the pain body is when you see it in somebody else, you have to be very careful. The pain bodies don't like to hear that they are the pain body.

So when you're talking to somebody like your partner, you have to be very careful because once the partner has already been taken over by the pain body, if at that stage you say, there's your pain body, the partner won't be hearing you anymore. The pain body will be hearing you and the pain body will say something back. It won't be pleasant.

It won't be pleasant. And you can't argue with the pain body. No way.

You can never, you can't, you can never win an argument with the pain body. He'll always win. The pain body will win.

It'll go on and on and on. And find another clever argument why the pain is justified and right.

[Speaker 2] (7:26:11 - 7:26:19)

And so it's like our first caller from Silver Spring was talking about her sister. What we must learn to do is be compassionate.

[Speaker 1] (7:26:19 - 7:26:20)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (7:26:20 - 7:26:29)

Stand still. Yes. Stand still.

As I said with the point, stand still and allow it to be whatever it is. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (7:26:29 - 7:26:32)

And then... And then you don't feed it.

[Speaker 2] (7:26:32 - 7:26:33)

You don't feed it.

[Speaker 1] (7:26:33 - 7:27:07)

Don't allow yourself to be drawn into the, pulled into the drama of it. And if the pain body is not fed, then it won't sustain itself for that long. It'll have to seek some other place where it will get fed or it will subside.

So that's the beauty when you're in a relationship. If both partners are conscious enough, you can have an agreement that says, if I observe the pain body beginning in you or you observe the pain body beginning in me, please let me know.

[Speaker 8] (7:27:07 - 7:27:07)

I'm going to point it out.

[Speaker 1] (7:27:07 - 7:27:21)

You have to point it out at the beginning before it takes over completely. Because once it's taken over completely, the person won't be hearing you anymore. But at the beginning, you can still say, could that be your pain body?

Even that is dangerous, but you can try.

[Speaker 2] (7:27:21 - 7:30:53)

No, it's not my pain body. Well, thanks to everybody around the world for joining us again. This fifth class will be available on demand tomorrow for free, of course.

Here at Oprah.com. And if you want to download or watch any of our classes, you can do that also tomorrow. All of them are available at Oprah.com and iTunes. It's free. Thanks to nature-made soft gel vitamins. Don't forget to update your workbook and get ready for next week's class.

Again, we thank you. Thank you. We thank you.

You're a man without a pain body. We'll see you in class next time. Thank you.

Good night, everybody. Welcome everybody to class six of our New Earth web series with author Eckhart Tolle. We're live again tonight.

And one of the things that we both look forward to every week is the energy that we feel from all of you out there who've signed on from your living room couches, from your kitchen tables, your home offices and dens and family rooms. I consider this to be a sacred moment when we can all come together and in community this way and share in this work. So wherever you are right now, I thank you.

Eckhart Tolle thanks you for awakening with us. One of my other favorite books is a book that Eckhart Tolle had written, I don't know how many years ago.

[Speaker 1] (7:30:53 - 7:30:55)

A few years ago.

[Speaker 2] (7:30:55 - 7:31:57)

A few years ago. And it's a little book with wonderful passages in it. And it's called Stillness Speaks.

It really speaks to, just on a different level, what we've been talking about in New Earth. And I wanted to begin tonight's class before we begin our moments of silence here, reading from the beginning of Stillness Speaks by Eckhart Tolle. And it says, stillness is your essential nature.

What is stillness? The inner space or awareness in which the words on this page are being perceived and become thoughts. Without that awareness, there would be no perception, no thoughts, no world.

You are that awareness, disguised as a person. I just love that. That you are the awareness.

That's what we've been saying week after week here, is that you're not your thoughts, you are the awareness of your thoughts.

[Speaker 1] (7:31:57 - 7:31:57)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (7:31:58 - 7:31:59)

Disguised as a person.

[Speaker 1] (7:31:59 - 7:32:18)

Yes. And you're not your sense perceptions, you are the awareness that makes all sense perception possible. You're not your emotions, you're the awareness that makes all these emotions possible.

So that's the, and that's the dimension where you are timeless. Everything else is time.

[Speaker 2] (7:32:19 - 7:32:46)

So when you lose touch with your inner stillness, you lose touch with yourself. When you lose touch with yourself, you lose yourself in the world. Your innermost sense of self, of who you are, is inseparable from stillness.

This is the I am that is deeper than name and form. You are the awareness disguised as a person. Yes.

So I think we should have our moments of silence leading into that.

[Speaker 1] (7:32:46 - 7:33:21)

Yes. So I suggest to use again the, what I sometimes call the anchor of the inner body, so that we can put our attention into the inner body and fully inhabit the body, be in the body and feel the aliveness that pervades the entire body. And that's where our attention is.

And that is our anchor for stillness. So let's do that now. Attention moves away from thinking into the aliveness of the inner body.

[Speaker 2] (7:33:55 - 7:35:52)

All right. All right, that is beautiful. So everybody, tonight we're discussing chapter six, breaking free.

Let's start with an overview of what this chapter is really about. In chapter five, as you all know, we met the pain body and that's, we all know what that is. That part of us, that's addicted to negativity and unhappiness.

And Eckhart says that the beginning of freedom from the pain body lies, first of all, in the realization that we all have a pain body. That was chapter five. We did that last week.

Now in chapter six, we're going to explore what triggers the pain body in our everyday lives and whether it's a situation or certain things other people do or say. Eckhart shows us how that we can actually use those triggers to enter a more heightened state of awareness. And also, this chapter is about breaking free of the pain body so you don't have to continually carry the past and everything that happened in the past and what people did to you, your story.

You can release that. Tonight is about breaking free. At the beginning of the chapter on page 162, you say that when you disidentify with the pain body, the energy that was trapped in the pain body, you say, then changes itself, its vibrational frequency and is transmuted into presence.

And this way, the pain body becomes fuel for consciousness. This is why many of the wisest, most enlightened men and women on our planet once had a heavy pain body, you say. So what I wanted to ask is that so many people today medicate themselves.

Any uncomfortable feelings that you have, you go to a psychiatrist or counselor, remember, the first thing they do is prescribe medication for you. Does medication get in the way of using the pain body as fuel for enlightenment?

[Speaker 1] (7:35:53 - 7:37:08)

To a large extent, it does. There may be certain extreme cases when medication is necessary. And for people who already are on medication, it's certainly not advisable to go off medication without the advice of a doctor.

So if you feel that it's time for you to get off, talk to a doctor who is relatively conscious and can help you gradually to get off the medication. So it's really a question of not giving in to this culturally conditioned behavior that says whenever you feel some discomfort inside yourself, emotional disturbance, immediately to seek some external help in the form of a substance that you ask your doctor to give you. Rather, learn to be with inner discomfort that arises, learn to be with emotional pain that arises rather than wanting to eliminate it.

Learn to accept it. Acceptance is one of the main focal points of this teaching. Learn to accept whatever emotion arises in you rather than run away from it or wanting to eliminate it.

[Speaker 2] (7:37:08 - 7:37:26)

But why? This is the thing, Eckhart. Why would I want to accept it?

That's why people are medicating themselves. That's why people eat, they gamble, they overwork themselves, they live in denial, they become unconscious because they don't want to deal with the pain. That's what we're all trying to get away from, is the pain.

[Speaker 1] (7:37:26 - 7:38:40)

Yes, yes. Now, if you medicate it, it doesn't actually go away. It dulls the pain so that you're not conscious of it anymore.

It's still there in the background. It's the same thing for many illnesses. For example, I had a heavy cold a couple of weeks ago.

Yes. I didn't take anything, but some people take things so that the symptoms are suppressed of the cold. It doesn't suppress the cold.

The cold is still there. So why accept it? It's because it is here at this moment.

So it's part of bringing this inner yes to whatever arises in the present moment. It is part of becoming friendly with the present moment, even if on the surface, the present moment doesn't look that great. So we are bringing, and this is where the awareness begins to come into the emotion.

If we bring acceptance to whatever we feel at this moment, rather than not wanting to feel it, the equivalent of that would be an external situation that arises, and then I resist it because I don't want this situation to be as it is, but it already is.

[Speaker 2] (7:38:40 - 7:38:48)

And then you just cause stress. And that's what you say in this book and also in The Power of Now. Wanting something to be different than it is is what causes stress.

[Speaker 1] (7:38:48 - 7:39:03)

And creates further negative emotion. If there's some emotion in you that is not pleasant and then you don't want to be feeling what you feel, creates on top of the emotion that's already there another negative emotion that wants to deny what's there.

[Speaker 2] (7:39:04 - 7:39:19)

So the best thing to do is to feel it, accept it, allow the feeling to do whatever it's going to do to you, make you feel sad or angry or upset or whatever, and then choose to do something about that.

[Speaker 1] (7:39:19 - 7:39:29)

Yes. Or not. Yes.

Realize first that you are the awareness for that emotion. You are the space for it. You are the awareness disguised as a person.

You are not the emotion.

[Speaker 2] (7:39:30 - 7:39:30)

You are the awareness.

[Speaker 1] (7:39:31 - 7:40:33)

Okay. So then already a shift has happened because if you completely identify with the emotion, then the emotion will very quickly rise into your mind and it will control your thinking. So...

And you will think it's you. Yes. Yeah.

You will think it's you. You will be identified with the emotion. Let's say it's anger that arises.

Yes. A slight trigger triggers enormous anger and immediately you start to think angry thoughts. Correct.

Or if it's sadness or depression, you immediately start to think thoughts that reflect the emotion. And the pain body loves that because the pain body will feed on the energy of your thinking. That's right.

And once you are trapped in the vicious circle between emotion and emotional thinking, when all the self-talk in your head, that is everybody experiences most of the time, the self-talk in the head then becomes the voice of the pain body that is talking in your head. And then all your interpretations of other people, of events will be totally distorted and very negative.

[Speaker 2] (7:40:34 - 7:41:03)

Because you say at the bottom of page 162, when you realize that pain bodies unconsciously seek more pain, that is to say they want something bad to happen, you understand that many traffic accidents are caused by drivers whose pain bodies are active at the time. When two drivers with active pain bodies arrive at an intersection at the same time, the likelihood of an accident is many times greater than under normal circumstances. So is it always the pain body that attracts accidents and other bad things?

[Speaker 1] (7:41:03 - 7:42:05)

No, no. That's just one factor that is often there, but there are many other factors that could attract an accident. Many people are not fully present when they drive I remember there was a sad story some years ago of a famous actor who got thrown off his horse and then had a spinal injury.

I forgot. Right, Christopher Reeve. Yes.

And he passed away I think a couple of years ago. And I remember seeing the interview with him when he talked about that incident. He loved riding.

And so he was horse riding and he said for one moment he lost the present moment while he was riding his horse. And at that moment he got thrown off the horse. Wow.

And he said that was the one moment of unawareness and it happened. But then he actually grew tremendously inside after the accident because he brought complete acceptance to what happened to him. And so there was an enormous awakening that happened in him before he passed away.

[Speaker 2] (7:42:05 - 7:42:06)

Even though he was paralyzed.

[Speaker 1] (7:42:06 - 7:42:07)

Yes, yes.

[Speaker 2] (7:42:08 - 7:42:13)

Well, Dave is Skyping us from his home office in Madison, Wisconsin. Dave, thank you for joining us.

[Speaker 1] (7:42:13 - 7:42:14)

Hi, Oprah.

[Speaker 21] (7:42:14 - 7:42:15)

Hi, Ecker.

[Speaker 1] (7:42:15 - 7:42:15)

Hi.

[Speaker 2] (7:42:16 - 7:42:18)

Your question is?

[Speaker 21] (7:42:19 - 7:42:50)

First off, I just want to say thank you. Thank you. Thank you to both of you.

You are welcome. Welcome. My question is when my wife and I have a disagreement she comes back hours or days later wanting to rehash that disagreement.

And she always feels there has to be a wrong or a right to it. How can I get her to live in the present and get the ego out of the way?

[Speaker 2] (7:42:51 - 7:43:00)

Were you watching last week when he told the story of the two monks? You know, and the monk said to the other monk you're still carrying that girl. I put her down hours ago.

[Speaker 21] (7:43:01 - 7:43:03)

I want us to become the two ducks.

[Speaker 1] (7:43:05 - 7:43:44)

You want to become the two ducks. Okay, good. Now, you need to see what is your role when you have disagreements at home?

I assume that your wife has a pain body that becomes active at that time. And when you have disagreements is your pain body also a contributing factor at home? Or do you feel that it is just your wife's pain body?

How, in other words, how do you feed into what is your part in the disagreement and in the energy field there?

[Speaker 2] (7:43:44 - 7:43:47)

Yeah, how are you playing into the drama of it, Dave?

[Speaker 21] (7:43:48 - 7:44:17)

I don't play into the drama of it. And that seems to initially increase it more on her behalf. And then, but lately, after going through the book, I find that I look for a single thing her eyes are beautiful and I just think of those and I take to a different place inside myself.

[Speaker 1] (7:44:18 - 7:44:40)

And it seems that it kind of, it just diminishes on her behalf then. Now, when you disagree or you have an argument, that means to some extent you must be identified with a mental position. And because if you don't have a mental position that you identify with, there is no argument.

[Speaker 2] (7:44:42 - 7:44:44)

That's why I said hmm to Dave.

[Speaker 1] (7:44:44 - 7:45:21)

Yes, this is why Oprah was a little bit skeptical when you were talking. So it's perhaps before we talk about your wife, maybe there's something that you can do so that you let go of identification with mental positions when you discuss things. You can still discuss the practicality of certain things that you need to talk about.

But don't become identified with a mental position of rightness that makes you right. And because that is what the ego thrives on and that is what feeds the pain body.

[Speaker 2] (7:45:22 - 7:45:24)

Whenever you identify with anything, it's the ego.

[Speaker 1] (7:45:25 - 7:45:57)

Yes, whatever you identify with becomes ego. So perhaps bring more vigilance into especially when you see a situation is developing that is going to become an argument. Or you can see that the pain body in your wife is becoming active again.

And then it's a time of being particularly alert and vigilant inside yourself so that you do not get drawn into opposing her in any way.

[Speaker 2] (7:45:57 - 7:47:10)

And even, Dave, you know, the reason why I said hmm and was skeptical because of what Eckhart just said, if I may reiterate. If you are, if there's no drama involved at all with you, if you just become peace, then the argument has to dissolve. Like the woman, the story that he tells in the book of the woman who came and was so upset and carrying all the papers and the bills and so forth.

And as he sat there, just listening, taking it in, she finally said, this doesn't really matter, does it? And left and went home. You remember that?

Yeah. From a couple classes ago. And I understand what you're talking about, because often when you start reading this material and you start, you know, to awaken yourself, we become a little self-righteous about it, you know?

So perhaps maybe there's a little bit of that still remaining with you where you want to say, I am so, because I know this happened with Stedman and myself. We're in a discussion and I'm feeling, well, I am very awakened. I'm a very evolved person.

So what you're saying is not going to upset me. But that attitude, the energy of that, my ego and my self-righteousness is what contributed to the drama. You see what I'm saying?

[Speaker 21] (7:47:11 - 7:47:11)

I do.

[Speaker 2] (7:47:12 - 7:47:12)

Yeah.

[Speaker 21] (7:47:12 - 7:47:12)

I do.

[Speaker 2] (7:47:13 - 7:47:20)

Your need to be right or your need to feel like, you know, I'm a little bit more superior because I'm not engaging in this and you are.

[Speaker 1] (7:47:21 - 7:47:28)

Yes. Yes. So that's then alertness and vigilance is very important on your part.

[Speaker 2] (7:47:28 - 7:47:56)

I think what you just said here is so important for every one of us who's trying to continue to wake into this process, that whenever there's an argument or disagreement, the thing is to not and it's not to ever make it about the other person, even though it seems to be. The question is not what can I do for my wife, for my partner, for my boss, for my co-worker, but it is what can I do in the situation.

[Speaker 1] (7:47:56 - 7:47:58)

Yes. Right. That's all.

[Speaker 2] (7:47:58 - 7:47:59)

What is my contribution to it?

[Speaker 1] (7:47:59 - 7:48:53)

That's right. That's primary. And then your wife, I don't know whether she has any interest in spiritual teaching or the pain body.

Have you ever mentioned to her the pain body, not while there's a pain body attack happening, but when the pain body is... Because you said nobody hears you when you say it. No, because when you cannot talk to the pain body about the pain body, that was actually dangerous because the pain body will throw something at you.

I love it when you get tickled. Go ahead. I know pain bodies.

So is your wife sometimes relatively more open to this than at other times? Or is she always not open to this in your view?

[Speaker 21] (7:48:54 - 7:49:14)

She's not open to it to this point. But when I was running off the sheets for this week's class, she picked them up out of the printer and she read them over and she said, you're talking about me. So maybe that opens the book.

[Speaker 1] (7:49:14 - 7:49:16)

Yes, yes, yes.

[Speaker 2] (7:49:16 - 7:49:19)

Opens the door. Dave, thanks so much for your question. Thanks so much.

[Speaker 1] (7:49:19 - 7:49:21)

Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (7:49:21 - 7:49:33)

Well, many acts of violence, you say on page 163, are committed by normal people who temporarily turn into maniacs. Does this mean that you think people are not responsible for what they do when possessed by the pain body?

[Speaker 1] (7:49:34 - 7:51:22)

No, that's what I say. They are not responsible. As we mentioned last time, Jesus on the cross, when he said, they know not what they do, meaning they are so unconscious.

They are in the grip of an energy field at which they cannot control. They don't even know that they are in the grip of this energy field because it has taken complete possession of them. So in that sense, I say they are not responsible, which does not mean that they do not suffer the consequences of their actions.

So it almost looks like a little bit of a paradox. Yes, no, they are not responsible. Nevertheless, karmically, they will suffer the consequences of their unconsciousness because human beings are, our purpose is to evolve into conscious beings.

So if we are not evolving into conscious beings, then we suffer. Right. The more close we are to this evolutionary impulse of evolving into conscious being, of the flowering of consciousness, the more close we are to this, the more we suffer.

And so these people who inflict violence on others, who make others suffer, also make themselves suffer. And they suffer the consequences karmically. And sometimes the karmic consequences come in the form of the legal system.

So they are put away and so that represents for them at that time karma. And then there's always the possibility when they are in deep suffering, because of something that they did in a state of complete unconsciousness, when they then are in deep suffering, perhaps in prison, whatever they may be, there's always the possibility then of awakening through the suffering that they inflicted on themselves, on others also.

[Speaker 2] (7:51:23 - 7:51:41)

Because you say on page 164, when you can't stand the endless cycle of suffering anymore, you begin to awaken. So the pain body too has its necessary place in the larger picture. But there are a lot of people who never awaken.

They just, you know, the pain body just, they die with it.

[Speaker 1] (7:51:41 - 7:52:04)

Yes, that is true. Then there's always a chance that the unawakened consciousness awakens in some other form, in some other situation. So, but the entire universe is going in that direction of awakening.

So it is, the more we are open to this...

[Speaker 2] (7:52:04 - 7:52:05)

Because we have to, are we going to die?

[Speaker 1] (7:52:06 - 7:52:46)

Yes, as the human species now, the impulse, the awakening impulse has been there for a million years longer. But for us now, we have arrived at this critical point where humanity, if humanity does not embrace this new state of consciousness, the awakened state, then humanity is not going to make it. On a cosmic scale, even that doesn't matter.

And whatever gain there has been achieved in the awakening of consciousness on this planet is not going to be lost. There's only one consciousness throughout the entire universe. And that one consciousness is awakening in millions and billions of lives.

[Speaker 2] (7:52:46 - 7:52:49)

And so if we don't survive as a human species?

[Speaker 1] (7:52:49 - 7:52:57)

That's not the greatest strategy either. In relatively speaking, it is tragic, but in absolute terms, that's fine too.

[Speaker 2] (7:52:58 - 7:53:00)

Yeah. And it's really, it's our decision.

[Speaker 1] (7:53:00 - 7:53:16)

Yes. Yes. The fact that we are here at this very moment engaged in this work is a very good sign.

It's a sign. Because here, at least we know that right now, here, the awakening is happening.

[Speaker 2] (7:53:17 - 7:53:20)

Yeah. For the hundreds of thousands of people who are joining us around the world.

[Speaker 1] (7:53:20 - 7:53:20)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (7:53:20 - 7:53:24)

Danielle, who's joining us now from Ireland and Skyping us from Dublin. Hi, Danielle.

[Speaker 15] (7:53:25 - 7:53:26)

Hi, Oprah. Hi, Akash.

[Speaker 2] (7:53:26 - 7:53:28)

Hi. What time is it in Dublin right now?

[Speaker 15] (7:53:29 - 7:54:03)

I think it's about half two in the morning. Okay. Well, you're up late.

Thank you for joining us. No, no, no. I'm delighted to be here.

Thank you for having me. And my question is about ego and I'm just going to read it out. And I've been practicing trying to stay in the present moment for over three years now, but I've come to some sort of block because my ego keeps on telling me, if you get rid of your ego, you will lose the world as you know it.

You will lose your relationships with the friends you've built up for years and you want to give up your career you've worked so hard for it and you'll be isolated from the rest of society because they are all living in ego. How can I overcome this?

[Speaker 1] (7:54:05 - 7:55:46)

Thank you. Excellent question. Now, as you may have noticed, these are thoughts that arise in your mind.

These thoughts that arise in your mind are telling you something. Now, what these thoughts are saying may be very far from the truth. What the thought that if you awaken, if you become really present, you're going to lose your friends.

Life is not going to be fun anymore. You have to see, is that the truth or are these just thoughts that my egoic mind is producing in order to stop me from being present? Do I believe in those thoughts or do I believe in first-hand evidence that I have?

Because if you've been practicing being present, then you realize it's actually quite joyful to be fully open to the present moment. It doesn't take away from the fun of being alive. It actually makes you more intensely alive when you are fully present in the now rather than always looking to some next moment that's going to be better than this one.

This is how most of the world lives. So I'm sure you've already had glimpses or more than glimpses of how the quality of your life actually becomes enhanced through being fully present to life now because life is now. So and your mind is...

Please, a question.

[Speaker 15] (7:55:46 - 7:56:01)

Oh no, I definitely have. But I think it's just the ego keeps on sweeping in or else you'll be in a situation where your friends expect you to act the same way that you've always acted, like in ego. Like your friendship, a lot of friendships are kind of are bound through ego.

[Speaker 28] (7:56:01 - 7:56:01)

Yes.

[Speaker 15] (7:56:01 - 7:56:12)

You know, it's your personality and you know you'll try and be in the present moment and then they'll be like, come on, come on, you know, let's go and do something, you know, which is obviously trying to escape from the present moment.

[Speaker 2] (7:56:12 - 7:56:48)

But isn't it true, Danielle, when you become to awaken, when you become to the state where you feel more alive and awakened and willing to be more present with yourself, that means you might have to let go of some of the things that used to bring you a false sense of happiness. That maybe the same people you used to hang around with and do things with who are not, you know, ready to follow your path or not willing to be a part of some of the things that you now recognize that matter. Maybe it means letting some of those friends go.

[Speaker 1] (7:56:49 - 7:57:40)

That's that's the whole point. Maybe just a comment on this. Usually what happens when people become more present, some of their friends are actually drawn into that also.

Because whatever state you're in will affect the people around you or your back. So usually it happens that some of your friends will actually join you and also grow in presence and awaken. And others may drop away who are not ready yet.

That's that is usually the case. So the and your career does actually can only improve because the quality of anything that you do in full presence is so much greater. And there's so much power available to you that is not there when you're always looking to some other scattered.

[Speaker 2] (7:57:40 - 7:57:42)

Yes, you're scattered.

[Speaker 1] (7:57:42 - 7:58:17)

You remember a couple of weeks ago, I quoted the Zen master who was observing competitors at an archery competition and the Zen master was observing one competitor. And he said his need to win drains him of power. And of course, this need to win, which most people in the old consciousness have is the need to arrive at some future point.

And it takes energy away from what you're doing now. And that drains you of power. So whatever you do becomes actually more powerful when you are present, rather than so it can.

[Speaker 2] (7:58:17 - 7:58:57)

I remember when I first started doing this talk show 22 years ago, I used to get asked a lot of questions about other talk shows and other people. And I always used to say, we're running our own race here. And the energy that it takes to look back and see where the other guy is in the race.

And there've been a lot of guys. Female guys and guys with shows who were in competition. I go, the energy that takes to look at what somebody else is doing takes energy away from what you're doing.

I mean, if you're on track, I used to run track. And if you just take the moment to look back and see where the other guy is, that energy is so draining.

[Speaker 1] (7:58:57 - 7:58:58)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (7:58:58 - 7:59:00)

And causes you to lose your own footing.

[Speaker 1] (7:59:00 - 7:59:00)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (7:59:01 - 7:59:02)

And lose your own concentration and focus.

[Speaker 1] (7:59:03 - 7:59:03)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (7:59:03 - 7:59:04)

So that's what you're saying.

[Speaker 1] (7:59:04 - 7:59:10)

Yes. And that's also put this end of this sense that you are competing against others as part of the ego energy.

[Speaker 2] (7:59:10 - 7:59:10)

That's right.

[Speaker 1] (7:59:11 - 7:59:12)

And that also takes power away.

[Speaker 2] (7:59:12 - 7:59:14)

That's right. Instead of just run the race.

[Speaker 1] (7:59:14 - 7:59:15)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (7:59:15 - 7:59:15)

Run your own race.

[Speaker 1] (7:59:16 - 7:59:16)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (7:59:16 - 7:59:22)

Now, what's the best way for us to sense the pain body? It's very... Thank you so much, Danielle.

Joining us from Dublin.

[Speaker 1] (7:59:24 - 8:02:29)

No, the love that knows the other as yourself. It's so simple. And love your neighbor as...

Yes. So the important thing is to catch it as it first arises. In the first, because before it takes over your mind, when it's there as an emotion.

And usually it's the pain body when the emotional reaction is out of proportion to the triggering event. So a relatively minor thing triggers an enormous amount of unhappiness. Yeah.

In whatever form. That's right. A small thing happens and you flare up.

Yes. Yeah. Yes.

So then after a while, you realize the kind of situation that triggers your pain body. And then you can be actually more vigilant when such a situation happens. And you can see a very important thing is to be able to have...

Sometimes called the kingdom of heaven. And what he said was... A very heavy emotion of deep sadness or whether it's a fiery emotion of anger or whatever it is or the emotion of intense fear.

That contraction. Then you can... There's so many people these days who are completely out of touch with their emotions because they live only in the head.

So being able to feel an emotion as it arises and then recognizing it as the beginning of the pain body. My pain body. And as long as you know this is the pain body, you are not identified with it because the knowing is the awareness.

So if you can catch it early on and then it may still grow. Suddenly the fear may become very intense or the anger or whatever form the pain body takes. But you will be there as the awareness in the background while it happens.

And one thing that doesn't happen is that the pain body cannot control your thinking because you're shining the light of consciousness on it. It cannot then creep into your mind and suddenly make your mind think what it wants to think. So remain there as the awareness for it and say, oh there's the pain body.

Then it cannot renew itself and it also cannot control your behavior, your actions. All it is that you have contained it not through holding it down but you have contained it there through your presence. Okay.

And then it can't renew itself through in that situation. So it suddenly it comes up but it cannot renew itself and then it will subside again. But the pain body being very clever, it will then wait for a more suitable opportunity when you are less conscious than at that moment.

And then it will try again.

[Speaker 2] (8:02:29 - 8:02:31)

And for example, It's like you're always being tested.

[Speaker 1] (8:02:31 - 8:02:45)

Yes. The pain body is like a little, little wild animal or something. It's always, it's there in the back and say, okay, what's the joy?

Can I, am I going to come out now? Or is it the situation not right? He's too conscious.

[Speaker 2] (8:02:45 - 8:02:48)

Is the pain body also your ego, Eckhart?

[Speaker 1] (8:02:48 - 8:03:05)

The pain body is the emotional aspect of ego. So when you identify with the pain body, it becomes part of the ego because whatever you identify with becomes part of the ego. When you don't identify with it, it's no longer part of the ego.

[Speaker 2] (8:03:05 - 8:03:08)

All right. Because what you identify with is the ego.

[Speaker 1] (8:03:08 - 8:03:08)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (8:03:08 - 8:03:29)

I like this question from Lorraine from Vancouver, British Columbia, who writes, I attract negativity. It seems that my whole world is one big fight. I just want people to stop instigating fights with me.

I don't deliberately go out and begin conflict, but it comes to me. I hate it. I just want peace.

What's the problem? Isn't that interesting?

[Speaker 1] (8:03:29 - 8:04:03)

Yes. Yes. Now this is whatever you experience repeatedly and frequently externally is a reflection of your inner state.

So you attract certain things into your life that reflect your state of consciousness. So for Lorraine, it's very important to become much more aware of whatever state she is in at any given moment. Become more aware of what emotion she is feeling at any given moment.

[Speaker 2] (8:04:03 - 8:04:06)

Because Lorraine could not be attracting fights and conflict.

[Speaker 1] (8:04:06 - 8:04:06)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (8:04:06 - 8:04:08)

Unless she was emanating that energy.

[Speaker 1] (8:04:08 - 8:04:08)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (8:04:09 - 8:04:27)

And you say on 162, every human being emanates an energy field that corresponds to his or her inner state. Most people can sense it, although they may feel someone else's energy emanation only subliminally. That is to say, they don't know that they sense it, yet it determines to a large extent how they feel about and react to that person.

[Speaker 1] (8:04:27 - 8:05:02)

Yes. So there are two aspects to your inner state. There's the emotional aspect to your inner state.

What is the energy of the emotion that you feel? And there's the mental aspect. What kinds of thoughts is your mind producing at this moment?

Is your mind producing negative thoughts? What kind of thoughts? So you need to be there as the awareness.

Become aware of what it is that I feel right now. What is my state at this moment? That's a good question to ask yourself.

What's my inner state at this moment?

[Speaker 2] (8:05:02 - 8:05:04)

At the moment that somebody instigates a fight with her?

[Speaker 1] (8:05:05 - 8:05:54)

No. No. Normal moments when you're not being challenged.

Okay. Because all these accumulate, your normal state of consciousness eventually produces some external event. So as much as possible and in any situation, it's always more important what your inner state of consciousness is than the external situation.

Got it. The external situation is always secondary. So what am I feeling now?

And what am I thinking now? These are the important questions. So become an alertness then arises.

You become suddenly realized what's my mind saying? What's most of the day? What kind of thoughts is my mind producing?

How many negative thoughts do I have every hour? Every minute. You become aware particularly of because the ego loves negative thinking.

[Speaker 2] (8:05:54 - 8:06:15)

And so what you're saying then, it would be impossible for Lorraine to be a peaceful person to say, she says here, I just want peace. What's the problem? It would be impossible to just be a peaceful person minding your own business, having peaceful, loving thoughts, and people want to pick a fight with you all the time.

[Speaker 1] (8:06:15 - 8:07:00)

Yes, that would not be possible. So there's something in her that she needs to become aware of. And that's not her true self.

It's a form of conditioning. Her true self is the awareness, which is already perfect. It's fine.

There's nothing wrong with who she is in her essence. So look, be vigilant as much as possible. Have maybe put little signs at home, little reminders so that you remember to be conscious of what's going on inside me.

What's going on inside me? Very important question.

[Speaker 2] (8:07:00 - 8:07:01)

What's going on inside me?

[Speaker 1] (8:07:01 - 8:07:04)

What thoughts is my mind thinking?

[Speaker 2] (8:07:04 - 8:07:04)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (8:07:05 - 8:07:06)

What is it that I'm feeling right now?

[Speaker 2] (8:07:07 - 8:08:12)

I wanted to go back to page 162 again, where you say every human being emanates an energy field that corresponds to his or her inner state. And most people can sense it, although they may feel somebody else's energy emanation only subliminally. That is to say, they don't know that they sense it, yet it determines to a large extent how they feel about and react to that person.

I had an encounter with somebody recently where their energy thing was so strong, I walked into the room and felt it so strong, I had to remove myself from the room. Yes. Yeah.

Yes. Some people are most clearly aware of it when they first meet someone, even before any words are exchanged. That's what had happened there.

A little later, however, I love this part. A little later, however, words take over the relationship and with words come the roles that most people play. Attention then moves to the realm of mind and the ability to sense the other person's energy field becomes greatly diminished.

Yes. Nevertheless, it is still felt on an unconscious level. And that's why kids can sense it.

Little kids can sense it because they don't have the words or the language.

[Speaker 1] (8:08:13 - 8:08:13)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (8:08:13 - 8:08:14)

Isn't that true?

[Speaker 1] (8:08:14 - 8:08:28)

Yes. And animals can sense it. Very acutely because they don't have the conceptual mental realm so they can feel much more acutely a human energy field.

[Speaker 2] (8:08:28 - 8:08:32)

That's right. And after they're introduced to you, your title means nothing to them.

[Speaker 1] (8:08:32 - 8:08:32)

No.

[Speaker 2] (8:08:32 - 8:09:05)

Yes. Your title or your position or your label, the role that you're playing means nothing to them. No.

So once they sniff you and they don't like you, they don't like you. We have Mubina on the phone from Dubai. Hi, Mubina.

We hear you have a question. Hi, Oprah. Hi.

I hear Dubai is so great. It's beautiful. Please come visit.

Yeah, I think I might be coming. And yeah, I am. Have you have a question about relationships?

Go ahead. Yes. My question is about the nature of love.

[Speaker 6] (8:09:06 - 8:09:54)

Echad says that love has no wanting and that true love really is about not expecting anything in return. My question is related to a little personal dilemma. I met somebody five years ago and I really, really like him, but I noticed that he has a dense pain body.

My question is, should I continue to be present for this person? I have been doing so for five years, giving him my present time and really being there for him. And is it worth waiting?

I really do want to get married and I would have a family someday. Is it worth waiting for someone, you know, with a dense pain body? But I still feel I want to be present for this person.

And I know Echad says that we shouldn't go around changing people.

[Speaker 2] (8:09:54 - 8:09:56)

Well, you're not going to change him, first of all.

[Speaker 6] (8:09:57 - 8:09:58)

Right. Okay.

[Speaker 2] (8:09:58 - 8:10:00)

Are you hoping that you're going to change him?

[Speaker 6] (8:10:02 - 8:10:09)

I'm hoping that he's going to let go of his past at some point and realize that I'm the one for him.

[Speaker 2] (8:10:09 - 8:10:18)

Hmm. Well, I think you need a little more awakening. Okay.

No, but I'll let Echad answer. Go ahead.

[Speaker 1] (8:10:20 - 8:10:23)

So, do you feel that you love that person?

[Speaker 6] (8:10:24 - 8:10:25)

Yes, very dearly.

[Speaker 1] (8:10:27 - 8:11:38)

Well, let's see what it means to love someone. When you truly love another human being, uh, there's something that you recognize in them that has nothing to do with the form of that person. There is the recognition of the essence of that person.

And your own essence, your own being, your own consciousness, recognizes that in the other. And that essence is the divine in each human being. So, when you love another person, you really love God in the other person.

You don't love the person. If you love the person, it's the ego, because then you love the form. And if you love the person and not the formless within the person, the divine, when you don't love God in the other person, then the love is of the ego.

And the ego love is very different from true love. The ego love is needy. And the ego love says, you love me back.

And if you don't, I'm going to get very angry.

[Speaker 2] (8:11:39 - 8:11:45)

Or upset with you, or impatient with you, because you haven't loved me the way I wish to be loved.

[Speaker 1] (8:11:46 - 8:11:55)

Yes, yes. So, there's no need to deny what you feel for this person. It's actually...

[Speaker 6] (8:11:55 - 8:12:16)

Yes, and I've never really expected anything back from him. But what I hear from friends is always, what are you waiting for? And, you know, he's not giving you anything back.

So, what are you waiting for? And I don't mind waiting another five years. It's just that I've just been, you know, getting bombarded with questions from friends who just think, you know, go out with other people.

[Speaker 1] (8:12:17 - 8:12:30)

No, the love in you actually is fine. The love that you feel does not need anything. But you as a person, you as a person may have certain needs and preferences in this situation.

[Speaker 2] (8:12:30 - 8:12:40)

I don't believe that she's making this phone call for her friends, personally. I believe that you are making this phone call for yourself, Ms. Mubina. And that it's not...

[Speaker 15] (8:12:40 - 8:12:40)

Absolutely, I am.

[Speaker 2] (8:12:40 - 8:12:59)

Yeah, that it's not your friends who are saying, why doesn't he do something? I think, you know, what you expressed to us at the beginning of this phone call is that you think it's been five years and it's time that he should do something. But he has a pretty heavy pain body, right?

Okay, so you want him to make a move and you want that move to be marriage?

[Speaker 6] (8:13:00 - 8:13:05)

Um, well, it could lead to that, sure. I mean, I'm in no hurry.

[Speaker 2] (8:13:05 - 8:13:07)

What do you want? But I'm just... What do you want?

[Speaker 6] (8:13:07 - 8:13:31)

Well, I want him to realize that he, um, I don't know, that I just, I just love him. That's all. Oh, no.

You know, and I just want him to see that. And I think he's just um, being blocked or... I'm not buying that.

His pain body is so dense.

[Speaker 2] (8:13:31 - 8:13:43)

No, I think what you said to us earlier is what you really want. You said, I want him to realize that I'm the one for him. Sure, definitely.

I'm not gonna lie about that. Okay. Yeah, you already said it.

Go ahead.

[Speaker 1] (8:13:43 - 8:13:43)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (8:13:44 - 8:13:45)

So what do you want to say about that, Eckhart?

[Speaker 1] (8:13:45 - 8:14:05)

Well, it may be time for you to talk to him and say, I love you and what I feel for you is not going to change. But I have certain needs and preferences. I would like to, I would like you to decide and make a commitment whether or not you want to be with me.

[Speaker 19] (8:14:06 - 8:14:06)

Right.

[Speaker 1] (8:14:06 - 8:14:09)

Old, old, old, Eckhart.

[Speaker 2] (8:14:11 - 8:14:13)

And then he says, well, I'm not ready for that.

[Speaker 1] (8:14:13 - 8:14:23)

No, if he says I'm not ready and you get angry or extremely upset, then it was ego love. If he says I'm...

[Speaker 6] (8:14:23 - 8:14:29)

He said that to me a lot of times before that he's not ready. Fine, it's okay. Did you hear what Eckhart just said?

[Speaker 2] (8:14:29 - 8:14:34)

Hello, Mabina, did you hear? If you get upset, then that's ego love. Ego, yes.

[Speaker 3] (8:14:35 - 8:14:35)

Okay.

[Speaker 2] (8:14:36 - 8:14:45)

And if you don't get upset and you're patient and you're, as you said, you can wait five more years or however it chooses to be, then perhaps maybe it is the real thing.

[Speaker 1] (8:14:45 - 8:14:46)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (8:14:46 - 8:14:53)

Unless you're just waiting for him to make the move and discover that you're the one. Okay.

[Speaker 6] (8:14:53 - 8:15:01)

Um, yeah, that's what I've been doing. And I just wanted to confirm that. So that's fine.

That's confirmed. That's great.

[Speaker 1] (8:15:01 - 8:15:40)

The extent to which you can love another human being depends on the extent to which you are connected with your own essence. And you can recognize, sometimes it's easier to recognize God in one particular form, but you can recognize God in another human being. So the love is in you.

And when you, the love does not come from the outside. The love is the recognition of oneness, that ultimately you and the other share the one consciousness. That's what connects and makes all humans one.

[Speaker 2] (8:15:40 - 8:15:58)

And what you say in the book, I don't know, I'm paraphrasing now because this was, I think, last week that you really addressed this in the pain body, is that many times people mistake what they believe to be love for their own neediness and their ego identification with, you know, this person validates me or...

[Speaker 1] (8:16:00 - 8:16:02)

Yes. So true love is...

[Speaker 2] (8:16:02 - 8:16:06)

Especially in our society, in the American society, where it's all about romance.

[Speaker 1] (8:16:06 - 8:16:07)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (8:16:07 - 8:16:07)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (8:16:07 - 8:16:37)

That's encouraged by the culture and so on what you see in films, the role playing associated with that. So... It's really damaged us a lot, hasn't it?

Yes. Yes. But we are waking up out of that.

There are not so many films now that end in the happy marriage or something like that because people are beginning to recognize that's not how it is.

[Speaker 2] (8:16:37 - 8:16:38)

That it's not happily ever after.

[Speaker 1] (8:16:38 - 8:16:39)

No, no.

[Speaker 2] (8:16:39 - 8:16:43)

Thank you, Mubina. Thanks. Thank you so much.

[Speaker 1] (8:16:43 - 8:16:44)

Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (8:16:44 - 8:17:19)

Last week, we aired an interview on The Oprah Show with Thomas, who was a transgendered man. Heard about this man who became pregnant? Transgendered man who was pregnant and his wife, Nancy.

We also spoke to Thomas and Nancy's neighbors, George and Victoria, who gave us their reaction. And I found out during a commercial break that George and Victoria are students of a new earth. And here's a clip of our conversation after The Oprah Show went off the air.

They just told me after, during commercial break, that you're reading A New Earth. Are you taking the class? Absolutely.

[Speaker 4] (8:17:19 - 8:18:04)

I love it, Oprah. It's been fantastic. I actually read the book first.

Yeah. And I couldn't put it down. I had to read the whole book because I said to George, oh, at last, I'm so excited.

This book is really captivating, you know? So then I encouraged George to take the class with me. So we've been watching it together and studying together.

And that's what's helped us be more understanding and open-minded, nonjudgmental, as Eckhart says, no labels, trying to get judgment out of our heads and stay in the moment and just really embrace our devoted neighbors as the human beings that are with us, sharing this earth.

[Speaker 13] (8:18:05 - 8:18:34)

And I don't think it's a coincidence that we moved to Bend and right across the street from us, we've encountered Nancy and Thomas and this situation because I think in a way, there's a design to this and it was an opportunity for us to grow. And this is why we're kind of honored, really, to share this experience because it's really helped us become, you know, more enlightened people. It's given us the opportunity to actually manifest what the seminars are all about.

[Speaker 2] (8:18:35 - 8:18:50)

So that's Victoria and George. Join us now from Skype from their home office in Bend, Oregon. Since Nancy and Tom were on the show, has all the press been in your neighborhood looking for them or looking for you?

[Speaker 13] (8:18:51 - 8:19:01)

Yes, they were. Oddly enough, they kind of dissipated after your show and it's been relatively peaceful now. Oh, good.

[Speaker 2] (8:19:02 - 8:20:00)

Well, I remember you had a question for Eckhart and I said I was gonna let you ask that question yourself that was related to the suffering of Christ. On page 144, Eckhart writes, why is the suffering body of Christ, his face distorted in agony, and his body bleeding from countless wounds such a significant image in the collective consciousness of humanity? Millions of people, particularly in medieval times, would not have related to it as deeply as they did if something within themselves had not resonated with it, if they had not unconsciously recognized it as an outer representation of their own inner reality, the pain body.

They were not yet conscious enough to recognize it directly within themselves, but it was the beginning of their becoming aware of it. Christ can be seen as the archetypal, archetypical human embodying both the pain and the possibility of transcendence. And you had a question regarding some of this.

[Speaker 13] (8:20:00 - 8:20:33)

Go ahead, George. Yes, thank you, Oprah, for having us on the show. Eckhart, you mention the Christian doctrine a lot in your book, and this is a question to help me reconcile Christian doctrine with your teachings.

If it's true that the ego loves suffering, as you mention in your book, and if it's true, as the New Testament says, that God sent his only begotten son to suffer and die for humanity's sins, was the passion of Christ an ego trip?

[Speaker 1] (8:20:35 - 8:25:37)

Thank you, thank you. Now, I would not say that the ego loves suffering, the pain body loves suffering. The ego is actually very often, tries very hard to avoid suffering.

If the ego produces suffering, inevitably, sooner or later, because the way it goes about its business is dysfunctional. The ego is a very limited view of who you are. And if you act from such a limited view of who you are, you cannot see where you fit into the totality of other human beings and your environment, then eventually your actions will produce suffering.

So the ego produces suffering, although it wants something else. This is why we have the proverb, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. The ego wants the best for you, but it produces often the worst.

So I would not say that the suffering of Christ is an ego trip, it's not that. I'd like to share with you something. I had an insight some years ago.

I was walking in England into a village church. It was all very quiet. I was the only person in that 600 year old church.

And I saw the cross, the altar, and Jesus on the cross. And this is an image that we are so used to, but we don't question it. But at that moment, I saw it as if I had just arrived on this planet and had never seen it before.

And I was struck by the strangeness of that symbol. And I looked, there's a suffering human being in agony on this cross. And at the same time, there was another cross without Jesus on it.

And I saw this golden cross was the same cross. That cross that is the torture instrument is at the same time a symbol for the divine. And suddenly I saw a very deep significance in that, that can be appreciated and recognized, I believe, by anybody, even if they are not Christians.

Jesus on the cross stands for humanity. Jesus represents every human being that has ever lived or will ever live. Jesus represents something that is part of the human condition.

And this, what he experienced at that moment, I saw when I was looking at the cross in the church, I saw that what this represents is a human being who experiences an extreme form of limitation. He's totally unfree, totally limited in deep suffering. And at the same time, the words I suddenly remembered from what is said on the cross, not my will, but thy will be done.

And that was the act of complete acceptance of suffering. He went to the depths of suffering and then totally accepted suffering. And through this total acceptance of suffering, a sudden transmutation happened.

And the very torture instrument, the cross, that had produced the suffering was transformed and became a symbol for the divine. And that explained the paradox that I had seen when I went into that church as if I'd never been to a church before. And I saw, how can the torture instrument at the same time be a symbol of the divine?

And so in every human being's life, every human being will experience some form of suffering, sometimes very intense. WINFREY OFFERS Every human being, as you said last week, will have their own cross to bear. Yes, every human being has their own cross to bear.

And every human being needs to learn the lesson that is there when we look at Jesus on the cross. He has to come to the point where the human being, instead of wanting to avoid suffering, says, this is what is, and bring a complete yes to whatever is at this moment. Not as I will, but thy will be done.

Thy will be done. Complete alignment. And that I call conscious suffering, where suddenly the inner resistance is not there anymore.

And when you go into conscious suffering and say, this is fine, I say yes to this. Even the most unacceptable situation, if there's nothing I can do about it, I bring a yes to it.

[Speaker 2] (8:25:37 - 8:25:39)

Not as I will, thy will be done.

[Speaker 1] (8:25:39 - 8:26:04)

Yes. And at that moment, the ego dies. And in that moment, the divine comes through.

And the very thing that was the worst thing that could ever happen to you, when you bring surrender to it, becomes an opening into the divine. And that's the miracle and the transformative value of the cross.

[Speaker 2] (8:26:04 - 8:26:22)

Boy, I think that's powerful, George and Victoria, don't you? The moment, I got that. I just got that.

I had a big old epiphany. The very moment, the worst thing that can happen to you, if you surrender to it, there is an opening that allows the energy of the divine to come through. At the moment of surrender.

[Speaker 1] (8:26:23 - 8:26:30)

Yes. And that is the grace. I got that, George.

Didn't you get that? Yes, I did. Thank you.

So it's a lesson for us, in other words.

[Speaker 13] (8:26:30 - 8:26:31)

It's a lesson, yeah.

[Speaker 1] (8:26:31 - 8:26:49)

Behind every form of suffering, there is grace hiding, concealed. It does not reveal itself until you surrender, until you suffer consciously, until you no longer deny what is. So there's the grace that's hiding behind every form of suffering.

[Speaker 13] (8:26:49 - 8:27:20)

Wow. So if the ego doesn't love suffering, but produces suffering, what is that voice in our head that you refer to in the book? The voice that denigrates our self-esteem, that says you weren't any good, you were never any good, you're never going to be any good.

That's also what in the Bible also is described as the voice of Satan. Is the ego, in that sense, a force of evil in us? You know, you have the good and the bad, the duality.

[Speaker 20] (8:27:21 - 8:27:21)

Yes, exactly.

[Speaker 1] (8:27:22 - 8:27:54)

Yes. Ego, I would define as... Ego is complete identification with form, total identification with form.

The form of me as this body, the psychological form of me, total identification with every thought that arises. So you cannot step out. You're trapped in form completely, and that is evil.

So going beyond form, beyond identification with form, is when the other dimension opens up.

[Speaker 2] (8:27:54 - 8:28:02)

Yeah, and didn't in some cultures in the past, I saw this on Guy Ritchie's documentary on the ego, that they used to refer to the ego as Satan.

[Speaker 1] (8:28:03 - 8:28:04)

Yes, yes, yes.

[Speaker 2] (8:28:04 - 8:28:12)

In some cultures, they refer to it as Satan. Yes. Thank you, George and Victoria.

Victoria, you're still enjoying the book or you're done now, right? Have you done...

[Speaker 4] (8:28:12 - 8:29:03)

I finished the book, Oprah. I actually have a quick question if it's possible. Go ahead.

I was curious because, you know, you spoke of children and the trauma that young children experience when their parents are fighting. Eckhart, do you think that it's possible that a pregnant mother passes her pain body onto her unborn child, and perhaps even generations that has happened with the grandmother, the great-grandmother, passing that onto their unborn baby? So we end up with this big old backpack of somebody else's pain body.

And can we free ourselves from that as simply as being aware, like you said?

[Speaker 1] (8:29:04 - 8:30:16)

Great questions, guys. Thank you. Yes, you're absolutely right.

The pain body is passed on from generation to generation. And certainly, whatever a mother experiences in pregnancy affects already the child that is inside her. Whatever emotions she experiences will affect and leave remnants in the child.

And I believe that, although no scientists have discovered it yet, I believe that even in the human DNA, there's already programming that is the pain body. And so we inherit it. It's only partly personal.

In other words, partly it arises as a result of things that happened to us in childhood and so on. But it goes back much further than that. It's old.

It's very old. And as you know, I mentioned in the book, another aspect of the pain body is it's also collective. You also inherit the pain body of your, sometimes of your entire nation is part of your pain body.

[Speaker 2] (8:30:16 - 8:30:26)

This is what we were talking about last week. The pain body of slavery in this country that so many people are in denial about. The pain body of what's happened to the Native Americans in this country.

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (8:30:26 - 8:30:26)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (8:30:26 - 8:30:27)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (8:30:27 - 8:30:38)

And so, so what you said is absolutely true. So the mother will often already pass on her pain body to the unborn child.

[Speaker 2] (8:30:38 - 8:30:50)

So isn't that harder to get yourself free? We're going to talk about before this class is over tonight, breaking free of the pain body. But if you inherited it, if it's like genetically DNA encoded, isn't that harder to get rid of?

[Speaker 1] (8:30:50 - 8:31:58)

Well, that's how it is. But it's, it comes from the past. It is the living past in you.

The living past. Now, the past has no power against the present moment. Because all power arises out of the present moment because it is life itself.

So then this is why you don't need years or generations to become free of the pain body. It has taken many generations for the pain body to build up. But it takes only one conscious human and one conscious moment now to disidentify from it and recognize it.

You're not totally free yet, no, but you recognize it for what it is. It takes only one moment of awareness now to see it for what it is. And when this person then has broken the unconsciousness of generations and that's what we are engaged in.

We are, we are breaking the unconsciousness that goes back thousands and thousands of years. That's pretty powerful.

[Speaker 2] (8:31:59 - 8:32:02)

George and Victoria, thank you again from Bend, Oregon. Thank you. Thanks guys.

[Speaker 13] (8:32:02 - 8:32:10)

Thank you because you folks are doing this on a global electronic basis. So thank you for letting us be a part of that breakthrough. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (8:32:10 - 8:32:12)

Thank you. Thank you for the second time.

[Speaker 13] (8:32:12 - 8:32:13)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (8:32:13 - 8:32:53)

Well, on page 170, you talk about children and you say suppressed pain bodies are extremely toxic, even more so than openly active ones. And that psychic toxicity is absorbed by the children and contributes to the development of their own pain bodies. So people who are, I think about this all the time.

We were just doing somebody on the show. We're always doing somebody on the show who's arguing in their families. When you argue in front of your children, I remember this the other day, the little girl said, when my mommy and daddy argue, I go and hide under the covers.

When you argue in front of your children, you are creating and reinforcing their pain bodies.

[Speaker 1] (8:32:54 - 8:34:24)

Yes. I did that as a child. I was always trying to hide from my parents' pain body, which was there a lot of the time active.

So that's one way is when there's an active confrontation and the parents having a confrontation with their mutual pain bodies. It shocked us last week when you said you started thinking of killing yourself when you were at a very young age, nine or 10 because of your parents. Yes, that was the general environment that I was in.

I perceived it as extremely unpleasant. There was the environment of my parents and there was not that they were not loving parents, but they both had heavy pain bodies. I loved them, but I didn't know at the time why that was continuous conflict.

I just knew it was dreadful to be around them. And of course, I was also unhappy at school because I never liked having to study things that I wasn't interested in and it wasn't done in an interesting way. So yes, the children then absorb.

One way they absorb the pain body from their parents is when there's open conflict between the parents' pain bodies. But another way is also when some parents say we mustn't fight in front of the children and nevertheless there's an intense emotional negativity. They may not be saying anything, but there's an emanation of intense negativity in the parents.

That's right.

[Speaker 2] (8:34:24 - 8:34:46)

I know a couple stayed together 24 years in order until the last child was grown and had gone to college. All the children are completely messed up. One problem after another problem, drugs and drinking and all kinds of problems because the children stayed in that house and absorbed all the energy that was in that house.

[Speaker 1] (8:34:47 - 8:34:47)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (8:34:47 - 8:34:47)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (8:34:47 - 8:35:12)

And sometimes it's the case if the parents repress that because they don't want to fight in front of the children or they may have an image of themselves as religious and they mustn't. That's right. And so they are not even admitting to themselves perhaps that there's intense negativity.

And then the children grow up in that and sometimes it's then the children who are forced to act it out in the world. That's right.

[Speaker 2] (8:35:13 - 8:35:35)

And the interesting about that when you try to repress it, when you're not fully realizing the truth of who you are and you say the truth of who you are will set you free, when you allow the repressed bad energy to go on in the household, the energy is still there. It goes back to what I was saying on page 162. The energy is always there.

[Speaker 1] (8:35:35 - 8:35:36)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (8:35:36 - 8:35:42)

And children more so than even adults children who don't have the language for it pick up on the energy.

[Speaker 1] (8:35:42 - 8:35:43)

Yes, yes.

[Speaker 2] (8:35:43 - 8:36:03)

And often blame themselves because they don't have the language to explain. Okay, okay. You also say on...

Well, first of all, we'll do this. We'll go to a caller on this topic from Melbourne, Australia. Hello.

She has a 10-year-old daughter. Her name is Wendy. Wendy, hi.

Hi, Oprah. Hi, Eckhart.

[Speaker 28] (8:36:03 - 8:36:04)

Hi.

[Speaker 19] (8:36:05 - 8:36:56)

Thank you for having me on the webcast today. Well, great to talk to you. I have a question.

Eckhart, on page 178, you state that someone who in childhood was neglected or abandoned by one or both parents will likely develop a pain body that becomes triggered in any situation that resonates even remotely with their primordial pain of abandonment. So I see this pain in my 10-year-old daughter whose father no longer sees her and hasn't really had much of a relationship with her. And my question is, how do I help her through her feelings of abandonment?

And how do I guide her through people-pleasing behavior? Because I notice she has a strong tendency to people-please just to be accepted or liked. I would really love some help on this one as I'm often at a loss on how to help her through it.

[Speaker 1] (8:36:56 - 8:37:13)

Can you give an example of how this, what you see as a sense of abandonment, how it manifests in her now? Can you give a situation where this happens? How does she behave in such a situation?

[Speaker 19] (8:37:15 - 8:37:49)

Well, often there's been occasions when they have little parties at school and children get invited. And she's one of the kids that's excluded because obviously not everyone gets invited to everyone's birthday party. She's so traumatized by it.

She cries and she doesn't understand. And she comes and she says they don't like her or they don't love her. And then she'll try to often buy the friendship.

She'll take things to them. You know, take gifts or take Easter eggs lately and things like that. And I just think, oh, how do I get her through this?

She wants to be liked all the time.

[Speaker 1] (8:37:49 - 8:38:52)

She wants approval. So your child- It's a case of intense tears and trauma. She is now 10 years old?

10 years old, yes. Yes. Perhaps you can gradually over the next few years explain to her that she cannot be liked by everybody.

Nobody is liked by everybody. And you cannot expect- I think if you explain it gently, she will begin to understand that it is impossible in this world to be liked and accepted by everybody. And it is not necessary to be liked and accepted by everybody.

And especially if you do things that are of any significance in this world, as when she grows up, the more significant things you do in this world, the more you will find there are certain people who don't like what you do. And even Oprah has people who don't like what she does. I don't know why, but the- I don't either.

[Speaker 2] (8:38:54 - 8:39:40)

Yes, and the more successful you become, the more people you have who don't like what you do. So you have a- And I used to be- Listen, as you're describing your daughter, I used to be this little 10-year-old girl who had such a desire to please. I was always taking all of my notebook paper and giving it to everybody else, whatever I had.

Even in college, nobody liked me. So I would spend all my money, because I was working in TV from the time I was a sophomore in college. And everybody else was jealous of me for having a job and having a job on TV.

And so I would take my money and buy pizzas for everybody and try to make everybody like me. And listen, I hope you- I was 40-something before I figured it out.

[Speaker 1] (8:39:40 - 8:39:56)

So I hope your daughter gets it before then. I think some gentle explanations, just a little bit here and there. Now she's 10.

And then over the next few years, the behavior will continue for a while. You cannot just undo all conditioning in another person.

[Speaker 2] (8:39:57 - 8:40:03)

Yeah, the pain body is, I was not wanted by my father. That's what the 10-year-old is feeling. I was not wanted by my father.

[Speaker 1] (8:40:03 - 8:41:08)

Yes, yes. And the pain body, if your daughter gets taken over by intense negative feelings that are out of proportion to the triggering event, which is a sign that this is the pain body, if this happens and when this happens, after- I'll describe it in a new earth. After a pain body episode is over, the next day, for example, you talk to what your daughter felt at that time.

Yesterday, when you behaved in such a way, when you did this, when you said that, what did it feel like? Ask her questions about- so that she begins to put attention on her own emotions and she can detect them. Ask questions about- after a pain body episode in your daughter, ask her what it feels like so that the awareness grows in her of this.

And next time, when it happens again, say, oh, there's the- that old thing has come back. She might even- you may even encourage her to give it a name, the pain body.

[Speaker 28] (8:41:08 - 8:41:09)

Mm-hmm, okay.

[Speaker 1] (8:41:09 - 8:41:28)

And then she can identify it when it happens again. So gradually, the child can be, instead of at the mercy of these arising emotions, the child can already learn at an early age to be there as the awareness of the emotion, rather than to be taken over by the emotion.

[Speaker 2] (8:41:29 - 8:41:33)

Actually, I think children can learn this a lot easier than adults can because we're so overly conditioned.

[Speaker 1] (8:41:33 - 8:41:38)

Yes, and that should be the- one of the main things that children learn at school. But so far, that's not happening.

[Speaker 2] (8:41:39 - 8:42:38)

Right. And also, Wendy, I might suggest this, you know, I think one of the things that would have helped me a lot, and I found this with my girls in Africa, who come from really disadvantaged backgrounds. They're disadvantaged.

And one of the things I want to teach them is a life of service. You always feel better about your life when you can be of service to someone else's. And so if your daughter, even at 10, is exposed to children who are less fortunate than she is, children who are orphaned or abandoned or, you know, in poverty, I don't know what the situation is in Melbourne, but children who have less than she does, and she is able to see that her situation really isn't so bad and allowed to feel a sense of gratitude for who she is and where she is and what she has, and yet also empathy and compassion for people who have less than she does. I think that that will also, even at 10 years old, begin to offer some perspective for her.

[Speaker 1] (8:42:39 - 8:42:39)

Yes, absolutely.

[Speaker 2] (8:42:39 - 8:42:40)

Yes, I agree.

[Speaker 1] (8:42:40 - 8:42:41)

Yes. Yes, absolutely.

[Speaker 2] (8:42:42 - 8:42:45)

Thank you so much for your call. Thank you very much. Thank you.

[Speaker 15] (8:42:45 - 8:42:45)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (8:42:46 - 8:42:56)

So tonight's chapter, Breaking Free, how do we do it? You say, how long does it take to become free of the pain body on page 183? Tell us how long.

[Speaker 1] (8:42:59 - 8:43:26)

The important question, as I say, is not how long it takes to become free of the pain body, but how long does it take for me to stop identifying with the pain body? That's because it's more important to stop identifying with it because in one sense, you're already free. The pain body may still be there in you for a while, but when you stop identifying with it, that's freedom already.

[Speaker 2] (8:43:26 - 8:43:38)

You say the answer is, of course, that it depends both on the density of an individual's pain body, some are more dense than others. Yes. As well as the degree or intensity of that individual's arising presence.

[Speaker 1] (8:43:38 - 8:43:39)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (8:43:39 - 8:43:54)

So the more you're able to bring that sense of awareness, or as I said in the beginning, that you, you who is disguised as awareness, that awareness is you disguised as a person, the more you can be present with that.

[Speaker 1] (8:43:55 - 8:43:55)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (8:43:55 - 8:43:56)

The more it dissipates.

[Speaker 1] (8:43:56 - 8:43:57)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (8:43:57 - 8:43:58)

It doesn't happen instantly.

[Speaker 1] (8:43:58 - 8:44:34)

No. But every time you disidentify, every time you are there as the awareness, the energy of the pain body already diminishes. So every time there's a little bit less of it.

And what happens to the energy? It's all, energy is all one. There's only one energy, but it appears in different frequencies and the pain body energy has a certain frequency.

It's contained, it's rigid, it's tight and it becomes freed and it contributes to the arising awareness.

[Speaker 2] (8:44:35 - 8:44:39)

And you say, but it's not the pain body, but identification with it that causes the suffering.

[Speaker 1] (8:44:39 - 8:44:43)

That's right. The pain body itself is only...

[Speaker 2] (8:44:43 - 8:44:43)

Has no power over it.

[Speaker 1] (8:44:43 - 8:44:57)

No. And it's not suffering anymore when you don't identify with it. Then it's only an unpleasant feeling inside you.

You can hardly call it suffering, but it's suffering when you become it or it becomes you, that's suffering.

[Speaker 2] (8:44:58 - 8:45:15)

It's not the pain body, but identification with the pain body that forces you to relive the past again and again and again and keeps you in a state of unconsciousness. I'm on page 183, everybody. So a more important question to ask would be, how long does it take to become free of identification?

[Speaker 1] (8:45:16 - 8:45:53)

Yes, that's the key. And the answer to that, of course, is it doesn't really take any time because all it requires you is to be aware at this moment as it arises, in the moment it arises to see it and recognize it. Be the awareness for it, be the space for it, is another word, another expression we can use.

Are you able to be the awareness for the pain body, to be the space for the pain body and say, oh, there it is. That means you have broken the identification. All it requires is for you to be present in the now as the awareness.

[Speaker 2] (8:45:54 - 8:46:04)

And to remember that the past, no matter what it is, no matter how awful it was, how horrifying, how much suffering, the past has no power over the present moment.

[Speaker 1] (8:46:04 - 8:46:27)

Because what arises out of the present moment is the dimension of consciousness that we call presence or awareness. It's a dimension that was already there in you always, but had been covered up by density of emotion and density of conditioned mind structures, thinking.

[Speaker 2] (8:46:27 - 8:46:31)

And the way you get to that is to bring yourself back to the present moment, get still.

[Speaker 1] (8:46:32 - 8:47:19)

Yes. Get still. Get still.

And then that arises, that dimension that then arises is, we could call it, goes beyond who you are as a person. It is transpersonal. It is a transpersonal dimension in you.

And that's the only thing that can free you from the purely personal realm, which has its place, but is very limited. And it's the only thing that can free you from the past and the heaviness of the past. And the past cannot prevail against it.

It is impossible because it is the only power there is. So it is also the timeless dimension in you. When we talk of presence or awareness, there is no past and future in presence or awareness.

[Speaker 2] (8:47:19 - 8:47:28)

I got that. When you say on the page 184, when you feel the pain body, don't fall into the era of thinking there's something wrong with you, making yourself into a problem.

[Speaker 28] (8:47:28 - 8:47:28)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (8:47:28 - 8:48:18)

Because the ego loves that. Okay. The knowing needs to be followed by accepting.

We talked about that a lot tonight. Anything else will obscure it. Accepting means you allow yourself to feel whatever it is you're feeling at that moment.

You can't argue with what is. Well, you can, but if you do, you suffer. That's how we suffer.

Through allowing you become what you are, vast and spacious, you become whole. You're not a fragment anymore, which is how the ego perceives itself. Your true nature emerges, which is one with the nature of God.

And then you say, Jesus points to this when he says, be ye whole, even as your father in heaven is whole. The New Testament's be perfect is a mistranslation of the original Greek word, which means whole. This is to say you don't need to become whole, but be what you already are with or without the pain body.

[Speaker 1] (8:48:18 - 8:48:21)

Yes. Yes. You already that.

[Speaker 2] (8:48:24 - 8:48:39)

Now, this brings us to the question that Denise in Michigan asks on our web. She says, is Eckhart perfect? Eckhart, you seem to be almost perfect, although I know nobody is.

Do you ever yell? Do you ever get angry or feel sad?

[Speaker 1] (8:48:40 - 8:49:30)

I'm not perfect because the form cannot be perfect. Every form, by the very fact that it has form, is one thing, but not the other. So whole, yes, I feel that I'm aligned with something far greater than the little person.

And that is where I rest, and that is where inspiration comes from, where the teaching arises. This is presence. And it goes far beyond this little person.

This little person is insignificant. It doesn't matter very much to me. So I don't look for perfection.

I don't look for perfection in myself because that would be terrible frustration. I do things that people perhaps would regard as not perfect.

[Speaker 2] (8:49:34 - 8:49:35)

I'm waiting to hear.

[Speaker 1] (8:49:38 - 8:50:19)

I have a glass of wine. I drink, I like my glass of wine occasionally. I drink coffee at Starbucks almost every day.

And sometimes people come up to me and say, you are drinking coffee. You shouldn't be drinking coffee. What do you need coffee for?

I say, why not? I enjoy it. So I enjoy all kinds of things.

I don't have many negative emotions. I can't think the last time I even had a negative emotion, but it's possible. Perhaps I remember maybe some years ago, yes, I was watching and people were mistreating an animal and I suddenly felt anger.

So it can happen. And what did you do when you felt the anger? I just did a show on puppy mills.

[Speaker 2] (8:50:19 - 8:50:26)

It made me very angry too. So what did you do with that anger? Did you say, oh, I'm feeling anger?

You noticed the anger?

[Speaker 1] (8:50:26 - 8:51:02)

Yes. And the situation, somebody else interfered at that very moment. Otherwise, I had already taken steps towards stopping it.

And so the anger was there. I felt it. And it was in my system for a couple of minutes as a vibrational, intense vibration in the body.

And then it dissipated. I let it go. So you don't just like little things don't upset you ever?

No, no. I let go. I had so much of that in the past.

So much suffering with all kinds of little things. It's not worth it.

[Speaker 2] (8:51:02 - 8:51:08)

Yeah. I never understand this because I'm not, you know, I don't get triggered by, you know, automobiles or driving or stuff.

[Speaker 1] (8:51:08 - 8:51:10)

I never understand the people, the road rage.

[Speaker 2] (8:51:10 - 8:51:11)

That's pain buddy, right?

[Speaker 1] (8:51:12 - 8:51:13)

Yes. And the continuous...

[Speaker 2] (8:51:14 - 8:51:19)

I never understand why not getting in a, not being led in a line or being cut off, why that would cause you to be so crazy.

[Speaker 1] (8:51:19 - 8:51:38)

I don't understand it either. But for many people, that is something they personalize. So it's an egoic phenomenon.

So when somebody does something, they regard it as a personal insult to them, to their dignity or whatever. So, and of course, if it were...

[Speaker 2] (8:51:38 - 8:51:39)

They personalize the traffic.

[Speaker 1] (8:51:41 - 8:52:37)

They wouldn't perhaps do it with the weather. If some hail or rain hits your windscreen, then you would, perhaps you wouldn't get angry. But if a driver cuts across, then you suddenly get angry.

But it's the same thing. It's just an energy field cutting across. Why personalize it?

And I'm amazed that people suffer so much stress in traffic because if you don't react, then there's no stress. If you don't personalize other drivers, as if they had some personal disagreement with you, it's nothing to do with you. They don't even know you.

If you don't personalize things, it's actually quite stress-free. Or you get stuck in traffic and people get so frustrated getting stuck in traffic. I know.

And that can be a wonderful meditation. You can't move. Why not be in the body, feel the intense aliveness in your energy field and be there, enjoy.

[Speaker 2] (8:52:37 - 8:52:47)

And everybody who's listening has ever been stuck in traffic. You now, after reading the book, you know how ridiculous it is to be upset that you're stuck in traffic because there's nothing you can do to change it.

[Speaker 1] (8:52:47 - 8:53:01)

So just be with it. Wonderful opportunity for acceptance and surrender. And a wonderful opportunity for learning dysfunction.

If you observe they are not accepting and surrendering, then you can observe how dysfunction arises.

[Speaker 2] (8:53:01 - 8:53:03)

I love the way you answered that question from Denise in Michigan.

[Speaker 1] (8:53:03 - 8:53:25)

You say you're not perfect, but you're whole. Yes. So sometimes people on the spiritual path, they look for some kind of perfection.

They have an image of how a perfect, evolved, spiritual human being behaves. And then they try to conform that to that image. It doesn't work.

It really accept your own limitations, accept your imperfections.

[Speaker 2] (8:53:25 - 8:54:02)

Do you have no attachment to, I mean, the way you even described your body. I love last week, toward the end of our webcast, I asked you if you had any fear of dying. And I said this later to some friends.

I've never talked to anybody whom I've asked that question, to whom I've asked that question. And there was such definitive resoluteness about it. Like I really believed you when you said you had no fear.

I really believed you when you had no fear of death. And you have no attachment to anything? Like, do you live in a nice house?

Do you like nice things?

[Speaker 1] (8:54:02 - 8:54:03)

Oh, yes.

[Speaker 2] (8:54:03 - 8:54:03)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (8:54:03 - 8:54:47)

I like nice things. Now, for many years, I lived on a minimum because for many years, I didn't have a regular job. I was just doing occasional counseling and occasional little workshops.

So for many years, I lived on very, very little. And I enjoyed that. I later on, I realized, oh, I must have lived for all those years below the poverty level.

But I didn't feel that at the time. I didn't regard myself as poor. I've enjoyed every moment of it.

And then now I have relative wealth, especially compared to that time. I'm relatively well. And I'm actually enjoying that too.

I buy some nice furniture sometimes and enjoy it. You like nice sheets? I like nice sheets.

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (8:54:47 - 8:54:48)

Or do you care?

[Speaker 1] (8:54:48 - 8:55:20)

Well, I can sleep in any, but I like nice things. So... But you're not attached to them?

Not, no, no. I'm not attached. I enjoy having space around so that you don't have to listen to the neighbor's noise.

That is quite nice. Perhaps the greatest thing that money can buy is space around you.

But if you don't have it and if you have to live with neighbor's noise, it's a great opportunity for surrendering or for telling them to shut up.

[Speaker 2] (8:55:22 - 8:55:32)

Before we go, I wanted to have you tell everyone about an upcoming... Oh, I want to tell you about an upcoming Oprah show. Do you want to summarize?

I guess you just basically did.

[Speaker 1] (8:55:32 - 8:55:32)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (8:55:32 - 8:55:34)

Break free of it, lose the identification.

[Speaker 1] (8:55:35 - 8:55:36)

Yes, that's it. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (8:55:36 - 8:55:57)

I'm really excited about the next chapter because the next chapter is finding who you truly are. And I would say bring a friend to the webcast next week. Come and bring a friend because even if you haven't read the rest of the book, you can start really on page 185 with finding who you truly are and then work your way backwards.

It's going to be so exciting.

[Speaker 1] (8:55:58 - 8:55:58)

Yes, I love it too.

[Speaker 2] (8:55:58 - 8:57:31)

I love it. I love it when you love it. I love it.

It's going to be so exciting. Also, everybody, listen, I want to tell you about an upcoming Oprah show we're doing this Wednesday, an entire hour on a new earth that's going to air on our show, this Wednesday, April 9th, in the United States and in Canada and the rest of the world as soon as we can get it to our international affiliates. For those of you who've been in Dubai, we'll be talking to people who've had a big and little transformation in their lives.

It's a powerful hour and something I think you'll want to see. If you've been trying to talk to your friends about this or people in your home about this, that's the show that they should watch. I want to encourage you to have them watch that and bring a friend to next week's webcast to find out who you truly are.

Again, Eckhart and I thank you all for joining us around the world. The sixth class will be available on demand tomorrow for free here at oprah.com. If you want to download or watch any of our classes, you can do that also tomorrow at oprah.com and iTunes. It's free. Thanks to nature-made soft gel vitamins. It's free.

And also tomorrow, we'll have special bonus materials for you on oprah.com and iTunes. Audio meditations read by Eckhart's partner, Kim Ng. You can listen to them on your computer or download them and take them to go.

Don't forget to update your workbook. Get ready for next week's class, finding out who you truly are. If you're not who you think you are, well, then who are you?

We're going to talk about that. It's going to be so exciting next week. Again, I thank you.

[Speaker 1] (8:57:32 - 8:57:33)

Thank you, everybody.

[Speaker 2] (8:57:33 - 8:57:36)

Thank you. See you in class next week. Good night.

[Speaker 1] (8:57:37 - 8:57:37)

Good night.

[Speaker 2] (8:57:39 - 8:58:35)

Lovely, wasn't that lovely? Hi. Welcome, everybody.

Welcome to Class 7 of our New Earth Web Series with author Eckhart Tolle. I want to thank our students from every corner of the world who are joining us live on this journey of discovery. I truly believe that as each one of us becomes more awake and aware in our own lives, so will our families and everyone we encounter, our communities and our countries and eventually our world.

And so Eckhart Tolle and I welcome you once again to yet another lesson. Chapter 7, my favorite chapter thus far. Before we get started, we're going to have a moment of silence and you're going to lead us into that moment of silence.

Yes?

[Speaker 1] (8:58:35 - 8:59:20)

Yes. We're already getting used to having moments of silence to start with. And I'll introduce the moment of silence today with a short meditation passage taken from The Power of Now.

And as I read this short passage, our viewers should already be able to become still as they listen. And after I've read it, we'll be still just for half a minute or so. So here we go.

It's all about entering the present moment fully. Uh-huh. And that begins with using your senses fully.

Uh-huh. Be where you are.

[Speaker 28] (8:59:20 - 8:59:21)

Uh-huh.

[Speaker 1] (8:59:22 - 9:00:26)

Look around. Just look. Don't interpret.

Be aware of the silent presence of each thing. Be aware of the space that allows everything to be. Listen to the sounds.

Don't judge them. Listen to the silence underneath the sounds. Touch something, anything, and feel and acknowledge its being.

Observe the rhythm of your breathing. Feel the air flowing in and out. Feel the life energy inside your body.

Allow everything to be within and without. Allow the is-ness of all things. Move deeply into the now.

[Speaker 2] (9:01:24 - 9:02:43)

That's great. Yes. That's great.

All right, everybody. Tonight, we're discussing Chapter 7, Finding Who You Truly Are, which I know is the reason why so many of you picked up this book in the first place, because when I first announced it, I was reading the subtitle that the book is A New Earth Awakening to Your Life's Purpose. And I'd gone on the message boards, and so many people were saying, I hope this book helped me discover my purpose.

I hope this book allows me to find who I am. Well, if you're ready, tonight's your night. Let's start with an overview of what this chapter is really about.

You say that it is about, you begin with know thyself. Chapter 7 starts with those two words that you say are inscribed above the entrance of a famous Greek temple. You say on page 186, what those words imply is this.

Before you ask any other questions, first ask the most fundamental question of your life. Who am I? And then you say on page 189, that you are not the ego.

So when you become aware of the ego in you, it doesn't mean you know who you are. It means you know who you're not. But it is through knowing who you are not that the greatest obstacle to truly knowing yourself is removed.

So let's start off with these two questions. Who aren't I? And who am I?

[Speaker 1] (9:02:45 - 9:07:02)

And of course the best starting point is the first question. Who aren't I? Because what is left when you realize, and it's usually a process for most people, realizing who you are not, letting go of identification with things and so on.

When you realize who you are not, then suddenly who you are becomes revealed to you. And who you are cannot easily be put into words. Because if it could, then it could be answered in one simple sentence.

And then everybody could repeat that answer and believe that they know who they are. That's right. So we start with knowing who you are not.

And that begins for people, sometimes with loss, where they lose something valuable that they had identified with. Or death comes into their lives. Some kind of breakdown or disaster happens.

Sometimes those people suddenly... Awaken. Awaken.

Something has been taken away from them that they had identified with for many years that had become part of their sense of self. And if something very fundamental that has been part of your sense of self is removed, death, loss, collapse... Even if it's a person, a human being who you loved.

Yes, it could be somebody close to you who dies. Then, of course, at first it leads to enormous suffering. And you feel as if part of you had died also.

And for some people that happens even if they lose possessions. Because they were so identified with their possessions that when their possessions are removed, they feel there's nothing left of me. Another related to possessions is social position.

If people fall from some high social position... There's a scandal that happens all the time in the news. Yes.

Not mentioning any names. Yes, don't. You don't have to.

And then these people can be extremely painful if they had become totally identified with either their possessions or their social position. And they are suddenly faced with a kind of huge emptiness in their lives. And then the question arises, I'm nobody anymore.

And this is the point, a decisive point is reached there where they can either continue to resist and suffer, resist what has happened internally, complain about it, tell themselves story about it, how it's all collapsed. Or they can suddenly come to a point of acceptance of what happened and acceptance of the present moment. So the thing that was so important in their lives actually left behind.

I sometimes compare it to, if you look at a person's life, it's a tapestry, consists of all kinds of things that one identifies with. And when a great loss happens, it's almost as if suddenly there's a huge hole in that tapestry of my life. Correct.

And that is painful when you identify with the tapestry. But behind the tapestry, there's a light that shines through because without the light, there wouldn't be anything at all. That's why you can even see your life.

Without the light of consciousness, nothing would be. Behind the tapestry, there's a light. I'm using a kind of analogy.

So when you don't resist this hole that has suddenly appeared in this tapestry of your life, then there's a light that shines through then. I'm using it as an analogy. There's suddenly a peace that comes when the emptiness that is left behind by the form that has dissolved is not resisted internally.

And then through that empty space, there comes what the Bible calls the peace that passes all understanding. Because you can't explain suddenly, and people have reported that this has happened to them. They lost sometimes, in some cases, everything.

They suffered at first. And then suddenly, an inner shift happened. They accept it.

[Speaker 2] (9:07:02 - 9:07:40)

And this also happens when you are grieving somebody that you loved. Isn't it true? Because when you come to understand fully who you are, it doesn't mean that you will no longer be saddened when you lose loved ones.

But you will also, when you become conscious, you then understand that they have just moved from form to formless, and that the formless can have an easier way to come through, come through now even more strongly than it did in the form if you allow yourself to be with it and to see it and to experience it.

[Speaker 1] (9:07:41 - 9:08:40)

Yes. What you just said, an example, I was talking to a woman who lost her son. He had an illness.

He was about 28, I believe. And she was sitting next to him at his deathbed. And the moment he, just a few minutes before he died and just after he died, she could sense an enormous peace descending upon the room and filling the whole room.

And she could feel that there was a sacred presence in the room in the moment of death. So she had totally surrendered to that. And it's very painful.

It's even more painful for a parent to have to witness a child's death than the other way around. And so she came. That was the most sacred moment in her life.

And that lasted for about 10 minutes. And after 10 minutes, her mind came in. And suddenly she started crying and protesting.

But that was... Because the mind wants the situation to be different.

[Speaker 2] (9:08:40 - 9:09:07)

Yes. The mind wants you alive again in the physical body. Or the mind wants the thing back that I have lost.

Yes. The job, the position, the whatever. I think it's harder though when it comes to loved ones because there is a connection there.

Yes. And there is, you know, nobody knows what happens. Yes.

Except maybe you when we die. And so there's this feeling that, you know, I have lost someone. Yes.

Is that feeling selfishness?

[Speaker 1] (9:09:08 - 9:09:34)

No, it's a normal feeling because there was... Even if you truly love somebody, of course, what you love in the other person is deeper than the form. Right.

The external form of that person. Nevertheless, there's always a little bit, even in true love, there's always a little bit of attachment to the form also. Because the light comes through the form.

The light comes through the form. Yes. All right.

[Speaker 2] (9:09:34 - 9:11:01)

Let's go here to page 186, everybody. This is one of my favorite things. A second, I have a cold.

So if I look like I'm sucking on a cough drop... Unconscious people, and many remain unconscious, trapped in their egos throughout their lives will quickly tell you who they are, their name, their occupation, their personal history, the shape or state of their body and whatever they identify with. Others may appear to be more evolved because they think of themselves as an immortal soul or divine spirit.

But do they really know themselves? Or have they just added some spiritual-sounding concepts to the content of their mind? Knowing yourself goes far deeper than the adoption of a set of ideas or beliefs.

Spiritual ideas and beliefs may at best be helpful pointers. But in themselves, they rarely have the power to dislodge the more firmly established core concepts of who you think you are, which are part of the conditioning of the human mind. This is my favorite in this chapter.

One of my favorites. I have three stars, then another star when I read it a second time, and another star. Knowing yourself deeply has nothing to do with whatever ideas are floating around in your mind.

Knowing yourself is to be rooted in being instead of lost in your mind.

[Speaker 1] (9:11:02 - 9:11:03)

Yes, yes.

[Speaker 2] (9:11:03 - 9:11:04)

That was beautifully written.

[Speaker 1] (9:11:04 - 9:11:31)

Yes. And so the... I mentioned that because some people identified, many people identified with external things.

You mentioned, I believe, a week or two ago, somebody mentioned to you that they suddenly realized that they are not their car. They're not their car. That's the beginning, early stage of disidentification.

But it's good. But we do think we are, and that's why you wrote the whole chapter, we do think we are our roles. Yes, our roles.

[Speaker 2] (9:11:31 - 9:11:37)

Because a lot of people have important roles, roles as parents and roles in important positions that affect a lot of people's lives.

[Speaker 1] (9:11:38 - 9:12:20)

And people think that they are their roles and they identify with their status in the world and what they have achieved. That's right. And of course, it's a question of finding a balance of honoring the role, that of honoring the function that you have in this world.

So that's fine. You have to do whatever you're doing. You fulfill your function as mother, as father, or in some other capacity, some public function, business function, whatever it is.

So to honor the function without becoming totally identified with the function. So that always there's still a human being there, not just a function. So knowing yourself deeply has nothing to do with whatever ideas are floating around in your mind.

[Speaker 2] (9:12:20 - 9:12:35)

Meaning knowing yourself deeply has nothing to do with me being on television every day, speaking to people, and even maybe doing a good job at it. Actually doing a good job at it. And all the great jobs that everybody else is doing who's listening.

Those are identifications.

[Speaker 1] (9:12:35 - 9:13:14)

Identifications. With form. Yes.

And also what I meant, what you just read, is people sometimes have certain ideas in their mind of who they are. And they may be spiritual ideas. I'm eternal spirit.

That's of course wonderful. And basically it is true. But do you truly know that?

Because in order to truly know that you are more, you are much deeper than this form, goes far beyond holding certain concepts in your mind. Yeah. It goes, this kind of knowing is a knowing that it goes beyond conceptual.

[Speaker 2] (9:13:14 - 9:13:21)

Because if you really knew that, you would have a certain way of being or living in the world that would manifest that in the world.

[Speaker 1] (9:13:21 - 9:13:40)

Exactly. That would manifest your being. That's right.

And particularly when situations happened, your reaction to a situation always tells you where you are at as far as your level of consciousness. That is why a lot of people become annoyed with people who claim to be so spiritual or so religious.

[Speaker 2] (9:13:40 - 9:13:42)

Yes. Who are intolerant of other people.

[Speaker 1] (9:13:43 - 9:13:43)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (9:13:43 - 9:14:32)

Intolerant of other ideas. Self-righteous. Imposing their ideas on other people.

Because if you truly were what you say you are. Yes. So moving on to who you think you are.

This is one of my beautiful statements here. On page 187, everybody. If small things have the power to disturb you, then who you think you are is exactly that small.

That will be your unconscious belief. What are the small things? Ultimately, all things are small things because all things are transient.

And you say, your sense of who you are determines what you perceive as your needs and what matters to you in life. And whatever matters to you will have the power to upset and disturb you. So people all the time say, you know, I'm a peaceful person.

I'm a loving person. Yes. I'm a kind person.

I'm a generous person. I'm a good person.

[Speaker 1] (9:14:32 - 9:15:37)

Yes. And then the slightest thing goes wrong and suddenly something else comes up, which is total opposite of the good person. And so this is not the deep knowing of who you are.

The deep knowing really is, we use the word know here in a somewhat differently from the conventional way of using the word know. Usually knowing is conceptual knowing. So the analogy one could have, which is sometimes given is with honey.

You can examine the chemical makeup of honey. You can examine the molecular structure of honey. I can tell you it's sweet.

You can write a PhD about honey or you can write poems about honey. But if you have never tasted honey, in other words, if honey has not merged with you, then you don't really know honey. But the moment you taste honey, then you know honey.

And all the other stuff beforehand, even your PhD about honey, if you wrote one, is not knowing, not true knowing. It's only conceptual. Okay.

[Speaker 2] (9:15:38 - 9:15:45)

So to be rooted in being instead of lost in your mind. And what does that mean to be rooted in being?

[Speaker 1] (9:15:45 - 9:16:54)

And again, we are using words here to describe something that really is beyond words. It's not describable. Yeah.

Yes. But just a little hint is, we always come back, of course, here in this teaching to the present moment. Absolutely.

So when your attention moves fully into the present moment, at that moment, you go deeper into being. You could say that life has two dimensions. There's the horizontal dimension of life, past, future, where everything happens.

And most people, their whole existence is on that horizontal surface dimension. And they think that's their life. They think that's all there is.

And of course, then life is quite a threatening place because... All that is transient. It changes.

Very transient. And you've never encountered the deeper dimension. This, by the way, is a few people have interpreted the Christian cross, which we mentioned also last time in a slightly different context.

The Christian cross as being, showing the horizontal dimension of life. And suddenly it intersects with the vertical dimension. It's also the dimension of the sacred.

[Speaker 28] (9:16:55 - 9:16:55)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (9:16:55 - 9:17:14)

And so you enter the vertical dimension by becoming present, by bringing your attention into the now. Because then past and future disappear from your consciousness. And at this moment, there's only the now.

And suddenly a depth opens up within you.

[Speaker 2] (9:17:14 - 9:17:24)

And so what you've been saying throughout this book is that if you are living your life in the horizontal, the past and the future, then you're not really living. You are making enemies of this present moment.

[Speaker 1] (9:17:25 - 9:17:25)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (9:17:25 - 9:17:26)

And you're not truly living.

[Speaker 1] (9:17:26 - 9:17:26)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (9:17:27 - 9:17:40)

And that when you say, what I interpret, what you say, knowing yourself is to be rooted in being instead of lost in your mind, is to in every encounter, and I've been doing this more and more, bringing, coming back to your breath.

[Speaker 1] (9:17:40 - 9:17:40)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (9:17:41 - 9:18:04)

Coming back to the present moment in such a way that you are aware and conscious of everything that's going on around you. And recognizing that you, you, you are that awareness. That's who you are.

You are the observer of all these things that are going on in the horizontal plane of your life.

[Speaker 1] (9:18:04 - 9:18:22)

Exactly. So the, was the vertical comes the witnessing presence. That's right.

Yeah. Oh, that's, and so that's the liberation. You, that's, you know, sometimes this word liberation is used in spiritual context.

That's the liberation from the horizontal dimension, which Jesus calls the world. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (9:18:22 - 9:20:01)

Do you know, may I should just share this? I know we have Debbie from the Netherlands on Skype, but maybe this will help illustrate this for you. A couple of years ago, I wrote this in my magazine for one of the, what I know for sure is, I was walking with my friend, Bob Green, on New Year's day, two years ago, on a mountain in Hawaii.

And it was late evening. The sun had set while we were walking and the moon had come up and the clouds had come in and come down to the ground where we were. And all of a sudden we're walking and we were surrounded by the clouds.

We're surrounded, we were in the clouds on this mountain and you could only see a sliver of the moon up ahead, just a sliver of it. And I think Bob made a comment like, it looks like the DreamWorks logo, the moon. It looks like you can go and sit up there with the fishing pole.

And we were walking along and all of a sudden he turned around and he said, can you hear that? And I stopped and it was completely, utterly still. It was so still, it makes me want to weep thinking about it.

It was so still that it felt like all of time and no time it felt like the earth had stopped, that everything had stopped. So much so that my very breath was so loud, I began to hold my breath because my breath was making too much noise in the stillness. And in that moment, I understood what you had written in Stillness Speaks, that that is always there.

That stillness, there's not a bird or a cricket or a frog or a car horn or anything.

[Speaker 1] (9:20:01 - 9:20:09)

That is always there. And that's also an inner dimension. And that is the same as I.

[Speaker 2] (9:20:10 - 9:20:19)

I am that. I am that stillness. It was a powerful spiritual experience for me.

I've never forgotten. I got chills now even thinking about it.

[Speaker 1] (9:20:20 - 9:20:20)

Wonderful.

[Speaker 2] (9:20:21 - 9:20:30)

Because you recognize that is always there. When all the noise and, you know, fireworks and all the things that go on on this mountain, that is always there.

[Speaker 1] (9:20:30 - 9:20:47)

Yes. Consciousness, we could call it, although its labels are always limiting, but I would say that is pure consciousness. Before consciousness becomes something, before it's born into a form, it's there in its pristine, formless, timeless state.

[Speaker 2] (9:20:47 - 9:20:53)

And in all things, that's why you were asking us to look around the room, there is the stillness of all things. It's easier to determine in nature, though.

[Speaker 1] (9:20:53 - 9:20:54)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (9:20:54 - 9:20:55)

It's harder with a table.

[Speaker 1] (9:20:55 - 9:21:34)

Yes, it's harder. And even harder with human beings because there's so much mind there. But so nature, but even in so-called inanimate objects that you perhaps never even look at, haven't looked at for years, they've been around you.

Sometimes it's wonderful to pick up an object and just be aware of its silent presence, no matter what it is. Because whatever it is, ultimately, nothing is inanimate. And physicists would agree because if you go deep into any so-called inanimate object, you realize it's intensely alive.

It's easy to do with trees, as I said earlier. Oh, yes.

[Speaker 2] (9:21:34 - 9:21:41)

And so the essence is, what we're trying to get here is that that is who we are, that stillness.

[Speaker 1] (9:21:41 - 9:21:49)

Yes, that's the essence of our being. That's who we are at the deepest level. This is the timeless dimension within us.

[Speaker 2] (9:21:49 - 9:22:03)

And when you're saying that even when you pass on, when you transition to another, to the formless, that stillness, that consciousness, that spirit, whatever name you choose to give it, still there.

[Speaker 1] (9:22:03 - 9:22:30)

Yes, that awareness is timeless. It's not subject to birth and death. As I have said somewhere, the opposite of life has no opposite.

Usually people think in terms of life and death. But really, death is the opposite of birth. It's not the opposite of life.

Hmm. Life in its essence has no opposite. It's eternal.

[Speaker 2] (9:22:32 - 9:22:45)

Debbie's from the Netherlands and lives in the city of Harlem. She's Skyping us from her family room there. Einstein, you have a question about the quote on page 187 about small things disturbing you.

I love this quote. Go ahead, Deb.

[Speaker 10] (9:22:45 - 9:22:48)

Hi. Hi, Oprah. Hi, Eckhart.

Hi.

[Speaker 4] (9:22:48 - 9:23:21)

My question is about high sensitivity. I always considered myself as a sensitive person and that means I'm easily overwhelmed by day-to-day life things that might be considered small. I've been practicing staying in the moment with challenging moments, but I think I need some more advice.

Is high sensitivity just a narrow egoic state? And do you have some tools that might help me to stop feeling so overwhelmed by all these small things?

[Speaker 2] (9:23:22 - 9:23:29)

It does sound like a label you've given yourself. Yeah, yeah, I know. I'm a highly sensitive individual, yes.

[Speaker 1] (9:23:29 - 9:23:40)

Yes, yes, that is true. So that's also we need to address. Can you give perhaps two or three examples of what kind of things you are very sensitive to?

[Speaker 4] (9:23:43 - 9:23:55)

Well, a lot of things, but usually when I go into a shop and there's loud music there, I just want to run away. I have a hard time dealing with noise and chaos.

[Speaker 1] (9:23:56 - 9:26:37)

Yes, or being in a big city, traffic. Yeah, yeah. Well, I suggest that you experiment a little bit when these situations arise and you feel the same thing happening again.

And if you bring a very alert attention to the situation, you realize that really there are three levels to this situation. Level one is whatever it is that disturbs you, the external noise, the chaos, the traffic, whatever it may be. So there's the thing that disturbs you, level one.

Level two, there is your reaction to that thing that disturbs you, which could be an almost physical reaction as perhaps a contraction in your body. It could be also an emotional reaction of frustration, irritation, anger, I assume, something like that, right? And also in addition, the reaction could be certain thoughts in your head about the situation that says, I can't stand being here any longer.

It's dreadful, dreadful, right? This is level two. Now, be aware that these two are first of all separate.

There is the triggering event or situation and then there is your physical, emotional, mental reaction to that. And now what is level three? That is usually overlooked, but level three is where ultimately freedom lies.

Level three is your awareness of both these levels. You are aware that there is the situation, the event, there is my reaction, physical, emotional, mental, and there is myself being the aware space for those two. And if you can bring your attention more to that deepest level, then you realize changes will happen on the other two levels.

If you recognize yourself not as the reacting entity that happens in you, but that's not who you are, but you recognize yourself as the awareness that is aware of the thing that's happening out there, of the thing that's reacting inside.

[Speaker 2] (9:26:37 - 9:26:45)

WINFREY OFFERS Actually, like, Debbie, you're observing your own behavior. You're observing your ego's behavior to it. You're observing your ego's behavior.

[Speaker 1] (9:26:45 - 9:26:49)

With no judgment, just as pure observation, pure awareness.

[Speaker 2] (9:26:49 - 9:26:54)

Like, oh, isn't that interesting? I'm getting so upset over this guy pulling in front of me.

[Speaker 1] (9:26:54 - 9:27:34)

Just being there as the awareness. And that's already the beginning of freedom. And then increasingly you realize that you are that.

You are not the entity that is reacting. And then, as Oprah said, then you can let go of thinking of yourself, of having this concept of yourself as a highly sensitive person that perhaps you might, it's not natural, nothing personal in this, you may have become attached to because you've lived with this concept of who you are for many years. So that's the, that's where freedom lies.

[Speaker 2] (9:27:35 - 9:28:00)

WINFREY OFFERS But in addition to Debbie's question, let's say, and for her, you know, she labels herself or defines herself as a highly sensitive person. But let's say a person gets upset about someone putting a dent in his or her car. Or you spill coffee on your blouse right before an important meeting.

Or your child gets sick. Or you get sick. Or are you saying that if we get upset about these things, these kinds of things, that we don't know who we truly are?

[Speaker 1] (9:28:01 - 9:28:16)

If the dimension of presence or awareness is missing, then you are lost in the reaction. WINFREY OFFERS You think you are the reaction. Yes.

Then you become the reaction. And when you become the reaction, you don't know who you are. It's a misperception of who you are.

[Speaker 2] (9:28:16 - 9:28:19)

WINFREY OFFERS You got that, right, Debbie? DEBBIE OPPENHEIMER Yeah, yeah, I got it.

[Speaker 4] (9:28:19 - 9:28:21)

Yeah. WINFREY OFFERS Yeah, I got it too. That's helped me a lot.

[Speaker 1] (9:28:21 - 9:28:22)

Isn't it good when you get it?

[Speaker 2] (9:28:23 - 9:28:30)

Yeah. I got it too. WINFREY OFFERS I got it too.

WINFREY OFFERS And just detaching yourself, it doesn't... that doesn't change the situation.

[Speaker 1] (9:28:31 - 9:29:14)

DEBBIE OPPENHEIMER It doesn't immediately change the situation. But you do find that as you practice this, changes suddenly appear. Changes sometimes first appear in the force that is behind your reaction, that lessens.

You react, still react, but less, not as strongly. And miraculously, you sometimes even find that if you're totally... because really the awareness level is also part of the acceptance, completely accepted at this moment, this is what I feel, and this is what the external situation is.

With complete acceptance, even changes often happen miraculously in the external situation.

[Speaker 2] (9:29:14 - 9:29:41)

WINFREY OFFERS I think acceptance of the situation which you talk about in Power of Now, and also repeatedly in A New Earth, acceptance, non-resistance to the moment, is one of the most important things we can learn. And that is whether or not you are facing a crisis, whether you're facing someone... you've lost a loved one, or whether you're, you know, in traffic and are a highly sensitive person, non-accepting what is in that moment...

[Speaker 1] (9:29:41 - 9:30:13)

DEBBIE OPPENHEIMER Yes. WINFREY OFFERS ...is the most important. DEBBIE OPPENHEIMER Yes.

And you can practice with little things, because little things happen throughout the day that people feel irritated about, angry about, protesting against, and so on. With little things, you will have many opportunities to practice. So it's a wonderful spiritual practice.

So you use what you... before you wanted to get rid of, you use it as part of your spiritual practice. And then as a byproduct, you also eventually get rid of it.

[Speaker 2] (9:30:14 - 9:30:18)

WINFREY OFFERS Thanks, Debbie. Thanks so much. Thank you.

From the Netherlands. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (9:30:18 - 9:30:19)

DEBBIE OPPENHEIMER Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (9:30:19 - 9:30:39)

Everybody says they want peace, inner peace and peace on Earth. On page 188, you say, if peace is really what you want, then you will choose peace. And if peace mattered to you more than anything else, and if you truly knew yourself to be a spirit rather than a little me, you would remain non-reactive and absolutely alert when confronted with challenging people or situations.

[Speaker 1] (9:30:40 - 9:31:47)

WINFREY OFFERS DEBBIE OPPENHEIMER Yes. That's the... so that you can either be reactive, act according to your...

the way you've reacted for many years, your past conditioning, or you can become more alert when a challenging situation happens so that you don't internally separate yourself from the situation. So that when you completely open yourself to the situation, you bring an alertness to it, an alertness of presence. So you're facing the situation totally with that state of alert presence.

You're not reactive anymore. And if something needs to be said or done in the situation, the words will suddenly come from that level of consciousness, from that alert stillness. If you need to do something, then you...

the right thing, the right doing will happen. Instinctively or... instinctively is not the right word.

Intuitively, the right thing, you will do the right thing. So... WINFREY OFFERS Because it will be born out of a sense of presence.

DEBBIE OPPENHEIMER Out of presence. Or a sense of being, which is another word that we're using.

[Speaker 2] (9:31:47 - 9:31:47)

DEBBIE OPPENHEIMER Yes.

[Speaker 1] (9:31:48 - 9:32:07)

WINFREY OFFERS And so any... whenever you are upset about any situation, there's a line in the Course in Miracles that says, I am never upset for the reason I think. DEBBIE OPPENHEIMER Yes.

WINFREY OFFERS So because when you're upset, you have lost yourself on the external level, what we call the horizontal.

[Speaker 2] (9:32:08 - 9:32:16)

DEBBIE OPPENHEIMER But aren't there some things worth upsetting you? I mean, there are injustices in the world and there are horrible things happening all the time in the world that we should be upset about.

[Speaker 1] (9:32:16 - 9:32:30)

I wouldn't say that we should be upset about. It is normal for people to be upset about this, but it is not the most effective way of bringing about change. WINFREY OFFERS I got it.

You can be upset all day long and nothing changes. DEBBIE OPPENHEIMER Nothing happens.

[Speaker 2] (9:32:30 - 9:32:32)

Because people have been upset for years and things don't change.

[Speaker 1] (9:32:32 - 9:32:46)

Yes. People are upset about violence. They're upset about war, continuous war between nations and so on.

It continues to happen. And you cannot fight against...

[Speaker 2] (9:32:46 - 9:32:51)

WINFREY OFFERS If somebody emailed me today, they said they were upset about 13-year-old girls having to marry so-called ministers.

[Speaker 1] (9:32:52 - 9:32:53)

DEBBIE OPPENHEIMER Yes. DEBBIE OPPENHEIMER Yes.

[Speaker 2] (9:32:53 - 9:32:55)

Upset about it, but being upset about it changes nothing.

[Speaker 1] (9:32:55 - 9:33:18)

DEBBIE OPPENHEIMER No. So it's more powerful to face a situation and see this is how it is and then see if action is possible. What is it that can be done?

Got it. DEBBIE OPPENHEIMER And then there's no negativity in the action. But if you are resisting, if you are complaining about a situation already, whatever you do, the negativity flows into what you do.

[Speaker 2] (9:33:18 - 9:34:05)

WINFREY OFFERS I just got something earlier. And the reason I'm thinking about this is because a friend of mine had lost his brother and was saying that, you know, he was having such a hard time letting go. And what I just had in this moment, something clicked for me, is that when people do finally are allowed to move on from their grief, it's because they have come to the point of acceptance that their loved one is gone.

DEBBIE OPPENHEIMER Yes. And what you're saying is in any situation, whether it's the loss of a loved one or loss of a position or loss of whatever that you're faced with, acceptance of the situation and beginning to deal with what is going on now instead of wondering or worrying about what could have been, should have been, might have been, DEBBIE OPPENHEIMER Yes. WINFREY OFFERS changes the situation and the way you feel about it.

[Speaker 1] (9:34:05 - 9:34:06)

DEBBIE OPPENHEIMER Yes.

[Speaker 2] (9:34:06 - 9:34:13)

And that your pain and suffering is caused and stress is caused because you refuse to accept the now.

[Speaker 1] (9:34:13 - 9:34:13)

WINFREY OFFERS Yes.

[Speaker 2] (9:34:14 - 9:34:25)

You're not one with the now. DEBBIE OPPENHEIMER Got it. WINFREY OFFERS Yeah.

So tonight we are Skyping with a new study group in West Hollywood, along with Borders, where we've been Skyping in Borders in Chicago. Now we've moved to Hollywood.

[Speaker 1] (9:34:26 - 9:34:29)

Very good. At the famed Bodhi Tree. Oh, I love that bookstore.

[Speaker 2] (9:34:29 - 9:34:29)

I love that book.

[Speaker 1] (9:34:29 - 9:34:31)

I was there some years. I gave a talk there.

[Speaker 2] (9:34:31 - 9:34:58)

Don't you love that bookstore? WINFREY OFFERS Hi, everybody at Bodhi. Hi.

God, everybody looks so California-like. We can tell we're not in Chicago. Everybody's all bundled up.

I Skyped Tanisha at the Bodhi Tree earlier today on The Oprah Show, and she's back tonight with a question. Hi, Tanisha.

[Speaker 15] (9:34:58 - 9:35:00)

TANISHA OPPENHEIMER Hi, Oprah. How are you? WINFREY OFFERS Good to see you.

[Speaker 2] (9:35:00 - 9:35:01)

And your question?

[Speaker 15] (9:35:01 - 9:35:42)

TANISHA OPPENHEIMER Yes. My question has to do with reactivity. On page 208, it totally says, the more reactive, becoming, okay, what is reactivity?

Becoming addicted to reaction. The more reactive you are, the more entangled you become with form. The more I identify with form, the stronger the ego.

My question has to do with, I've always related being reactive to being sensitive. And being sensitive allows me to be very passionate about things, allows me to connect with other people, and be emotionally available to my friends and family. So my question is, how can I retain sensitivity and be passionate about things and keep that, but not allow my ego to get stronger?

[Speaker 1] (9:35:43 - 9:35:43)

WINFREY OFFERS Great.

[Speaker 2] (9:35:43 - 9:35:44)

Great question, Tanisha.

[Speaker 1] (9:35:44 - 9:37:57)

Thanks. TANISHA OPPENHEIMER Yes. Thank you.

WINFREY OFFERS Well, reaction may appear to be sign of sensitivity, but actually reaction is not sensitive. Reaction is a conditioned way of responding to a situation. And you're not when you, all reaction really comes from the past because it's part of the way in which you have been conditioned.

And because it comes from the past, it is never totally adequate to the present moment. So sensitivity is actually lost when you are reactive. And true sensitivity comes when you are absolutely present in the situation and see, this is how it is.

And you totally face the situation as it is. And with that comes enormous sensitivity. And you can, with that comes also intuition.

It's only when you internally don't resist a situation, then the intuitive faculties arise within you. As long as you internally resist a situation and reactivity is always some form of resistance, as long as you internally resist, then the intuitive faculties cannot really come in because you're acting out old conditioning. Intuition comes out of presence, out of the present moment.

So bringing presence to a situation, then that means you become absolutely sensitive. And that's also a deeper aliveness and a deeper power than what looks like power and aliveness when you observe somebody reacting. Sometimes it might look very passionate, but really they are acting out their past conditioning.

The ego is acting out. That's not true passion. It's the ego wanting this or that from the situation, wanting to manipulate the situation, wanting to get something out of the situation, whatever, but not being truly present.

So it's only through presence that the true sensitivity is there.

[Speaker 2] (9:37:58 - 9:38:06)

Thank you, Tanisha. Thank you. And all you Bodhi people.

Thank you so much. The Bodhi tree. Love that.

[Speaker 1] (9:38:06 - 9:38:06)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (9:38:06 - 9:38:24)

That's great. Continuing on with who we are, because I know so many people have this as a prominent question for themselves. You say on page 189, nobody can tell you who you are.

It would just be another concept. So it would not change you. Who you are requires no belief.

[Speaker 1] (9:38:24 - 9:38:37)

In fact, every belief is an obstacle. What does that mean? It means who you are has nothing to do with any thought that you might have about yourself.

So does who you are have nothing to do with what you've done?

[Speaker 2] (9:38:38 - 9:38:54)

So you've spent your life here doing all this work and working, working, working, working, making money, taking care of your family, doing all the things that people do. And that has nothing to do with you. And then you at your funeral, they read your, you know, words about you and say, this is who you are.

[Speaker 1] (9:38:54 - 9:39:41)

Well, and then there's the gravestone. And on the gravestone, there is the date of birth. And there is a one or two inch dash.

Yes. And then there's the date of your death. And the dash is really all your ambitions and your fears and your drama and your problems.

That's what's left on that level. So I'm not saying not to honor the level of form, because that's what we are talking about. Whatever you do in this life, this horizontal level where we do things, where we have our functions and play roles, you honor that level, but realizing there is something more vital.

There is something deeper than just that.

[Speaker 2] (9:39:42 - 9:39:48)

Bridget says, Dear Oprah and Eckhart, can you explain the quote on page 192? But nothing you can find out about yourself is you.

[Speaker 1] (9:39:48 - 9:41:07)

Nothing you can know about you is you. Yes. Okay.

So I'm making a difference here between knowing yourself and knowing about yourself. Okay. And I mentioned as an example, if you go to a conventional psychoanalyst, let's say, you will spend some years examining the makeup of your conditioning, of your past, your childhood, and so on.

You find out more and more about yourself things that perhaps you hadn't seen clearly about your emotions, about the makeup of your thoughts, and so on. And all that is knowing about, it's to do with content, the content of my life and the content of my mind, ultimately, because my life is, I know it only as the content of my mind. So that is knowing about yourself and you can know thousands of facts about yourself and your history and still not know who you are because that knowing has nothing to do with conceptual knowing with bits of information.

It's the deeper knowing, I gave the analogy earlier of the honey. The honey. You can know about the honey.

[Speaker 2] (9:41:07 - 9:41:07)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (9:41:07 - 9:41:31)

Or you can taste the honey because when you taste the honey, the honey becomes you.

It merges with you. That's right.

That's right. In that sense, knowing who you are in a non-conceptual way is being fully who you are. It's being in touch with that deeper level of being that you can only access in the present moment, the vertical dimension.

[Speaker 2] (9:41:31 - 9:41:45)

Can I ask, well, if you are reading this book and suddenly become to understand or not reading this book and understand, as you say, many people say, well, I'm a spiritual being. I'm on my spiritual path.

[Speaker 1] (9:41:45 - 9:41:45)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (9:41:45 - 9:42:07)

As many people have said, as I'm reading all of the message boards, which I love, by the way, keep them coming. They say, I've been on the spiritual path for many years or I'm a spiritual person. Aren't you just a little step closer thinking you're a spiritual person or is that another form of your ego saying I'm a spiritual person?

Well, you have... Because I've said for years, I recognize I'm spirit.

[Speaker 1] (9:42:07 - 9:42:08)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (9:42:08 - 9:42:24)

That is... Come from the greater spirit. So I can use the word, I am consciousness come out of the greater consciousness that I call God.

Yes. Or spirit that come out of the greater consciousness spirit that I call God. Yes.

So I recognize that. I know that intellectually.

[Speaker 1] (9:42:24 - 9:42:29)

Yes. So in that sense, you can say intellectually, that is a true statement.

[Speaker 19] (9:42:29 - 9:42:29)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (9:42:29 - 9:43:18)

But I also feel it deeply. The question is whether, and this is, I know that you do, but the question is whether you truly feel that as a reality and a way of finding out how deeply you truly know this is how you react to situations in your life and how you react to other people in your life. It's there that you find out whether your belief that you are spirit, whether you truly know that or whether it's no more, as I put it, than an idea floating around in your mind.

Do you know it in the depths of your being? Because then, the way in which you deal with situations and people is very different. Correct.

I've always believed that I really was God's child.

[Speaker 2] (9:43:18 - 9:43:37)

That I was, you know, come from, and as I've gotten older and could articulate it better, you know, I use other ways of describing it, but I believe that I came from that, which is God. Yes. And was born of that.

Yes. And so therefore, really have no real fears in the world. I've always believed everything would be okay.

[Speaker 1] (9:43:37 - 9:43:37)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (9:43:37 - 9:43:40)

No matter what, I'm going to be okay. Because of that.

[Speaker 1] (9:43:41 - 9:44:03)

And you can... And that's more than a belief. More than a belief.

You can sense that. Yeah. In some way that it's hard to describe.

Right. But you can sense that ultimately, there isn't you and God. There is a deep place where you and God merge.

There's the oneness with that. Well, I've just gotten that later in life. Yes.

I used to think God was out there. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (9:44:03 - 9:44:08)

Eleanor lives in Boston, Massachusetts, and is Skyping us from a friend's house. Hi, Eleanor.

[Speaker 12] (9:44:09 - 9:44:15)

Hi, Oprah. Hi, Mr. Tole. This is such a great experience.

I really thank you so much for it.

[Speaker 2] (9:44:15 - 9:44:17)

Well, thank you. Your question is?

[Speaker 12] (9:44:18 - 9:45:12)

My question is on page 192, you say, you may not want to know yourself because you are afraid of what you may find out. And my question is about letting go of your insecurities or what you would call your ego. For many years now, I've been handling, so to say, an eating disorder.

And it's pretty much been, it's consumed a great part of my identity. That's how I identify myself. And I feel like that causes a great lacking in me.

And in a way, I do want to let go. But then a great part of me just wants to hold on to this identification of myself. And I guess my question is, what is this next step from awakening to the fact that I should move on and acting upon that?

[Speaker 1] (9:45:14 - 9:45:41)

That's the deriving your sense of who you are from certain thoughts or mental images that you have about yourself. And that's the normal identity that people have. They derive their sense of self from certain mental images or thoughts they have about themselves, which they repeat to themselves, which they talk to others about.

[Speaker 2] (9:45:42 - 9:45:49)

OPRAH WINFREY Yes. It's what Debbie was saying to us earlier from the Netherlands. I'm a very sensitive person.

So therefore, lots of things overwhelm me.

[Speaker 1] (9:45:50 - 9:47:44)

OPRAH WINFREY Yes. OLAF And that's already on one level that is true. But if you become too identified with a label like that, then that becomes a hindrance in going beyond it.

That's why you immediately said when she said that, ah, there we have a label. And so there's a similar thing perhaps that happens to you. So it's really finding within yourself something that is more powerful, more genuine, more truly who you are than any image that you have in your mind.

And we have to come back here to really the essence of this teaching, which is present moment. You have to invite the present moment into your life as frequently as you can. You have to make room for the present moment, because it's only when you make room for the present moment that these images and mental concepts about who you are do not operate.

So when you become present, and I've already given hints about how little things you can do to become present. At the beginning of our session today, we had this little meditation where we said, be aware of your sense perceptions. Touch things, look at things, listen to things without judging, without labeling.

Then the alertness rises. The key is here, another word for presence is the alertness. And so you become alert, also within you feel the aliveness of your inner body.

Rather than having a mental concept of who you are, you feel the entire energy field, that which animates the physical form. And you are in touch with that.

[Speaker 2] (9:47:44 - 9:48:28)

Yeah. And Eleanor, what I would say, add to that is, is that you haven't done that enough, because once you start to do that, when you get in touch with the inner body, when you begin to feel the inner space, when you begin to feel the presence and being that is really you, you realize you're bigger than your little self with an eating disorder. When you start, and the reason why you're still attached to this idea of having an eating disorder, because that's as big as you know yourself to be right now.

And when you know yourself to be something more, you will choose to be the something more and not this little me that has an eating disorder. That's how I see it.

[Speaker 1] (9:48:28 - 9:48:29)

Yes, that's it.

[Speaker 2] (9:48:29 - 9:48:35)

That's how I see it. Yes. And that's why you're clinging to it, because you don't know who you are.

Because you don't know who you are.

[Speaker 12] (9:48:36 - 9:48:48)

It's very difficult to move beyond that. I mean, I may, in my mind, understand that intellectually, that I'm greater than this issue, but it's hard.

[Speaker 2] (9:48:48 - 9:49:12)

You're not going to help yourself through your mind. That's what Eckhart is saying in this whole book, that real healing, real everything, creativity, real joy, real presence and being comes from that space, the inner space of consciousness or presence and being. And the reason why you're attached to the idea, because that works for you.

That works for you right now.

[Speaker 12] (9:49:13 - 9:49:14)

Very easy.

[Speaker 2] (9:49:14 - 9:49:37)

Yeah, that works for you because you like playing small right now. And so maybe you're not ready. But what he just described for you is exact.

And it doesn't happen overnight. It doesn't mean that tomorrow you're going to wake up and not have an issue. It's slowly bringing more and more consciousness into your daily way of being that allows you.

[Speaker 12] (9:49:37 - 9:49:39)

It's a lot of effort. That's for sure.

[Speaker 2] (9:49:40 - 9:49:42)

And I would say this, Eleanor, I would say you're worth it.

[Speaker 12] (9:49:43 - 9:49:46)

Thank you. Thank you so much for this opportunity.

[Speaker 2] (9:49:46 - 9:49:48)

I would say you're worth the effort. I would say.

[Speaker 12] (9:49:48 - 9:49:48)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (9:49:50 - 9:50:46)

I want to move on to abundance. And there was a question I had earlier that you had on here about abundance. I love that question.

But there's a lot in chapter seven about abundance and that we are not the little me that we think we are. You say on page 190, whatever you think the world is withholding from you, you're withholding from the world. And you're withholding it because deep down, you think you're small and that you have nothing to give.

Try this for a couple of weeks and see how it changes your reality. Whatever you think people are withholding from you, praise, appreciation, assistance, loving, care, and so on, give it to them. So is abundance...

I was looking... Do you have that question to put back here? The abundance question that somebody had asked in email?

What's so great about this, I think, is that it's something people can do every day right now is to start to give that which you say you most want.

[Speaker 1] (9:50:46 - 9:51:59)

Yes. And it starts with recognizing external abundance that if the act of recognition that there's external abundance and what that is, we'll see in a second, is the act of recognition of external abundance already brings out the abundance that is an essential part of your very being. So when you recognize abundance without...

What I'm suggesting there is just to look at... You're walking past a store, but there's a display of fruit, apples, oranges, and you see the abundance and the aliveness that is there. You acknowledge it there.

Abundance doesn't mean that you need to buy many things. You can buy or not buy. But you see the abundance of water, rain falling from the sky.

There's an abundance of water. There's an abundance of aliveness. There's an abundance of joy in the dog that's going past you there.

And so to recognize, to see the abundance that surrounds you, even if you're very poor in the eyes of the world, the abundance is always there around you. But you need to recognize it, acknowledge it. And another word for that is gratitude.

I know.

[Speaker 2] (9:51:59 - 9:52:02)

I was going to say, that's why I've kept a gratitude journal for years.

[Speaker 1] (9:52:02 - 9:52:03)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (9:52:03 - 9:52:16)

If you keep a gratitude journal listing, I do this thing, just the five things in the day that made you most grateful, what you start to notice is, is that there are more things added to your list, and you don't even have time to write them all.

[Speaker 28] (9:52:16 - 9:52:16)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (9:52:17 - 9:52:25)

And when you start to pay attention to the things, okay? And you also say acknowledging the good that is already in your life is the foundation for all abundance.

[Speaker 1] (9:52:25 - 9:53:05)

Yes. And again, many people make that mistake because they believe that there is nothing good in my life. And that's absurd.

It means they are not present. They are trapped in certain stories in their head which tell them continuously that there is nothing good in my life. And if they only opened their eyes and looked around, and if they smelled the air, saw the sunlight, the most abundant thing you can see is the sun.

Well, I think the most abundant thing you can have is your breath. The breath? Come back to your breath.

Yes, come back to the breath. So you can be with that and... When you can't think of anything to be grateful for, go to your breath.

Breath or the aliveness in your hands and in your arms to feel that.

[Speaker 2] (9:53:05 - 9:53:13)

Well, the email question from Rosanita in Georgia was to ask you to please explain what you mean by abundance comes only to those who already have.

[Speaker 1] (9:53:14 - 9:53:50)

Yes. Now, abundance, you need to recognize that as coming from within you. Abundance is not something that external things come to you that make you abundant.

Abundant is the energy that flows out of you, out of the being of who you are into this world. So the beginning of... You initiate this process by recognizing the abundance that's all around you externally.

Outflow determines inflow. And then it's suddenly the recognition already draws it out.

[Speaker 2] (9:53:50 - 9:54:02)

I was going to say, isn't gratitude in itself an energy field that draws more to you? Isn't it its own vibrational frequency that draws more to you?

[Speaker 1] (9:54:02 - 9:54:02)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (9:54:02 - 9:54:25)

And that's what I interpreted you saying. Is that gratitude is its own energy field. And that when you acknowledge and are grateful for whatever you have, when you can see and feel the gratitude, experience the gratitude in whatever you have, that changes your vibrational frequency, literally.

Yes. And allows more to be drawn to you.

[Speaker 1] (9:54:25 - 9:55:17)

Yes. It changes your entire reality. It changes the way in which you experience life.

Yes, it does. It changes your world. And so if that's the only thing people remember, there are many things in this book, but just if they want to change their lives, they're not happy with their lives, bring gratitude into it, which is, of course, connected also to the present moment because it's only here in this moment.

What is it in this moment that I can be grateful for? And then you suddenly say, Oh, it's all that. There's always...

It's miraculous if you truly look around and sense and feel. It's miraculous. The entire universe is miraculous.

Yes. And when you are so trapped in your thoughts that you don't see this anymore, then the entire universe becomes dead to you and there's nothing new that ever arises. You know, I was practicing this this weekend.

[Speaker 2] (9:55:17 - 9:56:05)

I was saying to Eckhart before we started that I was under the weather and had an obligation in New Orleans and wasn't able to fulfill that commitment. And normally I would have just been beating myself up about it because I've never had to cancel anything before. But I decided to be with the fact that I was sick.

And I had one of the happiest days of my life being sick in bed because I accepted it and was not fighting the fact that I wasn't well. I thought I'm going to be with feeling badly and I'm going to appreciate everything about the day. So every cup of tea that Stedman brought me, I was happy and happy that I was, you know, I had clean sheets.

I mean, and happy that I could open the curtains and there was sun coming through the window. And I just had the most happy time being sick in bed. Yeah.

So that's what you're talking about.

[Speaker 1] (9:56:05 - 9:56:05)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (9:56:06 - 9:56:08)

Being able to be grateful from where you are.

[Speaker 1] (9:56:08 - 9:56:47)

Yes. Very, very powerful. If I hadn't have read this book, I might not have been able to do that.

So it's been very helpful to me. And you say... Yeah, go ahead.

You can even be grateful for things that on the surface don't look so good. When you accept what is, you're grateful for whatever situation arises. Let's say your car breaks down and you have to change the tire in the middle of the night.

And even there you can say, okay, we come to this later in the book. It begins sometimes, a so-called negative situation, it begins with not resisting it. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (9:56:48 - 9:56:56)

Don't you say in the power of now, I just interrupted a thought. But don't you say in the power now that all stress comes from resisting the present moment?

[Speaker 1] (9:56:56 - 9:57:15)

Yes. It doesn't come from the situation. It comes from your thoughts about the situation.

Because the tire needing to be changed by itself could not cause you to be stressed. No, it's just is as it is. It is as it is.

And if you can see that, then suddenly you move into that and even there comes gratitude. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (9:57:15 - 9:57:19)

So your stress is about wanting the moment to be different than what it is.

[Speaker 1] (9:57:19 - 9:57:19)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (9:57:19 - 9:57:24)

And that's whether it's a tire, losing your job, losing a loved one.

[Speaker 8] (9:57:24 - 9:57:25)

Okay.

[Speaker 2] (9:57:25 - 9:57:37)

And you sum this up, this abundance, by using a quote from Jesus saying, ìGive and it will be given to you. Good measure, press down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap.î That is the truth, so help me.

[Speaker 1] (9:57:37 - 9:58:57)

That is just the truth. Yes, it's an amazing, amazing statement. And also somewhere else, Jesus talks about...

You must like Jesus. You talk about him a lot. Oh, yes.

There was a time when I was brought up as a Catholic and then for many years I wasn't interested anymore. And then after I went through this inner shift, a couple of years afterwards, I happened to pick up the New Testament and I happened to read the Gospels and I suddenly saw how deep all this is, these statements. That's right.

It became more than doctrine for you. Yes, yes. And so Jesus somewhere else says, ìI want you to have life in its fullness.

I want you to have the fullness of life.î And that's a beautiful statement and people sometimes don't realize what he means by the fullness of life because in our civilization particularly, the fullness of life means having as many things as possible. Yes. And of course, I'm convinced that Jesus was not talking about shopping malls.

No. Because if he was talking about shopping malls, then the kingdom of heaven has already arrived and it's in the shopping malls. So he was not talking about many, many things.

Eckhart made a joke, y'all.

[Speaker 2] (9:58:59 - 9:59:01)

Eckhart made a funny.

[Speaker 1] (9:59:04 - 9:59:16)

He was talking about something that is within you. The fullness of life is a dimension within you and he said, ìI want you to be in touch with that dimension within you.î And you are absolutely right.

[Speaker 2] (9:59:16 - 9:59:21)

If you get nothing else from this book, if you can get that, then your life will change.

[Speaker 1] (9:59:21 - 9:59:21)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (9:59:22 - 9:59:53)

Your life will change. That abundance comes only to those who already have it, page 192. It sounds almost unfair, but of course it isn't.

It's a universal law. Both abundance and scarcity are interstates and manifest as your reality. Jesus puts it like this, ìTo the one who has, more will be given and from the one who is not, even what he has will be taken away.î And he's not talking about things. No. He's talking about your interstate of gratitude for what you already have. Yes.

And your life will change. Laura from Baltimore is on the line, has a question for us. Laura?

[Speaker 6] (9:59:54 - 9:59:55)

Hi, Oprah. Hi, Eckhart.

[Speaker 2] (9:59:56 - 9:59:56)

Hi. Hello.

[Speaker 6] (9:59:57 - 9:59:57)

Thank you so much.

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[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 0:19)

If you truly look around and sense and feel, it's miraculous. The entire universe is miraculous. Yes.

And when you are so trapped in your thoughts that you don't see this anymore, then the entire universe becomes dead to you and there's nothing new that ever arises. You know, I was practicing this this weekend.

[Speaker 2] (0:19 - 1:08)

I was saying to Eckhart before we started that I was under the weather and had an obligation in New Orleans and wasn't able to fulfill that commitment. And normally I would have just been beating myself up about it because I've never had to cancel anything before. But I decided to be with the fact that I was sick.

And I had one of the happiest days of my life, being sick in bed, because I accepted it and was not fighting the fact that I wasn't well. I thought, I'm going to be with feeling badly and I'm going to appreciate everything about the day. So every cup of tea that Stedman brought me, I was happy.

And happy that I was, you know, I had clean sheets. I mean, and happy that I could open the curtains and there was sun coming through the window. And I just had the most happy time being sick in bed.

Yeah. So that's what you're talking about.

[Speaker 1] (1:08 - 1:08)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:09 - 1:11)

Being able to be grateful from where you are.

[Speaker 1] (1:11 - 1:12)

Yes, very, very powerful.

[Speaker 2] (1:12 - 1:15)

Yeah, if I hadn't read this book, I might not have been able to do that.

[Speaker 1] (1:15 - 1:54)

So it's been very helpful to me. And you say... Yeah, go ahead.

You can even be grateful for things that on the surface don't look so good. When you accept what is, you're grateful for whatever situation arises. Let's say your car breaks down and you have to change the tire in the middle of the night.

And even there you can say, okay, we come to this later in the book. It begins sometimes, a so-called negative situation, it begins with not resisting it. And so...

Don't you say in the power of now... I just interrupted a thought.

[Speaker 2] (1:54 - 1:58)

But don't you say in the power now that all stress comes from resisting the present moment?

[Speaker 1] (1:58 - 1:59)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:59 - 1:59)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:59 - 2:17)

It doesn't come from the situation. It comes from your thoughts about the situation. Because the tire needing to be changed by itself could not cause you to be stressed.

No, there's no... It's just is as it is. It is as it is.

And if you can see that, then suddenly you move into that and even there comes gratitude. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:18 - 2:21)

So your stress is about wanting the moment to be different than what it is.

[Speaker 1] (2:22 - 2:22)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:22 - 2:26)

And that's whether it's a tire, losing your job, losing a loved one.

[Speaker 1] (2:26 - 2:26)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:27 - 2:40)

Okay. And you sum this up, this abundance, by using a quote from Jesus saying, given it will be given to you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. That is the truth, so help me.

[Speaker 1] (2:40 - 4:18)

That is just the truth. Yes. It's an amazing, amazing statement.

And also somewhere else, Jesus talks about... You must like Jesus. You talk about him a lot.

Oh, yes. There was a time when I was brought up as a Catholic and then I, for many years, I wasn't interested anymore. And then after I went through this inner shift, a couple of years afterwards, I happened to pick up the New Testament and I happened to read the Gospels.

And I suddenly saw how deep all this is, these statements. That's right. It became more than doctrine for you.

Yes, yes. And so Jesus somewhere else says, I want you to have life in its fullness. I want you to have the fullness of life.

And that's a beautiful statement. And people sometimes don't realize what he means by the fullness of life, because in our civilization, particularly, the fullness of life means having as many things as possible. Yes.

And of course, I'm convinced that Jesus was not talking about shopping malls. No. Because if he was talking about shopping malls, then the kingdom of heaven has already arrived and it's in the shopping malls.

So he was not talking about many, many things. Eckhart made a joke, y'all. Eckhart made a funny.

He was talking about something that is within you. The fullness of life is a dimension within you. And he said, I want you to be in touch with that dimension within you.

And you are absolutely right.

[Speaker 2] (4:18 - 4:23)

If you get nothing else from this book, if you can get that, then your life will change.

[Speaker 1] (4:24 - 4:24)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (4:24 - 4:56)

Your life will change. Yes. That abundance comes only to those who already have it.

Page 192. It sounds almost unfair, but of course it isn't. It's a universal law.

Both abundance and scarcity are interstates and manifest as your reality. Jesus puts it like this, for to the one who has, more will be given. And from the one who is not, even what he has will be taken away.

And he's not talking about things. He's talking about your inner state of gratitude for what you already have. Yes.

And your life will change. Laura from Baltimore is on the line, has a question for us. Laura.

[Speaker 7] (4:57 - 4:58)

Hi, Oprah. Hi, Eckhart.

[Speaker 2] (4:58 - 4:59)

Hi. Hello.

[Speaker 7] (4:59 - 5:36)

Thank you so much for this opportunity. You've both been great spiritual teachers for me, and I'm just so grateful. Thank you.

My question is, before reading this book, I was someone who usually suppressed my emotions. And on page 208, you talk about bringing an inner yes to whatever form that the now takes. So now when I have the emotion of sadness arise, I try to apply this principle.

In the past, I would have said no to the emotion and suppressed it. But now I worry that by saying yes to this emotion, it's just the ego tricking me into feeding the pain body. How can I be sure that emoting is not actually strengthening my ego?

[Speaker 1] (5:38 - 7:00)

Right. Good question. So when you fully allow an emotion, it implies that you are there as the awareness, the witnessing presence, because it's only from that space that you can say, that this is what I feel.

And here it is. It's part of the isness of this moment. And if you do that, the emotion cannot rise up into your mind and control your thinking.

In other words, it does not become part of ego. It's only if the emotion rises up into your mind, and then your mind starts to think along the lines of that particular emotion, and thereby feeding more energy to the very same emotion. That means you are strengthening that emotion and it's becoming part of ego.

But if you can just look at the emotion and allow it to be, then the emotion is not going to feed on your thoughts anymore. And then you will actually find when you allow an emotion to be, it subsides fairly quickly. And it's not part of ego.

This practice is going beyond emotion without repressing them.

[Speaker 2] (7:02 - 8:05)

You got that, Laura? Yes, thank you so much. I love that.

I love that. Tell us the story of the Zen master on 199. The one who said, is that so?

I mean, I think you have to be a Zen master practically to have that kind of reaction to everything in life. Because when somebody attacks you, that's a thing I still have to work on. I live in a world where people write things that are not true all the time.

Somebody's working on a biography of me now, unauthorized. So I know it's going to be lots of things in there that are not true. And so I've gotten better at it.

And I know everybody experiences it on one level or another. For me, it's people saying things about me that are not true. It caused me to show myself as a small person.

The little me comes out and I'm like, that's not true. And so this Zen master who's able to say when he's being accused of doing something horrible to this girl, is that so? Who can do that?

[Speaker 1] (8:06 - 8:54)

It's a very extreme form of being one with the present moment. This is, I believe, should I tell the story? Yes, please do.

So there was a Zen master. He was highly regarded. And he was a spiritual teacher.

Had a very good reputation. And one day, neighbors of his came to him and said, our daughter is pregnant. And you remember, she came to see you about some advice some time ago.

And she has now confessed to us that you are the father of this baby that's going to be born out to our 17-year-old daughter. And of course, they didn't tell him this in the way as I'm telling it to you. They were very angry.

[Speaker 2] (8:55 - 8:56)

Is this a true story?

[Speaker 1] (8:57 - 10:58)

I believe it is. OK. So there was an enormous anger in this situation, you can imagine.

And the Zen master was listening to them as they were telling them that he had fathered this child. He was listening in that Zen state of open, alert attention like this. And then when they had finished their story, you are the father of this child.

And he said, is that so? Yes, he said. And then we are going to, when the child is born, you are going to look after the baby because you are responsible.

Is that so? And so when the baby was born, they brought the child over to him. Now you look after the baby.

It's not ours. You are responsible. And he accepted the baby.

And the word got around that he had fathered a child by a 17-year-old girl. He lost his reputation. Nobody came to see him anymore.

He was totally indifferent to this because he was only responding to the needs of the present moment. So he started looking after the baby. And so she spent about a year looking after the baby.

And in the meantime, the mother of the baby grew up a little bit more. And suddenly she confessed to her parents that the Zen master was not the father. She just didn't want to tell them that it was the boy who works in the butchers who was the father.

And of course, the parents got extremely upset. And they came running to the Zen master and said, she has just told us that you are not the father. He said, is that so?

Yes. And so we would like our baby back, please. And so he handed the baby over.

There was always the story. It must be in the Zen kingdom or something. Continuous.

It's a story that shows an extreme example of absolute non-resistance and the good that comes because the baby was being looked after with loving care for a whole year by this Zen master. But why wouldn't a Zen master? OK, because he's a Zen master.

[Speaker 2] (10:59 - 11:04)

Is that the level that you are saying that we should be striving? Well, I know you're not saying we should do anything.

[Speaker 1] (11:04 - 11:09)

We should do whatever we want to do. It is not necessary. That is only to exemplify.

[Speaker 2] (11:09 - 11:14)

Because I would be, it is not true. It's not true. Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (11:14 - 11:45)

Or you can say, no, I'm not the father. It's not true. I'm not the father.

So you can say it in one way that is very reactive and that would be the normal way. Or you can say it in a way that is free of reaction and nevertheless states the truth. So you're still surrendered inside.

Yes. You're still accepting that these parents, this is where they are at. This is what they believe.

And simply you say, this is not the case. I'm not the father. Bottom line is you're saying don't get pulled into the drama.

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (11:45 - 11:46)

Don't get pulled into the drama.

[Speaker 1] (11:47 - 11:47)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (11:47 - 11:52)

State your case. State the facts without allowing your ego to be pulled into the drama.

[Speaker 13] (11:53 - 11:53)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (11:53 - 12:02)

And then be able to move on. That's right. That's what you're saying.

That's it. OK, we've got Fatima on the line from Kuwait. Hello, Fatima.

[Speaker 9] (12:04 - 12:08)

Hello. Hello. Hi, Oprah.

Hi, Eckhart.

[Speaker 2] (12:08 - 12:15)

Nice to see you or hear you. Can you hear me? Yes, we can.

Go ahead with your question.

[Speaker 11] (12:16 - 12:35)

OK, great. Since we are used to identifying ourselves with what we have and what we do, I would like to ask you, Oprah and Eckhart, to identify yourself without names or any form of identification so other people can get a better understanding of who they are and what you mentioned on page 186.

[Speaker 1] (12:35 - 12:39)

OK, Eckhart, go right ahead and do that. The sound wasn't so good, I think.

[Speaker 2] (12:39 - 13:01)

She was saying, since we're so used, accustomed to identifying ourselves through labels and what we do, she would like for you and I, I would like for you, to identify yourself without using those labels of identification so that everybody listening can get a better idea then of how then do you describe yourself.

[Speaker 1] (13:01 - 13:32)

Yes, so we're talking about being with another person. When you identify yourself, you identify to another person. Yes.

So there's a situation where you meet somebody, perhaps somebody you don't know yet. Yes. And so you can be there as an ego entity, in which case you would immediately explain your achievements or you would immediately explain your sufferings or your diseases that you identify with or whatever.

[Speaker 2] (13:33 - 13:37)

Sometimes people do it this way, which annoys me. They'll say, what school did you go to?

[Speaker 1] (13:37 - 13:38)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (13:38 - 13:42)

That's immediately to say whether or not you're in the category. That's right.

[Speaker 1] (13:42 - 14:07)

Yeah, what school did you go to? So people, they want to, as the mind, that's what the human mind does, they want to be able to classify you. They want to be able to find out where they can put you in there.

Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. So they're asking questions about that, but you don't need to be drawn into that and realize that as you, and this is a very, very important thing.

[Speaker 2] (14:07 - 14:13)

Okay, so let's say we didn't know you and you're at a gathering where people don't know you.

[Speaker 1] (14:13 - 14:13)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (14:14 - 14:17)

And I come up and I introduce myself and I say, hello, I'm Oprah.

[Speaker 1] (14:17 - 14:17)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (14:17 - 14:30)

And I'm here with a convention and I'm, you know, I sold so many pharmaceuticals and I did so this and that. I've got three kids. I live in Oregon, whatever.

[Speaker 1] (14:30 - 16:01)

How would you then describe yourself? Well, perhaps I would not use that many words, but some words might be there. I wouldn't say I am formless spirit or anything like that.

You wouldn't? No. Hello, I am formless spirit.

I once asked somebody, I met somebody at a reunion and they knew that I had already written The Power of Now, so I was a spiritual teacher. And so I asked, for some reason, we had a conversation and I asked, how old are you? And he said, I was never born.

He really wanted to teach me a lesson. Oh, boy. So you can be quite normal in your interaction.

But more important is on a sensing level, you are there as a field of aware presence and in an interaction with another human being. What matters is not so much the words that are being said. There's a deeper level of the awareness that arises the field.

I call it the field of awareness that arises between two human beings. The field of presence that arises when those human beings, or even just one of them, is not totally identified with their thinking mind and the ego. Then I can be there as a conscious presence.

Right now, as I sit here, I'm here as a conscious presence.

[Speaker 2] (16:01 - 16:06)

So you wouldn't say, I'm Eckhart formless spirit. You would just say, I'm Eckhart.

[Speaker 1] (16:07 - 17:06)

I'm Eckhart. Yes. And if they say, well, hey, what do you do?

Yes. Then I give a conventional answer. I'm a writer.

And then they ask, what do you write about? And then depending on, I kind of sense where they are at, whether it's a genuine question and they truly want to know, or whether it's a question when I come into the States from Canada every week, they ask me, what do you do? And then I say, I'm a writer.

And then they ask, what do you write about? And then I'm not going to give a deep answer because they don't want a deep answer. I'm not really interested.

No, no, no. So I give conventional answers. And yet in every human interaction, even such an interaction as this, when the always what is, can you need to be able to sense that there is a presence underneath whatever you're saying.

[Speaker 2] (17:06 - 17:07)

That's right.

[Speaker 1] (17:07 - 17:09)

Feel your own presence underneath it.

[Speaker 2] (17:09 - 17:35)

And that's what we're going to be talking about next week is to be able to bring, that is our role in this lifetime, is to bring that sense of presence, who you really are, not the small little self that has eating disorders or shops too much, or all the other things that we define as in our horizontal lives as ourselves, but to bring that presence into your active life.

[Speaker 1] (17:35 - 17:35)

That's right. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (17:35 - 17:36)

That is our goal.

[Speaker 1] (17:37 - 17:37)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (17:38 - 18:07)

All right. Let's talk about the joy of being. Unhappiness or negativity is a disease on our planet.

What pollution is on the outer level is negativity. Page 213, everybody. What pollution is on the outer level is negativity on the inner.

It is everywhere. Not in just places where people don't have enough. I love this.

But even more so where they have more than enough. Their fluent world is even more deeply identified with form, more lost in content, more trapped in ego. I thought that was interesting.

[Speaker 1] (18:08 - 19:14)

Yes. Sometimes you see when you visit certain places where people have relatively little, often you see more happy faces and radiant faces than in our rich society. So the passage is about negativity.

And there's an enormous amount of negativity in the collective energy field of our planet. But it is generated by individuals. So it's everybody's task to be alert so that when negativity arises within them, they recognize it and then ask themselves whether that is what they choose.

When you recognize it, you can be there as the presence and you have a choice. Is negativity ever the optimum way of dealing with any situation? And if you look closely, you'll see it never is a good way of dealing with any situation.

[Speaker 2] (19:14 - 19:48)

Okay, you say on page 214, the joy of being, which is the only true happiness, cannot come to you through any form, possession, achievement, person, or event. And that means people who think that I'm with you and I love you and you're going to bring me joy cannot. Yes.

You either are joy or you're not. Okay. Through anything that happens, that joy cannot come to you ever.

It emanates from the formless dimension within you, from consciousness itself, and thus is one with who you are.

[Speaker 1] (19:49 - 20:36)

Yes, it comes from within and not from without. People conventionally expect it to come to them from without and then it usually doesn't because you need to discover it in yourself first. And this is why when you try to manifest things in your life, which is a fine thing to do, but the vital question is, have you first of all already come to that place of fullness and joy within yourself right now?

Have you found a right relationship with the present moment? If you haven't, because that's where it resides. It's only by having a right relationship with the present moment that the joy can arise from within you.

[Speaker 2] (20:36 - 22:01)

You talk about that on 210 when you say, to awaken within the dream is our purpose now. When we are awake within the dream, the ego-created earth drama comes to an end and a more benign and wondrous dream arises, this new earth. Also, let's go to page 215, everybody.

The top of 215, you talk about a powerful spiritual practice is consciously to allow the diminishment of ego. Because what we've been learning through A New Earth is that most of us have, until reading this book, believed we were our egos. Believed we were, as Eckhart has said earlier in tonight, we believe we were our horizontal life without the vertical.

We believe we were our past. We believe we are what we're going to do and what we have done. And the now was always just a sort of means to an end.

Okay. So you say a powerful spiritual practice is consciously to allow the diminishment of ego when it happens without attempting to restore the ego. I recommend that you experiment with this from time to time.

For example, when someone criticizes you, blames you, or calls you names, I got to tell you, it's hard to say, is that so? Instead of immediately retaliating or defending yourself, do nothing. Allow the self-image to remain diminished and become alert to what that feels like deep inside you.

So what's that supposed to do for us?

[Speaker 1] (22:01 - 22:32)

Now, I'm not saying in each case you should do that. Experiment with this from time to time, particularly when nothing depends on that situation. So you don't have to explain something so that a situation can be put right or whatever.

Somebody just calls you. We talked about it the other day. Somebody cuts you off in traffic?

Yes. So that would be a good practice, but it's totally pointless to retaliate.

[Speaker 2] (22:32 - 22:32)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (22:33 - 23:07)

It makes no sense whatsoever. But the retaliation when somebody calls you names in traffic or whatever. Or does something to upset you.

Yes. Try doing nothing. Yes.

The retaliation is automatic and unconscious because it comes from the ego. Because when somebody calls you stupid, for example. Right.

Or somebody calls you idiot, it injures the ego. It hurts the ego. And it's the ego that's being injured, not you.

Not you. It's nothing because deep down, you know that it's not you. It's just the ego image of who I think I am.

[Speaker 2] (23:07 - 23:14)

Deep down, you know it's not you. But if you are a person who lives unconsciously, if you live out of your ego, you think it's you.

[Speaker 1] (23:14 - 24:03)

Yes. Yes. And immediately the ego will go into what I call instant self-repair mechanism.

And this instant self-repair mechanism, which is totally unconscious. It says, I am not stupid. Well, it will call the other person something worse than stupid.

And by that, the ego believes that it has repaired itself. And on that level, it has. So this person has taken something away from you.

This is the imaginary ego. And then you take something away from that other person. That's how the egos work.

And then, of course, it's probably not the end. Because the other person is going to retaliate again. Right.

And now you're in it. The whole madness starts. You're in the drama.

Yes. So this is a good example where you can practice being non-reactive. So when somebody calls you something, remain total.

[Speaker 2] (24:03 - 24:24)

And you say when that happens, just do it for a few seconds. It may feel uncomfortable, as it will. Just to keep your mouth shut.

I've had that this week. Just to keep your mouth shut. Yes.

It's hard. It feels like you've shrunk in size momentarily. Then you may sense an inner spaciousness that feels intensely alive.

You haven't been diminished at all. In fact, you have expanded. What do you mean by that?

[Speaker 1] (24:24 - 25:17)

Yes. So somebody, what you are not defending is your egoic identity. The image identity.

And suddenly, that has become diminished by somebody calling you stupid, for example. This entity has become diminished. You don't resist the diminishment.

So it has become smaller, so to speak. And therefore, suddenly, something that is deeper than that can suddenly come through. Because the ego has shrunk in size.

I got it. Now, the ego doesn't like that. That's right.

It's a wonderful experiment. When you allow the ego to shrink, and then suddenly you feel there is a power underneath that that's far greater than the ego. And it shrinks every time you become aware of it.

Yes. Even when you don't do what you're supposed to do? Yes.

Okay. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (25:17 - 25:29)

I like this question from Suhad in Clifton, New Jersey. How can we use the high-quality no that you talk about on page 216 in our lives? Can you please provide us with some real-life examples?

[Speaker 1] (25:29 - 26:51)

216, high-quality no. What did you mean by high-quality no? In some cases, sometimes people misunderstand when I say, say yes to the present moment.

They believe then whenever somebody asks you something, you have to say yes. Yeah. No, when I say, say yes to the present moment, it's to do with an inner state of consciousness.

Yes. But it is open to what is. It does not resist what is.

It does not necessarily mean that every time somebody asks you something, you say yes. So let's say a person comes to you. You've known him.

You've already lent him money five times. He's never returned it. Or two.

Two's enough. Two is enough. And so he says, I need another $500 now.

And then you perhaps, this may be a good opportunity, an occasion where you can use a high-quality no that is not reactive and does not make that person wrong and, say, becomes angry and or shouts at him. And so you are dishonest. You haven't returned my money.

And I'm not giving you a penny more. Well, this is a low-quality no. It's a low quality.

A high-quality no is to say... Who do you think you are? All that kind of stuff.

Stories in order to make wrong. Yes. I've given you money so many times before.

Yes. And then you make yourself into a victim.

[Speaker 2] (26:52 - 26:56)

Yes. It's all part of... Into the great person who's been so benevolent.

[Speaker 1] (26:57 - 27:20)

Whatever the egoic game is. So the high-quality no is to simply state, well, I've already given you that money twice and you haven't returned it yet, so I won't give you any more. You have to return my money first.

I'm not going to give you... Can you sense that there's no negativity? You simply state clearly, this is what I'm going to do or not do.

I won't give you any more because you haven't returned that.

[Speaker 2] (27:20 - 28:25)

Yeah. And... That happened to me recently.

Somebody was asking me, do you want any interest? No, I won't do that. And no emotion attached to it at all.

All right. I just want to say here that the... I love this on 220.

What you see here, feel, touch, or think about is only one half of reality, so to speak. It is form. And the teaching of Jesus is simply called the world.

And the other dimension is the kingdom of heaven or eternal life. Then toward the bottom of the page, second to last paragraph, you say, the collective disease of humanity is that people are so engrossed in what happens, so hypnotized by the world of fluctuating forms, so absorbed in the content of their lives, they have forgotten the essence, that which is beyond content, beyond form, beyond thought. They're so consumed by time that they have forgotten eternity, which is their origin, their home, their destiny.

Eternity is the living reality of who you are. And that's what I felt on that mountain that day.

[Speaker 1] (28:26 - 29:18)

Yes. Yes. And you can actually sense it, although that's the wonderful thing, when you can be surrounded by the stillness.

Yeah. But the amazing thing is you can actually sense that even in the midst of chaos, even in the midst of noise, I have felt also what you describe. I've also very often felt that in nature.

But I have also felt that extreme peace in situations where one wouldn't expect it. I felt it in the middle of London, in busy streets, walking around, especially after I went through this shift. Before I went through this shift, I was always anxious and fearful, and I couldn't stand the traffic and the noise.

And suddenly I was able to just walk along Piccadilly Circus and be totally at peace as if I were on a mountaintop inside. So when you...

[Speaker 2] (29:19 - 29:20)

Mountaintop inside.

[Speaker 1] (29:20 - 29:21)

Inside, yeah.

[Speaker 2] (29:21 - 29:23)

And that's what presence is, is it not?

[Speaker 1] (29:23 - 29:23)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (29:24 - 29:26)

Presence is being on the mountaintop inside.

[Speaker 1] (29:26 - 29:48)

Yes. That stillness is always there in you as the essence of who you are. And when we call it stillness, we already limit it because it's so vast, you cannot describe it with one word.

Right. So whatever word you use is already a limitation. But words are limited, of course, because words refer to tangible things, but not to the inner reality.

[Speaker 2] (29:49 - 29:56)

So before we say goodbye, let's sum up what we've covered in this class. Knowing who you really are means knowing.

[Speaker 1] (29:56 - 31:19)

Yes. Knowing at a level beyond the level of concepts. Knowing yourself ultimately is being yourself fully.

Being in touch with being, the being that you are. To sense the I am that is the essence of your identity when you remove all the identifications that usually... So you say, after you say I am, you say what you are.

But if you say I am and add nothing to it, that gives a good practice. It can get you in touch with the essence. I am not this.

I'm not that. I am, as a simple meditation, repeat the words I am to yourself. It's so powerful.

I started to do that. It is so powerful when you do that. And don't fill in the blank after the words.

Yeah. Very powerful. Another similar one is, who am I?

It's a question, but don't look to the mind for an answer. In fact, don't look for any answer, especially not on the level of mind. Who am I?

And then allow the stillness to be there after the question. Don't look for an answer. And in not looking for an answer, there's the answer.

But it's not a mental concept as of sensing, feeling. Wow. I am.

[Speaker 2] (31:19 - 31:23)

Yes, I am. And just be with that.

[Speaker 1] (31:23 - 31:23)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (31:24 - 31:49)

Yes. And so for whether it's an addiction or an eating disorder or nothing, you think you have a really wonderful life. But you are connected to all the things in your life, to the content of your life.

Just being able to sit with yourself and to say those words to yourself, I am. It's wonderfully liberating. And to recognize them, to know them.

Yes. Like honey. Yes.

To know them.

[Speaker 1] (31:50 - 31:50)

That's right.

[Speaker 2] (31:50 - 31:51)

Thank you again.

[Speaker 1] (31:51 - 31:52)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (31:52 - 32:57)

I want to thank you all for joining us. The seventh class will be available on demand tomorrow, Finding Who You Truly Are, for free here at Oprah.com. And if you want to download or watch any of our classes, of course, you know this by now.

You can do that tomorrow at Oprah.com and at iTunes. It's free because of the generous support of people like Nature Made Soft Gel Vitamins. This week, update your workbook and get ready for our next class on chapter eight.

It's the discovery of inner space. I love this. It's my next favorite chapter.

I think seven, eight, and nine are really the essence of the book. Inner space is about allowing the inner space of your life to connect to the outer purpose of your life, the inner and outer purposes of your life. Right?

That's right. Love it. Again, we thank you.

This was a long chapter, lots to cover. I would say to everybody, I mean, I was sick in bed this weekend and read it again for the third time. Every time I read it, I go a little deeper and awaken a little more.

This is one you need to be with for a while, over and over.

[Speaker 1] (32:58 - 33:04)

After you've read it once, you don't need to read long pages. Just read sometimes half a page is enough.

[Speaker 2] (33:04 - 33:25)

Yes. One page. What I do is I go back and read.

This is what I would do. As you're using your highlighters, just go back and read what you've highlighted and just be with that because the things that you highlight are usually things that resonate with you more deeply. It's a good way of reviewing it.

Every time you come back to it, two weeks from now, you'll get something that you didn't get the first time.

[Speaker 1] (33:25 - 33:25)

Oh, yes.

[Speaker 2] (33:26 - 33:27)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (33:27 - 33:29)

Thank you. Thank you, Eckhart.

[Speaker 2] (33:29 - 33:30)

Thanks, everybody.

[Speaker 3] (33:48 - 33:49)

Hi, everybody.

[Speaker 2] (33:49 - 33:57)

Welcome to class number eight of our New Earth web series with author Eckhart Tolle. Eight means we only have two more to go. Tell all your friends, I'm going to miss it.

[Speaker 17] (33:58 - 33:58)

Me too.

[Speaker 2] (33:58 - 34:37)

Yeah, I'm going to miss it. As we head into these final chapters, it's really gratifying to hear from so many of you who feel that your commitment to this work is making a difference in your lives. I know I feel that way.

And I'd like to, again, thank all of the students from around the world who are watching, who are willing to awaken to the deeper meaning of your lives. Last week, one of the things that Eckhart said that really struck me, you said that the opposite of death is not life. The opposite of death is birth.

Life has no opposite. So I think that's a good place to begin our moment of silence. Can we go into silence?

Life has no opposite.

[Speaker 1] (34:37 - 34:59)

Life has no opposite. And perhaps, as we go into the silence, to feel yourself to be life rather than a person. A person is here only for a few years.

But you are basically life experiencing itself temporarily as this person.

[Speaker 2] (34:59 - 35:01)

As this person, this personality, this ego.

[Speaker 1] (35:02 - 35:32)

But underlying it, you are life that is eternal. And so when you go into stillness, it's easy to sense that underneath the personality, there is an aliveness, there is a presence, there is a consciousness that is timeless. And that's the life beyond the form of life that you are.

And that's why it has no opposite. That's right. Because it's forever.

Yes. And all the opposites only exist in the world of form.

[Speaker 2] (35:32 - 35:33)

In the world of form. I get that.

[Speaker 1] (35:34 - 35:48)

So as we go into the silence, into the stillness, let's see if we can just feel that in the background, you are life. Or rather to say, I am life.

[Speaker 2] (35:48 - 35:48)

I am life.

[Speaker 1] (35:50 - 36:03)

Eternal, timeless. So we go into the stillness now and get in touch with that eternal life.

[Speaker 2] (36:42 - 36:48)

How wonderful. How wonderful to be able to get into touch with that. That's the inner space that you're talking about.

[Speaker 1] (36:49 - 36:49)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (36:49 - 36:50)

In chapter eight.

[Speaker 1] (36:50 - 36:51)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (36:51 - 37:01)

Which is all about the discovery of inner space. That's what we're discussing tonight. Let's start with an overview of what this chapter is about.

What is inner space? What you just described?

[Speaker 1] (37:03 - 38:13)

I don't remember when this term first came to me. It must have been during a talk. I don't believe I use the term in the power of now.

I realize that most people's mind is full of stuff. Full of one thought after another. Full of continuously arising thoughts, emotions.

And the external life is full of things that need doing. One thing after another. One thing after another.

So I observed that in many people's lives, there seems to be no space. There's only one thing after another. One thought after another.

One thing to do after another. One thing to be worried about after another. So I noticed this absence of space in human beings.

And really, that inner space or spaciousness is what we could also call the stillness. But I use different terms because any one term limits it. When we talk about stillness, yes, it is stillness.

But it's much vaster than just stillness.

[Speaker 2] (38:13 - 38:15)

And vaster than being still.

[Speaker 1] (38:15 - 38:15)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (38:15 - 38:15)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (38:15 - 39:57)

Yes. So it's realizing that within you, there's not only objects in your consciousness that continuously arise in your consciousness as sense perceptions. You experience things.

Sense perceptions arise continuously. And each sense perception becomes an object in your consciousness. And then thoughts arise continuously.

And every thought becomes also an object that arises in your consciousness. Now, and this is what most people's lives consist of. Continuously objects arising in consciousness.

And I call that object consciousness. And that is what most people know. And they also know themselves as an object in their consciousness.

They have an image of who they are. They have certain opinions about who they are. And so you become an object to yourself.

And that is the ego. So most a mental object. You make yourself into a mental object.

And then you have a relationship with yourself as a mental object. It's a little bit insane. Right.

But it's normal. So now the incredible realization, this is where the spiritual dimension starts. There is no spiritual dimension in object consciousness.

You can have all kinds of interesting sounding or even religious sounding doctrines. If there is no space in you, spaciousness, where suddenly a gap arises in between thoughts. If there's no spaciousness, then you haven't touched yet the spiritual dimension.

And this book, I believe, is helping many people to find that space within.

[Speaker 2] (39:57 - 40:35)

You say on page 227, object consciousness needs to be balanced by space consciousness for sanity to return to our planet and for humanity to fulfill its destiny. The arising of space consciousness is the next stage in the evolution of humanity. Space consciousness means that in addition to being conscious of things, which always comes down to sense perceptions, thoughts and emotions, there is an undercurrent of awareness.

Awareness implies that you are not only conscious of things, but you're also conscious of being conscious. That's what you're talking about.

[Speaker 1] (40:35 - 42:06)

Yes. And that's an amazing thing. At first, if you just listen to being conscious of being conscious, the mind says, what does that mean?

You can only, you have to experience what that is to know what it means. So to be conscious of being conscious, for example, you can do it by looking at something. Just if people haven't had a taste of this yet.

Yes. For example, you look at a flower and you're conscious of the image, what you see, the sense perception. Now the question is, can you also be conscious of yourself as the perceiving presence?

Without which there would be no perception. Correct. And so, and that is the consciousness.

So why do you look at a flower? I'm saying flower because natural things can get you in touch with that dimension more easily. While you look at a flower, can you sense yourself as the presence that is looking, that is making the perception possible?

And then you have two dimensions. You're conscious of being conscious and you're conscious of what you're looking at. You live in two worlds at the same time.

That means in the background of your life, there is suddenly a vast but intensely alive peace. Because being conscious of being conscious is very peaceful. That's where the true inner peace arises.

[Speaker 2] (42:07 - 42:18)

And that if you don't have that in your life, if you're not able to find that space between the thinking and the perception, perception, perception, if you're not, then...

[Speaker 1] (42:18 - 42:20)

Then you lose yourself. In things.

[Speaker 2] (42:21 - 42:21)

In things. And in the world.

[Speaker 1] (42:21 - 42:29)

You lose yourself in the world. Yeah. And you lose yourself in your own mind.

You continuously get drawn into every thought that arises.

[Speaker 2] (42:29 - 43:27)

Yeah. Well, one of the things that you... I know you met Dr. Jill Boat Taylor today. Yes. And I interviewed her on my radio show, The Soul Series on XM Radio. And for those of you who have been enjoying our webcast with Eckhart Tolle, the Monday following our final webcast, I will have an interview with her on the web.

Dr. Jill Boat Taylor is a brain scientist who had had a stroke several years ago. And during the process of having the stroke, in the middle of having the stroke, she lost the left hemisphere of the brain, which was language and the ego and all of that. But the right hemisphere remained conscious.

Yes. And she was aware that she had lost the ego. And this sense of losing your mind that you have been talking to us about happened to her, was thrust upon her through the stroke.

[Speaker 1] (43:27 - 43:27)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (43:27 - 43:27)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (43:28 - 44:03)

So I believe what happened to her was what we are talking about. She became conscious of consciousness. She became conscious of consciousness.

Yeah. Through the stroke. Yes.

And really, when we say that, when we express it in language, and language always brings in a kind of duality. When I say, I become conscious of consciousness, it sounds as if I were separate from consciousness. Right.

This is because of the structure of language. In reality, what's happening is that consciousness, which is what I am, everyone is conscious in essence, consciousness is becoming conscious of itself.

[Speaker 2] (44:03 - 44:20)

And you don't know that until, and that's why that tape is going around the web of Dr. Jill Bowe Taylor, you don't know that until you can quiet the mind enough to know that you are not all of these thoughts that you have in your head. You are not your thoughts, but you are life itself.

[Speaker 1] (44:20 - 44:20)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (44:20 - 44:25)

That is what she also says. Yes. In her book and in her lectures.

[Speaker 1] (44:25 - 45:02)

Yes. Yes. That's a wonderful realization.

Just when it comes to a person for the first time, it's just, whoa. Whoa. And that frees you from a lot of things that before were so heavy.

The world can become such a burden to people. And your own mind can become such a burden. It creates so much suffering in people's lives.

If people had to live with somebody who inflicts all that negativity on them that they inflict on themselves through their own mind, they would have left that person a long time ago. But you can't leave your mind. You can only go beyond it.

[Speaker 2] (45:03 - 45:15)

And so being able to be conscious of your consciousness or aware of yourself as a perceiving entity or perceiving presence is really what the true awakening is about.

[Speaker 1] (45:15 - 45:15)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (45:15 - 45:16)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (45:16 - 45:21)

Yes. Yes. That's the awakening to who you are beyond the external appearance.

[Speaker 2] (45:21 - 45:35)

And that is what we're doing when we're angry and you see your ego flare up and all of that is to be able to step back and perceive yourself as the consciousness observing yourself as the angry person.

[Speaker 1] (45:35 - 45:39)

Yes. Yeah. Yes.

There's a space in between that. That's right.

[Speaker 2] (45:39 - 45:50)

And so the inner space you're talking about is the space between I am angry, I'm, you know, saying all of these things. And then there is the other self that is observing that.

[Speaker 1] (45:50 - 46:06)

Yes. Now, if you're angry and if the presence can be there in the background, that means you're already very present because it's not easy to remain present when there's anger, because anger has an enormous power. So.

[Speaker 2] (46:06 - 46:13)

But if you're observing it, then you can say, I'm out of control. You know, people have done that. We say to yourself, I'm out of control.

I need to calm down.

[Speaker 1] (46:13 - 46:28)

Yes. But if you know that you're out of control, you're not completely out of control. That's right.

That's right. And so and if so, if you know that you are have been taken over by anger, you haven't been completely taken over because there's a knowing in the background. Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (46:28 - 46:46)

And I think a lot of parents have experienced this, you know, when your kids do something and it's so upsetting to you. And, you know, in that moment, I should not try to discipline them because I'm too angry to discipline them. That part of you that knows that you're too angry to discipline them is the space that you're talking about.

[Speaker 1] (46:46 - 46:59)

Yes. Yeah. Yes.

Got that. And so and that's if you don't have that space, then you are completely controlled by the anger. You become the anger.

That's right. That thing that allows you to step back is what you're talking about.

[Speaker 2] (47:00 - 47:01)

I got it.

[Speaker 1] (47:01 - 47:02)

I got it.

[Speaker 2] (47:03 - 47:06)

That part of you that says I can step back and see I'm acting a fool.

[Speaker 1] (47:09 - 47:20)

And so if you if you know that you are acting a fool, then it's not there is a sanity there that's observing the insanity. And if you know that you are.

[Speaker 2] (47:20 - 47:23)

But sometimes people know they're acting a fool and they just keep on acting a fool.

[Speaker 1] (47:23 - 47:29)

Yes, that's possible, too. For a while, it can happen that the old certain old behavior patterns.

[Speaker 2] (47:29 - 47:31)

But generally, if you know you can pull yourself back.

[Speaker 1] (47:31 - 47:32)

Yes. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (47:33 - 47:37)

And that which knows is the inner space that you're talking about.

[Speaker 1] (47:37 - 47:40)

Yes. There was a film The Beautiful Mind some years ago.

[Speaker 2] (47:40 - 47:41)

Yes, yes, yes.

[Speaker 1] (47:41 - 48:07)

About the scientists. With Russell Crowe. Yes.

And so here he became delusional. This scientist completely absorbed by his mind and had all kinds of delusions. And at some point in the middle of the film, he suddenly realizes that these are delusions and he realized that he's insane.

And also the viewer at that moment realized it is so well done, because until that point, even the viewer doesn't know.

[Speaker 2] (48:07 - 48:08)

Not quite sure. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (48:08 - 48:21)

And and at that moment, the healing begins because with the realization that I am insane, the sanity has arisen. The observing presence is there. The observing presence.

And after that, he could function again.

[Speaker 2] (48:21 - 48:23)

Is observing presence and inner space the same thing?

[Speaker 1] (48:24 - 48:35)

Yes. But observing should not be confused with judging. I got it.

So there's no judgment. It's a it's a clear it's like a mirror. It's like a mirror showing you what's there.

[Speaker 2] (48:35 - 48:47)

So there are literally two dimensions. There is the personality acting out of, you know, form and perceptions and all of that. And then there is the observer of that.

[Speaker 1] (48:47 - 49:13)

Yes. And the observer is not judging what is being observed. If the observer begins to judge, then it's the mind that has come back in.

OK. It just is. And the observer is timeless.

And whatever the observer is observing, the behavior, the thinking is conditioned by the past. So you're bringing the timeless dimension into this world of time. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (49:14 - 49:29)

And those of you who are reading Jill Boat, Dr. Jill Boat Taylor's book, Stroke of Insight, what she she she said to me today, because she's been following our classes and she was saying, you know, what Eckhart calls consciousness, I call right brain.

[Speaker 1] (49:29 - 49:29)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (49:30 - 49:36)

Yeah. Right brain versus left left brain. Left brain is gone.

The right brain is the higher consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (49:36 - 49:37)

Yes. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (49:38 - 50:06)

So as I've said before, I love the message boards on Oprah.com. And I saw a posting that I wanted to share with everyone. It's from someone who calls himself Student 99.

It said, I've seen many, many posts by concerned Christians. Is Student 99 here? I thought we had him.

I heard he was on Skype. Well, I don't mean here, here, Dean. I know he's not in the building.

Bring up Student 99. So Student 99, is that you?

[Speaker 16] (50:07 - 50:07)

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (50:07 - 50:52)

Hi, on Skype. I love this email. I love I love the fact that you have a face and a body and everything.

You just were an entity on the web to me. Posted by Student 99. It says, I have seen many posts by concerned Christians wondering whether this book is a threat to their faith.

And you said, as a Christian, you don't think it is. And here is why. You want to tell us why?

Because I thought this was such a beautiful email. And you know, I've gotten some flack from some Christians. I've even been called the antichrist, which I'm kind of amused by that, for introducing this book to the world.

So I was interested in hearing what you had to say. Student 99, whose name is really Alan from Eugene, Oregon. Hi, Alan.

[Speaker 16] (50:53 - 50:55)

Hi, Oprah. Hi, Eckhart. Hello.

[Speaker 2] (50:56 - 51:02)

You said, go ahead. Go ahead. OK, you go ahead.

So someone let you tell me what you said in the email.

[Speaker 16] (51:03 - 51:44)

Well, basically, you know, I observed some people that were posting that were in a lot of distress. And because they felt that the book was an attack on their faith, many of them had not read the book. Yeah.

And so I wanted to just provide a little bit of perspective on that. From my perspective, I felt like Eckhart's book allowed me to do more than just quote what Jesus said and to actually understand the depth of what he was teaching and be able to practice what he taught rather than just quote what he taught.

[Speaker 2] (51:44 - 53:05)

Well, let me read what you said specifically, because I thought you said it so beautifully here. Most Christians understand the concepts from the Bible of surrendering their lives to God and living a loving life and living in the peace that passes understanding. Christians can quote Jesus saying such as be perfect as your father in heaven is perfect or judge not that you be not judged or you must die to live or deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me.

Unfortunately, not all Christians have succeeded in following up the talk with the walk.

This is because these quotes point to an internal transformation, which some Christians have not yet fully experienced. That is why I strongly recommend this book.

You said, Alan, it provides for very powerful tools for being able to successfully follow Jesus's teachings rather than just quoting them. The book doesn't ask anyone to change their religion of choice, but does help tremendously in successfully applying faith. In a nutshell, you say, Alan, the book shows how to apply forgiveness to every person and every situation.

It shows how to shine the light of awareness on our unconscious hatred of this moment and thereby overcome the cares of this world. If you want to go deeper than knowing about God at the level of thoughts and experience God at the level of knowing, I welcome you to join us in reading A New Earth. Blessings from Student 99.

Isn't that well said?

[Speaker 1] (53:06 - 53:09)

Oh, yes, wonderful. Thank you.

[Speaker 16] (53:10 - 53:28)

Alan, thank you for that. Sure. And, you know, I had left the church and I ended up being able to return to church because of understanding how to apply the concepts in this book.

Really? Well, that's good.

[Speaker 2] (53:29 - 53:46)

Well, thank you so much. Thank you so much. I don't read all the negative stuff, though, because it doesn't help me.

So I'm only, you know, I'm only interested in speaking to people who want to hear what we have to say. And if you don't agree with what I'm saying, that's really OK. I bless everybody and their path, whatever that is.

[Speaker 1] (53:47 - 54:14)

And I've had letters from some priests who found nuns and Buddhist monks, and they all found the book very helpful. They went more deeply into their own tradition, because when you go deep enough into your own tradition, eventually all traditions, eventually you end up in the same place, the same realization. On the surface, the traditions are different.

Yeah. There's only one God at the center.

[Speaker 2] (54:14 - 54:14)

Right.

[Speaker 1] (54:15 - 54:19)

There is only one God. I believe that. The source of all things, all creation.

[Speaker 2] (54:19 - 54:45)

So Peter is Skyping us from his dining room in Phoenix, Arizona. I love to see where people are. Is that a green dining?

Is that green? Yes, it is. That's my favorite color.

My gosh, that's such a lovely color. Hi. Peter is Skyping us from his dining room in Phoenix, where he and a group of friends gather every Monday night to watch our live webcast.

I think that's so great. I hear you adopted a dog and named it Oprah. Is that true?

Come on, Oprah.

[Speaker 8] (54:47 - 54:56)

Let me see her. She came to us the first night of the webcast. The system went down, so it crashed.

So we had all the people gathered. And she came into my life that night.

[Speaker 2] (54:57 - 55:04)

Wow. Oh, what a cutie pie. She's holding up a name.

[Speaker 8] (55:04 - 55:05)

So she's a new addition to my family.

[Speaker 2] (55:06 - 55:16)

That's so great. That's really great. You say you were addicted to smoking for 30 years, but quit 11 weeks ago after reading A New Earth.

This ties into your question, correct?

[Speaker 8] (55:17 - 55:37)

Exactly. We started our group four weeks before the actual webcast. And we were reading the chapter on number eight.

So I applied the techniques to quitting smoking. And with about five minutes work and about three hours time, I had completely stopped. No urges, no more cravings, nothing.

No willpower or anything like that. It was so easy. It was amazing.

[Speaker 2] (55:37 - 55:39)

What is it that you applied?

[Speaker 8] (55:40 - 56:10)

Becoming conscious of the feelings. I had run out of cigarettes. And I thought I had to go to the store.

But when the craving came, I said, OK, let's be with the craving. Let's feel it. What does it actually feel like?

Usually, we just react. And I actually sat there and closed my eyes and felt it. And it started to dissolve.

And it went away. And about two or three hours later, another craving came. And I did the same thing.

And this time, the feeling went away even faster. And then finally, when it came back about a third time, when I put my mind to it, it just completely disappeared.

[Speaker 2] (56:11 - 56:11)

Wow.

[Speaker 8] (56:11 - 56:12)

Gone. It never came back.

[Speaker 2] (56:13 - 56:29)

So were you also doing, I think Eckhart suggests in the addiction section, taking deep breaths sometimes when you feel like you need the craving for, whether it's cigarettes or food or whatever, to take the three deep breaths and see what happens if the feeling dissipates? Did you do that?

[Speaker 8] (56:30 - 57:00)

Yes, I did. I took the breaths to basically create stillness, to become calm. So I took long, deep breaths and just sort of calmed down and then just started to feel the feelings and watch the thoughts.

And I've tried to quit hundreds of times and sometimes a couple of months successfully.

But there was always willpower involved. There's always a craving still there.

You know, if I just had one that was always still in the back of my mind, that's no longer there. I can go out with my friends on a Friday night and they can all be smoking. And I won't even, I only want to look at one.

[Speaker 2] (57:00 - 57:02)

What in the world happened to you?

[Speaker 8] (57:03 - 57:04)

It was miraculous.

[Speaker 2] (57:05 - 57:26)

Yes, that's great. And have you been able to apply the teachings from the book in other areas of your life? I mean, for myself, I've just found that being able to go back to my breath in the middle of the day when things get crazier.

I mean, something Eckhart said, I think, on one of the beginning classes about one complete full breath is a meditation.

[Speaker 8] (57:28 - 57:31)

Well, that's where the question comes from, because I do have other...

[Speaker 2] (57:31 - 57:32)

One conscious breath is a meditation.

[Speaker 8] (57:32 - 57:36)

Earlier in the book and in the chapter, he talks about going below thought.

[Speaker 2] (57:36 - 57:36)

Yes.

[Speaker 8] (57:36 - 58:04)

And he described my situation exactly like he's here. We talk about alcohol, using food and TV to go below thoughts, sort of numb the senses, numb your thoughts and just sort of go into trance, if you will. And I do that a lot.

And I've been trying to break away from that by using the techniques. I have not had the same success. And you also say don't make it a problem.

But I think I made it a problem. And I want to kind of break from that.

[Speaker 2] (58:06 - 58:14)

So you're asking a question about how to use this more forcefully or whatever for alcohol?

[Speaker 8] (58:14 - 58:27)

Yeah, with alcohol, especially and food, you know, I tend to overeat when I'm tired and I just want to relax. Food, alcohol, TV tend to be the things I use. And that brings you below thought when we're trying to be above thought.

[Speaker 2] (58:28 - 58:28)

Right.

[Speaker 8] (58:28 - 58:32)

And I try and do that. I'm not as successful. I get very frustrated.

[Speaker 2] (58:32 - 58:34)

OK, what do you want to say, Eckhart?

[Speaker 1] (58:34 - 59:55)

Well, it's a wonderful success story as far as the smoking is concerned. And bringing, experiencing how awareness can dissolve old patterns. In some cases, instantly.

And in other cases, it takes more time for awareness to dissolve the old pattern. And awareness has to be brought to the pattern when it arises repeatedly. And it does not mean that every time awareness meets the pattern, that awareness is going to win.

Win may not be the right word because awareness, of course, is not never hiding anything. Awareness is just there as the conscious presence. But so bringing conscious presence, for example, into the urge to have a drink.

Not that one or two drinks are a problem, but if drinking is drags you down, drags you down to below thinking, then, of course, it is helpful to bring presence into the urge when it arises. In the same way that you did when you felt the urge come upon you to smoke. So have you practiced that?

Have you been able to feel the urge to drink and then bring awareness to that? And what happened?

[Speaker 8] (59:56 - 59:57)

Yes, I have.

[Speaker 1] (59:57 - 59:59)

And it kind of postpones.

[Speaker 8] (1:00:00 - 1:00:01)

Eventually, I kind of break down.

[Speaker 1] (1:00:01 - 1:01:09)

Yes, I believe I mentioned in the book that bring awareness to it. And it may well happen that the desire, the urge is still there after 10 minutes of awareness. I believe I mentioned that.

It does not mean that you have lost. It means that the desire is very strong. And at that point, perhaps you will have a drink.

And when it happens again, you bring awareness to it again. Eventually, something will happen to the pattern. It's very rare to have an instant success as you did with smoking.

It does happen in some cases. But bring awareness to old patterns, whatever it is, addictive patterns, behavior patterns. Bring awareness.

And eventually, they cannot coexist for that long. So it's a continuing practice. But don't expect perfection.

Don't expect you to be the perfect human being who never touches a drink again or whatever. As I said to Oprah, I enjoy a drink occasionally.

[Speaker 2] (1:01:10 - 1:01:43)

And I said, whoo-hoo. So what he's saying also, and you said this in the beginning, Peter, don't judge it. And as you begin to practice, what I hear you saying is this miracle that you experience with cigarettes is just that because it rarely happens that you start this one time and it works immediately.

What you're saying is the more you apply the practice of bringing consciousness to this desire or craving, to this craving, that it will gradually lessen. Lessen. It will weaken.

It will weaken.

[Speaker 1] (1:01:43 - 1:02:05)

Yes. You can also apply to other things like the many people addicted to television. One day without watching TV would be dreadful for them.

Yeah. So you could perhaps as a practice, like a spiritual practice, you could say one day a week, I'll see what happens if I don't watch television. Don't do it when the Oprah show is on.

[Speaker 2] (1:02:05 - 1:02:06)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:02:08 - 1:02:24)

One day a week, I'll practice and then observe inside yourself what it feels like. What the need to switch on, the need to be entertained, the need to be stimulated, to absorb what's on the screen. So one day practice.

[Speaker 2] (1:02:24 - 1:02:51)

Thank you so much, Peter. Those are friends behind you. Yes, they're my neighbors.

Peter, move out of the way so we can see them, so we can say hi to everybody. Hi, everybody. Hi to the Peter's group.

That's so great there in Phoenix. Yay, guys. Thank you for watching.

Thank you. Thank you. Thanks, Peter.

Thank you so much. Thank you so much. And all the best to Oprah, you know.

[Speaker 1] (1:02:52 - 1:02:58)

Thank you. Oprah's very cute. Oprah's very cute.

We're talking about the dog.

[Speaker 2] (1:02:58 - 1:03:04)

Okay, we've got Eric on the line calling from Copenhagen, Denmark. Eric, what's your question?

[Speaker 13] (1:03:05 - 1:03:15)

Hi, Oprah. Hi, Eckhart. Hi.

Hi, my question is in reference to page 224 when Eckhart writes the phrase, this too shall pass.

[Speaker 2] (1:03:15 - 1:03:17)

Oh, yeah. Love that.

[Speaker 13] (1:03:17 - 1:03:59)

Yeah, and I feel it's a real powerful phrase that brings a person into the present moment, and it's also used as a slogan in 12-step recovery programs. And when someone's been living very much in the ego and form surrenders and enters a 12-step program, which I did over five years ago, and I currently act as a sponsor for newcomers, am I acting too much in the ego because I'm constantly working these 12 steps and sharing them and your concepts with others? And also, if this is the case, how can I live in consciousness and work at 12-step programs with the meetings and sponsorship without the ego being so much at the forefront?

[Speaker 1] (1:04:00 - 1:04:47)

Well, that's a good question. The criterion is whether you yourself are still living it on a daily basis. If you're living the truth of it, this too shall pass is only a pointer towards a particular state of consciousness that is a state of detachment.

Not that you don't care, but it's a state of that you still care deeply, but there is a detachment from what's happening, an inner sense of freedom in the background. So when you use these tools, for example, a phrase or a pointer, sometimes people who teach these things professionally, after a while they stop practicing themselves, and they just use them as a formal thing, and then the ego can come back in.

[Speaker 2] (1:04:47 - 1:04:48)

Because you think you know everything.

[Speaker 1] (1:04:48 - 1:05:41)

Yes, yes. And then you are not living it, you're teaching it, but you're not yourself living it anymore. And that is the question that only you can answer, whether you are still living the reality that's beyond this pointer, that what the pointer points to.

And if you are living it, the ego has not taken over and you're doing wonderful and very helpful work. I know that the 12-step program has been extremely helpful for many people. I've had many people who've come to spirituality through that.

So I'm sure you're doing wonderful work and continue to be alert and awake so that there's a certain amount of self-observation, just to make sure that you are still there yourself, that you come from that place so that the mind doesn't take over.

[Speaker 2] (1:05:42 - 1:05:44)

Okay, Eric? Yeah, that sounds great.

[Speaker 13] (1:05:44 - 1:05:45)

Thank you very much.

[Speaker 2] (1:05:45 - 1:06:33)

Thank you, Eric. So let's begin, because I think that's one of a huge part of Chapter 8 in the discovery of inner space. The story that you began with the ancient Sufi story from the Middle East about a king who's continuously torn between happiness and depression.

On page 223, you write, The slightest thing would cause him great upset or provoke an intense reaction, and his happiness would quickly turn into disappointment and despair. A time came when the king finally got tired of himself and of life, began to seek a way out. He sent for a wise man who lived in his kingdom, who was reputed to be enlightened.

And when the wise man came, the king said to him, I want to be like you. Can you give me something that will bring balance, serenity, and wisdom into my life? I will pay any price you ask.

What is that price the king had to pay? What is the price all of us have to pay?

[Speaker 1] (1:06:34 - 1:07:00)

Well, first of all, of course, the price the king asked, well, how much does it cost? How much is it going to cost? And the wise man said to him, it is of such value that even your whole kingdom could not pay for it.

Now, what that means is that the primary thing in your life is nothing external. What is primary in your life is your inner state of consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (1:07:00 - 1:07:01)

I got that.

[Speaker 1] (1:07:01 - 1:07:15)

And compared to that, you could have the greatest riches if you are in a state of anxiety, of fear, negativity. Nothing is worth that.

[Speaker 2] (1:07:15 - 1:07:23)

You know, in the Bible and in the church, I don't know if it's in the Bible, but I know in the church we sing this song called, It is well with my soul.

[Speaker 1] (1:07:24 - 1:07:24)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:07:24 - 1:07:45)

So unless it is well with your soul, it does not matter what your outward state is, where you're living, how many square feet you have, how many cars, whatever acclaim you have received in the world, unless it is well with your soul or your inner state of being, your inner space, then you're not well.

[Speaker 1] (1:07:45 - 1:08:43)

Yes. And so always to bear that in mind, am I at one with life at this moment? What is my inner state at this moment?

Your primary concern in any situation needs to be your inner state. Your secondary concern is the outer situation, because only when you're in an inner state of rightness, of presence, can you adequately deal with outer situations. So what is the price?

There is no price in terms of monetary value or anything like that. We could say that the price to pay is you let go of the false self. That is the price you pay, the false mind made self.

The price to pay is identification with that false, the false I, the false me. And so that's a relatively easy price to pay because it's wonderful to let go of that.

[Speaker 2] (1:08:43 - 1:08:45)

But the wise man gives the king a ring.

[Speaker 1] (1:08:45 - 1:09:10)

Yes. And inside the ring, the inscription is. This too shall pass.

This too shall pass. And he says, whatever situation arises in your life, before you call it good or bad, before you react, before you judge it, touch this ring and remember the inscription. And this too shall pass.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:10 - 1:09:45)

Now, I find that to be very helpful. As a matter of fact, when I was going through last year, this crisis at my school, that was one of the things I said to myself every day is live in this moment. Let's handle this moment as it comes and this moment as it comes.

And then what comes next, I'll handle that moment. And I always knew this too shall pass. Works for me very well.

And I'm sure a lot of other people, if you're in a difficult stage in your life, you're going through, you know, trauma or divorce or whatever to know that this too shall pass. But when I'm feeling happy and feeling joyful, I don't want to think this too shall pass.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:47 - 1:09:51)

That can actually also be very peaceful if you know that it is transient.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:51 - 1:09:56)

I know that you're having such a good time. And then you're thinking this too shall pass. So don't get too happy.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:56 - 1:10:16)

If you don't know that this too shall pass, then what can happen? You will cling to the situation. I got it.

I got that. And if you cling to the situation and then it passes as it will. As it will.

Or even if it doesn't pass yet, it might last for a little while. Even while you are the clinging itself means already some fear is coming in.

[Speaker 2] (1:10:16 - 1:10:17)

Oh, I see that.

[Speaker 1] (1:10:17 - 1:10:29)

Through the holding on, you don't want this situation to leave you or you don't want to leave the situation. The clinging means brings already up some fear. And that means you can't enjoy it as much really.

[Speaker 2] (1:10:29 - 1:10:53)

I just had a great epiphany, not even for myself, but for all the people that I know that our keyword here is clinging. So many people do this in relationships. They're holding on to a relationship that has already shown itself to be transient.

It's moving on to the next level. And what so many people do, they want to hold on and let it be as it always was.

[Speaker 1] (1:10:53 - 1:10:53)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:10:54 - 1:10:55)

And it's in the process of passing.

[Speaker 1] (1:10:56 - 1:10:56)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:10:56 - 1:10:58)

And you should let it pass.

[Speaker 1] (1:10:58 - 1:11:17)

Yes. Allowing change to happen and becoming comfortable with change. This is part of this.

This too shall pass because we live in this world where things continuously pass away. The Buddhists call it impermanence. It's one of the deepest truths of the Buddha.

[Speaker 2] (1:11:17 - 1:11:25)

And the problem lies when you expect it to be the same as it always was. And that's where so many people get in trouble in their relationships, especially.

[Speaker 1] (1:11:25 - 1:11:37)

Yes. And it's an inability to let go, inability to let go of situations, of people. And that eventually brings suffering.

[Speaker 2] (1:11:37 - 1:12:04)

Yeah. Just recently, a friend of mine was telling me about her husband had said to her, he wasn't sure he wanted to remain in the relationship. He wasn't sure.

And there's, you know, seeking counseling about that. And he's now, you know, sleeping in a different bedroom and all that stuff. And she's trying to hold on and wants things to be the way they were and wants to have a baby and all of that.

[Speaker 1] (1:12:04 - 1:12:49)

And you would say, put that ring on. Yes. So especially don't cling.

If you don't cling, it means there's no fear in the situation. The fear comes through the clinging, through not wanting the change. And so if you approach the situation without fear, then one of two things can happen in a situation like this.

There may become a deepening in the relationship. When a relationship hits a crisis, it may be time for the relationship to dissolve or it may be time for a deepening. Uh-huh.

And so... How do you know the difference? When there's no fear, then you will know either it will deepen or it will end.

Wow. Or it will pass on. The fear keeps you stuck where you are.

[Speaker 2] (1:12:50 - 1:13:23)

Got it. I got it. So let's see some of the email questions you've been sending during our class.

Linda in Tokyo, Japan. How do I tell the difference between an ego decision or a conscious decision? I'm in a sexless marriage and want to leave.

Oh, I'm scared. I've been living in the moment for the past eight weeks. My answer is not coming to me.

That's what Linda wants to know. How do I tell the difference between an ego decision or a conscious decision? Yes.

I'm in a sexless marriage and I want to leave. But I'm scared. You just said it.

You just said it, though.

[Speaker 1] (1:13:23 - 1:14:11)

Yes. And an additional thing here. Sometimes something comes to you.

This is what I'm going to do, your mind says. Okay, now I know what I have to do. The question is, where does that realization of what you have to do come from?

Does it come from the ego? Or does it come from the deeper level of your being? How can I tell the difference?

There's a qualitative difference in, one could say, vibrational frequency. Correct. If it comes from the deeper level of yourself, out of the stillness, it's always associated with peace.

It's a peaceful realization. If it's agitated or if it's fearful and says, now I know what I have to do, or if it's angry, agitated, fearful, it comes from the upper level.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:11 - 1:15:10)

And another thing I would say to Linda in Tokyo, Japan, you're absolutely correct. Another thing, it comes from, if it's coming from inner space that we're talking about in chapter eight, if it's coming from consciousness or inner space and not your ego, not only will you feel peace, but you won't have to ask 15 other people, is it the right thing? You will know it's the right thing.

Yes. You will know it's the right thing. And I have found that if you are operating from consciousness, your higher consciousness, or as we're calling it in this chapter, inner space, that whether it's buying a pair of shoes or making a life decision, if it comes from the place of inner space, you know the answer.

When it's outside yourself, if it's in your ego mind, you have to ask the store clerk, you have to ask your friends, you have to ask everybody, what do you think? What do you think? What do you think of these shoes?

What do you think? What do you think? You know?

But when you are, when it's well with your soul, the answer's clear.

[Speaker 1] (1:15:11 - 1:15:20)

That's how you know. Quiet, peaceful certainty. Yes.

Powerful, quiet, peaceful. You know what you have to do. You know what's right for you.

[Speaker 2] (1:15:21 - 1:15:45)

It's like the other day I had to cancel an engagement and I was saying I never cancel things, but after I canceled, I felt such a calm and I knew that that was the right decision. Yes. Although it might be upsetting to other people, I felt such a calmness about it.

And that is true for anybody who's making a decision. When you make the right decision, you feel a calmness and a peace about it.

[Speaker 1] (1:15:45 - 1:16:01)

Yes. And that also relationships, leaving a relationship, if it comes from the right place, you leave, but you're peaceful. Right.

You're not afraid. No. You're not afraid.

You still could be sad about it, though. Yes. Yes.

Sadness can happen.

[Speaker 2] (1:16:01 - 1:16:03)

You could be sad about it, disappointed about it.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:03 - 1:16:39)

Interesting thing about sadness is, or sadness, of course, also arises when somebody passes away close to you. There can be sadness. And if there's acceptance, then, because death is one of the prime examples of everything passing away.

Before life form passes away. Everybody, if you live with a partner, either your partner will leave you or you will leave sooner or later through death. And so that's the allowing change to happen.

[Speaker 2] (1:16:40 - 1:17:05)

Allowing change to happen. And you say the key to understanding this too will pass at the top of page 225 is knowing that non-resistance, not resisting, non-judgment and non-attachment are the three aspects of true freedom and enlightened living. Hard to be non-resistant, non-judgmental and non-attached when it's your husband who says I don't longer want to be in this relationship.

[Speaker 1] (1:17:05 - 1:17:22)

Yes. Yes. And if there's a, if you share a great deal of past with another person, it could also be a family member or a parent, then it's sometimes harder to be present when there's a huge amount of past in the relationship.

[Speaker 2] (1:17:22 - 1:17:38)

I got that. But once you see and accept the transience of all things, page 225, and the inevitability of change, you can enjoy the pleasures of the world while they last without fear of loss or anxiety about the future.

[Speaker 1] (1:17:38 - 1:17:55)

I thought that was so brilliant the way you did that. That's the beautiful thing about being able to enjoy the things of this world knowing that nothing is going to last. Nothing's going to last.

And you can actually enjoy it more deeply now without the fear that it might finish. Because it is going to finish. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:17:56 - 1:17:56)

It is going to finish.

[Speaker 1] (1:17:56 - 1:18:01)

And then something else will take its place. It's continuous coming and going. I got that.

[Speaker 2] (1:18:01 - 1:18:22)

Tonight, we're Skyping again with a study group in Los Angeles who've gathered at the Bodhi Tree Bookstore. It's a landmark in West Hollywood. Hi, everybody at the Bodhi Tree.

Hi. Oh, gosh. There's our Bodhi followers.

Nick has a question about finding his purpose, and I know it's something that's been on the minds of quite a few of our students. Hello, Nick. Let's hear it.

[Speaker 4] (1:18:23 - 1:18:55)

Hey, Oprah. What's up? Hey.

Everything's up. My question is basically, well, you have to worry about a lot of stuff in life. You have to go to work.

You have to pay your bill. Your cell phone bill works in the now. But if you don't work today, it's not going to work a month from today.

So how do you live in the now and still worry about your IRAs, investing in your future, what you're going to do as far as money, paying your bills, doing what you have to do in this ego-censored world, especially in Los Angeles?

[Speaker 2] (1:18:56 - 1:19:08)

So we're just saying, how is just becoming who we are truly? What if becoming who we were truly meant to be really isn't financially practical, is what you're asking, right?

[Speaker 4] (1:19:10 - 1:19:36)

Yeah. What if I wanted to go on a mountain somewhere and just become who I was? I eventually would, I guess, starve or freeze.

But I mean, how do you integrate this in your everyday life, sort of being in the now, being the essence of who you are, without suffering in the long run? The squirrel would suffer. The squirrel would die if it didn't put away nuts for the future.

[Speaker 2] (1:19:39 - 1:19:48)

Yeah, I'd seen a question that you'd sent earlier, Nick, where you said it's all fine and dandy to read about becoming who you truly are and being who you were meant to be, but how do we do that and still pay all of our bills?

[Speaker 1] (1:19:49 - 1:19:50)

Right. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:19:51 - 1:19:51)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (1:19:51 - 1:21:02)

Thank you. Thank you. Good question.

However, the first few words of your question already contained an error, and it's easy if an error keeps into a question, then it's hard to answer it truly. The error was, you said, we have to worry about paying our bills and all kinds of things. Is that true?

No. You have to pay your bills, but you don't have to worry about paying your bills. And the squirrel has to put away the nuts, but the squirrel is not worried about the nuts.

Only humans are worried about their nuts. So being present with what you do does not mean that you neglect your daily affairs and so on. It means you deal with them in a different and, in fact, more powerful and more effective way.

You give up the worrying part. You still pay your bills, but you let go of the worrying about paying your bills. In that way, you learn from the squirrel how to live.

Because worrying is your choice. You see that, don't you, Nick? Worrying is your choice.

[Speaker 4] (1:21:03 - 1:21:33)

At times when I don't worry, I've had moments in my life where I didn't worry. I just kind of let the waves of the world roll over me, and I kind of did nothing about situations and hoped that they would work out themselves, and they didn't. You know, worrying did help me in the past to actually get things together and get my life on track.

I guess, for me in my life, to be in the essence, to be with my spiritual self, it's not enough. I have to really be actively worried about the actual day-to-day business of surviving.

[Speaker 1] (1:21:33 - 1:21:34)

Well, I would...

[Speaker 4] (1:21:34 - 1:21:35)

Which most people have to do, you know.

[Speaker 1] (1:21:36 - 1:23:05)

I would still argue with that. It is true that you need to take action. It is not true that you need to worry in order to be able to take action.

So you can actually experiment with, in your daily life, start with little situations. Let's say there's a pile of bills that you have to pay. How do you approach these bills?

Are you going to worry the night before or on the day? Or am I going to be able to pay you? You just take one bill after another.

You look at it. You face it. Okay, do I have the money in my bank account or not?

If you don't have the money in my bank account, I have to do something to make more money. What is the possible? What can I do now?

Put that aside. Look, this action I can take. Pick up the phone.

Make a phone call. Do the present. Effective.

Powerful. But no worry. If you...

Then you'll see your whole life will become not only more effective and more powerful, but also much easier. It flows with greater ease. Nothing in nature is worried.

All the animals do what they have to do, but they don't worry about it. They are active. Everything is active in nature.

The trees are active. The grass, the flowers. Everything is active and putting out energy.

It's only the humans that worry about it and think they need worry in order to survive in this world. You don't need worry. You need action, but not worry.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:05 - 1:23:17)

That's an interesting point. If you've ever been on safari or seen animals on a hunt or actually seen a kill, they go out in search of. And we've...

Everybody, I'm sure, watched the Planet... You watched the Planet Earth series, right, Nick? Where you see the animals...

[Speaker 4] (1:23:17 - 1:23:18)

Oh, Nick, you got it.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:18 - 1:23:19)

You know what?

[Speaker 4] (1:23:20 - 1:23:24)

What he was saying... I'm sorry. Nick, you got to get the Planet Earth.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:25 - 1:23:39)

And you get to see all these animals hunting other animals. And you just made me think of what you're saying. As the animal's hunting the other animal, it's just doing it.

It's not worrying. I hope I find a rabbit today. I hope I find a rabbit today.

Yeah.

[Speaker 13] (1:23:39 - 1:23:39)

Right.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:40 - 1:23:41)

Go ahead, Nick. Go ahead.

[Speaker 4] (1:23:41 - 1:23:42)

You want to continue?

[Speaker 2] (1:23:43 - 1:23:43)

Yeah.

[Speaker 4] (1:23:43 - 1:24:08)

That reminds me of the lily in the valley. It doesn't worry about clothing itself in the Bible. It just does.

It just exists. It worries not... Or the sparrow or the crow does not worry how it's going to get its next meal.

It just does. And that reminds me of that right there. But I'm thinking...

I guess I'm thinking of those hippies in India that still haven't come back. They're just broke and they took all their idealism there.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:08 - 1:24:36)

Well, that's really good for that Bible stuff and for the lilies of the valley. But listen, I'm in L.A. and I got to worry about these. Is there anybody else here at the Bodhi Tree behind you that...

Is there anybody that disagrees with Nick that has similar issues and you're not worried about it? You've been able to apply. Come up to the microphone here.

Let's get... Come on up there. Hi.

[Speaker 10] (1:24:36 - 1:24:38)

Hi. Hi, you are...

[Speaker 2] (1:24:38 - 1:24:38)

Hi, who are you?

[Speaker 10] (1:24:39 - 1:24:39)

I'm Jessica.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:40 - 1:24:43)

Oh, hi, Jessica. Hi. So what do you want to say about what we've been talking about?

[Speaker 10] (1:24:44 - 1:25:14)

You know, there's a... It's on page 238 and it's about becoming one with the situation and that the solution arises out of that. And I've always kind of been a more of a take action person first and then deal with the inner peace and all that later.

But I was wondering, how do you deal with things like that in relationships and things like weight management and all of those issues? Do you just become still and just hope for an answer to come or do you still actively seek one out?

[Speaker 1] (1:25:15 - 1:27:33)

So what you're referring to is on this page, it says you don't react. What I'm saying there is you don't react against a situation when a situation arises that... You merge with it.

Yes. And the solution rises out of the situation. Now, this should not be confused with becoming inactive or just sitting there and looking and not doing anything.

What it means is there is no inner resistance to that arising situation. Sometimes things happen when you have a project, you have some work to do, and something happens to... Some obstacle arises in what you want to do.

A person, a situation arises. And so for many people, as soon as an obstacle arises, they become resistant and they go into a negative state and try to fight the obstacle. They're fighting the obstacle rather than accepting the moment as it is internally and say, oh, the situation has changed.

We talked about change. Situations change continuously and the world does not necessarily do what it wants you to do, what you want it to do. So you face a situation and any change that happens is immediately accepted inside.

And through the acceptance, you respond to the situation. So you're not accusing, you're not making wrong, you're not complaining about the situation to yourself and others. So many people burn up a huge amount of energy uselessly that they could use to deal with the situation, but they burn up a huge amount of energy complaining in their heads and to others about what has happened.

Instead of looking at what has happened and saying, oh, this is how it is, what can I do now? A moment of stillness and then action happens. No complaining, no resisting, no fighting against, not making a person or situation into an enemy.

That again burns up a lot of useless energy and brings up a lot of energy that is going to sabotage what you want to do.

[Speaker 2] (1:27:33 - 1:27:47)

So again, you say when instead of reacting against the situation, you merge with it, the solution arises out of the situation itself. Actually, it's not you, the person who's looking and listening, but the alert stillness itself or the inner space.

[Speaker 1] (1:27:47 - 1:28:00)

When I say the solution arises out of the situation, it does not mean that you don't do anything. In some cases, it is you who's going to take the action, but it will come out of a powerful place of being one with the situation.

[Speaker 2] (1:28:01 - 1:30:07)

WINFREY. Yeah, I think too, Jessica. Ask Nick to come back to the microphone.

Thanks, Jessica. Nick, come back up here. We're not through with you.

I think too, I think you really represent a whole lot of people, particularly young people who have said to me personally or have emailed and think that being in alignment with who you're truly meant to be and awakening to your purpose is some kind of is represents passivity, that you're just sort of sitting around, just, you know, waiting on a moment and not really doing anything. The real purpose of this entire book and the work of spirituality is to get you to get us to align our personalities with our soul or higher consciousness, so that the work that you do in the world comes from the place of the higher consciousness, and you use your ego or personality to serve that. You allow your personality to serve the calling of consciousness that has put you here on the earth in the first place.

And when you do that, everything has a flow to it. You're in the right job that gives you the right amount of money for you at any given time, because you are in alignment. So you're not worrying about things because you're not living beyond your means.

You're not stressing about things because you're not allowing your ego to determine and define who you are in the world. So you're not acting out of an external self, but acting out of the place of inner space or consciousness. So everything is in alignment.

And that's not passive. That's not, I can't pay my bills. And so let me find myself later.

That is aligning your personality with the higher consciousness so that your higher consciousness, you operate from a place of being, and the inner space is directing and guiding your life and not the outer space. You get it?

[Speaker 4] (1:30:08 - 1:30:18)

Yeah, I do. Sorry if I made you mad, Oprah. But I do.

That's wonderful. Thank you so much.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:20 - 1:30:39)

No, I'm not mad, but I just, I hear this a lot. I mean, earlier today, my stylist was saying, but what about my passion? What about my passion?

You want me to just give up my passion? No, this isn't about giving up your passion. It's about feeling your passion more deeply.

And being in alignment with that.

[Speaker 4] (1:30:41 - 1:30:59)

How do you know if what you want, what your passion is, isn't just ego-driven? What if I just wanted to be like, I don't know, a rock star? And that's just completely ego-driven.

And that didn't help the world in any way. But if I kept on working towards it, it would just not be serving anyone but myself. What if my passion is wrong?

[Speaker 1] (1:31:00 - 1:31:01)

You know, what if it's wrong?

[Speaker 4] (1:31:02 - 1:31:02)

Sorry, too many questions.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:03 - 1:31:37)

No, no, it's fine. No, go ahead, go ahead. Eckhart, answer that.

Sometimes you may not know, until you have achieved what you wanted to achieve, whether it was ego or not. When you get what you wanted to achieve, and very soon you find it does not satisfy you, then it was the ego. So you can, it's a learning process.

Nobody's saying you shouldn't try to achieve this or that. If the impulse is there to have this or that, do it and see what happens. If it doesn't satisfy you, it's the ego.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:38 - 1:32:23)

And the greatest rock stars are those who are rock stars because they sing or they perform because they had to. And whether they were performing to, you know, grand crowds or in their garage space to just their family members, they sing because they have to. The greatest dancers are those who dance because they have to, and they become rock stars or dancing stars because that is coming from such a pure place of passion.

And that's what the world feels, because those are the people who last. The people who are operating from the passionate, true space, and not just doing it because they want to make the money or because of the ego self. That's what I think.

But it's nice talking to you, Nick.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:23 - 1:32:24)

Thank you.

[Speaker 4] (1:32:24 - 1:32:26)

Sorry it took so long, but it was a pleasure.

[Speaker 2] (1:32:26 - 1:32:53)

Thanks everybody at the Bodhi Tree, Jessica, Nick, and all our Bodhi buddies. Okay, now we have an email from Sumaya in Bethlehem who wanted to say that, I live under military occupation. I witnessed the demolishing of my home, and I do not know how to apply your theories when the outside is so out of my control.

How can I be at peace when there are soldiers outside my door? There's a question for you.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:55 - 1:34:20)

That is, of course, the experience of many people in this world. If you look what's happening in this world, people are confronted with violence all the time, with loss, they lose their homes, they lose family members. Is it possible here to enter a state of surrender?

Is it possible to accept the seemingly unacceptable? And for some people, it has been possible. I know it is possible to accept what seems unacceptable.

And if you accept the unacceptable, you will go very deep, very quickly. And what otherwise would take many years of realization to realize, it will take you to a very deep point if you accept something, great loss in your life. In prison, I continuously get letters from people in prison now.

This is unacceptable. Some prisons are dreadful places. And some people there live in agony and suffering and anger and resentment.

And some, a minority, a few, have realized that they can live in the state of inner surrender, which is not negative. It's a complete acceptance that this is as it is right now.

[Speaker 2] (1:34:20 - 1:34:23)

Because they are in non-resistance, non-judgment, and non-attachment.

[Speaker 1] (1:34:23 - 1:34:56)

Yes, because, and you accept it because, why should you accept it? Because it is at this moment, it is. So no matter what it is, accepting the isness of this moment brings you to a place of inner freedom and also a place of power.

You have to go, in order to accept the unacceptable, you have to go really very deep and say, bring a very deep yes to this moment. An uncompromising yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:34:57 - 1:35:30)

I think that a lot of people have trouble with the word accepting it because accepting says to people, I must then also condone it. What you're saying is, by your term accept, you mean don't deny that it's happening. As you resist it, if you continue to resist it, the example you used earlier in our classes is you're in the mud, you're stuck in the mud, the wheels are in the mud, you must first accept that I'm stuck in the mud before you can get yourself out of the mud.

You can't keep saying, I'm not in the mud.

[Speaker 1] (1:35:30 - 1:35:42)

No, and you don't say, I shouldn't be, why did this happen to me? I can't believe I'm in the mud. And then all the energy goes into the complaining and into the resistance.

Correct, got it, got it.

[Speaker 2] (1:35:42 - 1:35:47)

Christina lives in Toronto, Canada, and Skyping us from her family room. Christina, your question, hello.

[Speaker 9] (1:35:48 - 1:35:49)

Hi, Oprah, hi, Akbar.

[Speaker 2] (1:35:50 - 1:35:50)

Hi.

[Speaker 9] (1:35:51 - 1:36:34)

I have been afraid to drive for about 16 years now. I was in a serious car accident and it has stopped me from being responsible in my family life. My husband has so much burden.

He has to take our kids to their activities and so forth, take time off of work to take them to doctor's appointments. So my question, but just recently from reading A New Earth, I've started to drive, so yay. But my question is, how do I remain in inner spaciousness that you speak about on page 238 so that I can stay behind the wheel?

I mean, things are going well right now, but if that fear comes creeping back, how do I handle it?

[Speaker 2] (1:36:34 - 1:36:38)

I don't know if I want you behind the wheel if I'm on the road and you're trying to do that.

[Speaker 9] (1:36:38 - 1:36:39)

Don't say that.

[Speaker 1] (1:36:39 - 1:38:43)

No, okay, okay. First, you're now able to drive. That's wonderful.

The old fear is gone, but now a new fear has arisen and that fear is about whether the fear is going to come back or not. And so that is often the case. People develop a fear about a fear.

Am I going to be in fear again? The mind tends to do that kind of thing because it projects itself into the future and says, am I going to remain fearless or is the fear going to come back? So realize that that is your mind trying to figure something out and thereby creating a new level of fear on top of the original fear that has already dissolved.

So trust that it's not going to come back, but something you can do to help it is to actually consciously enjoy the driving and enjoy sitting in the car, enjoy sitting at the traffic light, enjoy the driving itself. I enjoy driving. It's a very peaceful thing to do for me.

And be comfortable with being in the car. What I used to do often in the... don't do it so much anymore.

I would get into my car and drive out to some lonely place and sit in the car and meditate or write. I liked being in the car. So use the enjoyment.

The more you find the enjoyment, the less likely the fear is going to come back. So seek the enjoyment of... it's to do with enjoying the present moment, the driving itself, the movement and so on.

And don't go into your mind. Don't follow up that thought when it says, oh, is it going to last? Is this state of being without fear going to last?

[Speaker 2] (1:38:43 - 1:38:44)

Just stay in the moment.

[Speaker 1] (1:38:44 - 1:39:16)

Stay in the moment. The more you're in the moment, the less likely fear is going to come back. It can't really come back when you are in the now.

It's only when you leave the now, then it'll come back. Either you go into the past and you remember something that happened in the past. You've left the now.

Or you go into the future and say, am I going to have fear again at some point? So the more you stay in the now, the more you're keeping out fear. Fear comes through past or future.

[Speaker 2] (1:39:18 - 1:39:27)

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you so much.

Thank you. Okay, Yvonne. Okay.

Yes. Hi. What's your question?

I like this question.

[Speaker 7] (1:39:28 - 1:39:57)

It's about this two shall pass and the quote about it. And I forget the quote now, shoot. How do you be a voice for change in the planet where things are going wrong and still be present in the stillness and create the action without being taken down by all the horrendous things that are happening?

It seems to me like a paradox to be present and then to work for change in the future.

[Speaker 2] (1:39:58 - 1:40:07)

Yeah. You said, how can I be a voice for planetary change and really say, I don't mind what happens? Because there's so much crazy stuff is going on in the world.

How can you just say...

[Speaker 7] (1:40:07 - 1:40:09)

Do not mind animal abuse.

[Speaker 2] (1:40:09 - 1:40:15)

Right. Not mind animal abuse. Not mind all the violence going on in the world and just say, this too shall pass.

[Speaker 1] (1:40:16 - 1:41:32)

First, of course, the English language has two expressions that are related and yet very different. Sometimes, I don't mind is interpreted by people as meaning I don't care. I don't care and I don't mind are very different.

I don't mind does not mean that you don't care. It means there is a space of freedom inside you and that is a peaceful place. And unless you are rooted in that peaceful place within, you cannot ultimately be an agent for true positive change in this world.

Your state of consciousness is what transmits itself through whatever you do. Your state of consciousness is primary. And only if your state of consciousness is at peace can whatever you do reflect that.

And you can be a bringer of peace into this violent and insane world. And you can then through whatever you do externally can bring sanity into this logic insane world.

[Speaker 2] (1:41:32 - 1:41:43)

Whether it's about that particular thing you're concerned about or not, because if you are in a state of consciousness where you are at peace, everything that you do in the world will bring peace to the world.

[Speaker 1] (1:41:44 - 1:42:12)

And that's how you change the world. Yes. And everything you do will be much more empowered.

It will be empowered by that consciousness rather than coming from antagonism, coming from thinking I have to fight these people, making situations or people into enemies. That's all the old consciousness. You cannot change this world through the old consciousness or applying the structures and the ways of the old consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (1:42:12 - 1:42:30)

Yeah. One of the things you shared with us earlier, what he was saying, Yvonne, in one of the early classes is that you cannot make change by fighting against anything. And a surefire way of knowing that something is going to fail is when you say it's the war against.

Yes. The war against anything cannot win.

[Speaker 1] (1:42:30 - 1:42:54)

No. So if you cannot fight, it does not mean that you cannot take action. You can take powerful action, but it comes out of that basic place of inner peace.

People don't realize, many people don't realize yet that very powerful action can come out of the place of inner peace. They believe they need to be agitated to bring about change.

[Speaker 7] (1:42:56 - 1:43:16)

Coming from inner peace motivate other people to sort of mind what's going on so that they might do things differently in their lives that impact the planet as a whole. That's the thing that kind of worries me, that the concept can give people apathy and like, oh, I'm going to throw my cigarette on the ground and it's going to go into the ocean and I don't mind what happens.

[Speaker 1] (1:43:17 - 1:44:20)

No, that's not it. You see the consequences of any action. If you're present, then you will not do unconscious things that will actually produce suffering.

It's only when you're not present that you will produce suffering in one form or another. Got that. When you're present, you do not generate suffering for yourself or others.

It's the only place from where you don't generate suffering. And then you are already the beginning of the change of the world. And then it doesn't matter what you do, you may just disseminate information, but the information to make people aware of certain things.

Some people, this can be a very important thing to do. And the way in which you disseminate the information will also be empowered by your state of consciousness. It will not make others wrong, other people wrong and thereby produce a reaction.

And then you're trapped in the same old thing.

[Speaker 2] (1:44:20 - 1:44:43)

You've experienced that, right, Yvonne? You've been on the street and somebody is trying to hand out something. And if it's a person who's really agitated or you can feel or sense their anger and agitation, you don't want to take the pamphlet.

But if the person hands it to you or whatever it is, with a sense of calm or peace, then you're more inclined to want to even engage with them.

[Speaker 7] (1:44:43 - 1:45:11)

YVONNE SEGARS I've experienced that as myself, like 15 years ago in college, being the staunch environmentalist and telling people what to do. And of course, watching them do the opposite, inspiring the exact opposite that I wanted. So I've worked the last 10 years since the power of the now to be present.

But in order to do that, I had to like stop looking at the atrocities of the world. And now I'm ready to come back and I want to keep the spiritual side, but at the same time, not let the world get me down, but be able to do something and be a part of positive change.

[Speaker 1] (1:45:11 - 1:45:29)

Yes, that's your challenge now. That's your challenge now. And your spiritual practice now is to balance the two so that you can be active and bring about change in the world without losing your rootedness in being and your presence.

So that's a balancing act.

[Speaker 7] (1:45:29 - 1:45:30)

YVONNE SEGARS Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:45:30 - 1:45:31)

And that's what you have to do now.

[Speaker 7] (1:45:31 - 1:45:49)

Thank you for sharing how to do it. I'm learning slowly what you just said about accepting the acceptance, the deep acceptance of the world as it is. That hit me finally.

I'm starting to understand the depth and not the accept of it's okay. YVONNE SEGARS No. Right.

Just that this is happening. YVONNE SEGARS That it is happening.

[Speaker 2] (1:45:50 - 1:45:50)

Yes.

[Speaker 7] (1:45:50 - 1:45:50)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:45:51 - 1:45:54)

And that the angrier you're more upset you get about it, it's still happening.

[Speaker 7] (1:45:55 - 1:46:08)

Oh, yeah, yeah. Yeah. That doesn't serve anything.

I get that. But then how do you keep going? I'm slow process.

There's two more weeks, two more chapters. I'm hoping. Inner purpose is going to help that a lot.

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:46:08 - 1:46:24)

Tell Nick to be sure to show up for inner purpose. I got a few things to say. YVONNE SEGARS Thanks, everybody.

Natalie lives in Australia, but is on holiday with her family and is Skyping us from her friend's kitchen in England. Hi, Natalie.

[Speaker 11] (1:46:24 - 1:46:27)

Hi, Yvonne. Hi, Yvonne. How are you?

[Speaker 2] (1:46:27 - 1:46:28)

YVONNE SEGARS We're both well. Thank you.

[Speaker 11] (1:46:29 - 1:47:30)

That's so exciting for me. On page 239 in your book, you say that some people feel more alive when they travel and visit unfamiliar places or foreign countries because those times, sense perceptions, experiencing takes up more of their consciousness and thinking. Since the class on the third chapter, I've been sharing an amazing holiday with my family and our friends in Europe.

I've been able to enjoy my holiday so much more by practicing the teachings that I've read about in the book and the things I've learned from the class. But my life back home is not like my holiday. It's really busy.

I've got a job and three children and my husband has his own business. And on reflection, I think I've filled up any free time I've had so that I wasn't alone with that constant noise in my head. I feel really great at the moment and I want to feel the same when I go home.

So my question is, how do I transition between this wonderful holiday and go back to my normal life at home?

[Speaker 1] (1:47:32 - 1:49:46)

Okay, okay. That's a good question. Yes, yes.

Thank you. Yes, it's a good question. The everydayness of many people's lives can really pull you into a place of unconsciousness because the repetitiveness of one's life.

So it's up to you when you get home to invite a different state of consciousness as much as possible into your daily life, into the daily routine of your life. Invite a state of presence when you are engaged in things that you do every day, repetitively. Things that usually are a means to an end.

Driving those kids to school, doing the shopping. You can see how many things are a means to an end in one's daily existence. And that's not a very powerful way to live when almost everything you do in your daily existence is a means to some end because you have to do this and this.

So bring in presence where, instead of treating whatever you do as a means to an end, as much as possible, make it into an end in itself. For example, when you're driving from here to there, be absolutely present every moment. Look around.

Be alert as if you were seeing things for the first time. The trees, the people, the traffic. And you do that by not labeling things.

Not labeling mentally what you're experiencing. Be there as a conscious presence when you're doing shopping at the supermarket. Perceiving without naming is what you call it.

Perceiving without naming. Be there with every step. Look at the things around you.

What do I need to get? Be conscious of every movement of everything around you so that it's not an everyday thing. It's that everything that you do is happening just now.

It's not a repetition.

[Speaker 2] (1:49:47 - 1:50:49)

And I promise you, if you start to do this in your everyday life, what he says on page 252, as much as possible in everyday life, use awareness of the inner body to start to create space. When waiting, when listening to someone, when pausing to look at the sky, all on page 252, a tree, a flower, your partner or child, feel the aliveness within at the same time. This means part of your attention or consciousness remains formless and the rest is available for the outer world to form.

Whenever you inhabit your body in this way, it serves as an anchor for staying present in the now, prevents you from losing yourself in thinking, in emotions or in external situations. When you really get that, what he's saying on page 252, Natalie, everything around you takes on a magical quality. I can really testify to that.

That just doing routine things becomes almost like you have wow moments doing the smallest things, you know, washing the...

[Speaker 11] (1:50:50 - 1:51:08)

I've been feeling that at the moment because we've been seeing so many amazing things and meeting so many different people and being in places where they speak different languages. But I know at home, what I do is when I'm doing something, I'm thinking about the next thing that I'm going to be doing. So I really need to, I can really take that on.

Thank you so much.

[Speaker 2] (1:51:08 - 1:51:43)

What I would like to say to you and everybody else, when you start to put this into practice, and I've been doing it myself during the past eight weeks, when you start to actually put it into practice, everything is amazing. Everything starts to be amazing. The fact that you're breathing in and out of your lungs starts to be amazing.

That's what the now does. It brings you into a level of consciousness and presence. So just being is amazing and you don't have to leave home to experience that.

Isn't that the, that's the key, isn't it?

[Speaker 1] (1:51:43 - 1:51:44)

Yes, that's the key. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:51:45 - 1:51:50)

What is on the backboard? I thought I saw my name there when there was a wide shot there. Does that say Oprah?

[Speaker 11] (1:51:51 - 1:51:58)

That's from my Georgie. She's asleep because it's about 3 a.m. But she wanted to say hi. So that's her.

Hi, Oprah.

[Speaker 2] (1:51:59 - 1:52:27)

Hi, Georgie. Thank you. Thank you very much, Natalie.

But that's, thank you. What Natalie was talking about is the whole point of awakening to your life's purpose. And next week, we're going to be talking about inner purpose.

Yes. Which is what I was trying to say to Nick, maybe too stridently. That's happened a couple of times where I'm like saying to Gail, Gail will say, I don't understand.

I'll go, well, the reason is.

[Speaker 1] (1:52:28 - 1:52:33)

Well, Nick represents about 50 million other people who are the same.

[Speaker 2] (1:52:34 - 1:53:14)

That's right. Who are feeling that, well, listen, I got to make money. I got to make money.

But what we're going to be talking about next week, Nick, is when you align the inner purpose and let the inner purpose determine what your outer actions are, then you're not worried. That's right. You never worry.

Yes. No matter how much money you're making. Yes.

You're not worried because you're on purpose with your life. You're on purpose with your life. Yeah, well, you know, I think a lot of people feel like this is all kind of, sometimes they feel like this is ooey gooey stuff.

And yes, and I'll get spiritual. But let me make some money first. Yeah, I want to be spiritual and all that.

But I got to make some money first.

[Speaker 1] (1:53:14 - 1:53:34)

Yeah, that's actually in the New Testament, where he says, let me first do this. They invite you to the kingdom of heaven. That's right.

Let me first do this with another excuse. Let me first do this. First, I have to do this.

Yes. Then I'll be ready. Of course, it never happens.

The then never comes.

[Speaker 2] (1:53:35 - 1:53:50)

So there is Barbara in Shanghai, China, who writes, I find it really difficult to be the observer of a challenging work environment, especially when I'm frustrated with employees and have to discipline my staff. What are some of the practical steps I can take to overcome the situation?

[Speaker 1] (1:53:52 - 1:55:07)

Well, there you use whatever the practical things that are described in the book. Conscious, one or two conscious breaths as often as possible. Getting in touch with the feeling of the inner body, the aliveness of the inner body while you are listening to people, especially.

Then already a different energy is there. You are listening from a different state of consciousness when you are in touch with the inner body while you listen. And a lot of thing, a person who is running an office or whatever our questioner does, they probably have to deal with many people every day, which involves listening to people in addition to, of course, speaking to people.

So be there as the, feel the aliveness within as you listen. As much as possible, take conscious breaths while you are engaged in things. That's right.

Bringing spaces, little spaces into your daily existence. Gaps. Little gaps.

That is more important than doing, it's wonderful to do a meditation at the end of the day, but bringing little gaps into your everyday activities is even more important.

[Speaker 2] (1:55:08 - 1:56:21)

I love what you talk about on page 232 and 233. You tell people to avoid watching television programs and commercials that assault you with a rapid succession of images that change every two or three seconds. Rather than watching at random, choose the programs you want to see whenever you remember to do so.

Feel the aliveness also inside your body as you watch. Alternatively, be aware of your breathing from time to time. Looking away from the screen at regular intervals so that it doesn't completely take possession of your visual sense.

We just did a show the other day, and this mom, it was a show about giving up what you could, what you'd be willing to live without. And this family was going to give up their computers, or they did give up their computers and their televisions for a week. And their little five-year-old boy was crying because he had to give up the computer.

His mom walked in the room, stood behind him, was behind him, called his name, and he still couldn't, he couldn't hear her because he was so mesmerized by the video game he was playing. What are we doing to ourselves and more importantly to our children through the video games, the television, which is a form of like hypnosis almost.

[Speaker 1] (1:56:21 - 1:56:52)

Yes. For people. Yes.

And it pulls your attention out of the body. It's like a leaking, an energy leakage, when especially for young children, when the energy gets drawn out very easily. And so it's continuous energy leakage and they cannot focus on, because of the rapidly changing images on TV screens in many programs, the ability to have a prolonged focus on something is greatly diminished.

[Speaker 2] (1:56:52 - 1:56:59)

Well, I thought that that's why we have so many children with ADD because they've grown up in a world where they can only, there's 30 seconds, 30 seconds and 30 seconds.

[Speaker 1] (1:56:59 - 1:57:43)

Yes. That means the quality of your life is also diminished because the quality of your life very much depends on the degree of your attention. Attention is quality.

So if you cannot give attention to anything for very long, that diminishes the quality of your life and what you can do. So parents need to be careful with their children. I'm not saying remove all these things immediately from your children because they are addictive, but very gently don't reduce the amount of time they spend with video games and reduce gently the amount of time they spend watching television.

[Speaker 2] (1:57:44 - 1:57:59)

Because they cause you, as you say, so when watching television, the tendency is for you to fall below thought, not rise above it. Television has this in common with alcohol and certain other drugs. While it provides some relief from your mind, you again pay a high price, loss of consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (1:57:59 - 1:58:23)

Yes. And here we have... That's what it's designed to do, isn't it?

For the most part. Yes, it's, here we have... Our show, though, is designed to make you more conscious.

I will have to say that. I know that. When I wrote there somewhere, there are some television shows that have been helpful to many people and have raised people's consciousness.

It says that somewhere in the book. It does. I saw you in my mental, in my mind.

[Speaker 2] (1:58:23 - 1:58:38)

Thank you. You could have just said, oh, the Oprah show. I saw you wrote that there are some television shows.

You could have just put in parentheses, the Oprah show, for example. Yes. Yeah, but for the most part, television is designed to numb us out.

[Speaker 1] (1:58:38 - 1:59:15)

Yes. And here we have the interesting concept of rising above thinking and falling below thinking. So what we are engaged in here...

Now, most people are at the thinking level. They are controlled by their mind. They are identified with their mind.

This work that we are doing here, if you can call it work, it's not work really, is rising above thinking. Being present means you have risen above thinking. You are fully conscious, but there's little or no thought activity.

[Speaker 2] (1:59:15 - 1:59:33)

Can you tell me why you say on page 233, make sure you don't go to sleep immediately after switching off the set, or even worse, fall asleep with the set still on? I know my friend Gail sometimes is watching TV, and she goes, I don't know if I was watching or my feet were watching, because she goes to sleep with the TV on.

[Speaker 1] (1:59:34 - 2:00:11)

So then all the turmoil that you've just been watching and you've just spent a significant amount of time below thought in a state of unawareness and unconsciousness, and if you go from... That will affect the quality of your sleep, and you will notice also when you wake up in the morning, you won't be as refreshed. It's vital to go into sleep from a place of consciousness rather than unconsciousness.

Then the quality of your sleep will be much better, and you will wake up feeling renewed.

[Speaker 2] (2:00:11 - 2:00:19)

I noticed that. See, I don't watch television before going to bed. I hardly watch television at all, but I noticed that if I meditate before going to sleep, I have a better sleep.

[Speaker 1] (2:00:20 - 2:01:10)

Yes, and what I recommend to people is, as they lie in bed, ready to go to sleep, lie on your back, flat on your back, and bring attention, scan your body with your attention, from your feet to your head, your hands, your arms, and then feel the internal aliveness of the body as you lie there. You lie in the energy field of your body. That means there's also very little or no thinking going on because the attention moves into the body, and from there you go to sleep.

Hold that for five, ten minutes. It's a very pleasant way of saying goodbye to that day and of going into sleep. It feels very much alive.

It's joyful, actually, to lie there in that energy field.

[Speaker 2] (2:01:10 - 2:01:17)

And that energy field that you're talking about is exactly what this whole chapter is about, is the energy field of inner space. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:01:17 - 2:01:49)

Go inside the body and allow yourself to be the observer of the body. Yes, and then you connect with the energy. You merge the energy field, and of course the body is mostly empty space, 99.999% empty space. Physicists tell us the space between the molecules, the atoms that make up the body, the spaces in between the atoms is so vast that your body is 99.999% empty space.

[Speaker 2] (2:01:52 - 2:02:28)

That's a lot for my brain to take in right now. But I do want to thank you for joining us. This eighth class will be available on demand tomorrow for free here at Oprah.com.

And if you want to download or watch any of our classes, you can do that tomorrow also at Oprah.com and iTunes. It's free because of the generous support of nature-made soft gel vitamins. This week, you can update your workbook, get ready for our next class, Chapter 9.

We're coming to the end. Your inner purpose, your inner purpose, for all of you who've read this book looking for your inner purpose, this is what it's all about, people. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (2:02:28 - 2:02:28)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:28 - 2:02:42)

For bringing us into inner space. Next week is inner purpose. And as I was saying to Nick earlier, inner purpose, when it defines what you do in the world, puts you in alignment and all things come.

[Speaker 1] (2:02:42 - 2:02:42)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:42 - 2:02:43)

As they should.

[Speaker 1] (2:02:43 - 2:02:46)

And then there comes the alignment of inner purpose and outer purpose.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:47 - 2:03:52)

Ah, that's it. Thanks, everybody. Good night.

Let's do our high five. We almost didn't do it last week and people complained. Bye, everybody.

Okay. Hi, everybody. Welcome to class number nine of our New Earth web series.

We're here with author Eckhart Tolle, number nine. We're counting down. We're down to the last two chapters of our book.

And it is my most sincere hope that all of our classes so far have been leading you to find more purpose and joy in your own lives. And tonight's class, tonight's lesson is really about bringing clarity to finding your inner purpose. And so I think this is my most exciting chapter of all.

I know I say that every chapter. I didn't say that last chapter and I'll tell you why in a few moments, but before we begin the class, I'm going to let you lead us in our moment of silence or moment of silence today.

[Speaker 1] (2:03:53 - 2:05:35)

Good. So we're already familiar with the silence that we start with. And this time I'd like to use a very short, very powerful line from the Old Testament.

And I believe that this will be especially helpful for those Christians who are not quite comfortable with silence and somehow feel that silence is not compatible with Christianity or Christian teachings, which is not the case at all. Perhaps it has been overlooked in the past couple of centuries in Christianity, but it is certainly compatible. And so this is one of my favorite lines from the Old Testament.

And that can take us very powerfully into stillness. And this line is, Be still and know that I am God. Meaning God is found precisely in that inner stillness, through the realm of inner stillness, that you can reach what we call God, but which nobody can understand through the mind.

It's the mystery, the mystery, which you cannot really explain or name, which we call God, is the depth of that. We touch that when we go into stillness. So these beautiful lines point to that inner experience.

So I'll say it again. And when I've said it, we just become still for a moment. Be still and know that I am God.

[Speaker 2] (2:06:29 - 2:07:54)

I love that. That's one of my favorite Bible passages. That and lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

Well, today, tonight, we're discussing chapter nine, your inner purpose. Finding your purpose is what I believe we're all put on the planet to do. So many people spend their lives, you know, trying to figure out what job, what job to do, what to do, what to do, what to do.

I think when you figure out what your purpose is and you align the outer purpose with the inner purpose, then the job really doesn't matter. Right. That's the essence of what you're saying in this chapter.

Let us begin. Page 257. As soon as you rise above mere survival, the question of meaning and purpose becomes a paramount importance in your life.

Many people feel caught up in the routines of daily living, you say, that seem to deprive their life of significance. Some believe life is passing them by or has passed them by already. Others feel severely restricted by the demands of their job and supporting a family.

Some are consumed by stress, lost in frantic doing. Many people long for the freedom and expansion that prosperity promises. Others already enjoy the freedom that comes with prosperity and discover that even that's not enough to endow their lives with true meaning.

There is no substitute for finding true purpose. So how do we do it?

[Speaker 1] (2:07:56 - 2:10:34)

Now, what you just read basically, of course, means that many people spend their lives in a state of almost permanent dissatisfaction. Right. Unfortunately.

So they are maybe looking for some purpose or they may have given up hope that there is some purpose for them and they're just surviving or making a living. Or caught up in the doing. Caught up in the doing, in the stress of it.

Right. And so usually when we talk about purpose, when people talk about purpose, they think of purpose in terms of future. Where am I going?

What am I supposed to do? What's the direction I'm going? What is my goal?

The goal that I want to achieve. And that, of course, is there. It has its place.

But I call that the outer purpose. More fundamental than the outer purpose is what most people usually overlook. And that is the realization that what matters most is finding your inner purpose.

Now, to most people, that initially doesn't mean anything. Inner purpose. And this is why I explain it briefly in the dialogue that is there in that chapter where somebody asks about, I want to know what my purpose is.

And I tell that person, your purpose is to be here at this moment and asking that question. Because this is where you are. So inner purpose is aligning your life fully with the present moment.

So that you are no longer out of alignment with the present moment, which leads to the state of dissatisfaction that we talked about, that is the reality for many people. So you have to go, first of all, beyond the state of dissatisfaction that is so many people's reality. Right.

But you cannot go beyond the state of dissatisfaction through some future goal that says, one day I would like to be in a state of fulfillment or satisfaction. No. You have to enter the state of fulfillment and satisfaction by becoming one internally with the present moment.

And your purpose then, your inner purpose, is that alignment with where you are right now. To be totally where you are and whatever you are doing, even if it doesn't look like the life purpose that you want for the next 30 years, whatever you are doing now, to be total in doing it. And no matter what it is, to be true to life by being true to this moment.

[Speaker 2] (2:10:35 - 2:11:50)

Yeah. As you say on page 271, there is always only this one step. And so you give it your fullest attention.

This doesn't mean that you don't know where you're going. It just means that the step that you're taking right now is primary. The destination is secondary.

And what you encounter at your destination once you get there depends on the quality of this one step. I love this so much because I discovered this when I was in the third grade. I couldn't articulate it this way in the third grade.

When I was in the third grade, I turned in a book report early in Ms. Driver's class. And the reaction that I got from my third grade teacher taught me or informed me that when you do your best, when you do your best in any given moment, that is well received. Because my third grade teacher told all the other teachers in the teacher's lounge, and I became known as this kid who really loved to read.

And that's why we're sitting here today because of that. But I learned in the third grade, this whole process of whatever you're doing in any given moment, if you do it your best, it leads you to the next best moment. So you don't have to worry about what's the next moment coming if you only do your best in this moment.

[Speaker 1] (2:11:50 - 2:12:14)

That's right. Because when the next moment comes, it comes as this moment. Right.

The future, you never experience the future as the future. You experience the future when it comes as the now. Because that's all there is.

It's all there ever is. And that's an amazing realization for people to realize life is always just this. It's always the now.

[Speaker 2] (2:12:14 - 2:12:26)

Yeah. It's interesting because last week we had Nick from the Bodhi Tree. And you said when Nick was up talking about he had to, well, you have to worry about your bills.

And you said, well, you don't have to worry about it.

[Speaker 1] (2:12:26 - 2:12:28)

You have to pay your bills. You have to pay your bills.

[Speaker 2] (2:12:28 - 2:12:44)

But you don't have to worry about paying your bills. I don't know about the rest of you, but that lesson has sort of been with me all week. So anytime I'd find myself, you know, in the mind worrying about something, I don't have to worry about this.

I can either figure out what to do about it or release that thought.

[Speaker 1] (2:12:44 - 2:13:01)

Yes. Yeah. Yes.

So if the bill is here, but the money is not there right now, I can't do anything, put it aside. And then see what action can I take now. And then you do whatever action you can take now.

Yeah. If you can't take any action, then you just be with it. Yeah.

Right.

[Speaker 2] (2:13:01 - 2:13:23)

But I love that when I read that there is always only this one step. And so you give this one step your fullest attention. That's in the middle of page 271, everybody.

And this doesn't mean you don't know where you're going. It just means that this step is primary and the destination is secondary. And what happens is most people are living their lives as though the destination, the end.

[Speaker 1] (2:13:23 - 2:13:23)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:13:24 - 2:13:25)

The end is what it's all about. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:13:25 - 2:13:50)

As if the end were more important than the means. And so the means and the end, however, are one. Right.

So if there's dissatisfaction and a denial of the present moment, which is a denial of life. Right. You're not honoring life if you don't honor this moment by being open to this moment, then that is how you will experience the future because the future is no more than an extension of now.

Right.

[Speaker 2] (2:13:51 - 2:14:47)

You also say on page 271, the unconscious assumption behind all such action is that success is a future event and that the end justifies the means. But the end and the means are one. You say that.

Let's say you're a business person after two years of intense stress and strain. You finally managed to come out with a product or service that sells well and makes money. Success in conventional terms, yes.

But in reality, you spent two years polluting your body as well as the earth with negative energy. You made everybody crazy. Don't say that.

You made everybody and everybody around you crazy and affected others you didn't even know. The unconscious assumption behind all of this action is that success is a future event and that the end justifies the means. But the end and the means are one.

And if the means did not contribute to human happiness, neither will the end. So whatever the end result is, it's going to carry the energy of what it took to get there.

[Speaker 1] (2:14:50 - 2:15:04)

That's exciting. Yes. And that means you actually, you determine what kind of future you're going to experience by deciding to be totally aligned with the present moment.

That's right.

[Speaker 2] (2:15:04 - 2:15:52)

It's your state of consciousness now that will determine whatever is manifested in the future. And when that happens, that'll just be now. I got that.

I got that very much. Okay. So let's continue with this lesson before we go to Ivy a little bit.

You say the true or primary purpose of your life cannot be found on the outer level. To me, that's the essence of what this book is all about. Everybody who's searching and waiting for answers and looking for it on the outer level, it does not concern what you do, but what you are.

That is to say your state of consciousness. So the most important thing to realize is this, your life has an inner purpose and an outer purpose. Inner purpose concerns being and is primary.

Outer purpose concerns doing and is secondary. You want to elaborate on that?

[Speaker 1] (2:15:54 - 2:16:38)

So once you realize that the primary purpose of your life is the inner and this is what becomes the main purpose, then the secondary purpose, the outer purpose, falls into place. By being true to life and being true to now, life will bring to you whatever is most appropriate as far as your inner purpose is concerned. Life will become helpful.

Suddenly, sometimes the helpful idea comes from within, a sudden realization, oh, this is what I want to do. This is what I have to do. But the realization only came because you were aligned with the present moment.

[Speaker 2] (2:16:38 - 2:16:46)

So let's say this, everybody, everybody who is born is alive and breathing, has an inner purpose.

[Speaker 1] (2:16:46 - 2:17:25)

Yes, the inner purpose is the same for all of humanity, which is being aligned with life, saying yes to life by saying yes to now, aligned with the power of the present moment, which is the power of life. That's everybody's purpose. Then the outer purpose varies from person to person.

How that translates into what you do varies from person to person. And even in one lifetime, it can vary. You may have a certain outer purpose for 10 or 20 years of your life and suddenly it changes completely.

So that varies and is subject to time. It doesn't necessarily last your whole lifetime.

[Speaker 2] (2:17:26 - 2:17:49)

OPRAH WINFREY You say finding and living in alignment with the inner purpose is the foundation of fulfilling your outer purpose. It's the basis for true success. Without that alignment, you can still achieve certain things through effort, through struggle, to determination, and sheer hard work or cunning.

But there is no joy in such endeavor, and in such endeavor, and it invariably ends in some form of suffering.

[Speaker 1] (2:17:49 - 2:18:03)

DERK DE ROOT Yes. That is, you're struggling to make it. You're struggling and fighting.

And basically, you're making, you're fighting against life or the world. Me against the universe is what the ego, how the ego sees it.

[Speaker 2] (2:18:03 - 2:18:26)

And isn't it sort of like swimming upstream? I always compare it to swimming upstream when you're like going against the grain of your life. There's a flow to all of our lives.

And if you are suffering, if you are in pain, if you can't figure out what it is you're supposed to do, if you're worried, worried, worried all the time, it is because you're going against the flow or the grain of your life.

[Speaker 1] (2:18:26 - 2:18:26)

DERK DE ROOT Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:18:26 - 2:18:28)

OPRAH WINFREY Means you're going against inner purpose.

[Speaker 1] (2:18:29 - 2:18:29)

DERK DE ROOT Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:18:29 - 2:18:33)

OPRAH WINFREY That when you align with inner purpose, everything flows. DERK DE ROOT Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:18:34 - 2:18:58)

DERK DE ROOT And any negative state, whenever negativity arises, and you dwell in negative inner states, then you're not going with the flow of life. You're against the flow of life. OPRAH WINFREY Yeah.

DERK DE ROOT And then you experience life as not helpful. You experience life as even as hostile because you are in a state of inner denial. You're in a state of negativity.

You're not open to life.

[Speaker 2] (2:18:59 - 2:19:35)

OPRAH WINFREY Okay. I got that. I really got that.

I really got that. Another friend of mine, a teacher who wrote a book called Seat of the Soul, Gary Zukov calls it, says when the personality or ego comes to serve the energy of the soul or consciousness, we've been calling that, when the personality comes to serve the energy of the soul, that is authentic empowerment. I take that to mean from Seat of the Soul that when you align your personality or use your personality to serve the inner purpose, to serve the soul or the consciousness, then you are your most powerful.

[Speaker 1] (2:19:35 - 2:19:50)

DERK DE ROOT Yes. OPRAH WINFREY In the world. DERK DE ROOT Yes.

OPRAH WINFREY Yeah. DERK DE ROOT And then you're not run by the mind anymore because the mind becomes the servant of what I sometimes call awareness or presence. OPRAH WINFREY Mm-hmm.

DERK DE ROOT The mind then serves something greater than itself, which is the consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (2:19:50 - 2:20:19)

OPRAH WINFREY You say on page 259, instead of being lost in your thinking, when you are awake or aware, you recognize yourself as the awareness behind it. Thinking then ceases to be a self-serving, autonomous activity that takes possession of you and runs your life. Awareness takes over from thinking.

And instead of being in charge of your life, love this everybody, instead of being in charge of your life, thinking becomes the servant of awareness.

[Speaker 1] (2:20:19 - 2:20:28)

DERK DE ROOT Yes. And then the mind is quite helpful. So the mind can be used for many wonderful things.

OPRAH WINFREY Right. DERK DE ROOT When it no longer controls you.

[Speaker 2] (2:20:28 - 2:20:53)

OPRAH WINFREY I got it. So in essence, our goal on Earth as human beings, these spiritual beings in the body, higher consciousness inside this flesh-filled, membranous, whatever, body, our goal is to allow the light of inner purpose or consciousness to come through everything that we do.

[Speaker 1] (2:20:53 - 2:21:23)

This is why we're here. And that is then also the entire universe is, the purpose of the universe, one could say, is the flowering of consciousness. OPRAH WINFREY Right.

DERK DE ROOT It moves towards more and more consciousness. OPRAH WINFREY Okay. DERK DE ROOT So we then become bringers of that, which is why we are here.

So then the consciousness, you could call it the light, the light of the source, the light of God comes through the human form. OPRAH WINFREY That's right.

[Speaker 2] (2:21:23 - 2:21:39)

And so when you allow the light of God, the light of consciousness to come through you, and it is allowed to fuel whatever it is you do, whatever it is you do will be fueled with a spiritual power that will allow you to be the best at what you do.

[Speaker 1] (2:21:40 - 2:21:59)

DERK DE ROOT Yes. And then that also means that what you do is not of primary importance, but how you do what you do is what matters, how you do it. And you could be doing something that the world would regard as relatively insignificant and yet make an enormous difference to the consciousness on the planet.

[Speaker 2] (2:22:00 - 2:22:08)

OPRAH WINFREY Ivy is Skyping us from her living room in Richmond, Virginia. Hi, Ivy. I hear you have a question about one of my favorite quotes.

Go ahead. What is the question?

[Speaker 9] (2:22:09 - 2:23:16)

IVY CHEN Well, my question deals with trying to find a career path that merges your inner purpose with outer purpose. And on the top of page 274, you say, Eckhart says, there may be a period of insecurity and uncertainty. And he goes on to say that if you're able to live with uncertainty, even enjoy it, you become comfortable with uncertainty.

Infinite possibilities open up in your life. And my question is this. I'm 26 years old.

And in the past few months, I've tried to find a career path that merges my inner purpose with my outer purpose and haven't really been able to do so. I began to think a lot about my life's purpose and question whether or not I would ever find a career that merged my life's work with something I was passionate about. So my question really is twofold.

The first is, how should I approach finding a career that is fulfilling but doesn't strengthen my ego? And secondly, and perhaps the more pressing question for me is, how do I do this while also becoming comfortable and embracing the uncertainty that's defining my life right now?

[Speaker 1] (2:23:18 - 2:23:42)

Good question. Yes. So to what extent have you become successful in embracing and accepting at this time of your life that you don't know yet what your purpose is?

To what extent are you able to say, well, can I become comfortable with not knowing? Have you been able to do that?

[Speaker 9] (2:23:42 - 2:23:51)

I, there are periods where I've been able to, but mostly it's just a lot of thinking and feeling very uncomfortable about not knowing.

[Speaker 1] (2:23:51 - 2:25:58)

Yes. And often the uncomfortableness are certain thoughts that go through your mind that tell you that it's not okay to be in this state. And then you have certain emotions which are the body's reaction to those thoughts.

So when these thoughts arise, they tell you it's not okay. The way you are right now is not okay. Realize that these are thoughts that arise in your mind, conditioned by the surrounding culture and so on.

And you don't necessarily need to believe in each thought that comes and tells you it's not okay not to know what to do. Life is an adventure. It's not a package tour.

When you travel, you can take a package tour and everything is already planned. There's no uncertainty. And every year you go to a nice hotel in a more exotic country, but you won't even know it's exotic because your hotel room is the same as every other hotel room.

You're totally sheltered, but everything is planned. You know beforehand where you're going to be in 10 days time exactly. That's not an adventure.

And it's unlikely that you are going to evolve internally through a trip like that. But if you went into a true trip into some exotic country, thrown back on your own resources, then you would encounter true adventure. And you would probably not be the same person when you come back.

Why not? Because we are constantly faced with uncertainty. And if you're able to accept that, you can actually enjoy the adventure.

If you cannot accept it, I'm giving this analogy of a trip because life is a journey. Yes. And so the person who cannot enjoy the uncertainty when adventure comes is going to be in a continuous state of negativity, of fear.

I don't want to be here. I'd rather be at home. So realize that life is an adventure.

And part of the adventure of life is being in that state that you are in now. If everything were already clear to you now, everything were already mapped out, there would be no evolution of yourself as a human being.

[Speaker 2] (2:25:58 - 2:26:06)

And may I say, Ivy, that is part of what being 26 is all about. That is what 26 is. You're trying to figure it out.

[Speaker 1] (2:26:07 - 2:26:41)

That is what the 20s are for. And another very helpful thing to remember is one of the most wonderful things in your period of life is to make mistakes. Yeah.

Because mistakes means you realize, oh, that wasn't my purpose. Yes. And so you're a little bit closer to your true purpose.

And then perhaps you think, oh, maybe that is my purpose. And then after a while you realize, no, that's not. And it's very helpful to make mistakes because gradually you begin to realize what it is that is right for you.

[Speaker 2] (2:26:42 - 2:27:52)

And many times, as Eckhart says in this chapter, Ivy, and you will find in your 20s, the 20s are about figuring out where you want to be. And there's this frustration. That's why they call that show The Young and the Restless because there's a restlessness about it.

And I know that because I've kept journals since I was 15. In my 20s, I'm just restless, restless, restless. And when I was your age, 26, I was an anchorwoman in television doing the evening news.

I hated it every single day. And what I now realize, and even then, my displeasure with being in that place every day was really informing me what I needed to do. What I needed to do was to get out of that space.

And many times being in a space that you can clearly identify as, this is, I do not want to do this. I want to be in television, I knew, but I do not want to do this. And, you know, and I had my father and everybody around saying, you're going to give up that job in television?

I knew I could not do that. News felt exploitive to me. So many times, if you're in a position where you know what you don't want to do, isn't that also helpful, Eckhart?

[Speaker 1] (2:27:52 - 2:28:10)

Oh, yes, yes. For a while, I thought my life purpose was to be an academic at university. And then the realization, after years of spending time working hard to become a professor, I realized that's not my life purpose at all.

But I had to go through that.

[Speaker 2] (2:28:10 - 2:28:13)

Didn't you give up a promising career as an academic?

[Speaker 1] (2:28:13 - 2:29:38)

Yes, I gave up the PhD. I gave up the promising career. And my relatives, my mother thought I was insane to give that up.

But I knew this is what I had to do. It was so clear. There was no doubt about it anymore.

For a little while, there was doubt. And then the realization was so strong, I had to walk out of there. And that led to a period of uncertainty.

For a few years, I didn't know what am I supposed to do with my life? Here I am. I was just barely managing to survive.

And gradually, I lived, but I was not unhappy. I was happy with the present moment then already. And then gradually, something evolved.

People started asking me questions. People that I met casually in parks. And gradually, a kind of spiritual teaching started to happen.

And after a little while, when somebody called me for the first time, oh, you are a spiritual teacher. I said, oh, that's what I am. And so the purpose came by itself.

It came just out of that state of just being with what is and not being unhappy with not knowing. Being at ease with not knowing. Then it's much more likely to come to you when you are at ease with not knowing.

So the question that you can ask yourself, can I be at ease with not knowing?

[Speaker 2] (2:29:38 - 2:30:01)

Because what you say on 274 that Ivy had mentioned earlier, you become comfortable with uncertainty. Infinite possibilities open up in your life. And it means when you become comfortable with uncertainty, it means fear is no longer a dominant factor in what you do and no longer prevents you from taking action to initiate change.

That's the big thing.

[Speaker 1] (2:30:01 - 2:30:01)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:30:02 - 2:30:10)

Because as long as you are afraid, you cannot allow the energy of what is supposed to happen to come into your life, as long as you're afraid, right?

[Speaker 1] (2:30:10 - 2:30:38)

The fear blocks that. Yes. So be alert and watch your mind to see what kind of thoughts it produces.

Feel also there may be the emotion of fear, as Oprah says, arising occasionally, associated with a thought. Like what's going to happen to me? Yes.

Because the mind wants to know what the future is going to bring. But how dread life would be, how dreadfully boring it would be if you knew already what's going to happen.

[Speaker 2] (2:30:38 - 2:31:06)

Well, part of that is because, too, people get afraid because of, again, what Nick said. Nick is our spiritual teacher this week. Because of what Nick said last week about worrying about your bills, because you're living outside yourself, you're creating more debt, creating more debt, creating more debt, allowing yourself to operate from the thinking mind.

Yes. At the time that you made these decisions for yourself, you were living on, in practically, you said, at the poverty level.

[Speaker 1] (2:31:07 - 2:31:23)

Yes. So... Yes.

And so you survive somehow, you make it. One more question before you go. Is there anything in your life that you truly enjoy?

Are there certain things that you enjoy doing that may not be necessarily associated in your mind with career?

[Speaker 9] (2:31:26 - 2:31:30)

Not really. That I can think of. Nothing I can think of.

[Speaker 1] (2:31:30 - 2:31:37)

Okay, then what's left is for you to enjoy the present moment and make that your spiritual practice. Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (2:31:38 - 2:31:48)

But I thought you were saying earlier, Ivy, about trying to align your passion, what you love, and getting paid for it. Isn't that what you were talking about earlier?

[Speaker 9] (2:31:48 - 2:31:58)

Well, something I was passionate about. To align something. To align what I'm passionate about once I figure that out.

I don't really know what that is right now.

[Speaker 2] (2:31:59 - 2:32:56)

Yeah. Well, I will... To reiterate something that Eckhart was saying last week, it doesn't come out of your head.

For everybody who's looking for that answer, for the purpose of your life, or what should I be doing, it does not come from your head. It's not something that you're ever going to think up. You don't think it.

It comes from that space that we opened tonight's session with, being still and knowing that I am God. Being still and allowing the presence of a universal energy, the presence of consciousness to come through you in such a way that it's a feeling. It is a feeling.

It is not something you're going to think up. How to do it. And you will just...

You will start to feel that I feel better doing this thing than I feel doing the other thing. It's a feeling that comes to you, not something that comes in your head.

[Speaker 1] (2:32:56 - 2:33:15)

That's right, yes. And you need to be careful that you are not in a state of dissatisfaction because when you're in dissatisfaction, the answer is not likely to come, neither from within nor from without. So keep your inner space clear, aligned with now, so that no negativity arises.

[Speaker 2] (2:33:15 - 2:33:49)

And then may I add also for you and everybody else who's trying to get this whole idea of purpose, some clarity about that. When you allow yourself to be still with it, you're not afraid of the uncertainty. The universe rises up to meet you.

The world... Eckhart says in here, I can't remember what page in this chapter, but he talks about how coincidences happen, you know, little things and big things happen. So you then have to be alert and paying attention to your life so when the opening shows itself, you're ready.

[Speaker 1] (2:33:50 - 2:34:13)

Yeah. And that's much more likely to come when you're in a state of clarity, aligned with now, then the answer can come from within or the answer can come from without. Right.

As some chance encounter, something you see in the paper, or something you can't even think where it might come from. It's a synchronistic event, a coincidence. It shows itself.

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:34:13 - 2:34:36)

That's right. In ways that you hadn't seen before. Thank you, Ivy from Richmond, Virginia.

Thank you so much. So you say on 261, while you're perhaps still waiting for something significant to happen to your life, you may not realize that the most significant thing that can happen to a human being has already happened within you. The beginning of the separation process of thinking and awareness.

[Speaker 1] (2:34:36 - 2:35:03)

Which is the awakening, which is another way of explaining what the term awakening means. That before your awareness or your consciousness was totally identified with thought processes, with thinking. But now, and this is the case for everybody who reads this book and finds it meaningful.

Right. It means if you are reading this book and you find it meaningful, something within your response, it means you have already begun to awaken.

[Speaker 17] (2:35:04 - 2:35:04)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (2:35:04 - 2:35:09)

If you haven't, the book will be meaningless. Got it.

[Speaker 2] (2:35:09 - 2:35:48)

You say as long as you are unaware of being on 263, you will seek meaning only within dimension of doing, the dimension of doing and the future. That is to say the dimension of time. Whatever meaning or fulfillment you find will dissolve.

Invariably, it will be destroyed by time and meaning we find on that level is true only relatively and temporary. So you're saying looking outside yourself, you're not going to find the meaning. That's right.

So let's go to the Beaudetrie Bookstore in West Hollywood. Is Nick there tonight? Well, Nick, step on up to the microphone.

You're back. So glad to see you.

[Speaker 4] (2:35:49 - 2:35:50)

Good to be here.

[Speaker 2] (2:35:50 - 2:35:52)

Okay. You have a question tonight?

[Speaker 4] (2:35:54 - 2:36:40)

I do. And actually my question kind of relies on a premise that's not exactly stated in the book. But the premise is God is love.

And if God is love and you love what you're doing as far as a career, then does God then sanction that career? And is it then meant to be? Is it right?

If let's say if you don't go to church, but if you enjoy doing something like reading and if you're reading constantly and you get a more spiritual feeling from reading than ever walking into a church, then isn't that right? Isn't that an alignment with or is love not anything that matters in a career choice?

[Speaker 1] (2:36:41 - 2:39:23)

Well, good question. Now, love, of course, is used in a very loose sense. It means so many different things to different people.

And the expression, I love this or that, or I love doing this or that is used casually by people, often meaning totally different things. For example, if somebody is obsessed with what they do in an ego way, totally focused, but in a negative way to a large extent, totally obsessed with what they are doing. And an outside observer might say, oh, he loves what he's doing.

He loves it so much that he gets up at five every morning and doesn't leave the office until 10 at night. But he's totally obsessed with what he's doing. And there's no love in it.

It's an obsession. But because love is used in such a loose way, sometimes we call that love. So when you actually love what you are doing, it's a totally different energy field that moves into what you are doing.

It means you are aligned completely with what you do. And then, yes, then you do bring a different consciousness. You bring the unconditioned consciousness into this world through whatever you do.

And it might be a doing or it may just be being somewhere. You mention a church. You can find God in many places.

Any place is holy. And the present moment, when you only pay attention to it completely, then you realize actually it's sacred. The present moment is sacred.

And you really bring attention to it. And then it doesn't matter where you are. You can be in a building.

You can be out in nature. You can be in the middle of a traffic. And you really bring your attention to this moment.

And you realize there is a sacredness here. You may be able to feel it more deeply when you're out in nature than in the middle of LA freeway. But even there, it can be sensed if you are present enough.

And there, that's love. There, love arises. And if you're doing something, and you're totally in what you do, not obsessed, not wanting the future more than you want the present, but totally wanting the present, totally wanting what you are doing, then yes, then you love what you're doing.

That is true love. And anybody who embodies that energy is creating the new earth.

[Speaker 4] (2:39:23 - 2:39:25)

So that's correct then?

[Speaker 1] (2:39:25 - 2:39:25)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (2:39:26 - 2:40:05)

There's a difference. I guess I'm thinking of Joseph Campbell where he talks about following your bliss. And he talks about how appetitive desires like eating and sex and drugs, things through the body, loves that come through the body are nothing compared to the love that comes from the spirit, which makes everything else pale in comparison.

And that is the bliss that Joseph Campbell talks about. Yes. And that's what I think you mean when you say that we are present and we're doing what we're supposed to do because we feel that feeling that makes everything else pale in comparison.

[Speaker 2] (2:40:06 - 2:40:41)

Yeah. Nick, that's what he's talking about at the bottom of 261. So while you're perhaps still waiting for something significant to happen in your life, you may not realize the most significant thing that can happen has already happened within you.

The beginning of the separation process of thinking and awareness. When you take yourself out of your head and take yourself out of the doing, doing, doing, doing, doing, and allow yourself to connect with the consciousness or spirit or soul, whichever word you want to use for it, that is connected to all consciousness. The spirit that is connected to the greater spirit is what he's talking about.

[Speaker 1] (2:40:42 - 2:40:43)

And- You got it, Nick.

[Speaker 4] (2:40:44 - 2:40:47)

Thanks. It's a lot of hard work.

[Speaker 2] (2:40:48 - 2:40:53)

Nick, listen, I didn't worry this week because he's told you not to worry. Have you been worried about your bills this week?

[Speaker 1] (2:40:55 - 2:40:57)

No, he just- Yeah, a little bit.

[Speaker 2] (2:40:59 - 2:41:00)

Oh, wow.

[Speaker 1] (2:41:00 - 2:41:55)

Thanks, everybody. One more thing when- just to add to this, when the doing- when you're doing in that state of consciousness, that means whatever you do is not primarily a means to an end. Correct.

But an end in itself. Right. You know what you want to achieve through the doing, that's fine.

But the essence of the doing is in the doing, not the goal that you want to achieve through it. So often the question you can ask yourself is, is what I'm doing right now primarily a means to an end or am I total in what I do? And there's a different quality flows into what you do when it is not just a means to an end.

And that is doing in the state of presence and different energy flows into that.

[Speaker 2] (2:41:56 - 2:42:45)

I love that. We're at the bottom of 263. You say, for example, if caring for your children gives meaning to your life, because everybody's looking for meaning, what happens to the meaning when they don't need you anymore and perhaps don't even listen to you anymore?

If helping others gives meaning to your life, you depend on others being worse off than yourself so that your life can continue to be meaningful and you feel good about yourself. If the desire to excel, win or succeed, I'm at the top of page 264, everybody, at this or that activity provides you with meaning, what if you never win or your winning streak comes to an end? Making it in whatever field is only meaningful as long as there are thousands or millions of others who don't make it.

So you need other human beings to fail so that your life can have meaning. I was going to ask though, what if you're making it, you're aligned with your purpose?

[Speaker 1] (2:42:45 - 2:42:51)

Yes, now after that, it doesn't say that those things should not be pursued immediately after what you just read.

[Speaker 2] (2:42:51 - 2:43:07)

Yes, it says, I'm not saying here that helping others, caring for your children or striving for excellence and whatever field are not worthwhile things to do. For many people, they're important. In the end though, you say it means you should connect them to your inner primary purpose so that a deeper meaning flows into what you do.

[Speaker 1] (2:43:07 - 2:44:19)

Yes, for example, then if, for example, we talked about looking after your children and that being the main purpose of your life and again, we have the two dimensions of purpose, outer purpose, which is what a good parent does anyway. Right. You look after the needs of the child, what you do to protect the child as much as possible.

But is the inner purpose there also, which the inner purpose is there when a field of awareness arises between you and the child, there's a space. Are you able to give the child spaciousness or space? Are you able to be open and listen to the child in a non-judgmental way?

Are you able to be with your child? Are you able to be with your child or are you lost in doing? Is it continuous doing?

Yeah. Or can you bring being into your relationship with your child? And if you bring being in, that is you're fulfilling the inner purpose.

And then when the child grows up, it's less, much less likely or improbable that you will get attached to your role of parent. You will then be able to let go of the role and then be able to be whatever you need to be at any given situation. All right.

[Speaker 2] (2:44:19 - 2:45:01)

You say if you ignore your inner purpose, that's why I keep reading from the book because I think I want to stress how important it is to connect your inner purpose. If you ignore your inner purpose, bottom of 264, no matter what you do, even if it looks spiritual, the ego will creep into how you do it. And so the means will corrupt the end.

The common saying, the road to hell is paved with good intentions, points to this truth. So in other words, not your aims or your actions are primary, but the state of consciousness out of which they come. Fulfilling your primary purpose is laying the foundation for a new reality, a new earth.

Doesn't that mean that it's not just what you do, but it's the intention behind what you do it?

[Speaker 1] (2:45:02 - 2:45:55)

Yes, the consciousness that flows into what you do. And there's no... Future is always secondary in the doing.

That is, your future is not that you look forward to primarily, but totality in what you do, being totally here. Any performer, artists know this very well. Can you be...

When you are total, then a completely different energy arises. That's right. I sometimes...

You see, when the moment the artist performs, sometimes there's an empowerment that suddenly comes in, because then it's sometimes only then that this person can be absolutely total.

[Speaker 2] (2:45:55 - 2:46:00)

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I see that. I was with Tina Turner and Cher this weekend.

[Speaker 1] (2:46:00 - 2:46:01)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:46:01 - 2:46:41)

A show that we're doing on May 8th. Everybody don't miss that. Tina Turner and Cher.

And watching them in rehearsal, sitting in the... We're just all sitting in the bleachers and watching. And then when they each came to the stage, something happened where there was like...

They were infused by something from another level that you could see. Yes. Something came over them on the stage.

And whatever that was, this is so interesting. Watching them perform, you say, I want some of that. I want some of that.

And what that is, is the presence or level of consciousness that they're bringing. Yes. Not just the beat and the rock and roll.

[Speaker 1] (2:46:42 - 2:46:49)

No. And that's also what people respond to. They go there because they can sense that there's something there that is very powerful.

[Speaker 2] (2:46:49 - 2:46:52)

Very powerful, yeah. Inspiration and enthusiasm.

[Speaker 1] (2:46:53 - 2:46:53)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:46:53 - 2:47:14)

Yeah. And you say when the combination of inspiration and enthusiasm, something happens that's bigger than one person. Yeah.

So Gwen and Bob have spent the last 17 years teaching at schools on U.S. military bases throughout Europe. They now live outside Munich, Germany, and are Skyping us from their kitchen. Hi, Gwen and Bob from Munich.

[Speaker 17] (2:47:14 - 2:47:14)

Hi.

[Speaker 2] (2:47:15 - 2:47:19)

Hello to you all. It's the middle of the night there, early morning. What's your question?

[Speaker 15] (2:47:20 - 2:48:13)

Well, my question's about apologizing. Reading on page 258, you say the most important thing to realize is your life has inner and outer purpose. And I have found that apologizing when it's the right time helps me get back in alignment.

However, when I've been wronged by someone, I expect to hear that apology to help build the relationship and get it back to a positive way. And I like feeling comfortable around others. And when there's not closure and apologies don't come, I feel very uncomfortable.

And I'm beginning to wonder if this is my ego at play. And how can I maintain an inner and outer alignment when I don't feel I've had an appropriate apology from the person I expect it from?

[Speaker 2] (2:48:13 - 2:48:31)

Well, you just answered your own question, really. I'm going to let Eckhart answer that. But you just answered your own question because you just, key word here, appropriate.

I've not received the appropriate apology from people. That would be your ego that needs that appropriate apology. Take it away, Eckhart.

[Speaker 1] (2:48:33 - 2:49:54)

Mr. Tholen. And adding to that, of course, the ego, another thing the ego does, it keeps accounts. And it says, you owe me.

Yeah. And in this case, of course, it says you owe me an apology. Now, this is good because this is an opportunity for you to become aware of the ego in you.

So whenever the ego arises and you recognize it as the ego, it's a great opportunity of saying, oh, there's the ego. There are the thoughts that the ego produces in my mind which say, he should apologize. She should have apologized.

And another thought that comes, I can't be comfortable with this person anymore unless he or she apologizes. So you can observe the thoughts that the ego produces and you can observe the emotions that are there as the result of those thoughts. So it's a wonderful opportunity for you to see your own ego, which is no more than the human ego.

It means there's anything wrong with you. Right. But to observe the ego in action.

This is always the greatest thing. And then at that moment, when you become aware of this kind of thought, emotional, mental, emotional pattern in you, who are you? When you recognize it, you're already in the space of awareness from where you recognize it.

[Speaker 2] (2:49:55 - 2:49:57)

And you take away its power. You diminish its power.

[Speaker 1] (2:49:57 - 2:50:21)

Yes. And so people, there are many reasons why people don't apologize. People don't apologize because they may not even know that there is anything to apologize in their view of things.

Or they may not apologize because their interpretation of what's happened is the complete opposite of your interpretation. And perhaps they think, or their ego thinks, that you should apologize. Or...

Or...

[Speaker 15] (2:50:21 - 2:50:23)

I like to think I do.

[Speaker 2] (2:50:24 - 2:50:25)

And other...

[Speaker 15] (2:50:25 - 2:50:26)

I get it.

[Speaker 2] (2:50:26 - 2:50:41)

But also that's how you're using it based on what you're saying, based on what you've just told us here. It's your ego's way of feeling superior because you like to think you do, and you're the one that goes and says, well, I apologized and you didn't.

[Speaker 1] (2:50:42 - 2:51:54)

Or you can keep a resentment inside for quite a while and inner resentment whenever you think of that person or you meet that person. There's a little resentment at the back, which is also the ego. The ego loves hanging on to resentments.

And when resentments go on for a long time, as I've described somewhere in the book, they become grievances. Grievances are heavy, long-term resentments. So you can observe that in yourself and again be happy that you are observing, able to observe the ego in you.

It's a wonderful thing to be able to do that. And of course, the other person who is not apologizing, perhaps it's the ego who prevents them from apologizing because the ego in many people, this is not a particular function perhaps of your ego, but in many other people, the ego finds it almost impossible to apologize because it believes that it would be losing something by apologizing, which of course is a delusion. So these things happen.

It's a wonderful opportunity for you to see your own ego and by seeing it, realize awareness grows in you. That's right. Bob, what's your question for Eckhart?

[Speaker 13] (2:51:55 - 2:52:11)

Yes, on page 265, Eckhart refers to your external purpose becomes charged with spiritual power because your aims and intentions will be one with the evolutionary impulse of the universe.

[Speaker 2] (2:52:11 - 2:52:12)

I love that.

[Speaker 13] (2:52:12 - 2:52:15)

What is the evolutionary impulse of the universe?

[Speaker 2] (2:52:15 - 2:52:50)

That is so great. Let's read that one more time. Once that foundation, he says, fulfilling your primary purpose is laying the foundation for a new reality, a new earth.

Once that foundation is there, your external purpose becomes charged with spiritual power because your aims and intentions will be one with the evolutionary impulse of the universe. Thank you. Because I had written, and did three little, I've read it three times and I got stars, circles, everything around that.

That's a great, thank you for bringing that up, Bob. Okay. What do you mean by that?

[Speaker 1] (2:52:53 - 2:54:54)

Now, I'm not sending you back to the book, but the answer is somewhere in the book. So, but I'm not sending you there now. So let's look at it.

Okay. The evolutionary purpose of the universe is the growth of consciousness. It's going towards, something is flowing into this world of so-called matter, physicality.

Something is flowing into this world of physicality or matter that comes from a different dimension, almost one could say. Well, how do I know this? Because I know it in myself and I know it, I've observed it in other people too.

Something is flowing into this world of this, it seems to be very heavy, the heaviness of matter, something very different flows in, which I call consciousness, which you can call spirit. So a spirit is beginning, has already started a long time ago, but now beginning more fully through the human form, amongst other forms, to come into this world more and more fully. This is the arising of awareness, the arising of presence.

And all that is part of the greater evolution because there's a famous dictum, which is so true, as above, so below. So whatever happens here on this planet and in the human form will be reflected throughout the universe. These are universal movements, as above, so below, as below, so above.

So what happens here in the microcosm of the earth will also be happening in the macrocosm. So when I say how, people might ask me, how do you know what the purpose of the universe is, the evolution of the universe is? Because I know it in myself.

If you know it in yourself, you know many, many answers, even about the macrocosm. Because the macrocosm is no more than a reflection of the inner.

[Speaker 2] (2:54:55 - 2:54:57)

And you see it all the time in nature. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:54:58 - 2:54:59)

You see it all the time in nature.

[Speaker 2] (2:54:59 - 2:55:08)

The whole process that's going on in nature is also going on with humans. If you compare ourselves to nature. Yes.

Yeah. The principles are the same. Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (2:55:09 - 2:55:10)

Did that answer your question, Bob?

[Speaker 13] (2:55:12 - 2:55:14)

Kind of.

[Speaker 1] (2:55:14 - 2:55:43)

No, you have to really know the answer. You have to go within. It's not through the mind or through somebody like listening to me and then saying, okay, I believe what you said.

I don't want anybody to believe what I said. I want people to really go within and verify within themselves whether or not that is true in their own experience. So by becoming more conscious of your inner being.

Okay. Many answers will come.

[Speaker 9] (2:55:43 - 2:55:44)

Okay.

[Speaker 2] (2:55:44 - 2:57:37)

Let me take a stab at it, interpreting what I hear Eckhart saying. He's saying that there is, you know, there's a universal source or power of energy that all of us, that we all stem from that universal power or source or energy. You're with me, right?

And you can call it God. You can call it whatever you choose to call it. You can call it, you know, higher consciousness or you can call it universal energy.

You can call it the divine. When you tap into the part of you that is, we're calling consciousness or presence or inner purpose. When you tap into that, that is connected to the source of all universal power and energy.

You're with me so far? Yeah. Okay.

And when you tap into that part of you that is connected to all universal power and energy, your aims and intentions will be one with what all universal power and energy is striving for. And what it's striving for is for you to allow the consciousness to come through you as a human being. So that's what he means by evolutionary impulse.

The impulse of the universe is to support you and you bringing about your higher consciousness. That's why you're here, is to allow that part of you that is connected to all that is universal energy, the source or God. To better explain it, it is the God in you.

When you allow the God in you to come forth, the God of all things supports that.

[Speaker 1] (2:57:39 - 2:57:53)

And you just gave us a demonstration of that because the whole energy shifted when you spoke those words, a very powerful energy came through. So beyond what you said, energy that came through with it was actually a demonstration of that.

[Speaker 2] (2:57:53 - 2:57:58)

Well, thank you. Did it. Good.

You got it now, Bob.

[Speaker 13] (2:57:59 - 2:57:59)

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (2:57:59 - 2:58:01)

Can I ask one more thing? Sure, sure.

[Speaker 13] (2:58:02 - 2:58:20)

Would there be a way to convey Eckhart's teaching on awareness to Christians who are probably offended by labels like evolution? Is there a way to convey this message?

[Speaker 15] (2:58:21 - 2:58:24)

Of the awakening without getting into the evolution.

[Speaker 13] (2:58:25 - 2:58:28)

So people are going to really shut down when they hear the word evolution.

[Speaker 1] (2:58:30 - 2:58:45)

Well, if they are completely shut down, then of course there's no way they are going to listen to you. But not all those people are going to be completely shut down. I don't believe that evolution is necessarily a problem for all Christians.

[Speaker 2] (2:58:45 - 2:59:02)

Yeah, an evolutionary process. The evolutionary impulse of the universe is about the evolvement as the earth. I mean, because even as Christians, you know that the earth keeps evolving.

It keeps evolving. It keeps moving forward. We as human beings keep evolving.

[Speaker 1] (2:59:02 - 2:59:04)

You can see it in your own life.

[Speaker 2] (2:59:04 - 3:00:28)

You can see it in your own life. You're not the same as you were, you know, 25 years ago. That is your evolutionary process as Bob and Gwen here on the planet.

Bob and Gwen have evolved as Christians. And even as you are a practicing Christian in the beginning of practicing Christianity, you're not, your faith may not be as strong or you may not be as tested, but you evolve in the process of your Christianity. Actually, can you ask somebody in the back to bring me the email, Dean, that came in from a message board this week that the woman who talked about Father, Son and Holy Ghost as consciousness and that there was a beautiful email that came on the message board from a woman who's a practicing Christian who said that she was a Catholic.

And I'm going to try to get the emails because she best, better, best. And I had an aha moment reading it because I thought, oh, that's right. The Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit is the higher consciousness that you're talking about.

And you just call it consciousness. But as a Christian, it is the Holy Spirit where Jesus said, I leave you with the Holy Spirit. You see that, right, Bob?

Oh, yeah. Yeah.

[Speaker 15] (3:00:28 - 3:00:43)

It's just the use of that word sometimes puts some people off that might otherwise have the door to be awakened. And just knowing that word is in the book, they might just say, oh, I'm not quite ready to do that yet.

[Speaker 2] (3:00:43 - 3:00:44)

That evolution.

[Speaker 1] (3:00:45 - 3:01:01)

Well, it will particularly put people off who take a literal, absolutely literal interpretation of Genesis. But most Christians, I believe, don't take an absolutely literal interpretation of Genesis. And they would be.

[Speaker 2] (3:01:02 - 3:01:03)

And if you do, then that's not for you.

[Speaker 1] (3:01:03 - 3:01:04)

No, that's fine.

[Speaker 2] (3:01:04 - 3:01:06)

Then this isn't the path that you need to follow.

[Speaker 1] (3:01:07 - 3:02:40)

Yes. But if you're open to the idea that this, the creation may not be literally true, but that there is actually, it's a description of an evolutionary process, not of blind chance. This is what Christians object to mostly.

And I also see it. It's absurd. It's not blind chance.

Evolution is not something of coming together over billions of years of atoms and molecules accidentally to bring about this beautiful universe. I do not believe that there is no guiding intelligence behind evolution. There is.

That is so obvious when you look at the world and you look at yourself. You know, the famous analogy of the monkey and the typewriter? No, I don't.

Oh, they say... You have a famous analogy? This is to do with, to describe what evolution means by people who believe it is blind chance.

It's a mechanical, mechanistic thing that how evolution happened, all chance events. That would mean if you put a monkey at a typewriter and this monkey is immortal and this monkey starts hitting the keys of the typewriter and goes on for a billion years or two billion years or longer, they say if evolution as chance development is true, then eventually the monkey is going to produce by chance the works of Shakespeare. Over a billion years.

It's not going to happen.

[Speaker 2] (3:02:42 - 3:05:12)

I miss that monkey and the typewriter analogy somewhere in my college upbringing. But you see the... Yes, I see it.

I see it. Oh, he has a quote. Bob and Gwen, can we go back to them?

This is from somebody named Button 20. Did you see this last week? No.

You don't see the message boards, do you? Um, actually she's Joni in Long Beach, actually. She said, My faith was strong.

Oprah, Oprah, Oprah. My faith was strong, but now it's growing stronger and stronger every day. The words of the Bible, she says, are just jumping out at me.

How could I have not seen them so clearly before? Like be still and know that I am God. I will not leave you alone.

I will always be with you. This book, New Earth, has put into words what I've always felt from within. As a Catholic, I can describe my faith very simply.

It's based on the Holy Trinity, which is in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. That's it in a nutshell. The rest of the Bible is just the history lesson as to how all that came about.

To say it another way, God created the world, saw what a mess we were making, sent his son down to teach us how to live. Then Jesus said, when he knew he was going to have to leave us, I will ask my Father and he will give you another advocate, the Holy Spirit, to be with you always. The spirit of truth, which the world cannot accept because it neither sees nor knows it, because it remains in you and will be in you.

John 14, 16. And here it is again, she writes. John 14, 26, 27.

The Holy Spirit, that the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have told you. Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you.

Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid. And you know what, Oprah?

I got it this time when I read it. I really got it. People wouldn't be so afraid if they only knew that the energy flowing through their very being, which I choose to call the Holy Spirit, is the most fabulous wireless connection to the most powerful source in the universe, the God that created us.

May God bless you and keep you safe in his grace. You're truly one of his messengers. And that's from Joni of Long Beach, California.

And she ends with, life is a gift, live every day as a thank you note.

[Speaker 1] (3:05:12 - 3:05:13)

Very good.

[Speaker 2] (3:05:13 - 3:05:22)

Isn't that fantastic? I mean, I just thought this was so fantastic. So happy to share that with you.

That's what one Christian had to say. Okay.

[Speaker 15] (3:05:23 - 3:05:24)

Thank you. It's very nice.

[Speaker 2] (3:05:24 - 3:05:54)

I thought that was great too. Joni of Long Beach. I almost Skyped her this week.

I thought, isn't that perfection? I thought that was perfection. Thanks Gwen and Bob.

Thank you guys. Well, shall we continue here? You say your inner purpose is to awaken.

It's as simple as that. You share that purpose with every other person on the planet because it is the purpose of humanity. So let's again talk about what it means to awaken.

Doesn't the very word purpose imply that you can do something about it?

[Speaker 1] (3:05:55 - 3:06:32)

Purpose means on purpose. That's right. I asked that question.

You say you can't make it happen that it is an act of grace, this awakening. Yes. And what I talk about is the first moment of awakening.

It happens or it doesn't happen. First moment, which is the disidentification from the stream of thinking and the arising. It might only be a glimpse at first.

The arising of awareness. You're suddenly becoming aware that there is a realm underneath thinking. There's a realm of stillness inside you.

You touch it. Maybe you're out in nature and suddenly, as you did when you were on the mountaintop.

[Speaker 2] (3:06:32 - 3:06:41)

Oh, I had another one. You know what? I had another one just Friday.

This is going to be on this Friday. But this past Friday, I was at Tom Cruise's house. You know Tom Cruise.

[Speaker 1] (3:06:42 - 3:06:42)

Not personally.

[Speaker 2] (3:06:43 - 3:06:43)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (3:06:47 - 3:06:49)

I know he jumped on your sofa.

[Speaker 2] (3:06:49 - 3:08:40)

Oh, you even know that. Okay. You even know that.

Okay. We're going to talk about that. Now I'm jumping on his.

I'm looking at his house to jump on his. Anyway, Tom Cruise lives in the, I could cry just thinking about it. He lives in the most magnificent place I have ever seen, read, heard or experienced in my life.

I tell you, I drove through his house through this grove of aspen trees for like a half mile before we get to the gate. He lives at the top of a mountain and the house sits in the center and you're surrounded by all the mountains of Telluride. And we went outside through his bedroom to stand on the balcony and there are all these aspen trees around and the mountains and absolute stillness.

Absolute stillness. So much, my eyes started to water. I've never seen anything more beautiful or felt anything so deep, so rich.

And aside from that time I was on my mountain, but I said to him, first of all, what it takes to be the kind of person that comes to this, that has that as your space. And he's had a lot of things going on in his life. And I said, no matter what, you have this.

You have this place to come to, my God. How it just, and I felt so filled up when I left from the stillness. Yes, yes.

And we stood out on Tom's balcony and I said, Tom, can you hear the silence? It has its own language. He said, yeah, you're right, it does.

It has its own language.

[Speaker 1] (3:08:40 - 3:08:42)

Was he already aware of it or you made him?

[Speaker 2] (3:08:42 - 3:09:01)

No, he was aware of it. He was aware of it, yeah. Wonderful.

That was my moment with Tom Cruise, that you'll get to see. Now when you see us on television this Friday, you won't get all of that because it's all about the interview and stuff, but I had a spiritual moment with Tom at the top of the mountain, yeah.

[Speaker 1] (3:09:01 - 3:09:50)

Well, these are wonderful moments of grace, but you don't necessarily need to be in those beautiful places. It's a great, it's an act of grace when it happens. Yeah.

But that stillness is primarily an inner dimension and it can arise anywhere. But sometimes it's good to have experience in there where the environment is most conducive to experiencing ultimately the inner, because if you don't feel it on the inner, you won't really be aware of the silence around you. That's right.

It's only through the inner that you can be aware of the outer silence. So to be aware of silence, how can you be aware of silence? Only by being still.

[Speaker 17] (3:09:50 - 3:09:50)

Yeah, yeah.

[Speaker 1] (3:09:50 - 3:10:57)

Because it's only the stillness in you that is aware of the silence. If your mind were totally occupied with noisy thinking, you wouldn't even know it's still around you. Or you would say for a moment, oh, it's very still and then you carry on thinking.

Right. Wouldn't really experience it. So there's the equivalent of outer stillness, this is the outer dimension of spirit.

You can sense the spirit that's out there in nature, but you can only sense it because you already have it within you. It's that in you that responds, that senses it. So only people whose mind is not totally noisy can actually be aware of silence.

And so I sometimes observe, when I go for a walk in the forest every day, and often I see people who are jogging or walking their dogs, and very few are really there. They're talking, they're talking on the phone, they have headphones on, they're talking to their friends and all that immersive thinking could be anywhere, in the office.

[Speaker 2] (3:10:59 - 3:11:15)

Someone asked, Eckhart, everything you say in your book resonates with my spirit, so I believe it to be true. However, do people ever ask you how you know all of this? If so, how do you respond?

Where does your knowledge come from? This is Renee in Indianapolis. Where does your knowledge come from?

How do you know what you know?

[Speaker 1] (3:11:16 - 3:12:35)

The essence of it comes through inner realization. In other words, it's by touching the consciousness that one is, that you are. It comes through becoming still and listening for what comes out of the stillness.

It's not primarily based on knowledge, although of course I have read spiritual books, quite a few. I use sometimes some of the terminology that is already in existence, has been in existence for a long, long time. But the book is more than just a compilation of other spiritual books that I have read.

The essence of the book is in my own realization. In other words, the answers come by being still. When I write, I sit there with a notepad, a pen and become still.

Not on computer? No. Okay.

Everything is done by hand. And then I wait for some movement of thought to come out of the stillness. And then gradually a thought formulates itself.

And then there is a critical faculty that says, okay, does that make sense? Sometimes it does, sometimes it doesn't. If it doesn't make sense, I become still again.

And then perhaps a thought that is more suited to what I can sense comes up. And then I write it down.

[Speaker 2] (3:12:35 - 3:13:10)

So did you write this book from the place of inner space? You know, last week we talked about inner space. And I was a little frustrated until the end of the class, because I was trying to get this concept of inner space across to all of our viewers and listeners.

And at the end of last week's class, as we'd gone off the air here, Eckhart said, I said, remember I said to you, I'm a little frustrated. And you said, because you cannot understand it through concepts and language, that inner space isn't something you can understand with your mind.

[Speaker 1] (3:13:10 - 3:13:27)

No. So as an explanation, it's not very satisfying when one talks about inner stillness and then people try to understand, okay, what's he actually talking about? And you can see already when you're in your head, inner stillness, what's that about?

Well, that doesn't make any sense. It doesn't make, of course it doesn't.

[Speaker 2] (3:13:27 - 3:13:28)

People say it's all that woo-woo stuff.

[Speaker 1] (3:13:29 - 3:13:51)

Yes, that's what some journalists often say. They come to spirituality and say, oh, it's all that stuff. They don't give themselves a chance.

You really, you have to give yourself a chance and see whether you can sense in yourself that to which these words point. Yes. So and only then does it become real and alive.

[Speaker 2] (3:13:52 - 3:14:24)

And that is the same thing we're saying to Bob and Gwen. When Bob is trying to say, what do you mean by the evolutionary impulse of the universe? What that really means is that when you are in alignment, when your inner purpose is aligned with what you do, that you will be supported by the spirit of God or by universal energy in such a way that life opens up to you.

And people think, oh, it's about you being lucky or gee, isn't that strange that this happened or serendipitous things happen. Things fall into line. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (3:14:24 - 3:14:56)

Right, when you are in alignment. Yes, that they fall into line. That's one way or another.

Everybody can experience that. So why not give it a try? Live as if the present moment were more important than past and future.

On a practical level, of course, you still use past and future. But give your attention to this. Spend some, a few days or a few weeks living in that way.

Immediately surrendering negativity when it arises and recognizing it as ego based or pain body based.

[Speaker 2] (3:14:56 - 3:14:59)

Because all ego, all negativity is ego based?

[Speaker 1] (3:14:59 - 3:15:58)

Well, negativity loves ego. It's a denial of life. The moment you identify with negativity, that's part of the ego.

So experiment with, because you've lived in one particular state of consciousness for many years, try something different and see what happens. And what happens primarily and first of all is an inner shift. And after a little time gap sometimes, it gets reflected in the outer realm also.

But that's no longer the main thing because the main thing is already that you enter that state of peaceful, alive presence in yourself when you're aligned with what is, aligned with the now. And that's what matters. The rest is the icing on the cake.

When good things happen to you, it doesn't mean you now feel good because something good has happened to you. Something good has happened to you because you've already found the goodness within you. That's right.

[Speaker 2] (3:15:58 - 3:16:02)

So you can only manifest that which you already are.

[Speaker 1] (3:16:02 - 3:16:35)

Yes. Yes. You already are that.

Whatever people are looking for, whatever form, they already are that. They're looking for God. And I'm not saying that this form is God.

I'm not saying that this person is God. I'm saying the essence, if you go deep enough within, there is a realm where you and God merge. And it's everybody's destiny and purpose to live from that place of connectedness.

[Speaker 2] (3:16:35 - 3:16:45)

Yes, because the I am, the I am, is I am that which comes from God. Yes. I am that which comes from God.

[Speaker 1] (3:16:45 - 3:16:46)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:16:46 - 3:16:52)

Laurie lives in New Brunswick, Canada, and she's Skyping us from her family room in St. John. Hello, Laurie.

[Speaker 6] (3:16:53 - 3:16:55)

Hello, Oprah. Hello, Eckhart.

[Speaker 2] (3:16:55 - 3:16:58)

Welcome to our conversation here this evening.

[Speaker 6] (3:16:58 - 3:18:32)

Thank you. It's a pleasure to be here. What do you want to say to us?

I would like to comment on the dialogue on inner purpose that begins on page 262. There are parts of that dialogue, the parts that were written in italics, that could have been me speaking word for word. In fact, those were the reasons that I think I was drawn to the book in the first place.

I turned 38 this summer, and I've had two members of my immediate family die in their mid-30s. So their deaths have left me very keenly aware of the immediacy of my own living and how important it is for me to align my life, however long it shall be, with my inner purpose and to make sure that the relationships that I have with people, my husband and my children especially, are genuine and that I conduct my life from that place of higher consciousness. So my question is, I'm so aware of how important and precious every moment of this human experience is, I don't want to waste a moment of it on anger or resentment or disappointment.

Some days I'm just more conscious than others. So I ask Eckhart, do you believe that two people can actually live in an intimate relationship with one another, either as partners or as parent and child, without wanting from one another? And do two people have to be at the same place in their spiritual awakening for this to happen?

[Speaker 1] (3:18:34 - 3:21:44)

Thank you, thank you. Good question. Now, when I say without wanting, what I mean, of course, is without saying, I want you, you are my property.

I'm, you must not leave me, otherwise I will get extremely angry. That's kind of, it doesn't, I'm not saying that you might not say to your partner, I want you to take out the garbage because I took it out yesterday. On a practical level, there may be some wanting.

So the question is, can two people live together without that deep psychological wanting that wants to cling to the other person, says fulfill me or make me happy, don't you dare leave me, that, right, that is the question. But I would like to change the question a little bit from can two people, because you cannot be responsible for somebody else, ask yourself the question, can I live with my partner or whoever without bringing in this unconscious energy of wanting which comes from the ego. Can I live with a person like that?

Because it only requires really one person to go through this shift in consciousness. So only you can really answer the question and it's not an abstract question. It's a question that you can only apply to the present moment to really answer it as an alive question rather than an abstract thing Can people live in fully conscious together is an abstract question.

A more powerful and a more vital question is, can I? And even that not for the rest of my life, not like that, no, now. So you bring to find the answer, a vital answer that is true for you.

You have to remember that question and as you live, situations arise in your relationship. At this moment, can I be free of that egoic wanting and needing? And if you cannot be free at this moment of this egoic wanting and needing, and because you cannot be free, negativity arises because the partner is not responding to the wanting and needing or isn't even there, hasn't come home yet.

Whatever. Then this is your chance again to be aware, as I meant to the other questioner a little earlier on, this is your chance to become aware of the ego in you as the wanting. Yeah.

So even if the answer, can I be free of wanting is, no, obviously I can't because there's still wanting in me. Then at least you're able to recognize the ego and that means, how are you able to recognize the ego? You're becoming aware.

And only when you dwell in awareness in your relationship, can you be free of those unconscious movements.

[Speaker 2] (3:21:44 - 3:22:18)

Yeah. I think that wanting that you're talking about is wanting you to be a certain way to help fill me up. Yes.

That's what he's talking about. Not in terms of practical, I need you to pick up the laundry, I want you to pick up the milk, I want you to... That's very different than I want you to be what I want you to be so that you make me whole.

You know that whole, you know, Tom Cruise as a matter of fact, Jerry Maguire line, you complete me. Wanting somebody to complete you is what he's talking about because nobody can.

[Speaker 6] (3:22:19 - 3:22:50)

Yes. I think I misinterpreted that as being wanting, you know, wanting recognition from your spouse or wanting gratitude or wanting respect or things like that. And I couldn't quite figure out how you live in an intimate relationship without wanting those things.

And for me, we have a busy household. We have five little boys all under the age of nine. There's always somebody wanting something around here.

Where are you?

[Speaker 2] (3:22:50 - 3:22:51)

In a closed off room somewhere?

[Speaker 6] (3:22:52 - 3:22:53)

With the door locked?

[Speaker 2] (3:22:53 - 3:22:57)

I am. And it's also 10 o'clock so they're all in bed. Okay.

[Speaker 6] (3:22:58 - 3:23:32)

But for me, I think, and you've talked a lot about people having their own spiritual practice. And I guess for me right now, it's living amidst the chaos of the day and not getting mired down in the muck of the daily routine and being able to stay above that, being unflappable and keeping that sense of inner peace, even though it's a little bit chaotic in the immediate surroundings.

[Speaker 2] (3:23:33 - 3:23:36)

Right, with five boys under nine. Yes. Oh my God, noisy house.

[Speaker 1] (3:23:36 - 3:24:28)

Yeah. A good practice here is not wanting to be this moment to be different from the way it is. Just this moment.

That's where you relinquish the wanting. That is the main relinquishment or letting go of wanting. Not wanting this moment, there's always this moment, to be different.

So if the children are screaming and there's mayhem, that's what is. And then you deal with what is, but not the internal rejection of what is. So not wanting really deep down is not wanting this moment.

This moment may come in the form of a person, your partner, the children. At this moment, this is what is. And not wanting this moment to be different from the way it is.

Then you are aligned and then you act, you take action. You can tell them, stop doing that. But internally, you are free.

You're not reacting internally.

[Speaker 2] (3:24:29 - 3:24:46)

But what about what Laurie was saying about wanting recognition? Not just from your spouse. A lot of people, you do things and you want people to recognize that you've done, to be, you know, I don't know, admired or, you know, receive affection in your relationship.

[Speaker 1] (3:24:46 - 3:25:20)

Is that your ego? It often is. But if you believe that the world is withholding from you, I say that somewhere in the book.

You say, give what you think people owe you, give it. And then you see a reciprocal movement, not even necessarily from the very same people that you're giving it to. But the universe reciprocates.

If you give recognition, gratitude, whatever it is, you give it out. Even to strangers. Recognition, a smile, giving.

So there's a flow of energy.

[Speaker 2] (3:25:20 - 3:25:28)

Because what you give out, what you put out is going to come back always. Always, always, always. That's a universal law.

Thank you, Lori.

[Speaker 6] (3:25:29 - 3:25:30)

LORI GARDNER Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (3:25:30 - 3:25:33)

OPRAH WINFREY Thank you for your moment of calm with the five boys.

[Speaker 6] (3:25:33 - 3:25:36)

LORI GARDNER I'm going to miss this on Monday night.

[Speaker 2] (3:25:36 - 3:25:40)

OPRAH WINFREY Well, thank you very much. OPRAH WINFREY Is this your time for yourself?

[Speaker 6] (3:25:40 - 3:25:43)

LORI GARDNER This is. OPRAH WINFREY Okay. LORI GARDNER Yeah, it's great.

[Speaker 2] (3:25:43 - 3:25:43)

OPRAH WINFREY Great.

[Speaker 6] (3:25:43 - 3:25:47)

LORI GARDNER We work hard to carve out those moments of stillness around here.

[Speaker 2] (3:25:47 - 3:26:12)

OPRAH WINFREY Well, we're going to continue with something we call the Soul Series on Monday nights. There's a great, great interview that I've done with Dr. Jill Bolte-Taylor.

Her mind actually, as we mentioned last week, she lost the left hemisphere of her brain through a stroke.

And the right hemisphere is still working. So all of the chatter stopped. And she was in bliss.

And she said, even though I was drooling, I was drooling, I was in, she was in heaven. She was in bliss.

[Speaker 1] (3:26:13 - 3:26:28)

LORI GARDNER Yeah. I haven't used the terms right and left hemisphere in the book. And I rarely use scientific terms.

But that is how she sees it. I think she's right. OPRAH WINFREY That's right.

LORI GARDNER So the right hemisphere is to do with unity of knowing, not conceptual.

[Speaker 2] (3:26:28 - 3:26:30)

OPRAH WINFREY She said she felt the connection to all things.

[Speaker 1] (3:26:30 - 3:26:31)

LORI GARDNER Yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:26:31 - 3:27:20)

OPRAH WINFREY Yeah, from the right hemisphere. LORI GARDNER It's beautiful. OPRAH WINFREY So here we are at week nine.

Only one more class to go. And I bet so many people can relate to this. Many people, you say on page 262, who are going through the early stages of awakening are no longer certain what their outer purpose is.

A woman from Milwaukee, Oregon, just wrote, can you still be 52 years old and be in the same place as Ivy was at the beginning of this show, not knowing what you want to do? What drives the world, you say, no longer drives them. Seeing the madness of our civilization so clearly, they may feel somewhat alienated from the culture around them.

So what do you do in this case? If you're at this point in your life where reading this book is shaking you up and you realize more than ever what you don't want to do. You realize, I have been on the wrong course.

You realize that you have an awakening. Now what do you do? I'm all awakened.

[Speaker 1] (3:27:21 - 3:29:29)

Now what? Well, the awakening, of course, is the realization of your inner purpose primarily. Yes.

So don't come into conflict with where you are now or what you're doing now. If you cannot surrender to what you're doing now and be okay with it, at least bring acceptance. We talk about in the next chapter, at least bring acceptance to whatever you're doing now so that you're okay with it.

That is vital. Then you are in a state of clarity. You enter a state of clarity when you are no longer in opposition to your present moment, life where you live or what you're doing.

If you cannot surrender, if whatever you are doing continues to produce unhappiness in you and no matter how hard you try, then, of course, it's a clear sign that you need to leave that situation. Right. So either you let go of the resistance and see if you can, and sometimes people say, no, I can't, but what they really mean is, no, I'm not willing to.

I'm not willing to, which is very different. You need to see the difference between not being able to and not being willing to. Whatever applies to you, am I not willing to accept this moment or am I truly incapable of accepting this moment?

If you find you're truly incapable of accepting this moment when you're doing your job or whatever you're doing, then this is a sign that it's time for change. Got it. Many times you will be able to have this energy flow into what you're doing already and transform how you do, perhaps what you've been doing for many years, and it's perhaps in a state of resistance, and suddenly how you do it changes.

You're no longer doing it in a state of inner resistance and then you bring a completely different energy into what you do. Consciousness flows into what you do. And often, either this is deeply fulfilling, it affects many people around you, or it could also happen that now that you're no longer resisting what you do, change suddenly comes into your life.

[Speaker 2] (3:29:29 - 3:29:59)

I got that. This is a beautiful quote from page 266. You say that the great arises out of small things that are honored and cared for.

Everybody's life really consists of small things. Greatness is a mental abstraction and a favorite fantasy of the ego. The paradox is that the foundation for greatness is honoring the small things of the present moment instead of pursuing the idea of greatness.

Yes. It's that one step.

[Speaker 1] (3:30:00 - 3:32:29)

That's right. So many people have this idea, I want to achieve something great or be somebody great, and they neglect the step that leads to greatness. They don't honor this step at this moment because they have this idea of some future moment where they're going to be great.

And then it's surprising when you truly look at people, perhaps, who you would say have achieved great things, that even in their life it really is a sequence of small steps because every moment is quite small. You are wherever you are at this moment. Some people believe, not to mention you, some people believe I'm doing great work.

I mean, I am because the consciousness is moving through this form. I don't feel personally responsible for what I do as such. But even there, it is small steps.

When the writing happens, there's a notepad and a pen, and there's the present moment and there's the stillness. Very small. There's not some idea I'm going to create a work that's going to change everybody's consciousness.

No, I'm just true to this moment. What this moment requires, it's a blank piece of sheet of paper and a pen and a stillness. It's a small thing.

Or when I give a talk, talk, maybe 2,000 people come. If I had this idea, I'm now going to give an important, big talk that would lead to stress and fear because maybe it's not going to be that great. But if you can be, with every step being present, the car comes to pick me up a few steps into the car, and I sit in the car.

The car moves towards the venue where the talk is going to be. I look out of the window. Simple.

People walking past the tree, the sky, just this moment. Step out, sit in the waiting, the green room to wait for the talk to start. Breathing.

Simple. Nothing big. Just a little moment, this moment, being true to that.

Then step onto the stage. There's an empty chair. I sit in it.

Still. Breathe. I know there's 2,000 people there, and I also know I have no word, no idea what's going to come out of this mouth.

Being happy with not knowing. Still. Not big.

It's all small. It's all a sequence of very small moments. And by being true to the small moment, something great arises.

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (3:32:29 - 3:33:04)

And the biggest lesson from tonight is, by being true to the small moments, by being true to this moment, it means to bring the sense of presence, the sense of consciousness to every single moment, so that everything that you do is fueled from a deeper level than your ego. Everything you do is fueled from a deeper level than your thoughts. That everything you do is fueled from your being, and that is what gives meaning and purpose to whatever you do.

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (3:33:04 - 3:33:11)

That's the essence. Yes. Right.

It's wonderful to see you when the power comes through. You talk. It's beautiful.

The words are so true.

[Speaker 2] (3:33:12 - 3:36:32)

Thank you. Thank you, everybody. I want to thank you for joining us tonight.

As I said, next week will be our last class on A New Earth, the finale. But we don't want the discussion to end there. Please join me on Monday, May 12th, for the start of my Soul Series, just to continue this conversation.

For those of you who've been enjoying these webcasts here on Oprah.com. For the first time, we'll be broadcasting the videotape sessions of my XM radio show. It's where I get to talk to spiritual teachers.

I've been doing that for a couple of years now. I talk to spiritual teachers, thinkers, and scholars about my favorite subject, the evolution of the soul. People like Dr. Jill Bolte-Taylor, Wayne Dyer, Elizabeth Lesser, Jon Kabat-Zinn, Byron Katie, Sarah Bonbronick, Kathy Freston, and others. So keep Monday nights at 8 p.m. reserved for Oprah.com. If you can, get away from the five noisy boys, whatever's going on in your life. Tonight's class will be available on demand tomorrow for free here at Oprah.com.

And if you want to download or watch any of our classes, you can do that tomorrow also at Oprah.com and iTunes. It's free because of the generous support of nature-made soft gel vitamins. This week, you can update your workbook and get ready for our last class, Chapter 10, A New Earth, How to Bring Awareness to Every Moment of Your Life.

There really is no higher calling. We're going to go for two hours next week for all of, for the benefit of wrapping up all the things we've been talking about these past 10 weeks. This was great.

Thank you. This was a good class. Thank you.

We'll see you in number 10, coming up, number 10. Bye, everybody. Thanks for your message boards.

Tonight, we're coming to you with a special two-hour finale of our New Earth webcast series. For 10 weeks, we've all met every Monday night for a global conversation. It's been really quite special.

A global conversation about consciousness from the UK to Hong Kong, to Russia, to all 50 states here in America. I just, again, want to say thank you to every one of you for helping us to create this new earth here with Eckhart Tolle and with me. So many of you have written to say that you want this forum to continue.

So beginning next Monday, May 12th, I hope you'll join me for the start of my soul series webcast here on Oprah.com. For the first time, we'll be broadcasting the videotape sessions of my XM radio show. Many of you didn't know I have a radio show.

Yeah, I have a day job, a night job, a middle job. It's where I get to talk to spiritual teachers and have been doing so for quite some time. Spiritual teachers and thinkers and scholars about this, my favorite subject, the evolution of our soul.

So keep Mondays reserved for Oprah.com. You can begin downloading next Monday. Tonight's the last chapter, chapter 10 of A New Earth.

And before we get started, let's begin with silence.

[Speaker 1] (3:36:32 - 3:36:33)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:36:33 - 3:36:34)

Would you like to lead us, sir?

[Speaker 1] (3:36:34 - 3:37:46)

Moment of stillness. Now, as you know, you need to put your attention somewhere in order to find the stillness. The attention needs to move out of the dimension of thinking.

So we have practiced in the past with putting our attention into the inner feeling of aliveness in the body. We've also, I believe, put our attention on our breath and we've put our attention on sense perceptions, whatever we can see or hear outside. But this time we go one step further and I suggest this is a little bit more subtle.

As we enter this moment of stillness, we put our attention on the fact that we are conscious. In other words, we become aware that there is a light in us. I'm using light metaphorically.

A presence, a space of awareness that is pure attention. So instead of being aware of something, our breath or the inner body or sense perceptions, let's just be aware that we are aware. You feel your own presence and become still.

[Speaker 2] (3:37:47 - 3:40:59)

Let's be aware that we are aware and become still. That was good. I think even Dean, the stage manager, became aware.

Right, Dean? The themes of Chapter 10 are truly the culmination, I think, of what all of our work has been about. How to bring consciousness to every moment and to every action of our lives and in the process, learning that we are far greater than anything that we could have imagined ourselves to be.

So we're going to get started. You talk about the brief history of your life on page 282. The coming into manifestation of the world as its return to the unmanifested, its expansion and contraction.

On the previous page, you talked about the Earth expanding, the universe, really, expanding and contracting. Those two movements are reflected throughout the universe in many ways, such as in the incessant expansion and contraction of our heart, as well as the inhaling and exhaling of our breath. They're also reflected in the cycles of sleep and wakefulness.

Each night without knowing it, I love this, you return to the unmanifested, capital S, source of all life when you enter the stage of deep dreamless sleep and then reemerge again in the morning replenished. Those two movements, the outgoing and return, are also reflected in each person's life cycles. Out of nowhere, so to speak, you suddenly appear in this world.

Birth is followed by expansion. There's not only physical growth, but also growth of knowledge and activities and possessions. This is a time where you're mainly concerned with finding or pursuing your outer purpose.

Each person's life, each life form, in fact, represents a world, a unique way in which the universe experiences itself. And when your form dissolves, a world comes to an end out of countless worlds. I thought that was so beautiful.

That's the bottom of page 283, everybody. Each person's life, each life form, in fact, represents a world, a unique way in which the universe experiences itself. So we are manifestations of the universe experiencing itself as each of us.

[Speaker 1] (3:41:00 - 3:41:26)

Yes. And that takes you out of this illusion that all you are is this limited little person.

This is on the surface of things.

You are this person with a name and a form. But in the depths of your being, you are the universe experiencing itself in this form. And just this thought brings about a little shift in the way in which you perceive yourself.

[Speaker 2] (3:41:27 - 3:41:28)

And everybody else.

[Speaker 1] (3:41:28 - 3:41:29)

Yes. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:41:29 - 3:41:40)

We are the universe or the source of all life or the creator or God, whichever name you choose to use, expressing itself in our particular form.

[Speaker 1] (3:41:40 - 3:41:59)

Yes, in and through this form. So there's not... People usually perceive themselves as being this is me and there's the universe or the world.

And there's the me and the rest of the world. But you are the universe. You are the life.

We're not separate. Not separate.

[Speaker 2] (3:41:59 - 3:42:25)

Yeah. Each person's life, each life form, represents a world, a unique way in which the universe experiences itself. And when your form dissolves, a world comes to an end, one of countless worlds.

Wow, that's really powerful. So let's talk about the awakening and the return movement. What is the return movement in a person's life?

[Speaker 1] (3:42:27 - 3:43:48)

Usually you start off with the outward movement as you grow up. And as you go into adolescence and adulthood, you start building your life. You acquire experiences.

You acquire knowledge. You acquire possessions. Your sphere of influence extends.

So that's the expansion. You grow. And usually that goes up to a certain age.

It varies from person to person. Unless... I talk about that also.

Unless this period of expansion is interrupted by some traumatic event, we can come to that a little bit later. So there's the expansion. And then when people reach a certain age, suddenly a different movement starts, thinks the body is no longer as strong, not working so well anymore.

People around you begin to die. They reach a certain age. And so there's another movement that at some point comes into people's lives, which we could call the dissolution of form.

It's gradually happening. And in our culture, we don't like to talk about that. And this is why most old people are hidden away in homes.

You rarely see... You have to go to third world countries to really see the reality of human life.

[Speaker 2] (3:43:49 - 3:44:00)

And also we have such a fear of it. And not just a fear, a disdain for it. So we do everything to make ourselves look younger.

Everything is about looking younger, being younger, younger, younger, younger.

[Speaker 1] (3:44:00 - 3:45:44)

Yes. Yeah. Now, the return movement is also when where the spiritual dimension can come into your life very strongly, when the form with which perhaps for many years you had been identified, which is the physical form and the form of my life, all the things that you had built up and identified with your job, your status, your profession, your possessions.

And when that begins to become a little bit shaky, then it is very often at that point that there's the possibility for the spiritual dimension to come into your life when the solidity of the outer forms becomes diminished. Right. So traditionally, in India, for example, there's still a tradition when a man reaches a certain age, he withdraws from society.

Some people still practice it, but not so many these days. He even leaves his family if he knows that his family is being looked after. He leaves and becomes a solitary mendicant or monk in order to go deeply within.

But you don't need to do that. All we need to be aware is that when the return movement starts, when the forms that you had identified with begin to break down, that is a wonderful time for going back home for the return movement into spirituality so that you would become aware of your own consciousness rather than what consciousness had identified with. That was your life before.

[Speaker 2] (3:45:44 - 3:45:45)

You mean form?

[Speaker 1] (3:45:45 - 3:45:46)

Form, yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:45:47 - 3:45:50)

And so it's sort of the return back to formlessness.

[Speaker 1] (3:45:50 - 3:46:23)

Yes, but consciously. It's the conscious return to see what is the source of my very being. You could say, when the world begins to become shaky, then you go back to the source out of which it all came, which is God ultimately, God within, the source within.

So there's these two movements in a person's life. Now, in our civilization, the whole civilization...

[Speaker 2] (3:46:23 - 3:46:26)

These two movements is the outgoing and the return home.

[Speaker 1] (3:46:26 - 3:46:48)

The outgoing and the return. Now, our civilization is only interested, it seems, in the outgoing movement. People are interested in accumulating, in building up, in creating, making a life for yourself, being successful.

Of course, that has its place. That's fine. What our civilization knows very little about is the return movement.

[Speaker 2] (3:46:48 - 3:47:25)

You say, then one day, you too disappear. Your armchair is still there, but instead of you sitting in it, there's just an empty space. You went back to where you came from, from just a few years ago.

Each person's life, each life form, in fact, represents a world, a unique way in which the universe experiences itself. And when your form dissolves, a world comes to an end, one of countless worlds. The return movement in a person's life, the weakening or dissolution of form, whether through old age, illness, disability, loss, or some kind of personal tragedy, carries great potential for spiritual awakening.

That's why you say some older people become sort of luminescent. Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (3:47:25 - 3:47:52)

Some and others have a resistance against the return movement. The ego identifies with the weakening body, for example, and so negative inner states arise. People become angry or bitter or complain all the time or talk about the past all the time.

Then they resist what's happening.

[Speaker 2] (3:47:53 - 3:48:00)

Yeah, because they can't accept. They can't accept, which we're going to talk about those three modalities, acceptance, enjoyment, and enthusiasm.

[Speaker 1] (3:48:01 - 3:48:09)

So here comes this, the acceptance of when old age approaches the acceptance that this can be also very beautiful if you're open to that.

[Speaker 2] (3:48:09 - 3:48:52)

You say because in old age, the emphasis, the top of 286, everybody, because in old age, the emphasis shifts from doing to being. And our civilization, which is lost in doing, knows nothing of being. It asks being, what do you do with that?

What do you do with it? Yeah. But the older you get, the more conscious you become that being is of more value to you than doing.

And the whole point of a new earth is for everybody to realize no matter what age you are, being is of more value to us than doing. And that it's only the being that you bring into your doing that matters.

[Speaker 1] (3:48:53 - 3:49:07)

Yes. And you don't have to wait for old age for this to happen. You can become conscious of this at any age.

And then the way in which you interact with the world is very different. Right.

[Speaker 2] (3:49:08 - 3:49:41)

287, when the ego is no longer identified with the return movement in a person's life, old age or approaching death becomes what it's meant to be an opening into the realm of spirit. And many times, obviously, you don't have to approach death in order to open into the realm of spirit. As so many of you have told us in your message boards that this whole book is about opening to the realm of spirit.

Okay. You say in a new earth, on our new earth, old age will be universally recognized and highly valued as a time for the flowering of consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (3:49:42 - 3:51:05)

Yes. In a way, we lost it because that was already there in ancient cultures where old age was greatly honored. For example, in the Native American culture, a grandmother is that when somebody is called a grandmother, it's a title of great distinction.

And everybody has great respect for the grandmother because the grandmother embodies that wisdom. Not only wisdom, she also embodies the opening into the realm of spirit. The elder of a tribe, for example, they embody the opening into the realm of spirit.

And through those old people, everybody can contact that realm. So it's very vital to have that. We lost it.

And now we are going to find that again where old age is honored rather than looked down upon. So there's the grandmother. And I mentioned in the book, you have the grandmother of the Native American.

In our civilization, you have the granny. And I say the granny, at best, is cute. But there's no depth to that, how we perceive it.

Because we don't honor. No. That dimension has virtually disappeared from our civilization, the dimension of depth, the dimension of spirit, the dimension of the sacred, which is so vital for human life.

[Speaker 2] (3:51:05 - 3:51:14)

And what kind of effect does that have on us, not honoring that age that which is sacred within the age and the depth of that? What kind of effect does that have on us?

[Speaker 1] (3:51:14 - 3:51:43)

Well, it means the whole dimension of spirit, which is lost. So all our life becomes completely superficial. And when life becomes completely superficial, you are identified with the surface movement of your life.

And because of that lack of depth, people become very unhappy because there's only the surface of their life, possessions, achieving this or that, getting recognition. And role-playing. Role-playing.

[Speaker 2] (3:51:43 - 3:51:47)

And also what you call on page 289, I like this, intelligent stupidity.

[Speaker 1] (3:51:47 - 3:51:48)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:51:48 - 3:51:49)

Intelligent stupidity.

[Speaker 1] (3:51:50 - 3:51:50)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:51:50 - 3:51:51)

Tell us what you mean by that.

[Speaker 1] (3:51:52 - 3:52:23)

Well, an example I give is, for example, you need great intelligence to split the atom. To do that, then what do we do with that? We create, we make an atom bomb, a destructive weapon out of something that could be a wonderful thing.

So on the one hand, humans seem very intelligent. And then what they do with that intelligence very often is extremely stupid. Right.

It becomes destructive.

[Speaker 2] (3:52:23 - 3:52:27)

Because that's where intelligent stupidity comes in.

[Speaker 1] (3:52:27 - 3:52:45)

Yes. And that's because the dimension of spirit is missing. Intelligence that is not connected to the deeper dimension of awareness or spirit, whatever you want to call it.

And being. Yes. It's very destructive.

Right. Sooner or later, it becomes destructive.

[Speaker 2] (3:52:45 - 3:52:58)

Yes. I love what you say on page 290. This is, you know, I've read the book now several times.

That's why this should be your new summer read, everybody. Because when you go back and read it again, you will find things that you didn't experience the first time.

[Speaker 1] (3:52:58 - 3:53:00)

Repeated readings, very helpful.

[Speaker 2] (3:53:00 - 3:53:20)

Or the second time. Yes. Or the third time.

This is what I got the other, just yesterday, I was reading it once again, this chapter. Struggle or stress is a sign that the ego has returned as our negative reactions when we encounter obstacles. So whenever you encounter obstacles in your life, it is because your ego is forefront, at the forefront.

[Speaker 1] (3:53:20 - 3:53:32)

Yes. It doesn't mean that you don't encounter challenges in your life. But to make them into, if you consider a challenge, an obstacle that you need to fight against, that means the ego is there.

[Speaker 2] (3:53:32 - 3:54:00)

Right. This is 290. The force behind the ego's wanting creates enemies.

That is to say, reaction in the form of an opposing force equal in intensity. That's what an enemy is. The stronger the ego, the stronger the sense of separateness between people.

The only actions, this is one of my favorite quotes. I love this. The only, see I've underlined it.

The only actions that do not cause opposing reactions are those that are aimed at the good of all.

[Speaker 1] (3:54:01 - 3:54:23)

Yes. So you no longer separate yourself and say, this is, this is my, you consider in whatever you do, you consider the totality or the whole, not just my little needs, but how do I fit into the totality? And so then, this is no longer karmic action which produces suffering.

Right.

[Speaker 2] (3:54:24 - 3:54:49)

We're also learning that action, although necessary, is only a secondary factor in manifesting our external reality. The primary factor in creation is consciousness. No matter how active we are, I love this, how much effort we make, our state of consciousness creates our world.

And if there's no change on that inner level, no amount of action will make any difference.

[Speaker 1] (3:54:50 - 3:55:13)

Yes. In other words, what you do is always secondary. Who you are is primary.

And that means not who you are in the eyes of the world or who you are in whatever image you might have about yourself, but whether you are connected within yourself with that dimension of being, spirit or consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (3:55:14 - 3:55:31)

You say it beautifully, 294. It's not what you do, but how you do what you do determines whether or not you are fulfilling your destiny. Yes.

It's not what you do, but how you do it. And by that you mean the amount of presence or consciousness you bring to whatever you do.

[Speaker 1] (3:55:31 - 3:56:20)

Yes. Another aspect of that is whether whatever you are doing at any given moment, even the most, what the mind would say, insignificant thing, are you doing it in presence or is it just a means to an end because you want to get to some future moment? Right.

Just a simple example you could give, you can go to a restaurant and the way in which the waiter puts the plate on your table can be present and conscious and immediately you would be affected by that. Sometimes it happens that you have a waiter who is conscious and with care and attention he or she puts the table there, the plate in front of you. And you can sense a very different energy from a waiter who is just doing his or her job.

Absolutely. And he just puts it down.

[Speaker 2] (3:56:20 - 3:56:21)

And that's in every aspect.

[Speaker 1] (3:56:22 - 3:56:25)

That's going to the toll booth. That's picking up your laundry. Everything.

[Speaker 2] (3:56:25 - 3:56:28)

That's standing in line for french fries. That's everything.

[Speaker 1] (3:56:28 - 3:56:28)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:56:28 - 3:56:31)

People either bring their presence or they don't.

[Speaker 1] (3:56:31 - 3:56:49)

Yes. Yeah. And often it's a useful thing to remember to check inside yourself to see whether you are making whatever you are doing at this moment whether it is primarily a means to an end because you want to get somewhere else through what you are doing or whether you're giving it your fullest attention.

[Speaker 2] (3:56:50 - 3:56:57)

I think you're going to have a generation of children growing up with unconscious parents because I recognize this with myself. I've been guilty of it since the Blackberries.

[Speaker 1] (3:56:57 - 3:56:58)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:56:58 - 3:57:07)

If you're riding in a car with friends or you're anyplace with friends everybody instead of talking now everybody's on their Blackberries to see who else is calling.

[Speaker 1] (3:57:08 - 3:57:10)

I've been wondering what they're doing when they go like that.

[Speaker 2] (3:57:10 - 3:57:19)

Oh this is where everybody's writing everybody you're right instead of talking to the people who are there with you you're writing to the people who are not there to see what they have to say. That's what everybody's doing.

[Speaker 1] (3:57:19 - 3:57:20)

Oh yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:57:20 - 3:57:28)

And many times people are now on their cell phones or they're on their Blackberries and their kids are coming into the room and nobody ever even looks up.

[Speaker 1] (3:57:28 - 3:57:54)

And you're not experiencing reality that is around you. You're not experiencing the fullness of life around you and what you are experiencing is a mental abstraction which is little letters that you're putting in there. It's just mental abstraction.

You're not even communicating truly with the person that you're sending the message to. Yeah. Because the communication is two or three times removed.

You're just sending little ciphers to them.

[Speaker 2] (3:57:54 - 3:58:17)

Okay. Well we're going to get into the three modalities of awakening where you say that unless you are at any given time having acceptance, enjoyment or enthusiasm for whatever you're doing you should stop doing it. Because if you're not accepting the moment, enjoying the moment or having enthusiasm for the moment then you are in one way or another causing suffering.

[Speaker 1] (3:58:17 - 3:58:44)

Yes. It's a dysfunctional state. You're in a dysfunctional state.

You're not aligned with the present moment. You're not aligned with yourself. You're not aligned with life.

Completely dysfunctional and then you generate psychic disharmony around you. You make yourself unhappy. Already you're unhappy.

Because you can't accept the present moment. And the unhappiness spreads because when you're unhappy others around you make them unhappy too. It spreads like a disease.

[Speaker 2] (3:58:44 - 3:59:47)

Well I think you know as we here are already in Chapter 10 one of the biggest issues that I've heard so many people talk about and last week a friend of mine started emailing me saying that how you know that she was following the classes and that it's very easy to have this resonate with you but then when you have to go out into the world and actually deal with people that it starts to get difficult.

And that friend is Skyping us today who is an actress who played my daughter in the movie Beloved. Yes. She's my baby girl.

Kimberly Elise played my baby girl. Hello Kimberly. Hi.

Hi. Who's been reading the book. Kimberly's been reading the book and following the webcast and we were I was trying to email back and forth explaining this in email and as Eckhart says emails are you know not a full form of communication when you're trying to express these ideas.

So go at it Kimberly.

[Speaker 5] (3:59:49 - 4:01:32)

Okay so yes as I was telling Oprah it's been really exciting and enlightening to discuss in theory all the different concepts and ideas in the book and it's been attainable here in this loving cocoon which I live in and my book club members live in. But once you go out into the real world and have real life situations you're presented with a lot of challenges because not everybody's read the book. Not everybody's on this journey.

Not everybody is striving to evolve or have awareness. A simple example one of the book club members works for a very egotistical boss and is very sort of pushed and has unrealistic demands put upon her and she's managed to sort of pull herself above it become witness to the ego she's dealing with and the ego within herself and as a consequence she's been perceived as sort of lax and dispassionate and disengaged in everything that's going around because everybody else is so in the drama and she feels her job could be at stake because she's being viewed this way. That's an example.

So my question is if we're in the process of evolving our state of consciousness moving away from our egos and getting closer to our true selves how do we manage how do we manage to maintain this level of elevation when you're forced in the real world to live and work with people who come from a strictly egotistical place and don't understand this awareness level and really can perceive you as being weak?

[Speaker 2] (4:01:34 - 4:01:39)

Good. Good question. Good.

Now let's hear what Eckhart has to say.

[Speaker 1] (4:01:40 - 4:03:56)

Okay. So we are gradually learning to live from a different state of consciousness. Now you cannot expect to be necessarily to be a master when you meet difficult people and already to be fully in that state of presence.

It's a gradual process where you bring presence into your life and as you invite presence into your life and at first don't even practice with the difficult boss but leave him alone for a while. At first you invite presence into your life with small things. When you're at home one little movement making tea making opening the curtains as you get up looking out of the window without any judgment just perceiving the light, the clouds.

Bring as much as possible presence into your life in simple situations when you get into your car you get in close shows the door be quiet for 20 seconds, 30 seconds feel the inner body. Many opportunities are there whenever you're waiting I talk about that in both books I believe. Whenever you're waiting for something or someone drop the waiting and be present be fully there fully alert fully accepting of that moment rather than wanting some other moment.

So and gradually you grow in presence power or presence power grows in you and when as presence power grows in you you can begin to apply it to slightly challenging situation which normally would have triggered for example some slight irritation and there you can observe oh there's the old reaction as you're waiting in line at the supermarket and you can see the irritation with the cashier or the whoever is there in ahead of you and you can immediately be aware of that and see well what's it can it has no useful function it does nothing except make me unhappy and you can then let go of it and be clear and free and present at that moment.

[Speaker 2] (4:03:56 - 4:04:14)

OPRAH WINFREY Yeah I think too Kim that one of the things that we all want when you read this and you feel so great it's like sort of being you know when you you feel so enthusiastic and you want everybody to get it as you get it it's like developing a like developing spiritual muscle.

[Speaker 17] (4:04:14 - 4:04:14)

DR. ANTHONY Yes.

[Speaker 2] (4:04:14 - 4:05:19)

OPRAH WINFREY It's like developing spiritual muscle you can't go out and lift you know the 50 pound weight unless you have also lifted the 25 pound weight and the 10 pound weight and so you have to start developing the muscle with things that you are more comfortable with and once you've developed a strong enough muscle the bosses become the unruly bosses become easier to handle. In the beginning you just can't say I'm going to go out I'm going to apply this principle and expect it to work because you have to have the inner strength in which to deal with it and also it comes from a greater awareness I think having had unruly bosses in my early years it comes from a greater awareness of what your real purpose in life is I remember being in Baltimore in the early days of my career having a boss who was a complete jerk who was just a complete jerk I'd like to use another word for it but I'll just leave it

[Speaker 1] (4:05:19 - 4:05:21)

DR. ANTHONY Of course it's not his true self but it's almost

[Speaker 2] (4:05:21 - 4:05:27)

OPRAH WINFREY Okay DR. ANTHONY Heavy overlay OPRAH WINFREY Having a boss whose true self was love and innocence and had a wonderful presence but

[Speaker 1] (4:05:27 - 4:05:28)

DR. ANTHONY Heavy overlay

[Speaker 2] (4:05:28 - 4:06:04)

OPRAH WINFREY Heavy overlay was the ego self that he showed daily was a complete jerk something inside me knew I wasn't going to be here forever there forever I knew that I could tolerate it I could deal with it I could handle it I could you know my place in it was not I knew he ultimately had no power over me that I needed to do what was necessary for this particular time in my life but inside myself I knew trouble don't last always and I will not this will this is not going to be the course of my life

[Speaker 1] (4:06:04 - 4:06:05)

DR. ANTHONY This too will pass

[Speaker 2] (4:06:05 - 4:06:40)

OPRAH WINFREY This too will pass I knew that this too will pass and so I could go into the space every day doing what needed to be done as perhaps maybe your friend needs to do doing what needs to be done and could do the thing that everybody else couldn't understand I could offer give that person what they thought they needed I could give them I could create the space for them to be and even to show themselves to be whoever their ego at that particular time you know wanted to be you see what I'm saying?

[Speaker 5] (4:06:41 - 4:06:53)

DR. ANTHONY I do I do so as you're as you're at that higher level of awareness you're able to look at a situation and see it as just a situation but not your entire life OPRAH WINFREY Not my entire

[Speaker 2] (4:06:53 - 4:07:02)

not your entire life because that person ultimately I knew I'm going to be here for a time I need to learn this much here and then I'm going to be gone

[Speaker 5] (4:07:02 - 4:07:16)

DR. ANTHONY And do you believe that there are just some people in this lifetime who will not get to this level of awareness and that you just really have to focus on yourself OPRAH WINFREY Yeah but that's what I said to you

[Speaker 2] (4:07:16 - 4:07:25)

that's what I was saying to you in the email that's not your job to worry about what other people are going to do your only role is to be is to concern yourself with yourself isn't that true?

[Speaker 1] (4:07:25 - 4:08:10)

DR. ANTHONY Oh yes, yes, yes so in one thing as we said Oprah called it spiritual muscle and I called it growing in presence power it's the same thing so presence builds up gradually in the meantime you can still practice even in difficult situations it might sometimes work even if your spiritual muscle is not yet highly developed if you can remember just the little little pointer the little phrase am I able to accept this moment as it is and if this moment comes in the form of this obnoxious person then the question is can I accept this obnoxious person at this moment?

[Speaker 2] (4:08:10 - 4:08:13)

OPRAH WINFREY Can I accept this obnoxious person at this moment?

[Speaker 1] (4:08:13 - 4:08:17)

DR. ANTHONY Because whatever arises in the present moment can I be the space for this?

[Speaker 2] (4:08:17 - 4:08:37)

OPRAH WINFREY Yeah and if you're able to remove your ego from it if you're able to take your ego out of it DR. ANTHONY Yes OPRAH WINFREY It becomes just what it is DR. ANTHONY Yes OPRAH WINFREY What you were saying, Kim it becomes just another situation if you can take your ego out of it or your friend take the ego out of it so it's not personal DR. ANTHONY No OPRAH WINFREY It's not personal at all DR. ANTHONY No OPRAH WINFREY Yeah that's what I learned how to do

[Speaker 5] (4:08:37 - 4:08:44)

KIM So we can really take these opportunities that are so challenging as little gifts and opportunities to grow ourselves

[Speaker 2] (4:08:44 - 4:09:18)

OPRAH WINFREY Not only that it is the true that is the spiritual path you know we talked at a previous class about how everybody has their cross to bear and the truth is that when you confront an obnoxious boss or in difficult situations therein lies your opportunity to build a spiritual muscle DR. ANTHONY Yes OPRAH WINFREY To build this or create or allow presence to come through in a way that you get to show who you are instead of being worried about what the other person is doing

[Speaker 1] (4:09:18 - 4:09:37)

DR. ANTHONY Yes so difficult people or ego controlled people have a very important spiritual function in this world eventually they will become so unhappy that they will also go beyond that but in the meantime they are there as practice material for others

[Speaker 2] (4:09:38 - 4:09:42)

OPRAH WINFREY That's right because if everything was wonderful all the time you would have no practice no way to practice

[Speaker 1] (4:09:42 - 4:09:43)

DR. ANTHONY There would be no growth

[Speaker 5] (4:09:43 - 4:09:45)

KIM That's a good way to look at it

[Speaker 2] (4:09:45 - 4:09:49)

OPRAH WINFREY Hey I love your house Kim I hadn't seen your new house how nice

[Speaker 5] (4:09:49 - 4:09:54)

KIM I know you haven't you have a dog OPRAH WINFREY Oh my gosh you have a dog and a fireplace

[Speaker 2] (4:09:56 - 4:10:17)

very cool KIM Yeah OPRAH WINFREY Very cool BG talk to you soon KIM Bye OPRAH WINFREY Bye very, very nice interesting about the practicing of the spiritual muscle DR. ANTHONY Yes OPRAH WINFREY Now you notice when I was calling my former boss a jerk and you said that's not who he is do you never encounter obnoxious people in your life?

[Speaker 1] (4:10:17 - 4:11:19)

DR. ANTHONY No you do encounter obnoxious people it's a question of looking OPRAH WINFREY Do you have only love for them? DR. ANTHONY Not necessarily OPRAH WINFREY Okay good DR. ANTHONY No OPRAH WINFREY Okay but it's a question of what did you say? DR. ANTHONY Of whether one is able to look through this overlay of ego or heavy pain body which can be very strong whether you're able to go through that and it's very hard to describe this process when you are not judging the person mentally not calling him or her anything you still know that this person is obnoxious you know that OPRAH WINFREY Yeah DR. ANTHONY You still know that this person is controlled by the ego you know it even without formulating a concept in your mind and so but you also know that beyond there is a being OPRAH WINFREY Right DR. ANTHONY That is pure and innocent and as close to God as anybody

[Speaker 2] (4:11:19 - 4:11:20)

OPRAH WINFREY As anybody

[Speaker 1] (4:11:20 - 4:11:26)

DR. ANTHONY So OPRAH WINFREY Okay DR. ANTHONY Is it possible to look through the ego in others?

[Speaker 2] (4:11:27 - 4:11:30)

OPRAH WINFREY Yeah but Eckhart you still don't have to want to deal with that person

[Speaker 1] (4:11:30 - 4:11:38)

DR. ANTHONY No you may want to remove yourself OPRAH WINFREY Right DR. ANTHONY And if that is possible then that often is the best thing to do

[Speaker 2] (4:11:38 - 4:11:46)

because you can still say I can bless you in your beingness but what you're showing me now is not what I want to deal with

[Speaker 1] (4:11:46 - 4:12:22)

OPRAH WINFREY Or you can walk out of a job if it's insane the environment is insane and the more present you are the more certain you will be DR. ANTHONY About what to do OPRAH WINFREY Of what to do DR. ANTHONY Absolutely OPRAH WINFREY But we talked about this in one of the sessions the realization of what you have to do comes from a powerful but peaceful place when you are present DR. ANTHONY That's right so when you're walking out of the office you're not walking out in anger when it comes through presence you're walking out you're being you're peaceful with everybody and say that's it I'm walking out of here OPRAH WINFREY That's it DR. ANTHONY There's power but no negativity

[Speaker 2] (4:12:22 - 4:12:23)

OPRAH WINFREY Right I got that

[Speaker 1] (4:12:23 - 4:12:26)

DR. ANTHONY And so that's it's beautiful when that happens

[Speaker 2] (4:12:26 - 4:12:28)

OPRAH WINFREY When to say I have had enough

[Speaker 1] (4:12:28 - 4:12:29)

DR. ANTHONY Yes

[Speaker 2] (4:12:29 - 4:12:33)

OPRAH WINFREY I have had enough and that comes from your inner purpose

[Speaker 1] (4:12:33 - 4:12:34)

DR. ANTHONY Yes

[Speaker 2] (4:12:34 - 4:12:35)

OPRAH WINFREY As opposed to your outer

[Speaker 1] (4:12:35 - 4:12:36)

DR. ANTHONY Yes

[Speaker 2] (4:12:36 - 4:12:36)

OPRAH WINFREY Yeah

[Speaker 1] (4:12:36 - 4:12:58)

DR. ANTHONY Now there may be other situations when you are forced for some reason you are forced into now an extreme example is that you're in an elevator and it gets the elevator gets stuck OPRAH WINFREY Right DR. ANTHONY And there you are with an obnoxious person for one hour in the elevator or some people are stuck with somebody for some reason they can't go leave leave the situation you're maybe in a prison cell

[Speaker 2] (4:12:58 - 4:13:01)

OPRAH WINFREY Or lots of people are in they have to keep jobs

[Speaker 1] (4:13:01 - 4:13:01)

DR. ANTHONY Yes

[Speaker 2] (4:13:01 - 4:13:02)

OPRAH WINFREY Where they are dealing

[Speaker 1] (4:13:02 - 4:13:03)

DR. ANTHONY Yes

[Speaker 2] (4:13:03 - 4:13:05)

OPRAH WINFREY Bosses who are obnoxious

[Speaker 1] (4:13:05 - 4:13:05)

DR. ANTHONY That's right

[Speaker 2] (4:13:05 - 4:13:10)

OPRAH WINFREY Yeah as we just heard Kimberly say you have to keep a job you have to earn a living for yourself and your family

[Speaker 1] (4:13:10 - 4:13:20)

DR. ANTHONY Yes and there's a question of accepting that this is where this person is at without getting into reactivity OPRAH WINFREY And resisting it DR. ANTHONY Resisting it OPRAH WINFREY Right DR. ANTHONY Yeah

[Speaker 2] (4:13:20 - 4:13:37)

OPRAH WINFREY I did it the right way because I was in that situation for quite a long time and literally would just accepted it and I would have friends say how can you put up with that how can you tolerate that because I know this too shall pass and trouble doesn't last always

[Speaker 1] (4:13:37 - 4:13:39)

I won't be there forever DR. ANTHONY Intuitively you did that

[Speaker 2] (4:13:39 - 4:13:41)

OPRAH WINFREY Intuitively I knew that I wasn't going to be there forever

[Speaker 1] (4:13:41 - 4:13:55)

DR. ANTHONY I remember the same reading your friend Maria Shriver wrote a book and she describes some of her early bosses dreadful OPRAH WINFREY Yes DR. ANTHONY But somehow she was able to just say that's how it is she also knew she wasn't going to be there for the rest of her life

[Speaker 2] (4:13:55 - 4:13:55)

OPRAH WINFREY She wasn't going to be there forever

[Speaker 1] (4:13:55 - 4:14:00)

DR. ANTHONY But for the time being she kind of OPRAH WINFREY This is what I need to do DR. ANTHONY Accepted and yes OPRAH WINFREY That's right

[Speaker 2] (4:14:00 - 4:14:35)

Kippy is an American who teaches gifted students at an elementary school on a U.S. Air Force base outside Tokyo, Japan and she's Skyping us from her home office with a reading group she started after hearing about our web classes How do you say hello in Japanese? Is it konnichiwa?

KIPPY Konnichiwa OPRAH WINFREY Konnichiwa DR. ANTHONY Konnichiwa OPRAH WINFREY Konnichiwa And the same to you Kippy, let's start with you What is your question?

[Speaker 11] (4:14:36 - 4:14:56)

KIPPY Okay, Eckhart on page 301 you wrote enthusiasm means there is a deep enjoyment in what you do plus the added element of a goal or vision that you work toward My question is how can we have goals or visions if we are to always remain in the present?

[Speaker 2] (4:14:56 - 4:14:58)

OPRAH WINFREY Good question

[Speaker 1] (4:14:58 - 4:15:01)

KIPPY Good, yes OPRAH WINFREY Good question KIPPY Yes

[Speaker 5] (4:15:01 - 4:15:02)

OPRAH WINFREY Thank you

[Speaker 1] (4:15:02 - 4:17:44)

KIPPY So the goal or vision when it's inside you as if it were already a reality and in fact on some level it is a reality inside you already So a goal that is powerful when you're in touch with your own power is not a goal that you project yourself mentally to and say I would like to achieve this or that at some future point I need that I want that to complete myself You're reaching out towards that goal You're losing yourself You're not present But if you are if you realize that whatever vision you hold is already a reality inside you I give an example now the power of now before I ever wrote the book I had this vision of that that book was already on some level already there had already been written And so I felt all I'm doing is I'm externalizing what's already there I had this strong inner feeling that the book already exists inside me I saw that it as a reality already I didn't try to achieve writing a book The book was already there and all then I had to do was be open to this energy movement coming from within to manifest what was already there on a deeper level And that's why Jesus said whenever you ask for anything believe that you already have received it and it will be yours So if you believe that you already have received it it means it must be already be a reality inside yourself So you're not coming from lack or scarcity or neediness because then you're not there's no power behind your vision or your goal You're already coming from fullness So the goal is already a reality inside you already feel as if you had it Right It's already a reality and what you feel about it is the fullness that is already there in the present moment And then you don't lose yourself then you are fully there as you begin to respond to this inner impulse you manifest it in your life in the present moment So it's not a future thing really a powerful goal when you visualize a powerful goal is you're not visualizing in order to achieve something in the future you're visualizing in order to bring something out that's already inside you Wow

[Speaker 2] (4:17:47 - 4:18:28)

That's powerful but I can understand why a lot of people would be confused by it because then how do you ever achieve anything in the future Isn't that what you're saying too, Kippy? Right, right How do you ever achieve anything in the future? Say, I want to be an actress There are a lot of people I know at the Bodhi Tree who we're going to talk to later A lot of people at the Bodhi Tree who have day jobs where they really want I want to be an actress That's a future goal I want to be an actor or an actress or I want to get a job working for a major corporation How do you, you know how can you not hold that as a vision for yourself?

[Speaker 1] (4:18:28 - 4:19:04)

You can but what you're visualizing is not yourself in some future state The power that is there inside you that will manifest externally in time and in the future is already there Get in touch with the power What would it feel like if you were an actress already successful? What does that feel like inside you? And where does the power come from with which you can make a difference in people's lives when you are doing something like that?

Where does the power reside? Yeah, because you say

[Speaker 2] (4:19:04 - 4:19:10)

instead of saying I want to be a great actress is how do I use this talent to manifest in such a way that causes people to

[Speaker 1] (4:19:10 - 4:19:11)

Yes

[Speaker 2] (4:19:11 - 4:19:12)

feel a certain way

[Speaker 1] (4:19:12 - 4:19:12)

Yes

[Speaker 2] (4:19:12 - 4:19:13)

Yeah

[Speaker 1] (4:19:13 - 4:19:38)

Yes So it's already a reality inside you and then you can take steps towards implementing that but it comes from fullness rather than neediness The mistake is not finding the place of power that is in the present moment and believing that something else that is not in the present moment is going to bring you to the place of power Okay It won't

[Speaker 2] (4:19:38 - 4:20:53)

Okay I just got it, Kippy I just got it I just got it What he's saying is is that whatever goal that you have or vision that you have must come from the place of being or consciousness and if it comes from a place of being or consciousness and not is an external goal that you have for yourself I think I'm getting it right, right? If it comes from being or consciousness then it comes through you out into the world instead of you reaching out into the world saying this is what I want for myself and so all things and I can use the example of myself I have always wanted to do exactly what I'm doing here with all of you tonight I've always felt that deep inside me this is what I was meant to do I was meant to be a teacher I was meant to use television as a platform for helping people to better know themselves and when and knowing that knowing that deep inside myself is what has helped bring this into fruition this way instead of saying you know one day I want to have a webcast and have a million people on the webcast you see what I'm saying?

[Speaker 16] (4:20:54 - 4:20:55)

I do, yes

[Speaker 2] (4:20:55 - 4:21:26)

that it comes from the inner part of you there's a feeling that comes from the consciousness part of yourself the being of yourself that says this is what I now need to do and that's why you're saying it doesn't matter what you do it's how you do what you do and it doesn't matter what you do everything that you do has to be fueled by consciousness or the spirit of God which is another way of saying it by consciousness or the spirit of God otherwise it has no real meaning in your life

[Speaker 1] (4:21:26 - 4:21:36)

yes and the place of power is in the present moment that's the vital thing is you can only touch that power in the present moment that's right so if you're not

[Speaker 2] (4:21:37 - 4:21:48)

and so you said last week it's about this step the step today that it takes to get to the next step then the next step and the next step and the next step you don't get there by thinking let me go let me you know

[Speaker 1] (4:21:48 - 4:22:18)

and even if you're doing something at the moment that life has given you that doesn't seem to be part of your vision let's say you are working in a restaurant but your vision is being a great artist right or manifestation you still need to honor whatever it is that you are doing at this moment fully and completely because it may some way it may arise out of that that may also be part of it that's right because every step leads you to the direction

[Speaker 2] (4:22:19 - 4:22:23)

it's the means and not the end that counts

[Speaker 1] (4:22:23 - 4:22:23)

yes

[Speaker 2] (4:22:23 - 4:22:24)

the means and not the end

[Speaker 1] (4:22:24 - 4:22:25)

yes

[Speaker 2] (4:22:25 - 4:22:38)

you follow that right Kip? I do thank you anybody else that want to say anything there hi ladies hi what time is it in Tokyo right now is it another day already?

[Speaker 17] (4:22:38 - 4:22:39)

it's already yes

[Speaker 5] (4:22:39 - 4:22:44)

we are living on tuesday yes tuesday morning oh tuesday

[Speaker 1] (4:22:45 - 4:22:47)

well so in Tokyo it's tomorrow it's not the now

[Speaker 2] (4:22:51 - 4:22:53)

Eckhart made a funny

[Speaker 11] (4:22:55 - 4:22:57)

and you'll have beautiful weather tomorrow

[Speaker 2] (4:22:58 - 4:23:34)

Tokyo it's tomorrow it's not now thank you guys so much thank you wow that's interesting because everything always comes back to that same point of whatever sense of presence or being holy spirit spirit of god whatever you choose to call it name because it doesn't have an ego so it doesn't get hung up on what it's being called that when you bring that into your life it fuels everything that you do and as you said last week the evolutionary impulse of the universe yes rises up to meet you

[Speaker 1] (4:23:34 - 4:24:13)

yes yes and so the question to ask yourself it's a very simple question am i okay with the present moment you need to be deeply okay with the present moment to find the power of the present moment which is your own power or the power of the universe or the power of god am i okay if you're not okay with the present moment let's say you're working in a restaurant but while you're working in the restaurant you would rather be somewhere else you're not empowered you're only empowered that even while you're working in the restaurant and for some people that's their life purpose to work in a restaurant and to spread that presence through whatever they do with people they meet there and that's beautiful

[Speaker 2] (4:24:13 - 4:24:28)

and what you're saying in this book is is that whatever you do wherever you do whatever you do can have deep meaning and purpose to it and for the rest of the world if you bring your presence to it yeah

[Speaker 1] (4:24:28 - 4:24:29)

yes

[Speaker 2] (4:24:29 - 4:24:37)

and we all have encountered that the difference between people whether it's a waiter or the toll booth operator or you know

[Speaker 1] (4:24:37 - 4:24:38)

yes

[Speaker 2] (4:24:38 - 4:25:04)

in every one of our life circumstances okay Elzbieta is joining us from Poland did i pronounce your name correctly tonight very well yes hello Elzbieta where she's been downloading all of the webcast hello is it Jin Dubré hello can you hear me yes yes i can oh fantastic

[Speaker 12] (4:25:04 - 4:25:14)

i want to thank you both for this extraordinary webcast the greatest book club i've ever seen

[Speaker 2] (4:25:14 - 4:25:15)

well thank you

[Speaker 12] (4:25:16 - 4:25:28)

thanks what's your question i'd like to ask Eckhart to comment on a certain quote from a philosopher Alan Watts if i may

[Speaker 1] (4:25:29 - 4:25:30)

yes please go ahead

[Speaker 12] (4:25:31 - 4:26:01)

later i will also have a question go ahead okay go ahead there's a certain pause that's why it's a little strange so the quote is from the book on the taboo against knowing who you are the most strongly enforced of all known taboos is the taboo against knowing who or what you really are behind the mask of your apparently separate independent and isolated ego could you please comment on that

[Speaker 1] (4:26:03 - 4:27:18)

well the taboo is not a taboo that's it's not called a taboo but our civilization is ignorant of that dimension and our civilization to a large extent is still run by the ego and the ego does not want to know about the deeper dimension of spirit it feels threatened by that the ego likes perhaps to to have an ideology and call that spiritual it has a certain rigid belief system and says that is spiritual and identifies with that and calls other people enemies or evil who don't agree with that belief system but so the ego feels threatened by the spiritual dimension within the human being and it will do unconsciously anything to sabotage the arising of the spiritual dimension in our culture in civilization or in human beings and so you see these are unconscious reactions some people say that what we are doing is evil these are unconscious reactions again by the ego to protect itself

[Speaker 2] (4:27:19 - 4:27:22)

wow you mean some people say what we're doing here is evil

[Speaker 1] (4:27:22 - 4:27:52)

yes yeah the oh i don't know how it is possible because bringing people to greater presence and a peaceful way to live how that can be evil i don't know but somehow they work it out in their minds that this is evil yeah yeah and so this is that it's an unspoken taboo there are no there are no laws against spirituality but the taboo is unspoken it's underneath the surface of things and the taboo has been created by the egoic civilizations that we inhabit

[Speaker 2] (4:27:54 - 4:27:55)

thank you

[Speaker 12] (4:27:55 - 4:28:18)

yes that's very clear to me too but i think that even though alan watts wrote it i don't know 30 40 years ago it still rings true unfortunately so my question actually is for those who misinterpret your teachings could you clarify do you consider your teachings to be a religion

[Speaker 1] (4:28:19 - 4:29:25)

certainly not it's not a religion it is spiritual which means this teaching the truth of it can be applied within any religion or within no religion it's the teaching is in essence spiritual it's not based on belief systems it's not based on thoughts it's based on becoming present and still and whether you are a muslim or a christian or a buddhist or uh atheist atheist it it can be applied in your life the transformation of consciousness does not depend on your belief system but it is possible of course if you have a rigid belief system it can stop you from the trans the belief system can sabotage the transformation but it does not depend the transformation does not depend on whatever belief system you have certain belief systems are so rigid that they represent a barrier

[Speaker 2] (4:29:26 - 4:29:43)

what do you say to those people though i mean i think that was one of the questions that somebody has tonight about other people who think that what you have written and what we have done here in communicating with people around the world about what you've written is evil what do you say to that

[Speaker 1] (4:29:43 - 4:30:05)

well probably most of them have never looked at the book right and many of them probably have never listened into the webcast right right so because if they if they truly read a few pages in the book they would see that there's absolutely nothing that could be interpreted as as evil as evil

[Speaker 2] (4:30:05 - 4:30:09)

thank you Elspita thank you so much i agree absolutely

[Speaker 12] (4:30:10 - 4:31:02)

opera can i also share one aha moment sure please show an aha share an aha yes please that would go back to the first chapter on page 12 where Eckhart writes about fear greed or the desire for power are not the dysfunction but are created by the dysfunction which is a deep-seated collective delusion that lies within the mind of each human being end of quote i think that this is it well there's lots of great stuff in the book and there's an aha almost on every page but this one is very important i think because seems to me seeing through the delusion can only when we can see through the delusion can we be really free of fear greed and desire for power which we all share i'm afraid

[Speaker 2] (4:31:02 - 4:31:07)

thank you Elspita thank you for sharing that all the way from Poland tonight thank you so much

[Speaker 1] (4:31:07 - 4:31:08)

thank you very much

[Speaker 2] (4:31:08 - 4:31:23)

thank you so much thank you thank you Beth from Green Bay Wisconsin sent in an email that caught my uh my attention a few weeks back i thought it'd be great to skype with her for this last chapter hi Beth hi Oprah hi hi why don't you read us your your email

[Speaker 10] (4:31:24 - 4:32:02)

okay okay i emailed in i've been working on this too shall pass and i've noticed it's much easier to accept that this in my own life situation than it is for the world's life situation for example i i can't be cavalier about teenagers beating each other for video content on the internet i can't condone 13 year old girls having spiritual weddings to much older men and i cannot just accept that human beings will be tortured and killed for having a different religion nationality or skin color why is it so much easier to say that's no big deal for me than it is um for the rest of the world why can't i let go of this global anger

[Speaker 1] (4:32:03 - 4:32:06)

you have global anger that's a good word

[Speaker 2] (4:32:06 - 4:32:07)

that's a good word for it

[Speaker 1] (4:32:07 - 4:32:08)

but many people have to say

[Speaker 2] (4:32:08 - 4:32:13)

you're going to be angry for a very long time you're going to carry that around but go ahead

[Speaker 1] (4:32:15 - 4:32:25)

so have you already dropped anger on a personal level in your own life being angry at people around you that you experience personally

[Speaker 10] (4:32:26 - 4:32:39)

very rarely do i get angry at anyone else anymore mostly it's my kids but that's that's just part of their growing up and i've been able to see that why they're doing what they're doing

[Speaker 1] (4:32:39 - 4:32:39)

yes

[Speaker 10] (4:32:39 - 4:32:43)

and have some compassion for them it's just on a larger scale

[Speaker 1] (4:32:43 - 4:34:52)

yes compassion there's an important word i also noticed in your question you used the word condone which perhaps may be synonymous in your mind with acceptance condone means to say it's okay to behave in such a way then this is not what acceptance is about acceptance is to see to simply see what is and to say this is what is right now this is how these humans behave this is what they're doing right now this is what is and no matter what you think or what how you judge that you cannot argue with the fact that this is what is and that's all acceptance is it doesn't mean it's okay i condone it there's nothing wrong with it it's to come to an inner acceptance of the isness of life right now and then you can look and then you can see once you have come to an acceptance of what is you also see that yes it is mad you can see it is mad you can come to a place of compassion when you see that all these people are unconscious they don't know what they are doing and then you can see evil i mean there's vast amounts of evil still happening on the planet which means suffering that humans inflicting on other humans on other life forms on the planet itself on nature all that you can see as manifestations of ignorance spiritual ignorance unconsciousness ego collective ego and so once you see that you can come to a place of compassion for those people who are still still controlled by ego and who are acting unconsciously

[Speaker 2] (4:34:52 - 4:36:00)

and also doesn't it come to that that phrase about accepting the things you cannot change changing the things you can and having the wisdom to know the difference and the truth of everything that we've been saying in these past two weeks Beth for you and everyone else is that you begin to change the world by first changing yourself and so the anger all of us are putting energy into the world all of us are putting energy out into the world and you raise the level of consciousness when you bring consciousness and presence to whatever it is you do that's how you begin to change the world in your home right now what room are you in right now wait this is the spare bedroom we call it the home office okay in your home office with your children in your actions every day being less angry in your personal life really helps diffuse it in the rest of the world and people don't see that as a big deal but if everybody did that it would it would it would be diminished

[Speaker 1] (4:36:00 - 4:36:29)

yes you are connected on an unseen level with all other humans that's right and whatever energy you put out contributes to that particular vibration in the collective energy field of humanity correct so if you're putting out anger then that connects with all the collective anger that is floating around on the planet which is vast it connects and feeds the collective anger

[Speaker 2] (4:36:29 - 4:36:59)

yes and so isn't each of us isn't it for each of us we're asked to do that which we can do I feel this every time I go to Africa that it's really easy to get overwhelmed by all of the massive problems encountered in that country you can get easily overwhelmed and so the thing to do is to focus on that which you can change that which you can have some impact on and do that as well as you can

[Speaker 1] (4:36:59 - 4:37:06)

yes yeah one little thing perhaps one thing that might seem insignificant and you can make a change

[Speaker 2] (4:37:06 - 4:37:10)

but everything is significant depending on what presence you bring to it

[Speaker 1] (4:37:10 - 4:37:10)

yes

[Speaker 2] (4:37:10 - 4:37:14)

Beth I hear you've made some big changes since reading A New Earth tell us about them

[Speaker 10] (4:37:14 - 4:37:45)

oh yes actually I picked up A New Earth after my grandmother passed away in January but some things have been happening along the line that I didn't really understand what was going on I left a job that was not good for me in November I was able to spend more time with my grandmother and we both prepared ourselves for her passing I've quit smoking I've started running I eat healthy foods it's I'm not even sure who I am anymore

[Speaker 2] (4:37:46 - 4:38:05)

and that's a good thing yes that's a good thing but I think the key word here is what Eckhart had said earlier accepting what is going on in the world isn't the same thing as condoning it because there are a lot of terrible things going on in the world and no I know and I don't know if it's because I've been a mom for so long

[Speaker 10] (4:38:05 - 4:38:27)

it's just I want to put myself maybe as a shield in front of these people to offer them some protection and I don't know if that's my own ego but it doesn't feel like it's my ego it's like you know you people don't deserve this you deserve to have a better life you're 13 14 years old it's not time for you to have a baby

[Speaker 2] (4:38:27 - 4:38:40)

are you talking about the polygamous story on the news yes yeah yes okay that's none of your business right now what's your business is what's going on in your house right now Beth yeah and I'm happy to hear Eckhart says

[Speaker 10] (4:38:40 - 4:38:43)

that grandmothers are going to be respected because I'm going to be a grandmother in July

[Speaker 2] (4:38:45 - 4:38:59)

well I don't know if they'll be respected by July but we're working we're working on it okay thanks for that email thank you so much thank you okay I think we got some work to do

[Speaker 1] (4:39:00 - 4:39:01)

maybe just wanted

[Speaker 2] (4:39:02 - 4:39:14)

we're going to get old age respected by July we got to get busy we got to sell some more books thanks Beth we have a caller from France on the line Michelle lives in Paris has a question

[Speaker 14] (4:39:15 - 4:40:41)

yes hello Oprah and Eckhart hello I actually have a million questions but I'm only going to ask one one that's actually troubled me for a long time and I think I can sum it up with a quote from the Bible it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven and for me I see the rich man as someone who is full of ego and full of mind which can never enter into consciousness and this relates to me and to my question if I have a very strong and active mind and it's my greatest asset perhaps but it's also my Achilles heel and when I can reach a place of stillness or awakening my mind wants to participate it wants to own the experience and at some point always succeeds in bringing form to the experience turning it into a concept trying to understand it trying to link it with past experiences and so you speak about this space between ego and awareness and I need to develop that space I need to be able to step further back from my mind and it's very difficult the mind's also very cunning and it deceives me even into believing that I'm actually in that space what can I do? how can I work on this dilemma?

[Speaker 1] (4:40:42 - 4:43:07)

well the mind cannot recognize that space it doesn't know anything about it it's completely meaningless to the mind but from what you are saying I can see that you already are able to enter that space for how long doesn't matter but you are already able to have that inner space of stillness inside you and your mind is almost denying that experience certainly resisting it so first of all it's the recognition that the most important thing which is the initial disidentification from the process of thinking has already happened inside you that first disidentification from thinking and encountering that dimension of presence or stillness inside yourself that has already happened now the mind is not happy with it it doesn't want to go there or it judges it in some way or the mind says oh I want to interpret it in some way all you need to be there is rather than fighting the mind or your thought processes to recognize thoughts that arise as thoughts and it's from the place of stillness or spaciousness inside you that you can recognize when thoughts come and say this or that about stillness or about whatever you should be doing something else or whatever they say you recognize these as just another thought and another thought and when you recognize a thought as a thought it does no longer it no longer has this power to pull your attention in completely and so the important thing is not the fact that your mind is highly developed that can be quite useful at some point when you're not identified with it you can use your highly developed mind in the service of awareness in the service of spirit and that's fine but in the meantime it's not being drawn into every thought that arises or even fighting a thought and saying go away I want to be still that doesn't work either you recognize

[Speaker 14] (4:43:07 - 4:43:08)

it's as a threat I'm giving it power

[Speaker 1] (4:43:10 - 4:43:10)

yes

[Speaker 14] (4:43:10 - 4:43:11)

yes

[Speaker 1] (4:43:12 - 4:44:42)

you recognize the mind as mind you recognize thinking as thinking so you can then choose to be present when you're walking out in nature for example or when you're sitting alone in your room you choose to be present and then you will notice the mind will occasionally try to come in and do or say something about it or something totally different or says you should be thinking about something else that's more important than this and then you can recognize these thoughts as just another thought that arises you can even say to yourself oh there's another thought and then you get still again then the thought comes oh there comes another not to give every thought that arises this importance so that it draws you in because the mind wants to do that it wants all your attention because it's had all your attention for such a long time so it's a habit pattern of the mind it wants to draw in your attention and all you do is you take your attention out of the mind so that's the really is the process thoughts is the mind is not the enemy you would never win that fight against the mind if you made the mind into an enemy the mind is like a little restless child you could say or a restless puppy it goes about and then you say oh it's just it's nothing it's not it's not a big deal yeah and as we all get

[Speaker 2] (4:44:43 - 4:45:28)

you know build our spiritual muscle here we become more and more conscious of our consciousness and recognize when the thoughts are just playing in your mind and I'm sure that started to happen to you already Michelle you just said oh there's thought there's another one there's another thought I mean I would have to say over the 10 weeks that we've been doing this course I've become really really more skilled at I will think about that later sort of like Scarlett O'Hara I won't think about that now I'll think about that later because this is now I want to be present with whatever is going on in this moment so I'll deal with that at a later time when I choose to set aside time for thinking about that particular thing instead of just letting my thoughts rule everything yes all the time exactly

[Speaker 14] (4:45:28 - 4:45:31)

yes I've been putting much too much effort into keeping my thoughts at bay

[Speaker 2] (4:45:31 - 4:45:32)

yes right

[Speaker 14] (4:45:32 - 4:45:34)

yeah looking at them for what they are

[Speaker 2] (4:45:34 - 4:45:46)

just looking to go there's another thought there it is again and then the effort should be in keeping yourself in the moment of what it be you know my mantra is be here be now here be now be here be now with whatever's going on

[Speaker 1] (4:45:46 - 4:45:47)

absolutely that's good

[Speaker 2] (4:45:47 - 4:45:48)

be here be now

[Speaker 1] (4:45:48 - 4:45:49)

yes

[Speaker 2] (4:45:49 - 4:45:50)

thank you so much

[Speaker 1] (4:45:50 - 4:45:54)

wonderful wonderful thank you so much thank you bonsoir thank you bonsoir

[Speaker 17] (4:45:54 - 4:45:55)

bonsoir

[Speaker 2] (4:45:56 - 4:47:10)

all right let's talk about you say that the alignment of your outer purpose with your inner purpose is which we talked about last week the inner purpose must fuel the outer purpose otherwise ultimately it's not going to work for us but the alignment of our outer purpose with the inner purpose is called awake and doing and that awake and doing is the next stage in the evolution of consciousness on our planet there are three modalities of awake and doing acceptance enjoyment and enthusiasm on page 295 you write each modality represents a certain vibrational frequency of consciousness that is you need to be vigilant to make sure that one of them operates whenever you are engaged in doing anything at all this is key folks from the most simple task to the most complex if you are not in a state of either acceptance enjoyment or enthusiasm look closely and you will find that you are creating suffering for yourself and others so let's explain each one of them you touched on it a little bit earlier when you were talking to Kippy I think about acceptance does not no that was Beth that acceptance does not mean condonement it means I accept this moment for what it is

[Speaker 1] (4:47:10 - 4:47:30)

yes and so when you're doing something you'll be amazed if you become aware of this and observe people around you how many people are constantly in a state of disharmony because they cannot be in either acceptance enjoyment or enthusiasm about what they're doing

[Speaker 2] (4:47:30 - 4:47:44)

you use the example in the book of changing a flat tire now you don't have to enjoy changing the flat tire that you would have reached another level of consciousness you can enjoy changing yes which I'm sure you could you maybe could change it with enthusiasm

[Speaker 1] (4:47:44 - 4:47:45)

I'll let you know when it happens

[Speaker 2] (4:47:47 - 4:48:04)

okay but so you don't have to enjoy changing the flat tire but at least to accept the tire is flat you will have a much better experience rather than cursing the fact that you've had a flat tire which is what most people do the first time you get the flat tire everybody goes damn

[Speaker 1] (4:48:04 - 4:48:05)

yes flat tire

[Speaker 2] (4:48:05 - 4:48:07)

I can't believe it

[Speaker 1] (4:48:07 - 4:48:39)

and even more so if it's at night in the pouring rain that's right never convenient no yeah so the question then is you have to check inside to see what is your inner state of consciousness that you're bringing to this action to whatever you're doing what is this inner state of consciousness am I what state am I in and then often you will realize that you are in a state of denial of the present moment okay so you said acceptance you just said this to Beth

[Speaker 2] (4:48:39 - 4:48:42)

is just saying what is is

[Speaker 1] (4:48:42 - 4:48:48)

and if this is what I have to do at this moment then I might as well do it without resistance

[Speaker 2] (4:48:48 - 4:48:58)

and that is the same as if it's a flat tire or if it is as my friend Kimberly was saying earlier with the girl and her boss my boss is obnoxious

[Speaker 1] (4:48:58 - 4:48:58)

yes

[Speaker 2] (4:48:58 - 4:48:59)

that is what is

[Speaker 1] (4:48:59 - 4:49:00)

yes

[Speaker 2] (4:49:00 - 4:49:04)

I'm not going to change that so let me figure out how to deal with that

[Speaker 1] (4:49:04 - 4:49:29)

yes and and the acceptance really has to be applied only to the present moment if the boss is there sitting there saying whatever he says right at this moment am I able to accept this am I bringing acceptance to this that's right here we are talking more specifically about when you're performing some kind of action right and what is the question is what energy flows into the doing

[Speaker 2] (4:49:29 - 4:49:31)

that's right that's the question

[Speaker 1] (4:49:31 - 4:50:27)

is it the energy of denial or negativity and and once you are you have developed a little bit of sensitivity you can very easily tell by observing other people whether the energy that flows into what they do is was contaminated with negativity or whether it is presence or consciousness yeah flows yeah totally qualitative difference is enormous I mentioned the waiter as an example how does he put the plate on the table is he just doing a job because he wants to get out of there as soon as possible just or just making a living or is he honoring this moment and by honoring this moment he's honoring you he's honoring life and something flows into the simple movement of putting a plate on the table just as one simple example right that changes the entire environment around him too yeah

[Speaker 2] (4:50:27 - 4:51:24)

I had this experience this weekend I had to go somewhere and had to do something and I was very upset with myself because I hadn't handled my schedule better so I had to get into fly into New York and then I my schedule started like eight o'clock in the morning I was very upset that I hadn't given more time for myself because I was already exhausted and I realized that I had to change my attitude change the frequency otherwise I was going to affect the outcome yes of everything I was doing that day if I couldn't have a shift in my own perception about the day so I really literally went and sat with myself in the closet until I could shift my attitude into well I must accept the fact that I didn't look out for myself I didn't prepare better my schedule is now overcrowded that's the way it is how can I move forward and make the best of it yes yeah as I was making myself angrier and you know looking for who I could blame

[Speaker 1] (4:51:24 - 4:51:28)

yes yeah so if and so if you hadn't done this the energy

[Speaker 2] (4:51:28 - 4:51:30)

I realized I was going to ruin my whole day

[Speaker 1] (4:51:30 - 4:51:31)

yes and it was

[Speaker 2] (4:51:31 - 4:51:33)

and everybody I encountered was going to feel that

[Speaker 1] (4:51:33 - 4:51:47)

and and everybody that you were everything that you would have done would have not truly been successful because success depends on what energy flows into what you do okay and and you affect everybody else also with that

[Speaker 2] (4:51:47 - 4:51:58)

and that is why you must change the modality to if you're not accepting enjoying or enthusiastic you need to stop whatever that is and work on changing your mood or don't do it

[Speaker 1] (4:51:58 - 4:52:12)

yes either accept what you do which is the the primary thing or don't do it remove yourself don't do it but don't contribute negative energy or suffering to this world

[Speaker 2] (4:52:12 - 4:52:15)

I know but most people are going to say I'm sure listening saying but I had to do it

[Speaker 1] (4:52:15 - 4:52:17)

I had to do it I have a responsibility

[Speaker 2] (4:52:17 - 4:52:18)

I have to do it

[Speaker 1] (4:52:18 - 4:52:53)

but I don't want to do it well then know that at that moment it is your choice to create unhappiness for yourself and others once you know that that is your choice it might change because it's really to to generate unhappiness for yourself and by implication for others really requires you to be unconscious right but when you make this process conscious and and realize at this moment by resisting what I'm doing I'm creating suffering for myself yes and probably people around me too okay and the reason you come into acceptance again

[Speaker 2] (4:52:53 - 4:53:01)

is because of the energy that you're bringing into it yes yes and the next mode of modality for awakening is enjoyment

[Speaker 1] (4:53:01 - 4:53:02)

yes

[Speaker 2] (4:53:02 - 4:53:04)

that's that's a notch above acceptance

[Speaker 1] (4:53:04 - 4:53:07)

yes different frequency vibrational frequency

[Speaker 2] (4:53:07 - 4:53:10)

because everything is about vibrational frequency

[Speaker 1] (4:53:10 - 4:53:10)

yes

[Speaker 2] (4:53:10 - 4:53:15)

people are bringing energy to everything that they do

[Speaker 1] (4:53:15 - 4:53:15)

yes

[Speaker 2] (4:53:15 - 4:53:16)

okay

[Speaker 1] (4:53:16 - 4:53:32)

now enjoyment is a higher frequency right some things are easier of course to do in the state of enjoyment one might almost say you do them naturally in a state of enjoyment things that you like doing

[Speaker 2] (4:53:32 - 4:53:45)

yeah I love this quote Eckhart on 297 you say on the new earth enjoyment will replace wanting as the motivating power behind people's actions yes when's that gonna happen?

[Speaker 1] (4:53:45 - 4:53:46)

well it has to

[Speaker 2] (4:53:46 - 4:53:48)

not not by July either I don't think

[Speaker 1] (4:53:48 - 4:53:53)

well not in the collective but it can happen in the individual already now

[Speaker 2] (4:53:53 - 4:53:55)

where we do things because we enjoy them

[Speaker 1] (4:53:55 - 4:53:56)

yes

[Speaker 2] (4:53:56 - 4:53:59)

and not because you want more and want more and want more

[Speaker 1] (4:53:59 - 4:53:59)

yes

[Speaker 2] (4:53:59 - 4:54:09)

because so many people have expressed throughout this class on the message boards and in other areas how you get more things and get more things and you want more things and want more things

[Speaker 1] (4:54:09 - 4:54:58)

and that leaves you with an empty space yes filling trying to fill your life up with things eventually you come to an empty space and you feel nothing completely unfulfilled right and so the wanting is the usual thing that comes out out of the egoic state of scarcity or lack which is always there when the ego predominates so I need that in order to fulfill myself in order to find satisfaction I need to achieve this in order to be fully myself this is the underlying assumption right and that is the old energy of wanting and so you go out and it becomes very stressful because you're trying to arrive at that point yes always trying to get away from this moment because the next one promises greater fulfillment

[Speaker 2] (4:54:58 - 4:54:59)

yes

[Speaker 1] (4:54:59 - 4:55:08)

the next one never comes because when it comes it's the now again which is a place you want to get away from completely insane right normal okay

[Speaker 2] (4:55:08 - 4:55:14)

so getting to the place where you can have enjoyment from things because enjoyment does what?

[Speaker 1] (4:55:15 - 4:55:25)

enjoyment brings an enormous empowerment to what you do and it flows into what you do and this is the beginning of creativity which comes out of that

[Speaker 2] (4:55:25 - 4:55:43)

when the creative power of the universe becomes conscious of itself it manifests as joy you don't have to wait for something meaningful to come into your life so that you can finally enjoy what you do there's more meaning in joy than you will ever need the waiting to start living syndrome is one of the most common delusions of the unconscious state

[Speaker 1] (4:55:44 - 4:55:56)

that's important because many people are trapped in that delusion they are waiting for something to come into their lives which will finally give them joy or a sense of aliveness okay

[Speaker 2] (4:55:56 - 4:56:19)

i love this 298 everybody joy does not come from what you do it flows into what you do and thus into this world from deep within you the misperception that joy comes from what you do is normal and is always dangerous because it creates the belief that joy is something that can be derived from something else such as an activity or thing don't people do things that bring them joy?

[Speaker 1] (4:56:20 - 4:57:21)

that's what it looks like but it's the same process that we talked about a little earlier when we talked about manifesting something from within the joy is there it comes from the fullness of life that you already sense within you at this moment okay so for example i have really enjoyed these webcasts yes i've really enjoyed doing these webcasts where does the enjoyment come from? from within you it doesn't come from this table or these lights or the cameras or even doesn't it come from the community of people out there? i've really enjoyed having all these people join us but the joy is within you and then it flows out it reaches everybody even through the cameras it can reach people and trigger joy in others can you all feel my joy?

yes but only within them so it's their own joy when they feel your joy they feel their joy because that's all it's one oh so they're not feeling my joy? no there's no such thing as my joy ultimately oh that's only joy

[Speaker 2] (4:57:21 - 4:57:22)

it's only our joy

[Speaker 1] (4:57:22 - 4:57:28)

yes you could say that there's our collective joy yes yes so you see that the

[Speaker 2] (4:57:28 - 4:58:05)

okay that is exactly what i'm doing the misperception that joy comes from what you do is normal also dangerous creates a belief that joy is something that can be derived from something else you then look to the world to bring you joy bring you happiness but it cannot do that that is why people live in constant frustration you will only in the because the world's not giving them what they think they need you will only enjoy any activity in which you are fully present any activity that is not just a means to an end it isn't the action you perform that you really enjoy but the deep sense of aliveness that flows into it that aliveness is one with who you are i got that

[Speaker 1] (4:58:06 - 4:58:19)

right so i'm sure many people touch that place within as they watch this webcast they watch you talking they watch me talking suddenly they feel that that intense sense of aliveness within

[Speaker 2] (4:58:19 - 4:58:23)

but is that enjoyment the same as um pleasure

[Speaker 1] (4:58:24 - 4:58:25)

no it's not

[Speaker 2] (4:58:25 - 4:58:27)

pleasure i asked that question of myself yesterday

[Speaker 1] (4:58:27 - 4:58:34)

pleasure comes from something without outside of you okay so you derive pleasure from something outside of you

[Speaker 2] (4:58:34 - 4:58:54)

and i ask that because you say this means that when you enjoy doing something you're really experiencing the joy of being in its dynamic aspect that's why anything you enjoy doing connects you with the power behind all creation i see i read that and i thought what about people who enjoy gambling or enjoy

[Speaker 1] (4:58:54 - 4:58:55)

these are pleasures

[Speaker 2] (4:58:55 - 4:59:02)

okay sex or enjoy being sadistic or enjoy harming other people

[Speaker 1] (4:59:02 - 4:59:04)

or enjoy things

[Speaker 2] (4:59:04 - 4:59:06)

the power of creation isn't behind that

[Speaker 1] (4:59:06 - 4:59:16)

or no we sometimes call that enjoy but there is no true joy in it okay it's being addicted to a pleasure something outside that feeds the ego or the plain body

[Speaker 2] (4:59:16 - 4:59:23)

and pleasure by the definition means pleasing me yes which would be ego

[Speaker 1] (4:59:23 - 4:59:24)

yes

[Speaker 2] (4:59:24 - 4:59:58)

got it got it okay let's go to our new earth study group that has gathered every week for the past 10 weeks at borders on michigan hi everybody in chicago we got a warm day in chicago aren't we happy i know i know people are out on the beach 68 degrees yes put our shorts on it's 68 degrees here thank you so much for your enthusiasm and participation we talked to sharon during one of our classes i think it was around the second web class and sharon's standing by now here you're going to be making some big changes

[Speaker 3] (4:59:58 - 5:02:50)

yes i am what what happened well just like eckhart was drawn to california to write the power of now i i i went on idealist.org and just decided to volunteer and someone responded back to me and it's in it's in the hague in netherlands the thing is is i have to do it everything has lined up and i'm just drawn to do this i have student loans because i have two graduate degrees and but yet i have all the money i need to do this i have the support of my support system here um you know through conversations i've had with different members of this uh book club i realized gosh you know what i really want to do this i absolutely want to do this and when i'm not in a space of acceptance i get scared and i say this does not make sense why am i doing this i flew to holland um last week no two weeks ago i've been back a week and i i interviewed with the gentleman i'm going to be working with he is an academic it's a it's an NGO and i i connect with him i i love what i'm actually doing research now but i'm back i'm going back i got an apartment i'm going to be there for some months you know maybe longer and because i feel drawn to do this and i feel encouraged to do this and things have just unfolded where i can absolutely afford to do this then it's all i was downsized it's all everything's lined up and i'm shocked by that i i absolutely when i think consciously of it or i don't know this is not my life this is not this never has happened to me before but whenever i i i go still by the way there was a uh a nick uh at the bodie tree yeah it and i i was sitting in my room in in uh holland crying uh the entire week i hadn't been able to use my computer because of course i used it first day and i ran out of um my code with my battery died on me and downstairs i troubles troubleshooted with the uh why were you crying over nick why were you crying over nick because because he was talking about what i was feeling and worried about i need to be earning i i said

[Speaker 2] (5:02:50 - 5:03:12)

yeah that was a powerful thing that nick said because i think everybody's touched by that i mean anytime ever since that nick comment two weeks ago what eckhart said to nick about worrying i haven't had a worry since i thought well i can think about it i can choose to do something about it but i don't have to worry about it i i thought that was really powerful for all of us really powerful

[Speaker 3] (5:03:12 - 5:03:14)

yes it was powerful

[Speaker 2] (5:03:14 - 5:03:58)

so now you're in a situation sharon don't question things lining up because that is what is supposed to be happening and that is i will say to everybody who um is listening to us today that is what happens when you become more conscious you get to you are aware enough to see things line up because when you move through the world unconsciously you can't even see it line up you're not available to to to be a witness to the alignment and so as soon as you become more awakened and the more awakened you become the more things line up and you end up moving oprah moving with the flow of your life

[Speaker 3] (5:03:58 - 5:05:25)

right but here's what's exciting whenever when i sit and i'm quiet yeah and i i just you know so i was crying and i i i was able to watch it um because i was able to borrow a plug from somebody else in the hotel that was alignment right there so it worked yeah again it lined up so it was great so i i'm sitting on the bed and i'm crying i'm like what am i doing with my life then i'm i'm watching nick talk i'm dying of laughter of course and i'm sure they heard me in the next rooms but i said wow this is fantastic what's really neat is i i after it was over i shut down the computer and i sat and i said okay let's be still you feel kind of strange about this you don't feel you deserve this right now it's that's really what it was and i sat for a while and i said okay let me just sit with this if this is what i feel will it kill me if i don't feel great right now after that i stayed up all night and i just smiled at the sunset you know the sun came up i packed slowly i felt joy and i have felt joy since coming back except for driving in to talk you know to this uh last of our uh meetings because i'm going to miss everyone and i realize also i'm letting go of something is over now for me i'm not going to be going back into finance i know that um and well i want everybody

[Speaker 2] (5:05:25 - 5:05:33)

whatever well thank you so much sharon for sharing i appreciate sharing thank you and everybody at the borders for your commitment to this work and our web series

[Speaker 3] (5:05:33 - 5:06:08)

borders give yourselves a round of applause all our border buddies oh can i say one last thing oprah yeah can i say one last thing this by the way this group of people i i so love them i'm going around saying to everybody i love you i love you this has been the best group i'm i'm taking classes some people here teach and i'm taking classes with them i've spoken to other people and learned so much about not just myself but about the world and and i feel so joined with everyone this has been just the best experience for me and thank you so much for it great thank you thank you again

[Speaker 2] (5:06:08 - 5:06:33)

thank you our borders buddy isn't that the whole point of all of this is that when you become more awakened everybody things begin to flow in your life in a way that they had not before and that's what's supposed to be happening these you know you talk in the book about you know serendipitous encounters i don't think you use the word but things just start happening they line up

[Speaker 1] (5:06:33 - 5:06:51)

yes yes you have to be there for this to happen if you're not there you have to be there in the now so that life can work for you you can't if you deny life by denying them now life can't work it's like shutting closing the shutters the sun can't come in

[Speaker 17] (5:06:51 - 5:06:51)

yeah

[Speaker 1] (5:06:52 - 5:07:21)

the sun doesn't mind but the sun why not open the shutters and let the sun shine in which is the strange thing is that the it's when you no longer deny the present moment then not only do you see all the things that are lining up there to support you it also means more things are coming into your life

[Speaker 2] (5:07:21 - 5:07:21)

absolutely

[Speaker 1] (5:07:21 - 5:07:23)

be of assistance

[Speaker 2] (5:07:23 - 5:07:24)

absolutely

[Speaker 1] (5:07:24 - 5:07:26)

and so that's wonderful once you

[Speaker 2] (5:07:26 - 5:07:31)

evolutionary impulse of the universe yes yes rises up to me yes it does

[Speaker 1] (5:07:31 - 5:07:54)

it does not mean that you will never again encounter challenges right or or if you have a if you want to have a certain course of action you want to go from here to there always of course being conscious that the step you're taking at this moment is the most important step but you might still want to go from here to there but it does reduce the fear

[Speaker 2] (5:07:54 - 5:08:00)

oh yes it does reduce the fear yes because you know you can always bring your sense of presence to the whatever the moment is

[Speaker 1] (5:08:00 - 5:08:01)

yes

[Speaker 2] (5:08:01 - 5:08:02)

and that you'll be all right

[Speaker 1] (5:08:02 - 5:08:02)

yes

[Speaker 2] (5:08:02 - 5:08:03)

that's right

[Speaker 1] (5:08:03 - 5:08:38)

and as soon as you encounter a challenge not resist it but immediately come to an acceptance of the new situation and then see how that very often it turns around and becomes actually helpful yes in the same way that a martial arts master always uses the opposing energy he never the martial arts master does not fight against he uses the opponent's energy and gives into it and he wins by not by yielding to the oncoming energy

[Speaker 2] (5:08:38 - 5:08:41)

knowing how to surrender to the right yes oncoming energy

[Speaker 1] (5:08:41 - 5:08:41)

yeah

[Speaker 2] (5:08:41 - 5:08:56)

yes absolutely a question that we get asked all the time is how old is Eckhart? how old are you?

this body is 60 years old wow and why did you say this body?

[Speaker 1] (5:08:57 - 5:09:20)

well I don't feel that I am this age I mean if you look within nobody feels that it's only if you identify with the body that you believe that you are a certain age the consciousness that I am is ageless the consciousness that you are is ageless and you I'm sure you also feel that there's inside your consciousness which has nothing to do with the age of the physical body

[Speaker 2] (5:09:21 - 5:09:37)

do you do something for your skin? no these are all the questions that we have to ask of the 10th lesson because people write in and they say that Eckhart has such glowy skin is there something you do especially for your skin Eckhart?

[Speaker 1] (5:09:37 - 5:09:53)

well one confession I need to make here is well my skin is usually fine I'm happy with my skin but here yes we have a very good makeup artist who does something to my skin before I come out here really? yeah Stella

[Speaker 2] (5:09:53 - 5:10:00)

Stella does so you're wearing like a little powder or something no whatever yeah yeah whatever

[Speaker 1] (5:10:00 - 5:10:51)

but my skin is fine I mean it's I'm happy with it and if you don't if you don't accumulate a lot of past inside then the aging process slows down quite a bit really say that again if you do not accumulate a lot of past inside your psyche by hanging on to past identifying with my past deriving a sense of self from past talking about the past thinking about the past then you carry this burden of past but if you let go of that past and focus primarily on present moment then the aging process I believe that and I've seen it in some people who are present the aging process of the body actually slows down considerably wow so six six oh yeah

[Speaker 2] (5:10:51 - 5:10:58)

your body is six oh years old yeah don't look at it you don't do anything like color your hair or anything

[Speaker 1] (5:10:58 - 5:10:58)

no

[Speaker 2] (5:10:58 - 5:11:10)

you don't okay no Botox okay yeah wouldn't we be just a little disappointed to find out Eckhart Mr. No Ego is Botox

[Speaker 1] (5:11:11 - 5:11:12)

what is that

[Speaker 2] (5:11:12 - 5:11:28)

what is Botox never mind it's too hard to explain what it is what is that can't even explain it now let's go to Denise who's Skyping us from her home office in Seattle, Washington Denise has a question that a lot of viewers have also asked Denise go ahead

[Speaker 7] (5:11:28 - 5:11:30)

hi Oprah hi Eckhart

[Speaker 11] (5:11:30 - 5:11:30)

hello hi

[Speaker 7] (5:11:30 - 5:11:42)

so when I go to bed and I'm feeling conscious and aware why then do I still have nightmares and do I have an ego while I'm while I'm sleeping good question

[Speaker 1] (5:11:46 - 5:12:20)

well some dreams are dreams that process things that haven't been faced completely during the day so many kinds of dreams are processing dreams and then there are other dreams that bring up different energies there can be pain body coming into a dream ego can come into the dream because normally in a dream you are not conscious that you are dreaming exceptional circumstances you may be I don't know whether you're ever conscious in the dream that you are dreaming are you

[Speaker 7] (5:12:21 - 5:12:22)

I can't remember

[Speaker 1] (5:12:23 - 5:13:19)

probably not so it is quite possible sometimes for the pain body to come up in a dream and the character that you represent in the dream is most likely an aspect of your ego ego in a dream of course you're completely identified with what's happening in the dream and there is usually and this is why I asked you this question there's usually an absence of the aware space where you are aware that you are a character in the dream and usually so you can have the awareness in your daily life here this is what this is all about is to live in a way so that you have a dimension in your life that so in the background of your life there's always the aware presence from there you are conscious of whatever you are doing whatever your mind is saying in a dream that's missing you don't have the level of awareness

[Speaker 2] (5:13:20 - 5:13:33)

unless you're conscious in the dream which I dream dreams and I'm conscious in the dream yes and I can say I can be in a dream and then say oh I'm dreaming now yes and if it's not a dream I want to be in I'll say gotta get out of here

[Speaker 1] (5:13:33 - 5:13:37)

that's nice yeah yeah or you could say in a dream okay I'm dreaming I can do anything

[Speaker 2] (5:13:37 - 5:13:49)

yeah I think I'll fly now but you don't do that in your dreams right so the question is whether or not your dreams are your ego sometimes they are not did you not also say well you did say in the book that sometimes when we dream

[Speaker 1] (5:13:49 - 5:14:08)

we go back to source yes yeah yes well there I talk about dreamless sleep yes because as you know when you sleep you have the dream stage which you go in and out of periodically and then occasionally you have the deep sleep state of dream sleep

[Speaker 2] (5:14:08 - 5:14:21)

say that on 282 I read that earlier each night without knowing it you return to the unmanifested source of all life when you enter the stage of deep dreamless sleep and then re-emerge again in the morning replenish so you've gone back to source energy

[Speaker 1] (5:14:21 - 5:14:32)

yes yes yes that's so it does help what do you do before going to sleep is that when you the last let's say the last 20 minutes or so what you're not watching the news are you

[Speaker 5] (5:14:33 - 5:14:38)

no I'm reading the new earth and so okay okay but even that

[Speaker 1] (5:14:39 - 5:15:30)

that's good but even that I would put it aside just for some minutes before you actually go to sleep so that there can be a space inside you rather than words and some of the words may actually help you get in touch with that space but then a time comes when you put the book aside and the best the most powerful the most helpful way of going into sleep is by lying on your back flat arms stretched out and put attention into the inner energy field of your body and feel the aliveness from your toes to the tip of your head scan your body with your attention a few times and then feel the entire energy field of the body as a single field of energy and it's

[Speaker 2] (5:15:30 - 5:17:11)

very it's very beautiful to that has helped me a lot that's actually since you said that about three classes ago has helped me do much better sleeping what I occurred is also I think emphasizing here for you Denise is that being more present in every moment of the day with whatever is going on in your life will allow you to not to have to deal with whatever you didn't deal with during the day in your dreams because dreams are often the manifestation of your you know unconscious or subconscious mind trying to work things out that you didn't fully work out in the day that you didn't work out and so again the answer is being present with whatever is going on dealing with whatever needs to be dealt with in the moment so that it doesn't show up later on in your dreams and I do that particularly if you know I don't I am not a television watcher because I'm on television like the cobbler's children has no shoes but if I happen to be in a room and walk into a room and the television's on and it's something particularly disturbing image rather than flip from that image or try to deny that I saw that image I will literally take it in I will accept what I have seen and deal with it in my mind so that it doesn't show up later on in a dream and and and frighten me or disturb me you know so I try to deal with whatever is going to be disturbing when it is happening so that I don't have to process it later yes you know it's good very good yeah I hope that helps thank you that makes sense thank you well thank you thank you because yeah the dreams are just unmanifested

[Speaker 1] (5:17:11 - 5:17:35)

stuff yes that you didn't deal with yes yeah occasionally it happens that one has a deeper dream but they tend to be more rare where you have might have a sudden insight coming into a dream that you didn't have before a sudden realization or some kind of dream images that come that have a symbolic meaning in your life and are telling you something that can happen occasionally

[Speaker 2] (5:17:36 - 5:18:07)

also and that's beautiful when it happens well let's go to the third modality which is we've talked about acceptance yes if you can't bring acceptance enjoyment or enthusiasm and enthusiasm which uh is what kippy from tokyo had brought up earlier is the the the higher vibration of of uh modality for awakening that whenever you are enthusiastic that there is something else that comes into play there's an energy feel created that's bigger than you are yes it's particularly

[Speaker 1] (5:18:07 - 5:18:28)

it's an energy that is a is of a creative kind an energy that creates something brings something into this world I wouldn't say it's necessarily of a higher frequency frequency it's a more powerful frequency because it it's the outgoing movement that is connected however with the source

[Speaker 2] (5:18:28 - 5:18:48)

yeah and again we say that that is the kind of enthusiasm that's just not wild external enthusiasm but enthusiasm born of the spirit enthusiasm born of consciousness yes yeah we're not just talking about going to a bears game standing out there screaming for your team no that's that's

[Speaker 1] (5:18:48 - 5:19:51)

excitement uh it's a sometimes the ego sometimes looks for states of excitement like that as substitutes for feeling the being for being out of touch with being then the ego looks for substitutes and excitement is one of them excitement sometimes through the media through watching the violent film or excitement through whatever um so acceptance then there are no clear dividing lines between these three modalities sometimes acceptance suddenly shifts into enjoyment and sometimes enjoyment shifts into enthusiasm right uh so if you let's say you're doing something that before you would have resented and suddenly you are able to realize okay there's resentment and denial inside me let's see if I can accept that I have to do this right now and so suddenly you bring acceptance to it and as you bring acceptance it and you're actually beginning to enjoy what you're doing yeah that is absolutely true this thing I had to

[Speaker 2] (5:19:51 - 5:20:30)

tell you I had to do this weekend I first was resenting it I went and sat in the closet with myself so I could change my attitude I decided I'm going to accept it and during the process of it I decided let me be 100 present and see what happens if I could just be one and that was my focus just to be 100 present and I started getting the kick out of it yes yeah yes yeah that's what we're skyping again with a study group that has gathered at the Bodhi tree bookstore in West Hollywood hi everybody hi everybody and Nick I see Nick there okay who's at the microphone

[Speaker 5] (5:20:31 - 5:21:20)

is that Tatiana hi Tatiana has a question yes okay go ahead yes I do it's about acceptance and Eckhart says that uh acceptance looks like a passive state and I do have a big problem with that because sometimes I can't I I feel like I accept what is more and more in my life but at times I feel like I have to be proactive and I have to do something and at the same time I know that I have to step back and and be aware and be in the moment and that creates even more stress like I'm not getting it like I'm doing it wrong uh and I feel like a loser sometimes I feel like I'm not getting it so how do I make it go away like this guilt of you should know better oh well

[Speaker 1] (5:21:20 - 5:23:12)

that's an additional question that's an additional question so the first one is okay let's deal with the first part and the first part is the first part is that you believe that when you're in a state of acceptance uh you are no longer very effective that you cannot act effectively anymore is that what you believe absolutely no that's not the case that's a wrong view of what acceptance means and this is why we've been talking about bringing acceptance into what you are doing so that acceptance is not separate from doing acceptance for it to be complete true acceptance needs to flow into the doing rather than take you away from the doing and say okay there's nothing I can do in some cases of course there is nothing you can do in certain situations in which case you simply accept at this moment there's nothing I can do there are other situations where you can do something where doing actually the situation requires you if you truly respond to the situation in the present moment it requires you to take action to do something and then something for you to experiment with now from now on is to see if you break can bring this energy field of acceptance and act out of that so that the action doesn't come out of inner resistance or a neediness or denial or denial or anger it comes out of a more peaceful state and then you will experience how powerful your action can actually be yeah did you get that Tatiana that acceptance

[Speaker 2] (5:23:12 - 5:23:40)

flows into the doing I think everybody who uh is misunderstanding is thinking that acceptance means that I'm saying this moment is okay and so I have to live with it and then do nothing with it or be passive he's saying you must first in in one of the earlier classes you use the example of the of the of the bus in the mud the wheels are in the mud yes or you are I'm stuck in the

[Speaker 1] (5:23:40 - 5:23:45)

mud let's say I'm walking out somewhere and suddenly I'm stuck in the mud to my knees

[Speaker 2] (5:23:45 - 5:23:58)

you're stuck in the mud to your knees you must first accept that you're stuck in the mud to your you can't curse the fact that you're stuck in the mud to your knees you can't deny that you're stuck in the mud to your knees you can't the energy that you spend wanting not to be stuck in the mud to

[Speaker 1] (5:23:58 - 5:24:03)

your knees is all wasted energy and it gets you stuck more deeply gets you stuck more if you're

[Speaker 2] (5:24:03 - 5:24:17)

struggling you must accept and let the acceptance that you're stuck in the mud on your knees flow into now what do I do to get myself out of the mud yes and this now what do I do is a state of alert

[Speaker 1] (5:24:17 - 5:25:00)

attention yes so you it and that's a high frequency it's a state of it comes up okay you almost listen it's not not an auditory listening but I'm using the analogy of listening it's a state of alert attention what do I do now and suddenly okay there's a moment of space you don't know and then out of that you do the doing arises spontaneously or a thought comes into your head that tells you what to do and that'll be empowered and that's your practice with little things first perhaps practice with things that usually you don't like doing so you bring a little bit of resistance to it even simple things you might not like going to the supermarket or you might not like

[Speaker 2] (5:25:01 - 5:25:13)

driving to work or whatever it is accepting what is that's what acceptance means I accept what is in this moment and now we'll decide what do I do to change this moment yes but I won't deny this

[Speaker 1] (5:25:13 - 5:26:16)

moment for what it is or wish that it was something else yeah and you won't feel guilty Tatiana yeah now yes now can we come to the second part or the second question which is your mind is telling you something that you are not good enough yes like I'm doing it wrong yes so there's nothing wrong you're you now know what to do and don't believe your mind when it tells you you can't do it you're not good enough these are things that often the mind will throw up especially when people try to be present or to become to be still the mind will say not now because I've too much on my mind I've got too much to think I can't do it not now possibly not now maybe tomorrow I'll try again yes yes it happens to me all the time the mind will always tell you why you cannot be present now because the mind doesn't like presence because it's the end of the mind yeah Tatiana and everybody

[Speaker 2] (5:26:16 - 5:26:59)

at the Bodhi tree thank you so much Nick see what a powerful influence you've had for your you're worrying about Nick's worried about his bill Sharon's in the hotel room crying because Nick's worried about his bill unbelievable everybody at the Bodhi tree thank you so much for for your sense of community Bodhi buddies thank you our Bodhi buddies thank you so much Tatiana so do you think that in these 10 weeks we have evolved I know somebody last week had a problem with the word evolution but do you think in these past weeks this community our new tribe of new earth readers we've evolved to a higher level of consciousness a new way of being in the world

[Speaker 1] (5:26:59 - 5:29:14)

yes I believe a new earth yes I believe for many people it's been an opening so that this suddenly this new dimension has come into their lives and once it has come into your life there's no going back it can be obscured for a while if you get identified with the mind again or with the pain body because don't you have to work on it all the time that helps even if you don't work on it it's there and eventually something will then happen in your life that will put you back in touch with it it could be a crisis but my recommendation is not to wait for a crisis in your life that forces you to become present again but to choose presence as much as possible in your daily life to choose the present moment to always check inside what your relationship is with the present moment the primordial question what's my relationship with this moment is it friendly or is it dysfunctional and that tells you everything if it's dysfunctional it means your future is going to manifest that if it's friendly open and accepting then the so-called future is going to manifest that it's as simple as that do you ever have problems eckhart do you have problems no i don't create problems challenges happen always you don't get life will always challenge you in one way or another and that is good but there's no need to transform the challenges of life into problems by dwelling on things mentally if you cannot take any action at this moment to turn things around in your mind which is where worry comes in related to worry is problem making it's the it's a mental problem making so i don't have problems but not because there are no challenges in my life because no matter what stage in life you reach there's always some kind of challenge right life is designed in that way the world is not here to make you conscious sorry the world is not here to make you happy right it's here to make you conscious yes and

[Speaker 2] (5:29:14 - 5:29:46)

when you bring consciousness into your life for all of those who um have been conflicted over the past weeks about their religious beliefs when you bring consciousness into your life what you're really saying is that you're bringing in allowing the spirit of that which is god to flow through you and be the preeminent force in your life isn't that what you're saying yes yes yes it's no longer the little me the little me yeah you are connecting yourself to the bigger

[Speaker 1] (5:29:46 - 5:30:14)

sorts to the source of all things yes and let it then flow through you and then this is for example where creativity comes into your life it's all create true creativity can only come in when you let that dimension into your life so the source energy manifests through you and creativity can start with a little thing like even a tiny creative thought or some new way of looking at

[Speaker 2] (5:30:14 - 5:30:56)

something is already a sign of creativity but most important it's recognizing that when you can be conscious of the consciousness when you bring the presence of that which is consciousness or the spirit of a higher power or the spirit of god into your life and you allow that to direct your path that then all things come to you as they should yes yeah you that's how you create the flow yes that's the flow entering the flow yeah and that is how you say um a new species is arising on the planet it is arising now and we are it yes yes this is such a enormous shift in

[Speaker 1] (5:30:57 - 5:31:24)

consciousness that's happening it's almost this is why i use that expression it's almost as if we were transforming into a new species for the first time a conscious species it's almost as if humanity was only now beginning to actually wake up yes but mick would you share with the rest of the audience

[Speaker 2] (5:31:24 - 5:31:58)

at the end of this um just before we started this class uh i had said a thank you to all the the crews who made this possible and oprah.com all the oprah.com staff who's worked so hard the past 10 weeks and our book club staff and producers and everybody uh we had a thank you to everybody and eckhart because of my my book and the condition of my book presented me with a leather bound copy of a new earth would you share with them what you wrote in my book i wrote a little uh the little

[Speaker 1] (5:31:58 - 5:32:57)

poem that i also quote in chapter 10 by the persian poet hafez which starts i am a hole in the flute that the christ's breath moves through listen to this music that's the poem i am a hole in the flute i'm not the flute i'm a hole in the flute that the christ's breath god's breath moves through listen to this music so i wrote this little poem and i said to oprah she was a wonderful hole that energy is moving through her and the world is listening to this music thank you for allowing

[Speaker 2] (5:32:57 - 5:33:38)

me to do that with this magnificent piece of work that you've given to us through your words and obviously you are the whole also yes for which christ's breath the breath of god the breath of all energy and creation flowed through you in order for you to write this i mean as i have read it over and over again now on my fourth reading i i marvel at how you were able to put these sentences together in such a way that they connect to have connected to me and to um all of you all around the world so yes thank you for this experience thank you and everybody else

[Speaker 1] (5:33:38 - 5:33:46)

of course is also that in essence you are the opening for that dimension to come into this

[Speaker 2] (5:33:46 - 5:35:37)

world that's right and anything that we do that is creative or is successful or is good comes from that source flowing through us yes it is not of our doing no but of the greater doing yes of consciousness so i want to thank you all for being a part of this really magnificent journey it's been um a part of what i know is my life's calling to be able to be the hole for all of this to flow through so i especially want to thank you and uh you and kim for coming to chicago these past 10 weeks every single week to share a new earth with all of us as i said earlier i really encourage all of you to let this be your summer rereading book um and if you've enjoyed it you should pass it on there's no greater gift than sharing it that's why i wanted to share it with you all there's no greater gift than sharing it with somebody that you care about and having their lives also be awakened and transformed by the words that point you in the direction of the experience of awakening so you can all begin to re-watch our webcast this summer uh please join me next monday may 12th for the start of my soul series webcast because so many people said what do we do now here on oprah.com i'll be talking to dr jill bolty taylor she's the brain scientist who had a catastrophic stroke and experienced much of what we've been talking about in our new earth webcast our soul series will continue throughout the summer with spiritual thinkers and authors from every walk of life so i hope you'll keep mondays reserved for oprah.com tonight's class will be available on demand tomorrow for free here at oprah.com and if you want to download or watch any of our other classes you can do that tomorrow at oprah.com and of course itunes it's free because of the generous support of nature made soft gel vitamins what are we going

[Speaker 1] (5:35:37 - 5:36:09)

to do next monday another way of being able to continue to connect with the energy would be perhaps one is rereading this book of course not necessarily from the beginning just opening it places that you've outlined yeah yes and also i there are lots of uh i've done retreats and talks so on my website people can get talks or retreats and just listening to a talk like two or three hour talk can get put you back in touch with this with the presence that's right and you can always

[Speaker 2] (5:36:09 - 5:36:25)

download load the webcast yes yes and uh we'll be back in the fall there's no telling what we'll do that's right there's no telling this is just the beginning so thank you all and again as gandhi said let's all go out in the world and be the change we want to see yes thank you yes thank you

[Speaker 1] (5:36:28 - 5:36:29)

great

2008-Eckhart Tolle Oprah A New Earth Audiobook Podcast Chapter01

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 39:53)

Chapter 1 The Flowering of Human Consciousness Evocation Earth, 114 million years ago, one morning just after sunrise. The first flower ever to appear on the planet opens up to receive the rays of the sun. Prior to this momentous event that heralds an evolutionary transformation in the life of plants, the planet had already been covered in vegetation for millions of years.

The first flower probably did not survive for long, and flowers must have remained rare and isolated phenomena, since conditions were most likely not yet favourable for widespread flowering to occur. One day, however, the critical threshold was reached, and suddenly there would have been an explosion of colour and scent all over the planet. If a perceiving consciousness had been there to witness it.

Much later, those delicate and fragrant beings we call flowers would come to play an essential part in the evolution of consciousness of another species. Humans would increasingly be drawn to and fascinated by them. As the consciousness of human beings developed, flowers were most likely the first thing they came to value which had no utilitarian purpose for them, that is to say, was not linked in some way to survival.

They provided inspiration to countless artists, poets, and mystics. Jesus tells us to contemplate the flowers and learn from them how to live. The Buddha is said to have given a silent sermon once, during which he held up a flower and gazed at it.

After a while, one of those present, a monk called Mahakasyapa, began to smile. He is said to have been the only one who had understood the sermon. According to legend, that smile, that is to say, realisation, was handed down by twenty-eight successive masters, and much later became the origin of Zen.

Seeing beauty in a flower could awaken humans, however briefly, to the beauty that is an essential part of their own innermost being, their true nature. The first recognition of beauty was one of the most significant events in the evolution of human consciousness. The feelings of joy and love are intrinsically connected to that recognition.

Without fully realising it, flowers would become for us an expression in form of that which is most high, most sacred, and ultimately formless within ourselves. Flowers, more fleeting, more ethereal, and more delicate than the plants out of which they emerged, would become like messengers from another realm, like a bridge between the world of physical forms and the formless. They not only had a scent that was delicate and pleasing to humans, but also brought a fragrance from the realm of spirit.

Using the word enlightenment in a wider sense than the conventionally accepted one, we could look upon flowers as the enlightenment of plants. Any life-form in any realm, mineral, vegetable, animal, or human, can be said to undergo enlightenment. It is, however, an extremely rare occurrence, since it is more than an evolutionary progression.

It also implies a discontinuity in its development, a leap to an entirely different level of being, and, most important, a lessening of materiality. What could be heavier and more impenetrable than a rock, the densest of all forms? And yet, some rocks undergo a change in their molecular structure, turn into crystals, and so become transparent to the light.

Some carbons, under inconceivable heat and pressure, turn into diamonds, and some heavy minerals into other precious stones. Most crawling reptilians, the most earthbound of all creatures, have remained unchanged for millions of years. Some, however, grew feathers and wings and turned into birds, thus defying the force of gravity that had held them for so long.

They did not become better at crawling or walking, but transcended crawling and walking entirely. Since time immemorial, flowers, crystals, precious stones, and birds have held special significance for the human spirit. Like all life-forms, they are, of course, temporary manifestations of the underlying one life, one consciousness.

Their special significance, and the reason why humans feel such fascination for and affinity with them, can be attributed to their ethereal quality. Once there is a certain degree of presence, of still and alert attention in human beings' perceptions, they can sense the divine life-essence, the one indwelling consciousness or spirit in every creature, every life-form, recognize it as one with their own essence, and so love it as themselves. Until this happens, however, most humans see only the outer forms, unaware of the inner essence, just as they are unaware of their own essence and identify only with their own physical and psychological form.

Crystal, precious stone, or bird, however, even someone with little or no presence can occasionally sense that there is more there than the mere physical existence of that form, without knowing that this is the reason why he or she is drawn towards it, feels an affinity with it. Because of its ethereal nature, its form obscures the indwelling spirit to a lesser degree than is the case with other life-forms. The exception to this are all newborn life-forms, babies, puppies, kittens, lambs, and so on.

They are fragile, delicate, not yet firmly established in materiality. An innocence, a sweetness and beauty that are not of this world still shine through them. They delight even relatively insensitive humans.

So when you are alert and contemplate a flower, crystal, or bird, without naming it mentally, it becomes a window for you into the formless. There is an inner opening, however slight, into the realm of spirit. This is why these three enlightened life-forms have played such an important part in the evolution of human consciousness since ancient times.

Why, for example, the jewel in the lotus flower is a central symbol of Buddhism, and a white bird, the dove, signifies the Holy Spirit in Christianity. They have been preparing the ground for a more profound shift in planetary consciousness that is destined to take place in the human species. This is the spiritual awakening that we are beginning to witness now.

The purpose of this book. Is humanity ready for a transformation of consciousness, an inner flowering so radical and profound that compared to it the flowering of plants, no matter how beautiful, is only a pale reflection? Can human beings lose the density of their conditioned mind structures and become like crystals or precious stones, so to speak, transparent to the light of consciousness?

Can they defy the gravitational pull of materialism and materiality and rise above identification with form which keeps the ego in place and condemns them to imprisonment within their own personality? The possibility of such a transformation has been the central message of the great wisdom teachings of humankind. The messengers, Buddha, Jesus and others, not all of them known, were humanity's early flowers.

They were precursors, rare and precious beings. A widespread flowering was not yet possible at that time, and their message became largely misunderstood and often greatly distorted. It certainly did not transform human behavior, except in a small minority of people.

Is humanity more ready now than at the time of those early teachers? Why should this be so? What can you do, if anything, to bring about or accelerate this inner shift?

What is it that characterizes the old egoic state of consciousness, and by what science is the new emerging consciousness recognized? These and other essential questions will be addressed in this book. More important, this book itself is a transformational device that has come out of the arising new consciousness.

The ideas and concepts presented here may be important, but they are secondary. They are no more than signposts pointing towards awakening. As you read, a shift takes place within you.

This book's main purpose is not to add new information or beliefs to your mind or to try to convince you of anything, but to bring about a shift in consciousness, that is to say, to awaken. In that sense, this book is not interesting. Interesting means you can keep your distance, play around with ideas and concepts in your mind, agree or disagree.

This book is about you. It will change your state of consciousness, or it will be meaningless. It can only awaken those who are ready.

Not everyone is ready yet, but many are, and with each person who awakens, the momentum in the collective consciousness grows, and it becomes easier for others. If you don't know what awakening means, read on. Only by awakening can you know the true meaning of that word.

A glimpse is enough to initiate the awakening process, which is irreversible. For some, that glimpse will come while reading this book. For many others who may not even have realized it, the process has already begun.

This book will help them recognize it. For some, it may have begun through loss or suffering. For others, through coming into contact with a spiritual teacher or teaching, through reading The Power of Now, or some other spiritually alive and therefore transformational book, or any combination of the above.

If the awakening process has begun in you, the reading of this book will accelerate and intensify it. The beginning is the recognition of the unawakened you, the ego as it thinks, speaks and acts, as well as the recognition of the collectively conditioned mental processes that perpetuate the unawakened state. This is why this book shows the main aspects of the ego and how they operate in the individual as well as in the collective.

This is important for two related reasons. The first is that unless you know the basic mechanics behind the workings of the ego, you won't recognize it, and it will trick you into identifying with it again and again. This means it takes you over, an imposter pretending to be you.

The second reason is that the act of recognition itself is one of the ways in which awakening happens. When you recognize the unconsciousness in you, that which makes the recognition possible is the arising consciousness, is awakening. You cannot fight against the ego and win, just as you cannot fight against darkness.

The light of consciousness is all that is necessary. You are that light, our inherited dysfunction. If we look more deeply into humanity's ancient religions and spiritual traditions, we will find that underneath the many surface differences there are two core insights that most of them agree on.

The words they use to describe those insights differ, yet they all point to a twofold fundamental truth. The first part of this truth is the realization that the normal state of mind of most human beings contains a strong element of what we might call dysfunction or even madness. Certain teachings at the heart of Hinduism perhaps come closest to seeing this dysfunction as a form of collective mental illness.

They call it Maya, the veil of delusion. Ramana Maharshi, one of the greatest Indian sages, bluntly states, The mind is Maya. Buddhism uses different terms.

According to the Buddha, the human mind in its normal state generates dukkha, which can be translated as suffering, unsatisfactoriness or just plain misery. He sees it as a characteristic of the human condition. Wherever you go, whatever you do, says the Buddha, you will encounter dukkha, and it will manifest in every situation sooner or later.

According to Christian teachings, the normal collective state of humanity is one of original sin. Sin is a word that has been greatly misunderstood and misinterpreted. Literally translated from the ancient Greek in which the New Testament was written, to sin means to miss the mark.

As an archer who misses the target, so to sin means to miss the point of human existence. It means to live unskillfully, blindly, and thus to suffer and cause suffering. Again, the term, stripped of its cultural baggage and misinterpretations, points to the dysfunction inherent in the human condition.

The achievements of humanity are impressive and undeniable. We have created sublime works of music, literature, painting, architecture and sculpture. More recently, science and technology have brought about radical changes in the way we live and have enabled us to do and create things that would have been considered miraculous even 200 years ago.

No doubt, the human mind is highly intelligent. Yet its very intelligence is tainted by madness. Science and technology have magnified the destructive impact that the dysfunction of the human mind has upon the planet, other life-forms, and upon humans themselves.

That is why the history of the 20th century is where that dysfunction, that collective insanity, can be most clearly recognized. A further factor is that this dysfunction is actually intensifying and accelerating. The First World War broke out in 1914.

Destructive and cruel wars, motivated by fear, greed, and the desire for power, had been common occurrences throughout human history, as had slavery, torture, and widespread violence inflicted for religious and ideological reasons. Humans suffered more at the hands of each other than through natural disasters. By the year 1914, however, the highly intelligent human mind had invented not only the internal combustion engine, but also bombs, machine guns, submarines, flamethrowers, and poison gas.

Intelligence in the service of madness. In static trench warfare in France and Belgium, millions of men perished to gain a few miles of mud. When the war was over in 1918, the survivors looked in horror and incomprehension upon the devastation left behind.

Ten million human beings killed, and many more maimed or disfigured. Never before had human madness been so destructive in its effect, so clearly visible. Little did they know that this was only the beginning.

The number of people who died a violent death at the hand of their fellow humans would rise to more than one hundred million. They died not only through wars between nations, but also through mass exterminations and genocide, such as the murder of twenty million class enemies, spies, and traitors in the Soviet Union under Stalin, or the unspeakable horrors of the Holocaust in Nazi Germany. They also died in countless smaller internal conflicts, such as the Spanish Civil War, or during the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia, when a quarter of that country's population was murdered.

We only need to watch the daily news on television to realize that the madness has not debated, that it is continuing into the 21st century. Another aspect of the collective dysfunction of the human mind is the unprecedented violence that humans are inflicting on other life-forms and the planet itself. The destruction of oxygen-producing forests and other plant and animal life, ill-treatment of animals in factory farms, and poisoning of rivers, oceans, and air.

Driven by greed, ignorant of their connectedness to the whole, humans persist in behavior that, if continued unchecked, can only result in their own destruction. The collective manifestations of the insanity that lies at the heart of the human condition constitute the greater part of human history. It is, to a large extent, a history of madness.

If the history of humanity were the clinical case history of a single human being, the diagnosis would have to be chronic paranoid delusions, a pathological propensity to commit murder and acts of extreme violence and cruelty against his perceived enemies, his own unconsciousness projected outward, criminally insane, with a few brief lucid intervals. Fear, greed, and the desire for power are the psychological motivating forces, not only behind warfare and violence between nations, tribes, religions, and ideologies, but also the cause of incessant conflict in personal relationships. They bring about a distortion in your perception of other people and yourself.

Through them, you misinterpret every situation, leading to misguided action designed to rid you of fear and satisfy your need for more, a bottomless hole that can never be filled. It is important to realize, however, that fear, greed, and the desire for power are not the dysfunctions that we are speaking of, but are themselves created by the dysfunction, which is a deep-seated collective delusion that lies within the mind of each human being. A number of spiritual teachings tell us to let go of fear and desire.

But those spiritual practices are usually unsuccessful. They haven't gone to the root of the dysfunction. Fear, greed, and desire for power are not the ultimate causal factors.

Trying to become a good or better human being sounds like a commendable and high-minded thing to do, yet it is an endeavor you cannot ultimately succeed in unless there is a shift in consciousness. This is because it is still part of the same dysfunction, a more subtle and rarified form of self-enhancement, of desire for more, and a strengthening of one's conceptual identity, one's self-image. You do not become good by trying to be good, but by finding the goodness that is already within you and allowing that goodness to emerge.

But it can only emerge if something fundamental changes in your state of consciousness. The history of communism, originally inspired by noble ideals, clearly illustrates what happens when people attempt to change external reality, create a new earth, without any prior change in their inner reality, their state of consciousness. They make plans without taking into account the blueprint for dysfunction that every human being carries within, the ego, the arising new consciousness.

Most ancient religions and spiritual traditions share the common insight that our normal state of mind is marred by a fundamental defect. However, out of this insight into the nature of the human condition, we may call it the bad news, arises a second insight, the good news of the possibility of a radical transformation of human consciousness. In Hindu teachings, and sometimes in Buddhism also, this transformation is called enlightenment.

In the teachings of Jesus, it is salvation, and in Buddhism it is the end of suffering. Liberation and awakening are other terms used to describe this transformation. The greatest achievement of humanity is not its works of art, science or technology, but the recognition of its own dysfunction, its own madness.

In the distant past, this recognition already came to a few individuals. A man called Gautama Siddhartha, who lived 2600 years ago in India, was perhaps the first who saw it with absolute clarity. Later, the title Buddha was conferred upon him.

Buddha means the awakened one. At about the same time, another of humanity's early awakened teachers emerged in China. His name was Lao Tzu.

He left a record of his teachings in the form of one of the most profound spiritual books ever written, the Tao Te Ching. Of course, the arising of sanity, the beginning of healing and transcendence. A new dimension of consciousness had begun to emerge on the planet, a first tentative flowering.

Those rare individuals then spoke to their contemporaries. They spoke of sin, of suffering, of delusion. They said, They then pointed to the possibility of awakening from the collective nightmare of normal human existence.

They showed the way. The world was not yet ready for them, and yet they were a vital and necessary part of human awakening. Inevitably, they were mostly misunderstood by their contemporaries, as well as by subsequent generations.

Their teachings, although both simple and powerful, became distorted and misinterpreted, in some cases even as they were recorded in writing by their disciples. Over the centuries, many things were added that had nothing to do with the original teachings, but were reflections of a fundamental misunderstanding. Some of the teachers were ridiculed, reviled or killed.

Others came to be worshipped as gods. Teachings that pointed the way beyond the dysfunction of the human mind, the way out of the collective insanity, were distorted and became themselves part of the insanity. And so religions, to a large extent, became divisive rather than unifying forces.

Instead of bringing about an ending of violence and hatred, through the realization of the fundamental oneness of all life, they brought more violence and hatred, more divisions between people, as well as between different religions, and even within the same religion. They became ideologies, belief systems people could identify with and so use them to enhance their false sense of self. Through them, they could make themselves right and others wrong, and thus define their identity through their enemies, the others, the non-believers or wrong-believers, who not infrequently they saw themselves justified in killing.

Man made God in his own image. The eternal, the infinite and unnameable was reduced to a mental idol that you had to believe in and worship as my God or our God. And yet, and yet, in spite of all the insane deeds perpetrated in the name of religion, the truth to which they point still shines at their core.

It still shines, however dimly, through layers upon layers of distortion and misinterpretation. It is unlikely, however, that you will be able to perceive it there unless you have at least already had glimpses of that truth within yourself. Throughout history, there have always been rare individuals who experienced a shift in consciousness and so realized within themselves that towards which all religions point.

To describe that non-conceptual truth, they then used the conceptual framework of their own religions. Through some of those men and women, schools or movements developed within all major religions that represented not only a rediscovery, but in some cases an intensification of the light of the original teaching. This is how Gnosticism and Mysticism came into existence in early and medieval Christianity.

Sufism in the Islamic religion. Hasidism and Kambala in Judaism. Advaita Vedanta in Hinduism.

Zen and Dzogchen in Buddhism. Most of these schools were iconoclastic. They did away with layers upon layers of deadening conceptualization and mental belief structures.

And for this reason, most of them were viewed with suspicion and often hostility by the established religious hierarchies. Unlike mainstream religion, their teachings emphasized realization and inner transformation. It is through those esoteric schools or movements that the major religions regained the transformative power of the original teachings, although in most cases only a small minority of people had access to them.

Their numbers were never large enough to have any significant impact on the deep collective unconsciousness of the majority. Over time, some of those schools themselves became too rigidly formalized or conceptualized to remain effective. Religion.

What is the role of the established religions in the arising of the new consciousness? Many people are already aware of the difference between spirituality and religion. They realize that having a belief system, a set of thoughts that you regard as the absolute truth, does not make you spiritual no matter what the nature of those beliefs is.

In fact, the more you make your thoughts, your beliefs, into your identity, the more cut off you are from the spiritual dimension within yourself. Many religious people are stuck at that level. They equate truth with thought, and as they are completely identified with thought, their mind, they claim to be in sole possession of the truth in an unconscious attempt to protect their identity.

They don't realize the limitations of thought. Unless you believe, think, exactly as they do, you are wrong in their eyes, and in the not-too-distant past they would have felt justified in killing you for that. And some still do, even now.

The new spirituality, the transformation of consciousness, is arising to a large extent outside of the structures of the existing institutionalized religions. There were always pockets of spirituality even in mind-dominated religions, although the institutionalized hierarchies felt threatened by them and often tried to suppress them. A large-scale opening of spirituality outside of the religious structures is an entirely new development.

In the past, this would have been inconceivable, especially in the West, the most mind-dominated of all cultures, where the Christian church had a virtual franchise on spirituality. You couldn't just stand up and give a spiritual talk or publish a spiritual book unless you were sanctioned by the church, and if you were not, they would quickly silence you. But now, even within certain churches and religions, there are signs of change.

It is heart-warming, and one is grateful for even the slightest signs of openness, such as Pope John Paul II visiting a mosque as well as a synagogue. Partly as a result of the spiritual teachings that have arisen outside the established religions, but also due to an influx of the ancient Eastern wisdom teachings, a growing number of followers of traditional religions are able to let go of identification with form, dogma and rigid belief systems and discover the original depths that is hidden within their own spiritual tradition at the same time as they discover the depths within themselves. They realize that how spiritual you are has nothing to do with what you believe but everything to do with your state of consciousness. This, in turn, determines how you act in the world and interact with others.

Those unable to look beyond form become even more deeply entrenched in their beliefs, that is to say, in their mind. We are witnessing not only an unprecedented influx of consciousness at this time, but also an entrenchment and intensification of the ego. Some religious institutions will be open to the new consciousness, others will harden their doctrinal positions and become part of all those other man-made structures through which the collective ego will defend itself and fight back.

Some churches, sects, cults or religious movements are basically collective egoic entities, as rigidly identified with their mental positions as the followers of any political ideology which is close to any alternative interpretation of reality. But the ego is destined to dissolve and all its ossified structures, whether they be religious or other institutions, corporations or governments, will disintegrate from within, no matter how deeply entrenched they appear to be. The most rigid structures, the most impervious to change, will collapse first.

This has already happened in the case of Soviet Communism. How deeply entrenched, how solid and monolithic it appeared, and yet within a few years it disintegrated from within. No one foresaw this.

All were taken by surprise. There are many more such surprises in store for us. The urgency of transformation.

When faced with a radical crisis, when the old way of being in the world, of interacting with each other and with the realm of nature doesn't work anymore, when survival is threatened by seemingly insurmountable problems, an individual life-form or species will either die or become extinct or rise above the limitations of its condition through an evolutionary leap. It is believed that the life-forms on this planet first evolved in the sea. When there were no animals yet to be found on land, the sea was already teeming with life.

Then, at some point, one of the sea creatures must have started to venture onto dry land. It would perhaps crawl a few inches at first, then, exhausted by the enormous gravitational pull of the planet, it would return to the water where gravity is almost non-existent and where it could live with much greater ease. And then it tried again and again and again, and much later would adapt to life on land, grow feet instead of fins, develop lungs instead of gills.

It seems unlikely that a species would venture into such an alien environment and undergo an evolutionary transformation unless it was compelled to do so by some crisis situation. There may have been a large sea area that got cut off from the main ocean when the water gradually receded over thousands of years, forcing fishes to leave the habitat and evolve. A radical crisis that threatens our very survival.

This is humanity's challenge now. The dysfunction of the egoic human mind, recognized already more than 2,500 years ago by the ancient wisdom teachers and now magnified through science and technology, is for the first time threatening the survival of the planet. Until very recently, the transformation of human consciousness, also pointed to by the ancient teachers, was no more than a possibility, realized by a few rare individuals here and there, irrespective of cultural or religious background.

A widespread flowering of human consciousness did not happen because it was not yet imperative. A significant portion of the earth's population will soon recognize, if they haven't already done so, that humanity is now faced with a stark choice. Evolve or die.

A still relatively small but rapidly growing percentage of humanity is already experiencing within themselves the breakup of the old egoic mind patterns and the emergence of a new dimension of consciousness. What is arising now is not a new belief system, a new religion, spiritual ideology or mythology. We are coming to the end not only of mythologies but also of ideologies and belief systems.

The change goes deeper than the content of your mind, deeper than your thoughts. In fact, at the heart of the new consciousness lies the transcendence of thought, the newfound ability of rising above thought, of realizing a dimension within yourself that is infinitely more vast than thought. You then no longer derive your identity, your sense of who you are, from the incessant stream of thinking that in the old consciousness you take to be yourself.

What a liberation to realize that the voice in my head is not who I am. Who am I then? The one who sees that.

The awareness that is prior to thought, the space in which the thought or the emotion or sense perception happens. Ego is no more than this, identification with form, which primarily means thought forms. If evil has any reality, and it has a relative, not an absolute reality, this is also its definition, complete identification with form, physical forms, thought forms, emotional forms.

This results in a total unawareness of my connectedness with the whole, my intrinsic oneness with every other as well as with the source. This forgetfulness is original sin, suffering, delusion. When this delusion of utter separateness underlies and governs whatever I think, say and do, what kind of world do I create?

To find the answer to this, observe how humans relate to each other, read a history book or watch the news on television tonight. If the structures of the human mind remain unchanged, we will always end up recreating fundamentally the same world, the same evils, the same dysfunction, a new heaven and a new earth. The inspiration for the title of this book came from a Bible prophecy that seems more applicable now than at any other time in human history.

It occurs in both the Old and the New Testament and speaks of the collapse of the existing world order and the arising of a new heaven and a new earth. We need to understand here that heaven is not a location but refers to the inner realm of consciousness. This is the esoteric meaning of the word and this is also its meaning in the teachings of Jesus.

Earth, on the other hand, is the outer manifestation in form which is always a reflection of the inner. Collective human consciousness and life on our planet are intrinsically connected. A new heaven is the emergence of a transformed state of human consciousness and a new earth is its reflection in the physical realm.

Since human life and human consciousness are intrinsically one with the life of the planet, as the old consciousness dissolves, there are bound to be synchronistic geographic and climatic natural upheavals in many parts of the planet, some of which we are already witnessing now.

[Speaker 2] (39:57 - 42:11)

Welcome to our very first live worldwide interactive event. We are here tonight breaking new ground. Nothing like this has ever been attempted before.

Right now, you all are online with me from every corner on our planet, places like Albania, Bolivia, Cambodia, Ecuador, Finland, Hong Kong, China, India, Zimbabwe, Australia, Canada, the UK, and the rest of Europe, along with, of course, all 50 states here in our United States of America. Over 139 countries are represented in our class tonight. Welcome to you all.

So I want to get started. This is the most exciting thing I've ever done. I've done a lot of things in my life, but I am most proud of the fact that all of you have joined us in this global community to talk about what I believe is one of the most important subjects and presented by one of the most important books of our time, A New Earth, Awakening to Your Life's Purpose.

I don't think there's anything more important than awakening and also knowing what your purpose is. And for the next 10 weeks, author and spiritual teacher Eckhart Tolle and I will be here in our virtual classroom here on Oprah.com. Every Monday, 8 p.m., beyond time for class, 8 p.m. Central, we're going to be answering your emails. We're going to be having a conversation about each chapter and taking your calls from around the world and your emails from around the world and seeing some of you around the world through our Skype phones. I'm sure you've already noticed that you can type in your questions on the right side of your screen and send that to us instantly. And we will, you know, we have a whole team of people here who are ready, waiting, standing by to take your calls and emails.

And, of course, I'm honored to introduce the author of this great book, A New Earth, Awakening to Your Life's Purpose, Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (42:12 - 42:14)

Thank you. Yeah. Good to be here.

[Speaker 2] (42:14 - 44:35)

How exciting this is. Yeah. It's very good.

Okay, so let's get class started. The way we're going to work the class is that we will have a conversation and take your calls and your questions whenever we feel appropriate. First of all, I wanted to just talk to you about how this book came to you.

I was introduced to this book several months ago when I was interviewing Eckhart Tolle on XM Radio. I have a show on XM Radio. Not many people know about it, but it's called The Soul Series.

And on that show, I get to talk to anybody I choose, and I choose to speak to people who represent this kind of thinking, this genre of spirituality, and we talk about the soul. So I was interviewing Eckhart Tolle several months ago about his book, The Power of Now, because that's really all I knew about Eckhart Tolle was The Power of Now. I call you the father of now, The Power of Now, which that book was a life-changing book for me, given to me many years ago, about eight years ago, by Meg Ryan, who was on the show.

And the producer, Corny, came in and said, well, as I was preparing, she said, there's this other book he's written called A New Earth. And I just had time to thumb through A New Earth and not really give it its due, because I was focused on reading The Power of Now and talking to you about that. And after our interview, started to read this book, and it was absolutely...

I felt the shift that you talk about, that you say on page seven that this will be meaningless to you or you will feel the shift. I started to feel the shift. And one of the things that really occurred to me as I was going through various chapters and having aha, aha, aha moment after another is what a clear...

how clear this message is. What a clear channel it seemed to come through for you. It was like I'd never, you know, didn't know you or hadn't met you in person, even through the radio.

We weren't sitting in the same studio. How did this come to be? How did this come through you, to you?

[Speaker 1] (44:36 - 45:26)

Well, it comes out of the space of stillness. That's where all creative endeavor is born. So it's getting in touch with the stillness within, where there's no mental noise.

And out of that stillness, when the time is right, sometimes an impulse comes, a feeling, a strong sense that something wants to be born into this world. I had the same strong sense before writing The Power of Now. That was 13 years ago when I started writing it.

I had left England. I was living in England. And I had this strong impulse one morning, and I was in England still, knowing I had to move to the west coast of North America without knowing why.

[Speaker 2] (45:28 - 45:29)

This was just a feeling you had.

[Speaker 1] (45:29 - 46:17)

Yes, a strong knowing. So it's not through a decision-making process, just the realization I have to move there. I don't know why, but I have to go.

It was such a total... absolutely no doubt about it. So I moved to Vancouver, and then I took a Greyhound bus to California.

I knew only one or two people. And I said, Why am I here? Three weeks passed.

Somebody put me up in a room near San Francisco, and suddenly I bought a notepad, and suddenly the strong stream came through, and I wrote, What is Enlightenment? The Beginning of the Power of Now. The moment I wrote that, I knew this is the book that wants to be born.

So rather than me wanting to write a book, there was a book that wanted to be written.

[Speaker 2] (46:19 - 46:23)

It's like Michelangelo says, The angel's in the marble, and he just cuts away the marble.

[Speaker 1] (46:25 - 47:30)

I'll come back to that in a second. For most people, that is the approach to what is my purpose, to look at what the greater purpose is. What does the greater purpose want from me?

What does life or God want from me rather than what do I want from life? So that's the starting point. I know that sometimes in new age you have the question, Well, what do you want?

It's fine to ask that question, but a more powerful question is, What does life want from me? How do I fit into the, what is the totality? What is my place within the whole?

So this is how it started, as knowing that this is what life wants from me. The book wants to be born, and the same thing happened later with the new earth. Again, a similar sense of, Oh, there's another book that wants to come.

I didn't know why, because everybody told me, Well, you've said it all in The Power of Now. Why write another book? Intellectually, I couldn't have answered, Why am I writing another book?

And it happened.

[Speaker 2] (47:30 - 47:41)

And it happened. Were you asking life, universal energy? I don't know, what do you call that?

I call it God. What word do you use for that?

[Speaker 1] (47:42 - 47:43)

Consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (47:43 - 47:47)

Were you asking consciousness? Were you saying, What do you want from me?

[Speaker 1] (47:47 - 48:00)

Yes. There was a time, for quite a few years, I lived in England, and I just did some spiritual teaching on a very small scale, sometimes little workshops, and so on.

[Speaker 2] (48:00 - 48:06)

I read in the paper today, in the USA Today, where you said you started out with 10 or 12 people in people's homes.

[Speaker 1] (48:07 - 48:23)

Yes, for quite a while, I would teach in people's living rooms, invited a group of friends, and this was the beginning of informal spiritual teaching. And as I said to the person who interviewed me, this is coming full circle now, because now I'm back in people's living rooms, just more of them.

[Speaker 2] (48:24 - 48:43)

I think we have more than 10 or 12 joining us this evening. And so, the book, would you sit and passages would come to you? Would you actively get up at a certain time and say, I'm going to write today?

Or know what you were going to write before it was written?

[Speaker 1] (48:44 - 49:34)

No, not knowing it beforehand, but every day there was a space for writing. Every morning, and until two in the afternoon or so, the space was set aside for writing. That was the writing space.

And there were days when the flow was not very strong, so maybe only a few lines got written, or even none at all. Nevertheless, I always honored that space of, I'm ready for the writing to happen. I'm not saying that the writing happened automatically.

My mind was involved. It wasn't a channeled book as such. It was inspired, but not channeled.

So it involved my thinking processes too. But the thinking process had to be inspired from something deeper. You can't rely on your thinking processes only to produce something that is powerful and original.

[Speaker 2] (49:35 - 50:02)

So already you've shared with us that in order to awaken to your life's purpose, one of the key things we must do is not try to tell life what our purpose is. Not go around even, I don't know, trying to define for ourselves. Because a lot of people say many times, I've done seminars across the country, and they'll say, I don't know what my purpose is.

You're saying you must ask life what purpose does it have for you.

[Speaker 1] (50:03 - 51:07)

Yes. And the answer may not immediately come. A very important part of asking life so that you can be ready to receive the answer is to practice inviting moments of stillness into your life so that you're not continuously absorbed in the incessant mental noise that we call thinking, most of which is unnecessary and repetitive.

So to find spaces of stillness is vital if you want to get to the place where the answers are, potentially. So for quite a few years when I lived in England and did spiritual teaching on a small scale, sometimes I would say, okay, there's much more that I could do. I said to life, I'm ready.

But life just waited and waited. The answer didn't come for several years until that morning when it said, move. Move.

[Speaker 2] (51:08 - 51:10)

Move to Vancouver.

[Speaker 1] (51:11 - 52:35)

Yes, and why did I have to move to write it there? I didn't realize that. Every place, Vancouver and California, that's where the Power of Now was written.

I was moving back and forth. I didn't have a home as such. I stayed with friends, moving back and forth.

And so only later I realized I had to move because the energy field on the West Coast, this is what I needed for the book to be born. The energy field in England, although I love England, I have a deep inner connection with England, the energy field there was not right for, in my personal case, for this book to come out. So I only realized that after I had to go back to England and then I stayed in a community because I didn't have a home of my own anymore, and I wanted to continue writing, but I couldn't do very much there because I thought, why can't I continue?

The stream stopped. I could only do editing and correction. That was necessary too.

But only when I went back to the West Coast, my visa had expired, I had to go to England, and I went back, immediately the flow came back. And I said, oh, now I know why I had to move. So it's often trusting life when a very strong impulse comes.

But you may have to wait. It doesn't mean that you necessarily immediately obey every impulse because impulses can also come from more superficial levels within yourself.

[Speaker 2] (52:35 - 53:22)

But you were wise enough to know the difference. You had discernment to know the difference. Well, it's so interesting because you, in the beginning of A New Earth, start out talking about a flower.

And I've heard many people who, because I go on the message boards every day, I'm loving you on the message boards, everybody. And many people are saying that they look at flowers differently now. I can certainly say that I do.

And one of the things that you said that struck me when you said that they are representatives of the spiritual realm, and that when you are still, allow yourself to be still with a flower or a crystal or a bird or really anything of nature. Yes. But you used a flower specifically because...

[Speaker 1] (53:22 - 53:47)

Because a flower is... Nature on the whole is a beautiful access point into inner stillness, if you can be there fully present. But a flower is even...

You say messengers from another realm. Yes, like messengers. A flower is very...

much more fragile than a plant. It is more fleeting. Ethereal, I think, is the word.

[Speaker 10] (53:48 - 53:48)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (53:48 - 54:24)

More ethereal. So it has less density to it than most other things. And because of the lack of density, it's almost as if spirit could flow through it more freely.

So when you contemplate a flower without too much interference of the thinking mind to actually truly look, which is what Jesus said by the way, I mean, in churches you hear Jesus saying, look at the lilies of the field. Yes. And so when he said that he wasn't just saying, look at the lilies of the field.

[Speaker 3] (54:24 - 54:25)

He said, look. Aren't they pretty? Yes.

[Speaker 1] (54:25 - 55:03)

He said, look. You really have to look because there is something that they embody something that you also have but because of all your anxiety about tomorrow and your thinking I'm translating very freely now what Jesus said. These flowers are not anxious.

They are not concerned about tomorrow and see how beautiful they are. How God clothes them in such beauty. And you can live like that also.

So he used this natural realm and flowers to get people in touch with the dimension of depth within them.

[Speaker 2] (55:03 - 56:24)

Well, what's very interesting to me about all of this is that when I read that the first time I thought it was, you know, a beautiful passage and then I read it a second time and awakened a little bit more and started to look at nature differently. You know, I have a, you know, live in a lovely space where I'm surrounded by flowers, not in Chicago, but in California. And you know, I always just appreciated the garden.

Aren't they lovely and all the different colors and the roses and all that. And then I decided to move into the garden without naming it. What if I were like a babe?

What if I were a babe? You know, learning what a flower was for the first time. What if I went out under the oaks that I love so much, but I didn't know it was an oak.

I didn't know what to call it. And I shared this in one of our after shows that for the first time, and I've loved trees all of my life and the sense of power and stillness they represent, but by not naming those things in nature that I felt a magical presence. I felt a sense of majesty and power and strength and connection that I'd never felt before.

Because I didn't give it a name.

[Speaker 9] (56:25 - 56:25)

Yes, that's the key.

[Speaker 2] (56:25 - 56:32)

Yes. I didn't give it a name or have a reference for everything that a tree has meant in my life. Isn't it?

[Speaker 1] (56:32 - 56:53)

That's right. So being present with the perception. And this theme runs, perhaps the main theme running through the whole book is that state where the compulsive naming of things, and you start with nature because that's easier to let go of the naming.

Later we'll be talking about that in some future sessions.

[Speaker 2] (56:53 - 56:54)

Stop labeling people.

[Speaker 1] (56:54 - 57:39)

Yes, that's more difficult because people invite the labels. Yes. Because there's so much mind in everybody and they label you and you label them.

But with nature, this is the starting point to find a different relationship to nature. It doesn't mean that you need to forget what you have learned about trees or about flowers. When it's necessary, you can get that knowledge and you'd use it.

Right. But not to be totally in the grip of what you have learned of mental labels, of interpreting mentally, but being able to perceive. One could call it perceive the flower, see it through a background of just stillness.

Just stillness. Which is really consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (57:39 - 58:12)

Well, I will tell you, it's amazing for all of those of you who've tried this and I know some of you have because you've emailed us and said so. But when you start to walk through a park or walk in your backyard or begin to, and you're right, it's easier with nature than with people. And pretend that you don't know or just let yourself be in the space without labeling the things.

It's just everything's vibrating and it's like, you know, scintillating. Everything's exciting.

[Speaker 9] (58:12 - 58:12)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (58:13 - 58:19)

Everything's exciting. A walk through the park becomes exciting and it's the same path you've always taken.

[Speaker 1] (58:19 - 59:05)

Yes. And before, when you were involved in your mind, perhaps you didn't even see it. Never saw it.

Yeah. And so many people are so trapped in this continuous mental noise that absorbs their whole attention all the time. Every thought absorbs this stream of thinking, absorbs their attention.

They don't see that the world around them is vitally alive. So you become, gradually, as people then grow older, the world around them becomes more and more lifeless and dead. Right.

And that happens to them also. And why is that? Because...

That is because you are run by mental abstraction. All the concepts and the thoughts in the head are abstractions. It's not life.

[Speaker 2] (59:05 - 59:14)

So you can't take in the information that's there to be received all around you because you're so... You're in your head.

[Speaker 1] (59:14 - 59:31)

You're in your head. You're not present. So you're lost in thought.

I could say that's the human condition is being lost in thought. And people don't... And that, of course, is the famous, what we call, the voice in the head.

Some people have been asking about.

[Speaker 2] (59:31 - 59:33)

Which we'll be talking a lot about, the voice in the head.

[Speaker 1] (59:33 - 59:37)

Some people say, what voice in the head? It's that one.

[Speaker 2] (59:39 - 59:46)

All right. So Kelly from Alton, Illinois, joins us via Skype. Kelly?

Hi. Hi.

[Speaker 4] (59:47 - 59:56)

What's your question? Thank you for having me. Well, good.

Where are you? Home? I'm at home.

Okay, good. This is the coolest thing.

[Speaker 2] (59:56 - 1:00:07)

Isn't this cool? It is. It's crazy.

It's crazy. That's what I think. It's crazy that we're, like, out here, wherever this is, talking to each other.

Okay. What's your question?

[Speaker 4] (1:00:07 - 1:00:38)

Well, my question is regarding religion and spirituality. I had a Catholic upbringing. I married a Catholic, and we're raising our children this way.

In reading books, such as Tully's, I've really... It's really opened my eyes up to a new way of thinking, a new form of spirituality that doesn't always align with the teachings of Christianity. So my question is to you, Oprah, how have you reconciled these spiritual teachings with your Christian beliefs?

[Speaker 2] (1:00:39 - 1:04:47)

Oh, the question's to me. I was resting, knowing it was going to be about... I've reconciled it because I was able to open my mind about the absolute indescribable hugeness of that which we call God.

I took God out of the box because I grew up in the Baptist church, and there were, you know, rules and, you know, belief systems and doctrine. And I happened to be sitting in church in my late 20s, and I was going to this church where you had to get there at, you know, 8 o'clock in the morning, or you couldn't get a seat, and a very charismatic minister, and everybody was just, you know, into the sermon, and this great minister was preaching about how great God was, and how omniscient and omnipresent and God is everything. And then he said, and the Lord thy God is a jealous God.

And I was, you know, caught up in the rapture of that moment until he said jealous. And something struck me. And I was like, I think about 27 or 28.

I was thinking, God is all. God is omnipresent. God is all.

And God's also jealous. God is jealous of me. And something about that didn't feel right in my spirit, because I believe that God is love, and that God is in all things.

And so, that's when the search for something more than doctrine started to stir within me. And I love this quote that Eckhart has. This is one of my favorite quotes in chapter one, where he says, man made God in his own image, the eternal, the infinite, and unnameable was reduced to a mental idol that you had to believe in and worship as my God or our God.

Now, I think that's very eloquently put by Eckhart Tolle in chapter one. But that is exactly what I was feeling when I was, you know, sitting in church that Sunday listening to the preacher. And, you know, it's been a journey to get to the place where I understand, as I said on the pre-show here, that what I believe is that Jesus came to show us Christ's consciousness.

That Jesus came us to show us the way of the heart, and that what Jesus was saying, that to show us the higher consciousness that we're all talking about here. Jesus came to say, look, I'm going to live in the body, in the human body, and I'm going to show you how it's done. These are some principles and some laws that you can use to live by to know that way.

And when I started to recognize that, that Jesus didn't come in my belief, even as a Christian, I don't believe that Jesus came to start Christianity. So that was also very helpful to me. And as I said earlier in the pre-show here, there was a wonderful book called Discover the Power Within You by Eric Butterworth, which helped me reconcile the two.

So that might be really good for those of you who are Christian and trying to balance the two. What would you say? Because one of the things that Eckhart says in the beginning of this book on page 6 is that this book's main purpose is not to add new information or beliefs to your mind or to try to convince you of anything, but to bring about a shift in consciousness, that is to say, to awaken.

He says that on page 6. And one of the reasons why I appreciate him so much is because he truly isn't out to become your next guru. He doesn't want, you know, all of you who are online with us tonight and those millions who will now hear about this book, he's not interested in being your guru.

Correct?

[Speaker 9] (1:04:47 - 1:04:48)

Yes. Correct.

[Speaker 2] (1:04:48 - 1:05:11)

Yeah. How would you respond to that? That's one of the biggest questions that we have coming into our message boards about the same thing that Kelly is addressing here from Alton about spirituality and religion.

This is not about trying to tell you how to believe. And how do you advise people to reconcile this with their religious beliefs?

[Speaker 1] (1:05:11 - 1:06:47)

Well, religion can be an open doorway into spirituality and religion can be a closed door that prevents you from going deeper. I love reading the New Testament and I also read the Old Testament. Sometimes there's some incredible jewels in there.

And when I went through this inner transformation and for the first time accidentally I picked up a copy of the New Testament at my mother's place and I started reading and I immediately recognized the deep truth that is there and I realized the truth that is deeper, that is expressed in what Jesus said, is much deeper than how the church interprets it. There's a depth to it and it reflects your own depth when you read it. There's no conflict between this teaching, which is purely spiritual, and any religion, because if you go deep enough into your religion then you all get to the same place.

It's a question of going deeper. So there's no conflict here. The important thing is that religion doesn't become an ideology.

I believe this and the moment you say only my belief or our belief is true and you deny other people's beliefs, then you've adopted an ideology. And then religion becomes a closed door. But potentially religion can also be an open door.

[Speaker 2] (1:06:48 - 1:08:42)

Well let me share this with you too, Kelly. There is another book by a woman named Elizabeth Lesser, it's called The Seeker's Guide, where she talks about the new spirituality versus the old. So I just wanted to, this is on page 51 and 52 of Elizabeth Lesser's book called The Seeker's Guide, and she talks about old spirituality versus the new spirituality.

And she says the old was, the old way, is the hierarchy has the authority. Church authorities tell you how to worship in church and how to behave outside of church. The new spirituality is that you are your own best authority.

As you work to know and love yourself you discover how to live a more spiritual life. The old is God and the path to worship him have already been defined and all you need to do is follow the directions. The new is being able to listen within for your own definition of spirituality.

Your deeper longings are your compass on the search. And the old says exactly what Eckhart was saying. That there is only one path.

It's the right way and all other ways are wrong. And the new spirituality says that many paths lead to spiritual freedom and peace. You have a rich array of gems from which to draw illumination.

The world's religious traditions, mythology, psychology, healing methods, scientific wisdom, your own experience and that you can begin to string a necklace all your own. Then she lists other old and new. And so it's really a question of what you were saying to us earlier.

That this material strikes a chord within you. Something in you opens up and once feels alive and is awakened to that. And yet there is the ideology that says what?

To you. What is the conflict for you?

[Speaker 4] (1:08:43 - 1:09:06)

Just thoughts on the afterlife. Things like that. In a lot of books, such as Tole's, we get teachings from Buddhism or Hinduism and those thoughts don't go along with what I was raised to believe as a Christian.

That's been the biggest thing that I've struggled with, I think.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:06 - 1:09:13)

I am a Christian who believes that there are certainly many more paths to God other than Christianity.

[Speaker 4] (1:09:14 - 1:09:14)

Right.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:15 - 1:09:23)

I'm a free-thinking Christian who believes in my way, but I don't believe that it's the only way with six billion people here on the planet.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:24 - 1:09:36)

Right. Another author who might appeal to you, who uses Christian terminology but goes very, very deep using Christian language and Christian teachings, Joel Goldsmith.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:37 - 1:09:37)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:38 - 1:09:40)

Joel Goldstein? Goldsmith.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:40 - 1:09:40)

Oh, Goldsmith.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:40 - 1:09:48)

Joel Goldsmith. Any book by Joel Goldsmith, I think you would try that and see how deep the Christian teaching can be.

[Speaker 4] (1:09:50 - 1:09:52)

Okay. Well, thank you very much.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:52 - 1:10:23)

Thanks, Kelly. You're our first Skyper. Great.

I didn't know what Skype was until this. Now we're Skyping all over. We have a Chicago study group watching our webcast together at Borders.

Hello. Borders flagship store right there on Michigan Avenue. Hi, everybody.

Hello. I know. Listen, I know it's my ego, but I just can't keep saying, stop saying how cool this is.

I hear that's Ryan. You're Ryan?

[Speaker 6] (1:10:24 - 1:10:25)

Yes, I'm Ryan.

[Speaker 2] (1:10:25 - 1:10:27)

Okay. Hello, Oprah. Hi.

Got a question?

[Speaker 6] (1:10:27 - 1:10:57)

Mr. Tully. I do. I have a question for actually either of you.

And it relates to the spiritual awakening that you speak of in Chapter 1. It seems to me that if you look at human history in the past 100 years and very poignantly in the past 10 years that there's been this intensity and speed at which people are becoming more aware of this Christ consciousness. And why do you think that is the case now?

Why is this happening now?

[Speaker 1] (1:10:58 - 1:11:31)

It's happening now because we are reaching a crisis point. Very essential things don't happen until there's an absolute need for them to happen. So we can say in the past, this awakening has been a luxury.

And only a few individuals here and there throughout the ages were able to be awakened. And they tried to teach others but to a large extent their teachings became misinterpreted. So we are awakening now.

[Speaker 2] (1:11:31 - 1:11:32)

Jesus was a revolutionary.

[Speaker 1] (1:11:32 - 1:11:33)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:11:33 - 1:11:34)

Got misinterpreted a lot.

[Speaker 1] (1:11:34 - 1:13:09)

Yes. We are awakening now because we have to awaken if humanity is to make it to a next evolutionary level. We need to awaken because the egoic consciousness will become has already become very destructive.

It will become more and more destructive. We will destroy ourselves and the planet if we do not step out of the egoic consciousness, the collective ego. If you look at the history of the 20th century, it gives you a taste of what it will be if there is no major shift.

I wrote in The Power of Now that 100 million human beings were killed by other humans during the 20th century through warfare and so on. And I recently read in a history book by a Harvard professor that my figure was much too low. It's as much as 160 to 180 million human beings were murdered through warfare and concentration camps and prison camps and starvation, purpose manufactured starvation because China, Russia and so on.

It's unbelievable insanity when you look at that history. So if there is no shift in consciousness, we will go downhill very quickly because we are already in the process of destroying the planet, but there will also be continuous conflict, collective conflict, and eventually then humanity would collapse. So you think we're at a crisis point now?

Crisis point, yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:13:09 - 1:13:52)

Well, Ryan, don't you think so too? I mean, when you were with your friends, you know, obviously you're gathered here at Borders Tonight because you are interested in this kind of this way of thinking, but we all talk about it in some form or another, how bad things are, how you know, the media, everybody complains about the media and the movies. I mean, if you just look at the Academy Awards this year and the kinds of movies that were made this year and it's all a reflection of who we are and you say in the book how we're the species that will go and watch other people on film be maimed and killed and murdered for our entertainment.

[Speaker 6] (1:13:52 - 1:14:09)

Yes. It's amazing. And it's noise.

It's the mind. It's all of that and my friends and I talk about it and it's things where we want to push that out and say, well, we choose not to look at those things. We choose not to surround ourselves with that type of energy.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:09 - 1:15:02)

But I just got it. I just had an epiphany and aha as Eckhart was speaking here. I mean, and I'd read this several times in the book too, the number of people murdered, maimed, destroyed by other human beings during the 20th century, but the aha for me was, yes, look at what we did in the 20th century.

Look at the surge that we've had in our technological abilities. Look at you right now.

We're Skyping each other.

The advancement in our abilities to create new bombs, new ways of killing each other, so that in the 21st century, if there isn't a shift, if you had a hundred, over a hundred million people killed in the 20th century, God only knows. And I do mean God only knows what will happen to us unless we start to change this.

[Speaker 1] (1:15:02 - 1:15:20)

Yes, because technology amplifies the egoic dysfunction in human beings. So before, the dysfunction was the same 2,000 years ago, but we couldn't do that much harm because the technology wasn't there. The very same dysfunction still operates and becomes magnified through science and technology.

[Speaker 6] (1:15:22 - 1:15:35)

Does that answer your question, Ryan? It does, and it just makes me think of what could we do if we just focused that same energy on the positive and helping other people, and I feel that that's where we're going.

[Speaker 2] (1:15:35 - 1:16:21)

But it's also not just the positive. One of the things that I think we all learn from reading A New Earth, that it's not just about being positive, it's about putting our own egos in check. Because as we begin to move forward in our studies the next 10 weeks, you'll see that first you have to see the voice in your head, see how you're contributing to it.

Because I think, you know, for years we've all heard that we're all, if you're not a part of the problem you're a part of the solution. I think most of us don't understand, and I did understand to an extent, but got it even more clearly after reading A New Earth, understand how we're contributing to the problem. And the way we're all contributing to the problem is, Eckhart?

[Speaker 1] (1:16:22 - 1:17:20)

Well, you need to look at your own mind. So it's everybody's responsibility to become aware of their conditioned mental processes, how you react in everyday situations, what kind of thoughts go through your head. It's good to not amplify the negativity that you see around you in the world by reacting to it.

You have to be very much aware, of course, of what your mind is doing. So observe your own mind, be there as the witness of your mind so that the witnessing dimension, which is awareness or presence, grows. You are not your thought processes.

The thought processes are conditioned through thousands and thousands of years of conditioning. And there is dysfunction built into the very structure of our thought processes, and this is how the ego arises. We'll talk about that in more detail.

[Speaker 2] (1:17:20 - 1:17:20)

That's right.

[Speaker 1] (1:17:20 - 1:17:35)

But to recognize in oneself, you may not contribute to the murder and so on out there in the world, but it's everybody's responsibility to discover that dysfunction within them.

[Speaker 2] (1:17:36 - 1:18:05)

Yeah, so you get that right, Ryan. What he's saying is that there is a collective consciousness that he talks about, pages 11 and 12. The dysfunction of the ego human mind has created the situation in the world today, he says, in the New Earth.

And what I hear you saying, Eckhart, is that our individual fears, doubts, angers, jealousies, resentments all contribute to the collective.

[Speaker 9] (1:18:05 - 1:18:06)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:18:06 - 1:18:28)

And so in order to begin to change the collective, each one of us has a responsibility to sort of mine that within ourselves. Yes. Because that's how we're contributing to the collective.

Yes. Yeah, and it's not just the road ragers. It's however you're holding resentment and anger and jealousy and fear in your own life.

That's what you're saying.

[Speaker 1] (1:18:28 - 1:18:46)

Yes. What is it that you're putting out into the world? Is there negativity, mental, emotional, in you?

Yes. Because that contributes to the collective energy field. So you can only go, so it's up to the individual to go, to step out of the egoic consciousness.

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (1:18:46 - 1:18:53)

You got that right, Ryan? That makes a lot of sense. Yeah, it does make a lot of sense.

Thank you. Thank you, Borders.

[Speaker 1] (1:18:54 - 1:18:55)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:18:55 - 1:19:01)

We've got Erica, who lives on a U.S. military base in Landstuhl, Germany.

[Speaker 1] (1:19:01 - 1:19:03)

Oh, you're in the middle of the night.

[Speaker 2] (1:19:03 - 1:19:05)

In the middle of the night. Yes. Hi.

[Speaker 7] (1:19:06 - 1:19:06)

Morning.

[Speaker 2] (1:19:07 - 1:19:07)

Morning.

[Speaker 7] (1:19:08 - 1:19:17)

Hi, Erica. Hi, Oprah. Thank you so much.

This has just been crazy, as you said. Crazy fun.

[Speaker 2] (1:19:18 - 1:19:24)

Yes. Landstuhl, Germany. Never heard of it, but glad to have you from there.

Hello.

[Speaker 7] (1:19:25 - 1:19:27)

Thank you. Glad. Thank God for Skype.

[Speaker 2] (1:19:27 - 1:19:31)

Thank God for Skype. Okay. What is your question or comment to us?

[Speaker 7] (1:19:32 - 1:20:11)

Well, my question is for Mr. Toley. I, too, grew up in the Baptist Church, just like Oprah and so many others. And you talk about the voice in my head.

And I had a situation where I no longer attend that church because the behavior didn't line up with the teaching. But on Sundays when I'm at home with my family and we're enjoying a nice day and we decided not to go to church, that voice in my head says things like, you didn't go to church today. That's not how you were raised.

When your mom calls, what are you going to say? Can you help me with that on explaining why we have the voice in the head that says things like that?

[Speaker 9] (1:20:12 - 1:20:12)

Yes.

[Speaker 7] (1:20:13 - 1:20:16)

Yes, he can help you, Erica.

[Speaker 1] (1:20:18 - 1:22:57)

Now, the voice, of course, is the conditioned thinking. The voice, what the voice says, is conditioned by your past, by your childhood, by your upbringing, by the surrounding culture. All those things condition your thought processes.

And when you, sometimes it happens when you awaken, maybe not completely, but when the awakening process begins, a lot of the old voices in the head, the old thoughts, still come up. They still come up. And the essential thing is to recognize them as conditioned thought processes.

Because the fact that you're asking the question means there's already an awareness there that these are the voices in your head, so you're not totally identified. Because if you were totally identified with the voice, you would say, I feel so terrible, I really think I should be doing this. But you realize it's the voice in the head that's doing it.

And then you can allow it and say, okay, there's an old thought, and allow it to be there and be the awareness behind the thought. And anybody, this is not just for your particular case, there are many other instances where people have the movement of thought, telling them this or that, interpreting events and people according to the old conditioning, when you meet people, telling you immediately, judging somebody according to your old conditioning, with prejudices, with all the old conditioning. So the only way you can gradually go beyond the conditioned thought processes is simply to be there as the witness.

You don't need to act on it or say, go away, I don't want to be thinking this, that doesn't work. It would only give it more energy. So, again, a vital thing, and this will be going throughout the book and the teaching is as much as possible, be aware of what your mind is saying and realize there's only a small part of the consciousness, the totality of consciousness that you are.

Many people don't know that yet. They're totally one with the voice. They are the voice.

They're so identified with every thought that comes, there's no space between them and the thought. So the essential thing is this, realize there's thought processes and here I am as the space for the thought. As the awareness or the space for the thought.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:57 - 1:23:00)

And that the thought is only a part of...

[Speaker 1] (1:23:00 - 1:23:12)

A small part, it's the conditioned part of who you are. And that's time bound, it's conditioned by the past. There's a more essential part of who you are and that is the awareness that knows that there's a voice.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:12 - 1:23:14)

The awareness of the thoughts.

[Speaker 1] (1:23:14 - 1:23:14)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:14 - 1:26:07)

Which we're going to get into in further detail. But also, Erica, let me share this with you. Part of what you and our first caller from Alton, Illinois was also talking about is trying to reconcile the two.

The reason why the voice keeps repeating is because of course of what Eckhart is saying, it's conditioned thinking. But also the guilt is you haven't made a decision for yourself about what is real or true for you. So you're still being led by the conditioned thinking and haven't made a decision.

And for me that came when I was able to do exactly what Eckhart said earlier. I didn't phrase it the way he did. I ask God to use me.

That has been my prayer for many years. You know, Eckhart says, ask life what is its purpose for you. But I would pray on my knees to God and ask to be used and to be a servant and to allow his spirit to work through me and to not to just be on television, but to be able to use television for a purpose that was greater than my own personality and to collect shoes in my closet.

Didn't mean I wanted to give up the shoes, but I would if I had to. So when I started to ask that question of God, how can I be used? God, how do you want me to live?

How would you have me be? I let go of the guilt of did I make it to church or I didn't make it to church because the majesty and power and omniscience of this force that we call God cannot be contained in a church. You're right.

Cannot be contained in a church and does not just want to be served in a church. But if church allows you to feel like you are being of service, then use it that way. But the bigness is what Eckhart was saying in that quote in the book, man made God in his image, the eternal, the infinite, and unnameable force that that is God, that is all consciousness, that is universal energy.

I don't believe wishes to just be served on Sunday at 11 o'clock service. And so that's what you're trying to reconcile with yourself. The voice in your head versus what you really should be doing.

That's it. Yeah. Thank you.

[Speaker 10] (1:26:07 - 1:26:07)

That's it.

[Speaker 2] (1:26:08 - 1:26:25)

You need to make that decision for yourself. Thank you. And start asking that question of God.

Okay. All right. Thank you.

Thank you, Erica from Lundstuhl. Lundstuhl, Germany. We have Adam from Redmond, Washington on the phone with a question.

[Speaker 5] (1:26:26 - 1:26:27)

Yes. Hello?

[Speaker 2] (1:26:27 - 1:26:29)

Oh, on the phone phone. Hi.

[Speaker 5] (1:26:29 - 1:26:30)

Hi there.

[Speaker 2] (1:26:30 - 1:26:31)

Hi. Hi, Adam.

[Speaker 5] (1:26:32 - 1:26:34)

Hi. Thank you so much, both of you.

[Speaker 2] (1:26:36 - 1:26:43)

I feel a little like Larry King is the caller there. A little like Larry King. Okay.

[Speaker 5] (1:26:44 - 1:27:14)

Go ahead. Yeah. Well, I used your online study group to create a couple groups out here which I called Embracing Silence.

And the purpose of joining together for meditation and study and discussion and to create a field of presence and share with others in that. And I'm curious, what role do you see community or joining with others with the intention of sharing this consciousness playing in the flowering of human consciousness?

[Speaker 1] (1:27:15 - 1:28:42)

Good. Good question. Yes.

It's very important and of course what's happening here tonight is part of that also because it is joining on a level that we haven't seen before. It's the arising presence. You can access it much more easily as part of a larger community or group of people.

So to have in your home, to have a group of people who practice being present, perhaps listen to a spiritual talk or have a little reading, enter stillness, be present, is extremely helpful because an energy field is generated when people come together and enter the state of presence together. So, and this is happening here also, although people are not physically together and yet there is an energy field now that is generated all over the planet of presence, a different level of consciousness being generated. So it's extremely helpful to join with others.

Also it needs to be said not to become dependent on any group. It is still your responsibility to bring this new consciousness into everyday life. Whenever you go about your business, in your family...

[Speaker 2] (1:28:42 - 1:28:44)

Once you become dependent upon the group, then you now...

[Speaker 1] (1:28:46 - 1:29:23)

Then you always need to go back to the group and you cannot live presence in your daily life. So the important thing, yes, go to the group to generate more presence and then your responsibility is to live it in your everyday life where most of the time, perhaps, you will not yet be surrounded by people who are present. You will be surrounded by the old egoic consciousness.

So there, that is... And this is the challenge for everybody now who is awakening that, yes, more and more people are beginning to awaken and yet there are still vast numbers of people on the planet who are not.

[Speaker 2] (1:29:24 - 1:29:48)

But I was going to say that when Ryan from Borders was speaking to us and was saying, you know, the need to be more positive and there's all this negative energy in the world, look, we have 700 and some thousand of us all gathered here this evening, which is a huge positive force in creating the shift. And it's a different kind of community like we've never seen or experienced before.

[Speaker 1] (1:29:48 - 1:30:06)

That's right, yes. And then, of course, another kind of community is generated through the internet now and all these things that I don't know much about, but it's happening. So how people communicate with each other, and again, people are being linked in different ways with each other.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:06 - 1:30:09)

This is the arising of a new consciousness that he speaks about, Adam.

[Speaker 5] (1:30:11 - 1:30:34)

Well, it certainly is, and it's, you know, it's very pleasurable to spend time with others and sharing this consciousness, you know, like you said when you were under the tree and you felt that oneness and that majesty. Well, imagine if you had someone sitting there next to you to share that experience with. I think it makes it even that much more sacred.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:34 - 1:30:36)

I did have my two dogs, Luke and Layla were there.

[Speaker 5] (1:30:37 - 1:30:39)

Oh, wonderful. Wonderful.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:40 - 1:30:41)

Thanks, Adam.

[Speaker 5] (1:30:41 - 1:30:42)

It's a sacred moment. Yes, thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:43 - 1:31:19)

Thank you, Adam. That's Adam from Redmond, Washington. Let's see some of the questions that you're sending us now.

Oh, this is cool. On email. Okay, we're going to check the computer screen here.

Ta-da. Questions are? Nothing's there.

Nothing's there. So I'll keep talking. One of the things that really struck us so was so many people responded to this.

Page 13. You don't become good by trying to be good. You don't become good by trying to be good.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:21 - 1:31:22)

And carry on.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:22 - 1:31:23)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:23 - 1:31:25)

There's more to that sentence.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:25 - 1:31:43)

Yes, there is. I must go to page 13 to find it. You don't become good by trying to be good.

But by finding the goodness that is already within you and allowing that goodness to emerge. But it can only emerge if something fundamental changes in your state of consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:43 - 1:32:36)

So what that means if nothing changes in your state of consciousness the ego has many ideas. It says, I want to be a spiritual person. I want to be recognized as a spiritual person.

I want to be more spiritual than all these people. And I'm definitely more spiritual than you. So the ego has all kinds of ideas of what it wants to be.

It might even say yes, I want to be good. Because it wants to have a better image of itself. But on that level the essential dysfunction of the ego is still operating.

So this is why we have the phrase, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Because no matter how good your intentions are, when you're still trapped in the ego it will always take you into conflict eventually.

[Speaker 2] (1:32:37 - 1:32:40)

That's why I was saying to Ryan, you can't just think positively.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:40 - 1:32:43)

No. It's not enough. You have to go deeper.

[Speaker 2] (1:32:43 - 1:32:49)

You can think positively, but it is not enough, because eventually something negative will come along to challenge the positive.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:49 - 1:32:49)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:32:49 - 1:32:50)

Right.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:50 - 1:33:10)

So you must It's the realm of opposites. So you have to go deeper beyond the realm of opposites, where there's good and bad, and reach a place within yourself that is unconditioned. That is what I sometimes call the formless consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (1:33:10 - 1:33:11)

What I call spirit.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:12 - 1:34:52)

Expressed beautifully in the Old Testament, in the little saying Be still and know that I am God. And that's in the Old Testament. It contains the entire wisdom of religion in those few words.

Be still meaning, go to that place where the mind is no longer operating. Where you are just conscious without thinking. And that is the level where the eternal resides.

So the eternal, the formless, the spirit is the essence of every human being. No matter how insane or conflict ridden they seem to appear on the surface, within every human being, that remains untouched. There's nothing that anybody could have done to you, or nothing that you could have done to others to destroy that.

It's always there. And that is the grace of being here. And no matter how much madness there has been in your life, that remains untouched.

So it's getting in touch with that deepest place within. And you can only do that by becoming still. Now, becoming still does not mean that you go to sleep.

It means you're actually more alert than when you're thinking. You have to invite the stillness into your life as much as possible.

[Speaker 2] (1:34:52 - 1:34:56)

That's why I loved your book, Stillness Speaks. Only that small, but every page is a gem.

[Speaker 1] (1:34:57 - 1:34:57)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:34:57 - 1:35:44)

And also, it's what I was saying earlier, that in order to feel that, the way you feel that, for everybody who's listening to us now, the way you begin to feel that is to look at nature. If you were to go out and just be with a tree, and I don't mean hug a tree. We're not talking about now you gotta go hug a tree and eat granola.

But if you were just to be with anything in nature, I like trees because they're so majestic, they're so powerful and visual. And if you're with it for a time, you start to sense the presence of it, the stillness of it, and begin to recognize that stillness within yourself.

[Speaker 1] (1:35:45 - 1:35:48)

So what you sense in the tree is also in you.

[Speaker 2] (1:35:49 - 1:35:52)

And it's always in the tree. When the wind is blowing and there's a storm.

[Speaker 1] (1:35:53 - 1:36:23)

And that is also a sacredness that is there in the tree. Our world doesn't know much of sacredness. It has become an abstract concept.

Nobody seems to know what sacredness is until you can feel it. When you feel, then you don't need a definition. People ask please define what sacred is.

You don't need a definition of what sacred is because sacred is the essence of who you are. So it's sensing that, and you can sense it when you're still enough. You sense it in the tree.

[Speaker 2] (1:36:23 - 1:36:28)

Now isn't it interesting that you first came to recognize this when you were about to kill yourself?

[Speaker 1] (1:36:29 - 1:36:50)

Yes. Sometimes you have to reach a limit. Humans have to reach a limit.

The human species as a whole is reaching that limit. But also on a personal level, sometimes people have to be pushed to the limit. My ego was so obstinate and my pain body was so strong I had to be pushed to the limit before it cracked open.

[Speaker 2] (1:36:50 - 1:36:58)

Before we go any further, share that moment that you talk about in the beginning of The Power of Now, when you were about to kill yourself, feeling so much pain.

[Speaker 1] (1:36:58 - 1:37:48)

Dreadful suffering at night. I would often wake up in extreme feeling of dread and fear. Consumed by dread and fear the whole world seemed alien.

I saw the thought one night I woke up again, the thought came I can't live with myself any longer. I just can't live with myself any longer. It's so painful.

And that thought repeated itself a few times and then suddenly something happened inside me and I looked at the thought. That was, of course, awareness. I didn't know at the time what it was.

I became aware of the thought and I said, I cannot live with myself. That's strange. So there must be I and there must be myself.

Am I one or two? I seem to be two. Because if I can't live with myself there must be two of me.

[Speaker 2] (1:37:48 - 1:37:56)

Everybody has felt that. Not to kill themselves, but everybody has felt or heard you say to yourself I said to myself.

[Speaker 1] (1:37:57 - 1:38:25)

Yes. And of course the entire what we call the voice in the head we could also call it self-talk. Where you talk to yourself and most people address themselves as you.

So the voice is, you shouldn't have done that or you should better... So there's a constantly there's a separation inside human beings which is the essence of ego. Right.

Here's an image of who I think I am and then there's a me and they get mixed up together.

[Speaker 2] (1:38:26 - 1:38:35)

Okay, I'm sorry I interrupted you with that thought though. Getting ready to kill yourself said I can't live with myself any longer. Yes.

Said that several times in your mind.

[Speaker 1] (1:38:35 - 1:39:19)

And then I became aware of the structure of the sentence and said if that's the case then who is the self that I cannot live with and who am I? Wow. And at that moment a separation happened completely between the essential I which is the essential consciousness that I am beyond past and future the eternal stillness.

But awake stillness. And all my thought processes which were ego it was all my thought processes that created the dreadful suffering. The mind created entity, the unhappy me was continuously fed by my thinking.

It consisted of thinking. A stream of thinking.

[Speaker 2] (1:39:19 - 1:39:23)

So did you just decide that night I guess I'll wait to see if I will kill myself?

[Speaker 1] (1:39:23 - 1:39:39)

No. It was a kind of spiritual suicide so the ego died instead of me having to jump off a bridge, fortunately. The ego died.

The ego dissolved. The ego as the unobserved mind dissolved.

[Speaker 2] (1:39:40 - 1:39:40)

The ego.

[Speaker 1] (1:39:40 - 1:39:43)

The false self, the me, the unhappy story.

[Speaker 2] (1:39:43 - 1:39:44)

Oh, got it.

[Speaker 1] (1:39:44 - 1:40:15)

Me as the unhappy, my identity as me and my unhappy story. Died. Dissolved because the I behind it suddenly woke up and said who is that self that I can't live with?

And when you fully look at that self it actually dissolves because it cannot survive in the light of intense consciousness. And so the next morning I woke up and I didn't know that was strange what happened. I thought were you drinking?

No drinking. No drugs.

[Speaker 2] (1:40:16 - 1:40:18)

You had a couple sips or something.

[Speaker 1] (1:40:19 - 1:40:41)

Nothing. It just happened and I felt like being drawn into a kind of vortex and then I went to sleep and the last thing I felt, there was still some fear. A voice said don't resist or resist nothing.

Resist nothing. Don't resist. Resist nothing.

And so I must have gone to sleep then.

[Speaker 2] (1:40:41 - 1:40:43)

You had your first good night's sleep in God's Kingdom. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:40:43 - 1:41:11)

And the next morning I woke up and looked around and looked, everything looked so fresh. All the old furniture. The pencil.

Everything looked fresh and alive and I could hear birdsong outside. Wow. As if I'd never heard it before.

Wow. Because the mind had become still and there was simply the beautiful perception of everything. The sunlight coming through the curtains.

Incredible. I said I've never seen that before.

[Speaker 2] (1:41:13 - 1:41:14)

Sounds like a drug trip.

[Speaker 1] (1:41:14 - 1:41:31)

Well later on people tell me they ask me is that like acid? Because some people take acid and they say oh we experienced that when we took acid. They told me many times until finally, I'll tell you in confidence, finally I tried acid just for once.

[Speaker 2] (1:41:31 - 1:41:34)

You're telling me in confidence here? Yes. Okay good, go ahead.

[Speaker 1] (1:41:36 - 1:42:09)

I tried it just once just to see. If it was the same thing? Yes.

Yeah? It's not quite the same thing because what I experienced was much more subtle and beautiful. The acid I experienced as almost a violent thing where violently the perceptions, sense perceptions become so magnified that there was no room for thinking anymore.

But I could see why people say, why for some people it's a glimpse of what it means to perceive the world without this continuous interference of mental noise.

[Speaker 2] (1:42:10 - 1:42:12)

But your trip without acid was better.

[Speaker 1] (1:42:12 - 1:42:12)

Much better.

[Speaker 2] (1:42:14 - 1:42:51)

Part of what you're describing is what I came close to that when I decided to go outside without naming things or labeling things. It's what I was describing earlier, walking through the park, walking around my house which is like a park. Everything was like vibrating.

The colors and everything, the sense perception was very different because I wasn't in my mind thinking about it. I was just there to experience it. So that's how you get to that place.

[Speaker 1] (1:42:51 - 1:42:58)

That's right. So you're no longer there when you walk through your garden or wherever.

[Speaker 2] (1:42:59 - 1:43:00)

And you're not naming every flower.

[Speaker 1] (1:43:00 - 1:43:17)

You're not naming and also you're not carrying the burden of a heavy me, a personality, a person with its problems, with its past, with its future. You're not thinking about anything. So you are basically, you become a conscious presence perceiving the beauty around you.

[Speaker 2] (1:43:17 - 1:43:42)

It's fascinating. We do have an email now from Kathy in Delta, Colorado. Is that where you are?

Well, no, she can't talk. It's an email. How do I shed the years or rather decades of conditioning and distractions, sickness, relationships, work in order to hear and feel the moments of stillness?

Which is what we were just talking about.

[Speaker 1] (1:43:43 - 1:43:49)

The good thing is you don't need years and years to undo years and years of conditioning.

[Speaker 2] (1:43:50 - 1:43:51)

Do it in an instant.

[Speaker 1] (1:43:51 - 1:45:39)

Yes, only now. So it's the access point is the present moment. The present moment is the point of power to enter the new state of consciousness.

So we need to learn how to find in our daily life, as often as possible, this point of power of the present moment. Because if we don't, we get continuously dragged along by the old conditioning of the mind, all the old thought processes, all the old reactions, and so on. So, there are many little things you can do to access the power of the present moment.

For example, a very simple thing, ask yourself, am I still breathing? Now, what does that mean? To find out if you're still breathing, your attention needs to move from the thinking into here.

And you suddenly feel the air flowing into your body and out of your body. Yes, I'm breathing. At that moment, you've entered the state of presence.

Even if it's only five seconds, you've entered that, you've become present. In the moment. In that moment.

So, another thing I suggest is when you do habitual everyday motions, like washing your hands, or walking across the room, or walking down the stairs, or the slightest thing, taking a cup out of the cupboard. Do it consciously. Do it being present of every...

The feel, for example, you wash your hands, feel the water, smell the soap.

[Speaker 2] (1:45:39 - 1:45:42)

We have this in one of the workbook exercises online. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:45:43 - 1:45:54)

Sense perceptions, becoming acutely conscious of sense perceptions, which means looking, hearing, touching, also, brings you into the present moment.

[Speaker 2] (1:45:54 - 1:46:07)

How is that going to help me? Because I started doing that, going up the stairs. I was going, one foot on the stairs, there's another foot on the stairs, there's another foot, okay, I'm at the top of the stairs now.

I was present, walking up the stairs. What does that do for me, Eckhart?

[Speaker 1] (1:46:08 - 1:46:08)

Were you present?

[Speaker 2] (1:46:09 - 1:46:22)

Yeah, I think I was. There's a foot, there's a foot, there's a foot, there's a foot on the stairs. I'm just there.

The movement of... Feeling the motion of my body, and how many parts of my body have to move to get me up the stairs.

[Speaker 10] (1:46:23 - 1:46:23)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:46:23 - 1:46:27)

You know, oh, I used my, you know, thigh muscle there.

[Speaker 1] (1:46:27 - 1:46:27)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:46:27 - 1:46:29)

I used the back of the leg.

[Speaker 1] (1:46:29 - 1:46:36)

Good, okay, it was present. I wasn't sure from the way you said, I thought you were repeating mentally, here's one step and here's another step, but you were not.

[Speaker 2] (1:46:36 - 1:46:41)

No, I was not. I was feeling every part of what it took to get me up the stairs.

[Speaker 1] (1:46:41 - 1:46:41)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:46:42 - 1:46:42)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:46:42 - 1:46:45)

So now, the mind says, what's the point in that?

[Speaker 2] (1:46:45 - 1:46:50)

Yes, the mind then said, okay, now you were present getting up the stairs, now what?

[Speaker 1] (1:46:50 - 1:46:52)

And the mind says, I've got more important things to think about.

[Speaker 2] (1:46:52 - 1:46:53)

Yes, it did.

[Speaker 1] (1:46:54 - 1:47:13)

Mind said, now what did that do you? Now, to the mind, that kind of thing is completely meaningless, because you're inviting a different state of consciousness into your life, which the mind cannot understand. But this is, this is how you bring in awareness.

This is the end of the old conditioning.

[Speaker 2] (1:47:13 - 1:47:13)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:47:14 - 1:47:27)

And you bring in a consciousness that is totally fresh and new that comes out of the present moment. And the more you bring those moments of presence into your life, the more your old conditioning becomes eroded gradually.

[Speaker 2] (1:47:27 - 1:47:31)

I see. So, learning to do it with washing your hands.

[Speaker 1] (1:47:31 - 1:47:32)

Simple things.

[Speaker 2] (1:47:32 - 1:47:43)

This is good, this class is good for me. I don't know about the rest of y'all, but I got it now. Just learning to do the simple things begins to retrain your mind.

[Speaker 1] (1:47:43 - 1:48:05)

Yes. And another thing is, most simple things that you do, which actually fill up most person's everyday life, because the whole day consists of simple things that you have to do. Right.

They're all relatively simple. Right. And the way most people live is that everything you do is a means to an end.

And the end is where you want to get to, the next moment.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:05 - 1:48:08)

Right. So you're never thinking about the moment.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:08 - 1:48:17)

No, because you want to get to the next one. You're washing your hand in order to already do that, or you're making, while you're making a cup of coffee, you really want to be drinking it.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:17 - 1:48:30)

Yeah. Jon Kabat-Zinn says in his book, Coming to Our Senses, that most people, every morning, people take a shower, they bathe, there's a but most people are in the shower, but they never actually get to experience a shower, because they're thinking, they're already in the office.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:30 - 1:48:30)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:30 - 1:48:31)

They're already in the office.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:31 - 1:48:40)

And then everything you do is a means to an end. The end is always the next moment in the future, which never arrives, because all you ever have in life is the present moment.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:40 - 1:48:49)

Present moment. So you're constantly frustrated, creating anxiety for yourself, and stress, because you can't just be present now.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:50 - 1:49:12)

And the power can only flow into your life when you are present completely, totally, with what you're doing now. And this is why most people's lives do not have this power, because they're always living for the next thing, so they... Trying to get to.

They devalue the present moment. Got it. And so...

[Speaker 2] (1:49:12 - 1:49:14)

That's why walking up the stairs, being with the stairs.

[Speaker 1] (1:49:14 - 1:49:15)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:49:15 - 1:49:17)

Teaches you how to be present with other things.

[Speaker 1] (1:49:18 - 1:49:32)

Yes. And then gradually you can be present with... Even when you are with other human beings, you can be totally present in whatever work you do, so that the work is not a means to an end, but you're totally there with what you do.

Your attention.

[Speaker 2] (1:49:33 - 1:49:39)

Well, I see Cinda from Oregon has been waiting to talk to us. Cinda? Hi, from Oregon.

What's your question?

[Speaker 3] (1:49:39 - 1:49:41)

Hello, Oprah. Hello, Eckhart. Hi.

[Speaker 2] (1:49:42 - 1:49:42)

Hi.

[Speaker 3] (1:49:43 - 1:50:04)

Hey, I am so grateful for this opportunity to have Eckhart answer my question. Thank you for having me participate in this. And Eckhart, I need you to know that I am grateful that when you tried acid, that you preferred enlightenment more than that, because my children are upstairs listening in on this.

[Speaker 2] (1:50:05 - 1:50:09)

Because he was going to say, and I interrupted him. You were saying, I don't recommend it.

[Speaker 1] (1:50:09 - 1:50:21)

No, I don't. Why? Because it's...

You will always fall back. It's not... You always fall back to the old state of consciousness.

And it's almost... I experienced as almost a violent thing being done to me.

[Speaker 2] (1:50:22 - 1:50:25)

Okay, good. I wanted to say that for the children upstairs, Cinda.

[Speaker 3] (1:50:26 - 1:50:27)

Yeah, thank you, Oprah.

[Speaker 2] (1:50:27 - 1:50:28)

Okay, your question.

[Speaker 3] (1:50:29 - 1:51:52)

Well, my question is this. And, you know, first of all, I also want to tell Eckhart that his words and his book have moved me to my core, and I am a new person because of it. And not only because of my internal changes, but the way that I am in the world that I live.

And I am so grateful for that. Thank you, Eckhart. I want to ask a question.

It's something that we've already talked about a little bit tonight, but I feel it's important enough to bring up again. And I believe that the way that Eckhart answers this question might just be the catalyst to change that we need in order to save our planet and ourselves. On pages 20 and 21 in the book, you talk about in an ever-changing world or an ever-changing environment, a species needs to either adapt or they will die out.

And then you go on to say, and I quote, that humanity is now faced with this dark choice. Evolve or die. My question to you is this.

When you say evolve or die, do you mean that literally, and it sounds like you might, or do you mean that metaphorically, which I hope?

[Speaker 1] (1:51:53 - 1:54:43)

Evolve or die refers to humanity as a whole, whether humanity survives as a species. Even if humanity did not survive as a species, no gain in consciousness is ever lost within the totality of consciousness. So the fact that we are here and consciousness, which is really all that exists, we are only forms that come out of consciousness.

And consciousness is the evolutionary process of the universe. And we are here together as part of this evolution of consciousness which comes through the human form. Consciousness can use and does use millions and billions of other forms and evolves through that out of the unmanifested.

In the unmanifested, consciousness is already perfect, or God you could say. Timeless, perfect, eternal, no change. And then you have this so-called manifested dimension which some ancient teachers have described as a kind of dream which is what it is.

But for some reason, consciousness wants to come into this world of form. And in this world of form it evolves. So one could say that gradually, more and more, God, which is another word for consciousness, God comes into this world of form, gradually emerges.

And God comes through you. God comes through me. God comes through you.

Gradually, more and more, the density of form lessens, and this is what's happening. And so, even if humanity didn't make it, consciousness would, the gain in consciousness that has already been achieved by those human beings who have become conscious would make consciousness express itself much more easily through some other form. Because ultimately, we are not the form.

We are not the body that we see. You are not the form that is sitting there. In essence, you are beyond.

You are the formless consciousness itself. With a stillness. Temporarily assuming this particular form.

And of course, the form eventually is going to dissolve anyway because then consciousness moves on. Consciousness is continuous evolution, continuous metamorphosis. It's a wonderful process.

So there's nothing to be scared of because ultimately, when I say evolve or die, I'm only speaking of humanity as a species. But ultimately, nothing dies. It's only a transformation of consciousness.

A transformation of form. A transformation of form. So, there is no death.

[Speaker 2] (1:54:43 - 1:54:50)

But you do mean the end of our human species as we know it.

[Speaker 1] (1:54:50 - 1:55:24)

Yes, that is a possibility. But the fact that we are here tonight, which should give us hope and confidence that humanity is going to make it. Because this is growing and not just this teaching.

There are other spiritual, alive spiritual teachings. There is an enormous awakening happening on the planet. So, nobody knows.

I don't know the answer whether humanity is going to make it. But I do feel confident now, more so perhaps than before, that we are going to make it.

[Speaker 2] (1:55:25 - 1:55:42)

Well, yes. Because that's one of my favorite quotes too, Cinda, that we are a significant portion of the Earth's population will soon recognize if they haven't already done so that humanity is now faced with the stark choice, evolve or die. Thank you for raising that question in such a beautiful way, Cinda.

[Speaker 3] (1:55:43 - 1:55:45)

Thank you, Oprah. Thank you, Eckhart.

[Speaker 2] (1:55:45 - 1:55:51)

Thanks for joining us. Casey in Asheville, North Carolina is on Skype and has a question also for Eckhart about The Secret. Casey?

[Speaker 8] (1:55:52 - 1:56:37)

Hi, Oprah. Hi, Mr. Tully. I was debating about whether to read this book because it looked very deep to me, to be honest.

And I have a one-year-old and I hang out with her all day and I didn't know if I was ready for it. But Oprah, when I saw your show on The Secret and The Bubble Man and all that good stuff, I thought, I have got to read that book because you talked about a new Earth so much in that show. So my question is this.

When I put out into the universe, when I ask God for things, for hopes and dreams and material things and a lot of times I get them, those material things, I think they may be coming from the ego and I just wonder, Mr. Tully, is that wrong?

[Speaker 1] (1:56:38 - 1:57:57)

Okay. Well, it's not wrong. You can always easily recognize that something is coming from ego because when you get it, it doesn't satisfy you.

That's always a sign that it's coming from ego. It may satisfy you for a little while and then it's like, oh, I need more. I need something else.

So that's a good learning process. You can manifest things and if you see, oh, that's not satisfying, it must have been the ego. So there's nothing wrong with manifesting things.

The only illusion would be to expect things to provide some ultimate satisfaction in your life. Things can't do that. The world of form can't ultimately satisfy you.

You can enjoy the world of form, but the true satisfaction doesn't come from there. The world can't do that. The world can't make you happy.

Things cannot give you happiness because happiness comes from a deeper place within you that you can only access in the present moment. So it's fine to live in the world of things. Why not manifest things?

It's part of the game in this life, the game of form. But if you expect some kind of satisfaction, then you'll always be frustrated.

[Speaker 2] (1:57:58 - 1:58:44)

Which is going to be, I think we get into that a lot in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. Love Chapter 2. Love Chapter 2.

To be defined by the things. To be in the world and not of it is how I describe it. To have things.

I have lots of beautiful things and I love beautiful things. And later on in one of the chapters he talks about when you say that you're not defined by things, what happens to you if you were to lose any of those things? The depth of your grieving or sorrow or so-called suffering determines how attached you were to those things.

[Speaker 1] (1:58:44 - 1:58:45)

Yes. And for many people...

[Speaker 2] (1:58:45 - 1:58:47)

It doesn't matter to me until somebody steals your car.

[Speaker 1] (1:58:48 - 2:00:19)

That's right. And for many people that's a very important lesson when suddenly they do lose something. It can be a wonderful spiritual lesson and then perhaps you suffer and then your attachment gets broken and suddenly you go beyond the attachment.

So there have been people who've lost everything and suddenly become free of the ego because the ego had nothing left to identify with. So this can happen. And another important thing to mention with regard to manifestation is the basis for your life is the present moment.

First of all, the very basis for everything is to come to an acceptance of this moment as it is. Gratitude is part of that. Of course we'll be talking about that in more detail.

So that there's no neediness when you manifest the neediness that there's dissatisfaction, for example, in your life. There's dissatisfaction. That is not a good place, not a good starting point for changing your life.

The ego may tell you that, but it isn't. You need to find a place of acceptance, which is... Wow, that's powerful.

No matter where you are, come to terms and become friendly with the present moment. Because if you do not become friendly with the present moment, you're not friendly with life. Because life is only now.

If you're not friendly with life, life cannot support you.

[Speaker 2] (2:00:19 - 2:00:27)

But did you just say that being in a place of dissatisfaction, being dissatisfied is not a good time or place to change?

[Speaker 1] (2:00:27 - 2:00:58)

It's first... You can see the totality of the situation. Let's say...

I use the example in the power of now. You're stuck in the mud. You're walking somewhere and suddenly you get deep into the mud up to your knees.

Now you wouldn't say, OK, I'm satisfied with this situation. You can't be satisfied with this situation. And you know that you need to get out.

But you say, OK, here I am stuck in the mud and I need to get out. There is no... Cursing the mud.

Negative reaction. Yeah, there's no... Cursing.

[Speaker 2] (2:00:58 - 2:00:59)

Damn this mud!

[Speaker 1] (2:00:59 - 2:01:04)

Yes. Yeah. Or struggle against.

Yeah. Because if you struggle against, you get in deeper.

[Speaker 2] (2:01:04 - 2:01:06)

You're just going to get more mud on you.

[Speaker 1] (2:01:06 - 2:01:06)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:01:06 - 2:01:06)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (2:01:07 - 2:01:49)

So, very important, perhaps one of the key things here in this or any spiritual teaching is the question that you need to ask yourself as much as possible. You can even put it on your bathroom mirror or some other places where you often look. And that question is what is my relationship with the present moment?

And to become very conscious of that. And then you find out, then you of course need to become alert. OK, what's my relationship with this moment?

Am I... Is there negativity? In which case I'm fighting.

I'm making the present moment into an enemy. Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (2:01:50 - 2:01:52)

What you say is what you resist persists.

[Speaker 9] (2:01:52 - 2:01:52)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:01:53 - 2:01:55)

So you must make peace with the moment.

[Speaker 9] (2:01:55 - 2:01:55)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:01:55 - 2:01:57)

Doesn't mean you have to be... approve the situation.

[Speaker 9] (2:01:57 - 2:01:58)

No.

[Speaker 2] (2:01:58 - 2:02:02)

But you must make peace with the moment in order to get yourself out of it.

[Speaker 1] (2:02:02 - 2:02:02)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:02 - 2:02:04)

Because resisting is only going to cause more of it.

[Speaker 1] (2:02:05 - 2:02:22)

Yes. And that's absolutely vital that... So, peace with what is.

The is-ness of this moment is already as it always already is as it is. The ego doesn't understand that, but you can't really argue with what is because it already is.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:22 - 2:02:26)

So you must accept whatever it is first before you can begin to change it. That's what you're saying.

[Speaker 1] (2:02:26 - 2:02:48)

Yes. There must be acceptance. Acceptance of what is first.

First. Then action comes out of the acceptance. It no longer comes out of resistance.

Got it. Which is a totally different energy flows into what you do when it comes out of an acceptance of this is what is. And then action happens.

That is actually empowered by life itself.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:49 - 2:02:51)

Well, I think that explained it, Casey.

[Speaker 8] (2:02:52 - 2:02:55)

I think so, too. Thank you so much. That's amazing.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:55 - 2:03:20)

Thank you so much. I just wanted to go back to spirituality and religion for a few moments and the few moments we have remaining because I know that's still such a major issue with so many of you. And you say on page 17 that the more you make your thoughts or beliefs into your identity the more cut off you are from the spiritual dimension within yourself.

You also say on page 18 how spiritual you are has nothing to do with what you believe.

[Speaker 1] (2:03:20 - 2:03:21)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:03:21 - 2:03:24)

But everything to do with your state of consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (2:03:24 - 2:03:38)

Yes. How spiritual you are means how present how present are you at this moment. Are you in your thoughts or are you there as the awareness behind your thoughts?

[Speaker 2] (2:03:38 - 2:03:39)

Which is your spirit.

[Speaker 1] (2:03:39 - 2:04:02)

Yes. Stillness. Yes.

Often in newspapers and the media they always ask what do you believe in? That is not an important question, what I believe in. The important question is are you present at this moment?

Not what your belief structures are.

[Speaker 2] (2:04:02 - 2:04:08)

I think people want to know what you believe so that they can label it and decide whether they're going to like you accept you or not.

[Speaker 1] (2:04:08 - 2:04:13)

Yes. And they want to know do you believe the same thing that I believe because if you don't you're my enemy.

[Speaker 2] (2:04:15 - 2:04:17)

Yeah. You're laughing at that. Okay.

[Speaker 1] (2:04:17 - 2:04:20)

It's better to laugh at madness.

[Speaker 2] (2:04:20 - 2:04:29)

Yes. I just wanted to mention this person, Maria from Doha, Qatar. I just wanted to say Doha, Qatar.

[Speaker 1] (2:04:29 - 2:04:31)

In what country?

[Speaker 2] (2:04:32 - 2:04:32)

Qatar.

[Speaker 1] (2:04:33 - 2:04:33)

Okay.

[Speaker 2] (2:04:35 - 2:04:49)

She says do you think that people are ready and willing to set aside time to be quiet each day? Is this possible in a global sense? Would anyone who thinks their life is fine be willing to waste time just sitting in order to raise their consciousness level?

[Speaker 1] (2:04:50 - 2:05:01)

Well, better I would change the question a little bit to make it more vital and more relevant is ask am I ready? The only question you really need to answer is am I ready?

[Speaker 2] (2:05:01 - 2:05:02)

Love that.

[Speaker 1] (2:05:02 - 2:05:09)

You don't need to know whether other people are ready to do it. Only you can have the answer am I ready to be still?

[Speaker 2] (2:05:09 - 2:05:12)

Very good, Mr. Tarr. Am I ready?

[Speaker 1] (2:05:13 - 2:05:30)

That's the vital question and only you can answer that. I can't answer that. Are you ready or are you so fascinated by the things of this world and your mind that perhaps you need to pursue those things for a few more years until you suffer a bit more and then you're ready?

[Speaker 2] (2:05:30 - 2:05:43)

Well yes, when we were doing rehearsal for this yesterday we were up on Skype and someone said I'm 28 years old and I don't think I need to be awakened so what can I get from this book? I go don't waste your time, go read another book.

[Speaker 1] (2:05:43 - 2:05:44)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:05:44 - 2:05:46)

You don't think you need to be awakened then?

[Speaker 1] (2:05:46 - 2:05:51)

No, that's right. So the time is not yet there for everybody and that's fine too.

[Speaker 2] (2:05:52 - 2:05:57)

What about the people who are struggling particularly in this first chapter with the book?

[Speaker 1] (2:05:58 - 2:07:16)

The first chapter is a little bit more conceptual than the other chapters and less practical. I wanted to give a general context for where the book fits into the general context of the spirituality on the planet, the transformation of consciousness on the planet. So just read through.

There are already very important pointers in the first chapter if you can see them that will run through the whole book. Presence and so on. Just carry on not only the first chapter, anywhere in the book don't expect to immediately understand everything that's not necessary and besides understanding the book is not the essential thing, it's secondary.

The first thing is to experience the truth of it rather than conceptual understanding the essence of what's in the book but in any case cannot be understood conceptually. For example, presence. People say, can you explain to me what presence is?

I've already given a few pointers. It's pointless to go beyond that and give further definitions. You can only know what presence is by being present.

You must have at least a glimpse of presence and this is why it's not understanding that's the essence. So when you don't understand just read on. It's a process.

Reading this book is a process.

[Speaker 2] (2:07:17 - 2:07:26)

And this book as you say again as I said in the beginning this isn't about creating more information for you to believe in. And you don't want to be anybody's guru.

[Speaker 1] (2:07:27 - 2:08:04)

No, no. It's only it's not through your mind really that you can get it and anybody who finds this book meaningful and this is the important thing is already awakening. If you're not awakening already, this book will be completely meaningless or any other truly alive spiritual book will be meaningless.

You won't understand it or you say there's not much there. I don't know. It doesn't make sense to me.

If it does make sense and especially if you feel something from within responding and you say wow, yeah.

[Speaker 2] (2:08:04 - 2:08:21)

Well I think also too for all of you who've joined us there are a lot of people who are expressing they're getting it, they're awakening, they're feeling more alive and excited and then you want to go share it with somebody else who perhaps hasn't read the book, doesn't feel the same as you and then they feel frustrated.

[Speaker 9] (2:08:22 - 2:08:22)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:08:22 - 2:08:27)

And I guess you would say the same thing as you say to the woman in Qatar. Just worry about yourself.

[Speaker 1] (2:08:28 - 2:08:30)

Yes. And so if others...

[Speaker 2] (2:08:30 - 2:08:30)

Concern yourself with yourself.

[Speaker 1] (2:08:31 - 2:08:52)

That's right. And if friends or relatives say it doesn't make sense to me, that's fine. Perhaps in a few years time they'll be ready.

We don't know. So it's to accept that it's not yet for everybody. Accept it first.

Accept. Accept. Don't demand that or don't make it into an ideology and then try to convince people that they must be present.

[Speaker 2] (2:08:52 - 2:10:03)

Right. I got it. Before we say goodbye, I want to thank you for being with me, all of you out there.

This is just the most exciting thing I have ever done. Being able to talk with you all and share this kind of information that allows all of us to get closer to who we really are so that we can do honor our life's purpose and calling here while we're on Earth. We'll be here next Monday again at 8 p.m. Central. If you want to experience this first class again or tell a friend who missed it, our webcast will be available on demand tomorrow for free here at Oprah.com. You'll also be able to update your workbook and get started on Chapter 2. And if you want to download the podcast of this class, you can do that too at Oprah.com and at iTunes. Next week, woo! Moving out of the conceptual Chapter 1 into the good stuff. Yes.

Moving on. The next week we'll be talking about the ego. Wow!

We'll see you next Monday night. Thank you, Eckhart.

[Speaker 1] (2:10:03 - 2:10:03)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (2:10:03 - 2:10:12)

And thank you so much to all of you around the world. Good night. Good night.

Good morning. Bye-bye.

2008-Eckhart Tolle Oprah A New Earth Audiobook Podcast Chapter02

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 59:35)

Chapter 2 Ego, the current state of humanity. Words, no matter whether they are vocalized and made into sounds or remain unspoken as thoughts, can cast an almost hypnotic spell upon you. You easily lose yourself in them, become hypnotized into implicitly believing that when you have attached a word to something you know what it is.

The fact is, you don't know what it is. You have only covered up the mystery with a label. Everything, a bird, a tree, even a simple stone, and certainly a human being, is ultimately unknowable.

This is because it has unfathomable depths. All we can perceive, think about, is the surface layer of reality, less than the tip of an iceberg. Underneath the surface appearance, everything is not only connected with everything else, but also with the source of all life out of which it came.

Even a stone, and more easily a flower or a bird, could show you the way back to God, to the source, to yourself. When you look at it or hold it and let it be, without imposing a word or mental label on it, a sense of awe, of wonder arises within you. Its essence silently communicates itself to you and reflects your own essence back to you.

This is what great artists sense and succeed in conveying in their art. Van Gogh didn't say, That's just an old chair. He looked and looked and looked.

He sensed the beingness of the chair. Then he sat in front of the canvas and took up the brush. The chair itself would have sold for the equivalent of a few dollars.

The painting of that same chair today would fetch an excess of twenty-five million dollars. When you don't cover up the world with words and labels, a sense of the miraculous returns to your life that was lost a long time ago when humanity, instead of using thought, became possessed by thought. A depth returns to your life.

Things regain their newness, their freshness. And the greatest miracle is the experiencing of your essential self as prior to any words, thoughts, mental labels and images. For this to happen, you need to disentangle your sense of I, of beingness, from all the things it has become mixed up with, that is to say, identified with.

That disentanglement is what this book is about. The quicker you are in attaching verbal or mental labels to things, people or situations, the more shallow and lifeless your reality becomes, and the more deadened you become to reality, the miracle of life that continuously unfolds within and around you. In this way, cleverness may be gained, but wisdom is lost, and so are joy, love, creativity and aliveness.

They are concealed in the still gap between the perception and the interpretation. Of course we have to use words and thoughts. They have their own beauty.

But do we need to become imprisoned in them? Words reduce reality to something the human mind can grasp, which isn't very much. Language consists of five basic sounds produced by the vocal cords.

They are the vowels, A, E, I, O, U. The other sounds are consonants produced by air pressure, S, F, G, and so on. Do you believe some combination of such basic sounds could ever explain who you are, or the ultimate purpose of the universe, or even what a tree or stone is in its depths?

The illusory self. The word I embodies the greatest error and the deepest truth, depending on how it is used. In conventional usage, it is not only one of the most frequently used words in the language, together with the related words me, my, mine, and myself, but also one of the most misleading.

In normal everyday usage, I embodies the primordial error, a misperception of who you are, an illusory sense of identity. This is the ego. This illusory sense of self is what Albert Einstein, who had deep insights not only into the reality of space and time, but also into human nature, referred to as an optical illusion of consciousness.

That illusory self then becomes the basis for all further interpretations, or rather misinterpretations of reality, all thought processes, interactions, and relationships. Your reality becomes a reflection of the original illusion. If you can recognize illusion as illusion, it dissolves.

The recognition of illusion is also its ending. Its survival depends on your mistaking it for reality. In the seeing of who you are not, the reality of who you are emerges by itself.

This is what happens as you slowly and carefully read this and the next chapter, which are about the mechanics of the false self we call the ego. So what is the nature of this illusory self? What you usually refer to when you say I is not who you are.

By a monstrous act of reductionism, the infinite depth of who you are is confused with the sound produced by the vocal chords, or the thought of I in your mind, and whatever the I has identified with. So what do the usual I and the related me, my, or mine refer to? When a young child learns that a sequence of sounds produced by the parent's vocal chords is his or her name, the child begins to equate a word, which in the mind becomes a thought, with who he or she is.

At that stage, some children refer to themselves in the third person. Johnny is hungry. Soon after, they learn the magic word I and equate it with their name, which they have already equated with who they are.

Then other thoughts come and merge with the original I thought. The next step are thoughts of me and mine to designate things that are somehow part of I. This is identification with objects, which means investing things, but ultimately thoughts that represent things, with a sense of self, thereby deriving an identity from them.

When my toy breaks or is taken away, intense suffering arises. Not because of any intrinsic value that the toy has—the child will soon lose interest in it, and it will be replaced by other toys, other objects—but because of the thought of mine. The toy became part of the child's developing sense of self, of I.

And so as the child grows up, the original I thought attracts other thoughts to itself. It becomes identified with a gender, possessions, the sense-perceived body, the nationality, race, religion, profession. Other things the I identifies with are roles, mother, father, husband, wife, and so on, accumulated knowledge or opinions, likes and dislikes, and also things that happened to me in the past, the memory of which are thoughts that further define my sense of self as me and my story.

These are only some of the things people derive their sense of identity from. They are ultimately no more than thoughts held together precariously by the fact that they are all invested with a sense of self. This mental construct is what you normally refer to when you say I.

To be more precise, most of the time it is not you who speaks when you say or think I, but some aspect of that mental construct, the egoic self. Once you awaken, you still use the word I, but it will come from a deeper place within yourself. Most people are still completely identified with the incessant stream of mind, of compulsive thinking, most of it repetitive and pointless.

There is no I apart from their thought processes and the emotions that go with them. This is the meaning of being spiritually unconscious. When told that there is a voice in their head that never stops speaking, they say, What voice?

or angrily deny it, which, of course, is the voice, is the thinker, is the unobserved mind. It could almost be looked upon as an entity that has taken possession of them. Some people never forget the first time they disidentified from their thoughts and thus briefly experience the shift in identity from being the content of their mind to being the awareness in the background.

For others it happens in such a subtle way they hardly notice it, or they just notice an influx of joy or inner peace without knowing the reason. That first glimpse of awareness came to me when I was a first-year student at the University of London. I would take the tube, the subway, twice a week to go to the university library, usually around nine o'clock in the morning, towards the end of the rush hour.

One time a woman in her early thirties sat opposite me. I had seen her before a few times on that train. One could not help but notice her.

Although the train was full, the seats on either side of her were unoccupied, the reason being, no doubt, that she appeared to be quite insane. She looked extremely tense and talked to herself incessantly in a loud and angry voice. She was so absorbed in her thoughts that she was totally unaware, it seemed, of other people or her surroundings.

Her head was facing downward and slightly to the left, as if she were addressing someone sitting in the empty seat next to her. Although I don't remember the precise content, her monologue went something like this. .

. . And then she said to me, so I said to her, You are a liar!

How dare you accuse me of . . .

when you are the one who has always taken advantage of me? I trusted you, and you betrayed my trust. There was the angry tone in her voice of someone who has been wronged, who needs to defend her position lest she become annihilated.

As the train approached Tottenham Court Road station she stood up and walked towards the door with still no break in the stream of words coming out of her mouth. That was my stop too, so I got off behind her. At street level she began to walk towards Bedford Square, still engaged in her imaginary dialogue, still angrily accusing and asserting her position.

My curiosity aroused, I decided to follow her as long as she was walking in the same general direction I had to go in. Although engrossed in her imaginary dialogue she seemed to know where she was going. Soon we were within sight of the imposing structure of Senate House, a 1930s high-rise, the University's central administrative building and library.

I was shocked. Was it possible that we were going to the same place? Yes, that's where she was heading.

Was she a teacher, a student, an office worker, a librarian? Maybe she was some psychologist's research project. I never knew the answer.

I walked twenty steps behind her and by the time I entered the building, which ironically was the location of the headquarters of the Mind Police in the film version of George Orwell's novel Nineteen Eighty-Four, she had already been swallowed up by one of the elevators. I was somewhat taken aback by what I had just witnessed. A mature first-year student at twenty-five, I saw myself as an intellectual in the making, and I was convinced that all the answers to the dilemmas of human existence could be found through the intellect, that is to say, by thinking.

I didn't realize yet that thinking without awareness is the main dilemma of human existence. I looked upon the professors as sages who had all the answers, and upon the University as the temple of knowledge. How could an insane person like her be part of this?

I was still thinking about her when I was in the men's room prior to entering the library. As I was washing my hands, I thought, I hope I don't end up like her. The man next to me looked briefly in my direction, and I suddenly was shocked when I realized that I hadn't just thought those words, but mumbled them aloud.

Oh my God, I'm already like her, I thought. Wasn't my mind as incessantly active as hers? There were only minor differences between us.

The predominant underlying emotion behind her thinking seemed to be anger. In my case it was mostly anxiety. She thought out loud, I thought mostly in my head.

If she was mad, then everyone was mad, including myself. There were differences in degree only. For a moment I was able to stand back from my own mind and see it from a deeper perspective, as it were.

There was a brief shift from thinking to awareness. I was still in the men's room, but alone now, looking at my face in the mirror. At that moment of detachment from my mind, I laughed out loud.

It may have sounded insane, but it was the laughter of sanity, the laughter of the big-bellied Buddha. As my mind makes it out to be, that's what the laughter seemed to be saying. But it was only a glimpse, very quickly to be forgotten.

I would spend the next three years in anxiety and depression, completely identified with my mind. I had to get close to suicide before awareness returned. And then it was much more than a glimpse.

I became free of compulsive thinking and of the false, mind-made I. The above incident not only gave me a first glimpse of awareness, it also planted the first doubt as to the absolute validity of the human intellect. A few months later something tragic happened that made my doubt grow.

On a Monday morning we arrived for a lecture to be given by a professor whose mind I admired greatly, only to be told that sadly he had committed suicide sometime during the weekend by shooting himself. I was stunned. He was a highly respected teacher and seemed to have all the answers.

However, I could as yet see no alternative to the cultivation of thought. I didn't realize yet that thinking is only a tiny aspect of the consciousness that we are. Nor did I know anything about the ego, let alone being able to detect it within myself.

Content and Structure of the Ego The egoic mind is completely conditioned by the past. Its conditioning is twofold. It consists of content and structure.

In the case of a child who cries in deep suffering because his toy has been taken away, the toy represents content. It is interchangeable with any other content, any other toy or object. The content you identify with is conditioned by your environment, your upbringing, and surrounding culture.

Whether the child is rich or poor, whether the toy is a piece of wood shaped like an animal or sophisticated electronic gadget, makes no difference as far as the suffering caused by its loss is concerned. The reason why such acute suffering occurs is concealed in the word ¨my¨, and it is structural. The unconscious compulsion to enhance one's identity through association with an object is built into the very structure of the egoic mind.

One of the most basic mind structures through which the ego comes into existence is identification. The word identification is derived from the Latin word edem, meaning same, and facere, which means to make. So when I identify with something, I make it the same.

The same as what? The same as I. I endow it with a sense of self, and so it becomes part of my identity.

One of the most basic levels of identification is with things. My toy later becomes my car, my house, my clothes, and so on. I try to find myself in things but never quite make it, and end up losing myself in them.

That is the fate of the ego. Identification with things. The people in the advertising industry know very well that in order to sell things that people don't really need, they must convince them that those things will add something to how they see themselves or are seen by others, in other words, add something to their sense of self.

They do this, for example, by telling you that you will stand out from the crowd by using this product and so by implication be more fully yourself. Or they may create an association in your mind between the product and a famous person, or youthful, attractive, or happy-looking person. Even pictures of old or deceased celebrities in their prime work well for that purpose.

The unspoken assumption is that by buying this product, through some magical act of appropriation, you become like them, or rather the surface image of them. And so in many cases you are not buying a product but an identity enhancer. Designer labels are primarily collective identities that you buy into.

They are expensive and therefore exclusive. If everybody could buy them, they would lose their psychological value and all you would be left with would be their material value, which likely amounts to a fraction of what you paid. What you identify with will vary from person to person according to age, gender, income, social class, fashion, the surrounding culture, and so on.

What you identify with is all to do with content, whereas the unconscious compulsion to identify is structural. It is one of the most basic ways in which the egoic mind operates. Paradoxically, what keeps the so-called consumer society going is the fact that trying to find yourself through things doesn't work.

The ego satisfaction is short-lived and so you keep looking for more, keep buying, keep consuming. Of course, in this physical dimension that our surface selves inhabit, things are a necessary and inescapable part of our lives. We need housing, clothes, furniture, tools, transportation.

There may also be things in our lives that we value because of their beauty or inherent quality. We need to honor the world of things, not despise it. Each thing has beingness, is a temporary form that has its origin within the formless one life, the source of all things, all bodies, all forms.

In most ancient cultures people believed that everything, even so-called inanimate objects, had an indwelling spirit, and in this respect they were closer to the truth than we are today. When you live in a world deadened by mental abstraction you don't sense the aliveness of the universe anymore. Most people don't inhabit a living reality but a conceptualized one.

But we cannot really honor things if we use them as a self-enhancement, that is to say if we try to find ourselves through them. This is exactly what the ego does. Ego identification with things creates attachment to things, obsession with things, which in turn creates our consumer society and economic structures where the only measure of progress is always more.

The unchecked striving for more, for endless growth, is a dysfunction and a disease. It is the same dysfunction the cancerous cell manifests whose only goal is to multiply itself, unaware that it is bringing about its own destruction by destroying the organism of which it is a part. Some economists are so attached to the notion of growth that they can't let go of that word, so they refer to recession as a time of negative growth.

A large part of many people's lives is consumed by an obsessive preoccupation with things. This is why one of the ills of our times is object proliferation. When you can no longer feel the life that you are, you are likely to try to fill up your life with things.

As a spiritual practice I suggest that you investigate your relationship with the world of things through self-observation, and in particular things that are designated with the word ¨my¨. You need to be alert and honest to find out, for example, whether your sense of self-worth is bound up with things you possess. Do certain things induce a subtle feeling of importance or superiority?

Does the lack of them make you feel inferior to others who have more than you? Do you casually mention things you own or show them off to increase your sense of worth in someone else's eyes and through them in your own? Do you feel resentful or angry and somehow diminished in your sense of self when someone else has more than you, or when you lose a prized possession?

When I was seeing people as a counsellor and spiritual teacher, I would visit a woman twice a week whose body was riddled with cancer. She was a schoolteacher in her mid-forties and had been given no more than a few months to live by her doctors. Sometimes a few words were spoken during those visits, but mostly we would sit together in silence, and as we did, she had her first glimpses of the stillness within herself that she never knew existed during her busy life as a schoolteacher.

One day, however, I arrived to find her in a state of great distress and anger. What happened? I asked.

Her diamond ring of great monetary as well as sentimental value had disappeared, and she said she was sure it had been stolen by the woman who came to look after her for a few hours every day. She said she didn't understand how anybody could be so callous and heartless as to do this to her. She asked me whether she should confront the woman or whether it would be better to call the police immediately.

I said I couldn't tell her what to do, but asked her to find out how important a ring or anything else was at this point in her life. You don't understand, she said. This was my grandmother's ring.

I used to wear it every day until I got ill and my hands became too swollen. It's more than just a ring to me. How can I not be upset?

Anger and defensiveness in her voice were indications that she had not yet become present enough to look within and to disentangle her reaction from the event and observe them both. Her anger and defensiveness were signs that the eager was still speaking through her. I said, I'm going to ask you a few questions, but instead of answering them now, see if you can find the answers within you.

I will pause briefly after each question. When an answer comes, it may not necessarily come in the form of words. She said she was ready to listen.

I asked, do you realize that you will have to let go of the ring at some point, perhaps quite soon? How much more time do you need before you will be ready to let go of it? Will you become less when you let go of it?

Has who you are become diminished by the loss? There were a few minutes of silence after the last question. When she started speaking again, there was a smile on her face and she seemed at peace.

She said, the last question made me realize something important. First I went to my mind for an answer and my mind said, yes, of course you've been diminished. Then I asked myself the question again, has who I am become diminished?

This time I tried to feel rather than think the before. If I can feel the I am so strongly, then who I am hasn't been diminished at all. I can still feel it now, something peaceful but very alive.

That is the joy of being, I said. You can only feel it when you get out of your head. Being must be felt.

It can't be thought. The ego doesn't know about it because thought is what it consists of. The ring was really in your head as a thought that you confused with the sense of I am.

You thought the I am or part of it was in the ring. Whatever the ego seeks and gets attached to are substitutes for the being that it cannot feel. You can value and care for things, but whenever you get attached to them, you will know it's the ego.

And you are never really attached to a thing but to a thought that has I, me or mine in it. Whenever you completely accept a loss, you go beyond ego and who you are, the I am which is consciousness itself, emerges. She said, now I understand something Jesus said that never made much sense to me before.

If someone takes your shirt, let him have your coat as well. That's right, I said. It doesn't mean you should never lock your door.

All it means is that sometimes letting things go is an act of far greater power than defending or hanging on. In the last few weeks of her life, as her body became weaker, she became more and more radiant, as if light were shining through her. She gave many of her possessions away, some to the woman she thought had stolen the ring, and with each thing she gave away, her joy deepened.

When her mother called me to let me know she had passed away, she also mentioned that after her death they found her ring in the medicine cabinet in the bathroom. Did the woman return the ring, or had it been there all the time? Nobody will ever know.

One thing we do know. Life will give you whatever experience is most helpful for the evolution of your consciousness. How do you know this is the experience you need?

Because this is the experience you are having at this moment. Is it wrong then to be proud of one's possessions or to feel resentful towards people who have more than you? Not at all.

That sense of pride, of needing to stand out, the apparent enhancement of oneself through more than and diminishment through less than, is neither right nor wrong. It is the ego. The ego isn't wrong.

It's just unconscious. When you observe the ego in yourself, you are beginning to go beyond it. Don't take the ego too seriously.

When you detect egoic behaviour in yourself, smile. At times you may even laugh. How could humanity have been taken in by this for so long?

Above all, know that the ego isn't personal. It isn't who you are. If you consider the ego to be your personal problem, that's just more ego.

End of Disc 1 To own something, what does it really mean? What does it mean to make something mine? If you stand in a street in New York, point to a huge skyscraper and say, that building is mine, I own it, you're either very wealthy or you're a delusional or a liar.

In any case, you're telling a story in which the thought-form I and the thought-form building merge into one. That's how the mental concept of ownership works. If everybody agrees with your story, there will be signed pieces of paper to certify their agreement with it.

You're wealthy. If nobody agrees with the story, they will send you to a psychiatrist. You're a delusional or compulsive liar.

It is important to recognize here that the story and the thought-forms that make up the story, whether people agree with it or not, have absolutely nothing to do with who you are. Even if people agree with it, it is ultimately a fiction. Many people don't realize until they are on their deathbed and everything external falls away, that no thing ever had anything to do with who they are.

In the proximity of death, the whole concept of ownership stands revealed as ultimately meaningless. In the last moments of their life, they then also realize that while they were looking throughout their lives for a more complete sense of self, what they were really looking for, their being, had actually always already been there, but had been largely obscured by their identification with things, which ultimately means identification with their mind. Blessed are the poor in spirit, Jesus said, for theirs will be the kingdom of heaven.

What does poor in spirit mean? No inner baggage, no identifications, not with things, nor with any mental concepts that have a sense of self in them. And what is the kingdom of heaven?

The simple but profound joy of being that is there when you let go of identifications and so become poor in spirit. This is why renouncing all possessions has been an ancient spiritual practice in both East and West. Renunciation of possessions, however, will not automatically free you of the ego.

It will attempt to ensure its survival by finding something else to identify with. For example, the mental image of yourself as someone who has transcended all interest in material possessions, and is therefore superior, is more spiritual than others. There are people who have renounced all possessions but have a bigger ego than some millionaires.

If you take away one kind of identification, the ego will quickly find another. It ultimately doesn't mind what it identifies with as long as it has an identity. Anti-consumerism or anti-private ownership would be another thought-form, another mental position that can replace identification with possessions.

Through it you could make yourself right and others wrong. As we shall see later, making yourself right and others wrong is one of the principal egoic mind patterns, one of the main forms of unconsciousness. In other words, the content of the ego may change, the mind-structure that keeps it alive does not.

One of the unconscious assumptions is that by identifying with an object through the fiction of ownership, the apparent solidity and permanency of that material object will endow your sense of self with greater solidity and permanency. This applies particularly to buildings and even more so to land, since it is the only thing you think you can own that cannot be destroyed. The absurdity of owning something becomes even more apparent in the case of land.

In the days of the White Settlement the natives of North America found ownership of land an incomprehensible concept, and so they lost it when the Europeans made them sign pieces of paper that were equally incomprehensible to them. They felt they belonged to the land, but the land did not belong to them. The ego tends to equate having with being.

I have, therefore I am. And the more I have, the more I am. The ego lives through comparison.

How you are seen by others turns into how you see yourself. If everyone lived in a mansion or everyone was wealthy, your mansion or your wealth would no longer serve to enhance your sense of self. You could then move to a simple cabin, give up your wealth and regain an identity by seeing yourself and being seen as more spiritual than others.

How you are seen by others becomes the mirror that tells you what you are like and who you are. The ego's sense of self-worth is in most cases bound up with the worth you have in the eyes of others. You need others to give you a sense of self, and if you live in a culture that to a large extent equates self-worth with how much and what you have, if you cannot look through this collective delusion, you will be condemned to chasing after things for the rest of your life in the vain hope of finding your worth and completion of your sense of self there.

TOUCHMENT TO THINGS Don't even try. It's impossible. Attachment to things drops away by itself when you no longer seek to find yourself in them.

In the meantime, just be aware of your attachment to things. Sometimes you may not know that you are attached to something, which is to say identified, until you lose it or there is a threat of loss. If you then become upset, anxious, and so on, it means you are attached.

If you are aware that you are identified with a thing, the identification is no longer total. I am the awareness that is aware that there is attachment. That's the beginning of the transformation of consciousness.

WANTING THE NEED FOR MORE The ego identifies with having, but its satisfaction in having is a relatively shallow and short-lived one. Concealed within it remains a deep-seated sense of dissatisfaction, of incompleteness, of not enough. I don't have enough yet, by which the ego really means, I am not enough yet.

As we have seen, having, the concept of ownership, is a fiction created by the ego to give itself solidity and permanency and make itself stand out, make itself special. Since you cannot find yourself through having, however, there is another more powerful drive underneath it that pertains to the structure of the ego, the need for more, which we could also call wanting. No ego can last for long without the need for more.

Therefore, wanting keeps the ego alive much more than having. The ego wants to want more than it wants to have, and so the shallow satisfaction of having is always replaced by more wanting. This is the psychological need for more, that is to say, more things to identify with.

It is an addictive need, not an authentic one. In some cases, the psychological need for more or the feeling of not enough that is so characteristic of the ego becomes transferred to the physical level and so turns into insatiable hunger. The sufferers of bulimia will often make themselves vomit so that they can continue eating.

Their mind is hungry, not their body. This eating disorder would become healed if the sufferers, instead of being identified with their mind, could get in touch with their body and so feel the true needs of the body rather than the pseudo-needs of the egoic mind.

Some egos know what they want and pursue their aim with grim and ruthless determination, Genghis Khan, Stalin, Hitler, to give just a few larger-than-life examples.

The energy behind their wanting, however, creates an opposing energy of equal intensity, which in the end leads to their downfall. In the meantime they make themselves and many others unhappy or, in the larger-than-life examples, create hell on earth. Most egos have conflicting wants.

They want different things at different times or may not even know what they want except that they don't want what is, the present moment. Unease, restlessness, boredom, anxiety, dissatisfaction are the result of unfulfilled wanting. Wanting is structural, so no amount of content can provide lasting fulfillment as long as that mental structure remains in place.

Intense wanting that has no specific object can often be found in the still-developing ego of teenagers, some of whom are in a permanent state of negativity and dissatisfaction. The physical needs for food, water, shelter, clothing and basic comforts could be easily met for all humans on the planet, were it not for the imbalance of resources created by the insane and rapacious need for more, the greed of the ego. It finds collective expression in the economic structures of this world, such as the huge corporations, which are egoic entities that compete with each other for more.

Their only blind aim is profit. They pursue that aim with absolute ruthlessness. Nature, animals, people, even their own employees are no more than digits on a balance sheet, lifeless objects to be used, then discarded.

The thought-forms of me and mine, of more than, of I want, I need, I must have, and of not enough, pertain not to content, but to the structure of the ego. The content is interchangeable. As long as you don't recognize those thought-forms within yourself, as long as they remain unconscious, you will believe in what they say.

You will be condemned to acting out those unconscious thoughts, condemned to seeking and not finding. Because when those thought-forms operate, no possession, place, person or condition will ever satisfy you. No content will satisfy you as long as the egoic structure remains in place.

No matter what you have or get, you won't be happy. You will always be looking for something else that promises greater fulfillment, that promises to make your incomplete sense of self complete and fill that sense of lack you feel within. Apart from objects, another basic form of identification is with my body.

Firstly, the body is male or female, and so the sense of being a man or woman takes up a significant part of most people's sense of self. Gender becomes identity. Identification with gender is encouraged at an early age, and it forces you into a role, into conditioned patterns of behavior that affect all aspects of your life, not just sexuality.

It is a role many people become completely trapped in, even more so in some of the traditional societies than in Western culture, where identification with gender is beginning to lessen somewhat. In some traditional cultures, the worst fate a woman can have is to be unwed or barren, and for a man to lack sexual potency and not be able to produce children. Life's fulfillment is perceived to be fulfillment of one's gender identity.

In the West, it is the physical appearance of the body that contributes greatly to the sense of who you think you are, its strength or weakness, its perceived beauty or ugliness relative to others. For many people, their sense of self-worth is intimately bound up with their physical strength, good looks, fitness, and external appearance. Many feel a diminished sense of self-worth because they perceive their body as ugly or imperfect.

In some cases, the mental image or concept of my body is a complete distortion of reality. A young woman may think of herself as overweight and therefore starve herself, when in fact she is quite thin. She cannot see her body anymore.

All she sees is the mental concept of her body, which says, I am fat or I will become fat. At the root of this condition lies identification with the mind. As people have become more and more mind-identified, which is the intensification of egoic dysfunction, there has also been a dramatic increase in the incidence of anorexia in recent decades.

If the sufferer could look at her body without the interfering judgments of her mind, or even recognize those judgments for what they are instead of believing in them, or better still, if she could feel her body from within, this would initiate her healing. Those who are identified with their good looks, physical strength, or abilities, experience suffering when those attributes begin to fade and disappear, as of course they will. Their very identity that was based on them is then threatened with collapse.

In either case, ugly or beautiful, people derive a significant part of their identity, be it negative or positive, from their body. To be more precise, they derive their identity from the I-thought that they erroneously attach to the mental image or concept of their body, which after all is no more than a physical form that shares the destiny of all forms, impermanence, and ultimately decay. Equating the physical sense-perceived body that is destined to grow old, wither, and die with I, always leads to suffering sooner or later.

To refrain from identifying with the body doesn't mean that you neglect, despise, or no longer care for it. If it is strong, beautiful, or vigorous, you can enjoy and appreciate those attributes while they last. You can also improve the body's condition through right nutrition and exercise.

If you don't equate the body with who you are, when beauty fades, vigor diminishes, or the body becomes incapacitated, this will not affect your sense of worth or identity in any way. In fact, as the body begins to weaken, the formless dimension, the light of consciousness, can shine more easily through the fading form. It is not just people with good or near-perfect bodies who are likely to equate it with who they are.

You can just as easily identify with a problematic body and make the body's imperfection, illness, or disability into your identity. You may then think and speak of yourself as a sufferer of this or that chronic illness or disability. You receive a great deal of attention from doctors and others who constantly confirm to you your conceptual identity as a sufferer or patient.

You then unconsciously cling to the illness because it has become the most important part of who you perceive yourself to be. It has become another thought-form with which the ego can identify. Once the ego has found an identity, it does not want to let go.

Amazingly, but not infrequently, the ego in search of a stronger identity can and does create illnesses in order to strengthen itself through them. Although body identification is one of the most basic forms of ego, the good news is that it is also the one that you can most easily go beyond. This is done not by trying to convince yourself that you are not your body, but by shifting your attention from the external form of your body and from thoughts about your body—beautiful, ugly, strong, weak, too fat, too thin—to the feeling of aliveness inside it.

No matter what your body's appearance is on the outer level, beyond the outer form it is an intensely alive energy field. If you are not familiar with inner body awareness, close your eyes for a moment and find out if there is life inside your hands. Don't ask your mind.

It will say, I can't feel anything. Probably it will also say, give me something more interesting to think about. So instead of asking your mind, go to the hands directly.

By this I mean, become aware of the subtle feeling of aliveness inside them. It is there. You just have to go there with your attention to notice it.

You may get a slight tingling sensation at first, then a feeling of energy or aliveness. If you hold your attention in your hands for a while, the sense of aliveness will intensify. Some people won't even have to close their eyes.

They will be able to feel their inner hands at the same time as they read this. Then go to your feet, keep your attention there for a minute or so, and begin to feel your hands and feet at the same time. Then incorporate other parts of the body—legs, arms, abdomen, chest, and so on—into that feeling until you are aware of the inner body as a global sense of aliveness.

What I call the inner body isn't really the body anymore, but life energy, the bridge between form and formlessness. Make it a habit to feel the inner body as often as you can. After a while, you won't need to close your eyes anymore to feel it.

For example, see if you can feel the inner body whenever you listen to someone. It almost seems like a paradox. When you are in touch with the inner body, you are not identified with your body anymore, nor are you identified with your mind.

This is to say, you are no longer identified with form, but moving away from form identification towards formlessness, which we may also call being. It is your essence identity. Body awareness not only anchors you in the present moment, it is a doorway out of the present that is the ego.

It also strengthens the immune system and the body's ability to heal itself—forgetfulness of being. Ego is always identification with form, seeking yourself and thereby losing yourself in some form. Forms are not just material objects and physical bodies.

More fundamental than the external forms, things and bodies, are the thought forms that continuously arise in the field of consciousness. They are energy formations, finer and less dense than physical matter, but they are forms, nonetheless. What you may be aware of as a voice in your head that never stops speaking is the stream of incessant and compulsive thinking.

When every thought absorbs your attention completely, when you are so identified with the voice in your head and the emotions that accompany it that you lose yourself in every thought and every emotion, then you are totally identified with form and therefore in the grip of ego. Ego is a conglomeration of recurring thought forms and conditioned mental-emotional patterns that are infested with a sense of I, a sense of self. Ego arises when your sense of beingness, of I am, which is formless consciousness, gets mixed up with form.

This is the meaning of identification. This is forgetfulness of being, the primary error, the illusion of absolute separateness that turns reality into a nightmare. To Sartre's Insight The seventeenth-century philosopher Descartes, regarded as the founder of modern philosophy, gave expression to this primary error with his famous dictum, which he saw as primary truth, I think, therefore I am.

This was the answer he found to the question, Is there anything I can know with absolute certainty? He realized that the fact that he was always thinking was beyond doubt, and so he equated thinking with being, that is to say, identity, I am, with thinking. Instead of the ultimate truth, he had found the root of the ego, but he didn't know that.

It took almost three hundred years before another famous philosopher saw something in that statement that Descartes, as well as everybody else, had overlooked. His name was Jean-Paul Sartre. He looked at Descartes' statement, I think, therefore I am, very deeply, and suddenly realized, in his own words, the consciousness that says I am is not the consciousness that thinks.

What did he mean by that? When you are aware that you are thinking, that awareness is not part of thinking. It is a different dimension of consciousness.

And it is that awareness that says, I am. If there were nothing but thought in you, you wouldn't even know you're thinking. You would be like a dreamer who doesn't know he's dreaming.

You would be as identified with every thought as the dreamer is with every image in the dream. Many people still live like that, like sleepwalkers, trapped in old dysfunctional mindsets that continuously recreate the same nightmarish reality. When you know you are dreaming, you are awake within the dream.

Another dimension of consciousness has come in. The implication of Sartre's insight is profound, but he himself was still too identified with thinking to realize the full significance of what he had discovered. An emerging new dimension of consciousness, the peace that passes all understanding.

There are many accounts of people who experienced that emerging new dimension of consciousness as a result of tragic loss at some point in their lives. Some lost all of their possessions, others their children or spouse, their social position, reputation or physical abilities. In some cases, through disaster or war, they lost all of these simultaneously and found themselves with nothing.

We may call this a limit situation. Whatever they had identified with, whatever gave them their sense of self, had been taken away. Then, suddenly and inexplicably, the anguish or intense fear they initially felt gave way to a sacred sense of presence, a deep peace and serenity and complete freedom from fear.

This phenomenon must have been familiar to St. Paul who used the expression, the peace of God which passes all understanding. It is indeed a peace that doesn't seem to make sense, and the people who experienced it ask themselves, in the face of this, how can it be that I feel such peace? The answer is simple once you realize what the ego is and how it works.

When forms that you had identified with, that gave you your sense of self, collapse or are taken away, it can lead to a collapse of the ego, since ego is identification with form. When there's nothing to identify with anymore, who are you? When forms around you die or death approaches, your sense of beingness, of I am, is freed from its entanglement with form.

Spirit is released from its imprisonment in matter. You realize your essential identity as formless, as an all-pervasive presence, of being prior to all forms, all identifications. You realize your true identity as consciousness itself, rather than what consciousness had identified with.

That's the peace of God. The ultimate truth of who you are is not I am this or I am that, but I am. Not everybody who experiences great loss also experiences this awakening, this disidentification from form.

Some immediately create a strong mental image or thought form in which they see themselves as a victim, whether it be of circumstances, other people, an unjust fate or God. This thought form and the emotions it creates, such as anger, resentment, self-pity and so on, they strongly identify with. And it immediately takes the place of all the other identifications that have collapsed through the loss.

In other words, the ego quickly finds a new form. The fact that this new form is a deeply unhappy one doesn't concern the ego too much, as long as it has an identity, good or bad. In fact, this new ego will be more contracted, more rigid and impenetrable than the old one.

Whenever tragic loss occurs, you either resist or you yield. Some people become bitter or deeply resentful. Others become compassionate, wise and loving.

Yielding means inner acceptance of what is. You are open to life. Resistance is an inner contraction, a hardening of the shell of the ego.

You are closed. Whatever action you take in a state of inner resistance, which we could also call negativity, will create more outer resistance and the universe will not be on your side. Life will not be helpful.

If the shutters are closed, the sunlight cannot come in. When you yield internally, when you surrender, a new dimension of consciousness opens up. If action is possible or necessary, your action will be in alignment with the whole and supported by creative intelligence, the unconditioned consciousness which in a state of inner openness you become one with.

Circumstances and people then become helpful, cooperative. Coincidences happen. If no action is possible, you rest in the peace and inner stillness that come with surrender.

You rest in God.

[Speaker 2] (59:51 - 1:01:02)

Along with a multitude of North Americans, we also have students registered in this class from countries like Afghanistan, Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Croatia, Denmark, Egypt, Ireland, South Africa, and even a few of you from Zanzibar, I hear. Thank you. Since last week, 1,860,000 of you have streamed or downloaded our first class.

I just want you to know it's always available if this pioneering effort again tonight should break up and we have webcast problems, you can go to oprah.com tomorrow or iTunes and begin streaming afternoon. Well, for the next nine weeks, author and spiritual teacher Eckhart Tolle and I plan to be right here in our virtual classroom on oprah.com Monday nights at 8 p.m. central to discuss each chapter and talk with you about it. And you can type in your questions on the right side of your screen and send that to us instantly.

And throughout this class, we're going to also talk directly to students via Skype. So cool. Free software that allows you to make internet and video phone calls all over the world.

Welcome again, Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (1:01:02 - 1:01:04)

Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:01:04 - 1:01:33)

Well, last week, you shared with us how there are tools that we can use to bring ourselves into the present moment. And you were saying from that first chapter that and throughout this book that there is only the present moment. And you were saying that if we would allow ourselves to take ourselves out of our mind and just go to our breath, that that we could could learn presence that way.

That's how you begin to learn presence.

[Speaker 1] (1:01:33 - 1:02:57)

Yes, yes. And I suggest that we all do that right now, which is to say, we are taking our attention right now, away from where it usually dwells, which is in the head and in the thinking mind. And we direct our attention to our breath.

And the simple question that one could ask is or you could ask yourself is, am I still breathing? Let's just check if I'm still breathing. Now, how do you find out whether you're still breathing?

You have to take your attention away from the thinking mind and sense yourself breathing right now. And as you're taking attention away from the thinking mind, which always works using past and future sustains itself by always generating past and future thinking. You also enter the present moment when you take attention away from thinking, direct attention to your breathing.

You're always breathing, but usually you're not aware of it. Right. And now we are bringing awareness to it, which means we are taking attention away from thinking.

So we are not losing consciousness. We are very conscious, but thinking much less or perhaps not at all. So let's do this now.

This has never been done on television. It's unprecedented, but we can do it here.

[Speaker 2] (1:02:57 - 1:03:00)

Yes. Silence is usually not good on TV.

[Speaker 1] (1:03:00 - 1:03:01)

No.

[Speaker 2] (1:03:02 - 1:03:04)

But let's try it for the next 10 seconds.

[Speaker 1] (1:03:05 - 1:03:07)

Just be aware of yourself breathing.

[Speaker 2] (1:03:32 - 1:03:33)

I'm still alive.

[Speaker 1] (1:03:34 - 1:03:35)

Yes. I just checked in. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:03:36 - 1:03:36)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:03:37 - 1:03:48)

Perhaps even more alive than when you're engaged in thinking. There's a deeper sense of aliveness there that you're beginning to touch when you get in touch with that, these inner processes. Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (1:03:48 - 1:03:58)

I think that's pretty cool that all around the world and all of these different countries I just named that all of us come together in silence for a moment just to give our mind to break.

[Speaker 1] (1:03:58 - 1:03:59)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:03:59 - 1:04:50)

Yeah. Well, this is the most exciting chapter until you get to the next chapter. I think chapter two is the most exciting chapter.

As we said last week, chapter one is pretty conceptual. You would agree. Yes.

Even you're the one who wrote it. Yes. Pretty conceptual.

But in chapter two title, ego, the current state of humanity, we get into, I think, a way of understanding ourselves that perhaps so many people were not aware of until beginning to read this. So I would just like to just get right into this chapter. When you say when you don't cover up the world with words and labels, a sense of the miraculous returns to your life that was lost a long time ago when humanity, instead of using thought, became possessed by thought.

What do you mean by that?

[Speaker 1] (1:04:50 - 1:06:18)

Now, usually, and everybody can verify this in their own experience, we experience the phenomenal world, whatever we experience, we do not experience it directly. It is overlaid with self-talk, which are the mental processes. So as you go about your life, you encounter situations, you meet people, you do your work, and most of the time there is a voice in the head, which can be called the self-talk, it can be called the inner voice, but it is the conditioned thought processes.

And they are commenting and interpreting and mentally labeling whatever it is you're perceiving or experiencing. So there's always a running commentary in people's heads. So they don't relate to the world directly and immediately, but through the veil of the self-talk.

And this greatly decreases the sense of aliveness, the sense of how you relate to the outer world, and especially to human beings. For example, if every time I meet another human being, I immediately have certain thoughts and judgments in my head that come up the moment I meet a person, I'm already thinking something about this person.

[Speaker 2] (1:06:18 - 1:06:19)

That's right, you've already labeled.

[Speaker 1] (1:06:20 - 1:06:27)

I'm already labeled, and so I'm no longer really in communication with that person, I'm in communication with my own labels.

[Speaker 2] (1:06:27 - 1:07:11)

Yes, and what you said to us last week, and you also say in this chapter, even a stone and more easily a flower or bird could show you the way back to God and the source to yourself when you look at it or hold it and let it be without imposing a word or mental label. And what you were saying in last week is that if you can learn to do that in nature first, stop labeling things, just feel the essence and presence of things, it allows you then to be able to gradually move into doing that with people. Because so often we don't engage in presence with people, we've already labeled them and labeled the situation, and so we're reacting out of the situations and not out of what's actually happening.

That's what you're saying.

[Speaker 1] (1:07:11 - 1:07:39)

Yes, we've already put people into mental boxes, and so we no longer experience them as in their full aliveness. We have desensitized ourselves through this continuous mental conceptualization, we have desensitized ourselves to the aliveness of other human beings. Because the moment I put a label on another human being, I've already desensitized myself to their life.

[Speaker 2] (1:07:39 - 1:07:57)

So you say the quicker you are in attaching verbal or mental labels to things, people or situations, the more, on page 26 everybody, the bottom, the more shallow and lifeless your reality becomes, and the more deadened you become to reality, the miracle of life that continuously unfolds within and around you.

[Speaker 1] (1:07:57 - 1:08:41)

Yes, I go for a walk every day in the little forest at home, and often I encounter people who are jogging or friends going for a walk, and most people, some are listening to things on their headphones, whatever it is, and they're talking to their friends, and very few people are actually truly present there as they walk through this beautiful forest. And this is a spiritual practice, and I recommend that people, whenever they go out into nature especially, practice being very alert so that they can perceive the trees, the flowers, the plants, the sky, without too much mental interference.

[Speaker 2] (1:08:42 - 1:09:03)

That's so interesting, because when I used to run all the time, I'd have all these people who'd run with their headphones, and I'd say, what are you listening to? And even now, working out, I like just being and feeling the, you know, my feet on the pavement and, you know, taking it all in. I like just sort of being with myself, and I find that the headphones and all that, it's a distraction for me.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:03 - 1:09:26)

Yes, yes, yes. So that's a great practice. It's a good practice.

Later, but you can, even without leaving your home, you can practice even if you have a potted plant at home in your room. Look at the plant just for a few seconds, 10 seconds, 20 seconds, and just bring your attention to the sense perception, and truly look without mentally saying anything about it.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:26 - 1:09:30)

Well, Heather from Vancouver Island, Canada is on Skype. Hello, Heather.

[Speaker 10] (1:09:31 - 1:09:35)

Hello, Oprah. I'm honored to be here speaking with you today.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:35 - 1:09:37)

I think this is fun, okay?

[Speaker 10] (1:09:37 - 1:09:56)

Okay, go right ahead. Mr. Tolle, I'd like to commend you on a spectacular book. I found it thought-provoking, and questions arose for me.

For example, when we get free of the ego, where does that energy go? Good question.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:56 - 1:11:10)

Good question. Yes, thank you. The energy that was used up by the ego.

Now, what is the ego? It basically consists of compulsive, conditioned thought processes that we are not aware of. So we identify so closely with our stream of thinking that we don't even know that we are thinking.

So all this energy is used up in continuous, to a large extent, useless thinking. Even psychologists have found out that 90, even psychologists who are not interested in spiritual things, they looked at the nature of human thought, and they discovered that 98 or 99 percent of our thoughts are quite useless and repetitive. They're not really needed.

So where does that energy go? That energy that then becomes freed from thinking and becomes presence, which is a new dimension. Well, not entirely new, because almost everybody has had glimpses of presence, but it is a dimension of consciousness that most people still don't know exists.

And really, this is the essence of the whole teaching.

[Speaker 2] (1:11:10 - 1:11:35)

And everybody's had glimpses of it. I'm sure you have too, Heather, and everybody who's listening to us. Everybody's had just that little moment where everything is okay, where you have just a moment of bliss, where there's nothing particularly going on that would cause you to feel that, but there's a sense of an awareness that causes you to have, as you said, a glimpse of something bigger than yourself.

[Speaker 1] (1:11:35 - 1:11:55)

Yes, it can come accidentally. Sometimes it comes into people's lives accidentally, and suddenly you feel a deep sense of inner peace and aliveness. And all rightness.

Yes, and not because something particular has happened. So there's no external cause for it. It's causeless joy, one could say.

[Speaker 2] (1:11:55 - 1:12:03)

That's happened to you, Heather? Has that happened to you? Occasionally.

Yeah, occasionally. Yeah, and then you wonder, how did that happen so I could make that happen again?

[Speaker 1] (1:12:03 - 1:12:47)

Yes, it can also happen when you're engaged in very strenuous physical activity. So that requires all your attention, like climbing a mountain. So you need to be, when you're climbing a wall, you need to be totally present every moment.

If you lose presence and start thinking about what you're going to do when you get down from the mountain, you'll probably have an accident. So certain activities, very strenuous activities, require absolute presence. And some people become actually addicted to dangerous activities because they feel much more alive in those moments.

Because you need to be fully present. Yes, the reason why they feel so much more alive is because they're thinking almost nothing at all.

[Speaker 2] (1:12:47 - 1:12:52)

Because you have to be present in order to climb a mountain or to do strenuous activities.

[Speaker 1] (1:12:52 - 1:12:54)

Your attention is absolutely there.

[Speaker 2] (1:12:55 - 1:13:17)

All right. All right, Heather, did that answer your question? Yes, it did.

Thank you. Thank you so much from Vancouver Island, Canada, Heather. Well, Heather introduces this whole idea of the illusory self that you talk about on page 27.

You say the word I embodies the greatest error and the deepest truth, depending upon how it is used. What do you mean by that?

[Speaker 1] (1:13:17 - 1:13:55)

Yes. Usually when people say I, they refer to what I call me and my story, which is your personal history that you identify with as yourself. So everybody has a story, of course, because everybody has a past.

Now, most people are completely identified with the story that is their successes, their failures, things that happened to them, things that they acquired. They see themselves as a victim. They see themselves as successful.

Whatever it is, there is a certain story that develops.

[Speaker 2] (1:13:55 - 1:14:07)

Because when you ask me, who am I? That's what I'm going to tell you. My story, my successes, my failures, where I was born, what I did, what my mother did or didn't do.

That's who we think we are.

[Speaker 1] (1:14:07 - 1:16:09)

That's right. Now, what I'm saying is and what all spiritual teachings point to is that that ultimately is not who you are in your essence. It is no more than a collection of memories.

And, of course, memories are thoughts. It is no more than a bundle of thoughts that you identify with and that you believe to be who you are. So that becomes an entity almost, a mind-made entity, a sense of self, like a phantom entity that lives with you that you then refer to as myself.

So you have me and myself. For example, in Greek mythology, we have the interesting story of Narcissus. Narcissus was a young man who lived, how the story goes, mythology, of course, always embodies some truth that goes beyond the personal.

Narcissus happened to be walking somewhere and he saw, suddenly he looked down and he saw his own image in a pool of water. At a time, of course, they didn't have mirrors at the time, so it was a surprise for him to see himself reflected in a pool of water. And the story goes that he fell in love with himself.

My view is that, actually, a better translation of the story is that he became obsessed with himself. And that, to me, signals the beginning of the human ego. It is to have a mental image in your head, ultimately, not out there, that's just the story, a mental image in your head that you regard as yourself.

And that mental image is the mind-made me that consists of memories, things that happen to you, things, failures, successes, opinions, all kinds of things. I've described them in the book. Together, make up this ìIî.

[Speaker 2] (1:16:10 - 1:16:15)

OPRAH WINFREY Well, if I'm not the memories, and I'm not the things that happen to me, and I'm not my story, then who am I?

[Speaker 1] (1:16:15 - 1:17:33)

THOMAS KUHN That's the question. And, in fact, who am I is actually a question that in some spiritual, Eastern spiritual teachings is used as a kind of mantra or pointer that you repeat to yourself in a meditation setting. So you sit down and you ask yourself, ìWho am I?î And you're not supposed to answer that question.

You leave the blank after the question. In that blank, in that empty space, if it works, if this practice works as it should, you suddenly get a sense of your own presence that has nothing to do with your thought processes. Your own sense of conscious presence, your beingness, your presence, part of which is actually also your physical presence, but as a sense of aliveness.

Every cell of the body becomes part of that sense of presence and aliveness. So as we sit here, we can perhaps see if we can get a little glimpse of that, a glimpse of our own presence, which, again, is nothing to do with thinking. It is deeper than thinking.

[Speaker 2] (1:17:33 - 1:17:35)

OPRAH How do we get a glimpse of it sitting here?

[Speaker 1] (1:17:35 - 1:17:53)

THOMAS KUHN We get a glimpse of it. I recommend that see if you can feel the inner aliveness in your body as you sit here. Is there any sense in which you can feel that there is an aliveness in every cell of the body?

[Speaker 2] (1:17:54 - 1:17:56)

Now, if peopleÖ OPRAH But isn't my mind thinking that?

[Speaker 1] (1:17:56 - 1:17:59)

THOMAS KUHN Your mind may be thinking, yes, of course, I'm alive.

[Speaker 2] (1:18:00 - 1:18:11)

OPRAH Like in the book, you say, feel the aliveness in your hands. Okay. When I go to feel the aliveness in my hand, I can't feel the aliveness in my hand unless I had a mind in which to feel that.

[Speaker 1] (1:18:11 - 1:19:02)

THOMAS KUHN No. So if you close your eyes and you hold out your hand like this, and then the questionÖ OPRAH Feel the vibrating sensation in your hand. THOMAS KUHN Yes.

You ask yourself, for example, I always have this exercise for people who have no idea what I'm talking about when I talk about inner body. So you hold your hand and close your eyes and then ask yourself, how, without touching anything and without moving my hand, how can I know whether my hand is still here? How can I know that?

Now, your mind might say, of course I know it because I remember seeing it just a few seconds ago. That's it. You feel the inside is alive.

A subtle sense of warmth or tingling, a subtle sense of aliveness. That is the beginning of getting in touch with your inner body, the energy field.

[Speaker 2] (1:19:02 - 1:19:05)

OPRAH But I need my brain to do that, though.

[Speaker 1] (1:19:06 - 1:19:41)

THOMAS KUHN You need your conscious attention to do that, but not thinking. OPRAH Not thinking. THOMAS KUHN No.

That's the difference. You need attention, which is consciousness. Yes, you need consciousness to feel it, but the consciousness then moves from where it usually is, just as it did when we started today with becoming aware of our breathing.

Now the consciousness moves into the hand. And if you can feel your hand, if you can feel one hand, you can also feel the other hand. If you can feel both hands at the same time, you can perhaps also feel your both arms.

And if you can feel the arms, perhaps you can also feel your feet.

[Speaker 2] (1:19:41 - 1:19:47)

OPRAH Okay. And as I begin to feel that and everybody who's with us around the world feels that, then what?

[Speaker 1] (1:19:47 - 1:20:47)

THOMAS KUHN This means the inner body, which we also could call, what we're doing is we're practicing embodiment. This keeps you in the present moment and keeps you present. It keeps you out of your thought processes.

OPRAH Out of your thought processes, thinking about what I need to do tomorrow. THOMAS KUHN Yes. And it takes you out of ego, because the ego lives in your thought processes, consists of thought processes.

So the moment you enter the inner aliveness of a body, there's a sense of self that is deeper than thinking. You are that aliveness that you feel. You are that alive presence.

And this applies whether your past or your personal history is a happy one or an unhappy one. For most people, it's a very mixed story, but no personal history is entirely happy. OPRAH Right.

With very few examples, and then you just have to wait a little while until it becomes unhappy again.

[Speaker 2] (1:20:47 - 1:20:49)

OPRAH Even the people who say, I had a great childhood.

[Speaker 1] (1:20:49 - 1:21:18)

THOMAS KUHN Yeah. No, personal histories are all very problematic. And it's not people think, oh, it's only me.

It's everybody. Everybody's personal history. OPRAH Because that's what being a human is.

THOMAS KUHN Yes. OPRAH Okay. THOMAS KUHN So to be able to step out and find a dimension that has nothing to do with your past and your history or whether you are a miserable failure in the eyes of the world or your thought processes or greater has nothing to do with that.

[Speaker 2] (1:21:18 - 1:21:51)

OPRAH I love it when you say, what you usually refer to when you say I, I'm on page 28, is not who you are. By a monstrous act of reductionism, which is a great way of putting it, the infinite depth of who you are is confused with the sound produced by the vocal cords or the thought of I in your mind and whatever the I has identified with. So what do the usual I and the related me, my, or mine refer to?

You talk about when a young child first learns to identify my toy.

[Speaker 1] (1:21:51 - 1:22:33)

THOMAS KUHN Yes. That's the beginning of ego when the child starts to identify with an external object. And you can see when, when the toy is taken away from a child after this identification has happened, after it was, the child thought of it as my toy, there's enormous amount of pain in the child.

The child will start screaming and saying, it's mine, it's mine. So the toy has been taken away. Why is it so painful for the child?

Because it is the beginning of the ego. The ego has lost something that it had identified with. It's a misperception of who one is.

And so it's very painful.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:33 - 1:22:38)

And the child thinks that the toy has something to do with them.

[Speaker 1] (1:22:38 - 1:22:40)

Who they are. That's the identification.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:41 - 1:22:45)

That's why kids go into spasms over a toy and you're going, it's just a toy.

[Speaker 1] (1:22:45 - 1:22:58)

And two days later, they lose interest in it. Right. And so that's the beginning of it.

And then it's That's right.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:58 - 1:23:00)

And when you take it away, they think it isn't.

[Speaker 1] (1:23:00 - 1:23:05)

Then they be, it's like losing a limb because it was, became so much part of who they thought they were.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:06 - 1:23:08)

In the child's mind, that's a part of me.

[Speaker 1] (1:23:08 - 1:23:08)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:08 - 1:23:10)

And then we grow up.

[Speaker 1] (1:23:10 - 1:23:11)

And of course the process continues.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:12 - 1:23:13)

When we grow up, our toys just get bigger.

[Speaker 1] (1:23:14 - 1:23:14)

They get bigger.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:15 - 1:23:17)

And we cry because I lost mine.

[Speaker 1] (1:23:18 - 1:23:34)

External possessions. Yes. But it's, of course, possessions is an important part of all the things that people identify with that become part of their identity.

But there are many other things apart from possessions. Right. For example, social position, how others see you.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:34 - 1:23:45)

Because you say other things the eye identifies with is nationality, race, religion, profession, mother, father, husband, wife, so on.

[Speaker 1] (1:23:45 - 1:23:45)

Roles they play.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:45 - 1:23:46)

Roles they play.

[Speaker 1] (1:23:47 - 1:23:52)

Opinions they hold. You can see, for example, when people are.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:52 - 1:23:57)

But these are roles. They are actual roles. You know, people are mothers and fathers and.

[Speaker 1] (1:23:57 - 1:23:57)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:58 - 1:23:58)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:23:59 - 1:24:06)

And now it's important, of course, to fulfill the functions that you have in this world. And mother and father are important functions as opposed to roles.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:06 - 1:24:09)

Your nationality and your race and your religion.

[Speaker 1] (1:24:09 - 1:24:10)

It's fine.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:10 - 1:24:11)

You identify with those things.

[Speaker 1] (1:24:11 - 1:25:02)

It's fine to honor all these things. But if that's all you have, then you are lost in a surface reality that always turns into becomes painful and turns into conflict. OK.

You can see, for example, when people are discussing and if somebody questions somebody's opinion, very often, immediately they become defensive. Right. Sometimes even aggressive or start shouting.

Right. And because opinions, again, is another thing. That's my belief.

Mine. They identify with the thought they hold a mental position. And then anybody who questions that mental position immediately becomes your enemy because you believe you're being attacked.

You're not being attacked, but the image that you have of yourself and the opinion is part of that. The ego believes it's being attacked.

[Speaker 2] (1:25:02 - 1:25:25)

So you're saying that whenever you can see that that's what you're thinking, when you can see the illusion of that, the moment you can see the illusion of it. These are thoughts in my head. This is something I've told myself.

I believe this is something I've told myself that I identify with that when you can see that the seer or the observer is who you really are.

[Speaker 1] (1:25:25 - 1:25:30)

Yes. And the seer or the observer is the presence of the awareness.

[Speaker 2] (1:25:30 - 1:25:32)

So you're saying there's two of us at all times.

[Speaker 1] (1:25:33 - 1:25:42)

Yes. There is the formless awareness and there is the form that a thought becomes. A thought is an energy formation.

[Speaker 2] (1:25:42 - 1:25:42)

OK.

[Speaker 1] (1:25:43 - 1:25:50)

And so that you've just mentioned, the essence is to be there as the awareness when it happens.

[Speaker 2] (1:25:50 - 1:25:57)

All right. I'm going to go to Victoria. Victoria lives in Maui, joins us via Skype.

Victoria, hello. Aloha. Aloha.

[Speaker 6] (1:25:58 - 1:26:53)

Can't wait to get there. Thank you, Oprah. Mr. Tully, for this awesome opportunity. I was diagnosed over 10 years ago with systemic lupus and R.A. And I've been a really active person. But two years ago, I gave up my business. My health deteriorated and I got an aha moment in this book on page 51.

I never realized that I had unconsciously clinged to my illness. And I'm taking this out of the book because I put it to myself because it had actually become the most important part of who I perceived myself to be. How can I undo this identity and how can I stay focused when I'm in excruciating pain from the illness to have the peace constantly and not just fleeting moments?

OK. That's real.

[Speaker 1] (1:26:53 - 1:26:53)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:26:53 - 1:26:54)

That's real.

[Speaker 1] (1:26:54 - 1:29:22)

Yes. Now, the most important thing has already happened, which is you have become aware that up to now you had been identified with the idea of I am sufferer of such and such an illness. So the illness had become thought forms in your head and you had identified with these thought forms and took them to be who you are.

And now the most important thing, your question still is still valid, but realize that the most important thing has already happened, which is the awareness has arisen. So there's a space now between yourself and your thought processes and the image of yourself as a sick person. Now, another thing, in addition, you can do is, for example, no longer talk about your illness to other people except when you visit a doctor.

Otherwise, the more you talk about it to your friends, acquaintances, family members, the more you keep that process going. Empower it. He empowers the disease.

That's right. So if you just take the decision now that from now on, I'm not going to talk about it. And if people ask me about my illness, which they're going to do because they're used, perhaps used to you talking about it, you say, well, it's I'm doing all I can to find healing in this and I'm making good progress.

Go as far as that and don't encourage people to ask you questions and just say that's how it is. No more mentioning my illness. So you begin on the external level, not to talk about it anymore, except when, of course, when you need to talk to doctors.

And that will have also a certain influence on your thought processes. And then you can gradually also refrain from thinking of yourself as a sick person and perhaps give less thought to your illness and focus attention more on well-being. Now, you may ask, well, but if I don't feel good, if I feel it, how can I give attention to well-being?

You can still do that. One way is to see well-being around you in nature, because nature is just an embodiment of well-being.

[Speaker 2] (1:29:22 - 1:29:24)

You have a lot of opportunity to do that in Maui.

[Speaker 1] (1:29:24 - 1:30:03)

Yes, you are the best, you're in the best place. And also there's well-being, even if certain parts of your body feel unwell or painful. And again, we are coming back to the sensing the inner body.

There are always parts of your body where you can still find well-being in your hands, your arms, wherever. Take some attention into the body and see, where can I most strongly feel, get a sense of well-being in the body, and then take your attention there. So you choose to direct attention to well-being rather than dwelling on the idea of illness.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:04 - 1:30:08)

That does not mean the pain's going to go away, because she said she has physical pain.

[Speaker 1] (1:30:08 - 1:30:54)

The pain may still be there, that's fine. But as far as the pain is concerned, pain unfortunately requires surrender. You need to see that the pain is there, so that you do not generate an additional level of psychological pain, which complains about being in physical pain.

Because if the mind starts to complain about being in physical pain, you have two levels of pain. You have psychological pain and physical pain. WINFREY Got it.

DR. SCHNEIDER Leave physical pain. With physical pain, you just, right now, this is how it is. It's there.

WINFREY Don't resist it? DR. SCHNEIDER Don't resist it. Do what you can, as far as treatment goes, of course.

But don't resist it. Don't create psychological pain on top of the physical pain.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:54 - 1:30:58)

WINFREY Are you following that, Victoria? DR. SCHNEIDER Got it. Yeah, excellent.

WINFREY Got it. Got it.

[Speaker 6] (1:30:58 - 1:31:06)

Makes sense to you? DR. SCHNEIDER You know, it really does. It does, yes.

WINFREY Yeah. DR. SCHNEIDER And I do have a little garden in the back that I go out to a lot.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:07 - 1:31:20)

DR. SCHNEIDER Yes, because there's well-being all around you, and you can almost, one could say, you absorb it from, if you don't, if you can contemplate all these plants and the intense aliveness around you. Contemplate that.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:21 - 1:31:36)

WINFREY Well, email us in the weeks to come, and let us know how this works for you, Victoria. DR. SCHNEIDER I will. I will, Oprah.

WINFREY Thank you so much, Victoria from Maui. DR. SCHNEIDER Thank you. WINFREY We have Anne from Ireland on the phone with a question.

Anne, hello? ANNE Hi, Oprah. How are you?

WINFREY Hi. Middle of the night there?

[Speaker 7] (1:31:36 - 1:31:39)

ANNE It's 1.30 in the morning. WINFREY Okay.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:39 - 1:31:40)

Thank you.

[Speaker 7] (1:31:41 - 1:32:01)

ANNE And hi, Eckhart. ANNE This book's been so inspirational. I have three young children, five, seven, and nine years old, and motherhood's one of the things that's motivated me to find ways to be happier with myself, because it's so evident that children are influenced by what they experience with you rather than what you actually tell them.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:01 - 1:32:01)

DR. SCHNEIDER Yes.

[Speaker 7] (1:32:02 - 1:32:33)

ANNE And I see that the stress in my life has even had an impact on their health. And I found the ideas in A New Earth helpful in this way because I'm practicing being present with them and really enjoying my time with them, not thinking about work and thinking about the things I should be doing around the house, but just spending time with them and being with them. And I'm seeing the individuals that they really are and who I am.

Are there other ways to introduce these ideas to small children like that? DR. SCHNEIDER Good.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:33 - 1:34:58)

Yeah, that's a very good question. Now, you've already mentioned the most important thing is your own state of consciousness at home because the children absorb from you your predominant state of consciousness. And if you can be present with children at home, present means to give them full attention.

When you are present, you don't want anything from them. You just give them attention, which could be listening, it could be watching them as they play. Now, many parents don't do that.

They give them attention, but it's always wanting something. They say, do this, don't do that. Now, this needs to get done.

So that is, I call that form-based attention. That has its place, of course. Of course, the children need to brush their teeth.

They need to tidy up their room. This is fine. It has its place, but more is needed.

Your child wants to be acknowledged in his or her being. So it is vital to give the child conscious attention at home. Give the child space to be.

It doesn't need to be long, just a few minutes every day. Be there, be present for the child. That's vital.

Another thing that is important is, there comes a stage in a young child's life when they start asking, they want, the mind wants to absorb concepts. So they start asking what things are called. What's this, mom?

What's that? And so at that point, usually, of course, you have to tell them this is a tree, or this is that, and that's that. Rabbit.

Yes. Bird. Yes.

Yes. And the important thing is so that the child does not, at that stage, immediately lose him or herself in concepts, and then believe that the moment they know that this is a bird, the danger is, the moment you know that this is a bird, you're no longer really looking at the bird. You have the concept of bird in your head, and then you just briefly glance at a bird, and immediately the concept bird comes into your mind, and so you've become deadened to the aliveness that is there in the bird.

Right. And that has been the, unfortunately, the fate of all of us growing up. We had, we had become, we became lost in a world of conceptualization.

[Speaker 2] (1:34:58 - 1:34:58)

Correct.

[Speaker 1] (1:34:59 - 1:35:28)

And so that this doesn't happen to the young child. Of course, you have to tell the child what it is called. Right.

But I would suggest, for example, not to say to the child, this is an oak tree. Say, this is called an oak tree. Because it's not an oak tree.

The oak tree is just a word. When we lose ourselves in concepts, we mistake a word for the thing.

[Speaker 2] (1:35:28 - 1:35:29)

For the thing.

[Speaker 1] (1:35:29 - 1:35:43)

Got it. When I say, this is an oak tree, that's a, it's not an oak tree. The oak tree is just a word.

So I lose my relationship with the oak tree when I believe now I know what it is. And every time for the rest of my life.

[Speaker 2] (1:35:43 - 1:35:45)

And when you believe you know what it is, it loses its magic.

[Speaker 1] (1:35:45 - 1:36:21)

Yes, it loses. Its essence. Magic is a good word.

The word loses its miraculous quality. Yeah. And its aliveness.

So after you've given the child the concept, encourage the child to continue to experience the tree. Encourage the child to touch the bark of the tree and to look, to look at the leaves, see how the sunshine, how the sun shines through the leaves of the tree. Encourage the child to continuously still experience the reality of the tree, rather than dismiss it.

[Speaker 2] (1:36:21 - 1:36:54)

You got that, Anne? You got that? Yeah, I can see, but that'd be very helpful.

Yeah, that would be very helpful. Thank you very much. Let's move on to content and structure of the ego.

On page 34, everyone, if you're following tonight's class as we move through chapter two, chapter two, it's very exciting when you really get these concepts of the ego. You say that the egoic mind is completely conditioned by the past. Its conditioning is too full.

It consists of content and structure. What do you mean by that?

[Speaker 1] (1:36:56 - 1:39:29)

Content is whatever it is that you identify with and that then you take to be yourself. So that varies. Depends what culture you live in.

Depends on your upbringing. It depends on your personal circumstances. Content is different for everybody.

It differs for everybody, although there are certain similarities in the same cultural field, like there are certain similarities that in America or in France or whatever country you live in, there are certain similarities of things that pertain to that particular nationality that we would identify with. Nevertheless, from person to person, yes, it differs. The content differs.

One person may identify with very strongly held religious beliefs and believe that everybody else is evil who does not hold these religious beliefs. That would be a very rigid ego. Or another person identifies very strongly with the company they work for.

And they feel, I've heard stories in Japan where people, when they got dismissed from their job, they committed suicide. They were so identified with their company that when they lost their job, which until recently was very rare apparently in Japan, you would keep your job for the rest of your life, so it became part of who you thought you were. And if they didn't commit suicide, they suffered dreadfully because their identity got taken away.

All that, of course, is pseudo-identity. It's not who you truly are. It's part of the ego.

And all that is content. The structure of the ego basically consists of identification. The ego seeks something or things to identify with.

What it is doesn't really matter. For one person, one person identifies him or herself with a very positive-looking ego, meaning I'm the greatest thing that ever lived. It might be a delusion, probably is, but it's...

Or another person might identify with a very negative ego image, like I'm the most wretched person that has ever lived. Life has treated me so unfairly. I've suffered so much more than you.

Let me tell you about it. Many egos are like that. They are just as strong as egos who think they are the greatest.

So the ego can be predominantly negative, it can be predominantly positive, but in either case, it's ego.

[Speaker 2] (1:39:30 - 1:39:39)

OPRAH WINFREY Capsulize for us what, you know, I know the whole chapter is about the current state of humanity being the ego, but can you put in a capsule what it is, the ego?

[Speaker 1] (1:39:40 - 1:39:50)

The ego is a false sense of self based on mental concepts. So that's...

[Speaker 2] (1:39:51 - 1:39:53)

OPRAH WINFREY And our identification with form.

[Speaker 1] (1:39:53 - 1:39:56)

DR. SCHNEIDER Identification with form. These are, yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:39:57 - 1:40:19)

OPRAH WINFREY But why do we have it, though? Why do we have an ego? We're all human.

We all have one, right? We all have one. You say yours...

Last week, you said yours died. Does that mean you don't have one? You said yours died in that moment where you wanted to kill yourself.

I am so miserable. I can live with myself no longer. You said in that moment your ego died.

It never came back. It died forever.

[Speaker 1] (1:40:20 - 1:40:48)

DR. SCHNEIDER Yes. When we say that, it simply means, it sounds like some great achievement or it's not. All it means is I'm no longer identified with my thought processes.

I know when thoughts happen, I know they are just thoughts. I don't look for myself in some opinion that I hold of myself. Some mental concept, including the concept that I am free of ego.

I don't think in those terms because if I had this mental concept, I am free of ego, there would be ego again.

[Speaker 2] (1:40:49 - 1:40:50)

OPRAH WINFREY That would be ego again. Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:40:51 - 1:40:53)

DR. SCHNEIDER And this can happen very easily.

[Speaker 2] (1:40:53 - 1:40:56)

OPRAH WINFREY So ego is any identification with form.

[Speaker 1] (1:40:56 - 1:40:56)

DR. SCHNEIDER Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:40:57 - 1:41:03)

OPRAH WINFREY Because what we really are is the awareness that we are identified with form.

[Speaker 1] (1:41:03 - 1:41:03)

DR. SCHNEIDER Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:41:03 - 1:41:11)

OPRAH WINFREY And the more you can become aware that you are identified with things, you create a space that separates you from the things.

[Speaker 1] (1:41:11 - 1:41:24)

DR. SCHNEIDER Yes. Because the question is, when you are aware that you are identified, who is it that is aware? It is a new dimension of consciousness that comes from a deeper level of yourself.

[Speaker 2] (1:41:24 - 1:41:28)

OPRAH WINFREY But how do we live in the world without things? We have to have things. We have to live in a house.

[Speaker 1] (1:41:29 - 1:41:59)

We have transportation. DR. SCHNEIDER Nothing wrong with things. OPRAH WINFREY We have clothes.

We have to be clothed. DR. SCHNEIDER Nothing wrong with things. Nothing wrong with thoughts.

Nothing wrong with opinions. But the moment you identify with opinions, then you need to defend them. They become part of your pseudo image.

OPRAH WINFREY Right. DR. SCHNEIDER There is nothing wrong with possessing things. But when you become identified, then first of all, if you lose something, immediately you will suffer.

[Speaker 2] (1:41:59 - 1:43:31)

I love when you say, the people in the advertising industry know very well that in order to sell things that people don't really need, I'm on page 35, everybody, they must convince them that those things will add something to how they see themselves or are seen by others. In other words, add something to their sense of self. They do this, for example, by telling you, you will stand out from the crowd by using this product, and so by implication, be more fully yourself.

You say, in so many cases, you're not buying a product, but an identity enhancer. I thought that was so fantastic. OPRAH WINFREY Designer labels are primarily collective identities that you buy into.

They are expensive and therefore exclusive. If everybody could buy them, they would lose their psychological value, and all you would be left with would be their material value, which likely amounts to a fraction of what you paid. Interesting, because I mean, I've been in situations, we even see it in the magazines now, especially for the Oscars or Emmys or whatever, the women are lined up in their gowns.

There used to be a time when I first went on the red carpet of the Oscars, people were interested in the movie you were doing. Now they want to, everybody asks, the paparazzi shouts, what are you wearing? Who are you wearing?

Who did your gown? Where are the jewels from? It's all about the designer label and who got to wear what, and so our whole society to an extent is based on this.

What do you have? And is it exclusive?

[Speaker 1] (1:43:31 - 1:43:52)

Yes, you can see it. I suggest sometimes to go through a magazine or watch the TV commercials from that point of view to see how often you are actually identified, hold an identity rather than the emphasis on the identity rather than the product. The identity enhancers.

Yes. Okay.

[Speaker 2] (1:43:52 - 1:44:32)

Let's see some of the questions you're sending us now on email. I have Debra in Mandeville, Louisiana. Okay.

Who says, I'm having difficulty transitioning from the beauty of my youth to living with a face and body that has aged. How do we let go of that kind of possession or obsession, especially as a woman in a society obsessed with youth and beauty? Fantastic question, Debra.

Fantastic question. Same thing as being attached to the identity enhancers of clothes and things and cars and having, having, having, having. Yes.

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:44:32 - 1:44:54)

That's a hard, that's harder though. It is hard. The, uh, it's particularly hard for people, uh, who are good looking.

Uh, that was never my problem, fortunately, but I had other problems. I had a, I had a huge mind that says I'm the greatest intellectual. That was my identification.

[Speaker 11] (1:44:54 - 1:44:54)

Uh huh.

[Speaker 1] (1:44:54 - 1:45:16)

And then I suffered more and more and finally I had to let go. But so you're, you identify with whatever is the most obvious in your life. So if you have good looks, then you're most likely to identify with that.

Probably even more so for a woman than a man. And so, and that, particularly in our society. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:45:16 - 1:45:16)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:45:17 - 1:45:30)

And so for quite a few years, that works quite well. And, but then at some point you realize that the body does get old and time, the monster time does something to the body.

[Speaker 2] (1:45:30 - 1:45:49)

Yeah. I always thought this too. I don't know, Deborah and Manville, but I always thought, uh, pretty women would have a really hard time because if you grow up and that is your identity and everybody says how beautiful you are and you're pretty little girl and you're great and beautiful, beautiful, beautiful, beautiful.

When that starts to fade, then who are you?

[Speaker 1] (1:45:49 - 1:45:49)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:45:49 - 1:45:49)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:45:50 - 1:46:13)

And this is why it's important, uh, even at an early age, when you still feel very comfortable with your external appearance to already see if you can bring a deeper dimension into your life so that you don't live the rest of your life trapped in the surface dimension. When you equate who you are with your external appearance, which is not going to last.

[Speaker 2] (1:46:14 - 1:46:20)

Well, she says I'm having difficulty transitioning from the beauty of my youth to living with a face and body that is age.

[Speaker 1] (1:46:20 - 1:46:25)

Yes. So the question then perhaps is so what, what to do now?

[Speaker 2] (1:46:25 - 1:46:27)

Yes. How do we let go of that kind of obsession?

[Speaker 1] (1:46:28 - 1:47:58)

So first of all, again, the arising awareness is important that you had been, and to some extent perhaps still are identified with appearance. Right. And then comes in a little thing that we could call acceptance.

Acceptance. When you look in the mirror in the morning, you realize, yes, one can see wrinkles here and there. The skin is not quite as vibrant as it used to be.

And you can see it very clearly. And so some of these people who had been identified, they regard that as a personal problem. They see it as if life dealt them some blow that it's not personal.

It's the destiny of every human being to grow old and to, unless they die prematurely, it's the destiny of every human being to experience the gradual decline of the physical form. So what you're experiencing is the destiny of all humans, all humans that have ever lived on the planet and will live on the planet. So I suggest, first of all, to practice a little bit of acceptance.

They say that it's not my personal problem. It's the destiny of humanity. It's just my share in that.

And also, with any kind of acceptance comes a little spaciousness. Because here you have the condition.

[Speaker 2] (1:47:58 - 1:48:00)

Yeah, there's a space between resisting it.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:00 - 1:48:00)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:01 - 1:48:02)

Yeah. So wanting it to be different.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:02 - 1:48:17)

Yes. So you have the condition, which means I'm getting old or the body is getting old. And then you accept that this is what's happening.

With that acceptance comes a little bit of space around the condition, a little bit of peace around the condition.

[Speaker 11] (1:48:17 - 1:48:17)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:18 - 1:48:21)

And then a very helpful thing.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:21 - 1:48:24)

That is, instead of saying, I hate my wrinkles.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:24 - 1:49:40)

Yes. Yeah. So it's and you can it's the same process.

You look at a flower, you have a flower for a few days and the same thing that's happening to your body happens to the flower after a few days. It wilts or put an apple there and see what the apple looks like three weeks later. It just happens more quickly.

It's the destiny of all form to eventually dissolve. So Deborah needs to come to some acceptance, acceptance and see that it's it's the destiny of all life forms to go through that process. In addition, also, especially for people who have been identified with the external body, because it's been it was beautiful for many years to take attention, even when they're still young to what we've been doing here, take attention into the inner body, the inner aliveness of the body, because that actually does not grow old because you can feel the aliveness when you're 80.

It's the same way that you can feel the inner aliveness when you're 20. So instead of always stopping with the external appearance, spend time sensing the inner body rather than always staying with the external.

[Speaker 2] (1:49:40 - 1:49:58)

When you shared the story in the book, I forgot which page that was the ring story. Oh, the lost ring on page 38. And you told the story of the woman who had was deteriorating and accused her maid of stealing the ring.

And then you asked her the question.

[Speaker 1] (1:49:59 - 1:50:36)

Yes. I asked, do you do you feel diminished in who you are now that you've lost the ring? Do you actually feel diminished in your sense of self?

And at first she said, yes, of course I do. And then she stopped for and then she started going to within. And I asked her what your sense of self take your attention.

What does it mean to feel yourself? And eventually she was able to go deeper within and feel her sense of presence had nothing to do with the ring. In fact, she felt it most strongly because the identification with the external object had gone.

[Speaker 2] (1:50:36 - 1:50:47)

Yes. And I brought that up that story up because you say that as she her body began to fade. Yes.

That her inner light became more luminous that she became.

[Speaker 1] (1:50:47 - 1:51:33)

Yes. Almost light, almost like light shining through. She became I've experienced that several times with people that I have known who got close to death.

They had an illness. They knew they were going to die and they left in a state of acceptance. They accepted every moment.

And those people not only became very peaceful inside because they had relinquished all identification with the external form. All right. And so and then something else that was deeper than the form that all them, all religions really point to that, that in every human being, there is a dimension that we could call the eternal or the sacred formless formless.

[Speaker 2] (1:51:33 - 1:51:43)

Let's go to our Chicago study groups watching our webcast at Borders on Michigan Avenue. Hi, everybody. I hear Sharon has a question, Sharon.

[Speaker 5] (1:51:44 - 1:52:45)

Hi, Oprah. Hello, Mr. Tully. I'm so excited to talk to you.

I have a question. I have close relationships to people who suffer from depression and in talking with them and trying to be useful to my friends when they talk to me about a bout of depression or what have you. I find that there is an inwardness and a strong identity that they have as as people who suffer from depression.

And I wonder what role does the ego play in in depression and to what extent is it helpful to sort of point them toward this definition of the ego, the the the content identity and the structural identity? I mean, or is it unfair for me to to feel that that should be useful, given that, um. You know, there seems to be a strong identification with themselves as as people who suffer from depression.

[Speaker 1] (1:52:46 - 1:53:04)

Yes, that's again brings us back to an earlier question where whether the condition is a physical condition that one suffers from or whether it is a psychological condition that one suffers from, there is the tendency to identify oneself with the illness or with the whatever it is. Right.

[Speaker 2] (1:53:04 - 1:53:06)

I'm a depressed person.

[Speaker 1] (1:53:06 - 1:53:06)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:53:06 - 1:53:12)

And then I'm depressed because I'm identifying with my whole story. Yes. My story is sad.

[Speaker 1] (1:53:12 - 1:53:12)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:53:13 - 1:53:14)

And that would make me depressed. Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:53:14 - 1:53:15)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:53:15 - 1:53:16)

That's what people are saying. Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:53:16 - 1:53:27)

Yes. If you are very strongly identified with with my sad story, which for many people, yes, the story is sad. I had a sad story story for many years until I let go of it.

[Speaker 2] (1:53:27 - 1:53:29)

And you were in depression. You were depressed.

[Speaker 1] (1:53:31 - 1:54:18)

I was that this this unhappy self is not who I am. I could sense the I amness that came from a much deeper level than me and my story and my unhappy self. And I described that as the self that I could no longer live with.

I asked myself, what is that self? Who am I? Am I that self?

No, I am. I am consciousness. I am presence.

I am. I am. So the question, of course, is what do you tell your friends?

Because it's not easy to tell a person that you are identified with an ego image and very likely you will get resistance.

[Speaker 2] (1:54:18 - 1:54:21)

Correct. They'll say, what is wrong with you?

[Speaker 1] (1:54:21 - 1:54:21)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:54:21 - 1:54:24)

Yes. What is your problem?

[Speaker 1] (1:54:25 - 1:55:07)

I would suggest doing it in a more subtle way. And that is perhaps point out the possibility of becoming aware of one's thought processes of thoughts that arise instead of being totally identified with the thoughts. Perhaps you can tell your friend what you have been doing for yourself.

You can tell that it's not threatening to the ego. If you tell something that you have been doing, you've been observing your own thoughts and you are more detached now from your thoughts than you were before. And you realize that thoughts are only thoughts.

They are not who you are. If you can tell them about yourself, that could help.

[Speaker 2] (1:55:07 - 1:55:16)

Yeah. When many times if you're depressed, I think you're so attached to the story. The story works for you.

You know, the idea of being a depressed person.

[Speaker 1] (1:55:16 - 1:55:16)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:55:17 - 1:55:18)

Works for you.

[Speaker 1] (1:55:18 - 1:55:38)

Yes. So it's good. Sometimes depression comes in waves for some people.

So you go through periods and then a good time is when you come out of it. And then is a good time because then you're more aware than when you're down in the depression. Then perhaps talk to you when you see your friend is at that point.

[Speaker 2] (1:55:38 - 1:56:04)

This brings us to something you were saying at the end of last week's session, though, as you're trying to share this information, everybody with your friends. Eckhart said at the end of last week's class that the most you can do is ask yourself, are you ready to awaken? Are you ready to be more present, more alive for yourself?

Because you really cannot bring other people along unless they are also ready.

[Speaker 1] (1:56:04 - 1:57:37)

Yes. But sometimes you bring other people along simply because you embody a different state of consciousness, even while you sit with them. They may be telling you their sad story, but you don't buy into the sad story, nor do you question the sad story.

You're just there as a spacious, conscious presence, right? No resistance, just conscious presence. All right.

And sometimes that transmits itself. And suddenly the person wakes up for a moment. I had that experience.

I believe I describe it. I don't remember whether it's in this book or in The Power of Now. I had a neighbor many years ago who always was close to a nervous breakdown.

Whenever I met her, she would come with extremely complicated stories of what other people were doing to her. And she always wanted something from me to join her in her struggle against other people. One night she was ringing my bell at 10, 30, or 11 at night.

And through the intercom, she said, can I come up with something very important to talk about? So she came up in great distress and said something about she hadn't paid the service charge, and so on, and we had to fight them, and so on. And I found myself going just into a state of alert presence, allowing her to speak, no thinking, just allowing her to say what she had to say, feeling quite peaceful.

And suddenly she stopped talking, and she looked around, and she had brought all these papers to look at all over the floor. Yeah, to verify her position.

[Speaker 11] (1:57:38 - 1:57:38)

Her story. Yeah, yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:57:38 - 1:58:04)

And suddenly she looked around and said, this isn't important at all, is it? And I said, no. And she said, thank you.

And she got her papers and walked out. And the next morning I saw her, she came to me in the street. She said, what did you do to me last night?

Last night was the first night that I slept well in years and years. The first night after this happened.

[Speaker 11] (1:58:04 - 1:58:05)

What did you do to her?

[Speaker 1] (1:58:05 - 1:58:12)

Now the thing is, I did nothing. I was just there present for her. So there was no doing.

[Speaker 2] (1:58:12 - 1:58:15)

And not buying into the story. Not buying into the story. Not empowering the story.

[Speaker 1] (1:58:15 - 1:58:21)

And not feeding her thought processes, and not even not resisting their thought processes either.

[Speaker 2] (1:58:22 - 1:58:24)

Thank you, Sharon. Thanks, everybody at Borders.

[Speaker 11] (1:58:24 - 1:58:25)

Thank you, Borders.

[Speaker 2] (1:58:26 - 1:58:31)

We have Kathy from Beijing, China on the phone with a question. Hello, Kathy from Beijing.

[Speaker 4] (1:58:32 - 1:59:21)

Hi, Oprah and Eckhart. I just want to say this is huge that we can have this one conversation around the world. I'm a girl from Duluth, Minnesota, living in Beijing, China, and I'm talking to Oprah in Chicago and Eckhart.

Go ahead. My question is, I lost 30 pounds in the last year, and for me it has been spiritual work. It's not just on the surface weight loss.

And now my friends are asking me about it and how I did it. And I'm wondering how to explain that it is this whole spiritual process. It's not just what you eat and how you exercise, but for me it's been life-changing.

And they look at me like I'm like mentally ill when I try to explain all of that.

[Speaker 2] (1:59:23 - 2:00:03)

A friend of mine and I were talking about this the other day, about allowing yourself to be fed from the energy that's already there inside your body. I know what you're talking about. I know you know.

Yeah, checking in, being conscious, aware of what you're feeding yourself, and aware of how you are in touch with your body to give your body just what your body needs. And so then it becomes not about the diet and the food and how many reps you did, but about being aware. Right, yeah.

[Speaker 4] (2:00:03 - 2:00:09)

But most of the world is focused on how it's just the surface, what you eat. Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (2:00:09 - 2:00:27)

Yes, it's being in touch with the body helps greatly because the body knows what it needs. Really, the overeating happens because it's part of the ego, the unconsciousness, which seeks a substitute for the sense of aliveness.

[Speaker 2] (2:00:27 - 2:00:40)

Yeah, I can say that for sure. And you know that too, right, Kathy? Yeah, now I know too.

Yes, yeah. Well, now you know how to explain it to all your friends. Thank you.

It's so cool talking to you from Beijing. What time is it there?

[Speaker 4] (2:00:41 - 2:00:50)

It's nine o'clock in the morning and I am able to watch it successfully this week. I was like others and didn't get it last week, but oh, we're still up and out.

[Speaker 2] (2:00:50 - 2:01:07)

That's great. I know I have all listen. I have the Skype people and the limelight people and the move people and Oprah.com people. And I just walked through the hall as I we started this and I said to all of them, may the force be with you. And this is my this is what I'm doing. Hello.

[Speaker 4] (2:01:08 - 2:01:10)

You can make things happen.

[Speaker 2] (2:01:11 - 2:01:49)

OK, thank you so much. OK, bye. Thank you so much.

I want to go back to the identification with things, because that is an issue for so many people. The unchecked striving for more, for endless growth, you say, is a dysfunction and a disease on page thirty seven, like the cancer cell whose only goal is to multiply itself, unaware that it's bringing about its own destruction by destroying the organism of which it is a part. I heard we had a shopaholic on Skype.

I saw that earlier. Did we bring her back? Yeah.

Isn't that. Yes. OK, we have Joyce from Minnesota who is Skyping us.

Joyce, what is your question? I thought I thought this applied to you.

[Speaker 3] (2:01:50 - 2:02:12)

Yeah, yeah, it does. And unfortunately, unfortunately, it applies to my son as well. Last week he came home from kindergarten and I said, I'm so happy to see you and I'm in such a good mood.

And he said, oh, good. Does that mean we get to go shopping? And I thought it's rubbing off on him.

So what my question is, is how do I reverse that process in him?

[Speaker 2] (2:02:12 - 2:02:20)

Oh, well, first of all, let me ask you this. You're reading the book, correct? Yes.

Right. So you've gotten through Chapter two already?

[Speaker 3] (2:02:21 - 2:02:21)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:21 - 2:02:24)

Yes. So when you read that, did you see yourself in the pages?

[Speaker 3] (2:02:25 - 2:02:38)

I did. The one that the aha for me was in seeing of who you are not. That your real self emerges through something along those lines.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:38 - 2:02:52)

My favorite quote and one of my favorite quotes in this chapter is when you can no longer feel the life that you are. Yes, you are likely to try to fill up your life with things. Yes.

Would that be what you're trying to do?

[Speaker 3] (2:02:52 - 2:03:26)

That was me. I've since I've started reading this book, I've gotten so much better. I I I'm not searching for that thing anymore.

I think I was trying to find my identity in things. And since I've stopped that and I really don't have any interest in that anymore, I've discovered so much more about myself. I'm artistic and I'm doing sculptures and just things I never did before.

So it's working out great. I just want to know how to enforce that in my son as well, since he's only five.

[Speaker 1] (2:03:27 - 2:03:56)

Oh, well, now the most important change has already happened in you. So you've become aware of the old pattern, you've gone beyond it. And it's inevitable that now this will even if you don't say anything, it will transmit itself to your son also when after a while your son sees that the importance that you give to acquiring things has diminished, then he will also reflect that this is how it works with young children.

[Speaker 2] (2:03:57 - 2:04:20)

It will take some time. Since he's been a baby, you've been a shopaholic. That's the way you described yourself to our producers.

And so that's what he has seen. That's what he's taken in. That's what he identified he identifies with as pleasure.

And when you when you say I'm in a good mood and things are going well, well, let's go shopping, mommy, because that's what he's already always done.

[Speaker 1] (2:04:20 - 2:05:20)

Yes. Another thing that that perhaps you could do is to point out things to him that are of intrinsic value that you cannot buy. So, for example, the natural world to whatever you see out in nature is of infinite intrinsic value and you can't buy it.

Don't pick flowers, for example. Don't encourage him to because that's the acquisition instinct, the instinct to oh, I want that for myself. Why not allow the flower to be there and enjoy it for a few seconds as you look at it?

So point out things and engage in activities, perhaps, that involve nature and see that is of greater value than anything that you see in the shopping mall. And it doesn't mean that you don't buy anything anymore. Occasionally, you may come across something that looks truly beautiful, that speaks to you, and you may acquire it, but it's no longer compulsive.

[Speaker 2] (2:05:20 - 2:05:26)

You say we need to honor the world of things, not despise it, but we cannot honor things if we try to find ourselves through them.

[Speaker 1] (2:05:27 - 2:05:27)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:05:27 - 2:05:28)

And how do we honor them?

[Speaker 1] (2:05:29 - 2:06:13)

You honor them by giving them attention. I sometimes I have a few possessions that I love and I sometimes I just hold them, look at them, they're beautiful to look at. If they if somebody stole them, that's fine.

Somebody else wants them more than I, it's fine, you let go. There's no identification, but there can be enjoyment in things. You can enjoy a beautiful, you might come across a beautiful picture and you buy it.

You might come across a beautiful fabric, whatever it may be, you see beauty there. And sometimes it will be enough to acknowledge beauty in a shop window and say, oh, isn't that beautiful? Of course, I don't need it.

And you walk on and you can. And that's what there's a lot.

[Speaker 2] (2:06:13 - 2:06:24)

There's a lot of thought I never had. There's a lot of freedom. It's beautiful.

Let's leave it there. I can just admire its beauty. What about that, Joyce?

It's beautiful. Let's leave it in the window.

[Speaker 1] (2:06:24 - 2:06:26)

It's the same as the flower. You don't need to pick it.

[Speaker 3] (2:06:26 - 2:06:29)

That's that's a thought. Yeah, that's a good one.

[Speaker 1] (2:06:29 - 2:06:54)

Enjoying you can you can walk around. Occasionally I don't do it anymore, but I sometimes would enjoy walking around a few stores or when I lived in London, I would sometimes walk down Regent Street, all these beautiful stores, window shop, window shopping, look in. Oh, nice.

Would I want to buy it? No. Even if I can just accept that it's beautiful and beautiful and then let it be.

[Speaker 2] (2:06:54 - 2:07:02)

Thank you, Joyce. Thank you so much. We have from India.

I don't know the name of this country. Priyanka.

[Speaker 1] (2:07:02 - 2:07:03)

Sri Lanka.

[Speaker 2] (2:07:03 - 2:07:19)

No, the person's name is Priyanka from Mumbai, India. When we try to change our bad habits for good, then aren't we trying to resist rather than accept ourselves? When we try to change our bad habits for good, aren't we trying to resist rather than accept ourselves?

[Speaker 1] (2:07:20 - 2:08:13)

Yes. It's not that you change your bad habits. The bad habits drop away when you bring awareness to them.

So it's not me trying to change something inside me. But when you bring awareness to old conditioned forms of behavior or thinking, when you bring awareness to it, those old conditioned forms of behavior or thinking, after a while, drop away by themselves. So it's not me trying to bring about a change.

It's the arising awareness, and then change happens. Like the lady we just talked to, she read the chapter on shopping, and that immediately brought her to this point of awareness. And with the awareness, the compulsion immediately lessened.

[Speaker 2] (2:08:14 - 2:08:42)

You talk about the illusion of ownership on page 42. You say the ego tends to equate having with being and lives through comparison. And you use a quote from the Bible that Jesus said, blessed are the poor in spirit, Jesus said, for theirs will be the kingdom of heaven.

What does poor in spirit mean? No inner baggage, no identifications. I never knew that's what poor in spirit means.

How did you come to that interpretation of what poor in spirit means?

[Speaker 1] (2:08:42 - 2:09:35)

There was a time after I went through this inner shift, it must have been three years later, I was visiting my mother, and she had a New Testament on her shelf. I picked it up, and I started reading. I could suddenly see the truth that was hiding there, and that in many cases, the conventional interpretation was the superficial one of what Jesus had said.

And that was one of the things that I immediately saw when he said poor in spirit, I realized it's to do with not carrying stuff inside, so that your spirit is very light, it has no burden. And so there were many things at that time I read, and I suddenly saw, oh, he was talking about awakening, and about living in that free state of consciousness. Wonderful, suddenly to be able to read it, and suddenly it all makes sense, which before hadn't made sense.

[Speaker 2] (2:09:35 - 2:09:45)

You also talk about renunciation of possessions will not automatically free you of the ego, that there are people who have renounced all possessions, but have a bigger ego than some millionaires.

[Speaker 11] (2:09:45 - 2:09:45)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:09:45 - 2:09:53)

So if you take away one kind of identification, the ego will quickly find another. For instance, I'm a more spiritual person than you are.

[Speaker 1] (2:09:53 - 2:09:53)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:09:53 - 2:09:54)

You see this all the time.

[Speaker 1] (2:09:55 - 2:09:56)

Yes. So it's identification.

[Speaker 2] (2:09:57 - 2:09:59)

People use their religion to say I'm better than you are.

[Speaker 1] (2:09:59 - 2:10:32)

Yes. Or even an image of myself as a spiritual person. I'm more spiritual than you.

For example, there could be theoretically, you could have a man driving a Rolls Royce, and then in the same street, a man riding a bicycle. And it is quite possible, not necessarily, of course, it could be the other way around, but it's quite possible that the man on a bicycle may have a bigger ego than the Rolls Royce, if he thinks of himself as spiritually superior to the man in the Rolls Royce. And so the ego compares itself always to others.

[Speaker 2] (2:10:32 - 2:10:32)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:10:32 - 2:10:35)

In order to find some superiority somewhere.

[Speaker 2] (2:10:35 - 2:10:45)

Yes, because another favorite quote is that anytime you feel yourself superior or inferior to anybody, it is always your ego.

[Speaker 1] (2:10:45 - 2:11:17)

Yes. And that's very interesting. You can observe yourself then in many situations, because the ego always looks out when you come into a group of people or you meet new people, and it wants to position itself somewhere.

Am I better looking than this person? Or am I more knowledgeable than this person? Or am I more wealthy than this person?

Or is this person more wealthy than me? So it tries to position itself, and that then leads either to a sense of superiority or inferiority, and both are ego.

[Speaker 2] (2:11:18 - 2:11:42)

Yes. Well, what made me also think about one of the situations in our country in particular, here in the United States, is that people live lives in debt. They're indebted, credit card debt, overwhelmed by debt, because of what you talk about on page 46, wanting, the need for more.

Wanting keeps the ego alive much more than having. Let's talk about that.

[Speaker 1] (2:11:42 - 2:11:44)

Now, that's again a structure of the ego.

[Speaker 2] (2:11:44 - 2:11:45)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:11:45 - 2:12:08)

Because we've been talking about content and structure, and one of the main structures of the ego is it is never satisfied. Satisfied. So, for example, when you have attained a goal or attained something that you wanted.

I got a nice house. Not a nice house. Nice things in the house.

And after a little while, it no longer satisfies you, and that's always a sign that it was an egoic goal.

[Speaker 2] (2:12:08 - 2:12:10)

Because I now need nicer things.

[Speaker 1] (2:12:10 - 2:12:44)

Yes. And I need more square footage. Yes.

Yes. So nothing satisfies the ego for long, and therefore, it needs to continue to look for more. And of course, and this is to do also with the ego's need for future, because it's only by attaching undue importance to the future, because it's looking for more in the future moment.

It seeks to complete itself at some point, it wants to attain something in addition to what you already have.

[Speaker 2] (2:12:44 - 2:12:50)

So, what do we do about that and begin to be satisfied where we are with what we have and who we are?

[Speaker 1] (2:12:51 - 2:14:00)

Well, first of all, to see the illusion of seeking fulfillment in the future. Sometimes people need to have lived for a while to see that that's actually true. Right.

That no matter what you achieve or what you attain, you're not satisfied for long. So what do we do about this? We realize that the thing that is of prime importance in our lives, we had always overlooked, and that's the ego in us had always overlooked that.

And that thing that is of absolutely prime importance in our life is the present moment. The present moment is actually the easiest exit point out of the ego state of consciousness. Because when you're absolutely present in this moment, the ego can't survive.

There's only conscious presence. The ego lives through past and future. It identifies with the past, but it's not a very happy identity.

And it looks to the future where it wants this, that or the other to complete itself.

[Speaker 2] (2:14:01 - 2:14:09)

Well, someone's asked me during the week, someone asked me, what about our past memories that are pleasant? You have happy times, the pleasant memories.

[Speaker 1] (2:14:10 - 2:15:08)

OK. And when you remember those memories, it's also the present moment. So no matter what you remember from the past, when those things happened, whether pleasant or unpleasant, did they happen in the past?

That's what we say, OK, these things happened in the past. But of course, they happened in the now because nothing can happen in the past. There is only the now.

And when you remember something from the past, when do you remember it? Now. And when you think of something that may happen in the future, when do you think of that?

Now. And when that thing actually happens, when does that happen? Now.

So there is no life apart from now. And that is a very important realization for people to have, because the ego continuously overlooks the now. It thinks past and future are more important.

It gives much more importance to past and future. And the now is just almost as if didn't exist.

[Speaker 2] (2:15:09 - 2:15:25)

And what you're saying is that if we can learn to recondition ourselves to be present now, then we can be more alive. Yes. To do whatever it is going to be in the future.

[Speaker 1] (2:15:25 - 2:15:26)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:15:26 - 2:15:29)

Because even when the future gets here, it will only be now.

[Speaker 1] (2:15:29 - 2:15:34)

Yes. The now is the foundation for the rest of your life. Got it.

The rest of your life will also be the now.

[Speaker 2] (2:15:35 - 2:15:42)

Got it. Madeline from Pennsylvania is 13 years old and is on the phone with a question. Madeline?

Hi. Hi. Hello.

[Speaker 8] (2:15:44 - 2:16:11)

On page 47, at the end of the second paragraph, the sentence reads, intense wanting that has no specific object can often be found in the still developing ego of teenagers, some of whom are in a permanent state of negativity and dissatisfaction. By stating this, are you implying that teenagers cannot be awakened, that although I'm reading this book, I may have no chance in reaching consciousness merely because I'm 13 and my ego is not fully developed?

[Speaker 2] (2:16:13 - 2:16:20)

Go Madeline. Go Madeline. I just think the fact that you could ask the question is pretty darn good.

[Speaker 1] (2:16:20 - 2:16:33)

Yes. Now, the first thing, you are more advanced than I was at 13. Yeah, than most of us, I'd say.

I would not have been able to read or understand that book when I was 13.

[Speaker 2] (2:16:33 - 2:16:37)

Are you reading the book, Madeline? Yeah. Okay.

[Speaker 1] (2:16:37 - 2:16:38)

That's quite amazing.

[Speaker 2] (2:16:38 - 2:16:39)

That's quite amazing.

[Speaker 1] (2:16:39 - 2:17:26)

So it certainly does not mean that you cannot be awakened because you're already awakening, because if you are not already awakening, the book would be completely meaningless to you. So there is a new generation growing up and there are more youngsters now than before who may not have to go through the extreme egoic delusion that we had to go through in our generation. And you may be one of them.

It doesn't mean perhaps that your ego will not develop at all. Your ego will develop. But I don't believe that you will be as trapped in ego as I had to be.

I can't speak for Oprah. I know Oprah is fine now.

[Speaker 2] (2:17:26 - 2:17:30)

Oprah was trapped. Oprah was very trapped, Madeline. Oprah was very trapped.

[Speaker 1] (2:17:30 - 2:17:35)

So your chances are excellent. You're already awakening. It's wonderful to see.

[Speaker 2] (2:17:35 - 2:18:07)

Let me ask you this, though, Madeline. When you just read us that passage at the bottom of page 47, intense wanting that has no specific object can often be found in the still developing ego of teenagers. So what you're saying there is that the ego of teenagers is still in the process of growing.

And also, Madeline, don't you see it in your friends, this sort of intense wanting? Yeah, all the time. Okay.

So I think that's what he was talking about. Yes. He was talking about all of your friends, but not you, Madeline.

[Speaker 1] (2:18:07 - 2:18:11)

Now, Madeline, do you detect intense wanting in yourself?

[Speaker 8] (2:18:11 - 2:18:12)

Yeah, occasionally.

[Speaker 1] (2:18:13 - 2:18:13)

Occasionally.

[Speaker 8] (2:18:14 - 2:18:14)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (2:18:14 - 2:18:19)

But you're not totally identified because you know it's there. There's an awareness there, isn't there?

[Speaker 2] (2:18:20 - 2:18:41)

Okay. Are you understanding the book, Madeline? Yeah, it makes a lot of sense, actually.

What grade are you in, actually? I'm in eighth grade. Eighth grade.

Okay. Well, great to hear from you. Thank you so much.

Thank you. Were you in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania? That's what I hear.

Yep. Actually. Well, great.

Thank you. Keep reading. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (2:18:42 - 2:18:42)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (2:18:42 - 2:19:19)

Okay. So we're going to check our live emails again. That's pretty cool, isn't it?

Wonderful. 13. I couldn't have listened.

I was in so much trouble at 13. I didn't have... Me too.

Yes. Okay. As we make our way in the world, this is from Japan, Toyohashi, Japan.

As we make our way in the world, being confident, assertive, our characteristics that help us get a job, that big promotion, I realize now that these are traits that are associated with ego. And so the question then becomes, how then does one move beyond the ego? Great question.

How does one move beyond the ego?

[Speaker 1] (2:19:21 - 2:19:23)

Become aware of the ego is the first step.

[Speaker 2] (2:19:24 - 2:19:41)

But can't you still be the biggest jerk on earth and still just be aware of it and say, well, I'm a jerk. Boy, that sure is some big ego of mine. You know, you were talking earlier, I was thinking, you know, you can be in the moment, still being one of those road raging people, road raging jerk in the moment.

[Speaker 1] (2:19:42 - 2:19:58)

Well... Aware that you are a road raging jerk in the moment. It's unlikely that at that moment you are actually aware.

Really? Because if you're aware, then you cannot be totally possessed. By?

By the ego, by the form, the thought form or the emotional form.

[Speaker 2] (2:19:58 - 2:19:58)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (2:19:58 - 2:19:59)

If that, if that...

[Speaker 2] (2:19:59 - 2:20:01)

Usually that's the pain body that's taken over.

[Speaker 1] (2:20:01 - 2:21:37)

Yes. If that, if the dimension of awareness is present, you are not totally in the grip of ego. And so, but the quickest way out of ego is to practice as much as possible living in the present moment, which means to give more attention to this moment than to the future or the past.

To make this moment the primary factor in your life rather than future and past. Of course, you still use future and past for practical purposes. It helps to make an appointment to go from here to there.

It's all fine. It works very well. But it means being present...

As much as possible, being open to whatever arises in the present moment. The word that I use, and I think it may be helpful for many people, is make friends with the present moment. Because the ego doesn't, can't do that.

The ego always is antagonistic. At best, it uses the present moment as a stepping stone because it wants to get to the next moment, which promises greater fulfillment at best. But in many cases, the ego actually dislikes the pleasant moment.

It resists the present moment. So, if you can make the present moment into the primary focal point of your life and live, then ego will very quickly diminish in you. Because it cannot survive the present moment.

So, the ego...

[Speaker 2] (2:21:37 - 2:21:38)

That's how you do it.

[Speaker 1] (2:21:38 - 2:22:14)

That's how one moves beyond the ego. Yes. The ego...

Present. So, the ego lives as if... People who are possessed by the ego live as if the present moment were their enemy.

They're stressed. They want to get somewhere else. Whenever you need to, they're doing something, but they really already want to be at the end of their doing.

Yeah. They don't want to be where they are. They'd rather be somewhere else.

They don't want to be who they are with. They don't... It's always a striving away from now, internally.

Yeah. And that's, of course, the dysfunction of the ego.

[Speaker 2] (2:22:14 - 2:22:26)

I just had a moment like that today because I was waiting on somebody to get something ready. And they said, Sorry, we're so sorry. We're going to hurry up.

We're waiting. And I go, No, I took the lesson from the book. No, I'm just here being with myself.

[Speaker 11] (2:22:26 - 2:22:27)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:22:27 - 2:22:32)

Not waiting on anything. Because if you're waiting, you're in anticipation, and you're wanting to be out of that moment.

[Speaker 1] (2:22:32 - 2:22:56)

That's right. Yes. Waiting means you don't like this moment.

Right. Rather have another moment. So, whenever you are waiting, so to speak.

Yes. Why not practice being rather than waiting? Which means completely inhabit this moment and feel your body, perhaps.

Feel the energy. And that's very pleasant to feel that you're alive.

[Speaker 2] (2:22:57 - 2:23:05)

All right. We have one last phone call. A question from Michelle in Philadelphia.

Hello. Hi, Oprah. How are you?

Fine. Good.

[Speaker 9] (2:23:05 - 2:23:07)

Good. Yeah. Hi, Eckhart.

[Speaker 11] (2:23:07 - 2:23:07)

Hello.

[Speaker 9] (2:23:07 - 2:23:34)

I'm just like a little bit so excited that you called me. My question was that I'm a little bit confused with chapter two. I understand the quote, If someone takes your shirt, let them have your coat as well.

But where do you draw the line without getting walked all over? I do not want to be an egotistical person. But at the same time, I don't want to get taken advantage of.

Good question. So, I was having a little bit confusion with that. Thank you.

Yes. Good, good, good. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:23:35 - 2:24:46)

All it says is sometimes letting go, there's more power in letting go than in clinging or hanging on to something. So, there are situations when you actually become empowered when you let go rather than when you cling. It does not mean that people walk all over you.

In fact, I say there are situations when you have to say no very clearly to a situation or to a person. But even that no can be of two different kinds. Usually, the no is very negative.

When you say no to a person, the person says, I'll give you a ride home. And you see the person is drunk. Of course, you wouldn't say yes just to be pleasant.

You say no. Now, do you say no with negative energy and in a state of resistance? Or do you say no that is positive?

It simply means a clear and straightforward no, I won't do that. This is very different from the resistance no. I call that the no that is not negative, a high quality no.

True.

[Speaker 2] (2:24:46 - 2:25:50)

It's also looking at the reason why you would cling to the shirt. You can have my shirt if I'll give you the shirt. If the reason why you're holding to the shirt is because you think the shirt is going to give you more value or you're operating from your ego when you're holding on to it.

So, you're saying be able to be in the state of presence and awareness so that you can surrender whatever needs to be surrendered. That does not mean and surrender does not mean allowing yourself to be walked over, but to be fully present so that you can be conscious of what's always going on. Yes.

So, it means in some cases, it's fine to say here, you want it, take it. In other cases, it's not depending upon what the situation is. That's right.

Based upon the truth of who you are in any given moment. Yes. Yeah.

Okay. I got that, Michelle. I got that.

Thank you for asking the question. It helped me to get it. So, let's close with the piece that passes all understanding that you talk about on page 56.

What is that piece?

[Speaker 1] (2:25:51 - 2:26:07)

That piece comes when you live in internal alignment with the present moment, which means what is, whatever is. When you no longer argue with what is, when you don't fight it internally, this present moment already, always is.

[Speaker 2] (2:26:07 - 2:26:09)

Even if it's a situation that you don't want.

[Speaker 1] (2:26:10 - 2:26:57)

Even if you don't want it, it is. You must accept it first. You accept first, and then you take action.

Because that was the mud example you used last week. Yes. Even if you're stuck in the mud.

This is where I am right now. I'm here. And then you take action, but that action no longer arises out of negativity, which is there when you don't like to be where you are, when you don't like this moment.

Always friendly with the present moment, accepting the is-ness of the present moment. Then move on from there. Then whatever action you take is actually empowered by life itself.

When you're in a state of negativity or resistance, your action is not empowered by life. So it's not inspired and much less effective than action that comes out of the state of non-resistance. Right.

[Speaker 2] (2:26:58 - 2:27:15)

It's like last week when we were having problems, which neither you nor I knew until we had finished the class. And I said, we were doing a toast to everybody afterwards for all of their efforts. And I say, I'm going to accept it.

I'm going to accept that we had a breakdown on the web. I'm going to accept it, and now let us correct it.

[Speaker 1] (2:27:15 - 2:27:28)

Yes. And it was everybody's lesson whose computer froze up. It was everybody's lesson to say, well, this is what it is.

And with that comes an inner peace that has nothing to do with what's happening.

[Speaker 2] (2:27:28 - 2:27:31)

Not resisting and banging up the computer. Oh my God.

[Speaker 1] (2:27:31 - 2:27:31)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:27:31 - 2:27:32)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (2:27:32 - 2:27:43)

And that's the peace that passes all understanding, because the peace cannot be explained with reference to external events. It's there because you live in alignment with the present moment. That's the peace.

[Speaker 2] (2:27:45 - 2:28:28)

That is the peace, living in alignment. Before we say goodbye, I'd like to thank you for being with Eckhart and with me. And we'll be here again next Monday at 8 p.m. Central. Don't forget, if you want to experience this class again or tell a friend who missed it, our webcast is available on demand tomorrow for free here at Oprah.com. Is that noon, Dean? Beginning at noon?

Beginning at noon, you can start to download. And if you want to download a podcast of this class, you can do that tomorrow at Oprah.com and iTunes. Your assignment for our next class is to update your workbook and spend this week rereading and thinking about Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 is all about the core of ego. So do your homework.

2008-Eckhart Tolle Oprah A New Earth Audiobook Podcast Chapter03

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 46:02)

CHAPTER THREE THE CORE OF EGO Most people are so completely identified with the voice in the head, the incessant stream of involuntary and compulsive thinking and the emotions that accompany it, that we may describe them as being possessed by their mind. As long as you are completely unaware of this, you take the thinker to be who you are. This is the egoic mind.

We call it egoic because there is a sense of self, of I, ego, in every thought, every memory, every interpretation, opinion, viewpoint, reaction, emotion. This is unconsciousness, spiritually speaking. Your thinking, the content of your mind, is of course conditioned by the past, your upbringing, culture, family background, and so on.

The central core of all your mind activity consists of certain repetitive and persistent thoughts, emotions and reactive patterns that you identify with most strongly. This entity is the ego itself. In most cases, when you say I, it is the ego speaking, not you, as we have seen.

It consists of thought and emotion, of a bundle of memories you identify with as me and my story, of habitual roles you play without knowing it, of collective identifications such as nationality, religion, race, social class, or political allegiance. It also contains personal identifications, not only with possessions, but also with opinions, external appearance, long-standing resentments, or concepts of yourself as better than or not as good as others, as a success or failure. The content of the ego varies from person to person, but in every ego the same structure operates.

In other words, egos only differ on the surface. Deep down they are all the same. In what way are they the same?

They live on identification and separation. When you live through the mind-made self comprised of thought and emotion that is the ego, the basis for your identity is precarious because thought and emotion are by their very nature ephemeral, fleeting. So every ego is continuously struggling for survival, trying to protect and enlarge itself.

To uphold the I-thought it needs the opposite thought of the other. The conceptual I cannot survive without the conceptual other. The others are most other when I see them as my enemies.

At one end of the scale of this unconscious egoic pattern lies the egoic compulsive habit of fault-finding and complaining about others. Jesus referred to it when he said, Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? At the other end of the scale there is physical violence between individuals and warfare between nations.

In the Bible Jesus' question remains unanswered, but the answer is, of course, because when I criticize or condemn another it makes me feel bigger, superior. Complaining and Resentment Complaining is one of the ego's strategies for strengthening itself. Every complaint is a little story the mind makes up that you completely believe in.

Whether you complain aloud or only in thought makes no difference. Some egos that perhaps don't have much else to identify with easily survive on complaining alone. When you are in the grip of such an ego, complaining, especially about other people, is habitual and, of course, unconscious, which means you don't know what you are doing.

Applying negative mental labels to people either to their face or, more commonly, when you speak about them to others, or even just think about them, is often part of this pattern. Name-calling is the crudest form of such labeling and of the ego's need to be right and triumph over others. Jerk, bastard, bitch, all definitive pronouncements that you can't argue with.

On the next level down on the scale of unconsciousness you have shouting and screaming, and not much below that, physical violence. Resentment is the emotion that goes with complaining and the mental labeling of people and adds even more energy to the ego. Resentment means to feel bitter, indignant, aggrieved or offended.

You resent other people's greed, their dishonesty, their lack of integrity, what they are doing, what they did in the past, what they said, what they failed to do, what they should or shouldn't have done. The ego loves it. Instead of overlooking unconsciousness in others, you make it into their identity.

Who is doing that? The unconsciousness in you, the ego. Sometimes the fault that you perceive in another isn't even there.

It is a total misinterpretation, a projection by a mind conditioned to see enemies and to make itself right or superior. At other times the fault may be there, but by focusing on it, sometimes to the exclusion of everything else, you amplify it. And what do you react to in another?

You strengthen in yourself. Reaction to the ego in others is one of the most effective ways not only of going beyond ego in yourself, but also of dissolving the collective human ego. But you can only be in a state of non-reaction if you can recognize someone's behavior as coming from the ego, as being an expression of the collective human dysfunction.

When you realize it's not personal, there's no longer a compulsion to react as if it were. By not reacting to the ego, you will often be able to bring out the sanity in others, which is the unconditioned consciousness as opposed to the conditioned. At times you may have to take practical steps to protect yourself from deeply unconscious people.

This you can do without making them into enemies. Your greatest protection, however, is being conscious. Somebody becomes an enemy if you personalize the unconsciousness that is the ego.

Non-reaction is not weakness but strength. Another word for non-reaction is forgiveness. To forgive is to overlook or rather to look through.

You look through the ego to the sanity that is in every human being as his or her essence. The ego loves to complain and feel resentful not only about other people but also about situations. What you can do to a person, you can also do to a situation.

Make it into an enemy. The implication is always, this should not be happening. I don't want to be here.

I don't want to be doing this. I'm being treated unfairly. And the ego's greatest enemy of all is, of course, the present moment, which is to say, life itself.

Complaining is not to be confused with informing someone of a mistake or deficiency so that it can be put right. And to refrain from complaining doesn't necessarily mean putting up with bad quality or behavior. There's no ego in telling the waiter that your soup is cold and needs to be heated up, if you stick to the facts, which are always neutral.

How dare you serve me cold soup? That's complaining. There's a me here that loves to feel personally offended by the cold soup and is going to make the most of it, a me that enjoys making someone wrong.

The complaining we are talking about is in the service of the ego, not of change. Sometimes it becomes obvious that the ego doesn't really want change so that it can go on complaining. See if you can catch, that is to say notice, the voice in the head, perhaps in the very moment it complains about something, and recognize it for what it is, the voice of the ego, no more than a conditioned mind-pattern, a thought.

Whenever you notice that voice, you will also realize that you are not the voice, but the one who is aware of it. In fact, you are the awareness that is aware of the voice. In the background there's the awareness, in the foreground there's the voice, the thinker.

In this way you are becoming free of the ego, free of the unobserved mind. The moment you become aware of the ego in you, it is strictly speaking no longer the ego, but just an old conditioned mind-pattern. Ego implies unawareness.

Awareness and ego cannot coexist. The old mind-pattern or mental habit may still survive and reoccur for a while because it has the momentum of thousands of years of collective human unconsciousness behind it, but every time it is recognized, it is weakened. Reactivity and Grievances Whereas resentment is often the emotion that goes with complaining, it may also be accompanied by a stronger emotion such as anger or some other form of upset.

In this way, it becomes more highly charged energetically. Complaining then turns into reactivity, another of the ego's ways of strengthening itself. There are many people who are always waiting for the next thing to react against, to feel annoyed or disturbed about, and it never takes long before they find it.

This is an outrage, they say. How dare you? I resent this.

They are addicted to upset and anger as others are to a drug. Through reacting against this or that they assert and strengthen their feeling of self. A long-standing resentment is called a grievance.

To carry a grievance is to be in a permanent state of against, and that is why grievances constitute a significant part of many people's ego. Collective grievances can survive for centuries in the psyche of a nation or tribe and fuel a never-ending cycle of violence. A grievance is a strong negative emotion connected to an event in the sometimes distant past that is being kept alive by compulsive thinking, by retelling the story in the head or out loud of what someone did to me or what someone did to us.

A grievance will also contaminate other areas of your life. For example, while you think about and feel your grievance, its negative emotional energy can distort your perception of an event that is happening in the present or influence the way in which you speak or behave towards someone in the present. One strong grievance is enough to contaminate large areas of your life and keep you in the grip of the ego.

Whether you still harbor grievances, whether there is someone in your life you have not completely forgiven, an enemy. If you do, become aware of the grievance both on the level of thought as well as emotion, that is to say, be aware of the thoughts that keep it alive and feel the emotion that is the body's response to those thoughts. Don't try to let go of the grievance.

Trying to let go, to forgive, does not work. Forgiveness happens naturally when you see that it has no purpose other than to strengthen a false sense of self, to keep the ego in place. The seeing is freeing.

Jesus' teaching to forgive your enemies is essentially about the undoing of one of the main egoic structures in the human mind. The past has no power to stop you from being present now. Only your grievance about the past can do that.

And what is a grievance? The baggage of old thought and emotion. Being right, making

wrong.

Complaining as well as fault-finding and reactivity strengthen the ego's sense of boundary and separateness on which its survival depends. But they also strengthen the ego in another way by giving it a feeling of superiority on which it thrives. It may not be immediately apparent how complaining, say, about a traffic jam, about politicians, about the greedy wealthy or the lazy unemployed, or your colleagues or ex-spouse, men or women, can give you a sense of superiority.

Here's why. When you complain, by implication you are right, and the person or situation you complain about or react against is wrong. There's nothing that strengthens the ego more than being right.

Being right is identification with a mental position, a perspective, an opinion, a judgment, a story. For you to be right, of course, you need someone else to be wrong. And so the ego loves to make wrong in order to be right.

In other words, you need to make others wrong in order to get a stronger sense of who you are. Not only a person, but also a situation can be made wrong through complaining and reactivity, which always implies that this should not be happening. Being right places you in a position of imagined moral superiority in relation to the person or situation that is being judged and found wanting.

It is that sense of superiority the ego craves and through which it enhances itself. In defense of an illusion. Facts undoubtedly exist.

If you say, light travels faster than sound, and someone else says the opposite is the case, you are obviously right and he is wrong. The simple observation that lightning precedes thunder could confirm this. So not only are you right, but you know you are right.

Is there any ego involved in this? Possibly, but not necessarily. If you are simply stating what you know to be true, the ego is not involved at all, because there is no identification.

Identification with what? With mind and a mental position. Such identification, however, can easily creep in.

If you find yourself saying, believe me, I know, or why do you never believe me? Then the ego has already crept in. It is hiding in the little word, me.

A simple statement, light is faster than sound, although true, is now in the service of illusion, of ego. It has become contaminated with a false sense of I. It has become personalized, turned into a mental position.

The I feels diminished or offended because somebody doesn't believe what I said. Ego takes everything personally. Emotion arises, defensiveness, perhaps even aggression.

Are you defending the truth? No. The truth, in any case, needs no defense.

The light or sound does not care about what you or anybody else thinks. You are defending yourself, or rather the illusion of yourself, the mind-made substitute. It would be even more accurate to say that the illusion is defending itself.

If even the simple and straightforward realm of facts can lend itself to egoic distortion and illusion, how much more so the less tangible realm of opinions, viewpoints and judgments, all of them thought-forms that can easily become infused with a sense of I. Every ego confuses opinions and viewpoints with facts. Furthermore, it cannot tell the difference between an event and its reaction to that event.

Every ego is a master of selective perception and distorted interpretation. Only through awareness, not through thinking, can you differentiate between fact and opinion. Only through awareness are you able to see, there's the situation and here's the anger I feel about it, and then realize there are other ways of approaching the situation, other ways of seeing it and dealing with it.

Only through awareness can you see the totality of the situation or person, instead of adopting one limited perspective. If or Absolute Beyond the realm of simple and verifiable facts, the certainty that I am right and you are wrong is a dangerous thing in personal relationships as well as in interactions between nations, tribes, religions and so on. But if the belief, I am right, you are wrong, is one of the ways in which the ego strengthens itself, if making yourself right and others wrong is a mental dysfunction that perpetuates separation and conflict between human beings, does that mean there's no such thing as right or wrong behavior, action or belief?

And wouldn't that be the moral relativism that some contemporary Christian teachings see as the great evil of our times? The history of Christianity is of course a prime example of how the belief that you are in sole possession of the truth, that is to say right, can corrupt your actions and behavior to the point of insanity. For centuries, torturing and burning people alive if their opinion diverged even in the slightest from church doctrine or narrow interpretations of scripture, the truth, was considered right because the victims were wrong.

They were so wrong that they needed to be killed. The truth was considered more important than human life. And what was the truth?

A story you had to believe in, which means a bundle of thoughts. The one million people that mad dictator Pol Pot of Cambodia ordered killed included everybody who wore glasses. Why?

To him, the Marxist interpretation of history was the absolute truth. And according to his version of it, those who wore glasses belonged to the educated class, the bourgeoisie, the exploiters of the peasants. They needed to be eliminated to make room for a new social order.

His truth also was a bundle of thoughts. The Catholic and other churches are actually correct when they identify relativism, the belief that there is no absolute truth to guide human behavior, as one of the evils of our times. But you won't find absolute truth if you look for it where it cannot be found—in doctrines, ideologies, sets of rules, or stories.

What do all of these have in common? They are made up of thought. Thought can at best point to the truth, but it never is the truth.

That's why Buddhists say, The finger pointing to the moon is not the moon. All religions are equally false and equally true, depending on how you use them. You can use them in the service of the ego, or you can use them in the service of the truth.

If you believe only your religion is the truth, you are using it in the service of the ego. Used in such a way, religion becomes ideology and creates an illusory sense of superiority as well as division and conflict between people. In the service of the truth, religious teachings represent signposts or maps left behind by awakened humans to assist you in spiritual awakening—that is to say, in becoming free of identification with form.

There is only one absolute truth, and all other truths emanate from it. When you find that truth, your actions will be in alignment with it. Human action can reflect the truth, or it can reflect illusion.

Can the truth be put into words? Yes, but the words are of course not it. They only point to it.

The truth is inseparable from who you are. Yes, you are the truth. If you look for it elsewhere, you will be deceived every time.

The very being that you are is truth. Jesus tried to convey that when he said, ìI am the way and the truth and the life.î These words uttered by Jesus are one of the most powerful and direct pointers to the truth, if understood correctly. If misinterpreted, however, they become a great obstacle.

Jesus speaks of the innermost I am, the essence identity of every man and woman, every life-form, in fact. He speaks of the life that you are. Some Christian mystics have called it the Christ within.

Buddhists call it your Buddha nature. For Hindus it is Atman, the indwelling God. When you are in touch with that dimension within yourself, and being in touch with it is your natural state, not some miraculous achievement, all your actions and relationships will reflect the oneness with all life that you sense deep within.

This is love. Laws, commandments, rules and regulations are necessary for those who are cut off from who they are, the truth within. They prevent the worst excesses of the ego, and often they doník even do that.

ìLove and do what you will,î said St. Augustine. Words cannot get much closer to the truth than that. On a collective level, the mindset ìWe are right and they are wrongî is particularly deeply entrenched in those parts of the world where conflict between two nations, races, tribes, religions or ideologies is long-standing, extreme and endemic.

Both sides of the conflict are equally identified with their own perspective, their own story, that is to say, identified with thought. Both are equally incapable of seeing that another perspective, another story, may exist and also be valid. Israeli writer Halevi speaks of the possibility of accommodating a competing narrative, but in many parts of the world people are not yet able or willing to do that.

Both sides believe themselves to be in possession of the truth. Both regard themselves as victims and the other as evil. And because they have conceptualized and thereby dehumanized the other as the enemy, they can kill and inflict all kinds of violence on the other, even on children, without feeling their humanity and suffering.

They become trapped in an insane spiral of perpetration and retribution, action and reaction. Here it becomes obvious that the human ego in its collective aspect as ìus against themî is even more insane than the ìmeî, the individual ego, although the mechanism is the same. By far the greater part of violence that humans have inflicted on each other is not the work of criminals or the mentally deranged, but of normal respectable citizens in the service of the collective ego.

One can go so far as to say that on this planet ìnormalî equals ìinsaneî. What is it that lies at the root of this insanity? Complete identification with thought and emotion, that is to say, ego.

Greed, selfishness, exploitation, cruelty and violence are still all-pervasive on this planet. When you doník recognize them as individual and collective manifestations of an underlying dysfunction or mental illness, you fall into the error of personalizing them. You construct a conceptual identity for an individual or group and you say, ìThis is who he is.

This is who they are.î When you confuse the ego that you perceive in others with their identity, it is the work of your own ego that uses this misperception to strengthen itself through being right and therefore superior, and through reacting with condemnation, indignation and often anger against the perceived enemy. All this is enormously satisfying to the ego. It strengthens the sense of separation between yourself and the other, whose ìothernessî has become magnified to such an extent that you can no longer feel your common humanity, nor the rootedness in the one life that you share with each human being, your common divinity.

The particular egoic patterns that you react to most strongly in others and misperceive as their identity tend to be the same patterns that are also in you, but that you are unable or unwilling to detect within yourself. In that sense, you have much to learn from your enemies. What is it in them that you find most upsetting, most disturbing?

Their selfishness, their greed, their need for power and control, their insincerity, dishonesty, propensity to violence, or whatever it may be. Anything that you resent and strongly react to in another is also in you. But it is no more than a form of ego, and as such it is completely impersonal.

It has nothing to do with who that person is, nor has it anything to do with who you are. Only if you mistake it for who you are can observing it within you be threatening to your sense of self. War is a mindset.

In certain cases you may need to protect yourself or someone else from being harmed by another, but beware of making it your mission to eradicate evil, as you are likely to turn into the very thing you are fighting against. Fighting unconsciousness will draw you into unconsciousness yourself. Unconsciousness, dysfunctional egoic behavior, can never be defeated by attacking it.

Even if you defeat your opponent, the unconsciousness will simply have moved into you, or the opponent reappears in a new disguise. Whatever you fight you strengthen, and what you resist persists. These days you frequently hear the expression, ÒThe war against this or that,Ó and whenever I hear it I know that it is condemned to failure.

There is the war against drugs, the war against crime, the war against terrorism, the war against cancer, the war against poverty, and so on. For example, despite the war against crime and drugs there has been a dramatic increase in crime and drug-related offenses in the past twenty-five years. The prison population of the United States has gone up from just under 300,000 in 1980 to a staggering 2.1 million in 2004. The war against disease has given us, amongst other things, antibiotics. At first they were spectacularly successful, seemingly enabling us to win the war against infectious diseases. Now many experts agree that the widespread and indiscriminate use of antibiotics has created a time bomb, and that antibiotic-resistant strains of bacteria, so-called superbugs, will in all likelihood bring about a re-emergence of those diseases and possibly epidemics.

Medical Treatment is the third leading cause of death after heart disease and cancer. Homeopathy and Chinese medicine are two examples of possible alternative approaches to disease that do not treat the illness as an enemy, and therefore do not create new diseases. War is a mindset, and all action that comes out of such a mindset will either strengthen the enemy, the perceived evil, or, if the war is won, will create a new enemy, a new evil equal to and often worse than the one that was defeated.

There is a deep interrelatedness between your state of consciousness and external reality. When you are in the grip of a mindset such as war, your perceptions become extremely selective as well as distorted. In other words, you will see only what you want to see and then misinterpret it.

You can imagine what kind of action comes out of such a delusional system, or, instead of imagining it, watch the news on TV tonight. Recognize the ego for what it is, a collective dysfunction, the insanity of the human mind. When you recognize it for what it is, you no longer misperceive it as somebody's identity.

Once you see the ego for what it is, it becomes much easier to remain non-reactive towards it. You don't take it personally any more. There is no complaining, blaming, accusing, or making wrong.

Nobody is wrong. It is the ego in someone, that's all. Compassion arises when you recognize that all are suffering from the same sickness of the mind, some more acutely than others.

You do not fuel the drama any more that is part of all egoic relationships. What is its fuel? Reactivity.

The ego thrives on it. Do you want peace or drama? You want peace.

There is no one who does not want peace. Yet there is something else in you that wants the drama, wants the conflict. You may not be able to feel it at this moment.

You may have to wait for a situation or even just a thought that triggers a reaction in you. Someone accusing you of this or that, not acknowledging you, encroaching on your territory, questioning the way you do things, an argument about money. Can you then feel the enormous surge of force moving through you, the fear perhaps being masked by anger or hostility?

Can you hear your own voice becoming harsh or shrill, or louder and a few octaves lower? Can you be aware of your mind racing to defend its position, justify, attack, blame? In other words, can you awaken at that moment of unconsciousness?

Can you feel that there is something in you that is at war, something that feels threatened and wants to survive at all cost, that needs the drama in order to assert its identity as the victorious character within that theatrical production? Can you feel there is something in you that would rather be right than at peace, beyond ego, your true identity? When the ego is at war, know that it is no more than an illusion that is fighting to survive.

That illusion thinks it is you. It is not easy at first to be there as the witnessing presence, especially when the ego is in survival mode or some emotional pattern from the past has become activated. But once you have had a taste of it, you will grow in presence power, and the ego will lose its grip on you.

And so a power comes into your life that is far greater than the ego, greater than the mind. All that is required to become free of the ego is to be aware of it, since awareness and ego are incompatible. Awareness is the power that is concealed within the present moment.

This is why we may also call it presence. The ultimate purpose of human existence, which is to say your purpose, is to bring that power into this world. And this is also why becoming free of the ego cannot be made into a goal to be attained at some point in the future.

Only presence can free you of the ego, and you can only be present now, not yesterday or tomorrow. Only presence can undo the past in you and thus transform your state of consciousness. The belief that you are spirit?

No, that's a thought. A little closer to the truth than the thought that believes you are who your birth certificate says you are, but still a thought. Spiritual realization is to see clearly that what I perceive, experience, think or feel is ultimately not who I am, that I cannot find myself in all those things that continuously pass away.

The Buddha was probably the first human being to see this clearly. And so anatta, no self, became one of the central points of his teaching. And when Jesus said, deny thyself, what he meant was, negate and thus undo the illusion of self.

If the self, the ego, were truly who I am, it would be absurd to deny it. What remains is the light of consciousness in which perceptions, experiences, thoughts and feelings come and go. That is being.

That is the deeper, true I. When I know myself as that, whatever happens in my life is no longer of absolute but only of relative importance. I honor it, but it loses its absolute seriousness, its heaviness.

The only thing that ultimately matters is this. Can I sense my essential beingness, the I am, in the background of my life at all times? To be more accurate, can I sense the I am that I am at this moment?

Can I sense my essential identity as consciousness itself? Or am I losing myself in what happens, losing myself in the mind, in the world? All structures are unstable.

Whatever form it takes, the unconscious drive behind ego is to strengthen the image of who I think I am, the phantom self that came into existence when thought, a great blessing as well as a great curse, began to take over and obscured the simple yet profound joy of connectedness with Being, the Source, God. Whatever behavior the ego manifests, the hidden motivating force is always the same, the need to stand out, be special, be in control, the need for power, for attention, for more. And, of course, the need to feel a sense of separation, that is to say, the need for opposition, enemies.

The ego always wants something from other people or situations. There is always a hidden agenda, always a sense of not enough yet, of insufficiency and lack that needs to be filled. It uses people and situations to get what it wants, and even when it succeeds, it is never satisfied for long.

Often it is thwarted in its aims, and for the most part the gap between I want and what is becomes a constant source of upset and anguish. The famous and now classic pop song, I can't get no satisfaction, is the song of the ego. The underlying emotion that governs all the activity of the ego is fear, the fear of being nobody, the fear of nonexistence, the fear of death.

All its activities are ultimately designed to eliminate this fear, but the most the ego can ever do is to cover it up temporarily with an intimate relationship, a new possession, or winning at this or that. Illusion will never satisfy you. Only the truth of who you are, if realized, will set you free.

Why fear? Because the ego arises by identification with form, and deep down it knows that no forms are permanent, that they are all fleeting. So there is always a sense of insecurity around the ego, even if on the outside it appears confident.

As I was walking with a friend through a beautiful nature reserve near Malibu in California, we came upon the ruins of what had been once a country house, destroyed by fire several decades ago. As we approached the property, long overgrown with trees and all kinds of magnificent plants, there was a sign by the side of the trail put there by the park authorities. It read, ìDanger, all structures are unstable.î I said to my friend, ìThatís a profound sutra, sacred scripture.î And we stood there in awe. Once you realize and accept that all structures, all forms, are unstable, even the seemingly solid material ones, peace arises within you. This is because the recognition of the impermanence of all forms awakens you to the dimension of the formless within yourself, that which is beyond death. Jesus called it ìeternal life.î There are many subtle but easily overlooked forms of ego that you may observe in other people and, more important, in yourself. Remember, the moment you become aware of the ego in yourself, that emerging awareness is who you are beyond ego, the deeper ìI.î The recognition of the false is already the arising of the real. For example, you are about to tell someone the news of what happened. Guess what?

You donít know yet? Let me tell you. If you are alert enough, present enough, you may be able to detect a momentary sense of satisfaction within yourself just before imparting the news, even if it is bad news.

It is due to the fact that for a brief moment there is, in the eyes of the ego, an imbalance in your favor between you and the other person. For that brief moment you know more than the other. The satisfaction that you feel is of the ego and it is derived from feeling a stronger sense of self relative to the other person.

Even if he or she is the president or the pope, you feel superior in that moment because you know more. Many people are addicted to gossiping partly for this reason. In addition, gossiping often carries an element of malicious criticism and judgment of others, and so it also strengthens the ego through the implied but imagined moral superiority that is there whenever you apply a negative judgment to anyone.

If someone has more, knows more, or can do more than ìIî, the ego feels threatened because the feeling of ìlessî diminishes its imagined sense of self relative to the other. It may then try to restore itself by somehow diminishing, criticizing or belittling the value of the other personís possessions, knowledge or abilities. Or the ego may shift its strategy, and instead of competing with the other person it will enhance itself by association with that person if he or she is important in the eyes of others.

Ego and Fame The well-known phenomenon of name-dropping, the casual mention of who you know, is part of the egoís strategy of gaining a superior identity in the eyes of others and therefore in its own eyes, through association with someone, important. The bane of being famous in this world is that who you are becomes totally obscured by a collective mental image. Most people you meet want to enhance their identity, the mental image of who they are, through association with you.

They themselves may not know that they are not interested in you at all, but only in strengthening their ultimately fictitious sense of self. They believe that through you they can be more. They are looking to complete themselves through you, or rather through the mental image they have of you as a famous person, a larger-than-life collective conceptual identity.

The absurd overvaluation of fame is just one of the many manifestations of egoic madness in our world. Some famous people fall into the same error and identify with the collective fiction, the image people and the media have created of them, and they begin to actually see themselves as superior to ordinary mortals. As a result, they become more and more alienated from themselves and others, more and more unhappy, more and more dependent on their continuing popularity.

Surrounded only by people who feed their inflated self-image, they become incapable of genuine relationships. Albert Einstein, who was admired as almost superhuman and whose fate it was to become one of the most famous people on the planet, never identified with the image the collective mind had created of him. He remained humble, egoless.

In fact, he spoke of a grotesque contradiction between what people consider to be my achievements and abilities and the reality of who I am and what I am capable of. This is why it is hard for a famous person to be in genuine relationship with others. A genuine relationship is one that is not dominated by the ego with its image-making and self-seeking.

In a genuine relationship, there is an outward flow of open, alert attention towards the other person, in which there is no wanting whatsoever. That alert attention is presence. It is the prerequisite for any authentic relationship.

The ego always either wants something, or if it believes there is nothing to get from the other, it is in a state of utter indifference. It doesn't care about you. And so, the three predominant states of egoic relationships are wanting, thwarted wanting, anger, resentment, blaming, complaining, and indifference.

[Speaker 2] (46:07 - 47:28)

Hello again, everyone. Welcome to week number three of our New Earth web class. And again, I thank you.

Eckhart Tolle thanks you for joining us as we bring students and seekers together to discuss our latest book club selection, Eckhart Tolle's A New Earth. I'm happy once again to see that we've been connecting with readers around the world. We've gotten questions and comments just this week from as far away as Rotterdam, Rio, Beirut, Casablanca, Greece, Seoul, and even Tasmania.

Hello, Tasmania. Thank you for all of your really so, so thoughtful your emails have been. And I can tell you, we love hearing from you wherever you are.

There have been either two million of you who've watched our classes live, or on streams, or downloads. No matter how you're watching, I welcome you to the awakening, the shift in consciousness that's happening really all over the planet. So, I want to get started on chapter three.

As you see on your screen, you can type in your questions and send them to us instantly throughout the class. We're going to be speaking with students via Skype. You know, Skype is that free software that allows you to make internet and video phone calls from all over the world.

Welcome again.

[Speaker 1] (47:28 - 47:29)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (47:29 - 47:29)

Did you have a good week?

[Speaker 1] (47:30 - 47:30)

Very good.

[Speaker 2] (47:30 - 47:50)

Very good. So, if we were to summarize, last week we were talking about how the current state of humanity is that we are humans here living on the planet Earth, have an ego, and learning to manage that ego is what this book is all about.

[Speaker 1] (47:50 - 48:25)

Yes, and going beyond ego at the same time means going beyond what the Buddha described as the normal human condition, which is one of suffering, because ultimately the ego, sooner or later, usually sooner, always produces some form of suffering. So, it's really transcending the ego, going beyond the ego, at the same time means going beyond this unconscious urge to generate more and more suffering, both in people's personal lives as well as collectively.

[Speaker 2] (48:25 - 48:39)

We did something last week that was unprecedented. You said it's never been done before on television where you just sit there in silence. And I thought a lot of people responded to the sense of connection from that.

So, you want to do that again?

[Speaker 1] (48:39 - 48:39)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (48:39 - 48:40)

Let's do that again.

[Speaker 1] (48:40 - 49:35)

Yes, yes. So, you're going to lead us in silence. Okay, I'll just maybe one or two little hints about what to do with your mind when you go into silence, because not speaking isn't complete silence yet, because usually, even though you're not speaking, the mind is still active and producing noise.

So, how to stop the mind from producing noise or how to reduce the amount of noise that the mind produces is quite easy. You take your attention away from the mind, from thinking, and we did that already last week, and simply become aware that you are breathing. The air flows in and out and you feel yourself breathing.

Air flows in and out of the body. And so, as we go into silence now for a few seconds, just direct your attention and feel your own breath.

[Speaker 2] (49:35 - 50:33)

That was nice. Yes. Today's lesson, chapter three, beginning on page 59.

I love the idea that we're all literally on the same page. Everybody, page 59, the core of the ego. Most people are so completely identified with the voice in the head, the incessant stream of involuntary and compulsive thinking and the emotions that accompany it, that we may describe them as being possessed by their mind.

My question to you, if we are not that constant stream of thinking, then who are we?

[Speaker 1] (50:35 - 50:44)

Now, that question usually would be answered by the mind, by giving some kind of concept of who we are.

[Speaker 2] (50:46 - 50:59)

Now... Yes, I am female. Is that...

I am African American. I work on TV. Yes.

My mother was, my mother is, I live at, my job is. Yes. That's how most people with you say, who are you?

[Speaker 1] (50:59 - 53:05)

Yes. But beyond that, because concepts refer to who we are temporarily in the world of form. You're a mother, you're a father, you have a certain profession, belong to a certain race, you're a man or a woman, nationality, all these things.

Now, when you ask who are we beyond that, there is no conceptual answer to that. No conceptual answer would be absolutely correct. We can give little hints.

We can say, we are the formless consciousness behind all that. We are that which cannot be defined through concepts or words. So, knowing who you are is not, does not mean that suddenly you have some new idea in your head and say, oh, now let me tell you who I am.

I've discovered who I am. You get closer to knowing you, who you are, if you come to a stage where you have that feeling, and I mention it in the book somewhere, when people tell me, I don't know who I am anymore, because they have realized who they are not. They are ultimately not their profession, they are not whatever function they fulfill, they are not their nationality, so they're beginning to realize that's not really who I am, but then they enter the unknown and say, well, I'm no longer sure who I am.

And I always congratulate people when they say, I'm not sure who I am anymore. Well, that usually connotes confusion. Confusion, if you still want to know who you are, but if you can become comfortable with not knowing who you are, with not defining yourself, to yourself or to others, mainly to yourself, because the ego is constantly a self-definition, to remind yourself who you are, you remember your story of your past, and so on.

You have opinions about yourself, and so this is the self-definition.

[Speaker 2] (53:06 - 53:12)

But don't we obviously need the ego, Eckhart? Don't we obviously need it? Otherwise, why don't we have it?

Why wouldn't we have evolved past it?

[Speaker 1] (53:13 - 54:18)

We're doing that now. So it's been a stage in the evolution of consciousness, a necessary stage in the evolution of consciousness. For survival.

Yes, yes. Because? The ego arose because we started to think.

So the ability in humans, suddenly humans developed the ability to differentiate and to think. To me, the beginning of the Old Testament really describes the beginning of the ability to think, because what it says in the Old Testament is, ìThey ate of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil.î The ability to say, ìThis is good, this is bad,î to differentiate, starting to think. So the ability to think arose in our species, which was a wonderful thing on the one hand, but over many, many millennia, hundreds of thousands of years, more and more, our original sense of connectedness with life and with being, which the natural world still has, animals still have that.

They live in a state of natural connectedness.

[Speaker 12] (54:18 - 54:21)

And some cultures did. Some of ancient cultures.

[Speaker 6] (54:21 - 54:22)

That's right.

[Speaker 1] (54:22 - 55:21)

They still have that. A sense of being rooted, being comfortable in your own skin, being rooted deeply within, and feel that sense of oneness with the totality of life. Oneness with life itself.

And so we had, humanity had that once, and as you say, some ancient cultures, perhaps there are still remnants of ancient cultures, and they still have that. But humans, as they went into more and more thinking and differentiation, they gradually, their sense of self, gradually moved from the center of their being, which I would describe as their heart, or the solar plexus, into their mind. Into their mind.

And they more and more, they began to identify with the movement of thought. And gradually, out of this continuous identification with the movement of thought, a thought-made entity was produced, which is the ego.

[Speaker 2] (55:22 - 55:25)

Yeah. Which is what you're saying is being possessed by our minds.

[Speaker 1] (55:25 - 55:25)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (55:25 - 55:40)

Okay. By being possessed by our minds. Okay, you say this is the egoic mind, and we call it egoic because there's a sense of self, of I, in every thought, every memory, every interpretation, opinion, and so forth.

And this is unconsciousness, spiritually speaking.

[Speaker 1] (55:40 - 56:05)

Yes, because you identify with thought, rather than being, identifying with the, your inner essence, which is what we lost, which is the state of Eden, or paradise, as it's described in the Bible. We lost that, and it's not only in the Bible, there are many ancient cultures where they speak of the golden age that we lost, in many different cultures.

[Speaker 2] (56:05 - 56:37)

And you say egos are all the same on the surface, they only, they differ only on the surface. Deep down, they're all the same. Yes.

Okay. Now, chapter three is all about the core of the ego, what makes it thrive. Yes.

And you say that, that what we react to in another, we strengthen in ourselves. Can you give us an example of that? One of the things the ego needs to survive is reacting against other people.

What you react to in another, you strengthen in yourself, you say.

[Speaker 1] (56:37 - 57:14)

Yes, that's usually what we react to most strongly in others, and what we most strongly condemn in others is usually something that we also have, a trait that we also have, but that we are unconscious of in ourselves. So when we, for example, we become upset if we encounter somebody who is very greedy, or we could become upset about somebody who is dishonest, no matter who, the force of your reaction usually tells you that something in you that you need to look at.

[Speaker 12] (57:14 - 57:18)

Really? All the time? All the time?

[Speaker 1] (57:19 - 57:28)

Well, it's for you to find out or anybody to find out in their own lives. When you react strongly, have it then become alert and have a look inside.

[Speaker 2] (57:28 - 57:38)

Okay. You say complaining is one of the ego's favorite strategies for strengthening itself. Every complaint is a little story the mind makes up that you completely believe in.

[Speaker 1] (57:39 - 58:07)

Yes. Now, that's a very common thing, and perhaps until people begin to become more aware... And some egos survive on complaining.

Some egos who haven't got much else to identify with, they can survive on complaining alone. So then continuously you are condemning other people, you're continuously criticizing, condemning, or judging negatively situations that you're in, your surroundings, other people.

[Speaker 2] (58:07 - 58:12)

So the ego is the identification with those thoughts. It's not necessarily the thought.

[Speaker 1] (58:12 - 58:20)

No. It's the thing that you become those thoughts. There's no space between you and the thought.

Got that.

[Speaker 2] (58:21 - 58:28)

Okay. All right. So, name-calling is also a form that the ego defines itself.

[Speaker 1] (58:28 - 59:27)

Yes. And that, of course, one could say, well, it's relatively harmless. On one level, it's to call a person this or that, to attach a label to a person.

But if you follow this up to see, you can actually see how dreadful it is to label another human being or another group of human beings. Because once you have labeled, you've attached a mental label to another human being, you have desensitized yourself to the aliveness and the humanity of that other human being, because you're relating now to a label. So if you say he's a whatever, maybe he's a communist, he's this, he's that, any label, and immediately, instead of sensing the aliveness of that human being and have some empathy with that, you have cut yourself off and you have a label.

[Speaker 2] (59:27 - 59:42)

In Chapter 4, you talk about that, that role-playing, how we do it in temporary ways. I'm the person who's going to the store, I'm the customer, and there's the clerk. The person who labels himself the clerk, and I'm the customer, there's a certain defined behavior that we have.

[Speaker 1] (59:42 - 59:49)

Yes. And then when it's done collectively, the labeling, when an entire nation labels another nation in a certain way.

[Speaker 2] (59:49 - 59:51)

Or I'm the boss and you're the janitor.

[Speaker 1] (59:51 - 1:00:10)

Or you're my subordinate. Yes. All these are forms of mental labeling.

So any kind of mental label that you're completely identified with desensitizes you to the humanity and then of the other human being. And then all kinds of things are possible, even violence becomes possible.

[Speaker 2] (1:00:10 - 1:00:37)

Okay, I got it. Everybody, I just got this. You got this.

Remember two weeks ago, we were talking about walking under the trees, feeling nature, not labeling the flowers, being able to experience the essence of the flowers. What you're saying here is you're labeling people as he's a jerk or he's a whatever. Once you start doing that, you become desensitized to who they really are in the same way that you were when you were labeling things in nature.

[Speaker 1] (1:00:38 - 1:00:38)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:00:38 - 1:00:43)

Okay. Right, exactly. Okay, we have Bill.

Hello, Bill. Talked to you earlier today.

[Speaker 3] (1:00:43 - 1:00:44)

Oprah, how are you?

[Speaker 2] (1:00:44 - 1:00:50)

Hi. Bill's in Connecticut on Skype. Bill and I Skyped on the Oprah show earlier today.

What's your question to us now?

[Speaker 3] (1:00:51 - 1:01:05)

Well, first of all, Eckhart, I'd like to say that this book is indicative to the quintessential essence of life. This is incredible reading. I have a very simple question.

Do you compare the egoic mind to the subconscious?

[Speaker 1] (1:01:05 - 1:01:20)

I don't use those terms because they're a completely different frame of reference. There is, of course, a lot of subconscious activity in the egoic mind also.

[Speaker 3] (1:01:21 - 1:01:25)

Do they run in conjunction with each other or are they separate?

[Speaker 1] (1:01:25 - 1:02:29)

Essentially, for the ego to survive, for the ego to thrive, you need to be unconscious of it. So the way I see it, I would describe the entire egoic functioning as part of the unconsciousness. And it's only when you become aware of those patterns that operate in your own mind that you are stepping out of the unconsciousness.

And this is why we call it awakening. And when you suddenly become aware, even of initially, perhaps, of just a tiny pattern in your mind. For example, we talked about complaining.

If you become aware that often during the day you complain uselessly because it serves no purpose about other people or situations. And suddenly say, oh, there's the complaining voice in my head. Not only do you say there's the complaining voice, there is a deeper dimension of consciousness that has suddenly come forth from where you can be aware of that voice.

[Speaker 2] (1:02:29 - 1:02:34)

And what you're saying is you, we are the awareness.

[Speaker 1] (1:02:34 - 1:02:49)

That's right. We are the awareness. This is essentially who you are.

You are not all those things that the awareness can be conscious of. Or the labels or whatever. You are the consciousness or the awareness.

[Speaker 2] (1:02:49 - 1:02:50)

You are the awareness.

[Speaker 1] (1:02:50 - 1:02:52)

And as long as you don't know that.

[Speaker 2] (1:02:52 - 1:02:53)

Isn't that blow your mind, Bill?

[Speaker 3] (1:02:54 - 1:02:58)

I'm like, I'm just, I'm washed away here.

[Speaker 2] (1:02:59 - 1:03:16)

What is so fascinating, I was sharing this with Eckhart as we were preparing for tonight's lesson. That I received an email from you through our message boards where you were talking about how your life was sort of spiraling downhill. You were not communicating with your wife.

You were sort of.

[Speaker 3] (1:03:17 - 1:03:47)

Oprah, I wasn't communicating with anybody. I was just, I was stagnating and I needed a wake up call. And I was, I was, I was on the search.

And when I heard you mention this book, it was the name that stuck a new earth. You know, that's really cool. I really have to check that out.

And it took me five weeks to buy the book. But you know, it's my manual for life. It's just, it's an incredible composition.

It truly is.

[Speaker 2] (1:03:47 - 1:03:59)

So you were saying on the Oprah show earlier today. Many people are joining us this evening who weren't a part of the Oprah show. But you were saying on the Oprah show earlier today when we were Skyping.

That you sat down, you were going to give it a couple of hours and then.

[Speaker 3] (1:04:00 - 1:04:21)

Yeah, yeah. I figured, you know, I'll knock off two or three chapters. I got so consumed in this, in this, this whole wave of, of, of writing.

I was like, wow, I can't put it down. And that, you know, 12 hours later I closed the cover and I went, wow. What an incredible ride.

[Speaker 2] (1:04:21 - 1:04:26)

Okay. And what was the biggest realization? Hey Bill, what was the biggest realization for you?

[Speaker 3] (1:04:26 - 1:05:31)

The biggest realization, you know, the whole book itself was a realization. I didn't have any one chapter or any one paragraph I went through. It really started on chapter three for me.

From chapter three, it went to the next chapter, the chapter after that. How we're brought up, how we live in a dysfunctional life. And Oprah, let me tell you something.

I grew up in one of the most dysfunctional families you'd ever want to know. And this is something that we carry with us. Your pain body.

I've said that, you know, this is a manual for life. We're thrown out there. We're not given, you know, we get a manual for our cars, our appliances, our electronics, but we're thrown out there.

And, you know, as young adults, it's like, go do your thing. But while we're doing our thing, we're consumed in all of the negativity that is in society, the negativity that's in our families. And it's, you know, we can take ourselves so far, but this book can take us a whole lot farther.

[Speaker 11] (1:05:32 - 1:05:39)

Well, thank you, Bill. Bill, thank you. Thank you.

I'm glad you were around when I was talking about the book.

[Speaker 3] (1:05:39 - 1:06:06)

I got to tell you something. You are, I don't know where you came from, and I did read in the book that you were studying a, you never, you know, said what kind of a career you were on in the book. You just said that you were studying for a lucrative career and you, you got off the beaten path and went into the spiritual realm.

I've got to tell you something, my friend, we need more people like you.

[Speaker 2] (1:06:07 - 1:06:25)

Bill, I thank you very much for that. Thank you so much. Thank you.

Where were you? What were you doing? That's a good point that Bill brings up.

What were you doing before? The last week you said that your thing was, you never thought you were so cute. No.

But that you had, that you thought, that you thought that you had such a great intellectual mind.

[Speaker 1] (1:06:25 - 1:07:30)

Yes. So what were you doing? I was an intellectual.

I got into university fairly late because I left school at 13 or 14. And then later, when I was 18, I went to live in England. And then I took, suddenly became interested in intellectual things.

I was searching. I was becoming already more and more unhappy. And I thought all the answers would be found on the intellectual level.

So what were you planning on doing? Not being a spiritual teacher, obviously. No, becoming a professor.

And then have all the answers to life. And then after a while, I realized they don't have the answers. Wow.

And I became more and more depressed and unhappy. And then suddenly something snapped inside. And this disidentification from my mind happened.

Yes. Which happened to our friend, Bill, while he was reading the book. Because when somebody reads the book and has such a powerful response, that means the reading of the book coincides with his own awakening as he reads.

But this happens because he was so ready for it.

[Speaker 2] (1:07:30 - 1:07:30)

Because he was ready.

[Speaker 1] (1:07:30 - 1:07:34)

Ready for it. It's wonderful to see when that happens. When that happens.

[Speaker 2] (1:07:34 - 1:08:12)

But, okay, we were talking earlier about the ego loves complaining. First of all, loves to believe, loves to identify with the thoughts in the head and believe those thoughts. And loves to complain.

But aren't there some things legitimately worth complaining about? You know, anybody who's ever gone into a house construction at some point or another is told a story by the construction workers, unless you have the most amazing, you know, that this is going to be finished at a certain time or it's going to be a certain price and then it often doesn't turn out to be what you expected. That's a complaint a lot of people have.

Isn't that legitimate?

[Speaker 1] (1:08:13 - 1:08:13)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:08:13 - 1:08:16)

Like you talk in the book about, my soup is cold.

[Speaker 1] (1:08:17 - 1:08:18)

Yes, in a restaurant.

[Speaker 2] (1:08:18 - 1:08:21)

Yeah, in a restaurant. My soup is cold. Sometimes your soup is cold.

[Speaker 1] (1:08:21 - 1:08:22)

That's right.

[Speaker 2] (1:08:22 - 1:08:22)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:08:22 - 1:08:34)

So, first of all, the complaining that we are talking about mainly here, the egoic complaining, most of that fulfills no real purpose because it's not meant to bring about change in any situation.

[Speaker 2] (1:08:34 - 1:08:37)

Okay, that's complaining and resentment complaining.

[Speaker 1] (1:08:37 - 1:09:53)

Yes. And a lot of it for many people happens only in the head. Sometimes they verbalize it also.

But a lot of the complaining happens in the head alone. But no matter whether they verbalize it or whether the complaining happens in the head alone, in probably 90% of cases, it has no real purpose because it's not meant to bring about change. It's meant to strengthen the ego.

I see that. And then, of course, there are situations, of course, where something needs to be said in order to bring about change in the situation. And that's a completely different kind of complaining where you say something so that change can happen.

For example, the cold soup in the restaurant. You say, the soup is cold. Please bring me hot soup.

That's fine. You could call that also complaining. And there are also two ways of, as far as this kind of complaining is concerned, that is connected to a real situation that is meant to bring about change.

There's one way of complaining with ego in that situation also. And that is when the ego is attempting to make somebody wrong. A personal element comes into it and there's a negativity that flows into it.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:53 - 1:09:56)

To make somebody wrong because my soup is cold.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:56 - 1:10:45)

Yes. Damn it. That's right.

You're personalizing it. And so you're making another person almost, one could say, into an enemy when you complain in that way. So whether it's somebody who is a builder, who is working on your home.

And so there is a way of complaining. I wouldn't even perhaps call it complaining. Of simply stating what the situation is.

Stating the facts. Yes. Without the negativity that flows into it when the ego does it.

And so that can be practiced. And whatever you are stating in order to bring about change is actually going to be much more effective if it's done without the negativity. Because if it comes with negativity, it provokes a negative reaction in the other.

And so the whole situation then becomes a conflict situation.

[Speaker 2] (1:10:45 - 1:11:09)

As you say, see if you can catch. That is to say, notice the voice in the head. Perhaps I'm on page 64 everybody.

Second paragraph. Perhaps in the very moment it complains about something. Recognize it for what it is.

The voice of the ego. And then later you say, the moment you become aware of the ego in you. This is mid-paragraph.

It's strictly speaking no longer the ego but just an old conditioned mind pattern.

[Speaker 1] (1:11:09 - 1:11:30)

Yes, because ego means you're not aware of it. So ego means unconsciousness. So a good thing that people can ask themselves when they become aware of this complaining voice in the head.

Or the verbalized complaining voice. Is this meant to bring about change in the situation? And if they look at it clearly, often they will say no.

[Speaker 2] (1:11:30 - 1:11:36)

No, it's just hearing myself complain. Because it keeps fueling my sense of righteousness and rightness.

[Speaker 1] (1:11:36 - 1:11:44)

And what the complaining voice also loves is to get confirmation from somebody else. That yes, you're right to complain. So then two people join.

[Speaker 2] (1:11:44 - 1:11:46)

Oh yeah, and then you just fuel it.

[Speaker 1] (1:11:46 - 1:11:48)

On and on and on and on.

[Speaker 2] (1:11:48 - 1:11:48)

I love it.

[Speaker 1] (1:11:48 - 1:11:49)

That's right.

[Speaker 2] (1:11:49 - 1:11:54)

Doris is Skyping us from outside of London, England. Doris, what's your question? Hello.

[Speaker 7] (1:11:55 - 1:12:26)

Hi, Oprah. Hi, Eckhart. What an amazing day or evening.

The book resonated very deeply within me, I must say. And reading on page 62, the first paragraph, resentment is the emotion that goes with complaining. It started a question within me.

And I thought like, but where do hurt feelings belong to? Is this something that my ego tells me to feel? Or where do they come from, Eckhart?

[Speaker 1] (1:12:27 - 1:12:34)

Can you give a situation, an actual situation? It's always easier to talk about this when you can look at an actual situation.

[Speaker 7] (1:12:34 - 1:12:57)

Well, hurt feelings can have, most of the time, some outside. Either way, somebody is telling you something that hurts you personally. But what about sadness?

You know, you lose a person or, you know, hurt feelings come from many different sources. Where do they come from? How do they relate to the ego?

[Speaker 1] (1:12:57 - 1:12:58)

Thank you. Okay.

[Speaker 7] (1:12:58 - 1:12:59)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (1:12:59 - 1:13:35)

So often it happens that even, let's say, somebody criticizes you and you feel hurt because perhaps you were attached to what you were doing and you feel hurt. Now, what is it in you that feels hurt? And yes, it is the ego that feels hurt.

And so when that happens, all you do is, first of all, you can't say, Oh, I shouldn't be feeling hurt and I shouldn't have an ego. It doesn't work. You simply accept that this is what you are feeling right now.

And you recognize what it is in you that is producing.

[Speaker 13] (1:13:35 - 1:13:37)

Ah, okay. Just take it in.

[Speaker 1] (1:13:37 - 1:14:21)

It's a mental image of yourself that has become hurt. Because most people think of themselves as good people. And if somebody says you're no good, immediately something feeds.

And many people get extremely angry. They're not only hurt. For many people, that immediately turns into anger.

And so the ego wants to immediately defend itself in driving in traffic. Often, let's say, you're driving and another driver suddenly calls you idiot. That hurts.

On one level, it hurts. It hurts the ego. And usually, immediately, the ego goes into self-repair mode, as I call it, and will shout something back in order to repair itself.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:24 - 1:14:39)

I'm laughing at you because, I mean, I'm thinking if somebody calls me an idiot. Somebody gave me the finger once and I was like, gee, that gave me the finger. But I don't remember being hurt about it.

I was so stunned by it.

[Speaker 1] (1:14:40 - 1:14:45)

But many people would be hurt. But you were not because you were...

[Speaker 2] (1:14:45 - 1:14:47)

I thought, what a bad day he's having.

[Speaker 1] (1:14:47 - 1:14:54)

Yes, you were in touch with a deeper level of yourself where nothing is hurt. You can't be hurt on that level.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:54 - 1:15:04)

When I used to take taxis all the time, when I'd have a taxi driver in a really bad mood, if he was in a horrible mood, I would tip him double extra so that he'd be nicer for the next person.

[Speaker 1] (1:15:05 - 1:15:06)

Really.

[Speaker 2] (1:15:07 - 1:15:07)

That's a good one.

[Speaker 1] (1:15:08 - 1:15:44)

There's even a story about an official in Japan, a high government official went to see a Zen master. And he asked the Zen master, can you explain to me what the self is? Self really means ego.

Because they talk about the self in Buddhism. Can you explain to me what the self is? And the Zen master said, what a stupid question is that?

Why are you asking such stupid questions? And immediately the government official said, how dare you talk to me like that? Don't you know who I am?

And the master said, that's the ego. That's the ego.

[Speaker 2] (1:15:44 - 1:15:45)

All right.

[Speaker 1] (1:15:45 - 1:15:53)

Got it. Now this person got hurt, but in him, immediately the hurt turned into anger.

[Speaker 2] (1:15:53 - 1:15:56)

So any time you have hurt feelings, that is your ego?

[Speaker 1] (1:15:56 - 1:15:57)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:15:57 - 1:16:38)

Okay. Now you say here also, Doris, on page 65 he says, a long-standing resentment is called a grievance. To carry a grievance is to be in a permanent state of against.

And that is why grievances constitute a significant part of many people's ego. Collective grievances can survive for centuries in the psyche of a nation, we know that, or tribe, and fuel a never-ending cycle of violence. And so I guess all of us need to ask, what are the grievances that we allow ourselves to carry?

Yes. Family grievances. Families.

That carry on and you don't even forget why you're carrying the grievance.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:38 - 1:16:47)

Yes. Personal grievances. Family grievances.

Grievances between tribes, religious groups, nations, and so on. Dreadful.

[Speaker 2] (1:16:47 - 1:16:55)

And so are you saying no grievance has a justification? That all grievances are based as the core of the ego?

[Speaker 1] (1:16:56 - 1:17:05)

It's an essential part of the ego to hold grievances. The ego keeps itself alive. That's one of the ways in which the ego keeps itself alive.

[Speaker 2] (1:17:05 - 1:17:36)

You also say on page 66 here, Doris, don't try to let go of the grievance. Trying to let go to forgive does not work. Forgiveness happens naturally when you see that it has no purpose other than to strengthen a false sense of yourself.

Forgiveness happens when you realize that being resentful is only to build up your ego. But that resentment is only helping you carry around this false sense of who you are. I got that.

[Speaker 10] (1:17:36 - 1:17:44)

I got that. You got that, Doris? Yes, I got it too.

Yes, thank you very much. You got it too. Good.

All the way in London.

[Speaker 2] (1:17:44 - 1:17:54)

Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you.

We have Tim, a retired Air Force officer who lives in Sicily on the line. Hi, Tim. Your question?

[Speaker 6] (1:17:55 - 1:17:56)

Hello, Oprah. How are you doing?

[Speaker 2] (1:17:56 - 1:17:58)

Good. Good to talk to you.

[Speaker 6] (1:17:58 - 1:18:04)

Hey, good to talk to you. Thank you for this opportunity. It's a real honor to be talking to you and Eckhart.

[Speaker 2] (1:18:05 - 1:18:06)

Okay, your question?

[Speaker 6] (1:18:06 - 1:19:04)

I want to put this in context first. I'm jumping ahead to page 74 where Eckhart mentions that sometimes you need to protect yourself against the deeply unconscious. So in that context, my question is, in the case of war, if I protect myself and others via violence, I seem to be part of the insanity that he talks about.

But to surrender our lives to any unconscious mass of people seems to push us closer to extinction. And I guess my question is, are my defensive actions bringing humankind closer to or further away from a collective enlightenment? And then as a follow-up, I would just ask, is it possible personally, can I fight a war and stay in the present, keep that space between my ego and my true self?

[Speaker 2] (1:19:04 - 1:19:08)

Those are brilliant questions. Thoughtful.

[Speaker 1] (1:19:08 - 1:19:09)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:19:09 - 1:19:11)

Thank you so much. Thank you.

[Speaker 12] (1:19:11 - 1:19:13)

Thanks, Tim, for asking. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:19:13 - 1:21:47)

I have personally known people and read accounts of people who actually experienced an awakening in the midst of the turmoil of a war situation, when death was imminent, could happen at any second, and something within them suddenly disidentified. The ego broke down in the midst of the suffering generated by that situation. The ego collapsed.

As it also has happened to people even in concentration camps and prison camps. I regularly get letters from people in prison who tell me that they have suddenly become free. They are still in prison, but they consider themselves free.

So we are talking perhaps here not only about war, but any kind of situation that usually would be described as extremely negative and unconscious. Is it possible to awaken there? Yes, it happens.

I'd say that every human being has a spiritual teacher. For most humans, their spiritual teacher is their suffering. And a war situation is an extreme form of suffering.

And ultimately, whatever happens here will lead us to awakening, even something that looks on the surface very negative, like a war situation. Eventually, even that will lead us into an awakening. And it's already happening.

So, yes, it is possible in the midst of war to suddenly awaken. What will happen then, I cannot foretell. It depends on whatever the situation is.

It is also true to say that once you have awakened, it is very unlikely that you will still become part of violence. I'm not saying it could not happen. Nothing can be said categorically.

But you no longer resonate with violence. Now, so that if war will no longer happen, when a certain number of people have, I don't know what the critical mass is, a certain number of people have entered the awakened state, so they no longer generate the unconsciousness, the negativity that produces war, that's perhaps...

[Speaker 2] (1:21:47 - 1:21:48)

That's where we're evolving to.

[Speaker 1] (1:21:48 - 1:21:49)

We're evolving to that.

[Speaker 2] (1:21:49 - 1:21:52)

We haven't done so good in the 20th century, nor 21st.

[Speaker 1] (1:21:52 - 1:22:30)

No, the 20th century was dreadful, the most dreadful, almost as if the ego had reached a climax there, the madness of it. And we can see a lot of that still flowing now into the 21st century also, but at the same time something is happening in this century that is quite unprecedented. Well, it started in the later part of the last century.

This awakening is quite unprecedented. If you look, for example, at previous war situations, there was very little...

[Speaker 2] (1:22:31 - 1:22:32)

Challenges to it.

[Speaker 1] (1:22:32 - 1:22:38)

Yes. It was never challenged by the people. That's right.

And now this is very different. Right.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:38 - 1:22:57)

You actually say in Chapter 4, you talk about how the hippie movement in the United States brought about a shift in consciousness. The movement itself started to fall apart, but the hippies actually brought a challenge to the status quo as we knew it. The hippies said...

[Speaker 1] (1:22:57 - 1:23:07)

Yes. Also, it was a disidentification from the collective image. Right.

The collective, which up to that point, people had very strongly identified with the collective.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:07 - 1:23:31)

Behaved a certain way, did things as they were told, obeyed the status quo. Yes. All right.

You say ego takes everything personally, back to what Doris was saying earlier. Ego takes everything personally. Emotion arises, defensiveness, perhaps even aggression.

Are you defending the truth? No, the truth in any case needs no defense. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:23:32 - 1:24:04)

So when people argue, usually an argument, often arguments turn into violence. If people are very unconscious, and many of you still are, arguments turn into violence. So when people argue about something, usually what happens is they are so identified with their opinion...

Of being right. Yes, being right, their mental position, that any questioning of their mental position, of their opinion or their viewpoint, is regarded as an attack on them.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:05 - 1:24:05)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:24:05 - 1:24:09)

And this is how the ego gets confused with who you are.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:09 - 1:25:19)

You know, I will tell you a funny story. I was reading this book, and Stedman and I were at dinner, just the two of us, talking about what are the most important questions in life. And I said, I believe one of the most important questions in life is to know whether...

It's just to know, to believe whether the universe is compassionate or not compassionate. And he said, well, I disagree with you. I think the most important thing is whether or not you know how to work on your strengths.

And I go, well, that's ridiculous, because the most important thing is do you believe whether the universe is compassionate or not? And so we're arguing about whether or not the universe is compassionate or not compassionate, and he didn't agree with my view. And I said, well, you know, I know I'm right.

I ended up clearing the table, leaving the table, and going upstairs, because I don't want to have the conversation anymore. And, you know, half an hour passes. He comes up, and he says, OK, you're right.

You're right. And I go, never mind, I don't need to be right. I don't need to be right.

And then I realized that, yes, that is exactly what happened. My ego is arguing because it is defending its right to be right.

[Speaker 1] (1:25:19 - 1:25:26)

Yes. Yeah. Identification with a mental position, with a concept in the head, can happen so easily.

[Speaker 2] (1:25:26 - 1:25:55)

Right. And we're talking about compassionate issues. Yes.

Or non-compassionate issues. Yes. Yeah.

Well, my friend, Kadada Jones, who I was at her father's 75th birthday party the other night. Quincy Jones turned 75, everybody. And Kadada was there, his daughter.

And we started talking about A New Earth, and she had so many questions that I said, Kadada, why don't you just Skype us on Monday? And here you are. Hello, Kadada.

[Speaker 4] (1:25:56 - 1:25:58)

Hi, Eckhart. Hi, Oprah. How are you?

[Speaker 2] (1:25:58 - 1:25:58)

Hi.

[Speaker 4] (1:25:59 - 1:26:24)

And your question? OK, my question is, this book hits me really, really deep in my heart. And I know it to be the truth.

But I have such resistance. And I feel like if everything in form is an illusion, it feels really disenchanting. And I'm at a point in my life where I have goals.

I'm excited about my career. I want to have kids. I want to meet a great partner.

And if it's all illusion, where's the fun?

[Speaker 1] (1:26:27 - 1:27:43)

Not my ego. You are not meant to believe that all is illusion. At a stage in your life where you can simply enjoy the play of form, eventually you will come to a point, as every human does, where the forms in your life are no longer completely satisfying.

They leave a certain emptiness. They leave a frustration. But you haven't reached that point yet.

That's fine. In the meantime, you enjoy your life. Be as present as you can, which means don't project yourself continuously into some future moment that promises you more and greater fulfillment.

But if that happens and you can't help it, that's fine too. But why not enjoy this moment as it is, really? That's all you can do.

This is not to take the joy out of life. It's to really deepen the way in which you live rather than living on the surface of things and expecting fulfillment through relatively superficial things, going deeper to a place where true joy resides.

[Speaker 2] (1:27:44 - 1:27:57)

I know. I think that's a good question, though, that you raised, Kadada, especially I've heard this from a lot of people your age who say, so now where is ambition? Ambition is ambition my ego?

Good question.

[Speaker 4] (1:27:57 - 1:28:15)

You want to hit career strides. You want to see things happen. You're excited to meet somebody.

You're going to have a baby that you're going to be madly in love with. And then I hear Eckhart's voice, and I have to remember my ego, remember that it's form, and it just kind of makes me feel a little unexcited. But I guess it's about being in the moment.

[Speaker 1] (1:28:16 - 1:29:21)

No, there comes a point when you can see the truth of this very clearly in your own life. Until you can see the truth of it very clearly in your own life, the book remains on the conceptual level. And so I wouldn't say that there's anything in the book that you should believe in.

If the book works for you, the truth of it is immediately recognized, like in Bill, who we talked to earlier, the truth of it is immediately recognized. There's a sense of, ah, yes. But at 20, I would not have understood the truth in this book.

I had ambitions. I wanted to become a great professor. I wanted to be seen as to be successful.

I wanted to show to the world that I can make it. So I was working hard. If at that point I had read this book, I would have said the same as you.

I don't want this right now. I don't need this. The book really, as long as you feel that you don't really need it, it's fine.

You should carry on with what you're doing.

[Speaker 2] (1:29:21 - 1:29:22)

I don't even hear her saying she doesn't need it.

[Speaker 4] (1:29:22 - 1:29:53)

I totally need it. I totally know that this book is real and true. And I'm actually turning 34 in a week.

So it's really, really, really important for me to figure out how to integrate consciousness into this next chapter. I want to approach it in a very conscious way. But there's still probably a little part of me, a lot of part of me, that's gripping on to the form.

I live in Los Angeles. I'm in a business where form is at the forefront. It's kind of a hard balance.

I'm just wondering how do you reap the fruits and not identify to the form?

[Speaker 1] (1:29:54 - 1:30:30)

Yes, forms. You can enjoy the forms, and you can really only truly enjoy the forms if you're not completely identified with the forms. Because if you're completely identified with the forms, there's always an element of fear that the form might leave you, the situation that you have, whatever, the form might leave you, or suddenly the form will no longer be satisfying.

So the attachment to the form doesn't really mean that you enjoy it. The attachment to the form produces negativity and produces fear around it, around your life situation.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:30 - 1:30:43)

It's doing, Kadada, what I said, I think, on an earlier class. It's like, especially in Los Angeles, you know, great fun city, City of the Angels there, it's like being able to be in the world but not of it.

[Speaker 1] (1:30:44 - 1:30:45)

Yes, yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:45 - 1:30:47)

To be in the world but not of it.

[Speaker 1] (1:30:47 - 1:31:17)

Yes, and a lot of that, the attachment, is less likely to be there the more present you are with any life experience, the more present you are in the moment, then you're not attached. The attachment needs future, needs more looks to the future, either as a threat or hope. So be as present as you can in every situation in your life, in every moment in your life.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:17 - 1:31:30)

Yes, and what you were talking about, I think, in one of the future chapters about being able to be present with your children instead of just sort of going through the motions with your children, being present with your children. Hey, Kadada, great to see you on Skype.

[Speaker 4] (1:31:30 - 1:31:31)

Thank you for having me.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:33 - 1:31:43)

Let's go to our study group who's watching our webcast at Borders on Michigan Avenue in Chicago. Hi, everybody. Hi.

I hear Jamie is there and has a question.

[Speaker 9] (1:31:44 - 1:32:00)

Yes, hi, Oprah, hi, Eckhart. My name is Jamie. My question is, on page 83, you mention how fame especially is such a downfall for the ego, and I'm just wondering, Oprah, how you manage to keep everything so grounded?

[Speaker 1] (1:32:01 - 1:32:04)

I've been meaning to ask you that too. Really?

[Speaker 2] (1:32:06 - 1:32:40)

Oh, thanks for bringing that up, Jamie. How do I manage to keep everything so grounded? I can think, I believe that I'm not attached to the fame.

I don't know that to be true since I have been, quote, famous for most of my adult life, but I believe that I really am, that what I do comes from such a, you know, I consider myself blessed, and I'm blessed because I have acquired fame and attention and money by being myself.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:40 - 1:32:43)

That's it. You don't play roles.

[Speaker 2] (1:32:43 - 1:32:47)

Yeah, I don't have to be anybody other than myself, and so...

[Speaker 1] (1:32:47 - 1:33:13)

And that's very rare. On television, almost everybody is playing a role. And your success is due to the fact that you are yourself.

Right. You're the same person outside television as you are here in the studio, and really that can apply to anybody. The more you are truly yourself and not playing roles, the more powerful you are.

The ego tells you you need to play some role, but your true power lies in not playing a role.

[Speaker 2] (1:33:13 - 1:34:34)

I will say this. When I first started television, I was a news reporter and never was satisfied. I always felt that I was exploiting people.

My whole day was based around finding the worst story possible to report. And also, I was an anchorwoman, and something would happen, Jamie, when the light would come on, like on this camera, there's a little red light on, and all of a sudden, I'd be, like, talking like I am now, and the light would come on, and I would suddenly go into my newswoman anchor voice and play the role of the newswoman anchor person that I thought I was supposed to be. And one night, I was reading some copy that I hadn't pre-read, and I was naming a lot of countries, and Canada was on the list, and I called Canada Kanata.

And I started cracking myself up, then I said, did I just call Canada Kanata? And that was the breakthrough moment for me on television. That was the breakthrough moment where I was able, for just a few seconds, break through the wall of my facade as an anchorwoman who knows all of the different countries and in Kanata.

And that moment was such a funny moment for me, I couldn't stop laughing, and started the process of me being able to be myself on the air, that first little glimpse of it. So, did you have a question for Eckhart?

[Speaker 9] (1:34:36 - 1:35:00)

With all, you know, this webcast and being on Oprah, obviously you've come into incredible fame, and I didn't ask you the question, because this has been what you've been preaching since, you know, since you wrote The Power of Now, but do you anticipate, are you just completely self-actualized, you don't expect this to be a problem, or how do you expect fame to come in into play for you at all now?

[Speaker 2] (1:35:01 - 1:36:25)

Yeah. No, this is so funny. Amy Gross, who's the editor of O Magazine, who's also a pretty centered person, we were talking about, Eckhart did an article for us from a conversation that we had earlier in O Magazine and on my issue, and so we were talking about Eckhart coming for the first session a couple weeks ago.

She says, won't we all be surprised if Eckhart comes in in a fur hat and three pounds of bling, wearing sunglasses with an entourage? If Eckhart walks in and goes, yo, yo, what's up? No, I don't think it's affected him because this is so funny.

When I first called Eckhart months ago, months and months, I don't even know how long ago it was, to tell Eckhart that I was going to be choosing A New Earth as our book club selection, I think it's our 61st selection or whatever, he was very, he was so calm about it. Later, one of the producers says, well, did you call him, did you call him? And I said, yeah, I called him.

And she said, well, was he excited? And I said, I think for him that was excitement. As I said, I'm choosing the book.

He goes, yes, very good. So anyway, I don't think it's gone to his head yet. And listen, so far, no bling.

[Speaker 1] (1:36:26 - 1:36:32)

When it happens, then you'll know the ego has come back. Let me know. I will.

Because I won't know it if it's come back.

[Speaker 2] (1:36:32 - 1:37:15)

When Eckhart comes in wearing two earrings, I'll let you know. Okay. Let's see, thank you so much, Jamie.

And all the group from Borders, thank you for being there every week. Yay Borders! Michigan Avenue!

Let's see some of the email questions you've been sending during our class on our computer screen here. This is Melissa from Crab Orchard, West Virginia. She says she's being awakened with worry.

My sister's addicted to drugs. She's been through rehab to no avail every day. We worry about her.

We fear she may die if she continues. My question is this. How can we live awakened with this major, major distraction in our lives?

That's good.

[Speaker 1] (1:37:16 - 1:40:10)

Well, the first thing, you need to take responsibility for your own life and your own state of consciousness rather than thinking your primary responsibility is your sister's life and your sister's state of consciousness. That's not the case. You have to start with yourself.

Change can only begin with yourself. So are you taking responsibility for your own state of consciousness rather than believing unconsciously that of course you're worried and there's nothing else you can do. You have to look at what you call the worry in yourself, the continuous mind activity that dwells on negativity.

See if you can enter that state of acceptance or presence and just be with yourself. I recommend to get out of the mind, go into the body several times a day, and connect with the feeling of aliveness within. For yourself.

So that the worry, the worry pretends. Worry is part of the ego. It's the compulsion to think and it serves no purpose because it doesn't get you anywhere.

It's similar to the complaining. It has no useful purpose. It doesn't bring about change in any situation.

No matter how much you worry, it's never the worry that brings about any change in the situation. The mind may tell you you need to worry because it has some purpose. It doesn't.

So the essential thing is that you get out of that unconscious habit of continuous worrying. So find a little bit of peace in yourself first to start with, and it may be more than a little bit of peace, but start with a little. Is there any peace in you underneath this continuous mental noise that we call worry?

Is there anything else in you? And you have to find that you can only be of true service to your sister, you can only truly be an agent for change in this world if something has changed in your state of consciousness. Otherwise you contribute to the turmoil.

So find through meditating, through bringing awareness to the present moment as much as possible, through bringing awareness into the inner body as much as possible. Get out of the mind and enter presence and realize the mind may tell you you're not helping your sister. This is the beginning where you may be able to truly be of help to somebody else.

[Speaker 2] (1:40:11 - 1:40:13)

Because the only thing you can do is really help yourself.

[Speaker 1] (1:40:13 - 1:40:13)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:40:14 - 1:40:17)

That's right. But the mind tells you, I have to save my sister.

[Speaker 1] (1:40:17 - 1:40:18)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:40:18 - 1:40:22)

And what you're saying is that is not necessarily true.

[Speaker 1] (1:40:22 - 1:41:32)

No. Ultimately your sister is also responsible. It doesn't mean that one human being cannot help another.

But what is essential when we ask whether you can be of help or not to another human being is is there something in you that can bring about change in the consciousness of another human being. Unless some change has happened inside you, it can't happen. But this may talk more generally about worry.

This is the problem for many, many people. They wake up in the middle of the night worrying. During the day they go about worrying about this or that.

What does it mean to worry? What does it mean? It means there is unconscious mind movement projecting itself usually into the future and you see how dreadful the future is going to be, what's going to happen.

You see outcomes that are negative. Many things, of course, are never going to happen. But worry pretends to be necessary.

You have to see very clearly.

[Speaker 2] (1:41:32 - 1:41:34)

Worry pretends to be necessary.

[Speaker 1] (1:41:34 - 1:41:38)

Oh, I got that. You have to see that it serves no useful purpose.

[Speaker 2] (1:41:38 - 1:41:42)

Yeah, worry pretends to be necessary but serves no useful purpose.

[Speaker 1] (1:41:43 - 1:41:51)

And so once you see that it serves no useful purpose, you can sometimes maybe be able to step out of that and see, oh, and then become present.

[Speaker 2] (1:41:51 - 1:42:05)

Yeah, you can become present. If you can step out of the worry for a moment, you can become present enough to say, what can I do now? How can I be now in this moment?

[Speaker 1] (1:42:05 - 1:42:05)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:42:05 - 1:42:08)

For myself, for my sister, for whatever it is you need. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:42:08 - 1:42:56)

And the greatest gift you can give to somebody, especially somebody who is suffering like your sister, when you are with them, what is your state of consciousness? Are you able to bring presence when you connect with your sister or any other human being that you want to help? Can you be present with them?

Can you give them space to be? That's the healing. Healing.

You can be an agent for healing of another. Not in the sense that I am going to heal you, not believing. Right.

That would be ego gain. I'm going to heal you. No, simply be there as a conscious space of presence, not wanting to do anything, just being there as a conscious presence with another person.

[Speaker 2] (1:42:56 - 1:42:57)

That's very hard for people.

[Speaker 1] (1:42:57 - 1:42:57)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:42:57 - 1:42:59)

I understand it's very hard for people.

[Speaker 1] (1:42:59 - 1:43:02)

And that's why we call it the shift. It's a shift. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:43:02 - 1:43:30)

I recognize how hard it is. I'm reading this book now from a guest who is coming on the show called Beautiful Boy. You might have heard of it.

It's the story of the father. The father and the son both wrote a book together. It's going to be on the Oprah show later.

His son was an addict for many years. Very difficult for parents especially, and as in this case, Melissa, a sister, to a drug addict to stand by and watch somebody daily attempt to kill themselves through drugs. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:43:30 - 1:43:40)

Okay. But acceptance is also an important part of that. It's at the moment you need to accept.

Stop resisting it. Yes. Stop resisting it.

Not bringing the resistance always into the relationship.

[Speaker 2] (1:43:41 - 1:43:44)

Because whatever you fight, you strengthen, and what you resist persists.

[Speaker 1] (1:43:45 - 1:43:45)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:43:45 - 1:43:47)

That's at the top of page 75.

[Speaker 1] (1:43:48 - 1:43:48)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:43:48 - 1:43:53)

Whatever you fight, you strengthen, and what you resist persists. Why is that?

[Speaker 1] (1:43:53 - 1:44:14)

Because that's how the... By opposing, you bring... This world works in terms of polarities, so if you strengthen one polarity, you immediately strengthen the other.

That's an exact... Physics, yes. Exactly the same.

Physics.

[Speaker 2] (1:44:14 - 1:44:40)

Yes. Okay. You say, because these days you frequently hear the expression, the war against this or that, and whenever you hear that, you know that it's condemned to failure.

There's the war against drugs, against crime, the war against terrorism, against cancer, against poverty, and so on. And despite the war against all of these things, every one of those things is bigger than ever. That's right.

That's right. Because what you fight, you strengthen, and what you resist persists. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:44:41 - 1:45:00)

And then the implication, of course, is there is another way of dealing with things, with situations. And that is to make peace with it. Make peace with it.

And then action, take action. The action then comes out of a different state of consciousness. The action comes out of presence.

Presence. It's no longer reaction.

[Speaker 2] (1:45:01 - 1:45:06)

Yeah. It comes out of presence and not out of you being defensive about it. That's right.

I got it.

[Speaker 1] (1:45:06 - 1:45:12)

And the action is much more powerful and effective when it's not defensive and not negative.

[Speaker 2] (1:45:12 - 1:45:18)

We have Dana from Monrovia, Liberia. Oh. On the phone.

Hello?

[Speaker 8] (1:45:21 - 1:45:22)

Hello, Oprah. Hello, Eckhart.

[Speaker 2] (1:45:22 - 1:45:28)

Hello. It's Dana. Hi.

It's Dana. Hi, Dana. How are you?

Oh, we're happy to talk to Monrovia.

[Speaker 8] (1:45:28 - 1:45:57)

Hello. Oh, thank you. Your question.

Can I go ahead? Yeah, go ahead. My question has to do with non-reaction in relationships.

Would it be the same to say that the opposite of love is not hate, but rather indifference, considering if one makes that situation not a personal one?

[Speaker 1] (1:45:59 - 1:46:04)

Okay. That's your question. Yes.

I don't fully understand the question. Thank you.

[Speaker 10] (1:46:05 - 1:46:07)

Don't leave, Dana. Reading.

[Speaker 8] (1:46:10 - 1:46:13)

Go ahead. Concerning non-reaction.

[Speaker 12] (1:46:14 - 1:46:14)

Yes.

[Speaker 8] (1:46:15 - 1:46:22)

Would it be the same to say that the opposite of love is not hate, but rather indifference?

[Speaker 1] (1:46:24 - 1:46:27)

Now, do you mean that non-reaction is indifference?

[Speaker 8] (1:46:30 - 1:46:38)

Correct. That's what I'm asking. Oh, okay.

Particularly if one doesn't take it in a negative context.

[Speaker 12] (1:46:38 - 1:46:38)

Okay.

[Speaker 8] (1:46:40 - 1:46:43)

Meaning not letting negative consume one person.

[Speaker 1] (1:46:43 - 1:48:40)

Okay. Well, non-reaction means that you recognize when another human being displays some form of ego behavior, wants to be right or wants you to be wrong, or accuses you of this or that, whatever. Many kinds.

The ego manifests in many different ways. You recognize that that is its ego, and you don't react to it, which means you don't confuse this behavior with who that human being is. It means you allow the ego to be there without fighting that behavior.

For example, I had a—it happened some years ago, but it's an interesting example. I had a plumber come in to do some repair at my place, and he was extremely aggressive and rude. The plumber?

The plumber. And I treated him as if he were a noble guest, very polite and explained what needs to be done, because I recognized that perhaps he had been trapped in this pattern for years. Maybe it started with childhood when everybody around him was rude to him.

So there was a deep-seated pattern of rudeness and unpleasant behavior and of regarding other people as enemies. And I didn't react because I recognized that as a dysfunction in him that it wasn't him at all. So I simply accepted his behavior and pointed out this needs to be done.

After 20 minutes, he was changed completely. He suddenly said, Oh, thank you. For the first time, perhaps— Somebody was nice to him.

Somebody was nice because everybody else reacted to him in the same way that he acted. He got the reaction. And this is how most human beings encounter their daily reality.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:40 - 1:48:42)

It's a cab driver situation.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:42 - 1:48:48)

And for most people, their daily reality is really a reflection of their own predominant inner state.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:49 - 1:49:14)

And so the enlightened part of ourselves, after reading this book, being awakened, we realize what you're saying here in Chapter 3, Cord the Ego. You should be able to recognize the ego not only in yourself, but see it in other people. Other people.

So when you see that kind of reaction from someone, you realize it's their ego. Yes. It's not them.

[Speaker 1] (1:49:14 - 1:49:19)

That's right. So one could almost say it's like an illness.

[Speaker 2] (1:49:19 - 1:49:26)

It's like a mental— So the presence in you then gets to respond to, relate to the presence in them.

[Speaker 1] (1:49:27 - 1:49:27)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:49:27 - 1:49:30)

Oh, you've got to be really highly involved to do that.

[Speaker 1] (1:49:30 - 1:49:35)

It's not indifference, by the way. This is not indifference. No, that's— You're not indifferent.

[Speaker 11] (1:49:35 - 1:49:36)

That's compassionate.

[Speaker 1] (1:49:36 - 1:49:37)

Compassion.

[Speaker 11] (1:49:37 - 1:49:37)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:49:37 - 1:49:39)

Yes. Understood.

[Speaker 2] (1:49:41 - 1:49:44)

In fact— Yes, thank you for that clarity. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:49:44 - 1:49:44)

Okay.

[Speaker 2] (1:49:44 - 1:49:45)

Thank you. Thank you, Donna.

[Speaker 1] (1:49:45 - 1:49:50)

Now, the question is, you say you need to be highly involved.

[Speaker 2] (1:49:51 - 1:49:54)

Well— Yes. Because most people just react.

[Speaker 1] (1:49:54 - 1:50:25)

It is true to say that, at first, the reaction is so automatic when somebody behaves unconsciously to react in the same way. It's very automatic. Now, as people begin to become more aware of their egos, usually after it's happened, they become aware that they reacted in the old ego way after the event.

Then, after a while, in the middle of reacting to somebody's ego, you suddenly become aware that that's what you're doing.

[Speaker 2] (1:50:25 - 1:51:33)

Somebody just told me this last night, and this happens a lot with the airlines, where, you know, my goodness, if you can get from point A to point B on commercial airlines these days without losing your luggage or flights being canceled or sitting on the tarmac or whatever, and they were reading the book, and in the midst of, you know, schedule for the flight— I'm sure this has happened to many of you— schedule for the flight, everything's fine, you get there, and there's no seat. There's no seat. And other people didn't have their seats, and people around them were just imploding, and this person said that they decided to remain calm, as my godson, as a matter of fact, and people all around them were going nuts.

And suddenly, out of nowhere, after about a half an hour— not out of nowhere, about a half an hour— the person behind the counter called the names, and of all the names they called, they called his, who had been sitting there calm. Now, they didn't know him from anybody else, but, you know, it eventually worked out. I'm not saying that it always works out, but he realized after reading the book that it makes no sense to get crazy.

[Speaker 1] (1:51:33 - 1:51:43)

Yes, it's not only that, but also it's true that things are much more likely to work out when you are in a harmonious state of consciousness and not in resistance.

[Speaker 2] (1:51:43 - 1:52:19)

Which brings us to page 77. Do you want peace or drama? You say, we all want peace.

There's no one who doesn't want peace, yet there's something else in you that wants the drama, wants the conflict. And whenever you're moving in the drama, you can, as we all can, I think, now, a little bit, anyway, detach from the thought, see yourself having the thought, recognize that you, the you, the I of I am, is the awareness that you're having the thought. When you can see all the drama, just detach a little bit, you've done what?

[Speaker 1] (1:52:20 - 1:52:37)

That's the vital thing, to see it in the midst of it, to suddenly become aware that this is an old pattern in you, an ego pattern in you. It may not even stop immediately, but at least suddenly there is a witnessing presence in the background.

[Speaker 2] (1:52:37 - 1:52:43)

That the ego wants to complain, the ego wants to be resentful, the ego wants drama.

[Speaker 1] (1:52:43 - 1:53:19)

Yes, and to see that in oneself, one could call it almost, there is in humans something that we could call the addiction to unhappiness. When you are unhappy, for whatever reason, once you are trapped in that energy of unhappiness, you don't want to get out. That's right, because your ego loves it.

Yes, so there is an addiction to the, actually on some level you enjoy your unhappiness, and when you can become aware of that, then suddenly you're stepping out.

[Speaker 2] (1:53:19 - 1:54:00)

So let's talk about the power of awareness. You talk about on page 78, a power comes into your life that is far greater than the ego, greater than the mind. All that is required to become free of the ego is to be aware of it, since awareness and ego are incompatible.

This is page 78, first paragraph. Awareness is the power that is concealed within the present moment. This is why we may also call it presence.

And the ultimate purpose of human existence, which is to say, your purpose, is to bring that power or that presence into this world. Yes. That is why we're here.

[Speaker 1] (1:54:00 - 1:54:30)

Yes, that is the universal, the impulse, the universal impulse is the evolution of consciousness. That is the impulse behind the universe. The universe is moving towards the evolution of consciousness.

And we are one manifestation of the evolution of consciousness into this world. We're one. Yes, there are many others.

Right. Even a plant is a manifestation of that already.

[Speaker 2] (1:54:30 - 1:55:06)

Right, right, right. But our ultimate purpose of human existence is to bring that presence, that awareness, into the world and to become more aware in our daily lives so that, regardless of what you're doing in your form world, in your form life, that you recognize, as you say on page 79, can I sense my essential beingness, the I am, in the background of my life at all times? Yes.

To be more accurate, can I sense the I am that I am at this moment?

[Speaker 1] (1:55:07 - 1:55:27)

Yes. And an easy step towards that is the inner acceptance of this moment as it is without wanting it to be different or rejecting it or resisting it. If you can accept, if you can see that the primary thing in your life is the present moment because there is never anything else.

[Speaker 13] (1:55:28 - 1:55:28)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:55:28 - 1:55:47)

It's always now. So you must see if you can have a good relationship with the now because if you don't have a good relationship with the now, you don't have a good relationship with life because life is now. Yes.

So accepting this moment as it is can connect you with that dimension of depth in yourself.

[Speaker 2] (1:55:47 - 1:55:52)

And that is how we begin to quieten or quiet the ego.

[Speaker 1] (1:55:52 - 1:55:53)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:55:53 - 1:55:56)

Is by being more fully present now.

[Speaker 1] (1:55:57 - 1:56:18)

That's the exit out of the ego, the now. The now is the hidden exit because the ego doesn't want you to know that that there is an exit and it's called now. The exit is the door out of the ego.

The now is the door. The exit. Yes.

The now is the exit door. Out of the ego. Okay.

[Speaker 2] (1:56:19 - 1:56:41)

And so whenever you find yourself complaining, whenever you find yourself, as we said last week, the need to feel superior, you feel superior or inferior to someone else, you know that it's your ego. Whenever you recognize that this is my ego and can bring yourself to the present moment of what is going on now and can see yourself doing it.

[Speaker 1] (1:56:41 - 1:56:41)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:56:42 - 1:56:43)

Yeah, that is awakening.

[Speaker 1] (1:56:43 - 1:56:44)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:56:44 - 1:56:50)

Okay. Ginger is a singer, songwriter, living in Berlin and is calling us via Skype. Hello?

[Speaker 5] (1:56:51 - 1:56:52)

Hi.

[Speaker 2] (1:56:52 - 1:56:54)

Berlin, Germany. Hello. Hello.

[Speaker 5] (1:56:54 - 1:56:56)

Hello. Schöne Grüße aus Berlin.

[Speaker 2] (1:56:58 - 1:57:00)

I guess that meant hello, right?

[Speaker 5] (1:57:02 - 1:57:03)

Yeah, exactly.

[Speaker 13] (1:57:03 - 1:57:03)

Okay.

[Speaker 5] (1:57:04 - 1:57:50)

Well, I feel like I am aware of the things that I do that are destructive and I can't seem to stop them anyway. I feel like I label things that are bad for me and then I resist them, like eating fried food or drinking too much or relationships. I resist them and I feel like it causes a source of anxiety and sometimes the huge decisions in my life come easily, but these little things, little decisions every day, they pile up and become a source of anxiety.

So my question is how can we get to this inspired action and effortless doing, not only when it comes to the big decisions, but when it comes to making healthy choices in our everyday lives?

[Speaker 2] (1:57:51 - 1:57:57)

Amen. Good question. Thank you, Ginger.

Yes. Yeah, because I was saying this to...

[Speaker 5] (1:57:57 - 1:57:59)

I know I'm doing it.

[Speaker 2] (1:57:59 - 1:58:20)

I just do it anyway. Yeah, why does it have to be a struggle just to do the right thing in terms of, you know, for me it's food always. It's always about food.

Yes. How can it become effortless? Isn't that your question, Ginger?

Yeah. And are you talking about, for me this would be about potato chips. What is this about for you?

[Speaker 5] (1:58:21 - 1:58:24)

For me it's red wine, French fries.

[Speaker 2] (1:58:25 - 1:58:28)

Okay. A little red wine every now and then.

[Speaker 5] (1:58:28 - 1:58:29)

And a few other things, of course, too.

[Speaker 1] (1:58:29 - 1:58:43)

Yeah. Okay. Go ahead.

So you mean when you eat French fries. And she knows that they're not so good for her. And then there's a voice in the head that says you shouldn't be eating them.

Nevertheless, you are eating them.

[Speaker 5] (1:58:44 - 1:58:46)

A tennis match is more like it.

[Speaker 1] (1:58:49 - 2:00:37)

A lot of eating, overeating, has a lot to do with the ego also because the ego lives in a constant state of not enough. It always seeks something else to fill itself with. And usually it experiences to identify with this or that.

Things. Things. But it's also the need for more, as I call it, that is built into the ego.

Sometimes it can get transferred to the body and then you experience it as the desire to eat much more than the body really wants. It's to take in more. So really to eat consciously really is the way out of it.

For example, I would suggest that when you eat your French fries, to make a meditation out of it and eat them consciously without having a secondary entity in your head that says you shouldn't be eating them. Eat them fully and consciously and at the same time feel how your body feels while you eat them and after you've eaten them. Then you bring some presence into it and you may realize in some cases that the body doesn't actually want to eat them.

It was the mind that wanted to eat the potato. So eat consciously. If you eat a sandwich, if you go to the fridge, sometimes people get up in the middle of the night, they open the door and you reach in and there's this need to get...

The body doesn't need it.

[Speaker 2] (2:00:37 - 2:00:38)

You're trying to feed something.

[Speaker 1] (2:00:39 - 2:00:40)

Feed something, yes.

[Speaker 5] (2:00:41 - 2:00:50)

For me it's also the anxiety that the resistance, not just for food but things that I label as bad for me, seem to cause a lot of anxiety.

[Speaker 2] (2:00:51 - 2:01:50)

What he's saying is stop resisting. Actually, after reading this book, I've been trying this lately, exactly what you said. And this is what you will find.

If you stop resisting it because the French fries are not bad, it's the thought in your head that has told you that the French fries are bad. And if you do what he's recommending, if you sit and you consciously make it a meditation, what you will find is you won't eat two bags of French fries unconsciously, that you will enjoy every single French fry. And in the enjoyment and the pleasure, if you stop when it's no longer pleasurable, it's no longer pleasurable after three or four or five.

By the time you've eaten a whole bag of them, you don't even taste it anymore. So he's saying make it a meditation. Be with it.

Feel it. Sense it. Allow your whole body to be with it.

Feel it. Sense it. And when you're done with the pleasure of it, let it go.

Yes. That is what you're saying, correct?

[Speaker 1] (2:01:50 - 2:01:50)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:01:51 - 2:01:52)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (2:01:52 - 2:01:52)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (2:01:52 - 2:01:59)

And that's with the red wine too. Yes. And other things as well, I suspect.

And other things as well.

[Speaker 1] (2:01:59 - 2:02:01)

Yes. Be with it.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:01 - 2:02:01)

Be with it.

[Speaker 1] (2:02:02 - 2:02:35)

When I was in my 20s, as young people do, I would often get drunk. Nowadays I still enjoy a glass of wine. Right.

You do. I enjoy it very much. Yes.

And I know after I've had one glass of wine, sometimes does my body want another glass of wine? And usually I cannot drink more than one glass. It's very rare that I would drink two glasses of wine because that's exactly the body says no more.

If you can sense your body, it will often tell you whether it's right or not to eat or drink something.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:35 - 2:02:56)

Well, that's a very good point that you just made. I just had an epiphany. Because you don't become overweight or even drunk or intoxicated as long as you are acting consciously.

It's when you become unconscious that you eat too much. Unconscious that you drink too much. Unconscious is when you become obsessively indulgent with things.

[Speaker 1] (2:02:57 - 2:02:59)

Yes. Yes. All these addictions are unconscious.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:59 - 2:03:07)

Are unconscious. Ginger from Berlin. Love that green you're wearing, girl.

That's fantastic. Thank you. Thank you.

Thanks for joining us.

[Speaker 1] (2:03:07 - 2:03:09)

Enjoy your fries.

[Speaker 2] (2:03:09 - 2:03:46)

Enjoy. Yeah. Have a glass of wine.

Consciously. Page 78, everybody. Bottom paragraph.

What is spiritual realization? The belief that you are spirit? You say no.

That is a thought. A little closer to the truth than the thought that believes you are who your birth certificate says you are, but still a thought. So, we're not spirit?

I thought we were spirit. What is the saying that we are spiritual beings having a human experience?

[Speaker 1] (2:03:46 - 2:03:47)

Yes, that's very good.

[Speaker 2] (2:03:47 - 2:03:49)

Yes, but we're not spirit.

[Speaker 1] (2:03:49 - 2:04:15)

No. That when we say we are spiritual beings having a human experience is not yet the realization that we are. It's the belief that we are.

Oh, okay. So, there is a step that goes from the belief. Belief is still a mental concept.

It's a little closer, as I say, to believing that you are what your birth certificate says you are. Yes. But it's not the realization.

No thought that you have about yourself is realization.

[Speaker 2] (2:04:15 - 2:04:34)

Okay, well, this is another thing. You know, a lot of people are still very conflicted about this spirituality and their religion. And what I hear you saying, feel you saying in this book is is that this book isn't about believing.

This book is about what you come to know for yourself.

[Speaker 1] (2:04:35 - 2:04:35)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:04:35 - 2:04:37)

Yeah, what you become to feel for yourself.

[Speaker 1] (2:04:37 - 2:04:38)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:04:38 - 2:05:03)

And that what you're saying is that God, in the essence of all consciousness, isn't something to believe. God is. Yes.

God is. And God is a feeling experience, not a believing experience. That's right.

And if your religion is a believing experience, if God for you is still about a belief, then it's not truly God.

[Speaker 1] (2:05:03 - 2:05:03)

No.

[Speaker 2] (2:05:03 - 2:05:04)

That's what you're saying.

[Speaker 1] (2:05:04 - 2:05:05)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:05:05 - 2:05:05)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (2:05:05 - 2:05:50)

At best, a belief is a transitional thing, that from there you go on to the realization that there is no separation between you and God, between you and the source of life, that you are one with the source. And you cannot realize that through believing. Believing, it's not a belief.

It's not a thought. Not a thought. It's a direct realization within yourself, and it's there in the gap between two thoughts.

That's right. And conceptually, you may not know anymore, you may not have an opinion of who you are anymore, and yet, at a very deep level, there's a knowing that cannot be put into words.

[Speaker 2] (2:05:51 - 2:06:24)

So, what is spiritual realization? The belief that you are spirit? No, that's a thought.

Closer to the truth than the thought that believes you are who you are, that your birth certificate says you are, but still a thought. Spiritual realization is to see clearly. On the bottom of page 78, everybody.

Spiritual realization is to see clearly that what I perceive, experience, think, or feel is ultimately not who I am. That I cannot find myself in all those things that continuously pass away.

[Speaker 1] (2:06:25 - 2:07:31)

Yes, so you are the space for all those things. You are the consciousness, the awareness, in which all those things, experiences, sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions, come, they appear. Jesus says, you are the light of the world.

That means you are the consciousness in which the world appears, is seen. And the consciousness itself has no form. It is formless, and it has nothing to do with time.

It's the dimension of the timeless in yourself. Eternity is the religious term for it. For most religious people, when they use eternity, it's a very abstract concept.

What eternity, what do I do with that? Or they believe it's continuous time that never ends. That would be extremely boring.

Eternity, there's no end to time, would become very boring. I wouldn't want things to go on forever in my life, to go on forever, ever, ever. But finding the timeless dimension is a very different thing in yourself.

[Speaker 2] (2:07:31 - 2:07:35)

Timelessness is very different than eternity, as you're saying.

[Speaker 1] (2:07:35 - 2:07:42)

The true meaning of eternity is timelessness. It's usually misinterpreted as meaning endless time.

[Speaker 2] (2:07:42 - 2:07:43)

On and on and on. I got that.

[Speaker 1] (2:07:43 - 2:08:10)

So there is in every human being, underneath all the stream of thinking and underneath the emotions, there is that dimension where timelessness or eternity dwells. That is the essence of who you are. That is consciousness itself.

You can know it by realizing that you are the space for whatever happens in your life. The space of consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (2:08:10 - 2:08:26)

Deep. I must say that's pretty deep there, Eckhart. We're on page 80, everybody.

One of my favorite quotes in the entire book, that actually I used in one of our ads in O Magazine, only the truth of who you are, if realized, will set you free.

[Speaker 1] (2:08:27 - 2:09:02)

Yes. Yes. Know who you are and you are free.

But to know who you are doesn't mean that suddenly you have an answer in your head. There's a stillness, and in that stillness, when you accept that you don't know who you are, as I say somewhere in the book, when you completely accept that you've realized all the things that you thought you were is not really who you are, and then you come to a point where you don't know who you are. And if you can fully accept that you don't know who you are, you're closer to who you are than you were ever before.

[Speaker 2] (2:09:02 - 2:09:40)

Once you realize and accept that all structures, page 81, forms are unstable, even the seemingly solid material ones, peace arises within you. This is because the recognition of the impermanence of all forms awakens you to the dimension of the formless within. That's what you're calling timelessness, that which is beyond death.

Jesus called it eternal life. Eternal life. So you believe what happens to us at death when the body dies?

You don't have a belief? I don't give it any thought. You don't?

No. Well, did you ever think about it at heart? No.

[Speaker 1] (2:09:41 - 2:10:56)

I know that the essence of who I am, which is the essence of who you are, is indestructible. I know that directly on a feeling level, and you can also know it even if you talk to a physicist. He will tell you that energy never gets destroyed.

It can only transform. So whatever it is that animates this physical form, at some point, whatever it is that animates this physical form is going to no longer animate this form, and that is when you see a dead body. And when you see a dead body, you see a year and a half ago both my parents died within the space of a few months, and I saw very clearly, each time I saw my mother's body lying there, a few months later I saw my father's body lying in the coffin, and I realized the form was still there, but the essence of that being was not present.

So the essence of that being was never the form. It was gone. It was no longer there.

And then when that which animates the form...

[Speaker 2] (2:10:56 - 2:11:03)

The essence of that being was never the form. The essence of that being inhabited the form, and now it no longer inhabited the form.

[Speaker 1] (2:11:03 - 2:11:09)

So you could see there was only a shell there. Right. And that was such a clear realization.

[Speaker 2] (2:11:09 - 2:11:13)

Many people who've seen their loved ones in the cast could see that.

[Speaker 1] (2:11:13 - 2:11:44)

Yes. So that which was the life within that form was always invisible. All you could ever see was the form.

Maybe you could sense the life within the form, but the life is always invisible, and the life ultimately has no form itself. And so you see, suddenly somebody dies. The essence is gone.

The life within the form is gone.

[Speaker 2] (2:11:45 - 2:12:28)

So what you're saying, again on page 79, is to be able to be in form and be able to sense the formlessness of yourself. Yes. To be in form and to sense that there is an essential beingness or formlessness, the I am in the background of our life at all times.

And that awareness, that formlessness, is what can hear, see, sense the thoughts that are going on all the time. And there's a little space, just a space, between the thoughts and the awareness of the thoughts. And that is where we, I, reside.

[Speaker 1] (2:12:29 - 2:12:45)

Yes. You are the awareness. You are consciousness, appearing as a person for a little while.

But in essence, you are consciousness, and consciousness is... As consciousness, you are timeless. You are eternal in the sense of timeless.

[Speaker 2] (2:12:46 - 2:12:53)

And when the form itself is lying there in the casket, that timeless formlessness has gone where?

[Speaker 1] (2:12:56 - 2:13:05)

Transformed, either to join with the source or to go through further experiences of awakening.

[Speaker 2] (2:13:07 - 2:13:37)

In ways that our mind cannot even comprehend. No. Okay.

Before we say goodbye, I want to thank all of you around the world for making this remarkable experience possible. Eckhart and I will be here again next Monday at 8 p.m. Central. This third class will be available on demand tomorrow for free here at Oprah.com.

And if you want to download a podcast of any of our three classes, you can do that tomorrow at Oprah.com and iTunes. So what did you want to say in conclusion about the core of the ego?

[Speaker 1] (2:13:39 - 2:15:09)

The core of the ego. The ego, sometimes we look at it as if it were an entity. But really, it's just a form of unconsciousness.

It appears to be an entity sometimes. It is not threatening, never regarded as an enemy or something that you need to get rid of. It's only to be recognized for what it is.

And then the ego has fulfilled its purpose. It has taken you to that point of awakening. So in order to awaken, humans were in the state of oneness with the source when they first came here.

And then they lost themselves. They lost themselves in thinking. They lost themselves in the mind.

They lost themselves in the ego. And then they reached the stage where this state of being lost produces so much suffering that this dream of life becomes a nightmare and they start waking up in this stage that we have reached now. So as we wake up, we regain the state that we once had.

We lost the state of oneness with life. So we're waking up now. Oneness with the source.

But when we regain it, we regain it at a deeper level because we are conscious of it now. Wonderful. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (2:15:10 - 2:15:33)

Can't wait till next week because this week we're talking about all the things that form the core of the ego, how the ego loves to complain and it loves to be right and it loves drama and all of that. Next week we talk about role-playing, all the many faces of the ego, how so many of us believe that we are the roles that we play. That's next week.

Thanks, everybody.

[Speaker 10] (2:15:34 - 2:15:41)

Another night. Yay! LAUGHTER It's good.

It's good.

2008-Eckhart Tolle Oprah A New Earth Audiobook Podcast Chapter04

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 1:16:26)

CHAPTER FOUR ROLE-PLAYING THE MANY FACES OF THE EGO An ego that wants something from another, and what ego doesn't, will usually play some kind of role to get its needs met, be they material gain, a sense of power, superiority or specialness, or some kind of gratification, be it physical or psychological. Usually people are completely unaware of the roles they play. They are those roles.

Some roles are subtle, others are blatantly obvious except to the person playing it. Some roles are designed simply to get attention from others. The ego thrives on others' attention, which is after all a form of psychic energy.

The ego doesn't know that the source of all energy is within you, so it seeks it outside. It is not the formless attention which is presence the ego seeks, but attention in some form, such as recognition, praise, admiration, or just to be noticed in some way, to have its existence acknowledged. The shy person who is afraid of the attention of others is not free of ego, but has an ambivalent ego that both wants and fears attention from others.

The fear is that the attention may take the form of disapproval or criticism, that is to say, something that diminishes the sense of self rather than enhances it. So the shy person's fear of attention is greater than his or her need of attention. Shyness often goes with a self-concept that is predominantly negative, the belief of being inadequate.

Any conceptual sense of self, seeing myself as this or that, is ego, whether predominantly positive, I'm the greatest, or negative, I'm no good. Behind every positive self-concept is the hidden fear of not being good enough. Behind every negative self-concept is the hidden desire of being the greatest or better than others.

Behind the confident ego's feeling of and continuing need for superiority is the unconscious fear of inferiority. Conversely, the shy, inadequate ego that feels inferior has a strong hidden desire for superiority. Many people fluctuate between feelings of inferiority and superiority, depending on situations or the people they come into contact with.

All you need to know and observe in yourself is this. Whenever you feel superior or inferior to anyone, that's the ego in you, villain, victim, lover. Some egos, if they cannot get praise or admiration, will settle for other forms of attention and play roles to elicit them.

If they cannot get positive attention, they may seek negative attention instead, for example, by provoking a negative reaction in someone else. Some children already do that, too. They misbehave to get attention.

The playing of negative roles becomes particularly pronounced whenever the ego is magnified by an active pain body, that is to say, emotional pain from the past that wants to renew itself through experiencing more pain. Some egos perpetrate crimes in their search for fame. They seek attention through notoriety and other people's condemnation.

Please tell me that I exist, that I'm not insignificant, they seem to say. Such pathological forms of ego are only more extreme versions of normal egos. A very common role is the one of victim, and the form of attention it seeks is sympathy or pity or others' interest in my problems, me and my story.

Seeing oneself as a victim is an element in many egoic patterns, such as complaining, being offended, outraged, and so on. Of course, once I'm identified with a story in which I assigned myself the role of victim, I don't want it to end, and so, as every therapist knows, the ego does not want an end to its problems, because they are part of its identity. If no one will listen to my sad story, I can tell it to myself in my head, over and over, and feel sorry for myself, and so have an identity as someone who is being treated unfairly by life or other people, fate or God.

It gives definition to myself image, makes me into someone, and that is all that matters to the ego. In the early stages of many so-called romantic relationships, role-playing is quite common in order to attract and keep whoever is perceived by the ego as the one who is going to make me happy, make me feel special, and fulfill all my needs. I'll play who you want me to be, and you'll play who I want you to be.

That's the unspoken and unconscious agreement. However, role-playing is hard work, and so those roles cannot be sustained indefinitely, especially once you start living together. When those roles slip, what do you see?

Unfortunately, in most cases, not yet the true essence of that being, but that which covers up the true essence. The raw ego divested of its roles, with its pain body, and its thwarted wanting, which now turns into anger, most likely directed at the spouse or partner, for having failed to remove the underlying fear and sense of lack that is an intrinsic part of the egoic sense of self. Falling in love is in most cases an intensification of egoic wanting and needing.

You become addicted to another person, or rather to your image of that person. It has nothing to do with true love which contains no wanting whatsoever. The Spanish language is the most honest in regard to conventional notions of love.

Te quiero means I want you as well as I love you. The other expression for I love you, te amo, which does not have this ambiguity, is rarely used, perhaps because true love is just as rare. Letting go of self-definitions.

As tribal cultures developed into the ancient civilizations, certain functions began to be allotted to certain people. Ruler, priest or priestess, warrior, farmer, merchant, craftsman, labourer, and so on. A class system developed.

Your function, that in most cases you were born into, determined your identity, determined who you were in the eyes of others as well as in your own eyes. Your function became a role, but it wasn't recognized as a role. It was who you were or thought you were.

Only rare beings at the time, such as the Buddha or Jesus, saw the ultimate irrelevance of caste or social class, recognized it as identification with form, and saw that such identification with the conditioned and the temporal obscured the light of the unconditioned and eternal that shines in each human being. In our contemporary world, the social structures are less rigid, less clearly defined than they used to be. Although most people are, of course, still conditioned by their environment, they are no longer automatically assigned to function and with it an identity.

In fact, in the modern world, more and more people are confused as to where they fit in, what their purpose is, and even who they are. I usually congratulate people when they tell me, I don't know who I am anymore. Then they look perplexed and ask, are you saying it is a good thing to be confused?

I ask them to investigate. What does it mean to be confused? I don't know is not confusion.

Confusion is, I don't know but I should know, or I don't know but I need to know. Is it possible to let go of the belief that you should or need to know who you are? In other words, can you cease looking to conceptual definitions to give you a sense of self?

Can you cease looking to thought for an identity? When you let go of the belief that you should or need to know who you are, what happens to confusion? Suddenly it is gone.

When you fully accept that you don't know, you actually enter a state of peace and clarity that is closer to who you truly are than thought could ever be. Defining yourself through thought is limiting yourself. Pre-established roles.

Of course different people fulfill different functions in this world. It cannot be otherwise. As far as intellectual or physical abilities are concerned, knowledge, skills, talents and energy levels, human beings differ widely.

What really matters is not what function you fulfill in this world, but whether you identify with your function to such an extent that it takes you over and becomes a role that you play. When you play roles, you are unconscious. When you catch yourself playing a role, that recognition creates a space between you and the role.

It is the beginning of freedom from the role. When you are completely identified with the role, you confuse a pattern of behavior with who you are, and you take yourself very seriously. You also automatically assign roles to others that correspond to yours.

For example, when you visit doctors who are totally identified with their role, to them you will not be a human being, but a patient or a case history. Although the social structures in the contemporary world are less rigid than in ancient cultures, there are still many pre-established functions or roles that people readily identify with and which thus become part of the ego. This causes human interactions to become inauthentic, dehumanized, alienating.

Those pre-established roles may give you a somewhat comforting sense of identity, but ultimately you lose yourself in them. The functions people have in hierarchical organizations such as the military, the church, a government institution or large corporation easily lend themselves to becoming role identities. Authentic human interactions become impossible when you lose yourself in a role.

Some pre-established roles we could call social archetypes. To mention just a few, the middle-class housewife, not as prevalent as it used to be but still widespread, the tough macho male, the female seductress, the non-conformist artist or performer, a person of culture, a role quite common in Europe, who displays a knowledge of literature, fine art and music in the same way as others might display an expensive dress or car. And then there's the universal role of adult.

When you play that role, you take yourself and life very seriously. Spontaneity, light-heartedness and joy are not part of that role. It originated on the west coast of the United States in the 1960s and then spread throughout the western world, came out of many young people's rejection of social archetypes, of roles, of pre-established patterns of behavior, as well as egoically based social and economic structures.

They refused to play the roles their parents and society wanted to impose on them. Significantly, it coincided with the horrors of the Vietnam War, in which more than 57,000 young Americans and three million Vietnamese died, and through which the insanity of the system and the underlying mindset was exposed for all to see. Whereas in the 1950s most Americans were still extremely conformist in thought and behavior, in the 1960s millions of people began to withdraw their identification with a collective conceptual identity, because the insanity of the collective was so obvious.

The hippie movement represented a loosening of the hitherto rigid egoic structures in the psyche of humanity. The movement itself degenerated and came to an end, but it left behind an opening, and not just in those who were part of the movement. This made it possible for ancient eastern western spirituality to move west and play an essential part in the awakening of global consciousness.

TEMPORARY ROLES If you are awake enough, aware enough, to be able to observe how you interact with other people, you may detect subtle changes in your speech, attitude, and behavior depending on the person you are interacting with. At first it may be easier to observe this in others. Then you may also detect it in yourself.

The way in which you speak to the chairman of the company may be different in subtle ways from how you speak to the janitor. How you speak to a child may be different from how you speak to an adult. Why is that?

You are playing roles. You are not yourself, neither with the chairman nor with the janitor or the child. When you walk into a store to buy something, when you go to a restaurant, the bank, the post office, you may find yourself slipping into pre-established social roles.

You become a customer and speak and act as such. And you may be treated by the salesperson or waiter, who is also playing a role, as a customer. A range of conditioned patterns of behavior come into effect between two human beings that determine the nature of the interaction.

Instead of human beings, conceptual mental images are interacting with each other. The more identified people are with their respective roles, the more inauthentic the relationships become. You have a mental image not only of who the other person is, but also of who you are, especially in relation to the person you are interacting with.

So you are not relating with that person at all, but who you think you are is relating to who you think the other person is, and vice versa. The conceptual image your mind has made of yourself is relating to its own creation, which is the conceptual image it has made of the other person. The other person's mind has probably done the same.

So every egoic interaction between two people is in reality the interaction between four conceptual mind-made identities which are ultimately fictions. It is therefore not surprising there is so much conflict in relationships. There is no true relationship.

The Monk with Sweaty Palms Kazan, a Zen teacher and monk, was to officiate at a funeral of a famous nobleman. As he stood there waiting for the governor of the province and other lords and ladies to arrive, he noticed that the palms of his hands were sweaty. The next day he called his disciples together and confessed he was not yet ready to be a true teacher.

He explained to them that he still lacked the sameness of bearing before all human beings, whether beggar or king. He was still unable to look through social roles and conceptual identities and see the sameness of being in every human. He then left and became the pupil of another master.

He returned to his former disciples eight years later, enlightened. Happiness as a Role vs. True Happiness How are you?

Just great, couldn't be better. True or false? In many cases, happiness is a role people play, and behind the smiling facade there is a great deal of pain.

Depression, breakdowns and overreactions are common when unhappiness is covered up behind a smiling exterior and brilliant white teeth, when there is denial, sometimes even to oneself, that there is much unhappiness. Just fine is a role the ego plays more commonly in America than in certain other countries where being and looking miserable is almost the norm and therefore more socially acceptable. It is probably an exaggeration, but I am told that in the capital of one Nordic country you run the risk of being arrested for drunken behaviour if you smile at strangers in the street.

If there is unhappiness in you, first you need to acknowledge that it is there. But don't say, I am unhappy. Unhappiness has nothing to do with who you are.

Say, there is unhappiness in me. Then investigate it. The situation you find yourself in may have something to do with it.

Action may be required to change the situation or remove yourself from it. If there is nothing you can do, face what is and say, well, right now, this is how it is. I can either accept it or make myself miserable.

It is never the situation but your thoughts about it. Be aware of the thoughts you are thinking. Separate them from the situation, which is always neutral, which always is as it is.

There is the situation or the fact, and here are my thoughts about it. Instead of making up stories, stay with the facts. For example, I am ruined is a story.

It limits you and prevents you from taking effective action. I have 50 cents left in my bank account is a fact. Facing facts is always empowering.

Be aware that what you think, to a large extent, creates the emotions that you feel. See the link between your thinking and your emotions. Rather than being your thoughts and emotions, be the awareness behind them.

Don't seek happiness. If you seek it, you won't find it, because seeking is the antithesis of happiness. Happiness is ever elusive, but freedom from unhappiness is attainable now, by facing what is rather than making up stories about it.

Unhappiness covers up your natural state of well-being and inner peace, the source of true happiness. Parenthood. Role or function.

Many adults play roles when they speak to young children. They use silly words and sounds. They talk down to the child.

They don't treat the child as an equal. The fact that you temporarily know more or that you are bigger does not mean the child is not your equal. The majority of adults, at some point in their lives, find themselves being a parent, one of the most universal roles.

The all-important question is, are you able to fulfil the function of being a parent and fulfil it well, without identifying with that function, that is, without it becoming a role? Part of the necessary function of being a parent is looking after the needs of the child, preventing the child from getting into danger, and at times telling the child what to do and not to do. When being a parent becomes an identity, however, when your sense of self is entirely or largely derived from it, the function easily becomes overemphasised, exaggerated, and takes you over.

Giving children what they need becomes excessive and turns into spoiling. Preventing them from getting into danger becomes overprotectiveness and interferes with their need to explore the world and try things out for themselves. Telling children what to do or not to do becomes controlling, overbearing.

What is more, the role-playing identity remains in place long after the need for those particular functions has passed. Parents then cannot let go of being a parent even when the child grows into an adult. They can't let go of the need to be needed by their child.

Even when the adult child is forty years old, parents can't let go of the notion, I know what's best for you. The role of parent is still being played compulsively, and so there's no authentic relationship. Parents define themselves by that role and are unconsciously afraid of loss of identity when they cease being parents.

If their desire to control or influence the action of their adult child is thwarted, as it usually is, they will start to criticise or show their disapproval, or try to make the child feel guilty, all in an unconscious attempt to preserve their role, their identity. On the surface it looks as if they were concerned about their child, and they themselves believe it. But they are only really concerned about preserving their role identity.

All egoic motivations are self-enhancement and self-interest, sometimes cleverly disguised even from the person in whom the ego operates. A mother or father who identifies with the parental role may also try to become more complete through their children. The ego's need to manipulate others into filling the sense of lack it continuously feels is then directed towards them.

If the mostly unconscious assumptions and motivations behind the parent's compulsion to manipulate their children were made conscious and voiced, they would probably include some or all of the following. I want you to achieve what I never achieved. I want you to be somebody in the eyes of the world, so that I too can be somebody through

you.

Don't disappoint me. I sacrificed so much for you. My disapproval of you is intended to make you feel so guilty and uncomfortable that you finally conform to my wishes.

And it goes without saying that I know what's best for you. I love you and I will continue to love you if you do what I know is right for you. If the motivation is conscious, you immediately see how absurd they are.

The ego that lies behind them becomes visible, as does its dysfunction. Some parents that I spoke to suddenly realized, my God, is this what I've been doing? Once you see what you're doing or have been doing, you also see its futility.

And that unconscious pattern then comes to an end by itself. Awareness is the greatest agent for change. If your parents are doing this to you, do not tell them they are unconscious and in the grip of the ego.

That will likely make them even more unconscious, because the ego will take up a defensive position. It is enough for you to recognize that it is the ego in them, that it is not who they are. Egoic patterns, even long-standing ones, sometimes dissolve almost miraculously when you don't oppose them internally.

Opposition only gives them renewed strength. But even if they don't, you can then accept your parents' behavior with compassion, without needing to react to it, that is to say, without personalizing it. Be aware also of your own unconscious assumptions or expectations that lie behind your old habitual reactions to them.

My parents should approve of what I do. They should understand me and accept me for who I am. Really?

Why should they? The fact is they don't, because they can't. Their evolving consciousness hasn't made the quantum leap to the level of awareness yet.

They are not yet able to identify from their role. Yes, but I can't feel happy and comfortable with who I am unless I have their approval and understanding. Really?

What difference does their approval or disapproval truly make to who you are? All such unexamined assumptions cause a great deal of negative emotion, much unnecessary unhappiness. Be alert.

Are some of the thoughts that go through your mind the internalized voice of your father or mother, saying perhaps something like, you are not good enough, you will never amount to anything, or some other judgment or mental position? If there's awareness in you, you will be able to recognize that voice in your head for what it is, an old thought conditioned by the past. If there's awareness in you, you no longer need to believe in every thought you think.

It's an old thought, no more. Awareness means presence, and only presence can dissolve the unconscious past in you. If you think you are so enlightened, Ram Dass said, go and spend a week with your parents.

That is good advice. The relationship with your parents is not only the primordial relationship that sets the tone for all subsequent relationships. It is also a good test for your degree of presence.

The more shared past there is in a relationship, the more present you need to be, otherwise you will be forced to relive the past again and again. Conscious suffering. If you have young children, give them help, guidance, and protection to the best of your ability, but even more important, give them space.

Space to be. They come into this world through you, but they are not yours. The belief, I know what's best for you, may be true when they are very young, but the older they get, the less true it becomes.

The more expectations you have of how their life should unfold, the more you are in your mind instead of being present for them. Eventually, they will make mistakes and they will experience some form of suffering, as all humans do. In fact, they may be mistakes only from your perspective.

What to you is a mistake may be exactly what your children need to do or experience. Give them as much help and guidance as you can, but realize that you may also at times have to allow them to make mistakes, especially as they begin to reach adulthood. At times, you may also have to allow them to suffer.

Suffering may come to them out of the blue, or it may come as the consequence of their own mistakes. Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could spare them from all suffering? No, it wouldn't.

They would not evolve as human beings and would remain shallow, identified with the external form of things. Suffering drives you deeper. The paradox is that suffering is caused by identification with form and erodes identification with form.

A lot of it is caused by the ego, although eventually suffering destroys the ego. But not until you suffer consciously. Humanity is destined to go beyond suffering, but not in the way the ego thinks.

One of the ego's many erroneous assumptions, one of its many deluded thoughts is, I should not have to suffer. Sometimes a thought gets transferred to someone close to you. My child should not have to suffer.

That thought itself lies at the root of suffering. Suffering has a noble purpose, the evolution of consciousness and the burning up of the ego. The man on the cross is an archetypal image.

He is every man and every woman. As long as you resist suffering, it is a slow process because the resistance creates more ego to burn up. When you accept suffering, however, there is an acceleration of that process which is brought about by the fact that you suffer consciously.

You can accept suffering for yourself or you can accept it for someone else, such as your child or parent. In the midst of conscious suffering, there is already the transmutation. The fire of suffering becomes the light of consciousness.

The ego says, I shouldn't have to suffer, and that thought makes you suffer so much more. It is a distortion of the truth which is always paradoxical. The truth is that you need to say yes to suffering before you can transcend it.

Many children harbour hidden anger and resentment towards their parents, and often the cause is inauthenticity in the relationship. The child has a deep longing for the parent to be there as a human being, not as a role, no matter how conscientiously that role is being played. You may be doing all the right things and the best you can for your child, but even doing the best you can is not enough.

In fact, doing is never enough if you neglect being. The ego knows nothing of being but believes you will eventually be saved by doing. If you are in the grip of the ego, you believe that by doing more and more you will eventually accumulate enough doings to make yourself feel complete at some point in the future.

You won't. You will only lose yourself in doing. The entire civilization is losing itself in doing that is not rooted in being and thus becomes futile.

How do you bring being into the life of a busy family, into the relationship with your child? The key is to give your child attention. There are two kinds of attention.

One we might call form-based attention. The other is formless attention. Form-based attention is always connected in some way with doing or evaluating.

Have you done your homework? Eat your dinner, tidy up your room, brush your teeth, do this, stop doing that, hurry up, get ready. What's the next thing we have to do?

This question pretty much summarizes what family life is like in many homes. Form-based attention is of course necessary and has its place. But if that's all there is in the relationship with your child, then the most vital dimension is missing and being becomes completely obscured by doing, by the chaos of the world, as Jesus puts it.

Formless attention is inseparable from the dimension of being. How does it work? As you look at, listen to, touch or help your child with this or that, you are alert, still, completely present, not wanting anything other than that moment as it is.

In this way you make room for being. In that moment, if you are present, you are not a father or mother. You are the alertness, the stillness, the presence that is listening, looking, touching, even speaking.

You are the being behind the doing, recognizing your child. You are a human being. What does that mean?

Mastery of life is not a question of control, but of finding a balance between human and being. Mother, father, husband, wife, young, old, the roles you play, the functions you fulfill, whatever you do, all that belongs to the human dimension. It has its place and needs to be honored.

But in itself it is not enough for a fulfilled, truly meaningful relationship or life. Human alone is never enough, no matter how hard you try or what you achieve. Then there is being.

It is found in the still, alert presence of consciousness itself, the consciousness that you are. Human is form, being is formless. Human and being are not separate, but interwoven.

In the human dimension, you are unquestionably superior to your child. You are bigger, stronger, know more, can do more. If that dimension is all you know, you will feel superior to your child, if only unconsciously.

And you will make your child feel inferior, if only unconsciously. There is no equality between you and your child because there is only form in your relationship. And in form you are, of course, not equal.

You may love your child, but your love will be human only, that is to say, conditional, possessive, intermittent. Only beyond form, in being, are you equal. And only when you find the formless dimension in yourself can there be true love in that relationship.

The presence that you are, the timeless I am, recognizes itself in another. And the other, the child in this case, feels loved, that is to say, recognized. To love is to recognize yourself in another.

The other's otherness then stands revealed as an illusion pertaining to the purely human realm, the realm of form. The longing for love that is in every child is the longing to be recognized not on the level of form, but on the level of being. If parents honor only the human dimension of the child, but neglect being, the child will sense that the relationship is unfulfilled, that something absolutely vital is missing, and there will be a buildup of pain in the child and sometimes unconscious resentment towards the parents.

Why don't you recognize me? This is what the pain or resentment seems to be saying. You, that recognition draws the dimension of being more fully into this world through both of you.

That is the love that redeems the world. I have been speaking of this with specific reference to the relationship with your child, but it equally applies, of course, to all relationships. It has been said, God is love, but that is not absolutely correct.

God is the one life in and beyond the countless forms of life. Love implies duality, lover and beloved, subject and object. So love is the recognition of oneness in the world of duality.

This is the birth of God into the world of form. Love makes the world less worldly, less dense, more transparent to the divine dimension, the light of consciousness itself, giving up role playing. To do whatever is required of you in any situation without it becoming a role that you identify with is an essential lesson in the art of living that each one of us is here to learn.

You become most powerful in whatever you do if the action is performed for its own sake rather than as a means to protect, enhance or conform to your role identity. Every role is a fictitious sense of self, and through it everything becomes personalized and thus corrupted and distorted by the mind-made little me and whatever role it happens to be playing. Most of the people who are in positions of power in this world, such as politicians, TV personalities, business as well as religious leaders, are completely identified with their role, with a few notable exceptions.

They may be considered VIPs, but they are no more than unconscious players in the egoic game, a game that looks so important yet is ultimately devoid of true purpose. It is, in the words of Shakespeare, a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. Amazingly, Shakespeare arrived at this conclusion without having the benefit of television.

If the egoic earth drama has any purpose at all, it is an indirect one. It creates more and more suffering on the planet, and suffering, although largely ego-created, is in the end also ego-destructive. It is the fire in which the ego burns itself up.

In a world of role-playing personalities, those few people who don't project a mind-made image—and there are some, even on TV, in the media and the business world—but function from a deeper core of their being, those who do not attempt to appear more than they are but are simply themselves, stand out as remarkable and are the only ones who truly make a difference in this world. They are the bringers of the new consciousness. Whatever they do becomes empowered because it is in alignment with the purpose of the whole.

Their influence, however, goes far beyond what they do, far beyond their function. Their mere presence—simple, natural, unassuming—has a transformational effect on whoever they come into contact with. When you don't play roles, it means there is no self, ego, in what you do.

There is no secondary agenda, protection or strengthening of yourself. As a result, your actions have far greater power. You are totally focused on the situation, you become one with it.

You don't try to be anybody in particular. You are most powerful, most effective when you are completely yourself. But don't try to be yourself.

That's another role. It's called natural, spontaneous me. As soon as you are trying to be this or that, you are playing a role.

Just be yourself is good advice, but it can also be misleading. The mind will come in and say, let's see, how can I be myself? Then the mind will develop some kind of strategy.

How to be myself? Another role. How can I be myself is in fact the wrong question.

It implies you have to do something to be yourself. But how doesn't apply here, because you are yourself already. Just stop adding unnecessary baggage to who you already are.

But I don't know who I am. I don't know what it means to be myself. If you can be absolutely comfortable with not knowing who you are, then what's left is who you are, the being behind the human, a field of pure potentiality rather than something that is already defined.

Give up defining yourself, to yourself or to others. You won't die. You will come to life.

And don't be concerned with how others define you. When they define you, they are limiting themselves, so it's their problem. Whenever you interact with people, don't be there primarily as a function or role, but as a field of conscious presence.

Why does the ego play roles? Because of one unexamined assumption, one fundamental error, one unconscious thought. That thought is, I am not enough.

Other unconscious thoughts follow. I need to play a role in order to get what I need to be fully myself. I need to get more so that I can be more.

But you cannot be more than you are because underneath your physical and psychological form, you are one with life itself, one with being. In form, you are and will always be inferior to some, superior to others. In essence, you are neither inferior nor superior to anyone.

True self-esteem and true humility arise out of that realization. In the eyes of the ego, self-esteem and humility are contradictory. In truth, they are one and the same.

In a wider sense of the word, the ego itself is pathological, no matter what form it takes. When we look at the ancient Greek root of the word pathological, we discover just how appropriate that term is when applied to the ego. Although the word is normally used to describe a condition of disease, it is derived from pathos, which means suffering.

This is of course exactly what the Buddha already discovered 2,600 years ago as a characteristic of the human condition. A person in the grip of ego, however, does not recognize suffering as suffering, but will look upon it as the only appropriate response in any given situation. The ego in its blindness is incapable of seeing the suffering it inflicts on itself and on others.

Unhappiness is an ego-created mental-emotional disease that has reached epidemic proportions. It is the inner equivalent of the environmental pollution of our planet. Negative states such as anger, anxiety, hatred, resentment, discontent, envy, jealousy, and so on, are not recognized as negative, but as totally justified, and are further misperceived, not as self-created, but as caused by someone else or some external factor.

I am holding you responsible for my pain. This is what by implication the ego is saying. The ego cannot distinguish between a situation and its interpretation of and reaction to that situation.

You might say, what a dreadful day, without realizing that the cold, the wind, and the rain, or whatever condition you react to, are not dreadful. They are as they are. What is dreadful is your reaction, your inner resistance to it, and the emotion that is created by that resistance.

In Shakespeare's words, there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so. What is more, suffering or negativity is often misperceived by the ego as pleasure, because up to a point the ego strengthens itself through it. For example, anger or resentment strengthen the ego enormously by increasing the sense of separateness, emphasizing the otherness of others, and creating a seemingly unassailable fortress-like mental position of rightness.

If you were able to observe the physiological changes that take place inside your body when possessed by such negative states, how they adversely affect the functioning of the heart the digestive and immune systems and countless other bodily functions, it would become abundantly clear that such states are indeed pathological, are forms of suffering and not pleasure. Whenever you are in a negative state, there's something in you that wants the negativity, that perceives it as pleasurable, or that believes it will get you what you want. Otherwise, who would want to hang on to negativity, make themselves and others miserable, and create disease in the body?

So whenever there's negativity in you, if you can be aware at that moment that there's something in you that takes pleasure in it or believes it has a useful purpose, you're becoming aware of the ego directly. The moment this happens, your identity has shifted from ego to awareness. This means the ego is shrinking and awareness is growing.

If in the midst of negativity you're able to realize, at this moment I'm creating suffering for myself, it will be enough to raise you above the limitations of conditioned egoic states and reactions. It will open up infinite possibilities which come to you when there's awareness. Other, vastly more intelligent ways of dealing with any situation.

You will be free to let go of your unhappiness the moment you recognize it as unintelligent. Negativity is not intelligent. It is always of the ego.

The ego may be clever, but it is not intelligent. Cleverness pursues its own little aims. Intelligence sees the larger whole in which all things are connected.

Cleverness is motivated by self-interest, and it is extremely short-sighted. Most politicians and business people are clever. Very few are intelligent.

Whatever is attained through cleverness is short-lived and always turns out to be eventually self-defeating. Cleverness divides. Intelligence includes.

The background unhappiness. The ego creates separation, and separation creates suffering. The ego is therefore clearly pathological.

Apart from the obvious ones such as anger, hatred, and so on, there are other more subtle forms of negativity that are so common they are usually not recognized as such. For example, impatience, irritation, nervousness, and being fed up. They constitute the background unhappiness that is many people's predominant inner state.

You need to be extremely alert and absolutely present to be able to detect them. Whenever you do, it is a moment of awakening, of disidentification from the mind, that is easily overlooked precisely because it is so common, so normal. You may be familiar with it.

Do you often experience a feeling of discontent that could best be described as a kind of background resentment? It may be either specific or nonspecific. Many people spend a large part of their lives in that state.

They are so identified with it that they cannot stand back and see it. Underlying that feeling are certain unconsciously held beliefs, that is to say, thoughts. You think these thoughts in the same way that you dream your dreams when you are asleep.

In other words, you don't know you are thinking those thoughts, just as the dreamer doesn't know his dreaming. Here are some of the most common unconscious thoughts that feed the feeling of discontent or background resentment. I have stripped away the content from those thoughts so that the bare structure remains.

They become more clearly visible that way. Whenever there is unhappiness in the background of your life, or even in the foreground, you can see which of these thoughts applies and fill in your own content according to your personal situation. ¶ There is something that needs to happen in my life before I can be at peace, happy, fulfilled, and so on.

And I resent that it hasn't happened yet. Maybe my resentment will finally make it happen. Something happened in the past that should not have happened, and I resent that.

If that hadn't happened I would be at peace now. Something is happening now that should not be happening, and it is preventing me from being at peace now. Often the unconscious beliefs are directed towards a person, and so happening becomes doing.

You should do this or that so that I can be at peace. And I resent that you haven't done it yet. Maybe my resentment will make you do it.

Something you or I did, said, or failed to do in the past is preventing me from being at peace now. What you are doing or failing to do now is preventing me from being at peace. The Secret of Happiness ¶ All of the above are assumptions, unexamined thoughts that are confused with reality.

They are stories the ego creates to convince you that you cannot be at peace now or cannot be fully yourself now. Being at peace and being who you are, that is, being yourself, are one. The ego says, maybe at some point in the future I can be at peace, if this, that, or the other happens, or I obtain this or become that.

Or it says, I can never be at peace because of something that happened in the past. Listen to people's stories, and they could all be entitled, Why I Cannot Be at Peace Now. The ego doesn't know that your only opportunity for being at peace is now.

Or maybe it does know, and it is afraid that you may find this out. Peace, after all, is the end of the ego. How to be at peace now?

By making peace with the present moment. The present moment is the field on which the game of life happens. It cannot happen anywhere else.

Once you have made peace with the present moment, see what happens, what you can do or choose to do, or rather what life does through you. There are three words that convey the secret of the art of living, the secret of all success and happiness. One with life.

Being one with life is being one with now. You then realize that you don't live your life, but life lives you. Life is the dancer, and you are the dance.

The ego loves its resentment of reality. What is reality? Whatever is.

Buddha called it tatata, the suchness of life, which is no more than the suchness of this moment. Opposition towards that suchness is one of the main features of the ego. It creates the negativity that the ego thrives on, the unhappiness that it loves.

In this way, you make yourself and others suffer and don't even know that you are doing it, don't know that you are creating hell on earth. To create suffering without recognizing it, this is the essence of unconscious living, this is being totally in the grip of the ego. The extent of the ego's inability to recognize itself and see what it is doing is staggering and unbelievable.

It will do exactly what it condemns others for and not see it. When it is pointed out, it will use angry denial, clever arguments, and self-justifications to distort the facts. People do it, corporations do it, governments do it.

When all else fails, the ego will resort to shouting or even to physical violence. Send in the marines. We can now understand the deep wisdom in Jesus' words on the cross.

Forgive them, for they know not what they do. To the human condition for thousands of years, you have to start with yourself and take responsibility for your inner state at any given moment. That means now.

Ask yourself, is there negativity in me at this moment? Then become alert, attentive to your thoughts as well as your emotions. Watch out for the low-level unhappiness in whatever form that I mentioned earlier, such as discontent, nervousness, being fed up, and so on.

Watch out for thoughts that appear to justify or explain this unhappiness, but in reality cause it. The moment you become aware of a negative state within yourself, it does not mean you have failed. It means you have succeeded.

Until that awareness happens, there is identification with inner states, and such identification is ego. With awareness comes disidentification from thoughts, emotions, and reactions. This is not to be confused with denial.

The thoughts, emotions, or reactions are recognized, and in the moment of recognizing, disidentification happens automatically. Your sense of self, of who you are, then undergoes a shift. Before you were the thoughts, emotions, and reactions.

Now you are the awareness, the conscious presence that witnesses those states. One day I will be free of the ego. Who is talking?

The ego. To become free of the ego is not really a big job, but a very small one. All you need to do is be aware of your thoughts and emotions, as they happen.

This is not really a doing, but an alert seeing. In that sense, it is true that there's nothing you can do to become free of the ego. When that shift happens, which is a shift from thinking to awareness, an intelligence far greater than the ego's cleverness begins to operate in your life.

Emotions and even thoughts become depersonalized through awareness. Their impersonal nature is recognized. There is no longer a self in them.

They are just human emotions, human thoughts. Your entire personal history, which is ultimately no more than a story, a bundle of thoughts and emotions, becomes of secondary importance and no longer occupies the forefront of your consciousness. It no longer forms the basis for your sense of identity.

You are the light of presence, the awareness that is prior to and deeper than any thoughts and emotions, pathological forms of ego. As we have seen, the ego is in its essential nature pathological, if we use the word in its wider sense to denote dysfunction and suffering. Many mental disorders consist of the same egoic traits that operate in a normal person, except that they have become so pronounced that their pathological nature is now obvious to anyone except the sufferer.

For example, many normal people tell certain kinds of lies from time to time in order to appear more important, more special, and to enhance their image in the others' mind, who they know, what their achievements, abilities, and possessions are, and whatever else the ego uses to identify with. Some people, however, driven by the ego's feeling of insufficiency and its need to have or be more, lie habitually and compulsively. Most of what they tell you about themselves, their story, is a complete fantasy, a fictitious edifice the ego has designed for itself to feel bigger, more special.

Their grandiose and inflated self-image can sometimes fool others, but usually not for long. It is then quickly recognized by most people as a complete fiction. The mental illness that is called paranoid schizophrenia, or paranoia for short, is essentially an exaggerated form of ego.

It usually consists of a fictitious story the mind has invented to make sense of a persistent underlying feeling of fear. The main element of the story is the belief that certain people, sometimes large numbers or almost everyone, are plotting against me or are conspiring to control or kill me. The story often has an inner consistency and logic, so that it sometimes fools others into believing it too.

Or entire nations have paranoid belief systems at their very basis. The ego's fear and distrust of other people, its tendency to emphasize the otherness of others by focusing on their perceived faults and make those faults into their identity, is taken a little further and makes others into inhuman monsters. The ego needs others, but its dilemma is that deep down it hates and fears them.

Jean-Paul Sartre's statement, ''Hell is other people,'' is the voice of the ego. The person suffering from paranoia experiences that hell most acutely, but everyone in whom the egoic patterns still operate will feel it to some degree. The stronger the ego in you, the more likely it is that in your perception other people are the main source of problems in your life.

It is also more than likely that you will make life difficult for others. But, of course, you won't be able to see that. It is always others who seem to be doing it to you.

The mental illness we call paranoia also manifests another symptom that is an element of every ego, although in paranoia it takes on a more extreme form. The more the sufferer sees himself persecuted, spied on, or threatened by others, the more pronounced becomes his sense of being the center of the universe around whom everything revolves, and the more special and important he feels as the imagined focal point of so many people's attention. His sense of being a victim, of being wronged by so many people, makes him feel very special.

In the story that forms the basis of his delusional system, he often assigns to himself the role of both victim and potential hero who is going to save the world or defeat the forces of evil. The collective ego of tribes, nations, and religious organizations also frequently contains a strong element of paranoia. Us against the evil others.

It is the cause of much human suffering. The Spanish Inquisition, the persecution and burning of heretics and witches, the relations between nations leading up to the First and Second World War, communism throughout its history, the Cold War, McCarthyism in America in the fifties, prolonged violent conflict in the Middle East, are all painful episodes in human history dominated by extreme collective paranoia. The more unconscious individuals, groups, or nations are, the more likely it is that egoic pathology will assume the form of physical violence.

Violence is a primitive but still very widespread way in which the ego attempts to assert itself, to prove itself right and another wrong. With very unconscious people, arguments can easily lead to physical violence. What is an argument?

Two or more people express their opinions, and those opinions differ. Each person is so identified with the thoughts that make up their opinion, that those thoughts harden into mental positions which are invested with a sense of self. In other words, identity and thought merge.

Once this has happened, when I defend my opinions, thoughts, I feel and act as if I were defending my very self. Unconsciously, I feel and act as if I were fighting for survival, and so my emotions will reflect this unconscious belief. They become turbulent.

I'm upset, angry, defensive, or aggressive. I need to win at all costs lest I become annihilated. That's the illusion.

The ego doesn't know that mind and mental positions have nothing to do with who you are, because the ego is the unobserved mind itself. In Zen they say, don't seek the truth, just cease to cherish opinions. What does that mean?

Let go of identification with your mind. Who you are beyond the mind then emerges by itself. End of Disc 3 Without Ego Most people have moments when they are free of ego.

Those who are exceptionally good at what they do may be completely or largely free of ego while performing their work. They may not know it, but their work has become a spiritual practice. Most of them are present while they do their work and fall back into relative unconsciousness in their private life.

This means their state of presence is for the time being confined to one area of their life. I have met teachers, artists, nurses, doctors, scientists, social workers, waiters, hairdressers, business owners, and salespeople who perform their work admirably without any self-seeking, fully responding to whatever the moment requires of them. They are one with what they do, one with the now, one with the people or the task they serve.

The influence such people have upon others goes far beyond the function they perform. They bring about a lessening of the ego in everyone who comes into contact with them. Even people with heavy ego sometimes begin to relax, let down their guard, and stop playing their roles when they interact with them.

It comes as no surprise that those people who work without ego are extraordinarily successful at what they do. Anybody who is one with what he or she does is building the new earth. I have also met many others who may be technically good at what they do, but whose ego constantly sabotages their work.

Only part of their attention is on the work they perform. The other part is on themselves. Their ego demands personal recognition and wastes energy in resentment if it doesn't get enough.

And it's never enough. Is someone else getting more recognition than me? Or their main focus of attention is profit or power, and their work is no more than a means to that end.

When work is no more than a means to an end, it cannot be of high quality. When obstacles or difficulties arise in their work, when things don't go according to expectation, when other people or circumstances are not helpful or cooperative, instead of immediately becoming one with the new situation and responding to the requirements of the present moment, they react against the situation and so separate themselves from it. There's a me that feels personally offended or resentful, and a huge amount of energy is burned up in useless protest or anger, energy that could be used for solving the situation if it were not being misused by the ego.

What is more, this anti-energy creates new obstacles, new opposition. Many people are truly their own worst enemy. People unknowingly sabotage their own work when they withhold help or information from others or try to undermine them, lest they become more successful or get more credit than me.

Cooperation is alien to the ego, except when there's a secondary motive. The ego doesn't know that the more you include others, the more smoothly things flow and the more easily things come to you. When you give little or no help to others or put obstacles in their path, the universe, in the form of people and circumstances, gives little or no help to you because you've cut yourself off from the whole.

The ego's unconscious core feeling of not enough causes it to react to someone else's success as if that success had taken something away from me. It doesn't know that your resentment of another person's success curtails your own chances of success. In order to attract success, you need to welcome it wherever you see it.

The Ego in Illness An illness can either strengthen or weaken the ego. If you complain, feel self-pity or resent being ill, your ego becomes stronger. It also becomes stronger if you make the illness part of your conceptual identity.

I am a sufferer of such and such a disease. Ah, so now we know who you are. Some people, on the other hand, who in normal life have a big ego, suddenly become gentle and kind and much nicer people when they are ill.

They may gain insights they may never have had in their normal life. They may access their inner knowing and contentment and speak words of wisdom. Then, when they get better, energy returns and so does the ego.

When you are ill, your energy level is quite low and the intelligence of the organism may take over and use the remaining energy for the healing of the body. And so there's not enough left for the mind, that is to say, egoic thinking and emotion. The ego burns up considerable amounts of energy.

In some cases, however, the ego retains the little energy that remains and uses it for its own purposes. Needless to say, those people who experience a strengthening of the ego in illness take much longer to recover. Some never do, and so the illness becomes chronic and a permanent part of their false sense of self.

How hard it is to live with yourself. One of the ways in which the ego attempts to escape the unsatisfactoriness of personal selfhood is to enlarge and strengthen its sense of self by identifying with a group, a nation, political party, corporation, institution, sect, club, gang, football team. In some cases, the personal ego seems to dissolve completely as someone dedicates his or her life to working selflessly for the greater good of the collective without demanding personal rewards, recognition or aggrandizement.

What a relief to be freed of the dreadful burden of personal self. The members of the collective feel happy and fulfilled, no matter how hard they work, how many sacrifices they make. They appear to have gone beyond ego.

The question is, have they truly become free, or has the ego simply shifted from the personal to the collective? A collective ego manifests the same characteristics as the personal ego, such as the need for conflict and enemies, the need for more, the need to be right against others who are wrong, and so on. Sooner or later, the collective will come into conflict with other collectives, because it unconsciously seeks conflict and it needs opposition to define its boundary and thus its identity.

Its members will then experience the suffering that inevitably comes in the wake of any ego-motivated action. At that point, they may wake up and realize that their collective has a strong element of insanity. It can be painful at first to suddenly wake up and realize that the collective you had identified with and worked for is actually insane.

Some people at that point become cynical or bitter and henceforth deny all values, all worth. This means that they quickly adopted another belief system when the previous one was recognized as illusory and therefore collapsed. They didn't face the death of their ego, but ran away and reincarnated into a new one.

A collective ego is usually more unconscious than the individuals that make up that ego. For example, crowds, which are temporary collective egoic entities, are capable of committing atrocities that the individual away from the crowd would not be. Nations not infrequently engage in behavior that would be immediately recognizable as psychopathic in an individual.

As the new consciousness emerges, some people will feel called upon to form groups that reflect the enlightened consciousness. These groups will not be collective egos. The individuals who make up these groups will have no need to define their identity through them.

They no longer look to any form to define who they are. Even if the members that make up those groups are not totally free of ego yet, there will be enough awareness in them to recognize the ego in themselves or in others as soon as it appears. However, constant alertness is required, since the ego will try to take over and reassert itself in any way it can.

Dissolving the human ego by bringing it into the light of awareness, this will be one of the main purposes of these groups, whether they be enlightened businesses, charitable organizations, schools, or communities of people living together. Enlightened collectives will fulfill an important function in the arising of the new consciousness. Just as egoic collectives pull you into unconsciousness and suffering, the enlightened collective can be a vortex for consciousness that will accelerate the planetary shift.

Incontrovertible Proof of Immortality Ego comes about through a split in the human psyche in which identity separates into two parts that we could call I and me, or me and myself. Every ego is therefore schizophrenic, to use the word in its popular meaning of split personality. You live with a mental image of yourself, a conceptual self that you have a relationship with.

Life itself becomes conceptualized and separated from who you are when you speak of my life. The moment you say or think, my life, and believe in what you are saying, rather than it just being a linguistic convention, you have entered the realm of delusion. If there is such a thing as my life, it follows that I and life are two separate things, and so I can also lose my life, my imaginary treasured possession.

Death becomes a seeming reality and a threat. Words and concepts split life into separate segments that have no reality in themselves. We could even say that the notion, my life, is the original delusion of separateness, the source of ego.

If I and life are two, if I am separate from life, then I am separate from all things, all beings, all people. But how could I be separate from life? What I could there be apart from life, apart from being?

It is utterly impossible. So there is no such thing as my life, and I don't have a life. I am life.

I and life are one. It cannot be otherwise. So how could I lose my life?

How can I lose something that I don't have in the first place? How can I lose something that I am? It is impossible.

[Speaker 2] (1:16:59 - 1:17:14)

So welcome to you all and welcome, sir.

[Speaker 1] (1:17:14 - 1:17:14)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:17:15 - 1:17:17)

Yes. A good week for you?

[Speaker 1] (1:17:17 - 1:17:18)

Yes. Very good.

[Speaker 2] (1:17:18 - 1:17:22)

Thank you. Very good. So let's do what we've now started as a tradition.

[Speaker 1] (1:17:22 - 1:18:26)

A moment of silence. Yes. And the question is where to put our attention.

And this time I suggest we put our attention into the feeling of aliveness within what I call the inner body, to feel that there's actually life inside your hands. A good place to start is always with the hands to feel. Yes, I can feel somehow that there is an aliveness in here.

The cells are alive. And that's the beginning of feeling being able to feel the entire inner body, the energy field as a global sense of aliveness. And just put our attention there rather than have it in the head.

And then we can enter actual stillness, because stillness doesn't happen until the mind becomes still. Usually the mind doesn't stop until you take attention away from it and put it somewhere else. So we are putting attention into the body.

And so we can go into stillness just for half a minute or so.

[Speaker 2] (1:19:05 - 1:19:14)

Let us begin here on chapter four, which is a very long chapter. Yes. When you wrote this, you must have been at it for a while.

[Speaker 1] (1:19:14 - 1:19:23)

Yes. And in a way, it reflects all the main themes in the book that actually already contained in that chapter. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:19:23 - 1:20:28)

The chapter is called Role Playing the Many Faces of the Ego. So before we really begin, I'd like to take a moment and talk about one of the most frequently asked questions that we receive by far. So many people who are committed to the book and becoming aware of a new way of thinking, a new way of consciousness, want to know how they can relate to people in their lives who are not yet on this path and don't think they need to be.

Sometimes it's a coworker or a friend or even a spouse, you all have said to us on many of your emails, and it can feel very divisive. We got an email from a gentleman who says, listen, my wife isn't interested in this. I don't know what's going to happen to our relationship.

So that question actually came up as one of the last questions from Qatar, the very first session that we had. But it's an ongoing question that a lot of people, the more they become engaged in the book, are feeling and wanted your response to.

[Speaker 1] (1:20:29 - 1:22:22)

Yes. The main thing is that the shift can only happen inside you. So not to expect other people to also change or to expect or say, I cannot change unless somebody close to me also changes.

The main thing is to take responsibility for your own state of consciousness and allow other people, especially people that you are close to, to be where they are, not to demand that because something is happening inside you and you are beginning to change, not to demand that others should also change. Change does not come about in others by trying to make them change. The most powerful way of bringing about change in others is not trying to bring about change in the other, but to completely accept the other as he or she is.

So that is absolutely vital. There are even schools of psychotherapy that recognize that. So you give the other person your complete acceptance.

And that's part of this change that's happening in us is that we step out of the judgmental mind that continuously judges the other. So we step out of that. And if we step out of the judgmental mind, we are able to simply accept your partner, a close friend, a family member, a relative.

This is where they are at right now. They are still going through their old behavior patterns. What has changed is you are no longer resisting their pattern and reacting to and by reacting, reinforcing their pattern.

That's right. That's right. So you're not taking part in that game anymore.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:22 - 1:22:36)

So part of your change has to be your willingness not to judge, you know, to sit back and to be an observer in your own life and then to more clearly see the ego in others as you also see it in yourself.

[Speaker 1] (1:22:36 - 1:22:36)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:36 - 1:22:37)

Don't judge it.

[Speaker 1] (1:22:37 - 1:22:38)

No.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:38 - 1:22:40)

Just know that that's what it is.

[Speaker 1] (1:22:40 - 1:23:04)

Yes. And don't mistake what you're observing, the behavior that people manifest as them. Not that's not who they are.

And that's a vital distinction, because if you mistake that for who they are, then you will perpetuate that kind of behavior. So that's not it won't work. Acceptance is vital acceptance.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:04 - 1:23:27)

And isn't it sort of like I mean, all of you who've asked that question, it's kind of like when people join the church or are, quote, born again, or, you know, we've heard about being born again in the church or you find Jesus or you find Buddha or you discover a new way of being for yourself. And now you want everybody to go to Jesus. Yes.

And you want everybody to believe what you believe.

[Speaker 9] (1:23:28 - 1:23:28)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:28 - 1:23:32)

That is part of your ego that now wants people to believe what you believe.

[Speaker 1] (1:23:32 - 1:23:57)

Yes. And so that's a trap one can fall into, even with this teaching, which isn't really based on belief at all. So it's not a new belief.

We're not trying to find some new belief. It's going beyond beyond the thinking mind to into awareness. But there is always the danger when you discover something new that you want to talk about it with everybody.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:57 - 1:24:01)

Well, that's how we ended up with this webcast, because yes, I wanted to share it with other people.

[Speaker 1] (1:24:01 - 1:24:35)

And sometimes it works because sometimes the other person is totally ready and receptive and say, wow, I never realized that. But they recognize it from within because the readiness is there. Right.

But the readiness is not there in everybody. So some people buy copies of the new earth or the power of now for their friends or relatives and then give them out. And sometimes they are disappointed when the other person says, doesn't make sense to me at all.

Means they're not yet ready and that's fine. Maybe they put it on the shelf and maybe 10 years later they're ready. It's quite possible.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:35 - 1:26:23)

Absolutely. Absolutely. So now for class number, I want to get that question out because it comes up over and over and over again on our message board.

So now we're ready for class number four tonight. We're going deeper into identifying the ego in all of its forms. Chapter four, role playing and the many faces of our ego.

Let me start by saying that I think the essence, it's a long chapter, so we have a lot to cover in a short period of time, these 90 minutes. But I think that the essence of this chapter is what you say on page 104, everybody, that you are a human being. What does that mean?

Mastery of life is not a question of control, but of finding a balance between human and being. Mother, father, husband, wife, young, old, all roles that you play, the functions you fulfill, whatever you do, all that belongs to the human dimension. It has its place and needs to be honored.

But in itself, it is not enough for a fulfilled, truly meaningful relationship or life. Human alone is never enough. No matter how hard you try or what you achieve.

I just love that sentence. I loved it so much. I wrote, wow.

Yeah, we're wow. Human alone is never enough, no matter how hard you try or what you achieve. Then there is being it is found in the still alert presence of consciousness itself.

The consciousness that you are human is form being is form less human and being are not separate, but interwoven. That's the essence to me of this chapter.

[Speaker 1] (1:26:23 - 1:26:27)

Yes. And one could say the essence of the whole teaching in a way.

[Speaker 2] (1:26:28 - 1:26:28)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:26:28 - 1:26:29)

Way of putting it.

[Speaker 2] (1:26:30 - 1:26:45)

So and of course, human alone is never enough, no matter how hard you try or what you achieve. And that is the essence of why people are in such suffering and such struggle and such, you know, angst against themselves in life, is it not?

[Speaker 1] (1:26:45 - 1:27:49)

And it's why they play roles, because the ego plays roles, because there's unawareness that within you there is the source of all power. So people who are out of touch with the power within or the place where all power resides, the aliveness itself, consciousness itself, then they feel a sense of lack. Why are they not in touch with it?

Because they are not present. They're not in the present moment, because the present moment is the entry point into that place of power within. If you're not present, you don't realize that there is a source of power within.

And then you believe that you need to get secondary power from someone or some situation or other people. Then the ego plays roles to manipulate the environment and other people to get what it thinks it needs, not realizing that all the things that it thinks will give it the power that it seems to lack, all that is already within you, if you could only be present in the now.

[Speaker 2] (1:27:50 - 1:28:00)

I got it. Okay. So the question is how not to lose ourselves in the human dimension.

How not to? By being present in the now.

[Speaker 1] (1:28:00 - 1:28:07)

Yes. And by realizing that whenever you lose yourself, realizing... In the human dimension.

In the human...

[Speaker 2] (1:28:07 - 1:28:10)

That's all the stuff that being human brings with it.

[Speaker 1] (1:28:10 - 1:28:38)

Yes. On the most primordial level, losing oneself means losing oneself in that continuous stream of thinking that goes through people's heads. So it drags you along.

It takes all your conscious attention. Remember, we started today with taking attention away from mind and putting it into the body. Right.

Another thing you can do is take attention away from thinking and put it into sense perceptions and really look and listen and touch things. Like an alertness arises.

[Speaker 2] (1:28:38 - 1:29:01)

You know what I found by doing this? I don't know about all the rest of you, but I have found by being more present, just doing that one exercise, putting yourself... If I'm walking along a path in the woods near my house, be there and not be in my head thinking about what I need to do, just to be there.

And what I found is, I don't know if you all are realizing this too, you are just less stressed.

[Speaker 1] (1:29:01 - 1:29:19)

Less stressed. You're calmer. Yes.

And you don't carry the heavy burden of a personality or me with the burden of past and future, my problematic future, my problematic past. You're much more, you're light and free when you walk in presence.

[Speaker 2] (1:29:19 - 1:29:28)

Okay. But my hairdresser, Andre, asked me this this morning. So I'm going to ask you, then how do you ever plan for anything if you're not thinking about the future?

How do you ever get anything done?

[Speaker 1] (1:29:28 - 1:29:39)

You plan in the present moment. When the time comes to plan and the time is not when you're walking in the woods and when you're walking in the woods, the time is to be present. Unless you want to go to the woods to plan.

[Speaker 2] (1:29:40 - 1:29:41)

You could go to the woods.

[Speaker 1] (1:29:41 - 1:30:06)

You could. Yes, you could. But it's much more likely that your planning is going to be fruitful if it is preceded by a period of presence and stillness.

All right. Any mind activity is much more likely to be beneficial and to be creative if it's preceded by presence and stillness. And then you apply the mind and say, OK, what do I have to do today?

[Speaker 2] (1:30:06 - 1:30:15)

And then you make a list. So if you're going to be in the future, do that as a concentrated event experience.

[Speaker 1] (1:30:16 - 1:30:16)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:16 - 1:30:18)

Now I'm going to sit and plan.

[Speaker 1] (1:30:18 - 1:31:08)

Yes. And don't think about tomorrow. Once you've done that, then you know this is what I have to do so that you're not continuously in the next moment.

You don't project yourself. You play mental movies about what you're going to say when that situation arises. So you can you trust in life that whatever it is that you need when the future comes will be there.

So that's the as far as practical matters are concerned. Future is simply something that you use like I call it a clock time. You make an appointment for tomorrow and you do it tomorrow.

Tomorrow. Yes. So you don't continuously project yourself away from the now to some future, believing that it's more important, going to be more important than the now.

It's not.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:08 - 1:31:17)

Because what you say on page 122, anybody who is one with what he or she does is building the new earth.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:17 - 1:31:17)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:17 - 1:31:18)

That's how you do it.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:19 - 1:31:48)

Being one with what you're doing means being total in what you do so that the main focus of your attention is not where you want to get to. You know where you want to get to. Right.

But the main focus of your attention is on the actual doing now. So this is what the energy flows fully into this. The energy doesn't is not diverted from what you are doing now through mental dysfunction because you're wanting to get there, because then whatever you're doing will be stressful.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:48 - 1:31:53)

Because whatever you give your 100 percent attention to is going to be better anyway. Yes, absolutely.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:54 - 1:32:15)

There was a Zen master. He was he was watching somebody in a competition artery and a man was trying very hard to win this competition, but he just couldn't make it. And then somebody asked the Zen master, what's he doing wrong?

And the Zen master said his need to win drains him of power.

[Speaker 2] (1:32:15 - 1:32:16)

Wow.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:16 - 1:32:22)

And so his need to win some future. He wants to have some future moment where he's going to be fulfilled.

[Speaker 11] (1:32:22 - 1:32:22)

Wow.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:22 - 1:32:29)

So his attention is not totally in the now. So the now where all power resides.

[Speaker 11] (1:32:29 - 1:32:29)

Wow.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:29 - 1:32:43)

This power that resides in the now cannot flow then into what you're doing. The openness isn't there because to to have mastery in any endeavor, whatever it is, you need to be total in what you do.

[Speaker 2] (1:32:43 - 1:32:45)

That's what athletes know. The great ones know.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:45 - 1:32:48)

And then they when they enter that, they call it the zone.

[Speaker 2] (1:32:48 - 1:33:01)

Yeah. There was this great article this week, as a matter of fact, those of you saw on Tiger Woods in USA Today saying that he's perhaps the greatest athlete of all times because that's what he knows how to do is to focus and be 100 percent present.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:01 - 1:33:02)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:33:02 - 1:33:03)

It's just him in that ball.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:03 - 1:33:04)

Absolutely.

[Speaker 2] (1:33:04 - 1:33:05)

Yes. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:05 - 1:33:06)

Of course. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:33:06 - 1:33:55)

OK. So another question that was on the message boards a lot last week when Kadada from California called and was saying was on Skype and she was saying that as a young person, she's thinking about the future and thinking about wanting to have a career and husband and so forth. I think a lot of people felt unsatisfied by your response.

I've heard that a lot of people were like, I feel the same way Kadada feels. A lot of people are wondering where the passion goes, where the ambition goes and how you relate passion and ambition, which is what I think Kadada was saying. OK, with with this this new awakening.

Yes. So do we now just we're just all so awakened and that we become passive people?

[Speaker 1] (1:33:56 - 1:35:22)

No, the passion is much greater when you are totally focused on what you're doing now. There will be far. The passion will become stress.

The more you're focused on where you want to get to, the more the passion will degenerate into stress. You may still have a high energy, but it's there's a lot of negative energy that comes in. So if you want to remain truly in your power, then you need to be total.

And that applies to the smallest thing that you do during the day. Right. Because even great endeavors consist of small steps, even the greatest thing.

You are doing wonderful work, but every day that you spend consists of small steps. You arrive in the studio, you get dressed, you get ready, you speak on one sentence at a time. It all consists of one needs to be present as you are.

That's where the power comes from every moment and not look to some future moment that promises some kind of greater fulfillment. That is the delusion. It does not mean that you don't have a plan.

You can plan you. I want to achieve to build up a business. I want to do this or that.

But the main focus must be in the doing. And if the main focus is in the doing now, that's the passion is there and the deep enjoyment is there and an intensity of energy and intensity of energy.

[Speaker 2] (1:35:22 - 1:35:33)

Now, people often say that again, what the Zen master said that his desire to desire to win drains him of power, desire to win, drains his need to win, needs him of power.

[Speaker 1] (1:35:34 - 1:35:39)

So the right man would be being the being present.

[Speaker 2] (1:35:39 - 1:35:47)

You just focused on whatever is necessary in that moment, in that moment. I'm sure that struck a lot of people that that Zen master quote.

[Speaker 9] (1:35:47 - 1:35:47)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:35:48 - 1:36:00)

Because you're so you got to win. You got to make it. You got to succeed.

You got to got to got to. And that's draining energy from you. Instead, we should be focused on this moment, this step and then the next step and then the next step.

[Speaker 1] (1:36:00 - 1:37:05)

That's right. Now, you may win if you try very hard or very stressed. Occasionally it happens that you do win, but it's not really worth it because you get more and more depleted.

And after a while, you lose the you lose the joy of life. If you if if you spend five years of stress and finally you achieve what you wanted, is that worth it? Right.

Enjoyment is very important. Am I losing is that joy in what I'm doing? Is there an enliveness and intensity?

That's the question people believe sometimes high energy in our civilization when there's high energy in what you do. Often people believe there must be stress. They cannot imagine high energy in what you do without stress because that's how we are conditioned because we're always conditioned to look to the next thing.

But there is a much more powerful state of high energy and intensity of energy where the energy is intense and focused. Now, no stress at all. No stress at all.

[Speaker 2] (1:37:05 - 1:37:17)

Well, let's go to our new Earth Study Group watching our webcast at Borders on Michigan Avenue. Hello in Chicago. Hi, everybody.

Hi again. All right. Shireen has a question.

Hello, Shireen.

[Speaker 8] (1:37:18 - 1:37:39)

Hi, Oprah. Hi, Eckhart. We're thrilled to be here.

My question is for you, Eckhart. You say on page one twenty six that constant alertness is required to not let the ego take it over. And I was wondering, do you are you in a constant alertness yourself and do you ever struggle staying alert?

[Speaker 1] (1:37:41 - 1:40:37)

I am usually present in the now, the intensity varies according to the situation. If I'm just I'm sitting alone at home, there's just a background of stillness and there may be thoughts arising, I may be doing this or that. So the and then if a situation arises, the more challenging the situation is, the stronger the sense of presence that arises.

That's a strange thing. I realized that the first time when after this, I underwent this shift. I was actually in a cinema and I was watching a film.

It was a Japanese film about the end of the world. And I saw all these things. Everything was going up in flames.

And this is on the film in the film. And I suddenly found I was becoming more and more peaceful and present inside those intensity of aliveness, as if inside something was saying inside me there is no death. But that's an interpretation.

Really, for the first time, I realized when things go wrong outside, presence intensifies. Everything is fine. There's just a background of presence.

And that's that's wonderful. So because then the challenges that come into your life, two things can happen when a challenging situation or challenging person comes into your life. Either the challenge drags you into old conditioned ego reactions.

Right. For example, an angry person provokes an angry reaction in you. So this means the other person or the situation drags you to their level of consciousness or unconsciousness.

That's one way that one thing that can happen. The other possibility is that any challenge wakes you up more. So you become more intensely present when there's a challenging situation.

And even let's just look at a very simple situation. It's not really challenging, but for some people it is. You're sitting in a traffic jam, not moving.

You have to get somewhere, but it's not moving. So many people would go into negativity at that point. They get stressed.

They body gets tense. So that situation, then you react in the old way. And perhaps a few minutes ago, you were at home, very still and present and it felt good.

And you were looking at the tree in the class, you get in the car. And the moment the first challenge happens, it can drag you down into unconsciousness. But there's another possibility.

You can be alert and see and recognize that situation as the first challenge of the day. And then you say, OK, here I can either go into reaction or I can go into more presence. And suddenly you're in the same situation.

Nothing is moving, fumes, cars. And suddenly you become actually completely present in that city.

[Speaker 2] (1:40:37 - 1:40:48)

There's an exercise, Shireen, in the workbook that we have for this chapter where we talk about being, there's two, the transparency. Can you describe that? Becoming transparent.

[Speaker 1] (1:40:49 - 1:42:10)

Yes. When you react, when you react against a situation, whatever it is, something irritating, it could be somebody screaming, children screaming, an irritating noise. And immediately when that happens, it's almost as if you were a wall and whatever the irritations were hitting this wall inside you.

And it hurts because something inside you gets hit. Now, as a practice, what you can do is imagine yourself being transparent. So what before was hitting this wall inside you and that was painful, that was the resistance that this shouldn't be happening, that's painful.

Now imagine yourself being transparent and the irritating thing passes through you. You can do it, I mean, for example, one of the most irritating noises is perhaps a drill that goes, they break up the road. And so practice with that, become transparent to that, feel the noise passing through you.

It's wonderful. And suddenly in the very same situation that before would have provoked a negative reaction in you, you actually become more present and more peaceful. So the very thing that would have made you react now makes you more present.

Makes you more present.

[Speaker 2] (1:42:11 - 1:42:14)

Also, you talk about the deep lake, the deep lake effect. Would you describe that?

[Speaker 1] (1:42:14 - 1:43:11)

Yes. So the lake, if you imagine a vast lake, the surface of the lake changes all the time according to the weather, according to the wind. Sometimes it's rough, sometimes it's very still.

But even when it's rough, if you imagine you are the lake and whatever happens in your life, the external situations of your life are the surface of the lake. External situations change continuously. Sometimes it's rough, sometimes it's fine, it's very still.

But no matter, even if they are rough, the surface, the depth of the lake remains always undisturbed and you are the lake in its depth. So your external life is the surface of things, surface reality. Your ego.

Ego for the world of form and included in the surface reality is even all your thoughts. Because what we are talking about is the inner depth is deeper than your thoughts and your emotions.

[Speaker 2] (1:43:11 - 1:43:16)

And your presence is the bottom of the lake, is the lake, is the full lake.

[Speaker 1] (1:43:16 - 1:43:30)

Yes. And it's wonderful when you begin to realize that your inner state is no longer dependent on and determined by what's going on the surface. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:43:31 - 1:43:31)

Got it.

[Speaker 1] (1:43:32 - 1:44:01)

Got it. And that's and that's incredible freedom. That's true freedom.

Yes. You can arrive at that place, even if you are in a prison cell. And I've had letters from prison.

People have written to me and said, we are free. I am free. I found that place where my inner state is no longer dependent on what's happening outside.

Of course, the prisoner would still prefer to be outside on that level. Fine. But that's right.

Deep down, there is freedom from external conditions.

[Speaker 2] (1:44:01 - 1:44:04)

Because you are connected to the beingness of yourself.

[Speaker 1] (1:44:04 - 1:44:05)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:44:05 - 1:44:06)

The consciousness of yourself.

[Speaker 9] (1:44:06 - 1:44:07)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:44:07 - 1:44:48)

And you can use the word being you can use the word consciousness. You can use the word. A lot of people use the word soul.

Yes. Or inner being. Yes.

Higher self. The word doesn't matter. The word doesn't matter.

Thank you, Shireen and everybody at Borders. Thank you very much. Very alert.

So let's let's get into this chapter. You say that we can assume that the ego is at play whenever we feel superior or inferior to anyone else. Now, I know this is true.

When you see the person who's the biggest jerk out there, you know, people who act with such a sense of superiority and arrogance. I know that that is because they are really feeling inferior.

[Speaker 9] (1:44:49 - 1:44:49)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:44:49 - 1:44:50)

But still hard to deal with.

[Speaker 9] (1:44:50 - 1:44:50)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:44:51 - 1:45:06)

But what surprised me is that you say that often people who are also shy are also acting out of their egos. And you say whenever you feel superior or inferior to anyone, that's the ego in you. Why is that?

[Speaker 1] (1:45:07 - 1:45:19)

Well, if you're shy, then you're you're what I what you fear is to be found wanting. But so you're not you're there.

[Speaker 2] (1:45:19 - 1:45:22)

The fear is that the attention may take the form of disapproval or criticism.

[Speaker 1] (1:45:22 - 1:45:59)

Yes. You're afraid of that. So because you're afraid of that, whatever the disapproval or the criticism would represent an injury of your mentally mind made sense of self, which is the ego.

So it was the image that I have of myself as a capable person or whatever it is that I'm trying to uphold. If I if I encounter criticism, the ego immediately will be hurt. And so a shy person would not dare say anything because they're afraid of ego loss, afraid of ego loss.

[Speaker 2] (1:45:59 - 1:46:00)

Got it.

[Speaker 1] (1:46:00 - 1:46:33)

And so because sometimes that's mistaken for an egoless person, a person who's very it's not. And deep down inside the shy person or this person who is suffering from this sense of inferiority, there's a desire, the unexpressed desire to be superior. Wow.

And inside the person who acts superior, who seems to have a big confident ego, there's always the hidden fear that he might be inferior. And his whole acting out is to compensate for that hidden fear of being inferior.

[Speaker 2] (1:46:34 - 1:46:38)

OK, behind every positive self-concept is the hidden fear of not being good enough.

[Speaker 1] (1:46:38 - 1:46:39)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:46:39 - 1:46:51)

Behind every negative self-concept is the hidden desire of being the greatest or better than others. And where does self-esteem fit into all of that? Where is real self-esteem?

What would true self-esteem look like?

[Speaker 1] (1:46:51 - 1:48:03)

Well, first, there is the ego self-esteem, which is really even if you have high ego self-esteem, as we've just seen, there's always hidden fear underneath it. It's always there to compensate for that fear that you feel of not being good enough or perhaps failing. So you need to play a role of being big to compensate for the fear of failure that's deep down.

So that's but that's usually the world calls that he has. Yes, the world would say he or she has high self-esteem of people who have big egos. But the world doesn't realize that

that's not true self-esteem.

True self-esteem goes much deeper. It's finding the source of power and aliveness deep inside. We talked about the lake realizing that within the depth of your being, there is that continuous source of intense aliveness and power, which is the stillness out of which everything comes.

The potential, the unexpressed potential for all form is there within every human being. You just have to become still.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:03 - 1:48:08)

So true self-esteem is realizing that that sense of being, that presence is there.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:08 - 1:48:10)

It comes out of the stillness.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:10 - 1:48:14)

That it comes out of the stillness. And that presence in me is the same as the presence in all people.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:14 - 1:48:15)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:15 - 1:48:22)

And when you recognize that and act from that space within yourself, that is when you have true self-esteem.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:22 - 1:48:29)

That's true self-esteem. And self-esteem then is not no longer derived from the belief that you are better than somebody else.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:29 - 1:48:38)

And so you are not attached to the labels or the roles that you play. And you speak about the many various roles that everybody has.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:38 - 1:48:51)

Yes. And then you're no longer devastated by criticism or get very angry when you're criticized as the ego does. The ego is either totally devastated when you get, or it gets very angry when it gets criticized the self-image.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:52 - 1:49:05)

But there's a role that most women in our society and all societies play is that role of mother, which is more than just a role. I mean, it's real. It's not just a role.

[Speaker 1] (1:49:05 - 1:49:52)

Yes. So we need to differentiate between the function that you need to fulfill in this world for a while. Right.

So if you have a child, your function is to be the mother and to fulfill the function of being the mother, which of course is looking after the child, sometimes set limits, what the child is allowed to do and so on. That's all fine. Now, if you become too identified with your function, then the function turns into a role.

And then you cannot let go of the role. And that gets stuck to you. And even when the child grows up and especially becomes a teenager, you still behave as if your child were small and you still try to control and try to protect when it's no longer appropriate.

[Speaker 2] (1:49:52 - 1:49:53)

I got it.

[Speaker 1] (1:49:53 - 1:50:05)

Because you're stuck with a role then. So sometimes when the children become adults, the adult children are still treated by their parents, parents who are stuck in the role of parents.

[Speaker 2] (1:50:05 - 1:50:06)

They can't let go of the role.

[Speaker 1] (1:50:06 - 1:50:14)

So they believe unconsciously that they need to continue to protect and ultimately control what the child does.

[Speaker 2] (1:50:14 - 1:50:16)

Because you don't parent a child the same at every age.

[Speaker 1] (1:50:16 - 1:50:17)

No.

[Speaker 2] (1:50:17 - 1:50:34)

Absolutely. And so they've lost sight of the function that they had as mother to be guide and to direct and to correct and to help and to protect. And they want to carry that into the future.

Yes. Because they are attached to the role.

[Speaker 1] (1:50:34 - 1:51:05)

Yes. OK. And it's not only when the when this when children grow up, even when the children already are still small.

Right. If you are completely identified with this role of mother, then also it can become obsessive. So you might become too controlling or overprotective.

Certain functions become overemphasized. You go too far in fulfilling these functions. So so what was good initially is looking after the child, protecting the child can become too much.

[Speaker 2] (1:51:05 - 1:51:12)

OK, I got it. I got it. Tonight, actress Jenny McCarthy is joining us.

Oh, yeah. Via Skype. Hey, Jenny.

[Speaker 10] (1:51:13 - 1:51:14)

Hi.

[Speaker 2] (1:51:14 - 1:51:52)

How are you? Do you know that when I was reading this book, Jenny, when I was reading my book, here it is. My book's all kind of torn up now.

When I was reading this book on page one oh four, I wrote when I read, as you look at, listen to touch or help your child with this so that you are alert, still completely present, not wanting anything other than that moment as it is. And this way you make room for being in that moment. You're present.

You're not a father, a mother. You are the alertness, the stillness. You are the being behind the doing.

I wrote Jenny McCarthy because that reminded me so much of what you had said about your function as a mother.

[Speaker 4] (1:51:54 - 1:52:34)

Yes, absolutely. You know, I read this book when it first came out, and that was one of my big wake up calls, realizing that when I was with Evan, all I needed to do was just be with Evan. And our relationship bloomed like you wouldn't believe the love connection was there.

He was getting fulfilled because he knew even when Evan wasn't able to speak, this was when Evan still wasn't able to use words energetically, he felt that I was with him, that I was being with him. And I'm so grateful, Eckhart, that you that you taught me that. So did you have a question or do you?

[Speaker 2] (1:52:34 - 1:52:35)

I do.

[Speaker 4] (1:52:35 - 1:53:35)

I do have a question. Okay, it's long, so bear with me. It's not that long, but bear with me.

One very common emotion that I have personally experienced and that I have seen in many mothers is this emotion called guilt. Mothers today experience a few different forms of guilt, and I'm going to explain three different versions where I'm sure mom's listening right now. One of them will say, that's my guilt.

Yeah. The first one is the nine to five working mom feels guilty for leaving her baby with the nanny all day. The second one is the stay-at-home mom feels guilty for getting bored playing with her, you know, her son or daughter all day long.

I mean, sometimes you can only play choo-choo so long and you can't do it anymore and you feel guilty for not wanting to do that. And the third, the last one being, and this one I can really connect to, the thousands of mothers I've met who have children with autism carry a huge amount of guilt with them. It's hard for me to get out, sorry.

[Speaker 7] (1:53:40 - 1:54:07)

Take your time. I haven't cried yet in one interview, so I'm sorry. But a huge amount of guilt that it's in some way their fault, our fault, that our child became autistic.

So my question is, can you offer some insight as to how we can look at things differently from a guilt that we carry as mothers?

[Speaker 2] (1:54:08 - 1:54:22)

Nine to five guilt, choo-choo guilt, and feeling guilty because your child has autism or whatever your child has, and that you are somehow responsible. Thanks, Jenny. That was so well said.

[Speaker 1] (1:54:22 - 1:54:56)

Thank you. Before I say anything, I read your book, while it was still in manuscript form. You gave it to me and I was very impressed by what you did with your child, the courage that you had, where other people would have succumbed and fallen into negativity or self-pity.

You were able to turn it all around and make it into something very positive, at the same time helping many other people, not helping your child, but helping many other people.

[Speaker 10] (1:54:57 - 1:54:58)

Thank you, Eckhart.

[Speaker 1] (1:54:58 - 1:57:55)

You still feel guilty, of course, that's the structure, even after all this wonderful work that you have done with your son. It's amazing, isn't it, that there are certain structures in the human mind that operate no matter how much good you do. They carry the structures, carry on playing themselves out, and they are part of the, what I call, not the content of the ego, but the structure of the ego.

So nobody could have done a better job than you with your boy, in addition helping many others writing that book, and yet you feel guilty. It's not that you feel guilty, there's a certain structure in the thought processes that produces the feeling of guilt. And the other two examples that you gave, there's the mother that has a job, nine to five, the child is with the nanny, and the mother feels guilty about that, cannot accept that this is how it is, and the other mother is at home playing with the child, feels guilty about not doing more in the world.

And so, whatever it is, if you don't tackle the, recognize the structure in your mind for what it is, then you will always believe that the answer to solving this question lies in the realm of content. In other words, content is the situation. So if I change the situation, perhaps I won't feel guilty anymore.

Then this would be, if you think that this so-called problem, it's not a real problem, it's a mind-created problem, if you believe that this problem can be solved on an external level by changing something that you do, it will not, because no matter what situation you go into, the guilt will come back, because in this world you are limited, you can't do everything. You either do this, or you do that, but you cannot be both at home and at work at the same time. So the mind, no matter what situation you go into, will bring up the same structures.

So unless you are very alert, and you recognize that these are egoic mind structures, nothing to do with content, then you realize that what the ego, one of the jobs of the ego is to blame others. Another job of the ego is to make yourself feel guilty. Both of these things strengthen your sense of identity, their negative senses of identity.

And the ego loves to have a strong sense of identity, and no sense of identity is stronger than a negative one, where you condemn yourself for something. And you can see, objectively speaking, it doesn't make sense to feel guilty in your case, and in many other people's cases.

[Speaker 2] (1:57:55 - 1:58:04)

Yes, because if you have to work 9 to 5 to provide for your child, and make, you know, a safe home for your child, and food on the table for your child...

[Speaker 1] (1:58:04 - 1:58:48)

You are doing the best you can. You are doing the best you can. And your mind doesn't, your mind works according to its old conditioning.

So recognize, when those thoughts come, recognize that these are not actual valid thoughts that are actually concern a true situation. They are thoughts generated by the ego. And if you can recognize them as thoughts generated by the ego, structural, not content-based, then in the moment of recognition, they begin to lose their power over you.

Wow. And they will try to come in. It's not, you can't do it just for once.

They will try to come in the next day.

[Speaker 2] (1:58:48 - 1:59:26)

Because you, Jenny, wrote that book. Obviously, I read the book too, because you were here, and shared the book, you know, with our audience. You, you know, refused to take no for an answer.

You fought for Evan. You did the best you knew how to do. And when you didn't know, you sought other answers to figure out the best to do.

So there is a part of you, the part of you that is really you, right, Eckhart? Yes. That knows that.

Yes. True? True, Jenny?

True. Absolutely. And that little crazy talk in your head is just that.

Crazy talk in your head. That's the correct expression. Yeah.

That crazy talk in your head. Yeah.

[Speaker 4] (1:59:27 - 1:59:35)

It really, I just had a huge awakening moment when he said that within me. So I get it. Absolutely.

That's a wow.

[Speaker 2] (1:59:36 - 1:59:37)

That's a wow. Thanks, Jenny.

[Speaker 4] (1:59:38 - 1:59:40)

That's a wow. Thank you both so much.

[Speaker 2] (1:59:40 - 1:59:42)

Say hello to my palsy-wowsy, Jim.

[Speaker 4] (1:59:42 - 1:59:43)

I will. He sends his love to you.

[Speaker 2] (1:59:43 - 2:00:00)

Yeah, he sent me flowers after he was on for Horton Hears Who and said- I know. I made him. Oh, you made him.

Okay. His note said, from your palsy-wowsy. Okay.

Thanks. Thanks a lot. Dion is calling now from Port of Spain, Trinidad.

Dion, what's your question?

[Speaker 6] (2:00:01 - 2:00:03)

Hi, Oprah. Hi, Eckhart. Nice talking to you.

[Speaker 2] (2:00:03 - 2:00:04)

Nice talking to you.

[Speaker 6] (2:00:05 - 2:00:24)

My question is, although I'm now aware of some of the roles that I've played, it's still really easy to slip back into them sometimes. And I'm at this stage where I recognize that I've been playing a role after the moment has passed. But I'd like to know, how do I recognize it in the moment before it happens, especially in those unexpected moments?

[Speaker 2] (2:00:25 - 2:00:27)

About playing a role, did you say?

[Speaker 6] (2:00:28 - 2:00:46)

Yes. Yes. So sometimes I'm aware of a role, but I'm only aware after the moment has passed that I've slipped back into some of the roles that I've recognized.

I'm just trying to figure out, how do I stay in the moment and recognize the role before it happens, so I don't slip back into the same role again? Okay.

[Speaker 1] (2:00:46 - 2:02:22)

Oh, yes. Well, this is a very common thing that happens to people as they grow in awareness. At first, the awareness does not reach many of the conditioned behavior patterns.

The awareness at first, and this applies to many, many people I've heard this so many times, people in whom the awareness begins to grow, this dimension that we call presence or awareness. At first, the awareness does not necessarily flow into all parts of their lives. There are certain behavior patterns that remain as they are, but the awareness comes in after they have happened.

So in this case, in an interaction that you have with other people, you play a certain conditioned role without knowing it. So you are the role. When it's over, and you go away from that situation, suddenly you realize, oh dear, I did it again.

I played that role again, whatever the role is. And that is how our awareness at first comes in, in many cases, after the event. And retrospectively, the presence or the awareness recognizes the old pattern after it's happened.

And what then tends to happen, and I believe this is going to happen to you because I've seen it in so many people, the time gap between the event and the awareness gets shorter. So what then happens is the old pattern operates still, you play the role, and immediately afterwards, you realize, oh, I played it again. But there was virtually no time gap anymore.

Immediately afterwards, you realize it.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:22 - 2:02:23)

So that means you're awakening.

[Speaker 1] (2:02:24 - 2:02:24)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:24 - 2:02:28)

You get closer and closer, so the time gap is shorter and shorter.

[Speaker 1] (2:02:28 - 2:03:23)

The next step, the next thing that happens is in the middle of playing a role, you suddenly realize, oh, I'm playing that role again. So the awareness has come in, you're still doing it, but then you know that you're doing it. An enormous difference.

So you're not just playing the role, there is the other dimension comes in at the time of playing the role or whatever the behavior pattern may be, and you realize, I'm doing it again. And that's wonderful, too. And the next step is, it's amazing, it's the same pattern as I've observed in thousands of people.

The next step is just before you are about to enter into some condition pattern like role playing, the awareness is there and you can feel the impulse inside you of wanting to play the role. And you can then say, I don't need to play that anymore.

[Speaker 2] (2:03:23 - 2:03:29)

Well, let's clarify what we mean by role playing. Thank you so much, Dionne from Port of Spain. Thank you.

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (2:03:30 - 2:03:30)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (2:03:30 - 2:03:52)

Let's clarify what we mean by roles, because I think it's confusing to some people who say, well, listen, I am a doctor, I am a teacher, I am a lawyer, I am a store clerk, I am a that. Those are labels. And what is the difference between the job functions that we have and the so-called and roles, you know, and the roles that we play?

[Speaker 1] (2:03:53 - 2:04:35)

I met a woman, middle aged, and she talked to me in a certain way. And I asked, are you a school teacher? And she said, now, how did you know that I'm a school teacher?

So she was because she had already she talks to people as if she were talking to the children at school. OK, so and even when she said, how did you know she was pointing a finger? OK, OK.

You naughty boy. How did you know that? Yes.

Yes. Of course, that's how I knew it, because she had become completely identified with her function. So the role took her over.

She couldn't leave it. She couldn't leave her function behind after work, even inside her family. She behaved like a teacher.

[Speaker 2] (2:04:35 - 2:04:41)

You say when you adjust the way you interact based upon who you're talking to, you're playing a role.

[Speaker 1] (2:04:41 - 2:04:50)

Yes, that also. So do we talk to everyone the same? No.

Most people, if they but you need to have some power of self-observation, which is another one.

[Speaker 2] (2:04:50 - 2:04:52)

We talk to children differently.

[Speaker 1] (2:04:52 - 2:04:52)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:04:53 - 2:04:55)

Friends differently than we do a head of state.

[Speaker 1] (2:04:55 - 2:05:16)

Yes. Or the so-called important person and a so-called not important janitor in a building different than your boss. Yes.

And this is very interesting to observe in one's self because you need to observe it in yourself. Otherwise, you won't know that you're doing it. And you can only observe it in yourself if there's some awareness there that is outside of the role.

[Speaker 2] (2:05:16 - 2:06:03)

And is this why when you go to a party or you're in an event and you don't know people, the first thing you want to know is a friend of mine, Marlene, said to me who is taking our class every week. Hello, Marlene, that she was at a gathering recently and that she was trying to practice the principles of a new earth and that she was introducing herself around the table and she was doing that in such a way that she didn't talk about what she had done or accomplished or who she was married to or where she lived and that one of the people at the table said, we don't care about who you are. We want to know what you do.

We want to know what do you do. And what I realize is people want to know that so they can determine your so-called value.

[Speaker 9] (2:06:04 - 2:06:04)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:06:04 - 2:06:11)

And to see if you will be of value or yes, perhaps that or necessary.

[Speaker 1] (2:06:11 - 2:06:11)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:06:12 - 2:06:14)

For them to play the role with you.

[Speaker 1] (2:06:14 - 2:06:34)

Oh, yes. Enhance the ego or whether you might be a threat to the ego, whether they can use you or whether they need to be afraid of you or whether they want to have further contact in their circle. Yes.

And all these things. And then many judgments go through people's minds often when they meet somebody and they're automatic.

[Speaker 2] (2:06:34 - 2:06:43)

You observe what that is, what people mean by what do you do really, isn't it? For the most part, they want to say, what do you do? Let me place it in terms of.

[Speaker 1] (2:06:43 - 2:06:43)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:06:43 - 2:06:45)

How valuable that's going to be to you.

[Speaker 1] (2:06:46 - 2:06:55)

Now, when you don't play roles anymore, you don't have to become strange. And then when you go to parties and somebody asks you, what do you do? You say, I am.

[Speaker 2] (2:06:55 - 2:07:02)

Yes, I am. I am that I am. That is all that I am.

[Speaker 1] (2:07:02 - 2:07:14)

This is the basic truth. But you don't need to say that when you go to a party. You don't.

You can actually talk quite normally without being identified with what you say. If people ask me so.

[Speaker 2] (2:07:14 - 2:07:29)

So that's the essence of what you're trying to say to us in this chapter is that, of course, there are all roles that we are assigned or labels that we use to identify ourself. What you're saying is the problem is when you become completely identified.

[Speaker 1] (2:07:29 - 2:07:30)

Yes. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:07:30 - 2:07:32)

And you think that is who you are.

[Speaker 1] (2:07:32 - 2:07:45)

Yes. And you behave and act as if that were who you are. So you get trapped inside that that conditioned personality.

And whatever you do, then there's the personalities acting out.

[Speaker 2] (2:07:45 - 2:07:54)

You mention in the book where where you play the role of patient. And if you go to a doctor who's playing the role of doctor, he often doesn't see you, the person.

[Speaker 1] (2:07:54 - 2:07:55)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:07:55 - 2:07:56)

Because he's playing the role.

[Speaker 1] (2:07:56 - 2:08:25)

Yes. He has become so identified with his function that the function has taken him over and his has become a role. So and many patients can actually feel that when they go to a doctor, whether there's a human being still there or whether the doctor has become a role.

And so when the doctor has become a role, the the when you go to that doctor, you don't feel acknowledged anymore in your being. You feel he might be very competent as a doctor.

[Speaker 2] (2:08:25 - 2:08:26)

I know.

[Speaker 1] (2:08:26 - 2:08:36)

But something vital is lacking in the interaction. When you see a doctor, he might be the greatest expert in his field. It still doesn't help.

Something very vital is missing.

[Speaker 2] (2:08:36 - 2:08:47)

And everybody and you feel completely that happened to me recently where you feel completely dismissed and disconnected because he you're you're you're thinking he's just trying to get me out of here so he can get the next person in.

[Speaker 1] (2:08:47 - 2:08:47)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:08:47 - 2:08:47)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (2:08:48 - 2:08:52)

Now, if he does that to you, you can imagine what he does. That's a normal person.

[Speaker 2] (2:08:52 - 2:09:02)

Yeah. It's usually people treat me, treat me pretty. Anyway, Dimitri Skyping us from Moscow.

Hello.

[Speaker 3] (2:09:02 - 2:09:06)

Yes. Hi. Hello.

Hello. Hello.

[Speaker 2] (2:09:07 - 2:09:11)

Hi. What time is what time is it there? I'm always curious.

[Speaker 3] (2:09:12 - 2:09:16)

It's about five, 5 a.m. in the morning.

[Speaker 2] (2:09:16 - 2:09:20)

You're up early. Well, thank you. Thank you for joining us.

Your question.

[Speaker 3] (2:09:22 - 2:09:38)

I'd like to first thank you very much for your job. It's an unprecedented event when you spread consciousness all around the world. So thank you very much.

Thank you very much for selection for being there.

[Speaker 2] (2:09:38 - 2:09:39)

Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (2:09:39 - 2:10:26)

And my question is, you know, I do some movement exercises, very ancient ones, and they bring me to stillness. And so I experience stillness when I do this movements and I lose it when I come to my work. No, I do some pauses, breathings before I start my work.

But when I'm provoked, I'm getting into the power games, especially when I'm criticized. So can you recommend something in this? Thank you.

OK.

[Speaker 2] (2:10:27 - 2:10:31)

Yes. I like the way Dimitri breathe. Yes.

It was good.

[Speaker 3] (2:10:32 - 2:10:36)

It's so-called panoramic breath when you breathe in all surroundings.

[Speaker 1] (2:10:41 - 2:11:47)

So what would you recommend? Well, this is you are able to access that dimension of presence when you are not disturbed by external situations, when you are not being challenged. The ego is inactive at those times.

And when you go into ordinary work situations and so on, you begin to relate to people and immediately the ego with its old conditioning comes back and takes you over and you lose yourself in the roles you play and so on. So when do you know? Because we had a question earlier that talked about playing roles and becoming aware of the role playing afterwards, after the event.

Do you become aware at the end of the day or do you become aware in individual instances after like a few minutes after it's happened at work? At what point does the awareness come in?

[Speaker 3] (2:11:48 - 2:12:20)

It depends. If the situation is minor, I'm aware, I guess, five minutes after or maybe into the situation. But when I'm provoked deeply or, for instance, when I'm deeply criticized by my boss, I can be in this for a week and only on weekend when I do the movements to change the tense body position into the relaxed one, I can manage to understand, wow, yes, it was again.

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:12:20 - 2:14:29)

Another very helpful thing you can do is not just confine your presence practice to those periods at home, but bring in small, very brief moments of presence into your everyday life. For example, I don't work at work. No matter where you are, you may be sitting at a computer talking on the phone or whatever it is.

Let's I'll give you two or three examples. The phone rings. It wants to be answered.

Let it ring two more times than is necessary before you answer it. The phone rings. Normally you would pick it up, let it ring twice and be present while it rings.

Allow it to ring, but be there in your presence. Use it as a signal to tell you be present now. So that's one way of bringing a little bit of presence into an ordinary work situation.

Or you're at a computer, put a flower next to your computer and occasionally look away from the screen and look at the flower. It doesn't take long, just 20 seconds is fine, 30 seconds. Look at the flower and feel its aliveness inside you.

It helps you. Anything natural can bring you back into presence much more easily than things that are man-made. In our body, at work, when you find a moment, turn away from your desk or whatever it is and feel the aliveness.

Do your breathing, but not the whole thing, just for a few seconds. One conscious breath in and out is a meditation. You don't have to wait for your meditation until you get home.

Bring the meditation into the spaces, into your daily life, as many spaces as possible. That's what, otherwise, the mind has such momentum, the egoic mind, that it will drag you along and you will lose yourself in it. Bringing in small spaces.

[Speaker 2] (2:14:30 - 2:14:31)

Within your daily life.

[Speaker 1] (2:14:31 - 2:14:32)

Daily life.

[Speaker 2] (2:14:32 - 2:14:36)

Yeah. In addition to your panoramic breathing, Dimitri. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:14:37 - 2:15:14)

That's beautiful. And then you will find that in the midst of situations, the awareness is more likely to be there. And we've already, you may have listened to what I said to a previous questioner about becoming aware after falling back into old conditioned behaviors.

And you will experience the same thing, especially if you practice bringing these spaces of awareness into your daily life. Then you will find that gradually presence will be strong enough, even when the boss speaks to you and criticizes you.

[Speaker 2] (2:15:14 - 2:15:16)

Even when he's on the third ring.

[Speaker 1] (2:15:19 - 2:16:23)

So it's a gradual process where presence goes into every aspect of your life, gradually. It permeates your everyday life, because that's what is needed. Even if you were the greatest meditator and you could achieve sublime states twice a day at home when you meditate, it wouldn't help you if presence does not permeate every aspect of your life.

Yes. And because otherwise you'll be like the father who was doing in Buddhism, they have a meta meditation. It's called meditating on loving kindness.

So you sit there and say, I love all the people in this house. I love all the people in this city. I love all the people, all the people, all the people, all the people in this house be at peace, all the people in this city be at peace, all the people in this country be at peace.

And then the daughter comes in and says, dad, and the father says, leave me alone. Can't you see I'm doing loving kindness meditation?

[Speaker 2] (2:16:25 - 2:16:53)

Thank you, Dimitri. It goes back to what you were saying earlier. Can I sense my, what you said on page 79, this is in last week's chapter on core of ego.

Can I sense my essential beingness, the I am in the background of my life at all time? That's what you're saying to him. To be more accurate, can I sense the I am that I am at this moment?

Can I sense my essential identity as consciousness itself, even when my boss is yelling at me?

[Speaker 1] (2:16:53 - 2:17:01)

And then perhaps precisely in moments of greatest challenge, there's a greater intensity of presence.

[Speaker 2] (2:17:01 - 2:17:06)

Because those moments would be his most sacred moments, would they not be? That's how you know.

[Speaker 1] (2:17:06 - 2:17:23)

So it's when your greatest challenges become, instead of drawing you into unconscious reactions, when your greatest challenges intensify your presence, then that's how it works. That's the miracle. And that's how the beauty of this work.

[Speaker 2] (2:17:24 - 2:17:29)

Thank you again for Skyping us from Moscow. Thank you. Thank you very much.

[Speaker 3] (2:17:30 - 2:17:47)

I'd like to tell that I'm very familiar with your voice because I have some recordings of your talks. So your voice already permeated me. Thank you very much for bringing presence into the life of this planet.

Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (2:17:47 - 2:18:06)

Thank you. I like all your books in the background there too, Dimitri. That's very nice.

So I want to look at some of the email questions, which there's a question from Grayson

Pleasant in California that says, since I've been an owner of a dog, I find myself so much more in the present. My question is, why am I naturally so much more present with an animal than I'm sometimes dealing with people?

[Speaker 1] (2:18:06 - 2:18:39)

Ah, yes. Well, the animal does not provoke thought activity because the dog is not thinking. When the dog looks at you, the dog is not thinking what kind of a person you are.

The dog is not judging you. The dog is at a state of consciousness prior to the arrival of thought. So the dog is, and that state has certain similarities with a state of presence, which is a state of going beyond thinking where we are going.

In both cases, if you are...

[Speaker 2] (2:18:39 - 2:18:41)

So in that way, the dogs are a little more enlightened than we are?

[Speaker 1] (2:18:41 - 2:18:47)

In some ways, the dogs are more connected with being than we are, than normal humans are.

[Speaker 2] (2:18:47 - 2:18:51)

Normal humans are. Because that's where they are all the time.

[Speaker 1] (2:18:51 - 2:19:04)

Yes. And I sometimes call them dogs and cats, particularly because that's the pets that for millions of humans are very important in their lives. Right.

I call them guardians of being.

[Speaker 2] (2:19:05 - 2:19:06)

Guardians of being.

[Speaker 1] (2:19:06 - 2:19:22)

Because for many people, they fulfill that function. For many people who are so lost in their minds, so much involved in their thought processes, the only moments they have when they are not trapped in that is when they are relating to their animal, their pet.

[Speaker 2] (2:19:23 - 2:19:35)

All right. I have to get to this quote. Well, I'll get to that in a moment.

You say that the role of the parent should not be to spare children from all suffering. Why not?

[Speaker 1] (2:19:36 - 2:19:54)

Because first of all, you can't. It would be futile to even attempt. Of course, you protect the child as much as you can.

But every human being has to go through a certain amount of suffering. You cannot come to this planet and avoid suffering.

[Speaker 2] (2:19:56 - 2:19:58)

Because that's what being a human being is.

[Speaker 1] (2:19:58 - 2:19:58)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:19:59 - 2:20:01)

There's some discord.

[Speaker 1] (2:20:01 - 2:20:19)

Yes. And that is how we grow. If there were a human being that could have avoided all suffering, that human being would be totally superficial and totally identified with the external form of things because it's suffering that drives you deeper, drives you within what you need to find.

[Speaker 2] (2:20:20 - 2:20:22)

And by suffering, do you mean not getting what we want?

[Speaker 1] (2:20:23 - 2:20:36)

Well, that's one form of suffering, too. There are different forms of suffering. Many forms of suffering, of course, are generated by the ego itself.

These are ultimately unnecessary forms of suffering.

[Speaker 10] (2:20:37 - 2:20:37)

Right.

[Speaker 1] (2:20:37 - 2:20:44)

But they don't they are necessary for as long as you are unconscious. And another word for suffering would be challenges or difficulties.

[Speaker 2] (2:20:45 - 2:20:45)

Correct.

[Speaker 1] (2:20:45 - 2:20:47)

Yes. Yes. Challenges.

[Speaker 2] (2:20:47 - 2:20:50)

So you can't be a human being without being challenged.

[Speaker 1] (2:20:51 - 2:21:47)

No, that would be you would miss the whole purpose for being here. So you need to see even your children will not escape. They will soon or later and usually sooner than later.

They will encounter their form of suffering, whatever it is. You protect them as much as you can. But when you see certain things are inevitable, they may do things, unconscious behavior.

They may generate their own suffering, self-generated, or it may happen to them from the outside. But no matter what, it will happen. And then rather than going into intense anguish, see this is human suffering.

And every human, you had to go through your forms of suffering. In my case, for example, I had my parents were had very heavy pain bodies. There was constant conflict at home.

And that was my constant suffering.

[Speaker 2] (2:21:48 - 2:21:49)

Pain body. That's next week.

[Speaker 1] (2:21:49 - 2:21:49)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:21:49 - 2:21:50)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:21:50 - 2:21:51)

We'll talk about that. Okay.

[Speaker 2] (2:21:51 - 2:21:53)

No, finish the sentence. I just wanted to say.

[Speaker 1] (2:21:54 - 2:22:21)

So this, of course, not only applies to children, it also applies to other people that may be close to you and going through their suffering. You do what you can to help them. Whatever you can.

The important thing is that you don't go into anguish yourself because by going into anxiety and anguish yourself, you're not helping them at all. Because whatever state you are in transmits itself to others.

[Speaker 2] (2:22:21 - 2:22:28)

How does playing a role at work keep us from being powerful?

[Speaker 1] (2:22:30 - 2:22:57)

Well, if you play a role at work, you always have a secondary motive in what you do because the ego is at work. You are not totally focused on the task at hand because there is some self-interest there. You want to protect yourself.

You want to get credit for yourself. You want to perhaps eliminate other people around you, or perhaps you want to use other people for your own purposes.

[Speaker 2] (2:22:57 - 2:23:00)

A lot of times this happens when people get promoted to supervisors.

[Speaker 1] (2:23:00 - 2:23:00)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:23:00 - 2:23:20)

You know, they were really good in whatever position they had, and then they get promoted to supervisors, have a little more power, means they're not just now functioning at work for themselves, but now they're over other people. And a little bit of power goes to their heads, and before you know it, trouble.

[Speaker 1] (2:23:20 - 2:24:04)

That's absolutely right. And that's the ego. If you have a position of little power, then the ego is kind of there in potential.

It's latent as far as your work situation is concerned. The similar situation you have in certain third world countries where often you find a revolution overthrows the government, and the people who initiate the revolution have the best intentions they want. Eventually they want to do away with corruption.

They want the best for their country. The moment they get into power, the latent ego in them, although they had good intentions, comes up and they repeat the same dysfunction that they wanted to do away with.

[Speaker 2] (2:24:05 - 2:24:06)

Happens all the time.

[Speaker 1] (2:24:06 - 2:24:06)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:24:07 - 2:24:20)

All right. Charlie lives in Stockholm. Charlie, you were on earlier today.

We Skyped you up on the open word show earlier. Well, you've been up a long time. I hear you have a question about raising your three-year-old daughter.

Go ahead.

[Speaker 5] (2:24:21 - 2:25:11)

I do have a question about that. A lot of it, I guess, has been answered just by listening to tonight's show. But the question about her is, how do you stay present when you're trying to discipline your child and she starts screaming and shouting?

And she's only three, so I can't really explain to her that it's really your ego that's coming out. And I feel like she's learning these roles. I guess my question is, I want to raise her as a more conscious human being.

I don't want her to be awakened at the age of 35 like me. How do you raise a more conscious child? And how do you stay more conscious when you're dealing with conflict?

Because I don't want to set a negative pattern for when she's 16 and she wants to borrow the car, for example.

[Speaker 1] (2:25:11 - 2:25:34)

Yes, yes. I would suggest that you pay, first of all, pay more attention to your inner state than to what is happening to your daughter. Because I believe you experience, perhaps, your daughter causing you feelings of anxiety sometimes.

[Speaker 5] (2:25:35 - 2:25:36)

Yeah, right on.

[Speaker 1] (2:25:36 - 2:26:39)

You believe that. Now, that seems to be the case, that your daughter, by going through certain kinds of behavior, causes you feelings of anxiety. But ultimately, that is not the case.

You cause yourself the feelings of anxiety. When your daughter refuses to eat, she's not making you anxious. Only you can do that.

So it is vital what state of consciousness you are in, what emotional state you are in, when you are relating to your daughter. Because if you're often in a state of anxiety, you get into a vicious circle. The anxiety that you believe was caused by your daughter's behavior, but is ultimately caused by your reaction to your daughter's behavior, that anxiety then will affect her.

And that is a nervous energy field that will provoke further so-called bad behavior in her. Because children absorb...

[Speaker 2] (2:26:39 - 2:26:44)

I was going to say, a three-year-old is absorbing that and picking up that energy more than even your language.

[Speaker 1] (2:26:44 - 2:26:45)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:26:45 - 2:26:47)

They're picking up the energy that you carry.

[Speaker 1] (2:26:47 - 2:26:48)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:26:48 - 2:26:49)

Right. Yes. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:26:49 - 2:28:32)

Because that is their language. That's right. And so your first realization needs to...

your first interest needs to be in any situation with your child, okay, there's the external situation, there's what the child is doing, or is not doing, but should be doing, or screaming, or whatever it is, or not eating, not wanting to go to bed, whatever children do. But your first interest needs to be, okay, what's my inner state right now? Am I accepting this moment, no matter what form it is?

Am I saying that's... what I suggest is the little mantra that I recommend, is to ask yourself whether you can be there as the space for whatever your daughter does. Can I be the space for this?

This is a general thing that many people will find helpful, no matter what situation you go into in life, at work, at home, wherever. The present moment, am I able to accept this moment as it is, or am I saying, this should be different, you should behave differently, but she's not behaving differently, she's behaving the way she's behaving right now. You need to accept that right now, she's screaming, if that's what she does, there it is.

Can I be the space for that? And then you see her screaming. Another, this is related to the little exercise we had earlier, where you felt yourself becoming transparent to an irritating external situation, so that you don't have a reactive barrier inside you.

[Speaker 2] (2:28:32 - 2:29:00)

That's hard to do though, when your child is screaming, because your immediate instinct, I would think, is to stop the child from screaming, to resist the screaming, to try to prevent more screaming, and so the resistance of that, the angst and the anxiety of that, creates more screaming. Because if you could just be calm enough to allow your calmness to then calm the child, that's easier said than done.

[Speaker 1] (2:29:00 - 2:29:53)

Yes, that's your spiritual practice, you don't need any other spiritual practice for the next few years. It's far better than going to a monastery and meditate all day long. It's much more effective making that into your spiritual practice, and then you will see as you become more peaceful and more accepting of the present moment, more being the space, then that will transmit itself to the child and affect the child, and the child will absorb your emanation, your energetic vibrational frequency, and the change will happen in that way, rather than feeling that I need to change her. The change happens when you change.

[Speaker 2] (2:29:53 - 2:30:08)

Yeah, that is to prevent her, but that is to not allow her to do things that are dangerous, or to, you know, he's not saying that, but he's saying about adjusting the way you are being, capital B, with her. Yes. Capital B.

Yes. Thank you.

[Speaker 5] (2:30:09 - 2:30:13)

Thank you so much, and thank you so much for doing this web seminar. I hope you do more.

[Speaker 2] (2:30:13 - 2:30:25)

Well, thank you. Thank you so much. It's a way of being present for any situation, and what you were saying is we can apply it not just to children, but to all situations.

[Speaker 1] (2:30:25 - 2:31:44)

Any situation, and it's usually the case the most, in some people's lives, they have a variety of little challenges, but there's other people who have one predominant difficulty in their lives, whether it's another person, whether it's a health situation, or whether it's a work situation, or a financial problem, they have one huge challenge in their lives, and usually one would consider this huge challenge in your life as your greatest enemy, almost, the greatest burden, or as Christians would call it, my cross.

To bear. To bear. Yeah.

Now, this can actually be turned around, and you can make that very thing that is considered your great... Your cross to bear. You can make that into your greatest help on the spiritual path, because it's precisely there that you can, if you can bring acceptance to that, and be the space for that situation, that is usually called, would usually be called bad by the mind, but it is.

You can't argue with that. This is the situation right now. Can I be the space for that?

Then that situation takes you into surrender and into presence.

[Speaker 2] (2:31:44 - 2:32:26)

So that, you know, so many people, when they were first talking about purchasing this book on the website, I saw a lot of messages from people saying, I hope this, you know, shows me my life purpose. I want to awaken to my life's purpose, and for a lot of people, they want that to be something grand. They want it to be, you know, saving starving children in India and Africa.

They want it to be some, you know, great description or something, but what you're saying is, is that if we allow ourselves to be fully present with whatever our chosen function is in life, and whatever difficulties might arise, that there is sacredness in the difficulty.

[Speaker 1] (2:32:26 - 2:32:26)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:32:26 - 2:32:27)

If we allow it to be.

[Speaker 1] (2:32:28 - 2:32:45)

Yes, and be fully present with whatever it, the situation is now. Yes. And then go from there.

So, because then your inner self changes, when you're fully present with the situation, you're no longer putting up internal resistance to life.

[Speaker 2] (2:32:45 - 2:32:54)

Even if there is that thing that you call, there's something that you call background happiness, there's something that happened or needs to happen, or someone who did something.

[Speaker 1] (2:32:54 - 2:32:55)

Yes, background unhappiness.

[Speaker 2] (2:32:55 - 2:33:17)

Background unhappiness. There's something that happened or needs it. He refers to that on page 114, everybody.

There's something that needs to happen in my life before I can be at peace. Something happened in the past that should not have happened. Something is happening now that should not be happening.

How do we make peace with the background unhappiness of our lives?

[Speaker 1] (2:33:17 - 2:33:51)

Yes, you recognize the background unhappiness as not a content base, but as structural. It's the structure of the egoic mind to create that. We had the same when Jenny asked her question.

Right. We had the similar thing. The guilt feelings that she had was part of the background structure of the ego.

And no matter what situation, if you haven't tackled or recognized the structure of the ego in yourself as certain thought forms that repeat themselves, no matter what situation you go into, they will come up in some new form, but basically the same structure.

[Speaker 2] (2:33:53 - 2:34:00)

I got it. I got it. So the secret to happiness, you say, there's so many people were writing about this on the web.

[Speaker 9] (2:34:00 - 2:34:00)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:34:01 - 2:34:48)

The secret to happiness, everybody. Page 115. There are three words that convey the secret of the art of living, the secret of all success and happiness.

One with life being one with life is being one with now. You say you then realize that you don't live your life, but life lives you. Life is the dancer and you are the dance.

I have to tell you, I love this book, but I was like, gee, I thought life was the was the dance and I was the dancer. And there are a lot of people on on the web who are saying the same thing. Can you explain how life is the dancer and we are the dance?

Why aren't we the dancer?

[Speaker 1] (2:34:49 - 2:35:48)

You are not separate from life. So whatever any form is a dancer, life is dancing the dance of form. One could say every human being and everything that's exists is part of the dance of life.

That which moves you, the very consciousness that animates your being, that animates every cell of your body, that produces thoughts too, the very consciousness that you are is the one universal, the one life. And that permeates everything. So the entire universe is permeated by that consciousness, by life, which is another word for God.

God. I don't see God as an entity that is in a particular place somewhere, but as the essence, the intelligence, the animating life essence behind all life forms. It's the eternal.

[Speaker 2] (2:35:49 - 2:35:50)

The totality.

[Speaker 9] (2:35:50 - 2:35:50)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:35:50 - 2:36:02)

It's the totality. You see God. You're saying that God is your idea of God is the totality of the essence of all life form.

[Speaker 1] (2:36:03 - 2:36:46)

Yes. And ultimately you are not separate from that. It's the egoic mind that says my life.

The moment you say my life, you've already separated yourself from life. It's a thought. You have a thought to say, this is my life.

And then you think, oh, I can lose my life. I am not separate from life because I am life. It's only through the structure of language that you create the illusion of separation.

The dog still knows on a primordial level, the animal, the tree knows that it is one with life. So it doesn't have this fear of death and it doesn't see itself as separate from the rest of the universe.

[Speaker 2] (2:36:46 - 2:36:49)

So let me ask you the big question. You have no fear of death?

[Speaker 1] (2:36:49 - 2:37:01)

No. No. The ego has dissolved.

And so only the ego fears death. I know there is no death. You know there is no death.

[Speaker 2] (2:37:05 - 2:37:06)

Okay. Tell me how.

[Speaker 1] (2:37:06 - 2:37:09)

I have a little thing at the end of this chapter.

[Speaker 2] (2:37:09 - 2:37:16)

I know you say the incontrovertible proof of immortality. I read that and I went, okay.

[Speaker 1] (2:37:16 - 2:38:09)

I've done a little thing I did there. Usually when people talk about immortality, they use certain arguments, perhaps from physics. They say the energy gets never is destroyed.

Energy can only become transformed. So the vital energy that is your life, because energy cannot be destroyed, must survive in some form. That's often the argument for the survival of that life.

There is no death, only the form dissolves. That's one way you can approach it. But what I thought I'd do, I look at the structure of this sentence of language that says my life, or I have a life, because most people believe that they have a life.

And they also believe that they can lose their life. Now, if you look at that sentence and say, I can lose my life, then I am separate from life.

[Speaker 2] (2:38:09 - 2:38:14)

So there is no such thing as my life, you say at the end of this chapter, page 128.

[Speaker 1] (2:38:15 - 2:38:32)

Because I am life. I am not separate from life. I am an expression of the one life, a temporary expression in this form of the one timeless and formless life.

So I don't have a life because I am life, expressing itself as this form.

[Speaker 2] (2:38:32 - 2:38:59)

OPRAH WINFREY Okay. So what happens when you, two weeks ago, talked about your mother and father lying in the casket, and you realized that the life force or formlessness, that they were lying in the casket and there were these bodies, but they were not there. They were not there.

So we're not our bodies. We do know that. Everybody who's reading this book knows.

We're not our bodies. We do get that.

[Speaker 1] (2:38:59 - 2:39:37)

OLE GROSSMAN Yes. And once you can actually sense that, it's not just a belief. You can also see that you're not your body, even if you just approach it logically and see that when there's a dead body, then that being is not there anymore.

There's only the flesh and the bones. And when the being isn't there anymore, the flesh and the bones very quickly dissolve. When the animating presence isn't there anymore, all the atoms and molecules separate and go their own way, because the animating presence is not there anymore.

[Speaker 2] (2:39:38 - 2:40:40)

OPRAH WINFREY Okay. So continuing here, so there's no such thing as my life, and I don't have a life. I am life.

I and life are one. It cannot be otherwise. So how could I lose my life?

How can I lose something that I don't have in the first place? How can I lose something that I am? It is impossible.

So what is happening here is I just got it, hello, hello, hello, bing, bing, bing, bing. I got it. We are confusing the I am life force with our bodies.

We're confusing that. So when this dies and becomes the shell and dissipates and the atoms go wherever they go, back into the ground, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, we are confusing that which is the physical form, the human, we're confusing that with the being. And they are separate.

[Speaker 1] (2:40:40 - 2:41:49)

Yes. So another way, if you don't like the word life, you can say the universe. People believe that I am here, and there's the rest of the universe.

And they believe I have come into this universe. They don't know from where. I've come into this universe.

It would be more appropriate to feel that you have come out of this universe, because you are this universe experiencing itself very briefly as a human, as a human, as a human. I got that. And so it wants to do that.

I got that. It's wonderful when you realize there's more to you than a person. You are the universe expressing, expressing itself.

Yes. And experiencing as a human, as a human. And it's called Eckhart.

Yes. For a little while, for a little while. And then it goes through other experiences.

And then where do we go, Eckhart? Could you tell us that? Well, let's see what happens.

Otherwise, you take the fun out of it. If you knew the rest of your life, already the fun would be taken out of it.

[Speaker 2] (2:41:49 - 2:42:16)

Oh, okay. All right. Well, before we say goodbye, I know there's lots we did not get to in this chapter.

We could have spent, you know, two or three weeks on this one chapter. But what would you say is the essence of this chapter? The essence of this chapter?

Yeah. The role-playing chapter. What I said in the beginning, that we're humans and beings.

And in this body, trying to combine, trying to live through the two.

[Speaker 1] (2:42:17 - 2:42:51)

Yes. It's balancing the human and the being, so that you can be function in this world of form, where you have to do things and fulfill your function. At the same time, not lose yourself in that.

Be rooted in the depth of being, so that you're not lost in form. So there's a depth to you and rootedness in that stillness, that aliveness. And then from there, you function out here.

And there's always then a peace in the background. A peace in the background. No matter what's happening out there.

[Speaker 2] (2:42:51 - 2:43:02)

And most particularly, not to be attached to, defined by, the roles that we play in life and realize what they are. Just roles.

[Speaker 1] (2:43:02 - 2:43:02)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:43:02 - 2:43:03)

Yes. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:43:03 - 2:43:13)

And relinquish the role when it's not required anymore. When your children grow up, you don't need to be a mother or father. You don't need to play that role anymore.

[Speaker 2] (2:43:13 - 2:43:18)

See, so many people think that is who they are. And so when their children grow up, they don't know who they are anymore.

[Speaker 1] (2:43:19 - 2:43:23)

Yes. Can be a crisis. Or people retire.

That's right. They had identified.

[Speaker 2] (2:43:23 - 2:43:24)

And they were their job.

[Speaker 1] (2:43:24 - 2:43:26)

Yes. And then, who am I?

[Speaker 2] (2:43:26 - 2:43:29)

Yeah, you were talking about in Japan, where it used to be, you kept your job for life.

[Speaker 1] (2:43:29 - 2:43:30)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:43:30 - 2:43:34)

And you were sharing with us the last time about a man who committed suicide.

[Speaker 1] (2:43:34 - 2:43:42)

There's been many cases of people in Japan who lost their jobs and committed suicide, because they were so identified. Their company was their sense of self.

[Speaker 2] (2:43:44 - 2:45:12)

Well, fascinating. I want to thank all of you around the world for making this really a remarkable experience, for making it possible. Eckhart and I will be here again next Monday at 8 p.m. Tell all your friends. Share the book with them. If they say, I don't get it, that's OK. That's really OK.

That's OK. They'll have the book and maybe pick it up a year from now, two years from now, 10 years from now. This fourth class will be available on demand starting tomorrow, just like all the other classes, for free here at Oprah.com.

And if you want to download a podcast of any of our classes, you can also do that tomorrow at Oprah.com and at iTunes. Your homework assignment for this week is to update your workbook. Next week, it's the chapter many of you have been waiting for, Chapter 5, The Pain Body.

The Pain Body. If you feel burdened by your past, begin to learn how to lighten that load. That's going to be really very exciting.

Now, many of you have been asking about our new Earth theme music. The song is called We Are One Earth, and it was produced by Harpo Sounds, our in-house music label. Beginning tomorrow, it will be available as a free download on iTunes at Oprah.com.

So enjoy it, those of you who've asked us for it. This was fun. This was fun.

And so let's just wait to see what happens. Let's just wait to see what happens. Thank you so much.

See you in class next week. Bye, everybody.

2008-Eckhart Tolle Oprah A New Earth Audiobook Podcast Chapter05

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 55:27)

CHAPTER FIVE THE PAIN BODY The greater part of most people's thinking is involuntary, automatic, and repetitive. It is no more than a kind of mental static and fulfils no real purpose. Strictly speaking, you don't think.

Thinking happens to you. The statement, I think, implies volition. It implies that you have a say in the matter, that there's choice involved on your part.

For most people, this is not yet the case. I think is just as false a statement as I digest or I circulate my blood. Digestion happens, circulation happens, thinking happens.

The voice in the head has a life of its own. Most people are at the mercy of that voice. They are possessed by thought, by the mind.

And since the mind is conditioned by the past, you are then forced to re-enact the past again and again. The eastern term for this is karma. When you are identified with that voice, you don't know this, of course.

If you knew it, you would no longer be possessed because you are only truly possessed when you mistake the possessing entity for who you are, that is to say, when you become it. For thousands of years, humanity has been increasingly mind-possessed, failing to recognize the possessing entity as not-self. Through complete identification with the mind, a false sense of self, the ego, came into existence.

The density of the ego depends on the degree to which you, the consciousness, are identified with your mind, with thinking. Thinking is no more than a tiny aspect of the totality of consciousness, the totality of who you are. The degree of identification with the mind differs from person to person.

Some people enjoy periods of freedom from it, however brief, and the peace, joy and aliveness they experience in those moments make life worth living. These are also the moments when creativity, love and compassion arise. Others are constantly trapped in the egoic state.

They are alienated from themselves as well as from others and the world around them. When you look at them, you may see the tension in their face, perhaps a furrowed brow, or the absent or staring expression in their eyes. Most of their attention is absorbed by thinking, and so they don't really see you, and they are not really listening to you.

They are not present in any situation, their attention being either in the past or future, which, of course, exist only in the mind as thought-forms. Or they relate to you through some kind of role they play, and so are not themselves. Most people are alienated from who they are, and some are alienated to such a degree that the way they behave and interact is recognized as phony by almost everyone, except those who are equally phony, equally alienated from who they are.

Alienation means you don't feel at ease in any situation, any place or with any person, not even with yourself. You are always trying to get home, but never feel at home. Some of the greatest writers of the twentieth century, such as Franz Kafka, Albert Camus, T.

S. Eliot and James Joyce, recognized alienation as the universal dilemma of human existence, probably felt it deeply within themselves, and so were able to express it brilliantly in their works. They don't offer a solution, their contribution is to show us a reflection of the human predicament, so that we can see it more clearly.

To see one's predicament clearly is a first step towards going beyond it. The Birth of Emotion In addition to the movement of thought, although not entirely separate from it, there is another dimension to the ego, emotion. This is not to say that all thinking and all emotion are of the ego.

They turn into ego only when you identify with them, and they take you over completely, that is to say, when they become I. The physical organism, your body, has its own intelligence, as does the organism of every other life form. And that intelligence reacts to what your mind is saying, reacts to your thoughts.

So emotion is the body's reaction to your mind. The body's intelligence is, of course, an inseparable part of universal intelligence, one of its countless manifestations. It gives temporary cohesion to the atoms and molecules that make up your physical organism.

It is the organizing principle behind the workings of all the organs of the body, the conversion of oxygen and food into energy, the heartbeat and circulation of the blood, the immune system that protects the body from invaders, the translation of sensory input into nerve impulses that are sent to the brain, decoded there, and reassembled into a coherent inner picture of outer reality. All these, as well as thousands of other simultaneously occurring functions, are coordinated perfectly by that intelligence. You don't run your body.

The intelligence does. It also is in charge of the organism's responses to its environment. Any life form, it is the same intelligence that brought the plant into physical form and then manifests as the flower that comes out of the plant, the flower that opens its petals in the morning to receive the rays of the sun and closes them at night-time.

It is the same intelligence that manifests as Gaia, the complex living being that is planet earth. This intelligence gives rise to instinctive reactions of the organism to any threat or challenge. It produces responses in animals that appear to be akin to human emotions, anger, fear, pleasure.

These instinctive responses could be considered primordial forms of emotion. In certain situations, human beings experience instinctive responses in the same way that animals do. In the face of danger, when the survival of the organism is threatened, the heart beats faster, the muscles contract, breathing becomes rapid in preparation for fight or flight.

Primordial fear. When being cornered, a sudden flare-up of intense energy gives strength to the body that it didn't have before. Primordial anger.

These instinctive responses appear akin to emotions, but are not emotions in the true sense of the word. The fundamental difference between an instinctive response and an emotion is this. An instinctive response is the body's direct response to some external situation.

An emotion, on the other hand, is the body's response to a thought. Indirectly, an emotion can also be a response to an actual situation or event, but it will be a response to the event seen through the filter of a mental interpretation, the filter of thought, that is to say, through the mental concepts of good and bad, like and dislike, me and mine. For example, it is likely you won't feel any emotion when you are told that someone's car has been stolen, but when it is your car, you will probably feel upset.

It is amazing how much emotion a little concept like my can generate. Although the body is very intelligent, it cannot tell the difference between an actual situation and a thought. It reacts to every thought as if it were a reality.

It doesn't know it is just a thought. To the body, a worrisome, fearful thought means, I'm in danger, and it responds accordingly, even though you may be lying in a warm and comfortable bed at night. The heart beats faster, muscles contract, breathing becomes rapid.

There's a buildup of energy, but since the danger is only a mental fiction, the energy has no outlet. Part of it is fed back to the mind and generates even more anxious thought. The rest of the energy turns toxic and interferes with the harmonious functioning of the body.

Emotions and the Ego The ego is not only the unobserved mind, the voice in the head which pretends to be you, but also the unobserved emotions that are the body's reaction to what the voice in the head is saying. We have already seen what kind of thinking the egoic voice engages in most of the time, and the dysfunction inherent in the structure of its thought processes, regardless of content. This dysfunctional thinking is what the body reacts to with negative emotion.

The voice in the head tells a story that the body believes in and reacts to. Those reactions are the emotions. The emotions, in turn, feed energy back to the thoughts that created the emotion in the first place.

This is the vicious circle between unexamined thoughts and emotions, giving rise to emotional thinking and emotional story-making. The emotional component of ego differs from person to person. In some egos it is greater than in others.

Thoughts that trigger emotional responses in the body may sometimes come so fast that before the mind has had time to voice them, the body has already responded with an emotion, and the emotion has turned into a reaction. Those thoughts exist at a pre-verbal stage and could be called unspoken, unconscious assumptions. They have their origin in a person's past conditioning, usually from early childhood.

People cannot be trusted, would be an example of such an unconscious assumption in a person whose primordial relationships that is to say with parents or siblings were not supportive and did not inspire trust. Here are a few more common unconscious assumptions. Nobody respects and appreciates me.

I need to fight to survive. There is never enough money. Life always lets you down.

I don't deserve abundance. I don't deserve love. Unconscious assumptions create emotions in the body which in turn generate mind activity and or instant reactions.

In this way they create your personal reality. Your continuously disrupts the body's natural state of well-being. Almost every human body is under a great deal of strain and stress, not because it is threatened by some external factor, but from within the mind.

The body has an ego attached to it and it cannot but respond to all the dysfunctional thought patterns that make up the ego. Thus a stream of negative emotion accompanies the stream of incessant and compulsive thinking. What is a negative emotion?

An emotion that is toxic to the body and interferes with its balance and harmonious functioning. Fear, anxiety, anger, bearing a grudge, sadness, hatred or intense dislike, jealousy, envy all disrupt the energy flow through the body, affect the heart, the immune system, digestion, production of hormones and so on. Even mainstream medicine, although it knows very little about how the ego operates yet, is beginning to recognize the connection between negative emotional states and physical disease.

An emotion that does harm to the body also infects the people you come into contact with and indirectly, through a process of chain reaction, countless others you never meet. There is a generic term for all negative emotions. Unhappiness.

Do positive emotions then have the opposite effect on the physical body? Do they strengthen the immune system, invigorate and heal the body? They do indeed.

But we need to differentiate between positive emotions that are ego generated and deeper emotions that emanate from your natural state of connectedness with being. Positive emotions generated by the ego already contain within themselves their opposite into which they can quickly turn. Here are some examples.

What the ego calls love is possessiveness and addictive clinging that can turn into hate within a second. Anticipation about an upcoming event, which is the ego's over-valuation of future, easily turns into its opposite, let down or disappointment, when the event is over or doesn't fulfill the ego's expectations. Praise and recognition make you feel alive and happy one day.

Being criticized or ignored make you dejected and unhappy the next. The pleasure of a wild party turns into bleakness and a hangover the next morning. There is no good without bad, no high without low.

Ego generated emotions are derived from the mind's identification with external factors which are, of course, all unstable and liable to change at any moment. The deeper emotions are not real emotions at all but states of being. Emotions exist within the realm of opposites.

States of being can be obscured but they have no opposite. They emanate from within you as the love, joy and peace that are aspects of your true nature. The duck with a human mind.

In The Power of Now I mentioned my observation that after two ducks get into a fight, which never lasts long, they will separate and float off in opposite directions. Then each duck will flap its wings vigorously a few times, thus releasing the surplus energy that built up during the fight. After they flap their wings, they float on peacefully as if nothing had ever happened.

If the duck had a human mind, it would keep the fight alive by thinking, by story-making. This would probably be the duck's story. I don't believe what he just did.

He came to within five inches of me. He thinks he owns this pond. He has no consideration for my private space.

I'll never trust him again. Next time he'll try something else just to annoy me. I'm sure he's plotting something already.

But I'm not going to stand for this. I'll teach him a lesson he won't forget. And on and on the mind spins its tails, still thinking and talking about it days, months or years later.

As far as the body is concerned, the fight is still continuing, and the energy it generates in response to all those thoughts is emotion, which in turn generates more thinking. This becomes the emotional thinking of the ego. You can see how problematic the duck's life would become if it had a human mind.

But this is how most humans live all the time. No situation or event is ever really finished. The mind and the mind-mate, me and my story, keep it going.

We are a species that has lost its way. Everything natural, every flower or tree, and every animal have important lessons to teach us if we would only stop, look and listen. Our duck's lesson is this.

Flap your wings, which translates as let go of the story, and return to the only place of power, the present moment. The inability or rather unwillingness of the human mind to let go of the past is beautifully illustrated in the story of two Zen monks, Tanzan and Eikido, who were walking along a country road that had become extremely muddy after heavy rains. Near a village they came upon a young woman who was trying to cross the road, but the mud was so deep it would have ruined the silk kimono she was wearing.

Tanzan at once picked her up and carried her to the other side. The monks walked on in silence. Five hours later, as they were approaching the lodging temple, Eikido couldn't restrain himself any longer.

''Why did you carry that girl across the road?'' he asked. ''We monks are not supposed to do things like that.'' ''I put the girl down hours ago,'' said Tanzan. ''Are you still carrying her?

Now imagine what life would be like for someone who lived like Eikido all the time, unable or unwilling to let go internally of situations, accumulating more and more stuff inside, and you get a sense of what life is like for the majority of people on our planet. What a heavy burden of past they carry around with them in their minds. The past lives in you as memories, but memories in themselves are not a problem.

In fact, it is through memory that we learn from the past and from past mistakes. It is only when memories, that is to say, thoughts about the past, take you over completely that they turn into a burden, turn problematic, and become part of your sense of self. Your personality, which is conditioned by the past, then becomes your present.

Your memories are invested with a sense of self, and your story becomes who you perceive yourself to be. This little me is an illusion that obscures your true identity as timeless and formless presence. Your story, however, consists not only of mental but also of emotional memory, old emotion that is being revived continuously.

As in the case of the monk who carried the burden of his resentment for five hours by feeding it with his thoughts, most people carry a large amount of unnecessary baggage, both mental and emotional, throughout their lives. They limit themselves through grievances, regret, hostility, guilt. Their emotional thinking has become their self, and so they hang on to the old emotion because it strengthens their identity.

Because of the human tendency to perpetuate old emotion, almost everyone carries in his or her energy field an accumulation of old emotional pain, which I call the pain body. We can, however, stop adding to the pain body that we already have. We can learn to break the habit of accumulating and perpetuating old emotion by flapping our wings, metaphorically speaking, and refrain from mentally dwelling on the past, regardless of whether something happened yesterday or thirty years ago.

We can learn not to keep situations or events alive in our minds, but to return our attention continuously to the pristine, timeless present moment rather than be caught up in mental movie-making. Our very presence then becomes our identity, rather than our thoughts and emotions. Nothing ever happened in the past that can prevent you from being present now.

And if the past cannot prevent you from being present now, what power does it have, individual and collective? Any negative emotion that is not fully faced and seen for what it is in the moment it arises does not completely dissolve. It leaves behind a remnant of pain.

Children in particular find strong negative emotions too overwhelming to cope with and tend to try not to feel them. In the absence of a fully conscious adult who guides them with love and compassionate understanding into facing the emotion directly, choosing not to feel it is indeed the only option for the child at that time. Unfortunately, that early defense mechanism usually remains in place when the child becomes an adult.

The emotion still lives in him or her unrecognized and manifests indirectly, for example as anxiety, anger, outbursts of violence, a mood, or even as a physical illness. In some cases it interferes with or sabotages every intimate relationship. Most psychotherapists have met patients who claimed initially to have had a totally happy childhood, and later the opposite turned out to be the case.

Those may be the more extreme cases. But nobody can go through childhood without suffering emotional pain. Even if both of your parents were enlightened, you would still find yourself growing up in a largely unconscious world.

The remnants of pain left behind by every strong negative emotion that is not fully faced, accepted, and then let go of, join together to form an energy field that lives in the very cells of your body. It consists not just of childhood pain, but also painful emotions that were added to it later in adolescence and during your adult life, much of it created by the voice of the ego. It is the emotional pain that is your unavoidable companion when a false sense of self is the basis of your life.

Old but still very much alive emotion that lives in almost every human being is the pain body. The pain body, however, is not just individual in nature. It also partakes of the pain suffered by countless humans throughout the history of humanity, which is a history of continuous tribal warfare, of enslavement, pillage, rape, torture, and other forms of violence.

This pain still lives in the collective psyche of humanity and is being added to on a daily basis, as you can verify when you watch the news tonight or look at the drama in people's relationships. The collective pain body is probably encoded within every human's DNA, although we haven't discovered it there yet. Every newborn who comes into this world already carries an emotional pain body.

In some it is heavier, more dense than in others. Some babies are quite happy most of the time. Others seem to carry an enormous amount of unhappiness within them.

It is true that some babies cry a great deal because they are not given enough love and attention, but others cry for no apparent reason, almost as if they were trying to make everyone around them as unhappy as they are. And often they succeed. They have come into this world with a heavy share of human pain.

Other babies may cry frequently because they can sense the emanation of their mother's and father's negative emotion, and it causes them pain and also causes their pain body to grow already by absorbing energy from the parents' pain bodies. Whatever the case may be, as the baby's physical body grows, so does the pain body. An infant with only a light pain body is not necessarily going to be a spiritually more advanced man or woman than somebody with a dense one.

In fact, the opposite is often the case. People with heavy pain bodies usually have a better chance to awaken spiritually than those with a relatively light one. Whereas some of them do remain trapped in their heavy pain bodies, many others reach a point where they cannot live with their unhappiness any longer, and so their motivation to awaken becomes strong.

Why is the suffering body of Christ, his face distorted in agony and his body bleeding from countless wounds, such a significant image in the collective consciousness of humanity? Millions of people, particularly in medieval times, would not have related to it as deeply as they did if something within themselves had not resonated with it, if they had not unconsciously recognized it as an outer representation of their own inner reality, the pain body. They were not yet conscious enough to recognize it directly within themselves, but it was the beginning of their becoming aware of it.

Christ can be seen as the archetypal human, embodying both the pain and the possibility of transcendence. How the pain body renews itself The pain body is a semi-autonomous energy form that lives within most human beings, an entity made up of emotion. It has its own primitive intelligence, not unlike a cunning animal, and its intelligence is directed primarily at survival.

Like all life forms, it periodically needs to feed, to take in new energy, and the food it requires to replenish itself consists of energy that is compatible with its own, which is to say, energy that vibrates at a similar frequency. Any emotionally painful experience can be used as food by the pain body. That's why it thrives on negative thinking as well as drama in relationships.

The pain body is an addiction to unhappiness. It may be shocking when you realize for the first time that there's something within you that periodically seeks emotional negativity, seeks unhappiness. You need even more awareness to see it in yourself than to recognize it in another person.

Once the unhappiness has taken you over, not only do you not want an end to it, but you want to make others just as miserable as you are in order to feed on their negative emotional reactions. In most people, the pain body has a dormant and an active stage. When it is dormant, you easily forget that you carry a heavy, dark cloud or a dormant volcano inside you, depending on the energy field of your particular pain body.

How long it remains dormant varies from person to person. A few weeks is the most common, but it can be a few days or months. In rare cases, the pain body can lie in hibernation for years before it gets triggered by some event.

The pain body feeds on your thoughts. The pain body awakens from its dormancy when it gets hungry, when it is time to replenish itself. Alternatively, it may get triggered by an event at any time.

The pain body that is ready to feed can use the most insignificant event as a trigger, something somebody says or does, or even a thought. If you live alone or there is nobody around you at the time, the pain body will feed on your thoughts. Suddenly, your thinking becomes deeply negative.

You were most likely unaware that just prior to the influx of negative thinking, a wave of emotion invaded your mind. As a dark and heavy mood, as anxiety, or fiery anger. All thought is energy, and the pain body is now feeding on the energy of your thoughts.

But it cannot feed on any thought. You don't need to be particularly sensitive to notice that a positive thought has a totally different feeling tone than a negative one. It is the same energy, but it vibrates at a different frequency.

A happy positive thought is indigestible to the pain body. It can only feed on negative thoughts, because only those thoughts are compatible with its own energy field. All things are vibrating energy fields in ceaseless motion.

The chair you sit on, the book you are holding in your hands appear solid and motionless only because that is how your senses perceive their vibrational frequency. That is to say, the incessant movement of the molecules, atoms, electrons and subatomic particles that together create what you perceive as a chair, a book, a tree, or a body. What we perceive as physical matter is energy vibrating, moving, at a particular range of frequencies.

Thoughts consist of the same energy vibrating at a higher frequency than matter, which is why they cannot be seen or touched. Thoughts have their own range of frequencies, with negative thoughts at the lower end of the scale and positive thoughts at the higher. The vibrational frequency of the pain body resonates with that of negative thoughts, which is why only those thoughts can feed the pain body.

The usual pattern of thought creating emotion is reversed in the case of the pain body, at least initially. Emotion from the pain body quickly gains control of your thinking, and once your mind has been taken over by the pain body, your thinking becomes negative. The voice in your head will be telling sad, anxious, or angry stories about yourself or your life, about other people, about past, future, or imaginary events.

The voice will be blaming, accusing, complaining, imagining. And you are totally identified with whatever the voice says, believe all its distorted thoughts. At that point, the addiction to unhappiness has set in.

It is not so much that you cannot stop your train of negative thoughts, but that you don't want to. This is because the pain body at that time is living through you, pretending to be you. And to the pain body, pain is pleasure.

It eagerly devours every negative thought. In fact, the usual voice in your head has now become the voice of the pain body. It has taken over the internal dialogue.

The vicious circle becomes established between the pain body and your thinking. Every thought feeds the pain body, and in turn the pain body generates more thoughts. At some point, after a few hours or even a few days, it has replenished itself and returns to its dormant stage, leaving behind a depleted organism and a body that is much more susceptible to illness.

If that sounds to you like a psychic parasite, you're right. That's exactly what it is. How the pain body feeds on drama.

If there are other people around, preferably your partner or close family member, the pain body will attempt to provoke them, push their buttons, as the expression goes, so it can feed on the ensuing drama. Pain bodies love intimate relationships and families, because that is where they get most of their food. It is hard to resist another person's pain body that is determined to draw you into reaction.

Instinctively it knows your weakest, most vulnerable points. If it doesn't succeed the first time, it will try again and again. It is raw emotion looking for more emotion.

The other person's pain body wants to awaken yours, so that both pain bodies can mutually energize each other. Many relationships go through violent and destructive pain body episodes at regular intervals. It is almost unbearably painful for a young child to have to witness the emotional violence of their parents' pain bodies, and yet that is the fate of millions of children all over the world, the nightmare of their daily existence.

That is also one of the main ways in which the human pain body is passed on from generation to generation. After each episode, the partners make up, and there is an interval of relative peace to the limited extent that the ego allows it. The human pain body will often activate the pain body, particularly in men, but also in some women.

When a person becomes drunk, he goes through a complete personality change as the pain body takes him over. A deeply unconscious person whose pain body habitually replenishes itself through physical violence often directs it towards his spouse or children. When he becomes sober, he is truly sorry and may say he will never do this again, and he means it.

The person who is talking and making promises, however, is not the entity that commits the violence, and so you can be sure that it will happen again and again unless he becomes present, recognizes the pain body within himself, and thus disidentifies from it. In some cases, counseling can help him do that. Most pain bodies want to both inflict and suffer pain, but some are predominantly either perpetrators or victims.

In either case, they feed on violence, whether emotional or physical. Some couples who may think they have fallen in love are actually feeling drawn to each other because their respective pain bodies complement each other. Sometimes the roles of perpetrator and victim are already clearly prescribed the first time they meet.

Some marriages that are thought to be made in heaven are actually made in hell. If you have ever lived with a cat, you will know that even when the cat seems to be asleep, it still knows what is going on, because at the slightest unusual noise its ears will move towards it and its eyes may open slightly. Dormant pain bodies are the same.

On some level they are still awake, ready to jump into action when an appropriate trigger presents itself. In intimate relationships, pain bodies are often clever enough to lie low until you start living together and preferably have signed a contract committing yourself to be with this person for the rest of your life. You don't just marry your wife or husband, you also marry her or his pain body.

And your spouse marries yours. It can be quite a shock when, perhaps not long after moving in together or after the honeymoon, you find suddenly one day there's a complete personality change in your partner. Their voice becomes harsh or shrill as they accuse you, blame you, or shout at you, most likely over a relatively trivial matter.

Or they become totally withdrawn. What's wrong, you ask? Nothing is wrong, they say.

But the intensely hostile energy they emanate is saying, everything is wrong. When you look into their eyes there's no light in them any more. It is as if a heavy veil has descended, and the being you know and love, which before was able to shine through their ego, is now totally obscured.

A complete stranger seems to be looking back at you, and in their eyes there's hatred, hostility, bitterness, or anger. When they speak to you, it is not your spouse or partner who is speaking, but the pain body speaking through them. Whatever they are saying is the pain body's version of reality.

A reality completely distorted by fear, hostility, anger, and a desire to inflict and receive more pain. At this point you may wonder whether this is your partner's real face that you had never seen before, and whether you made a dreadful mistake in choosing this person. It is, of course, not the real face, just the pain body which temporarily has taken possession.

It would be hard to find a partner who does not carry a pain body, but it would perhaps be wise to choose someone whose pain body is not excessively dense. Dense Pain Bodies Some people carry dense pain bodies that are never completely dormant. They may be smiling and making polite conversation, but you do not need to be psychic to sense that seething ball of unhappy emotion in them just underneath the surface, waiting for the next event to react to, the next person to blame or confront, the next thing to be unhappy about.

Their pain bodies can never get enough, are always hungry. They magnify the ego's need for enemies. Through their reactivity, relatively insignificant matters are blown up out of all proportion, as they try to pull other people into their drama by getting them to react.

Some get involved in protracted and ultimately pointless battles or court cases with organizations or individuals. Others are consumed by obsessive hatred towards an ex-spouse or partner. Unaware of the pain they carry inside, by their reaction they project the pain into events and situations.

Due to a complete lack of self-awareness, they cannot tell the difference between an event and their reaction to the event. To them, the unhappiness and even the pain itself is out there in the event or situation. Being unconscious of their inner state, they don't even know that they are deeply unhappy, that they are suffering.

Sometimes people with such dense pain bodies become activists fighting for a cause. The cause may indeed be worthy, and they are sometimes successful at first in getting things done. However, the negative energy that flows into what they say and do, and their unconscious need for enemies and conflict, tend to generate increasing opposition to their cause.

Usually they also end up creating enemies within their own organization, because wherever they go, they find reasons for feeling bad, and so their pain body continues to find exactly what it is looking for. The Media and the Pain Body If you were not familiar with our contemporary civilization, if you had come here from another age or another planet, one of the things that would amaze you is that millions of people love and pay money to watch humans kill and inflict pain on each other and call it entertainment. Why do violent films attract such large audiences?

There is an entire industry, a large part of which fuels the human addiction to unhappiness. People obviously watch those films because they want to feel bad. What is it in humans that loves to feel bad and calls it good?

The pain body, of course. A large part of the entertainment industry caters to it. So, in addition to reactivity, negative thinking and personal drama, the pain body also renews itself vicariously through the cinema and television screen.

Pain bodies write and produce these films, and pain bodies pay to watch them. Is it always wrong to show and watch violence on television and the cinema screen? Does all such violence cater to the pain body?

At the current evolutionary stage of humanity, violence is still not only all-pervasive but even on the increase, as the old egoic consciousness, amplified by the collective pain body, intensifies prior to its inevitable demise. If films show violence in its wider context, if they show its origin and its consequences, show what it does to the victim as well as the perpetrator, show the collective unconsciousness that lies behind it and is passed on from generation to generation, the anger and hatred that lives in humans as the pain body, then those films can fulfill a vital function in the awakening of humanity. They can act as a mirror in which humanity sees its own insanity.

That in you which recognizes madness as madness, even if it is your own, is sanity, is the arising awareness, is the end of insanity. Such films do exist and they do not fuel the pain body. Some of the best anti-war films are films that show the reality of war rather than a glamorized version of it.

The pain body can only feed on films in which violence is portrayed as normal or even desirable human behavior or that glorify violence with the sole purpose of generating negative emotion in the viewer and so become a fix for the pain-addicted pain body. The popular tabloid press does not primarily sell news but negative emotion, food for the pain body. Outrage screams the three-inch headline or BASTARDS!

The British tabloid press excels at this. They know that negative emotion sells far more papers than news does. There is a tendency in the news media in general, including television, to thrive on negative news.

The worse things get, the more excited the presenters become and often the negative excitement is generated by the media itself. Pain bodies just love it. The collective female pain body.

The collective dimension of the pain body has different strands in it. Tribes, nations, races, all have their own collective pain body, some heavier than others, and most members of that tribe, nation or race have a share in it to a greater or lesser degree. Almost every woman has her share in the collective female pain body, which tends to become activated particularly just prior to the time of menstruation.

At that time, many women become overwhelmed by intense negative emotion. The suppression of the feminine principle, especially over the past 2,000 years, has enabled the ego to gain absolute supremacy in the collective human psyche. Although women have egos, of course, the ego can take root and grow more easily in the male form than in the female.

This is because women are less mind-identified than men. They are more in touch with the inner body and the intelligence of the organism where the intuitive faculties originate. The female form is less rigidly encapsulated than the male, has greater openness and sensitivity towards other life forms and is more tuned to the natural world.

If the balance between male and female energies had not been destroyed on our planet, the ego's growth would have been greatly curtailed. We would not have declared war on nature, and we would not be so completely alienated from our being. Nobody knows the exact figure because records were not kept, but it seems certain that during a 300-year period, between 3 and 5 million women were tortured and killed by the Holy Inquisition, an institution founded by the Roman Catholic Church to suppress heresy.

This surely ranks together with the Holocaust as one of the darkest chapters in human history. It was enough for a woman to show a love for animals, walk alone in the fields or woods, or gather medicinal plants to be branded a witch, then tortured and burned at the stake. The sacred feminine was declared demonic, and an entire dimension largely disappeared from human experience.

Other cultures and religions, such as Judaism, Islam and even Buddhism, also suppressed the female dimension, although in a less violent way. Women's status was reduced to being child-bearers and men's property. Males who denied the feminine even within themselves were now running the world, a world that was totally out of balance.

The rest is history, or rather, a case history of insanity. This fear of the feminine that could only be described as acute collective paranoia. We could say, of course, men were responsible.

But then why in many ancient pre-Christian civilizations, such as the Sumerian, Egyptian and Celtic, were women respected and the feminine principle not feared but revered? What is it that suddenly made men feel threatened by the female? The evolving ego in them.

It knew it could gain full control of our planet only through the male form, and to do so, it had to render the female powerless. In time, the ego also took over most women, although it could never become as deeply entrenched in them as in men. We now have a situation in which the suppression of the feminine has become internalized, even in most women.

The sacred feminine, because it is suppressed, is felt by many women as emotional pain. In fact, it has become part of their pain body, together with the accumulated pain suffered by women over millennia through childbirth, rape, slavery, torture and violent death. But things are changing rapidly now.

With many people becoming more conscious, the ego is losing its hold on the human mind. Because the ego was never as deeply rooted in women, it is losing its hold on women more quickly than on men. Certain countries in which many acts of collective violence were suffered or perpetrated have a heavier collective pain body than others.

This is why older nations tend to have stronger pain bodies. It is also why younger countries such as Canada or Australia, and those which have remained more sheltered from the surrounding madness such as Switzerland, tend to have lighter collective pain bodies. Of course, in those countries, people still have their personal pain body to deal with.

If you are sensitive enough, you can feel a heaviness in the energy field of certain countries as soon as you step off the plane. In other countries, one can sense an energy field of latent violence just underneath the surface of everyday life. In some nations, for example in the Middle East, the collective pain body is so acute that a significant part of the population finds itself forced to act it out in an endless and insane cycle of perpetration and retribution, through which the pain body renews itself continuously.

In countries where the pain body is heavy but no longer acute, there has been a tendency for people to try and desensitize themselves to the collective emotional pain. In Germany and Japan, through work, in some other countries through widespread indulgence in alcohol, which, however, can also have the opposite effect of stimulating the pain body, particularly if consumed in excess. China's heavy pain body is to some extent mitigated by the widespread practice of Tai Chi, which amazingly was not declared illegal by the communist government that otherwise feels threatened by anything it cannot control.

Every day in the streets and city parks, millions practice this movement meditation that stills the mind. This makes a considerable difference to the collective energy field and goes some way towards diminishing the pain body by reducing thinking and generating presence. Spiritual practices that involve the physical body, such as Tai Chi, Qigong and Yoga, are also increasingly being embraced in the Western world.

These practices do not create a separation between body and spirit and are helpful in weakening the pain body. They will play an important role in the global awakening. The collective racial pain body is pronounced in Jewish people who have suffered persecution over many centuries.

Not surprisingly, it is strong as well in Native Americans whose numbers were decimated and whose culture all but destroyed by the European settlers. In black Americans, too, the collective pain body is pronounced. Their ancestors were violently uprooted, beaten into submission and sold into slavery.

The foundation of American economic prosperity rested on the labor of four to five million black slaves. In fact, the suffering inflicted on Native and black Americans has not remained confined to those two races but has become part of the collective American pain body. It is always the case that both victim and perpetrator suffer the consequences of any acts of violence, oppression or brutality.

For what you do to others, you do to yourself. It doesn't really matter what proportion of your pain body belongs to your nation or race and what proportion is personal. In either case, you can only go beyond it by taking responsibility for your inner state now.

Even if blame seems more than justified, as long as you blame others, you keep feeding the pain body with your thoughts and remain trapped in your ego. There is only one perpetrator of evil on the planet, human unconsciousness. That realization is true forgiveness.

With forgiveness, your victim identity dissolves and your true power emerges, the power of presence. Instead of blaming the darkness, you bring in the light.

[Speaker 4] (55:30 - 55:31)

End of disc four.

[Speaker 2] (55:32 - 57:30)

Hi everybody, welcome again to class number five in our webcast series about Eckhart Tolle's A New Earth. We're at the halfway mark and I'd like to thank all of you who are committed to this work and make time every week to share this space with us and to give this to yourself. As of today, we've hit nearly 11 million streams and downloads of this series.

That's really uplifting. So together, I believe that we are beginning to create powerful changes in our lives as individuals and then putting that out into the world. Before we get started, I wanted to share something with all of you.

Our friend Elizabeth Lesser of the Omega Institute sent me a poem that I'd like to share with everybody. She sent it to me this week because I, several weeks ago, was talking about being under my trees and sensing the trees and so she emailed me this poem and said, here's a poem to be with your trees. It's called Lost by David Wagner and will be on our website for you to get later.

So listen to this, Eckhart. It says, stand still, the trees ahead and bushes beside you are not lost. Wherever you are is called here and you must treat it as a powerful stranger.

Must ask permission to know it and be known. The forest breathes. Listen.

It answers. I have made this place around you. If you leave it, you may come back again.

Saying, here, no two trees are the same to raven. No two branches are the same to wren. If what a tree or a bush does is lost on you, you are surely lost.

Stand still. The forest knows where you are. You must let it find you.

[Speaker 1] (57:32 - 57:34)

Don't you love that? That's beautiful.

[Speaker 2] (57:34 - 57:45)

Yes. So that's my point, to lead us into silence. Would you like to lead us into silence?

Yes. Eckhart has a call this week, everybody. I told you he's sounding very sexy now.

[Speaker 1] (57:50 - 59:14)

So when we go into silence, another way of putting it is to say we go into the present moment more deeply. So let's approach it from that angle today and say let's take our attention right now into this present moment, no matter what it contains on the surface, no matter what you're perceiving or what you're feeling. You bring your full acceptance to this moment as it is, no matter what form it takes.

And that aligns you with now and takes you into stillness. So that's all we do right now, and so we're still, just for a little while, sensing what the present moment is beyond the forms of the present moment, sensing what the essence of the present moment is because the essence of the present moment is life itself. So it's sensing that life that is the essence of now, which is more than what you see in the now and what you touch in the now.

It's deeper than that. You can only sense it. The external senses cannot perceive it.

So let's do this now and just be in the present moment.

[Speaker 2] (1:00:02 - 1:00:13)

All right. I'm actually finding it easier. The first time we did this, I was like, oh boy, we're going to be quiet for 10 seconds.

Now I think we're going like 40, 50 seconds.

[Speaker 1] (1:00:13 - 1:00:33)

Yes, and another strange thing is when you actually enter the present moment, it's a holy place no matter where you are, and this connects with the poem you read. If you bring your attention to it fully, every place you are is holy. So there's a sacredness to life that you become aware of when you take your attention into the present moment.

[Speaker 2] (1:00:34 - 1:00:49)

What I'm finding too, reading this book and then working with you every week, is that everything starts to be sacred. I mean, everything starts to be. You can find the sacred in the most ordinary of things.

[Speaker 1] (1:00:49 - 1:00:50)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:00:50 - 1:01:19)

And that there is a calmness and a stillness to almost everything if you can get quiet enough yourself to feel it. Yes. Yeah, that's what's happening to me.

Yes. As so many other people are experiencing whatever you're experiencing, how the reading of this book, The Awakening for You, is taking on whatever form it does in your life, that's what I'm seeing for myself. Yes.

Yeah. Everything's magical. Yes.

You never have to be bored, ever.

[Speaker 1] (1:01:19 - 1:01:34)

No, no. And the need for artificial stimulus goes when people continuously need to, whenever they get home, they need to switch something on to have some kind of entertainment. You can still enjoy entertainment, but you're not dependent anymore.

[Speaker 2] (1:01:34 - 1:02:43)

On that to fill you up. Yeah. Well, tonight we're discussing chapter five.

So glad we're in the pain body. So I wanted to just start with my idea of an overview of this chapter. You say that in this chapter that the human mind seems to be hooked on me and my story, constant mind chatter that keeps negative emotions alive and personalizes everything.

You say at the beginning of this chapter on page 129, I'm on everybody, that the greatest part of most people's thinking is involuntary, automatic, and repetitive. It's no more than a kind of mental static and fulfills no real purpose. Strictly speaking, you don't think thinking happens to you.

The statement, I think, implies volition, you say. It implies that you have a say in the matter, that there's a voice involved on your part. But really, you say, I think it's just as false a statement as I digest or I circulate my blood.

Digestion happens, circulation happens, thinking happens.

[Speaker 1] (1:02:43 - 1:03:36)

Yeah. So it's becoming aware that thinking happens to you all the time. The key is becoming aware of it.

It's happening to everybody until the awareness occurs, then you are identified with that voice in the head, with its repetitive thought patterns. And that is what most people are trapped in, and it makes up their superficial personality with all the continuous repetitive judgments and likes and dislikes and prejudices and whatever makes up the content of their egoic mind. So people are trapped in that and derive their sense of self from that, which is ultimately insubstantial, conditioned by the past, not who they are.

[Speaker 2] (1:03:36 - 1:03:55)

Absolutely. And you say also in Chapter 5, the pain body, you show how this addiction to being these thoughts in our head, this addiction to these thoughts in our head, to this negativity, is at the root of humanity's problems. On page 137, you write, we are a species that has lost its way.

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:03:55 - 1:04:43)

And we are lost, I could say also we are a species lost, we are lost in thought. We've lost ourselves in the mind. So looking for some kind of identity in the movement of thinking without ever really finding it.

So the most important step in any person's awakening is to realize that there is a voice in their head that doesn't stop speaking. When you realize all this, and then you begin to realize what kinds of things the voice is saying, repetitive judgments and so on, negative thoughts about yourself, about other people, about situations you are in, especially all these repetitive negative thoughts that many people are trapped with, you become aware of that.

[Speaker 2] (1:04:43 - 1:04:48)

Yes, and then you become aware that it's really just the story that you've told yourself about yourself.

[Speaker 1] (1:04:49 - 1:04:49)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:04:49 - 1:04:50)

And that's all it is.

[Speaker 1] (1:04:50 - 1:04:51)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:04:51 - 1:04:52)

All right. That it has no power.

[Speaker 1] (1:04:53 - 1:04:53)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:04:53 - 1:04:55)

Yes. The past has no power over you.

[Speaker 1] (1:04:55 - 1:04:59)

No power. The power comes in with your awareness that there is a voice.

[Speaker 2] (1:04:59 - 1:05:00)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:05:00 - 1:05:04)

Because the awareness is not part of it, and that is part of becoming present.

[Speaker 2] (1:05:04 - 1:05:19)

Yes. One of my favorite quotes of this chapter is, nothing on page 141, nothing ever happened in the past that can prevent you from being present now. And if the past cannot prevent you from being present now, what power does it have?

[Speaker 1] (1:05:19 - 1:05:55)

Yes. Yes. Because many people are so attached to the past that they carry a burden, like carrying a huge sack on your back, a burden.

You're identified with that. And they believe that they're unable to be present because the past prevents them from being present. But it can't do that.

You can step out of the stream of thinking, take your attention into the present, and immediately the past no longer has that power over you.

[Speaker 2] (1:05:55 - 1:08:32)

Because nothing ever happened in the past that can prevent you from being present now. You say that the core of all of this is the pain body. On page 141 we read that any negative emotion that is not fully faced and seen for what it is in the moment it arises does not completely dissolve.

The energy field of old but still very much alive emotion that lives in almost every human being is the pain body. And chapter 5 introduces us to the pain body. Amazing.

You know, when I read this, I thought about my childhood. Now, I've shared my childhood with lots of people, and as a child I was raised by my grandmother for the first six years. And my grandmother used to whip me often, like I used to get beatings on a regular basis.

And it was really a part of our culture, and I know many of you were raised this way too, that not only would you get beaten for almost, you know, for doing nothing, for you broke a glass or you, you know, spoke out of turn or whatever the adults deemed was inappropriate for you in that moment, but I would get beaten, and then I was never allowed to have any emotion about it. I remember feeling many times my grandmother would whip me with switches. She would braid the switches together, and I'd get a whipping.

And then in the middle of whipping me, she'd say, stop your crying, stop your crying. And I'd get whipped until I would stop crying. And then afterwards she would say, you better wipe that pout off of your face.

You better put a smile on your face. So you'd have to now act as though the beating that you just had didn't happen. And when I read this, that any negative emotion that is not fully faced and seen for what it is in the moment it arises does not completely dissolve.

It leaves behind a remnant of pain. I realized that that pain of not being able to express the emotion, of just being able to be angry. I mean, now I see kids today when their parents say something and they don't like it, the kids can say, I don't like you, or that upset me, or, you know, God forbid I hate you, which, you know, in my culture was never allowed.

You had to suppress that, whatever you're feeling. If you're beaten, wipe that pout off of your face, wipe your tears, stop crying right now. And so that would be a huge pain body that I would end up carrying, especially as a child, because you say children especially carry it.

[Speaker 1] (1:08:32 - 1:08:41)

So did you find then that as you grew up that there was a lot of unexpressed negative emotion in you?

[Speaker 2] (1:08:41 - 1:09:08)

I didn't, it wasn't unexpressed, it was repressed ability to, it's what caused me to have the disease to please for so long, a desire to please everybody, because the ability to say in the moment, this upsets me, or this really bothers me, or what you're doing I don't like, was not something I felt I could do for the longest time.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:08 - 1:09:18)

Yes, yes. So all these negative remnants of negative emotions, they become, they accumulate in the body.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:19 - 1:09:20)

I ate mine.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:20 - 1:09:21)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:21 - 1:09:21)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:23 - 1:11:15)

Yeah, yeah. And then together they form what I call, because we need to realize that any emotion that you have is a form of energy that's acceptable I think to most people, just as every thought you have is a form of energy, every thought is energy, so there's nothing spooky about that. So when I say that the pain body can be considered almost an entity in its own right that lives in you, some people find that's a little spooky, but all that I'm trying to say is here that it's an energy form.

Entity is another word for it. So an energy form lives in you that you may not be aware of all the time because some of the time it is dormant, and it's only active for a certain percentage of time. So first realization is that there is something in me that seeks unhappiness, that seeks unpleasant experiences, that seeks more negativity, because it feeds on those things.

Those things, negative thoughts, will feed the pain body. That is one of the favorite ways pain body to feed, it's your own thinking. So this is very important for people to realize, to observe within themselves that periodically in many people an addiction to negativity arises.

And if you can recognize that as it arises, then you're no longer totally at the mercy of it.

[Speaker 2] (1:11:15 - 1:11:18)

Right, because the awareness dissipates it.

[Speaker 1] (1:11:18 - 1:11:18)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:11:20 - 1:11:56)

And so back to this point though, whenever there is negativity in your life that you never fully dealt with, that negativity, the energy of that negativity has to go someplace. And you're saying where it goes is inside us. And for me, everybody knows I've struggled with my weight for years, for me that's the form that it takes.

For a lot of other people it makes them outwardly angry or negative toward other people. But it has to take some form. For some people it makes them sick, makes them ill.

[Speaker 1] (1:11:56 - 1:12:40)

Yes. And a very frequent manifestation of it, perhaps the most frequent manifestation of the pain body, is in intimate relationships, where periodically partners have to go through their drama. They have to reenact drama every few weeks, in some cases every few days.

They go through intense emotional negativity. And usually the pain body awakens first in one, in either the man or the woman first. And when the pain body awakens, it wants some kind of reaction, negative emotional reaction.

[Speaker 2] (1:12:40 - 1:12:41)

That from the other person.

[Speaker 1] (1:12:41 - 1:13:11)

Because it feeds on it. So many people have realized when they've spoken about it, there is, oh yes, this is happening in our relationship, that periodically the need, the pain body arises, and it then will attempt to push the partner's buttons, as they're called in some forms of psychotherapy. They say pushing the person's buttons means the pain body knows exactly what buttons to push in your partner, buttons that will certainly bring a negative reaction.

[Speaker 2] (1:13:11 - 1:13:26)

Now is the pain body ultimately this feeling of not being good enough? Is the pain body there because of a feeling of not being worthy, of not knowing its sense of presence or consciousness? Is that why it's the pain body?

[Speaker 1] (1:13:26 - 1:13:48)

Well, it's the emotional aspect of the ego. So really pain body is part of the ego, and it's a very unhappy entity. But because its very existence consists of this unhappy vibration, it does not want an end to its unhappiness, because an end to its unhappiness is the end to the pain body.

[Speaker 2] (1:13:48 - 1:13:54)

Got it. Got it. Linda is Skyping us from her den.

Hello. Hi.

[Speaker 4] (1:13:54 - 1:13:54)

Hi.

[Speaker 2] (1:13:55 - 1:14:04)

How are you, Oprah? Is that a yellow den you have there? Yellow?

Yes. Yes, it's gorgeous. In Silver Spring, Maryland, she has a question about the pain body and her sister.

[Speaker 4] (1:14:05 - 1:15:47)

I do. And thank you, Oprah, so much for this. I first encountered your book, Mr. Choli, in 2005, and have read it at least four times. And so when Oprah picked it, I was so excited. You write on page 148 that the pain bodies love intimate relationships and families, because that is where they get most of their food. And that really resonated for me.

I had a huge aha moment, because I have a sister who has always interacted with everyone in the family in a very dramatic way. And I always considered her to be a drama queen who would rather have a problem than solve a problem. But after reading this chapter, it helped me so much understand more about her and what was going on and why she was interacting with us the way that she is.

My question is, now that I've seen that, of course I wanted to call her and have her read the book, but you've already talked about how sometimes that's not necessarily the best way to approach people. But what is the way? How can I really reconnect the family?

She is separated from our family. She's separated from her children, from us, and we have no relationship at all. And it's really tragic.

And I want to do something to help bring us back together and don't know what to do.

[Speaker 1] (1:15:48 - 1:15:53)

So at the moment you have no contact with her at all?

[Speaker 4] (1:15:53 - 1:16:09)

She has totally withdrawn everything. I do send her emails every month or so just to check in. Sometimes she responds, but very terse and cold.

Most times not.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:10 - 1:17:59)

Well, the... I'm sorry. I hope an opportunity will arise for you to get together at some point so you can continue to invite her if there's an event at home or whatever and then just be open.

But when she does come, it's very important for you not to buy into her drama. I don't know whether this happened in the past, whether she used to draw other family members into her drama. That's usually the tendency.

So now when you meet her again, then you will realize, of course, you will be in a different state of consciousness because you will see that what she is suffering from is the disease of the pain body. And that is not part of who she actually is in truth. So you can be there as a very compassionate presence.

And when the drama arises again, as it will, because her pain body will be very active again when she meets you or any family member, when it happens again, it is very unlikely that you will find yourself forced to react to the pain body because you will be present. So you can simply recognize the pain body in her without the need, as that was there in the past, the need to react to it and therefore buy into her drama and feed her drama. And that will be a very strange experience for her.

Somebody who simply accepts her the way she is and if accusations come at you, whatever she does, you did this or whatever form the drama takes.

[Speaker 4] (1:17:59 - 1:18:00)

You sound like you know her.

[Speaker 1] (1:18:00 - 1:18:47)

I know the pain body. They're all the same basically. So then you can simply accept that she is suffering from this and simply be there as a compassionate presence without reacting.

Allow her to be in her pain body. And that means the drama cannot sustain itself for very long if only one person plays the drama. It needs two.

So you're not feeding her pain body anymore and then see what happens. She may be confused. I've experienced that quite a few times when people came up to me with heavy pain bodies.

[Speaker 2] (1:18:47 - 1:19:08)

It's a story that you tell in this chapter about the friend who comes to your house and she has all the papers and she's complaining. And she doesn't know what to do and she lays out all the papers and she's complaining, complaining, complaining. And Eckhart basically says nothing but just listens and is the presence there for her.

And finally she picks up her papers, confused, and goes home and the next day says, What did you do to me?

[Speaker 1] (1:19:08 - 1:19:33)

Yes. But don't underestimate the pain body's ability to make you unconscious again, to push some kind of button and you will find yourself reacting again because pain bodies are very cunning, very clever. And they know exactly what will make you unconscious and what will make you react.

[Speaker 2] (1:19:33 - 1:19:37)

You speak of it like it's a creature that's like an alien force inside of us.

[Speaker 1] (1:19:37 - 1:19:39)

Yes, that's how I see it. Really?

[Speaker 2] (1:19:40 - 1:19:51)

But you see that, Linda, that this then becomes your sacred spiritual journey. This is a part of your spiritual journey to not be drawn into the drama.

[Speaker 4] (1:19:52 - 1:20:09)

Well, it's so interesting you put it that way, Oprah, because that's what I've kind of come to the conclusion that this is part of my awakening. My role in my family is to kind of be the one to help her get out of this.

[Speaker 2] (1:20:09 - 1:20:17)

And not by judging and not by telling her to, but by being that which you wish to emulate.

[Speaker 4] (1:20:18 - 1:20:20)

Yeah, and that's the hard part.

[Speaker 2] (1:20:20 - 1:20:21)

Yeah, that's hard.

[Speaker 4] (1:20:21 - 1:20:26)

Not judging, because I guess that's the part of the pain body that she activates in me.

[Speaker 2] (1:20:26 - 1:20:32)

Your pain body wants to say, who do you think you are? Exactly. I know, I've been there.

[Speaker 1] (1:20:33 - 1:21:14)

And of course when the pain body takes over a person, the whole personality becomes transformed. And sometimes people are shocked when they marry somebody or they start living with somebody, and this lovely man or woman that they loved so much, one morning suddenly he or she turns into a little monster. And the total energy shift in them, a complete change of energy, like it's truly as if they were possessed by a completely different, very negative personality.

And that comes as a shock often to people when they start living together.

[Speaker 2] (1:21:14 - 1:21:14)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:21:15 - 1:21:23)

And again, it doesn't mean that necessarily that you chose the wrong person to live with, it just means for the first time you experienced... The pain body showed up.

[Speaker 2] (1:21:23 - 1:21:31)

...that person's pain body. And also what we were talking about in the last chapter, you were playing a role up until then. You were playing the role, I am in love with you.

[Speaker 1] (1:21:31 - 1:21:31)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:21:32 - 1:21:36)

And often love, you say, is about your own possessiveness.

[Speaker 1] (1:21:36 - 1:21:36)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:21:36 - 1:21:36)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:21:37 - 1:21:49)

And so the roles are easy to play as long as you're not living together, then you can sustain the roles. But when you start living together, very soon the roles cannot be played anymore.

[Speaker 2] (1:21:49 - 1:22:00)

And also that's why I was thinking with the pain bodies, what happens on a lot of holidays, Linda, you've seen this in families, everybody comes together and you have all those pain bodies in a room.

[Speaker 7] (1:22:00 - 1:22:01)

Oh, yeah.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:01 - 1:22:07)

Clashing. Clashing and reacting to one another and all living about the past.

[Speaker 1] (1:22:07 - 1:22:07)

Oh, yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:07 - 1:22:11)

Because that's what the coming together for families is about.

[Speaker 1] (1:22:11 - 1:22:22)

Thanksgiving and Christmas Day are the best day for the pain bodies because... Everywhere. And often the families go through the same thing year after year.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:22 - 1:22:27)

Really? Thank you, Linda, for bringing that up. Thank you so much.

[Speaker 4] (1:22:27 - 1:22:31)

And I will listen to the rest of the class. Thank you so much for the opportunity.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:31 - 1:22:54)

Thank you for bringing that up for us. Yeah. And often, yeah, the reason why you have all these pain bodies clashing Thanksgiving on the major holidays, they come together, and people have an image in their mind, the courier and Ives, the painting of what they want the Thanksgiving dinner to be, and instead it becomes something different because everybody's bringing their past.

[Speaker 1] (1:22:55 - 1:22:55)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:55 - 1:22:57)

Living that moment through their past.

[Speaker 1] (1:22:57 - 1:23:00)

Yes, yes. That's amazing.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:00 - 1:23:03)

So how do we change that this Thanksgiving?

[Speaker 1] (1:23:03 - 1:23:20)

Well, it just takes one person to be present and one person not to participate in this. So when next event happens, family gathering, whatever it is, then you will see the usual comments will be made.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:20 - 1:23:21)

That's right.

[Speaker 1] (1:23:21 - 1:23:24)

And the usual reactions will happen.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:25 - 1:23:27)

Can you believe he did? Yes, yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:23:28 - 1:24:07)

Or you visit your parents and your parents don't fully approve of you and then they say, well, you remember 10 years ago, I told you you should have done that. You would be better off now if you had done that. And again, immediately, if you're not present, pain body will arise and become defensive.

Anger will arise. And you're in it. You're drawn into the drama.

Yes. So it requires great alertness not to be drawn in. Right.

So because we don't underestimate the pain body's ability to draw in sometimes even very present people can still be drawn in.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:08 - 1:24:24)

And you were saying that it happens in intimate situations, in family situations more often than not, because I would suppose it's because out in the world, everybody's trying to be at least on their best behavior. A lot of people who are taking this class, you know, are working people who see it in their jobs every day with people.

[Speaker 7] (1:24:24 - 1:24:25)

Yes, yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:25 - 1:25:01)

Every day. I love on page 134 when you say, although the body is very intelligent, it cannot tell the difference between an actual situation and the thought. It reacts to every thought as if it were a reality.

It doesn't know it's just a thought. To the body, a worrisome, fearful thought means I'm in danger and it responds accordingly, even though you may be lying in a warm and comfortable bed at night. The heart beats faster, muscles contract, breathing becomes rapid.

There's a buildup of energy, but since the danger is only a mental fiction, the energy has no outlet. The rest of the energy turns toxic, interferes with the harmonious functioning of the body.

[Speaker 1] (1:25:01 - 1:25:01)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:25:01 - 1:25:04)

So that's what you said weeks ago about worry.

[Speaker 1] (1:25:05 - 1:25:05)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:25:06 - 1:25:06)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:25:06 - 1:25:15)

To see in oneself when worry arises, what we call worry, is simply repetitive negative thought patterns.

[Speaker 2] (1:25:15 - 1:25:23)

That's right. And your body doesn't know the difference, and so all of that energy is inside your body, and that's what makes people sick.

[Speaker 1] (1:25:23 - 1:26:10)

Yes, yes. So it's very important to clear up your mind so that you stop the continuous negativity of the egoic self-talk, as we call it. So recognize it, and then step out of that stream of thinking.

Use any device you can. I recommend device number one to step out of the stream of negative thinking, come into the present moment, take one or two conscious breaths. Ah, you've stepped out of the stream of thinking.

Or feel the inner body, feel the aliveness in your arms, your hands, your legs. Put your attention there.

[Speaker 7] (1:26:10 - 1:26:11)

Right.

[Speaker 1] (1:26:11 - 1:26:32)

You've stepped out of the stream of thinking. Or look at something and bring your full consciousness to the active perception. For example, a tree or a flower, anything natural is best.

Look at anything natural, give it your full attention, that takes you out of the stream of thinking. Or any natural sound, a bird, the wind.

[Speaker 2] (1:26:32 - 1:26:33)

To bring you back, really.

[Speaker 1] (1:26:33 - 1:26:43)

Or bring you back to the present. These are all little ways in which you can step out of the stream of competitive thinking.

[Speaker 2] (1:26:43 - 1:27:06)

In the story on page 137, The Duck with the Human Mind, love that story. You talk about how the human mind creates a me and a my story that keeps negative emotions alive and personalizes everything and has ultimately led our entire species to a precipice. So, tell us the duck story.

What lessons it has for all of us as humans.

[Speaker 1] (1:27:07 - 1:27:58)

I was writing The Power of Now and writing about accumulated emotions. And then I was taking a break and went into the park and sat on a bench by a pond and I saw two ducks approaching on the pond and suddenly, maybe one duck got too close to the other. Suddenly, they started getting into a fight.

It lasted for about 30 seconds and then they both separated, swam off in opposite directions. They were still agitated, both of them. And then both ducks kind of lifted themselves up on the water and vigorously flapped their wings a few times.

They almost stood up on the water and went... And then suddenly, they were totally peaceful again and swam off.

[Speaker 2] (1:27:58 - 1:28:00)

They were doing cleansing breaths.

[Speaker 1] (1:28:00 - 1:28:00)

Cleansing.

[Speaker 2] (1:28:00 - 1:28:01)

Which we did from Russia last night.

[Speaker 1] (1:28:03 - 1:28:50)

And I realized at that moment I had actually been writing about this and the ducks were showing me how they let go of what otherwise would have become accumulated negativity in the body. Wow. And so their instinctive natural intelligence takes over and then I realized they all do it.

And all the ducks after a fight do that. And immediately... It's like clearing their wings.

Clearing. The energy gets dissipated. Wow.

And they are totally peaceful afterwards. And then, of course, they don't have the human mind which repeats the story of what this duck did to me and what I'm going to do to this duck next time or I'm never going to get close to her anymore. Whatever the story is.

[Speaker 2] (1:28:50 - 1:28:53)

How dare you come over to my side of the pond again.

[Speaker 1] (1:28:53 - 1:29:11)

And then talk to other ducks about what that duck did to you. And all the story making... Because the story making that still goes on in the human mind keeps the old emotion alive.

Yes. So you relive it. Again, the negativity is relived.

The body believes it's still happening.

[Speaker 2] (1:29:11 - 1:29:12)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:29:12 - 1:29:14)

Because the body believes in what your mind is thinking.

[Speaker 2] (1:29:14 - 1:29:20)

Because although the body is intelligent, it cannot tell the difference between an actual situation and a thought.

[Speaker 1] (1:29:20 - 1:29:34)

Yes. So whatever thoughts you are holding, your body believes that is your reality. And the corresponding emotions will arise.

Wow. And the corresponding physical states of contraction will be there.

[Speaker 2] (1:29:34 - 1:29:34)

Wow.

[Speaker 1] (1:29:35 - 1:29:40)

So this is how... That was the duck's lesson. So I put it into the book.

[Speaker 2] (1:29:40 - 1:29:56)

That's right. I mean, and we see so many people... I know I have friends who've been through divorce and they live and still, you know, hating their ex-spouse and talking about their ex-spouse and what their ex-spouse did to them and, you know, years after the spouse is gone.

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:29:56 - 1:29:59)

And so that keeps it alive as if it were still happening.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:00 - 1:30:00)

As if it were still happening.

[Speaker 1] (1:30:01 - 1:30:02)

And there's an addictive quality...

[Speaker 2] (1:30:02 - 1:30:03)

And that's in your mind.

[Speaker 1] (1:30:03 - 1:30:13)

In the mind. And it's addictive. There's an addictive quality to that.

You need to see it in yourself to see that it's still the case for some people who are listening to us.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:13 - 1:30:17)

So it's like the monks. Tell the monk story. I like the monk story.

The two monks.

[Speaker 1] (1:30:17 - 1:30:18)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:18 - 1:30:20)

And the one monk picks up the girl on the road.

[Speaker 1] (1:30:21 - 1:31:19)

Yes. That's the story of two monks on a pilgrimage and they come across, in a village, they come across a young 17-year-old girl with a long kimono trying to cross a very muddy road but she's not daring to step into the mud. So one monk picks her up, carries her across the road through the mud, puts her down, and so the monks walk on in silence for another four or five hours just practicing noble silence.

And then after four or five hours they're getting close to their destination. One monk says to the monk who had picked up the girl, Oh, you know, you shouldn't have done that because we monks are not supposed even to touch women so you really shouldn't have picked up that girl. You're not supposed to do that.

The other monk says, Oh, are you still carrying that girl? I put her down hours ago. So the other monk was still carrying the girl, the event, in his head.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:19 - 1:31:20)

Four hours later.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:20 - 1:31:22)

And for four hours he was walking with this burden.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:23 - 1:31:23)

Yes. Right.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:24 - 1:31:30)

That shows the reluctance of the human mind to let go of the past.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:31 - 1:31:41)

Yeah. So how many of us reading this chapter are not carrying things from four hours ago but carrying things from four years and 40 years ago?

[Speaker 1] (1:31:41 - 1:31:41)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:41 - 1:31:44)

People are still holding on to what was done to them.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:44 - 1:31:45)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:45 - 1:31:45)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:45 - 1:31:57)

Yes. That's a dreadful burden. It's like carrying a useless weight around with you.

And some people carry it from all their lives. And they even derive some identity from that.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:58 - 1:31:58)

Right.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:58 - 1:31:59)

Right.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:59 - 1:32:10)

I had to learn years ago to let go of what had happened to me as a child because what I realized, you know, my grandmother, the people who took care of me, did the best they knew how to do at the time.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:10 - 1:32:10)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:32:11 - 1:32:13)

And if they had known better, they would have done better.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:13 - 1:32:36)

Yes. And that is always the case. Whatever humans have done to you, it's always they didn't know any better because they could only act according to their level of consciousness.

Nobody can act beyond their level of consciousness. So you cannot expect your parents, if you believe they did something that was wrong, you cannot expect your parents to have acted beyond their level of consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (1:32:36 - 1:32:37)

Because that's all they knew.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:37 - 1:32:50)

Yes. Jesus on the cross said it all when he says, forgive them for they know not what they do, which means they are unconscious. So when you realize that, you naturally forgive.

[Speaker 2] (1:32:50 - 1:32:51)

That's what Jesus meant.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:51 - 1:32:56)

Yes. If he had lived now, he probably would have said they are unconscious. They don't know.

[Speaker 2] (1:32:56 - 1:33:02)

Okay. Well, Roz is on the phone from Sydney, Australia and has a question about the pain body and grief. Hello, Roz.

[Speaker 5] (1:33:03 - 1:33:36)

Hi, Oprah. Hi, Eckhart. Can I start by saying thank you both so much for helping to make my life feel lighter and less stressful?

That's amazing. And for taking the time to answer all our questions. But in regard to the pain body, I'd like to clarify, how do we honor the memory of our loved ones who have died and that we shed tears for and not add to our pain body?

I'm trying to work out, are we adding to our pain body or is this the type of sorrow from the state of being?

[Speaker 2] (1:33:37 - 1:33:41)

You mean the ability to grieve or not? Yeah.

[Speaker 5] (1:33:42 - 1:34:19)

Well, the best way I can describe it is I lost my dad six years ago and most of the time I think of him and I have a smile on my face. But sometimes the tears flow for what I think is no apparent reason. Intellectually, I know crying won't bring him back and I can't change the past, but the tears just come.

So am I adding to my pain body by doing that? I feel I'm honoring my father's memory, but I'm sad at the time. So is that a negative emotion or is that something deeper down inside that is a natural thing and it's a part of my being?

[Speaker 1] (1:34:19 - 1:36:54)

There's a natural mourning, of course, that happens when a loved one passes away. With some people, that also can turn into pain body. For example, that would be the case if there's an excessive or exaggerated amount of sadness or depression.

Some people, after a loved one dies, go through years of debilitating depression or they develop even extreme anger. That is also quite frequent that people develop anger when a loved one dies. Those are instances when the pain body becomes activated through the death of a loved one.

But that does not seem to be the case with you. So to allow mourning to happen when it happens can actually be a beautiful thing. Observe what your mind is doing and what kind of thoughts your mind is generating when you go through these periods of sadness or crying.

Maybe your mind is not saying much at all. Maybe there's just emotion, and that can be quite beautiful, simply to allow this emotion of sadness, which is natural after all when somebody has passed away or when you remember a loved one, allow this emotion of sadness to be there. You may actually find that underneath the sadness there's still some peace.

When you allow the emotion of mourning to be there, then you realize that underneath the seemingly negative emotion there's still a deeper peace. I found that when my parents passed away a year and a half ago, both of them within a few months, the sadness came, some tears came periodically, and yet through the acceptance of the emotion there was an underlying peace that was deeper even than the sadness. And that comes with the acceptance of the emotion, and that's important for you.

So I don't believe that in your case this is the pain body, but I would suggest that you observe, or perhaps you can tell me now, what kind of thoughts your mind produces when you go through these periods of sadness or weeping. What does your mind say?

[Speaker 5] (1:36:55 - 1:37:35)

Well, usually at the end I end up smiling again. It's just that I wonder whether the tears were a negative thing, or no, I don't suppose tears are a negative thing, but there are just times when I suppose it's that sense of loss that comes with it, which I know in a way is adding pain to your life, but it's something you just, I don't know, how do you explain the void you feel inside when you lose someone. Admittedly, I'm not getting depressed about it, thank God, but I just wondered whether logically I was adding pain to my life or whether it just is something that if you can stay detached and observe, you realize it's just a part of who you are.

[Speaker 2] (1:37:36 - 1:38:44)

I think it is a part of who we are, and I recently just lost a loved one who happened to be a four-legged animal, my beloved little Sophie I lost. Sophie died? Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

Yes, and unless you have an animal who's a member of your family, a lot of people don't understand, but she was a member of my, she was as close to me as anybody has ever been in my life, and I will have to say that I miss her little body, and I miss the, as I know you do with your loved one, I miss the physicality of her because she slept with me every single night, came to work with me every single day, has been at every event for the past 13 years, so I miss her physical body, but I actually feel closer to her, to the spirit of her, to the soul of her. I feel that the density of the body has allowed the spirit of her to be with me in a way that I never could really fully appreciate or absorb, so I actually feel closer to her.

I feel the love that she was in a way that I didn't even feel when she was alive.

[Speaker 1] (1:38:44 - 1:38:45)

Yes, yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:38:45 - 1:38:47)

Did you sense that with your parents too?

[Speaker 1] (1:38:47 - 1:38:47)

Yes, yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:38:47 - 1:38:49)

So that's the peace you're talking about.

[Speaker 1] (1:38:49 - 1:38:49)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:38:49 - 1:39:09)

And actually she died on the second night that we were doing this, on March the 10th, and I went home in the middle of the day. She died early in the morning. I cried all afternoon.

I came here and allowed myself to be, to accept it, to go to that place where, all right, she's gone.

[Speaker 7] (1:39:10 - 1:39:10)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:39:11 - 1:39:16)

She's gone. I'm not going to say, oh, why is she gone? Oh, all right, she's gone.

[Speaker 1] (1:39:16 - 1:39:18)

Yes, and that's the acceptance.

[Speaker 2] (1:39:18 - 1:39:20)

And a peace comes with that.

[Speaker 1] (1:39:20 - 1:40:10)

Yes, because the void is the word, because a void is left when the form that was there, the body that was there, suddenly is no longer. And that's the void. Now the void, when it's resisted, and it is resisted especially by the ego, the ego hates it.

The ego doesn't want the void to be there. But when you can accept that now there is the void instead of the body, then something else shines through that void which is formless. Right.

So where the form once was, the formless can now shine through. Absolutely. And that's the beauty, and that's the grace that is hiding behind death or death of whatever kind.

So there's always that. You have to look for that. I see that.

[Speaker 2] (1:40:11 - 1:40:13)

I see that. Do you see that, Roz?

[Speaker 5] (1:40:14 - 1:40:17)

Yeah, that's inspirational. That natural morning makes me feel better now.

[Speaker 2] (1:40:17 - 1:40:40)

And what happens is, Roz, if we spend our time, I always say when somebody you love dies, you now have an angel you know. You can call the angel formless or consciousness or being or whatever. But what happens is so many people are just caught up in the grief of it and the loss of it and resisting and wanting it to be the way it was.

[Speaker 1] (1:40:40 - 1:40:41)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:40:41 - 1:40:49)

Trying to hold on to the way it was instead of accepting what is, and they don't allow the grace of the formless to come through.

[Speaker 1] (1:40:50 - 1:40:53)

Then the grace cannot come through. That's right. I got that.

[Speaker 2] (1:40:53 - 1:41:41)

I hope you got that too, Roz. Yeah, thank you. That was lovely.

I really appreciate that. God bless you both. God bless you.

I love when you say that sometimes understanding the science for me, sometimes understanding the science behind these concepts as you're talking about makes it easier. And you say on page 146, all things are vibrating energy fields in ceaseless motion. The chair you sit on, the book you're holding appears solid and motionless only because that's how our senses perceive their vibrational frequency.

That is to say the increased movement of the molecules. And so we're all vibrating at different frequencies. And the vibrational frequency of the pain body resonates with that of negative thoughts.

[Speaker 1] (1:41:41 - 1:41:46)

Yes. Negative thoughts and other negative emotions coming from other people.

[Speaker 2] (1:41:47 - 1:42:45)

And then I love that you say this on page 152. You write on page 152. I think this is great here.

If you were not familiar with our contemporary civilization, if you had come here from another age or another planet, one of the things that would amaze you is that millions of people love and pay money to watch humans kill and inflict pain on each other and call it entertainment. When I read that, I thought, yeah, if you're from another planet, you would think, what is that? So what is that that people love that?

I mean the most violent movies, particularly this year for Academy Awards, most of the movies were violent movies, destructive, all those pain bodies up there on the screen. And what is it about a lot of the public that enjoys that?

[Speaker 1] (1:42:46 - 1:43:40)

Well, if it's in some cases violence may be actually helpful to see because it shows the human madness. If it shows the wider context in which violence happens, if it shows the psychological dysfunction behind violence, then it can be helpful. But most of these movies contain violence that is actually meant to feed the pain body.

And it is the pain body in the viewers who enjoy those films that enjoys the violence. So it's not actually the people themselves who pay money to see these movies. It's the pain body in them that feeds on the violence that it watches.

And the people who produce these movies probably...

[Speaker 2] (1:43:40 - 1:43:41)

Your pain bodies are writing them.

[Speaker 1] (1:43:41 - 1:43:47)

The pain bodies write them. The pain bodies write the movies, the pain bodies produce them, and the pain bodies watch them.

[Speaker 2] (1:43:48 - 1:43:58)

Well, this comes from a screenwriter, Lana, who's in her study in Copenhagen and has a question. Copenhagen. Copenhagen.

Hello, Lana, from Copenhagen.

[Speaker 3] (1:43:58 - 1:44:08)

Hi, Oprah. Hi, Eckerd. Hello.

Eckerd, I also have a cold, so I hope I sound as sexy as you do. So, yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:44:09 - 1:44:15)

I like your flowers on the wall, may I say? I like your art. Did you take those pictures yourself?

Oh, no.

[Speaker 3] (1:44:15 - 1:47:23)

I bought it from somebody. Okay, okay, great. Yeah.

But I'm a screenwriter. I'm also a producer. And after reading this chapter, it just floored me on so many levels.

I write pieces that involve scenes that may have violence. It may have a death. It may have rape.

But I try not to be gratuitous. But after reading this chapter, I wasn't quite sure how to be sure. And one particular experience that I had really kind of put me in a tailspin about how to create content, how to create media projects going forward after reading this book.

I had a few friends over for dinner, Danish friends of mine, and I've learned so much from the Danish people. They're wonderful, wonderful people. And at the time, there was in the news, the beginning of this year, a lot of what they call second-generation kids were burning cars here in Denmark.

And a friend of mine made the comment to me, well, I don't understand how people can burn their own neighborhoods. And that hit me like a ton of bricks. And although I was too young to remember the riots after Martin Luther King died, I remember that comment being spoken by Americans.

So here I am in Denmark and kind of hearing the same type of conversation. And I felt like my first response was, I've got to do a documentary on this. And so I started making the phone calls to do whatever I needed to do to talk to traditional Danes and also second-generation Danish people.

But then I read the chapter and I wondered whether or not my pain body as an African-American was now entering into this situation and creating something that may kind of negatively affect the pain body of another group of people. So I questioned whether or not I wanted to do this documentary. So what is your question?

What is your question to us? My question is, in this situation that I've just described, the pain body that led me to come up with the idea for this documentary, I think it comes from my experience of being an African-American and that I want to bring people together. I want to kind of not allow a situation that's not necessary to just go unchecked.

And I feel like media can do that. A documentary can open up that dialogue. But I'm wondering if my pain body, since it created this idea for a documentary, is this something that will help both sides?

Or am I just speaking to pain bodies, to other pain bodies?

[Speaker 1] (1:47:24 - 1:48:43)

Well, I don't believe necessarily that your pain body came up with the idea of making this documentary about the violence that's happening in Denmark. And I believe that you will probably show the wider context in which this violence happens and the root causes of this violence, not only historical but perhaps also psychological. And if all these things are included in the film, then to show violence can actually fulfill a useful purpose.

That's why I mention in the book that some of the most powerful anti-war films were war films because those films showed the reality of war, not some glamorized version of war for the pain body to feed on. So if you show the reality and the underlying causes at the wider context, then those films are not going to feed the pain body because they will help people become more conscious and perhaps not prematurely judge the people who are carrying out these acts of vandalism or whatever it is to see perhaps what lies behind it.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:43 - 1:50:27)

Correct. Thank you, Lana. Thank you so much.

I think it's interesting, though. Lana's talking about what you talk about on page 159, that as there are individual pain bodies that each of us carries because of whatever negativity happened in our lives, and we didn't completely deal with that at the moment, that there is also a collective pain body that nations carry and races carry. And you say the collective racial pain body is pronounced in Jewish people who suffered persecution over many centuries.

Not surprisingly, it's strong as well in Native Americans whose numbers were decimated, whose culture all but destroyed by the European settlers, and black Americans, too, for whom the collective pain body is pronounced, their ancestors violently uprooted, beaten into submission and sold into slavery. The foundation of American economic prosperity rested on the labor of four to five million black slaves. In fact, the suffering inflicted on Native and black Americans has not remained confined to those two races, but has become part of the collective American pain body.

It is always the case that both victim and perpetrator suffer the consequences of any acts of violence, oppression, or brutality for what you do to others you do to yourself. I think that there is not an understanding, and actually, Senator Obama in his speech a couple of weeks ago was trying to speak to this, this collective pain body that America holds. And I think a lot of Americans, number one, don't know it exists and want to deny that it does exist because they say, I didn't have anything to do with slavery, or I didn't have anything to do with the Native Americans.

Correct?

[Speaker 1] (1:50:27 - 1:50:28)

That's right.

[Speaker 2] (1:50:28 - 1:50:32)

And to not to recognize it is what? Is to be in denial of what is the truth.

[Speaker 1] (1:50:33 - 1:50:37)

Yes, and then it continues to be there without you knowing it.

[Speaker 2] (1:50:37 - 1:50:42)

That's right. Because the recognition of it is the beginning of being able to change it, right?

[Speaker 1] (1:50:42 - 1:51:41)

Yes, that's right. And I believe, since you mentioned Senator Obama, there was this controversy about the pastor who was making certain remarks. I believe that the pastor who has probably helped many, many people over many years, occasionally when he speaks, as far as I can tell, he gets taken over by the pain body.

And then the pain body speaks through him. And it's understandable, and I believe Obama understands that, although he may not use the term or be familiar with the term pain body, but he understands the wider context for those remarks and he realizes that it arises out of the collective pain. And once you see that these things arise out of the collective pain, you can see them in a much wider perspective.

And you don't personalize what this person is saying. It's not personal anymore. He's expressing collective pain.

[Speaker 2] (1:51:41 - 1:52:30)

You also talk about this when it comes to women. Pretty revolutionary. On page 155, you say, The suppression of the feminine principle, especially over the past 2,000 years, has enabled the ego to gain absolute supremacy in the collective human psyche.

Although women have egos, of course, the female form is less rigidly encapsulated than the male and has greater openness and sensitivity toward other life forms. If the balance between male and female energies, I found this so fascinating, had not been destroyed on our planet, you say, the ego's growth would have been greatly curtailed. With many people becoming more conscious, the ego is losing its hold on the human mind because the ego was never as deeply rooted in women.

It's losing its hold on women more quickly than on men.

[Speaker 1] (1:52:31 - 1:52:31)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:52:31 - 1:53:01)

You know what? Reading this, as a female, living in the world today, able to make choices and be my own person and express myself, I had forgotten about the years and years of torture and suppression and, you know, killing of women were the most natural things because you liked animals, because you were a midwife, because you were a woman who wanted to have a voice.

[Speaker 1] (1:53:02 - 1:53:02)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:53:02 - 1:53:03)

Tortured, killed.

[Speaker 1] (1:53:03 - 1:53:03)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:53:04 - 1:53:05)

Hundreds of millions of women.

[Speaker 1] (1:53:05 - 1:53:09)

Yes. And what I'm saying is it's the arising ego.

[Speaker 2] (1:53:10 - 1:53:12)

And that happened because of the ego in the male.

[Speaker 1] (1:53:12 - 1:53:29)

Yes. So it's not the male as such. It was the growing ego in the male that saw the feminine principle and the feminine energy as a threat because it could not fully establish itself in that.

[Speaker 2] (1:53:29 - 1:53:34)

You believe we would have had a new earth a lot sooner if there had been not the suppression of the female.

[Speaker 1] (1:53:35 - 1:54:20)

Yes, probably, yes. But the shift is happening now, and the interesting thing is that there are more women changing, going through the shift in consciousness, than men. Men are going through also, but there are, for example, Elizabeth Lesser mentioned at the Omega Institute, about 70-75% of the people who come there for inner work, consciousness transformation, and so on, are women.

So women are more open now to the change in consciousness that is happening than men. I'm not saying it's not happening to men also, but there's a greater openness.

[Speaker 2] (1:54:20 - 1:54:43)

We love it. Audrey in Campbell, California, one of our emails says, I have 20 pounds to lose as a child. My father and brother call me big girl and big fat cow.

Could this be? That's not good. Could this be why?

Audrey, that's not good at all. Could this be why I have such difficulty losing the weight? I've been hearing these words in my head for years and years, and I can't let the words go.

[Speaker 1] (1:54:43 - 1:56:58)

Help. So, of course, these words have become lodged in your mind, and they have taken up residence in your mind, and now you can't get rid of them. So they are, again, thoughts are energy formations, and thoughts that get lodged in your mind, sometimes they start in childhood, when parents tell you something negative.

For example, some parents tell their children, you are stupid. It's a stupid thing to say. Yes, it's a stupid thing to say that your kids are stupid, yeah.

And if told that repeatedly, this thought becomes lodged in their mind. A thought can, if you don't bring presence to it now, you won't be able to dislodge it. So the first thing is to realize what has happened to you, is that something that you were told years ago, repeatedly, has now become a thought that refuses to leave.

It's an energy, you are possessed, so to speak, temporarily, hopefully, by a thought. Some of you may have seen a film called The Number 23 with Jim Carrey last year, and that's about a man who becomes obsessed with the idea of the number 23. And he sees it, suddenly he sees everywhere, significance in the number 23.

And that's an example of how one thought can take possession of your entire mind, and then through this one thought that takes possession of your entire mind, you interpret the whole universe, the whole of reality. This is how dangerous it can be, if you're not careful, how one thought can take you over. So realize, the questioner here needs to realize that this is an old thought, and realize it's no more than a thought.

It is not the truth. It's an old record that has been playing itself.

[Speaker 2] (1:57:00 - 1:57:03)

Over and over in your head. Big fat cow, big fat cow, big fat cow.

[Speaker 1] (1:57:03 - 1:57:13)

Yes, no more than an old, no more than a tape. So when you hear it again, when you hear that in your mind, you realize there's the old tape again.

[Speaker 2] (1:57:13 - 1:57:13)

That's right.

[Speaker 1] (1:57:13 - 1:57:16)

It loses its power, because it's no more than that.

[Speaker 2] (1:57:16 - 1:57:21)

That's right. There's an old tape for the past, and the past has no power over the present moment.

[Speaker 1] (1:57:21 - 1:57:21)

No.

[Speaker 2] (1:57:21 - 1:57:57)

All right. I love also when you say that thinking is no more than a tiny aspect of the totality of consciousness, the totality of who you are. Yes.

I had an awakening moment with that thought, because we all think that we are our thoughts. Up until reading this book, I think so many of us, I was one of those people thinking that we were our thoughts. Yes.

And then to read that thinking, not only are we not our thoughts, we are the awareness of our thoughts, but that thinking is only no more than a tiny aspect of the totality of consciousness, the totality of who you are.

[Speaker 1] (1:57:57 - 1:58:08)

Yes. And the awareness, of course, compared to thinking, the awareness is vast, it's limitless, and has infinite potential for anything creative to come into your life.

[Speaker 2] (1:58:08 - 1:58:10)

Because that's where all your creativity comes from.

[Speaker 1] (1:58:10 - 1:58:23)

Yes. Not through thinking. Thinking can become a secondary tool in manifesting something, but not with the creative insight, the creative realization, the creative idea does not come through the movement of thinking.

[Speaker 2] (1:58:24 - 1:58:31)

Wow. Think about that, everybody. That when you have a creative inspiration, it does not come through your thoughts.

[Speaker 1] (1:58:31 - 1:58:31)

No.

[Speaker 2] (1:58:31 - 1:58:33)

It comes through your being.

[Speaker 1] (1:58:33 - 1:58:35)

Yes. And so the space of awareness.

[Speaker 2] (1:58:36 - 1:58:37)

The space of awareness.

[Speaker 1] (1:58:37 - 1:59:10)

Now, to the extent to which you are creative in your life depends on how much access you have in yourself to that space of awareness, of presence. And it's sometimes enough for brief moments to have access to that, and for some people that's enough to lead a creative life. Right.

But, of course, we want to be more than that, not just have brief access, but to make it the very foundation of your life.

[Speaker 2] (1:59:10 - 1:59:29)

It's like when Quincy Jones was doing the We Are The World tape, and he brought together all of those artists, and he left the door open. First they had a sign outside the door that said, Check your egos at the door. And then they left the door open.

He said, We wanted to leave room for God to walk in the room. Leave enough space for God to walk into the room. Yes.

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:59:29 - 1:59:34)

So you're leaving the space. Leaving the space. Leaving the space inside yourself.

[Speaker 2] (1:59:34 - 1:59:34)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:59:37 - 2:00:24)

So, also if you want change in your life, some people don't know, there will be other chapters when we'll talk about life purpose and so on, but the realization of what it is, for example, what it is that you're meant to do in your life, also comes from that inner space. Are you able to allow the space within to come still? Right.

And then whatever it is that you need to know will arise from there. Will come through that. Yes.

And then it may come as a thought, but then it will be an inspired thought. Right. Without the space, without the stillness, without accessing that dimension, thinking cannot be inspired.

There is no inspired thinking. The inspiration comes from the realm that is deeper than thought.

[Speaker 2] (2:00:24 - 2:00:27)

I got that. And you're never going to think your way to a purpose.

[Speaker 1] (2:00:27 - 2:00:32)

No. And you're not going to worry your way out of a problem.

[Speaker 2] (2:00:33 - 2:00:35)

You're not going to worry your way out of a problem.

[Speaker 1] (2:00:35 - 2:00:39)

It's impossible because worry means to manufacture more problems.

[Speaker 2] (2:00:39 - 2:00:41)

The same thing. You're just continuing the same thought over and over.

[Speaker 1] (2:00:41 - 2:00:42)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:00:42 - 2:00:48)

Yes. You need a different kind of consciousness. Wasn't it Einstein that said that?

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:00:48 - 2:00:59)

I don't remember whether it was Einstein or Jung, but he said a problem cannot be solved on the same level of consciousness that gave rise to the problem. That created it. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:00:59 - 2:01:10)

We have an email from Judy in Columbia, South Carolina. Could you talk a bit about alcohol and drug abuse in the pain body? Is this an attempt at escape from the pain body, alcohol and drug abuse?

[Speaker 1] (2:01:11 - 2:03:02)

Yes. Often it is. And I mention that in the book.

It's an escape of not wanting to feel the pain anymore. In some people, the pain body is active almost all the time. And that is a dreadful way to live.

And those people in whom the pain body is active almost all the time, often they will seek some kind of escape from it because they can't live with that pain anymore. The pain body loves it, but it makes your life more and more miserable. But there is also a good chance, and maybe that connects us to what I said in the book, if people who have a heavy pain body, their chance of awakening is also quite great because when life becomes unbearable because you are creating so much pain continuously for yourself, your desire to awaken, to finally get out of this misery, is much greater than a normal person's desire to awaken.

In other words, you could say when you are having a relatively pleasant dream, you don't mind so much dreaming on, but when your dream turns into a nightmare, then you really want to awaken from that when you can't stand it. And that was the case with me. I had a very, very heavy pain body that drove me almost very close to suicide until the realization came I cannot live with myself any longer.

That thought was the breakthrough where the separation happened from the consciousness that I am and the ego and the pain body that I had been identified with as the unhappy little me.

[Speaker 2] (2:03:02 - 2:03:07)

Were you really actually going to kill yourself? Did you have a plan to kill yourself?

[Speaker 1] (2:03:08 - 2:03:12)

Yes. My first plans to kill myself I already had at the age of 9 and 10.

[Speaker 2] (2:03:13 - 2:03:14)

Really?

[Speaker 1] (2:03:14 - 2:03:20)

Yeah. So I had worked it all out, but somehow I didn't quite have the courage yet to do it.

[Speaker 2] (2:03:20 - 2:03:22)

Because the pain body was so heavy even at 9 and 10?

[Speaker 1] (2:03:22 - 2:03:29)

Already then it was quite heavy. Then it subsided a little bit and then it came back again very strongly in my 20s.

[Speaker 2] (2:03:29 - 2:03:37)

Wow. And what was it? What was it that caused you to feel you felt depressed, you felt unworthy, you felt what?

[Speaker 1] (2:03:37 - 2:03:53)

It was partly living in almost continuous conflict in the home environment between my parents who were always fighting. There was very little peace at home. I was very sensitive, so it was very hard for me to even be there at home.

[Speaker 2] (2:03:54 - 2:03:59)

As you say in the book, for children who watch their parents fight, it's almost unbearable.

[Speaker 1] (2:03:59 - 2:04:21)

Yes. And that of course contributes to the child's growing pain body. So my pain body grew very quickly.

But if this had not been the case, I would never have awakened. Right. I would have been in a relatively pleasant dream.

That's right.

[Speaker 2] (2:04:21 - 2:04:26)

If you'd had a nice happy childhood, you might not be sitting here teaching with us tonight.

[Speaker 1] (2:04:26 - 2:04:27)

Certainly not.

[Speaker 2] (2:04:27 - 2:04:27)

No.

[Speaker 1] (2:04:27 - 2:04:36)

No. So retrospectively, one is grateful for one's suffering because eventually suffering will wake you up.

[Speaker 2] (2:04:37 - 2:04:56)

You said when I read earlier on page 141 about any negative emotion that's not fully faced and seen for what it is in the moment it arises, does not completely dissolve, it leaves behind a remnant of pain. So when we are faced with negative emotions on a daily basis, we should embrace them, we should go into them rather than resist them.

[Speaker 1] (2:04:56 - 2:04:58)

Yes. Accept whatever emotion.

[Speaker 2] (2:04:58 - 2:04:59)

Accept it.

[Speaker 1] (2:04:59 - 2:05:10)

Accept because it's part of accepting the present moment because if a certain negative emotion is part of what's happening in the present moment, what can you do? It's already happening.

[Speaker 2] (2:05:11 - 2:05:11)

Take it.

[Speaker 1] (2:05:11 - 2:05:47)

Take it. Oh, there it is. I can feel that anger.

I can feel the sadness. I can feel it. Be the space for it.

So accept that it is there. The acceptance of the present moment, no matter what form it takes, externally or internally, whatever form it takes. Externally, it means whatever situation arises right now, it always is as it is at this moment.

You might as well say yes to it. Internally, it means whatever emotion arises at this moment, it is as it is. You might as well say yes to it.

[Speaker 2] (2:05:47 - 2:06:03)

Well, I know next week we're going to be talking about breaking free of the pain body, but just for now, if every time you can see it show itself and recognize it for what it is, there it is, there's my pain body again, there's his again, that the awareness of it begins to dissolve it. Correct?

[Speaker 1] (2:06:04 - 2:06:04)

Okay.

[Speaker 2] (2:06:05 - 2:06:23)

Let's go to our new Earth Study group watching our webcast. Hey, everybody at Borders on Michigan, are you enjoying the class tonight? Yes.

Interesting. All the pain bodies have gathered together at Borders. I hear Courtney has a question.

[Speaker 6] (2:06:24 - 2:06:57)

Yes. Yes, I have a question. Hi.

I think a lot. So what I'm curious to know is, when I'm not in a relationship, I obsess that I'm going to be alone. And when I'm in a relationship, I obsess about my career or money or anything.

And I think a lot of people my age obsess about this, money, career, finding a relationship. What you say in the book, Eckhart, makes sense, but what I guess I'm having trouble with is taking that and actually putting it, you know, changing my life kind of daily, I guess.

[Speaker 2] (2:06:57 - 2:07:02)

I love the makes sense but. What you say makes sense but. Go ahead.

[Speaker 6] (2:07:03 - 2:07:14)

It does make sense, but then I just don't know, I guess I'm having trouble putting that into my daily life. How do I not obsess or think about these things all the time and try and stay in the present?

[Speaker 1] (2:07:15 - 2:07:22)

Well, when you say obsess, of course you're talking about certain thoughts that go through your head.

[Speaker 2] (2:07:23 - 2:07:26)

Over and over and over. Over and over and over.

[Speaker 1] (2:07:26 - 2:08:08)

So are you able sometimes to, while these thoughts go through your head, to recognize the futility of these thoughts? Are you sometimes able to be there as the presence in the background or see, for example, just after they happened, let's see, for example, realize for the past 20 minutes I've been obsessing about this or that. I'm having had thoughts about a certain situation that's not here now.

And that's part, of course, of the structure of the egoic mind. It loves to do that. Are you sometimes already there as the presence or are you always totally identified with the?

[Speaker 6] (2:08:09 - 2:08:26)

No, sometimes I am. And in the hindsight, I can go back and realize what I've done, but it's in the moment when I'm doing this and my mind just won't stop. It just keeps going and going and I keep thinking about things that it's hard to stop, I think, and kind of realize what I will realize eventually.

[Speaker 1] (2:08:26 - 2:09:29)

Yes, now something applies that we talked about the other week when we are talking about worry. Worry is another type of that kind of thinking, what you call obsessing. These thoughts, the way I put it two weeks ago, was these thoughts pretend to be important and necessary.

These thoughts want to draw in all your conscious attention and it's almost as if every thought we're saying, give me your attention. This is very important. You must think about this.

Think, think. Right. So the thoughts have the ability, they have a certain momentum behind them.

This is the momentum of the mind. And so it's not easy to become free of that. But the first freedom is in realizing their futility in the moment they happen and to realize that they fulfill no useful purpose except to make your life miserable.

[Speaker 2] (2:09:30 - 2:09:32)

Yeah, because what has the obsessing gotten you?

[Speaker 6] (2:09:33 - 2:09:38)

What does it do for you? Worry. More worry.

It's just kind of an idea of how to be, how to just be.

[Speaker 2] (2:09:38 - 2:09:46)

And also takes energy away from your being. It takes energy away from your being able to be fully present with whatever it is you're doing.

[Speaker 1] (2:09:47 - 2:09:47)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:09:47 - 2:09:48)

You can see that, right?

[Speaker 1] (2:09:48 - 2:09:49)

You see that.

[Speaker 6] (2:09:49 - 2:09:53)

Oh, yeah. It's just at the time sometimes it's not so... Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (2:09:53 - 2:10:30)

So rather than trying to get rid of those thoughts, because what you resist persists. Right. So if you try to get rid of those thoughts, that will be hard.

But if you see they are futile and they are meaningless and they are no more than part of the structure of the conditioned egoic mind, because if you change your situation, you will obsess about something else. You've experienced that already. So if you're in a relationship, you then have some other thing to obsess about.

If there's no relationship, you can obsess about the lack of relationship. Yep.

[Speaker 7] (2:10:32 - 2:10:32)

Yep.

[Speaker 1] (2:10:33 - 2:10:40)

Or if you're making money, you can obsess about perhaps losing it. Perhaps the financial market will collapse.

[Speaker 7] (2:10:40 - 2:10:41)

Right.

[Speaker 1] (2:10:41 - 2:11:10)

Or if you have no money, then you obsess about how to make money. So see the futility of all this movement of thought in the moment it happens and realize it actually takes away your power. It's like a little parasite.

Egoic thought patterns are almost like a parasitic entity that lives in you that sucks up all your conscious attention.

[Speaker 2] (2:11:10 - 2:11:11)

You got that right, Courtney?

[Speaker 6] (2:11:12 - 2:11:16)

Oh, yeah. It makes sense now. It's just when I'm going through it, I can't stop.

[Speaker 2] (2:11:16 - 2:11:35)

Well, the thing to do is all of this doesn't happen. Awakening doesn't happen all at once. No.

The whole process is you have to catch yourself doing it more and more often. You start slowly, and more and more often you catch yourself, and pretty soon or later you'll find.

[Speaker 1] (2:11:35 - 2:11:35)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:11:36 - 2:11:36)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (2:11:36 - 2:12:07)

Or another thing that might be helpful is when the mind is not overly active, just normal moments, occasionally choose to take your attention away from thinking. We mentioned it earlier. Right.

And bring your attention to the present moment. Either use the device of feeling the inner body, conscious breath, sense perceptions, conscious alert sense perceptions. So choosing to be present rather than to be thinking.

[Speaker 2] (2:12:07 - 2:12:16)

And what that does is you begin to train yourself. You begin to train yourself to be present with yourself.

[Speaker 1] (2:12:16 - 2:12:16)

That's right.

[Speaker 2] (2:12:16 - 2:12:18)

It's about present moment training.

[Speaker 1] (2:12:19 - 2:12:22)

Right. And then presence grows in you.

[Speaker 2] (2:12:22 - 2:12:23)

Yes, it does.

[Speaker 1] (2:12:23 - 2:12:29)

But you have to invite it in. Yeah. Invite it in when the mind is not totally mad.

[Speaker 2] (2:12:29 - 2:12:29)

Right.

[Speaker 1] (2:12:29 - 2:12:37)

And then when the mind does become, then these periods come when it gets totally mad, then it's more likely that there will still be a presence there in the background.

[Speaker 2] (2:12:37 - 2:12:39)

Still can take a breath.

[Speaker 1] (2:12:39 - 2:12:39)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:12:39 - 2:13:03)

I'm getting better at it. I've actually gotten better in the past five weeks, and you will too, Courtney. Thank you.

Thank you. Thanks, everybody at Borders. Thank you all.

Okay. Somebody asked earlier, there was an email where somebody wanted to know, and I didn't get to it, wanted to know whether or not that pain body allows artists and writers and creative people to be more creative, the pain body.

[Speaker 1] (2:13:04 - 2:13:32)

There are, especially in modern art and modern writing, there are some artists who express the pain body in their work. So when you read their work or when you see their visual art, you can see, wow, there's a lot of pain in there. And perhaps that is how they free themselves to some extent of the pain body because they externalize it and make it into an object.

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (2:13:32 - 2:13:35)

You can take that suffering and turn it into something else.

[Speaker 1] (2:13:35 - 2:14:09)

Now, whether this is really helpful to many humans, I don't know. To see so much pain on a canvas, I'm sure it was helpful for the artist to externalize that. So I believe that the deepest art goes deeper than that, than just show the pain, the human pain.

It may also include the human pain, but like the great works of literature are not just expressions of human suffering. They also show a dimension that's beyond suffering. Right.

[Speaker 2] (2:14:10 - 2:14:44)

Well, another question from Mary in Birmingham, Michigan. Politics in the pain body, she writes. Is it the pain body that leads us to be fascinated with others' downfalls, such as the governor of New York and the mayor of Detroit?

I find myself eagerly watching the news to hear more about the scandals. I find myself wondering what I would do if I were in their place, having risen so high, so successful, and fallen so far. Fallen so far.

That's Mary in Birmingham, Michigan. Is that our pain body that loves to hear bad things about other people, the tabloids?

[Speaker 1] (2:14:45 - 2:14:45)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:14:46 - 2:14:49)

Even watching the news, things that are true, scandals.

[Speaker 1] (2:14:49 - 2:14:50)

Loving bad news.

[Speaker 2] (2:14:51 - 2:14:52)

Yes, loving bad news.

[Speaker 1] (2:14:52 - 2:15:17)

Is also of the pain body. And so there are some publications actually thrive on emotional negativity. They actually sell a negative emotion.

Some newspapers do it in their headlines. And because they have realized the more negative the headlines are, the more papers they sell. Yeah.

You were saying the British press. They love it. Love it.

[Speaker 2] (2:15:17 - 2:15:20)

Yes. And we do too now in our country.

[Speaker 1] (2:15:20 - 2:15:20)

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (2:15:20 - 2:15:30)

Yeah. More and more tabloid newspapers, tabloid magazines, following the lives of famous people. People love to see famous people fail, fall.

[Speaker 1] (2:15:30 - 2:15:30)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:15:30 - 2:15:32)

And that's our pain body?

[Speaker 1] (2:15:32 - 2:15:56)

Yes. Whenever you see that negativity, the enjoyment of negativity in whatever form, or the enjoyment of negative events, the enjoyment of negative things happening to people, the enjoyment of your own negative thinking, all that is the pain body. It loves pain.

It lives on it.

[Speaker 2] (2:15:56 - 2:15:58)

And loves drama. It seeks drama.

[Speaker 1] (2:15:58 - 2:15:59)

Drama is part of that pain. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:15:59 - 2:16:12)

Yes. Yes. Yes.

That story you told about going into the restaurant. Oh, yes. Yeah.

Oh, my gosh. Going into the restaurant and this guy is all disrupted. Wow.

[Speaker 1] (2:16:12 - 2:16:36)

Yes. But it was particularly strange because it happened immediately after I'd had a session with a woman who had a very heavy pain body at home. She came to see me at home.

And she had carried this pain body for many, many years. And it was so heavy that one could almost sense it in the energy field. In the room.

[Speaker 2] (2:16:36 - 2:16:39)

We've all encountered people like that where it's deep.

[Speaker 1] (2:16:39 - 2:16:40)

Yes. It's heavy. It's dark.

[Speaker 2] (2:16:40 - 2:16:41)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:16:41 - 2:18:06)

So I had been doing work with her and suddenly she became conscious. She was able to separate suddenly for the first time in her life. She was able to separate herself from the pain body.

And there was an awareness that realized she was carrying this heavy pain body inside. That was a great liberation for her. And she went off and said, Oh, wonderful.

Thank you so much. And that was the beginning of a change in her. And after this session with the woman, I went off to the restaurant.

And I felt that I was so happy that the pain body had left her, not left her permanently, but the awareness had come in. And then in the restaurant, I encountered a man in a wheelchair at a table nearby who had just finished his meal. And then I could feel the negative emotion in him building up, becoming stronger and stronger and stronger.

And suddenly he started shouting and screaming. And I realized I had a suspicion that the pain body, the universal pain body, because every personal pain body is an expression of the one human universal pain body, that the pain body had come back there to tell me, I'm still here. You thought you got rid of me, but I'm still here.

So the pain body got into the person who had the most negativity inside.

[Speaker 2] (2:18:07 - 2:18:10)

Because the person with the most negativity would have drawn it in.

[Speaker 1] (2:18:10 - 2:18:10)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:18:10 - 2:18:18)

But did you, at the end of this incident in the book that you write about, and the restaurant owner says, Did you do all this? Did you cause this?

[Speaker 1] (2:18:18 - 2:18:21)

The restaurant owner must have had some intuition that there was some connection.

[Speaker 2] (2:18:22 - 2:18:30)

Between you sitting in the restaurant and all this disruption. And so the answer is, Did the pain body follow you into the restaurant?

[Speaker 1] (2:18:30 - 2:18:54)

I never knew the answer. It occurred to me that that might have happened. All it means is that the energy that was so heavy, the room, my place where she had come to see me was so heavy with that energy.

When I left, perhaps it came with me. And it's possible. I don't know the final answer to that.

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (2:18:55 - 2:19:02)

Yes. Because as we were saying earlier, you speak of the pain body like it's its own alien force. Like a ghost of some kind.

[Speaker 1] (2:19:02 - 2:19:02)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:19:03 - 2:19:08)

But it is. It's not a ghost. It's an energy.

It's an energy field.

[Speaker 1] (2:19:08 - 2:19:33)

And eventually it becomes transmuted. Which means it loses its energy for its pain body form. And the very energy that was trapped there because of the energy was trapped.

It was emotional energy that was trapped inside this shell. That becomes freed through presence.

[Speaker 2] (2:19:34 - 2:19:43)

So that's what we're going to talk about next week. Next week is how you can begin to free the pain body or any energy that you're carrying from the past.

[Speaker 1] (2:19:43 - 2:19:44)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:19:44 - 2:19:45)

And you can free it instantly.

[Speaker 1] (2:19:45 - 2:20:12)

You free it instantly. But although not the whole of it necessarily instantly. But in the moment, some of it can become transmuted.

And the example I gave is like it's like putting a log into the fire. The fire is the fire of consciousness or presence. And so the pain body can actually be transmuted and becomes presence.

We'll talk about that next week.

[Speaker 2] (2:20:12 - 2:20:18)

Before we say goodbye, though, let's sum up what we've covered in this class today. What do you want people to know about the pain body?

[Speaker 1] (2:20:19 - 2:20:54)

The most vital thing is for people to be there when it happens. Now, when it happens means it's either happening to somebody close to you at home, your partner or family member. Or more importantly, when the pain body happens to you.

Now, it's easier to realize that the pain body is there when you see it arising in somebody else. Always easier. You require more presence to see it in yourself.

But that's the vital thing is to be there and realize it. That's the pain body.

[Speaker 2] (2:20:54 - 2:21:14)

Well, the way you know it's in yourself is when you start to tell yourself the story. The woman who was the big fat cow or family had called her a big fat cow her whole life. When you start to replay the tapes in your head over and over again.

My story, my story, my story. Identifying with that. Anything you identify with is ego.

[Speaker 1] (2:21:14 - 2:21:15)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:21:15 - 2:21:18)

Right. That's how you know it's the pain body.

[Speaker 1] (2:21:18 - 2:21:40)

Yes. Or a sudden emotion arises. Something your partner made a remark, said something.

And an enormous emotion arises that is out of proportion to the external trigger. And that could be the beginning of the arising pain body. So then you say, oh, there's the pain body.

Then you already, you're not at the mercy of the pain body.

[Speaker 2] (2:21:40 - 2:21:51)

So let me ask you this. On the night that you had that, you know, the breakthrough where you said, I cannot live with myself any longer. Did you lose your pain body too?

[Speaker 1] (2:21:51 - 2:21:52)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:21:53 - 2:21:55)

Well, that just was one happy day, wasn't it?

[Speaker 1] (2:21:57 - 2:21:58)

That's quite rare.

[Speaker 2] (2:21:58 - 2:21:59)

Oh, my goodness.

[Speaker 1] (2:22:01 - 2:22:02)

You lost your ego.

[Speaker 2] (2:22:02 - 2:22:04)

You lost your pain body. What a day that was.

[Speaker 1] (2:22:05 - 2:22:59)

Well, after years of dreadful suffering. So that's the one more thing to say about the pain body is when you see it in somebody else, you have to be very careful. The pain bodies don't like to hear that they are the pain body.

So when you're talking to somebody like your partner, you have to be very careful. Because once the partner has already been taken over by the pain body, if at that stage you say, there's your pain body. Your partner won't be hearing you anymore.

The pain body will be hearing you and the pain body will say something back. And it won't be pleasant. And you can't argue with the pain body.

You can never win an argument with the pain body. He'll always win. The pain body will win.

It will go on and on and on and find another clever argument why the pain is justified and right.

[Speaker 2] (2:23:00 - 2:23:19)

And so it's like our first caller from Silver Spring was talking about her sister. What we must learn to do is be compassionate. Yes.

Stand still. Yes. Stand still, as I said with the point.

Stand still and allow it to be. Yes. Whatever it is.

Yes. And then.

[Speaker 1] (2:23:19 - 2:23:21)

And then you don't feed it.

[Speaker 2] (2:23:21 - 2:23:26)

You don't feed it. Don't allow yourself to be drawn into the, pulled into the drama of it.

[Speaker 1] (2:23:26 - 2:23:56)

And if the pain body is not fed, then it won't sustain itself for that long. It will have to seek some other place where it will get fed or it will subside. So that's the beauty when you're in a relationship.

If both partners are conscious enough, you can have an agreement that says, if I observe the pain body beginning in you or you observe the pain body beginning in me, please let me know.

[Speaker 2] (2:23:56 - 2:23:56)

I'm going to point it out.

[Speaker 1] (2:23:56 - 2:24:10)

You have to point it out at the beginning before it takes over completely. Because once it's taken over completely, the person won't be hearing you anymore. But at the beginning, you can still say, could that be your pain body?

Even that is dangerous, but you can try.

[Speaker 7] (2:24:10 - 2:24:12)

Oh, it's not my pain body.

[Speaker 2] (2:24:13 - 2:24:50)

Well, thanks to everybody around the world for joining us again. This fifth class will be available on demand tomorrow for free, of course, here at Oprah.com. And if you want to download or watch any of our classes, you can do that also tomorrow.

All of them are available at Oprah.com and iTunes. It's free. Thanks to Nature Made Soft Gel Vitamins.

Don't forget to update your workbook and get ready for next week's class. Again, we thank you. Thank you.

We thank you. You're a man without a pain body. We'll see you in class next time.

Thank you. Good night, everybody.

2008-Eckhart Tolle Oprah A New Earth Audiobook Podcast Chapter06

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 41:46)

CHAPTER 6 BREAKING FREE The beginning of freedom from the pain body lies first of all in the realization that you have a pain body. Then, more important, in your ability to stay present enough, alert enough, to notice the pain body in yourself as a heavy influx of negative emotion when it becomes active. When it is recognized, it can no longer pretend to be you and live and renew itself through you.

It is your conscious presence that breaks the identification with the pain body. When you don't identify with it, the pain body can no longer control your thinking and so cannot renew itself anymore by feeding on your thoughts. The pain body in most cases does not dissolve immediately, but once you have severed the link between it and your thinking, the pain body begins to lose energy.

Your thinking ceases to be clouded by emotion. Your present perceptions are no longer distorted by the past. The energy that was trapped in the pain body then changes its vibrational frequency and is transmuted into presence.

In this way, the pain body becomes fuel for consciousness. This is why many of the wisest, most enlightened men and women on our planet once had a heavy pain body. Regardless of what you say or do or what face you show to the world, your mental emotional state cannot be concealed.

Every human being emanates an energy field that corresponds to his or her inner state, and most people can sense it, although they may feel someone else's energy emanation only subliminally. That is to say, they don't know that they sense it, yet it determines to a large extent how they feel about and react to that person. Some people are most clearly aware of it when they first meet someone, even before any words are exchanged.

A little later, however, words take over the relationship, and with words come the roles that most people play. Attention then moves to the realm of mind, and the ability to sense the other person's energy field becomes greatly diminished. Nevertheless, it is still felt on an unconscious level.

When you realize that pain bodies unconsciously seek more pain, that is to say, that they want something bad to happen, you will understand that many traffic accidents are caused by drivers whose pain bodies are active at the time. When two drivers with active pain bodies arrive at an intersection at the same time, the likelihood of an accident is many times greater than under normal circumstances. Unconsciously, they both want the accident to happen.

The role of pain bodies in traffic accidents is most obvious in the phenomenon called road rage, when drivers become physically violent often over a trivial matter, such as someone in front of them driving too slowly. Many acts of violence are committed by normal people who temporarily turn into maniacs. All over the world at court proceedings you hear the defense lawyers say, this is totally out of character, and the accused, I don't know what came over me.

To my knowledge, so far no defense lawyer has said to the judge, although the day may not be far off, this is a case of diminished responsibility. My client's pain body was activated and he did not know what he was doing. In fact, he didn't do it, his pain body did.

Does this mean that people are not responsible for what they do when possessed by the pain body? My answer is, how can they be? How can you be responsible when you are unconscious, when you don't know what you are doing?

However, in the greater scheme of things, human beings are meant to evolve into conscious beings, and those who don't will suffer the consequences of their unconsciousness. They are out of alignment with the evolutionary impulse of the universe. And even that is only relatively true.

From a higher perspective, it is not possible to be out of alignment with the evolution of the universe, and even human unconsciousness and the suffering it generates is part of that evolution. When you can't stand the endless cycle of suffering anymore, you begin to awaken. So the pain body too has its necessary place in the larger picture.

Presence A woman in her thirties came to see me. As she greeted me, I could sense the pain behind her polite and superficial smile. She started telling me her story, and within one second her smile changed into a grimace of pain.

Then she began to sob uncontrollably. She said she felt lonely and unfulfilled. There was much anger and sadness.

As a child she had been abused by a physically violent father. I saw quickly that her pain was not caused by her present life circumstances, but by an extraordinarily heavy pain body. Her pain body had become the filter through which she viewed her life situation, and to see the link between the emotional pain and her thoughts, being completely identified with both.

She could not yet see that she was feeding the pain body with her thoughts. In other words, she lived with the burden of a deeply unhappy self. At some level, however, she must have realized that her pain originated within herself, that she was a burden to herself.

She was ready to awaken, and this is why she had come. I directed the focus of her attention to what she was feeling inside her body, and asked her to sense the emotion directly, instead of through the filter of her unhappy thoughts, her unhappy story. She said she had come expecting me to show her the way out of her unhappiness, not into it.

Reluctantly, however, she did what I asked her to do. Tears were rolling down her face, her whole body was shaking. ''At this moment, this is what you feel,'' I said.

''There's nothing you can do about the fact that at this moment, this is what you feel. Now, instead of wanting this moment to be different from the way it is, which adds more pain to the pain that is already there, is it possible for you to completely accept that this is what you feel right now?'' She was quiet for a moment. Suddenly she looked impatient as if she was about to get up and said angrily, ''No, I don't want to accept this.'' ''Who is speaking?'' I asked her. ''You, or the unhappiness in you. Can you see that your unhappiness about being unhappy is just another layer of unhappiness?'' She became quiet again. ''I'm not asking you to do anything.

All I'm asking is that you find out whether it is possible for you to allow those feelings to be there. In other words, and this may sound strange, if you don't mind being unhappy, what happens to the unhappiness? Don't you want to find out?'' She looked puzzled briefly, and after a minute or so of sitting silently, I suddenly noticed a significant shift in her energy field.

She said, ''This is weird. I'm still unhappy, but now there's space around it. It seems to matter less.

This was the first time I heard somebody put it like that. There's space around my unhappiness. That space, of course, comes when there's inner acceptance of whatever you're experiencing in the present moment.

I didn't say much else, allowing her to be with the experience. Later she came to understand that the moment she stopped identifying with the feeling, the old painful emotion that lived in her, the moment she put her attention on it directly without trying to resist it, it could no longer control her thinking and so become mixed up with a mentally constructed story called the unhappy me. Another dimension had come into her life that transcended her personal past, the dimension of presence.

Since you cannot be unhappy without an unhappy story, this was the end of her unhappiness. It was also the beginning of the end of her pain body. Emotion in itself is not unhappiness.

Only emotion plus an unhappy story is unhappiness. When our session came to an end, it was fulfilling to know that I had just witnessed the arising of presence in another human being. The very reason for our existence in human form is to bring that dimension of consciousness into this world.

I had also witnessed a diminishment of the pain body, not through fighting it, but through bringing the light of consciousness to it. A few minutes after my visitor left, a friend arrived to drop something off. As soon as she came into the room, she said, ìWhat happened here?

The energy feels heavy and murky. It almost makes me feel sick. You need to open the windows, burn some incense.î I explained that I had just witnessed a major release in someone with a very dense pain body, and that what she felt must be some of the energy that was released during our session. My friend, however, didnít want to stay and listen. She wanted to get away as soon as possible. I opened the windows and went out to have dinner at a small Indian restaurant nearby.

What happened there was a clear further confirmation of what I already knew, that on some level all seemingly individual human pain bodies are connected, although the form this particular confirmation took did come as a shock. The return of the pain body. I sat down at a table and ordered a meal.

There were a few other guests. At a nearby table there was a middle-aged man in a wheelchair who was just finishing his meal. He glanced at me once, briefly but intensely.

A few minutes passed. Suddenly he became restless, agitated, his body began twitching. The waiter came to take his plate.

The man started arguing with him. ìThe food was no good, it was dreadful.î ìThen why did you eat it?î asked the waiter. ìAnd that really set him off.î He started shouting, became abusive. Vile words were coming out of his mouth. Intense violent hatred filled the room. One could feel that energy entering the cells of oneís body, looking for something to latch on to.

Other guests too, but for some strange reason ignoring me completely as I sat in intense presence. I suspected that the universal human pain body had come back to tell me. ìYou thought you defeated me.

Look, Iím still here.î I also considered the possibility that the released energy field left behind after our session followed me to the restaurant and attached itself to the one person in whom it found a compatible vibrational frequency, that is to say, a heavy pain body. The manager opened the door. ìJust leave, just leave.î The man zoomed out in his electric wheelchair, leaving everyone stunned. One minute later he returned. His pain body wasnít finished yet. It needed more.

He pushed open the door with his wheelchair, shouting obscenities. The waitress tried to stop him from coming in. He put his chair in fast forward and pinned her against the wall.

Other guests jumped up and tried to pull him away, shouting, screaming, pandemonium. A little later a policeman arrived. The man became quiet, was asked to leave and not return.

The waitress fortunately was not hurt except for bruises on her legs. When it was all over, the manager came to my table and asked me, half joking but perhaps feeling intuitively that there was some connection, ìDid you cause all this?î ìThe pain body in children.î Childrenís pain bodies sometimes manifest as moodiness or withdrawal. The child becomes sullen, refuses to interact and may sit in a corner, hugging a doll or sucking a thumb.

They can also manifest as weeping fits or temper tantrums. The child screams, may throw him or herself on the floor or become destructive. Thwarted wanting can easily trigger the pain body, and in a developing ego the force of wanting can be intense.

Parents may watch helplessly in incomprehension and disbelief as their little angel becomes transformed within a few seconds into a little monster. ìWhere does all that unhappiness come from?î they wonder. To a greater or lesser extent it is the childís share of the collective pain body of humanity which goes back to the very origin of the human ego.

But the child may also already have taken on pain from his or her parentsí pain bodies, and so the parents may see in the child a reflection of what is also in them. Highly sensitive children are particularly affected by their parentsí pain bodies. Having to witness their parentsí insane drama causes almost unbearable emotional pain, and so it is often these sensitive children who grow into adults with heavy pain bodies.

Children are not fooled by parents who try to hide their pain body from them, who say to each other, ìWe mustnít fight in front of the children.î This usually means, while the parents make polite conversation, the home is pervaded with negative energy. Suppressed pain bodies are extremely toxic, even more so than openly active ones, and that psychic toxicity is absorbed by the children and contributes to the development of their own pain body. Some children learn subliminally about ego and pain body simply by living with very unconscious parents.

A woman whose parents both had strong egos and heavy pain bodies told me that often when her parents were shouting and screaming at each other, she would look at them and, although she loved them, would say to herself, ìThese people are nuts. How did I ever end up here?î There was already an awareness in her of the insanity of living in such a way. That awareness helped reduce the amount of pain she absorbed from her parents.

Parents often wonder how to deal with their childís pain body. The primary question is, of course, are they dealing with their own? Do they recognize it within themselves?

Are they able to stay present enough when it becomes activated, so that they can be aware of the emotion on the feeling level before it gets a chance to turn into thinking and thus into an unhappy person? While the child is having a pain body attack, there isnít much you can do except to stay present so that you are not drawn into an emotional reaction. The childís pain body would only feed on it.

Pain bodies can be extremely dramatic. Donít buy into the drama. Donít take it too seriously.

If the pain body was triggered by thwarted wanting, donít give in now to its demands. Otherwise the child will learn, ìThe more unhappy I become, the more likely I am to get what I want.î This is a recipe for dysfunction in later life. The pain body will be frustrated by your non-reaction and may briefly act up even more before it subsides.

Fortunately, pain body episodes in children are usually more short-lived than in adults. After it has subsided, or perhaps the next day, you can talk to the child about what happened. But donít tell the child about the pain body.

Ask questions instead. For example, ìWhat was it that came over you yesterday when you wouldnít stop screaming?î ìDo you remember?î ìWhat did it feel like?î ìWas it a good feeling?î ìThat thing that came over youódoes it have a name?î ìNo.î ìIf it had a name, what would it be called?î ìIf you could see it, what would it look like?î ìCan you paint a picture of what it would look like?î ìWhat happened to it when it went away?î ìDid it go to sleep?î ìDo you think it may come back?î These are just a few suggested questions. All these questions are designed to awaken the witnessing faculty in the child, which is presence.

They will help the child to disidentify from the pain body. You may also want to talk to the child about your own pain body, using the childís terminology. The next time the child gets taken over by the pain body you can say, ìItís come back, hasnít it?î Use whatever words the child used when you talked about it.

Direct the childís attention to what it feels like. Let your attitude be one of interest or curiosity rather than one of criticism or condemnation. It is unlikely that this will stop the pain body in its tracks, and it may appear that the child will not even be hearing you, yet some awareness will remain in the background of the childís consciousness even while the pain body is active.

After a few times the awareness will have grown stronger and the pain body will have weakened. The child is growing in presence. One day you may find that the child is the one to point out to you that your own pain body has taken control of you.

Unhappiness Not all unhappiness is of the pain body. Some of it is new unhappiness, created whenever you are out of alignment with the present moment, when the ìnowî is denied in one way or another. When you recognize that the present moment is always already the case, and therefore inevitable, you can bring an uncompromising inner ìyesî to it, and so not only create no further unhappiness, but, with inner resistance gone, find yourself empowered by life itself.

The pain bodyís unhappiness is always clearly out of proportion to the apparent cause. In other words, it is an overreaction. This is how it is recognized, although not usually by the sufferer, the person possessed.

Someone with a heavy pain body easily finds reasons for being upset, angry, hurt, sad, or fearful. Relatively insignificant things that someone else would shrug off with a smile or not even notice, become the apparent cause of intense unhappiness. They are, of course, not the true cause, but only act as a trigger.

They bring back to life the old accumulated emotion. The emotion then moves into the head and amplifies and energizes the egoic mind structures. Pain body and ego are close relatives.

They need each other. The triggering event or situation is then interpreted and reacted to through the screen of a heavily emotional ego. This is to say, its significance becomes completely distorted.

You look at the present through the eyes of the emotional past in you. In other words, what you see and experience is not in the event or situation, but in you. Or, in some cases, it may be there in the event or situation, but you amplify it through your reaction.

This reaction, this amplification, is what the pain body wants and needs, what it feeds on. For someone possessed by a heavy pain body, it is often impossible to step outside his or her distorted interpretation, the heavily emotional story. The more negative emotion there is in a story, the heavier and more impenetrable it becomes.

And so the story is not recognized as such, but is taken to be reality. When you are completely trapped in the movement of thought and the accompanying emotion, stepping outside is not possible because you don't even know that there is an outside. You are trapped in your own movie or dream, trapped in your own hell.

To you it is reality and no other reality is possible. And as far as you are concerned, your reaction is the only possible reaction, breaking identification with the pain body. A person with a strong active pain body has a particular energy emanation that other people perceive as extremely unpleasant.

When they meet such a person, some people will immediately want to remove themselves or reduce interaction with him or her to a minimum. They feel repulsed by the person's energy field. Others will feel a wave of aggression towards this person, and they will be rude or attack him or her verbally, and in some cases even physically.

This means there's something within them that resonates with the other person's pain body. What they react to so strongly is also in them. It is their own pain body.

Not surprisingly, people with heavy and frequently active pain bodies often find themselves in conflict situations. Sometimes, of course, they actively provoke them, but at other times they may not actually do anything. The negativity they emanate is enough to attract hostility and generate conflict.

It requires a high degree of presence to avoid reacting when confronted by somebody with such an active pain body. If you're able to stay present, it sometimes happens that your presence enables the other person to disidentify from his or her own pain body and thus experience the miracle of a sudden awakening. Although the awakening may be short-lived, the awakening process will have become initiated.

I witnessed happened many years ago. My doorbell rang close to 11 o'clock at night. My neighbor Ethel's anxiety-laden voice came through the intercom.

We need to talk. This is very important. Please let me in.

Ethel was middle-aged, intelligent, and highly educated. She also had a strong ego and a heavy pain body. She escaped from Nazi Germany when she was an adolescent, and many of her family members perished in the concentration camps.

Ethel sat down on my sofa, agitated, her hands trembling. She took letters and documents out of the file she carried with her and spread them out all over the sofa and floor. At once I had the strange sensation as if a dimmer switch had turned the inside of my entire body to maximum power.

There was nothing to do other than remain open, alert, intensely present, present with every cell of the body. I looked at her with no thought and no judgment and listened in stillness without any mental commentary. A torrent of words came out of her mouth.

They sent me another disturbing letter today. They are conducting a vendetta against me. You must help.

We need to fight them together. Their crooked lawyers will stop at nothing. I will lose my home.

They are threatening me with dispossession. It transpired that she refused to pay the service charge because the property managers had failed to carry out some repairs. They in turn threatened to take her to court.

She talked for ten minutes or so. I sat, looked, and listened. Suddenly she stopped talking, looked at the papers all around her as if she had just woken up from a dream.

She became calm and gentle. Her entire energy field changed. Then she looked at me and said, This isn't important at all, is it?

No, it isn't, I said. She sat quietly for a couple more minutes, then picked up her papers and left. The next morning she stopped me in the street, looking at me somewhat suspiciously.

What did you do to me? Last night was the first night in years that I slept well. In fact, I slept like a baby.

She believed I had done something to her. But I had done nothing. Instead of asking what I had done to her, perhaps she should have asked what I had not done.

I had not reacted, not confirmed the reality of her story, not fed her mind with more thought and her pain body with more emotion. I had allowed her to experience whatever she was experiencing at that moment. And the power of allowing lies in non-interference, non-doing.

Being present is always infinitely more powerful than anything one could say or do, although sometimes being present can give rise to words or actions. What happened to her was not yet a permanent shift, but a glimpse of what is possible, a glimpse of what was already within her. In Zen such a glimpse is called Satori.

Satori is a moment of presence, a brief stepping out of the voice in your head, the thought processes and their reflection in the body as emotion. It is the arising of inner spaciousness where before there was the clutter of thought and the turmoil of emotion. The thinking mind cannot understand presence and so will often misinterpret it.

It will say that you are uncaring, distant, have no compassion, are not relating. The truth is, you are relating, but at a level deeper than thought and emotion. In fact, at that level there is a true coming together, a true joining that goes far beyond relating.

In the stillness of presence you can sense the formless essence in yourself and in the other as one. Knowing the oneness of yourself and the other is true love, true care, true compassion. Triggers.

Some pain bodies react to only one particular kind of trigger or situation, which is usually one that resonates with a certain kind of emotional pain suffered in the past. For example, if a child grows up with parents for whom financial issues are the source of frequent drama and conflict, he or she may absorb the parent's fear around money and develop a pain body that is triggered whenever financial issues are involved. The child as adult gets upset or angry even over insignificant amounts of money.

Behind the upset or anger lies issues of survival and intense fear. I have seen spiritual, that is to say relatively conscious people, who started to shout, blame, and make accusations the moment they picked up the phone to talk to their stockbroker or realtor.

Just as there is a health warning on every package of cigarettes, perhaps there should be similar warnings on every banknote and bank statement.

Money can activate the pain body and cause complete unconsciousness. Someone who in childhood was neglected or abandoned by one or both parents will likely develop a pain body that becomes triggered in any situation that resonates even remotely with their primordial pain of abandonment. A friend arriving a few minutes late to pick them up at the airport or a spouse coming home late can trigger a major pain body attack.

If their partner or spouse leaves them or dies, the emotional pain they experience goes far beyond the pain that is natural in such a situation. It may be intense anguish, long-lasting incapacitating depression, or obsessive anger. A woman physically abused by her father may find that her pain body becomes easily activated in any close relationship with a man.

Alternatively, the emotion that makes up her pain body may draw her to a man whose pain body is similar to that of her father. Her pain body may feel a magnetic pull to someone who it senses will give it more of the same pain. That pain is sometimes misinterpreted as falling in love.

A man who had been an unwanted child and was given no love and a minimum of care and attention by his mother developed a heavy ambivalent pain body that consisted of unfulfilled intense longing for his mother's love and attention, and at the same time intense hatred towards her for withholding what he so desperately needed. As an adult, almost every woman would trigger his pain body's neediness, a form of emotional pain, and this would manifest as an addictive compulsion to conquer and seduce almost every woman he met and in this way get the female love and attention that the pain body craved. He became quite an expert on seduction, but as soon as a relationship turned intimate or his advances were rejected, the pain body's anger towards his mother would come up and sabotage the relationship.

When you recognize your own pain body as it arises, you will also quickly learn what the most common triggers are that activate it, whether it be situations or certain things other people do or say. When those triggers occur, you will immediately see them for what they are and enter a heightened state of alertness. Within a second or two you will also notice the emotional reaction that is the arising pain body, but in that state of alert presence you won't identify with it, which means the pain body cannot take you over and become the voice in your head.

If you are with your partner at the time, you may tell him or her, what you just said or did triggered my pain body. Have an agreement with your partner that whenever either of you says or does something that triggers the other person's pain body, you will immediately mention it. In this way the pain body can no longer renew itself through drama in the relationship and instead of pulling you into unconsciousness will help you become fully present.

Every time you are present when the pain body arises, some of the pain body's negative emotional energy will burn up as it were and become transmuted into presence. The rest of the pain body will quickly withdraw and wait for a better opportunity to arise again, that is to say when you are less conscious. A better opportunity for the pain body to arise may come whenever you lose presence, perhaps after you've had a few drinks or while watching a violent film.

The tiniest negative emotion such as being irritated or anxious can also serve as a doorway through which the pain body can return. The pain body needs your unconsciousness, it cannot tolerate the light of presence. The pain body as an awakener.

At first sight it may seem that the pain body is the greatest obstacle to the arising of a new consciousness in humanity. It occupies your mind, controls and distorts your thinking, disrupts your relationships and feels like a dark cloud that occupies your entire energy field. It tends to make you unconscious, spiritually speaking, which means totally identified with mind and emotion.

It makes you reactive, makes you say and do things that are designed to increase the unhappiness within yourself and the world. As unhappiness increases, however, it also causes increasing disruption in your life. Perhaps the body can't take the stress anymore and develops an illness or some dysfunction.

Perhaps you become involved in an accident, some huge conflict situation or drama that was caused by the pain body's desire for something bad to happen, or you become the perpetrator of physical violence, or it all becomes too much and you cannot live with your unhappy self anymore. The pain body, of course, is part of that false self. Whenever you get taken over by the pain body, whenever you don't recognize it for what it is, it becomes part of your ego.

Whatever you identify with turns into ego. The pain body is one of the most powerful things the ego can identify with, just as the pain body needs the ego to renew itself through it. That unholy alliance, however, eventually breaks down in those cases where the pain body is so heavy that the egoic mind structures, instead of being strengthened by it, are becoming eroded by the continuous onslaught of the pain body's energy charge, in the same way that an electronic device can be empowered by an electric current, but also destroyed by it if the voltage is too high.

It often reaches a point where they feel their life is becoming unbearable, where they can't take any more pain, any more drama. One person expressed this by saying plainly and simply that she was fed up with being unhappy. Some people may feel, as I did, that they cannot live with themselves anymore.

Inner peace then becomes their first priority. Their acute emotional pain forces them to disidentify from the content of their minds and the mental-emotional structures that give birth to and perpetuate the unhappy me. They then know that neither their unhappy story nor the emotion they feel is who they are.

They realize they are the knowing, not the known. Rather than pulling them into unconsciousness, the pain body becomes their awakener, the decisive factor that forces them into a state of presence. However, due to the unprecedented influx of consciousness we are witnessing on the planet now, many people no longer need to go through the depths of acute suffering to be able to disidentify from the pain body.

Whenever they notice they have slipped back into a dysfunctional state, they are able to choose to step out of identification with thinking and emotion and enter the state of presence. Their relinquished resistance becomes still and alert, one with what is, within and without. The next step in human evolution is not inevitable, but for the first time in the history of our planet it can be a conscious choice.

Who is making that choice? You are. And who are you?

Consciousness that has become conscious of itself. Breaking free of the pain body. A question people frequently ask is, how long does it take to become free of the pain body?

The answer is, of course, that it depends both on the density of an individual's pain body as well as the degree or intensity of that individual's arising presence. But it is not the pain body but identification with it that causes the suffering that you inflict on yourself and others. It is not the pain body but identification with the pain body that forces you to relive the past again and again and keeps you in a state of unconsciousness.

So a more important question to ask would be this, how long does it take to become free of identification with the pain body? And the answer to that question is, it takes no time at all. When the pain body is activated, know that what you are feeling is the pain body in you.

This knowing is all that is needed to break your identification with it. And when identification with it ceases, the transmutation begins. The knowing prevents the old emotion from rising up into your head and taking over not only the internal dialogue but also your actions as well as interactions with other people.

This means the pain body cannot use you anymore and renew itself through you. The old emotion may then still live in you for a while and come up periodically. It may also still occasionally trick you into identifying with it again and thus obscure the knowing but not for long.

Not projecting the old emotion into situations means facing it directly within yourself. It may not be pleasant but it won't kill you. Your presence is more than capable of containing it.

The emotion is not who you are. When you feel the pain body, don't fall into the era of thinking there's something wrong with you. Making yourself into a problem, the ego loves that.

The knowing needs to be followed by accepting. Anything else will obscure it again. Accepting means you allow yourself to feel whatever it is you're feeling at that moment.

It is part of the is-ness of the now. You can't argue with what is. Well, you can, but if you do, you suffer.

Through allowing, you become what you are, vast, spacious. You become whole. You're not a fragment anymore, which is how the ego perceives itself.

Your true nature emerges, which is one with the nature of God. Jesus points to this when he says, Be ye whole even as your father in heaven is whole. The New Testament's be ye perfect is a mistranslation of the original Greek word which means whole.

This is to say, you don't need to become whole, but be what you already are, with or without the pain body.

[Speaker 2] (41:49 - 42:35)

Welcome everybody to class six of our New Earth web series with author Eckhart Tolle. We're live again tonight and one of the things that we both look forward to every week is the energy that we feel from all of you out there who've signed on from your living room couches, from your kitchen tables, your home offices and dens and family rooms. I consider this to be a sacred moment when we can all come together and in community this way and share in this work.

So wherever you are right now, I thank you. Eckhart Tolle thanks you for awakening with us. One of my other favorite books is a book that Eckhart Tolle had written, um, I don't know how many years ago.

[Speaker 1] (42:36 - 42:37)

A few years ago.

[Speaker 2] (42:37 - 43:39)

A few years ago and it's a little book with wonderful passages in it and it's called Stillness Speaks. It really speaks to, um, just on a different level what we've been talking about in New Earth and I wanted to begin tonight's class, uh, before we begin our moments of silence here, reading from the beginning of Stillness Speaks by Eckhart Tolle and it says, stillness is your essential nature. What is stillness?

The inner space or awareness in which the words on this page are being perceived and become thoughts. Without that awareness there would be no perception, no thoughts, no world. You are that awareness disguised as a person.

I just love that. That you are the awareness. That's what we've been saying week after week here is that you're not your thoughts, you are the awareness of your thoughts.

[Speaker 1] (43:39 - 43:39)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (43:40 - 43:41)

Disguised as a person.

[Speaker 1] (43:41 - 44:00)

Yes. And you're not your sense perceptions, you are the awareness that makes all sense perception possible. You're not your emotions, you're the awareness that makes all these emotions possible.

So that's the, and that's the dimension where you are timeless. Everything else is time.

[Speaker 2] (44:01 - 44:24)

So when you lose touch with your inner stillness, you lose touch with yourself. When you lose touch with yourself, you lose yourself in the world. Your innermost sense of self of who you are is inseparable from stillness.

This is the I am that is deeper than name and form. You are the awareness disguised as a person.

[Speaker 9] (44:24 - 44:25)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (44:25 - 44:28)

So I think we should have our moments of silence leading into that.

[Speaker 1] (44:28 - 45:03)

Yes. So I suggest to use again the, what I sometimes call the anchor of the inner body so that we can put our attention into the inner body and fully inhabit the body, be in the body and feel the aliveness that pervades the entire body. And that's where our attention is.

And that is our anchor for stillness. So let's do that now. Attention moves away from thinking into the aliveness of the inner body.

[Speaker 2] (45:37 - 47:34)

All right. All right. That is beautiful.

So everybody tonight we're discussing chapter six, breaking free. Let's start with an overview of what this chapter is really about. In chapter five, as you all know, we met the pain body and that's, we all know what that is.

That part of us that's addicted to negativity and unhappiness. And Eckhart says that the beginning of freedom from the pain body lies first of all, in the realization that we all have a pain body. That was chapter five.

We did that last week. Now in chapter six, we're going to explore what triggers the pain body in our everyday lives and whether it's a situation or certain things other people do or say. Eckhart shows us how that we can actually use those triggers to enter a more heightened state of awareness.

And also this chapter is about breaking free of the pain body. So you don't have to continually carry the past and everything that happened in the past and what people did to you, your story. You can release that.

Tonight is about breaking free at the beginning of the chapter on page 162. You say that when you disidentify with the pain body, the energy that was trapped in the pain body, you say, then changes itself, its vibrational frequency and is transmuted into presence. And this way, the pain body becomes fuel for consciousness.

This is why many of the wisest, most enlightened men and women on our planet once had a heavy pain body, you say. So what I wanted to ask is that so many people today, uh, medicate themselves, um, any uncomfortable feelings that you have, you go to a psychiatrist or counselor. Remember the first thing they do is prescribe medication for you.

Does medication get in the way of, um, using the pain body as fuel for enlightenment?

[Speaker 1] (47:35 - 48:50)

Uh, to a large extent it does. There may be certain extreme cases when medication is necessary. And for people who already are on medication, it's certainly not advisable to go off medication without the advice of a doctor.

So if you feel that it's time for you to get off, talk to a doctor who is relatively conscious and can help you gradually to get off the medication. So it's really a question of, uh, not giving into this culturally conditioned behavior that says whenever you feel some discomfort inside yourself, emotional disturbance, immediately to seek some external help in the form of a substance that you ask your doctor to give you rather learn to be with inner discomfort that arises, learn to be with emotional pain that arises rather than wanting to eliminate it, uh, learn to accept it. Acceptance is one of the main, uh, focal points of this teaching. Teach, learn to accept whatever emotion arises in you rather than run away from it or wanting to eliminate it.

[Speaker 2] (48:50 - 48:55)

But why this is the thing, Eckhart, why would I want to accept it? That's why people are medicating themselves.

[Speaker 9] (48:55 - 48:55)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (48:55 - 49:08)

That's why people eat, they gamble, they overwork themselves, they live in denial, they become unconscious because they don't want to deal with the pain. That's what we're all trying to get away from.

[Speaker 1] (49:08 - 49:08)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (49:08 - 49:08)

Pain.

[Speaker 1] (49:08 - 50:22)

Yes. Now, if you medicate it, it doesn't actually go away. It dulls the pain so that you are not conscious of it anymore.

It's still there in the background. It's the same thing for many illnesses. The, uh, for example, I had a heavy cold a couple of weeks ago.

Yes. I didn't take anything, but some people take things to, so that the symptoms are suppressed of the cold. It doesn't suppress the cold.

The cold is still there. So why accept it? It's because it is here at this moment.

So it's part of bringing this inner yes to whatever arises in the present moment. It is part of becoming friendly with the present moment, even if on the surface, the present moment doesn't look that great. So we are bringing, and this is where the awareness begins to come into the emotion.

If we bring acceptance to whatever we feel at this moment, rather than not wanting to feel it, the equivalent of that would be an external situation that arises. And then I resist it because I don't want this situation to be as it is, but it already is.

[Speaker 2] (50:22 - 50:30)

And then you just cause stress when, and that's what you say in this book and also in the Power of Now, wanting something to be different than it is, is what causes stress.

[Speaker 1] (50:30 - 50:46)

And creates further negative emotion. If there's some emotion in you that is not pleasant, and then you don't want to be feeling what you feel, creates on top of the emotion that's already there, another negative emotion that wants to deny what's there.

[Speaker 2] (50:46 - 51:01)

So the best thing to do is to feel it, accept it, allow the feeling to do whatever it's going to do to you, make you feel sad or angry or upset or whatever, and then choose to do something about that.

[Speaker 1] (51:01 - 51:13)

Yes. Or not. Yes.

Realize first that you are the awareness for that emotion. You are the space for it. You are the awareness disguised as a person.

You are not the emotion, you are the awareness.

[Speaker 2] (51:13 - 51:13)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (51:14 - 51:28)

So then already a shift has happened, because if you completely identify with the emotion, then the emotion will very quickly rise into your mind, and it will control your thinking. So... And you will think it's you.

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (51:28 - 51:28)

Yeah, you will think it's you.

[Speaker 1] (51:28 - 52:15)

So you will be identified with the emotion. Let's say it's anger that arises. Yes.

A slight trigger triggers enormous anger, and immediately you start to think angry thoughts. Correct. Or if it's sadness or depression, you immediately start to think thoughts that reflect the emotion.

And the pain body loves that, because the pain body will feed on the energy of your thinking. That's right. And once you are trapped in the vicious circle between emotion and emotional thinking, when all the self-talk in your head, that everybody experiences most of the time, the self-talk in the head then becomes the voice of the pain body that is talking in your head.

And then all your interpretations of other people, of events, will be totally distorted and very negative.

[Speaker 2] (52:16 - 52:45)

Because you say at the bottom of page 162, when you realize that pain bodies unconsciously seek more pain, that is to say they want something bad to happen, you will understand that many traffic accidents are caused by drivers whose pain bodies are active at the time. When two drivers with active pain bodies arrive at an intersection at the same time, the likelihood of an accident is many times greater than under normal circumstances. So is it always the pain body that attracts accidents and other bad things?

[Speaker 1] (52:45 - 53:47)

No. No. That's just one factor that is often there, but there are many other factors that could attract an accident.

Many people are not fully present when they drive. I remember there was a sad story some years ago of a famous actor who got thrown off his horse and then had a spinal injury. I forgot.

Right. Christopher Reeve. Yes.

And he passed away, I think, a couple of years ago. And I remember seeing the interview with him when he talked about that incident. He loved riding.

And so he was horse riding. And he said for one moment he lost the present moment while he was riding his horse. And at that moment, he got thrown off the horse.

Wow. And he said that was the one moment of unawareness and it happened. But then he actually grew tremendously inside after the accident because he brought complete acceptance to what happened to him.

And so there was an enormous awakening that happened in him before he passed away.

[Speaker 2] (53:48 - 53:48)

Even though he was paralyzed.

[Speaker 1] (53:49 - 53:50)

Yes. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (53:50 - 53:55)

Well, Dave is Skyping us from his home office in Madison, Wisconsin. Dave, thank you for joining us.

[Speaker 7] (53:56 - 53:57)

Hi, Oprah. Hi, Eckhart.

[Speaker 1] (53:57 - 53:58)

Hi. Hello.

[Speaker 2] (53:59 - 54:00)

Your question is.

[Speaker 7] (54:01 - 54:07)

First off, I just want to say thank you. Thank you. Thank you to both of you.

You are welcome.

[Speaker 2] (54:08 - 54:08)

Welcome.

[Speaker 7] (54:10 - 54:32)

My question is, when my wife and I have a disagreement, she comes back hours or days later wanting to rehash that disagreement. And she always feels there has to be a wrong or right to it. How can I get her to live in the present and get the ego out of the way?

[Speaker 2] (54:34 - 54:43)

Were you watching last week when he told the story of the two monks, you know, and the monk said to the other monk, you're still carrying that girl. I put her down hours ago.

[Speaker 7] (54:43 - 54:45)

I want to become the two ducks.

[Speaker 2] (54:47 - 54:48)

You want to become the two ducks.

[Speaker 1] (54:49 - 55:27)

OK, good. Now, you need to see what is your role when you have disagreements at home. I assume that your wife has a pain body that becomes active at that time.

And when you have disagreements, is your pain body also a contributing factor at home or do you feel that it is just your wife's pain body? How, in other words, how do you feed into what is your part in the disagreement and in the energy field there?

[Speaker 2] (55:27 - 55:29)

Yeah. How are you playing into the drama of it, Dave?

[Speaker 7] (55:30 - 56:05)

I don't play into the drama of it. And that seems to initially increase it more on her behalf. And then, but lately, after going through the book, I find that I look for a single thing.

Her eyes are beautiful. And I just think of those and I take to a different place inside myself. And it seems that it kind of it just diminishes on her behalf that.

Mm hmm.

[Speaker 1] (56:05 - 56:23)

Now, when you disagree or you have an argument, that means to some extent you must be identified with a mental position. And because if you don't have a mental position that you identify with, there is no argument. Correct.

[Speaker 2] (56:24 - 56:26)

So that's why I said today this.

[Speaker 1] (56:26 - 57:03)

Yes. This is why Oprah was a little bit skeptical. Yes.

When you were talking. So it's perhaps before we talk about your wife, maybe there's something that you can do so that you let go of identification with mental positions. When you discuss things, you can still discuss the practicality of certain things that you need to talk about, but don't become identified with a mental position of rightness that makes you right.

And because that is what the ego thrives on and that is what feeds the pain body.

[Speaker 2] (57:04 - 57:06)

Whenever you identify with anything, it's the ego.

[Speaker 1] (57:07 - 57:39)

Yes. Whatever you identify with becomes ego. So perhaps bring more vigilance into especially when you see a situation is developing that is going to become an argument or you can see that the pain body in your wife is becoming active again.

And then it's a it's a time of being particularly alert and vigilant inside yourself so that you do not get drawn into opposing her in any way.

[Speaker 2] (57:39 - 58:53)

And even Dave, you know, the reason why I said and was skeptical because of what Eckhart just said, if I may reiterate, if you are if there's no drama involved at all with you, if you just become peace, then the argument has to dissolve. Like the woman, the story that he tells in the book of the woman who came and was so upset and carrying all the papers and the bills and so forth. And as he sat there just listening, taking it in, she finally said, this doesn't really matter, does it?

And left and went home. You remember that? Yeah.

From a couple of classes ago. And I understand what you're talking about, because often when you start reading this material and you start to awaken yourself, we become a little self-righteous about it, you know? So perhaps maybe there's a little bit of that still remaining with you where you want to say, I am so because I know this happened with Stedman and myself.

We're in a discussion and I'm feeling, well, I am very awakened. I'm a very evolved person. So what you're saying is is not going to upset me.

But that attitude, the energy of that, my ego and my self-righteousness is what contributed to the drama. You see what I'm saying?

[Speaker 7] (58:53 - 58:54)

I do. Yeah, I do.

[Speaker 2] (58:55 - 59:03)

Your need to be right or your need to feel like, you know, I'm a little bit more superior because I'm not engaging in this and you are.

[Speaker 1] (59:03 - 59:10)

Yes. Yes. So that's then alertness and vigilance is very important on your part.

[Speaker 2] (59:10 - 59:38)

I think what you just said here is so important for every one of us who's trying to continue to wake into this process, that whenever there's an argument or disagreement, the thing is, is to not and it's not to ever make it about the other person, even though it seems to be. The question is not what can I do for my wife, for my partner, for my boss, for my co-worker? But it is what can I do in the situation?

[Speaker 1] (59:38 - 59:39)

Yes. Right.

[Speaker 2] (59:39 - 59:42)

That's that's what is my contribution to it.

[Speaker 1] (59:42 - 1:00:35)

That's right. That's primary. And then your wife, I don't know whether she has any interest in spiritual teaching or the pain body.

Have you ever mentioned to her the pain body, not while there's a pain body attack happening, but when the pain body said nobody hears you when you know, because when you cannot talk to the pain body about the pain body, that was actually dangerous because the pain body will throw something at you. So the is your does your wife. What?

I love it when you get tickled. Go ahead. I know pain bodies.

So the is is your wife sometimes relatively more open to this than at other times? Or is she always not open to this in your view?

[Speaker 7] (1:00:36 - 1:00:58)

She's not open to it to this point. But when I was running off the sheets for this week's class, she picked him up out of the printer and she read him over and she said, hmm, you're talking about me. So maybe that opens the book.

Yes. Yes. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:00:58 - 1:01:01)

Opens the door. Dave, thanks so much for your question. Thanks so much.

[Speaker 7] (1:01:02 - 1:01:03)

Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:01:03 - 1:01:16)

Well, many acts of violence, you say on page 163 are committed by normal people who temporarily turn into maniacs. Does this mean that you think people are not responsible for what they do when possessed by the pain body?

[Speaker 1] (1:01:16 - 1:03:05)

No, that's what I say. They are not responsible. As we mentioned last time, Jesus on the cross, when he said they know not what they do, meaning they are so unconscious, they are in the grip of an energy field at which they cannot control.

They don't even know that they are in the grip of this energy field because it has taken complete possession of them. So in that sense, I say they are not responsible, which does not mean that they do not suffer the consequences of their actions. So it almost looks like a little bit of a paradox.

Yes. No, they are not responsible. Nevertheless, karmically, they will suffer the consequences of their unconsciousness because human beings are.

Our purpose is to evolve into conscious beings. So if we are not evolving into conscious beings, then we suffer. Right.

The less, the more close we are to this evolutionary impulse of evolving into conscious being of the flowering of consciousness, the more close we are to this, the more we suffer. And so these people who inflict violence on others, who make others suffer, also make themselves suffer. And they suffer the consequences karmically.

And sometimes the karmic consequences come in the form of the legal system. So they are put away. And so that represents for them at that time karma.

And then there's always a possibility when they are in deep suffering because of something that they did in a state of complete unconsciousness. When they then are in deep suffering, perhaps in prison, whatever they may be, there's always the possibility then of awakening through the suffering that they inflicted on themselves, on others also.

[Speaker 2] (1:03:05 - 1:03:23)

Because you say on page 164, when you can't stand the endless cycle of suffering anymore, you begin to awaken. So the pain body, too, has its necessary place in the larger picture. But there are a lot of people who never awaken.

They just, you know, the pain body just, they die with it.

[Speaker 1] (1:03:23 - 1:03:46)

Yes, that is true. Then there's always a chance that the unawakened consciousness awakens in some other form, in some other situation. So but the entire universe is going in the direction of awakening.

So it is, the more we are open to this...

[Speaker 2] (1:03:46 - 1:03:47)

Because we have to, or we're going to die.

[Speaker 1] (1:03:48 - 1:04:28)

Yes, the human species now, the impulse, the awakening impulse has been there for a million years longer. But for us now, we have arrived at this critical point where humanity, if humanity does not embrace this new state of consciousness, the awakened state, then humanity is not going to make it. On a cosmic scale, even that doesn't matter.

And whatever gain there has been achieved in the awakening of conscience on this planet is not going to be lost. There's only one consciousness throughout the entire universe. And that one consciousness is awakening in millions and billions of lives.

[Speaker 2] (1:04:28 - 1:04:32)

And so if we don't survive as a human species...

[Speaker 1] (1:04:32 - 1:04:40)

That's not the greatest tragedy either. In relatively speaking, it is tragic. But in absolute terms, that's fine too.

[Speaker 2] (1:04:40 - 1:04:42)

Yeah. And it's really, it's our decision.

[Speaker 1] (1:04:42 - 1:04:59)

Yes. Yes. The fact that we are here at this very moment engaged in this work is a very good sign.

It's a sign. Because here, at least we know that at right now, here, the awakening is happening.

[Speaker 2] (1:04:59 - 1:05:02)

Yeah. For the hundreds of thousands of people who are joining us around the world.

[Speaker 1] (1:05:02 - 1:05:02)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:05:03 - 1:05:06)

Danielle, who's joining us now from Ireland and Skyping us from Dublin. Hi, Danielle.

[Speaker 8] (1:05:07 - 1:05:08)

Hi, Oprah. Hi, Akash.

[Speaker 2] (1:05:09 - 1:05:10)

Hi. What time is it in Dublin right now?

[Speaker 8] (1:05:11 - 1:05:13)

I think about half two in the morning.

[Speaker 2] (1:05:13 - 1:05:17)

Okay. Well, you're up late. Thank you for joining us.

[Speaker 8] (1:05:18 - 1:05:45)

No, no, no. I'm delighted to be here. Thank you for having me.

And my question's about ego, and I'm just going to read it out. And I've been practicing trying to stay in the present moment for over three years now. But I've come to some sort of block because my ego keeps on telling me, if you get rid of your ego, you will lose the world as you know it.

You will lose your relationships with the friends you've built up for years. And you want to give up your career you've worked so hard for. And you'll be isolated from the rest of society because they are all living in ego.

How can I overcome this?

[Speaker 1] (1:05:47 - 1:05:48)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:05:48 - 1:05:49)

Excellent question.

[Speaker 1] (1:05:50 - 1:07:28)

Now, as you may have noticed, these are thoughts that arise in your mind. These thoughts that arise in your mind are telling you something. Now, what these thoughts are saying may be very far from the truth.

What the thought that if you awaken, if you become really present, you're going to lose your friends. Life is not going to be fun anymore. You have to see, is that the truth or are these just thoughts that my egoic mind is producing in order to stop me from being present?

Do I believe in those thoughts or do I believe in first-hand evidence that I have? Because if you've been practicing being present, then you realize it's actually quite joyful to be fully open to the present moment. It doesn't take away from the fun of being alive.

It actually makes you more intensely alive when you are fully present in the now, rather than always looking to some next moment that's going to be better than this one. This is how most of the world lives. So, I'm sure you've already had glimpses or more than glimpses of how the quality of your life actually becomes enhanced through being fully present to life now, because life is now.

So, and your mind is... please, a question?

[Speaker 8] (1:07:28 - 1:07:43)

Oh, no, I definitely have. But I think it's just the ego keeps on sweeping in or else you'll be in a situation where your friends expect you to act the same way that you've always acted, like in ego. Like your friendship, a lot of friendships are kind of bound through ego.

[Speaker 9] (1:07:43 - 1:07:43)

Yes.

[Speaker 8] (1:07:44 - 1:07:54)

You know, it's your personality and, you know, you'll try and be in the present moment and then they'll be like, come on, come on, you know, let's go and do something, you know, which is obviously trying to escape from the present moment.

[Speaker 2] (1:07:54 - 1:08:33)

But isn't it true, Danielle, when you become to awaken, when you come to the state where you feel more alive and awakened and willing to be more present with yourself, that that means you might have to let go of some of the things that used to bring you a false sense of happiness, that maybe the same people you used to hang around with and do things with who are not, you know, ready to follow your path or not willing to be a part of some of the things that you now recognize that matter, maybe it means letting some of those friends go.

That's, that's the whole point.

[Speaker 1] (1:08:33 - 1:09:23)

Maybe just a comment on this. Usually what happens when people become more present, some of their friends are actually drawn into that also, because whatever state you're in will affect the people around you or your back. So usually it happens that some of your friends will actually join you and also grow in presence and awaken, and others may drop away who are not ready yet.

That's that is usually the case. So the and the career does actually can only improve because the quality of anything that you do in full presence is so much greater and there's so much power available to you that is not there when you're always looking to some other scattered.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:23 - 1:09:24)

Yes, you're scattered.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:24 - 1:09:39)

You remember a couple of weeks ago, I quoted the Zen master who was observing competitors at an archery competition, and the Zen master was observing one competitor and he said, his need to win drains him of power.

[Speaker 9] (1:09:39 - 1:09:39)

Power.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:39 - 1:09:59)

And of course, this need to win, which most people in the old consciousness have is the need to arrive at some future point. And it takes energy away from what you're doing now. And that drains you of power.

So whatever you do becomes actually more powerful when you're present rather than so it can.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:59 - 1:10:30)

I remember when I first started doing this talk show 22 years ago, I used to get asked a lot of questions about other talk shows and other people. And I always used to say, we're running our own race here. And the energy that it takes to look back and see where the other guy is in the race.

And there have been a lot of guys and female guys and guys with shows who were in competition. The energy that it takes to look at what somebody else is doing, takes energy away from what you're doing.

[Speaker 1] (1:10:31 - 1:10:31)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:10:31 - 1:10:39)

I mean, if you're on track, I used to run track. And if you just take the moment to look back and see where the other guy is, that energy is so draining.

[Speaker 1] (1:10:40 - 1:10:40)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:10:40 - 1:10:42)

And causes you to lose your own footing.

[Speaker 1] (1:10:42 - 1:10:43)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:10:43 - 1:10:45)

And lose your own concentration and focus.

[Speaker 1] (1:10:45 - 1:10:45)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:10:45 - 1:10:46)

So that's what you're saying.

[Speaker 1] (1:10:46 - 1:10:54)

Yes. And that's also put this in the sense that you're competing against others as part of the ego energy. That's right.

And that also takes power away.

[Speaker 2] (1:10:55 - 1:10:56)

That's right. Instead of just run the race.

[Speaker 1] (1:10:57 - 1:10:57)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:10:57 - 1:10:58)

Run your own race.

[Speaker 1] (1:10:58 - 1:10:58)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:10:58 - 1:11:04)

Now, what's the best way for us to sense the pain body? It's very... Thank you so much, Danielle.

Joining us from Dublin.

[Speaker 8] (1:11:05 - 1:11:06)

The technical problem. Thanks. Bye.

[Speaker 2] (1:11:06 - 1:11:39)

Thank you. Bye. Thank you.

It's very easy for all of us to spot the pain body in other people. And I've actually heard the word come up many times as we go. That was his pain body.

That was his pain body. So thanks for introducing it to our culture. So it's easy to see it in other people.

What's the best way? Number one, to spot it in yourself. And how do you stop ourselves from acting out when we're in its grip?

Are there simple exercises or something we can do to break the grip when you feel yourself go in there?

[Speaker 1] (1:11:39 - 1:12:02)

Yes. So the important thing is to catch it as it first arises in the first because before it takes over your mind when it's there as an emotion. And usually it's the pain body when the emotional reaction is out of proportion to the triggering event.

So a relatively minor thing triggers an enormous amount of unhappiness in whatever form.

[Speaker 2] (1:12:02 - 1:12:05)

That's right. A small thing happens and you flare up.

[Speaker 1] (1:12:05 - 1:12:05)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:12:05 - 1:12:05)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:12:05 - 1:13:04)

Yes. And so then after a while you realize the kind of situation that triggers your pain body. And then you can be actually more vigilant when such a situation happens.

And you can see a very important thing is to be able to have some attention inside your body that is connected with the exercise we did at the beginning today which is bringing consciousness into the body. Because if you're able to bring consciousness into the body you can more easily feel an arising emotion inside you. Whether it's a very heavy emotion of deep sadness or whether it's a fiery emotion of anger or whatever it is.

Or the emotion of intense fear. That contraction. Then you can.

There's so many people these days who are completely out of touch with their emotions because they live only in the head.

[Speaker 9] (1:13:04 - 1:13:04)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:13:06 - 1:14:36)

It's so being able to feel an emotion as it arises and then recognizing it as the beginning of the pain body. My pain body. And as long as you know this is the pain body you are not identified with it because the knowing is the awareness.

So when you if you can catch it early on and then it may still grow. Suddenly the fear fear may become very intense or the anger or whatever form the pain body takes. But you will be there as the awareness in the background while it happens.

And one thing that doesn't happen is that the pain body cannot control your thinking because you're shining the light of consciousness on it. It cannot then creep into your mind and suddenly make your mind think what it wants to think. So remain there as the awareness for it and say oh there's the pain body.

Then it cannot renew itself and it also cannot control your behavior. Your actions. All it is that you have contained it not through holding it down but you have contained it there through your presence.

Okay. And then it can't renew itself through in that situation. So it suddenly it comes up but it cannot renew itself and then it will subside again.

But the pain body being very clever it will then wait for a more suitable opportunity when you are less conscious than at that moment. It will try again. And for example.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:36 - 1:14:38)

It's like you're always being tested.

[Speaker 1] (1:14:38 - 1:14:52)

Yes. The pain body is like a little little wild animal or something. There's always it's there in the back and say okay what's the joy.

Can I am I going to come out now or is it the situation not not right. He's too conscious.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:52 - 1:14:54)

Is the pain body also your ego Eckhart?

[Speaker 1] (1:14:54 - 1:15:12)

The pain body is an ask the emotional aspect of ego. So when you identify with the pain body it becomes part of the ego because whatever you identify with becomes part of the ego. When you don't identify with it it's no longer part of the ego.

[Speaker 2] (1:15:12 - 1:15:14)

All right. Because what you identify with is the ego.

[Speaker 1] (1:15:15 - 1:15:15)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:15:15 - 1:15:36)

I like this question from Lorraine from Vancouver British Columbia who writes I attract negativity. It seems that my whole world is one big fight. I just want people to stop instigating fights with me.

I don't deliberately go out and begin conflict but it comes to me. I hate it. I just want peace.

What's the problem? Isn't that interesting?

[Speaker 1] (1:15:36 - 1:16:09)

Yes. Now this is whatever you experience repeatedly and frequently externally is a reflection of your inner state. So you attract certain things into your life that reflect your state of consciousness.

So for Lorraine it's very important to become much more aware of whatever state she is in at any given moment. Become more aware of what emotion she is feeling at any given moment.

[Speaker 2] (1:16:09 - 1:16:12)

Because Lorraine could not be attracting fights and conflict.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:12 - 1:16:13)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:16:13 - 1:16:15)

Unless she was emanating that energy.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:15 - 1:16:15)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:16:15 - 1:16:34)

And you say on 162 every human being emanates an energy field that corresponds to his or her inner state. Most people can sense it although they may feel someone else's energy emanation only subliminally. That is to say they don't know that they sense it.

Yet it determines to a large extent how they feel about and react to that person.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:34 - 1:17:08)

Yes. Yeah. So there are two aspects to the your inner state.

There's the emotional aspect to your inner state. What is the energy of the emotion that you feel? And there's a mental aspect.

What kinds of thoughts are you is your mind producing at this moment? Is your mind producing negative thoughts? What kind of thoughts?

So you need to be there as the awareness become aware of what is that I feel right now. What is my state at this moment? That's a good question to ask yourself.

What's my inner state at this moment?

[Speaker 2] (1:17:08 - 1:17:11)

At the moment that somebody instigates a fight with her?

[Speaker 1] (1:17:11 - 1:17:12)

No.

[Speaker 2] (1:17:12 - 1:17:12)

No.

[Speaker 1] (1:17:12 - 1:17:31)

Normal moments when you're not being challenged. Okay. Because all these accumulate your normal state of consciousness eventually produces some external event.

So as much as possible in any situation, it's always more important what your inner state of consciousness is than the external situation.

[Speaker 2] (1:17:31 - 1:17:32)

Got it.

[Speaker 1] (1:17:32 - 1:18:01)

The external situation is always secondary. So what am I feeling now? And what am I thinking now?

These are the important questions. So become an alertness then arises and you become suddenly realize what's my mind saying? What's most of the day?

What kind of thoughts is my mind producing? How many negative thoughts do I have every hour, every minute? You become aware particularly of because the ego loves negative thinking.

[Speaker 2] (1:18:01 - 1:18:21)

And so what you're saying then, it would be impossible for Lorraine to be a peaceful person to say, she says here, I just want peace. What's the problem? It would be impossible to just be a peaceful person, minding your own business, having peaceful, loving thoughts.

And people want to pick a fight with you all the time.

[Speaker 1] (1:18:22 - 1:19:06)

Yes, that's not would not be possible. So it's there's something in her that she needs to become aware of. And that's not her true self.

It's a form of conditioning. Her true self is the awareness, which is already perfect. It's fine.

There's nothing wrong with who she is in her essence. So look, be vigilant as much as possible. Have maybe put little signs at home, little reminders so that you remember to be conscious of what's going on inside me.

What's going on inside me? Very important question.

[Speaker 2] (1:19:07 - 1:19:08)

What's going on inside me?

[Speaker 1] (1:19:08 - 1:19:10)

What thoughts is my mind thinking?

[Speaker 2] (1:19:11 - 1:19:11)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:19:11 - 1:19:13)

What is it that I'm feeling right now?

[Speaker 2] (1:19:13 - 1:20:19)

I wanted to go back to page 162 again, where you say every human being emanates an energy field that corresponds to his or her inner state. And most people can sense it, although they may feel somebody else's energy emanation only subliminally. That is to say, they don't know that they sense it, yet it determines to a large extent how they feel about and react to that person.

I had an encounter with somebody recently where their energy thing was so strong. I walked into the room and felt it so strong. I had to remove myself from the room.

Yes. Yeah. Yes.

Some people are most clearly aware of it when they first meet someone, even before any words are exchanged. That's what had happened there. A little later, however, I love this part.

A little later, however, words take over the relationship and with words come the roles that most people play. Attention then moves to the realm of mind and the ability to sense the other person's energy field becomes greatly diminished. Nevertheless, it is still felt on an unconscious level.

And that's why kids can sense it. Little kids can sense it because they don't have the words or the language.

[Speaker 1] (1:20:19 - 1:20:20)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:20:20 - 1:20:20)

Isn't that true?

[Speaker 1] (1:20:21 - 1:20:35)

Yes. And animals can sense it. And animals can sense it too.

Very acutely because they don't have the conceptual mental realm, so they can feel much more acutely a human energy field.

[Speaker 2] (1:20:35 - 1:20:38)

That's right. And after they're introduced to you, your title means nothing to them.

[Speaker 1] (1:20:38 - 1:20:39)

No.

[Speaker 2] (1:20:39 - 1:20:55)

Yes. Your title or your position or your label, the role that you're playing means nothing to them. No.

So once they sniff you and they don't like it, they don't like you. We have Mubina on the phone from Dubai. Hi, Mubina.

We hear you have a question.

[Speaker 9] (1:20:55 - 1:20:57)

Hi, Oprah. Hi. Good morning.

[Speaker 2] (1:20:57 - 1:21:08)

I hear Dubai is so great. It's beautiful. Please come visit.

Yeah, I think I might be coming. And yeah, I am. You have a question about relationships?

Go ahead. Yes.

[Speaker 3] (1:21:08 - 1:22:01)

My question is about the nature of love. Eckhart says that love has no wanting and that true love really is about not expecting anything in return. My question is related to a little personal dilemma.

I met somebody five years ago and I really, really like him. But I noticed that he has a dense pain body. My question is, should I continue to be present for this person?

I have been doing so for five years, giving him my present time and really being there for him. And is it worth waiting? I really do want to get married and have a family someday.

Is it worth waiting for someone with a dense pain body? But I still feel I want to be present for this person. And I know Eckhart says that we shouldn't go around changing people.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:01 - 1:22:03)

Well, you're not going to change him, first of all.

[Speaker 3] (1:22:03 - 1:22:04)

Right.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:04 - 1:22:06)

OK. Are you hoping that you're going to change him?

[Speaker 3] (1:22:08 - 1:22:15)

I'm hoping that he's going to let go of his past at some point and realize that I'm the one for him.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:18 - 1:22:25)

Well, I think you need a little more awakening. OK. No, but I'll let Eckhart answer.

Go ahead.

[Speaker 1] (1:22:26 - 1:22:30)

So do you feel that you love that person?

[Speaker 3] (1:22:31 - 1:22:32)

Yes, very dearly.

[Speaker 1] (1:22:33 - 1:23:44)

Well, let's see what it means to love someone. When you truly love another human being, there's something that you recognize in them that has nothing to do with the form of that person. There is the recognition of the essence of that person and your own essence, your own being, your own consciousness recognizes that in the other.

And that essence is the divine in each human being. So when you love another person, you really love God in the other person. You don't love the person.

If you love the person, it's the ego, because then you love the form. And if you love the person and not the formless within the person, the divine, if you don't love God in the other person, then the love is of the ego. And the ego love is very different from true love.

The ego love is greedy. And the ego love says, you love me back. And if you don't, I'm going to get very angry.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:46 - 1:23:52)

So we're upset with you or impatient with you because you haven't loved me the way I wish to be loved.

[Speaker 1] (1:23:52 - 1:24:01)

Yes, yes. So there's no need to deny what you feel for this person. It's actually...

[Speaker 3] (1:24:01 - 1:24:23)

Yes, and I've never really expected anything back from him. But what I hear from friends is always, what are you waiting for? And, you know, he's not giving you anything back.

So what are you waiting for? Now, I don't mind waiting another five years. It's just that I've just been, you know, getting bombarded with questions from friends who just think, you know, go out with other people.

[Speaker 1] (1:24:24 - 1:24:37)

Now, the love in you actually is fine. The love that you feel does not need anything. But you as a person, you as a person may have certain needs and preferences in this situation.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:37 - 1:25:05)

I don't believe that she's making this phone call for her friends, personally. I believe that you are making this phone call for yourself, Ms. Mubina. And that it's not...

Absolutely, I am. Yeah, that it's not your friends who are saying, why doesn't he do something? I think, you know, what you expressed to us at the beginning of this phone call is that you think it's been five years and it's time that he should do something.

But he has a pretty heavy pain body, right? Okay, so you want him to make a move and you want that move to be marriage?

[Speaker 3] (1:25:07 - 1:25:13)

Um, well, it could lead to that, sure. I mean, I'm in no hurry. What do you want?

But I'm just...

[Speaker 2] (1:25:13 - 1:25:14)

What do you want?

[Speaker 3] (1:25:14 - 1:25:36)

Well, I want, I want him to realize that he, um, I don't know that I, I just, I just love him. That's all. Oh, no.

You know, and I, I just, I just want him to see that. And I think he's just, um, being blocked or...

[Speaker 2] (1:25:36 - 1:25:36)

I'm not buying that.

[Speaker 3] (1:25:37 - 1:25:38)

His pain body is so dense.

[Speaker 2] (1:25:38 - 1:25:44)

No, I think what you said to us earlier is what you really want. You said, I want him to realize that I'm the one for him.

[Speaker 3] (1:25:45 - 1:25:47)

Sure, definitely. I'm not going to lie about that.

[Speaker 2] (1:25:47 - 1:25:50)

Okay, yeah, you already said it. Go ahead.

[Speaker 1] (1:25:50 - 1:25:50)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:25:50 - 1:25:52)

So what do you want to say about that, Eckhart?

[Speaker 1] (1:25:52 - 1:26:11)

Well, it may be time for you to talk to him and say, I love you. And what I feel for you is not going to change. But I have certain needs and preferences.

I would like to, I would like you to decide and make a commitment whether or not you want to be with me.

[Speaker 3] (1:26:12 - 1:26:12)

Right.

[Speaker 1] (1:26:13 - 1:26:16)

Old, old, old, Eckhart.

[Speaker 2] (1:26:17 - 1:26:19)

And then he says, well, I'm not ready for that.

[Speaker 1] (1:26:20 - 1:26:27)

Now, if he says I'm not ready and you get angry or extremely upset, then it was ego love.

[Speaker 3] (1:26:28 - 1:26:34)

If he says I'm... He said that to me a lot of times before that he's not ready, right? Fine, it's okay.

[Speaker 2] (1:26:34 - 1:26:57)

Did you hear what Eckhart just said? Hello, Mabina, did you hear? If you get upset, then that's ego love.

Ego, yes. Okay. And if you don't get upset and you're patient and you're, as you said, you can wait five more years or however it chooses to be, then perhaps maybe it is the real thing.

Yes. Unless you're just waiting for him to make the move and discover that you're the one.

[Speaker 3] (1:27:00 - 1:27:08)

Okay. Yeah, that's what I've been doing. And I just wanted to confirm that.

So that's fine. That's confirmed. That's great.

[Speaker 1] (1:27:08 - 1:27:47)

The extent to which you can love another human being depends on the extent to which you are connected with your own essence. And you can recognize... Sometimes it's easier to recognize God in one particular form, but you can recognize God in another human being.

So the love is in you. And when you... The love does not come from the outside.

The love is the recognition of oneness, that ultimately you and the other share the one consciousness. That's what connects and makes all humans one.

[Speaker 2] (1:27:47 - 1:27:59)

And what you say in the book, I don't know, I'm paraphrasing now, because this was, I think, last week that you really addressed this in the Pain Body, is that many times people mistake what they believe to be love for their own neediness.

[Speaker 1] (1:27:59 - 1:28:00)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:28:00 - 1:28:06)

And their ego identification with, you know, this person validates me or... Yes. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:28:07 - 1:28:08)

Yes. So true love is...

[Speaker 2] (1:28:08 - 1:28:13)

Especially in our society, in the American society, where it's all about romance.

[Speaker 1] (1:28:13 - 1:28:13)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:28:14 - 1:28:14)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:28:14 - 1:28:23)

That's encouraged by the culture and so on, what you see in films, the role playing associated with that. So...

[Speaker 2] (1:28:23 - 1:28:25)

It's really damaged us a lot, hasn't it?

[Speaker 1] (1:28:25 - 1:28:30)

Yes. Yes. But we are waking up out of that.

[Speaker 9] (1:28:30 - 1:28:31)

Mm-hmm.

[Speaker 1] (1:28:33 - 1:28:44)

There are not so many films now that end in the happy marriage or something like that, because people are beginning to recognize that's not how it is.

[Speaker 2] (1:28:44 - 1:28:45)

That it's not happily ever after.

[Speaker 1] (1:28:45 - 1:28:46)

No, no.

[Speaker 2] (1:28:46 - 1:28:49)

Thank you, Mubina. Thanks. Thank you so much.

[Speaker 1] (1:28:49 - 1:28:50)

Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:28:51 - 1:28:59)

Last week, we aired an interview on The Oprah Show with Thomas, who was a transgendered man. Heard about this man who became pregnant?

[Speaker 1] (1:28:59 - 1:28:59)

No.

[Speaker 2] (1:29:00 - 1:29:25)

Transgendered man who's pregnant, and his wife, Nancy. We also spoke to Thomas and Nancy's neighbors, George and Victoria, who gave us their reaction. And I found out during a commercial break that George and Victoria are students of A New Earth.

And here's a clip of our conversation after The Oprah Show went off the air. They just told me during commercial break that you're reading A New Earth. Are you taking the class?

Absolutely.

[Speaker 5] (1:29:26 - 1:30:10)

I love it, Oprah. It's been fantastic. I actually read the book first, and I couldn't put it down.

I had to read the whole book because I said to George, at last, I'm so excited. This book is really captivating, you know? So then I encouraged George to take the class with me.

So we've been watching it together and studying together. And that's what's helped us be more understanding and open-minded, non-judgmental. As Eckhart says, no labels.

Trying to get judgment out of our heads and stay in the moment and just really embrace our devoted neighbors as the human beings that are with us sharing this Earth.

[Speaker 4] (1:30:11 - 1:30:40)

And I don't think it's a coincidence that we moved to Bend and right across the street from us, we've encountered Nancy and Thomas and this situation. Because I think, in a way, there's a design to this. And it was an opportunity for us to grow.

And this is why we're kind of honored, really, to share this experience, because it's really helped us become more enlightened people. It's given us the opportunity to actually manifest what the seminars are all about.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:41 - 1:30:57)

So that's Victoria and George. Join us now from Skype from their home office in Bend, Oregon. Since Nancy and Tom were on the show, has all the press been in your neighborhood?

Looking for them or looking for you?

[Speaker 4] (1:30:58 - 1:31:08)

Yes, they were. Oddly enough, they kind of dissipated after your show. And it's been relatively peaceful now.

Oh, good.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:08 - 1:32:07)

Well, I remember you had a question for Eckhart. And I said I was going to let you ask that question yourself. That was related to the suffering of Christ.

On page 144, Eckhart writes, Why is the suffering body of Christ, his face distorted and agonized, his body bleeding from countless wounds, such a significant image in the collective consciousness of humanity? Millions of people, particularly in medieval times, would not have related to it as deeply as they did if something within themselves had not resonated with it, if they had not unconsciously recognized it as an outer representation of their own inner reality, the pain body. They were not yet conscious enough to recognize it directly within themselves, but it was the beginning of their becoming aware of it.

Christ can be seen as the archetypal, archetypical human embodying both the pain and the possibility of transcendence. And you had a question regarding some of this. Go ahead, George.

[Speaker 4] (1:32:08 - 1:32:40)

Yes, thank you, Oprah, for having us on the show. Eckhart, you mention the Christian doctrine a lot in your book, and this is a question to help me reconcile Christian doctrine with your teachings. If it's true that the ego loves suffering, as you mention in your book, and if it's true, as the New Testament says, that God sent his only begotten son to suffer and die for humanity's sins, was the passion of Christ an ego trip?

[Speaker 1] (1:32:42 - 1:36:49)

Thank you, thank you. Now, I would not say that the ego loves suffering, the pain body loves suffering. The ego is actually very often tries very hard to avoid suffering.

The ego produces suffering inevitably, sooner or later, because the way it goes about its business is dysfunctional. The ego is a very limited view of who you are. And if you act from such a limited view of who you are, you cannot see where you fit into the totality of other human beings and your environment, then eventually your actions will produce suffering.

So the ego produces suffering, although it wants something else. This is why we have the proverb, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. The ego wants the best for you, but it produces often the worst.

So I would not say that the suffering of Christ is an ego trip. It's not that. I'd like to share with you something.

I had an insight some years ago. I was walking in England into a village church. It was all very quiet.

I was the only person in that 600-year-old church. And I saw the cross on the altar and Jesus on the cross. And this is an image that we are so used to, but we don't question it.

But at that moment, I saw it as if I had just arrived on this planet and had never seen it before. And I was struck by the strangeness of that symbol. And I looked, there's a suffering human being in agony on this cross.

And at the same time, there was another cross without Jesus on it. And I saw this golden cross was the same cross. That cross that is the torture instrument is at the same time a symbol for the divine.

And suddenly I saw a very deep significance in that, that can be appreciated and recognized. I believe by anybody, even if they are not Christians. Jesus on the cross stands for humanity.

Jesus represents every human being that has ever lived or will ever live. Jesus represents something that is part of the human condition. And this, what he experienced at that moment, when I was looking at the cross in the church, I saw that what this represents is a human being who experiences an extreme form of limitation.

He's totally unfree, totally limited in deep suffering. And at the same time, the words I suddenly remembered from what is said on the cross, not my will, but thy will be done. And that was the act of complete acceptance of suffering.

He went to the depths of suffering and then totally accepted suffering. And through this total acceptance of suffering, a sudden transmutation happened. And the very torture instrument, the cross that had produced the suffering, was transformed and became a symbol for the divine.

And that explained the paradox that I had seen when I went into that church as if I'd never been to a church before. And I saw how can the torture instrument at the same time be a symbol of the divine. And so in every human being's life, every human being will experience some form of suffering, sometimes very intense.

[Speaker 2] (1:36:49 - 1:36:53)

Sometimes every human being, as you said last week, will have their own cross to bear.

[Speaker 1] (1:36:53 - 1:37:44)

Yes, every human being has their own cross to bear. And every human being needs to learn the lesson that is there. When we look at Jesus on the cross, he has to come to the point where the human being, instead of wanting to avoid suffering, says this is what is, and bring a complete yes to whatever is at this moment.

Not as I will, but thy will be done. Thy will be done. Complete alignment.

And that I call conscious suffering, where suddenly the inner resistance is not there anymore. And when you go into conscious suffering and say, this is fine, I say yes to this. Even the most unacceptable situation, if there's nothing I can do about it, I bring a yes to it.

[Speaker 2] (1:37:44 - 1:37:45)

Not as I will, thy will be done.

[Speaker 1] (1:37:45 - 1:38:10)

Yes. And at that moment, the ego dies. And at that moment, the divine comes through.

And the very thing that was the worst thing that could ever happen to you, when you bring surrender to it, becomes an opening into the divine. And that's the miracle and the transformative value of the cross.

[Speaker 2] (1:38:10 - 1:38:27)

Boy, I think that's powerful, George and Victoria, don't you? The moment, I got that. I just got that.

I had a big old epiphany. The very moment, the worst thing that can happen to you, if you surrender to it, there is an opening that allows the energy of the divine to come through.

[Speaker 1] (1:38:27 - 1:38:28)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:38:28 - 1:38:29)

At the moment of surrender.

[Speaker 1] (1:38:29 - 1:38:31)

Yes. And that is the grace.

[Speaker 2] (1:38:31 - 1:38:33)

I got that, George. Didn't you get that?

[Speaker 4] (1:38:33 - 1:38:36)

Yes, I did. Thank you. So it was a lesson for us, in other words.

[Speaker 1] (1:38:36 - 1:38:56)

It's a lesson, yeah. Behind every form of suffering, there's grace hiding, concealed. It does not reveal itself until you surrender.

Until you suffer consciously. Until you no longer deny what is. So there's the grace that's hiding behind every form of suffering.

[Speaker 4] (1:38:56 - 1:39:27)

Wow. So if the ego doesn't love suffering, but produces suffering, what does that voice in our head that you refer to in the book, the voice that denigrates our self-esteem, that says you weren't any good, you were never any good, you're never going to be any good. That's also what in the Bible also is described as the voice of Satan.

Is the ego, in that sense, a force of evil in us? You know, you have the good and the bad, the duality.

[Speaker 1] (1:39:27 - 1:39:27)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (1:39:27 - 1:39:27)

Exactly.

[Speaker 9] (1:39:29 - 1:39:29)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:39:29 - 1:40:01)

Ego, I would define as, ego is complete identification with form. Total identification with form. The form of me as this body, the psychological form of me, total identification with every thought that arises.

So you cannot step out, you're trapped in form completely. And that is evil. So going beyond form, beyond identification with form, is when the other dimension opens up.

[Speaker 2] (1:40:01 - 1:40:08)

Yeah. And didn't in some cultures in the past, I saw this on Guy Ritchie's documentary on the ego, that they used to refer to the ego as Satan.

[Speaker 1] (1:40:09 - 1:40:09)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:40:10 - 1:40:19)

Yes. Yes. In some cultures.

Yes. Referred to as Satan. Yes.

Thank you, George and Victoria. Victoria, you're still enjoying the book, or you're done now, right? Have you done reading?

[Speaker 5] (1:40:19 - 1:40:37)

I finished the book, Oprah. I actually have a quick question, if it's possible. Go ahead.

I was curious because, you know, you spoke of children and the trauma that young children experience when their parents are fighting.

[Speaker 2] (1:40:37 - 1:40:38)

Yeah.

[Speaker 5] (1:40:39 - 1:41:10)

Eckhart, do you think that it's possible that a pregnant mother passes her pain body onto her unborn child? And perhaps even generations that has happened with the grandmother, great grandmother, passing that onto their unborn baby. So we end up with this big old backpack of somebody else's pain body.

And can we free ourselves from that as simply as being aware, like you said?

[Speaker 2] (1:41:10 - 1:41:12)

Great questions, guys.

[Speaker 1] (1:41:12 - 1:42:23)

Thank you. Yes. You're absolutely right.

The pain body is passed on from generation to generation. And certainly whatever a mother experiences in pregnancy affects already the child that is inside her. Whatever emotions she experiences, they will affect and leave remnants in the child.

And I believe that although no scientists have discovered it yet, I believe that even in the human DNA, there's already programming that is the pain body. And so we inherit it. It's only partly personal.

In other words, partly it arises as a result of things that happened to us in childhood and so on. But it goes back much further than that. It's old.

It's very old. And as you know, I mentioned in the book, another aspect of the pain body is it's also collective. You also inherit the pain body of sometimes of your entire nation is part of your pain body.

[Speaker 2] (1:42:23 - 1:42:33)

This is what we were talking about last week. The pain body of slavery in this country that so many people are in denial about. The pain body of what's happened to the Native Americans in this country.

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:42:33 - 1:42:33)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:42:33 - 1:42:33)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:42:34 - 1:42:44)

And so what you said is absolutely true. So the mother will often already pass on her pain body to the unborn child.

[Speaker 2] (1:42:44 - 1:42:57)

So isn't that harder to get yourself free? We're going to talk about before this class is over tonight, breaking free of the pain body. But if you inherited it, if it's like genetically DNA encoded, isn't that harder to get rid of?

[Speaker 1] (1:42:57 - 1:44:05)

Well, that's how it is. But it's it comes from the past. It is the living past in you.

The living past. Now, the past has no power against the present moment. Yes.

Present moment. Because all power arises out of the present moment because it is life itself. So then this is why you don't need years or generations to become free of the pain body.

It has taken many generations for the pain body to build up, but it takes only one conscious human and one conscious moment now to disidentify from it and recognize it. You're not totally free yet, no, but you recognize it for what it is. It takes only one moment of awareness now to see it for what it is.

And when this person then has broken the unconsciousness of generations and that's what we are engaged in, we are we are breaking the unconsciousness that goes back thousands and thousands of years. That's pretty powerful.

[Speaker 2] (1:44:05 - 1:44:09)

George and Victoria, thank you again from Bend, Oregon. Thanks, guys.

[Speaker 4] (1:44:09 - 1:44:16)

Thank you because you folks are doing this on a global electronic basis. So thank you for letting us be a part of that breakthrough.

[Speaker 2] (1:44:17 - 1:45:00)

Thank you. Thank you for the second time. Well, on page 170, you talk about children and you say suppressed pain bodies are extremely toxic, even more so than openly active ones.

And that psychic toxicity is absorbed by the children and contributes to the development of their own pain body. So people who are, I think about this all the time. We were just doing somebody on the show.

We're always doing somebody on the show who's arguing in their families. When you argue in front of your children, I remember this the other day, the little girl said, when my mommy and daddy argue, I go and I go and hide under the covers. When you argue in front of your children, you are creating and reinforcing their pain bodies.

[Speaker 1] (1:45:00 - 1:45:16)

Yes. I did that as a child. I was always trying to hide from my parents' pain body, which was there a lot of the time active.

So that's one way is when there's an active confrontation and the parents having a confrontation with their mutual pain body.

[Speaker 2] (1:45:16 - 1:45:21)

You shocked us last week when you said you started thinking of killing yourself when you were at a very young age, nine or 10.

[Speaker 1] (1:45:21 - 1:46:30)

Yes. Because of your parents. Yes, that was the general environment that I was in.

I perceived it as extremely unpleasant. There was the environment of my parents and there was, not that they were not loving parents, but they both had heavy pain bodies. I loved them, but I didn't know at the time why that was continuous conflict.

I just knew it was dreadful to be around them. And of course, I was also unhappy at school because I never liked having to study things that I wasn't interested in. It wasn't done in an interesting way.

So yes, the children then absorb. One way they absorb the pain body from their parents is when there's open conflict between the parents' pain bodies. But another way is also when some parents say we mustn't fight in front of the children.

And nevertheless, there's an intense emotional negativity. They may not be saying anything, but there's an emanation of intense negativity in the parents.

[Speaker 2] (1:46:30 - 1:46:53)

That's right. I know a couple stayed together 24 years in order until the last child was grown and had gone to college. All the children are completely messed up.

One problem after another problem. Drugs and drinking and all kinds of problems because the children stayed in that house and absorbed all the energy that was in that house.

[Speaker 1] (1:46:53 - 1:46:53)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:46:54 - 1:46:54)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:46:54 - 1:47:04)

And sometimes it's the case if the parents repress that because they don't want to fight in front of the children or they may have an image of themselves as religious and they mustn't.

[Speaker 2] (1:47:04 - 1:47:05)

That's right.

[Speaker 1] (1:47:05 - 1:47:18)

And so they are not even admitting to themselves perhaps that there's intense negativity. And then the children grow up in that. And sometimes it's then the children who are forced to act it out in the world.

[Speaker 2] (1:47:18 - 1:47:49)

That's right. And the interesting about that when you try to repress it when you're not fully realizing the truth of who you are and you say the truth of who you are will set you free. When you allow the repressed bad energy to go on in the household, the energy is still there.

It goes back to what I was saying on page 162. The energy is always there. Yes.

And children more so than even adults children who don't have the language for it pick up on the energy.

[Speaker 1] (1:47:49 - 1:47:50)

Yes, yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:47:50 - 1:47:53)

And often blame themselves because they don't have the language to explain.

[Speaker 1] (1:47:54 - 1:47:54)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:47:54 - 1:48:10)

Okay, okay. You also say on... Well, first of all, we'll do this.

We'll go to a caller on this topic from Melbourne, Australia. Hello. She has a 10-year-old daughter.

Her name is Wendy. Wendy, hi. Hi, Oprah.

Hi, Eckhart.

[Speaker 9] (1:48:10 - 1:48:10)

Hi.

[Speaker 6] (1:48:11 - 1:49:02)

Thank you for having me on the webcast today. Well, great to talk to you. I have a question.

Eckhart, on page 178, you state that someone who in childhood was neglected or abandoned by one or both parents will likely develop a pain body that becomes triggered in any situation that resonates even remotely with their primordial pain of abandonment. So I see this pain in my 10-year-old daughter whose father no longer sees her and hasn't really had much of a relationship with her. And my question is, how do I help her through her feelings of abandonment?

And how do I guide her through people-pleasing behavior? Because I notice she has a strong tendency to people-please just to be accepted or liked. I would really love some help on this one as I'm often at a loss on how to help her through it.

[Speaker 1] (1:49:03 - 1:49:20)

Can you give an example of how this, what you see as a sense of abandonment, how it manifests in her now? Can you give a situation where this happens? How does she behave in such a situation?

[Speaker 6] (1:49:21 - 1:50:00)

Well, often there's been occasions when they have little parties at school and children get invited. And if she's one of the kids that's excluded, because obviously not everyone gets invited to everyone's birthday party, she's so traumatized by it. She cries and she doesn't understand.

And she comes and she says they don't like her or they don't love her. And then she'll try to often buy the friendship. She'll take things to them.

You know, take gifts or take Easter eggs lately and things like that. And I just think, oh, how do I get her through this? She wants to be liked all the time.

She wants approval. So your child- It's a case of intense tears and trauma.

[Speaker 1] (1:50:01 - 1:50:03)

She's now 10 years old?

[Speaker 6] (1:50:03 - 1:50:04)

10 years old, yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:50:04 - 1:50:59)

Yes. Perhaps you can gradually over the next few years explain to her that she cannot be liked by everybody. Nobody is liked by everybody.

And you cannot expect- I think if you explain it gently, she will begin to understand that it is impossible in this world to be liked and accepted by everybody. And it is not necessary to be liked and accepted by everybody. And especially if you do things that are of any significance in this world as when she grows up, the more significant things you do in this world, the more you will find there are certain people who don't like what you do.

And even Oprah has people who don't like what she does. I don't know why, but- I don't either.

[Speaker 2] (1:51:01 - 1:51:46)

Yes, and the more successful you become, the more people you have who don't like what you do. So you have a- And I used to be- Listen, as you're describing your daughter, I used to be this little 10-year-old girl who had such a desire to please. I was always taking all of my notebook paper and giving it to everybody else, whatever I had.

Even in college, nobody liked me. So I would spend all my money, because I was working in TV from the time I was a sophomore in college. And everybody else was jealous of me for having a job and having a job on TV.

And so I would take my money and buy pizzas for everybody and try to make everybody like me. And listen, I hope you- I was 40-something before I figured it out.

[Speaker 1] (1:51:46 - 1:52:03)

So I hope your daughter gets it before then. I think some gentle explanation, just a little bit here and there. Now she's 10.

And then over the next few years, the behavior will continue for a while. You cannot just undo all conditioning in another person.

[Speaker 2] (1:52:03 - 1:52:10)

Yeah, the pain body is, I was not wanted by my father. That's what the 10-year-old is feeling. I was not wanted by my father.

[Speaker 1] (1:52:10 - 1:53:15)

Yes, yes. And the pain body, if your daughter gets taken over by intense negative feelings that are out of proportion to the triggering event, which is a sign that this is the pain body, if this happens and when this happens, after, I'll describe it in a new earth, after a pain body episode is over, the next day, for example, you talk to what your daughter felt at that time. Yesterday, when you behaved in such a way, when you did this, when you said that, what did it feel like?

Ask her questions about, so that she begins to put attention on her own emotions and she can detect them. Ask questions about, after a pain body episode in your daughter, ask her what it feels like so that the awareness grows in her of this. And next time, when it happens again, say, oh, there's the, that old thing has come back.

She may even, you may even encourage her to give it a name, the pain body.

[Speaker 6] (1:53:15 - 1:53:16)

Hmm, okay.

[Speaker 1] (1:53:16 - 1:53:35)

And then she can identify it when it happens again. So gradually, the child can be, instead of at the mercy of these arising emotions, the child can already learn at an early age to be there as the awareness of the emotion, rather than to be taken over by the emotion.

[Speaker 2] (1:53:35 - 1:53:40)

Actually, I think children can learn this a lot easier than adults can, because we're so overly conditioned.

[Speaker 1] (1:53:40 - 1:53:45)

Yes, and that should be the, one of the main things that children learn at school, but so far that's not happening.

[Speaker 2] (1:53:45 - 1:54:45)

Right. And also, Wendy, I might suggest this, you know, I think one of the things that would have helped me a lot, and I found this with my girls in Africa, who come from really disadvantaged backgrounds. They're disadvantaged.

And one of the things I want to teach them is a life of service. You always feel better about your life when you can be of service to someone else's. And so if your daughter, even at 10, is exposed to children who are less fortunate than she is, children who are orphaned or abandoned or, you know, in poverty, I don't know what the situation is in Melbourne, but children who have less than she does, and she is able to see that her situation really isn't so bad and allowed to feel a sense of gratitude for who she is and where she is and what she has, and yet also empathy and compassion for people who have less than she does. I think that that will also, even at 10 years old, begin to offer some perspective for her.

[Speaker 1] (1:54:45 - 1:54:46)

Yes, absolutely.

[Speaker 2] (1:54:46 - 1:54:47)

Yes, I agree.

[Speaker 1] (1:54:47 - 1:54:48)

Absolutely.

[Speaker 2] (1:54:48 - 1:55:03)

Thank you so much for your call. Thank you very much. Thank you.

Okay, so tonight's chapter, Breaking Free, how do we do it? You say, how long does it take to become free of the pain body on page 183? Tell us how long.

[Speaker 1] (1:55:05 - 1:55:33)

The important question, as I say, is not how long it takes to become free of the pain body, but how long does it take for me to stop identifying with the pain body? That's because it's more important to stop identifying with it because in one sense, you're already free. The pain body may still be there in you for a while, but when you stop identifying with it, that's freedom already.

[Speaker 2] (1:55:33 - 1:55:45)

You say the answer is, of course, that it depends both on the density of an individual's pain body, some are more dense than others. Yes. As well as the degree or intensity of that individual's arising presence.

[Speaker 1] (1:55:45 - 1:55:45)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:55:45 - 1:56:01)

So the more you're able to bring that sense of awareness, or as I said in the beginning, that you, you who is disguised as awareness, that awareness is you disguised as a person, the more you can be present with that.

[Speaker 1] (1:56:01 - 1:56:01)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:56:02 - 1:56:03)

The more it dissipates.

[Speaker 1] (1:56:03 - 1:56:03)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:56:03 - 1:56:04)

It doesn't happen instantly.

[Speaker 1] (1:56:05 - 1:56:41)

No, but every time you disidentify, every time you are there as the awareness, the energy of the pain body already diminishes. So every time there's a little bit less of it. And it's the, what happens to the energy?

It's all, energy is all one. There's only one energy, but it appears in different frequencies and the pain body energy has a certain frequency. It's contained, it's rigid, it's tight and it becomes freed and it contributes to the arising awareness.

[Speaker 2] (1:56:41 - 1:56:46)

And you say, but it's not the pain body, but identification with it that causes the suffering.

[Speaker 1] (1:56:46 - 1:56:49)

That's right. The pain body itself is only...

[Speaker 2] (1:56:49 - 1:56:50)

Has no power over it.

[Speaker 1] (1:56:50 - 1:57:04)

No, it's not suffering anymore when you don't identify with it. Then it's only an unpleasant feeling inside you. You can hardly call it suffering, but it's suffering when you become it or it becomes you, that's suffering.

[Speaker 2] (1:57:04 - 1:57:22)

It's not the pain body, but identification with the pain body that forces you to relive the past again and again and again and keeps you in a state of unconsciousness. I'm on page 183, everybody. So a more important question to ask would be, how long does it take to become free of identification?

[Speaker 1] (1:57:23 - 1:58:00)

Yes, that's the key. And the answer to that, of course, is it doesn't really take any time because all it requires you is to be aware this moment as it arises, in the moment it arises to see it and recognize it. Be the awareness for it, be the space for it, is another word, another expression we can use.

Are you able to be the awareness for the pain body, to be the space for the pain body and say, ah, there it is. That means you've broken the identification. All it requires is for you to be present in the now as the awareness.

[Speaker 2] (1:58:00 - 1:58:11)

And to remember that the past, no matter what it is, no matter how awful it was, how horrifying, how much suffering, the past has no power over the present moment.

[Speaker 1] (1:58:11 - 1:58:33)

Because what arises out of the present moment is the dimension of consciousness that we call presence or awareness. It's a dimension that was already there in you always, but had been covered up by density of emotion and density of conditioned mind structures, thinking.

[Speaker 2] (1:58:34 - 1:58:38)

And the way you get to that is to bring yourself back to the present moment, get still.

[Speaker 1] (1:58:38 - 1:59:25)

Yes. Get still. Get still.

And then that arises, that dimension that then arises is, we could call it, goes beyond who you are as a person. It is transpersonal. It is a transpersonal dimension in you.

And that's the only thing that can free you from the purely personal realm, which has its place, but is very limited. And it's the only thing that can free you from the past and the heaviness of the past. And the past cannot prevail against it.

It is impossible because it is the only power there is. So it is also the timeless dimension in you. When we talk of presence or awareness, there is no past and future in presence or awareness.

[Speaker 2] (1:59:25 - 1:59:34)

I got that. When you say on the page 184, when you feel the pain body, don't fall into the era of thinking there's something wrong with you, making yourself into a problem.

[Speaker 9] (1:59:35 - 1:59:35)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:59:35 - 2:00:24)

Because the ego loves that. Okay. The knowing needs to be followed by accepting.

We talked about that a lot tonight. Anything else will obscure it. Accepting means you allow yourself to feel whatever it is you're feeling at that moment.

You can't argue with what is. Well, you can, but if you do, you suffer. That's how we suffer.

Through allowing, you become what you are, vast and spacious. You become whole. You're not a fragment anymore, which is how the ego perceives itself.

Your true nature emerges, which is one with the nature of God. And then you say, Jesus points to this when he says, be whole, even as your father in heaven is whole. The New Testament's be perfect is a mistranslation of the original Greek word, which means whole.

This is to say you don't need to become whole, but be what you already are with or without the pain body.

[Speaker 1] (2:00:25 - 2:00:28)

Yes. Yes. You already that.

[Speaker 2] (2:00:30 - 2:00:45)

Now, this brings us to the question that Denise in Michigan asks on our web. She says, is Eckhart perfect? Eckhart, you seem to be almost perfect, although I know nobody is.

Do you ever yell? Do you ever get angry or feel sad?

[Speaker 1] (2:00:46 - 2:01:36)

I'm not perfect because the form cannot be perfect. Every form, by the very fact that it has form, is one thing, but not the other. So whole, yes, I feel that I'm aligned with something far greater than the little person.

And that is where I rest, and that is where inspiration comes from, where the teaching arises, this is presence. And it goes far beyond this little person. This little person is insignificant.

It doesn't matter very much to me. So I don't look for perfection. I don't look for perfection in myself because that would be terrible frustration.

I do things that people perhaps would regard as not perfect.

[Speaker 2] (2:01:39 - 2:01:42)

I'm waiting to hear.

[Speaker 1] (2:01:44 - 2:02:22)

I have a glass of wine. I like my glass of wine occasionally. I drink coffee at Starbucks almost every day.

And sometimes people come up to me and say, you are drinking coffee. You shouldn't be drinking coffee. What do you need coffee for?

I say, why not? I enjoy it. So I enjoy all kinds of things.

I don't have many negative emotions. I can't think the last time I even had a negative emotion, but it's possible. Perhaps I remember maybe some years ago, yes, I was watching and people were mistreating an animal and I suddenly felt anger.

So it can happen.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:22 - 2:02:32)

And what did you do when you felt the anger? I just did a show on puppy mills. It made me very angry too.

So what did you do with that anger? Did you say, oh, I'm feeling anger? You notice the anger?

[Speaker 1] (2:02:33 - 2:02:55)

And the situation, somebody else interfered at that very moment. Otherwise, I had already taken steps towards stopping it. And so the anger was there.

I felt it. And it was in my system for a couple of minutes as a vibrational, intense vibration in the body. And then it dissipated.

I let it go.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:55 - 2:02:59)

So you don't just like little things don't upset you ever?

[Speaker 1] (2:02:59 - 2:03:08)

No, no. I've let go. I had so much of that in the past.

So much suffering with all kinds of little things. It's not worth it.

[Speaker 2] (2:03:08 - 2:03:17)

Yeah. I never understand this because I'm not, you know, I don't get triggered by, you know, automobiles or driving or stuff. I never understand the people, the road rage.

[Speaker 1] (2:03:17 - 2:03:19)

That's pain buddy, right? Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:03:19 - 2:03:26)

I never understand why not getting in a, not being led in a line or being cut off, why that would cause you to be so crazy.

[Speaker 1] (2:03:26 - 2:04:27)

I don't understand it either. But for many people, that is something they personalize. So it's an egoic phenomenon.

So when, when somebody does something, they regard it as a personal insult to them, to their dignity or whatever. So, and of course, if, if it were personalized, the traffic, that's good. They wouldn't perhaps do it with the weather.

If some hail or rain hits your windscreen, then you would, perhaps you wouldn't get angry. But if a driver cuts across, then you suddenly get angry, but it's the same thing. It's just an energy field cutting, cutting across.

Why personalize it? And I'm amazed that people suffer so much stress in traffic because if you don't react, then there's no stress. If you don't personalize other drivers, as if they were, had some personal disagreement with you, it's nothing to do with you.

They don't even know you. Right. If you don't personalize things, it's actually quite stress-free.

[Speaker 2] (2:04:28 - 2:04:32)

Or you get stuck in traffic and you get, people get so frustrated getting stuck in traffic.

[Speaker 1] (2:04:32 - 2:04:44)

Yes. I know. And that can be a wonderful meditation.

You can't move. Why not be in the body, feel the intense life, the liveness in your energy field and be there, enjoy.

[Speaker 2] (2:04:44 - 2:04:55)

And everybody who's listening has ever been stuck in traffic. You now, after reading the book, you know how ridiculous it is to be upset that you're stuck in traffic because there's nothing you can do to change it. So just be with it.

[Speaker 1] (2:04:56 - 2:05:07)

Wonderful opportunity for acceptance and surrender. And a wonderful opportunity for learning dysfunction. If you observe they are not accepting and surrendering, then you can observe how dysfunction arises.

[Speaker 2] (2:05:07 - 2:05:12)

I love the way you answered that question from Denise in Michigan. You say you're not perfect, but you're whole.

[Speaker 1] (2:05:12 - 2:05:31)

Yes. So sometimes people on the spiritual path, they look for some kind of perfection. They have an image of how a perfect, evolved, spiritual human being behaves.

And then they try to conform that to that image. It doesn't work. It really accept your own limitations, accept your imperfections.

[Speaker 2] (2:05:31 - 2:06:09)

Do you have no attachment to, I mean, the way you even described your body. I loved last week, toward the end of our webcast, I asked you if you had any fear of dying. And I said this later to some friends.

I've never talked to anybody whom I've asked that question, to whom I've asked that question. And there was such definitive resoluteness about it. Like I really believed you when you said you had no fear.

I really believed you when you had no fear of death. And you have no attachment to anything? Like do you live in a nice house?

Do you like nice things?

[Speaker 1] (2:06:09 - 2:06:09)

Oh, yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:06:09 - 2:06:10)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:06:10 - 2:07:27)

I like nice things. Now for many years, I lived on a minimum because for many years I didn't have a regular job. I was just doing occasional counseling and occasional little workshops.

So for many years, I lived on very, very little. And I enjoyed that. I later on, I realized, oh, I must have lived for all those years below the poverty level.

But I didn't feel that at the time. I didn't regard myself as poor. I've enjoyed every moment of it.

And then now I have relative wealth, especially compared to that time. And I'm actually enjoying that too. I buy some nice furniture sometimes and enjoy it.

You like nice sheets? I like nice sheets. Do you care?

Well, I can sleep in any, but I like nice things. But you're not attached to them? Not, no,

no.

I'm not attached. I enjoy having space around so that you don't have to listen to the neighbor's noise. That is quite nice.

Perhaps the greatest thing that money can buy is space around you. But if you don't have it and if you have to live with neighbor's noise, it's a great opportunity for surrendering or for telling them to shut up.

[Speaker 2] (2:07:29 - 2:07:41)

But... Before we go, I wanted to have you tell everyone about an upcoming, well, I want to tell you about an upcoming Oprah show. Do you want to summarize?

I guess you just basically did. Break free of it, lose the identification.

[Speaker 1] (2:07:41 - 2:07:43)

Yes, that's it. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:07:43 - 2:08:04)

I'm really excited about the next chapter because the next chapter is finding who you truly are. And I would say, bring a friend to the webcast next week. Come and bring a friend because even if you haven't read the rest of the book, you can start really on page 185 with finding who you truly are and then work your way backwards.

It's going to be so exciting.

[Speaker 1] (2:08:04 - 2:08:05)

Yes, I love it too.

[Speaker 2] (2:08:05 - 2:09:38)

I love it. I love it when you love it. I love it.

It's going to be so exciting. Also, everybody, listen, I want to tell you about an upcoming Oprah show we're doing this Wednesday, an entire hour on a new earth that's going to air on our show, my show, this Wednesday, April 9th, in the United States and in Canada and the rest of the world as soon as we can get it to our international affiliates. For those of you who've been in Dubai, we'll be talking to people who've had a big and little transformation in their lives.

It's a powerful hour and something I think you'll want to see if you've been trying to talk to your friends about this or people in your home about this, that's the show that they should watch. I want to encourage you to have them watch that and bring a friend to next week's webcast to find out who you truly are. Again, Eckhart and I thank you all for joining us around the world.

The sixth class will be available on demand tomorrow for free here at oprah.com. If you want to download or watch any of our classes, you can do that also tomorrow at oprah.com and iTunes. It's free.

Thanks to nature-made soft gel vitamins. It's free. And also tomorrow, we'll have special bonus materials for you on oprah.com and iTunes. Audio meditations read by Eckhart's partner, Kim Ng. You can listen to them on your computer or download them and take them to go. Don't forget to update your workbook.

Get ready for next week's class, finding out who you truly are. If you're not who you think you are, well, then who are you? We're going to talk about that.

It's going to be so exciting next week. Again, I thank you.

[Speaker 1] (2:09:38 - 2:09:39)

Thank you, everybody.

[Speaker 2] (2:09:40 - 2:09:43)

Thank you. See you in class next week. Good night.

[Speaker 1] (2:09:43 - 2:09:44)

Good night.

[Speaker 2] (2:09:45 - 2:09:47)

Lovely. Wasn't that lovely?

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[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 1:10:57)

CHAPTER VII Finding who you truly are. Nossi seauton. Know thyself.

These words were inscribed above the entrance to the temple of Apollo at Delphi, site of the sacred oracle. In ancient Greece, people would visit the oracle hoping to find out what destiny had in store for them, or what course of action to take in a particular situation. It is likely that most visitors read those words as they entered the building without realizing that they pointed to a deeper truth than anything the oracle could possibly tell them.

They may not have realized either that, no matter how great a revelation or how accurate the information they received, it would ultimately prove to be of no avail, would not save them from further unhappiness and self-created suffering, if they failed to find the truth that is concealed in that induction. Know thyself. What those words imply is this.

Before you ask any other question, first ask the most fundamental question of your life. Who am I? Unconscious people, and many remain unconscious, trapped in their egos throughout their lives, will quickly tell you who they are, their name, their occupation, their personal history, the shape or state of their body, and whatever else they identify with.

Others may appear to be more evolved because they think of themselves as an immortal soul or divine spirit. But do they really know themselves, or have they just added some spiritual-sounding concepts to the content of their mind? Knowing yourself goes far deeper than the adoption of a set of ideas or beliefs.

Spiritual ideas and beliefs may at best be helpful pointers, but in themselves they rarely have the power to dislodge the more firmly established core concepts of who you think you are, which are part of the conditioning of the human mind. Knowing yourself deeply has nothing to do with whatever ideas are floating around in your mind. Knowing yourself is to be rooted in being, instead of lost in your mind, who you think you are.

Your sense of who you are determines what you perceive as your needs and what matters to you in life. And whatever matters to you will have the power to upset and disturb you. You can use this as a criterion to find out how deeply you know yourself.

What matters to you is not necessarily what you say or believe, but what your actions and reactions reveal as important and serious to you. So you may want to ask yourself the question, What are the things that upset and disturb me? If small things have the power to disturb you, then who you think you are is exactly that, small.

That will be your unconscious belief. What are the small things? Ultimately, all things are small things, because all things are transient.

You might say, I know I'm an immortal spirit, or I'm tired of this mad world, and peace is all I want. Until the phone rings. Bad news.

The stock market has collapsed. The deal may fall through. The car has been stolen.

Your mother-in-law has arrived. The trip is cancelled. The contract has been broken.

Your partner has left you. They demand more money. They say it's your fault.

Suddenly, there's a surge of anger, of anxiety. A harshness comes into your voice. I can't take any more of this.

You accuse and blame, attack, defend, or justify yourself, and it's all happening on autopilot. Something is obviously much more important to you now than the inner peace that a moment ago you said was all you wanted. And you're not an immortal spirit anymore, either.

The deal, the money, the contract, the loss or threat of loss are more important. To whom? To the immortal spirit that you said you are?

No, to me. The small me that seeks security or fulfillment in things that are transient and gets anxious or angry because it fails to find it. Well, at least now you know who you really think you are.

If peace is really what you want, then you will choose peace. If peace mattered to you more than anything else, and if you truly knew yourself to be spirit rather than a little me, you would remain nonreactive and absolutely alert when confronted with challenging people or situations. You would immediately accept the situation and thus become one with it rather than separate yourself from it.

Then, out of your alertness, would come a response. Who you are, consciousness, not who you think you are, a small me, would be responding. It would be powerful and effective and would make no person or situation into an enemy.

Sure that you cannot fool yourself for long about who you really think you are by showing you what truly matters to you. How you react to people and situations, especially when challenges arise, is the best indicator of how deeply you know yourself. The more limited, the more narrowly egoic the view of yourself, the more you will see, focus on, and react to the egoic limitations, the unconsciousness in others.

Their faults, or what you perceive as their faults, become to you their identity. This means you will see only the ego in them and thus strengthen the ego in yourself. Instead of looking through the ego in others, you are looking at the ego.

Who is looking at the ego? The ego in you. Very unconscious people experience their own ego through its reflection in others.

When you realize that what you react to in others is also in you, and sometimes only in you, you begin to become aware of your own ego. At that stage, you may also realize that you were doing to others what you thought others were doing to you. You cease seeing yourself as a victim.

You are not the ego, so when you become aware of the ego in you, it does not mean you know who you are. It means you know who you are not. But it is through knowing who you are not that the greatest obstacle to truly knowing yourself is removed.

Nobody can tell you who you are. It would just be another concept, so it would not change you. Who you are requires no belief.

In fact, every belief is an obstacle. It does not even require your realization, since you already are who you are. But without realization, who you are does not shine forth into this world.

It remains in the unmanifested, which is, of course, your true home. You are then like an apparently poor person who does not know he has a bank account with 100 million dollars in it, and so his wealth remains an unexpressed potential. Abundance Who you think you are is also intimately connected with how you see yourself treated by others.

Many people complain that others do not treat them well enough. I don't get any respect, attention, recognition, acknowledgement, they say. I am being taken for granted.

When people are kind, they suspect hidden motives. Others want to manipulate me, take advantage of me. Nobody loves me.

Who they think they are is this. I am a needy little me whose needs are not being met. This basic misperception of who they are creates a dysfunction in all their relationships.

They believe they have nothing to give, and that the world or other people are withholding from them what they need. Their entire reality is based on an illusory sense of who they are. It sabotages situations, amass all relationships.

If the thought of lack, whether it be money, recognition or love, has become part of who you think you are, you will always experience lack. Rather than acknowledge the good that is already in your life, all you see is lack. Acknowledging the good that is already in your life is the foundation for all abundance.

The fact is, whatever you think the world is withholding from you, you are withholding from the world. You are withholding it because deep down you think you are small and that you have nothing to give. Try this for a couple of weeks and see how it changes your reality.

Whatever you think people are withholding from you, praise, appreciation, assistance, loving care and so on, give it to them. You don't have it? Just act as if you had it and it will come.

Then, soon after you start giving, you will start receiving. You cannot receive what you don't give. Outflow determines inflow.

Whatever you think the world is withholding from you, you already have. But unless you allow it to flow out, you won't even know that you have it. This includes abundance.

The law that outflow determines inflow is expressed by Jesus in this powerful image. Give and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap.

The source of all abundance is not outside you. It is part of who you are. However, start by acknowledging and recognizing abundance without.

See the fullness of life all around you, the warmth of the sun on your skin, the display of magnificent flowers outside a florist's shop, biting into a succulent fruit, or getting soaked in an abundance of water falling from the sky. The fullness of life is there at every step. The acknowledgment of that abundance that is all around you awakens the dormant abundance within.

Then let it flow out. When you smile at a stranger, there's already a minute outflow of energy. You become a giver.

Ask yourself often, What can I give here? How can I be of service to this person, this situation? Nothing to feel abundant.

Although if you feel abundant consistently, things will almost certainly come to you. Abundance comes only to those who already have it. It sounds almost unfair, but of course it isn't.

It is a universal law. Both abundance and scarcity are inner states that manifest as your reality. Jesus puts it like this, For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.

Knowing yourself and knowing about yourself. You may not want to know yourself because you're afraid of what you may find out. Many people have a secret fear that they are bad.

But nothing you can find out about yourself is you. Nothing you can know about you is you. While some people do not want to know who they are because of fear, others have an insatiable curiosity about themselves and want to find out more and more.

You may be so fascinated with yourself that you spend years in psychoanalysis, delve into every aspect of your childhood, uncover secret fears and desires, and find layers upon layers of complexity in the makeup of your personality and character. After ten years, the therapist may get tired of you and your story and tell you that your analysis is now complete. Perhaps he sends you away with a 5,000-page dossier.

This is all about you. This is who you are. As you carry the heavy file home, the initial satisfaction of at last knowing yourself gives way quickly to a feeling of incompleteness and a lurking suspicion that there must be more to who you are than this.

And indeed, there is more. Not perhaps in quantitative terms of more facts, but in the qualitative dimension of depth. There is nothing wrong with psychoanalysis or finding out about your past as long as you don't confuse knowing about yourself with knowing yourself.

The 5,000-page dossier is about yourself, the content of your mind which is conditioned by the past. Whatever you learn through psychoanalysis or self-observation is about you. It is not you.

It is content, not essence. Going beyond ego is stepping out of content. Knowing yourself is being yourself.

And being yourself is ceasing to identify with content. Most people define themselves through the content of their lives. Whatever you perceive, experience, do, think or feel is content.

Content is what absorbs most people's attention entirely. And it is what they identify with. When you think or say, My life, you are not referring to the life that you are, but the life that you have or seem to have.

You are referring to content, your age, health, relationships, finances, work and living situation, as well as your mental-emotional state. The inner and outer circumstances of your life, your past and your future, all belong to the realm of content, as do events, that is to say, anything that happens. What is there other than content?

That which enables the content to be. The inner space of consciousness. Chaos and higher order.

When you know yourself only through content, you will also think you know what is good or bad for you. You differentiate between events that are good for me and those that are bad. This is a fragmented perception of the wholeness of life, in which everything is interconnected, in which every event has its necessary place and function within the totality.

The totality, however, is more than the surface appearance of things, more than the sum total of its parts, more than whatever your life or the world contains. Behind the sometimes seemingly random or even chaotic succession of events in our lives as well as in the world, lies concealed the unfolding of a higher order and purpose. This is beautifully expressed in the Zen saying, The snow falls, each flake in its appropriate place.

We can never understand this higher order through thinking about it, because whatever we think about is content, whereas the higher order emanates from the formless realm of consciousness, from universal intelligence. But we can glimpse it and, more than that, align ourselves with it, which means be conscious participants in the unfolding of that higher purpose. That has not been interfered with by man.

Our thinking mind will see only disorder and chaos all around us. It won't even be able to differentiate between life, good, and death. Bad, anymore, since everywhere new life grows out of rotting and decaying matter.

Only if we are still enough inside, and the noise of thinking subsides, can we become aware that there is a hidden harmony here, a sacredness, a higher order in which everything has its perfect place and could not be other than what it is and the way it is. The mind is more comfortable in a landscaped park because it has been planned through thought. It has not grown organically.

There is an order here that the mind can understand. In the forest, there is an incomprehensible order which to the mind looks like chaos. It is beyond the mental categories of good and bad.

You cannot understand it through thought, but you can sense it when you let go of thought, become still and alert, and don't try to understand or explain. Only then can you be aware of the sacredness of the forest. As soon as you sense that hidden harmony, that sacredness, you realize you are not separate from it.

And when you realize that, you become a conscious participant in it. In this way, nature can help you become realigned with the wholeness of life. Good and Bad At some point in their lives, most people become aware that there is not only birth, growth, success, good health, pleasure and winning, but also loss, failure, sickness, old age, decay, pain and death.

Conventionally, these are labeled good and bad, order and disorder. The meaning of people's lives is usually associated with what they term the good. But the good is continually threatened by collapse, breakdown, disorder, threatened by meaninglessness and the bad, when explanations fail and life ceases to make sense.

Sooner or later, disorder will erupt into everyone's life, no matter how many insurance policies he or she has. It may come in the form of loss or accident, sickness, disability, old age, death. However, the eruption of disorder into a person's life and the resultant collapse of a mentally defined meaning can become the opening into a higher order.

The wisdom of this world is folly with God, says the Bible. What is the wisdom of this world? The movement of thought and meaning that is defined exclusively by thought.

Thinking isolates a situation or event and calls it good or bad, as if it had a separate existence. Through excessive reliance on thinking, reality becomes fragmented. This fragmentation is an illusion, but it seems very real while you are trapped in it.

And yet the universe is an indivisible whole in which all things are interconnected, in which nothing exists in isolation. The deeper interconnectedness of all things and events implies that the mental labels of good and bad are ultimately illusory. They always imply a limited perspective and so are true only relatively and temporarily.

The story of a wise man who won an expensive car in a lottery. His family and friends were very happy for him and came to celebrate. Isn't it great, they said.

You are so lucky. The man smiled and said, maybe. For a few weeks he enjoyed driving the car.

Then one day a drunken driver crashed into his new car at an intersection and he ended up in hospital with multiple injuries. His family and friends came to see him and said, that was really unfortunate. Again the man smiled and said, maybe.

While he was still in hospital, one night there was a landslide and his house fell into the sea. Again his friends came the next day and said, weren't you lucky to have been here in hospital. Again he said, maybe.

The wise man's maybe signifies a refusal to judge anything that happens. Instead of judging what is, he accepts it and so enters into conscious alignment with the higher order. He knows that often it is impossible for the mind to understand what place or purpose a seemingly random event has in the tapestry of the whole.

But there are no random events, nor are there events or things that exist by and for themselves in isolation. The atoms that make up your body were once forged inside stars and the causes of even the smallest event are virtually infinite and connected with the whole in incomprehensible ways. If you wanted to trace back the cause of any event, you would have to go back all the way to the beginning of creation.

The cosmos is not chaotic. The very word cosmos means order. But this is not an order the human mind can ever comprehend, although it can sometimes glimpse it, not minding what happens.

J. Krishnamurti, the great Indian philosopher and spiritual teacher, spoke and travelled almost continuously all over the world for more than fifty years, attempting to convey through words, which are content, that which is beyond words, beyond content. At one of his talks in the later part of his life, he surprised his audience by asking, Do you want to know my secret?

Everyone became very alert. Many people in the audience had been coming to listen to him for twenty or thirty years and still failed to grasp the essence of his teaching. Finally, after all these years, the Master would give them the key to understanding.

This is my secret, he said. I don't mind what happens. He did not elaborate, and so I suspect most of his audience were even more perplexed than before.

The implications of this simple statement, however, are profound. When I don't mind what happens, what does that imply? It implies that internally I am in alignment with what happens.

What happens, of course, refers to the suchness of this moment, which always already is as it is. It refers to content, the form that this moment, the only moment there ever is, takes. To be in alignment with what is means to be in a relationship of inner non-resistance with what happens.

It means not to label it mentally as good or bad, but to let it be. Does this mean you can no longer take action to bring about change in your life? On the contrary.

When the basis for your actions is inner alignment with the present moment, your actions become empowered by the intelligence of life itself. The Zen master Hakuin lived in a town in Japan. He was held in high regard and many people came to him for spiritual teaching.

Then it happened that the teenage daughter of his next-door neighbor became pregnant. When being questioned by her angry and scolding parents as to the identity of the father, she finally told them that he was Hakuin, the Zen master. In great anger the parents rushed over to Hakuin and told him with much shouting and accusing that their daughter had confessed that he was the father.

All he replied was, Is that so? News of the scandal spread throughout the town and beyond. The master lost his reputation.

This did not trouble him. Nobody came to see him anymore. He remained unmoved.

When the child was born, the parents brought the baby to Hakuin. You are the father, so you look after him. The master took loving care of the child.

A year later, the mother remorsefully confessed to her parents that the real father of the child was the young man that worked at the butcher shop. In great distress they went to see Hakuin to apologize and ask for forgiveness. We are really sorry.

We've come to take the baby back. Our daughter confessed that you are not the father. Is that so?

is all he would say as he handed the baby over to them. The master responds to falsehood and truth, bad news and good news in exactly the same way. Is that so?

He allows the form of the moment, good or bad, to be as it is and so does not become a participant in human drama. To him, there's only this moment and this moment is as it is. Events are not personalized.

He is nobody's victim. He is so completely at one with what happens that what happens has no power over him anymore. Only if you resist what happens are you at the mercy of what happens and the world will determine your happiness and unhappiness.

The baby is looked after with loving care. Bad turns into good through the power of non-resistance. Always responding to what the present moment requires, he lets go of the baby when it is time to do so.

Imagine briefly how the ego would have reacted during the various stages of the unfolding of these events. The ego and the present moment. The most important, the primordial relationship in your life is your relationship with the now or rather with whatever form the now takes, that is to say, what is or what happens.

If your relationship with the now is dysfunctional, that dysfunction will be reflected in every relationship and every situation you encounter. The ego could be defined simply in this way, a dysfunctional relationship with the present moment. It is at this moment that you can decide what kind of relationship you want to have with the present moment.

Once you have reached a certain level of consciousness, and if you are reading this you almost certainly have, you are able to decide what kind of relationship you want to have with the present moment. Do I want the present moment to be my friend or my enemy? The present moment is inseparable from life, so you are really deciding what kind of a relationship you want to have with life.

Once you have decided you want the present moment to be your friend, it is up to you to make the first move, become friendly towards it, welcome it no matter in what disguise it comes, and soon you will see the results. Life becomes friendly towards you, people become helpful, circumstances cooperative. One decision changes your entire reality.

But that one decision you have to make again and again and again until it becomes natural to live in such a way. The decision to make the present moment into your friend is the end of the ego. The ego can never be in alignment with the present moment, which is to say aligned with life, since its very nature compels it to ignore, resist or devalue the now.

Time is what the ego lives on. The stronger the ego, the more time takes over your life. Almost every thought you think is then concerned with past or future, and your sense of self depends on the past for your identity and on the future for its fulfillment.

Fear, anxiety, expectation, regret, guilt, anger, are the dysfunctions of the time-bound state of consciousness, in which the ego will treat the present moment as a means to an end, as an obstacle, or as an enemy. Let us look at them in turn so that when this pattern operates in you, you can recognize it and decide again. To the ego, the present moment is, at best, only useful as a means to an end.

It gets you to some future moment that is considered more important, even though the future never comes except as the present moment, and is therefore never more than a thought in your head. In other words, you are never fully here because you are always busy trying to get elsewhere. When this pattern becomes more pronounced, and this is very common, the present moment is regarded and treated as if it were an obstacle to be overcome.

This is where impatience, frustration, and stress arise, and in our culture it is many people's everyday reality, their normal state. Life, which is now, is seen as a problem, and you come to inhabit a world of problems that all need to be solved before you can be happy, fulfilled, or really start living. Or so you think.

The problem is, for every problem that is solved, another one pops up. As long as the present moment is seen as an obstacle, there can be no end to problems. I'll be whatever you want me to be, says life, or the now.

I'll treat you the way you treat me. If you see me as a problem, I will be a problem to you. If you treat me as an obstacle, I will be an obstacle.

At worst, and this is also very common, the present moment is treated as if it were an enemy. When you hate what you are doing, complain about your surroundings, curse things that are happening or have happened, or when your internal dialogue consists of shoulds and shouldn'ts, of blaming and accusing, then you are arguing with what is, arguing with that which is always already the case. You are making life into an enemy and life says, war is what you want and war is what you get.

External reality, which always reflects back to you your inner state, is then experienced as hostile. A vital question to ask yourself frequently is, what is my relationship with the present moment? Then become alert to find out the answer.

Am I treating the now as no more than a means to an end? Do I see it as an obstacle? Am I making it into an enemy?

Since the present moment is all you ever have, since life is inseparable from the now, what the question really means is, what is my relationship with life? This question is an excellent way of unmasking the ego in you and bringing you into the state of presence. Although the question doesn't embody the absolute truth, ultimately I and the present moment are one, it is a useful pointer in the right direction.

Ask yourself it often until you don't need it anymore. How do you go beyond a dysfunctional relationship with the present moment? The most important thing is to see it in yourself, in your thoughts and actions.

In the moment of seeing, of noticing that your relationship with the now is dysfunctional, you are present. The seeing is the arising presence. The moment you see the dysfunction, it begins to dissolve.

Some people laugh out loud when they see this. With the seeing comes the power of choice, the choice of saying yes to the now, of making it into your friend. The paradox of time On the surface, the present moment is what happens.

Since what happens changes continuously, it seems that every day of your life consists of thousands of moments in which different things happen. Time is seen as the endless succession of moments, some good, some bad. Yet, if you look more closely, that is to say through your own immediate experience, you find that there are not many moments at all.

You discover that there's only ever this moment. Life is always now. Your entire life unfolds in this constant now.

Even past or future moments only exist when you remember or anticipate them, and you do so by thinking about them in the only moment there is, this one. Why does it appear then as if there were many moments? Because the present moment is confused with what happens, confused with content.

The space of now is confused with what happens in that space. The confusion of the present moment with content gives rise not only to the illusion of time, but also to the illusion of ego. There's a paradox here.

On the one hand, how can we deny the reality of time? You need it to go from here to there, to prepare a meal, build a house, read this book. You need time to grow up, to learn new things.

Whatever you do seems to take time. Everything is subject to it, and eventually, this bloody tyrant time, as Shakespeare calls it, is going to kill you, a river that drags you along with it, or a fire in which everything is consumed. I recently met some old friends, a family I had not seen in a long time, and I was shocked when I saw them.

I almost asked, Are you ill? What happened? Who did this to you?

The mother who walked with a cane seemed to have shrunk in size. Her face shriveled like an old apple. The daughter who had been full of energy, enthusiasm, and the expectations of youth when I last saw her, seemed worn out, tired after bringing up three children.

Then I remembered. Almost thirty years had passed since we last met. Time had done this to them.

And I'm sure they were just as shocked when they saw me. Everything seems to be subject to time, yet it all happens in the now. That is the paradox.

Wherever you look, there's plenty of circumstantial evidence for the reality of time. A rotting apple? Your face in the bathroom mirror compared to your face in a photo taken thirty years ago?

Yet you never find any direct evidence. You never experience time itself. You only ever experience the present moment, or rather what happens in it.

If you go by direct evidence only, then there is no time, and the now is all there ever is. Eliminating time. You cannot make the egoless state into a future goal and then work towards it.

All you get is more dissatisfaction, more inner conflict, because it will always seem that you have not arrived yet, have not attained that state yet. When freedom from ego is your goal for the future, you give yourself more time, and more time means more ego. Look carefully to find out if your spiritual search is a disguised form of ego.

Even trying to get rid of yourself can be a disguised search for more if the getting rid of yourself is made into a future goal. Giving yourself more time is precisely this. Giving yourself more time.

Time, that is to say past and future, is what the false mind-made self, the ego, lives on. And time is in your mind. It isn't something that has an objective existence out there.

It is a mind structure needed for sensory perception, indispensable for practical purposes, but the greatest hindrance to knowing yourself. Time is the horizontal dimension of life, the surface layer of reality. Then there is the vertical dimension of depth, accessible to you only through the portal of the present moment.

So instead of adding time to yourself, remove time. The elimination of time from your consciousness is the elimination of ego. It is the only true spiritual practice.

When we speak of the elimination of time we are of course not referring to clock time, which is the use of time for practical purposes, such as making an appointment or planning a trip. It would be almost impossible to function in this world without clock time. What we are speaking of is the elimination of psychological time, which is the egoic mind's endless preoccupation with past and future, and its unwillingness to be one with life by living in alignment with the inevitable isness of the present moment.

Whenever a habitual no to life turns into a yes, whenever you allow this moment to be as it is, you dissolve time as well as ego. For the ego to survive it must make time, past and future, more important than the present moment. The ego cannot tolerate becoming friendly with the present moment, except briefly, just after it got what it wanted.

But nothing can satisfy the ego for long. As long as it runs your life, there are two ways of being unhappy. Not getting what you want is one.

Getting what you want is the other. Whatever is or happens is the form that the now takes. As long as you resist it internally, form that is to say the world, is an impenetrable barrier that separates you from who you are beyond form, separates you from the formless one life that you are.

When you bring an inner yes to the form the now takes, that very form becomes a doorway into the formless. The separation between the world and God dissolves. The form that life takes at this moment, when you treat the now as a means, an obstacle or an enemy, you strengthen your own form identity, the ego.

Hence the ego's reactivity. What is reactivity? Becoming addicted to reaction.

The more reactive you are, the more entangled you become with form. The more identified with form, the stronger the ego. Your being then does not shine through form anymore, or only barely.

Through non-resistance to form, that in you which is beyond form emerges as an all-encompassing presence, a silent power far greater than your short-lived form identity, the person. It is more deeply who you are than anything in the world of form, the dreamer and the dream. Non-resistance is the key to the greatest power in the universe.

Through it, consciousness, spirit, is freed from its imprisonment in form. Inner non-resistance to form, whatever is or happens, is a denial of the absolute reality of form. Resistance makes the world and the things of the world appear more real, more solid and more lasting than they are, including your own form identity, the ego.

It endows the world and the ego with a heaviness and an absolute importance that makes you take yourself and the world very seriously. The play of form is then misperceived as a struggle for survival, and when that is your perception, it becomes your reality. The many things that happen, the many forms that life takes on, are of an ephemeral nature.

They are all fleeting. Things, bodies and egos, events, situations, thoughts, emotions, desires, ambitions, fears, drama, they come, pretend to be all-important, and before you know it they are gone, dissolved into the no-thingness out of which they came. Were they ever real?

Were they ever more than a dream, the dream of form? When we wake up in the morning, the night's dream dissolves, and we say, Oh, it was only a dream. It wasn't real.

But something in the dream must have been real, otherwise it could not be. When death approaches, we may look back on our life and wonder if it was just another dream. Even now, you may look back on last year's vacation or yesterday's drama and see that it is very similar to last night's dream.

There's the dream, and there's the dreamer of the dream. The dream is a short-lived play of forms. It is the world, relatively real, but not absolutely real.

Then there's the dreamer, the absolute reality in which the forms come and go. The dreamer is not the person. The person is part of the dream.

The dreamer is the substratum in which the dream appears, that which makes the dream possible. It is the absolute behind the relative, the timeless behind time, the consciousness in and behind form. The dreamer is consciousness itself, who you are.

To awaken within the dream is our purpose now. When we are awake within the dream, the ego-created earth drama comes to an end, and a more benign and wondrous dream arises. This is the new earth, going beyond limitation.

In each person's life there comes a time when he or she pursues growth and expansion on the level of form. This is when you strive to overcome limitations such as a physical weakness or financial scarcity, when you acquire new skills and knowledge, or through creative action bring something new into this world that is life enhancing for yourself as well as others. This may be a piece of music, or a work of art, a book, a service you provide, a function you perform, a business or organization that you set up or make a vital contribution to.

When you are present, when your attention is fully in the now, that presence will flow into and transform what you do. There will be quality and power in it. You are present when what you are doing is not primarily a means to an end, money, prestige, winning, but fulfilling in itself, when there is joy and aliveness in what you do.

And, of course, you cannot be present unless you become friendly with the present moment. That is the basis for effective action, uncontaminated by negativity. Limitation We are here not only to experience limitation, but also to grow in consciousness by going beyond limitation.

Some limitations can be overcome on an external level. There may be other limitations in your life that you have to learn to live with. They can only be overcome internally.

Everyone will encounter them sooner or later. Those limitations either keep you trapped in egoic reaction, which means intense unhappiness, or you rise above them internally by uncompromising surrender to what is. That is what they are here to teach.

The surrendered state of consciousness opens up the vertical dimension in your life, the dimension of depth. Something will then come forth from that dimension into this world, something of infinite value that otherwise would have remained unmanifested. Some people who surrendered to severe limitation become healers or spiritual teachers.

Others work selflessly to lessen human suffering or bring some creative gift into this world. In the late seventies, I would have lunch every day with one or two friends in the cafeteria of the graduate center at Cambridge University where I was studying. A man in a wheelchair would sometimes sit at a nearby table, usually accompanied by three or four people.

One day, when he was sitting at a table directly opposite me, I could not help but look at him more closely, and I was shocked by what I saw. He seemed almost totally paralyzed. His body was emaciated.

His head permanently slumped forward. One of the people accompanying him was carefully putting food in his mouth, a great deal of which would fall out again and be caught on a small plate another man was holding under his chin. Occasionally, the wheelchair-bound man would produce unintelligible croaking sounds, and someone would hold an ear close to his mouth and then, amazingly, would interpret what he was trying to say.

Later, I asked my friend whether he knew who he was. Of course, he said he is a professor of mathematics and the people with him are his graduate students. He has motor neuron disease, which progressively paralyzes every part of the body.

He has been given five years at the most. It must be the most dreadful fate that can befall a human being. A few weeks later, as I was leaving the building, he was coming in, and when I held the door open for his electric wheelchair to come through, our eyes met.

With surprise, I saw that his eyes were clear. There was no trace in them of unhappiness. I knew immediately he had relinquished resistance.

He was living in surrender. A number of years later, when buying a newspaper at a kiosk, I was amazed to see him on the front page of a popular international news magazine. Not only was he still alive, but he had by then become the world's most famous theoretical physicist, Stephen Hawking.

There was a beautiful line in the article that confirmed what I had sensed when I had looked into his eyes many years earlier. Commenting upon his life, he said, now with the help of a voice synthesizer, Who could have wished for more? The joy of being.

Unhappiness or negativity is a disease on our planet. What pollution is on the outer level is negativity on the inner. It is everywhere, not just in places where people don't have enough, but even more so where they have more than enough.

Is that surprising? No. The affluent world is even more deeply identified with form, more lost in content, more trapped in ego.

People believe themselves to be dependent on what happens for their happiness, that is to say, dependent on form. They don't realize that what happens is the most unstable thing in the universe. It changes constantly.

They look upon the present moment as either marred by something that has happened and shouldn't have, or as deficient because of something that has not happened but should have. And so they miss the deeper perfection that is inherent in life itself, a perfection that is always already here, that lies beyond what is happening or not happening, beyond form. Accept the present moment and find the perfection that is deeper than any form and untouched by time.

The joy of being, which is the only true happiness, cannot come to you through any form, possession, achievement, person or event, through anything that happens. That joy cannot come to you ever. It emanates from the formless dimension within you, from consciousness itself, and thus is one with who you are, the ego.

The ego is always on guard against any kind of perceived diminishment. Automatic ego-repair mechanisms come into effect to restore the mental form of me. When someone blames or criticizes me, that to the ego is a diminishment of self, and it will immediately attempt to repair its diminished sense of self through self-justification, defense, or blaming.

Whether the other person is right or wrong is irrelevant to the ego. It is much more interested in self-preservation than in the truth. This is the preservation of the psychological form of me.

Even such a normal thing as shouting something back when another driver calls you idiot is an automatic and unconscious ego-repair mechanism. One of the most common ego-repair mechanisms is anger, which causes a temporary but huge ego inflation. All repair mechanisms make perfect sense to the ego, but are actually dysfunctional.

Those that are most extreme in their dysfunction are physical violence and self-delusion in the form of grandiose fantasies. A powerful spiritual practice is consciously to allow the diminishment of ego when it happens without attempting to restore it. I recommend that you experiment with this from time to time.

For example, when someone criticizes you, blames you, or calls you names, instead of immediately retaliating or defending yourself, do nothing. Allow the self-image to remain diminished and become alert to what that feels like deep inside you. For a few seconds it may feel uncomfortable, as if you had shrunk in size.

Then you may sense an inner spaciousness that feels intensely alive. You haven't been diminished at all. In fact, you have expanded.

You may then come to an amazing realization. When you are seemingly diminished in some way and remain in absolute non-reaction, not just externally but also internally, you realize that nothing real has been diminished, that through becoming less you become more. When you no longer defend or attempt to strengthen the form of yourself, you step out of identification with form, with mental self-image.

Through becoming less in the ego's perception, you in fact undergo an expansion and make room for being to come forward. True power, who you are beyond form, can then shine through the apparently weakened form. This is what Jesus means when he says, deny yourself, or turn the other cheek.

This does not mean, of course, that you invite abuse or turn yourself into a victim of unconscious people. Sometimes a situation may demand that you tell someone to back off in no uncertain terms. Without egoic defensiveness, there will be power behind your words, yet no reactive force.

If necessary, you can also say no to someone firmly and clearly, and it will be what I call a high quality no, that is free of all negativity. If you are content with being nobody in particular, content not to stand out, you align yourself with the power of the universe. What looks like weakness to the ego is in fact the only true strength.

This spiritual truth is diametrically opposed to the values of our contemporary culture and the way it conditions people to behave. Instead of trying to be a mountain, teaches the ancient Tao Te Ching, be the valley of the universe. In this way, you are restored to wholeness, and so all things will come to you.

Parables teaches that when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, friend, move up higher. Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

Another aspect of this practice is to refrain from attempting to strengthen the self by showing off, wanting to stand out, be special, make an impression or demand attention. It may include occasionally refraining from expressing your opinion when everybody is expressing his or hers, and seeing what that feels like. As without, so within.

When you look up at the clear sky at night, you may easily realize a truth at once utterly simple and extraordinarily profound. What is it that you see? The moon, planets, stars, the luminous band of the Milky Way, perhaps a comet, or even the neighboring Andromeda galaxy two million light years away.

Yes, but if you simplify even more, what do you see? Objects floating in space. So what does the universe consist of?

Objects and space. If you don't become speechless when looking out into space on a clear night, you are not really looking, not aware of the totality of what is there. You are probably only looking at the objects and perhaps seeking to name them.

If you have ever experienced a sense of awe when looking into space, perhaps even felt a deep reverence in the face of this incomprehensible mystery, it means you must have relinquished for a moment your desire to explain and label and have become aware not only of the objects in space, but of the infinite depth of space itself. You must have become still enough inside to notice the vastness in which these countless worlds exist. The feeling of awe is not derived from the fact that there are billions of worlds out there, but the depth that contains them all.

You cannot see space, of course, nor can you hear, touch, taste, or smell it. So how do you even know it exists? This logical-sounding question already contains a fundamental error.

The essence of space is no-thingness, so it doesn't exist in the normal sense of the word. Only things, forms, exist. Even calling it space can be misleading, because by naming it, you make it into an object.

Let us put it like this. There is something within you that has an affinity with space. That is why you can be aware of it.

Aware of it? That's not totally true either, because how can you be aware of space if there is nothing there to be aware of? The answer is both simple and profound.

When you are aware of space, you are not really aware of anything, except awareness itself, the inner space of consciousness. Through you, the universe is becoming aware of itself. When the eye finds nothing to see, that no-thingness is perceived as space.

When the ear finds nothing to hear, that no-thingness is perceived as stillness. When the senses, which are designed to perceive form, meet an absence of form, the formless consciousness that lies behind perception and makes all perception, all experience possible, is no longer obscured by form. When you contemplate the unfathomable depths of space, or listen to the silence in the early hours just before sunrise, something within you resonates with it as if in recognition.

You then sense the vast depths of space as your own depths, and you know that precious stillness that has no form to be more deeply who you are than any of the things that make up the content of your life. The ancient scriptures of India point to the same truth with these words, What cannot be seen with the eye, but that whereby the eye can see. Know that alone to be Brahman the Spirit, and not what people here adore.

What cannot be heard with the ear, but that whereby the ear can hear. Know that alone to be Brahman the Spirit, and not what people here adore. What cannot be thought with the mind, but that whereby the mind can think.

Know that alone to be Brahman the Spirit, and not what people here adore. God, the scripture is saying, is formless consciousness and the essence of who you are. Everything else is form, is what people here adore.

The two-fold reality of the universe, which consists of things and space, thingness and no thingness, is also your own. A sane, balanced and fruitful human life is a dance between the two dimensions that make up reality, form and space. Most people are so identified with the dimension of form, with sense perceptions, thoughts and emotion, that the vital hidden half is missing from their lives.

Their identification with form keeps them trapped in ego. What you see, hear, feel, touch or think about is only one half of reality, so to speak. It is form.

In the teaching of Jesus, it is simply called the world. And the other dimension is the kingdom of heaven or eternal life. Just as space enables all things to exist, and just as without silence there could be no sound, you would not exist without the vital formless dimension that is the essence of who you are.

We could say God if the word had not been so misused. I prefer to call it being. Being is prior to existence.

Existence is form, content, what happens. Existence is the foreground of life. Being is the background, as it were.

The collective disease of humanity is that people are so engrossed in what happens, so hypnotized by the world of fluctuating forms, so absorbed in the content of their lives, they have forgotten the essence, that which is beyond content, beyond form, beyond thought. They are so consumed by time that they have forgotten eternity, which is their origin, their home, their destiny. Eternity is the living reality of who you are.

Some years ago, when visiting China, I came upon a stupa on a mountaintop near Guilin. It had writing embossed in gold on it, and I asked my Chinese host what it meant. It means Buddha, he said.

Why are there two characters rather than one, I asked. One, he explained, means man, the other means no, and the two together means Buddha. I stood there in awe.

The character for Buddha already contained the whole teaching of the Buddha, and for those who have eyes to see, the secret of life. Here are the two dimensions that make up reality, thingness and no-thingness, form and the denial of form, which is the recognition that form is not who you are.

[Speaker 2] (1:11:00 - 1:11:43)

Well, hi. Welcome, everybody. Welcome to Class 7 of our New Earth Web Series with author Eckhart Tolle.

I want to thank our students from every corner of the world who are joining us live on this journey of discovery. I truly believe that as each one of us becomes more awake and aware in our own lives, so will our families and everyone we encounter, our communities and our countries and eventually our world. And so Eckhart Tolle and I welcome you once again to yet another lesson, Chapter 7, my favorite chapter thus far.

Before we get started, we're going to have a moment of silence, and you're going to lead us into that moment of silence. Yes?

[Speaker 1] (1:11:43 - 1:13:34)

Yes. We're already getting used to having moments of silence to start with, and I'll introduce the moment of silence today with a short meditation passage taken from The Power of Now. And as I read this short passage, our viewers should already be able to become still as they listen.

And after I've read it, we'll be still just for half a minute or so. So here we go. It's all about entering the present moment fully.

And that begins with using your senses fully. Be where you are. Look around.

Just look. Don't interpret. Be aware of the silent presence of each thing.

Be aware of the space that allows everything to be. Listen to the sounds. Don't judge them.

Listen to the silence underneath the sounds. Touch something, anything, and feel and acknowledge its being. Observe the rhythm of your breathing.

Feel the air flowing in and out. Feel the life energy inside your body. Allow everything to be within and without.

Allow the is-ness of all things. Move deeply into the now.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:32 - 1:15:49)

That's great. That's great. All right, everybody.

Tonight, we're discussing Chapter 7, Finding Who You Truly Are, which I know is the reason why so many of you picked up this book in the first place, because when I first announced it, I was reading the subtitle that the book is A New Earth Awakening to Your Life's Purpose, and I'd gone on the message boards and so many people were saying, I hope this book helped me discover my purpose. I hope this book allows me to find who I am. Well, if you're ready, tonight's your night.

Let's start with an overview of what this chapter is really about. You say that it is about, you begin with know thyself. Chapter 7 starts with those two words that you say are inscribed above the entrance of a famous Greek temple.

You say on page 186, what those words imply is this. Before you ask any other questions, first ask the most fundamental question of your life. Who am I?

And then you say on page 189 that you are not the ego, so when you become aware of the ego in you, it doesn't mean you know who you are, it means you know who you are not. But it is through knowing who you are not that the greatest obstacle to truly knowing yourself is removed. So let's start off with these two questions.

Who aren't I?

[Speaker 1] (1:15:50 - 1:17:15)

And who am I? And of course, the best starting point is the first question. Who aren't I?

Because what is left when you realize, and it's usually a process for most people, realizing who you are not, letting go of identification with things and so on, when you realize who you are not, then suddenly who you are becomes revealed to you. And who you are cannot easily be put into words, because if it could, then it could be answered in one simple sentence, and then everybody could repeat that answer and believe that they know who they are. So we start with knowing who you are not, and that begins for people sometimes with loss, where they lose something valuable that they had identified with, or death comes into their lives, some kind of breakdown or disaster happens, sometimes those people suddenly awaken, something has been taken away from them that they had identified with for many years that had become part of their sense of self. And if something very fundamental that has been part of your sense of self is removed, death, loss, collapse.

[Speaker 2] (1:17:15 - 1:17:18)

Even if it's a person, a human being who you loved.

[Speaker 1] (1:17:18 - 1:18:57)

Yes, it could be somebody close to you who dies. Then, of course, at first it leads to enormous suffering, and you feel as if part of you had died also. And for some people that happens even if they lose possessions, because they were so identified with their possessions that when their possessions are removed, they feel there's nothing left of me.

Another related to possessions is social position. If people fall from some high social position, there's a scandal that happens all the time in the news. Yes.

Not mentioning any names. Yes, don't. You don't have to.

And then these people can be extremely painful if they had become totally identified with either their possessions or their social position, and they're suddenly faced with a kind of huge emptiness in their lives. And then the question arises, I'm nobody anymore. And this is the point, a decisive point is reached there where they can either continue to resist and suffer, resist what has happened internally, complain about it, tell themselves story about it, how it's all collapsed, or they can suddenly come to a point of acceptance of what happened and acceptance of the present moment.

So the thing that was so important in their lives, actually left behind, I sometimes compare to, if you look at a person's life, it's a tapestry. It consists of all kinds of things that one identifies with.

[Speaker 9] (1:18:57 - 1:18:57)

Right.

[Speaker 1] (1:18:57 - 1:20:10)

And when a great loss happens, it's almost as if suddenly there's a huge hole in that tapestry of my life. Correct. And that is painful when you identify with a tapestry, but behind the tapestry there's a light that shines through, because without the light there wouldn't be anything at all.

That's why you can't even see your life. Without the light of consciousness, nothing would be. Behind the tapestry there's a light.

I'm using a kind of analogy. So when you don't resist this hole that has suddenly appeared in this tapestry of your life, then there's a light that shines through then, and I'm using that as an analogy. There's suddenly a peace that comes when the emptiness that is left behind by the form that has dissolved is not resisted internally.

And then through that empty space there comes what the Bible calls the peace that passes all understanding. Because you can't explain suddenly, and people have reported that this has happened to them, they lost sometimes, in some cases, everything. They suffered at first and then suddenly an inner shift happened.

They accepted.

[Speaker 2] (1:20:10 - 1:20:49)

And this also happens when you are grieving somebody that you loved, isn't it true? Yes. Because when you come to understand fully who you are, it doesn't mean that you will no longer be saddened when you lose loved ones.

But you will also, when you become conscious, you then understand that they have just moved from form to formless and that the formless can have an easier way to come through, come through now, even more strongly than it did in the form if you allow yourself to be with it and to see it and to experience it.

[Speaker 1] (1:20:49 - 1:21:44)

Yes. What you just said, an example, I was talking to a woman who lost her son. He had an illness.

He was about 28, I believe. And she was sitting next to him at his deathbed and the moment he, just a few minutes before he died and just after he died, she could sense an enormous peace descending upon the room and filling the whole room and she could feel that there was a sacred presence in the room in the moment of death. So she had totally surrendered to that and it's very painful.

It's even more painful for a parent to have to witness a child's death than the other way around. That was the most sacred moment in her life and that lasted for about 10 minutes and after 10 minutes her mind came in and suddenly she started crying and protesting.

[Speaker 2] (1:21:45 - 1:22:15)

Because the mind wants the situation to be different. The mind wants you alive again in the physical body. Or the mind wants the thing back that I have lost.

The job, the position, the whatever. I think it's harder though when it comes to loved ones because there is a connection there and there is, you know, nobody knows what happens except maybe you, when we die. And so there's this feeling that, you know, I have lost someone.

Is that feeling selfishness?

[Speaker 1] (1:22:16 - 1:22:39)

No, it's a normal feeling because there was, even if you truly love somebody, of course what you love in the other person is deeper than the form, the external form of that person. Nevertheless there's always a little bit even in true love, there's always a little bit of attachment to the form also. Because the light comes through the form.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:39 - 1:22:41)

The light comes through the form.

[Speaker 8] (1:22:41 - 1:22:41)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:42 - 1:24:12)

Alright, let's go here to page 186 everybody. This is one of my favorite things. A second, I have a cold so I look like I'm sucking on a cough drop.

Unconscious people and many remain unconscious, trapped in their egos throughout their lives, will quickly tell you who they are. Their name, their occupation, their personal history, the shape or state of their body and whatever they identify with. Others may appear to be more evolved because they think of themselves as an immortal soul or divine spirit.

But do they really know themselves? Or have they just added some spiritual sounding concepts to the content of their mind? Knowing yourself goes far deeper than the adoption of a set of ideas or beliefs.

Spiritual ideas and beliefs may at best be helpful pointers but in themselves they rarely have the power to dislodge the more firmly established core concepts of who you think you are which are part of the conditioning of the human mind. This is my favorite in this chapter. One of my favorites.

I have three stars, then another star when I read it the second time and another star. Knowing yourself deeply has nothing to do with whatever ideas are floating around in your mind. Knowing yourself is to be rooted in being instead of lost in your mind.

That was beautifully written.

[Speaker 1] (1:24:13 - 1:24:34)

Yes. And so the... I mentioned that because some people identified many people identified with external things.

You mentioned I believe a week or two ago somebody mentioned to you that they suddenly realized that they are not their car. They're not their car. That's the beginning, early stage of disidentification but it's good.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:34 - 1:24:38)

But we do think we are and that's why you wrote the whole chapter. We do think we are our roles.

[Speaker 8] (1:24:38 - 1:24:39)

Yes, our roles.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:39 - 1:24:52)

Because a lot of people have important roles. Roles as parents and roles in important positions that affect a lot of people's lives and people think that they are their roles and they identify with their status in the world and what they have achieved.

[Speaker 1] (1:24:52 - 1:25:23)

That's right. And of course it's a question of finding a balance of honoring the role, of honoring the function that you have in this world. So that's fine.

You have to do whatever you're doing. You fulfill your function as mother as father or in some other capacity, some public function, business function whatever it is. So to honor the function without becoming totally identified with the function so that always there's still a human being there not just a function.

[Speaker 2] (1:25:23 - 1:25:45)

So knowing yourself deeply has nothing to do with whatever ideas are floating around in your mind. Meaning knowing yourself deeply has nothing to do with me being on television every day, speaking to people and even maybe doing a good job at it. Actually doing a good job at it.

And all the great jobs that everybody else is doing who's listening. Those are identifications with form.

[Speaker 1] (1:25:45 - 1:26:23)

Yes. And also what you just read is people sometimes have certain ideas in their mind of who they are and they may be spiritual ideas. I'm eternal spirit.

That's of course wonderful and basically it is true but do you truly know that because in order to truly know that you are more you are much deeper than this form goes far beyond holding certain concepts in your mind. Yeah. It goes this kind of knowing is a knowing that it goes beyond conceptual knowing.

[Speaker 2] (1:26:23 - 1:26:29)

Because if you really knew that you would have a certain way of being or living in the world that would manifest that in the world.

[Speaker 1] (1:26:29 - 1:26:42)

Exactly. That would manifest your being in the world. That's right.

And particularly when situations happened your reaction to a situation always tells you where you are at as far as your level of consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (1:26:42 - 1:26:51)

That is why a lot of people become annoyed with people who claim to be so spiritual or so religious. Yes. Who are intolerant of other people.

[Speaker 8] (1:26:51 - 1:26:51)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:26:51 - 1:27:40)

Intolerant of other ideas. Self-righteous. Imposing their ideas on other people because if you truly were what you say you are.

Yes. So moving on to who you think you are. This is one of my beautiful statements here.

On page 187 everybody. If small things have the power to disturb you then who you think you are is exactly that small. That will be your unconscious belief.

What are the small things? Ultimately all things are small things because all things are transient. And you say your sense of who you are determines what you perceive as your needs and what matters to you in life and whatever matters to you will have the power to upset and disturb you.

So people all the time say I'm a peaceful person. I'm a loving person. Yes.

I'm a kind person. I'm a generous person. I'm a good person.

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:27:41 - 1:28:46)

And then the slightest thing goes wrong and suddenly something else comes up which is total opposite of the good person. And so this is not the deep knowing of who you are. The deep knowing really is we use the word know here in a somewhat differently from the conventional way of using the word know.

Usually knowing is conceptual knowing. Right. So the analogy one could have which is sometimes given is with honey.

You can examine the chemical makeup of honey. You can examine the molecular structure of honey. I can tell you it's sweet.

You can write a PhD about honey or you can write poems about honey. But if you have never tasted honey, in other words if honey has not merged with you, then you don't really know honey. But the moment you taste honey, then you know honey.

And all the other stuff beforehand, even your PhD about honey if you wrote one is not knowing, not true knowing. It's only conceptual. Okay.

[Speaker 2] (1:28:46 - 1:28:53)

So to be rooted in being instead of lost in your mind. And what does that mean to be rooted in being?

[Speaker 1] (1:28:54 - 1:28:59)

And again we are using words here to describe something that really is beyond words. It's not describable.

[Speaker 9] (1:29:00 - 1:29:00)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:29:00 - 1:30:02)

But just a little hint is we always come back of course here in this teaching to the present moment. Absolutely. So when your attention moves fully into the present moment, at that moment you go deeper into being.

You could say that life has two dimensions. There's the horizontal dimension of life, past, future where everything happens. And most people, their whole existence is on that horizontal surface dimension of life.

And they think that's their life. They think that's all there is. And of course then life is quite a threatening place because All that is transient.

Very transient. And you've never encountered the deeper dimension. This by the way is a few people have interpreted the Christian cross which we mentioned also last time in a slightly different context.

The Christian cross as being showing the horizontal dimension of life and suddenly it intersects with the vertical dimension. It's also the dimension of the sacred.

[Speaker 9] (1:30:03 - 1:30:03)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:30:03 - 1:30:22)

And so you enter the vertical dimension by becoming present by bringing your attention into the now. Because then past and future disappear from your consciousness. At this moment there's only the now and suddenly a depth opens up within you.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:22 - 1:30:33)

And so what you've been saying throughout this book is that if you are living your life in the horizontal, the past and the future, then you're not really living. You are making enemies of this present moment.

[Speaker 8] (1:30:33 - 1:30:33)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:33 - 1:30:34)

And you're not truly living.

[Speaker 8] (1:30:34 - 1:30:35)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:35 - 1:31:12)

And that when you say, what I interpret when you say knowing yourself is to be rooted in being instead of lost in your mind is to in every encounter, and I've been doing this more and more, bringing, coming back to your breath Yes. Coming back to the present moment in such a way that you are aware and conscious of everything that's going on around you. And recognizing that you you, you are that awareness.

That's who you are. You are the observer of all these things that are going on in the horizontal plane of your life.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:12 - 1:31:30)

Exactly. So with the vertical comes the witnessing presence. That's right.

And so that's the liberation you, that's, you know, sometimes this word liberation is used in spiritual context That's the liberation from the horizontal dimension which Jesus calls the world. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:30 - 1:33:38)

You know, may I just share this? I know we have Debbie from the Netherlands on Skype, but maybe this will help illustrate this for you. A couple of years ago, I wrote this in my magazine for one of the What I Know For Sure's.

I was walking with my friend Bob Green on New Year's Day two years ago on a mountain in Hawaii and it was late evening the sun had set while we were walking and the moon had come up and the clouds had come in and come down to the ground where we were. And all of a sudden we were walking and we were surrounded by the clouds. We were in the clouds on this mountain.

And you could only see a sliver of the moon just a sliver of it. And I think Bob made a comment like it looks like the DreamWorks logo, the moon. It looks like you can go and sit up there with the fishing pole.

And we were walking along and all of a sudden he turned around and he said can you hear that? And I stopped and it was completely utterly still. It was so still it makes me want to weep thinking about it.

It was so still that it felt like all of time and no time it felt like the Earth had stopped. That everything had stopped. So much so that my very breath was so loud I began to hold my breath because my breath was making too much noise in the stillness.

And in that moment I understood what you had written in Stillness Speaks that that is always there. That stillness. There's not a bird or a cricket or a frog or a car horn or anything.

That is always there. And that's also an inner dimension. And that is the same as I.

I am that. I am that stillness. It was a powerful spiritual experience for me.

I've never forgotten. I've got chills now even thinking about it. Wonderful.

Because you recognize that is always there. When all the noise and all the fireworks and all the things that go on on this mountain that is always there.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:38 - 1:33:55)

Yes. Consciousness. We could call it, although labels are always limiting, but we could say that is pure consciousness.

Before consciousness becomes something. Before it's born into a form, it's there in its pristine, formless, timeless state.

[Speaker 2] (1:33:55 - 1:34:02)

And in all things, that's why you were asking us to look around the room, there is the stillness of all things. It's easier to determine in nature though.

[Speaker 1] (1:34:02 - 1:34:02)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:34:02 - 1:34:03)

It's harder with a table.

[Speaker 1] (1:34:04 - 1:34:39)

Yes. It's harder. And even harder with human beings.

Because there is so much mind there. So nature, but even in so-called inanimate objects that you perhaps never even look at, haven't looked at for years they've been around you. Sometimes it's wonderful to pick up an object and just be aware of its silent presence.

No matter what it is. Because whatever it is, ultimately, nothing is inanimate. And physicists would agree, because if you go deep into any so-called inanimate object you realize it's intensely alive.

[Speaker 2] (1:34:40 - 1:34:49)

It's easy to do with trees as I said earlier. And so, the essence is what we're trying to get here is that that is who we are. That stillness.

[Speaker 1] (1:34:49 - 1:34:57)

Yes. That's the essence of our being. That's who we are at the deepest level.

This is the timeless dimension within us.

[Speaker 2] (1:34:57 - 1:35:11)

And when you're saying that even when you pass on, when you transition to another, to the formless, that stillness, that consciousness, that spirit, whatever name you choose to give it, still there.

[Speaker 1] (1:35:11 - 1:35:38)

Yes. That awareness is timeless. It's not subject to birth and death.

As I have said somewhere, the opposite of the opposite of life has no opposite. Usually people think in terms of life and death. But really, death is the opposite of birth.

It's not the opposite of life. Life in its essence has no opposite. It's eternal.

[Speaker 2] (1:35:40 - 1:35:53)

Debbie's from the Netherlands and lives in the city of Harlem. She's Skyping us from her family room there. Einstein, you have a question about a quote on page 187 about small things disturbing you.

I love this quote. Go ahead, Deb.

[Speaker 4] (1:35:54 - 1:36:30)

Hi. Hi, Oprah. Hi, Eckhart.

My question is about high sensitivity. I always considered myself as a sensitive person, and that means I'm easily overwhelmed by day-to-day life things that might be considered small. I've been practicing staying in the moment with challenging moments, but I think I need some more advice.

Is high sensitivity just a narrow egoic state? Do you have some tools that might help me to stop feeling so overwhelmed by all these small things?

[Speaker 2] (1:36:30 - 1:36:32)

It does sound like a label you've given yourself.

[Speaker 4] (1:36:33 - 1:36:33)

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (1:36:34 - 1:36:36)

I'm a highly sensitive individual.

[Speaker 1] (1:36:37 - 1:36:48)

Yes. That is true. That also we need to address.

Can you give perhaps two or three examples of what kind of things you are very sensitive to?

[Speaker 4] (1:36:51 - 1:37:03)

Well, a lot of things, but usually when I go into a shop and there's loud music there, I just want to run away. I have a hard time dealing with noise and chaos.

[Speaker 1] (1:37:05 - 1:37:07)

Yes. Or being in a big city, traffic.

[Speaker 4] (1:37:08 - 1:37:08)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:37:08 - 1:39:45)

Yes. Well, I suggest that you experiment a little bit when these situations arise and you feel the same thing happening again. And if you bring very alert attention to the situation, you realize that really there are three levels to this situation.

Level one is whatever it is that disturbs you, the external noise, the chaos, the traffic, whatever it may be. So there is the thing that disturbs you, level one. Level two, there is your reaction to that thing that disturbs you, which could come as an almost physical reaction, as perhaps a contraction in your body.

It could be also an emotional reaction of frustration, irritation, anger, I assume, something like that. Right? And also, in addition, the reaction could be certain thoughts in your head about the situation that says, I can't stand being here any longer, it's dreadful, dreadful.

Right? This is level two. Now, be aware of that these two are, first of all, separate.

There is the triggering event or situation and then there is your physical, emotional, mental reaction to that. And now, what is level three? That is usually overlooked, but level three is where ultimately freedom lies.

Level three is your awareness of both these levels. You are aware that there is the situation, the event, there is my reaction, physical, emotional, mental, and there is myself being the aware space for those two. And if you can bring your attention more to that deepest level, then you realize changes will happen on the other two levels.

If you recognize yourself not as the reacting entity that happens in you, but that's not who you are, but you recognize yourself as the awareness that is aware of the thing that's happening out there, of the thing that's reacting inside.

[Speaker 2] (1:39:45 - 1:39:53)

Actually, like, Debbie, you're observing your own behavior. You're observing your ego's behavior to it. You're observing your ego's behavior.

[Speaker 1] (1:39:53 - 1:39:57)

With no judgment, just as pure observation, pure awareness.

[Speaker 2] (1:39:58 - 1:40:02)

Like, oh, isn't that interesting? I'm getting so upset over this guy pulling in front of me.

[Speaker 1] (1:40:02 - 1:40:42)

Yes, just being there as the awareness. And that's already the beginning of freedom. And then, increasingly, you realize that you are that.

You are not the entity that is reacting. And then, as Oprah said, you can let go of thinking of yourself, of having this concept of yourself as a highly sensitive person, that perhaps you might, it's not natural, nothing personal in this, you may have become attached to, because you've lived with this concept of who you are for many years. So, that's the, that's where freedom lies.

[Speaker 2] (1:40:43 - 1:41:08)

But, in addition to Debbie's question, let's say, and for her, you know, she labels herself or defines herself as a highly sensitive person, but let's say a person gets upset about someone putting a dent in his or her car, or you spill coffee on your blouse right before an important meeting, or your child gets sick, or you get sick, or are you saying that if we get upset about these things, these kinds of things, that we don't know who we truly are?

[Speaker 1] (1:41:10 - 1:41:24)

If the dimension of presence or awareness is missing, then you are lost in the reaction. You think you are the reaction. Yes, then you become the reaction, and when you become the reaction, you don't know who you are.

It's a misperception of who you are.

[Speaker 2] (1:41:24 - 1:41:38)

You got that, right, Debbie? Yeah, yeah, I got it. I got it, too.

Isn't it good when you get it? I got it, too. I got it, too.

And just detaching yourself, that doesn't change the situation.

[Speaker 1] (1:41:39 - 1:42:22)

It doesn't immediately change the situation, but you do find that as you practice this, changes suddenly appear. Changes sometimes first appear in the force that is behind your reaction that lessens. You react, still react, but less, not as strongly.

And miraculously, you sometimes even find that if you totally, because really the awareness level is also part of the acceptance, completely accepted at this moment, this is what I feel, and this is what the external situation is. With complete acceptance, even changes often happen miraculously in the external situation.

[Speaker 2] (1:42:22 - 1:42:51)

I think acceptance of the situation which you talk about in Power Now, and also repeatedly in A New Earth, acceptance, non-resistance to the moment is one of the most important things we can learn. And that is whether or not you are facing a crisis, whether you're facing someone, you've lost a loved one, or whether you're in traffic and are a highly sensitive person, accepting what is in that moment is the most important.

[Speaker 1] (1:42:52 - 1:43:21)

And you can practice with little things, because little things happen throughout the day that people feel irritated about, angry about, are protesting against, and so on. Or with little things, you will have many opportunities to practice. So it's a wonderful spiritual practice.

So you use what before you wanted to get rid of, you use it as part of your spiritual practice, and then as a by-product, you also eventually get rid of it.

[Speaker 2] (1:43:22 - 1:43:47)

Thanks, Debbie. Thanks so much. Okay, thank you.

From the Netherlands. Thank you. Everybody says they want peace, inner peace and peace on Earth.

On page 188 you say, if peace is really what you want, then you will choose peace. And if peace mattered to you more than anything else, and if you truly knew yourself to be a spirit, rather than a little me, you would remain non-reactive and absolutely alert when confronted with challenging people or situations.

[Speaker 1] (1:43:48 - 1:44:48)

Yes. So you can either be reactive, act according to the way you've reacted for many years, your past conditioning, or you can become more alert when a challenging situation happens, so that you don't internally separate yourself from the situation. So that when you completely open yourself to the situation, that you bring an alertness to it, an alertness of presence.

So you're facing the situation totally with that state of alert presence. You're not reactive anymore. And if something needs to be said or done in the situation, the words will suddenly come from that level of consciousness, from that alert stillness.

If you need to do something, then the right thing, the right doing will happen. Instinctively, or instinctively is not the right word, intuitively the right thing, you will do the right thing.

[Speaker 2] (1:44:49 - 1:44:52)

Because it will be born out of a sense of presence.

[Speaker 1] (1:44:52 - 1:44:52)

Out of presence.

[Speaker 2] (1:44:53 - 1:44:55)

Or a sense of being, which is another word that we're using.

[Speaker 1] (1:44:55 - 1:44:55)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:44:56 - 1:44:57)

That's right.

[Speaker 1] (1:44:57 - 1:45:09)

And so whenever you are upset about any situation, there's a line in the Course in Miracles that says, I am never upset for the reason I think.

[Speaker 2] (1:45:09 - 1:45:09)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:45:10 - 1:45:16)

So because when you're upset, you have lost yourself on the external level, what we call the horizontal.

[Speaker 2] (1:45:16 - 1:45:24)

But aren't there some things worth upsetting you? I mean, there are injustices in the world, and there are horrible things happening all the time in the world that we should be upset about.

[Speaker 1] (1:45:24 - 1:45:35)

I wouldn't say that we should be upset about. It is normal for people to be upset about this, but it is not the most effective way of bringing about change. I got it.

[Speaker 2] (1:45:35 - 1:45:37)

You can be upset all day long and nothing changes.

[Speaker 1] (1:45:37 - 1:45:38)

Nothing happens.

[Speaker 2] (1:45:38 - 1:45:40)

Because people have been upset for years and things don't change.

[Speaker 1] (1:45:41 - 1:45:54)

Yes. People are upset about violence. They're upset about war.

Continuous war between nations and so on. It continues to happen. And you cannot fight against...

[Speaker 2] (1:45:54 - 1:45:59)

Somebody emailed me today. They said they were upset about 13-year-old girls having to marry so-called ministers.

[Speaker 1] (1:46:00 - 1:46:00)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:46:01 - 1:46:03)

Upset about it, but being upset about it changes nothing.

[Speaker 1] (1:46:04 - 1:46:26)

No. So it's more powerful to face a situation and see this is how it is, and then see if action is possible. What is it that can be done?

Got it. And then there's no negativity in the action. But if you are resisting, if you are complaining about the situation already, whatever you do, negativity flows into what you do.

[Speaker 2] (1:46:27 - 1:46:48)

I just got something earlier, and the reason I'm thinking about this is because a friend of mine had lost his loved one and was saying that he was having such a hard time letting go. And what I just had in this moment, something clicked for me, is that when people do finally are allowed to move on from their grief, it's because they have come to the point of acceptance that their loved one is gone.

[Speaker 8] (1:46:48 - 1:46:48)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:46:48 - 1:47:22)

And what you're saying is, in any situation, whether it's the loss of a loved one or loss of a position or loss of whatever that you're faced with, acceptance of the situation and beginning to deal with what is going on now instead of wondering or worrying about what could have been, should have been, might have been, changes the situation and the way you feel about it. And that your pain and suffering is caused and stress is caused because you refuse to accept the now. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:47:22 - 1:47:23)

You're not one with the now.

[Speaker 2] (1:47:23 - 1:47:34)

Got it. So tonight we are Skyping with a new study group in West Hollywood along with Borders where we've been Skyping in Borders in Chicago. Now we've moved to Hollywood.

[Speaker 1] (1:47:34 - 1:47:39)

Very good. At the famed Bodhi Tree. Oh, I love that bookstore.

I was there some years. I gave a talk there.

[Speaker 2] (1:47:39 - 1:47:40)

Don't you love that bookstore?

[Speaker 1] (1:47:40 - 1:47:40)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:47:40 - 1:48:06)

I do too. The Bodhi Tree is considered by many to have one of the best book selections in Los Angeles for the mind, body and spirit. So, hi everybody at Bodhi.

Hi. God, everybody looks so California-like. We can tell we're not in Chicago.

Everybody's all bundled up. I Skyped Tanisha at the Bodhi Tree earlier today on The Oprah Show and she's back tonight with a question. Hi, Tanisha.

[Speaker 5] (1:48:06 - 1:48:07)

Hi, Oprah. How are you?

[Speaker 2] (1:48:08 - 1:48:09)

Good to see you. And your question?

[Speaker 5] (1:48:10 - 1:48:51)

Yes, my question has to do with reactivity. Page 208 totally says, the more reactive... Okay, what is reactivity?

Becoming addicted to reaction. The more reactive you are, the more entangled you become with form. The more I identify with form, the stronger the ego.

My question has to do with I've always related being reactive to being sensitive. And being sensitive allows me to be very passionate about things, allows me to connect with other people and be emotionally available to my friends and family. So my question is how can I retain sensitivity and be passionate about things and keep that but not allow my ego to get stronger?

[Speaker 2] (1:48:51 - 1:48:52)

Great question, Tanisha.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:52 - 1:51:05)

Thanks. Thank you. Well, reaction may appear to be a sign of sensitivity but actually reaction is not sensitive.

Reaction is a conditioned way of responding to a situation and you're not... All reaction really comes from the past because it's part of the way in which you have been conditioned. And because it comes from the past, it is never totally adequate to the present moment.

So sensitivity is actually lost when you are reactive and true sensitivity comes when you are absolutely present in the situation and see this is how it is and you totally face the situation as it is and with that comes enormous sensitivity and with that comes also intuition. It's only when you internally don't resist a situation then the intuitive faculties arise within you. As long as you internally resist a situation and reactivity is always some form of resistance as long as you internally resist then the intuitive faculties cannot really come in because you are acting out old conditioning.

Intuition comes out of presence, out of the present moment. So bringing presence to a situation then that means you become absolutely sensitive and that's also a deeper aliveness and a deeper power than what looks like power and aliveness when you observe somebody reacting. Sometimes it might look very passionate but really they are acting out their past conditioning.

The ego is acting out. That's not true passion. It's the ego wanting this or that from the situation, wanting to manipulate the situation, wanting to get something out of the situation, whatever, but not being truly present.

So it's only through presence that the true sensitivity is there.

[Speaker 2] (1:51:06 - 1:51:35)

Thank you Tanisha and all you Bodhi people. Thank you so much. The Bodhi tree.

Love that. That's great. Continuing on with who we are because I know so many people have this as a prominent question for themselves.

You say on page 189, nobody can tell you who you are. It would just be another concept. So it would not change you.

Who you are requires no belief. In fact, every belief is an obstacle.

[Speaker 1] (1:51:35 - 1:51:43)

What does that mean? It means who you are has nothing to do with any thought that you might have about yourself.

[Speaker 2] (1:51:43 - 1:52:02)

So does who you are have nothing to do with what you've done? So you spend your life here doing all this work and working, working, working, working, making money, taking care of your family, doing all the things that people do, and that has nothing to do with you. And then you, at your funeral, they read your, you know, words about you and say, this is who you are.

[Speaker 1] (1:52:03 - 1:52:49)

Well, and then there's the gravestone, and on the gravestone there is the date of birth, and there is a one or two inch dash, and then there's the date of your death, and the dash is really all your ambitions and your fears and your drama and your problems. That's what's left on that level. So I'm not saying not to honor the level of form, because that's what we are talking about.

Whatever you do in this life, this horizontal level, where we do things, where we have our functions and play roles, you honor that level, but realizing there is something more vital, there is something deeper than just that.

[Speaker 2] (1:52:50 - 1:52:58)

Bridget says, Dear Oprah Eckhart, can you explain the quote on page 192, but nothing you can find out about yourself is you. Nothing you can know about you is you.

[Speaker 1] (1:52:59 - 1:54:15)

Yes. So I'm making a difference here between knowing yourself and knowing about yourself. And I mention as an example if you go to a conventional psychoanalyst, let's say, you will spend some years examining the makeup of your conditioning, of your past, your childhood, and so on.

And you find out more and more about yourself things that perhaps you hadn't seen clearly. About your emotions, about the makeup of your thoughts, and so on. And all that is knowing about.

It's to do with content. The content of my life, and the content of my mind, ultimately. Because my life is, I know it only as the content of my mind.

So that is knowing about yourself. And you can know thousands of facts about yourself and your history and still not know who you are. Because that knowing has nothing to do with conceptual knowing, with bits of information.

It's the deeper knowing. I gave the analogy earlier of the honey. The honey.

You can know about the honey.

[Speaker 9] (1:54:15 - 1:54:15)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:54:16 - 1:54:39)

Or you can taste the honey because when you taste the honey, the honey becomes you. It merges with you. That's right.

That's right. In that sense, knowing who you are in a non-conceptual way is being fully who you are. It's being in touch with that deeper level of being where that you can only access in the present moment, the vertical dimension.

[Speaker 2] (1:54:39 - 1:54:53)

Can I ask, well, if you are reading this book and suddenly become to understand or not reading this book and understand, as you say, many people say, well, I'm a spiritual being. You know, I'm on my spiritual path.

[Speaker 8] (1:54:53 - 1:54:53)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:54:53 - 1:55:15)

As many people have said, you know, as I'm reading all of the message boards, which I love by the way. Keep them coming. They say, I've been on the spiritual path for many years or I'm a spiritual person.

Aren't you just a little step closer thinking you're a spiritual person or is that another form of your ego, saying I'm a spiritual person? Well, you have... Because I've said for years, I recognize I'm spirit.

[Speaker 8] (1:55:15 - 1:55:16)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:55:16 - 1:55:25)

That just... Come from the greater spirit. So, I can use the word, I am consciousness come out of the greater consciousness that I call God.

[Speaker 8] (1:55:25 - 1:55:25)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:55:25 - 1:55:32)

Or spirit that come out of the greater consciousness spirit that I call God. Yes. So, I recognize that.

I know that intellectually.

[Speaker 1] (1:55:32 - 1:56:22)

Yes. So, in that sense, you can say intellectually that is a true statement. But I also feel it deeply.

The question is whether, and this is I know that you do, but any... The question is whether you truly feel that as a reality and a way of finding out how deeply you truly know this is when how you react to situations in your life and how you react to other people in your life. It's there that you find out whether your belief that you are spirit, whether you truly know that or whether it's no more, as I put it, than an idea floating around in your mind.

Do you know it in the depths of your being? Because then, the way in which you deal with situations and people is very different. Correct.

[Speaker 2] (1:56:23 - 1:56:45)

I've always believed that I really was God's child. That I was, you know, come from, and as I've gotten older and could articulate it better, you know, I use other ways of describing it, but I believe that I came from that which is God. Yes.

And was born of that. And so, therefore, really have no real fears in the world. I've always believed everything would be okay.

[Speaker 1] (1:56:45 - 1:56:45)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:56:46 - 1:56:47)

No matter what, I'm going to be okay.

[Speaker 1] (1:56:47 - 1:56:48)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:56:48 - 1:56:49)

Because of that. And you can...

[Speaker 1] (1:56:49 - 1:57:09)

And that's more than a belief. More than a belief. You can sense that.

Yeah. In some way that it's hard to describe. Right.

But you can sense that, ultimately, there isn't you and God. There is a deep place where you and God merge. There's a oneness with that.

Well, I've just gotten that later in life. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:57:09 - 1:57:16)

I used to think God was out there. Yes. Mm-hmm.

Yes. Eleanor lives in Boston, Massachusetts, and is Skyping us from a friend's house. Hi, Eleanor.

[Speaker 3] (1:57:17 - 1:57:23)

Hi, Oprah. Hi, Mr. Tolle. This is such a great experience.

I really thank you so much for it.

[Speaker 2] (1:57:24 - 1:57:25)

Well, thank you. Your question is?

[Speaker 3] (1:57:26 - 1:58:21)

My question is, on page 192, you say, you may not want to know yourself because you are afraid of what you may find out. Mm-hmm. My question is about letting go of your insecurities or what you would call your ego.

For many years now, I've been handling, so to say, an eating disorder. It's pretty much been, it's consumed a great part of my identity. That's how I identify myself.

I feel like that causes a great lacking in me. Mm-hmm. In a way, I do want to let go, but then a great part of me just wants to hold on to this identification of myself.

I guess my question is, what is this next step from awakening to the fact that I should move on and acting upon that?

[Speaker 1] (1:58:22 - 1:58:49)

That's the deriving your sense of who you are from certain thoughts or mental images that you have about yourself. That's a normal identity that people have. They derive their sense of self from certain mental images or thoughts they have about themselves, which they repeat to themselves, which they talk to others about.

[Speaker 2] (1:58:50 - 1:58:55)

Yes. It's what Debbie was saying to us earlier from the Netherlands. I'm a very sensitive person.

[Speaker 1] (1:58:55 - 1:58:55)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:58:55 - 1:58:57)

Therefore, lots of things overwhelm me.

[Speaker 1] (1:58:58 - 1:58:58)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:58:58 - 1:58:58)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:58:58 - 1:59:09)

That's already on one level that is true, but if you become too identified with a label like that, then that becomes a hindrance going beyond it.

[Speaker 9] (1:59:09 - 1:59:10)

Mm-hmm.

[Speaker 1] (1:59:10 - 1:59:14)

That's why you immediately said when she said that, ah, there we have a label.

[Speaker 9] (1:59:15 - 1:59:15)

Mm-hmm.

[Speaker 1] (1:59:15 - 2:00:52)

There's a similar thing perhaps that happens to you. It's really finding within yourself something that is more powerful, more genuine, more truly who you are than any image that you have in your mind. And we have to come back here to really the essence of this teaching, which is present moment.

You have to invite the present moment into your life as frequently as you can. You have to make room for the present moment, because it's only when you make room for the present moment that these images and mental concepts about who you are do not operate. So when you become present, and I've already given hints about how to, little things you can do to become present.

At the beginning of our session today, we had this little meditation where we said be aware of your sense perceptions. Touch things, look at things, listen to things without judging, without labeling. Then the alertness rises.

The key is here, another word for presence is the alertness. And so you become alert also within. You feel the aliveness of your inner body.

Rather than having a mental concept of who you are, you feel the entire energy field, that which animates the physical form, and you are in touch with that.

[Speaker 2] (2:00:52 - 2:01:36)

Yeah, and Eleanor, what I would say, add to that is is that you haven't done that enough, because once you start to do that, when you get in touch with the inner body, when you begin to feel the inner space, when you begin to feel the presence and being that is really you, you realize you're bigger than your little self with an eating disorder. When you start, and the reason why you're still attached to this idea of having an eating disorder because that's as big as you know yourself to be right now. And when you know yourself to be something more, you will choose to be the something more, and not this little me that has an eating disorder.

That's how I see it.

[Speaker 1] (2:01:36 - 2:01:37)

Yes, that's it.

[Speaker 2] (2:01:37 - 2:01:43)

That's how I see it. And that's why you're clinging to it, because you don't know who you are. Because you don't know who you are.

[Speaker 3] (2:01:44 - 2:01:56)

It's very difficult to move beyond that. I mean, I may in my mind understand that intellectually that I'm greater than this issue, but it's hard.

[Speaker 2] (2:01:57 - 2:02:21)

You're not going to help yourself through your mind. That's what Eckhart is saying in this whole book. That real healing, real everything, creativity, real joy, real presence and being comes from that space, the inner space of consciousness or presence and being.

And the reason why you're attached to the idea, because that works for you. That works for you right now.

[Speaker 3] (2:02:21 - 2:02:22)

Very easy.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:22 - 2:02:45)

Yeah, that works for you because you like playing small right now. And so maybe you're not ready. But what he just described for you is exactly...

And it doesn't happen overnight. It doesn't mean that, you know, tomorrow you're going to wake up and not have an issue. It's slowly bringing more and more consciousness into your daily way of being that allows you...

[Speaker 3] (2:02:45 - 2:02:47)

It's a lot of effort, that's for sure.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:48 - 2:02:51)

And I would say this, Eleanor, I would say you're worth it.

[Speaker 3] (2:02:51 - 2:02:54)

Thank you. Thank you so much for this opportunity.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:54 - 2:02:55)

I would say you're worth the effort.

[Speaker 3] (2:02:56 - 2:02:57)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:58 - 2:03:54)

I want to move on to abundance. And there was a question I had earlier that you had on here about abundance. I love that question.

But there's a lot in Chapter 7 about abundance and that we are not the little me that we think we are. You say on page 190 whatever you think the world is withholding from you you're withholding from the world and you're withholding it because deep down you think you're small and that you have nothing to give. Try this for a couple of weeks and see how it changes your reality.

Whatever you think people are withholding from you, praise, appreciation, assistance, loving, care, and so on, give it to them. So is abundance... Do you have that question to put back here?

The abundance question that somebody had asked in email? What's so great about this, I think, is that it's something people can do every day right now, is to start to give that which you say you most want.

[Speaker 1] (2:03:55 - 2:05:07)

Yes. And it starts with recognizing external abundance, that if the act of recognition that there's external abundance and what that is, we'll see in a second, is the act of recognition of external abundance already brings out the abundance that is an essential part of your very being. So when you recognize abundance without, and what I'm suggesting there is just to look at you walking past a store where there's a display of fruit, apples, oranges, and you see the abundance and the aliveness that is there.

You acknowledge it there. Abundance doesn't mean that you need to buy many things. You can buy or not buy, but it's to see the abundance of water, rain falling from the sky.

There's an abundance of water. There's an abundance of aliveness. There's an abundance of joy in the dog that's going past you there.

And so to recognize, to see the abundance that surrounds you, even if you're very poor in the eyes of the world, the abundance is always there around you, but you need to recognize it, acknowledge it, and another word for that is gratitude.

[Speaker 2] (2:05:07 - 2:05:11)

I know. I was going to say, that's why I've kept a gratitude journal for years.

[Speaker 1] (2:05:11 - 2:05:11)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:05:11 - 2:05:24)

If you keep a gratitude journal listing, I do this thing, just the five things in the day that made you most grateful, what you start to notice is, is that there are more things added to your list, and you don't even have time to write them all.

[Speaker 8] (2:05:24 - 2:05:25)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:05:25 - 2:05:33)

And when you start to pay attention to the things, okay? And you also say acknowledging the good that is already in your life is the foundation for all abundance.

[Speaker 1] (2:05:33 - 2:06:06)

Yes. And again, many people make that mistake because they believe that there is nothing good in my life. And that's absurd.

It means they are not present. They are trapped in certain stories in their head which tell them continuously that there is nothing good in my life. And if they only opened their eyes and looked around, and if they smelled the air, saw the sunlight, the most abundant thing you can see is the sun.

Well, I think the most abundant thing you can have is your breath. The breath? Come back to your breath.

So you can be with that?

[Speaker 2] (2:06:06 - 2:06:09)

When you can't think of anything to be grateful for, go to your breath.

[Speaker 1] (2:06:09 - 2:06:13)

Breath? Or the aliveness in your hands and in your arms to feel that.

[Speaker 2] (2:06:13 - 2:06:22)

Well, the email question from Rosanita in Georgia was to ask you to please explain what you mean by abundance comes only to those who already have.

[Speaker 1] (2:06:22 - 2:06:58)

Yes. Now, abundance, you need to recognize that as coming from within you. Abundance is not something that external things come to you that make you abundant.

Abundance is the energy that flows out of you, out of the being of who you are, into this world. So the beginning of you initiate this process by recognizing the abundance that's all around you externally. Outflow determines inflow.

And then it suddenly, the recognition already draws it out.

[Speaker 2] (2:06:58 - 2:07:10)

I was going to say, isn't gratitude in itself an energy field that draws more to you? Isn't it its own vibrational frequency that draws more to you?

[Speaker 8] (2:07:10 - 2:07:10)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:07:10 - 2:07:15)

And that's what I interpreted you saying. Is that gratitude is its own energy field?

[Speaker 8] (2:07:15 - 2:07:15)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:07:15 - 2:07:33)

And that when you acknowledge and are grateful for whatever you have, when you can see and feel the gratitude, experience the gratitude in whatever you have, that changes your vibrational frequency, literally, and allows more to be drawn to you.

[Speaker 1] (2:07:33 - 2:08:23)

Yes. It changes your entire reality. It changes the way in which you experience life.

Yes, it does. It changes your world. And so it's, if that's the only thing people remember, there are many things in this book, but just if they want to change their lives, they're not happy with their lives, bring gratitude into it, which is, of course, connected also to the present moment, because it's only here in this moment.

What is it in this moment that I can be grateful for? Be grateful for. And then you suddenly see, oh, it's all that.

There's always, it's miraculous if you truly look around and sense and feel. It's miraculous. The entire universe is miraculous.

Yes. And when you are so trapped in your thoughts that you don't see this anymore, then the entire universe becomes dead to you and there's nothing new that ever arises.

[Speaker 2] (2:08:23 - 2:09:13)

You know, I was practicing this this weekend. I was saying to Eckhart before we started that I was under the weather and had an obligation in New Orleans and wasn't able to fulfill that commitment and normally I would have just been beating myself up about it, because I've never had to cancel anything before, but I decided to be with the fact that I was sick and I had one of the happiest days of my life, being sick in bed, because I accepted it and was not fighting the fact that I wasn't well. I thought, I'm going to be with feeling badly and I'm going to appreciate everything about the day. So every cup of tea that Stedman brought me, I was happy and happy that I was, you know, I had clean sheets, I mean, and happy that I could open the curtains and there was sun coming through the window, just and I just had the most happy time being sick in bed.

Yes. Yeah, so that's what you're talking about.

[Speaker 8] (2:09:13 - 2:09:14)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:09:15 - 2:09:16)

Being able to be grateful from where you are.

[Speaker 1] (2:09:17 - 2:09:18)

Yes, very, very powerful.

[Speaker 2] (2:09:18 - 2:09:20)

If I hadn't read this book, I might not have been able to do that.

[Speaker 1] (2:09:21 - 2:09:56)

So it's been very helpful to me. And you say, yeah, go ahead. You can even be grateful for things that on the surface don't look so good.

When you accept what is, you're grateful for whatever situation arises. Let's say, your car breaks down and you have to change the tire in the middle of the night and even there you can say, okay, we come to this later in the book. It begins sometimes, a so-called negative situation begins with not resisting it.

Yes. And so...

[Speaker 2] (2:09:56 - 2:10:04)

Don't you say in the power of now, I just interrupted a thought, but don't you say in the power of now that all stress comes from resisting the present moment?

[Speaker 1] (2:10:04 - 2:10:04)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:10:05 - 2:10:05)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (2:10:05 - 2:10:09)

It doesn't come from the situation, it comes from your thoughts about the situation.

[Speaker 2] (2:10:09 - 2:10:14)

Because the tire needing to be changed by itself could not cause you to be stressed.

[Speaker 1] (2:10:14 - 2:10:23)

No, it just is as it is. It is as it is. And if you can see that, then suddenly you move into that and even there comes gratitude.

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:10:24 - 2:10:27)

So your stress is about wanting the moment to be different than what it is.

[Speaker 1] (2:10:27 - 2:10:27)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:10:27 - 2:10:32)

And that's whether it's a tire, losing your job, losing a loved one.

[Speaker 8] (2:10:32 - 2:10:32)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:10:33 - 2:10:45)

Okay. And you sum this up, this abundance, by using a quote from Jesus saying, Give and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap.

That is the truth, so help me.

[Speaker 1] (2:10:46 - 2:12:05)

That is just the truth. Yes. It's an amazing, amazing statement.

And also, somewhere else, Jesus talks about... You must like Jesus. You talk about him a lot.

Oh, yes. There was a time when I... I was brought up as a Catholic and then I...

for many years I wasn't interested anymore. And then after I went through this inner shift, a couple of years afterwards, I happened to pick up the New Testament and I happened to read the Gospels and I suddenly saw how deep all this is, these statements. Right.

It became more than doctrine. Yes, yes. And so Jesus somewhere else says, I want you to have life in its fullness.

I want you to have the fullness of life. And that's a beautiful statement and people sometimes don't realize what he means by the fullness of life because in our civilization particularly, the fullness of life means having as many things as possible. Yes.

And of course, I'm convinced that Jesus was not talking about shopping malls. No. Because if he was talking about shopping malls, then the kingdom of heaven has already arrived and it's in the shopping malls.

So he was not talking about many, many things. Eckhart made a joke, y'all.

[Speaker 2] (2:12:08 - 2:12:09)

Eckhart made a funny.

[Speaker 1] (2:12:12 - 2:12:23)

He was talking about something that is within you. The fullness of life is a dimension within you and he said, I want you to be in touch with that dimension within you.

[Speaker 2] (2:12:23 - 2:12:29)

And you are absolutely right. If you get nothing else from this book, if you can get that, then your life will change.

[Speaker 8] (2:12:29 - 2:12:29)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:12:30 - 2:12:31)

Your life will change.

[Speaker 8] (2:12:31 - 2:12:31)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:12:31 - 2:12:57)

That abundance comes only to those who already have it, page 192. It sounds almost unfair, but of course it isn't. It's a universal law.

Both abundance and scarcity are interstates and manifest as your reality. Jesus puts it like this, for to the one who has, more will be given and from the one who is not, even what he has will be taken away. And he's not talking about things.

No. He's talking about your interstate of gratitude for what you already have.

[Speaker 8] (2:12:57 - 2:12:57)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:12:58 - 2:13:01)

And your life will change. Laura from Baltimore is on the line and has a question for us. Laura?

[Speaker 6] (2:13:02 - 2:13:04)

Hi, Oprah. Hi, Eckhart.

[Speaker 2] (2:13:04 - 2:13:05)

Hi. Hello.

[Speaker 6] (2:13:05 - 2:13:41)

Thank you so much for this opportunity. You've both been great spiritual teachers for me and I'm just so grateful. Thank you.

My question is, before reading this book, I was someone who usually suppressed my emotions. And on page 208, you talk about bringing an inner yes to whatever form that the now takes. So now, when I have the emotion of sadness arise, I try to apply this principle.

In the past, I would have said no to the emotion and suppressed it. But now I worry that by saying yes to this emotion, it's just the ego tricking me and defeating the pain body. How can I be sure that emoting is not actually strengthening my ego?

[Speaker 1] (2:13:44 - 2:15:06)

Right. Good question. So, when you fully allow an emotion, it implies that you are there as the awareness, the witnessing presence.

Because it's only from that space that you can say that this is what I feel and here it is. It's part of the is-ness of this moment. And if you do that, the emotion cannot rise up into your mind and control your thinking.

In other words, it does not become part of ego. It's only if the emotion rises up into your mind and then your mind starts to think along the lines of that particular emotion and thereby feeding more energy to the very same emotion. That means you are strengthening that emotion and it's becoming part of ego.

But if you can just look at the emotion and allow it to be, then the emotion is not going to feed on your thoughts anymore. And then you will actually find when you allow an emotion to be, it subsides fairly quickly. And it's not part of ego.

This practice is going beyond emotion without repressing them.

[Speaker 2] (2:15:07 - 2:15:08)

You got that, Laura?

[Speaker 6] (2:15:09 - 2:15:10)

Yes, thank you so much.

[Speaker 2] (2:15:10 - 2:16:11)

I love that. Tell us the story of the Zen Master on 199, the one who said, is that so? I mean, I think you have to be a Zen Master, practically, to have that kind of reaction to everything in life.

Because when somebody attacks you, that's a thing I still have to work on. Because I live in a world where people write things that are not true all the time. Somebody's working on a biography of me now, unauthorized.

So I know it's going to be lots of things in there that are not true. And so, I've gotten better at it. And I know everybody experiences it on one level or another.

For me, it's people saying things about me that are not true. It caused me to show myself as a small person. The little me comes out.

And I'm like, that's not true! And so this Zen Master who's able to say, when he's being accused of, you know, doing something horrible to this girl, is that so? Who can do that?

[Speaker 1] (2:16:11 - 2:17:00)

It's a very extreme form of being one with the present moment. This is a, I believe, should I tell the story? Yes, please do.

So there was a Zen Master. He was highly regarded. And he was a spiritual teacher, had a very good reputation.

And one day, neighbors of his came to him and said, our daughter is pregnant, and you remember, she came to see you about some advice some time ago, and she has now confessed to us that you are the father of this baby that's going to be born out of our 17-year-old daughter. And of course, they didn't tell him this in the way as I'm telling it to you. They were very angry.

[Speaker 2] (2:17:01 - 2:17:02)

Is this a true story?

[Speaker 1] (2:17:03 - 2:18:46)

I believe it is. So there was an enormous anger in this situation, you can imagine. And the Zen Master was listening to them as they were telling them that he had fathered this child.

He was listening in that Zen state of open alert attention, like this. And then when they had finished their story, you are the father of this child, and he said, is that so? Yes, he said.

And then we are going to, when the child is born, you are going to look after the baby, because you are responsible. Is that so? And so when the baby was born, they brought the child over to him and said, now you look after the baby, it's not ours, you are responsible.

And he accepted the baby, and the word got round that he had fathered a child by a 17-year-old girl. He lost his reputation, nobody came to see him anymore. He was totally indifferent to this, because he was only responding to the needs of the present moment, so he started looking after the baby.

And so she spent about a year looking after the baby, and in the meantime the mother of the baby grew up a little bit more, and suddenly she confessed to her parents that the Zen master was not the father, she just didn't want to tell them that it was the boy who works in the butchers who was the father. And of course the parents got extremely upset, and they came running to the Zen master and said, she has just told us that you are not the father. He said, is that so?

Yes, and so we would like our baby back please. And so he handed the baby over. It's the story that...

[Speaker 2] (2:18:46 - 2:18:48)

It must be in the Zendom kingdom or something.

[Speaker 1] (2:18:49 - 2:19:01)

Continuous, it's the story that shows an extreme example of absolute non-resistance, and the good that comes because the baby was being looked after with loving care for a whole year by this Zen master.

[Speaker 2] (2:19:01 - 2:19:11)

But why wouldn't a Zen master, okay, because he's a Zen master. Is that the level that you were saying that we should be striving? Well I know you're not saying we should do anything, we should do whatever we want to do.

[Speaker 1] (2:19:11 - 2:19:15)

It is not necessary, that is only to exemplify...

[Speaker 2] (2:19:15 - 2:19:18)

Because I would be it is not true! It's not true!

[Speaker 1] (2:19:20 - 2:19:47)

Or you can say no, I'm not the father. It's not true, I'm not the father. So you can say it in one way that is very reactive and that would be the normal way, or you can say it in a way that is free of reaction and nevertheless states the truth.

So you're still surrendered inside, you're still accepting that these parents this is where they are at, this is what they believe, and simply you say this is not the case, I'm not the father.

[Speaker 2] (2:19:47 - 2:19:58)

Bottom line is you're saying don't get pulled into the drama. Yes. Don't get pulled into the drama.

Yes. State your case, state the facts without allowing your ego to be pulled into the drama of it.

[Speaker 8] (2:19:59 - 2:19:59)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:19:59 - 2:20:21)

And then be able to move on. That's right. That's what you're saying.

That's it. Okay, we've got Fatima on the line from Kuwait. Hello, Fatima?

Hello? Hello. Hi Oprah.

Hi. Hi. Nice to see you.

Or hear you. Hi. Can you hear me?

Yes we can. Go ahead with your question.

[Speaker 7] (2:20:21 - 2:20:43)

Okay, great. Since we are used to identifying ourselves with what we have and what we do, I would like to ask you, Oprah and Eckhart, to identify yourself without names or any form of identification so other people can get a better understanding of who they are and what you mentioned on page 186. Okay, Eckhart, go right ahead and do that.

[Speaker 1] (2:20:43 - 2:20:44)

The sound wasn't so good.

[Speaker 2] (2:20:44 - 2:21:07)

She was saying since we're so used, accustomed to identifying ourselves through labels and what we do, she would like for you and I, I would like for you, to identify yourself without using those labels of identification so that everybody listening can get a better idea then of how then do you describe yourself.

[Speaker 1] (2:21:07 - 2:21:38)

Yes, so we're talking about being with another person. When you identify yourself, you identify yourself to another person. Yes.

So there's a situation where you meet somebody, perhaps somebody you don't know yet. Yes. And so you can be there as an ego entity in which case you would immediately explain your achievements or you would immediately explain your sufferings or your diseases that you identify with or whatever.

[Speaker 2] (2:21:38 - 2:21:43)

Sometimes people do it this way, which annoys me, they'll say, what school did you go to?

[Speaker 1] (2:21:43 - 2:21:43)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:21:44 - 2:21:47)

That's immediately to say whether or not you're in the category.

[Speaker 1] (2:21:47 - 2:22:13)

That's right. Yes. So people, they want to as the mind, that's what the human mind does, they want to be able to classify you, they want to be able to find out where they can put you in there.

So they're asking questions about that but you don't need to be drawn into that and realize that as you, and this is a very very important thing.

[Speaker 2] (2:22:13 - 2:22:19)

Okay, so let's say we didn't know you and you're at a gathering where people don't know you.

[Speaker 8] (2:22:19 - 2:22:19)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:22:19 - 2:22:22)

And I come up and I introduce myself and I say, hello, I'm Oprah.

[Speaker 8] (2:22:23 - 2:22:23)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:22:23 - 2:22:38)

And I'm here with a convention and I'm, you know, I sold so many pharmaceuticals and I did so this and that, I've got three kids, I live in Oregon, whatever. How would you then describe yourself?

[Speaker 1] (2:22:39 - 2:24:06)

Well, perhaps I would not use that many words but some words might be there. I wouldn't say, I am formless spirit or anything like that. You wouldn't?

No. Hello, I am formless spirit. I once asked somebody, I met somebody at a reunion and they knew that I had already written The Power of Now so I was a spiritual teacher and so I asked, for some reason we had a conversation and I asked how old are you?

And he said, I was never born. He really wanted to teach me a lesson. Oh boy.

So you can be quite normal in your interaction but more important is on a sensing level, you are there as a field of aware presence and in an interaction with another human being, what matters is not so much the words that are being said, there is a deeper level of the awareness that arises, the field, I call it the field of awareness that arises between two human beings. The field of presence that arises when those human beings or even just one of them is not totally identified with their thinking mind and the ego. Then I can be there as a conscious presence.

Right now as I sit here, I can, I'm here as a conscious presence.

[Speaker 2] (2:24:07 - 2:24:12)

So you wouldn't say, I'm Eckhart formless spirit, you would just say, I'm Eckhart.

[Speaker 1] (2:24:13 - 2:24:13)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:24:13 - 2:24:16)

And if they say, well hey, what do you do?

[Speaker 1] (2:24:16 - 2:25:01)

Yes, then I give a conventional answer, I'm a writer. And then they ask, what do you write about? And then depending on, I kind of sense where they are at, whether it's a genuine question and they truly want to know or whether it's a question when I come into the States from Canada every week, they ask me, what do you do?

And then I say, I'm a writer. And then they ask, what do you write about? And then I'm not going to give a deep answer because they don't want a deep answer.

They're not really interested. No. So I give conventional answers.

And yet, in every human interaction, even such an interaction as this, when the...

[Speaker 8] (2:25:01 - 2:25:01)

Imaginary.

[Speaker 1] (2:25:02 - 2:25:12)

Always what is, you need to be able to sense that there is a presence underneath whatever you're saying.

[Speaker 2] (2:25:12 - 2:25:12)

That's right.

[Speaker 1] (2:25:12 - 2:25:15)

Feel your own presence underneath it.

[Speaker 2] (2:25:15 - 2:25:42)

And that's what we're going to be talking about next week, is to be able to bring, that is our role in this lifetime, is to bring that sense of presence, who you really are, not the small little self that is you know, has eating disorders or shops too much or all the other things that we define in our horizontal lives as ourselves, but to bring that presence into your active life. That's right. That is our goal.

[Speaker 8] (2:25:42 - 2:25:43)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:25:43 - 2:26:11)

Yes. Alright, let's talk about the joy of being. Unhappiness or negativity is a disease on our planet.

What pollution is on the outer level is negativity. Page 213, everybody. What pollution is on the outer level is negativity on the inner.

It is everywhere. Not in just places where people don't have enough. I love this.

But even more so where they have more than enough. Their fluent world is even more deeply identified with form, more lost in content, more trapped in ego.

[Speaker 1] (2:26:12 - 2:26:12)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:26:12 - 2:26:13)

I thought that was interesting.

[Speaker 1] (2:26:13 - 2:27:20)

Yes. Sometimes you see, you know, when you visit certain places where people have relatively little, often you see more happy faces and radiant faces than in our rich society. So the passage is about negativity and there's an enormous amount of negativity in the collective energy field of our planet, but it is generated by individuals.

So it's everybody's task to be alert so that when negativity arises within them, they recognize it and then ask themselves whether that is what they choose. When you recognize it, you can be there as the presence and you have a choice. Is negativity ever the optimum way of dealing with any situation?

And if you look closely you'll see it never is a good way of dealing with any situation.

[Speaker 2] (2:27:20 - 2:27:54)

Okay, you say on page 214, the joy of being, which is the only true happiness, cannot come to you through any form, possession, achievement, person or event. And that means people who think that I'm with you and I love you and you're going to bring me joy, cannot. Yes.

You either are joy or you're not. Yes. Okay.

Through anything that happens, that joy cannot come to you ever. It emanates from the formless dimension within you, from consciousness itself and thus is one with who you are.

[Speaker 1] (2:27:55 - 2:28:42)

Yes, it comes from within and not from without. People conventionally expect it to come to them from without and then it usually doesn't because you need to discover it in yourself first and this is why when you try to manifest things in your life, which is a fine thing to do, but the vital question is, have you, first of all, already come to that place of fullness and joy within yourself right now? Have you found a right relationship with the present moment?

If you haven't, because that's where it resides. It's only by having a right relationship with the present moment that the joy can arise from within you.

[Speaker 2] (2:28:42 - 2:30:06)

You talk about that on 210 when you say to awaken within the dream is our purpose now. When we are awake within the dream, the ego-created earth drama comes to an end and a more benign and wondrous dream arises, this new earth. Also, let's go to page

215 everybody.

The top of 215 you talk about a powerful spiritual practice is consciously to allow the diminishment of ego because what we've been learning through A New Earth is that most of us have, until reading this book, believe we were our egos. Believe we were, as Eckhart has said earlier in tonight, we believe we were our horizontal life without the vertical. We believe we were our past.

We believe we are what we're going to do and what we have done. And the now was always just a sort of means to an end. So, you say a powerful spiritual practice is consciously to allow the diminishment of ego when it happens without attempting to restore the ego.

I recommend that you experiment with this from time to time. For example, when someone criticizes you blames you or calls you names I gotta tell you, it's hard to say is that so? Instead of immediately retaliating or defending yourself do nothing.

Allow the self-image to remain diminished and become alert to what that feels like deep inside you. So what's that supposed to do for us?

[Speaker 1] (2:30:09 - 2:30:38)

I'm not saying in each case you should do that. Experiment with this from time to time. Particularly when nothing depends on that situation.

So you don't have to explain something so that a situation can be put right or whatever. Somebody just calls you we talked about it the other day. Somebody cuts you off in traffic?

Yes. So that would be a good practice. But it's totally pointless to retaliate.

[Speaker 9] (2:30:38 - 2:30:38)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:30:38 - 2:31:12)

It makes no sense whatsoever. But the retaliation when somebody calls you names in traffic or whatever. Or does something to upset you.

Yes. Try doing nothing. Yes.

The retaliation is automatic and unconscious because it comes from the ego. Because when somebody calls you stupid for example. Right.

Or somebody calls you idiot it injures the ego. It hurts the ego. And it's the ego that's being injured not you.

Not you. It's nothing because deep down you know that it's not you. It's just the ego image of who I think I am.

[Speaker 2] (2:31:13 - 2:31:19)

Well deep down you know it's not you. But if you are a person who lives unconsciously. If you live out of your ego you think it's you.

[Speaker 1] (2:31:19 - 2:31:30)

Yes. And immediately the ego will go into what I call instant self repair mechanism. And this instant self repair mechanism which is totally unconscious.

[Speaker 2] (2:31:30 - 2:31:32)

Says I am not stupid.

[Speaker 1] (2:31:32 - 2:32:08)

Well it will call the other person something worse than stupid. And by that the ego believes that it has repaired itself and on that level it has. So this person has taken something away from you.

It's the imaginary ego. And then you take something away from that other person. That's how the egos work.

And then of course it's probably not the end because the other person is going to retaliate again. Right. And now you're in it.

The whole madness starts. Now you're in the drama. Yes.

So this is a good example where you can practice being non-reactive so when somebody calls you something remain totally.

[Speaker 2] (2:32:08 - 2:32:29)

And you say when that happens just do it for a few seconds. It may feel uncomfortable as it will. Just to keep your mouth shut.

I've had that this week. Just to keep your mouth shut. It's hard.

It feels like you've shrunk in size momentarily. Then you may sense an inner spaciousness that feels intensely alive. You haven't been diminished at all.

In fact you have expanded. What do you mean by that?

[Speaker 1] (2:32:30 - 2:33:15)

Yes. So somebody you are not what you are not defending is your egoic identity. The image identity.

And that suddenly that has become diminished by somebody calling you stupid for example. This entity has become diminished. You don't resist the diminishment.

So it has become smaller so to speak. And therefore suddenly something that is deeper than that can suddenly come through because the ego has shrunk in size. I got it.

No the ego doesn't like that. That's right. It's a wonderful experiment when you allow the ego to shrink and then suddenly you feel there is a power underneath that that's far greater than the ego.

[Speaker 2] (2:33:15 - 2:33:17)

And it shrinks every time you become aware of it.

[Speaker 8] (2:33:17 - 2:33:18)

Yes. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:33:18 - 2:33:20)

Even when you don't do what you are supposed to do?

[Speaker 8] (2:33:20 - 2:33:21)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:33:21 - 2:33:22)

Okay.

[Speaker 8] (2:33:22 - 2:33:22)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:33:23 - 2:33:36)

I like this question from Suhad in Clifton, New Jersey. How can we use the high quality no that you talk about on page 216 in our lives? Can you please provide us with some real life examples?

216. High quality no.

[Speaker 1] (2:33:37 - 2:34:47)

What did you mean by high quality no? In some cases sometimes people misunderstand when I say say yes to the present moment. They believe then whenever somebody asks you something, you have to say yes.

No, when I say yes to the present moment, it's to do with an inner state of consciousness that is open to what is. That does not resist what is. It does not necessarily mean that every time somebody asks you something, you say yes.

So, let's say a person comes to you, you've known him, you've already lent him money five times, he's never returned it. Or two. Two is enough.

And so he says, I need another $500 now. And then you perhaps this may be a good opportunity and occasion where you can use a high quality no that is not reactive and does not make that person wrong and so he becomes angry or shouts at him. So you are dishonest, you haven't returned my money, and I'm not giving you a penny more.

This is a low quality no. It's a low quality. A high quality no is to say...

[Speaker 2] (2:34:47 - 2:34:55)

Who do you think you are? Stories in order to make wrong. Yes, I've given you money so many times before.

[Speaker 1] (2:34:55 - 2:34:57)

Yes, and then you make yourself into a victim.

[Speaker 2] (2:34:58 - 2:35:02)

Or make yourself into the great person who's been so benevolent.

[Speaker 1] (2:35:02 - 2:35:26)

Yes, whatever the egoic game is. So the high quality no is to simply state, well, I've already given you that money twice and you haven't returned it yet so I won't give you any more. You have to return my money first.

I'm not going to give you... Can you sense that there's no negativity? You simply state clearly, this is what I'm going to do or not do.

I won't give you any more because you haven't returned that.

[Speaker 2] (2:35:26 - 2:36:31)

Yes. That happened to me recently. Somebody was asking me, and I said, no, I won't do that.

And no emotion attached to it at all. Alright, I just want to say here that the... I love this on 220.

What you see, hear, feel, touch, or think about is only one half of reality, so to speak. It is form. In the teaching of Jesus, it's simply called the world and the other dimension is the kingdom of heaven or eternal life.

Then toward the bottom of the page, second to last paragraph, you say, the collective disease of humanity is that people are so engrossed in what happens, so hypnotized by the world of fluctuating forms, so absorbed in the content of their lives, they have forgotten the essence, that which is beyond content, beyond form, beyond thought. They're so consumed by time that they have forgotten eternity, which is their origin, their home, their destiny. Eternity is the living reality of who you are.

And that's what I felt on that mountain that day.

[Speaker 1] (2:36:31 - 2:37:24)

Yes. Yes. And you can actually sense it, although that's the wonderful thing when you can be surrounded by the stillness.

Yeah. But the amazing thing is you can actually sense that even in the midst of chaos, even in the midst of noise, I have felt also what you describe, I've also very often felt that in nature. But I have also felt that extreme peace in situations where one wouldn't expect it.

I felt it in the middle of London, in busy streets walking around, especially after I went through this shift. Before I went through this shift I was always anxious and fearful and I couldn't stand the traffic and the noise. And suddenly I was able to just walk along Piccadilly Circus and be totally at peace as if I were on a mountaintop inside.

So when you...

[Speaker 2] (2:37:25 - 2:37:26)

Mountaintop inside.

[Speaker 1] (2:37:26 - 2:37:27)

Inside, yeah.

[Speaker 2] (2:37:27 - 2:37:29)

And that's what presence is, is it not?

[Speaker 1] (2:37:29 - 2:37:29)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:37:29 - 2:37:32)

Presence is being on the mountaintop inside.

[Speaker 1] (2:37:32 - 2:37:53)

Yes. That stillness is always there in you as the essence of who you are. And when we call it stillness we are already limited because it's so vast you cannot describe it with one word.

Right. So whatever word you use is already a limitation. But words are limited of course because words refer to tangible things but not to the inner reality.

[Speaker 2] (2:37:54 - 2:38:01)

So before we say goodbye let's sum up what we've covered in this class. Knowing who you really are means knowing.

[Speaker 1] (2:38:02 - 2:39:25)

Yes. Knowing at a level beyond the level of concepts. Knowing yourself ultimately is being yourself fully.

Being in touch with being. The being that you are. To sense the I am that is the essence of your identity when you remove all the identifications that usually you say after you say I am you say what you are.

But if you say I am and add nothing to it that gives a good practice. It can get you in touch with the essence. I am not this.

I am not that. I am. It's a simple meditation.

Repeat the words I am to yourself. It's so powerful. I started to do that.

It is so powerful when you do that. And don't fill in the blank after the words. Very powerful.

Another similar one is Who am I? It's a question but don't look to the mind for an answer. In fact don't look for any answer especially not on the level of mind.

Who am I? And then allow the stillness to be there after the question. Don't look for an answer.

And in not looking for an answer there is the answer but not a mental concept as of sensing. Feeling. I am.

[Speaker 2] (2:39:27 - 2:41:02)

And just be with that. And so for whether it's an addiction or an eating disorder or nothing. You think you have a really wonderful life.

But you are connected to all the things in your life. To the content of your life. Just being able to sit with yourself and to say those words to yourself.

I am. And to recognize them. To know them.

Like honey. To know them. Thank you again.

I want to thank you all for joining us. The 7th class will be available on demand tomorrow. Finding who you truly are for free here at oprah.com.

And if you want to download or watch any of our classes of course you know this by now. You can do that tomorrow at oprah.com and at iTunes. It's free because of the generous support of people like Nature Made Soft Gel Vitamins.

This week update your workbook and get ready for our next class on chapter 8. It's the Discovery of Inner Space. I love this.

It's my next favorite chapter. I think 7, 8, and 9 are really the essence of the book. Inner Space is about allowing the inner space of your life to connect to the outer purpose of your life.

The inner and outer purposes of your life. Right? That's right.

Love it. Again we thank you. This was a long chapter.

Lots to cover. I would say to everybody, I mean I was sick in bed this weekend and read it again for the third time. Every time I read it I go a little deeper and awaken a little more.

So this is one you need to be with for a while.

[Speaker 1] (2:41:02 - 2:41:02)

Definitely.

[Speaker 2] (2:41:02 - 2:41:03)

Over and over.

[Speaker 1] (2:41:03 - 2:41:10)

And after you've read it once you don't need to read long pages. Just read sometimes half a page is enough.

[Speaker 2] (2:41:10 - 2:41:31)

Yes. One page. What I do is I go back and read.

This is what I would do. As you're using your highlighters, just go back and read what you've highlighted and just be with that. Because the things that you highlight are usually things that resonate with you more deeply.

It's a good way of reviewing it. And every time you come back to it, you know, two weeks from now you'll get something that you didn't get the first time.

[Speaker 8] (2:41:31 - 2:41:32)

Oh yes. Oh yes. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:41:32 - 2:41:33)

Thank you.

[Speaker 8] (2:41:33 - 2:41:34)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (2:41:34 - 2:41:35)

Thank you Eckhart. Thanks everybody.

2008-Eckhart Tolle Oprah A New Earth Audiobook Podcast Chapter08

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 26:16)

CHAPTER VIII THE DISCOVERY OF INNER SPACE According to an ancient Sufi story, there lived a king in some Middle Eastern land who was continuously torn between happiness and despondency. The slightest thing would cause him great upset or provoke an intense reaction, and his happiness would quickly turn into disappointment and despair. A time came when the king finally got tired of himself and of life, and he began to seek a way out.

He sent for a wise man who lived in his kingdom, and who was reputed to be enlightened. When the wise man came, the king said to him, �I want to be like you. Can you give me something that will bring balance, serenity and wisdom into my life?

I will pay any price you ask.� The wise man said, �I may be able to help you, but the price is so great that your entire kingdom would not be sufficient payment for it. Therefore it will be a gift to you if you will honour it.� The king gave his assurances, and the wise man left. A few weeks later he returned and handed the king an ornate box carved in jade.

The king opened the box and found a simple gold ring inside. Some letters were inscribed on the ring. The inscription read, �This too will pass.� �What is the meaning of this?� asked the king. The wise man said, �Wear this ring always. Whatever happens, before you call it good or bad, touch this ring and read the inscription. That way you will always be at peace.

This too will pass.� What is it about these simple words that make them so powerful? Looking at it superficially, it would seem, while those words may provide some comfort in a bad situation, they would also diminish the enjoyment of the good things in life. �Don�t be too happy, because it won�t last.� This seems to be what they are saying when applied in a situation that is perceived as good. The full import of these words becomes clear when we consider them in the context of two other stories that we encountered earlier. The story of the Zen Master, whose only response was always �Is that so?�, shows the good that comes through inner nonresistance to events, that is to say, being at one with what happens. The story of the man, whose comment was invariably a laconic �maybe�, illustrates the wisdom of nonjudgment.

And the story of the ring points to the fact of impermanence which, when recognized, leads to nonattachment. Nonresistance, nonjudgment and nonattachment are the three aspects of true freedom and enlightened living. Those words inscribed on the ring are not telling you that you should not enjoy the good in your life, nor are they merely meant to provide some comfort in times of suffering.

They have a deeper purpose � to make you aware of the fleetingness of every situation, which is due to the transience of all forms, good or bad. When you become aware of the transience of all forms, your attachment to them lessens and you disidentify from them to some extent. Being detached does not mean that you cannot enjoy the good that the world has to offer.

In fact, you enjoy it more. Once you see and accept the transience of all things and the inevitability of change, you can enjoy the pleasures of the world while they last, without fear of loss or anxiety about the future. When you are detached, you gain a higher vantage point from which to view the events in your life, instead of being trapped inside them.

You become like an astronaut who sees the planet earth surrounded by the vastness of space and realizes a paradoxical truth � the earth is precious and at the same time insignificant. The recognition that this, too, will pass brings detachment, and with detachment another dimension comes into your life � inner space. Through detachment, as well as non-judgment and inner non-resistance, you gain access to that dimension.

When you are no longer totally identified with forms, consciousness, who you are, becomes freed from its imprisonment in form. This freedom is the arising of inner space. It comes as a stillness, a subtle peace deep within you, even in the face of something seemingly bad.

This, too, will pass. Suddenly there is space around the event. There is also space around the emotional highs and lows, even around pain.

And above all, there is space between your thoughts. And from that space emanates a peace that is not of this world, because this world is form, and the peace is space. This is the peace of God.

You can enjoy and honor the things of this world without giving them an importance and significance they don�t have. You can participate in the dance of creation and be active without attachment to outcome and without placing unreasonable demands upon the world. Fulfill me, make me happy, make me feel safe, tell me who I am.

The world cannot give you those things, and when you no longer have such expectations, all self-created suffering comes to an end. All such suffering is due to an overvaluation of form and an unawareness of the dimension of inner space. When that dimension is present in your life, you can enjoy things, experiences and the pleasures of the senses without losing yourself in them, without inner attachment to them, that is to say, without becoming addicted to the world.

The words �This, too, will pass� are pointers towards reality. In pointing to the impermanence of all forms, by implication, they are also pointing to the eternal. Only the eternal in you can recognize the impermanent as impermanent.

When the dimension of space is lost or rather not known, the things of the world assume an absolute importance, a seriousness and heaviness that in truth they do not have. When the world is not viewed from the perspective of the formless, it becomes a threatening place, and ultimately a place of despair. The Old Testament prophet must have felt this when he wrote �All things are full of weariness, a man cannot utter it�, Object Consciousness and Space Consciousness Most people�s lives are cluttered up with things, material things, things to do, things to think about.

Their lives are like the history of humanity, which Winston Churchill defined as �one damn thing after another.� Their minds are filled up with a clutter of thoughts, one thought after another. This is the dimension of Object Consciousness that is many people�s predominant reality, and that is why their lives are so out of balance. Object Consciousness needs to be balanced by Space Consciousness for sanity to return to our planet and for humanity to fulfill its destiny.

The arising of Space Consciousness is the next stage in the evolution of humanity. Space Consciousness means that in addition to being conscious of things, which always comes down to sense perceptions, thoughts and emotions, there is an undercurrent of awareness. Awareness implies that you are not only conscious of things, objects, but you are also conscious of being conscious.

If you can sense an alert inner stillness in the background while things happen in the foreground, that�s it. This dimension is there in everyone, but most people are completely unaware of it. Sometimes I point to it by saying, �Can you feel your own presence?� Space Consciousness represents not only freedom from ego, but also from dependency on the things of this world, from materialism and materiality.

It is the spiritual dimension which alone can give transcendent and true meaning to this world. Whenever you are upset about an event, a person or a situation, the real cause is not the event, person or situation, but a loss of true perspective that only space can provide. You are trapped in object consciousness, unaware of the timeless inner space of consciousness itself.

The words �This too will pass� when used as a pointer can restore awareness of that dimension to you. Another pointer to the truth in you is contained in the following statement, �I am never upset for the reason I think.� Falling below and rising above thought. When you are very tired, you may become more peaceful, more relaxed than in your usual state.

This is because thinking is subsiding, and so you can�t remember your mind-made problematic self anymore. You are moving towards sleep. When you drink alcohol or take certain drugs, provided they don�t trigger your pain body, you may also feel more relaxed, more carefree, and perhaps more alive for a while.

You may start singing and dancing, which since ancient times are expressions of the joy of life. Because you are less burdened by your mind, you can glimpse the joy of being. Perhaps this is the reason alcohol is also called �spirit.� But there�s a high price to pay�unconsciousness. Instead of rising above thought, you have fallen below it. A few more drinks, and you will have regressed to the vegetable realm. Space consciousness has little to do with being �spaced out.� Both states are beyond thought. This they have in common. The fundamental difference, however, is that in the former you rise above thought, in the latter you fall below it. One is the next step in the evolution of human consciousness, the other a regression to a stage we left behind aeons ago.

Watching television is the favorite leisure activity, or rather non-activity, for millions of people around the world. The average American, by the time he is sixty years old, will have spent fifteen years staring at the TV screen. In many other countries the figures are similar.

Many people find watching TV relaxing. Observe yourself closely and you will find that the longer the screen remains the focus of your attention, the more your thought activity becomes suspended, and for long periods you are watching the talk show, game show, sitcom, or even commercials, with almost no thought being generated by your mind. Not only do you not remember your problems anymore, but you become temporarily free of yourself.

And what could be more relaxing than that? So does TV watching create inner space? Does it cause you to be present?

Unfortunately it does not. Although for long periods your mind may not be generating any thoughts, it has linked into the thought activity of the television show. It has linked up with the TV version of the collective mind, and is thinking its thoughts.

Your mind is inactive only in the sense that it is not producing thoughts. It is, however, continuously absorbing thoughts and images that come through the TV screen. This induces a trance-like passive state of heightened susceptibility, not unlike hypnosis.

That is why it lends itself to manipulation of public opinion, as politicians and special interest groups, as well as advertisers, know, and will pay millions of dollars to catch you in that state of receptive unawareness. They want their thoughts to become your thoughts, and usually they succeed. So when watching television, the tendency is for you to fall below thought, not rise above it.

Television has this in common with alcohol and certain other drugs. While it provides some relief from your mind, you again pay a high price. Loss of consciousness.

Like those drugs, it too has a strong addictive quality. You reach for the remote control to switch off, and instead find yourself going through all the channels. Half an hour or an hour later, you are still watching, still going through the channels.

The off button is the only one your finger seems unable to press. You are still watching, usually not because anything of interest has caught your attention, but precisely because there is nothing of interest to watch. Once you are hooked, the more trivial, the more meaningless it is, the more addictive it becomes.

If it were interesting, thought-provoking, it would stimulate your mind into thinking for itself again, which is more conscious and therefore preferable to a TV-induced trance. Your attention would therefore no longer be totally held captive by the images on the screen. The content of the program, if there is a certain quality to it, can to some extent counteract and sometimes even undo the hypnotic, mind-numbing effect of the medium of television.

There are some programs that have been extremely helpful to many people, have changed their lives for the better, opened their heart, made them more conscious. Even some comedy shows, although they may be about nothing in particular, can be unintentionally spiritual by showing a caricature version of human folly and the ego. They teach us not to take anything too seriously, to approach life in a light-hearted way, and above all, they teach by making us laugh.

Laughter is extraordinarily liberating as well as healing. Most of television, however, is as yet controlled by people who are totally controlled by the ego. And so the TV's hidden agenda becomes control of you by putting you to sleep, that is to say, making you unconscious.

Yet there is enormous and still largely unexplored potential in the medium of television. Avoid watching programs and commercials that assault you with a rapid succession of images that change every two or three seconds or less. Excessive TV watching, and those programs in particular, are largely responsible for attention-deficit disorder, a mental dysfunction now affecting millions of children worldwide.

A short attention span makes all your perceptions and relationships shallow and unsatisfying. Whatever you do, whatever action you perform in that state, lacks quality, because quality requires attention. Frequent and prolonged TV watching not only makes you unconscious, it also induces passivity and drains you of energy.

Therefore, rather than watching at random, choose the programs you want to see. Whenever you remember to do so, feel the aliveness inside your body as you watch. Alternatively, be aware of your breathing from time to time.

Look away from the screen at regular intervals so that it does not completely take possession of your visual sense. Don't turn up the volume any higher than necessary so that the TV doesn't overwhelm you on the auditory level. Use the mute button during commercials.

Make sure you don't go to sleep immediately after switching off the set, or, even worse, fall asleep with the set still on. Space between thoughts is probably already arising sporadically in your life, and you may not even know it. A consciousness mesmerized by experiences, and conditioned to identify exclusively with form, that is to say, object consciousness, finds it at first almost impossible to become aware of space.

This ultimately means that you cannot become aware of yourself because you are always aware of something else. You are continuously distracted by form. Even when you seem to be aware of yourself, you have made yourself into an object, a thought form, and so what you are aware of is a thought, not yourself.

When you hear of inner space, you may start seeking it and, because you are seeking it as if you were looking for an object or for an experience, you cannot find it. This is the dilemma of all those who are seeking spiritual realization or enlightenment. Hence Jesus said, The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed, nor will they say, Lo, here it is, or, There.

For behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you. If you are not spending all of your waking life in discontent, worry, anxiety, depression, despair, or consumed by other negative states, if you are able to enjoy simple things like listening to the sound of the rain or the wind, if you can see the beauty of clouds moving across the sky, or be alone at times without feeling lonely or needing the mental stimulus of entertainment, if you find yourself treating a complete stranger with heartfelt kindness, without wanting anything from him or her, it means that a space has opened up, no matter how briefly, in the otherwise incessant stream of thinking that is the human mind. When this happens, there is a sense of well-being, of alive peace, even though it may be subtle.

The intensity will vary from a perhaps barely noticeable background sense of contentment to what the ancient sages of India called ananda, the bliss of being. Because you have been conditioned to pay attention only to form, you are probably not aware of it except indirectly. For example, there is a common element in the ability to see beauty, to appreciate simple things, to enjoy your own company, or to relate to other people with loving kindness.

This common element is a sense of contentment, peace, and aliveness that is the invisible background without which these experiences would not be possible. Whenever there is beauty, kindness, the recognition of the goodness of simple things in your life, look for the background to that experience within yourself. But don't look for it as if you were looking for something.

You cannot pin it down and say, now I have it, or grasp it mentally and define it in some way. It is like the cloudless sky. It has no form.

It is space. It is stillness, the sweetness of being, and infinitely more than these words, which are only pointers. When you are able to sense it directly within yourself, it deepens.

So, when you appreciate something simple, a sound, a sight, a touch, when you see beauty, when you feel loving kindness towards another, sense the inner spaciousness that is the source and background to that experience. Many poets and sages throughout the ages have observed that true happiness, I call it the joy of being, is found in simple, simple, seemingly unremarkable things. Most people, in their restless search for something significant to happen to them, continuously miss the insignificant, which may not be insignificant at all.

The philosopher Nietzsche, in a rare moment of deep stillness, wrote, For happiness, how little suffices for happiness! The least thing precisely, the gentlest thing the lightest thing, a lizard's rustling, a breath, a whisk, an eye-glance, little makes up the best happiness. Be still.

Why is it the least thing that makes up the best happiness? Because true happiness is not caused by the thing or event, although this is how it first appears. The thing or event is so subtle, so unobtrusive, that it takes up only a small part of your consciousness, and the rest is inner space, consciousness itself unobstructed by form.

Inner space consciousness and who you are in your essence are one and the same. In other words, the form of little things leaves room for inner space, and it is from inner space, the unconditioned consciousness itself, that true happiness, the joy of being, emanates. To be aware of little, quiet things, however, you need to be quiet inside.

A hiding place of a degree of alertness is required. Be still. Look.

Listen. Be present. Here's another way of finding inner space.

Become conscious of being conscious. Say or think, I am, and add nothing to it. Be aware of the stillness that follows the I am.

Sense your presence. The naked, unveiled, unclothed beingness. It is untouched by young or old, rich or poor, good or bad, or any other attributes.

It is the spacious womb of all creation, all form.

[Speaker 3] (26:19 - 26:21)

End of Disc Six Him?

[Speaker 1] (26:23 - 1:04:40)

A Zen Master was walking in silence with one of his disciples along a mountain trail. When they came to an ancient cedar tree, they sat down under it for a simple meal of some rice and vegetables. After the meal, the disciple, a young monk who had not yet found the key to the mystery of Zen, broke the silence by asking the master, Master, how do I enter Zen?

He was, of course, inquiring how to enter the state of consciousness which is Zen. The master remained silent. Almost five minutes passed while the disciple anxiously waited for an answer.

He was about to ask another question when the master suddenly spoke. Do you hear the sound of that mountain stream? The disciple had not been aware of any mountain stream.

He had been too busy thinking about the meaning of Zen. Now, as he began to listen for the sound, his noisy mind subsided. At first he heard nothing.

Then his thinking gave way to heightened alertness, and suddenly he did hear the hardly perceptible murmur of a small stream in the far distance. Yes, I can hear it now, he said. The master raised his finger and, with a look in his eyes that in some way was both fierce and gentle, said, Enter Zen from there.

The disciple was stunned. It was his first Satori, a flash of enlightenment. He knew what Zen was without knowing what it was that he knew.

They continued on their journey in silence. The disciple was amazed at the aliveness of the world around him. He experienced everything as if for the first time.

Gradually, however, he started thinking again. The alert stillness became covered up again by mental noise. And before long he had another question.

Master, he said, I've been thinking. What would you have said if I hadn't been able to hear the mountain stream? The master stopped, looked at him, raised his finger and said, Enter Zen from there.

Right action. The ego asks, How can I make this situation fulfill my needs? Or, How can I get to some other situation that will fulfill my needs?

Presence. Presence is a state of inner spaciousness. When you are present, you ask, How do I respond to the needs of this situation, of this moment?

In fact, you don't even need to ask the question. You are still, alert, open to what is. You bring a new dimension into the situation.

Space. Then you look and you listen. Thus you become one with the situation.

When instead of reacting against a situation, you merge with it, the solution arises out of the situation itself. Actually, it is not you, the person, who is looking and listening, but the alert stillness itself. Then, if action is possible or necessary, you take action or rather, right action happens through you.

Right action is action that is appropriate to the whole. When the action is accomplished, the alert spacious stillness remains. There is nobody who raises his arms in a gesture of triumph, shouting a defiant, Yay!

There is no one who says, Look, I did that. All creativity comes out of inner spaciousness. Once the creation has happened and something has come into form, you have to be vigilant so that the notion of me or mine does not arise.

If you take credit for what you accomplished, the ego has returned and the spaciousness has become obscured. Outnaming. Most people are only peripherally aware of the world that surrounds them, especially if their surroundings are familiar.

The voice in the head absorbs the greater part of their attention. Some people feel more alive when they travel and visit unfamiliar places or foreign countries, because at those times sense-perception, experiencing, takes up more of their consciousness than thinking. They become more present.

Others remain completely possessed by the voice in the head even then. Their perceptions and experiences are distorted by instant judgments. They haven't really gone anywhere.

Only their body is travelling, while they remain where they have always been—in their head. This is most people's reality. As soon as something is perceived, it is named, interpreted, compared with something else, liked, disliked, or called good or bad by the phantom self, the ego.

They are impresent in thought-forms, in object consciousness. You do not awaken spiritually until the compulsive and unconscious naming ceases. Or at least you become aware of it and thus are able to observe it as it happens.

It is through this constant naming that the ego remains in place as the unobserved mind. Whenever it ceases, and even when you just become aware of it, there is inner space, and you are not possessed by the mind anymore. Choose an object close to you—a pen, a chair, a cup, a plant—and explore it visually, that is to say, look at it with great interest, almost curiosity.

Avoid any objects with strong personal associations that remind you of the past, such as where you bought it, who gave it to you, and so on. Also avoid anything that has writing on it, such as a book or a bottle. It would stimulate thought.

Without straining, relaxed but alert, give your complete attention to the object, every detail of it. If thoughts arise, don't get involved in them. It is not the thoughts you are interested in, but the act of perception itself.

Can you take the thinking out of the perceiving? Can you look without the voice in your head, commenting, drawing conclusions, comparing, or trying to figure something out? After a couple of minutes or so, let your gaze wander around the room or wherever you are, your alert attention lighting up each thing that it rests upon.

Then listen to any sounds that may be present. Listen to them in the same way as you looked at the things around you. Some sounds may be natural—water, wind, birds—while others are man-made.

Some may be pleasant, others unpleasant. However, don't differentiate between good and bad. Allow each sound to be as it is, without interpretation.

Here, too, relaxed but alert attention is the key. When you look and listen in this way, you may become aware of a subtle and at first perhaps hardly noticeable sense of calm. Some people feel it as a stillness in the background.

Others call it peace. When consciousness is no longer totally absorbed by thinking, some of it remains in its formless, unconditioned, original state. This is inner space.

Who is the experiencer? What you see and hear, taste, touch and smell are, of course, sense-objects. They are what you experience.

But who is the subject, the experiencer? If you now say, for example, well, of course I, Jane Smith, senior accountant, forty-five years old, divorced, mother of two, American, am the subject, the experiencer, you are mistaken. Jane Smith and whatever else becomes identified with the mental concept of Jane Smith are all objects of experience, not the experiencing subject.

Every experience has three possible ingredients, sense-perceptions, thoughts or mental images and emotions. Jane Smith, senior accountant, forty-five years old, mother of two, divorced, American, these are all thoughts and therefore part of what you experience the moment you think these thoughts. They and whatever else you can say and think about yourself are objects, not the subject.

They are experience, not the experiencer. You can add a thousand more definitions, thoughts, of who you are, and by doing so will certainly increase the complexity of the experience of yourself, as well as your psychiatrist's income, but in this way you will not end up with the subject, the experiencer, who is prior to all experience, but without whom there would be no experience, the experiencer. You are, and who are you?

Consciousness, and what is consciousness? This question cannot be answered. The moment you answer it, you have falsified it, made it into another object.

Consciousness, the traditional word for which is spirit, cannot be known in the normal sense of the word, and seeking it is futile. All knowing is within the realm of duality, subject and object, the knower and the known. The subject, the I, the knower without which nothing could be known, perceived, thought or felt, must remain for ever unknowable.

This is because the I has no form. Only forms can be known, and yet without the formless dimension the world of form could not be. It is the luminous space in which the world arises and subsides.

That space is the life that I am. It is timeless. I am timeless, eternal.

What happens in that space is relative and temporary, pleasure and pain, gain and loss, birth and death. The greatest impediment to the discovery of inner space, the greatest impediment to finding the experiencer, is to become so enthralled by the experience that you lose yourself in it. It means consciousness is lost in its own dream.

You get taken in by every thought, every emotion and every experience to such a degree that you are in fact in a dreamlike state. This has been the normal state of humanity for thousands of years. Although you cannot know consciousness, you can become conscious of it as yourself.

You can sense it directly in any situation, no matter where you are. You can sense it here and now, as your very presence, the inner space in which the words on this page are perceived and become thoughts. It is the underlying I am.

The words you are reading and thinking are the foreground, and the I am is the substratum, the underlying background to every experience, thought, feeling. The Breath Discover inner space by creating gaps in the stream of thinking. Without those gaps, your thinking becomes repetitive, uninspired, devoid of any creative spark, which is how it still is for most people on the planet.

You don't need to be concerned with the duration of those gaps. A few seconds is good enough. Gradually they will lengthen by themselves without any effort on your part.

More important than their length is to bring them in frequently so that your daily activities and your stream of thinking become interspersed with space. Someone recently showed me the annual prospectus of a large spiritual organization. When I looked through it, I was impressed by the wide choice of interesting seminars and workshops.

It reminded me of the Smörgåsbord, one of those Scandinavian buffets where you can take your pick from a huge variety of enticing dishes. The person asked me whether I could recommend one or two courses. I don't know, I said, they all look so interesting.

But I do know this, I added. Be aware of your breathing as often as you are able, whenever you remember. Do that for one year, and it will be more powerfully transformative than attending all of these courses.

And it's free. Being aware of your breathing takes attention away from thinking and creates space. It is one way of generating consciousness.

Although the fullness of consciousness is already there as the unmanifested, we are here to bring consciousness into this dimension. Be aware of your breathing. Notice the sensation of the breath.

Feel the air moving in and out of your body. Notice how the chest and abdomen expand and contract slightly with the in and out breath. One conscious breath is enough to make some space where before there was the uninterrupted succession of one thought after another.

One conscious breath, two or three would be even better, taken many times a day, is an excellent way of bringing space into your life. Even if you meditated on your breathing for two hours or more, which some people do, one breath is all you ever need to be aware of, indeed ever can be aware of. The rest is memory or anticipation, which is to say thought.

Breathing isn't really something that you do, but something that you witness as it happens. Breathing happens by itself. The intelligence within the body is doing it.

All you have to do is watch it happening. There is no strain or effort involved. Also, notice the brief cessation of the breath, particularly the still point at the end of the out breath, before you start breathing in again.

Many people's breath is unnaturally shallow. The more you are aware of the breath, the more its natural depth will re-establish itself. Because breath has no form as such, it has since ancient times been equated with spirit, the formless one life.

God formed man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. Breathing, Atman, is derived from the ancient Indian Sanskrit word Atman, meaning the indwelling divine spirit or God within. The fact that breath has no form is one of the reasons why breath awareness is an extremely effective way of bringing space into your life, of generating consciousness.

It is an excellent meditation object precisely because it is not an object, has no shape or form. The other reason is that breath is one of the most subtle and seemingly insignificant phenomena, the least thing that according to Nietzsche makes up the best happiness. Whether or not you practice breath awareness as an actual formal meditation is up to you.

Formal meditation, however, is no substitute for bringing space consciousness into everyday life. Being aware of your breath forces you into the present moment, the key to all inner transformation. Whenever you are conscious of the breath you are absolutely present.

You may also notice that you cannot think and be aware of your breathing. Conscious breathing stops your mind. But far from being in a trance or half asleep, you are fully awake and highly alert.

You are not falling below thinking, but rising above it. And if you look more closely you will find that those two things, coming fully into the present moment and ceasing thinking without loss of consciousness, are actually one and the same, the arising of space consciousness. Addictions A longstanding compulsive behavior pattern may be called an addiction.

And an addiction lives inside you as a quasi-entity or sub-personality, an energy field that periodically takes you over completely. It even takes over your mind, the voice in your head, which then becomes the voice of the addiction. It may be saying, ìYouíve had a rough day, you deserve a treat.

Why deny yourself the only pleasure that is left in your life?î And so, if you are identified with the internal voice due to lack of awareness, you find yourself walking to the fridge and reaching for that rich chocolate cake. At other times, the addiction may bypass the thinking mind completely and you suddenly find yourself puffing on a cigarette or holding a drink. ìHow did that get into my hand?î Taking the cigarette out of the packet and lighting it, or pouring yourself a drink were actions performed in complete unconsciousness.

If you have a compulsive behavior pattern such as smoking, overeating, drinking, TV watching, internet addiction, or whatever it may be, this is what you can do. When you notice the compulsive need arising in you, stop and take three conscious breaths. This generates awareness.

Then for a few minutes be aware of the compulsive urge itself as an energy field inside you. Consciously feel that need to physically or mentally ingest or consume a certain substance, or the desire to act out some form of compulsive behavior. Then take a few more conscious breaths.

After that you may find that the compulsive urge has disappeared, for the time being. Or you may find that it still overpowers you and you cannot help but indulge or act it out again. Donít make it into a problem.

Make the addiction part of your awareness practice in the way described above. As awareness grows, addictive patterns will weaken and eventually dissolve. Remember, however, to catch any thoughts that justify the addictive behavior, sometimes with clever arguments, as they arise in your mind.

Ask yourself, ìWho is talking here?î And you will realize the addiction is talking. As long as you know that, as long as you are present as the observer of your mind, it is less likely to trick you into doing what it wants. Inner Body Awareness Another simple but highly effective way of finding space in your life is closely linked to the breath.

You will find that by feeling the subtle flow of air in and out of the body, as well as the rise and fall of your chest and abdomen, you are also becoming aware of the inner body. Your attention may then shift from the breath to that felt aliveness within you, diffused throughout the body. Most people are so distracted by their thoughts, so identified with the voices in their heads, they can no longer feel the aliveness within them.

To be unable to feel the life that animates the physical body, the very life that you are, is the greatest deprivation that can happen to you. You then begin to look not only for substitutes for that natural state of well-being within, but also for something to cover up the continuous unease that you feel when you are not in touch with the aliveness that is always there, but usually overlooked. Some of the substitutes people seek out are drug-induced highs, sensory overstimulation such as excessively loud music, thrills or dangerous activities, or an obsession with sex.

Even drama in relationships is used as a substitute for that genuine sense of aliveness. The most sought-after cover-up for the continuous background unease are intimate relationships. A man or a woman who is going to make me happy.

It is, of course, also one of the most frequently experienced of all the let-downs. And when the unease surfaces again, people will usually blame their partner for it. Take two or three conscious breaths.

Now see if you can detect a subtle sense of aliveness that pervades your entire inner body. Within, so to speak. Sense briefly specific parts of your body.

Feel your hands, then your arms, feet and legs. Can you feel your abdomen, chest, neck and head? What about your lips?

Is there life in them? Then become aware again of the inner body as a whole. You may want to close your eyes initially for this practice.

And once you can feel your body, open your eyes, look around and continue to feel your body at the same time. Some readers may find there is no need to close their eyes. They can in fact feel their inner body as they read this.

Inner and Outer Space Your inner body is not solid but spacious. It is not your physical form but the life that animates the physical form. It is the intelligence that created and sustains the body.

Simultaneously coordinating hundreds of different functions of such extraordinary complexity that the human mind can only understand a tiny fraction of it. When you become aware of it, what is really happening is that the intelligence is becoming aware of itself. It is the elusive life that no scientist has ever found because the consciousness that is looking for it is it.

Physicists have discovered that the apparent solidity of matter is an illusion created by our senses. This includes the physical body, which we perceive and think of as form, but 99.99% of which is actually empty space. This is how vast the space is between the atoms compared to their size, and there is as much space again within each atom.

The physical body is no more than a misperception of who you are. In many ways, it is a microcosmic version of outer space. To give you an idea of how vast the space is between celestial bodies, consider this.

Light traveling at a constant speed of 186,000 miles or 300,000 km per second takes just over one second to travel between the earth and the moon. Light from the sun takes about eight minutes to reach the earth. Light from our nearest neighbor in space, a star called Proxima Centauri, which is the sun that is closest to our own sun, travels for four and a half years before it reaches the earth.

This is how vast the space is that surrounds us. And then there's the intergalactic space, whose vastness defies all comprehension. Light from the galaxy closest to our own, the Andromeda galaxy, takes 2.4 million years to reach us. Isn't it amazing that your body is just as spacious as the universe? So your physical body, which is form, reveals itself as essentially formless when you go deeper into it. It becomes a doorway into inner space.

Although inner space has no form, it is intensely alive. That empty space is life in its fullness, the unmanifested source out of which all manifestation flows. The traditional word for that source is God.

Thoughts and words belong to the world of form. They cannot express the formless. So when you say, I can feel my inner body, that is a misperception created by thought.

What is really happening is that the consciousness that appears as the body, the consciousness that I am, is becoming conscious of itself. When I no longer confuse who I am with the temporary form of me, then the dimension of the limitless and the eternal, God, can express itself through me and guide me. It also frees me from dependency on form.

However, a purely intellectual recognition or belief that I am not this form does not help.

The all-important question is, at this moment, can I sense the presence of inner space, which really means, can I sense my own presence, or rather, the presence that I am? Or we can approach this truth using a different pointer.

Ask yourself, am I aware not only of what is happening at this moment, but also of the now itself, as the living, timeless inner space in which everything happens? Although this question seems to have nothing to do with the inner body, you may be surprised that by becoming aware of the space of now, you suddenly feel more alive inside. You are feeling the aliveness of the inner body, the aliveness that is an intrinsic part of the joy of being.

We have to enter the body to go beyond it and find out that we are not that. As much as possible in everyday life, use awareness of the inner body to create space. When waiting, when listening to someone, when pausing to look at the sky, a tree, a flower, your partner or child, feel the aliveness within at the same time.

This means part of your attention or consciousness remains formless, and the rest is available for the outer world to form. Whenever you inhabit your body in this way, it serves as an anchor for staying present in the now. It prevents you from losing yourself in thinking, in emotions or in external situations.

Perceive and experience, consciousness is born into form. It is reincarnating, into a thought, a feeling, a sense perception, an experience. The cycle of rebirth that Buddhists hope to get out of eventually is happening continuously, and it is only at this moment, through the power of now, that you can get out of it.

Through complete acceptance of the form of the now, you become internally aligned with space, which is the essence of now. Through acceptance, you become spacious inside. Aligned with space instead of form.

That brings true perspective and balance into your life. Noticing the gaps. Throughout the day there is a continuously changing succession of things that you see and hear.

In the first moment of seeing something or hearing a sound, and more so if it is unfamiliar, before the mind names or interprets what you see or hear, there is usually a gap of alert attention in which the perception occurs. That is the inner space. Its duration differs from person to person.

It is easy to miss because in many people those spaces are extremely short, perhaps only a second or less. This is what happens. A new sight or sound arises, and in the first moment of perception there is a brief cessation in the habitual stream of thinking.

Consciousness is diverted away from thought because it is required for sense perception. A very unusual sight or sound may leave you speechless, even inside, that is to say, bring about a longer gap. The frequency and duration of those spaces determine your ability to enjoy life, to feel an inner connectedness with other human beings as well as nature.

It also determines the degree to which you are free of ego, because ego implies complete unawareness of the dimension of space. When you become conscious of these brief spaces as they happen naturally, they will lengthen, and as they do, you will experience with increasing frequency the joy of perceiving with little or no interference of thinking. The world around you then feels fresh, new and alive.

The more you perceive life through a mental screen of abstraction and conceptualization, the more lifeless and flat the world around you becomes. Lose yourself to find yourself. Inner space also arises whenever you let go of the need to emphasize your form identity.

That need is of the ego. It is not a true need. We have already touched briefly upon this.

Whenever you relinquish one of these behavior patterns, inner space emerges. You become more truly yourself. To the ego it will seem as if you were losing yourself, but the opposite is the case.

Jesus already taught that you need to lose yourself to find yourself. Whenever you let go of one of these patterns, you de-emphasize who you are on the level of form, and who you are beyond form emerges more fully. You become less, so you can be more.

Here are some ways in which people unconsciously try to emphasize their form identity. If you are alert enough, you may be able to detect some of these unconscious patterns within yourself. Demanding recognition for something you did and getting angry or upset if you don't get it.

Trying to get attention by talking about your problems, the story of your illnesses, or making a scene. Giving your opinion when nobody has asked for it and it makes no difference to the situation. Being more concerned with how the other person sees you than with the other person, which is to say, using other people for egoic reflection or as ego enhancers.

Trying to make an impression on others through possessions, knowledge, good looks, status, physical strength, and so on. Bringing about temporary ego inflation through angry reaction against something or someone. Taking things personally.

Feeling offended. Making yourself right and others wrong through futile mental or verbal complaining. Wanting to be seen or to appear important.

Once you have detected such a pattern within yourself, I suggest that you conduct an experiment. Find out what it feels like and what happens if you let go of that pattern. Just drop it and see what happens.

De-emphasizing who you are on the level of form is another way of generating consciousness. Discover the enormous power that flows through you into the world when you stop emphasizing your form identity. Stillness It has been said, stillness is the language God speaks, and everything else is a bad translation.

Stillness is really another word for space. Becoming conscious of stillness whenever we encounter it in our lives will connect us with the formless and timeless dimension within ourselves, that which is beyond thought, beyond ego. It may be the stillness that pervades the world of nature, or the stillness in your room in the early hours of the morning, or the silent gaps in between sounds.

Stillness has no form. That is why through thinking we cannot become aware of it. Thought is form.

Being aware of stillness means to be still. To be still is to be conscious without thought. You are never more essentially, more deeply yourself than when you are still.

When you are still, you are who you were before you temporarily assumed this physical and mental form called a person. You are also who you will be when the form dissolves. When you are still, you are who you are before beyond your temporal existence.

Consciousness. Unconditioned. Formless.

Eternal.

[Speaker 2] (1:05:04 - 1:05:32)

I feel that way and I'd like to again thank all of the students from around the world who are watching who are willing to awaken to the deeper meaning of your lives. Last week one of the things that Eckhart said that really struck me, you said that the opposite of death is not life. The opposite of death is birth.

Life has no opposite. So I think that's a good place to begin our moment of silence. Can we go into silence?

Life has no opposite.

[Speaker 1] (1:05:32 - 1:05:54)

Life has no opposite and perhaps as we go into the silence to feel yourself to be life rather than a person. A person is here only for a few years, but you are basically life experiencing itself temporarily as this person.

[Speaker 2] (1:05:54 - 1:05:56)

As this person, this personality, this ego.

[Speaker 1] (1:05:56 - 1:06:27)

But underlying it, you are life that is eternal. And so when you go into stillness, it's easy to sense that underneath the personality there is an aliveness, there is a presence, there is a consciousness that is timeless. And that's the life beyond the form of life that you are.

And that's why it has no opposite. That's right. Because it's forever.

Yes. And all the opposites only exist in the world of form.

[Speaker 2] (1:06:27 - 1:06:28)

In the world of form. I get that.

[Speaker 1] (1:06:29 - 1:06:42)

So as we go into the silence, into the stillness, let's see if we can just feel that in the background you are life. Or rather to say, I am life.

[Speaker 2] (1:06:43 - 1:06:43)

I am life.

[Speaker 1] (1:06:45 - 1:06:57)

Eternal, timeless. So we go into the stillness now and get in touch with that eternal life.

[Speaker 2] (1:07:37 - 1:07:45)

How wonderful. How wonderful to be able to get into touch with that. That's the inner space that you're talking about in Chapter 8.

[Speaker 1] (1:07:45 - 1:07:46)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:07:46 - 1:07:56)

Which is all about the discovery of inner space. That's what we're discussing tonight. Let's start with an overview of what this chapter is about.

What is inner space? What you just described?

[Speaker 1] (1:07:58 - 1:09:08)

I don't remember when this term first came to me. It must have been during a talk. I don't believe I used that term in The Power of Now.

I realized that most people's mind is full of stuff. Full of one thought after another. Full of continuously arising thoughts, emotions.

And their external life is full of things that need doing. One thing after another. One thing after another.

So I observed that in many people's lives there seems to be no space. There's only one thing after another. One thought after another.

One thing to do after another. One thing to be worried about after another. So I noticed this absence of space in human beings.

And really that inner space or spaciousness is what we could also call the stillness. But I use different terms because any one term limits it. When we talk about stillness, yes it is stillness, but it's much vaster than just stillness.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:08 - 1:09:10)

And vaster than being still.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:10 - 1:10:52)

Yes. So it's realizing that within you there's not only objects in your consciousness that continuously arise in your consciousness as sense perceptions. You experience things.

Sense perceptions arise continuously and each sense perception becomes an object in your consciousness. And then thoughts arise continuously and every thought becomes also an object that arises in your consciousness. Now, and this is what most people's lives consist of.

Continuously objects arising in consciousness. And I call that object consciousness. And that is what most people know.

And they also know themselves as an object in their consciousness. They have an image of who they are. They have certain opinions about who they are.

And so you become an object to yourself and that is the ego. So most, a mental object. You make yourself into a mental object.

And then you have a relationship with yourself as a mental object. It's a little bit insane, but it's normal. So now the incredible realization, this is where the spiritual dimension starts.

There is no spiritual dimension in object consciousness. You can have all kinds of interesting sounding or even religious sounding doctrines. If there is no space in you, spaciousness, where suddenly a gap arises in between thoughts.

If there's no spaciousness, then you haven't touched yet the spiritual dimension. And this book, I believe, is helping many people to find that space within.

[Speaker 2] (1:10:52 - 1:11:30)

You say on page 227, object consciousness needs to be balanced by space consciousness for sanity to return to our planet and for humanity to fulfill its destiny. The arising of space consciousness is the next stage in the evolution of humanity. Space consciousness means that in addition to being conscious of things, which always comes down to sense perceptions, thoughts and emotions, there is an undercurrent of awareness.

Awareness implies that you are not only conscious of things, but you're also conscious of being conscious. That's what you're talking about.

[Speaker 1] (1:11:30 - 1:12:14)

Yes. And that's an amazing thing. At first, if you just listen to being conscious of being conscious, the mind says, what does that mean?

You can only, you have to experience what that is to know what it means. So to be conscious of being conscious, for example, you can do it by looking at something, just if people haven't had a taste of this yet. For example, you look at a flower and you're conscious of the image, what you see, the sense perception.

Now, the question is, can you also be conscious of yourself as the perceiving presence, without which there would be no perception?

[Speaker 2] (1:12:15 - 1:12:15)

Correct.

[Speaker 1] (1:12:15 - 1:13:01)

And so, and that is the consciousness. So while you look at a flower, I'm saying flower because natural things can get you in touch with that dimension more easily. While you look at a flower, can you sense yourself as the presence that is looking, that is making the perception possible?

And then you have two dimensions. You're conscious of being conscious and you're conscious of what you're looking at. You live in two worlds at the same time.

And that brings in, that means in the background of your life, there is suddenly a vast, but intensely alive peace. Because being conscious of being conscious is very peaceful. That's where the true inner peace arises.

[Speaker 2] (1:13:02 - 1:13:13)

And that if you don't have that in your life, if you're not able to find that space between the thinking and the perception, perception, perception, you're not, then...

[Speaker 1] (1:13:13 - 1:13:24)

Then you lose yourself... In things. In things, you lose yourself in the world...

Yeah. And you lose yourself in your own mind. You continuously get drawn into every thought that arises.

[Speaker 2] (1:13:24 - 1:13:28)

Yeah. Well, one of the things, I know you met Dr. Jill Boat Taylor today.

[Speaker 11] (1:13:28 - 1:13:28)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:13:28 - 1:14:22)

And I interviewed her on my radio show, The Soul Series on XM Radio. And for those of you who have been enjoying our webcast with Eckhart Tolle, the Monday following our final webcast, I will have an interview with her on the web. Dr. Jill Boat Taylor is a brain scientist who had had a stroke several years ago. And during the process of having the stroke, in the middle of having the stroke, she lost her left, the left hemisphere of the brain, which was language and the ego and all of that. But the right hemisphere remained conscious and she was aware that she had lost the ego. And this sense of losing your mind that you have been talking to us about happened to her, was thrust upon her through the stroke.

[Speaker 1] (1:14:22 - 1:14:22)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:22 - 1:14:22)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:14:23 - 1:14:28)

So, I believe what happened to her was what we are talking about. She became conscious of consciousness itself.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:28 - 1:14:30)

She became conscious of consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (1:14:30 - 1:14:30)

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:30 - 1:14:31)

Through the stroke.

[Speaker 1] (1:14:31 - 1:14:58)

Yes. And really, when we say that, when we express it in language, and language always brings in a kind of duality. When I say, I become conscious of consciousness, it sounds as if I were separate from consciousness.

Right. This is because of the structure of language. In reality, what's happening is that consciousness, which is what I am, everyone is conscious in essence, consciousness is becoming conscious of itself.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:58 - 1:15:15)

And you don't know that until, and that's why that tape is going around the web of Dr. Jill Bowe Taylor, you don't know that until you can quiet the mind enough to know that you are not all of these thoughts that you have in your head, you are not your thoughts, but you are life itself.

[Speaker 11] (1:15:15 - 1:15:15)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:15:15 - 1:15:20)

That is what she also says in her book and in her lectures.

[Speaker 1] (1:15:20 - 1:15:20)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:15:21 - 1:15:21)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:15:21 - 1:15:57)

That's a wonderful realization, just when it comes to you, a person for the first time, it's just, whoa. Whoa. And that frees you from a lot of things that before were so heavy, the world can become such a burden to people, and your own mind can become such a burden, it creates so much suffering in people's lives.

If people had to live with somebody who inflicts all that negativity on them that they inflict on themselves through their own mind, they would have left that person a long time ago, but you can't leave your mind, you can only go beyond it.

[Speaker 2] (1:15:57 - 1:16:10)

And so being able to be conscious of your consciousness or aware of yourself as a perceiving entity or perceiving presence is really what the true awakening is about.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:10 - 1:16:10)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:16:10 - 1:16:11)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:11 - 1:16:16)

Yes. Yes. That's the awakening to who you are beyond the external appearance.

[Speaker 2] (1:16:16 - 1:16:29)

And that is what we're doing when we're angry and you see your ego flare up and all of that is to be able to step back and perceive yourself as the consciousness observing yourself as the angry person.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:30 - 1:16:30)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:16:30 - 1:16:30)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:31 - 1:16:32)

Yes. There's a, in the background.

[Speaker 2] (1:16:33 - 1:16:33)

A space in between that.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:33 - 1:16:34)

That's right.

[Speaker 2] (1:16:34 - 1:16:45)

And so the inner space you're talking about is the space between I am angry, I'm, you know, saying all of these things, and then there is a, there is the other self that is observing that.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:45 - 1:17:01)

Yes. Yes. Now, if you're angry and if the presence can be there in the background, that means there's already, you're already very present because it's not easy to remain present when there's anger, because anger has an enormous power.

So...

[Speaker 2] (1:17:01 - 1:17:08)

But if you're observing it, then you can say, I'm out of control. You know, people have done that, you can say to yourself, I'm out of control, I need to calm down.

[Speaker 1] (1:17:08 - 1:17:12)

Yes. Yes. But if you know that you're out of control, you're not completely out of control.

[Speaker 2] (1:17:12 - 1:17:13)

That's right. That's right.

[Speaker 1] (1:17:13 - 1:17:22)

That's right. So, and if, so if you know that you are, have been taken over by anger, you haven't been completely taken over because there's a knowing in the background.

[Speaker 2] (1:17:22 - 1:17:41)

Yeah. And I think a lot of parents have experienced this. You know, when your kids do something and it's so upsetting to you and you know in that moment I should not try to discipline them because I'm too angry to discipline them.

That part of you that knows that you're too angry to discipline them is the space that you're talking about.

[Speaker 1] (1:17:41 - 1:17:50)

Yes. Yes. Yes.

Yes. Got that. And so, and that's a, if you don't have that space, then you are completely controlled by the anger.

You become the anger. That's right. That's right.

[Speaker 2] (1:17:51 - 1:18:01)

That thing that allows you to step back is what you're talking about. I got it. I got it.

I got it. I got it. That part of you that says, I can step back and see I'm acting a fool.

[Speaker 1] (1:18:01 - 1:18:15)

Yes. And so if you, if you know that you are acting a fool, then it's not, there is a sanity there that's observing the insanity. And if you know that you are...

[Speaker 2] (1:18:15 - 1:18:18)

But sometimes people know they're acting a fool and they just keep on acting a fool.

[Speaker 1] (1:18:18 - 1:18:24)

Yes. That's possible too. For a while it can happen that the old, certain old behavior patterns...

[Speaker 2] (1:18:24 - 1:18:26)

But generally if you know you can pull yourself back.

[Speaker 1] (1:18:26 - 1:18:27)

Yes. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:18:28 - 1:18:31)

And that which knows is the inner space that you're talking about.

[Speaker 1] (1:18:32 - 1:19:02)

Yes. There was a film, A Beautiful Mind some years ago about this scientist. With Russell Crowe.

Yes. And so here he became delusional, this scientist, completely absorbed by his mind and had all kinds of delusions. And at some point in the middle of the film, he suddenly realizes that these are delusions and he realized that he's insane.

And also the viewer at that moment realized it is so well done because until that point even the viewer doesn't know that.

[Speaker 2] (1:19:02 - 1:19:03)

Not quite sure. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:19:03 - 1:19:16)

And at that moment the healing begins because with the realization that I am insane, sanity has arisen. The observing presence is there. The observing presence.

And after that he could function again.

[Speaker 2] (1:19:16 - 1:19:18)

Is observing presence and inner space the same thing?

[Speaker 1] (1:19:19 - 1:19:22)

Yes. But observing should not be confused with judging.

[Speaker 2] (1:19:22 - 1:19:23)

I got it.

[Speaker 1] (1:19:24 - 1:19:30)

So there's no judgment. It's a clear... It's like a mirror.

It's like a mirror showing you what's there.

[Speaker 2] (1:19:30 - 1:19:42)

So there are literally two dimensions. There is the personality acting out of, you know, form and perceptions and all of that. And then there is the observer of that.

[Speaker 1] (1:19:43 - 1:20:08)

And the observer is not judging what is being observed. If the observer begins to judge, then it's the mind that has come back in. It just is.

And the observer is timeless and whatever the observer is observing, the behavior, the thinking is conditioned by the past. So you're bringing the timeless dimension into this world of time.

[Speaker 2] (1:20:08 - 1:20:31)

Yes. And those of you who are reading Dr. Jill Boat Taylor's book, Stroke of Insight, what she said to me today, because she's been following our classes, and she was saying, you know, what Eckhart calls consciousness, I call right brain. Yes.

Yeah. Right brain versus left brain. Left brain is gone.

The right brain is the higher consciousness.

[Speaker 11] (1:20:32 - 1:20:32)

Yes. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:20:33 - 1:21:01)

So, as I've said before, I love the message boards on Oprah.com, and I saw a posting that I wanted to share with everyone. It's from someone who calls himself Student 99. It said, I've seen many, many posts by concerned Christians.

Is Student 99 here? I thought we had him. I heard he was on Skype.

Well, I don't mean here, here, Dean. I know he's not in the building. Bring up Student 99.

So, Student 99, is that you?

[Speaker 7] (1:21:02 - 1:21:02)

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (1:21:02 - 1:21:47)

Hi, I'm Skye. I love this email. I love the fact that you have a face and a body and everything, because you just were an entity on the web to me, posted by Student 99 that says, I have seen many posts by concerned Christians wondering whether this book is a threat to their faith.

And you said, as a Christian, you don't think it is, and here is why. You want to tell us why? Because I thought this was such a beautiful email.

And you know, I've gotten some flack from some Christians. I've even been called the Antichrist, which I've been kind of amused by that, for introducing this book to the world. So I was interested in hearing what you had to say, Student 99, whose name is really Alan from Eugene, Oregon.

Hi, Alan.

[Speaker 7] (1:21:47 - 1:21:50)

Hi, Oprah. Hi, Eckhart. Hello.

Hi.

[Speaker 2] (1:21:51 - 1:21:57)

You said... Well, you know... Go ahead.

Go ahead. Okay. You go ahead.

So I'm going to let you tell me what you said in the email.

[Speaker 7] (1:21:58 - 1:22:39)

Well, basically, you know, I observed some people that were posting that were in a lot of distress, and because they felt that the book was an attack on their faith, many of them had not read the book. And so I wanted to just provide a little bit of perspective on that. From my perspective, I felt like Eckhart's book allowed me to do more than just quote what Jesus said, and to actually understand the depth of what he was teaching and be able to practice what he taught, rather than just quote what he taught.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:39 - 1:24:01)

Well, let me read what you said specifically, because I thought you said it so beautifully here. Most Christians understand the concepts from the Bible of surrendering their lives to God and living a loving life and living in the peace that passes understanding. Christians can quote Jesus' saying such as, be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect, or judge not that you be not judged, or you must die to live, or deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me.

Unfortunately, not all Christians have succeeded in following up the talk with the walk. This is because these quotes point to an internal transformation, which some Christians have not yet fully experienced. That is why I strongly recommend this book, you said, Alan.

It provides for very powerful tools for being able to successfully follow Jesus' teachings, rather than just quoting them. The book doesn't ask anyone to change their religion of choice, but does help tremendously in successfully applying faith. In a nutshell, you say, Alan, the book shows how to apply forgiveness to every person and every situation.

It shows how to shine the light of awareness on our unconscious hatred of this moment and thereby overcome the cares of this world. If you want to go deeper than knowing about God at the level of thoughts and experience God at the level of knowing, I welcome you to join us in reading A New Earth, Blessings from Student99. Isn't that well said, Eckhart?

[Speaker 1] (1:24:01 - 1:24:04)

Oh, yes. Wonderful. Yeah.

Yeah. Thank you.

[Speaker 7] (1:24:05 - 1:24:21)

Alan, thank you for that. Sure. And, you know, I had left the church and I ended up being able to return to church because of understanding how to apply the concepts in this book.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:22 - 1:24:41)

Well, that's good. Well, thank you so much. Thank you so much.

I don't read all the negative stuff, though, because it doesn't help me. So I'm only, you know, I'm only interested in speaking to people who want to hear what we have to say. And if you don't agree with what I'm saying, that's really OK.

I bless everybody and their path, whatever that is. Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:24:42 - 1:25:09)

And I've had letters from some priests and nuns and Buddhist monks, and they all found the book very helpful. They went more deeply into their own tradition, because when you go deep enough into your own tradition, eventually all traditions, eventually you end up in the same place, the same realization. On the surface, the traditions are different.

There's only one God at the center.

[Speaker 2] (1:25:10 - 1:25:20)

There is only one God. I believe that. The source of all things, all creation.

So Peter is Skyping us from his dining room in Phoenix, Arizona. I love to see where people are. Is that a green dining?

Is that green?

[Speaker 4] (1:25:21 - 1:25:22)

Yes, it is.

[Speaker 2] (1:25:22 - 1:25:38)

That's my favorite color. My gosh, that's such a lovely color. Peter is Skyping us from his dining room in Phoenix, where he and a group of friends gather every Monday night to watch our live webcasts.

I think that's so great. I hear you adopted a dog and named it Oprah. Is that true?

[Speaker 4] (1:25:39 - 1:25:51)

Come on, Oprah. Come on. Let me see her.

She came to us the first night of the webcast. The system went down, so it crashed. We had all the people gathered, and she came into my life that night.

[Speaker 2] (1:25:52 - 1:25:59)

Wow. Oh, my cutie pie. She's holding up her name.

[Speaker 4] (1:25:59 - 1:26:00)

So she's a new addition to my family.

[Speaker 2] (1:26:00 - 1:26:11)

That's so great. That's really great. You say you were addicted to smoking for 30 years but quit 11 weeks ago after reading A New Earth.

This ties into your question, correct?

[Speaker 4] (1:26:12 - 1:26:32)

Exactly. We started our group four weeks before the actual webcast, and we were reading the chapter on number eight. So I applied the techniques to quitting smoking.

And with about five minutes work and about three hours time, I completely stopped. No urges, no more cravings, nothing. No willpower or anything like that.

It was so easy. It was amazing.

[Speaker 2] (1:26:32 - 1:26:34)

What is it that you applied?

[Speaker 4] (1:26:35 - 1:27:05)

Becoming conscious of the feelings. I had run out of cigarettes, and I thought I had to go to the store. But when the craving came, I said, OK, let's be with the craving.

Let's feel it. What does it actually feel like? Usually, we just react.

And I actually sat there and closed my eyes and felt it. And it started to dissolve. And it went away.

And about two or three hours later, another craving came. And I did the same thing. And this time, the feeling went away even faster.

And then finally, when it came back about a third time, when I put my mind to it, it just completely disappeared.

[Speaker 2] (1:27:06 - 1:27:06)

Wow.

[Speaker 4] (1:27:06 - 1:27:07)

Gone. It never came back.

[Speaker 2] (1:27:08 - 1:27:24)

So were you also doing, I think Eckhart suggests in the addiction section, taking deep breaths sometimes when you feel like you need the craving for whether it's cigarettes or food or whatever, to take the three deep breaths and see what happens if the feeling dissipates? Did you do that?

[Speaker 4] (1:27:25 - 1:27:55)

Yes, I did. I took the breaths to basically create stillness, to become calm. So I took long, deep breaths and just sort of calmed down and then just started to feel the feelings and watch the thoughts.

And I've tried to quit hundreds of times and sometimes a couple of months successfully. But there was always willpower involved. There's always a craving still there.

There's always a, you know, if I just had one that was always still in the back of my mind, that's no longer there. I can go out with my friends on a Friday night. They can all be smoking.

And I don't even want to look at one.

[Speaker 2] (1:27:55 - 1:27:57)

What in the world happened to you?

[Speaker 4] (1:27:58 - 1:27:59)

It was miraculous.

[Speaker 2] (1:27:59 - 1:28:21)

Yes, that's great. And have you been able to apply the teachings from the book in other areas of your life? I mean, for myself, I've just found that being able to go back to my breath in the middle of the day when things get crazier, I mean, something Eckhart said, I think, on one of the beginning classes about one complete full breath is a meditation.

[Speaker 4] (1:28:23 - 1:28:25)

Well, that's where the question comes in. Because I do have other issues.

[Speaker 2] (1:28:25 - 1:28:27)

One conscious breath is a meditation.

[Speaker 4] (1:28:27 - 1:28:31)

Earlier in the book, in the chapter, he talks about going below thought.

[Speaker 2] (1:28:31 - 1:28:31)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (1:28:31 - 1:28:59)

And he described my situation exactly like he's here. You talk about alcohol, using food and TV just to go below thoughts, sort of to numb the senses, numb your thoughts, and just sort of go into trance, if you will. And I do that a lot.

And I've been trying to break away from that by using the techniques. And I have not had the same success. And you also say, don't make it a problem.

But I think I've made it a problem. And I want to kind of break from that.

[Speaker 2] (1:29:01 - 1:29:09)

So you're asking a question about how to use this more forcefully or whatever for alcohol?

[Speaker 4] (1:29:10 - 1:29:22)

Yeah, with alcohol especially and food. I tend to overeat when I'm tired. And I just want to relax.

And food, alcohol, TV tend to be the things I use. And that brings you below thought when we're trying to be above thought.

[Speaker 2] (1:29:22 - 1:29:23)

Right.

[Speaker 4] (1:29:23 - 1:29:27)

And when I try and do that, I'm not as successful. I get very frustrated.

[Speaker 2] (1:29:27 - 1:29:29)

OK, what do you want to say, Eckhart?

[Speaker 1] (1:29:29 - 1:30:50)

Well, it's a wonderful success story as far as the smoking is concerned and bringing, experiencing how awareness can dissolve old patterns. In some cases, instantly. And in other cases, it takes more time for awareness to dissolve the old pattern.

And awareness has to be brought to the pattern when it arises repeatedly. And it does not mean that every time awareness meets the pattern that awareness is going to win. Win may not be the right word.

Because awareness, of course, is never fighting anything. Awareness is just there as the conscious presence. So bringing conscious presence, for example, into the urge to have a drink.

Not that one or two drinks are a problem. But if drinking drags you down to below thinking, then, of course, it is helpful to bring presence into the urge when it arises in the same way that you did when you felt the urge come upon you to smoke. So have you practiced that?

Have you been able to feel the urge to drink and then bring awareness to that? And what happened?

[Speaker 4] (1:30:51 - 1:30:56)

Yes, I have. And it kind of postpones. And eventually, I kind of break down.

[Speaker 1] (1:30:57 - 1:32:04)

Yes, I believe I mentioned in the book that bring awareness to it. And it may well happen that the desire, the urge is still there after 10 minutes of awareness. I believe I mentioned that.

It does not mean that you have lost. It means that the desire is very strong. And at that point, perhaps you will have a drink.

And when it happens again, you bring awareness to it again. Eventually, something will happen to the pattern. It's very rare to have instant success as you did with smoking.

It does happen in some cases. But bring awareness to old patterns, whatever it is, addictive patterns, behavior patterns. Bring awareness.

And eventually, they cannot coexist for that long. So it's a continuing practice. But don't expect perfection.

Don't expect you to be the perfect human being who never touches a drink again or whatever. As I said to Oprah, I enjoy a drink occasionally.

[Speaker 2] (1:32:05 - 1:32:35)

And I said, woo-hoo. So what he's saying also, and you said this in the beginning, Peter, don't judge it. And as you begin to practice, what I hear you say is this miracle that you experienced with cigarettes is just that because it rarely happens that you start this one time and it works immediately.

What you're saying is the more you apply the practice of bringing consciousness to this desire or craving, to this craving, that it will gradually lessen.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:35 - 1:32:35)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:32:35 - 1:32:38)

It will lessen. It will weaken. It will weaken.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:38 - 1:33:00)

Yes. You can also apply it to other things like many people are addicted to television. One day without watching TV would be dreadful for them.

So you could perhaps, as a practice, like a spiritual practice, you could say one day a week, I'll see what happens if I don't watch television. Don't do it when the Oprah show is on.

[Speaker 2] (1:33:00 - 1:33:02)

Thank you. For that part.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:03 - 1:33:16)

One day a week, I'll practice. And then observe inside yourself what it feels like, what the need to switch on, the need to be entertained, the need to be stimulated, to absorb what's on the screen.

[Speaker 2] (1:33:18 - 1:33:21)

So one day practice. Thank you so much, Peter. Those are friends behind you?

[Speaker 4] (1:33:22 - 1:33:24)

Yes, they're my neighbors. Hi.

[Speaker 2] (1:33:25 - 1:33:46)

Peter, move out of the way so we can see them, so we can say hi to everybody. Hi, everybody. Hi, Oprah.

Hi, Peter. Hi to Peter's group. That's so great there in Phoenix.

Yay, guys. Thank you for watching. Thank you.

Thank you. Thanks, Peter. Thank you so much.

Thank you so much. And all the best to Oprah, you know.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:49 - 1:33:51)

Oprah's very cute. Oprah's very cute.

[Speaker 2] (1:33:51 - 1:33:59)

We're talking about the dog. Okay, we've got Eric on the line calling from Copenhagen, Denmark. Eric, what's your question?

[Speaker 8] (1:34:00 - 1:34:10)

Hi, Oprah. Hi, Eckhart. Hi.

Hi, my question is in reference to page 224, when Eckhart writes the phrase, these two shall pass.

[Speaker 2] (1:34:10 - 1:34:11)

Oh yeah, love that.

[Speaker 8] (1:34:12 - 1:34:54)

Yeah, and I feel it's a real powerful phrase that brings a person into the present moment. And it's also used as a slogan in 12-step recovery programs. And when someone's been living very much in the ego-informed surrenders and enters a 12-step program, which I did over five years ago, and I currently act as a sponsor for newcomers, am I acting too much in the ego because I'm constantly working these 12 steps and sharing them and your concepts with others?

And also, if this is the case, how can I live in consciousness and work at 12-step programs with the meetings and sponsorship without the ego being so much at the forefront? Correct.

[Speaker 1] (1:34:55 - 1:35:42)

Well, that's a good question. The criterion is whether you yourself are still living it on a daily basis. If you're living the truth of it, this two shall pass is only a pointer towards a particular state of consciousness that is a state of detachment.

Not that you don't care, but it's a state of you still care deeply, but there is a detachment from what's happening, an inner sense of freedom in the background. So when you use these tools, for example, a phrase or a pointer, sometimes people who teach these things professionally, after a while, they stop practicing themselves and they just use them as a formal thing, and then the ego can come back in.

[Speaker 2] (1:35:42 - 1:35:43)

Because you think you know everything.

[Speaker 1] (1:35:43 - 1:36:36)

Yes, yes. And then you are not living it, you're teaching it, but you're not yourself living it anymore. And that is the question that only you can answer, whether you are still living the reality that's beyond this pointer, that what the pointer points to.

And if you are living it, the ego has not taken over and you're doing wonderful and very helpful work. I know that the 12-step program has been extremely helpful for many people. I've had many people who've come to spirituality through that.

So I'm sure you're doing wonderful work and continue to be alert and awake so that there's a certain amount of self-observation just to make sure that you are still there yourself, that you come from that place so that the mind doesn't take over.

[Speaker 2] (1:36:37 - 1:36:38)

Okay, Eric.

[Speaker 8] (1:36:38 - 1:36:40)

Yeah, that sounds great. Thank you very much.

[Speaker 2] (1:36:40 - 1:37:28)

Thank you, Eric. So let's begin, because I think that's a huge part of chapter eight in the discovery of inner space. The story that you began with the ancient Sufi story from the Middle East about a king who's continuously torn between happiness and depression.

On page 223, you write, the slightest thing would cause him great upset or provoke an intense reaction, and his happiness would quickly turn into disappointment and despair. A time came when the king finally got tired of himself and of life, began to seek a way out. He sent for a wise man who lived in his kingdom, who was reputed to be enlightened.

And when the wise man came, the king said to him, I wanna be like you. Can you give me something that will bring balance, serenity, and wisdom into my life? I will pay any price you ask.

What is that price the king had to pay? What is the price all of us have to pay?

[Speaker 1] (1:37:29 - 1:37:55)

Well, first of all, of course, the price the king asked, well, how much does it cost? How much is it going to cost? And the wise man said to him, it is of such value that even your whole kingdom could not pay for it.

Now, what that means is that the primary thing in your life is nothing external. What is primary in your life is your inner state of consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (1:37:55 - 1:37:56)

I got that.

[Speaker 1] (1:37:56 - 1:38:10)

And compared to that, you could have the greatest riches if you are in a state of anxiety, of fear, negativity, nothing is worth that.

[Speaker 2] (1:38:10 - 1:38:18)

You know, in the Bible and in the church, I don't know if it's in the Bible, but I know in the church, we sing this song called, it is well with my soul.

[Speaker 1] (1:38:19 - 1:38:19)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:38:19 - 1:38:40)

So unless it is well with your soul, it does not matter what your outward state is. Where are you living? How big, how many square feet you have?

How many cars, whatever acclaim you have received in the world, unless it is well with your soul or your inner state of being. Yes. Your inner space, then you're not well.

[Speaker 1] (1:38:40 - 1:39:38)

Yes. And so that's the, always to bear that in mind. What is, am I at one with life at this moment?

What is my inner state at this moment? Your primary concern in any situation needs to be your inner state. Your secondary concern is the outer situation because only when you're in a state of rightness, of presence, can you adequately deal with outer situations.

So what is the price? There is no price in terms of monetary value, anything like that. We could say that the price to pay is you let go of the false self.

That is the price you pay. The false mind made self, the price to pay is identification with that false, the false I, the false me. And so that's a relatively easy price to pay because it's wonderful to let go of that.

[Speaker 2] (1:39:38 - 1:39:43)

But the wise man gives the king a ring. Yes. And inside the ring, the inscription is.

[Speaker 1] (1:39:44 - 1:40:05)

This too shall pass. This too shall pass. And he says, whatever situation arises in your life, before you call it good or bad, before you react, before you judge it, touch this ring and remember the inscription that you, and this too shall pass.

[Speaker 2] (1:40:05 - 1:40:40)

Now, I find that to be very helpful. As a matter of fact, when I was going through last year, this crisis at my school, that was one of the things I said to myself every day is, live in this moment, let's handle this moment as it comes and this moment as it comes, and then what comes next, I'll handle that moment. And I always knew this too shall pass.

Works for me very well. And I'm sure a lot of other people, if you're in a difficult stage in your life, you're going through, you know, trauma or divorce or whatever to know that this too shall pass. But when I'm feeling happy and feeling joyful, I don't wanna think this too shall pass.

[Speaker 1] (1:40:42 - 1:40:44)

That can actually also be very peaceful.

[Speaker 2] (1:40:44 - 1:40:51)

If you know that it is transient, I know that- No, but you're having such a good time and then you're thinking, this too shall pass, so don't get too happy.

[Speaker 1] (1:40:51 - 1:40:57)

If you don't know that this too shall pass, then what can happen? You will cling to the situation internally.

[Speaker 2] (1:40:57 - 1:40:57)

I got it.

[Speaker 1] (1:40:57 - 1:41:11)

I got that. And if you cling to the situation and then it passes as it will. As it will.

Or even if it doesn't pass yet, it might last for a little while, even while the clinging itself means already some fear is coming in.

[Speaker 2] (1:41:11 - 1:41:12)

Oh, I see that.

[Speaker 1] (1:41:12 - 1:41:24)

Through the holding on, you don't want this situation to leave you or you don't want to leave the situation. The clinging means brings already up some fear and that means you can't enjoy it as much really.

[Speaker 2] (1:41:24 - 1:41:53)

I just had a great epiphany, not even for myself, but for all the people that I know that our key word here is clinging. So many people do this in relationships. They're holding on to a relationship that has already shown itself to be transient.

It's moving on to the next level. And what so many people do, they want to hold on and let it be as it always was. And it's in the process of passing.

And you should let it pass.

[Speaker 1] (1:41:53 - 1:42:12)

Yes, allowing change to happen and becoming comfortable with change. This is part of this too shall pass because we live in this world where things continuously pass away. The Buddhists call it impermanence.

It's one of the deepest truths of the Buddha.

[Speaker 2] (1:42:12 - 1:42:20)

And the problem lies when you expect it to be the same as it always was. And that's where so many people get in trouble in their relationships especially.

[Speaker 1] (1:42:20 - 1:42:32)

Yes. And it's an inability to let go. Inability to let go of situations, of people.

And that eventually brings suffering.

[Speaker 2] (1:42:32 - 1:43:02)

Yeah, just recently a friend of mine was telling me about her husband had said to her, he wasn't sure he wanted to remain in the relationship. He wasn't sure. And there's, you know, seeking counseling about that.

And he's now, you know, sleeping in a different bedroom and all that stuff. And she's trying to hold on and wants things to be the way they were and wants to have a baby and all of that. And you would say, put that ring on.

[Speaker 1] (1:43:02 - 1:43:44)

Yes. So especially don't cling. If you don't cling, that means there's no fear in the situation.

The fear comes through the clinging, through not wanting the change. And so if you approach the situation without fear, then one of two things can happen in a situation like this. There may become a deepening in the relationship.

When a relationship hits a crisis, it may be time for the relationship to dissolve or it may be time for a deepening. And so- How do you know the difference? When there's no fear, then you will know either it will deepen or it will end.

Wow, or it will pass on. The fear keeps you stuck where you are.

[Speaker 2] (1:43:45 - 1:44:18)

Got it. I got it. So let's see some of the email questions you've been sending during our class.

Linda in Tokyo, Japan. How do I tell the difference between an ego decision or a conscious decision? I'm in a sexless marriage and want to leave.

Oh, I'm scared. I've been living in the moment for the past eight weeks. My answer is not coming to me.

That's what Linda wants to know. How do I tell the difference between an ego decision or a conscious decision? Yes.

I'm in a sexless marriage and I want to leave, but I'm scared. You just said it. You just said it.

[Speaker 1] (1:44:18 - 1:44:54)

Yes. And an additional thing here, sometimes something comes to you. This is what I'm going to do, your mind says.

Okay, now I know what I have to do. The question is, where does that realization of what you have to do come from? Does it come from the ego?

Or does it come from the deeper level of your being? How can I tell the difference? There's a qualitative difference, a difference in one could say vibrational frequency.

Correct. If it comes from the deeper level of yourself out of the stillness, it's always associated with peace.

[Speaker 11] (1:44:54 - 1:44:54)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:44:55 - 1:45:06)

It's a peaceful realization. If it's agitated or if it's fearful and says, now I know what I have to do, or if it's angry, agitated, fearful, it comes from the upper level.

[Speaker 2] (1:45:06 - 1:46:06)

And another thing I would say to Linda in Tokyo, Japan, you're absolutely correct. Another thing, it comes from, if it's coming from inner space that we're talking about in chapter eight, if it's coming from consciousness or inner space and not your ego, not only will you feel peace, but you won't have to ask 15 other people, is it the right thing? You will know it's the right thing.

You will know it's the right thing. And I have found that if you are operating from consciousness, your higher consciousness, or as we're calling it in this chapter, inner space, that whether it's buying a pair of shoes or making a life decision, if it comes from the place of inner space, you know the answer. When it's outside yourself, if it's in your ego mind, you have to ask the store clerk, you have to ask your friends, you have to ask everybody, what do you think?

What do you think? What do you think of these shoes? What do you think?

What do you think? But when you are, when it's well with your soul, the answer's clear. That's how you know.

[Speaker 1] (1:46:07 - 1:46:15)

Quiet, peaceful, certainty. Yes. Powerful, quiet, peaceful.

You know what you have to do. You know what's right for you.

[Speaker 2] (1:46:16 - 1:46:40)

It's like the other day I had to cancel an engagement and I was saying I never cancel things, but after I canceled, I felt such a calm. And I knew that that was the right decision. Yes.

Although it might be upsetting to other people, I felt such a calmness about it. And that is true for anybody who's making a decision. When you make the right decision, you feel a calmness and a peace about it.

[Speaker 1] (1:46:40 - 1:46:48)

Yes. And that also relationships, leaving a relationship, if it comes from the right place, you leave, but you're peaceful. Right.

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:46:49 - 1:46:50)

You're not afraid.

[Speaker 1] (1:46:50 - 1:46:50)

No.

[Speaker 2] (1:46:51 - 1:46:54)

You're not afraid. You still could be sad about it though. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:46:54 - 1:46:55)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:46:55 - 1:46:58)

Sadness can happen. You could be sad about it, disappointed about it.

[Speaker 1] (1:46:58 - 1:47:34)

Interesting thing about sadness is, or sadness, of course, also arises when somebody passes away close to you. There can be sadness. And if there's acceptance, then, because death is one of the prime examples of everything passing away.

Before life form passes away, everybody, if you live with a partner, either your partner will leave you or you will leave sooner or later through death. So that's the allowing change to happen.

[Speaker 2] (1:47:35 - 1:48:00)

Allowing change to happen. And you say the key to understanding this too will pass at the top of page 225 is knowing that non-resistance, not resisting, non-judgment and non-attachment are the three aspects of true freedom and enlightened living. Hard to be non-resistant, non-judgmental and non-attached when it's your husband who says, I don't longer want to be in this relationship.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:00 - 1:48:17)

Yes. Yes. And if you share a great deal of past with another person, it could also be a family member or a parent, then it's sometimes harder to be present when there's a huge amount of past in the relationship.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:17 - 1:48:33)

I got that. But once you see and accept the transience of all things, page 225, and the inevitability of change, you can enjoy the pleasures of the world while they last without fear of loss or anxiety about the future.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:33 - 1:48:33)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:33 - 1:48:35)

I thought that was so brilliant the way you did that.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:36 - 1:48:43)

That's the beautiful thing about being able to enjoy the things of this world, knowing that nothing is going to last.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:43 - 1:48:44)

Nothing's going to last.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:44 - 1:48:50)

And you can actually enjoy it more deeply now without the fear that it might finish. Because it is gonna finish. Yes, yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:51 - 1:48:51)

It is gonna finish.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:51 - 1:48:55)

And then something else will take its place. It's continuous coming and going.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:55 - 1:49:22)

I got that. Tonight we're Skyping again with a study group in Los Angeles who've gathered at the Bodhi Tree bookstore. It's a landmark in West Hollywood.

Hi, everybody at the Bodhi Tree. Hi. Oh, gosh.

There's our Bodhi followers. Nick has a question about finding his purpose. And I know it's something that's been on the minds of quite a few of our students.

Hello, Nick. Let's hear it. Hey, Oprah, what's up?

Hey. Everything's up.

[Speaker 3] (1:49:24 - 1:49:50)

My question is basically, well, you have to worry about a lot of stuff in life. You have to go to work. You have to pay your bill.

Your cell phone bill works in the now, but if you don't work today, it's not gonna work a month from today. So how do you live in the now and still worry about your IRAs, investing in your future, what you're gonna do as far as, you know, money, paying your bills, doing what you have to do, you know, in this ego-censored world, especially in Los Angeles. So.

[Speaker 2] (1:49:51 - 1:50:03)

So what you're saying is, what if, how is this becoming who we are truly, what if becoming who we were truly meant to be really isn't financially practical is what you're asking, right?

[Speaker 3] (1:50:04 - 1:50:33)

Yeah, what if I wanted to go on a mountain somewhere and just become who I was? I eventually would, I guess, starve or freeze, but I mean, you know, how do you integrate this in your everyday life? Sort of being in the now, being the essence of who you are, without suffering in the long run, without, you know, the squirrel would suffer, the squirrel would die if it didn't put away nuts for the future, so.

Okay, okay.

[Speaker 2] (1:50:33 - 1:50:43)

Yeah, I'd seen a question that you'd sent earlier, Nick, where you'd said, it's all fine and dandy to read about becoming who you truly are and being who you were meant to be, but how do we do that and still pay all of our bills?

[Speaker 3] (1:50:44 - 1:50:45)

Right, right.

[Speaker 2] (1:50:46 - 1:50:46)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (1:50:46 - 1:51:51)

Okay, thank you, thank you, good question. However, the question, the first few words of your question already contained an error, and it's easy, if an error keeps into a question, then it's hard to answer it truly. The error was, you said we have to worry about paying our bills and all kinds of things.

Is that true? No, you have to pay your bills, but you don't have to worry about paying your bills. And the squirrel has to put away the nuts, but the squirrel is not worried about the nuts, only humans are worried about their nuts.

So, you can, being present with what you do does not mean that you neglect your daily affairs and so on, it means you deal with them in a different and in fact, more powerful and more effective way. You give up the worrying part, you still pay your bills, but you let go of the worrying about paying your bills. In that way, you learn from the squirrel how to live.

[Speaker 2] (1:51:51 - 1:51:54)

Because worrying is your choice, you see that, don't you, Nick?

[Speaker 3] (1:51:56 - 1:52:30)

Worrying is your choice. At times when I don't worry, I've had moments in my life where I didn't worry, I just kind of let the waves of the world roll over me, and I kind of did nothing about situations and hoped that they would work out themselves, and they didn't. I mean, worrying did help me in the past to actually get things together and get my life on track.

I guess to be, for me in my life, to be in the essence, to be with my spiritual self, it doesn't, it's not enough. I have to really be actively worried about the actual day-to-day business of surviving. Which most people have to do, you know.

[Speaker 1] (1:52:30 - 1:54:00)

I would still argue with that. It is true that you need to take action. It is not true that you need to worry in order to be able to take action.

So you can actually experiment with, in your daily life, start with little situations. Let's say there's a pile of bills that you have to pay. How do you approach these bills?

Are you going to worry the night before, or on the day, or am I going to be able to pay you? You just take one bill after another, you look at it, you face it. Okay, do I have the money in my bank account or not?

If you don't have the money in my bank account, I have to do something to make more money. What is it possible, what can I do now? Put that aside, look, this action I can take.

Pick up the phone, make a phone call. Do the present, effective, powerful, but no worry. If you, then you will see your whole life will become not only more effective and more powerful, but also much easier.

It flows with greater ease. Nothing in nature is worried. All the animals do what they have to do, but they don't worry about it.

Everything is active in nature. The trees are active, the grass, the flowers, everything is active and putting out energy. It's only the humans that worry about it and think they need worry in order to survive in this world.

You don't need worry, you need action, but not worry.

[Speaker 2] (1:54:00 - 1:54:12)

That's an interesting point. If you've ever been on safari or seen animals on a hunt or actually seen a kill, they go out in search of, and we've, I've, everybody I'm sure watched the planet, or you watched the Planet Earth series, right, Nick? Where you see the animals.

[Speaker 3] (1:54:12 - 1:54:19)

No. Oh, Nick, you got it. You know what?

What he was saying, I'm sorry. Nick, you gotta get the Planet Earth.

[Speaker 2] (1:54:20 - 1:54:34)

And you get to see all these animals hunting other animals. And I just, you just made me think of what you were saying. As the animals hunting the other animal, it's just doing it.

It's not worrying. I hope I find a rabbit today. I hope I find a rabbit today.

Yeah.

[Speaker 11] (1:54:34 - 1:54:34)

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (1:54:35 - 1:54:38)

Go ahead, Nick, go ahead. You want to continue? Yeah.

[Speaker 3] (1:54:38 - 1:54:52)

That reminds me of the lily in the valley. It doesn't worry about clothing itself in the Bible. It just does.

It just exists. It worries not, or the sparrow or the crow does not worry how it's gonna get its next meal. It just, it just does.

[Speaker 1] (1:54:52 - 1:54:52)

Yes.

[Speaker 3] (1:54:52 - 1:55:01)

And that reminds me of that right there. Yes. But I'm thinking, I guess I'm thinking of those hippies in India that still haven't come back.

They're just, they're just broken.

[Speaker 2] (1:55:02 - 1:55:30)

Yeah, yeah. Nick is saying, Nick is saying, well, that's really good for that Bible stuff and for the lilies of the valley. But listen, I'm living in L.A. and I gotta worry about this. Is there anybody else there at the Bodhi tree behind you that, is there anybody that disagrees with Nick that has, you know, similar issues and you're not worried about it? You've been able to apply. Come up to the microphone here.

Let's get, hey, come on up there. Hi.

[Speaker 10] (1:55:31 - 1:55:32)

Hi.

[Speaker 2] (1:55:32 - 1:55:33)

Hi, you are. Hi, who are you?

[Speaker 10] (1:55:34 - 1:55:34)

I'm Jessica.

[Speaker 2] (1:55:34 - 1:55:38)

Oh, hi, Jessica. Hi. So what do you want to say about what we've been talking about?

[Speaker 10] (1:55:39 - 1:56:09)

You know, there's a, it's on page 238 and it's about becoming one with the situation and that the solution arises out of that. And I've always kind of been a more of a take action person first and then deal with the inner peace and all that later. But I was wondering, how do you deal with things like that in relationships and things like weight management and all of those issues?

Do you just become still and just hope for an answer to come or do you still actively seek one out?

[Speaker 1] (1:56:10 - 1:58:28)

So what you're referring to is on this page, it says you don't react. What I'm saying there is you don't react against a situation when a situation arises that- You merge with it. Yes.

And the solution rises out of the situation. Now this should not be confused with becoming inactive or just sitting there and looking and not doing anything. What it means is there's no inner resistance to that arising situation.

Sometimes things happen when you have a project, you have some work to do, and something happens to, some obstacle arises in what you want to do. A person, a situation arises. And so for many people, as soon as an obstacle arises, they become resistant and they go into a negative state and try to fight the obstacle.

They're fighting the obstacle rather than accepting the moment as it is internally and say, oh, the situation has changed. We talked about change. Situations change continuously and the world does not necessarily do what it wants you to do, what you want it to do.

So you face a situation and any change that happens is immediately accepted inside. And through the acceptance, you respond to the situation. So you're not accusing, you're not making wrong, you're not complaining about the situation to yourself and others.

So many people burn up a huge amount of energy uselessly that they could use to deal with the situation, but they burn up a huge amount of energy complaining in their heads and to others about what has happened. Instead of looking at what has happened and saying, oh, this is how it is, what can I do now? A moment of stillness and then action happens.

No complaining, no resisting, no fighting against, not making a person or situation into an enemy. That again, burns up a lot of useless energy and brings up a lot of energy that is going to sabotage what you want to do.

[Speaker 2] (1:58:28 - 1:58:42)

So again, you say when instead of reacting against the situation, you merge with it, the solution arises out of the situation itself. Actually, it's not you, the person who's looking and listening, but the alert stillness itself or the inner space.

[Speaker 1] (1:58:42 - 1:58:55)

When I say the solution arises out of the situation, it does not mean that you don't do anything. In some cases, it is you who's going to take the action, but it will come out of a powerful place of being one with the situation.

[Speaker 2] (1:58:56 - 2:01:02)

Yeah, I think too, Jessica, ask Nick to come back to the microphone. Thanks, Jessica.

Nick, come back up here, we're not through with you.

I think too, I think you really represent a whole lot of people, particularly young people who have said to me personally or have emailed and think that being in alignment with who you're truly meant to be and awakening to your purpose represents passivity, that you're just sort of sitting around just waiting on a woo-hoo moment and not really doing anything. The real purpose of this entire book and the work of spirituality is to get you, to get us to align our personalities with our soul or higher consciousness so that the work that you do in the world comes from the place of the higher consciousness and you use your ego or personality to serve that. You allow your personality to serve the calling of consciousness that has put you here on the earth in the first place.

And when you do that, everything has a flow to it. You're in the right job that gives you the right amount of money for you at any given time because you are in alignment. So you're not worrying about things because you're not living beyond your means.

You're not stressing about things because you're not allowing your ego to determine and define who you are in the world. So you're not acting out of an external self but acting out of the place of inner space or consciousness so everything is in alignment. And that's not passive.

That's not woo-hoo, I can't pay my bills and so let me find myself later. That is aligning your personality with the higher consciousness so that your higher consciousness, you operate from a place of being and the inner space is directing and guiding your life and not the outer space. You get it?

[Speaker 3] (2:01:03 - 2:01:14)

Yeah, I do. Sorry if I made you mad, Oprah. But I do, that's wonderful.

Thank you so much. Pleasure to be here.

[Speaker 2] (2:01:15 - 2:01:34)

No, I'm not mad, but I just, I hear this a lot. I mean, earlier today, my stylist was saying, well, what about my passion? What about my passion?

You want me to just give up my passion? No, this isn't about giving up your passion. It's about feeling your passion more deeply.

Yes, yes. And being in alignment with that.

[Speaker 3] (2:01:36 - 2:01:57)

How do you know if what you want, what your passion is, isn't just ego-driven? What if I just wanted to be like, I don't know, a rock star and that's just completely ego-driven and that didn't help the world in any way, but if I kept on working towards it, it would just not be serving anyone but myself. What if my passion is wrong?

If it's wrong. Sorry, too many questions.

[Speaker 1] (2:01:58 - 2:02:32)

No, it's fine. No, go ahead, go ahead. Eckhart, answer that.

Sometimes you may not know until you have achieved what you wanted to achieve, whether it was ego or not. When you get what you wanted to achieve and very soon you find it does not satisfy you, then it was the ego. So you can, it's a learning process.

Nobody's saying you shouldn't try to achieve this or that. If the impulse is there to have this or that, do it and see what happens. If it doesn't satisfy you, it's the ego.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:33 - 2:03:18)

And the greatest rock stars are those who are rock stars because they sing or they perform because they had to. And whether they were performing to grand crowds or in their garage space to just their family members, they sing because they have to. The greatest dancers are those who dance because they have to and they become rock stars or dancing stars because that is coming from such a pure place of passion.

And that's what the world feels because those are the people who last. The people who are operating from the passionate, true space and not just doing it because they wanna make the money or because of the ego self. That's what I think.

But it's nice talking to you, Nick.

[Speaker 3] (2:03:18 - 2:03:21)

Thank you, sorry it took so long, but it was a pleasure being here.

[Speaker 2] (2:03:21 - 2:03:48)

Thanks everybody at the Bodhi Tree, Jessica, Nick and all our Bodhi buddies. Okay, now we have an email from Sumaya in Bethlehem who wanted to say that I live under military occupation. I've witnessed the demolishing of my home and I do not know how to apply your theories when the outside is so out of my control.

How can I be at peace when there are soldiers outside my door? There's a question for you.

[Speaker 1] (2:03:49 - 2:05:14)

That is of course the experience of many people in this world. If you look what's happening in this world, people are confronted with violence all the time, with loss, they lose their homes, they lose family members. Is it possible here to enter a state of surrender?

Is it possible to accept the seemingly unacceptable? And for some people it has been possible. I know it is possible to accept what seems unacceptable.

And if you accept the unacceptable, you will go very deep very quickly. And what otherwise would take many years of realization to realize, it will take you to a very deep point if you accept something, great loss in your life. In prison, I continuously get letters from people in prison now.

This is unacceptable. Some prisons are dreadful places. And some people there live in agony and suffering and anger and resentment.

And some, a minority, a few have realized that they can live in the state of inner surrender, which is not negative. It's a complete acceptance that this is as it is right now.

[Speaker 2] (2:05:15 - 2:05:18)

Because they are in non-resistance, non-judgment and non-attachment.

[Speaker 1] (2:05:18 - 2:05:51)

Yes, because, and you accept it because, why should you accept it? Because it is at this moment, it is. So no matter what it is, accepting the isness of this moment brings you to a place of inner freedom and also a place of power.

You have to go, in order to accept the unacceptable, you have to go really very deep and bring a very deep yes to this moment. An uncompromising yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:05:52 - 2:06:25)

I think that a lot of people have trouble with the word accepting it, because accepting says to people, I must then also condone it. What you're saying is stop, by your term accept, you mean don't deny that it's happening. As you resist it, if you continue to resist it, the example you used earlier in our classes is, you're in the mud, you're stuck in the mud, the wheels are in the mud, you must first accept that I'm stuck in the mud before you can get yourself out of the mud.

Yes, yes. You can't keep saying, I'm not in the mud.

[Speaker 1] (2:06:25 - 2:06:37)

No, and you don't say, I shouldn't be, why did this happen to me? I can't believe I'm in the mud. And then all the energy goes into the complaining and into the resistance.

Correct, got it, got it.

[Speaker 2] (2:06:37 - 2:06:42)

Christina lives in Toronto, Canada, and Skyping us from her family room. Christina, your question, hello.

[Speaker 9] (2:06:43 - 2:06:44)

Hi, Oprah, hi Akbar.

[Speaker 2] (2:06:44 - 2:06:45)

Hi.

[Speaker 9] (2:06:46 - 2:07:29)

I have been afraid to drive for about 16 years now. I was in a serious car accident, and it has stopped me from being responsible in my family life. My husband has so much burden.

He has to take our kids to their activities and so forth, take time off of work to take them to doctor's appointments. So my question is, but just recently from reading A New Earth, I've started to drive. So yay, but my question is, how do I remain in the inner spaciousness that you speak about on page 238, so that I can stay behind the wheel?

I mean, things are going well right now, but if that fear comes creeping back, how do I handle it?

[Speaker 2] (2:07:29 - 2:07:33)

I don't know if I want you behind the wheel if I'm on the road and you're trying to do that.

[Speaker 11] (2:07:33 - 2:07:34)

Oh, don't say that.

[Speaker 1] (2:07:34 - 2:09:38)

No, okay, okay. Well, first, you're now able to drive. That's wonderful.

The old fear is gone, but now a new fear has arisen, and that fear is about whether the fear is going to come back or not. And so that is often the case. People develop a fear about a fear.

Am I going to be in fear again? The mind tends to do that kind of thing because it projects itself into the future and says, am I going to remain fearless or is the fear going to come back? So realize that that is your mind trying to figure something out and thereby creating a new level of fear on top of the original fear that has already dissolved.

So trust that it's not going to come back, but something you can do to help it is to actually consciously enjoy the driving and enjoy sitting in the car, enjoy sitting at the traffic light, enjoy the driving itself. I enjoy driving. It's a very peaceful thing to do for me.

So, and be comfortable with being in the car and what I used to do often in the, don't do it so much anymore, I would get into my car and drive out to some lonely place and sit in the car and meditate or write. I liked being in the car. So use the enjoyment.

The more you find the enjoyment, the less likely the fear is going to come back. So seek the enjoyment of, it is to do with enjoying the present moment, the driving itself, the movement and so on. And don't go into your mind, don't follow up that thought when it says, oh, is it going to last?

Is this state of being without fear going to last?

[Speaker 2] (2:09:38 - 2:09:39)

To stay in the moment.

[Speaker 1] (2:09:39 - 2:10:11)

Stay in the moment. The more you're in the moment, the less likely fear is going to come back. It can't really come back when you are in the now.

It's only when you leave the now, then it'll come back. Either you go into the past and you remember something that happened in the past, you've left the now, or you go into the future and say, am I going to have fear again at some point? So the more you stay in the now, the more you're keeping out fear.

Fear comes through past or future.

[Speaker 2] (2:10:13 - 2:10:22)

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you so much.

Thank you. Okay, Yvonne. Okay, Yvonne.

Okay. Yes. Hi.

What's your question? I like this question.

[Speaker 5] (2:10:23 - 2:10:52)

It's about this two shall pass and the quote about it. Forget the quote now, shoot. How do you be a voice for change in the planet where things are going wrong and still be present in the stillness and create the action without being taken down by all the horrendous things that are happening?

It seems to me like a paradox to be present and then to work for change in the future.

[Speaker 2] (2:10:53 - 2:11:10)

Yeah, you said, how can I be a voice for planetary change and really say, I don't mind what happens because there's so much- I don't mind what happens. So much crazy stuff is going on in the world. How can you just say- Do not mind animal abuse.

Right, not mind animal abuse, not mind all the violence going on in the world and just say, this too shall pass.

[Speaker 1] (2:11:11 - 2:12:27)

First, of course, the English language has two expressions that are related and yet very different. Sometimes, I don't mind is interpreted by people as meaning I don't care. So I don't care and I don't mind are very different.

I don't mind does not mean that you don't care. It means there is a space of freedom inside you and that is a peaceful place. And unless you are rooted in that peaceful place within, you cannot ultimately be an agent for true positive change in this world.

Your state of consciousness is what transmits itself through whatever you do. Your state of consciousness is primary. And only if your state of consciousness is at peace can whatever you do reflect that.

And you can be a bringer of peace into this violent and insane world. And you can then, through whatever you do externally, can bring sanity into this logic insane world.

[Speaker 2] (2:12:27 - 2:12:40)

Whether it's about that particular thing you're concerned about or not, because if you are in a state of consciousness where you are at peace, everything that you do in the world will bring peace to the world. And that's how you change the world.

[Speaker 1] (2:12:40 - 2:13:07)

Yes, and everything you do will be much more empowered. It will be empowered by that consciousness rather than coming from antagonism, coming from the thinking I have to fight these people, making situations or people into enemies. That's all the old consciousness.

You cannot change this world through the old consciousness or applying the structures and the ways of the old consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (2:13:07 - 2:13:25)

Yeah, one of the things you shared with us earlier, what he was saying, Yvonne, in one of the early classes is that you cannot make change by fighting against anything. And a surefire way of knowing that something is going to fail is when you say it's the war against. The war against anything cannot win.

[Speaker 1] (2:13:25 - 2:13:49)

No. So if you cannot fight, it does not mean that you cannot take action. You can take powerful action, but it comes out of that basic place of inner peace.

People don't realize, many people don't realize yet that very powerful action come out of the place of inner peace. They believe they need to be agitated to bring about change.

[Speaker 5] (2:13:51 - 2:14:11)

Coming from inner peace, motivate other people to sort of mind what's going on so that they might do things differently in their lives that impact the planet as a whole. That's the thing that kind of worries me, that the concept can give people apathy and like, oh, I'm going to throw my cigarette on the ground and it's going to go into the ocean and I don't mind what happens.

[Speaker 1] (2:14:12 - 2:14:30)

No, that's not it. You see the consequences of any action. If you're present, then you will not do unconscious things that actually produce suffering.

It's only when you're not present that you will produce suffering in one form or another.

[Speaker 2] (2:14:31 - 2:14:31)

Got that.

[Speaker 1] (2:14:31 - 2:15:15)

When you're present, you do not generate suffering for yourself or others. It's the only place from where you don't generate suffering. And then you are already the beginning of the change of the world.

And then it doesn't matter what you do, you may just disseminate information, but the information to make people aware of certain things. Some people, this can be a very important thing to do. And the way in which you disseminate the information will also be empowered by your state of consciousness.

It will not make others wrong, other people wrong, and thereby produce a reaction. And then you're trapped in the same old thing.

[Speaker 2] (2:15:15 - 2:15:38)

You've experienced that, right, Ivan? You've been on the street and somebody is trying to hand out something. And if it's a person who's really agitated or you can feel or sense their anger and agitation, you don't wanna take the pamphlet.

But if the person hands it to you or whatever it is with a sense of calm or peace, then you're more inclined to wanna even engage with them.

[Speaker 5] (2:15:38 - 2:16:06)

I've experienced that as myself, like 15 years ago in college, being the staunch environmentalist and telling people what to do. And of course, watching them do the opposite, inspiring the exact opposite that I wanted. So I've worked the last 10 years since the power of the now to be present.

But in order to do that, I had to like stop looking at the atrocities of the world. And now I'm ready to come back and I want to keep the spiritual side, but at the same time, not let the world get me down, but be able to do something and be a part of positive change.

[Speaker 1] (2:16:06 - 2:16:24)

That's your challenge now. That's your challenge now. And your spiritual practice now is to balance the two so that you can be active and bring about change in the world without losing your rootedness in being and your presence.

So that's a balancing act.

[Speaker 5] (2:16:24 - 2:16:25)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:16:25 - 2:16:26)

And that's what you have to do now.

[Speaker 5] (2:16:26 - 2:16:43)

Thank you for sharing how to do it. I'm learning slowly what you just said about accepting the acceptance, the deep acceptance of the world as it is. That hit me finally.

I'm starting to understand the depth and not the accept of it's okay, just that this is happening.

[Speaker 2] (2:16:44 - 2:16:49)

That it is happening. Yes. And that the angrier you're more upset you get about it, it's still happening.

[Speaker 5] (2:16:50 - 2:16:59)

Oh yeah. That doesn't serve anything. I get that.

But then how do you keep going? But it's a slow process. There's two more weeks, two more chapters.

I'm hoping.

[Speaker 2] (2:17:00 - 2:17:19)

Thanks. Inner purpose is going to help that a lot. Thank you.

Tell Nick to be sure to show up for inner purpose. I got a few things to say. Thanks everybody.

Natalie lives in Australia, but is on holiday with her family and is Skyping us from her friend's kitchen in England. Hi, Natalie.

[Speaker 6] (2:17:19 - 2:17:21)

Hi, Oprah. Hi, Oprah. How are you?

[Speaker 2] (2:17:22 - 2:17:23)

We're both well. Thank you.

[Speaker 6] (2:17:24 - 2:18:25)

This is so exciting for me. On page 239 in your book, you say that some people feel more alive when they travel and visit unfamiliar places or foreign countries because those times sense perceptions, experiencing takes up more of their consciousness than thinking. Since the class on the third chapter, I've been sharing an amazing holiday with my family and our friends here.

I've been able to enjoy my holiday so much more by practicing the teachings that I've read about in the book and the things I've learned from the class. But my life back home is not like my holiday. It's really busy.

I've got a job and three children and my husband has his own business. And on reflection, I think I've filled up any free time I've had so that I wasn't alone with that constant noise in my head. I feel really great at the moment and I want to feel the same when I go home.

So my question is, how do I transition between this wonderful holiday and go back to my normal life at home?

[Speaker 1] (2:18:28 - 2:20:09)

Okay, okay. That's a good question. Yes, yes.

Thank you. Yes, it's a good question. The everydayness of many people's lives can really pull you into a place of unconsciousness because the repetitiveness of one's life.

So it's up to you when you get home to invite a different state of consciousness as much as possible into your daily life, into the daily routine of your life. Invite a state of presence when you are engaged in things that you do every day repetitively, things that usually are a means to an end, driving those kids to school, going, doing the shopping, doing, you can see how many things are a means to an end in one's daily existence. And that's not a very powerful way to live when almost everything you do in your daily existence is a means to some end because you have to do this and this.

So bring in presence where, instead of treating whatever you do as a means to an end, as much as possible, make it into an end in itself. For example, when you're driving from here to there, be absolutely present every moment. Look around, be alert as if you were seeing things for the first time, the trees, the people, the traffic.

[Speaker 2] (2:20:09 - 2:20:11)

And you do that by not labeling things.

[Speaker 1] (2:20:11 - 2:20:41)

Not labeling mentally what you're experiencing. Be there as a conscious presence when you're doing shopping at the supermarket. Perceiving without naming is what you are.

Perceiving without naming. Be there with every step, look at the things around you, what do I need to get? To be conscious of every movement, of everything around you so that it's not an everyday thing.

It's that everything that you do is happening just now. It's not a repetition.

[Speaker 2] (2:20:42 - 2:21:53)

And I promise you, if you start to do this in your everyday life, what he says on page 252, as much as possible in everyday life, use awareness of the inner body to start to create space. When waiting, when listening to someone, when pausing to look at the sky, all on page 252, a tree, a flower, your partner or child, feel the aliveness within at the same time. This means part of your attention or consciousness remains formless and the rest is available for the outer world of form.

Whenever you inhabit your body in this way, it serves as an anchor for staying present in the now, prevents you from losing yourself in thinking, in emotions or in external situations. When you really get that, what he's saying on page 252, Natalie, everything around you takes on a magical quality. I can really testify to that, that just doing routine things becomes almost like you have wow moments doing the smallest things, washing the- I've been feeling that at the moment because we've been seeing so many amazing things and meeting so many different people and being in places where they speak different languages.

[Speaker 6] (2:21:53 - 2:22:03)

But I know at home, what I do is when I'm doing something, I'm thinking about the next thing that I'm going to be doing. So I really need to, I can really take that on. Thank you so much.

[Speaker 2] (2:22:03 - 2:22:38)

What I would like to say to you and everybody else, when you start to put this into practice, and I've been doing it myself during the past eight weeks, when you start to actually put it into practice, everything is amazing. Everything starts to be amazing. The fact that you're breathing in and out of your lungs starts to be amazing.

That's what the now does. It brings you into a level of consciousness and presence. So just being is amazing.

And you don't have to leave home to experience that. Isn't that the- That's right.

[Speaker 1] (2:22:38 - 2:22:39)

That's the key, isn't it? Yes, that's the key, yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:22:40 - 2:22:45)

What is on the back board? I thought I saw my name there when there was a wide shot there. Does that say Oprah?

[Speaker 6] (2:22:46 - 2:22:54)

That's from my Georgie. She's asleep because it's about 3 a.m., but she wanted to say hi, so that's her hi, Oprah. Hi, Georgie.

[Speaker 2] (2:22:55 - 2:23:20)

Hi. Thank you. Thank you very much, Natalie.

But that's- Bye, thank you. Thank you. What Natalie was talking about is the whole point of awakening to your life's purpose.

And next week, we're gonna be talking about inner purpose, which is what I was trying to say to Nick, maybe too stridently. It's happened a couple times where I'm like saying to Gail, Gail will say, I don't understand.

[Speaker 1] (2:23:20 - 2:23:28)

I'll go, well, the reason is- Well, Nick represents about 50 million other people who are the same.

[Speaker 2] (2:23:28 - 2:24:09)

That's right, who are feeling that, well, listen, I gotta make money. I gotta make money. But what we're gonna be talking about next week, Nick, is when you align the inner purpose and let the inner purpose determine what your outer actions are, then you're not worried.

That's right. You never worry. No matter how much money you're making, you're not worried because you're on purpose with your life.

You're on purpose with your life. Yeah, well, I think a lot of people feel like this is all kind of, sometimes they feel like this is ooey gooey stuff. And yes, and I'll get spiritual, but let me make some money first.

Yeah, I wanna be spiritual and all that, but I gotta make some money first.

[Speaker 1] (2:24:09 - 2:24:18)

Yeah, that's actually in the New Testament where he says, let me first do this. They invite you to the kingdom of heaven.

[Speaker 2] (2:24:18 - 2:24:18)

That's right.

[Speaker 1] (2:24:19 - 2:24:29)

Let me first do this with another excuse. Let me first do this. First, I have to do this.

Yes. Then I'll be ready. Of course, it never happens.

That's right. The then never comes.

[Speaker 2] (2:24:30 - 2:24:45)

So there is Barbara in Shanghai, China, who writes, I find it really difficult to be the observer of a challenging work environment, especially when I'm frustrated with employees and have to discipline my staff. What are some of the practical steps I can take to overcome the situation?

[Speaker 1] (2:24:47 - 2:26:02)

Well, there you use whatever the practical things that are described in the book, conscious, one or two conscious breaths as often as possible, getting in touch with the feeling of the inner body, the aliveness of the inner body while you are listening to people, especially, then already a different energy is there. You are listening from a different state of consciousness when you're in touch with the inner body, especially while you listen. Right.

And a lot of thing, a person who is running an office or whatever our questioner does, they probably have to deal with many people every day, which involves listening to people in addition to, of course, speaking to people. So be there as the, feel the aliveness within as you listen, as much as possible, take conscious breaths while you are engaged in things. That's right.

Bringing spaces, little spaces into your daily existence. Gaps. Little gaps.

That is more important than doing, it's wonderful to do a meditation at the end of the day, but bringing little gaps into your everyday activities is even more important.

[Speaker 2] (2:26:02 - 2:27:17)

I love what you talk about on page 232 and 233. You tell people to avoid watching television programs and commercials that assault you with a rapid succession of images that change every two or three seconds. Rather than watching at random, choose the programs you wanna see whenever you remember to do so, feel the aliveness also inside your body as you watch.

Alternatively, be aware of your breathing from time to time, looking away from the screen at regular intervals so that it doesn't completely take possession of your visual sense. We just did a show the other day and this mom, it was a show about giving up what you'd be willing to live without. And this family was gonna give up their computers or they did give up their computers and their televisions for a week.

And their little five-year-old boy was crying because he had to give up the computer. His mom walked in the room, stood behind him, was behind him, called his name and he still couldn't hear her because he was so mesmerized by the video game he was playing. What are we doing to ourselves and more importantly to our children through the video games, the television, which is a form of like hypnosis almost for people.

[Speaker 1] (2:27:17 - 2:27:47)

Yes, and it pulls your attention out of the body. It's like a leaking, an energy leakage, especially for young children when the energy gets drawn out very easily. So it's continuous energy leakage and they cannot focus on, because of the rapidly changing images on TV screen in many programs, the ability to have a prolonged focus on something is greatly diminished.

[Speaker 2] (2:27:47 - 2:27:54)

Well, I thought that, that's why we have so many children with ADD because they've grown up in a world where they can only, there's 30 seconds, 30 seconds and 30 seconds.

[Speaker 1] (2:27:54 - 2:28:38)

Yes, that means the quality of your life is also diminished because the quality of your life very much depends on the degree of your attention. Attention is quality. So if you cannot give attention to anything for very long, that diminishes the quality of your life and what you can do.

So parents need to be careful with their children. I'm not saying remove all these things immediately from your children because they are addictive, but very gently don't reduce the amount of time they spend with video games and they reduce gently the amount of time they spend watching television.

[Speaker 2] (2:28:38 - 2:28:54)

Because they cause you, as you say, so when watching television, the tendencies for you to fall below thought, not rise above it. Television has this in common with alcohol and certain other drugs. While it provides some relief from your mind, you again pay a high price, loss of consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (2:28:54 - 2:28:54)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:28:54 - 2:29:03)

And here we have- That's what it's designed to do, isn't it? For the most part. Yes, it's, here we have- Our show though is designed to make you more conscious.

I will have to say that.

[Speaker 1] (2:29:03 - 2:29:18)

I know that. When I wrote there somewhere, there are some television shows that have been helpful to many people and have raised people's consciousness. It says that somewhere in the book.

It does. I saw you in my mental, in my mind.

[Speaker 2] (2:29:18 - 2:29:33)

Thank you. You could have just said, oh, the Oprah show. Yes, I saw you wrote that there are some television shows.

You could have just put in parentheses, the Oprah show, for example. Yes. Yeah, but for the most part, television is designed to numb us out.

[Speaker 1] (2:29:33 - 2:30:10)

Yes. And here we have the interesting concept of rising above thinking and falling below thinking. So what we are engaged in here, now most people are at the thinking level.

They are controlled by their mind. They are identified with their mind. This work that we are doing here, if you can call it work, it's not work really, is rising above thinking.

Being present means you have risen above thinking. You are fully conscious, but there's little or no thought activity.

[Speaker 2] (2:30:10 - 2:30:28)

Can you tell me why you say on page 233, make sure you don't go to sleep immediately after switching off the set, or even worse, fall asleep with the set still on? I know my friend Gail sometimes is watching TV and she goes, I don't know if I was watching or my feet were watching because she goes to sleep with the TV on.

[Speaker 1] (2:30:29 - 2:31:05)

So then all the turmoil that you've just been watching and you've just spent a significant amount of time below thought in a state of unawareness and unconsciousness, and if you go from, that will affect the quality of your sleep and you will notice also when you wake up in the morning, you won't be as refreshed. It's vital to go into sleep from a place of consciousness rather than unconsciousness. Then the quality of your sleep will be much better and you will wake up feeling renewed.

[Speaker 2] (2:31:06 - 2:31:14)

I noticed that. See, I don't watch television before going to bed. Hardly watch television at all, but I noticed that if I meditate before going to sleep, I have a better sleep.

[Speaker 1] (2:31:15 - 2:32:05)

Yes, and what I recommend to people is as they lie in bed, ready to go to sleep, lie on your back, flat on your back, and bring attention, scan your body with your attention from your feet to your head, your hands, your arms, and then feel the internal aliveness of the body as you lie there. You lie in the energy field of your body. That means there's also very little or no thinking going on because the attention moves into the body.

And there, from there, you go to sleep. Hold that for five, 10 minutes. It's a very pleasant way of saying goodbye to that day and of going into sleep.

It feels very much alive. It's joyful, actually, to lie there in that energy field.

[Speaker 2] (2:32:05 - 2:32:18)

And that energy field that you're talking about is exactly what this whole chapter is about, is the energy field of inner space. Go inside the body and allow yourself to be the observer of the body.

[Speaker 1] (2:32:18 - 2:32:44)

Yes, and then you connect with the energy. You merge the energy field. And of course, the body is mostly empty space, 99.999% empty space. Physicists tell us the space between the molecules, the atoms that make up the body, the spaces in between the atoms is so vast that your body is 99.999% empty space.

[Speaker 2] (2:32:47 - 2:33:23)

That's a lot for my brain to take in right now. But I do wanna thank you for joining us. This eighth class will be available on demand tomorrow for free here at oprah.com.

And if you wanna download or watch any of our classes, you can do that tomorrow, also at oprah.com and iTunes. It's free because of the generous support of nature-made soft gel vitamins. This week, you can update your workbook, get ready for our next class, chapter nine.

We're coming to the end. Your inner purpose, your inner purpose. For all of you who read this book, looking for your inner purpose, this is what it's all about, people.

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (2:33:23 - 2:33:23)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (2:33:24 - 2:33:38)

For bringing us into inner space. Next week is inner purpose. And as I was saying to Nick earlier, inner purpose, when it defines what you do in the world, put you in alignment and all things come.

As they should.

[Speaker 1] (2:33:38 - 2:33:41)

And then there comes the alignment of inner purpose and outer purpose.

[Speaker 2] (2:33:43 - 2:33:55)

That's it. Thanks, everybody. Good night.

Let's do our high five. We almost didn't do it last week and people complained. Bye, everybody.

Bye. Bye.

2008-Eckhart Tolle Oprah A New Earth Audiobook Podcast Chapter09

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 39:18)

CHAPTER NINE YOUR INNER PURPOSE As soon as you rise above mere survival, the question of meaning and purpose becomes of paramount importance in your life. Many people feel caught up in the routines of daily living, which seem to deprive their life of significance. Some believe life is passing them by, or has passed them by already.

Others feel severely restricted by the demands of their job and supporting a family, or by their financial or living situation. Some are consumed by acute stress, others by acute boredom. Some are lost in frantic doing, others are lost in stagnation.

Many people long for the freedom and expansion that prosperity promises. Others already enjoy the relative freedom that comes with prosperity, and discover that even that is not enough to endow their lives with meaning. There is no substitute for finding true purpose.

But the true or primary purpose of your life cannot be found on the outer level. It does not concern what you do, but what you are, that is to say, your state of consciousness. So the most important thing to realize is this.

Your life has an inner purpose and an outer purpose. Inner purpose concerns being and is primary. Outer purpose concerns doing and is secondary.

While this book speaks mainly of your inner purpose, this chapter and the next will also address the question of how to align outer purpose and inner purpose in your life. Inner and outer, however, are so intertwined that it is almost impossible to speak of one without referring to the other. Your inner purpose is to awaken.

It is as simple as that. You share that purpose with every other person on the planet, because it is the purpose of humanity. Your inner purpose is an essential part of the purpose of the whole, the universe and its emerging intelligence.

Your outer purpose can change over time. It varies greatly from person to person. Finding and living in alignment with the inner purpose is the foundation for fulfilling your outer purpose.

It is the basis for true success. Without that alignment, you can still achieve certain things through effort, struggle, determination and sheer hard work or cunning, but there is no joy in such endeavor, and it invariably ends in some form of suffering. Awakening Awakening is a shift in consciousness in which thinking and awareness separate.

For most people it is not an event but a process they undergo. Even those rare beings who experience a sudden, dramatic and seemingly irreversible awakening will still go through a process in which the new state of consciousness gradually flows into and transforms everything they do, and so becomes integrated into their lives. Awareness Instead of being lost in your thinking, when you are awake you recognize yourself as the awareness behind it.

Thinking then ceases to be a self-serving, autonomous activity that takes possession of you and runs your life. Awareness takes over from thinking. Instead of being in charge of your life, thinking becomes the servant of awareness.

Awareness is conscious connection with universal intelligence. Another word for it is presence, consciousness without thought. The initiation of the awakening process is an act of grace.

You cannot make it happen, nor can you prepare yourself for it or accumulate credits towards it. There isn't a tidy sequence of logical steps that leads towards it, although the mind would love that. You don't have to become worthy first.

It may come to the sinner before it comes to the saint, but not necessarily. That's why Jesus associated with all kinds of people, not just the irrespectable ones. There's nothing you can do about awakening.

Whatever you do will be the ego trying to add awakening or enlightenment to itself as its most prized possession and thereby making itself more important and bigger. Instead of awakening, you add the concept of awakening to your mind, or the mental image of what an awakened or enlightened person is like, and then try to live up to that image. Living up to an image that you have of yourself or that other people have of you is inauthentic living, another unconscious role the ego plays.

There's nothing you can do about awakening. If it has either already happened or not yet happened, how can it be the primary purpose of your life? Does not purpose imply that you can do something about it?

Only the first awakening, the first glimpse of consciousness without thought, happens by grace, without any doing on your part. If you find this book incomprehensible or meaningless, it has not yet happened to you. If something within you responds to it, however, if you somehow recognize the truth in it, it means the process of awakening has begun.

Once it has done so, it cannot be reversed, although it can be delayed by the ego. For some people, the reading of this book will initiate the awakening process. For others, the function of this book is to help them recognize that they have already begun to awaken, and to intensify and accelerate the process.

Another function of this book is to help people recognize the ego within them whenever it tries to regain control and obscure the arising awareness. For some, the awakening happens as they suddenly become aware of the kinds of thoughts they habitually think, especially persistent negative thoughts that they may have been identified with all of their lives. Suddenly, there is an awareness that is aware of thought, but is not part of it.

What is the relationship between awareness and thinking? Awareness is the space in which thoughts exist when that space has become conscious of itself. Once you have had a glimpse of awareness or presence, you know it firsthand.

It is no longer just a concept in your mind. You can then make a conscious choice to be present rather than to indulge in useless thinking. You can invite presence into your life, that is to say, make space.

With the grace of awakening comes responsibility. You can either try to go on as if nothing has happened, or you can see its significance and recognize the arising of awareness as the most important thing that can happen to you. Opening yourself to the emerging consciousness and bringing its light into this world then becomes the primary purpose of your life.

I want to know the mind of God, Einstein said. The rest are details. What is the mind of God?

Consciousness. What does it mean to know the mind of God? To be aware.

What are the details? Your outer purpose and whatever happens outwardly. So while you are perhaps still waiting for something significant to happen in your life, you may not realize that the most significant thing that can happen to a human being has already happened within you, the beginning of the separation process of thinking and awareness.

Many people who are going through the early stages of the awakening process are no longer certain what their outer purpose is. What drives the world no longer drives them. Seeing the madness of our civilization so clearly, they may feel somewhat alienated from the culture around them.

Some feel that they inhabit a no-man's land between two worlds. They are no longer run by the ego, yet the arising awareness has not yet become fully integrated into their lives. Inner and outer purpose have not merged.

A Dialogue on Inner Purpose The following dialogue condenses numerous conversations I have had with people who were looking for their true life purpose. Something is true when it resonates with and expresses your innermost being, when it is in alignment with your inner purpose. This is why I am directing their attention to their inner and primary purpose first.

I don't know exactly what it is, but I want some change in my life. I want expansion. I want to be doing something meaningful, and, yes, I want prosperity and the freedom that comes with it.

I want to do something significant, something that makes a difference in the world. But if you ask me what exactly I want, I would have to say that I don't know. Can you help me find my life purpose?

Your purpose is to sit here and talk to me, because that's where you are and that's what you're doing, until you get up and do something else. Then that becomes your purpose. So my purpose is to sit in my office for the next thirty years until I retire or get laid off?

You are not in your office now, so that's not your purpose. When you do sit in your office and do whatever you do, then that is your purpose. Not for the next thirty years, but for now.

I think there's some misunderstanding here. For you, purpose means what you are doing now. For me, it means having an overall aim in life, something big and significant that gives meaning to what I do, something that makes a difference.

Shuffling papers in the office is not it, I know that. As long as you are unaware of being, you will seek meaning only within the dimension of doing and of future, that is to say, the dimension of time. And whatever meaning or fulfillment you find will dissolve or turn out to have been a deception.

Invariably, it will be destroyed by time. Any meaning we find on that level is true only relatively and temporarily. For example, if caring for your children gives meaning to your life, what happens to that meaning when they don't need you and perhaps don't even listen to you anymore?

Meaning to your life? You depend on others being worse off than yourself so that your life can continue to be meaningful and you can feel good about yourself. If the desire to excel, win or succeed at this or that activity provides you with meaning, what if you never win or your winning streak comes to an end one day, as it will?

You would then have to look to your imagination or memories, a very unsatisfactory place to bring some meager meaning into your life. Making it, in whatever field, is only meaningful as long as there are thousands or millions of others who don't make it. So you need other human beings to fail so that your life can have meaning.

I'm not saying here that helping others, caring for your children or striving for excellence in whatever field are not worthwhile things to do. For many people, they are an important part of their outer purpose. But outer purpose alone is always relative, unstable and impermanent.

This does not mean that you should not be engaged in those activities. It means you should connect them to your inner, primary purpose, so that a deeper meaning flows into what you do. Without living in alignment with your primary purpose, whatever purpose you come up with, even if it is to create heaven on earth, will be of the ego or become destroyed by time.

Sooner or later, it will lead to suffering. If you ignore your inner purpose, no matter what you do, even if it looks spiritual, the ego will creep into how you do it, and so the means will corrupt the end. The common saying, the road to hell is paved with good intentions, points to this truth.

In other words, not your aims or your actions are primary, but the state of consciousness out of which they come. Fulfilling your primary purpose is laying the foundation for a new reality, a new earth. Once that foundation is there, your external purpose becomes charged with spiritual power, because your aims and intentions will be one with the evolutionary impulse of the universe.

The separation of thinking and awareness, which lies at the core of your primary purpose, happens through the negation of time. We are not speaking here, of course, of the use of time for practical purposes, such as making an appointment or planning a trip. We are not speaking of clock time, but of psychological time, which is the mind's deep-seated habit of seeking the fullness of life in the future where it cannot be found, and ignoring the only point of access to it, the present moment.

When you look upon what you do or where you are as the main purpose of your life, you negate time. This is enormously empowering. The negation of time in what you do also provides the link between your inner and outer purposes, between being and doing.

When you negate time, you negate the ego. Whatever you do, you will be doing extraordinarily well, because the doing itself becomes the focal point of your attention. Your doing then becomes a channel through which consciousness enters this world.

This means there is quality in what you do, even in the most simple action, like turning the pages in the phone book or walking across the room. The main purpose for turning the pages is to turn the pages. The secondary purpose is to find a phone number.

The main purpose for walking across the room is to walk across the room. The secondary purpose is to pick up a book at the other end, and the moment you pick up the book, that becomes your main purpose. You may remember the paradox of time we mentioned earlier.

Whatever you do takes time, and yet it is always now. So while your inner purpose is to negate time, your outer purpose necessarily involves future and so could not exist without time. But it is always secondary.

Whenever you become anxious or stressed, outer purpose has taken over and you lost sight of your inner purpose. You have forgotten that your state of consciousness is primary. All else, secondary.

Would living like this not stop me from looking to achieve something great? My fear is that I will remain stuck with doing little things for the rest of my life, things that are of no consequence. I am afraid of never rising above mediocrity, never daring to achieve anything great, not fulfilling my potential.

The great arises out of small things that are honored and cared for. Everybody's life really consists of small things. Greatness is a mental abstraction and a favorite fantasy of the ego.

The paradox is that the foundation for greatness is honoring the small things of the present moment instead of pursuing the idea of greatness. The present moment is always small in the sense that it is always simple, but concealed within it lies the greatest power. Like the atom, it is one of the smallest things yet contains enormous power.

Only when you align yourself with the present moment do you have access to that power. Or it may be more true to say that it then has access to you and through you to this world. Or when he said, It is not I but the Father within me who does the works.

And I can of my own self do nothing. Anxiety, stress and negativity cut you off from that power. The illusion that you are separate from the power that runs the universe returns.

You feel yourself to be alone again, struggling against something or trying to achieve this or that. But why did anxiety, stress or negativity arise? Because you turned away from the present moment.

And why did you do that? You thought something else was more important. You forgot your main purpose.

One small error, one misperception creates a world of suffering. Through the present moment you have access to the power of life itself, that which has traditionally been called God. As soon as you turn away from it, God ceases to be a reality in your life and all you are left with is the mental concept of God, which some people believe in and others deny.

Even belief in God is only a poor substitute for the living reality of God manifesting every moment of your life. Would complete harmony with the present moment not imply the cessation of all movement? Doesn't the existence of any goal imply that there is a temporary disruption in that harmony with the present moment, and perhaps a re-establishment of harmony at a higher or more complex level once the goal has been attained?

I imagine that the sapling that pushes its way through the soil can't be in total harmony with the present moment either, because it has a goal, it wants to become a big tree. Maybe once it has reached maturity it will live in harmony with the present moment. The sapling doesn't want anything because it is at one with the totality, and the totality acts through it.

Look at the lilies of the field, how they grow, said Jesus. They toil not, neither do they spin. Yet even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

We could say that the totality, life, wants the sapling to become a tree, but the sapling doesn't see itself as separate from life and so wants nothing for itself. It is one with what life wants. That's why it isn't worried or stressed.

And if it has to die prematurely, it dies with ease. It is as surrendered in death as it is in life. It senses, no matter how obscurely, its rootedness in being, the formless and eternal one life.

Like the Taoist sages of ancient China, Jesus likes to draw our attention to nature because he sees a power at work in it that humans have lost touch with. It is the creative power of the universe. Jesus goes on to say that if God clothes simple flowers in such beauty, how much more will God clothe you.

That is to say, that while nature is a beautiful expression of the evolutionary impulse of the universe, when humans become aligned with the intelligence that underlies it, they will express that same impulse on a higher, more wondrous level. So be true to life by being true to your inner purpose. As you become present and thereby total in what you do, your actions become charged with spiritual power.

At first there may be no noticeable change in what you do, only the how changes. Your primary purpose is now to enable consciousness to flow into what you do. The secondary purpose is whatever you want to achieve through the doing.

Whereas the notion of purpose before was always associated with future, there is now a deeper purpose that can only be found in the present, through the denial of time. When you meet with people, at work or wherever it may be, give them your fullest attention. You are no longer there primarily as a person, but as a field of awareness, of alert presence.

The original reason for interacting with the other person, buying or selling something, requesting or giving information and so on, now becomes secondary. The field of awareness that arises between you becomes the primary purpose for the interaction. That space of awareness becomes more important than what you may be talking about, more important than physical or thought objects.

The human being becomes more important than the things of this world. It does not mean you neglect whatever needs to be done on a practical level. In fact, the doing unfolds not only more easily, but more powerfully when the dimension of being is acknowledged and so becomes primary.

The arising of that unifying field of awareness between human beings is the most essential factor in relationships on the new earth. Is the notion of success just an egoic illusion? How do we measure true success?

The world will tell you that success is achieving what you set out to do. It will tell you that success is winning, that finding recognition and or prosperity are essential ingredients in any success. All or some of the above are usually by-products of success, but they are not success.

The conventional notion of success is concerned with the outcome of what you do. Some say that success is the result of a combination of hard work and luck, or determination and talent, or being in the right place at the right time. While any of these may be determinants of success, they are not its essence.

What they tell you, because it doesn't know, is that you cannot become successful. You can only be successful. Don't let a mad world tell you that success is anything other than a successful present moment.

And what is that? There is a sense of quality in what you do, even the most simple action. Quality implies care and attention, which come with awareness.

Quality requires your presence. Let's say that you are a business person and after two years of intense stress and strain you finally manage to come out with a product or service that sells well and makes money. Success?

In conventional terms, yes. In reality, you spend two years polluting your body, as well as the earth, with negative energy, made yourself and those around you miserable, and affected many others you never even met. The unconscious assumption behind all such action is that success is a future event and that the end justifies the means.

But the end and the means are one. And if the means did not contribute to human happiness, neither will the end. The outcome, which is inseparable from the actions that led to it, is already contaminated by those actions and so will create further unhappiness.

This is karmic action, which is the unconscious perpetuation of unhappiness. As you already know, your secondary or outer purpose lies within the dimension of time, while your main purpose is inseparable from the now and therefore requires the negation of time. How are they reconciled?

By realizing that your entire life journey ultimately consists of the step you are taking at this moment. There is always only this one step, and so you give it your fullest attention. This doesn't mean you don't know where you are going.

It just means this step is primary, the destination secondary. And what you encounter at your destination once you get there depends on the quality of this one step. Another way of putting it, what the future holds for you depends on your state of consciousness now.

When doing becomes infused with the timeless quality of being, that is success. Unless being flows into doing, unless you are present, you lose yourself in whatever you do. You also lose yourself in thinking as well as in your reactions to what happens externally.

What exactly do you mean when you say you lose yourself? The essence of who you are is consciousness. When consciousness, you, becomes completely identified with thinking and thus forgets its essential nature, it loses itself in thought.

When it becomes identified with mental-emotional formations such as wanting and fearing, the primary motivating forces of the ego, it loses itself in those formations. Consciousness also loses itself when it identifies with acting and reacting to what happens. Every thought, every desire or fear, every action or reaction is then infused with a false sense of self that is incapable of sensing the simple joy of being and so seeks pleasure and sometimes even pain as substitutes for it.

This is living in forgetfulness of being. In that state of forgetfulness of who you are, every success is no more than a passing delusion. Whatever you achieve, soon you will be unhappy again, or some new problem or dilemma will draw your attention in completely.

What My Inner Purpose Is To finding out what I am supposed to do on the outer level. The outer purpose varies greatly from person to person, and no outer purpose lasts forever. It is subject to time and then replaced by some other purpose.

The extent to which dedication to the inner purpose of awakening changes the external circumstances of your life also varies greatly. For some people, there is a sudden or gradual break with their past. Their work, living situation, relationships, everything undergoes profound change.

Some of the change may be initiated by themselves, not through an agonizing decision-making process, but by a sudden realization or recognition, this is what I have to do. The decision arrives ready-made, so to speak. It comes through awareness, not through thinking.

You wake up one morning and you know what to do. Some people find themselves walking out of an insane work environment or living situation. So before you discover what is right for you on the external level, before you discover what works, what is compatible with the awakening consciousness, you may have to find out what is not right, what no longer works, what is incompatible with your inner purpose.

Other kinds of change may suddenly come to you from without. A chance meeting brings new opportunity and expansion into your life. A long-standing obstacle or conflict dissolves.

Your friends either go through this inner transformation with you or drift out of your life. Some relationships dissolve, others deepen. You may get laid off from your job or you become an agent for positive change at your workplace.

Your spouse leaves you or you reach a new level of intimacy. Some changes may look negative on the surface, but you will soon realize that space is being created in your life for something new to emerge. There may be a period of insecurity and uncertainty.

What should I do? As the ego is no longer running your life, the psychological need for external security, which is illusory anyway, lessens. You are able to live with uncertainty, even enjoy it.

When you become comfortable with uncertainty, infinite possibilities open up in your life. It means fear is no longer a dominant factor in what you do and no longer prevents you from taking action to initiate change. The Roman philosopher Tacitus rightly observed that the desire for safety stands against every great and noble enterprise.

If uncertainty is unacceptable to you, it turns into fear. If it is perfectly acceptable, it turns into increased aliveness, alertness and creativity. Many years ago, when as a result of a strong inner impulse, I walked out of an academic career that the world would have called promising, stepping into complete uncertainty.

And out of that, after several years, emerged my new incarnation as a spiritual teacher. Much later, something similar happened again. The impulse came to give up my home in England and move to the west coast of North America.

I obeyed that impulse, although I didn't know the reason for it. Out of that move into uncertainty came the power of now, most of which was written in California and British Columbia while I didn't have a home of my own. I had virtually no income and lived on my savings, which were quickly running out.

In fact, everything fell into place beautifully. I ran out of money just as I was getting close to finishing writing. I bought a lottery ticket and won $1,000, which kept me going for another month.

Not everybody, however, will have to go through drastic change in their external circumstances. At the other end of the spectrum, you have people who stay exactly where they are and keep doing whatever they are doing. For them, only the how changes, not the what.

This is not due to fear or inertia. What they are doing already is a perfect vehicle for consciousness to come into this world, and it needs no other. They, too, bring into manifestation the new earth.

Anybody? If fulfilling your inner purpose is being at one with the present moment, why should anybody feel the need to remove themselves from their current work or living situation? Being at one with what is doesn't mean you no longer initiate change or become incapable of taking action.

But the motivation to take action comes from a deeper level, not from egoic wanting or fearing. Inner alignment with the present moment opens your consciousness and brings it into alignment with the whole, of which the present moment is an integral part. The whole, the totality of life, then acts through you.

What do you mean by the whole? On the one hand, the whole comprises all that exists. It is the world, or the cosmos.

But all things in existence, from microbes to human beings to galaxies, are not really separate things or entities, but form part of a web of interconnected, multidimensional processes. There are two reasons why we don't see this unity, why we see things as separate. One is perception, which reduces reality to what is accessible to us through the small range of our senses, what we can see, hear, smell, taste and touch.

But when we perceive without interpreting or mental labelling, which means without adding thought to our perceptions, we can actually still sense the deeper connectedness underneath our perception of seemingly separate things. The other more serious reason for the illusion of separateness is compulsive thinking. It is when we are trapped in incessant streams of compulsive thinking that the universe really disintegrates for us, and we lose the ability to sense the interconnectedness of all that exists.

Thinking cuts reality up into lifeless fragments. Extremely unintelligent and destructive action arises out of such a fragmented view of reality. However, there is an even deeper level to the whole than the interconnectedness of everything in existence.

At that deeper level, all things are one. It is the source, the unmanifested one life. It is the timeless intelligence that manifests as a universe unfolding in time.

The whole is made up of existence and being, the manifested and the unmanifested, the world and God. So when you become aligned with the whole, you become a conscious part of the interconnectedness of the whole and its purpose, the emergence of consciousness into this world. As a result, spontaneous helpful occurrences, chance encounters, coincidences and synchronistic events happen much more frequently.

Carl Jung called synchronicity an acausal connecting principle. This means there is no causal connection between synchronistic events on our surface level of reality. It is an outer manifestation of an underlying intelligence behind the world of appearances and a deeper connectedness that our mind cannot understand.

But we can be conscious participants in the unfolding of that intelligence, the flowering consciousness. Nature exists in a state of unconscious oneness with the whole. This, for example, is why virtually no wild animals were killed in the tsunami disaster of 2004.

Being more in touch with the totality than humans, they could sense the tsunami's approach long before it could be seen or heard and so had time to withdraw to higher terrain. Perhaps even that is looking at it from a human perspective. They probably just found themselves moving to higher terrain.

Doing this because of that is the mind's way of cutting up reality, whereas nature lives in unconscious oneness with the whole. It is our purpose and destiny to bring a new dimension into this world by living in conscious oneness with the totality and conscious alignment with universal intelligence. Can the whole use the human mind to create things or bring about situations that are in alignment with its purpose?

Yes. Whenever there is inspiration, which translates as in spirit, and enthusiasm, which means in God, there is a creative empowerment that goes far beyond what a mere person is capable of.

[Speaker 2] (39:21 - 40:07)

Okay, hi everybody, welcome to class number nine of our New Earth web series. We're here with author Eckhart Tolle, number nine, we're counting down. We're down to the last two chapters of our book and it is my most sincere hope that all of our classes so far have been leading you to find more purpose and joy in your own lives and tonight's class, tonight's lesson is really about bringing clarity to finding your inner purpose.

And so I think this is my most exciting chapter of all. I know I say that every chapter. I didn't say that last chapter and I'll tell you why in a few moments, but before we begin the class, I'm going to let you lead us in our moment of silence or moment of silence today.

[Speaker 1] (40:07 - 41:49)

Good, so we are already familiar with the silence that we start with and this time I'd like to use a very short, very powerful line from the Old Testament and I believe that this will be especially helpful for those Christians who are not quite comfortable with silence and somehow feel that silence is not compatible with Christianity or Christian teachings, which is not the case at all. Perhaps it has been overlooked in the past couple of centuries in Christianity, but it is certainly compatible. And so this is one of my favorite lines from the Old Testament and that can take us very powerfully into stillness and this line is, Be still and know that I am God.

Meaning, God is found precisely in that inner stillness, through the realm of inner stillness that you can reach what we call God, but which nobody can understand through the mind. It's a mystery, the mystery which you cannot really explain or name, which we call God, is the depth of that. We touch that when we go into stillness.

So these beautiful lines point to that inner experience. So I'll say it again and when I've said it, we just become still for a moment. Be still and know that I am God.

[Speaker 2] (42:43 - 44:09)

I love that. That's one of my favorite Bible passages. That and lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

Well, today, tonight, we're discussing chapter 9, your inner purpose. Finding your purpose is what I believe we're all put on the planet to do. So many people spend their lives trying to figure out what job to do, what to do, what to do, what to do.

I think when you figure out what your purpose is and you align the outer purpose with the inner purpose, then the job really doesn't matter. That's the essence of what you're saying in this chapter. Let us begin, page 257.

As soon as you rise above mere survival, the question of meaning and purpose becomes a paramount importance in your life. Many people feel caught up in the routines of daily living, you say, that seem to deprive their life of significance. Some believe life is passing them by or has passed them by already.

Others feel severely restricted by the demands of their job and supporting a family. Some are consumed by stress, lost in frantic doing. Many people long for the freedom and expansion that prosperity promises.

Others already enjoy the freedom that comes with prosperity and discover that even that's not enough to endow their lives with true meaning. There is no substitute for finding true purpose. So how do we do it?

[Speaker 1] (44:11 - 46:50)

Now, what you just read basically, of course, means that many people spend their lives in a state of almost permanent dissatisfaction, unfortunately. So they may be looking for some purpose or they may have given up hope that there is some purpose for them and they're just surviving or making a living. Or caught up in the doing.

Caught up in the doing, in the stress of it. And so usually when we talk about purpose, when people talk about purpose, they think of purpose in terms of future. Where am I going?

What am I supposed to do? What's the direction I'm going? What is my goal, the goal that I want to achieve?

And that, of course, is there, it has its place, but I call that the outer purpose. More fundamental than the outer purpose is what most people usually overlook. And that is the realization that what matters most is finding your inner purpose.

Now, to most people that initially doesn't mean anything, inner purpose. And this is why I explain it briefly in the dialogue that is there in that chapter where somebody asks about, I want to know what my purpose is. And I tell that person, your purpose is to be here at this moment and asking that question.

Because this is where you are. So inner purpose is aligning your life fully with the present moment. So that you are no longer out of alignment with the present moment, which leads to the state of dissatisfaction that we talked about.

That is the reality for many people. So you have to go, first of all, beyond the state of dissatisfaction that is so many people's reality. But you cannot go beyond the state of dissatisfaction through some future goal that says one day I would like to be in a state of fulfillment or satisfaction.

No, you have to enter the state of fulfillment and satisfaction by becoming one internally with the present moment. And your purpose then, your inner purpose, is that alignment with where you are right now. To be totally where you are and whatever you are doing, even if it doesn't look like the life purpose that you want for the next 30 years, whatever you are doing now, to be total in doing it.

No matter what it is, to be true to life by being true to this moment. Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (46:50 - 48:05)

As you say on page 271, there is always only this one step. And so you give it your fullest attention. This doesn't mean that you don't know where you're going.

It just means that the step that you're taking right now is primary. The destination is secondary. And what you encounter at your destination once you get there depends on the quality of this one step.

I love this so much because I discovered this when I was in the third grade. I couldn't articulate it this way in the third grade. When I was in the third grade, I turned in a book report early in Ms. Driver's class. And the reaction that I got from my third grade teacher taught me or informed me that when you do your best, when you do your best in any given moment, that is well received. Because my third grade teacher told all the other teachers in the teacher's lounge and I became known as this kid who really loved to read. And that's why we're sitting here today because of that.

But I learned in the third grade this whole process of whatever you're doing in any given moment, if you do it your best, it leads you to the next best moment. So you don't have to worry about what's the next moment coming if you only do your best in this moment.

[Speaker 1] (48:05 - 48:29)

That's right, because when the next moment comes, it comes as this moment. Right. The future, you never experience the future as the future.

You experience the future when it comes as the now because that's all there is. It's all there ever is. And that's an amazing realization for people to realize life is always just this.

It's always the now.

[Speaker 2] (48:29 - 48:41)

Yeah. It's interesting because last week we had Nick from the Bodhi Tree. And you said when Nick was up talking about he had to worry, well, you have to worry about your bills.

And you said, well, you don't have to worry about it.

[Speaker 1] (48:41 - 48:42)

You have to pay your bills.

[Speaker 2] (48:42 - 48:59)

You have to pay your bills, but you don't have to worry about paying your bills. I don't know about the rest of you, but that lesson has sort of been with me all week. So anytime I'd find myself in the mind worrying about something, I don't have to worry about this.

I can either figure out what to do about it or release that thought.

[Speaker 1] (48:59 - 49:00)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (49:00 - 49:00)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (49:00 - 49:16)

Yes. So if the bill is here but the money is not there right now, I can't do anything, put it aside. And then see what action can I take now.

And then you do whatever action you can take now. Yeah. If you can't take any action, then you just be with it.

Yeah. Right.

[Speaker 2] (49:16 - 49:40)

But I love that when I read that there is always only this one step. And so you give this one step your fullest attention. That's in the middle of page 271, everybody.

And this doesn't mean you don't know where you're going. It just means that this step is primary and the destination is secondary. And what happens is most people are living their lives as though the destination, the end.

Yes. The end is what it's all about.

[Speaker 1] (49:40 - 50:05)

As if the end were more important than the means. The means. And so the means and the end, however, are one.

Right. So if there's dissatisfaction and a denial of the present moment, which is a denial of life. Right.

You're not honoring life if you don't honor this moment by being open to this moment. Then that is how you will experience the future because the future is no more than an extension of now. Right.

[Speaker 2] (50:05 - 51:02)

You also say on page 271, the unconscious assumption behind all such action is, is that success is a future event. And that the end justifies the means. But the end and the means are one.

You say that. Let's say you're a business person after two years of intense stress and strain. You finally managed to come out with a product or service that sells well and makes money.

Success in conventional terms, yes. But in reality, you spent two years polluting your body as well as the earth with negative energy. You made everybody crazy.

Don't say that. Made everybody and everybody around you crazy and affected others you didn't even know. The unconscious assumption behind all of this action is that success is a future event and that the end justifies the means.

But the end and the means are one. And if the means did not contribute to human happiness, neither will the end. Yes.

So whatever the end result is, it's going to carry the energy of what it took to get there.

[Speaker 8] (51:02 - 51:03)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (51:03 - 51:04)

That's it. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (51:05 - 51:06)

Yes. That's exciting.

[Speaker 1] (51:06 - 51:18)

Yes. And that means you actually, you determine what kind of future you're going to experience by deciding to be totally aligned with the present moment.

[Speaker 2] (51:18 - 52:07)

That's right. It's your state of consciousness now that will determine whatever is manifested in the future. And when that happens, that'll just be now.

I got that. I got that very much. OK, so let's let's continue with this lesson before we go to Ivy a little bit.

You say the true, true or primary purpose of your life cannot be found on the outer level. To me, that's the essence of what this book is all about. Everybody who's searching and waiting for answers and looking for it on the outer level.

It does not concern what you do, but what you are, that is to say, your state of consciousness. So the most important thing to realize is this. Your life has an inner purpose and an outer purpose.

Inner purpose concerns being and is primary. Outer purpose concerns doing and is secondary. You want to elaborate on that?

[Speaker 1] (52:09 - 52:53)

So once you realize that the primary purpose of your life is this is the inner and this is what becomes the main purpose, then the secondary purpose, the outer purpose falls into place by being true to life and being true to now. Life will bring to you whatever is most appropriate. As far as your inner purpose is concerned, life will become helpful.

Suddenly, sometimes the helpful idea comes from within a sudden realization. Oh, this is what I want to do. This is what I have to do.

But the realization only came because you were aligned with the present moment.

[Speaker 2] (52:53 - 53:00)

So let's say this. Everybody, everybody who was born is alive and breathing, has an inner purpose.

[Speaker 1] (53:01 - 53:40)

Yes. The inner purpose is the same for all of humanity, which is being aligned with life, saying yes to life by saying yes to now. Aligned with the power of the present moment, which is the power of life.

That's everybody's purpose. Then the outer purpose varies from person to person. How that translates into what you do varies from person to person.

And even in one lifetime, it can vary. You may have a certain outer purpose for 10 or 20 years of your life and suddenly change completely. So that that varies and is subject to time.

It doesn't necessarily last your whole lifetime.

[Speaker 2] (53:40 - 54:04)

You say finding and living in alignment with the inner purpose is the foundation of fulfilling your outer purpose. It's the basis for true success. Without that alignment, you can still achieve certain things through effort, through struggle, through determination and sheer hard work or cunning.

But there is no joy in such endeavor and in such endeavor. And it invariably ends in some form of suffering.

[Speaker 1] (54:04 - 54:18)

Yes. That is you're struggling to make it. You're struggling and fighting and basically you're making you're fighting against life or the world.

Me against the universe is what the ego, how the ego sees it.

[Speaker 2] (54:18 - 54:41)

And isn't it sort of like swimming upstream? I always compare it to swimming upstream. When you're like going against the grain of your life, there's a flow to all of our lives.

And if you are suffering, if you are in pain, if you can't figure out what it is you're supposed to do, if you're worried, worried, worried all the time. It is because you're going against the flow or the grain of your life.

[Speaker 8] (54:41 - 54:41)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (54:41 - 54:43)

Means you're going against inner purpose.

[Speaker 8] (54:44 - 54:44)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (54:44 - 54:47)

That when you align with inner purpose, everything flows.

[Speaker 1] (54:48 - 54:48)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (54:48 - 54:48)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (54:49 - 55:13)

And any negative state, whenever negativity arises and you dwell in negative inner states, then you're not going with the flow of life. You're against the flow of life. And then you experience life as not helpful.

You experience life as even as hostile because you are in a state of inner denial. You're in a state of negativity. You're not open to life.

[Speaker 2] (55:14 - 55:50)

Okay. I got that. I really got that.

I really got that. Another friend of mine, a teacher who wrote a book called Seat of the Soul, Gary Zukav calls it, says, when the personality or ego comes to serve the energy of the soul or consciousness, we've been calling that, when the personality comes to serve the energy of the soul, that is authentic empowerment. I take that to mean from Seat of the Soul that when you align your personality or use your personality to serve the inner purpose, to serve the soul or the consciousness, then you are your most powerful.

[Speaker 1] (55:50 - 56:05)

Yes. In the world. Yes.

And then you're not run by the mind anymore because the mind becomes the servant of what I sometimes call awareness or presence. The mind then serves something greater than itself, which is the consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (56:05 - 56:34)

You say on page 259, instead of being lost in your thinking, when you are awake or aware, you recognize yourself as the awareness behind it. Thinking then ceases to be a self-serving, autonomous activity that takes possession of you and runs your life. Awareness takes over from thinking.

And instead of being in charge of your life, love this everybody, instead of being in charge of your life, thinking becomes the servant of awareness.

[Speaker 1] (56:34 - 56:42)

Yes. And then the mind is quite helpful. So the mind can be used for many wonderful things.

Right. When it no longer controls you.

[Speaker 2] (56:42 - 57:08)

I got it. So in essence, our goal on Earth as human beings, these spiritual beings in the body, higher consciousness inside this flesh-filled membranous whatever body, our goal is to allow the light of inner purpose or consciousness to come through everything that we do.

[Speaker 1] (57:08 - 57:23)

Yes. This is why we're here. And that is then also the entire universe is the purpose of the universe, one could say, is the flowering of consciousness.

Right. It moves towards more and more consciousness.

[Speaker 9] (57:24 - 57:24)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (57:24 - 57:38)

So we then become bringers of that, which is why we are here. So then the consciousness, you could call it the light, the light of the source, the light of God comes through the human form. That's right.

[Speaker 2] (57:38 - 57:54)

And so when you allow the light of God, the light of consciousness to come through you, and it is allowed to fuel whatever it is you do, whatever it is you do will be fueled with a spiritual power that will allow you to be the best at what you do.

[Speaker 1] (57:55 - 58:14)

Yes. And then that also means that what you do is not of primary importance, but how you do what you do is what matters, how you do it. And you could be doing something that the world would regard as relatively insignificant and yet make an enormous difference to the consciousness on the planet.

[Speaker 2] (58:15 - 58:23)

Ivy is Skyping us from her living room in Richmond, Virginia. Hi, Ivy. I hear you have a question about one of my favorite quotes.

Go ahead. What is the question?

[Speaker 5] (58:23 - 59:31)

Well, my question deals with trying to find a career path that merges your inner purpose with outer purpose. And on the top of page 274, you say, Eckhart says, there may be a period of insecurity and uncertainty. And he goes on to say that if you're able to live with uncertainty, even enjoy it, you become comfortable with uncertainty.

Infinite possibilities open up in your life. And my question is this. I'm 26 years old.

And in the past few months, I've tried to find a career path that merges my inner purpose with my outer purpose and haven't really been able to do so. I began to think a lot about my life's purpose and question whether or not I would ever find a career that merged my life's work with something I was passionate about. So my question really is twofold.

The first is, how should I approach finding a career that is fulfilling but doesn't strengthen my ego? And secondly, and perhaps the more pressing question for me is, how do I do this while also becoming comfortable and embracing the uncertainty that's defining my life right now?

[Speaker 1] (59:33 - 59:56)

Good question. Yes. So to what extent have you become successful in embracing and accepting this time of your life that you don't know yet what your purpose is?

To what extent are you able to say, well, can I become comfortable with not knowing? Have you been able to do that?

[Speaker 5] (59:57 - 1:00:05)

There are periods where I've been able to, but mostly it's just a lot of thinking and feeling very uncomfortable about not knowing.

[Speaker 1] (1:00:06 - 1:02:13)

Yes. And often the uncomfortableness are certain thoughts that go through your mind that tell you that it's not okay to be in this state. And then you have certain emotions, which are the body's reaction to those thoughts.

So when these thoughts arise, they tell you it's not okay. The way you are right now is not okay. Realize that these are thoughts that arise in your mind, conditioned by the surrounding culture and so on.

And you don't necessarily need to believe in each thought that comes and tells you it's not okay not to know what to do. Life is an adventure. It's not a package tour.

When you travel, you can take a package tour and everything is already planned. There's no uncertainty. And every year you go to a nice hotel in a more exotic country, but you won't even know it's exotic because your hotel room is the same as every other hotel room.

You're totally sure that everything is planned. You know beforehand where you're going to be in ten days' time exactly. That's not an adventure and it's unlikely that you are going to evolve internally through a trip like that.

But if you went into a true trip into some exotic country, thrown back on your own resources, then you would encounter true adventure. And you would probably not be the same person when you come back. Why not?

Because we are constantly faced with uncertainty. And if you're able to accept that, you can actually enjoy the adventure. I'm giving this analogy of a trip because life is a journey.

And so the person who cannot enjoy the uncertainty when adventure comes is going to be in a continuous state of negativity, of fear. I don't want to be here. I'd rather be at home.

So realize that life is an adventure and part of the adventure of life is being in that state that you are in now. If everything were already clear to you now, everything were already mapped out, there would be no evolution of yourself as a human being.

[Speaker 2] (1:02:13 - 1:02:25)

And may I say, Ivy, that is part of what being 26 is all about. That is what 26 is. You're trying to figure it out.

That is what the 20s are for.

[Speaker 1] (1:02:25 - 1:02:57)

Yes. And another very helpful thing to remember is one of the most wonderful things in your period of life is to make mistakes. Yeah.

Because mistakes means you realize, oh, that's not that wasn't my purpose. Yes. And so you're a little bit closer to your true purpose.

And then perhaps you think, oh, maybe that is my purpose. And then after a while you realize, no, that's not. It's very helpful to make mistakes because gradually you begin to realize what it is that is right for you.

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (1:02:57 - 1:04:07)

And many times, as Eckhart says in this chapter, Ivy, and you will find in your 20s, the 20s are about figuring out where you want to be. And there's this frustration. That's why they call that show The Young and the Restless because there's a restlessness about it.

And I know that because I've kept journals since I was 15. In my 20s, I'm just restless, restless, restless. And when I was your age, 26, I was an anchorwoman in television doing the evening news.

I hated it every single day. And what I now realize, and even then, my displeasure with being in that place every day was really informing me what I needed to do. What I needed to do was to get out of that space.

And many times, being in a space that you can clearly identify as this is, I do not want to do this. I want to be in television, I knew, but I do not want to do this. And I had my father and everybody around saying, you're going to give up that job in television?

I knew I could not do that. News felt exploitive to me. So many times, if you're in a position where you know what you don't want to do, isn't that also helpful, Eckhart?

[Speaker 1] (1:04:07 - 1:04:25)

Oh, yes, yes. For a while, I thought my life purpose was to be an academic at university. And then the realization, after years of spending time working hard to become a professor, I realized that's not my life purpose at all.

But I had to go through that.

[Speaker 2] (1:04:25 - 1:04:28)

Didn't you give up a promising career as an academic?

[Speaker 1] (1:04:28 - 1:05:53)

Yes. I gave up the PhD. I gave up the promising career.

And my relatives, my mother, thought I was insane to give that up. But I knew this is what I had to do. It was so clear.

There was no doubt about it anymore. For a little while, there was doubt, and then the realization was so strong, I had to walk out of there. And that led to a period of uncertainty.

For a few years, I didn't know what am I supposed to do with my life. Here I am. I was just barely managing to survive.

And gradually, I lived, but I was not unhappy. I was happy with the present moment then already. And then gradually, something evolved.

People started asking me questions. People that I met casually in parks. And gradually, a kind of spiritual teaching started to happen.

And after a little while, when somebody called me for the first time, Oh, you are a spiritual teacher. Oh, that's what I am. And so the purpose came by itself.

It came just out of that state of just being with what is and not being unhappy with not knowing. Being at ease with not knowing. Then, it's much more likely to come to you when you are at ease with not knowing.

So the question that you can ask yourself, can I be at ease with not knowing?

[Speaker 2] (1:05:53 - 1:06:16)

Because what you say on 274 that Ivy had mentioned earlier, you become comfortable with uncertainty. Infinite possibilities open up in your life. And it means when you become comfortable with uncertainty, it means fear is no longer a dominant factor in what you do and no longer prevents you from taking action to initiate change.

That's the big thing.

[Speaker 8] (1:06:16 - 1:06:16)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:06:16 - 1:06:26)

Because as long as you are afraid, you cannot allow the energy of what is supposed to happen to come into your life, as long as you are afraid, right? The fear blocks that.

[Speaker 1] (1:06:26 - 1:06:26)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:06:26 - 1:06:27)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:06:28 - 1:06:53)

So be alert and watch your mind to see what kind of thoughts it produces. Feel also there may be the emotion of fear, as Oprah says, arising occasionally, associated with a thought. Like what's going to happen to me.

Yes. Because the mind wants to know what the future is going to bring. But how dead life would be, how dreadfully boring it would be if you knew already what's going to happen.

[Speaker 2] (1:06:53 - 1:07:21)

Well, part of that is because, too, people get afraid because of, again, what Nick said. Nick is our spiritual teacher. Because of what Nick said last week about worrying about your bills because you're living outside yourself.

You're creating more debt, creating more debt, creating more debt, allowing yourself to operate from the thinking mind. Yes. At the time that you made these decisions for yourself, you were living on, practically, you said, at the poverty level.

[Speaker 1] (1:07:22 - 1:07:22)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:07:22 - 1:07:22)

So.

[Speaker 1] (1:07:23 - 1:07:38)

Yes. And so you survive somehow. You make it.

One more question before you go. Is there anything in your life that you truly enjoy? Are there certain things that you enjoy doing that may not be necessarily associated in your mind with career?

[Speaker 5] (1:07:41 - 1:07:45)

Not really. That I can think of. Nothing I can think of.

[Speaker 1] (1:07:45 - 1:07:52)

Okay. Then what's left is for you to enjoy the present moment and make that your spiritual practice. Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (1:07:53 - 1:08:03)

Okay. But I thought you were saying earlier, Ivy, about, you know, trying to align your passion, what you love, and getting paid for it. Isn't that what you were talking about earlier?

[Speaker 5] (1:08:03 - 1:08:13)

Well, something I was passionate about. To align something. To align what I'm passionate about once I figure that out.

I don't really know what that is right now.

[Speaker 2] (1:08:14 - 1:08:31)

Yeah. Well, to reiterate something that Eckhart was saying last week, it doesn't come out of your head. For everybody who's looking for that answer, for the purpose of your life, or what should I be doing, it does not come from your head.

It's not something that you're ever going to think up.

[Speaker 1] (1:08:31 - 1:08:32)

No.

[Speaker 2] (1:08:32 - 1:09:11)

You don't think it. It comes from that space that we opened tonight's session with, being still and knowing that I am God. Being still and allowing the presence of a universal energy, the presence of consciousness to come through you in such a way that it's a feeling.

It is a feeling. It is not something you're going to think up how to do it. And you will just start to feel that I feel better doing this thing than I feel doing the other thing.

It's a feeling that comes to you, not something that comes in your head.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:11 - 1:09:29)

That's right, yes. And you need to be careful that you are not in a state of dissatisfaction because when you're in dissatisfaction, the answer is not likely to come, neither from within nor from without. So keep your inner space clear, aligned with now, so that no negativity arises.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:30 - 1:10:04)

And then may I add also, for you and everybody else who's trying to get this whole idea of purpose, some clarity about that, when you allow yourself to be still with it, you're not afraid of the uncertainty. The universe rises up to meet you. Eckhart says in here, I can't remember what page in this chapter, but he talks about how coincidences happen, little things and big things happen.

So you then have to be alert and paying attention to your life so when the opening shows itself, you're ready.

[Speaker 1] (1:10:04 - 1:10:26)

Yes, and that's much more likely to come when you're in a state of clarity aligned with now than the answer can come from within or the answer can come from without. As some chance encounter, something you see in the paper, or something you can't even think where it might come from, a synchronistic event, a coincidence.

[Speaker 2] (1:10:26 - 1:10:27)

It shows itself.

[Speaker 1] (1:10:27 - 1:10:28)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:10:28 - 1:10:33)

That's right. In ways that you hadn't seen before. Thank you, Ivy, from Richmond, Virginia.

Thank you. Thank you so much.

[Speaker 8] (1:10:34 - 1:10:34)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:10:34 - 1:10:50)

So you say on 261, while you're perhaps still waiting for something significant to happen to your life, you may not realize that the most significant thing that can happen to a human being has already happened within you, the beginning of the separation process of thinking and awareness.

[Speaker 1] (1:10:51 - 1:11:18)

Which is the awakening, which is another way of explaining what the term awakening means, that before your awareness or your consciousness was totally identified with thought processes, with thinking. But now, and this is the case for everybody who reads this book and finds it meaningful. Right.

It means if you are reading this book and you find it meaningful, something within your response, it means you have already begun to awaken.

[Speaker 9] (1:11:18 - 1:11:19)

To awaken, yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:11:19 - 1:11:24)

If you haven't, the book will be meaningless. Got it.

[Speaker 2] (1:11:24 - 1:12:03)

You say as long as you are unaware of being on 263, you will seek meaning only within the dimension of doing and the future, that is to say, the dimension of time. Whatever meaning or fulfillment you find will dissolve. Invariably, it will be destroyed by time.

And meaning, we find on that level, is true only relatively and temporary. So you're saying looking outside yourself, you're not going to find the meaning. No, that's right.

So let's go to the Beauditry Bookstore in West Hollywood. Is Nick there tonight? Well, Nick, step on up to the microphone.

You're back. So glad to see you.

[Speaker 4] (1:12:04 - 1:12:04)

Good to be here.

[Speaker 2] (1:12:05 - 1:12:07)

Okay. You have a question tonight?

[Speaker 4] (1:12:08 - 1:12:55)

I do. And actually, my question kind of relies on a premise that's not exactly stated in the book. But the premise is God is love.

And if God is love and you love what you're doing, as far as a career, then does God then sanction that career? And is it then meant to be? Is it right if, let's say, if you don't go to church, but if you enjoy doing something like reading, and if you're reading constantly and you get a more spiritual feeling from reading than ever walking into a church, then isn't that right?

Isn't that in alignment with, or is love not anything that matters in a career choice?

[Speaker 1] (1:12:56 - 1:15:37)

Well, good question. Now, love, of course, is used in a very loose sense. It means so many different things to different people.

And the expression, I love this or that, or I love doing this or that, is used casually by people, often meaning totally different things. For example, if somebody is obsessed with what they do in an ego way, totally focused, but in a negative way to a large extent, totally obsessed with what they are doing, an outside observer might say, oh, he loves what he's doing. He loves it so much that he gets up at 5 every morning and doesn't leave the office until 10 at night.

But he's totally obsessed with what he's doing, and there's no love in it. It's an obsession. But because love is used in such a loose way, sometimes we call that love.

So when you actually love what you are doing, it's a totally different energy field that moves into what you are doing. It means you are aligned completely with what you do. And then, yes, then you do bring a different consciousness.

You bring the unconditioned consciousness into this world through whatever you do. And it might be a doing, or it may just be being somewhere. You mention a church, you can find God in many places.

Any place is holy. And the present moment, when you only pay attention to it completely, then you realize actually it's sacred. The present moment is sacred when you really bring attention to it.

And then it doesn't matter where you are. You can be in a building, you can be out in nature, you can be in the middle of a traffic, and you really bring your attention to this moment and you realize there is a sacredness here. You may be able to feel it more deeply when you are out in nature than in the middle of LA freeway, but even there it can be sensed if you are present enough.

And there, that's love. There love arises. And if you are doing something and you are totally in what you do, not obsessed, not wanting the future more than you want the present, but totally wanting the present, totally wanting what you are doing, then, yes, then you love what you are doing.

That is true love. And anybody who embodies that energy is creating the new earth.

[Speaker 4] (1:15:39 - 1:15:40)

So that's correct then.

[Speaker 1] (1:15:40 - 1:15:40)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (1:15:41 - 1:16:20)

There's a difference. I guess I'm thinking of Joseph Campbell where he talks about following your bliss, and he talks about how appetitive desires like eating and sex and drugs, things through the body, loves that come through the body, are nothing compared to the love that comes from the spirit, which makes everything else pale in comparison. And that is the bliss that Joseph Campbell talks about.

Yes. And that's what I think you mean when you say that we are present and we are doing what we are supposed to do because we feel that feeling that makes everything else pale in comparison. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:16:21 - 1:17:08)

Nick, that's what he's talking about at the bottom of 261. So while you're perhaps still waiting for something significant to happen in your life, you may not realize the most significant thing that can happen has already happened within you, the beginning of the separation process of thinking and awareness. When you take yourself out of your head and take yourself out of the doing, doing, doing, doing, doing, and allow yourself to connect with the consciousness or spirit or soul, whichever word you want to use for it, that is connected to all consciousness.

The spirit that is connected to the greater spirit is what he's talking about. Yes. You got it, Nick.

Thanks. It's a lot of hard work. Nick, listen, I didn't worry this week because he's told you not to worry.

Have you been worried about your bills this week?

[Speaker 1] (1:17:10 - 1:17:12)

Yeah, a little bit.

[Speaker 2] (1:17:13 - 1:17:15)

Oh, wow.

[Speaker 1] (1:17:15 - 1:18:10)

Thanks, everybody. One more thing just to add to this. When the doing, when you're doing in that state of consciousness, that means whatever you do is not primarily a means to an end.

Correct. But an end in itself. Right.

You know what you want to achieve through the doing. That's fine. But the essence of the doing is in the doing, not the goal that you want to achieve through it.

So often the question you can ask yourself is, is what I'm doing right now primarily a means to an end, or am I total in what I do? And there's a different quality flows into what you do when it is not just a means to an end. And that is doing in the state of presence, and different energy flows into that.

[Speaker 2] (1:18:10 - 1:19:00)

I love that. We're at the bottom of 263. You say, for example, if caring for your children gives meaning to your life, because everybody's looking for meaning, what happens to the meaning when they don't need you anymore and perhaps don't even listen to you anymore?

If helping others gives meaning to your life, you depend on others being worse off than yourself so that your life can continue to be meaningful and you feel good about yourself. If the desire to excel, win, or succeed, I'm at the top of 264, everybody, at this or that activity provides you with meaning, what if you never win or your winning streak comes to an end? Making it in whatever field is only meaningful as long as there are thousands or millions of others who don't make it.

So you need other human beings to fail so that your life can have meaning. I was going to ask, though, what if you're making it, you're aligned with your purpose?

[Speaker 1] (1:19:00 - 1:19:06)

Yes. Now, after that, it doesn't say that those things should not be pursued immediately after what you just read.

[Speaker 2] (1:19:06 - 1:19:22)

Yes. It says, I'm not saying here that helping others, caring for your children, or striving for excellence, in whatever field, are not worthwhile things to do. For many people, they're important.

In the end, though, you say it means you should connect them to your inner primary purpose so that a deeper meaning flows into what you do.

[Speaker 1] (1:19:22 - 1:20:33)

Yes. For example, then, if, for example, we talked about looking after your children, and that being the main purpose of your life, and again, we have the two dimensions of purpose, outer purpose, which is what a good parent does anyway, you look after the needs of the child, you protect the child as much as possible, but is the inner purpose there also? The inner purpose is there when a field of awareness arises between you and the child.

There's a space. Are you able to give the child spaciousness or space? Are you able to be open and listen to the child in a nonjudgmental way?

Are you able to be with your child? Are you able to be with your child, or are you lost in doing? Is it continuous doing, or can you bring being into your relationship with your child?

And if you bring being in, that is you're fulfilling the inner purpose. And then, when the child grows up, it's much less likely or improbable that you will get attached to your role of parent. And you will then be able to let go of the role and then be able to be whatever you need to be in any given situation.

[Speaker 2] (1:20:33 - 1:21:16)

All right. You say if you ignore your inner purpose, that's why I keep reading from the book because I think I want to stress how important it is to connect your inner purpose. If you ignore your inner purpose, bottom of 264, no matter what you do, even if it looks spiritual, the ego will creep into how you do it, and so the means will corrupt the end.

The common saying, the road to hell is paved with good intentions, points to this truth. So in other words, not your aims or your actions are primary, but the state of consciousness out of which they come. Fulfilling your primary purpose is laying the foundation for a new reality, a new earth.

Doesn't that mean that it's not just what you do, but it's the intention behind what you do it?

[Speaker 1] (1:21:17 - 1:21:52)

Yes. The consciousness that flows into what you do and there's no future is always secondary in the doing. That is, your future is not that you look forward to primarily, but totality in what you do, being totally here.

Any performer, any artist knows this very well. When you are total, then a completely different energy arises.

[Speaker 2] (1:21:52 - 1:21:52)

That's right.

[Speaker 1] (1:21:53 - 1:22:11)

I sometimes, you see, the moment the artist performs, sometimes there's an empowerment that suddenly comes in because then, it's sometimes only then that this person can be absolutely total in the present moment.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:11 - 1:22:15)

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I see that. I was with Tina Turner and Cher this weekend.

[Speaker 8] (1:22:15 - 1:22:16)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:16 - 1:22:56)

The show that we're doing on May 8th, everybody don't miss that, Tina Turner and Cher, and watching them in rehearsal, you know, sitting in the, you know, we're just all sitting in the bleachers and watching and then when they each came to the stage, something happened where there was like, they were infused by something from another level that you could see. Something came over them on the stage and whatever that was, this is so interesting, watching them perform, you say, I want some of that. I want some of that.

And what that is, is the presence or level of consciousness that they're bringing. Yes. Not just the beat and the rock and roll.

[Speaker 1] (1:22:56 - 1:22:57)

No.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:57 - 1:22:57)

No.

[Speaker 1] (1:22:57 - 1:23:04)

And that's also what people respond to. They go there because they can sense that there's something there that is very powerful.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:04 - 1:23:07)

Very powerful, yeah. Inspiration and enthusiasm.

[Speaker 1] (1:23:08 - 1:23:08)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:08 - 1:23:29)

Yeah, and you say when the combination of inspiration and enthusiasm, something happens that's bigger than one person. Yes. Yeah.

So Gwen and Bob have spent the last 17 years teaching at schools on U.S. military bases throughout Europe. They now live outside Munich, Germany, and are Skyping us from their kitchen. Hi, Gwen and Bob, from Munich.

[Speaker 9] (1:23:29 - 1:23:29)

Hi Oprah.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:30 - 1:23:34)

Hi. Hello to you all. It's the middle of the night there, early morning.

What's your question?

[Speaker 6] (1:23:35 - 1:24:28)

Well, my question is about apologizing. Reading on page 258, you say the most important thing to realize is you're like us, inner and outer purpose. And I have found that apologizing when it's the right time helps me get back in alignment.

However, when I've been wronged by someone, I expect to hear that apology to help build the relationship and get it back to a positive way. And I like feeling comfortable around others. And when there's not closure and apologies don't come, I feel very uncomfortable.

And I'm beginning to wonder if this is my ego at play and how can I maintain an inner and outer alignment when I don't feel I've had an appropriate apology from the person I expected it from.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:28 - 1:24:46)

Well, you just answered your own question, really. I'm going to let Eckhart answer that. But you just answered your own question because you just, key word here, appropriate.

I've not received the appropriate apology from people. That would be your ego that needs that appropriate apology. Take it away, Eckhart.

[Speaker 1] (1:24:48 - 1:26:09)

Mr. Tholen. And adding to that, of course, the ego, another thing the ego does, it keeps accounts and it says, you owe me. And in this case, of course, it says, you owe me an apology.

Now, this is good because this is an opportunity for you to become aware of the ego in you. So whenever the ego arises and you recognize it as the ego, it's a great opportunity of saying, oh, there's the ego. There are the thoughts that the ego produces in my mind which say, he should apologize, she should have apologized.

And another thought that comes, I can't be comfortable with this person anymore unless he or she apologizes. So you can observe the thoughts that the ego produces and you can observe the emotions that are there as a result of those thoughts. So it's a wonderful opportunity for you to see your own ego, which is no more than the human ego.

It means there's anything wrong with you. Right. But to observe the ego in action.

This is always the greatest thing. And then at that moment when you become aware of this kind of thought, emotional, mental-emotional pattern in you, who are you? When you recognize it, you're already in the space of awareness from where you recognize it.

[Speaker 2] (1:26:09 - 1:26:12)

And you take away its power. You diminish its power.

[Speaker 1] (1:26:12 - 1:26:36)

Yes. And so people, there are many reasons why people don't apologize. People don't apologize because they may not even know that there is anything to apologize in their view of things.

Or they may not apologize because their interpretation of what's happened is the complete opposite of your interpretation. And perhaps they think or their ego thinks that you should apologize. Or, or.

[Speaker 6] (1:26:36 - 1:26:41)

I like to think I do. I get it.

[Speaker 2] (1:26:41 - 1:26:55)

But also that's how you're using it based on what you're saying, based on what you've just told us here. It's your ego's way of feeling superior because you like to think you do. And you're the one that goes and says, well, I apologized and you didn't.

[Speaker 1] (1:26:57 - 1:28:07)

Or you can keep a resentment inside for quite a while. And in that resentment, whenever you think of that person or you meet that person, there's a little resentment at the back, which is also the ego. The ego loves hanging onto resentments.

And when resentments go on for a long time, as I've described somewhere in the book, they become grievances. Right. Grievances are heavy, long-term resentments.

So you can observe that in yourself and, again, be happy that you are observing, able to observe the ego in you. It's a wonderful thing to be able to do that. And, of course, and then the other person who is not apologizing, perhaps it's the ego who prevents them from apologizing because the ego in many people, this is not a particular function perhaps of your ego, but in many other people, the ego finds it almost impossible to apologize because it believes that it would be losing something by apologizing, which is, of course, a delusion.

So these things happen. It's a wonderful opportunity for you to see your own ego. And by seeing it, awareness grows in you.

[Speaker 2] (1:28:07 - 1:28:09)

That's right. Bob, what's your question for Eckhart?

[Speaker 7] (1:28:10 - 1:28:26)

Yes, on page 265, Eckhart refers to your external purpose becomes charged with spiritual power because your aims and intentions will be one with the evolutionary impulse of the universe.

[Speaker 2] (1:28:26 - 1:28:27)

I love that.

[Speaker 7] (1:28:27 - 1:28:30)

What is the evolutionary impulse of the universe?

[Speaker 2] (1:28:30 - 1:29:05)

That is so great. Let's read that one more time. Once that foundation, he says, fulfilling your primary purpose is laying the foundation for a new reality, a new earth.

Once that foundation is there, your external purpose becomes charged with spiritual power because your aims and intentions will be one with the evolutionary impulse of the universe. Thank you. Because I had written aha and did three little, I've read it three times, and I got stars, circles, everything around that.

That's great. Thank you for bringing that up, Bob. Okay.

What do you mean by that?

[Speaker 1] (1:29:05 - 1:31:09)

Now, I'm not sending you back to the book, but the answer is somewhere in the book. But I'm not sending you there now, so let's look at it. Okay.

The evolutionary purpose of the universe is the growth of consciousness. It's going towards, something is flowing into this world of so-called matter, physicality. Something is flowing into this world of physicality or matter that comes from a different dimension almost, one could say.

Well, how do I know this? Because I know it in myself. And I know it, I've observed it in other people too.

Something is flowing into this world of this heavy, it seems to be very heavy, the heaviness of matter. Something very different flows in, which I call consciousness, which you can call spirit. So, a spirit is beginning, has already started a long time ago, but now beginning more fully through the human form, amongst other forms, to come into this world more and more fully.

This is the arising of awareness, the arising of presence. And all that is part of the greater evolution because there's a famous dictum, which is so true, as above, so below. So, whatever happens here on this planet and in the human form will be reflected throughout the universe.

These are universal movements, as above, so below, as below, so above. So, what happens here in the microcosm of the earth will also be happening in the macrocosm. So, when I say, people might ask me, how do you know what the purpose of the universe is, the evolution of the universe is?

Because I know it in myself. If you know it in yourself, you know many, many answers, even about the macrocosm, because the macrocosm is no more than a reflection of the inner.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:10 - 1:31:25)

And you see it all the time in nature. Yes. You see it all the time in nature.

The whole process that's going on in nature is also going on with humans. Yes. We compare ourselves to nature.

Yes. Yeah, the principles are the same. Yeah.

Did that answer your question, Bob?

[Speaker 1] (1:31:27 - 1:31:58)

Kind of. No, you have to really know the answer. You have to go within.

It's not through the mind or through somebody like listening to me and then saying, okay, I believe what you said. I don't want anybody to believe what I said. I want people to really go within and verify within themselves whether or not that is true in their own experience.

So by becoming more conscious of your inner being, many answers will come.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:58 - 1:33:52)

Okay, let me take a stab at it, interpreting what I hear Eckhart saying. He's saying that there is a universal source or power of energy that all of us, that we all stem from that universal power or source or energy. You're with me, right?

And you can call it God. You can call it whatever you choose to call it. You can call it higher consciousness or you can call it universal energy.

You can call it the divine. When you tap into the part of you that we're calling consciousness or presence or inner purpose, when you tap into that, that is connected to the source of all universal power and energy. You're with me so far?

Yeah. Okay. And when you tap into that part of you that is connected to all universal power and energy, your aims and intentions will be one with what all universal power and energy is striving for.

And what it's striving for is for you to allow the consciousness to come through you as a human being. So that's what he means by evolutionary impulse. The impulse of the universe is to support you and you bringing about your higher consciousness.

That's why you're here, is to allow that part of you that is connected to all that is universal energy, the source or God. To better explain it, it is the God in you. When you allow the God in you to come forth, the God of all things supports that.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:53 - 1:34:08)

Yeah. And you just gave us a demonstration of that because the whole energy shifted when you spoke those words. A very powerful energy came through.

So beyond what you said, the energy that came through with it was actually a demonstration of that.

[Speaker 2] (1:34:08 - 1:34:13)

Well, thank you. That's true. Did it?

Yeah. You got it now, Bob?

[Speaker 7] (1:34:14 - 1:34:14)

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (1:34:14 - 1:34:16)

Can I ask one more thing? Sure, sure.

[Speaker 7] (1:34:16 - 1:34:35)

Would there be a way to convey Eckhart's teachings on awareness to Christians who are probably offended by labels like evolution? Is there a way to convey this message?

[Speaker 6] (1:34:36 - 1:34:39)

Of the awakening without getting into the evolution.

[Speaker 7] (1:34:39 - 1:34:43)

To people who are going to really shut down when they hear the word evolution.

[Speaker 1] (1:34:44 - 1:35:00)

Well, if they are completely shut down, then, of course, there's no way they are going to listen to you. But not all those people are going to be completely shut down. I don't believe that evolution is necessarily a problem for all Christians.

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (1:35:00 - 1:35:17)

And evolutionary process, the evolutionary impulse of the universe is about the evolvement as the earth. Because even as Christians, you know that the earth keeps evolving. It keeps evolving.

It keeps moving forward. We as human beings keep evolving.

[Speaker 1] (1:35:17 - 1:35:19)

You can see it in your own life.

[Speaker 2] (1:35:19 - 1:35:33)

You can see it in your own life. You're not the same as you were 25 years ago. That is your evolutionary process as Bob and Gwen here on the planet.

Bob and Gwen have evolved as Christians.

[Speaker 8] (1:35:33 - 1:35:34)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:35:34 - 1:36:43)

And even as you are a practicing Christian in the beginning of practicing Christianity, your faith may not be as strong or you may not be as tested. But you evolve in the process of your Christianity. Actually, can you ask somebody in the back to bring me the e-mail, Dean, that came in from a message board this week that the woman who talked about Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as consciousness and that there was a beautiful e-mail that came on the message board from a woman who's, you know, a practicing Christian who said that she was Catholic.

And I'm going to try to get the e-mails because she best... And I had an aha moment reading it because I thought, oh, that's right. The Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit is the higher consciousness that you're talking about.

And you just call it consciousness. But as a Christian, it is the Holy Spirit where Jesus said, I leave you with the Holy Spirit. Yes.

You see that, right, Bob? Oh, yeah. Yeah.

[Speaker 6] (1:36:43 - 1:36:59)

It's just the use of that word sometimes puts some people off that might otherwise have the door to be awakened. And just knowing that word is in the book, they might just say, oh, I'm not quite ready to do that yet. Evolution.

Evolution.

[Speaker 1] (1:37:00 - 1:37:16)

Well, I think it will particularly put people off who take a literal, absolutely literal interpretation of Genesis. But most Christians, I believe, don't take an absolutely literal interpretation of Genesis. And they would be...

[Speaker 2] (1:37:16 - 1:37:18)

And if you do, then that's not for you.

[Speaker 1] (1:37:18 - 1:37:19)

No, that's fine.

[Speaker 2] (1:37:19 - 1:37:21)

Then this isn't the path that you need to follow.

[Speaker 1] (1:37:21 - 1:38:55)

Yes. But if you're open to the idea that the creation may not be literally true, but that there is actually, it's a description of an evolutionary process, not of blind chance. This is what Christians object to mostly.

And I also see it. It's absurd. It's not blind chance.

Evolution is not something of coming together over billions of years of atoms and molecules accidentally to bring about this beautiful universe. I do not believe that there is no guiding intelligence behind evolution. There is.

That is so obvious when you look at the world and you look at yourself. You know the famous analogy of the monkey and the typewriter? No, I don't.

Oh, they say… The famous analogy? This is to describe what evolution means by people who believe it is blind chance.

It's a mechanical, mechanistic thing that how evolution happened, all chance events. That would mean if you put a monkey at a typewriter, and this monkey is immortal, and this monkey starts hitting the keys of the typewriter and goes on for a billion years or two billion years or longer, they say if evolution as chance development is true, then eventually the monkey is going to produce by chance the works of Shakespeare over a billion years. Right.

It's not going to happen.

[Speaker 2] (1:38:55 - 1:41:36)

Right. I miss that monkey and the typewriter analogy somewhere in my college upbringing. But you see the…

Yes, I see it. I see it. He has a quote.

Bob and Gwen, can we go back to them? This is from somebody named Button 20. Did you see this last week?

No. You don't see the message boards, do you? Actually, she's Joni in Long Beach, actually.

She said, my faith was strong. Oprah, Oprah, Oprah. My faith was strong, but now it's growing stronger and stronger every day.

The words of the Bible, she said, are just jumping out at me. How could I have not seen them so clearly before? Like, be still and know that I am God.

I will not leave you alone. I will always be with you. This book, New Earth, has put into words what I've always felt from within.

As a Catholic, I can describe my faith very simply. It's based on the Holy Trinity, which is in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. That's it in a nutshell.

The rest of the Bible is just the history lesson as to how all that came about. To say it another way, God created the world, saw what a mess we were making, sent his Son down to teach us how to live. Then Jesus said, when he knew he was going to have to leave us, I will ask my Father, and he will give you another advocate, the Holy Spirit, to be with you always, the Spirit of Truth, which the world cannot accept because it neither sees nor knows it, because it remains in you and will be in you.

John 14, 16. And here it is again, she writes. John 14, 26, 27.

The Holy Spirit, that the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have told you. Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you.

Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid. And you know what, Oprah?

I got it this time when I read it. I really got it. People wouldn't be so afraid if they only knew that the energy flowing through their very being, which I choose to call the Holy Spirit, is the most fabulous, wireless connection to the most powerful source in the universe, the God that created us.

May God bless you and keep you safe in his grace. You're truly one of his messengers. And that's from Joni of Long Beach, California.

And she ends with, Life is a gift. Live every day as a thank you note. Very good.

Isn't that fantastic? I mean, I just thought this was so fantastic. So I'm happy to share that with you.

That's what one Christian had to say. Okay?

[Speaker 6] (1:41:38 - 1:41:39)

Thank you. It's very nice.

[Speaker 2] (1:41:39 - 1:42:11)

I thought that was great too. Joni of Long Beach. I almost Skyped her this week.

Isn't that perfection? I thought that was perfection. Thanks Gwen and Bob.

Thank you guys. Thank you. Well, shall we continue here?

You say your inner purpose is to awaken. It's as simple as that. You share that purpose with every other person on the planet because it is the purpose of humanity.

So, let's again talk about what it means to awaken. Doesn't the very word purpose imply that you can do something about it? Purpose means on purpose.

[Speaker 1] (1:42:11 - 1:42:13)

That's right. I asked that question.

[Speaker 2] (1:42:13 - 1:42:16)

You say you can't make it happen that it is an act of grace, this awakening.

[Speaker 1] (1:42:16 - 1:42:47)

Yes, and what I talk about is the first moment of awakening. It happens or it doesn't happen. The first moment, which is the disidentification from the stream of thinking and the arising.

It might only be a glimpse at first. The arising of awareness. You're suddenly becoming aware that there is a realm.

Underneath thinking, there's a realm of stillness inside you. You touch it. Maybe you're out in nature and suddenly, as you did when you were on the mountaintop.

[Speaker 2] (1:42:47 - 1:42:56)

Oh, I had another one. You know what? I had another one just Friday.

This is going to be on this Friday. But this past Friday, I was at Tom Cruise's house. You know Tom Cruise.

[Speaker 1] (1:42:57 - 1:42:57)

Not personally.

[Speaker 2] (1:42:58 - 1:42:58)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (1:43:02 - 1:43:04)

I know he jumped on your sofa.

[Speaker 2] (1:43:04 - 1:44:41)

Oh, you even know that. Okay. You even know that.

Okay. We're going to talk about that. Now I'm jumping on his.

I'm going to give him a chance to jump on his. Anyway, Tom Cruise lives in the... I could cry just thinking about it.

He lives in the most magnificent place I have ever seen, read, heard, or experienced in my life. I tell you. I drove through his house through this grove of aspen trees for like a half mile before we get to the gate.

He lives at the top of a mountain. The house sits in the center, and you're surrounded by all the mountains of telluride. We went outside through his bedroom to stand on the balcony, and there are all these aspen trees around, and the mountains, and absolute stillness.

Absolute stillness. My eyes started to water. I've never seen anything more beautiful or felt anything so deep, so rich.

Aside from that time I was on my mountain. I said to him, first of all, what it takes to be the kind of person that comes to this, that has that as your space. He's had a lot of things going on in his life, and I said, no matter what, you have this.

You have this place to come to. My God. I felt so filled up when I left from the stillness.

[Speaker 8] (1:44:42 - 1:44:42)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:44:43 - 1:44:54)

We stood out on Tom's balcony, and I said, Tom, can you hear the silence? It has its own language. He said, yeah, you're right, it does.

It has its own language.

[Speaker 1] (1:44:55 - 1:44:56)

Was he already aware of it?

[Speaker 2] (1:44:56 - 1:45:15)

No, he was aware of it. He was aware of it, yeah. That was my moment with Tom Cruise.

That you'll get to see. Now, when you see us on television this Friday, you won't get all of that because it's all about the interview and stuff, but I had a spiritual moment with Tom at the top of the mountain.

[Speaker 1] (1:45:15 - 1:47:11)

Yeah. Well, these are wonderful moments of grace, but you don't necessarily need to be in those beautiful places. It's a great act of grace when it happens.

Yeah. But that stillness is primarily an inner dimension, and it can arise anywhere. But sometimes it's good to have experience in there where the environment is most conducive to experiencing ultimately the inner because if you don't feel it on the inner, you won't really be aware of the silence around you.

That's right. It's only through the inner that you can be aware of the outer silence. So to be aware of silence, how can you be aware of silence?

Only by being still. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Because it's only the stillness in you that is aware of the silence.

If your mind were totally occupied with noisy thinking, you wouldn't even know it's still around you. Or you would say for a moment, oh, it's very still, and then you carry on thinking. Right.

You wouldn't really experience it. So there's the equivalent of outer stillness. This is the outer dimension of spirit.

You can sense the spirit that's out there in nature, but you can only sense it because you already have it within you. It's that in you that responds, that senses it. So only people whose mind is not totally noisy can actually be aware of silence.

And so I sometimes observe, when I go for a walk in the forest every day, and often I see people who are jogging or walking their dogs, and very few are really there. They're talking on the phone, they have headphones on, they're talking to their friends, and all that immersive thinking could be anywhere, in the office.

[Speaker 2] (1:47:12 - 1:47:30)

Right. Someone asked, Eckhart, everything you say in your book resonates with my spirit, so I believe it to be true. However, do people ever ask you how you know all of this?

If so, how do you respond? Where does your knowledge come from? This is Renee in Indianapolis.

Where does your knowledge come from? How do you know what you know?

[Speaker 1] (1:47:31 - 1:48:21)

The essence of it comes through inner realization. In other words, it's by touching the consciousness that one is, that you are. It comes through becoming still and listening for what comes out of the stillness.

It's not primarily based on knowledge, although, of course, I have read spiritual books, quite a few. I use sometimes some of the terminology that is already in existence, has been in existence for a long, long time. But the book is more than just a compilation of other spiritual books that I have read.

The essence of the book is in my own realization. In other words, the answers come by being still. When I write, I sit there with a notepad, a pen, and become still.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:22 - 1:48:22)

Not on a computer?

[Speaker 1] (1:48:23 - 1:48:23)

No.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:23 - 1:48:23)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:24 - 1:48:50)

Everything is done by hand. And then I wait for some movement of thought to come out of the stillness. And then gradually a thought formulates itself, and then there is a critical faculty that says, okay, does that make sense?

Sometimes it does, sometimes it doesn't. If it doesn't make sense, I become still again. And then perhaps a thought that is more suited to what I can sense comes up, and then I write it down.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:50 - 1:49:25)

So did you write this book from the place of inner space? Last week we talked about inner space, and I was a little frustrated until the end of the class because I was trying to get this concept of inner space across to all of our viewers and listeners. And at the end of last week's class, as we'd gone off the air here, Eckhart said, I said, remember I said to you I'm a little frustrated?

And you said, because you cannot understand it through concepts and language, that inner space isn't something you can understand with your mind.

[Speaker 1] (1:49:25 - 1:49:42)

No. So as an explanation, it's not very satisfying when one talks about inner stillness and then people try to understand, okay, what's he actually talking about? And you can see already when you're in your head, inner stillness, what's that about?

That doesn't make any sense. Of course it doesn't to the mind.

[Speaker 2] (1:49:42 - 1:49:43)

People say it's all that woo-woo stuff.

[Speaker 1] (1:49:43 - 1:50:06)

Yes, that's what some journalists often say. They come to spirituality and say, oh, it's all that stuff. They don't give themselves a chance.

You really have to give yourself a chance and see whether you can sense in yourself that to which these words point. Yes. And only then does it become real and alive.

[Speaker 2] (1:50:06 - 1:50:40)

And that is the same thing we're saying to Bob and Gwen. When Bob is trying to say, what do you mean by the evolutionary impulse of the universe? What that really means is that when you are in alignment, when your inner purpose is aligned with what you do, that you will be supported by the Spirit of God or by universal energy in such a way that life opens up to you.

And people think, oh, it's about you being lucky or, gee, isn't that strange that this happened or serendipitous things happened. Things fall into line when you are in alignment.

[Speaker 1] (1:50:41 - 1:51:11)

Yes, that they fall into line. That's one way or another. Everybody can experience that.

So why not give it a try? Live as if the present moment were more important than past and future. On a practical level, of course, you still use past and future.

But give your attention to this. Spend a few days or a few weeks living in that way. Immediately surrendering negativity when it arises and recognizing it as ego-based or pain-body based.

[Speaker 2] (1:51:11 - 1:51:14)

Because all negativity is ego-based?

[Speaker 1] (1:51:14 - 1:52:12)

Well, negativity loves ego. It's a denial of life. The moment you identify with negativity, that's part of the ego.

So experiment with... Because you've lived in one particular state of consciousness for many years, try something different and see what happens. And what happens primarily and first of all is an inner shift.

And after a little time gap sometimes, it gets reflected in the outer realm also. But that's no longer the main thing because the main thing is already that you enter that state of peaceful, alive presence in yourself when you're aligned with what is. Aligned with the now.

And that's what matters. The rest is the icing on the cake. When good things happen to you, it doesn't mean you now feel good because something good has happened to you.

Something good has happened to you because you've already found the goodness within you.

[Speaker 2] (1:52:12 - 1:52:17)

That's right. So you can only manifest that which you already are.

[Speaker 1] (1:52:17 - 1:52:50)

Yes. Yes, you already are that. Whatever people are looking for, whatever form, they already are that.

They're looking for God. And I'm not saying that this form is God. I'm not saying that this person is God.

I'm saying the essence, if you go deep enough within, there is a realm where you and God merge. And it's everybody's destiny and purpose to live from that place of connectedness.

[Speaker 2] (1:52:50 - 1:53:07)

Yes, because the I am, the I am, is I am that which comes from God. Yes. I am that which comes from God.

Laurie lives in New Brunswick, Canada, and she's Skyping us from her family room in St. John. Hello, Laurie.

[Speaker 3] (1:53:08 - 1:53:10)

Hello, Oprah. Hello, Eckhart.

[Speaker 2] (1:53:10 - 1:53:13)

Welcome to our conversation here this evening.

[Speaker 3] (1:53:13 - 1:54:47)

Thank you. It's a pleasure to be here. What do you want to say to us?

I would like to comment on the dialogue on inner purpose that begins on page 262. There are parts of that dialogue, the parts that were written in italics, that could have been me speaking word for word. In fact, those were the reasons that I think I was drawn to the book in the first place.

I turn 38 this summer, and I've had two members of my immediate family die in their mid-30s. So their deaths have left me very keenly aware of the immediacy of my own living and how important it is for me to align my life, however long it shall be, with my inner purpose and to make sure that the relationships that I have with people, my husband and my children especially, are genuine and that I conduct my life from that place of higher consciousness. So my question is, I'm so aware of how important and precious every moment of this human experience is, I don't want to waste a moment of it on anger or resentment or disappointment.

Some days I'm just more conscious than others. So I ask Eckhart, do you believe that two people can actually live in an intimate relationship with one another, either as partners or as parent and child, without wanting from one another? And do two people have to be at the same place in their spiritual awakening for this to happen?

[Speaker 1] (1:54:49 - 1:57:59)

Thank you. Thank you. Good question.

Now when I say without wanting, what I mean of course is without saying, I want you, you are my property, you must not leave me, otherwise I will get extremely angry. I'm not saying that you might not say to your partner, I want you to take out the garbage because I took it out yesterday. On a practical level, there may be some wanting.

So the question is, can two people live together without that deep psychological wanting that wants to cling to the other person, says fulfill me or make me happy, don't you dare leave me. That, right, that is the question. But I would like to change the question a little bit from can two people, because you cannot be responsible for somebody else, ask yourself the question, can I live with my partner or whoever without bringing in this unconscious energy of wanting which comes from the ego?

Can I live with a person like that? Because it only requires really one person to go through this shift in consciousness. So only you can really answer the question and it's not an abstract question, it's a question that you can only apply to the present moment, to really answer it as a live question rather than an abstract thing whether can people live in fully conscious together is an abstract question.

A more powerful and a more vital question is can I? And even that not for the rest of my life, not like that, no, now. So you bring, to find the answer, a vital answer that is true for you, you have to remember that question as you live, situations arise in your relationship, see at this moment, can I be free of that egoic wanting and needing?

And if you cannot be free at this moment of this egoic wanting and needing and because you cannot be free, negativity arises, because the partner is not responding to the wanting and needing or isn't even there, hasn't come home yet, whatever, then this is your chance again to be aware, as I meant to the other questioner a little earlier on, this is your chance to become aware of the ego in you as the wanting.

So even if the answer can I be free of wanting is no, obviously I can't because there is still wanting in me, then at least you are able to recognize the ego and that means how are you able to recognize the ego? You are becoming aware. And only when you dwell in awareness in your relationship can you be free of those unconscious movements.

[Speaker 2] (1:57:59 - 1:58:33)

Yeah, I think that wanting that you're talking about is wanting you to be a certain way to help fill me up. Yes. That's what he's talking about, not in terms of practical, I need you to pick up the laundry, I want you to pick up the milk, I want you to, that's very different than I want you to be what I want you to be so that you make me whole.

You know that whole, you know, Tom Cruise as a matter of fact, Jerry Maguire line, you complete me, wanting somebody to complete you is what he's talking about because nobody can.

[Speaker 3] (1:58:34 - 1:59:04)

Yes, I think I misinterpreted that as being wanting, you know, wanting recognition from your spouse or wanting gratitude or wanting respect or things like that. And I couldn't quite figure out how you live in an intimate relationship without wanting those things. And for me, in our, we have a busy household.

We have five little boys all under the age of nine. There's always somebody wanting something around here.

[Speaker 2] (1:59:04 - 1:59:08)

Where are you, in a closed off room somewhere? With the door locked?

[Speaker 3] (1:59:08 - 1:59:12)

I am, and it's also 10 o'clock, so they're all in bed.

[Speaker 2] (1:59:12 - 1:59:12)

Okay.

[Speaker 3] (1:59:13 - 1:59:47)

But for me, I think, and you've talked a lot about people having their own spiritual practice. And I guess for me right now, it's living amidst the chaos of the day and not getting mired down in the muck of the daily routine and being able to stay above that, being unflappable and keeping that sense of inner peace, even though it's a little bit chaotic in the immediate surrounding.

[Speaker 2] (1:59:48 - 1:59:50)

Right, with five boys under nine. Oh, my God.

[Speaker 1] (1:59:50 - 2:00:43)

It's a noisy house. Yeah, a good practice here is not wanting this moment to be different from the way it is. Just this moment.

That's where you relinquish the wanting. That is the main relinquishment or letting go of wanting. Not wanting this moment, and it's always this moment, to be different.

So if the children are screaming and there's mayhem, that's what is. And then you deal with what is. But not the internal rejection of what is.

So not wanting really deep down is not wanting this moment. This moment may come in the form of a person, your partner, the children. At this moment, this is what is.

And not wanting this moment to be different from the way it is. Then you are aligned. And then you act.

You take action. You can tell them, stop doing that. But internally, you are free.

You're not reacting internally.

[Speaker 2] (2:00:43 - 2:01:02)

Well, what about what Laurie was saying about wanting recognition? Not just from your spouse. A lot of people, you do things and you want people to recognize that you've done.

To be, you know, I don't know, admired or, you know, receive affection in your relationship. Is that your ego?

[Speaker 1] (2:01:03 - 2:01:35)

It often is. But if you believe that the world is withholding from you, I say that somewhere in the book. Yes, you say that.

Give what you think people owe you. Give it. And then you see a reciprocal movement.

Not even necessarily from the very same people you're giving it to. But the universe reciprocates. If you give recognition, gratitude, whatever it is, you give it out.

Even to strangers. Recognition, a smile, giving. So there's a flow of energy.

[Speaker 2] (2:01:35 - 2:01:43)

Because what you give out, what you put out is going to come back always. Always, always, always. That's a universal law.

Thank you, Laurie.

[Speaker 3] (2:01:44 - 2:01:44)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (2:01:45 - 2:01:48)

Thank you for your moment of calm with the five boys.

[Speaker 3] (2:01:48 - 2:01:51)

I'm going to miss this on Monday night.

[Speaker 2] (2:01:51 - 2:01:55)

Well, thank you very much. Is this your time for yourself?

[Speaker 3] (2:01:55 - 2:02:01)

This is. Yeah, it's great. We work hard to carve out those moments of stillness around here.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:02 - 2:02:27)

Well, we're going to continue with something we call the Soul Series on Monday nights. There's a great, great interview that I've done with Dr. Jill Bolte-Taylor. Her mind actually, as we mentioned last week, she lost the left hemisphere of her brain through a stroke.

And the right hemisphere was still working. So all of the chatter stopped. And she was in bliss.

And she said, even though I was drooling, I was drooling, she was in heaven. She was in bliss.

[Speaker 1] (2:02:28 - 2:02:43)

Yes, I haven't used the terms right and left hemisphere in the book. And I rarely use scientific terms. But that is how she sees it.

I think she's right. That's right. So the right hemisphere is to do with unity of knowing, not conceptual stillness.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:43 - 2:02:45)

She said she felt the connection to all things.

[Speaker 1] (2:02:45 - 2:02:46)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:46 - 2:03:35)

Yeah, from the right hemisphere. That's beautiful. So here we are at week nine.

Only one more class to go. And I bet so many people can relate to this. Many people, you say on page 262, who are going through the early stages of awakening, are no longer certain what their outer purpose is.

A woman from Milwaukee, Oregon, just wrote, can you still be 52 years old and be in the same place Ivy was at the beginning of this show, not knowing what you want to do? What drives the world, you say, no longer drives them. Seeing the madness of our civilization so clearly, they may feel somewhat alienated from the culture around them.

So what do you do in this case? If you're at this point in your life where reading this book is shaking you up and you realize more than ever what you don't want to do, you realize I have been on the wrong course. You realize you have an awakening.

Now what do you do? I'm all awakened.

[Speaker 1] (2:03:36 - 2:05:44)

Now what? Well, the awakening, of course, is the realization of your inner purpose primarily. So don't come into conflict with where you are now or what you're doing now.

If you cannot surrender to what you're doing now and be okay with it, at least bring acceptance. We talk about it in the next chapter. At least bring acceptance to whatever you're doing now so that you're okay with it.

That is vital. Then you are in a state of clarity. You enter a state of clarity when you are no longer in opposition to your present moment, life where you live or what you are doing.

If you cannot surrender, if whatever you are doing continues to produce unhappiness in you, and no matter how hard you try, then, of course, it's a clear sign that you need to leave that situation. Right. So either you let go of the resistance and see if you can.

Sometimes people say, No, I can't. But what they really mean is, No, I'm not willing to. Not willing to, which is very different.

You need to see the difference between not being able to and not being willing to. The difference is, whatever applies to you, am I not willing to accept this moment, or am I truly incapable of accepting this moment? If you find you're truly incapable of accepting this moment when you're doing your job or whatever you're doing, then this is a sign that it's time for change.

Got it. Many times you will be able to have this energy flow into what you're doing already and transform how you do perhaps what you've been doing for many years, perhaps in a state of resistance, and suddenly how you do it changes. You're no longer doing it in a state of inner resistance, and then you bring a completely different energy into what you do.

Consciousness flows into what you do. And often, either this is deeply fulfilling and it affects many people around you, or it could also happen that now that you're no longer resisting what you do, change suddenly comes into your life.

[Speaker 2] (2:05:44 - 2:06:14)

I got that. This is a beautiful quote from page 266. You say that the great arises out of small things that are honored and cared for.

Everybody's life really consists of small things. Greatness is a mental abstraction and a favorite fantasy of the ego. The paradox is that the foundation for greatness is honoring the small things of the present moment instead of pursuing the idea of greatness.

Yes. It's that one step.

[Speaker 1] (2:06:15 - 2:08:44)

That's right. So many people have this idea, I want to achieve something great or be somebody great, and they neglect the step that leads to greatness. They don't honor this step at this moment because they have this idea of some future moment where they're going to be great.

And then it's surprising when you truly look at people, perhaps, who you would say have achieved great things, that even in their life it really is a sequence of small steps because every moment is quite small. You are wherever you are at this moment. Some people believe, not to mention you, some people believe I'm doing great work.

I mean, I am because the consciousness is moving through this form. I don't feel personally responsible for what I do as such. But even there, it is small steps.

When the writing happens, there's a notepad and a pen, and there's the present moment and there's the stillness. Very small. There's not some idea, I'm going to create a work that's going to change everybody's consciousness.

No, I'm just true to this moment. This moment requires a blank piece of sheet of paper and a pen and a stillness. It's a small thing.

Or when I give a talk, maybe 2,000 people come. If I had this idea, I'm now going to give an important, big talk that would lead to stress and fear because maybe it's not going to be that great. But with every step being present, the car comes to pick me up.

If you step into the car, then I sit in the car. The car moves towards the venue where the talk is going to be. I look out of the window.

Simple. People walking past, the tree, the sky. Just this moment.

Step out. Sit in the waiting room, the green room to wait for the talk to start. Breathing.

Simple. Nothing big. Just a little moment.

This moment. Being true to that. Then step onto the stage.

There's an empty chair. I sit in it. Still.

Breathe. I know there's 2,000 people there. And I also know I have no idea what's going to come out of this mouth.

Being happy with not knowing. Still. Not big.

It's all small. It's all a sequence of very small moments. And by being true to the small moment, something great arises.

[Speaker 2] (2:08:44 - 2:09:20)

Yeah. And the biggest lesson from tonight is by being true to the small moments, by being true to this moment, it means to bring the sense of presence, the sense of consciousness to every single moment so that everything that you do is fueled from a deeper level than your ego. Everything you do is fueled from a deeper level than your thoughts.

That everything you do is fueled from your being, and that is what gives meaning and purpose to whatever you do. Yes. That's the essence.

[Speaker 1] (2:09:20 - 2:09:27)

Yes. Right. It's wonderful to see you when the power comes through.

You talk. It's beautiful. The words are so true.

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (2:09:28 - 2:11:14)

Thank you, everybody. I want to thank you for joining us tonight. As I said, next week will be our last class on A New Earth, the finale, but we don't want the discussion to end there.

Please join me on Monday, May 12th, for the start of my Soul Series just to continue this conversation. For those of you who've been enjoying these webcasts here on Oprah.com, for the first time we'll be broadcasting the videotaped sessions of my XM radio show. It's where I get to talk to spiritual teachers.

I've been doing that for a couple of years now. I talk to spiritual teachers, thinkers, and scholars about my favorite subject, the evolution of the soul. People like Dr. Joe Bolte-Taylor, Wayne Dyer, Elizabeth Lesser, Jon Kabat-Zinn, Byron Katie, Sarah Bonbronick, Kathy Freston, and others. So keep Monday nights at 8 p.m. reserved for Oprah.com. If you can, get away from the five noisy boys, whatever's going on in your life. Tonight's class will be available on demand tomorrow for free here at Oprah.com.

And if you want to download or watch any of our classes, you can do that tomorrow also at Oprah.com and iTunes. It's free because of the generous support of nature-made soft gel vitamins. This week you can update your workbook and get ready for our last class, Chapter 10, A New Earth, How to Bring Awareness to Every Moment of Your Life.

There really is no higher calling. We're going to go for two hours next week for the benefit of wrapping up all the things we've been talking about these past 10 weeks. This was great.

Thank you. This was a good class. Thank you.

We'll see you at number 10, coming up, number 10. Bye, everybody. Thanks for your message boards.

Wasn't this great?

2008-Eckhart Tolle Oprah A New Earth Audiobook Podcast Chapter10

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 54:53)

Chapter 10. A New Earth. Astronomers have discovered evidence to suggest that the universe came into existence 15 billion years ago, in a gigantic explosion, and has been expanding ever since.

Not only has it been expanding, but it is also growing in complexity and becoming more and more differentiated. Some scientists also postulate that this movement from unity to multiplicity will eventually become reversed. The universe will then stop expanding and begin to contract again, and finally return to the unmanifested, the inconceivable no-thingness out of which it came, and perhaps repeat the cycles of birth, expansion, contraction and death again and again.

For what purpose? Why does the universe go to all the bother of existing, asks physicist Stephen Hawking, realizing at the same time that no mathematical model could ever supply the answer. If you look within rather than only without, however, you discover that you have an inner and an outer purpose, and since you are a microcosmic reflection of the macrocosm, it follows that the universe too has an inner and outer purpose, inseparable from yours.

The outer purpose of the universe is to create form and experience the interaction of forms, the play, the dream, the drama, or whatever you choose to call it. Its inner purpose is to awaken to its formless essence. Then comes the reconciliation of outer and inner purpose, to bring that essence, consciousness, into the world of form and thereby transform the world.

The ultimate purpose of that transformation goes far beyond anything the human mind can imagine or comprehend. And yet, on this planet, at this time, that transformation is the task allotted us. That is the reconciliation of outer and inner purpose, the reconciliation of the world and God.

Before we look at what relevance the expansion and contraction of the universe has to your own life, we need to bear in mind here that nothing we say about the nature of the universe should be taken as an absolute truth. Neither concepts nor mathematical formula can explain the infinite. No thought can encapsulate the vastness of the totality.

Reality is a unified whole, but thought cuts it up into fragments. This gives rise to fundamental misperceptions, for example, that there are separate things and events, or that this is the cause of that. Every thought implies a perspective, and every perspective by its very nature implies limitation, which ultimately means that it is not true, at least not absolutely.

Only the whole is true, but the whole cannot be spoken or thought. Seen from beyond the limitations of thinking and therefore incomprehensible to the human mind, everything is happening now. All that ever has been or will be is now, outside of time, which is a mental construct.

As an illustration of relative and absolute truth, consider the sunrise and sunset. When we say the sun rises in the morning and sets in the evening, that is true, but only relatively. In absolute terms, it is false.

Only from the limited perspective of an observer on or near the planet's surface does the sun rise and set. If you were far out in space, you would see that the sun neither rises nor sets, but that it shines continuously. And yet, even after realizing that, we can continue to speak of the sunrise or sunset, still see its beauty, paint it, write poems about it, even though we now know that it is a relative rather than an absolute truth.

So let us continue to speak for a moment of another relative truth, the coming into form of the universe and its return to the formless. Which implies the limited perspective of time, and see what relevance this has to your own life. The notion of my own life is, of course, another limited perspective created by thought, another relative truth.

There is ultimately no such thing as your life, since you and life are not two, but one, your life. The coming into manifestation of the world, as well as its return to the unmanifested, its expansion and contraction, are two universal movements that we could call the outgoing and the return home. Those two movements are reflected throughout the universe in many ways, such as in the incessant expansion and contraction of your heart, as well as in the inhalation and exhalation of your breath.

They are also reflected in the cycles of sleep and wakefulness. Each night, without knowing it, you return to the unmanifested source of all life when you enter the stage of deep dreamless sleep, and then re-emerge again in the morning, replenished. Those two movements, the outgoing and the return, are also reflected in each person's life cycles.

Out of nowhere, so to speak, you suddenly appear in this world. Birth is followed by expansion. There is not only physical growth, but also growth of knowledge, activities, possessions, experiences.

Your sphere of influence expands and life becomes increasingly complex. This is a time when you are mainly concerned with finding or pursuing your outer purpose. Usually there is also a corresponding growth of the ego, which is identification with all the above things, and so your form identity becomes more and more defined.

This is also the time when outer purpose, growth, tends to become usurped by the ego, which, unlike nature, does not know when to stop in its pursuit of expansion and has a voracious appetite for more. And then, just when you thought you made it or that you belong here, the return movement begins. Perhaps people close to you begin to die, people who were a part of your world.

Then your physical form weakens. Your sphere of influence shrinks. Instead of becoming more, you now become less, and the ego reacts to this with increasing anxiety or depression.

Your world is beginning to contract, and you may find you are not in control anymore. Instead of acting upon life, life now acts upon you by slowly reducing your world. The consciousness that identified with form is now experiencing the sunset, the dissolution of form.

And then one day, you too disappear. Your armchair is still there, but instead of you sitting in it, there is just an empty space. You went back to where you came from just a few years ago.

Each person's life, each life-form in fact, represents a world, a unique way in which the universe experiences itself. And when your form dissolves, a world comes to an end, one of countless worlds. AWAKENING AND THE RETURN MOVEMENT The return movement in a person's life, the weakening or dissolution of form, whether through old age, illness, disability, loss, or some kind of personal tragedy, carries great potential for spiritual awakening, the disidentification of consciousness from form.

Since there is very little spiritual truth in our contemporary culture, not many people recognize this as an opportunity, and so when it happens to them or to someone close to them, they think there is something dreadfully wrong, something that should not be happening. There is in our civilization a great deal of ignorance about the human condition, and the more spiritually ignorant you are, the more you suffer. For many people, particularly in the West, death is no more than an abstract concept, and so they have no idea what happens to the human form when it approaches dissolution.

Most decrepit and old people are shut away in nursing homes. Dead bodies, which in some older cultures are an open display for all to see, are hidden away. Try to see a dead body, and you will find that it is virtually illegal, except if the deceased is a close family member.

In funeral homes, they even apply make-up to the face. You are only allowed to see a sanitized version of death. Since death is only an abstract concept to them, most people are totally unprepared for the dissolution of form that awaits them.

When it approaches, there is shock, incomprehension, despair, and great fear. Nothing makes sense anymore, because all the meaning and purpose that life had for them was associated with accumulating, succeeding, building, protecting, and sense gratification. It was associated with the outward movement, and identification with form, that is to say, ego.

Most people cannot conceive of any meaning when their life, their world, is being demolished. And yet, potentially, there is even deeper meaning here than in the outward movement. The onset of old age, through loss or personal tragedy, that the spiritual dimension would traditionally come into people's lives.

This is to say, their inner purpose would emerge only as their outer purpose collapsed, and the ego would begin to crack open. Such events represent the beginning of the return movement towards the dissolution of form. In most ancient cultures, there must have been an intuitive understanding of this process, which is why old people were respected and revered.

They were the repositories of wisdom and provided the dimension of depths without which no civilization can survive for long. In our civilization, which is totally identified with the outer and ignorant of the inner dimension of spirit, the word old has mainly negative connotations. It equals useless, and so we regard it as almost an insult to refer to someone as old.

To avoid the word, we use euphemisms such as elderly and senior. The first nation's grandmother is a figure of great dignity. Today's granny is, at best, cute.

Why is old considered useless? Because in old age, the emphasis shifts from doing to being, and our civilization, which is lost in doing, knows nothing of being. It asks, being?

What do you do with it? In some people, the outward movement of growth and expansion gets severely disrupted by a seemingly premature onset of the return movement, the dissolving of form. In some cases, it is a temporary disruption, in others, a permanent one.

We believe that a young child should not have to face death. But the fact is that some children do have to face the death of one or both parents through illness or accident, or even the possibility of their own death. Some children are born with disabilities that severely restrict the natural expansion of their lives, or some severe limitation comes into a person's life at a relatively young age.

The disruption of the outward movement at a time when it is not meant to be happening can also potentially bring forth an early spiritual awakening in a person. Ultimately, nothing happens that is not meant to happen, which is to say, nothing happens that is not part of the greater whole and its purpose. Thus, destruction or disruption of outer purpose can lead to finding your inner purpose and subsequently the arising of a deeper outer purpose that is aligned with the inner.

Children who have suffered greatly often grow into young adults who are mature beyond their years. What is lost on the level of form is gained on the level of essence. In the traditional figure of the blind seer or the wounded healer of ancient cultures and legend, some great loss or disability on the level of form has become an opening into spirit.

When you have had a direct experience of the unstable nature of all forms, you will likely never overvalue form again and thus lose yourself by blindly pursuing it or attaching yourself to it. The opportunity that the dissolution of form and in particular old age represents is only just beginning to be recognized in our contemporary culture. In the majority of people, that opportunity is still tragically missed because the ego identifies with the return movement just as it identified with the outward movement.

This results in a hardening of the egoic shell, a contraction rather than an opening. The diminished ego then spends the rest of its days whining or complaining, trapped in fear or anger, self-pity, guilt, blame or other negative mental-emotional states or avoidance strategies such as attachment to memories and thinking and talking about the past. When the ego is no longer identified with the return movement in a person's life, old age or approaching death becomes what it is meant to be, an opening into the realm of spirit.

I have met old people who were living embodiments of this process. They had become radiant. Their weakening forms had become transparent to the light of consciousness.

On the new earth, old age will be universally recognized and highly valued as a time for the flowering of consciousness. For those who are still lost in the outer circumstances of their lives, it will be a time of a late homecoming, when they awaken to their inner purpose. For many others, it will represent an intensification and a culmination of the awakening process.

GOING MOVEMENT The natural expansion of one's life that comes with the outward movement has traditionally been usurped by the ego and used for its own expansion. Look what I can do. I bet you can't do that, says the small child to another as he discovers the increasing strength and abilities of his body.

That is one of the ego's first attempts to enhance itself through identification with the outward movement and the concept of more than you, and to strengthen itself by diminishing others. It is, of course, only the beginning of the ego's many misperceptions. However, as your awareness increases and the ego is no longer running your life, you don't have to wait for your world to shrink or collapse through old age or personal tragedy in order for you to awaken to your inner purpose.

As the new consciousness is beginning to emerge on the planet, an increasing number of people no longer need to be shaken to have an awakening. They embrace the awakening process voluntarily, even while still engaged in the outward cycle of growth and expansion. When that cycle is no longer usurped by the ego, the spiritual dimension will come into this world through the outward movement, thought, speech, action, creation, as powerfully as through the return movement, stillness, being, and dissolution of form.

Until now, human intelligence, which is no more than a minute aspect of universal intelligence, has been distorted and misused by the ego. I call that intelligence in the service of madness. Splitting the atom requires great intelligence.

Using that intelligence for building and stockpiling atom bombs is insane or, at best, extremely unintelligent. Stupidity is relatively harmless, but intelligent stupidity is highly dangerous. This intelligent stupidity, for which one could find countless obvious examples, is threatening our survival as a species.

Without the impairment of egoic dysfunction, our intelligence comes into full alignment with the outgoing cycle of universal intelligence and its impulse to create. We become conscious participants in the creation of form. It is not we who create, but universal intelligence that creates through us.

We don't identify with what we create and so don't lose ourselves in what we do. We are learning that the act of creation may involve energy of the highest intensity, but that it is not hard work or stressful. We need to understand the difference between stress and intensity, as we shall see.

Struggle or stress is a sign that the ego has returned, as are negative reactions when we encounter obstacles. The force behind the ego's wanting creates enemies, that is to say, a reaction in the form of an opposing force equal in intensity. The stronger the ego, the stronger the sense of separateness between people.

The only actions that do not cause opposing reactions are those that are aimed at the good of all. They are inclusive, not exclusive. They join, they don't separate.

They are not for my country, but for all of humanity. Not for my religion, but the emergence of consciousness in all human beings. Not for my species, but for all sentient beings and all of nature.

We are also learning that action, although necessary, is only a secondary factor in manifesting our external reality. The primary factor in creation is consciousness. No matter how active we are, how much effort we make, our state of consciousness creates our world, and if there is no change on that inner level, no amount of action will make any difference.

We would only recreate modified versions of the same world again and again, a world that is an external reflection of the ego. Consciousness is already conscious. It is the unmanifested, the eternal.

The universe, however, is only gradually becoming conscious. Consciousness itself is timeless and therefore does not evolve. It was never born and does not die.

When consciousness becomes the manifested universe, it appears to be subject to time and to undergo an evolutionary process. No human mind is capable of comprehending fully the reason for this process, but we can glimpse it within ourselves and become a conscious participant in it. Consciousness is the intelligence, the organizing principle behind the arising of form.

Consciousness has been preparing forms for millions of years so that it can express itself through them in the manifested. Although the unmanifested realm of pure consciousness could be considered another dimension, it is not separate from this dimension of form. Form and formlessness interpenetrate.

The unmanifested flows into this dimension as awareness, inner space, presence. How does it do that? Through the human form that becomes conscious and thus fulfills its destiny.

The human form was created for this higher purpose, and millions of other forms prepared the ground for it. Consciousness incarnates into the manifested dimension, that is to say, it becomes form. When it does so, it enters a dreamlike state.

Intelligence remains, but consciousness becomes unconscious of itself. It loses itself in form, becomes identified with forms. This could be described as the descent of the divine into matter.

At that stage in the evolution of the universe, the entire outgoing movement takes place in that dreamlike state. Glimpses of awakening come only at the moment of the dissolution of an individual form, that is to say, death. And then begins the next incarnation, the next identification with form, the next individual dream that is part of the collective dream.

When the lion tears apart the body of the zebra, the consciousness that incarnated into the zebra form detaches itself from the dissolving form and, for a brief moment, awakens to its essential, immortal nature as consciousness, and then immediately falls back into sleep and reincarnates into another form. When the lion becomes old and cannot hunt anymore, as it draws its last breath, there is again the briefest of glimpses of an awakening, followed by another dream of form. On our planet, the human ego represents the final stage of universal sleep, the identification of consciousness with form.

It was a necessary stage in the evolution of consciousness. The human brain is a highly differentiated form through which consciousness enters this dimension. It contains approximately 100 billion nerve cells, called neurons, about the same number as there are stars in our galaxy, which could be seen as a macrocosmic brain.

The brain does not create consciousness, but consciousness created the brain, the most complex physical form on earth, for its expression. When the brain gets damaged, it does not mean you lose consciousness. It means consciousness can no longer use that form to enter this dimension.

You cannot lose consciousness because it is, in essence, who you are. You can only lose something that you have, but you cannot lose something that you are. Awakened doing is the outer aspect of the next stage in the evolution of consciousness on our planet.

The closer we get to the end of our present evolutionary stage, the more dysfunctional the ego becomes, in the same way that a caterpillar becomes dysfunctional just before it transforms into a butterfly. But the new consciousness is arising even as the old dissolves. We are in the midst of a momentous event in the evolution of human consciousness, but they won't be talking about it in the news tonight.

On our planet, and perhaps simultaneously in many parts of our galaxy and beyond, consciousness is awakening from the dream of form. This does not mean all forms, the world, are going to dissolve, although quite a few almost certainly will. It means consciousness can now begin to create form without losing itself in it.

It can remain conscious of itself even while it creates and experiences form. Why should it continue to create and experience form? For the enjoyment of it.

How does consciousness do that? Through awakened humans who have learned the meaning of awakened doing. Awakened doing is the alignment of your outer purpose, what you do, with your inner purpose, awakening and staying awake.

Through awakened doing, you become one with the outgoing purpose of the universe. Consciousness flows through you into this world. It flows into your thoughts and inspires them.

It flows into what you do and guides and empowers it. Not what you do, but how you do what you do determines whether you are fulfilling your destiny. And how you do what you do is determined by your state of consciousness.

A reversal of our priorities comes about when the main purpose for doing what you do becomes the doing itself, or rather, the current of consciousness that flows into what you do. That current of consciousness is what determines quality. Another way of putting it?

In any situation and in whatever you do, your state of consciousness is the primary factor. The situation and what you do is secondary. Future success is dependent upon and inseparable from the consciousness out of which the actions emanate.

That can be either the reactive force of the ego, or the alert attention of awakened consciousness. All truly successful action comes out of that field of alert attention, rather than from ego and conditioned, unconscious thinking. The Three Modalities of Awakened Doing There are three ways in which consciousness can flow into what you do and thus through you into this world.

Three modalities in which you can align your life with the creative power of the universe. Modality means the underlying energy frequency that flows into what you do and connects your actions with the awakened consciousness that is emerging into this world. What you do will be dysfunctional and of the ego, unless it arises out of one of these three modalities.

They may change during the course of a day, although one of them may be dominant during a certain stage in your life. Each modality is appropriate to certain situations. The modalities of awakened doing are acceptance, enjoyment and enthusiasm.

Each one represents a certain vibrational frequency of consciousness. You need to be vigilant to make sure that one of them operates whenever you are engaged in doing anything at all, from the most simple task to the most complex. If you are not in the state of either acceptance, enjoyment or enthusiasm, look closely and you will find that you are creating suffering for yourself and others.

Whatever you cannot enjoy doing, you can at least accept that this is what you have to do. Acceptance means, for now, this is what this situation, this moment, requires me to do, and so I do it willingly. We already spoke at length about the importance of inner acceptance of what happens, and acceptance of what you have to do is just another aspect of it.

For example, you probably won't be able to enjoy changing the flat tire on your car at night in the middle of nowhere and in pouring rain, let alone be enthusiastic about it. But you can bring acceptance to it. Performing an action in the state of acceptance means you are at peace while you do it.

That peace is a subtle energy vibration which then flows into what you do. On the surface, acceptance looks like a passive state, but in reality it is active and creative, because it brings something entirely new into this world. That peace, that subtle energy vibration, is consciousness, and one of the ways in which it enters this world is through surrendered action, one aspect of which is acceptance.

If you can neither enjoy or bring acceptance to what you do, stop. Otherwise, you are not taking responsibility for the only thing you can really take responsibility for, which also happens to be the one thing that really matters. Your state of consciousness.

And if you are not taking responsibility for your state of consciousness, you are not taking responsibility for life. Enjoyment. The peace that comes with surrendered action turns into a sense of aliveness when you actually enjoy what you are doing.

Enjoyment is the second modality of awakened doing. On the new earth, enjoyment will replace wanting as the motivating power behind people's actions. Wanting arises from the ego's delusion that you are a separate fragment that is disconnected from the power that lies behind all creation.

Through enjoyment, you link into that universal creative power itself. When you make the present moment instead of past and future the focal point of your life, your ability to enjoy what you do, and with it the quality of your life, increases dramatically. Joy is the dynamic aspect of being.

When the creative power of the universe becomes conscious of itself, it manifests as joy. You don't have to wait for something meaningful to come into your life so that you can finally enjoy what you do. There is more meaning in joy than you will ever need.

The waiting-to-start-living syndrome is one of the most common delusions of the unconscious state. Expansion and positive change on the outer level is much more likely to come into your life if you can enjoy what you are doing already, instead of waiting for some change so that you can start enjoying what you do. Don't ask your mind for permission to enjoy what you do.

All you will get is plenty of reasons why you can't enjoy it. Not now, the mind will say. Can't you see I am busy?

There's no time. Maybe tomorrow you can start enjoying. That tomorrow will never come, unless you begin enjoying what you are doing now.

When you say, I enjoy doing this or that, it is really a misperception. It makes it appear that the joy comes from what you do. But that is not the case.

Joy does not come from what you do. It flows into what you do, and thus into this world from deep within you. The misperception that joy comes from what you do is normal, and it is also dangerous because it creates the belief that joy is something that can be derived from something else, such as an activity or a thing.

You then look to the world to bring you joy, happiness. But it cannot do that. This is why many people live in constant frustration.

The world is not giving them what they think they need. Then what is the relationship between something that you do and the state of joy? You will enjoy any activity in which you are fully present, any activity that is not just a means to an end.

It isn't the action you perform that you really enjoy, but the deep sense of aliveness that flows into it. That aliveness is one with who you are. This means that when you enjoy doing something, you are really experiencing the joy of being in its dynamic aspect.

That's why anything you enjoy doing connects you with the power behind all creation. It will bring empowerment and creative expansion into your life. Make a list of a number of everyday routine activities that you perform frequently.

Include activities that you may consider uninteresting, boring, tedious, irritating or stressful. But don't include anything that you hate or detest doing. That's the case either for acceptance or for stopping what you do.

The list may include travelling to and from work, buying groceries, doing your laundry, or anything that you find tedious or stressful in your daily work. Then, whenever you are engaged in those activities, let them be a vehicle for alertness. Be absolutely present in what you do and sense the alert, alive stillness within you in the background of the activity.

You will soon find that what you do in such a state of heightened awareness, instead of being stressful, tedious or irritating, is actually becoming enjoyable. To be more precise, what you are enjoying is not really the outward action but the inner dimension of consciousness that flows into the action. This is finding the joy of being in what you are doing.

If you feel your life lacks significance or is too stressful or tedious, it is because you haven't brought that dimension into your life yet. Being conscious in what you do has not yet become your main aim. The new earth arises as more and more people discover that their main purpose in life is to bring the light of consciousness into this world and so use whatever they do as a vehicle for consciousness.

The joy of being is the joy of being conscious. Awakened consciousness then takes over from ego and begins to run your life. You may then find that an activity that you have been engaged in for a long time naturally begins to expand into something much bigger when it becomes empowered by consciousness.

Some of those people who, through creative action, enrich the lives of many others, simply do what they enjoy doing most without wanting to achieve or become anything through that activity. They may be musicians, artists, writers, scientists, teachers or builders, or they may bring into manifestation new social or business structures, enlightened businesses. Sometimes for a few years their sphere of influence remains small and then it can happen that suddenly or gradually a wave of creative empowerment flows into what they do and their activity expands beyond anything they could have imagined and touches countless others.

In addition to enjoyment, an intensity is now added to what they do and with it comes a creativity that goes beyond anything an ordinary human could accomplish. But don't let it go to your head, because up there is where a remnant of ego may be hiding. You are still an ordinary human.

What is extraordinary is what comes through you into this world. But that essence you share with all beings. The 14th century Persian poet and Sufi master Hafiz expresses this truth beautifully.

I am a hole in a flute that the Christ's breath moves through. Listen to this music. Then there is another way of creative manifestation that may come to those who remain true to their inner purpose of awakening.

Suddenly one day they know what their outer purpose is. They have a great vision, a goal, and from then on they work towards implementing that goal. Their goal or vision is usually connected in some way to something that on a smaller scale they are doing and enjoy doing already.

This is where the third modality of awakened doing arises. Enthusiasm. Enthusiasm means there is deep enjoyment in what you do plus the added element of a goal or a vision that you work towards.

When you add a goal to the enjoyment of what you do, the energy field or vibrational frequency changes. A certain degree of what we might call structural tension is now added to enjoyment. And so it turns into enthusiasm.

At the height of creative activity fueled by enthusiasm, there will be enormous intensity and energy behind what you do. You will feel like an arrow that is moving towards the target and enjoying the journey. To an onlooker, it may appear that you are under stress, but the intensity of enthusiasm has nothing to do with stress.

When you want to arrive at your goal more than you want to be doing what you are doing, you become stressed. The balance between enjoyment and structural tension is lost, and the latter has won. When there is stress, it is usually a sign that the ego has returned and you are cutting yourself off from the creative power of the universe.

Instead, there is only the force and strain of egoic wanting, and so you have to struggle and work hard to make it. Stress always diminishes both the quality and effectiveness of what you do under its influence. There is also a strong link between stress and negative emotions, such as anxiety and anger.

It is toxic to the body and is now becoming recognized as one of the main causes of the so-called degenerative diseases such as cancer and heart disease. Unlike stress, enthusiasm has a high energy frequency and so resonates with the creative power of the universe. This is why Ralph Waldo Emerson said that nothing great has ever been achieved without enthusiasm.

The word enthusiasm comes from the ancient Greek, en- and theos, meaning in God. And the related word, enthusiasain, means to be possessed by a god. With enthusiasm you will find that you don't have to do it all by yourself.

In fact, there is nothing of significance that you can do by yourself. Sustained enthusiasm brings into existence a wave of creative energy, and all you have to do then is ride the wave. Enthusiasm brings an enormous empowerment into what you do, so that all those who have not accessed that power would look upon your achievements in awe and may equate them with who you are.

You, however, know the truth that Jesus pointed to when he said, I can of my own self do nothing. Unlike egoic wanting, which creates opposition in direct proportion to the intensity of its wanting, enthusiasm never opposes. It is non-confrontational.

Its activity does not create winners and losers. It is based on inclusion, not exclusion of others. It does not need to use and manipulate people, because it is the power of creation itself and so does not need to take energy from some secondary source.

The ego's wanting always tries to take from something or someone. Enthusiasm gives out of its own abundance. When enthusiasm encounters obstacles in the form of adverse situations or uncooperative people, it never attacks but walks around them Enthusiasm, or, by yielding or embracing, turns the opposing energy into a helpful one, the foe into a friend.

Enthusiasm and the ego cannot coexist. One implies the absence of the other. Enthusiasm knows where it is going, but at the same time it is deeply at one with the present moment, the source of its aliveness, its joy and its power.

Enthusiasm wants nothing because it lacks nothing. It is at one with life, and no matter how dynamic the enthusiasm-inspired activities are, you don't lose yourself in them. And there remains always a still but intensely alive space at the center of the wheel, a core of peace in the midst of activity that is both the source of all and untouched by it all.

Through enthusiasm you enter into full alignment with the outgoing creative principle of the universe, but without identifying with its creations, that is to say, without ego. No attachment, one of the great sources of suffering. Once a wave of creative energy has passed, structural tension diminishes again and joy in what you are doing remains.

Nobody can live in enthusiasm all the time. A new wave of creative energy may come later and lead to renewed enthusiasm. When the return movement towards the dissolution of form sets in, enthusiasm no longer serves you.

Enthusiasm belongs to the outgoing cycle of life. It is only through surrender that you can align yourself with the return movement, the journey home. To sum up, enjoyment of what you are doing combined with a goal or vision that you work towards becomes enthusiasm.

Even though you have a goal, what you are doing in the present moment needs to remain the focal point of your attention. Otherwise you will fall out of alignment with universal purpose. Make sure your vision or goal is not an inflated image of yourself and therefore a concealed form of ego.

Such as wanting to become a movie star, a famous writer, or a wealthy entrepreneur. Also make sure your goal is not focused on having this or that, such as a mansion by the sea, your own company, or ten million dollars in the bank. An enlarged image of yourself or a vision of yourself having this or that are all static goals and therefore don't empower you.

Instead, make sure your goals are dynamic, that is to say, point towards an activity that you are engaged in and through which you are connected to other human beings as well as to the whole. Instead of seeing yourself as a famous actor and writer and so on, see yourself inspiring countless people with your work and enriching their lives. Feel how that activity enriches or deepens not only your life but that of countless others.

Feel yourself being an opening through which energy flows from the unmanifested source of all life through you for the benefit of all. All this implies that your goal or vision is then already a reality within you on the level of mind and of feeling. Enthusiasm is the power that transfers the mental blueprint into the physical dimension.

That is the creative use of mind and that is why there is no wanting involved. You cannot manifest what you want, you can only manifest what you already have. You may get what you want through hard work and stress but that is not the way of the new earth.

Jesus gave the key to the creative use of mind and to the conscious manifestation of form when he said, Whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it and it will be yours. The outward movement into form does not express itself with equal intensity in all people. Some feel a strong urge to build, create, become involved, achieve, make an impact upon the world.

If they are unconscious, their ego will, of course, take over and use the energy of the outgoing cycle for its own purposes. This, however, also greatly reduces the flow of creative energy available to them and increasingly they need to rely on efforting to get what they want. If they are conscious, those people in whom the outward movement is strong will be highly creative.

Others, after the natural expansion that comes with growing up has run its course, lead an outwardly unremarkable, seemingly more passive and relatively uneventful existence. They are more inward looking by nature and for them the outward movement into form is minimal. They would rather return home than go out.

They have no desire to get strongly involved in or change the world. If they have any ambitions, they usually don't go beyond finding something to do that gives them a degree of independence. Some of them find it hard to fit into this world.

Some are lucky enough to find a protective niche where they can lead a relatively sheltered life, a job that provides them with a regular income or a small business of their own. Some may feel drawn towards living in a spiritual community or monastery. Others may become dropouts and live on the margins of a society they feel they have little in common with.

Some turn to drugs because they find living in this world too painful. Others eventually become healers or spiritual teachers, that is to say, teachers of being. They would probably have been called contemplatives.

There is no place for them, it seems, in our contemporary civilization. On the arising new earth, however, their role is just as vital as that of the creators, the doers, the reformers. Their function is to anchor the frequency of the new consciousness on this planet.

I call them the frequency holders. They are here to generate consciousness through the activities of daily life, through their interactions with others, as well as through just being. In this way, they endow the seemingly insignificant with profound meaning.

Their task is to bring spacious stillness into this world by being absolutely present in whatever they do. There is consciousness and therefore quality in what they do, even the simplest task. Their purpose is to do everything in a sacred manner.

As each human being is an integral part of the collective human consciousness, they affect the world much more deeply than is visible on the surface of their lives. The new earth is no utopia. Is the notion of a new earth not just another utopian vision?

Not at all. All utopian visions have this in common. The mental projection of a future time when all will be well, we will be saved, there will be peace and harmony and the end of our problems.

There have been many such utopian visions. Some ended in disappointment, others in disaster. At the core of all utopian visions lies one of the main structural dysfunctions of the old consciousness.

Looking to the future for salvation. The only existence the future actually has is as a thought form in your mind. So when you look to the future for salvation, you are unconsciously looking to your own mind for salvation.

You are trapped in form, and that is ego. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, writes the biblical prophet. The foundation for a new earth is a new heaven, the awakened consciousness.

The earth, external reality, is only its outer reflection. The arising of a new heaven and by implication a new earth are not future events that are going to make us free. Nothing is going to make us free because only the present moment can make us free.

That realization is the awakening. Awakening as a future event has no meaning because awakening is the realization of presence. So the new heaven, the awakened consciousness, is not a future state to be achieved.

A new heaven and a new earth are arising within you at this moment. And if they are not arising at this moment, they are no more than a thought in your head, and therefore not arising at all. What did Jesus tell his disciples?

Heaven is right here in the midst of you. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus makes a prediction that to this day few people have understood. He says, Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

In modern versions of the Bible, meek is translated as humble. Who are the meek or the humble, and what does it mean that they shall inherit the earth? The meek are the egoless.

They are those who have awakened to their essential true nature as consciousness and recognize that essence in all others, all life forms. They live in the surrendered state and so feel their oneness with the whole and the source. They embody the awakened consciousness that is changing all aspects of life on our planet, including nature, because life on earth is inseparable from the human consciousness that perceives and interacts with it.

That is the sense in which the meek will inherit the earth. A new species is arising on the planet. It is arising now, and you are it.

[Speaker 2] (55:26 - 56:41)

I'm coming to you with a special two-hour finale of our New Earth webcast series. For ten weeks we've all met every Monday night for a global conversation. It's been really quite special, a global conversation about consciousness from the UK to Hong Kong, Russia to all 50 states here in America.

I just again want to say thank you to every one of you for helping us to create this new earth here with Eckhart Tolle and with me. So many of you have written to say that you want this forum to continue, so beginning next Monday, May 12th, I hope you'll join me for the start of my soul series webcast here on Oprah.com. For the first time we'll be broadcasting the videotaped sessions of my XM radio show.

Many of you didn't know I have a radio show. Yeah, I have a day job, a night job, a middle job. It's where I get to talk to spiritual teachers and have been doing so for quite some time.

Spiritual teachers and thinkers and scholars about this, my favorite subject, the evolution of our soul. So keep Monday's reserved for Oprah.com. You can begin downloading next

Monday.

Tonight's the last chapter, chapter 10 of A New Earth. And before we get started, let's begin with silence.

[Speaker 1] (56:41 - 56:41)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (56:42 - 56:43)

Would you like to lead us, sir?

[Speaker 1] (56:43 - 57:55)

A moment of stillness. Now, as you know, you need to put your attention somewhere in order to find the stillness. Attention needs to move out of the dimension of thinking.

So we have practiced in the past with putting our attention into the inner feeling of aliveness in the body. We've also, I believe, put our attention on our breath and we've put our attention on sense perceptions, whatever we can see or hear outside. But this time we go one step further and I suggest this is a little bit more subtle.

As we enter this moment of stillness, we put our attention on the fact that we are conscious. In other words, we become aware that there is a light in us. I'm using light metaphorically.

A presence, a space of awareness that is pure attention. So instead of being aware of something, our breath or the inner body or sense perceptions, let's just be aware that we are aware. You feel your own presence and become still.

[Speaker 12] (57:55 - 58:56)

Let's be aware that we are aware and become still. That was good.

[Speaker 2] (58:57 - 1:01:09)

I think even Dean, the stage manager, became aware. He was aware. Right, Dean?

The themes of Chapter 10 are truly the culmination, I think, of what all of our work has been about. How to bring consciousness to every moment and to every action of our lives. And in the process, learning that we are far greater than anything that we could have imagined ourselves to be.

So we're going to get started. You talk about the brief history of your life on page 282. The coming into manifestation of the world as its return to the unmanifested, its expansion and contraction.

On the previous page, you talked about the Earth expanding, the universe really expanding and contracting. Those two movements are reflected throughout the universe in many ways, such as in the incessant expansion and contraction of our heart, as well as the inhaling and exhaling of our breath. They're also reflected in the cycles of sleep and wakefulness.

Each night without knowing it, I love this, you return to the unmanifested, capital S, source of all life, when you enter the stage of deep dreamless sleep and then reemerge again in the morning replenished. Those two movements, the outgoing and return, are also reflected in each person's life cycles. Out of nowhere, so to speak, you suddenly appear in this world.

Birth is followed by expansion. There's not only physical growth, but also growth of knowledge and activities and possessions. This is a time when you're mainly concerned with finding or pursuing your outer purpose.

Each person's life, each life form, in fact, represents a world, a unique way in which the universe experiences itself. And when your form dissolves, a world comes to an end out of countless worlds. I thought that was so beautiful.

That's the bottom of page 283, everybody. Each person's life, each life form, in fact, represents a world, a unique way in which the universe experiences itself. So we are manifestations of the universe experiencing itself as each of us.

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:01:09 - 1:01:35)

And that takes you out of this illusion that all you are is this limited little person. On the surface of things, you are this person with a name and a form, but in the depths of your being, you are the universe experiencing itself in this form. And just this thought brings about a little shift in the way in which you perceive yourself.

[Speaker 2] (1:01:35 - 1:01:36)

And everybody else.

[Speaker 1] (1:01:36 - 1:01:37)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:01:38 - 1:01:49)

We are the universe, or the source of all life, or the creator, or God, whichever name you choose to use, expressing itself in our particular form.

[Speaker 1] (1:01:49 - 1:02:07)

Yes, in and through this form. So there's not... People usually perceive themselves as being this is me, and there's the universe, or the world, and there's the me and the rest of the world.

But you are the universe. You are the life. We're not separate.

[Speaker 2] (1:02:08 - 1:02:34)

Each person's life, each life form represents a world, a unique way in which the universe experiences itself. And when your form dissolves, a world comes to an end, one of countless worlds. Wow, that's really powerful.

So let's talk about the awakening and the return movement. What is the return movement in a person's life?

[Speaker 1] (1:02:35 - 1:03:57)

Usually you start off with the outward movement as you grow up, and as you go into adolescence and adulthood. You start building your life. You acquire experiences.

You acquire knowledge. You acquire possessions. Your sphere of influence extends.

So that's the expansion. You grow. And usually that goes up to a certain age.

It varies from person to person. I talk about it also. Unless this period of expansion is interrupted by some traumatic event, we can come to that a little bit later.

So there's the expansion, and then when people reach a certain age, suddenly a different movement starts, thinks the body is no longer as strong, not working so well anymore. People around you begin to die. They reach a certain age.

And so there's another movement that at some point comes into people's lives, which we could call the dissolution of form. It's gradually happening. And in our culture, we don't like to talk about that.

And this is why most old people are hidden away in homes. You rarely see. You have to go to third world countries to really see the reality of human life.

[Speaker 2] (1:03:58 - 1:04:08)

And also we have such a fear of it, and not just a fear, a disdain for it. So we do everything to make ourselves look younger. Everything is about looking younger, being younger, younger, younger, younger.

[Speaker 1] (1:04:08 - 1:05:53)

Yes. Now the return movement is also where the spiritual dimension can come into your life very strongly, when the form with which perhaps for many years you had been identified, which is the physical form, and the form of my life, all the things that you had built up and identified with, your job, your status, your profession, your possessions. And when that begins to become a little bit shaky, then it is very often at that point that there's the possibility for the spiritual dimension to come into your life, when the solidity of the outer forms becomes diminished.

Right. So traditionally, there's still the, in India for example, there's still a tradition when a man reaches a certain age, he withdraws from society. Sometimes even, some people still practice it, but not so many these days.

He even leaves his family if he knows that his family is being looked after. He leaves and becomes a solitary mendicant or monk in order to go deeply within. But you don't need to do that.

All we need to be aware is that when the return movement starts, when the forms that you had identified with begin to break down, that is a wonderful time for going back home, for the return movement into spirituality, so that you become aware of your own consciousness, rather than what consciousness had identified with that was your life before.

[Speaker 2] (1:05:53 - 1:05:54)

You mean form.

[Speaker 1] (1:05:54 - 1:05:55)

Form, yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:05:55 - 1:05:59)

And so it's sort of the return back to formlessness.

[Speaker 1] (1:05:59 - 1:06:57)

Yes, but consciously. It's a conscious return to see what is the source of my very being. You could say when the world begins to become shaky, then you go back to the source out of which it all came, which is God ultimately, God within, the source within.

So there are these two movements in a person's life. Now in our civilization, the whole civilization, the outgoing and the return. Now our civilization is only interested, it seems, in the outgoing movement.

People are interested in accumulating, in building up, in creating, making a life for yourself, being successful. Of course that has its place. That's fine.

What our civilization knows very little about is the return movement.

[Speaker 2] (1:06:57 - 1:07:33)

You say then one day, you too disappear. Your armchair is still there, but instead of you sitting in it, there's just an empty space. You went back to where you came from from just a few years ago.

Each person's life, each person's life is a form of self. And when your form dissolves, a world comes to an end, one of countless worlds. A return movement in a person's life, the weakening or dissolution of form, whether through old age, illness, disability, loss or some kind of personal tragedy, carries great potential for spiritual awakening.

That's why you say some older people become sort of luminescent.

[Speaker 1] (1:07:33 - 1:08:01)

Yes. Some and others for example, and so negative inner states arise, people become angry or bitter or complain all the time or talk about the past all the time, then they resist whatís happening.

[Speaker 2] (1:08:02 - 1:08:09)

Yeah, because they canít accept, which weíre going to talk about those three modalities, acceptance, enjoyment and enthusiasm.

[Speaker 1] (1:08:09 - 1:08:18)

So here comes the acceptance of, when old age approaches, the acceptance that this can be also very beautiful if youíre open to that.

[Speaker 2] (1:08:18 - 1:09:01)

You say because in old age the emphasis, the top of 286 everybody, because in old age the emphasis shifts from doing to being, and our civilization which is lost in doing knows nothing of being. It asks being, ìWhat do you do with that?î What do you do with it? But the older you get, the more conscious you become that being is of more value to you than doing.

And the whole point of A New Earth is for everybody to realize no matter what age you are, that being is of more value to us than doing, and that itís only the being that you bring into your doing that matters.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:01 - 1:09:15)

Yes, and you donít have to wait for old age for this to happen. You can become conscious of this at any age, and then the way in which you interact with the world is very different.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:16 - 1:09:50)

Right, 287, ìWhen the ego is no longer identified with the return movement in a personís life, old age or approaching death becomes what itís meant to be, an opening into the realm of spirit.î And many times, obviously, you donít have to approach death in order to open into the realm of spirit, as so many of you have told us in your message boards, that this whole book is about opening to the realm of spirit, okay? You say, ìIn a new earth, on our new earth, old age will be universally recognized and highly valued as a time for the flowering of consciousness.î

[Speaker 1] (1:09:50 - 1:11:14)

Yes, in a way we lost it because that was already there in ancient cultures where old age was greatly honored, for example, in the Native American culture, a grandmother is a, when somebody is called a grandmother, itís a title of great distinction and everybody has great respect for the grandmother because the grandmother embodies that wisdom, not only wisdom, she also embodies the opening into the realm of spirit. The elder of a tribe, for example, they embody the opening into the realm of spirit and through those old people, everybody can contact that realm, so itís very vital to have that.

We lost it and now we are going to find that again, where old age is honored rather than looked down upon. So thereís the grandmother, and I mention in the book, you have the grandmother of the Native American. In our civilization, you have the granny, and I say the granny at best is cute, but thereís no depth to that, to how we perceive it.

Because we donít honor. No, that dimension has virtually disappeared from our civilization, the dimension of depth, the dimension of spirit, the dimension of the sacred, which is so vital for human life.

[Speaker 2] (1:11:14 - 1:11:23)

And what kind of effect does that have on us, not honoring that age and that which is sacred within the age and the depth of that, what kind of effect does that have on us?

[Speaker 1] (1:11:23 - 1:11:51)

Well, it means the whole dimension of spirit, which is lost, so all our life becomes completely superficial, and when life becomes completely superficial, you are identified with the surface movement of your life, and because of that lack of depth, people become very unhappy, because thereís only the surface of their life, possessions, achieving this or that, getting recognition. And role-playing. Role-playing.

[Speaker 2] (1:11:51 - 1:12:00)

And also what you call on page 289, I like this, ìintelligent stupidity.î Yes. ìIntelligent stupidity.î Yes. Tell us what you mean by that.

[Speaker 1] (1:12:00 - 1:12:32)

Well, an example I give is, you need great intelligence to split the atom, to do that, but then what do we do with that? We make an atom bomb, a destructive weapon, out of something that could be a wonderful thing. So on the one hand, humans seem very intelligent, and then what they do with that intelligence very often is extremely stupid, and it becomes destructive.

[Speaker 2] (1:12:32 - 1:12:36)

Because thatís where ìintelligent stupidityî comes in.

[Speaker 1] (1:12:36 - 1:12:53)

Yes, and thatís because the dimension of spirit is missing. Intelligence that is not connected to the deeper dimension of awareness or spirit, whatever you want to call it. And being.

Yes. Is very destructive. Right.

Sooner or later, it becomes destructive.

[Speaker 2] (1:12:54 - 1:13:29)

Yes. I love what you say on page 290. This is, you know, Iíve read the book now several times, thatís why this should be your new summer read, everybody, because when you go back and read it again, you will find things that you didnít experience the first time.

Repeated readings, very helpful. Or the second time. Yes.

Or the third time. This is what I got, just yesterday I was reading it once again, this chapter. Struggle or stress is a sign that the ego has returned, as are negative reactions when we encounter obstacles.

So whenever you encounter obstacles in your life, it is because your ego is forefront, at the forefront.

[Speaker 1] (1:13:29 - 1:13:40)

Yes. It doesnít mean that you donít encounter challenges in your life, but to make them into, if you consider a challenge an obstacle that you need to fight against, that means the ego is there.

[Speaker 2] (1:13:41 - 1:14:08)

Right. This is 290. The force behind the egoís wanting creates enemies.

That is to say, reaction in the form of an opposing force, equal in intensity. Thatís what an enemy is. The stronger the ego, the stronger the sense of separateness between people.

The only actions, this is one of my favorite quotes, I love this, the only, see Iíve underlined this a few times, the only actions that do not cause opposing reactions are those that are aimed at the good of all.

[Speaker 1] (1:14:10 - 1:14:32)

Yes. So you no longer separate yourself and say this is, this is my, you consider in whatever you do, you consider the totality or the whole, not just my little needs, but how do I fit into the totality. And so then, this is no longer karmic action which produces suffering.

Right.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:32 - 1:14:58)

Weíre also learning that action, although necessary, is only a secondary factor in manifesting our external reality. The primary factor in creation is consciousness. No matter how active we are, I love this, how much effort we make, our state of consciousness creates our world.

And if thereís no change on that inner level, no amount of action will make any difference.

[Speaker 1] (1:14:58 - 1:15:22)

Yes. In other words, what you do is always secondary. Who you are is primary.

And that means not who you are in the eyes of the world or who you are in whatever image you might have about yourself, but whether you are connected within yourself with that dimension of being, spirit or consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (1:15:22 - 1:15:39)

You say it beautifully, 294, ìItís not what you do, but how you do what you do determines whether or not you are fulfilling your destiny.î Yes. Itís not what you do, but how you do it. And by that you mean the amount of presence or consciousness you bring to whatever you do.

[Speaker 1] (1:15:39 - 1:16:29)

Yes. Another aspect of that is whether whatever you are doing at any given moment, even the most, what the mind would say, insignificant thing, are you doing it in presence or is it just a means to an end because you want to get to some future moment? Right.

Just a simple example you could give, you can go to a restaurant and the way in which the waiter puts the plate on your table can be present and conscious and immediately you would be affected by that. Sometimes it happens that you have a waiter who is conscious and with care and attention he or she puts the plate in front of you. Right.

And you can sense a very different energy from a waiter who is just doing his or her job and he just puts it down.

[Speaker 2] (1:16:29 - 1:16:37)

And thatís in every aspect, thatís going through the toll booth, thatís picking up your laundry, thatís standing in line for french fries, thatís everything.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:37 - 1:16:37)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:16:37 - 1:16:40)

People either bring their presence or they donít.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:40 - 1:16:58)

Yes. And often itís a useful thing to remember to check inside yourself to see whether you are making, whatever you are doing at this moment, whether it is primarily a means to an end because you want to get somewhere else through what you are doing or whether you are giving it your fullest attention.

[Speaker 2] (1:16:58 - 1:17:06)

I think youíre going to have a generation of children growing up with unconscious parents because I recognize this with myself, Iíve been guilty of it since the Blackberries.

[Speaker 1] (1:17:06 - 1:17:07)

Yes. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:17:08 - 1:17:16)

If youíre riding in a car with friends or youíre any place with friends, everybody instead of talking now, everybodyís on their Blackberries to see who else is calling.

[Speaker 1] (1:17:16 - 1:17:19)

Yes, Iíve been wondering what they are doing when they go like that.

[Speaker 2] (1:17:19 - 1:17:28)

Oh, this is where everybodyís writing, everybody, youíre writing, instead of talking to the people who are there with you, youíre writing to the people who are not there to see what they have to say. Thatís what everybodyís doing.

[Speaker 1] (1:17:28 - 1:17:28)

Oh, yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:17:29 - 1:17:37)

And many times people are now on their cell phones or theyíre on their Blackberries and their kids are coming into the room and nobody ever even looks up.

[Speaker 1] (1:17:37 - 1:18:02)

And youíre not experiencing reality that is around you, youíre not experiencing the fullness of life around you and what youíre experiencing is a mental abstraction which is little letters that youíre putting in there, itís just mental abstraction. Youíre not even communicating truly with the person that youíre sending the message to because the communication is two or three times removed, youíre just sending little ciphers to them.

[Speaker 2] (1:18:03 - 1:18:26)

Okay. Well, weíre going to get into the three modalities of awakening where you say that unless you are at any given time having acceptance, enjoyment or enthusiasm for whatever youíre doing, you should stop doing it. Yes.

Because if youíre not accepting the moment, enjoying the moment or having enthusiasm for the moment, then you are in one way or another causing suffering.

[Speaker 1] (1:18:26 - 1:18:53)

Yes, itís a dysfunctional state, youíre in a dysfunctional state, youíre not aligned with the present moment, youíre not aligned with yourself, youíre not aligned with life. Completely dysfunctional and then you generate psychic disharmony around you. You make yourself unhappy, already youíre unhappy when youíre notÖ Because you canít accept the present moment.

And the unhappiness spreads because when youíre unhappy, others around you, you make them unhappy too. It spreads like a disease.

[Speaker 2] (1:18:53 - 1:19:56)

Well, I think, you know, as we here are already in Chapter 10, one of the biggest issues that Iíve heard so many people talk about, and last week a friend of mine started emailing me saying that how, you know, that she was following the classes and that itís very easy to have this resonate with you, but then when you have to go out into the world and actually deal with people, that it starts to get difficult. And that friend is Skyping us today who is an actress who played my daughter in the movie Beloved.

Oh. Yes. Sheís my baby girl.

Kimberly Elise played my baby girl. Hello, Kimberly. Hi.

Hi. Whoís been reading the book. Kimberlyís been reading the book and following the webcast and I was trying to email back and forth explaining this in email and as Eckhart says, emails are, you know, not a full form of communication when youíre trying to express these ideas.

So, go at it, Kimberly.

[Speaker 4] (1:19:57 - 1:21:41)

Okay. So, yes, as I was telling Oprah, itís been really exciting and enlightening to discuss in theory all the different concepts and ideas in the book and itís been attainable here in this loving cocoon which I live in and my book club members live in, but once you go out into the real world and have real life situations, youíre presented with a lot of challenges because not everybodyís read the book, not everybodyís on this journey, not everybody is striving to evolve or have awareness. A simple example, one of the book club members works for a very egotistical boss and is very sort of pushed and has unrealistic demands put upon her and sheís managed to sort of pull herself above it, become witness to the ego sheís dealing with and the ego within herself and as a consequence, sheís been perceived as sort of lax and dispassionate and disengaged in everything thatís going around because everybody else is so in the drama and she feels her job could be at stake because sheís being viewed this way. Thatís an example. So, my question is, if weíre in the process of evolving our state of consciousness, moving away from our egos and getting closer to our true selves, how do we manage, how, how, how do we manage to maintain this level of elevation when youíre forced in the real world to live and work with people who come from a strictly egotistical place and donít understand this awareness level and really can perceive you as being weak?

[Speaker 2] (1:21:43 - 1:21:47)

Good question. Good. Now letís hear what Eckhart has to say.

[Speaker 4] (1:21:49 - 1:21:50)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (1:21:50 - 1:24:04)

So, you, we are gradually learning to live from a different state of consciousness. Now you cannot expect to be necessarily to be a master when you meet difficult people and already to be fully in that state of presence. Itís a gradual process where you bring presence into your life and as you invite presence into your life and at first donít even, donít even practice with the difficult boss, but leave him alone for a while.

First you invite presence into your life with small things. When youíre at home, one little movement, making tea, making, opening the curtains as you get up, looking out of the window without any judgment, just perceiving the light, the clouds. Bring as much as possible presence into your life in simple situations.

When you get into your car, you get in, close the door, be quiet for 20 seconds, 30 seconds, feel the inner body. Many opportunities are there whenever youíre waiting. I talk about that in both books, I believe.

Whenever youíre waiting for something or someone, drop the waiting and be present, be fully there, fully alert, fully accepting of that moment rather than wanting some other moment. So, and gradually you grow in presence power or presence power grows in you. And when as presence power grows in you, you can begin to apply it to slightly challenging situations which normally would have triggered, for example, some slight irritation.

And there you can observe, oh, thereís the old reaction as youíre waiting in line at the supermarket and you can see the irritation with the cashier or whoever is there ahead of you. And you can immediately be aware of that and see, well, it has no useful function, it does nothing except make me unhappy, and you can then let go of it and be clear and free and present at that moment.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:05 - 1:24:22)

Yeah, I think too, Kim, that one of the things that we all want when you read this and you feel so great, itís like sort of being, you know, when you feel so enthusiastic and you want everybody to get it as you get it, itís like developing a, like developing spiritual muscle.

[Speaker 11] (1:24:23 - 1:24:23)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:23 - 1:25:28)

Itís like developing spiritual muscle. You canít go out and lift, you know, the 50-pound weight unless you have also lifted the 25-pound weight and the 10-pound weight. And so you have to start developing the muscle with things that you are more comfortable with.

And once youíve developed a strong enough muscle, the bosses become, the unruly bosses become easier to handle. In the beginning, you just canít say, Iím going to go out, Iím going to apply this principle and expect it to work, because you have to have the inner strength in which to deal with it. And also it comes from a greater awareness, I think, having had unruly bosses in my early years, it comes from a greater awareness of what your real purpose in life is.

I remember being in Baltimore in the early days of my career, having a boss who was a complete jerk, who was just a complete jerk. Iíd like to use another word for it, but Iíll just leave it at that.

[Speaker 1] (1:25:28 - 1:25:30)

Of course, thatís not his true self, but itís almost.

[Speaker 2] (1:25:30 - 1:25:30)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (1:25:31 - 1:25:31)

Heavy overlay.

[Speaker 2] (1:25:31 - 1:26:13)

Having a boss whose true self was love and innocence and had a wonderful presence, but theÖ Heavy overlay. Heavy overlay was the, the ego self that he showed daily was a complete jerk. Something inside me knew I wasnít going to be here forever, there forever.

Power. I knew that I could tolerate it, I could deal with it, I could handle it, I could, you know, my place in it was not, I knew he ultimately had no power over me, that I needed to do what was necessary for this particular time in my life. But inside myself I knew, trouble donít last always, and I will not, this is not going to be the course of my life.

[Speaker 1] (1:26:13 - 1:26:14)

This too will pass.

[Speaker 2] (1:26:14 - 1:26:49)

This too will pass! I knew that this too will pass, and so I could go into the space every day doing what needed to be done, as perhaps maybe your friend needs to do, doing what needs to be done, and could do the thing that everybody else couldnít understand. I could offer, give that person what they thought they needed.

I could give them, I could create the space for them to be an even, to show themselves, to be whoever their ego at that particular time, you know, wanted to be. You see what Iím saying?

[Speaker 4] (1:26:50 - 1:27:01)

I do. I do. So as youíre, as youíre at that higher level of awareness, youíre able to look at a situation and see it as just a situation, but not your entire life.

[Speaker 2] (1:27:01 - 1:27:11)

Not my entire, not your entire life, because that person, ultimately I knew, Iím going to be here for a time, I need to learn this much here, and then Iím going to be gone.

[Speaker 4] (1:27:11 - 1:27:23)

And do you believe that there are just some people in this lifetime who will not get to this level of awareness, and that you just really have to focus on yourself?

[Speaker 2] (1:27:23 - 1:27:33)

Yeah, but thatís what I said to you, thatís what I was saying to you in the email, thatís not your job to worry about what other people are going to do. Your only role is to be, is to concern yourself with yourself. Isnít that true?

[Speaker 1] (1:27:34 - 1:27:34)

Yes. Oh, yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:27:34 - 1:27:34)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:27:35 - 1:27:35)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:27:35 - 1:27:36)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:27:36 - 1:28:19)

So, in one thing, as we said, and Oprah called it ìspiritual muscle,î and I called it ìgrowing in presence power,î itís the same thing, so presence builds up gradually. In the meantime, you can still practice, even in difficult situations, it might sometimes work even if your spiritual muscle is not yet highly developed, if you can remember just a little pointer, a little phrase, ìAm I able to accept this moment as it is?î And if this moment comes in the form of this obnoxious person, then the question is, ìCan I accept this obnoxious person at this moment?î

[Speaker 2] (1:28:19 - 1:28:21)

Can I accept this obnoxious person at this moment?

[Speaker 1] (1:28:21 - 1:28:25)

Because whatever arises in the present moment, can I be the space for this?

[Speaker 2] (1:28:26 - 1:28:41)

Yeah, and if youíre able to remove your ego from it, if youíre able to take your ego out of it, then it becomes just what it is, what you were saying, Kim, it becomes just another situation. If you can take your ego out of it, or your friend take the ego out of it, so itís not personal.

[Speaker 13] (1:28:41 - 1:28:42)

No.

[Speaker 2] (1:28:42 - 1:28:46)

Itís not personal at all. No. Yeah.

Thatís what I learned how to do.

[Speaker 4] (1:28:46 - 1:28:53)

So we can really take these opportunities that are so challenging as little gifts and opportunities to grow ourselves.

[Speaker 2] (1:28:53 - 1:29:27)

Not only that, it is the true, that is the spiritual path. You know, we talked at a previous class about how everybody has their cross to bear, and the truth is that when you confront an obnoxious boss or in difficult situations, therein lies your opportunity to build a spiritual muscle. Yes.

To build or create or allow presence to come through in a way that you get to show who you are, instead of being worried about what the other person is doing.

[Speaker 1] (1:29:27 - 1:29:46)

Yes. So difficult people or ego-controlled people have a very important spiritual function in this world. Eventually, they will become so unhappy that they will also go beyond that, but in the meantime, they are there as practice material for others.

[Speaker 2] (1:29:47 - 1:29:51)

Thatís right, because if everything was wonderful all the time, you would have no practice, no way to practice.

[Speaker 1] (1:29:51 - 1:29:52)

There would be no growth.

[Speaker 4] (1:29:52 - 1:29:54)

Thatís a good way to look at it.

[Speaker 2] (1:29:54 - 1:30:28)

Hey, I love your house, Kim. I hadnít seen your new house. How nice.

I know, you havenít. I know. Do you have a dog?

Oh my God, you have a dog and a fireplace? Very cool. Yeah.

Very cool, BG. Talk to you soon. Bye.

Bye. Very nice. Very interesting about the practicing of the spiritual muscle.

Yes. Now, notice when I was calling my former boss a jerk, and you said, ìThatís not who you never encountered obnoxious people in your life?î No, you do encounter obnoxious people.

[Speaker 1] (1:30:29 - 1:30:34)

Itís a question of lookingÖ Do you have only love for them? Not necessarily.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:34 - 1:30:35)

Okay, good.

[Speaker 1] (1:30:35 - 1:30:35)

No.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:36 - 1:30:38)

Okay. But itís a question of what? Did you say?

[Speaker 1] (1:30:39 - 1:31:03)

Of whether one is able to look through this overlay of ego or heavy pain body, which can be very strong, whether youíre able to go through that. Itís very hard to describe this process. When you are not judging the person mentally, not calling him or her anything, you still know that this person is obnoxious.

Yes. You know that.

[Speaker 11] (1:31:03 - 1:31:03)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:03 - 1:31:27)

You still know that this person is controlled by the ego. You know it even without formulating a concept in your mind. But you also know that beyond there is a beingÖ Right.

That is pure and innocent and as close to God as anybody.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:28 - 1:31:29)

As anybody.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:30 - 1:31:35)

SoÖ Okay. Is it possible to look through the ego in others?

[Speaker 2] (1:31:35 - 1:31:39)

Yeah, but Eckhart, you still donít have to want to deal with that person.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:39 - 1:31:41)

No. You may want to remove yourself.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:41 - 1:31:42)

Right.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:42 - 1:31:47)

And if that is possible, then that often is the best thing to do.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:47 - 1:31:55)

Thatís right. Because you can still say, ìI can bless you in your beingnessÖî Yes. ìÖbut what youíre showing me now is not what I want to deal with.î No.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:55 - 1:32:30)

Or you can walk out of a job if itís insane. The environment is insane. And the more present you are, the more certain you will beÖ About what to do.

About what to do. Absolutely. But we talked about this in one of the sessions, the realization of what you have to do comes from a powerful but peaceful place where youíre present.

Thatís right. So when youíre walking out of the office, youíre not walking out in anger when it comes through presence. Youíre walking out, youíre peaceful with everybody and say, ìThatís it.

Iím walking out of here.î Thatís it. Thereís power but no negativity.

[Speaker 2] (1:32:31 - 1:32:31)

I got that.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:32 - 1:32:35)

I got that. So itís beautiful when that happens.

[Speaker 2] (1:32:35 - 1:32:45)

When to say, ìI have had enough.î Yes. ìI have had enough.î And that comes from your inner purposeÖ Yes. As opposed to your outerÖ Yes.

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:45 - 1:33:07)

Now there may be other situations when youíre forced, for some reason youíre forced intoÖ Now, an extreme example is that youíre in an elevator and you getÖ the elevator gets stuckÖ Right. And there you are with an obnoxious person for one hour in the elevator. Or some people are stuck with somebody for some reason.

They canít go, leave the situation. Youíre maybe in the prison cell.

[Speaker 2] (1:33:07 - 1:33:13)

Or lots of people are inÖ they have to keep jobsÖ Yes. Where they are dealing with bosses who are obnoxious.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:13 - 1:33:14)

Thatís right.

[Speaker 2] (1:33:14 - 1:33:19)

Yeah. As we just heard Kimberly say. You have to keep a job.

You have to earn a living for yourself and your family.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:19 - 1:33:26)

Yes. And thereís a question of accepting that this is where this person is at without getting into reactivity.

[Speaker 2] (1:33:26 - 1:33:27)

And resisting it.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:27 - 1:33:29)

Resisting it. Right. Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (1:33:29 - 1:33:31)

I did it the right way.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:31 - 1:33:31)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:33:31 - 1:33:50)

Because I was in that situation for quite a long time. And literally just accepted it. And I would have friends say, ìHow can you put up with that?

How can you tolerate that?î Because I know, ìThis too shall pass.î And soÖ ìTrouble doesnít last always.î Intuitively you did that. Intuitively I knew that I wasnít going to be there forever.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:50 - 1:34:09)

I remember the same reading your friend Maria Shriver wrote a book and she describes her earlyÖ some of her early bosses dreadfulÖ Yes, yes. But somehow she was able to just say, ìThatís how it is.î She also knew she was going to be there for the rest of her lifeÖ She was going to be there forever. But for the time being, she kind ofÖ This is what I need to do.

Accepted and yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:34:09 - 1:34:32)

Thatís right. Kippy is an American who teaches gifted students at an elementary school on a U.S. Air Force base outside Tokyo, Japan. And sheís Skyping us from her home office with a reading group she started after hearing about our web classes.

How do you say ìhelloî in Japanese? Is it konnichiwa? Konnichiwa!

Konnichiwa!

[Speaker 1] (1:34:33 - 1:34:33)

Konnichiwa!

[Speaker 2] (1:34:34 - 1:34:34)

Konnichiwa!

[Speaker 1] (1:34:35 - 1:34:38)

And the same to you? Mushimushi.

[Speaker 2] (1:34:38 - 1:34:39)

Mushimushi.

[Speaker 1] (1:34:39 - 1:34:40)

Only on the telephone.

[Speaker 2] (1:34:41 - 1:34:44)

All right, Kippy, letís start with you. What is your question?

[Speaker 9] (1:34:45 - 1:35:05)

Okay. Eckhart, on page 301 you wrote, ìEnthusiasm means there is a deep enjoyment in what you do plus the added element of a goal or vision that you work toward.î My question is, is how can we have goals or visions if we are to always remain in the present?

[Speaker 2] (1:35:06 - 1:35:07)

Good question.

[Speaker 1] (1:35:07 - 1:35:09)

Good, yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:35:09 - 1:35:09)

Good question.

[Speaker 1] (1:35:09 - 1:35:10)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:35:10 - 1:35:11)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:35:12 - 1:37:51)

So the goal or vision when itísÖ is inside you as if it were already a reality. And in fact on some level it is a reality inside you already. So a trueÖ a goal that is powerful when youíre in touch with your own power is not a goal that you project yourself mentally to and say, ìI would like to achieve this or that at some future point.

I need that. I want that to complete myself.î Youíre reaching out towards that goal. Youíre losing yourself.

Youíre not present. But if you areÖ if you realize that whatever vision you hold is already a reality inside you, I give an example now, ìThe Power of Now.î Before I ever wrote the book, I had this vision of that that book was already on some level already there, had already been written. And so I felt all Iím doing is Iím externalizing whatís already there.

But I had this strong inner feeling that the book already exists inside me. I saw that it as a reality already. I didnít try to achieve writing a book.

The book was already there and all then I had to do was be open to this energy movement coming from within to manifest what was already there on a deeper level. And thatís why Jesus said, ìWhenever you ask for anything, believe that you already have received it and it will be yours.î So if you believe that you already have received it, it means it must already be a reality inside yourself so youíre not coming from lack or scarcity or neediness because then youíre notÖ thereís no power behind your vision or your goal. Youíre already coming from fullness.

So the goal is already a reality inside. You already feel as if you had it. Itís already a reality and what you feel about it is the fullness that is already there in the present moment.

And then you donít lose yourself, then you are fully there as you begin to respond to this inner impulse. You manifest it in your life, in the present moment. So itís not a future thing really.

A powerful goal when you visualize, a powerful goal is youíre not visualizing in order to achieve something in the future, youíre visualizing in order to bring something out thatís already inside you.

[Speaker 2] (1:37:52 - 1:38:36)

Wow. Thatís powerful but I can understand why a lot of people would be confused by it because then how do you ever achieve anything in the future? Isnít that what youíre saying too, Kippy?

Right, right. How do you ever achieve anything in the future? Say, I want to be an actress.

There are a lot of people I know at the Bodhi Tree who weíre going to talk to later. A lot of people at the Bodhi Tree who have day jobs where they really want, I want to be an actress. Thatís a future goal, I want to be an actor or an actress.

Or I want to get a job working for a major corporation. How do youÖ how can you not hold that as a vision for yourself?

[Speaker 1] (1:38:36 - 1:39:12)

You can. But what youíre visualizing is not yourself in some future state. The power that is there inside you that will manifest externally in time and in the future is already there.

Get in touch with the power. What would it feel like if you were an actress already successful? What does that feel like inside you?

And where does the power come from with which you can make a difference in peopleís lives when you are doing something like that? Where does the power reside?

[Speaker 2] (1:39:12 - 1:39:21)

Yeah, because you say, instead of saying, ìI want to be a great actress,î is, ìHow do I use this talent to manifest in such a way that causes people to feel a certain way?î Yes. Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:39:22 - 1:39:47)

Yes. So itís already a reality inside you. And then you can take steps towards implementing that.

But it comes from fullness rather than neediness. The mistake is not finding the place of power that is in the present moment and believing that something else that is not in the present moment is going to bring you to the place of power. Okay.

It wonít.

[Speaker 2] (1:39:47 - 1:41:02)

Okay. I just got it, Kipi. I just got it.

I just got it. What heís saying is, is that whatever goal that you have or vision that you have must come from the place of being or consciousness. And if it comes from a place of being or consciousness and not as an external goal that you have for yourselfóI think Iím getting it right, right?óif it comes from being or consciousness, then it comes through you out into the world instead of you reaching out into the world saying, ìThis is what I want for myself.î Yes. And so all thingsóand I can use the example of myself. I have always wanted to do exactly what Iím doing here with all of you tonight. Iíve always felt that deep inside me this is what I was meant to do.

I was meant to be a teacher. I was meant to use television as a platform for helping people to better know themselves. And whenóand knowing that, knowing that deep inside myself is what has helped bring this into fruition this wayó Yes.óinstead of saying, you know, ìOne day I want to have a webcast and have a million people on the webcast.î Yes. Yes. You see what Iím saying? Yes.

[Speaker 9] (1:41:03 - 1:41:04)

I do. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:41:04 - 1:41:35)

That it comes from the inner part of you. Thereís a feeling that comes from the consciousness part of yourself, the being of yourself that says, ìThis is what I now need to do.î And thatís why youíre saying it doesnít matter what you do. No.

Itís how you do what you do. Mm-hmm. And it doesnít matter what you do.

Everything that you do has to be fueled by consciousness or the spirit of God, which is another way of saying itó Mm-hmm.óby consciousness or the spirit of God. Otherwise it has no real meaning in your life.

[Speaker 1] (1:41:35 - 1:41:43)

Yes. And the place of power is in the present moment. Thatís the vital thing is you can only touch that power in the present moment.

Thatís right.

[Speaker 2] (1:41:44 - 1:41:56)

So if youíre notó And so you said last week itís about this stepó This. step today that it takes to get to the next step, then the next step, and the next step, and the next step. Yes.

You donít get there by thinkingó No.

[Speaker 1] (1:41:56 - 1:42:24)

Let me, you knowó And even if youíre doing something at the moment that life has given you that doesnít seem to be part of your visionó Your vision. Letís say youíre working in a restaurant, but your vision is being a great artistó Right.ómanifesting. You still need to honor whatever it is that youíre doing at this momentó Right.ófully and completely because it may, in some way, it may arise out of that. That may also be part of it.

Thatís right.

[Speaker 2] (1:42:25 - 1:42:33)

Because every step leads you to the direction. Itís the means and not the endó Yes.óthat counts. Yes.

The means and not the end.

[Speaker 1] (1:42:33 - 1:42:33)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:42:34 - 1:42:36)

You follow that, right, Kip? I do.

[Speaker 9] (1:42:36 - 1:42:37)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:42:37 - 1:42:40)

Anybody else want to say anything there? Hi, ladies.

[Speaker 11] (1:42:42 - 1:42:43)

Hi.

[Speaker 2] (1:42:43 - 1:42:46)

What time is it in Tokyo right now? Is it another day already?

[Speaker 9] (1:42:47 - 1:42:48)

Itís already, yes.

[Speaker 11] (1:42:48 - 1:42:51)

We are living on Tuesday. Yes. Tuesday morning.

[Speaker 2] (1:42:52 - 1:42:53)

Oh, Tuesday. Ten to five.

[Speaker 1] (1:42:54 - 1:43:02)

Well, so in Tokyo, itís tomorrow. Itís not the now. So, thisóTokyoó That card made her funny.

[Speaker 9] (1:43:04 - 1:43:06)

And youíll have beautiful weather tomorrow.

[Speaker 2] (1:43:07 - 1:43:13)

Oh, okay. Tokyo, itís tomorrow. Itís not now.

All right. Thank you guys so much. Thank you.

[Speaker 11] (1:43:13 - 1:43:14)

Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:43:14 - 1:43:43)

Wow, thatís interesting because everything always comes back to that same point of whatever sense of presence or being, Holy Spirit, Spirit of God, whatever you choose to call it, name, because it doesnít have an ego, so it doesnít get hung up on what itís being called, that when you bring that into your life, it fuels everything that you do, and as you said last week, the evolutionary impulse of the universe rises up to meet you.

[Speaker 1] (1:43:43 - 1:44:22)

Yes. Yes. And so the question to ask yourself, itís a very simple question, am I okay with the present moment?

You need to be deeply okay with the present moment to find the power of the present moment, which is your own power, or the power of the universe, or the power of God. Am I okay? If youíre not okay with the present moment, letís say youíre working in a restaurant, but while youíre working in the restaurant you would rather be somewhere else, youíre not empowered.

Youíre only empowered that even while youíre working in the restaurant, and for some people thatís their life purpose, to work in a restaurant and to spread that presence through whatever they do, the people they meet there, thatís beautiful.

[Speaker 2] (1:44:22 - 1:44:37)

Yes, and what youíre saying in this book is that whatever you do, wherever you do, whatever you do, can have deep meaning and purpose to it, and for the rest of the world, if you bring your presence to it. Yes.

[Speaker 11] (1:44:38 - 1:44:38)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:44:38 - 1:44:46)

And we all have encountered that, the difference between people, whether itís a waiter, or the toll booth operator, or, you knowÖ Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:44:47 - 1:44:47)

Enormous.

[Speaker 2] (1:44:47 - 1:45:10)

Yes, in every one of our life circumstances. Okay, Elzbieta is joining us from Poland. Did I pronounce your name correctly tonight?

Very well, yes, Elzbieta, hello. Elzbieta, where sheís been downloading all of the webcasts. Hello?

Is it Jyn Dubré? Hello? Can you hear me?

Yes.

[Speaker 5] (1:45:11 - 1:45:25)

Yes, I can. Oh, fantastic. I want to thank you both for this extraordinary webcast, the greatest book club Iíve ever seen.

Well, thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 11] (1:45:25 - 1:45:26)

Whatís your question?

[Speaker 5] (1:45:27 - 1:45:37)

Iíd like to ask Eckhart to comment on a certain quote from a philosopher, Alan Watts, if I may?

[Speaker 1] (1:45:37 - 1:45:39)

Yes, please, go ahead.

[Speaker 5] (1:45:40 - 1:46:10)

Later I will also have a question, if possible. Go ahead. Okay, go ahead.

There is a certain pause, thatís why itís a little strange. So, the quote is from the book on the taboo against knowing who you are. ìThe most strongly enforced of all known taboos is the taboo against knowing who or what you really are, behind the mask of your apparently separate, independent and isolated ego.î Could you please comment on that?

[Speaker 1] (1:46:11 - 1:47:27)

Well, the taboo is not a taboo thatísÖ itís not called a taboo, but our civilization is ignorant of that dimension. And our civilization, to a large extent, is still run by the ego. And the ego does not want to know about the deeper dimension of spirit.

It feels threatened by that. The ego likes, perhaps, to have an ideology and call that spiritual. It has a certain rigid belief system and says that is spiritual, and identifies with that and calls other people enemies or evil who donít agree with that belief system.

But, so the ego feels threatened by the spiritual dimension within the human being. And it will do unconsciously anything to sabotage the arising of the spiritual dimension in our culture, in civilization or in human beings. And so you see, these are unconscious reactions.

Some people say that what we are doing is evil. These are unconscious reactions, again, by the ego to protect itself.

[Speaker 2] (1:47:27 - 1:47:31)

Wow. You mean, some people say what weíre doing here is evil.

[Speaker 1] (1:47:31 - 1:48:01)

Yes. Yeah. I donít know how it is possible, because bringing people to a greater presence and to a peaceful way to live, how that can be evil, I donít know.

But somehow they work it out in their minds. That this is evil. Yeah.

And so this is an unspoken taboo. There are no laws against spirituality, but the taboo is unspoken. Itís underneath the surface of things.

And the taboo has been created by the egoic civilizations that we inhabit.

[Speaker 5] (1:48:02 - 1:48:26)

Thank you. Yes, thatís very clear to me too. But I think that even though Alan Watts wrote it, I donít know, 30, 40 years ago, it still rings true, unfortunately.

So my question actually is, for those who misinterpret your teachings, could you clarify, do you consider your teachings to be a religion?

[Speaker 1] (1:48:28 - 1:49:34)

Certainly not. Itís not a religion. It is spiritual, which means this teaching, the truth of it, can be applied within any religion or within no religion.

The teaching is in essence spiritual. Itís not based on belief systems. Itís not based on thoughts.

Itís based on becoming present and still. And whether you are a Muslim or a Christian or a Buddhist orÖ Atheist? Atheist, it can be applied in your life.

The transformation of consciousness does not depend on your belief system. But it is possible, of course, if you have a rigid belief system, it can stop you fromÖ The belief system can sabotage the transformation. But it does not depend, the transformation does not depend on whatever belief system you have.

Certain belief systems are so rigid that they represent a barrier.

[Speaker 2] (1:49:35 - 1:49:52)

What do you say to those people though? I mean, I think that was one of the questions that somebody has tonight about other people who think that what you have written and what we have done here in communicating with people around the world about what youíve written is evil. What do you say to that?

[Speaker 1] (1:49:53 - 1:50:12)

Well, probably most of them have never looked at the book. Right. And many of them probably have never listened in to the webcast.

Right, right. So, because if they truly read a few pages in the book, they would see that thereís absolutely nothing that could be interpreted as evil.

[Speaker 2] (1:50:13 - 1:50:16)

As evil. Thank you, Elzbieta. Thank you so much.

[Speaker 5] (1:50:17 - 1:51:11)

I agree, absolutely. Oprah, can I also share one ìahaî moment? Sure, please.

Show an ìahaî. Share an ìahaî. Yes, please.

That would go back to the first chapter on page 12, where Eckhart writes about fear, greed or the desire for power are not the dysfunction, but are created by the dysfunction, which is a deep-seated collective delusion that lies within the mind of each human being. End of quote. I think that this is aÖ Well, thereís lots of great stuff in the book, and thereís an ìahaî almost on every page, but this one is very important, I think, because it seems to me seeing through the delusion can onlyÖ when we can see through the delusion, can we be really free of fear, greed and desire for power, which we all share, Iím afraid.

[Speaker 2] (1:51:11 - 1:51:15)

Thank you, Elzbieta. Thank you for sharing that all the way from Poland tonight. Thank you so much.

[Speaker 13] (1:51:16 - 1:51:16)

Thank you very much.

[Speaker 2] (1:51:16 - 1:51:17)

Thank you so much.

[Speaker 13] (1:51:17 - 1:51:18)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:51:18 - 1:51:29)

Beth from Green Bay, Wisconsin, sent in an email that caught my attention a few weeks back. I thought itíd be great to Skype with her for this last chapter. Hi, Beth.

Hi, Oprah. Hi.

[Speaker 1] (1:51:30 - 1:51:30)

Hi.

[Speaker 2] (1:51:30 - 1:51:33)

Why donít you read us your email? Okay.

[Speaker 6] (1:51:36 - 1:52:13)

Okay, I emailed in, ìIíve been working on this too shall pass, and Iíve noticed itís much easier to accept that this is my own life situation than it is for the worldís life situation. For example, I canít be cavalier about teenagers beating each other for video content on the Internet, I canít condone 13-year-old girls having spiritual weddings to much older men, and I cannot just accept that human beings will be tortured and killed for having a different religion, nationality, or skin color. Why is it so much easier to say thatís no big deal for me than it is for the rest of the world?

Why canít I let go of this global anger?î You have global anger.

[Speaker 1] (1:52:13 - 1:52:14)

Thatís a good word.

[Speaker 2] (1:52:14 - 1:52:16)

Thatís a good word for it.

[Speaker 1] (1:52:16 - 1:52:17)

Many people have that.

[Speaker 2] (1:52:17 - 1:52:22)

I was going to say, you can be angry for a very long time if youíre going to carry that around, but go ahead.

[Speaker 1] (1:52:23 - 1:52:34)

So have you already dropped anger on a personal level in your own life, being angry at people around you that you experience personally?

[Speaker 6] (1:52:35 - 1:52:51)

Very rarely do I get angry at anyone else anymore. Mostly itís my kids, but thatís just part of their growing up. Iím able to see that, why theyíre doing what theyíre doing, and have some compassion for them.

Itís just on a larger scale.

[Speaker 1] (1:52:52 - 1:55:01)

Yes, compassion. That is an important word. I also noticed in your question you used the word ìcondone,î which perhaps may be synonymous in your mind with acceptance.

Condone means to say itís okay to behave in such a way, that this is not what acceptance is about. Acceptance is to simply see what is, and to say this is what is right now. This is how these humans behave.

This is what theyíre doing right now. This is what is. And no matter what you think or how you judge that, you cannot argue with the fact that this is what is.

And thatís all acceptance is. It doesnít mean itís okay, I condone it, thereís nothing wrong with it. Itís to come to an inner acceptance of the is-ness of life right now.

And then you can look, and then you can see, once you have come to an acceptance of what is, you also see that, yes, it is mad, you can see it is mad. You can come to a place of compassion when you see that all these people are unconscious. They donít know what they are doing.

So, and then you can see evil, I mean thereís vast amounts of evil still happening on the planet, which means suffering that humans are inflicting on other humans, on other life forms, on the planet itself, on nature. All that you can see as manifestations of ignorance, spiritual ignorance, unconsciousness, ego, collective ego. And so once you see that, you can come to a place of compassion for those people who are still controlled by ego and who are acting unconsciously.

[Speaker 2] (1:55:01 - 1:56:08)

And also, doesnít it come to that phrase about accepting the things you cannot change, changing the things you can, and having the wisdom to know the difference. And the truth of everything that weíve been saying in these past two weeks, Beth, for you and everyone else, is that you begin to change the world by first changing yourself. And so the anger, all of us are putting energy into the world.

All of us are putting energy out into the world. And you raise the level of consciousness when you bring consciousness and presence to whatever it is you do. Thatís how you begin to change the world.

In your home, right now, what room are you in right now? This is a spare bedroom. We call it the home office.

Okay. In your home office, with your children, in your actions every day, being less angry in your personal life really helps diffuse it in the rest of the world. And people donít see that as a big deal, but if everybody did that, it would be diminished.

[Speaker 1] (1:56:09 - 1:56:38)

Yes. You are connected on an unseen level with all other humans. Thatís right.

And whatever energy you put out contributes to that particular vibration in the collective energy field of humanity. Correct. So if youíre putting out anger, then that connects with all the collective anger that is floating around on the planet, which is vast.

Uh-huh. It connects and feeds the collective anger.

[Speaker 2] (1:56:38 - 1:57:09)

Yes. And so isnít each of us, isnít it for each of us, weíre asked to do that which we can do? I mean, I feel this every time I go to Africa, that itís really easy to get overwhelmed by all of the massive problems encountered in that country.

You can get easily overwhelmed, and so the thing to do is to focus on that which you can change, that which you can have some impact on, and do that as well as you can. Yes.

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:57:09 - 1:57:15)

One little thing, perhaps, one thing that might seem insignificant, and you can make a change there.

[Speaker 2] (1:57:15 - 1:57:23)

But everything is significant, depending on what presence you bring to it. Beth, I hear youíve made some big changes since reading A New Earth. Tell us about them.

[Speaker 6] (1:57:23 - 1:57:53)

Oh, yes. Actually, I picked up A New Earth after my grandmother passed away in January. But some things have been happening along the line that I didnít really understand what was going on.

I left a job that was not good for me in November. I was able to spend more time with my grandmother, and we both prepared ourselves for her passing. Iíve quit smoking.

Iíve started running. I eat healthy foods. Iím not even sure who I am anymore.

[Speaker 2] (1:57:55 - 1:58:11)

And thatís a good thing. Yes. Thatís a good thing.

But I think the key word here is what Eckhart had said earlier. Accepting what is going on in the world isnít the same thing as condoning it, because there are a lot of terrible things going on in the world. No, I know.

[Speaker 6] (1:58:11 - 1:58:35)

And I donít know if itís because Iíve been a mom for so long. Itís just that I want to put myself maybe as a shield in front of these people to offer them some protection. And I donít know if thatís my own ego, but it doesnít feel like itís my ego.

Itís like, you know, you people donít deserve this. You deserve to have a better life. Youíre 13, 14 years old.

Itís not time for you to have a baby.

[Speaker 2] (1:58:36 - 1:58:45)

Are you talking about the polygamous story on the news? Yes. Yeah.

Yes. Okay. Thatís none of your business right now.

Your business is whatís going on in your house right now, Beth.

[Speaker 6] (1:58:46 - 1:58:52)

Yeah, and Iím happy to hear Eckhart says that grandmothers are going to be respected, because Iím going to be a grandmother in July.

[Speaker 2] (1:58:54 - 1:59:08)

Well, I donít know if theyíll be respected by July, but weíre working on it. Weíre working on it. Okay.

Thanks for that email. Thank you so much. Thank you.

Okay. I think weíve got some work to do.

[Speaker 1] (1:59:09 - 1:59:10)

Maybe just one.

[Speaker 2] (1:59:11 - 1:59:22)

Weíre going to get old age respected by July. Weíve got to get busy. Weíve got to sell some more books.

Thanks, Beth. We have a caller from France on the line. Michelle lives in Paris, has a question.

[Speaker 7] (1:59:24 - 2:00:50)

Yes. Hello, Oprah. This is Eckhart.

Hello. I actually have a million questions, but Iím only going to ask one. One thatís actually troubled me for a long time, and I think I can sum it up with a quote from the Bible.

ìIt is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.î And for me, I see the rich man as someone who is full of ego and full of mind, which can never enter into consciousness. And this relates to me and to my question, because I have a very strong and active mind, and itís my greatest asset, perhaps, but itís also my Achilles heel. And when I can reach a place of stillness or awakening, my mind wants to participate.

It wants to own the experience. And at some point, always succeeds in bringing form to the experience, turning it into a concept, trying to understand it, trying to link it with past experiences. And so, you speak about this space between ego and awareness, and I need to develop that space.

I need to be able to step further back from my mind. And itís very difficult. The mindís also very cunning, and it deceives me even into believing that Iím actually in that space.

What can I do? How can I work on this dilemma?

[Speaker 1] (2:00:51 - 2:03:14)

Well, the mind cannot recognize that space. It doesnít know anything about it. Itís completely meaningless to the mind.

But from what you are saying, I can see that you already are able to enter that space, for how long doesnít matter, but you are already able to have that inner space of stillness inside you, and your mind is almost denying that experience, certainly resisting it. So, first of all, itís the recognition that the most important thing, which is the initial disidentification from the process of thinking, has already happened inside you. That first disidentification from thinking and encountering that dimension of presence or stillness inside yourself, that has already happened.

Now, the mind is not happy with it. It doesnít want to go there, or it judges it in some way, or the mind says, ìOh, I want to interpret it in some way.î All you need to be there is, rather than fighting the mind or your thought processes, to recognize thoughts that arise as thoughts. And itís from the place of stillness, or spaciousness inside you, that you can recognize when thoughts come and say this or that about stillness, or about whatever you should be doing, something else, or whatever they say, you recognize these as just another thought, and another thought.

And when you recognize a thought as a thought, it does no longer, it no longer has this power to pull your attention in completely. So the important thing is not the fact that your mind is highly developed. That can be quite useful at some point when youíre not identified with it.

You can use your highly developed mind in the service of awareness, in the service of spirit, and thatís fine. But in the meantime, itís not being drawn into every thought that arises, or even fighting a thought and saying, ìGo away, I want to be still.î That doesnít work either.

[Speaker 7] (2:03:15 - 2:03:17)

You recognizeÖ If thatís a threat, Iím giving it power.

[Speaker 1] (2:03:18 - 2:04:43)

Yes, yes. You recognize the mind as mind. You recognize thinking as thinking.

So, you can then choose to be present, when youíre walking out in nature, for example, or when youíre sitting alone in your room. You choose to be present, and then you will notice the mind will occasionally try to come in and do or say something about it, or something totally different, or says you should be thinking about something else thatís more important than this. And then you can recognize these thoughts as just another thought that arises.

You can even say to yourself, ìOh, thereís another thought.î And then you get still again. And then a thought comes, ìOh, there comes another.î Not to give every thought that arises this importance, so that it draws you in, because the mind wants to do that. It wants all your attention, because itís had all your attention for such a long time.

So, itís a habit pattern of the mind. It wants to draw in your attention. And all you do is you take your attention out of the mind.

So, thatís really the process. Thoughts is, the mind is not the enemy. You would never win that fight against the mind if you made the mind into an enemy.

The mind is like a little restless child, you could say, or a restless puppy.

[Speaker 2] (2:04:43 - 2:05:37)

It goes about, and then you say, ìOh, itís just, itís nothing, itís not a big deal.î Yeah, and as we all get, you know, build our spiritual muscle here, we become more and more conscious of our consciousness. And recognize when the thoughts are just playing in your mind. And Iím sure that started to happen to you already, Michelle.

You just said, ìOh, thereís a thought, thereís another one, thereís another thought.î I mean, I would have to say over the ten weeks that weíve been doing this course, Iíve become really, really more skilled at, I will think about that later, sort of like Scarlett OíHara. I wonít think about that now, Iíll think about that later, because this is now, I want to be present with whateverís going on in this moment, so Iíll deal with that at a later time, when I choose to set aside time for thinking about that particular thing. Instead of just letting my thoughts rule everything, all the time.

Exactly, yeah.

[Speaker 7] (2:05:38 - 2:05:40)

Iíve been putting much, much effort into keeping my thoughts at bay.

[Speaker 2] (2:05:40 - 2:05:41)

Yes, thatís right.

[Speaker 7] (2:05:41 - 2:05:43)

Looking at them for what they are.

[Speaker 2] (2:05:43 - 2:05:55)

Just looking, ìOh, thereís another thought, there it is again.î And then the effort should be in keeping yourself in the moment. You know, my mantra is, ìBe here, be now.î Be here, be now, with whateverís going on.

[Speaker 1] (2:05:55 - 2:05:56)

Yes, absolutely.

[Speaker 2] (2:05:56 - 2:05:57)

Be here, be now.

[Speaker 1] (2:05:57 - 2:05:58)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:05:58 - 2:06:03)

Thank you so much. Wonderful, wonderful. Thank you so much.

Bonsoir. Bonsoir.

[Speaker 11] (2:06:03 - 2:06:04)

Bonsoir.

[Speaker 2] (2:06:05 - 2:07:19)

All right, letís talk about, you say, that the alignment of your outer purpose with your inner purpose, which we talked about last week, the inner purpose must fuel the outer purpose, otherwise, ultimately, itís not going to work for us. But the alignment of our outer purpose with the inner purpose is called awakened doing, and that awakened doing is the next stage in the evolution of consciousness on our planet. There are three modalities of awakened doing.

Acceptance, enjoyment, and enthusiasm. On page 295, you write, ìEach modality represents a certain vibrational frequency of consciousness.î That is, you need to be vigilant to make sure that one of them operates whenever you are engaged in doing anything at all. This is key, folks.

From the most simple task to the most complex. If you are not in a state of either acceptance, enjoyment, or enthusiasm, look closely and you will find that you are creating suffering for yourself and others. So letís explain each one of them.

You touched on it a little bit earlier when you were talking to Kippy, I think, about acceptance does not, no, that was Beth, that acceptance does not mean condonement. It means, I accept this moment for what it is.

[Speaker 1] (2:07:19 - 2:07:39)

Yes. And so when you are doing something, youíll be amazed if you become aware of this and observe people around you, how many people are constantly in a state of disharmony because they cannot be in either acceptance, enjoyment, or enthusiasm about what they are doing.

[Speaker 2] (2:07:39 - 2:07:52)

You use the example in the book of changing a flat tire. Now, you donít have to enjoy changing a flat tire, that you would have reached another level of consciousness where you can enjoy changing it, which Iím sure you could. You maybe could change it with enthusiasm.

[Speaker 1] (2:07:53 - 2:07:54)

Iíll let you know when it happens.

[Speaker 2] (2:07:55 - 2:08:19)

Okay, okay. But so, you donít have to enjoy changing the flat tire, but at least to accept the tire is flat, you will have a much better experience rather than cursing the fact that youíve had a flat tire, which is what most people do. The first time you get the flat tire, everybody goes, ìDamn!î ìI canít believe it.î And even more so if itís at night in the pouring rain. Thatís right.

[Speaker 1] (2:08:19 - 2:08:57)

Itís never convenient. So, the question then is, you have to check inside to see what is your inner state of consciousness that you are bringing to this action, to whatever you are doing. What is this inner state of consciousness?

What state am I in? And then often you will realize that you are in a state of denial of the present moment. So, you said acceptance, you just said this to Beth, is just saying, ìWhat is, is.î Is, and if this is what I have to do at this moment, then I might as well do it without resistance.

[Speaker 2] (2:08:57 - 2:09:08)

And that is the same as if itís a flat tire or if it is, as my friend Kimberly was saying earlier with the girl and her boss, ìMy boss is obnoxious.î Yes. ìThat is what is.î Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:09:09 - 2:09:38)

ìI am not going to change that, so let me figure out how to deal with that.î And the acceptance really has to be applied only to the present moment. If the boss is there, sitting there, saying whatever he says, at this moment, am I able to accept this? Am I bringing acceptance to this?

Thatís right. Here we are talking more specifically about when you are performing some kind of action. Right.

And what is the question is, what energy flows into the doing?

[Speaker 2] (2:09:38 - 2:09:40)

Thatís right. Thatís the question.

[Speaker 1] (2:09:40 - 2:10:36)

Is it the energy of denial or negativity? And once you have developed a little bit of sensitivity, you can very easily tell by observing other people whether the energy that flows into what they do is contaminated with negativity or whether itís presence or consciousness that flows. Totally qualitative difference is enormous.

I mentioned the waiter as an example. How does he put the plate on the table? Is he just doing a job because he wants to get out of there as soon as possible or just making a living?

Or is he honoring this moment? And by honoring this moment, he is honoring you. He is honoring life.

And something flows into the simple movement of putting a plate on the table, just as one simple example, that changes the entire environment around him too.

[Speaker 2] (2:10:36 - 2:11:33)

I had this experience this weekend. I had to go somewhere and had to do something. And I was very upset with myself because I hadnít handled my schedule better.

So I had to fly into New York and then my schedule started like 8 oíclock in the morning. I was very upset that I hadnít given more time for myself because I was already exhausted. And I realized that I had to change my attitude, change the frequency, otherwise I was going to affect the outcome of everything I was doing that day.

So I couldnít have a shift in my own perception about the day. So I really literally went and sat with myself in the closet until I could shift my attitude into, well, I must accept the fact that I didnít look out for myself, I didnít prepare better, my schedule is now overcrowded, thatís the way it is, how can I move forward and make the best of it? Yes.

Because I was making myself angrier and looking for who I could blame.

[Speaker 1] (2:11:33 - 2:11:39)

Yes. And so if you hadnít done this, the energyÖ I realized I was going to ruin my whole day. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:11:40 - 2:11:42)

And everybody I encountered was going to feel that.

[Speaker 1] (2:11:42 - 2:11:52)

And everything that you would have done would have not truly been successful because success depends on what energy flows into what you do.

[Speaker 2] (2:11:52 - 2:11:53)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (2:11:53 - 2:11:56)

And you affect everybody else also with that.

[Speaker 2] (2:11:56 - 2:12:07)

And that is why you must change the modality to if youíre not accepting, enjoying or enthusiastic, whatever that is, and work on changing your mood or donít do it.

[Speaker 1] (2:12:07 - 2:12:20)

Yes. Either accept what you do, which is the primary thing, or donít do it, remove yourself, donít do it, but donít contribute negative energy or suffering to this world.

[Speaker 2] (2:12:20 - 2:12:25)

I know. But most people are going to say, Iím sure, listening, saying, ìBut I had to do it. I had to do it.

[Speaker 1] (2:12:33 - 2:12:59)

I had to do it for others.î Once you know that that is your choice, it might change. Because really, to generate unhappiness for yourself and by implication for others really requires you to be unconscious. Right.

But when you make this process conscious and realize at this moment by resisting what Iím doing, Iím creating suffering for myself. Yes. And probably people around me too.

[Speaker 2] (2:12:59 - 2:13:04)

Okay. Thatís the energy that youíre bringing into it.

[Speaker 1] (2:13:05 - 2:13:05)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:13:05 - 2:13:10)

And the next modality for awakening is enjoyment.

[Speaker 1] (2:13:10 - 2:13:10)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:13:11 - 2:13:12)

Thatís a notch above acceptance.

[Speaker 1] (2:13:12 - 2:13:16)

Yes. Different frequency. Vibrational frequency.

[Speaker 2] (2:13:16 - 2:13:18)

Because everything is about vibrational frequency.

[Speaker 1] (2:13:19 - 2:13:19)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:13:19 - 2:13:24)

People are bringing energy to everything that they do.

[Speaker 1] (2:13:24 - 2:13:24)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:13:24 - 2:13:25)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (2:13:33 - 2:13:40)

And when youíre in a state of enjoyment, one might almost say you do them naturally in a state of enjoyment. Things that you like doing.

[Speaker 11] (2:13:41 - 2:13:41)

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (2:13:42 - 2:13:53)

I love this quote, Eckhart. On 297 you say, ìOn the new earth, enjoyment will replace wanting as the motivating power behind peopleís actions.î Yes. Whenís that going to happen?

[Speaker 1] (2:13:54 - 2:13:55)

Well, it has to.

[Speaker 2] (2:14:03 - 2:14:04)

Because you enjoy them.

[Speaker 1] (2:14:04 - 2:14:05)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:14:05 - 2:14:08)

And not because you want more and want more and want more.

[Speaker 1] (2:14:08 - 2:14:08)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:14:08 - 2:14:20)

Because so many people have expressed throughout this class on the message boards and in other areas how you get more things and get more things and you want more things and want more things and it leaves you with an empty space.

[Speaker 1] (2:14:20 - 2:14:52)

Yes. And it comes out out of the egoic state of scarcity or lack which is always there when the ego predominates. So I need that in order to fulfill myself, in order to find satisfaction.

I need to achieve this in order to be fully myself. This is the underlying assumption.

[Speaker 2] (2:14:53 - 2:14:54)

Right, of wanting.

[Speaker 1] (2:14:54 - 2:15:07)

And that is the old energy of wanting. And so you go out and it becomes very stressful to get away from this moment because the next one promises greater fulfillment.

[Speaker 12] (2:15:07 - 2:15:08)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:15:08 - 2:15:16)

The next one never comes because when it comes it's the now again which is a place you want to get away from. Completely insane. Right.

But normal.

[Speaker 2] (2:15:16 - 2:15:23)

Okay. So getting to the place where you can have enjoyment from things because enjoyment does what?

[Speaker 1] (2:15:24 - 2:15:34)

Enjoyment brings an enormous empowerment to what you do and what comes out of that.

[Speaker 2] (2:15:34 - 2:15:52)

When the creative power of the universe becomes conscious of itself it manifests as joy. You don't have to wait for something meaningful to come into your life so that you can finally enjoy what you do. There's more meaning in joy than you will ever need.

The waiting to start living syndrome is one of the most common delusions of the unconscious state.

[Speaker 1] (2:15:53 - 2:16:04)

That's important because many people are trapped in that delusion. They don't have a sense of aliveness.

[Speaker 2] (2:16:05 - 2:16:28)

Okay. I love this. 298 everybody.

Joy does not come from what you do. It flows into what you do and thus into this world from deep within you. The misperception that joy comes from what you do is normal and is always dangerous because it creates the belief that joy is something that can be derived from something else such as an activity or thing.

Don't people do things that bring them joy?

[Speaker 1] (2:16:29 - 2:16:42)

That's what it looks like but it's the same process that we talked about a little earlier when we talked about manifesting something from within. The joy is there. It comes from the fullness of life that you already sense within you at this moment.

[Speaker 2] (2:16:43 - 2:16:46)

Okay, so for example I have really enjoyed these webcasts.

[Speaker 1] (2:16:46 - 2:16:46)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:16:47 - 2:16:50)

I've really enjoyed doing these webcasts.

[Speaker 1] (2:16:56 - 2:16:58)

Whether it's for these lights or the cameras or even...

[Speaker 2] (2:16:58 - 2:17:03)

Doesn't it come from the community of people out there? I've really enjoyed having all these people join us.

[Speaker 1] (2:17:03 - 2:17:13)

But the joy is within you and then it flows out. It reaches everybody. Even through the cameras it can reach people and trigger joy in others.

[Speaker 2] (2:17:14 - 2:17:15)

Can you all feel my joy?

[Speaker 1] (2:17:15 - 2:17:28)

Yes, but only within them. So it's their own joy. When they feel your joy there's no such thing as my joy ultimately.

[Speaker 2] (2:17:28 - 2:17:30)

Oh, that's right. It's only our joy.

[Speaker 1] (2:17:31 - 2:17:34)

Yes, you could say that. There's our collective joy. Yes, yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:17:36 - 2:18:14)

Okay, that is exactly what I'm doing. The misperception that joy comes from what you do is normal, also dangerous, creates a belief that joy is something that can be derived from something else. You then look to the world to bring you joy, because the world's not giving them what they think they need.

You will only enjoy any activity in which you are fully present, any activity that is not just a means to an end. It isn't the action you perform that you really enjoy, but the deep sense of aliveness that flows into it. That aliveness is one with who you are.

I got that.

[Speaker 1] (2:18:16 - 2:18:28)

I'm sure many people touch that place within as they watch this webcast. They watch you talking, and they have that intense sense of aliveness within.

[Speaker 2] (2:18:28 - 2:18:32)

But is that enjoyment the same as pleasure?

[Speaker 1] (2:18:32 - 2:18:34)

No. It's not.

[Speaker 2] (2:18:34 - 2:18:36)

I asked that question of myself yesterday.

[Speaker 1] (2:18:36 - 2:18:43)

Pleasure comes from something outside of you. So you derive pleasure from something outside of you.

[Speaker 2] (2:18:43 - 2:19:03)

And I ask that because you say this means that when you enjoy doing something, you're really experiencing that sensation. I read that and I thought, what about people who enjoy gambling or enjoy...

[Speaker 1] (2:19:03 - 2:19:04)

These are pleasures.

[Speaker 2] (2:19:04 - 2:19:10)

Okay. Sex or enjoy being sadistic or enjoy harming other people.

[Speaker 1] (2:19:11 - 2:19:11)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:19:12 - 2:19:14)

Creation isn't behind that.

[Speaker 1] (2:19:15 - 2:19:30)

No. We sometimes call that enjoy, but there is no true joy in it. It's being addicted to a pleasure, something outside that feeds that pleasure by the definition means pleasing me.

[Speaker 2] (2:19:30 - 2:19:32)

Yes. Which would be ego.

[Speaker 1] (2:19:32 - 2:19:32)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:19:33 - 2:20:07)

Got it. Got it. Okay, let's go to our New Earth study group that has gathered every week for the past 10 weeks at Borders on Michigan.

Hi, everybody in Chicago. We got a warm day in Chicago. Aren't we happy?

I know. Thank you for your time and participation. We talked to Sharon during one of our classes.

I think it was around the second web class and Sharon's standing by now. I hear you're going to be making some big changes.

[Speaker 3] (2:20:08 - 2:22:58)

Yes, I am. What happened? Well, just like Eckhart was drawn to California to write The Power of Now, I went on Idealist.org and just decided to volunteer and someone responded back to me. And it's in The Hague in Netherlands. The thing is, is I have to do it. Everything has lined up and I'm just drawn to do this.

I have student loans because I have two graduate degrees and but yet I have all the money I need to do this. I have the support of my support system here. You know, through conversations I've had with different members of this book club, I realized, gosh, you know what?

I really want to do this. I absolutely want to do this. And when I'm not in a space of acceptance, I get scared and I say, this does not make sense.

Why am I doing this? I flew to Holland last week. No, two weeks ago.

I've been back a week and I interviewed with the gentleman I'm going to be working with. He is an academic. It's a it's an NGO and I connect with him.

I love what I'm actually doing research now that I'm back. I'm going back. I got an apartment.

I'm going to be there for some months, you know, maybe longer. And because I feel drawn to do this and I feel encouraged to do this and things have just unfolded where I can absolutely afford to do this. Then it's all.

I was downsized. It's all. Everything's lined up.

And I'm shocked by that. I absolutely. When I think consciously of it, I don't know.

This is not my life. This is not. This never has happened to me before.

But whenever I I go still. By the way, there was a Nick at the Bodie tree. Yeah.

And I was sitting in my room in in Holland. Crying the entire week, I hadn't been able to use my computer because, of course, I used it first day and I ran out of my my battery died on me and downstairs trouble troubleshoot it with the. Why were you crying over Nick?

Why were you crying over Nick? Because because he was talking about what I was feeling and worried about to be earning.

[Speaker 2] (2:22:58 - 2:24:06)

I said, yeah, that was a powerful thing that Nick said, because I think everybody's touched by that. I mean, any time ever since that Nick comment two weeks ago of what Eckhart said to Nick about worrying, I haven't had a worry since I thought, well, I can think about it. I can choose to do something about it, but I don't have to worry about it.

I thought that was really powerful for all of us. Really powerful. Yes, it was powerful.

So now you're in a situation, Sharon, don't question things lining up because that is what is supposed to be happening. And that is, I will say to everybody who is listening to us today, that is what happens when you become more conscious. You get to you are aware enough to see things line up, because when you move through the world unconsciously, you can't even see it line up.

You're not available to be a witness to the alignment. And so as soon as you become more awakened and the more awakened you become, the more things line up and you end up moving with Oprah moving with the flow of your life.

[Speaker 3] (2:24:07 - 2:25:34)

Right. But here's what's exciting whenever when I sit and I'm quiet. Yeah.

And I I just you know, so I was crying and I was able to watch it. Because I was able to borrow a plug from somebody else in the hotel. That alignment right there.

So it worked again. It lined up. So it was great.

So I'm sitting on the bed. I'm crying. I'm like, what am I doing with my life?

Then I'm watching Nick talk. I'm dying of laughter, of course, and I'm sure they heard me in the next rooms. But I said, wow, this is fantastic.

What's really neat is I after it was over, I shut down the computer and I sat and I said, OK, let's be still. You feel kind of strange about this. You don't feel you deserve this right now.

It's that's really what it was. And. I sat for a while and I said, OK, let me just sit with this.

If this is what I feel, will it kill me if I don't feel great right now? After that, I stayed up all night and I just smiled at the sunset. You know, the sun came up.

I packed slowly. I felt joy. And I have felt joy since coming back, except for driving in to, you know, to this last of our meetings, because I'm going to miss everyone.

And I realize also I'm letting go of something is over now for me. I'm not going to be going back into finance. I know that.

Yeah. And well, I want everybody.

[Speaker 2] (2:25:34 - 2:25:36)

Well, thank you so much, Sharon, for sharing.

[Speaker 3] (2:25:36 - 2:25:37)

I appreciate sharing.

[Speaker 2] (2:25:37 - 2:25:44)

Thank you. And everybody at the borders for your commitment to this work in our web series borders. Give yourselves a round of applause.

[Speaker 3] (2:25:45 - 2:26:15)

All our border buddy. Oh, can I say one last thing? Yeah.

Can I say one last thing? This, by the way, this group of people, I so love them. I'm going around saying that I love you.

I love you. This has been the best group. I'm taking classes.

Some people here teach and I'm taking classes with them. I've spoken to other people and learned so much about not just myself, but about the world. And I feel so joined with everyone.

This has been just the best experience for me. And thank you so much for it.

[Speaker 2] (2:26:15 - 2:26:42)

Great. Thank you. Thank you again.

Thank you. Our borders buddy. Isn't that the whole point of all of this is that when you become more awakened, everybody things begin to flow in your life in a way that they had not before.

And that's what's supposed to be happening. These, you know, you talk in the book about, you know, serendipitous encounters. I don't think you use the word, but things just start happening.

They line up.

[Speaker 1] (2:26:42 - 2:26:51)

Yes. Yes. You have to be there for this to happen.

If you're not there, you have to be there in the now so that life can work for you.

[Speaker 11] (2:26:52 - 2:26:52)

Uh-huh.

[Speaker 1] (2:26:52 - 2:27:00)

You can't, if you deny life by denying the now, life can't work. It's like shutting, closing the shutters. The sun can't come in.

[Speaker 11] (2:27:00 - 2:27:00)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (2:27:00 - 2:27:30)

The sun doesn't mind, but the sun, why not open the shutters and let the sun shine in, which is, the strange thing is that the, it's when you no longer deny the present moment, then not only do you see all the things that are lining up there to support you, it also means more things are coming into your life.

[Speaker 2] (2:27:30 - 2:27:30)

Absolutely.

[Speaker 1] (2:27:30 - 2:27:31)

To be of assistance.

[Speaker 2] (2:27:32 - 2:27:32)

Absolutely.

[Speaker 1] (2:27:33 - 2:27:35)

And so that's wonderful once you...

[Speaker 2] (2:27:35 - 2:27:37)

The evolutionary impulse of the universe...

[Speaker 1] (2:27:37 - 2:27:37)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:27:38 - 2:27:39)

...rises up to meet it.

[Speaker 1] (2:27:39 - 2:27:39)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:27:39 - 2:27:40)

It does.

[Speaker 1] (2:27:40 - 2:28:01)

It does not mean that you will never again encounter challenges. Right. Or if you have a, if you want to have a certain course of action, you want to go from here to there, always, of course, being conscious that the step you're taking at this moment is the most important step, but you might still want to go from here to there.

[Speaker 2] (2:28:01 - 2:28:03)

But it does reduce the fear.

[Speaker 1] (2:28:03 - 2:28:03)

Oh, yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:28:03 - 2:28:04)

It does reduce the fear.

[Speaker 1] (2:28:05 - 2:28:05)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:28:05 - 2:28:09)

Because you know, you can always bring your sense of presence to whatever the moment is.

[Speaker 1] (2:28:09 - 2:28:09)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:28:09 - 2:28:11)

And that you'll be all right.

[Speaker 1] (2:28:11 - 2:28:11)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:28:11 - 2:28:11)

That's right.

[Speaker 1] (2:28:12 - 2:28:47)

And as soon as you encounter a challenge, not resist it, but immediately come to an acceptance of the new situation and then see how that... Very often it turns around and becomes actually helpful. Yes.

In the same way that a martial arts master always uses the opposing energy. He never, the martial arts master does not fight against. He uses the opponent's energy and gives into it.

And he wins by not, by yielding to the oncoming energy.

[Speaker 2] (2:28:47 - 2:28:57)

Knowing how to surrender to the oncoming energy. Yes. Absolutely.

A question that we get asked all the time is, how old is Eckhart? How old are you?

[Speaker 1] (2:28:58 - 2:29:00)

This body is 60 years old.

[Speaker 2] (2:29:00 - 2:29:05)

Wow. And why did you say this body?

[Speaker 1] (2:29:05 - 2:29:28)

Well, I don't feel that I am this age. I mean, if you look within, nobody feels that. It's only if you identify with the body that you believe that you are a certain age.

The consciousness that I am is ageless. The consciousness that you are is ageless. And you, I'm sure you also feel that there's inside you a consciousness which has nothing to do with the age of the physical body.

[Speaker 2] (2:29:29 - 2:29:46)

Do you do something for your skin? No. These are all the questions that we have to ask of the 10th lesson because people write in and they say that Eckhart has such glowy skin.

Is there something you do especially for your skin, Eckhart?

[Speaker 1] (2:29:46 - 2:30:00)

Well, one confession I need to make here is, well, my skin is usually fine. I'm happy with my skin. But here, we have a very good makeup artist who does something to my skin before I come out here.

[Speaker 2] (2:30:00 - 2:30:01)

Really?

[Speaker 1] (2:30:01 - 2:30:01)

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (2:30:02 - 2:30:07)

Stella. Stella does. So you're wearing like a little powder or something.

[Speaker 1] (2:30:07 - 2:30:07)

Whatever.

[Speaker 2] (2:30:08 - 2:30:09)

Yeah, yeah, whatever.

[Speaker 1] (2:30:09 - 2:30:25)

But it's so smooth. But my skin is fine. I mean, I'm happy with it.

If you don't accumulate a lot of past inside, then the aging process slows down quite a bit. Really?

[Speaker 2] (2:30:25 - 2:30:26)

Say that again.

[Speaker 1] (2:30:26 - 2:30:57)

If you do not accumulate a lot of past inside your psyche by hanging on to past, identifying with my past, deriving a sense of self from past, talking about the past, thinking about the past, then you carry this burden of past. But if you let go of that past and focus primarily on present moment, then the aging process, I believe that, and I've seen it in some people who are present, the aging process of the body actually slows down considerably. Wow.

[Speaker 2] (2:30:58 - 2:30:59)

So 6-0.

[Speaker 1] (2:30:59 - 2:31:00)

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (2:31:00 - 2:31:07)

Your body is 6-0 years old. Yeah. Don't look at it.

You don't do anything like color your hair or anything?

[Speaker 13] (2:31:07 - 2:31:07)

No.

[Speaker 2] (2:31:07 - 2:31:08)

You don't.

[Speaker 13] (2:31:08 - 2:31:09)

No.

[Speaker 2] (2:31:11 - 2:31:19)

Okay. No Botox. Okay.

Yeah. Wouldn't we be a little disappointed to find out, Eckhart, Mr. No Ego is Botox.

[Speaker 1] (2:31:20 - 2:31:20)

What is that?

[Speaker 2] (2:31:20 - 2:31:37)

What is Botox? Never mind. It's too hard to explain what it is.

What is that? Can't even explain it. Now let's go to Denise who's Skyping us from her home office in Seattle, Washington.

Denise has a question that a lot of viewers have also asked. Denise? Go ahead.

[Speaker 10] (2:31:37 - 2:31:39)

Hi, Oprah. Hi, Eckhart. Hello.

[Speaker 2] (2:31:39 - 2:31:39)

Hi.

[Speaker 10] (2:31:39 - 2:31:51)

When I go to bed and I'm feeling conscious and aware, why then do I still have nightmares and do I have an ego while I'm sleeping? Good question.

[Speaker 1] (2:31:55 - 2:32:28)

Well, some dreams are dreams of that process, things that haven't been faced completely during the day. So many kinds of dreams are processing dreams. And then there are other dreams that bring up different energies.

There can be pain body coming into a dream. Ego can come into the dream because normally in a dream you are not conscious that you are dreaming. In exceptional circumstances you may be.

I don't know whether you're ever conscious in the dream that you are dreaming. Are you?

[Speaker 10] (2:32:30 - 2:32:31)

I can't remember.

[Speaker 1] (2:32:31 - 2:33:28)

No, probably not. So it is quite possible sometimes for the pain body to come up in a dream and the character that you represent in the dream is most likely an aspect of your ego. Ego in a dream, of course, you're completely identified with what's happening in the dream and there is usually, and this is why I asked you this question, there is usually an absence of the aware space where you are aware that you are a character in the dream.

And usually, so you can have the awareness in your daily life here, this is what this is all about, is to live in a way so that you have a dimension in your life that in the background of your life there is always the aware presence. From there you are conscious of whatever you are doing, whatever your mind is saying. In a dream that's missing, you don't have the level of awareness.

[Speaker 2] (2:33:28 - 2:33:33)

Awareness. Unless you're conscious in the dream, which I dream dreams and I'm conscious in the dream.

[Speaker 1] (2:33:33 - 2:33:33)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:33:33 - 2:33:37)

And I can say, I can be in a dream and then say, oh, I'm dreaming now.

[Speaker 1] (2:33:38 - 2:33:38)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:33:38 - 2:33:41)

And if it's not a dream I want to be in, I'll say, got to get out of here.

[Speaker 1] (2:33:42 - 2:33:42)

That's nice.

[Speaker 2] (2:33:42 - 2:33:43)

Yeah, yeah.

[Speaker 1] (2:33:43 - 2:33:46)

Or you could say in a dream, okay, I'm dreaming, I can do anything.

[Speaker 2] (2:33:46 - 2:33:59)

Yeah, I can do anything, I think I'll fly now. But you don't do that in your dreams, right? So the question is whether or not your dreams are your ego.

Sometimes they are not. Did you not also say, well, you did say in the book that sometimes when we dream we go back to source.

[Speaker 1] (2:34:00 - 2:34:01)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:34:01 - 2:34:01)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (2:34:01 - 2:34:17)

Yes. Well, there I talk about dreamless sleep. Yes.

Because, as you know, when you sleep you have the dream stage. Right. Which you go in and out of periodically and then occasionally you have the deep sleep state of dreamless sleep.

[Speaker 2] (2:34:17 - 2:34:25)

You say that on 282, I read that earlier. Each night without knowing it you return to the unmanifested source of all life when you enter the state of deep dreamless sleep.

[Speaker 1] (2:34:25 - 2:34:25)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:34:25 - 2:34:30)

And then re-emerge again in the morning, replenish. So you've gone back to source energy there.

[Speaker 1] (2:34:30 - 2:34:41)

Yes. So it does help. What do you do before going to sleep?

Is there when you, the last, let's say, the last 20 minutes or so? You're not watching the news, are you?

[Speaker 10] (2:34:42 - 2:34:45)

No, I'm reading the New Earth. And so...

[Speaker 1] (2:34:45 - 2:35:41)

Okay. Okay, but even that... I'm feeling...

That's good, but even that I would put it aside just for some minutes before you actually go to sleep so that there can be a space inside you rather than words. And some of the words may actually help you to get in touch with that space. But then the time comes when you put the book aside and the best, the most powerful, the most helpful way of going into sleep is by lying on your back, flat, arms stretched out and put attention into the inner energy field of your body and feel the aliveness from your toes to the tip of your head.

Scan your body with your attention a few times and then feel the entire energy field of the body as a single field of energy. And it's very beautiful to...

[Speaker 2] (2:35:41 - 2:37:12)

That has helped me a lot. That's actually, since you said that about three classes ago, has helped me do much better sleeping. What Eckhart is also, I think, emphasizing here for you, Denise, is that being more present in every moment of the day with whatever is going on in your life will allow you to not to have to deal with whatever you didn't deal with during the day in your dreams because dreams are often the manifestation of your subconscious mind trying to work things out that you didn't fully work out in the day, that you didn't work out. And so, again, the answer is being present with whatever is going on, dealing with whatever needs to be dealt with in the moment so that it doesn't show up later on in your dreams. And I do that particularly if, you know, I am not a television watcher because I'm on television like the cobbler's children has no shoes, but if I happen to be in a room and walk into a room and the television's on and it's something, a particularly disturbing image, rather than flip from that image or try to deny that I saw that image, I will literally take it in.

I will accept what I have seen and deal with it in my mind so that it doesn't show up later on in a dream and frighten me or disturb me. You know, so I try to deal with whatever is going to be disturbing when it is happening so that I don't have to process it later. Yes.

It's good.

[Speaker 1] (2:37:13 - 2:37:13)

Very good.

[Speaker 2] (2:37:13 - 2:37:17)

Yeah. I hope that helps. Thank you.

That makes sense. Thank you. Well, thank you.

[Speaker 1] (2:37:17 - 2:37:18)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (2:37:18 - 2:37:22)

Because, yeah, the dreams are just unmanifested stuff that you didn't deal with.

[Speaker 1] (2:37:22 - 2:37:47)

Yes. Occasionally, it happens that one has a deeper dream but they tend to be more rare where you might have a sudden insight coming into a dream that you didn't have before, a sudden realization or some kind of dream images that come that have a symbolic meaning in your life and are telling you something. That can happen occasionally also.

And that's beautiful when it happens.

[Speaker 2] (2:37:47 - 2:37:50)

Well, let's go to the third modality which is we've talked about acceptance.

[Speaker 1] (2:37:51 - 2:37:51)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:37:51 - 2:38:14)

If you can't bring acceptance, enjoyment or enthusiasm. And enthusiasm, which is what Kippy from Tokyo had brought up earlier, is the higher vibration of modality for awakening. That whenever you are enthusiastic that there is something else that comes into play there's an energy feel created that's bigger than you are.

[Speaker 1] (2:38:15 - 2:38:37)

Yes. Particularly, it's an energy that is of a creative kind, an energy that creates something, brings something into this world. I wouldn't say it's necessarily of a higher frequency.

It's a more powerful frequency because it's the outgoing movement that is connected, however, with the source.

[Speaker 2] (2:38:37 - 2:38:50)

Yes. And again, we say that that is the kind of enthusiasm that's just not wild, external enthusiasm, but enthusiasm born of the spirit. Enthusiasm born of consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (2:38:50 - 2:38:50)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:38:51 - 2:38:55)

We're not just talking about going to a Bears game, standing out there screaming for your team.

[Speaker 1] (2:38:55 - 2:39:35)

No. That's excitement. Sometimes the ego sometimes looks for states of excitement like that as substitutes for feeling the being.

For being. Out of touch with being. Then the ego looks for substitutes.

And excitement is one of them. Excitement sometimes through the media, through watching a violent film, or excitement through whatever. So acceptance, there are no clear dividing lines between these three modalities.

Sometimes acceptance suddenly shifts into enjoyment. And sometimes enjoyment shifts into enthusiasm.

[Speaker 12] (2:39:35 - 2:39:36)

To enthusiasm. Right.

[Speaker 1] (2:39:37 - 2:39:57)

So if you, let's say you're doing something that before you would have resented, and suddenly you're able to realize, okay, there's resentment and denial inside me. Let's see if I can accept that I have to do this right now. And so suddenly you bring acceptance to it.

And as you bring acceptance to it, you're actually beginning to enjoy what you're doing.

[Speaker 2] (2:39:58 - 2:40:20)

That is absolutely true. This thing I was telling you I had to do this weekend, I first was resenting it. I went and sat in the closet with myself so I could change my attitude.

I decided I'm going to accept it. And during the process of it, I decided, let me be 100% present and see what happens. If I could just be one, and that was my focus, just to be 100% present.

And I started getting the kick out of it.

[Speaker 11] (2:40:20 - 2:40:21)

Yes. Yeah. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:40:21 - 2:40:28)

Yeah. We're Skyping again with a study group that has gathered at the Bodhi Tree bookstore in West Hollywood. Hi everybody.

[Speaker 11] (2:40:30 - 2:40:31)

Hi Oprah.

[Speaker 2] (2:40:32 - 2:40:33)

Hi everybody and Nick.

[Speaker 11] (2:40:33 - 2:40:34)

It's Nick.

[Speaker 2] (2:40:35 - 2:40:44)

I see Nick there. Okay. Who's at the microphone?

Is that Tatiana? Hi Tatiana. Has a question?

Yes. Okay, go ahead.

[Speaker 8] (2:40:44 - 2:41:28)

Yes, I do. It's about acceptance and Eckhart says that acceptance looks like a passive state and I do have a big problem with that because sometimes I feel like I accept what is more and more in my life but at times I feel like I have to be proactive and I have to do something and at the same time I know that I have to step back and be aware and be in the moment and that creates even more stress like I'm not getting it, like I'm doing it wrong. And I feel like a loser sometimes. I feel like I'm not getting it.

So how do I make it go away like this guilt of you should know better?

[Speaker 1] (2:41:29 - 2:41:49)

Oh, well that's an additional question. That's an additional question so the first one is Okay, let's deal with the first part and the first part is The first part is that you believe that when you are in a state of acceptance you are no longer very effective that you cannot act effectively anymore. Is that what you believe?

[Speaker 8] (2:41:50 - 2:41:51)

Absolutely.

[Speaker 1] (2:41:51 - 2:43:17)

That's not the case. That's a wrong view of what acceptance means and this is why we've been talking about bringing acceptance into what you are doing so that acceptance is not separate from doing. Acceptance for it to be complete, true acceptance needs to flow into the doing rather than take you away from the doing and say okay there's nothing I can do in some cases of course there is nothing you can do in certain situations in which case you simply accept at this moment there's nothing I can do.

There are other situations where you can do something where doing actually the situation requires you if you truly respond to the situation in the present moment it requires you to take action to do something and then something for you to experiment with now from now on is to see if you can bring this energy field of acceptance and act out of that so that the action doesn't come out of inner resistance or neediness or denial or denial or anger it comes out of a more peaceful state and then you will experience how powerful your action can actually be.

[Speaker 2] (2:43:17 - 2:43:48)

Yeah, did you get that Tatiana? Yes, I get it. flows into the doing I think everybody who is misunderstanding is thinking that acceptance means that I'm saying this moment is okay and so I have to live with it and then do nothing with it or be passive he's saying you must first in one of the earlier classes you used the example of the bus in the mud the wheels are in the mud

[Speaker 1] (2:43:48 - 2:43:55)

yes, or you are I'm stuck in the mud let's say I'm walking out somewhere suddenly I'm stuck in the mud to my knees you're stuck in the mud to your knees

[Speaker 2] (2:43:55 - 2:44:09)

you must first accept that you're stuck in the mud to your knees you can't curse the fact that you're stuck in the mud to your knees you can't deny that you're stuck in the mud to your knees you can't the energy that you spend wanting not to be stuck in the mud to your knees is all wasted energy

[Speaker 1] (2:44:09 - 2:44:11)

and it gets you stuck more deeply

[Speaker 2] (2:44:11 - 2:44:12)

gets you stuck more deeply

[Speaker 1] (2:44:12 - 2:44:12)

if you're struggling

[Speaker 2] (2:44:12 - 2:44:22)

you must accept and let the acceptance that you're stuck in the mud on your knees flow into now what do I do to get myself out of the mud

[Speaker 1] (2:44:22 - 2:45:12)

yes, and this now what do I do is a state of alert attention yes so you and that's a high frequency it's a state of it comes up okay, you almost listen it's not not an auditory listening but I'm using the analogy of listening it's a state of alert attention what do I do now and suddenly okay, there's a moment of space you don't know and then out of that you do the doing arises spontaneously or a thought comes into your head that tells you what to do and that will be empowered and that's you practice with little things first perhaps practice with things that usually you don't like doing so you bring a little bit of resistance to it even simple things you might not like going to the supermarket or you might not like driving to work or whatever it is

[Speaker 2] (2:45:12 - 2:45:13)

accepting what is

[Speaker 1] (2:45:13 - 2:45:14)

accepting what is

[Speaker 2] (2:45:14 - 2:45:24)

that's what acceptance means I accept what is in this moment and now we'll decide what do I do to change this moment yes but I won't deny this moment for what it is or wish that it was

[Speaker 8] (2:45:24 - 2:45:24)

something else

[Speaker 2] (2:45:25 - 2:45:28)

and you won't feel guilty and you won't feel guilty Tatiana

[Speaker 1] (2:45:29 - 2:45:37)

now yes now can we come to the second part or the second question which is your mind is telling you something that you are not good enough

[Speaker 8] (2:45:37 - 2:45:39)

yes like I'm doing it wrong

[Speaker 1] (2:45:39 - 2:46:10)

yes so there's nothing wrong you now know what to do and don't believe your mind when it tells you you can't do it you are not good enough these are things that often the mind will throw up especially when people try to be present or to become to be still the mind will say not now because I have too much on my mind I've got too much to think I can't do it not now possibly not now maybe tomorrow I'll try again

[Speaker 8] (2:46:10 - 2:46:13)

yes yes it happens to me all the time

[Speaker 1] (2:46:13 - 2:46:21)

the mind will always tell you why you cannot be present now because the mind doesn't like presence because it's the end of the mind

[Speaker 2] (2:46:22 - 2:46:41)

yes Tatiana and everybody at the Bodhi Tree thank you so much Nick see what a powerful influence you've had for your you're worrying about Nick's worrying about his bill Sharon's in the hotel room crying because Nick's worrying about his bill unbelievable everybody at the Bodhi Tree thank you so much for your gathering

[Speaker 11] (2:46:41 - 2:46:43)

and your sense of community

[Speaker 2] (2:46:43 - 2:47:08)

thank you Bodhi Buddies thank you our Bodhi Buddies thank you so much Tatiana so do you think that in these 10 weeks we have evolved I know somebody last week had a problem with the word evolution but do you think in these past weeks this community our new tribe of new earth readers we've evolved to a higher level of consciousness a new way of being in the world

[Speaker 1] (2:47:08 - 2:47:09)

yes

[Speaker 2] (2:47:09 - 2:47:10)

to creating a new earth

[Speaker 1] (2:47:10 - 2:47:29)

yes I believe for many people it's been an opening so that this suddenly this new dimension has come into their lives and once it has come into your life there's no going back it can be obscured for a while if you get identified with the mind again or with the pain body

[Speaker 2] (2:47:29 - 2:47:32)

because don't you have to work on it all the time

[Speaker 1] (2:47:32 - 2:48:27)

that helps even if you don't work on it it's there and eventually something will then happen in your life that will put you back in touch with it it could be a crisis but my recommendation is not to wait for a crisis in your life that forces you to become present again but to choose presence as much as possible in your daily life to choose the present moment to always check inside what your relationship is with the present moment the primordial question what's my relationship with this moment is it friendly or is it dysfunctional and that tells you everything if it's dysfunctional it means your future is going to manifest that if it's friendly open and accepting then the so called future is going to manifest that it's as simple as that

[Speaker 2] (2:48:27 - 2:48:30)

do you ever have problems Eckhart? do you have problems?

[Speaker 1] (2:48:31 - 2:49:21)

no I don't create problems challenges happen always life will always challenge you in one way or another and that is good but there's no need to transform the challenges of life into problems by dwelling on things mentally if you cannot take any action at this moment to turn things around in your mind which is where worry comes in related to worry is problem making it's the mental problem making so I don't have problems not because there are no challenges in my life because no matter what stage in life you reach there's always some kind of challenge life is designed in that way the world is not here to make you conscious sorry the world is not here to make you happy it's here to make you conscious

[Speaker 2] (2:49:21 - 2:49:46)

yes and when you bring consciousness into your life for all of those who have been conflicted over the past weeks about their religious beliefs when you bring consciousness into your life what you're really saying is that you're bringing in allowing the spirit of that which is God to flow through you and be the preeminent force in your life isn't that what you're saying?

[Speaker 1] (2:49:46 - 2:49:51)

yes yes it's no longer the little me

[Speaker 2] (2:49:51 - 2:49:57)

the little me you are connecting yourself to the bigger source to the source of all things

[Speaker 1] (2:49:57 - 2:50:25)

yes and let it then flow through you and then this is for example where creativity comes into your life true creativity can only come in when you let that dimension into your life so the source energy manifests through you and creativity can start with a little thing like even a tiny creative thought or some new way of looking at something it's already a sign of creativity

[Speaker 2] (2:50:25 - 2:50:44)

but most important it's recognizing that when you can be conscious of the consciousness when you bring the presence of that which is consciousness or the spirit of a higher power or the spirit of God into your life and you allow that to direct your path that then all things come to you as they should

[Speaker 1] (2:50:44 - 2:50:45)

yes

[Speaker 2] (2:50:45 - 2:50:47)

yeah that's how you create the flow

[Speaker 1] (2:50:47 - 2:50:50)

yes that's the flow entering the flow yeah

[Speaker 2] (2:50:50 - 2:51:00)

and that is how you say a new species is arising on the planet it is arising now and we are it yes

[Speaker 1] (2:51:00 - 2:51:29)

yes this is such a enormous shift in consciousness that's happening it's almost this is why I use that expression it's almost as if we were transforming into a new species for the first time a conscious species it's almost as if humanity was only now beginning to actually wake up

[Speaker 2] (2:51:29 - 2:52:03)

yes but Mick would you share with the rest of the audience at the end of this just before we started this class I had said a thank you to all the the crews who made this possible and Oprah.com all the Oprah.com staff who's worked so hard the past ten weeks and our book club staff and producers and everybody we had a a thank you to everybody and Eckhart because of my my book and the condition of my book presented me with a a leather bound copy of A New Earth would you share with them what you wrote in my book

[Speaker 1] (2:52:03 - 2:53:03)

I wrote a little the little poem that I also quote in chapter ten by the Persian poet Hafiz which starts I am a hole in the flute that the Christ's breath moves through listen to this music that's the poem I am a hole in the flute I'm not the flute I'm a hole in the flute that the Christ's breath God's breath moves through listen to this music so I wrote this little poem and I said to Oprah she was a wonderful hole that energy is moving through her and the world is listening to this music

[Speaker 2] (2:53:04 - 2:53:44)

thank you for allowing me to do that thank you with this magnificent piece of work that you've given to us through your words and obviously you were the hole also for which Christ's breath the breath of God the breath of all energy in creation flowed through you in order for you to write this I mean as I have read it over and over again now on my fourth reading I marvel at how you were able to put these sentences together in such a way that they connect have connected to me and to all of you all around the world so thank you for this experience

[Speaker 1] (2:53:45 - 2:53:55)

thank you and everybody else of course is also that in essence you are the opening for that dimension to come into this world

[Speaker 2] (2:53:55 - 2:54:05)

that's right and anything that we do that is creative or is successful or is good comes from that source flowing through us

[Speaker 1] (2:54:05 - 2:54:06)

yes

[Speaker 2] (2:54:06 - 2:54:07)

it is not of our doing

[Speaker 1] (2:54:07 - 2:54:07)

no

[Speaker 2] (2:54:07 - 2:55:46)

but of the greater doing yes of consciousness so I want to thank you all for being a part of this really magnificent journey it's been a part of what I know is my life's calling to be able to be the hole for all of this to flow through so I especially want to thank you and you and Kim for coming to Chicago these past 10 weeks every single week to share a new earth with all of us as I said earlier I really encourage all of you to let this be your summer re-reading book and if you've enjoyed it you should pass it on there's no greater gift than sharing it that's why I wanted to share it with you all there's no greater gift than sharing it with somebody you care about and having their lives also be awakened and transformed by the words that point you in the direction of the experience of awakening so you can all begin to re-watch our webcast this summer please join me next Monday May 12th for the start of my soul series webcast because so many people said what do we do now here on Oprah.com I'll be talking to Dr. Jill Bolte-Taylor she's the brain scientist who had a catastrophic stroke and experienced much of what we've been talking about in our new earth webcast our soul series will continue throughout the summer with spiritual thinkers and authors from every walk of life so I hope you'll keep Monday's reserved for Oprah.com tonight's class will be available on demand tomorrow for free here at Oprah.com and if you want to download or watch any of our other classes you can do that tomorrow at Oprah.com and of course iTunes it's free because of the generous support of nature made soft gel vitamins what are we going to do next Monday?

[Speaker 1] (2:55:47 - 2:55:59)

another way of being able to continue to connect with the energy would be perhaps one is re-reading this book of course not necessarily from the beginning just opening it some places

[Speaker 2] (2:55:59 - 2:56:00)

that you've outlined yes

[Speaker 1] (2:56:00 - 2:56:16)

and also there are lots of I've done retreats and talks so on my website people can get talks or retreats and just listen and listening to a talk a two or three hour talk can get put you back in touch with the presence

[Speaker 2] (2:56:16 - 2:56:19)

that's right and you can always download the webcast

[Speaker 1] (2:56:19 - 2:56:20)

yes

[Speaker 2] (2:56:20 - 2:56:24)

yes and we'll be back in the fall there's no telling what we'll do

[Speaker 1] (2:56:24 - 2:56:24)

that's right

[Speaker 2] (2:56:24 - 2:56:47)

there's no telling this is just the beginning so thank you all and again as Gandhi said let's all go out in the world and be the change we want to see yes thank you yes thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you

2009 Eckhart Tolle TV Meditation August 09

[Speaker 1] (0:03 - 37:09)

Welcome to our live meditation. On the surface of things, there are a few thousand people in different parts of the planet looking at their computer screens, yourself included. And there may be friends or relatives who have asked you, are going to ask you, what are you doing?

There's always more than what you see on the surface. A few thousand people looking at their computer screens, becoming still, alert, present. That's all part of a transformation of collective consciousness that's happening on the planet.

So there's something occurring here that is far more profound than what it appears to be on the surface. And you and I are an essential part of that transformation of consciousness. And if you look more deeply, there isn't even you and I.

There's only the one essence that underlies all life, consciousness itself, manifesting through forms. Consciousness itself, however, is formless, the essence of who you are. Consciousness also manifests in time, through form, in time, because out here, there's time.

It's shortly after one o'clock in the afternoon on the West Coast here. And different times in different places. Conscious manifests gradually in time, manifests more and more in time through form.

But consciousness itself is timeless. It is the life essence, universal intelligence, formless, timeless. It emerges through the form.

It begins to shine through the form, through the mind, even through the physical form. It shines through the form. It emerges through you, through I.

And your mind may ask, tell me what to do now. And of course, there's nothing to do. Just to be aware that you are.

Be aware of your presence, of the light of your consciousness. It's not your consciousness. It's just a way of speaking.

Be aware of the light of consciousness in you. The light, the light in which these words are being perceived. And you may want to have a look inside yourself and see if you are still thinking as you look at me.

Are there thoughts going through your head? There's nothing wrong with that. I'm not saying there shouldn't be any thoughts going through your head.

Just find out, be aware if there are thoughts still going through your head as you look. Or do you find that there are actually spaces arising in yourself? An opening up of space where before there was the movement of the mind.

A space of no thought, just presence. That's the arising new consciousness, one could say. It's a new dimension arising.

Spacious alertness. That is the, you then, as this opens up, this is why we're here, to enter that dimension, to access that dimension. The most vital thing in your life.

Everything else is secondary. Successes, failures, this or that happening, your past, your future, so-called past, so-called future, which can never be experienced outside of the present moment. The present moment is the consciousness.

The present moment is who you are and the present moment is the timeless dimension. So we are accessing that discovering that inside. So the miracle then is the space opens up inside you and there's simple alert presence, spaciousness.

No loss of consciousness. Not going towards sleep but heightened consciousness. So you're touching the unconditioned, timeless dimension of consciousness itself.

That eventually does things even to this form. As you live in conscious connectedness with that dimension, it tends to also transform the outer realm of your so-called life because it brings in a new energy. It empowers your life not in an egoic sense.

I am all-powerful now in a very subtle, gentle way. A new power and intelligence flows into your life if you open yourself up to that new consciousness in your daily life as much as possible. Welcome it.

Look for it. How do you do that? How can you look for that?

Step one is are you thinking? Being aware that there's thinking happening inside you. Oh, that's an important step because when you're aware that your mind is active and perhaps uselessly active, which is a lot of the time, that's what the mind does, it just produces mental noise.

Useless thinking. Often self-destructive thinking, often negative thinking. More frequently you will find thinking dwells on that which is problematic, that which involves conflict, that which involves fear and anxiety, than thinking about that which is pleasant or good or joyful.

So the awareness that there's a lot of useless thought happening right now, that's a step, an important step. With that awareness comes choice. I'm talking from the viewpoint of the so-called person.

From that viewpoint of the so-called person suddenly there comes the element of choice. What is that choice? The choice to say I will take my consciousness out of the structures of thinking where it is impresent.

Consciousness gets captured continuously and used by the movement of thought, the mind. The choice is to say I'll take, I will remove my conscious attention from thinking and become present. And those of you who are not familiar with this ask how do I do that?

And there comes what you could call step two. I don't usually use steps but just temporarily let's just approach it in this way. Step two then is where do I put my attention if it's not in thinking?

Very simple thing for example you can do is ask yourself if you're breathing at this moment. Am I breathing? But don't answer it from memory.

It says of course I'm breathing because I'm still alive. If I wasn't breathing I wouldn't be alive. That's logical thinking.

But that's not direct evidence that you're breathing. The direct evidence that you're breathing you can only find by placing attention on the act of breathing. And then you can truly answer the question am I breathing at this moment?

Am I still breathing? Okay, let me have a look. Your attention moves to the intake, the inflow, and the outflow of breath.

You can feel the air moving into the body. You feel the air moving out of the body. You may feel it more as it enters the nose.

Some people feel it there most strongly or you may be able to follow with your attention. You follow the airflow into the body and out of the body. Wherever that is you know you can feel yourself breathing.

So now you know that you're breathing and what does that do? It takes your attention away from thinking. Conscious attention is consciousness.

So your consciousness instead of being trapped in the movement of thought you have to to know whether or not you're breathing you have to take your attention out of the movement of thought. That's what's happening when you're finding out whether you're breathing and you've put it inside and you think yes yes there's breathing happening or I am breathing. And that is called, it's an old very old way of entering the meditative state already recommended by the Buddha and that's called traditionally breath awareness and it's called the meditation technique.

But it's so simple and so natural to know that you're breathing. It's not really a technique. I'm not that fond of techniques because they tend to come in between you and who you are in your essence because here now I'm using a technique.

So if you use techniques choose techniques that are simple not complicated if you even want to call them techniques. Breath awareness. So if you do it now it's not a doing it's a it's a realizing of what's already there so in that sense it's not a doing.

Breath awareness in that sense is not a doing it's a an awareness arising right now and with that comes the spaciousness. You're touching the formless consciousness and breath is such an ideal meditation object so to speak because it is not an object it is not clearly defined in form. It is shapeless formless breath.

Just as consciousness itself is shapeless formless. And that's why breath has often been traditionally been equated with spirit the formless dimension. Both in the Old Testament and why it's such a favorite meditation technique in Buddhism for example.

But it's essentially a very such a simple thing to know that I'm breathing. And you're entering the present moment of course at the same time that's what the meditative state is. That's what presence is.

Presence is called presence because you're that you then suddenly you fully inhabit the now. You come to life. And if you're attentive you may be able to be aware of more than just one breath.

You're just you're breathing. And if you're very alert behind that breathing you can sense something very alive. You can't define it.

There's a background there that's intensely alive. Some people may call it peace deep inner peace. You may call it being.

You suddenly become aware that you are. Not that you are this or that or that. Not that you are 40 years old or you are this profession or you are that.

You're becoming aware of beingness of the aliveness within you of the I am. First person singular of to be I am. Of your presence.

Of your essence. That which has nothing to do with your past. Nothing to do with your future.

And that is inherently enlivening joyful. Awareness of your breath can also put you in touch with the awareness. It's somehow they're connected.

Awareness of the inner body. The aliveness within the body that I've often spoken about. Written about the awareness of the inner body.

Awareness that there is a field of aliveness permeating every cell of your body. Feel that aliveness that normally in our world a human being is not conscious of that because all their attention is in the movement of thinking in the head. Just to feel that sense of aliveness permeating your body.

Breath awareness can easily put you in touch with that. And somehow they go together. And that aliveness too is formless.

The physical body has a form. But that which underlies the form is formless. So as you sit here be aware of that inner aliveness.

And when I say be aware of that inner sense of aliveness that permeates every cell of the body. It sounds as if there were a subject and an object. I am aware of the aliveness.

But this is due to the structure of language. When you formulate a sentence you have a subject and an object. I am doing something.

But we have to go beyond that because that is not really how it is. It just appears to be as if I were aware of the aliveness permeating my inner energy field. But in reality the observer, so called the observer and the observed which is the aliveness are a single phenomenon, a single thing, a single no-thing.

They are really one. So it really is a becoming self-aware of your entire being. Your entire being becomes self-aware.

Not I am aware of this. I am aware of myself. So there is no subject and object except when we put it into language.

Self-awareness reflects back on itself. Observer and observed merge. And that is the state of traditionally called self-realization.

Not something mystical ultimately or weird or something to be attained after another 100 incarnations. No, but as a natural way of being and living. A state of connectedness with the source, with life itself.

If you don't find that you run around the planet back and forth for a few more years and that's it. Never gone beyond the surface of things. And all the things that you thought were important at the latest just when you are about to die you realize it wasn't important, not essentially.

And you will have missed the only thing that really is important. And if a whole civilization misses it, it quickly disappears. Even a civilization needs to be rooted to some extent in the eternal and timeless dimension.

It means it requires a few people, what the percentage is I don't know, to be rooted there. To keep the whole civilization anchored in being. That's of course what Jesus meant when he was sitting with two women, two sisters, Mary and Martha.

Martha goes about worrying about this and that, getting this and that ready. And Mary is just listening in a state of alert attention. And Jesus says, there's only one thing that really matters and she has chosen that thing.

It doesn't mean never to be active again, but to see where the true priorities lie. Then action can flow from that state of connectedness with being rather than come from a state of disconnectedness. And then it becomes quickly mad, pointless.

So as you sit here, either with your eyes closed or looking at the screen, can you be as much as possible free of mental noise and just be here as a spacious presence? Perhaps feel in the background the inner aliveness, the entire body alive within, no need to think, just as I'm not thinking. The words just come out of stillness.

There's no preparation. And when there's no speaking, there's no thinking. So we can be together in that state of simple alert presence.

That's the shift. And then in daily life, welcome that state of presence. Choose it, because you have a choice now.

Choose to take your attention out of useless thinking. Thinking is fine when it's helpful for this or that. It's good.

When thinking becomes negative, brings up problems that have no actual existence here and now, which actually means all problems, because in the here and now no problem can survive. There's only a situation, not a problem. When life becomes complicated and you start thinking how hard it all is, that means you've lost yourself, you've lost the present moment, you've lost the timeless dimension of consciousness, the I am.

And then, knowing that, you can choose to take your attention out of thinking, because it's pointless, it's recognized as pointless, and be simply here as an alert presence. And in any situation, be there as an alert presence. As you're driving towards an interview or whatever you're doing, instead of protecting yourself mentally, be there as an alert presence.

Feel the entire energy field. And there comes power. And then if you sit with the other person who's interviewing you for a job or whatever, be there, connected with the power within, which is the timeless consciousness.

And let your words come from there. Then the right thing will happen. Either you will get the job and it will be the right thing, or they will say, no, we don't want you, because they don't want that empowered consciousness there.

They want an ego. Or somebody senses that there is that genuineness to who you are, that absence of role playing, that absence of fear, am I going to get this job or not? There's just the presence.

There's just the state of connectedness with the power of now. And then you may find that even while you're thinking and doing things, there's still an awareness in the background that isn't lost. So you never completely lose yourself in thinking.

When you discuss things with people, observe how people discuss. They are completely lost. Every thought drags them along.

Every reaction drags them along. Lost in thoughts, lost in reactions, lost in emotion that reflects the thoughts. And here, as the new state of consciousness arises, there's in the background a space of awareness while thinking happens in the foreground.

That's the stillness in the background and you can sense it even while you discuss things. But now you discuss things without ego because ego is being lost in the forms, identification with forms, thought forms, emotional forms. And that's where all the collective madness of the planet comes from.

So you can participate in the game of life without ego and that is the only way things on our planet can change by enough humans entering that state of consciousness. Awareness or presence in the background even as you speak. Even as you discuss and say, No, this is not my viewpoint.

My viewpoint is this. I know that your viewpoint is different. I'll just now give you my viewpoint.

This is how I see things. No ego. Not making others wrong.

And learning to be. Just be. Not going to sleep and be.

Be awake. But just be. From time to time, just allow yourself to be.

There is no need to fill up every moment with doing. No matter how busy you are. Leave some room for being.

Occasionally just be. It doesn't have to be long. Just space.

One minute of space. It's timeless really. Just from the external viewpoint you call it one minute.

And then gradually being isn't lost even while you do. That's why we're here.

2009 Eckhart Tolle TV Questions And Answers

[Speaker 1] (0:25 - 1:02:29)

We need to understand a few basic things about this, and I'd like to remind you of something that's already been written in the power of now, and that is that your life consists of, what you call your life, is usually your life situation. Your life consists of your life situation, which is your job, your financial situation, your relationships, your living situation, your health situation, whether you're young or old, or whatever is happening in your life, all that makes up your life situation. And for most people, that's all there is.

They don't know anything else. Their whole life consists, what they call my life, when they refer to my life, they're talking about their life situation. And in the power of now, I differentiate between your life situation, which is one level, and a more fundamental level that I call your life.

We are going to talk about these two levels today at a time when, for many people, their life situation is becoming challenging. They're encountering new limitations suddenly coming into their life situation. The only difference between our present situation in the world and what normally happens is that many people experience similar things at the same time.

So many people at the present time experience some form of challenge or limitation coming into their life, as many of the structures, the external structures in the world, are becoming shaky, and some have collapsed already. You may remember from a New Earth, I speak about the collapse of Soviet communism, which nobody could have predicted. And I speak of the impending collapse of many of the structures that are ego-based, that are an external reflection of an inner state of consciousness, that is the ego.

And those structures, which, of course, includes financial structures and so on, are now beginning to collapse. And something totally new will arise. How long this collapse will take, I cannot say.

But everybody can clearly see, and even the experts are talking about systemic, I hear this word on the radio, a systemic crisis or something like that. In other words, the crisis is not to do with this or that on the surface of things, but concerns the very structure of these organizations, in the same sense that the human mind, the problems of the human mind have not to do with content of whatever is the content of your mind, but the very structure of the mind, the human mind that needs to change. So for many people, limitation in one form or another is coming into their life situation.

And that is actually not what the media wants us to believe. These things are dreadful. The challenge that many people are encountering at this time is actually that which will push them into a new state of consciousness.

That is the possibility, that is the promise. Whenever you encounter a crisis situation, whether it's personal or collective, there is the opening into a new way of being. The possibility, it doesn't mean that everybody will embrace that possibility.

So we need to first of all see, not believe what we are told in the media, that we should be in a state of fear, that the only real response, the only natural response to what's happening is a state of fear. That is an unconscious response. We need to see that change is absolutely necessary in this world, and the dissolution of many of the ego-based structures is absolutely necessary for the planet to survive and for humanity to survive.

So what's happening is not dreadfully bad. What's happening needs to happen. The totality, the intelligence behind phenomena is doing it.

So it is a good thing, and if challenges come into your life, which might mean limitation, financial limitation, you may have to move somewhere else, you may have to downgrade, uncertainty may come into your life. Oh, that shouldn't be happening. I should know what's going to happen for the next 20, 30 years of my life.

Well, you don't know anymore. And that is wonderful that there is suddenly an opening into uncertainty. So is it possible for you to embrace uncertainty and not demand that you should know what's going to happen to you in your life situation?

To embrace not knowing, to embrace uncertainty and to embrace, yes, yes, there are difficulties, there are challenging situations, but that is part of being here on this planet in this form. I'd like to remind you of, there's a book called The Road Less Traveled, and I never got to read the whole book. I basically got stuck on the first two sentences of the book, and those first two sentences of the book were so good that you didn't need to read anymore.

I don't know whether that's a good thing for an author to write such a good book, that all you need is the first two sentences. And if you don't get that, you can still read the rest of the book, but if you get that, well. So the first sentence is, life is difficult, okay?

And the second sentence, I don't know literally, but it says something like, and if you know that life is difficult and you accept that life is difficult, it's no longer difficult. It's only, it's difficult when, if you say it shouldn't be. But if you go with, yes, the uncertainty, this is part of being here in this form, there is continuous uncertainty, and the certainty, the rigidity of things is an illusion.

The certainty that all these structures are solid, and you can sometimes see it, that the world trade center looked very solid, and phew, gone. And all the structures, the big banks, they looked so solid, nothing could possibly happen there, they are forever, and within a few weeks, they're beginning to crumble. It's Soviet communism, nothing looked more solid than Soviet communism.

You say, this is so rigid, it can't possibly, must at least survive for another thousand years, the rigidity of it, and the people who embodied that, it's not going to move. When you saw the Soviet rulers greeting the military parades, huge tanks and rockets going past, nothing can be more solid than that, and within a year, collapsed, the whole thing collapsed. Now, one good thing, of course, about traveling to India is that the external reality is a little bit less solid than in the West, so you're less likely to delude yourself that you live in a solid reality that can be controlled or that you can be in control of, where you see the structures are actually a bit shaky everywhere, and even if you go into a luxury hotel, you never know what's going to happen. So, we are learning to go with the flow of things, as the expression goes, and the flow of things is fluid, it's not a continuous change, something new is arising, and why demand that there should be certainty in your life? Be open to uncertainty and see how empowering that actually is, and not say, okay, but what about my pension plan, the mutual funds?

I had saved all my life, and now, look, I got the statements, I lost 50% of it. Yes, so, but you're still here, that's your life situation. Whatever happens, your life situation, and you may remember a year ago, you were looking at your mutual funds, and said, wow, it's made so much money, it's great.

It feels good, and then you look at it again. Oh, okay, now I can relax now. And then you relax, and then the next one comes, and it's, oh my God, life is difficult.

Things are dissolving, and see, if you resist internally what is happening, as the media teaches you to do, then, of course, you resist the flow, you resist the arising of the new, the arising of the new state of consciousness, primarily, in you, and eventually, the arising of new external expressions of that state of consciousness, a new world. We don't need to be concerned about that. That comes of itself.

What we need to be concerned about is to be open to this transformation, to be open to not knowing. So there's our life situation, and it's interesting. There may be interesting changes happening in our life situation, and we say, that's fine.

Whatever change comes, you look at the situation and see, yes, all of a sudden, a limitation is coming into my life. I lost my job, and my investments are not worth that much anymore. Okay, then, how can you overcome these limitations?

Limitations can be overcome always on two levels. There is the external limitations. Limitations can be overcome on an external level, and other limitations can only be overcome on an inner level.

So you need to see, whatever situation you encounter in your life, is there anything I can do to overcome these limitations? It might involve moving somewhere else where you don't have a huge mortgage anymore. It might involve moving to a different location.

It might involve finding a different job or thinking outside of the box and doing something totally different you'd never even thought of, of thinking creatively. So whatever limitation you encounter in your life, you look at, first of all, at the externals of the situation. Is there anything I can do?

And then you become still. And then you start thinking again, and you look at the situation. What are the possibilities?

Then you become still again. Then you look again, you think, or you talk to someone. And then you go back into stillness, and that process may take a while, not necessarily just a day, of looking what it is, what is it that I can do, and going within where you're not looking for anything, but become comfortable with what is here and now.

And when you become comfortable with what is here and now, you're stepping out of your life situation into life. Life is now. Life has nothing to do with what's going on in your life.

It has nothing to do with past and future or what your relationships are or what your financial situation is or your living situation is or even your health situation is. That's all your life situation. That is not life.

Your life situation exists in time, past and future. Life is now. So it is vital that you learn to step out of your life situation so that, periodically, so that your life situation does not absorb your entire attention continuously, because if it does, it'll drain you and eat you up because you'll have continuous stuff to think about, one problem after another in my life, my life situation.

You know, do you think, oh, now I have to, what about that problem and that? And you're thinking about your, there's a continuous succession of problems that I need to worry about, and if I don't worry about it, it's all going to collapse totally, even worse than it has done so already. I need to be responsible and worry.

You're being eaten up by your life situation. Your mind, it comes down to your mind, because your mind gives power to your life situation. The continuous involuntary mind activity really is your life situation.

If you don't think about your life situation, there is no life situation. What situation? You come into, you step out of that periodically, vital to learn that, and come into life, and then the mind says, what do you mean by life?

Okay, let's see where that is, that life. You step out of time, your attention, you remove your attention from past and future, okay? How do you do that?

Well, a little help would be, what about now? What's wrong with now? Do I have a problem now?

Now? Of course I have a problem now, look at my bank statement. Of course I have a problem now, I need to move by the end of the month, of course I got noticed.

I'm not talking about the end of the month, or what's going to happen to your mutual funds. I'm talking about, do you have a problem now? No.

I can't see any. I'm trying hard to find a problem in this moment. Well, there's a stain, no there isn't, I'm just saying.

There's a stain here, is that a problem? No, it's a stain, okay. I have a backache, I don't, it's just an example.

I have a backache, is that a problem? Only if you start thinking about it and saying, am I going to have to live with that for the rest of my life? Or why do you always have a backache?

I wonder what's wrong with me. No, it's not a problem, it's a backache. It's just that.

You stay with what is now. Don't spin some stories about what is now. Don't, you know, you don't have to be judge it, compare it, say it shouldn't be.

You come into now. So the first level of now is whatever is around you, that's only level one. Level one of now is your sense perceptions.

Wow. And that's already a revelation. When you step out of being totally possessed, eaten up, eaten alive by your life situation, and you step out of that into just, even just becoming aware of sense perceptions, you're entering the now because you can only perceive now.

And you're not perceiving any problem. You're perceiving what is now. Sense perceptions, this room, the people, the incredible variety of human forms.

Amazing to see. Every human form is different and unique in some way. It's beautiful.

You can sit in a public place and be in the now and watch people. Nothing to do with your life situation. You're there as a presence, watching, perceiving this moment.

The incredible fullness of this moment around you in the form of life forms, human life forms, animal life forms, plant life forms, the air, the incredible forms and shapes that are continuously moving the spectacle of phenomena. Unbelievable variety. It's fantastic.

And you have no idea that this is going on around you when you're totally trapped in your life situation, which really is your mind. So we are learning periodically to step out of that level that I call life situation and enter life. Life is now.

This was level one of now, what is around you. Be alert to that because otherwise you miss the whole thing because you're so concerned about your conceptual reality, which really is what a life situation is. You're so concerned about your conceptual reality that you miss reality.

Your conceptual reality eats up your entire attention continuously and you're worrying about your life, which in reality is your life situation, but you call it your life. It's not life at all. And so this is a dreadful fate for a person to be consumed by their life situation.

And so they miss life. They're trying to find the life, the fullness of life in their life situation. And they're hoping that if they can eventually sort out their life situation so that they can find life.

But if your life situation is all you have, you're never going to find life because your life situation is a set of thoughts and concepts in your head. So to become empowered, you need to rise, one could say you rise above your life situation, which doesn't mean you don't deal with things anymore. You still deal with things, but you realize there is a level or a dimension to you that is far more powerful and vital than whatever is happening in your life.

So accessing that dimension is vital. And that really is what spirituality is all about. Not having some weird ideas about this or that, or beliefs, it's nothing to do with ideas.

It's nothing to do with concepts. There's no such thing as spiritual concepts. Concepts are not spiritual.

They're not even spiritual thoughts. There's no such thing as a spiritual thought. A thought is not spiritual because thought is form.

Spiritual is the formless dimension in yourself. Level one, then, whatever surrounds you. You can say, yeah, but this is still form too.

Yes, it's form too, but it's not a mind form. It's not a conceptual form. It's what is here in the world of physical forms.

Be open to that. Level one of the now. Level two of the now, don't get attached to the numbers.

I'm just saying two. Level two of the now is feeling that you're alive. Level two is, so your attention was on what is around you.

The world is multifaceted. There's incredible play of phenomena all around you, and you acknowledge that, and it's beautiful. It has nothing to do with what your relationships are doing at the moment or what your bank statements are doing at the moment or whether you have a job or you don't have a job or whether your wife has just left you or the husband has done this or whether you're, nothing to do with any of that.

You're stepping out into presence. Level two of presence is to feel that you're alive inside. You've already noticed that the world around you is alive.

Well, that's a big step forward. You have noticed that the world around you is vitally alive. So to notice that, you need to have stepped out of your life situation, your conceptual reality.

Wow. Okay, that was, you breathe. It's beautiful.

The play of forms. And then you feel that you inside are alive. Your body is alive.

You feel the aliveness in your hands, your arms, your legs, and the totality of aliveness, the global aliveness inside in the background. And you can still look around and see the incredible aliveness around you. Now, if you feel the body inside, you're already moving to an even more vital dimension than the vitality of life forms.

There's your body. It feels good to be embodied, to sense the aliveness, even in an everyday situation. When things are going, when you're listening to the news and say something dreadful has just happened, there will be negative growth next year in the economy.

Negative growth, what does that mean? We are now officially in a recession. Oh my God.

We are going to buy less at Christmas this, oh no. We are not going to run around like mad rabbits this Christmas. Oh, that's dreadful.

So even when you listen to the news, I'm exaggerating a little, but there's some truth in it. Even when you listen to the news, you can feel the aliveness within while they're saying we are now officially in a recession. The entire automobile industry of the United States may collapse and drag everybody else down.

And you feel the aliveness inside. So there you have something more vital than that. And if you are part of the automobile industry of the United States, and if it affects you directly or indirectly, when the situation arises externally, then you will deal with it.

You will address it in the now. And you accept whatever is, and you look at it, okay, what is it that I can do? And then you go into life, and then you go out again and look at your situation.

And you go back and find the balance between dealing with your life situation and entering life. So level two, set the aliveness in the body while you listen to the news, for example, or while the phone rings and somebody says, ah, ah, ah, oh dear, we need to do something. Well, if anybody comes to you and says, oh, we need to do something, you step out of the life situation and become present where there are no problems.

So you can hang on to your inner body. And then an even deeper level of your life situation, which, of course, they are all connected. They are ultimately all one.

At the deepest level, the one that contains it all is the realization that underneath it all, who you are is not the thoughts that go through your head or whatever's happening externally, but you can actually sense within yourself that you are that in which all the phenomena appear. That's the deepest level of life. Life is the consciousness that you are, the I, the I am.

You attach nothing else to I am. The I am, it's the deepest, who you are in your innermost identity. That is consciousness.

It is formless. It is the light in which everything appears. And to feel yourself, even at this moment, to feel that nothing that can be defined is who you are.

Nothing that can be thought is who you are. Nothing that happens around you has anything ultimately to do with who you are in your essence. Success or failure ultimately has nothing to do with who you are.

Success cannot give you your true reality. Failure, success is not who you are. It's all the play of forms.

It's all to do with time. It's your life situation. Stepping out of that, into the power and the fullness of the present moment where you know yourself as consciousness itself.

Another word you could use as a pointer is to realize the stillness within yourself. Consciousness is still, alive, vibrant, but still. Underneath all the things that are happening externally and internally in your mind and your emotional field, you remain as that.

And that can be in any situation when you are the master, the spiritual master, knows him or herself as consciousness in any external situation. You can actually sense a spaciousness inside you no matter what's happening. And even while you're thinking, well, you're going to think much less because there's no reason to think totally unnecessary things all the time.

To sense always in the background, the I am, the stillness, that which is precious, something very precious, indestructible. And sometimes you may need to encounter a life-threatening challenge that suddenly comes in to sense that. But whenever a form in your life begins to dissolve or collapse, there's a greater chance to discover within yourself that which is beyond form.

So let's say the entire stock market collapses and then you get your statement and it says zero. That moment of looking at your balance and you say your mutual funds have gone from $500,000 to $5. So this form that was important to you has dissolved.

And you look at that and instead of resisting, because this is what is, ultimately it's only a figure on a piece of paper. Only when you start thinking does it become a big problem. But the reality of it is you're opening this thing, you're taking it out of the envelope and you're reading and there is little scribbles, computer printout, which has a little figure on it.

And that's all that it is in the reality of the present moment. Unless you make a problem out of it and start thinking what's going to happen to me in the future? How am I going to survive in my old age?

I've worked for nothing, 30 years of work for nothing. What does all that mean? It means it's a story around the simplicity of a figure on a piece of paper.

And then once you are trapped in that, you're lost. So to see very clearly, this is the master, you're becoming a master when you just see the simplicity of any moment without going into spinning stories around me, my past, my future. It was all in vain, I failed, it's all been pointless.

I'm never going to make money again. All mind stories, mind-created stories. So the solution to your financial, other problems is stepping out as much as you can into the aliveness of the present moment, which is who you are in your essence.

You are the now in which everything happens, the consciousness in which everything unfolds, the timeless space, and then look at the situation. So you're coming from a, you're rooted in a deeper place. And then you're dealing with the externals.

But always be very careful because the externals have a pulling power and you're living in a world that's totally hypnotized by the externals. And in a world that continuously tells you how important the external is. And every time you listen to somebody say, this is so important, you should be worried.

You should be in fear. You should think about this. Let's discuss it.

And the world has this pulling power. So you need to realize everybody's hypnotized into believing that this is all that there is. And this is absolutely serious and important.

It is important perhaps, but it is only relatively important. It is not of absolute importance. Of absolute importance is finding the essence of who you are.

And then deal with things from there. So that a different energy flows into, even into what you do. So the two are not separate.

Even your so-called life situation changes, is affected by the power of life itself when you are aware of that in yourself. So a different level of consciousness flows into what you do. A different energy flows into what you do when you realize that whatever you do is at best only relatively important.

Whatever happens is relative. The only one thing is absolute, and that is finding life, or as Jesus calls it, the fullness of life, which has nothing to do with your life situation. And the strange thing is the life situation tends to unfold with greater ease when you are connected with something, that dimension that is deeper than life situations.

And then even on the external level of your life situation, there's things happen more lightly, more easily. And that's the beauty of it. And this is the practice then, and no better opportunity than the present time when you're being challenged rather than being deluded for a few more years that all is well when it isn't, because eventually things are going to dissolve around you anyway.

And if they dissolve, don't dissolve around you, then you dissolve before they do. So it's better to see that fact now than wait until you're 92 years old. You may not be that alert anymore to find the reality of who you are and the reality underneath phenomena.

So here's the mastery of life is to live in two dimensions simultaneously and then see what happens. You're practicing then every moment and whatever situation that arises in your life becomes a practice for staying present within that situation to feel the depths of who you are, the power of now, the power of consciousness as you deal with things. So this is what it means to become empowered.

That's what everybody wants, but they're looking for it where they can't find it. They're looking for some power in their external life situation. The power must come from within.

It does not come from your thoughts or from whatever happens out here. So another way of putting this is look at whatever limitations arise in your life. Let's say you're trapped somewhere in some unpleasant situation or place and you want to get out.

Look at the situation. What is it that I can do? Or perhaps there's nothing you can do.

All right, no, it's a beautiful thing to see. At this present moment, there's nothing I can do. I can't even pick up the phone.

It's Sunday today. I can't call anybody. They're all, nobody's at work.

There's nothing I can do except be with what is. The next day, action arises. Not losing yourself in the action, another important thing, because it's very easy once you start to speak and to act, you totally lose yourself in that.

You will get stressed. The slightest stress means you've lost yourself in your life situation again. It is possible to deal with things effectively without stress.

Just be more powerful than the situation. Most people, for most people, the situation is always more powerful than they, so they feel smaller than the situation. That's normal.

And that's a delusion because it all arises from consciousness. So you are actually far more powerful, the power of who you are is far greater than anything external, but that's, people don't know that. So they're always reacting to something, defending themselves against this or that, realizing that the situation actually has very little power.

And if your change of, your state of consciousness changes, external reality reflects the change. This does not mean that anything remains absolutely solid in external reality. It still is subject to continuous fluctuations.

So you don't attach yourself to anything, but it's beautiful to see that external reality reflects basically your predominant inner state. If your inner state is empowered, and it can only be empowered when you are not lost in your life situation, then the empowerment is reflected around you. And it may come in many forms.

It may come as financial abundance. It may come as anything, any form that the aliveness can take. So it's an incredible thing to discover that you are actually more powerful than the world around you.

Not in the narrow egoic sense that you say, I can control everything that happens, no. So this is a wonderful opportunity now to experiment with consciousness, with your life situation and your life. Where is the life at this moment?

Do you feel the aliveness of this moment? And then the universe uses you because it is going somewhere. There's an evolutionary impulse at work on this planet and everywhere else, because if it's happening here, it's happening everywhere, as above, so below.

Then the consciousness that wants to come into this world can freely flow through you and express itself. How? In many different ways.

According to your particular form, it might be some enlightened business. It may be that you are producing something that affects many people and brings that consciousness to others through some artistic creation, or this or that, innumerable possibilities, how you can be an opening for the evolutionary impulse of the universe that wants to come through. And then wherever you go, people will be affected by this transformed energy.

You cannot not affect the world. When you live in the new state of consciousness, whoever you come into contact with is affected by that. Even if you were a hermit, you would still affect the collective consciousness.

If you are a frequency holder, as I call it in a new earth, a frequency holder is somebody who is not very interested in going out into the world and changing the world or building up some huge, great organization to make the world a better place or to create a great work of art or to come up with some new discovery or write a great book. Not that there's anything wrong with these things. For some people, that is their life purpose.

But there are some other people who are not drawn to that, who are content with remaining in a relatively small circle of influence, a little, maybe just contemplatives is the old word for those people, people who feel, don't want to go out there and change the world. They just want to be present. And that's fine because they hold the frequency of that state of consciousness because whatever state of consciousness you are in affects the totality of consciousness, is part of the totality of consciousness.

So I was a frequency holder for a large part of my life, never very interested in going out into the world and achieving the great things. I was kind of happy being withdrawn and until something came into my life and I felt there's more that I can do, that was a thought that came. I was doing little work, workshops with people, 10 people at a time, 15 people for a number of years, giving talks in people's living rooms.

And then it was fine, in many ways, I felt happy being a semi-hermit and occasionally going out and doing little things, happy not being famous, that was never thought I would want to be famous. But then the thought came, I could do so much more in this world, but it doesn't seem to be happening. And one day I sat under an oak tree, you could call this, there's a question, later on we'll have some questions.

Somebody is asking a question about divine discontent. The question is, do you ever experience what might be called divine discontent? That is the discontent that leads to something very positive.

And you could say at that, there was a moment that came at that time when I experienced a mild form of divine discontent, which simply is a sense of, there's more than I can do, that I could do, but it's not happening. That's a mild form of divine discontent. It's not some unhappiness that says, oh, I have failed, I'm in my forties, and what have I achieved?

That's not divine discontent. That's just a form of normal unhappiness. With divine discontent, there is not some lot of mind activity around me and my life.

There's just a sense of this, my present life situation has these limitations around me, but I could go beyond that. I could be much vaster. The world needs what I know comes through me.

I know that the world needs that. So why isn't the world, I'm speaking for some of you too, why isn't the world opening up these channels for me? So that was the divine discontent.

So I sat under an oak tree in Somerset, where I would sometimes go, magnificent oak tree, and I said to the universe, which ultimately to myself, please use me. I was talking to myself ultimately, because I am that, please use me, I'm here. So I was a frequency holder, and yet after many years of a frequency holder, I had this sense of, okay, now expansion is what is called for in this world, a moment of divine discontent, please use me.

I didn't hear any answer. And then I said something that some years later, I almost said, maybe I said too much. I said, I want acceleration.

Okay, and then I went home and nothing happened for a few months. I didn't know that while nothing was happening for a few months in my little cottage in Somerset, somebody there, I don't take it literally, the countdown has already started, like the rocket ship, which goes 10, nine, eight, seven, six, and then one day I woke up and say, I have to move. I have to move to the West Coast of North America.

And that was the beginning. And so the rocket ship had taken off suddenly, and finally I landed at the desk of Oprah a few years later. I never wanted that much.

It's too much. And then the lesson was to surrender to that. It wasn't too much.

It was what was needed. If I'd been stuck to some previous idea that I had about how my life should unfold, I would be saying, oh, I'm overwhelmed, it's too much. Well, this is surrender now to what is now, surrender to this enormous energy stream that's coming through.

You asked for it, you said acceleration. And there it is. And continuously, even in this, my life, many people believe my life situation must be wonderful.

In many ways it is, but no life situation is totally satisfying. And there are always things that happen and change. There's no ultimate certainty in any life situation.

You cannot derive long-lasting satisfaction from any life situation, even if you become famous. I can tell you that now. Your life situation has not the power to satisfy you for long.

The satisfaction needs to be found in life, and life is now. And if you find that, then your life situation is fine. It unfolds and becomes empowered, probably.

So don't expect your life situation does not have the power to make you fulfilled. And it does ultimately not have the power to make you feel unfulfilled. You have to go deeper where you are bigger than that.

Although there was this divine discontent for a little moment, I'm certainly not happier or more fulfilled now than I was when I, as one magazine said, Eckhart Tolle suddenly emerged from complete obscurity. So when I lived in complete obscurity, I didn't know I was in complete obscurity, but... I was not less happy than I am now, and the state is the same.

So there's no sense, it is fulfilling to see that consciousness is evolving through this form, yes. But there's no increased happiness through that. The happiness was already there, basically, the sense of, because I was deeply rooted, as I still am, in life.

Life is always more vital to me than the life situation. I've always going, even now, I'm always a little bit out of balance, even now, although great things are happening, but I'm not recommending that to anybody. I'm just saying, I'm a little bit out of balance because I'm always more vitally drawn to the present moment and the aliveness of that than whatever I have to deal with on an external level.

So I'm always going a little bit too much, so sometimes it's a little bit chaotic around me because I don't deal with everything. If I dealt with everything, I would lose, I would become stressed, it's just too much. So many things just put aside, and then after a few months, they are not a problem anymore because the situation has changed.

And I don't do anything when I feel I'm not enjoying it anymore, stop. What's the point? What is the point in doing something that you cannot enjoy?

But don't prematurely say, okay, I definitely can't enjoy this. See if you can connect with the power of now and then do whatever you do. So don't immediately say, well, what I'm doing, definitely I could never enjoy, maybe, maybe not.

Just try connecting, stepping out of the situation into the power of now and then do. Perhaps you can enjoy it. And if you still can't, then go and do something else.

But no compromise, don't live with unhappiness or with continuous stress or frustration. That is dreadful way to live. The large part of the world lives like that.

So what a wonderful challenge here. And whatever comes where it's a life situation and the challenges of your life situation, they draw out that which is deeper. So without the challenges, you would be comfortably sitting in your armchair for the next 30 years or until you retire and watching your investments grow and grow and then drop dead.

And you would live with complete certainty that you're being looked after because you've got your life insurance and your investments are growing every year and there's nothing can possibly go wrong. And there's nothing, okay, everything is great. Watch TV every day for five hours.

And that's it. No evolution, no flowering of consciousness. And then there's somebody else who made a total mess of his or her life and ends up in prison and sits there for 20 years and suddenly wakes up in the midst of that and realizes I am life.

And the situation is just relatively unimportant to feel that who I am in my essence is beyond any limitation on the external level. So that's why I often get letters from people in prison that say, I have woken up in prison. I'm free.

I'm no longer unhappy. And I have another 20 years to do. No, I'm not unhappy anymore.

I rarely get people, I get letters from people who say, I've woken up because my investments are growing every year. In fact, I've never had a letter.

[Speaker 6] (1:02:35 - 1:02:35)

No.

[Speaker 1] (1:02:42 - 1:23:40)

Sometimes I get letters from people who wake up because they encounter some physical illness and often change happens then. Any challenge has the opportunity to wake up. If you're not being challenged by life, then wait, it'll come.

No, isn't that wonderful? That means whatever happens now, it's no longer some problem that comes into your life. It's a challenge.

It's not a dreadful thing. It's great. It's an opportunity to be more conscious, more present with what is.

So that brings us back to the first two lines of that book. Life is difficult. Of course, it's full of challenges.

But once you know that, and say, that's what it is, that's life, then it's no longer difficult. It just is what is. It only remains difficult if you have the idea stuck in your head that it shouldn't be.

It's a paradox. Life is difficult. And once you know that it's difficult, it's no longer difficult.

Knowing that it's difficult implies accepting that it's difficult. But to say it is difficult only when you resist life. So what this implies is it's when the resistance goes, then it's no longer called difficult.

It's challenging. And every challenge brings increased aliveness. My friend Steve, who is here, can testify to that because he was faced with a challenge recently of being stuck in a hotel room in Bombay with mad terrorists running all around the building for several days.

And he went deep inside. Wasn't difficult for him because he was already immersed in presence for many years. So he was able to step out of the situation, which certainly could be called difficult, and go deep within into the power of the present moment, into consciousness itself.

What signs do you see in the past year or so, either positive or negative, of the progress of the human race towards change and growth? Do you think we as a species are on the right track or have we gone even further astray? From Julie, are we on the right track or have we gone even further astray?

If you look for evidence of the one, you will find it. If you look for evidence of the other, you will also find it. So if you want to convince yourself or others that we are definitely not on the right track, you will find plenty of evidence that we are not on the right track.

Just watch the news every evening. And if all the information that you have or the facts that you gather come from the media, then perhaps you won't find that many facts that we are on the right track. But if you look elsewhere, you will find that indeed change is happening in many humans at this time.

One is that we are here now. We are here at this very moment in the now. We are part of that transformation of consciousness.

Why else should we be here? We have been led here because we are part of that universal movement of the transformation of human consciousness. And even in the news, occasionally you have little glimpses that some change is happening.

The transition in the United States, a more conscious president after eight years of unconsciousness, that is a good sign. I've seen some statements coming from Obama that are quite encouraging. Some people have asked me, has he actually read The Power of Now or New Earth?

I don't know. But if I hear things like, simple things, but surprising things coming from a politician, things like you don't need to be disagreeable when you disagree with somebody. A very simple truth, but coming from a politician, it's an incredible thing.

It's almost a miracle. Because the implication is that you don't need to be identified with your mind beyond that. Whatever opinion you might hold, you don't need to be so identified with your mental positions that immediately you make somebody who holds a different mental position into an enemy.

That's what he's really saying, but he's pressing it in very simple terms. And so, and that's a new thing. We haven't had that in a long time in politics.

Or even you have occasionally a person like we had in the past in Russia. Gorbachev, compared to the previous Soviet leaders, Gorbachev was a highly evolved Buddha. Perhaps he was a Buddha or is a Buddha.

But even if we only compare him to the previous leaders, it's like day and night. Gorbachev, I remember he said when there was another one of many crises between the United States and Russia, and they asked him, what is your opinion of this crisis situation? And he just said, this too will pass.

So that's, occasionally you see some consciousness coming even into politics. And so we have this, now there's a good chance that consciousness is flowing into that crisis. Area, there's no guarantee because what Obama is moving into now is he's moving into the old, already existing ego created structures.

Now the question is whether he is able to sustain that state of consciousness that he's in now that is not dominated by ego, but goes beyond egoic conflict. Whether after having moved into all the political, economic, military structures that have been created by the collective ego, are these structures, and not only in his own country, but also he then has relationships through the structures with other structures in other countries which are equally ego dominated. Whether he's able to sustain the state of relative awareness or presence within that, or whether he will be pulled into greater unconsciousness through moving into those egoic structures, or he's able to maintain it and transform to some extent the old structures from within.

It would be a miraculous thing, but not beyond possibility. It is possible that he's able to do that, but the forces of unconsciousness around him will be quite strong. There is, you may be familiar with the phrase, I think it's called the military industrial complex, I believe that's the phrase.

And I always thought that phrase must have been coined by somebody like Chomsky or somebody in the 60s. But in fact, I recently learned that actually it was President Eisenhower who used that term for the first time when he was leaving office. He was actually giving a warning because he could see that there was an energy formation there that had its own momentum.

It was a very powerful, and of course he didn't say that, but it's an egoic energy formation. It doesn't mean that the people in it are evil. It's just, it's an energy formation created by the collective ego.

And of course, that is still there. Obama, this is not going to disappear the moment Obama moves into the White House. So we have something coming together there and remains to be seen whether he's able to sustain consciousness or whether the structures will pull him into unconsciousness.

So what we are doing here is all, it's not separate from that because ultimately it is the collective consciousness that creates whatever government you have. Whatever predominates in the collective consciousness is then reflected externally. And so as we are here, part of the transformation of consciousness that will have an effect on, it will affect the totality of consciousness also.

So it's every single individual is vital in this. And any individual who is part of this transformation of consciousness as we are, otherwise we wouldn't be here. It goes beyond the personal.

We are part of the transformation of consciousness. And of course, that affects the totality of consciousness. So if there's beyond that, if there's something that you personally can do on the practical level, wherever you, wherever it might be in politics, if you're in politics or it might be at work, if you work for a corporation, it might be in your, some business that you have that is your own, anything that you can do and be more present with what you do and do it without the interference of the egoic consciousness, all that helps. So it's vital then that we bring this presence into whatever we do.

It is vital also that we don't complain too much about people who are not present yet because that's another way of being pulled into unconsciousness. The moment you complain about an unconscious person, and of course, when I use the term unconscious, I don't mean that they are, when I use the term unconscious, I mean that they are identified with the involuntary mind activity, which runs according to its old patterns. So they're completely in that, the old reactive patterns happen again and again and again, they're unconscious.

What they say is dominated, is controlled by that. That's unconscious. To be, not to be there as the aware presence behind your mind, but to be totally identified with the conditioned mind is unconsciousness.

So that's what unconscious means. So when you are confronted with an unconscious person, you can actually see that it's unconscious, but the important thing is not to complain about somebody else's unconsciousness. And to, how, that makes, that complaint is already an unconscious reactive pattern in you, and you are equating a pattern that operates in another human being with who that human being is.

So you've made it much more difficult for that human being by equating a pattern in that human being with who he or she is, you've made it more difficult for him or her to step out of it. And you yourself have become trapped again in a reactive pattern. So you see unconsciousness, spiritually speaking, still all around you, and that's fine.

You kind of look through it. You know it's there, but you look through. There on the surface, you have whatever reactive patterns the person manifests.

And you kind of, you see, it's like if you look through, not necessarily visual, I'm using a visual image, you sense your way through that, and you can feel that that is not who that person is. You don't have to tell this to yourself, but you can sense it. You can sense there is a human being underneath all that madness in everybody.

Even some politicians, not mentioning any names, there is a human being underneath there somewhere. Sometimes you have to look very deep, but it's there. So being pulled into unconsciousness can happen very easily.

We were talking it on the personal level and in politics. Similar example, just one more example of Second World War, we had in the person of Hitler and the movement of National Socialism, extremely, extreme egoic unconsciousness taking over a whole country. And so to some extent, the countries that were pulled into this, the Second World War, also were pulled into not as great unconsciousness as the originating unconsciousness, but into some unconsciousness also, because they did things which we would say, how can you bomb a city that is filled with civilians, millions of civilians, knowing exactly there's no military value whatsoever, we are complaining about terrorists, and the so-called good people, of course, the originating unconsciousness was even greater and even worse.

But it pulled even the other powers into bombing cities, even with atom bombs and firebombs, where there were only women and children, there were not even any men left because they were all fighting somewhere. So sometimes the response then becomes equally unconscious. So evil, if you want to call it evil breeds further evil, if you're not very careful, very present, or the response to terrorism, a few mad terrorists.

We have a question here, perhaps I'll read it, that's our next, and then we can come to some spoken questions. Every question is interesting, but this is from an anonymous questioner. One of the most puzzling human behaviors for me is to witness an act of retribution.

9-11 happens, and rather than stopping and asking who perpetrated this act of violence and what healing needs to occur, our response is to ask who did this so that we can inflict equal or greater pain and misery, thereby escalating the pain and generating cycles of violence that become even more difficult to stop as we have witnessed in the Middle East. Can humanity stop acting from its most base response? This touches on what we have just been talking about.

Can humanity stop acting from its most base response, which is the unconscious response? And the questioner mentions 9-11 happens, and rather than stopping and asking who perpetrated this act of violence and what healing needs to occur, our response is to ask who did this so that we can inflict equal or greater pain and misery. Well, the only thing that's even more stupid than this is to...

Even more stupid than hitting back at the unconscious person is to hit back somebody who didn't even do it. Just because you have to hit back, somebody, anybody will do. So the question is, can humanity stop acting from its most base response?

Yes. The most vital question is always to bring it back to yourself because it always starts with the individual. Can I, so humanity is replaced with the word I, can I stop acting from my most base response, which is the old reactive pattern?

Or what, it might not even be aggression, it can be other reactive pattern, but it's an old reactive pattern and it's ego. Can I, well, you have to see when the next challenge comes into your life, whether or not the answer is yes or no. So I can't answer that, only you can answer it, but to answer it, even that, you have to see when the next challenge comes into your life and then say, okay, can I stop acting from my most base response?

It's a somewhat complicated question, but simple question or another simple question is, what am I doing? What am I saying? What am I feeling?

[Speaker 2] (1:23:57 - 1:50:38)

So let's begin with what I like to call bamboo tree. In yoga, it's called Mountain Pose, Tadasana. In traditional Chinese, Qigong, it's called Tree Pose, but I like to add the bamboo tree because the bamboo tree, it's firm yet flexible, but the most important thing is, is that it's hollow on the inside.

And that's what we are. We are actually space, 99% empty space. And it's only with the thoughts and the identification with thinking that we become contracted in the body and therefore, in a way, feeling solid and tense.

So bamboo tree can be used standing, it could be done seated anytime, standing in line at the supermarket. And all you're just doing is you are just standing and emptying yourself. So just you could stand with your feet a bit, hip width apart.

The knees are unlocked, not bent a lot, just unlocked. And the whole body is relaxed. So the shoulders are relaxed, the arms are relaxed, the feet, the legs, everything is relaxed.

And imagine your tailbone being drawn towards the earth, the crown of your head lifted towards the sky. You may wish to close your eyes and just feeling the breath, just allowing yourself to empty. If any thoughts arise, just notice them, let them go.

Return your awareness to the breath. Become the space, become the awareness that you are. So this bamboo tree is a good practice to do after any activity or before any activity.

Even it's before you, when the phone rings, instead of running and rushing to the phone to answer it, just stop, stand there for a few moments and just become alert, present and empty. And then move into your activity, into whatever motion that is called for in the moment. And in practicing this, you'll begin to feel the inner body that Eckhart calls the inner body, the feeling of aliveness within, the chi, the prana, the life force that is always flowing within.

But with the thoughts, the thinking mind, the attachment to the thoughts, the attachment to emotions that arise, do we become rigid and contracted and the chi is not able to flow. So with this, it's just an emptying out of everything. And you can even imagine any emotions or any negativity flowing right down on the body and out the soles of your feet and to the edge of the universe.

Okay, and then just gently begin to shake the right arm. And then you can begin to shake it even more. Just make sure that it's nice and loose, including the wrist, the elbow and the shoulder.

And shake it. So it's not a movement where there's effort. It's just like almost a shaking where you can just allow everything to loosen up.

And now the right foot and the right leg. So the ankle, the knee and the hip. Just allow everything to be loose.

Don't worry if you fall off balance. And now the left arm. Again, it's a constant scanning of the body to make sure everything is relaxed.

So in any Chö Gong, everything is done in the body in a relaxed way because we're wanting to have the chi flow through the body and the chi to move. And then the left leg. Scanning the leg, making sure from hip to the bottom of your feet, relaxed.

And now the whole body. So as we shake, we just allow ourselves to fully be relaxed. And it's a good idea if we can keep our feet on the floor, the heels can come up, the knees are bent.

I wouldn't jump with locked knees, so you want to bend the legs. And you can shake as gently as you like or as hard as you like. And then perhaps eventually you begin to feel the chi moving and the chi actually shaking you, your body, moving you.

So the neck is loose, the jaw is loose, everything is loose. And this shaking Chö Gong, it's actually one of my favorites because what this does, it not only unblocks any of the stagnant, contracted energy in the body, but it helps the chi to flow. So the natural life force to start flowing through the body.

You can make any sound you'd like, just a, oh, even have your tongue loose. Everything is nice and loose. So scan the body from head to toe, making sure that everything is loose.

And shake a little harder. And it's a good idea if you can do this exercise for at least 10 minutes, if you're a beginner, do it for at least 10 minutes. Because if you're not used to feeling what the inner body feels like, what this chi, this life force, this living energy feels like, this is a good exercise because you'll see at the end when we stop.

So shake a little harder. A little bit more. Now, check out what's happening in the mind because if you have this thought of, oh, this is stupid.

This is a really dumb exercise. It's actually one of the natural exercises that kids even do it. Kids jump up and down, they shake.

Animals, they'll shake. You may even notice when you go pet a dog sometimes and as you go pet the dog and when you released your hand from the dog, the dog will just shake. He's releasing that energy that has been passed.

So through from the human hand onto the animal. And you know, it just sometimes will shake it off. And the human emotions that arise, if we're identified or we resist the emotion, then it gets lodged because it's energy.

All thought, all emotions is an energy. It can get just lodged with it somewhere in the body. So just continue to shake a little harder.

Allow the, yes, just the neck to be loose, the shoulders. Forehead, everything's loose. And still focusing on the breath, keeping your attention in the body.

So you can feel, just really get into this shaking. Be in present, be in the moment. Not lost in thought, but just fully feel the body.

A little more, a little harder. And as a one Chagong teacher, I went to Chagong class. We used to start this every class, shaking, usually for about 10 minutes.

But then one day we were in a class, 15 minutes went by, it's an hour long class. 20 minutes went by, 30, 40, then 50 minutes went by. And finally we stopped the shaking.

So we only had 10 minutes to do other things. And then somebody after class said, why did we shake for so long? And he said, because I was waiting for the last one to surrender.

So fully get into this. And you'll notice after doing this, it could be done daily. Actually, I used to do this daily and it's a good practice to do daily because it gets the chi flowing.

But I forget what I was gonna say. Oh well, it's gone. Ah, remembered.

Okay, so it's nice to start with this practice for this exercise for 10 minutes. But as you get to just do it, you can even just do it for, if you're fully present while doing it, surrender as you do this. You can just do it even for one minute and it would be amazing to feel the chi flow.

So let's shake a little harder. Everyone shake us just a bit more. You can even shake with your arms up.

And if the chi starts flowing and you start feeling it and you find that the chi will want to move you, so you might want to shake in any way that you like, any way that the chi wants to move. Keep feeling the body. Everything is relaxed.

You may notice some blocked energy begin to loosen up and you can sigh it out through the mouth or whatever way that feels like the energy just needs to be released. Imagine the negative chi, the stagnant energy flowing out through the bottom of your feet to the edge of the universe. So one last good shake.

And then when you're ready, just stop and feel. Perhaps you feel the tingling, a warmth, or a numbness. This is the inner body, the chi, the prana, the life force, the feeling of aliveness within, the energy, which is your bridge, your access to stillness.

And if you'd like, you could just, if you'd like to feel what that energy feels like outside the body, because even though the chi flows in, chi extends beyond the body. Hold your hands up in front of you, palms facing in. And you just go in slowly and gently in and out with your hands.

Your hands not touching, but feel what's between the hands. Perhaps you can feel this energy, something there. And this is life, the life force, the energy that's within you, within me, within the trees and the animals, the one life that connects us all.

And then when you're ready, let's just store that energy right into the belly, into the dantian, which is about three, four finger widths below the navel and in towards the back spine. Let's just say it's in the belly. And then when you're ready, just return to bamboo tree, emptying yourself of the last moment because the last moment's gone.

And only this moment exists. So just allowing the energy of the last moment to pass through, dissolve until as always there are new forms that arise to the next moment. You're rising, which can only happen now.

So let's begin to just clear the energy field of any leftover stagnant chi that may be blocked in the body. And what I do is a clearing. So you gather the chi into your arms and just comb out your energy field.

Your fingers are pointing towards your body. And you're feeling what's between your fingertips and your body. And you're combing out the energy.

You're not touching the body, but you're just combing your energy field. And in your mind's eye, focusing it out down, the energy right out through your feet. And inhale, gathering the chi, exhale, combing.

Just staying present in the moment, in this move. You don't want to go into the future and that means even thinking about getting to the bottom of your feet, but just staying conscious, alert, aware of this. So we did the front body three times.

We'll do the side body three times. And then the back body three times. So if there's any of the two exercises, these two, the shaking and the clearing, are probably the two major ones to just sort of clear the energy field, to clear the energy of any blockages.

And then the back body, and when you're finished, return to Bamboo Tree. And just notice how you feel. The most important thing, the primary importance, is stillness.

The form, the movement, is secondary. And as we begin to feel the inner body more, we also begin to sense stillness more. Be able to sense the stillness of all this energy that's all around, that's within, and being connected and rooted to stillness, you begin to witness that this energy that is here, within, moves through you.

It's a creative life energy, life force, that wants to create and move through you, that wants to express its consciousness, expressing itself through you. And this energy is the purest life force, purest life energy. That just is.

And with this clear energy then, being connected to stillness, you'll find, whether it comes, moves up, and uses the mind through words, or through just a touch, and this energy is love. It's filled with peace. It's filled with stillness.

And this stillness is the true healer. So we can do these exercises, and there's many Qigong exercises that's used for healing, but you can still be in your mind and thinking a lot, and you may or may not get better, but really the true healer is stillness. And when you're connected to consciousness, to your God essence, we begin to realize that the form is not so important as the mind makes it out to be.

So healing happens, not only can it happen on the physical level, but most important, it happens on the spiritual level. And when we're healed spiritually, it's like it won't matter even if we're healed physically, because we realize that the physical body is not who we really are. It's the gift, the expression of consciousness, and that our consciousness is who we really are, the consciousness that was never born and never dies.

And being rooted in this consciousness, we allow the expression of consciousness to take its form in birth and in death, stillness is who we are, our true nature. And then the form of this moment, the form of this body is beautiful. It too is who we are, but not in the fullest sense.

So the practice of the bamboo tree, being hollow, so that the form of the moment, whatever is in expression, and as all forms are impermanent, will dissolve. So it too, then, you can allow by being a bamboo tree, to allow it to dissolve. Hi there, I have a friend who very suddenly recently lost his mother, and I'm watching him try to process this.

And I'm wondering if you have any words of comfort based on your insights on death and dying.

[Speaker 1] (1:50:39 - 2:06:11)

Thank you. Now dealing with death and dying, which is of course everywhere around us, although it's to a large extent hidden in our society, because society is not yet comfortable with acknowledging the pervasiveness of death and dying, without taking refuge into some kind of belief structure. I'm not saying that every belief structure, that every belief that you may have about death is wrong, but I'd like to approach death without telling you this or that, without even telling you, they are waiting for you on the other side, you're going to meet again.

I don't want to go there, but to something more, I'm not saying this won't happen, and I'm not saying it will happen, but to leave it at a more vital level that does not require some kind of story making, even if the story is true, some kind of conceptualization in your head. So to be with a fact of death, somebody close to you, or in your case, it's indirectly. So your job is to be with someone who has suffered loss.

And so you are dealing with it indirectly with this, your friend's grief. And so in your case, of course, rather than, I would recommend, rather than tell your friend some story that they are going to survive, or you will meet again, or they have moved, just be, accept what your friend feels fully, the grief that your friend feels, and your friend's job is to accept the fact of death. Now, if you are able to accept not only the fact of death, which is all around you continuously, but also the fact that whatever you feel at this moment, the sadness or the grief, say yes to both the dead body that you might see and the grief that you feel.

Bring an acceptance to that rather than thinking it shouldn't be, it should be otherwise. Many people are shocked when they encounter death in our civilization because nobody has told them, not really, that everybody around them is going to die. They know it as some abstract fact at the back of their heads.

They know that, yes, they're going to die. And it's another abstract fact in the back of your mind is that I'm going to die too, but you don't really believe it until perhaps somebody very close to you dies, and then it begins to dawn on you that I'm going to die too. And then their mind will push that out of the way again.

As you may know, in some Buddhist countries, the monks regularly visit the morgue where they keep the dead bodies on display, and they sit there for a few hours at a time and meditate on death. They meditate on the fact of impermanence of the physical form, which the Western world has hardly heard of. Impermanence of the physical form can't be.

Death is a travesty, it shouldn't be happening. So they contemplate the impermanence, or if you go to India where soon after death, they take the dead body and they burn it. And everybody watches.

To a Westerner, that is, oh, this is dreadful. Well, that's what it is. That's what happens to the physical form.

If one had lived with the, as in ancient older cultures, they lived in closer proximity to the fact of death, and therefore had greater acceptance of the naturalness of death, for us, it's more difficult. But we need to learn that to realize that the physical form is impermanent. And if you can accept a great loss, and death is one of the greatest losses of death of somebody close to you, if a great loss comes into your life, and if you can be in a state of non-resistance when this dear person that has been in your life for so many years suddenly disappears and leaves behind this emptiness, you can be in a state of non-resistance to that, and even non-resistance to whatever you feel.

If you feel grief, allow yourself to feel the grief. You can be the awareness or the space for that. Then you go beyond unhappiness.

You may still feel grief, but you go into a state of deep inner peace, particularly in the face of death. Whenever something, great loss comes into your life, it leaves behind a space, an emptiness. Let's imagine it could happen to anybody.

Maybe this body or that body suddenly goes plop, and suddenly there's an empty chair where before there was a body. It's really, this is how it is. If you could see how all pervasive death is, if you imagine, I like to use the analogy of a soap bubble.

If you imagine every body here is a soap bubble, and any of the soap bubbles could go pop at any moment, and you know what happens to a soap bubble when it goes pop, there's nothing left, just a little drop. That's strange, because a minute ago there was something there, and a minute later, there's nothing there. Now, if you are totally attached to the form of the soap bubble, then it's dreadful, because that was, but the essence of the soap bubble wasn't the form of the soap bubble, because that was insignificant.

The essence of the soap bubble was the space in the soap bubble. And so, nothing is really lost. And in fact, I sometimes like to use the expression, a hole appears in the fabric of your existence when great loss suddenly happens.

So there's a fabric, everything is in place. You have a house, and you have your relationships, and you have your job, and you have this and that. It's all in place, but it won't be in place for long, because sooner or later, a little thing is going to, and a big hole, I'm now using a different analogy, a big hole happens in the, or a small hole.

My investments, small hole, small loss. Somebody close to me dies, huge loss. Some kind of loss, loss means there was, where there was something, there's now nothing.

Where there was somebody, there's now nobody. And that's where the pain comes from, is the emptiness. I experienced it acutely, many years ago, I was visiting my mother when my stepfather died, and he was always sitting in the same chair, many years.

And so I arrived at my mother's place, and I had the strangest experience when I saw the empty chair. He had always been in it, and suddenly, he was gone. It was just an empty space.

There was nobody sitting in the chair. Just an empty space. And that was actually a deep realization of the formless.

The formless dimension comes into your life when a form in your life disappears. And if you can not, if you can be with it, not resist it internally, it becomes transformed into a spiritual deepening, and you get to a very deep place within yourself. And in that very deep place within yourself, that is the formless essence of all life, and that's the grace that's hiding behind every loss and every death, that it leaves behind formlessness.

The form disappears, and for a moment, you're aware of the formless. And that is the spiritual, when you cannot, if you don't resist it, but allow it, that great deepening happens. And suddenly, you go so deep that you realize that death is not ultimately real.

Without formulating any more theories, it's a deep unknowing that the essence of life is formless. The essence of who you are is formless. It was, what was it, Leonard Cohen, Singer?

There's a song, I believe, that goes, there is a crack, a crack in everything. That's how the light gets through. And of course, there's very deep truth.

There's a crack in everything, which really means every situation, eventually you'll find there's a crack in it, which where the form begins to collapse. Any structure, any situation, and that's where the light comes through. And that's what you learn, and that's what the Buddhist monks learn when they go to the morgue.

They become at home with that fact. So there is even behind, death is not the most dreadful thing. There's actually beauty hiding behind it.

So great opportunity, wait for the next crack to appear in your life, it may be small, or it may be large, and then see that there's grace hiding there, and the light, which is the formlessness, the formless, shines through. And this is why some people have gone, even people who have had never any spiritual training or any spiritual teaching, may not have read any spiritual book, it has happened occasionally that some people who experienced deep loss in their lives became transformed and suddenly became awake through their loss. And this is, I believe, how the first spiritual teachers, thousands of years ago, it happened to them, they must have had deep loss in their life, and through the deep loss and acceptance, because they couldn't resist any longer, it was too painful, they accepted, and suddenly through the opening, the formless, they lost everything.

The light comes through, the formless essence of all life, and you are in touch with that suddenly, you are that. And from there you know that death is not ultimately real, just as the physical form is not ultimately real, it's a little bit, every physical form is a little bit dreamlike, a dreamlike temporary appearance. But there's something there that is real, but that has no form and it cannot really be named.

That's why the Buddha calls it emptiness, so that you can't form some image around it. It's, of course, very clever, because no matter how hard you try, emptiness is the one word that you can't form an image around it or believe in it. Any other word that you use, well, I use sometimes formlessness, that's pretty hard too, but emptiness is even better, perhaps.

And of course, the Western people, Western scholars say Buddhism is life-denying, because they don't understand in what sense, in what deep sense the word emptiness is used in Buddhism. So they say it's life-denying. And then if you ask them, then why is the Buddha smiling?

They say, oh, I don't know. If Buddhism is life-denying, what is there to smile about? But the Buddha is quite blissful, but he's denying life.

There must be something wrong here. It's not, it's actually supremely life-affirming, but it's not equating life with the forms of life. It's going to the essence of life, the unmanifested, timeless essence that lives through each form, appears as each form, and then disappears again as that form.

The one consciousness, the one life, and death is an opportunity to experience that, to be that, to go into that.

[Speaker 4] (2:06:17 - 2:06:46)

The hardest word that I'm having trouble with right now is responsibility. And I have a hunch that most of the things that I consider responsibility are just my ego telling me things I have to do. But I also, when I think about the future of the earth and human evolution and stuff like that, sometimes I have big emotions of responsibility.

So I'm just curious. Thank you. About the right relationship to the word responsibility.

Okay, thank you.

[Speaker 1] (2:06:54 - 2:14:30)

Yeah, it's a strange word. It has been pointed out that if you look at the word, it seems to be talking about the ability to respond. So to take responsibility for, what is it that you can take responsibility for primarily?

It's taking responsibility for your state of consciousness, which determines what kind of world you create. Because you are humanity. Humanity is an abstract concept, doesn't exist.

Humanity is the human being. You are humanity. So for humanity to take responsibility, you need to take primarily responsibility for your state of consciousness, because only a diseased or dysfunctional state of consciousness produces a diseased and dysfunctional world out there.

By world, I mean the human-made world that has been imposed on what's already there, the planet, which is potentially, of course, a paradise. The planet, pristine, unbelievable jewel. The being of great intelligence.

We are not separate from it, but the being is going through a transitional process. And every transitional process is critical. It may or may not work, in which case the being will go some other way.

But your state of consciousness determines what kind of world you create, what kind of action you take, and what consequences your actions have. So here, this is why my main work is to address the cause of dysfunction, which lies in the human mind. The dysfunction of the human mind, or as it is sometimes called in Zen, the sickness of the human mind.

So, as I see it, and I don't think anybody who reads history can doubt it, there is a deep-seated dysfunction in humans, has been there for thousands of years. And if there's no shift in that, then the dysfunction will destroy us. It probably won't destroy the planet because the planet has enormous resources, but it will take a while, would take a while for the planet to recover.

All you have to do then is primarily take responsibility for your state of consciousness now. Now. And this is what the entire teaching really is about.

What is my state of consciousness at this moment? Am I generating disturbance? Am I generating negativity?

Am I generating conflict and suffering for myself and others? Am I generating inner pollution? Am I polluting my beautiful, the beautiful being that I am with continuous absurd movements of thought producing negative emotions, producing an entire entity that is illusory that I call the me.

So to take responsibility, it needs to be just, of course, an awakening where you can say, okay, I will take responsibility now. Some people don't know that there is even the possibility of taking responsibility. That's why you are so important.

Anybody who realizes it, you are the beginning of the transformed world. I don't know who first coined the famous phrase. You hear it quite often these days.

You need to be the change, that the change that you want to see out there, you need to embody that. And that's not primarily what you do. There's something more primary than what you do.

It's who you are. Who you are is your state of consciousness. Whatever you do flows out of that.

So that's the primary is that. So the change is the transformed state of consciousness. Now, that is your responsibility.

Anybody, once you've seen that, that's your responsibility. Now you know it. People who are not yet at that level, don't realize it, and that's fine.

You can't expect the whole world already to be at that stage. It's enough for you to take responsibility, knowing there's still a few millions others who don't know that they can take responsibility because they live in such unconsciousness that they see the entire evil in others. What they see as evil, it's all in them.

And they make half the world into their enemy. It's all out there. That's fine.

Only those are required to take responsibility who are up to it. But even those who are totally unconscious still, on the one hand, they don't know what they're doing. Obviously, as Jesus said on the cross, they know not what they do.

In other words, they are in the grip of unconscious forces, or unconscious mental, emotional streams. They don't know what they do. They cannot be held responsible.

And people say, well, they should be held responsible. No, they can't, but they don't know what they do. However, the fact that they are not responsible because they can't be responsible does not mean that they do not suffer the consequences of their unconsciousness.

So they generate suffering. And eventually, suffering is the fire in which the ego gets burned up, the collective ego and the personal ego. That's the long way, the slow way, the painful way.

And then there is a shortcut, which is any spiritual teaching, it cuts through that, the painful way, the long way of waking up, more and more suffering. The planet might not endure such a long learning process for humanity. So if the learning process of humanity does not become shortened, it is doubtful that the planet can allow humanity to learn through further suffering for another 500 years, or even 200 years, or even 100 years.

So that's, you're responsible for all that.

[Speaker 3] (2:14:38 - 2:15:28)

I don't know how you'd label this question. Is this on? Okay.

I've met some people, or had conversations with people who are going through what might be called a crisis of awakening. And it seems like they have, their identification with self is mostly fallen away. And they're in a kind of terror.

And they feel like they're going insane. And I kind of, I mean, I'm not there myself, but I've had those times when it's like giving up all control over everything feels kind of scary. And I just wondered if you could speak to that.

[Speaker 1] (2:15:29 - 2:35:37)

Okay, thank you. Yes, I've also encountered people like that. The mind feels suddenly scared.

The image really is the ego is still there to some extent, and it becomes a little panicky. I'm not in control anymore. But there is a place, so one can lose oneself in that, but I would advise a person like that to look for a place that is not confused inside, a place that is not scared.

Many people say they're confused or scared, but really the way out of it is really always the fuller acknowledgement of the present moment. Because the rest of it, all that confusion and feeling scared is you're not in the present moment, you're in your mind again. And your mind is saying, oh, my life is falling apart.

I have to start worrying again, because otherwise it's all going to fall apart. So once you realize that you've moved out, the realization needs to be there of that, okay, I'm lost in the mind again. Okay, you're not lost, because you know that you're lost.

The moment you realize it's happening, for a while you may not realize it's happening, you're so identified with your panicky thoughts that you're completely in them, you don't even know what is happening to you. And then time may pass while you're completely in your thoughts, and you're just, oh, I think I'm going mad. I just don't know, I can't figure things out anymore.

I don't, they're not, I can't work things out. Don't know about, the mind says you should have an opinion about everybody, and I don't anymore. You shouldn't have an opinion about every situation you're in in your life.

I don't know what to think about my life anymore. That's dreadful, that's the mind. And of course, the opposite is true.

If you don't know what to think about your life anymore, then you're beginning to wake up and realize there's no such thing as your life. There's only life. Your life is a mental construct.

It's a story, the story of me. So, it's always the moment you realize it's happening, or if you're trying to help somebody, bring your attention to the present moment. This is the exit point out of confusion.

You can't be confused when your attention moves into the present moment, because the present moment is always simple. There's always a simplicity about it. The complexity is in the mind structures, the unobserved mind of the ego.

So simply take your attention into the present moment, and then confusion suddenly dissolves, dissolves, because the mind says, I need to work something out, I need to understand something. No, you don't. All you need to do is respond to this moment.

Either this moment may require action or it may not require action. Just be there for this moment. And then it becomes simple.

You cannot do more than one thing at a time, for example, in this moment. No matter how much you have to do, you can only do one thing. Well, you can do two things, but it gets hard.

Basically, you have to do one thing at a time and give it your attention, or do nothing and bring attention to sense perceptions. Look around and get a sense of what this moment feels, what it is, what does it mean, this moment? First of all, it means what you see and perceive, because that's this moment.

And that's already a revelation because you might have been so trapped in your mind that you were completely unaware of your surroundings. And you didn't realize there was a beautiful tree there and there were clouds there. You didn't realize that there's a sound of the wind outside.

You didn't realize that you are breathing in the air. You didn't realize that all those things around you are vitally alive. You didn't realize it because you were stuck in your head, thinking about your problems.

And so the beginning of the present moment is that, oh, and then you can go a little deeper. Then you can experience the present moment as the energy field in your body, as the aliveness in your body. Oh, and then you can go even deeper and experience the present moment as the awareness of all this, rather than the present moment isn't the flower as such.

The flower appears in the present moment, but essentially what the present moment is, it's the consciousness in which you see the flower. Otherwise there would be no flower. Remove the consciousness, I don't know what's left.

No flower. You all know the famous saying, the tree in the forest, if a tree falls in the forest and there's nobody there to hear it, does it make a noise? And of course it doesn't, because noise implies not only a sensory organ, it also applies a consciousness that's perceiving through the sensory organ that brings about what we call noise.

And without that, there's no noise. And you can even follow that up and ask other similar questions. But what I'm pointing to is the present moment in essence is not the things, the things appear in the space of the present moment.

It's always present moment. You can't get out of that. Your life is always one with now.

Your life and now are one. If you doubt that, then let me know one day when you can say, my life is not now. Or maybe you remember when it wasn't now, not possible.

Life and now is synonymous. Life is now, now is life. But the mind says, yeah, but what does that mean?

Isn't that just words? No, it's more than words. The words are pointing to a realization.

And that is whatever appears has to appear in the present moment, but in itself is not the present moment. It is a form that appears in the space of now. Everybody in this room or wherever the body is, is a form that appears in the space of now.

Whatever happens, whatever thought comes, whatever emotion is felt is a form that appears in the space of now. And that now is consciousness, timeless, ever present. You are that, I am that.

So that's really what the present moment is. So ultimately it's yourself, it's consciousness and you are consciousness. So bringing attention to the now takes people out of confusion.

The now begins with sense perceptions. So encourage people or do it to yourself. If you find you become lost in your mind, come into your senses first, touch something, whatever, any surface, feel it, then look.

Already confusion subsides because your attention gets away from thinking into the sense, the act of perception. Then listen, even less and less confusion. What is there to confused about right here?

Nothing. Nothing. Then breathing.

And breathing takes attention into the inner body. Alive, it's alive. Where's the confusion?

It's gone. You stopped giving attention to your thoughts, the confusion is gone. And then you go even deeper into just the spaciousness of stillness.

No confusion in there. And then it's fine. Every time that happens, use that process of reorientation of focus of your consciousness into now.

So this is the advice you can give and you do it with people when they come to you in a state of confusion, or to say, okay, sit there, okay. Okay, look around, look, touch something, look at this. Listen to the rain, listen to the wind, listen to the birds, listen to the car.

Be there as the presence for it. Confusion can end very quickly that way. Present moment is the exit point.

Out of confusion is the point of exit out of your mind. It's always there. You just have to acknowledge it.

So, and when it happens again, same process. No more confusion. It's a shift for people.

You get drawn back into the old consciousness and step out again. That's why we call the awakening process. For most people, it is a, we are transitional.

Most of the people who are going through this, we are transitional beings from, it's a very significant and incredible thing, from one way of being, one state of consciousness that's been there for thousands and thousands of years to a different state of consciousness. And so we live, many people live in two worlds and two states, still shifting. And gradually, awareness takes over from continuous thinking.

And then it's all different. It's like, I sometimes call it as you, as I say, at the end of the new earth, a new species is emerging on the planet. One could almost say that we used to look the same, but your inner state is so different from the normal insane state that it's like a completely new species.

And yet it's already, it's already arising in you. It's not something that you need to arrive at some future point. And I want to become a new species.

It's already arising. From an anonymous questioner. I have read that as long as we are in a body, we have a shadow.

Is this true for you? What is your shadow? Oh.

Let me think. What is your shadow? Do you have a shadow?

Okay. The answer is, part one of the answer is yes. Part two of the answer is, if you ask anybody if they have a shadow and they say no, then you know that they have a shadow.

And if they say yes, they don't. Because shadow, which is just a way, it's a Jungian term, which I don't normally use, but what it means is an area of unconsciousness that you're not aware of, because if you're aware of it, it's no longer unconscious, and it's not really a shadow. So if it's an area of unconsciousness in your life, and if it's truly a shadow or an area of unconsciousness, then, of course, you won't know it.

You might know there's a certain behavior pattern, but you will not recognize it as an area of unconsciousness. You might say, of course I get furious every time somebody mentions this or that, because, and you'll have some justification, it's not recognized as an unconscious reactive pattern. Or you might be totally unconscious of it and say, I'm never angry.

Why do you accuse me of always being angry? So it's right there, but you don't know it, you deny it. So the shadow then, anybody who says no, they probably have one.

If they say yes, then they have seen that there are still certain areas where there's certain behavior patterns still operating. Of course they are, because as long as somebody has a body, certain patterns operate, certain behavior patterns. You might, well, idiosyncrasies, ways of doing things.

So if you're aware that that's there, then that's all that it is. It's not a totally conscious thing. It's not a shadow as such.

We can talk also in terms of ego. You have, if you're aware of certain patterns in you that originated from ego, and they still operate to some extent, although you live mostly in awareness, sometimes there's a momentum behind certain behavior patterns, like they're not being energized anymore, but it's still there. And so if you're aware of it, it's not really the ego anymore.

Ego implies unobserved mind. Ego implies you don't know it's the ego. There's no awareness, there's just the conditioned mind doing its thing, acting out.

The moment you bring awareness to it, there's a light on it. So if the light shines, it's shining on the shadow, it's not a shadow. Shadow means there's an absence of light, and light means consciousness.

So ego is no longer ego when you know there's ego. It's only truly speaking ego when you don't know it, and there's unconsciousness. Short question here.

Do you experience the earth as Gaia, an entity with her own consciousness? Yes, of course, just as the one consciousness animates this physical form, the one consciousness animates also the earth as a living, intelligent being. Not only the earth, the sun also.

The sun, there's far more both to the earth and to the sun than we realize. The sun is the life-giving principle in the manifested. It's almost in the manifested, sense-perceived world, the sun is the closest we can get to what we could call the divine, because it's a continuous outpouring of energy, continuous giving, millions and millions of years, a vast outpouring of energy, and we think it's just a physical process, like in our narrow interpretations, we say that it's a huge atomic reactor or whatever, but there's far more to the sun than that.

It's a living being of great intelligence, and so is the earth. So let's see what the earth is going to do with the little microbes that are crawling around its surface. What would you do if, what does the body do if viruses or bacteria invade it to get rid of them?

It raises the temperature, it gets a fever. The earth could do any number of things. The earth has barely noticed that humans are here because its time, constant time is very different.

Humans have been here for a very short time. The earth is just beginning to notice that the humans have arrived here and are not doing much good now. So, and then the intelligence that governs earth life, which is no more than, it's the one consciousness moving through that form of earth, can do many things.

It could get rid of most humans without any violence. For example, the simple thing, for example, of reducing fertility in humans so that neither men nor, either in men or women or both, and then within 100 years, humanity would shrink to very little. If the earth wanted to do it, it can do many things to get rid of humans if it needed to get rid of humans.

But we haven't reached that stage yet. We would, if there's no change in consciousness, eventually we will reach a stage where the earth will say, okay, we'll have to get rid of this life form. And there's no problem, it can do that easily.

But we have not yet reached that stage. There's still the possibility of something very different happening, which will not end in the elimination of humans, but will be a flowering of consciousness, the consciousness of the earth through the humans.

[Speaker 4] (2:35:43 - 2:37:10)

For the past several years, I've been making a concerted effort to live a, especially sort of conscious, present, spiritual path, and doing yoga and meditation and retreats and that sort of thing. And now when I hear people talk about spiritual stuff, I kind of cringe. It's like, I feel like there's this spiritual thing that's like separate, separate from this, this special dimension.

At first it was really great, because I was meditating like 10 hours in a weekend and I could tell everybody how cool it was and how special and unique I felt, practicing this special spiritual life. And now I just, I listen to what you say and other people say, and I just want to hear about like how I'm no one. And I mean that sincerely in being in this, but just not having to, even though I am conscious, all these words that just seem to get in the way a lot of the time.

I mean, they're concepts and everything. But I just, I hear the, I feel the sweetness of not, just really not having to be this special, unique, spiritual person on top of being a regular person. It's like this double-decker sandwich that I got to carry around and I'm, and it's getting stale.

And I don't know. I don't know if there's a question in there, but maybe you could speak to that.

[Speaker 1] (2:37:10 - 2:38:12)

Thank you. Yes. Okay, thanks.

Well, you overdid it a little bit with your spiritual practice. And hence the reaction now, because you have to get back to some normality after all that specialness over that, both your spiritual practice, where you thought of yourself as special and your practice as special. You went quite far to an extreme and you're now experiencing the reaction to that extreme.

And that's good. In other words, you don't want to hear about anything spiritual anymore. I've had it, right?

So you overdid it. Now there's a reaction. Don't mention to me anything spiritual anymore, you say.

But of course, you know, the famous expression, what is it? The baby in the bath water. Don't throw out your baby with the bath water.

It's all spiritual.

[Speaker 4] (2:38:12 - 2:38:13)

It's all spiritual.

[Speaker 1] (2:38:13 - 3:00:14)

It's so separate. So first you went to that extreme. Now you go to an extreme of reaction and eventually you end up in the middle where every moment is spiritual as it is.

There's nothing special. Spirit is not separate from daily existence. So that's, when we say spiritual, we are not referring to some realm out there that is to be achieved at some point where you become more special than you are now.

It's not going to happen. It's here and now. We're going deeper into the here and now.

That's spiritual. Now you are a little bit tired of these words because you went too far to that extreme. So you have to realize, if you're a little bit perhaps like a Christian who was once very religious and suddenly got fed up and then occasionally I have people in talks who are ex-Christians.

And the moment I say, occasionally I say Jesus said, they go, oh, don't talk to me about anything. It's remotely Christian. I don't want to hear that.

I've had all that. So they don't realize because of course they had a somewhat distorted view of what the whole thing was about. So they didn't, but they can't stand the terms anymore.

And that's fine. It's a phase. You will come through that.

Maybe it's happening already. It's the ordinariness. Spiritual means the more spiritual you are, the more ordinary you are, the more non-special you are.

And again, for the ego, that means, okay, I have to become more non-special. How do I become ordinary? Okay, I need somebody to teach me to be ordinary.

So I understand your dilemma and perhaps you understand it also. And so this, nothing special, chopping wood, carrying water, as Zen defines spirituality ultimately, what is the spiritual life? Chopping wood, carrying water, which is the kind of thing you do in Zen monasteries.

It's daily doing, in my case, it's buying some food in the store, going to have a cup of coffee, taking the dog for a walk in the forest, listening to the BBC World News, having a glass of wine occasionally with a meal, watching a movie, nothing extraordinary. And so quite an ordinary existence. And so it's hiding in there, the spirituality is in there, it's not away from there, just this.

And so I'm sorry about these words that we use, but language is limited, so we have to use certain words. And perhaps the emotion around these words then eventually is going to go and they become neutral again and you can use them for what they are, which is simply useful pointers no more. Thank you.

Sometimes when I hear you talk about presence, it seems like you're describing a state in which there's no mental or emotional content and yet I experience emotions in presence, perhaps sadness when something happens that is difficult for another person or at the news of the death of someone I love and I experience that emotion happening in present time. Isn't it possible for emotional experiences to arise in presence? Yes, you can have presence while the emotions are happening or even while thoughts are happening.

It means you're not totally lost in, totally identified with, totally drawn into the emotion or the thought. There is in the background a space of awareness that in the foreground there may be anger, sadness, and you're not totally lost in it. There's a space for it that you still sense and you are essentially not the emotion.

You're the awareness behind the emotion. You know that this emotion is there. The same thing can happen when the mind is active.

You can talk and the mind can completely take over and you become lost in your mind in a stream, either a stream of thinking or a stream of speaking. You can observe it. If you can't yet observe the mind stream in yourself, you can occasionally just quietly observe people talking to each other and especially people who are having a discussion because when you're having a usually discussion or disagreeing about something, there is not only the mind, there's also an emotion that goes with the mind stream.

That's the disagreement. Why is there an emotion when people are having a discussion and they disagree? Why is there an emotion that goes with their mental positions?

Well, because they're identified with a mental position. That identify means their sense of self has become one with the thought. The consciousness, the I, has identified with the form rather than realizing that it is formless in essence.

It has lost that knowledge. So consciousness is in a dreamlike state, I could say. Consciousness identifies with I, with the form, and so there is a self-identification with a mental position or thought which means anybody who questions or doubts or contradicts this mental position or thought is unconsciously regarded by the self-identified thought structure which you have become.

The ego is part of ego. Anybody who disagrees, contradicts, doubts, is unconsciously, not in so many words, but unconsciously regarded as an enemy because you are threatening, it's a delusion, but there's an unconscious belief that the other person is threatening my very being because the person is threatening my mental position with which I have identified. So you can, it's a very deeply unconscious process and it requires quite an alertness to see it in the moment that it happens in yourself.

But perhaps next time somebody comes to you and you're having a kind of disagreement about something and suddenly you can feel an influx as you defend your position or contradict the other person or justify something, feel the emotion that flows into what you say. It will be some kind of either aggressive or defensive emotion that goes with it, either some fear or some aggression. If you can be aware of that at that moment and realize what is happening that you have identified with something in your mind believing that that is you, believing your very existence is threatened by somebody contradicting you, it's unconscious.

That's why people get aggressive and negative energy flows the moment somebody contradicts you. It just means somebody has a different opinion, but the ego can't allow a different opinion because the ego feels its existence is threatened by a different opinion because ego's identification with thought and a mental position. This is on a personal level, this can become an entire war between nations, the similar pattern.

So you can, at first you can see it, let's say you're observing two people having a discussion and of course, let's say you are not involved, then it's easier for you to see that process at work and realize that usually both of them become drawn into a very negative confrontation simply because they hold different opinions, but for them, it's more than an opinion, it's their very self that's threatened.

It's an illusion, but that's how it is perceived. So it's very fundamental and very basic to the huge amount of conflict that arises in human interactions. And it's basically so simple that it's just quite incomprehensible that people haven't realized by now that this is how it works.

And so, but the pattern is so deep seated that even people who are engaged in spiritual work for years still get drawn into that when their mental position is threatened. No matter how much spirituality, whoom, there they are, defending their very existence. Because the pattern is very deep.

So alertness is required. If you don't want to carry on in that way for the rest of your life and be part of that, madness ultimately, dysfunction ultimately because it creates continuous conflict and negative feelings and so on and interferes with the true relationship with another human being. Be aware in yourself of this process when and as it happens.

And for that, you have to wait until the moment comes when somebody contradicts you or says, no, you're not right, or I don't agree or whatever they say. And then you have to be alert. What is it that comes up and wants to defeat the other or protect itself?

So that is a very vital thing, but presence is required. The pattern is deep, very deep seated. Without the presence, each time, every time it will take you over and you'll be lost.

So alertness. I can't remember what the question was, but this is vital. Ah, yes.

Sometimes when I hear you talk about presence, it seems like you're describing a state in which there's no mental or emotional content and yet I experience emotions in presence. So we've been talking now just about experiencing the absence of presence and there's a mental, emotional stream that comes up. You can do it to yourself also.

You can have a discussion with yourself. You can doubt yourself. You can have an argument with yourself.

You can have one part of your mind accusing another part of your mind of being lazy, for example, or of being not good enough. And then you have to have a similar argument with one part of you. The mind splits itself in two and says, you should know better by now.

You should do better. Why did you do this? Well, I just couldn't help it.

No presence. So yes, there can be presence when there are thoughts and emotions. And it is vital that there should be presence in the background, which means just you're aware that certain emotions are coming through you and you're not the emotion, but you're the awareness.

You're aware that certain thoughts are there. You're aware that you have an opinion. You're aware that you're voicing your opinion.

That's fine, but you are not in the opinion. Your sense of self isn't in the opinion. Your sense of self is the awareness.

And then you can express an opinion and you can say, the universe is in essence consciousness. And then the other person says, that's a load of rubbish or whatever they say, mumbo jumbo. You are talking mumbo jumbo.

Where's the, show me the consciousness or whatever the flat footed materialist is saying to you. And then observe, see whether you actually know that you, the universe, which means you ultimately comes down to you as this is where you experience the universe as yourself. Do you know that the universe is consciousness or do you just believe that the universe at that moment are you the consciousness or are you the belief that you are conscious?

If you are the belief and you are the thought and then you'll be defending yourself. So you'll be shouting back at the other person that they are narrow minded bigots. Or there is an awareness in the background and then you say the universe is consciousness and the other person says, that's a load of rubbish.

Then you say, well, I'm sure in your perception that the universe is not consciousness and that's fine. Why should you believe that if that's not within your reality, fine, you're entitled to believing that the universe is a soup of chemicals. That's fine, that's your reality.

It's perfectly, I'm perfectly comfortable to allow you your reality of living in a soup of chemicals or whatever atoms floating around, whatever it is or the gray matter of the brain producing the illusion of consciousness or whatever, it's fine. No defensiveness anymore and no negative feelings. This is why I liked the, when Obama said you don't need to be disagreeable to disagree, you don't need to become disagreeable when you disagree.

The deeper implication is you're not identified with your mental position. And he couldn't say that because nobody would understand what he's talking about. So, well, only some people would understand.

There's awareness in the background. So presence or awareness is there while things happen in the foreground. The foreground can be your thoughts.

The foreground can be your emotions. The foreground can be whatever is happening around you. And so the perceptions of whatever is happening outside, there's also, you're not perceiving this through the screen of concepts or thoughts.

You're perceiving through the, you are the awareness, not the thoughts. And even if a thought comes and says, that person looks weird, then you just have, you realize it's just a thought in your head. And when you're finally communicating with that person, you can still be the awareness and communicate as awareness rather than communicate as if the thought, this person is weird, were the reality.

You realize it's just a thought that came into the head and you don't impose the thought on the person and then relate to that person as if it were true. And you say, and then suddenly you're talking to this weird person. What are you going to, everything, it'll distort everything.

Or you want something, but the thought says, this person could be helpful to me or whatever the ego says. That's a thought, be there as the spacious presence. Now the question is, yes, of course there can be presence while thoughts happen or emotions happen, including sadness or anger.

But the questioner asks, it seems like you're describing a state in which there's no mental or emotional content. There's also the possibility of presence becoming so intensified at times that all thoughts and emotions become obliterated. This is very different from suppressing emotions or thoughts.

It's simply that the presence that arises becomes so intense that they're just thoughts or emotions don't arise. And usually it could happen in a limit situation as existentialist philosophers call it, when you're in a life or death situation, it could happen that presence sometimes can become so intense or it can become, for no reason at all, it can happen. And you're simply sitting in your room and suddenly there's no thought whatsoever.

There's no emotion, there's just an intense aliveness. It's not you haven't deadened yourself because that is sometimes people believe if you have no emotion, you're dead. You haven't deadened yourself, there's an intense aliveness, a different kind of aliveness than the emotion, a vibrantly alive field of intense consciousness.

So that can arise sometimes and it's beautiful. I sometimes spend periods of time without thought and without emotion and it's beautiful. Nature, walking around nature or with nothing particular to think about, why think?

Or sitting in a cafe, drinking a cup of coffee, why think? Be, just be the alert presence. So you have the presence can be there without thought and emotion at times that will happen or presence can be there as a background to whatever emotions or thoughts are there.

So, and presence can be lost completely in which case all you have is thoughts and emotions and you will believe that you are the thought and the emotion, that's the unconscious state. So for us, it's important to be there as the emotions happen and I suggest you work particularly with people, talking to people, exchange of opinions and viewpoints, observing aggression, observing defensiveness, observing negativity flowing into just because somebody has not the same opinion that you have. And then don't condemn yourself and say, oh, I shouldn't have, I shouldn't be feeling this.

No, just again, observe that, observe that. Suddenly you've become angry with this person and instead of saying, oh dear, that's, I failed miserably in my spiritual practice. No, just say, okay, I just, just noticing that.

You're no longer in it, you're already out of it when you notice it. So be compassionate with yourself. It's just, but the important thing is you're aware.

So we all know the famous joke about the person when you tell the person, why are you so angry? The person says, I am not angry. And that's of course a typical example of somebody who doesn't know, has absolutely no awareness.

In the middle of anger denies that there's anger.

[Speaker 2] (3:00:16 - 3:04:45)

You can have a moment of silence, which is, I recommend that you bring space for that into your life, is to have that silence, just to sit silently, to return home within yourself. And love is space, find that space and let the love flow through. If you're full of thoughts and ideas and expectations and imagination of what your relationship should be like, there's no space, not only externally between the other and yourself, but there's no space internally.

I like to use this analogy and I've often used it of a bamboo flute. And if you can imagine, use the image of the flute. And yes, so there's the form, just as we have a form.

But the most important aspect of the flute is the whole, is the whole in the flute, in which then life's breath, when life wants to create music, it blows into this beautiful form. And without that whole, it couldn't create the music, so it creates beautiful music. But if we, so here we have the form, ourselves, our minds.

Every thought that we have, every idea, expectation, opinion, judgment, that we identify with. And we say that every thought and idea, et cetera, is a being and we begin to fill with every thought, every identification that we have as this being into the flute hole.

And then life, which wants to create this beautiful music through us, we blow into the flute and we go, and there's absolutely no sound that come out, no music that can be created through this, because the hole is filled with beings.

Oh, this is where I say that most of us human beings are full of beings. And our spiritual journey is our spiritual awakening. The process is to empty out the beings.

All our identifications, so empty out the hole that you are, the emptiness that you are, because you're a nothingness, even physicists have proved we're 99% empty space. And it's only the idea that we hold so solidly and believe in, and then we defend, which creates conflict, not only internally, but a conflict with others in our relationships, between different so-called cultures, because we're full of beings. So our job is to be empty, be the hole in the flute, in which life's breath breathes through.

That's from, is it Rumi? No, not Rumi, which? Hafiz, of course.

Yeah, thank you.

[Speaker 1] (3:04:59 - 4:25:59)

So as we sit here, I'd like to put a little question mark into your mind. And I'd like you to ask yourself whether at this moment you're thinking. So you will know the answer.

And try it again. I'll stop speaking for a few seconds. And just be alert inside yourself to find out whether you're thinking, because usually you don't even know that you're thinking.

You're just, you are the thinking. So there's no outside thing that knows that you are thinking. You are just the thinking, you become the thinking, the thinker, and the thinker is the person.

And to step out of the person, you have to experience that there is a dimension in you where the person is not, but something deeper is there. That's what we want to explore. So again, a moment of stillness.

In the power of now, I talk about a mouse, sorry, a cat watching a mouse hole. Now, if you've ever watched a cat watching a mouse hole, then you will have noticed that the cat could spend a long time there, being extremely alert and just watching in the same way that my dog watches a treat when I put it down and say, not yet. And then the dog goes.

And so the cat watches the mouse hole, is in a state of complete attention. So one spiritual master, I believe it was a Sufi master, said his teacher had been a cat. When he was asked who had been his spiritual teacher, he said, a cat, how is that?

And he said, I watched a cat watching a mouse hole. And by watching a cat watching a mouse hole, I realized, I awakened. Because by watching a cat, he entered a state of alert attention in which there's no thinking, like now.

Just that. There's no, so just a short moment, but it's not matter how long. It's a wonderful thing to realize that you can not think.

It's a wonderful thing to realize that you are still there when you're not thinking. As Oprah said, when we started for the first time with a moment of silence, and we started to talk again, she said, okay, I'm still here. I just checked in.

I'm still alive. I'm still here. I haven't disappeared.

One more time. Be alert. You need to be alert to know whether you're thinking or not.

So there's an alertness, like a cat, and there may be thinking or there may not be thinking. There may just be the alertness. I also mentioned in The Power of Now that another question you can ask yourself is, what's my next thought going to be?

I'm going to just watch out, see what the next thought is that's going to come into my mind. If you're very alert, it'll be quite a while before the next thought comes, but the moment the degree of alertness decreases, thoughts come flooding back in. Interesting experiments you can do with yourself and your mind.

Now, from the point of view of the usual thinking mind, the realization that there is a dimension in you where thinking either does not happen at all or becomes unimportant. To the thinking mind, that is either a threat or completely uninteresting because what could be less interesting than not thinking? So from the point of view of the thinking mind, the state of consciousness in which there is no thinking is either a threat, oh, I don't want to go there, I'm going to disappear.

But of course, Oprah didn't disappear after the stillness. I'm still there, I'm still alive. And then when she said that, I said, perhaps you're even more alive now.

And that is pointing to something. There is an intensification of aliveness when you begin to enter that, let's call it, dimension in yourself. The dimension in which compulsive thinking doesn't operate anymore.

But you have to be careful because you could easily, because it's, okay, what we're doing here is we rise above thinking. We become so alert that thinking either doesn't happen or is seen as unimportant. From there, you can easily suddenly drop, ooh, through thinking to below thought.

In other words, you go to hot sleep. So when you stop thinking, there's the alertness. Here's the thinking level.

That's the normal level for most human beings while they are awake and even when they dream, they're still going on. Here's the thinking level. Underneath the thinking level, there's consciousness.

Above the thinking level, there's consciousness. And even within thinking, there's consciousness. Thinking is an expression of consciousness, but there are infinite varieties of manifestations or expressions of consciousness.

This flower is an expression of consciousness taking on the form, this beautiful form, incredible beauty. Consciousness being born into forms. And consciousness, not all consciousness is form.

There is a dimension of consciousness that is formless out of which all forms come, the ground of all being. And that's what we are exploring here. Thinking, you rise above thinking or you fall below thinking.

My dog is below thinking. Now, that doesn't mean that the dog is stupid. The dog has its own intelligence.

And in some ways, the dog is superior to humans, in some ways. For example, it's more joyful than most humans, has more fun than most humans, lives more intensely in the present moment where life is than most humans, doesn't worry like most humans do, and is loving towards all beings. Some dogs are loving only towards certain beings, but our dog is loving towards all beings.

But the dog doesn't think. The dog is conscious, but there's no conceptual thinking. I'm sure the dog doesn't have thoughts.

The other day, the dog was in the bedroom in her little house. Quite late, it was already night. The dog was already sleeping.

And I was still doing things near the door, the entrance door to the apartment. I was opening the sliding door and looking for something in my coat. And when the dog heard the sliding door near the exit, she came out, she must have woken up and heard a noise, came out running to see what I was doing, whether I was getting my coat to go out.

So she came running. And then for 10 seconds, the dog stood there looking at me and realized I was just taking something out of a pocket and I wasn't going out. So after five seconds, the dog must have realized I wasn't going out and went straight back into her house and back to sleep.

Now, did the dog begin to think in her house, oh, I can hear some, he's opening the sliding door to the wardrobe, I wonder if he's getting the coat out to go out and then I need to have a look because he may leave me alone here. Okay, I'm going to have a look to see what's happening. And then the dog would go and look, oh, what's he doing there?

Oh, I think he's just taking something out of his pocket, he's not going out after all, why did I bother to come out? I might as well go back to sleep. Now, I'm sure that's not how it happened, but that's what would have happened for a human doing that.

Now, the strange thing, how would that happen for a dog? All the whole thing must have happened without conceptualization. There was the listening to the noise and there was a sudden knowing that that could be, that noise of the door could mean that I'm going out.

And then there was just getting up, running out without, I'm sure, although you can't really get into the dog's mind, I've tried, I'm sure it was without any decision-making process or mental commentary. There was just an immediately response to a situation and then there was a recognition of what was going on in that situation and immediately not a decision to go back to bed, but just going back to bed. So there was consciousness there at work, but not through conceptualization.

And for humans, of course, it would be usually different. There would be, as you're doing that, there would be the running commentary that I just mentioned if the dog had a human mind. There are some anthropologists who have looked at the history of the human race and they wondered where or how did thinking start?

When did humans begin to think? And it seems likely that at first there was no conceptual thinking. There was only thinking in images.

So when they closed their eyes, they could suddenly see certain images of things that had happened or things that they imagined. So the moment they closed their eyes, certain images would be there and when they opened their eyes, they still lived very much like the dog, just an immediate response without the interference of conceptualization. And then thinking started.

And there's one anthropologist who has put forward the theory. He has some evidence for it. I forgot what the evidence is, but his theory is very controversial.

I believe, however, that he may be right. He believed that at first, when thinking began to happen in humans and thinking in the sense of words in your mind, those humans at first thought that some entity, a god or a spirit, was talking to them. And so the voice of the god or spirit that suddenly appeared in their head said, oh, you better go to the lake and make sure that you catch another fish.

And they would go, oh, why is there no fish today? Somebody's talking. Why don't you go there?

There might be a better catch there. Okay, thank you. I got a message.

I should be going there. It was their own thoughts, but for a long time, because it was something new, they didn't realize that these were their thoughts. They believed some spirit helper, something was telling them to do something.

And then, of course, sometimes it might also be the same kind of voice that is telling these days the terrorists to go and shoot people. You must shoot these evil people and go do it. Oh, okay, I'll do it.

No idea that they are obeying something that is in their own mind. And so that's how it all started. And then thousands of years passed, and now we have human beings who are completely identified with mind.

And their whole sense of self is derived from mind, from mind activity. And the awakening of consciousness is the realization that beyond your mind, there is a great depth to who you are and great freedom and a far greater intelligence than is in your thinking mind. Then the thinking mind can be used by that greater intelligence.

But for the thinking mind to be used by the greater intelligence, it means you have to find within yourself that greater intelligence, which we could call unconditioned consciousness. You have to find that in yourself. If we don't find it, we are going to kill ourselves because this evolutionary level where we are identified with thinking is no longer functioning well.

It has become destructive. It has reached the end of its lifespan or usefulness. And so if humans don't achieve the transition, they will either regress to an earlier stage of development and then have another go, which could take a few hundred thousand years, but the universe is patient.

Or the species becomes extinct and then consciousness simply decides to move through other channels to express itself. It could be another life form very easily. Consciousness does not mind through which channel it comes into this world, but it wants to come into this world.

I don't know why, but I know that consciousness wants to be born fully into this world from another realm, from the untimeless, unmanifested, where consciousness does not evolve. It's already full and complete because it's timeless. But from the timeless realm, for consciousness, you can use other words if you want.

The Tao, God, transcendental reality, it doesn't matter, it just works. That which we cannot name, it wants to come through the forms into this world and somehow do something here. Perhaps it wants to dissolve this world, to outshine this world, to transform it, to spiritualize matter, transformation of the entire universe.

But I know what our task is to wake up here out of being trapped in your own little mind, the little mind, it's not yours, it's just the human mind. And that's why I started today by asking you to see if you can have a little space inside yourself where you're actually not thinking, but still awake and alert. That's the opening into the greater intelligence.

At first, it seems there's nothing happening. No, don't expect anything to happen, that will come. It's the beginning, you open the door.

You're opening the door to another dimension. Now, the thinking mind knows nothing of it and you cannot use it to enter that dimension. The moment you use it and try to figure something out, what's in there, you're out again, you're not in that dimension anymore.

We are opening the door to another dimension of consciousness within ourselves. And then see if the door can stay open while we go about our daily business, or if it can be open occasionally as we go about our daily business. And from the point of view of the mind, it's not interesting because there's nothing, to the mind, it's nothing.

And that's fine, to the mind, it's not interesting. And of course it isn't, because when you're not thinking for a moment, nobody could possibly call that interesting. It's deeper than interesting.

But at first it might appear, well, there's nothing there, there's nothing happening. But you have to persist and see, wait a little, and see if you can enter that dimension more fully. Just you open the door and first of all, you experience not so much a positive thing, but an increasing absence of negative things, all the negative things that are continuously produced by the thinking mind, by unnecessary thinking.

So as you bring that dimension into your life, you experience an increasing absence of the negativity that is normal when you're totally trapped in your mind, all the negative thoughts that go through your head and that emotions then respond to. So our destiny is to shift from thought into the realm of no thought, and then being able to use thought from there. In fact, who or what is it that then uses thought?

The intelligence that is the realm of no thought then uses your mind. And then you become productive in this world. You contribute something truly new to this world in whatever form, whether you're an artist or a writer, or you work with people, or you are engaged in some organization.

You then make a very different contribution because it's no longer ego-based. Ego is the unobserved mind, the mind without awareness that you mistake for who you are, me, the person. And it's a dreadful thing to live your entire life never going beyond the personal dimension, never seeing the transcendent dimension in yourself and in the world.

So it's essential then to no longer be trapped continuously in thought. And don't expect results from the dimension of no thought. It could be a while before there's any tangible result on an external level.

In other words, that you suddenly write a masterpiece or you suddenly become a great performer, or suddenly you help thousands of people with this or that and become a beneficial influence in this world. It could take a while, and we don't know what form it'll take. It may not happen immediately that as you begin to enter that dimension occasionally, and then the mind says, you see, nothing is happening.

I've been practicing being free of thinking for a few months now, and my life hasn't changed at all. It's still the same. In fact, it's become less interesting because I worry less.

Of course, worry makes your life very interesting, and it gives you the impression that your life is so important. My life is so important that I'm worrying all the time, and these are very important things I need to worry about. And so then from the point of view of the mind, your life has become less important.

So, okay, I've been doing it for several months. That's enough. I'm going back to my old ways.

And sometimes people write to me and say, okay, I've been practicing awareness, presence for a year now, and where do I go from here? There were years when I lived mainly in the state of awareness without any, many tangible results. Occasionally I would help people.

That was very nice. I enjoyed that. Help would, not I would help, but help would come through that opening.

But beyond that, there wasn't much happening. That went on for years, and occasionally I thought, well, there is more that could happen, but it's not happening yet, but that's fine. And in the meantime, there was a, I realized retrospectively, there was a, whatever words we use are not quite right, but let's just put it like this.

There was a buildup gradually of energy, of presence power, one could say. There was an intensification of that in the background of my life that had no visible manifestation really in the external, not very much. And so that presence was there, and one day, in fact, I gave a little, it came to me to say, please, I can do more.

I said to myself, accelerate, please, accelerate, acceleration. I was talking to myself, because you're always just talking to yourself. And then a little bit later, it happened, and then the energy stream came, that became a book, and so on, and an intensification of what I was doing already on a very small scale, but suddenly there was a whoosh coming into this world.

But for years, there was just empty space mostly inside, walking around and just very pleasant, enjoying the beauty of every moment, of the trees and of the animals. And something was there in the background, and then finally it came whoosh into this world.

And perhaps when it's, it may well be that after a while, the energy stream that goes out may subside again, and I just go back into just the space.

In some way, I do that continuously, because after a talk, you go back into whoosh. So there's the coming out of the consciousness stream, going into words and into energy that flows out, whoosh, and then return into just stillness, space. No need to think very much, unless there's something to think about.

Where am I going for dinner? Where do I have enough? But even there, you can, it's amazing how many things you can do without unnecessary thinking, and just experiment.

I recommend that you experiment in your daily life. This is the most beautiful spiritual practice. Experiment whether you can do many little things without the interference of thinking, with just presence or awareness there.

Because what I mean by that is you are conscious that you're doing something, but you're not thinking about it. And whether you can actually even register things without formulating words in your mind. If you have little things, little experiments, it's all very fascinating.

You can have a little clock. If you have a watch or a clock that doesn't have, especially if it doesn't have digitals on it, you can experiment with yourself and see whether you can look at a clock or a watch and know what time it is without in your mind telling yourself what time it is. And that's quite a strange thing.

There is a knowing without conceptualization then. If you know that it is a certain time, whatever it is, without saying to yourself that time it is. You don't do it with a digital clock because when you read the numbers, it's almost impossible not to say the numbers in your mind.

Just one little experiment. And then many other things when you're doing a certain task, every master, the moment you become a master, you don't think anymore. Intuition takes over.

Otherwise you can't be a master. Now, sometimes you have to learn first gradually through the mind to do something. There may be certain steps that you need to learn, whether you're building something or whatever it is that you do, learning to play the piano or whatever it is.

At first, it's driving a car, whatever. At first, it takes effort to learn, to become an artist, a painter. You learn the techniques and so on.

And then a moment comes when all that is not helpful anymore. If you never go beyond the techniques, you won't be a great artist. The great artist knows the techniques and then steps beyond it and then something else takes over.

And that's where your life becomes empowered. But you need to open the door to the empowerment. And it's not, you cannot get there through thinking.

And even something that seems to be an intellectual thing, like writing a book, if there's any inspiration or power in the book, whether it's fiction or nonfiction, it has to come from the place, the empty space inside you that you go into where for a moment you close your eyes and then you look again and nothing comes. You go back and you look again until something comes through spontaneously. But it won't come spontaneously.

You have to have learned, you need to learn to write first before you, I mean, before you can write a book, you need to be able to write. Or if you want to become a great tennis player, you cannot go into the state of no thought very deeply and suddenly step on the tennis court and take a rack and become, be immediately a great tennis player. There's a, you have to go through many steps first before the intuition can take over.

But that's where the dividing line is between somebody who has learned to do something well, and many people do that, and somebody who brings in something new or goes beyond doing something technically well where inspiration comes in, where empowerment comes in. So it's vital to find that dimension in yourself. So go around your daily life, see how much you can actually do without the interference of conceptualization.

It's amazing, and observe yourself. Is it possible for you to be, for a moment, free of thinking at any given time? For example, now, no thought, just presence.

You haven't disappeared, but what can you, what is there to add to this moment by thinking about something? Nothing. Why do you, you don't need to add anything.

And what is there then when you're not thinking? What's there left of you, what you had called you? There is definitely something there.

No past, let's say, because to have a past, you need to think about your past. To have a future, you need to think about your future. Now, if you're not thinking about your past and your future, you don't have a past and a future.

There's only nowness. There's only this moment. So you have, let's say, you have no past, you have no future, there's only this moment now, and there's nothing to think about.

There's still something there, and that's the essence of who you are, consciousness itself. It cannot be defined. It's neither big nor small, nor fat nor thin, nor old nor young, timeless essence, has no form.

There's nothing much you can say about it, but there's definitely a strong sense of beingness or aliveness that's left when you take that, the rest away. And that's what you take thought away. You haven't disappeared.

In fact, thought wasn't at all who you are. You thought so, but it wasn't. If you take thought away, you can actually, you touch the essence.

You know the essence. And when I say you know the essence, that's not absolutely correct because the moment we use words, we create duality. You know yourself as the essence.

You don't know it like a subject and object knowing. I know this, in this world, that's through thought. There's always the knowing subject and that which is known.

But here, the knower and the known are one. You know yourself to be consciousness. It's not separate.

There isn't a me that says, I am consciousness. There's consciousness. You know yourself as consciousness.

I am that. No separation, no division anymore. And when I put it into words, it sounds almost complicated because we cannot really verbalize because it's too simple.

It's not a differentiated state. Everything out here is differentiated. This is undifferentiated state of pure intelligence or pure consciousness.

It's always there to be easy to just touch it in you. It's always underneath the mental noise in everyone. It's there for you, waiting for you, almost one could say.

It's waiting and it wants to come through you. Just open, open, and it comes through. It doesn't matter if you are a saint or a sinner.

You open, there's a space between two thoughts and it comes through. What you did in the past is irrelevant, whether you accumulated many spiritual credits by spending 20 years in a monastery or whether you are stuck in a prison and the opening happens, spirit doesn't ask, well, are you qualified for me to come through? It will come through wherever there is an opening.

So your personal past doesn't have that much to do with it. The only thing is it got you here to this moment where you realize the possibility of living in a different state of consciousness. Your past got you here.

Well, that's good enough. Whether your past was a successful past or failure past, whether you built up great things already in your life or whether you messed your life up completely becomes irrelevant. So you become free from the past through this because another dimension comes in.

This is why it has happened to some people who were criminals. And at some point, suddenly all that subsided. And a space opened up inside them.

The unhappy self suddenly wasn't operating anymore. Now, to some people, it comes as a spiritual experience, which means it comes and then after a while, they say, oh God, it's gone, I lost it. Okay, that's the normal thing.

Sometimes it comes once and stays forever. You never lose the connection again with the open space. But for many people, first it comes and then it leaves them.

And they don't realize that they can actually welcome it and encourage it. You don't have to wait for it to come again at some point. Why don't you ask for it to come back?

I'm not saying you ask like, please come back. No, you ask for it to come back by simply walking across the room without thought. Just see if I can walk across the room without needing to be already where I want to get to the door, just be present in every step.

Can you be present in each step as you walk across the room? Chup, chup, chup. Oh, you're not thinking, you're just present with that.

Can I be present while I look out of the window to check the weather? And can I know what the weather is like without saying something to myself or having some kind of relationship or attitude towards the weather? Can I open the curtains in the morning and say nothing, just look and know?

There's either sunshine or there's rain or whatever it is. You open the window and there is an awareness that's looking through your eyes. And do you have to say something to yourself then?

Do you have to say, oh, it's another dreary day. I can't take any more of this. Do you have to say that or is it just an old habit that you've slipped into?

Do you have to say, oh, I hope it stays like that today or I hope it doesn't or whatever, it's going to be too hot or whatever comment you have, do you need to comment or can you look out of the window and just know and be the knowing without conceptualization and without like or dislike, just allow it to be and know. In the same way you would, I suggested you can look at your watch and know what time it is without saying to yourself what time it is. So you look out of the window and for a moment there is a space, you are the space through which the perception happens.

You are not a person. Don't worry, the person is still there on some level. So you're not going to be spaced out for the rest of your life and then walk around.

I don't know where I am anymore. That doesn't happen. But it's a wonderful thing if you realize that you can actually be there as the conscious space for whatever you are looking at, even at this moment.

You're looking at this person and this person is looking at you. Can you be the conscious space for the perception, for the looking, rather than be a person that always has some kind of thing to say like, what's he talking about? It's a thought.

I don't understand. It's a thought. Can you explain more?

I don't get it. Don't believe that thought. The thought says I don't get it and of course on the level of thought you don't get it, but on another level you get it.

You get it by being it. And so can you be in your car at the traffic light and just be there as the space for the perception of the red light? It's peaceful.

Suddenly the traffic light becomes peaceful. You are there as you're just seeing. There's the seeing and there is the space.

Why comment on the red light or think about something that's going to happen or might happen or happened in the past or something. Just be, perceive and be the space. And then the strange thing is that which you perceive is more alive and even the traffic light, the red light has a beauty to it.

It sounds very strange and normally it's only sometimes people who take acid talk about weird things like when I saw the traffic light, I went, wow. Now you don't need to take acid for that and it may not be a wow, but it may be wow, that has its own beauty and aliveness, that color. And you're not saying it, you just know it.

And so if you can see the traffic light like that, even more so, that will be the case even more so if you look at the tree that's right next to the traffic light, it has a presence, it has a beauty, it has an aliveness beyond the concept of tree or the birds that just landed on a branch, an aliveness, a beingness that you then recognize from your own beingness and aliveness that before was obscured by mental noise. So unless you become like little children because this is something to do with how little children perceive the world before they conceptualize. Unless you become like little children, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

Oh, so that's what it is. But it's even deeper state than the child state because the child still has to go through the thinking stage and then come out of it. The child has certain things still in common with a dog, not quite, but still no conceptualization, just wonder.

And so that's a gradual practice of choosing to step out of the conceptualizing mind whenever it is unnecessary, which is about, depending on your life activity, 80% of the time, you don't need to think a lot. You could think thoughts may come and go, but you don't, there's no need to continuously think. It's become familiar with spaciousness and then think when it's necessary.

And you be empowered then in your thinking becomes actually empowered. You can actually, if you wanted to create something in this world, this is what some popular books talk about, manifesting your external reality. Of course you can through applying focused thinking, you can manifest, but if you're in touch with the spaciousness, the unconditioned consciousness inside, then that comes through and will manifest through you.

And then it comes as a sudden knowing that this is what I want to do, but the I that wants to do it, it's not the ego I, it is the deeper I. So you become aligned with what the universe wants. It's not just the little me wants.

That's the beauty of that. So you can then, you as the greater consciousness can manifest if you want to. Don't fall into the trap of believing that something that you manifest is going to bring you fulfillment.

It's only on the external level, the fulfillment needs to be there already now. Fulfillment is being in touch with that dimension in yourself before anything happens. That's where fulfillment lies.

The rest is the divine play of form, but the divine wants to play out there. It wants the manifestation. It wants two things.

There are two movements in the universe. One is the movement into differentiation and into form and into birth, into bodies, into thinking. The universe started from a point of nothingness.

That nothingness became one, let's just, it's all not quite right because we can't really talk about it. Out of the nothingness came the ball, whatever, before the big bang happened. There was just one point of potentiality for the entire universe.

Then at some point, the explosion, if we could call it that, out of that was the beginning of the process of differentiation into increasing number of different forms. And we are still part of that explosion into greater and greater differentiation. But at the same time, there is, this is a pull, the outward pull.

Then there's the inward pull back to the source, to the timeless source out of which it all came. And so we as human beings are at a transitional stage where we are becoming strongly aware of the pull back to the source. So there are two movements in the universe.

One is out into more and more form and more and more thinking. It's still there, that movement. There's still many people who believe that the problems of this world can be solved if we just think harder about them, have more committee meetings about the problems of the world and discuss them.

And eventually they can be solved. They don't realize that the problems of the world are there because we have lost touch with the source out of which everything came. So by going into further differentiation, we cannot solve the problems.

We'll actually increase them. So we need to balance now, return to the source and going out into the world. It doesn't mean we don't do anything anymore.

We can still create and do, but not lose ourselves in creating and doing and thinking. Lose ourselves in the mind. Connected with the timeless, formless source of all life within, a space of no thought, connected with that.

Then we can create, not we as persons, but we as a universal movement of consciousness. Consciousness wants us to be co-creators of the universe, of form. So we can be that, but only if we are connected.

We need conscious connection with the source. So that's the destiny. That's your life purpose.

That's why we are here. And if it sounds complicated to your mind, it's only to the mind. It's not complicated at all.

It's actually very, very simple. It's so simple that you can't even think about it. What is self?

Now I noticed that it's spelled with a capital S. I don't know whether it's a mistake or on purpose. Probably on purpose.

There's one self, that's the illusion, that is the identification with the mind and the ego, which is the unobserved mind. And there's a self that arises there that is a dreadful burden to live with. You carry around, most people for their whole life, they carry the burden of a mentally defined sense of who they are, me.

What about me? That's the little self, the illusory self. And that's the self that most people refer to when they say I.

But I potentially has a deeper meaning and is the deepest word perhaps we could say in the language. In its truest sense, I refers to who you are beyond the form, beyond the thoughts and the emotions. You as the consciousness is the self.

Now the self has no form. You cannot grasp it. You cannot see it.

You cannot really define it. You can never say, ah, there it is. Because who is saying that?

You are the consciousness, the perceiving. You are it. You can never see it as an object external to yourself.

It's the essence. You are not what is seen. You are the seeing.

You are the consciousness behind the seeing. You are not what you hear. You are the consciousness behind what you hear.

So it's never, this is what Jesus said when he used the term the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God. He said in one of the gospels, the kingdom of heaven does not come with signs to be observed. You cannot say, ah, here it is, or ah, it's over there.

It's a free translation more or less. That's what he said. And of course, what do Christians do?

They're waiting for the kingdom of heaven to arrive when they've been told you won't be able to see it. You can't say, ah, there it is. It does not come with signs to be observed.

Literally, he said that. And I'm sure that's one of the, there's a lot of things that people later put into his mouth, but that is one of the things, words that were uttered by somebody who knew the reality. It doesn't come with signs to be observed.

You can never see it or grasp it or know it as an object for your knowledge because you essentially are it as the consciousness that perceives, the consciousness behind your thinking, behind your emotions, behind your perceptions, behind your experiences, the very light of the world. Another thing he said, he not only said, Jesus, I am the light of the world. He said also, you are the light of the world.

So he's pointing, what is the light? It's the light of consciousness which illuminates the world. You are that.

That is the self. It has no form. Therefore, it seems that Buddhism and Buddhists and Hindus are in disagreement, but only those who haven't realized the reality behind their teachings.

Those Buddhists and Hindus who have not really realized the reality behind their teachings, they are in disagreement and they have arguments whether there's self or no self. Atman, anatman, the Hindus believe in atman, that the existence of self, the fundamental underlying reality. And the Buddhists say, no, anatman, no self.

And then whenever you see a Hindu and a Buddhist discussing, perhaps even with negative emotions, whether one or the other is true, then you'll know that they haven't experienced, they haven't known the reality behind the teaching because the reality behind the teaching is exactly the same. It's just a different perspective on the same. The Buddhists like to deny, they don't want to call it something as if the moment you call it, you say the self, the danger is that you make it into a mental object and start believing in it.

The Buddhists don't like that, so they say there is no self, which in a way is true also. There's nothing that you could say, there it is. It is an empty space almost, you could say, but it's potential fullness also.

It's full and empty at the same time. It's all the same, the self. That's why the Dalai Lama I saw giving a talk a while ago to Hindus and he said, you believe in Atman and we believe in Anathman, what does it matter?

And he laughed, ah, ah, ah, makes no difference. Ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah. That's a good answer.

From Lian, Lian, most spiritual teachers talk about the process of enlightenment or awakening, explaining things as if we are moving towards a goal somewhere in the future. How do you bridge learning the process of living in the now without continuing to feed the idea of it being a goal somewhere in the future? So we talk about learning to live in the now, which implies time, which is not the now.

That's what the question is about. The process of awakening, and does this not lead to the idea that we are moving towards a goal in the future and thereby, of course, missing the now? That could be the case if it's misunderstood.

If the process of awakening or living in the now is misunderstood, then the mind will create an imagined future self that is fully at home in the now. So one day, the mind says, I will achieve the state of being fully in the now, and then I'll be awake. And of course, thereby ensuring that you will never reach it.

And this is a dilemma of many spiritual seekers who have been seeking for many, many years, nobody present, of course, here. They've been seeking for many, many years and not realizing that their mind has created a state to be achieved in the future, and I am aspiring towards that state, and that state is a perfected, more enlightened or awake form of me. And so, of course, you will never reach it because continuously, you have the idea in your mind that there is a state to be reached.

And so you miss continuously the only place where the state can be reached, which is now. So that's the realization then that we need to let go of this idea that awakening is a future state to be achieved, but awakening can only happen in the present moment, and there's no self that you're going to reach that is a perfected version of your present self. But whenever we talk about the timeless dimension of consciousness, of presence, with reference to this dimension, we are going to encounter some kind of paradox.

It is true, of course, that it does take time to learn to live in the now. What that means is that continuously, you're not in the now, and you lose the now, which is access to the timeless dimension of consciousness. You lose access to it, and you're back in your life situation, back in your mind, back in time, where past and future completely obliterate the present moment, a normal state, in other words, and you become a normal human being again, somewhat mad, which is normal.

So the learning to live in the now, yes, there's a little bit of a paradox here because it takes time to be at home in the now and to live it continuously so that you don't lose the now anymore and go into the dream world of not now. So you bring in the timeless dimension into the dimension of time, and when the two come together, you will encounter, when you put it into words, you'll encounter some form of paradox. That's fine, that's fine.

The important thing is realizing that awakening is not about achieving some future state. The intensity needs to be directed not towards wanting to reach a future because many spiritual seekers have great intensity. They work very hard.

They might meditate four hours a day, and they're really determined to get there, and they never do because their intensity flows into future, into their mind. But the same intensity can be directed into the present moment. So that is bringing together two seemingly conflicting approaches to awakening.

One says there's nothing you can do. Any effort will just take you away from it. And the other approach says you need to want awakening as a drowning man wants air.

Otherwise, you won't get there. So you have the two. Some teachers will tell you there's nothing you can do.

It comes when it comes. Just be here now, enjoy yourself. The other says, oh no, you have to work really hard like the drowning man.

And so you get these conflicting viewpoints. But you can put the two together. But the intensity of the drowning man who wants air, or woman, the intensity of the drowning person who wants air can be directed into the now rather than into some idea of future.

So you become intensely present now. That means you don't need the future anymore. The intensity moves into the vertical dimension rather than losing itself in the horizontal dimension.

So for spiritual seekers, for most spiritual seekers who haven't arrived yet, they may have intensity or others have no intensity at all and they fall asleep in front of the TV waiting for enlightenment to happen. So that doesn't work either. Some intensity is necessary, but not the intensity that moves into the future, but the intensity of presence.

And when a challenge comes into your life, two things can happen. Either the challenge pulls you into old, unconscious, reactive patterns. And you start complaining and resisting and fighting and dreadful things happening.

Or a challenge can awaken you. So for example, let's say your stockbroker sends a statement or your mutual fund sends a statement, you open it and you see your investments have become reduced in value by 65%. You can become unhappy and make up stories in your mind about how difficult your life has now become and how difficult your life is going to be the next few years and how futile it has been to work so hard and to try and save all that money as a security for the future and it's all evaporating into nothingness and how dreadful it all is and think about it and talk to others about it and feel the corresponding emotions arising in your body.

In other words, the challenge has pulled you into unconsciousness, completely lost the now, completely lost the aliveness of now. Or the challenge can awaken you and you see, oh, you see the figure on the page, oh, that's what it is. And you accept this moment as it is without building stories around it and become intensely present.

So the intensity of, you need to have intensity when a challenge comes or a challenging person, a very unconscious person trying to drag you into some kind of conflict. Very easy to succumb to that. It happens in politics all the time.

One unconscious terrorist pulls the whole administration into unconsciousness. We may talk about that. So use a challenge to wake you up into that alertness that is so different from the normal state of reactive thinking, absolutely alert in the now.

Whenever the mind comes in and creates some form of unhappiness for yourself, because that's how unhappiness is created. Unhappiness is not created from the situation. It's created from what your mind is telling you about the situation.

So if you can observe that process in yourself, it's not the situation, situation is neutral. The mental commentary about your situation, life situation, whatever situation you encounter, the mental commentary is what produces the feeling of unhappiness. The mind judges the situation as not good, not good enough or is threatened by it or imagines a future that's not going to be satisfactory and so on.

So it's not the situation, but the mental commentary that creates that unhappiness that is so normal for most people and they don't realize it because they confuse what their mind is saying about a situation with the actual situation. It starts with the simplest thing like saying it's a dreadful day today because there are drops of water coming from the sky and it's gray. The sky is gray and it's a dreadful day.

You've already confused the simplicity of what is with your judgment of what is. So you call the day dreadful. And that's a tiny thing to do, but and then of course it flows into almost everything.

And so you cannot see that everything's, the simple isness of the present moment always the moment is as it is. The rest you add to it. And to see that the moment always is as it is, there's great power in that, that you don't need to have some kind of reactive relationship with what is.

That's superfluous, it's dysfunctional. And that's so, this is what every master, every Zen master teaches that simplicity of being with what is. People try to study Zen and they go to monasteries and can't figure it out even after 20 years.

Why? Because it's too simple. What is now is, that's Zen.

Be completely with what is and you're immediately a Zen master. If you want to be a Zen master, it's a good profession, then just decide that I'll just be with what is every moment. You got it.

You're there, you don't need time anymore. No time is needed to be with what is. So here we have the paradox.

Now, of course, in this dimension of time, it's very rare that somebody enters that state and never leaves it again. So you might decide as you sit here, okay, I'm going to be a Zen master. From now on, I'm going to be with what is totally.

And I'm not going to add superfluous mind stuff to what is. I'll be with what is and I'll respond to what is out of presence, out of that alert presence and it'll be wonderful. No more problems for the rest of my life.

Of course, it's true. And so you walk out of here or wherever you are and then probably before you reach home, a minor challenge will present itself if only in the form of, it's still raining. It's been raining for days.

Why am I living in this climate? But, ooh, you're beginning to lose it. The master is no longer a master.

Because once you start with that little thought, another one comes about my life. Maybe this thing about the present isn't really working. And so you go, oh, I lost it.

I thought I was going to be a Zen master. I have to think of something else. And so you need time.

You need time because you lost it and then you need time to learn to live in such a way because you continuously lose it. Old patterns, mind patterns come up and take you over again. Habitual mind patterns come up and pull you wherever they want to go.

Now, if you had absolute intensity of presence, and it's possible, it is possible that someone who listens to this, perhaps you or you or you, you're okay, are going to remain present. So with such intensity that the old patterns just cannot take you over anymore. Then all you can feel is the old patterns wanting to come in and saying, hi, here, come here, worry about this.

You have to worry about this. And you say, no, I'll just be present with what is. There's no problem now.

I'm not going to worry. If I have to think about something practical, then I'll think in a focused way, but I'm not going to be taken over by my mind. Okay, returning to presence.

And then there will be another attempt, a little challenge happens in the traffic or wherever. It is, this driver is like a gust of wind. Why personalize a driver that does something to you?

Well, you wouldn't personalize a gust of wind and complain about the gust of wind that pushes your car this way or that way. It just is a natural phenomenon. And so simply you are with what is.

If there's an unconscious driver, it's just, that's what is. There's no inner self that is complaining about it. You remain present, you remain the master.

That's the, if you had that intensity, then the mind would never take you over again. And you would have your new career as a spiritual master. Or just be free of unhappiness, and that's enough.

But you cannot not be a master and affect everybody around you if you live in that state. Whether you want to or not, you may not be a formal spiritual teacher. You will, you always teach your state of consciousness.

If you're unconscious, you teach unconsciousness. And you will pull others into unconsciousness. It happens continuously.

So I sometimes use this paradox. You need time to awaken or to be enlightened or to be free. You need time until you realize that you don't need time.

As long as you believe you need time, you need time. And then the moment comes when you realize I don't really need time to be who I am. I am who I am already.

I am who I am. The formless essence of who I am cannot change. So time is not needed.

The full realization of that might take you time. Ha ha! How do you experience God?

What do you see when you see someone? Do you see more than their physicality? How I experience God, I've been talking about, this is really the only thing I talk about now in different words.

What do you see when you see someone? Do you see more than their physicality? No, I don't see more than their physicality.

I see exactly what everybody else sees, but I feel or sense something that is deeper than the physicality, and that is hard to put into words. There's a sensing of there's more to you than what I see, not as a thought, but as a knowing. And because I know there's more to this form than I can see or you can see here.

So the consciousness beyond the form looks through the form and senses, we don't have a word for it, I can say I sense or I feel, it's not quite right, maybe sense it is the closest, I would have to create a new word for it. I sense who you are or what you are beyond what I see, or beyond what you are telling me, or beyond what your mind is saying or your emotions are doing. So there's a connection with presence, the presence that is in you, the presence that you are.

And I have that more strongly than what I see, so that kind of almost obliterates what I see. What I see is the same as anybody sees, but that strong sense of consciousness, the alive presence that you are, is almost stronger than what I see. So there's more of my attention is in that than in my perception of what I see.

It's hard to put into words something that is so far beyond words. But this is not something special to me, this is something whenever you look at a human being and for a moment be free of definitions or interpretations, then you neither of yourself nor the other, nor definitions, be there as just a spacious awareness, then you begin to sense an aliveness within you and the same aliveness in the other. And then whatever the human beings do isn't that important anymore, you don't react to.

They may be saying something silly or intelligent or whatever, it doesn't matter that much, there's something deeper there. They may be deluded, they might want something from you, it doesn't matter anymore. It's very beautiful because it's only from that place that you can really relate, it's not the personality or the mind level.

That's the way to go for humans, to recognize each other as essentially sharing the same life, the same consciousness, recognizing oneness on a sense level, not on an intellectual level, feeling oneness. And that's love in a deeper sense, not the ego love, but the true love. The love comes from there.

You recognize that there is ultimately no other. The more you think in terms of others, the more you're in ego. He's like that, she's like that, she does that, he does that.

Remember I wrote in a book the famous Jean-Paul Sartre philosopher said, hell is other people. In the French original if you translate literally he says hell is the others. That's the ego's perception of other people.

A strong ego would see other people like that. And of course it can become so strong that you end up with things like paranoia because every strong ego has already an element of paranoia in it. Even before it's recognized as pathological, when it's still normal, it has an element of paranoia in it.

And so any strong ego goes around the world in that way of what does he want, what does she want, what do you want from me? Oh, I know what he's thinking. Evil intentions and so on.

Very critical of others, they want something that's all very normal but already part of the insanity.

[Speaker 2] (4:26:08 - 4:35:40)

I couldn't explain it and I don't think Eckhart could have explained it, but it was almost it felt like for me this magnetic pull just to come together. So I followed that pull without thinking about it and having to take it day by day. And I saw, as I mentioned when I started seeing the expectations I had, how the mind can want to try to pull away from that somehow, let's call it an energetic pull.

A pull that's beyond thought. You know, because he didn't fit in with my image. But yet I couldn't deny this pull.

So every time I sat and still, there are many times in our relationship where I thought, I want out. This is just, it's not right for me. You know, these are the thoughts that was going on, you know, like, it's just, you know, because I had these expectations that he wasn't fulfilling.

But yet every time I sat in meditation and I said, do I want out now? And the answer was always no. What is it that I want now?

And that pull is still there. It hasn't gone away, it hasn't subsided. Will it go away?

I don't know. Will I be pulled somewhere else? I don't know.

But it doesn't matter because I'm not even going there. I just stay in this moment with this, the only word I can come up with is pull. This pull just to stay here, be here.

So it may not have that big romantic story behind it. But to me, that was. The romance is with this stillness and the form that came and arise that's here that I had the pull towards is beautiful, is love.

And all the stuff on the human level, well, yeah, that needs to be worked out. And it does, it works itself out. And it's amazing how much it works itself out.

The more that you're rooted in stillness, it's like, oh, OK, because things begin to fall away. You know, the expectations fall away and other perhaps, you know, the ideas about what a relationship should be like fall away. And here you are, you're just here.

So that's how we came together. I followed, you can call a pull, an impulse, the energy. Sometimes people ask me, how do I know that I'm in the right relationship?

I mean, sometimes I want to leave the relationship or he's that way, she's that way. He does this, she does that. And it just doesn't seem to fit with how I am.

And I guess I would say to that is that, who, who is asking all those questions? I guess it's, it's coming from the mind because it's not fitting in with your ideas about what you think a relationship is like. I had one person during an individual session say, my, my wife, my partner, I don't understand it and it really just really gets to me.

It ticks me off. But she walks out of the house without saying goodbye or she gets up in the morning, she doesn't even say good morning to me. I went, wow, this is really interesting.

Because he had the idea that she ought to be doing this, saying goodbye, saying good morning. And yeah, it might be nice, it's pleasant. But I also understood the same thing is because in my family, we never said that either.

We never said goodbye. We never said good morning. We would walk out of the house without saying anything.

We just walk out, we'd get up, not say anything. And I thought, wow. Because his idea was that, oh, she doesn't love me because I had said I want her to say goodbye to me.

I wanted to say good morning and yet she won't do it, you know. And, and so he didn't know actually, because he didn't know whether she loved him and whether he could love somebody who didn't say, I mean, I'm sure there was more to it than this, but this is what, this was the example he was giving. He, he didn't know.

And it's like, and I did share with him about my family thing. And I thought, you know, maybe it has nothing to do with you. It could be just that this is how she is in terms of how she's been brought up or whatever.

Can you let go? What is it in you that you are demanding her to be different? What is it in you that you just can't be the space in which allows this to happen?

Oh, she's leaving. You notice her. Bye.

I mean, Eckhart still does that to me. He'll go, you know, I'm about to do something or leave. Actually, now I say goodbye.

But you know, before it's like, all of a sudden he'll say goodbye or he'll say, good morning. And I'm like, oh yeah, yeah, good morning. But it's not because I don't love him.

And it's not because I want to just, you know, I'm rude or, you know, whatever idea you think of or judgment that you have on it. It's because that was part of my conditioning. Our family never did that.

So it is the investigation. And what better opportunity for spiritual awakening, but in daily life. And it's in daily life, and especially in relationships, that you begin to see what is actually being reflected back.

Because what's being reflected back is really what's going on internally, inside the mind. So for those who are on the verge of wanting to walk out, just stop. And you can even ask yourself, as I did many times, what do I want right now?

Do I want to leave right now? No. Because only the mind I saw wanted to leave, wanted to get out, for whatever reason, you know, the thought that it wasn't good enough, it wasn't what I wanted, or he didn't do what I wanted.

When you come back into stillness, right action always follows. So from a place of stillness, you will know without a doubt, that you'll find yourself walking out. You'll just leave.

And it may be, you know, you don't know, you might leave that day, or you might sit down and just sort of talk and say, I want to, I want to come out, and who knows what will happen. But it's really beginning to also communicate that truth, what it is that you feel, what's going on inside you, from a place that is non-threatening, to be able to communicate it, what's going on. And just to be in that stillness, and you'll know.

[Speaker 1] (4:35:45 - 5:58:38)

The moment of stillness, before we start, not waiting for anything to happen, but just being in the moment now. Make sure you're comfortable in your own skin, as you sit there. If you're not comfortable, then just notice that you're not comfortable, and allow yourself to not be comfortable, and then you become comfortable.

I have a little treat in store, we will talk about, not only talk about, but go into the essence of the book that has been with me, accompanied me for the past 30 years. A book that I've gone to, back to, periodically, I still go back to, periodically, pick it up, read a page or two or three, and meditate on it. It's one of the great treasures of spiritual literature, and it is a book that was written in China 2,500 years ago, the Tao Te Ching.

Now that's a huge, seemingly a huge gulf that separates us from that time period, and yet the book is still vitally alive. And if a book that was written so long ago is still vitally alive, it means it must have been written from a very deep place, and point to something that is timeless. If it were not written from a deep, timeless place within the author, and did not point to something that is beyond time, a book written 2,500 years ago would be irrelevant, meaningless, incomprehensible.

Many books that were written 20 years ago are out of date, or if you read yesterday's newspaper, it's out of date. So for something to still be alive now, and to be deeply meaningful to many people, there must be something there that is timeless, and that is the essence of the book, and that's what I would like to go into with you. So we are not going into a book.

We are not just going to study a book. We are just using the text to go deeply within, to discover something within ourselves. So all that the book is, is a device that helps us discover ourselves and our connection with the greater whole, the universe, whatever you want to call it.

So just very briefly, the historical context, it might be helpful to know a little bit about that. This book was written about 2,500-2,600 years ago in China, that in other words, 500-600 BC. Now that was a very exciting and meaningful time period.

Something incredible was happening during those, let's say, one and a half to two centuries. For the first time in the history of humanity, as far as we can see, there was a universal wave of spiritual awakening coming over the planet at that time. So the author of the Tao Te Ching, Lao Tse, is a contemporary more or less of the Buddha in India.

So the Buddha and his teaching arose at the same time, approximately as the teaching of Lao Tse, the author of the Tao Te Ching. So there was the Buddha arising in India, beginning to teach, and another significant teacher in India whose teaching did not go very much beyond India even to this day, but has remained very meaningful and profound in India, Mahavira, taught at approximately the same time as the Buddha, and it developed into Jainism, the religion, a very beautiful religion still practiced widely in India based on ahimsa, non-violence, and respect for all living beings. All those things were revelations when they first came into being at the time, the teachings. So we have the Buddha in India, we have Mahavira in India, all arising at the same time.

In Persia we have Zoroaster, sometimes called Zarathustra, not to be confused with Nietzsche's Zarathustra, which is a completely different character, Zarathustra the prophet in Persia. We have at the same time in ancient Greece, and that was a time before the famous Greek philosophers started to teach, Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, it was earlier than that, those were philosophers that arose for the first time there, they are called pre-Socratic philosophers because they predate Socrates. We only have fragments of their philosophy, but those fragments are enough to show us that their teachings were in some ways, this is how I feel, more profound than the later more differentiated teachings of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

My favourite pre-Socratic philosophers are Heraclitus and Parmenides, and we only have small fragments, but the fragments show us that those teachings were still in touch with the source of being, the source of life, the oneness that underlies all phenomena. And later as the philosophy became more differentiated, that was becoming lost. The philosophies became very interesting and much more differentiated, but the connection with the root of all life, the unmanifested oneness, the transcendental dimension, gradually became lost.

So those philosophers 500 and 600 BC still had that connection, and they showed people, they also realised that humanity had lost it, so it was part of the wave of awakening that was coming over the planet, the teaching of those philosophers. This is not philosophy as we understand it these days. It's about inner transformation, not speculation.

Those were not speculative philosophers, in the same way that Buddha wasn't speculative, Mahavira wasn't speculative. So it is a transformational teaching. It's about inner transformation, not about figuring something out with your mind.

So we have that arising, the awakening arising in Persia, the awakening arising in India, the awakening arising in ancient Greece, and now we come to China, we have Lao Tse, his teaching at the same time was arising in China. All part of this wave of awakening that we are now experiencing again, even on a much larger scale now. So we are at a similar time period, except that the wave of awakening that is coming into this world, of spiritual awakening, is on a much larger and more powerful and all-pervasive scale.

So we are in the middle of that. A hundred, two hundred years ago, nobody in the West was discussing the Tao Te Ching, and this is why we can go back to it and understand it, because we are awakening. Lao Tse, we know very little about his life.

He was, they say, in charge of the archives of a kingdom called Shu, and reached, we don't know how old he was when he was becoming bored with the life of the court and the intrigues and the conflicts around him, and so he decided to leave his job and to leave his homeland and just go out into solitude. And the story goes, nobody knows whether it is true, that he left and he got to the border of the kingdom, there was a front, a little border crossing and a gate, and the gatekeeper said, I'm not going to let you pass unless you write down your wisdom. So he must already have had a certain reputation as a wise man, but he had never written anything.

And so, all he could do, he said, okay then, I'll write it down. We don't know how long it took, he wrote it down, and the gatekeeper let him go, and that is the Tao Te Ching. That is the teaching, and that is the book.

And then, according to one story, the last we ever know of him, he was sitting on a water buffalo, riding off into nowhere, and that's the last that anybody ever heard of him, nobody ever saw him again. That's one version of the story. Another version of the story is that he continued to teach and reached the age of 160 years.

The Tao Te Ching is the title of the book, which is not usually translated. People have tried to translate it, but unsuccessfully. Usually they give you subtitles.

So it says, Tao Te Ching, one of the traditional subtitles is The Way and Its Virtue, and that's already somewhat of a mistranslation. Although Tao can be translated as The Way, you just can't translate Tao, even if you translate it as Way, it's pretty meaningless. And if you're a Chinese person, you're not at a great advantage, you still won't know what Tao is.

So you're not at a great advantage. The Tao is something that cannot be named. We'll come to that in a minute.

So the subtitle, The Way and Its Virtue, Virtue is a mistranslation of the Te in the Tao Te Ching. Virtue has become a dead word in our language. When did you last say Virtue?

When did you last use that word? Probably many years ago, if ever. So the word Virtue is not alive.

What it really refers to is the power. So to translate, it's the power of the spirit. Of spirit, of the transcendental dimension.

The Way and Its Power is a better subtitle for the Tao Te Ching. The Way, how to live. The way to living, living in alignment with the one power that underlies the universe.

The one thing that you cannot name, that is not a thing. Living in alignment with the ultimate, which sometimes is called God, but the moment you call it God, it's not it. You've made it into something.

It is not something. It is something that flows through the entire universe, animates the entire universe, and at the same time is beyond it. That is the Tao.

And that is something that you can discover within yourself. You can live in a way that connects you with the inner source of all life, of all being. So the Way and Its Power.

He is teaching us how to live so that we are in alignment with the power that underlies all life, which, as Lao Tzu says, for the lack of a better word, I'll call it the Tao. And the Tao, that's a good thing, because you can't do much with a word that you cannot exactly see what it means. The same way that Buddha used the word emptiness.

You cannot worship emptiness. It's a negative term. It negates form.

So it's always been the tendency for humans to worship emptiness. Worship concepts. The concept of God arises in your mind, and then you start talking about God.

The concept of God becomes an idol, because it's no more than a thought. So you can't do that with the Tao, because you can't picture it. You can't form an image of it, in the same way that you can't form a picture, an image of emptiness.

So that is the transcendental reality that the book points to, and it shows us the way to it. So there's great power there. And the book came to me for the first time in my 20s, maybe mid-20s.

Somebody said, have a look at this. This is interesting. And I looked at it, and something drew me into it, but then I couldn't quite...

It was so obscure that I couldn't... I knew there was something hiding there in the book. There was some truth hiding, but I couldn't get it.

It was there, and then I put it aside and, OK, I have other things to do now. And then years passed, and then in my early 30s, I rediscovered the book in a different translation. There are many translations available.

And not only was the translation better, something had by then taken place within me, an awakening, a shift in consciousness. And through that new consciousness, I looked at the book, and I said, wow, that's... he's talking...

I know what he's talking about. I realized the depth and the profundity of what those words were saying. And since then, the book in different versions, not the actual physical book, but the Tao Te Ching has never left me.

It's always been with me in one way, one form or another. So that's the story behind the Tao Te Ching. And now let's see if we can go a little deeper into it.

We are going to use... There are two translations that at the moment are my favorites. We will use Stephen Mitchell's translation, fairly recent, Tao Te Ching.

Another translation that I've had for a number of years that I'm very fond of is by Jia-Fu Feng and Jane English. They together translated the Tao Te Ching. And that's another beautiful translation.

I will be using mainly for today Stephen Mitchell's translation or version of it. And the first two lines of the Tao Te Ching are very famous. I've quoted it quite a few times.

But even there, sometimes translations differ. The first two lines are, the Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao. What he is saying is, you cannot really speak about the ultimate reality.

Whatever you say about it is not it. However, he then continues to talk about it. So how is that?

Well, he's telling you not to attach yourself to the words, not to begin to believe in the words or in concepts, not to make it into some new belief. The truth is not in the words. That's what he's saying.

The truth, the words only point to the truth. And the truth is only to be found within you, beyond the realm of mind or of thinking or of concepts. So that's just a little, very important, those first two lines.

The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao. Okay, and now let me tell you about it. Because the Tao is in you.

And the only place where you can discover it is in you. And so the book shows the way to discover who you are beyond who you thought you are, beyond whatever your mind is telling you, who you are. And now, the closest he comes to defining the Tao, which cannot be defined, I'm just saying the closest he comes to defining it is in these little lines, which I'll read to you now.

And again, you need to listen to that, not just with your head, but you need to listen to that with your belly or your entire being, those words, because you cannot understand them just through the mind. If they are meaningful, or if you can sense the power that is in the words, then you are sensing your own power beyond thought activity. There was something formless and perfect before the universe was born.

It is serene, empty, solitary, unchanging, infinite, eternally present. It is the mother of the universe. For lack of a better name, I call it the Tao.

Note that he begins by saying there was something formless and perfect before the universe was born, before the arising of form, before the Big Bang, you could say. He uses the past tense. In the next line, he says, it is serene, empty, solitary.

It is not only that which was there before the world came into being, it is that which continues to be there timelessly at the core of your being. That which was there before the Big Bang is still present in you, the unmanifested, one life, one consciousness, without which you are nothing. It is the essence of who you are.

And of course, if you say that to a normal, materialist scientist, whatever, I'm saying a normal scientist, not a great scientist, then he'll say, what is this nonsense? Or if you tell it to somebody who is totally close to you, they'll say, this is mumbo-jumbo. There was something before the universe was born and there's something, what are you talking about?

And now, listen, he very wisely, Stephen Mitchell, put in a little quote by one of the great scientists, Albert Einstein, what he had to say about it. Somebody who did a lot of thinking, but whose thinking was rooted in the stillness, which, as we shall see, is an essential part of the teaching of the Tao. His thinking was rooted in the Tao, in the stillness beyond the noisy mind.

That's where Einstein's realizations came from. And so, he was not just trapped in his noisy mind, like most scientists, and then deny the reality of the transcendental, but he was connected with it. And he said, I'm not used to quoting from books and talks, here's Einstein talking, the scientist's religious feeling takes the form of a rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law, which reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, in comparison with it, all systematic thinking of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection.

This feeling is the guiding principle of my life and work, the recognition of a vast intelligence that underlies all of creation. Instead of saying, what, somebody, something more intelligent than me, that can't be, that's mumbo-jumbo. But something that I can't understand, I can't categorize, what mumbo-jumbo is that?

This is what the dowdy jingle is standing on tiptoe, and you're not stable. It's in the flower. It creates that.

It's in you. It pervades the very space around us. It comes through the human brain, becomes, the brain is like a, gives it some form.

And when the brain goes, it no longer goes through that form. It's the very consciousness that you are. So this shows that Einstein was in touch with that dimension.

That's why his thinking was inspired. That's why he had sudden revelations. Now, now we come to the first, slightly longer, just a few lines, never more than a few lines at a time.

How to live, to be in touch with that. Can, I'll read the whole, this little section first, and then we'll look at the lines and go into it. Not just, not with the intellectual mind, but sensing our way into it.

Can you coax your mind from its wandering and keep to the original oneness? Can you let your body become supple as a newborn child's? Can you cleanse your inner vision until you see nothing but the light?

Can you love people and lead them without imposing your will? Can you with the most vital matters by letting events take their course? Can you step back from your own mind and thus understand all things, giving birth and nourishing, having without possessing, acting with no expectation, leading and not trying to control?

This is the supreme virtue. For virtue, substitute power. The power moves through you.

If you live in that way, you become it. You realize your oneness with it. Back to the beginning.

Can you coax your mind from its wandering? It wanders about. If you look at your own mind, that's what it does.

It goes, one thing to another, one thought leads to another thought, and it goes on and on. Sometimes I call it the voice in the head. Can you coax your mind from its wandering and keep to the original oneness?

In other words, is it possible for you to sit still for a moment and don't give attention to every thought that says, follow me, I'll show you the way. That's what every thought is. I'm important.

Think about this, think about this. Okay, and once you follow up one thought, it becomes another one, and another. That's how most people live.

Continuously immersed in just chatter, mental chatter, streams of thinking. It's even become literature in the 20th century. It's called the stream of consciousness, James Joyce.

You get 30 pages without any punctuation marks, just he wrote down how he observed his own mind and he wrote down how it works. It goes on and on. No period, no comma, nothing.

Normal. So once you know that, and most of these people don't even know that. They are so identified with it.

It's just, that's who I am. I just, I think. But it's not even that they say, I think, because they are the thoughts.

And they miss the vast dimension within, at least underneath thoughts. That's why I say, okay, just don't give all that importance to your thoughts. Just come to a point of rest.

This is where the present moment becomes so important because it's the present moment that can take you out of the stream of thinking. Just becoming alert to this moment. There's nothing much to think about as you sit here.

What can you add to this moment that's better than what's already here? Or when you look at a flower, why add thought to it? Or when you look at another human being, why add thought to the beautiful perception of that?

And you keep to the original oneness. The moment you're no longer dominated by thinking and you realize there's a realm beyond thinking inside me, you're connected to the oneness because it's only through thinking that the illusion of separation arises when you start calling things this and that and judging and naming. Doesn't mean you can't do it anymore, but you're not trapped in it anymore.

Can you let your body become supple as a newborn child? When you are immersed in thinking, your body becomes rigid because it reflects what's going on in here, a lot of which is problematic. I need to think about this.

And the more problematic your thinking is and all thinking is problematic, the more lifeless your body becomes and the flow of energy through the body diminishes. You get rigid, you get tense, you're holding in. Can you let your body become supple as a newborn child?

This is a free translation. If you go back to the more literal translation, he's actually saying, can you concentrate your chi or your vital energy until your body becomes supple as a little child? This is really, he's teaching body awareness.

Can you go within, take attention into the body and to feel that you are alive inside? Can you feel the aliveness in your hands? Can you feel the aliveness in your feet?

Can you feel the aliveness that pervades the entire body, takes you out of your mind? Even as you sit here, can you feel that? There's a very ancient Taoist practice, thousands of years old, almost as old as the Tao Te Ching, which tells you you should breathe from your heels upward.

It says, can you breathe from your heels upward? Of course you can't because you can't suck in air with your feet. But what it's saying is it is directing attention to your feet and you imagine that you're breathing from down there, you're breathing through your heels.

What that does is you suddenly become aware it starts from the bottom of your entire energy field. As I'm breathing in, just simply imagine you're breathing in from your feet, energy starts to move in from down there. Imagine that you're actually breathing in from your feet and then the energy of the breath flows into the body, very ancient practice.

At particular, I only discovered two days ago that somebody, that thousands of years ago they recommended that already. And I said, oh, that's the inner body, that's what I was talking about, I always talk about. Can you cleanse your inner vision until you see nothing but the light?

That is perhaps somewhat obscure, although there's light in it, to the mind it's a little obscure. What do you mean cleanse your inner vision until you see nothing but the light? The light is the light of consciousness.

Cleansing your inner vision is to still the mind until you become aware of awareness, until you become aware that you are conscious. And then that remains always there. This entire little chapter is really how to be in the world, but at the same time connected with the source.

At this moment, it might be easier if you forget, don't think of yourself as somebody having a past, don't think of yourself somebody having a future. What's left of you right now without that? Consciousness, just a presence, not an opinion or memory.

That's the light of consciousness and that's the Tao really. You cannot grasp it. You cannot make it your object of knowledge and say, oh, there it is, there's the light of consciousness, I can see the light of consciousness.

No, you are the light of consciousness through which everything is seen. You can't see it, you can't grasp it, it underlies everything. It's so there, it's who you are.

It's your presence. When I say your presence, it's not quite right because it's not yours, it's you, it's oneness. If I say your presence, then there's you and presence, but language works in that way.

It creates duality and that's what the Tao Te Ching is about, is realizing that that's an illusion. Can you love people and lead them without imposing your will? This is imposing your will in another translation, it's always helpful to look at different translations.

It says, can you be without cleverness in this world? I talk about cleverness in one of the books, that the ego is clever because it tries to work out some advantage for myself or for us. It has its little schemes.

It tries to use people. That's cleverness. Politicians are clever, most of them.

Very few are intelligent. PhD doesn't mean you're intelligent. Well, whether they have PhDs or not, it has nothing to do with that.

Intelligence is to see the larger whole of all and then not just act to enhance one little fragment and then be in opposition to the rest of the world of life, but see the totality. Can you be without cleverness? Can you deal with the most vital matters by letting events take their course?

That's a very fundamental teaching of the Tao, is not to interfere in the way things are moving. So there's no violence whatsoever and that's of course beautifully practiced in all martial arts. In martial arts, the opposing energy that is coming towards you is not resisted.

This is deeply influenced by the Tao Te Ching, non-resistance going with the movement of life. The Western approach is somebody comes towards you and you hit back. It comes towards you and you go and the Eastern is it comes, the force is coming towards you and you go with it and then suddenly your opponent falls.

The very energy of that attack movement is used to defeat the opponent. You have not opposed it, you go with it. There's almost, we can say, no violence in it and yet extremely powerful and that can be applied in many things.

It can be applied in daily life, in not getting involved in useless discussions, not identifying with mental positions of rightness. I'm right and you are wrong and then you start, this energy totally takes you out of yourself. Not engaging in useless discussions, being able to listen in a state of openness to another, not identifying with your opinions and then opposing somebody else's opinion.

Can you step back? Oh, before that, can you deal with the most vital matters by letting events take their course? Now, I looked at another translation that's a little closer to the original which says, instead of by letting events take your course, it says, by becoming the female.

Can you deal with the most vital matters by becoming the female? The female principle, female is often used as synonymous with the Tao. So one could almost say that the feminine principle is the principle of allowing, which is like this, whereas the male principle is this.

If you want to see it and express this, the male goes like that, the female goes like that. And according to this teaching, the female is, one could almost say, expresses the Tao more clearly than the male. It's somewhat easier to express the Tao through the female form than the male form.

If you're male, then you have to discover the female in yourself to be one with the Tao also. You have to discover that. For example, when I say, allow this moment to be as it is, that's a female.

You're not fighting what is. You're allowing what is. There's an embracing.

You see it sometimes with Kuan Yin statues, the holding hands like that, or Virgin Mary statues, which are all expressions of the female, all embracing, all embracing. Can you be the female in any situation? And that's, in a discussion, some women would say, I don't like this idea.

I want to be powerful. They don't realize that the power of the female is enormous. The power of allowing is far greater than the power of interfering.

Can you be the female? Let's see what else we have before we go to another longer one. How you receive this depends on your degree of openness to this message.

So, this sounds very familiar to me. That's why I'm just reading it to you, just a few lines. Some say that my teaching is nonsense.

Others call it lofty but impractical. But to those who have looked inside themselves, this nonsense makes perfect sense. And to those who put it into practice, this loftiness has roots that go deep.

So, there are some people in whom the openness is not there, and then whatever, what we are talking about here is totally nonsensical. So, there needs to be something in you that recognizes the truth of this beyond words and concepts. Empty your mind of all thoughts.

Let your heart be at peace. I'm going to read the same again in a different translation. Just gives you a slightly different sense, feel.

Empty yourself of everything. Let the mind become still. Empty yourself of everything.

Let the mind become still. Watch the turmoil of beings, but contemplate their return. Watch the turmoil of this world, of all the activity of this world, of all beings involved in running around.

Watch it, which means be the awareness, and contemplate their return. They all return to the formless, sooner or later. All the forms.

Imagine you're seeing a movie. I always, I love to see old movies, like movies made in the 30s or so, or 40s. And I love seeing, for example, you see street scenes, actual street scenes, big city, London, New York, whatever, people, hundreds of people running around to go about their business.

But this is what the turmoil of beings, as it's called here, you have to see it. And I see that in amazement, I watch that. This refers to watch, but contemplate their return.

And when I watch that, I realize all these people, the actual street scenes, all these people are no longer there. They're all dead now. It was so important, what they were doing.

It looked so important, running around, cars going. And if you had seen a speeded-up version of the movie, if you see a speeded-up version of anything, if you saw a speeded-up version of this room, like you sometimes see how a flower, it's a wonderful image, if you see, they do it on film, how a plant comes suddenly out of the soil. And so they, over a period of a few hours or a few days, it's filmed.

So you see that period, within a few seconds, contracted. So you see actually how the plant comes out of the soil, then leaves come out of the plant, and the flower comes out. And suddenly, you see, the flower is wilting.

The leaves are wilting and falling off. And then the entire plant goes, gone. This is what it's talking about.

You have to actually see. It's an amazing thing when the touch can, we'll touch to see that, when you truly watch that, something inside you goes, you can't put it into words, it goes, wow. Because you realize that applies to everything in this world.

It's that way. It comes into being. Every body, I'm really, I'm looking at my own body when I see it.

It's just a slightly different version of that. It lasts a few years longer than the plant. But if you saw even the baby growing into an adult, you would, maturity, vitally alive, physically active, and then gradually, winding down.

And then beginning to look like a wrinkled apple or a pear. And then, suddenly, the life force leaves. And then, soon later, all the molecules and atoms say goodbye.

We're going our own way now. And there's nothing left. Just an emptiness.

If you saw this room, and the people in this room, and let's see if we didn't move from this room, and we had a camera here, you would see gradually the bodies dissolving or evaporating, whatever, it would go very quickly. I sometimes compare them to soap bubbles popping. So if you saw this, we had this camera here over a period of, let's see, how long do you want to live?

Another 50 years? Then the soap bubbles would pop one after another. Nothing left.

And then for a little while longer, the physical forms would stay. And then you would see, gradually, even the physical forms crumbling. It could take 2,000 years or whatever, depending on atmospheric conditions.

And even then, the chairs could become dust. So everything is dissolving, birth, dissolution, everything, every form. It's impermanent.

And to watch, it's extremely powerful to watch that. This is why he's telling you, watch the turmoil of beings, but contemplate their return, means be aware of the impermanence of all forms, not as a negative thing, but simply as you see it for what it is. And if you are aware of the impermanence of all forms, that all forms are short-lived, how can you be aware of it?

There must be something in you that is beyond that. It's only from, as I sometimes say, if the entire universe were blue, the colour blue would not exist for you, because there would be nothing to differentiate it from. If we said, everything is blue, you say, what are you talking about?

There's blue? What's blue? There's no other colour.

If everything were impermanent, you wouldn't even know it. But there is something in you that is beyond that. It's only from there.

And that is why the contemplation of impermanence can put you in touch with that, because that in you, which is the consciousness, the timeless presence, the light of consciousness, is not touched by that. And then the question the mind asks is, well, but what about when I die, I lose consciousness? Or if a brick falls on my head, I lose consciousness.

What about that? All it means is that consciousness can no longer flow through your brain into this world. It then has to withdraw and seek another channel.

Consciousness is not affected. You cannot lose consciousness. Isn't that amazing?

Why not? Because you are consciousness. It's the essence of who you are.

So you can't lose yourself. Consciousness, you can also say life. You can call it life.

You can call it Tao. It's the unmanifested, underlying, the timeless essence of all life, that which animates all life forms for brief periods, each form of brief period, you are that. You can't think about that.

If you think about it, it doesn't make sense. You have to sense that in yourself. Now, sense that.

You can't know it as an object of knowledge. You can only know it as yourself, because it's the subject of all knowledge. Each separate being in the universe returns to the common source.

Returning to the source is serenity. Another word for serenity is stillness. All things return to the source out of which they have come, the life, the unmanifested one life.

Returning to the source is stillness. Now, the wonderful thing is, we don't have to wait until we die to return to the source. To live a life that is filled with power and wisdom, we can return to the source before the body dies, and live in a state of connectedness with the source of life.

And that's why it says returning to the source is stillness. When you find the stillness within yourself, you're returning to the source of all life. What is stillness?

Just a moment when you're not thinking, but still conscious. Just an inner space, like now. Okay, ready for this?

Here are all your thoughts, and now we go. Then thoughts come creeping back, and then we go, and suddenly there's a, can you sense that there is a space inside you that's just conscious? Where you don't call yourself anything or call me anything?

You're returning to the source, to the formless, the timeless in you. If you don't realize the source, you stumble in confusion and sorrow. If you don't realize the source in yourself, you stumble in confusion and sorrow.

That's how most people live, unfortunately. Stumbling about, unconnected with who they are, disconnected from who they are, not realizing the source of their being. There is immediately, there's confusion, which is mental confusion, the mind creating all kinds of pseudo problems.

You yourself, you become a problem to yourself. You become a problem to others. You become a problem to the planet.

You become a problem, or you contribute to the problem-making of the world, and that's the normal way to be. You stumble in confusion and, so that's confusion, and sorrow is the suffering that comes when you are not connected with that dimension in yourself, in your daily life. You suffer.

That's a destiny, that's what the Buddha said. Life is suffering, unless you go beyond suffering, which is the teaching. It shows you the way, as the Tao Te Ching does.

Confusion and sorrow, you can't get rid of it, no matter how you try to rearrange your outer life, or think, if I achieve that or that, I'll be fine. You won't. So you stumble in confusion and sorrow.

You need to find the source, and it's not even hidden, it's just there underneath the mental noise. So when you realize the source, realize, of course, doesn't mean you have some kind of intellectual idea about it. Realize is when you have no idea, when the ideas, the importance of ideas diminishes, and there's just a space of awareness.

Ideas are secondary. In fact, you will have some interesting ideas coming out of that, creative ideas, new ideas, new insights, but they are secondary. When you where you come from, you naturally become tolerant, disinterested, amused, kind-hearted as a grandmother, dignified as a king, immersed in the wonder of the Tao, you can deal with whatever life brings you, and when death comes, you're ready.

Beautiful images explains who or what you become when you live in connectedness with that, no longer as a little entity that thinks itself to be separate from the universe and from other human beings and from everything. You become tolerant, disinterested, it's not uninterested, disinterested, amused. There's a little bit of amusement and all the things that people in this world feel is so serious and so important and all their fears and ambitions and all the things they run after.

You then become a little bit amused at all this, what is called the turmoil of beings running around like little rabbits. All this and so on. I have so many problems to think about.

Oh my god, what's happening? Oh no, god. You become amused a little, there's a slight smile.

Sometimes you might even laugh, but there's a slight, a little bit of a smile, because you know it's not ultimately real what they believe to be so important is ultimately not that real. It's a temporary thing. It's relatively real, not ultimately real.

In other words, everything is a little bit like a dream. For example, what happened to you yesterday? Where is it now?

A little bit like a dream, whatever was important then. Even breakfast this morning. Okay, did I have breakfast or was it a dream?

Not that much difference. Or you come to the end of your life and suddenly you think back all those years. That was a long dream.

Was it a nightmare? And you become kind-hearted as a grandmother. Nice image.

The grandmother was already been through everything. It's a little bit like the big-bellied Buddha that you see that is influenced, the Taoist-influenced Buddha, the Chinese big-bellied Buddha. He sits there.

Sometimes people who think they have lots of problems in their lives, I recommend that they should get a big-bellied Buddha and look at it quite often when they think they have problems. Because the Buddha, he's actually laughing. He's at a huge belly and he always goes, oh, it's not serious.

It implies that he is connected with something deeper. He doesn't take the world that seriously. And so his influence is beneficial.

It's only people who take the world not that seriously they can actually be of benefit to the world and improve the world. But if you think that the world is absolutely serious, you're not going to improve it. You can just contribute to the madness.

You will be fighting one or somebody or some organization or some group of people. It's serious, serious. That little bit of detachment, you become the Buddha, the big-bellied Buddha or the grandmother and dignified as a king with a certain dignity or integrity to who you are.

The same dignity and integrity that each animal has, that many humans have lost. One with itself. I feel always when I look at a dog or a cat or bird, whatever it is, it is one with itself, with who it is.

It has enormous dignity. And then sometimes you can see the contrast if you look at a particularly silly human being. And sometimes silly human beings have a dog that's very dignified.

And the only times when they get out of their silliness is when they pet their dog. For a moment they can truly be themselves for a moment. With all other people they're playing some kind of silly roles, not knowing that they're playing roles.

And then they come in, for a moment their dog gives them the ability to relax for a moment and be who they are without pretending. And that's why they don't know it. That's why they love their dog or their cat so much.

Because they can be themselves. They find themselves through that. That's the integrity of the animal, the dignity of the animal.

But it's in you also. This is a nice one about people who are in control of something, of an organisation or a country or whatever. How to rule a country or an organisation.

When the master governs, the people are hardly aware that he exists. Next best is a leader who is loved. Next, one who is feared.

The worst is one who is despised. If you don't trust the people, you make them untrustworthy. The master doesn't talk, he acts.

When his work is done, the people say, amazing, we did it all by ourselves. So the greatest ruler is not even aware that he or she is there. Hardly aware that he or she is there, does not interfere, never says, look at me, I did that, identifying with their actions and taking credit for what they did.

I did that. Or arguing with somebody, you didn't do it, I did that. That same thing can exist.

This talks about having gone beyond ego and beyond mind and identification with action. You also find this phenomenon in some very simple people who haven't developed an ego yet. They sometimes do wonderful things, but there's no entity that says, look, I did that, or how it feels, I did that.

Beautifully expressed in the film Forrest Gump, where the hero or the anti-hero does not have an ego, he is below ego. He helps many people and many good things come into his life, but he has no sense of a separate self. He lives in the right way, not what this describes, because this describes of going beyond ego, but he hasn't arrived at ego yet, so he still lives in the sense of oneness.

And if you live in the sense of oneness, the universe to a large extent becomes helpful. Helpful things come into your life, because you are no longer separating yourself from life. That begins with being in a state of oneness with the present moment, accepting the moment as it is.

That's really all you need to do. Then you're in a state of oneness with life, not imposing anything on the present moment, judgments, reactions, and if they are there, accept that they are there. So you can always accept what is, whatever level, either accept what is externally or accept what is internally.

And now here's a very wonderful thing about how your state of consciousness affects the world, that there's a correlation between the collective consciousness of humanity and the state of the planet. And there is a correlation between your state of consciousness and whatever happens to you, not always apparent immediately, but there is a correlation between what's within you and what happens to you or what you attract into your life. And furthermore, it's not so much that what happens to you is your fate or your destiny.

Your destiny is determined not by what happens to you, that's what people think, that what happens to me determines my life. Your life is determined, your destiny is determined by how you respond to what happens. And what happens next is determined by how you react or respond to what happens now.

So something seemingly bad happens, something goes wrong. If your reaction is negative, you attract the next negative thing. If your reaction is a response that says, well, this is how it is, now let's deal with that.

The next thing will reflect that state of consciousness. Many people are trapped their whole lives in a stream of same kind of unpleasant things happening continuously to them because they don't realize at any given moment there's a freedom for them to change their lives by reacting differently to what happens. Your present reaction determines the future, not what happens.

Your reaction to what happens determines the next moment. That's how you can change your life rather than being trapped in bad karma for a very long time. Very easy, but it requires awareness.

And here we talk, the Tao Te Ching talks about how the collective consciousness affects the planet. In harmony with the Tao, the sky is clear and spacious. The earth is solid and full.

All creatures flourish together, content with the way they are, endlessly repeating themselves, endlessly renewed. When man interferes with the Tao, the sky becomes filthy. The earth becomes depleted.

The equilibrium crumbles. Creatures become extinct. The master views the parts with compassion because he understands the whole.

His constant practice is humility. He doesn't glitter like a jewel, but lets himself be shaped by the Tao, as rugged and common as a stone. Beautiful images.

When humans collectively live out of touch with the greater consciousness, the Tao, the transcendent, the reality, whatever they manifest externally reflects that state of disconnectedness. And then the planet around them suffers. It's simply a reflection of a state of consciousness.

And so, this eternal principle, he already saw 2,500 years ago. And that also implies that the solution to what is happening to the planet cannot be found exclusively on the external level. Yes, of course, we need to change things that we do on the external level.

But unless the consciousness, the state of consciousness that is our habitual state, changes, even if we remove one evil from somewhere out there, it will be replaced by some other thing that has the same harmful influence on nature and the planet. So, the fundamental is the shift in consciousness in humans, in humanity, but not waiting for others to change. Humanity is you.

Humanity is I. You are humanity. The shift in consciousness needs to happen in you, and then the planet will be saved.

So, that is vital. Here we have the two beautiful lines. The master always means the enlightened being, the being in touch with the Tao.

Here he happens to use the he pronoun, but he changes continuously in this translation. Chinese doesn't differentiate, apparently, with the pronoun. Traditionally, it's always he in the old translation of the Tao Te Ching, but in this Stephen Mitchell translation, he shifts continuously from he to she.

It happens to be he here, but it doesn't matter. The master views the parts with compassion because he understands the whole. He understands the whole.

He is connected with the whole. Then you can look upon the parts, the individual human beings and the many different life forms with compassion, because you recognize them as expressions of, manifestations of the one life that you also are. Manifestations or expressions of the one consciousness that is the essence also of who you are.

When you don't impose thoughts on, continuously impose thoughts on reality, but allow things to be, allow a flower to be, with that spaciousness, spacious perception. Another human being. Compassion comes out of that state.

Compassion has a deeper level to it, and that is the recognition of oneness. Out of that comes true compassion. The recognition that, in essence, you and I share a common source and consciousness.

Not a source in the distant past, a source we share, a common source now. And that's not an intellectual thing. The realization comes the less you impose thoughts on other people, judgments, definitions, and on yourself.

You start thinking about my life. What about my life? And then you define your life as either good or bad, fulfilling or unfulfilling, satisfying or unsatisfying.

And you have all kinds of opinions, all kinds of opinions about me and my life. And you have a whole, a whole structure in your mind develops that you call my life. And for many people that mental consists of thoughts all clinging together.

This is all part of the edifice of my life. And it's here. And they all cling together, and people think that's who they are.

It's just thoughts about its definitions, about them. They're just thoughts. And when you don't know that, that cuts you off from who you, the power that is there underneath all that, the power of consciousness itself, the Tao.

You're cut off, and you live as if that thing were real, and you try to somehow make it better on that, on the level of the thought structure of my life, or try to convince yourself that, oh, my life isn't that bad after all. And then you get a little bit of, okay, I'm feeling a little bit better today because I just hadn't thought that my life isn't so bad after all. Or, or you see somebody who is in suffering say, oh, I'm better off than that person.

And you have a little bit of happiness. My life isn't so bad. Many people's lives are far worse than my life.

Okay, I should feel good. Okay. A little bit of feeling a little bit good for a few moments.

But the structure of my life is not a satisfying one for almost anybody. If you don't go beyond that structure, you might think the people you read about in People magazine or wherever are better off, they're just as unhappy as everybody else. Because they, unless they've gone deeper, some may have.

My life, it's a figment of the imagination. There's no such thing as my life. I don't have a life.

How can I have, what does that mean I have a life? I am life. I am an expression of the one life.

The one consciousness, the Tao, the expressing itself briefly through this form. And the very power of all life is here. Why have some mental structure that gives me a sense of identity that tells me who I am with definitions and judgments and not good enough or better than all kinds.

Unnecessary, unnecessary, sometimes called in the Tao Te Ching, unnecessary baggage. Walking around with unnecessary baggage. My life is so heavy and it's hard.

I have a hard life. Where's your hard life at this moment? Can't see it.

It's only when I start to think about it, it's back, oh yeah. But where is it ever now? It's an imaginary entity, the me that is up there, consisting of all kinds of thoughts and opinions, is an imaginary entity, unreal.

It's wonderful to see that in this moment you don't have that baggage of my life. You are life right now. I don't need to define myself mentally as either good or bad or better than or success or failure.

All that cuts you off from the power that's actually there of the Tao. This is why it says, as we read earlier, empty yourself of everything it said, which means empty yourself of these ideas that otherwise dominate you, the ideas of who you are. Jesus said the same thing, almost literally to me, it means exactly the same.

Blessed are the poor in spirit. Poor in spirit, that means inside you do not carry baggage, the baggage of your thoughts, of who you are. So the same thing, blessed are the poor in spirit, means you are internally unencumbered by heavy thinking and identification and creating an image of who you think you are that becomes my life.

And then you even believe that you could lose your life. I'm going to lose, he lost his life. That must be, there must be, he must have been separate from life.

Who was he if not life? Without life, he isn't. He couldn't have been.

You cannot be, you are life. You can't separate yourself from life and say, I have a life. Who are you then?

Separate from life? What is it other than life? Well, I, that's life.

But you don't have it, you are it. Only the mind tells you that you have it.

[Speaker 6] (5:58:47 - 5:58:48)

Insane.

[Speaker 1] (5:58:48 - 6:09:15)

But normal, normal and insane. One more, he who stands on tiptoe doesn't stand firm. He who rushes ahead doesn't go far.

He who tries to shine dims his own light. He who defines himself can't know who he really is. He who has power over others can't empower himself.

He who clings to his work will create nothing that endures. If you want to accord with a Tao, just do your job, then let go. He who stands on tiptoe doesn't stand firm.

Look at me, me, my life, unhappy or look how miserable I am. Look how great I am. He who rushes ahead doesn't go far, always looking to the next thing.

What do you have to do now? Always grasping for the next, or the next, what's the next thought that I need to worry about? And the next thing, rushing, entire civilization stressed, stressed out, all disconnected from the Tao.

They're all rushing ahead. No time for anything else. No time, no time.

He who rushes ahead doesn't go far. You won't, don't really reach anywhere. He who tries to shine dims his own light.

By trying to play roles or identifying with yourself as special, look at me, you cut yourself off from the power of the Tao. It's by not, by not directing attention to yourself, the power comes through you. Not identifying with anything, anything that you do, because you don't do it if it's, it's a pity in a way that I wish sometimes, it's a little joke, I wish I had written The Power of Now when I still had a big ego, because now the ego would feel so great, me, me.

But then of course, The Power of Now couldn't have come through the ego. And here, important, he who defines himself can't know who he really is. This is what we were talking about, this constant definitions of who you are in your mind.

Why not just be the consciousness, be the presence right now? That's where the power is. What a wonderful teaching.

Timeless. It helps, of course, to have a translation that makes it more accessible by somebody who was, is deeply in tune with that state of consciousness. Traditionally, the Tao has been always translated by academics, who had a wonderful knowledge and command of ancient Chinese, but absolutely no idea of the spiritual dimension.

The Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, stillness. We started with it, we end with it, a moment of stillness. From Vince, in The Power of Now and in the New Earth, the way you describe the ego makes it sound like it has a personality of its own.

It seems to be a collection of habits, desires, etc. that run counter to some deeper or more authentic dimension of reality. What are the benefits and potential downsides to describing ego as a personalised entity, rather than, say, as a more impersonal pattern?

The question then, I'll just repeat it or paraphrase it, what is the advantage or the downside of talking about the ego in terms of an entity as if it were a personalised entity, or talking about the ego as simply a collection of impersonal patterns, mental, emotional patterns? And the questioner mentions that I often talk about the ego as if it were an entity in itself. So what are the benefits and potential downsides to talking about it as if it were an entity?

Because these two are just two ways of looking at it. If you look at it in one way, it is like a person, like a being that wants to survive. So this conglomeration of patterns working together, it wants to survive, it has certain needs, so it has certain characteristics of an entity.

And that's why the downside of looking at it as an entity is that it might scare you. You may get scared, you might get scared of your own ego and think there's some demon inside me that wants to take over my life. So that's the downside then, is it creates some kind of emotion around it, and you feel threatened by it.

If you call it, it's a collection of patterns, then you don't have that. But the downside of that is that you may underestimate the force behind it, and the persistence behind the patterns, and the fact that the patterns have a certain organisation to them, they kind of go together, they reinforce each other. So there the downside is that you underestimate the egos.

And you say, well, there's still some unconscious patterns in me, or that's, you probably won't even say that. But anyway, that's, you have the two ways of looking, neither one is the one right way. Another, I can add a third way of looking at the ego, which is to say, it's an illusion.

That's the Eastern approach, in many cases, to say, if the ego is an illusion, or you can even have a saying, the ego doesn't exist, it's just an illusion. And again, everything is a somewhat limited perspective. And every perspective will have, it's helpful, in some ways, maybe helpful, and in other ways, as the questioner says, a downside to it.

So not one perspective really can encapsulate the ego. So you can really have, there's no need to embrace just one perspective, realise that the ego is, it is a personalised entity, it is consisting of a conglomeration of mental emotional patterns, and it is ultimately a dreamlike entity, an illusory form. It's all that together, you could say.

And so that's, then there's also no disagreement between one person saying there is no ego, because it's an illusion, and the other one says, oh, yes, there is, there's just two viewpoints, perspectives. Ego is, of course, the unobserved mind, plus its emotions. Thank you.

[Speaker 4] (6:09:17 - 6:09:39)

A friend of mine got shot and died a couple days ago, so it's been on my mind. What happens at the time of death, and where does the life force go, what is the transformation? Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (6:09:42 - 6:18:22)

Thank you. Well, I haven't gone through physical death yet. As the Zen master who was asked about life after death said, I don't know.

And they said, why don't you know? You're the master. And he said, yeah, but I'm not a dead master.

But I've gone very deeply to what one could call death to identification with form. So in a way, I have gone into that realm, from where I can say and know that ultimately, what we see as death is the dissolution of form, that the eternal in us, which I know that firsthand, cannot be touched by that. So what exactly happens, I would say, depends on whatever state of consciousness you were in, that must be a predominant state of consciousness in this lifetime.

If in this lifetime, you were continuously identified with form, your body, or the psychological form of me, that means consciousness, this expression of consciousness was still in a somewhat dreamlike state, which is identification with form. And you can easily extrapolate from that if the tendency of consciousness to identify with form was still there, which in other ways, the awakening had not happened. This tendency will continue, there will be further identification with form.

And the process will continue as the consciousness that is not yet fully awake, will continue to identify with form again. And then gradually come to a place where awakening happens. Or, if there has already been a disidentification from form in this lifetime, then you can extrapolate from there that the compulsive urge to identify with form and to seek another form or another cycle of form identification, this compulsion to seek further experiences through identifying with form, then would either be much weaker, or be completely absent, in which case, the consciousness that you are, is no longer bound to this realm, and will not seek to re-experience the realm of form. But in either case, you really, I know, I can tell you that all is well, does not really matter whether this person now needs further experiences of identification, in which case this will happen, or whether he's already free of this urge, in which case, he will move on and live in a realm that we can't even conceive of from where we are here.

I get a sense deep within, in the form of what that is. But we don't need to talk about it here. All we know is nothing, this is the beginning of A Course in Miracles, which is the entire Course in Miracles summarized in two lines.

Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God.

That which is real in him is beyond form. Anybody can know that when you see a dead body, you realize that this is no longer whom you knew, this is not the being that you knew, this is only a shell. So nothing real can be threatened.

Nothing unreal ultimately exists. This is why sages from all traditions speak of this realm of form as ultimately illusory. It ultimately, it depends what level you look at.

The important thing is all is well. Beyond the appearance on the level of form, which is the only level where death exists, it is the transition from one form into another form or from one form into formlessness. That is what death is.

No more than that. Nothing real dies. Nothing real dies.

Which is to say, ultimately, there is no such thing as death. There only seems to be. It's a transmutation of form.

Either form dissolves, or seeks some other form, some other identification with form.

That for you, of course, to go into stillness in the face of death, to go into stillness is important, to become still within yourself, especially when you are sitting with somebody who is going through the death process, or you are confronted with somebody who has just died next to you. To be with that, immediately close your eyes, go into the deep stillness where you realize who you are.

And once you realize who you are, which is formless consciousness, then you realize also that nothing real died. Nothing real died, which is to say, ultimately, there is no death. It does not mean that you can't feel sad.

You can allow yourself to feel tears and to feel sad, and at the same time, realize that nothing real died. That happened to me when my parents died two years ago within the space of six months, both of them. So to be confronted with the death of a loved one in a short period of time.

Yes, there were tears, and there was sadness. And at the same time, there was the realization that ultimately, there is no death, and who they were in their essence has not been destroyed. Just as I know that I, in my essence, cannot be destroyed.

And so that comes from that. It comes from self-realization or self-knowledge, the realization that the other also is beyond death. So you can have the coexistence of yes, on this level, there is a place for sadness and mourning and tears.

If it happens, it comes in waves, you may have noticed, usually if somebody close to you dies, the sadness comes in waves at you, then you cry, and then it leaves you. And then comes another wave. And even when the wave comes, there can be an undercurrent of peace.

So you're not totally in that emotion, you're not totally consumed by it, it exists there in your own spaciousness. And the spaciousness underneath the emotion is the peace. And it's only from that inner peace that you can realize the truth behind death.

[Speaker 3] (6:18:36 - 6:20:47)

I kind of want to speak about earlier in the week, I was away for a period of time in the fall, and then I came back about a month ago. And I was in Asia in the bright sunshine and, you know, kind of open culture, a lot of sharing of just basic open heartedness. And I mean, I think others have had that experience.

And coming back to Vancouver is kind of rainy and closed down and cold. And, you know, also coming back to North America in the middle of the crisis and the chaos, and also the hope of Obama, like the change, the kind of transition, Bush Obama, but in the middle of all the economy breaking down and stuff. So what I was experiencing in my direct work environment was a lot of, it seemed to me what I was observing was a lot of criticism and fear, you know, anger at different things, entitled behavior, that kind of thing that we do in North America, very well, I think.

But, you know, so I found myself initially, I was kind of observing it, and then I was like, not wanting to get involved in it. And then, of course, I gradually started getting really involved in it. And it kind of hit me by the beginning of the week is like, I was in a state of protest against the environment, and also against the feelings that were coming up in me, related to the environment.

So I was in, you know, a fair degree of emotional discomfort and stuff. And when I sat with it, and also played what I call Eckhart tapes, like from other retreats and stuff, which I find settled me down. You know, what I saw was this field of alienation, both in myself, and in the environment around me.

So, you know, when I identified, I was feeling, I was identifying the feeling of being alienated, and I was feeling very alienated. And it was somewhat liberating to kind of feel that. And then I could kind of see it.

And then I was more at peace with it, because I had a name for it or something like that. But I wonder if you could generally kind of talk about that. It's like a low level sense of discomfort, of non acceptance of what's going on around.

And it does really feel like one really feels kind of alienated from everything, including one's deeper sense of connection and stuff like that.

[Speaker 1] (6:20:47 - 6:30:48)

Yes, thank you. Yes. Well, what you're describing is most people's normal state of consciousness.

That state of alienation, for most people is so normal, they don't even know it, because they have nothing else to compare it with. But you had just returned, you perhaps were in a more liberated state while you were away in the in Asia. At that time, you felt able to be more present there, perhaps.

So you came back here and then you linked into the collective state of consciousness in the Western Hemisphere. So the state of discontent, latent discontent in the background, and sometimes more acute unhappiness and dissatisfaction in the foreground, is quite normal for almost everybody who is still unawakened. And also still happens to people, even people who are going through the awakening process, often periodically fall back into that state for a while.

So what to do? Well, acceptance is perhaps the key for you. Acceptance of first a reorientation of your conscious attention to this moment, because that's what is.

And then acceptance of whatever is here at this moment in your life, whatever situation you encounter here. If you want to become free, don't listen to too many media things for a while, so that you become more deeply rooted within first. If you're not deeply rooted in beingness, in the unconditioned consciousness, in the inner stillness, if you're not rooted in there, then even just listening to the news on TV or radio will put you in an unbalanced state, immediately upset about this, and hundreds of things seem to be going wrong in the world.

And then you react to people around you. All that because you're not at home in yourself. So to feel at home in yourself, in the present moment in yourself, to be at ease with yourself requires you to take your attention away from the thinking mind as a conscious choice.

You choose to take your attention away from that, because it's not really the external things that are pulling you out. It's your mind's reaction to the external things. Take attention away.

Breathe. Feel the inner body. Look around.

Accept the form that this moment takes, wherever you are. You might be on a bus. It's raining outside.

It looks gray. The mind would say it looks gray and miserable. But miserable is something supplied by the mind.

It's just gray. It's not gray and miserable. It's just gray.

And the miserable is the mind's interpretation of the weather. But the moment you believe in the thought that the weather is miserable and people around you are looking miserable, you experience certain emotions. This is the body's response to the mental judgments that you totally believe in, and then you feel miserable suddenly, because the weather is miserable, the people around you are miserable, and life is miserable.

And you get trapped in... you hypnotize yourself into that thought pattern, and you experience the corresponding emotions. And once you are trapped in that, whatever situation you go into, and this is how it works, reflects back to you, your state of consciousness.

You find more miserable people. It's not easy, not difficult. And you get into a more miserable situation, and the next day it's miserable again, the weather.

These are the minds. So life is becoming complicated for you because your mind is creating a complexity and judgment, a level of judgments and interpretations that is pulling you out of yourself, and then believing in it, and then believing that you live in a world that is unpleasant. But it's not really that.

It's the mind's activity that's unpleasant, and you believe in it. And then you have the emotions that go with that. So taking your attention away from that, breathe, feel, be, look around, and then next time you're on the bus or in the car, wherever you are, and of course it's the same kind of weather again, around Northwest Pacific for quite a few months, it'll probably be the same, and you suddenly it's no longer miserable.

It's just rain, moisture, the sky is gray, but light is filtering through, no need to judge it. And the person next to you, they might not be smiling, but that's fine. And perhaps when you get off the bus, you smile at them.

There's no judgment. It's fine. You bring a different energy into this world.

Rather than be the victim of this world, which ultimately is really your mind, rather than be the victim, something new comes into this world through you. And so you are the bringer of something new, and rather than reacting to all that, it really is being stuck in your mind. The simplicity of this moment.

And then you gradually feel more rooted in being. Just this. Life is not complicated.

Why? Because the present moment is never complicated. Well, I don't find any complication for yet now.

And the present moment, of course, life is always the present moment. Only that. Only just this moment.

All I need to do is be, allow this moment to be, whatever a person comes into this moment, that's what is. The is-ness or the such-ness of this moment. Become one with that.

No need to judge or to say anything about it. Just it is. Simple.

Very simple. Then you feel you're arriving at yourself. One with yourself.

That's your practice. It's maybe challenging a little bit more challenging here. Some people find it easier in India to be present, or to be spiritual.

Sorry, spiritual. Other people actually can't do it in India. In fact, they're longing to get back and say it's easier at home.

It just depends on your... But India can teach you surrender. That's good.

More than the West, because in the West you expect things to be how they should be. In India you quickly learn that they are not how you demand they should be. The train is not there, or whatever.

And things, you can't plan too much ahead because it's not going to be the way you plan it. Everybody who goes to India learns that, and people who are then able to surrender suddenly feel much better in India than they feel at home, even though the trains are not arriving on time and so on. But people who can't surrender, for them it's miserable to be there because they have no control anymore over their surroundings.

This shouldn't be happening. That shouldn't be happening. There should be hot water.

I paid for it. Look, no hot water. And then somebody comes, oh, just wait one hour and the hot water will be back.

And then five hours later you're only going, it's still not here. You haven't surrendered yet. And so it doesn't matter where you learn surrender.

You can learn surrender in India, or you can learn surrender on the bus in Vancouver or in Seattle, or you can learn surrender in Detroit or in New York, or Piccadilly Circus in London, wherever you are. There's no reason why you can't be with what is in the now, just that. Thanks.

[Speaker 2] (6:30:53 - 6:50:56)

I learned through my relationship with Eckhart that any and all my ideas I had about what a relationship should be, what my relationship should look like, and how I wanted my relationship to be. It took a lot of looking and some years where I finally realized that I wasn't having a real relationship. I was just having a relationship with an idea in my head.

I wasn't meeting the other and seeing the other, as we can say, as myself or the essence of the other, the essence of Eckhart. But I just had all my expectations and ideas, my imagination, and that's how my relationship, that's how I was relating. And you could only see that in the daily activities, in your daily life.

You can know this, and I knew it on some level, that consciousness, that stillness was not about thought, was not about your ideas. And you can know this, and in a relationship it's not about the idea of a relationship. But that's when the awareness, the inner work needs to be done.

You have to take it beyond the intellectual and then actually then to discover it. So it's the discovery becomes this inner deep knowing that, okay, what I see, what I'm doing, is that I'm not relating with another human being as consciousness, as stillness, but as ego. So when I saw that, and it took many times seeing it, for example, we come from different cultures.

Eckhart is from Germany, even though I'm born in Canada, I'm Chinese, so I had the cultural conditioning of Chinese. We bring to it our own conditioning, and plus being a woman, him a man, the idea, and all that sort of stuff. The era in which Eckhart was born, the generation in which I was born.

So I have certain expectations that I brought to the relationship. The first one I remember is very close to when Eckhart and I first got together in relationship. And I thought I had to do sort of all the cooking, you know, all the cleaning up and that was my conditioning.

And he didn't have to do anything. And I didn't realize that his conditioning also is that, because he was brought up in Europe, Germany and in Spain, where he had his mother, his stepmother, who did everything. So it was easy for him just to, that was it, you just allow the woman to do it.

At least this was my perception, because he was not doing too much, right? So here I was, and then I was starting to get resentful, like, you know, here I am chopping the vegetables or whatever, or cleaning up, and I'm like, why doesn't he do anything? You know, he's got to do something, you know, like, why do I have to ask?

I shouldn't have to ask. And then suddenly I realized, oh my God, these are all my thoughts in my head, my expectations, instead of just telling him, you know, I don't want to do all the cooking, you know? So I told him that, and he goes, oh, okay, well, you don't have to cook, we'll go out.

I went, oh, okay, so we'll go out. All right. I don't think at that time I didn't really say to him, well, just help me, you know, I just said, okay, okay, we'll go out, because I didn't really like cooking anyways, at least so I thought at that time.

So we went out, and we went out a lot, and then plus we traveled, and we ate out again, so I was feeling more and more unhealthy. And anyways, when we bought a house together over in the island and had this wonderful big kitchen, I found myself cooking, and able to, I liked cooking, I enjoyed it. And I wanted to, we wanted to be at home.

So we came back to the same scenario again, right? We weren't going out to a restaurant, and here I was cooking. But this time I was able to express, to say, you know, I would like some help.

And he would go, okay. But then, you know, several weeks and months would pass, and I'd have to still keep on asking, well, I need some help now. And then I can see it here, just this thought arise in the background, like, oh my god, why is it that I always have to ask him?

It's just like a little kid where I have to, you know, always have to ask a little kid what to do. Why can't he just offer and help? I went, wow, this is what I expect.

I expect him to just help when his nature, his conditioning is that he just doesn't, unless he's asked. So I had to resign and just say, okay, I just have to ask. And it was me that was stirring up all the angst, all the anxiety, in this thought that I wanted him different than what he is.

So I don't mind now. I just say, okay, time to help. And he'll go, okay.

And he just, he'll help. So, I mean, those are just the superficial things in the relationship, the daily things. Because many people ask me about what my relationship with Eckhart is like, and how wonderful it must be.

And yes, on the level of silence, of stillness, it's absolutely wonderful. I feel like I'm right at home in stillness. We don't have to say a word and can just sense the stillness.

But we have the daily life. And this is where most of us can get caught up in, because you can meet somebody, and you have that wonderful spiritual connection, and you go, ah, this is wonderful. This is great.

And some people are conscious of that spiritual connections and other things that this is just, they don't know about the spiritual end of things, but they just sense something. They just love this person. They want to be with this person, etc.

until you live with them. And it is a working out. It is a giving space to allow them to have their conditioning, because that's, we all have it.

But it's our own job to be aware of what our conditioning is, what our expectations are, and to hear the other, to, okay, what's their conditioning? It took several years before Eckhart would never really ask me for anything. For example, I learned this when we were in Germany one time, and Eckhart wasn't there.

He decided not to come for dinner, and we went with a group of people to dinner. And one woman said, is your water no good? And I said, yes, it's fine.

And then my friend who sat next to me, who is also German, said, she's really asking you for a sip of water. And I went, she asked me if my water was good, but she didn't ask me for a sip. No, that's how, that's how we ask.

We don't ask directly. And I went, oh my gosh, Eckhart's been doing this to me for years. I thought, you mean he was really asking for a sip of my water, and I never knew it?

So, and I went, okay, I understand. So it is learning each other's own conditioning, and, and seeing how we apply our own conditioning, our own idea of how our relationship or how communication should be when the other has, you know, some other conditioning going on, some other way of being in this world and relating how we relate. And this happens all around the world.

And this is where miscommunication comes in, conflict comes in, because we have all these different ideas. But it's to see and to learn what those ideas, what the expectations, what that conditioning, what that culture is, is to, is to learn it and not demand that they change and be like yourself. So when I went back to the hotel, and I told Eckhart that, and he went, yeah, yeah, that's right.

And then when I, it's interesting, because when I finally knew and understood what he wanted, he was then be able to, because I was able to communicate, maybe we just didn't know what was going on. I don't know what he thought. Maybe he thought he was totally selfish all this for many years or something.

I don't know. But he was then able to now say, can I have a sip of your water? So it's giving each other that space just to be and watching, learning, listening to hear just exactly what it is that's being communicated.

So it's beautiful that we have these two cultures, German and Chinese, which are very two strong different cultures, and just finding out about it, exploring. However, the basis of our relationship, I think, would not have last. I probably would have walked out a long time ago, because I would have thought he was lazy.

If I didn't have this understanding, and this primary importance of having God, consciousness, stillness, whatever you want to call it, in my life first, and having that be the holder, the container of what the form, in this case, my form in relationship with Eckhart, is, that's the holder. And to realize that whatever form, and it's taken many years to realize that whatever form is going on is not as important as the background, the stillness in which the form is. Emerges, arises, and that's the beauty.

And then when that stillness is there, then the things, the everyday life, yeah, there'll be ups and downs. It's not always great, and it's not always bad. It's, you know, sometimes we got to do things, but it's coming back, always, just to the present moment, to go beyond the conditioning, knowing that it's there, maybe even having the awareness that, yes, you have expectations, but then allowing the expectations to go.

Just let it go, and just see them as that, expectations, and just to live in that stillness, and move, and breathe, and communicate from that place, and just allowing the nature of the other person just to be. I get a kick out of every time when we, because we live on Salt Spring, and we have this recycling thing going on, and we go to the recycling, and we have these containers of, you know, paper, plastic, etc., bottles. And so we have about six, seven containers.

We load up in the truck, and we go. And Eckhart by nature is very, you know, just kind of slow. He just sort of casually just sort of moves and does it, and I'm a little quicker.

So we can go to the recycling, and here we're doing our jobs, and I realize, wow, I've done like five containers, and he's done two. And, you know, it's like, okay, this is, it's okay, it's fine, this is how he is. He just moves a little slower.

I could create a story in my head about it, but I've accepted that, okay, he just, he's with me, and he's doing it, and it's enough. And if I want him to do more in me less than, if I want him to do it in half, I could easily just hop in the car and wait and let him do his half, I suppose. But it's just easier just to, for me, just to do it.

It's there. It's okay. So every relationship goes through just that working out of how everyday life is going to emerge.

We have a unique circumstance, and I think we both really love it, and that is we have, we're fortunate enough to have three places. In Vancouver, we each have our own apartment that is right across from each other, so we have our own space, and then we live part-time together on the island. And some people will think, wow, that's just so weird, and other people think, that's neat.

I think for both of us, at least for me, I love it. I love having my own space. So you find a way to live together.

Now, not everybody is going to have, to be able to afford to have that amount of space, physical space, but it's the working out, it's finding the way, and we need to find that way, respect each other, be able to give that other person the space. I know, just on this awakening process, it requires a lot of space, at least it did for me, a lot of alone time, to search, to look, to be, well, you can say, even in meditation, although I wasn't quite always sitting there in formal meditation, but just being aware, being able to see the mind working and operating in harmony. And how the thoughts just arise, and what kind of those thoughts are, and not, as what Eckhart says, taking your thoughts so seriously, to be able to just, ah, okay, it's not so important.

All my ideas, opinions, expectations, it's not important. And in order to have what we can call a successful relationship, we need to each come to that place to realize, not intellectually, but really internally, inner knowing that yes, the form of this moment is secondary, the primary importance is the space. In which all communication, in which all love, presence, activity flows.

And it's not so much a commitment to the other, but a commitment to your relationship with God, with stillness, and that's the true relationship, is stillness, is God-consciousness. And when you're truly committed to that, then life flows, and shit happens, and it will always happen. And true life is now, it's not what happens, it's the space in which it happens, and that's love.

[Speaker 5] (6:51:04 - 6:52:06)

Just one comment, for the benefit of everybody, is that in the Indian custom, today is the day of the full moon, and on that day, consciousness is enlivened the most, and a lot of knowledge, and energy, and bliss comes from the guru. So you're our guru today, so we want to thank you for sharing that enlivened consciousness with us. So that's one comment, and I had one question, and that is that in order to maintain the unity and the diversity all the time, would it be advisable to cut down activity and make your life a lot more simple with less belongings?

Because according to Nisargadatta, one of the things he comments is that you should give up pretty much everything in life and maintain as little as possible, and your sole purpose in life should be just enlivenment of your own self and consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (6:52:06 - 8:15:10)

Thank you, thank you. Of course it's true that many people have many superfluous things, they're not only concerned with innumerable things that are ultimately superfluous, they also try to accumulate more and more things that are ultimately superfluous. But the liberation does not lie in whether or not you have things, but it's more important what is your inner relationship to what you have, talking for a moment about things that you possess or acquire.

Another aspect of your question, of course, is things that you do, activities that you are engaged in. We have the two aspects as far as activities are concerned. Many people in our civilization are hyperactive, they are continuously active, they are stressed almost continuously, they are pursuing one thing after another, and they never arrive, there's always the next thing to do, and the next thing, and they're in a hurry with everything.

That's the stress disease of our civilization, and that's a form of madness. That has to be relinquished because it's an insane way to live. Now, people might say, well, I'm going to lose my job if I'm not stressed, or if I don't do what I'm supposed to do, and I cannot do what I'm supposed to do without stress, because there's always deadlines, one deadline after another.

Another aspect of living in our civilization is that you get continuous deadlines for obscure reasons. Publishers say the book has to be out by such and such a date. Why does it have to be out by such and such a date?

Can't you wait until the book is mature and complete? No, no, we have all the things, I don't know what the justifications are, but they always say it has to be out and you need to hurry. It's insane.

And so, many things that our civilization produces are rushed, rushed jobs, one could say. They're not fully matured. Decisions are taken before they even know fully whether, all the facts that involve the decision.

On TV executives, they put on a show and then they look at the, what are the audience numbers, and if it's not high enough, no, take it off, take it off. If they'd given it a chance, it might have developed into something great. Or employees, companies not doing well say, OK, we have to sack a thousand people, do it now.

But there's no spaciousness at all, there's only rushed decision making, all insane. So, to bring, not to be part of that is essential. Your state of consciousness, you need to, it's not easy living in this world, to say, I'm not going to live in this way.

I will do what is required of me, but I won't be part of the madness. I'll do what I can, I'll do it as well as I can, but I'm not going to live the rest of my life in a state of stress. You just give attention to whatever it is you're doing now and see if you can do it well.

Not looking to the fruit of the action, do it now. Reducing unnecessary activities, but more important than that is reducing the unnecessary mind activity. Because really that's where the whole thing originates.

Because the mind is becoming more and more active, what is being projected is external activity. So, a hyperactive mind produces a hyperactive life. What's the next thought?

What's the next thing really? What's the next thought about what I have to do? And the next thought, so you're rushing after one thought after another, trying to capture this and this and this.

So it goes back to the mind. So it needs to be tackled on the inner level primarily rather than the outer. If you do not come to grips with or bring awareness to your hyperactive mind, there isn't that much you can do on the outer level because you will continuously be driven by the hyperactive mind into all kinds of activities, many of them quite useless.

Even useless, even people who have jobs, they're still doing many things that are quite unnecessary, superfluous, just hyperactive, can't stop doing, have to stop doing, inability to just be. So, reducing the hyperactive mind, slowing that down is of the essence, that's the most important part of it. And then, that will then manifest in your active life so that the hyperactivity will not be there.

You will be actually more effective in what you do, but you'll do fewer things, but you'll do them better than countless things half done because there's not enough time to really do it well. Of course, that's all mind. And that's the dilemma.

Our whole civilization is in that dysfunctional state. So to take yourself out of the dysfunctional state, so to speak, not physically, but internally, is not easy. It's a challenge because you're surrounded by a certain state of consciousness, the collective consciousness that you move in.

So it's your job to be awake enough so that you don't get drawn into that state of consciousness, which really should be called state of unconsciousness, the collective, so that some sanity comes into this world through you. And so, that's the reduction of activity begins with the reduction of thought in your hyperactive mind. And then, automatically, then that will flow into reduction of activity.

Now we come to the second part. That's to do with things or acquiring things. As some people recommend, you should get rid of as many things as possible in your life.

Now I'm speaking as somebody who has relatively few things, although I have more things now than I ever had before in my life. And that's strange because usually it goes the other way. As you get older, you gradually let go.

But life has been so strange that now I have more material possessions, although not vast amounts, but more than before. I don't feel particularly attached to any one thing. In other words, if it disappeared, it would be okay.

That's fine. So it's not, and I believe not everybody, it's not for everybody to let go of things on the physical level. It's not even necessary.

You need to examine what your inner relationship to the things that surround you is, whether there is an identification with possessions or whether you simply appreciate something beautiful that is in your life without the attachment to it. Or it giving you an enhanced sense of self, as it often is the case. And you need to see whether there is some kind of acquisitive tendency in you that propels you to buy or acquire more and more and more.

Or whether you are simply just happy with what is already there and simply appreciate what's there. Or do you compulsively go to the shopping malls every weekend and look for something to buy to fill up this emptiness you feel inside? And just the action of buying something confirms that you are somebody to the ego.

There's nothing wrong with buying. You can buy something beautiful, but not as an addictive thing, as a compulsive thing. So it's finding a right relationship with the external world, not an addictive relationship, but a free relationship.

The appreciation of nice things is not something that is non-spiritual. It's actually spiritual to appreciate nice things. Whether you call the nice things mine or whether it's not yours, for me sometimes it's enough.

Well, not anymore. When I lived in London, I would sometimes walk around the streets and look in shop windows and love Regent Street or Bond Street and look at the nice things in the window and say, wow, that's beautiful. I neither had the money nor the desire to buy these things.

But I loved it. Now, if I had had the money, I might have bought an occasional thing. It would be nice to have that at home and look at it and feel its presence.

Perhaps it was made with attention and care. Why not appreciate beautiful things? The attachment is what keeps you unconscious.

So I happen to know your home and I know that you are surrounded by beautiful things. And I also believe that although you are surrounded by beautiful things, you don't have an enormous attachment to those things. I can sense that there's a certain spaciousness there between you and that.

There's a simple appreciation of it. And that is fine. Now, if the time comes in your life where you feel from within, the urge comes to leave even that behind.

Although you may not be attached, but at some point in your life it is possible that you may feel, now I want to live in totally simple surroundings. I just want to not have things anymore at all. If it comes, that's fine.

And then you will take action. You might remove yourself or you might give away all the beautiful things that fill up your house and just be in the empty, relatively empty space. Who knows?

If that comes to you at some point, that's fine too. But primarily really is what your inner relationship is to the outer. Welcome to our private seminar.

I'm talking about spiritual awakening in daily life. And some people may not be quite sure what the term spiritual awakening even means. Or they may have strange ideas in their head of what spiritual is, what is spiritual and what is awakening.

And instead of defining right now, I'm just going to talk about spiritual awakening in daily life. And as I talk, what spiritual means and what awakening means will hopefully emerge while we talk. So instead of defining beforehand what these things are, because although this is not a talk on philosophy, so we're not here to define terms, it's an experiential thing.

It's not information-based. We're here to experience something and then to bring that into daily life, live it in our daily existence. Everybody has done some traveling and sightseeing, visited unfamiliar places, European cathedrals perhaps, or the pyramids in Egypt, or Machu Picchu, Stonehenge in England, whatever it may be.

And it's often an interesting experience for me to go into a place and walk around doing some sightseeing. Let's say it's a cathedral, an ancient cathedral in Europe. And you walk in there and usually you have little groups of people with a guide.

They walk around. The guide has now come this way in different languages. The guide explains what this means, when it was built, or who is, this is a tomb, or this king, or whoever lies there, and all kinds of interesting information.

Occasionally when I walk into a place like that, an ancient cathedral, I kind of approach the little group and just listen in and stand at the side and just see what he's saying. Sometimes quite interesting, but I never feel drawn to actually sticking around for very long because I prefer to explore the place by myself without the interference of a voice explaining to me what things are. Now, it may well be that I may have read a guidebook beforehand, or I may not.

In most cases, probably, I have not looked at a guidebook beforehand. So I'm actually going into this, let's say it's a medieval cathedral. I'm walking into this medieval cathedral not knowing very much about it, except it was built a thousand years ago, whatever, and it took two or three hundred years to build.

But I prefer that experience of entering a space and not being burdened by information about it, rather than entering a space and immediately being bombarded with facts about it. There are two very different kinds of experiencing that place. One kind of experiencing that place is based on bits and pieces of information, on knowledge, on mental knowledge, on mind.

And this is why most people travel for that reason, because they want to learn new things. So as soon as they enter the cathedral, they say, OK, I'm going to join this guided tour. Or, these days, I have invented something to substitute the human guide.

You can rent a little device recording with earphones, and you can choose your language, and you put it on your ears, and then you choose your language, and then it tells you where to go. Now turn right here, stop here, and then it starts explaining it. You look, and you're continuously learning a lot.

And then, OK, walk on now ten steps, and now look up to the left, and you will see more information, information coming in. Very interesting, learning so much about history. It's true, you are.

You're learning a lot. And so you walk around this cathedral with the voice in your head, teaching you about it. What's wrong with that?

Nothing. It's fine. Why don't I do that?

Because there is another way of experiencing, of perceiving that place. And that's not something that people even know about. Some people do it intuitively.

And that way is going into that place, and not perceive whatever is around you through the veil of facts, information, knowledge, thoughts. Ultimately, it all comes down through thoughts, one thought after another. There is another way of perceiving that place that is not based on mind activity.

And I love that other way more than the way of learning about. There's nothing wrong with that. Sometimes I read a guidebook afterwards, after I've been to a place like that.

I read, oh, that's what I saw, and have a little bit of information about it. But at first, I love entering that place and perceiving, first of all, the totality of this, the vast, let's say it's a cathedral, it could be other places, but there's always, there's a spaciousness there, there's a vastness, there's a silence, interrupted, of course, sometimes by the voice of the guides here and there, and the clicking of cameras, but there is still a vastness, a silence, there's a, the whole place has a presence.

There's an energy field there. And the first thing that I love to take in is to enter and to take in the totality of that energy field that is this ancient cathedral, to sense it, to feel it directly. And there's a, it has its own presence, it's an energy field.

I like to get in touch with this ancient energy field, ancient and new, because it's still alive. And then look around at this architecture, and so on, and again, just see the shapes, the forms, the colors. So you see, be aware also of the space itself, because anybody who goes into a place like that and is struck by something, they go, wow.

Even people who later seek out the guide, there may be a few seconds when they take in this and go, they sense something, a sacred presence, you could almost say, they sense it, they don't need to know anything about it. In fact, you cannot sense the presence of that place if your mind is full of thoughts, full of knowledge. And if you enter a cathedral and you are, let's say, you are already very knowledgeable, you're a historian or whatever, and you know much, you would have to let go for a moment of all that you know, if you truly wanted to experience that place.

And I always feel a little bit sorry for most tourists, because they don't seem to be aware that there is another way of experiencing life, there is another way of perceiving, other than the mind, through the mind only. There's nothing wrong with the mind, it has its place, and it's needed for quite a few things in your daily life. But for many other things, for realising the depths of life and becoming a deep person, it's a strange expression, it's sometimes used, you say, this person has a depth, or we speak of a depth of perception.

What does that mean for a person? You would say there's a shallow person, and there's a deep person. What does that mean?

I would say it means what we might call a shallow person is a person who is totally trapped only in the mind activity, the knowledge accumulated by the mind, and perceives everything through thoughts. In other words, you walk around your life like the tourist who rents this little device and tells him comments about what they are perceiving continuously, that's fine, sometimes it may be necessary, but imagine going through life not being able to get rid of that device. You can't take it off anymore, it keeps commenting, so wherever you go in the street, it says, look at that person, and the thing even tells you whether you like it or not.

I like that, or I don't like that, I wish I had an answer on whatever, and of course, this is how most people live, because they are so identified with the involuntary mind activity, the little voice in the head, they don't even know it, they think they are the voice. And to live through the voice then makes your life quite shallow, because whatever you experience lacks depth, you experience it through a concept, every thought is conceptual. So when, let's say, you are in the street, a man or woman comes towards you, and your mind immediately has to say something about whether you like or don't like, or would like to do something with this person, whatever it may be, or have some kind of reference point, or commenting on the way they look, weird or strange, or nice, or I'd love to, whatever.

Is there another way of perceiving this human being? Yes. To perceive the human being in the same way, if that's what I said about the cathedral, if that resonates with you, if you have had a glimpse of that experience, or perhaps more than a glimpse, then you know the difference between stepping into a place and going, no comment, well, perhaps the mind says, oh, this is so beautiful, and then there's this stillness again.

So there is a still space through which you perceive instead of concepts through which you perceive. And suddenly, there is a depth, not only you feel another dimension is suddenly present, not only outside of you, another dimension that the tourist, who is totally dependent on either the mechanical guide or the human guide, is not aware of that. The tourist, who only listens to the commentary, misses the true aliveness, the sacredness, and the depth of that place.

And so, also within, you are trapped in the head, there's no depth then to you as a human being. There's something that responds to life, something deeper than the commentary in your head. And so many people these days are trapped then with this guide, the tourist guide they can't get rid of, and it's called your mind.

And so, not that the mind is not a useful tool, and even in the cathedral, it sometimes, it adds a little bit to it, if you know something about it, and I would say that's the second stage, to come back just for a moment to this cathedral analogy, one could almost say. You come back to that, of course, ideally, and I do that occasionally, but sometimes we don't have enough time when we travel. First, I love to experience the place without knowing anything, and truly experience it, the depth of it.

And then, perhaps, go back to the hotel room, and then look at a guidebook, and then learn a few facts about it. Could be quite helpful. And then go back the next day, look at it again, and then you have a balance between knowing things about it, and still being able to experience it.

So, in other words, you have then some information in your head, it's, oh, this is, I read about that, it was built by such and such, and then whatever, and then again you have the spaciousness that you perceive. And then you look at something else, and you, oh, this is a statue of the saint so and so, and some knowledge about it that you might have overlooked, a little detail, you can actually see a tear coming out of his eye or whatever. Oh yeah, there's a tear, he seems to be crying, don't know why, but it seems to be.

And then again, you can take it in without the commentary. So that's a little, you can experiment with that. And so, I'm using that almost as just an analogy for the whole of your life.

Most people are stuck with the tourist guide in their head. It comments continuously of what's going on in your life, and evaluates and interprets and defines in words everything that you perceive. And so, in whatever way it is defined or interpreted depends on your particular conditioning, on the way you were brought up, what you were taught by the surrounding culture and so on.

So the kind of tourist guide you have depends on your past. And so it's really your past talking to you continuously, certain forms of conditioning from your culture, your education, your family background, what you have read. Your fears and ambitions are also expressed there as thought structures.

They just become thoughts, what you would like, want, what you fear. What if that happens? Oh my God, this could go wrong.

What if? Of course, so it becomes very problematic because the voice doesn't stop talking. Except occasional moments when you suddenly feel a heightened sense of aliveness.

Perhaps you're out in nature and you're looking at a tree or a forest. And for a moment you say, wow. And then after a few seconds the mind says, that's beautiful.

But for about 10 seconds or 20 seconds the mind wasn't saying anything. And that's the reason that you can know that it's beautiful. Beautiful is not, the mind cannot really, the mind is concepts.

There's no beauty really in that. If something from within you responds to beauty in nature, for a moment there must have been a space where the tourist guide in the head stopped talking. And in that space there is a deeper experiencing of whatever is there.

There's a depth to your experience. What does that mean? It means, yes, what you see is the same.

But the state of consciousness through which you see it has deepened. A space has opened up inside you through which the perception happens. And that's the depth.

So you could say, when you look at something and for a moment you're not interpreting what you see. There's just the seeing. And you may be aware of the background to what you see.

Which cannot be defined. But there's a stillness inside while you perceive. This is what I meant when I talked about entering a cathedral without the knowledge in your head.

So suddenly the mind has become still and the perception happens. So you have two dimensions. You have a stillness in the background and whatever is going on outside is there.

The stillness is the depth that changes your perceptions. Then you see that the tree also has a depth to it and an aliveness and a sacredness that you didn't know before. When you were conceptualizing the tree and said, oh, that's such and such a tree and whatever knowledge you have.

Or this tree is in my grandmother's garden too. Or I'd like to chop this tree up and use it as my Christmas tree. Or I wonder how much it would be worth the timber if I cut it.

How much the timber would be worth. The tree is a surface phenomenon when you're in that state of consciousness. A utilitarian surface phenomenon.

You cannot sense the depth, the aliveness, the sacredness of the tree. And I'm only using tree as one of many possible examples. Life really.

The tree stands for life. It could be a human being. You cannot sense the aliveness of that if you are totally trapped in conceptualization in your head.

So there needs to be a depth to you in order to recognize that there is also a depth in life. Otherwise you walk around for the rest of your life skimming the surface of life. Just every human being is a surface phenomenon because you just have judgments about them.

Whatever you see is just no depth. And then you can go into nature and even there you will not know that nature has a sacredness to it. Because you can't sense it.

Because the space isn't there inside you to sense that when you go into a forest, an ancient forest, you've been there for thousands of years, and you cannot sense that that is a sacred space. Because otherwise you would go, wow. And then you would...

And if you don't know it's sacred and our civilization doesn't know, it looks at the forest as a utilitarian thing. How much would it be worth? So the people who cut down the ancient forests, they don't know what they are doing because they cannot sense that there is more there than what appears to be there on the surface of things.

But since they themselves are trapped in the surface of their own mind only, they have no idea what they are doing when they log an ancient forest. To them it's just a utilitarian thing. You talk to them and say, what are you talking about?

We are going to plant trees again. Yeah, but it will take a thousand years to reach that sacredness. No idea what you say sacredness, what do you mean?

It's a tree. We are harvesting the trees. And this is one example of what happens when you cannot get out of the conceptualizing mind.

Life has no depth anymore. And getting out of the conceptualizing mind is what I call spiritual awakening. So spiritual awakening has nothing to do with some kind of, suddenly you have new spiritual thoughts in your head and you start talking about angels or even God.

You suddenly start talking about God all the time and then people say, oh he has become spiritual. No he hasn't, he has become religious. Religious without spiritual is an ideology.

You could be a communist and then talk in those terms, whatever, it's an ideology. Sometimes religious and spiritual can go together, but in many cases religious only is just more thoughts in your head, but different kinds of thoughts. Then God of course becomes my God and your God is not the right one.

And then you become my enemy and I will conceptualize you as the non-believer, for example. And the non-believers are evil, another concept. The non-believers must be killed because we know the truth.

And the truth is our God, concepts in the mind. You can no longer sense, and then when you do kill somebody, you are not killing a human being because you cannot sense that there is a being there, another human being. You are killing, there is a mental concept there.

You have conceptualized, you have deadened, just as you have deadened the forest to yourself, you have deadened the other human being. You put some label on, non-believer, American. And so it's not a human being, it's American.

This is how the madness grows. So, and of course they don't know what's happened to them. They don't realize what's happening.

They are unconscious, and not unconscious in the conventional sense of the word because unconscious in the conventional sense of the word means they're lying there. No, not that unconscious. They seem to be very conscious, seem to be very alert with their guns or whatever they're doing.

But they are unconscious because they are totally trapped in the conceptualizing mind. They no longer sense the aliveness of life. They have deadened themselves.

They don't know who they are beyond the conceptualizing mind where they are completely identified with their belief structures that gives them, the belief structures give them their identity, their sense of who they are. I am a, whatever label they have. We are, we, we are, the only true, etc, etc.

And then it's the others, it's the others, them, they're not alive. They're just, they're concepts. So it's easy to, when you no longer sense what you're doing, to kill another human becomes easy because you no longer know that the human, the depths of the human being has disappeared.

And that's perhaps why Jesus on the cross said, they know not, forgive them for they know not what they do. In other words, they are unconscious. They have not awakened.

And so we are coming here from the tourists, going into a cathedral, and we've arrived at terrorists. Just an extension of really what is considered a normal state of consciousness. And what it does to you to be trapped in that your whole life is a dreadful fate.

And the reason why we are on this planet, why we have arrived at such a point of extreme crisis is that this state of consciousness that we have been trapped in for thousands of years has created and is creating increasing havoc and destruction. It destroys nature. It destroys human beings, destroying each other.

What we do externally is always a reflection of the predominant collective state of consciousness. And if you read the 20th century history, you see what human beings have done to each other. The only conclusion you can reach is they are mad.

It's quite mad. And 20th century is just the most extreme form of that madness where human beings kill each other by the millions. Often they don't even know what for.

In the end you don't even know anymore what the whole thing is for. The First World War. What was that whole thing about?

And then the First World War led to the Second World War and so on. And innumerable other wars. So the spiritual awakening then is for the planet or humanity to survive is an absolute necessity.

So having realized then that what is needed is to awaken out of complete identification with the continuous stream of thinking in your mind. Okay, well, how do we do that? Simple first step.

Is to realize that there is a continuous stream of thoughts in your mind. This is the first step of awakening. It's not saying I shouldn't be thinking.

No, the first step is to realize that there is a voice that talks most of the time inside you. And perhaps that until now you had been so identified with the voice that that was you.

You were talking to yourself.

Sometimes people talk to themselves as I. Sometimes people talk to themselves as you. You have a little voice that says you should have done that.

Why didn't you do that? The voice is talking to some other voice. And then perhaps there is an answer.

Well, I couldn't help it. Yeah, but you should have. So sometimes the voice splits itself into different voices talking to each other.

Becomes even more mad. And sometimes the voice also can have certain streams that one stream of the voice only comes up in certain circumstances. What some psychologists, they have discovered that this is the case.

Some psychologists call it sub-personalities. So in certain circumstances, perhaps a whining little girl suddenly comes up. But you're 30 years old.

Why are you still? It's a sub-personality. And suddenly you have a whining voice in your head that talks about how unfair life is treating me.

It's a sub-personality talking. And then when that subsides, something else happens. And another voice suddenly comes in and becomes extremely aggressive.

Another stream, another aspect of that has arisen. And so sometimes different voices take over. But really, it all belongs ultimately to the one thing, the one voice in your head.

So the first step to awakening, the beginning of awakening, is to realize there's a voice in my head. And it's especially useful to realize in the moment of it saying, for example, voices have most of the mind activities, old thoughts, old patterns, repetitive thoughts. For example, when I was younger, I had a frequent thought that said, whenever something that wasn't good happened to me, or that my mind interpreted as not good, the voice in my head would say, you see, bad things always happen to you.

And then I was just waiting for the next bad thing to confirm that I was right. And it would never have to wait for very long, and something else would go wrong in my life, and I would say, you see, it's happening again. Always bad things to you.

I don't know why it's always to you. And then of course you experience the emotion that goes with that kind of thought. And I completely believed in that thought.

I was so identified with that thought, I didn't realize this is just a thought in my head. It's not the reality. It's a conditioned way of interpreting the phenomenal world, the world outside you.

And so the liberation then comes with beginning to realize, oh, the voice is saying the same thing again, and again, and again, and it's not me. It's the voice. Who realizes that?

You. So there is a deeper dimension is suddenly there, and you become aware that all the stuff that your mind is saying to you and to others, is not ultimately who you are. But the awareness that at this moment your mind is reproducing the same old thoughts, there you're beginning to touch the depth that is within yourself, that we could call the awareness, the aware presence.

Because knowing that there is thought in my head is not a thought, it's just a looking, an internal aware, why do bad things always happen to me? And then you look at the thought, and you realize the thought. So you begin to, one could almost say you listen to your thoughts, you become aware of the kinds of thoughts you think, and when, this is for many people the first awakening.

And what people realize when they first awaken, not everybody, because some people's thoughts are not too bad, they can live with it quite well, they saw their thought activity is not predominantly negative, but many people actually find that when they become aware of their thoughts, they realize how many thoughts are actually negative. The majority of people become aware that the larger part of your mind activity is negative thoughts. There are far more negative thoughts than positive thoughts.

Not in everybody, some people have quite a few positive thoughts. One could almost say it's easier for people who are trapped in a lot of negative thinking to step out of their thinking than people who have relatively nice thoughts. Their inner urge to awaken is not as strong.

If you live in a self-made nightmare, as I did, the impulse to awaken is much stronger. Then you really, I can't stand my mind anymore. I don't want to live with this mind anymore.

Oh, that's good. It doesn't mean you have to kill yourself. It just means you have to realize that your mind is not who you are.

You are the awareness behind your mind. You are the space because the awareness is space. It's not a thought.

It's consciousness. So there's a depth of consciousness to you of which the thought activity is only like little ripples. You could say there's a vast ocean or lake very deep on the surface and the waves and ripples on the surface are the thoughts in your head.

And so most people are trapped on that level. They don't realize that there is a depth underneath that that is vast and that if they ever wanted to become creative human beings or bring anything new into this world it would have to come from the depth. It can't come from just the surface activity of your mind.

It's repetitive continuously the same kind of thing. Nothing creative can ever happen on that level alone. One day I'm going to compose a great piece of music.

One day I'm going to write a great book. Well, not if you don't get out of that. Of course the mind is needed to write a book, yes.

But you cannot have a deep or inspired thought if you don't make room a moment for the depth inside you so that you touch something deeper. You need to become still for a moment when you sit in front of your computer or piece or notepad and want to write something new and creative, bring something new into this world. Well, where does that come from?

From the repetitive noise in your head? No, it comes if for a moment the repetitive noise in your head subsides. It's the moment of stepping out.

And then you wait. So there is a... Open yourself to the stillness inside.

It's there. You don't have to make yourself still. Underneath, even in the most mad, the maddest person, underneath that there is the realm of stillness.

They just can't touch it. It's there. So it's very easy to actually embrace that you don't need to think all the time.

You need to have spaces of no thought and it's not that difficult unless you're totally mad. But not that many people are totally mad. Most people are partially mad.

And the madness comes up occasionally in a more acute form. It's there. So can you walk into the cathedral and be there rather than a mind burdened with knowledge?

Can you walk along the street and look at another human being without commenting? Just look and sense. When there's no commenting you can sense there's an aliveness in the other human being.

There's an essence there that is even deeper than your mind and deeper than their mind. And if you then communicate while you, for example, while you listen to them can you be still inside while you listen? You might be talking about the weather.

It doesn't matter. But be still and just be there as the space for that human being as you are there at the space as the space for the tree and realise what an incredible phenomenon this tree is. You can capture it through the mind.

What you know may be useful for certain things but there's a depth to that thing that we call tree that you cannot capture through that but you can sense something and the more you sense it outside the deeper you go within and there is an even greater depth in another human being. And the more you sense the depth of aliveness in another human being the more you sense it in yourself. Relationships become problematic if both parties are totally trapped in their noise-making mind.

Then very quickly conflict arises in relationships and that's why relationships are full of conflict because people can't get out of that. They are trapped in here so every discussion when they disagree becomes conflict. You have an opinion this is how it is I'm right.

You identify with your mental position your partner has a different mental position no, you're not I'm right. You identify with your opinion. Identify means your sense of self is in the thought that you have in your mental position of this is how it is today it's cold.

Your partner says no, it's not cold it's just mild. No, it's cold. I'm just giving an oversimplified example.

Even that could lead to an argument because are you accusing me of being a liar? Or moving in concepts. Well, you did lie last week didn't you?

I wasn't lying I was just and it goes on and on and it's all happening the entire relationship is mind mind against mind so you identify with mind and that becomes the ego the me that needs to be right always because if the ego is wrong it's death thinks I'm dead I'll die can't be wrong need to defend my position dreadful fate but it's normal so we're now slowly getting to what spiritual awakening is because we've looked at what spiritual sleep is we've seen what it means to be asleep or unconscious normal in other words normal existence the entire world not the entire world there's some awakening here and there more and more people in fact are awakening going through the awakening process we now know what that is because it means you're no longer identified with the mind who are you if you're not your mind?

you are the consciousness out of which every thought comes and then it plops back it's like a wave or ripple you are the consciousness that is far greater than any single thought or even greater than the totality of thought and that consciousness is experienced touch it as inner stillness stillness doesn't mean you go to sleep it means where the mind was before there's a space and out of that space comes all creativity every great realisation or insight that any human being has ever had the creative impulse comes out of the vast intelligence that is there and then it flows into the mind and there's an instrument for that and that's how the mind can be a beautiful thing when it's not just self-serving but it is serving something greater than itself the mind as a master is mad the mind as a servant is a great thing so that's the shift in consciousness that is happening and needs to happen on this planet the mind finds its place as the servant of consciousness or awareness so it's up to you then to invite the consciousness that you are beyond the mind into your daily life and how do you do that? you do that by inviting space, inner space or inner stillness into your life make a cup of tea or coffee why not try to practice being still with every movement just be aware bring awareness into that every movement pour the water no commentary look at a flower look at a tree look at the sky and for just a few seconds just look listen to whatever sound you can hear and just listen bring the attention to sense perceptions attention to sense perceptions that means the mind is quiet while you listen the mind is quiet while you look and that's a little practice that you can do many times during the day and it will deepen your life and in daily existence it goes from one thing that you have to do to another thing you have to do and another thing you have to think about now then there's no gaps so the gaps are vital in daily life inviting gaps into your daily existence looking for the gaps in daily existence in everyday situations a helpful thing as many of you already know is that that your body is actually alive inside normally people are not aware of that because their whole attention is on thought activity but if you can feel that your body is alive so the attention is some attention can be in the energy field of your hands and you feel yes I feel alive there is an aliveness in your body your body is full of life but most people can't feel that so if you can feel the inner body that you are alive inside the entire body at this very moment is a vibrating alive energy field and it actually feels good to have some of your attention there even while you're looking around the room you can just for people people who are new to this can just start by doing it with their hands feel the aliveness that's in your hands you can feel it perhaps even more with your eyes closed and then you can still feel it even when your eyes are open simultaneous thing you are present inside your body and you are present outside in your sense perceptions what does that do?

it means your mind becomes quite still because you can't be thinking because you are already present in the body and you are present outside you become awake really awake to this moment then and your mind there is not enough attention left then for thinking part of your attention is in the inner body and part of your attention is on your perceptions and what you perceive then is more alive than it was before it's more surprising there is more depth to it every human being is more interesting then more really there new you no longer feel that you are experiencing the same old thing again and again life then is always new every day is a new day it's not a repetition as people grow older they reach 30 years 40 years, 50 years life becomes more and more boring because it's so repetitive and they no longer look anywhere they go every day they go to work the same place they don't look at anything anymore there is nothing to look at I looked at it yesterday and last year and 5 years ago what's there to look at? and even people they live with for a few years after a few years you don't look at your wife you don't look at your paintings anymore on the wall because they have been there for too long you can't look it's their old and really nothing new and then you become that kind of person who says I've seen it all don't tell me about it I know it all I've had enough you're not there and you're not and so that's the that's the fate of many people as they grow old in our civilization and only a few perhaps an increasing number now because more and more people are awakening spiritually they remain alive perhaps even become more alive as they grow older and slowly and then the person doesn't actually even if they are 70, 80 years old you don't get the impression that they are old people because there is a light shining through their eyes there is an aliveness to them and occasionally you meet people like that they may be old in terms of calendar years but they are not old inside because they are being used but they are no longer being used by their mind which says I already know all this and so every day is new and fresh and every moment is still alive because you're not putting your past you're not obscuring it with past the accumulated past in your head putting it onto the aliveness of the present moment stifling the aliveness and then spiritual awakening is then essentially intrinsically connected with the aliveness of the present moment the only place where life is and so you are more and more open to the now rather than live continuously in past and future which is normal for most people it's future there's not much future left and then they live mostly in the past that's why old people many old people continuously talk about the past and the younger people continuously think about their future where they're going to finally make it someday and find fulfillment in some future when they have done or achieved this whatever it may be it could be a big house for recognition or for spiritually inclined people it could be enlightenment but it's put into the future I'm going to reach that place and then I'll be finally fully myself fulfilled, happy alive I will become alive one day fully alive but without ten million dollars in the bank I don't think I can feel alive because I really need to have that sense of security I need the sense of security without which I'll just be in fear the way I've always been and you'll be surprised if ten million dollars happen to come to you for a few weeks you will feel alive and one night you'll wake up and you'll be in the same fear as before because the stock market is about to collapse so spiritual awakening is becoming awake to the aliveness of this moment and becoming awake to the aliveness of this moment the all there ever is nothing else is ever going to come you can wait for millions of years if you lived that long nothing is ever going to come that's not this moment your life will always be this moment and that sounds well we know that no you don't if you don't live it you don't know it life is always this moment you don't know this if you don't live it it's only through living it that you know it otherwise it's just a concept in your head yeah of course life is always this moment and then what's next where's the next moment so you might as well become friendly with this moment if there's nothing else be open to that don't stifle it with an excessive amount of judgments and interpretations and definitions but be open to the aliveness of this moment open means there's spaciousness here so the shift is from a thought based entity which is the normal old way for humans been for thousands of years to a deeper entity that is based in awareness or presence consciousness so because when you're not commenting on things obsessively who are you when you're not continuously thinking about me and my problems at this very moment let's say pretend that you don't remember your past at this moment in fact you don't because at this moment unless you start a thought process at this moment now but pretend for a moment actually there's there is no past and there's no future what's left of you if I removed your past and your future from you now what's left I remember nothing what's left I don't remember my name who are you I don't know yes there is something there but I can't say what it is that's who you are consciousness itself when you remove the content from consciousness for a while then you realize that you are consciousness when the content content is thoughts and emotions and thoughts and thoughts when the content comes back it obscures the reality that you are consciousness and you identify with content and you have been able to awaken spiritually because life took away their content they lost everything suddenly they lost their reputation in other words their name it happens sometimes that life does these things to people they lost their money their possessions they lost even their family they suddenly were killed in an accident a big earthquake came everything lost and they sit there and they suddenly had a deep spiritual awakening why?

because life took away all the things they had identified with as themselves as the me and what was left was what we just did now here when I asked you to pretend that there is no past and future we took away for a moment content from your life and when you remove content it's not permanent whatever content you have is impermanent in your life things come and go or as the Buddha says it's impermanence is the word transient everything is transient and that refers to content so as long as you are identified with all the content in your life that can go very quickly even your body can go very quickly but if you just beyond content is consciousness itself rather than what consciousness has identified with and you are that I am that you and I on that level are the same we are in essence nothing else is added temporarily it's a disguise consciousness disguising itself as this and that and that person appearing in this particular form that's the play lila, the divine play of life as it's called in India and that's fine the play is not to be rejected but you can only enjoy the play of life if you know what is beyond phenomenal existence so it's only if you know who you are beyond all the things in your life you can actually truly enjoy the things in your life while they last and you don't need to cling because you know nothing is going to last relationships whatever it's only very young people when you realize so many things have evaporated that I thought were permanent and more things are going to evaporate and a few more things are going to come and then evaporate so not to live your life is no longer content based but essence based I'm giving you here in one little talk the essence of what spirituality really is all about and that's really that's what it is there's not much else that you need to know beyond that in the sense of knowledge accumulated knowledge it is now a question of living that and if you don't want to live it that's fine it means you have to suffer a bit more to make this shift until the shift begins to happen a human being needs to reach the point of readiness where they say ok, I've done enough madness I've suffered enough I'm ready for the shift I'm ready to say ok this moment is all there ever is I might as well become friendly with it acknowledge it give it attention in whatever form it comes because the form is not the moment it's the form that this moment takes the now it's not what happens the now is not what happens it's the space in which it happens and essentially that space is consciousness everything happens in the light of consciousness you can say as some philosophers have done they question everything some philosophers have said is there anything I can be absolutely sure of because everything can be doubted I can doubt that you exist you can doubt that I exist it could be a dream who says we are not dreaming right now who says that us sitting here is not a dream you cannot know for sure but even if it is a dream there must be something real there because the dream must appear to something or someone there must be a light in which the dream appears a space in which the dream happens so even if it is a dream the one thing you cannot question is the fact of being itself being is the being may be a dream or it may not be a dream but one thing you can be certain of I am is something that cannot be doubted if I am dreaming that I am it is still the essence of I am is still there in the dream then and that is an amazing thing to realise there is one thing that is beyond doubt and that is I am it is not as the philosopher Descartes said I think therefore I am he confused consciousness with thinking perhaps because he was always thinking so he couldn't stop thinking and then he said if I can't stop thinking then the essence of who I am must be thinking I think therefore I know that I am he stopped too soon he should have taken one more step and realised that beyond thinking there is consciousness and then realised because I am conscious I am because there is consciousness I am I am that consciousness and that consciousness that people believe in our civilisation that the consciousness is a by-product of chemical reactions in the brain and many psychologists or scientists actually doubt that there is such a thing as consciousness they say no there is no consciousness it is just a chemical soup but they do recognise that the brain is the most complex thing on the planet and they understand a tiny fraction of it only so who built that incredibly complex thing through which consciousness comes if not consciousness so consciousness is prior to whatever appears here and what is the relationship between the brain and consciousness and some scientists are beginning to say they recognise the possibility that consciousness may be all pervasive throughout the universe and the brain is like a lens through which consciousness enters this dimension so it is like a receiver it reduces and receives consciousness so when you eliminate the brain you eliminate the receiver like a TV you can smash the TV and suddenly the image disappears but the TV didn't produce the image so that is our meditation I am consciousness not something to believe in but we are using those words only as a pointer to the essence of who you are thank you

[Speaker 3] (8:15:16 - 8:15:32)

there was a quote where you were discussing people's food choices and how that is connected maybe to their spirituality and I am wondering if you can elaborate on how that is connected especially concerning Ahimsa

[Speaker 1] (8:15:33 - 8:19:29)

thank you I would say I have never as I never do to tell people you should do this and then the right food choice will happen for you rather than giving an abstract guideline it needs to come from within rather than as something from without so if you are vegetarian that is wonderful it doesn't mean it immediately makes you into a person who is spiritual you could be egoically identified with being vegetarian in which case so I shocked a vegetarian once when I said did you know that Hitler was a vegetarian that person was very strongly identified with the mental image of me as a spiritually evolved vegetarian and so yes he was a vegetarian I don't know why he was a vegetarian perhaps I don't know I haven't read about it but I know that whenever people around Hitler were eating chicken soup so he said condescendingly so you are eating dead bird soup so it really is it comes from within you and you have to do what feels right what corresponds to your state of consciousness at any time when you go into when you even look at food or even think of food it is helpful to sometimes when I buy some food I go into a supermarket and I look at the shelf I imagine that this is going into my body and that opens up to it or closes down and so if you are in touch with the body then that is quite helpful it makes it easier the mind often doesn't really know what the body really wants the mind remembers some past pleasure and wants to repeat it and that is where overeating also occurs because it is just overeating is on the physical level the need to fill a sense of insufficiency that is ultimately there on the psychological, spiritual level the sense of not enough is ego the ego lives from that sense of insufficiency of not enough and of needing more and for some people that comes into the physical realm in which case you eat more than the body really needs or wants and again it is a spiritual dilemma and can only be ultimately transcended if you realize that you are not that needy entity that says I need more so body awareness helps a lot in food choice that is what it is that you feel and you will know you will not be in a dilemma you will know what is right for you and so this is all important answers need to come from within you

[Speaker 4] (8:19:40 - 8:20:11)

I understand how you can be in the moment and when it is a calm peaceful moment it is much easier for prolonged psychic or physical pain what is the process by which they learn to find some kind of stillness within that when it is so all consuming what they desire is for it to pass more than anything else

[Speaker 1] (8:20:11 - 8:28:44)

yes thank you sometimes people just know they haven't heard of the possibility of acceptance of what is they are still the largest part of the population of our planet is not even aware that such a possibility exists that you can accept a situation that usually would be called unacceptable and so a person really either it happens spontaneously there is a letting go of inner resistance because you cannot stand the pain anymore and very often the large part of the pain is the resistance to whatever is the case a large part of the pain is the psychological pain that says this is dreadful the last few years of my mother for example she was occasionally I was able to bring her into stillness but very quickly she was drawn out again by her mind and 90% of her suffering which was intense the last 2 or 3 years of her life 90% of her suffering was psychological yes her body was no longer working normally she found it increasingly difficult to walk then she had to walk with the help of this device a walker and then her eyesight was beginning to fail so those but she she did not have physical pain but she had physical discomfort and it became increasingly difficult to move from here to there by herself that in itself would have been yes not pleasant perhaps it would have been uncomfortable the eyesight failing yes you can't see very clearly anymore but that you can live with what you cannot live with is the enormous amount of psychological suffering that then she generated unconsciously for herself which said what if I go blind completely and she spent hours and hours in terror at this thought of going blind completely what if I won't even be able to walk anymore and so she spent many more hours thinking what if I'm going to spend my last few years in bed and I can't go to the bathroom by myself anymore what if that happens to me because that seems to be the way I'm going enormous amount of suffering and again I tried again and again to say if this is not what is now is just this what you're experiencing now is just this for brief moments she got it and she was free of the what if extrapolation of what if this continues a further area of suffering was since she had always been identified with her external appearance what are people going to think of me now they see me walking with this walker she must be dreadful for somebody to whom other people's opinion had always been very important so there was an enormous amount of psychological suffering there also so she was every day was consumed in intense psychological suffering so very often a large part of the suffering is psychic psychological emotional suffering generated unconsciously by the mind and then there is the actual physical suffering at times that is there in the form of pain or in the form of extreme discomfort or in the form of weakness the message is there is a way of going beyond unnecessary suffering which really is to say of going beyond all suffering because suffering is the way we use the term here suffering is the superstructure on top of what is the mind created baggage there is a way of being free of that so but not everybody is ready to hear this or those who hear this message which is in essence a spiritual message but not everybody is yet open to this spiritual message there are some people who don't even need this spiritual message to whom the realization of letting go comes spontaneously that happened to me so it came because the suffering the psychological suffering became so intense there had to be a letting go otherwise I would have had to kill myself there had to be a letting go and some the intelligence the greater intelligence within on some level must have realized that well it did that night it realized that I was doing it unconsciously I can't live with myself and who is the self that I can't live with it's the unhappy superstructure that has been created so to some people it happens by itself so it you sometimes see people in poor countries people who certainly wouldn't have never attended a workshop who would never have bought a spiritual book and perhaps never come into contact with any spiritual teaching perhaps beyond the the traditional religion of their country which in most cases is just a formal thing and yet sometimes you see people and they they may even occasionally a beggar you see who has gone through no suffering anymore you can see a light shining through their eyes the body may be unwell but they have gone into that inner acceptance of the isness of this moment and then something else has come through not everybody is ready whoever is ready for it it will happen for them they will whether it comes spontaneously or with the help of some so called spiritual teaching doesn't really matter if you are ready for it either it will happen to you spontaneously or will happen to you with the help of a spiritual teaching and you will suddenly hear it and suddenly see the possibility of what the Buddha called the end of suffering that's the whole teaching of the Buddha is has that purpose to bring about the end of suffering but neither at that time nor now is everybody ready to hear that so there are millions of people still on the planet who have never heard anything of the end of suffering or anything and if they heard it they still wouldn't hear it it still wouldn't it wouldn't sink in it's so sometimes people pick up a spiritual book whatever it may be Power of Now or any other spiritual book somebody has sent it to them says you must you really need this book sometimes people tell me they send it to they send it to a friend they send it to a relative an uncle their aging parent or the other way the aging parent sends it to their young daughter you must read this book you need it and so the recipient gets the book opens it says what does that mean it means nothing and then they well at best they put it on the shelf and it gathers dust or they may they even get angry they can even get they get angry some people whose ego is so strongly entrenched who don't want to let go of the suffering that's associated with ego they get angry when they see this in in the office Eckhart teachings one day apparently I don't I didn't see it but the a new earth arrived in a package in it somebody had put it through a shredder

[Speaker 6] (8:28:45 - 8:28:46)

and

[Speaker 1] (8:28:48 - 8:30:45)

and returned it to the office so this person was not ready you cannot force it on people and you cannot like if the apple isn't ripe then there isn't it just won't happen so there needs to be some degree of readiness and then either it happens spontaneously or it happens with the help of a teaching and then she it happens so all the spiritual teaching does it saves time which is not real but it's on this level you have to see levels beautifully expressed in the course in miracles where it says delay does not matter in eternity but it is tragic in time different levels so it just it saves time and suffering that's what spiritual teaching does because in the absence of a spiritual teaching you still have your suffering that's the teaching and the teacher everybody has that that's the main teaching and the main teacher even if you never come into contact with any spiritual teaching then your spiritual teacher is your suffering and that eventually it will wake you up eventually it could take time of course the awakening itself does not take time you can only wake up now one more quote from a course in miracles I haven't quoted that in a long time it has taken time to misguide you so completely but it takes no time at all to be who you are

2009 Eckhart Tolle on Ralph Waldo Emerson

[Speaker 1] (0:07 - 2:39)

What we commonly call man, or woman, the eating, drinking, planting, and counting man, eating, drinking, planting, counting, doing all kinds of things, what we commonly call man, the eating, drinking, planting, counting man, does not, as we know him, represent himself, but misrepresents himself. Him we do not respect, but the soul, whose organ he is, would he let it appear through his action, would make our knees bend. When it breathes through his intellect, it is genius.

When it breathes through his will, it is virtue. When it flows through his affection, it is love. And the blindness of the intellect begins when it would be something of itself.

The weakness of the will begins when the individual would be something of himself. So the blindness of the intellect begins with the belief that you are something of yourself, that's the mind, the self-serving mind. The weakness of the will begins when the individual would be something of himself, that's the ego, believing that you are an independent, autonomous, self-sufficient entity that has been put into this world from somewhere, not realizing you have come out of it, and you are an intrinsic part of the totality.

And so there comes the sense of separateness, of alienation, with that comes the continuous neediness of the ego, and with that comes the continuous underlying fear. It's always there when you're not connected, there's fear no matter what you may have achieved in the world of form, the fear will not leave you until the sense of separateness. It leaves you, you reconnect.

2009 How do we integrate spirituality into ordinary existence

[Speaker 2] (0:04 - 1:33)

For the past several years I've been making a concerted effort to live a especially sort of, you know, conscious, present, spiritual path and doing yoga and meditation and retreats and that sort of thing. And now when I hear people talk about, you know, spiritual stuff, I kind of cringe. It's like, I feel like there's this spiritual thing that's like separate, you know, separate from this, you know, this special dimension.

At first it was really great, you know, because I was meditating like, you know, ten hours in a weekend and I could tell everybody how cool it was and, you know, how special and unique I felt, you know, practicing this special spiritual life. And now I just, I listen to what you say and other people say and I just want to hear about like how I'm no one. And I mean that sincerely in being in this, but just not having to, even though, you know, I am conscious, all these words that just seem to get in the way a lot of the time.

I mean, you know, they're concepts and everything. But I just, I just, I hear the, I feel the sweetness of not, just really not having to be this special, unique, you know, spiritual person on top of being a regular person. It's like this, you know, double-decker sandwich that I got to carry around and I'm, and it's, and it's getting stale and I, I don't know.

I don't know if there's a question in there, but maybe you could speak, speak to that. Thank you. Yes.

Okay. Thanks.

[Speaker 1] (1:36 - 2:32)

Well, you overdid it a little bit with your spiritual practice, and hence the reaction now, because you have to get back to some normality after all that specialness over that, both your spiritual practice, where you thought of yourself as special and your practice as special, you went quite far to an extreme. And you're now experiencing the reaction to that extreme. And that's good.

In other words, you don't want to hear about anything spiritual anymore. I've had it, right? So you overdid it.

Now there's a reaction. Don't mention to me anything spiritual anymore, you say. But of course, you know, the famous expression, what is it, the baby and the bathwater?

Don't throw out your baby with the bathwater.

[Speaker 2] (2:32 - 2:33)

It's all spiritual.

[Speaker 1] (2:34 - 2:34)

It's all spiritual.

[Speaker 2] (2:35 - 2:36)

And it's so separate.

[Speaker 1] (2:36 - 6:21)

So now first you went to that extreme. Now you go to an extreme of reaction and eventually you end up in the middle where every moment is spiritual as it is. There's nothing special.

Spiritual is not separate from daily existence. So that's when we say spiritual, we're not referring to some realm out there that is to be achieved at some point where you become more special than you are now. It's not going to happen.

It's here and now. We're going deeper into the here and now that's spiritual. Now you are a little bit tired of these words because you went too far to that extreme.

So you have to realize if you're a little bit perhaps like a Christian who was once very religious and suddenly got fed up. And then occasionally I have people in talks who are ex-Christians. And the moment I say occasionally I say Jesus said they go oh don't talk to me about or anything it's remotely Christian.

I don't want to hear that. I've had all that. So they don't realize because of that.

Of course they had a somewhat distorted view of what the whole thing was about. So they didn't but they can't stand the terms anymore. And that's fine.

It's a phase. You will come through that. Maybe it's happening already.

It's the ordinariness. Spiritual means the more spiritual you are the more ordinary you are. The more non-special you are.

And again for the ego that means okay I have to become more non-special. How do I become ordinary? Okay that's...

I need somebody to teach me to be ordinary. So I understand your dilemma and perhaps you understand it also. And so this nothing special, chopping wood, carrying water.

Zen defines spirituality ultimately. What is the spiritual life? Chopping wood, carrying water which is the kind of thing you do in Zen monasteries.

Daily doing in my case it's buying some food in the store, going to have a cup of coffee, taking the dog for a walk in the forest, listening to the BBC World News, having a glass of wine occasionally with a meal, watching a movie. Nothing extraordinary and so quite an ordinary existence. And so it's hiding in there.

The spirituality is in there. It's not away from there. To just this.

And so I'm sorry about these words that we use. But language is limited. So we have to use certain words.

And perhaps the emotion around these words then eventually is going to go and they become neutral again. And you can use them for what they are, which is simply useful pointers no more. Thank you.

2009 What is my responsibility

[Speaker 2] (0:01 - 0:28)

The hardest word that I'm having trouble with right now is responsibility. And I have a hunch that most of the things that I consider responsibility are just my ego telling me things I have to do. But I also, when I think about the future of the earth and human evolution and stuff like that, sometimes I have big emotions of responsibility.

So, I'm just curious. Thank you. About the right relationship to the word responsibility.

[Speaker 1] (0:28 - 8:14)

Okay, thank you. It's a strange word. It has been pointed out that if you look at the word, it seems to be talking about the ability to respond.

So, to take responsibility for, what is it that you can take responsibility for primarily? It's taking responsibility for your state of consciousness which determines what kind of world you create. Because you are humanity.

Humanity is an abstract concept, it doesn't exist. Humanity is the human being. You are humanity.

So, for humanity to take responsibility, you need to take primarily responsibility for your state of consciousness because only a diseased or dysfunctional state of consciousness produces a diseased and dysfunctional world out there. By world, I mean the human-made world that has been imposed on what's already there, the planet, which is potentially, of course, a paradise. The planet, pristine, unbelievable jewel.

The being of great intelligence. We are not separate from it, but the being is going through a transitional process and every transitional process is critical. It may or may not work, in which case the being will go some other way.

But your state of consciousness determines what kind of world you create, what kind of action you take and what consequences your actions have. So here, this is why my main work is to address the cause of dysfunction, which lies in the human mind. The dysfunction of the human mind, or as it is sometimes called in Zen, the sickness of the human mind.

So, as I see it, and I don't think anybody who reads history can doubt it, there is a deep-seated dysfunction in humans, has been there for thousands of years. And if there's no shift in that, then the dysfunction will destroy us. It probably won't destroy the planet because the planet has enormous resources, but it would take a while for the planet to recover.

All you have to do then is primarily take responsibility for your state of consciousness now. Now. And this is what the entire teaching really is about.

What is my state of consciousness at this moment? Am I generating disturbance? Am I generating negativity?

Am I generating conflict and suffering for myself and others? Am I generating inner pollution? Am I polluting the beautiful being that I am with continuous, absurd movements of thought, producing negative emotions, producing an entire entity that is illusory, that I call the me.

So, to take responsibility, there needs to be, of course, an awakening where you can say, OK, I will take responsibility now. Some people don't know that there is even the possibility of taking responsibility, that's why you are so important. Anybody who realizes it, you are the beginning of the transformed world.

I don't know who first coined the famous phrase, you hear it quite often these days. You need to be the change. The change that you want to see out there, you need to embody that.

And that's not primarily what you do. There is something more primary than what you do. It's who you are.

Who you are is your state of consciousness. Whatever you do flows out of that. So, the primary is that.

So, the change is the transformed state of consciousness. Now, that is your responsibility. Once you have seen that, that's your responsibility.

Now you know it. People who are not yet at that level don't realize it, and that's fine. You can't expect the whole world already to be at that stage.

It's enough for you to take responsibility, knowing there are still a few millions others who don't know that they can take responsibility because they live in such unconsciousness that they see the entire evil in others. What they see as evil. It's all in them.

And they make half the world into their enemy. It's all out there. That's fine.

Only those are required to take responsibility who are up to it. But even those who are totally unconscious still, on the one hand, they don't know what they're doing. Obviously, as Jesus said on the cross, they know not what they do.

In other words, they are in the grip of unconscious forces. Unconscious mental-emotional streams. They don't know what they do.

They cannot be held responsible. And people say, well, they should be held responsible. No, they can't be.

They don't know what they do. However, the fact that they are not responsible because they can't be responsible does not mean that they do not suffer the consequences of their unconsciousness. So they generate suffering.

And eventually, suffering is the fire in which the ego gets burned up. The collective ego and the personal ego. That's the long way, the slow way, the painful way.

And then there is a shortcut, which is any spiritual teaching, it cuts through that. The painful way, the long way of waking up. More and more suffering.

The planet might not endure such a long learning process. So if the learning process of humanity does not become shortened, it is doubtful that the planet can allow humanity to learn through further suffering for another 500 years, or even 200 years, or even 100 years. So you are responsible for all that.

[Speaker 2] (8:14 - 8:20)

Thank you.

2009 Why do you often talk about the ego as a "personalized entity"

[Speaker 1] (0:01 - 4:43)

From Vince, in The Power of Now and in A New Earth, the way you describe the ego makes it sound like it has a personality of its own. It seems to be a collection of habits, desires, etc. that run counter to some deeper or more authentic dimension of reality.

What are the benefits and potential downsides to describing ego as a personalized entity rather than, say, as a more impersonal pattern? The question then, I'll just repeat it or paraphrase it, what is the advantage or the downside of talking about the ego in terms of an entity as if it were a personalized entity, or talking about the ego as simply a collection of impersonal patterns, mental, emotional patterns? The questioner mentions that I often talk about the ego as if it were an entity in itself.

So what are the benefits and potential downsides to talking about it as if it were an entity? Because these two are just two ways of looking at it. If you look at it in one way, it is like a person, like a being that wants to survive.

So this conglomeration of patterns working together, it wants to survive, it has certain needs, so it has certain characteristics of an entity. And that's why the the the downside of looking at it as an entity is that it might scare you. You may get scared, you might get scared of your own ego and think there's some demon inside me that wants to take over my life.

So that's the downside, then, is it creates some kind of emotion around it and you feel threatened by it. If you call it it's a collection of patterns, then you don't have that. But the downside of that is that you may underestimate the force behind it and the, it's the persistence behind the patterns and the fact that they are, the patterns are they have a certain organization to them, a certain, they kind of go together, they reinforce each other.

So there the downside is that you underestimate the egos. And you say, well, there's still some unconscious patterns in me. That's you probably won't even say that, but anyway, that's, you have the two ways of looking.

Neither one is the one right way. Another, I can add a third way of looking at the ego, which is to say it's an illusion. That's the Eastern approach, in many cases, to say the ego is an illusion.

Or you can even have a saying, the ego doesn't exist, it's just an illusion. And again, everything is a somewhat limited perspective and every perspective will have it's helpful, in some ways maybe helpful, and in other ways has a, as the questioner says, a downside to it. So not one perspective really can encapsulate the ego.

So you can really have, there's no need to embrace just one perspective. Realize that the ego is, it is a personalized entity, it is and consisting of a conglomeration of mental emotional patterns, and it is ultimately a dream-like entity, an illusory form. It's all that together, you could say.

And so that's then there's also no disagreement between one person saying there is no ego because it's an illusion, and the other one says, oh yes, there is. There's just two viewpoints, perspectives. Ego is of course the unobserved mind, plus its emotions.

2009-07 How can I work with the fear I project

[Speaker 2] (0:05 - 0:53)

Hello. I have a question about children. I did a lot of spiritual work on myself before I had children.

And now I realize that I've transferred all of my fear of death and need for security onto my children. And I don't know what to do about it. I don't know what the best course of action is because I realize that it's part of taking care of them is to protect them.

But on the other hand, it goes against being present and being in presence and definitely brings on anxiety and wanting to control situations and their lives.

[Speaker 1] (0:53 - 0:59)

Do you overprotect or how does it manifest in actual daily life?

[Speaker 2] (1:01 - 1:45)

Well, my children are unusual in that they both have special health problems. So they involved both my husband and I a great deal in caring for their health at a time when it was really important. But now we give them the same amount of attention even though for the most part they're okay.

So it's kind of like we got into that pattern of putting all of our energy into them. And it's continuing, but I'm not sure where to let go and where to hold on.

[Speaker 1] (1:45 - 15:37)

Yes. Thank you. Certain behaviors, once they are in place, have a certain momentum and they kind of take you over almost, especially then if it happens between two people or an even larger group.

Behavior pattern can become an energy stream that takes you over. You can have it, for example, when there are riots or whatever, sometimes they go on for days because the people who participate in the riots, nothing to do with you, of course, just a similar, same phenomenon on a larger scale, the phenomenon of people being in the grip of a certain behavior pattern which is an energy stream. And so they are not doing it, they are in the grip of it.

Nobody is doing it. So that can even happen here, a certain kind of behavior becomes initiated and then refuses to go away. Similar phenomenon would be when you are in a certain state, you don't want to get out of that state.

Children, for example, many children, it's a very simple example, and even adults, even when they're tired, they don't want to go to bed because somehow there's always something else, because the state of being awake wants to continue despite the tiredness. But once you're in bed and asleep, you don't want to get out of bed in the morning because then that momentum wants to continue. Or the child doesn't want to go into the bath or the shower because it doesn't want to change its state from dryness to wetness.

Once you're in the bath, you don't want to get out because it's so nice. So there are certain energies that want to sustain themselves and behavior patterns can be like that. So the essential thing then for you is to have spaces of awareness during the day from where you can be aware of whatever behavior you're manifesting at that moment so that you're not totally controlled by the old pattern.

And this is why it's so essential to have your daily life, your day, totally interspersed with what I call spaces. This is just another way of saying step out of your life situation, which is in time, past and future, and mind, and step into the present moment. So a little space opens up inside.

That's the space of awareness. From the awareness you can see the energy behind an old pattern of behavior and this pattern either makes you think a certain thought or it immediately goes into action. It makes you do something.

And so you can sometimes then feel the arising behavior before it manifests as an action. You can feel the impulse to go there and do this protective thing to the child when it's quite unnecessary. It's no longer needed.

So you can feel the impulse arising and recognizing it as an old impulse, but only from the space of awareness. And then you don't need to act on it. You can say, oh, there's the old impulse.

And so the impulse is there, arises, and then subsides. Or if thought comes in, some compulsive thought about your child, that also, from that space of awareness, that inner space of aware presence, the stillness, another word for it, from the stillness, you observe the thought that wants to push itself, is pushing itself into your mind. You have to think this now and say, okay, there it is.

And you allow it. You don't fight it because whatever you fight you make stronger. So you are not in the grip of it anymore.

So more aware spaces. Vital with all children to bring spatial consciousness, as I sometimes call it, or space consciousness, nothing to do with science fiction, to bring space consciousness into the relationship with your child. For example, it's essential not to always relate to your child from the point of view of doing.

Do this, don't do that. Now we need to do that. Now let's do that.

Don't do that. Don't go there. Go there.

But to relate to your child, that has its place, of course. But if that's all there is, then it's a very one-dimensional relationship because what is missing is being. What is missing is to bring in the spaciousness into the relationship where you can just be with the child and look at the child and listen to the child and be there as the aware presence for the child.

And so you don't want the child to do this or that. You're just there with the child and observing, watching, listening, being, giving attention. That's a beautiful thing.

And that's beyond any pattern. That's not an inherited pattern. It's presence.

Presence is not an old pattern. It's eternally new. It's timeless.

So most parents don't know that yet. They cannot bring the timeless dimension into the relationship with their child. And so the relationship becomes full of conflict eventually.

You have the best of intentions. And yet, then the child grows and then suddenly the child is reactive and you don't know why. And there's conflict.

The reason is that the most vital dimension is missing. You've done all you could but doing wasn't enough. Doing is necessary but it's not enough.

Being was neglected. So being means to bring the aware spaces into the relationship where doing doesn't matter so much when doing can still happen within it. But that's vital.

And of course not only into the relationship with your child but also bring it into every relationship. No relationship can thrive if there is no spaciousness in it. And the spaciousness is there when you look at the other person and there's no thought in your head while you look because you're simply there as an aware presence.

Then there's a true relationship beyond the forms, the psychological form and the physical form. You can look at another person and just be there as the aware presence with no thought, just an alert presence. That's what I call, that is space.

If you can't do it with another human being, start by doing it with a flower. But I know you can. If you can't do it with another human being, do it with a dog.

It might be a little bit easier to be the aware space with a dog because the dog is already free of thought. So the dog does not stimulate thought in you as a human being would do with the other person probably thinking. So that transmits itself.

It's contagious. Every state transmits itself. So you might be dragged into thinking also.

So to have that no thought in any relationship is vital. It's vital for your children so that old patterns cease to operate and the new can come in. Then from that state of consciousness you can respond to the need of the child but it's no longer responding from a pattern that is no longer useful.

From the aware space you also know what is right for any given moment, whether you need to allow the child to explore, for example, or whether you need to say, come away from there because there's a 50-meter drop you might fall. So there's always a balance between allowing the child to find out for him or herself and to protect the child and say, no, come here. It's a very subtle balance but it's much easier from awareness to know where the balance is and to do the right thing from there.

So your entire life then, it's not just that. So the question has wider implications. It's not just to do with your children but the spaciousness needs to be there inside yourself.

Wherever you go, if you go into nature, without spaciousness you're hardly there because you're thinking. While you're surrounded by beauty and aliveness, you're thinking. Now, you're either thinking about you and yourself and your problems and you're only aware of the forest or the seaside or the mountains or the clouds or the wind and the breeze and the beautiful noises of nature on the periphery of your awareness because you're thinking about your failed investments or, a little bit better, you might be thinking about what you're looking at.

Oh, I wonder what that's called. What's that? I can't remember what that's called.

I'll have to look it up. You're not fully present either. You're maybe a little bit more present than the person who's totally away but not much more because you're still trapped in concepts in your mind.

Can you be there simply as spacious awareness? Like a little child but deeper, more intense. Can you be anywhere as spacious awareness rather than a person?

That's a new state of consciousness that's arising. Can I be here as spacious awareness with anybody? Of course, as I said, probably a little easier with a dog or a cat because you can meet the dog or the cat in the state of no thought.

The dog has no thought because it hasn't arrived at thought yet. It's intelligent but it has no conceptual thinking. The dog hasn't arrived at conceptual thinking.

It's below conceptual thinking and you have gone beyond conceptual thinking into the spaciousness. And there you meet in no mind. That's why it's so beautiful to relate to an animal and why so many people feel drawn to animals these days because it's the only time they can be free of their conceptual mind when they look at the pet, the dog or the cat.

Nothing to think about. And you know the dog or cat is not thinking about you. They're looking at you.

No thought. No thought. It doesn't mean that you have regressed.

It means for you, you've gone beyond thinking, stepped above thinking. And then you can meet the entire dimension that is below thinking in a wonderful state of oneness, the oneness that you sense with all nature that's around you. If you're in conceptual thinking, you're separated.

You meet everything because when you're not thinking about the tree and the bird and the breeze and the insect, there is no me and them. There's a single phenomenon, the forms arising in consciousness. And so you're like God that says, and God saw what he, she, it had made and recognized it as good.

The consciousness out of which the whole universe came, you represent that when you're in the state of no thought. You represent the ground of being, of all being. And you walk around nature and you say, if you had a thought, it would say, oh, I did a good thing there.

And you see that even in the tension between opposites, even that there's a deeper good beyond that. Yes, occasionally one thing eats up another, but there is a greater harmony that envelops the whole. You cannot sense that harmony when you're trapped in conceptual thinking.

So next time you can tell me how it's going with your children. It's a spiritual practice like everything else. It becomes a spiritual practice.

2009-07 Must a culture lose its innocence to evolve

[Speaker 2] (0:03 - 0:50)

Eckhart, I've heard you make reference to a number of situations which I think convey the same idea. You've talked about certain cultures that go through a stage where this thought process becomes more developed, which I interpret in some ways as being almost a loss of innocence. Is it necessary for a culture or a stage of civilization to go through this process of losing innocence, of getting trapped in the thought and emotional process, in order then to regain the development of awareness to reach a stage of enlightenment?

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (0:59 - 10:51)

That seems to be the process when we look at it. There are still remnants of ancient cultures, very few these days, who have not gone through that process of loss of innocence or loss of connectedness with being, we could call it, the natural connectedness with being. And a few humans may still have it, very simple people, perhaps who live close to the land, never left.

Very simple people sometimes still have it in some cultures, a natural connectedness with the root of life, with being. They feel they are rooted in themselves, there's a stillness there. That is the natural.

What is happening when you lose it, whether it's an individual or whether it's a whole culture, a whole civilization, when you lose it, then you get lost in problem making, get lost in mind, the loss of original innocence, you could say, which of course is replaced by what is called in Christianity, original sin, which simply means the dysfunction that we all inherit that is there in the collective. So the original innocence is replaced by the original sin. Original innocence, however, is much deeper than original sin.

Original innocence is always still there, even when original sin comes in, it only covers up the original innocence. It does not destroy the original innocence. So the original innocence remains, and then a human being, either an individual or a whole nation, culture, tribe, moves through the phase of being identified with mind, ego, thinking, problem making, conflict, burden, suffering, life, inflicting suffering on other humans around you, continuous violence, and so on.

All that is part of the loss of connectedness with being. That's why so many ancient cultures, and the innocent state, we once were in that. Many ancient myths exist in different cultures throughout the world that speak of the golden age, something, a time when everything was beautiful.

We have it in Indian mythology, at the beginning, humans, they say, lived in connectedness. I'm paraphrasing, but they were one with life, one with the divine. They didn't inflict suffering on others.

There was no violence. Many cultures have that myth still. It survived as a myth.

It's also expressed, of course, in the Bible, at the beginning of the Bible, like a paradise, the loss of paradise. And paradise, of course, is not a place, it's a state. So the loss, is it necessary?

Well, it's happening, it has happened and is happening, so it seems to be an evolutionary process. When innocence is regained, connectedness with being is regained, it is not the same as the state, as that state that was lost. And that, perhaps, is why it is necessary to go through the state of being lost.

When it is regained, it is regained at a deeper level. There's a great deepening. Innocence is there, but from natural innocence, you now go to conscious innocence.

You're fully conscious of your state, rather than living in natural. For example, this is reflected in your relationship with nature, as your consciousness changes. First, let's say, in the innocent state, there's a oneness with nature and a respect for nature, as the old civilizations had, as the Native Americans had, a respect for nature.

They recognized nature as alive with spirit force. They recognized that the tree is not just a dead object that I can use for making money, or for my benefit, or to build a house, or whatever. They recognized the tree is alive with something more than what you see, and they respected that life.

Every animal, even if they had to kill an animal, they respected the life that is in the spirit presence in the animal. So everything, they inhabited a universe that was alive with presence. Now, then, we lost that, and more and more, we began to inhabit a universe that we kept.

We deadened ourselves to the aliveness of the universe. We can't see it anymore. So that we ended up looking at the whole of nature as a utilitarian thing to be used, but no longer recognized the essential aliveness that is in everything in nature.

Why couldn't we recognize it anymore, that it is essentially sacred and essentially one with the life that we are, because we had lost that within ourselves. We had cut ourselves off from the root of being. We were completely trapped in mind, and then nature became dead, and we could then exploit it, do anything, because we didn't know that there was a sacred presence there.

We've lost the sacred presence within ourselves. Well, it was covered up. Then we regain it.

Then again, nature is alive, but this time, there is the added dimension of conscious awareness. When you've always lived in oneness with nature, you don't even know that you live in oneness with nature. It's totally natural.

But when you do it with full consciousness, there is an added dimension to it. And so this is what's happening, and this, it seems to be why the process is that we have to move through the stage of being lost and then regaining. Perhaps the truth of that is expressed in the parable of the prodigal son, which predates, actually, it's used in various cultures, it predates even when Jesus used it.

It exists in different forms. The son of a rich father says to the father, Father, give me my inheritance. I want to go out and make a life for myself.

And so the father says, OK, you go out into the world, and the son goes out into the world, squanders his wealth, becomes a destitute and becomes a beggar, and even forgets where he comes from. And then eventually the father sends messengers to the son to remind him who he is. Don't you remember that you are?

And the beggar says, No, me? The son of the king? No.

And gradually the memory comes back to him, and then he comes back to his father's house, and the father now loves him more than before. That's the story. So there's a deepening, what that parable means, there's a deepening after you've been lost.

When you regain that which has been lost, it is regained at a deeper level because you're now fully conscious of it. There's a conscious dimension, the awareness that is there. That's why that seems to be our destiny.

But perhaps there is no... I just know that this is how it is. There may be exceptions.

There may be certain people on the planet or small groups of people who don't go through it. Who knows? We'll have to see.

I can only see the general trend, the general movement seems to be, Yes, we have to go through that. There may well be exceptions to that. There may well be certain people who remain in the state of innocence, and that is wonderful too.

I don't know. So that's the paradise regained. That is the cycle.

And so I know that I had to go through it. You had to go through it, or are still going through it. And so the state of innocence is lost in childhood.

Every child is still born with it. But then very quickly, these days, it is lost. Well, it's never lost.

It's obscured. That's the journey.

2009-09 Do you believe that there is a consciousness to the universe

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 5:37)

How do you experience God? What do you see when you see someone? Do you see more than their physicality?

How I experience God, I've been talking about, this is really the only thing I talk about. Now, in different words, what do you see when you see someone? Do you see more than their physicality?

No, I don't see more than their physicality. I see exactly what everybody else sees. But I feel or sense something that is deeper than the physicality, and that is hard to put into words.

There's a sensing of, there's more to you than what I see, not as a thought, but as a knowing. And I, because I know there's more to this form than I can see or you can see here. So the, the consciousness beyond the form, looks through the form, and senses of, we don't have a word for it.

I can say we, I sense or I feel, it's not quite right. Maybe sense it is the closest, can't, I would have to create a new word for it. I sense the, who you are or what you are, beyond what I see, or beyond what you are telling me, or beyond what your mind is saying, or your emotions are doing.

So there is a, there's a connection with presence, the presence that is in you, the presence that you are. And that I have, I have that more strongly than what I see. So that kind of almost obliterates what I see.

What I see is the same as everybody, anybody sees. But that, that strong sense of consciousness, the alive presence that you are, is almost stronger than what I see. So there's, there's more of my attention is in that than in, in my perception of what I see.

It's hard to put into words something that is so far beyond words. And, but this is not something special to me. This is something whenever you look at a human being, and for a moment be free of definitions or interpretations, then you neither of yourself nor the other, nor definitions, be there as just a spacious awareness.

Then you begin to sense an aliveness within you, and the same aliveness in the other. And then whatever the human beings do isn't that important anymore. You don't react to.

They may be saying something silly, or intelligent, or whatever. It doesn't matter that much. There's something deeper there.

They may be deluded. They might want something from you. It doesn't matter anymore.

It's very, it's very beautiful, because it's only from that place that you can really relate. Not the, it's not the personality, the mind level. That's, that's the way to go for humans, to recognize each other as essentially sharing the same life, the same consciousness, recognizing oneness, on a sense level, not, not an intellectual level, feeling oneness.

And that's love in a deeper sense, not the ego love, but the true love. You can, the love comes from there. It's, you'd recognize that there is ultimately no other.

The more you think in terms of others, the more you're in ego. He's like that. She's like that.

She does that. He does that. Oh.

Remember I wrote in the book, the famous Jean-Paul Sartre philosopher said, that hell is other people. In the, in the French original, if you translate literally, he says, hell is the others. That's the ego's perception of other people.

A strong ego would see other people like that. And of course it can become so strong that you end up with things like paranoia, because every strong ego has already an element of paranoia in it, even before it's recognized as pathological, when it's still normal, it has an element of paranoia in it. And so the, any strong ego goes around the world in that way of what does he want?

What does she want? What do you want from me? Oh, I don't, I know what he's thinking.

Evil intentions, and so on. Very critical of others. They want something that's all very normal, but already part of the insanity.

2011 Eckhart Tolle Creating A New Earth Audiobook

[Speaker 1] (0:15 - 12:02)

We need to understand a few basic things about this, and I'd like to remind you of something that's already been written in The Power of Now, and that is that your life consists of, what you call your life, is usually your life situation. Your life consists of your life situation, which is your job, your financial situation, your relationships, your living situation, your health situation, whether you're young or old, or whatever is happening in your life, all that makes up your life situation. And for most people, that's all there is.

They don't know anything else. Their whole life consists, what they call my life, when they refer to my life, they're talking about their life situation. And in The Power of Now, I differentiate between your life situation, which is one level, and a more fundamental level that I call your life.

We are going to talk about these two levels today, at a time when, for many people, their life situation is becoming challenging. They're encountering new limitations suddenly coming into their life situation. The only difference between our present situation in the world, and what normally happens, is that many people experience similar things at the same time.

So many people at the present time experience some form of challenge or limitation coming into their life, as many of the structures, the external structures in the world, are becoming shaky, and some have collapsed already. As you may remember from A New Earth, I speak about the collapse of Soviet communism, which nobody could have predicted, and I speak of the impending collapse of many of the structures that are ego-based, that are an external reflection of an inner state of consciousness, that is the ego. And those structures, which of course includes financial structures and so on, are now beginning to collapse, and something totally new will arise.

How long this collapse will take, I cannot say. But everybody can clearly see, and even the experts are talking about a systemic, I hear this word on the radio, a systemic crisis, or something like that. In other words, the crisis is not to do with this or that on the surface of things, but concerns the very structure of these organizations, in the same sense that the human mind, the problems of the human mind, have not to do with content of whatever is the content of your mind, but the very structure of the mind, the human mind, that needs to change.

So for many people, limitation in one form or another is coming into their life situation. And that is actually not what the media wants us to believe, that these things are dreadful. The challenge that many people are encountering at this time is actually that which will push them into a new state of consciousness.

That is the possibility, that is the promise. Whenever you encounter a crisis situation, whether it's personal or collective, there is the opening into a new way of being, the possibility. It doesn't mean that everybody will embrace that possibility.

So we need to first of all see, not believe what we are told in the media, that we should be in a state of fear, that the only response, the only natural response to what's happening is a state of fear. That is an unconscious response. We need to see that change is absolutely necessary in this world, and the dissolution of many of the ego-based structures is absolutely necessary for the planet to survive, and for humanity to survive.

So what's happening is not dreadfully bad. What's happening needs to happen. The totality, the intelligence behind phenomena is doing it.

So it is a good thing, and if challenges come into your life, which might mean limitation, financial limitation, you may have to move somewhere else, you may have to downgrade, uncertainty may come into your life. Oh, that shouldn't be happening. I should know what's going to happen for the next 20, 30 years of my life.

Well, you don't know anymore. And that is wonderful that there is suddenly an opening into uncertainty. So is it possible for you to embrace uncertainty, and not demand that you should know what's going to happen to you in your life situation, to embrace not knowing, to embrace uncertainty, and to embrace, yes, there are difficulties, there are challenging situations, but that is part of being here on this planet in this form.

I'd like to remind you of a book called The Road Less Traveled, and I never got to read the whole book. I basically got stuck on the first two sentences of the book, and those first two sentences of the book were so good that you didn't need to read anymore. I don't know whether that's a good thing for an author to write such a good book, that all you need is the first two sentences.

And if you don't get that, you can still read the rest of the book, but if you get that... So the first sentence is, life is difficult. Okay?

And the second sentence, I don't know literally, but it says something like, and if you know that life is difficult, and you accept that life is difficult, it's no longer difficult. It's only, it's difficult when, if you say it shouldn't be. But if you go with, yes, the uncertainty, this is part of being here in this form, there is continuous uncertainty, and the certainty, the rigidity of things is an illusion.

The certainty that all these structures are solid, and you can sometimes see it, that the world trade center looked very solid, and gone. And all the structures, the big banks, they looked so solid, nothing could possibly happen there, forever. And within a few weeks, they're beginning to crumble.

Soviet Communism, nothing looked more solid than Soviet Communism. You say, this is so rigid, it can't possibly, must at least survive for another thousand years. The rigidity of it, and the people who embodied that, it's not going to move.

When you saw the Soviet rule, greeting the military parades, huge, huge tanks and rockets going past, nothing can be more solid than that. And within a year, collapsed. The whole thing collapsed.

Now, one good thing, of course, about traveling to India is that the external reality is a little bit less solid than in the West. So you're less likely to delude yourself that you live in a solid reality that can be controlled, or that you can be in control of. There you see the structures are actually a bit shaky everywhere.

And even if you go into a luxury hotel, you never know what's going to happen. So we are learning to go with the flow of things, as the expression goes. And the flow of things is fluid.

It's not a continuous change, something new is arising. And why demand that you should, there should be certainty in your life. Be open to uncertainty and see how empowering that actually is.

And not say, okay, but what about my pension plan? What's the mutual funds? I had saved all my life and now, look, I got the statements, I lost 50% of it.

Yes, so, but you're still here. That's your life situation. Whatever happens, your life situation.

And you may remember a year ago, you were looking at your mutual funds and said, wow, it's made so much money. It's great. It feels good.

[Speaker 3] (12:02 - 12:04)

And then you look at it again.

[Speaker 1] (12:05 - 25:28)

Okay, now I can relax now. And then you relax and then the next one comes and says, oh my God, life is difficult. Things are dissolving.

And see, if you resist internally what is happening, as the media teaches you to do, then of course, you resist the flow. You resist the arising of the new, the arising of the new state of consciousness primarily in you, and eventually the arising of new external expressions of that state of consciousness, a new world. We don't need to be concerned about that.

That comes of itself. What we need to be concerned about is to be open to this transformation, to be open to not knowing. So there's our life situation.

And it's interesting. There may be interesting changes happening in our life situation. And we say, it's fine.

Whatever change comes, you look at the situation and see, yes, all of a sudden a limitation is coming into my life. I lost my job and my investments are not worth that much anymore. Okay, then how can you overcome these limitations?

Limitations can be overcome always on two levels. There is the external limitations. Limitations can be overcome on an external level.

And other limitations can only be overcome on an inner level. So you need to see whatever situation you encounter in your life, is there anything I can do to overcome these limitations? It might involve moving somewhere else where you don't have a huge mortgage anymore.

It might involve moving to a different location. It might involve finding a different job or thinking outside of the box and doing something totally different you'd never even thought of, of thinking creatively. So whatever limitation you encounter in your life, you look at first of all at the externals of the situation.

Is there anything I can do? And then you become still. And then you start thinking again.

And you look at the situation. What are the possibilities? Then you become still again.

Then you look again. You think or you talk to someone. And then you go back into stillness.

And that process may take a while, not necessarily just a day, of looking what it is, what is it that I can do, and going within where you're not looking for anything, but become comfortable with what is here and now. And when you become comfortable with what is here and now, you're stepping out of your life situation into life. Life is now.

Life has nothing to do with what's going on in your life. It has nothing to do with past and future, or what your relationships are, or what your financial situation is, or your living situation is, or even your health situation is. That's all your life situation.

That is not life. Your life situation exists in time, past and future. Life is now.

So it is vital that you learn to step out of your life situation periodically so that your life situation does not absorb your entire attention continuously, because if it does, it'll drain you and eat you up, because you'll have continuous stuff to think about, one problem after another in my life, my life situation. Do you think, oh now I have to, what about that problem and that? And you're thinking about your, there's a continuous succession of problems that I need to worry about, and if I don't worry about it, it's all going to collapse totally, even worse than it has done so already.

I need to be responsible and worry. You're being eaten up by your life situation. Your mind, it comes down to your mind, because your mind gives power to your life situation.

The continuous involuntary mind activity really is your life situation. If you don't think about your life situation, there is no life situation. What situation?

You come into, you step out of that periodically, vital to learn that, and come into life, and then the mind says, what do you mean by life? Okay, let's see where that is, that life. You step out of time, your attention, you remove your attention from past and future, okay?

How do you do that? Well, a little help would be, what about now? What's wrong with now?

Do I have a problem now? Now? Of course I have a problem now.

Look at my bank statement. Of course I have a problem now. I need to move by the end of the month.

I got no, I'm not talking about the end of the month, or what's going to happen to your mutual funds. I'm talking about, do you have a problem now? No.

I can't see any. I'm trying hard to find a problem in this moment. Well, there's a stain.

No, there isn't. I'm just saying, there's a stain here. Is that a problem?

No, it's a stain. Okay. I have a backache.

I don't. It's just an example. I have a backache.

Is that a problem? Only if you start thinking about it and saying, am I going to have to live with that for the rest of my life? Or, why do I always have a backache?

I wonder what's wrong with me. No, it's not a problem. It's a backache.

It's just that. You stay with what is now. Don't spin some stories about what is now.

Don't judge it, compare it, say it shouldn't be. You come into now. So, the first level of now is whatever is around you.

That's only level one. Level one of now is your sense perceptions. Wow.

And that's already a revelation. When you step out of being totally possessed, eaten up, eaten alive by your life situation, and you step out of that into just, even just becoming aware of sense perceptions, you're entering the now, because you can only perceive now. And you're not perceiving any problem.

You're perceiving what is now. Sense perceptions, this room, the people, the incredible variety of human forms. Amazing to see.

Every human form is different and unique in some way. It's beautiful. You can sit in a public place and be in the now and watch people.

Nothing to do with your life situation. You're there as a presence, watching, perceiving this moment, the incredible fullness of this moment around you in the form of life forms, human life forms, animal life forms, plant life forms, the air, the incredible forms and shapes that are continuously moving, the spectacle of phenomena, unbelievable variety. It's fantastic.

And you have no idea that this is going on around you when you're totally trapped in your life situation, which really is your mind. So we are learning periodically to step out of that level that I call life situation and enter life. Life is now.

This was level one of what is around you. Be alert to that. Because otherwise you miss the whole thing because you're so concerned about your conceptual reality, which really is what a life situation is.

You're so concerned about your conceptual reality that you miss reality. Your conceptual reality eats up your entire attention continuously, and you're worrying about your life, which in reality is your life situation, but you call it your life. It's not life at all.

And so this is a dreadful fate for a person to be consumed by their life situation. And so they miss the life. They're trying to find the life, the fullness of life in their life situation.

And they're hoping that if they can eventually sort out their life situation so that they can find life. But if your life situation is all you have, you're never going to find life because your life situation is a set of thoughts and concepts in your head. So to become empowered, you need to rise.

One could say you rise above your life situation, which doesn't mean you don't deal with things anymore. You still deal with things, but you realize there is a level or a dimension to you that is far more powerful and vital than whatever is happening in your life. So accessing that dimension is vital, and that really is what spirituality is all about, not having some weird ideas about this or that or beliefs.

It's nothing to do with ideas. It's nothing to do with concepts. There's no such thing as spiritual concepts.

Concepts are not spiritual. They're not even spiritual thoughts. There's no such thing as a spiritual thought.

A thought is not spiritual because thought is form. Spiritual is the formless dimension in yourself. Level one, then, whatever surrounds you.

You can say, yeah, but this is still form too. Yes, it's form too, but it's not a mind form. It's not a conceptual form.

It's what is here in the world of physical forms. Be open to that. Level one of the now.

Level two of the now, don't get attached to the numbers. I'm just saying two. Level two of the now is feeling that you're alive.

Level two is, so your attention was on what is around you. The world is multifaceted. There's incredible play of phenomena all around you, and you acknowledge that, and it's beautiful.

It is nothing to do with what your relationships are doing at the moment or what your bank statements are doing at the moment or whether you have a job or you don't have a job or whether your wife has just left you or the husband has done this or whether you're... nothing to do with any of that. You're stepping out into presence.

Level two of presence is to feel that you're alive inside. You've already noticed that the world around you is alive. Well, that's a big step forward.

You have noticed that the world around you is vitally alive. So to notice that, you need to have stepped out of your life situation, your conceptual reality.

[Speaker 4] (25:29 - 25:29)

Wow.

[Speaker 1] (25:31 - 4:14:15)

Okay, that was... It's beautiful, the play of forms. And then you feel that you inside are alive.

Your body is alive. You feel the aliveness in your hands, your arms, your legs, and the totality of aliveness, the global aliveness inside in the background. And you can still look around and see the incredible aliveness around you.

Now, if you feel the body inside, you're already moving to an even more vital dimension than the vitality of life forms. There's your body. It feels good to be embodied, to sense the aliveness even in an everyday situation.

When things are going... Listen to the news and say something dreadful has just happened. There will be negative growth next year in the economy.

Negative growth. What does that mean? We are now officially in a recession.

Oh, my God. We are going to buy less at Christmas this... Oh, no.

We are not going to run around like mad rabbits this Christmas. Oh, that's dreadful. So even when you listen to the news, I'm exaggerating a little, but there's some truth in it.

Even when you listen to the news, you can feel the aliveness within while they're saying, we are now officially in a recession. The entire automobile industry of the United States may collapse and drag everybody else down. And you feel the aliveness inside.

So there you have something more vital than that. And if you are part of the automobile industry of the United States, and if it affects you directly or indirectly, when the situation arises externally, then you will deal with it. You will address it now.

And you accept whatever is and you look at it, okay, what is it that I can do? And then you go into life. And then you go out again and look at your situation.

Find the balance between dealing with your life situation and entering life. So level two said the aliveness in the body while you listen to the news, for example, or while the phone rings and somebody says, oh, dear, we need to do something. Well, if anybody comes to you and says, we need to do something, you step out of the life situation and become present, where there are no problems.

So you can hang on to your inner body. And then an even deeper level of your life situation, which of course, they're all connected, they're ultimately all one. At the deepest level, the one that contains it all is the realization that underneath it all, who you are is not the thoughts that go through your head, or whatever's happening externally.

But you can actually sense within yourself that you are that in which all the phenomena appear. That's the deepest level of life. Life is the consciousness that you are.

The I, the I am. You attach nothing else to I am. I am is the deepest who you are in your innermost identity.

That is consciousness. It is formless. It is the light in which everything appears.

And to feel yourself, even at this moment, to feel that nothing that can be defined is who you are. Nothing that can be thought is who you are. Nothing that happens around you has anything ultimately to do with who you are in your essence.

Success or failure ultimately has nothing to do with who you are. Success cannot give you your reality. Failure, success, is not who you are.

It's all the play of forms. It's all to do with time. It's your life situation.

Stepping out, out of that, into the power and the fullness of the present moment where you know yourself as consciousness itself. Another word you could use as a pointer is to realize the stillness within yourself. Consciousness is still, alive, vibrant, but still.

Underneath all the things that are happening externally and internally in your mind and your emotional field, you remain as that. And that can be in any situation. When you are the Master, the spiritual Master knows him or herself as consciousness in any external situation, you can actually sense a spaciousness inside you, no matter what's happening.

And even while you're thinking, or you're going to think much less, because there's no reason to think totally unnecessary things all the time, to sense always in the background the I am, the stillness. That which is precious, something very precious, indestructible. And sometimes you may need to encounter a life-threatening challenge that suddenly comes in to sense that.

But whenever a form in your life begins to dissolve or collapse, there's a greater chance to discover within yourself that which is beyond form. So let's say the entire stock market collapses, and then you get your statement and it says zero. That moment of looking at your balance, and you say your mutual funds have gone from $500,000 to $5.

So this form that was important to you has dissolved. And you look at that, and instead of resisting, because this is what is, ultimately it's only a figure on a piece of paper. Only when you start thinking does it become a big problem.

But the reality of it is, you're opening this thing, you're taking it out of the envelope, and you're reading, and there is little scribbles, computer printout, which has a little figure on it. And that's all it is in the reality of the present moment. Unless you make a problem out of it and start thinking what's going to happen to me in the future.

How am I going to survive in my old age? I've worked for nothing, 30 years of work for nothing. What does all that mean?

It means it's a story around the simplicity of a figure on a piece of paper. And then once you are trapped in that, you're lost. So to see very clearly, this is the master, you're becoming a master when you just see the simplicity of any moment without going into spinning stories around me, my past, my future.

It was all in vain, I failed, it's all been pointless, I'm never going to make money again. All mind stories, mind created stories. So the solution to your financial or other problems is stepping out as much as you can into the aliveness of the present moment, which is who you are in your essence.

You are the now in which everything happens, the consciousness in which everything unfolds, the timeless space. And then look at the situation. So you're coming from a, you're rooted in a deeper place.

And then you're dealing with the externals. But always be very careful because the externals have a pulling power. And you're living in a world that's totally hypnotized by the externals.

And in a world that continuously tells you how important the external is. And every time you listen to somebody say, this is so important, you should be worried, you should be in fear, you should think about this, let's discuss it. And the world has this pulling power.

So you need to realize everybody's hypnotized into believing that this is all that there is. And this is absolutely serious and important. It is important perhaps, but it is only relatively important.

It is not of absolute importance. Of absolute importance is finding the essence of who you are. And then deal with things from there.

So that a different energy flows into, even into what you do. So the two are not separate. Even your so-called life situation changes is affected by the power of life itself when you are aware of that in yourself.

So a different level of consciousness flows into what you do. A different energy flows into what you do. When you realize that whatever you do is at best only relatively important.

Whatever happens is relative. Only one thing is absolute, and that is finding life, or as Jesus calls it, the fullness of life, which has nothing to do with your life situation. And the strange thing is, the life situation tends to unfold with greater ease when you are connected with something that dimension that is deeper than life situations.

And then even on the external level of your life situation, things happen more lightly, more easily. And that's the beauty of it. And this is the practice then.

And no better opportunity than the present time when you are being challenged rather than being deluded for a few more years that all is well, when it isn't, because eventually things are going to dissolve around you anyway. And if they dissolve, don't dissolve around you, then you dissolve before they do. So it's better to see that fact then wait until you're 92 years old, you may not be that alert anymore, to find the reality of who you are and the reality underneath phenomena.

So here's the mastery of life is to live in two dimensions simultaneously and then see what happens. You're practicing then every moment and whatever situation that arises in your life becomes a practice for staying present within that situation to feel the depths of who you are, the power of now, the power of consciousness as you deal with things. So this is what it means to become empowered.

That's what everybody wants, but they're looking for it where they can't find it. They are looking for some power in their external life situation. The power must come from within.

It does not come from your thoughts or from whatever happens out here. So another way of putting this is look at whatever limitations arise in your life. Let's say you're trapped somewhere in some unpleasant situation or place and you want to get out.

Look at the situation. What is it that I can do? Or perhaps there's nothing you can do for right now.

It's another, it's a beautiful thing to see at this present moment there's nothing I can do. I can't even pick up the phone. It's Sunday today.

I can't call anybody. Nobody's at work. There's nothing I can do except be with what is.

Stay. The next day, action arises. Not losing yourself in the action, another important thing, because it's very easy once you start to speak and to act, you totally lose yourself in that.

You will get stressed. The slightest stress means you've lost yourself in your life situation again. It is possible to deal with things effectively without stress.

Just be more powerful than the situation. For most people, the situation is always more powerful than they, so they feel smaller than the situation. That's normal.

And that's a delusion, because it all arises from consciousness. So you are actually far more powerful. The power of who you are is far greater than anything external, but that's, people don't know that.

So they're always reacting to something, defending themselves against this or that, realizing that the situation actually has very little power. And if your change of, your state of consciousness changes, external reality reflects the change. This does not mean that anything remains absolutely solid in external reality.

It still is subject to continuous fluctuations, so you don't attach yourself to anything. But it's beautiful to see that external reality reflects basically your predominant inner state. If your inner state is empowered, and it can only be empowered when you are not lost in your life situation, then the empowerment is reflected around you.

And it may come in many forms. It may come as financial abundance. It may come as anything, any form that the aliveness can take.

So it's an incredible thing to discover that you are actually more powerful than the world around you. Not in the narrow, egoic sense that you say, I can control everything that happens. No.

So this is a wonderful opportunity now to experiment with consciousness, with your life situation and your life, to find where is the life at this moment? Do you feel the aliveness of this moment? And then the universe uses you because it is going somewhere.

There's an evolutionary impulse at work on this planet and everywhere else, because if it's happening here, it's happening everywhere, as above, so below. Then the consciousness that wants to come into this world can freely flow through you and express itself. How?

In many different ways, according to your particular form. It might be some enlightened business. It may be that you're producing something that affects many people and brings that consciousness to others through some artistic creation or this or that, innumerable possibilities, how you can be an opening for the evolutionary impulse of the universe that wants to come through.

And then wherever you go, people will be affected by this transformed energy. You cannot not affect the world. When you live in the new state of consciousness, whoever you come into contact with is affected by that.

Even if you were a hermit, you would still affect the collective consciousness. If you are a frequency holder, as I call it in a new earth, a frequency holder is somebody who is not very interested in going out into the world and changing the world or building up some huge, great organization to make the world a better place or to create a great work of art or to come up with some new discovery or write a great book. Not that there's anything wrong with these things.

For some people, that is their life purpose. But there are some other people who are not drawn to that, who are content with remaining in a relatively small circle of influence. Contemplatives is the old word for those people, people who don't want to go out there and change the world.

They just want to be present. And that's fine because they hold the frequency of that state of consciousness. Because whatever state of consciousness you are in affects the totality of consciousness, is part of the totality of consciousness.

So I was a frequency holder for a large part of my life, never very interested in going out into the world and achieving the great things. I was kind of happy being withdrawn until something came into my life and I felt there's more that I can do. That was a thought that came.

I was doing little work, workshops with people, 10 people at a time, 15 people for a number of years, giving talks in people's living rooms. And then it was fine. In many ways, I felt happy being a semi-hermit and occasionally going out and doing little things.

Happy not being famous. I never thought I would want to be famous. But then the thought came, I could do so much more in this world, but it doesn't seem to be happening.

And one day I sat under an oak tree. You could call this, a question, later on we'll have some questions. Somebody's asking a question about divine discontent.

The question is, do you ever experience what might be called divine discontent? That is, a discontent that leads to something very positive. And you could say that there was a moment that came at that time when I experienced a mild form of divine discontent, which simply is a sense of, there's more than I can do, that I could do, but it's not happening.

That's a mild form of divine discontent. It's not some unhappiness that says, oh, I have failed, I'm in my forties and what have I achieved? That's not divine discontent.

That's just a form of normal unhappiness. With divine discontent, there is not a lot of mind activity around me and my life. There's just a sense of, my present life situation has these limitations around me, but I could go beyond that.

I could be much vaster. The world needs what I know comes through me. I know that the world needs that.

So why isn't the world, I'm speaking for some of you too, why isn't the world opening up these channels for me? So that was the divine discontent. So I sat under an oak tree in Somerset, where I would sometimes go, magnificent oak tree.

And I said to the universe, which ultimately to myself, please use me. I was talking to myself ultimately, because I am that. Please use me.

I'm here. So I was a frequency holder. And yet after many years of a frequency holder, I had this sense of, okay, now expansion is what is called for in this world, a moment of divine discontent.

Please use me. I didn't hear any answer. And then I said something that some years later, I almost said, maybe I said too much.

I said, I want acceleration. Okay. And then I went home and nothing happened for a few months.

I didn't know that while nothing was happening for a few months, in my little cottage in Somerset, the countdown has already started, like the rocket ship, which goes 10, 9, 8, 7, 6. And then one day I woke up and said, I have to move. I have to move to the West Coast of North America.

And that was the beginning. And so the rocket ship had taken off suddenly. And finally I landed at the desk of Oprah a few years later.

I never wanted that much. It's too much. And then the lesson was to surrender to that.

It wasn't too much. It was what was needed. If I had been stuck to some previous idea that I had about how my life should unfold, then I would be saying, oh, I'm overwhelmed.

It's too much. Well, this is surrender now to what is now, surrender to this enormous energy stream that's coming through. You asked for it.

You said acceleration. And there it is. And continuously, even in this, my life, many people believe my life situation must be wonderful.

In many ways it is. But no life situation is totally satisfying. And there are always things that happen and change.

There's no ultimate certainty in any life situation. You cannot derive long-lasting satisfaction from any life situation, even if you become famous. I can tell you that now.

The life situation has not the power to satisfy you for long. The satisfaction needs to be found in life. And life is now.

And if you find that, then your life situation is fine. It unfolds and becomes empowered, probably. So don't expect that your life situation does not have the power to make you fulfilled.

And it does ultimately not have the power to make you feel unfulfilled. You have to go deeper where you are, bigger than that. Although there was this divine discontent for a little moment, I'm certainly not happier or more fulfilled now than I was when I, as one magazine said, Eckhart Tolle suddenly emerged from complete obscurity.

So when I lived in complete obscurity, I didn't know I was in complete obscurity, but I was not less happy than I am now. The state is the same. So there's no sense it is fulfilling to see that consciousness is evolving through this form, yes.

But there's no increased happiness through that. The happiness was already there, basically. Because I was deeply rooted, as I still am, in life.

Life is always more vital to me than the life situation. I've always going, even now, I'm always a little bit out of balance. Even now, although great things are happening, but I'm not recommending that to anybody, I'm just saying, I'm a little bit out of balance, because I'm always more vitally drawn to the present moment and the aliveness of that than whatever I have to deal with on an external level.

So I'm always going a little bit too much, sometimes it's a little bit chaotic around me, because I don't deal with everything. If I dealt with everything, I would lose, I would become stressed, it's just too much. So many things, just put aside, and then after a few months, they are not a problem anymore, because the situation has changed.

And I don't do anything when I feel I'm not enjoying it anymore. Stop. What's the point?

What is the point in doing something that you cannot enjoy? But don't prematurely say, okay, I definitely can't enjoy this. See if you can connect with the power of now, and then do whatever you do.

So don't immediately say, well, what I'm doing, definitely I could never enjoy. Maybe, maybe not. Just try connecting, stepping out of the situation into the power of now, and then do.

Perhaps you can enjoy it. And if you still can't, then go and do something else. But no compromise, don't live with unhappiness, or with continuous stress, or frustration.

That is a dreadful way to live. The large part of the world lives like that. So what a wonderful challenge here.

And whatever comes, it's a life situation, and the challenges of your life situation, they draw out that which is deeper. So without the challenges, you would be comfortably sitting in your armchair for the next 30 years, or until you retire, and watching your investments grow and grow, and then drop dead. And you would live with complete certainty that you're being looked after because you've got your life insurance, and your investments are growing every year, and nothing can possibly go wrong, and there's nothing.

Okay, everything is great. Watch TV every day for five hours, and that's it. No evolution, no flowering of consciousness, and then there's somebody else who made a total mess of his or her life, and ends up in prison, and sits there for 20 years, and suddenly wakes up in the midst of that, and realizes, I am life.

And the situation is just relatively unimportant. To feel that who I am in my essence is beyond any limitation on the external level. So that's why I often get letters from people in prison that say, I have woken up in prison.

I'm free. I'm no longer unhappy. And I have another 20 years to do, nor I'm not unhappy anymore.

I rarely get letters from people who say, I've woken up because my investments are growing every year. In fact, I've never had a letter. Sometimes I get letters from people who wake up because they encounter some physical illness, and often change happens then.

Any challenge has the opportunity to wake up. If you're not being challenged by life, then wait. It'll come.

Now isn't that wonderful? That means that whatever happens now is no longer some problem that comes into your life. It's a challenge.

It's not a dreadful thing. It's great. It's an opportunity to be more conscious, more present with what is.

So that brings us back to the first two lines of that book. Life is difficult. Of course, it's full of challenges.

But once you know that, and say, that's what it is, then it's no longer difficult. It just is what is. It only remains difficult if you have the idea stuck in your head that it shouldn't be.

It's a paradox. Life is difficult, and once you know that it's difficult, it's no longer difficult. Knowing that it's difficult implies accepting that it's difficult.

But to say it is difficult only when you resist life. So what this implies is, it's when the resistance goes, then it's no longer called difficult. It's challenging.

And every challenge brings increased aliveness. My friend Steve, who is here, can testify to that because he was faced with a challenge recently of being stuck in a hotel room in Bombay with mad terrorists running all around the building for several days. And he went deep inside.

It wasn't difficult for him because he was already immersed in presence for many years. So he was able to step out of the situation, which certainly could be called difficult, and go deep within into the power of the present moment, into consciousness itself. Welcome to our private seminar.

I'm talking about spiritual awakening in daily life. And some people may not be quite sure what the term spiritual awakening even means. Or they may have strange ideas in their head of what spiritual is, what is spiritual, and what is awakening.

And instead of defining right now, I'm just going to talk about spiritual awakening in daily life. And as I talk, what spiritual means and what awakening means, will hopefully emerge while we talk. So instead of defining beforehand, what these things are, because although we're not, this is not a talk on philosophy.

So we're not here to define terms. It's an experiential thing. It's not information based.

We're here to experience something and then to bring that into daily life, live it in our daily existence. Everybody has done some traveling and sightseeing, visited unfamiliar places, European cathedrals perhaps, or the pyramids in Egypt, or Machu Picchu, Stonehenge in England, whatever it may be. And it's often an interesting experience for me to go into a place and walk around doing some sightseeing.

Let's say it's a cathedral, an ancient cathedral in Europe. And you walk in there. And usually you have little groups of people with a guide.

They walk around, the guide has now come this way, in different languages. The guide explains what this means, when it was built, or who is, this is a tomb, or this king, or whoever lies there, and all kinds of interesting information. And just occasionally when I walk into a place like that, an ancient cathedral, I kind of approach the little group and just listen in and stand at the side and just see what he's saying.

Sometimes quite interesting, but I never feel drawn to actually sticking around for very long, because I prefer to explore the place by myself without the interference of a voice explaining to me what things are. Now it may well be that I may have read a guidebook beforehand, or I may not. In most cases probably I have not looked at a guidebook beforehand, so I'm actually going into this, let's say it's a medieval cathedral, I'm walking into this medieval cathedral not knowing very much about it, except it was built a thousand years ago, whatever, and it took two or three hundred years to build.

But I prefer that experience of entering a space and not being burdened by information about it, rather than entering a space and immediately being bombarded with facts about it. There are two very different kinds of experiencing that place. One kind of experiencing that place is based on bits and pieces of information, on knowledge, on mental knowledge, on mind.

And this is how why most people travel for that reason, because they want to learn new things. So as soon as they enter the cathedral, they say, okay, I'm going to join this guided tour. Or these days they have invented something to substitute the human guide.

You can rent a little device recording with earphones, and you can choose your language, and you put it on your ears, and then you choose your language, and then it tells you where to go. Now turn right here, stop here, and then it starts explaining it. You look, and you're continuously learning a lot, and then, okay, walk on now ten steps, and now look up to the left, and you will see more information coming in, very interesting, and learning so much about history.

It's true, you are. You're learning a lot. And so you walk around this cathedral with the voice in your head, teaching you about it.

What's wrong with that? Nothing. It's fine.

Why don't I do that? Because there is another way of experiencing, of perceiving that place. And that's not something that people even know about.

Some people do it intuitively. And that way is going into that place, and not perceive whatever is around you through the veil of facts, information, knowledge, thoughts, ultimately. It all comes down through thoughts, one thought after another.

There is another way of perceiving that place that is not based on mind activity. And I love that other way more than the way of learning about. There's nothing wrong with

that.

Sometimes I read a guidebook afterwards, after I've been to a place like that, I read, oh, that's what I saw, and have a little bit of information about it. But at first, I love entering that place and perceiving, first of all, the totality of this, the vast, let's say it's a cathedral, it could be other places, but there's always, there's a spaciousness there, there's a vastness, there's a silence, interrupted, of course, sometimes by the voice of the guides here and there, and the clicking of cameras, but there is still a vastness, a silence, there's a, the whole place has a presence.

There's an energy field there. And the first thing that I love to take in is to enter and to take in the totality of that energy field that is this ancient cathedral, to sense it, to feel it directly. And there's a, it has its own presence, it's an energy field.

I like to get in touch with this ancient energy field, ancient and new, because it's still alive. And then look around at this architecture, and so on, and again, just see the shapes, the forms, the colors. So you see, be aware also of the space itself, because anybody who goes into a place like that and is struck by something, they go, wow.

Even people who later seek out the guide, there may be a few seconds when they take in this and go, they sense something, a sacred presence, you could almost say. They sense it, they don't need to know anything about it. In fact, you cannot sense the presence of that place if your mind is full of thoughts, full of knowledge.

And if you enter a cathedral and you are, let's say, you are already very knowledgeable, you're a historian or whatever, and you know much, you would have to let go for a moment of all that you know, if you truly wanted to experience that place. So I always a little bit feel sorry for most tourists, because they don't seem to be aware that there is another way of experiencing life. There is another way of perceiving other than the mind, through the mind only.

There's nothing wrong with the mind, it has its place, and it's needed for quite a few things. But for many other things, for realising the depths of life and becoming a deep person, that's a strange expression that's sometimes used. You say, this person has a depth, or we speak of a depth of perception.

What does that mean for a person? You would say, there's a shallow person and there's a deep person. What does that mean?

I would say it means what we might call a shallow person, a person who is totally trapped only in the mind activity, the knowledge accumulated by the mind, and perceives everything through thoughts. In other words, you walk around your life like the tourist who rents this little device and comments about what they are perceiving continuously. That's fine, sometimes it may be necessary, but imagine going through life not being able to get rid of that device.

You can't take it off anymore. It keeps commenting. So wherever you go in the street, it says, okay, look at that person there.

And the thing even tells you whether you like it or not. This is great, I like that, or I don't like that. I wish I had an answer on whatever.

And of course, this is how most people live because they are so identified with the involuntary mind activity, the little voice in the head. They don't even know it. They think they are the voice.

And to live through the voice then makes your life quite shallow because whatever you experience lacks depth. You experience it through a concept. Every thought is conceptual.

So when let's say you are in the street, a man or woman comes towards you and your mind immediately has to say something about whether you like or don't like or would like to do something with this person, whatever it may be, or have some kind of reference point or commenting on the way they look, weird or strange or nice, I'd love to, whatever. Is there another way of perceiving this human being? Yes, to perceive the human in the same way, if that's what I said about the cathedral, if that resonates with you, if you have had a glimpse of that experience or perhaps more than a glimpse, then you know the difference between stepping into a place and going, no comment.

Well, perhaps the mind says, oh, this is so beautiful. And then there's stillness again. So there is a still space through which you perceive instead of concepts through which you perceive.

And suddenly, there's a depth, not only you feel another dimension is suddenly present, not only outside of you, another dimension that the tourist who is totally dependent on either the mechanical guide or the human guide is not aware of that, that the tourist who only listens to the commentary misses the true aliveness, the sacredness, and the depths of that place. And so, also within, you are trapped in the head, there's no depth then to you as a human being, where there's something that responds to life, something deeper than the commentary in your head. And so many people these days are trapped then with this guide, the tourist guide they can't get rid of, and it's called your mind.

And so, not that the mind is not a useful tool. And even in the cathedral, it sometimes, it adds a little bit to it, if you know something about it. And I would say that's the second stage, to come back just for a moment to this cathedral analogy, one could almost say, you come back to that, of course, ideally, and what I do that occasionally, but sometimes we don't have enough time, because when we travel, first, I love to experience the place without knowing anything, and truly experience it, the depths of it.

And then perhaps go back to the hotel room, and then look at a guidebook, and then learn a few facts about it, can be quite helpful. Then go back the next day, look at it again. And then you have a balance between knowing things about it, and still being able to experience it.

So in other words, you have then some information in your head is, oh, this is, I read about that. It was built by such and such, then and then, whatever. And then again, you have the spaciousness where you perceive.

And then you look at something else, and you are, this is the statue of the saint, so and so. And some, some knowledge about it, that you have had, might have overlooked a little detail. You can actually see a tear coming out of his eye or whatever.

Oh, yeah, there's a tear, he seems to be crying. Don't know why, but it seems And then again, you can, you can take it in without the commentary. So that's a little, you can experiment with that.

And so I'm using that almost as just an analogy for the whole of your life. Most people are stuck with the tourist guide in the head. It comments continuously of what's going on in your life and evaluates and interprets and defines in words, everything that you perceive.

And so, in whatever way it is defined or interpreted depends on your particular conditioning, on the way you were brought up, what you were taught by the surrounding culture, and so on. So the kind of tourist guide you have depends on your past. And so it's really your past talking to you continuously, certain forms of conditioning from your culture, your education, your family background, what you have read, your fears and ambitions are also expressed there as thought structures, which become thoughts, what you would like, want, what you fear, what if that happens?

Oh my God, this could go wrong. What if, of course, it becomes very problematic, because the voice doesn't stop talking. Except occasional moments, when you suddenly feel a heightened sense of aliveness, perhaps you're out in nature, and you're looking up at a tree or a forest, and for a moment you say, wow.

And then after a few seconds, the mind says, that's beautiful. But for about 10 seconds or 20 seconds, the mind wasn't saying anything. And that's the reason that you can know that it's beautiful.

Beautiful is not, the mind cannot really, the mind is concepts. There's no beauty really in that. If something from within you responds to beauty, for example, in nature, for a moment, there must have been a space of where the tourist guide in the head stopped talking.

And in that space, there is a deeper experiencing of whatever is there. There's a depth to your experience. What does that mean?

It means, yes, what you see is the same. But the state of consciousness through which you see it has deepened. A space has opened up inside you through which the perception happens.

And that's the depths. So you could say, when you look at something, and for a moment, you're not interpreting what you see. There's just the seeing.

And you may be aware of the background to what you see, which cannot be defined. But there's a stillness inside while you perceive. This is what I meant when I talked about entering a cathedral without the knowledge in your head.

So suddenly the mind has become still. And the perception happens. So you have two dimensions, you have a stillness in the background.

And whatever is going on outside is there. The stillness is the depth that changes your perceptions. Then you see that the tree also has a depth to it and an aliveness and a sacredness that you didn't know before.

When you were conceptualizing the tree and said, oh, that's such and such a tree and whatever knowledge you have, or this tree is in my grandmother's garden too, or this, I'd like to chop this tree up and use it as my Christmas tree, or I wonder how much it would be worth the timber if I cut it, how much the timber would be worth. You're not really, the tree is a surface phenomenon when you're in that state of consciousness, a utilitarian surface phenomenon. You cannot sense the depths, the aliveness, the sacredness of the tree.

And I'm only using tree as one of many possible examples. Life, the tree stands for life. It could be a human being.

You cannot sense the aliveness of that if you are totally trapped in conceptualization in your head. So there needs to be a depth to you in order to recognize that there is also a depth in life. Otherwise you walk around for the rest of your life skimming the surface of life.

Just every human being is a surface phenomenon because you just have judgments about them and whatever, it's just no depth. And then you can go into nature, and even there you will not know that nature has a sacredness to it, because you can't sense it, because you haven't, the space isn't there inside you to sense that when you go into a forest, an ancient forest, you've been there for thousands of years, that, and you cannot sense that that is a sacred space, because otherwise you would go, wow. And then you would, and if you don't know it's sacred and our civilization doesn't know, he looks at the forest as a utilitarian thing, how much would it be worth?

So the people who cut down the ancient forests, they don't know what they are doing because they cannot sense that there's more there than what appears to be there on the surface of things. But since they themselves are trapped in the surface of their own mind only, they have no idea what they are doing when they log an ancient forest. To them it's just a utilitarian thing.

You talk to them and say, what are you talking about? We're going to plant trees again. Yeah, but it'll take a thousand years to reach that sacredness.

No idea what you say, sacredness, what do you mean? It's a tree. We are harvesting the trees.

And so, and this is one example of what happens when you cannot get out of the conceptualizing mind. Life has no depth anymore. And getting out of the conceptualizing mind is what I call spiritual awakening.

So spiritual awakening has nothing to do with some kind of, suddenly you have a new spiritual thoughts in your head and you start talking about angels or even God. You suddenly start talking about God all the time and then people say, oh, he's become spiritual. No, he hasn't.

He's become religious. Religious without spiritual is an ideology. You could be a communist and then talk in those terms, whatever.

It's an ideology. Sometimes religious and spiritual can go together. But in many cases, religious only is just more thoughts in your head, but different kinds of thoughts.

And then God, of course, becomes my God. And your God is not the right one. And then you become my enemy.

And I will conceptualize you as the non-believer, for example. And the non-believers are evil, another concept. And the non-believers must be killed because we know the truth.

And the truth is our God. Concepts, concepts in the mind. You can no longer sense.

And then when you do kill somebody, you're not killing a human being because you cannot sense that there is a being there, another human being. You are killing. There's a mental concept there.

You have conceptualized, you have deadened, just as you've deadened the forest to yourself, you've deadened the other human being and made him into a, you put some label on. Non-believer. American.

And so it's not a human being, it's American. This is, and that's how it, this is how the madness grows. So, and of course, they don't know what, what's happened to them.

They don't realize what's happening. They are unconscious. And not unconscious in the conventional sense of the word, because unconscious in the conventional sense of the word means they're lying there.

No, not that unconscious. They seem to be very conscious, seem to be very alert with their guns or whatever they're doing. But they are unconscious because they are totally trapped in the conceptualizing mind.

They no longer sense the aliveness of life. They have deadened themselves. They don't know who they are beyond the conceptualizing mind, where they are completely identified with their belief structures that gives them, the belief structures give them their identity, their sense of who they are.

I am a, whatever label they have, we are, the we, we are, the only true, etc., etc. And then it's the others, it's the others, them, they're not alive. They're just their concepts.

So it's easy to, when you no longer sense what you're doing, to kill another human becomes easy because you no longer know that the human, the depths of the human being has disappeared. And that's perhaps why Jesus on the cross said, forgive them for they know not what they do. They have, in other words, they are unconscious.

They have not awakened. And so we are coming here from the tourists, going into a cathedral, we've, we've, and we've arrived at terrorists. Just an extension of really what is considered a normal state of consciousness.

And what it does to you to be trapped in that your whole life is a dreadful fate. And the reason why we are on this planet, why we have arrived at such a point of extreme crisis is that this state of consciousness that we have been trapped in for thousands of years is, has created and is creating increasing havoc and destruction. It destroys nature, it destroys human beings, destroying each other.

What we do externally is always a reflection of the predominant collective state of consciousness. And if you read the 20th century history, you see what human beings have done to each other. The only conclusion you can reach is they are mad.

It's quite mad. And 20th century is just the most extreme form of that madness where human beings kill each other by the millions. Often they don't even know what, what for.

In the end, you don't even know anymore what, what the whole thing is for. The First World War, they, what was that whole thing about? And then the First World War led to the Second World War and so on and innumerable other wars.

So we need the spiritual awakening then is for the planet or humanity to survive is an absolute necessity. So there's a depth of consciousness to you of which the thought activity is only like little ripples. You could say there's a vast ocean or lake, very deep, with lots of waves and ripples on the surface.

And the waves and ripples on the surface are the thoughts in your head. And so most people are trapped on that level. They don't realize that there is a depth underneath that, that is vast.

And that if they ever wanted to become creative human beings or bring anything new into this world, they would have, it would have to come from the depths. It can't come from this, just the surface activity of your mind. That's repetitive, continuously, same, same kind of thing.

Nothing creative can ever happen on that level alone. One day I'm going to compose a great piece of music. One day I'm going to write a great book.

Just have to wait. Well, not if you don't get out of that. Of course, the mind is needed to write a book, yes.

But you cannot have a deep or inspired thought if you don't make room, a moment for the depths inside you so that you touch something deeper. You need to become still for a moment when you sit in front of your computer or piece or notepad and want to write something new and creative, bring something new into this world. Well, where does that come from?

From the repetitive noise in your head? No. It comes if for a moment the repetitive noise in your head subsides.

That's the moment of stepping into the cathedral. Ah. And then you wait.

So there's a, open yourself to the stillness inside. It's there. You don't have to make yourself still.

Underneath, even in the most mad, the maddest person, underneath that, there is the realm of stillness. They just can't touch it. It's there.

So it's very easy to actually embrace, say, okay, you don't need to think all the time. You need to have spaces of no thought and it's not that difficult unless you're totally mad. But not that many people are totally mad.

Most people are partially mad. And the madness comes up occasionally in a more acute form. It's there.

So can you walk into the cathedral and be there as an aware presence rather than a mind burdened with knowledge? Can you walk along the street and look at another human being? Without commenting, just look and sense.

When there's no commenting, you can sense there's an aliveness in the other human being. There's an essence there that is deeper than, even deeper than your mind and deeper than their mind. And if you then communicate with that human being, while you, for example, while you listen to them, can you be still inside while you listen?

You might be talking about the weather. It doesn't matter. But be still and just be there as the space for that human being as you are there.

You are there at the space as the space for the tree and realize what an incredible phenomenon this tree is. Beyond anything that you could know about it through the mind, what you know may be useful for certain things, but there's a depth to that thing that we call tree that you cannot capture through that, but you can sense something. And the more you sense it outside, the deeper you go within.

And there is an even greater depth in another human being. And the more you sense the depth of aliveness in another human being, the more you sense it in yourself. It always goes together.

So relationships become problematic if both parties are totally trapped in their noise-making mind, then very quickly conflict arises in relationships. And that's why relationships are full of conflict because people can't get out of that. They have, they are trapped in here.

So every discussion when they disagree becomes conflict. You have an opinion. This is how it is.

I'm right. You identify with your mental position. Your partner has a different mental position.

No, you're not. I'm right. You identify with your opinion.

Identify means your sense of self is in the thought that you have in your mental position of this is how it is. Today, it's cold. Your partner says, no, it's not cold.

It's just mild. No, it's cold. I'm just giving an oversimplified example.

Even that could lead to an argument because are you accusing me of being a liar? Also moving in concepts. Well, you did lie last week.

I wasn't lying. I was just... And it goes on and on and on.

And it's all happening. The entire relationship is mind. Mind against mind.

So you identify with mind and that becomes the ego. The me that needs to be right. Always.

If the ego is wrong, it's death. It thinks, I'm dead. I'll die.

Can't be wrong. I need to defend my position. Dread will fade.

But it's normal. So having realized then that what is needed is to awaken out of complete identification with the continuous stream of thinking in your mind. Okay.

Well, how do we do that? Simple first step is to realize that there is a continuous stream of thoughts in your mind. This is the first step of awakening.

It's not saying I shouldn't be thinking. No, the first step is to realize that there is a voice that talks most of the time inside you. And perhaps that until now you had been so identified with the voice that was you.

You were talking to yourself. Sometimes people talk to themselves as I. Sometimes people talk to themselves as you.

You have a little voice that says you should have done that. Why didn't you do that? You're talking to...

The voice is talking to some other voice. And then perhaps there's an answer. Well, I couldn't help it.

Yeah, but you should have... So sometimes the voice splits itself into different voices. Talking to each other becomes even more mad.

And sometimes the voice also can have certain streams that one stream of the voice only comes up in certain circumstances. What some psychologists, they have discovered that this is the case. Some psychologists call it sub-personalities.

So in certain circumstances, perhaps a whining little girl suddenly comes up. But you're 30 years old. Why are you still...

It's a sub-personality. And suddenly you have a whining voice in your head that complains about how unfair life is treating me. It's a sub-personality talking.

And then when that subsides, something else happens. And another voice suddenly comes in and becomes extremely aggressive. Another stream, another aspect of that has arisen.

And so sometimes different voices take over. But really it all belongs ultimately to the one thing, the one voice in your head. So the first step to awakening, the beginning of awakening is to realize there's a voice in my head.

And it's especially useful to realize in the moment of it saying, for example, voices have all, most of the mind activities, old thoughts, old patterns, repetitive thoughts. For example, I had when I was younger, I had a frequent thought that said, whenever something that wasn't good happened to me, or that my mind interpreted as not good, the voice in my head would say, you see, bad things always happen to you. And then I was just waiting for the next bad thing to confirm that I was right.

And it would never have to wait for very long and something else would go wrong in my life. And I would say, you see, it's happening again. Always bad things to you.

I don't know why it's always you. And then, of course, you experience the emotion that goes with that kind of thought. And I completely believed in that thought.

I was so identified with that thought, I didn't realize this is just a thought in my head. It's not the reality. It's a conditioned way of interpreting the phenomenal world, the world outside you.

And so the liberation then comes with beginning to realize the voice is saying the same thing again and again and again. And it's not me. It's the voice.

Who realizes that? You. So there is a deeper dimension is suddenly there and you become aware that all the stuff that your mind is saying to you and to others when you have is not ultimately who you are.

But the awareness that at this moment, your mind is reproducing the same old thoughts. They are beginning to touch the depths that is within yourself that we could call the awareness, the aware presence, because knowing that there is thought in my head is not a thought. It's just a looking in internal aware.

Why do bad things always happen to me? And then you look at the thought and you realize the thought. So you begin to one could almost say you listen to your thoughts.

You become aware of the kinds of thoughts you think. And when this is for many people, the first awakening and what people realize when they first awaken, not everybody, because some people's thoughts are not too bad. They can live with it quite well.

They saw their thought activity is not predominantly negative, but many people actually find that when they become aware of their thoughts, they realize how many thoughts are actually negative. The majority of people become aware that the larger part of your mind activity is negative thoughts. There are far more negative thoughts than positive thoughts.

Not in everybody. Some people have quite a few positive thoughts. One could almost say it's easier for people who are trapped in a lot of negative thinking to step out of their thinking than people who have relatively nice thoughts.

Their inner urge to awaken is not as strong. If you live in a self-made nightmare as I did, the impulse to awaken is much stronger. Then you really, I can't stand my mind anymore.

I don't want to live with this mind anymore. Oh, that's good. It doesn't mean you have to kill yourself.

It just means you have to realize that your mind is not who you are. You are the awareness behind your mind. You are the space because the awareness is space.

It's not a thought. It's consciousness. So we are now slowly getting to what spiritual awakening is because we have looked at what spiritual sleep is.

We've seen what it means to be asleep or unconscious, normal in other words, normal existence. The entire world, not the entire world, there's some awakening here and there. More and more people, in fact, are awakening, going through the awakening process.

We now know what that is because it means you're no longer identified with the mind. Who are you if you're not your mind? You are the consciousness out of which every thought comes.

And then it pops back. It's like a wave or ripple. You are the consciousness that is far greater than any single thought or even greater than the totality of thought.

And that consciousness is experienced when you first touch it as inner stillness. Stillness doesn't mean you go to sleep. It means the mind is where the mind was before.

There's a space. And out of that space comes all creativity, every great realization or insight that any human being has ever had. The creative impulse comes out of the vast intelligence that is there.

And then the mind, it flows into the mind and the mind becomes an instrument for that. And that's how the mind can be a beautiful thing. When it's not just self-serving, but it is serving something greater than itself.

The mind as a master is mad. The mind as a servant is a great thing. So that's the shift in consciousness that is happening and needs to happen on this planet.

The mind finds its place as the servant of consciousness or awareness. So it's up to you then to invite the consciousness that you are beyond the mind into your daily life. And how do you do that?

You do that by inviting space, inner space or inner stillness into your life. For example, while you make a cup of tea or coffee, why not try to practice being still with every movement, just be aware, bring awareness into that every movement, pour the water, no commentary, look at a flower, look at a tree, look at the sky. And for just a few seconds, just look, listen to the wind, listen to the rain, listen to whatever sound you can hear and just listen.

Bring the attention to sense perceptions, attention to sense perceptions. That means the mind is quiet while you listen. The mind is quiet while you look.

And that's a little practice that you can do many times during the day and it will deepen your life. It will bring spaces into an otherwise, an existence that goes from one thing that you have to do to another thing you have to do and another thing you have to think about now. Then there's no gaps.

So the gaps are vital in daily life, inviting gaps into your daily existence, looking for the gaps in daily existence. In everyday situations, a helpful thing, as many of you already know, is to feel that your body is actually alive inside. Normally people are not aware of that because their whole attention is on thought activity.

But if you can feel that your body is alive, so some attention can be in the energy field of your hands and you feel, yes, they feel alive. There is an aliveness that pervades the entire body. Your body is full of life.

But most people can't feel that. So if you can feel the inner body that you are alive inside, the entire body at this very moment is a vibrating, alive energy field. And it actually feels good to have some of your attention there, even while you're looking around the room.

You can just, for people, people who are new to this can just start by doing it with their hands, feel the aliveness that's in your hands. You can feel it perhaps even more with your eyes closed. And then you can still feel it even when your eyes are open.

Simultaneous thing, you're present inside your body and you're present outside in your sense perceptions. What does that do? It means your mind becomes quite still because you can't be thinking also at the same time because you're already present in the body and you're present outside.

You become awake, really awake to this moment then. And your mind, there's not enough attention left then for thinking. Part of your attention is in the inner body and part of your attention is on your perceptions.

And what you perceive then is more alive than it was before. It's more surprising. It's more, it has more depth to it.

Every human being is more interesting then, more really there, new. Things are, you no longer feel that you're experiencing the same old thing again and again. Life then is always new.

Every day is a new day. It's not a repetition. As people grow older, they reach 30 years, 40 years, 50 years.

And for many people, life becomes more and more boring because it's so repetitive. And they no longer look anywhere. They go every day, they go to work, the same place.

They don't look at anything anymore. There's nothing to look at. I looked at it yesterday and last year and five years ago.

What's there to look at? And even people they live with for a few years, after a few years you don't look at your wife or husband anymore. They're part of the furniture.

And you don't look at your paintings anymore on the wall because they've been there for too long. You can't look. They're old.

And really, nothing new. And then you become that kind of person who said, I've seen it all. Don't tell me about it.

I know it all. I've had, yeah, I know. I know that kind of person.

I know that kind of thing. I've been there, done it. Been there, done it.

Life becomes more and more dull. Been there, done it. You're not there and you're not.

And so that's the, that's the fate of many people as they grow old in our civilization. And only a few, perhaps an increasing number now because more and more people are awakening spiritually. They remain alive, perhaps even become more alive as they grow older.

And then you have a truly, and then the person doesn't actually, you don't get, even if they are 70, 80 years old, you don't get the impression that they are old people. Because there is a light shining through their eyes. There is an aliveness to them.

And occasionally you meet people like that. They may be old in terms of calendar years, but they are not old inside. Because they are not, they are not burdened by their mind anymore.

Their mind is, can be used, but they are no longer being used by their mind, which says, I already know all this. And so every day is new and fresh and every moment is still alive. Because you're not putting your past, you're not obscuring it with past, the accumulated past in your head, putting it onto the aliveness of the present moment, stifling the aliveness of the present moment.

And so then spiritual awakening is then intrinsically connected with the aliveness of the present moment, the only place where life is. And so you are more and more open to the now rather than live continuously in past and future, which is normal. For most people it's future until they reach a certain age where there's not much future left, and then they live mostly in the past.

That's why old people, many old people continuously talk about the past. And the younger people continuously think about their future, where they're going to finally make it someday and find fulfillment in some future. When they have done or achieved this, whatever it may be, it could be a big house or recognition, or for spiritually inclined people it could be enlightenment.

But it's put into the future. I'm going to reach that place and then I'll be finally fully myself, fulfilled, happy, alive. I will become alive one day, fully alive.

But without ten million dollars in the bank, I don't think I can feel alive. Because I really need to have that sense of security, you know. I need the sense of security without which I'll just be in fear the way I've always been.

And you'll be surprised if the ten million dollars happen to come to you for a few weeks, you will feel alive. And one night you'll wake up and you'll be in the same fear as before. Because the stock market is about to collapse.

So spiritual awakening is becoming awake to the aliveness of this moment. And becoming awake to the aliveness of this moment, the all there ever is, nothing else is ever going to come. You can wait for millions of years if you lived that long.

Nothing is ever going to come that's not this moment. Your life will always be this moment. And it sounds, well, we know that.

No, you don't. If you don't live it, you don't know it. Life is always this moment.

You don't know this if you don't live it. It's only through living it that you know it. Otherwise it's just a concept in your head.

Yeah, of course, life is always this moment. And then what's next? Where's the next moment?

So you might as well then become friendly with this moment if there's nothing else. Be open to that. Don't stifle it with an excessive amount of judgments and interpretations and definitions.

But be open to the aliveness of this moment. Open means there's spaciousness here. So the shift is from a thought-based entity, which is the normal old way for humans, been for thousands of years, to a deeper entity that is based in awareness of presence, consciousness.

So because when you're not commenting on things compulsively, who are you? When you're not continuously thinking about me and my problems, at this very moment, let's say, pretend that you don't remember your past at this moment. In fact, you don't because at this moment, unless you start a thought process, at this moment, your past is not here.

You're just sitting here now. But pretend for a moment, actually, there's no past and there's no future. What's left of you?

If I removed from your past and your future from you now, what's left? I remember nothing. What's left?

I don't remember my name. Who are you? I don't know.

But there must be something there. Yes, there is something there. But I can't say what it is.

That's who you are. Consciousness itself. When you remove the content from consciousness for a while, then you realize that you are consciousness.

When the content, content is thoughts and emotions and thoughts and thoughts. When the content comes back, it obscures the reality that you are consciousness and you identify with content. And that's why some people have been able to awaken spiritually because life took away their content.

They lost everything suddenly. They lost their reputation, in other words, their name. It happens sometimes that life does these things to people.

They lost their money, their possessions. They lost even their family. They suddenly were killed in an accident, a big earthquake came, everything lost.

And they sit there, their house is in ruins, everything gone. And suddenly, some of these people suddenly had a deep spiritual awakening. Why?

Because life took away all the things that they had identified with as themselves, as the me. And what was left was what we just did now, here, when I asked you to pretend that there's no past and future, we took away for a moment content from your life. And when you remove content, because content is going to disappear anyway, it's not permanent.

Whatever content you have is impermanent in your life, things come and go. Or as the Buddha says, it's impermanence is the word. Transient.

Everything is transient. And that refers to content. So as long as you are identified with all the content in your life that can go very quickly, even your body can go very quickly.

But if you just, beyond content is consciousness itself, rather than what consciousness has identified with. And you are that. I am that.

You and I, on that level, are the same. We are, you're in essence, the essence of who you are is consciousness. Everything else is added temporarily.

It's a disguise. Consciousness disguising itself as this and that and that person, appearing in this particular form. That's the play.

Lila, the divine play of life, as it's called in India. And that's fine. The play is not to be rejected.

It's what you can only enjoy the play of the phenomenal existence, if you know what is beyond phenomenal existence. So it's only if you know who you are beyond all the things in your life, you can actually truly enjoy the things in your life, while they last. And you don't need to cling, because you know nothing is going to last.

Relationships, whatever, it's only very young people who think there are lasting things. Then you reach a certain age and you realize, oh, it's so many things have evaporated that I thought were permanent. And more things are going to evaporate.

And a few more things are going to come and then evaporate. So not to live and your life is no longer content based, but essence based. I'm giving you here in one little talk, the entire essence of what spirituality really is all about.

And that's that really, that's what it is. There's not much else that you need to know beyond that, in the sense of knowledge, accumulated knowledge. It is now a question of living that.

And if you don't want to live it, that's fine. It means you have to suffer a bit more until you're ready to make this shift until the shift begins to happen. A human being needs to reach the point of readiness where they say, okay, I've done enough madness.

I've suffered enough. I'm ready for the shift. I'm ready to say, okay, this moment is all there ever is.

I might as well become friendly with it, acknowledge it, give it attention in whatever form it comes. Because the form is not the moment. It's the form that this moment takes, the now.

It's not what happens. The now is not what happens. It's the space in which it happens.

And essentially, it is that space is consciousness. Everything happens in the light of consciousness. You can say, as some philosophers have done, they question everything.

Some philosophers, they said, is there anything I can be absolutely sure of? Because everything can be doubted. I can doubt that you exist.

You can doubt that I exist. It could be a dream. Who says we are not dreaming right now?

Who says that us sitting here is not a dream? You cannot know for sure. But even if it is a dream, there must be something real there because the dream must appear to something or someone.

There must be a light in which the dream appears, a space in which the dream happens. So even if it is a dream, the one thing you cannot question is the fact of being itself. Being is.

The being may be a dream or it may not be a dream. But one thing you can be certain is that you are. I am is something that cannot be doubted.

If I'm dreaming that I am, the essence of I am is still there in the dream then. And that's an amazing thing. That's to realize there's one thing that is beyond doubt and that's I am.

It's not as the philosopher Descartes said, I think therefore I am. He confused consciousness with thinking, perhaps because he was always thinking. So he was, he couldn't stop thinking.

And then he said, okay, then if I can't, if I can't stop thinking, then the essence of who I am must be thinking. I think, therefore, I know that I am. Well, he, he, he got, he stopped, he stopped too soon.

He should have taken one more step and realized that beyond thinking there's consciousness. And then realized because I'm conscious, I am. Because there is consciousness, I am.

I am that consciousness. And that consciousness that people believe in our civilization, that the consciousness is a byproduct of chemical reactions in the brain. And many psychologists or scientists actually doubt that there is such a thing as consciousness.

They say, no, there is no consciousness. It's just a chemical soup. But they do recognize that the brain is the most complex thing on the planet.

And they'd understand a tiny fraction of it only. So who built that incredibly complex thing through which consciousness comes, if not consciousness? So consciousness is prior to whatever appears here.

And it's a very complex thing. And what is the relationship between the brain and consciousness? Even some scientists are beginning to say that, recognize the possibility that consciousness may be all pervasive throughout the universe.

And the brain is like a lens through which consciousness enters this dimension. So it's like a receiver. It reduces and receives consciousness.

So when you eliminate the brain, it does not mean you eliminate consciousness. You eliminate the receiver. Like a TV, you can smash the TV and suddenly the image disappears.

But the TV didn't produce the image. So that is our meditation. I am consciousness.

Not something to believe in. But we're using those words only as a pointer to the essence of who you are. Thank you.

So as we sit here, I'd like to put a little question mark into your mind. And I'd like you to ask yourself whether at this moment you're thinking. So you will know the answer.

And try it again. I'll stop speaking for a few seconds. And just be alert inside yourself to find out whether you're thinking because usually you don't even know that you're thinking you're just you are the thinking.

So there's no outside thing that knows that you are thinking. You are just thinking. You become the thinking, the thinker.

And the thinker is the person. And to step out of the person, you have to experience that there is a dimension in you where the person is not. But something deeper is there.

That's what we want to explore. So again, a moment of stillness. In the power of now, I talk about a cat watching a mouse hole.

Now, if you've ever watched a cat watching a mouse hole, then you will have noticed that a cat could spend a long time there being extremely alert and just watching in the same way that my dog watches a treat when I put it down and say not yet. And then the dog goes. And so the cat watches the mouse hole is in a state of complete attention.

So one spiritual master, I believe it was a Sufi master, said his teacher had been a cat when he was asked who had been his spiritual teacher. He said a cat. How is that?

And he said, I watched a cat watching a mouse hole. And by watching a cat watching a mouse hole, I realized, I awakened. Because by watching a cat, he entered a state of alert attention, in which there's no thinking.

Like now, just that there's no so that just a short moment, but it's not matter how long is, it's a it's a wonderful thing to realize that you can not think. It's a wonderful thing to realize that you're still there when you're not thinking. As Oprah said, when we started for the first time with a moment of silence, and we then we started to talk again, she said, Okay, I'm still here.

I just checked in. I'm still alive. I'm still here.

I haven't disappeared. One more time. Be alert.

You need to be alert to know whether you're thinking or not. So there's an alertness like a cat. And there may be thinking or they may not be thinking they may just be the alertness.

I also mentioned in the power of now that another question you can ask yourself is, what's my next thought going to be? I'm going to just watch out, see what's the next thought is that's going to come into my mind. If you're very alert, it'll be quite a while before the next thought comes.

But the moment the degree of alertness decreases, thoughts come flooding back in. Interesting experiments you can do with yourself and your mind. Now, from the point of view of the usual thinking mind, the realization that there is a dimension in you where thinking either does not happen at all, or becomes unimportant to the thinking mind that is either a threat or completely uninteresting.

Because what could be less interesting than not thinking? So from the point of view of the thinking mind, the state of consciousness in which there is no thinking is either a threat. Oh, I don't want to go there.

I'm going to disappear. But of course, Oprah didn't disappear after the stillness. I'm still there.

I'm still alive. And then when she said that, I said, perhaps you're even more alive now. And that is pointing to something.

There is an intensification of aliveness when you begin to enter that, let's call it, dimension in yourself. The dimension in which compulsive thinking doesn't operate anymore. But you have to be careful because you could easily, because, that's okay.

What we're doing here is we rise above thinking. We become so alert that thinking either doesn't happen or is seen as unimportant. From there you can easily suddenly drop through thinking to below thought.

In other words, you go towards sleep. So when you stop thinking, there's the alertness. Here's the thinking level.

It's a normal level for most human beings while they are awake. And even when they dream, they're still going on. Here's the thinking level.

Underneath the thinking level, there's consciousness. Above the thinking level, there's consciousness. And even within thinking, there's consciousness.

Thinking is an expression of consciousness. But there are infinite varieties of manifestations or expressions of consciousness. This flower is an expression of consciousness taking on the form, this beautiful form, incredible beauty.

Consciousness being born into forms. And consciousness, not all consciousness is form.

There is a dimension of consciousness that is formless, out of which all forms come, the ground of all being.

And that's what we are exploring here. Thinking, you rise above thinking, or you fall below thinking. My dog is below thinking.

Now that doesn't mean that the dog is stupid. The dog has its own intelligence. And in some ways, the dog is superior to humans in some ways.

For example, it's more joyful than most humans, has more fun than most humans, lives more intensely in the present moment where life is than most humans, doesn't worry, like most humans do, and is loving towards all beings. Some dogs are loving only towards certain beings, but our dog is loving towards all beings. But the dog doesn't think.

The dog is conscious, but there's no conceptual thinking. I'm sure the dog doesn't have thoughts. The other day, the dog was in the bedroom in his little house.

Quite late, it was already night. The dog was already sleeping. And I was still doing things near the door, the entrance door to the apartment.

I was opening the sliding door and looking for something in my coat. And when the dog heard the sliding door near the exit, she came out. She must have woken up and heard a noise, came out running to see what I was doing, whether I was getting my coat to go out.

So she came running. And then for 10 seconds, the dog stood there looking at me and realized I was just taking something out of a pocket, and I wasn't going out. So after five seconds, the dog must have realized I wasn't going out and went straight back into her house and back to sleep.

Now, did the dog begin to think in her house, oh, I can hear something. He's opening the sliding door to the wardrobe. I wonder if he's getting the coat out to go out.

And then I need to have a look because he may leave me alone here. Okay, I'm going to have a look, see what's happening. And then the dog would go and look.

Oh, what's he doing there? Oh, I think he's just taking something out of his pocket. He's not going out after all.

Why did I bother to come out? I might as well go back to sleep. Now, I'm sure that's not how it happened, but that's what would have happened for a human doing that.

Now, the strange thing, how would that happen for a dog? All the whole thing must have happened without conceptualization. There was the listening to the noise, and there was a sudden knowing that that noise of the door could mean that I'm going out.

And then there was just getting up, running out. I'm sure, although you can't really get into the dog's mind, I've tried, I'm sure it was without any decision-making process or mental commentary. There was just an immediate response to a situation, and then there was a recognition of what was going on in that situation, and immediately not a decision to go back to bed, but just a going back to bed.

So there was consciousness there at work, but not through conceptualization. And for humans, of course, it would be usually different. There would be, as you're doing that, there would be the running commentary that I just mentioned, if the dog had a human mind.

There are some anthropologists who have looked at the history of the human race, and they wondered where or how did thinking start? When did humans begin to think? And it seems likely that at first there was no conceptual thinking.

There was only thinking in images. So when they closed their eyes, they should suddenly see certain images of things that had happened or things that they imagined. So the moment they closed their eyes, certain images would be there, and when they opened their eyes, they still lived very much like the dog, just an immediate response without the interference of conceptualization.

And then thinking started. And there's one anthropologist who has put forward the theory. He has some evidence for it.

I forgot what the evidence is, but his theory is very controversial. I believe, however, that he may be right. He believed that at first when thinking began to happen in humans, and thinking in the sense of words in your mind, those humans at first thought that some entity, a god or a spirit, was talking to them.

And so the voice of the god or spirit that suddenly appeared in their head said, oh, you better go to the lake and make sure that you catch another fish. And they would go, oh, why is there no fish today? Somebody is talking.

Why don't you go there? There might be a better catch there. Okay, thank you.

I got a message. I should be going there. It was their own thoughts, but for a long time, because it was something new, they didn't realize that these were their thoughts.

They believed some spirit helper or something was telling them to do something. And then, of course, sometimes it might also be the same kind of voice that is telling these days the terrorists to go and shoot people. You must shoot these evil people.

Go do it. Oh, okay, I'll do it. No idea that they are obeying something that is in their own mind.

And so that's how it all started. And then thousands of years passed. And now we have human beings who are completely identified with mind.

And their whole sense of self is derived from mind, from mind activity. And the awakening of consciousness is the realization that beyond your mind, there is a great depth to who you are, and great freedom, and a far greater intelligence than is in your thinking mind. Then the thinking mind can be used by that greater intelligence.

But for the thinking mind to be used by the greater intelligence, you have to find within yourself that greater intelligence, which we could call unconditioned consciousness. You have to find it in yourself. If we don't find it, we are going to kill ourselves because this evolutionary level where we are identified with thinking is no longer functioning.

It has become destructive. It has reached the end of its lifespan or usefulness. And so if humans don't achieve the transition, they will either regress to an earlier stage of development and then have another go, could take a few hundred thousand years, but the universe is patient, or the species becomes extinct and then consciousness simply decides to move through other channels to express itself.

It could be another life form very easily. Consciousness does not mind through which channel it comes into this world, but it wants to come into this world. I don't know why, but I know that consciousness wants to be born fully into this world from another realm, from the untimeless, unmanifested, where consciousness does not evolve.

It's already full and complete because it's timeless. But from the timeless realm, for consciousness, you can use other words if you want. The Tao, God, transcendental reality, it doesn't matter, just words.

That which we cannot name, it wants to come through, into, through the forms, into this world and somehow do something here. Perhaps it wants to dissolve this world, to outshine this world, to transform it, to spiritualize matter, transformation of the entire universe. But I know what our task is, to wake up here out of being trapped in your own little mind, the little mind.

It's not yours, it's just the human mind. And that's why I started today by asking you to see if you can have a little space inside yourself where you're actually not thinking, but still awake and alert. That's the opening into the greater intelligence.

At first it seems there's nothing happening. No, don't expect anything to happen. That will come.

It's the beginning. You open the door. You're opening the door to another dimension.

Now the thinking mind knows nothing of it and you cannot use it to enter that dimension. The moment you use it and try to figure something out, what's in there, you're out again.

You're not in that dimension anymore.

We are opening the door to another dimension of consciousness within ourselves. And then see if the door can stay open while we go about our daily business, or if it can be open occasionally as we go about our daily business. And from the point of view of the mind, it's not interesting, because to the mind it's nothing.

And that's fine. To the mind it's not interesting. And of course it isn't, because when you're not thinking for a moment, nobody could possibly call that interesting.

It's deeper than interesting. But at first it might appear, well, there's nothing there. There's nothing happening.

But you have to persist and see, wait a little, and see if you can enter that dimension more fully. Just you open the door and first of all you experience not so much a positive thing, but an increasing absence of negative things. All the negative things that are continuously produced by the thinking mind, by unnecessary thinking.

So as you bring that dimension into your life, you experience an increasing absence of the negativity that is normal when you're totally trapped in your mind. All the negative thoughts that go through your head and that emotions then respond to. So our destiny is to shift from thought into the realm of no thought, and then being able to use thought from there.

In fact, who or what is it that then uses thought? The intelligence that is the realm of no thought then uses your mind. And then you become productive in this world.

You contribute something truly new to this world in whatever form, whether you're an artist or a writer, or you work with people, or you are engaged in some organization. You then make a very different contribution because it's no longer ego-based. Ego is the unobserved mind, the mind without awareness, that you mistake for who you are, me, the person.

And it's a dreadful thing to live your entire life never going beyond the personal dimension, never seeing the transcendent dimension in yourself and in the world. So it's essential then to no longer be trapped continuously in thought. And don't expect results from the dimension of no thought.

It could be a while before there's any tangible result on an external level, in other words, that you suddenly write a masterpiece, or you suddenly become a great performer, or suddenly you help thousands of people with this or that, become a beneficial influence in this world. It could take a while, and we don't know what form it'll take. It may not happen immediately, that as you begin to enter that dimension occasionally, and then the mind says, you see, nothing is happening.

I've been practicing being free of thinking for a few months now, and my life hasn't changed at all, still the same. In fact, it's become less interesting because I worry less. Of course, worry makes your life very interesting, and it gives you the impression that your life is so important.

I have, my life is so important that I'm worrying all the time, and these are very important things I need to worry about. And so then from the point of view of the mind, your life has become less important. So, okay, I've been doing it for several months, that's enough.

I'm going back to my old ways. And sometimes people write to me and say, okay, I've been practicing awareness, presence for a year now, and where do I go from here? And there were years when I lived mainly in the state of awareness without any, many tangible results.

Occasionally, I would help people, that was very nice, I enjoyed that, help would, not I would help, but help would come through that opening. But beyond that, there wasn't much happening that went on for years. And occasionally I thought, well, there is more that could happen, but it's not happening yet, but that's fine.

And in the meantime, there was a, I realized retrospectively, there was a, whatever words we use are not quite right, but let's just put it like this, there was a build-up gradually of energy, of presence power, one could say. There was an intensification of that in the background of my life that had no visible manifestation really in the external, not very much. And so that presence was there and one day, in fact, I gave a little, it came to me to say, please, I can do more.

I said to myself, accelerate, please, accelerate, acceleration. I was talking to myself because you're always just talking to yourself. And then a little bit later it happened and and then the energy stream came that became a book and so on.

And an intensification of what I was doing already on a very small scale, but suddenly there was a coming into this world. But for years, there was just empty space mostly inside, walking around and just very pleasant, enjoying the beauty of every moment of the trees and of the animals. And something was there in the background and then finally it came into this world.

And perhaps when it's, it may well be that after a while the energy stream that goes out may subside again and I just go back into just the space. In some way I do that continuously because after a talk you go back into. So there's the coming out of the consciousness stream going into words and into energy that flows out and then return into just stillness, space.

No need to think very much unless there's something to think about. Where am I going for dinner? Where do I have enough?

But even there you can, it's amazing how many things you can do without unnecessary thinking and just experiment. I recommend that you experiment in your daily life. This is the most beautiful spiritual practice.

Experiment whether you can do many little things without the interference of thinking, with just presence or awareness there. Because what I mean by that is you are conscious that you're doing something, but you're not thinking about it. And whether you can actually even register things without formulating words in your mind.

If you have a, if you, little things, little experiments, it's all very fascinating. You can have a little clock, if you have a watch or a clock that doesn't have, especially if it doesn't have digitals on it, you can experiment with yourself and see whether you can look at a clock or a watch and know what time it is without in your mind telling yourself what time it is. And that's quite a strange thing.

There is a knowing without conceptualization then. If you know that it is a certain time, whatever it is, without saying to yourself that time it is. You don't do it with a digital clock because when you read the numbers it's almost impossible not to say the numbers in your mind.

Just one little experiment. And then many other things when you're doing a certain task, every master, when the moment you become a master you don't think anymore. Intuition takes over.

Otherwise you can't be a master. Now sometimes you have to learn first gradually through the mind to do something. There may be certain steps that you need to learn, whether you're building something or whatever it is that you do, learning to play the piano or whatever it is.

At first it's driving a car, whatever. At first it takes effort to learn, to become an artist, a painter. You learn the techniques and so on.

And then a moment comes when all that is not helpful anymore. If you never go beyond the techniques you won't be a great artist. The great artist knows the techniques and then steps beyond it and then something else takes over.

And that's where your life becomes empowered. But you need to open the door to the empowerment. You cannot get there through thinking.

And even something that seems to be an intellectual thing like writing a book, if there's any inspiration or power in the book, whether it's fiction or non-fiction, it has to come from the place, the empty space inside you that you go into where you, for a moment you close your eyes and then you look again and nothing comes. You go back and you look again until something comes through spontaneously. But it won't come spontaneously.

You have to have learned, you need to learn to write first before you, I mean, before you can write a book you need to be able to write. Or if you want to become a great tennis player, you cannot go into the state of no thought very deeply and suddenly step on the tennis court and take a rack and be immediately a great tennis player. You have to go through many steps first before the intuition can take over.

But that's where the dividing line is between somebody who has learned to do something well, and many people do that, and somebody who brings in something new or goes beyond doing something technically well, where inspiration comes in, where empowerment comes in. So it's vital to find that dimension in yourself. So go around your daily life, see how much you can actually do without the interference of conceptualization.

It's amazing, and observe yourself. Is it possible for you to be for a moment free of thinking at any given time? For example, now, no thought, just presence.

You haven't disappeared, but what is there to add to this moment by thinking about something? Nothing. You don't need to add anything.

And what is there then when you're not thinking? What's there left of you, what you had called you? There is definitely something there.

No past, let's say, because to have a past you need to think about your past. To have a future you need to think about your future. Now, if you're not thinking about your past and your future, you don't have a past and a future.

There's only now-ness. There's only this moment. So you have, let's say, you have no past, you have no future, there's only this moment now, and there's nothing to think about.

There's still something there, and that's the essence of who you are, consciousness itself. It cannot be defined. It's neither big, nor small, nor fat, nor thin, nor old, nor young.

Timeless essence has no form. There's nothing much you can say about it, but there's definitely a strong sense of beingness or aliveness that's left when you take that, the rest away. And that's what you take thought away.

You haven't disappeared. In fact, thought wasn't at all who you are. You thought so, but it wasn't.

If you take thought away, you can actually, you touch the essence. You know the essence. And when I say you know the essence, that's not absolutely correct, because the moment we use words, we create duality.

You know yourself as the essence. You don't know it like a subject and object knowing. I know this, in this world, that through thought there's always the knowing subject and that which is known.

But here, the knower and the known are one. You know yourself to be consciousness. It's not separate.

There isn't a me that says, I am consciousness. There's consciousness. You know yourself as consciousness.

I am that. No separation, no division anymore. And when I put it into words, it sounds almost complicated, because we cannot really verbalize, because it's too simple.

It's not a differentiated state. Everything out here is differentiated. This is undifferentiated state of pure intelligence or pure consciousness.

It's always there to be easy to just touch it in you. It's always underneath the mental noise in everyone. It's there for you, waiting for you, almost one could say.

It's waiting, and it wants to come through you. Just open, open, and it comes through. It doesn't matter if you are a saint or a sinner.

You open, there's a space between two thoughts, and it comes through. What you did in the past is irrelevant, whether you accumulated many spiritual credits by spending 20 years in a monastery, or whether you are stuck in a prison and the opening happens. Spirit doesn't ask, well, are you qualified for me to come through?

It will come through wherever there is an opening. So your personal past doesn't have that much to do with it. The only thing is it got you here to this moment where you realize the possibility of living in a different state of consciousness.

Your past got you here. Well, that's good enough. Whether your past was a successful past or a failure past, whether you built up great things already in your life, or whether you messed your life up completely becomes irrelevant.

So you become free from the past through this, because another dimension comes in. This is why it has happened to some people who were criminals, and at some point suddenly all that subsided, and a space opened up inside them, and the unhappy self suddenly wasn't operating anymore. Now, to some people it comes as a spiritual experience, which means it comes and then after a while they say, oh God, it's gone, I lost it.

Okay, that's the normal thing. Sometimes it comes once and stays forever. You never lose the connection again with the open space.

But for many people, first it comes and then it leaves them, and they don't realize that they can actually welcome it and encourage it. You don't have to wait for it to come again at some point. Why don't you ask for it to come back?

I'm not saying you ask like, please come back. No, you ask for it to come back by simply walking across the room without thought. Just see if I can walk across the room without needing to be already where I want to get to, the door.

Just be present in every step. Can you be present in each step as you walk across the room? Oh, you're not thinking, you're just present with that.

Can I be present while I look out of the window to check the weather, and can I know what the weather is like without saying something to myself or having some kind of relationship or attitude towards the weather? Can I open the window and say, nothing, just look and know. There's either sunshine or there's rain or whatever it is.

You open the window and there is an awareness that's looking through your eyes. And do you have to say something to yourself then? Do you have to say, oh, it's another dreary day.

I can't take any more of this. Do you have to say that, or is it just an old habit that you've slipped into? Do you have to say, oh, I hope it stays like that today, or whatever, it's going to be too hot, or whatever comment you have, do you need to comment, or can you look out of the window and just know and be the knowing without conceptualization and without like or dislike.

Just allow it to be and know. In the same way you would, I suggest that you can look at your watch and know what time it is without saying to yourself what time it is. So you look out of the window, and for a moment there is a space.

You are the space through which the perception happens. You are not a person. Don't worry, the person is still there on some level, so you're not going to be spaced out for the rest of your life and then walk around, oh, I don't know where I am anymore.

That doesn't happen. But it's a wonderful thing if you realize that you can actually be there as the conscious space for whatever you are looking at. Even at this moment, you're looking at this person, and this person is looking at you.

Can you be the conscious space for the perception, for the looking, rather than be a person that always has some kind of thing to say, like, what's he talking about? That's a thought. I don't understand.

That's a thought. Can you explain more? I don't get it.

Don't believe that thought. The thought says I don't get it, and of course on the level of thought you don't get it, but on another level you get it. You get it by being it.

And so, can you be in your car at the traffic light and just be there as the space for the perception of the red light? It's peaceful. Suddenly the traffic light becomes peaceful.

You are there as you're just seeing. There's the seeing, and there's the space. Why comment on the red light or think about something that's going to happen or might happen or happened in the past or something?

Just be, perceive, and be the space. And then the strange thing is that which you perceive is more alive, and even the traffic light, the red light, has a beauty to it. It sounds very strange, and normally it's only sometimes people who take acid talk about weird things like, when I saw the traffic light, I went, wow.

Now, you don't need to take acid for that, and it may not be a wow, but it may be, wow, that has its own beauty and aliveness, that color. And you're not saying it, you just know it. And so, if you can see the traffic light like that, even more so, that will be the case even more so if you look at the tree that's right next to the traffic light.

It has a presence, it has a beauty, it has an aliveness beyond the concept of tree or the birds that just landed on a branch. An aliveness, a beingness that you then recognize from your own beingness and aliveness that before was obscured by mental noise. Unless you become like little children, because this is something to do with how little children perceive the world before they conceptualize.

Unless you become like little children, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. Oh, so that's what it is. But it's an even deeper state than the child state, because the child still has to go through the thinking stage and then come out of it.

The child still has certain things still in common with the dog, not quite, but still no conceptualization, just wonder. And so, that's a gradual practice of choosing to step out of the conceptualizing mind whenever it is unnecessary, which is about, depending on your life activity, 80% of the time, you don't need to think a lot. Thoughts may come and go, but you don't, there's no need to continuously think.

It's become familiar with spaciousness. And then think when it's necessary. And you be empowered then in your thinking becomes actually empowered.

You can actually, if you wanted to create something in this world, this is what some popular books talk about, manifesting your external reality. Of course, you can, through applying focused thinking, you can manifest, but if you're in touch with the spaciousness, the unconditioned consciousness inside, then that comes through and will manifest through you. And then it comes as a sudden knowing that this is what I want to do, but the I that wants to do it, it's not the ego I, it is the deeper I.

So you become aligned with what the universe wants, it's not just what the little me wants. That's the beauty of that. So you can then, you as the greater consciousness, can manifest if you want to.

Don't fall into the trap of believing that something that you manifest is going to bring you fulfilment. It's only on the external level, the fulfilment needs to be there already now. Fulfilment is being in touch with that dimension in yourself before anything happens.

That's where fulfilment lies. The rest is the divine play of form. But the divine wants to play out there.

It wants the manifestation. It wants two things. There are two movements in the universe.

One is the movement into differentiation and into form and into birth, into bodies, into thinking. The universe started from a point of nothingness. That nothingness became one, let's just, it's all not quite right because we can't really talk about it.

Out of the nothingness came the ball or whatever before the Big Bang happened. There was just one point of potentiality for the entire universe. Then at some point the explosion, if we could call it that, out of that was the beginning of the process of differentiation into increasing number of different forms.

And we are still part of that explosion into greater and greater differentiation. But at the same time there is, this is the pull, the outward pull. Then there's the inward pull back to the source, to the timeless source out of which it all came.

And so we as human beings are at a transitional stage where we are becoming strongly aware of the pull back to the source. So there are two movements in the universe. One is out into more and more form and more and more thinking.

It's still there, that movement. There are still many people who believe that the problems of this world can be solved if we just think harder about them, have more committee meetings about the problems of the world and discuss them. And eventually they can be solved.

They don't realize that the problems of the world are there because we have lost touch with the source out of which everything came. So by going into further differentiation we cannot solve the problems, we'll actually increase them. So we need to balance now, return to the source and going out into the world.

It doesn't mean we don't do anything anymore. We can still create and do, but not lose ourselves in creating and doing and thinking. Lose ourselves in the mind, connected with the timeless, formless source of all life within, the space of no thought, connected with

that.

Then we can create, not we as persons, but we as a universal movement of consciousness. Consciousness wants us to be co-creators of the universe, of form. So we can be that, but only if we are connected.

We need conscious connection with the source. So that's the destiny. That's your life purpose.

That's why we are here. And if it sounds complicated to your mind, it's only to the mind. It's not complicated at all.

It's actually very, very simple. It's so simple that you can't think about it. While it's wonderfully still in here, usually in these places you have some background air conditioning sound, but here you just have stillness.

So we can start by noticing that it is still in this room. And of course, the moment you notice that it is still outside, you're still inside. You have to be still for a moment to even notice that there's silence outside.

So it's already a meditation to notice that there is stillness. You can do it in the middle of the night if you wake up. That's usually the most silent time when most people are asleep.

And you simply notice that it is silent in the room or outside, and you cannot notice it by thinking about it. That's the wonderful thing. To notice that it's silent, you have to become silent inside.

So there's already a shift in consciousness. But the simple fact of becoming aware that there's silence around you, you've become silent within, which means for a moment, the stream of thinking has subsided. But you haven't gone to sleep.

You're alert. You're awake. There is a space that has opened up inside you.

And I would say that the silence is part of nature also, because wherever you go in nature, and we'll be talking about that, or there may be sounds. Nature has all kinds of sounds, produces all kinds of sounds, from animals to the wind to the rain to the flowing water and so on. There's always also the deeper dimension of silence.

So if you walk in a forest, for example, you hear all kinds of subtle sounds. But underneath all the subtle sounds in the forest, there is an all-pervasive silence also. Now, if you go into the forest only with your mind, then you will only notice the sounds and what the mind will try to interpret.

Oh, that's such and such a bird. That's that and that's that. It will label.

So that's fine. You might think you're present in the forest, but you're not really. You're simply judging what you hear.

But if you become aware of the silent dimension underneath the sounds and in between the sounds, then you become present, because the moment you become aware of the silence, you also have become silent. The mind has become still. In that moment where you notice, oh, there's silence.

In that moment, not perhaps when you say it, then it's also you're already back in words. But before you say it, so you are able to notice it, that means a space has opened up inside you, a space of awareness, of presence, of no thought, of a shift in consciousness, in fact. It doesn't matter if it only lasted for two seconds.

It was there, a shift. And you can't really remember it. You can't memorize it.

It's not memorable, because in that space of silence, nothing is happening. The silence itself is eventless. All events take place in the silence, but the silence itself or the inner stillness itself is eventless.

And this is why I sometimes say these talks that you listen to are not interesting, because the interesting means mind stuff. What really matters about us being together here is that we enter the deeper dimension together. And that deeper dimension of still presence is not interesting, because it's not differentiated.

You can't say they're not bits and pieces in anything. Oh, look at that. Oh, look at that.

In the same way that the sunset is not interesting or the sunrise. It's too vast. It's too awesome.

You can't say, oh, that's an interesting sunrise. No, you just go, wow. There's nothing.

It's not. It's beyond interesting. It's deeper than interesting.

It's deeper than the mind can analyze. The moment the mind starts analyzing, you have reduced it, and there is a place for that also. But that's not the vastness of being.

There is a place for analysis, but if you're lost in analysis, continuous compulsive judgment and analysis, then, well, life becomes impoverished. You're lost, then, in the mind. So you have to be able to use the power of analysis of the mind, yes, but not be used by it.

And then you can have thoughts. Of course you have thoughts. You're not going to be totally free of thoughts.

But the important thing is you then have a thought. The thought doesn't have you, because it's terrible to be had by a thought. And so that the whole subject matter of our gathering is to connect more deeply with yourself.

And we may be talking about nature, but really we're talking about yourself, to go deeper so that you have a very deep connection with who you are beyond the movement of thought, so that your identity is not derived from the movement of thought any longer. You can still think, but your thoughts are no longer telling you who you are, opinions about who you are, which then translates, of course, also into opinions about other people. And so you can relate more deeply to others when you're present, but first you need to find that depth in yourself.

And we'll see today how nature can help us with that. Once you found the depth within yourself, all your relationships deepen. They have an added dimension.

And you can then see that relationships that do not have the dimension of depth are very surface phenomena. There's no true relationship. It's just two mind-made entities, two minds are bouncing off each other with their opinions and mental positions and so on.

And even if they're talking about something deep, it's unlikely it will be deep, but even if it sounds deep, it won't really be deep because the depth doesn't come from the words. I don't know if each one of you perhaps remember something that I remember. I don't often talk about the past, but I'll just bring it in, just one little memory now because it's relevant to this moment, what we are saying now.

And perhaps you have a similar memory. I have a memory of being 10, 11 and 12 years old and being mostly unhappy as a child because of, I was unhappy at school, didn't like that at all. At home, my parents were usually in conflict, so there was no peace there.

And if there was peace, I knew it was only a brief interval between conflict. So even when there was no conflict for a day or two, I knew it was like walking through a minefield. And so that's the case, of course, with perhaps some of you had a similar experience.

And there's nobody to blame, it's just people act according to their conditioning and level of consciousness. Nobody can act beyond their level of consciousness, so you can't really blame anybody. Of course, they suffer their consequences, yes, but that's another matter.

So, I was basically an unhappy child, but I was given a bicycle at the age of 10, and we lived in a city, but it was only a short bike ride, 15 minutes or so out of the city. And that was my salvation. And I would quite often, occasionally even, I just didn't go to school.

I just said, goodbye, I'm going to school, and then I went off into the country. And then I reached the outskirts of the city, not particularly overpowering landscape of exceptional beauty, just ordinary, some wheat fields, occasionally groups of trees, groves, hedges, but it was nature. And I would slow down on my bike, and very slowly, and start to look.

I looked at, and I listened to the wind, and the leaves, and birds, and I slowed down. And then every time I did that, I was shedding a burden, and a sentence would repeat itself in my mind, and it's a strange thing. I didn't know why, I didn't even question why I thought this particular sentence, and that sentence was, this will always be here.

And this kept repeating itself, this will always be here, this will always be here. Years later, I remember that I realized that sentence must have meant, that I must have realized that there's the man-made dimension, and there is nature. And nature compared to the man-made world is virtually timeless.

There's a, the time spans in nature are virtually infinite compared to the short-lived man-made things. So what I actually experienced at that time was transcendence through nature, transcendence of my personal condition, the narrow suffering condition. So nature enabled me to experience that, the transcendence of a different dimension that is beyond the man-made world.

And perhaps some of you have similar memories when you were a child, how you related to nature, or how nature helped you or gave you a sense of support. And I believe there aren't many children nowadays that are actually deprived of that, unfortunately, because they are so captivated by their electronic gadgets and computer screens and so on that their main attention is in this world of little screens. So it's important for every parent to encourage children to experience nature, vitally important for their well-being, as it is for every human being too, for every adult.

Now, there may be one or two people being with us here, there, who perhaps are stuck somewhere in a room and can't get out because of physical disability, or they may be in prison, and they say, what can I do? What can we do? We can't get out into nature.

Well, you need to remember that your body also is nature, so you can start there. Every time you take a breath, that's nature. Nature is breathing.

The air that you're breathing is nature. The very fact of breathing is a natural process. It's not choice.

It's done for you. It's not so much that you breathe, although we say, I breathe, but you're not the body breathing, so it's a natural thing that happens. You wouldn't say, I'm beating my heart.

You don't do that, but that's the same thing. The body does it. It's a natural process.

For some reason, we say, I'm breathing because breathing is semi-voluntary. You can stop it for a while, but not for that long, because if you stop it for too long, nature takes over. So, you live with nature, with your body.

So, even if you can't get out, you can start by being aware of that level of yourself, the physical level, the natural part of who you are, the body, and not just by saying, okay, I'm looking at my hands or my feet, not just the physics, not the external image of the body, but you can go into the body with your attention, and that's, you're in nature. Even if you're in a present cell, you can do that, and even if there's no opportunity, you might be in an office block in Manhattan, and you look out of the window, and all you have is maybe a little bit of sky. Okay, there's a little bit of nature there.

You can look at that, but you have more nature than that in yourself. So, as you sat in your office, wherever it is, go within first, be conscious that breathing is happening. The body is breathing.

Be conscious also of the preciousness of the air. It's such a precious substance. So, to acknowledge that is actually part of what sometimes is called to live in a state of gratitude.

Now, some people say, what can I be grateful for? There's nothing in my life that I can be grateful for. Well, are you breathing?

Yes. Well, you start there. If you start being grateful for the tiniest things, then gradually that expands, and that shift in consciousness of honoring life, no matter how small it is, the manifestation of life as yourself.

By honoring that, gratitude arises, and a totally different state of consciousness then brings about good things. But you have to start with the good that is already there. There's not enough good in my life, people say.

I need more good. Life hasn't given me what I needed. Start with what you have, and the most obvious thing to start with is, I'm breathing.

And it's something very beautiful to feel that you are absorbing this energy that is air, that then merges with your being. It's an amazing thing to honor the process of breath, to honor the fact that you are breathing. You can start with that.

That is being, becoming, honoring the present moment. If you're looking for the present moment, which is, of course, all there ever is. Some people write it in The Power of Now and were surprised.

And they're still surprised when I say the present moment is all there ever is in your life. There's nothing, there is no past and future in your experience except when you think about it, but not in your actual experience. Oh, well, yes, it's actually true.

The greatest philosopher could come and he could not argue with the fact that you only ever experience the present moment, there is nothing else. The mind asks, well, where is the present moment? Well, start with your breath.

That will always take you into the present moment because you're breathing now. And you're only ever taking one breath, this one. All other breaths you either remember or anticipate mentally.

And it's actually said that the Buddha recommended this as a meditation, maybe even before the Buddha, but the Buddha certainly recommended that people should be aware of their breath as a meditation. He didn't say, as far as I know, that that will take you into the present moment. And he didn't say that will actually stop your mind, too.

He just said, be aware of your breath. And so breath awareness meditation has become a Buddhist meditation that's practiced. But the dangerous thing is with practitioners of meditation is they make it into something to be achieved through it.

They want to become good at it. You can't become good at one breath. This is just one breath.

So there's nature and there's the present moment. Here, now, here. Oh, and I thought there was nothing to be grateful for.

I'm breathing, or breathing is happening. And then as you become aware of that, you're beginning to feel that your body is also alive on the inside, to feel that there's an energy that is pervading the entire body. That's nature, and it's very close.

You can't get to a tree that close as you can to your body or anything else. So really, the closest you can ever get to nature is there in yourself as the physical body. But when you become aware, now, this is something for each one of us to do right now, not to do, but to notice.

There's no doing as such because we don't have to do anything. You can do, sometimes it helps to move about, to get a little bit of sense that your body is alive. It can help.

But you can see there's, the body is alive. Can I feel that? Yes, the breath is happening and there's aliveness in my feet, my hands, my legs.

Very subtle at first, but it's there. And there's nature, and that's already a deeper level than what you see. Out in nature, when you look at a tree, you can't, to get deeper than the image of the tree, you have to have gone deeper within yourself so that you can sense the aliveness of the tree.

You cannot sense the aliveness of the tree unless you can sense the aliveness in yourself. If you don't sense the aliveness in yourself, you're only approaching the tree with your mind and your mind might say, oh, that's a nice tree. But you're missing the depths of it.

You're missing the fact that there's more here than what the mind tells you there's here.

When the mind says there's a tree or a flower or whatever it is, what you're looking at and call a tree and then believe that the word that you have attached to it actually describes its reality, no, it's a label, it's an abstraction that you put onto this thing that you cannot really understand. It's a vitally alive, mysterious being with great depths.

It's as much depth as you because all forms, all life forms are connected and come out of the one source of life. So you're beginning to go to feel that when you feel the aliveness of the inner body. It's not quite the deepest source yet, but you're going towards the non-physical, the life energy that comes from the source.

So connecting with yourself through breath and feeling the inner body is part of connecting with nature. Often people only notice nature when there's something unusual happening, for example, a thunderstorm. You cannot help notice that.

Suddenly there's a flash of lightning or you go to a place where there's a tornado happening. Of course, then you notice nature or you go out into alpine regions, high mountains, overpowering. You're climbing up mountains and suddenly you hear, as I remember a few years ago in Switzerland, I was walking and suddenly you hear a huge, like a cannon being fired.

And there were chunks breaking off the glacier. And of course, that is such an overpowering thing. It stops you and you go, wow, is it coming this way?

But most of the time, nature is more subtle than that. And so to notice the nature in its subtle aspect, which is always there, now that requires you to have a certain degree of alertness, attention, alertness is required. You have to, in other words, if you are totally immersed in the thinking mind, you miss the whole thing.

And even sometimes I walk in the forest quite often. I see people walking, some are wearing noise machines. It's as if the noise machine that they have in their head anyway were not enough.

They put speakers onto their ears so that they don't hear nature, don't hear anything natural, just hear. And even those who don't have these things on their ears, whatever they are these days, technology changes so quickly I no longer know what they're called. I can't catch up.

It's no longer CDs, so at least this is old-fashioned. It's other things now, digital. Even if they don't have that, often I can see two friends walking in the forest and they're talking to each other, animators, nothing wrong with talking to each other, but they don't, 98% of what's around them they don't notice.

Occasionally they say, oh, look at that, and then, okay, let's talk about something more important. And even people walking alone, often they're not really there. They are partly there, but a lot of their attention is still in their thoughts.

And even if they are looking and saying, oh, this is, they're exclusively there as the judgmental mind, the interpreting mind, not yet as presence. But nature offers such a wonderful opportunity to enter the state of presence, which is a state of spacious awareness of just that. There's no conceptualizing thought happening, just spacious, aware presence, the most miraculous state for human beings to be in, the next stage in human evolution.

Nature offers you that opportunity more than anything that is man-made, because everything that is man-made has been made with, to a greater or lesser extent, the mind has come in and transformed nature into something that still is, if you trace it back, everything goes back to nature. Even a piece of plastic cannot be made without something natural to start with, which then the mind transforms. And even a car, everything in the car, if you trace it back where it comes from, of course it comes from nature originally.

But in the intervening time period, the human mind has transformed it into something else, and there's nothing wrong with that, except that the man-made things are not as suitable for going deeper and experiencing the state of presence than things that have not been made through thinking, that came spontaneously out of the one consciousness out of which everything comes, produced by the one life, the one underlying intelligence field.

Everything has come out of that, and there is no thinking that goes into the, when nature manufactures a flower, look at that, it doesn't say, let's have a committee meeting and draw up a blueprint and talk about what shape should it be, let's put into the computer the proportions of it and work it all out, it gets very complicated. And they could never manufacture something like that, the subtleness of it, the incredible delicacy of it. So this, yes, of course this has incredible harmony and beauty, but no conceptual thinking has gone into its making, it's not, an intelligence has created that it must have, but this is not analytical thought, has not created that.

And this is why the flower then is more suitable for entering the state of no thought, of pure presence, than, for example, this clock. Because the moment I look at this clock, the mind says, oh, it's such and such a time, and it's nothing wrong with clocks, I like ticking clocks, but, and once you are firmly rooted in presence, you can look at anything and be free of thinking, and you can see the beauty even in a clock or a car and say, wow, oh, it's just, but to, as a help, nature is much more helpful because nature exists in prior to thought, we could say, evolutionary scale. I could have held this flower up and stopped speaking, and the Buddha's silent sermon 2,600 years ago, people still remember it, he sat there and he was going to speak and then suddenly he saw this flower and he took this flower and looked at it for how long, nobody knows, but it must have gone on for a long time and everybody got restless. It's called the Buddha's silent sermon.

And then after half an hour or one hour, we don't know, because they didn't have clocks then, one of the, because they were all monks at that time, other people didn't have access to anything, to spiritual teachings. I talk about that in the New Earth at the beginning. One of the monks, all the other monks looked puzzled, what's he trying to do, what's he saying?

And one monk suddenly started to smile, and the story goes that he was the only one that understood that sermon of the Buddha, the one who smiled. And this smile was, according to the story or the legend or the scriptures, the smile was passed on from generation to generation of teacher and pupil. So he became a teacher, that monk, and they say he passed on the smile, which really means the realization, to the next and the next and the next, and after six or seven or whatever generations, it became the origin of Zen.

That's how the story goes. So what is it then that he smiled about? Well, let's not conceptualize it.

I think you will realize it for yourself as we progress here. Are we then returning, when we go into nature, are we then returning to the level that trees live at, or flowers, or minerals, or birds, whatever it is? Is it an act of return to a primordial stage of being?

Not quite. We join whatever natural thing it is that we are perceiving, we join it in the state of no thought. But when we go there, we've gone through thought already.

We rise above thought. The flower exists below thought. And then we meet in the dimension of no thought.

But at a very deep level, we do not become the flower or the cabbage. Well, if you had a choice, you'd probably rather be a flower than a cabbage, but cabbage is beautiful too. We are not regressing.

Cabbage is fine for the cabbage, but not for us. The cabbage is totally at ease with itself, one with a source, doesn't inhabit a world of problems, doesn't generate conflict. The cabbage is rooted in being.

So is the tree. So is the flower. And even the dog, well, most of them, and the cat, except those who have lived for too long with neurotic humans, they are rooted in being.

And this is why people love dogs and cats. There's actually a deep reason, a deep meaning to that. Because they can sense that the dog or the cat is more deeply rooted in being, is more at rest within him or herself than the human.

The human has gone out very far from the source into further and further differentiation. Everything originates from the one source of all life, the unmanifested, formless, timeless, one source. Everything then comes out of that source.

And humans are a product, a very differentiated product, gone out a long way from the source, a little bit like the prodigal son in the New Testament who leaves the father's home and squanders his wealth and becomes destitute. He's left the source. He's gone so far out that he becomes destitute.

He doesn't remember his origins anymore. So the dog, and even less so the flower or the tree, they haven't gone out that far, so to speak, from the source. There's still more of a connection with their origin.

And this is also why they are not fearful of death. They don't think about, oh, I'm going to die. And when an animal dies, an animal is very accepting.

It surrenders into that. It doesn't make a problem out of living, and it doesn't make a problem out of dying. It doesn't live on the level of problem-making, which is a level when you lose your sense of connectedness with the source, and this is because you identified with the thinking mind, then a world of problems arises.

You create a world of, that's what you manifest then, and that's what you end up with on this planet, on this beautiful planet which is paradise. You end up with layers and layers of complexity and increasing problems. Oh, my God, it's all getting so complicated.

It's just survival is getting complicated, very complicated. So really now when we talk about nature exists closer to the source, we have gone out very far, and for us it's not a return to the original level where the animal lives or the tree lives. It's a transcendence where you regain awareness of the source of being with full consciousness rather than as a natural state and you don't really know.

The dog doesn't know that the dog is one with being. He just is one with being. The tree doesn't know.

If you tell a tree, are you one with being? If a tree could understand you, of course, which it doesn't, it doesn't have conception. Are you one with being?

I don't know. But if you look at nature, everything exists in its, it's so much, so at rest within itself. It has so much integrity.

Everything natural has such integrity. Integrity, the word originally means being one with yourself, not having split yourself into two or three. For example, when you say, me and my life, the tree doesn't say me and my life, my difficult life.

The tree is life, an expression of life. The human says, I have a hard life. And the hard life that the human says he or she has is a mental construct because it has no real reality except as a movement of thought because the only real life that you have is at this moment, ever, always.

This is your life now. I'm sitting here, breathing, perceiving this aware presence. This is life.

This is your life. The rest is memories or anticipatory thinking. So the dog doesn't have a life.

The dog is an unproblematic expression of life. So is everything in nature. It is life manifesting, the one timeless, sacred, the one, deep down, the one formless life becoming form as millions of life forms coming out from.

They say with the Big Bang it all started. Who knows? Before the Big Bang there was nothing.

Nobody understands that because you can't understand nothing. No thing, no form, no time. Out of that void, which is also the fullness of infinite potential, came the forms.

More and more differentiated over millions and millions of years. And then finally it becomes the human mind, the most differentiated as far as we can see. There may be others even more mad somewhere else in the universe.

Continuously thinking and analyzing and evaluating. And then the entity that has to carry that mind is completely out of touch with the source. Not only you're not cut off from the original source, the original oneness, you just don't know it's there.

And so that's it. That's the state of being lost. Lost in your mind, lost in the world, split yourself in two or three, having a life that you don't like, me and my life, me and my story, my sad story.

And then life is perceived no longer as a joyful expression of the underlying oneness, but becomes a burden. It gets heavier and heavier. And so this has happened to humanity.

Humanity is, this species is at a critical stage now. There's a possibility of a shift into a deeper state, or a higher state if you want to call it that, of transcending conceptual thinking, going beyond. And that's what we're going to talk about in a moment.

You can still think, but no longer trapped in thinking. This is where humanity has to go. And as you transcend conceptual thinking, you regain what was lost eons, eons ago.

You regain your sense of connectedness with being. You feel deep down you're connected with something vast, and it's not different from who you are. It just, when we put it into language, it sounds as if that was something different from who you are.

You're connected with being, with a sense of simple beingness. Being is, comes from the word to be, to be the most primordial thing. And everything in nature is an expression of that underlying beingness, and including the physical body.

This body, this body. All that we perceive in this world is existence. Exists, it exists.

This body exists. This body exists. Underlying existence is being.

Being is the formless, timeless dimension within yourself. It's very much like the black hole at the center of the galaxy. When I was writing The Power of Now, I wrote, I don't know why I wrote that, it just came to me one day.

I wrote, there is a black hole at the center of every galaxy. And the editor saw it and said, you can't say that because you don't, how can you know that? The people are going to argue with that.

So it was taken out. And some years later I read, I read an article by a scientist and said, now scientists believe that there is a black hole at the center of every galaxy. And so, why did I know that?

I knew that because I could feel the black hole inside myself. This spacious, formless, one life. The origin.

And so, and I know that the human being is a microcosm. It's just, you can understand the whole universe by understanding yourself. You are just a microscopic version of that.

So that's the, we are regaining by no longer being lost in the conceptualizing mind. We regain something that was lost a long, long time ago. Very much like the prodigal son in the New Testament.

Your origin. Not your origin in, you can't say, it's not really your origin in time. It's not saying, okay, my origin was six billion years ago.

That's where I started. When the Big Bang happened, that was the beginning of me. That's true, of course.

That was the beginning. But it's not so much that the origin is in the distant past, or not even in the near past. The origin is timeless.

The origin of your being. It is still there. This primordial nothingness, nothingness before the Big Bang is still in you now.

Nature can help you rediscover that. If you approach it, not with the conceptualizing mind, but you approach nature and perceive nature in a state of alert attention, spaciousness. And that's a wonderful, wonderful, first we could call it a practice, but then it's no longer a practice.

It becomes a natural way of being. First in nature, and then even in the man-made world. But we need to first of all be able to, we are going into it now, do it in the forest, or on the beach, or in the field, wherever it is, before you can be in that state in the shopping mall, where everything, it's not so, being, you can't really find being that easily.

You have to be rooted very deeply in yourself to find being in the shopping mall, because everything is surface phenomena. Buy me, do this, do this, eat a hamburger. Look here, look here, and then after 20 minutes in the shopping mall, you're totally exhausted because all the energy is flowing out of your eyes into phenomena.

And music is in the background, not the most profound music. And yet you could be walking in the forest for three hours and not feel exhausted, in fact, feel invigorated. Isn't that strange?

So the shopping mall takes it out of you, and the forest, or whatever, or the beach, or the desert puts it back. There's something there that's very, very different, but not for everybody. There needs to be the openness and the alertness so that all the seemingly insignificant things in nature, you are alert to that.

And that, for example, you're looking at, you're walking a tree, a slight movement of leaves in the breeze, perhaps a sound associated with it. Your senses are alert, not strained, there's no tension, you don't go... No, just alert.

In that alertness, of course, there's no thought anymore, because if you were thinking you would not be alert. Thought is not alert, it's a lower state. Alertness is a higher state than thought, higher consciousness than thought.

But good thoughts, which means creative thoughts, original thoughts, original insights, can only come out of the alertness. You need to have the alertness and then sometimes thought becomes fruitful and original and creative out of that. But if you never touch the alertness, then thought is repetitive.

Old records, CDs, not records anymore, and not CDs anymore, old iPods or whatever. So, nature then, you have to approach nature with that alertness, attentiveness, like a little child, as if you had come there for the first time, into that place. Let's say, maybe you drive somewhere, or it's close to where you live, you get out of the car, out of your door.

For most people, even wherever you live, there will be something natural when you step out of your house somewhere. Even if you live downtown, there may be a little tree somewhere. Not acknowledged by most people, almost everybody walks past it without looking, because they have more important things to think about.

But you, for a moment, you acknowledge that. Not by saying, oh, I should be acknowledging the tree. You just acknowledge, you give it attention.

And in that moment, you notice little things about it that before you didn't notice, how the quivering leaves, how the light shines through the branches or the leaves, how the light interacts with the tree. And you notice all these things without having to call it anything. It's just a noticing.

And this is a practice. You can practice that as a choice, because you choose to relate to nature in a different way. And when you do that, then nature gives you something back.

What it gives you back is some of that energy of connectedness with the source that the tree is still in. This energy comes back to you. The tree gives you that back.

It says, have some of this. I have more than enough. So it helps you to feel that connectedness.

But you are also helping the tree. I'm saying that intuitively. The tree hasn't spoken to me like that.

Maybe some trees speak to some people, but not to me. Well, Prince Charles, years ago, said he talked to the plants. And that's, of course, a wonderful thing.

And I think he not only, he meant he not only talked to the plants, I think he meant he gives them his full attention. And ever since the newspapers have been making fun of him. Because they don't understand.

It's just the mind doesn't want to understand that. So you're giving it attention. It's not just that the tree, and I'm only using tree as an example.

It could be a tree. It could be a flower. It could be an entire forest.

As, because the attention that you give, you can give to either a single natural phenomenon, or being, like a tree, or a flower, or even a blade of grass, or a little plant, whatever it may be. You can also give attention to a more inclusive energy field, like an entire valley. That is, it has its own energy field, its own, its own spirit almost, one could say.

Or a forest as you walk. So there are two modalities, one could say, of being there in, let's say it's a forest. You can notice single things, like trees or plants, and for a moment you give them some, give them attention.

There's a looking in alertness. And then you look at something else. And there's no choice really involved in not saying, okay, what can I look at now?

It happens naturally. Your eyes, you'd look at this, and then suddenly you look at something else. And then you look, you take in the totality of what's there, just a general, without always necessarily focusing on one thing, you take in the totality.

And that is, there's an expression in Zen which is translated as a choiceless awareness, an expression that also I believe Krishnamurti used. Choiceless awareness of, so you take in the totality of what is around you. And then the entire energy field of what's around you then connects with you, and you connect with it.

So it gives you what some of that connectedness with a source that nature never lost almost transmits itself to you. But it's a reciprocal process. What you give nature is the awareness of itself.

Because we need to remember that nature, it's not that you are separate from nature, you haven't been put into nature, you have come out of nature, you are nature also. You are nature that is in the process of becoming conscious of itself. And so what you then give back to the tree or the flower or the forest is awareness of itself.

It recognizes, because this flower, I would say it does not know it is beautiful, it just is. The flower is. Its beauty is there, it comes from the source.

And now when any human perceives this flower as a true act of perception, not conceptualizing it or judging it, but something responds from within. Something is touched within. There's such beauty there, but even to call it beauty, you don't need that.

There's something there, something within responds, almost a recognition. And when you perceive in such a way, you realize that you and it are not separate. The illusion of separation which is created by the thinking mind disappears.

And there's a sense of oneness. When you are not calling it anything, this pure spacious perception, immediately there's not me and the flower. There's a continuum.

The flower arises within the field of consciousness. It comes out of that. And so this is really what love is.

You love the flower because you recognize it as ultimately one with who you also are. You're connected to the source. Through the flower you can connect to the source, but you feel it within yourself.

It's an amazing thing. Allow nature to take you back by choiceless awareness, presence. You can allow nature to take you back to the source, but as it takes you back to the source, you are going to the source with the awareness, full awareness of the beauty, of the sacredness, of whatever you want to call it, full awareness.

And then suddenly you have a love of nature and a deep empathy with nature that even the people who lived before the human mind developed into the monster that it has become now. There were people who lived close to the land, close to nature. That was a natural oneness.

They didn't even know it because there was nothing else. So natural, simple people who lived close to nature, they didn't know the preciousness of nature because you can only know the preciousness when you're beginning to lose it. Then it becomes precious.

When there is nothing else, then it's just what is. In the same way, if the entire world were painted green, the color green would not exist. You wouldn't know it.

So this is having lost, which seems like a tragedy on the one hand, that we lost connectedness. Well, we didn't lose it, but it's forgot our connectedness with being or with the source became obscured. We almost, we could say we lost it.

And it seems a tragedy, but it's not really, because it, I believe it was a necessary cycle in the evolution of humanity, because it's only by losing it that you then regain it at a deeper level and a new level is reached. And that is why we are here. That's the process.

But your practice then needs to be bring your gift to nature. Nature has a lot to give you, but it only can do that if you bring your gift to nature. And that is, that gift is consciousness, awareness.

You are there when you go anywhere in nature or even in the city street, there will be something, whether it's, it can be the clouds, it can be even be aware of the sun, the sunlight, that's nature too. Acknowledge all these things with your awareness, by bringing awareness to it. And that looks like I can only, one can only say that much about awareness.

It needs to be experienced. And what I mean by awareness, you can never understand unless at least for a moment you become aware. I could be speaking for weeks about awareness or presence here and you would not know, conceptually you might know everything about it then.

You could write a PhD about awareness or presence without ever having, knowing what it really is. So, let me just demonstrate very simply what awareness is. It's just senses are alert, visual.

Even if there's nothing to hear, you can still have an alertness, auditory alertness. And you know what happened, I talked about it at the beginning, the mind becomes still. When you have nothing to hear, there's nothing beautiful, there's just what raises awareness.

To become aware of what awareness is in yourself is the key. Nature can help you there and speed up this process. So, but the vital, you don't need anything beyond this moment.

You have nature, I said, and you carry it around with yourself, in yourself as this physical form. Awareness is the key. Sometimes it's called attention in some teachings, doesn't matter.

You remember the Zen teacher who would always say when they asked, please explain the meaning of Zen, he would always go like that. And that was the explanation. Another Zen story, the disciple said to the master, I'm going off somewhere else now, can you just write something down for me so that I remember the essence of the teaching?

Obviously, he didn't have it yet, otherwise he wouldn't have asked. He still thought it was something memorable. So the teacher wrote on a little piece of paper or whatever they had, attention.

And the disciple looks and says, okay, can you just say a little bit more, please? I need a little bit more. And so the master writes something else.

And the disciple looks and reads, attention, attention. Oh, well, he said, I want it just a little bit more. Just, can you just write something else?

And then the master writes, and the disciple reads, attention, attention, attention. So the disciple becomes a little bit frustrated. And well, I know that now, the disciple says, what does attention mean anyway?

And the master says, attention means attention. That's the end of the story. Whether he got it or not, we don't know.

This attention is the vital thing, and there is no tension in attention. It just happens to be a similar word. So if it's, there's no straining, there's no, it's not concentration.

Concentration is just focusing on one thing, and there's always some straining involved with it. It goes, attention, it facially looks like. So that's not it.

There's a little bit of the, the very young child, if you can, that, in true attention, there's a little bit of the openness of a very young child in whom the conceptualizing mind hasn't started up yet. Before the child starts asking the question, what's this called? What's that?

What's that? And before they start asking, why? Why?

Why? Before all that, of course, they have to go through that stage. But before that, there's a moment when there's already consciousness beginning to blossom, but not yet taking form as thought.

So there's a short period where the child is in that state of open attention with light shining through their eyes, and then they go. What we are then really talking about is the cessation of thinking, of having to think. Not forever, thinking still happens, but there's actually the choice not to think when there's nothing to think about, which is a lot of the time.

A lot of the time, nothing is added to this moment by thinking about it. The depths, the fullness of life now, you cannot add really anything to it by thinking. Some situations require thinking, that's fine.

Many situations don't require thinking, that's even better. And if you have to think prior to thinking, enter the state of attention or no thought just for a moment, and you will see the quality of thinking improves, the thinking that you then do or that then happens. But to have spaces of not thinking, that's what nature offers you, otherwise you're not really using the vastness of its wealth, nature, when you are thinking about it.

The vastness of that is only accessible to you when there is the spaciousness of not thinking. It doesn't matter for how long you don't think, don't try to stop your mind as such, because that creates a conflict in yourself, and you would perhaps try to exercise willpower, and you may have limited success if you go out into nature and say, I mustn't think. And you'll probably stop breathing too.

So there's no, there's no, no willpower that can't do that. One way of not thinking naturally is, yes, bringing attention to sense perceptions can be very helpful there. Just bring attention to sense perceptions.

Then there won't be enough attention left for thinking. If you're fully attentive with your senses, there's not attention, not enough consciousness left for producing thoughts. Just you're too alert.

That's a simple thing. Another one that is, you can do in daily life and not just in nature, is work with the present moment, and accepting what is now. Whatever form this moment takes, you say, fine, this is what is.

And then you will think much less. A lot of thinking is there because you're trying to get away from what is. So if you can become friendly with the present moment, you become more relaxed, open to life, and naturally the compulsive thinking mind subsides because there's only ever the simplicity of now, of this moment.

So that's a, you can do it in nature more easily than in the office, of course. You can do it in nature more easily than in the shopping mall. You can perhaps do it more easily when you're alone in nature than when you're with a friend in nature, because two people together, most people think, okay, what can we talk about now?

Let's talk about the stock market.

[Speaker 4] (4:14:16 - 4:14:16)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (4:14:18 - 5:23:58)

So it's probably easier alone than visiting your family. Visiting people with whom you share a lot of past. To then to remain clear, present, requires more intense presence.

So nature then is a good place to start being present. And then you, a wonderful thing happens then as your, as presence deepens, you can bring your presence anywhere you go. Even visiting your relatives.

Or even the shopping mall, not that you might choose to spend more time than necessary at the shopping mall, because the compulsion to acquire, which is a substitute for a feeling of aliveness, will have left you. So the compulsion, what can I get now? Why this compulsion to buy things you don't really need?

Because for a moment you get a sense of aliveness, and that moment is quite short. It's when you pay for, when you pay for the stuff and then they put it in the shiny bag and then you say, there you are. Oh.

And then you walk home and there is the bag and then you take it out and then the sense of fulfillment quickly leaves you. And then so that this means of course another visit to the shopping mall is required. And so why that?

Because for a moment you feel there's a sense of lack in most humans that comes from disconnectedness from this. They cannot sense the being within them. They cannot sense that the aliveness, the being that they are.

They cannot sense the I am, the primordial sense of beingness. They're disconnected from that. They're up in the head and the head says, I need, and now I need, what else do I need?

I need this and I need that and I need that. Where can I go? Look, maybe that will do it or that.

Oh, I need another meal. I need another chocolate cake. Whatever, on whatever level the neediness manifests, it will be there.

I need another relationship. I knew somebody who had enough money and he bought one car, a very expensive car and there's nothing wrong with that. It's fine if you enjoy a car.

But very quickly he found it didn't have, it didn't fulfill him the way he thought it would. And so I think that was a, what was it, Aston Martin or Bentley or something. And then he bought a Ferrari and then for a while that was, yeah, that's it.

And then that wore off also and then he bought another one. They had three cars standing there and he said, oh, that's a piece of garbage. It's a piece of garbage.

See, it wasn't fulfilling anymore. And so that really is whatever, all these are substitutes. And of course, unfortunately, if the whole economic structure that we, well, it's a little bit shaky now, which is probably a good thing, but the whole economic structure can survive only if enough people still live in that neediness to consume.

If not enough people consume, they say this is very bad, the economy is going downhill fast, people are not consuming anymore. Of course you will. So what I'm talking about is the neediness, the neediness to have substitute fulfillment then goes.

So we create a different, very different society, very different world is then created. Of course, the transition will be a little bit painful for some people. But the more you are surrendered to life, to the present moment, the easier it will be.

So nature then is the, can be for many people, the entry into the state of being, connectedness with being, because nature is really being. Through every form of life, being speaks, not through words, being communicates itself to you through every natural form. And within yourself also through existence is the forms of life, existence, billions, billions of life forms.

Underlying the billions of life forms is the one life. So you are that, I am an expression of the one life, a temporary expression of the one timeless life. Can you sense, that question is, can you sense the one timeless life within yourself as consciousness?

Can you, at this moment, can you feel your own presence, your own awareness? These words are not quite right, it's not yours, nothing is yours. But let's just for a moment put it like that just to get you there.

Can you feel, can you feel your own presence, which don't mean you're thinking, I don't mean your feelings, they may be there, but underneath it, isn't there, isn't there a presence that perceives this moment as in whatever form it arises at this moment? Isn't there an underlying light, isn't there an underlying space in which all this arises? Even if it's all a dream, it might all be a dream, but even then, if it is a dream, there's no point in arguing whether it's a dream or not, isn't there an underlying space in which the dream arises?

Somebody's having this dream, who is that somebody? You. But not you as the person, the person is part of the dream, if it is a dream.

Well, it's dreamlike, that's for sure, because everything passes very quickly, it certainly is dreamlike, our existence is dreamlike, no doubt about that, but who is having this dreamlike thing? To whom is it happening? To me, who are you?

You can't attach a name to it, you are consciousness, the essence. So when I say, can you feel your own presence, another way of putting it is, can you be aware that you are aware at this moment, aware of your own awareness, aware of awareness, self-awareness, self-realization? You don't need to think, there's nothing to understand in it, nothing to understand, just that.

Yeah, that's the transcendent dimension in you, it transcends everything. Transcend means it's beyond. As it says in the Buddhist scripture, something like, what is it, gate, gate, paragate, beyond, beyond, gone to the farthest shore, gone beyond.

And this is not some extraordinary state reserved for one person in a billion, it's a natural state, because we had lost it for so long, it just seems so extraordinary. It's the most wonderful thing if you can go into any situation as that clear space, not as a person. The person is there for a while, you can still bring the person out of the cupboard when you want it.

If people ask me, what do you do, or whatever, usually I say something, I'm a writer, okay, that doesn't create any problems. I don't, I'm not saying, I am formless consciousness and I was never born, and that would lead to problems. So you can pretend that you are a person and then give a clear answer, and that's fine, and still know that that's not the truth at all, not that you're lying, but it's a tiny, tiny temporary aspect, and still be there as a spacious presence in any situation, doesn't matter where anymore, just spacious presence.

And a lot of the time, don't need to think, just be there as a presence, and you are truly, that's true intelligence coming into this world. Real intelligence is not what the IQ test measures in you. I'm incapable of doing IQ tests, I mean, I've never done one, but I just looked, glanced at one, and I know my IQ would be very low.

My mind doesn't work in that way, it doesn't work analytically, and so, that is only a tiny aspect, it's not, this is not true intelligence, and I'm not saying that because my IQ test would be low, it's not, nor should it be an insult to anybody who has a high IQ, and I'm now removing their sense of identity by saying it doesn't matter that much whether your IQ is high or low, it's not that, but there's a true, the true intelligence is the unconditioned consciousness.

The thinking mind is the conditioned consciousness, conditioned by the past, conditioned by innumerable factors, conditioned by the language that you inherit. There's past in every word that you inherit. The moment you start speaking a language, you inherit an entire world view that's associated with that language, an entire energy that comes with the language that you're born into, and then that becomes part of who you think you are, your identity.

It's not, it's a temporary acquisition, it's a form of conditioning, and then people are, I'm English, German, Italian, Greek, whatever, it's nothing to do with who they are, it's a form of conditioning. So, and then there is the unconditioned underneath it, spacious awareness, unconditioned, and everybody, it's in everybody, you just stop thinking for a moment and there it is. And the mind says, oh, that can't be that insignificant because there was nothing happening just now.

And then you don't need to desensitize yourself anymore and all the other substitutes that you may have for a sense of aliveness, whatever drugs people use to feel more alive for a little while, relationships, they need to change relationships quickly because quickly the novelty wears out and then, okay, maybe somebody else will finally make me happy and do it for me. Maybe he's right here, or she. And there's nothing wrong with any of these things, buying something or even enjoying a drink or whatever, but the compulsive nature, then, is no longer there.

You don't need substitute aliveness. Another one, of course, is drama in relation, you need the drama to have, to feel, we are still alive. We haven't been fighting in one month, something must be wrong.

Even with your dog or cat, if you have a dog or cat, approach them as much as possible, not through language, of course, sometimes you speak, but approach them just bringing also awareness, just look, watch your dog or cat, how he runs around or rests or eats or sleeps, and just bring aware presence, look into their eyes, connect with the, because there's so much being coming through them, through their eyes, and that's why people are drawn to dogs or cats, they love them, and even people with big egos, they sometimes, when they see a dog, they go, oh, for a moment the ego subsides, for a moment they look into the eyes of the dog and they feel a little bit more themselves even, more, oh, and again, it's the being that speaks through this little animal, more connected than the master, than the owner, the being of the dog, and this is what people relate to in the animal, this is why they spend so much money on their animals, because it gives them a glimpse of being, of that connectedness, but it's a secondary thing, but if you can be, the dog can help you if you bring, always realize it's in you, you feel that in yourself when you relate to the dog or the cat, it's not in the dog, it's also in the dog or cat, but it is primarily felt here. Thank you.

Thank you. Let's talk about meditation today and whatever else arises out of that, you never know beforehand. Meditation, as you may know, I don't teach meditation as such, not so much as a separate practice.

Presence practice, bringing presence into everyday life, is meditation, but there's also something to be said for having a structured practice every day, and it may not be right or absolutely necessary for everybody, but many people will find structured meditation every day helpful. The thing is, I've come across many meditators who are extremely accomplished, have been practicing meditation, structured meditation for 20 or 30 years, and still they find that no matter what states of consciousness they achieve or enter into in their structured meditation, there's still a huge gap between their everyday life and their state of consciousness while they meditate. In other words, they tend to be almost as unconscious as a non-meditator in everyday life.

So there's a gap that can arise in people who practice structured meditation between, this is my meditation, and then you get on with the rest of your life. Meditation in the morning and the evening, and then they move out of their meditation into the rest of their lives. To exemplify that, there's the example of the meditator, a man who is meditating on metta, a Buddhist meditation called loving-kindness, where you spread loving-kindness out from you, says, goes something like, may I be well and happy, may I be well and happy, may I be well and happy, and as the words are used as pointers so that you emanate peace, you can feel yourself, and then you include the next circle, may everybody in this house be well and happy, may everybody in this city be well and happy, gradually you expand, may everybody in this state be well and happy, in this country, the entire planet.

So it's quite a beautiful meditation. Anyway, this man then was practicing the metta loving-kindness meditation, and then the door opened and his daughter came running in, and so he opened it, I said, can't you see I'm doing my meditation? Get out of here.

Every day you disturb me while I'm doing it. There's a gap between the practice and living. So if you are a meditator, or if you take up meditation, beware of that, and very important, meditation must not be confined to just one time period when you sit down, when you sit in wherever you sit, on the floor, on a chair, on a cushion, and close your eyes.

Meditation needs to seep into everyday life, and this is what we call, of course, this is what we always address here, what the teaching is all about, that's the presence practice. And sometimes I recommend little, what I call mini meditations, and this is really a presence practice that you can do wherever you are, and in any situation. So I recommend, for example, every time you get into your car, when you close the door, not to immediately reach for the ignition, but to sit for at least about 30 seconds.

Don't do too much, not necessary. 30 seconds, and be present during those 30 seconds. You can choose either to have your attention on sense perceptions, visual, auditory, give it your complete attention, or you can have your attention on the fact that you are breathing, or you can have your attention on the feeling of the inner body as you sit there, the aliveness in the body.

30 seconds, unless there's an emergency, you need to get to the hospital, your wife is pregnant, then don't do it, or there's an extreme emergency. Now, many people live their everyday life as if their entire life were an emergency. It's not the case, that's a deep-seated form of conditioning.

In other words, they live in continuous stress, and that's really treating everyday life as a continuous emergency. Can you imagine living like that? And don't imagine it, many people do.

Living is amazing. So what does that mean? A continuous emergency means there's a continuous, enormously powerful pull that pulls you out of yourself and out of the now into some kind of pursuit of future.

That's the emergency, because the emergency means I need to get there. There are some real emergencies, as I said, you may have to get to the hospital, or you may have to, whatever it is. But mostly it's not a real emergency, it's a form of conditioning.

The entire civilization is conditioned and conditions you in that way. It starts at school, it starts the way people live at home, in their family. There's always stress, always something to do.

I don't personally have much experience anymore with visiting families like that, because most people, if I visit people, they're already present, already living in presence. So I don't have that much contact anymore with the normal dysfunctional families. But I know that many of them still exist, the majority.

And I sometimes see it in films, when you see very quite realistic films, where you see a family interacting. God, they're all insane. Let's do this, have you done this?

Come on, let's do that. What's the next thing we have to do? This continuous stream of things arising in your mind, one mind object after another, content, completely absorbed in the content of your mind, that's ultimately what it is.

And so never finding any kind of space in your life. And really that's what meditation is all about, finding that most precious of things, or no things, space. Without space, your life is, as I sometimes called Winston Churchill, when he talked about human history, one damn thing after another.

And that's how many people experience their life. Just one, what's the next damn thing I have to do? And then you have a succession of damn things that you haven't done yet.

They're just waiting. And they're saying, give me attention, give me attention. And so you're torn.

It's a normal way to live these days. And even professions that used to be cushy and comfortable, like being a teacher, have become extremely stressful. And places that potentially could be and certainly should be places of healing, like hospitals, many of them are madhouses.

And sometimes the only grace that is still there is the nurses and a few doctors who are not completely lost, and they bring some presence into that situation. But very often the entire, everybody else is on the verge of a nervous breakdown continuously. There are even TV soap operas about life in a hospital.

It doesn't have to be like that. So this is a deep-seated form of conditioning and the absence, the lack of space. And really that is, another word for space, we could say being, the sense of being, the formless and timeless sense of being or aliveness, spaciousness.

If that's lacking in your life, really nothing much is going to help you, no matter what you achieve, because the most precious thing is not there. The beingness, the connectedness with being, one could put it like that, some sense of inner spaciousness. That's where peace emanates, inner peace, can only emanate from there.

There is no peace to be found in any of the objects of consciousness. Sometimes the object deceives you and says, if I can only obtain this object of my desire, then I will achieve inner peace. Of course, then if you are lucky or unlucky enough to obtain it, then quickly you realize it didn't do its job.

It didn't do it for me. I thought fame would make me happy and complete it, and once fame comes, it comes to a few, to some it comes for a little while, fame is for a day, or you may be famous for a couple of years, or you may be famous for the rest of your life. But I've met a few famous people and unless they have gone beyond identification with that, they are as unhappy or more unhappy than non-famous people.

You very quickly see the downside of fame, big downsides. One of them being that newspapers invent stories about you. That's not true.

I never did that. I never said it. Why are they writing this about me?

Because they want to sell more papers so that you're being used by many people just to... So meditation then really is about, you could say, finding inner space, discovering inner space. I wouldn't say quite creating inner space because, although I might have said it once or twice, words are always never quite right.

You don't have to create inner space because inner space is your essential identity, the spaciousness of consciousness itself. So in that sense, you don't need to create it, produce it, achieve it, and here we come already to the pitfall that many meditators succumb to or fall into, whatever, is that unconsciously they make their meditation into something to be achieved, a means to an end. And then you try to get better in your meditation practice.

That sounds like a good thing to do, get better in my meditation practice. But what is being obscured by trying to get somewhere in your meditation, what's being obscured is the space that can only be accessed in the now. So for many people it happens unconsciously that meditation, which could be a great thing, if it's not done rightly, it's just another way of attempting to get to some future achievement through your meditation.

And of course you can achieve quite a few things. You can achieve a relatively still mind, but it won't be the real thing. There'll be some kind of willpower behind it.

It's not the discovery of inner space. You're holding, maybe you're holding the lid on the kettle. You can sometimes look at a person, if you go to a place where there's group meditations, and you can sometimes see that in some, quite a few people, there's a lot of strain and holding back while they meditate.

Some people, sometimes in Eastern places, in Buddhist monasteries, there are some Westerners and some Eastern people, and sometimes the Eastern monks are very impressed by the Westerners, some of the Westerners, because they can sit still, they have so much willpower, they sit there. And of course they're showing everybody how great are in their meditation. And of course that's not, you can see when there's a lot of wanting there, a lot of force behind it, and that's not it.

There's no discovery of inner space there, but potentially meditation could be used as a way of discovering space, inner space, finding it, connecting with it, and realizing that essentially you are it. Meditation then is usually connected, it's always connected with your attention. Directing attention is the beginning, and the essential part of every meditation is, where is your attention?

Now for most people, their attention is continuously absorbed by thought activity, very habitual. For many people that is so overpowering that they wouldn't even be interested in meditation. They may not even have heard of it, it's not part of their reality.

They are so absorbed in the continuously arising streams of thought, that beyond that nothing exists for them, and they are not looking for anything, because apart from the continuously arising thoughts, they don't know there's anything else. They are so identified with that, that apart from the thoughts there is nobody there. At least they don't know that there is a deeper dimension.

It is obscured, completely obscured. So those people are then, we can say they are trapped in their ego, because the meaning of ego is complete identification with the stream of thinking, whereby the stream of thinking becomes invested with a sense of self. And because you are identified with every thought that arises, and that sense of self is the ego, the false self, normal human condition.

So, and often it is only when the living in that way creates more and more unhappiness, that at some point the unhappiness or the stress either makes you ill, or in itself is enough to create so much tension that something happens, and that is the good side of suffering or unhappiness. At some point there's a slight awakening, and there's a little crack in the egoic density, the shell of the ego. And that's the wonderful thing about the ego is that it has built into itself a self-destruct mechanism.

Sooner or later, the ego, because of the unhappiness it generates, the stress and the suffering, sooner or later something cracks, either directly or something in the body cracks, in the physical, and then that creates an opening. And then perhaps if something cracks, then the person suddenly becomes interested in, ah, there may be more. And then you might want to explore meditation, or you're drawn to a spiritual teaching.

And then you become aware for the first time of where your attention is. And then you become aware for the first time of the kinds of thoughts you think habitually. It's not so much that you think the thoughts, it's the thoughts that inhabit your mind.

You don't think them because they're just there, they arise. You don't think your thoughts, the thoughts in the same way that you don't beat your heart. And so some of your attention then, a little bit of your attention detaches from thinking, and is there, and there's a little bit of a witness there that realizes what's going on in your mind.

That's wonderful. And then the desire may come, oh, okay, that wants to grow. And then you may take up a meditation practice.

And then you learn about your attention. Then you learn how enormously powerful the pull of your mind is, that of continuously wanting more attention for thoughts. And then you take up some meditation, and the first thing you learn in meditation, in any meditation, is to direct your attention to some meditation object.

So you learn to direct attention away from thinking onto some object. The object may be an external object, a flower. It may be a candle flame.

It could be anything. It could be a picture. It could be directing your attention to a word that is repeated in your mind, or a group of words, a so-called mantra.

And then you repeat that in your mind, and instead of going into all kinds of thought activity, thought activity is reduced then to just a few words, or one word. And a mantra is a traditional Eastern thing, and can be helpful for many people. You can create your own mantra, too.

You can say whatever. God is. Even if you don't believe in God, you can say, God is.

You can say, I am. You can ask the question, Who am I? It's a wonderful meditation, very simple, favored by the Indian teacher, Ramana Maharshi.

He recommended it highly. And if you don't want any kind of complicated meditation, I suggest you use that, so your attention, first of all, is directed to the words, Who am I, that you repeat every 20 seconds, 30 seconds, whatever feels comfortable, in your mind, silently. So the focus of your attention is, rather than going into all kinds of thinking, is reduced to those words.

And the wonderful thing about this meditation, in a way, one could say, the more simple a meditation, the better. And this one is very simple. The wonderful thing about this meditation is, you have your attention on the words, attention, but after you've said those words, those words are a question.

Now, usually, a question demands an answer. And your mind might think that at some point, some answer will come into your mind, that will tell you who you are. And it may even happen, after you've done it for 10, 15, 20 minutes, suddenly your mind might say something, but whatever it says, that won't be quite it.

Even if your mind says, well, your mind might say all kinds of things. It might suddenly say, you are a miserable wretch, who has failed at everything you've done. Or your mind might suddenly say, you are the greatest being that has ever come to this planet, you are here to redeem the world, you are very special.

It's happened to some, even to some people who've gone very deep. Suddenly this thought came, oh, and they completely believed in that thought, I am the greatest. And then they announced it to the world, and started to write books.

And then, not only they believed in that thought, some other people started to believe in that too. And then you have a cult. So that may come in, and or you may have something much more subtle, and perhaps closer to who you are, it might say, you are timeless and unlimited consciousness itself.

Well, that's better, you can't really identify with that so much. And yet, that's not quite it either, because it's just another thought, just more concepts to believe in. A little bit better, I would say, than saying, I am the greatest that has ever lived, but still a conceptual structure that then you believe in and identify with.

So you have to be careful with this meditation, who am I? Because no matter what your mind says in answer to the question, will not be quite it. So why then ask the question, who am I?

Because what matters with this meditation is the silent space after the question. And the answer to who you are lies in the silent space after you have asked the question. And the only reason why you should then repeat the same question is to prevent all kinds of other thoughts from arising, because the silent space may only have a limited lifespan from our external viewpoint.

It may be there for a few seconds, and then some thought may come and say, have I answered my emails today? And so to prevent that kind of thought from arising, you just ask the question again. We need to know that, because otherwise the mind, after you've practiced this meditation for a while, will become frustrated and say, well, I've been doing this meditation that Eckhart talked about and that Ramana Maharshi recommended, and I haven't gotten anywhere with it.

I still don't know who I am. I haven't had an answer. That's because you haven't paid attention to the space after the question.

So this is a wonderful meditation once you know what to be aware of and be careful not to fall into some kind of error or belief. Who am I? Beautiful, gentle question that directs your attention to that which cannot be named, that which cannot be understood through concepts, that which has no time to it.

It can very quickly put you in touch with yourself, so to speak. The mind then, mind activity subsides, and there's just a beautiful space of beingness or presence. Who am I?

Who am I? Space. And how often you need to ask the question as the space remains, then there's no need to repeat the question.

Be with the space for perhaps a minute. It's fine. And then just to make sure that perhaps the question you find is arising again.

Who am I? Wonderful meditation. You can also do it, sometimes people do it to each other.

You can sit with your partner and look into his or her eyes and ask, Who are you? Answers are not required, by the way. Who are you?

Who are you? Sometimes there are such things, I've heard about it, I haven't experienced it in meditation. No, enlightenment intensives, I believe.

I don't know if anybody has had that experience of a group. And as far as I know, people often spend hours asking this question. And sometimes after two or three or four or five or six hours of being asked, Who are you?

Apparently some people have a realization. Now whether it's produced in such a way, whether it's a lasting realization, I don't know. Somebody's shaking his head no, so that's the answer.

So that's not needed. Don't overdo anything. That's again a pitfall of meditation, because people think if meditation is good, more of it must be even better.

And more of it must be better still. And then people become obsessed with meditation. And I've seen some people even going, becoming mentally very unbalanced after a while, because they thought, Okay, I'm going to get there.

Where? You're there already. I will get there.

And then suddenly after doing eight, nine, ten hours of meditation every day for several weeks, they had to be taken away. So moderation, no need to overdo it. There's nowhere to get.

You think there's somewhere to get? No, there isn't. That's the very thing of meditation is that it opens up for you the depths of the present moment.

If you are going anywhere in your meditation, where you're going is more deeply into the now. That sounds very strange, because when we talk about now, the timeless dimension, we're using words. All words originate in the world, the dimension of time.

So even to say, although I would say it's a true statement, but it's a paradoxical statement to say we are going more deeply into the now. More implies there's time. So there's always a paradox when you talk about the now using words and using words that originate in this dimension of time.

But that's how it is. So let's become comfortable with a paradox and say that meditation is about the deepening into the vertical dimension, so that you are no longer lost in the horizontal dimension of life, past and future, one thought after another, one thing to do after another. And looking for yourself in the horizontal dimension, where there is no, as the Buddha already said, there is no self there.

The self that you're looking for cannot be found. Anatta, I believe, in Pali. Anatta, no self, Buddha said, enormous insight, 2,600 years ago, no matter where you go and what you do, what condition you enter into or find, it's not self.

And if you are looking for yourself where there is no self, you encounter dukkha, which means suffering. Wonderful. And suffering in whatever form, unhappiness, unsatisfactoriness, discontent, irritation, whatever, all forms of suffering.

So if you don't realize that there is no self in anything that you can identify with in the world of mind objects, whatever it is, possessions, relationships, places, people, situations, achievements, successes, failures, they're all self. There's no self in them. They're just conditions that arise, come and go, come and go.

And that's the third part of the teaching of the Buddha. It's any mind object in any condition that arises is impermanent, impermanent. In the Pali language, anicca, I believe, fleeting.

So if you're looking for yourself in what is fleeting and what is impermanent, where there is no self, then you suffer. So the whole teaching is about, the Buddhist teaching, any spiritual teaching, is about the kingdom of heaven in the vertical dimension of now. So the meditation, if it works, takes you into the vertical dimension of now, and that is what this meditation does when you ask, who am I?

Just what remains is there's no mind object. There's only this. Everything else falls away.

Beautiful meditation. Another meditation object that is a very simple one, again, the meditation object means that to which attention is directed, is your breathing, and that's a very ancient meditation. Breathing is quite a nice meditation object because it does not have a clearly defined form.

It's a very subtle thing, and it's always there. It's always there. Mostly you're not aware of it, but you're always breathing, or breathing is always happening in your body.

And so taking your attention to the fact that you are breathing is another very simple meditation that anybody can practice for 10 minutes, 15 minutes a day, if you want to make it into a structured meditation. Or you can take one conscious breath occasionally, which is already a mini meditation. What does that mean, one conscious breath?

It means you're aware of the air moving into your nose and into your body. Now there, people have developed various ways of being aware of that. The most basic form of this kind of breath awareness, which is designed for people who have an extremely noisy mind, and they just, to ask them to be aware of their breath half a breath is too much to ask.

They can do half a breath, the in-breath, but by the time they breathe out, they're thinking about something else. So there are many people whose mind is so active, and perhaps even half a breath they can't do. And for those people, they have devised, well they, I mean, these are some forms of meditation that are used in Buddhism, although they have nothing to do with Buddhism as such.

Anybody could use them. And there you start by counting your breaths. So if your mind is over, absolutely overactive, then you just go, as you breathe in, you count from one to nine, one, two, three, four, in your mind, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, a little pause, and as you breathe out you count from nine to one, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one.

Now of course you're not free of thought there. You haven't found inner space yet, but this is for people who are burdened with an extremely noisy mind. And they should be doing that, they say, for perhaps a few months at least.

And gradually you can reduce the number of counts, one to six, then you do one to three, and then if you're lucky you can just do one or two. And that's called the counting. It's part of a practice that is called in Buddhism, I believe, Samatha, calm, to calm your mind.

The next stage then, once you can do the counting, now many of you won't need that, because your mind is not that active, otherwise you wouldn't be here listening to this. You would be off thinking about something else. The next step, and this is perhaps for many of you might be helpful, is to follow, it's called the following, you follow the breast with your attention as it moves into the body.

You can actually feel the air moving into the body, and then you follow it with your attention as it moves out of the body. That's quite a pleasant thing to do. Let's just do it just for a few breaths, with eyes closed or eyes open.

Eyes closed is probably easier. I'll keep my eyes open as I speak, but I'll also do it. In-breath, follow your attention, follow the breath, and out-breath.

In-breath, and out-breath. In-breath, and out-breath. In-breath, out-breath.

Quite pleasant, you have a meditation object that's very close to you. And that leads us even to a more subtle thing, that is to feel the air at the tip of your nose, where the air comes in, a very subtle feeling, it's called the touching. So now you feel the air as it touches your nose on its way into the body.

Now to feel that you need more acute attention. You can practice with that. So you will notice that the attention needs to be more acute so that you can catch that very subtle feeling where the air moves into the nostrils.

And then comes something that they don't even teach in all schools. The most important part in any meditation is to drop the meditation object. So once you can feel the subtleness of the air entering your nostrils, at that point, when you are good at it, drop it, finish, that's the end of the meditation, because what remains is attention itself, bare attention itself, and that's the space, consciousness itself.

So no matter what meditation object you use, one tends to get attached. If meditation, you become peaceful as you meditate, one tends to become attached to the meditation object, but, and then that again is a pitfall in meditation, because eventually every object, every meditation object is to be relinquished so that what remains is the formless consciousness itself. That's the beauty of it, and that's the only reason why you have a meditation object.

The only thing is that many people find it hard to go directly from normal mind-identified consciousness into the realization of consciousness itself, but that can be done. You can, as you sit here, often I invite you to realize that in yourself without necessarily going through the meditation. So the opportunity is there at any moment to realize that in you that underlies all thought, that underlies all mind activity.

So at any moment the possibility is there, there you realize who you are beyond thought, and the, and thought can subside suddenly, it can happen spontaneously, and really the entire spiritual teaching is aimed at this realization of who you are underneath all the mind objects, underneath all the clutter of the mind, plus the emotions that go with the mind activity. So the ultimate, the aim of meditation is to find that clarity, that peace, and that space, but some people find it even without the meditation. Some people find it because life has become unbearably painful, and suddenly they step out of that which created all the pain, identification with form.

And then the closest in this teaching that we get to meditation is inner body, and that's another beautiful thing. You can either, I usually recommend inner body awareness in everyday life, when you listen to somebody, when you're looking at something, especially nature, connect with the aliveness within, and then look at the tree, so that you're not putting abstraction onto the aliveness of that being that we call tree, that beautiful, mysterious, everything is mysterious, and the mind believes that once you have put a label on something, you know it. But you can see that this is, it's a pseudo-knowing, it's fine as a practical thing in everyday life, but to call a tree a tree, or that's an oak tree, or that's such and there are many different kinds of oak trees. So now, no, it's not just an oak tree, that is such and such an oak tree.

Oh, okay, now I know what it is. Finished. I finished with that.

What's the next thing I can label? So you haven't actually connected with a tree, you haven't contacted the essential reality of that thing that the mind calls tree, the depth of it, the mystery of it, because you believe that once you call something by a name, then you know what it is. It's not, it's just an attachment of a concept onto something that is profound, and you do it to yourself.

You attach concepts and labels to who you think you are, and then that becomes, then you miss the profundity of your very being. So then you're trapped, again, that's the horizontal dimension of thought. So we need to break through that, not believing in the thoughts that arise, especially thoughts that concern you or other people.

Who am I? Well, then you refer to your personal history, or the way in which you interpret your life. Nothing to do, essentially, with who you are.

Not believing in labels. And so, feeling the inner body can be done as a structured meditation, or can be practiced in everyday life as a way of anchoring yourself in the now, as a way of keeping the conceptualizing mind out of the way, and relating more deeply to people and things, whatever it is you perceive, the life around you. The inner body, when it's done as a structured meditation, is quite an old meditation, been around for hundreds or perhaps thousands of years.

The practitioners of this meditation believe that that was one of the meditations originally taught by the Buddha, and they have some scriptures to prove it. Of course, nobody knows what the Buddha actually said. Many of the scriptures were written much, much later.

But that doesn't matter. It is a powerful meditation. They call it vipassana, and it's a very structured meditation where you gradually, your attention gradually goes from one part of the body to the other.

You can do it as a, learn it as a practice, if you want. The way I recommend inner body is less structured or hardly structured. I might say feel the aliveness in your hands as you sit here, and then feel the aliveness in your feet at the same time.

Feel the aliveness means direct your attention there, away from thinking. Feel the aliveness throughout the body as you sit here and listen. And then if you want to make it into a structured or more real kind of so-called meditation, then you sit upright in a chair or on a floor, close your eyes and go deeply into that feeling of aliveness.

That's quite beautiful too. So that all your attention is in that intense sense of aliveness that pervades the entire body where it isn't really the body anymore. Well, you don't know what it is.

It's just aliveness. And there's no longer, when you go deeply into that aliveness, you can do it as I speak. If you close your eyes, or even with your eyes open, close your eyes, go into that aliveness, and even the sense of, I am aware of the aliveness disappears because the consciousness and the aliveness become one.

So this is a good meditation because the meditation object, you merge with the meditation object. There isn't you and the object. So when you go deeply into the inner body in your meditation, with your eyes closed, you get a sense that you are that field.

The inner body is the field of consciousness, the spaciousness. You are that. It is aware of itself.

You are aware of yourself. No duality. When you go deeply into the body, there's no duality of the observer and the observed.

The observer and the observed are one. That's a wonderful realization. And then, when you sense that strongly, then you open your eyes and stay connected with that sense, and then look around the room or wherever you are, and then you feel the depth and sense perceptions.

Beautiful. That's the way, absolute balance between the outer world of form and the inner world of being. You're connected with being.

[Speaker 4] (5:24:00 - 5:24:00)

Wow.

[Speaker 1] (5:24:02 - 6:01:21)

So that's just a wonderful meditation practice. If you want to do it in a more formal way, do it once a day or so, twice a day, sit somewhere quiet, erect, not lying in some... Because you would fall below thinking.

If you lie on a sofa or couch, want really relax and do your meditation, you will quickly fall below thinking. That's the only reason why people then attempt to sit erect. And if you want to sit cross-legged on the floor, and if it's...

That can, on the one hand, can be a distraction. It can also be something that's part of your meditation. If your legs start to hurt, these days it's painful for me to sit like that.

My legs start to hurt after a few minutes. But if that happens, that's fine. You can surrender to that, and then there's a space around it that too can become part of your practice.

I think Kim will have more to say about that. That too can become part of your practice. Pain arises while you sit.

Do you need to immediately do something about it, or can you just say, or say nothing, just be with it? Which means, there's a space around it. It's completely accepted for what it is, and so that it just is.

And that brings me to another aspect of meditation, any meditation that you do. Discomfort may arise sometimes during meditation. Discomfort is something that everybody is familiar with.

Some people spend their whole lives in discomfort, psychological discomfort. And so if discomfort arises, or irritation arises, or impatient arises, or any kind of mind condition arises, and you can learn there to simply be with it. Accept the form that this moment takes in the form of pain in the knee.

You accept the form of this moment. And that in itself can become a meditation. And that is why in Zen, Zazen, the school of Zen, they have a meditation that they call sitting.

No structure whatsoever. All they tell you is, sit and be with what is. And you sit for hours and be with what is.

That's the Zen meditation. And they put you in a room, you're facing the wall, and then they open the windows in the winter, and the cold air comes in, and you sit there shivering, and you be with what is. And then you observe your mind, what it comes up with.

What am I doing here? What's the point of all this? This is dreadful.

I could be home in a warm bed. Oh my God, this is so stupid. And then you be with the mind, the thoughts that arise in your mind.

You see that? Be with that. And you don't say to the thoughts, I mustn't have these thoughts.

No. Whatever is, you be with what is. That's the Zen meditation that has no other structure, or no structure, except that sitting.

That's why they don't even call it meditation. They call it sitting. And so they ask you when you go to a monastery, how long have you been sitting?

And you say, I'm not sitting, I'm standing. What they mean is, how long have you been meditating? Oh, I've been sitting for 25 years.

So hopefully, they no longer need the Zen monastery. And that's an interesting thing. That's really where, this is the way to live, to be with what is, because what is already is.

And to fight that is absurd. And so that's what you learn then in your Zen meditation, the most simple form of meditation. And some people would say, the most difficult form of meditation.

Just sitting, just. And again, you can use that. Even without a teacher, you can just sit.

There's nothing much to learn beyond that. Just sitting and being with what is. The only thing you don't have, the helpful thing in some Zen monasteries, somebody to hit you with a stick from behind the moment he sees that you are drifting off somewhere.

Whack! And then you have to say, thank you. So that meditation then, being with what is, has no specific meditation object except the condition that arises at this moment.

That is, whatever condition arises at this moment, externally or internally, is the meditation object. An emotion, a thought, a feeling, a physical sensation, or externally, cold air, warm air, heat, cold, people making funny noises around you, disturbing noises, a lawnmower, drill. Be with what is.

Everything, and again, that's in this meditation, whatever is, is incorporated into the meditation. So you can never say, I can't meditate because this is happening. Well, that's part of the meditation.

So whatever happens is incorporated into the meditation. So there are no excuses left then. I can't meditate because the children are screaming.

Well, that's your meditation object. Be the space for that. And then you learn really that it's a preparation for living in that way.

That's the ultimate. The real meditation is, and that's the awakened state of consciousness. Whatever arises at this moment, whatever condition arises at this moment, is part of the is-ness of life and is therefore accepted fully.

It doesn't mean you become powerless. It means you contact enormous power. You become an expression of enormous power, which is the power and intelligence of life itself, which can then act through you and come into this world.

True intelligence. And that can only come if you no longer obstruct the power of the present moment. It's always there.

Now, the fact that you can obstruct the power of the present moment does not mean that you are more powerful than it. It means it's just somebody who closes, as I sometimes give the example of closing the shutters, the sun can't come in. It doesn't mean the shutters are more powerful than the sun.

So this is the most powerful way to live, that the Zen meditation can just show it to you, you can practice there, and then the vital thing is to live it in daily life. And so a meditation can be very helpful, especially very simple meditations. You don't need the complicated ones.

Well, except, as I said, the counting. If your mind is totally mad, then you have to start with the counting. You can't just be with what is, because you don't even know what is.

When you sit down, your mind will immediately go off into what isn't here. It will go off into thinking about my investments, what's going to happen to them. Be with what is.

No, no, I have to think about the investment. I have to think about the falling property prices. Gosh, what's going to happen if I'm never going to sell my house, my life insurance, my whatever.

Anything except what is, I need to worry about it. If I don't worry about it, it'll all fall apart. I need to be responsible and hold it together by worrying about it, especially in the middle of the night.

And so Zen teaches you then the simplicity of the is-ness. That's really the secret of Zen, is that it's simple to be with what is. And that's why the Zen master said, well, the story goes that some disciples went to their Zen master and said, the other master from that other monastery, we were just told that he can walk across the river.

He walks on water. What can you do, they asked the master. And of course, the famous answer of the Zen master was, what can I do?

When I'm hungry, I eat. When I'm tired, I sleep. That's the answer.

It means he is absolutely, just totally present in whatever arises. That's all that is needed. No stuff around it.

Just the simplicity of this moment. Just facing this moment as it is. When you are completely aligned with this moment, you are in continuous meditation.

You are in meditation now by simply being with what is. That's the successful Zen meditator, is that. And not only that, if you live in that way, for as long as you live in that way, you are the spiritual master.

To be a spiritual master, you don't need to know anything. People sometimes think you need to have a lot of knowledge to be a spiritual teacher. It's not true.

All you need is to be completely aligned with the present moment. And then whatever is needed in the moment will come through you. And you will never go beyond your real life experience.

And you don't need to. So any answer that's needed, either in your own life or for somebody else, if you can just be with what is, become present and still, then that's primordial intelligence operating. And that is the spiritual teacher.

You never become a spiritual teacher. And if you feel that, okay, I'm now ready to be a teacher, no. The best feeling is actually to feel that you are not ready to be a teacher and you don't know anything.

You have nothing to say and nothing to teach. That's the start of every talk I give. What else can I say?

I've been talking for so long. What else is there to say? It's completely empty.

Nothing. And the teaching there doesn't come from the person or the person's accumulated knowledge. It comes through the person.

So the person really is never ready to be a teacher. And if the person is ready, then that's a delusion. You don't have to be ready.

You just have to be spacious enough. Spacious. In other words, get out of the way, as it can put it.

If you get out of the way, it happens through you. And you live in that way. It's not just, I'm just using the example of spiritual teaching.

Anything that you do that is truly powerful, you have to, in the moment of doing at least, or in the moment of creation, you have to get out of the way, and it comes through you. And every creative person, unless the ego has come back and obscured that wonderful flow of aliveness, unless the ego has come back and then claims some kind of merit, and so the creator feels superior to other humans because I did that. No, you didn't.

It happened because you got out of the way. And then the primordial intelligence and the power of life, the power of now, came through you. That's how it happened.

And that's how any true creation happens. It's interesting. I have some questions here, questions that people have been asking, for example, about art and music, relationship between the state of being present and creating art or music.

Of course, is there presence in music, somebody asks. Well, it depends on who is creating the music. Where is it coming from?

And there is a fundamental difference. Anybody can verify it, and anybody deep down knows it. For example, music, where does it truly original music come from?

And I'm not just talking about classical music, even relatively simple music. Some of it comes from a place of originality and power. It is inspired.

It almost comes into this world ready-made, as if it were, it's already there somewhere, and then the person who writes this music or plays this music is just receiving it. And any great act of creation is a receiving, and so this is how, and sometimes to a human being, a stream comes where they are connected with that. And every piece of music they write has this originality and power to it.

And strange enough, humans recognize it when they hear it. That's the music that survives. If you listen to the radio, you will find many kinds of continuous playing music.

Now, most things that you listen to, they may be popular for a few weeks or a few months, sometimes a few days, and then it disappears. But there are some pieces that don't disappear. You hear them again, and if you switch on the radio in ten years, you still hear that piece.

If you switch on the radio in 50 years from now, they're still playing it. And why? There is a qualitative difference between that and ordinary stuff that the mind tries to create without the connectedness with where all creativity comes from.

And so it's contrived. It may even be clever, but it doesn't have that quality. So even simple music like the Beatles songs, they came from somewhere deeper.

Some people would say, well, you can't compare the Beatles to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Well, you can. They came from the same place.

It's just Beethoven's Ninth Symphony is obviously more complex, but they both have this spark of originality to them that a human just cannot create it. The human mind alone cannot do that. And it can even happen that a person can spend a whole life making music, and only one night he or she connects with that ground where all creativity arises.

That was the case, for example, I read about it recently. There was a woman in South Africa who went to court because her husband had composed a piece of music. The only thing that he was ever remembered for, he composed a piece of music.

But because he was a black man at that time, her husband had died. At that time in

South Africa, black people had no rights, so he sold this piece of music for five dollars. And he had been playing music all his life.

Only one night he wrote this piece that came from a deeper, everything else that he wrote disappeared. This piece survived because it had that essential quality of aliveness and originality to it. And so she finally got several million dollars from this one piece of music that he composed one night, which at first became popular throughout Africa, and then throughout the world.

It's called The Lion Sleeps Tonight. Wonderful, there's something there, you can't make that up. I'd like to sing the whole thing, I can't remember the words.

So no matter what you do in life, whatever you do, that connectedness is vital. And knowing that it's not up to me, ultimately. It's up to me, only to connect with the depth of being within.

And then whatever you do, the power will flow into it. And if it's very limited what you do, then sometimes, let's say you have a job in a factory, and there's just no scope for anything much to happen. If all you do is pick up a box from here, open it and put in three things, close the box and hand it on and pick up another box, then it doesn't, the important thing is not to fall into negativity and say there's nothing.

And connect with the aliveness, and if life sees that there's no outlet in your present circumstances for the power within you, life will put you somewhere else. The first thing that may happen is that you lose your job. And then because you're connected with the power within, you're not going to complain, because you're going to be like the man that I mentioned the other day, who whatever happened, he shouted, God is great.

So if you lose your job, you'd say, God is great, great, it must be the right thing. And so often it might look negative, because life needs to disrupt your present circumstances to make room for something else. So if you connect with the power within, and life, when I say life, I mean primordial, the one intelligence that pervades the universe.

If there is no outlet in your present circumstances for power, the power that is within you, then life will remove your present circumstances and create circumstances where there is an outlet. But if you are already doing something, and if that what you're doing already could become infinitely enhanced, if you connect with that source of creativity within you, then you will find that you stay where you are. It's just an enormous expansion.

If you are playing in the street, the guitar or whatever, for a few pennies, busking, and you suddenly, you connect with that, and you even begin to play original things, then something will happen, and that thing will expand. Life may not take you away from your guitar, it will empower the guitar. And suddenly, somebody walks past you and stops for a second and says, come and see me.

So that's the, wherever you are, trust, your responsibility is to embrace the power of the present moment within you, to not resist the is-ness of whatever condition is now that obstructs the power. So I'm really, we've been talking about meditation, but it always comes back to living, how to live in this moment now. That's what it's all about.

And becoming good at meditation is nothing. The question is, are you good at living? Do you live connected with the power or cut off from it, the power of yourself ultimately, the power of the universe?

So then, what you learn in the Zen meditation is not to complain about anything in your life, but to incorporate everything into your meditation, and now your meditation is your life. That's ultimately what it is. It's not the little meditation period.

That can be a, it can be a practice ground for life, but ultimately what matters is life, and life is now. So if you're practicing, incorporating whatever happens while you sit in meditation, into the meditation, nothing can happen that will obstruct your meditation, and then nothing can happen in your life that will obstruct the power, but not if you complain and resist what is. The power comes when there is inner alignment with what is, the is-ness of now.

No matter what form that takes, that's where power comes into your life, and that's in all the, that's in all the teachings, and so that's all that meditation can teach you, to do. You don't need time. It's a little absurd to say, I need time to become good at accepting the present moment, or to take a three-year course in accepting the present moment.

I'm learning to accept the present moment, but I'm not there yet. So there's nothing that you need to add to your life so that you can finally accept the present moment. There are many delusions that the mind will bring up.

Why, why you, why you can't do it now? I can accept everything except where I live, or accept whatever, that my parents don't understand me, or accept the, remember that acceptance has nothing to do with some kind of story in your mind. That's not acceptance.

This is often a delusion when people misunderstand when I speak of acceptance. So some people say, okay, I need to accept that I have no money in the bank, that I'm poor, that I've ruined my life. I need to accept that I live in a dreadful place.

Oh, if you call it dreadful, what where's the acceptance? You've already judged it as bad. You have already called your life bad.

I need to accept that I'm ruined, that all my investments have collapsed, and I'm completely ruined. All these things are stories in your mind. It would be absurd.

Or I need to accept that I'm, I'm ill. Of course, you may be ill from the point of view of medical viewpoint. That may be the case.

But that is not what you need to accept. Because this feeling I am ill is a mental construct. All you need to accept is the reality of this moment.

And in this moment, there is no illness. But there may be pain, there may be discomfort, there may be disability, there may be weakness in the body. This is, this is how this so-called illness manifests at this moment.

So all you need to accept is whatever manifests in this moment, not some idea around it. Then you get into illusion. So the person who is, who has an illness, you don't accept, I need to accept that I have cancer, that I have AIDS, that I need to accept whatever.

No, that's the story. Acceptance only concerns this moment, whatever it is that you feel or experience at this moment. So you're not denying that you're ill, nor do you subscribe to that belief that you are ill.

You just leave that alone, and you address only the conditions that arise at this moment in your life. And that's what you accept. And with that, often, if it is an illness, then you accept only the symptom as it appears at this moment, because it is already there.

At this moment, there's pain, there's the disability, there's this, there's that. That's what is. That becomes part of your meditation practice, which is your life.

So your life becomes, all you ever need to accept is that. Let's say you're in prison. Let's say your sentence is 25 years.

So you sit in that cell, and I'm talking about that because often I get correspondence from people in prison. So you, if you then say, okay, I need to accept that I'm stuck in here for the next 25 years, and that I've messed my, my whole life up completely. I need to accept that.

No, that's a story. And that's time. All you need to accept is at this moment, you're sitting here, there's a little window.

You're looking out of the window. You're breathing. You feel the aliveness of the inner body.

There's a little metal plate in front of you, and you're eating a piece of bread. And there's a glass of water, and you're drinking that. And there are the walls that you're seeing.

And these are the conditions of this moment, and they are as they are. You add nothing to them. Like, dislike, good.

That's the Zen master. You're the master. You add nothing to it, and the bare conditions of this moment are as they are.

That's what you accept. And with that power comes, and with that, internally you become free of dependency on external conditions. That's where incredible power comes into your life.

And it's often the case that miracles happen when you enter and live in that state of consciousness. So you might have 25 years sentence in prison, and you could find that unexpectedly something happens, and you're free. And I don't necessarily mean an opportunity comes to escape.

It could come in a different way. It probably won't come in that way. And if it doesn't, you're still free in prison.

And I've had correspondents from people in prison said, I found freedom here. And to them, the prison has become like a Zen monastery. Whatever condition arises is part of the meditation.

And so that's I'm saying that so that it's easy to misunderstand the term acceptance. Acceptance is always the simplicity of this moment that is to be accepted, not a story around this moment. And then gradually you learn to live less and less with stories, imposing stories on your life, and traveling through life with the heaviness of stories of who you are in relationship to the world.

Not good enough or better than most. But if you think you're better than most, underneath is the fear that you're not good enough anyway. That's why you have to think you're better than most.

All kinds of stuff that people live with and live through. No, your life is now. Your life is always now.

And that is the focal point of your consciousness. Now and you're aligned with now. And the moment you're aligned with now, you become the space for now.

You were it already, but you didn't know it. Now consciously you become the space for now. And you're free.

And that's where power comes suddenly through you. And only if enough humans begin to live in that way is the world going to truly change. And then you have fulfilled the purpose of your life on earth.

Aligned with the evolutionary purpose of the entire, not just the planet, the evolutionary purpose of the entire universe wants that. It wants the flowering of that new consciousness to happen. And that's why we're here.

It's not going to happen. It's happening. Us being here is because it's happening.

We're not in expectation of utopia or something like that. We're not in expectation that a new world is going to arise. No, we are here because the new world, which is based on the new state of consciousness, is arising.

There's no future expectation. And we don't need the world to change to become free. No, becoming free comes first.

Then the world changes. It's so simple. That's why the mind says, oh, this is hard.

Let's make sure we are at home in the present moment and inhabiting the body. So a little bit of your attention is in the body, the inner energy field of the body. And the rest of your attention is on sense perception.

And in that way, you are anchored in the present moment. The inner energy field provides the anchor for staying present. If you can't feel anything in your body, start with your hands.

Direct your attention into your hands and see if you can feel a little bit of aliveness in there.

[Speaker 4] (6:01:24 - 6:01:24)

Oh, yes.

[Speaker 1] (6:01:25 - 7:31:11)

There it is. And your feet, are they alive? Oh, yes.

You can feel almost a kind of tingling. There's energy there. There's life energy in there.

And so you can connect with the entire body as a global sense of aliveness as you sit here, because wherever you are, you're here and now. And the mind will not be excessively active when your attention is in the inner energy field. You can be alert without unnecessary interference of thinking, without having to wait for the next moment to provide some kind of improvement.

So the realization comes that this moment is actually good enough, more than good enough, because you're beginning to feel the goodness that is underneath the phenomenal appearance of the present moment, the forms. You're getting in touch with the formless. One of the things we are doing as part of our new venture, which is a kind of experiment, using the Internet to reach many thousands of people, occasionally I present a book to you that has been very meaningful to me for many years.

There are a number of books that I've carried around. Well, sometimes I lost copies and then I bought another one, because I moved around so much. And we already, in one of the previous sessions, we had one session on one of the greatest books ever written, the

Tao Te Ching.

We had a session on that, and I feel that we are going to have another session on that at some point. Not today, though. For today, I've chosen a book.

Before I continue, I need to tell you, we're not studying something that's external to ourselves. We're not here, it's not a university setting. We're not learning philosophy.

We're only using the subject matter of the book as an alternative pointer to the reality within ourselves. So it's not anything, we're not studying anything outside ourselves that would be useless. So this book, that actually I never lost, it's been with me for 25 or 30 years.

I bought it new, but now the pages are turning yellow, the edges, which means I'm getting old. When books that you bought new turn yellow around the edges, you're getting old, or the quality of the paper is deteriorating. Emerson.

Ralph Waldo Emerson. Essays, which he became famous for. What I'm going to do is just read very brief extracts one or two of the essays, and then we will comment on that.

As some of you may know, Emerson was born in Boston in 1803, died about 80 years later, and most of his life he traveled around giving talks. A very unusual thing, he was kind of a 19th century spiritual teacher, a very unusual thing for the 19th century. And some of these essays have enormous power, so he must have gone very deep within to be able to write these things.

An important thing, just a very brief look at his life. As many people who are destined to go very deep within, he experienced a not very pleasant childhood and early life. At a very early age, and this is the case with many people who are forced, either destined to go deeper within, or if not destined, they are forced by life's circumstances to go deeper within.

And so in his case, at the age of eight, his father died. So becoming acquainted with mortality at a very early age, a very painful thing. Then there were five children.

His mother was relatively poor, so they lived on very little. The mother had to feed five boys. Then later, in his early 20s, he developed tuberculosis, a potentially fatal illness, but recovered from it.

Then he got married, and two years later his wife died. So again, it became very clear to him, it must have become very clear to him, how fragile, how impermanent, fleeting the world of form is, of bodies and forms. So whether he already realized that on a conscious level, there must have been a very deep having to go deeper within.

And then he studied at Harvard to become a theologian, to become a minister. He became a minister, but was not happy with the constraints of the church, and then left the church and started just giving talks, and some of the talks became the essays. So you can see retrospectively how loss is very often a concealed blessing.

You don't know it at the time. At the time, it just seems a dreadful thing to be happening to you. But if you look deeper, and especially if you're able to come to a state of acceptance, then the moment you surrender to what is, the other side of loss reveals itself to you.

There's grace hiding behind every loss. It's good to know next time loss comes to you, as it will of course, because you can't go through life without experiencing loss. People around you are going to leave you, unless you leave them first.

Bodies dissolve, and the older you get, the more clearly you see, wow, all these bodies are dissolving. A very brief, just a few sentences here on being, and the sense of being, finding that within yourself. He says, oh, I must before I read, this is mid-19th century English prose, so at first, it might be for some of you who are not used to reading that kind of thing, Jane Austen or that kind of thing, may find it a little bit unusual at first.

For the sense of being which in calm hours rises, we know not how in the soul, is not diverse from things, from space, from light, from time, from man, but one with them, and proceeds obviously from the same source whence their life and being also proceeds. We first share the life by which things exist, and afterwards see them as appearances in nature, and forget that we have shared their cause. Here is the fountain of action and the fountain of thought.

Here are the lungs of that inspiration which gives man wisdom, of that inspiration of man which cannot be denied without impiety and atheism. We lie in the lap of immense intelligence, which makes us organs of its activity and receivers of its truth. When we discern justice, when we discern truth, we do nothing of ourselves, but allow a passage to its beams, the beams of that great intelligence like the sunlight.

So the sense of being which in calm hours rises, we know not how in the soul, is not diverse from things, from space, from light, from time, from man, but one with them. In calm hours means when you become still inside, when the mind activity subsides, then what arises is something that had been obscured by mental noise, which is the sense of being, and that really is the essence. Sometimes it's called the sense of I am, without any addition to the I am, not I am this or I am that.

The sense of beingness, as you may remember from grammar lessons at school, to be and I am is part of the same verb. It's easy to forget when you say I am is the first person singular of to be. So being and I am is the same, so getting that sense of your innermost identity which has no form to it, no mental concept, no physical appearance, it's deeper than that, a formless sense of being that is there, clearly is revealed when the continuous flux of forms, especially mind forms, subsides.

So that sense of being is always, has always been there underneath the mental noise. And when that is realized as the essence of who you are, in other words, you are formless in essence, timeless, the Buddhists call it empty, and of course Western scholars misinterpret that. They say it's a nihilistic religion, or it's life denying.

They don't realize that what Buddhists call emptiness is the formless essence of all life, and timeless. And that is something to be realized, of course, only in the, it's inextricably one with what we call the present moment. We could say it is the present moment, because it is the space in which everything arises.

All sense perception, all thoughts, all emotion, where do they appear? They appear in that space of being, which you could also call unconditioned consciousness, timeless. And that is the eternal in you.

And once that is known directly, not as an intellectual fact or belief, directly. And again, not known as you know the flower or the table or the tree, not known as a subject knows an object, but knowing yourself as the eternal subject, not making yourself into an object, and that's the ego. That's what happened to the human mind.

We made ourselves into objects, and then you begin to have a relationship with yourself. And then you start liking or disliking yourself. And then you talk about that you have a life, not realizing that you are life.

And perhaps then only the dog or the cat can still remind you that they don't have a life, they are life. They don't have an unhappy or happy story. They are life.

That's why we talked about nature. Nature still lives in that state of connectedness. And once you realize that, you recognize that formless essence that you are wherever you look.

It is the underlying one, the one life, the one timeless life that you are. And then wherever you look, every tree, every animal, every blade of grass, even the sun, the stars, your dog or your cat, you recognize something there, something that any life form is also an expression of that one. So you recognize yourself in others, which is the most beautiful thing, when you recognize the essence of who you are in the flower.

And you recognize it not through any mental concept, but through the absence of mental concepts. It is only mental concepts that create the barrier between yourself and the flower, when you start calling it something. Or another human being, the beauty of being with another human being, without the interference, the screen of conceptualization, just spacious presence.

No matter what the other human being is doing or saying, you are there as spacious presence for whatever arises in this moment. That means you are connected with the one, you are that, and recognize it, there's nothing alien anymore, there is ultimately no other anymore. And this is what he is talking about.

The sense of being which in calm hours rises, when you become still, now, we know not how, it rises within, is not diverse from things, from space, from light, from time, from man, but one with them and proceeds obviously from the same source when their life and being also proceeds. And then that is intelligence itself, not the intelligence that can be measured by IQ tests, but primordial, unconditioned intelligence is there when you discover that dimension in yourself. Here is the fountain of action, spontaneous action arises out of that presence, and the fountain of thought, it can inspire the mind.

Creative thought can only come when you still contact that dimension, realize that is who you are in essence, and then your mind starts to operate and it becomes inspired, it becomes an instrument rather than self-serving mind activity. And then all the repetitive thinking gradually subsides and more creative thinking happens. And in between the creative thinking there are wonderful spaces of not thinking.

The greatest thing that can happen to you, and hopefully is happening to you, is to discover within yourself spaces of not thinking. You have not reverted back to the vegetable realm, you have gone beyond thinking. And from the point of view of the ego that's not a big thing, it says, how does that solve my problems, not thinking?

The conceptual mind does not understand the significance of that. I sometimes say that all I have achieved in life is I don't need to think unless I want to think. That really is where everything comes from, just becoming comfortable with a state of not knowing from the point of view of the mind.

Going to a talk, in my case, sitting down and having the feeling I have absolutely nothing to say and becoming comfortable with not knowing. Not just when you are going to give a talk, in any situation, you don't need to work it out conceptually, what am I going to, how am I going to deal with this person, how am I going to deal with this situation. Be there, bring the presence to it and let that intelligence come through you.

It can then use your mind and you find yourself saying something original, or you find yourself saying just the right thing that is helpful for that moment and that person. Or you find yourself taking spontaneous action, suddenly the right thing, the right action arises. You suddenly realize what it is that you need to do.

You've been thinking about it for years and suddenly you let go of thinking, space opened up and the realization is there. So for a balanced life there needs to be the two dimensions in your life, the dimension of form, I call that human, the human dimension, where you are a person with a history and you think and you have relatives and relationships and you have a life situation which is good or bad or changes from good to bad and bad to good. And you are the being dimension of the human being, most humans don't know that yet, there is the being dimension that is the formless.

So a truly fruitful life is the balance between the formless essence within yourself and the world of form. Most humans on this planet are lost in form, totally identified with form, that's all they know, totally identified with their mind, every thought form that comes into, every thought which is a thought form, it comes into their head, they are completely identified with it, they are in the grip of form and then they are surrounded by countless forms and each form in their life situation demands attention, this matters, this matters, the phone rings, I need to do this now, I need to do that, completely absorbed by form and everything is serious, has a heaviness and a seriousness to it. And the more you go on living like that, the heavier and the more serious your life becomes.

It's a loss of balance, so and then all you end up with, this is the subject matter of many movies that you see, is people who are totally trapped on that dimension only of form, complete absence of transcendence in their life. And sometimes these films are quite nice, you see, what a pity that there's not the slightest glimpse of any transcendence, they're trapped in their little life situations. And so for life to be balanced, there needs to be attention on consciousness, the underlying essence of life is formless consciousness.

Oh, and that means your sense of identity comes from there, the true sense, so you don't need the world of form anymore to give you your sense of self, because as the Buddha said, when you identify with, when you are looking for yourself in things, I'm giving a very free translation of Buddha, when you identify with the world of form and looking for yourself in forms, in your thoughts, in your possessions, in your achievements, in other people's opinion of who you are, whatever form it is, if you're looking for yourself or some kind of completion of your sense of self in form, you're going to suffer. That's the message of the Buddha, because there is no self in these things.

You cannot find yourself. Now Buddhism says, because there is no self. Hinduism will tell you, talks about the self, but they're really talking about the same thing.

It's a formless self. Now whether you say no self or formless self doesn't make any difference. These are just pointers, you may prefer one pointer to the other.

I prefer this finger pointing to the moon, and then another says no, this finger pointing to the moon is much nicer. It doesn't matter, the moon matters. And so we lie in the lap of immense intelligence.

It is within and without. We are pervaded by it. It fills the entire space of the universe.

We lie in the lap of immense intelligence which makes us organs of its activity and receivers of its truth if we are open to it. It's like having a house. If you close the shutters, no matter how bright the sunlight is, it can't come in.

It doesn't mean the shutters are more powerful than the sunlight, it just means shutters are closed. And so if a human being is closed, the vast intelligence cannot operate or can only operate as a trickle. Everybody has a trickle of it, otherwise they wouldn't be alive.

So everybody has a little trickle of that coming into their lives, but the full power of it in most people's lives is missing. So they live not knowing what vast power is available to them or to put it more accurately, what vast power they themselves are. It's not available to you that creates a separation.

It is, in essence, who you are. Now I'd like to read to you a little thing that came to Emerson when he was sitting in his study and outside there were roses growing outside his window. And here again we come to the power of nature that we talked about the other day, the power of nature to reconnect you with being.

And so he looked at the rose and then he saw this or realized this. The context of this is that he's talking about people who are always quoting ancient texts only. They are not open to the power of the divine coming through them.

They are quoting from the Bible and they are quoting from other scriptures, not realizing that the very power that spoke then is in them now also. It's just a question of opening yourself to it. And then he looked at the roses under his window.

The roses under my window make no reference to former roses or to better ones. They are for what they are. They exist with God today.

There is no time to them. They are simply the rose. It is perfect in every moment of its existence.

Before a leaf bud has burst, its whole life acts. In the full-blown flower there's no more. In the leafless root there's no less.

Its nature is satisfied and it satisfies nature in all moments alike. There is no time to it, but man postpones or remembers. He does not live in the present, but with reverted eye laments the past or heedless of the riches that surround him, stands on tiptoe to foresee the future.

He cannot be happy and strong until he too lives with nature in the present above time. There you have the rose teaching Emerson how to live, and then he put it into words. And this shows us that he actually, it was not just a superficial look at a rose as one would normally, oh, what a nice rose.

There was a true, he truly gave attention to the rose and realized how absolutely present the rose is, how absolutely devoid of time it is, carrying no past and no future. And he recognized that, the same as Jesus did when he said, look at the flowers of the field, look at the lilies. When he said that, he didn't just say, have a look at the lilies, he said, really look, give it your full attention, and then you will realize something there, that human beings, there's a connectedness with being.

They haven't gone out as far as humans. They have not left the source of all life. They have not become as differentiated as the humans have, so therefore what they can teach us, show us, is the connectedness with the source of all life.

And that's what he saw when he looked at the rose. And then he realized that we can, when we reconnect with that, we don't just become, go back to the vegetative realm, which is beautiful for everything vegetative there, but not for us. It's not our destiny to go back to become a rose or a tree or a blade of grass.

We transcend the thinking stage. We transcend the differentiation of the thinking stage and we then regain the oneness that was once lost, that ancient mythologies point to as the lost paradise. And when you regain something, as I often point out, you regain it at a deeper level with knowing, consciousness.

And so the last sentence here is important. He saw here, of course, that usually man does not live in the present but with reverted eyes, reverted eyes. He doesn't look at what's right here.

He reverts his eyes and looks, laments the past. Oh dear, regrets about what happened, guilt, regret, memories, things went wrong in my life situation, this happened, that happened. Or heedless of the riches that surround him, stands on tiptoe to foresee the future.

I need to get, I need to get there. Where is it? I need to get to the next moment.

You're heedless of the riches that surround you that are part of the now. So the lesson then is to truly look so that something imparts itself to you from anything natural. So the anything natural can reconnect you with being.

By the way, when he uses, he wrote in the 19th century so there was still a tendency for there to use male pronouns, the same as the Bible and so on. So obviously when he says man he means man and woman and he tends to use the masculine pronoun. So you have to excuse that.

Man is a stream whose source is hidden. Always our being is descending into us from we know not whence. Most humans regard themselves as a surface phenomenon.

You're here, no sense of deeper connectedness with life. You're here like as if somebody had put you here on this planet and there's me and there's the rest of the world, the rest of the universe. The lack of connectedness.

If you go deeper within and you do it by finding the dimension of stillness underneath thinking, then you connect with the source, the depth within yourself. And there's vast depth. Man is a stream whose source is hidden.

And when, once it's open, so all you have to really do, if you can even call it doing, is open the door. And even that is not a doing because really keeping the door closed through continuous thinking is the doing. So it's more like a stop doing and then it opens.

In that sense some of those teachers are right saying you can't do anything because it's the doing that obscures the being. And so once that is open then you gradually learn to do and be at the same time. You can act without losing connect.

At first you find it only in still moments, perhaps in nature, and you go, ah, ah. And then gradually you see if you can stay connected when you're going shopping for food, supermarkets, or traveling from here to there, carrying alertness, alert presence, rather than continuously thinking entity, always about the next moment or the last moment. This is the only, you may have noticed that I only ever talk about one thing.

And this is it. Now he uses in one of his essays the term the over-soul. And by over-soul he means the unity of all things, the unity, the oneness of all things.

All things are ultimately one. Not only that all things are connected to everything else, which physicists now tell us is actually the case. There's no division between this body and this table and this flower and those other bodies.

There's no real division on the subatomic realm. And so not only is everything connected with everything else, a web of interconnectedness, but also everything is connected to a common source. It has come out of the common source.

It returns to the common source, which is formless and timeless, and the common source remains in every form as its innermost essence. And so this common source, this unity he calls the over-soul. And he says, that unity, that over-soul, within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other, that common heart of which all sincere conversation is the worship, to which all right action is submission, that overpowering reality which confutes our tricks and talents and constrains everyone to pass for what he is and to speak from his character, which means from his essence, and not from his tongue, and whichever more tends and aims to pass into our thought and hand and become wisdom and virtue and power and beauty. We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles.

Meantime, within man is the soul of the whole, the wise silence, the universal beauty to which every part and particle is equally related, the eternal one. And this deep power in which we exist and whose beatitude is all accessible to us is not only self-sufficing and perfect in every hour, but the act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object are one. We see the world piece by piece as the sun, the moon, the animal, the tree.

But the whole of which these are the shining parts is the soul, the oneness, oneness, seeing the oneness behind the multiplicity, seeing the oneness of all forms in every form. And what he calls the soul, we could also use the word, the consciousness, the one unconditioned consciousness that pervades the entire universe, the one reality. So when he says here, the soul, if you want to use consciously a different pointer, that's fine.

All goes to show that the soul in man is not an organ, but animates and exercises all the organs, is not a function like the power of memory, of calculation, of comparison, but uses these as hands and feet, is not a faculty but a light, is not the intellect or the will, but the master of the intellect and the will, is the vast background of our being in which they lie, an immensity not possessed and that cannot be possessed.

From within or from behind, a light shines through us upon things and makes us aware that we are nothing but the light is all. The background, the background space, consciousness, looks through these eyes, speaks through this mouth, becomes form and yet remains untouched as a formless. So can you go through life dealing with a foreground of things that need doing, things that you need occasionally to think about and yet remain aware of the background to your life, the consciousness, the light of consciousness or the space in which everything appears.

Another way of putting it, can you be aware that you are aware at this moment? Can you sense the awareness underneath what you are perceiving with your senses at this moment, without which there would be no perception? Can you sense the awareness underneath any kind of emotional feeling you might be having at this moment?

Can you sense the awareness out of which any thought that might arise in your mind at this moment comes and dissolves back into the presence that you are? That's the formless, that's the timeless and so that is the vast background of your being, an immensity not possessed and that cannot be possessed. A man is the facade of a temple wherein all wisdom and all good abide.

What you see is the facade of the temple, not only what you see as the physical form of this human being but also the psychological form of this human being is also the facade still of the temple. It is not in essence who that being is. What we commonly call man or woman, the eating, drinking, planting and counting man, eating, drinking, planting, counting, doing all kinds of things, what we commonly call man, the eating, drinking, planting, counting man does not, as we know him, represent himself but misrepresents himself.

Him we do not respect but the soul whose organ he is, would he let it appear through his action, would make our knees bend. When it breathes through his intellect, it is genius. When it breathes through his will, it is virtue.

When it flows through his affection, it is love. And the blindness of the intellect begins when it would be something of itself. The weakness of the will begins when the individual would be something of himself.

So the blindness of the intellect begins with the belief that you are something of yourself. That is the mind, the self-serving mind. The weakness of the will begins when the individual would be something of himself.

That is the ego. Believing that you are an independent, autonomous, self-sufficient entity that has been put into this world from somewhere, not realizing you have come out of it, and you are an intrinsic part of the totality. And so there comes the sense of separateness, of alienation.

With that comes the continuous neediness of the ego, and with that comes the continuous underlying fear. It is always there when you are not connected. There is fear no matter what you may have achieved in the world of form.

The fear will not leave you until the sense of separateness leaves you. You reconnect. Well, wonderful to see that all spiritual teachings in essence are one.

This is why I love to go back to some of the ancient books, and they might use very different words, but once you recognize the truth in yourself, you see the truth wherever it comes, in whatever form it comes, and you say, yes, there it is. I recognize it. And so this is sometimes being called the perennial philosophy.

There is a thread that goes back thousands of years, the same truth being expressed in different words and different forms throughout the ages, in the past by very rare individuals here and there, but somehow it survived in whatever form they left behind, writing, or it survived. Somehow there were always enough humans who had at least an inkling that there was something extremely precious and valuable there. So that's the perennial philosophy that, I don't know who first used that word, there is a very wonderful book by Aldous Huxley of the same title, Perennial Philosophy.

So the truth is there, and there's no arguing once you have it in yourself. You don't attach yourself to the form in which it's being expressed, that's what religions traditionally do. You get attached to the form, not realizing the form points to an underlying essence, which is one.

All religions are one, and you don't even need a religion to see the essence. You are enough. If you have a religion, fine, you don't need it.

But if you use it rightly, it can take you deeper. If you use it wrongly, you get more entangled in ego through your religion. There is no bar or wall in the soul where man, the effect ceases, and God, the cause begins.

There is no separation between you and the source. It's a continuous, you could almost think of it, if you think of it visually, you're connected. If you're walking around a globe, and every being on the globe is connected to the center with a thread, it's a visual representation of it.

You're connected. Now, if the surface reality of where you're walking around is all you have, then you see the separation between you and the other human being or other life form. You see the separateness.

When you are aware of the center within, then you see the unity. So, you're walking around this globe, there's one human being, here's another human being, disconnected because they're only aware of the surface. If you're aware of the depths within yourself, then suddenly you see that you are one with the other.

You're connected at the center. That's a visual, of course, somewhat incomplete representation. The sovereignty of this nature whereof we speak is made known by its independency of those limitations which circumscribe us on every hand.

The soul circumscribes all things. As I have said, it contradicts all experience. In like manner, it abolishes time and space.

The influence of the senses has, in most men, overpowered the mind to that degree that the walls of time and space have come to look solid, real, and insurmountable. And to speak with levity of these limits is, in the world, a sign of insanity. Yet time and space are but inverse measures of the force of the soul.

A man is capable of abolishing them both. You could say, now when he uses inverse measures, you could say, I said that somewhere also, the vastness of space that you see when you look out at night into this clear sky, and that was when I was a child even before, no, about the same time when I had mentioned previously, I would often go out into nature to reconnect with being when I was a child. And one other thing I did that helped me when I was a child, and that didn't happen until I went to live in Spain at the age of 13 and a half, where often the sky is clear, especially in the summer.

And so we lived on the top floor with a, I would climb up onto the roof of the building at night and lie in a deck chair and just look at the vastness of the night sky. And I didn't realize at that time that my mind actually became still. I was just in a state of awe, and I didn't realize at the time I didn't even know anything about meditation.

I didn't know I was in a state of meditative stillness. And there was a sense of awe and of feeling speechless. And what made me speechless was not the, well, it was wonderful to all the thousands of points of light that we call stars or suns, but more than that, the vastness of the space itself.

I already knew a little bit. I was interested in astronomy, and I started reading, and I knew a little bit about the vast distances involved there and the vastness of space, of what a light year is. And it was so inconceivable and totally beyond anything the mind could understand.

Even the greatest scientists cannot understand limitless space. So I sometimes ask myself, well, what is beyond space? And if it's limitless, it's inconceivable.

There's a vastness there that is totally ungraspable and inconceivable. And that, I believe, what he's pointing at, Emerson, here, is what you see as the vastness of space is the externalized vastness of your own being, of being itself. You see it spreading, spread out there.

It contains all things. It's the externalized vastness of consciousness itself. And it appears to us as space.

Now space, of course, is nothing, really. It just enables everything to be, but in itself it is no thing. It is nothing.

So, and time equally, the vast stretches of time, inconceivable. And does time have an end? Does time have a beginning?

And here, too, what we perceive as endless vast time is the externalization of the timeless within. And that gets stretched out when we go into the sense-perceived world. It gets stretched out like, it becomes skimmed milk.

The cream is within you, and then the universe is the skimmed milk, diluted. So that also can put you in touch with yourself. Just look into contemplation of space.

It doesn't have, it could be the space of the night sky. It could even be the space of an inner room. If you go into an ancient church or cathedral, it's particularly beautiful to have to be, if you become aware of, but any room will do it, become aware of, okay, what's the essence of this room?

There's the floor, the ceiling, the walls, the chairs, the furniture in it, the people. Okay, but is there more to it? Yes, of course there's more to it.

What really matters about this room is the space. Without the space, there wouldn't be a room. And there's usually, people would not be aware of the space, they would be aware only of what's in the space, the furniture, the walls, the people, whatever it is.

And so if you can become aware not only of what's in the space and what circumscribes the space, but the space itself, the awareness of space creates in you the awareness of the formless within you. Because only the moment you become aware of space around you, and I can't tell you how, you just have to do it, because there's nothing to grasp, there's nothing to be aware of. So the mind asks, how can I be aware of space if there's nothing there to be aware of?

And that's precisely it. What is left when you're aware of something where there's nothing? What's left is awareness itself.

That's why being aware of space is such a powerful thing, because what you really become aware of then is awareness, nothing, no content. And so it's a beautiful meditation, wherever you go, you can do it, there's even a line in the Tao Te Ching which speaks of what, I don't, I can't remember literally, that it says, there's a bowl and the essence of the vessel or the bowl is the emptiness inside the space. And so to make it a bowl, there's the two aspects, and these are the two aspects to every life form, form and formless.

Form and the essence, the formless. And so if you can be aware that that applies to you also, just like the bowl or like the room, in yourself also there is content, there's furniture inside you, thoughts, some people have a lot of furniture inside, room is just crammed full with furniture, one thought after another. And so, but there must be some space there because the furniture somehow has to get in there, so space is there, you just have to know it's there, there is space inside you already, you don't have to produce it or achieve it somehow, just realize it's already there because otherwise nothing could be there in your mind.

The mind itself in essence is space, which is consciousness. So most people are so seduced by the furniture, so seduced by all these fascinating bits of furniture or furniture they complain about, they don't want but it's there, and so that they're never aware of the space around the furniture inside themselves. What a limitation, which means all you're stuck with is your life situation, your limited life situation, which consists of content, content, the content of your life.

And no matter what you do with the content of your life, it's never satisfying. On the level of content alone, you will always come to a point of frustration because you never, no matter how you rearrange the furniture, I'm using of course, as you know, furniture as a metaphor for everything in your mind, no matter how you arrange the furniture or even if you throw some bits out and take other bits in, you always find it's not quite it. You always very quickly come to a point of dissatisfaction because the transcendent dimension is missing from your life.

And what is the transcendent dimension? The formless space. Not realize that that is the essence of who you actually are.

And so people go through life frustrated, complaining that the world isn't doing what it should be doing to make them happy, not realizing the world cannot make you happy. It's not in the, it's not in its power because the world is a world of form. It can challenge you so that you go deeper and finally find the formless.

That's what it's there for really. And of course the world is good at that. It always does that.

And once you know that, then every challenge you can actually welcome. And every loss you can actually, even though you might weep, you can still welcome it because you can see how precious loss also is. Because what is loss in whatever form?

Loss is some form has been removed from your life and has left behind an empty space. And that happens when somebody close to you dies. Suddenly there's an empty space.

And that is, from the point of view of form, is very painful. And of course you will cry, you will weep, because there is the reality of form, but there's also the deeper reality of the formless. And if you can be with both, then in the presence of death, although you may weep, there will be a deep peace that you sense because the formless shines through the space that's left behind.

And that's the sacred, the divine, God, whatever you want to call it. It shines through. Wherever there's loss, there's grace.

The grace is something has opened up. And that's the essence, that is the essence of the form that passed away also. And that is the indestructible.

That is the deathless, as it's in Buddhism, the closest Buddhism ever gets to talking about God is death, the deathless realm, Amaravati, the deathless. That's how wonderful to see. And then balance comes into your life.

The dance between form and formlessness. The dance between the world and spirit, if you want to call it that. I don't use it very often, it's too many associations there.

And then the beautiful thing is the world is no longer a frustrating place. When you realize that the world was actually meant to be frustrating, it's no longer frustrating. Then you recognize whatever challenge comes, you say, oh, okay, either you resist or you go deeper.

That's always a choice. There's a beautiful line in a book, I believe it's called The Road Less Traveled, and it has the best first sentence or first two sentences of any book. That's why I never read the whole book.

It says more or less this, life is difficult, and when you know that and accept that, it's no longer difficult. It's so simple. Once you know you don't expect something that the world cannot give you, happiness, fulfillment, peace, and once you realize you don't need the world to give you that because that is already, that emanates from the formless dimension within yourself, then, ironically, maybe the universe has a sense of humor or irony, then, ironically, the world and the things of the world are actually quite nice.

They're quite satisfying, and you appreciate them. It's not that you deny. I don't believe that those areas of ancient practices that almost aggressively deny the reality of form are that helpful.

I don't think you can get to the, find the formless within by fighting or aggressively denying the world of form. The world of form is also an expression, it's all an expression of the one, and so the world then becomes a much, a place where you can appreciate whatever form is around you arises, no matter whether it's large or small. Mostly it's small because mostly your life consists of small things.

There's a flower, there's the shopping to do, there's go from here to there, get into the car, take one step at a time. It's all small, really, and you can appreciate the preciousness of all the things in your life, and it's suddenly what before was frustrating now is actually quite pleasant. Why has it become pleasant?

You no longer demand from the world, which includes places you go to, which includes people you meet or have relationships with, which includes situations in your life that arise, which includes achievements, successes or failures, whatever. You don't demand that they should give you what they can't, and you can let them be, you can honor them, but you never, you're not again going to a situation or place and say, I demand that you fulfill me, or go into a relationship and say, I demand that you make me happy. Or whatever condition you encounter, some success and expect ultimate fulfillment through it, no, briefly, yes, and then things happen.

So with this comes then the freedom, freedom from, you could call it freedom from the world. It doesn't mean you disengage from the world, but your attachment to things lessens and then goes. There is appreciation, there is honoring the beauty of life, the beauty of even the smallest things, yes, but without the attachment to that, you don't need that anymore, and you can let go when it's time to let go.

This always comes, wherever you go and whatever you do, at some point it's time to let go, and to the, as long as there's attachment, it's a painful thing when life says, okay, let go now, no, no I can't, it's part of who I am, and that's painful, and then life may even tear it out of your hands, it's even more painful, but it could be so simple, you could say, there you go, and then some other form appears, oh, that's nice, and you know full well there's nothing that is yours ultimately.

The whole thing that you can possess something is, of course, an illusion. You only, for a little while, it comes into, you look after it, and then you hand it on, you look after it, pass it on, let's see what freedom, and then you appreciate the beauty of all things, and you see beauty where before you didn't see beauty, also in the smallest things, and you don't have to take acid for that, but of course the truth is everything around you is intensely alive and beautiful. It's only the judgmental mind that creates the screen, a barrier of conceptualization between yourself and the aliveness of the world, but the essential aliveness is within in the formless, so don't look for the aliveness in there, nature can hint at it, can connect you with own aliveness. Yes, the essence of all life is within.

The action of the soul or consciousness is oftener in that which is felt and left unsaid than in that which is said in any conversation. It's not in the words, it's in the spaces. It broods over every society and they unconsciously seek for it in each other.

You unconsciously seek the formless in the other. We know better than we do. We do not yet possess ourselves and we know at the same time that we are much more.

I feel the same truth how often in my trivial conversation with my neighbours that somewhat higher in each of us overlooks this by-play and Jove nods to Jove from behind each of us. God nods to God from behind each of us. You're engaged in superficial conversation, but there's something in the background that far transcends anything in the world of form which includes words and thoughts.

And if you can sense that in yourself, then you can also sense it in the other. And if you sense that in the other, all relationships become holy relationships, as the Course in Miracles would put it. And you recognize the holy in every relationship, even if it's a brief one.

And there is something in you that knows and recognizes the truth. We know truth when we see it. Let skeptic and scoffer say what they choose.

Foolish people ask you when you have spoken what they do not wish to hear. How do you know it is truth and not an error of your own? We know truth when we see it, as opposed to opinion, as we know when we are awake that we are awake.

Do you know that you are awake? Yes, you must be. So this is direct realization.

So if you know that you are awake, that means what is it that you really know? You know that you're awake. You can subtract anything that appears in your consciousness at this moment, any form, and you could then be left with just the state of being awake.

And there's the formless. One more sentence. Under all this running sea of circumstance, whose waters ebb and flow with perfect balance, lies the aboriginal abyss of real being.

Circumstances, situations, world of form, comings, goings. Underneath it all, the timeless, formless. Become familiar with the state of not needing to continuously interpret and judge what is happening to you or around you.

You don't need that. You actually become more intelligent when you don't continuously and compulsively interpret what's happening or what's in front of you, what you're perceiving. That's an old habit going back thousands and thousands of years.

And the habit says, no, I have to interpret. I become stupid if I don't. I won't know what's going on anymore if I can't judge this person that I'm meeting, or I can have some kind of opinion I like or dislike this situation, or this, I want this, I don't want this, should be happening, that shouldn't.

All the stuff that the mind produces continuously that detracts from the simplicity and power of the present moment, that the mind puts out the screen of conceptualization. And so in living without the compulsive screen of conceptualization is the great liberation. And so you invite into your life the spaces, spaces, the one space really, but spaces of not knowing, not needing to know, not just being present with what is, just giving attention to what is at this moment.

Which implies, of course, accepting the is-ness of whatever this moment brings, whatever form arises in this moment. Can you say yes to what arises in whatever form? Because if you, you should say yes because otherwise you suffer.

Because what is already is. So if you argue internally with what is, you really make the universe into an enemy. I don't want this, but there it is right in front of you.

You say, okay, this is what is. You become the space for it. And that's a very quick way of accessing the space consciousness in you.

By simply bringing an acceptance into the present moment in whatever form it comes. Where before there was an irritation, where before there was a complaint, where before there was an angry reaction, there's now saying, oh, okay, that's what is. You open your arms and say yes to now.

Present moment is my friend. I've had the enemy, present moment has been my enemy for long enough. I'm now making friends with the present moment.

Why? Because that's all I have. There's nothing else ever.

Why not make friends with the present moment in whatever form it appears? And the little, the secret then, of course, the miracle is if you make friends with the present moment no matter in what form it appears, then the formless opens up within you because you become who you already were, space for it. You are the space for that.

That's all. So the primordial spiritual practice, or if you want a mantra, can I be the space for this? You can ask yourself the question when situations arise that before you might have complained about, been irritated about, whatever the reaction would have been, can I be the space for this?

And usually, or I would say always, you will find yes, I can be this. You just forgot that you can be the space for it. You forgot that you are the space for whatever arises in your life because you are the now, you are the consciousness in which it arises.

So you become who you already are. Can I be the space for this? With that is the end of all irritation or angry reactions or complaining, inner no, don't want this, want something else, yeah, but this is what you have now.

And it doesn't mean that you get stuck with what is. The amazing thing is you move on much more quickly when you bring a yes to the present moment. Then life moves on.

You've passed the test. If you bring no to the present moment, means you haven't passed. Okay, you get stuck.

It's all expressed beautifully in the film Groundhog Day. You can live in resistance. You can try whatever you will.

As long as you are stuck in your negativity, you have to do it the lesson again. You wake up the same day. This protagonist wakes up in the same day every day until finally an inner shift happens and he begins to say yes to the present moment.

And then suddenly all the unpleasantness of this day that he has to repeat again and again, all the unpleasantness of that day becomes actually quite pleasant. He's beginning to help people because he says yes to situations. So he becomes a helpful, beneficial presence in that day and suddenly everybody loves him in that town.

And finally he becomes so accepting whereas before he hated where he was and he hated his work. Many people live like that, hating everything, complaining continuously, nothing and nobody's ever good enough. And then suddenly the shift happens and finally he's in the same place and he says to his girlfriend, oh let's stay here, it's quite nice.

And then suddenly he's free and he's no longer forced to repeat the same day. Deep spiritual lesson in there and that's how it is. So it's the egoic mind tells you if you accept what is, you'll be stuck.

This is not the case. Acceptance is the beginning for powerful action if action is required. And non-acceptance, the action that you take on the basis of non-acceptance is never powerful.

It always is tainted with negativity and you could say I call it karmic action. It produces more unhappiness, more karma. So a very quick way then of accessing the space consciousness within, the formless, is not resisting the form that the present moment takes in your life internally.

Wow, huge shift. When you can try it in this evening, there may be little things happening on your way home. Wow, non-resistance, greatest power there is.

Marina asks from North Carolina, in my efforts to be in the now, I find I'm able to reach a state of peace and connectedness. I think that I wouldn't call it effort but I know what you mean. It feels complete and fulfilling and yet there's a voice in my mind saying that to be truly connected I should find a way to be in service to others.

Can you help me understand the role that being in service to others plays in the evolutionary impulse of the universe? Thank you for bringing a ray of hope to humanity. It is an interesting synchronicity to me that the day of your program launch is also my birthday.

Happy birthday. The evolutionary impulse of the universe, the arising of presence, you cannot not be of service to others as presence arises, one way or another. The way in which you are of service to others will vary from person to person.

You may not immediately know what your way is. Again, the mind sometimes wants to know too soon, okay, what am I going to do with it now? Be present and gradually the realization of how you are to serve others, whether it's through direct spiritual teaching or whether it's through some activity into which the energy frequency of presence flows, you don't know.

It may come to you, it might take a while. It took years for this teaching to come out of the state of presence, so many years. It may take a while or it may happen very quickly.

There is an acceleration happening on the planet now of the arising of presence, so it's probably happening more quickly to you than to me. How to be of service to others, whether it's through direct spiritual teaching or some activity, they will come to you either through an external circumstance that will tell you what it is that you need to do. It can come from the outside as a synchronistic event, and many people are telling me that they're finding that things that are just right as they live more and more in presence come into their lives.

The right offer, the right meeting, the right person, and suddenly what it is that you need to do arises from the outside. It comes or you wake up one morning and with the realization of this is what I need to do, and then I would wait and see just to make sure that it comes from a deep enough place, and if it's still there the next day and a week later and there's a deep sense of peace with it and power, then it comes from a deep place and then it's good to act on it. This is how I got taken away from living in England.

I loved England, but one morning I knew I have to remove myself without knowing why, and it was so strong that I removed myself. I knew I had to go to the west coast of North America, not knowing why, and it took a while before I got rid of everything, removed myself, landed on the west coast. What now?

I don't know, and so I sat there for a few weeks in presence, and the mind, yes, came in occasionally and said, this is, why did you come here? And the mind even got to, started to look at ads for flying back to England, fares, and then at some point the impulse came to buy a notepad, carried the notepad, not home, I didn't have a home, somebody had put me up, and there in his kitchen the pen came and a very strong impulse came to write, and I wrote, what is enlightenment? Somebody had once asked me that, but I hadn't, I remembered more or less what I said, but that was a new stream that came, and I'd written one page and I knew, this is a book, it's coming, and so there was simply something I couldn't have predicted, obedience to what came out of the present moment, and the trust to go just into the, with a limited amount of money, into complete unknown, but don't do it on an impulse that is a restless kind of impulse that comes out of any kind of negative emotion, and see if it's still with you after a while, then it's right, it's peaceful and it's powerful.

It seemed the book could only be written on the west coast of North America because of the energy field there. I realized that later when I went back to England, the writing stopped, I could only do editing, and so all kinds of things, people will be called upon to serve in all kinds of capacities according to your abilities. It may be that you produce something artistic or music that is inspiring to many people, whatever it is, we don't know.

It may be that you set up a business and everybody who comes there is greeted for who they are, so you recognize everybody as spirit, as consciousness, and everybody who comes away from your business feels lighter and more themselves. Many things can be used as excuses for spiritual transmission and spiritual teaching, and if you already have some business or some activity, it is quite possible that this could continue to be used then as a vehicle for transmission of spiritual energy, and then it will become empowered. Beautiful thing.

There's no predicting how this will change your life, except that it will change your life, and even if some people may not remove themselves, they may stay where they are, and yet it will change. It might not change what you do, but it will fundamentally change how you do what you do. That's always the most important thing.

It's not what you do, it's how you do it. What is the consciousness that flows into it? Is it the egoic consciousness or is it the unconditioned consciousness?

[Speaker 3] (7:31:14 - 7:32:00)

Eckhart, I've heard you make reference to a number of situations which I think convey the same idea. You've talked about certain cultures that go through a stage where this thought process becomes more developed, which I interpret in some ways as being almost a loss of innocence. Is it necessary for a culture or a stage of civilization to go through this process of losing innocence, of getting trapped in the thought and emotional process, in order then to regain the development of awareness to reach a stage of enlightenment?

Thank you, thank you.

[Speaker 1] (7:32:04 - 7:46:05)

That seems to be the process when we look at it. There are still remnants of ancient cultures, very few these days, who have not gone through that process of loss of innocence or loss of connectedness with being, we could call it, the natural connectedness with being. And a few humans may still have it, very simple people, perhaps who live close to the land, never left.

Very simple people sometimes still have it in some cultures, a natural connectedness with the root of life, with being. They feel they are rooted in themselves, there's a stillness there. That is the natural.

What is happening when you lose it, whether it's an individual or whether it's a whole culture, a whole civilization, when you lose it, then you get lost in problem making, get lost in mind, the loss of original innocence, you could say, which of course is replaced by what is called in Christianity, original sin, which simply means the dysfunction that we all inherit, that is there in the collective.

So the original innocence is replaced by the original sin. Original innocence, however, is much deeper than original sin. Original innocence is always still there, even when original sin comes in, it only covers up the original innocence, it does not destroy the original innocence.

So the original innocence remains and then a human being, either an individual or a whole nation, culture, tribe, moves through the phase of being identified with mind, ego, thinking, problem making, conflict-ridden, suffering life. Suffering, inflicting suffering on other humans around you, continuous violence, and so on. All that is part of the loss of connectedness with being.

That's why so many ancient cultures and this, the innocent state, we once were in that. Many ancient myths exist in different cultures throughout the world that speak of the golden age, something, a time when everything was beautiful. We have it in Indian mythology.

At the beginning, humans, they say, lived in connectedness. I'm paraphrasing, but they were one with life, one with the divine. There were no, they didn't inflict suffering on others.

There was no violence. There was, that was, and many cultures have that myth still. It survived as a myth.

It's also expressed, of course, in the Bible, at the beginning of the Bible, like a paradise, the loss of paradise. And paradise, of course, is not a place. It's a state.

So the loss, is it necessary? Well, it's happening. It has happened and is happening.

So it seems to be an evolutionary process. When innocence is regained, connectedness with being is regained, it is not the same as the state, as that state that was lost. And that perhaps is why it is necessary to go through the state of being lost.

When it is regained, it is regained at a deeper level. There's a great deepening. Innocence is you're fully conscious of your state, rather than living in that room.

For example, this is reflected in your relationship with nature. As your consciousness changes, first, let's say, in the innocent state, there's a oneness with nature and a respect for nature, as the old civilizations had, as the Native Americans had, a respect for nature. They recognized nature as alive with spirit force.

They recognized that the tree is not just a dead object that I can use for making money or for my benefit or to build a house or whatever. They recognized the tree is alive with something more than what you see. And they respected that life.

Every animal, even if they had to kill an animal, they respected the life that is in the spirit presence in the animal. So everything, they inhabited a universe that was alive with presence. Now, then we lost that, and more and more, we began to inhabit a universe that we were deadened ourselves to the aliveness of the universe.

We can't see it anymore. So that we ended up looking at the whole of nature as a utilitarian thing to be used, but no longer recognized the essential aliveness that is in everything in nature. Why couldn't we recognize it anymore, that it is essentially sacred and essentially one with the life that we are, because we had lost that within ourselves.

We had cut ourselves off from the root of being. We were completely trapped in mind, and then nature became dead, and we could then exploit it, do anything, because we didn't know that there's a sacred presence there. We've lost the sacred presence within ourselves.

Well, it was covered up. Then we regain it. Then again nature is alive, but this time there is the added dimension of conscious awareness.

When you've always lived in oneness with nature, you don't even know that you live in oneness with nature. It's totally natural. But when you do it with full consciousness, there is an added dimension to it.

And so this is what's happening, and this seems to be why the process is that we have to move through the stage of being lost and then regaining. Perhaps the truth of that is expressed in the parable of the prodigal son, which predates, actually, it's used in various cultures, even when Jesus used it. It exists in different forms.

The son of a rich father says to the father, give me my inheritance. I want to go out and make a life for myself. And so the father says, okay, you go out into the world, and the son goes out in the world, squanders his wealth, becomes a destitute, and becomes a beggar, and even forgets where he comes from.

And then eventually the father sends messengers to the son to remind him who he is. Don't you remember that you are? And the beggar says, no, me, the son of the king?

No, don't. And gradually the memory comes back to him, and then he comes back to his father's house, and the father now loves him more than before. That's the story.

So there's a deepening, what that parable means, there's a deepening after you've been lost. When you regain that which has been lost, it is regained at a deeper level because you're now fully conscious of it. There's a conscious dimension, the awareness that is there.

That's why that seems to be our destiny. But perhaps there is no... I just know that this is how it is.

There may be exceptions. There may be certain people on the planet or small groups of people who don't go through it. Who knows?

We'll have to see. I can only see the general trend, the general movement seems to be, yes, we have to go through that. There may well be exceptions to that.

There may well be certain people who remain in the state of innocence, and that is wonderful too. I don't know. So that's the paradise regained.

That is the cycle. And so I know that I had to go through it. You had to go through it or are still going through it.

And so the state of innocence is lost in childhood. Every child is still born with it, but then very quickly these days it is lost. Well, no, it's never lost.

It's obscured. That's the journey. From an anonymous questioner.

I have read that as long as we are in a body, we have a shadow. Is this true for you? What is your shadow?

Let me think. What is your shadow? Do you have a shadow?

Okay. The answer is, part one of the answer is yes. Part two of the answer is, if you ask anybody if they have a shadow, and they say no, then you know that they have a shadow.

And if they say yes, they don't. Because shadow, which is just a way, it's a Jungian term, which I don't normally use, but what it means is an area of unconsciousness that you're not aware of. Because if you're aware of it, it's no longer unconscious.

It's not really a shadow. So if it's an area of unconsciousness in your life, and if it's truly a shadow or an area of unconsciousness, then, of course, you won't know it. You might know there's a certain behavior pattern, but you will not recognize it as an area of unconsciousness.

You might say, of course I get furious every time somebody mentions this or that because, and you have some justification, it's not recognized as an unconscious reactive pattern. Or you might be totally unconscious of it and say, I'm never angry. Why do you accuse me of always being angry?

So it's right there, but you don't know it. You deny it. So the shadow then, anybody who says no, they probably have one.

If they say yes, then they have seen that there are certain areas where there are certain behavior patterns still operating. Of course they are, because as long as somebody has a body, certain patterns operate, certain behavior patterns. You might have idiosyncrasies, ways of doing things.

So if you're aware that that's there, then that's all that it is. It's not a totally conscious thing. It's not a shadow as such.

We can talk also in terms of ego. If you're aware of certain patterns in you that originated from ego, and they still operate to some extent, although you live mostly in awareness, sometimes there's a momentum behind certain behavior patterns. Like they're not being energized anymore, but it's still there.

And so if you're aware of it, it's not really the ego anymore. Ego implies unobserved mind. Ego implies you don't know it's the ego.

There's no awareness. There's just the conditioned mind doing its thing, acting out. The moment you bring awareness to it, there's a light on it.

So if the light shines, it's shining on the shadow. It's not a shadow. Shadow means there's an absence of light, and light means consciousness.

So ego is no longer ego when you know there's ego. It's only truly speaking ego when you don't know it, and there's unconsciousness.

[Speaker 3] (7:46:08 - 7:46:09)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (7:46:11 - 7:46:18)

A friend of mine got shot and died a couple days ago, so it's been on my mind.

[Speaker 3] (7:46:19 - 7:46:28)

What happens at the time of death, and where does the life force go? What is the transformation?

[Speaker 1] (7:46:30 - 7:54:57)

Thank you. Well, I haven't gone through physical death yet. As the Zen master who was asked about life after death said, I don't know.

And they said, why don't you know? You're the master. And he said, yeah, but I'm not a dead master.

But I've gone very deeply to what one could call death to identification with form. So in a way, I have gone into that realm from where I can say and know that ultimately what we see as death is the dissolution of form, that the eternal in us, which I know that firsthand, cannot be touched by that. So what exactly happens, I would say, depends on whatever state of consciousness you were in.

That must be a predominant state of consciousness in this lifetime. If in this lifetime you were continuously identified with form, your body, or the psychological form of me, that means consciousness, this expression of consciousness, was still in a somewhat dreamlike state, which is identification with form. And you can easily extrapolate from that if the tendency of consciousness to identify with form was still there, which in other ways the awakening had not happened, this tendency will continue.

There will be further identification with form, and the process will continue as the consciousness that is not yet fully awake will continue to identify with form again, and then gradually come to a place where awakening happens. Or if there has already been a disidentification from form in this lifetime, then you can extrapolate from there that the compulsive urge to identify with form and to seek another form or another cycle of form identification, this compulsion to seek further experiences through identifying with form, then would either be much weaker or be completely absent, in which case the consciousness that you are is no longer bound to this realm and will not seek to re-experience the realm of form. But in either case, I know, I can tell you that all is well. It does not really matter whether this person now needs further experiences of identification, in which case this will happen, or whether he's already free of this urge, in which case he will move on and live in a realm that we can't even conceive of from where we are here.

I get a sense deep within in the forms of what that is, but we don't need to talk about it here. All we know is nothing, this is the beginning of A Course in Miracles, which is the entire Course in Miracles summarized in two lines, nothing real can be threatened, nothing unreal exists, herein lies the peace of God. That which is real in him is beyond form.

Anybody can know that when you see a dead body, you realize that this is no longer whom you knew, this is not the being that you knew, this is only a shell. So nothing real can be threatened, nothing unreal ultimately exists. This is why sages from all traditions speak of this realm of form as ultimately illusory, ultimately, it depends what level you look at.

The important thing is all is well, beyond the appearance on the level of form, which is the only level where death exists, it is the transition from one form into another form, or from one form into formlessness. That is what death is, no more than that, nothing real dies, nothing real dies, which is to say ultimately there is no such thing as death, there only seems to be. It's a transmutation of form, either form dissolves or seeks some other form, some other identification with form.

That for you, of course, to go into stillness in the face of death, to go into stillness is important, to become still within yourself, especially when you are sitting with somebody who is going through the death process, or you are confronted with somebody who has just died next to you, to be with that, immediately close your eyes, go into the deep stillness where you realize who you are. And once you realize who you are, which is formless consciousness, then you realize also that nothing real died. Nothing real died, which is to say ultimately there is no death.

It does not mean that you can't feel sad. You can allow yourself to feel tears and to feel sad, and at the same time realize that nothing real died. That happened to me when my parents died two years ago, within a space of six months, both of them, so to be confronted with the death of a loved one in a short period of time.

Yes, there were tears, and there was sadness, and at the same time there was the realization that ultimately there is no death, and who they were in their essence has not been destroyed. Just as I know that I, in my essence, cannot be destroyed. And so that comes from that, it comes from self-realization or self-knowledge, the realization that the other also is beyond death.

So you can have the coexistence of, yes, on this level there is a place for sadness and mourning and tears. If it happens, if it comes in waves, you may have noticed usually if somebody close to you dies, the sadness comes in waves at you, and then you cry, and then it leaves you, and then comes another wave. And even when the wave comes, there can be an undercurrent of peace.

So you're not totally in that emotion, you're not totally consumed by it, it exists there in your own spaciousness. And the spaciousness underneath the emotion is the peace. And it's only from that inner peace that you can realize the truth behind death.

[Speaker 2] (7:55:03 - 7:55:42)

I don't know how you'd label this question. I've met some people, or had conversations with people who are going through what might be called a crisis of awakening. And it seems like the identification with self is mostly fallen away.

And they're in a kind of terror. And they feel like they're going insane. And I can kind of, I mean, I'm not there myself, but I can, I've had those times when it's like giving up all control over everything feels kind of scary.

[Speaker 1] (7:55:43 - 8:07:35)

And I just wondered if you could speak to that. Okay, thank you. Yeah.

Yes, I've also encountered people like that. The mind feels suddenly scared, which really is the ego is still there to some extent. And it becomes a little panicky.

I'm not in control anymore. But there is a place, so one can lose oneself in that. But I would advise a person like that to look for a place that is not confused inside, a place that is not scared.

Many people say they're confused or scared. But really, the way out of it is really always the fuller acknowledgement of the present moment. Because the rest of it, all that confusion and feeling scared is you're not in the present moment, you're in your mind again, and your mind is saying, Oh, my life is falling apart.

I have to start worrying again, because otherwise, it's all going to fall apart. So once you realize that you've moved out, that needs to, the realization needs to be there of that. Okay, I'm lost in the mind again.

Okay, you're not lost, because you know that you're lost. The moment you realize it's happening for a while, you may not realize it's happening. You're so identified with your panicky thoughts that you're completely in them, you don't even know what's happening to you.

And then it time may pass while you're completely in your thoughts. Oh, I think I'm going mad. I just don't know.

I can't figure things out anymore. I don't. They're not, I can't work things out.

Don't know. The mind says you should have an opinion about everybody and I don't anymore. You shouldn't have an opinion about every situation you're in and your life.

I don't know what to think about my life anymore. That's dreadful. That's the mind.

And of course the opposite is true. If you don't know what to think about your life anymore, then you're beginning to wake up and realize there's no such thing as your life. There's only life.

Your life is a mental construct. It's a story. The story of me.

So it's always the moment you realize it's happening, or if you're trying to help somebody, bring your attention to the present moment. This is the exit point out of confusion. You can't be confused when your attention moves into the present moment because the present moment is always simple.

There's always a simplicity about it. The complexity is in the mind structures, the unobserved mind of the ego. So simply take your attention into the present moment and then confusion suddenly dissolves because the mind says, I need to work something out.

I need to understand something. No, you don't. All you need to do is respond to this moment.

Either this moment may require action or it may not require action. Just be there for this moment and then it becomes simple. You cannot do more than one thing at a time, for example, in this moment.

No matter how much you have to do, you can only do one thing. Well, you can do two things, but it gets hard. Basically, you do one thing at a time and give it your attention.

Or do nothing and bring attention to sense perceptions. Look around and get a sense of what this moment feels, what it is, what does it mean, this moment. First of all, it means what you see and perceive, because that's this moment.

And that's already a revelation because you might have been so trapped in your mind that you were completely unaware of your surroundings. And you didn't realize there was a beautiful tree there and there are clouds there. You didn't realize that there's a sound of the wind outside.

You didn't realize that you are breathing in the air. You didn't realize that all those things around you are vitally alive. You didn't realize that because you were stuck in your head thinking about your problems.

And so the beginning of the present moment is that. And then you can go a little deeper. Then you can experience the present moment as the energy field in your body, as the aliveness in your body.

And then you can go even deeper and experience the present moment as the awareness of all this, rather than the present moment isn't the flower as such. The flower appears in the present moment, but essentially what the present moment is, it's the consciousness in which you see the flower. Otherwise there would be no flower.

Remove the consciousness. I don't know what's left. No flower.

You all know the famous saying, the tree in the forest, if a tree falls in the forest and there's nobody there to hear it, does it make a noise? And of course it doesn't, because noise implies not only a sensory organ, it also implies a consciousness that's perceiving through the sensory organ that brings about what we call noise. And without that there's no noise.

And you can even follow that up and ask other similar questions. But what I'm pointing to is the present moment in essence is not the things. The things appear in the space of the present moment.

It's always present moment. You can't get out of that. Your life is always one with now.

Your life and now are one. If you doubt that, then let me know one day when you can say, my life is not now. Or maybe you remember when it wasn't now.

Not possible. Life and now is synonymous. Life is now, now is life.

But the mind says, yeah, but what does that mean? Isn't that just words? No, it's more than words.

The words are pointing to a realization. And that is, whatever appears has to appear in the present moment, but in itself is not the present moment. It is a form that appears in the space of now.

Everybody in this room or wherever the body is, is a form that appears in the space of now. Whatever happens, whatever thought comes, whatever emotion is felt, is a form that appears in the space of now. And that now is consciousness, timeless, ever present.

You are that. I am that. So that's really what the present moment is.

So ultimately it's yourself, it's consciousness, and you are consciousness. So bringing attention to the now takes people out of confusion. The now begins with sense perceptions.

To encourage people, or do it to yourself, if you find you become lost in your mind, come into your senses first. Touch something. Whatever, any surface, feel it.

Then look. Already confusion subsides because your attention gets away from thinking into the act of perception. Then listen.

Less and less confusion. What is there to be confused about right here? Nothing.

Then breathing. And breathing takes attention into the inner body. Alive.

It's alive. Where's the confusion? It's gone.

You stopped giving attention to your thoughts, the confusion is gone. And then you go even deeper into just the spaciousness of stillness. No confusion in there.

And then, that's fine. Every time it happens, use that process of reorientation of focus of your consciousness into now. So this is the advice you can give, and you do it with people when they come to you in a state of confusion.

Say, okay, sit there, okay, look around, look, touch something, look at this, listen to the rain, listen to the wind, listen to the birds, listen to the car, be there as the presence for it. Confusion can end very quickly that way. Present moment is the exit point out of confusion, is the point of exit out of your mind.

And it's always there. You just have to acknowledge it. So, and when it happens again, same process, no more confusion.

It's a shift for people. You get drawn back into the old consciousness and step out again. That's why we call the awakening process.

For most people, it is a, we are transitional, most of the people going through this, we are transitional beings from, it's a very significant and incredible thing, from one way of being, one state of consciousness that's been there for thousands and thousands of years, to a different state of consciousness. And so we live, many people live in two worlds, in two states, still shifting, and gradually awareness takes over from continuous thinking. And then it's all different.

It's like, I sometimes call it as you, as I say, at the end of the new earth, a new species is emerging on the planet. One could almost say that, we still look the same, but your inner state is so different from the normal, insane state, that it's like a completely new species. And yet it's already, it's already arising in you.

It's not something that you need to arrive at at some future point. I want to become a new species. It's already arising.

[Speaker 3] (8:07:40 - 8:09:06)

For the past several years, I've been making a concerted effort to live a, especially sort of, you know, conscious, present, spiritual path, and doing yoga and meditation and retreats and that sort of thing. And now when I hear people talk about, you know, spiritual stuff, I kind of cringe. It's like, I feel like there's this spiritual thing that's like separate, you know, separate from this, you know, this special dimension.

At first it was really great, you know, because I was meditating like, you know, 10 hours in a weekend and I could tell everybody how cool it was and, you know, how special and unique I felt, you know, practicing this special spiritual life. And now I just, I listen to what you say and other people say, I just want to hear about, like, how I'm no one. And I mean that sincerely in being in this, but just not having to, even though, you know, I am conscious, all these words that just seem to get in the way a lot of the time.

I mean, you know, they're concepts and everything. But I just, I just, I hear the, I feel the sweetness of not, just really not having to be this special, unique, you know, spiritual person on top of being a regular person. It's like this, you know, double-decker sandwich that I got to carry around and I'm, and it's, and it's getting stale.

And I, I, I don't know. I don't know if there's a question in there, but maybe you could, maybe you could speak, speak to that.

[Speaker 1] (8:09:06 - 8:09:06)

Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (8:09:07 - 8:09:08)

Yes. Okay. Thanks.

[Speaker 1] (8:09:12 - 8:10:07)

Well, you overdid it a little bit with your spiritual practice. And hence the reaction now, because you have to get back to some normality after all that specialness over that, both your spiritual practice, where you thought of yourself as special and your practice as special. You went quite far to an extreme and you're now experiencing the reaction to that extreme.

And that's good. In other words, you don't want to hear about anything spiritual anymore. I've had it, right?

So you overdid it. Now there's a reaction. Don't mention to me anything spiritual anymore, you say, but of course, you know, the famous expression, what is it?

The baby and the bath water. Don't throw out your baby with the bath water.

[Speaker 3] (8:10:07 - 8:10:08)

Well, it's like, it's all spiritual.

[Speaker 1] (8:10:09 - 8:10:10)

It's all spiritual.

[Speaker 3] (8:10:10 - 8:10:11)

That it's so separate.

[Speaker 1] (8:10:11 - 8:17:55)

So now first you went to that extreme. Now you go to an extreme of reaction and eventually end up in the middle where every moment is spiritual as it is. There's not nothing special.

Spirit is not separate from daily existence. So that's when we say spiritual, we're not referring to some realm out there that is to be achieved at some point where you become more special than you are now. It's not going to happen.

It's here and now. We're going deeper into the here and now. That's spiritual.

Now you are a little bit tired of these words because you went too far to that extreme. So you have to realize if you're a little bit perhaps like a Christian who was once very religious and suddenly got fed up, and then occasionally I have people in talks who are ex-Christians, and the moment I say, occasionally I say, Jesus said, they go, oh, don't talk to me about anything that's remotely Christian. I don't want to hear that.

I've had all that. So they don't realize because of that. Of course, they had a somewhat distorted view of what the whole thing was about.

So they didn't, but they can't stand the terms anymore. And that's fine. It's a phase.

You will come through that. Maybe it's happening already. It's the ordinariness.

Spiritual means the more spiritual you are, the more ordinary you are, the more non-special you are. And again, for the ego, that means, okay, I have to become more non-special. How do I become ordinary?

Okay, I need somebody to teach me to be ordinary. So I understand your dilemma, and perhaps you understand it also. And so this nothing special, chopping wood, carrying water, Zen defines spirituality, ultimately, what is the spiritual life, chopping wood, carrying water, which is the kind of thing you do in Zen monasteries.

Daily doing, in my case, it's buying some food in the store, going to have a cup of coffee, taking the dog for a walk in the forest, listening to the BBC World News, having a glass of wine occasionally with a meal, watching a movie, nothing extraordinary, and so quite an ordinary existence. And so it's hiding in there. The spirituality is in there.

It's not away from there, to just this. And so I'm sorry about these words that we use, but language is limited. So we have to use certain words.

And perhaps the emotion around these words, then eventually it's going to go and they become neutral again. And you can use them for what they are, which is simply useful pointers no more. Thank you.

Is proximity, this is Nancy from Florida, is proximity to someone who is in presence important or is listening to an awakened person on CD equally helpful? If the readiness is there, I would say listening on CD can be equally helpful for those who are ready. And even a book can be equally helpful for those who are ready.

For others, the added presence of an actual physical presence of the teacher might sometimes break certain egoic resistances. But that's more the case in a disciple guru relationship. And so I'm not a guru as such, although some people would want me to be one.

A guru works closely together with disciples. And I did that for a little while, for a few years, and that was fine. But life has now called upon me to fulfill a different function.

And there's still a place for spiritual teachers who work with people more closely on a prolonged basis with disciples. Again, I could say a lot about that, the dangers involved and the possibilities involved in that. But I know that from correspondence I receive that many people's lives have changed from watching CDs or reading books.

Because when you recognize presence in another, that means there must be presence in you. So it's always in you when you recognize there's this great spiritual being there. How do you recognize it?

Through the very same consciousness in you. Because if it wasn't in you, you wouldn't recognize this. This person would look totally ordinary to you and say, I don't know what this fuss is all about.

And so there were always many people who never, you could, without that opening, you can live with the Buddha for 10 years, 20 years and say, he's just a completely ordinary person. And in a way he is. I mean, he's more ordinary than ordinary without an ego, that's true.

So when you recognize presence in another, at that moment, there is the presence in you. It's only presence can recognize presence. So it's always in you.

So whether you can recognize it when you see a CD, say, wow, where does that wow come from? The power, the aliveness that your mind is telling me is in that person there. No, it's in you.

So it's better not to project it and make a person special, which the mind tends to do. Well, the person is special, but so are you. You are equally special.

There's nobody closer to God than you are, to use that word, except that they may not know it. They may not know it. So when you recognize this, the wonderful thing is turn your attention within and say, where is the realization that this is a wonderful spiritual being talking right now?

How do I know that? Because you are a wonderful spiritual being, so to speak. You're not a being, you are an expression of being, but the words are limiting.

[Speaker 2] (8:18:22 - 8:37:37)

I learned through my relationship with Eckhart that any and all my ideas I had about what a relationship should be, what my relationship should look like, and how I wanted my relationship to be, it took a lot of looking and some years where I finally realized that I wasn't having a real relationship. I was just having a relationship with an idea in my head. And I wasn't meeting the other and seeing the other as we can say as myself or the essence of the other, the essence of Eckhart.

But I just had all my expectations and ideas, my imagination, and that's how I was relating. And you could only see that in the daily activities, in your daily life. You could know this, and I knew it on some level that consciousness, that stillness was not about thought, it's not about your ideas, and you can know this, and in a relationship it's not about the idea of a relationship.

But that's when the awareness, the inner work, needs to be done. You have to take it beyond the intellectual and then actually then to discover it. So it's discovery becomes this inner deep knowing that okay what I see what I'm doing is that I'm not relating with another human being as consciousness, as stillness, but as ego.

So when I saw that, and it took many times seeing it, for example, we come from different cultures, Eckhart is from Germany, even though I'm born in Canada, I'm Chinese, so I had the cultural conditioning of Chinese. We bring to it our own conditioning, and plus being a woman, him a man, the idea, and all that sort of stuff, the era in which Eckhart was born, the generation in which I was born. So I have certain expectations that I brought to the relationship.

The first one I remember is very close to when Eckhart and I first got together in relationship, and I thought I had to do sort of all the cooking, you know, all the cleaning up afterwards, and that was my conditioning. And he didn't have to do anything, and I didn't realize that his conditioning also is that, because he was brought up in Europe, Germany, and in Spain, where he had his mother, his stepmother, who did everything. So it was easy for him just to, that was it, you just allow the woman to do it, at least this was my perception, because he was not doing too much, right?

So here I was, and then I was starting to get resentful, like, you know, here I am chopping the vegetables or whatever, or cleaning up, and I'm like, why doesn't he do anything? You know, he's got to do something, you know, like, why do I have to ask? I shouldn't have to ask.

And then suddenly I realized, oh my god, these are all my thoughts in my head, my expectations, instead of just telling him, you know, I don't want to do all the cooking, you know? So I told him that, and he goes, oh, okay, well, you don't have to cook, we'll go out. I went, oh, okay, so we'll go out, all right.

I don't think at that time I didn't really say to him, well, just help me, you know, I just said, okay, yeah, okay, we'll go out, because I didn't really like cooking anyways, at least so I thought at that time. So we went out, and we went out a lot, and then plus we traveled, and we ate out again, so I was feeling more and more unhealthy. And anyways, when we bought a house together over in the island and had this wonderful big kitchen, I found myself cooking and able to, I liked cooking, I enjoyed it, and I wanted to, we wanted to be at home.

So we came back to the same scenario again, right? We weren't going out to the restaurants, and here I was cooking, but this time I was able to express, to say, you know, I would like some help, and he would go, okay. But then, you know, several weeks and months would pass, and I'd have to still keep on asking, well, I need some help now, and then I can say, just this thought arises in the background, like, oh my God, why is it that I always have to ask him?

It's just like a little kid, where I have to, you know, always have to ask a little kid what to do. Why can't he just offer and help? I went, wow, this is what I expect.

I expect him to just help, when his nature, his conditioning is that he just doesn't, unless he's asked. So I had to resign and just say, okay, I just have to ask, and it was me that was stirring up all the angst, all the anxiety, in the thought that I wanted him different than what he is. So, I don't mind now.

I just say, okay, time to help, and he'll go, okay, and he just, he'll help. So, I mean, those are just the superficial things in the relationship, the daily things, because many people ask me about what my relationship with Eckhart is like, and how wonderful it must be, and yes, on the level of silence, of stillness, it's absolutely wonderful. I feel like I'm right at home in stillness.

We don't have to say a word and can just sense the stillness, but we have the daily life, and this is where most of us can get caught up in, because you can meet somebody, and you have that wonderful spiritual connection, and you go, ah, this is wonderful, this is great, and some people are conscious of that spiritual connections, and other things that this is just, they don't know about the spiritual end of things, but they just, they just sense something, they just love this person, they want to be with this person, etc., until you live with them, and it is a working out, it is a giving space to allow them to have their conditioning, because that's, we all have it, but it's our own job to be aware of what our conditioning is, what our expectations are, and to hear the other, to, okay, what's their conditioning? It took several years before, Eckhart would never really ask me for anything, for example, I learned this when we were in Germany one time, and Eckhart wasn't there, he decided not to come for dinner, and we went with a group of people to dinner, and one woman said, is your water no good? And I said, yes, it's fine, and then my friend who sat next to me, who is also German, said, she's really asking you for a sip of water, and I went, she asked me if my water was good, but she didn't ask me for a sip, no, that's how, that's how we ask, we don't ask directly, and I went, oh my gosh, Eckhart's been doing this to me for years, I thought, you mean he was really asking for a sip of my water, and I never knew it, so, and I went, okay, I understand, so, it is learning each other's own conditioning, and seeing how we apply our own conditioning, our own idea of how our relationship, or how communication should be, when the other has, you know, some other conditioning going on, some other way of being in this world, and relating how we relate, and this happens all around the world, and this is where miscommunication comes in, conflict comes in, because we have all these different ideas, but it's to see and to learn what those ideas, what the expectations, what that conditioning, what that culture is, is to learn it, and not demand that they change and be like yourself, so when I went back to the hotel, and I told Eckhart that, and he went, yeah, yeah, that's right, and then when I, it's interesting, because when I finally knew and understood what he wanted, he was then be able to, because I was able to communicate, maybe we just didn't know what was going on, I don't know what he thought, maybe he thought it was totally selfish, all this for many years or something, I don't know, but he was then able to now say, can I have a sip of your water? So it's giving each other that space just to be, and watching, learning, listening, to hear just exactly what it is that's being communicated, so it's beautiful that we have these two cultures, German and Chinese, which are very two strong different cultures, and just finding out about it, exploring, however the basis of our relationship, I think, would not have last, I probably would have walked out a long time ago, because I would have thought he was lazy, if I didn't have this understanding, and this primary importance of having God, consciousness, stillness, whatever you want to call it, in my life first, and having that be the holder, the container, of what the form, in this case, my form in relationship with Eckhart, is, that's the holder, and to realize that whatever form, and it's taken many years to realize that whatever form is going on, is not as important as the background, the stillness in which the form emerges, arises, and that's the beauty, and then when that stillness is there, then the things, the everyday life, yeah, there'll be ups and downs, it's not always great, and it's not always bad, it's, you know, sometimes we got to do things, but it's coming back, always, just to the present moment, to go beyond the conditioning, knowing that it's there, maybe even having the awareness that, yes, you have expectations, but then allowing the expectations to go, just let it go, and just see them as that, expectations, and just to live in that, in that stillness, and move, and breathe, and communicate from that place, and just allowing the nature of the other person just to be. I get a kick out of every time when we, because we live on Salt Spring, and we have this recycling thing going on, and we go to the recycling, and we have these containers of, you know, paper, plastic, etc, bottles, and so we have about six, seven containers, we load up in the truck, and we go, and Eckhart, by nature, is very, you know, just kind of slow, he just sort of casually, just sort of moves, and does it, and

I'm a little quicker, so we can go to the recycling, and here we're doing our jobs, and I realize, wow, I've done like five containers, and he's done two, and you know, it's like, okay, this is, it's okay, it's, it's fine, this is how he is, he just moves a little slower. I could create a story in my head about it, but I've accepted that, okay, he just, he's with me, and he's doing it, and it's enough, and if I want him to do more in me, less than, if I want him to do it in half, I could easily just hop in the car, and wait, and let him do his half, I suppose, but it's just easier just to, for me, just to do it, it's there, it's okay. So, every relationship goes through just that working out of how everyday life is going to emerge.

We have a unique circumstance, and I think we both really love it, and that is, we're fortunate enough to have three places. In Vancouver, we each have our own apartment, that is right across from each other, so we have our own space, and then we live part-time together on the island, and some people will think, wow, that's just so weird, and other people think, that's neat. I think for both of us, at least for me, I love it, I love having my own space.

So, you find a way to live together. Now, not everybody is going to be able to afford to have that amount of space, physical space, but it's a working out, it's finding the way, and we need to find that way, respect each other, be able to give that other person the space. I know, just on this awakening process, it requires a lot of space, at least it did for me, a lot of alone time to search, to look, to be where you can say, even in meditation, although I wasn't quite always sitting there in formal meditation, but just being aware, being able to see the mind working and operating, and how the thoughts just arise, and what kind of those thoughts are, and not, as what Eckhart says, taking your thoughts so seriously, to be able to just, ah, okay, it's not so important, all my ideas, opinions, expectations, it's not important, and in order to have what we can call a successful relationship, we need to each come to that place to realize, not intellectually, but really internally, inner knowing that, yes, the form of this moment is secondary, the primary importance is the space in which all communication, in which all love, presence, activity flows, and it's not so much a commitment to the other, but a commitment to your relationship with God, with stillness, and that's the true relationship, is stillness, is God-consciousness, and when you're truly committed to that, then life flows, and shit happens, and it will always happen, true life is now, it's not what happens,

[Speaker 4] (8:37:40 - 8:37:50)

it's the space in which it happens, and that's love.

2011-Eckhart-Tolle-Hawaii-Retreat

[Speaker 1] (1:16 - 51:12)

Welcome, welcome. Does it work? No, of course not.

Does? Electronics seem to break down easily these days here. Welcome to everybody here and wherever you are on the planet.

The retreat is short but intensive. We'll have five sessions all together. Tomorrow evening, some of you may not know this yet, we are meeting again at 8 o'clock Hawaiian time for our evening gathering, probably a meditation, but who knows.

So, three sessions tomorrow. In the afternoon, probably questions and answers, or questions without answers, we'll see. So, just one or two practical things, recommendations for you, both those of you who are here and those of you who are elsewhere.

I recommend that for the duration of our retreat, you don't watch television and if possible, don't use alcohol, unless you really need a glass of wine for medicinal purposes. Even one cold beer might not matter that much, but the first cold beer can easily lead to the second cold beer and then before you know it, you have fallen below thinking, believing that you are approaching enlightenment. If some of you wish to remain silent, not speak to anybody during the retreat, of course, you're welcome to do so and if that's what you wish to do, we can agree on a little sign when somebody approaches you, you just do as the Zen master did when he asked the meaning of Zen, then people will know that you are in silence.

Although whether you are present is another question, because the question is whether there is silence in here and of course this is what this is all about, to encounter, to access, to deepen that dimension of stillness, we could call it that. And I have another suggestion for you, this goes a little bit beyond the practical already, and that is just as a, let's call it an experiment while you are here, the thoughts that arise in your mind, and particularly viewpoints on this or that matter or topic, don't give them a great deal of importance. So I recommend that as a continuing practice for you, especially for the duration of this retreat, and then hopefully that will carry on into the rest of your life.

I'll explain for a moment what that means. Most humans are or have been hijacked, so to speak, by their thoughts. I don't know this.

And when humans express viewpoints or opinions, out aloud or even to themselves in the internal dialogue that goes on in most people's minds, these viewpoints can have an enormous amount of force behind it. You can, if you listen to people, you can see how when they express their viewpoints, how much energy there is behind that, and how important they believe their viewpoint is, because they don't know it's a viewpoint, for them it's the reality. And of course somebody else has another viewpoint, which to him or her is their reality.

So this complete identification with opinions and viewpoints, which are thoughts that have an energy behind them, become aware of that, and so that treat your viewpoints as they arise concerning all kinds of matters, the retreat, where you are, other people, the food, the lack of this or that, should, shouldn't, strong viewpoints are attached usually to each should and shouldn't, and they, why don't they, all the viewpoints, which usually dominate people's consciousness and make up a large part of their sense of identity, be aware of them, and realize it's a viewpoint, and just don't give it that much importance. It's, then you, a minute later, you may find another viewpoint coming out of your mouth, and then an awareness arises, oops, there's another strong viewpoint, and there we have, when you bring consciousness to that, you're already beginning to dismantle the egoic state of consciousness, because it thrives on identification with thought, and particularly, thoughts that have an enormous amount of self in it, so you identify with the thought, this is how it is, this is what they should do. Often, often, often viewpoints are connected with fault finding, the ego loves that, where's the next fault I can complain about?

If you can, if you come here, of course you can complain about all the species that are around you that are called tourists. How can I have a retreat with all these tourists? Of course, tourists are just humans like you, but once the mind has conceptualized another human, that human is no longer human completely to you, it's become conceptualized, and it has lost, you cannot sense its aliveness.

And in the collective consciousness or unconsciousness, sometimes collective viewpoints arise, again, in order to conceptualize others, perhaps the ego loves it, because it gets stronger when you can weaken somebody else through your conceptualization. So, observing viewpoints in yourself, and of course you will perhaps be more aware when viewpoints are being expressed in other people as you are here, but beware of saying to them, do you know what you're doing? You're identifying with a mental position again, a viewpoint.

You're in your ego, can't you see it? And then you can experience what the ego does when you are directly confronting it. You can't, you'll never win, your own ego will come up.

So, in other words then, thoughts that come into your head during this retreat, let's just put it like this, not just the strong self-identified opinions and viewpoints, but let's say all thoughts that come, and every thought is some kind of judgment, that's what a thought is, let's say for this duration of this retreat, they're not that important. And you're not losing anything, because if you don't find that satisfying at the end of the retreat, you can give back all the habitual importance to your thoughts again, if you want to, but why not just be open to this and see what happens if no thought that arises in your mind is given a great deal of importance? That's another thought.

So that's a practice when we speak tomorrow afternoon. I hope I will get some feedback about your practice. With thoughts and viewpoints.

It is liberating. At first it seems strange. What no thought that I think is important, you feel kind of diminished.

But as you withdraw, endowing these thoughts with such importance, something else arises in you that's actually more important than any thought. And that is, again it's just a name, the dimension of awareness or presence. So thought begins to lose its hold over you.

You can use it, but it can't use you anymore. So we could say, and also I suggest this as a practice here, to observe. This is just another way of talking about what we've just been talking about.

For the sake of our practice, let's put it like this, although ultimately it's not true, as very little that one says in words is ultimately true. There are two of you here, or at any time, there are two of you, or there are two dimensions. You consist of two dimensions.

This is not the ultimate truth, but it is a very useful approach towards the truth. There are two dimensions in you. There are two of you.

Let's put it like that. There is the form you, I call it in the power of now, your form identity, which of course is, first of all, the physical body. Second, the form identity is the psychological form of you, the who you think you are, consisting of memories and thoughts, emotions, reactive patterns, the psychological form of me, physical form, psychological form.

And the psychological form consists of thoughts and emotions, feelings. Now, for most people, that's all they know about themselves, that they are their form identity, not realizing that the most vital part of who they are, they're completely unaware of. And we could call that, I call it in the power of now, your essence identity, which has no form.

We are here to deepen our awareness of our essence identity. We are not here to improve who you are on the level of form. But there are other workshops you can go to for that.

And that has its place. There may be a certain time in one's life when that is helpful. But what, the most vital thing is the realization of one's essence identity, which is formless, the formless part of who you are.

And really, this is the very core of our teaching here. You, this is what you need to get. If you haven't got it already, it's the entire, our entire retreat, all the teachings, every true spiritual teaching is really about this one thing, which isn't a thing at all, because it has no form.

And which is so hard to grasp, because we think we can capture it, by saying, ah, now I have it. You can never say, now I know this is my form, my essence identity. You can never say that.

It's elusive, and yet all-pervasive. And it is realized in a moment when the stream of thinking ceases, which from the point of view of your form identity looks like nothingness, nothing important happening there at all. If you are not totally miserable or angry or disturbed all the time, some people are, if you are not totally disturbed, miserable, angry, or in some kind of deep negative state, that means you must have some access to your essence identity without knowing it.

There must be some moments in your life when the stream of thinking, for a moment, opens up like heavy clouds. Suddenly they part, and there's some blue sky coming through. And then, of course, if you don't know it, all you know is that at that moment, suddenly you feel, it can manifest in various ways, you feel suddenly intense joy for no particular reason.

Or you feel suddenly very peaceful and alive at the same time. Or suddenly, you have a wonderful idea, not realizing that before this idea came to you, there was a space of just presence. And people don't know that even I didn't know that when my mind stopped running my life, when the self-identification with thinking came to an end suddenly, I didn't know that the self-identification with thinking had come to an end.

I couldn't have said that. What do you mean self-identification with thinking? That understanding came much later.

But I didn't know that my mind had become, slowed down and thought had become reduced by 80%. All I knew was there's so much peace suddenly. And if people ask me, why are you so peaceful?

You've got nothing to be peaceful about. I don't know. It's just a feeling.

It comes up. Only much later, when I talked to a Zen monk, three years later, he said, Zen is about the end of thinking. Oh, that's what it is.

Not that you never think again, but that dimension, the formless essence of who you are comes into your life. And that is, I read an article on Sunday in the New York Times about the Apple founder, Steve Jobs, who passed away. Now, regardless of what importance you attribute to the invention of the iPhone, iPad and iPod, there's no doubt that he was creative.

Something new came into this world through him, regardless of what importance you give it. Look out for your viewpoints. And I read that he's very quite an intuitive person.

The article was written by Walter Isaacson, who just published his biography, who also wrote a biography of Einstein and Benjamin Franklin, all of which had some access to that intuition. They call it the intuition, but it's just a word. What does that really mean?

He says both Benjamin Franklin and Albert Einstein and Steve Jobs, he says they are of varying importance, but that's the viewpoint. They all had access to what he calls intuition. And there were thinkers that had a more highly developed thinking ability, he says quite rightly, than Einstein.

And there are other people who got even more technically better than Steve Jobs. But these people had access to intuition, but he doesn't examine the author, although he writes great biographies, but he doesn't examine what does that mean, intuition? How does intuition arise?

What do we mean when we say intuition? Of course, intuition means a space opens up within you, the stream of normal thinking is interrupted or subsides, and you become alert and still. And then, out of that, an insight arises, a realization, an idea, a fresh thought that wasn't there before.

That's the intuition. So it comes to those who have some access to their formless essence. But we are not here just so that you can develop your intuition and then produce perhaps the next generation of iPads.

Maybe one of you will. It's a byproduct. I regard it as a byproduct of the evolving consciousness, that intuition, and not to even be content with just having an occasional intuition in your life.

There's more to life than that. There is an entire awakening process that is taking place in a growing number of humans such as you. It's not only that you become more intuitive, your entire being becomes awake.

It's an entire shift in consciousness happens. And that's why we are here. So I only have one thing to teach, if you can even call it that.

It's not a teaching. Words are limited. And that is finding your essence identity, or if you already have access to it, deepening it.

And I am here to help you with the ability which is growing in you, the ability to stop thinking when you choose to. Like now. Not by using willpower.

Don't hold your breath. Yes. Because once you start breathing again, an enormous amount of accumulated thought will rush back in.

Just like the boiling pot, you hold the lid down. Again and again, I will come back to that. There are ways, as we will see at some point, tonight or tomorrow, there are ways, there are entry points into that state of spacious awareness where you are aware of that, the inner space of consciousness itself, which is the essence of who you are.

There are ways, there are portals into that. But there is also, for those who are ready for it, there is the simple, the possibility of simply, without using any secondary means, of surrendering the compulsion to think and then be comfortable with the seeming nothingness that remains when you are not thinking. And also become comfortable in that state of pure awareness.

This is really what I teach, nothing else. The pure awareness, not through a technique, but directly. That state of pure awareness arising in you in which you can think, but you don't need to think.

And you can actually choose to enter that state and be your formless self, which the Buddhists call no-self, be your formless self and still operate, to some extent, through the form. A lot of the time in my daily life, there's, I am the formless consciousness because there isn't much thinking. And occasionally, there is the form.

And still, I am aware that I have a name and a body and a function in this world. There is somebody who the people call a spiritual teacher and he has become famous and is recognized in the street and he goes and gives talks and has written books and has a certain life history, which people know about and I know about. I know all that, but I choose not to not to carry that around with me in my head.

And so at any given moment, you also can be the person that you are with your history, that you start thinking, your name, your body, your history. You can go through life as that, especially your thoughts and viewpoints and you're getting your identity from expressing how you feel about things. This is how it is and that is how and arguing with those who have different opinions and you feel I'm really becoming somebody especially the more I argue with the world and the more I complain on the internet sites and then argue with others who have other views and all of that.

You can go through life like that being totally only the form being totally identified with the physical, but even more importantly the psychological form of I or you can realize another dimension and then you can be a hybrid creature. A hybrid creature that is partly form and partly formless. Another way of putting it, the formless shines through the form.

So before you were, let's say you were a fist, the identity that is the form identity without any awareness of your essence is the closed fist. Just waiting for the next thing to be annoyed with or sad about poor me or complain about the evil others or whatever concept you project. The 1% they are the cause of all the evil in this world.

The 1% and then you look out for people when you go through the city. He could be one of the 1%. Let's say that China has become fashionable and it will be fashionable for a while and then will be replaced by something else.

And what do you do? I mean you immediately with a term like that you conceptualize other humans and the ego loves that. You reduce them to mental concepts.

So you become a when you become a hybrid there's no longer the closed fist. There is that your hand opens up and you can even see the space between your fingers. And so you are the form.

You still have your viewpoints. Democrats, Republicans. You have viewpoints on the candidates.

Possible candidates for the next President of the United States. I have viewpoints on that too. But they are not very strong.

I can say of all those who would you choose? I would choose probably that one but who knows. But if there is self-identification with the viewpoints then they become you get trapped in them.

They become a prison but you don't know it. And ultimately you are trapped in ego. So from living like this to living like this you bounce through the gaps in you.

That's what we are here to experience. And how? By becoming comfortable with alert stillness.

Thoughtless stillness. Not in the original sense the conventional sense in which that word is used. Thoughtless is a negative term.

Somebody who is not paying attention. But thoughtless as a positive term filled with presence you could say. So I'm here to transmit presence to you which I could not do if there were not already that dimension arising in you because it can only be transmitted when it is received because ultimately this is not my awareness.

It's not my presence. And it's not yours. It is the presence.

The awareness. There's only one. It's arising through seemingly individual entities temporary forms.

And something is beginning to shine through these temporary forms. And it is a transition in human consciousness. So I want to invite you to experience for yourself the state of pure awareness.

The state of spacious aware presence like now. You may find as that arises in you that you feel your entire being becomes energized. You feel your entire being becomes aware as you sit here in presence.

And if you ask who are you in that awareness? This is where the old question that some Indian teachers particularly used as a meditation the question who am I which you are supposed to ask yourself that is meant to be a pointer to the state of conscious pure consciousness. Who am I?

Don't answer it because every answer is another form identity. Every answer is another concept. If I said I am a famous spiritual teacher no it's a form identity it's a temporary thing.

In a few years this form will be gone and then what? Who am I? If you don't answer that question what remains after the question is a space of alert aware presence.

Who am I? Who am I? Nothing.

No thing. And if you can become comfortable with that then it that deepens. The form identity is afraid of it so it likes to I don't know who I am anymore.

Of course on the level of concept you don't know who you are. But don't worry when you need to remember your name and somebody asks you what's your name you will know it and your history and when somebody asks you would you vote democrat or republican you will still have an answer but you won't be consumed by that answer which is a thought. So allowing awareness to arise so that form and formlessness can coexist as you move through life and I I'm only attempting to show how I live sometimes form asserts itself a little bit more and at other times the formless is much more so you can at any let's give a concrete example here you are walking from your room to the restaurant or the breakfast place you can walk part of that will be through the building and then you will go outside the building where are some palm trees and there's the sea or if you are somewhere else there will be something else people who are elsewhere you can walk if you are walking immersed in thought as you walk from your room to your breakfast table you are totally trapped in your form identity you can also walk partly thinking and partly being in the state of pure awareness in the pure awareness you tend to perceive things that before you had not perceived you might notice that so you perceive you suddenly there's somebody in the elevator and you look at that other human suddenly with no judgment and you can sense their essential aliveness and you acknowledge it you might feel there might be a word that you say or two words but there is suddenly a connection with the other human being because you are in essence and then perhaps you lose yourself in some other thought and then again there comes a space you take five steps and you are spacious and aware as you take these five steps and you suddenly you look at the sky and the palm trees at that moment again you are not a person anymore you look like a person you can resume your personal identity but at that moment for those five steps you are a conscious presence embodied or shining through expressing itself through this temporary form and that's when you notice that it actually deepens some people have it it comes to them occasionally naturally I mentioned before if you are not miserable all the time or angry all the time it means you have a little bit of access to that it occasionally without you inviting it in it occasionally is there in your life for brief moments of ah oh or when you are engaged in some activity that requires your complete attention there is suddenly a spacious awareness while you do it you are not a person at that moment realize you are not always a person when you are a person you are identified with a stream of thinking that creates the person when you are consciousness the person subsides it goes to the form identity subsides and the essence identity comes to the foreground and that shift happens in hybrids like you all the time you can actually observe it in your life your daily life the shift where the person comes out strongly remember your viewpoint for example there is a person for example there are many other instances where the person is strongly there or you can be the impersonal timeless consciousness you are the essence identity shining through the person so the person is hardly there so you observe it in yourself just walking from here to there when I walk in here I don't come in as a person imagine if I came in as a person how stressful it would be because the person will ask all kinds of questions what do they expect am I going to have enough to say to them are they going to be happy with it I hope this will not happen is my going to work what are they going to think of me what are they it's such an important gathering all these people in other parts of the world they're all streaming in oh dear what I've got if I came as a person it would be very stressful I would not be able so the only way I can do this job is not to be a person not to come as a person and I don't come as a person by not thinking a single thought when I walk from here to here a single thought would be stressful and it's beautiful it's it's it's a life and enjoyable not being a person you're intensely more intensely more alive than as a person I mean the person is half dead because the person is a conceptual identity conceptualizing everybody else and they're basically not really alive so the wonderful thing is we are emerging from the the the person to a different being an essence identity coming through the person has been wonderful it's not that you can't take up the person anymore when you need it it's fine you still function and you will also notice at times it will take you over again completely especially when you watch television and there's that candidate that you dislike or you have an argument over the breakfast table something to do with enlightenment and the person and what you believe about it and how it should be and so once you notice that in yourself that at times you are totally a person at other times you are a person but there's essence shining through and there may be times when there's only essence where the body is still there but there's only aware presence and then you can do anything you can if you bring that into whatever you do in your life it transforms whatever you do it becomes beautiful or it might remove you from somewhere all kinds of changes come into your life especially the how which is always more important than what you do is how you do what you do changes as the essence arises so I'm teaching the end of the person the person of the purely personal sense of self which is a dreadful person and if you find yourself getting angry while you are listening to this that's good but look there's the person because only the person would get angry with this

[Speaker 4] (51:16 - 51:17)

of

[Speaker 1] (51:17 - 1:07:28)

course it wants to defend itself what do you mean no person so experiment with how you the shift inside you from form from total form identity to essence identity and then you can be in your room and you can experiment by go sit down touch something and don't name it look at something don't name it and how your mind reassembles the sensory data and then you see the table or you feel the table but it's form it's a thought form it's a perception there's a form arising but when you don't label it you are also the perceiving awareness which is formless so when you perceive things around you feeling here for example the air feel it on the skin the air which is moisture laden and the breeze the warm breeze enveloped continuously like in some velvety blanket feel that but don't name it I'm naming it so simply to point you to the nameless experience of it feel that and so you have the consciousness and the form that arises but then when you don't name it or label it you are not a person perceiving that you are a conscious presence the formless perceiving forms it's an enormous liberation not to carry the burden of a person around with you as you do things and walk through life or even walk through a room you can as I pointed out you can walk through a room with the burden of a personal self or you can walk through a room as a simple presence so every moment of your life can be a practice of bringing together form and formlessness and that really is the purpose of your life the primary purpose of your life is to evolve into that so that you you can live in that the dance between form and formlessness and as you grow older the incredible opportunity for old age is to increasingly it's amazing nobody knows that the most vital things nobody seems to know that as you grow older it's really a natural way of relinquishing more and more your form identity because it's going to go anyway sometime soon relinquishing that more and more and more and more being the essence identity which is consciousness itself and then you grow old and you become more luminous as the body weakens you become more luminous and peaceful and alive more alive some old people whom I have met who live in that way are more alive at the age of 85 than they were at the age of 25 feel more alive so old age is a natural way of bringing that dimension into your life and it's a flowering of your entire life no matter what happened in your personal history it becomes irrelevant it becomes irrelevant it's taking you to this point where the person gives way to the flowering of consciousness which is pure awareness but you don't have to wait to old age at any moment the practice if you're lucky enough to be old it's even better and you will then see the beautiful thing that happens as you bring essence into your life essence of consciousness pure consciousness how the beautiful thing how it transforms every interaction with another human being because when two persons meet without in the absence of essence identity very quickly you get conflict you can't have two persons two form identities both of them having no access to their essential reality and have a harmonious relationship so whenever two persons meet for a while the illusion can be there oh it's all working and then before you know it the conflict is there but the wonderful opportunity of bringing that into and you actually enjoy other humans which the person can't really do the person which really is the egoic self will either look for other humans to see what they can do for you or feel threatened by them no more either how can I use this human unconsciously they don't formulate it in their minds they think they're in love but they're using the other for some gratification either physical or psychological gratification and so as you bring in your essential identity you actually enjoy other humans even the briefest encounters it's there's a loving connection that can only be there when you have gone beyond this exclusive form of identity and that's the the qualitative difference is just incredible in your life from as essence comes in more and more the compulsion to judge others which is what the ordinary person needs to do to uphold its illusory sense of identity goes and you can be a spacious presence with others even others you meet in the elevator and you don't they don't need to you don't need to make them see that you are in spacious presence you just you look like a person that's the wonderful thing you still look like a normal person and everybody thinks you are a normal person and yet they feel good when they see you because they feel acknowledged in their own essence but they don't know that they just think you are a lovely person but don't tell them I'm not a person that doesn't work and it's not necessary so remember this I have to mention it again because it's so easy to forget this no thought just it's a suggestion it's not a command it's just a suggestion no thought that comes into your head during for the duration of this retreat is terribly important because it's just another thought I can hear one mind saying but what you are talking isn't that thoughts yes it is but they are a particular kind of thoughts that point away from themselves to thoughtlessness so they are transitional thoughts they are little things pointing go that way and once you go that's the end so thoughts that arise in your mind that usually are saying I'm so important think a bit more about this just another thought because this is not about thoughts or viewpoints or opinions it's about transcending the realm of thought it's transcendence transcendence of the person transcendence of egoic thinking and you may notice with what how powerfully thoughts come up into their and want to get expressed and if they have to come out let them come out but be there as just watch yourself expressing your terribly important viewpoint well that means there's a presence there that's watching so this is our practice of transcending what is normally called the normal human condition transcending that into what we could call awakened consciousness and once that operates in your life the person is still there in the background but no longer runs your life no longer controls your thinking there's still yes there's a body there's a history my history what other people people think of me all kinds of that's okay and that is the transformation of consciousness it's an enormous evolutionary leap and I've said I was reminded by an old friend the other day that I used to say years ago when I was teaching this already this is so important but it's not going to be on television tonight they're not talking about it on television I said that for years until Oprah came I also recommend inviting stillness into your life especially during this retreat so if you come here with a friend if you are with a friend or relative take some time so that there's some space between you you're not always interacting in the old the usual way or be still together become comfortable with being still together when you're talking to other people become comfortable with not expressing your opinion because it doesn't really make any difference others may be expressing theirs they may have forgotten about what I said become comfortable with not saying what you think because it doesn't make any difference really

[Speaker 4] (1:07:30 - 1:07:31)

who

[Speaker 1] (1:07:31 - 1:11:53)

you think should be the next president or whether Obama has failed or he's still doing well viewpoints and so stillness is another word for the absence of thought another word for spaciousness another word for the essence of who you are and that's why I said in stillness speaks you are never more completely yourself than when you are still because it's your essence identity that's left when all thoughts are relinquished the essence remains the essence is consciousness you are that it's timeless I invite you just for a little while now to be in that space of stillness alert presence you don't need to remember who you are to be yourself you don't need to remember who you are to be yourself you can be yourself without any story in your mind whatsoever so yourself isn't the story it's the presence the conscious presence is your essential self and it's an amazing realization that you're actually more fully yourself when you're not remembering the story and that self has no time in it no past or future it's pure presence Jesus called it the light of the world pure presence you are that you are the light of the world that's from the New Testament what an incredible liberation to be liberated from the person

[Speaker 4] (1:11:54 - 1:11:55)

oh

[Speaker 1] (1:11:55 - 1:19:23)

God I'm not my history thank God for that all my viewpoints all the emotions that come and go for tonight I also recommend to go when you're in bed not to read certainly not to watch television certainly not to surf the web or check your emails but as you lie in bed be aware of yourself as consciousness as presence and you may find your entire body becomes part of that field of presence and enjoy that you're then enjoying yourself usually that term means you're doing something that's fun but the deeper meaning is you're enjoying your essential beingness which isn't yours because whenever we say my or your it's never the absolute truth because there is nothing that's my or yours so again as you wake up in the morning or if you should wake up in the night you have a choice you can go into thinking about yourself or somebody else and you some situation your past or your future whatever the person thinks about to keep itself going or you can choose to enjoy the presence of consciousness of being conscious as you lie there and then sleepless moments are actually quite nice and as you wake up in the morning before you get out again feel your essential beingness the presence rather than immediately go into some kind of thought at some point of course you will start to think but you start with the space and then gradually even your thinking becomes interspaced with presence and that's thinking then isn't a problem anymore so essence your essence or as I called it in the power of now essence identity is not something that you can ever know as an object in your consciousness because the essence identity is the eternal subject I so who you are you cannot become an object to yourself because that's the ego again the myth of Narcissus who looked at a reflection of himself in a pool of water and fell in love with himself which really should be translated as became obsessed with himself that's how it all started according to Greek mythology so who you are you cannot know it in your essence you can only be it the I Jesus said the kingdom of heaven cannot be seen you can't say ah it's over here or oh it's over there but truly I tell you the kingdom of heaven is within you so it cannot become an object in your consciousness because it is consciousness it is the formless dimension spiritual dimension so when you walk out of here do you walk out as a person or as a conscious presence and if somebody asks you outside what did you think of the talk the correct answer is

[Speaker 4] (1:19:24 - 1:19:24)

nothing

[Speaker 1] (1:19:36 - 1:25:36)

because the talk was really secondary the words were secondary what they point to is primary traditionally bells are called to attention and attention of course is presence and presence is awareness no thought good morning this is the last place on the planet where at this time we say good morning this morning I had an encounter with a gecko little prehistoric mini dinosaurs that are everywhere here it was looking at me it had stopped I approached got closer and closer and closer I was this close I knelt and we looked at each other for two or three minutes this close I looked into its eyes blinking his her its eyes were blinking looking at me it yawned once which doesn't mean it was tired it's probably like dogs when there's some uncertainty sometimes they yawn and we met in that place of not thinking because it wasn't thinking and I wasn't thinking the only difference was well it's quite a difference

[Speaker 4] (1:25:37 - 1:25:38)

the

[Speaker 1] (1:25:38 - 1:26:05)

gecko is two million years prior to thought as an expression of consciousness and I am just thirty years post thought in the evolution of consciousness

[Speaker 4] (1:26:09 - 1:26:11)

there are

[Speaker 1] (1:26:11 - 1:59:17)

certain similarities between the state of pre-thought that nature dwells in animals trees which are all expressions of the one consciousness and the state of no thought when you have been through thought as a species I've been through thousands of years of thought and come out the other end transcend it doesn't mean leave behind totally transcend still includes what you transcend so you transcend another dimension opens up and the old can still operate within the new dimension and so the similarities are a state of non not feeling the separateness between you and the world around you feeling a sense of continuity and oneness which also the natural expressions of consciousness that exist prior to thought they also exist in that state of natural connectedness in which there are no problems yes challenges but not problems because only the mind manufactures problems when it takes up a reactive position towards the challenges of life which then strengthen the false self so no problem no sense of separation and again when you transcend thought you don't make up a world of problems anymore challenges continue to come that's fine life won't leave you alone that's how it's meant to be but you don't make up problems and besides the challenges that people face in the mind identified state large percentage of them are self manufactured by that ultimately dysfunctional state of consciousness in other words you make up a lot of your own drama when you are in that state of mind identification the egoic consciousness unnecessary drama unnecessary conflict through reactivity all that falls away when you transcend thinking that's why we are here and then also you have a much deeper empathy of course with nature and animals and other humans I talked last night about moving in the two dimensions the dimension of form and existing as the physical and psychological form here a person with a personal identity yes for a little while that's the case the physical body yes personal history yes certain patterns inside you that are still operating and may remain and that is else that's actually much more vital that most humans overlook because they are hypnotized by form so they are totally identified and pursuing forms outer forms thought forms rights so you see how the pursuit of forms I hope that's not what is meant in the declaration or whatever it is the pursuit of happiness that is guaranteed in the united states as one of your rights the pursuit of happiness I hope but what is not meant by that is the pursuit of forms. Where is the happiness that I am looking for in this or that or some kind of thoughts or situations or people?

Of course, the happiness is in the formless. True happiness is only there when you access the formless. So at some point, I would, perhaps not in my lifetime, but I would suggest it already for somebody else to take up when this body is gone, an amendment that explains the actual true meaning of the pursuit of happiness so that people don't get misled.

So I hope somebody who is watching this, when this body has dissolved, will take it up. But sometimes things can happen fairly quickly. It would be a miracle if somebody took it up already, but who knows?

Miracles happen. So in the meantime, it's good enough if we here begin to live this truth and then transmit it by living it, transmit it to others, not always necessarily by explaining something, but more vitally by embodying the truth so you don't pursue happiness anymore. By pursuing, which really means running after, forms.

I'm looking for the ultimate, the situation that finally is going to make me happy, says the egoic consciousness. And what it conceives of that, I don't know what it is, perhaps total comfort, total security, absolute certainty, a kind of death, if you really could find it, total comfort, everything is in its place, nothing disturbs me anymore out here, I'm protected, absolutely safe. Or maybe it thinks of continuous pleasure, taking in pleasure through food, sexuality, I need, I must have, I want.

Where's the next satisfaction that won't give me satisfaction? Can you give it to me? Maybe on the physical level, let's try something new.

Or maybe on a psychological level, you can enhance who I think I am. Maybe you can enhance my illusion. Oh no, I mustn't say that because it's so real, isn't it?

It's who I am. Maybe that's the ultimate state. So for some egos, it may be total comfort, for other egos, it may be a continuous pleasure, paradise, or you can project paradise.

If you live in a cold climate, you think of yourself as finally achieving paradise by living in a warm, lovely, warm place like here. But of course, if you lived here, you would soon see there are challenges even here. Or if you live in a hot climate, as in the paradise is a cool place, but it's all projections, all seeking something out there to fulfill me, the pursuit of happiness where happiness cannot be found because you're looking for it in the realm of forms.

Overlooking, because forms are so seductive, and I remember when I talk about forms, it's not just the outer forms that attract your attention and you want something from them, but even more fundamentally, the thought forms that arise, because really, all outer forms become, before you can experience them, become translated into mental forms. Even if your car gives you a sense of identity, just one simple example, it can be many, many other things, but it can add something to your identity. It's not, ultimately, it's not the outer car because you don't know whether there actually is a car out there.

It's just what the sensory data gets transmitted and your mind creates a picture and it calls it my car. So it's ultimately the identification with forms is ultimately to do with forms that arise in consciousness, in your consciousness, as this or that. Thoughts and images in consciousness arising.

Yes, they are hypnotic and seductive until a point, a human being reaches a point when he or she begins to realize, hmm, I can't get no satisfaction. Ha, ha, ha, ha, because there's something not right with this pursuit of happiness through forms. And then there's some suffering, of course, comes with that because you can't get satisfaction and it's so frustrating to live with these forms because no situation you ever go into is really satisfying, relationship included.

And as the more you're identified with your form identity and the less you're in touch with your essence identity, the formless, the less satisfying relationships are also. The less satisfying your entire life experience is, although you get brief moments of satisfaction, but and then again, you come down after the party, the big party, and the next morning you're, and the party can also be used as a metaphor. It can be an actual party, or it can be a party of this great romantic relationship that's just happened.

And the coming down just takes a little bit longer. You have to wait until after the honeymoon. Who is this person?

And that's in every relationship, there comes a moment when you start living together, when you ask yourself, who is this? And the other person may ask him or herself the same question. So the pursuit of happiness is realizing the unsatisfactory nature of seeking satisfaction through forms.

And then there's the beginning of an awakening. Perhaps you hear something, a spiritual message, a teacher teaching, or it just happens by itself where something arises within you that is an aliveness, an alive stillness, an alertness, and you look around and there's an enormous delight suddenly, it begins with the simple things that you suddenly notice around you. You're no longer looking for the big fix to fix your life, and suddenly you notice the miraculous nature of the forms, and there's a little paradox here.

The beginning of the arising of the formless manifests often as an incredibly enhanced appreciation of all the life forms around you. It's but very different from before where you were just selectively seeking out forms to satisfy you, you wanted something from them, but now you allow them to be and appreciate their beauty and aliveness. And you walk around as if you had just been, just come into this world, and you look, everything is alive, and it's miraculous, and you can sense this delight in all the little things.

And you look around, and what's happening is, of course, the personal self has subsided, and you're no longer perceiving the world around you through the mental accumulations, which make up the ego. You are becoming, your essence identity has emerged, and you're looking as consciousness, not as a form identity of consciousness having become a form, but the pure consciousness. And every little thing gives you delight, or rather, the delight is there inside you as you perceive the world, and what's happening on the, it's really a non-personal event when you're beginning to perceive all the miraculous life forms around you.

What does that really mean? It means the universe delights in its own creations, because you are not separate from the universe. You are not in the universe.

That would be an egoic perception. You are the universe expressing itself as this temporary form. The ego thinks, I am in the universe.

This is me, and there's the rest of the world, the universe. But, of course, you are it. You are an expression of it.

So when you delight in a flower, a breeze that touches your skin, the lapping of little waves, the sound of the rain, the gecko, the sky, the incredible cloud formations that you can see here that change every few minutes. Every few minutes, the great artist in the sky paints a new abstract picture in the sky of magnificence with light shining through it, and you can just sit there and delighting in the changing pictures when you look at the sky. And your mind is still then.

You are consciousness delighting in what it has created, the forms that it has taken. But you can only really delight in the forms that consciousness has been born into. They're all temporary, the clouds.

No single cloud is long-lived. It dissolves quickly and becomes something else. The body just lasts a little bit longer.

So the universe delights in itself through this form. The personal has receded. It doesn't mean you cannot deal with your bills anymore.

It's nothing to do with that. You can, when the time comes, you take, you open the envelope, or however you do it, and you pay your bill. Or if you can't pay your bill, then you take some step.

Maybe you have to live without the electricity. Whatever it is, it's not a problem. It just, it is, and you face it.

Let's go back in the little things that you begin to notice that are delightful when the personal self no longer occupies your entire field of consciousness. In other words, when the forms don't fill up your mind, one thought form after another. You don't really appreciate anything when you walk through nature that's here, but really, wherever you are, there will be delightful things even when it's, even if you live in London, Seattle, or Vancouver, and it's raining in gray at the moment there are still delightful things, delightful forms.

And the shift then is the personal can still operate, but it is no longer occupying the main part of your consciousness. So that's the shift I, yesterday, last night, I talked in terms of becoming a hybrid so that you are still the personal, which includes thinking, still operates in you, especially when it's needed, but it does not interfere with your enjoyment of life when it is not needed. And a lot of time it is not needed.

Not only is it not needed, it is, it interferes with the happiness that could be there because it's seeking happiness elsewhere, ignoring the true happiness that is already here. And this is how the person blocks the happiness that is there, it's already here, it can't see it. So when you see a human who is totally identified with the personal self, which are thoughts primarily, they don't see the sky, they don't see the flower.

And if they do, there's a glimpse at best. Oh, that looks nice. And you go back to your thoughts.

Oh, what a lovely flower, I wonder what it's called. My aunt so-and-so has a flower in her garden, I remember that, and then what happened to her? Well, then she got married three times and then she had five children.

Or at best, it says, oh, that sky looks like a, that looks like a Turner painting. Okay, there you go, okay, that's good. But then again, you immediately, you go into art, thinking about art and you don't realize that, yes, the Turner, Turner is a British artist who painted lovely, luminous views of sky and so on.

But so best, again, for a moment, you see it and immediately a naming happens and immediately the naming draws you into further thought forms. So you're very little, you exist in this world, you see little slits through which you see the aliveness of the world around you through little slits in your box, the box is the mind, and then you have little slits or holes in it and occasionally you had to glimpse through the little hole in your box and say, oh, that's lovely, and then you go back in the box. And that's called normal existence.

And the box is full of patterns that keep you trapped of fault finding and complaining and dissatisfaction and worries and anxieties and thinking and thinking and this and that and what about me? What's going to happen to me then? I mean, the burden of my life, my life, what's going to happen to my life?

What has happened to my life? Where's it all gone? What have, it wasn't meant to be like that.

It all went wrong somewhere. Where did I go wrong? Where was that?

I think it all started when I was eight with my parents. Or my first wife, or my first husband, they really messed me up. And then you try to work out some explanation or some conceptual, trying to arrive at some conceptual conclusion about your life, your life.

Well, your life, what is your life when you think about your life? It's a stream of thoughts, but you're so captured by the stream of thoughts that you believe this is absolutely real, this is my life. And then maybe you arrive at some conclusion one day.

Maybe it says, I failed completely. I was treated unfairly by life. Never was given a chance.

Other people get all the lucky breaks. I didn't get any. Nobody gave me a lucky break.

And there are these disgusting 1% people who get all their, all their lucky breaks. I hate them. And then all that spiritual nonsense.

God said all that about it doesn't solve my problems, does it? I have to think about this more carefully now. So you confuse your life with thoughts in your head.

So you have a stream of thoughts in your head and you call that my life. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. That's called delusion.

And that's why in the path now I differentiate between what people call my life and my life situation. When you are identified with forms with your mind, you don't even know what your life is. You don't have a life.

You just think you do. It's obscured totally. You have it.

You can't have a life. Actually, you are life, but you don't know that. Ha, ha.

And so that is the state of form identity. When the transcendent dimension, the essence of who you are, the formless, which you could call the spiritual dimension, but I don't want to use words that have lots of misunderstandings around it. When that is not realized in your life, so you're in the box and perceive things from and through the box.

And as the essence arises and it arises, for some people, through the simple act of becoming aware of the present moment. When your attention moves to the present moment, you cannot carry your conceptual life, the baggage of your conceptual life in your head with you because then the present moment doesn't even exist for you. So when you, the present moment for many people opens up through sense perception.

That's the first step. That's the first level of the present moment is this becoming aware of, oh, you consciously, you perceive through a little space. A little bit more is opened up than the slit or the little hole in the box.

The slit is widened. And there's the present moment. And there, at that moment, you feel the breeze, the air on your skin.

And there, at that moment, you are not thinking. There's a moment of pure perception. And there, at that moment, you look at the sky and you see the beauty, but you also sense something.

At that moment, you sense an aliveness in you that wasn't there before. That's life. The aliveness wasn't there before when you were in your stream of thinking.

This is called life. When you delight in something that you see or hear or touch or smell around you, little things. They're all delightful, ordinary things.

So you begin to appreciate all that. And the universe is waking up. The universe is waking up and delights in itself.

And so you can truly say that you created whatever you perceive around you because you are the universe. You are the one consciousness out of which it has all come. So you created it, not the person, of course, and you delight in your own creation.

It's really only then that the beginning of the Bible becomes true. When God says he, God then looks at the creation and sees, oh, it was good.

[Speaker 4] (1:59:18 - 1:59:19)

Oh, that's good.

[Speaker 1] (1:59:20 - 2:45:34)

You sense the goodness of life. Now, so for many humans, it starts with the present moment as a portal. And the present moment starts with, and an essential part of it remains, the sensory world around you.

But that's only the one level of the present moment. It is so delightful, where is that delight? That is at a deeper level than the sense perception, beautiful as it is.

But the delight, the joy that is there when you are present and perceive through presence is the formless. You can't name it. It's there in you.

It's that where the joy or delight arises. It's consciousness itself. It has no form.

So you could then, let's say you are delighting in the play of forms, a breeze, a flower, the clouds, the buzzing of an insect, raindrops falling. And even as you become more familiar with this way of perceiving, even in, you can delight in any form. You can even delight in looking at traffic moving because they are all forms that have arisen.

So there's a flow of traffic. You can delight in a green or red traffic light without acid. It's a life, everything.

You can delight in picking up a toothpaste and for a moment feel its beingness. Anything, not just something that ordinarily we would call beautiful. Yes, that of course it's wonderful, but also things that ordinarily one would not call beautiful or even be aware of.

But it all has its place and its aliveness. And so you have delighting in that, but what is it that underlies that in you? And that is something you cannot name.

You can only sense as an underlying aliveness through which the perception happens. And that underlying aliveness has nothing to do with you, the person, with its history and its name and so on. It is the delight of consciousness itself, or you could call it being.

You can feel the being, the one being, or you could just call it the one that underlies the many. And you realize, I am that. Total transcendence of the temporary form of me.

And that is, when that operates in your life, then the transition has happened and the formless is then shining into your life through the forms. That is awakening to who you are in your essence. That is the answer to the question, who am I?

Which has no conceptual answer, but a realized answer. You are the essential aliveness. You are being.

If we want to use words to point to this, we could say being is the formless, timeless, one life. The uncreated, it's a Buddhist term. Another Buddhist term for this is the unborn or the unmanifested.

These are all pointers pointing to the same. It's life itself before it becomes a life form. When you realize you are that in the depths of your being, then you realize that this is the realization of being and what you perceive around you, you could call existence because it's an apt term because existence etymologically, in other words, the origin of the word from Latin, ex means out, stens comes from to stand out.

So whatever exists is a form that stands out, ex. Ah, a thought too, it comes out of the one, a little bit like the ripples, the ocean produces ripples. And so every ripple says, I, I, me, me.

Of course, it has very short lived. Every ripple in existence is short lived. Even on the planet, on a cosmic scale is short lived, every ripple in existence, but all that is what is existence.

So you have the being, the one, the unborn and the forms. So that is the realization of the one. And then you realize what you are perceiving is all an expression, a temporary manifestation of the one life, which you could call God, a term I avoid because many misperceptions have accumulated around it.

So that is the, the destiny of the universe is of course, inseparable from your destiny. And the destiny is the awakening, the awakening so that the universe can, on the one hand, delight in the forms it has created and continuously pours out, creates the play of forms. It delights in that it's no longer identified totally with each form, this form, but also the universe awakens to its own essence or beingness.

It had to be, it had to lose itself in the forms before it could awaken to that. And this is a kind of explanation of the purpose of the universe, which should be taken as they say in Latin, well, that's the origin of the expression, with a grain of salt, because whatever we can say about the nature of the universe, which is vast, can only be a very distant approximation of what is actually there. So when I explain what the purpose of the universe is, it's even deeper, much deeper than words could say, much deeper.

All we need to know here is not to have some new explanation of the nature. I'm only giving you that as a little added on remark, but the essential thing here is the awakening to your formless identity. And again, then, the portal, the most accessible portal to that state of consciousness, and it's terribly accessible, it's the present moment.

So you don't have to figure out, how can I find my formless identity? And then the mind says, well, first of all, I'm not quite clear what you mean by that. Can you explain a bit more?

No, you don't need that. Your formless identity opens up with a simple acknowledgement of the present moment. That's the moment you acknowledge the present moment, it begins to open.

The moment you acknowledge the present moment, the personal me recedes, the ego, the mind stream, identification with which is the ego recedes, something opens up at the present moment, as I said, begins with an acknowledgement of some form. That's how you get hold of the present moment. Sensory perception can, that can, there you hold, you look at something, you touch something, you see something, you hear something, and your attention is there, and you're not naming it, pure perception.

That in itself, beautiful spiritual practice, that's all you really need. If you could do pure perception as you walk around a lot of your life, and then you notice, I'm going to go through it again because it's so vital. There, there's the form, there's the form, but what you delight in, in the beautiful form, and again, as I mentioned before, the beauty, you see beauty even in insignificant things like the toothpaste or your shoes or whatever, the carpet, not just, it's not the outer form that is, there's an essence behind everything you see, there is an essence in everything you see that is one with your own essence, and that's what you sense, and that opens up through form, giving attention to sense perception. And then I recommend, once this begins in your life, from time to time, when you see something that is delightful, close your eyes and let go of it and sense the delight without the form. You look at the sky and you say, ah, then just as a little practice from time to time, close your eyes if you're not driving, close your eyes and then sense the delight without the form, the aliveness, and there's no thought in it, it's not an emotion, it's deeper than that, no thought, no emotion, just life itself, delighting in itself, and now there's a delight without any form, but the form got you there, and that's the beauty when you look at another human being, also, if you don't react to their silly person, because almost every person is a bit silly without the transcendent dimension, well, very limited, conditioned by their past, full of stuff, if you don't react to this, which only strengthens your own form identity, your own silliness, so you have two silly people fighting each other, you don't react to that, and then you can delight in another human's presence through not naming the other human in any way, but first you contemplate their form, but that's only the surface phenomenon, and immediately you penetrate beyond the form, so to speak, and from within you, you feel the delightfulness of life, and then you recognize that dimension in the other, and that connects you very deeply, in other words, it's the realization of oneness, but not conceptually, you don't say, now I realize oneness, you don't need the words, and that's where there's true, it's only then that true, as in the words of the Dalai Lama, he uses the term kindness, but of course it's deeper than that, kindness arises, language is limited, that's why he has very little choice in words, love, is that a better term?

Well, again, it's like God, which has many misperceptions around it, but yes, it is love, it is a deep empathy, it is a sensing, a delighting in another human, and you don't want anything from them, you don't want anything from the other human, you're delighting in their presence, because there is a shared presence or aliveness, and then if it's a human that you are familiar with, a relationship, family, whatever, there also you can sometimes look at the other, so-called other, and then for a moment, close your eyes and let go of the form, and feel the other in here, as yourself, feel the other's presence in here as yourself, because it's essence identity, it's consciousness itself, it's life itself, which is, that's the thing you love in the other, whether it's an animal or a human or a flower, that is what you love in the other is not the form, but the life within the form, which is consciousness itself, which is your own essence, if you love the form only, it gets frustrating very quickly, because it will not satisfy you, neither the physical form will satisfy you after a little while, nor the psychological form of the other, the person with its conditioning is not going to satisfy you, so there's always this dissatisfaction, but if you can look beyond the form, sense beyond the form, first in yourself, you can't start with the other, you can't say, I want to sense you beyond form, no, you can only do it through your own essence, so there you go first, you start with a flower or whatever it is, and then you close your eyes, and then go within and feel, you can't name what it is that you feel, and you don't, it's even to say you feel it is not quite correct, we are using language and every sentence has a subject and an object, so you say, I feel the life that I am, expressed in language, it sounds as if there was I and life, but that's because we are using language which separates everything into subject and object, this is ultimately not true, you sense life as yourself, you sense yourself, there is no subject and object in that self-recognition of you as being, of you as consciousness, what you sense is not an object, there is not I and life, I don't sense the life that I am, and then life here becomes conscious of itself, that's a better way of putting it, but you have to kind of be so careful with language, because it's language is to do with the world of duality and multiplicity, that's what it reflects, so in the awakening, there is no longer subject and object, it's not that I sense life, the life that I am, I sense the I am, you can't really say more than I am, the I am knows itself, I'm explaining in words, just it can be helpful just to have the little pointers, what matters is that recognition in yourself, and it's everything else in your so-called life, which doesn't exist, because you don't have a life, you are life, you have a life as long as you have a conceptual life, we talked about that, but everything else in the life that you think you have, is quite unimportant compared to this, compared to this awakening, and everything else in your so-called life, the life that you have, which is a conceptual thing, a lot of these things actually become easier, the life of form that you inhabit, your life situation is so much easier to deal with, when you are rooted in the formless, when you are rooted in beingness, then the way in which you, not only the way in which you perceive, the life of forms around you, changes because it becomes delightful, but also the way in which you interact, with the life around you, people, situations that arise, whatever it is, that also changes fundamentally. And how does it change?

It changes, because first of all, you will notice, nothing that is to do with the world of form, your life situation, and whatever arises there, it loses its absolute seriousness, it's the which it has, if that's all you know, because if the life of form is all you know, it's dreadfully serious, because it's all that matters to you, and every situation that you discuss with other people, this is, what are we going to do about this? Oh my God, and now he wants us to do that, he's trying to do that, what's he, other people, what are they trying to do to us?

Now we are going, what's going to happen if we do that? It could be disaster. Now we have to be very careful here, this is complete identification with, oh, everything matters so much, and then we react, I'm acting out a little bit, but basically, that's how it is, and everything is dreadfully serious, because it's all you have, and you're still hoping at some point, it's all going to work out and satisfy you, until the next lawsuit comes.

So it loses, it's this absolute seriousness, and then you deal with, you can deal with it, but you deal with it in a more spacious way, there's always, and this is the wonderful thing that happens when you are connected, there's always a bit of space when you deal with, for example, you have a discussion, what are we going to do about this? And as you listen to the other person, as you speak, there's always some space there in the background, and that's the formless. So there's a, sometimes it's called detachment, which could also be misinterpreted, but there is definitely, although you deal with it, you give it your fullest attention, but there is a sense of space around situations and people that ultimately is inner space, so you have both forms that arise in your life and space that is there at the same time as you deal with the forms.

And that is, for example, when you listen to somebody, let's say you're discussing what to do in business, some business situation or whatever it may be, you're engaged in discussing, is there, there's some space as you listen, there's just listening, spacious listening, that's space. And that means what ultimately, what ultimately matters in any situation that arises in your life isn't the outcome or what you say or do or what other people say or do, what ultimately matters is whether through you, space comes into the situation, whether you embody spacious awareness while you do things, say things or listen to other people. The spacious awareness that is in you now as you listen here, spacious awareness when you're listening to a spiritual discourse is of course easier to enter because every word in spiritual discourse, if it comes from spatial awareness, in other words, if it's truly alive, it awakens that dimension in you unless it's totally blocked.

It awakens the dimension in you. So as you sit here, you can dwell in that spacious awareness of essence, thoughtless awareness fairly easily, perhaps not continuously, perhaps occasionally your mind will come in and say, what the hell is he talking about? And then that thought subsides and the egoic personality goes back into the background.

And again, there is spacious awareness. And so this is a wonderful place to experience this fully or as fully as possible at this point for you. But then you go into everyday life where the discourse you hear from other people is not spiritual discourse that is designed to point you to spatial awareness.

No, what you're listening to in other people is egoic minds totally identified with what they are saying, totally identified with every thought. And then it's more challenging to listen and listen is the first step, to listen through spatial awareness and not get drawn into their identification with form, total identification with form. So you have to be, hold the presence, embody the presence, be the presence, even though the other may be completely trapped in form or the other people around the table.

A meeting of six agitated egos plus you, that's a challenge. And the words that are spoken around the table are not meant to take you into spacious awareness. They are meant to pull you out of spacious awareness and say, this really matters.

All that's, forget about that spiritual stuff. This is real. We have a lawsuit against us.

They're doing this, trying to do this to us. Now, this is what matters. And then the challenge is stay present.

And present with your whole body as you sit there and listen to the egos without judging them or reacting or confusing who these beings are with their state of consciousness. These people are so annoying. You're confusing, of course, the reaction with who they

are.

It's like saying, the weather is miserable. The weather doesn't know about it, that it's miserable. You just told the weather that it's miserable, but of course the weather just is.

And everybody just express whatever their state of consciousness is. And the moment you call it something and believe in it, you have joined them in their state of consciousness. The moment you believe in a thought that arises that judges the other, welcome, you're one of them.

So the other people, it's of course, as I mentioned somewhere, Jean-Paul Sartre said, hell is other people. That's of course true from the egoic point of consciousness. The literal, I believe my French is very limited, but the original in French actually is, hell is les autres, the others.

Hell is the others. That's the egoic perception, ultimately. There's a movie that we saw recently.

It's called, There Will Be Blood. And it's, I think it got even some Oscars. The word ego is never mentioned, but really what it shows is how one man's ego grows and grows and grows and grows until it reaches complete insanity.

So other people, the otherness, I use that term sometimes, the egoic consciousness, the form-identified consciousness likes to emphasize the otherness of others. It wants to make the other really other by judging and dismissing and criticizing and fault-finding. And perhaps a lot of the time it's actually true, what it says, but it's not true.

Sometimes it's true, and sometimes it's a complete projection. You never know. So whatever, if your last five, four ex-wives say the same thing about you, there's probably some truth in it.

If it's only one ex-wife, it could be a complete projection. But if it's three, four, five, they have to look more carefully. If they all say you are a jerk, you're a controlling jerk, then you may have to admit, maybe something there.

But at other times, what other people say about you may be a complete projection of their conditioning. You never know. But whatever it is, when you, you emphasize the otherness of others, that's the ego loves it because it feels superior when it can criticize, judge, find fault, whatever it does to others, dismiss, evaluate negatively, find wanting in this or that area, not good enough, whatever it is, the ego feels good about that because the moment you judge the other, you feel superior, not knowing that you've become more trapped in your own form identity, which is thought forms. And this is why Jesus, he didn't explain it the way I explain it now, because at that time, the people wouldn't have understood what he said. Judge not so that you are not judged.

You judge, in other words, when you judge another, you're really doing it to yourself. You yourself get trapped in the judgment, which is a thought form, which you totally believe in. And in that sense, when you judge another, you judge, you are judged.

You believe in that. And so a wonderful spiritual practice is to relinquish judgment of others and allow them to be in this moment, brings us back to the present moment. Allow them to be as they are and be the space for them.

Lovely. And then you can be in the meeting with five agitated egos, and you can be the one conscious presence there and hold that state. And that's more challenging than here.

You will feel the pulse of the collective mind pulling you. This is so serious. Can't you see that?

Not that you have to, don't say this isn't serious. That doesn't work. You have to embody it.

It may be relatively serious on the level of form, but it hasn't that dreadful, it's not absolutely. I also use the word important. Whatever happens on the level of form may be relatively important, but it's not absolutely important.

The absoluteness is knowing who you are beyond forms and then living this knowing in your daily life. And then you become a blessing wherever you go. If you live that, you bless every situation.

You heal situations you go into without feeling, I am healing. You're not actively doing the healing. It happens by embodying that consciousness and you will be challenged from within and from without just because that is arising in you, is awakening in you the essence of who you are does not mean that your egoic mind is not going to come back.

Let's for a moment consider it because there's some truth in it. Almost an entity that lives in you that has lived in you for a long time, thousands of years in human beings, an entity that consists of mind forms and emotional forms that consciousness has identified with completely, which is the dream state of unconsciousness, the nightmare, the dream, that exists in you as a little, a nice, I love the little creature in Lord of the Rings, the little, the little, and it's really, it's a visual representation of ego. When you look at it, it's beautifully done in the both written and in the movie too, how it goes about and that little creature, this cunning thing, it doesn't just go away.

It's, it will want to come back up. You can, don't fight it. You can't fight it.

You can, if you fight it, you energize it, but recognizing it is enough because recognizing, what does that mean? Recognizing is recognizing there's a light of consciousness shining on it. Consciousness is the unconditioned, timeless, and the form is consciousness that has become a little bit like frozen water.

So there's up, there's no duality. This is just an analogy. The forms that are stuck in your mind as egoic forms, consciousness has become that frozen heart.

So it's ultimately the ego is not separate from consciousness. It's just an appearance of consciousness as solid. And it goes, as it comes into the field of awareness, it gradually dissolves, but that could take a little while.

In the meantime, it comes up and will try to trick you and sometimes succeed in giving it energy again by identifying with the thoughts it thinks. And what does it think about? Me and my life.

Oh my God. And there you are, trapped, it drags you along and you completely get back into it. And the little thing comes up and says, oh, I know exactly how I can get your attention.

Just this little thought.

[Speaker 4] (2:45:34 - 2:45:35)

And it's, ooh.

[Speaker 1] (2:45:41 - 4:30:54)

And you follow it and then hours later, you wake up, oh, and there's a little bit of spacious awareness again. And for the first time again, you see the sky. And you smell the air.

And there's a feeling of aliveness inside you. So that may happen. Have compassion with yourself, the ego and identification with thinking.

Don't consider it as a personal problem of yours. It's not, neither the ego nor the identification with thinking, which creates the ego is personal. It's inherited.

Everybody inherits it as a human. It is the inherited condition, the human condition. That is the Buddha already recognized as that which leads to suffering.

The state that leads to suffering. Dukkha, dukkha, misery, translated as misery, unsatisfactoriness, not good enough. Suffering, unhappiness, discontent.

That's all dukkha, inseparable from identification with thought. He already saw that. That comes as you exist as a hybrid.

There are two forms of hybrid. There's the more advanced hybrid. And there is the more basic hybrid.

The more basic hybrid creature, those are the first production line. The more basic hybrid creature is periodically, completely taken over again by the egoic consciousness. And then after a while, they wake up again.

And then they are back in pain body or something and do it also, which is the emotional part of the ego of old accumulated painful emotion that becomes, that energizes the egoic mental patterns. So the hybrids, the basic hybrids lose themselves in that and then come back for a while and then lose themselves again. And then gradually you advance to the more advanced hybrid.

Which means forms, you can, thoughts come up in you, but there's never complete identification anymore with them. There's always some spaciousness and you can use thoughts beautifully, but always with spaciousness in the background. And that is the beautiful state when you are an advanced hybrid of form and formlessness.

Then you are the advanced hybrid and then problems don't exist anymore in your life. You no longer even think in terms of my life. There's only life and unfolding every moment.

And it's beautiful, even the challenges. Comfort is not the ultimate aim of the universe. Security is not the ultimate aim of the universe.

The lack of challenges is not the ultimate aim. And the universe is not here to make you happy. Things are not here to make you happy.

People are not here to make you happy. They're here to make you conscious so that you find the happiness, the true happiness that's not dependent on things and forms. But forms are good, but the formless is the good.

Thanks. Welcome to our evening meditation or middle of the night meditation. If you're somewhere else or morning meditation if you're in Europe, whatever time it is on the external level where you are, it's the now and that's our meditation for this evening on the now.

We start with the surface of now, which is whatever we perceive at this moment, whatever you perceive, whatever I perceive, really it's the I. Okay. So you perceive this person sitting on a chair, talking, you hear the voice.

There's the totality of the room. There's the ever present noise of the air conditioning. There are the lights, the ceiling and the walls, all part of the totality of your visual perception.

The people in the room, you perceive them and peripherally perhaps, because your focus is perhaps on this man sitting in a chair. And you feel the body on the chair. Yes.

Resting. So there's a totality of sensory perception. Let's see, I actually call it the surface of the now or you can call it the outside of now.

And then you're also aware of yourself breathing and you may be aware of the energy inside the body. So we are gradually moving from the outside to the inside. And if you allow the outside to be as it is, although there's nothing special here in this room, it is quite nice, it has its own beauty.

I mean, even artificial light is quite nice. Sounds are quite nice if you allow them. And if you don't complain about the air condition, even that is quite pleasant.

And imagine it's the om sound. And now comes the really important part. You're aware of yourself as the perceiver of all these things.

You're not aware of yourself right now or of the personal self, because at this moment, let's use this word, I hope that you are not thinking about your personal history right now or the problems you've had in the future, in the past or might have in the future. So when I say you're aware of yourself, it's not you're aware of yourself in the usual way, because when you usually say you're aware of yourself, you're aware of the story of yourself, you and your life, you and your position in the world, you and other people and so on. No, more simple now in our meditation, you're aware of yourself, not as a person with a history, but a deeper level of self.

And I begin by calling it the perceiver of whatever it is that arises in your perception, auditory, visual, feeling, sensing. Perhaps you can even feel the air a little bit. There's this little bit of air flow, very subtle.

That's the feeling level or feeling your chair, your body resting on the chair or your feet on the floor. So, but who is it that is perceiving this? Not the person, because the person is a story.

The story is not perceiving this. So for a moment, let's not call it anything, but be aware of the simple fact that you are perceiving this, but you don't know what that is, what is that I that is perceiving. But there's no doubt that that is there.

And even if what you're perceiving is a dream, perhaps it is. It certainly has a lot in common with a dream because a dream evaporates very quickly. It doesn't last.

Many philosophers have discussed whether the human existence is a dream. We don't need to go there. Can say it might be, but even if it is, if it's all not real, as some people say, there is something in which the dream appears.

The dream is being experienced. One could say there's a light in which the forms appear and you are that. And there's no doubt that if it's a dream, it's happening.

If it's all unreal, at least that unreality is happening. In that light of awareness, because without that awareness, there would be no sense perception. There would be no room.

There would be no man on this chair or voice or somebody listening to the voice. So that's the one thing that cannot be doubted. Everything else you can doubt whether it's actually real.

And that awareness is formless. It doesn't have a history because your entire history appears in it when you remember it in that awareness. And when things happened that once happened, they happened in the present moment, in the light of awareness.

And you can only remember it as the awareness now. So I'm now asking you, although you continue to be aware of sense perceptions, to simply acknowledge the fact that you are aware. And even that is not perhaps putting it rightly to acknowledge the fact that there is awareness.

In other words, you are aware that you are aware. You are conscious of being conscious. It sounds a little strange, but it's an amazing thing.

It also sounds, if there were a duality here, I am conscious of being conscious. The subject, I, but that only appears in language. In fact, when you are conscious of being conscious, and that's a, it's a, it's a strange thing.

Just, and you can't, you can't say much about it. You can't, it just has no form and no shape. It's, it has, it's totally elusive and yet all pervasive.

Can you feel the fact that you are conscious, or rather that you are consciousness? And that's an, to, to sense yourself as that and still be able to perceive all this. And you have long since left compulsive labeling behind when you are aware of yourself as consciousness and then perceive as consciousness.

Labeling things mentally doesn't come in anymore. There's just consciousness and forms arising and subsiding in consciousness. Arising, some forms stay for a while.

This room stays as long as you sit here. This room arises in consciousness and then you leave and it subsides. But the voice, the words arise in consciousness and subside.

Arise, subside. We could call consciousness the, the eternal gap behind everything. The gap in between everything.

The space behind everything. Whatever you want to call it, these are just pointers. And there is a, an intense frequency that arises in you when you become aware of consciousness.

Very, a, it burns up, it, it makes the personal self fade out. It burns up the, even burns up the karmic accumulations in you. Old, old stuff from the past.

Pain body, old mind patterns. And your entire being is vibrating at a higher frequency. That's the only way I can put it.

The words may not be absolutely right, but that's how I sense it in you. And that is inherently joyful and energizing. To sense this essence in yourself.

And we are learning here not to have it as a very short-lived glimpse, but to be able to stay there. And every moment you stay in that, the old gets burned up in you. And you connect with intelligence, not the IQ intelligence that you measure in IQ tests.

That's a very limited form of intelligence. Creative intelligence, I talk about creative. This does not mean that you or I this moment will come up with the solution to the problem that Einstein couldn't solve.

The unified field theory or whatever it was. Nor does it mean that suddenly I can paint a masterpiece or compose an exquisite piece of music. Because these are not vehicles that have been prepared in this body, by this body.

But this intelligence can flow into something if there is a vehicle in your life, it can flow into that, transform it, and make it absolutely creative. And even that is no more than a bonus. For some people, it may be enough to walk around the planet for the rest of their life in this form, as peaceful, intensely alive beings that are astonished at the beauty of all things and bring that vibration of peace that comes with the awareness of pure consciousness.

Whoever they meet gets a little whiff of that. And for some humans, that's enough, and they fulfill their purpose here. Others may create some more elaborate forms, but empowered by not the ego, but by the greater intelligence it creates, it can flow into the human mind and body and create through the human form.

Let's come back to the simple secret. Be conscious that you are conscious. Feel the awareness as your essence.

And you will notice it's very still. The awareness is still. I compare it sometimes to space.

I call it inner space or space consciousness. It has no extension. It is vast, but not like the outer space that you see or that you don't see it, but that is there when you look at the sky at night.

The vastness of space is only a reflection in the external of who you are in the essence of your being. And that's the awe-inspiring thing when you look at the starry sky at night. The absolutely awe-inspiring thing that if you are really looking will really shut up your mind immediately because it's so astonishing.

That was my first meditation when I was in my teens. I'd had no idea it was meditation.

Lying on the deck of our, we lived on the top floor.

There was a little terrace. It was in the south of Spain where there were beautiful skies at night, totally clear, and I would lie and look at this. And there was no thought.

I had no idea that was going on then. I just, it was deeply enjoyable. The awe-inspiring thing is not the countless, countless suns that you see, which are stars, but the vastness of it, the nothingness that makes it all possible, the vastness of space, unimaginable infinity, and there too that can put you in touch with the vastness within you, just looking at that.

And space, again, is very similar. The outer space is very similar to inner space because both of them don't really, you cannot say that they exist because as I mentioned earlier, existence means to stand out, but space is, you can't say, oh, here's space. All you can ever be aware of is things in space.

And again, in yourself, you can't say, here is the essence of who I am. You cannot be aware of it as an object. All objects are things, forms that arise in the space.

Why can't you be aware of space? Because you are it. You cannot separate from it and look at it as an object.

It is the formless I, the I am that I am. The most profound statement in the entire Bible, which is, of course, a mixed bag of all kinds of writings, but there are some deep insights. You'd know how to find them.

When God is asked, what's your name? God says, I am that I am. That's my name.

It's the I am. So that immediately, there's space in you when you become conscious of being conscious. That is space.

In any situation you find yourself in, a quick access to inner space, spaciousness, essence, is to become conscious that you are conscious. That's presence. Then, yes, you are then still a person.

You can function as a person, but you are not trapped in the person. That's the hybrid I talked about. You function as the person.

We are not trapped in the person. And now for a little while, I'll say very little, and we just see if we can stay there in that consciousness of consciousness. Just for a little while.

Occasionally, I may say something just to point you back to it, because there is always a possibility that you may drift off into thinking. Oh, if any question comes into your mind right now, please realize that it is irrelevant. And please realize that it is an attempt of your mind to obstruct your practice of presence.

It's also quite helpful as you are aware of being conscious to be aware at the same time that you are breathing, to feel the breaths going in and out, and at the same time, be the consciousness, the presence. Thoughts are not important right now, even if they pretend to be. Don't be concerned if an occasional ripple of thought floats around the surface of your consciousness.

Not a problem. So when you go into a meditation like this, it can become very deep so that there's just consciousness left, pure consciousness. And then as you open your eyes again, listen, look around, begin to perceive externals again, it's still in the background.

This is a bit like to use a slightly funny analogy. You know the lines from Shakespeare, all the world's a stage and all the men and women are merely players and so on. So in a way, humans here are conditioned entities when presence has not yet arisen.

So they're acting out their scripts in a way, because without consciousness, you are a conditioned being and you are simply acting out your conditioning, very much like actors on the screen, on the movie screen. So I like to give this analogy, imagine the movie screen, people acting out their comedy or drama. And at some point, let's imagine one of the characters in the screen suddenly becomes aware of something, he becomes aware that what's real about me is actually the light.

And then he closes his eyes and he traces his origin back to the projector lamp, because that's how the illusion of the form is created. You have a movie projector and then you have a film. I think you still do, I don't know how technology has advanced these days, but you have a film that goes through that obstructs the light in some interesting ways.

So by creating movies, humans are replicating the play of universal consciousness. You obstruct the light and the obstructions of the light become the characters that you see on the screen. And each character on the screen believes in his or her complete independent reality as a separate entity and identifies with their story and their form until one character wakes up and says, wait a moment, what is this essence that I can sense?

And then his attention goes or her, and then you suddenly notice your essential reality as the light that's being projected onto the screen. I'm actually the light. And then the moment you realize that, you have connected with the source of the light.

You've realized your, you've always been connected, but you didn't know it. You've connected with the source of the light and realize your oneness with the source of the light. And that changes to continue for just one moment, this weird analogy, which becomes more and more unreal, that changes from now on, what the character does and how this character experiences life and how this character interacts with the other characters in the movie changes because he or she is aware of his or her essential identity.

So he behaves differently, not no longer his or her behavior is no longer based on the illusion of absolute separateness of the me entity. So his consciousness has linked back with the source of everything. And so that's the end of my analogy.

And that's really what's happening to you. And that's what Jesus was talking about when he said of himself, I am the light of the world. And when he said, talking to some of his disciples, you are the light of the world.

Now, his disciples were not important people, illiterate, most probably, fishermen or craftsmen, but they were not VIPs in this world. So he cannot have meant that they were special in any way on the level of form. So when he said, you are the light of the world, he didn't say you are very special VIPs.

No, he was pointing to something essential that is not the form, their essence. He was pointing to their essence as the light of the world. And the light of the world is consciousness, of course.

And that's what every spiritual teacher teaches, awareness of your source and your oneness with the source. And when you no longer live your life through the conceptualizing mind, then that awareness is there and it changes how you behave, how you perceive things, how you relate to other humans. So that's what happens really, when you become aware that you are consciousness.

The actor has become aware of his essential identity as the light of consciousness. And he or she may continue to play for a while in the world of form. And the quality of the movie actually improves with that consciousness.

The cheap melodrama of unconscious existence can actually become something quite beautiful. So it is vital to, in daily life, to remember that, remember is not the right word, let's use it anyway, language is so limited, to remember that you are consciousness, not to remember to be consciousness, to sense your essential reality as consciousness. And then more and more, it's there.

And that's what you teach. You then teach who or what you are. You become the teaching.

You demonstrate through your behavior, your words and your silences, you demonstrate and it spreads from there. It's wonderful to see the one consciousness awakening in so many beautiful forms. We will meet again in the morning.

In the meantime, another little moment of complete stillness. We'll close our eyes, finish in your own time. I'll be with you for a little while.

And then probably when you open your eyes, the chair will be empty. Apparently, I got up rather abruptly at the end of our last session, and people said, is something wrong? I didn't even know I got up abruptly, the body got up and walked out.

And we have perhaps, well, not perhaps, we have some questions. I know there are some on paper and some in heads, your heads, some of your heads. Without insulting anybody, I just like to mention that no question is really that important.

What about my question? Well, mine is important. So the question has to be seen within the larger context.

And what is the larger context? It's the space. It's more important than any thought within the space.

And we are here to transcend thought within ourselves. But of course, thought still appears from time to time. A question may have relative importance, but not absolute importance.

It's also helpful not to have self-identification with question, which is self-identification with thought, which is ego, because it happens to be, come out of your head, and it's my question. And once you have identified, which is very normal, with some thought, like a question, if that question is overlooked, and the likelihood of your question being overlooked is greater than the likelihood of your question being answered, because there are many more questions than we can possibly answer here. And so you feel overlooked because your question is overlooked, and then the ego then feels diminished.

Almost insulted, as if something had been taken away. And again, it's normal, normal unconsciousness. And why does it happen?

Well, it's self-identification with thought, and so you need some kind of thought to respond to your thought, to feel enhanced in your sense of self. And then if the question does get chosen, then the ego says, oh, he chose my question. It's normal.

Perhaps many of you are not at that stage anymore, so I'm only mentioning to just a few who may still experience that. But the egos are weird creatures. They can even then get angry because my question wasn't chosen, and don't hear the rest of the session, the next session.

And our task is not to lose ourselves, and this always applies when you begin to use your mind, not to lose ourselves in the form consciousness, talking, questions, answers, and get completely drawn into that, and then lose all sense of space around it. So as we speak here, it's vital to have one foot, so to speak, in the spaciousness, and one foot in form, formlessness and form. And perhaps that brings us to just one question that I saw a few minutes ago is coming to mind at this moment.

So that seems to be the first question then to start with. It's on paper. Some questions, by the way, are also from people who are elsewhere on the planet.

Online, it's called, apparently. All these expressions, I only have a vague idea what they mean. Downloading online, and uploading, and...

Well, it's all very well this question coming to mind at this moment, but it also has to come into my hands. Anyway, it's not in my hands, but I know what it is. And it's a question about how do we, what does it mean to have space in a relationship?

How do we actually bring space, as I sometimes put it, the questioner asks, how practically, can you give practical advice? That's actually the question. Can you give practical advice on how to bring space into the relationship?

Because space is vital in any relationship, not just the so-called close, intimate relationships, but all kinds of relationships, from friends, to lovers, to friends, to acquaintances, to people you meet casually in the street. But especially, I think the questioner was especially referring to intimate relationships. Of course, there's a beautiful line in Khalil Gibran's book, The Prophet, which says, let there be space, or spaces, I think space, let there be space in your togetherness.

As this is the recipe for a good relationship. This is just a line out from that, these little prose poems that he wrote. Let there be space in your togetherness.

So, it comes down quite simply to your ability to have that space within yourself where you're not imposing thoughts on your partner. Or, to put it differently, where you're not looking at him or her through any kind of thought, mental concept. That space, when you can be with another human being, not constantly, but when it's possible from time to time, during the day, have brief moments of spacious togetherness when you, for example, listen to the other, even the other maybe just saying a few sentences or telling a little story of what happened, or telling how he or she feels.

And as you listen, you're not thinking. So, to have space in relation, it presupposes that the ability within you to access the space of presence. And then you can look at the other and be that pure, aware consciousness and not a person.

No matter, now, it does not matter whether the other person is also in that state or that moment or not. It's a beautiful thing if both can be in the state of pure presence. So, you can intersperse your relationship with spaces of pure togetherness when the need to function on the level of thought, and even on the level of emotion, is transcended for those spaces that arise.

It's deeper than the emotion, too, a very deep sense of oneness. So, looking at the other, whether the other is silent or speaking, and be silent inside while you listen, or look, or listen, and look, or touch. That is, you're bringing, you become the space.

So, to have space in the relationship, you need to embody the space. You need to become the space for the other person. The other, that lifts the relationship to a different dimension where you transcend mind, ego.

You transcend also the emotion. There may be an emotional bond, but at that moment, that also is transcended. There's a deeper sense of oneness there.

So, one thing is listening or looking at the other while they do something, or a beautiful sharing from time to time, look into the other person's eyes, and then you see no judgment, no thought, just a beautiful, just a presence. And if you can both do it, it's even more beautiful. It's then a deep sharing of oneness, of one field of consciousness where the body becomes unimportant.

Looking into each other's eyes, not overdoing it, of course, but, and that, I practice that in virtually any relationship, whether I meet, I don't practice it, it's so natural, you can't really call it practice, but it's, I don't think when I relate to a person unless that person asks a question, then perhaps as an answer, some thought arises that then becomes a word or words coming out of my mouth.

But while I listen or look, there's no thinking. And that's why every encounter becomes actually quite enjoyable when you're not thinking, but when you are space. I sometimes call it, I haven't used that expression yet, here, today or yesterday, I sometimes call that space consciousness, as opposed to object consciousness, which is thoughts.

Space consciousness is not a term from science fiction, nor is it to do with acid trips. It's something very real. Space consciousness is just another word for your essence identity.

And what we share here, why you are here, why I am here is to share basically space consciousness. Our essence. That's why we're here, to deepen that, so that it becomes familiar living in connectedness with that dimension.

That's why we're here. And the rest of it is simply addressing possible, very common obstacles to the arising of space consciousness. How object consciousness can keep you in its grasp.

And if you don't recognize how it does that, and we're talking here about, of course, about ego, then you can very easily be deceived by the egoic consciousness or space consciousness, because it has its little tricks with every thought. As you know, I mentioned before, every thought says, follow me. And so it tries to pull your attention in completely.

This is so important. I must think about this, says the thought. Not verbally, but it's implied.

It's 4.30 in the morning, but now I have to think about this. This is so neat. If my life will fall apart if I don't work that out right now, it's about my life.

Now, we already looked at that in the earlier session, the illusory nature of saying my life when you have a stream of thinking, which you call my life. That's identification with object consciousness. So we need to look at how easily that arises, how it pulls you in, so you can recognize it when the pull comes, a thought comes, says, give me attention.

And it can get hold, especially old thoughts that have been around for years, lodged in your mind, some deep seated thoughts of whatever it is. I don't know what it is. You are no good, or I can never forgive that person.

Or I'm a victim of life, whatever it is. And that comes again, and you were spacious, and then suddenly this entity comes in and goes. And you can see how you disappear.

Your presence becomes obscured, and you disappear into the thought. Your entire consciousness is absorbed by form. That's ego.

And so, people who are deeply trapped in ego, you can see them, you can recognize it. They are not there. There's something there, but it's a thought formation.

And they don't see you when they look. There's no space for you. It's just, there might even be some kind of role-playing, but it's all part of egoic consciousness.

There's, so not to space with the other, look at each other, touch sometimes without just being with that. Listen, watch the other move, and go about doing this or that, and just be there as a silent watcher. It's beautiful.

So, you can, of course, more formally meditate together as a formal thing, or just be still together. It's lovely. Let's be still together.

Go for a walk in stillness, all these things. But primarily, space always means a break in the stream of thought. And then, whenever I just got sidetracked, whenever I look at another human being, I am the space.

I'm not the person. And that's primarily your task also. So, be alert in any interaction to see whether it's, is it dominated by thought, or is it, is there space?

And when you are functioning as when you have a particular function in this world, a job or whatever, you may be playing a certain role. You are the salesperson, or you are the, whatever you do, the manager of this or that, and the other person is the employee, or the other person is the client or the customer. These are the roles that, of course, you play the roles, that's part of it, but don't lose yourself in the role.

So, if you are the customer and you approach somebody about something that's not right, so make sure there is space while you interact. There is a human being behind the role. Don't accept the roles that society gives you, or a social situation gives you, because then you function as the role.

So, when you're dealing with hotel staff, for example, in this situation, it's very easy to behave like a hotel guest talking to a member of staff, which is also true. That's on the level of form. But is there a deeper interaction between two human beings also?

That is more important, and that is the space. So, that must be part of the interaction. Otherwise, you're lost in form, you're lost in roles.

One more question from here, and then we'll have a question from any one of you. Now, there are a few similar questions here, so I'll take this one as a representative of other questions that are very much alike. Now, this one expresses it in this way.

Why allurement to thinking by the universe? To be allurement is the word. It means why, is that a word that exists?

It's on paper, it must exist. No. Why does, let's rephrase it, what's the purpose of thinking if we have to transcend thinking, or if it's our destiny to go beyond, or if it causes so much trouble, why does thinking arise in the universe?

Now, it is, as you might have noticed, the universe is very busy creating continuously multiplicities of life forms on this planet, and I'm sure in many other places in the universe, as there are several billion suns in our galaxy alone, and billions of galaxies, so the universe delights in creating form, and it creates the human form, and one way in which the universe explores the multiplicity, diversity, and differentiation of life forms is through human thinking. It's a very interesting way of experiencing itself, and when I say universe, I mean life, I mean the one that becomes the many without losing its essential oneness.

So the one creates these bodies, and through these bodies and these brains, it moves through the brains that it created and experiences the universe through thinking. So the experience of its creations becomes extremely differentiated through thinking. It's an incredible thing.

It's a wonderful thing. So you get thinking, be entities. It creates thinking entities, and then the game continues.

The thinking entities develop the thinking ability more and more. And they speak, they write books, and they discuss, and you can see how, and the universe must delight in this, and the drama suddenly arises, whoa, and of course, for it to really work, the thinking entities need to forget who they really are, which is expressions of the one, but if they remember that, it wouldn't really, it wouldn't be a real thing. It has to be the real thing.

So they have to forget who they are temporarily. So the entity loses itself in thought, becomes thought. It's as expressed in the biblical creation myths, where they eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and that, to me, means the differentiation of judgment, good, bad, thinking ability arises.

Wonderful thing, on the one hand, but of course, on the other hand, you lose paradise for a while. So more and more over millennia, thinking becomes more and more important, so that eventually you're totally identified with that movement of thought. An interesting thing anthropologists found that there's this, I believe, I have an intuitive sense that this is true.

Some anthropologists, although others don't agree with it, say that when thinking first arose in humans, they thought they were being spoken to by entities. Gods would talk in their heads. Now you pick up the weapon and kill him.

Yes, I'll do that. Not realizing thoughts are arising. And so it must have been an incredible thing to experience that at first, very disconcerting.

Suddenly, voice starts up in your head. Imagine how your dog would feel if suddenly he or she started thinking. Mm-hmm.

Somebody talking in my head. And suddenly, your dog wouldn't have an opinion about you. And very soon, the tail would no longer wag because the dog would see how big your ego is.

And the dog would have lost paradise. But unfortunately, the dog is still in paradise, which means natural connectedness with being. Humans moved through the thinking stage, but the universe is getting tired now.

Why do I know that? I got tired. That means the universe must have been getting tired of thinking because the suffering, it's too much that's created when you'd continuously lose yourself in the mind.

And so the next stage arises, which is even more wondrous, much more wondrous, which is waking up out of thinking and realizing for the first time how wondrous all this is, which before was taken for granted when you hadn't arrived at thinking yet. It was just, everything was nature, everything was natural. You were part of nature.

There was no concept of nature and humans. It was all part of the undifferentiated oneness, the same way in which animals still experience reality, the universe. So that happened.

Now, an even more wondrous thing happens. Thinking has, to a large extent, outlived its usefulness as an exploration of the one, although it will continue for quite a while, but it will no longer be dominant because the one is now embarking on a different experiment or experience, and that is a deep recognition of that which was lost, the state of connectedness with being. But when something that is lost is found again after a long time, the reconnection happens at a much deeper level.

There is an added dimension of depths there that my dog does not have, although the dog is naturally connected. When you transcend thinking, you reconnect, so to speak, and there's the dimension of deep knowing there of the sacredness and the miraculous nature of all things and the essence of all things, as expressed in the, I believe it was Wayne Dyer the other day who quoted it, as I was having a dialogue with him, a little poem by T.S. Eliot, which I also love, which goes, and let us not cease from exploration, and at the end of all our exploring, arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.

That, of course, is also, is true of both human beings in their individual journey because they only reflect in their individual journey the larger cosmic journey. So these lines refer to human beings, individual lives. They also refer to the entire life of the cosmos.

It's a wonderful, wonderful thing. So you arrive where you started and then you know the place for the first time. So that's the function of thinking.

We are in the midst of the transitional, well, not perhaps in the midst yet because 90% of humans are not yet going through the awakening process on the planet as a whole. In some places on the planet, more than up to 20% are going through the awakening process. I haven't done any research on that because you couldn't.

It would be hard to do, but my intuitive sense is that. By the way, I can usually, I can be wrong occasionally, but usually by looking at another human being in a room or sitting somewhere going past, I can usually tell whether they are going already through the awakening process or not. How, I don't know.

I just know. But I have been wrong a few times too. So we could talk more about thinking, but I don't think that is necessary.

Hope, just before we have a live question, there's one of the questioners, there's a question about hope. Let's see if I can find it. Oh, I can't find it.

It's here. But the question said, what about hope? You said you used the word hope the other day when you were talking about your dog.

I must have said, I hope my dog lives a little longer. Is there a place for hope? For some people, hope is extremely important.

I use hope in a casual way, in a casual sense. Hope is not something that helps you to be present. It's hope.

When hope dominates your consciousness, then of course you are looking to some future moment for freedom or fulfillment or satisfaction, and you're missing this. Does not mean you cannot casually say, I hope you're feeling better. You can use these words.

And of course, I hope if you're not well, and the next day I call you or I leave a message on your phone, why not say, I really do hope that you're feeling better? I also hope if I'm ill, I hope that I will get better. I can say that casually, but I can still totally accept that this moment is as it is.

And I'm not devastating if the hope is not fulfilled. So you can put all your attention on the hope, in which case you lose yourself in future, or you can use the word casually, but be totally present and accepting of what is anyway. If my dog dies, then they surrender.

And if the dog lives, it's beautiful. Eventually every form dissolves. But don't live on hope.

Do, because there's always a, oh, it's, I hope one day my life is going to be better. But what about now? And of course it might be better on the level of form.

Maybe it will get better. Maybe you will move to a better place, a nicer place. Maybe you will fall in love and live happily ever after.

Is there water coming in? But there's a crack, a crack in everything that's, that's not only how the water gets in, but also the light in. So don't live in hope, knowing that things may get better, but if you don't access that which is beyond form, what happens is things get better for a while until they get worse again.

There's a continuous change of forms. You gain something until it's taken away from you or you have to let go or it dissolves in your hands because all forms come and go. It's a continuous flux.

So yes, of course they can get better, but not as some ultimate answer or solution to your life. It's simply how things work on the level of form. Things come, things go, things grow, things thrive.

But they can't thrive forever on the level of form. The economy is growing and growing and every day we are doing so well, the economy every year grows by so many percentage points and it grows and grows until the planet is gets choked by the economy and what it entails and can't breathe anymore. But it's so economic use is excellent that the news keeps saying, no they're not, it's an imaginary situation because it can't happen.

You have growth and you have shrinkage and growth, shrinkage, birth, death, decay, these come always together. So hope is fine, but knowing there's no ultimate fulfillment in anything that happens out there in any form. You have to access the formless, which is in the now, nowhere else.

And so you have to find the vertical dimension into the space as the essence of who you are, which is consciousness itself. And then you can casually say, I hope there's not, I hope we're not going to get flooded completely here. And if we do get flooded, that's fine too, we'll take action.

I assume there's a beautiful downpour outside unless it's a water pipe, but I believe it's these wonderful downpours that you get here. And then 10 minutes later, sunshine. And you enjoy them all, you enjoy every moment.

Let's see if there's a question that the people are running towards. There's Greg and there's Aaron, and they are running towards you and they will select a few, one or two people to come, first person is on its way. In the meantime, we are present.

Okay.

[Speaker 4] (4:30:59 - 4:31:06)

Got it, okay. Eckhart, on any average day, how much in the presence are you able to be?

[Speaker 1] (4:31:09 - 4:31:12)

Oh, me? You.

[Speaker 4] (4:31:13 - 4:31:17)

I guess I'm wondering what's possible for a mere mortal.

[Speaker 1] (4:31:17 - 4:35:36)

Okay. And then you tell me about yourself too. Okay.

There's always space consciousness. The intensity varies. Sometimes it's in the background.

So I may be dealing with some stuff in the foreground, sorting out papers, looking at trying to do something on the iPad. Or there may be some problem arising, so-called problem outside. So let's see, how do we do that?

What do you deal with that? So the intensity is in the background, there's a space, in other words, nothing that happens out there, I take terribly seriously. Not that I laugh all the time about things, no, I look quite serious sometimes, but it's not, I know it's not that serious if there's a problem out there.

So you deal with it, you give it attention, you give it its due. But there's always a space consciousness in the background somewhere. But that, so that happens when there's something to deal with.

And then enormous variation depending on the moment I interact with another human being, there's an intensification. When there's a personal interaction and I look at someone, there's immediately more. Often in nature, there's more.

Often in chaotic situations, there's more. In the middle of traffic, there's more. When something goes drastically wrong, so to speak, much more intense.

So if, for example, we had an earthquake here right now, hopefully, hopefully not, there would be very, just a very intense presence and in teaching situations also, another, there's an intensification of presence that comes with what is required at this moment, really the presence that arises according to what really is required in the present moment. So it's like a dimmer switch that goes up, it goes down, but the light doesn't go off, it goes up and down. So in another way of putting it is, you can be, there's the person, there's the object consciousness of the person and there's the space consciousness of the essential being of consciousness itself.

So in this situation here, it's virtually 100% space consciousness. This is not the person, the personal self really talking, it's consciousness using this mind to speak through. I don't say that I channel as such, but it is similar to that.

I don't channel as such, I don't have the sense that there's not an entity speaking through me, but there is source, the source speaking through me, through this form. So in a teaching situation, 100% in other situations, maybe less, there's a little bit of the person there, but there's space around the person. And so, what about you?

[Speaker 4] (4:35:37 - 4:35:38)

I'm getting there.

[Speaker 1] (4:35:39 - 4:35:44)

Yes, good. So there's already space in you, in your life, in daily life.

[Speaker 4] (4:35:45 - 4:35:50)

I think about it all the time. I don't practice it all the time, but I do try to think about it, be aware of it.

[Speaker 1] (4:35:50 - 4:50:03)

Thanks to you. Yes, so the awareness is there. Okay.

And are you able to find spaces of no thought at all? For example, now? Yeah.

That's fine. That is wonderful. It doesn't really matter how long they are initially, the spaces of no thought.

You can just, you open a little space and that is no thought. You can even use this gesture because it's a little added, almost a symbolic gesture, a physical pointer to something that's of course beyond the physical. When you go like this during the day occasionally, perhaps when nobody else is looking at you, there's a space.

So this represents the space between the hands, this represents the space of no thought. And you can hold that. It sounds, it looks almost like Qigong, but you go even deeper to just that space of no thought.

It's beautiful. And so you can practice with that and you can then miraculously feel your mind actually has stopped and you're fully aware. There's no, nothing, no voice anymore.

Just enormous, enormous power you've just accessed. The mind doesn't recognize that. The conceptual mind says, what's the point in that?

How does that solve my problems? Doesn't realize that that's the, it's far beyond anything the mind could understand, the conceptual mind. This is pure, another way of putting it, this is pure intelligence.

And that's only one word for it. It's primordial intelligence, the intelligence that underlies all of creation. It is the unborn, it is the unmanifested.

What the Buddha pointed to. So, and there it is. You can, even as a little practice, again, as a little external help, later you don't need it anymore, as a little external help, when you are walking somewhere, either in nature or in a town or a city, you know, if you're walking somewhere, look at the next tree or lamppost, let's say it's a few steps away, like the end of the stage here.

And as you're walking towards that tree or lamppost, that becomes the space for you in which you are just present and not thinking. So you hope that becomes the external space for the inner space. So as you're walking, and there you are, you had a space of no thought, and then you can look at the next one if you like, or you can go back into thinking.

But it's so beautiful and empowering, you will want to have more of that in your life, to be yourself more, more and more deeply, more fully. So little things you can use as transitional, helpful devices, pointers that help you to bring that into your life. So you can do it here.

You can choose also one activity, if it's not too long, it's not an activity that takes 20 minutes, you will probably lose yourself in thought quite soon. But an activity that is just 20 seconds, half a minute or one minute, and choose whenever you perform that activity, choose to be present with it, to feel what it is you're doing. This is the ancient, the idea underlying the Japanese practices of the tea ceremony, of flower arrangement.

There are these, why these practices originally arose is as a vehicle for a state of consciousness, a vehicle for presence. So with the tea ceremony, now, of course, what happens after centuries of practice, the things become formalized. And when they become more and more formal, the original essence and purpose behind it can easily get lost.

And so, for example, another example of that is the certain simple instruments. In Japan, they have the shakuhachi flute. The shakuhachi flute is a simple piece of bamboo with a few holes in it.

And you play these beautiful notes on it with silences in between. And it's originally intuitive and played by Zen monks as part of their practice. And then some of them are just wonderful to listen to.

It's not only the playing, even when you listen to it, it puts you in that state of consciousness of pure presence if you pay more attention to the spaces than to the sounds. That's what it's there for, for you to become aware of the space. And, of course, after several centuries, you now get professional musicians who play the shakuhachi technically beautifully, but the underlying state of consciousness isn't there.

And you can sense that when you listen to it. So, occasionally, you still have shakuhachi played with the underlying state of presence, but when professional musicians play it, often, yes, technically very good, but the essence is missing. So, again, tea ceremony, you can have your own tea ceremony.

You don't need to learn anything about it. It just means, basically, again, you invite presence into your life by using any action that is not a means to an end. Any physical action that you perform, if it's not a means to an end, like making a cup of tea, usually the end is drinking the tea and everything else is a step towards that.

But that can be, it doesn't have to be like that. You can, with every movement, you can be fully present. You fill the water, the kettle up with water.

The lid goes down. The kettle, pick it up, put it there. Either it goes on the gas fire or electric, switch on, and after half a minute, you begin to hear the noise.

You open the cupboard, you take out a box of tea, either bags or tea, put it into the pot, and again, presence, you're present with every movement. It's beautiful. And then the water is ready, and then you pick that up, and it goes, and your senses are also awake, so you listen to the sounds, you feel the touch, and it's become a meditation.

In other words, it's not a means to an end. Any movement is fully self-contained. It's not in order to arrive there.

It's an end in itself. And that's, again, it's a practice that you can choose any simple activity. It can be extremely short.

It can be three seconds. If you only had a few, 10 times a day, five seconds of presence is a huge gain in consciousness. I'm giving you a minute.

Press the elevator button to call the elevator. And if you can, be present until it comes. And if you can, you might even be present while you're traveling in it, up or down.

So if you use an elevator at work, every day, somewhere, why not make that into presence practice? Every time you use it, presence, alert. It's no longer a means to an end, because the absurd thing about the unconscious egoic state is that virtually everything you do is a means to something else, which always pretends to be more important than the thing you're doing now.

It's a very strange way to live. It's always the next thing is, unconsciously, the next thing is always believed to be essentially more important than the thing you're doing now that is supposed to lead you to the next thing. But when you arrive at the next thing, you can't appreciate it because the mental pattern is always next.

Then already you have the next thing. And that's why people miss their whole lives, because they live for the next thing. No, if you spend your whole life living for the next thing, where's your life?

You've been waiting for the next thing. And then you reach the age of 80. Where's the next thing?

Still waiting for the next thing. So again, inviting presence into your life, no longer living for the next thing, because what does it mean when we say the next thing? What is the next thing?

The next thing is a thought in your head. That's what future is. The future moment is what we call the future moment.

This is vitally important. The future moment is the only reality it has, if we can even call it reality, is it's a thought in your head of the future that I need to get to. Because the future has no reality except as a thought.

Because when it becomes real, it's the present. There is only the present ever. There is no future.

Not the greatest philosopher could argue with the simple fact that every human being requires very little intelligence. Every human being can verify in their own lives that they have never experienced the future. Or have they?

No, you can't. How can you experience the future? You can only ever experience the present moment.

But you live as if something called the future were more important. And so what is that thing that pretends to be more important than the only thing there is? Thinking.

It's a thought. Future is a thought. There is no future except for the thought of future.

So a sign then to live for the next moment means to be identified. We come back to where we started, to be identified with your mind, to be trapped in object consciousness, in thought. So the more you are trapped in thought, the less space there is in you, the more you will be obsessed by getting to the next moment or the one after that, which promises fulfillment and which you never find.

Amazing, amazing. I've spoken about it many times, but every time I say it, I'm amazed.

[Speaker 4] (4:50:04 - 4:50:04)

But.

[Speaker 1] (4:50:10 - 4:50:19)

Thank you. Perhaps another question from the audience.

[Speaker 3] (4:50:21 - 4:50:44)

Oh, it's one person there. Yes. I find in trying to be present, I often feel tremendously alone.

Sorry, tremendously? Tremendously alone, a strong sense of loneliness. And the more I meditate, I find at the moment at least, everything feels dissatisfying.

Even the most pleasurable experience feels dissatisfying in some way.

[Speaker 1] (4:50:45 - 4:50:45)

Yes.

[Speaker 3] (4:50:46 - 4:51:45)

I find myself craving a sense of companionship, rather like Christians talk about having a companion for God or something that gives direction and helps making order and decisions. Yes. But instead I'm finding myself more and more with this sort of deep sense of aloneness and anxiety.

And my response is becoming more to become a workaholic rather than actually being present. And I was wondering if you could give some advice. Yes.

On the external level, do you live alone or do you live with people? I live alone and I'm probably as happy as I ever have been. Happy?

Basically, except inside there's a sense of I'm running away from now. Yes. So all the outside stuff is dandy, but when I'm actually present, something feels deeply unhappy.

Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

[Speaker 1] (4:51:52 - 5:31:57)

Now, as you know, there's a loneliness and there is solitude. Loneliness means you're alone, but longing not to be alone. And solitude means you're alone and completely surrendered to that state of being alone.

I wonder if you are able to really yet take your attention into the present moment, for example, by directing the focus of your attention, as we were suggesting today, to simple sense perceptions, or to your breathing, or to the feeling of aliveness inside your body, all things that bring you into the present moment, a largeness to sense perceptions, breath, feeling the aliveness that is there, that pervades your body, starting perhaps with your hands, feeling, are they alive? Can I feel the life inside my hands? Close your eyes for a moment.

Yes, can feel. Hard to describe what it is, but there's an aliveness there. Can I feel it in my feet?

Yes. Can I feel it in the rest of my body? Yes, I'm beginning to feel it there.

So, and then you're really, so make sure your attention actually moves into the present moment. And then, if then a sense, that means if you do it correctly, thought slows down and begins to subside. You're entering the present moment.

If then what you describe persists, a certain deep seated feeling of dissatisfaction, dissatisfaction, incompleteness, or not enough, what you do with that is you accept it the way it is rather than wishing that you were not feeling it. So you, the next step, but if so, first present moment, and then what is left when you bring your attention fully to the present moment, if that's left, what you do with it is you bring an acceptance to it in the similar way that you would accept, let's say you find yourself at home and suddenly a very unpleasant noise starts up outside. One of these drills, for example.

What do you do with it? You can't go out and say, stop. No, they have vital work to do.

So at that moment, I'm giving an external example. The same can be applied to the inner, something that doesn't feel good, but all you can do, you either suffer or you surrender, which surrender means you give it space to be, you accept it. And suddenly, let's stay with the drill for a moment.

Suddenly the drill continues. There was the irritation that you felt when you couldn't accept it. Your mind said something about it, how dreadful it is.

Why do I have to live in this place? It's the second time this week, this goes on. Why can't I find a place that's more peaceful?

Et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. Emotions come to respond to your thoughts. And then suddenly you realize what you're doing.

And you say, okay, let's see what happens if I completely accept that that is there, because that's obviously, there's nothing else I can do about it except create suffering for myself. And you accept the noise continues, and suddenly you become aware of space, spaciousness. And suddenly you feel peaceful with the noise.

This also means you have become internally independent of the external condition. A wonderful sense of freedom suddenly comes. The external condition can no longer determine your state of consciousness because you surrender.

And now we can move, let's move to the inner. Something arises in you that perhaps has lived inside you for many years. And perhaps it's an old feeling, an old emotion that is an energy formation inside you, a sense of deep lack.

And what do you do? There it is. That's your inner unpleasant noise, so to speak.

And what you do is bring, you accept that that's what you feel. You let it be, as the song says, let it be. There it is.

You become the space for it. So anything that you accept means you become the space for it. In other words, you realize there is more to you than the reaction, than the person that reacts.

The spaciousness comes the moment you completely accept any condition brings you to spaciousness. And then you feel peaceful despite the condition. And that's an incredible thing to be, and it almost sounds paradoxical that you can feel something inside you that doesn't feel good, but as you completely accept it, there is space around it, so to speak.

And then you realize that you, that space is more essentially you than the condition that you experience. That's an amazing realization. The spaciousness around the condition is more truly who you are because it's your essence than the condition that before made up your sense of who you are.

So you have to work with surrender to whatever arises as long as you do not fuel the condition with unconscious thinking, which means you're not present at all. So first you become present and what then, what still persists when you are present, you have to surrender to. So make sure you don't create the inner obstacle by unconscious thinking how lonely you are and that other people have relationships and you are the only one who doesn't have a relationship and whatever else your mind is saying, that means it's unconsciousness, you can't get out that way.

So you can only, before you can surrender, you have to become present and see what's left when you are present. You may be on the physical, emotional level, you may be longing for companionship that at the moment you don't have. It is possible because we are not complete as entities, we are male or female and so you long for the opposite.

That applies even in gay relationships, there are opposites. So on the physical level, you may long for this physical form, may want to feel the closeness of another physical form. Or on an emotional level, you may want to feel the closeness, the emotional closeness to another human being that again is a natural thing.

And if you have no access to the essence of who you are, then if those longings or physical emotional needs are not met, you become a very unhappy human being. For if for some reason they are not met, so there's longing for closeness, physical and emotional, even sexual longing can be part of that, it's not being met. If you have no access to space, the space within you, then your life seems terribly impoverished.

Similar to, for example, every woman carries in the physical vehicle, which is built in the desire to give birth is part of the physical form. Now, those who are not, who are totally identified with their physical form for their sense of self, if that is denied to you for some reason by life, you become very unhappy. And in some cultures where people identify you totally with the physical, when you're a woman, you are primarily a woman in some older cultures.

You're not a human being primarily, you're primarily a woman. And so you have to get married and have children. And if you're not married and have children, you're despised virtually.

You're assigned a particular role, a form identity, and if you don't comply for some reason, you have little value in that society. But if you go beyond the form and access the space, then even if these needs are not met, the physical need, for example, of the female form to give birth, or other needs on a physical emotional level of proximity, you can still continue to feel the longing without being consumed by it and without it making you unhappy. And that's a strange thing.

You can, for a while, you can coexist with that longing that is not met and still on a deeper level be in surrender. And that also, not giving birth to a child as a woman, if you are totally identified with your form identity, which is the physical vehicle, then they feel something missing. And some women who cannot give birth become very unhappy.

But if they access that which is beyond the form, then a little bit of unfulfillment remains within the vast space that you are. And that's the unfulfillment of the physical form. You can live with that.

You can live with. But the vastness of who you are beyond the form is there. Around it.

And so you feel peaceful about it. You can even feel peaceful about the physical longing. And as you become peaceful, by the way, it's much more likely that some human being will be drawn to you because humans are drawn to other humans who embody that peaceful state of consciousness.

And so on that deepest level, you don't need anything. On the level of essence, you don't need anything. On the level of form, there are some needs which may or may not be met by life.

So that's the practice. Thank you. Thank you.

Let's see, I haven't read any, sorry, any question online, online. It doesn't say where it comes from, but somewhere on the planet. There are several questions here.

I'll just take one or two. Oh, there's a question about space that I already answered, space in a relationship. And there's a question about being depressed and acceptance, that seems the question that has just been asked.

So somebody else on the planet has a similar problem to yours, at least one. I have autism that's increasing apparently. The cases of autism are increasing tremendously.

I have autism and practicing presence has slowed my thoughts and helped me feel peace. But I have a hard time bringing attention to my physical body, which often initially feels uncomfortable. What would you suggest to help bring awareness to my body?

That's easy. But it may not be so easy for you to take your attention out of the head. And I always start with one hand.

If you're right-handed, the right hand, otherwise the left hand. And for a person suffering from autism, this may not be that easy for anybody else. It's relatively easy, unless you're totally, many people are actually, totally.

And feel, the simple question is when you close your eyes, how do you know that I have a left or a right hand, whichever hand you choose? If the hand is not touching anything, how can I know whether I have a hand? Is there any way of me, without moving it or touching it, is there any way I can know whether I have a hand?

That question, the mind may superficially answer it and say, yes, because I just saw it. But that's not the answer, because you have to know in the moment, in this moment, how can I know? And the question takes your attention, which for many people is absorbed by thought in their heads, but to give an answer to it, your attention has to step out of thought and travel into your hand.

Some of your consciousness has to remove itself from thought, plook, plop. And it goes in here. And then suddenly you feel an aliveness, a very subtle aliveness, even sometimes tingling or warmth in your hand.

And then you can truly answer, yes, now I know that I have a hand. And that's the beginning of having attention in the body. If you can do it with one hand, you can also feel the other hand, it becomes easier.

And suddenly you have attention there in both hands. And you feel more alive already, and it's only the hands. And then can you feel your feet?

Okay, you may have to close again. Some attention has to travel there. Yes, and there, and feel.

And then what about the legs? And yes, arms. And then it becomes more diffused throughout the entire body.

I believe it was the first time with a spiritual teacher called Zong Klein, who called it, I think, a global sense of aliveness, global, so entire being. And that, it's an enormously, you feel so alive suddenly. And that's the entry point into the formless.

It's, you're already going deeper than the physical. So at first, what you touch is the, the life energy, the chi, and you begin to feel that it becomes alive. You feel it more strongly.

But the chi is the, as I call it, the bridge between the world of form, physical and other psychic forms, and the formless. So when you touch chi, you're already on the bridge to the formless. Chi is the aliveness inside you, and the aliveness in every being.

So as you put your attention into the body, you feel an intensification of life energy. That's the chi. But you're also on your way to accessing that which has no form already.

The chi is half form and half formless. And as you go deeper, you actually, after a while, if you did it with your eyes closed, you lose sense of feet, legs, hand, arms, and it becomes all that's left is a feeling of intense aliveness. But the mental image of body disappears, and what was before the inner body becomes a sense of aliveness that has no extension in time and space anymore.

It's just aliveness. So you've moved into the realm of the formless. That's how the body, the inner body, can be a portal for you to move into the formless, because that's the essence of every form is the formless, the one, God, the uncreated, or the universe before it became form, form, before the Big Bang.

No scientist can go there. The moment they ask, what was there before the Big Bang when it all started? Nothing.

But how is that possible? How can, let's think about that. Can't.

But you can experience that reality of that initial nothing in yourself, because it never went away. It still remains at the core of every form, the one formless nothingness. And so that's a beautiful, that was really getting in touch with the inner body as a spiritual practice, very powerful.

You can teach it to your grandmother or your parents who may not want to hear about anything spiritual. Don't talk to them about the formless or spirit, but you can say to your grandmother or mother who is tortured by her mind, can you feel the life in your hands? Let's have a little game.

Can ask her, can you feel the life in your hands? What do you mean? Do you want to just try it, try?

There, oh, yeah, yeah, I can feel it. Now what? Okay, do it again.

And so gradually you take her attention. I'm just taking an example of your grandma, could be anybody. And it's a beautiful thing.

They don't know it's spiritual. Don't mention the word. So that's the embodiment and also movement helps as some of you have been doing the presence through movement with Kim.

Movement can also help getting in touch with that inner aliveness. And for the autistic person that asked the question, I would also recommend that you take up an actual practice, physical practice, presence through movement, Tai Chi, yoga, Qigong, whatever it is that involves movement. And that can be a help to bring body awareness to make it possible for you to get out of the head.

Let's take one question from paper. Okay, here we have a question. My pain body is violent, destructive, and terrifying, and it tends to completely take me over with its power.

I try to just witness it or stay present, but it consumes me. I live in a constant state of fear and anxiety to the point where life doesn't seem worth living. Can you comment?

Very heavy pain body. You get completely taken over by it in certain situations. Presence is lost.

What to do? I very rarely recommend remembering something or going into the past, but one helpful thing that you can do is when you're alone or with someone who is fairly present or conscious, remember the last incident that triggered your pain body. Remember how it started.

And then you may begin to feel the emotion that goes with it, but it won't be quite as strong. It may be strong, but it won't be quite as strong as when it actually happened.

But you still can visualize what happened and you can feel the emotion.

Some people can even feel strong emotion when they remember how 20 or 30 years ago they were bullied at school. You remember the bully and what he did, and you go through the motion, and suddenly you feel this enormous anger. That's a good opportunity for practice.

So if you remember an incident or the typical kind of incident, if there is a typical incident that tends to trigger the pain body, bring it up in your memory and feel the emotion, and then it's not quite as powerful. It's a secondary way of exploring it and bring awareness to it there when it's not the actual situation, but it was the past. But you can still, the emotion is very much in the present moment.

So although the memory brought it about, you're still experience, of course, the only thing you can experience, which is the present moment. So you feel some of that emotion strongly again, and then see if you can stay present with it, which simply means allowing this pain to be there feeling it without, and the key, of course, is without fueling it with your thoughts. Because as you may remember, there are two ways in which the pain body feeds, takes on more energy, absorbs more energy.

One way is through drama with other people, provoking other people, wanting the emotional reaction of other people's pain bodies. And you actually go in there and it's like poking, poking somebody psychically. You say that the pain body says the very thing that's most hurtful to the other person, especially people you're close to, that's where pain body like to feed in families and relationships.

And so you poke the other person exactly where it hurts, so to speak, not physically, but psychically. And then you get the reaction, and then perhaps your own pain body even, and so you're feeding the other person, it laughs at, shouting, screaming. But if you're alone, what do you do then?

How does the pain body feed when there's nobody around you, but at its feeding time comes, it wants to renew its energy, it moves into your mind, and makes you think certain thoughts that correspond to the feeling. And they're not pleasant thoughts because the feeling is not pleasant. The feeling, whatever the feeling is, anger or deep sadness, irritation.

And then you think the thoughts, how dreadful it all is. You remember my life, thoughts about my life. When they are fueled by the pain body, thoughts about your life become dreadfully unhappy.

And so every negative thought has energy frequency that the pain body absorbs. Basically, it thinks the thoughts that it wants to think through you. It uses your mind, the emotion, it's like an entity, it uses your mind and makes it think thoughts that correspond to the kind of energetic intake that it likes.

It's vibrational, heavy, painful, negative thoughts. And it can go on for an hour, two hours, three hours. A day, two days.

And then a time comes when it doesn't need it anymore. It has taken on enough fresh energy and goes back to the dormant state. And you wake up, the drama is over, or the train of negative thinking.

You have a little bit of peace now until the next pain body feed comes. And so that's the pattern of the pain body. So when you go through this exercise that I just described, don't feed your pain body with your thoughts.

In other words, thinking negative thoughts because you have negative feelings in the anger, for example, extremely angry. So the thoughts that go with it, of course, are thoughts that one can sometimes read. I very rarely dip into the internet where people comment.

Now, 95% of comments, for example, when I post, well, actually somebody still does it for me, I don't know how, Facebook. When I post on Facebook, somebody posts what a little comment I write, a quote and a comment. And only the other day, for the first time, I started reading the comments that people make.

It's fascinating. Most of the comments are very, very positive. It's wonderful to read.

And then there's always, out of 50, there's one very negative, very angry person. No matter what you say, he or she, I don't know whether it's he or she, is very angry. You, how dare you say this?

I only talked about inner peace. How dare you? How dare you?

Who do you think you are? It is obvious that this has very little to do with me, but there's a very heavy pain body talking there. And no matter what I say, it would get triggered.

I could say, you are the most beautiful, how, what are you talking, nothing will work. So, there are some people who are in the grip, either permanently, some people have pain bodies that are almost permanently active. Even just underneath the surface, it's just waiting for the next thing.

It's always there somewhere, waiting for, you can look into their eyes and you feel this negative emotional entity waiting there behind, just for one wrong word, and you'll get the reaction. But if you're very present, actually, it won't come. It'll, and that person can experience a little bit of, oh, but it requires enormous presence when you're confronted with a very heavy pain body.

So, make sure when you do this practice, you are not feeding the pain body with your thoughts, you're accepting what you feel on the level of feeling, bringing acceptance to that, be with it, feel the energy of it. And, a visual representation of that enormous anger is in the old TV series, The Incredible Hulk, where whenever this person gets angry, the body suddenly grows, huge muscles develop, the shirt rips open, and the person turns green or red, I can't remember, and becomes huge. And it's a beautiful visual representation of what is inside of the pain body when it grows.

And it's satisfying, people loved watching it, it's gone now, but, because you could feel it with him, it was a, perhaps a cathartic thing of, without endangering anybody, experiencing a bit of your own pain body as this person's pain body suddenly grows whenever he gets angry. And then he shrinks again until the next thing happens. One more from a paper, and then again, we come back to you.

Can the mentally ill, like bipolar, people who suffer from bipolar disorder, understand consciousness and awakening? I would say, yes. Bipolar disorder is only an intensification of what is considered normal, a much more intense version of what is normal.

So as we all know, bipolar is people who are getting taken over by enormous positive, so-called positive energy, and they do weird, mad things even when they're on a high, emotional, mental high. And then they experience the corresponding emotional, mental low, and they get taken over by mental, emotional states. That's what it is.

Now, every human being, even in the so-called normal state of consciousness, gets taken over by mental, emotional states when they are not conscious. And here's just an extreme form of such a takeover. So this person, especially in between the high or the low, there are periods when this person can actually begin to be shown that there is such a thing as awareness in themselves by simply simple practices, pointing out certain things.

Here's, there's a thought, and there's, you know that this thought is in you. Can you feel that emotion? Who is it that feels the emotion?

Are you the emotion? The thought that comes into your head, are you that thought? If you are not the thought, if you are not the emotion, who are you?

Those questions can point the person to awareness. Once you have accessed awareness, there is a chance that some awareness remains the next time one of the two, the high or the low, begins to take you over. There's no guarantee that that will immediately stop it or stop the behavior.

But if there's some witnessing consciousness, which is awareness in the background, you won't be taken over completely. So the beginning then is become acquainted with awareness in yourself. And then there is a chance that awareness remains as, and if awareness grows in you, the intensity of the episodes will diminish.

It's not that they don't happen anymore, but gradually the intensity of the episodes diminishes. It diminishes. So that is, I would recommend that awareness practice.

So the answer then is yes, a person with bipolar disorder. The question is not quite right. The question says, can this person understand consciousness and awakening?

It's not really to do with understanding. It's with realizing it in yourself. Conceptual understanding is the first step, but then that, of course, is not enough.

You need to access awareness in yourself. Let's see if there are questions from the room. Somebody, Greg, or is going to choose.

[Speaker 2] (5:32:11 - 5:33:33)

Hi. Hi. I saw you speak with Wayne Dyer the other day, and there was a point where you were talking about this list of spiritually fantastic people or similar, and you mentioned that if you ever let it get to your head, that's the beginning of delusion.

Sorry, if you? If you let that thought. Oh, yes.

That idea. Oh, yes, yes, yes. That you're up high on the list.

That if you let that get to your head, it's the beginning of delusion, and what was interesting to me was you said something like, and I won't have it. Yes. And it was your strength in rejecting that idea, and I wonder how we can all get that same strength, so you get to a point where you sense the space and you love it, but you still revert back to thinking and various bad habits, whatever they might be.

Yes. How do we develop that strength where you just, I know I'm not gonna go there. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (5:33:34 - 5:33:35)

Good question.

[Speaker 2] (5:33:35 - 5:33:37)

Thank you. Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (5:33:43 - 7:11:28)

One way one could put it like this, presence, there is an awakening process, and as part of the awakening process, the presence that comes through you, it grows. There is a growth of presence, and it's only when presence has reached a certain level are you able to say, I won't have it. When presence has reached a certain level, you are also able to say you can drop thinking if you don't want to think, and when you've reached that, I think quite a few of you, I feel, are at that level or approaching that level where you're able to be free of thinking when you say, I won't have it, especially if you feel old negative thoughts arising if they're still inside you, and you notice how harmful they are to your organism, even to the physical vehicle, what emotions they produce, and you can say, I won't have it. There was a spiritual teacher in India who never wrote a book, but somebody recorded his teachings in a wonderful book that I've often recommended called I Am That, and the name of the teacher is Nisargadatta Maharaj. I won't spell that for you, but I'm sure.

And he, one of the things he said when people asked, a questioner asked about meditation, but really the question was about presence, what is meditation, what is true meditation, which, of course, is presence, and his answer, he was very radical in his answers. And he said, it's very simple. It's the radical refusal to harbor thoughts.

That's what he looked like, right? Almost a little scary. The radical refusal to harbor thoughts.

That's the most radical spiritual teaching I've ever heard, but it's beautiful. It's quite extreme, one might say, but that, of course, presupposes or requires a considerable degree of presence that's in you to say, I refuse to harbor these thoughts or any thoughts at any time. When you're walking on the beach here, there are the clouds, there's the sea, there are the palm trees.

What is there to think about, or anywhere? And so, are you able to, in the words of Nisargadatta, refuse to harbor thoughts? Many of you are there, almost there.

I never expressed it in such extreme terms, but yes, I'm not having it. You drop it when you don't want to think, you don't think. That's the greatest achievement, by the way, if you think you'll want a successful life or are not quite happy with the success that you have achieved.

If you're able to not think when you choose not to think, you become incredibly empowered by the source of all creativity. It not only ends all the unnecessary drama in your mind, you also touch the source of all intelligence and creativity there. So, it's a wonderful thing.

And the greatest success that you can achieve, except it won't look to you as if you had achieved anything, because the you that was thinking in terms of achievement was mind-made. And when you're not thinking, the mind-made self dissolves. So, you don't get the sense of I have achieved enlightenment.

What about you? But it doesn't arise, unfortunately. It's bad news for the ego.

So, all we can do then is trust in the growing presence in you, and of course, being here either as physical or tuning into here gives you an enormous boost of presence because this is what it is all about. It may not stay with you in that intensity as you go away from here, but some of it remains. Or it may.

Or it may be the end of all delusion. Some of you, it may be the end of non-acceptance, of not being able to live in the present, and from now on, you're aligned with the is-ness of now. For some, it happens all at once.

It's rare, but it does happen. For most, it's a process of awakening, and process is never a straight line upwards. Process is usually a spiral thing, so there's a gain in consciousness, and then you get drawn back into, mm, and then you come up again, and then you get, mm.

And sometimes you may have to experience a huge setback in your life that can happen to some in order to make an enormous leap forward in consciousness. As it happened to Wayne Dyer, he mentioned two instances in his life that would usually be regarded as very undesirable, being abandoned as a child, being an orphan, and then at a moment, he found himself by his father's grave, and he was able to forgive. He was still an adolescent, and that brought enormous, the event that would usually be regarded as extremely bad and negative, then turned around and became an influx of grace.

And more recently, as he shared with us, his illness, leukemia, and I could see the change, the deepening in him from last time I met him eight years ago to now, so again, something that normally would be considered bad through acceptance brought about a huge influx of consciousness. So let's trust in the process that it is happening in each one of you, and then eventually, you can drop these hot potatoes or hot coals, which you don't want them, not having that, the radical refusal to harbor thoughts. Thanks.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

This doesn't mean that you can't think again. Of course, you think again, but you're no longer run by old thoughts. You can think more creatively when you do think.

Let's look at one more here. One question is about psychotropic depression. Drugs?

Ram Dass isn't here, so we won't do it. I'll ask him, and then I'll convey the answer to you. Are the conceptual mind and the egoic mind the same thing, or are they both separate entities of the unconscious mind that like to work together and regularly high-five each other?

No. No. No.

No. No. No.

No. No. No.

No. No. I love that expression that originated in Australia.

No worries. Beautiful. Are the conceptual mind and the egoic mind the same thing?

Yes. The difference being the conceptual mind that gets hold of you, so you identify with it, becomes the egoic mind. The conceptual mind itself is fine.

It's a lovely tool. You can do great things with it, but when the sense of self becomes lodged in that conceptual mind, in every thought that arises, this, then it becomes the ego. And so that's the false self.

That is the self that is ultimately not real, that all spiritual traditions point to as illusory, that Jesus talked about, the deny thyself, which means deny the illusory, the illusion of the self. Well, what point is there in denying the self if it's real? So by saying deny thyself, the implication is, of course, it's not real.

And the Buddha's teaching, the very essence of the Buddha's teaching, means the unreality of the self, and that is the concept, the mind-made self. So the question is, do you have thoughts, or do thoughts have you? There is no problem with having thoughts, but when thoughts have you, you become a problem to yourself and to others.

And that's the false self. So that is always the question is, are you in the grip of your thoughts, or is there space around your thoughts? And do you realize that you are the space, not the thought, the spaciousness around the thought?

That's the question. So the conceptual mind and the egoic mind, the conceptual mind becomes the egoic mind when there is a sense of self in every thought. And you can see it in people who start arguing about the most insignificant thing, the need to be right in an argument, the defensiveness, the anger that arises, even the lying.

You would rather lie, any lie will do, as long as you can be right when you get involved in an argument and you identify it with your thoughts, which is your mental position, your viewpoint. You will lie, you will bring out any evidence, you come up with weird ideas, this is how it is, just to be right. But people come to physical fights just to decide who is right.

So how does this need arise to be right in an argument? It means there is self-identification with viewpoints in your mind. And what is a viewpoint?

It's a mental position. What is a mental position? It's a thought.

So the thought has you in its grip, you cannot distinguish between who you are and your thought. That is insanity. If you can't distinguish between a thought in your mind and your identity, it's a form of insanity.

And this is how people fight each other, not realizing it's thoughts. So if you are wrong, it means nothing. It doesn't detract from your identity, but when you're identified with thought and you're wrong, you're virtually dead.

You feel totally devastated. So you can't allow that, you can't be wrong. This is just one example of the madness of complete self-identification with thought.

And so this is why we're here. We are definitely coming out of this self-identification with thought. So thought isn't a problem anymore without the self.

Anatta, in the Pali language, said the Buddha, the three, I love those three words of the Buddha's teaching in the Pali language. Anatta is the basic reality, no self. A means no, atta is the Pali for atman, no self, anatta.

Dukkha, suffering, misery. Anicca, impermanence. Those three, what he's saying is, all things are impermanent, all forms are nature.

All things are impermanent, forms come and go. If you attach yourself to forms and seek your identity in forms, especially the thought forms, then you have a self that is unreal. And so the teaching is anatta, there is no self, you can't find yourself in form.

Because if you look for yourself in form, then you experience dukkha, misery and suffering. That's a beautiful teaching, 2,500 years ago. So the Buddha just said, I teach suffering and the end of suffering.

So simple. Which means, I show you how suffering arises, and we've been doing that here all day. I show you how suffering arises, and when you see that, there's the end of suffering.

Because the seeing is the awareness, is the unconditioned. And this time I'm not going to run away. We'll go into stillness, just a little bit now.

Nobody's waiting, I hope. Forms dissolve quickly as the Buddha realized already. And you can verify in your experience, things come and go.

This retreat, there's a form, the external form of the retreat, the place, this room, the people coming together. It's beautiful. But what it really is powerful and beautiful is not the external form, it's something that's arising in you.

That's the essence of this, and that is timeless. So nothing really important is coming to an end. That which really matters is there in you.

And so the scenery changes as you, the body moves away today, tomorrow, next week. There's always something that remains unchanging. And that's consciousness itself.

We could call it the present moment. It's always the now that doesn't change. You can be sure that your life, your, your life is always now.

And the now in essence is who you are because it's a space for everything. Everything unfolds in the now and it's inseparable from who you are. So ultimately in the depths of it, what we call the now is the space of consciousness, the formless, the unborn.

And that's why we can talk about the power of now. And as you may have heard me say before, once or twice, the now is not what happens. That's the surface of the now, but it's not the now.

People confuse usually in ordinary existence, people confuse the now with, with what happens in the now. And therefore they say, every day consists of many, many moments, many present moments. That's how it looks when you think the now is what happens.

But if you look more closely, which in other words means in your immediate experience, you will see that your life does not consist of many moments. It's only when you go into thinking and then you remember, oh, there were past moments. I had breakfast this morning and so on.

But in your, that's your immediate experience is always only of this moment. Your life is always only this moment. So that's one can't really argue with because it's so obviously true.

So although we think life consists of many moments, that's because we confuse the now with what happens in the now. That of course changes continuously. That's what the Buddha refers to as the fact of impermanence.

And that's what the pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus or Heraclitus, who lived about the same time as the Buddha, 500 or so years BC. He had this famous saying, I believe in Greek, it's pantare, which means everything flows. And he said, you cannot step into the same river twice because it's everything is different water.

So everything is continuous flux. He saw that as the essence of all life, which is true on the surface of things. But if you go deeper within, you have two dimensions.

You have the flux of birth and death, coming and going of forms. And you find the place within that actually is an unchanging presence or space. And that is the true meaning of now.

And that's the only place where anything can happen. There was actually another philosopher who lived shortly, I don't know, shortly after or shortly before Heraclitus, who said the exact opposite. He said, nothing ever changes.

It's an, the change is an illusion. They are both right. So if you can be in your, in the essence of who you are, and then from there, you deal with a world of form, which continuously changes.

So if you can sense within you that still presence, that's the essence, and that's the now, then you become the space for whatever arises. Then you don't need to cling to the forms, but you appreciate them, but you don't need to cling. I need to have this thing that or whatever form it is.

It could be also totally abstract. I need to have recognition. People need to recognize me as important.

They're all thought forms. I need somebody to understand me, thought forms. I need you to understand me, otherwise I can't be fulfilled.

My parents need to understand me. It's just a thought, they don't. Just imagine these people who need to understand you, suddenly say, yes, now I understand you.

Oh, okay. It looks, when it's not there, it looks, it's going to be some great fulfillment. When you look to a form that isn't here yet, and when you project, you think when it comes, then I'll be fulfilled.

When it actually does come, you go, oh, I need to be famous, become famous. When it actually does come, you say, oh, is that what it entails, all that stuff? That didn't complete me.

Let's think of something else. I want to become a hermit now. I have a few more questions that people submitted.

And as you know, every answer to a question really is more than just about the question. It really is always about the unchanging truths. Somewhere it's, the core is always the same, of course, of every answer.

Okay, let's start with this one. In my everyday life, I find peace and connection to the universe. Here at this retreat with birds in cages, noise, junk food, blah, blah, blah, something like that, I am finding it hard to connect to that peace.

How would you cope if you had to live in a disco for a week? Well, the, let's just address the two parts to this. One is the part of here, not living in these unusual surroundings, not your usual, perhaps more sedate and peaceful surroundings.

How would you cope? Okay, that's a hypothetical situation that's very unlikely to ever happen to me. Okay.

But if it did, there are two possibilities, of course. One is you open the door and go out and leave, and then you're at peace. If you can't be at peace in the disco, my choice would be to open the door and step outside and leave.

But if the doors are locked, I suppose that's what you're talking about. But, if the doors are locked and I can't get out, what's left is surrender. So I would probably start dancing.

And to the same here, there's a clash between what makes you feel comfortable, you perhaps live in a quiet place, and you're not usually surrounded by sun-bathing tourists, and birds in cages. I haven't seen them, but they must be around. And junk food, because you don't have to eat it, but.

It's quite good for retreats to be, I haven't yet, by the way, found an ideal retreat setting. One would have thought that going to an ashram in India would be more conducive to inner peace than being in a big hotel in Hawaii. But there too, you'll find things that disturb your peace.

For example, my first night in an ashram in India, you're on this bed, and I was given a deluxe room, as they call it. They said the Queen of Spain had also spent some time in that room. So you're under the, lying on your bed, the temperature is just one degree less than at midday, extreme, extremely hot, under a mosquito net, and then sleep doesn't come.

At 1.30 in the morning, the need to go to the toilet arises, but there are several huge mosquitoes sitting on the outside of the net, waiting for you to emerge. And then you just wait a little longer, and finally, you have to get out, being pursued by the mosquitoes, you run to the bathroom. And in the bathroom, suddenly a flutter arises, and there's a big bat flying around the ceiling.

And finally, you manage to get back under your mosquito net, and there's a little bit of sleep. And then, at 4.30, there's a knock on the door. Oh no, that's not all, I forgot.

At 2.30, there's in the street, there's a loudspeaker of very low sound quality, with some lovely religious chanting going on. Why are they chanting in the street, to a loudspeaker at 2.30 in the morning? I don't know, but it's, rah, rah, rah, rah, rah, rah, rah, rah, rah, rah, rah, rah.

In a way, it's lovely, because they're chanting about God, and it doesn't matter if they wake people up, it's. And then, after 20 minutes, that subsides, and then there's a little bit of sleep. And at 4.30, at 4.30, there's a knock on the door. And the man, I open the gate up, open the door. Of course, it's still dark. And the man comes with a bucket with hot water, and said, the hot water you ordered, it's 5.30. It's 4.30, I ordered it for 5.30. And. And. And. And.

Oh no, come back, no, you surrender, you have to surrender every moment, so that you become one with whatever is in that moment. So you immediately adjust to that, you adjust to the mosquitoes not being able to sleep, or you become unhappy. And so you accept that the hot water comes at 4.30 instead of 5.30. And so it goes on. And then finally, you go for breakfast in the big hall, you sit on the floor, there's a banana leaf on the floor, and a man comes with a huge bucket, or what's in it, I don't know, and then a ladle, and he goes, on your banana leaf, flop. And. It's wonderful, continuous, one becoming one with what is.

And here you have the tourists. And the parrots in cages, and junk food. Probably the food on the banana leaf is more healthy in some ways, it's not junk food.

On the other hand, there may be certain things in there that the Western body is not used to. Which then results in very frequent visits to the bathroom. Wherever you go, there will be an opportunity for surrender, rather than want to, and that's part of the retreat, and it's part of, really, life.

Because wherever you go, you will find you get challenged by life, there'll be something that you need to surrender to, or you walk out. But very often, you need to go with it, rather than having expectations how things should be, you go with the, how things are, the is-ness, I call it, the is-ness of things in the present moment. And if you can be one with the is-ness, whether it's the bat in the bathroom, or whether it's the tourists here, then wherever you go, you can find peace.

That really is the purpose for realizing that, and without saying conditions need to be in a certain way, to be conducive. And if you could find the absolutely ideal place for a retreat, where everything works, and everything is absolutely immaculate and perfect, the food is exquisite, the temperature is just right, you get massages every day, in addition to the, pampered in every need is immediately met, you just have to say something, and somebody comes, yes, now you're totally undisturbed for meditation, absolutely perfect. Is that the ideal retreat?

Not really. The imperfections are actually more helpful than the perfect conditions. In the ideal retreat, or the ideal life, which doesn't exist, the life without challenges would be very similar to going to a movie in which there is no conflict.

Everybody is peaceful. Nothing really happens because there's no drama. The characters in the movie are not challenged by anything.

And so the movie viewers would go, Titanic without the accident. A perfect crossing. Two and a half hours of that.

But this is how people want their lives to be, they have this inner expectation, that's how it should be, or can be. But it's not like that. And then you begin to welcome the challenges.

It's actually fine. You don't demand that conditions should be perfect. They never are perfect.

And if they are, you go to sleep. Or if they are, they are not perfect for very long. Or you get so bored.

Oh, there's a question here about what is boredom? So that's the next question. You're not connected with the inherent aliveness within you.

You're floating on the surface of your mind and as a mind, you need continuous stimulus. If you are connected with the depths of your being, then even watching the perfect crossing of the Titanic would be fine, not that you would have to watch that. So if you're not connected, the mind needs stimulus and food.

What can I take in next? It needs some kind of sense of aliveness. I call it sometimes a substitute sense of aliveness.

So it looks for the next thing to, really, we could call it to reincarnate into the mind reincarnates and you identify with every form that arises. And when you identify with a form, that is what reincarnation is. Consciousness identifies with a form and does therefore a dreamlike state.

And that's, of course, what consciousness wanted to experience for a long, long time. And then it's had enough and then it wants to wake up out of the dream. So you can see how the mind grasps always at the next thing.

It used to be magazines that people, well, they still do. For instance, just one example, when people look through magazines, nothing really satisfies, but there's always something new there. But nowadays, of course, it's on the screen.

And it says, as we know, it has enormous addictive effect on the mind. But that restlessness, that is boredom, doesn't really arise. You become comfortable with being and you don't need something exciting.

But if it does, you appreciate whatever happens, but you don't need some kind of excitement around there to make you feel alive. And you become comfortable with sitting quietly in a room, too. One French philosopher said, all the ills of humanity are to do with the inability to sit quietly in a room.

It's really talking about the ability to enjoy your being, the essence of who you are. And you may find there comes a time as people are beginning to awaken that all the doings become less and less satisfying. What before was fulfilling and exciting is not really that satisfying anymore.

And so that means something else wants to come up in you, that is more essential, more vital. So, what are your suggestions for healing from deep grief of losing my two children last year in a boating accident? It's always painful, of course, when a loved one passes away, even more so when it seems far before their time, long before their time.

You have to become very still here so that you can sense, by sensing the essence of who you are, also sense that in your children that is not subject to decay and death. And it is a realization within you. I don't want to give an explanation, something to believe in, but I would only suggest whenever deep grief of this kind comes, which you cannot deny, which is going to be there, nor should one say, I shouldn't be feeling grief, as you know, I mentioned it in a book, there was a philosopher, ancient Greek philosopher, who, when he was told that his son had died, he said, I knew he was not immortal.

Now, where that statement came from, we don't know. We don't know out of what inner state these words came. They either came out of a disconnection, a person who refused to feel emotional suffering, who disconnected himself from his emotions, that's possible.

It's also possible that the words he spoke, I knew he was not immortal, came out of a deep realization of the essence of all beings. I don't know which one it is, where the answer came from. If it came from the disconnection, then of course it was a false thing.

If it came from the deepest level, I know from my own experience with somebody close to me, dying, my parents, for example, which is painful enough, but not as painful as your children dying, that there is grief because this cannot be denied and weeping. At the same time, there's a deep sense of peace and even sacredness in the face of death. These two can coexist.

I'd like to assume that this Greek philosopher had connected with the essence of who he is and that he spoke from that essence when he said those words, they were not flippant words, they were deeply felt. And I'd also like to feel that he did feel grief when he heard that and perhaps wept. But nevertheless, he said, I knew he was not immortal.

He was very much aware of the precariousness of all forms, all life forms, all humans, all other life forms. And that is the awareness of that death could just be just around the corner for anybody. That is a fact.

No matter what age you are, it could be just, you could walk out and slip on a banana skin and bump your head against something and that's it. It could, it's possible. Anything.

So we tend to delude ourselves into believing as a society, Western society, there's still very much death denial. We don't know how to deal with it. We deny it.

We don't really talk about it much. Some people are beginning to talk about it now. But awareness of death is actually a very beautiful thing.

And somebody close to you dying can be, this can result in a awakening in you of the precariousness of all forms. And then that can, when you see how impermanent and precarious forms are, and as you get older, of course, you also begin to see in a more natural way, people that you knew are beginning to die. And sometimes even young people die and they suddenly, people little, where there was a form, there's a nothingness suddenly.

Tch, tch. And in the presence of death, you become very still. If tears come, they come.

Feel the, if you can feel the essence of another human being, a loved one, while they are still with you, that is very helpful so that you don't identify who that being is with the, neither with the physical form nor with the psychological form. There is a deeper essence in that human being. And so in essence, what dies is the physical becomes dust.

And then my intuition tells me that on the psychological level, the form survives and may reincarnate. But ultimately what reincarnates is still the form identity. The essence is beyond reincarnation.

The essence is timeless. So there is an essence in me. There is an essence in you that is beyond reincarnation.

So you could say only the misperception of who you are finds another vehicle until awakening happens. So what reincarnates is the misperception, the delusion of thinking I am a separate person. That delusional mind structure, psychic structure, closes itself in another physical form.

But underlying that delusion, there is the truth of who you are already. So underlying that, and you find it, don't wait for death to find that which is deathless in you. That is also a word that's sometimes used in some tradition, Buddhist traditions, where as you know, they deny the reality of the separate soul.

And ultimately that is true in ultimate terms. Ultimately, there's only God and each being is a temporary expression of that underlying one, the one reality. Buddhists, the closest they get to talking about God is they have the term they sometimes use, it's called the deathless.

It's the realization of in you of that which is beyond death. Then the death of someone close to you is still painful because yes, the form also, there was an attachment to the form, but was that all there was, or was there more? It's painful, but with that acceptance of the dissolution of a form, although grief comes, a deep stillness also arises.

And in that stillness, there is a knowing, not conceptual, but a knowing that at the core of each being, there is the deathless. And that is also when you sit with someone who is dying, which is a very sacred thing to accompany someone, to be with someone on their deathbed, is the most sacred thing really you can do. And you are called upon to be absolutely still and present.

And words may come out of your mouth, words may come from the dying person or not, but if you embody that presence, then you will realize that the death process is very sacred. I spoke some years ago to a woman who sat next to her son who was dying of an illness. He was in his 30s.

And in the moment that he died, she was absolutely present and she could feel the entire room being transformed into a sacred space. And at that moment, she knew ultimately there is no death and who he is in his essence has not died. The room was transformed.

And only 10 or 15 minutes later, she started to weep. So she lived for 10 minutes, she was in that deep realization. And then other levels came up in her, of course, which is quite natural.

But it was the most sacred thing she had ever experienced. It transformed her life. And it made something that otherwise would have been absolutely devastating into something that is still, of course, will bring grief, deep sadness, but also sacredness.

As more humans awaken, one of the most essential things to happen is that people are taught how to die. This should be one of the most important things. People who are able to teach that, not as a set of, but to teach it primarily to embody that state of consciousness that is necessary to be with a dying person.

And to talk about death to almost anybody should already be, even children at school should know about death, but especially, of course, older people, they should, the places where death is a sacred thing rather than a thing you deny, as in hospitals, nobody knows to know except a few nurses who intuitively can be with a patient, not because necessarily they have been taught it, but they're in a something from within response to the situation.

But on the whole, hospitals just try to prolong life as much as possible, even if it causes more and more pain. How to die, one of the most vital things. But of course, how to die is also not just how to die physically, that's very important, but every human being at any stage of their life needs to know how to die to the psychological mind-made self that's the spiritual death.

And that's why we're here, because you have already said yes to that. You don't want to continue to be trapped in the illusion of that mind-made little entity, and that's the kind of death. Also, cause and miracles, again, the beautiful lines at the beginning of the cause and miracles, nothing real can be threatened, nothing unreal exists, herein lies the peace of God.

That's really all you ever need to know. Nothing real can be threatened. Of course, the body can be threatened, so it's not absolutely real.

Any form can be threatened, so that's not absolutely real. Herein lies the peace of God is in knowing this in the depth of your being, there arises the peace of God, which means the peace of the unconditioned, the unborn, the formless, the essence. How do you stay present when there's chronic illness and the symptoms are so consuming, it is hard to get peaceful?

The symptoms make your mind go a million miles a minute, and it's hard to focus on the breath because of asthma. For a long time in Christianity, in modern Christianities, maybe not really anymore, but medieval Christianity, and so for hundreds and hundreds of years, there was the image of the crucifixion was of extreme importance, and it sometimes actually worked beautifully for humans to look at that image, and especially if you are in deep suffering, because it is an archetype of human suffering, and you could then feel that you were sharing in the suffering of this archetypal human. You were sharing in their suffering, and thus you were able to accept your suffering, surrender. That's really the only way when this happens to you, chronic pain or chronic, very difficult condition, there's nothing else you can do except surrender, and I have met people who have experienced that extreme suffering, and I could see that through surrender, then their ego became eroded.

So surrender in extreme suffering can be one way of allowing your ego to be dissolved. It cannot survive in that, and then also your mind would become still in the midst of suffering. Otherwise, you have a hardening of ego if you resist it and have a lot of thoughts about it, how unfair it all is, how dreadful it is.

The ego can harden in suffering. The ego can dissolve in extreme suffering, and perhaps you have already seen the ego hardening is more common. The potential is there for the ego to be burned up.

It's not so much that it's burned up by the suffering. It's burned up by the deep surrender that is necessary. With the deep surrender, it would burn up in any situation.

The crucifixion is an image that can still, for some people, work. There's also, I talked about on the internet TV thing, I occasionally talk about a book, and one of the books I talked about was the medieval work, The Imitation of Christ, a lovely work of medieval spirituality. And The Imitation of Christ means that you become like Christ.

That's the sense of imitation. And that is a book that I would recommend to anybody who is in deep suffering. It can be very helpful in that state of suffering.

Suffering is also a path. Suffering that arises not because you create it out of your mind, but suffering that seems to come to you. So complete surrender to that really is, means it's almost then you accept it as if you had chosen it, which is an expression that I sometimes use.

You accept it as if you had, of course, as you know, in some new age teachings, you are told, why did you manifest that? Or they ask you, you must have chosen it on some level, but I don't say that. It creates anger in people.

And it's not necessary. You don't need to say you must have chosen it on some level, or why did you manifest this? That person feels even worse.

I must have done something dreadfully wrong. It's also not right to equate physical, spiritual awakening with perfect health. It's not always the case.

There may be other factors that operate, which are karmic in the physical vehicle. Many things do dissolve in presence. Many old patterns do dissolve as intense presence arises.

There may be some, however, that do not dissolve. And so there have been enlightened masters who have contracted illnesses. And so let us not necessarily equate spiritual awakening with perfect health, that would be, or a perfect body.

I remember the spiritual teacher Gangaji saying, I was talking to her some years ago, when she first met her teacher, an Indian guru, and she was a body worker. And so she met this Indian guru, and at first she said she wasn't interested in him because being a body worker, her idea was a perfect body means a perfect spiritual realization. And this guy had a kind of crooked body, a little bit like mine, perhaps just bigger.

And she thought, how can a person with that posture possibly be awakened? Later she realized, of course, that was a misperception, but that was her first, being a body worker, that was her first thing. Of course, there is a relationship between inner states and the body.

Of course, it's preferable to have a healthy body. Of course, it's something through healthy diet and exercise, of course, you want to, it's wonderful to have a healthy body, but there's not necessarily that correlation. There may be other factors at work in the physical vehicle.

Some ancient Indian teachings say that the karma, the old karma is like an arrow that has left the bow, and even if you awaken, the arrow that has already been shot as this physical vehicle goes through its lifespan, it's the arrow that has been left, so it's the old karma. And there are some, unfortunately, some traditional teachings also in the West that equate perfect health with spiritual realization. There's a lot in Christian science.

There's spirituality there. The book, the foundational book for Christian science is a beautiful work, quite powerful, a lot of truth in there, and yet the complete equation of health and spirituality go together is not quite right, and even a beautiful teacher like Joel Goldsmith, who is a, if you haven't read, I'm sure many of you would love him, Joel Goldsmith, who lived, taught mainly in the 50s and early 60s, he lived actually in Hawaii, and his teachings are an expression of oneness, oneness, non-duality, what's called advaita in Indian terminology. He expressed oneness through his teaching in Christian terminology, so he deepened the Christian message through his teachings, but he too, because he came from, originally from Christian science, there was a little bit, unfortunately, too much of a correlation of physical health and physical healing with spiritual realization, to the extent that when he had his first heart attack, it had to be kept secret from the followers, because the followers would have thought, oh, he hasn't realized, he's just talking about it, it's not the case, and finally, he did die of another heart attack, and finally, they had to admit he died of a heart attack. Suffering, physical suffering, suffering, psychological suffering.

In many cases, it's the psychological suffering that can be far worse than the physical, but in extreme cases, the physical can be pretty bad, but then surrender is the answer here, so that all psychological suffering dissolves. I witnessed in the case of my mother, when her body was growing old, the body she had identified with all her life, up to the age of 80, as being quite fit, quite slim, always looking, oh, look, this is, look at that fat person there, she would say, and I said, how can you say that? And then she looked in the mirror and said, oh, I'm still so slim, but look so good, and then her physical appearance, being identified with that, and then as she was growing older, the body suddenly failing.

She had a fall, her hip couldn't walk properly anymore, had to use the thing that you push, push, what, push, walker, walk, whatever, and there was discomfort, not extreme pain, but some discomfort, some pain, but not extreme. The extreme pain was the psychological pain. Why did that happen to me?

Other people, look, they're all looking at me now, dread, I'm not going out anymore. It's dreadful what's happened to, why did this have to happen to me? I tried to explain it's old age, the body is beginning to go, but we look at other people, they don't, if you had really looked at the suffering of humanity, you would see that you're quite lucky that you have to reach the age of 80 with an excellent body and only then it's beginning to fail.

There were brief insight, brief realizations when I was sat with her, but then immediately the old mind came back, unfortunately. So I'm sure she will have an opportunity to reincarnate and given another chance to experience her sensual, to know her sensual reality. So many nice questions.

Given all the responsibilities in today's world of raising children, would young married hybrids not be more trapped in the world of form focused on setting goals and planning future activities while a retired individual like myself can easily be more present? Well, there's perhaps some truth. It's more challenging perhaps to be present in the midst of continuous activity in daily life, but that's a good thing.

The challenge is a good thing. Old age is a wonderful opportunity, of course, for spiritual realization. And again, like death also, old age should be, could be the flowering of life for any human being.

If they reach old age, well, somebody once said, old age isn't so bad if you consider the alternative. You reach old age and it's a time of letting go of that which is false, of consciousness, flowering of consciousness, experiencing, knowing, realizing the essence of who you are as the body begins to dissolve almost. And again, many old, nobody can teach that yet.

It's very few people. There will be old age places where people can grow old rather than waiting for death, spiritual centers where old people go and where spiritual realization in old age is encouraged and helped along. Then it's the, so you are, I'm very happy that you are flowering now in old age and it's a beautiful opportunity for the younger people who are still immersed in all kinds of activities.

The talent of being present may be greater, but it's equally important to bring being into the doing. And we've been talking about this a lot, but perhaps I haven't put it quite like that. While you do not lose yourself in the activity, don't treat all these activities as means to an end.

Be present in whatever you do. Don't project forward continuously. The beautiful teaching in the Bhagavad Gita, the ancient Indian scripture, one of the main spiritual practices recommended in the ancient Bhagavad Gita is translated into English.

The term is karma yoga, but it's translated in one of the beautiful translations as consecrated actions. So every action, it says you consecrate to God. You're not doing it for yourself.

It's a consecration. So every act is that. So that is also another word where you could translate it as surrendered action.

And you don't look to the fruit of your action, it teaches. Don't look always to the outcome, always the next moment, but treat every action as self-contained, that you're driving the children to school. Why project yourself mentally of having arrived already at the school?

And once you do that, you have another projection. Or getting the children ready to go to school. Is it possible?

I'm not telling you it is possible because I haven't had children, but you have to find out, but I know it's possible in many other ways. You have to find out whether it is possible to get the children ready without stress and without necessarily even slowing down. You can still be fast.

Can you enjoy the movement? Can you enjoy the energy behind what you do in the moment? Rather than getting stressed, thinking we should already be there, but we are here, we shouldn't be here.

So that's incredible to experiment with that. You may not succeed all the time, but experiment with moving fast without stress because the stress is not generated by moving fast. The stress is generated by doing one thing here, but mentally already wanting to be there.

That causes a tension between the doing and where you want to be at the end of the doing or whatever it is. You want to be, that is where stress arises. Stress does not come from working fast.

You have to add something to the working fast that projects you away from the present moment. You can hurry to get somewhere without stress. You should try it.

Next time you have to hurry to get somewhere, you're late. See if you can move fast or whatever you do without stress. It is possible.

And once you do that, you actually enjoy the high energy of that moment. Oh, wow, it's great. I'm alive.

Trying to catch a bus. And don't be attached to the outcome or as the Bhagavad Gita says, to the fruit of your action. In the case of the catching the bus means, ultimately, whether you catch it or not, isn't that important?

And if you don't catch it, you surrender there. So you introduce another level into your daily activities. There's not only what you need to do on the level of your daily activities.

There's another level introduced into your daily activities. That means your daily activities become a spiritual practice and you are almost more interested in that than in what you're doing. So the two come together.

That means being flows into doing. Otherwise, you can only either lose yourself in the doing, which includes thinking. Thinking is a doing.

You lose yourself in thinking and then you lose yourself in your activities, always reaching out to the next thing. Or you can be in being, but then you have two separate compartments in your life. You're quite good at meditating.

Dad, can you help me with this? Can't you see I'm meditating? That means the being hasn't merged with the doing.

Leave me alone. I'm not meditating. I'm meditating.

I'm practicing loving kindness, metta. So daily life as a spiritual practice, every challenge, everything. How do you meet the challenge?

How do you do what you do? Being and doing merging. Ah, it's been a life-changing journey.

Now I'm lost. My so-called life is in crumbles and I can't seem to put the pieces back together. Your life is not, has not crumbled.

Maybe your life situation, I don't know the details of a life situation, but your life is now and it's fine. What's wrong with this moment, with your life now, the life that you are? The rest is a mental construct.

Yes, there are situations that you may need to deal with in your external circumstances. These are your life situation. But if you lose yourself in your life situation, and this happens to the majority of humans, then you miss the most essential thing there is, and that is your life, which is now.

It has no problem now. There is no problem in the now, ever. So the more you dwell in the problem-less, the problem-less now, the more, I would say, empowered you also become by life itself, which can guide you and help you into dealing with the life situation.

Then you look, you become still. You look, you're sitting on a bench. I'm giving an example because I'm familiar with that.

You're sitting on a bench, not much, just a little bit of money left in your pocket. Can you feel the life that you are? Is there a problem at this moment?

No, of course not. This moment is beautiful. I can sense the aliveness in the depths of my being, and from there, I perceive the world around me, the trees, the sky, I can feel the wind, every little detail, it's lovely, it's beautiful.

There is no problem here in this moment. And then the mind, of course, says, okay, what are you going to, where are you going to spend the night? What are you going to live on tomorrow?

And you become still, and see if there's any action you can take. And then you may find yourself getting up from the bench and going somewhere, or calling somebody, or you may suddenly see something that points you to where, what's the next step in your life? Or somebody may come to you and offer help.

This often happened to me when I was sitting around, sometimes not knowing where to go, what to do. Very often, help came from the outside, and sometimes it was a combination of initiating something, and then the universe helping you along. So you take one step at a time.

The important thing is to be rooted in life so that you don't lose yourself in your life situation. From once you're rooted in life, then you deal with things one thing at a time. You do what you can.

So the idea that your life has crumbled is just a mental construct. Your life is fine. We're calling it your life, of course it's not yours.

It's the life that you are. The rest is things you do, the situations you deal with. If you exist exclusively in the mental construct, we talked about that probably yesterday, then you think in terms of, oh, what's my life, where has it gone to?

What's, that you live in that mental construct that you call my life, and it's not a pleasant place. Cada vez que intento meditar y estar presente, me invade gran sensación de cansancio y sueño. Quisiera saber su opinión al respecto.

That happens to some people. I would highly recommend, if that's the case with you, that as soon as you become still, you go, because you fall below thinking, that's what it is. You become still, and then you go, hmm.

Instead of rising above thinking and actually being more alert, you go, thinking, above thinking, below thinking. I would highly recommend a physical, associating the state of presence with some physical practice, such as yoga, tai chi, qigong. If you fall asleep while doing tai chi, it's not pleasant.

So to be on, to stand on that one leg and go like that, as seen in the movies, you have to be really present. And then perhaps gradually, a time may come then, where you can also sit still and be present. So that is a great help for many people, presence in movement through movement.

One or two more. Okay. How do you deal with being in the now all day?

You get hungry after all the shops are closed. In Denmark, they close and you didn't shop because you weren't hungry before. This person says, in Denmark, the shops close early, so you can't go out late at night and buy things.

The person apparently is from Denmark. Welcome. So you're in the now all day.

And of course, the questioner says, because you're in the now, you're not going to do any shopping, are you? Of course, that's a false assumption. And then suddenly you get hungry, and then the shops are closed.

[Speaker 4] (7:11:28 - 7:11:30)

Ha ha ha.

[Speaker 1] (7:11:39 - 7:18:56)

Clock time and psychological time. We're talking about the psychological time, not about disregarding clock time and disregarding the practical aspects of your daily life, where you say, where you look in the fridge and you know that tomorrow morning, you're going to need your muesli and whatever else you have and some fruit, and the fridge is empty, and you say, right, I need to buy muesli and fruit for tomorrow morning. Does that mean you have left the present moment?

No. You have left the present moment when you sit there and think, isn't it going, my life going to be wonderful when I get that muesli again tomorrow morning? Or I wonder if they have muesli in that hotel I'm going to tomorrow, and then you give them mental movies about muesli in the morning.

But there's no, you don't leave the now when you say, all right, tomorrow morning, I need this. Therefore, I'm going to the shop now. And while you look in the fridge, you're present.

And while you write down on a piece of paper, muesli, bananas, nuts, you're present. And while you put the piece of paper in your pocket and open the door and walk towards the shop, you're present. And while you buy the muesli, you're present.

So you don't lose the now, you don't have to wait until you get hungry to do your shopping. So you don't lose the ability to deal with your life situation and what is needed. You can't say, I'm never going to book a flight again because I'm lose the present moment.

And I'm only going to book it the moment I want to go and say, is there a seat left? That's not how it works. You can plan for the future.

It has nothing to do with losing yourself in the future. And even while you plan the future, you can be present in the planning. You can draw up a plan if you know how to.

I'm going to build a house. Yeah, why not? And this is how it's going to look like.

Are you losing the present moment? No, you'll go, shh, shh, shh. And then I visualize it like that.

And that's how it's going to be, completely present. But you'll lose yourself when you dream about that new house and how wonderful it's going to be when you finally move in, you will finally be at peace and finally people will come and visit you and admire your wonderful new place. That's losing yourself in the future.

Or you worry about the house. Well, is it all going to work? Or think about all the things that we'll have to do and useless thinking, not purposeful, just useless daydreaming.

Space of the present. And, ah, so what you take with you from here, to put it in external terms, is this. This is, you take with you the space, which is what you are, who you are in your essence.

The rest is form, of course it dissolves. It's fine. So this is not the end of the retreat because the retreat is finding the essence, realizing the essence of who you are.

That's the essence of the retreat. And so that's the retreat. Whatever you see here is the surface of it.

Some people, if you confuse the surface and essence and you feel, oh, what a pity. Or in the case of the man who is not happy with the, there may be a few others, not happy with the tourist hotel and the trapped birds and the junk food, they can happily look forward to their usual place of residence. But I suggest the alternative possibility.

This is your last chance of surrendering to this place here. So if you haven't done it yet, this is your last chance of saying this is how it is and be comfortable with the isness of this place because while you're here, because you happen to be here at this moment, you're not going to change the hired hotel. So in some situations you can take action to initiate change in a situation, but you would fight a useless battle if you try to change things here, it would be pointless.

It is not necessary. So use the last hour or two that you have here. And if you haven't surrendered yet, walk through where all the tourists are sunbathing in a state of surrender.

There's nothing wrong with it, it's what is. Thank you. I may see some of you a little later.

I wish you well, be at peace, rooted in essence, surrendered to what is. As the Beatles song says, it's easy. Thank you.

2012 June Eckhart Tolle Omega Retreat New York State part 1 of 2

[Speaker 1] (0:11 - 1:20:44)

So we're here for a few days. You have arrived here with a little bit of luggage, probably not a lot because it's summertime, light luggage. But of course then there's another kind of metaphorical baggage of a different kind that you cannot let go of so easily and that's the mental baggage that every human carries around as their conditioning, conditioned mind patterns.

And wherever you go, of course, that goes with you and colors the way in which you experience your reality. And so many people find that wherever they go and whoever they meet, they tend to recreate similar life experiences. And that's because the way in which you experience life is largely determined by the conditioning of your mind.

But we are not here to improve your conditioning, to make it better so that you can function better in this world. There's nothing wrong with doing that, but this is not what this is about. This is about discovering, or for many of you, it's not discovering, it's already deepening or accelerating something that's already happening in you, discovering a dimension in you that is deeper than the conditioned mind.

And that is the core of all spiritual teachings, no matter what words they use to point to it. And that is also the core of the essence of all religion, although most religions have become burdened with all kinds of other baggage, cultural baggage, collective cultural baggage, so often you cannot perceive the essence anymore. But the essence of all that is that liberation from the conditioning of your mind.

It doesn't mean that those things, all the things that have accumulated in your mind, it does not mean that you erase your mind completely. We are not, don't need to do that, but discover something within you that is deeper and not conditioned. Whatever we want to call that dimension, it is there, all the ancient teachings and teachers point to it.

And many of you already are undergoing this process of becoming more and more rooted and established in that dimension. So you are here to deepen or to accelerate what we could call the awakening, because that's what it is. You awaken to something within you that is vaster than the personality that you think you are.

I'd like to give in our first session here, which may be a little shorter than the other sessions, but who knows? I'm not planning anything. Just a few hints and suggestions on how to use the totality of our situation here as part of this shift in consciousness, where you're no longer exclusively identified with the mind-made sense of self, that consists of continuous thinking, and it's all conditioned.

That's the baggage. So it's vital that don't just consider our sessions here as the teaching. Use the totality of the situation here, that every moment that you are here as part of the teaching and as part of your practice.

And I'll make a few suggestions in a second on how. So I mentioned the baggage that you cannot so easily let go of, that travels with you, that may come in the form of certain patterns, some very common patterns. I'll mention a few.

They may be familiar to some of you. Complaining or fault-finding, a very favorite pattern of the egoic mind, because when you complain something, who you feel yourself to be can get a little bit bigger and stronger. You put yourself in a position of superiority when you complain about another person or a situation, you immediately become superior towards that.

It's an unconscious pattern. I'm not saying do not tell people if something is wrong here in your room, and the water, the tap doesn't work, or something wrong with the mattress, and you cannot surrender to it. To point out to somebody that something needs to change, if they can do it, this is not complaining.

It's just telling people this is something, can you put that right? That's fine. Some things can be put right.

Other things, perhaps not. So please use every moment of being here to step out of the conditioned mind by, and here comes the spiritual practice, by using the present moment as a portal into a deeper state of consciousness, the unconditioned state of consciousness. So the present moment really is the device, so to speak, that you use, and the present moment has two dimensions to it, the surface dimension and the depth dimension.

First, let's talk, perhaps primarily right now, about beginning, touching the present moment, the surface dimension of the present moment, and you do that by noticing whatever there is around you in a state of alertness, alert to sense perceptions. If you become alert to sense perceptions, you are beginning to touch the surface of the present moment, and that means your attention moves into visual perception. You're truly looking at whatever it is that you are looking at, and you are truly listening to the sounds of the trees and the birds, whatever natural sounds or human sounds.

Your attention moves into perception, auditory perception. You're listening, you are looking, and behind the listening and the looking, perhaps you're also smelling the air. Perhaps you're touching things too, but the predominant senses are, of course, visual and auditory.

You are looking, and now the practice is, and don't say, don't believe your mind when it says you can't do that. You are looking without interpretation, and that's a practice. You look at the flowers, at the sky, the tree, the grass, the totality of the landscape, or if you go for walks, which is highly recommended in nature, there are trails, and even if you travel here with friends or family members, I recommend that from time to time you take a solitary walk.

Then you move about as an aware presence through which all that beauty around you is being perceived, a state of alert presence, and as I speak about that right now, I hope that these words, that are not just words, because the words come out of that state of alert presence, which is nobody's personal achievement. It's an evolutionary shift. I have not achieved alert presence.

The me that I thought I was isn't even there when the alert presence arises, so it's nobody's achievement. And this is the arising of a deeper essence in you when the awareness comes in which the conceptual mind that otherwise takes up most of your attention, so that most people are only peripherally aware of their surroundings, they still know where they're going, they have enough awareness of that, but beyond that, most of their attention, and that's unfortunately the normal state of humans, most of their attention is continuously being absorbed by thought processes, conceptualization, mental conceptualization.

With just enough attention left to their surroundings not to bump into furniture. And sometimes even not that. And this has become so normal for millions of humans, that state of complete absorption in the conceptualizing mind, so much so that your entire sense of who you are is derived from the conceptual mind, that certain ideas which are concepts of who you are, your history and so on, that you're thinking about and telling others about.

That's why when humans use the word I, usually they refer to that mind-made entity, one could say, that consists of conceptualization, it's a conceptualized sense of self. And that sense of self is never at ease, you might have noticed, in any situation. And very quickly finds something wrong with whatever situation that self finds itself in.

And it's, oh, very quickly something comes in, and if sometimes that subsides, and you go, ah, perhaps it just happens occasionally, that you simply suddenly become a present and aware, and suddenly there's a deep sense of peace and aliveness, and that perhaps lasts for a few minutes, and then the conceptualizing mind will look for a problem, there must be something wrong here, that I can think about, and that I can make into a problem, and then I feel, and then the conceptualizing mind feels it's in control again, because when you're peaceful, it's no longer in control, it's not running your life anymore. So we are burdened with this entity. It's almost a science fiction story, but I'm not going that way.

We can come up with all kinds of theories, and they exist if you look on the internet. Theories that at some point, something, those aliens did something to humans, and that's why we are in such a mess. That might even be true, I do not know.

What I do know, and what everybody can verify for themselves, is that the fact that we are in a mess is the case, look at human history, 20th century, if you think that there's nothing wrong with the human mind, read the history of the 20th century, as if you had never read it before, not as some familiar story, but as if you'd never read it before, let's say it's the history of another planet, and you read that, and then you read, no, this can't be true, what humans have killed in one century alone, not 100 million of their fellow humans, as it mentioned in the Power of Now, erroneously, but more closer to 180 million of their fellow humans. What?

This can't be right, it must be a misprint, it's inconceivable, in one century alone. So if you still doubt that there's a dysfunction embedded in the human mind, then you will definitely be convinced otherwise, if you read anything on 20th century history, or listen to the news tonight, or look at the lives of your relatives, a milder form of dysfunction, they perhaps don't go around with machine guns killing people, because we don't live in that time period, fortunately, unless they ascend to some country where these things are still happening right now, but most of them probably don't, but there's still a lot of really unnecessary conflict that humans generate continuously in their relationships. I call that excess baggage, when, because of their conditioned reactions, situations are blown up into drama, and we all know people who have a tendency of doing that, and some of you were there too at some point perhaps, not anymore of course.

But one needs to, the root of it is, lies in the collective mind, and you have access to the collective mind in your own mind, because there is ultimately no such thing as your own mind, your own mind is an aspect of the collective mind. So when we conceptualize reality, because our entire sense of self is derived from concepts, we lose the ability to sense the essential humanness of other humans, the essential, the essence in other humans, and we can, there's no empathy anymore, we cannot sense anymore the essential aliveness of the other. And when we have, because we have attached concepts to them, called them this or that, they have become conceptualized, of course first we have done it to ourselves, because our entire sense of self comes, whether it's a religious conceptualization, whether you call them the unbelievers and therefore they must be eliminated, or whether it's a political thing, it doesn't matter, the same pattern operates, loss of empathy, loss of the ability to have compassion towards other humans, because we live in a conceptualized reality, and then it can happen that violence towards other humans becomes so much easier, because you don't feel your essential oneness with them, you cannot feel their pain, because they are a concept in your mind. You have certain labels that you attach to them, and that's what they are to you.

But even all those humans who don't go around killing others, they also do it in a, not such an extreme form, but whenever you apply judgments to other humans and believe that your judgments are the essential reality of that, those humans, you are in some way inflicting the same thing on them. And it's a dreadful thing to do to them and to yourself. As somebody said, when you judge others, you are really judging yourself, you get trapped in that same, in that mindset.

And this is all part of the baggage that we carry, so we need to get out of that sense of self that is derived from thinking, ideas in the head about who we are, and who others are, and that's why we are here. So, to get out of that, there are a number of portals that you just need to know that they are available, a number of portals into the, an awakened state of consciousness where you are no longer controlled by the conditioning of your mind. For a while, it may still operate, but you are no longer trapped in it because something else has arisen in you.

And whatever you want to call it, I'm going to use several pointers because I'd like to give you a choice because some pointers work better for others, certain pointers work for certain people, and other pointers work for others better. So, we begin by using the portal of the present moment, and as our spiritual practice, especially here and now, in the next two or three days, our spiritual practice is to make the present moment the focal point of our attention. And that, in the first instance, means, as I said, noticing, paying attention to sense perceptions.

And already then, you will notice a shift happening inside you, you just, as your attention moves into sense perception, listening, hearing, there must be an alertness there, otherwise you can't even be aware of sense perceptions. That alertness replaces habitual thinking. And that's already, there's already a shift, the moment you pay attention to sense perceptions, without wanting anything, it's not a want, not that you want to pluck that flower because you want to take that flower home, or you, no, just noticing, a shift happens in your consciousness, and you may notice that shift, an alertness arises, and not only an alertness, an actual, there's a stillness that comes with that alertness. And at that moment, the mind-made sense of self subsides, and something else arises, and that is, whatever we want to call that, awareness, pure consciousness, stillness, an essence, a presence, an underlying presence that was always there, but you didn't know it, because it was continuously obscured by mostly unnecessary, futile thinking, so you couldn't sense your essential beingness, which is what that is, you could not sense your essential beingness because you were trapped in the surface layers of the mind. And as I'm talking now, I hope that when I say attention, the word attention, please, this is not some new thing to believe in, attention, okay, it's all about attention, I must, I have to ask some more questions about that, then it doesn't work, it's a pointer, so attention means, oh, and being aware of sense perceptions means this, and then you notice a miraculous thing, the sense perceptions, first of all you see aliveness and beauty around you which you hadn't seen before, even in an urban environment you will see aliveness and beauty, even the man-made things are alive in some way, they are all manifestations of the play of life, so even when you are in that aware presence, when you are not interpreting, you're just letting it be, of course the mind says, don't go there, you will lose control, this is not true, when you go there, a deeper intelligence begins to operate in your life, the conditioned mind loses control, that is true, but the unconditioned arises, but at first it seems to the human mind that you don't know anything anymore when you don't interpret all the time, and then you look at another human being without interpreting and you just look, and there's a beauty there, you don't need to call that human being anything, you don't need to judge, compartmentalise, no labelling, attaching some kind of label in order to feel secure, or immediately want something from them, or fear something, or compare yourself, is her or his body better than mine, I have to look more closely, I have to think about my body, or he looks more spiritual than me, must have been, or what's he doing here, he doesn't seem to be spiritual at all. But once you have decided on certain labels for certain people that you meet, whenever you meet that person again, the first thing that arises in your mind is those, the labels that you have already attached to them, so you're then no longer really interacting with another human, you're interacting with your mental labels, and vaguely behind that screen you still see there is another human but you can't really reach him or her, there's no true meeting anymore, there's only the conceptualised mind. So the beauty that comes with relinquishing the need, and this is our spiritual practice here, not just as we sit here, relinquishing the need to interpret, the need to label things, the need to call things something, and we can actually realise that we can be, you can be, the presence behind the sense perception.

And that alertness is a beautiful state, it is a very peaceful and alive state, a simple alert state of consciousness. And of course that's the essence of ancient teaching such as Zen is simply that, that's all there is to Zen, and people go to Zen monasteries and spend years there, can't figure it out. There was a Zen disciple in a monastery who had just spent a few years with a master and then he was going away to, back into normal, every Sunday, please give me something to remind me of the essential teaching of Zen, just please write down a few words for me to remind me.

Of course that already means he didn't get it in all those years. And so the master wrote, of course it was in Japan, so there's the symbol with the ink brush, there it is. And the disciple looks, oh, and it reads attention.

And the disciple says, okay, can you just write a little bit more please? And the master takes it back, the scroll or paper, and tries again, and the disciple reads, attention, attention. The disciple says, attention?

What does it mean, attention? I don't understand. And the master looks at him and says, attention means attention.

That's the end of the story, Zen stories are like that. You only understand them when you get the essence of Zen and then you understand the story. Attention means attention.

Ah, oh, okay, thank you, got it. And of course, some of you may be familiar with the story which I haven't told in a long time. There was the Zen master who, whenever he was asked to explain the meaning of Zen, and again, you can't really explain the meaning, the essence of Zen, you can't explain it.

You have to get it some other way. Whenever he was asked, he became famous because whenever they asked him about to explain Zen, his teaching consisted of a raised finger. And not only a raised finger, but of course, together with the raised finger came the entire energy field of attention.

That was the answer, that's the essence of Zen. So there wasn't just the raised finger, that was the outer reality, but behind the raised finger, there was the emanation of presence or attention. So what's the meaning of Zen?

And a few people got it, and many others didn't. And of course, those who didn't said, well, did you hear my question? So this is, to be able to do that, to discover in yourself that you are able to be the present behind the perception, is a beautiful thing.

And many of you already have discovered it, and if you are new to this, some of you, look at it as an experiment. You have nothing to lose. You are welcome, of course, and quite free to go back to your normal reality when you get home, but just spending these days here, or wherever you are at home, as an experiment in consciousness, why not?

You've lived in one particular consciousness all your life, and that wasn't that great. Why not try something else, and see what that feels like, and what that does. And so, it's particularly helpful if you are in nature, of course.

If you live in a city, when you become, this becomes more deeply established in you, it's easy to do in a city, too, to perceive in that way. But initially, it's easier to perceive in this way the natural things, because they do not stimulate thought as much as the man-made things do. Man-made things tend to stimulate thinking much more.

So, if you want to be present on Madison Avenue, where I walked along the other day, for ten blocks, just perceiving all that enormous flux of energy fields, humans, cars, car horns, and it was a wonderful experience. It was simply like floating along a sea, a stream of energy, and it's actually, it's a manifestation of life, of aliveness in that particular form. And walking along Madison Avenue for ten blocks with virtually no thought in my head, the most wonderful experience.

And then back on Park Avenue, the same way. But that's a somewhat more advanced practice. Because otherwise, if you go to Madison Avenue, immediately, you are drawn into the same nervous state that most humans are in.

But of course, it's energy. It's good. It can be transformed into awakening.

There's a shorter way, probably, from the nervous state of high intensity of energy, or the little bit mad, sometimes, or more than a little sometimes. Little bit mad, but probably easier to shift there into presence than sitting around a street corner all day long in a state of semi-sleep. As in some places that seem very relaxed, you go to some countries where it's hot and tropical or whatever.

People sit there. Everybody seems totally relaxed. And they say, oh, they must all be enlightened.

But probably they are, perhaps because of the heat, they are beginning to fall below thinking. They're not rising above thinking. So, easier than Madison Avenue is the trees.

Look at the trees and the sky and listen to the sound of the breeze and the leaves, this wonderful sound as I was walking here. Oh, there's a beauty in that. This is what poets hear and then they write about it.

This is the things that you can only notice when you are, when your attention is there. And there's no, there's no person there that imposes something on the sense perceptions. So, that is your, that is your practice.

And not only, now we come to the deeper level. When you notice sense perceptions, that I called them, you may remember I called those things the surface of the present moment. So, you're becoming, you're entering the present moment through the portal of the now.

And the now, first of all, is realized as and through sense perceptions. And then, you may also notice an essential presence that is you, without which there would be no sense perception. You notice, we, one could say your essential presence is not yours, by the way, we're just using those words temporarily.

You're sensing your essential presence not as the person, because you're not remembering your story at that moment, or your problems, because at that moment there is no problem, of course, it's only in the mind. Unless a dog runs towards you about to attack you, but that's not a problem, it's a talent and then you have to take action in the moment. You sense also the underlying, an underlying essence, or aliveness, or presence, or stillness, I'm giving you a choice of pointers, without which you wouldn't be able to perceive anything, there would be no perception.

So what it is that you sense, we could call that consciousness itself, before consciousness becomes a thought, the unconditioned consciousness, the spaciousness, the formless, the spirit, the divine spirit, the light of consciousness, Jesus called it the light, sometimes he used that expression, it's the, you are the light of the world, he said to his disciples, who were not VIPs, but simple fishermen, so he wasn't telling them that they were very special as personalities, but he said, you are the light of the world, and he's, and this is not something to believe in, or to then go to the church and repeat, you, I am the, you are the light of the world, no, it's a pointer, that is, it's meant to you, to take you to that realization, that, what does it mean light of the world, without the light there's nothing, you wouldn't see anything. So it's not that which you perceive is lovely, but that which makes the perception possible, there's an Upanishad that actually talks about that, the ancient scripture of India, not that which you perceive, but that which makes perception possible, know that to be the eternal, and not what people here adore, not your thoughts, but that which makes thinking possible, know that to be the eternal, and not what people here adore, and so on.

What people here adore is the world of form, but that which underlies it is the formless essence, so there is an essence reality in you, and without that, you've really missed the purpose of your life in this particular incarnation, which is not that tragic on a universal level, because one incarnation is a brief consciousness moving into this particular form, and then withdrawing from the form, the one consciousness moving into all these forms, withdrawing, so if you could see a speeded up version of your life, then of course you would see you grow, and then you shrink, and then you dissolve, and that was your life. But that's the form. Now that was an attempt of consciousness to enter this dimension, and it's a wonderful thing when it does happen, and that's the purpose beyond whatever, you have a purpose of course on a personal level, also whatever life gives you to do on a personal level is fine, that needs to be honoured also, you have a function as a parent perhaps, so you have a job to do, you have a creative endeavour, you're creating something, all these are wonderful things, they need to be honoured, and also given attention to, but in themselves they are not really enough to bring you to a sense of fulfilment and true inner peace and aliveness, and knowing yourself as something far deeper than the personality, the person.

So it all then begins with sense perceptions, this is the surface of the present moment, and then the deeper dimension of the present moment is presence itself, which you sense as that which underlies sense perceptions. Let's do it right now, if you're not there already. Your entire life, of course, if you bring it down to essentials, your entire life consists of sense perceptions, thoughts and feelings, that's about it, isn't it?

So sense perception means whatever happens around you, you register it through your senses, of course, so all the events in your life and the people you relate to, you register, you know all these things through your senses, which then transmit signals to the brain, which decodes the signals, it's a miraculous process, and suddenly a world arises. So sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions become your life. Right now that means there is this room, the totality of this room, and your visual perception of this room, and the sounds that you hear, and your awareness of, you can touch your body, or you can touch the chair you're sitting on, or you can touch your hand and you can feel that, it's also sense perception.

You can breathe in, it's also sense perception, you feel the air moving in, and you may have certain emotions right now, certain feelings, perhaps it feels good, perhaps not so good, but it's there, and certain thoughts, if you still have thoughts, that occasionally come into your head and they arise, they say something about this, where we are, where you are, there may be expectations that have not been met, because you haven't achieved enlightenment yet in the first 30 minutes, thoughts arise, and they go, and another thought comes and goes, those are all part of that which makes up your life, and it all very quickly fades and becomes something else, like a dream. Is there anything that we missed? Thoughts, sense perceptions, feelings.

How is it possible for thoughts, sense perceptions, feelings to be? Oh, there is someone there who has these thoughts, sense perceptions, and feelings, and that someone is not the person that you think you are, because the person consists of thoughts, sense perceptions, and feelings, so there is something deeper in which those arise, and that is the underlying presence. Now at this moment, can you feel yourself as that underlying presence that is deeper than thinking?

And it may be helpful, you may find that you can feel the entire, you can feel that presence in your entire energy field, the body, not the external body, but an inherent sense of aliveness that pervades the entire body, right now. Don't believe your mind when it says, oh, I can't feel that, you can, you can feel the aliveness in your hands, your arms, your feet, there is a global sense of presence, it's not just a head presence, your entire being becomes present in that, and that's a beautiful state of peace and stillness and intense aliveness, and that is the, becomes the basis for the sense of who you are, not the story in your head, not the conceptualized sense of self, but something more vital and more real, infinitely more real than the conceptualization in the head, and then the conceptualized self is fine, it goes about, it will still do things, you think things, you go about your life, talking about things, meeting people, there's nothing wrong with that, I'm not saying you get rid of it, no, but you transcend it, it still operates, actually in a less dysfunctional way, when you know who you are beyond any idea in your head, because otherwise who you are is an accumulation of ideas in your head about who you are, reinforced by other people's ideas about who you are, so it's a, this is how looking at a tree can bring you to self-realization, looking at a tree, which is beautiful in itself, in itself it's lovely, even if you don't go any deeper, it's lovely to truly perceive the aliveness and beauty all around you, which many humans miss all the time because they're too absorbed in the head, the problem making faculty in the head, so we are here then to discover or deepen that dimension in ourselves, and it begins with simple things like noticing the noises around you, the flowers, the birds, the sky, and then noticing that there's an alertness there, and a still alert presence, and in that your past becomes irrelevant in that alert presence, also whether you are young or old becomes irrelevant, it has nothing to do with that alert still presence, whether your body is, looks good or not good becomes irrelevant, whether your success or failure in the eyes of the world or in your own eyes becomes irrelevant also, whether everything you've done in your life has been a mistake becomes irrelevant and not only that, you actually realize it wasn't a mistake, because it has brought me to this point of realization, if I hadn't made all the mistakes and made me unhappy, I wouldn't realize, I haven't realized it, I would still be immersed in the illusory reality, so that's the, my life was like that, one mistake after another and nothing really worked on the external level, because I was more concerned with being the presence, so I didn't pay that much attention to, until I started writing a book, and my relatives and particularly my mother thought I had wasted my whole life, never achieved anything, had to reach the age of 50 without achieving, almost 50 without achieving anything, and then finally, ah, a book, he wrote a book, oh that's great.

Now finally he is somebody. Now strongly linked to the attention in which you let go of labeling or if mental labeling of things happen, you just don't follow it, if a thought comes about what you are perceiving, see it's only a thought that arises and don't follow it where it wants to take you, just let it go again, and another thought may arise or they may not even arise. So you are beginning then to experience the most amazing transformation possible for humans, an evolutionary leap, one could almost say, by realizing that you are able to relate to external reality, not always having to relate to external reality through concepts, but you can also relate to external reality through awareness, and you have a choice.

When you look at another human, you can be the awareness or the presence and become still and alert and look at them and then you are truly meeting them, or you can be the person and label that other person and have certain interpretations about them and believe in them completely and then think that that is who they are. Simple people do things like somebody lies to you and then you say to your friend, he is a liar, and then you call up another friend, you know what he did, he lied to me, he is a liar. What you have done, he may have lied to you, but now you have made him into a liar and this is a big label that you stick on his head and next time you meet him, that label already obscures who that person is because you are meeting the liar.

And whenever you talk about him, you talk about him as this is a conceptualized reality. Now it's even possible that he lies continuously to everybody. It's possible some humans are like that, so you might say, well, I'm not quite, this isn't completely wrong because he lies all the time, so he is a liar.

But you are still, the fact that he lies a lot may be a true fact, but if then you create a conceptualized reality for him and call him a liar, that is where you make it impossible for you to relate to him and also in some way you prevent him from going beyond that behavior pattern because you impose it on him by your judgment. So what you now expect him to do and everybody else believes it, they all expect him to lie and he does. Humans are connected in their interactions and if you are not fully conscious, your expectations to a large extent determine people's behavior towards you and the expectations are governed by the conceptualizing mind.

And that's why there's this story that you may have heard, there's a man sitting in a small town in a cafe, an old man, and a man approaches him and says, oh, are you a native here? You live here? Yes, and the man says, I'm thinking of moving here, do you think it's a good place to live?

And what are the people like here? And the old man says, well, what were the people like where you used to live? And the man says, well, oh, they were dreadful, they were dishonest, deceitful, full of envy and malice, I just can't stand that place anymore, I have to get out.

Okay, then the old man says, it's very much the same here. And the next day, the old man sits again in the cafe and somebody else turns up, by coincidence, and says, my wife and I are thinking of moving here because we like this town, what are the people like? And the man says, well, what were the people like where you come from?

And he says, oh, they're great, they're helpful, kind, couldn't be nicer people. And the old man says, it's very much the same here. And of course, the old man is right.

You create according to your conditioning, your conditioning to a large extent determines the way in which you experience other people and reality. And when you go beyond your conditioning, you reach a place where you give the greatest gift to other humans that you can give, and that is the gift of your pure attention. When you look at somebody and you give them attention, there's an outflow of energy towards them.

Just look, and attention means, pure attention is you're not labeling anymore, it's not, you're just looking, perceiving, and there's an outflow, perhaps they are talking to you, there's an outflow. Attention is energy, or you give attention to a child. Many parents can't do that because they're continuously saying to the child, do this, don't do that, now we must do that, get ready for this.

There's always something, there's never pure attention really. There's always something to sort out and to make better. Of course, those things have their place.

Brush your teeth, of course they need to brush their teeth, but if that's the only reality of do this, do that, come to, there's never that spaciousness which is attention, giving it to the other. And the child can feel that, if you give a child, you just look at the child and you listen to the child, or look. It's a beautiful thing, there's a flow, and then something comes back to you from the other, because ultimately attention is a form, we can almost say a form of love, in a deeper sense.

There's a giving, an outflow. Of course it's not your personal, it's not something of your personal belonging that you give, attention comes through you, it doesn't come from you, it comes through you from the Divine, the One Consciousness, and you become an opening for that. And then the way in which you experience reality changes dramatically, a wonderful shift happens, situations are no longer, life in general is no longer perceived as hostile, it becomes helpful.

And again, when you look at a tree, or you listen to the sounds, that's the outflow of attention, and attention of course is just a word, it's a mysterious, ultimately unnameable energy that is, goes, it has no form. And you can become an opening for that, and then it begins to live through you, that essence, and express itself through you, in what form it expresses itself varies from person to person. But it begins to, it could just be that you become more, you stay where you are, become more kind, and loving, and not because you're thinking, I need to be kind and loving, that doesn't work, you can try very hard, love your neighbor as yourself, okay, I'll try.

Except that guy, and that one, when you feel that you are, something is living through you, without being obstructed anymore, it was living through you before also, but only a trickle. It's a little bit like, let's imagine you are a ripple on the surface of the ocean, and the ripple, for a moment, which is a lifetime for the ripple, forgets that it is part of the ocean, and it's only an expression, a brief expression of the totality in this particular form. And the ripple thinks, I'm a ripple, that's my life, that's my ripple life, my life, the ripple thinks that its life is its own, it doesn't know it is the ocean, and then of course the ripple becomes unhappy.

It doesn't realize that it is the ocean. But once the ripple realizes it is the ocean, and now we have to let go of this analogy, because then something happens to the ripple that would not happen to a normal ripple, that's why we let him go. It becomes a beautiful formation suddenly.

Oh, and now the ocean is expressing itself fully through that. So use every moment here, and when I say every moment, it's not entirely correct, there is no such thing as every moment, there is only this moment. Well, I've never met any other moment, I can't find any other, it's always been this moment, so in language one says every moment, or many moments, but ultimately there is no such thing, there is only the appearance of many moments, because there is always something different that arises, that changes all the time.

In the space of consciousness, things arise and subside, and arise and subside, thoughts, emotions, perceptions, experiences, come and go, and so when you only see the surface, then you think everything that arises, this is one moment that arises, and one moment that arises, and the next moment that, but of course it's not really like that, because it all arises in the present moment. Which is eternal. And the present moment, the deeper meaning of it, of course is that the present moment is consciousness itself.

That's what the real meaning of the power of now is, of what the now is, it's not what happens, the now in its deeper sense is not what happens, it's the space in which everything happens, and that space is eternal, in other words timeless, and that space is you, in your essence. Oh, but this is not of course something to believe in, but to sense that spaciousness in you as that which underlies all perceptions and all thinking. So the shift in consciousness or the evolutionary leap in consciousness is from being exclusively identified with form, the me, the thought forms of me, to being rooted in the dimension of the formless.

So this is why I sometimes say, although again, don't believe, don't take these words as absolutely true, they are only temporary pointers, one could almost say they are two halves to who you are. And most humans only know one half, which is the form, the physical form and the psychological form, the ideas they have about themselves, the stories and so on. The one half is your form identity, the other half, which most humans don't know themselves as, is the more essential, the essence identity that is formless, that you cannot know.

The other half you can know, but the formless essence identity, you cannot know it because it is the essence through which everything is known, this is why it is sometimes called the I, the eternal I am, the timeless eternal I am. And that's why Jesus said, you cannot, the kingdom of heaven, which is the dimension of the formless, which is, kingdom means dimension, my translation of kingdom is dimension, because we don't have many kingdoms anymore, so the language is old fashioned. The kingdom of heaven is, and heaven is, now in many languages, heaven, the word heaven is the same word as the word sky, in German, in French, in Spanish, heaven is and sky are the same word.

And for that reason, when Jesus used the kingdom of heaven, Christians for many centuries, they always looked, where is it? And a Russian astronaut said, when he came back from space, I went up into the heavens and I didn't find God there. So the word can be very misleading because it becomes a place where you look for God, but the kingdom of heaven is already God, the kingdom of heaven and God are the same thing, no thing.

And heaven is, now when you look up at the sky, of course, there is a vast expanse there, a vast spaciousness, whether it's the night sky or daytime sky, a vast spaciousness. So it's the dimension of vast spaciousness, this is my translation of the kingdom of heaven, the dimension of vast spaciousness that is not, as Jesus said, it's not out here, you can't say, oh, there it is, or no, it's over here, that's my translation again. But I tell you the kingdom of heaven is within you, it's the essential dimension of who you are beyond form.

And the moment your thinking mind ceases in between two thoughts, right now, in between two thoughts, what is left of you? A spaciousness that at first seems like nothing and then you sense it is a presence and it is essentially who I am. And to live in connectedness with that and ask that as the foundation for your life that is awakened living and that's why we are here.

And as you go to bed tonight, for a few minutes, lie on your back, on your bed, in the spaciousness of presence and feel that presence with your entire body. So that you may almost find that these cells begin to tingle with presence almost, it's an aliveness. And then you begin to see that aliveness is not confined to the body, you are surrounded by that presence also, so it is within and without.

And there is no thought in that, there is no thought, there is just being it. And from there, perhaps you can go to sleep and when you wake up in the morning before you do anything else or get out of bed, again lie on your back and feel yourself as presence. And then open your eyes and look around and as you look around the room, continue to feel the energy field of presence.

That makes it easy to look without labeling anything, just pure perception. This is a little bit like a child would perceive the world where conceptualization hasn't happened yet. But there is an added dimension when you do it because you have gone through conceptualization, there is a deeper knowing now.

But this is the reason why Jesus said, you must become as little children if you want to enter the kingdom of heaven. Little children are not burdened by conceptualization, by the conceptualizing mind. Now we are not going back to the child stage, we are transcending the human stage, the intermediate stage of dysfunctional humans.

And we are becoming, we could say, fully, completely human. So far we are only going towards it, have been going towards it. Unless you become like little children, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

And then of course you can only understand that if you look at a one year old and look into their eyes and see, sense the consciousness that's there that has not yet been obscured by conceptualization. And it's beautiful, you go, ah, ah, because it opens something in you. When you see that, it triggers that opening in you where you can sense that in yourself.

When you go, ah, then really what happens is for a moment you join with that child in the non-conceptual state of consciousness. And of course it opens your heart in colloquial language. It opens your heart, this is what presence does, and you go, ah, and that's the beauty of it.

Even a dog can do that to you. You look into the eyes of a dog, and the tail, and you go, ah, so sweet, that sweetness of being coming through the eyes. Or a cat, and rubs itself against your legs, and you go, ah, and you can sense the being there.

And so those animals are more rooted in being still. Humans, of course, are still also in being, but they don't know it anymore. They've become externalized through the mind, and they can no longer sense their rootedness, their oneness with the one, so to speak.

So the animal, I say, the animal or anything natural has integrity that most humans don't have anymore, but they can regain it at an even deeper level. Integrity, of course, really means, translated, being one with who you are. Not being divided, split into two, and suddenly have an identity that you can be concerned about and talk about my life.

What's my, I have to think about my life now. And then you have a relationship with yourself. I hate myself, but I'm trying to love myself.

Of course, loving yourself is better than hating yourself, much better. But I would suggest there is a way beyond also loving yourself, and that is called being yourself. Because when you love yourself, there's still a duality there.

There's the self that you love, and maybe one day you don't love it. But if you are yourself, then you become an expression of love. You are one with the one, and then love, just true love flows through you.

So self-images humans have, they are problematic self-images. Hmm, me. No dog has a self-image.

No dog has a problem with self-esteem. Even the ugliest dog, in the eyes of humans, is simply in itself. It doesn't have a mental image of this is me, this is me.

But we are not regressing. We are transcending that intermediate stage of where we think we are our mind, whatever our mind tells us who we are. So, that's our essential practice.

And it's about the most, well, not about, it is the most vital and the most important thing in your so-called life. Although, of course, it's not your life at all. I'm just saying it.

It's just words. There's no such thing as your life, because you don't have it. It's not yours.

You are it. If you say you have a life, there's a duality there of you and life, which is absurd. There is no you, or let's say I, there is no I apart from life.

I can't say my life, really, although I sometimes use those words. It's colloquial language, semantics. But I, I don't, I cannot have a life.

You cannot have life. It's not your life. People think they are independent, little independent life entities with their own life.

It's, but, of course, it's not possible. You cannot have your own life. You can only be an expression of the one life moving through a temporary form.

It's obvious, isn't it, that when you say my life, or he lost his life, or I don't want to lose my life, it's all erroneous, it's created, a delusion created by conceptual, by language and concepts that you have a life. You can't, because that would imply that there is a life and then there's you. And you have it, but what are you without life?

There is no you without life. It's an absurd duality created by conceptualization. You are life.

I am life. You are, I am, temporary brief expressions in form of the one formless essence which goes into billions of life forms on this planet alone, let alone the rest of the galaxy and other galaxies. And it moves, it becomes form, it goes into forms, billions of, and it evolves in time on this dimension, or in the essential dimension, there is no time.

And it forms, come and go. And it's all one, it's all one. So, it's quite a relief, ultimately, that your life is not yours, you are an expression of the one.

Oh, so I don't really need to worry about my life, because I don't have a life. That's right, you don't, but of course, in the world of form, you still need to do things, you need to honor that, but coming from essence, the essence then flows into the doing. And that's what this is all about.

I will leave you now to your night time practice, and we are meeting again in the now, in what we call tomorrow, which of course doesn't really exist, and you will know that it doesn't exist tomorrow morning, because I'll ask you, is this tomorrow? Hello?

[Speaker 11] (1:20:49 - 1:20:51)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:21:36 - 3:33:45)

Welcome back. It's the now again. I thought we were going to meet tomorrow.

No. Also welcome to those of you who are not in this room, but elsewhere on the planet. Very pleasant here outside, pleasantly cool temperature, ideal for walking.

Hard to believe that according to the weather forecast, within 48 hours, the temperature is going to go up to around low 90s or 36 centigrade. We'll see if that's true. And that'll be good practice too.

As you sit here, a good way of being here, sitting here while you listen, or even just sit, is to have part of your attention in the inner sense of aliveness of your body, the inner sense of aliveness that pervades the body. Then the temptation, or the gravitational pull of the habitual mind, lessens, and it can become for you an anchor for staying present in the now. And that's an interesting thing.

Right now, what I'm talking about and recommending to you, I'm also, of course, feeling that very strongly, as I sit here, a very powerful sense of aliveness throughout the entire body. So some of your attention is there. There's still more than enough attention left for auditory perception, more than you need.

So you are present within, and present without. Now what is it that you sense within you? We don't really need to attach a name to it.

We can say, well, it's universal life energy. It's chi. It's the bridge between the world of form and this formless source of all life, halfway.

Whatever it is, it feels wonderful and good. To be present within, I'd like to get, when this afternoon we have our first question and answer session, some feedback from some of you to see how you're getting on with that practice. Then it becomes habitual, almost, that you are present in yourself while engaging in activities and even thinking.

You can still think and nevertheless feel that sense of aliveness within. Another wonderful benefit of that is you're not dependent on some external stimulus to make you feel alive. Because when you're not in touch with the inherent sense of aliveness, then you're up here in the upper story of the house, the loft.

You inhabit only the loft of a big building and you never venture down into the rest of the building. And up in the loft you go, OK, what can I do now? And if there's nothing, then what you can always do is think about your problems.

And if you have enough problems, as everybody does, then at least it gives you a sense of, I must still be alive because my life is full of problems. And not only that, that mind also then loves to create problems for others. And that is called drama.

Problems between two or more people is called drama. And in relationships it's often the case that couples feel there's something wrong with our relationship, we haven't had any drama in a whole week. Are we still having a relationship?

Another subtle thing on another level, it gives the egoic sense of self a sense of self-importance to have all these problems. My life is so important. I have far more problems than you.

Or as my dad used to say, whenever somebody said, I have a headache, he said, you have a headache? I've had a headache for weeks. So that puts the ego down of the other person.

Oh. And that of course is a pattern that operates in many people, not necessarily with headaches, but you have problems, let me tell you about mine. Oh.

Interesting pattern. So then of course other ways in which that self in the upper story, in the loft, seeks some kind of heightened sense of aliveness through whatever there is a grasping. What can I take in next to add to me, to give me more of a sense of fulfillment?

And so it used to be, it could be things like picking up magazines and you go. And no page is really satisfying, but maybe the next one is. Or make a totally pointless phone call.

Now that used to be like that, but nowadays of course we have, technology is much more advanced, so there are other things we can do that are even more stimulating and addictive. We can go on the internet, this vast world that suddenly opens up and go into all kinds of futile channels and oh, maybe there's more there. It used to be just changing the channels on a TV set, but we've long gone beyond that.

There's far more stimulus now for the mind that's seeking more and more stimulus. And it becomes addictive. Of course anybody who uses that thing knows through self-observation, I can feel it once I start looking at YouTube.

One thing leads to another. And another, and then there's related videos and others. Oh God.

And it's always that reaching out and I need to take in something more. Where can I get the next more? And if it's not that, then of course it's the search for some new stimulus through a new affair.

I'm looking for somebody to, so you go to a bar, well most of you don't perhaps have gone far beyond that stage. And then you look for that. It's just another search for the next thing to fulfill you.

And there's always, from the basis behind that, there's that sense, there's always that sense of unfulfillment. We could call that state not enough. Or we could call it something missing here.

And that unconscious assumption, belief of feeling something missing here, not enough, is prevalent. It's there in virtually everybody who has not gone beyond the egoic mind, who is still totally identified with the egoic mind. So underlying then your whole existence, without you knowing it, it's an unconscious underlying belief or assumption, this is not enough, I'm not enough, I can't get enough, something is missing.

You may, if you observe your own life, I'm just using those words, your life, as you know you don't have a life. We are just using words. If you observe your own life, you can, or you remember before you awakened spiritually, how it was, maybe it sometimes occasionally still is, that sense of something not right.

And it's always, of course, in the present moment that something is not right, because that's the only thing you ever have. So the permanent place where something is not right is the present moment. But the present moment happens to be the only thing there is.

That's a dreadful state to be in, of course. It's called normal. And then the civilization creates all kinds of things to perhaps obscure that feeling of not enough, to mask it, to satisfy it.

But of course it never is satisfied, because it's not to do about what is missing. It's a structure in the mind. It's not to do with content, because no matter what content you add, it's not going to be it.

There'll still be something missing. I talked to somebody who achieved enormous success in the world, became extremely wealthy, and then bought a huge mansion overlooking the Pacific Ocean. And at first it was very satisfying.

And then he realized he was beginning to spend most of his time in just two rooms out of the 35 rooms. And then he was feeling a bit lost, wandering through the other 33 rooms. Okay, is that it?

And then he had to invite people, a cocktail party. And that at first was fulfilling too, and then not another one. And it got too much too.

So maybe that huge house is not that fulfilling either. There's still something missing. And there always will be.

Because the answer is not on the level of content. Nothing that you can add to yourself is going to free you of that feeling of not enough. I am not enough.

This moment is not enough. Or another perspective on this is to say another aspect of it is there's something wrong here. That's another aspect of that feeling.

And so imagine millions of humans walking around the world with a continuous underlying sense of there's something wrong here. And of course they create a whole civilization in which there is something wrong. Because if you create out of your state of consciousness, so then awakening is the realization that the answer is not out there at all.

And some people only get there when they have all the things that they thought would be fulfilling and then realize there's still something missing, something vital missing. And so we reach the simplicity of directing our attention away from the mind and its restless movements and feel the inherent aliveness in the inner energy field. And from there we can begin to, as I pointed out yesterday, look around and actually enter the present moment with our attention without feeling that there is something missing in it.

That's an enormous advance when you can consciously inhabit the present moment without feeling this isn't enough. I'm not meant to be here. Why am I here?

I don't want to be where I am. I don't want to be with the people that I'm with. I don't want to be doing what I'm doing.

I want to be somewhere, anywhere but here. And that is a great liberation. And you notice immediately a shift in your entire inner energy field as you feel the inherent sense of aliveness and then from there you perceive whatever is around you.

You look, you listen and you realize it's actually quite beautiful, this moment. You acknowledge it. You acknowledge the aliveness of it.

In everything, in every other human, that before humans were... What are they doing here? Or as Jean-Paul Sartre said, hell is other people.

Les autres, the others, that was the literal translation. Hell is the others. And that's again part of not feeling totally alienated from life because you are totally alienated from the present moment which is where life is.

So for the first time then suddenly actually you discover subtleties about the present moment and your surroundings that were always there but you didn't know it. You discover how satisfying it is to watch a leaf quivering on a tree, quivering in the slight breeze and you see things that before were just unimportant because you had other things on your mind. I've got other things on my mind.

I haven't got time to look at the leaves. And you see suddenly... And there's a subtle sound when hundreds of leaves on the tree go like this.

Oh, the world is alive. And it's almost as if as you come to life you can feel that not only your body is pervaded by this field of aliveness it's also externally the entire world around you is pervaded by a presence. And you can most clearly feel that when you're out in nature.

And when you're very advanced in your present moment ability to inhabit the present moment fully you can even sense it in the city. But let's wait with that. Let's put that aside for a moment.

So in nature, in other words, you discover something that for many humans makes no sense at all that we could call sacredness. There is a dimension there that you acknowledge. There is a presence there that is not separate from your own presence but it is...

All the things you see or hear are an expression of that aliveness that which inhabits the forms. And so... Oh, suddenly the mind has stopped.

Oh no, it wasn't the mind, it was the air conditioning. And we never even knew that that noise was there until it stopped. So many humans, they live with this...

The mind never stops. They don't even know that they have this voice in their head that never stops talking until something happens and suddenly they go... Oh!

Oh, and suddenly they really look at something or someone and they're fully there. And suddenly they go, Oh, this is how pleasant life can actually be. And nothing has changed externally.

So that's... The present moment practice then brings about a shift in consciousness. And you notice the sacredness that otherwise is just a concept.

Sacred? What do you mean by sacred, says the mind. Sacred?

What is that sacred? Can you define it? And of course, no matter how you define it, that still is not it.

It's like writing a PhD about honey and never having tasted it. So I'm sure there are learned PhDs about sacredness, holiness, the holy. But whether the author actually has tasted it, I don't know.

And it's so immediate that I usually avoid language that is too religious because most religious terms have been used for so many centuries and misused and misunderstood that they are burdened with all these misunderstandings and distortions. But I'll just say it. There's a sense of a sacred presence that is both within and without.

You can only get that when the mind becomes still and an alertness arises instead of the mental noise. The alertness takes the place of the mental noise. And then you feel something that is beyond concepts or words.

There is a presence there, both within and without, of which you are an inseparable part, not an otherness. A presence of which you are an inseparable part, and yet a presence that is vast. And to feel your connectedness with that, and connectedness, again, is not even the right word because it's your oneness with it, that liberates you from the sense of not enough or something missing.

Because when you sense the presence, which I sometimes call your own presence, but of course it's not your own, there's nothing that's your own. When you sense the presence, that frees you from the habitual dissatisfaction of the mind, the mental, the mind-made sense of self. And you become also, of course it frees you from the egoic self, and you become simple and present.

And something arises that is sometimes called, or an acknowledgement of that sacred presence, that you find both in the forms that you see, but also formless, a formless presence, but it shines also through the life forms that you see all around you. And the acknowledgement of that, one could call that, because you may have heard, you may practice, have practiced, be practicing in your life, the very important thing called gratitude. And that is really, in a deeper or wider sense, the acknowledgement of that, the sacredness of the present moment, is an act of gratitude also.

And even if you're a Buddhist who says, well a Buddhist asked me, well gratitude, I don't believe in a god, some entity there, Buddhists don't, but so who am I grateful to if I have gratitude, if I don't believe in a god? Who am I grateful to? You don't need to be grateful to, gratefulness can be a state of consciousness that does not require an object that says, I'm grateful to you, that is just appreciation of the beauty and sacredness of life.

And that is really great, that appreciation, that acknowledgement, is really gratefulness also. So you don't need to say, I'm grateful to you. Of course, and if you do believe in god, the important thing is that the belief becomes an actual realization that ultimately, there is a place where you and god merge.

And you are not separate from the one. You're an aspect of the one. And even as we talk now, I can still feel the aliveness in the inner energy field.

When you're walking in nature, here or wherever, walking is a very helpful thing because you can only take one step at a time. So you can have some of your attention on the step you're taking at this moment, still capable of reaching your destination. When you pay attention to the step you're taking at this moment doesn't mean you lose your ability to reach your destination because you forget where you're going, because there's only one step.

It means the focus of your attention is on the step you're taking now. You may not be able to feel the inner body so much when you're moving, but your attention can be on the movement. So you feel there can be, again, a sacredness.

Now let's change the term. Equality. When a movement that your body performs is imbued with consciousness, with presence, when you are present in the movement, there is a sense of, for lack of a better word, or maybe it is a good word, quality in the movement that you perform.

And this you can only observe in yourself when the mind is somewhere else. You need to reach the next moment, which is so more important than this one, and the mind is trying to get there. And in the meantime you are moving, or performing some kind of work that you need to get to.

Lack of quality. Now, if you compare that with movement that are imbued with presence, then the walking, and not even necessarily much slower than before, you can even walk faster, and there can still be presence, but there's a presence in every step, in every movement. You can pack your suitcase, let's say you're running late, and you have to go to the airport, and you're not fully packed yet, usually that would be a very stressful thing, because your mind says, I need to be at the airport already, but I'm still packing here, and all kinds of stress arises, the mental projection of future, and you don't really want to be here, you want to be there.

And if anything like that happens, you can actually practice, you can still, can I be present even now, even in that situation, with every movement, rather than projecting myself mentally, and then your attention is on, and you're actually beginning to enjoy the high energy of that, you're moving actually fast, but without the mental projection away from the present moment. That means you're still moving without stress, at the same speed as you would be moving under enormous stress. So you do not become less effective, or so slow that you'll immediately be fired from your job, or you can't reach, you don't get anywhere anymore in time, you're so present that you never look at your watch again, and you miss every appointment, it's not like that.

I'm usually on time, I love to be on time, and I wear a watch, people say, you wear a watch? I thought, there's nothing wrong with the practical aspect of time, it makes life easier, we're talking about the psychological time. So, there it comes, and then you close the suitcase, and then you run to the car or the taxi, and still present, enjoy the high energy of that moment, and whether or not you catch the plane is not that important anymore.

If you miss it, at least you feel alive. So, you miss the plane, and you sit somewhere else, instead of sitting on the plane, you sit in the airport seat. You always either sit, stand or walk somewhere, does it really matter where?

It's only the mind that tells you, I should be somewhere else. So, that comes then, we go from sensing the sacred presence, within and without, to gratitude, to not projecting yourself away from the present moment into the future, and nevertheless, be capable of performing, and performing more beautifully, whatever it is that you're performing, any action that you take, a sense of quality, comes into your life. And sometimes you can sense the quality in an object that has been made by a human in that state of consciousness of attention, where it wasn't rushed, it wasn't machine made on the conveyor, there was a human being who paid attention to the making of this object, there was presence, and sometimes an object can be imbued with a sense of quality that humans can feel because of the way, of the energy that went into the making of it. But more important than, of course, than anything you make is that energy field itself. So that quality of life is related very strongly to your state of consciousness, not so much to the external things of your life.

And so, you may remember, I believe I mentioned in the Power of Now, every human has a life situation and also there's a life situation and there's life. And we are here to go deeply into, to discover, to go deeply into the life that you are so that, this is another aspect of this vital realization so that the life that you are, the consciousness that you are is not continuously obscured by your life situation. There needs to be a balance in your life, your life, not to be taken too literally, there needs to be a balance in your life between your life situation and your ability to be present as life.

Now, life situation, everybody has one. Life situation, I have a life situation, you have a life situation. What is it?

What are the ingredients of a life situation? The ingredients of a life situation are where you live, your home circumstances, your work situation, your financial situation, your health situation, your relationships, the general, the work that you do, I mentioned that already, the sense of purpose in what you do. So, basically then, health, finances, relationships, home situation, your life situation.

And, for many people, of course, life situation is something problematic. It's, is it working for me? And it's very rare that it actually works totally smoothly for too long.

There's always things that creep in there that, where there was, there's order for a moment and everything is fine in my life situation. There are probably not that many humans who can say that everything is perfectly fine in my life situation. It's not, it's not the nature of life situations to be totally, totally harmonious.

You can try, it's good to try to, of course, it's likely to become more harmonious as you become present. Nevertheless, most humans are then burdened. There is, all they ever, your entire, your life situation absorbs your entire attention.

And this is the case for many humans. Their finances, their relationships, their health, whatever may be the main thing at this time. And often it happens, your finances improve and then there's something goes wrong with your health.

Your health improves and then relationship breaks down. Somebody has a great success your, your, your son, your daughter has had a great success but the other one, dreadful failure. They see ups and downs.

And so, most people believe they need to continuously dwell on those, on their life situation and they don't even know that there is anything else. It absorbs all these aspects of their life situation, absorb conflict situation between people, whatever is happening there absorbs their attention almost the entire time except when they become too tired to think about it. But that's, those are short moments in between wakefulness and sleep when for a little while you become free simply because you're moving towards sleep.

And that can be quite nice but that's not where we are going here. Okay, I can't remember all my problems anymore. Just one more drink and I'll be free of my problems.

And to some extent it's true but the next drink after that you, you lose consciousness. Well, maybe two or three after that. So, realizing of course you have a life situation and of course a life situation is a life situation which requires your attention but the attention that it mainly requires is when things that pertain to your life situation need to be dealt with in the present moment.

But for your life situation to occupy your entire, the entire workings of your mind for all your waking hours that means you are missing out on the most vital dimension of life which is to feel the aliveness of life. To feel yourself as life. So you have the dimension of life which is inseparable from the present moment and you have the dimension of the life situation which involves past and future in other words the mind.

So where your life situation exists ultimately is in the mind. It is, that's where it is kept alive. Without that all you would ever have to deal with is whatever arises in the present moment.

But as the shift happens you are no longer, your attention is no longer continuously absorbed by your life situation and you are able to step out of that which is the mind and into the present moment and that's life. Life is now, your life situation is past and future in the mind. That's because that's where past and future exist.

I haven't found any past and future elsewhere except in the mind. Even if you go to ancient Greece and see the ruins of the temples it's still the now. And when they were built it was the now and when we see them it's in the now.

So even, so past and future are in the mind that's obvious and then there is the present moment. Oh and attention to the present moment takes you out of being trapped in your life situation takes your attention out of the life situation and connects you with the inherent aliveness of life itself. And that by the way as a byproduct of that is that it adds enormously to your ability to deal effectively with the things that pertain to your life situation that you need to deal with when the time comes which is always the present moment.

So you become much more effective when you when you get in touch with the vertical dimension which is the present moment so that your entire attention is not continuously absorbed by the horizontal dimension which is where your life situation exists in past and future. You remember the past? Okay that wasn't too good but I can still I can still look here.

Oh promise of fulfillment here. But if you took look too long to the to here which is the future if you look too long the promise of fulfillment can suddenly become the monster. Oh dear what's going to happen to me?

Well you're going to die. So horizontal dimension you can see how how superficial in a deeper sense a deeper sense of superficial how how superficial your life is when you live only in past and past and future trapped in your life situation. The vertical dimension is missing the depth is missing which the depth can only be accessed by moving your attention into the present moment and suddenly the life situation subsides and you realize this there's far greater vitality in this moment than anything I can find in my life situation.

So it frees you from this trap of exclusively dwelling on your life situation and identifying with it and deriving your sense of self from your life situation which may be satisfying for a while I did well people admire me okay for a while but who knows what they say about you tomorrow Oh now they don't like me anymore whatever it is enter the vertical dimension if that's missing no matter what you do you are dissatisfied the sense of not enough remains something missing remains and it's frustrating it's just so frustrating to live only on a horizontal dimension of life why does nobody teach the children at school not to lose themselves in the horizontal dimension of course I wouldn't call it that to children find another term but the most vital knowledge should be that life has a dimension of depth which is now which is vital this is where the inherent intelligence behind all life is accessed this is where all creativity comes from by accessing the vertical dimension which means for a moment the mind becomes still but an alertness remains and there opens up the present moment the depths of the present moment Oh and you're not thinking at that moment of yourself as a person you're not remembering all the problems and dilemmas that make up your life situation but it is not you're not evading the mind will tell you if you go into the present moment you are evading your problems you need to think about them because the more you think about them the more likely you are to find some solution and eventually you'll be able to solve all your problems just think about it more of course that doesn't work you can many of you have been there have tried that when the time comes a situation can be addressed and a situation is there okay now I need to go my wife is taking me to court I'm taking an example of a problematic life situation she wants all my money and so you're on your way to see the lawyer but even on your way to the lawyer you can you can enter as you're travelling there you become alert and present and you look at the sky and the trees and you feel yourself breathing and you feel an inherent sense of aliveness you acknowledge the beauty around you and then when you sit in front of him you say okay what can we do well and even as you talk to him you can feel the inner sense of aliveness and you're rooted in in presence of being you are the presence and the presence looks at the situation it faces the situation this looking is not just a visual looking it's an outflow of attention towards whatever situation arises there now what is what are the possibilities here what can we do and you can deal with things without the egoic involvement which says that bitch she wants all my money that draws you into and you deal with it and you don't make her into an enemy simply that's what she does okay that she wants okay I have one million in the bank and she wants three million okay let's deal with it what can we do here that that it's not it becomes specific when you can deal with it through the personality or the conditioned mind you can deal with the situation or you can deal with the situation this is of course the next step in presence living presence practice the first step is you're looking at the trees a more advanced step which we are going to now is being in the lawyer's office but when you can see it working there it's an amazing thing to be able to look at a situation that would normally be called problematic in some sense you could say it is problematic and yet you look at it and you can feel the power of your attention that you're directing towards it and primarily that attention in the first place is not conceptual you don't immediately say oh we have to do this or we can do that before any concept arises or any realization of what best course of action is before that arises there is a pure field of attention directed towards the situation and that is where the power lies when you can look at whatever the situation is you look and I'm using look in a wider sense not just through eyes looking meaning the outflow of pure attention or consciousness in the same way that before you looked at a tree and felt its aliveness and your own aliveness at the same time and therefore your oneness with it no longer the separation in the same way you now look at the situation in your lawyer's office and you feel the same energy flow but perhaps you feel it even more strongly because that situation may demand a more intense presence than the non-demanding tree the tree is offering itself to you and says please perceive me acknowledge me give me your attention see my beauty because when you perceive me acknowledge me nature is I get that sense it's a very strongly that nature has been waiting for to be acknowledged by humans and appreciated by humans for a long time and now something it completes itself it knows itself and its own beauty and sacredness when a human comes and looks at that tree or that flower it responds that's a an almost poetic way but I very strongly feel the reality of that and you may also sense that as you bring your attention to nature and now let's return to the lawyer's office so that the nature is not is not is more it actually as I said it loves your attention and now in the lawyer's office the situation requires a more intense presence because you are faced with the human mind in its and if you're in the lawyer's office you're probably faced with a human mind in its unconscious state or fearful state and that requires intense presence and you may find as you as presence operates more and more in your life in certain situations the presence that comes through you intensifies and those tend to be challenging situations when you're not when presence is not yet fully flowing it can easily happen that a challenging situation a difficult human a difficult situation even just missing your plane or being delayed in traffic can bring about a reversal into complete reactive unconsciousness until presence is more fully alive in you when a challenge makes you more present until that happens a challenge tends to pull you into unconscious reaction so find the ability in yourself to direct attention towards a situation and feel the power that is you still feel the inner body and feel the power that is in that outflow of attention and then you're still in that you're looking you're listening to the lawyer she wants that she's talking okay hmm and then suddenly you find your mind starts to operate but now the mind is linked into presence and you start saying something and it's absolutely clear and say well these are the possibilities I can do this I'm prepared to do that I wouldn't be prepared to do that let's tell her these things write it down please that I can do that I can't do and it's absolutely clear and you have not gone into judgment and making enemies just dealing there are some people who are very effective in the world who somehow perhaps they've learned this lesson in other lifetimes they deal with things in that way not many but some I've met a few who deal with things in that non-egoic which is what it is totally non-egoic way they don't regard a challenge as a personal attack on them and of course the ego regards anything that goes wrong as a personal attack even sometimes bad weather gets angry about it and definitely a traffic jam in other drivers they personally they are these drivers they are actually their purpose is to annoy me I regard it as a personal attack on me that's how the ego sees other drivers but when you drive non-egoically somebody cutting you off or whatever on the freeway there's no you just take action whatever action is required in that moment you take it it's just as if a wind were suddenly blowing towards your car a strong wind unless your ego is massive you wouldn't get angry with the wind but an unconscious human is just like that it's a natural force and so why get angry there's really nobody there he doesn't know who you are you don't know who he is and so how you behave in traffic is already one of the many ways in which you can judge your progress on the spiritual path so attention the directing of attention onto anything specific become familiar with what attention feels like what it what that is and that it is the most vital part of who you are and most humans don't even know that it exists in them that the potential exists in them it is the most vital part of who you are and at the same time far transcends who you are as this person and that's the beauty of it that the what we call attention or pure consciousness comes from a source far deeper than you as this person so you are then connected to that deeper source of life or aliveness and that is the end also of conducting your life in a state of fear it's only when you are not connected to that then of course life is fearful and threatening and every situation and every challenge is threatening and it's a dreadful way to live so that is the power of attention that we become familiar with here when we are not being challenged so that when we are being challenged it can be there also and we can deal with life by accessing in ourselves the vertical dimension and living from the dimension of depth and it all starts with little things like walking around consciously perceiving things being in the present moment choosing the present moment rather than choosing to be in useless thinking a great help then always to remember feeling the inner body when especially when you are sitting or lying somewhere it's easy to do feel it now and at the same time perceive practice is when you are talking to somebody in the dining hall for example when you are listening to people talking while you are listening feel the inner body so that you don't get lost in your mental reactions it happens so easily so you and even meditators who have a compartment in their lives that's their meditation and then they meet people over lunch and then they go totally go off into especially arguing about who is right and your perspectives and beliefs and mental positions and likes and dislikes which are very strong so if you can listen to humans and feel the aliveness within that keeps you present when you are moving then the movement itself can become an anchor for presence the step you are taking at this moment and then you can sense get the sense of quality in every step or whatever action you perform with your hands and then another wonderful access point or portal is simply to be aware that you are breathing that also takes your attention away from futile thinking and you are just sensing I call it one conscious breath you feel the air flowing in to the body and you feel the air flowing out of the body just one conscious breath opens up an inner space where you are not thinking because while you are observing how the air observing not visually but just sensing how the air flows into the body and then out of the body while that happens when you are truly your attention has to move there otherwise you can't be aware of your breathing just one breath one breath is the in breath and the out breath that's one breath and taking one breath a conscious breath maybe just two or three times in an hour which is not very much at all will bring in little pockets of spaciousness into your life that presence in other words because while your attention is on the breath it is not on thinking so while your attention is on the breath you go into the vertical dimension it brings in and to do that let's say twenty thirty times during the day which is still very little is probably more effective than meditating as a separate compartment in your life for half an hour or an hour every morning but if you can do both that's wonderful of course if you can have both the meditation and those what I call those mini meditations throughout the day but the mini meditations where you bring presence into your life only for a few seconds have more transformative power than the compartments set aside for meditation and then do not flow into everyday life so just a conscious breath this goes back thousands of years to the Buddha and perhaps even before the Buddha the Buddha's teaching nobody knows exactly what exactly he taught the scriptures we don't know exactly which of the scriptures actually do go back to the Buddha but it seems very likely that that was one of the main methods that he recommended to be aware of your breathing now that in itself can become part of a meditation technique and that is a different matter when you set aside 10 minutes 20 minutes and while you sit you your main activity then is to be aware of your breaths flowing in and out that's very calming too and it opens up space you surrender to the breaths and my recommendation is use it throughout your daily life have little pointers in different parts where you work where you live in the bathroom have a little pointer that may be a symbol for breath whatever symbol you choose that reminds you to take one conscious breath and you may love it so much that you may even take two conscious breaths and you can also associate taking a conscious breath with certain routine activities brief activities that you do and while you are engaged in those brief activities you are at the same time putting your attention on your breath if you have an elevator that you use during the day a few times at home or in the office while you are in it going up or down while you are waiting for it you press the button why be immersed in your life situation while you are standing there what are you going to add to your life situation thinking about it waiting for the elevator why not enter the vertical dimension and access the inner space and take conscious breaths until it arrives and then you step in and then why not continue until you get either up or down and there it is and why not associate getting into your car closing the door and taking why not two or three conscious breaths before you start the engine how much time do you lose in that twenty seconds thirty seconds you can't afford to lose thirty seconds for conscious breaths I don't think so but the mind may tell you that not now I have to get thirty seconds to haven't got time for presents now that's tough I've got things on my mind I've got so you close the door and so if that becomes habitual then many routine activities have an added dimension to them and they are no longer routine they actually take you deeper many years ago when I lived in England they started they introduced compulsory seatbelt wearing so they had to come up with an advertising slogan to remind people that they have to use their seatbelts now and so what they came up with is the slogan was clunk click every trip clunk is the door the noise of the car door clunk click is the noise of the seatbelt clunk click every trip and that's how people in England remember to put on their seatbelts and here you can have a similar slogan clunk whatever I don't know what but it means it's the association of something that you do all the time with something else so you go clunk breeze and taking just the if this were the only thing in your life of the only spiritual practice throughout the day remembering to take conscious breaths especially associating the conscious breaths with certain routine activities if that were the only spiritual practice it would be enough to transform your life because it would bring in spaciousness and so your daily life would become interspersed with presence with moments of presence and then as your daily life becomes interspersed with presence then that grows to it and you find after a while it's no longer just tiny pockets of presence presence then tends to grow into larger pockets until it's no longer a pocket there's a vast space opens up and then you begin to live in that dimension or rather that dimension begins to live through you and it's not so much sometimes from the egoic point of view it looks okay I have now access to this vast power I can become powerful here there's a secret here well this is not entirely untrue but as presence moves into your life it may well be that your initial impulse in some cases is that you want to become more effective and powerful it's true that you become much more effective and creative as presence comes in but whatever it is that initially gave you the motivation to seek presence to embrace presence to invite presence into your life whatever that is you may find that changes as presence moves into your life more powerfully and then presence has its own purposes for you it's not that you are you are the one who is using presence presence begins to use you because as you this form it flows through you and then suddenly what it is that you want in life changes completely because what it is that you want is no longer what you want it's what presence wants but ultimately it is what you want because you are the presence something to be aware of that is another habitual tendency of the human mind is a very all this is very closely related of course the habitual mind always anything that it does anything that you do through the habitual mind is really is always a means to an end because anything you do either whatever writing doing something on the computer going from here to there cleaning something wiping the table getting dressed but really the attention is always on the next moment I want to be dressed while I'm getting dressed I'm really elsewhere already and while I'm traveling to work I don't want to be traveling to work I want to be at my workplace I don't want to be going to the store I want to be already at the store so it's every movement is in the service of the next one the next moment and that is you need to be aware of that so that the pattern that is so prevalent does not take you over again and again it is a mental pattern that we all inherit the collective mind has that pattern and that is reducing the precious present moment instead of acknowledging it honoring it giving it your full attention the egoic mind reduces it to a means to an end the end being the moment that it wants to get to which of course only exists as a thought in your head so and this is part of the trap of living in a conceptualizing mind you're living for some thought in your head which you call the next moment that I need to get to you have to be very alert so that when that pattern comes in you catch yourself and say oh where is the present moment here am I reducing this moment to a means to an end and then you give your attention to this moment rather than where you want to get to and with that comes the power and the quality again is back there it is and then the next time you do something again the old pattern asserts itself it's always I need to get I need to get there and there's always I'm now acting out so that I don't you can see what that state of consciousness is like I need to get there whether the there is somewhere else in space or somewhere else in time doesn't matter it's the next thing while I'm doing this I really want to be there so a frustrating way to live and what you do is not effective at all because your attention is not fully in it so that can be read undone so that you know where you want to get to of course you do and yet your fullest attention is on the doing so observe yourself when you when you make the present moment into a means to an end reduce it to a means to an end it's a very common pattern you may find even as presence arises you may find that that pattern still comes in from time to time but recognizing it is helpful because then you suddenly can say oh okay let's give the attention to this moment because that's all there ever is and then your attention moves into this moment any conscious breath as we said will take you there also immediately puts you back into presence any time you feel your inner body you're back there you're back in presence and then of course another habitual pattern is which is even more unconscious than making the present moment into a means to an end is to make the present moment into an enemy you intensely dislike where you are who you are with or what you're doing and you're doing it the dislike the unpleasantness flows into what you do and anybody you speak to the words that you speak are full of that the negative energy that you feel about what you're doing you hate you don't want to be here some people live like that almost all the time I've seen people in information offices people who are there their job is to give information at airports or stations and some of them they regard every question that somebody is asking as a personal insult and I've seen others who are absolutely present give your fullest attention and everybody who asks them a question feels better afterwards not only because they were given the right information but also because their being was acknowledged it doesn't happen often but I've met people like that also in jobs like let's say waiter waitresses waiters there are some who embody in their work presence when they put the fork or the knife on their table they go they don't go now it tends those are the waiters that tend to work in better restaurants and if you if you work at at Denny's and you go like that then it wouldn't be long before somebody notices you and says do you want to work for me and it's a wonderful thing when you when somebody in a service capacity uses it uses presence in the service then that presence flows into what they do and they spread presence everybody who comes into contact with them feels that quality that surrounds them and that flows into everything that they do so the way you of the person in front of you, is not made into a means to an end, which means that again, here we have the outflow of fullest attention towards that person.

And you give the information and all that you feel is secondary to the flow of attention between you and that person. And when the attention is directed, that awakens something and the attention always involves, always involves a spaciousness. In when you look and listen, there's not just the looking and the listening.

There is the energy field behind that perception. And it's not thinking. It's not to do with thoughts.

The energy field has no thought in it. It is pure awareness, pure presence. And so when you look and listen to the other person, there is not, there's far more to it than the visual perception and the auditory perception.

There is the flow of consciousness. And that is the most wonderful thing you can give to another human. You're giving of life essence to the other.

And that awakens life essence in the other. Sometimes it happens. And the other person may not know that this is what is happening or the other person feels as they like you very much.

They like to be in your presence and they don't know why. He's such a lovely person. And they feel good around you.

And if the client feels good around you, he is of course much more likely to sign. But the attention must not be used as a means to an end. You're not giving attention so that he signs because then you're fooling yourself.

It's not the real thing. The full attention is not a means to an end. It cannot be.

It's pure presence. And it is so enjoyable. You're not even thinking that you could make it into a means to an end.

It's so enjoyable to give attention. And you can use that in whatever job you're doing right now, even if you're dissatisfied with the job you're doing. In the meantime, while you're still doing it, maybe you are looking for something else.

That's fine. But if you're still doing it, you might as well, while you're doing it, give it your fullest attention. And if it's a job that you cannot possibly do it in that job, let's see, what kind of a job would it be that you cannot give your fullest attention?

I don't know. There might be some, you may be in a totally insane work environment where everybody's close to a nervous breakdown and everybody's screaming at each other. You could still be there as the Buddha and sing.

But those places don't want Buddhas, so luckily you would probably get sacked. So some places will eject you as you become, as you give your fullest attention. Those are the insane, totally insane places.

Because insanity cannot tolerate sanity. It would threaten it. But in many places, you can transform, not necessarily what you do while you're doing it, but how you do what you do, which is always more vital than what you do.

How you do it, how means what state of consciousness do you bring to it. And so even if you work at a diner, you can give attention to everybody and acknowledge their being and have that spaciousness in the moment when you, what would you like? And one coffee?

Okay, I'll get you coffee. There was, there's a, that's love too. That is really a deeper love, not the egoic love.

There is a, you'll love that person. And although that person may be, the personality may be rough and unpleasant and, but you, when you're not judging through the mind, you give them space. Give them space to be rough and unpleasant.

Okay, good, I'll get you. Coffee is not hot enough, I want another one. Okay, good, I'll get you another one.

And they become very perplexed because of your lack of reaction. There's a saying, and I don't know which spirit tradition it is, treat everybody who comes to you as a noble guest. How would you receive a noble guest?

I don't know who would be a noble guest. Well, noble, we think in terms of nobility, but noble means something else. So you give them, this is the, yeah.

You would, how would you receive, well, noble would, let's say the Queen of England came to you. I don't know, if you like her, you'd say, please come in, sit down. Perhaps you would be more likely to give her attention than an ordinary human, but that is absurd to differentiate.

The egoic mind, of course, demands certain things from people, and it doesn't, the egoic mind doesn't get what it wants. I remember my dad who had a big ego. Later in his life, some chunks of his big ego broke off, and some awakening came through in certain areas of his life, and it was wonderful to see.

And other chunks didn't break off and remained. So in his next lifetime, the remaining chunks will break off. He went to visit a colleague at work when he was still working for dinner.

And when he arrived, the colleague was wearing slippers. And my dad, who had a big ego, said, he received me with his slippers on. If I had been the Pope, would he be wearing his slippers?

And probably not, I think. So he saw it as an affront, his dignity felt injured, and he never went to see him again. That is an ego reaction.

But of course, everybody wants, is longing to be acknowledged in their being. Now, it doesn't have to be through wearing shoes instead of slippers, but really what they want is to be acknowledged and to be given that attention so that in that pure attention, you acknowledge their being beyond the personality. On the ego level, of course, the ego wants other things.

It wants to be superior to you, or it fears you, or it wants to be made bigger through this or that. But there's something deeper in every human that needed to be recognized in their being. And when it does happen, they love it, and you love it.

And you're both joined then in that energy field of presence that unites you. There's a common energy field in which who you are transcends whatever you are dealing with on the surface of life, the business, whatever. Who you are transcends that, and it also transcends who you are as personalities, and something deeper emerges.

And then two people could meet from totally different worlds in that way. You could meet somebody from a totally different culture and you meet, and if there's that flow of attention, all those differences would become irrelevant and you would feel your heart opens and there's a coming together of the two. All the cultural differences would subside at that moment.

Or you can meet somebody who is perhaps from your own culture, but a totally different level of education or background. Well, in England, for example, you still have less so than it used to be, but to some extent, you still have class, these social class differences. And some people are only comfortable with their own class.

So you may be the working class or you are the upper middle class, and the accent, the way you speak, will immediately tell people what class you belong to. And again, as you meet somebody in that flow of attention, that becomes totally irrelevant. With every human, you feel the oneness, no matter what the surface differences are.

Everything is transcended. Everything in the world of form is transcended. And so that is, of course, how different cultures can live together.

If enough humans can access that dimension in them, the differences don't matter anymore. Something that is far more vital can be there, and that is what matters. So your practice is whatever your portal, as I sometimes call it, whatever portal you choose to enter the vertical dimension, to enter presence, is fine, breath, inner body, sense perceptions, movement, either movement as a spiritual practice or spontaneous movement.

That's actually quite beautiful. Most people, of course, you may want to learn Tai Chi or you're practicing Tai Chi already, but there's also such a thing as when you're present, you may feel occasionally, it feels good to move. Let the body move, and there's no thought.

There's simply, the body begins to move. And you're totally in every movement. When the hand is here, it's not going to try to be there already.

You're there at every moment. Anybody who does Tai Chi well is there at every moment. There's not a mental projection from the hand being here but wants to be there.

No, it's here and here and here and here and here and here. It's always now. And it's quite possible that Tai Chi that originated thousands of years ago originally was performed by somebody who was in presence who suddenly felt his or her body moving.

And then the disciples looked at him and said, what's he doing? And then they got a piece of paper and they wrote down, and now his hand is moving to the left. And then it's moving down.

And now his legs are lifting. Oh, write it down, write it down. And then it became Tai Chi that you can learn.

Now the strange thing is, it may have originated probably from presence, but as you go through the motions, it can also take you into presence, even if you're not present yet. So you can approach it from it originating out of presence, or you go through the motions and then they take you into presence. So it does work.

But also, so there's movement as spiritual practice and there's the natural movements that you do. And there again can be a wonderful way of giving it attention, the walking. You don't have to make it into a walking meditation, you can, but any walking from, every time you walk from your room or your cabin to the restaurant can be, be there with every step.

And you can, it makes a noise too, as your shoes or sandals touch the ground. And that's just, then you're not just present with the walking automatically, you're also present with your surroundings. Even eating, eating consciously.

You don't, not self-consciously. Self-consciously, you're there as, you're an external observer of yourself or you're thinking of whether others are realizing how consciously you're eating. There are certain things that can easily take humans into unconsciousness and eating is one of them.

And I've known people who are relatively, relatively present in daily life, but not completely, let's say not completely un-present. But the moment they start eating, they go completely off and they go. And when they finish their meal, they go, okay.

And also, of course, to some people, food is addictive. And that is only one aspect of what we mentioned earlier. And that is the not enough, the underlying sense of not enough in the egoic mind.

And in some humans, it may take the place of not enough food, not consciously expressed as a thought, but it's an unconscious assumption. And so the compulsion to absorb more food can be in some people an aspect of the underlying sense of more, not enough, not yet enough of trying to fulfill you with something. And it's unconscious again.

If you make it conscious, often the pattern gradually subside. But one way of making it conscious is when the impulse to eat comes, provided you know that the impulse to eat is there and arises. If you're very much identified with it, you might even not know that the impulse to eat has arisen until you're already biting into the chocolate cake.

And you don't even know how it got into your mouth. You walk to the fridge unconsciously, you took it out unconsciously, and you're already chewing. Oh, but as presence arises, you can actually catch the impulse.

And then you can just be with the impulse to have a chocolate cake or another sausage, or look at the fridge and whatever is in there, walking towards the fridge. And you can stop and for a moment, be spacious with it and allow yourself to feel that impulse. And again, it's part of what is in the present moment.

You might as well accept that this is what is at the present moment. Because if you argue with it, or beat yourself up, it doesn't work. But you can be there with that impulse and feel it, give it space, and wait a couple of minutes or three minutes.

And what you then do is really secondary. Whether you still want to go and eat it, then go ahead. Or you may find it's no longer that strong and you can actually leave it.

But either way, it can become part of your presence practice and then it's working. It's secondary really whether you still eat the cake or not. But it's more likely that as you practice this more, unnecessary eating or eating as an addictive behavior pattern will subside.

Let's finish this session with a little meditation. I'll be quiet for once. And we'll start the meditation with the bells and finish with the bells.

Choose where you want to put your attention while we are still here. You have a large choice. You can put your attention on your breathing.

You can put your attention on the inner energy field of the body. You can put your attention on sense perceptions. See the room and hear the noises.

Or, of course, the best of all, and ultimately it all comes down to that, you can put your attention on attention. In other words, you can feel or sense the presence, the attention, aware that you are aware. That's the ultimate meditation.

You're aware that, not that you are aware, you are aware as awareness. You're aware of yourself as the underlying awareness. If you can do that, that's great.

If you need an anchor, then use the inner body or use the breathing or use sense perceptions. Just a few minutes, timeless few minutes. Thank you.

You may want to get up in your own time, sit a little longer if you wish, whatever feels right. Welcome back. I may just say a few words now and then we'll go on to the questions and maybe some answers too.

The greatest thing to learn here, learn is not the right word because learn usually means adding some knowledge or information to your mind. That's usually the meaning of to learn. And to teach means to give out information.

So I'm not really teaching and you're not really learning because it's not about conveying information that may happen to bits of useful knowledge. Yes, but the essence is something else. The essence is for you to become familiar with, to absorb almost, by tuning into what looks like a person, is a person on some level, but tuning into spaciousness.

So you become familiar with something that perhaps you didn't know before and that is to know yourself not only as the person that consists of a history and mental content, but more importantly, to know yourself, not know in a conceptual sense, to sense yourself as that spaciousness also, formless awareness. And you may find at times, you become a person again, totally identified with form. At other times, you move in between two worlds, the world of form and thinking and doing.

But at the same time, there is a space in between the doing when the doing is not always directed to, as we pointed out before, the doing is not always directed to arriving at some point, but it's totally given complete attention in the now, then there is a spaciousness that comes into the doing. Sometimes a spiritual teacher is regarded by the disciples as God or a God. And the reason is that they see him or her and only as the space, and the family of the spiritual teacher say, I don't know what they're on about.

They only see the form. Talk to their children if they have children or their wife if they have a wife or their parents. They say, what is this?

This is so and so. We know him, we know him so well. They don't get the space at all because they're so familiar with the form of the teacher.

They don't see the transcendent dimension. Their vision is closed. And sometimes even the surroundings.

This is why Jesus said, no prophet, I don't know the exact line, no prophet counts for much in his own village, his hometown. And there's also a line in the Gospels where the family of Jesus, he is with a group of people in a house and his family come, presumably means his mother and he also had siblings. They come and they want to get him because they think he's gone mad.

They want to bring him back home. And they tell him, your family is here. And he said, you are my family, the spiritual family, which transcends the relationships that you have on the level of form.

So the greatest liberation is to know yourself also as space, not only as a person. And this is why you are here. And that happens when you become still and alert and present, the personality subsides.

And sometimes that takes over completely. It could happen when somebody comes who needs some form of healing, not necessarily physical healing, perhaps healing of his mind or her mind, or somebody comes and asks you a question and the answer suddenly comes no longer from what you know, from your mind, but you become still, you hear the question, and then suddenly you find yourself, you start speaking. And the answer comes and it's just right for this moment and for this person.

That is the connectedness with the essence. And it's beautiful when it happens. And then you could say you're beginning to teach.

Anybody who goes through this transformation, and even while you're already still in the process of awakening, the Course in Miracles uses the term teacher. It says anybody who goes through this process of awakening becomes a teacher of God. You teach God.

Not the conceptual God, the true God, which is beyond form. Not the God of this or that religion, but that which is behind the names, the various names. Not my God or your God.

You don't even have my life as a mistake, let alone my God. There's also a word in spirituality and religion called faith. Faith is sometimes mistaken for the complete conviction that certain statements or stories are absolutely true.

I have faith in this and this and this and this. I believe this to be absolutely true. That's a lower form of faith.

And of course it always applies when you don't really know whether it's true or not, because if you know it, you don't need to believe it anymore. I don't have faith in this flower because I know it's there. But if there is no flower, I can say I have faith that somewhere there is a flower.

So faith in God is something else. It's a sense of trust. Trust in something that transcends who you are, but is intimately one with who you are.

Something that carries you, something in which you are rooted, and something that can actually move and operate through you. And that is called faith. To sense, to feel that trust.

Trust in life or just trust. And with faith, there is a lot that you don't need to know. The egoic mind thinks I need to work out.

There's a lot you don't need to know about other human beings, about certain situations, because a lot of the so-called knowledge of the mind is a pseudo-knowledge. It's not real knowledge at all. And it's a fragment.

You have a thought about a person. He is such, so and so. This is how he is, she is.

It's a fragment, a tiny fragment, and even that's probably distorted. Thought always takes a fragment out of reality, and this is how it is. Also, then, it's very liberating to know that you don't need to.

There's so much that you don't need to know to come to some conclusion about another human being. You don't need it when you're present with them. You don't need to formulate some concept.

This is how it is, and then you carry that around in your head. And many conclusions of that kind about other groups of people, all these rigid opinions, and this is why one Zen master when asked about how to practice Zen, he simply said, stop cherishing opinions when you're practicing Zen. Stop cherishing opinions.

Interesting, he didn't say have no opinions anymore. Cherish, cherish means to hold them dear, my opinion, and really means to identify with. This is my mind, and of course, when you identify with an opinion, you don't know it's an opinion.

You think it's the truth, and your sense of self is invested in it. That's the whole delusion. So stop cherishing opinions.

You can have them in a loose way. Yes, of course. You still have the same opinion about the Democrats or the Republicans, whatever, your favorite politicians.

But they are no longer invested with a sense of self, and there's a space around them. One more thing before we go on to the questions. You may have observed that before you began the awakening process, you spent a large part of your life waiting, waiting for the next thing, waiting for some resolution to something, waiting for the end of the day, waiting for the weekend, waiting to get somewhere, to achieve this or that, waiting for, there's always a waiting game that's part of the old consciousness, the mind-identified consciousness. So that is, of course, you're not present. You are waiting for the next moment, and that begins to subside as you become more present.

You're not always waiting for the next thing because this moment is actually fine. And so when I stop speaking, you're no longer waiting for, but what's he going to say next? Why is he stopping?

There's often, when I start giving a talk, there's often a silence first, not quite as long when there's a huge group because then, before I even start speaking, I've already lost 50% of the audience. But there's a silence, and one reason, of course, is that I love it, and it's lovely to enter the silence, but another reason, of course, is that there's a silence because I don't know what to say. And faith means to be comfortable with that state of not knowing and just be in it, the spaciousness.

And then, at some point, the first words come. So, and then, this is important to point out, not just if you ever give talks, but many other occasions, to become comfortable with not knowing. You don't need to know, not in the conceptual sense, but if you relinquish having to know every conclusion in the conceptual sense, there is a deeper knowing that arises that is non-conceptual.

I sometimes call it non-conceptual intelligence. And that is there, whatever you really need to know at that moment is suddenly there. And that's where it becomes, you become inspired by true life knowledge.

So, anything, also action that you need to take right now, if you come from that place of non-reactive place, right action arises also spontaneously. And if you've ever listened to the Dalai Lama, who you might have noticed that quite often when they ask him questions, and sometimes they ask the strangest questions, and he looks like, I don't know. And sometimes after a while he does, he starts to speak, and then the answers actually, he's quite inspired.

But he starts from not knowing, but he's not uncomfortable about it. If he had a self image as I am the Dalai Lama and I know everything, then he would have to pretend that he knows. But there's just a space there.

You may have noticed that some people with big egos can never say, I don't know. If you ask them a question, they come up with the most absurd answer, just to pretend they have not the slightest idea, but something has to come out because they can't say, I don't know. Okay, let's have a first question, and I cannot guarantee that I know the answer.

And remember how it goes, there will be a couple of people, I'm not going to pick the questioners, but a couple of people, one person will be closer to here, the front, and another person will be closer to over there in the middle, and we'll pick, I don't know where the person is here in the front who is going to pick the questioners, so that person needs to come to the front while we are still not waiting for anything, of course. Take your time, the longer the better.

Okay, so, one questioner is already there, not waiting either, not waiting for anything, just standing there, that's fine. And let's see how it goes, hi.

[Speaker 5] (3:33:45 - 3:34:16)

Thank you very much, I'm enjoying the conference and all the participants here, and I've read the books, and there's one thing that's been on my mind, and that's when you started talking to us, you talked about all of us having luggage, and I wondered if you carried any luggage at this point, I'm still curious as to whether or not you have a bad day with a pain body that comes out, or with all your practice, has it gotten to the point where you're 100% focused on days and presence?

[Speaker 1] (3:34:16 - 3:37:13)

Okay, there are fluctuations, there are days when, for example, when physical energy is low, and there are days when physical energy is higher, there are days of more intense presence, and other days of presence just being in the background, there's always a sense of that spaciousness somewhere, it's always somewhere, but sometimes it's in the background, and I'm dealing with paperwork or stuff here, and it's there, or somewhere, and I'm doing things here, and then there are times when the awareness comes and almost obliterates everything else, and it goes...

and everything is a bit unreal in the world of form, and everything is compared to that presence, so there are variations, and sometimes it depends on what the situation is, when, before an event, there's often an arising of more intense presence, and sometimes that can also arise spontaneously when I'm just meeting one person who is asking something, or who needs something, one person who might be suffering, and I'm just facing that person, and sometimes it happens that, as this person speaks to me, suddenly I notice an intensification of presence, and then words may come, or they may not even come, maybe there's just the presence and the listening through the presence.

When there is chaos around me, it doesn't happen very often, but it can happen, a chaotic situation, also there's an intensification of presence, so there's a fluctuation of the intensity of presence, I haven't experienced the loss of presence for a long time, so a bad day as such I wouldn't say, but fluctuations, yes, they happen. What about you?

[Speaker 5] (3:37:23 - 3:37:31)

I was having a good day. I am having a good day, yes. I'm here, so there are fluctuations.

[Speaker 1] (3:37:31 - 3:37:48)

Yes, okay. Okay, where is the next, where is the person who, oh, do we have, do we change from somebody being, okay, welcome.

[Speaker 5] (3:37:48 - 3:38:14)

Namaste, thank you for sharing your wisdom with us. Thank you. You said the world is in a mess, and I was wondering if there are any clues as to how we can get out of it, or do we have to go through a path, because we won't be able to do it, won't be able to get the act together, and what is that path going to be all about, and what's the best way to survive that if there's...

[Speaker 1] (3:38:14 - 3:38:19)

So you're asking about the mess that's out there? Yes.

[Speaker 5] (3:38:20 - 3:38:31)

And if you were to recommend an impact on the curriculum of education for children in schools, what would that be based on all your learnings?

[Speaker 1] (3:38:31 - 3:44:12)

Okay, that's an interesting and good question. The most important subject for school, if I were to recommend, and actually I am scheduled to meet with one or two people who are... Somebody wants to introduce me to the Minister of Education in British Columbia, which is the province, and about bringing in consciousness into the curriculum.

So if I were to recommend, the main subject at school would not be mathematics or sciences or history or languages. These are all secondary. The main subject would be to teach the children the meaning and the reality of awareness.

To show them, of course, it means the teacher needs to embody awareness. You cannot teach it as an abstract subject. The teacher needs to show what awareness is so that the child learns not to be lost in their mind and not to be lost in their emotions.

What it means to be the awareness behind it. And that needs to be a daily practice at school. Everything else is secondary because that is the art of living that should be the main subject.

How to live in a sane way. And it's only when more humans begin to live in that sane way, not the normal insane way, that the outer will begin to reflect that as the new generation grows up. Less insanity means less of a mess and suffering that we create out there.

It is absolutely dependent not on some kind of new governmental policies. No policy can bring about a true change unless it arises out of a transformed state of consciousness. So many things have been tried.

Communism was initially an attempt to create a fairer society. The only thing they overlooked, and when I say the only, it's also the most important, they overlooked the one vital thing. They wanted to create a new society overlooking the dysfunction that's inherent in the human mind.

And so they created something new. And what did it become? A manifestation, in an even more extreme form, of the dysfunction that's inherent in the human mind.

And so what became of it then was quite mad. But the original idea was actually, of course, wonderful. Equality.

Well, the French Revolution already started with that. But equality. No possessions.

That sounds all wonderful. But they neglected the inner, the inside. So it's good that you have two questions.

One is concerning how to deal with the mess that humans have created and what to do about the education of children because these two are really one question. You need to start with the education and to bring in the most essential factor into the educational system. And, of course, that begins with the teachers.

I already have come across and met teachers who are introducing that into their classroom. But it's not yet part of the official curriculum. It's only individual teachers here and there are introducing it, and it works beautifully.

I had a conversation with Oprah a few weeks ago. And, as you may know, she has the school for girls in South Africa. And the first class graduated recently.

And I was amazed when she told me that she had given each of the girls a copy of my little book, Stillness Speaks. And then they talked about it. And then she said, they got it.

And Oprah told them, without stillness, there's nothing. You have to try. And they got it, she said.

They got it. That's a wonderful start. So, your question really is one.

The two questions are really one question. And I'm sure you know that. That's why you asked them.

The transformation of the mess begins in this room and in you. And it's wonderful that you are here because you are the root for the transformed world. Not only children.

Adults have their role to play, too. Because we are still here alive as long as we live. We have the role to play here, too.

Do you live in the States?

[Speaker 5] (3:44:13 - 3:44:14)

I live in New Delhi, in India.

[Speaker 1] (3:44:15 - 3:44:15)

In Delhi?

[Speaker 5] (3:44:15 - 3:44:17)

Yes. Yeah, yeah.

[Speaker 1] (3:44:18 - 3:44:43)

Yes, well, I'd like to go back to India sometime soon. I perhaps see you there. It would be a pleasure.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you so much.

[Speaker 6] (3:44:43 - 3:45:18)

I appreciate the impact that you have on my life and on so many others. I kind of have a practical question. It relates to something you said yesterday about being present with your children.

And I certainly want to be present with my child. You brought up something about they still have to brush their teeth. And I get the infamous, no mommy, no mommy, I don't want to brush my teeth.

No mommy, I don't want to get dressed. And so how do you be present when your child is constantly saying no on a day-to-day basis so that I can really love him that, like you said, be completely present to him?

[Speaker 11] (3:45:21 - 3:45:22)

I'm finding it hard.

[Speaker 1] (3:45:25 - 3:50:07)

All right, now I feel like a Dalai Lama. But let's wait a little. And that's all right.

There's a balance, and that's quite an art to achieve that balance. Since I've never brought up children, I cannot give you concrete examples, but I have observed children and I have observed families, how they live together, how they relate to each other. And the balance is between doing what needs to be done on the level of form, which includes brushing your teeth, knowing also to what extent you need to force a child to do something, which might have to do with preventing the child from endangering him or herself.

Some parents have become so permissive that they allow the child to do almost anything. They can climb up on a high wall, they might fall down and break their neck, and they still let them do it. That is not wise.

But allowing them to explore, allowing them to make mistakes, even fall down, not down a cliff, but don't stop them from experimenting and exploring, give them space to explore for themselves, but at the same time there need to be certain structures in their daily life, which many modern parents cannot because they represent the reaction to the oppressive way of bringing up children that we experienced in the past, of absolute coercion, of not giving them enough freedom, forcing them into their roles, and shut up. Why ask the child, why?

And then the answer is, because I say so. That's not a good answer. But traditionally that was the answer for a long time, and then as a whole we have now shifted to the other polarity where many parents seem incapable of having structures in their child's life, and the child is yearning for some kind of guidelines and structures in their daily life that are absolutely there.

There's no question that this needs to be done. So it's bringing in structures, not more structures than are needed to bring about a sane way of living together as a family. And the rest is, once you have the structures, it becomes easier.

The child knows that those structures, you can't go outside of those, and there are boundaries, there need to be boundaries. Many parents these days don't give boundaries, and then when the child grows up eventually, they have to find boundaries in a much more painful way, and they may end up arrested or something, and then they suddenly find, oh, actually there's boundaries in this world. There are things I can't do.

So bringing up children as long as structures, and once you have that, it's easier to bring in the spaciousness into the child's life, and that is giving attention. So when the child is talking to you, the child learns primarily from their parent's state of consciousness. The child learns not so much from what, as you know, we all know that, the child does not learn from what the parents tell them.

The child observes the parent's behavior, and it absorbs that, and also absorbs their state of consciousness. If there's a lot of emotional conflict in the family, the child absorbs that, and the pain body grows and grows.

[Speaker 6] (3:50:09 - 3:50:16)

That's extremely helpful, because I think you really put the nail in the head, because I'm really having trouble putting boundaries and structure, figuring out what's guilt around that.

[Speaker 1] (3:50:16 - 3:50:17)

Yes, yes.

[Speaker 6] (3:50:17 - 3:50:20)

And it will help me be more present once he gets into the routine.

[Speaker 1] (3:50:20 - 3:53:56)

Yes, yes. And so the child models your state of consciousness, so that if you embody presence, then something of that will be absorbed by the child. And if you are able to give the child, in addition to dealing with daily situations, this needs to be done, and that needs to be done, and this is not to be done, there's the spaciousness that comes when you look at the child.

Don't always, when you look at a child, come up with something that needs to be done, or tell them to stop doing something. And that's the only way you interact with a child, is to tell them either to do something or to stop doing something. And that's a very impoverished way of interaction.

The most vital element is missing. And, of course, many parents are so absorbed in their minds, they are hardly there, their bodies are there, but the dad is on his cell phone and computer, and the mom is busy with her things, and then they are arguing with each other, and there on the periphery is the child. Nobody is really giving them attention, except when they say, stop doing that, or do that now, it's time to do that.

It brings, give attention, which is looking, listening. It doesn't have to be long, you don't set aside, you don't say, okay, it's time for attention now, it doesn't work like that. It's an organic thing, it's part of your daily life.

So that means you need to embody the presence, and then don't just relate to the child as the mother, that is your role, temporary, because when the child grows up, and you can't get out of the role of mother, you become obnoxious to them. Because you still tell them what to do, and you always know better. And you are so worried about the mistakes they are making, and you know all the mistakes they are making, and you keep telling them not to do that, and they hate you for it.

So don't get identified with the role, no, it's a temporary thing, and then you grow out, because know yourself not only as the role, but know yourself also as the essence, the essence consciousness behind the role. And the essence is not even a woman, the essence is beyond man and woman, it is the aware presence. So it can be there not only as the role, mother, but the form, but be there also as the aware presence, and the two.

So the child is living with two of you, so to speak, the mother and the aware presence, but they are really one, of course. Well, that's my answer, and you can also ask Dr. Phil about it. Okay, now the next is from the second half of the room, and then again we come to the front half, we alternate between people from the second half and from the front half.

As somebody has been, yes, somebody is walking towards the microphone, we are not waiting for anything to happen.

[Speaker 6] (3:54:02 - 3:54:49)

Thank you, Mr. Tolle. You've given myself and I know many other people this gift that I'm about to present to you, in that I've been walking the road with my mother, who is in the process of dissolution of self through dementia, and the gift you have given me, and I'm sure many others is, that it has become, instead of something very sad, it has become a beautiful spiritual process, and I thank you for that. And my question now is, what can we do as a culture to help encourage others to make this road more comfortable for those, and for us as we walk down that road toward the dissolution of self?

[Speaker 1] (3:54:52 - 3:54:59)

For others, other cultures, or what, how do you...

[Speaker 6] (3:54:59 - 3:55:23)

Well, in our culture, I guess, what I'm trying to express is, I feel like perhaps we don't handle this as best we could. We shove people back, and we put people in corners and away, and I'm wondering how we can use your teachings in a way where we can find presence and bring others into this presence as their lives are ceasing.

[Speaker 1] (3:55:24 - 4:16:34)

Ah, yes, yes, thank you, yes. That's important. It occurred to me recently that, as I was talking to someone, that it may be time for this teaching, which, it's not a teaching, but we have to use words, it may be time for this teaching, which so far has gone out, spread out into the world at large, to perhaps be applied in a somewhat more focused way to certain areas where perhaps it has not sufficiently, the areas it has not sufficiently reached yet. And one that came to mind as I was talking to this person was college kids.

I got inspired by, I gave a talk a couple of months ago at the University of California, Santa Barbara campus, to a small class of undergraduates. Some were graduates, some were undergraduates. And the talk was about, to do with ethics in daily life.

And there were about 25 people there. And I was surprised how many people, after I talked for an hour, were absolutely, look, they said this had an enormous impact on my life. We feel something has come into my life, many said.

I didn't know it was there. They were transformed, many of them. And that inspired me, because I didn't know I could reach people that age that easily.

And so one thought came that perhaps I'd like to focus a bit more on reaching certain classes of people. One is college kids. And two days later I got invited to Yale University.

I haven't replied, I forgot to reply. I got invited to give a talk at Yale in the fall. Just as the thought came, I'd like to reach more college kids, they came, would you like to come to Yale to talk?

Yes, I would. I just have to remember to reply to the email. And then it came to me another area is prisons.

So that to get the teaching into prisons through sending them reading material and CDs or DVDs and perhaps even go into prison, if that is possible, and work with a group there for a while. And then perhaps we have to use the media these days and then perhaps film it and then perhaps the film of that work could be shown to others. And Oprah had a similar idea.

She told me she was in the shower and suddenly she said she felt she wanted to go into a prison with me. But it hasn't happened yet, but it may happen. And then the other idea that came to me was reaching people who are approaching or going towards death, old age, because that is a wonderful opportunity that is sadly an opportunity that is missed in most cases still, of spiritual blossoming when the form of you, the physical form and also the psychological form, begins to become shaky and begins to dissolve as you are moving towards the dissolution of form. And still the majority of old age centers, senior residences, homes and so on are just waiting rooms where they hang around waiting for death to happen and watching television and playing cards in the meantime. It's an emptiness there, not the true emptiness that we point to, but another emptiness.

And there's a wonderful opportunity there because it is such an important stage that the Western societies don't know about this anymore. It's such an important stage of life because Western societies are so excessively focused on form they cannot deal with the dissolution of form. They have to deny it.

So in more ancient cultures there is more of an acceptance of death and the elders are highly respected because they can sense, others, the younger people can sense that there is a wisdom in the elders. And so the most respected people are the old people and that is not the case in our civilization at all. They are tolerated.

They may be the cute granny, that's the most, you have a cute little granny, but not the grandmother in the sense of the native Indian tradition and so on. It's a figure of great dignity, the grandfather, the grandparent. And so I don't just want to go back to what we have lost but recover what we have lost and at the same time go deeper and to show people who are approaching death what is possible in the dimension of consciousness as the form is becoming less heavy.

And I have had contact with people who were close to death and quite a few of them, once they realized the possibilities, went into a state of complete surrender and absolute childlike presence. And they looked at you very much like as if they were a little child with a presence there that was absolutely beautiful and suddenly something ageless came through the form. They were no longer old people, only the form was old.

In fact, some of them appeared younger in their last year or two years of their lives than they had been during their working life as adults because there was a liberation there, an inner liberation that happened and the form identity subsided, the heavy form. Because being an adult in our civilization and serious about life and business and dealing with stuff, it's a role. You play the role of adult and you are serious about life and business and it needs to be taken seriously.

It's a role you play. Society teaches you that this is your role. You are now a responsible adult.

You are not playful anymore. You can't really enjoy yourself because you're not responsible if you're enjoying the present moment. You should be worried.

You should be worried about your financial future. That's what you are taught. Yes, this is a wonderful thing, so let's see what happens.

In the meantime, you do what you can, whoever you meet, who is approaching, who is entering that last stage of physical existence, perhaps there's something that you can point out when the moment is right. You always wait for the right moment, which can be maybe a question or some kind of opening that you can sense, and then you point something out. And there may be some old people who are absolutely close to anything spiritual, never say spiritual, but they may be open to, if you suggest, can you feel the aliveness in your hands?

Yes. What are you getting at? And can you feel the aliveness in your feet?

Aliveness in my feet, yes, just try. Do you know if your feet are still there without looking at them? Yes.

And then the rest of the body, how does that feel? Does it feel good? Yeah.

Never say anything spiritual or you need to be in the present moment, maybe that's too much too, but you can feel the aliveness within. Oh, that's good. But you're not convincing them of anything, that they need to believe in something, not at all.

Start with something very, very concrete, very immediate in their experience, and then see where it leads. Actually, I read your book, I was thinking about my sweetheart, and when I read it I wrote this question down. So it is this, how do you keep your ego in check and love yourself at the same time?

Okay, good. The true meaning of ego is you don't even know that there is an ego. When you're really in the grip of ego, you're in the grip of certain mind patterns which are totally possessed by your thoughts, identified with your thoughts, and you are a thought-made entity.

So, to be aware of ego already implies that there is a little bit of freedom because you're aware that there are certain behavior patterns that are egoic. For example, you're aware that when you're having a discussion with people, you suddenly become defensive or aggressive because your point of view is questioned, your opinion is questioned. Or with your partner, you suddenly get into a fight because you need to be right, and your partner needs to be right, and you're fighting about being right, and you can sense the emotional force behind the argument, that leads to the argument.

And sometimes couples, they start fighting, and it starts with, I'm right, no, you're right. It could be something quite totally insignificant, and it leads to a big fight. It's quite amazing.

It could be a simple fact. What was the temperature yesterday? No, it wasn't.

What do you know? You never believe in me, do you? You always doubt what I say.

You believe other people, but you never believe me. You always know better, don't you? There's the ego.

So as it operates, you can be aware of it. And when you're aware of it, it no longer has that force that it has when you're completely unaware of it. And then the awareness grows, because from the awareness you're able to see that it is a little bit insane, to put it mildly.

It's a way to live that is where you carry the excessive baggage around, and you react to situations through that excessive baggage. You get worked up about things. You take things personally.

When something doesn't go right according to your expectations, you take it personally, and you react to a situation as if the situation had been designed to frustrate you. Me. It's against life against me.

Me against life. That's the ego. So you observe whenever you get upset.

You observe, what did that happen? And then the awareness comes in more and more. So you keep it in check, really.

You can't really suppress it, but you keep it in check by more and more being the awareness rather than the behavior pattern that may still be there for a while. Loving yourself. One aspect of loving yourself is you accept that you are part of an evolutionary transition that's happening, and as such you are not perfect.

There are things in you that are perhaps still dysfunctional, including the ego, and you accept that that is still there, so you have compassion towards yourself. You don't beat yourself up because you got lost in your mind again and you got into an argument again, or whatever it is that the ego does. But there's a deeper meaning to loving yourself, and that is, yes, be compassionate and accepting of your limitations while they're there, and there will always be some limitations.

You are here as a particular form, so as that form you may be good at this, but no good at that. My left brain is probably quite undeveloped, so I have to have compassion with myself. I can't remember numbers, and I could never do mathematics at school, totally failed at mathematics, and even remembering a number, my cell phone number took me four years to remember.

So that didn't improve with becoming awakened. And other things, I have to accept my physical body is not strong, but so far it's been okay. I mean, I haven't seen a doctor in many years, so it must be okay, relatively speaking, but it's not strong and it's not beautiful, so you have to live with that imperfection that for a time when I was younger made me unhappy, but now it's actually all right.

I don't mind. It's fine. It served me for quite a few years, and I'm okay with that.

So there's a compassion that comes as to your limitations. That's good. But loving yourself when you feel good about yourself is much better than hating yourself, and many people hate themselves, are very critical about themselves in their mind, and continuously regard themselves and berate themselves as not good enough, not as good as, should be better, I should have done that, why didn't I do that, why are you so stupid?

They talk to themselves in their head. Why are you always so stupid? You never get it right, can you?

You've been in a spiritual path for so long, and what's it all been pointless? You can't get it right, can you? If you lived with a person like that, as many people have stuck in their head, you would run away.

If you lived with a person that is so critical about you as the voice in your head is, not you personally, but generally speaking, it applies to many people, you would immediately end the relationship. But ending the relationship with your mind is something else that's not that easy. That can only come in through awareness.

It's only through awareness that the relationship with your mind changes. So, and then you go perhaps from loving, from hating yourself, to say, OK, I love who I am. To me, that is, in some New Age teachings, that is the goal of transformation, but as far as I'm concerned, it is a transitional stage, loving yourself.

Because even when you love yourself, what does it mean, I love myself? Who are you, and who is the self? There must be two of you here.

So you're split. You are the one who has a relationship with yourself. The dog doesn't.

The cat doesn't. The dog is itself, him or herself. It doesn't have a relationship.

It doesn't feel good about himself or bad about himself, or have some kind of inadequate self-image. The dog has no self-image, there's no ego. Ego really means an imaginary mind-made image of who you are and living through that image.

So you are possessed by the mental image consisting of thoughts and emotions, and that's me. And so you are possessed by that mental image, and you are split, you don't know it. So loving yourself is a transitional stage that can take you to being one with who you are.

And then you don't love yourself anymore, but love can flow through you into this world. You become love, but you don't love yourself because there is no self anymore. You and yourself have merged, like the dog.

But you have transcended the ego. You haven't gone back to the stage prior to ego, evolutionary terms. You have transcended the ego.

So we have pointed a lot, we have practiced here, being the awareness. When you are the awareness, you don't need to love yourself anymore because the awareness is who you are, and there's no longer a split between the thing that I am and the thing that I love. In that awareness, yes, there is compassion because awareness is a spaciousness.

And in that spaciousness, you have compassion not only towards yourself but also towards other human beings and their shortcomings. Acceptance is an intrinsic part of awareness because awareness is spaciousness, and awareness is saying, I accept this moment as it is. And this moment takes on many forms that change all the time.

Often this moment comes in the form of another human that comes into your field of vision or consciousness. And that human may manifest behavior that is very unconscious and very egoic. And you don't hold it against them.

You know what it is. You don't make it into their personal identity, and you accept them for who they are. You become the space for what is.

That's ultimately love and compassion becoming one. So awareness is love and compassion flowing through you into this world. And then you don't need to love yourself anymore because you are yourself fully.

This is oneness with who you are, which can be called integrity. And then you look at your dog and say, we're in the same place, except that I know it. The dog just lives it.

And you live it and know it. That's the added dimension.

[Speaker 11] (4:16:36 - 4:16:37)

Great answer.

[Speaker 1] (4:16:37 - 4:16:40)

Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (4:17:02 - 4:17:02)

Hi.

[Speaker 3] (4:17:04 - 4:17:19)

I was wondering if you perhaps could offer a few words about physical pain, particularly chronic pain, pain that's been going on for many years and for which no alleviation could be found.

[Speaker 1] (4:17:20 - 4:17:23)

Is that a question that concerns you?

[Speaker 3] (4:17:23 - 4:17:24)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (4:17:24 - 4:17:27)

Yes. What kind of pain is it?

[Speaker 3] (4:17:27 - 4:17:29)

It's pain in my eyes.

[Speaker 1] (4:17:30 - 4:17:34)

Your eyes? And is it constant?

[Speaker 3] (4:17:35 - 4:17:35)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (4:17:36 - 4:17:38)

Do you know the cause?

[Speaker 3] (4:17:40 - 4:18:05)

I've searched for the cause for many years and it was not really possible to determine. I've really consulted traditional ways of medicine, of coping with it, and many alternative ways. The last I heard about it was that it's supposed to be a neuropathic condition that is the result of a dry eye condition that I was suffering from originally.

[Speaker 1] (4:18:26 - 4:23:44)

An important aspect of that is accepting what is, which does not imply that you do not seek help, if help is possible. You explore every possible avenue, but in the meantime, not creating on top of the physical pain an unhappy me that is the second superimposed on the physical pain. Then comes the psychological suffering that goes with the physical pain.

That is something that you do not need to accumulate in you. This is part of excess baggage. If the pain creates an unhappy me entity that complains about it and feels sorry for itself, and so on.

So, accept while it's there. You have to bring acceptance to it. And then, don't formulate certain thoughts in your head about it that make you into a victim where your identity becomes, you become someone who is a sufferer of a particular disease.

And that can easily become, I've often observed it, people who have a condition that goes on and on, in their mind they become a victim of that condition and they describe themselves to others and to themselves as a sufferer of such and such. There's a labeling process that happens. And for some people it even happens that they don't even want to let go anymore of their condition because it has become so much part of their identity and if anybody would suggest to them that they perhaps could find a cure they might even get angry.

They say, there is no cure. They've looked for a cure for years. Don't even suggest it.

So, don't create. Surrender means allow the pain. Now in your case it's that, it may be many other kinds of pain.

Pain can, if you surrender to it, erode your ego. And I have seen cases of people who've had prolonged pain or prolonged disability, confined to a wheelchair for 20, 30 years or their whole life, no longer able to use your limbs, being totally paralyzed. And some of those have actually transcended the ego without ever having come into contact with any spiritual teaching.

It just happened by itself. In the face of this constant pain they had to give up inner resistance and with giving up the inner resistance the ego, which is resistance to what is, dissolved. And so I've occasionally met people in wheelchairs, for example, and we have, I looked at them, and I say, there's no ego there anymore.

There was just... I thought I saw it, although I'm not sure, that was many, many years ago when I looked at Stephen Hawkins in his wheelchair. And he looked at me and I looked at him.

And I could suddenly feel he's not suffering. He's suffering on the physical level, I'm sure, but he doesn't seem to be suffering on the psychological level. So there was no me entity that was in suffering.

And I found that quite amazing that in the face of one of the worst things that could happen to a human being, you could hardly imagine a worse fate than what happened to him. It would be very hard to come up with a worse story, no matter how much you have suffered in your life. Not to become gradually paralyzed, can't even hold your head up anymore, can't move any of your limbs, the only thing that's still working is your mind, and you're like that.

You cannot feed yourself, you can do nothing. You lose everything. And that was his fate.

And there he was when I observed him every day at lunchtime being fed by his students and trying to speak but no longer being able to speak. He didn't have a machine yet. They hadn't invented it yet at that time.

So only croaking sounds would come out of his mouth.

[Speaker 11] (4:23:46 - 4:23:48)

Croak, croak, croak, croak, croak.

[Speaker 1] (4:23:49 - 4:28:21)

Nobody could understand except the people who were close to him and spent a lot of time with him. They could interpret what he was saying. Croak, croak, croak, croak.

He wants apple pie. And... Croak, croak, croak.

Coffee. He wants coffee. And I'm doing that because it's...

So the amazing thing, what did not happen to him was the build-up of a victim identity on top of the pain. The build-up of an unhappy me on top of the pain, which would be normal. It would be normal for this to happen.

It didn't. For some reason, it didn't happen. So all that was left was that extreme discomfort, but he seemed to be okay with it.

So with a deep acceptance, and this is... I've seen it several times with some people who have had chronic pain or permanent disability, surrender happened. And sometimes also when acceptance happens...

Now, acceptance is not the acceptance of a condition. You don't say, I accept that I have AIDS, cancer, whatever the condition is called. You don't accept the condition in your mind.

What you accept is only the reality of this moment. And at this moment, the condition, which may have a name, at this moment, the condition manifests in some form as either physical pain or it manifests as physical disability or as physical weakness. It manifests in some way, presumably.

And that is what you accept. So you don't have in your mind, okay, I might as well accept that I have cancer or AIDS. I need to accept...

No, that's not... You don't accept some mind structure. You accept only the immediate reality of this moment.

And then healing can also happen and does happen when you go into deep acceptance. There is a... I read one or two books about healing and they found that when people come to a deep acceptance, not of their condition as a whole, but only of that which arises in the moment through the condition, then healing is more likely to happen because with that acceptance comes an energy field that is loving and harmonious and powerful and deep that comes with the acceptance.

So allow the pain to push you into that acceptance of what is so that you don't build up a superstructure of an unhappy me on top of it. And then perhaps a change will happen. So use it.

It's not... Nobody perhaps would choose it, although in new age many people might tell you, why did you choose that? And of course I never say that because it doesn't quite work that way.

I'm not telling you that you chose that pain, but some new age people will. They may not be entirely wrong, but it's not quite the right perspective. But what I do suggest is accept, and I wrote it somewhere, accept this moment as if you had chosen it.

That's easier. Because if you believe I chose that, you begin to feel bad about yourself and guilty. So that's not the case.

You don't need that. But accept this moment as if you had chosen it. And then a shift may happen.

And even if the pain does not go away, something else gets eroded inside you. And then the pain will have had a certain function that you didn't know it could have. And maybe then it will go away.

So that's all I can offer you with surrender to what is, and don't build up an unhappy me on top of it.

[Speaker 3] (4:28:23 - 4:28:25)

Thank you so much. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (4:28:25 - 4:28:45)

Thank you. The hand of destiny.

[Speaker 10] (4:28:57 - 4:29:25)

Hello. I had a meditative experience one time that was so... Consciousness was in every cell of my body to the point where it felt like my knees understood like they were communicating with plants in the rain.

In that state of consciousness, it occurred to me that death perhaps wasn't imminent. You speak about the new species arising. Is that possibly what you're referring to?

[Speaker 1] (4:29:31 - 4:29:36)

Was that a short-lived or how long did that experience last?

[Speaker 10] (4:29:37 - 4:29:41)

I don't know. Perhaps 10 to 20 minutes.

[Speaker 1] (4:29:42 - 4:30:01)

So it was an intense awareness of the aliveness in every cell of your body. And then what about your normal day-to-day life? Is there still remnants of that left, that you still feel that?

[Speaker 10] (4:30:02 - 4:30:22)

Fluctuations. There are times when it feels like a pulling back and I realize that there are shadowy parts of my body. You speak about disease possibly creeping in to those parts of the body.

I accept that I probably will die, but I don't... That you will die? That I will certainly die.

[Speaker 1] (4:30:22 - 4:37:08)

Yes, you will. But with enough consciousness that death perhaps wasn't imminent. No.

It's probably not imminent for you. So that's fine. And even if it were imminent, that would not be a problem when you are disidentified from form and the flowering of consciousness happens.

Now, perhaps you can... Do not try to replicate that experience. That rarely works.

But you can simply, very gently, continue to put attention into the inner energy field. So don't wait for it to happen again. But consciously direct attention into the inner energy field of the body.

And of course, that is part of the... It seems almost as if you were identifying with the body more. But the strange thing is, when you sense the inner energy field of the body, you're actually going beyond identification with the physical body.

Because what you sense is not the physical realm anymore. It's that which animates the physical realm. That is what you sense.

So, you're already... And of course, that is all part of the awakening. What eventually, so it seems, will lead to a transformation of collective consciousness that is so vast that we could only compare it to the arising of a new species, as I wrote somewhere and as you just said.

So, that is what is happening. So, don't wait for it to happen again. But consciously choose to bring more awareness into the body in daily life.

And be happy with whatever awareness is there. So, you may not be able to replicate for a while the intensity of what you experience spontaneously then. But that's not necessary.

But be there as much as possible. An interesting question arises now. And that is, is it not that when you are aware of the inner body, is there not some duality there, you might ask?

Is there not an I that is aware of something? It seems like that when we talk about it. Because when we talk about it, we use language.

And it sounds, if you say, I am aware of the inner body, there's I and there's the awareness of the inner body. But the reality is not like that. And the reality is what you experienced.

And that is, one could say, the entire energy field of the body becomes self-aware. So, it's not that you, there's not you and the body awareness. You and the body awareness are one.

You and the inner body are one. You are that. And it is becoming self-aware.

And that's an amazing thing. It's only when we then talk about it, we formulate a sentence. And in the sentence, we have a subject and an object.

And then we say, I am aware of the inner body. But there is no division there. There is already a sense of oneness.

You and it are one. It's a beautiful thing. And it's also a very healing thing to have attention in the energy field of the body.

It's healing. And it is a great way of preventing disease from arising. Not in every case.

There may be other factors coming in. But it is a great way of preventing many diseases from even beginning to arise. Because in this intense aliveness, diseases find it hard to survive.

Of course, yes, you might ingest poisonous substances which are everywhere in our civilization. Something could still happen. But it's less likely to happen.

So your immune system, this awareness affects every cell of the body. And the immune system becomes actually, I rarely use terms like that which refer only to the physical dimension, becomes strengthened through that. And that's a wonderful thing.

I highly recommend it when you feel the onset of some kind of disease. It could be flu or something like that, which, by the way, can often happen. You may observe it in your own life.

It often happens when you lose yourself in some emotional upheaval, mental emotional upheaval. Something happens in your life. You lose yourself in reactivity, in the old egoic consciousness.

You get upset and negative and angry. And a few days later, you can feel a flu start coming on. There's also a correlation they even find between the onset of serious illnesses and drastic upheavals in a person's life, such as separation, divorce, death of someone close to you, accident happening to somebody close to you, great loss, extreme anxiety about losing your job.

Upheavals in your daily life can often lead to the onset of disease because they bring about an absence of consciousness in the body because you become totally mind-identified in those states. So, yes, be grateful for that and continue to bring attention into the body so that it becomes a natural way of being and then see what happens. You don't have to do much else except invite it in and then it will do the rest.

[Speaker 10] (4:37:09 - 4:37:13)

The experience made me realize that Jesus probably did walk on water, is how it felt.

[Speaker 1] (4:37:14 - 4:37:38)

Okay. Monday we may try it. With Tony Robbins, people can walk on fire.

Perhaps we can walk on water. Thank you. Where's the hand of fate?

[Speaker 9] (4:37:41 - 4:38:25)

My question is about trusting what arises. For example, at the moment I have a big decision to make in life that will impact my life and other people and a direction seems to arise, simply arise. But I also know that there are unconscious forces, unconscious desires inside me that are silent and can arise in the same way.

How can I trust what arises?

[Speaker 1] (4:38:31 - 4:41:05)

Some things, you're right, arise not from the deep place of knowing and awareness. Some things may arise from the emotional field or the ego or fears and desires may arise. And how do you tell the difference?

There is a certain feeling quality associated with things that arise, realizations, sudden realizations, even a thought that comes that you suddenly, oh, this is what I need to do. There's a feeling quality associated with things that come from the deep place of awareness and of knowing and not from the restless emotional field. There's always associated with it a deep sense of peaceful certainty.

Peace is peace, but a vibrantly alive peace comes with that realization. If a vibrantly alive peace does not come with the realization, it doesn't come from the deepest place. It comes from the intermediate place of emotion, fear, egoic desire, masquerading as perhaps some great insight.

But if it's deeply peaceful, and with that comes a faith that you can't really question that anymore. It's so obvious that this comes from the deep place, and then you know you can trust that. If it's not peaceful, it does not come from the deepest place.

So if, for example, a decision becomes, should I continue to be in this relationship, or should I leave? Now, the impulse to leave may come from the emotional or egoic level. You get very angry and upset, and finally you pack your bags and you walk out.

That is probably not from the deepest place, but if the impulse to leave comes with a peaceful and deep certainty, then it is right. And then you walk out without even making the other that you leave behind into an enemy. And there you know that's the right place, and you can act on that.

That's how it is. So does that make sense to you?

[Speaker 9] (4:41:06 - 4:41:42)

It does make sense. Sometimes when it does come with that feeling of alive peace, and I've acted on it in the last years as I've been on the path, even then, as that peacefulness stays with me, it still creates turbulence outside. So even that faith stays with me, that somehow it couldn't have been different.

It's difficult. That is not what's reflected back in the world. It doesn't change my path, but I do wonder about it.

[Speaker 1] (4:41:43 - 4:41:55)

The turbulence, so you act on what you feel within, it's peaceful, and then you take some action, and that creates a turbulence around you. Yes.

[Speaker 9] (4:41:55 - 4:42:01)

Even sometimes for me, but yet that peace stays.

[Speaker 1] (4:42:01 - 4:46:52)

Yes. Well, some people may be upset by certain things that you do from there. You're not in this world in order to protect others from their upset.

For example, one's parents, parents of grown-up children, may have certain fixed ideas of what it is you need to do and how you need to lead your life, and if you don't conform to their ideas of what you need to do and how you need to live your life, they get very upset. Your mother might be close to a nervous breakdown, as my mother was, several times. She couldn't sleep anymore.

She said, he's going mad. What is he doing with his life? He's wasted every opportunity.

He could have done so much. He had so much. He's so intelligent.

And what's he doing with his mind? Nothing. Now, I had to accept that.

If I had said, okay, I have to do something so that my mother doesn't have sleepless nights anymore, I'm now going to apply for a job in Wall Street, and then my mother will be happy. That would, of course, be dreadful. Of course, she would be happy, but I would not be happy.

Some people may have to go through the pain generated by their unconsciousness. You cannot take that away from them. So you may have to take certain actions that sometimes cause others pain, not directly.

Ultimately, you are not causing them pain. If I become a dropout, as I kind of did, became a dropout, I did not directly cause pain to my mother. She did it to herself.

That is, of course, the case. And all I could do was compassionately accept that this is occasionally attempting to point out that I was doing what I felt was right for me, even not very successfully pointing it out. And so she continued to feel the pain until, in the eyes of the world, I became somebody.

And then she suddenly could sleep again. So certain things I did created that turbulence, and I accepted it. I wasn't even in a conflict about it.

It was so clear to me that I did what I had to do and could not do otherwise and had to just allow my mother to go through that pain that she generated for herself. So that created turbulence. Another thing that happens is, even when a deep conviction comes from within that is peaceful, you act on it, there is still your mind that may come up with all kinds of subsequent doubts.

It can then start to question, but can you really be sure? Was that really the thing? Maybe I should have done something different.

So the peaceful thing that comes does not immediately obliterate your entire mind, which may still be there and may still question whether what you are doing is the right course of action or not. Because that's how the mind is. But you again have to see what is the feeling quality of it and go to the source and feel that, and then you can ask the mind to, please, you don't need this anymore.

I've already decided on this course of action and this is what I'm going to do. You could otherwise be in conflict for years. Some people live like that.

The mind loves that because it can keep itself going. It can think all through the night, did I do the right thing? Maybe I should have done something else.

So stepping out of the mind as much as you can. Yeah. Okay, do you want to go one first and the other one next?

Okay, so we have...

[Speaker 10] (4:47:32 - 4:48:08)

There are a couple of things that still pull me into the pain body. And I'm aware of that. So I know it's a process and it's getting better.

It won't always be like that. But when I'm in there, it's total suffering. It's really total suffering.

And then when it passes, I see it. I'm having difficulty with a loss of identity. I'm not sure who I am anymore.

[Speaker 1] (4:48:09 - 4:48:11)

Okay, that's good.

[Speaker 10] (4:48:23 - 4:48:25)

I feel kind of lost.

[Speaker 1] (4:48:26 - 4:54:03)

Yes, yes. Well, that's the transitional stage. There are really two questions.

There's the pain body question, pain body episodes, and the sense of being lost because you're not quite sure anymore who you are. And not being quite sure who you are and feeling uncomfortable about it is a transitional stage for many people as they go through the awakening process. And once you've gone through the transitional stage, not knowing who you are and feeling uncomfortable about it, you reach the stage where you don't know who you are and feel comfortable with not knowing who you are.

And then there is a deep knowing in there, who you are, but you couldn't say anything about it. When you become comfortable with not knowing, as I am, I don't know who I am. I don't have concepts in my head that tell me who I am.

I have other people who think they know who I am. They say he's a spiritual teacher, or they say he's a writer, or they say he's done great things, or whatever they say, or they say he's insane. They all know who I am, it seems, but I don't subscribe to that.

I don't have a sense even that I'm a spiritual teacher except when spiritual teaching happens. Right now, I seem to be a spiritual teacher because I'm sitting here and teaching happens, if you want to call it teaching. When I walk away from here, and I don't carry around the sense of identity that here's a walking spiritual teacher.

So a spiritual teacher is a function, but it's not an identity. It's a function, so whatever you do in your life, you perform a function. You may have a job, whatever you do in your job, it is a function that you do.

And while you do it, you can call yourself that, teacher, whatever you do, the function, but not an identity. You don't carry it around as an identity. The most liberated place in yourself is the place of having no particular ideas in your head about who you are, but just being the awareness.

But the awareness is not an idea. It looks like an idea when you talk about it. But being the awareness, that's who you are.

But conceptually, you can only be the awareness if you give up on a conceptual level trying to figure out who you are. So it's only when you give up trying to figure out who you are conceptually, and conceptually means it's some story you tell yourself. This is who I am.

It may not even be your job. In some people, in some cases, it's their life story. I'm a sufferer of abuse.

Of course, it's a sad thing that you suffered abuse, but to build an identity around it is a deception, a conceptual identity. I'm a sufferer of such and such. And then you can go to a convention of sufferers of such and such a condition and to strengthen your sense of identity.

It's very seductive. Oh, now we know who we are. So not knowing who you are feels a little strange to you right now, but if you go more fully into that and you see that there's an awareness there that doesn't need to know conceptually, and that's who you are, and you are rooted in that.

So just continue what I said about the function of being a spiritual teacher, and then I walk away to my room or go somewhere, but not as a walking spiritual teacher, but simply as a walking field of presence, a field of awareness walking. But that's not a conceptual thing. That's an immediate realization that I am the awareness.

But I'm only the awareness because conceptually I've become comfortable with not being anybody. Comfortable with not being anybody. So your transition, the discomfort, will be replaced by acceptance of not knowing who you are, and suddenly you feel yourself rooted in awareness, or you are the awareness.

Then you know who you are by not knowing who you are conceptually. That's the beauty of it. And now let's come briefly to your pain body episodes.

There are certain situations in which it tends to arise. Perhaps you can even note the two or three particular situations where it happens again and again. Perhaps to do with other humans close to you.

Am I right? Yes.

[Speaker 10] (4:54:06 - 4:54:11)

It has to do with my daughter and money. Those two things.

[Speaker 1] (4:54:11 - 4:57:41)

Okay. That's a big thing for many people, their children and money. Money can bring up a sense of the fear that makes up many people's pain body.

Pain body can consist primarily of anger. The pain body, which is the old accumulated emotion that you carry around, can also consist mainly of fear. Fear of survival and so on.

And particularly for those people in whom the pain body contains a lot of fear vibration, money often triggers that fear. And it could be sometimes insignificant amounts of money and you can suddenly have a reaction. $10.

$100. $100. So whenever you...

You lose awareness when the pain body arises and the awareness returns when it subsides. So it's not yet there in the middle of it. I recommend that when you approach a situation that you know may lead to your pain body coming up, a discussion with your daughter or a particular situation that tends to repeat itself with your daughter or something to do with money, the moment your attention begins to focus on some money situation, bring that alertness to it knowing that at any moment this thing may trigger my pain body and turn up the dimmer switch inside you so that you become more alert as you begin to deal with money matters, for example.

Okay, now let's look at my bank account. It's like handling a hot coal. Hot coals.

Careful. Be alert. And then you may find it may not even come or if it does still come, at least there will be an awareness as it happens.

If there can be an awareness as you get taken over by the pain body, that means you're not completely taken over by the pain body. The beginning of the end, which may take a while, but the beginning of the end of a pain body is when the awareness begins to be there even while it's happening, which may not yet prevent it from happening, but you know it's happening and not just afterwards. And that is more likely to happen if you have a little bit of foresight so that you know, I'm now approaching a possible pain body situation and then the alarm, maybe they should invent an app for that, that you carry your cell phone in your pocket and when it senses certain skin reactions that are associated with pain body, suddenly the cell phone goes, burp, burp, burp, burp, burp.

So maybe somebody here can come up with that. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (4:57:52 - 4:58:24)

Hi. I'd like to know if you have someone in your life who has suffered from a medical condition and it has become part of that person's identity and you see that person suffering, how could then I be most helpful to that person to help, I can't tell the person what to do, but to help alleviate the suffering?

[Speaker 1] (4:58:25 - 4:58:32)

So there is such a person in your life? A very close relative or friend or?

[Speaker 9] (4:58:32 - 4:58:34)

A child.

[Speaker 1] (4:58:34 - 4:58:37)

A child. How old?

[Speaker 2] (4:58:37 - 4:58:41)

Well, a young adult. Young 20s.

[Speaker 1] (4:58:47 - 4:59:03)

It's likely that if you tell him or her, it is likely that if you tell her, this is not who you are, probably is not going to be received well. Maybe you have tried it.

[Speaker 9] (4:59:03 - 4:59:06)

I think I've said everything. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (4:59:09 - 5:01:46)

Yes. It's probably best not to address that particular condition, the psychological condition, if you want to call it that, of pseudo-identity, not to address it directly, but simply what I suggested a little bit earlier, to do what you could do with older people who are maybe not be open to anything spiritual whatsoever, introduce somehow, find a way of introducing to them to body awareness. Somehow, maybe you can think of something that makes it an occasion that arises where you just do it, you say, oh, I learned something interesting, you want to try it out, and try out, guide them, guide them into body awareness as something that actually is fun and feels good, and it works for me, you say, it's not a lie, hopefully, it works for me, and it actually is very pleasant to do.

And when you guide them into body awareness, inner body awareness, that already takes attention away from where it is usually lodged in their mind, and of course that is in their mind is where the pseudo-identity lives, as an idea of who I am. So the more you take attention away from their mind, put it into the body, the weaker the pseudo-identity, which is an idea, becomes in their head, and you never need to address it directly, you never need to question the pseudo-identity, because as you know, probably it doesn't work. So take them out of their mind, and see what happens, and then they may love it, and then begin to embrace it, and live more centered in the body rather than in the mental realm, so they become rooted in something more real than the level, dimension of ideas of who they are.

Another thing is, of course... Oh, how old is that person? Twenty-three.

And what is your relationship?

[Speaker 9] (5:01:47 - 5:01:48)

My daughter.

[Speaker 1] (5:01:49 - 5:02:04)

Your daughter. Okay. How does being in nature...

Does she have a relationship with the natural world, or the world of nature?

[Speaker 9] (5:02:05 - 5:02:06)

Not so much.

[Speaker 1] (5:02:06 - 8:03:22)

No. If you can somehow take her out of the mental realm... These days, many youngsters are very much immersed in the abstract realm of electronic media devices.

Many youngsters are continuously... It's always a pity to see, when I see the young people, children often, they are with their parents, they are on vacation, and what do they do? The children are going...

They're in some new place that they haven't seen before. They could take it all in. Wow.

Wow. But the parents don't seem to be guiding them either. They don't say, Let's touch this, look at that.

They let them just... I'm just imitating what I saw a few days ago, a family, the two boys, maybe 12 years old and 14. They hardly looked at each other or the world around them.

The complete attention completely absorbed by... As if the device was sucking up their consciousness. I'm surprised there's no conspiracy theory yet on the Internet about these devices sucking up our consciousness.

Maybe I shouldn't have said that. There is? Maybe there is.

In some ways it's true, but it doesn't need to be some evil thing behind it. We created it, so it is quite an obstacle. It takes you away from...

It completely takes you into your mind and into the world of mental abstraction. And it has an enormous addictive quality. Potentially it can also be used for awakening.

And this is why I'm happy that the Internet is being used here also to spread the teaching and why I did the Oprah webinars a few years ago. So to counteract the negative impact it has on human consciousness, there is also a possibility of using it in a positive way. So nature can be very healing and can bring balance into a person's life and also help take them out of excessive mental...

dwelling mentally in your mental identity. It can take you also into the body, also interacting with nature in some way, going on hiking, anything where you are in touch with the elements. Maybe you can take her on some trips where you both engage in interacting with nature.

And bring in inner body awareness also. So all those things are helpful. And then a shift may happen without you having to address it directly.

Sir, in one of your lectures, I recall you saying that when tragedy and devastation comes into our life, try in the first instance to accept it. And if you can't do that, try to accept how we feel about the occurrence and eventually the winds of grace will blow over us and we'll discover a deeper peace than we knew before. Then, in another lecture, I recall you saying something about this barren painting.

And I recall you saying that she's a bit radical in her posture vis-a-vis this thing because she says learn to love it the way it is, period. And it does sound radical compared to your position, but it is a position that a lot of people I know espouse, at least intellectually. What do you feel is the middle ground if there is one between you and this barren painting?

Thank you. Of course, barren Katie, she loves what is, and so she teaches what she lives. And it happened to her, it happened to her spontaneously.

And I've spent time with her privately and she truly seems to love whatever is. And this is her teaching. And my teaching is related to it, but I don't quite express it in such extreme terms.

I say many situations, you may not be able to love that situation, but you're always able to bring acceptance to it. And if you bring acceptance to it, there at least is a peace around the situation. So let's say you find yourself stranded somewhere, your car breaks down in the middle of nowhere, you walk through the rain, you can't find anywhere.

It's barren Katie can probably love it. She loves the feeling of the rain and breathing in the air. And every step is great.

Why should it be otherwise? This is what is. And you love it without even telling yourself mentally that you love it.

You just love the experience. Any experience, you love it. And that's how she, this is what happened to her.

And this is what for quite a few years people around her thought she was mad and she couldn't hardly talk to people anymore because there was no common ground anymore with ordinary humanity. But now she's able to interact again. And I find for most people it is easier in extreme situations not to try and love it because you cannot try and love a situation.

But acceptance is much easier. Acceptance is the realization that you cannot argue with the is-ness of this moment and if you internally argue with the what is because what is already is. And if you resist it internally, that is how suffering arises.

And when you observe that process, then you see how suffering arises and when you see how you create your own suffering and ultimately not the situation but you, your reaction to the situation, then you're closer to the end of suffering. And this is what the Buddha taught. He said, I teach suffering and the end of suffering.

By which he meant, I show you how suffering arises. And by, and when you see how suffering arises, how you create it, that is the beginning of the end of suffering. So as you bring acceptance to a situation, a certain peace arises, a peacefulness comes.

So let's come back to the same situation. You cannot perhaps love having to get out of your car in the cold and the rain and total darkness in the middle of nowhere. What do I do now?

Usually the mind would go into, and this is just a relatively insignificant situation. There are far more serious situations than breaking down a car in the middle of nowhere. This is what is.

If that is your realization, you don't have a mental commentary on that. You simply stay with every step and see, what can I do now? And that is acceptance.

And then you're more likely to do the right thing when you bring acceptance to it. And then you may find the acceptance deepens. And as you go about taking the necessary steps to end that particular situation, to remedy that particular situation, as the acceptance deepens, you may find that there is no clear dividing line between acceptance of what is and loving what is.

At some point, they merge into one. And this is why sometimes a human who accepts and then goes more deeply into acceptance suddenly finds that what we call acceptance has turned into loving what is. So acceptance, if it's deep enough, becomes loving what is.

So ultimately, they are intimately connected and ultimately one. And now, that was the last question for today. I'm getting a signal that we need to finish for today with a little meditation on stillness.

On time. Being in the present moment and on time. Being spacious but not spaced out.

Welcome back, everybody, here and elsewhere on the planet. Whatever time it is where you are, it's also the present moment. The present moment is a deeper truth than what time it is.

Two levels. Of course, we can't escape from time on this level. There is undoubtedly the reality of time because although you cannot ever experience time directly, you can only notice the effects of time.

If you leave an apple out for a few days or weeks, then you look at it every day and you notice the effects of time on the apple. It begins to shrink. If you wait long enough, it disappears completely, miraculously.

And then all that's left is a bit of dust. And then that gets blown away and that's time. You can do the same with yourself.

Take a picture on your phone of yourself and then wait a few years. With the apple it's a few weeks and you may have to wait a few years before you notice certain differences. And then you compare the two and say, What happened here?

Time. Assaulted by time. The body got assaulted by time.

If you're interested in poetry, a large part of Shakespeare's sonnets are about what time does to the human being. Quite pleasant to read. You become very much aware of impermanence when you read those poems, Shakespeare's sonnets.

So that's a spiritual reading. Although he doesn't say anything spiritual. But it is spiritual because when you are presented with the fact of impermanence and see it clearly and accept it, not go into a state of fear and say, Oh, I'm going to grow old.

Will you still love me? Will you still need me? When I'm 64?

No. I'm 64 now. And I sang that on my birthday.

Now when you look at the impermanence and accept it, then you can sense something in you from where you can see the impermanence, but which in itself is not subject to impermanence. There is something, let's talk about there's something in me that is the same now as it was 30 years ago. A sense of beingness that has nothing to do with the passing of time.

A deeper I, not the I when you say I, that can usually refer to the surface level of who you are. When a human being says I, usually they talk about their physical body, that comes first, that's always the first thing in your mind. And then comes the mental I, the psychological entity, the mind made entity, the person, the personality, the conditioned self, what the Buddha called the self.

And I think also Jesus called it the self, because he said deny thyself, which means recognize the unreality of the self. So there's the self, when a human says I, usually refers to that entity, the history of me, in other words me, which I sometimes call me and my story. That's where people derive their sense of I from.

But there is a deeper meaning and level to I, when I comes from a deeper place, it refers to the unconditioned I, the beingness itself, the consciousness itself, not the form that it has taken as a thought, but the pure consciousness itself, the pure awareness, the pure, just the presence. And that's not subject to time, but when you look at, do not close yourself or resist the fact of impermanence and you see it in front of you, you only really see it from the perspective of the timeless. I sometimes say if there were nothing but impermanence, you wouldn't even see it, notice it, because it would be like imagine everything on this planet were green, you were green and every object is green and everything you see is green, the color green wouldn't exist, because it only exists if there's something else too.

There would be no word for green and nobody would know that everything is green. So there is something in you that notices, that is a witness to the impermanence of the world of form. So when you contemplate impermanence, not through thinking, but from the pure awareness, space of pure awareness, then the space of pure awareness becomes more conscious of itself, so to speak, through contemplating the short-lived nature of all life forms.

So that simply means, in practical terms, when you look at impermanence, whether it's an actual thing that you see, it always comes to me very strongly whenever I look at an old photo in a book or in an antiquarian store or a junk shop or where they have old photo albums, whenever I look at an old photo and you see street scenes of people in 1920 or whatever they are doing and I always come immediately, there's a deepening of stillness for a moment and go, they're all gone now. All these life forms that you see on the photo have dissolved and been replaced by others.

You can have a street scene, I saw New York, the same street in 1920, you can still a little bit recognize that that's the same street as now, just filled with completely different people because all the people you see on the photo have dissolved. But the same consciousness has assumed slightly different forms and is living again and again and again in this dimension of time through these forms and expressing itself through these forms. Because it would be sad, one would have to weep looking at old photos and say, all these lives, what have they lived for?

Hasn't it all been in vain because they thought everything they did was so important and now they're all dead and gone and nothing was really that important. So if you come to strange conclusions and it could lead you to a nihilistic conclusion that it's all so pointless, isn't it? But that's not how it is.

You see that something arises in you that is deeply peaceful. Also when you contemplate death itself and surrender to it or sit next to it. I spent some time when my mother died sitting next to the body and the sadness came and then a very deep peace.

And a little bit of that peace is always there. The fact when impermanence is faced, there's something. I'm just pointing this out so that you can verify it in your own experience next time you're confronted with any sign of impermanence, which could be a dead leaf that's fallen from the tree or a wilted flower or an old photo or whatever it is and stay with that.

Or you watch a movie that faces the reality of death or old age. I have seen some movies like that, for example, The Notebook, a lovely movie. You see the same couple as youngsters and very old and she's beginning to lose her memory and they all come together.

It's beautiful to contemplate. It's spiritual because the contemplation of impermanence, if it's not rejected or interpreted in some way, come to some conceptual conclusion, no, just contemplate it and then something, feel very alert, something you notice, something arising in you that is deeply peaceful. You don't even need to interpret it.

You can just notice. If you don't run away from the fact of impermanence, something becomes deeply peaceful. Buddhist monks know that in some Buddhist traditions, the monks regularly go to the morgue where the dead bodies are and spend hours there in meditation.

And if you don't know the reason, then it looks very strange, you see. That's a morbid thing to do, isn't it? Of course it's not.

There's a deep reason for that. The death is all around you, which death means a form dissolves. It's much more obvious and therefore it can be a spiritual experience to go to India where death is not always hidden as it is in the West.

Let's hide the dead bodies, says the Westerner. It's all sanitized. And in India, somebody dies in public.

The bodies are being burned. And that's quite a, oh my God. There you see the reality of the impermanence of all physical forms.

And also, another fact is the old age, which is by the way what led to the Buddha's search for enlightenment when he was a young man, was the realization of old age and death and sickness. But old age, for the first time he saw consciously, he looked around. Well, the story goes that his father wanted to hide all these things from him because an astrologer had predicted that he would either become a great leader or a great spiritual master.

And his father wanted him to become a great leader and not a spiritual master. So his father, he must have known somehow that if he became aware of old age and death and sickness, then he would become a spiritual person. But at one point, the young man, the young Buddha, when he wasn't the Buddha yet, went out into town and for the first time, or for the first time consciously, saw a dying person and a very old person and a sick person.

And he asked somebody, what happened to these people? And he was already 25 or something like that. What happened to these people?

And somebody said to him, well, it's called old age. And his father wanted to surround him only with lovely young and beautiful people where they lived in the palace or mansion. And old age, what's that?

Yes, well, is that a disease? No, no, it happens to everybody. Then what's the point of it all, he said.

And that was such a shock to him that soon later he left it all behind in the search for something that is not subject to impermanence and death, the eternal, God, the eternal, whatever you want to call it. And it took a few years and then he realized it within. But it was that which brought about his search was the fact of impermanence.

If he had not faced that, it would never have happened. He would have become involved in the superficialities of daily existence for the rest of his life. So old age also is hidden mostly in Western countries because as soon as you get really old, you're usually in a sheltered place where you're being looked after, but you're no longer roaming about the streets and you're even separated from the family so that the children no longer live with their grandparents in most cases, as it used to be.

So the children are hardly aware of old age and occasionally might visit. So there's a separation. They're the old people.

And if you go to other countries, non-Western, you see old age much more because they're still around. They haven't been put away. So you see people in a much more realistic view of human existence than you would get in the West if you look around.

So impermanence is a beautiful thing to contemplate. And again, the most powerful way to contemplate impermanence is to face it in whatever form, because it's always the decay and the dissolution of form, to contemplate that and not think, not draw any conceptual conclusion. No, just be with it.

And be that which the awareness for it. And then you will notice a deepening and an arising of something that cannot be really put into words, an arising of a deep sense of peace and spaciousness. So that is how impermanence can become a spiritual, lead to a spiritual realization.

And they've known this for thousands of years, except Western people. And of course, a large part of the world is Western these days. One could almost say China is Western and Japan is Western.

Very powerful things to see. Sometimes people have filmed life forms like plants, how they are born and how they die. And what usually takes place over a period of several weeks, or days at least, is condensed into two minutes.

And you see the cameras on the plant that comes out of the soil. And it's a miraculous thing to see how it shoots out. Of course, it's speeded up.

It shoots out and then the bud appears. And then the bud opens. Sometimes it closes and opens because some flowers close at night.

And then you see that for a while. Daytime. Nighttime.

Daytime. Daytime. Nighttime.

And then, very quickly, it no longer opens, or it stays open and open. The more and more it begins to collapse. And then the entire plant collapses and disappears.

And that's an amazing, amazing thing to see. You could do the same with a human, except it wouldn't be practical because the cameraman would be dead before the human dies. But I have seen a wonderful, I may have mentioned it before, some of you know, a wonderful commercial that somebody sent to me.

It's from some Scandinavian country. The most spiritual commercial I've ever seen. And it's for beer.

Which beer, I don't know. So, on that level, the commercial probably doesn't work because nobody remembers. Don't remember what beer it is.

It starts with a, it's a kind of cartoon, but it looks lifelike. A baby shoots out of the mother's womb in a kind of explosion and goes up into the sky, screaming. So the baby shoots out of the womb, into the sky, screaming.

But as the baby travels upward, it already begins to grow. And by the time it's reached the highest point, it's already a fully grown man. And then the descent begins, and the scream, the voice, of course, deepens a bit.

And it continues to scream all the time. And then the fully grown man goes downwards and, of course, becomes old very quickly. All this is within less than a minute.

Becomes old very quickly, and just as he approaches the ground, is a very old man, and he shoots into the earth. And there's a gravestone there. And I watched that when my mouth opened.

Because there you see the reality of the life of form. And, of course, all it said was at the end, life is short, drink. Unfortunately, I forgot what to drink.

And that also makes you realize that on the level of form, nothing is all that important. There is something beyond the form. Beyond form, something that expresses itself through the form, something that grows somehow as the form faces its challenges in the world of form, something within evolves and grows into this dimension that comes from some other dimension, the formless, the one.

One could almost say, the one or God incarnating gradually into the world of form. I don't want to offer too much of an explanation of the universe because the mind cannot do that. You cannot comprehend through concepts what the purpose of the universe is.

You can get a sense of it in yourself, but not through concepts. You can, on a non-conceptual level, through non-conceptual intelligence, which is awareness, you can have realizations that you can never verbalize. Nor would you want to because you would know it would be immediately falsified.

That's why the writer of the Tao Te Ching said, the Tao that can be spoken of is not the true Tao. You can only point, you cannot explain the universe. Philosophers have tried, but of course it's absurd.

How can you explain the vastness of what is unfolding, the cosmos? I mean, even the earth is incomprehensible. The cosmos, how can you explain the vastness that is unfolding there through a few sounds?

Or a few mathematical symbols? Scribbles on a piece of paper? Or on a board?

I mean, it looks impressive, but is that the explanation of the purpose of the universe or the underlying purpose of it? Or words? How many sounds are there?

There are five vowels. A, E, O, U, Y, whatever. And these are the vowels that the vocal cords produce.

And then you have the other consonants that are produced by air pressure. And you put these together and then you expect to have some ultimate answers through that. But they tried.

That's good. That's fun. So this is all about the realization within you.

That's why you are here, why I am here, and why you are there, wherever you are. It's always here and now. It's about the realization of the formless dimension in you, which is, if you want to attach a word to it, just as a little pointer, it is a sense of deep and alive peace, an inner stillness, a space that looks like a not-knowing space, because no conceptualization happens, a space that you do not need or cannot fully inhabit continuously, because if you did, you would spend the rest of your life like that. And you would not need to do anything. If you totally dwelled there, you would simply be, and it would be joyful.

And if you lived in India, you could survive that way, because people would come and feed you, because they would see there is something there that is the transcendent shining through this form. And if you do it in the West, an ambulance will come, and you will be taken away. So it's the destiny for most humans is to find a balance between still being interacting and doing things in the world of form, but at the same time, being willing to do things rooted in something much deeper, or another way of putting it, sensing your own reality, the essence of who you are, as something, it's not a thing, something within that is far deeper than anything that you can do or perceive or think.

It's being, being itself. And so you find a balance between being. Being is experienced or known as the deepest I am.

When you say I, it can express that deepest level of being, I. And that is the eternal I that has nothing to do with you as a person. That is really where all your true sense of identity comes from, of who or what you are.

Even the sense of identity that is attached to a story, what really happens is the deepest sense of I is shining through the forms of the story, and you feel there's me here, there's an identity here. If you remove the story, then you can sense it directly, something very precious. But when it's associated only with a story, so it shines through in some obscure way through the story, then you think that is your identity, not the light behind it.

Because the story can only exist because it appears in the light of consciousness. So the light of consciousness, which is that essence, shines through whatever the story in your mind is about who you are, what you're telling yourself, the ideas that you have about who you are. How is it possible for you to have these ideas about who you are?

Because there's a light of consciousness or the space of consciousness in which these appear. So that is shining there and makes it possible for you to even have a story about yourself. So you could say the story is the film that runs through the projector and the essence of who you are is the light behind it.

And all that the film does, it obscures the light in various places. And by obscuring the light in various places, it creates the illusion that there are people there. And it creates the illusion that there's something important happening out there and drama.

And so everybody senses there's something very precious in them that they don't want to lose. Everybody senses there's something that I don't want to die. There's something so precious there.

But it's usually associated with the superficial level of the story, which is the film, not realizing that that preciousness is actually the light. So you confuse the surface level of reality, which could not exist and ultimately is not separate from the core of reality, the unmanifested, and then it is essentially the timeless essence. That which you touch in yourself when you realize the formless, sense it, is not just in you.

It is the core of all life. So you're not only touching the essence of who you are, it's the essence of all life, all other life forms, the very same essence. So it's the expression self-realization, but the true self that is realized goes far beyond any form.

So you get to the very core of the universe itself, in yourself. So it's nothing to do with some kind of selfish pursuit. It far transcends what you conceive of as you.

One could almost say it is a self-realization of the universe, when through this form the universe becomes conscious of its own being. So there are two levels, because you are the universe, obviously, you are an intrinsic part. Human beings sometimes think that they are in the universe.

You're not in the world, in the universe. You are the universe, you are an expression of the totality in this particular short-lived form. You haven't been put into it, you have come out of it, and you go back in, and you go out again, and back in, and out again.

This is the continuous movement of forms arising, forms withdrawing, and arising and withdrawing. So you are the universe. So there are two levels of what the universe wants, and this is not philosophy, you can simply verify that by looking at your own life.

What you want, the universe wants. So on one level, you enjoy the forms, and on one level you want to do something, create something, many of you feel you want to contribute something, create some new form, or somehow make a contribution, to bring something into this world, and that is the level of manifestation. The universe manifests through you, the creative aspect, you can become a co-creator of the universe, you can manifest, there are books about that, we may talk about that again, but not right now.

And also, you can contemplate the beauty of life forms, and appreciate them. We talked yesterday about looking at a tree, for example, and the tree finding itself, and its own beauty and sacredness through you, and knowing it's because ultimately you are not separate. So, when you look at things, and appreciate them, you bring a consciousness to them, that the tree is deeply connected with being, but the consciousness is not as evolved into this dimension, as the human consciousness.

So, in some sense, you can say the tree is closer to God, which is the one being itself, and an animal is closer to God, so to speak, than humans, because they are still more deeply connected with being. Humans have gone out into differentiation in the world of form more, therefore, their mind has developed, their mind can now create thought, and can now look at the universe through thought, and it has created a more developed, a stronger consciousness that goes out there, so it can do something that those other life forms, or ultimately they are all one, cannot do. So, when you contemplate at night here, you look at the stars, you look at, you walk around, you look at all the beauty around in the present moment, of course, it's the only place where you can notice things, and you go, oh, and there's a stillness that the universe is now enjoying its own creations, that's what's happening, and consciously contemplating them, it's not really you, because you are an aspect of the universe, so when you see beauty, the universe sees its own beauty, it's obvious, and when you appreciate the creation, then the universe appreciates what it has created, that's obvious. So, on one level, it wants to know itself, and through humans and other life forms, the universe wants to know itself, and it does that, it also wants to create more forms, that's the outward movement into differentiation, life on this planet is now far more complex than it was 500 million years ago, it was much more simple, and it's the complexities growing so quickly, that even if you go back a hundred years, life on the human level is much more complex now, than it was then. Now, we don't know for how long the movement into complexity can continue, because there is a point when the tree cannot grow any more branches, and they begin to collapse, and then the tree needs to simplify itself again, so if there's an excessive proliferation of complexity, at some point, there would be a collapse, and that's fine, that's how it's meant to be, and the world becomes more simple again, and then something new arises, but let's put that aside for a moment. So, there's the outward movement of the universe, which it wants is to create forms, and they are continuously being created on this planet, and I'm sure billions of other planets, life forms are being created continuously, it's like the play in this Indian term, Leela, which is the play of form, on some level, it's a playful thing.

To the universe, it's not tragic, the fact that one fish gets eaten by another fish, one minute after it's born, to the universe, that is not tragic, because the very same life essence, immediately, is there again in another form, and another form, and another form, so the universe enjoys the play of form, and it wants also to become more conscious of that, and that happens through the humans. So, on the one hand, there is the outward movement, which is creation, manifestation into form, and then there is another movement, and how do I know that? Just look within, and you will find the two movements in yourself, which could be expressed in the most simple terms by saying, on the one hand, you want to do things in your life, and create things, and be active, on the other hand, you also want to be deeply at peace.

There is something that draws you into deep, you want the peace of God, as it's called sometimes, you want the peace, you want a sense of absolute fulfillment, you want to feel most clearly and strongly who you are, essentially, and that is the movement into being, being and doing. So, one is the outward movement of the universe, birth, birth, birth, and another one is the return movement, which humans call the spiritual path. The spiritual path, essentially, is not how to manifest a big house, or whatever you want, that's not spiritual, that's more, it's to do with the outward movement of the universe, so it's not to be condemned, it's just, I sometimes say, the two movements, as far as contemporary teachers, if you want to call them that, is concerned, the outward movement is most clearly expressed by Tony Robbins, when he goes, you can do it, you can do it, you just go out there and do it, and that's what the universe also wants, and Eckhart says, be, be, and that seems to be the other movement, the return journey. Of course, the fact that both exist means, yes, they both have their place, and it is possible, actually, for a human being, and that, I would say, is how we are meant to live, is not to get lost in the doing, because eventually you would become insane, yeah, I'm still doing, I'm still doing, I can't stop doing, I just have to stop doing, and there's the next phone call, and there's the next deal, and now we create this, and you don't lose yourself in being, as I think we already pointed out, you go, oh, if I had a choice, because I more represent the being, I'd rather be lost in being than in doing, but there's a balance, now, not every human needs to be right in the middle, and very few humans can be right in the middle, where they are effective as a doer in the world, without losing their connectedness with being, with being rooted, still rooted in an inner, there's an inner space or core of stillness while they do. Very few, I said to Oprah, you may be one of the few who is right in the middle, because she is connected with being, but she's always constantly doing, she's doing so much, I would collapse if I lived like her, she just doesn't stop, but she's not lost in doing, she returns to stillness, so she's kind of in the middle, for most humans, they can't be in the middle, nor would you need to be in the middle, most are either tending a little bit more towards there, the being, or a little bit more towards the doing, and that's fine, and this is why humans differ, not everybody needs to be totally balanced between doing and being, and I have the expression in A New Earth, I use the expression frequency holders, to describe humans who live much more on the level of being, and are not very interested in doing great things, they are happy to have a life of simple things, perhaps they are gardeners, perhaps they have a job that provides a sufficient income that they pursue, and they don't feel the need to go beyond that, and that's fine, I call them frequency holders, because their job is to be present in whatever they do, and with whomever they interact, to bring presence into the simplest action, traditionally those people lived in monasteries, but nowadays very few people live in monasteries, but there was in the past, or of course in Tibet, a section of the community lived in monasteries, so the frequency holders traditionally were monastics, but our modern civilization has little place for monastics, many monasteries have closed down, and the others are sparsely populated, and so these humans feel perhaps, I would say, 80% into being, and the rest is the things that they do, and awareness flows into whatever they do, but the state of consciousness that you embody has an influence, affects the totality of consciousness, so those frequency holders are important, also they are as important as the doers, those who are 80% into doing, and perhaps just 20% still connected with stillness and being, they are as important because they present a point of stillness within the totality of human consciousness, that's why I call them frequency holders. The danger, if you are a frequency holder, there is a danger if you are a frequency holder, and there is a danger if you are more of a doer, if you are more of a doer, the danger is that eventually you get lost in the doing, and if you are 80% into doing, then before you know it, you may be 90% into doing, and 100% into doing, and you are lost, and that can happen. If you are a frequency holder, and predominantly rooted in being, the danger is that instead of remaining on the, what I call, on the level above thinking a lot of the time, which is what awareness is, you have risen above the thinking level, you still think, but you have access to the level of awareness, and the awareness flows through you, which is above thinking.

And if you are a frequency holder, sometimes because of the type of life you lead does not contain enough challenges, if you lead a very protected life, job security, pleasant surroundings, many gardeners are frequency holders, you work every day in this lovely garden, your job is relatively secure, you have a little place to live, you have enough to eat, and you are just wonderful, you hold the presence.

But it can happen that after a few years, because of lack of challenges, because challenges are wonderful things, they bring about, they shake you awake, lack of challenges, without the frequency holder realising it, gradually he or she seeps below thinking, is still peaceful, but the alertness is lost, and you become like somebody who is getting tired and is peaceful because he or she is tired, not because they are awake and alert. And that can happen very gradually to a frequency holder, without him or her even noticing it, but after a few years, it's all good, it's all fine. It's nice, they are still very nice people.

I'd rather be with them than with somebody who is completely lost in doing. But these are the dangers associated with the doing, and the danger associated with somebody who is more into being. You will know, most of you probably know, whether you are more drawn towards doing or more drawn towards being.

I would say that the majority of you here go a bit more into being, otherwise you would be at Tony Robbins' firewalking. Or perhaps some of you have been there and done that, that's possible too, and realised, oh, this is not quite the fulfilment that I was looking for, that is possible. Another thing that happens to some humans is that there are periods in your life that can be several years, it can be ten years, sometimes more or less, there are periods in your life when you are moving more into doing, and then it's followed by a time period when you go more into being, that is also.

So there is on the one hand the natural inclination more towards doing or being, and then there is a temporal factor that applies sometimes to humans. Now traditionally, of course, the being has been associated with growing with old age and where it naturally belongs because an 80-year-old who is still frantically doing there is something not quite right. How is the stock market doing?

80-year-old, how is the stock market doing? Okay, buy this, sell that. Or the 80-year-old woman looks in the jeweller's shop, I'd love that diamond ring, it would look so great.

Okay, at that point in life if you haven't gone into being at an earlier stage of your life, then it's time even for the doer when you reach a certain age, even for the doer it becomes time to embrace being and make that the predominant dimension in your life. So eventually if they live long enough every human eventually to lead a complete, fulfilled human life that is lived in the way it's meant to be lived according to the purpose of the totality every human in old age has to move into the being dimension. And again, this should be common knowledge in our civilisation, but it's not.

Old age is regarded as, you become useless. It's a waiting room. Senior residences in most cases are waiting rooms, you're just waiting to die.

And it's tragic on that level that our civilisation still knows so little about the possibilities of old age and how the flowering of consciousness can happen, even to the greatest doers, if they get old enough let's see what Donald Trump does when he's 85. He may move into being. So it's good not to attach too many concepts and judgements to a person because they may go the other way.

So if you fix somebody and say, this is how he is well, maybe right now, but who knows. There's a every human life is a journey and of course the one human life is a small part of a much larger journey. So see where you belong as regards doing and being.

And they have to be reconciled. Some of you maybe this afternoon when we have questions and answers, there may be one or two questions about doing and being and how to reconcile them or even you may be so much drawn equally this way and that way and so you totally hear, okay, I could do so much but on the other hand I just want to be. What do I do now?

So that has to be one has to look at individual cases. I spent a lot of my life as a frequency holder so much so that I was regarded as useless by the doers and a failure a loser Now that's a nice label, isn't it? And then life said, okay you're not only you can't remain in the dimension of being mostly life said, come you're also meant to do and at first reluctantly and then I surrendered to it and I said, okay I'll go out and give talks and I'll write a book and now of course one could say I'm doing quite a bit but all the doing that I do is of course it's almost a paradox I go and do and give talks but it's all about really it's more about being than about doing Now what this civilization as a whole needs more undoubtedly is the being dimension it does not need much more doing because there's so much doing already, we are out of balance already on that side of doing very much so so if we do even as a collective as a civilization if we do more and more and more eventually we just create more and more chaos because continued doing without some connectedness with being creates an insane world and eventually makes you insane so the civilization that is disconnected from the source of course goes into more and more doing and you know that stress so many people suffering from stress it's all created by the civilization there's no stress out there it's humans created for themselves and so that is already a mild form of insanity to be stressed means you lose connectedness with being and there's an element of fear in it and you get very upset and very quickly you get negative and angry that's all part of stress and then you create the world that corresponds to that state of consciousness so the world is out of balance undoubtedly and to regain the balance it needs to go into being finding the connectedness with being the good thing is we return to being because humans once had natural connectedness with being a long time ago when they lived a more simple life one with nature the golden age that's the subject of many mythologies in many cultures speak of a golden age that once Indians also talk about the golden age and then gradually deteriorated which really means the gradual deterioration is a gradual disconnectedness from source or unawareness of source of the one and now we are returning, this is why we are here we are returning to that but it's more than a return always when you have lost something and then regain it it's more than just going back to what was before there's an added dimension now when humans return to connectedness with being they return with a full knowing that wasn't there before when it was your natural state in paradise, as it's called mythologically the garden of Eden when you lived in virtually continuous joyful, pleasant there was no problem as such, there was no stress there was just simple doing alignment with nature, ego hadn't developed yet so there was no problem and there was just the present moment there probably might have been already some language simple words perhaps but almost certainly no past and future tense I'm told, I don't know if it's true that the language they speak in Bali whatever language it is has no past and future and that's why people there are actually relatively happy compared to the rest of the population so of course if you have no past and future that's very helpful, there's only this moment and that's already the portal into being so we come back to where we started with the present moment and it's always coming back to the simplicity of that don't forget your practice here the present moment practice of noticing everything around you so that it everything then becomes helpful everything takes you into present moment awareness present moment awareness and immediately the being dimension arises and if you want to be balanced then you discover gradually you have to work it out in your own life discover that it is possible to be in present moment awareness predominantly in your life and nevertheless be effective also as a doer you can you have to experiment with that start with simple things first you start with whenever you do non-challenging activities that you tend to do repetitively and see if you can stay connected with the present moment awareness even while you do when you're going from A to B be present with every step and if it's not a step, be present behind the wheel of your car be present as you drive I enjoy driving because it's a very peaceful thing every light that you stop at it's a peaceful moment and you look around and it's so interesting there's not only the vibrancy of the red light it's light, it's vibrant it's a manifestation of life also the red light and then you look, the humans are crossing the street everybody looks different and there's a tree and there's the sky and every time you stop at a red light it's a slightly different arrangement of humans and trees and sky and other cars and you're just there as the aware presence for all that and there's a peace you don't get any faster to your destination by thinking I should be there already and then let your mind pull you out and then you go and your entire body becomes tense I need to be there now but you're here now so every all these routine activities can be vehicles so that you can allow present moment awareness to flow into the doing and here we talk about doing simple things, routine things and then the next step is to see if you can stay present when small challenges come that normally would have pulled you into some kind of reactivity your mother-in-law calling and when you hear her voice then you know, okay I need to be particularly present now and alert because if I'm not, I'll be pulled into the same old reaction and we'll play out the same old drama that we always play or when you meet with your relatives or you visit your parents then you bring an alertness to that whatever you do, present the moment and then something new perhaps, you want to create something new whatever it is, build up a new, something, a business build up some enterprise open a store to sell chocolate whatever open a coffee shop sell liquor spiritually, coffee shop is probably better than selling beer because at least coffee makes you more alert I must admit there's a little story which I might have told before when I shifted from being totally anxious and depressed and confused person to being a very being peaceful and feeling the wonderful sense of every cell is alive with life and at night I would enjoy lying in bed and whereas before I was getting bored when I couldn't go to sleep and of course I couldn't go to sleep because I was bored and the mind was thinking about whether I would ever make it in this world and how dreadful my life was and it can't go better because you don't see how it's going to get better and so whatever the mind does, I was totally identified with it and then suddenly after the shift just lying in bed in the deep enjoyment of being, of aliveness and I was almost sorry to go to sleep eventually and for a while I would drink coffee before going to bed so that I could stay awake and continue to enjoy so if you then create, you may have some vision of what it is that you want to do in this world perhaps bring something new in if you are more on the side of doing then you're a bit more towards that side and that's fine, see if that is if it comes out of that peaceful place that vision that you have not from an egoic place where you think when I finally reach that goal that I have then I'm going to be really happy and fulfilled and that is not the motivation that leads to fulfillment whatever you create needs to come from a place of fullness already and then it's a pleasure to do and then you don't lose yourself in the doing and so the state of fullness is a deep connectedness with the present moment and realizing to feel that peace and aliveness, there is nothing that I need to add to my life so whatever I do, I don't do it in order to feel better about myself or in order to find some happiness at some point some relief from my unhappiness that would be stressful to do in that way but something arises that wants to be created through you, whatever it is and then you do and it flows from the fullness of being, which means you can always tell if you enjoy the doing while you're doing it, then you come from the right place, if it becomes stressful then the goal has taken over which is a mental projection and you're no longer connected with being when I say when it becomes stressful it does not mean there cannot be an intensity to the doing, even when you're connected with being there can be an intensity of focus which every creative person probably is familiar with when the creative process happens there's an intensity of focus which goes...

and there's enormous joy in that too when something is being born, whatever it is I remember when I was writing The Power of Now or A New Earth there was this intensity of focus that could even look from an outsider looking at you when there's such intensity of focus he or she might even think that you are stressed but there is no stress in it there's just that intensity it transcends who you are as a person it means a power is moving through you and something is being created that's the joy of the creative process so as long as there is joy in whatever you're doing then you are connected intensity may be there, but that's an aspect of joy too it is joyful to be in that intensity when stress arises that's a sign you're losing either you're beginning to lose the connectedness with being or you're doing the wrong thing perhaps it was an egoic desire that impelled you to want to create that new bank on Wall Street let's set up a new bank okay there could be such a thing as an enlightened bank or a banking system, it hasn't happened yet who knows, that could be the case but those things are more likely to be egoically motivated but a simple thing is stress you're not aligned anymore with universal purpose because it's only when the doing arises from universal purpose and not just egoic purpose then the creative flow is there so you have to find your own I'm just giving a few hints you have to find your own way there watch out for stress and losing yourself in the doing so perhaps in the afternoon we can interact a bit more and talk about maybe some of you might tell us what you're doing already or whether you're finding it hard to find the right avenue for universal purpose how to be more deeply aligned with universal purpose this is a question for many there was a time when I felt there was not enough, I felt this deep connectedness with being but it wasn't manifesting externally in any big way at all I was reaching a few people who came to me for spiritual guidance and the years went by and that was fine I was more deeply in being than in doing and yet I felt there's more that I could do so the pull into doing came in and I remember after a few years of working with people and sometimes giving talks in people's living rooms, they would invite me in invite friends and I would talk and at some point I gave a weekly talk in a B&B, the owner invited me in and whoever was staying at the B&B would come and listen and at some point this pull into more doing came in out of being, and when that pull came the thought arose, I could do more there's a lot there that the world needs and wants I'm only reaching a few people, that's fine but the pull came, so I went into a church in a tiny village in Somerset, near to where I lived in England, and these old village churches some of them 500, 600 years old 700 years, a very old church in a tiny village, and I sat in that empty church I love empty churches I sat in that empty church and all I said, I was very still and all I said then was, all the words came I'd like some acceleration please and then I went back home and 3 months passed I didn't notice any acceleration at all 4, 5, 6 months passed and then after about 6 months, one morning I woke up and I knew, I have to move I couldn't question it because it was so strong and I also knew where to I have to move to the west coast of North America Why? and I didn't act on it at first because sometimes these things come as just powerful thoughts, but not from the deepest place and if they're not from the deepest place they come and then they disappear but there was a peace associated with it a powerful sense of peace and purpose and then it stayed the next day I still said, I have to go and a week later, I have to go and if I had stayed, I probably would have fallen ill because I would have not followed the call and then I got ready to sell everything and get rid of, I had a little cottage sell it, and that took a few months and then finally I got a plane ticket and I thought at first, California west coast must mean California but I didn't know anybody in California well I knew one or two acquaintances but somebody had just visited the place where I lived in Sussex, who was from Vancouver and he said, come and see me I told him I was coming, come and see me first and then spend a couple of weeks and then you can go to California so I flew out of Vancouver, he put me up at his mother's home he was a little bit of an outsider too, he lived in the basement of his mother's home and was writing a spiritual book there but his whole family thought he was mad and there I was and I sat there in his mother's spare guest room and said what am I doing here and I didn't know, I stayed for two or three weeks then I took a bus to California on the Greyhound bus to San Francisco and there I knew one person and at first I stayed in a kind of small hotel and then I went to a meditation group that had been organized by that person in Palo Alto the acquaintance and during the meditation, there were about 15 people she said we have a visitor here from England and he's looking for a place to stay and I said a few words I did a little meditation with them and afterwards a man said I have a guest room ok, I'll come with you then so I stayed in his guest room in Menlo Park and still he had his business I was alone most of the time in his apartment why did I come out here how long is the money going to last where am I going after this no home, no life insurance no pension plan not even relationships anymore I left them behind and then after two or three weeks there suddenly the impulse came to buy a notepad yellow notepad and then on the kitchen table I sat there and the pen and then suddenly a strong energy stream came through and I wrote the question came, what's enlightenment what is enlightenment and then and that was the energy stream that became the power of now and I had old writings with me that I had written casually over the years things that came to me during counseling sessions some of those I read again and I said oh some of this is not bad at all and some of it I incorporated into the more empowered writing that was happening then and some of it became incorporated into the power of now but that was when the stream happened and that went on for three months after which my visa stamp expired I had to go back to England and so the writing happened every day during those three months first in Menlo Park and then I found another place in Sausalito and after three months I had to go back to England of course I had no home to go back to so I stayed in a commune which is quite interesting in itself and there I thought I would continue to write but nothing happened, I couldn't write I could only edit what I had written and so after two months I bought another ticket and went back again to Vancouver this time, again to Vancouver first and even after Vancouver the writing came back, the stream came back so anywhere on the west coast would work one more time it happened and then I knew beyond any doubt there was a reason why I had to leave England because for some reason the energy field there was not conducive to that particular creation that had to happen I needed the dynamic and peaceful and yet dynamic particular energy field that is there on the west coast which doesn't mean everybody needs that so don't all go off to the west coast so I still have a connectedness with England for some reason I still feel very much, I love the country and the people and the land and yet the creative process for some reason could not happen there but the answer then to my request, Acceleration came a few months after the request had been uttered, voiced and the Acceleration was at first the creative process and I thought that was it, little did I know that was only the beginning of the Acceleration and then the book came out after three years and then the book grew through word of mouth for one year and I could see, oh this is wonderful everybody seems to love it at that time everybody loved it because it got into only the hands of those people who were ready for it and then Oprah suddenly discovered the book and then of course it got into so many people's hands some of whom were ready for it and some were not and then not everybody loved it anymore but many people still did and then the Acceleration came and grew and grew and I almost thought, oh dear so you be careful with what you ask for so a request uttered from a place of stillness can sometimes be quite powerful if you feel it's coming not from the personality but from something that wants to happen through you something, when you say I want Acceleration it's not really the I self, the egoic self that wanted Acceleration when the words came the universe, the totality, the consciousness wanted the Acceleration and that led to the words asking for the Acceleration and that was part of the coming into form of that energy movement and this is a wonderful thing when you notice something that comes up from a deep level within you and then you say it but it doesn't come from the surface level of your mind so you may get a vision of what it is not so much what it is that you want to create but a more apt way of putting it would be to say a vision of what it is that wants to be created through you that the larger whole or the totality wants to create through you so it's not the question of what I want it is the question of what the greater whole wants the totality of the universe or consciousness and then the creative process is not only enormously empowered but is also a joyful thing so not that on a personality on the level of the little person of course you always experience even in the greatest things you create you always experience that every situation you go into, every new situation has always a polarity to it so as the acceleration came and it accelerated and accelerated I lost some things that I loved very much like not being noticed by people I loved always being in the background as just the observer of everything and suddenly I found instead of being the observer I was being observed and so I had to surrender to that I realized that comes with it so you can't keep your privacy and this is a small sacrifice to make for the person who would rather remain invisible and that's just how it is there's always something you need to surrender to and I've since talked to other people who have become famous in Hollywood or elsewhere and they said for a long time they longed for fame and when they finally achieved fame they realized, oh, is that it? It's not what I thought it was and it's not really making me happy at all at first it gives an acceleration and then there's a huge downside to it and some of the famous people especially actors and so on when it comes to them very early they go quite insane and some become very unhappy they take drugs, they can only survive with drugs even great artists they get overtaken by the energy stream that comes through them and such as happened to Michael Jackson for example there was this enormous energy coming through and he couldn't really fully integrate it into his life, the energy that came with the creation and he probably didn't have much spiritual guidance it didn't reach him in time if he had continued to live a little longer he probably would have had some spiritual guidance and be able to accommodate, to live with it without being swept away by this enormous energy that came through him the moment he started performing in his normal life he looked quite ineffective you wouldn't have thought there was a powerful there wasn't a powerful person there it didn't look like a charismatic powerful person but the moment he moved or sang something came through this also is a creation into form this is the outgoing movement the universe wants to create through humans and when it does sometimes powerfully it really pulls you along perhaps one day one could have a retreat for people who are coping with very powerful creative energy streams that are going through them that would be an interesting retreat please continue to use your particular situation here as part of your practice not only nature which we already pointed out but use the interaction with other people which is one of the joyful things that you have here use the interaction with others also as part of your practice and when you talk to others you engage in conversation be aware of not only the thoughts that lead to the words but be aware of yourself as the underlying the stillness or the awareness there was a teacher in Russia he was Armenian but he lived in Russia and then in France he was an early 20th century spiritual teacher and he had a term called self-remembrance and what he called self-remembrance was not as you might think remember your story remember who I am and my life story nothing was like that at all self-remembrance was a term that he used for being aware he never put it like that but what he meant was being aware of awareness to feeling the awareness in you even while you do things and even while you speak and one of the ways in which that effects the way you interact with others when you have said what you had to say you stop and there is a stillness after that if you don't have that you may have observed it in other people not here of course if you don't have it there are people who talk and one thought leads to another and another and another there is a stream and they never come to a stop you listen to them and they continue to talk it's one thing but then it leads to another and there is no gap ever and this is particularly difficult when you are trying to leave because you are trying to find the slightest gap that gives you an opportunity to say OK, I have to go now but the gap doesn't come and so you sit there waiting and there is a stream of thinking it goes on and on and on and perhaps finally they start coughing or catching breath OK, I have to go now so it's easy to get drawn into a stream of thought and pulls you along it can also happen when two people are having a conversation they can mutually pull themselves along so they are totally in that they are both engaged in that stream one stops talking and the other one immediately picks him up and goes, oh yeah and often it sounds terribly important the same stream you can have when you listen to people on the radio they talk and talk and talk and what they are saying is quite meaningless it's just words and when you listen to that in a foreign language you think they must be talking about something terribly important what are they talking about?

nothing much, just gossip and whatever so what I am saying is be careful not to be drawn along with the mind so that you are not in the grip of thoughts it's wonderful to have thoughts but it's not wonderful to be possessed by thoughts so as I sometimes put it the difference is between having a thought and a thought having you so or you could call it an opinion opinion is a little group of thoughts or a sentence or a perspective or a viewpoint but it's a thought form and again, it's not somebody even said it once I saw it quoted most people don't have opinions opinions have them they don't know that so that means to be in the grip of thought completely identified with thought which brings me back of course to what I quoted yesterday the Zen master who said to practice Zen the main thing to do is stop cherishing opinions now he used opinions in a wider sense it really means any mental perspective any mental position, any mental viewpoint any thought and when he said stop cherishing I think he meant stop identifying with, don't seek yourself in it, it's the self when the sense of self goes into the thoughts then you are in the grip of thought and that's what we call unconsciousness unconsciousness is to be totally in the grip of thought and then you do whatever your mind tells you to do and when you are in the grip of thought you lose empathy with other humans because you are then in the grip of conceptualized reality in the head and when you are in the grip of conceptualized reality you lose the ability to emphasize and to feel the aliveness of other life forms around you you get very much trapped in an encapsulated sense of self with a strong sense of separateness a sense of separateness that even that separate self wants to even emphasize it loves therefore to condemn others and to criticize others and it loves doing that all the time because the more it can criticize and condemn others even if it's just through gossip of how silly they are and what they did again and shouldn't have done all that kind of stuff when it can do that it immediately feels superior and more separate look at all these people and of course the pattern is so strong that you can have a group of people who are gossiping of somebody who happens to be in the bathroom and then that person comes back from the bathroom and then another person goes to the bathroom and then they start gossiping about that person it can become quite extreme so to be trapped in a conceptual reality you lose that ability the thing that makes you human the thing that the one thing that really defines you as a human or fully human being is the ability for compassion and empathy and to feel the aliveness of others and to feel that there is something beyond the personality that you share with the other life form with other humans but even with other life forms there is something that you share and what that is we could call that life but not the life form the underlying one life, we could also call it consciousness there is a consciousness even when you look at a dog or a horse into their eyes there is a consciousness there and that is no different a different level of manifestation yes, but the essence of that is no different from the consciousness in you there is only one life, one consciousness manifesting through all the life forms in different degrees of manifestation and that you can no longer sense in other words you are trapped in the world of form, thought forms and when you are trapped in the world of form you no longer know what you do to use the words of Jesus some of his last words they know not what they do, forgive them for they know not what they do when you are trapped on that level of form you no longer know that you are inflicting suffering on others because the others to you are lifeless you have made them lifeless through conceptualization by attaching labels to them and if they have been lifeless you lose all empathy and compassion you can either insult them or you can do all kinds of things to the degree that even violence becomes possible in the more extreme cases well the more extreme cases in 180 million cases in the 20th century alone therefore you can see the connectedness between the enormous violence inflicted by humans on others because they lost empathy through conceptualization and the collective mind and there is a connectedness with you talking to somebody in the dining hall and losing yourself in a mind stream a much milder form of the same dysfunction here we have one extreme, violence but a milder form is to lose yourself in the mind stream it doesn't mean that you immediately are going to attack that person hopefully not but it could happen if you are totally trapped in there the other just becomes another mental position to you conflicting with yours the enemy so let's go to the root I read yesterday the Burmese leader whose name I can never quite remember everybody knows who I am talking about she is visiting Europe at the moment and they asked her why did you never condemn the military that imprisoned you in your home for 20 years or so why did you never condemn them and she said condemnation does not bring about change we need to look at the root of evil condemning it does not bring about change or condemning people who perpetrate things she didn't even say that by the way she only said condemnation does not bring about change we need to get to the root of what creates that we need to tackle the root and that's very wise and that's why the greatest leaders Gandhi, Nelson Mandela and her few others they never condemned other humans they just embodied a more awakened state of consciousness so the temptation to condemn others is always egoically motivated even though it might look terribly rational to condemn all those evil people they are not in essence evil they represent a stage in evolution, the unawakened stage so any kind of condemnation of other humans is really, there is always ego there which doesn't condone, doesn't mean you condone what they do you see it but the important thing is what is the root of it and the root in the first instance is always to be found in your own mind because you are not separate from others and if we go through this shift this awakening from identification with form then the world is beginning to change not the other way around maybe the expression not from the top down by creating new organizational structures no, from the bottom up your state of consciousness if then at some point new organizational structures are created, that's fine they are created out of the new consciousness but you don't create the organizational structures first because egoic things will go into them and there will be another ego creation so this is the transformation the shift in consciousness that happens in you brings about the new world or the new us it's so simple we have a little stillness I mentioned this morning Gurdjieff the spiritual teacher early 20th century Armenian by birth, lived in Russia and then in France and then I got distracted by something else he had a technique that he called the stop technique and I got tempted to use it right now as I came onto the stage the stop technique was he had disciples I don't have disciples but when his disciples were gathering and doing whatever they were doing sitting, talking, he would sometimes come into the room and then he would shout, stop and everybody had to freeze whatever they were doing, however they were standing they had to freeze and that was an attempt perhaps a desperate attempt to help them to become present of presence and he called that self-remembering stop because they were all immersed in the mind stream before he said it no presence at all and stop was to produce that deeper sense of presence and get them out of their mind he also used movement almost a kind of dance to help people become present you can also apply it to your partner have an agreement and if you notice that your partner is immersed in his or her mind or mind coupled with an emotional field you can say stop but you have to have an agreement first it's easier of course to see when it's happening to somebody else than when it's happening to yourself another agreement that I sometimes recommend is there is another version of being totally identified and that is the pain body which occasionally arises in humans as you know, a pain body is an accumulation of old emotion consisting often of fear or anger and that frequency of unpleasantness and pain going back sometimes to early childhood and perhaps even beyond early childhood so it's regarded as a byproduct of the ego it becomes associated with the ego as the ego grows and it has a life of its own like a little gremlin I think in the gremlin the gremlins have the stage when they look cute and then later they look really evil and I don't mean the cute stage it's the gremlins at the later stage that's the energy of the pain body and when that takes you over of course you are in the grip of it and if you have an agreement and you notice it arising in your partner in many relationships pain body episodes come periodically and this is called drama in the relationship when you are completely unconscious one pain body provokes and brings up the pain body in the other person and usually the pain body is triggered by something relatively small and brings up a reaction out of proportion to the triggering event and then by that you can recognize that this is the pain body so it's a small event that brings up a lot of old emotion and magnifies the importance of that small event and that is the triggering event and so it's very helpful to have an agreement with your partner that if you notice the pain body arising the earlier you catch it the better sometimes it comes so quickly before you know it, it's already there especially if it's anger you say something some innocent remark almost and then the pain body that's ready to awaken because it hasn't fed on somebody else's emotional reaction enough it needs to take in more food in the form of energy vibration that corresponds to its own vibrational field and it's easy, it reacts it just waits for some excuse and anything you say could be slightly off and it goes how dare you say that and the other person and then before you know it the two pain bodies have come up energizing each other through the drama it can take a few minutes an hour, who knows and then it could also go on for a day or two the drama on and off until finally they have energized themselves and each other enough and then it subsides again oh ok, let's make up and it's like the thunderstorm has passed but unfortunately it will come again when the pain body feels it's time to feed again pain bodies, they are linked into your mind and they have an intelligence they use your mind, it's the emotion as you might find it strange that I talk about an emotion as if it were an entity but it is a little bit like that it's an energy field like every thought every thought we could regard as a kind of psychic entity it's a thought form and thoughts also thoughts can be like a virus in your mind a thought can proliferate, it can occupy your mind it can do so in a harmless way like a tune that you can't get out of your mind you have to hum it all the time and that's a relatively harmless way of a thought occupying your mind or becoming like a virus but other thoughts can be quite harmful obsessive ideas can get hold of your mind and they refuse to go now if there is enough awareness in you it's not that much of a problem because there is still that field from where you can see the thought you are the space for it if there is no awareness you are at the mercy of an obsessive thought you are not necessarily declared insane there are many people who are at the mercy of obsessive thought and are still considered totally normal it's only when it goes to an extreme and you start becoming a problem to the people around you then it becomes a clinical thing but it starts as a normal thing many people are considered totally normal throughout their lives, are still plagued by obsessive thoughts which are like entities that are created through mind activity and there they are stuck and you can have an obsessive thought occupy an entire collective energy field of a nation an obsessive thought, for example, there was Russia or China or wherever a country gets obsessed with one particular way of looking at things and so you had China when the cultural revolution happened suddenly everybody had as if something had gone into everybody's mind everybody has to think in exactly the same way that was the thought that the collective virus that had taken possession of people's minds anybody who deviates from that would become eliminated millions were killed in the middle ages it was a religious obsessive thought anybody who deviated from the norm would be very dangerous there was a thought police virtually any priest that said anything that somebody high up in the hierarchy disagreed with would be easily killed imprisoned, tortured, killed oh dear it's quite insane so thoughts can get hold of you as happened in China when children would report their parents it was a very widespread phenomenon would report their parents to the authorities because their parents had said a few sentences that were not totally in agreement with the great shamans little red book and everybody had to dress in boiler suits and that lasted a few years and finally that obsessive collective thought pattern disintegrated slowly it's still stuck in a few people's minds but not that many anymore and so yes, they are like both a thought and an emotion they are like little entities with a limited life span and so the pain body has a little bit of almost an autonomous thing like a thought too and it wants to survive in that form so it doesn't want to dissolve it doesn't want to die as the pain body it never really dies because the energy that's trapped in there when it dissolves in the field of awareness gradually the energy that was trapped in the pain body actually becomes freed and becomes life energy again so the anger or the fear that was constituted in the pain body that was in there you don't need to eliminate that because it's life too, it's life energy too it's just kind of frozen, stuck and so in the field of awareness when you know when it arises in you this is the pain body and you don't even need to verbalize it you're there as the witness then a transmutation begins and it can no longer then perpetuate itself by feeding on either one or two things that it primarily feeds on one is people close to you it pushes their buttons it has that cunning intelligence of the gremlin and it goes and then it pushes your partners it knows what the sensitive buttons are in your partner and it pushes those sensitive buttons and before you know it if you don't know what the pain body is doing the reaction comes so it's good at manipulating the other in order to get the same thing back that it lives on and so you need to be very conscious you need to recognize it before it starts to feed the most common and favorite feeding ground for pain bodies is families that's where they thrive at work sometimes too but the favorite thing is families or even more favorite is the intimate so called intimate relationships so it feeds on the reactions and the drama but if there's nobody around to feed on it can still feed it feeds on your thoughts when it's ready to arise it can be triggered just by one little thought that is slightly negative you get up in the morning and everything is fine you get into your car and then in the traffic something happens and you suddenly say what a real idiot and that can be the trigger for further negative thoughts how dreadful life is anyway and most people are so stupid and then it goes on one negative thought leads to another before you know it you are immersed in a stream of negative thinking and the pain body actually feeds them because thought is energy it feeds on your thoughts every negative thought it gobbles up like a gremlin so the emotion rises into the mind then your mind activity is controlled by the old emotion of the pain body so you are not thinking the old emotion is using your mind thinking through you and using your mind renewing itself through your thought activity the vicious circle and that's where people get into that extremely negative self talk for a few hours whatever a day or a whole night what a dreadful night of talking to yourself and more and more becoming more and more convinced how awful your life is or how dreadful some people around you are or were to you 20 years ago when it happened and you remember all these awful things whatever scenario the mind creates as long as it's of a negative kind then the energy of the pain body gets replenished the old emotion replenishes itself until it has done so efficiently and then it subsides and then you get a little bit of relief for a while until next time so if you live alone you don't have a partner then it will use your mind also some pain bodies use both they use your mind to feed on when your partner is not around or preferably use your partner to feed on it and so it's good to have an agreement again this is why we started to have an agreement with your partner when you are both conscious you can't enter the agreement when the other partner is already beginning to be in the grip of the pain body and then make that suggestion it's too late so if you have that agreement then I sometimes recommend to have a little sign that tells your partner that he or she may be coming in the grip of the pain body you notice it's starting in him or her and then you go oh well maybe this is not the right way it has to be something subtle maybe a word or whatever and there is no guarantee that that's going to work by the way because the agreement that you made with your partner when your partner was conscious will not necessarily apply anymore if your partner loses consciousness and this is how many people make agreements when they are relatively conscious and the person who breaks the agreement is not the person who made the agreement because the person who breaks the agreement is the person who is in the grip of certain mental emotional patterns this is how it happens, alcoholics they often create havoc in their families and then when they are sober again they say this was definitely the last time and I promise you on my life I promise you it is not going to happen again and of course they are totally sincere they totally mean that they are not trying to deceive you and yet it happens again but the person who made the promise that was there was some essence shining through awareness shining through the person and therefore the person was able to make that promise and then that essence becomes obscured when the addiction returns and the real being that made the promise the essence becomes so obscured that he or she isn't even there anymore so it's not that he or she breaks their agreements no, the essence becomes so obscured that the pattern then controls them and this is why it happens again and again and again and so whether or not it works helping your partner when you notice pain body arising we'll have to try it out and the most important thing obviously is to know it in yourself more difficult, self knowledge self observation requires more presence than the observation of somebody else you can observe easily when you observe somebody in conversation or whatever, how they get drawn into a mind stream and become totally identified with their mind stream and how they lose consciousness by trying to be right and so on, easy to observe in another but when it happens to you not so easy to be awake then and say, hmm, what's going on the stop technique, easy to apply to others but to oneself, not so easy but when it does happen, it's a wonderful step forward in the direction of fuller consciousness when it does happen, it's a wonderful thing when you can suddenly become aware of a pattern such as the pain body in yourself or a certain mind pattern that is repetitive and causes you perhaps a lot of suffering some kind of negative self talk that tends to be repetitive in your mind about yourself or somebody close to you and you see how it makes you suffer you can feel the emotion that goes with it and at that moment you realize this is not a reality that is making me suffer what is making me suffer is not some reality what is making me suffer is my thoughts that is an enormous insight that on many, many, many majority of occasions what makes you suffer is not the event or whatever your thoughts tell you it's your thoughts that make you suffer and you can easily see that in a situation if you don't think that anymore about it the situation is quite neutral OK, he cheated me out of 5,000 dollars you can dwell on that and see how dreadful he is and most people are dishonest anyway and then become distrustful of everybody you meet from then onwards and all kinds of things that the mind gets into conclusions that become fixed ideas all kinds of unnecessary baggage and self-talk that you carry around that obscures the way in which you relate to others the way in which you perceive the world it's all mind baggage I call it huffing and puffing about stuff and it's nothing, it's just an event there it is, this is what happened and the suffering is in the thought and the emotional reaction to the thought rather than in the event in most cases I'm talking about psychological suffering if somebody injures you physically of course then there is pain we could call that suffering I use the word suffering as a psychological layer on top of what could be physical pain so many philosophers and so on have had that insight that it is not it's thinking that creates a lot of the suffering in humans which is psychological suffering on top of any physical suffering they may have so it's the psychological me entity that gets strengthened through the negative thought processes and you have to observe it in yourself in any situation where you feel upset or angry or anxious see what is it that creates the upset what is it that creates the anxiety what is it that creates the anger what is my mind what kind of thoughts is my mind producing and when you see that you a lot of the time you create your own suffering that's a wonderful insight and if you can be there in the moment when it happens that's the beginning of the end of those unconscious mind patterns and then you are no longer in the grip of them and gradually then awareness replaces habitual and compulsive identification with thinking always and it's patterns amazing realization so self observation is vital to have enough awareness so that you can know what kind of thoughts your mind is producing and even that millions of people still don't have that not enough awareness to know what kind of thoughts your mind is producing being totally in the grip of every thought that comes that occupies your mind and becomes part of the illusory self wherever it wants to take you amazing and that's of course the work of a teacher that some of you may be familiar with, Byron Katie her work consists mainly of looking at a thought that arises and asking yourself is that true, is that really true can I really know that this is true, that he's a jerk do I know that this is absolutely true and of course at first you might say, of course it's true but if you look more closely you can see well, there may be aspects to him that are not jerk not a jerk in some ways, my ex let's say my ex-husband, she says, he was such a jerk and he made my life, he created so much suffering and what he did the story goes on and on how do you know that what you're saying is do you know that this is absolutely true what you're saying about if you look closely at a thought you see it's almost only a fragment and then you say, no, I don't know whether this is absolutely true or not so greatly her work helps you disidentify from thought and bring awareness in instead of following every thought where it wants to go where it wants to take you come with me, says the thought I'll show you a lovely place I can take you to and then you get hooked in and you follow it and then it pulls you in and before you know it your total attention is in there and you go off into dreamland which sometimes becomes a nightmare and then of course you create out of that unconscious state you create your reality that becomes the way through which you perceive situations in your life, around you the way through which you interpret other people totally distorting who they are through all the accumulated stuff in the mind getting a totally distorted view of others this is the human condition which could be summarized as lost in thought lost in thought so this has been the human condition up to recently, although there have been starting thousands of years ago already isolated individuals who saw the reality of that and then a few got it here and there there were pockets of awakening briefly here and there little pockets of awakening but it never became a widespread thing it's perhaps for the first time now that it can be a more widespread awakening in humanity and this is why this teaching and other associated teachings of a similar kind are so important the awakening is happening on the planet we don't need to ask now is everybody going to awaken, that seems very unlikely etc, etc, yes that's true but it's enough that you awaken because then everybody creates their own world so what we collectively call our collective reality is just the sum total of millions of individuals creating their own world you inhabit your world and the way in which you create your world that depends largely on your state of consciousness that's why you may remember the story that I told about the man coming into a new town asking the old man who was sitting there, what are the people like here and the old man says, well what were the people like where you used to live and so the first man who comes in says, they are all dreadful and then the man says, well here is much the same because the old man knows your state of consciousness determines what reality you perceive and experience and the next man, of course you may remember the next day comes, asks him, I want to move here, what are the people like again he asks, what were the people like where you lived before lovely people and the man says, very much the same here so I had a talk for ETTV just before coming here oh by the way, Stephen who just made an announcement before I came on said Eckhart created ETTV I'm sure you didn't believe that some dedicated people created it and all I do is just sit on a chair and then there is a camera and then I talk as you know I would not be capable of creating ETTV but I did a talk I had a dialogue with the actress Susan Sarandon in New York before coming here she is very open to the spiritual dimension and the first thing I asked her, why do you live in New York because she has lived most all her life I think in New York although she travels a lot and she says, I love the people here they are so open and so helpful and so alive and I love the energy and I heard many stories that the people are horrible from other people and she said the people are the way you expect them to be and what you show them, they reflect back to you which is very true and also the little experience I have of New York is quite good so I enjoyed the intensity of energy and the little contact I had with people was good so again to a large extent your inner determines the outer especially as far as human interactions are concerned in extreme cases you cannot immediately go into a place of complete deep unconsciousness and insanity a place where there is continuous violence which is simply a magnified form of usual unconsciousness you cannot go into such a place and expect because you are there absolutely present that they are not going to shoot you well, it could happen that they don't shoot you it could be but the likelihood is that something negative will happen so you have to listen carefully to see where you go what energy field you go into and they are not horrible people they are just a little bit more a magnified version of normal insanity that's what it is so with the pain body then this is a very wonderful thing to realize that there is a pain body in you and then it becomes your your little a challenging thing that helps you that pushes you into presence any challenge whether coming from within or without is actually helpful because without that we would go to sleep just look at movies when you see a movie you are interested because at the beginning or at some place close to the beginning of the movie something goes wrong and that determines then what happens but something has to go wrong I'm using a kind of generic expression on some level something must happen that is challenging to the protagonists, to the characters in the movie I call that something goes wrong and this is why you watch the movie if you watch a movie where nothing goes wrong you will go to sleep they are just a lovely family having breakfast together he goes to work, it's all harmonious gets home, then they go on a vacation go on a hike, the camera follows them everything is so wonderful two hours, everybody would be asleep and in your own life of course you complain when something goes wrong that it shouldn't happen the mind says this shouldn't be happening but of course it's a challenge and what works in the movie also works in real life because if it's a good movie then the protagonists the characters by facing the challenges undergo some inner transformation either they generate strength or energy that they didn't have before or they discover their egoic patterns they become, after going through turmoil and challenges in the end perhaps they become more fully human or they find compassion or whatever some change happens as a result of the characters facing challenges and so challenges are helpful there would be no spiritual awakening if you were not being challenged by whatever your challenges are so we can welcome in the words of Byron Katie loving what is that's a big one but let's start with accepting what is and perhaps then gradually that will take us to loving what is and just bring an acceptance to the present moment because what is must be happening now there's nothing else so loving what is is loving the present moment in whatever form and if you can't love it you can at least say well here it is and if you start arguing with it mentally that's the unnecessary baggage that's when thoughts get hold of you and it is that that creates whatever 80% or 90% of the suffering in your life is created by the mental baggage through which you approach situations and not by the situations themselves and it's a wonderful thing when you encounter how often situations that happen that before would have been labelled as bad by the mind and you would have complained about them and difficult people and so on, the world is full of them as you know so how wonderful it is when you discover suddenly that you can be in a place of neutrality towards events and immediately accept that this person didn't do what he was supposed to do you paid the plumber $200 and it's leaking again oh ok, it's leaking again so I think we'll get a different plumber and there's no complaint how dreadful plumbers are these days and you can't get anybody to do the right thing anymore and they're all really out to cheat you and the story goes on, simple this is the obstacle how can we go around it or transform it into something that works no reaction, no complaint just facing, this is accepting what is in action it doesn't make you into a passive person once you take action on the basis of acceptance you become very effective if you're in any business and you become free of reaction you become very effective in what you do because immediately a higher intelligence comes in which comes from presence the presence that is obscured whenever you get into a mental emotional reaction it obscures the higher or deeper intelligence that dwells in you which would be ready to act and live through you but it can't because the little me entity with its reactivity is lying there on top of it it says I'm going to control this situation I'm going to tell him what I think of him it can be very simple you look a moment of stillness there's an energy field and then you see what the situation requires and then you take action and you don't create every time you react from the conditioned mind the egoic mind, you create a further reaction in the other people with whom you are dealing so you strengthen their ego through your ego and then you get all the fighting that goes on but without it you don't strengthen the other person's ego the other person's ego exists suddenly in a kind of vacuum and he says he didn't react what's going on? it collapses without opposing it it very quickly collapses and then you can experience the miracle of sometimes unpleasant people suddenly showing that there's also a pleasant person hiding underneath but of course it's not a person a little bit of their essence shines through so this is the presence in action we started off with the pain body and of course that is still relevant what we are talking about have an agreement with your partner and even more importantly see if you can find on what occasions your pain body tends to arise when you lose yourself in the emotional negativity what is it that tends to trigger it and once you know that as a questioner yesterday said it was money and that's the case with many people because money is associated with fear and many pain bodies consist of fear fear of survival and so on and you can know as I already pointed out whenever you begin to deal with money you become very alert like you're walking on eggshells or something ok, now I'm going to call my bank manager and see what's going on and be very alert feel the energy field in your body and then talk from there or you you could even have a conversation with your partner to see when it is that we tend to have drama what particular situations pull us into unconsciousness it's an adventure it's the inner journey and it's a wonderful adventure and a highly interesting movie now in a bad movie things still go wrong but everything is resolved only on the external level nothing changes in the characters and the protagonists now those may be entertaining too just entertaining, but there's no particular depth to them you can watch that there are some good action movies but there's no depth if what goes wrong does not produce a change in the character and of course in movies the possibilities movies can contribute also to an awakening because when you identify with a character identify means you become one with it if the script is good and the acting is good you become a little bit one with the character there is such a thing as you may remember from college suspension of disbelief it's a term that means when you watch something on stage or in the movies everybody knows that this isn't really happening but you voluntarily suspend your disbelief and then you pretend that this is happening and then you identify with the character that happens in a good movie or play to some extent also in literature when you read and if this character undergoes a transformation in consciousness it may be very minor but then a little bit of change happens in you also because you have identified with this character who then faced problems and challenges and through them either generated more power and aliveness or preferably became more conscious one way or another and then a little bit of that you take home with you then that stays with you there is a transformational element in certain movies and of course one of my favorites in that sense that most of you have seen it's about a little animal that creeps around here too and eats the grass groundhogs, groundhog day which can be summarized now in one sentence for those who haven't seen it it's about a character with a massive and huge ego who dislikes everything and everybody and he gets stuck in one day he wakes up every morning the same day and has to experience the same things and the same unpleasantness that of course he generates and he suffers, he tries to commit suicide several times and he does but he wakes up again the same morning until something in him shifts and it's not explained fortunately because in movies that doesn't work it has to be shown and the viewer has to draw his or her own conclusions and in the end he says he comes into an acceptance which means a complete transformation from what he was before he accepts, he becomes a force for good on that particular day that he is forced to repeat and everybody begins to love him in that town where he is stuck that he hated before and finally he says to the woman whom he experiences also every day oh, this is a great place let's stay here and the next morning he is free to go and it's only so only when he comes to complete acceptance then the shift happens that he doesn't even need anymore it's lovely, if you haven't seen it or you saw it years ago without perhaps fully understanding what it is about, then I recommend you watch it again let's see if there are any questions and we'll do it the same way as before we have one hand of fate in this section and another hand of fate who is the hand of fate in front you are the hand of fate oh, she's going away is there somebody behind also two people

[Speaker 7] (8:03:28 - 8:05:13)

thank you Eckhart for being such a wonderful teacher to me I've been in the path for decades and occasionally I kind of lost heart and I thought I would never make it and you brought me so much closer to it and every time I listen to you, you do that so, thank you so much for that but that's not the question I know you are familiar with this quote because I think I heard you they said that democracy is the worst form of government except for all the other ones you quoted that that's one thing, the other thing is I get the feeling, although maybe it's just a thought that we're in the process of destroying the planet some people say it's too late already we overpopulated it, we polluted it and so, sometimes I like to think what is the solution to this problem so, somebody else said that the best form of government is an enlightened monarch and I was thinking and this is a little bit of a it's a little bit of a Dalai Lama kind of a question but I was thinking, suppose you were an enlightened monarch and you have absolute control of this little planet what would you do to try to save it and try to sort of lead us in the right direction sorry if it's kind of a

[Speaker 1] (8:05:28 - 8:06:17)

there have been occasionally in history as you mentioned, I'll come to the other main part of the question in a minute very rarely in history there have been a few that could be considered almost as enlightened rulers, monarchs or emperors but for example Marcus Aurelius, the Roman emperor who lived around 2000 years ago who wrote this wonderful book that is called Meditations which is really, was originally because it was never meant to be published with deep insights but unfortunately enlightened rulers have children who then become rulers and quite often the children of enlightened rulers are quite insane

[Speaker 7] (8:06:18 - 8:06:24)

I want to sort of maybe kind of I sort of know that, I want to suspend that part of that

[Speaker 1] (8:06:24 - 8:06:25)

I know, me too

[Speaker 7] (8:06:25 - 8:06:31)

suppose you were an enlightened ruler and you would last forever

[Speaker 1] (8:06:31 - 8:16:20)

yes so what would I do, that's the question I could not really do anything other than what I'm doing now which is transmit consciousness help becoming an opening for consciousness and that is then those people who are close to me and you are close to me here the consciousness is not transmitted but of course the same consciousness is in you it calls forth that awakening so the awakened state needs to spread into those close to you so the first thing I would then have some people close to me and make sure that they are relatively if not 100% awakened free of identification with mind and from there they go on and have others so I would not try to do everything because you cannot impose enlightened government on a non-enlightened population it won't work you will immediately have a revolution it sounds wonderful for example prohibition they said alcohol is so harmful it does so much harm to people and we are still selling it to people they are destroying themselves through alcohol doesn't it make more sense to ban the sale of alcohol and of course yeah let's do that so we all know what happened during the time of prohibition so you cannot impose from above one would have to use force in many cases which would be counterproductive and it would lead to the opposite of what you wanted to create one can only spread consciousness to other humans who are then going to take action the consciousness the very basis for the transformation of the world is a shift in the individual consciousness if there are enough individuals that go through that shift then they no longer create the insanity that has been to a large extent human history until now they don't create the violence and the warfare and so on anymore but it starts with us here so I would not suggest that we look to another solution that is quicker than what is happening here you might say ok but do we have enough time to save the planet I believe there is an acceleration of awakening now and although there may be short term very serious problems coming to us challenges which will be part of a more massive awakening that's how I see it you already saw it on a smaller scale in the 60s there was quite an awakening as far as spirituality is concerned it kind of probably started in California and then into many other countries there was quite an awakening that was coincided with teachers from the east coming, meditation happening enormous things that weren't happening before but it all accelerated because of some huge so called bad thing that was the Vietnam war that was happening at the same time and so many youngsters withdrew their identification with the collective in the states here most strongly my country identifying with my country being proud of my country feeling you are one with my country and they suddenly found it very difficult to do that because they could see that their country was doing very insane things and so they withdrew and in the 50s in America everybody was still childlike almost everybody everybody was confident and optimistic we can do no wrong and of course they had the second world war the difference between right and wrong was more clear there than perhaps in any other war and the suffering generated by the Vietnam war and insanity accelerated the awakening partial awakening in many humans and I believe if it hadn't been for that awakening in the 60s we wouldn't even be here now and probably the power of now would not have been written because it's all connected it's a stream of awakening which sometimes becomes obscured again and then opens up again there are times when you think have they not learned anything when Iraq happened haven't they read history and even recent history so the only thing to save is consciousness it's not so much what to do there are countless humans who will be responsible for what to do there cannot ever be one human who tells everybody what to do because the world is extremely complex there are so many areas where action is taken so the decision making process cannot flow from one individual it would flow out there and meet innumerable obstacles and then what does the enlightened monarch do he says this and this and this needs to be done and they refuse to do it because they don't realize that this is necessary so they refuse to do it what does the enlightened monarch do then you have to do it I force you to do it and the enlightened monarch becomes a dictator so it only works if the population there needs to be a certain percentage at least in the population of humans who embody if not a fully awakened state the awakening who are sane, just sane it's enough so there are sometimes politicians where you say compared to most others they look quite sane there was Gorbachev years ago in the Soviet Union and I heard even some people said oh is he enlightened but he looked like the Buddha because compared to him all his predecessors compared him to his predecessor he was like the Buddha because his predecessors were totally immersed in their collective mental conditioning and no matter what you feel or think about the current president and certain things that he should have done and could have done but didn't do this may all be true and of course I also ask myself can't he see that Afghanistan is not going to work ok there may be a pocket of unconsciousness in him but the general state of consciousness that he embodies is still far superior to almost any other politician that you see one can argue with many of the things that he does we don't know how much power he even has there are so many forces around him but when you observe the underlying state of consciousness there is still a non-reactivity there there is little ego that you see there is a facing what we have been talking about there is a facing a situation in a non-reactive way and seeing what is it that we can do about it and then he explains what it is that needs to be done so I still enjoy actually watching him in action because I can sense there is still this underlying consciousness more conscious than most it seems so perhaps this is the best that we can have at the moment it is a miracle that that is there that he is still there thank you ok the hand of fate I am not allowed to choose only the hand of fate do we need somebody here front also

[Speaker 3] (8:16:23 - 8:17:51)

hello I call you ET because you are from another planet and my question is about God I lost it and what I now see was a mental construct of mine coming from my very southern Spanish background Catholic is gone and nothing replaced it so I am wondering so I don't know if that is the reason why I am one of those compulsive doers and I think that my doing comes from my heart but I don't think if I think I find an empty hole there where my mental construct was so I don't even know who to pray to or what to pray to so that divine intelligence that the Christians say instead of creationism doesn't work I am a scientist as well so I don't believe that we wear a big band into all our complexities or soul or psyche I don't think it was just coming from the amoeba it is just not enough so that left me in a very confused state and I don't like to be confused because it is very confusing

[Speaker 1] (8:17:58 - 8:19:03)

it is a transitional stage you are leaving behind one particular state of consciousness that perhaps was comfortable while it was there the belief that there is a God and it becomes of course a mental concept you believe that there is a God who controls events who has the power to do that and then of course the mind begins to question at some point and we have all the old famous dilemmas come up if there is a God who is omnipotent we have had this many times but this is how people gradually tend to lose their belief in an omnipotent God somewhere when they start thinking ok, if there is a God to be God, He, they usually call Him He

[Speaker 11] (8:19:03 - 8:19:05)

if there is...

[Speaker 1] (8:19:06 - 8:30:08)

yes, and a beard I think it has to grow a bit if there is a God He must be omnipotent because if He is not omnipotent He is not God ok, so we have sorted that out and then the next step the mind says if there is therefore an omnipotent God but He does not prevent the enormous amount of suffering that is happening on the planet then He is either indifferent to human suffering or maybe He is even enjoying it in which case He does not have the goodness that I would usually associate with God if He is a God, He must be both omnipotent and absolutely good and if He is omnipotent and absolutely good how is it that this omnipotent and absolutely good God allows all that evil to happen and all the suffering to happen this is the question that traditionally arises for humans who are beginning to step out of that very comfortable mindset which of course is upheld by the centuries of beliefs collective beliefs that humans have had and still represented by the church and so on as long as you have that belief then it is comfortable, you know where you belong it gives you a sense of a little bit of safety although it does not really free you from fear and then you begin to doubt you say, ok, absolute goodness and absolute power and yet He is allowing all this to happen and for many people this is how their traditional belief structure begins to crumble because they don't have an answer for that and when they go to the priest, the priest will say we cannot question the way God does things we just have to accept that this is what God does and yet it is hard, you can't do that with the mind you start thinking more and more and so of course there was the philosopher in the 19th century Nietzsche, the philosopher he shocked everybody when in one of his books he wrote God is dead of course it is a contradiction in terms if there is a God, God cannot be dead because God would be totally timeless and so on but what he meant was really the concept that we have created of that supreme being is dying that was the early stage then the mentally created concept this is about realising something within you that traditionally has been called the divine but it is also about giving up the belief that somewhere there is an entity that is the controlling giver of good as somewhere in space or time or wherever traditionally people look upwards when they look for God it must be somewhere and you grow out of that and you realise that all the religious people they venerate a mental concept of God but they never touch, they never realise the reality of the divine and I'd like now to replace the word God with something else that is less confining because the word God immediately implies somebody and usually a male figure otherwise you have to say goddess and then he becomes female so God immediately implies an entity somewhere and people traditionally have even believed that God is very much like a human because it says somewhere in the Bible at the beginning God created man in his own image and people didn't understand the real meaning of that and they took it at a superficial level and therefore thought he must look like us and then they imagined this controlling entity looking like us like a human, like a man and then they thought if he looks like us he must have the same emotion that we do he gets angry and he's jealous and so then created out of their mind they created a God that they thought he gets angry and jealous the unconscious behaviour that humans exhibit they attribute also then to God and say oh you have to be careful because he has a bad temper so they create out of their very limited understanding they created a mental construct but throughout while these things were happening throughout there were certain individuals who realised that there is a reality to what we call God that is far deeper than any of those images that we have created and they realised it within themselves and there was a teacher 2,500 years ago in India who later was called the Buddha the one who is awake and he was born into what was already a Hindu culture Hinduism is older than Buddhism so he came out of Hinduism which had belief in God less limited by the way than the Christian belief but with limitations too with a heavy mythology they asked him is there a God? they asked the Buddha please tell us because they realised the Buddha was a deep presence there and the thing is the Buddha never answered that question and in the scriptures it says he kept noble silence I am going to give a bit more of an answer than the Buddha but the Buddha kept noble silence he didn't say there is a God and he didn't say there is no God and there is a wonderful depth in that because it is only when you go into the deeper levels of your being that you realise that what traditionally is called God that you are actually an extension in form, a limited form that which animates you the consciousness that expresses itself for a very short time as that particular human being in that particular physical form in that particular psychological form the consciousness that animates that without which you could not exist that consciousness is one could say an emanation of the one source consciousness that is at the core or the source of the entire universe that has no location of course in space or time is the unmanifested which means it does not manifest in the world of form it is the eternal, timeless, unmanifested source of all consciousness and all life, life and consciousness are the same very much compared to the sun the sun could be you could compare although the sun has a location in space and time so it's not the sun, it's just we can give an analogy it gives of itself and you could then say every life form is animated by the light of the sun so the consciousness that you are not the thought forms but that which makes the thoughts possible is an emanation of that one underlying consciousness which is continuously born into short lived life forms and seems to for some reason enjoy that so there is not we are here to realize that even if we only get a glimpse of it we become free of the image of a controlling entity which really that is like humans that belongs to a more childlike stage in human evolution that kind of image so you are leaving that behind so instead of believing in God you are beginning to sense in yourself you got it but for those who hadn't got it yet laughter laughter laughter instead of believing in God which is a workings of the mind you step deeper into yourself and you can sense your essential reality as a presence yes, a divine presence the emanation from the one source you transcend the personality and you sense that in yourself that cannot really be named anymore because you realize when you name it that is definitely not it so you lose your belief in God and you begin to find the reality of God in yourself

[Speaker 3] (8:30:10 - 8:30:16)

so even if I screw up I can always tap into it again

[Speaker 1] (8:30:16 - 8:31:47)

yes, when you screw up then you see what you did from that place of consciousness what in colloquial terminology is called screw up means you act unconsciously and humans have been doing that throughout history that is why history is screwed up laughter so we act as we connect more to the transpersonal the transcendent dimension within ourselves we screw up less and the more that begins to live through us the less suffering we create suffering we otherwise create for ourselves and for others look at tradition if you look at the history of just Christianity middle ages created a lot of suffering in the name of God they tortured people in the name of God they believed in God it was an absurd form of insanity so here we are this is the next stage in the evolution of consciousness now you feel a little bit it's a little bit like a child that's growing up and feels a little bit sorry about losing childhood that's you yes

[Speaker 3] (8:31:50 - 8:31:52)

thank you, you might have saved my life

[Speaker 1] (8:31:52 - 8:31:58)

laughter applause applause

[Speaker 8] (8:32:14 - 8:33:21)

hello I've had some thoughts and when you said this morning I don't really have a question as much it's just something I wanted to share and that is that in your ETTV and I have not seen it and I'm not sure where it's going but I would love to see awareness television you're talking about children with devices where is that all going and how can we turn the internet or television into something more meaningful I would love to see we have a big screen TV over my fireplace that looks like I'm there and if I could just see animals and no documentary, I don't need to know I don't need to see them fighting I just want to see them, observe them and a church, when you said a church I was thinking the exact same thing an empty church there are so many things I wish we could see I don't need to be there, I'm not going to go to Africa but I would love to just look in the eyes of an animal that I'll never get the chance to see

[Speaker 1] (8:33:22 - 8:33:39)

peaceful images appearing in your living room a succession of peaceful images nature, animals maybe beautiful, serene buildings, temples, churches

[Speaker 8] (8:33:39 - 8:33:54)

and it could even be downtown New York if that's something I would choose I want to just look and watch that with nothing but hearing the sounds and just to focus on improving my awareness I think it would just be a great thing

[Speaker 1] (8:33:54 - 8:34:51)

I was a few months ago in a hotel I don't remember where and there was a channel in the hotel television that was actually on when I came into the room for the first time and that channel was showing beautiful landscapes it changed every 15 seconds or 20 seconds or so and so all this beauty appeared a lake, mountains, trees nature usually, very often when you come into a hotel room the TV is actually on, sometimes it's the hotel channel usually the first thing I do when I go into a hotel room I switch off the TV if it's on but this time I didn't switch it off and I left it on for an hour because it was so pleasant perhaps you can create that

[Speaker 8] (8:34:51 - 8:35:02)

my other issue is I'm a bit of a frequency holder so I was hoping if I put it up there laughter laughter

[Speaker 1] (8:35:02 - 8:35:32)

laughter well I'm not a doer either because as I said I didn't create E.T. TV either but I know somebody who is a doer her name is Oprah I will see her on Friday in Chicago I may just briefly mention it with just one sentence just put a thought into her head and see what happens

[Speaker 11] (8:35:36 - 8:35:37)

thank you

[Speaker 1] (8:35:53 - 8:44:08)

thank you for doing all that you do my question is about how does one pay attention to the future while making choices and everything around you is changing constantly the future of course you need to consider on a practical level where you make plans or you project a timeline and you can write these things or do it on a computer screen but that has its place and you're not losing yourself in the future but you're giving your fullest attention to what you're doing in the present moment let's say you know what it is that you want to achieve in a certain course of action I want to achieve whatever do you have a business or what is your occupation I'm a life coach life coach, good, well that's a very good occupation giving your fullest attention provided that you know what it is that you want and what it is that you want is really what is it that one wants to manifest through me we talked about this yesterday the true question is not so much what is it that I want but what is it that wants to come through me what is it that wants to be born through me into this world and so you have to look at that in the present moment that's not dwelling on future and then you might get a realization not perhaps immediately of where you want to take your life your so-called life your external life okay, let's say I want to create you're a life coach so who knows, maybe you're happy doing what you're doing and you continue doing that or you might feel something wants to I want to create a retreat center where people can spend some time and learn about how to live for example, that might arise and then you look at what is the next what is the first step that is required you focus on it the focusing itself is an important part of manifesting you focus on the vision which is all present moment you don't focus on I want to achieve that at some future point you hold the vision in your mind which is all present moment and you hold the vision in your mind as if it were already a reality and this is an important part Jesus briefly talked about that too he said when you pray for something, feel as if you already had it and that's of course when you read books about manifestation the good ones will also tell you that the most powerful thing when you want to manifest something in the so-called future is to feel that it's already there so what would it feel like to have this healing center where people come, just an example the healing center where people come spend time and learn how to live consciously and you can feel you can feel already the fullness of that it feels good so you are not doing it in order to feel better about yourself or about life when you finally achieve it the creation needs to come from a sense of fullness in yourself and not from a sense of neediness of insufficiency or of lack I need to have that to feel happy and fulfilled or get recognition manifestation comes from a place of fullness and when that place of fullness Jesus also he used the expression the fullness of life he said I want you to have the fullness of life that seems to be a contradiction to what the Buddha talked about the essence of life as emptiness and if you look at the surface only of words then of course if you are a scholar you say they talk about the exact opposite, Jesus says fullness and the Buddha says I want you to realize emptiness and of course they are talking about the same no thing, exactly the same no thing from a different perspective because the emptiness is the unmanifested source of all forms which already contains everything in itself in that emptiness so it's just another word for it there is no contradiction whatsoever when you feel empty there is an intense field of aliveness in that emptiness that has no form it's just vast spaciousness and in that you don't need anything, you don't need the healing center but you might enjoy creating it it may want to be created through you and out of that joyful realization of that presence that the fullness of life you begin to take action talk to this person and you may find when you are tuned in in that way you often get approached with just the right you meet just the right person at the right moment or the right synchronistic you run into somebody and say as happened to me when I mentioned yesterday after giving a talk to a class at University of California I suddenly realized it would be wonderful to reach more it's so satisfying to reach all these youngsters they are much more open than I realized I thought they had to suffer a bit more before they would be open but many of them are actually open and I thought it would be good to teach to talk to more of them and a few days later I got an email from Yale that's a strange coincidence I haven't had an email in years from places like that that's beautiful and I got it personally I got very few emails how it reached me I don't remember, somebody must have given somebody a phone number my email address it's very strange but it's beautiful and when you are tuned in in that way coincidences seem to happen to support what you are doing and when it does happen it feels it's a kind of confirmation that this is the right path it's more than what I want to do it's what the greater whole wants to do and from there you are present moment centered you have the vision but now in the meantime every action you take will be just one step at a time towards the vision and you know very well that when you achieve your vision you are not going to be any happier than you are now

[Speaker 4] (8:44:22 - 8:44:55)

Thank you Vielen Dank my question has to do with location you spoke this morning about the energy field in western North America you had to come there in order to have that book getting out of you and I have been living in New York City 14 years

[Speaker 1] (8:44:55 - 8:44:58)

which is full of nice people

[Speaker 4] (8:45:03 - 8:46:17)

all kinds of people and I had in April I teach yoga and in April I had a sudden ending of many classes and I had, I can't even say it's a thought I can't even say if it's a thought or a feeling but I have lately coming up in my consciousness you need to go, your time is over here but I don't know if it's too much a mind, an egotistical thought that I want to go somewhere to get something because now I am challenged with the situation even though I have been right now I am having the best time in my life it's the best moment of my life right now right here, it's wonderful, it's amazing and this loss is not a loss it's a gain because I have discovered something of the dimension of being I am very grateful but I am not sure if I need to go somewhere to be more useful to be more given

[Speaker 1] (8:46:17 - 8:46:24)

so right now you are still in New York where are you living?

[Speaker 4] (8:46:24 - 8:46:25)

Manhattan

[Speaker 1] (8:46:28 - 8:52:37)

and so as you deepen now and perhaps this being here has contributed to a deepening in you see if you still feel that when you go back and pay attention to how you feel about the energy field of Manhattan when a deepening happens often places that before we thought we can't possibly be here they become okay but not necessarily the deeper you are the more the easier it will be for you to know whether or not it is right for you to continue to live there there was a time very similar in my life to what you just described for many years I lived in London and a time came when something within me no longer seemed to be aligned with the energy field of that big city it just as if there was a shrinking back I could feel it energetically inside as a kind of shrinking whenever I went out into the traffic and the subway and the masses of people but for many years I enjoyed London but the time came when something didn't feel right anymore and that feeling continued and then finally I realized I have to leave I was seeing I lived on very little then I was seeing people who would come for counseling occasionally and I got into my old car and I drove out into the countryside looking for somewhere that felt right and I reached Somerset the county of Somerset and for some strange reason I reached this strange town called Glastonbury which is an alternative center where lots of spiritual people and weird people in other words people like myself they visit there they live there so it's very much unlike any other town in England except perhaps one or two that are a little bit similar Totnes in Devon is a gentler form of Glastonbury and there my car broke down and I could never use it again after that and so that's where I then began to live of course first I had to catch a train back to London and get rid of everything so that took a few months but that's where the car broke down and that's where it felt right at the time to be there it happened to be quite a magical place in many ways with spirituality that goes back to pre-Christian times it's been a spiritual center and a place of healing for thousands of years going back to pre-Christian religion and so that's how it happened in my case so I finally went but the realization whether you need to leave it may come to you something coming into your life that also tells you where to go you may not necessarily have to go into your car and wait for it to break down because your car is probably better than the one I had and it may take a long time before it breaks down so see what it feels like as you return now with more presence and more awakened consciousness see what it feels like now or if the feeling continues that it doesn't feel right to be there then you can focus on begin to see where is it that I might want to live where does it feel right do I already know a place somebody may bring something to you some bit of information mention a place, invite you somewhere come and spend a few days here somebody says in that way it may happen for you but cannot predict in what way or you may feel compelled to go somewhere that you have heard of or you might feel good about nobody can predict how you will be taken out if that's meant to be for you how you will be taken out don't so I asked myself when I was walking along the streets of Manhattan a few days ago whether I could live here and I said yes I could yes I had to ask Laura

[Speaker 4] (8:52:39 - 8:53:06)

is there a difference from a spiritual point of view or from becoming aware in the fields of energy that are supporting awakening more than other places so that's part of the question is there on the west coast of the United States is there more support to awaken than on the east coast

[Speaker 1] (8:53:06 - 8:54:05)

yes, this depends on the individual there is no way of saying that this particular place is for everybody, would be more conducive to spirituality than another person it might be the opposite coming back to London, all my spiritual transformation and the shift in consciousness, it all happened in London so I cannot say that London is not conducive to spiritual realization it's a powerful place in many ways there is a powerful energy field there and it's closely related to my spiritual path both before the awakening happened and after and the awakening itself happened in northwest London and yet a time came years later when it no longer felt right to be there, it doesn't mean that for other people it's not absolutely right to be there

[Speaker 2] (8:54:28 - 8:56:26)

first of all thank you for this book obviously it's not read at all in 2008 this was a huge puzzle for my awakening the journey with Oprah and yourself so thank you so much my question has to do with how you mentioned nature and how it compels us in and how we actually reflect its own beauty through us observing it and I wonder if the same parallel can be drawn through us as humans without ego also when you mentioned specialness and uniqueness I'm trying to sort those all out because I feel like we also perhaps without ego being involved can draw or perhaps feel compelled to draw people so that they can also see the beauty in us and there's an analogy I wonder if I could offer perhaps help me there is a field of flowers and perhaps poppies and there are some flowers who strive to be taller healthier and the bee then goes to those flowers and prolificates the field with those flowers isn't it then in some ways okay for the human men to strive to be its best and then it prolificates the consciousness of humanity or is this considered egoic

[Speaker 1] (8:56:28 - 8:59:04)

okay well in the same way that when you contemplate a tree or a flower you reflect back to the tree its own beauty and sacredness and aliveness so the tree through you becomes conscious of itself in the same way I don't know if that's the answer to exactly your question you can reflect back to another human their own reality who they are beyond the ego when you meet another human with another human whether it's a brief encounter or whether there is more of a relationship you can reflect back to them who they are beyond ego by yourself being more of a presence than a person when you are with them we already know what that means being more of a presence than a person in the presence of another human with another human means as you look at this human or listen to what they say there is a spaciousness in you in addition to perhaps having some thoughts about the other human occasionally perhaps not even that there is a spaciousness in you through which you look at the other human you give them that space and this means you reflect back to them who they are beyond ego and this is what happens here I am not here as a person it would be absurd for this person to think that you had come here to see me I mean, what for? you don't want to see the window frame you want to see the light that comes through the window you are not interested in the frame so nobody comes to see a window frame but people love the light that shines through which is the unconditioned consciousness so if I ever thought people came to see me that would be a very stressful thought so they want the spaciousness because it is a reflection of who they are in their essence so this is what happens here but everyone, am I answering your question?

[Speaker 2] (8:59:05 - 8:59:19)

yes, but doesn't the garment that we wear and the window frame have some essence as well doesn't it have a purpose doesn't it have something without ego yes, doesn't it have a place in itself

[Speaker 1] (8:59:19 - 9:00:04)

the form is honored also in that presence you honor the form of that human there is the physical form there is the makeup of their personality you don't say get out of the way no, it's acknowledged that is there also that's the form and the form is shining through the form so in many ways the things that you talk about are of the level of form usually with the other human so both levels are acknowledged if this is not the full answer ask me again

[Speaker 2] (9:00:05 - 9:00:34)

I guess because I feel that in some ways we focus of course on the essence and I understand that and I wonder if when I look at nature and I don't feel there is also anything wrong with encompassing the physical form and the essence they are not really separate

[Speaker 1] (9:00:35 - 9:02:57)

what we call beauty is a combination of the form and that which animates the form shining through the form without the form it wouldn't be there so it's a combination ultimately the two are together as the ancient Buddhist texts tell us form and emptiness, emptiness and form they are really one so it's not really a duality you actually love the form as you reflect back the essence you also love their form I love the human form I love sitting in a cafe and looking at all the humans that come and go and sit there and contemplate the multiplicity of the human form it's beautiful or wherever in big cities talking about New York and the humans that inhabit New York not only is there the multiplicity of races and all ethnic backgrounds from all parts of the world it's quite a unique thing quite a unique place and they all come there and they all participate in this high intensity energy field everybody has some important business to do and they're all running around and they create this high intensity and I found it very enjoyable actually I felt like floating in a sea of energy as I was walking along the streets Madison Avenue almost being carried by this no thought in my head just loving all these forms energy forms it's quite beautiful you can only really love the form when you are in touch with that which is deeper than form if you're not in touch with that which is deeper than form you don't really love the forms that you see you either fear them or you want something from them but you're only free to love them when you are in touch with that which is beyond form and from there you can love the forms

[Speaker 2] (9:02:58 - 9:03:01)

I feel that you're right then it becomes a celebration

[Speaker 1] (9:03:02 - 9:03:33)

a celebration of the multiplicity of life maybe one or two one more depending on the length of the answer we have some more questions tomorrow so don't despair and if your question is not answered tomorrow then of course you go to the best place where to receive an answer which is within, in the stillness

[Speaker 5] (9:03:35 - 9:03:40)

first of all thank you very much it meant a lot to me my son actually introduced me to you

[Speaker 1] (9:03:41 - 9:03:47)

how old is your son? 26 good work

[Speaker 5] (9:03:55 - 9:04:23)

so I guess my question is yesterday you mentioned and you talked about it today too, pain body and yesterday living a life of fear with the world the way it is and the economy the way it is a lot of people are gripped in fear and so you talked about being gripped in thought and so I was wondering how do you deal with the grip of fear and what's the best approach to take to get out of that grip of fear and become aware and productive

[Speaker 1] (9:04:23 - 9:04:33)

do you experience that from time to time? are there particular occasions when you feel it most strongly?

[Speaker 5] (9:04:33 - 9:04:35)

yes

[Speaker 1] (9:04:40 - 9:17:00)

an interesting starting point is to see what the relationship is between certain thoughts that you think and the emotion of fear to see are there certain thoughts that I think when you feel the fear look at your mind what thoughts is my mind creating right now what are the thoughts telling me what kinds of thoughts are floating around in my mind and you may find that there are thoughts concerning the future some possible future scenario something about yourself at some point and you may find that a lot of that fear is not created by a situation you find yourself in unless you're facing a dog that's about to attack you but that probably happens rarely or you're in some place and you're about to fall off the ledge this is actual fear in the presence of imminent danger but I assume you are not you're not a soldier I was in the Marine Corps the Marines as you know if you're in an actual battle situation then there may or may not be fear perhaps in the immediacy of battle you're forced into such presence there's no fear or there may be fear but if there is fear there then that is not what we call psychological fear that is an instinctive reaction to imminent danger but what you're facing now I assume is not an instinctive reaction to immediate danger it's a fear that lives in you and first thing to discover whether you are creating it at any given time by certain thoughts that your mind is producing at that moment you may find maybe you know the answer already right now or maybe you have to wait until the fear rises again and then look at it because it's surprising how often humans are not even aware of what kinds of thoughts they are thinking that even happened to me when the shift happened this is just aside from I'll come back in a second when the shift in consciousness happened and I suddenly felt so peaceful and I didn't know why the present was so enjoyable but I didn't even call it the present I just said peace, it's so peaceful and everything was so lovely and that was of course in London and I could walk around the center of London and find everything so peaceful and only later I discovered when I talked to a monk a Zen monk who said well Zen is really about the cessation of the thinking mind I thought oh, now I understand why I feel so peaceful because ever since it happened I haven't been thinking that much and there's actually vast spaces in me of no thought, of just perception but I didn't even realize that that's what it was I didn't perceive it as the absence of thinking, I perceived it as peace so you could say I didn't really know what was going on in my mind and suddenly I realized all the peace is associated with the cessation of thinking but no loss of consciousness whereas usually the cessation of thinking is associated with loss of consciousness when you stop thinking you go so observe whether your mind is creating certain thoughts that create the emotion of fear then it is also possible that the fear lives in you as an accumulation of old emotion and that from time to time it comes up and creates fearful thoughts so there is always a relationship between the emotion and the thoughts so make sure that the link between the thoughts and the emotion of fear is broken, severed and you do it by becoming aware of the fear when you feel it indirectly in yourself as an energy vibration one could say, whatever it feels, it's hard to describe because you can't see it you feel it in yourself, it's somewhere in the body it affects the body and feel it rather than allow it to arise into your mind and give rise to thinking but be aware to see whether whenever you feel it whether that is perhaps the result of certain types of thoughts in your head so in other words are you creating the fear that you feel by your thoughts which is the case for many humans or, which can also happen is there an accumulation of fear in you that goes back to the past that from time to time you feel more strongly than at other times, it comes up and it then tends to go into the mind and lead to fearful thoughts so it can be thought creating fear or fear living in there perhaps going back many years in your life and from time to time but usually some link happens then with your thinking and that link needs to be cut which is not a violent process at all which is a very gentle thing you do it simply by being the space for the fear to feel it and to accept that right now this is what you feel now this might seem not very helpful to say I accept that right now this is what I feel, but what it does is when you accept whatever you feel right now it creates this acceptance that you bring to it implies there is an awareness suddenly around it it's a space of awareness that then begins to surround the fear, that's what acceptance does so in the same way that you accept because whatever arises in the present moment whatever arises in the now externally you might as well say yes to it because undoubtedly there it is it is what is in the present moment so you might as well say yes if you don't say yes to it it's a form of insanity almost but it's quite normal to argue with what is the same applies internally, what arises internally you can't deny that there is fear and if you say go away, it won't work so what does work is to say ok, there it is, I can feel it and by being the awareness around it which comes through acceptance acceptance means you kind of step back you are not totally in the grip anymore you step back from the fear so to speak internally and suddenly there is an aware space around it which we call acceptance and so the fear continues but when you then are conscious of it you hold it in that field of consciousness it cannot renew itself by using your mind and thinking fearful thoughts and in that way whenever you feel the fear arising accept it that this is what is right now you don't even need to call it fear anymore you just feel what it feels like and accept that kind of feeling it's a strange frequency and you may then find if you do it often enough that gradually the energy that was trapped in that fear becomes freed and you feel more alive because when the energy sometimes an enormous amount of energy is trapped in a person's fear and when that is freed that very same energy that was trapped there becomes part of your sense of aliveness and actually fuels your conscious presence so you don't need to want it to go away anybody can experience that even people who are maybe not burdened by excessive fear normally when there is anxiety or something like that let's say you have to give a public talk and many people are anxious beforehand stage fright because they are projecting themselves mentally into that situation and it's very problematic because it's not happening now how are they going to receive me?

what am I going to say? are they going to like what I say? what if and so on when you feel anxious and you become totally present with the anxiety so that it's not using your mind anymore you just feel the anxiety and accept it completely then it can often happen that the anxiety becomes high intensity energy and you suddenly go from suddenly go from so fear when it's totally accepted can sometimes quickly become transmuted into intense aliveness so the way then beyond it is the acceptance of it hold it in that space of consciousness and feel it fully don't fuel it with your thinking and be very careful so that when your mind creates more of it by thinking certain thoughts that you need to recognize that is called dysfunctional thinking which is usually associated with projecting some kind of future because obviously there is nothing to fear at this very moment but there may be something tomorrow to the mind so see what your mind is creating how that contributes to the fear it may contribute a lot or it may be that the fear lives in you but either case if it's your mind make sure that you recognize the futility and the dysfunction of those thought patterns and then take your attention into simply feeling what you feel so don't create more of it by unconscious thinking observe if that is the case observe how your thinking creates more fear more fear, more fear and so good luck that's your spiritual practice everybody has their tailor made spiritual practice and that is an important part of your spiritual practice

[Speaker 5] (9:17:00 - 9:17:08)

and the second part of the question is how do you deal with regrets you talk about the present moment a lot of people deal with regrets as well

[Speaker 1] (9:17:08 - 9:30:12)

yes, so fear is usually associated with thoughts concerning some projected future and regret is associated with thoughts concerning something that happened in the past and in either case you are identified with those thoughts and you take them to be virtually reality you don't recognize that those thoughts are simply thoughts when you are identified you believe the thought is a reality so when you regret something your mind is formulating a certain story an interpretation of certain events that happened in the past you did something that perhaps you think was wrong you know now that it was wrong but at the time you did not know that otherwise you wouldn't have done it that would be called guilt which is also related to regret but these are all thought forms that perpetuate the past in your mind and they are imbued with a sense of self anybody that has guilt which is associated related to regret, it's not quite the same but it's related to regret guilt means there was something in the past that you feel you did and that you realize now that was wrong to do perhaps it created suffering for other humans it was wrong you realize it now because now there is a consciousness there that wasn't there at the time this action happened so at that time you were in the grip of unconsciousness compared to what you are now and to personalize that actually creates more ego you have to forgive yourself in the same way that Jesus pointed to on the cross when he said forgive them for they know not what they do sometimes you have to say I forgive myself for I did not know what I was doing when Jesus said they do not know what they do in our terminology that we use here he would have said don't hold it against them because they are completely unconscious that's what he meant they are completely unconscious if you forgive yourself I was unconscious then I was in the grip of certain emotional mental streams and there was not enough presence in me to act otherwise recognizing that this happened because you didn't know what you were doing that is part of the forgiveness and there is no self essentially in it, who you essentially are has nothing to do with that it does not mean that sometimes people still have to undergo karmic retribution for certain things but there is no sense anymore that I, who I essentially am did that, no let's now, thank you let's now go a little bit more silence and we have more questions tomorrow unless they have all dissolved dissolved in the stillness I got mail welcome again wherever you are, here or elsewhere we are in the tropics now that may slow you down a little which is a good thing there is a Zen saying which goes hurry slowly but what that really means is not that you necessarily slow down on the external you can both be fast on the internal and be still on the inside I briefly mentioned that before at some point and then of course you are not stressed you are still very effective in fact more effective and yet there is always that still core that still space if it has to be fast you can move fast there was a Greek ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus

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[Speaker 1] (0:08 - 40:39)

There was a Greek, ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus, or Heraclitus, who became famous, well, his most famous saying, he was a pre-Socratic philosopher, which means before Plato, before Socrates. The pre-Socratics are wonderful, but their teachings only survive in fragments, and one of the surviving fragments by Heraclitus is the saying, in ancient Greek, I don't know much ancient Greek, but I just happen to know this one, Pantave, which means everything flows, or everything is in flux. And he's also known for his saying, you cannot step into the same river twice.

So, he very much was aware of, like the Buddha, too, of the fleeting nature of all phenomena, the continuous fluctuation of forms, and I'm sure he also taught that if we get attached to the fleeting forms, then we suffer, although I don't think those fragments, I don't know if there are any fragments that say that, is the emphasis of his teaching is on the impermanence and the fleeting nature of all phenomena, and then, I don't remember one generation before or after him, there was another philosopher, Parmenides, who said the exact opposite, he said, all change is an illusion, nothing ever changes. And if you study philosophy at university, they'll tell you these are two totally conflicting views of reality, but if you enter the spiritual dimension, then you realize that they are both right. One refers to the dimension of being, which can be realized within, where you find that point of absolute rest, which however is not dead, but vibrantly alive, that which Jesus called fullness, which Buddha called emptiness, that absolute stillness, like the very center of the hub, the wheel, is still, and everything else revolves around it, and so that's the still point, where nothing ever changes, and from there, once you realize that that is actually the essence of who you are, seeing from there, you look around, and then you see something that many of those people who had that realization, when they looked out upon the world, said, oh, this is a bit unreal, it all looks a bit unreal, because it's very much like a dream, all these forms, tomorrow, of course tomorrow will be, when it happens is now, we know that, but we have to use these words, tomorrow you'll wake up somewhere else and then you'll make a, was that a dream, or did that happen? It dissolved, the experience receded and dissolved, and at some point, there will be nobody left who remembers this experience, it could be many years from now, until the last person here dissolves, and even their descendants, to whom you told about your wonderful Omega experience, they remember that their grandfather talked about being at a place called Omega, and he realized his true identity there, but then they die too, and finally, no trace is left of this particular experience, it's dissolved completely, but what does not change actually is there is a consciousness that has emerged through the various forms into this dimension, and then, because it has emerged more fully here, expresses itself more fully through other forms, so there's an essence which is not to do with the word of form, everything on the level of form eventually dissolves, dissolves, dissolves. So Parmenides realized, as did many Indian saints and gurus, teachers, they said, it's all an illusion what happens out here, and then of course other people come and they read what they said, and then they repeat, they might even start giving spiritual teachings, so they have read that it's all an illusion, and then they say, it's all an illusion, but when you look at them in their daily life, they get extremely upset about things when they happen, where's the illusion now? Some Zen masters sometimes when the disciples said, all is one, everything else is illusory, sometimes the Zen master would hit you, and then the disciple gets, why did you do that?

Well, if all is an illusion, then where does that anger come from? So it's not true until you realize the truth of it, it doesn't become true because it needs to be true for you, not as a mental concept, but as a realization in the depth of your being, and then you can say, compared to that vibrantly alive stillness that I am at the center of my being, so to speak, or the being beyond form that I am, compared to that, it all looks a little bit unreal, that's how I would put it.

I wouldn't say it's all an illusion because on its own level it has a certain reality, you can't deny that, but it feels a little bit unreal and a little bit insubstantial but quite pleasant and interesting, the continuously changing forms of life. So everything flows, yes, everything moves, and yet nothing moves, ultimately Parmenides said it's an illusion, but it's a pleasant, it can become a pleasant dream, that's the transition, I call it a lucid dream, you know, you may have experienced at night in the middle of a dream, suddenly you realize that you were dreaming, and that's quite an interesting one, wow, this is a dream, and then you might even have thought, I can do anything, I can try out anything, but usually what happens is very soon you wake up, it's the continuing to dream and being aware that it is a dream, usually they're not compatible, and then very quickly you wake up out of the dream, and lucid dreaming happens, we use it as an analogy when you are rooted in that sense of spaciousness, you're spacious inside, there is an aware presence in you beyond the person, and from there whatever unfolds in your life is a kind of dream, you're no longer totally attached to it, in it, like the dreamer who doesn't know he or she is dreaming, you're totally in the grip of the dream, when you know you're dreaming the dream changes, the nature of the dream changes, so the realization of being, which is what this is, the realization of being also changes the way in which you dream the dream of everyday life, as you have a spacious relationship with the dream of everyday life, in other words, nothing that happens is any longer of absolute importance, it still is of relative importance, but it is not of absolute importance, of relative importance is whether you live in a tent, you're homeless and live in a tent or on a park bench or in a pleasant house, of course in relative terms it does make a difference to your life on the level of form, whether you have a nice family around you or whether you have nobody, in relative terms it makes a difference whether your body is healthy and vigorous or your body is fragile and getting old, makes a difference, whether you are successful in the world or completely unsuccessful in the world, there's a relative difference to your life experience of course and perhaps you would prefer to be successful, when these things are regarded as absolutes then each one of these things has the power to make you either happy temporarily or quite unhappy, when you see them as relative then anything that happens on the level of form still matters to some extent but as I put it, it matters but it does not matter absolutely because there is always a space within you from where whatever is there unfolding on the level of form is witnessed and allowed to be, there's always that dimension in you that is not really touched by whatever happens on the level of form and then you discover the amazing thing that even when you're homeless you can be very deeply peaceful and even when you have lost everything that deep peace remains, it might even become stronger but you may also find because you then embody that deep vibrantly alive peace, you may also find that that also emanates from you into the world and so it does influence the way in which you experience life and how other people and life situations respond to you, so if you're homeless and sit on a park bench and feel this absolute peace, of course you may think okay I may need to take some action, see if I can get a roof over my head and find somewhere to stay, fine, but in the meantime you're sitting there, happened to me for a while and then somebody comes sits next to you and asks a question or says something and then you give an answer and there's perhaps a tiny glimpse of something spiritual in your answer or in his question and suddenly you find teaching is happening, somebody gets drawn to you and then he comes back, this happened to me, he comes back the next day and sits next to you again and wants to ask another question and then that's the beginning of your career as a spiritual teacher. It also happened to me several times that as I sat not knowing, at that point I wasn't totally homeless, I was staying sleeping on somebody's floor but during the daytime I would still sit around on park benches and then I looked in my pocket, oh I've only got two pounds left in England and suddenly somebody comes by and says oh he recognized me from a job I'd done before, oh you're just the person I need, I need some language classes, can you teach me German, I think it was, at that time my Spanish was so good I could even teach Spanish but I couldn't do that now probably, so he needed I think both German and Spanish, okay for two weeks you teach me for three hours twice a week and that was enough to keep me going for another two or three, and then always at the last minute the universe came, it was supportive, so circumstances then are there but there is a space around them and there's always, there's present in you the transcendent dimension and that's a wonderful sense of freedom and the paradox is that as this transcendent dimension is present in you, it affects even the circumstances of your life, but that's secondary, Jesus used the words for that when he talked about that, he said all those things that you thought you needed, seek only the one thing that matters, there's only one thing that matters and seek that, pay attention to that, all the other things that you thought you needed will be added unto you and that's the experience, this adding unto means you no longer need it for your sense of identity, for your happiness, for your sense of fulfillment, to give you a sense of who you are, usually people look for all kinds of stuff to give themselves a more complete identity and those things, you don't need those things anymore because your core identity is consciousness and that can be realized at any moment, it can only be realized in the one moment, in the vertical dimension now. So, and then the little, it's almost as if the universe had a sense of humor or irony when you really don't need it anymore on the level of fulfillment or identity and then the universe says, oh, here it is. When I had a big ego in my 20s and so on, of course, I was unhappy too with it, it goes with it, to be a great spiritual teacher, wow, that I would have given anything, my ego would have and then something happened and the need to be anybody in particular dissolved and I was happy, very happy, being nobody in particular.

In other words, we could say I was happy being a valley whereas the ego, the egoic self wants to be a mountain, the egoic self wants to stand out and say, me, look at me, how successful I am or if it can't do that, it says, look at me, how miserable I am, definitely more miserable than you. It wants to, in some way, it wants to stand out, be special through knowledge, through possessions, through appearance. Some people hit you over your head with their knowledge, they are so highly educated and they throw it at you so that you feel very small.

That's one way the ego could, or others show off how much better they look than you or in a very subtle way, the spiritual image, seeing yourself as a spiritual, highly evolved spiritual being can also be part of the ego, to have an image of yourself as highly evolved. It always involves comparison with others, when you, the ego always compares itself with others. So when you, you have to be alert to it, in case it happens to you, when you detect a subtle sense of superiority or inferiority towards others, when you see somebody here at Omega and you see, well, I'm so much more spiritual than this person, or if you look in admiration and you see, wow, they've gone a long way further than me, they're so much more evolved than me, will I ever reach that point? So, comparison, a sense of either inferiority or superiority, always associated with ego, because beyond ego, there's just a sense of aware, spacious beingness, and that doesn't need to compare itself to anything or anybody. And so that is really the need to stand out, to exist, one could say, because to exist means to stand out, X means out, ist comes from stand in Latin.

To exist means the need to express your opinions, when it doesn't really matter what your opinion is, because there's no decision-making process involved, you just have to express your opinion when things are being discussed. You can feel how it pushes forward into your mind, and you cannot stop yourself. And that's part of wanting to be defined in form more strongly.

The ego wants to define itself, its form identity, more strongly, and so it uses all kinds of strategies to enhance its form identity. Another one of, as we know, is criticizing others, because when you criticize others, you strengthen your form identity as a superior being, because the implication is, of course, when you criticize somebody, you are superior morally or intellectually, whatever, to that person that's being criticized. So it's an unconscious attempt of the ego to enhance its form identity.

Another way in which the ego strengthens its form identity is to regard people as enemies, to say, he is such a, what he did to me, to use, you make people into enemies, you make situations into enemies. When you complain about a situation you find yourself in, why don't they, they should have gone in your head or out aloud. Again, even complaining about a situation you find yourself in or a place, a location where you are, the complaining strengthens your form identity and you are making the situation into a kind of enemy.

And many people spend a large part of their lives converting situations that they find themselves in into enemies. It's an ego pursuit. It's quite insane.

And so they spread a lot of unpleasantness because whoever they come into contact with gets infected by their energy field of hostility towards things that are around them. So these are very rigid egoic identities and it's all unconscious. But it's all an attempt to get a stronger sense of me as opposed to other.

As I sometimes put it, the ego tries to emphasize the otherness of others. And even collectives do it, nations do it sometimes towards other nations, the collective mind of one nation makes the other nation into absolute devils. This has happened a lot in the past.

To some extent still happens, maybe a little bit less so when you look at the propaganda, the nation's first world war and so on. It's an attempt to make the others like that's like the other, the neighboring nation, they are all evil. Or you make a race, another race into they are all evil and we are the good ones.

But that goes back thousands of years where when tribal identities, when humans lived in smaller tribes and the neighboring tribes were sometimes regarded as not even human because they were a totally different tribe. They were conceptualized already then, that was very much there already, conceptualizing other humans as the other. And so when you have the other and emphasize the otherness of others, then you get a stronger sense of your own self.

But that self is an illusory sense of self. But to the ego, which is the illusory sense of self, it's very satisfying to do that. And that's how a lot of the insanity happens that we see in human history.

So it's, but it's all related. That can be traced back then to simple things like feeling the need to complain all the time about people and things and situations. All the ways in which one enhances unconsciously one's egoic identity, wanting to be somebody, not liking to be overlooked.

If somebody don't give me enough attention, get very angry. You know the saying that the sentence that just precedes an act of violence, they say, hey, I'm talking to you. But you give me attention, I'm here, here, look at me.

And if you don't give them attention, then they'll hit you. Then they'll get attention. I'm talking to you.

Oh dear. And all the spiritual teachings emphasize try, instead of trying to be the mountain, see if you can become comfortable with being the valley. The Tao Te Ching actually talks about the valley spirit as the essence of the Tao, the valley spirit.

Being nobody in particular, or Jesus saying, when you are invited to a feast, don't sit, don't sit at the best seat, seek the lowest seat when you are invited. And this is a parable. It's not literal, to be taken literally.

He's not advising you where you're going to sit at a dinner party. It's not that. It means something else.

It points to something else. Seek the lowest place means do not seek to emphasize your form identity. Be comfortable with the simple beingness, which might include not emphasizing your form identity.

I talk about that a little bit in the New Earth also. At first it feels strange when you give up the need perhaps there's a discussion, people are putting forward their point of view, you have a point of view and then as an experiment you decide you just drop it and just be there as a presence. At first it seems that you are beginning to disappear and then you find there's a, you sink down to the bottom so to speak, instead of being up here, you go and at first it's a little disconcerting when you don't emphasize the me, but then suddenly there's a, you can sense a peace and then you can actually sense true power.

True power is, comes from a different place when you are rooted in the, in the beingness, the aware space, you sense an enormously powerful energy field that is not, has nothing to do with the world of form and you can rest in that and that's a, that's a wonderful thing. You're then free of the ego and have become, have accessed true power in yourself, but not power in the way the ego would think of power, power over somebody else or power as having more than a deeper sense of power to get to the source of life, to source of all life within yourself. And then you don't, the wonderful liberation is you don't need to emphasize the me anymore.

And so one sometimes sees, occasionally I've seen in movies, characters in movies that are virtually egoless, whether this was happened accidentally or whether the screenwriter knew what he or she was doing, I don't know. Well, on the one hand you have certain characters that are pre-egoic like Forrest Gump or The Hobbit, and then you have, they haven't gone through the egoic stage yet, they are pre-egoic, therefore connected more with the totality of life and the source of life. And then in some movies I've seen characters who are actually egoless and seem to have gone beyond, there's even, I may have mentioned it before, there's an older movie that I saw in the 80s, with the adventurer, the man that always plays the adventurer that goes out seeking treasures and so on, Indiana Jones kind of movie.

I think it was called The Jewel of the Nile. So if you ever can read it, The Jewel of the Nile has one character in it who is supposed to be a Sufi master, a spiritual teacher. And that Sufi master in Egypt, I think it is, that Sufi master, normally when these masters are depicted in movies, they're huge egos because that's how the scriptwriter or the director thinks of a master, so you've got your massive presence.

And this master has no functions without any ego whatsoever in a childlike way, and it's quite wonderful to watch. I also noticed, one can sometimes watch movies from that point of view. There was another movie called, I think it's called The Fastest Indian or something, it's about a motorbike race with the famous English actor Anthony Hopkins, based on a real person.

The character that he plays in that movie also functions virtually without ego. He's never reactive. He immediately goes with the situation.

So it's wonderful to watch. So you don't need to really try to tackle the various manifestations because there are so many ways in which the ego manifests. If you examine them one by one and try to get rid of them in your life, that doesn't work and you don't need that.

You need to focus on that which is beyond the mind, which creates the ego, which is focused on space, on awareness. And then in that, the ego naturally begins to dissolve. But also you become more aware of it when it does appear and you can smile at it.

Oh, there it is again. And for a while it has a momentum, it will reappear. And before you know it, you've gone name dropping and you've said in order to enhance other people's opinion of who you are, you say like, whatever.

Oh, I just got a phone call from Oprah. I just had to mention that. I didn't.

I'm just such an example. And sometimes it's totally invented. There are people who invent all kinds of things to enhance other people's opinion of who they are.

Or you drive in a big car because you want to be seen by others with the roof down. Now, of course, these are more rudimentary manifestations of ego. Most of you are beyond that.

But wanting to be seen by others, it's totally meaningless because all that others see is a man or a woman sitting in a car. It has nothing to do with anything. But to the ego, it's a kind of food to be admired or envied by somebody else if it's only for a second and they have no idea who you are.

By observing my dad when I was a child, I learned a lot about ego. Often 50% of what he said about when people were visiting us and I noticed very quickly, that's not true. I didn't know it was called ego, but I just knew why does he invent these things to make himself more interesting.

But it was a great need to be more, to stand out more in the eyes of others because the ego loves to see its reflection. It sees itself very often through the eyes of others because it's part of the self image. Quite amazing.

So, I had an early teaching there and only much later realized, oh, that was called, that was the ego. You may remember in New Earth, I talked about the old, the ancient saying, this too will pass, which is again coming back to impermanence, the fact of impermanence. This too will pass as a reminder that whatever happens is fleeting.

And this little reminder, this too will pass, it's like having a bird's eye view of what's happening in your life situation. A bird's eye view gives you a larger perspective and you see the, again, relative and absolute, you see the relative unimportance of whatever you think is so important in your life situation. You could also look up at night into the starry sky and become still and see the vastness of the heavens, the stars, and not just the stars, more the greater sense of awe that comes when you look at the stars without interpretation is the vastness of space that you suddenly sense.

The spaciousness of it, that is where the sense of awe derives from. Oh my god. And the timelessness of it because you know that several thousand years ago it was virtually the same.

And a few thousand years from now it will still be virtually the same. The changes that take place over such long periods of time that it's virtually eternity that you're looking at. And again, that gives you a sense of perspective of the relative unimportance of your life situation.

Whatever happens in your life situation, you remember I contrast life situation with life. Life situation is past and future, whatever happens in it. Life is vertical dimension, is now.

And it's not ultimately to do with the level of form. You drop down into consciousness itself and realize that is who you are. And your life is always now and your life situation is in past and future, relatively important but not absolutely important.

So there are ways of, there are another access point into the transcendent dimension of the vertical, of course, is to be aware of the impermanence of all phenomena. That's, before we have questions, mentioning that, what I'll try to do now is to show you something on the screen as an entertainment. If it works that it's with technical stuff you never really know whether it will work or not.

I mentioned yesterday the commercial. The only mistake I made, it wasn't for beer. It was actually a commercial for a video game, but that hardly matters.

That only comes at the very end where it says life is short, play this. So let's see if we can get that on the screen now. It's very short.

I hope everybody can see the screen and I also hope the sound is there with it, which is an important part of it. So the most spiritual commercial ever. And I don't even know whether those who produced that, whether they knew that or not.

So now you had to look at your life. So if any questions remain after this. So let's see that we have two hands of fate, your hand of fate and then there's another hand of fate over there.

I'm not allowed to choose. The hand of fate chooses.

[Speaker 5] (40:48 - 41:00)

Thank you. Thank you, Eckhart. Years ago I had visions.

I would close my eyes and I would see all text just moving in front of my eyes.

[Speaker 1] (41:01 - 41:03)

What do you see? Visions.

[Speaker 5] (41:04 - 41:19)

So I still don't know what was it about. I still don't know the language. And I saw a lot of other things, predictions for myself.

I saw my thought forms, the entities.

[Speaker 1] (41:20 - 41:21)

Entities?

[Speaker 5] (41:21 - 41:45)

Entities, yeah. So and all of a sudden 15 years ago it stopped completely. And right now I don't even see dreams.

I don't even have dreams at night. So my question is what happened and how can I get it back because life without it is quite boring.

[Speaker 1] (41:47 - 41:48)

Okay.

[Speaker 5] (41:50 - 42:12)

My guess, I didn't accept this gift because I didn't act on it. I didn't ask questions. I was I didn't even consider myself worthy of this gift.

So maybe I didn't accept it. So right now I'm trying to accept that I didn't accept and accept that.

[Speaker 1] (42:13 - 59:28)

So you haven't had any visions for some time now. 15 years, not even dreams. 15 years without visions.

Okay, okay. Let's see. I've been 34 years without visions.

Visions, they have their place. It's usually a stage in one's development. It can be associated with spiritual awakening because sometimes the mind seeks to what is happening at a deeper level.

In the same way that when a dream is created at night, you're asleep. And very often the dream is associated with certain emotions. And it seems to the dreamer that the dream creates the emotions.

But very often the opposite is the case. There is a certain emotion left over in you while you're asleep from the previous day or from many years back, if the pain body, whatever it may be. And the emotion is felt while you sleep.

Not dreamlessly, but intermediate sleep. The emotion is felt and the mind, always now you may have noticed the mind always seeks to interpret what's going on. So when you feel an emotion and you're in the intermediate stage of sleep, the mind is looking now for an explanation for the emotion that you feel in the body.

And this is then how the mind creates a dream that corresponds to the emotion in order to justify, to explain the existence of this emotion. And to the dreamer, however, it seems that what happens in the dream causes the emotion. So if you feel fear in that intermediate stage, this is only the beginning of my answer, so be patient.

So if you feel fear inside you, then the mind seeks to interpret the fear and then creates a dream where you're being chased by some awful monster and you feel fear. But cause and effect are confused, the fear was already there, then the mind attempts to explain it and give it an image. And so it also happens when a person now begins to grow or deepen spiritually, sometimes that you sense something arises within you which the mind cannot interpret but seeks to interpret.

And so it often happens that saints and spiritual people sometimes have visions. You may have visions of Jesus, you may have a vision of Krishna, you may have a vision of some other spiritual figure and it usually somehow relates to your cultural background or your personal background. But those are attempts of the mind to interpret something deeper.

Powers of prediction or clairvoyant powers, these things can also happen, they're well known in Indian spirituality where they are called siddhis. Siddhis are powers that develop as a by-product of spiritual awakening. For example, you might know what somebody else is thinking or you can suddenly have an insight into what's going to happen next.

These are spiritual powers that happen and all the deep teachings and teachers say, do not give these things too much importance because if you give these things, accept them when they are there, but if you seek these things and try to make them even stronger or want more of it, that will lead you astray from going to the source and finding yourself as the formless and timeless one source beyond form. So when these things arise, acknowledge them but don't let them take you away into that because then you might, there are some wonderful psychics in this world, they're extremely good at telling you, maybe not all the time but when it works, they can see, they can tell you what your grandfather said on his deathbed or whatever and this is very wonderful.

It's not necessarily associated with the true spiritual awakening, maybe just halfway down. So when it happens, it's wonderful. The visions are not the essence of the spiritual path.

They sometimes come as a by-product on your spiritual path but the essence of the spiritual path is actually stillness and stillness is not interesting as you said it. Visions are much more interesting. Now, but the term interesting is a conceptual term that refers to the world of things that arise and especially things that can be conceptualized easily.

So for example, a discussion between people may be interesting. Some drama may be interesting. A movie is interesting.

Observing a huge city and what happens there might be interesting, what people do there. Now what's not interesting is to watch a sunset. Nobody could say, what an interesting sunset.

Now because that exists in a different, when you really pay attention to a sunset, and this is just one example, it could be at nighttime looking at the vastness of the sky. Now it's only when you try to interpret what is that constellation and what is that star, what are they called, then it becomes interesting. But if you simply watch, which is a different way of perceiving it, you are there in awe of the vastness of it, you cannot say anymore, isn't that an interesting sky?

No, there is a dimension that is much deeper than interesting. Interesting is a relatively superficial dimension. It has its place.

Occasionally it's nice to look at interesting things or experience interesting things and it continues to happen anyway on this surface level of your existence. Things are interesting and things go wrong and it makes your life interesting. As I said the other day, whenever something goes wrong in a movie, it's only then that the movie becomes interesting.

So you cannot have a movie, two hours of a sunset in a movie, but you can go to a, you don't need a movie for that, but you go to a real sunset and you watch and there is this majestic spectacle of the sun, the vastness of the sky, the changing colors, the mind stops when you watch that. You cannot really see it unless the conceptual mind stops and then something is deeper, touched more deeply in you and responds to it from a deeper level. We can't call that deeper level interesting at all.

It's not interesting. We have left interesting behind. We have gone deeper where there is a power that is much more vast than interesting.

Don't worry, you can go back to interesting after the sunset or the sunrise or the starry sky. But interesting is only one level of existence. Now if you are stuck on the superficial level, then you will always be looking for the next interesting thing to get your mind into and this is a normal human existence where you see what's the next stimulating thing that I can get into, says the mind.

It's always looking out because it cannot sense the inherent deep sense of aliveness within. It seeks a substitute for the sense of beingness and presence that is the essence. It hasn't found that yet.

So it looks for substitutes and in a deeper sense, you know that Buddhists talk about reincarnation. In a deeper sense, reincarnation happens whenever the mind identifies with something because then the consciousness that essentially is the mind, when you identify with a thought or you look at an interesting thing on the computer screen or in a book, a magazine, a book or talk about interesting things or interesting TV program, an interesting political discussion, interesting spiritual speculations.

What about what did the Buddha ever incarnate on planet Mars? Isn't that so interesting? Let's talk about that and all kinds of theories about it.

He said he did and then somebody else said no, he didn't and all that's the mind which the consciousness that you are reincarnates every time it into thought forms every moment. So that's the reality of reincarnation, it can actually be experienced. You don't have to speculate, is there such a thing as reincarnation?

That's interesting to think about but when you look in your immediate experience, you realize that whenever you identify with form, a thought form, an interest and they're all interesting. All these thoughts are relatively interesting compared to the non-interesting but much vaster beingness. So when you go into a thought form, consciousness incarnates.

Incarnate means assumes a form, is born into a form. Oh, let's think about that. Or you see a vision, oh wow, isn't that so beautiful and that happens in your mind of course.

It's a form that arises, everything happens in your mind, a form that arises. This is so interesting. And then of course the vision disappears and that's oh, it's gone.

I hope I get another one soon. It comes and goes. As everything in the world of form, it comes and then it goes.

And so there have been saints who have had visions for a few years and then Jesus suddenly no longer appears to them and they became desperate without realizing that they were actually meant to transcend that stage now where you don't, they don't need the vision anymore which is some form that arises because who you essentially are is a formless. So become comfortable with the non-interesting dimension which is not boring. Boring means you're still on the level of the mind and it just cannot incarnate into anything interesting at this moment.

And then the mind gets very restless and bored. Oh, what can I do now? But of course before long it will probably come up with some problems that you're having.

And so suddenly your life is interesting again. So become comfortable with the visions not being there and see what happens when you accept that right, this is not interesting and then allow yourself to go deeper. Remember the sunset and you may actually want to watch the sun or sunrise or contemplate nature, sit somewhere surrounded by nature without trying to pick out things and say, oh, what's that?

Let's see. I think that's called such and such. Or you may carry a book of birds and then you look, this looks like, or you, this looks, oh no, it isn't.

It's something else. You see, it's a totally different way of perceiving than sit there and not conceptualize and simply go, wow. The first way of perception that I just described is interesting.

The second one is not interesting, but it's much more alive really, much deeper to go like. The same when I visit other places where there are ancient buildings such as temples or cathedrals, it's wonderful to go into them. And again, there are two ways of experiencing those places.

There is an interesting way of experiencing a cathedral, an ancient cathedral or a temple. And the interesting way is you have a guidebook or you put things or you rent this little commentary that you put an earphone on and then you switch it on and then it tells you exactly the history of each thing and the entire building and it becomes very interesting. Or you have your guidebook and you go, okay, now what's it?

Oh, this goes back to the year such and such and the meaning is such and such. Fine, that has its place and it makes your visit interesting. Usually I don't do that.

I go in and just look. And I know many things on the interesting level I'm probably missing. But there is then another level of perceiving the entirety, the totality of that space which far transcends and is actually deeper than any bit of information you could have about that place.

Not that there is not, there is a place for information too. If you can have the two in your life, that's even better. But most people, once they start on the informational level, they get completely absorbed by it and they lose the spacious way of perceiving which is not interesting.

So it's very easy to get drawn into the interesting way of perceiving and thereby losing the much deeper, non-interesting, spacious way of perceiving life. So when you go into a cathedral you can try out both, go in and just perceive, just watch everything in that alert spaciousness and then you are not only aware of what it is that you are seeing, you are also aware, probably there is some stillness in that space, you're also aware of the stillness that surrounds you and you're aware of the space itself, not only of the things that are in the space, you're also aware of the space itself, both the stillness and the space. And the guidebooks never mention that. They don't say, now the space here, what can they say about it?

Nothing. And they can't say anything, they don't mention the stillness either. So these vital things are missed when you look at a guidebook and perceive on that level, the interesting level.

So interesting in your life has its place and I'm sure in many ways your life will continue to be interesting but go deeper than interesting, it's much more alive, which means deeper than the visions too.

[Speaker 5] (59:29 - 59:32)

Okay, I'm just asking for acceleration please.

[Speaker 1] (59:36 - 59:43)

Thank you. Okay.

[Speaker 6] (59:57 - 1:00:07)

Hi. Thank you for being here. My name is Margot.

I came from Israel.

[Speaker 1] (1:00:07 - 1:00:13)

Oh, can you get a little closer to the microphone? You come from Israel?

[Speaker 6] (1:00:14 - 1:00:22)

Israel. And I have a question. Why we still need, why we can't give up suffering?

[Speaker 1] (1:00:23 - 1:00:27)

Why do we still need suffering? The suffering.

[Speaker 6] (1:00:27 - 1:00:31)

Why we still cannot give up suffering.

[Speaker 1] (1:00:31 - 1:00:49)

Does that question apply to humanity or does it apply also to yourself?

[Speaker 6] (1:00:49 - 1:00:55)

I thought about it and speak about humanity and exactly in our space.

[Speaker 1] (1:00:55 - 1:00:56)

Yes.

[Speaker 6] (1:00:56 - 1:00:57)

I look around myself.

[Speaker 1] (1:00:58 - 1:01:06)

Yes. Do you find in your own life that you still cannot give up suffering or have you given up suffering?

[Speaker 6] (1:01:07 - 1:01:08)

I'm in the process.

[Speaker 1] (1:01:08 - 1:08:45)

Okay. A question is always more immediate and more powerful and the answer to a question like is more powerful when the question is why can I not give up suffering completely and then it becomes more relevant because you have to then find the answer in yourself and observe in yourself when you still suffer and as you say you're beginning, you're no longer suffering the way you did before. You're beginning to step out of it but it still arises from time to time and so when it, the fact that you're beginning to step out of it means there is an awareness that is arising.

You're not totally unconscious anymore except from time to time when you still lose it so to speak. So it's the answer to the question really you can find in yourself to observe in yourself how you create the psychological suffering that we speak about, how it is created in your mind. That is a more important observation than why you are creating it.

The how can more quickly lead you to the end rather than trying to figure out why. I can tell you briefly why but the how is more powerful to ask how does it happen because when you see how it happens you're very close to the end because you're making it conscious. Whenever suffering is created it's done unconsciously.

You don't know you're doing it to yourself except afterwards. So why is it created? Because the false sense of self that arises through identification with the mind creates suffering because it prolongs its existence, it strengthens its existence, it opposes things, it is not aligned with life which is always now and it's non-alignment with life for example by arguing with what is internally that's a great source of suffering, by dwelling on things that happened long ago and recreating those things in your mind through thinking is a form of suffering, by looking at situations through the excess baggage of the mind and huffing and puffing as I call it while they happen and take things personally instead of immediately saying yes to what it is, is suffering, but it keeps alive the false sense of self and so as long as the false sense of self is in control it will create suffering as one of its favourite ways of keeping itself alive. So the more important question is how does it happen? Observe then what kind of thoughts your mind is creating and how the body responds to the thoughts that your mind is creating with an emotion and so the two come together and suffering arises.

So if you are there as the witnessing presence when it happens that's the beginning of the end of it. So we know why it's the false sense of self gets stronger, you can have an entire victim identity in your head, that's the suffering. So the Buddha said it is desire which causes suffering, now desire of course implies future, you cannot desire something that's already here because it's already here, desire implies an absence, it also implies future because whatever you desire must come to you or you're hoping that it will come to you in the future.

So desire implies non-presence and having the focus of your attention on some future point and so that is one of the great causes of suffering to lose the present moment. So how to go beyond, whenever suffering arises you could notice in even small mild forms of suffering you will immediately know that somehow you lost the present moment, you lost yourself in the mind. So it can act like an alarm clock for you when you get upset or whatever arises, oh I must have lost the present moment and then bring your attention back to the present moment and when you fully accept the present moment you are aligned with the present moment and there is no suffering.

There may be a situation that you need to deal with but you don't bring the level, you don't impose on it the suffering and important thing is here, important aspect of that, to differentiate between the situation and your reaction to the situation. Now many people can't do that, for them the situation that arises and their reaction to the situation, they experience it as a single phenomenon. A simple example would be, you wake up in the morning, it's raining and cold and you look out of the window and you say, oh it's another dreadful day that thought arises and you feel an emotion that goes with that and of course that thought leads to another thought and the emotion leads to another corresponding emotion.

You don't realize here you have the rain and here you have your reaction but you experience it as a single phenomenon and this is only one example, there are many more examples, hundreds you could give. If you can separate by being aware enough, if you can separate a situation and your thoughts about it or your reaction to it which is thoughts and emotions, if you can separate them then you can see suddenly the situation is actually as it is. The rest is the suffering that I create about it in my mind.

That's an amazing realization, disentangling your reaction and your thoughts from the situation and suddenly you see the situations actually become quite simple and easy, they're neutral but you do not mix them up with reactivity and that disentanglement, as one could call it, is part of the spiritual path and is quite a revelation for people to suddenly discover that life can be much easier than they thought it would be or could be.

[Speaker 3] (1:09:05 - 1:11:08)

I would like to ask about trauma or post-trauma and it's a personal question, me and my family and I'm like about 10 years in the spiritual way and it really saved my life. I was really, I can say just one sentence, since my first child was born I was extremely in worries and anxieties. I'm also from Israel so the situation which was the past is holocaust and wars.

So the post-trauma is not like it's cold outside, it's really your children are suffering from anxieties, panic attacks sometimes, not all the time and it's the huge sadness like a cloud which follows me. So this way really helped me a lot. Still, there's a lot of sad hours, like many times I can't enjoy myself, like I think, oh I'm enjoying here and there's my children suffering and I really stop and try to discern the situation like I'm here at Omega and I have a wonderful time and really everything is wonderful this minute but the other, like this minute even, it's so combined together, the joy and the fear and the happiness and the sadness. So can I be really present with like post-trauma and these kind of things and there's other work that I do with the post-trauma.

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:11:08 - 1:22:10)

One important practice of course is to be aware of what kind of thoughts arise in your mind at any moment so that you are not being dragged along by your thoughts but you are there as the presence and especially detect negative thoughts that cause you unhappiness. As more awareness arises and you realize there is a dimension in you that is deeper than thought and also deeper than whatever emotions arise or thoughts and emotions arise in that vast spaciousness of presence. So you can pick from there, you as the presence can become aware of what thoughts your mind is creating instead of being those thoughts and you need to be alert enough to observe the kind of thinking that happens in your mind and when a thought arises that causes you unhappiness notice that and realize that is not something that you want, that is something that you can do without and that is actually a dysfunctional thought. When you recognize a thought as dysfunctional then you are no longer invested in it and it tends to subside and perhaps a minute later another one comes and again you see it as it has no useful purpose in your life except to make you unhappy, to worry about your children.

Worry is a word that we use to describe thinking that makes us unhappy, usually unconscious thinking, you don't know that you are doing it, you are so in it that you become it. So worry is a way, the word worry describes thinking that is dysfunctional and makes you unhappy. Wonderful thing happens as more awareness arises, thinking still happens but you are beginning to be aware of how often the unhappiness that you feel is caused by thoughts that you think and then these thoughts once you recognize the process, these thoughts you can let go of them, it is a relinquishing, relinquish them because you realize they are futile, they have no purpose whatsoever and then gradually you reach a stage where thoughts lose the power to make you unhappy and that's a wonderful step to reach in spiritual evolution when the thoughts you are thinking, even occasionally still old patterns of negative thoughts can come in but they are immediately recognized and then they subside, your mind can no longer make you unhappy. It is not situations mostly that make you unhappy, it is your mind that makes you unhappy. Now in addition to that, this is the unhappiness that you create, that your mind creates in the present moment.

There is also an unhappiness that lives in you that goes back much further in time and you describe it as something that almost follows you or you carry it around with you and of course as you know I describe that as the pain body and that is also something that you need to be aware of and realize what it is so it cannot take over your mind, I talked about that yesterday, so that it cannot take over your mind, this emotional heaviness, it's not pleasant, it doesn't feel so good, so that it cannot take over your mind again and again and renew itself by making your mind think thoughts that correspond to its vibrational frequency which is unhappiness and suffering. And I also, I already wrote about it and talked about it, pain body has a personal aspect to it and pain body has also a collective aspect to it and very often they become a mixture of two, it is not always easy to see which part of it is your personal, derives from your personal life and which part of it derives from the collective energy field where you live, the cultural surroundings where you live or things that go back into your more distant past, you can trace it back if you want genetically, there's probably pain body somewhere in the DNA which scientists haven't found a pain body in the DNA yet but we are only at the beginning of understanding these things and probably something that is far beyond anything that means we can see on the physical realm that scientists don't know anything about yet. So there are certain places where there has been a lot of suffering and of course your country has had a lot of suffering especially the people who then came to your country have got an enormous amount of collective suffering that goes back generations and so that does not immediately dissolve and everybody who lives there partakes of that and some aspect of your personal suffering will be the collective suffering but the vital thing it is only you, only the individual can begin the process of dissolving that. Without the awareness, without the consciousness it does not dissolve, you could wait forever, it just reincarnates and is passed on from generation to generation.

So it takes one person to be aware enough to say as the expression goes, the bucket stops here, is the expression. So it is up to you and what the work that you do, the work that you do is vital, is absolutely vital not just for yourself because it affects many people that you don't even meet because you are all connected on a deeper level, all the humans are connected, all humans on the planet are connected, all humans in a particular energy field such a nation are also connected in some way so you dissolve not only your personal pain body by bringing awareness to it which implies acceptance when it does arise and that's a very interesting position to be in to feel this heaviness, this burden arise in you without any longer making it into a personal problem but simply say oh there it is again, I can feel it and let's see if I can accept that this is what I feel right now, can I say yes to this and usually you find well yes I can and there it is. Now an interesting shift in consciousness happens when you accept something completely whether it's an external phenomenon or an inner phenomenon.

When you accept something completely, I already mentioned it briefly the other day, a space arises around it, that is what acceptance is. Acceptance means you kind of step back from it so to speak and you become the space for it. At first there's very little space, there's still this enormous heaviness that you feel and when you accept it at first you feel just a little bit of space around it, this is part of the acceptance but as you continue to accept and make it your practice, gradually you find the space around it gets bigger and it, let's call it it, seems to begin to shrink as the space, whether it shrinks or not who knows but relative to the space it seems to shrink. So as you continue to practice acceptance, so instead of thinking I must get rid of this, why is this happening to me or even let it rise into your mind and control your thinking, no, be there, be the space for it and gradually the space becomes actually quite big as you continue to practice and then that which arises is no longer that big.

In other words you, because you essentially are spacious awareness, consciousness, not the form, you become bigger than it, well you always were but you didn't know it, you become bigger than it, much bigger and even if it never left you, but it will gradually become transmuted, but even if it never left you it wouldn't be so bad anymore because there is that vast spacious stillness around it and that's the process and there will be a time when you will be grateful for the very thing that you are talking about now because it is this very thing that pushes you to the spiritual dimension, without it you wouldn't go there.

[Speaker 3] (1:22:19 - 1:22:28)

It's not a question but I would like to, I think you are needed in Israel and I would like to invite you to come because I'm sure.

[Speaker 1] (1:22:29 - 1:22:39)

I think the time is coming close when I will go because I had a few invitations already so I hope that it will happen very soon.

[Speaker 3] (1:22:39 - 1:22:39)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:56 - 1:23:12)

Hello Eckhart, before I start I'd like to just stand here for a little bit and be present and to soak all of the sin and to feel the connection that you are offering all of us in a way without the mind involved if you don't mind.

[Speaker 1] (1:23:13 - 1:23:18)

Wonderful, yes, thank you. We are not waiting for you.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:23 - 1:27:35)

I spent the last two mornings writing and trying to figure out what I wanted to ask you. And this morning I did a meditation and I realized the mind wanted to know. I have been on a journey for the last three years of intense immersion into the spiritual world and I have tasted everything you have spoken of.

And I realized that that's from where I wanted the question to come today. And the funny part is that the people, there are a few here that know me, probably smiled when you spoke this morning because some of the questions were going to be about dream and illusion. And this morning I was speaking about lucid dreaming and lucid living and I sat there and I smiled because I knew that I was speaking through you to me.

This feeling is incredible. And my question to you is I have experienced this and I know that while I am within this reality of dream of which I truly believe. On the way over here I said I am truly the creator, the dreamer of this dream and my ego came and said no, you are creating an illusion of creating an illusion and I said I have you.

Because there is any answer to am I creating the illusion of creating the illusion leads back to I am creating it in one shape or form. So to get next, while I am here I experience this dream and do all the things that you have so beautifully shared with us on how to realize truth. But to realize the truth that I have experienced through deep meditative states of disillusion, of the illusion and being okay with it never happening again but knowing of tasting it that it is a thirst that is unquenchable at this point.

And that's okay because I am enjoying drinking it. And I know that everything I have read, heard and said has been myself speaking to me to teach myself things that I already know and to be able to apply within this illusion. It brought me to the Manduka Upanishad and now I am reading A Course in Miracles which a dear friend of mine shared with me you are very familiar with.

And in there it talks about a gap. And for me that gap is the experience of the dissolution of the truth, the real truth at whatever level it is I am experiencing it here and to have nothing else besides that. And then the illusion and getting so close to the dissolution of the illusion that I can get within the illusion and that gap to jump over.

And when I read in there and I am on page 600 so I am about to start and I know that I have created this for me to experience it to know for sure because you can only know through experience, truly know. So my question to you, I am sorry you took a long guess. Yes, my question to you is.

I think we are finally voting. My question to you is, is your experience of what the teaching of A Course in Miracles is, will that be the gap to which I will be able to bridge to experience, to experience myself without it being a temporary or short lived experience within the illusion. The son coming back to the father.

[Speaker 1] (1:27:38 - 1:32:57)

The one thing that is still a little bit of an obstacle is of course your mind. And the attempt of your mind to understand more, to understand more about the process and so on. So the next step for you and to provide to many of you who still have this strong impulse to understand.

Let me quote since you talked about A Course in Miracles. Let me quote one sentence from there that applies to you particularly at this moment which is, sounds almost as a little insult to the ego. Your understanding is not a powerful contribution to the truth.

A Course in Miracles. And when you realize that, you relinquish your need to understand. The deepest spiritual teachings come from the place of relinquishment of understanding.

And then the deepest teachings, the teachings that come through you will deepen. It's only when they no longer come from your mind, eventually your mind can become an instrument for the deepest dimension. But the necessary step now is to not believe that in order to reach full awakening, whatever you want to call it, the end of the illusion, that further understanding is necessary because that will only draw you into more illusion.

Because any understanding on that level will be a particular perspective and no more than that. And will be a fragment, will never embrace the whole. So the next step is to relinquish looking to thought for anything.

And allow yourself, have the courage to drop down below thought and absolutely embrace inner stillness and the presence that is there. And from there, if anybody asks you, what do you know now? Nothing.

This is how this teaching happens. It seems that I know a lot, but I don't. It doesn't come from the level of conceptual knowing.

It can only start when you become comfortable with not knowing. And that's the depths. You have to go into the depths where you become comfortable with not knowing any answer or anything at all, even about yourself or what level you have reached.

Because all that is the form identity. And you become, you no longer know, as somebody, a questioner the other day said, I no longer know who I am, and I said, that's great, that's very good. Because you become comfortable with not knowing, you relinquish that, you realize that your understanding is not a powerful contribution to the truth, and then you become absolutely present and still.

And then, from there, life unfolds. There may come a moment then that you need to know something. Perhaps somebody comes and asks.

And then you may find an answer comes from the depths. And you didn't know that you knew that. It comes from a much deeper dimension.

But it can only come when you become comfortable with not knowing, and especially when knowing is not required, which is a lot of the time, when you're going about, walking from here to there, going shopping, knowing is not required, you can just be the presence most of the time. And then there are occasions when there's something that wants to be known, either because the situation arises, whatever it may be, and then an answer comes, if it's needed. Stop trying to work things out mentally.

And there's something much more powerful in you than that level. It can be a wonderful servant, but go into the stillness, I know you are able to do it, go into the stillness, become comfortable with not being anybody in particular, and really not knowing anything.

[Speaker 7] (1:33:01 - 1:33:02)

Thank you.

[Speaker 4] (1:33:03 - 1:34:48)

Thank you, sweet Eckhart. You've touched on something that arose in me to ask, and it's about the mind. And if you could talk some more on that.

As an entity. I read Power Now, I read that phrase, you are not your mind. I'm an engineer.

That stopped me for a little while. And I'm working on it. But you've talked about several entities, the pain body and the mind, and how they come together.

So if you could talk a little bit on the mind, help me. I don't want to say understand. And a second portion of something I'm working on is to give up the self.

But then there's karma, which has a self identity. So how do those play together?

[Speaker 1] (1:34:49 - 1:35:18)

Well, let's not make it too complicated. The mind basically is thoughts that arise. And you are familiar with thoughts that arise.

Are you able to, from time to time, sense a space between two thoughts when you're not thinking?

[Speaker 4] (1:35:20 - 1:35:22)

Yeah, that's karma.

[Speaker 1] (1:35:23 - 1:44:22)

And that's the important thing, that that arises more and more, so that spaciousness comes into your thinking. So your thinking is interspersed with spaciousness. That's really all that's needed.

Then what happens is, thinking can fulfill a very useful function in your life, as a wonderful tool to deal with the physical world, and to create things, even to manifest things in the physical realm. But until or unless your mind activity, which is thinking, is interspersed with presence, until or unless that happens, when it is not interspersed with spaces, so to speak, spaciousness, then it is an opaque entity, because there is then only a continuous stream of thinking and mind activity. And that continuous compulsion to think creates an illusory identity that consists of a bundle of thoughts to do with who you think you are, and your so-called problems, and your so-called life situation, and your so-called history, and your so-called future.

This is a bundle of thoughts. All kinds of thoughts go through the mind continuously in the absence of spaciousness. It's a continuous stream of self-talk, which sometimes splits itself into two.

It might say, I, or it might talk to itself as you. And the other one is the I, but it splits itself up, sometimes into three or four, and you can have an argument in your mind. And you're on the road to, of course, insanity then, but it happens a lot in the absence of spaciousness.

So without spaciousness, mind is all you have, or think you have, and your entire sense of self, identity, who you are, is derived from certain repetitive thoughts. Let's say there's a basket of certain repetitive thoughts in addition to the other thoughts, which also repetitive, but perhaps don't necessarily contribute to your sense of identity, but there's a basket or bundle of thoughts that recur, that tell you who you are, and they form your sense of identity. And that sense of identity is always a little bit fragile, it feels easily threatened by others, it's often on the defensive, and usually there is a sense in it of I'm not quite enough yet, or there's something not quite right with this situation, something is missing here in my life, or in this situation, it can never really acknowledge the present moment, because the moment you acknowledge the present moment, you have to become present, which is a different state of consciousness, when you suddenly go and you really look and perceive and listen, suddenly thinking subsides, and the spaciousness is there. And that's the present moment, therefore, is a wonderful portal, as I call it, into spaciousness, out of the egoic mind, which is an illusory sense of who you are.

But that's all you have in the absence of any spaciousness whatsoever. And so, that entity is quite dysfunctional, it is then when thinking actually creates more problems than it solves. And it loves to create problems, because the more problems it can create, the stronger its sense of false sense of identity is, it loves that, it doesn't know that it's not true love, it's an addiction, it's an addiction to problems.

And if ever you should be in a situation that is very peaceful, let's say you suddenly arrive on a tropical island, well, we're tropical today, but you arrive on some tropical

South Pacific island, and you're surrounded by, you're in paradise, well, this is almost paradise too, anyway it's paradise, but in conventional terms, and you would sit there, and for a while it would, oh, isn't this wonderful, but the egoic mind cannot tolerate peace for very long, it would very quickly come up with something that is a problem, either something that is here that you're making into a problem, or something that you're just thinking about, and suddenly it says, oh, it's not peaceful. The same in a relationship, the egoic mind finds it hard to have prolonged periods of peace in a relationship, we need to have some drama, because we don't have a relationship without the drama, except those relationships that have become so deadened, that both are completely closed, and then you just go about the routine business of your life every day, we don't have drama anymore, you watch TV every evening, you go to bed, and you probably haven't looked at your wife or your husband in years, you haven't really even looked at them, they've become part of the furniture, that can happen, can happen, but the important thing is, you understand now what the mind is in the absence of spaciousness, and how dysfunctional it becomes, and as spaciousness comes in, and this is your job, this is all really you need to understand about the mind, the important thing is, invite spaciousness into your mind in daily life by using those things that I described, a conscious breath, sensing the inner body, just paying attention to what is in the present moment, because that's all there ever is, so you pay more attention to it because it's life itself, it makes sense to honor it, to become friendly with it, because the present moment and life are one, there is no life anywhere else, only here and now, and once you understand that, then the dysfunction of the egoic mind begins to dissolve, in other words, the egoic mind begins to dissolve, so that's all really that one needs to know, and the process of awakening is an increase in spaciousness in your inner being, your consciousness, so that you are not, you are no longer identified with that false self that consists of thinking only, so that's all there is to it, it's not too difficult to understand, and it's not even difficult to practice, we just think it's difficult, or the mind will tell us it's difficult, to live, the real difficult thing is to live in the old consciousness, that makes life difficult, to live in this new consciousness is actually much easier, however, it is true that there is a momentum to the old consciousness, which is the egoic mind identified consciousness, the voice that never stops talking, there is an enormous momentum behind it, that is true, and it's been there for thousands of years, and the momentum will periodically, and this applies to most of you, will periodically still pull you in, and then you wake up again after a while, especially when you feel you're beginning to suffer again, and your mind is making you suffer, and you realize it's your mind that's making you suffer, and then you wake up again, and you choose, ah, you always realize the way out is present moment awareness, whatever portal you use into it, because present moment awareness is the spaciousness that arises, and gradually you become free, and that's the path.

[Speaker 4] (1:44:23 - 1:44:33)

Now, I've been reading a little of Joe Goldsmith, he talks about training the mind, Zen talks about training the mind, is that...

[Speaker 1] (1:44:33 - 1:45:33)

There are many ways of putting it, that's not a term that I use, but I believe what he really means is to practice what I'm here describing, he used those terms, maybe because he taught at a different time, in the 50s and early 60s, every time period has a certain way of approaching it, and vocabulary, so, but basically he talks about also being absolutely present and realizing that the essence of who you are is consciousness, there's even a book by him called Consciousness is Who I Am, but most of his books are transcripts of talks that were edited. Yes, so, that's all there is to it, spaciousness, invite spaciousness into your life, and that is the answer.

And that is my final message to every one of you.

[Speaker 6] (1:45:33 - 1:45:34)

Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:45:43 - 1:46:46)

So, thank you. Spaciousness is who you are, you don't need to try to become perfect as this form, the form gradually becomes less dense and less heavy, and then you can be compassionate towards it also, from that spaciousness, and that is the essence of our gathering here, so, don't be sad that the form of this gathering is coming to an end, as all forms dissolve very quickly, the essence of this gathering, that which made it joyful, is not the form of this gathering, it's something that is arising in you, and that's not going to leave you when you leave here, it can't, well it can be obscured, if you're not careful, but I think you will be careful and alert.

Thank you.

2012 to 2015 Eckhart Tolle TV Part 1

[Speaker 1] (0:07 - 1:32:51)

I was putting away some clothes this morning, hanging up some clothes and folding something. And we talked yesterday about somebody asking a question about repetitive things. You get up in the morning, you do your repetitive tasks every day.

And most of one's life consists of little tasks, there's rarely anything big. And if there is, it doesn't last long. What would be big?

A wedding, a funeral or in North America, Thanksgiving, Turkey dinner, Christmas, a promotion, or suddenly they write about you in people magazine. Hopefully something good. Or some big thing, you're going to talk or give a talk to a few hundred people.

But even a seemingly big thing consists of just one little thing at a time. Now, if you had the idea, this is just a little example, I'm coming back to the clothes in a little while. One could say that folding up clothes and hanging up shirts is an insignificant thing that one would only do in order to get somewhere else.

And in this case, if I thought, okay, I have to get this done because that's really big thing is waiting for me there. All these people are waiting for me to talk, give a big talk. Then in the meantime, all the little things leading up to it would be regarded as something that you have to get out of the way or pay little attention to because I have this big thing coming up.

And then this big thing coming up is a mind form, would become a mind form, big thing called big people wanting me to say something significant, but who knows if I can say something significant. That would have led to not only not paying much attention to the little things, but also most probably to a sense of anxiety because the mind has created a big thing. Now, if I had that, then it would not be enjoyable to do what I do because if every time I got anxious before a talk, that would be dreadful.

I'd rather not do it. So why is there no anxiety? Because I realized that even a so-called big talk consists of little things.

You approach it, you take, they pick me up in a buggy and then drive. Then I step out and then it's just one step at a time. And then I sit in a little room for a few minutes and look around and breathe.

And then I come here, it's still one little step at a time. And then I sit here and then one word comes out and then another word comes out. It's just, that too is just small.

It's only the mind that creates differences and says, I'm waiting for the next big thing. And for other people, a big thing could be the next vacation they look forward to. In the meantime, they're just trying to get to that future moment or the next, or getting married, looking for someone to get married, finding the right relationship.

That would be the big thing, wouldn't it? If I could find that, the partner, the ideal partner for me. And then you're looking towards that.

And in the meantime, little attention is paid to the intervening periods. But the strange thing is, most of your life is the intervening periods. 95%, no, 99% is something that happens while you wait for something else to happen.

And it's an unconscious way to live. So as I was folding up my clothes and I realized how extremely pleasurable the activity is. And not because of the simple movements of putting it away, but there's an underlying stillness with it that goes with that.

And so as you notice that, as you do little things, in other words, 90 something percent of your life, if you're aware not only of what you are doing, of course, yes, that's part of present moment awareness is to give attention to what you're doing so that the doing is not just a means to an end. The greatest fallacy and big dysfunction in people's lives is that almost all they're doing is a means to an end. That implies future, of course, is a means to an end.

And unconsciously, the end is regarded as more important than the means. But of course, the end, which is in the future, is always in the future. The moment it comes, it's the present moment.

But the mind pattern that has lodged itself firmly in people's minds is always that the next thing, and it's the thing that I really need to get to. So the moment the so-called future comes, it appears as the present moment. Something else, almost simultaneously or very quickly afterwards, something else appears looming up in the so-called future.

Oh, I need to get there. Of course, there are things that you need to achieve and go towards, and that involves time and so on. But if that absorbs almost 100% of your attention, or even if it absorbs 80% of your attention, that's you're out of balance.

Because if future absorbs 80% of your attention, you only have 20% of your attention left for the one thing that is ever real in your life, which is the present moment. So the present moment is just, okay. That's why many, many people don't actually, very rarely feel really comfortable with the present moment.

It's rare for people to regard the present moment even in a friendly way. Many people live continuously in some kind of almost confrontational or denying relationship with the present moment. And then their entire life is then not aligned with the present moment, which is life itself.

Because the only place where life can appear to you is in the present moment. There is nothing else ever. And so your life is not aligned.

Your life with a small L is not aligned with life, with a capital L. And that out of alignment creates an unhappy existence. And millions of people leading such an unhappy existence create an entire culture or civilization, every aspect of which reflects back to you that unhappy, basically unhappy state that all those millions are in.

So all the things that the culture produces, the civilization produces, the structures, the economic structures, political structures, educational, and so on, they will contain these elements of that state of consciousness that created them. So that's the dysfunctional element in politics, in economics, in educational system, and so on. Which all that, all those things that you can see are not working very well because they are products of a certain collective state of consciousness.

And the collective state of consciousness is made up of millions of individuals that produces the collective state of consciousness. So if you try to tackle exclusively the products of that collective consciousness in the form of the economic structures, the political educational system, and so on, then you're working only on one end of the spectrum and it's not the causal. You're working on effect.

And what you can do is limited. There are, yes, you can initiate changes, but what is the state of consciousness in the individuals and in you as you try to initiate changes? So the causal is the individual so that the individual no longer lives in a way that produces unhappiness and is dysfunctional.

So that the present moment is no longer reduced to a means to an end, but is given its fullest attention. And then I think you could, if you want to express it in quantitative terms, to say, reverse it, rather than 80% of your attention is where you need to get to and just 20% is here, reverse that. Have 20% of your attention on your goal and 80% of your attention on the doing now, whatever it is.

That means the quality of what you do becomes greatly enhanced, but without attention, quality diminishes. Now, quality, usually quality, people think in terms of something that you make and that can reflect quality, but quality really is a state of consciousness. And you can, there can be quality in a short interaction between two human beings that can be a high quality interaction and it can be a low quality interaction.

A high quality interaction is a true relationship at that moment with a flow of goodwill between two human beings, where the being of every person is fully acknowledged. And there is that field of attention and some stillness with it as the humans interact. That's a high quality interaction.

And then you have a low quality interaction, which is totally mind dominated. So you're basically just using, as you're using the present moment as a means to an end, whatever comes into the present moment will largely become a means to an end including human beings, so that you no longer recognize that the being of the human being, all you're aware of is the human. The human part is whatever function or role they have at this moment.

So it could be your, but selling, buying something from somebody or selling something to somebody or asking for information, or you're, there's a form element to every human. I call that the human. Human is who you are in form and being is the formless.

Now that, I'd love to come back to that because that is vitally important that there are those dimensions to you. There's the human dimension. This is the person with a name and a history and successes and failures, et cetera.

And then there is the unknown dimension to who you are, the being that far transcends the person, but is relative to which the person is less than the tip of an iceberg. Now, you know, an iceberg is usually what you see when it floats in the sea is 10% of the size because most of it is underwater. So the human part of you, the person with an history and so on is less, much less than the tip of the iceberg.

There's a vastness beyond, which is the being. So this is, I like it that the English language uses the word human being. And the reason why we use human being is the English language doesn't have a word that includes men and women.

So traditionally they used the word man and then they said, well, it includes women. Well, now they say it, but in the past they didn't even say it includes women. They just said, all men are, what about the women?

So English language doesn't have a word. The German language has, of course, the word Mensch, which means man or woman, which is a different meaning from the Yiddish Mensch, which is a man of, which is a human being who has a heartfelt, true presence, something that he's a real Mensch. But the German word for Mensch just means human being, but it's one word.

But luckily in this case, the English language doesn't have that. For our purposes right here, we are lucky that the English language doesn't force us to say human being, because there's something here that reflects the dual nature, one could almost say, of every human being. Ultimately it's not dual, but let's call it dual, form and formless.

So the present moment gives you access to the deeper dimension within yourself. And that starts with a little thing like, let's come back to folding the clothes. Why does that feel so wonderful and peaceful?

Because the task itself doesn't really require that much attention. You can do it. You don't have to work out mentally, how am I going to fold these pants or trousers?

Or how exactly am I going to hang this shirt up? No, you just do it. It's simple and it's easy.

So a lot of your attention is left to spare. Now, most people with all that attention to spare, they go into all kinds of mind stuff. So they're not fully conscious of what they're doing.

They're just elsewhere. So I could have been here already giving a talk in my head. What am I going to say?

Well, I fold. And I wonder what's going to happen tonight with that. And then, when is our flight back home?

Or did I let go of the menu? What's for lunch today? What did he say to me yesterday that wasn't very kind?

What was it? And I really should have replied. What should I have?

I should have said this and this and this. And so it's a kind of sleepwalking existence. So you're folding.

Okay. You're not here. So all that attention that was to spare is absorbed by unconscious thinking.

And that's normal, very normal. But it's a pity, because all that attention that is spare attention, you could have used to become aware of the fact that you are conscious. In fact, so you become very still and you realize that stillness is your consciousness.

And then as you fold, whatever it is you're doing, your clothes, you feel this undercurrent of still alert attention. And that is the meaning of what in Zen, we mentioned yesterday. Okay.

In Zen, the phrase is chopping wood, carrying water. If you don't understand that, you say, okay, what's such a big thing about chopping wood and carrying water? Why are they saying that?

Of course you have to chop wood and carry water. Everybody has to, well, at that time, when it arose, everybody had to chop wood and carry water. Why even talk about it?

Well, because it points to something deeper. Chopping wood and carrying water is the same as folding your clothes or whatever it is that you do. The possibility of doing those seemingly repetitive things, not seemingly repetitive things, but at the same time, be there fully with your attention.

Not all your attention is actually on the doing because you don't need all that just to do these simple things. You don't need to chop wood and say, or carry water and have all that. I must have all my attention on this bucket of water.

And this is why people spend years in Zen monasteries trying to get it, but don't quite get it. There was a, there's a story of a nun in a Zen monastery who was actually carrying a bucket of water and she was practicing chopping wood and carrying water. And at that moment she was carrying water and she was trying to really focus on the water.

So she didn't quite get it yet. And the story goes that the bucket was very old and suddenly the bottom fell out of the bucket and all the water fell out. And suddenly, as the story goes, she became enlightened.

After years of practice, this had to happen. And there was a deep, of course, symbolic meaning behind that. So the attention then is, some of your attention is on what you do.

Yes, you need some for that, but what do you do with your spare attention? You don't want to go where habitually everybody goes, which is drift off into completely unnecessary, very often unpleasant, very often negative emotion-producing thinking. Completely pointless.

You don't want that anymore. What you want is to be present, but that does not mean that all your attention is on the, yes, you give it your fullest attention, but whatever is needed, whatever attention is needed for it, the rest is available to you. And this is very hard to put into words.

And the only way you can understand what I'm saying now is by, at this very moment, experiencing it. As you're aware, for example, of this room, me sitting here, my voice, all those things, whatever surrounds us here, you don't need that much attention really to listen to me. You don't need to work out mentally what I'm actually talking about, because it's too simple.

You can't work it out in your mind. What's it? So there's just a lot of attention left as you sit here.

Oh, by the way, before I carry on, could we have the temperature a little lower? Because I see several people trying to keep cool and fanning themselves. Thanks.

Now, as you sit here, can you be aware of that field of attention in you, the consciousness in you that is perceiving this room and that is hearing the voice as visual perception, auditory perception? Can you sense that underlying all those perceptions, which don't require that much attention, there is something else. There is a depth in you, an alert stillness.

If you can become aware of that directly, and if I say become aware, it's not even like quite like that, because language causes, when you formulate a sentence, you have a subject and an object. So when you say, I become aware of that underlying consciousness that creates a separation and a duality that isn't really there, it's not that you become aware because you are the consciousness. So the consciousness becomes aware of itself.

It's the awakening of consciousness to itself, an amazing event of cosmic significance, which will not be reported on CNN or Australian television today, but it is very important. The most important things are not reported, by the way, on television. So you become aware of the fact that there is this depth in you that you are essentially that depth behind things, so to speak, and you can sense there's also a power there, not egoic power, but there is an aliveness and a presence there that is enormously powerful.

It's the only power there is really. And when you connect with that power, which is not egoic power, egoic power says I'm more powerful than that person. So it's not comparative at all.

Then you feel you are just an expression of that power, which is universal consciousness power. And the wonderful effect that has on your life is fear goes away, because if you are that power that you can sense, what is there to fear? Fear, which includes anxiety and all other manifestations of fear, arises only when you are not aware of who you truly are, when you're not aware of that power of which you are only an expression.

That is your essential you, the person, is only an expression of that. If you're not aware of it, if you cannot sense it in yourself, of course you're going to have fear in one form or another, because you're cut off. Well, you're not really cut off, but if you don't know that it's there, it's as if you were cut off.

If you don't know the analogy, I sometimes use, if you don't know you have $10 million in a Swiss bank account, then you don't, you only have the $2 in your pocket, because you don't know there's a numbered account in a Swiss bank with $100 million that's mine. You didn't know that. This is a poor analogy, because that power is $100 billion is totally insignificant.

So I'm just using just an analogy. If you're not aware of it, it's as if you didn't have it, you're cut off. This is probably what Jesus referred to when he said, you are like a vine that is cut off from the main branch.

So that's probably what he was pointing to. So all the little things, so that means most of your life, you can actually use them in this way so that they become a help. All those things that don't require that much of your attention, they become, use that spare attention to go within, and another way of putting it, become aware of that field of attention itself as the consciousness.

And this is why it was so pleasant when I put away the clothes this morning, just, ah, it wasn't the putting away, it was something deeper. And that's, you can practice that, practice it here and in the rest of your life with all the little things that make up most of your life. Whether you are a so-called VIP in the eyes of the world, a totally meaningless concept or not, it's still little things that makes even, and you become most effective when you give your attention to little things.

If there's something that absorbs more of your attention, then some attention will move more into mind and thinking, and you will have less than the being awareness, so to speak, goes a little bit into the background if you have to work something out or write something, but it's vital that it's still there. So there's, or you're engaged in a discussion that can very quickly pull you completely out of the being awareness. When you're getting your viewpoint, you need to defend your viewpoint now.

Now, there are two ways of defending your viewpoint. One is losing yourself in your viewpoint, and one is remaining in connection with the being awareness and then just put forward your viewpoint and why you have it, and then allow the other person to put forward their viewpoint and don't make them into an enemy, which is much easier now when you have not, you're no longer seeking your identity to derive your identity from your opinions and viewpoints. That's a dreadful state to be in because then you're surrounded by enemies or those who don't share your viewpoints or have opposite ones. They are awful.

These people are evil. The same thing happens with collective viewpoints. You have a collective belief system.

It's the same mechanism. Our belief is the only one. Obviously that's true.

All other beliefs are fallacy. They are lies spread by the devil. They're not our beliefs.

So these people are less than human who don't share our beliefs. It's insane, but normal. And what kind of a world does that mean?

What does that produce if millions of people are trapped in that dysfunctional belief system, egoic belief structures? And so when I talk about the little things, another Zen, I love these Zen people. There was a Zen master who was asked, what's the essence of Zen?

And now there are many different kinds of answers the masters give. None of them are answers that you would expect. And he said, Zen, or the disciple, of course, came, please explain to me again.

I've only been here for 10 years and I don't get it yet. What is it? I need a fuller explanation.

You haven't said enough. And what is Zen? And the master said, Zen is doing one thing at a time.

Is that it? Yeah. Okay, thank you.

I'm going to look for another master who gives me a better explanation. But if he had really listened, that's all you need to know, doing one thing at a time. Attention.

So attention on what you're doing and attention on attention. Then you're no longer an egoic doer. If you don't have attention on attention, the doing becomes egoic seeking.

And it's not empowered. It comes out of the conditioning of your mind. So attention on what you're doing and attention on attention.

Then you are in touch. Again, that's another aspect of what we called yesterday one foot in one dimension, the other foot in that dimension. And then you are both a human and a being, a full human being.

And until you are able to live like that, you're not a full human being yet, as Confucius already said. Over 2,000 years ago, and many humans are still not, evolution has not come to an end of humanity or anything. We are still evolving, obviously, which this is not the end product.

Where we are at, I don't know, not that advanced. So the most important thing to get here, get, get it, get. The most important thing to get here is to be able to be aware of yourself as consciousness, or attention on attention.

This means, oh, this is another Zen story that just came to me. The disciple said, I'm going to take my leave now because I'm going to look for another monaster and another master, because you actually haven't given me the full answer. Can you just write something down so that it's just something for me to remember that is important, so some explanation.

And the Zen master, he always give me paper, pen, he wrote. There, and he said, attention. Okay, is that all?

Yes, please add a little bit more, just another few more words. Okay, give to me. And then the disciple reads it, attention, attention.

What does that mean, he said, attention, attention. What does it mean? The master said, attention means attention.

So the disciple was seeking to pursue Zen through mental concepts. And the master was attempting to help him break through mental concepts, because the answer to all, to who you are, the answer to the secrets of the universe, which are all in you, of course, you are a microcosm of the macrocosm, as above, so below, as the ancient philosophers already said. The answer, all the secrets of the universe are not to be found through conceptual thinking.

What conceptual thinking can do is relatively little. And the human evolution, which has now reached a critical stage, does not mean that we are going to improve conceptual thinking. It's been helpful, it's done interesting things, it's created, of course, it has a downside, lots of huge problems, especially if it's not connected with wisdom, which comes from the being.

But you cannot further develop more refined conceptual thinking. We've come to the kind of end of the road of conceptual thinking, because what else is just putting words together in a different way. So we've tried so many ways of putting words together.

How many words, there are a limited number of letters in the alphabet, not to mention sounds, I talked about that already. There are a limited number of letters in the alphabet and a limited number of words that you can put together. Every book in the library, or nowadays on the computer, anything you read, any text you read, is words put together in a certain order.

And then you jumbled and you put, and then you have another text and you put a different one. But the number of words is limited. And they're just words.

So the answer is not in further development of conceptual thinking or other way of putting it. More information is more information because we live in the so-called information age. And you can get all the information on the computer that you, it is quite amazing.

Of course it is on that level that before you had to buy the Encyclopedia Britannica and it was quickly out of date. And now you can Google and Wikipedia and all those things. And it's all, whatever, all the human knowledge is there.

But human evolution does not consist in finding, getting more and more info. You don't evolve by getting more and more information. In fact, the more you stuff, get information, the more confused you get if you're not connected with being.

So much stuff, then the stuff accumulates in the head and all the devices, the more stuff comes into your mind. You absorb more and more stuff and you get completely scattered human. And attention deficit disorder, all these things, can't focus on anything for longer than 20 seconds.

Dreadful state to be in. Of course, yes, you know more than Jesus did 2,000 years ago. And of course you do on the level of information.

You know a hundred, 1,000 times more than the Buddha did, but that's not vital. So it's knowledge, but it's not knowing. So human evolution is not to completely abandon conceptual thinking.

No, to be able to use conceptual thinking without being trapped in conceptual thinking. So it's to transcend conceptual thinking. Transcend mean it doesn't, you don't remove it.

You go beyond it, but it's still there for you to use, but not for you to be used by. Because for many humans on the planet now, they are used by their mind. Their thinking is wild, just continuous input happening and going wild.

And one thought comes into their head, another thought comes, and then they link, the thinking's linked into the devices, internet and so on. Those, then they absorb the collective thoughts. They no longer know the difference between their personal and collective thoughts.

So our evolutionary challenge now is not to be drawn to go with the current of, which has enormous momentum, the current of conceptual thinking. And it's amplified by the devices that we have, computers for smartphones, pads, iPods, U-pads, and so on. And so this, it amplifies that, and it has an enormous momentum.

You can, you might have noticed the addictive nature of these devices because they are linked into that stream of thinking. So our challenge is not to be dragged along with this enormous current of thinking, conceptual thinking, which is egoic thinking, because the identity is lodged in the thinking. Because if we are dragged along, this, the development, the evolutionary development of thinking, which was a great thing, will turn out to be very destructive, and it would lead to our destruction if we were not able to step beyond conceptual thinking within, I cannot give you a timeframe, but it wouldn't take that long before things would collapse.

And first, people collapse internally, psychologically, and then the external structures collapse, and they will happen simultaneously. In other words, we would go mad. We're already mad in many ways.

But we would go even madder, more mad. And then things would collapse, and that would be, and then, of course, there's always, the universe is abundant and patient. Then, of course, there would be a new beginning.

Let's go back a few thousand years and start again. Why not? But it's a pity because it doesn't have to be like that.

There is a possibility that we can now step beyond to the next level of human evolution. And this is why we're here. And there is a lot of people, there is a longing in many, many humans, even those who have not yet come into contact with direct spiritual teaching, so-called spiritual teaching, there is a longing for something beyond.

And there's a dissatisfaction, of course, with the way people are now. So millions are very dissatisfied with life. They are missing out on life and the possibilities of life.

So we are stepping beyond. This is why I so often emphasize, learn to step out of thought. And it's not that hard because that is already in you.

It's covered the field of presence, aware presence is already there. Just notice that it's there. So now coming back to practicalities.

There's a phone call for you. That's okay. It's fine.

It's not a concert. So it doesn't matter that much. It happened at a concert I read the other day.

A violinist, I think, was playing. And of course they had asked people to switch off their phones. And just as he was playing, the telephone rang and then he stopped playing, got very angry.

And he looked at the person and asked her to leave. And she had to leave. That's not going to happen here.

So back to practicalities. It's the little things, walking, eating. Oh, eating is interesting.

Eating is also, there could be a lot of attention left over for being present as you eat. Now, most people eat unconsciously and they think about other things while they eat. And some people are actually pulled into more than their usual level of unconsciousness when they eat.

And occasionally I've observed people who the moment they put things into their mouth, they go completely unconscious. They might've been discussing philosophy before, great concepts. And then suddenly a food, a plate of food is there.

Okay, what was, okay, let's go back to Aristotle's concept of. So be conscious as you eat and feel, conscious means now as the two aspects, be conscious of what you're doing and be conscious of yourself doing it. Now yourself means not the historical self, not the person, but the underlying presence.

Sense, I call it your presence, although it's not yours, there's nothing is yours, but let's call it your presence, not the presence. Sense the fact that you are present and then do things. And when there's nothing to do, because you don't always, you don't have to do all the time, sometimes there's nothing to do and that's beautiful.

I love doing nothing, it's one of my favorite occupations. And when you do nothing, you'd simply, you're there, you contemplate. Now, if you're surrounded by nature, it's beautiful, you contemplate nature and as you contemplate nature, you also feel this underlying alert stillness.

And nature loves to be, as I said before, nature loves to be recognized in that way. It loves you for it. The birds love you, the trees love you.

That's my intuitive insight. I cannot prove it scientifically that the birds and trees love me. And how do you measure the love?

And, or if you are just even just being in a room to be with yourself quietly, just, there's a Chinese concept, wu wei, I'm not sure if I pronounced it correctly. It's translated as, it goes back to ancient Taoist spirituality. It means, this is considered one of the highest virtues and it's translated as sitting quietly, doing nothing.

Sitting quietly, doing nothing. It does not, there's more to it than meets the eye. It does not mean being semi-asleep.

What are you doing? I'm practicing sitting quietly, doing nothing. Let's have another beer.

No, it's a, it implies consciousness. So you're aware of being, so you could be in your room and be completely at ease with being there. And there's nothing that needs to be added to this moment.

There was a French philosopher, I don't remember the name though. I cannot, at this moment, access that file in my mind. And he said, all the problems of humanity can be reduced to a person's inability to sit quietly in a room.

All the problems of humanity can be reduced to this one thing. This is a human being's inability to sit quietly in a room. And again, there's a deeper implication than just sit quietly in the room, of being conscious of being.

I also mentioned on, when we started that evening, whenever it was, to be aware of, we talked today about doing small things, to be aware of the little things, particularly that surround you, not necessarily look for the kangaroos all the time, or the big lizards. I haven't seen any this time, but when we were here a few years ago, six years ago, I had an encounter with a, it was about this size, and it came very close to me. That was a very memorable encounter.

But I don't go around looking, where is he? I want to see him again. If he comes, he'll come.

But all the beauty that is in every little, even in a blade of grass, the beauty that's there. Sometimes you may want to focus on one little thing, one flower, one leaf, one tree, one bird. And then at other times, you can take in the totality of a particular view.

So you have a totality here of trees and plants and one or two houses, sky. So you can take in, but every, whether you focus on one thing or you focus on a larger landscape, larger section, visual section, sense yourself as the presence while you look. And that is how you become aware of the sacredness of nature.

And nobody could explain to you what sacredness means, but you will know when you sense it, you'll know it. It's all an expression of the one place. It's all an expression of the one, the underlying one life, one consciousness.

And you love whatever you see. You, there's a sense of no longer separateness. You love it.

And there's a joy that comes with seeing that, but the joy is there because you're in touch with yourself. So that is, again, an aspect of the balance between being and doing, to be aware of being while you do. And even when you're not doing something, not to lose consciousness.

The danger is when you do activities, let's say your normal work situation, a little bit more complex than putting away clothes, the danger is that you lose yourself in the activity. And so you're no longer rooted in being, you're out there. And then the sign, the clear sign, signal that you are out there and lost yourself in it is something arises like stress, anxiety, some negative reactivity, some belief that something out there is terribly important that needs to be done now and nothing else matters.

So you lose yourself in the doing. Now, if you sit quietly in your room, the danger is that you drift off to sleep. At first, you're there present, you're above thought.

And then before you know it, you can observe it. Many years ago, I spent some time occasionally in one Buddhist monasteries and you can observe the early morning meditation, especially when the monks sit 4.30, 5 o'clock. Sitting for an hour for the early morning meditation.

Now, I must have been not meditating all the time because occasionally I opened my eyes and looked at the monks. And so at first, they're always there. And then after 15, 20 minutes, some of them go.

And of course, in a Zen monastery, you have the head monk who may hit you if he sees you're drifting off. That works. So don't overdo the being, not doing anything.

So do it. Sometimes don't say, I'm not going to sit for one hour in this room and be. No, just take it as it comes.

There's a time for being and there's a time for doing. Now, many humans alive now are actually feel very uncomfortable with just being. They can't do it.

They can't do the being. Or when they're trying to be, they're trying to do the being, which is like trying to do the meditation. You can't do a meditation because the meditation is about being.

Doing a meditation implies you want to get somewhere. But true meditation is you are somewhere. You go into the vertical dimension.

So many humans are very uncomfortable with silence. Can't stand it. Need some noise.

Or they need continuous sensory or mental stimulation. Need something to get my mental teeth into. And when they don't have it, they were very restless.

The worst thing that you could do to them is put them in a room where they have no devices to produce noise. That would be hell for many humans these days. Sense deprivation of noise.

So not with you though, because all of you are comfortable with being and with the absence of noise. And you're actually appreciative of silence. It's precious and it's beautiful.

Now you wouldn't want to have it all the time. No, there needs to be a balance between noise and silence and between thinking and not thinking and doing and being. Some ancient cultures who are not yet lost in mental development, like our more advanced, so-called more advanced culture, some ancient cultures, the people have a natural ability to just be and they're not uncomfortable with being.

It was reported by when North America, the Europeans came and settled in North American continent. I remember reading one doctor or somebody observed people lining up somewhere in the States for a doctor's appointment. And some of them were Europeans who had come to America and some were native Americans.

And it took so long, the doctor was overburdened with work. And these people, there were not enough chairs. People had to line up a long way.

And whether it was a doctor or nurse who wrote about it, observed that all the Europeans became increasingly restless and then they got very angry. What's going on? I've been here now for three hours.

And all the native Americans were just completely happy with just standing there. So the person who wrote it was so amazed that he wrote about it. So there's a natural ability to drop in and go still.

Now, then the Westerners came. And then of course there was a clash between the old culture of the native Americans and the mind-dominated culture of the West. And then many of the native Americans became very confused and became very destructive for that culture.

Now, when we go there, we have been through the development of the intellectual faculty and the mental faculty, and we come out the other end and then we encounter that ability again and even more deeper. If you haven't lost something, don't appreciate it that much and you don't even know it that much. So for thousands of years, humans could actually drop into stillness, I'm sure, as these native Americans could.

They could drop into stillness quite easily. Perhaps they were fighting one moment and the next moment they go. In the same way that a duck does it, as I describe in the power of now, the ducks get into a fight.

And then two minutes later, flap their wings completely back into stillness. But they didn't even know, they just did it. They didn't know they did it.

But once when you lose something and then you regain it, there's always an element of depth to it that wasn't there before, because then you knowingly go into the stillness. It's not a natural thing anymore, it's a knowing thing. That is probably the meaning of the parable of the prodigal son in the New Testament that Jesus tells, which actually I believe goes back to pre-Jesus times.

The son who squanders his father's wealth and then he becomes poor. He goes abroad and then doesn't even remember who he is until finally the father sends messengers who find him and tell him who he is. Then he regains his place as the father's son and the father loves him more deeply now than before.

So that's how the story goes. He was lost and then he is found. So whenever you lose something and then you find it, there's a deeper appreciation.

For example, another ancient cult just lived in oneness with nature. But it was so natural, there was no question, there was nothing else except in oneness with nature. Nobody was not living in oneness with nature.

So they didn't know they lived in oneness with nature, they just did. So now we lost that connectedness with nature and then those of us who are awakening spiritually find it, regain it, and at a deeper level where they're acutely aware of the preciousness and the sacredness of nature. So when you transcend something and then you regain something that was lost a long time ago, there's always an added dimension to it.

That's, as I mentioned the other day, that's the fool whose mind is not highly developed. So-called fool is not a fool, but fool, then comes an intellectual development, he's no longer a fool. And then intellectual, mental development reaches a critical stage where it's no longer helpful.

And then transcend that, and then there's a sage. And the sage and the fool have many things in common. One of them being that they don't think that much anymore.

Well, the fool doesn't think that much yet, the sage doesn't think that much anymore. No superfluous thinking, and the thinking that happens doesn't cause any unhappiness anymore. You don't believe every thought that comes into your head.

What a relief. Just spending time with one thing can be very helpful. One flower, one plant, one tree, and become aware of its silent presence.

It just is, and how deeply rooted it is in being. Something that humans left thousands and thousands of years ago. They went into differentiation away from home.

And now we've refined it. Home, I wonder if it is a coincidence that the English word home sounds very much like, ohm, ohm. We do know that many European languages have roots in Sanskrit.

How that happens, nobody knows. That's why they're called Indo-European languages. And so Sanskrit is a very, of course a language no longer has been out of use for thousands of years, but how Sanskrit created words in the European languages, there must have been a deep connection a long time ago.

Ek, by the way, E-C-K means one in Sanskrit. That's lucky. Maybe one degree cooler might be a good thing.

Perhaps one and a half. We're all comfortable with being, which means you're not waiting for anything. In the old consciousness, the predominant state is one of waiting for the next thing.

And in the new consciousness, even when you're waiting somewhere, you're not really waiting. You're just being where you are. And you can use every opportunity when there is an external waiting.

You're waiting at the airline counter or a bus, at the traffic light, at the supermarket. To meet somebody, you have an appointment, somebody to arrive. So much waiting.

I read somewhere that the average person who learns, who starts driving at the age of 20 and drives a car every day throughout their lives, how they worked it out, I don't know. They spend, I believe it was four or five days of their life waiting at a red light. If you sum it, add it all up, it's four or five days of your life, you spend waiting at the red traffic light.

And most people are not happy. Unless it's just one instance of waiting and so many other occasions when you are waiting. And mostly people are not comfortable with waiting.

They get restless, uneasy, complain. They shouldn't be waiting. Well, maybe not, but you are waiting.

Things should be different if people only were more efficient and punctual and did their job properly and were aware of the time, but they're not. So whenever you're waiting, see if you can, your state of consciousness can be one of just being present, enjoy being where you are. Start with a supermarket.

And if you once, if you notice the shift from the restlessness and discontent and complaining, the anger, even irritation with having to wait at the supermarket and then say, okay, is that a pleasant state? Do I really want, am I, is it possible to be here in a different way? Do I choose to be in that unpleasant state?

Am I forced to be in that unpleasant state? Is somebody forcing me to be irritated? No, I'm just irritated.

I can't help it. Well, that's just a thought that may not be true. I can't help it.

And then you realize that you can help it and you simply drop your irritation and come into the present moment. Irritation is just a thought. This should not be happening.

Or I'd rather be out of here than in here, but you're in here. And this is just a tiny thing, of course, but as we mentioned before, life is made up of tiny things. And if one tiny irritation is followed by another tiny irritation somewhere else and followed by another tiny irritation somewhere else, and every tiny irritation leaves behind something and energy and that gradually it builds up and then you get more prone to irritation and not just irritation, then add up 100 little irritations and then you become a potentially angry person which was waiting for the next thing to be angry about.

Hopefully you can find something to be angry about. So you can just drop it. You drop it by realizing it's futile.

You're actually creating it yourself. It serves no purpose. There's an underlying assumption, and this is a childlike way of looking at the world or a childish way of looking at the world, an immature childish world that says, if I get really irritated, things are going to change.

In the same way, a child might think if I cry hard enough, something will happen. And of course, in the case of a child, often it is the case where the parents come running. But if you're an adult and you cry hard enough, not necessarily cry as such, but metaphorically speaking, unhappy, you believe the same thing is going to happen, but it's not.

In fact, people run away from you. They don't come and say, oh, you have that energy of get away from me. Yeah.

So if you're, it's practiced with those little things, so you can not only be free of irritation, you can also be actually use those opportunities to be present. Then you're welcome every time you're waiting. And if you don't succeed, that's okay occasionally, but you're welcome every time you go, oh.

Well, one very small anecdote happened to me recently. I was at a supermarket waiting and the cashier was the slowest that I've ever seen, perhaps in my entire life. And not only did she not know what she was doing, she also engaged every customer in a long conversation.

And even I, who is usually okay with these things, could feel a small amount of irritation creeping up and then immediately I let it out and it went away. And then another one came. But by the time I reached, finally reached her, the irritation fortunately was gone and I was present again.

And when she saw me, she said, oh, I've been waiting to meet you all my life. And I was so glad that the irritation wasn't there anymore. And she said also that she hadn't been there for very long, not worked there for a long time yet, so she's still learning.

And she had recently moved back to Canada from after spending 10 years in Maui, Hawaii, where time is not so important, of course. People have a loose relationship with time. It's island time.

So that was an interesting encounter. So it can happen. Irritation can still arise.

You don't catch, you don't catch it. So you have to be alert so that you catch it before it takes you over. And then realize you don't want it.

What for? And it's gone. Related to that is unhappiness.

A lot of so-called unhappiness is also a childish way of trying to change things by being as unhappy as you can about them. And the underlying unconscious or semi-conscious assumption is if I'm really unhappy, somebody, perhaps God, is going to do something about it, or I'm going to prove him wrong. I'm going to show him how dreadful it is.

And then finally, this is an unconscious assumption behind the unhappiness, because you believe, if you're habitually and frequently unhappy, you believe that it has a purpose. It's an underlying assumption. Perhaps you wouldn't verbalize it in that way, but you believe that it works for you.

Of course it doesn't, but things are going to change. But just need to be really unhappy so that God finally, even if you don't believe in God, this can still be the mechanism, the underlying unconscious assumption behind it, it's something that's going to happen. And of course the opposite is true because the more unhappy you are with something, the more you're stuck in the situation.

Whereas a friend of mine said, when a relationship ended, she said, and he walked off into the sunset, she said, God, this time you've gone too far. And now I'm going to show you how unhappy I can be. And she was a Buddhist.

They don't talk about God usually, but in this case, God was there. Okay, it's supposed to be questions, so I need to stop talking. And well, I will still be talking, but please, relevant questions are preferable to irrelevant questions.

An example of a irrelevant question would be, why do you always wear these boring clothes? Don't you have a fashion advisor? What did you have for breakfast this morning?

So, and relevant questions are questions to do with your presence practice, and how your presence practice is related to certain situations in your life, or how things are going for you here. And even if you don't have a question, but just have a contribution to say, talk about your state of consciousness here, that's all fine, that's all relevant, because those questions really, almost everybody will find them interesting, and the answers, almost everybody will find them helpful, because most human difficulties in this realm or dilemmas are universal, so you can always, most answers apply to almost everyone.

[Speaker 3] (1:33:10 - 1:33:12)

Firstly, thank you for coming back to Australia.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:13 - 1:33:13)

Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (1:33:15 - 1:33:41)

My question is to do with people's connection to guides or angelic forces, or people that have passed on, and I just would like to know your thoughts on that, and they don't need to be proven either. And I saw your lizard, too.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:41 - 1:33:42)

Sorry?

[Speaker 3] (1:33:42 - 1:33:44)

And I saw your lizard today, too.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:44 - 1:33:45)

You did?

[Speaker 3] (1:33:45 - 1:33:46)

Yes, and I took a photo for you.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:46 - 1:33:47)

Oh, send him to me.

[Speaker 3] (1:33:47 - 1:34:12)

Oh. Just before you answer, before you were talking about the lizard today, I arrived, and they were talking about the koalas in the trees, so I've been going, please, koala, come to me, come to me, and I think you just gotta get your vibration right. So I got the lizard, and a small snake.

[Speaker 1] (1:34:12 - 1:34:28)

Well, the koalas apparently are asleep most of the time, and occasionally they wake up and munch something, and then they go back to sleep. Also, they are not terribly interested in procreation, apparently.

[Speaker 4] (1:34:31 - 1:34:33)

I only want to see it.

[Speaker 3] (1:34:34 - 1:34:37)

I'm not interested in their private life.

[Speaker 1] (1:34:39 - 1:34:45)

Do you have any experience with guides, spirit guides?

[Speaker 3] (1:34:46 - 1:34:57)

No, it's in relation to my own business, actually, and I have a lot of people that come in and question that, so I just, yeah, it's just bringing the best possible truth.

[Speaker 1] (1:34:58 - 1:52:28)

Yes, yes. Well, some people seem to have contact with different entities that are not physically embodied, and there's no doubt that there are entities that are not physically embodied. There are lots of guides, those entities, who are also pretending to be somebody else, and the main criterion is what is the quality of the information that you are getting, rather than trying to figure out who they really are, and this also applies to so-called channeling, when this is still quite popular, I suppose, in some places more than in others.

In the States, there's a town called Sedona, which is a New Age kind of, in Arizona, a New Age town where it seems every other inhabitant channels some kind of spirit guide, so I have seen many channeled writings, and a large percentage of them seems not all that relevant to anything. Small percentage, yes, there's something there. A prominent example is the Course in Miracles, which is not for everybody, but it is a high-quality text, scripture, whatever you want to call it, and that was definitely channeled because the person who wrote it had an inner dictation, and she wrote down what she heard.

She did not fully understand what the dictation was saying, and she couldn't live it, the teaching, and yet the book was produced. You may have heard the saying, as far as deceased, people like that, some people think when people at the moment they are deceased, they know everything, but there's a saying that goes, just because they are dead doesn't mean they are smart. So whether you do channeling or you go to somebody who does channeling, who goes, the eyes usually close, and they go, this is so-and-so talking to you.

And whether or not it's genuine, listen to the quality of the teaching, if it is a teaching, the words, is it just, is it fictitious? Could it be information that you have to believe in, and they could say anything, and does it make any difference to your life whether or not what they say is right or wrong? Perhaps they're talking about life on those distant planets and what happens there.

It could be a science fiction novel, as far as you are concerned, but some people are so impressed by the fact that these are channeled, and they go, okay, and then what happens on those planets? Or they identify themselves as big entities from outer space. Who knows?

Ashtar, my name is Ashtar, commander of the galactic fleet. And I have come here to guide you. Okay, so what do you have to say?

And ultimately, if there is a true message that includes angels or angelic presences, it always boils down to find out who you truly are, find your connectedness with the source of all life. All true answers will come from within you. And whatever I say, verify it in your own experience.

Don't believe me. If you cannot verify it in your own experience, then it's not relevant. This is what the true guide would say.

So the great scriptures of the world, we're not, they're not the author. Some are anonymous. There's a difference between spirit guide and teaching that comes from a deep connectedness of the teacher with the source.

In that case, the teacher does not feel that it comes from an entity, but it comes from the source, not. And if an entity gives you information, where do they get that from? From the one consciousness.

So it may well be that this entity is more closer, more deeply connected to that one consciousness, but they are not separate consciousnesses. There's only one consciousness. And every guide, the one consciousness can only speak through any guide, no matter who it is, whether it's an angel or a deceased person or Ashtar, commander of the galactic fleet.

There's only one consciousness that can speak through them. And the essence of their message needs to be, if it is to be true, find out who you are in your essence and then begin to live from the essence of who you are. So use your own insight.

And I believe you will be able to tell whether what they say is helpful or not. At the moment, I can only think of causing miracles that's of a high quality. There was a time when there was Seth, the writings of Seth, the woman channeled an entity called Seth.

Some of that is interesting and has some helpful things. It doesn't necessarily go to the deepest level. Nevertheless, there's some useful information there, but not at the deepest level.

When I speak, I don't feel that some other entity speaks through me, but I do realize that this is not the person speaking. This is consciousness using the mind, this person's mind as a vehicle and consciousness speaks through me. In that sense, what I say is also channeled.

Also, I don't know what I'm going to say next and most of the time I don't know, even before I talk, what words are going to come out of my mouth. And that connectedness is important. That is the connectedness with the source, with being, with stillness, with presence, whatever you want to call it.

And that you have that available to you also, you might not give public talks or you might at some point, and some of you already do, but in whatever area you are active in, to be connected to the source will empower you in whatever area you are active in and will make your work much more helpful to others and more empowered. You become more inspired and you become an inspiration for others, even if you sell tickets, cinema tickets or whatever, it doesn't matter. Everything becomes transformed through your connectedness with source.

But to have that, the vital thing is to be able to access the space of no thought. And another way of calling that space of no thought, which I sometimes express by, because it's an inner space, thinking, thinking, thinking, you remember? And then you go, present.

That's the space of no thought. So in order to have the connectedness with source, you need to open up that space of no thought. Alertness, relaxed alertness.

It seems almost paradoxical, but they go together. Relaxed alertness. And you could also call that becoming comfortable with not knowing, because otherwise your mind always thinks it knows already.

So when you're trying to help somebody, somebody has a problem, often people will immediately try to say something helpful. They think hard. Okay, what can I say to this person who is suffering so much?

I need to say something helpful. And then you search in your mind. And usually it's not that great, and it's not well-received by the person, and it's not that helpful.

They might say, okay, thanks. But they feel it doesn't come from any deep place within yourself. Although your intentions are good.

You're trying hard to say something helpful. But to be really helpful, you need to become comfortable with not knowing anything. And that because that the space of no thought is, you don't know anything in the space of no thought, at least not conceptually.

The miracle is that in the space of no thought, you access the source of all knowledge, but it hasn't reached concepts yet. It's potential of all knowledge, the primary source. So many people are actually afraid of going there because they're afraid of not knowing.

And so they need to keep thinking. So if you can, somebody comes to you, let's assume you have practiced already beforehand, not knowing, for example, by not labeling compulsively everything around you, but actually be present with a tree, with a sky, with another person. And so you almost, another way of putting it, you almost disappear as a person in that state of no thought because in no thought, who are you?

You're simply a presence. You're not a particular person anymore. So it's a voluntary kind of disappearing act where you as the personal entity disappear.

And there's just a space of consciousness where you were before. This sometimes happens to people who suffer greatly. They suffer so much that their ego gets destroyed and eroded.

And what's left is just a presence. And this could happen to you, but probably won't need to happen because you're already voluntarily going there. So life doesn't need to push you into it.

So to become comfortable with not knowing, let's say a person comes to you, is in suffering again, or is close to death, or somebody has just died, or they have just lost everything, whatever it may be. Or of course, it could be pseudo-suffering too. It could just be a suffering totally created by their mind.

No actual situation, just totally mind created. In which case, I naturally always have a little smile on my face. I'm not laughing at them.

I'm just smiling because I realize it's a delusion. But let's assume it's real suffering. Somebody has just died or is approaching death or has an illness.

And then instead of figuring out what can I say, you just go still and you just listen. And it may be that no words come, but an energy, you contributed an energy to that situation. That is helpful.

That is healing. Some healing comes in healing. The deepest healing really comes in that way too.

When you access that, it's not always words that come out of that space. Sometimes a wordless emanation comes out of that space, which some people might call healing. And healing is not necessarily healing of a physical symptom.

There's a deeper level of healing that helps that other person to connect with the deepest source within themselves. And that's really the true, the ultimate and true healing. So when I was many years ago, I was many, many years ago, I was beginning to work with people who came to me for advice and counseling and so on.

And I was always naturally becoming very still. So that's, and it all came out of that. Never knew the answer beforehand.

Just get still and listen. Oh. And I may have told the story before, for a while I thought I was a healer because that was early on after my shift in consciousness when I didn't understand much.

So I was sitting with this woman who had been a Catholic nun for 15 years and then left the order because she hadn't found God yet. And she came to me and I was sitting in that state of not knowing, but being comfortable with not knowing, not being uncomfortable with not knowing because that's not pleasant and then it gets blocked immediately. And she said she could feel the energy suddenly that was flowing and she'd, oh, you are doing healing.

You're a healer. I said, oh, that's what I am. And I thought, oh, so that's what this energy is.

And then for a couple of years, the word must have spread. People called me a healer. And some people came for physical healing and some people had a pain there and the foot was hurting and can you heal my foot?

Well, I don't know. And so I, and then I realized after two years, most people who then came were just interested in getting rid of certain symptoms. They were not interested in a deeper healing.

So I made an announcement says, I am not a healer. So the main thing is what any spirit guide or angelic presence, the most essential information that he, she, it can give you is to get in touch with the source yourself. Because if they are giving, if they are highly evolved beings, they are in touch with the source.

And all their main work then must be to help you to evolve also and be in touch with the source. So these, if there are any presences, angelic or otherwise, they are not independent consciousnesses. They are evolved expressions of the one consciousness.

And whether or not they are evolved expressions or not so involved expression of the one consciousness, you will be able to tell, I believe, when you listen to what they have to say.

[Speaker 3] (1:52:31 - 1:52:33)

Thank you. Thank you so much. Thanks.

[Speaker 2] (1:52:53 - 1:55:06)

Okay, I was born in Somalia and spent first 18 years of my life there. Wonderful country from memory. Really happy, poor, but extremely happy.

Unfortunately, the war happened and my family was scattered around the world. 14 kids, one mom and dad. I ended up in Australia.

I was the lucky one. And 15 years later, I was able to support my family. So I brought one brother who ended up in England as a refugee to Australia.

And beautiful man. He's finished his master's. He's got a wonderful career in Australia and we're happy.

When he finished, I brought the second one and unfortunately, it didn't work out. He, that brother, ended up from Somalia to Syria in refugee camp and had a horrible life. Ended up in Denmark and I got him out of Denmark.

He's a Danish citizen and a good, happy life, but absolutely broke and sold. And got into trouble in university and started fighting. Ended up getting him out of police stations.

And the third time, the university kicked him out. And you know in Australia, to be kicked out of university as an international student, it's almost impossible. Because it's a full paying fee and so that happened and I sent him back to Denmark.

Now I'm ready to help the other members of the family. And two of my closest sisters when we were growing up and I miss them. They don't wanna talk to me because I have different values and beliefs to them and it breaks my heart.

But at the same time, I don't wanna give up my life. I've built here. My friends, my beautiful husband, my son.

And I'm stuck with two lives and I really miss them. I wanted to ask you, what would you do if you were in my position?

[Speaker 1] (1:55:08 - 1:55:10)

So your sisters won't talk to you?

[Speaker 2] (1:55:12 - 1:55:13)

That's right.

[Speaker 1] (1:55:13 - 1:55:14)

They live in?

[Speaker 2] (1:55:15 - 1:55:17)

Birmingham, in England.

[Speaker 1] (1:55:17 - 1:55:22)

Okay. And why is it they don't want to talk to you?

[Speaker 2] (1:55:24 - 1:56:12)

When we were living in Somalia, we were beautiful life, beautiful culture, respectful Muslim. When I came here, I've decided to follow meditation, still keep that peacefulness inside me. And they've decided to take up wearing the veil.

We didn't do that when we were in Somalia. I don't know what happened. But they now feel that I'm not part of them unless I give up my career, which I worked very hard and have the same beliefs as them.

I'm not part of them.

[Speaker 1] (1:56:24 - 3:01:10)

It sometimes happens that members of the same family evolve at very different rates. So a sense of separation can come if one member of the family evolves spiritually much more rapidly than another. And that is something that you cannot do anything about.

You need to accept that your sisters, their viewpoints and their judgments of you arise because of the way in which they have been conditioned by their culture. So this is part of the mental conditioning. There's nothing really personal about it.

They have been conditioned in a certain way. To some extent, you have gone beyond your conditioning because anybody who begins to awaken spiritually goes beyond also simultaneously, begins to go beyond their cultural conditioning. And that applies whether you're from Somalia, whether you're from Australia or whether you're in the United States or anywhere.

If you are not awakening spiritually, you are your behavior, your viewpoints, your opinions, the way in which you judge other people, the way in which you judge other cultures, all that is conditioned by the content of your mind, the culture and family and so on that you grew up in. So you are basically a conditioned entity. And your opinions and viewpoints are not really yours.

They are the product of your conditioning. And so that's the case with your sisters. So sometimes the same thing applies to close friends.

I've had many similar questions of people who had a close friendship with someone. And sometimes it's the case with a husband and wife. Often I've had many, in many cases, one of them, either she or he began to evolve and awaken spiritually.

And a gap suddenly arose between the one that was still totally conditioned and the one that was beginning to awaken spiritually. In some cases, they can still live together. It depends on the nature and degree of the person who is not yet awakening spiritually.

Depends that the ways in which this non-awakened state manifests differs from person to person. Some you can live with, you can awaken, and you know your partner is not, and you can totally surrender to that fact that your partner is not awakening yet. In other cases, it will create a hostility, a growing hostility in your partner.

The ego objects to the other beings becoming so different and changing, they don't understand you anymore. And so, and then a separation happens. With husband and wife, then it sometimes happens that they do their different ways.

In the case of a family member, there's a link that remains. So you cannot just say, we go our different ways. There's always a certain bond between you and your family members.

But the first thing is you ask me what I would do. What I would do is, first of all, understand why. And this is what I've just been talking about.

If you understand, then already it is a helpful thing. If you don't understand why is this happening, but if you understand that these people act out of their, your sisters act out of their conditioning, you have begun, already are in the process of transcending your conditioning. Whether or not they will also awaken or begin to awaken spiritually, we don't know.

So in the meantime, all you can do, or all I could, if I were you, all I could do was continue to recognize the limitation in them. It is, they are conditioned in their responses. Recognize that that is what happens, not to blame them for it, not to feel guilty because you make them angry, because you don't.

It's their conditioning that makes them angry. So you don't feel guilty because you are different from them. I wouldn't, I'm talking now, but I would not feel guilty.

I would simply recognize compassionately what it is that makes them say and do the things they say and do towards you. And you cannot even explain to them. You can't, you, it would be futile to say to them, I know why you're saying that to me because you're totally conditioned.

What? They wouldn't know what you're talking about because they know nothing outside of their conditioning. So compassion arises, compassion and acceptance of a person's limitations.

You can still hold them in your heart and realize there is an essence in them that is lovable and you can continue to be connected to that essence of who they are. If they refuse to talk to you, then you have to accept and surrender that. You can hold them in your meditation.

You can even sometimes look at their photo, look beyond the surface appearance of who they are. And the photo can be a little help to establish the inner connection. Then you don't need the photo anymore to establish the inner connection, feel the inner connection with their innermost selves.

And even if they don't talk to you, that can still be there. And then you send, in the conventional new age language, you send loving energy to them. There's some truth in that.

So there's a loving, still a loving connection even though you don't talk. So recognition to summarize, recognition of why this is happening, accepting your family member's limitations and not judging them. They judge you, of course, because their judgments of you are part of their conditioning, but you don't need to judge them.

You simply see that this is a limitation of their state of consciousness at this present time. They will awaken too. In time, eventually, this lifetime or the next.

So then you can begin to feel peaceful about it so that it does not become a source of suffering, continuous source of suffering at the back of your mind. So if you can be in a loving relationship, even though you might not meet them much anymore or at all, you can stay in a state of love towards them, compassionately accept their limitations, and then see what happens. Sometimes in that way, a healing does happen.

It may be that at some point there's a crack in their conditioning and they're suddenly able to accept you, who you are for who you are now, but your happiness or fulfillment does not depend on any other human's acceptance of who you are. That would be a deluded thought. If you think you can only be happy if these people accept and understand you.

Some people have that with their parents. So they say, my dad, my father, they don't understand me at all. It's terrible, terrible.

I'm trying to explain what I add. Of course they cannot understand you. It's beyond their comprehension if you have awakened spiritually and they haven't.

So compassionately accept that they cannot understand you instead of trying to explain yourself to them, just be there in a loving way with them when you meet for Christmas or Thanksgiving and you hear all the judgments coming at you from them. You should have, why don't you look where it's taken you, look at your sister, she married a millionaire and you are into that weird kind of meditation stuff that's not getting you anywhere. Whatever judgments come, say, okay, I know that this is what you think and feel and I think and feel differently, that's all.

So you don't need to justify accepting people's limitations and suddenly realizing whether or not your father, your mother, your sister, your brother, or anybody else close to you accepts you for who you are is really not, you become free of the need to be accepted, but you can nevertheless have a deeper connection. Keep that deeper connection and connectedness with them. That's what I would do.

There's quite a, there's been some sports people who were apparently greatly helped by this teaching and more recently, oh, I forgot to contact her. I was going to contact her. She got in the Winter Olympics, she got the gold medal in, what was it?

Snowboarding. Snowboarding, it has another name. It's a new discipline in the Winter Olympics.

The half, what? Half pipe? I don't know, but anyway, it's a kind of snowboarding.

They go up on this thing and they go into the air and turn and go around and then finally they land. It's an amazing thing. And she was an American young woman and she got the gold medal.

And then she said what helped her greatly was the power of now reading that and she traveled with that book. And that's always wonderful to see. And there've been other cases where sports people reported being helped greatly by simply becoming present in what they do.

That's no matter what you do, it will help greatly to do it better or to stop doing it. So presence will improve what you do or will take you away from what you're doing. You can't know that beforehand.

As for let's see what happens to the tobacco company employees. There's a movie about, there was a book written many years ago by Dan Millman called Peaceful Warrior. And Dan Millman was also, he was a gymnast and I believe he also was at the Olympics years ago.

And he wrote a book about learning to be more present and then performing better and changing his life at the same time. It's partly fact and it's a mixture of fact and fiction. So there is a fictitious character but it's all based on his life.

And they made a movie out of that. It's also called Peaceful Warrior, which unfortunately was not successful. The critics didn't like it, but I did.

And if you get a chance to see it, I would recommend that you watch it. Some, because there are moments in that movie where they really get the viewer to identify with the protagonist who is learning to find what the meaning of presence. So there were wonderful instances in the movie when the protagonist suddenly becomes present and how it is done with a camera.

It's beautiful. So if you can watch it, Peaceful Warrior. Welcome to another live meditation.

If you think that we are doing something here, doing a meditation that can become a big obstacle to actually entering the state of meditation, the notion that you're doing something. One minute you're doing, you're answering the emails and then you are putting the dishes away and then you're doing the meditation. And every doing has a certain aim.

You're doing in order to get it done, get it over with, achieve the goal. So in doing involves time. Can't do anything without time.

And the ordinary state of consciousness is always involved in time, inseparable from time. There's a deeper dimension within you that could be called timeless. But as long as you're doing something to get there, that becomes a paradox.

You can't use time to get to the timeless because you don't need to get to the timeless. It's already there in you. You just need to notice that it's there.

So that removes all sense of doing. All you need to do, so to speak, it's not a doing. It's a notice right now that there's a deeper dimension in you, deeper than the physical, that which you perceive through your senses, deeper than thinking, deeper than the emotions, emotional layers.

Where is it? I still can't feel it. Somebody thinks.

Become aware that you are. Become aware of the beingness of yourself. Aware of your own presence.

Thinking doesn't help you here. It actually prevents you from dropping down into the core of your being. So you can allow yourself to let go of thinking or trying to figure something out.

Become aware that right now you are conscious. Right now you are aware. And in the gap between two thoughts, there's a space or a spaciousness.

And in that spaciousness, in that space, you are aware, you are conscious without any particular content. You are conscious of consciousness, that which is prior to all content, but not separate from, deeper than all content, but not separate from all the content of your mind. Whatever you are aware of, sense perceptions, thinking, emotions, all these things you are aware of, in many cases, not just aware of, identified with, because you derive your sense of self from those things.

I have situations which you are aware of through your sense perceptions, plus mental interpretations, plus emotional reflections. That makes up the content of your consciousness. And that makes up what you call your life.

That's my life. And you try to figure out your life by thinking about your life. There is a place for that too, yes.

If that's all there is to your life, however, then you are, to use one of my favorite analogies, you are like a wave or ripple on the surface of the ocean who does not realize that it is not only a wave or ripple on the surface of the ocean, being surrounded by other waves or ripples, but this wave or ripple does not realize that it is also, and more fundamentally, the entire ocean. And that this wave or ripple is only temporarily a manifestation of the entire ocean. Hmm.

Somebody once said, I believe it was Alan Watts, said something like, you are something that the universe is doing in the same way that the wave is something that the ocean is doing. So you are something that the universe is doing or being. And if you can realize that rather than just thinking, oh, that's an interesting idea.

Let me think about that. I'm something that the universe is doing in the same way that the wave is something that the ocean is doing. You can start thinking about it.

That's one way you might come up with a few more related ideas. Or the mind might say, well, this may be true or may not be true. Or the mind might say, that doesn't make sense to me.

Or I have no idea what he's talking about. Now, like with all statements that point to a spiritual dimension, they are just pointers. And they're to be used as pointers, signposts.

So if you can get even just a little taste or a glimpse experientially of what this means, and perhaps you can do it by visualizing just yourself as a wave or ripple on the surface of the universe, the surface of the ocean, just to keep the analogy. And allow yourself to drop into the core of your being in the space between two thoughts and realize your essential beingness. I am no particular content as such, but you feel connected to something limitless, timeless, vast, deep.

You're not only connected with it, you are an extension of it, an expression of it, inseparable from it. You have to have the courage in order to experience that, to realize that, the courage to enter the realm of not knowing anything and of not being anybody in particular. That's the most beautiful experience, if you want to call it that.

It's deeper than experience. The most beautiful realization, the most liberating realization, that you are not just this little person, which is just like a brief, momentary spark that appears and then disappears. Oh, that was you, that was me.

So every human being, a brief, momentary spark of light is born and dies, so to speak, goes. Oh, that was it. Yes.

And all over the planet, new sparks are born of consciousness, beings, human beings. Right now, at this very moment, new sparks are rising, right now. They're all going, choop, choop, choop, choop, choop, choop.

And right now, other sparks are extinguished, choop, choop, choop, choop, choop, choop. And each little spark has a name attached to it. That gives the impression that there's something permanent there.

Well, that spark originates in the central fire, the central consciousness. Each spark is a manifestation of that and returns there. So the most liberating thing is for you to become aware that there's more to you than the person, that you are connected with that depth within yourself.

And that is the universe, not just the sense-perceived universe and galaxies and so on, but more essentially something deeper that underlies the sense-perceived universe. But as I said, you need to have the courage to step into the unknown, become comfortable with not knowing anything. Don't worry, all the things that you know, when you need them, you can still use.

But to know who you are, essentially, you need to become comfortable with not knowing anything, become comfortable with not knowing who you are conceptually, become comfortable with being ignorant, so to speak. And then something that cannot be known emerges. You can't know it because it's the source of all knowledge, where all knowing and all knowledge originates.

That's you cannot know it, but it knows itself through you. With that realization, one could say that not only you become deeper, you deepen. The universe deepens.

The universe has two movements. It expands in two directions. That's one way of putting it.

There are other ways of putting it. It expands externally into multiplicity and greater complexity and differentiation. If you look at life on the planet, it's involved in an explosive expansion from mineral life to vegetable life, to animal life, to human life, all different levels of consciousness, becoming more and more differentiated, more complex, more interesting.

Life on the planet here is certainly more interesting than it was a billion years ago. So it expands into form, the creation of form. The universe delights in creating forms, life forms, experiences, even drama.

Otherwise there wouldn't be drama. The universe also wants to expand, so to speak, internally. So there's a corresponding movement into yourself.

There's more depths to you. That's the inner expansion, one could say, although you might choose to use a completely different word for that. There's the outer.

And then there's the inner deepening of the universe. So if you have this courage to go into the unknown by relinquishing thought when it's not needed, taking thought up again, of course, when you want it, it's a wonderful, wonderful tool the universe created. But connect with the depths within yourself, the primordial, undifferentiated, unconditioned, timeless consciousness that underlies the entire universe.

And then you can begin to realize the truth of this statement. The universe, I am something that the universe is doing. The unconditioned intelligence can then act through you.

And you become co-creator. Then being and doing come together in your life, which means you no longer compulsively do things, compulsively go into doing and doing and doing. Part of that is thinking, thinking, thinking, an addiction, must think, think, think.

You no longer compulsively do. There's the ability to just be in that timeless moment, to appreciate this moment, the depths of it, the aliveness of it, within and without, but not having separate compartments anymore in your life of this is my spiritual time, don't disturb me, but to bring the two together. So when you're engaged in doing and thinking, the unconditioned consciousness can operate through you.

It can do and inspire you, inspire your thinking, your activities, empower, inspire, whatever it is that you do. So ultimately, you don't have a separate existence. It's an illusion.

You're an expression of the totality of the one consciousness, every human, every life form, everything is an expression of the one underlying consciousness. That's your essential identity. So by inviting that spaciousness, inner spaciousness, the gap between two thoughts into your life, dropping into that spaciousness, the core of who you are, the beingness of you, you realize that you are the entire universe, not the multiplicity of it, you're not that which underlies the multiplicity of it.

And that's called self-realization. So the spiritual awakening is really that, it's a liberation from a limited, ultimately false sense of self, of who you are. And there's such freedom in that, suddenly you're, oh, many desires, all the things that occupy your mind, the heaviness of your life, it's all to do with the limited sense of who you are.

So that's, of course, presence is another word for that state of realization. You realize that you are the presence, the consciousness, the conscious presence. And there's a joy in that realization, a peace, but an alive peace, not a dead, deadened, deadening peace, an alive peace.

So the real happiness, if you even want to use that word, originates within you. This comes from the realization of who you are. And it's not caused by external circumstances.

And that's why often people have realized it when their life circumstances were very limiting or unpleasant, people have realized it in a prison cell, in a hospital bed, in the face of great loss, disaster, imminent death, and suddenly they dropped into the core of their being. One expression for that is the ego died. The false sense of self died.

It became too painful to sustain the false sense of self. It could not sustain itself any longer. That's a possibility of grace to use a traditional word.

That's the grace that's hiding behind every disaster, the possibility of it. And the acceleration comes when a human being voluntarily disidentifies from who they are on the level of form and realizes who they are in the depths of your being. And that realization is not conceptual.

You don't know anything, but you can, we don't even have a word to describe it. We can, you can sense it, be it. So when you voluntarily enter that dimension of depth within yourself, that's a great acceleration in consciousness.

Otherwise, life would eventually force you to go there through disaster, suffering, and so on, loss. And this is possible for humans now because humanity as a whole has already gone through enormous suffering over many millennia, but many still need to go that way. They're not ready to even hear this.

These words would be still meaningless to many humans on the planet, and that's okay. So for the rest of your incarnation here, the practice is to bring, yes, to drop into being and when you do, to bring the being dimension into the doing so that there's no loss of connectedness with being. So there's the pieces in the background and then you act.

The doing becomes infused with a sense of being, which means there's no stress in the doing anymore, but there can be enormous effectiveness when you're connected with a deeper dimension within yourself because it then acts through you, not the little me that needs this and that. It acts through you. Some people connected with it almost accidentally and they became, they are regarded as the great artists, composers, the scientists, those who had the deep, sudden insights.

They almost accidentally or accidentally connected with that dimension and it, all those things that could be considered sublime creations of human beings are humans who momentarily were able to drop into that unconditioned consciousness and it then expressed itself through the human mind and gave birth to enormous creativity. So the expression that I use, getting lost in doing, that's still the destiny of many humans. They are lost in their minds, identified with every thought.

And then of course that gives rise to activities and then they're lost in the activities. What's next? No, this, this, think.

Totally uncentered, disconnected. Every little thing has the power to upset them. Oh no, not this.

What's going to happen next? Oh no. So the practice is being and doing as one.

And sometimes being predominates and then you, it's not, you don't need to do continuously. Sometimes you just love being out in nature or sitting in your room or traveling while you're traveling. Feel the beingness of yourself and contemplate the world around you.

And it's amazing. And then doing can predominate. Suddenly you need to really focus on that, but there can still be a connectedness with the stillness in the background, the deeper dimension.

That's the main, that's the one thing that matters absolutely to have that. Everything is maybe important, but it's all relatively important. And as Jesus said to this woman who was very concerned with doing, with activities, and her sister, I believe, Mary, was only concerned with being.

She was listening to the spiritual teacher. And Martha, the active, the doing one, said to Mary, come on, you've got so many things to do. Come on, we need to get on with it.

We've got food to prepare. We've got to do this and that. And Jesus said, well, Mary has chosen the one thing that really, that matters.

He doesn't say, he didn't say you shouldn't be doing anything anymore. Just wanted to point to what the very foundation for everything is, the being dimension, to be aware of that, because that's why that is the one thing that matters. And everything in your life may be important, as I said before, whether you are wealthy or poor, or whether you have a good relationship or bad relationships, whether you're healthy or not healthy, or where you live, whether you live in a home as in a tent, or live in a mansion, these things are relatively important, but not absolutely important.

There's only one thing that is of absolute importance.

[Speaker 4] (3:01:13 - 3:01:44)

And this is it. Thanks.

[Speaker 1] (3:02:48 - 3:12:10)

Welcome to our retreat. You made it. You're here despite everything.

And if you're here, and if you're still here a week from now, that means that you are already undergoing a transformation of consciousness. I'm saying, if you're still here a week from now, because it's possible that one or two people could be here for ego reasons, but they wouldn't be able to stand it, not for a whole week. It would become unbearable.

Wouldn't be able to stand the stillness and most of all, wouldn't be able to stand yourself because whoever is still under the control of ego is running always somewhere else. Is not at ease with who they are, where they are and what is. Never at ease.

And so they won't be at ease here either. If the pattern inside your head is to be ill at ease, how could you be at ease here? And very quickly you would find reasons to justify to yourself and others your state of not being at ease.

If you're looking for excuses for not being at ease in the now, the only place there is, you can always find them wherever you go. You could say, I didn't come here for bad weather. Not knowing that by attaching that label, that thought, you've taken the weather out of the totality because within the totality, the so-called bad weather, which isn't bad at all, is inseparable from the beauty that surrounds you here.

It feeds it. But mind takes it out of the totality and takes it out and separates one little fragment and calls it something, unaware that it is part of the totality. And weather is only a tiny example of that.

You take anything that happens to you, any condition that arises is part of the totality. And when you judge it, call it this or that, and even call it good. Even good weather.

Why call it anything? It is as it is. If you call it good, then you must have bad weather because you can't have good weather without bad weather because otherwise the word good doesn't make sense anymore.

And I'm only taking weather as a small example. So these are conditions that arise continuously. If you want to use them, if the mind, the egoic mind, wants to use them for its own purposes, which is to be right, to make something or someone wrong, to enhance your sense of self through resisting and complaining, you can always find excuses, reasons, but they are never the true reasons.

There's a beautiful lesson in the Course in Miracles that says, I'm never upset for the reason I think. I am never upset for the reason I think. So that, of course, means to be upset is part of the structure of the egoic mind.

You're not in touch with the depth of who you are the essence of your being. You're not in touch with the depth of the present moment, which is inseparable from the depth of who you are. And that's why you're upset.

And then little things happen and you go, then that permanent state of being upset comes out. It's just waiting to say, ah, that's why I'm upset. Now I know why I'm so unhappy.

There's a bug in my bed. So these are, now I'm not saying the fact that you are already, you're here because you are undergoing a transformation of consciousness does not necessarily mean that you are entirely free, entirely free yet of those mind structures, egoic structures, because your ability to be rooted within the depths of being, which is the depths of yourself and the depths of the present moment, inseparable, your ability to be, to dwell within yourself, to rest within your very being, that's the only thing that could redeem you from the state of being upset, unhappy, fearful, that may still, in some of you, occasionally become obscured by mind waves and by the old structures, which still have a certain momentum within you. They are collective human mind structures that has been around for a long time.

And so you may find yourself occasionally during this week that we are here together, you may find yourself, or you may already have found yourself in the short time that you have been here, becoming upset with this, that, or the other. And that's nothing personal. You don't need to feel, oh, he caught me, I got him, it's nothing personal.

And it is quite possible that from time to time, you will find yourself entering the state, I'm using that word that is used in the course in miracles, you're upset one way or another, fearful, anxious, complaining, sad, doubting. Emotions and mind waves come and say, this is, I feel that because of this, this is doing this because of that. And then perhaps you'll remember, I'm never upset for the reason I think.

Oh, and then, that's a little pointer. It works like a bell.

[Speaker 4] (3:12:11 - 3:12:13)

Ding. And.

[Speaker 1] (3:12:16 - 3:22:25)

And so sometimes the bell that I occasionally use is a spiritual alarm clock. It says, step out of your state of being identical and identified with thinking and emotions. Step out and be present and see your thoughts and emotions.

That's the spiritual alarm clock because awakening means to awaken out of the old mental emotional patterns. And so a bell can fulfill that function. That's why in some monasteries, they use it quite a lot.

Or a stick that the master in a Zen monastery uses to hit you, that can work too. Or a little pointer like, I'm never upset for the reason I think. And then you suddenly, that awakens you out of your identification with a reaction, the mental emotional reaction that was ego, that was me.

And then you see it. And then you see the situation isn't really that important. And you see the real reason why you're upset is you've lost touch with yourself.

Or another way of putting it, you've lost touch with the present moment. You're not fully aligned internally with what is now. So, and not being aligned internally with whatever form this moment takes means not being in touch with life.

Because at this moment, life is taking this form. It's not going to last, forms never last. But at this moment, life is taking this form.

To be aligned with a deeper life that is beyond form, you need to be first of all aligned with the form that life takes. Instead of rejecting the form and saying, I'm looking for the real life, but not this. So that's a little secret.

And that's something to be particularly practiced, to be aware of here, to be aligned, to be in touch with being who you are or what you are beyond the conditioned entity, conditioned by the past, mentally, emotional conditioning, a bundle of mental, emotional conditioning. That's to most people, that's who they think they are. They speak out of that.

They react out of that. They interact and so on, and are upset a lot of the time out of that. So to be aligned with who you are beyond that, the unconditioned, the being that you are, that which is so hard to put into words, because words come from this world of forms.

And we are now pointing towards the formless dimension in yourself, not the form, not the physical form, and certainly not the psychological form of me. It's a temporary formation, nothing wrong with it. It's a temporary formation like a cloud or a snowflake.

No human is the same on the planet. And they say, I mean, they look at snowflakes through the microscope. Not one snowflake is the same as any other snowflake, and yet it only survives for a short time.

So to be aligned with who you are, and that's the only thing that can free you from the state of being unhappy, which is structural, not caused ultimately by conditions, because I have met people in the worst of conditions, physical or otherwise, who were absolutely at peace inside. So it's not that. Life.

Jesus said, I want you to have life, and I want you to have it more abundantly. True, abundant life, which is not to do with quantities, forms of life, but life itself. To be in touch with the life that you are, which is one with the life that is at the heart of the universe.

You could also call it God, if the word had not been misused so much. To enter life, you have to first of all enter, and life by life we mean here, not a form of life, but the formless, timeless one life of which you are a temporary expression. To know that, that is the purpose of your being here, that is the purpose of the universe.

It wants to know itself through you. To know that one life that you are, a condition for that is not being at odds with the forms of life, the form that life takes at this moment, because that's the only place where life can take form. So to bring an inner alignment to whatever condition arises at this moment, either an external condition or an internal condition.

Oh, this is how it is. Doesn't mean you can't take action. If you're in bed cold, your pajama isn't thick enough, you thought you were coming to a warmer climate.

Well, if you arrived, by the way, if you arrived this evening, you'll be surprised how hot it is tomorrow morning. That's how it seems to go every day. Of course, you can ask for a blanket.

You can say, okay, I need to accept this moment. I'm not going to ask for a blanket. If there's something you can change, let's you take a step.

But the action that you take already arises out of an inner alignment, not out of being upset. Because if you run to the reception or wherever you go and you're already upset because the egoic entity used the fact that you were not warm enough in your bed or in your tent, used that as another justification for being upset, just its normal condition, came up again and said, this is why. Of course it's not.

It's only a blanket. Or it's only a little cold. And then you go, and then they will either tell you, yes, here it is, or they tell you, no, we've run out of blankets.

There are too many people here. We don't have that many blankets. And then you go, oh.

Now you can see the egoic entity would have another reason for being even more upset. And in that, strengthen its sense of self, which is a total illusion. Its illusory sense of me gets strengthened through the upset.

And then it runs and you talk to your next one. You know what? They don't even have enough blankets.

And then perhaps at that moment, if you remember, I'm never upset for the reason I think. And of course, I'm never upset for the reason I think means I'm upset because I've lost the present moment. I'm not aligned with the form that this moment takes.

That's all. If I were aligned internally, if I said, that's how it is, I've taken action that didn't work, and then I can ask somebody else about some blankets, or find some other means of covering myself, or I find nothing and I'm simply shiver in bed. And that is not that bad either.

If you lived in a Zen monastery, you would shiver for years. And they can't complain.

[Speaker 4] (3:22:25 - 3:22:39)

Well, they can not only in the head, but they can't go to the master and complain.

[Speaker 1] (3:22:39 - 3:40:11)

You idiot, go out. And he's not insulting, he's hoping to break your mind identification. Sometimes it works, but most of the time it doesn't.

So you work with whatever arises. That's the raw material for our retreat. Whatever condition arises, external or internal.

And so if you couldn't find the blister just to stay for one moment with that situation, you then spend a night feeling a little cold. And then that's a good opportunity for not mentally labeling it and not even saying I'm cold, cold. That makes it far worse.

And you're feeling upset and in that you feel good. The ego feels good about that. The strange thing is that the ego, what is bad for the organism, being upset the body doesn't like it, it interferes with the flow of energy through the body.

But to the ego, it's great to be upset. The more upset, the stronger I feel. And so whatever condition arises is as it is at this moment.

Nobody could argue with that except the ego. Whatever arises at this moment is as it is. And if you can recognize that fact, suddenly life becomes very simple because it's the simplicity of the present moment which you can always deal with.

It's always really quite simple. Either you take action or you let it be. If action is necessary or possible, action happens.

But it doesn't arise anymore out of the ego which really is looking to enhance itself through the action to make itself right and somebody else wrong. If action is possible or necessary, it happens. If no action is possible, there's a simple beautiful acceptance of this moment as it is.

And that is the inner alignment with this moment. So confusion leaves you because confusion is to do with being out of the moment and trying to work something out about your past and your future and how they two hang together. How can I make it work, my life story?

And I've got, okay, then you're like, I may have 20 years left and I've got to make it work. And you neglect the primary where life is found, the present moment. So people are trying to make their life work or find their life purpose in terms of future.

Where is my life purpose? And then automatically you look to the future for your life purpose. That is your secondary life purpose.

The future is your life purpose to do with this temporary form, whatever function this form fulfills. And yes, that also exists. It has its dimension also.

But primary is the purpose of, it is your purpose to be internally one with life. And that can only be found in the present moment. And if you miss that, because you're looking for some greater purpose than this, you've missed the primary, the very foundation of your life, this moment, and looking for some greater life in some future moment, which doesn't exist except as a thought.

So we are here to go deeper into this. It is the depths, it's to do with depths. That's why we may briefly touch upon what you do externally with your life.

Of course, that also, that is a dimension that is a temporary one, due as form. But nothing, it is nothing compared to the importance of being one with who you are in the depths of your being. What purpose could you possibly find if you're not one, if you're looking to the future to find that state of being one with who you are?

Who you are, not who you will be. The one with being, life, God, the now is the portal. But that's the formless dimension, but you cannot reach the formless dimension.

I'm saying it again, I will repeat it many times. You cannot be aligned with the formless eternal life that you are as long as you reject or resist or are at odds with the form that life takes at this moment. Then the form that life takes as your life situation or as a condition that arises becomes a wall, a big obstacle.

You have made it into it, it isn't, but you make then whatever situation or condition arises in your life into, and you look upon it as an obstacle, like a, oh no, this is not what I want, oh no, oh no. Something, oh no, not this again, that's not supposed to happen, that shouldn't happen. He shouldn't do that, they shouldn't, I shouldn't.

Oh no, and so you create, it's that which separates yours, you're looking, there are people who are looking for spiritual enlightenment away from what is here, they're in some, and these are people who love abstract, some abstract mental constructs about what enlightenment is and they study it for years, and then you get divisions, you can divide in 15 this and 25 that and 100 this and oh. So the form that is the condition, the form of this moment that this moment takes, if you're internally aligned, it becomes an opening. The worse it is, the wider the opening really.

So we work with that these days that we are here, bringing particular alertness, particular attention to whatever arises outside or inside. Notice your reactions, see if you can be in a state of immediate oneness with the form that life takes at this moment, immediate inner oneness. Whenever you are in immediate inner oneness, you're already a master, spiritual master.

Maybe only for that minute, maybe the next minute you're no longer at one, but that's fine. You don't need to be a master for the rest of your life, it's enough to be master of the present moment because that's all there is. Otherwise the mind comes in and says, but yeah, but I'm not going to able to sustain this for the, so the mastery of life doesn't mean that you exert total control over everything and everybody.

Mastery means to be one with the totality, the total, the cosmos, the Tao, the flow of the universe. It's all one, it's all interconnected, the web of the one world, universe, reality. To be one with that, that's being a master.

One, so master is master of the present moment, that's all. And suddenly life becomes, is very simple. The present moment is primary in your life at any moment and whenever you forget that, you become upset.

And so you're not upset for the reason you think, you're upset because you forgot what really matters. That's all. And so it's interesting to see how many times this week you forget what really matters.

Forget yourself, forget being, forget the present moment. And the moment you realize that you forgot the present moment, you forgot what really matters. The moment you realize that, you haven't forgotten.

It's only when you don't know it, then you have truly forgotten it. Because then you're immersed in the reaction, in the old mental emotional pattern. That means you've truly forgotten and that means you're truly asleep, spiritually speaking, you're asleep.

And then you need a stronger dose, perhaps, of a stronger alarm clock. But here, of course, there are probably many because we meet here quite often and it'll be hard to stay asleep here if you're deadlocked and your door's off, that's another matter. Externally, what you do here, there is more freedom on this retreat than on some other retreats that you may have attended.

If you have been on other retreats, not our retreats, but some other, there's some retreats, meditation retreats that are like boot camps where you have to, you sit for 10 hours a day and you meditate and then you walk and you can't even look at anybody. And I'm not saying that's bad, that could be great too. It's just, this is different, forms are different, that's all, that could take you into being too.

And here, the form is somewhat different. And to some extent, it is up to you whether on the external level, you want to have a retreat and refrain from speaking, in which case, whenever anybody approaches you, you could go and then they know that you want to be on a silent retreat. I would also like to, at some point, for probably two or three days, we will endeavor to be silent together for a whole day or two days, whatever it may be.

But in addition to that, you may want to, those who want it can be silent all the time. There are some silent tables set aside in the restaurant. Or you can reduce your amount of verbal exchange to a minimum and not engage in a lot of chit-chat.

But that's up to you, I'm not saying you should. Or you can engage in normal chit-chat and still be present and observe the chit-chat coming out of your mouth. There it goes.

If you are one of those people who want to continue to chit-chat, that's fine. But something that will help you observe the chit-chatting entity, it helps to be, while you chit-chat or listen to somebody else chit-chatting, to be in your body, to feel the inner, the aliveness in your body while you sit there and chit-chat. That's not immediately easy because what tends to happen is the stream of chit-chatting draws all your attention in and the old stories come out.

And you can actually see how they pull you along, they pull your consciousness. Your consciousness is pulled into these words and the words go, one string of strings of words like coming out of you like some long... LAUGHTER And there's no end, it's like a magician.

And as that happens, can you be in the body or at least can you feel your hands, the aliveness in your hands while you talk? You are not really talking, it's the mind is talking. Can you feel the aliveness in your hands?

Or when you listen to the other person chit-chatting, can you feel the energy in your body? And while you listen, can you at least listen to the other person without engaging in preparatory chit-chat? LAUGHTER What you're going to say next?

Or some clever remark that's waiting on the tip of your tongue. So to be in the body, and that's useful also for those who decide to have more of a monastic retreat and refrain from speaking altogether because that doesn't help you, if that thing up here is continuously busy and perhaps even more busy than it would be if you were talking to people normally because it gets so frustrated not being able to talk. And then it talks even more in the head.

LAUGHTER And so being in the body is important no matter whether you're having a social retreat or a monastic retreat. Being rooted here means that some of the attention goes away from... The mind hasn't got all that much attention any more.

The attention is in the body. And it's beautiful to rest, to have attention in here. While you do things, especially while you listen to others, or if you are having a silent retreat and you're sitting at a silent table, you can hear other people talking.

And can you be the silent listener while others are talking? Or is somebody else talking in you and saying, Look at these people. They're supposed to be on a spiritual retreat and they're talking, not me.

[Speaker 4] (3:40:13 - 3:40:36)

LAUGHTER Ego can use all kinds of disguises and forms.

[Speaker 1] (3:40:36 - 7:56:39)

And when you think you got rid of ego in one form, it appears in another. So it's essential to watch. Be there.

Watch. Be alert. So it's up to you then what kind of a retreat you want to have.

But we meet here. That's a given. Observe doubts that come into your mind, because mind is doubt.

If it's not doubt, it's some kind of obsession, or so-called conviction. It's probably worse than doubt. This absolute conviction that this is how it is.

And I've had it for 20 years and this is how it is. Or it goes, well, what if... But on the other hand, I shouldn't have come here, should I?

Yes, no... Oh, that reminds me of the presidential... These two seem to embody...

They say one was going from one to the other and the other has an absolute conviction. That's a given. Two forms of mind that the mind can take.

So doubt may come in that perhaps you shouldn't have come here. Often people tell me that on the second or third day they start thinking of leaving. The mind gets suddenly very active.

Nothing is happening here. And the same people often tell me, they haven't left, but they tell me towards the end of the retreat the mind comes in and absolutely says, I don't want to leave here. So you can observe that also.

That's a wonderful thing, to be there as the observer of your mind, what it does, what it says, its reactions. Because you're also observing the ego. Ego is no more than mind, mental, emotional forms that you have identified with, that carry a sense of self.

That's all. Being in the body, I recommend it tonight, when you go to bed. If you're traveling with a friend or a partner, once you lie down, at least then stop talking.

And going to sleep, lying flat on your back first, and enter the inner energy field of your body. And of course you will still listen, and you will listen much more acutely to the noises, the night insects, the beautiful sounds. And you will be able to listen to all that, because as you enter the body, the mind, the mental noise, will gradually calm down, or dissolve completely.

And only then can you truly listen. We'll be talking about that more. So you lie on your back, hands either on your legs or by your side, and you lie in the energy field of your body.

And so the compulsive thinking subsides, the thinking entity subsides, and there's simply spacious aliveness. And go to sleep from there. Don't go to sleep from mental noise.

You're lucky here that there's no television, so you can't watch the latest talk show, or whatever it is. There's no magazines, at least I haven't seen any. If you brought them, put them away.

Newspapers, put them away. Because these are addictive things to the mind, which is always searching for more, more stimulus, more of this to get its teeth into. And so you may find, not only tonight, but also in the next few days, certain symptoms of withdrawal symptoms.

Because the mind is addictive. The mind, everybody's mind is an addict. And so even if you're not addicted to drugs, it's still an addict.

And if you can't sing, even if you don't watch TV and read papers, ever, the mind is still addicted, and its main addiction is thinking. I've got to think. But there's nothing to think about.

You're in bed in this beautiful place. What is there to think about? What could you add to this moment by thinking about some other moment?

You can only obscure the moment by thinking about something else. So this is another aspect. We won't go into this this evening.

It's transcending having to think. And if you achieve nothing else in your incarnation here, your life is fulfilled. Consciousness has flowered.

No matter whether the world tells you that you are important or not, consciousness has flowered. And if you wake up in the middle of the night, and soon after you wake up, usually the mind starts saying something. It will be about past or future or complaining or whatever.

And then simply go back into the body. Use it. Don't say, Oh, I should be asleep.

No, you're not asleep. Or say, I can't sleep. I'm going to be tired.

I'm going to fall asleep tomorrow in the session. We don't know what you're going to fall asleep. You're not asleep.

No, that's all you know. And that is what you are internally aligned with. I'm not asleep.

Okay. And then you go into the body. And it's beautiful not being asleep in the body.

You're in the body then. And then not being asleep is not a problem. In fact, it's very enjoyable.

And say, Oh, this is good. Little fragments of thoughts may come in. This is good.

It feels good. Alive. And then you listen.

Subtle noises. Beautiful. And you feel an intense aliveness within.

And then perhaps at some point, you will go back to sleep. And in the morning, fortunately there's no radio here to switch on. Can't listen to the news.

Don't know what's going on. It's always the same anyway. I listen to it too.

But I know it's always the same. Just not in the morning though. The first, keep that freshness.

As you wake up, that freshness. Keep it fresh. And instead of going immediately into thinking, go back into the body before you get up.

Just five or ten minutes. And then you get up. That's a good start.

It was a good end to the day. And it's a good start to the next day. So that you don't go into sleep from thought.

And you do not go from sleep immediately into thought. You have a space. And then remember the next, when you interact with people, be in the body as much as you can while you interact.

So that you feel. And if you can't be in the body, feel just the hands. Be there in here while you listen.

If you can't feel the whole body. So that is important. No matter whether you are quiet or whether you talk on the retreat.

I will address this again when we have our silent days. Something else that you may want to do. There's one sense that's a little bit neglected.

The primary senses for human beings are visual and auditory. Smelling. At different times of the day, the air smells different here.

And so you can take, also as you get up, you put your head out of the window or the door. Or you walk out of here. Or you walk out of the restaurant.

Always take, smell the air and see the fragrance. Smell that. Always subtly different.

But there's more here than the smell. Notice that in the moment of smelling the air, there's no thought. Because if you were thinking, you couldn't smell it.

In the moment of smelling the air, there's no thought and there's an intense sense of aliveness. Then afterwards, after that smell, perhaps thought comes in. And then you notice that.

But a great thing is if you can notice, and that perhaps you've been doing for years, perhaps if you're not totally identified with the mental noise, you have occasionally, when you're out in nature, you've taken a deep breath and said, this is good. But you didn't say this is good while you were smelling, it came afterwards. While you are conscious of that, there's no thought.

And there's more to it than that, but I'll leave it at that right now. So use that. Senses will become very important this week as we practice presence.

Senses will become sharpened as more awareness flows into all the senses. We'll address that tomorrow. But we already have enough for tonight and the night and tomorrow morning.

Remember, the slightest upset, for whatever reason, I'm never upset for the reason I think, I lost the present moment. I lost the internal alignment with the present moment. And at that moment of realization, the possibility of being aligned with the present moment is there.

It is your decision or your choice. Do I want to continue being out of alignment and feel upset? And then perhaps the ego says, oh yeah, I'd love to feel even more upset.

Now you see, that's a funny question because when you make it conscious, you can see that it's insane. And so the pattern will collapse when you make it conscious and if you ask yourself, is this what I want? Do I want to continue to be upset about this or am I enjoying feeling upset about this?

Or is it possible now that I've realized I'm out of alignment, I can choose to say yes to what is and be in alignment with what is. It's your choice then. Choice comes in at that moment.

The universe chooses through you to be conscious. And if your mind said, oh, I'd love to carry on being upset, you would start laughing. It doesn't work anymore because you've made it conscious.

No matter how hard you try, you can't be upset anymore. That's no fun anymore, says the ego. Life just isn't fun anymore.

Notice your left leg is moving. That's an emotion. Be aware of it.

I'm not saying stop it. Just watch it. And you're not the only one.

I always see people whose leg or arm moves slightly. It is an emotion in the body. All you need to do is be conscious of it and suddenly it will stop.

It's something that is... You're not fully in here yet. There's something.

Be conscious. Watch it. And then it stops by itself.

If your attention is in here, it stops. If your attention is in here, the body goes... Get in here.

Be in here. Your consciousness has to go in here. And then the body becomes a portal.

And eventually you transcend body, but first you go in here. It's essential to leave that, to get out of that while you're here. Not to become unconscious, but to transcend that, the thinker.

And then there's not only the thinker, there's the emotional field that accompanies the thinker, that's been there for years. There's the pain body that's been there, not just your pain body, humanity's pain body that's been there for years. So there's the thinker in alliance with the pain body.

They together form the ego. The emotional field, old emotion and that. And that feeds that, and the emotion feeds the thinker, and the thinker feeds the emotion.

Consciousness. In consciousness. And watch.

If there's a movement in here, simply watch that. Internally, not externally. Internally.

Feel it. Now one more thing. There is something in perhaps everyone, and that is the emotional, mental emotional entity that is simply a form that consciousness has taken that you confuse with who you are.

And that egoic entity does not want to be here. It may occasionally arise as you sit here and manifest either as intense thought movement in the head, you're not listening to a word anymore that's being said here, intense thought movement, whatever it is, I don't know what about, could be anything, past, future, dreamland, anything. Fantasy, or your problems, or your life, or what somebody did to you, or what you're going to do to them, or what you should have said and didn't say.

Whatever. As you sit here, there can be a reaction. It can be very intense in the head, and or in the body as an emotion, so much so that you just can't stand it being here anymore.

And then sometimes I can see people, they start looking around when it happens, and some look for the door. And again, just when it happens, you can watch that. I may, without offending, wanting to offend you, if I occasionally see somebody who is engaged in it, I might point it out.

So there's nothing personal about thoughts or emotions. Oh, well, that takes a lot of steam out of my story. And if you cannot stand it here, if the impulse comes to leave, to go home, I'll just recommend one thing.

Do not immediately obey the impulse, but watch the impulse to go, wanting to go home. Allow it to be there. Watch it.

You may watch it, and it may subside, and an hour later you may find you love it. Or it may well be that the impulse comes continuously, or doesn't go away, and then you may find yourself, you have no choice, you have to, you do, you cannot stop yourself, you have to go, then if you have to go, it is not wrong to leave here. You are not wrong if you leave here.

It just means consciousness will arise in some other way, in you or through you, somewhere else, in another situation, perhaps while you're traveling home, or when you arrive home, or 50 years later when you're near deathbed. We don't know. It is not wrong.

Although when you, those who do leave, the egoic mind will attempt to make everybody else wrong. That's normal. And that's not personal either.

And when it happens, you can watch that in yourself. All these people, I'm not going to stay here. Okay, they're all wrong, and I'm right.

Yes, that's how it is. It's okay. Spiritual alarm clock, but much nicer than any alarm clock.

Thank you. Quite a few people apparently arrived after our meeting last night. And for those who did, let me summarize what we said last night.

Your only job here is to be present. That's it. To be present is a reversal of the normal way in which people live.

Normal means unconscious. Normal means insane, dysfunctional, and so on, of course. So we don't want to be normal.

The result of normal, you see, when you watch the news or television, that's normal. The arising of presence goes beyond the personal realm. It seems to happen to a person.

But at the same time, it's only happening because the personal dimension is becoming relatively unimportant. It's still there, remains there, but it becomes far less significant than it has been before. Your whole personal sense of me, of selfhood, of story, my story, any kind of my mind, my history, my story, my future, my purpose, my...

The normal way is that the present moment is on the periphery of your consciousness because you've got better things to be worried about. So the attention is normally mainly on past or future. Probably more future for most people than past, except very old people when it shifts to past.

So they talk about the past all the time because they haven't got much future left to think about. Not knowing that old age is an incredible opportunity for entering the timeless dimension that is presence when you haven't got much future left. So this is our training ground for living in a different state of consciousness where your primary attention is always on the present moment.

Peripherally you are still aware, of course, of your life situation, which has a past and probably a future, unless something happens. You never know. Nobody knows.

So that your consciousness is not completely absorbed any longer by your life situation. Every life situation is to some extent problematic. But there's nothing problematic about the present moment.

That's the amazing thing. And every life situation is to a greater or lesser extent complicated. But there's nothing complicated ever about the present moment.

So instead of deriving your sense of self from your life situation, derive your sense of self from the present moment. The depth of the present moment, which is the depth of who you are, which is not what happens, but it's underneath what happens. But only when you are aligned with what happens can you get to that which lies deeper than what happens, which is the form that life takes at this moment.

You can never get to the formless dimension as long as you reject the form internally. In another teaching, this has been expressed by somebody, I don't know who, I can't remember. Somebody asked, how can I become free of the world?

And that teacher said, when you love the world and everything in it, and to be aligned with the present moment is really no more than that. It's not to accept what is, this is the form, and that openness towards the form that arises is really love, this allowing. And that's our practice here.

Probably only little things will arise on a retreat, a relatively protected setting, although occasionally it happens that some people go through enormous drama even on a retreat. The shift in consciousness happens when the present moment becomes primary, that's all. You realize how important, how much incredibly more important this is compared to your life situation.

And to live rightly, or to get your life right, is totally pointless, even to make plans. There's nothing wrong with making plans, but it's like constructing a building, there's nothing wrong. If you make plans without, you think, OK, I have to get my life right and in order, and you're making plans, and it's all mapped out, that's where I want to get, and this is how I'm going to get there.

And if you forget what is primary, the present moment, it's like building a big building without the foundation or crumbling foundation, because your relationship with the present moment isn't right. You're hoping that when you achieve all the things that you have planned, then your relationship with life will suddenly fall into place, and you will totally fit into life, and life will be working for you. But if you carry inside the mind structure of non-alignment with the present moment, then no matter what you achieve, that which you want to achieve through whatever you achieve, you're never going to get.

So we're not saying don't make plans, but this is about the very foundation. To get your life right is getting this moment right. Your relationship to this moment, and that's not the ultimate truth, because if you go even deeper, you realize you, who you are in your essence, and what we call the present moment beyond the form that this moment takes, is there one.

But let's, just for a moment, use that approach and talk about your relationship to the present moment. No, this is not the ultimate truth, but it's an approximation towards the truth. If your relationship to the present moment is not right, nothing can ever be right in the future, because when the future comes, it's the present moment.

And your habit, your mental, emotional habit, is to have a dysfunctional relationship with it when it comes. And so when it comes, it's never quite right, and it's never enough. There's always something missing.

For a little while, there's an elation when some new form arises that satisfies you for a moment, takes away the needing and wanting, and you get a little bit of glimpse of the fullness of being. Not because the ten million dollars suddenly arrived in your bank account, but because for a moment, the ten million dollars removed the wanting, the next thing. For a moment, the ten million dollars removed the mental, emotional, wanting and grasping to where's the next thing, the more that I need to fulfill myself.

For a moment, the ten million arrives, and the wanting seems to be satisfied. For a moment, it subsides. And because of that, the joy that you feel is not because of the ten million dollars that arrived in your bank account, but because for one moment, the incessant wanting, future, subsided.

And then the joy of being came through. And you confuse that and believe it's caused by the ten million dollars. And that can happen with big things or little things.

They give you suddenly enormous satisfaction, but what you really feel is that for a moment, the wanting has died down. And when that mind structure, which is the future, looking to the future, then being, the aliveness, the essence of who you are, the joy of being comes through. But never for long.

And then it reasserts itself. And there's renewed wanting. And then you get the sense that there's something missing, even with the ten million dollars in your bank account.

And the same dysfunctional relationship with the present moment arises again. Except that before, you were living in a trailer, and you had a dysfunctional relationship with the present moment. And when the ten million dollars arrive, you live in a mansion, and there you have a dysfunctional relationship with the present moment.

Ultimately it doesn't make much difference where you are unhappy. You might say, I'd rather be unhappy in luxury than in poverty, but it really makes little difference. Recognizing what is primary and getting, observing your relationship with the present moment.

And this is a training ground while we are here. We bring attention to that, what, and we ask, and again, that's a little pointer. We had one last night from the Course in Miracles.

I'm never upset for the reason I think. That's to point it out why you're upset, because you're not in touch with the life that you are, the depths of your being. And anything out there can upset you, but it's not that, it's that.

You're not in touch with the present moment. Another pointer now, ask yourself as often as possible, what is my relationship with this moment, the present moment? And observe the witness, your relationship with the present moment.

And you may observe that it is not a friendly one. And that's enough to know that, because that's an unconscious habit. To have an unfriendly relationship with the present moment is an unconscious habit.

The moment you make an unconscious habit conscious, it begins to dissolve. So the simple recognition that my relationship with this moment is unfriendly or even hostile, or I'm running away from it. I want to be somewhere else.

I resist this. Interesting. Don't fall into the trap of self-condemnation.

Because if you condemn yourself for not being in a good relationship with the present moment, you have added a further dysfunctional relationship with the present moment. You see? I'm no good.

I can't do it. I've done it again. I can't.

You see? You see all the internal dialogue. Sometimes you talk to yourself as you.

You address yourself as you. That's what the mind does. You see?

You can't do it. There's no point. You're just not good enough.

Or you say, that teaching doesn't work. I have to try some other teaching. It obviously isn't working for me.

And that's just a thought. Don't believe any thought that comes into your head. Just watch.

And this is particularly important on this retreat. Thoughts that come into your head are just thoughts. No more.

Don't give them an importance that they do not have. You can allow them. It's there.

But don't completely believe in every thought that comes into your head. So, examining your relationship with the present moment as often as possible. And that's not an analysis.

You don't need to analyze. You simply watch. Mental and emotional.

Am I judging this moment mentally? Am I calling it not good enough? Am I running away from it?

Am I projecting myself elsewhere? Am I resisting it emotionally? And that's enough to see it.

The moment you see it, the unconscious pattern begins to dissolve. But in addition, that happens by itself. But in addition, you can actually choose to be fully present.

The moment you realize you're not present, you don't have a friendly relationship with the present moment. At that moment, you can also choose to be present. You can choose or you can choose as we said last night, you can also choose that you want to continue to have an unfriendly relationship with the present moment.

I'd like to continue to be unhappy. That's a choice too. But it's unlikely that you would, if it makes conscious, that's an unconscious egoic choice.

Yes. The choice to be unhappy, humans make that all the time. But they're not conscious of it.

But consciously, it would even be absurd if you even said to yourself, I love that, this unhappiness. I really enjoy this. The moment you said that, you're making it conscious and you would start laughing.

It just doesn't work. A dysfunctional pattern, when you make it conscious, can't work anymore. It doesn't work anyway because it's dysfunctional.

I think. So we are to be able to observe your relationship with the present moment of course requires some presence. Very unconscious people simply react unconsciously and they don't have that choice.

They cannot observe their relationship with the present moment. And this is not something that you can bring about. Precondition for being able to observe your relationship with the present moment is that there is enough presence in you from where you can observe your relationship with the present moment.

And this is not something that you can make happen. This is the grace. By grace, there is enough presence in you so that you can be conscious of your relationship with the present moment and of the present moment itself.

You can be conscious of the thoughts you have. You can be conscious of the emotions that go through you. Very unconscious people, they are their thoughts.

They are their emotions. They're completely in the grip of their thoughts and emotions. There's nothing you can do to tell them, observe your thoughts and emotions or be conscious of your relationship with the present moment.

It's pointless. They don't even know what you're talking about. So that is not something that is up to you to choose.

By grace, presence is arising through this form. And because presence is arising through this form, you are able to say, I choose to be present. And that is good.

Now you can say, I choose to be present, because there is enough presence in you to do that. So really, what speaks in you, what chooses, is presence itself. Presence is arising and it looks as if a person were choosing to be present.

And this is because you are going beyond the personal realm, beyond that you transcend the limitations of being no more than a little person with a little past and a little future. And that's why we are here, to see that it is possible to live much more beautifully, much more effectively and joyously in that way. So the primary, your primary attention, while we are here, this is a protected setting, it's a training ground, it's a greenhouse, or hothouse for consciousness.

But it's not as much as a hothouse as some retreats. Some retreats are so structured and you have to meditate ten hours a day, and you don't speak at all, although we will have periods of not speaking, that they become a real hothouse, and the consciousness can develop very quickly in extremely structured and protected setting, and then you become very present after ten days a week, and everybody goes, it's beautiful. And then the retreat comes to an end.

And then they go out, and the first they go back into the traffic, they go back into the city, they go back into their normal life, and they feel... And the hothouse plant isn't used to normal conditions. The moment you take the hothouse plant out of the hothouse, and it stays for two or three days, and then...

So here we have a in some way normal life, but something else arising, we continue to interact to some extent, but not as much as in so-called ordinary life. So we bring consciousness into the ordinary, into relating. Now this is very important, the choice to be present.

You are able to make that choice. And ultimately, but this doesn't matter, it's a philosophical question, it is not you as the person who chooses presence, because you as the person would never choose presence. Because the person is the old conditioning, is the ego.

You as the person don't want to be present. So when you choose presence, it is not the person that chooses, it is the deeper dimension of that which is beyond the conditioned that chooses to be present. And occasionally, you may find the obstruction of the person coming back in.

It doesn't say, I don't want to be present, it says something else to distract you, to pretend that something else is more important than being present. The person is also the conditioned thought patterns is part of the person. All the conditioned thought patterns in the head are part of the person, the me.

And identification, the thought patterns are clever. They will come up with some thought that draws you out of presence and that it doesn't say this is more important than presence, it implies that this is more important than presence, and I need to think about this, this thought is, and off you go. So you may observe that also, the person reasserting itself, which is the old pattern, the old thought, and you disappear.

You disappear into the conditioned. Consciousness goes back to sleep. Consciousness identifies with form, thought forms, emotional forms.

Consciousness identifies with forms and continues to dream the dream of form, which is the dream that you are no more than a person. And then everything that is in form in your life has an enormous importance in that dream because you know nothing beyond the dream. So everything that happens is so terribly important.

That's why you get upset so much. It's true. And things happen continuously in the dream to upset you more.

Consciousness dreaming the dream of form, one of the ways in which that manifests is as a person. And if consciousness were not ready to awaken, nobody would be awakening. It is only because consciousness is ready to awaken out of that dream that we are sitting here.

And for many people it is not until the dream becomes very unpleasant that they begin to awaken. It's only when the dream gets just can't stand anymore and then that suffering, that pain wakes you up and suddenly you become present. Some people are forced into presence.

Many of you were forced into presence because you couldn't stand the dream anymore. The dream of past and future. The dream of me and my story.

And that's why you're here. So choosing, you choose to be present and you may have to choose that many times. Particularly when you notice the dysfunctional relationship with the present moment.

And choose. Now what happens the moment you say I choose presence? That's just a thought.

That's not yet presence. It's a pointer. I choose presence is not presence.

Otherwise and that's the traditionally the mistake of religion is to confuse the pointer with that which it points to. And so if that ever happens you'll know that this has happened when we start having prayers about presence. We choose presence.

Or even worse we believe in presence. And if you don't then you're wrong. That's or worse.

Now what happens I choose presence to be present. You enter the present moment. What happens as you enter the present moment?

When you observe another person going through the shift from dreamland which is being identified with thinking and emotions and their problems and their future and suddenly something wakes them up into presence and you observe you can see both the difference in their face and in their eyes and also the energy emanation that changes and it goes like this or or or into suddenly you wake up out of the dream of thought and for some people it happens that the first thing they notice when they become present is their surroundings as if they had just arrived.

And then they may notice certain noises that were there. One man reported I read about it became present at home for the first time he had lived there for several years and he heard distant but clearly audible church bells it was somewhere in Europe he had never heard the church bells before because he was too much his consciousness was too much absorbed by thought. For the first time in years he heard church bells ringing and was amazed and you may see colors, you may see light you become aware of the space in the room and the next thing often that happens is you sense more the energy field, the entire energy field in the body that is Piccato, because it's presence within and presence without and you feel there's an aliveness in the body whereas before you didn't, the body wasn't really, even if you did physical exercises still you were not in the body, you were still even while you're on the treadmill in the gym you're either thinking about your problems or you're watching a TV screen, that's what people do it's quite draining because the attention goes out there so even people who say they're looking after their bodies are not necessarily in the body it can be still in here and so most people live in the upper compartment or in the loft or the attic and there's the entire building inhabited by weird by weird people all kinds of emotions live in there and go and anybody can come in because you're not there they all know that you're only up there and then the emotions they make a lot of noise and then they take over the thinker and the thinker doesn't know what's happening so presence means first usually ah you become present without and within there is an alertness that is suddenly there and thought is not important is no longer primary when presence arises another word for presence of course is stillness because whenever you are present the movement of thought subsides occasional thoughts can still come in but there are suddenly there is space there is suddenly the space of no thought but but I'm reluctant to call that a relaxed state in a way it is a relaxed state but it is not to be confused with what is normally called relaxation in the mind identified unconscious state it has relaxation when you go you're hanging out and that's good at least for a while you are free of the torture of the mind and then there is the high energy state which in the egoic state is stress some kind of let's get it, let's get something done ok we've got so much to do, come on let's get on with it that's the high energy state and then occasionally they lapse into the so called relaxed state, perhaps only after a few drinks or then they just let's hang out or wedge out is the expression in front of the TV wedging out in front of the TV and with the TV the nice thing is that you don't have to think your own thoughts anymore, the thoughts and that's it's a small liberation from yourself but you're unfortunately you link into all the stuff that you see and you think their thoughts whatever thoughts they want you to think you switch on into that you link into that and then you don't have your own problems you just live their problems but at least it frees you from your own for a little while but that's not a liberation really it's just a shift from one mind form to another mind form but for some people they relax a little bit then in front of it and if you have a can of beer it's even better laughter and then the next morning you go back into the high energy state and with the briefcase or whatever it is phone calls is there something that is neither this nor that yes and that's the state of presence I'm reluctant to call it relaxed because of what I've just described what is normally called relaxed is losing consciousness drifting towards sleep and what is usually called high energy in the mind state is quite a stressful state and it's not the body doesn't like it but the ego says I've got to be responsible I've got to be stressed to be responsible if I'm not worried I'm not responsible about my life and as the man called the boss calls the employee into the office into his office and says I've told this joke before looks at him grimly and says the boss says to the employee you are the only person in this company not suffering from a stress related disease how come laughter so that there is another way to live that is neither the state where you hang out all the time nor the state of so called high energy that is stressful and ultimately harmful to the body and harmful to everybody around you because it is a state of dysfunction ultimately you can go into some companies and everybody is unhappy they are all running around fighting against each other as much as they are fighting against the competition uselessly their energy is being uselessly burned up in fighting and fighting against this and against that their positions and their little cliques with their positions totally absurd and they are all anxious, intense insane presence is very different it is a state of high energy but there is no stress in it and there is not no sleepiness in it whatsoever in fact it is extremely alert and that's the then you become very effective not that you have you are not forced into activity when there is actually nothing useful to do you are quite happy with not doing without losing the high energy of presence you can just sit and be without falling into the vegetative state you could sit for an hour or two and it is beautiful and more and more you would enjoy the simple state of being present the joy of being of being present with yourself of feeling your own presence your own is the way of putting it, it is not yours it is presence and when activity is required presence can flow into doing and you give all those people many people who are those people who are very successful in whatever field of endeavor those who are very successful and not unhappy have touched presence in what they do now there are others who in the eyes of the world are successful but really they are very unhappy at the same time, there is no point in that no matter how much money you make what's the point in making money making your bodies ill everybody else unhappy including yourself and then you die so you can actually it is a very different energy energetically than presence is not the ego knows nothing of that that it is possible to be to put enormous energy into something that you do without stress if that is what is needed presence is clear energy and it can flow into action some sports people know that they enter the so called zone as they say and when they are in the zone then right action happens and it is joyful this is why people watch they watch because it is beautiful to watch somebody performing an action in the state of presence because a little bit of that transmits itself it is also joyful to be with somebody who is not active in the state of presence to some extent that happens here it is joyful to sit here because also a kind of transmission happens but here it is not through action but through simple being non-action something that transmits itself and awakens that dimension within you not that it comes through this form into you as if you didn't have it yet no it is here and something in you recognizes it that is why it is nice to be here and the moment it is no longer nice to be here you have gone back into your mind and as long as it feels good to be here you are present when it doesn't feel good to be here anymore you are absent again, you are back in so we could say it is as present as relaxed alertness if you look at two breeds of dogs you could say let's say there is the german shepherd dog and quite many german shepherds they are excellent guard dogs because they are a little bit nervous not all but they are bred to be nervous, to be alert and they go, they look when a visitor comes, they are a bit suspicious and they look at you and then there is the saint bernard dog now if you could cross breed these two you would get a present dog now maybe I have given somebody an idea for a new business and of course my favorite example of that with human beings which some of you already know you have the buddha and then you cross the buddha with the character played in most films by clint eastwood cross the two and you have presents now it is not only that the moment you choose presents you become conscious of sense perceptions of your surroundings it is also sense perceptions themselves when you pay attention to sense perceptions can help you to enter the state of presence to become very conscious of sense perceptions not to lose yourself in sense perceptions now we will see the difference in a second to become very conscious of sense perceptions and in this setting here highly recommended and sense perceptions here are mostly beautiful ones and that is good it is nature mostly what you see here is nature and humans which is also nature let's talk about nature for a moment to become conscious of sense perceptions is to look or listen or smell I mentioned last night to smell the air which changes it is a different smell in the morning from the way it smells after it has rained if it does in the evening it is alive and notice that at the moment of smelling the air there is no thinking because you cannot smell the air and think while you smell the air there is no thought perhaps afterwards the thought interprets the smell or maybe some poem comes into your mind about the air or some haiku or whatever that's thought and sometimes thought that comes after presence is more likely to be original and inspired when it comes and even a brief stretch of presence is enough sometimes to give rise to an inspired original thought not a thought that is of the ego that makes you unhappy and creates more stress and more problem no, an inspiring original alive thought may come not that it has to come you are quite happy without it and then you take another breath and smell again and there is no thought and then you look and in the perception you look at a flower, a tree or just one leaf moving in the wind not necessarily look at what is spectacular there is so much here that is spectacular so much beauty all the potted plants that in colder climates we have at home and they are little and here they are all out there and huge and it's there is a lot that is spectacular and that's good to see too but not just look at the spectacular huge tropical flowers and so on but also look at relatively insignificant things one leaf and there is a slight breeze and the leaf is moving in the breeze it's quivering and stay with that for whatever a minute, two minutes this is just one example of many ways in which you can observe the little the seemingly insignificant and as you observe there is the perception against the background of stillness there is no labeling mentally of what you are observing because then you would lose the sense perception you would go into thought so you can play with that yourself see if you can be present with the sense perception without going into thought and if you go into thought observe the thought and then let it go and go back to the sense perception and so there is more than that there is not just at the moment we are talking about visual sense perception there is not just the sense perception you are not just conscious of the leaf moving quivering slightly and poets have done that and great artists, they are able to watch in presence and then out of that a poem may come and they talk about some great beauty that came out of the state of presence and if it's a great poem can put you back into the state out of which it came in the author that's why it's called great nothing is called great and humans can recognize it that means they are not as insane as they seem to be something in humans recognizes the greatness of great art or great poetry or great literature what is it that makes one work great and the other one is mere fiction or one painting is great and the other one is mere colors put together it is the state out of which it came was it put together by the mind trying to think of something clever a lot of modern artists like that let's try and think of something clever and we make some abstract statement through that it's fine, but it doesn't touch people in here it can stimulate the mind that's okay on that level it doesn't touch you here, if it touches you here it awakens presence you can go directly to that which inspired many artists and poets which is nature go directly to it and watch the quivering leaf and be still as you watch otherwise you have to be, otherwise you can't watch it be with it and notice there's the form whatever it is the leaf moving in the wind is there anything else there apart from the form now you could lose yourself in that form you could just go into and then you fall off the chair or you can be there and see that, but also be conscious of that which makes the perception possible we could say of yourself not yourself as the person with the history but of yourself as the consciousness the attention, the stillness that makes the perception possible and that is not something that you can this is formless you can't touch it, you can't see it, you can't say oh there it is, because that which says there it is, is it so you can never make it into an object of knowledge this is an object of perception but as you perceive there's more than the object of perception but the object of perception helps you to find that the world of form helps you to find the formless which is that in you which is beyond form so you watch and you're aware of the form, but you're also aware of the background stillness the alert background stillness that is, you could also call that the I, the I am which has nothing to do with a person it's the consciousness itself through which the perception happens or in which the perception happens which is the formless dimension of who you are the eternal, formless, timeless dimension who you are beyond the form beyond the physical form beyond the psychological form of me to be trapped in in form is the most dreadful fate to go through your whole lifetime and never know who you are or what you are beyond form is dreadful it's like being in a prison for the whole of your life so how is it that something seemingly so simple as observing a flower observing a leaf moving in the wind, observing a blade of grass or a little patch of ground or whatever it is or a tree or even a distant landscape the wholeness of it it is amazing that that can be an entry point direct perception an entry point into who you are the formless and these are incredible things but just watch and be aware of the watcher not only what is being watched but also feel, sense, be the being the consciousness that makes that flower possible or watch the sky that changes probably this afternoon as it has done the past few days in the afternoon clouds start coming in and the light changes and you can watch that and you can watch the movement of the clouds and as you watch be aware of the presence without which there would be no cloud movements do you think there would be the movement of clouds coming in if you weren't watching it?

of course not there are no clouds it requires a consciousness to see otherwise there are only atoms there is the game, the play of atoms and molecules there are no clouds atoms and molecules playing and through you arises a whole world and so be conscious of that essence in you which is consciousness the I am presence that makes the whole thing all this possible and so sense perception is vital it is much closer to who you are than thought thought is much further removed so in most humans sense perceptions are only peripheral because there is so much thought in them that there isn't much time for listening or watching they hardly ever they just listen or watch enough not to have an accident or to bump into something and sometimes there is so much thinking that they do have an accident because they are not present enough and of course when you perform a dangerous activity then you have to be present when you are in something certain dangerous activities require absolute presence and one thought and you are gone the actor Christopher Reeve died recently I was in Chicago when it happened and I saw on television they showed an interview with him that was done just a few months before he died and as you know he as they rightly pointed out in the interview he became a superman after his accident before it was just a role but then he was confronted with the incredible limitation of form and it seems that he became quite peaceful but we are not we do not need to seek out danger to be present some people believe that that's what they need to do and so they get addicted almost to an activity because it is so liberating compared to their normal state it is so liberating you feel so much more alive when you are present that they need to go back and then climb another wall and another and another and perhaps one day a thought comes in just as they grasp for the next ledge on the rock and that's it so here we sense perceptions are also an opening into presence and that's an important practice while we are here sense perceptions as an opening into presence if done rightly so there's always two dimensions to a sense perception that which you are perceiving and that which is perceiving the form and the formless and then you go to auditory sense perceptions beautiful and again there's no calling it of good or bad it's all equal when you are practicing sense perception you allow whatever sense, whatever noise is there to be there so there's a bird song many different birds the crickets whatever they are at night that's a beautiful chorus wonderful to just listen to that there is the leaves in the wind all different noises and that's, modern humans cannot listen to it anymore there's too much thinking and as you listen be aware of the noise and of the background the perception is the foreground the consciousness, the stillness the presence is the background and it is you it is the formless you and this is at this very moment you can be in that state you can listen to the voice you can also see the room, that's the visual but you can also sense there's an underlying stillness and that is yourself beyond form the I am presence has no form and when you are in touch with that you no longer mind when the form doesn't stay or when the form isn't the most pleasant of forms like occasionally a heavy truck comes up the road here and it goes brrrr and you can listen to that also and continue to feel the background where that arises unaffected by the form the more you are rooted in the background I'm saying whenever we use language we create a duality I say you are rooted in the background or I say you are conscious of the background that's not how it is but the moment we form a sentence we have a subject and an object and we have duality what really happens is you become conscious of yourself it is self-awareness it is self-realization it's not that you are conscious of consciousness because that's what it is consciousness is conscious of itself and it's you you cannot become an object to yourself you can't make yourself into an object self is eternal subject all these different beautiful sounds and you have the sound and the inner stillness there is one bird here somewhere that sounds like a cell phone maybe you will hear it I saw one man who was looking around for his cell phone that's the conditioning from out there so we have visual sense perception and so sometimes look at something small and at other times it may be good to practice visual sense perception looking at a totality of a landscape either looking out there or looking at a group of trees or grove or bushes take in a larger space practice with different ways different ways of looking from the tiniest to larger to the spaciousness of the sky maybe a little beetle crawling on your floor in your room and there are lots of little beetles and sometimes when they hear this and then you can watch that and again be conscious not lose yourself in it just watch and you may want to pick it up either on a piece of paper and put it outside but watch it first before you put it outside it crawls and if it notices your presence the beetle stops and sometimes the head goes in and then if it notices that you are getting closer you are touching it all its legs go in also it becomes a little almost a ball and it will stay like that for minutes it can wait longer than you can that's why it survived for millions of years simply because it can wait and there's a beauty there too and it's this life or consciousness appearing in that particular form and you appear as a form also appear for a little while not much longer than the beetle beetle is maybe a few weeks or months and you are a few years that's all you appear also as a form a physical and psychological form for a little while unique perhaps more unique than the beetle I don't know if every beetle is unique or whether you can't tell the difference at first sight you can't tell the difference one beetle looks very much like any other beetle but probably to the beetle the humans look the same too but we are probably safe to say that there are subtle differences no two forms are ever totally the same we mentioned snowflakes last night or human beings you with your particular physical form you could recognize a close friend but all the billions of humans on the planet there's not one that looks the same you would always be able to pick out somebody that you know well or your father or your mother nobody is quite the same so there is a uniqueness to the form and yet it evaporates very quickly and it's gone, that uniqueness is gone and if that's all you know then it's a very sad thing and the universe doesn't really make sense why create something unique and then destroy it well because the universe is playing with form when you watch if you saw life forms being born and dying and speed it up on a film you would see that it is a play you would see plants and sometimes they have made films like that where you can see a plant coming out of the soil and you speed it up over several days you would see it in one minute and it goes and then it withers and it's gone and then if you speed it up even more you see hundreds and thousands of different plants and trees going and humans coming out of the womb and growing and running around here and there and then shrinking becoming wrinkled shrinking and gone and then but at the same time others are already on their way they are coming so it's a continuous something nothing form formless the two dimensions and finding that yes although you are unique not only your appearance but also your life story nobody has quite the same life story as you basically in their deeper structure they are all very similar if not the same the deep structure of a life story any life story in any life story for example something goes wrong that makes it interesting if nothing went wrong there would be no story look at any film or any novel the deep structure in every film or every novel I can't think of any exception but there may be one or two but to watch those you would have to be really present if nothing goes wrong it's not interesting it's the moment something goes wrong the story starts any novel or any film look at it, doesn't matter what you can always say at some point she leaves him he dies they lose something they become ill something starts going wrong and that's why it's interesting and that's the life of form that's how it works and if you had a holiday in which absolutely nothing goes wrong it's conceivable although unlikely but it's conceivable it would be you wouldn't remember nothing but if something went very wrong you would remember it for the rest of your life and you could talk about it that happened that's the life of form so there's the uniqueness of your story on the one hand it's unique nobody has quite the same life story as you and yet deep down it's not that unique and yet also yet it's destined to dissolve very quickly just like a cloud every cloud is unique in that particular form but as you look at it it's already dissolving and changing so we honor the uniqueness of the form we honor the form that we are, not in essence but as we appear our life circumstances and the physical form without becoming trapped in that so this is why we are here to touch the formless within ourselves to be it, to recognize it and what do we use? we use the form as an entry point we are not saying although I'm not condemning that it's another way in some spiritual traditions they say do not look at beauty do not look at anything avert your eyes don't be seduced by sense perception they say just look at the floor all this they might say, they do it in some buddhist traditions, and I love buddhism it's beautiful all this is illusion in some way of course that's true it's all destined to dissolve very quickly, every form in that sense it is an illusion, it is a dream so don't look just don't get into sense perceptions just be conscious of consciousness that may work too it's another way of entering this perhaps is more accessible for humans that are alive now perhaps at least for those who are here beauty is hiding in every form and beauty is not the external appearance ultimately but the essence in each form, which is the same essence that you discover when you are conscious of the consciousness that you are, that is perceiving then you realize the same essence of consciousness is in that form taking temporary expression as that form and so it is the beauty lies in that the true essence of beauty is always beyond the form appearance, it's something that shines through the form and that is the same in humans true beauty in humans is not of the form, it shines through the form, you can sometimes see it even in people whose body is crippled you can sometimes see if they have surrendered you can see beauty shining through the form or people who are close to death that light shines through so sense perceptions as an entry point into yourself so not only do sense perceptions keep you present they are also an opening into the formless dimension which of course it is presence presence is formless unconditioned consciousness and then we have touch, a neglected sense perception relatively probably the first one in the evolution of the species probably the first sense perceptions was touch when little worms crawling and that was the beginning of a world arising that was a very little world at first so to occasionally pick something up and feel it fully it's beautiful and again you cannot feel it fully unless you're completely attentive to what it feels like and there's no need to label it just feel and who is it or what is it that feels who or what is it that makes the sense perception possible your presence consciousness itself who you are, the stillness in the background against which the sense perception happens and that if you can live like that in the two dimensions you are a master and you are a blessing on the planet because a human being who can live in the two dimensions not being seduced by form into believing that that's all there is and not yet disappearing into the formless and saying I'm not going to be bothered with anything anymore, I'm not going to wash my hands even anymore because it's all form, no be here as a bridge between the two dimensions the formless and the entire world here is lost in one in form we don't need to improve this is not a workshop where we try to improve the world of form and there's a place for that also that's good but what the world needs is for humans to find that hidden dimension the spiritual because that's what spiritual is spiritual is not a belief spiritual is the formless dimension in yourself and that's not something to think about it's something to experience at this moment sense perception background the I am presence it has no attributes it's not big or small or young or old it has no age or time to it and if you can go into the world and live and be in the two as a bridge then you affect the world of form, anybody who is rooted in eternity in essence will deal with and relate to the world of form in a different way and will affect the world of form so it's not just the two dimensions are not separate they hang together and anyone being in touch with that will change the world without needing to change it or wanting to change it he cannot or she or he or she cannot not change the world so you become a blessing when you are in touch with that which ultimately means yourself and then relate to people and continuously sense the background in any interaction sense the background of yourself as space and then in any interaction there's the spacious background of consciousness and there's the form there's the words that come there's the sense perception there's what you're talking about and you're not losing yourself in what you're talking about words come but as the words are spoken there's still a consciousness of consciousness stillness in the background there must be a very important message out there maybe what he's saying is it's time to wake up humanity needs to wake up he's so excited, I think that's what he's saying follow the sound with your attention until only attention remains which is presence the sound is form that which is there before and after the sound and underneath the sound is formless and now as you listen to the sound be aware of that which is listening that which makes the listening possible the I am presence form and formless and the loudspeaker out there represents the world which says this is so important you must give attention to this this really matters, absolutely and that's your challenge not to lose yourself in that you really have to drink coca cola, you must vote for this person you have to allow it you can't fight that because they're all fighting that creates the whole thing you can only watch it and be there as the watcher and then it changes without you wanting it to change thank you thank you just sit in the stillness just for a little while until you feel the body is getting up with some kinds of music particularly this kind the sounds always point to the silence so the when you listen to this kind of music the silence what is not there is more important more powerful than what is there it's not music that emphasizes the form in the case of music the form is sound so this kind of music does not emphasize the form as a lot of music does especially western music that can be beautiful too forms can be beautiful too but this does not emphasize the form there is only a bare minimum of form and your attention is being drawn to the formless the silence in between the sounds and underneath when you listen to that you can listen instead of listening to the sounds of the flute or whatever it is listen to the silent spaces to which all the sounds point then the act of listening becomes a meditation and you enter presence because the moment you pay attention to silence there is stillness in you and stillness is consciousness formless unconditioned the essence of you so one could say that kind of music brings out if you listen rightly brings out you the essence of you traditionally that kind of music has been played by meditating monks and then later musicians took over and they became good technically but very often the essence wasn't quite there anymore because in a subtle way it only seems to work when the person who is playing is in that state so that for example the way in which the sound of the flute subsides dies very subtle it goes from being manifested into unmanifested and then it takes you with it into the stillness now this is one example but amazingly the same thing operates in any human encounter interaction or relationship we already pointed to it yesterday is only the form there in the encounter the form, the thought forms are they interacting or is presence present in the interaction between you and another human being that is a qualitative difference that's enormous sometimes you may hear an interesting talk announced a dialogue between two theologians about something a very interesting topic the sacred in modern civilization or something like that and then you go and listen and you are disappointed because they're talking about it the sacred but it's all form but the sacred isn't actually present there they're only using words and concepts and yet the essence is not there there's no stillness and that's the case with a lot of even spiritual discourse sometimes people tell me they read an interesting book and then the author comes into town and gives a talk and they go there and then they're disappointed because the book was more interesting than the author the author didn't seem to embody what he or she talked about in the book and at other times they do it happens too but often people tell me that it wasn't the presence wasn't there and so that's the whole point of us being here is to access presence in ourselves access it deepen it live it that new dimension not new in terms of time because presence is timeless but new in the sense that new on the planet it's a relatively recent phenomenon maybe only started a few thousand years ago with isolated humans who accessed that dimension within themselves and then attempted to show it to others they immediately realized it is in everyone they immediately realized they are not special they realized I am not because presence manifested through this form it does not make this form special it does not make this person special in fact the opposite is the case it's because this form this person has lost the illusion of specialness that it could come through and sometimes people ask strange questions they ask, an interviewer asked me once how do you explain that it happened to you why did this shift happen to you can you explain don't you feel very lucky that it happened to you and of course there is only an error hiding in the question it's because the you recognized itself as insubstantial that it happened the you the me became transparent recognized it's nothingness it's really all it's non-specialness means nothingness specialness is always ego specialness means the form wants to emphasize itself in order to survive in order to have an identity of me one way or another through identifying with this or that and then at some point the recognition comes that that is an illusion so the awakening doesn't really happen to anybody it's when the no-bodiness is recognized then it's there it's simply an illusion dissolving and of course in some spiritual seekers they still feel the unconscious need to be special and the projection is that once I attain enlightenment awakening then I will be special and finally be myself and yet as long as that entity is there wanting to obtain something in the future the specialness that you are that has nothing to do with the ego specialness now I'm changing the terminology for a second you are very special but not more special than anybody else there is something absolutely precious at the core of your being maybe that's what the Tibetans refer to in the famous mantra om mani padme hum which speaks of the jewel in the lotus and that specialness is the very life the very consciousness that you are and it is if anything is divine if we use the term divine for anything it is that it is the formless essence of your being it is the indwelling God essence and really apart from that everything else is simply has a dream like quality dreamt by the divine a divine dream a dream of form so there can actually one can feel the true specialness that you can only sense when the pseudo specialness goes the pseudo specialness says I am more special than you or at least I'm trying to be the pseudo specialness can take strangest forms it can hide in many new forms when you think you've left it behind even that belief can already be a new specialness when you finally give away your Rolls Royce and your mansion and get on your bike and then all the other big cars go past you and you feel quite superior in a subtle way more subtle than before but the ego when the ego operates and you can observe it in those rare instances when the ego still operates in you there's always a subtle comparison of me with others and there's always a comparison implies inferior or superior you regard yourself as either inferior or superior compared to others and the ego is constantly on the lookout to see where it fits in it wants to be superior but often that doesn't work then it considers itself to be inferior with this strange unfulfilled longing to be superior and both are equally strong egos so somebody who feels inferior does not have a weaker ego people think people with strong egos are people who feel bigger than anybody else people who feel less than anybody else have an equally strong ego and people who feel too timid to speak up or maybe they don't have a strong enough no, their ego is very strong they just don't want to be they fear what happens to their ego when they speak up in public they fear what others may think of them that the image that others have of them may not be what they want what they desire for themselves is the image that they want for themselves so when you observe it it's good to observe the ego in oneself because the ability to observe it in yourself means you're not totally in the grip of it anymore so it doesn't mean you have failed the moment you observe the ego in yourself operating you may have just thought something or said something and suddenly something takes ah, ego and where does that realization come from? not from the ego, it comes from presence the arising presence it's only from the witnessing presence that you can be aware of a conditioned ego pattern and whatever you discover the more ego you discover in yourself the more successful you are in awakening and one could even say that the moment you have recognized the ego in you as ego it's not ego anymore because it's only truly ego when you are totally identified with that pattern so for example when you are discussing something with someone there's a group after dinner discussing some spiritual topic and you, somebody puts forward their opinion and then you feel a strong emotion coming up because you clearly recognize that that opinion is wrong at least from your point of view but and so there's immediately an identification with your mental position which is ego a mental position is a thought form this is how it is an opinion, a thought form so identification with a mental position is there which means the self has gone into the thought has incarnated one more time and it's already done that hundreds of times during that day has incarnated, you have reincarnated one more time into another thought form so instead of having broken the cycle of reincarnation you've readily gone into another one and then you put forward your opposing point of view not in a detached and relaxed way but with inattention that wants to show that you truly know but that person does not know and it's possible that at that moment or a few seconds later you recognize what's happening I can't even say that you recognize what you are doing because you are not doing it it happens the ego has a life of its own it's a pattern, collective pattern you are not doing it the ego happens and the ego only happens when you are asleep then it happens it's a collective conditioning nothing personal and then suddenly you see it oh or in the middle of an argument you see how strong the emotion is that goes with defending your point of view and sometimes even the voice goes up you raise your voice you become a very heated argument they call it and that's just a tiny the ego wants to be superior, it wants to show it's not enough to be superior you need to be seen to be superior and so there's the constant it's an uneasy existence as an ego because even a superior ego goes around fearing that it might be inferior in some way even if it thinks it's superior one could go on for hours and days and weeks talking about the ego and all that's really needed is to see it and then what's left is only a pattern that still has a certain momentum but is no longer renewing itself so ego is a mixture of mind patterns and emotions and so they form an entity an emotional, mental emotional entity one could say that shifts, it identifies sometimes it takes things on board and sometimes it gets rid of things that it just tries to doesn't want so what it identifies with can change but the core of it are certain basic identifications they vary from person to person but basically they only vary slightly it's identification so it's basically the same so you could you can identify with sometimes one can observe the ego can identify one moment it competes with a person and the next moment it identifies with that person, I knew a mother who whenever the mother was talking to other people about her daughter who married a rich husband she would incorporate her daughter into her self image and as soon after she met somebody would mention that her wealthy daughter and the mansion and so on and the yacht so you couldn't meet this woman for five minutes before she had mentioned her wealthy daughter so she incorporated that into her self image but when she actually visited her daughter she competed she resented that her daughter had married this rich husband but she hadn't and so there was a competition with her daughter and a lot of hostility so when she was with her daughter the ego was competing against the daughter when she was away from her daughter the ego incorporated her daughter and it's always identification with something that you are not but you're hoping that by adding it to who you think you are that you can grow in your sense of self and it works in the sense that you can grow in your sense of self but only in your illusory sense of self and so the ego traditionally there are only two ways for the ego to be transcended and that is it gets knocked out of you by life through the suffering or through the coming into contact with the spiritual teaching and usually the two go together but sometimes suffering is enough for some people and they don't need a teacher anymore life doesn't leave you any identifications it takes them away from you and then you're left with nothing you don't know who you are anymore and there you sit, everything has crumbled around you and maybe you don't even have much longer to live it's possible too, even future has been taken away and there you sit not knowing who you are anymore because all identifications have been removed and now this is no guarantee that now the ego is transcended because you could even there the ego could still form a new image of itself as someone who has been dreadfully wronged by life no person has had a worse fate than me and it's there you have another ego life has taken away all identifications and you have escaped you have suddenly immediately invented a new story for yourself which says you're the greatest victim of all of life and from then on you can have resentment against everything and everybody look at all these people, I hate them and God what you did to me, I'll never forget that and yet at other times it can happen that a new story is not invented the ego has come to an end and those people suddenly wake up and say where does that peace come from I feel so peaceful that's often the first question and they smile and they don't know why they smile and then somebody comes and say why are you smiling and say I don't know there are some humans coming into this world now some still have a heavy they inherit as I did as many of you did they inherit all the heavy ego structures that have built up over thousands and thousands of years and then it's painful you create suffering for yourself believing that life does it to you and then there's so much suffering that finally it dissolves you can't stand it anymore you can't live with myself anymore and you suddenly realize it's all self created but there are some humans coming into this world now who have relatively little ego here and there so they may not have to go what we had to go through and that's good some may be born into relatively conscious parents background environment some may come to talks at an early age and some don't need that at all and yet they are still in conflict with the surrounding culture because they are at school somewhere they are living this mad world and they may not necessarily be able to adjust to this world but they'll survive and the world won't they are part of what is stronger than the mad world that is arising now so ego one way of transcending ego is simply to recognize it in yourself that's already a transcendence the other is to be very conscious of the thoughts that go through your head because ego is thought, identification with thought plus the emotions that accompany those thoughts and that is our practice here it's not only recognizing ego when it appears it's also to be very much conscious of the root of ego and the root of ego is thought and identification with thought with thinking and ultimately the ego cannot go away it can perhaps disappear for brief moments but it cannot dissolve unless you go beyond compulsive thinking and that is our task so that we can more and more live in the state of no thought we've already suggested ways of entering the state of no thought which is called presence we can call presence we can call awareness we can call stillness, alert stillness not asleep stillness asleep stillness means you're falling below thought but to transcend thought is to rise above thought and then you realize whenever you think there is a diminished degree of alertness compared to the state of no thought where you have risen above thought when you look at a flower when you take one conscious step when you perform one conscious action conscious meaning you're totally there without the interference of mental labels without making something into a means to an end that's conscious that's completely present there you are awake and then thought comes in and you can sense the diminished degree of wakefulness as the moment thought identification with thought comes in and you can actually feel in yourself or observe in somebody else how they go from clarity to a dreamlike state which often means there's a problem that you need to solve there's a memory there's a future situation that you're thinking about you're moving into away from what is so we've suggested ways of sustaining without making an effort it's no effort you can't make an effort to be present a way of sustaining presence for more than a moment by conscious looking by conscious self sense perception by conscious action by conscious listening by consciously being in the body these are all ways of exiting the noise machine in the head and there's another one that will work for some of you but not for all and we cannot call it method it is the most direct way it's not a method because method implies there's a little bit of distance the most direct way is simply and some people will tell you you can't do that of course they tell you that because they couldn't do it one way simply to stop thinking because you decide that you want to stop thinking now that's an interesting one that requires a considerable degree of alertness sustained alertness if you can sustain alertness this is what people try to do when they practice meditation techniques but here I'm saying examine the possibility of entering that state without any technique and without any method simply by allowing yourself to be present and alert and it is you need effort is not involved and yet you need the attitude of a warrior you need the I occasionally use the expression the sword of presence and with that sword you cut through time because time is and thought go together if you remove time thought collapses also if you remove thought there's no more time there's only this moment because all past and all future are thought forms if anybody else knows a greater truth you can tell me now and can tell me that you have actually touched the future or experienced it some might tell me yes but I foresaw the future well when did you foresee it? in the now surely so you both if you have the ability to foresee the future when does that happen you foresee it at this moment and when it comes it's also this moment it's not philosophy it's too simple to be philosophy it is self evident so anything that's self evident cannot become philosophy no so I'm not saying that it is not possible to predict what we call the future but it's still always now that's all we need to know and recognize it's still always now so past and future only exist as thoughts in your head because in your experience actual experience direct experience all you have is the present moment ever that's all so past and future are abstractions mental abstractions the moment you stop thinking there's no past and future there is the enormous aliveness and vitality and intelligence of the present moment the power of life itself is there and the present moment before when you were absorbed in past and future and thinking the present moment seemed totally insignificant because you were concerned with the vastness of past and the vastness of future and me in the middle of all that and what looked like the smallest thing the present moment is really it's like splitting the atom present moment recognition means you discover that in the tiniest thing is concealed the most enormous amount of energy the atom is the present moment and it suddenly splits and reveals it is the very core of all energy the very heart of all life energy emanates from now the present moment and before it seemed so insignificant the tiniest thing so here we are splitting the atom but it's not going to be made into a weapon it's simply a because it cannot be a weapon weapon means always separation me against you so here we are recognizing thought and time go together we abolish time we abolish thought it doesn't matter where you start if you say there is only this moment automatically thinking subsides and you enter presence or if you say there is nothing to think about I'll just be still that's it and alert that's it no past, no future an enormous energy but subtle energy not gross it's not noisy energy it's not that energy so is it possible for some people it is they may not have realized that it is possible to simply stop thinking the entire message of some spiritual teachers is to stop thinking some of them never said it openly perhaps they didn't want to shock the audience the entire teaching of Krishnamurti can be reduced to don't think and the entire spiritual teaching of anybody can be reduced to don't think but Krishnamurti went about the roundabout way and said let's investigate can thought solve our problems now let's think about that no and there was one teacher my favorite quote by that teacher Nisargadatta Maharaj who wrote I am that he didn't write it, he spoke it his definition of presence or meditation which is the same what is meditation, what is presence and he was a radical teacher he was very much like a Zen teacher he would shout at you so his definition was simply the radical refusal to harbor thoughts now this is not I am inviting you that is one way but it is not for everyone there is another related way that is open to more people and that is the discovery that already in your life there are many moments of no thought you just hadn't noticed because if there were not many brief moments of no thought you would be on the verge of insanity if not insane it is out of the brief gaps of no thought that a sense of aliveness arises that is still there even in people whose mind is very active where a sense of occasional glimpses of joy arise occasional glimpses of peace arise and there are humans who don't have these gaps anymore because their mind is continuously they are very very unhappy and some go insane and some commit suicide it is not that they don't have the stillness, it is covered up continuously but in still the majority of humans there are gaps of no thought and they never noticed and the wonderful thing is when you make that conscious you notice that there are gaps of no thought then the gaps become longer they become conscious because one is so humans are so identified with mind to the thinking mind the gaps when you are not thinking are totally meaningless it doesn't even know they are there and it cannot do anything with them so you cannot remember that you had gaps of no thought except sometimes perhaps when they were extremely more prolonged than others you might remember that once you climbed a mountain and it took you 4 or 5 hours to get to the top and the exertion, the physical exertion was such that you just couldn't think anymore and when you finally arrived at the top there was total stillness and at that moment the sun rose and there you stood and you remember it for the rest of your life the incredible sense of aliveness that you experienced there and you experienced it because there was complete stillness but I'm not talking about these great realizations that also of course come and go but the little ones for example, every time you look at something every time your glance falls upon something, whatever it may be a person an object a tree a flower, the sky at the first moment of perception there is no thought, there is always a gap when you first perceive something there is a gap of about a second sometimes two seconds before some kind of naming comes in which is thought and most people are not aware that that is there if you become aware that the moment you start to listen to a sound before the mind names it there is a gap of pure perception and that is there and it is out of these gaps during the day that you still find life worth living it is not because your thought is justifying to yourself, well it's still worth living because I might still make it it's a secondary that doesn't really work that well and a point comes when the mind will tell you it's too late now, I'm not going to make it so you cannot life cannot be made into it's worth living by some kind of mental justification why you should still be here it works for a little while, it's a substitute but to realize that life is worth living, that life is good beyond the forms because when you look at the forms of life you might draw the conclusion that life is not good because all the forms die sooner or later but to realize that life is good in essence and that in essence there is nothing that is not life and the realization that death is not the opposite of life, that life has no opposite, only birth has an opposite and that's death the realization that there is a goodness to life despite the fact that everything around you dies, despite the fact that even your physical form is already condemned to death everyone everyone despite the fact that somebody close to you might disappear at any moment, including yourself you could slip on a banana skin when you walk out of here and that's the end of it you don't know or I could and does it mean that life is bad the fact that forms are impermanent that they're not reliable that all structures are unstable that the stability of the physical universe is only a delusion when you go into big cities, you see the big buildings that's going to last forever not at all, it could dissolve at any moment occasionally we see that when huge buildings collapse and everybody is dreadfully shocked that looked so permanent and yet underneath that so here we have the impermanent nature of all the it's a universe in flux it's not stable the world of form and it's a dance a dance of form but hiding underneath all the forms of life is life the one unmanifested still, ever present essence and you that reveals itself the moment the forms, the primordial forms which are thought forms subside then the clear sky within is suddenly visible the clear sky the still space of presence and so that is to be realized and from that comes that spaciousness within out of that comes an intense sense of aliveness beingness and there lies the realization that life is good despite appearances and there comes the realization that even death is part of the goodness of life and death is no longer the great monster that lurks somewhere that you need to shut out and mustn't think about that and hide all the dead bodies that's what our civilization does they not only hide the dead bodies they even put make up on dead bodies life is good that realization comes when you realize it's actually wonderful to realize how impermanent all the forms around you are to watch dissolving forms means the formless comes up in you it's only from there that you can watch that and not react that is the deathless and that the deathless is there when in the moment that thought which is primordial form subsides and so the goodness of life is felt the more you have space inside you I mean everybody has equal space but the more you know it the more you realize it because if the fact that everybody has exactly the same space within as their essence even within and without ultimately is meaningless it's very much like saying everybody is tremendously wealthy but some people have forgotten their bank account number and if you've forgotten your bank account number that has a hundred million dollars in it you're poor or are you wealthy it's a question of perspective this is not a good analogy because a hundred million dollars would make no difference to you really to the joy of life whether you know that life is good so be aware that already that space of no thought is already in you many times during the day and again beware of sense perception and see when you first listen when you first look at something even when you first touch something there is a brief moment of no naming simply a still perception and that's where you where truly there's direct experience at that moment the moment you start thinking and naming it's no longer direct experience it's an abstraction and you've brought in the past now thought can still operate in you but it is no longer self-serving it still operates when it is needed and those humans who can think well there are not many humans who can think well most are simply burdened with noise in the head those humans who think creatively who have original thoughts not deep thoughts they don't exist deep thoughts don't exist but an original thought can come out of the depth of stillness every thought is a form it can point to the depth but in itself it cannot be deep no thought is deep so humans who can think originally original thinkers creative thinkers inspiring thinkers the way they think is they enter the state of alertness and many of them they don't even know that that's what they do they enter the state of alertness and they step back into no thought very briefly and then the words come when they have uttered a certain sequence of words they step back into no thought briefly, you may not even notice it it's not that they become still and suddenly start meditating they step back into no thought this is brief, it could only be only two seconds and some of them may feel the inner body and they don't even know it they just feel alive and then out of that aliveness come words but that aliveness is still vital, it is still and vital, it is and there's the primordial intelligence there that is consciousness itself that they touch also artists create out of that they become still and then it happens so people who think creatively it simply happens it's not even they don't think it's something that happens by itself it's a beautiful process normal humans who don't they are burdened by totally repetitive thoughts always the same kind of thing going round and round in the head and there are many humans who have not had one original thought in 20, 30, 40 years why not? because they cannot step back not for a moment out of the noise machine out of the continuous formation of thoughts and repetition of the same thoughts cannot step back into stillness and for even 5 seconds and then if they did for the first time they would have an original and a life thought I was amazed some years ago when my mother came to visit me and my mother like everybody else is burdened with a noise machine in the head she came to stay with me for a couple of weeks and first I was shocked because there's so much noise talking and continuous and it's not personal it's not because my mother is deficient it's simply the human condition and I just all I could do was sit there and be and listen and allow her to go through the motions of speaking and it's always the same it's normal too and then I was still and I was still, still, still and at some point after a few days she became suddenly still and she didn't speak for about a minute and then suddenly came what she said then I found amazing what she said then is the beginning of all spiritual seeking is the beginning of all philosophy lies at the very beginning of all that and she said isn't it strange we are born and then we die that was an original true thought and that came perhaps because some of the stillness activated for a moment that dimension in her and so, ah, yes so even the noisiest and that question is more important than the answer just to dwell with that question you don't even need to answer it on a conceptual level just have that question there and allow the strangeness of birth and death to be there why do we need to explain it you can arrive at a knowing that is beyond concepts by simply allowing the mystery of life to be there we are born and then we die so to be creative a creative thinker it's a continuous moving back and forth between nothingness emptiness you dissolve into nothingness and then form comes back nothingness, no thingness thingness no thingness thingness because every thought is a thing not a physical thing but it's a form and a form is a thing so discover that is how to think creatively but essential here for you to discover that already that dimension is present in your life it may be there when you open your eyes in the morning you wake up and there's a moment of when you haven't remembered, you're not remembered your past and you're not thinking about the future and you haven't remembered your problems there's simply aware presence ah, there it is now it is whether or not you achieve mastery in this or that doesn't really matter some people achieve mastery in kicking a ball or throwing a ball and in there they have if they're doing it well they're doing it without thought, in other words they're not doing it at all it's happening they link into a greater whole that is performing through them, a greater intelligence is acting through them to see that in action is always beautiful and most humans love watching it, they don't know why I always say why otherwise would they watch people either kicking or throwing or hitting a ball for hours and hours, well ego comes in too because you identify with a particular team and then the team loses and you go you're depressed for three days our team has lost we have been defeated so it's there are different approaches to the same you can look simply for where the spaces already are in your life and as they become conscious more conscious they become deepened and prolonged and then if that works for you but to simply as Nisargadatta said the refusal, the radical refusal to harbor thoughts don't misunderstand that it does not involve willpower as such as we know it it does not involve opposing something it does not involve fighting thought you cannot fight against a thought you could for a little while you could suppress a thought but while you suppress the thought more and more thoughts accumulate behind that one and eventually the lid will blow off you could say I'm not going to think and you will notice your body will become tense and you may stop breathing and it may work for a little while but that's not it, it's not the arising of presence, it is thought trying to suppress thought and then the slightest thing happens while you're doing that, somebody knocks at the door leave me alone can't you see I'm meditating so that's it can be misunderstood, that's perhaps why Krishnamurti never said it there is no effort involved and yet there is intense energy there your body is quite relaxed in that state but you are present throughout the body, every cell is alive with presence every cell alive with presence and you sense the entire body and it is simply the alertness that does it, not some kind of willpower not some kind of wanting, the alertness is there that is such that it doesn't allow thought to come and if thought does come it comes into the field of alertness which is so bright this is an analogy it's so filled with light that the thought comes and the moment it reaches the alertness it dissolves in it it goes and sometimes you can notice a thought coming up and you can you know that the eyes and the brain are very closely related they say the cells of the eyes are the same as the brain cells I don't know if that's true the you can blink if a thought tries to creep up into alertness and you notice that a thought is creeping up you blink once and you blink it away, it's gone it's a strange that's a a wonderful practice is to be practiced with your partner or anybody that you know well or once you get used to it even anybody that you don't know well is to look into each other's eyes it's not called staring it's called gazing because staring is the I'm going to outstare you staring is ego who can last longer and so on no it's we could call it gazing in some spiritual circles it is done a lot in some spiritual circles it is overdone but there's a beauty to it when it's happens naturally or as together with your partner someone you look into each other's eyes for a long time and the point of it is to share the space of thoughtless presence where you merge beyond thought the point of it is not to think about the other person or yourself but simply to abide in no thought while the looking happens and you merge virtually because when thought doesn't operate there's no thought of me and the other anymore there's simply a oneness that arises a space of presence arises between you and if thoughts do come in you can either recognize them as thoughts and say they're not important it's just a thought and you allow it to pass through or you can blink it away just once or twice one blink is enough usually a little thought comes, one blink it's gone or it comes and it drifts away and to realize thought always pretends to be important and so you have to recognize it's non-importance which is actually the case most of the time so this is a beautiful practice with anybody but there needs to be usually an agreement with the other person laughter sometimes in some spiritual circles or meditation or retreat places a newcomer comes and they've never been there before and the first person they meet they say hello my name is such and the other person goes laughter it can be very beautiful and it can also like everything else it can degenerate into something that you feel you should be doing to fit in or to be spiritual or whatever anything can become that so and then also once you can actually the same happens when you look once you practice thoughtless present looking you can actually do it with people who don't know that you are doing it but not in the way I just described it's briefer when they talk you go to the supermarket or the store and they say okay that'll be ten dollars fifty and you look at that person and for three seconds there's no thought they never know it they think you're working out in your head whether this is correct or laughter or you meet somebody and you shake hands and for a moment, two seconds, three seconds there's simply there's an energy that comes with that the ego can get in there and say I'm going to do something to you and immediately that's not it at all that's immediately mind energy so the ego can come in and say I'm going to make you present or it can say I'm going to heal you all you need give me three seconds and I'll heal you no there's no wanting in that there's no I don't want anything I don't even want the other person to be more conscious it's simply joyful to join with that person in presence yes of course it has an effect but there's no wanting in it, I don't need that person to change and that's why I'm doing it it is a joyful thing, it is a joining and it's joyful and that changes all your interactions once you're able to look at another human being and remain free of thought only just briefly enough a completely different energy comes into the interaction which has nothing to do with thought energy, mind energy yes, and then you speak another way, very important now again to bring that dimension into your life to invite it into your life not to create it, you don't create stillness or spaciousness because it's already there, you already discover it so don't think you need to bring it about as such it's there when you speak to someone usually it consists of several sentences, it's a mind stream you're telling something, something needs to be done or this or that come to the end of that particular mind stream as soon as possible and then step back otherwise you go on and on or the other person takes over and then it goes on and then you take over and then she takes over or he takes over and some people don't even need the other person they're happy to be engaged they're happy with a monologue all they want is somebody to be there they can talk at and it goes on and on but it's very easy once you're in a conversation with somebody for the mind stream to take over the interaction completely and then you talk and talk and talk and the other person says oh yeah that's it and then you go no space so to bring also step back here the similar thing that you do when you wish to think creatively, stepping back when the mind, you've said what you had to say why carry on step back into presence you've said your bit step back into presence if only for three or four seconds maybe then you speak again but it's also there, finding the gaps finding the gaps of no thought in any interaction, even when you go to Christmas dinners and talk to your family and so on, back to no thought where you're simply then you look at the other person again and in the looking there is a stillness and there is presence very different energy so that's important so that you don't get lost every time you open your mouth as somebody said to me I can be very spiritual when I sit alone in my room but the moment I start dealing with people and talking to people I lose it and of course that's when you open your mouth then the mind stream gets even stronger in many people because it reinforces itself through the other person so it's always a stepping back into the no thingness that is the essence of who you are and then you're back into form it's a dance, life is a dance between form and formlessness well that's how life that is how when life is lived as it could be lived beautifully, it is that for most humans it's not a dance between form and formless for most humans it's being lost in form and feeling the burden of that they haven't found yet the secret of stepping back because if you know the secret of stepping back into the no thingness into stillness, into presence then the world of form which before was a very frustrating place awful place really because things go wrong continuously in the world of form and if there's nothing beyond form you cannot depend on anything out here you can't trust anybody or anything and everything lets you down eventually because nothing lasts every situation lets you down because it's not fulfilling ultimately for a little while every person lets you down because either they leave you or they die so you can't in the world of form on the level of form alone it's not that reliable the world of form, of course not it's not meant to be reliable that's not how it works but when you are able to step back then it's actually a place that you can enjoy because your sense of self, your identity your sense of beingness your peace your aliveness does not depend on it anymore on the forms in your life you enjoy them but you don't depend because the very aliveness that you sense and feel and are, derives from the formless so from there you can enjoy the world of form it's a beautiful place too you could also reject it and then go totally into the formless but as long as you have a physical body or seem to have, why not enjoy the world of form while you're here and it's wondrous and beautiful and you don't need, no longer need to demand that the world, which is the world of form should satisfy you or make you happy because it won't you make me happy the world owes me no it doesn't the world doesn't owe you anything the world is supposed to make me happy and give me fulfillment no, fulfillment cannot be derived from anything in the world it is derived directly from the essence of your being at this moment then all the things of this world will give you a secondary fulfillment they will be enjoyable because you don't depend on them you can enjoy them you can enjoy the Rolls Royce you don't even have to give it away but if you decide to give it away you can enjoy the bicycle without needing to compare in any way the fact that you drive a Rolls Royce doesn't mean you're superior in any way to the next person on a bicycle or the other way around and you help the people that want to make a difference this is a great thing the main thing in this life is I want to make a difference in this world you cannot really make a difference as long as all the mind structures in you have not transcended the collective mind structures that have been running this world for thousands of years and you can see what that produced by reading a history book or watching TV tonight well, not here, but at home so you can see what kind of world that has produced you can only make a true difference by changing inside by accessing that by going through that shift in consciousness and then no matter where you go you make a difference you go into a supermarket you make a difference there you make a difference at work you make a difference at the conference table you make a difference wherever you are your very presence makes a difference and what in addition you do actively that varies from person to person whether you actively go and help people on one or the other level that depends one person is called upon to do this another person is called upon to do that you might be drawn to go to some country where people are starving and help there or you may continue to have your hairdressing salon and everybody who comes to you feels better when they leave not because they look better because they feel better inside we are entering the phase of silence from now except for this person on the chair and except for when perhaps tomorrow morning tomorrow afternoon we may ask questions here or if you go and have a session with someone if you need to say a few words that's fine too but I would recommend to observe the silence between now and Wednesday morning when you get up that's one day and two nights now one thing for those of you who have not experienced retreat retreatees, retreat attendants participants you may find it at first very awkward to sit at a table in the dining hall and nobody is speaking you may find it awkward if you are sharing a room to be with one or two or three people and you can't talk to them and you can sense that awkwardness perhaps, it's the same awkwardness that you feel when you go into a small elevator and somebody else steps in and you're both standing there and it's going and usually one of them will break the silence because they can't stand it anymore you cannot endure ten floors of silence and usually one person will break it and will make a comment about the weather that's the first thing it's wet today isn't it and the other person is relieved and says yes it is and I think it's going to rain even more okay that's it, it worked so if you feel the awkwardness what do you do then very simple watch the feeling of awkwardness and allow it to be there so that you become the space around the awkwardness there's the awkwardness and there's oh I feel awkward and then you feel it you feel what it is that you feel so you bring consciousness to it and you allow, you don't say I shouldn't be feeling awkward because he talked about it no I'm not saying don't feel awkward I say when you feel awkward know that you're feeling awkward and say it's okay to feel awkward I allow myself to feel awkward the allowing also brings the space whatever you allow there's immediate allowing any condition, internal or external saying I allow it to be there because it's here now what can I do, it's the form of this moment you allow it the allowing means immediately there's a space around it and you are the allowing space because space contains it all space allows everything to be there and that is another way of course accessing spaciousness or presence no matter what the condition is the moment you allow the condition, external or internal awkwardness, whatever the moment you say oh there it is, I can feel it and it's okay the moment you allow it, you have transcended the condition because you've become the consciousness in which the condition appears whereas before you were trapped in the condition and you were little limited by the condition yourself was in the condition your sense of self you incarnated into the condition and now you step out of the condition and allow the condition you are the space for all conditions and that's beautiful and once you allow it you transcend and that means when you transcend a condition for a little while it's still there and then usually it dissolves because you are not feeding it anymore if you want to prolong a condition, you resist it external or internal if you want to prolong it, you create inner resistance or some mental resistance, I'm feeling this but I shouldn't be unnecessary, allow this moment to be as it is no matter what form it takes and if you do that, that alone takes you to the formless that alone would take you to the formless because the formless is the allowing the space that is there the moment you allow it's a stepping back from the condition stepping, I could almost say you take the self out of the condition, you take the self out of the condition and the self is recognized as space, not as something, the self is recognized in its essence as no thingness that is the self that the Hindu teachings talk about, the great self, the one self and then there's a little self that identifies with a condition a thought, an emotion, a form a car, whatever that's the little self and that the Buddha recognized that as an illusion, Buddha said there is no self, what people regard as themselves as their self is an illusion there is no self and he's right because he was speaking about the self as form any form is not who you are, any condition is not who you are so although the Hindu teachings and the Buddhist teachings seem to contradict each other they're talking about the same thing, they're just using different terms because all that can be verified in your immediate experience, they are not abstract notions to believe in for many people they are, they say the Buddhist says there is no self and then the Hindu scholar comes and says yes there is a great self, Krishna said find out for yourself before you discuss so the awkwardness will go away if you allow it to be there and then actually it's quite nice to be in silence together, in stillness together and to eat your meal one spoonful at a time and taste it perhaps even more don't make a ritual out of anything don't say I'm going to chew 25 when you are in silence the mind will sometimes invent games to keep itself busy it will devise its own crossword puzzles in the head and then you start counting the people in the room and you become Mr. Bean Mr. Bean is so funny because there is always a basic truth of how the mind operates and he just exaggerates it a little and talking about crossword puzzles, don't go into your room and get the crossword puzzles out watch the mind as the Buddhists say the Buddhists in Buddhist monasteries when they want you to shut up, they say watch your mind so while we are in silence watch your mind be the watcher of your mind be the witnessing presence not only of the thoughts and you recognize the thoughts as thoughts especially while we are silent now don't take your thoughts too seriously they are only thoughts when you take them seriously then they get bigger and bigger when you recognize a thought as a thought it comes and goes, it's harmless there is no self in it if there is no self in thought every thought is quite harmless nothing wrong with it it doesn't really matter let it drift in, out be in the body as much as possible sense perceptions look, watch listen, smell be an alert presence not a heavy person walking through the gardens here a heavy me with a heavy past and a heavy problematic future that you carry all of them in your head be simply be an alert presence be consciousness, be a field of consciousness that walks through the gardens and there may be one or two rebellious people here who are saying, I'm not going to be told what to do and when you see them in the dining hall they say, ok, I'll have some juice now or they address you and say what did you think of this afternoon session did you get anything out of it to which the correct answer of course is nothing didn't get anything out of it laughter and so when we talk again it'll be Wednesday morning well, we will talk here it'll be Wednesday morning yes, tomorrow is Tuesday we'll be meeting here twice tomorrow in the afternoon we may ask questions that may involve words usually it does the most pointless talk by the way especially on retreats or anywhere is talking about presence what it is what I think it is laughter you're either present or not that's all laughter the mind cannot, can never really understand what presence is so don't try to sometimes, there was a retreat two years ago, after a week finally one mind which is always a human mind so it's nothing personal asked me would you please define in more detail and more clearly what presence is we had practiced presence for a whole week now the mind demanded a more clearer definition of presence so that it can put it in its pocket and take home a set of concepts and say okay now I know what presence is now what's the next workshop I can go to laughter if your body wants to move I believe there's a movement class following this and you can be present body can be present I can feel that my body wants to move but I may not come to the class laughter Tai Chi is a beautiful thing some people say that Tai Chi originated when thousands of years ago some people watched the movement of animals and imitated the movement of animals that's one theory, this may be correct another possibility is because nobody really knows another possibility is that it originated as spontaneous movement in a human being who was totally present and then a spontaneous movement happened he or she didn't know why simply the body went into a slow dance like movement to express the joy of presence this is how I see it started who knows it happened to me once and it happened to Kim I observed her, she suddenly started moving and she had never studied before when she did that, never done Tai Chi before and it was better than Tai Chi because it was totally spontaneous it came out of presence maybe it's in her genes it came out of presence and there was that spontaneous that movement and then that was thousands of years ago perhaps the first person went into that in China and there were probably some bystanders said what's that person doing it looks incredible and then perhaps it happened again, the same bystanders came and looked and those bystanders became the first practitioners of Tai Chi because they said we want to learn that and then they got a piece of paper if they had paper, or whatever they had and said ok, left arm goes up now now the right leg goes up slightly and then it goes down again and then later they started teaching it and miraculously even though that was turning it around it still worked in some way so it works both when the movement comes from the inside out as a spontaneous expression of presence joyful presence and it also seems to work from the outside in if you do these movements you enter presence seems to work both ways well if you do them rightly and you're not thinking while you're doing them of course if you're thinking ok my arm needs to be there now and you're not present in that movement because you're already there thank you as we sit here let's see if we can be aware of let me speak as you see if I can be aware of the presence that I am at this moment see if I can be aware of of the essence of my identity which is not my past which is not my thoughts or my emotions or what happened to me but something deeper that which is hiding in my story as the sense of I but usually gets mixed gets mixed up with my story it's like one could say it is the light of consciousness and that light that pure light gets mixed up with form one could use the analogy of a film projector the light is behind the film and there are forms that obscure the light in one way or another and everybody this is a strange thing everybody is aware of who they are of their innermost sense of self or identity but through the distorted form of their story, their life their thoughts and emotions and memories and identifications which are thoughts so when we ask who are you, usually you mention the identifications that consciousness identified with I am, that you give your name and then what you do or what you have or own or status or whatever it is that you identify with and then you present that as who you are I am a such and such I am a somebody I am a self-made millionaire I am a spiritual seeker and the self-made millionaire the spiritual seeker I am somebody who failed miserably another story all the stories and then in there somewhere is hiding the sense of me, of self and that is precious everybody knows that there is something precious that's to do with who they are people are so afraid that they lose themselves at some point and so hiding in the story is the I am that is nothing to do with time beingness presence consciousness itself before it becomes something is born into a form a thought form an emotional form and so one could ask what is it in your life or in my life talking as you what is it in my life that I can be absolutely sure of and some philosophers have asked that question what is it that I cannot doubt and they realized and scientists also asked that question and they realized that almost everything you can doubt you can doubt whether this room exists the people in this room because you have no direct experience of it because it's there is an optical your eye is a lens and so it's like a camera lens and the picture that it captures is projected onto a screen behind it, is then translated into nerve impulses that are sent to the brain and then in some strange way the brain reassembles certain nerve impulses that come through the senses in some way and forms a world out of that, a reality now what relationship does that have with what's actually out there, we don't know nobody really knows whether there's actually anything out there or whether it is simply something that is being dreamt the brain creates its dream or we share the same dream but we don't want to degenerate now into philosophy all I'm saying is you can doubt everything, including that the whole life up to now that you experienced as your life ever happened it could be a dream too it's very similar, you wake up in the morning and sometimes just before you're completely awake you remember the day before and you might think, was that the dream or did that happen but everything in the past is of the nature of a dream that dissolves and then you say, was that real or did I dream that when you arrive home after this retreat, you open your front door and then you put your luggage down and you look around and say did I ever leave did I dream all that because everything dissolves so quickly it's in the nature of a dream so you can doubt everything except one thing that you are because if you were not, the dream could not arise, the dream can only arise in the field of consciousness, there needs to be a consciousness that enables the dream to be if it is a dream or that enables your life to be there needs to be some dreamer a dream when you wake up in the morning and you remember a dream and you say it's unreal or it's only a dream well there must be something real in it the consciousness that enabled the dream to be that was real the light in which the dream appeared which is the light of consciousness and so your innermost who you are you can doubt on the level of form everything except that you are, there is beingness or presence there you don't know what you are perhaps you don't know what that is but without it nothing could be the light of consciousness I am so that is the I am that is hiding in the story the story says I am this or I am that you identify with this you identify with that that's form and you can doubt all that and it all passes very quickly but something that you cannot doubt is that you are you may be dreaming of this but you are and you may not be able to name what you are or who you are because in the moment you name it you have given the formless form so can we remain as the formless sense of I am at this very moment to sense your beingness or presence that has nothing to do with your past in fact let's pretend for a moment that you have no past and no name because it's ephemeral anyway, what is the name it's a sequence of sounds that your parents invented for you and then you believed in it so let's pretend for a moment that you have no past or you can't remember it because if you don't remember it, it's gone anyway and you don't have a name and remain with a bare sense of being and that is what underlies all the forms in your life no name no past no future do you know who you are?

No that's self-realization you have to become happy with not knowing who you are so you enter the unknown dimension of yourself all you know is that you are but you don't know what or who you are because if you think you know what or who you are you've already limited yourself you remain as consciousness and even that's too much to say that but I say it anyway because if we call it something we've already limited it but as long as you're aware that's only a point I cannot explain it by saying consciousness I cannot explain who you are by saying you are consciousness it's only a pointer consciousness is only a name somebody else calls it Tao, somebody else calls it something else it is better to let that be nameless simply it is simply knowing that you are but not knowing what or who you are and not needing to escape immediately or again into knowing and that's the great people find it hard to live with not knowing and this is why there's the compulsion to name as soon as an experience appears in front of you you need to name it it's the mind that needs to feel secure by interpreting it and saying what it is and so we are becoming familiar here first basically with not knowing who we are because you cannot know yourself as an object of knowledge not the essence because you are that through which everything is known you are the knower itself the very basis for knowing and that you cannot make into an object and from the point of view of the mind that sense of being as a presence is a state of not knowing of ignorance but only from the point of view of the mind but the mind and the egoic mind, the ego that's associated with mind identification is afraid of that it thinks you will lose yourself but you don't and once you are comfortable with not knowing who you are but simply realizing that you are that is what we described earlier as the background to all your experiences and perceptions the I am which if we want to describe it to give you another pointer it is a sense of spaciousness space also you cannot describe you cannot grasp an inner spaciousness the I am-ness beingness presence so when you look at it we talked this morning about sense perception looking at a plant a blade of grass, a tree, a landscape the clouds, listening to the rain listening to the birds whatever it may be and knowing yourself as the background or the stillness which is the same as the I am one could say that is the another analogy it is the screen on which the world of form temporarily appears so when people meditate then they attempt to get to that realization not through the sense perceptions which is another way they attempt to get to that directly to sense the presence that they are as consciousness and here we are doing it with our eyes open while somebody is speaking not somebody but there is a voice and that is enormously even a glimpse of that gives you a sense of intense aliveness because what you are getting a glimpse of by the way, whenever we talk about it we are distorting it and we are creating a duality where there isn't one you are not getting a glimpse of it it gets a glimpse of itself you are getting a glimpse of it there is a sense of aliveness subtle but strong it has nothing to do with the form whether the form is 20 years old or 95 years old it has nothing to do with that nothing to do with your achievements or non-achievements or what you have identified with direct sense of aliveness the joy of being beingness everything else that people seek in the world of form is a substitute because they haven't found that themselves there they haven't found the life what Jesus called eternal life they haven't found that their innermost sense the consciousness that they are and that is obscured by forms and so they look for more forms they are looking for that for themselves in the world of form and that's why living in this world for most people is such a frustrating experience because the world cannot give you what you are looking for ultimately and they don't even know that that is what they are looking for they think they are looking when I have accumulated those forms then I will be full and complete not realizing their very search for the fullness and completeness in the world of form is obscuring the fullness and completeness that's already there at this moment as their very life their very essence their very consciousness the very search for it obscures the reality of it now the search for it in the future obscures the reality of it now and so this is why as I said this morning sometimes when you obtain something that you thought would fulfill you for a moment it does seem to fulfill you if you thought your life would be fulfilled when you own your Rolls Royce or whatever it is or the mansion or finally appear on the front page of People magazine then for a moment when you see your picture on the front page of People magazine you will feel you have arrived and you might feel joy and that's because for a moment you're not looking for something more in the future the search for more forms to find yourself through has for a moment subsided and there you are and that won't last long because if you open People magazine and start to read what they write about you you will soon come down from that state because it will be completely distorted they will have created an image first they build somebody up and then they enjoy tearing them down that's how it works and that's why people love reading it because their emotions get stimulated by it another substitute for the true feeling of aliveness it's another substitute for their true being their true reality and so a large part of our civilization is there to provide people with substitutes to give them a second or third hand sense of aliveness of beingness of who they are through this and through that stimulus it starts when young children become more and more clever at devising stimulus because people there's more and more demand for stimulus because the restlessness and the discontent and the unhappiness are growing and so they say ok we must find something all these children are unhappy we must give them video games to keep them busy and give them stimulus so they at a young age they get already addicted to that input and it gives them it's a drug, it gives them it's a substitute feeling of aliveness the moment they stop playing they become restless again and the body twitches and then they go to the TV this is what our civilization has come to loss of forgetfulness we could say of being, there cannot be loss of being because the essence of who you are cannot be lost but we could call it forgetfulness of being and then large part of the civilization is engaged in finding substitutes, substitute stimulus drugs things proliferation of things in this world promises that through this or through that you will feel better you will be more more complete you will define your identity through this or that possession and people unconsciously buy it they buy it in both senses of the word entertainment industry a lot of it is violent so it feeds the emotion the old emotion the pain body substitutes so here freedom is only in finding that which everybody is seeking in the wrong place future that everybody is seeking through some form the formless through some form and it's right here of course you will function differently when that becomes a living reality in your life which we could call which we could call the feeling of yourself the sense of your very being we could call the space in the background the stillness within all the same thing the same null thing of course how you conduct your life will be different when you are connected with that dimension you have one foot in that dimension the other foot in this dimension and in any situation there's a question and here's another pointer we had I'm never upset for the reason I think we had what's my relationship with this moment and another pointer now is there space in my perception or my relationship or in what I'm doing at this moment is there space what does that mean we already have touched upon this when we look at something the space the still space is the background to the looking and to sense that as yourself while you look the form and the formless that is the light of consciousness itself and now to sense the still background that you are is very subtle at first because the mind may look for it and you can't find it like that it's in the background as a simple nothingness that's why the Buddhists call it emptiness it's perceived from the point of view of mind and form as the nothingness in the background the no thingness in the background that's always there in everyone even in the most insane person the no thingness is there in the background it cannot be destroyed in the same way that the space in this room cannot be destroyed no matter what you do to this room you cannot destroy the essence of this room which is space you can destroy the walls but you can make a lot of noise in here and yet at some point you'll have to stop making noise and the stillness and spaciousness of this room is immediately there again so it's always don't think you have lost it or too much has happened in my life I've done too many bad things it cannot be it can neither be destroyed nor marred in any way the essence of your being but it is from the point of view of this gross material reality and even gross mental and emotional reality from that point of view it is elusive subtle can never grasp it and yet it's always there in the background as the stillness and it's there when you look at a plant and you can sense there's a stillness it's not me as a person looking at a plant when there's no thought movement there's simply a field of stillness against which the perception of the plant arises and it may sometimes happen that you sense I'm not just talking now as I talk you can actually sense that it may sometimes happen that that sense of stillness against which a sense perception happens you feel that much more strongly than the sense perception itself, it is almost it can happen that the sense perception recedes although it may be very beautiful the beingness can be so overwhelming that all sense perceptions become surface phenomena ripples on the surface of being because the vastness of stillness that you are is so great that the entire world of form is no more than that ripples imagine being being a ball it's not because it has no shape and there's a stillness pervading the entire sphere but on the external surface of the sphere there's a ripple movement, continuously changing that's the world of form and in the depths of the sphere there's the eternal, timeless stillness and so most people are lost on the surface of things it's the world we call that the world Jesus calls it the world they are lost in the world which is the surface layer of reality we could say and that's all there is and then life becomes dramatic and frustrating and ultimately very unfulfilling so much that you want to get out not realizing that you really want to get in so when you look at a landscape a tree a flower the flame of a candle whatever it may be you may sense sometimes that we talked about it in terms of two dimensions, you may sense that the dimension of stillness becomes so vast that what you are looking at or what you are listening to is relatively insignificant, it's just a little ripple and then you may sometimes want to close your eyes and be more completely one with that but it's not yet time to completely disappear or merge with it because for a while we are here with a physical body what looks like a physical body and we are here meant to be a bridge between the world of form and the formless so the question is vital not only in your sense perceptions space is there space, where is the space can I sense the space it's a little pointer and then that's the I am it is vital in any activity that you do, now so far we have spoken about it in terms of what we could call passive perception listening, seeing touching, smelling but it is vital in any activity because that is something people not only lose themselves in sense perceptions they lose themselves even more in doing, in what they do so in any activity whether it's a manual activity then it's easier to stay present if it's manual, easier to have a sense of beingness and presence while the movement happens and if that is there then the manual activity, whatever you may be doing crafting something doing gardening some artistic creation that you do with your hands anyway it may be and there if you have the two dimensions then whatever you are creating whatever activity it is that you are engaged in will reflect that dimension if you are in touch with it while you do, while there is a spaciousness there is not little thought, there is simply aware presence that flows into the doing then whatever you are producing is of high quality, not only the end product is of high quality the doing itself is of high quality and if somebody watches you they will want to watch you more because it is beautiful to watch somebody being engaged in an activity that is not a means to an end, where the mind has created a future end that it wants to get to and in the meantime it is just the activity is complete in itself, it is not a means to something in the future there is tremendous enjoyment in the doing when the space is there with the doing but many things in this world do not involve manual things you are involved in abstract in an abstract world, mental abstractions consisting of computers of telephones of letters and documents and papers and screens and devices gadgets all abstract things that stimulate the mind that were created by the mind and stimulate the mind and it seems you can only run them if you use your mind can only operate these gadgets if you use your mind and to some extent that is true I have remained to this day computer illiterate now if I truly had to I would learn it and surrender to it so that perhaps could even enjoy it, but I am not going to try I prefer the pen and paper for writing it's more tactile, more immediate and it seems to work so in any activity you need to say is there space in what I do the loss of spaciousness is the worst thing that can happen to you no matter what kind of activity you are involved in and it is the most common thing for people to lose that the entire civilization one can almost say has lost it people are so obsessed with the doing that all sense of spaciousness is lost so the world pulls them in whatever they are doing pulls them in completely and they always need to look to the next thing or the end of it that they haven't reached yet but they want and need to reach, I need to get to the end of that because there is another thing waiting for me that I have to do also the loss of spaciousness in doing and so that needs to be regained, once you know what spaciousness is you have glimpsed it, you have glanced it you have experienced spaciousness here or many of you already have it in your life and now it's a question of not just having it while you look at a beautiful tree, that's relatively easy but having it while you are engaged in any kind of doing mechanical, whatever it may be is there standing back and observing what it is that you are doing so there is still a background of spaciousness although you may be, I sometimes describe in this world you need to everybody is in a hurry for some reason that's the civilization that we have created and there is always little time to do whatever you have to do it seems even with me, the publisher says we need a quote for this but it needs to be in by tomorrow evening can you write a testimonial for that but we need it maximum two days, it's going to print day after tomorrow it always seems to be, I don't know why and there is always the time there is very little time okay and then you sit down and then the testimonial there is a piece of paper there if it comes, it comes first you enter spaciousness become still present pick up a pen and then something may come or it may not come sometimes it does, sometimes it doesn't but I refuse to be driven mad by the world and this means some things get done and others don't get done and the world does not collapse when some things don't get done it's better to do a few things with high quality than many things low quality and if they sack you because you are now producing few high quality things and not many low quality things then that's for the best or it may be that you that others see how you work and then they catch it and they also start doing it the same way a constant alertness to see have I have I lost the space this is really another version of asking have I lost the present moment which really means have I lost awareness of the present moment and what is awareness of the present moment other than awareness of the underlying stillness the I am-ness because awareness of the present moment is not awareness of what happens in the present moment that comes that's a surface phenomenon but that's indirect awareness of the present moment that's awareness of the form of the present moment but awareness of the present moment itself is spaciousness is awareness of the underlying stillness in any moment no matter what happens and that is so the question of asking is there space in what I do or have I lost the space is the same as asking have I lost the present moment because the present moment is that is the space in which everything happens is the background is the stillness is who you are in your essence and the question have I lost it is not an absolutely correct question because you cannot lose it but it simply points to the fact that it has become obscured but let's just put it that way have I lost it and the moment you have lost it or think you have lost it there's the opportunity the opening for re-entering the space and that is a little skill that you can acquire here if you have not acquired it already the skill of re-entering presence spaciousness when you notice that you lost it lost in quotation marks the re-entering the possibility of re-entering spaciousness the moment you realize it's gone that realization is already the re-entry of spaciousness but if you don't know that the mind will immediately come in and form a judgment out of that realization it will make a judgment and say you lost it not realizing how do you know that you lost it because you just realized that you lost it and that realization is presence but the mind uses that realization and misuses it for its own ends and makes a mental judgment out of it and say you see you lost it again what's the point in doing it or whatever the mind says so to realize the moment you know that you lost it that knowing is the re-emergence of it because if you had truly lost it you wouldn't know it you would be completely immersed in the unconscious movement the unconscious thinking the unconscious activity the unconscious reaction so to know that you lost the present moment it is there in the knowing is the awakening already and then you stay in the knowing and that is the state of alertness that is suddenly back and you suddenly feel the inner body again and the first thing as I mentioned earlier the first thing that you often notice is your surroundings again sense perceptions ah space is back and then you continue doing what you are doing with the sense of space now the place where you most easily lose it is when the mind is active and especially when the mind is interacting with other minds talking discussing something that's where you most easily get completely drawn into thought forms the consciousness gets totally drawn into thought forms and you are totally in every thought and so you can observe it when you watch maybe not here because perhaps everybody is present now but when you watch two people talking to each other or just listen to two people talking to each other you can often notice that lack of presence that lack of space in the interaction and then you said you know I really think that wasn't quite the right thing well no you are not quite it just forms one form after another there is never not a standing back from the mind stream it's being immersed in the mind stream and that's so seductive once you and especially when you are dealing with something that the world calls a problem we need to deal with this, this is so important what are we going to do about this that's how the world functions one problem after another so then to lose yourself not only in the mind stream but to lose yourself in whatever the world says matters this thing is so important we have to sort this out what do we do everybody is frustrated and everybody is so important no sense of space between it and yourself you are not there really as the space you get absorbed by the problem you get absorbed by the activity you get absorbed by the mind stream and then you suddenly you notice oh and there is a waking up again I lost the space and then the space is back and you stand back and for a moment you don't participate in the interaction the discussion whatever it is and immediately there is a different energy field there and if you then start speaking again the words will not feed the mind they may be words but the words then come out of presence and it may be that for the first time somebody says something sensible for the first time somebody presents a real solution to the situation and that is the world is the world has two aspects, the world in your head and the world out there which is, I don't mean nature by world I mean the civilization that the mind has created so you have the inner world and the outer world which are really one the whole civilization, almost everything is mind creation very little in it contains presence, occasionally here and there, there are certain things, yes but it's rare so the world has incredible momentum the world in here primarily and the world out there, but primarily of course in here and everything it's easy to lose yourself in that because of the pulling power of the mind the inner mind and the externalized mind as the world and the world will, it's not only that the world wants to pull you in, every other mind every human who is only there as a mind wants you to contribute to his or her mind stream and wants to convince you that this really matters this is very important whenever you think something matters absolutely in this world you have lost space whenever you behave as if something was deadly serious and mattered absolutely and for some people it can be the tiniest thing just even getting the right, buying the right kind of thing in a store I got that he told me the wrong kind of what does it matter

[Speaker 4] (7:56:39 - 7:56:41)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (7:56:44 - 8:18:02)

and you see what people get upset about absurd things completely irrelevant and unimportant and they say it matters they believe it matters it's completely meaningless in the larger scheme can only be seen from the perspective of space so the tiniest thing people lose themselves in and get upset and angry about and tell others about and yet you might ask what about the big things because sometimes big things go wrong in this world there can be somebody close to you may suddenly die or die prematurely you may suddenly experience great loss something may suddenly go drastically wrong in your life and there's no human life in which this does not ever happen it happens to everyone sooner or later things go wrong and even there, yes of course you weep when someone close to you dies you may feel sad when somebody leaves you because it's a kind of death or your business empire collapses 30 years of work down the drain, says the mind it's just a thought not a reality yes, form collapses as they do all the time, and there may well be weeping you may find yourself weeping but if you know if you're in touch with the life that is beyond form within, at a deeper level there's also a peace and that will be there particularly once you already have touched space spaciousness or as I sometimes call it space consciousness the rest is object consciousness then if something in the world of form, including physical forms, human forms suddenly dissolves dies, leaves you there is you as the form identity may feel sad and may weep, because one aspect of you, a small one, is form, the physical form and the psychological form of me and the depths of yourself you will feel that more strongly the peace will be stronger that is underneath the weeping for those who have already who are in touch with that dimension within when great loss happens to you and so that really means nothing in this world which is the world of forms matters absolutely because every form of course is destined to dissolve sooner or later and nobody can predict you cannot have a business contract that says if I do the right things then my form is going to survive for a hundred years doesn't work every form is destined to dissolve sooner or later and the question is are you in touch with the deathless dimension in yourself the formless, deathless dimension.

Deathless is a term the Buddhists sometimes use the deathless realm Buddhists like to use negative terms some Buddhist schools do also have positive terms but originally the whole of Buddhism is expressed in negative terms so that you don't substitute mental idols for the actual reality so Buddhism does not talk about eternal life like Jesus did but they point to the same thing it speaks of the deathless realm Amara Vati the realm of the deathless and that is exactly what we are pointing to here and isn't it amazing that that begins with looking at a flower in stillness that is the beginning of the arising of the timeless and deathless and formless dimension of who you are when you are in touch with that even what the world calls dreadful disaster yes, you may weep on the surface where you also are a form temporarily well, I'm not saying will not touch you in the depths of your being it will touch you but very differently, it will touch you in the sense that the peace that you feel will only be stronger when things around you collapse that's, I've experienced that many years ago for the first time and I couldn't understand it when things went wrong in my life the peace was stronger I said that doesn't make sense I just lost that and the peace is more is deeper it was almost like something within to compensate for the loss of a form, the formless was shining even more so that begins with spacious perception the next step is spacious doing the next step is spacious interaction with other humans and then meeting the world and whatever the world demands with the sense of space so that it doesn't draw you in completely and realize only one thing matters absolutely and that's not a thing everything else is in the realm of the relative it matters relatively but not absolutely exactly the same truth Jesus expressed in the famous parable of Martha and Mary, two sisters he was visiting two sisters Martha was busy about the house cooking and cleaning and preparing the meal for Jesus and getting so much to do before lunch is ready got so much, and Mary was listening to Jesus sitting at his feet looking into his face and Martha said come on Jesus, tell her we've got things, we need to get on with things here, there's so much to do tell her to help me I can't do it all by myself I'm going mad here and Jesus said Martha, Martha, you are worried about many things but only one thing is needful and she has chosen that one thing now modern theologians are not very happy with that they try to reinterpret it in some way, he didn't really mean that now is he saying we should never it's not saying we should never do anything anymore but get a sense of perspective and see what really matters and that choose that first and if then the lunch is not ready on time so be it but it may be ready too but nothing matters more than finding yourself which is one with finding God, a word I rarely use because of it's misuse nothing matters more and so if things don't get done they don't get done and then after a while you see there is a balance you can do things beautifully without losing touch with being with presence teaching used to be enjoyable and nowadays at universities and schools many teachers say the administrative work and the burden of that is is almost impossible to carry and so see what is primary and that is presence you choose that first uncompromising uncompromisingly so that you don't get seduced into believing that something in this world matters more, that something in this world matters absolutely nothing matters absolutely except finding yourself and then you do what you can in some cases the world around you will catch on if you start living in a different way some other people may become interested and may watch you and may ask questions or just your presence may be enough to change an environment that's sometimes possible the presence of one conscious person can sometimes change an unconscious environment in other instances if the unconsciousness is too heavy too deeply entrenched that may not be possible and then there will be a separation you will separate yourself from that unconscious energy field or they may want you to leave anyway as we said in the joke that I mentioned you will get the sack because you are not suffering from a stress related disease space space vital use that here while you interact with people space in an interaction means first of all the ability to be there as spacious presence while you listen that means the words of the other person are being received in a field of alert stillness that's how not to get drawn into the mind level of that vibrational frequency of mind because the mind wants you to join it, the other person's mind will attempt you your mind to draw it out and to join it so that they can unite and reinforce each other mutually on that level of frequency of mind so the mind, come on surely you must have an opinion about this don't you think that was a dreadful thing?

I thought it was absolutely well can you listen even to somebody who wants you to and emotion may be part of it too often the ego is a mixture of mind and emotion an entity, a mental emotional entity, come on and to be able to listen in spacious presence now that requires a high degree of alertness on your part alertness has nothing to do with tension of course alertness is free of tension it is relaxed remember Buddha and Clint Eastwood together in one it's that but if you are not alert then you will lose yourself in that person's mind stream and join it with your mind stream so the person is speaking or they may just be making some innocent remarks but even there while the person speaks the ability to listen not to listen as a mind or to listen as a person but to listen as spacious presence to be there as spacious presence for the other person so the words are being received nothing now it means you are not mentally seeking anymore to either agree or disagree with that person because that's usually what the mind does it will immediately say you are absolutely right there, they should do something about it or the mind says you are completely wrong you don't understand this at all, let me tell you how it is so you either, the mind usually looks for either a dissent I think is the word or assent either it wants to agree or disagree and here you neither agree nor disagree nor are you preparing the next thing that you are going to say if ever you prepare mentally the next thing that you are going to say whatever it is that you are going to say will only function on the level of mind and it will be uninspiring it will be of low quality only that which comes out of your mouth and I'm not saying it's an emotion that suddenly bursts out because that's possible too, no if it comes out of presence out of first there is the stillness and then that person speaks and then that person stops perhaps if you are lucky and says now what do you think and at that moment you are not thinking anything yet and then there is a moment of stillness perhaps but it may not be long, the other person may not even notice that it's stillness and then some words will come out of your mouth there is no nobody can predict what will come out but it will be more vitally true than anything that the mind could say and it's possible that the words that come out of your mouth are I don't really know to be comfortable with not knowing not to prepare mentally the next statement the next objection, the next question the next clever thing that's coming out of your mouth but to simply be there as spacious stillness and if three people are talking it's even more important and that's even more seductive or four people being in the body helps feeling the inner body as you listen I learned that lesson at my first public talk I ever gave many years ago I met somebody in London where I was living at a some dinner and he said I work for the Theosophical Society I just spoke to him for ten minutes he didn't know anything about me well nobody did and I didn't either and he said can you come and give a talk to our Theosophical Society we need people like you the first time anybody ever asked me to give a talk and I said ok what should I talk about he said you just find a title it doesn't matter and then let me know and then in three months time you can come and give the talk so when the time came close to the talk one morning I woke up and my mind said you better prepare something I already knew that to speak the truth that must come from presence not from anything that is prepared and yet my mind convinced me that I need to prepare something so I got a piece of paper at least I already knew that writing a whole script that would not be possible but I had a piece of paper not big with all the points, ten points that I thought needed to be mentioned to make the talk complete one to ten and so I arrived maybe 30 or 40 people were there and he said here is Eckhart he is going to talk about can't remember what the title was spiritual dimensions in psychotherapy they liked a complicated title and I already knew the first two points that I wanted to talk about by heart so the piece of paper was there started to talk and everybody was presence was beginning to fill the room everybody entered presence and I came to the end of point two and then the mind said now have a look

[Speaker 4] (8:18:02 - 8:18:08)

and the moment

[Speaker 1] (8:18:08 - 8:21:31)

I looked at the paper and read point three I could feel the entire energy field in the room going they'd all left me they'd all gone back into their little minds and I had gone back into mine and when I looked up again I saw two people were looking at their watches and then I started to talk about point three and presence returned and then I'd come to the end of point three and then it happened one or two more times it took me a while to learn I looked collapsed, energy field collapsed and that was the last time I ever used a piece of paper in a talk and I realize now even if I had forgotten five or six out of the ten points even if I'd only mentioned the first two points and couldn't remember anything else it would not have mattered because the essence of any true talk is not in the words the essence is in the space out of which the words come the rest you can go to universities for, that's okay it's that's what matters and even at university I experienced it once when a lecturer the only one who spoke spontaneously who didn't have notes that they'd used for ten or fifteen years read the same lecture notes there was one lecturer who spoke who just opened a work of literature or poetry and he would look and spontaneously talk never had any notes that was at the university I was taught in London a few years later I was at another university where he got invited as a guest speaker and he had come with notes I had told everybody he's great you must listen to him and when he got up he had a pile of notes and every time he read partly 75% of his talk he read from notes and everybody was okay and 25% occasionally he looked away from the notes and started to speak ah that was fresh, that was new, that was alive and it wasn't in the words, the words were there, yes they had a certain significance but where there was something present in the room beyond the words, that was that would make the talk vitally alive and so after the talk we went to a pub and I asked him why did you bring notes he said well I thought it was Cambridge here and they expected something more than just a

[Speaker 4] (8:21:32 - 8:21:32)

boop

[Speaker 1] (8:21:40 - 8:34:58)

so it's very rare at university to find that dimension extremely rare a few geniuses there who miraculously survived within that structure, yes but mostly the entire thing is mind and therefore it is not a place universities are not usually places that are where you feel true aliveness, they are dense energy fields some more than others but here and there they manage just as in medieval times you had a few great mystics, teachers who miraculously survived within the catholic church some of them were tolerated or they hadn't discovered yet what they were really talking about and they miraculously survived within that structure and so even at universities there are some alive beautiful beings who miraculously survive within that otherwise totally mind dominated structure so the ability to speak from presence not to prepare the next thing that you are going to say and that is to speak from space is there space in this interaction no relationship can thrive without space that's the most vital ingredient in any relationship and space is the formless dimension of who you are, the stillness is there stillness is another question is there stillness in this relationship and stillness is to be able to listen in stillness to be able to look at your partner in stillness the wind is sweeping away all the old mind structures we had a retreat here four years ago and on the last night there was a violent storm several tents collapsed and the roofs the tiles got blown off the building ah I'm not predicting anything you may remember Jesus saying truly I tell you whenever he says truly I tell you in the old translation it says verily I tell you whenever Jesus says truly I tell you he's saying now listen up unless you become like little children you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven so in many ways living in presence is like living like a it's living like a little child there's a sense of openness of wonder of awe of continuous newness the only difference is when presence arises in an adult human there is the same openness that you have in a child in whom the mind has not taken over yet with an added dimension of knowing of depth not only are you in touch with that dimension you know that you are in touch with that dimension without formulating any thought you just know it there's a knowing that has nothing to do with concepts and that knowing will play an increasingly important part in your life and gradually substitute the conceptual knowing that people think they need they cannot live without it will gradually substitute that a non-conceptual knowing and that already is there when you look at a plant you know that it is a plant but you're not limiting this life being to that by imposing the label plant on it you also leave untouched the mystery the unfathomable dimension of every life form you don't fall into the error that you can explain the mystery that is hiding in each life form that can never be known through any mental concept but can be known as a reflection of the essence of who you are so the mind is to a large extent pseudo-knowledge it believes that you know the moment you've called it something nothing, you don't know anything if you call it something, you just have given it a label or a sound, you've attached a sound to it, it's such and such a plant now you think you know nothing it remains as mysterious as before except now you have the illusion that you know what it is the world is a complete mystery and it should remain a complete mystery that's the beauty of it it cannot ultimately be known conceptually, it can only be known yes, as a reflection of your very being and yet even there that remains a mystery the modern world has lost all sense of sacredness because sacredness and mystery are intimately connected holiness or sacredness when the mind labels everything there's no sacredness left because there's only pseudo-knowledge left sacredness is there the moment there's space and that's why you go into certain places that are considered sacred where people who are attuned to it can still feel something and there's always great spaciousness in those places there's always a sense of space whether it's a temple or a cathedral an ancient cathedral and preferably you go in when they're not doing something in there when there's just the empty space there's sacredness or certain in nature there's the space between two hills or the space of a cave a sense of there's always there's no sacredness without space and the primary realm of the sacred is your own self the space that you are there goes a thought and that's fine an externalized thought noisy smelly laughter again to remind you tonight when you are in bed lie in on your back and go into the body go into sleep from inner body awareness when you wake up go back into the body rest in there so that the mind doesn't immediately take over and then all the little things here sense perceptions hearing, seeing maybe smelling occasionally touching doing little doings bring presence into little doings walking one step at a time no need to arrive at the last step you'll get there anyway at the moment this is the step you're taking doing little things hand lifting a cup of coffee, a cup of tea juice just present with the movement so that presence flows into what you do it's not a means to an end it's simply the moment of drinking isn't better than the moment of reaching for the glass or the moment of the glass traveling to the lips it's good can this movement happen against a backdrop of space in other words can you lift the glass and put it back without the interference of thought simply alert stillness so any movement you can do like that is it possible to perform this little, you have to find out for yourself can you perform this movement in spaciousness put this from here to there how long does that take to put something from here to there it takes about three seconds but that doesn't matter it's three seconds of presence and no thought just alert presence that's a little spiritual practice I don't know if anybody has ever suggested that you pick up a little thing and put it from here to there space and that's not asking a lot but it's an enormous thing because what comes into your life then is space is thoughtless presence alertness the ability to do things without the interference of thought but not unconsciously with great consciousness but without the interference of thought so walking from here to there don't make it a very long distance don't say okay I'm now going to attempt half a mile without thought it's enough between here and the next tree every step I'll just be present with every step and okay then you're there you can then try the next tree or forget about it

[Speaker 4] (8:35:04 - 8:35:06)

I've forgotten what my problems are

[Speaker 1] (8:35:16 - 9:45:16)

we will have a communal silence probably starting tomorrow evening and go on until Wednesday morning tomorrow evening, that's Monday evening until Wednesday morning I will suggest that we be silent together and particularly at that time many things you can practice like that because nobody is going to interfere and ask you questions or tell you their opinions or if they do you tell them to quiet we're talking about movement there will be movement classes apart from the yoga classes that you have in the morning those who feel awake enough early in the morning can go to yoga if that's the kind of movement your body likes or holding and Kim is doing movement classes the first one after this after sitting for a long time it may be helpful I believe it's not outside today but in the Leela Hall Leela is the Indian word for divine play in the Leela Hall so you can move the body there and here is exactly what we were talking about to bring presence into movement I talked about little movements that you may do in your everyday life and then there's also the possibility of being present with any kind of movement, it could be a spontaneous movement or it could be a movement that you have learned as in Tai Chi where you move just one movement while this arm moves from here to there to move it to be a high quality movement you need to be present and not wanting to be there while you're still here and not being here while you're already there with your mind to just be there at every moment so you cannot do movement well if you're not thinking you have to be present so movement can be a great help for the arising of presence and and when you listen to that wind can you sense the stillness underneath it the listening presence that you are being and that's a beautiful contrast because in a way wind seems the opposite of stillness it's an enormous movement and yet it's happening against the background of stillness somebody once asked me why are you quiet before you wait for so long before you start speaking and the true answer of course is because I don't know what to say now that could be very uncomfortable if I thought that I should know what to say that would be a nightmare and some people have these nightmares you dream that you suddenly you sit somewhere and suddenly the curtain opens and you're in front of a large audience and you don't know what to say but it's only a nightmare because you think you should know what to say if you were comfortable with not knowing what to say would be fine so there are two states of not knowing one is not knowing and thinking that you should know and the other is not knowing and being at ease with not knowing then the not knowing is actually a very deep state of knowing but not conceptual but it's covered up as long as you think that you should know or trying to know or trying to figure out or interpret or you should know what the next moment what's going to happen the next moment so by thinking that you should know or by attempting to project yourself to the next moment you cover up the depths that's in you that we could call not knowing but that really is simply non-conceptual intelligence formless intelligence primordial intelligence it's not something we can measure sometimes people think they can measure intelligence but all they can measure is form thought form solving little problems or puzzles which is a tiny fraction of true intelligence to be comfortable with not knowing in a conceptual sense is part of living in the state of presence and it's not only when you're in front of an audience because you may or may not be but also be comfortable with not needing to interpret the situation or another person as the old 60s Beatles song went let it be there it is let it be why have to figure out what it is why?

of course because the ego feels better it has control over life if you can figure it out interpret it judge it then the ego feels it's in control it's not, it's an illusion and the more the ego feels in control the more deeply you are immersed in dream and illusion and then comes a point after a few years of doing that and you inhabit your own conditioned illusory reality and that you experience then as the world and what you react to is then not actual situations but your view your interpretation of the situations and then you recreate the same thing it's a vicious circle we could talk about it a long time but this is essential that you feel at home with leaving things alone leaving people alone that's a great gift the greatest gift is to leave them alone when the ego says yeah but I need to protect myself who knows what he wants from me there is a knowing that's not conceptual and you'll find yourself doing the right thing saying the right thing you know as the buddhist thing goes I can't remember all the right action, right speech, right this right that and I love buddhists I mean buddhism the I think they start from up there you cannot generate right speech, right action and so on without being in the right state of consciousness it flows out of the state of presence naturally as long as you're not present you can try hard to practice right speech and right this and right that but it's hard and many times you won't get it right so I don't believe the Buddha ever said you should start up there I'm sure he said let's start with the foundation and he didn't explain all that much conceptually, that came later he might have said be in the body or said take a conscious breath observe your breath or something like that, which of course means stop thinking you can't observe your breath without, and think at the same time if you think, you either think or you observe your breath another way of space arising space observing your breath you can do it as a meditation where you sit down and light a candle and light the incense or you can observe your breath at any time, at any moment just one breath at a time brings in a space into your life one breath at a time observing simply means following it with your attention feeling it, sensing it as it enters the body, the air enters the body and even noticing the tiny gap when the in-breath has come to an end and then observing the breath as it leaves the body and even being conscious of the tiny gap after the out-breath has come to an end and that's a very simple thing but it requires alertness and it brings in space so it's just that one little thing which is also closely related to being in the body because as you observe the breath it takes you into the body so almost without wanting to, you begin also to feel the body at the same time takes you out of mind it creates space and it doesn't matter it would be more helpful to remember 50 times during the day to take one conscious breath than to sit for very long periods in meditation bring it into normal living just one breath at a time or if you can, maybe two but people say I haven't got time for meditation that's fine, then don't meditate just take conscious breath during the day have little reminders next to your computer in the bathroom or wherever to take one conscious breath and there's nobody in this world who does not have time for one conscious breath 50 times and then people might say yeah, but 50 during the day and that is space arising spaciousness just that and then out that is presence and then out of presence comes right speech or no speech, could be even better many times unnecessary speech drops away also arises right action if it's needed and unnecessary action drops away a lot of the action generated by egoic consciousness is unnecessary they're all running around like mad and but of course some action is necessary and then you'll know the difference becoming acquainted with space consciousness which is not from science fiction but it's to do with inner space we call it inner, but ultimately everything is inner the whole world is an inner phenomenon because where else does the world arise so you could say there's nothing that is not inner there was one Zen master little known one of his ways was he would call a disciple in the monastery he would call their name when they were nearby as if something very urgent was happening John yes master and then they looked at him and he didn't say anything and so the new monks or nuns or and some of the old ones too they try to figure out he's trying to tell me something what's he trying to tell me he's not trying to tell you anything the interesting thing is it's not about content these disciples or monks they expected content to come from the master and all the master pointed to was space content doesn't matter to him he's got nothing to say what can he put in all he's interested in is space not content so all the master wants is your attention, your wakefulness your alertness your spacious awareness he doesn't want to fill it with anything and that's when you that's such a shift when you you shift from a life a content based life which is normal and normal equals insane as we know content content based life almost everybody lives a content based life a life entirely dominated by content their situation the so called external content the things they start with physical objects that they own or that are in their life that they have to worry about that's physical thingness content content is then the situations that arise, the relationships the problems that arise life situation content is your own body and your concerns about that other people that you meet, your work your financial situation the drama whatever, all that is the content of your life on the external level that absorbs people's attention and for most people the entire attention is in the content of their lives, what's going on in my life and then there comes the inner content the thoughts one after another, ultimately of course it's all inner, but just for the time being we divide it after inner the thoughts which they are identified with and which are related of course to the life situation and so on, and then there come the emotions both the emotions that are generated now by egoic thinking and the emotions that have lived in you for a long time accumulated from the past pain, from childhood pain from the more distant collective past of humanity that comes up periodically we may talk about that in a little bit more detail, but for the time being just to see all that is content and that absorbs people's consciousness virtually a hundred percent their thoughts, their emotions and the things that are going on in their lives and that's how there's nothing else, a content based existence and then comes the realization that there is another dimension without which content would not even be possible, there wouldn't be no content just in the same way we couldn't put any furniture or bodies in this room if there were no space here but we don't, it's easy to forget that the essence of this room is space and it's easy to forget that the essence of yourself is equally space the space of consciousness but that space is so crammed full with content that you can't see it anymore you can't sense it so it's almost as if content obliterated space in people's lives and then life becomes a burden and what they try is they try to rearrange the content of their lives in such a way that finally their life works but a content based life cannot work because the most vital essence the very aliveness of life is missing the essence which is space which is not content which is not form, the formless essence of all life, life itself is missing and then no matter how you rearrange the content and some people are obsessed with rearranging the content of their lives they think just a different configuration of furniture will change everything furniture meaning content and it doesn't many times you might think okay now I've made it that's it, new relationship new place to live, new job new climate everything is it's perfect now and it's not and soon you find out that wasn't supposed to be here and that is what the Buddha says means when he talks about dukkha, suffering which can also be translated as just plain misery and so he said wherever you go, whatever you do you will encounter suffering, misery or it can also be translated as unsatisfactoriness not quite fulfilling not quite it so it's the degrees of dukkha just unease is already dukkha irritation is already dukkha and then it gets there is more and so he is talking about a content based existence and so primary is not rearranging the content of your life but finding that which lies beyond content and to do that you don't need time or future and you don't need to have the content of your life in a particular way so that finally you have time to find you don't need time I need time to find myself I can't do it not here I need more space I can't share a room with three people I need space, I wish I had stayed home I could have done better meditations at home could have done my own retreat at home and then I had to wait for the bathroom that's all, that's not these are not ideal conditions, I can't practice in them observe your thoughts don't believe in them the best place to start the only place to start with finding space is at the very conditions of this moment the three people in the room one of them snores waiting for the bathroom and then observe the thought that comes in and says I can't do it, I need space, my own private space and observe that as a thought and let it be then the thought doesn't grip you anymore, it doesn't have that hold on you where your whole sense of self is in that thought and you actually 100% believe in what that thought which is a thought form, which is content says so the thought form, the content says I can't find the space now of course it says that, because it is it is form it wants to be there as form every life form wants to persist in that form it has a certain momentum including thoughts so it's only by observing the thought and then saying, ok why believe in it I can't I need more space the thought comes and goes you allow it and in that moment you have the space or you have a reaction, emotional that goes perhaps with the thought and then you observe that you step, oh and you also allow it ok and there's the space, the moment you allow something there's space you step back out of it we could call that consciousness disidentifies from form you step out of a thought or an emotion you don't deny it you don't push it down you don't repress it you simply step, you were in it and then you step out and really what's happening is on a cosmic level we could almost say you look like a person but you're not a person, it's just a temporary appearance consciousness disidentifies from form or another way of putting it it's the end of the dream that consciousness dreamt the dream of forms steps out and realizes itself as space so it's always there the thoughts will come in and then you simply allow the thought to be there and especially we talked yesterday about the possibility perhaps of simply being so alert that thoughts don't come in anymore only as little fragments some of you may be able to do it or you may be able to do it for short periods of time it just depends on how much presence is coming through but one could say even more important than that is to find a spacious relationship to thoughts, the thoughts that are still there that's fine, that's enough really to find a spacious relationship this is just one way of putting it to find a spacious relationship to the thoughts that are still there that come thoughts are only problematic if your self is in them, because then the thoughts become a me, an ego when the thoughts are free of self, and that happens every time you step back and say there's a thought, or the emotion then the thoughts lose their heaviness you know the heaviness that otherwise people carry around with them as themselves, which are their thoughts plus the emotions that go with the thoughts there's always the next thing to be offended by and complaining about, or then one thing attracts your attention and then it disappoints you and lets you down, then you can complain again or at first something is just great, this is the greatest thing on earth but it's form and so then it lets you down it could be a spiritual teacher, it could be anything he's the greatest and then the form of the teacher does something oh no, he's not he burped after dinner and of course the content-obsessed mind loves to idolize other forms before, in many cases before it gets let down by them and then tears them down and complains about them it loves to idolize form because it mistakes the essence, the formless one life, one consciousness with form, and that is when it idolizes persons and of course there's the Buddha and Jesus yes they also burped occasionally after dinner of course they did because they had a physical body and other things and yet something was shining through them the formless and the egoic consciousness confused that with the form because it knew nothing of formless or in a very remote way it had some inkling that there was something there that's divine of God so there's a distant recognition but so distant that as the mind obscured it came in and misinterpreted it and this can also happen to yourself and it has happened to some people in whom presence has arisen who became transparent enough present enough for space the formless consciousness to shine through the form the psychological form especially the psychological form lost its density the egoic density which consists of an incessant stream of thoughts and emotions and so when it lost its density there were increasing gaps in that and suddenly the power of the divine if you want to call it which it is was able to come through the form but there's still the form still to some extent operates and so it has happened and can happen that the form consciousness, the object consciousness that is still operating although there are increasing gaps is now interpreting the power that is the power that is totally non-personal it's nothing to do with this form it's there because the form has become transparent but this content consciousness misinterprets that and identifies with the power that flows through and says that's me and then what tends to happen these spiritual teachers will suddenly start saying I am the greatest who ever lived I am greater than and no greater will ever come after me form identity has reasserted itself the power was there and may still be for a little while be there so you can sometimes have the discrepancy in certain teachers there's an ego which sometimes can be quite mad because there's an enormous power there suddenly and the ego misinterprets it and claims and says it's me and when this happens usually it's the case when the teacher has certain claims of uniqueness that greater than this one or that one or that one greater than a comparison which is always an ego device comes back in so be careful when you go to teachers who say no greater has ever been or will ever come or something like that or I'm the greatest at the moment on the planet there may be a greater one once I'm gone but not while I'm here and so that's not only in it's also something to be aware of in yourself the ego can easily misinterpret what is happening in you to you in you the process of transformation, the ego doesn't understand it in some ways the ego is afraid of it or at other times it might have a different approach the ego can identify with almost anything, now what happens once the teacher has claimed his or her unique power and often it's the disciples who do it to the teacher and the teacher may just say nothing because the teacher rests in the form and the disciples say he is the greatest because he's our master and some masters allow people to say and do whatever they like they don't care if you think I'm the greatest you can think what you like especially Indian teachers have that attitude which is quite nice do what you like I don't care so it can happen and it can also happen if there's still content consciousness left in the teacher the tendencies the egoic tendencies may have become dormant and yet they're still waiting and they can then be brought back to life by projections of specialness from people around you and so others believe that you are very special and then that awakens the dormant tendencies of the ego and suddenly one day you wake up and say they are right I am very special and then you get the weird thing in teachers that they begin to speak truth and half and non-truth mixed together and that can be quite confusing to at that point it's better to go away and take a conscious breath because that's all you need really and then it often happens that the space becomes obscured again in the teacher the power of the teaching is lost and then the words that are being spoken are just from memory accumulated knowledge and some of the disciples may never notice it because they're so identified with their viewpoint of who the teacher is, which is mind they're so identified with their thoughts, their mind that they don't even notice the vital vitality of the teaching the true aliveness of the teaching isn't there anymore because they're just stuck in their minds so but here the important thing is in yourself see, the ego often comes in and you need to be alert and be conscious of specially any idea of specialness some people suddenly get the idea that they are Jesus when and the spiritual power that comes through is true, it's the same power that came through Jesus but that doesn't mean that they are the form, identity of again, the mind's misinterpretation is of course you are Christ, in essence you are Christ because the very same life consciousness that came through him is in you as your own essence in that sense you are of course everybody is Christ the Christ but that's not what they're saying they're saying I am and you are not or they say I am and you will be in ten thousand years time space consciousness simple thing, remember the just a breath brings in space it's worth more than a hundred spiritual books a conscious breath practiced throughout the day whenever you remember and then it more and more the space is there because every book is content now it may well be that if it comes from space if the book comes was written from presence then within the content is hiding space and so when you open a book like that you read a few lines and you transcend the content because the content always points towards the space the entire content of your life then becomes of secondary significance and that's called freedom from the world and that means whatever happens events or things that don't happen but you thought they should whatever happens in your life is only content and it never again matters absolutely one hundred percent not that it is not honored the world of form is also honored but whatever happens to you or around you in your life never loses the power to take away your peace to shake you the power to draw you in totally and not that you now have a separation between you and what happens, no there is a sense of openness but you are not dependent anymore on what happens because you have something better which is yourself which is the space that you are the stillness, whatever pointer you want to use and then you notice it for the first time when things that used to upset you now just happen and you allow them oh because you are rooted in being you allow what happens that in itself can be a practice for space allowing being aligned with what happens allowing it because it is there anyway it is happening anyway it is an event, there it is and there is the space Krishnamurti described the secret of his life once in a talk let me tell you my secret he said and everybody thought finally he is telling us we have been waiting for 30 years for it to come to every talk and every talk was like sand running through their fingers there was nothing there to grasp of course there wasn't because he was pointing to something that is beyond content so people were hoping to take something home after a talk and then they went back home and said what did he talk about he said I don't know, it's gone and this may happen to you also especially since you are not getting a folder with 100 steps for the next 10 years this is what we did so he said you want to know my secret I don't mind what happens that's it so most of the people didn't get it because they thought what next he is going to say something else so what does that mean I don't mind what happens my life is not based on content the content I described that in the book as your life and your life situation and what most people call my life what they are really referring to is their life situation that's what they call my life their divorce or their next marriage or the relationship they have now and their job situation and their health situation and their living situation and their financial situation that's my life what else is there so basically it boils down for most people to these things the physical situation healthy or not healthy their age, their relationship marriage, divorce their financial circumstances the place where they live the work that they do this work situation their function in society how society sees them what society tells them about them whether they are important or not and the weirdest most insane people are important in this world and many of wise people are not important that's all totally mixed up totally irrelevant of course nothing to do with your importance but that's how people see their lives when I go to LA there are many people who are desperately wanting to be famous actors the city is full of people who want to be famous actors and it's just in the nature of things that only a small fraction of those can become famous there can't be that many famous actors because otherwise if everybody is famous it's meaningless it won't serve the ego anymore and so many of them if they don't go beyond fortunately some of them come to our talks and then they see beyond that and go beyond that but if they don't go beyond that many of those their life is condemned to be frustrating and what they would see as a failure a failed existence I could have become a great actor but nobody discovered me and then they miss hundreds of other things that they could do or could have done but primarily they would miss who they are beyond the content of their lives so all that is the content and that is what happens or doesn't happen and the moment you become still or the moment you allow the content of this moment to be as it is not what I regard my life situation but simply the content of this moment just this moment to allow that you don't allow your life situation that doesn't work because your life situation is an abstraction it's a story so the story says my life has failed up to now but maybe I can still make it it says I've lost it all there's no point in starting again I might as well accept that because Eckhart says we should accept but that's a story in your head it's an interpretation and it's totally meaningless to say that your life has failed that you can't make it these are all stories that's not what acceptance is about it's not you're not being asked to accept a story in the head but that you're telling yourself and others about your life acceptance is only to do with the form that the present moment takes so if you're in prison then it's the acceptance of that you're sitting here and there's a window with bars and there's a little bunk bed and whatever the situation is around you and you're breathing this is how it is at the moment there that that yeah and it could be very unpleasant maybe you're cold, maybe it's noisy, maybe it's hot maybe you're still hungry it is but it is as it is at this moment it is as it is not the story I'm going to be in here for another ten years that's a story the acceptance is only needed for this moment and if you accept this moment as it is because there is never anything else the rest is abstraction there's only this moment and then it's an uncompromising facing the reality not the story with which you interpret this moment but the direct reality of this moment and people confuse that with a story they tell themselves about it here I am, my life has failed I'm just giving the example of prison because that is usually interpreted as a very undesirable life situation it could also be an illness, it could be a physical disability it could be some great loss that has suddenly happened to you whatever it is, I'm just taking a more extreme situation that usually people would invent stories about and would make you very unhappy if you are sitting in prison and telling yourself stories about your life you become very unhappy but if you stay with just this moment at that immediately the prison becomes for you a monastery no matter how unpleasant it is and Zen monasteries can be pretty unpleasant almost as bad as the prison some of them and in Tibet they even have the practice some of the monks, they go out in the middle of the night the temperature is sub-zero and they meditate naked or they put a wet blanket on you that would be called torture torture you stay with this, just this moment and the worse your life circumstances get the stronger the motivation your motivation will be once you know have a glimpse of the truth the stronger your motivation will be not to leave this moment does it mean you are not facing reality? no, it means you are for the first time facing reality because reality is the form that this moment takes there is, let's stay present for a while there is your sitting on the floor, on a hard chair there is your metal dish with the gruel or whatever you have just eaten there are the bars this is how it is at this moment there is nothing you can do unless you decide to escape, in which case that is what you do at this moment but if there is no possibility you stay with what is and you face it for the first time because any story that you invent about my life which is your life situation, is thought is an abstraction and that is not facing reality so the only way you can face reality is always to face the reality of just this moment and the worse it gets the more strongly motivated you will be not to leave this moment because the moment you leave this moment you will become very unhappy the moment you start thinking about my life because there is no such thing as your life there is only this moment you are life experiencing consciousness, experiencing the form of this moment but you are always, deep down untouched by anything the space itself in which things happen you are the moment you allow things to be as they are at this moment only you realize yourself as the space in which things happen and not as what happens you are not what happens you are the space in which it happens and at that moment you have stepped out of content of your life particularly when the content becomes so called unpleasant, it is vital that you step out of content, but only by facing the content directly, not by running away from it internally it's again, it's by facing the very limitations of the life of form at this moment and one of the greatest limitations is to be in prison, another perhaps even greater limitation is to encounter the limitations of your physical body when it happens you can't move anymore, or it's hard to move, or the body is getting so old or diseased to face directly, not to invent a story around it but to face the condition directly, this is how it is the very limitation when it's faced and totally allowed to be becomes an opening into space consciousness and that's the miracle of the turning around the turning around the worst thing in your life can be the doorway and will become the doorway, but you don't have to wait for the worst thing to happen to you it may or it may not well death will come eventually sooner or later, sometimes sooner sometimes later, you don't have to wait until they put you in prison or until the body fails or until the stock market collapses and the real estate market collapses, so even that's gone, who knows, I'm not predicting, you don't have to go around and sell your shares but the world of form is unstable you don't have to wait for anything just work with every little thing by choice face this moment at any moment directly and bring an uncompromising yes to it that's not, it is passive and active at the same time the passive seems to be that you say I allow this moment to be as it is but you cannot allow this moment to be as it is unless you bring an uncompromising this is how it is that's the sword that you can see in the face of the Zen master it cuts through time through every mentally constructed story to the reality of just just this then on the periphery of your life you still have, of course you have a past a kind of past, you remember it and you have a future but it's not heavy anymore, it's on the periphery of things so here we your life situation and your life your life lies underneath what happens your life even that's a mistake to say your life because language immediately creates illusion that's why some teachers never talk and for some reason some are mad enough to talk my life is an illusory statement even when I say your true life is not the content even that is not your life because there is no separation between you and life you are life you are life both in the unmanifested, timeless eternal essence of all life is in you as pure consciousness and you are a temporary expression of life in this form so there is no such thing as my life because you are life manifesting temporarily as this form so where is my life? you are life I am life experiencing the world of form as like this at this moment and then it will change and then it will change again and it will change again so I don't have a life and you don't have a life because the moment you say I have a life or my life you separate yourself from life and you think there is something there is me and there is life who is talking? life is talking you cannot be without life your very being is life so how can you lose your life?

it's only through mental abstraction that you can have the illusion that you can lose your life there is not you and life or could there be? who is that you talking without life? nobody could say me or my so isn't it great that you cannot lose your life because you don't have one?

so how deceptive language is and of course language is thought thought that becomes sounds very basic sounds so we are hoping to to understand the universe through that how could you? just a few sounds absurd so there is not it cannot take you to reality and it doesn't have to really what it's good for is basic things give me please a glass of water that works I am thirsty or whatever, please come here that works and that's how language originated, it's to reproduce to find symbols for things and then symbols for actions and there are still many words that are there that are simply originally imitated the sound of an action and then become like knock knock whistling, whistle whistle all these many onomatopoeic as I have called sounds that imitate actions, the sound of action, no more no more than that so let's go from one level of discourse you say your life situation and your life that's one level of discourse on that level it is helpful let's look at it for a moment from that perspective there is your life situation and there is your life and your life is vital, eternal your life situation is content and your life is space the formless unmanifested one eternal life that expresses itself in form temporarily as the content that's one level of discourse, if you want to go even more closer to reality even that's not true to say that it is your life it's just a helpful pointer it's not the truth language cannot encapsulate the truth so when we say there is your life circumstances and there is your life it's a pointer so all the stuff of my circumstances are not my life they are just the content of my life my fifth marriage my sixth divorce my bankruptcy my children getting into trouble someone close to me dying all content of life and then there is life and now let's say that's your life to find your life face this moment directly the form of it the content but not the story just this and then by facing it directly and accepting it go beyond the form if it's a limitation and usually form is some kind of limitation because even if you'd moved from a cabin or a trailer to a mansion at first it would look like a liberation and then you find the mansion has it's own kind of limitations different kinds of limitations you need staff to look after it there is always somebody around if it's in a good climate little ants may come in and basically it doesn't make much difference what kind of bed you sleep in whether you sit in a comfortable chair or not so comfortable chair it's not that's a big deal it's only when you associate it with me and the story it becomes a big deal my life situation my life and then it's not really your life because it is life you are it so we go from that level of discourse to even deeper and say it's not even your life it's life and you are it or even better because there is no ultimately on that level you and I it's not that you are it I am it I there is only one ultimately cause and miracles puts it beautifully I believe it's there there is only one of us there is only one primordial I it is the I of all beings the life essence in each form of life the space in each form of life which even physicists are beginning to discover because when they look at forms then they see that every life form including so called inanimate life because there is no such thing as inanimate life the table is full of pulsating it's a pulsating energy field it just looks inanimate through our senses physicists will tell you it is an energy field it's pulsating there are atoms moving atoms and molecules but the atoms and molecules that make up the table or the physical body or the flower they are so they are so few that both the table and the physical body consist 99.99% of empty space so much space is not only between the atoms even if you look inside the atoms you find even there it's almost exclusively empty space so you can see how the physicists view

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[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 1:00:56)

It's not only between the atoms. Even if you look inside the atoms, you find even there it's almost exclusively empty space. So you can see how the physicists' view of the reality and the spiritual realization of what the essence of all beings is are coming together.

And you can see the truth of the ancient Buddhist texts before there even were any physicists. They were already writing that emptiness is the essence of all things. It is in form.

Form is emptiness. Emptiness is form. That there's ultimately, although we're talking here in terms of difference between form and emptiness, ultimately they are one because the essence of every so-called form is emptiness itself also.

It is one. And we cannot understand through sequences of sounds what that emptiness, which we call emptiness, does to sound. Emptiness.

So don't fall into the mistake of now believing that you know what it is. That's the mind. You say, emptiness, and then, oh, yes.

And then your child asks, what is the essence of all life? If you have an enlightened child. And then you say, emptiness.

Ah, OK, now I know. It's the same many times when children ask, Daddy, why is this like that? Why do the birds, how do the birds know where they are flying?

At the end of the summer, they fly 6,000 miles, 10,000 miles to another. How do they know where to go? And where do they land again where they first were born?

How do they know where that is? Yes, my child, let me tell you. It's instinct.

Ah, OK. And people who can reproduce that kind of knowledge tend to do well academically. And there are many other children who may not do so well academically because they're too deep.

And the schools don't recognize debts. They're not there to recognize debts. They're there to recognize and promote shallowness.

And so even Einstein, who could think quite deeply if thinking could ever be called deep, it's not really. But he could think better than many other people only because he had access to stillness. He was considered a little bit dim at school.

He was considered a little bit slow, not promising material. And it's only when they left him alone, the system left him alone, and he got a job in Switzerland at the patent office that he was able to do. He was slow.

He had to go within. He had to go into stillness. He had to listen there.

And then thoughts came. Then he had to go back into stillness. And then, ah!

And then one day he was lying in his bath, and he went very still. And then he says, oh, relativity. And that changed the entire view of the universe that we had up to then.

And then he came up with deep spiritual insights because he went into the stillness that all resides. And he said, the true value of a human being is determined by the degree to which he is free of self. I thought he was a physicist, but he knew.

Because all knowledge, doesn't matter what form it takes, it came out of his ability to be still. And the realization came out of that. And he said, the way we view reality as separate things and separate bodies and everything separate, which, of course, thought contributes to, separates, that he called it an optical illusion of consciousness.

That's our view of the world. You know what an optical illusion is when you see something that's not there. And so it's an optical illusion of consciousness.

So great. All that's required is to go beyond the pseudo knowledge of the mind. Not that you never use it again in this world of form for practical purposes.

It's fine. But to find yourself or the meaning of life or the ultimate purpose of things cannot be found in that realm of form. But it's there in you as yourself.

No time is required to be that, to find who you are, to be who you are. Just stillness, just presence, just allowing this moment to be as it is, the form of it. Don't fight the forms of your life because you want something better.

Go through it by facing directly, looking. Ah, that's how it is, that is. And so you burn up gradually.

The story of me becomes insignificant. Only remnants remain. Little memories that are helpful because it's good to remember people's phone numbers or your past husbands or wives, what you did.

It's fine. There's no problem there. There's no self in it.

But not base your life on the content of your story. And that's how the ego disappears. As thought identification is relinquished, ego goes.

Because ego is thought identification. That's all. Ego is thought plus emotion together, egoic entity.

Stillness, presence, dissolve ego. And you don't need to ask questions like, how long will it take before my ego is dissolved? It doesn't matter.

Just this moment is enough. All you ever need to be concerned about is this moment. That's all there is.

So it's not necessary to be present for the rest of your life or the rest of this retreat. Because if you told yourself, I need to be present for the rest of this day, for the rest of this retreat, I need to be present, that's difficult. Because you've created future in your mind.

And then you have a problem already. Am I going to make it? And already you would begin to forget whether you're present at this moment, worrying about whether you can sustain presence.

Just this is enough. Just this. The present moment is always enough.

That's the secret of life. It's all you need. It's enough.

Because there's nothing else. It looks as if the present moment were trapping you in form, because it takes some form. And people want to get out of it to the unlimited.

I want freedom. I don't want this. And even if you have a mansion, eventually it will feel like a prison.

And you sit in there and you look at the walls. I want to get out of here. The same thing that came when you were sitting in the cabin.

And then you traveled again, hoping to find yourself somewhere else. The world of form is always some kind of limitation, because form means it's limited. It's form.

No matter what situation you go into, it's some kind of limitation. It does not mean that you cannot try to improve your life on the level of form, but not hoping that you find some ultimate fulfillment in that. To play around with form is great.

I'm not saying, if you're in a cabin, you should not try to live in a mansion. No, why not try? Because you're playing in the world of form.

But if you hope that the mansion will free you from unsatisfactoriness, that's not going to work. But if you're already free sitting in the cabin, and cabins are great. I've lived for periods of time, people have put me up in cabins, and it was great.

It's one of the greatest places. I love cabins. Probably prefer them to a mansion.

So there's nothing wrong with it. But if you think you would like a change, this world is there to be played with. And then you try, OK, I'll make money, and then I can live in a mansion, and we'll try that.

Not that it makes any difference. So you're already rooted in being in the cabin. Then you can go out and play.

But if you're not rooted, you cannot go out and play, because it will be a desperate struggle to get somewhere. And when you get there, it won't make you happy either. But once you're rooted within, if you want to play in the world of form, participate in the world of form, and you'll enjoy whatever you're doing, because you don't need it.

And yet you can, great energy can flow into it. You don't need a particular result, and enjoy what you're doing tremendously. And then you'll probably get a good result, not that it matters to you.

So it varies. One person maybe say, it's so peaceful, why should I move out of my cabin? It's great here.

And all you play with is flowers. You go around, you water the flowers. Whatever you do, little movements may be enough for you.

Or you may say, OK, now I'd love to experience some other form. And then you play and go out of your cabin and into something else. Fine.

It differs. The way in which the state of presence manifests in humans differs. Some are happy to remain where they are.

They're home, inside. You're home inside. You don't need the psychological need for future goals.

Because that's so strong in the egoic consciousness. You need the next moment because you're not fulfilled in this moment. Why are you not fulfilled in this moment?

Because you're not in it. The only reason why this moment is not fulfilling is because you're not honoring it. You're not there.

The depth of it remains hidden. All you see is the external form of it and you're running away from it. If you're not running away from the external form of it, but face it directly and say yes, then the form gives way to the depth of the present moment, which is the formless, inseparable from who you are in your essence.

So life is a great adventure. What you do on the surface of things, because everything is the surface of things, whatever happens, situations, is up to you. You don't need things to be in a particular way to fulfill you, to find yourself through.

Finally they'll recognize me. When I live in a mansion, they will all come and want to be with me. And then you would encounter the limitation of being extremely wealthy.

You attract all kinds of people who are only interested in the mental image they have of you, if not in your money. They want to add something to their mental image. I had tea with this and that person, rich and famous.

That surely must add something to who I am, don't you think? I've grown a little bit bigger by having had tea with such and such. He called me the other day.

I had a talk on the phone with... As I was saying to the Dalai Lama the other day, I thought I'd just let that slip in. I didn't.

The ego loves that. We may have questions this afternoon, if any questions remain. Sounds coming out of one mouth and other sounds coming out of another mouth.

If no questions remain, we'll be happy, very happy without questions. And if somebody does not want to make sounds, they can write their questions on a piece of paper and we may look at it on Thursday afternoon for written questions. Some people don't like to make sounds in public.

Because you never know what might come out. What are they going to think of me? I don't need to mention, because you know it already, that life can be very enjoyable when you are rooted in space, the space consciousness, the unmanifested.

And it's only then that the world of form can be enjoyable. Because it doesn't matter that much anymore. And then you can enjoy.

But if it matters, it's hard to enjoy it. That's it. We often experience interesting weather on retreats.

As you know, there's no such thing as bad weather. Nevertheless, let's use that word for a moment. Bad weather is more suited for awakening than good weather.

The worst conditions for spiritual awakening would be ideal conditions. But life is merciful and generous. So usually you get what's right, what works.

Make sure you're in the body, present, not waiting for anything at all. You may sometimes experience, even on retreats, one could perhaps say particularly on retreats, in some cases, the pain body coming up. How do you know it's the pain body and not something else?

As we know, pain body is old accumulated emotion from the past that lives in you. And that is, as long as you're identified with it, part of the ego. Because the ego is whatever you identify with.

So when you don't recognize the old pain that comes up for what it is, it becomes part of the mind structures that we call ego. And it fuels the thinking of the ego and derives nourishment, the pain body, derives nourishment from the negative thought processes that are working overtime once the old emotion has taken possession of the mind. This is called the vicious circle.

How do you know it's the pain body and not an emotion that's being created at this very moment by some kind of thought? The pain body is usually recognized by the fact that the emotion is out of proportion to the event, the triggering event, its overblown reaction. And everybody can see it except the sufferer.

And if you're taken out of your everyday life where there are lots of reasons, lots of triggers, the pain body which has a dormant state and an active state when it's ready to become active from its dormant state, your everyday life has plentiful triggers that the pain body can use and react and then awaken through it. Because in one's normal everyday life, all kinds of little things don't go the way they should throughout the day. And the pain body will react, which will use a trigger, which could be anything.

A pain body that's ready to awaken can use anything, but it doesn't know that this is the trigger. And if something truly drastic should happen to you, somebody dies, you get home and your partner left you, just left a letter, or you get home and all your possessions are gone, or you suddenly find yourself in the street because the president of your company has disappeared with the money and your pension fund is gone too. And then, of course, on the level of physical, psychological form, you will probably experience a certain degree of turbulence unless you're so deeply rooted in being that no matter what happens, you just go and say somebody dies and say there is no death.

But that's not necessarily a desirable state because you're still here as form also. The form aspect of you will react to things that happen on the level of form. But the difference is when you are in touch with being, with yourself beyond form, with the stillness within, the turbulence that you experience, the emotional turbulence, does not touch the core of who you are.

There is always a core of peace. And even if someone close to you dies, let's say a child, perhaps the worst death for someone to experience is not so much the death of a parent when they reach old age, but the death of a child that seems inexplicable and it seems we cannot find an explanation for it. It seems premature.

And something like that will affect you. You will weep. But if you already live in surrender, the deepest core within you will shine at that moment with an enormous power.

And externally you're weeping. And externally the emotion is there. And underneath the emotion you feel deep peace, deeper than ever before.

I mentioned that before, that is always the case. The worse things get out there on the level of form, which could affect your emotional level also, the more strongly the deathless, the formless one life shines within you, and the deeper the peace. And anything that happens to you can then only strengthen that.

So you do not become callous or indifferent. No, you can still weep. In fact, these are the two sides of true compassion, that you have empathy with the suffering of form, but you're also in touch with the formless that is beyond suffering.

And you know that the Course in Miracles, before it all starts on page one, before page one, as a short summary of the Course, just three or four lines, these lines summarize the whole Course and that's all you need to know. If you know that, you don't need to open the book or any other book. Know doesn't mean know as a concept, but know in here, living knowledge.

Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God.

That's the summary. It's the summary of all teachings. Nothing real can be threatened.

What does that mean? That ultimately what appears as a form can, of course, be threatened, but the form reality is not the ultimate reality. It is only a temporary reality.

That can be threatened, but it is not ultimately real. Within each form is concealed the formless that gives life to the form. The formless one life gives life to the form, appears as a form, which seemingly can be threatened, but nothing real can be threatened.

Nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God, means in knowing this lies the peace of God. So if something drastic should happen to you, there may well be, we can't predict, there may be a turbulence of emotion and underneath it a peace, particularly if something has died around you.

Something that was part of your form identity, which, however, you are no longer totally confined to. Something has died. Now, death means dissolving form.

A form dissolves. Where there was a form, there is now a whole. That's what death is.

Whether it's literal death, like somebody dying, and that's an amazing thing. When you go, somebody that you have seen every day, and suddenly in the same building, the same house, the same room where you used to be with that person, he or she is gone. It's gone.

The armchair is empty. The desk, there's suddenly an absence where there was someone, and the next day, completely gone. And that is the actual death.

And then there are other kinds of deaths that also leave a hole in your existence. Your partner suddenly disappears. Who knows?

It happens. Fallen in love with somebody else. Gone.

Or something that was part of your identity on the level of form. Your reputation. You did one silly thing, and your whole reputation ruined.

Everybody's laughing about you, or whatever, or criticizing you. And that also leaves a hole. Where there was a form, reputation is something, it's a thought form, a collective thought form.

People tell you that you're great. And then you take, you say, hmm, me, great, thought, VIP, me, VIP. And suddenly the world changes its mind.

Maybe you haven't even done anything. Maybe just some newspaper people thought they'd said enough good things, and now to make it interesting, they'll invent something. And suddenly the reputation is destroyed.

True or untrue, who knows? Again, it's a kind of death. There was a form that was part of who you thought you were.

Hopefully you were not limited to just that dimension. Because if you were, life gets very unhappy when a form dissolves. What it leaves, in whatever case, whether it's actual death or a kind of death, it leaves a nothingness, an opening, a space, where there was someone or something.

And to most human beings, that's extremely frightening. They're extremely afraid of the hole that's left in your existence when someone or something around you dies. It feels painful to someone who has never had any glimpse of the dimension of the formless, particularly to someone who has never had any glimpse of that dimension.

Because someone who has never had a glimpse of the formless, death, which is the eruption of the formless into ordinary life, which is concerned with content, it is the sudden removal of one important piece of content from your life, is the most frightening and painful thing that can happen to you, to a human being, especially if they have not, never touched that within that is beyond form. If they've already touched it, not even perhaps as a continuous realization, but if they have touched it, perhaps here, perhaps wherever, if they have had glimpses, then those initial glimpses that they have had of the formless within will become strengthened when death comes into your life, or rather, takes something out of your life, when death takes some content out of your life. And then it happens that some humans have grown enormously through death, and they say, it's because of that great loss that I went deeper within.

I had to. Something within said, it doesn't say anything, but it said, there is no death. It's the knowing that only the form dies.

And so death is the great opportunity of the formless dimension shining through into your life because it leaves the hole. So you can think of a person's life as consisting of content. They have a fabric constructed of things they put together like a tapestry.

A tapestry. This is my life, they say. That consists, that's my wife, there are my children, and this is my job.

There is my savings, and the stock market investments, and my dog, and it's all part of the tapestry of my life. And that's all, everybody has that. That's the content of your life.

And suddenly, and it happens sooner or later, this nice way, everything is in place, my life is okay, and suddenly something gets torn out of the tapestry. It's violent. And you have a gaping hole in that.

Here's my life, and there's a gaping hole in my life. But there's a grace hiding there because it's through that seeming absence of the form an enormous amount of peace. If you can be with it without rejecting internally, running away from it, an enormous amount of peace can come through the sudden eruption of the formless into your life, which is death.

And that only really happens if you don't run away from it, if you face it. And this will be easier if it is your practice to face what is, any moment. Because the form that this moment takes changes continuously, and one day will come, a moment will come, always the same moment, but a form of the moment will come, that is death.

It must come. Someone close to you will die, unless you die first. You will lose something.

Somebody will leave you. One way or another, they die or they leave you, or you die or you leave them. And so, if you are ready, this is beautiful, the practice of facing what is, and then you face that, and you look.

And don't try to explain or interpret. And if you are not identified with mind, it's easiest to step out of the mind, because the mind will go berserk, because it thought it had figured it all out. The mind thought it had figured out your whole life.

And then something happens that doesn't make sense. That shouldn't, that doesn't fit in at all into what I have constructed. And also it's a dreadful shock to the ego, which is the mind, because it shows you I am not in control, ultimately.

I'm not in control. So death, why is death so, is it taboo still in our civilization? Because humans know only form, only content.

They're afraid of that which is hiding behind form, which is the formless, which is God. If it has any meaning, God is the formless one life that is the essence of every form. And it shines more when there is death.

That's the grace that is concealed in every death, whether it's a loss, which is a kind of death, or whether it's actual death. There's enormous grace in every death. The greatest grace that can come into this life is through death.

One could almost say that every life form has a certain degree of density, and it obscures the light of the source, the one source of all life. And depending on its density, it obscures it more or less. It is our purpose here to become transparent so that that can shine through, which really means to find death already before it happens, before the form dissolves, to find death before death finds you, because it will find you.

It's only a question whether you find it first. And so what is death then? It is the formless one life.

Death is not the opposite of life. It's the opposite of birth. The moment you are born, you are condemned to death.

And everybody in this room will experience the moment of death. One could almost say it's already printed on you somewhere, a date, and it's hanging over your head. We don't realize how fragile, how unstable our life is on the level of form, how quickly what looked solid can dissolve, not only the body, structures, anything.

And our civilization is trying to conceal that. We mustn't just pretend that everything is okay, everything is lasting. There are some civilizations where people are still more comfortable with death.

Dead bodies are not hidden. And in the past it was the case in virtually every civilization. Death was normal, a normal part of life.

But as the ego grows, collectively, death becomes more and more unacceptable. I've actually heard somebody say that. Totally unacceptable.

So what we are doing here is we are finding death, which is really what is that, to find that which is beyond form. That's all. And death is hiding in everyone.

Ultimately, it's the god in you that's death, because it's a formless one life. And we cannot explain why death comes to a human being at a certain time. We cannot understand it, but everything is connected to the totality.

And in that sense, there's no meaningless event, because there's no separate event. Every tiniest event is not an event. It's only when we think about it, it's a separate event.

But everything that happens is part of the web of the totality. There is a reason why it happens. It would be futile to try and figure out what that is.

You can't. Very rare instances can you get a glimpse that it actually made something that looked bad make sense. But it is enough to simply realize and accept the fact that whatever happens is part of the web of interconnectedness, that's the entire universe.

And then you get something like that drastic event in New York a few years ago when the towers collapsed. Why did this have to happen to those people who were there seemingly unprepared? We don't know.

But there is a web in which everything is connected. And ultimately, only the form dissolves. Nothing real can be threatened.

Do we know how many people realized the formless a few minutes before they died on that occasion? How many of those? We don't know.

Probably quite a few. Every second somebody dies on the planet. No, no, no, no, no, no.

Continuously they are dying. And continuously someone is born. No, no, no, no.

The born goes a little bit faster. No, no, no, no, no. So here we are becoming familiar with death in a deeper sense.

We are dying to our form identity. Not that it doesn't exist anymore, our form identity. Our form identity continues as long as we carry around this form or walk around as this form.

But we are dying to identification with it, exclusive identification with it. And that is a death because we are dying to form. And the death is the entry point into that state which is also the state of life, what Jesus called eternal life, which doesn't mean it goes on and on, it means timeless.

He always talks about eternal life. You will taste eternal life. You can taste eternal life.

Timeless life. Not millions of years. That is within you, concealed in the present moment.

Formless. The formless one life. The rest is forms of life.

They're all hiding the formless one life, carrying it as the innermost essence within, which we could even say is the equivalent of the state of the universe before it became something. The beginning of time, some people call it. They say that before the universe came into being, it was one.

Now, nobody can possibly imagine, figure out, or explain what that one point was out of which the whole universe came. They call it an explosion. The Big Bang.

But before the universe was, what was there? And of course, no scientist can answer it. Nobody can answer it.

All you can say is there was nothing. And out of that nothing, everything came. And it's still coming because we are still part of the explosion, the original explosion.

It's manifestation out of the unmanifested. But every life form that has come out of it carries the origin of the entire universe still within as the unmanifested formless one life. So the point before all life started is still within you.

That which is prior to all form and that which is there when all forms are gone. As yourself, as God. You are that.

If God has any meaning, it is that. Not an entity somewhere in space or time, but the life within all beings. The consciousness, the intelligence, the life that lives within.

The recognition of that in another is love. The recognition of God in the other, the formless, which is death. Really, it's almost shocking to say death and God are one.

I saw it in a film some years ago. I think it was called Out of Africa, about a farm in Africa. And suddenly one night the whole farm goes up in flames and the black servant of the owner, who is a European, comes running and says, God has come, God has come.

It's all going up in flames. There's a deep truth there. And there's nothing more beautiful than the voluntary death that you are dying here.

And it's quite... It's not painful. It's joyful.

And when death comes, it's not anything to be feared anymore. And you will still weep when somebody close to you dies and feel peaceful at the same time. Because you have tasted the deathless within, or eternal life.

You die every time when you step out of a thought or an emotion, step back, disidentify, and allow it to be out of the form into the formless and realize that's who you are, the formless. Was disguised, was hidden in the form. You die every time when you accept this moment as it is.

The egoic entity dies in the state of acceptance of what is. That's why it hates it. That's why it always finds something to be unhappy about because I've got to find something here that I can complain about, find personally offensive, whatever it is.

And so it sometimes happens on talks or retreats. Although, as you may have noticed, there's very little that is being said here that anybody can disagree with because everything is so self-evident. The truth is so self-evident.

But occasionally a word or two may come out of this mouth that somebody could disagree with. And with some people it happens that when they hear something like that, they cling, suddenly something within them gets a hold of that statement and then they wait three days later when question time comes, not realizing that 99% of what's the truth that was self-evident that they also knew within. But they must...

This thing spoils it all for me. You said that and that's not right because I'm an expert and I can tell you that was quite wrong. It's probably true.

But it's probably also not very important. It's always wonderful. I walk a lot in the forest at home, untouched.

And when you look around, the forms around you, almost half of them are dying. They are dead or dying. In the process they're decaying.

Tree trunks, leaves, everywhere forms are entering the state of death or have died. So half of what you see in the life of the forest is death and the other half is life at first sight. And at second sight you realize the life of the forest comes out of the dying forest.

The dying forest is part of the life of the forest. Even on that level there is no death. There's just changing life forms.

Even on that level the dead tree trunk isn't dead at all. It's full of life. So wherever you look, life does not have an opposite on whatever level.

And the life essence is one with death. So ultimately death and life are one. The one life that we could also call God.

That's quite amazing. I'm amazed myself. I've never quite said it in that way.

But the truth is always the same, of course, but it always comes out in a slightly different way because it's always fresh and new. If you can completely accept the death of someone close to you then you can find deep peace in that enormous aliveness and yourself in it. A woman told me that she sat next to her son who was 30 years old as he died of an illness.

That's painful. It's probably more painful for a parent to witness the death of a child than it is for the child or the adult, grown-up child to see the death of a parent. And she sat with him and suddenly she was able to go into the state of pure presence.

And that was a few moments before he died. And she said when he died during those few minutes when it happened the entire room was bathed in divine grace. She felt an enormous grace coming out of the dissolving body filling the entire room and she had never felt so peaceful.

And at that moment she knew that death is actually also a benediction. It is not something to be feared. Some of that stayed with her forever.

But then she said five minutes later the mind started to become active and it said things about how dreadful it was. And then she started only then she started weeping and screaming and couldn't accept. But she had witnessed that in the state of presence and it had transformed her although she seemed to have lost it shortly afterwards.

Something remained within her. And it is always grace to accompany someone who dies. If there are any questions perhaps we can ask.

There may be, there's one person there and one person there.

[Speaker 4] (1:00:59 - 1:01:22)

Can you share your views about your thinking about monogamy and responsible non-monogamy and commitments made in the past and how they apply in the present? And if you're not with the one you love do you love the one you're with?

[Speaker 1] (1:01:40 - 1:09:39)

This concerns your life on the level of form and there is not, on that level there is not right and wrong. There is not one way that is correct and the other way that is incorrect. Commitment and responsibility.

Primary commitment is to be true to life. To live rightly at this moment. It is your commitment to this moment.

Does that mean that whatever emotion comes in can suddenly change everything? No. If you are committed to this moment you bring presence to this moment.

And presence provides continuity in your life also. It doesn't mean that you jump from one thing to the next because on this moment I'm suddenly falling in love with somebody else. This happens too.

But if you are with someone if there is more than a connection on the level of mind and emotions if the other person reflects back to you your own essential reality the formless one life which can only happen when you are still you can be still together. It can only happen when stillness is an important part of the relationship. That is all the commitment you need.

To be committed to the stillness in your relationship. It doesn't even mean that you need to every day sit together and meditate for two hours. It doesn't need to...

What that is on the level of form doesn't matter. Maybe you don't meditate but you are able to be with the other person and not invade the other person with words. You are giving space to the other person and the other is giving space to you.

You allow your partner to be. Your partner allows you to be. There is spaciousness in the relationship.

The only real commitment you need is to the spaciousness in the relationship. If you lose that, nothing makes sense. You might have signed a contract that you are going to be together for the rest of your life but that contract will then be broken.

It will suddenly become meaningless. First, the ego wants, of course, something like that because it says I need to be in control and I need to have security and I need to feel that we are truly committed so we have to sign something. And that may work if you are committed to spaciousness and stillness in the relationship then the signing could be a nice part of that.

If you are not committed to spaciousness and stillness in the relationship, no matter how many contracts you sign, they won't work. And because fluctuating emotions will take over, the mind will take over, mental positions will take over and you'll be battling out your battles with your respective mental positions, one against the other. Identify with your positions.

Identify with the emotions that go with mental positions. Make the other wrong. Periodically have to act out the pain body every week or two.

Have to feed the other's pain body until finally you've had enough and say that doesn't work for us anymore. And then something comes, okay, you forget about the signed contract and then try to find a way of undoing it. So the commitment is meaningless unless there's a commitment to spaciousness, stillness, spaciousness, stillness in the relationship.

That's the primary commitment. Now, that commitment being there, what you do on the level of form doesn't really matter. Whether you sign a contract or whether you say we don't need to sign a contract, we are committed to spaciousness.

And beyond that, if on the level of form, a time should come when we realize that somebody wishes to part for whatever reason, it would be done in the peace of spaciousness. Somebody would say this, I need to go away. Who knows what form that will take?

That doesn't matter anymore. You may be together for the rest of your life. Spaciousness does not guarantee that the relationship will necessarily be there for the rest of your life because everything has a...

Some relationships work, mature, everybody grows through them, and then it's time to separate, and perhaps something else, another constellation, another arises in this world of form. This can happen. That's all on the level of form.

So whether on the level of the two forms, a relationship is permanent or not is secondary. Ultimately, on the level of form, nothing is permanent. So if you don't leave each other, one or the other will die.

So you don't really... You do whatever you feel inclined to do with the partner, formal agreement, no formal agreement, whatever it may be. All of that doesn't ultimately matter.

All that matters is the primary commitment and responsibility, which is your responsibility to life, to be true to life, which is not lose yourself in the world of form because then there's no space, and all you have is two people with their mental content, their mental emotional content, trying to somehow make it. And somehow they make it to the end until somebody dies, but there is no lasting relationship without the space. So that is the question to ask then.

Commitment is absolutely necessary, but it is the commitment not to something on the level of form. It is the commitment to the formless in the relationship. Then it'll work out.

Even if it doesn't last, it'll work out. Thank you. Okay.

[Speaker 6] (1:09:40 - 1:10:10)

So could you speak about choice? So you're being still, in the stillness, and then there's what comes and what's choice, in terms of, well, just that, but then also in terms of creating a life situation.

[Speaker 1] (1:10:21 - 1:25:12)

In the unconscious state, which of course means to be identified with one's conditioning, the mind, the mental emotional conditioning from the past, which is the ego, it is obvious that in that state there is no choice because whatever you do and whatever you think is conditioned by the past. You have not woken up in that state. So you are simply acting out past conditioning.

No choice. Pain body, completely identified with that, acting out past pain and not knowing that it is past pain, no choice. So there are still many humans on the planet who simply have no choice, who do what they do because they're still immersed in the dream, called total conditioning of the dream.

And then gradually something happens in humans and suddenly there is a realization that they have a choice. And that often starts, often it comes through great pain. The pain is generated by the unconsciousness, the unconscious living.

The unconscious living becomes painful. You generate enormous amount of suffering for yourself and others. And then the suffering for many people suddenly wakes you up.

It's like dreaming a nightmare and you can't stand it anymore and you go, Oh! And then you go back. It comes for some people as the realization that they're having certain kinds of thoughts and they've had certain kinds of thoughts in their head for years without knowing it.

And in many cases these thoughts were very negative thoughts about themselves, about other people, repetitive thoughts. And you suddenly look at your own thoughts and see, That is a dreadful world in my head. And you suddenly realize, If I lived with a person who speaks what I think, it would be hell.

If I lived with a person who criticizes me as much as my mind does, it would be dreadful.

I would have left a long time ago. And where does that realization come from?

That comes not from thought. It comes from the suddenly emerging ability to stand back and see what kinds of thoughts are going through your mind. And that's the beginning of an awakening.

And that is the beginning of choice. Because first of all you also see that there's a relationship between your inner state and your external circumstances. And you can see that to a large extent your thoughts create what you experience as the world, your world, your reality.

So some people are stuck in a dreadful world. They haven't looked at the root of it. They think all the evil is out there, so they are fighting with machine guns and bombs, not realizing that the dysfunction is not in others, it's in them.

They haven't woken up yet. So you wake up out of identification with thoughts, for the first time are able to see the thoughts, and then you can actually say, I can change my thoughts. I can think different thoughts, not as easy as it seems.

Some thoughts are very deep-seated. You can change sometimes the surface of a thought, but other thoughts are linked to emotions, and they are not so easy to change. So it requires a great deal of presence and alertness to get in there and to sense also the connection between your thoughts and the old emotions in you that are still fueling old thoughts.

But if you get in there and bring alertness to it, you can, yes, you can change the structure of thought. And, yes, things like new age things that are actually good come in that are things like positive thinking, things like visualization, things like wanting to achieve something, change your life, and imagine that the change has already happened. You see already the desired reality as reality, and you feel as if it were already there.

That's how to... However, we have come to a little obstacle here, and that's called the ego. You do not need to be free of ego.

You only need a relatively limited degree of freedom from ego to be able to change your thoughts. Some degree, yes, because totally in the grip of ego means totally identified with thoughts, so there's nothing you can do. You can step outside and change the thoughts that you think, and the ego is still operating.

You can then... The ego will attempt to create a life that it feels will provide you with ultimate fulfillment or satisfaction, will give you yourself. And I know quite a few people who have done that.

They realize the power of positive thinking. They realize the power of visualization, which of course needs to be coupled with action, but if the two go together, it can be very powerful. Creative visualization, positive thinking, repetition, and after a while they feel better and they create a better reality.

And I've met quite a few people who have done that, and they created a better reality, and a few years later or a couple of years later they came back and said, I'm unhappy again, and it's just... I've got everything I wanted, but it's not fulfilling. It's not it, and I want to get out of it.

It's imprisoning me now. I got the place I wanted, I got the business I wanted, and now it's eating me up. I want out.

So we have... And many people are at that level where you have partial freedom from ego, but you're basically still serving the ego. The ego still has wants and needs.

And positive thinking can be used to fulfill the wants and needs, but they can never be fulfilled. So you always end up with not feeling quite... That's not it.

And then comes a higher degree of externalizing what is within, and that is not from the perspective of a limited, unfulfilled me that needs a certain change in my life situation in order to find myself, to feel fulfilled, to feel complete, to be happy. It doesn't arise out of that need. It is something comes that is one with the purpose of life itself, and that can work through you and create something that is not there to fulfill the ego, but is there to fulfill the purpose of the universe itself.

And when that happens, it still sometimes looks from the outside as if you were using creative thinking or visualization, but it's different. Let me tell you how it happened with the power of now. I've lived for years a relatively secluded life in the countryside in England, in a little house, and sometimes people would come to me for counseling, whatever.

Occasionally people would invite me to little groups. I would travel, do a weekend workshop, and it helped people. Some people changed.

It's basically what I do now. But instead of several hundred people, ten people came, sometimes three. Once I had one person came for the workshop, and at one talk I had to talk to myself.

On the level of my external situation, my life did not seem fulfilled, although a few people were deriving benefit and were waking up around, not many, very few. And I knew, surely there's more that is possible, but it just wasn't happening. I was not unhappy, but there was a puzzled sense of, there must be more, reach more people.

So I said, use me to life, which I am. I'm open, use me, I'm here. And one day I woke up and I had the vision of a book, and the vision came as if it already existed, and I wrote it.

I drew a circle on a white sheet of paper, and there's the book. And then I wrote, translated into 25 languages, read by millions of people, changing the life of millions of people, changing the consciousness on the planet. And I knew that book was virtually already there, or it was in the unmanifested.

And that was on my desk for about a year and a half. And this was not something that I wanted to bring about, it was a deeper knowing that this would come. And this tends to happen when life moves through you.

I had asked for it, it's good to ask for it. I had asked for it, and so life came, moved through, not immediately, the thing was on the desk for more than a year and nothing happened. A year and a half, approximately, it was on the desk, and I looked at it, it's coming, but where?

So life was moving through, and one morning I woke up, and I didn't know that was part of that, realizing I need to leave England. Why? I don't know.

I need to leave, I need to move to the west coast of North America. It was so strong that there was no question that I had to leave. And that was life moving me away.

I had to move to the west coast. I immediately started selling things, putting things away, giving up my home. It took a few months.

Buying a ticket, I knew one, two people, one in Vancouver, one in California. Went off to the west coast. I sat on the plane.

Where am I going and what for? I don't know. Life is taking me.

Arrived in Vancouver. Stayed for a few weeks. Traveled, took a Greyhound bus to California.

Had one contact there. Then I needed to find somewhere to stay that wasn't expensive. Somebody offered to put me up.

I went to a meditation meeting, and somebody said, I have a spare bedroom. And again, life had arranged in such a way, I suddenly see everything fall into place, to go towards the original vision. But I didn't know that yet, that it has anything to do with the original vision.

That person who put me up was a complete hermit. Had never any visitors, no social life. And he was out all day working in his office.

And then he came home. I was just sat there, surrounded by just walls. Didn't know anybody, couldn't go anywhere.

What am I doing here? One day I got out my old writings I had done. After each workshop, little works that I'd done, I often would take notes.

What I had said, what had come out. That wasn't a book as such, it was a collection of notes. I had that with me.

I looked through. And I read it for the first time. Before I just wrote it, I never read it.

And I said, wow. Wow.

[Speaker 6] (1:25:13 - 1:25:14)

Wow.

[Speaker 1] (1:25:15 - 4:08:49)

I knew it wasn't a book yet. And then I put it aside. And the next day I bought a notepad, a yellow notepad in a shop.

And then I sat down again the next morning. And an enormous energy stream came through. And I wrote, What is Enlightenment?

And I knew these lines were written. That was the book. And enormous power came through.

Nobody ever disturbed me because he was a hermit. After a few weeks, I had left him, and somebody else invited me. I didn't know that before.

And she was also a total hermit. No social life, no visitors, no phone calls. I was totally undisturbed.

Life put me from there to there. And every morning for four hours, five hours, the flow would come. Occasionally things that I had written were referred to, but also a lot of new things.

There was a powerful energy stream that had lasted three months. Then I had to travel back to England. And after the deadlock, got out my notepad to write more.

I stayed in a commune then because I didn't have a home anymore. Nothing happened. Couldn't write.

Nothing is coming through. All I could do was a little bit of editing. When I got a new visa, went back to the West Coast, immediately the flow started.

Then I realized life had to take me away from there because the energy field was not right for the book to come out. I asked for it at the beginning. So there was nothing to complain.

And then you have to... One more time it happened. I had to leave, get my visa renewed, back to England.

It didn't happen. I love England. England, something within me, resonates deeply with this piece of the English countryside and the emanation of that.

And yet the book couldn't come there. It needed the more dynamic energy field, the more open, dynamic, with less burden by the past of the West Coast. And that's where it happened.

So life, I became a channel for the purpose of life to come through me. So it wasn't so much as me wanting this particular thing, but suddenly having the vision of this would be, but without knowing how. And this tends to happen when you leave egoic goals, when you no longer believe that something that you might achieve out there will make you happy.

I never thought that that would make me happy, but I felt there is more that is possible. I'm open, do what you want. I was talking to myself because I am life, as are you.

And after that, everything fell into place, always. The book was written. It was published without ever needing to look for anybody to publish it.

And very quickly, two years after it came out, I found that old sheet of paper in my luggage. And I looked at it and saw it's all come to pass. Every little thing that it says here has already happened.

And more. And more. Millions of people undergoing an inner shift.

And that was the vision. So it was not so much a wanting a particular outcome, but realizing this is it. And then it comes.

Now you ask for it, and always every new situation, if I had believed that the new situation would make me happy, fulfill me, I would have been disappointed. Because I had no idea when you become well-known how many limitations this, new limitations this brings up in your life. It's not that great on the level of form.

And the demands that are made upon one's time, but the innumerable demands, all worthy requests, demands bombarded with... I had asked for it. But...

No longer being able to have one-on-one contact when there are groups. It was so wonderful when there were 10 people. There was a one...

When 2,000 people come to a talk, I have to be ushered in and ushered out because otherwise I can't get out of there for 2 or 3 hours. It creates a separation. New limitations come in.

If I had thought this new thing would make me happy, I would have preferred, oh no, that wasn't it. So it doesn't depend, it needs to... Yes, there is more that you can do.

You know that. And all that is required is for you to be open, and say, there's more, use me. And then see what comes.

But remain... The essence is to remain rooted, not to lose the present, so that you are rooted, that you do not come from a state of dissatisfaction, and create out of a state of dissatisfaction, which you could do, not quite as powerfully, but you could say, OK, I've got to create... It won't make you happy, and perhaps not anybody else either.

So there is the egoic creation, which is, you can try out, it works up to a point, and there is the creation when life creates through you, and all you need is the openness for that, ready to be used. And don't complain later when we find many new limitations, because no matter where you go on the level of form, you will find new limitations. And once you know that, it actually doesn't matter that much.

But if you expect it, liberation through some new life situation, that's not going to happen. The liberation is already now, from form. The liberation so that you are not dependent on form and on outcome internally.

Then it's much more. Only then can life work through you. If you are dependent on some form that arises, if you are not happy where you live now, you have to be first, get through the resistance now.

If you are living in a tiny place, or wherever, for some people it's a life situation, for some people it's where they live, the work they do, whatever it is. This comes to purpose. What is my purpose here?

It goes back to that. What is my purpose here? And this purpose is twofold, two dimensions, that corresponds to the twofold nature that you are, formed and formless.

Your primary purpose is what I, in the previous question, the earlier question, I called commitment. The primary purpose is your commitment to the now, to be true to life by being true to this moment. That's primary purpose.

It has nothing to do with anything else. It's your commitment to life and then no unhappiness is generated. This is what is.

It's an uncompromising yes to this moment, so you are committed to the formless, one life that can only be accessed if you accept the forms of this moment. And that needs to be uncompromising. Your commitment to life, now this is your primary purpose, no matter what happens on the level of form.

Primary purpose comes first, commitment to that. The next is secondary, but also you can apply purpose to that. Now, having fulfilled or rather fulfilling the purpose of my life at this moment and every moment, the only moment there is, fulfilling, having committed myself to this, being a permanent commitment to now, then you can look and see what is the secondary purpose of my life and that operates on the level of form.

Now, that's the mistake that people make, is they look to the secondary and think it's primary. The primary, it is quite possible that in some way the secondary may not even function for you anymore. You may only have a few more weeks to live.

You may have some other limitation, like being in prison. There isn't much that you can do on the secondary. There may be something.

Perhaps you can talk to other prisoners and tell them about the present moment. So, primary comes first, and primary works even if you only have one hour to live now. You have fulfilled the primary purpose of your life.

Surrender to now. Good enough. Your life is fulfilled.

But as long as you have time, and some of us still have some time, there also comes the secondary purpose of your life. What do I do on the level of form? Now, the more you are rooted in the formless, which is primordial intelligence itself, the more likely it is that you will know either as an insight, as happened to me, and it may only be partial knowledge because I didn't know why I had to move England.

I had very partial knowledge, but I know what I had to do without knowing why. That's a kind of knowing, too. Sometimes you only know a bit, but it comes as a realization.

It doesn't come through decision-making process, which is the mind. You suddenly know what it is that you have to do. It's a strong, and that is much more likely to come when you fulfill the primary purpose of your life because you are connected with the non-conceptual, unconditioned intelligence of life itself.

Then you will know what life wants from you, the so-called you in this form. That can come either as a realization, and then you have to obey it. You can't say, well, I have this strong impulse to move to the West coast of North America, but I hardly know anybody there and I haven't got that much money.

What do I do? Do I have to give up my home? It doesn't make sense.

Fear comes in. Oh, I can't do that. I didn't have much to lose, fortunately.

I didn't have a career or pension plan, so it was easier. But make sure it comes from the deeper level. It comes out of the peace.

It doesn't come out of an emotion that says, oh, now I have to do that. See, there's a power and a peace that comes with that when you know what it is that you have to do.

It's a peaceful but powerful knowing.

It is not a turbulent knowing. That's an emotion-created thought, and I wouldn't necessarily do what that wants you to do. Or if you are in doubt, wait a little, become present again.

Go within. And then you'll know if it stays, then you'll know it's right. If it's only a passing thing, then the next day you suddenly have a different emotion.

So it may come as a realization. It may also come as an external event that you don't know why just the right person or event, person comes into your life or event happens that corresponds to your purpose on the outer level of form. And that is sometimes called coincidence or whatever word you have for that.

And you can't explain. Many people have told me miraculous events and happenings. How is it that I met this out of millions of people, I met the one person who actually fit it into, who opened this door for me and did that.

But it works many, many times. I've seen it. So, if it doesn't come from within, it comes as an outer event or a person or it can come as something that at first sight looks negative.

It can come as a loss. If you said, I'm here, use me, be careful, it could come as a loss of something that you thought was your security but was in reality holding you back. And if you react with hostility, if you react to what happens when that loss comes, if it is loss for you, in some cases it is, loss often must precede the new.

If you then resist the loss and become negative about it, then you block the whole flow again. The loss was life removing the obstacle for you. And if you then complain about it and feel you are a victim of life, then you are creating a new obstacle.

The obstacle that life removed for you, you replace it with some thought that is complaining. So be ready then for anything on the level of form. Even if it looks negative, you will see when you accept it, how it quickly turns into positive.

And some people had to lose all their possessions before they could do the work they were meant to do on the level of form. But that's not necessarily the case, so you don't need to run away. It is miraculous what happens when you are aligned with primary intelligence, which is yourself.

But don't block it. So what could block it is resistance when change does come into your life and it's not what you could have envisioned and your mind says, that's not what I wanted. Well, your mind doesn't know enough to know what it is that you really need.

That's not what I wanted. And then you have to be uncompromising and accept it might even be the end of, it could be the end of a relationship, it could be anything. It may not necessarily be any kind of loss or end.

You can't predict what form it takes, but all we know is life begins to work for you when you are true to life, which is now. Then life becomes cooperative. Most humans on the planet do not yet experience life as cooperative.

They experience life as hostile. It's a struggle. It doesn't have to be like that.

Life can be cooperative, benevolent, empowering, but you have to contact life first. Find the life that you are first. And only here can you find it than now.

So here we have primary purpose, which applies no matter how old you are or what your life situation is. Out of the primary purpose, if you still have enough time, comes secondary purpose to do with your life in form. And it works beautifully.

Don't judge when things happen. Accept what comes, then change comes more quickly. Accept what comes.

With the acceptance, life speeds up. With non-acceptance, life is being held back. Accept whatever comes to you as the enlightened Roman emperor, perhaps the only political leader who was ever enlightened, Marcus Aurelius, who lived 2,000 years ago, said, Accept whatever comes to you woven in the pattern of your destiny, for what could more aptly fit your needs.

And therein lies enormous power in the acceptance of whatever comes, because when you do not accept what comes to you, you are saying no to life. And the mind says, I know better, I want something else. Accept whatever comes that is part of being true to life now.

Then the power comes through the acceptance, the non-rejection. So that's primary. Then the secondary purpose unfolds with ease, and there's no struggle.

Now the fact that there's no struggle does not mean that there may not be an enormous output of energy. Sometimes when I say there's no struggle, people think, well, it's going to mean there's going to be... There can be high intensity of energy output, such as happens here in our meetings, and it's joyful, such as happens if you should do writing, there will be great intensity that flows into the writing.

But not struggle, but intensity. When the book was being written, even my voice changed and became kind of more focused. And people said, what happened?

You have a different voice. I said, I don't know, it's an energy stream that's coming through. That's what's doing it.

So cooperate. Cooperate with life so that life becomes cooperative, because what face you show to life will be a reflection you get. If you don't cooperate, welcoming to life, whatever form life takes, that is true to life.

Then life cooperates with you. It works beautifully. So primary purpose, secondary purpose.

And that applies to everyone except to those who are going to depart from this world of form shortly, which could be anybody. Then primary purpose is enough for life to be fulfilled. As long as you have time on the level of form, secondary purpose will come in also.

There's the secret of human existence. Thank you. Now, as you know, tomorrow, if there is such a thing, only in the mind, of course, is Echo Adventure Day.

And you may well ask, what has Echo Adventure got to do with the spiritual retreat? And I'm sure one or two minds have been complaining about that. First of all, you don't need to go on Echo Adventure.

You can stay here and be quiet and just be still and walk around or sit and meditate. Nobody needs to go. On the other hand, you may find it enjoyable to go on an Echo Adventure and to bring so that the retreat is not separate from life, so that you bring together normal living.

Well, Echo Adventure is not exactly normal. But it's a little bit closer to normal than here. So you bring your presence into that.

I don't know what you do in the boat. You're going down the river on the little boat and you have to be really present, apparently. What do they call it?

Water, something, water. Rafting, white water. Rafting, something like that.

Well, that will keep you present. Our silence still applies until tomorrow morning. So we remain in silence until tomorrow morning.

Those of you who don't go on the Echo Adventure may want to be silent for the rest of the day, tomorrow also. If you're here, you might as well be silent. But that's an option.

One more thought has come in. Don't become impatient if your secondary purpose does not unfold immediately. That would also block it.

Stay true to life every moment. That's enough. The universe doesn't know much about time in the way that the human mind does.

Don't become impatient because you would lose... Impatience means you've lost the present moment. And one thing you can be sure of, at this moment, there's only one, you are where you're meant to be.

That is always true. At this moment, you are where you're meant to be. And then life unfolds.

If you remember that and know that continuously, that at each moment, the only one that is, you are where you're meant to be. This doesn't mean you're stuck in it. At this moment, you are where you're meant to be.

And if you know that, if change is destined for you, it'll happen much more quickly. You can never be anywhere else than where this is the best place for you to be right now. And this makes true at this moment, doesn't it?

It's not always obvious, but it's always true. Thank you. Some of you may know the story of a disciple in a Zen place.

It was time to leave and he went to the master and said, can you just write something down for me so that I remember what you said and the essence of it all. So the master got a piece of paper and wrote and he gave it to the disciple and it said, attention. That's what it says here too.

Attention. And the disciple looked at it and said, is that all? Surely just a little bit more.

I need just a little bit more. Laughter He gave it back to the master and the master wrote something else and gave it back to the disciple and the disciple wrote, attention, attention. Laughter Laughter And the same thing happened again.

He said, but please, I need a bit more than that. He gave it back. The master wrote again, gave it back.

Attention, attention, attention. And then the disciple got a little irritated and said, well, I know that by now, but anyway, what does attention mean anyway? I don't know.

And then the master said, attention means attention. Don't know what happened after that. Laughter Of course, all the good Zen stories leave you with a sense of and then what?

If it doesn't, it's not a good Zen story. And of course, the key to the story is in that and then what? That has no answer and nothing that follows it.

Laughter But you can also see in this story the desire of the disciple to have something tangible in form to carry away, to take away with him. He wrote this down for me and he's not getting it. Laughter Attention, of course, simply means presence.

The light of presence or the space of presence in which yesterday's echo adventure for those who went on an echo adventure, that light of presence or space of presence in which that appeared. The same light in which this room now appears. Temporarily, the only thing that's timeless is the light in which things appear or the space in which things appear.

The now, we call that the now sometimes. And you may have noticed the echo adventure is already receding. It's beginning to dissolve as an actual experience.

It has already dissolved. Now it remains in that form has already dissolved. Now it remains as a thought form, perhaps until you die.

And it may remain in your camera as a on film is also a form or a digital, however that works, but I know that it's form too. I don't know how exactly that works. And I know that that's not permanent either.

Eventually the digital record will also go or the photo will turn yellow at the edges. That's maybe after you die and then your children may still remember what that was and who that was and then if the photo survives which is after a while something happens to them then your grandchildren look at it and say that I think that was my great grandfather. And at some point they lose it and it gets into somebody else's hands and then they look at it and say these are two people on a raft.

And then maybe they find them in an antique store and they've written down approximately 2004. Somewhere in Latin America maybe. I don't know exactly where.

It looks tropical. But nobody knows anymore who these forms are. Sitting on the raft.

Now even if you had written a famous book or something and then people remembered oh that's that person who wrote that book, it doesn't help very much either because that doesn't survive that much longer either. Maybe another few hundred years. And it's only a thought form.

It's beautiful to see how everything evaporates. The end of our gathering is not here yet. I'm not saying that.

But you can see it on the horizon. And then the whole experience of being here. It's suddenly it's a past.

A thought form. And the essence is the space in which it appears. And the more you contemplate how quickly things dissolve, the more you're rooted in that which is not subject to time.

The still point at the center of it all. But it's not a point. It's still space.

All words are wrong. Needing an experience which is a form that hasn't happened yet or hanging on to something that's already disappearing, that's the normal way to live. Or fearing something that's coming.

There's always the movement between hope or anticipation of an event. And then there's the fear. If it's seen as something good that's going to add something to me, there's anticipation.

Oh, it's coming. And then you want to hang on. And you can't.

Or it's something that's perceived as a loss. All the retreat is coming to an end. Then it's seen as something fearful.

And yet the essence of this retreat lies not in any experience that you have here, but in finding that which underlies all experience. So the echo adventure is not, no matter how much fun it was, is not the essence of this retreat. Even the beautiful flowers and plant life are not the essence of this retreat.

Even this room and the people in this room and the words that are being spoken are not the essence of this retreat. Because all these things are going to leave you. Or you are going to leave them.

And it's not the essence why we're here. So if you, if that, if your mind clings to the outer form of this, which is the experience of the form of the retreat, then either you'll be happy that it's over because you go back to your own bed and nobody snores in your room, except yourself, and that's okay. Or it's something that's, it doesn't seem good because it's coming to an end and it was so nice.

But that's not it. To see the essence of this, why the very reason why we're here, of discovering that which underlies all experience. The now, the presence, yourself, the stillness within, in which it all appears and disappears.

And so this retreat you carry within. The essence of it is eternal because it's yourself. And then you enjoy the rest of your life, which isn't yours, because you don't have one.

It's going beyond form and identification with form, beyond ego. When you don't know the essence, then you're trapped in form, and you identify with form, and that's ego. Your life purpose is the transcendence of that.

That's the primary purpose. And it can only be transcended at this moment. The beautiful discovery that thinking and emotions are only a tiny fragment are not who you are.

That there's a depth in you that goes beyond me, the person. A temporary form. Variously described by different teachings and teachers as eternal peace, the deathless realm, the timeless dimension of consciousness, Buddha nature, Christ within.

And now you can see the story of your so-called life, the so-called your life, from the perspective of the eternal. And from the perspective of that which is not touched by time in yourself, you can see and realize it doesn't matter that much what happens. You rise above dependency on what happens, and that's beautiful.

Beautiful. And even if you have to go back to a big city and don't see a single tree anymore when you look out of the window, that's what is at that moment. And you can feel the essence of yourself as that in which that appears.

Because within you, you carry the essence of all trees. Because what is a tree other than a manifestation in form of the one life that you in essence are? The being that you are.

So the tree, the temporary manifestation, beautiful. All manifestations are ultimately beautiful because at their core lies the essence of all life. And that's why they're beautiful.

Sometimes the beauty is not so apparent. You have to look deeply to a concrete wall when you look out of your window if you should live in a big city, and that's your view. You have to look deeply and allow it to be and find that even there there's a beauty.

But you can only find that if you have found it within the essence of life within. All the trees are an externalization of that. And even if you should never, if they should put you in prison and you should never go out into nature again, you are the divine nature out of which everything comes.

So it is there in unmanifested no form within you. Life itself, to know yourself as life prior to form, timeless, still, present, formless, that's the liberation. The demand that the life of form should satisfy you can then be dropped.

Because very often the life of form seems to refuse to satisfy you. If you've lived for long enough and you don't need that long then you can realize that although some people never realize that the life of form does not have the ability to satisfy you and they carry on seeking. And when they're 85 or 90 they still look in the jewelry window to see, that's a great ring, I'd love to have that to add to me.

Or whatever it is. Not that you cannot appreciate beauty when you're 85 or 90 you can appreciate it deeply but I'm sick. To identify with a particular form and wanting to make it me and mine is seeking to be satisfied by the world of form.

And the more rings you accumulate in this tiny example, the more fearful and unsatisfied you would feel. So the beautiful thing is to be able to drop the demand that the world of form should satisfy you. And you can only drop that, you cannot make yourself okay, I shouldn't expect anything from the world of form.

That doesn't work. I shouldn't expect because it doesn't work. But it's only if you touch that.

Sometimes the seeing is enough to touch that in you that does not need to be satisfied by the world of form because it is prior to the world of form, it is the being itself, the life itself. And sometimes for some people it's enough to see how impermanent and passing and fleeting and ultimately unsatisfying everything in this world of form is, as long as you seek something there. Only as long as you seek something there.

For some people it's enough and they suddenly say, wow, it's all like dust and smoke and I'm trying to hang on to something or make it mine. And they see suddenly the impermanence. For some people it's enough for somebody, for one big loss or somebody close to them dying to see the whole thing in that one event of the unreliability the fleetingness of all forms and it hits them once and that's enough and it awakens in them that which is beyond form.

And that's the liberation. The liberation from form is the liberation from the world because the world equals form. It's the world of form.

Not needing a particular configuration of forms in your life anymore. It doesn't mean that you cannot play. You're not condemned to a totally passive observer of the world of form from now on.

But the observer is always there even while you participate in the world of form. The observer remains no matter whether you are passive at this moment and simply sit there or stand there or walk there and watch and let it all be and see the beauty of it. Or whether you participate in the world of form and in the midst of activity and people around you are running this way and that when you're trying to build a house or build this or build that or create this or create that.

And even while you're in action not to lose yourself in the action because the action also is form. The doing. People so easily lose yourself in the doing.

The doing also is form. So see that you don't get lost. You see how easy it is the moment you start.

Okay, what do I need to do now? Even with little things and most of life consists of little things. There are not that many big things.

99% of your life consists of little things. Even if you're a famous person it still consists of little things. After they acclaim you and you get a standing ovation you go back home and drink a cup of tea and then you say, okay now, here we are.

Or a cup of tea is brought to you. Then you miss out the beauty of making it. Of putting on the kettle.

The little movements. But it's still. It's little things.

People wait for the big things. They're rare and they're not that great either when they happen. The wedding.

And of course the wedding is inseparable either from the divorce or the funeral. The big trip that's coming and then on the big trip you always are where you are. You're sitting in an airline, an aircraft seat looking out of the window and then you arrive in the hotel and then you move your body from here to there.

But it's always just this moment. It's not. It's only an idea in the mind.

The big trip. The big trip consists of one little moment at a time. And that's again why there's something people, the dissatisfaction because there's always the clash between the mind forms that are generated by the egoic consciousness.

It's the big trip coming and it's going to be great and it's going to fulfill me. And when it comes it consists of ordinary things. And the rafting, okay, that's for a moment you get that stimulus of ha ha ha.

Ha ha ha. But you could have that all the time. If you were present with every little thing.

Just that. And then you don't depend on fun anymore. Not that you can't have fun but it means that every moment is fun.

Because fun means you feel alive. If fun has any meaning it's if you feel more alive and people make fun a goal in their lives because most of the time they don't feel the aliveness. So they think, okay, where's the fun in my life?

And there's no fun in my life. And they're looking. I need a trip, another or whatever it is, another relationship.

Maybe that will bring some fun in. Ha ha ha. And what do they mean by fun?

They want to feel more alive, I suppose. What else could it mean? Ha ha ha.

They want to feel the life that they are. The aliveness of themselves. And it's hard if you're looking on the level of form, you don't get it that often.

And some people spend their whole life pursuing fun through drugs and then they go out and listen to as loud music as they can. It even affects your hearing after a few times. At least I feel a little bit alive here.

Ha ha ha. Ha ha ha. And then always fly after a few hours, you have to walk out of the discotheque and then comes the, oh, you go down again.

And then even worse, the emptiness, not the true emptiness, but the emptiness of what now? And where's the next thing? And that worse thing after a while, fun.

Ha ha ha. So many people feel they're missing out on life. Ha ha ha.

And some people, no matter what age they are, 40, 50, 60, when is it all going to start? Ha ha ha. Some people call it the big break.

I'm not whenever getting my big break the big time. Ha ha ha. The big time is now.

Ha ha ha. Ha ha ha. Now if you don't realize that the big time is now, you're never going to find it, because when you think you have found it, it will turn out not to be it.

Ha ha ha. So to all fun seekers, Ha ha ha. The fun is the aliveness of life is here in this moment, and you know to get in there to find it.

Ha ha ha. Not away from it to find it. Get in here to find it.

And then you realize the very aliveness of yourself is the fun that you were looking for. Ha ha. And so does that mean I can't have fun anymore?

No, you're having fun already. Ha ha ha. Now what does happen, of course, the dependency on experiences goes.

So the almost compulsive or addictive search for more experiences also goes. In that sense, you're no longer a fun seeker in the same way in which you're no longer a spiritual seeker when you leave here or now. I hope nobody leaves here and continues to be a spiritual seeker.

Ha ha. Because you don't want that, and if your identity has been that you're a spiritual seeker for the past 30 years, it's time to step out of that and be a finder. And not a fun seeker either, but a fun finder at this very moment.

And you may find, and some people have come to me concerned, they say things we don't get fulfillment, I don't get fulfillment anymore through the things that I used to enjoy so much. And that all they mean is the external stimulus, things don't stimulate them anymore to such an extent, because they don't need them as stimulus, they're already alive now. So then you can go into an experience that before was great, like a ride on a roller coaster.

Now why people love that? Because it forces them into intense presence. And then they scream.

And then they... One person actually gave that as an example and said, I loved it so much, and the last time I just walked past it and watched the people and said, I didn't need that anymore. And he got worried.

He thought, I'm no longer... I can't have fun anymore. You can, or you may, or you may not go into the roller coaster, but there's no need to be concerned when you walk past it and just leave it, let it be.

Let them scream. Because you don't need the stimulus anymore, but if you can enjoy it, why not enjoy that? And that's the same with all experiences.

Sex, the need for it, that's an enormous need, one of the great needs. Of course it's built into the body. The body is programmed to seek it because it wants to perpetuate itself.

It wants to produce other bodies that's built into the very genes, it's nature. So it's nature for the body to seek that. And that in itself is not problematic, as you know, when you observe animals.

The sex that animals have is never problematic, because they don't have an ego that gets in there and want something. If they have sex, it's fine, if they don't, it's fine either. Of course they try very hard to find a mate, if it's time.

There's an enormous, it is almost, you can see once I made the mistake of not having a cat, a male cat neutered. And the, you can see the enormous force that drives that cat out at night. And it travels for miles.

And it gets, when it comes home, it's totally exhausted. And then it just drops. And later when I talked to a vet, the vet told me that unneutered male cats have a much shorter lifespan than...

But also you can sense the enormous force in them that forces them to go out and seek a mate. And it's getting more difficult these days in many countries because unsplayed females are hard to find. So they have to travel long distances and sometimes they get lost and they never come back.

But even that, which is almost, I almost felt it, the cat is suffering. I almost felt there's suffering in there. Needing it and being driven.

But there's no psychological suffering as such in a cat because the cat doesn't have a self image, an unhappy me that does not have a mate. It doesn't. Because it's only that self image that creates the psychological suffering that humans have.

And so for humans, there's not only the sexual urge that's built into the genes that you have at least when you're young and then gradually it becomes less, but to some extent it's still there, but not this overwhelming thing anymore. And then maybe when you're 80, you can finally claim to have transcended it. But to see that with humans, that is a great source for to feel alive, the stimulus.

It's not only the sexual act itself, it's also the whole thing that goes with it. The adventure of meeting someone and the games that are being played. The roles that they play.

It's rare that they are themselves when they, male and female meet. It's the dance.

Animals, some animals have their dance too.

They dance around each other. And then finally so some humans are addicted to that also. It's not that it isn't in everyone of course, but there comes the addiction.

It's a psychological addiction to this. It's I need. And it becomes part of the story of me, I need.

There's far more need in the mind than in the actual physical realm. The neediness of the egoic mind is far greater with its stories because even when you're not feeling sexual, you have this idea in the mind, I need a mate, I need a mate. You do at this moment, you're fine, aren't you?

Laughter Laughter But the story creates enormous layer on top of the true needs which are really they come and go, they pass. They are either met or they are not met. They come and go, they pass.

So the fun for some people, fun a large part of fun is that. And so they seek far more than what their physical organism really needs. Because it becomes part of the psychological need of me, I need the fulfillment.

I have the memory, I want to repeat the memory of it and so on. The feeling I'm not complete without a mate. Of course, on the level of form I mentioned it briefly in The Power of Now on the level of form there may always remain a sense of incompleteness or a longing for the other polarity because on the level of form you're only one half of the whole although you have the other half built in too, but you are male or female although every male has a female, also like the symbol of Yin Yang the opposite is also in that.

But yes, there is the longing on the level of form and it can never be truly fulfilled except in sexual union and that's very brief no matter how much you practice relatively speaking brief. So there's the, you can actually you can observe that yes, there may be the longing to have just male or female energy close to me you can sense that that in itself is part of the form as form and you can take one step back and allow that longing to be there and see there's a longing for that you don't even need to formulate it, you just take a step back and watch the longing then there's space around the longing and you are that, you are not the longing the longing is nature it's the physical nature, part of that but you are the divine nature, the formless the physical nature is form so you can watch that and you can allow it to be or you can go out into like the cat does and you can watch yourself doing that and give space to that and you sit in a bar where they meet where you meet people and give, and then you can watch yourself drinking don't drink too much because then the water may get lost and then you can, you watch a male or female at the other end of that room and one or two people have asked questions about that and you feel you're being drawn to that and you can watch that, you stay almost taking a step back and it's actually and then you always have more choice than before, you have the choice you can just carry on and watch you can watch perhaps you can even watch the awakening sexual desire without needing to act on it you have the choice actually, why make it into something where the next moment, and now I need the next moment one form of tantra would be to sit there and simply watch a slight sexual desire and allow it to be and then go home I'm not saying go home, you can do what you like but it doesn't matter what you do but the thing is you can you don't need to be pulled into the next moment, into the next thing, you can actually allow enjoy at any stage you can enjoy looking at the form of a man or woman why do you need to do why not simply enjoy that, notice that you're enjoying looking at it and still you take a step back from where you can enjoy it so you're no longer obsessed you're only obsessed when there's no space around it and then it's a bit like the cat goes now you cannot tell a cat to have space around that it doesn't it's not, the cat is not that's just not how it works for cats or it could be if you go to food food is another one where people some people have a strong sense of fulfillment through that and there's a similar there can be a very intense longing and there too you can observe that at any stage that you go past a window, there's a beautiful display of exquisite food and then you can stop and watch and you can feel the longing inside and enormous in some people it can be enormous I saw a Japanese they have some weird things on TV sometimes where they have these games and so people hadn't eaten for a long time and they would put these wonderful plates in front of them and they had to have willpower not to eat it and they were sitting with this plate of food there and going and if you then the person with the strongest willpower finally would get the first prize and others would suddenly go now of course that's not it because willpower is one part of you the formal one thought mental emotional form of you battling another mental emotional form of you say which one is stronger presence has nothing to do with willpower presence means at any moment you allow whatever arises at this moment to be there so if it's then enormous longing for the food that you're looking at you become conscious of the depths of what now is this you allow the longing to be there and you can see there it is and you can feel it well I imagine that it's not one long that I ever had but I had others and then there's a space around it and with the space comes choice there comes a choice you allow the longing and then you can actually make it anything that before was an obsessive reaching out to be fulfilled through it whatever it is anything like that can become your spiritual practice and that's tantra in a wider sense because tantra means ultimately I would say making something that before was unconscious conscious so there are many movements in humans that would draw you normally into unconsciousness the desire for food the desire for sex are two strong ones even breathing breathing is usually unconscious and one way of becoming conscious is making breathing conscious similar anything that is usually unconscious and you bring consciousness to it beautiful spiritual practice so and it doesn't mean that you need to change anything from what is you don't need to change what is at this moment the longing is there the mind may call it fun the mind might have a little and there you need to be there too to see what the mind is saying when you feel the longing you feel the longing for food and the mind is saying it's the evening it's another scenario you're at home you have a big fridge well stocked and even though you've had dinner you had dinner a couple of hours ago suddenly the longing comes and you walk over to the fridge and you open the door and at that moment you become conscious of the longing the neediness inside I need to fill myself with this but that's not what the mind is saying because that means you're making it something conscious the mind is saying you've had a hard day you deserve a break you deserve something now if you're not if you're not present then you don't you cannot see that thought as a thought then you are that thought and then of course you will reach out and the whole thing will be unconscious but if you recognize that thought you've had a hard day you deserve something because nobody else has given you anything I'm going to treat myself now nobody has given so you give it to yourself also again you're not in touch with yourself you think you need to give something to yourself because nobody else has done it if you were in touch with the being that you are you would see that the neediness is already fulfilled it is not to do with food or sex not that you never are hungry or want sex again but there is a psychological neediness at any moment stop and see when you feel make it conscious any fun things especially sex, food what else is fun?

the vicarious enjoyment of entertainment also addictive for many people again you need the stimulus and in many cases it's violent because little otherwise it doesn't work anymore because gradually you become dulled to stimulus and you need more and stronger and stronger doses so you might have noticed in cinemas these days that the sound in most films is exertly exaggerated you almost need to bring earplugs to films why?

because it seems they want the stimulus what for? and it's usually films that have no other merit except exaggerated sound and exaggerated violence and then every movement makes an enormous sound somebody goes stimulus you feel alive while you're watching it and then people come and tell me I'm a bit concerned I don't enjoy these films anymore well, that may be a good thing some films are still beautiful but they don't need the exaggerated sound effects and the violence that has no purpose it doesn't show the origin of violence, the consequences of violence but simply violence as if it were a normal thing and of course it is normal in this world at any moment bring attention to it attention to that moment and see what it is and then you see you don't need to be pulled into the next moment, at any moment even a longing is fine you can feel that, it's quite interesting to sense that in yourself if you feel hungry you sense that, now it may not be physical hunger, it may be mental hunger, psychological hunger sense that sexual desire you can sense that act or not act but you have choice and it's nothing to do with willpower just by having space around whatever condition arises at this moment whatever the condition is external or internal condition to have the space around it by allowing it and being there as the one who says there it is step out of it consciousness is then free and that's the beginning of transformation many things that before were unconscious that had you that were controlling you begin to transform any kind of addiction smoking drugs drinking sex for some addiction observe the urge to smoke observe the urge to reach out for a bottle and some of you, I know that there's alcoholics anonymous, they have done quite useful work very useful work with people although there are one or two things that I would correct that just to do with your identity but some people have become conscious through an addiction it woke them up it created suffering and it forced them into being the observer into being the conscious witness so any addiction watch it watch the force of it the force behind it and give yourself let's say if it is smoking or drinking or a drug make it into a spiritual practice and say ok, I'm so lucky to have that now I can make that into my spiritual practice give yourself a space, let's talk in terms of time five minutes instead of reaching out for the bottle or the cigarette it's so unconscious, most people don't know that they're reaching for a packet of cigarette when they know it they're already half way through the cigarette and then they realize, I'm smoking you see how conscious it often is and other people, they're half way through a sandwich or have already consumed the sandwich when they realize that they have been eating a sandwich that's how unconscious it can be because while they're eating a sandwich, they're immersed in thinking so when you feel give yourself a space also in terms of time in which you simply allow the longing to be there without acting on it you don't suppress it, you allow it to be there, you don't say I shouldn't have this longing you say there's the longing and here I am and you continue to feel it give yourself a few minutes and there you sit in front of the fridge or the bottle or the packet of cigarettes if that's what it is and bring consciousness to what you sense now you may find that the enormous neediness or longing subsides as you bring consciousness to it not necessarily always it may also be that after five minutes it's still there but you are also still there and because you are also still there, you have a choice now you have a choice, you can still reach out and light the cigarette you can still open the bottle and pour yourself another drink or whatever it is you can or you cannot the longing is no longer all consuming now if you are truly addicted to a powerful drug then you would need enormous presence and you probably need help in the form of somebody next to you or close to you who can sustain with you the presence that you need to counter to counteract the if it's like say you are addicted to heroin or some very powerful drug that pulls you into unconsciousness then it's quite possible that at first there's not enough presence in you to counteract the enormous pull of that addiction but somebody with you who can then at that moment when it comes sit with you and you can both sit together in a state of intense presence can get you through that particular wave of addiction because it comes in waves and then that you may need for a while to be with someone who can hold, sustain the space of presence with you because when you are sitting with someone in presence there's an energy field in which you are joined as of course also happens in this group here there is an energy field of presence that arises that is a unifying energy field and it's extremely helpful to be with someone who is rooted in presence and he can sustain it so if there is a powerful addiction in you, you may need help initially until there's enough presence in you so that when the wave of addiction comes you can sit there a strong addiction is almost similar to pain body and often associated links into the pain body and it lives in you almost as something that possesses you and it will attempt to use your mind and you will think thoughts to justify that the substance that you are taking now, they are totally justified whatever the thought is the thoughts will then, because the addictive force will have moved into the mind and will control the thoughts and with that you very easily justify, you tell a little story why it's right to do this now whatever it is if you are not there as the observer of your mind then the thoughts will take you over and you will act on those thoughts and you will do what the thoughts tell you to do, not realizing that the thoughts are being controlled by the addictive energy field so it's vital that you are there not only on the level of what you feel the force behind the addiction but that you are also there as the witness, the observer, the presence behind the thoughts of the thoughts that arise out of that intense longing because otherwise the thoughts will fool you every time and I know some people for years they've gone through the cycle many times they've been to rehabilitation centers and so on and yet it's still there it still takes over their minds but some of them gradually through that dreadful affliction gradually their presence grows more and there are some people who are destined the world calls them addicts but some of them are destined through their addiction to rise to intense presence and that's a painful way of spiritual realization and development but that's for some people how it is there is a spiritual teacher I believe who was Stephen Levine who was I believe addicted and that was for him was part of his the addiction turned out to be his teacher and so that it can be like that the worst thing in your life can turn out to be the greatest the very thing that awakens you and so it is often also that very sensitive human beings in this world they live in this gross environment and they cannot stand the pain of it, of this world and so many of very sensitive people become addicted to drugs at a young age because the world to them is so painful and they can't stand it and they don't have the spiritual guidance at that age there's nobody around them that can easily explain to get in touch with what they already have but all they know is that the world is dreadful and is painful and they can't stand it and so they need to dull they believe they need to dull the pain and you take one and you take another and then that's but often hiding behind the external appearance of the so called addict which is another mental label lies a spiritual being that perhaps is an enormous ready for awakening often more ready than the well adjusted humans so but we were just talking about extreme forms of addiction but remember every human being unless they are already truly rooted in the formless life that they are is to a greater or lesser extent addicted if only to the great addiction that every human carries which is thinking and then you wake up at night and you say I need to think a bit more can't stop thinking what is that?

It must be surely an addiction if you can't stop thinking can't stop it, no I must have more thought no if you ever said that to yourself you would immediately become conscious thinking doesn't even say I must have more thought it just creates more thought so that addiction of course is going away, that's the primordial addiction in humans, the addiction to thinking that and it is that addiction that prevents you from accessing the deeper dimension that is below thinking out of which thinking comes but is far vaster than thinking so work with if there's whatever is in your life it's fine whatever it is if you bring presence to it it's your teacher at this moment it's whatever condition it is one mistake that spiritual seekers make is that they believe that on they need to reach perfection as on the level of form as the human being that they are to become totally and that doesn't work because the level of form must have always some imperfection there's always one or other little quirks that perhaps in the unconscious state would be an addiction but you still have certain things you may continue to like coffee you may occasionally have a drink it doesn't no longer matter when you're rooted in presence you could have a drink and it doesn't make you unconscious you can enjoy anything and be present you don't need it anymore to give you the sense of aliveness but little quirks remain some spiritual teachers remain smokers and then the people came and said that doesn't make sense why do you need to smoke and he said well I'm talking of course of Nisargadatta and he just enjoyed it it didn't matter anymore he could smoke or not smoke probably but he enjoyed it the body enjoyed it well that's how it is sometimes people come up to me at Starbucks and say you drink coffee? you shouldn't be drinking why do you need coffee? I say I don't need it but I sometimes enjoy a cup of coffee now I wear hats talking about limitations in different life situations so on the level of form there's always been this or that you don't need to become perfect as a human being not a perfect human there's no such thing because the dimension of perfection resides within you as the formless that is perfect because it is beyond form but nothing that is in form is perfect because form means limitation so you can be good there but that means you're not good there because form means limitation so not to seek perfection where it cannot be found however when the formless shines through the form then the form who you are as form is a relatively benevolent entity although it's not perfect but it is a relatively benevolent entity so it is not a form that creates hell around itself and wherever you go there is a certain blessing that comes with you it's not through the form not because you as a human are perfect but because the perfection shines through the form so giving up that and so you don't need to be to feel that you are not there yet because you still do this or you still do that you may continue to do it who knows until the body goes and that's fine you don't make yourself suffer anymore and that's one reason is because you don't demand that anything should be different from the way you are you give yourself the form space to be also and then you don't suffer and you create a superstructure and say I should be different if you allowed all the imperfections and you are the space then you would already be a master with your imperfections and also just mention it briefly because you know that there is not a future state for you to achieve if you still believe that you need to become enlightened in other words to achieve the state of enlightenment as if it were something that you can add to yourself or something that will suddenly transform you into miraculous being which you already are but you won't know it if you think that is going to come in the future enlightenment or let's call it the egoless state I want to achieve the egoless state and of course the egoless state cannot be achieved in the future or in time it is only by looking through it now that the egoless state is here now a state that you want to achieve is a mental concept in which that is endowed with self and as such you can never reach it because it is an abstract concept of who I want to be not realizing you are it already so the egoless state it does not lie in the future it has nothing to do with future you cannot make it into a goal you cannot make whether you call it the egoless state or whether you call it enlightenment you cannot make it into a goal goal implies future because the very entry point into the egoless state or the enlightened state is the present moment if you make it into a goal that you want to achieve you miss the entry point because you are looking to the future because goal implies future and that is the dilemma of all spiritual seekers because they listen to spiritual talk or read a spiritual book and say there is such a thing as the egoless state or the enlightened state and perhaps I can achieve it too and immediately they make it into a goal project it away it becomes mind a mental image of who I want to be future and not realize that their very search for to actualize that image prevents them from being it now because the entry point is here, this moment only the ego can only be transcended through accessing the power of the present moment no other way enlightenment is only in the power of the present moment, nowhere else so it's never, it's only humans who give up the search who realize it's already here so you have to, one way or another, either because you are totally frustrated with the spiritual search or because you suddenly see the truth of it give up the search as if it were future there is still there seems to conflict with certain teachings that say basically there are two conflicting spiritual teachings one says, that seems what I've just said, but it's not quite it one says there's nothing you can do and you might as well totally relax because you can't bring it about there's nothing absolutely nothing you can do about it so let go, forget about all, some teachers say that forget the whole thing just have fun the other teaching says if you do not want enlightenment as intensely as a man, a drowning man wants air you're not going to get it now what I had what I just said seems to be more towards the other, that you cannot make it into something to want or to get but really the truth is hiding you bring the two together and how does that look? how can you bring those together?

on the one hand there's nothing you can do, that's true and on the other hand, an intensity is required you bring the two together, the very intensity that is mistakenly interpreted as an intensity that's driving you towards a future goal can become an intensity that is driving you into the present moment that's the uncompromising intensity there's only this moment and yes, there's an intensity there that goes, takes you deeper into this, it's not an intensity that drives you into future there's nothing you can do, it's true in the sense that if doing requires future and time, that doesn't help you and of course, going into the present moment and becoming internally aligned with the present moment isn't really a doing in that sense, there's nothing you can do you can only allow the present moment to be, and go deeply into it it's a question of how you use language but so in that sense, they are right there's nothing you can do and the others are also right the intensity is required the intensity with which you embrace the now so that's there's the point no future state you're not becoming something that you are not now and so you may have heard some spiritual teacher saying, you're enlightened already and that's deep down, that is true every human being is already complete within, on the level of form there are all kinds of things that perhaps you could still do and play around with, and add to yourself and learn or experience but in the depths of who you are your essence identity is already totally complete it doesn't require more time or more things to be added to who you are in your essence and really that is what matters in that sense, only future can only prevent you from being it finding it, and being it now so it's for some people hard to get rid of this idea, because it's no more than an idea in the head, that I need to achieve something become something but it's not really true, so it's truer to say, you are already it, you just need to realize it that you are already fully yourself you are already fully yourself you don't need more time or more of anything to be who you are already now you're already divine timeless, eternal in your essence everything else is on the level of form and it's a dance a game, a play of form there sometimes you get more and then you lose again you can play so, no more spiritual seeking intensity, yes but the intensity that drives you into the now not an intensity that wants to actualize an imagined state me as the enlightened one which you already are there was one psychologist some years, many years ago who lived, I can't remember the name he talked about self-actualizing and self-image-actualizing I don't know if this is exactly what he talked about but most people live in the realm of self-image-actualizing they have a self-image that they want to actualize that's the realm of delusion and that prevents them from the self-actualization that is right here now now it's a pity that you have to drop the idea of me as an enlightened one we can now see by Meister Eckhart in the 13th century the mystic said he used the term God quite often of course God is the essence, the formless essence of all life that you are the greatest obstacle to God is time now we can be thankful for the ego because it was a necessary stage in the evolution of humans and in realization as some Buddhists say if there were no illusion there would be no enlightenment it was a necessary stage was it fun? no it was a search for fun but so questions such as but when will I when will I finally be free of this or that the ego this, when you don't need that future moment, just this is enough you are already free now by being that which allows whatever condition is here now to be as that, you are already free by not losing yourself in the condition, you are free that's freedom and then what condition arises doesn't really matter that much anymore some may be called good, some may be called bad, but also here from that space spaciousness that is there once you allow the condition you don't depend so much on the good and bad of conditions anymore there is a liking and a disliking of what I like I dislike that, I like that I dislike that then you can just it is as it is you can still do things to change conditions that's part of it but in the meantime, is always is even while you change is in all whatever it is little things or big things if your body is ill now, illness is already an abstraction is already a mental concept so don't lose yourself because when you if you lose yourself in the mental concept I am ill, that's already a double illusion what is the reality of the illness at this moment and at this moment it may be you feel pain you feel perhaps a disability you feel weakness that is what is at this moment, or it may well be that you have an abstract knowing that somebody told you that you have an illness but you can't feel it yet that's possible too so it would not be the reality of this moment what is the reality of this moment, the condition of this moment bodily, physical condition you feel what you feel at this moment like weak or pain or whatever it is discomfort discomfort that's the reality of it at this moment and what can you do you allow because it is now that doesn't mean you cannot take any action to get better but the primordial action is the non-action of allowing what is and that we come again to the primary and the secondary the primary is to allow whatever condition is here now to be as it is then you can seek there may be something you can do you may have to see someone, a doctor a healer, you may want to change your diet something may be required on the level of form also that's secondary but the primary is and so any action that arises out of the primary is then present action and you are more likely to take the right kind of action if you are present first, so the action doesn't arise out of fear or out of anger with what has happened to you or out of depression or sadness because it's become a story in your mind, you say that's not fair you become a victim life has done something to you these are all mental stories always staying with what is what's the condition now, that's what is and somebody who wrote a book about healing some years ago said spontaneous healing which does happen and is much more likely he found that out through actually experimenting and talking to people many, many people he was a doctor or is a doctor those people who have accepted first were much more likely to be healed than those people who had strong this goes very much against what our culture tells you, which makes the illness into an enemy, because it makes everything the ego makes everything into an enemy so you need to fight the illness make it into an enemy that's not how healing happens. Healing comes first with allowing because there's some imbalance there that's why the illness is there and to some extent certain imbalances may always be there as long as you live in this mad world and so see don't fight it don't make any condition into an enemy that includes illness the illness is not an enemy so healing comes with allowing the condition, whatever it is which doesn't mean that you accept that you are ill that's a story in the head well, I have this illness and I might as well accept it no, that doesn't work it's a story that you've created acceptance refers to the direct and immediate condition of what is not something you tell yourself in the head so you don't accept an illness you realize illness is a concept accept this it even happens sometimes that the concept and the medical system doesn't know about this yet but some people are beginning to realize it, that the very concept of certain illnesses creates many more of those illnesses because you have a mental concept now and so many there are far more illnesses now than there were before because we have more mental concepts of illnesses, different illnesses and suddenly so many more people you have suddenly discovered a new illness and suddenly everybody, not everybody but many, it appears everywhere oh, that's strange how the mind and that are connected it becomes more and more differentiated it is true that some things are also new, they develop but the more you emphasize the concept of it the more of it you see you find and of course some have taken that to extremes there are some religious practitioners who can totally deny the reality of illness there are some churches I believe science can't remember the names church of religious science they have some truth there they have touched a truth there they say, they read ultimately it's an illusion which is true because everything on the level of form is ultimately an illusion so they totally deny the existence of any illness which if it's done truly can be very powerful healing I suspect that very often it remains still on the level of mind so being with what is remaining and that's true change comes then when you bring presence to what is you don't want you don't demand that this should be different whatever the condition is and amazingly then it is different it changes and action you can take that is intelligent that doesn't come out of denial it doesn't come out of anger or out of fear much more likely to be intelligent action you go to the right person to help you or you do the right thing or you stop doing the wrong thing because you suddenly see that you've been doing something that's created it this afternoon which at the moment is only a mental concept we'll address some further questions it happens in written form unless something else happens we don't know as they very nicely add often here in Spanish speaking countries si Dios quiere if God wants when they say we're going to do something you add si Dios quiere that's true because you don't know what's going to happen the ego thinks I'm in control we don't know the word that I use a lot that some people get irritated by is maybe and then Kim says did you tell him that you were going to do this when he asked you to do it he said you told him yes and I said no I said maybe because there's nothing more than really you can ever say you're not in control whatever the total, what is it the universe wants yes this is going to happen at four o'clock it's going to happen maybe in some countries where they have an innate wisdom and not so much ego yet they use that word a lot too there's some countries where people tell me people always say maybe and other countries where people are not quite as unhappy yet as in the west yet like Indonesia or Bali, people tell me that the language they speak there doesn't have a past tense or future tense it's all present well that's a little help however the western mind which is the egoic externalist is creeping all over the planet it's everybody's destiny to go through it and then transcend it but this can be done more quickly now don't need another thousand years a sometimes beautiful line in the course in miracles sometimes quote it has taken time to misguide you so completely but it takes no time at all to be who you are thank you as usual I don't know what to say but there are lots of questions waiting usually there are more questions than answers not only on retreats also in the human mind there's no end to the questions the human mind can ask one of them is and then what? what happens next? after that?

after enlightenment then what? we already addressed strangely some of the questions when I looked through that were asked this morning to some extent especially questions to do with wanting to become enlightened and some questions connected with sex and things like that entertainment entertainment fun but we may come back to a different perspective on those so I hope the two or three questions that are to do with I really want to be enlightened and so I believe this morning already gave the answer to that that it's not a goal in the future if you make it into that that's the sure way of not being enlightened also some questions are very similar they're duplicated two or three or four of them so we'll see do any of our the questions are quite good by the way very many good questions that are helpful to everybody but don't feel personally offended if your question doesn't come up it does not mean it's not good enough or you are not good enough because your question hasn't come up or whatever the mind can think of why mine hasn't come up if you have any true vital question a vital question is different from a mind made question a mind made question is curious about this and that speculating like theories a vital question concerns your very being and if there's ever a question that you truly need an answer to if you become still the answer will come or the question disappears in the stillness and that's often the case sometimes people travelled long distances to see a teacher with prepared questions in their head such as happened to Paul Brunton who discovered so to speak for the West, Ramana Maharshi and visited saw him his very highly trained mind had prepared some extremely intelligent questions and when he came into his presence Ramana Maharshi just looked at him and suddenly he said all the questions dissolved in presence they became unimportant and secondary so he didn't need to ask those, it's maybe some later point he asked a few but right there when he met him he realised the relative the only relative importance of any question so any vital answer you already know it you just have to be still enough to access the knowing the knowing is not necessarily conceptual, it may not even come as a thought there is a knowing that is deeper than thought there have been some awake humans who were in that state of deep knowing but could not express it through words it just didn't translate into words so all they could do is just sit there and in India there are always a few teachers who are that way, I mean there are thousands of teachers but relatively few true ones and of those few true ones there are always a few who simply sit there and that's enough some even lie on the sofa or bed and that's enough now they don't reach that many people because a video of somebody lying on a sofa isn't it's not that interesting the knowing the very source of all knowing is in you and anything that is being said here has been said or is being said is immediately recognized by the source of all knowing that is in you as you sit here it's as if you were speaking to yourself that's how it works occasionally the mind may interfere and say is that true, is the distance from here to the moon really he said the distance, if I gave some fact and the fact happened to be not right, that's possible then the mind might come in and say oh that's not quite right and then the ego may come in immediately after and say he's wrong, I must tell him that he's wrong, I must tell him that I know better and then he would lose the rest of the words but the vital words you know, they're recognized immediately, that's why it's pleasant it is you feel deeply alive as you sit here because your own truth is there it is not separate it just happens to come through this form the form is transparent, relatively speaking and so it comes through but you are transparent enough to recognize it if you were dense, all these words would be totally meaningless what's he talking about so the recognition the sense of ah yes you listen to the talk just as I do this form it's the same as you don't know what the next word is going to be, I don't know what the next word is going to be not that it is channeled in a narrow sense of the word, not that I feel there's an entity, but it is consciousness there may be some helpful entities too thank you better be careful thank you but these entities, if they are helpful where do they derive their wisdom from from the one consciousness, so it always goes back to the source if there should be an angel next to you, then what is that, a manifestation of the one source this is a short one and what of the new earth the new earth this, I'm writing a little bit more these days and that may turn into a book it seems the provisional title is a new earth, but it's only a provisional title a new earth of course the words come from the bible they appear in the book of revelations which also called the apocalypse which tells you about everything collapsing the whole man-made order of things collapsing that's what it is about, symbolically and then when it's all collapsed the writer says, and I saw a new heaven and a new earth out of the collapsed world rises a new world so that's in a way where the title comes from, a new earth and I saw a new heaven and a new earth that's what it says and the way I see that is a new heaven is a new consciousness that is arising, this is causal in humans the transformation of human consciousness it's the inner heaven is the inner world a new earth is the outer manifestation of the transformed consciousness so the question and what of the new earth the answer to that is we don't need to be concerned about the new earth all we need to be concerned about is the new heaven and that's why we are here because heaven is the inner the inner transformation of consciousness the outer, the externalization of that as a different world that humans create once the shift has happened that is obvious that politically economically, socially in every respect the structures, the man made structures and even the buildings and the cities and so on will be very different from that which the egoic consciousness creates so our gathering here is the arising of a new heaven the inner the rest comes automatically when it comes to making choices about life situation are there some decisions that are wrong and some choices that must be avoided because they will lead into greater selfishness in other words are some choices absolutely wrong or will eventually all choices bring us to wakefulness what then is the basis for making choices in the relative world now to some extent the answer is already here in the second question and that is all choices eventually bring you to awakening even if they appear wrong if they are wrong now wrong means they lead you into more delusion they lead you into more ego, they lead you into more suffering for yourself and others perhaps usually they go together if you make yourself suffer you make others suffer so if they are wrong in that sense then yes they bring about suffering and delusion and eventually suffering wakes you up so there is ultimately nothing wrong as such you cannot say that anything is wrong any choice that you make because if it is you will suffer and then the suffering will wake you up and that's a relief to know that eventually every road that you take will get you there but some are longer than others some go the roundabout way a bit more pain a bit more time and suffering the basis for a right choice of course is presence and to become still so that it comes from a deeper level of intelligence and not the conditioned mind or an emotion that you are suddenly overcome by and immediately act upon so there are always, you can make choices should I stay here or should I move should I marry this person or not, should I leave this person or stay with him or her should I leave my job should I leave everything behind and move to India should I go and help the needy in a poor country should I many choices and whatever you choose if you bring presence to it then you're fine and you've made the right choice the best choice the realization of what it is right for you to do does not come through thinking that is the main thing so in a way you could call that the basis for making choice in this relative world for making choices you can think for a while you can even write down the pro and cons of this choice or that choice if I do that but then on the other hand but even that won't give you a definitive answer the true realization and usually when it comes out of presence it comes as a ready made realization of this is what I have to do but don't mistake a strong emotion for that because that could be but the next day it'll be gone that remains the realization remains you can wait a few days and it'll still be there and you can wait a week or two or three weeks and still it remains whereas emotion will fluctuate so don't mistake a sudden or even a thought coupled with an emotion for it if it's very strong some thoughts have enormous energy behind them I have to get out of here just okay now this could be mistaken for something that comes from and it could be but it may not be just okay wait see what how you feel let sleep and then get up in the morning and see if that's still true if it's true it remains true because it comes from a deeper level when the realization came I had to leave England it remained with me I woke up in the morning and I had to go to the west coast and then okay that was it the next day it was still there the next day it was still there and a week later it was still there and then I knew yes that's it it was not arrived at through decision making because decision making is limited it involves thinking thinking always involves opposites if it comes from presence it's almost like a ready made answer ah this is what I and there is so that really choice means there is no choice in a way suddenly something comes and you almost have no choice anymore that is that is a true choice is no choice and even there the ego can still interfere and it can say oh no you don't you shouldn't do that what about your pension plan what about this what about that so those are wonderful when it comes though still you are the more likely it is that a realization of what is right if you are at a crossroads or feel they have to what is right will come suddenly ah yes I mentioned also yesterday that the sometimes the answer comes in the form of an event when you are present sometimes it comes from within as a realization but when you are present the answer to what it is what is needed if there is a choice in the external may sometimes come as an event that suddenly comes into your life and that clearly opens a door where before you didn't know and suddenly the door opens here so you have to also be alert to see what kind of events are happening while when you need an answer you become still and then see what the answer may come from without so to speak it may come through a person also an event a person that you meet an event that suddenly happens and even a so called bad event can sometimes be part of the answer but ultimately there are no mistakes there are only temporary learning situations because just look back on your life well if there is something to look back on I'd like to I've been told that the youngest person here is 12 years old I believe and it's wonderful thank you for being here and so present you are certainly more conscious than I was at 12 and I believe the oldest person is 91 is that right?

91 or something like that so it's and that's exactly it's wonderful to see those are the where consciousness needs to enter the incredible opportunity of old age for awakening and the wonderful thing when already at a young age that new consciousness arises it's beautiful to see so if there is if you look back on your life if you are 12 there isn't that much to look back on but and you haven't had time to make many mistakes but if you look back on your life you will probably discover many mistakes so called mistakes shouldn't have done that that was the wrong choice that took me there and I did that for years and then I realized it wasn't it and then I chose the wrong partner in some cases and another wrong partner and yet it's all taken you to this moment it's all taken you to this moment of presence and so it worked one could almost say retrospectively the meaningless jumble of events of your life becomes meaningful because presence arises now the arising presence now makes even gives meaning to the seemingly meaningful past because it's taken you here all the mistakes and all the chaos has taken you here if I look back on my life it was one mistake after another really one mistake after another the whole university thing was a mistake many things that I tried turned out to be mistakes and until the book was written if somebody had only looked at the externals of my life one would have said this person made too many mistakes that's why he didn't get anywhere externally from an external viewpoint and some of my family and relatives took that viewpoint and yet something suddenly came out of that it's almost like the that's perhaps why the lotus flower is the symbol of the consciousness in Buddhism and it grows out of the mud it has its roots in the mud and then suddenly out of the mud comes that incredible beauty out of that so be glad about all your mistakes they were not mistakes they might have been before but they're not now because presence is arising it's taken you into presence that's what it was supposed to do so it worked or if you need a few more then okay for the first time I understand true compassion but only in my head when I am presence one life doesn't come to me I believe he means when I am presence he or she means when I am presence the realization of the one life doesn't come to me so the person understands compassion mentally but has not yet experienced it especially in certain cases like I don't feel one with a snake a spider or George Bush am I doing something wrong? no no it doesn't quite work like that to feel that when you are presence and you watch a snake you immediately feel compassion or you see somebody on television and you immediately feel compassion compassion first arises first you need to remain present and look it's not just okay I don't feel you need to be able to look at a being a life form and continue to look and then usually presence first arises is not when you see the intact life form compassion arises when the life form the form begins to become broken and at that moment when you are present compassion arises because at that moment you see the dual nature of that life form whether it's an

animal or a human or some other life form being one with the dual nature of yourself the form, the impermanent and fragile form being broken and out of that the opening that is there when the form breaks and it could be not necessarily death immediately it could be a serious injury an animal that is injured or a human that is injured and then you would when you are present and you contemplate the form, the fragile nature of the form and that which is beyond the form can then come through more clearly and that is what resonates with the formless within you and then it can happen that there may be a human being whom you did not like at all in ordinary day to day living maybe somebody at work if I say who is the person that you least like in your life can think of that person and then if you imagine that person suddenly having a serious accident and you are there witnessing it and lying there all the that which is not essential in that person all the conditioning of that person that you had mistaken for who that person is all the unconscious conditioning that became the person that you disliked and the dislike strengthened the dimension of person egoic person in you all that suddenly becomes irrelevant or collapses completely and if the person had a strong ego a lot of role playing and posturing and suddenly that person has a serious accident all that would collapse and you would see something shining through that is not the conditioned unconsciousness that is the ego and the same would happen in an animal, a suffering animal even if the animal you didn't like or even feared when it begins to be the form breaks up then compassion arises and that is when you experience compassion fully and for the first time and when you the more you become rooted in the formless the more you feel it then a time suddenly you may realize you feel it even when the form is still intact you can look through the form and all the behavior patterns and thoughts that are manifested by this form that are only temporary formations not who that life form is in its his or her essence and so you can look through it and you can still see the unconsciousness on the surface if it's a human being you can see the limitations of the animal life form, the animal the scorpion or whatever it is but they do what they have to do according to their form they have certain limitations and certain animals will if you approach them probably bite you maybe not, miracles happen if you are totally present they may not bite you we don't know, you have to try it out but it is in the nature of the scorpion to bite we can't help it and it's in the nature of humans to do similar things they are not yet conscious enough they go there was a story, I don't quite remember the details there was a spiritual teacher and a scorpion that scorpion fell in the water or something and the teacher took it out and he got bitten and it happened again and the master took it and the disciple said, why do you take can't you see that you get bitten every time he said, well it's in its nature to bite and it's my nature to save so you don't it's the limitation of the form and that applies to humans and also to animals animals are usually much easier to like than some humans because there is less the being shines through despite the limitations of their form they are still closer to being than humans there is not the density of mind that's in the way there is not a mentally constructed person that's playing a role usually animals don't play roles except for very few dogs and cats that have lived with roleplaying humans for too long they get a little bit of roleplaying you see the beginnings of an ego in some pets that have lived for a long time with people with strong egos then they get, oh there is a little developing ego in that little dog but most of the time animals remain amazingly sane despite the humans they live with and so that you look into the eyes of a cat or a dog and there is so much goodness yes the cat has its limitations and the dog has its limitations the cat when it sees a bird it goes the mouse quivers they look at a bird and the mouse goes now the cat cannot yet be the witness of that so there are the limitations of form in humans and animals and they are more pronounced it seems in humans even in some ways so it's look at first compassion then you learn what compassion is by witnessing when the form is no longer fully functioning it begins to break up in one way or another and then if you truly watch then you feel no matter who it is that is having the accident or is close to death or whatever it may be you will feel compassion arising because the essence begins to shine through and you recognize it through the presence which is the light from your essence and whether it's George Bush or whoever it doesn't matter or a snake or whatever laughter that just comes from the question laughter so and then compassion as presence deepens in you you will be able to look through the limitations of form in animals and humans in the snake, in the scorpion in human beings you can look through that and you can have compassion with unconscious people because you recognize that what they do comes out of their conditioning it's ego, it's collective it's the collective unconsciousness of humanity there's not a anybody there really it's an expression of the collective unconsciousness of humanity and they manifest it it's nobody's fault as such and yet of course yes they make themselves and others suffer through unconsciousness the consequences of unconsciousness are suffering and that's how awakening also happens a person with a strong ego and everybody sees they're playing a role if a little thing happens to that person like say a person, a man or a woman with a strong ego walking along the street and they slip on a banana skin and they just, it's a minor fall everybody laughs the stronger the ego the more people will laugh because there's the discrepancy of the role and suddenly showing they're not in control and what happens to them but if something drastic happens nobody laughs anymore because immediately all that evaporates the whole level of ego and if you're present you will even run if you have enemies I hope nobody here still has enemies you would run and even save your enemy because at that moment you realize that was all in the realm of relativity nobody is your enemy in essence and it's compassion so with everyone you share, with every life form you share the precariousness of the form and the eternal of the essence and when you weep when a life form dies that's because you share you recognize that's you also you see yourself there also you share the fleetingness of the life of form and you can weep and the peace that you feel at the same time is the realization that both you and that life form are ultimately only temporary expressions of the one eternal life and that's where peace emanates from that realization put the two together and that's compassion I'm visited by an uneasiness or anxiety that what I'm doing to increase moments of consciousness is not enough a feeling something is lacking blocking the way there's a pill I need to take or if I just remove an obstacle or listen to another tape a shift will come occur this panic wakes me in the night several times a week is it a result of psychological makeup or disposition of a warrior or is it a message from unconscious realm to be listened to or is it fear and then it says at the bottom if you think I need medication don't read this question well I read it I believe there's one little mistake in the question a slight misperception it's in the first sentence I'm visited by an uneasiness or anxiety that what I'm doing to increase moments of consciousness is not enough this may be the anxiety that you experience here under these circumstances there's simply the condition of fear or anxiety and the mind according to your circumstances attempts to find an explanation for the anxiety so here the mind says I'm feeling anxious because presence isn't arising or it's not enough yet I feel I need more and that's why I'm anxious it's likely that in other circumstances or at other times in your life that also came or will come and will take a different form but the anxiety and the fear are there and usually the anxiety or fear are misinterpreted by the mind in the same way that in a dream often you have an underlying emotion that gives rise to the dream it could be fear or anxiety it could be something else it could be some other emotion and then suddenly you dream a dream that is the illustration of that emotion and it seems that the dream is causing the emotion in the dream oh I felt fearful because I dreamt that there was a monster running after me but it wasn't the monster was created by the mind to explain the fear and that created the dream and in the same way in normal wakefulness there are primordial emotions and fear is the most primordial emotion that humans carry inside that the mind interprets in different ways it says I fear because there's not enough money in the bank my job is not secure I don't know how much longer I'm going to live my health is unstable my relationship may collapse I have so many reasons I have fear because and then comes whatever it is in your surroundings not realizing the primordial condition that everybody has inherited that is part of everybody's pain body is the condition of fear every ego lives in a state of fear even if they look big at night they have nightmares and in the morning again they play the role and then the fear comes also at other times but disguises itself in different forms it can come as anger so anger is usually the disguised form of fear so the fear is there and let's just see allow that to be there and see it for what it is it's fear and even that's a label it has a certain feeling quality to it and you can observe that with your inner eye so to speak in other words feel it feel what the fear feels like and maybe not even call it fear anymore it's just a mental label it is something, yes, it's something in here that I feel and there it is at night you wake up and you feel that and then the mind will quickly come in and try to find an explanation if you're here you might think I'm feeling fear because I'm not I fear that I'll never be present enough or it might think I'm fearful because I have to go back home soon whatever it is so instead just be with the fear directly and say that's the condition of this moment a turbulence a shaking a quiver or a feeling of can't even call it fear maybe it's some kind of dread that's what I had it wasn't quite fear but it was a kind of dread of everything of life itself because I only knew the life of form and it became more and more alien there was a dread of the whole world as described in Jean-Paul Sartre's book Nausea aptly entitled Nausea which is the nausea of the world he described, I read that book later, what I felt the dread of even looking at an object even looking at the walls at night makes you feel almost sick

[Speaker 6] (4:08:50 - 4:08:50)

oh

[Speaker 1] (4:08:50 - 5:15:14)

and so it's tempting for the mind to find an explanation and my mind did that for a long time it explained my life situation is so insecure I'm never going to make it I'm miserable nobody likes me everybody thinks I'm nothing all kinds of stories and yet there was the primordial condition of dread and so can you if that arises it is the condition of this moment the form that this moment takes you're in bed, if it is for many people it's in bed at night particularly because there seems to be something about it that triggers it and so you lie there and you have fear can you not escape into thought when that happens because if you go into thinking then you're leaving the emotion you're not there witnessing it you're escaping from what you feel and your thought processes will be only a reflection of what you feel some explanation so can you stay with that feeling and simply say there it is give it space almost step back from it or endure it by surrendering to it sometimes there was one teacher who called that practice conscious suffering you surrender to what you feel don't run away just stay with it and feel it it's not going to kill you that's for sure if you allow it to rise into your mind and you go into thinking it might kill you, it has done that because it might drive you to the bridge and then you jump off but if you face it directly it's not going to kill you and so you stay with it and the more you allow it the more that which is no more than trapped energy begins to transform as because it's the light of consciousness that initiates the transformation of it so any kind of pain physical or emotional that still arises, but you have to look to see whether it's being created by a thought that you're thinking at this moment in which case you can see the fallacy of that or whether it's old and the fear that most humans carry is old fear it's of course contributed to by dysfunctional thinking continuously about the ego's attempt to control the future you think about the next and the next moment that you can't control, it creates more and more fear but if you stay more present live increasingly in presence then you are not creating new levels of fear on top of the old that's already inside you as part of the pain body you don't create new fear the more present you are, the more you realize there's nothing to fear in this moment there's only something to fear in the next moment which is conceptual so the fear is created by the conceptual reality in the mind that creates future and it's always uncertain therefore fear comes mixed up with hope sometimes they go together, you don't know what it is are you hoping for the future to come or are you fearing because it could be good or bad so anything painful physical or mental but be alert to see whether it's being created if it's not being created now it's old, it just comes you wake up and there it is stay with it allow it to be give it space and then it becomes if it's physical pain it consumes the ego quickly it has done that in some people who have suffered acute physical pain prolonged physical pain it drove them to surrender and that is called conscious suffering it's to surrender to whatever it is that you feel at this moment then it becomes like a fire it's beautiful some teachers and this is not what I advocate here, so don't get me wrong it's not part of this teaching it's to generate some kind of discomfort or pain and then stay conscious as it's there, you disidentify from the feeling, from the form that feels the yogis do that in India sometimes stand on one leg for six years and these are considered holy men in India there is some truth hiding there we see it this looks so mad and yet it is one way of being the witness anything that you allow to be don't run away from and surrender to completely brings about presence but in many cases of course in India there may be a few true ones in many cases it's an ego device to get recognition or money from others who consider you to be a holy man or woman, but some of them are real so they do the most the weirdest things to inflict pain for years and years some sit in the same place for 20 years or sit on painful you know the famous bed of nails but there is a truth hiding there too not that you need to do that because life gives you enough to work with you don't need to generate additional pain life is very generous it always gives you exactly what you need and that's all you need to work with but it's called conscious suffering when it does come it's the condition of this moment so you embrace the condition of this moment surrender to that and there is space around it light space there is a disidentification from the condition and it's beautiful could you please help me see clearly about this I find this week when I have been more still and less mind activity than ever before I have deliberately not read or allowed my mind to go off on long trains of thought that I am experiencing a numbness, an inert kind of inactivity but it feels more like dullness than aliveness the thought comes I would rather have the highs and lows than this blankness and neutrality I am not sure I want a life that is so tranquil it seems too uneventful and uninteresting what is the switch that brings in the aliveness, joy, exhilaration, etc this seems all yin with no yang now of course life the manifested life the world won't leave you alone anyway so it will continue to be interesting because the world will come in and challenge you and that makes the life of form interesting the question is will you lose yourself in that and it's no longer interesting it just becomes a burden it becomes depressing it becomes a place of fear when you lose yourself in it but yes why not have an interesting life in the world of form you don't have to give that up now presence is not interesting, that's true this is not entirely what he says about presence is not quite it yet, we'll see but one thing is true presence is not interesting because interesting can only apply to the world of forms where you can look at and say isn't that interesting look at that and look at that and then you work something out and the more you work it out the more interesting it gets there are many things in this life that are beyond interesting nature if you truly look at it if you look at nature from the point of view of mind only it's interesting because then you analyze the different species of birds and how they behave and you start writing things down and look it up in books and see how the trees work and what kind of leaves and compare the leaves to other leaves what families they belong to that's all interesting if you look at nature from no mind it suddenly becomes completely uninteresting but yes, it is alive sacred beautiful but you couldn't call it interesting if you watch the sunset if you watch the sunset and you have a camera and you have measuring devices to see the intensity of the sunlight and little tables and scales where you write it down then the sunset is interesting and then you can watch the sunset and just allow it to be see the majesty the beauty and the mystery of it you can no longer call it interesting it's of incredible beauty and vastness but it's not interesting because interesting means little bits and pieces interesting means you're cutting it means forms different forms in different pieces and the more you cut the world into little bits and pieces the more interesting it becomes and the more active the mind gets oh, isn't that interesting let's talk about this let's talk about the sunset now now, that level has its place for certain things in this manifested life that level measuring the sunlight may be useful for certain purposes but if that takes over your life then your whole life becomes reduced to the dimension of interesting which means it's the dimension of mind that cuts things up can never see the wholeness of things and that's a dreadful reduction so if your job is interesting and many jobs these days are extremely interesting then that's what you do but make sure that the other dimension is present in your life that which is not interesting so that you're not trapped in interesting which is trapped in the mind so yes the dimension of presence certainly is not interesting you're right there but it's alive I recommend to the questioner particularly to associate the state of presence more with being in the body and to sense the aliveness that you are as a body in the body with the unseen aliveness that is it that dwells in every cell of the body certainly it's not interesting but certainly it's alive it's full of life and so presence can deepen presence is not a head phenomenon it includes the head of course but presence is not generated by the head it the entire body and every cell in the body when you're present is alive it's alive with presence aliveness so it's a whole body phenomenon presence and then you will no longer feel that it is just a kind of lifelessness uneventful and uninteresting yes that's true but you have enough interesting in the world that's not going to leave you as long as you're here the world will give you lots of interesting things more than you want you can say leave me alone I've had enough, I've had an interesting life for too long so that's guaranteed but the state of presence although not interesting is deeply alive so go deeper within and realize presence is a whole body phenomenon and then it's not only that the body feels more alive the world around you also has an increased aliveness an increased I say for many people who are totally identified with mind the world that surrounds them is dead because they reduce the entire reality around them to concepts mental concepts and almost nothing gets past the filter of mental concepts in their world other human beings, nature they make everything interesting other human beings they talk about them all in terms of concepts they make themselves into concepts they inhabit a conceptual reality and they call it that's me they have concepts about who they are and that really means that the whole world becomes dead to you it may still be interesting but it lacks the vital aliveness so you inhabit a deadened reality and so they walk through nature and all they see is concepts the more knowledgeable they are the more concepts they carry in their head trees, what they are how they work and they know it all and then what comes after years of living in concepts life becomes old because they're always the same concepts you cannot experience anything fresh and new anymore because you've been there done it oh that's another one of those trees I've seen so many of those, many many because it's reduced to a concept and human beings so I've met that kind of person many times I know exactly what they're like somebody made me a compliment once, a woman with an enormous ego although occasionally she had glimpses she said I know whenever I meet anybody I immediately know almost everything about them I know what they're like I know what they're like in bed I know everything know everything she had so much knowledge of people on her level it was actually true, she knew she could look through but all she ever saw was the ego in the people, not beyond that but often on the level of ego she was often right and quite often also wrong because ego projects a lot also and so she's talking to me I know them all and then she looked at me and said but you, I don't know it all can't work you out that's because I was not interesting to the just present and she always often looked at me suspiciously kind of just trying to catch something that's interesting there maybe an emotion or thought but I immediately I experienced presence as sometimes intense and sometimes as a peaceful space in the background so that can vary it's always the presence is there, sometimes it obliterates almost the entire world but other times it's the background peace and whenever she came into my field of awareness I could sense an incredible heightening of presence the moment she came in I could feel so this was the question about interesting and so on go into the body and find that yes presence is alive but not interesting you're right there but you have the whole world there for interesting and your mind that's still there sometimes it happens that people walk out of talks, sometimes people come for the wrong reasons or because a friend said you must come to this talk it's really interesting and then they come to a talk and after 10 minutes they just can't stand it they have to walk out because they realize it's not interesting at all it doesn't work on that level and if they cannot access that in themselves that's beyond interesting then it's they can't stand it it's just too boring you have often said that if it were not for drugs and alcohol human beings would be insane or driven to suicide yes I believe I've said that imagine taking away alcohol drugs and television what would they do would they run around mad in the streets and all the children the poor children who are addicted addicted to television addicted to the video games suddenly no more TV and no more video games all interest being taken out of life and all they are left with is the trees and the flowers for many years of my life I tried to save my sister from herself by attempting to prevent her from accidentally or purposefully killing herself until eventually it became clear to me that her soul, spirit or inner presence was no longer accessible it was as though she had surrendered to everything outside of her inner she had surrendered to everything outside of her inner being her life situation was promising substantial financial means a loving supporting family two beautiful young boys intelligence and youth my question should I have clearly knowing her suicide was can't read the next word becoming a reality should I have continued to prevent her passing knowing she was choosing her destiny fully in some cases you do all you can and at some point you need to surrender and release that person and I believe it seems that's what you did you do whatever you can but there is something in some human beings that is so heavy there is so much pain in some human beings it seems that for some reason that we cannot explain through the mind they just need to be allowed to go through it they go through their hell nobody can understand it they are creating their own hell so it seems and something within them seems to be driving them there may be times when there is some consciousness and your hope comes up they can be reached for a little while and then they fall back and you reach them again they fall back sometimes it's somebody close, maybe somebody close to you, maybe a child, maybe a brother or sister in your case but some parents have had similar questions that their children went into drugs and so on and no matter what they did they tried for years to save them they tried everything and finally they had to be they had to release them you can still help but you can see that there is not more that you can do so there is no need to feel that you failed in any way we cannot understand often the purpose of certain lives of humans why they need to go through that but there is a purpose they need to experience the pain sometimes the awakening comes just before they die it can come a moment before they die the awakening may come after they die the life, the form the energy field no energy is ever destroyed or lost the life form that temporarily is a physical form is of course indestructible because it's one with the one life it's only a little ray or spark of the one life and eventually every life form which is only a cell within the totality of the one life another way of putting it eventually every life form realizes it's oneness in the early stages the oneness is natural nature lives in natural oneness with the one and then gradually as life forms evolve life gets more and more difficult because the oneness seems to be lost, the realization of oneness and the individual me becomes more and more pronounced and then life gets more and more difficult problematic because the me is far removed from the, so it seems and then comes the return journey, the return journey for the evolved life forms does not come until there is suffering, and some have to suffer more than others and so it is the suffering that is the destiny of every evolved life form that is prior to finding the way back to the full, to the conscious realization of oneness and the suffering, if you look at your own suffering you can see that it has it's place it has had it's place it has deepened you you probably wouldn't be here without it you would be watching TV or something like that so you can see that it has produced the deepening and so it will produce the deepening in every life form so the release, when there is nothing more that you can do, you still love them you love them, you love the essence, even though the essence may be heavily obscured you know it's there and it may still occasionally shine through in the glimpses and you love that as yourself but as far as actually helping them, there may come a point when you see, I've done everything, should they come yes, you help again the inner release is important because it's a surrender that also helps them, it doesn't help them only visible material or physical form reality but in many ways you can surrender for them they cannot surrender, they are in intense pain you surrender for them, which means you accept that that is where they are at, at the moment, that is their due their choice, do we call it choice or do we call it unconsciousness, it's not really choice, it looks as if they were choosing suffering, but there's nobody really there who is choosing it's the suffering that is simply perpetuates itself the pain body wants more and more pain and so when that reaches a critical point, the awakening happens and it may not happen in every case in this lifetime or in this form but the energy that you are goes through metamorphosis that's a continuous metamorphosis of energy and it's not it seems wasted, it seems that a lifetime is wasted, but it's not that's the strange thing nothing is ever wasted but you may not know that until the awakening comes as we said earlier, retrospectively that which seemed meaningless and full of mistakes suddenly makes sense has meaning, because it took you to awakening and that's the case with every life form and so for some humans their existence here is a kind of crucifixion, and they don't it seems in this lifetime they don't experience that which lies beyond the crucifixion surrender and the transformation of the cross from a torture instrument to a symbol of the divine and the ascension which is symbolic the realization of who you are there's one question here it may even be the next one one concerns the suffering of a human being and this question concerns the suffering of an animal life forms one can say, yes the human probably suffers more intensely am I projecting my own misery and suffering on the dying baby puppy lying right outside of the door of Pura Vida by wanting to hold him help him and save him while everyone ignores him if you can save save it's a beautiful thing to do and then of course you have to also recognize the enormous amount of suffering that's still happening on the planet in human forms animal forms and the human madness inflicting an incredible amount of suffering on the animals also beyond the suffering that is there the animals are more can suffer better than humans unless the human begins to surrender in which case suffering works beautifully it burns you up but animals die better than humans and suffer better than humans they are closer to the unmanifested within them you can see when two animals one animal is about to devour another at some point the other the animal that is dying becomes very still one could almost say they've already died millions and millions of times in the same way and so have humans they've already died so many times it's so familiar the animal is able to withdraw to a deeper place where it touches the formless and when death comes the animal goes there and humans can do that too we are going there, here you go, you draw away from the form into the formless and you touch that and that's the reason why sometimes cats who usually purr when they are happy one of the most beautiful sounds they are a very healing sound a purring cat if you are unhappy just put a purring cat on your stomach or belly and although I lived with cats for a long time or had cats for quite a few years I rarely experienced cats the cats around me were usually ok, I rarely experienced cats in distress but when I talked to, I visited a vet and there was a cat there, very fearful of the vet and the cat suddenly started purring so that extremely fearful cat suddenly started purring, I said to the vet why is it that this cat can't be happy because obviously it's full of fear and the vet said the cat fearful cats in great fear often start to purr the vet had some explanation for it but I don't believe it was the correct one I believe that when cats see a threat to their life, to their form they withdraw to the formless, the being underneath and the moment they touch that they feel the goodness of life the aliveness they touch the formless and then they purr and on the outer level they still fear but the fear makes them go in so deeply that they touch that and so that's the what is hiding whenever the form is in suffering whether it's human or animal form there's always that and some humans cannot consciously access that yet but it's there it's quite possible that your sister accessed it just as she died, as the form dissolved, she may have accessed that and suddenly seen the whole suffering took her to the point of death may have touched it very deeply we don't know, but it is it is the destiny of every life form to return to that the early the life forms still are in touch with it, gradually they lose it and then you return so if you whatever we can do we do to help and save if there's a puppy you can take the puppy home or feed it but there's an enormous amount of suffering still on the planet and if you think about it you'll go mad if you think about the amount of suffering that's happening at this very moment to humans animals you would go mad you have to be everywhere and a lot of the human suffering as well as the suffering of animals that are caused by humans is caused by humans that comes out of the madness of the unenlightened human egoic consciousness about 85% of human suffering is generated by humans for themselves they make themselves and others suffer and so we have to look also beyond that, the suffering for some reason that's what is now and even that has a purpose within the evolution of the whole the whole is beyond the forms the forms are temporary very temporary expressions and the suffering of the form has its place too it doesn't mean that you callously say oh it's all good yes it is all good but at the same time you may weep that's compassion because you can empathize empathize with the suffering form but at the same time if that's all there is, that's not true compassion, you have to go deeper and see that ultimately nothing real can be threatened and nothing unreal exists I will save some questions perhaps for what we call tomorrow I have some more in my room too that may come there's some more here, some have flown away but there's some more here, I'll put them in also, questions there's somebody asked me about a Marshall Plan for Economic Assistance to poor countries, is that person here? thank you maybe tomorrow I can mention that, I saw that may require a little bit more one person that I know quite well is on the list of people who contribute, Peter Russell, I may have a word with him and see what we can how we can help in that way that's also there's always the level of form on which it's good to help on the level of form wherever you can never losing touch with a deeper level otherwise you'll burn yourself up on the level of form as many therapists know as many social workers know as many people who work in third world countries know if you're not rooted here you will burn yourself up because there seems to be no end to it so the balance needs to be there between being rooted in being and helping on the level of form and then it's a different kind of help too there's more than just the physical or material help I believe the questions that have blown away have already been answered there some of you will be here tomorrow morning some will go away again for a while on another adventure, it's good to try out presence when you go into when the external absorbs your attention a bit more and to remain present when things happen you're on a bus or whatever that's good practice there's movement after this for those who whose body need presence flowing into movement not only in the movement class but also we mentioned that briefly when you do little things little everyday actions bring presence see if you can perform it just with such alertness that the action is not a means to an end but an end in itself do little things all that you do naturally you have to do them anyway so why not bring presence into them washing your hands drying your hands walking from the living room to the bathroom walking up the stairs in your house putting the cup on the table taking it from the kitchen on the kitchen top counter top and put it on the table the cup travels to the table and that's the space of presence any lifting something picking something up a pencil, a pen just that movement you associate a certain spatial movement with presence that's a great help to associate a spatial movement of your hands that's of course also to do with what the movement meditative movement is also about but also to practice it in everyday life in some Buddhist meditations they have the meditative walk the walking meditation which can look a bit strange if you and they do it very slowly sometimes it's overdone a bit but I would suggest a bit more natural walk but slow enough so that you don't make the way you want to get to as more important than the step you are taking now that's the main thing to be conscious of the step you are taking now just a little few steps here in the garden picking up the phone your hand reaches out grabs grasps the phone and then it goes to your ear and putting it down so your the thingness of life becomes interspersed with spaciousness because otherwise you get absorbed by the thingness if you don't bring space in so you bring the space into the thingness of life otherwise it's one thing after another and there's never any time for meditation I couldn't even think of meditation well, bring it into the very thingness so that the thingness doesn't take over not quite as stormy as on the last day, the last night of the last time we were here nevertheless it's quite windy today sweeping away the accumulated stuff of thousands of years of conditioning water was a nice idea to start with I was thinking and worked for quite a while it made life more interesting and then gradually it got out of hand or became dysfunctional because it approached or is approaching the end of its life span in an evolutionary stage of being identified with thinking always critical when an evolutionary movement comes to an end and something new is about to come out of the seeming collapse of the old always a critical moment because you never know whether the new is coming well, it seems to be coming here it is coming here it's always a critical moment just as those of you who saw the butterfly butterflies in the well, you see them flying around here but in the where the waterfall is they have a whole house full of butterflies many are hatching and some are still waiting well, they're not waiting they're just there transformation is coming the butterfly becomes a caterpillar and then the transformation happens and I've said it before the caterpillar at some point becomes dysfunctional before it becomes a butterfly because it's the end of its life span in that form just as humanity has become dysfunctional in many ways because it's this is the end of something nothing new is coming the caterpillar is not going to go much further it must be apparent to everybody if there's no change what new is there going to come out of that state of consciousness so the new tends to arise not within the structures that were created by the old consciousness although here and there it happens too but it comes outside so the new consciousness arises not within not usually out of the organized religion although there are some a few exceptions some churches have a certain openness and it can arise there too but as a whole the new is not arising out of the existing structures that are mostly reflections of the egoic consciousness so you don't find anything truly new or transformational arising in the universities, they get bogged down in further and further analysis cutting things up into further smaller and smaller pieces of mind knowledge universities the established traditions of writing there's no spiritual writing, people don't know how to classify it in some old bookstores I remember in England that was 20 years ago in the main academic bookstore, it was a huge place in Cambridge they had a little section where you could find things like the cause in miracles and other works to do with the changing consciousness and they just didn't know how to label that section it didn't fit into anything they knew so they labeled it phenomena and many people living in this world don't quite know where they belong and fit in anymore, before it was relatively comfortable, all the structures were rigid and established, everybody knew where they belonged and now this where do I belong, because the structures that are there don't seem to be that this is not where I belong so where do I fit in many people feel they are misfits others are functioning within the established structures and bring the new consciousness in from within the underground, they are undermining the existing order which isn't really an order it's something that has become dead and they are undermining it from within, that's good too I'd like to look briefly at just a few more questions because almost every question concerns everybody I'll start with my favorite here I no longer have any questions thank you laughter it is coming more naturally to see all else arising from one without mind or position the clearer this knowing the stronger the fight I seem to be exerting, it is like my ego wants credit for witnessing it all, instead of being one with it all ego wrestling ego knowing the futility of this does not help, the process is getting very tricky ego witnessing ego witnessing messy business any words of advice in deepest gratitude for speaking truth thank you it's true that sometimes the ego which is no more than a thought that you identify with the ego is no more than a thought that you identify with, then it becomes an egoic thought and becomes part of ego, when you recognize a thought as a thought, it's only a thought and it's not problematic thought becomes problematic when you become it, or it becomes you, or it pretends to be you then it's ego so yes a thought may come in and say I'm so present look, now I'm really there laughter that's possible and that's not doesn't matter that much if you recognize it as a thought no more now this is important not to have a right relationship to your thoughts a relationship as if you were relating to a little child comes up with all kinds of nonsense and occasionally the child says very wise things that can happen too and yet it's just a thought and it comes and the mind goes listen, okay you pat your mind on the head laughter now thought wants to be taken seriously but as you may remember on probably our first day here or may have been, or maybe it was another retreat, I don't remember we said one of the things to remember here as a kind of mantra or rather as a kind of pointer is don't take your thoughts too seriously they like to be regarded as a problem because the more you regard your thoughts as the problem, the more thoughts the more thought is generated laughter so if thought can pretend that you are faced with a problematic situation I just can't get beyond my ego I don't know what's going on then that generates more thought the ego is no more than that the unobserved mind that's all so always bring back when you think I just the ego is getting hold of me again I don't know how to get rid of it just a moment where's this moment what about this moment it's the we've already pointed awakening into this moment back into this moment, what is the reality what's the problem what's the problem well my ego is playing up well where is that what's the problem take one conscious breath one conscious look conscious listening perhaps even some other senses conscious being in the body that's the present moment that's the beginning of it and then there's a depth there's no problem except the movement of thought so be be in the body be in the senses be in the breath and then allow if there's any thought left allow it to play don't show too much interest look I matter, I'm so important and then no, you don't need to show that interest it's a thought, that's it come always back what's here now, what's the present moment and then first you come to the form of the present moment sense perceptions breathing and then you begin to go beyond form and you go into the inner body because it's the entry point into the formless and then the inner body and presence merge as one and then you're present with every cell of the body and there's a field of spacious aliveness underneath all the forms in which there's no problem ever and that's the present moment the direct present the present moment in its essence the formless now and then there's the manifestation of now which includes your thoughts always come, look for the now look for the now when you think there's a problem, look for the now if there is a problem in the now it's not a problem, it's a situation that you need to deal with and if you face it the ability to deal with it the power to deal with it is there it comes out of presence if it's a true situation or a challenge now, look at it face it and say, what do I have to do what action is needed and then you become still and an action arises you might not even ask the question the action may arise spontaneously so there are no problems they're all mind manufactured challenges, yes challenges can only be in the now if there's a situation that your mind carries around it's not here now when the time comes, you deal with it or maybe you have to think about something now but that's not a problem which flight am I going to catch to go home or something like that that's good, that's practical and you think about it and then it's done get out of problem there is no problem and you are not problematic now that's very important because the ego loves to especially as presence arises the ego loves to pretend that you are a problem to yourself and you can get stuck in that for years something that I need to work out but you don't really need to work out presence cuts through rather than works out you know there was this knot in ancient Greece the guardian knot somebody had tied a big piece of string it seems into a huge knot and nobody could undo the knot that was thousands of years ago and there was a prophecy that whoever would undo the knot would become the most powerful person on the planet something like that so everybody tried they all went to the knot but it was too complicated and then a young man came and he looked at the knot and he drew his sword and he cut through and they say he became Alexander the Great or something like that and he conquered most of the known planet that's the sword to undo yes but not through trying to work out the complicated me cut through the sword of presence so the knot of you is undone and every ego is a knot the mind tied itself into a knot and then energy cannot flow very well through a knot if you take a tube and you tie it into a knot the energy this is why the ego is not an open channel for life because the energy finds it very hard to get through because each sword blocks it, the me sword the future I must have, I need, I want I should, they should, I shouldn't every sword blocks life the full flow of life and then that's reflected in the emotions that tie themselves into a knot that's the pain body life energy that is no longer flowing and so people who have strong egos, in other words are very identified with mind and emotion you can see them, they're walking knots whatever the predominant energy of that particular manifestation of ego is so cutting through you are not a problem don't believe the mind when it tells you that you are a problem or even that you have a problem one conscious breath just you can bring it down one conscious breath brings you back to ah

[Speaker 2] (5:15:15 - 5:15:22)

where am I? oh oh oh I'm alive

[Speaker 1] (5:15:34 - 5:35:38)

I have experienced the presence now without ego during a 24 hour period of time however when I awoke after a night's sleep the extreme sense of presence was gone I achieved this state by asking myself the question who am I and who is the I that asks the questions the same question and contemplation does not work anymore and the brief moments of the now are so short am I stuck in comparing the problem is that I know what I'm not experiencing do you go in and out of the now or are you always present, first part of the question it sometimes happens either through a shock danger, great loss or sitting in a retreat that in some people there's a sudden eruption of presence and they're in amazement, suddenly ah and usually it doesn't stay, occasionally it does, but it's rare usually that eruption is like a flash and then it dies down and then after that you still get glimpses as pointed out and then the mind comes in very strongly and says I want that back and the mind says I lost it or it says when is it going to come back how is it going to come back it's not uncommon for something like this to happen the sudden eruption of intense presence and it's not uncommon for it also to subside after a while and then what you're left with is the seemingly insignificant present moment and you have to go back to that you have to go back to the seemingly little insignificant this and then presence comes again but this time in a different way whereas before it came like presence comes gradually creeping up from behind so to speak from the background at first it's hardly there and then from the background you sense something in the background which is yourself which is the consciousness that you are the unconditioned stillness at first you hardly notice anything it's just the present moment and it's fine so presence comes more slowly seeps in gradually no longer drastically like a flash of lightning that can be a prelude to a more permanent emergence of presence and then gradually there's the background, you are there as the background piece at first a distant background piece and then gradually the sense of background piece becomes stronger and then there tends to be a more everlasting emergence of presence and the flashes are beautiful, they're interesting when they come and even there as it emerges there may even be a flash again of intense presence and then it becomes a permanent not of experience because presence is the very foundation of all experience so presence sometimes is seen as if it were an experience, for example what happened to you, one could consider that as an experience but it isn't really because what came in was the very background of all experience, it came in so strongly that it almost obliterated the foreground and that happens to some people and to one, occasionally it happens it comes and never goes away and that's not even the greatest thing because it could complicate your external existence when it comes so suddenly as it did to Ramala Maharshi who kind of, he was just lying on his bed and experiencing so to speak his own death he had disidentified from form completely when he was 17 years old and then it took hold of him and he left he took a train to some distant temple and he sat down by the temple or later in a cave and didn't want to move anymore the sense of presence was so overwhelming, the being he disappeared in the being of presence and for years he said people had to put food in his mouth and then it took years to adjust so that he could function again start eating and after years start speaking he was not given medication because he was lucky enough to live in India and that happens to people in the West it's not recognized, everybody would say this is a symptom of a mental breakdown if you go to a doctor, unless you happen to find a conscious doctor there are more, there are some doctors here who are bringing consciousness in so if you're lucky enough yes, or a conscious psychiatrist but often if you go with something like that, imagine what you wrote here go to see your doctor about that unless he or she knows so don't try to repeat an experience it wasn't an experience, it was something very powerful, it gave you a taste a kind of satori satori doesn't last but it's a taste but what now comes is the gradual from behind the last part of the question, are you always present do you go in and out of the now no the now remains, presence remains the only variation is the intensity of it, it's sometimes in the background as a peace a peaceful field in the background of all experience and sometimes it comes more strongly there's the it's really, life is a play between the background and the foreground the foreground is what happens any happening including thoughts and events and sense perceptions anything to do with form is the foreground of life where things take place but how is it possible for these things to take place, how is it possible for these things to be, what is the light in which these things appear what in what light do they, what is it that gives them life, what is the life that underlies it all, that is the background, that is essentially who you are in your formless dimension and knowing it that frees you from being trapped in the foreground of your life which is a dreadful fate because then you're trapped in what happens or doesn't happen, continuously dependent on events and people and what things, what these people say and what they do and what happens or doesn't happen needing, wanting all that is trapped in the foreground so the background is the light in which it all appears, but so to speak you could have, I gave the image already of a film projector there you have the film behind the film is the light the light doesn't change the film is there and it's only through the light that the film comes to life and then you see all these figures being projected which are all different ways in which the light is obscured that's what you are as the form you are a way in which God is obscured, every form now if you identify with only that then that's a very, very limited view of who you are now if the figures that are being projected as actors whatever they do on the screen, they go through drama because usually a film is to do with interesting things and so that they go through the motions and they repeat the same, you run the same film again and it's like humans and now imagine that a character in that one of the projected images becoming self-aware while all that happens, suddenly who am I? and that question would draw him or her back to the origin I'm no more than the light a projection of that light, the essence of me is light so the character would suddenly perhaps for a while continue to play, but no and then the kind of play would also change because he would no longer play out the old there would be something new the play would become maybe less interesting but deeper more beautiful, more harmonious with an enormous depth of aliveness to it so presence is there and sometimes presence can almost obliterate the background can come into being, the sense of being can be so strong that it obliterates almost the foreground so events everything in form is almost so tiny because it feels like and I'm talking about this so that when it happens to you and I know to many it's already happening it's like there's a you are a sphere, I may have said that already, you are a sphere a ball and you sense the inner most essence of that sphere and everything else in your life is the surface of that sphere, the wave movement on the surface of being all events, all happenings, all sense perceptions, all thoughts, all emotions the wave movement so sometimes your consciousness goes more into the form without losing awareness of the center within, the still and at other times it may shift more towards the being itself and then the forms look quite irrelevant so there's a shift, sometimes certain situations bring out more presence I mentioned if you're facing a critical situation you would either fall into complete identification with old reactions or you would become more intensely present now that there's quite considerable degree of presence in you it is likely that any challenge will pull you into greater presence rather than pull you back into unconsciousness which would be the normal thing that a challenge does to a human being, they become more, they're pulled into unconsciousness the fear comes, the egoic fear and so on. Facing a person with a heavy pain body, facing a person with a strong ego, also like the lady I described yesterday came, you would become, suddenly feel intense presence because you have to the ego otherwise would pull you into identification the pain body would pull some emotion out of you, it would push some button somewhere as this lady said, I know exactly how people function, I can look through them and of course she also knows their buttons the pain body in her knows exactly what the right thing to say to get a response of emotional reaction and it can then feed and amplify it and feed it back to them and then get it back so sometimes you face humans and when you look into their eyes what you see is their being their liveness is being obscured more than usual by heavy emotion an emotional entity that wants something from you, it might attack you, it might whatever, who knows what it wants, but it wants a reaction it's just waiting for a reaction sometimes you meet people in the street walking with heavy I call them walking pain bodies and they're just waiting for an excuse to get angry at you and when you look into their eyes you have to be the sort of presence and then miracles are possible then it can happen and I have experienced that quite a few times that the sort of presence, even in a heavy pain body can cut through cuts into the through the pain body and you reach the essence of that person and for a moment the pain body subsides and there's a true communion, a true meeting and then you walk away and probably the pain body will come back but that person will have experienced something that they won't forget they have touched something that perhaps they hadn't touched before within something true and they might mistakenly associate that with you as a person, they might think you did something to them they might, the ego might even the ego, the suspicious ego might even think that he must have done some magic tricks on me, I don't know what he did but I can't trust him I can't trust him there's one long one and I'll have the short one first how can we concentrate to lessen the all around the planet fear the fear all around the planet almost paranoid that has arisen since September 11 how can we concentrate to lessen the fear, almost paranoid collective fear better not to ask how you can lessen the fear but how not to be drawn into it because you lessen it by not feeding it, by not contributing to it so many things that you watch on TV and so on in the media are produced by the egoic mind which lives with continuous underlying fear and really this event has brought it out more brought it out more to the surface the collective egoic fear so not to be drawn into it it's the fear of death but really it's only the fear of death of the ego so when you when you listen to the media when you listen to the politicians you listen to the reporters or whatever whoever they are on TV radio, read the papers don't you have to be as conscious there as you are when your mind goes because it's no more than the collective aspect of mind it's somebody else's mind and you have to be present while you listen to the news as present as when you listen to your own thoughts you have to be there as the witness of the human mind particularly when you watch television and realize that there's the human mind in its egoic state it says why you should be fearful, it tells you why you should be fearful I saw a nice science fiction episode on TV last year they visit some other planet and the people who live there have no technical gadgets they live totally simply in little huts and there's some evil race that's threatening to come to this planet and invade the planet and the people from earth want to save these seemingly innocent people who have nothing and the main character of the earth people is talking to one of the elders of the people they have this long hair and talk very little and have the ability to be invisible when they want to but he says these evil people are coming to get you you have to do something, we can help you, let us help you and the elder says we are not afraid and the earth character says then be afraid

[Speaker 6] (5:35:40 - 5:35:41)

laughter laughter

[Speaker 1] (5:35:59 - 5:50:03)

and then towards the end of that episode finally they give up and say we can't help these people, what do we do laughter they will be destroyed ok, you go ahead, they will destroy you ok, we have to go now and then finally the elder at the end says to the earth people look up there and he goes and suddenly they look up in the sky and they see a kind of a shimmering city of light floating in the sky which is usually invisible and suddenly the earth people realize that these people are a hundred times more advanced not only than the earth people but also more than these technologically extremely advanced evil ones and they function they have no ego whatsoever and of course no fear whatsoever and because they have no ego it's easy for them to be invisible and the entire civilization is invisible to the gross energy vibration but of course the punchline in the film is be afraid laughter so the ego wants you to be afraid it lives on that the ego itself means a sense of separation the otherness of others needs to be emphasized by the ego the fact others want to do something to me that's what the ego lives by because that creates a separation between me and the others the other of the others it always emphasizes the otherness and then fear arises at the otherness in ancient primitive villages where people have had little contact with the outside world usually they are afraid of strangers that's also they also have ego there's the fear what are they going to do anybody who looks different speaks differently, behaves differently look through the human mind when you watch TV be present, observe what's behind what they say don't get drawn into the detail what is what are the assumptions behind what they say which are all ego based unconscious mind patterns so not to be drawn into it to be there as a witness of the TV news so you don't watch the TV news like oh no you have to be the background to the TV news as you are the background to your mind and then you don't feed the collective that's enough that is your contribution to not feeding that level of unconsciousness on the planet and more and more people realize that then it won't grow anymore it needs unconsciousness yes paranoia is the right word here paranoia means everybody the enemy is everywhere it's an interpretation of the other as the enemy is paranoia what does he want, what do they want what are they plotting and it's everywhere, you go into companies big corporations what everybody is afraid of everybody else plotting against us, little groups here, little groups there so watching TV especially the news is good spiritual practice and it might even be good for enough people to watch the news from that state influences because your inner state is connected to every other human humans are connected at the level beyond form to each other of course and so your inner state influences even if you don't speak or meet others it has an influence it strengthens that in others when you enter fear the fear of the whole of humanity enters you and strengthens your fear you link in, you tune in to the fear of the entire collective on the planet and when you go beyond presence arises also you link into each other human who is present and that's the beauty of it there's an enormous strengthening through that so whenever you watch the news just sit there as a presence and then more and more others will also sit there and eventually the news changes that comes later that's the outermost manifestation the outermost manifestation is there politicians are also the outermost they come they'll be the last to change except for occasional miracles, they are possible too this is long but it's relevant relevant two days ago I had a massage and I relaxed so much that something new to me happened I became a kind of presence and I experienced my thoughts only as disappearing shadows like a big bang in reverse there was nothing for them to hold on to I felt like I was dying, somehow slipping away then yesterday during my echo adventure I fell out of my raft in the river the water was rushing into my mouth and nose I got very dizzy and was carried into some rocks, still more water inside of me and everyone seemed so far away I thought I was dying there in this river I never saw before I cried later, I cried after my roommate fell asleep people were so kind to me I feel like death is so close that I'm afraid suddenly my chest hurts I'm still crying today, thank you yes, the vital the two incredible initiations you had one, the massage when the mind-made structures subsided and that was a kind of death and then a brush with death on the river physical death and you're right what you say here death is so close and that's true and it's good to remember that death is close, very close because death is actually you look at it from the perspective of form or the foreground what looks like death when you say death is close and I'm afraid of it you're looking at death from the perspective of the foreground from the perspective of the background, death is life so here you can see death ooooh I'm afraid of what? of life the one life timeless, eternal, myself just shift be the background, that's death there's death the formless death is no more than the transition between form, from form to formless and it's beautiful so it's a great life is miraculously arranged it in such a way that you had two wonderful encounters with the reality of yourself to reverse what the character in the TV film said don't be afraid there's nothing to fear but don't try to explain to convince yourself that there's nothing to fear shouldn't be afraid go deeper where you realize that there's nothing to fear become still there's nothing to fear because there's no death it's only a perspective please address recognizing egoic thought from action and words which arise out of presence for example write a book move to the west coast of North America and so on how do you know where something comes from how to recognize egoic thought from something in a way the answer is already in the question as is often the case how to recognize egoic thought how to tell the difference between egoic thought from action and words which arise out of presence egoic the answer lies in the word thought the ego is consists of thought and it's a thought that arises it may be a strong thought it may be an obsessive thought it comes again and again and again it may be a fleeting thought one day you think this is what I have to do and then the next day you think oh maybe that's not it so it could be also an obsessive thought that gets hold somewhere in a corner of your mind like an old record that's stuck and it plays it again you should be how to recognize it because what arises out of presence the outer manifestation of that may also be a thought but there is a deep inner knowing a non-conceptual knowing that is not thought so the energy behind it is very strong and it's always a peaceful kind of energy it's not jarred it's not turbulent in the emotional sense there's a powerful knowing a realization comes, there's no question about it and then the outer manifestation oh that's it and you can't argue with that you know it so it's direct and immediate knowing that tells you the difference it's good always to just feel what's the feeling quality is it just a thought in my head or is there a deeper power underneath it out of which the thought comes a peaceful silent power out of which that thought comes that's presence and action also action can come out of that and action that comes out of ego is either premeditated wants to achieve something through it some kind of agenda wants to enhance or protect the me so that's if in doubt it's probably just an egoic thought but time helps in that sense just wait because thoughts come and go and they wait and see the next morning you may have a different thought but that means before there wasn't that feeling quality behind it anyway so that's to watch out for what's the power out of which the thought comes it usually it feels good it feels just right there's a rightness the rightness to it

[Speaker 2] (5:50:03 - 5:50:04)

yes

[Speaker 1] (5:50:05 - 6:24:14)

and the energy that comes it is deeper than emotion it may touch on an emotion also because everything is connected it may touch an emotion but it is deeper than emotion the rightness of that yes that's it let's just take as you know questions go on and on but I must tell you I've never thrown away a single question that I have received on retreats I have a collection huge amount of questions on pieces of paper and when I take them out most of them are great maybe another book will arise a book of questions and answers not that you will need that anymore but there may be some others don't wait for another book you don't need that what kind of language can I use to help my child understand presence the pain body as far as presence is concerned language is not very important to help understand your child may even be completely unnecessary to help your child your child doesn't really need to understand presence your child needs to see what presence is for him or herself by being with you and by recognizing that he or herself has that also already born with that ability that just becomes obscured in our civilization at a very early age your presence teaches the child to be present that's the teacher words are not really required you don't need to tell to your child look at me now that's called presence so the state of consciousness that you are in, in the home environment teaches presence and the child absorbs that and something within the child responds to that and that will counteract the madness of the world in which the child probably still finds him or herself maybe if the child is lucky maybe the child is at a school that's more enlightened than the normal school that's possible and even there you cannot be in this world and not come into contact with madness even if the child is relatively protected the madness is there so it comes you have to counteract all the massive influence of the mad egoic collective mind the media, the television the video games without making the child feel that the child is missing out on something no TV here in some cases that may work there will come a point when the child feels there is something mysterious there called TV and I need to know what it is but your presence is the teacher the pain body is somewhat different the pain body, and I've spoken I've addressed it a few times already in groups I'll just say it briefly now the pain body which the child will also have either greater or lesser some children come into this world with strong pain bodies others relatively weak some develop a pain body very quickly especially if they live in a very unconscious environment which is not the case with your child because you are here so the child will have a pain body, strong or not so strong but the child will have at times the pain body will come and it comes when something minor provokes a very strong emotional reaction of pain withdrawal complete withdrawal screaming and weeping throwing things, throwing themselves on the floor hysterical fits in some cases or long weeping attacks, sometimes some babies you can already recognize strong pain body and you can feel when you listen to the crying of a baby and you've given the baby everything and it's still crying some babies cry because they want the attention and the moment you give attention they stop it's better to keep the child close as they do in other ancient civilizations the child stays close to the mother's body for a long time that's an enormous help the separation from the mother's body at birth is the most natural thing that immediately the pain body grows because at first the baby was one with the mother and then the people they take the child away and put him somewhere else dreadful so perhaps slowly we are learning the importance of the child retaining contact with the body of the mother and then that's already that will lessen the development of the pain body because then it's a gradual separation from so if your child has a heavy pain body it doesn't mean the child is spiritually less advanced many spiritually extremely advanced humans have heavy pain bodies that's their teacher it all works if I hadn't had a heavy pain body I wouldn't be sitting here if you didn't have or had not had a heavy pain body some of you you would not be here so the child will have pain body attacks and if it's a heavy pain body then they are very very noticeable and maybe frequent yes, then words can be helpful but presence also comes first for you to stay present while it happens because even the child's pain body wants you to draw you into a reaction at that moment each pain body wants more pain so the child's pain body when it is active and playing up it wants any form of pain even physical punishment it would want it yes more pain and some very unconscious parents punish the child physically because they cannot resist the pull of the emotional pull of the pain body they are not conscious enough to see that in themselves and they own pain body awakens and complete unconsciousness so it's for you to stay present not being drawn into the drama to see it, to recognize it that's the pain body, that's all you need you can't say much at that point the next day, a few hours later or the next day or two days later then it's the time when the child is relatively present then you can talk what happened the other day what did it feel like when does it what was that thing that came over you I'm just suggesting, the questions will come from you out of your presence what was that thing that came over you yesterday when you threw yourself on the floor and couldn't stop, wouldn't stop screaming how did it all start what does it feel like in you does that thing have a name it's a temporary way of stepping out of identification if you ask, does it have a name and the child might say, no it doesn't have a name then you could ask, if it had a name what would be its name does it have a color no, if it had a color what color would it be and so gradually the child develops the ability to observe to step out so you do it afterwards next time it happens again you can just point out as it starts is it coming back by then it might have a name or a color is it coming back and then in the middle of it you can say, there it is now the child probably won't hear you because the pain body is there and it will scream even more when you say, there it is so you have to say it gently but something behind the pain body will be hearing that there will be a small amount of presence even while the pain body is going on and then after it subsides again you again let some time pass and then you say, it was again and point out if you still have a pain body do you remember what happened to me last week when I started shouting at you or at mom or at dad that was my same thing in me and so gradually the child learns to be present while it happens and that means the pain body is not being added to it's not deriving more food it's not feeding on anything anymore so that's a beautiful way and children will very quickly learn to observe it at first they can't be there while it happens but after a little while you notice there is a growing awareness in the background while the pain body happens and then that's a gradual coming to an end a gradual shift will then happen the pain body is no longer renewing itself and it's gradually becoming transmuted and that's beautiful so that's the way in which presence itself requires no words pain body requires a few pointers but even there presence is the prerequisite for dealing with the pain body in yourself or in others the world of form another helpful thing is just one more not to let the child slip away at an early age into the conceptual realm and believing totally in words and concepts I've said that before, I'll just mention it briefly there comes a time when the child demands to be fed words and concepts what's that?

those are the questions what's that, what's that at that stage they want concepts words, they want the names of things what's that, and what's that at some later point other questions come why questions that adults sometimes they're very interesting questions the adults stopped asking themselves those questions a long time ago and when the child asks why they suddenly say, I don't know forgot to ask that question but let's stay for a moment with what's that that's a tree that's a flower that's a car that's this table names of things don't say that is say that's called because if you say that is the child will confuse the word or the concept with the reality which is infinitely deeper, it loses touch with the actual direct experience of reality and as it accumulates words and concepts, it begins to live, it begins to believe that when it says this is a tree that it actually, that's all there is to know about the tree and later it might go to biology class and then you get a few more names to attach to the things that happen to the tree or in the tree or the names of different trees and then that's it, immediately the depth of that tree recedes and what is replaced by a dead a relatively dead thought form, free and so that's how language and concepts deaden the aliveness so when you teach a child language the child should stay in touch with the actual thing, so you say it is called, not it is, and encourage the child to continue to look look at it there, to continue to touch to feel, to look, to listen to show him, look there touch, look so that it doesn't always, it's not obscured, everything is obscured with words and concepts, stay with the reality and the child also stays with the now, here, there look, there listen, look so that some of the direct experience remains for the child so that because we had to go through the way most of us we were deadened by concepts and then later had to break out or the world of concepts got just life shook it so much that it started to crumble a bit and we could start living again so all the whatever you teach the child is always see, there's always more beyond the words, so that the child knows that there's always more beyond the word the reality beyond the word your name, you can say the name you are that's the name we've given you, John you are not John, that's the name that you have, that we chose for you it's not you are not your name it's just a name the world of form which could also be called existence because existence is anything that stands out, x means out stands, from Latin stand standing existence is the world of form and it stands out as a thought as an emotion, as something the world the existence is about to change for you, as it always does because this form is coming to an end, the being which is timeless, underneath existence being existence existence flows out of being being however remains untouched it's timeless it's who you are essentially that was the essence of our gathering and it cannot leave you, because it's one with who you are this form was only an opening an opening for you to get a reflection of your essential reality no more so that's why I said when you took the photos, yes it was a nice window, relatively insignificant window frame, but nice, not because of the frame, there's nothing special to the frame it's the light that comes through the window it's not the so don't get attached to any window frame it's essentially being with yourself, that's why you're here, not with me as this form it's essentially, you are here to be with yourself because we've been, the world has gone, as Causing Miracles says, it has taken time to misguide you so completely the world is has gone such a strange ways that yes, it seems strange that you had to travel to be with yourself laughter but miraculously it worked laughter and then, soon a time comes, maybe already here when there's no need to travel to be with yourself and yet, if that is what you enjoy, if you get an even stronger deepening of yourself when you sense the reflection through some other window frame that's fine too you can travel, not that you need it anymore, you don't need it because you're ready one, with yourself and you can feel yourself and that doesn't change, so what changes is the periphery of your life the stage setting you know when they change the scene we go from act one to act two they move the furniture on stage they create a new so here you are as the consciousness and then you see suddenly the whole thing, Pura Vida disappears, somebody pushes it aside and then and then you see there's an aeroplane seat and somebody puts some plastic food in front of you and then come familiar surroundings oh, and a little doubt in the head, did that actually happen?

but you can feel something here that confirms that yes, something did happen but not really, the essence of that which happened was not in time because it's still here now and then life may change the stage setting and many suddenly could happen again in more drastic ways suddenly, oh you can move here, move there or you stay where you are it's the periphery, whatever happens is the periphery and you can participate in it you're not just a passive observer of the periphery because you also act upon the periphery but you act from the more you act from here from being in touch with the background and the intelligence and the power of that flows into the periphery the foreground then that is called in Buddhism right action so you're more likely to act, to do the right thing knowing that ultimately you cannot do the wrong thing because you can only learn and as we said the other day every choice will eventually take you to the same place which is yourself the awakened you some choices just go round and round and request tips about surrendering surrendering is so simple but the mind doesn't know that it says it's the hardest thing to do to surrender yes it's true that it goes against the habit patterns of the mind the habit patterns of the mind are to live in resistance just little pointers are enough allowing allowing this moment surrendering only concerns this moment that's something you do not surrender to a life situation you cannot surrender it's pointless and even counterproductive to say I might as well accept that I'm a poor little so and so that I have failed, I might as well accept that nobody loves me I might as well accept that I'm going to be lonely for the rest of my life I might as well accept that I live in this little hole and I'm not going to get out of it I might as well accept that I'm stuck in my big lifeless mansion and nobody comes to see me anymore and all the people who come just want my money I might as well there are so many life stories you do not surrender to a life situation because a life situation exists in time all you surrender to is this moment so you have to single out this moment out of the life situation it's like cutting the segment of now out of your life situation so I gave the example before you sit in prison your life situation is that you did something or maybe you didn't even do it, it's even worse they put you in and you were innocent you did or did not do something but the fact is that they gave you 25 years and you've been in for 10 already then you have another 15 to go that's your life situation and then you say I might as well accept that my life is really being destroyed, it's not much when I get out I'll be too old to do anything I made some dreadful mistakes or the world did something dreadful to me and I might as well accept that it's all come to an end and a pointless existence no, that's a story that's a sense of self based on a story you have to out of the story you cut out the segment that is called now and now what do you end up with then, you end up with breathing looking whatever the perception is there, there's a cell chair, bed if you have one chamber pot whatever it is or more, maybe you have to share the cell as some of you know, the owner of this place spent some years in one of the worst prisons in Florida and that's where he woke up sharing a cell with 25 or 30 violent men who were listening to loud music all the time there was no air conditioning almost no air coming in through the little windows the cell was meant for 6 or 7 people and there he was stuck, hell on earth and then at some point he was left with the present moment because if he left the present moment it was dreadful just this, cut out there's just what arises at this moment, the noise the heat discomfort but it's not even, discomfort is already the beginning of a story it's just what you feel this is what I feel that the uncertainty of we might not wake up the next morning because often people would, inmates would kill other inmates which is one other way of life removing future from you they had taken away all his possessions threatened to put his child in a home nothing left and then surrender happened but only there was just this cutting out what is the reality of this moment or whatever condition arises at this moment, that I say yes to because I cannot do otherwise and that is surrender you take any, you get out of, cut out of your life situation the segment that is now first you have the form of now the moment you say, you bring a total yes to the form of now because you see the absurdity the madness of denying it how it creates pain, how it creates suffering, how it strengthens the false me that lives on suffering the moment you see that that the only sane way to live, even in the midst of insanity because it's up to you to break the insanity you can't wait for the world to become sane, the world around you I'm just people are so unconscious, I'm just complaining about how unconscious other people are and even spiritual people they're just talking about, they're all unconscious it's all what about you what are you complaining about who is it in you that's complaining what's wrong with this moment go in here now this is what is a yes an uncompromising yes because everything else is futile and insane creates suffering that's the end to ego it cannot survive anymore in the uncompromising yes, it's a sword surrender has a passive aspect and the active aspect the passive aspect is I allow this moment to be as it is and if there's a gesture that goes with that it's your hands in the same way that some female deities, it embodies the essence of the power of the female Virgin Mary, Kuan Yin the allowing embracing what is embraces, I allow this moment to be as it is the other aspect of surrender is the sword and they both in a way it seems almost like a contradiction in order to allow you also need the sword this is what is and the sword is the uncompromising yes to what is so there is the surrender is both masculine and feminine in one and then that's the form of this moment is no longer judged is no longer complained about, the form that this moment takes is as it is, that's the sword and you embrace it it always is as it is already and with that unconditional yes something opens up within that is deeper than the form you have gone through the form not by fighting it but by surrendering to it the what looked like a wall in front of you suddenly opens up, what looked like the greatest obstacle to your awakening becomes the opening for your awakening that's the miracle that's always non-opposition non-fighting that is the secret of surrender and you don't need to wait until they put you in prison or you are in hospital or an earthquake destroys everything you have although it may happen too there is little surrender and big surrender in ordinary life what you practice is continuous little surrender and surrender, what is surrender even surrender is temporary, it's a temporary device, surrender is the shift from no, an inner no to an inner yes then you may have to do that many times during the day all the little surrenders all the little things that happen the little shouldn't be don't want to be here, they shouldn't do that so many times little surrender and then the more that is practiced the more surrender becomes your normal state when surrender is your normal state it's not surrender anymore because surrender is only the shift you don't even have to think about surrender anymore it is natural then for you to be in alignment with what is it's a natural way to live and then somebody says surrender, I say what surrender then even surrender disappears it's a temporary thing because it's a shift yes to no, it's that surrender but for a while that is something that you bring into your life until surrender disappears then you live one in alignment inner and outer are no longer in conflict and that surrender is no longer even spoken about and there it is that's the simplicity of it and that is all of us to surrender until we come even to the end of that to the end of surrender and live in natural alignment with life that's all natural alignment natural state natural alignment beautiful simple not living like that is the difficult way that's the simple way although the mind will tell you no no it's the other way around simple thank you thank you something something perhaps the most precious thing in your life is inner peace because no matter what you get in this world without that it's not really worth that much

[Speaker 2] (6:24:25 - 6:24:28)

so in any moment

[Speaker 1] (6:24:29 - 6:29:10)

or situation if you can remember that then you realize that the situation is secondary yes of course you have to deal with it if it requires action but there's always something else that's more fundamental more vital because even if you achieve what you wanted but through this the action you lose inner peace it's not that helpful anymore whatever it was that you achieved what is it worth because inner peace goes away is obscured through mental judgments concepts that you completely believe in so it's not something you need to find it's already in you that's the amazing thing even in the most seemingly insane person there is inside there is the core of inner peace stillness aliveness I can only use pointers and as I use the pointers hopefully hopefully you go within and see if at this moment you can realize the reality of what the words point to otherwise they are only words something in you loves that inner peace and then there is the ego in everybody unless it's dissolved already that wants something else it's more important it says or it says you won't find inner peace until you get this or that and there is always a postponement if you listen to the egoic mind it says yes I want peace but before I can get there I need this and this and this unless this and this and this I can't really fully go into that it's just not can't do it now first Jesus talked about that when he said people get an invitation to a wedding it's a parable people get an invitation to a wedding and they all have another excuse, one says well first I need to deal with some real estate that I have and when I get that out of the way I'll come, somebody else says first I need to do that there's always the excuses always start with first I need to and one even says first I need to bury my father and even there Jesus says let the dead bury the dead

[Speaker 2] (6:29:12 - 6:29:13)

quite a

[Speaker 1] (6:29:13 - 6:37:17)

radical statement what he is saying that if you haven't found that dimension within yourself you are as if dead it doesn't mean it's not there in you potentially it's still there but in the meantime you are as if you were dead you're not dead, it's like saying let's say to use a deficient comparison let's say you have a billion dollars in a Swiss bank account but you don't know it so you are poor you are as if completely poor because you have no idea so you behave like a poor man and you ask for please give me a penny not knowing that there is a vast treasure of course a billion dollars is absurd, nothing compared to that the analogy is deficient but that's okay all analogies are so let me first well first I need to think about this so that it doesn't work first comes that and everything else then begins to flow with greater ease and again Jesus says what you thought you needed for your happiness once you realize that the kingdom of heaven is what you want it's your first choice then everything else will be added whatever you thought you needed for your fulfillment and peace will be added you don't need it anymore but you need to choose peace first which implies you surrender to the present moment and you step out of the judgments of your mind in other words you die because the false self lives on non-surrender and judgment and denial of the present moment, it can't tolerate the present moment that's why it says first I need to look somewhere else and do something else so yes I forgot to mention that you need to die because that's what it is but what dies is false anyway but as long as the false is mistaken for the real it's a little bit as if and only really if you're fed up with the suffering that the usual state of consciousness the ego has created for you then you begin to be ready to say okay I'm fed enough I'm fed up with suffering to the ego suffering often looks like a positive thing it's a perverted way of looking at things oh I'm so anxious at least I feel alive, I must be alive because I'm anxious I have enemies so I must be important I have huge problems I must be an important person with such huge problems because without my problems who would I be these are implied thought movements, they're not conscious because the moment you make them conscious you see their absurdity I'd like to talk today about something people have been periodically asking me what do you think about this book so I thought I'd bring it along and tell you what I think about it but not only that we'll see because there's no point in talking about something one has to go deeper into it to know it knowledge about and true knowing the difference in that so people have been asking what do you think about A Course in Miracles well here it is it's heavy paper is very thin like the bible and it's about as long as the bible some of you know it well or have gone through it or are still going through it some of you have heard of it some of you have tried to get into it but didn't like it some of you have never heard of it so it's been around for a few years this came out in 76 and it is a self study course for inner transformation I'm telling you this just very briefly you're supposed to study it by yourself some people go to groups too it's divided into three parts the long text the lessons one per day for one year 365 and the workbook for teachers which is relatively short at the end it's an incredible phenomenon it's a book that was channeled and just the same as with other spiritual writings only a small percentage of channeled works are actually quite deep just as small as anywhere else sometimes people are immediately impressed when something is channeled in other words some spirit or presence talks through you and some people the moment they say this is channeled they say

[Speaker 2] (6:37:17 - 6:37:17)

ah

[Speaker 1] (6:37:20 - 6:51:32)

of course you always have to remember that famous saying just because they are dead doesn't mean they are smart so it can be at first very impressive if the person suddenly goes this is so and so speaking good afternoon entities and then you can't question anymore yes so a small percentage of channeled works go deep and I believe Course in Miracles does but it certainly is not for everybody and certainly I'm not telling you oh you now have to do the Course no, you may we'll see the it is not for everybody not everybody needs it if presence is already transforming your life then that's where the Course in Miracles wants to get you basically so it's already there for you if presence is already transforming your life your relationships the way in which you experience reality it's already doing that increasing inner peace increasing freedom from externals and reactivity towards other people and external conditions if you are already experiencing that then you don't really need it, you may still enjoy reading it but you don't need it if you've been following this teaching and of course something in you has drawn you here that which is real has recognized the truth yes and as you are here something within you responds so that's wonderful but if that is lost the moment you start dealing with people and situations and if that has happened continuously in your life it's happened to a few people that there's presence when they are quiet, not disturbed it's beautiful, they can access stillness so that's already a huge breakthrough, huge breakthrough you can access stillness when you are not being challenged by anything and your mind subsides for a while because ultimately you are really only challenged by your mind, it looks like the situation but it's your mind interpreting the situation that challenges you and takes you out into disturbance so if you already can access that in moments when you can become still and beautiful that's enormous breakthrough but it may be that despite that you very quickly lose it in this moment you relate to other human beings and you go into the usual thing as if you had never heard of any spiritual teaching and only you can know that or you can ask the people who know you if you don't know it, what do you think of me me old friends family members well you might not get an objective opinion there then I would say try to apply the lessons of the Course in Miracles because it uses relationships as spiritual practice, that's one of the main focal points of the Course in Miracles is using relationships with other humans the most difficult challenge in your life in this lifetime is other humans relationship with other humans there's no doubt that that is the greatest challenge but it's also there's no doubt that it is there that the new consciousness needs to come in and change the way in which you relate so that a different energy you put out a different energy you do not contribute to the madness of the world so you put out a different energy in relationships, you dissolve conflict you are the bringer of peace and you realize that's your main priority in life, in the terminology of the Course in Miracles you become a teacher of God teacher doesn't mean necessarily that you explain something, no you live it and by living it you teach it so then that might be a helpful thing to apply the lessons everyday one because the lessons are meant to be applied in everyday situations in relationships I'll give you later one or two examples or three of the lessons and what they can do applying the teaching in everyday life and that is a reflection if you want to know where you are at in your spiritual growth which is not a good term well spiritual growth is probably fine personal shrinkage spiritual growth so if you want to know where you are at in your personal shrinkage personal shrinkage and the corresponding spiritual growth St. Paul was it St. Paul, he talked about that he says I must diminish and Christ in me must grow so something the light shines, begins to shine through so the criterion, sometimes not easy to know where are you at in your spiritual growth and personal shrinkage is to look at all the people that you relate with both people you know intimately and people, other people let's give you a reflection and the absence or lack of conflict your ability to dissolve conflict as it approaches you in the form inevitably not of cats and dogs they are okay even a barking dog that's not a big challenge but a human, a barking human and as that comes towards you, your ability not to react in the terms of the cause of miracles one would say to forgive to look through the error in the other to look through the ego and it's there everywhere to look and forgive not to equate somebody's egoic behavior with who they are, that's forgiveness in the terms of the cause of miracles you say if it's not love that you get comes to you from another human it's a call for healing and help so it reinterprets how you would usually interpret when somebody is offensive or whatever you reinterpret that it's to change to change your perceptions you reinterpret it and you realize that this mind would say obnoxious person it really is a call for healing and help because that person is out of touch with the reality of who he or she is doesn't know the oneness of all life so that's a helpful thing and then there are many other lessons to apply to situations with other humans in daily life especially your ability to heal situations one stumbling block for many and for some the stumbling block will be so huge that they cannot do a course in miracles even those who might need it but there are many other ways you can apply presence the terminology it uses is limited but that's form anything in form has its limitations so the course in miracles has certain limitations and they regard the terminology which is old fashioned Christian terminology that's one for some people that's fine they actually love because the terms that had become perhaps to some extent lifeless or meaningless to them suddenly they see that there is a deeper meaning to all those terms like Holy Spirit or Atonement which should be pronounced At-one-ment and so on so for some people that's a nice thing they can see that perhaps they were brought up as a child there is a deeper dimension to those terms for others they say I can't stand it I can't stand the fact that God is a he and God is the father what about the mother that's the limitation of the course in miracles it's the terminology if you can look beyond it and see what it points to is nothing to do with male or female but the terminology has that limitation if you can look beyond it fine it's no longer a barrier if you continuously feel an inner every time it says father God or he female pronoun is never used once in the whole course there is no she but that doesn't mean that it excludes women it just so it's only you can find out for yourself whether that is a barrier for you and if it's too much of a barrier if you cannot look beyond it forget it it's fine even course in miracles wouldn't say that you have to study a course in miracles it says no this is just one of many forms that the universal curriculum takes the universal curriculum is the where we are all going but there are many forms of the universal curriculum and there is not one form of the universal curriculum that is the right one there are many many and you will be drawn to whatever universal curriculum corresponds to your inner state and what most draws you and that's something to do with form of course you want to go through form to reach the formless in yourself but there are certain forms to which you the form that you are drawn more than to others and those can more easily take you beyond form if you try to force yourself into a form of teaching that does not resonate with your inner then that becomes a great hindrance perhaps you were born into a certain form of the universal curriculum which may not correspond to what you truly would be most helpful for you and then it would be good to find another so the universal curriculum every teaching is a form of that universal curriculum but the essence of the universal curriculum is to reach the formless within yourself which is where you and God merge where you and the source of all life merge where the little me realizes its true reality where the little ripple realizes that it is the ocean but continues to be a ripple for a little while but if the ripple and this is taken from the course in the text if the ripple and the ocean thinks of itself as separate imagine that the ripple and the ocean

[Speaker 6] (6:51:34 - 6:51:34)

the

[Speaker 1] (6:51:35 - 6:52:07)

world becomes very threatening because the vastness and just who am I on this little short left thing on this vastness and all the other ripples are my enemies what do they want laughter and the waves and if the ripple could realize by going within I am the ocean temporarily appearing as a ripple

[Speaker 6] (6:52:08 - 6:52:09)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (6:52:10 - 7:01:24)

oh that's great laughter of course I'm not going to last that long as a ripple but I'm eternal as the ocean what a liberation another analogy apart from the ripple course gives the analogy of the ray of sunlight and if the little ray forgets that it is actually part of the sun because the light that comes to you from the sun is actually it's an extension of the sun but if the ray forgets that it is an extension of the sun it's little me laughter doesn't know where it comes from it doesn't know its source it just looks around at other rays and says who are you laughter I don't like the way you look laughter laughter but if the ray could find its source oh then you can enjoy all the other rays because you know they're all the same source and then you can look at another ray through the source so you go in and then instead of looking at the other from out here you look at the other from the point of view of the source and you realize the oneness so you go you don't look like that that's two me and you you go there where we are both come from the same source and you look from there and see oh we look like two but we're actually one laughter that's the realization of oneness the greatest liberation there is and really that's again what any spiritual teaching is designed to do for you is to take you to that realization of oneness which is nothing to do with thinking thinking creates duality you have to go beyond thinking to realize oneness cause and miracles is a teaching of oneness as miracles are all but it does that in a very strange way because most people who study it they come from a belief in duality and so the cause and miracles uses the language of duality to gradually take you to oneness it doesn't immediately use the language of oneness so it talks about God the father is with you of course ultimately God the father and you are one and God the father is also God the mother but it takes you by the hand to take you where you are and then gradually take you into the realization of oneness which is where the words are not important anymore and when you get to the third part of the workbook with the lessons it says words are beginning to be less and less important from now on and the lessons get shorter and shorter and it says the words are only the beginning what comes after the words the state you enter after the words is what matters so it takes you gradually into oneness but it can be at first confusing because the language is the language of duality which you still hear in most churches there are some other Christian teachings that express duality more directly like Joel Goldsmith for example he is a Christian version of what in India is called Advaita non-duality which is the deepest truth of Hinduism beyond all mythology Advaita means oneness or not two non-duality Joel Goldsmith is a Christian version of that and ultimately Cause and Miracles is also a Christian version of that but Cause and Miracles does not express oneness as directly it just takes you there now you might think this was channeled that probably was channeled to some monk in a remote mountain monastery in the cell or nun and the strangest thing about it is that it was written in New York City and it was not written by a priest or nun or monk it was written by a woman who was a professor of medical psychology at Columbia University and she said of herself perhaps the most unlikely person spirit could have chosen in her opinion she was she didn't understand the cause very well and certainly as she herself said she couldn't live it she was just the medium through which it came and at one point she asked the voice that she heard it started one day shortly after her colleague at the university they were constantly fighting he she and her colleague and all the other people it is quite normal in most institutions constantly bickering and fighting and complaining about each other and intrigues and fighting for position and so on and her colleague another professor of medical psychology said to her one day there must be another way and a little bit later something started inside her and she realized perhaps this is the answer first she had visions strange visions in one she saw herself it was a kind of dream she saw an ancient chest and she went in a cave and she opened this ancient chest and out of it she took an old parchment and she started to unroll because the parchment has rolls left and right she started to unroll it to see what and she saw writing on the left but she couldn't quite decipher it and writing on the right more and more and the central panel was blank and then she heard the voice that later started to dictate the cause to her and the voice said if you read what's on the left you will know the past if you read what is on the right you will know the future and then she looked again at the central panel and there just had two words that said God is and then she rolled it back to where just the central panel was visible and she said I'm not interested in past or future this is all I want this is what I want God is and the voice said congratulations you've made it this time this is all I want just this that was the choice was present moment I don't want to know past and future and she had a few more visions and then one day she heard a voice coming inside her which said this is a cause in miracles please take notes laughter laughter and the it started with a summary of the whole cause and she was writing I'm going insane I'm going insane she was an atheist laughter I'm going mad but she had to compassion was strong she had to write and then it came the summary before the whole cause started the summary of the whole cause which by the way if you understand it that's it you can go home laughter nothing real can be threatened nothing unreal exists herein lies the peace of God of course she didn't understand it but we do do we laughter nothing real can be threatened nothing unreal exists herein lies the peace of God few more things came through and the next morning she went to her office at Columbia University and talked to her colleague Bill and said

[Speaker 2] (7:01:24 - 7:01:28)

I'm going mad I'm going insane this what's happened to

[Speaker 1] (7:01:28 - 7:06:58)

me and he said okay calm down let's see what you've written and then we'll decide if you're mad or not and she showed it to him and said this doesn't look mad I would do a bit more and that's how it started and then every morning she would bring it into her office almost every day the dictation came she would go into her office lock the door he would come in they would lock the door because of course they couldn't tell anybody else and they went through it and it took seven years and sometimes when she got interrupted in the middle of a sentence and a day or two or three days later she picked up the pen again the voice would just complete the sentence immediately so it's just quite a phenomenon I love it I actually realized yesterday when I picked it up because it came to me that I had read somebody else had asked what do you think about it so it came to me that I wanted to talk about it today I hadn't actually opened it for several years and it was lovely to open it again and many many years ago for when I lived in England still for a while I used the course shortly after I discovered it I used it as a medium through which to teach and so I would have little groups and workshops and sometimes spent a whole day on just one lesson read a lesson and talk about it and some people even people who didn't like the Course in Miracles they came and said now we understand it so it did help to have some to express it in somewhat different words I'd like to give you just a taste of and as we do that see if we can get to the very essence of it as we are here because what's the point otherwise can we get to the very essence of the Course in Miracles here not in 365 days from now but here okay okay let's see let's start with lesson one and if we can do lesson one completely you will have done the entire course any lesson if you can do it completely it doesn't say that here but I'm telling you if you can do it completely which means live it that's the entire Course in Miracles you don't need to pick it up again and lesson one is a little weird well some of the others are too laughter by the way there is the writing is varies in power and intensity to some extent but the most there are many very powerful and beautiful passages of great spiritual power and beauty in the text some extraordinary passages lesson one every lesson has a title the title of this lesson is always just one sentence nothing I see in this room means anything and then what you are supposed to do is look slowly around you practice applying this idea very specifically to whatever you see this table doesn't mean anything this glass doesn't mean anything this chair this carpet doesn't mean anything this hand doesn't mean anything this foot doesn't mean anything this flower doesn't mean anything then look further away it says apply to a wider range that door doesn't mean anything that light doesn't mean anything apply to anything you see it says before don't try to understand what this is all about well I'll tell you what this is all about but I'm sure you know it do it no more than this is the beginning no more than twice a day preferably morning and evening not more than a minute or so this is for beginners not more than a minute or so a comfortable sense of leisure is essential as you do it use it indiscriminately don't exclude anything specific so what is the purpose in that the purpose

[Speaker 2] (7:06:59 - 7:07:04)

this doesn't mean anything the purpose is to

[Speaker 1] (7:07:06 - 7:39:49)

wipe the blackboard clean on which the blackboard that's full of scribbles interpretations projections opinions judgments thoughts imagine a blackboard full of scribbles so you take this lesson and some of the subsequent lessons you take a sponge or whatever you do and you begin to wipe it's a voluntary relinquishing of all mental judgments and concepts all the meaning lesson two gives you a little bit further it says I've given everything I see in this room all the meaning that it has for me wiping the blackboard clean it's also an act of humility because the ego says I know and you're beginning to admit that you don't know and so that something deeper in you can come forth that had been obscured by the one who thought he or she knew lesson three says I do not understand anything I see in this room or wherever you are so you're letting go of interpretations in the next lesson you do it with your own thoughts these thoughts do not mean anything they are like the things I see in this room so you're letting go of investment in identification with thoughts so beautiful early lessons and really if you can do lesson one completely so what did I mean by that let's try and do it completely nothing I see in this room means anything now if you do that completely what happens inside you your mind has nothing else nothing more to do you stop thinking doesn't mean anything so that's it nothing else to think about so if you could do it completely it would lead to the cessation of thinking what remains of you if the thinker subsides or dies what remains of you if the movement of thought subsides the essence of who you are the formless you can say the Christ or the Buddha nature whatever terms people have used to describe it that's what remains the unconditioned consciousness the timeless the eternal no past no future so that if you do this lesson and live it you're no longer imposing interpretations and you everything there's a clarity of perception as you look at things and humans a refusal to think act of surrender and you become innocent like a little child but there's a enormous energy there in the terms of Causing Miracles it would mean the power of God in you also of course it's you're totally present the moment that happens you're totally present Causing Miracles calls it it is the practice of the power of God in you this is the practice of the power of God in you the present moment the Causing Miracles calls the holy instant it has some wonderful passages about the power of the holy instant of the present moment they are like meditations I'll read some very short passages and let's treat it as a deep meditation oh by the way did you know that the ego wants you dead but not itself oh did you know that when the Causing Miracles uses the word brother it includes sister which really brother means every other human okay so we have to look beyond that limitation let's do that so it says if you believe there is a space between you and your brother you are insane wow I'm not going to say anything about that I'll let you not work it out but feel the truth of it because mentally you go insane if you start trying to work that out feel the truth of it fear is not of the present but only of the past and future which do not exist there is no fear in the present when each instant stands clear and separated from the past without its shadow reaching out into the future each instant is a clean untarnished birth in which the son of God that's you emerges from the past into the present this lesson takes no time for what is time without a past and future it has taken time to misguide you so completely but it takes no time at all to be who you are begin to practice sorry take this very instant now and think of it as all there is of time take this very instant now and think of it as all there is of time there's nothing there's only this instant nothing else which is the truth there's only this instant nothing can reach you here out of the past and it is here that you are completely absolved completely free and holy without condemnation from this holy instant where in holiness was born again you will go forth in time without fear and with no sense of change no sense of change with time you go back you go into time but there is a continuous realization of the timeless within yourself the dimension of formless consciousness itself in this redeeming instant lies heaven start now to practice your little part in separating out the holy instant you will receive very specific instructions as you go along now the next sentence is important I quote it occasionally to learn to separate out this single second and to experience it as timeless is to begin to experience yourself as not separate to learn to separate out this single instant and experience it as timeless is to begin to experience yourself as not separate so through that intense presence the delusion of separation also subsides and you can then from there look at another human and sense the oneness beyond bodies and that comes out of the presence and that is the sort of as I call it sometimes the sort of presence cutting through time it is only your weakness that will depart from you in this practice for it is the practice of the power of God in you all you lose in this practice is your weakness it is the practice of the power of God in you use it but for one instant and you will never deny it again God knows you now he remembers nothing having always known you exactly as he knows you now this still uses the language of duality but it gradually takes you into the realization that you and God are one the holy instant reflects his knowing by bringing all perception out of the past thus removing the frame of reference you have built by which to judge your brothers once this is gone the Holy Spirit substitutes his frame of reference for it the veil that has been drawn across reality is lifted nothing has changed yet the awareness of changelessness comes swiftly as the veil of time is pushed aside the veil of time is pushed aside this is the primordial spiritual practice no matter where you go at the core of any spiritual system is this whether you go to Buddhist meditation or wherever this is the the primordial spiritual practice and to hold that to hold that intense awareness of now or awareness of awareness consciousness of being conscious of consciousness whatever you want to call it it transforms everything so beautiful beautiful meditations here you can see how it all comes together I'm focusing here on this particular aspect the power of which really is the center of the whole course now just to give you a taste of two lessons they kind of go together 33 and 34 you can use it as a little sample if you want to use it for the rest of the day today just as a little sample the title of the lesson is there is another way of looking at the world today's idea is an attempt to recognize that you can shift your perception of the world in both its outer and inner aspects full five minutes should be devoted in the morning and evening applications the shorter exercise periods should be as frequent as possible specific applications of today's idea should also be made immediately when any situation arises which tempts you to become disturbed for these applications say there is another way of looking at this any situation where there's even the slightest disturbance or irritation you use that there is another way of looking at this that's all just that remember to apply today's idea the instant you're aware of distress it may be necessary to take a minute or so to sit quietly and repeat the idea to yourself several times closing your eyes will probably help in this form of application there is another way of looking at the world the next lesson on the next day is I could see peace instead of this I could see peace instead of this search your mind for fear thoughts anxiety provoking situations offending personalities or events or anything else about which you're harboring unloving thoughts note them all casually repeating the idea for today slowly as you watch them arise in your mind and let each one go to be replaced by the next the shorter applications are to be frequent and made whenever you feel your peace of mind is threatened in any way if a specific form of temptation arises in your awareness the exercise you take this form I could see peace in this situation instead of what I now see in it if there is depression anxiety or worry use the idea in its original form I could see peace instead of this it's a re interpretation of how you would habitually interpret events in the world I could see peace instead of this so hopefully you'll get one or two disturbances today because otherwise there's nothing to practice with now it is possible of course that you're already at peace to such an extent that the disturbance does not arise anymore well that's even better and there's no need to practice the world will always challenge you in the form of people situations and ultimately always comes down to your mind you're ultimately only challenged by your mind disturbed by your mind you're not disturbed by the situation you're not disturbed by the situation you're disturbed by your mind really really yes so that's amazing realization isn't it it's so easy to forget because the deep conditioning is so deep seated and there's nothing personal in that it's not your fault if you forget if you say that's my fault that's more illusion illusion the conditioning is so deep seated of not realizing that ultimately it is your mind that creates your unhappiness of anxiety of fear so it's not what your mind says it is it's your mind so your mind says look at there look at that situation and you say no I'm going to look at you no no don't look at me look at he did it look I didn't do anything like a little child that's what children do isn't it no I didn't he my brother did it so there's the power of awareness in you and that we are here as we sit here it grows the your power of awareness just you just need to be here it grows as you sit here even though occasionally your mind will come in and say I'd rather be somewhere else and then it subsides again and then presence grows as you sit here because that's the essence of our gathering presence in the meantime a few words and concepts some of which are helpful and some of which keep your mind from doing harm while you sit here but it is an energetic process as we sit here beyond what you listen to with your ears that's secondary there's an energetic process at work that has nothing to do with concepts towards the end of the course it says the use of words is almost over now and that's after 365 days there's almost a little paradox there because on the one hand one could say well the course gives you time to reach the timeless in yourself and that is true it is a paradox but it is addressed in the text also so it gives you time on this level here to reach the timeless but at any moment that realization can be there so it doesn't say you're not going to get there until you reach the end of the course you can get there at the very beginning already or rather realize that you're already there it's a very radical thing the course of miracles takes you to the edge and after that you jump off we've been jumping off already takes you to the edge of the mind trying to understand mentally mentally letting go of that also going into this beautiful state of not knowing no longer needing to impose judgments on the world going to the state of not knowing that's where any spiritual teaching comes out of that not accumulated knowledge it comes out of that openness any creative act comes out of not knowing so you need to become comfortable with that state which is also the state of course of not thinking or not looking to thought for some ultimate answer fulfillment or identity really what I teach is and what you get to what the course aims to take you is what is the core of all spiritual practices the end of compulsive thinking thinking thinking you can still use thinking if you need it but it doesn't use you anymore you are no longer the thinker, your identity is no longer based in your thought activity the ego is gone then I am not the thinker, yes thinking happens but I am not the thinker I am the vastness out of which thinking happens and into which it subsides so go to any other teaching who by taking thought can add one qubit to his span of life I suppose in one translation by taking thought do not take thought for the moral, for the moral shall take thought for the things of itself, that's the old translation in Jesus do not take thought for the moral, the moral shall take thought for the things of itself only the present moment exists the person who was taking notes when Jesus was talking forgot to write down only the present moment exists go to any teacher Advaita in India, some of you are familiar with it, some have never heard the word, the teaching of non-duality, the teachers of non-duality how can you reach the realization of non-duality? By not thinking that's non-duality the moment you start thinking again you're back in duality so to realize non-duality the oneness of all life and your oneness with all life and your oneness with life itself, because all life is all life forms but life itself is the unmanifested one eternal life God to realize your oneness with that there must be a cessation of birth, continuous birth of forms and then there is just the ground out of which the forms come, that's it that is the realization of oneness and only then when you sense that in the depths of who you are you can look upon the world with love until you can sense that love is an illusion you may try very hard to be loving okay, I must be loving I must be really patient with him but of course you can't hold that for too long I've been loving now for two hours and you're still behaving like that I just can't love anymore so it's only when you sense that and you can look upon the world of form and realize they're all just temporary expressions of that one that I am that's a verbalization but the knowing is beyond words and that's peace, that's where you become the true teacher of God to use the terminology of the Course in Miracles because only then can you teach peace and only then can that power flow through you into this world that the Course in Miracles describes as a kind of delusion a kind of nightmarish dream a little bit like the Matrix and deep down people know that there's something not quite right with what we perceive as the world and the dreadful things there's been people when they see this film The Matrix there's been some, of course it's not the real truth, there's not computers that are doing it but machines that are doing it but there's some underlying truth that we're all walking around in some dreamlike state, this is not it that dreamlike state we need to wake up and so people get drawn they got drawn to that movie because there's some core truth there which says you're a dream walker and you need to wake up and it's wonderful when they saw the city scenes in the film and all these people walking around and then the protagonist is being told that they're all dreaming which is not quite true in the sense that it's shown in the film but in a deeper sense it is true so the oneness the realization of oneness comes with that Advaita, non-duality which came out of which is the deepest truth of Hinduism where Hinduism transcends all the huge mythology that they have which is interesting as long as you can't realize oneness keeps you busy and you get a few distant pointers to oneness through stories and images oh nice, very nice yeah but it's not quite there's a more direct thing there, Advaita is Vedanta the end of the Vedas it means that's going beyond that, it's also beyond concepts now Advaita in Hinduism has become fashionable in the west lately teachers are springing up every day of Advaita like mushrooms now some are great but many can't stop thinking and they're teaching Advaita from the point of view of the thinking mind and how to tell the difference it's very easy, go and listen to an Advaita teacher and if you feel a little bit sick when you leave then that's not it sick in the stomach I feel much worse now than before they tell you things like it's all an illusion your problems, what's your problems it's an illusion and then they go back to their wife and say where the hell is my dinner laughter and if you challenge them on that they say nothing to do with me that's an illusion too laughter Krishnamurti, the whole teaching of Krishnamurti another beautiful expression of the universal curriculum one particular form of the universal curriculum what's he talking about can thinking get us to this realization can thinking get us

[Speaker 2] (7:39:49 - 7:39:51)

let's investigate can it get us there

[Speaker 1] (7:39:54 - 7:42:29)

and an hour later no it can't oh okay he practiced non-thinking frequently didn't practice it came kind of naturally that's where the teaching came from so if some of you we're all in the terms of causing miracles you are the teacher of God because you are practicing that if you become a spiritual teacher in a more formal way not the Advaita one unless you have that realization not the mind the mental teacher but the true teacher you may feel that you're never quite ready to teach if you feel you're now ready to teach that's probably not it that's probably the ego but if you feel you're not ready to teach and yet something the situation calls upon you to teach in one way or another formal or semi-formal or informal it could be simply somebody asking a question or there's a group of people whatever it may be or somebody says oh come and talk to us me? yes well I have nothing to say well that's good then come and become comfortable with not having anything to say because we don't have anything to say either you may feel uncomfortable with it but if somebody can become comfortable with not knowing and sit in front of a group and not thinking that I should be speaking now or I should know but just become comfortable with the state of not knowing you may find that after a minute or two you say something a word suddenly comes it might be something very simple here we are in the present moment what does it feel like to be in the present moment

[Speaker 2] (7:42:29 - 7:42:30)

let's find out

[Speaker 1] (7:42:30 - 7:42:44)

I feel a slight disturbance because I'm sitting here talking to you I don't but it's just the same thing

[Speaker 2] (7:42:47 - 7:42:49)

constantly becoming present

[Speaker 1] (7:42:49 - 7:43:24)

and then words come the one who is teaching is always the one who is most empty that's where the power comes through and of course in the west we are only gradually learning that there are spiritual teachers some spiritual teachers traditionally don't speak they have a different

[Speaker 2] (7:43:24 - 7:43:28)

way of teaching they teach by being present or still

[Speaker 1] (7:43:30 - 7:44:00)

and just looking at you that's beautiful too here we have a mixture of words and looking and who is looking when I look at you who is looking the person or something deeper if I'm not thinking when I

[Speaker 2] (7:44:00 - 7:44:02)

look at you then the person isn't looking

[Speaker 1] (7:44:05 - 7:50:38)

consciousness is coming through and what is it that you recognize yourself something within your response you say oh it feels so good and consciousness recognizes itself so you're becoming who you are yourself beyond the story and your history what a dreadful story mine is too it becomes unimportant as far as your identity is concerned this is your identity it has no form and you can't call it anything you can't even call it man or woman certainly has no age has no form you can't say what it is you can't examine it it's the I it is I I without a past I without a future isn't that amazing but that is what emerges as you let go of obsession with thinking and then gradually you learn to not lose that or have it obscured even when did you start to think again so that thinking is interspersed with spaces and so that you even feel the space while you think and speak if you can feel the space that you are the consciousness in the background while you speak then your words have power and are fresh and new and creative and then your relationships are loving and peace flows out from you the challenge is not to be drawn so much into thinking that you're going totally out again so to hold that to hold the awareness of awareness so to speak and then speak be aware of the danger of the how the mind has enormous momentum especially if somebody asks you what do you think of the republicans or the democrats or whatever it is and before you know it you lost space completely well I'll tell you what I think or whatever it is your ex-husband wife opinions what's your opinion the Buddha talked about the the thicket of opinions don't get involved in that he said drop your opinions relinquish your opinions oh really what the Zen master said beautifully he didn't even say drop you don't need to drop your opinions stop cherishing your opinions just that but of course what are opinions thoughts a bundle of thoughts are your opinions so when the Zen master says stop cherishing your opinions he's saying stop cherishing your thoughts stop cherishing your thinking you can still have it of course you still have it but you don't cherish it which means really you don't attach a value to it that it doesn't have you don't look to it for your identity you are not totally drawn into it it exists there but here you are a much vaster presence and here's your little opinion rather than the opinion pretending to be you and getting so you can then play with opinions okay I think that's how it is but you might think differently and then you don't have to be disagreeable when you disagree because you only become disagreeable when you disagree if you identified with your opinion your thought if you're not identified you don't become disagreeable why do you become disagreeable because you feel threatened in your sense of self why do you feel threatened in your sense of self because you identified with your thoughts there's a self in your think It's like a delusion of self in every thought. Freedom from that, what freedom?

Nothing real can be threatened, nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God.

[Speaker 5] (7:52:48 - 7:52:54)

Oh my gosh, it feels like another world. It feels like another world.

[Speaker 3] (7:52:54 - 7:52:58)

Feels like another world. Yes, multiple worlds.

[Speaker 5] (7:53:02 - 7:53:07)

The question kind of evaporated when I was raising.

[Speaker 3] (7:53:13 - 7:53:13)

Wonderful.

[Speaker 5] (7:53:17 - 7:55:10)

Anyway, what prompted me first is that the first speaker was speaking about forgiveness. A few months ago, I was listening to a Hawaiian teacher about Ho'oponopono, it strike me. He's a co-author of a book called Zero Limits.

It's just, not worry about who else is here because there's nobody really here other than us. The inside is far more important than outside. And so really, in Ho'oponopono, directed to ourselves is really, doesn't matter, only the divinity or the zero who is the space can only forgive, nobody else can.

I'm not capable of forgiving except who I really am. Like one of the earliest Eckhart's teachings, Power of Now. Power of Now.

So it's like saying to ourselves, pretty much to ourselves, and I know if I say it, even doesn't make sense to me, but inside it somehow does in those moments. Please forgive me, I'm sorry, thank you, I love you. It's just saying to ourselves.

And according to this teacher, when I say I love you to ourselves, it actually takes away some of the data. They also, it's the space or this is also that is calling us and it's very hard to talk about this. This is also, he talks a lot about cleaning so that we can actually be at the zero, at the space or at the energy.

[Speaker 3] (7:55:11 - 7:55:13)

To clear yourself, is that what you said? Yeah. Yeah.

[Speaker 5] (7:55:14 - 7:55:44)

Anyway, on another level, when I wanted to say I felt a movement in the energy, the energy is also helping us, space and energy are one, and to be there. So the word I love you is along with breath and feeling the energy and everything is actually calling us from inside. That's the best I could say.

I can't say more because the moment I say it, it really even doesn't make sense to me.

[Speaker 3] (7:55:46 - 7:56:18)

I know what you mean. I'm like, what am I gonna say when I get out here? I mean, there's nothing to say.

And there really isn't anything to say. The words just point. And any spiritual teaching is pointing you right back to yourself.

God is within. Heaven is within.

[Speaker 5] (7:56:28 - 7:56:43)

Thank you. And so I use it constantly. I'm constantly attacked by a pain body in my heart.

So I just do this, I say I love you. And then cleansing breaths, and I used to let Eckhart, and Eckhart Tove TV helps me a lot, so I just wanted to say.

[Speaker 3] (7:56:43 - 7:56:44)

What was the last part?

[Speaker 5] (7:56:44 - 7:57:04)

Eckhart Tove TV and your, both of you have been listening for quite a while. But there's also, if you say one more thing about it, that there's nothing in that is, it's very gentle, and my noise is much heavier.

[Speaker 3] (7:57:04 - 7:57:05)

Louder.

[Speaker 5] (7:57:05 - 7:57:05)

Louder.

[Speaker 3] (7:57:05 - 7:57:06)

Very loud, yeah.

[Speaker 5] (7:57:07 - 7:57:13)

Yeah. So I don't know how I get back there. I really have no idea.

To that gentle calling.

[Speaker 3] (7:57:18 - 7:57:23)

Can you find the space in you now? The zero?

[Speaker 5] (7:57:24 - 7:57:25)

Yeah, zero.

[Speaker 3] (7:57:27 - 8:03:39)

Then that's it. The rest is noise. And the more that you pay attention to that zero, you call it zero, through that other teacher, that space, then that space will get bigger and bigger.

It happens as you become aware and place some of your attention on that space, even in bits, the noise, the loudness, because one will win out if you pay attention to space, and space is infinite. But it's also very quiet. It has no demands.

It doesn't want anything. But if you pay attention to the form, or if there's some sort of attachment to the form, identification with form, with the noise in your head, then it just becomes louder and louder, and it takes over the space. You've, I don't know whether you've heard it, but maybe you have if you've watched these videos.

I've given the example of a flute, like say a bamboo flute. I love bamboo, so bamboo flute. And even though the flute has a form, the essence of the flute, in order to have the beautiful music that life, consciousness, wants to play through this flute, is the whole, the space, is what creates the music.

Is able to make the sound of the music coming through when life blows into this flute. So if we take every thought, and thoughts come, but if we believe in that thought, identify with that thought, somehow grab onto that thought, and place it into that whole of the flute, so here it arises. In this case, say our body's thoughts just arise, but if we identify with it, we kind of somehow, in a way, store it in us.

Or every emotion that arises, we place into this flute. And imagine these emotions, and these thoughts, or these experiences, or the stories we tell ourselves, whatever, is a bean, a kidney bean, a llama bean, whatever kind of bean, a coffee bean, and we keep filling ourselves with it, because we're identified with it, and believe in it so much, that when life wants to use us, so in other words, we pick up the flute, and we try to blow to make music, beautiful music, nothing will come out.

God cannot use us. We cannot use the flute, because it's full of beans. So it is our work to empty, to allow, because thoughts arise, emotions arise, it's human nature, it's just what's happening, but if we learn to not attach ourselves, and we begin to understand, it's not so much a learning, but an understanding, that you know that you are not your thought, your emotion, or anything, then we allow that to pass through.

So go back to the healing of allowing things, because things come up, and we just allow it to pass through, and it no longer gets stored in us, and then we are open channels. We are the empty space in which life can use us, for that moment, and this moment, and the next moment, and the next moment. So it's a returning home to who you are, and that space, zero, nothing else.

And yet there's everything that arises within that space, and it can challenge you, because there's lots of things that could arise, but where is that space? You keep feeling it inside. And then we begin to see that it's not only inside, but it's everywhere, because it's the totality of things.

It's space, vast, empty space. The awareness is vast, empty, infinite. And some days it's stronger than other days, to be able to tap into that space.

But when we're filled with stuff, and we can't seem to get there, don't even try to get there, because that defeats it. You're trying to get something that's already here. So you just give yourself the space to allow everything to be there, even if you're full of emotions and thoughts, and you'll find that space again.

Or rather, it finds you.

[Speaker 5] (8:03:45 - 8:04:07)

When you said infinite, I got a goosebump. Is that means I'm connecting? I'm connecting, a feeling.

I'm blind, I'm just, yes. You're what? At some level I'm blind, just with some feelings.

[Speaker 3] (8:04:10 - 8:04:12)

You're blind, is that what you said, blind?

[Speaker 5] (8:04:12 - 8:04:28)

Blind in some sense, but with some sensation with which I'm moving on, sorry. I mean, just like a blind man in the street just walks with the stick, somehow makes sense of the road. That's how it feels.

[Speaker 3] (8:04:28 - 8:04:28)

Right now?

[Speaker 5] (8:04:29 - 8:04:31)

All times, but I'm just.

[Speaker 3] (8:04:31 - 8:04:32)

All the time.

[Speaker 5] (8:04:32 - 8:04:37)

Saying it. But there's something happening, but it's so hard to say.

[Speaker 3] (8:04:37 - 8:05:44)

I'm blind, but now I can see. How does that song go? How does, what is that?

What's the words? Grace. Yeah, amazing grace.

Yeah. We are all blind until we can see. And hallelujah, when that day comes.

Moment comes, then it comes and goes. We cannot control it. We think we can, and we'd like to, but we can't.

That's one pointer to it. Another pointer would be, as consciousness as who we are, we can choose for more consciousness. See, it's just pointers.

You're just bumbling inside. You're tingling. Yeah.

[Speaker 5] (8:05:44 - 8:05:46)

Start from the hand, like you.

[Speaker 3] (8:05:46 - 8:05:52)

I know. I know. Stay with it.

Thank you.

[Speaker 5] (8:05:52 - 8:05:53)

Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (8:05:56 - 8:05:57)

It's the aliveness.

[Speaker 5] (8:05:58 - 8:06:13)

Yeah, yeah, yeah. At this moment, it feels great, yeah. You're alive.

Aliveness, aliveness, yeah. Yeah.

[Speaker 3] (8:06:20 - 8:06:23)

Can you stay with that aliveness as you walk back?

[Speaker 5] (8:06:23 - 8:06:25)

Yes, I will. Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (8:06:35 - 8:09:35)

So, that was just beautiful, to end in aliveness. Or begin. So let's just have a moment of silence.

And really keep on feeling that inner body. That inner body, we can call it our joy body, our giggle body, our peace body. And it shows up as a different sensation every time.

Sometimes it's subtle. Sometimes it's strong. And the real practice begins when you step outside that door into the world.

God is the nothingness is within you, is you. That's the being in you. And the human is the part that gives us grief.

There you go. Thank you.

[Speaker 4] (8:09:56 - 8:11:47)

My original question seems quite obsolete. Good. And that, I think, is a wonderful thing to be able to share.

I will share my original question and then hopefully maybe go beyond. The original question had to do with expectations. I asked about if it was reasonable to expect honesty and openness.

To what? To expect honesty and openness in a marriage relationship or in an intimate relationship. Preventing the hurt of finding out things at a later date.

And I was in Malibu with my husband and listened to Eckhart and submitted the question shortly after. And in the period of time between then and now have come to some completely different realizations. And most of all, realizing that I may have preferences and that's where it ends, having preferences.

The expectations have hopefully subsided tremendously. What I'd like to evolve to though is the question about intimate relationships and the challenge of honoring our own personal stillness and each other's need for stillness. And at the same time, meeting those practical needs to negotiate preferences each 24-7, if you could give some insight.

I think it's a challenging experience.

[Speaker 3] (8:11:48 - 8:12:18)

Yeah, life didn't promise marriage is going to be easy. Or relationships, yeah. So that's wonderful.

First, can I ask you about just your own realization in coming to what you found that your whole issue that you were having about honesty and being found out, I think it was, that you called it?

[Speaker 4] (8:12:20 - 8:12:45)

I made a realization maybe eight, 10 weeks ago that I really only have my own honesty and my own openness to focus on. And that by focusing on anything that's going on in my significant other, I'm really expending energy that's taken away from focusing on what I need to be focusing on myself.

[Speaker 3] (8:12:45 - 8:13:16)

Okay, that's good, that's good. And now it almost sounds like as if you're still intertwining it in this next question that you had about the intimacy and the amount of stillness that perhaps you need and what he needs and how to integrate that into your everyday life and into just the common things, even this first question posing this, your expectations about honesty.

[Speaker 4] (8:13:17 - 8:14:04)

Yes, and I think maybe control is an issue, continuously letting go of control and just allowing things to evolve. What does your control look like in the relationship? Well, I think much like the woman that just shared before me, there's probably a deeper fear of if we're not traveling in a similar path, if the path isn't parallel, if it gets too far away from one another, then what?

And I'm kind of chuckling at myself because here we are, the two of us together, and I didn't even initiate being here this time, he did. So what am I questioning, you know? I'm grateful it's all in place and I need to get out of worrying and concerning myself about it and just allow.

[Speaker 3] (8:14:06 - 8:15:07)

So intimacy cannot happen if you have these expectations about what a relationship should look like and what it should be like and how he should be, how I should be, how we should be. There is no space then for intimacy because intimacy, you can say, requires that there is this space. So the space is here and we come together in that space where there is no expectations because isn't that when you find, when there are no expectations on you, can you then be your true self?

Just be, in other words. Expectation even of yourself, let alone the expectation you have of your relationship and your partner. But you cannot be if you have any expectations.

Be still, be present.

[Speaker 4] (8:15:10 - 8:15:14)

Allow preferences to be shared as preferences.

[Speaker 3] (8:15:14 - 8:15:50)

Preferences, we all have preferences. As preferences. But the demand that those preferences must be met or must be somehow manifested, which you can say then cuts off that intimacy.

I have a lot of preferences. I mean, I would like Eckhart to do the dishes more. I'd like to have him help me cook more.

And clean the house more. I mean, I really would. Does it happen?

Not really.

[Speaker 6] (8:15:51 - 8:15:54)

Am I okay with that?

[Speaker 3] (8:15:55 - 8:21:10)

Yeah, I'm okay with that. Does it bug me sometimes? Yes, it bugs me sometimes.

I mean, these are all real things that happen in the emotional level and all the things of, you know, the mind that goes on. Does it have me love him less? No.

Do I not want to be with him because he won't pick up after himself? No. Sometimes, yes.

But on the whole, no. And it's just, it's okay. I mean, it's like putting things in perspective, you know?

What do you want more? Someone that you can actually live and have an intimate, still relationship with, even though there's stuff going on in the mind that might happen and things, everyday life that may happen. You know, it's finding also the understanding.

I have observed that Eckhart is from a, I mean, he's like, you know, 62 years old. So he's from a generation where as a man and as a young boy, he didn't have to do anything. I mean, really.

He didn't have to cook. He didn't have to clean. He just didn't have to do anything.

And then he was a bachelor for most of his life. So to try to get him to do anything now at this age, I mean, I'm so fortunate, lucky that I've got him to do what he's doing right now. So I'm grateful.

But, I've been in other relationships too, whereas, you know, men have done things. So it's not about that. So I always, you know, would have to put myself, when that would come up, I'd always say, okay, I gotta put this in perspective here now.

Am I willing to leave this relationship because he won't help me enough? And then I actually even started looking at how I even, my own wording of that and expectation of that. I realized, I said, wait a second here.

I want someone, I want a partner to help me, like as if that was never his job and that it's my job and I need to help her. And this light bulb went on. I go, whoa, that's not the relationship I want either.

Is that what I have been projecting out? And then thus receiving? I went, wow, no, he's a partner.

He's a full grown up man that I don't need help. But my, you can say, wishes that my partner will take up his share. So when I realized that, I let go of that concept of like thinking that I need help, that I'm somehow in charge of all the household things and I need help with this.

No, I wanted a relationship where I could have someone meet me and when that changed, it also changed. Not that he meets me equally because I've got a different sort of conditioning, you can say, a disposition of I like things neat. I like things the way that I like things and he likes the way that he likes things, which it doesn't matter if things are all over the place.

But he will do things in his own time. He can watch me clean a house. Like when we're away and we're away for six months, it's amazing how dirty a house can get.

You know, those who have this experience, it's like, whoa. And finding a house cleaner on a small island is sometimes impossible. So, and plus we were undergoing renovations and this is just recently.

It took me four days of cleaning. It was only on the third day that he decided he can help. But you know, it was okay because I know I like the, if I want things done the way that I like, I'm responsible.

If I do wanna ask him to start doing something earlier, then I'll ask. But I was actually okay. And it's actually, I did a little sort of test.

I wanted to find out how long it would also take him. But you know, but when he did it, I was so grateful. It was wonderful.

And we, everyone needs their space. Every space we go into, we have to find a place that is big enough that we can find our own corners.

[Speaker 4] (8:21:12 - 8:21:38)

It seems to me that part of this whole, of what you have addressed here is that he doesn't need me to help him on his spiritual path any more than I need him to help me know where my path is. And that can only interrupt intimacy rather than produce it. Yeah.

Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (8:21:39 - 8:21:40)

Yeah, exactly.

[Speaker 4] (8:21:40 - 8:21:55)

Because our spiritual journey is our own. And the more respectful we can be of one another's journeys, the more we open the possibility for greater intimacy with one another.

[Speaker 3] (8:21:55 - 8:22:44)

Exactly. And we all have our own time where we need that space. And it's giving that space the honor to that person who needs that space at that moment and not that say, hey, no, we gotta be intimate now.

And they're going, no, I need space now. And you gotta look then at your own insecurity about if you are going like this to your partner. All that conditioning.

Feed me, I need you. Or we gotta go on this spiritual journey together. Because we are all on a spiritual journey together, but we do it all separately.

It can be an alone journey. And you'll even look at the word alone, it's all one.

[Speaker 4] (8:22:46 - 8:22:53)

And I am a Libra, always looking for balance. Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (8:22:58 - 8:24:09)

As we begin to awaken, it's so, I think it's just so vital. At least it has been in my experience to be able to have and give yourself that space, that individual time alone that's required just to go totally inward. Because when you're always with somebody, including your partner, it's more challenging to just go just completely inward.

So it requires this, maybe a room or you going out if there's your circumstances of your living situation or you're living in a studio apartment or something. Who knows, maybe you go and you close the door and have a long bath or sit on the toilet for a long time. We need this time because the answers come from within and the realization of stillness, of who you are ultimately comes from within.

And only from within can you know this.

[Speaker 2] (8:24:53 - 8:24:58)

Welcome to our live meditation.

[Speaker 1] (8:25:18 - 8:26:46)

For those of you who are joining us for the first time, all that's happening here is we become comfortable with nothing happening so that we can shift our consciousness from doing to being. Doing is not just physical doing, which obviously we are not engaged in right now. Well, the mouth is moving, but that's all.

[Speaker 2] (8:26:49 - 8:27:08)

Or you may be twitching a bit, but basically we are sitting or lying. That's physical doing, so we stop doing on the external.

[Speaker 1] (8:27:09 - 8:30:22)

And more importantly, the mind. So we are here to experience or get a taste of, or perhaps even more than that, go deeply into the state of being, which in itself has no content. It's a bit like having lived in a room full of furniture, stuff for many years, always being worried about polishing it or getting more stuff or getting rid of this stuff and talking about the stuff in your room.

And for the first time, you become aware also of the space of the room, which is the essence without which there wouldn't be a room. And you realize the furniture in the room is secondary to the space in the room. But space you cannot grasp.

You can't say, oh, there it is. You can't even point to it. Where?

You become, you sense it, you become aware of it, you sense, one could almost say the presence of the space. Wherever you are now, you can do it. You can sense the presence of the space.

And to do that, you might notice you can't be thinking. Thinking is to do with the furniture in the room, but thinking is never to do with the space in the room. A different faculty is required, inner faculty, is required to sense or to become aware of the space wherever you are.

That is not thinking. And most humans still don't know that they potentially have that ability or that faculty.

[Speaker 2] (8:30:27 - 8:30:33)

In other words, it's not awakened in most humans yet.

[Speaker 1] (8:30:39 - 8:33:47)

And of course, we are here for some of you to awaken that, and for many others who are already awake to it, to deepen it. So let's go back to the room. When you become aware of the space in the room, you might notice it's a very peaceful thing to be aware of the space.

It suddenly becomes, there isn't suddenly an added dimension to where you are, because before you were concerned with the furniture and whatever filled the room, stuff, and that every bit of stuff has a history. You talk about its history. By the way, may I point out that right now what we're doing, I'm using the room as an analogy for, of course, your mind, but I'm also talking about the room.

So we are on two levels here. So you can take it literally, and you can take it as an analogy for your mind, or both. So you may notice that suddenly the room, which is the old room that you've lived in for many years, suddenly becomes peaceful in the moment that you can sense the space of the room, rather than always focusing on the different bits and pieces in the room, the stuff.

Suddenly you take in the totality, which transcends what's in it, the spaciousness of it, and it becomes, oh, there's a sense of peace and almost a peaceful presence, which, of course, essentially is, you could say, yes, it's in the room, but, of course, it's in you. In our analogy, the furniture in the room, the bits and pieces, the stuff, corresponds, of course, to the content of your mind, the thoughts, most of which are old and repetitive, the furniture.

[Speaker 2] (8:33:54 - 8:33:59)

Whatever is occupying your mind is the stuff, the furniture.

[Speaker 1] (8:34:05 - 8:35:23)

Every item wants your attention. You keep the old stuff alive by continuously giving it your attention. And if you become aware of the space in the room, you withdraw attention from what is in the room, and you become aware of that which could be described as the essence of the room, without which there would be no room.

Without any room, there's no room. There's space, space, and within you, the same. If you don't find the space within you, the spaciousness, which is a presence, the presence that you can sense as if it were an external presence in filling the room is also in you.

[Speaker 2] (8:35:27 - 8:36:38)

Now, this is very deeply peaceful, and in many traditions, that's called the presence of God, that all the mystics, whether Christian or Buddhist or Hindu or Sufis, they all point to that. That's not the ideological God, not the person, but that which underlies all manifestation, the eternal.

[Speaker 1] (8:36:47 - 8:37:54)

So the eternal is both within and without. The moment you notice that presence outside of you, you can be out in nature or you can be in a room. You're no longer focusing on individual things.

You're focusing on the space between things, one could say, and you sense that as a silent presence. You can't say much about it. If you're a poet, perhaps you could.

Some poets have written about it quite beautifully, sometimes words worth the English poet went out into nature and wrote beautiful things, all pointing to that. But the moment you notice it outside of you, it's also within you.

[Speaker 2] (8:38:33 - 8:38:36)

So I call that usually presence.

[Speaker 1] (8:38:44 - 8:42:09)

You can call it the presence of God, you can call it divine presence, or you can forget about those terms. The terms don't really matter. So your entry point then can be, you start with the external.

Become aware of the essence of wherever you are, of that particular place, whether it's in a building or outside. The essence of that place, which goes beyond whatever is filling that place, whatever is there as a form. You become aware that there is also the formless dimension to that place.

Spirit, another word. And the more you are able to sense that in your life, the more spiritual you are. So how spiritual you are doesn't really have anything to do with your thought processes.

So thinking about God for 12 hours a day, or more, or talking about God doesn't make you spiritual. It's a concept. And the test, of course, is always whether you're able to retain that awareness of the presence.

Really, awareness and presence are the same thing. The moment you use language, you separate things into subject, objects, and bits and pieces. The question is, are you able to retain that aware presence, continuing to sense that presence that is, of course, inseparable from the essence of who you are?

[Speaker 2] (8:42:12 - 8:42:31)

Whether you can retain, sustain that when all this stuff in your life, whatever is happening, shouts at you, so to speak.

[Speaker 1] (8:42:34 - 8:42:47)

And every bit of stuff in your life says, I matter absolutely. I demand your complete attention.

[Speaker 2] (8:42:51 - 8:42:55)

If you don't give me attention, your life will collapse.

[Speaker 1] (8:42:59 - 8:43:09)

I need you to worry about me, says the stuff. If you don't, you're irresponsible.

[Speaker 2] (8:43:20 - 8:43:23)

Of course, that's not true.

[Speaker 1] (8:43:31 - 8:51:49)

Your most fundamental responsibility is to find that which is beyond the stuff, to access that dimension in you. That's why you're here. That's what the universe wants through you, to awaken to that dimension, to be it consciously.

First, it seems that it's something outside of you. It's the space in the room or how here in nature. And then you realize, oh, it's within me too.

And it's more essentially me than anything else. That's where the whole feeling of who you are actually originates in that deep sense of being, of presence. And then it gets mixed up with things, with stuff.

And then you sense the beingness through the stuff, still a little bit. And then a possession can give you a little bit of aliveness. You can sense your car, if you just got it.

After a while, it wears off. If you just got it, it can give you, that's a little bit of sense of, deeper sense of identity. But where it really, any sense, any identity sense of who your essential self comes from is from the formless dimension of presence.

And for most people, it can only a little bit filter through all the things in their lives. And it's never very satisfying because it's to a large extent obscured and it's mistaken for the thing. It's like having a lampshade and you're mistaking the light that comes through the lampshade.

You're mistaking the lampshade for the light. And then you attach yourself to the lampshade and not realizing what you love about the lampshade is the light that shines through it. And then you worry about the lampshade.

So really, perhaps it's a little bit radical to say it, but it is true. Whenever anything upsets you in life, in your life, the moment something upsets you or you get despondent or angry or whatever, then you lost awareness of that presence. The presence is obscured and something then in your life is regarded as absolutely important, the lampshade.

And you don't realize how insubstantial that is. And you're not aware of the light in your life. You are the light, said Jesus, the light of the world.

And nothing in life can satisfy you except this. No, you don't have to believe that. I'm not saying believe me.

Nothing is going to satisfy you. Either you know that already because you've tried many times to be satisfied by lampshades or you don't know it yet, which is fine too. You know to experience a little bit more frustration and suffering.

Look for real satisfaction in whatever fills your life, in things, in people, in situations, in positions, in what other people think of you or better opinion of yourself in your mind. Whatever, money, more money will finally. But as you begin to live this, live in continuous connectedness, what we could call continuous connectedness with being, then you can enjoy also the furniture in the room.

And yes, it has a certain importance, but that importance is always just relative. It's not ultimately important. It's relatively important, if that.

And then the famous word that we know is non-attachment, of course implies that you are rooted in something deeper or more real than whatever things you might be attached to. And of course, very often the attachment is attachment to a thought. That's the biggest attachments.

Non-attachment is not really possible unless you are rooted in something more fundamental than stuff that you might be attached to. So I wouldn't even say practice non-attachment.

[Speaker 2] (8:51:50 - 8:52:14)

No, find the essence of who you are and then as a natural consequence, that attachment to things and people and places and situations and success and failure and so on and so on falls away by itself.

[Speaker 1] (8:52:38 - 8:54:09)

So true happiness is deeper than what is conventionally called happiness. It's a sense of deep, alive peace, which can be there even if on the outer level you experience a wave of unhappiness, such as would be the case if somebody close to you dies. Essential part of all this is becoming comfortable with, of course, not thinking.

Just being, just awareness. That's the inner space of awareness right now. Do you need to think?

[Speaker 2] (8:54:11 - 8:54:14)

Do you need to fill this space with thoughts?

[Speaker 1] (8:54:14 - 8:54:31)

No, it's alive without thoughts. You can sense your own aliveness without telling yourself anything. Being it.

[Speaker 2] (8:57:58 - 9:37:47)

Welcome to our live meditation. Meditation is about accessing stillness within you, which is a dimension of consciousness above thinking. Aware stillness.

There's also a stillness below thinking. People become still when they get tired. The most important thing in a person's life is to find that dimension.

Perhaps first it comes in glimpses, sometimes arises naturally, perhaps when you're out in nature or relating to an animal. Or it can be there as the part of your meditation practice while you meditate or right here and now by paying attention to the silent spaces between words. Paying attention, meaning noticing the silent spaces between the words.

That's the meditation. Not noticing just for one second, oh, there's a silent space, and then go off into thinking. But noticing the silent spaces while they are there.

For example, between now and now. And of course, you can't notice the silent spaces and think at the same time. To notice the silent space, you become still inside because only the stillness in you can become aware of it.

So noticing those spaces between words for here is an important part of, or the most important part of our life meditation. And as you notice, you become still inside. And there is the dimension that transcends the person.

So first you access it here, and as I said, perhaps it arises naturally. And if you access it here or it's part of your meditation practice, it's more likely to arise also naturally in other situations in daily life. And when it does arise, you notice it again.

A moment of alert attention. When you look at the sky and you go without having any interpretation or words arising in your mind about the sky, you just go, there's an alertness in which an alert space in which the sense perception happens of the sky. And what is the sky?

Nothing really. It's not an object. You can never touch it.

There isn't even no such thing as a sky. It's only a perception from a particular location. There's the background of space and there's the sunlight that creates the temporary illusion, we could say, that there's a sky.

But because it has no actual form, it's a helpful thing to look at the sky. It's a vast spaciousness. Today, the sky here is totally clear.

And that's, you can look at that spaciousness with inner spaciousness. And if there are clouds, you see that there's clouds and the clear sky also there. And sometimes there's just clouds, but still, there's still a spaciousness there.

And the light is filtering through the clouds. And that could be used as an analogy for your inner state of consciousness. Which can be totally overcast.

Which means, in this analogy, clouds are thoughts. For many people, their state of consciousness is continuously overcast. Overcast.

Which means one thought leads into another and into another and into another and into another. And all their consciousness is absorbed by thinking. So that's how most people still live on the planet.

And then comes a time when you realize, oh, there's an opening, a bit of spaciousness. There's some blue sky coming through in between the clouds. So that means noticing the gap between two thoughts in yourself.

And then occasionally you may find there's mostly clear sky and just a few puffy clouds floating past, which are little thoughts. You don't have to give them too much attention. And gradually you begin to be able to have that stillness, that spaciousness, not just occasionally, or when you are practicing meditation, but have it always, if not in the foreground of your life, that's not always possible.

There are many things that happen in the foreground that you need to give attention to, but in the background. So when you're looking at something, you don't immediately label it in terms of what it is. You don't interpret it, immediately form some fixed opinion or viewpoint.

But there's a moment of non-conceptualization and there's a stillness in the background against which the sense perception happens. And then whatever you look at, you look at, there's a dimension of depth to whatever you're looking at, which cannot be there if you immediately label everything. And sometimes that you don't even need an interpretation.

You can just be there with it, stillness against which the sense perception happens. Or if you need to have an interpretation, then after a moment of stillness, a thought arises concerning that particular situation, event or thing or person that is being perceived. So that's very important.

You can practice it throughout the day, looking at things, listening, and be still at the same time. Alert, an alertness goes with that. You become much more alert to your sense perceptions.

And that's the beginning of not relating to the world around you, to events, situations, to places, to activities that you engaged in, to other people, not to relate to all these things, primarily through the conditioned mind, which is the identification with which is the personality. That's an enormous sense of freedom. Freedom, as they would say, perhaps in Buddhist terms, freedom from the self that otherwise becomes the screen through which you look at everything, distorts everything according to their conditioning, personal, cultural conditioning, which is a kind of prison.

It imprisons you and you don't even know it. It also limits the amount of intelligence available to you to deal with situations and relate to people in a deeper, more intelligent way, ultimately with much more empathy and loving attention and an outflow of goodwill towards others, all of which is not possible when you're relating to other human beings and the world at large through exclusively through the conditioned mind, the personality, that entity. So that really is, to use words that I believe it was Krishnamurti used, that really is, finding that stillness is the awakening of intelligence in you, not just personal intelligence, not just the ability to solve problems or to analyze or compartmentalize or compare, but a deeper and creative intelligence. You are accessing a universal intelligence that is deeper or higher, whatever you want to call it, than the personal.

They're not absolutely distinct. They're not totally separate. The personal intelligence is conditioned intelligence.

It's a trickle. And then there is a vaster intelligence. So through becoming still, you access that.

And then you live in a sane way. If you don't access that in your life, there will be a lot of insanity. You won't even know it because it's normal.

You see that insanity, the way in which people relate to others and so on, how they react to situations. You see that when you watch movies and so on, it's all normal, seemingly normal human behavior. You see it in politics and so on.

But it's ultimately, when you realize that something else is possible, then you also realize that it is actually dysfunctional. Or insane. And there are periods in a person's life, a person who has not accessed the dimension of stillness or depth, the unconditioned consciousness.

There are periods in a person's lives when that insanity manifests particularly strongly. These are periods of big drama or terrible unhappiness, which always seems to come from the outside. This is how an unconscious person perceives it.

Other people are doing it to me. Situations are doing it to me. But it's generated by your reaction to other people and events and whatever else you encounter.

And collectively, there are also periods when the dysfunction of the human mind manifests very strongly. And then there's a period where it subsides a little bit. The first half of the 20th century was a period when the collective dysfunction of the human mind manifested particularly strongly.

If you think things are bad now, if you listen to the news, just look at the first half of the 20th century. Two world wars and many other things. Genocide.

How do you measure success in life? The world has certain criteria. But since the state of consciousness, the unawakened state of consciousness is highly dysfunctional, the criteria that the world has to judge success or failure must be a reflection of that dysfunction.

In the collective consciousness, which manifests in every personal consciousness. True success is determined by the degree to which you have transcended the conditioning of your mind, transcended the personality, doesn't mean there is no personality anymore. Transcended means you've gone beyond.

The personality still operates, but it no longer predominates, no longer has that overriding controlling function. You are no longer in its grip. And surprisingly or not surprisingly, one of the world's great scientists or one of the greatest, Albert Einstein, who was also a deeply spiritual person, said something similar.

He had deep spiritual insights. He said something similar. He didn't use the word success.

He said, value, the true value of a human being is determined by the degree to which he or she has become free of the self. That's what he said. And if somebody had quoted that without telling you who said it, you would probably have guessed it.

Maybe it was the Dalai Lama who said it. Maybe it was the Buddha who said it. No, it was Albert Einstein who said it.

The self, freedom from the self, which implies the self is the conditioned entity consisting of the conditioning of your mind, the personality. To become free is to transcend. It means the arising of the unconditioned consciousness, the stillness, the spaciousness.

Now, some people may object to the first part of Einstein's statement, which seems to imply that not every human being is of the same value because he says the true value of a human being is determined by the degree to which he or she is free of the self. That seems to conflict with the modern notion that we are all equal, that every human being is of the same value. To solve this dilemma, I suggest that you consider the possibility that in essence, every human being is of the same value and the essence of every human being is one with the essence of every other human being and the essence of the universe, that which underlies the universal source.

In essence, every human being is a manifestation of the one source of all life, an emanation of the one source of life. In that sense, there's no greater or lesser value to a human being because in essence, every human is a manifestation of the one. But the degree to which the underlying essence manifests outwardly varies from person to person.

Some are still very unconscious, totally, that means totally identified with the conditioned mind and its dysfunctional beliefs, the whole dysfunctional structure. In others, something else begins to shine through. The essence is less obscured, shines through.

So they display, instead of murderous aggression, they display compassion, empathy, goodwill, but even the person who displays murderous aggression, there's no saying, you just don't know whether that person will be stuck in that dysfunctional, highly dysfunctional state of consciousness, but that person can also suddenly, that would usually happen through intense suffering, self-inflicted, inflicted on others, then it gets reflected back through intense suffering. Even the person who is deeply unconscious can suddenly manifest, there can suddenly be an opening and more of the essence manifests itself because the essence was always there and is always there, but it was totally obscured. So if you wanted a yes or no answer to whether all human beings are of the same value, you cannot have a yes or no answer because they're different, can be addressed at different levels.

At the deepest level, yes. At the level of manifestation, no, or not yet. So when I use the word success, I could have used the word value.

And as you access the stillness, you realize that we call it stillness, of course, it's just a word, but it's more than that. You realize that that is something very precious, very deep, and that is not just something that you access as if it were something other. It's not other.

The stillness is the essence of who you are. It's one with who you are, and that is very precious. You can sense, it's hard to talk about it, but, and that's where true, the true sense of self-worth comes from.

Even self-confidence, which really is a wrong word now. Self-confidence, meaning you trust in you as the person, your personal achievements, your personal knowledge, your personal strengths, me, me, I'm, it's always comparative to others. You have self-confidence because you think of yourself as better than others.

You might have confirmation temporarily that you are better than others. But what we're accessing, finding, realizing here, that sense of self-worth is really, comes from a deeper place that's not the self. So we could substitute self-confidence for no self, no self in quotation marks, hyphenated, one word, no self-confidence.

You can trust that stillness, that deeper intelligence, that primordial intelligence to operate through you. I trust it, for example, when I come here and speak to you without having any idea what I'm going to say. So it's just a beautiful trusting in the deeper intelligence to act and speak through you, and then use your mind to manifest through.

So you could say, yes, I have that confidence, but it's not a confidence in me as a person. That deeper confidence comes when this personal self gets out of the way. And it gets out of the way the moment the mind becomes still.

The moment there's an opening and the self is out of the way. Thank you. I wish you a peaceful rest of the day or for many of you, evening sleep, or even a new day already starting.

And remember to invite moments of stillness into your life. So many opportunities every day, every moment. Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (9:38:35 - 9:45:16)

Together, let's try an exercise to help balance and equalize your breathing. It's an equal breathing exercise of inhaling for a count of four, holding the breath for a count of four, exhale on a count of four, hold the breath for a count of four, and then we repeat, inhale, hold, exhale, hold. And then as our breath begins to deepen and we feel comfortable, we'll just increase the count to a count of six.

So that's inhale for a count of six, hold the breath for a count of six, exhale for a count of six, and hold the breath for a count of six. So today, we'll go up to six, but feel free on your own, you can even increase it to a count of eight, to a count of 10, to a count of 12, whatever feels comfortable. But remembering, it's not a forced breathing.

So if you find that it kind of stresses your body out and you get a little contracted, even with the count of six, take it down to a count of four. So with breathing, don't push yourself beyond where it is naturally comfortable. Because the whole point is to bring your body back into balance and calm, not to stress the body.

So begin by sitting in a comfortable chair, your feet flat on the floor, and your spine is erect. So if your chair tends to, and you tend to sort of slouch down in your chair, slide your buttocks forward so that you're seated at the edge of your chair. So spine is erect, crown of your head lifted towards the sky.

You may wish to close your eyes. Your palms are facing down on your lap. And let's just sort of, first of all, we'll do one or two sighs just to let go of any sort of unwanted energy that's been lingering in your body, in your emotional field.

So take a deep inhale and exhale. Let it go with a sigh. Again, inhale and exhale.

One more time, inhale and let it go. And begin, inhale to release. Three, four, hold.

Two, three, four. Exhale, to three, four. Hold, two, three, four.

Inhale, two, three, four. Hold, two, three, four. Exhale, two, three, four, hold, two, three, four.

Keep going, counting on your own. The inhale and the exhale is done through the nose. As you're staying present with your breath, become also aware of your body, relaxing your entire body.

And noticing, perhaps, during this breathing exercise, how the body relaxes with each exhale. Nice, slow, easy breathing. And on your next exhale, we'll step it up to a count of six.

Inhale, two, three, four.

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[Speaker 2] (0:02 - 33:24)

And on your next exhale, we'll step it up to a count of six. Inhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Hold, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Exhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Hold, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Inhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Hold, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Exhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Hold, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Continue like this, counting on your own. Remembering that if you find the count of six is strenuous for your body, go back to the count of four. Being aware of how you feel in your body.

Being aware of your breathing. Relaxing into this moment. Into your breath as you inhale, as you hold, and as you exhale.

Noticing at the end of the exhale, during the pause, during the hold, notice the stillness. And again, notice the stillness at the top of the inhale. Don't rush through the exercise, through the breathing.

It's just nice and slow, equal, balanced breathing. You can continue this breathing exercise for as long as you wish, but for this segment, let's do two more rounds, ending with your exhale and returning to regular breathing. Last round.

So it's exhale, then return to your regular breathing. Feeling the calmness in your body, the quietness of your mind, the relaxation of your body. And when you're ready, you can open your eyes and enjoy the harmony within.

Thank you. This breathing technique is a yoga breathing technique called Pranayama. It's an alternate nostril breathing.

So sitting up nice and tall, whether you're sitting on your yoga mat cross-legged or in like a sort of seated prayer position, kneeling on your knees, sitting back on your heels or sitting between your heels. Or you can even, since we're at the computer, be sitting in your chair, making sure that it's a firm yet comfortable chair, preferably not the sofa. And if you're sitting back in your chair, just check in to see whether you're kind of slouching back.

If so, just move, slide forward, and just come to sit at the edge of your chair. Spine is erect. Crown of your head is reaching towards the heavens.

Your chin can be slightly tucked in if you wish. Left hand stays on your lap, palm facing down. And with your right hand, raise your right hand, your thumb and your baby finger sticking out, and the three fingers facing down onto your palm.

We will begin by closing off the right nostril, and then you breathe in through the left nostril. And when you exhale, you close off the left nostril and breathe out through the right nostril. And then again, we breathe in through the right nostril, close off the right, and breathe out to the left, and so on.

We will equalize the breathing, first with a count of four, and then we'll step it up to a count of six. So, actually, before you start, you may wish to clear your nostrils. So, I won't do that in front of the camera.

It may not look so pretty, but I've done it. So, grab some Kleenex and clear your nostrils. And the other point I'd like to make is that if you are at all feeling congested today, we don't want to make your breathing into any strain or strenuous breathing.

It kind of defeats the purpose. So, if you're feeling congested today, you may wish to choose an alternate breathing exercise. And also, if you have any serious illness or are pregnant, you may wish to even consult a physician to see whether it's okay for you to be doing this kind of breathing technique.

So, let's begin. Sitting up nice and tall, crown of your head being lifted towards the heavens. Inhale through the left nostril.

Inhale, 2, 3, 4. Exhale, 2, 3, 4. Inhale, 2, 3, 4.

Exhale, 2, 3, 4. Inhale, 2, 3, 4. Exhale, 2, 3, 4.

Inhale, 2, 3, 4. Exhale, 2, 3, 4. Continue like this on your own.

Last round, exhaling through the left nostril. And then when we inhale, we'll do it on the count of 6. Inhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Exhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Inhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Exhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Inhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Exhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Inhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Exhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Continue like this on your own. Keep your attention fully on your breath.

Even notice the pauses between the top of the inhale and at the bottom of the exhale. One more cycle of this. Ending with your exhale with the left nostril.

Return to your regular breathing. And if need to, you can take a deep inhale and just exhale with another sigh. Just stay aware internally, noticing any change within your body, your mind, your emotional state, or even your state of consciousness.

This pranayama exercise can be done for 2, 3, 5, 10, 20 minutes. Choose the time that's right for you. Here's a simple breathing technique that can be done at any time.

And it's actually good to do when you're feeling perhaps a little stressed. When you notice that your breathing has become shallow, it just helps you to bring yourself back into your body. I even practice this breathing technique when I'm stopped at a stoplight.

When I'm doing the dishes. It actually can be done at any time. It's simply breathing, inhaling for a count of 4, exhaling for a count of 4.

Now you'll notice, especially if you're under stress emotionally, if the body's feeling stressed, or if you notice that you've been breathing really shallowly, even a count of 4 can be a little strenuous. So you can even start off with a count of 3, but generally a count of 4 is pretty good. And then when the body begins to relax, your mind begins to relax, and the breathing begins to kind of restore itself, up the count to a count of 6.

You can even up it to a count of 8. So it's equal inhales and equal exhales. So sitting up straight, spine erect, in a firm yet comfortable chair, your feet flat on the floor, crowning your head lifted towards the sky.

You may wish to close your eyes, and you don't have to close your eyes, but you may. So it's inhale, 2, 3, 4. Exhale, 2, 3, 4.

Inhale, 2, 3, 4. Exhale, 2, 3, 4. Continue like this, counting on your own.

And you'll notice that at the top of each inhale, there's just this natural slight pause. And then naturally, you exhale. And then again, there's a pause.

And then an in-breath will naturally occur. So you're not only connected to your breath, but stay also conscious of your body. Just noticing where there's any tension and bringing awareness to that area and consciously relaxing your body.

Feeling your breath becoming more equalized, more balanced. On your next inhale, we'll count to 6. So it's inhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Exhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Inhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Exhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Continue like this on your own, counting to yourself. Noticing the belly rise as you inhale, filling your belly, your side body, your back body, your chest with air. And exhaling all the toxins from your body, all the stress, all the emotions.

If the count of 6 is not comfortable for you and you're feeling a little strained on this count of 6, return to the count of 4. Remembering to keep your chin level or at least slightly tucked in rather than tilted upwards. Upwards restricts your throat.

We want to keep the throat open. Breathing is life and you are life. Restore yourself at any time by simply breathing slowly and deeply.

And when you're ready, on your next exhale, just return to your regular breathing, perhaps noticing that your regular breathing is deeper, is slower than when you started out. Noticing your state of consciousness now, body's calm, mind is calm. Restored the balance physically, emotionally, mentally.

And perhaps you've tapped into a higher state of consciousness, sensing the stillness. When you're ready, you can open your eyes and thank yourself for this breath of life. Namaste.

Welcome. Our segment today is on breathing. Breathing is life.

We survive without food for several weeks and without water for a few days. But without oxygen, we will die within a matter of minutes. We breathe in oxygen.

We breathe in the chi all around us. It sustains us. It revitalizes us.

In our bodies, in our minds. We all know how to breathe. Breathing is automatic, it's spontaneous, and it's natural.

In fact, we breathe even when we're not even aware of it. However, most of our breathing becomes modified or restricted. Usually this happens when we're under stress, when we worry, when we're filled with anxiety, when we're in fear, and sometimes even if we're in this habit of moving quickly, the pattern of the movement and breath follow each other.

If you've become in a habitual mode of being in fear, it's almost like that feeling of, you know, when somebody comes up behind you and you get scared and you go, and that freezes up our whole body, our lungs, and everything contracts, including our breathing. So then the breathing ends up just being very, very shallow, perhaps only breathing from one third of our capacity of our lungs, just up here, instead of that full belly breath of breathing in and breathing out. So proper breathing revitalizes you.

It brings and restores health in your body, in your mind, emotionally, and even can help you to a higher state of consciousness. I will teach you five different breathing techniques. Each one can be used at any particular time, but use the one that feels right for you in this moment.

An overview of the five breathing techniques. The first one is simply sighing. The second is a pranayama breathing technique.

The third is a chagang technique, and it's called abdominal breathing. The fourth is a breathing technique that equalizes, balances you, your system. Lastly, the fifth is a simple breathing technique.

[Speaker 4] (33:44 - 34:11)

I echo. I have met people in my life that have an awareness and an intuition that can only come with presence. That's very attractive, and it invites trust.

So my question is, can presence be used to manipulate or use others?

[Speaker 1] (34:14 - 34:20)

Without going into detail, would you say that you have experienced something like that?

[Speaker 7] (34:21 - 34:21)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (34:27 - 46:40)

Now, presence cannot be used, but presence can arise and then be covered up again, and then the ego returns and claims something. It claims ownership of presence. That's one thing that can happen.

It claims the ownership of the power that is in presence. That's the downfall frequently of spiritual teachers who have periods of egolessness, and the ego has become dormant or stepped aside, and presence arises. But the ego is still lurking in the background, and then it reasserts itself.

And then you know it, whether the spiritual teacher claims some sort of specialness for him or herself. When he says, I'm the most advanced human that ever lived and ever will live on the planet, then you know that probably the ego has crept back in, even though that teacher might have uttered beautiful words only a few weeks ago, inspired words. So that can happen and has happened.

Another, there are certain abilities that some people have that's now the second part of the answer. There are certain abilities that some people have that sometimes look as if they were things that only an awakened human being, an ability that only an awakened human being would have. It sometimes appears like that.

For example, what in India they call siddhis, which are psychic powers, people who are able to, sometimes clairvoyant, or can tell you what the name of your grandmother was and at what age your grandmother died. They can perhaps influence others, infuse their own will into others and make people do certain things that otherwise they would not do. They can have a hypnotic effect on others.

And sometimes it looks to an outside observer as if you were looking at a highly evolved being, an enlightened being, but that is not necessarily the case because there are many humans who have psychic powers which do not necessarily go together with spiritual realization. But if you don't know that, you can easily be led to believe that these things can only come out of spiritual realization. If I levitated here and now and somebody films it, then suddenly large numbers of people all over the world would believe that I am the most highly evolved human being on the planet.

But it could be that I simply have certain psychic powers like an athlete on the physical realm has developed enormous physical abilities that other humans don't have because he or she has trained certain muscles and limbs to move in certain ways. So he has things that are almost superhuman. In the same way, there are some humans who have psychic abilities.

They're like athletes in the psychic realm and doesn't necessarily go together with the absence of ego. In fact, it's quite dangerous if there's a big ego that is hidden. Egos are also good at concealing themselves.

So the ego is hidden and this person is able to bend spoons or to manifest things out of nothing. Well, it seems out of nothing, but maybe the sleeve is not nothing. It manifests somewhere.

I haven't practiced enough. I can't do it. So those things are often, of course, often used, not necessarily often used in the service of the ego.

But presence itself cannot be used by the ego. Ego can only come in once presence has been covered up, receded into the background, and then the ego claims something, perhaps because there was inspiration there. And then with some spiritual teachers, you can see the difference.

Once the presence has been covered up, also the quality of what they say is diminished. It no longer has the inspirational power that it had before. There's also a difference between charisma and presence that is sometimes confused by people.

There are certain humans, some are spiritual teachers, some are other humans that perhaps have certain powers or positions of power, who seem to emanate a very powerful energy field. And that is also, in those of you who don't know the difference, is going also be confused with spiritual attainment or enlightenment or awakening. Some spiritual teachers have both presence and charisma.

Some have only presence. Presence is more fine an energy field of a higher vibrational frequency than charisma. Charisma is a very powerful, it's basically it's chi or shakti that emanates from them.

And I have described chi or shakti, whatever you want to call it, as the bridge between the manifested physical world and the unmanifested formlessness. In between, as form is born out of formlessness, it becomes energy. The energy is the first manifestation is energy.

You can't see it with your senses. And that energy is chi. And then that energy flows into creating form.

So it's a bridge between form. And some humans are in touch with that level. And those humans have charisma.

Sometimes spiritual teachers have, as I just said, have both presence and occasionally charisma. Or psychic powers can often come with charisma also. And then you have people who are in powerful positions in the world.

And because of the energy that flows through them and the attention they're given by other humans, they develop the charisma. They are in touch with that energy source of chi. For example, obviously some of these are not necessarily great good people because that energy can be used for egoic purposes.

Hitler had great charisma, but so did, I'm told, somebody who met Bill Clinton even after he was no longer president. He still, as when he comes into a room apparently, everybody can feel that there is an emanation of energy there. And in the past, kings often had that.

In medieval times, the king had, many kings were reputed to have the ability to heal. And so they called it the royal touch and often sick people were brought into the presence of the king and he would place his hand on them and many of them were healed. And through perhaps the power of the energy added to that, of course, is also their belief that in the presence of the king you are healed.

So it was their own power, of course, very often that healed them. So it's sometimes hard to tell the difference unless you're already firmly established in presence yourself between charisma and presence. And some spiritual teachers, I don't know whether you had contact with what you just mentioned, whether that was a spiritual teacher that you had contact with and then you witnessed what you just described.

Yes. Yeah. Some spiritual teachers, I'm not mentioning any names, of course, whether they're alive or dead, I'm not mentioning any names, but there are some who very clearly had enormous energy outflow and people would get virtually addicted to their energy field.

Whenever they came into the presence of the teacher, they could feel, ah. And with presence, a little bit like that happens also because presence in one human being awakens your own presence. But the teacher needs to point out that what you're experiencing is yourself.

It's not the energy of the teacher. The energy of the teacher awakens your presence. But there's a misperception when humans are addicted to an external figure, to the energy that comes from that figure, they are dependent on him or her for their energy intake.

They suck in their chi or shakti and think they're being enlightened. But a very clear sign that they're not being enlightened is when they go back into ordinary life, they're just as unconscious as everybody else. So there's no real change.

There's only an energy absorption, which really the energy you should find your own source from within rather than depend on an external source. So presence cannot be used. Two things can happen.

Either it's not presence, it's she in the service of the ego, or it was presence, but it became covered up, ego reasserted itself and then made claims and tried to manipulate people for its own purposes. Now, which one it is in your case, I don't know, but perhaps you will be able to see for yourself. The main thing is a person in presence, presence and ego cannot coexist at the same time.

So you can't have the ego can be in the background, but it cannot use, ego cannot use presence when presence is present. I understand.

[Speaker 4] (46:40 - 46:41)

Yeah. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (46:42 - 47:05)

Thank you. Is there another question that has not dissolved?

[Speaker 6] (47:16 - 47:18)

It only has partly dissolved.

[Speaker 1] (47:19 - 47:20)

Partly dissolved.

[Speaker 6] (47:20 - 48:02)

Hello, Eckhart. Moin, moin. My question deals with parents.

With practice and presence, I felt love for them after many years, not feeling love and feeling guilty for that. But I still have huge problems to meet them. When I meet them, if they are in the same room, even if I try to be aware of my breath and my inner body, after a while, I have huge pain body attacks.

[Speaker 1] (48:04 - 48:07)

Is that triggered by something they say?

[Speaker 6] (48:07 - 48:27)

I can't even say that. Sometimes it's the way I manage to go through the meeting quite fine, and my mother leaves the room and I break down. And, yeah, I don't know what it is.

[Speaker 1] (48:29 - 48:32)

German parents can be difficult. Yes.

[Speaker 7] (48:33 - 48:34)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (48:35 - 57:57)

I know. American parents, too. So on one level, there's already an acceptance of them.

On a mental level, the acceptance of who they are, the acceptance of their limitations, they behave the way they behave. The pain body is still there inside you, of course, and the pain body reacts. It may also be that the mental level, the mental acceptance, is not yet complete either.

To see that they act the way they act, speak the way they speak, not because of who they are, but because of their past conditioning, which is their mental emotional conditioning is speaking through them. They can't help that. If there's not enough presence, everybody is controlled by their mental emotional conditioning.

They can't help it. They are afflicted by that disease, which is identification with unconscious conditioning. I'm not the only one who calls that disease.

Even in the ancient teachings of Zen, they sometimes call it the disease of the mind. And there are some Zen teachers who have said they are here to cure that mental illness. They've said that's what Zen is about.

It's curing that mental illness. So you need to, on the mental level, as you sit with them, you need to know that continuously that what you are observing is not who they are. You're observing a form of mental conditioning.

Underneath that, there is the being. And you may sometimes get a glimpse of it. My mother was very much identified also with her mind, and occasionally I looked into her eyes, and suddenly there was a light shining through when she stopped talking for a little while.

In other words, the mind catching a breath after talking for 10 minutes incessantly. And then for a moment I could see, ah, there's their being, her being was shining through. And I have one or two photos where her being shines through.

And then, of course, it gets obscured again. And then you get the same, get the suspicions, the complaints, the accusations, all the stuff associated with unconscious thinking. So on the mental level, you need to know that, be present enough so that you don't forget that what you're observing is not who they are, but you're observing the past in them, the conditioning.

And then comes the emotions that you feel. Of course, there's your past, the past, the living past in you from your childhood, all the things they did or failed to do because they couldn't help it. There wasn't enough presence to change it.

So that's something for you to find acceptance. As you accept them, you accept what you feel at that moment. Whether you can even label it, we don't know.

Is it sadness? Is it anger? Is it heaviness or a mixture of all of that, a feeling of wanting to run away, a contraction, whatever it is, that's all there.

You don't need to even analyze it. You just need to feel the entire energy field of that, and it doesn't feel pleasant. And it's the past in you.

So there you're observing the past in them, acting out, and you experience the past in you. And so what do you do with two pasts? You have the past out there and the past in here.

Only presence can dissolve the past. So you need to access the power of presence in yourself. And how do you do that?

A quick way in a situation like this is the acceptance of whatever arises inside or outside at this moment. You accept this is what you feel. This is what they do or say.

There's the acceptance of the inner and the outer, because it is already happening. You have to accept or you suffer. In a way, if you don't accept, you suffer more.

If you don't want to feel what you feel, that's more suffering because you're resisting. Acceptance does something that I could describe as, let's say here's the emotional field and it doesn't feel good. And acceptance means just to say, okay, there it is, I can feel it.

I'm verbalizing. Acceptance doesn't even require, after a little while, you don't need words anymore. You can just see what is, be with it.

And at that moment, a little bit of space opens up around that emotion. A little bit of space. That space comes from your acceptance.

The acceptance gives it space. And that's already a tiny bit of freedom. You've given it a little bit of space inside yourself when you say, yes, this is what is.

And that's a beauty. You've given both them space externally to be, and you've given yourself space internally. And then, as you notice that actually, that feels already a little bit better than before because there's space around the emotion.

And then you go into it more deeply and you accept even more. You continue to accept. And that space grows a little bit around it.

And then you encounter the strange phenomenon of an emotion that is not pleasant existing in a spacious field, so to speak, that's around it. And then you realize that who you are is you are that field. And you can allow the emotion to be in that field and you can allow your parents to be there and say what they say and do what they do.

They're repeating the past. Space comes in. So acceptance brings space, and space is the transcendence of conditioning.

Space is the transcendence of the past. The transcendence, transcendence of the personality and the person, and it's freedom, space. That's the practice.

And so the best place to practice is with your parents. There are many other places where you can practice, but the ultimate mastery you will achieve when you can practice with your parents. That's the graduation.

You graduate. It's the PhD in presence. Don't jump into it too much.

If you say, okay, I'm going to spend a week with our parents now, it's too much, too much. Give yourself short time periods at first. Say, I'm going to come for coffee and cake.

That's what they like to do. At least my mother did. I'll come for coffee and cake, and I'll stay for an hour, or you know, if you can.

I don't know how that works practically. And then you practice. You give yourself one hour to practice.

And you know it's only an hour. I have to be present for an hour. And it's your spiritual practice.

So, as you know, I've written the quote in a book. Ram Dass said, if you think you're so enlightened, spend two weeks with your parents. Two weeks.

The ultimate test. So, happy practice. Thank you.

[Speaker 4] (58:21 - 59:22)

The Fyndhorn Foundation in the north of Scotland is a center of spiritual service in co-creation with nature, which emphasizes education and community. The Fyndhorn Foundation is at the heart of one of the best-known intentional communities in the world. It is a major international center of adult educational, personal, and spiritual transformation.

About 14,000 visitors a year come to the Foundation in one of the many ways that it is possible to visit, live, and work there. Eckhart Tolle gave a weekend retreat in the Universal Hall to a group of over 300 people. This is a record of that event.

[Speaker 1] (1:00:45 - 2:11:10)

Welcome to our weekend retreat at this beautiful, sacred place. Our theme for this weekend is stillness, which is inseparable from who you are in the depth of your being. One could say everybody is still already.

The stillness is already there. It does not need to be found even. It certainly does not need to be created because it's already there.

The only thing is you may not notice it. If there's a lot of mental noise, then you just don't notice it, that it's there. And also you don't notice the dimension within yourself that is far deeper than the movement of thought.

And your whole identity is then bound up with the movement of thought, a mind-created sense of self, a personal history and no more, that is soon coming to an end. Soon, next year or in 40, 50 years' time, it's soon. So who you are and stillness are one and the same.

And if you have not yet gone completely mad in this mad world, that means you have some access to the stillness inside you. You may not remember it afterwards because it's not memorable, since stillness is timeless and the mind cannot memorize it or think, oh, that was interesting, I'll remember that, because stillness is not interesting. Interesting is a mental thing.

Just as our weekend here is not going to be interesting. You may have noticed that already. But interesting is not the ultimate.

It's only the ultimate to the human mind. You can go out here and look at a tree or flower or the sunset, and could you say, this sunset is interesting? Only if you were trying to write a PhD about sunsets.

If you had to analyze it, or the oak tree. The oak tree becomes interesting the moment you start to analyze it mentally. And there is a place for that also in this dimension.

But if you get caught up on that dimension only, where you break things up into little bits and pieces and analyze them, and by the way, most kinds of analysis, you have to kill the thing first before you can analyze it, or in the process of analysis it gets killed. But if you just be with the oak tree, contemplate it, truly look, then what you're looking at goes beyond interesting. It's far deeper than interesting.

Same as the sunset. There's nothing interesting about it, and yet it is awe-inspiring. It is deep.

There's a depth there that defies analysis by the mind. The moment you analyze it, you have reduced it to something lifeless. And most people in our civilization, and this has been going on for a long time, are trapped in that dimension where compulsively they go about their life analyzing, interpreting, and labeling things as soon as they enter their field of consciousness.

They do it to people. They do it to situations that they encounter, immediately have some personal reactive relationship to it. They do it to nature, and they can no longer perceive the sacredness that is there in nature because they approach it only through thinking.

And that is a dreadful present that you then end up in, the present of your own mind. And then you approach your whole life only through that. And your whole life becomes reduced to a conceptual reality in the head, consisting of thoughts that you have about things, viewpoints, opinions, and even so-called knowledge.

Knowledge is thought, a label, and gives the illusion that you know. And all it is, it's a thought that you have put on something. And then it loses its depth and aliveness.

And you begin to relate to reality through the veil of thinking. And you relate to yourself through the veil of thinking because you yourself become a conceptual thought-based entity, an egoic self, a me, with its unfulfilled personal history, its desires and fears and frustrations, and its hopes that it will find ultimate fulfillment of its unfulfilled and unfulfilling sense of self based on a story in the future, which again is a thought form. That's what the future is.

Nobody has ever encountered it except as a thought. And yet most people live unconsciously as if the next moment or the one after that were more important than this moment, the only thing there ever is. This one moment that you could never escape from, have never escaped from, will never escape from, that is inseparable from the life that you are, also inseparable from stillness, because the moment you enter the now with your attention, a stillness arises.

The essence of the present moment, no matter how mad it may appear on the surface, is always stillness. It is also sacredness. The only place where the sacred dimension can be found is now.

You have to be present to this moment. You have to wake up into this moment to realize that life is sacred. When you are lost in thought, sacred is meaningless.

It could become another of the many concepts that you can play with, and you could write a PhD about it without ever having encountered it yourself. So this, the depths of now, is inseparable from your very being, your very life, and it is a sacred one life. And yes, this is why we're here, to deepen our awareness of that dimension.

And the sacred is everywhere. If you become truly present, you would find the sacredness everywhere. It's easier here.

In certain places that are called sacred, there is less of a density in the structures, the physical structures, the forms. There is a transparency almost to the form. Something shines through the forms, and this is why we call those places sacred.

But even here, there are some people who cannot sense that because they are not present enough when they walk in the garden. They are still in their head, thinking about where they are going the day after tomorrow, and the accumulation of problems, which are thought forms that are part of their sense of self. I have important problems to think about.

And occasionally you get a glimpse, three seconds of presence, and you get a glimpse, and immediately there comes the movement of thought again. So some people cannot be present here. Most of you can, and those who cannot, I believe, will quickly deepen and see how easy it is to be present, and how hard it is not to be present.

Normally people tell me the opposite. They say, it's so hard to be present. And this is what the mind believes, but the opposite is true.

Not being present to the now is hard. To live trapped in your mind is hard. That makes living into something that is a struggle and an effort, and you never get there, you never make it, because you live for the future, which is only a thought form.

And this is another aspect of living, trapped in thought, with your whole sense of self trapped in thought, hoping that at some point you will find yourself, complete yourself, or it's all going to work out in the end. And in the way the mind imagines it, it cannot work out, because every form dies, and every structure eventually dissolves again. And the mind only thinks in terms of forms and structures, and it hopes that life will work itself out on that level of structures and forms.

And it's always disappointed, because it cannot. And the miracle is, it's already working out at this very moment. It's already as it should be at this moment.

You have already arrived at the place of sacredness at this moment. It's easier to see it here, to sense that here. More difficult to feel that this moment is sacred when you find yourself at Piccadilly Circus or Times Square.

And you need to be an enlightened being perhaps, which simply means very present, to see the sacredness in the flashing Coca-Cola sign at Piccadilly Circus. And you need to be a Buddha to see the sacredness in a prison camp. And if one says the prison camp also has the dimension of the sacred, if one says that prematurely, this will be misunderstood and really will not make sense unless you know within yourself that that which is beyond form, the one formless life, is indestructible.

And some people who were in prison camps realized it for themselves. So we are here to find that dimension that is deeper than thought within ourselves, that has nothing to do with time. And so people ask sometimes, how do I still my mind?

I want to find the stillness. And then, yes, there are some good meditation methods, and eventually that also has to be left behind, otherwise it comes in between who you are. You put a method there to find yourself.

That is a space between you and yourself. And every method eventually needs to be left behind. You don't need it.

It's the last thing you leave behind. And this particular teaching works without methods. But if you have a method, it's beautiful, and you use it until you don't need it anymore.

Every thought in your mind when you are not aware of it as a thought has a sense of self in it. A sense of I am. You identify with the movement of thought.

And that is the essence of unconscious living. And that is why people continuously live for the future. The thought form of future where they are hoping to complete their insufficient sense of self.

The happy ending of my story. This is not to say you should not pursue certain activities. Learn new things.

Explore new countries. Meet new people. Learn this and that.

Acquire knowledge, expertise here and there. Develop your abilities, physical or mental. And create whatever you are called upon to create in this world.

It is beautiful to create in this world. And on that level, of course, there is always more that you could do. And as you grow older, there are certain things that you can no longer do.

So gradually, on the level of form, your life becomes reduced. There are already many, many things that it is unlikely that I will be able to do. I am not going to win a title at Wimbledon anymore.

It would be a miracle if I managed to do that. Not totally impossible, but I'm not even going to try it. And many other things would say, well, it's just, it's too late.

And this is true. It's, for many things, it's too late. On the level of form, I need to accept, yes, no, I'm not going to be the heavyweight boxing champion.

It's just too late for that, or it never was possible. So on the level of form, yes, depending on where you are in years, there may still be many things that you can add to what you can do and what you know and what you explore. Or it may be that you're reaching the end of the lifespan of this form, so there's little time left, and there isn't that much more that you can add to yourself.

And that's fine, too. Now, the question is, are you looking for yourself when you attempt to add more to who you are? And that is the dilemma of human existence.

There's a compulsive searching for more. Not that there's anything wrong with doing new things. No.

But there is a compulsive striving towards the next moment and the next and the next, hoping to add more to who I think I am. Thought forms. Possessions, attainments, recognition by other people, all thought forms.

My, I have not enough yet. I don't feel secure enough. I only have five houses and three cars.

And I still don't feel secure. And I think the houses are not big enough. That must be the reason.

Or they all, they write about me in the papers, and then, okay, by the way, I don't have five houses. It's just an example. Or to get recognition, they all write about me, and then I read in the papers, finally people have recognized who I am.

They think I'm great. And that gives, temporarily gives you the feeling of I have now added that universal recognition to who I think I am. And many people strive for that.

They think, when are they going to discover me? When are they going to realize that I am special? They may never realize it.

There is a search for specialness in the mind-made sense of self that in some cases is fulfilled, and in most cases is not fulfilled on the level where it's seeking. And so in either case, that sense of specialness, you could say, there are two ways of being unhappy. Not getting what you want, and getting what you want.

Because all the people who have attained universal recognition in whatever field, they are not happy either. They are not at peace with themselves. They do not feel the sense of security and the sense of finally having arrived, that before they had it, they had associated with that idea.

Once people recognize me, then I will have arrived. And then the moment comes, and at first it feels good, and then you see that people's opinion of you are only thought forms, they are images that they create, or if they are very well known, the media creates a fiction that has your name. And then you read about yourself in the paper, and you see, who is this?

They are writing about, there is nothing to do with me at all. And so many people become unhappy, even more unhappy, when they attain recognition. The world tells them, yes, you are special, and yet, I don't feel special.

Or they say, this is an illusion, that's not me, it's an image, a mind-created image. And a few people then go beyond all the mind-created sense of identity, because they have attained what the world tells us is desirable, wealth, property, recognition, attainment, here or there, and yet, it has not provided them with what they were really looking for, myself, a sense of being rooted in life, the fullness of life, as Jesus calls it, the fullness of life. And so there are many famous people who take drugs, and they need to dull the dreadful unhappiness they feel inside, because even the illusion of more in the future, that most people are still living by, doesn't work anymore, because if you already have everything, the illusion that the more, by attaining more in the future, you're going to be happy, can't work anymore for you.

What a dreadful fate. You can't look to the more anymore to feel that you are yourself. And so they feel even more unhappy.

They cannot escape into the next moment anymore. So they need to take some drugs so that for a little while, I feel better. Or a few break through to a deeper level within themselves, and realize that that sense of specialness that operated on the level of better than, or more than, was an illusion.

You can't pursue it, and it will take you nowhere. It can never fulfill itself because it is a thought form, me, the special one, that you wanted to incorporate into the story of me, that is the basis of your identity as long as you are trapped only in thought. Me, the special one.

Some people have the fiction in their head that they are... I don't want to take away anybody's fiction if they still like it. You could have the fiction in your head that in a past lifetime you were Napoleon.

And that can give you a sense of specialness, but it is derived from the movement of thought and images. But that keeps some people going. Nobody might agree with you that you were Napoleon, but at least, temporarily, it keeps you...

But you have to keep thinking about it, and tell the story to others. And others have other stories where other people say, yeah, that's true, that's who you are. But it is based on the movement of thought and the emotions that go with those thoughts.

So you have a whole identity based on a personal history. Very little. And it's not going to last very long.

The soap bubble of my personal history is going to pop soon. And everybody can say, I'm not predicting my imminent death, nobody knows. But everybody's death is ultimately imminent because one year or 50 years, it comes quite soon.

And it'll be now when it comes, not tomorrow. And so to be trapped in that sense of self, a conceptual reality, that is a dreadful fate. It's constant neediness, which even gets translated into the spiritual once you have realized, okay, I'm done with possessions, I know that that's not it.

But be careful here with other thought forms that arise to replace. For example, you might have spent 20 years of your life making money, and then you see, okay, I'm now giving away my BMW, I'm going to buy a bicycle because I'm spiritual. And I will only wear certain spiritual clothes or this or that, it doesn't matter what it is.

I'm on my bicycle, and then I can be on my bicycle and look at the person who is still so unconscious that he's driving his BMW and can think how much superior I am in my spiritual. And of course what you're carrying now is a much heavier thought form than the BMW thought form. So your sense of self has become, can, it could, it's quite possible that the BMW man has less of a sense of self than the man on the bicycle.

It's possible, probably not, but it's possible. So be careful with any, how the mind shifts and then chooses another story to feel, but always to feel, to make itself feel more than in one way or another so that it can, it works through comparison because it's thought, I think of, I have an image of who I am and then I need to compare that to who I think other people are. So I impose images on myself, mental concepts and images and then I impose them on others and then I compare my image with that image.

Hmm, okay, I'm more spiritual than this or he's more spiritual, he's been at it for much longer than me. And then you get how much you know. Knowledge is another one.

You casually mention from your great store of knowledge, you casually mention a few things and the other person is dumbfounded, doesn't know what you're, and it is, it's obvious that you know more than he. And that gives the feeling of ah. And so it works with little things to enhance it's always very precarious sense of self and then it loves being right and it loves others to be wrong because it's the only way you can be right.

It loves being right and feels itself enhanced momentarily through ah, I'm right. So it's always the strengthening of the fiction of self, the fiction of me, me and my story and that people go through life looking for that. That's the purpose of their life is to strengthen the fiction of me.

And so that becomes the motivating force behind their actions, what they do. And it's always, it's an uneasy thing because very often you feel less than somebody else and then you have to kind of work around that. Less special than he.

He knows more but on the other hand I look better. Laughter And then other people, if they cannot achieve the specialness in the way in which the world tells us you ought to be special, they achieve a reverse specialness by feeling unfairly treated by life. By feeling that they are a victim of certain people or situations and in their thought form of being a victim they feel very special.

So you can still win even if you lose. The mind is very clever. And a victim identity can be very strongly lodged in some people's minds and as soon as you meet them and after five minutes they will tell you their story.

You know what happened to them. 25 years ago it happened. And of course, yes, dreadful things did happen 25 years ago and they happen today also in this mad world but building an identity around some form of suffering that happened at some point or repeatedly in this mad world where suffering is inevitable to build a sense of specialness around that then you have put yourself into a dreadful prison with bars all around but at least you think you know who you are. You have a story.

Oh great, at least I have a story. My life treated me more unfairly than most people. I can feel more then.

And so whatever the mind it will find something to give itself an identity a conceptual identity and it is very much afraid of losing the story of abandoning it stepping beyond it and usually the story needs to become unpleasant for people to be pushed out of it. It's because in a way the story is a dream. A dream of who I am.

And if a dream becomes very unpleasant then you will want to wake up. No dream of me is ultimately all that pleasant but some are more unpleasant than others. So see how the self the conceptual self continuously tries to survive not only to survive and protect itself from others and to use others to enhance itself use them in one way or another and that determines the relationship between humans when you haven't stepped beyond that there is wanting to use another human or feeling you need to protect yourself from another human being.

Those are the two things that govern relationships in the egoic state. You either use them or you fear them. You need them and you are afraid of them and sometimes both at the same time.

And of course that also means there is no true relationship. It gets distorted because you don't know who you are. You have only an image in the head.

That tries to make itself stronger because it doesn't feel enough yet. I'm not enough yet. And so for some people the sense of specialness is attained by frequent complaining in the head and out aloud about life and situations and people and what's going on and it really shouldn't be happening.

They should do something about it. It's all very bad indeed. Why doesn't he?

And there is blaming continuously complaining and blaming and that the ego loves because it makes itself right by doing that. When you complain about something or somebody you feel you are right and the person or the situation you complain about is wrong. I'm not saying complain in a practical sense where you say I'd like to exchange this thing that I bought because it's not working.

That's fine. It's practical and you do something about it. But the complaining that is the telling of stories in the head that has no practical purpose whatsoever that constantly is in a conflict relationship with the present moment.

There's always something about it that isn't right and so you complain or something has just happened and you complain or you complain because it hasn't happened yet. So many people feel they cannot be themselves or truly at peace with themselves because of something that happened or something that hasn't happened. Those are the two reasons why you cannot be yourself.

Either something has happened and that's preventing me from being myself truly or something hasn't happened yet and if that doesn't happen I can't be myself. Isn't that it's a strange thing? I need something to happen so that I can be myself.

So we are not all the many ways we are talking about this here so that you can recognize it when it happens in you because it is a universal pattern in every human. It's inherited. It is the collective human mind in its egoic unconscious state that operates in that way.

That keeps you trapped on the surface of your being on the little surface movement the wave movement of life the forms of life all the things that happen and you're continuously you're trapped in that on the level of form just and of course on the level of form which includes even thought forms they are primordial forms when you are identified with every thought that comes into your head and of course there is never an end to it because the next thought comes immediately afterwards it's a string and so it goes the whole day long and you go and occasionally you get the little glimpses that keep you sane so that you can still survive here you are not they keep you from committing suicide or they keep you from going totally insane you have little moments of and they may be short but they keep you alive there is a little bit of joy seeping through from the depths of your being through the layers the heavy layers of mind there is a little bit a little crack appears here and there if it didn't you would be totally lost in here and you certainly wouldn't be sitting here and so occasionally there is moments it may be when there is sudden beauty and it's overwhelming or sudden a moment of danger that wakes you up out of the continuous voice in the head and suddenly there is more intense aliveness beingness presence and then thought comes back or it could be for some people danger in the form of physical illness can come and suddenly that wakes you up and suddenly you realize all the things that you pursued and you thought were important are not important at all so already something collapses on the level of thought all the things that mattered so much and suddenly you develop a physical illness and see it doesn't matter at all and so that can be helpful for some it can be an awakening for some people or it may be some people are kept sane by an animal because whenever it's the only way they can relate to another being that is non-conceptual because when they meet humans they are trapped in the concepts that they have about every human they meet they impose mental concepts and images in the form of what they think about they know exactly what they think about you they are not relating to you they are relating to the thoughts in their head they have about you and most people do it to each other so you have only two thought made entities trying to be in a relationship each one both needing and fearing the other and this is of course why relationships are so problematic these days so some people are kept sane by an animal and that the pets fulfill an incredible function that hasn't been fully acknowledged and recognized in this world they keep humanity sane because there you have when you touch the dog or the cat whatever it is and for a moment you are not some people even there they carry ego but those are the extreme cases you touch the animal and this you can be yourself you don't need to psychologically protect yourself from the animal or want something from you just can be with that and you can something transmits itself because the animal lives more deeply connected with the source of life than most humans less removed or one could say the illusion has not grown to such an extent of being a separate entity a me and the rest of the universe the animal still has the oneness with the totality hasn't lost it totally is deeply rooted in being so the animal does not create a world of problems the animal is one with life and humans have separated themselves from life they have a conceptual image this is me and there is the rest of the world there is a barrier and there is the other the other human being a dreadful concept other and they are needing others and fearing others walking through life and other is a mentally another concept so the egoic self the stronger you are trapped in the egoic sense of self the more you will emphasize the otherness of others and others will all become reduced to walking caricatures because the few labels that you have about them you reduce them and they are basically all caricatures and sometimes when people you listen to people they mention about somebody they met or somebody they know and see how stupid that person is and they have a few judgments and when you listen to that you see this caricature of this strange distorted human being and when you meet them you say this is the person you were talking about yeah and so the animal is not burdened by the continuous stream of thinking it does not have a conceptual identity like the humans so it hasn't separated itself so it can be an access point for some humans into being where they can be with a being without and it is for some humans it's a moment when they actually thought subsides when they pat their dog or you have a purring cat on your chest suddenly you think thought quietens becomes more quiet and you have a space of stillness and you feel the purring of a cat on your chest or simply to watch an animal can be if you can truly watch it can take you out of your mind and you become present because the animal is present and the same with the realm of nature the trees and the flowers and the blades of grass they are all present they are all surrendered to life one with life a beautiful temporary expression of the one life and so for some humans that's their only access point and for some even that doesn't work anymore I knew someone with a very strong ego who had ego battles with her cat if the cat didn't come she had the kitchen window open and the cat one evening didn't appear and she was where's my cat and then she would shut the window and said if she doesn't want to see me I don't want to see her and so the poor cat had to stay outside all night that also happens or there are cases where humans cannot even relate to animals anymore so this is where and so we see millions and millions of humans living in a pseudo reality with a sense of self that is ultimately a fiction that is always insufficient always feeling a sense of lack always needing more always even needing to make enemies so that it can still define itself as me and the other needing some kind of conflict so that it's separate sense of self can remain intact what can I be in conflict with today what can I complain about now so that I can feel a little bit more myself ah there it is and so when millions of humans live like that then this what then the result is what we read as human history a dreadful tale of incredible suffering that humans inflict on each other and other life forms on the planet incredible suffering and so the same you see on television tonight when you switch on the news you will see just how mad the collective consciousness is of humanity in its present evolutionary stage and yet here we are here we are and we recognize that all that is a form of one could say collective mental illness that humanity is suffering from and so one could say well how can God allow a whole species to become mentally ill I heard that question somewhere in somebody's mind and of course you can ask the same question on a personal level how can does God allow me to be ill how dare he she it to allow me to be ill to suffer and of course within the larger as a whole everything has its place and everything is as it should including your personal illness for the moment doesn't mean healing cannot happen but there are many humans here who were brought here who would not be here if they had not suffered some kind of dysfunction in their lives physical illness perhaps or some great loss and so you can already see on your personal level that your suffering your physical suffering whatever it may be to some extent began to dissolve the ego the egoic structures in your mind it started to shake it loose so that something else could come through and you suddenly found yourself becoming interested in the present moment and then you end up here and no matter what your story is and some of you may feel that it was all one big mistake the story of me was all one big mistake you are here now and that's an amazing thing to be to be here now and see that was the story and the outcome of all that big mistake was that now you are stepping out of it and you realise it as yes on the level of form this is how my life unfolded and now let me speak personally for one moment I could easily look upon my whole life let's say until the world told me that I was important a few years ago it happened before that nobody told me I was important until that I could look at my whole life up to that point as one complete disaster nothing actually worked out I tried that for a few years and then I was at university and then I did my PhD and then I gave that up and then I drifted for two years and then I went into that and then I tried that and it didn't things many things ok and then my mother said ok now you are 45 where what have you achieved others have already built up big businesses and so on the level of story it was a big disaster and yet fortunately at some point already I had given up identification with the story that the story was only my identity up to the age of 29 and it was a very unhappy one even there even when I was that was my relatively successful the only worldly success I had was I did well at university up to before I became a graduate student and it made me happy for two weeks and so how isn't it strange that a failed story can produce the flower the flower of consciousness and perhaps the flower of consciousness needs the mud out of which it grows you have the beautiful image of the lotus in Buddhism the symbol of Buddhism the lotus flower it grows it has its roots in the mud and it grows out of that and there is nothing more beautiful in human life than a failed story ah and the good news is every story ultimately fails because the forms because the story is based on the forms it identifies with forms and no forms last for that long no building lasts for that long eventually it crumbles all forms are temporary and they are beautiful the essence that is hiding in each form is the formless one life that is indestructible but even this beautiful form finchon it is not eternal as a form but the eternal shines through the forms here that is why because the forms are transparent and you also are not eternal as this form and yet a transparency is happening in you even as you sit here so that that which is beyond form no matter what we call it stillness presence beingness a deep sense of I am that before got mixed up with the story of me and that the preciousness of being is your true specialness what the egoic self had been looking for on the level of the story I want to be special that very thought obscured the fact that you already could not be more special than you are now but not special in the egoic sense that more than he or more than she special in the sense that there is a beauty and preciousness that is the essence of your being and that is what deep down you can sense even the person who is most completely identified with their story and their conceptual sense of self they feel that there is somewhere there is something precious that is me but they confuse it with the forms thought forms it gets that essence of being which is formless and timeless gets mixed up with form with thought and a story in the head and that is what the Buddha calls the fictitious self the self that the Buddha even 2,600 years ago recognized as an illusion an enormous insight the greatest perhaps the greatest insight of all humanity when he recognized the self is an illusion and by that he means the self that is identified with any form thought form physical form anything and that is the illusion to lose oneself in some form and then the preciousness of being that is the essence that is timeless and formless in every human and in every life form one could say incarnates in form and there is nothing wrong with incarnating in form as long as you know yourself as that which is beyond form but if you lose yourself in the incarnation and ultimately you had to do that too that was part of the totality of how things work to lose oneself is as the Buddha called it suffering then you suffer because you you you don't know who you are anymore you're looking for yourself in some form in some thought form in some physical form that you identify with which is also a thought form me and so everybody is looking for the essence of their being not knowing that the specialness that they look for is already the essence of who they are but they can only find it when they stop looking for themselves in the future through more so the one place it's all like some strange game the one place where you truly can only find yourself in that one place most humans never look which is the present moment they look there for themselves and to feel I want to be more on the level of form you can temporarily be more that's true and then that dissolves again but there is a level within yourself where more does not operate you do not need to be more you are already a full expression of the one life you are already complete on the level of the timeless the essence of your being now the only reason why you needed time was you needed to be ready to hear this truth and recognize it as a truth for that one could say you need time to hear the message that to be who you are you don't need time but the paradox is there are still many humans to whom this would be meaningless and they don't come here they need in other words they need more time they need to continue to look for themselves and they need to continue to be frustrated in their search that is part of the larger design to be the frustration is built into human existence and so that's what the world is for the so called world it is there to frustrate you and to drive you deeper to eventually drive you out of identification with form because as long as you identify with form it is so frustrating and you can never make it you can never arrange the forms and accumulate all the forms that you need you think you need to be yourself or sometimes you can do it for very brief a very brief time span you can suddenly find everything is now working in my life my health is good my relationship is great great money got possessions everybody loves me they all write good things about me it's all working my job my living situation my finances my health my relationships they're all great but before long something there starts to crumble here and there it's either the finances or it's the relationship or it's the living situation it's in the nature of the world of form that nothing stays fixed for very long and so it starts to crumble again here you just it sorted it all out and so that's why humans they experience life as a series of frustrations why can't it work and it doesn't work because they are looking for themselves there they are demanding that the world of form should make them complete and happy I demand that this world should complete who I am should give me my sense of self I just need this and that from there and then that's all this is what I demand and then it's not happening there's something wrong here life isn't working it seems to be working for everybody else but it's not working for me I read in the magazines all these glossy people they it seems to be working for them but only if you look at the glossy pictures if you visited them at home you would see that it's not working for them either so it's built into living here is frustration it's meant to be frustrating this is the larger the whole there is a purpose but people haven't seen it so it's quite a relief to recognize first of all the world cannot make me happy to demand that situations people places or attainments should complete me or make me happy are bound to be frustrated whether I attain or do not attain okay so that looks very negative doesn't it that's and that's why when you don't go deeper when you only see the surface you see oh all is vanity as the old testament prophet said vanity of vanities all is vanity I've seen it all I can't remember the exact words but I'm giving you a free translation I've seen it all I've done it all and it's all completely meaningless that's what he said and that was probably an elderly man who had tried it all and now why did they put this into the bible isn't it very negative to have such a statement that life is completely vain whatever you can achieve is vanity they put that in there because when you see the truth of it you're already becoming free of it the seeing of the inability of the world to make you happy the seeing of the short lived nature of whatever forms you encounter in real life what is it in you that is able to see that and say ah or even laugh what before was a dreadful story and frustration you suddenly step out of your own story and see that your own frustrating story is not your personal dilemma but the human condition and you derived your sense of self from that which is nothing personal whatsoever it's the human condition and that it's the human condition in it's unconscious state it's unenlightened state and that's what gave you your sense of personal selfhood and that you wanted to cling to and now you step out of it by simply seeing it the seeing means something is arising that is not part of that unconsciousness and that is why they put it into the bible because when you see it that which can witness that in you the impermanent nature of all forms the fictitious nature of the mind made story what is it in you that is able to look at that and see ah that is not thought that is the ability to be aware and hold up the mirror of awareness and simply see it there

[Speaker 7] (2:11:10 - 2:11:10)

ah

[Speaker 1] (2:11:10 - 2:14:53)

or let's say better the light of awareness shines on it the light of awareness shines on it and sees what before you were trapped in the frustrating story of my life and there is no life that is not ultimately frustrating it only begins it loses it's frustration when you do not look to the world anymore for your satisfaction or for yourself when you give up demanding that people places situations should make you happy and give you fulfill you you don't demand it anymore then suddenly the ability arises to allow the forms of this moment to be as they are because life at this moment already always is as it is it always the isness you cannot doubt whatever forms appear in the present moment it always is as it is and so most humans are in a conflict relationship with the isness of life they internally run away from it or reject it criticize it complain about it or look somewhere else I don't want to I don't want the isness of this I want that so when you see what the world cannot do for you you no longer you drop your demand because you see it as absurd to demand something of the world that it cannot deliver and then you can simply be with whatever is and is and this moment are always inseparable of course whatever is at this moment is as it is I don't demand that this place even if you come here and you demand that Fenton should make me happy if you came with that demand you would probably already have experienced frustration here because no place is capable of doing that for long or doing it at all and so you come here and say little things oh that shouldn't be here there's a there's a royal air force base right next to the spiritual center it doesn't make sense and so you can complain about that that shouldn't be why did they put that here they should have gone somewhere else and then you can say I came here to find peace and what do I find I find screaming jets this stuff I'm going home and that's only one thing and you'll find many more my roommate snores I can't get a night I can't I have to wait for the bathroom and it's not sunny this is late May and it's not sunny I should never have come to Scotland so if you just little examples of if you expect a place to fulfill you it can't do that in no place even if you went to a South Pacific island there would be something that is not quite right it doesn't fit there whatever it is the sunshine every day it's too much

[Speaker 7] (2:14:56 - 2:14:57)

the mosquitoes

[Speaker 1] (2:14:57 - 2:49:58)

at night they didn't I didn't know about that they didn't mention them in the travel brochures so here again a beautiful opportunity to drop the demand that a particular place should make you happy or give you peace or help you find yourself and simply then bring a yes to whatever form this moment takes instead of demanding that's the form of this moment should be different in order to satisfy me so you bring an inner alignment into your relationship with the present moment let's put it like that the way in which you relate to life which is always now only now an inner alignment comes in with now so you do not internally separate yourself from now which is life life and now are one because that is a source of great frustration and suffering and so whatever form this moment takes there's a jet flying it may be raining and then there's some sun coming through good, bad the mind could call this good could call this bad but it all is as it is at this moment and an enormous freedom comes into your life when you drop the demand that this should be other than it is and then you no longer demand that Fenton should make you happy or give you peace and then every moment or rather the one moment is as it is you go one step at a time to wherever you go and you look around and you stand and you walk and you sit and there are people coming people going things here things there and suddenly as you bring an inner alignment to the now something arises within you that has nothing to do with the form that this moment takes and it arises because you allow the form that this moment takes to be as it is so in allowing the form that this moment takes internally embracing it saying I might as well say yes because it is life because it is the only moment there ever is the now I might as well embrace it say yes that's how it is this does not diminish your ability to change if anything needs changing action arises out of the alignment with what is so you can be aligned with getting something that is not good you can have food that's gone cold or something and then you bring it back to the kitchen and you say this food is cold would you please heat it up again if it's possible nothing wrong with that but it's the action comes out of alignment the same action could arise out of an inner resistance to what is and then there's immediately self comes in a complaining self a self that enhances itself through it's complaints and then walks the same action but with a fundamentally different energy field you then walk with a plate to the kitchen and say what is this don't you know don't you heat your food here what you should be this you should be serving hot you are in this your action is to enhance yourself through it to make the self right to strengthen the fiction of me and then you do that to another human and that other human is going to defend itself and try to react in order to resist the diminishment of their sense of self because that's what the ego tends to do it says you are wrong it tries to diminish the fiction of that other person and then the other will defend itself and come up with even bigger canons and start shouting back at you in order to defend it's diminishment again the diminishment of the fiction what a world so you could live when you live in alignment with what is intelligence arises in your life that is far greater than the accumulated knowledge of the mind or the ability of the mind to analyze or solve IQ problems or crossword puzzles that sort of limit very tiny form of intelligence nothing wrong with it but it's tiny but that's what this world calls intelligence you can memorize and analyze and be quick in giving answers manipulate thoughts and keep as many thoughts as possible in your head and yet there's a far deeper intelligence that our civilization knows nothing of and that and it's that out of which all true creation comes true creativity comes and so that is accessed when you bring a yes no more than that a yes to the present moment that by the way includes the past because there are some people who carry a strong grievance or resentment connected with something that happened in the past somebody did it to you or a situation happened in the past and there's still a strong grievance that they carry and how does that work when I say accepting the present moment accepting the present moment the way it is now includes accepting the past because it is only because you believe that something that happened in the past is interfering somehow with your ability to be alive or to be yourself or to be fully yourself at this moment you're saying okay maybe you lost a limb or something like that somebody cut it off ten years ago and you carry the grievance so how does when you accept this moment as it is you accept this as it is one limb is missing that is as it is that is the form that this moment takes well and you accept that this is how it is then you don't have the reference to the past anymore as having caused that and on the level of form of course that is a disability it prevents you from winning Wimbledon this year you can't do it anymore yes on the level of form perhaps that imposed some limitation on your life but the world is full of limitations that are inherent in form if it's not one set of limitations you will encounter some other set of limitations so there's almost never a present moment that does not have certain limitations even the noise coming occasionally from the Air Force Base next door could be considered a kind of limitation or even if you can't get a good night's sleep because your roommate snores could be considered a relatively minor limitation in your life but there are large limitations and they are also to do with the world of form and that's what the world of form does you can exchange limitations you can of course improve your life on the level of form there's nothing wrong with that as long as you are not looking for yourself in it it's beautiful to play with forms in your life okay I'm going to make money now I'll play with that but not hoping that once you've made enough then you can finally be someone if you're not someone now being you cannot find it through money or through future then you can play with the world of form and the miraculous thing is when you drop your demands towards the world of form that it should make you happy then wherever you find yourself whatever situation you find yourself in whoever you meet wherever you go place situation person is actually quite satisfying because you have touched something within yourself that is deeper than the movement of thought which is form deeper than form the movement of thought is still form so the simple thing of internally bringing a yes to this moment is that all yes but it needs for you to do that requires a certain degree of presence to be able to say this is as it is instead of being taken over by an old reactive pattern governed by the fictitious self that says this doesn't fit into the story of me or how can I fit this into my this isn't completing my story in fact this shouldn't be in my story at all get out of here so many people they're walking stories often when they meet other humans they don't want to be with other humans they say get out of my story you shouldn't be in here I want somebody else in here and again so you step beyond you step out of the movement of thought and the stillness and the peace arises the moment you become friendly with what is that's all become friendly with what is no matter what form this is takes it's going to change anyway quite soon and people who are stuck for years are usually stuck because there is a resistance pattern inside them that keeps them stuck in the same situation and the resistance pattern says I want to get out of this dreadful place that I'm in and every day they go to the office and they say this is and the same energy is there the negativity and the resistance and every time they answer the phone yes and so you get some people traditionally people at government offices carry a lot of frustration I don't know if that's still true probably it's everywhere these days and so you people are continuously and they say why am I stuck in this boring job with all these dreadful people they always want something from me and 25 years later they're still stuck and complaining and then they hear the message it is possible to live differently it is possible to say yes not to not say yes to a story not say yes to okay I might as well accept that I've spent 25 years in this dreadful office and I'm probably going to spend another 10 years in this dreadful office I might as well say yes to that because I read that in a book somewhere no this has nothing to do this has nothing to do with bringing a yes to some kind of story about your life or if you were in prison to say okay I might as well accept that everything has failed in my life and I've been in here for 20 years and I've got to do another 15 years and I might as well accept that I've been a miserable failure nothing saying yes to the present moment only means the present moment not a story it means it takes you out of the story and that is vital in your spiritual life now as a spiritual practice as often as possible to break the continuity between past and future okay I'm coming from there and I'm going there I'm just busy trying to get there and getting this done I'm on my way there don't stop me now and break okay but what about this moment where are you at this moment this moment oh and suddenly you wake up out of that stream of past future that was pulled you from past to future always that is old conditioning same old thing same old thing no matter how much you complain the more you complain the more you're stuck and suddenly you take the present moment out of the story and you and you ah you wake up and suddenly alertness comes for example you might hear the birds singing oh and you realize it's beautiful and you feel yourself breathing and you feel an aliveness in the body every cell is alive the life that you are that which animates the body and you as you feel that aliveness you're also aware that there's a stillness around you and in that stillness there's this incredibly beautiful sound that this little being produces which is a celebration of life every moment you've stepped out of the story into the aliveness of the present moment and yet you can still deal with things you may still be walking wherever you have to go and when you arrive there you're there and confront another human being you can still be present so there's more and more presence rather than time it's reversing whereas before you were dominated by time now you use time still but allow presence in which means break the story as much as often as you can step out of into the aliveness of this moment and then a far greater intelligence comes in and love and joy all the things that otherwise you can only think about but never experience all those things suddenly come in and transform even the story not that the story is ever going to be continuously wonderful in the level of form forms always come and go but because you're not dependent anymore on the forms of your life the circumstances of your life you have access to the life that is beyond form that is you the stillness the aliveness the I am that is deeper than I am this or I am that and then all those all the beauty and aliveness and joy that is there in the moment even if the forms were crumbling it can be there you would be missing the whole thing because you would be drifting continuously adrift in the mind only and the bird you would not even hear it or hear it for a moment and say oh that's pretty and then ok my problems what are my problems whenever you think you have problems a good question is what is the problem now well well I'm trying to see my lawyer about this thing and there's a bank I'm going bankrupt and I'm seeing my lawyer about what is the problem now what is the problem what is the problem there's no problem I'm sitting here breathing beautiful birds sing birdsong stillness space there's an aliveness that I feel inside every cell is alive there isn't really a problem now but there may be one tomorrow and of course when tomorrow comes you have to ask the same question what is the problem now as you sit in front of the lawyer I say sign here to declare your bankruptcy you say ok what is the problem now here's a piece of paper and here's a pen scratching on a piece of paper and then you put it down and you listen to the bird and see the tree and the flower and the aliveness within and say I'm still alive so you don't need the idea I am a bankrupt person to give you your sense of self anymore because your sense of self comes from the life that you are the aliveness of your very being and then yes on the level of form it happens that I had to declare bankruptcy I'm still breathing and the bird is still singing and a million people before me have survived that and this is just one example a more extreme example a friend of mine Byron Katie a spiritual teacher was visiting a woman in hospital who had advanced cancer and she came into her room hospital room and the woman was of course very unhappy and Byron Katie said to her I don't see a problem and the woman got even more unhappy and she said you don't see a problem I'll show you a problem and she took off her blanket and showed her right leg was two or three times the size of her left leg this is a problem and Byron Katie said oh so your problem is that you think your right leg should be the same size as your left leg and in that moment the woman laughed for the first time in a long time she laughed because she dissociated from the thought form she stepped out of thought which judged this form as wrong which judged the present moment as wrong should not be it was she was trapped in the thought form this should not be invested with a sense of self and so the stepping out is vital for you the story has a momentum that will reassert itself again and again because that is the momentum of the mind and I'm not saying that you no longer deal with things in your daily life you deal with them much more effectively when you have access to the deeper dimension where true intelligence resides that can then flow even into the way in which you deal with things on the level of form so even on the level of your story the story will unfold more harmoniously when you no longer demand that it should make you happy or do anything for you then you can truly honour this level of form because the neediness is gone because you are not looking to it anymore to give you a sense of who you are because who you are comes out of the aliveness and depth of this moment and so to step out of the story and into this moment as much as you can it's vital always, ok just a second why is it now especially when you get upset you lose yourself in some thought movement or you can help others if you have an agreement with your partner or friend and when you can see that they are not losing themselves in thought which almost certainly is going to be a world of problems it's not that they are solving problems by thinking they are creating problems by thinking to solve the true solutions always come when you for a moment you step out of thinking and become truly intelligent by becoming still and present and alive and then if thought should come back often a little later you suddenly have a creative insight that before wasn't there it came because that dimension operated in your life and then it comes more and more and then everything changes your relationships change because you don't demand that the other person should do something for me make enhance my sense of self you don't compare yourself to others and try to be more than another to strengthen your sense of self it's fine to allow everyone to be as they are and you don't need to change them to say you should behave differently and then I'll be happy if you behave differently you will make me happy but in the meantime I'm going to be very unhappy and I'm going to show you that I'm unhappy so that you behave differently and then finally make me happy and many relationships work like that the partners show each other they're very unhappy because they want to change in their behavior and of course by their unhappiness they strengthen the same pattern and so especially in this beautiful place here don't pollute the garden of Fintan and be a walking story here that is heavy your steps become heavy and where a walking story steps no grass grows and so humanity has that that is collectively how humanity is on the planet now a great heaviness has descended on the planet and that is the collective human mind with its accumulated enormous amount of negativity and dreadful delusion and that's the heaviness that weighs heavily on nature also and life forms all life forms feel that pain so here step lightly don't carry the burden of personal selfhood around with you which is your past and your problematic future but be light as take one step at a time and be the presence through which you perceive be there with every step and when you perceive the tree the flower you are able to perceive against the background of stillness so you are not creating a barrier of concepts between nature and yourself a oneness a field of oneness arises between nature and yourself and then nature will be extremely helpful it's teaching you to be one with life to be still just go to any tree and see how still it is and the moment you notice how still and alive and surrendered to life the tree is that in you which notices that is the stillness otherwise you wouldn't even see that there's stillness there if you approach it only with thought you would have some kind of personal thing to do with nature oh that tree that would be great in my garden and don't feel guilty if that thought crossed your mind or even more the wanting to pick a flower don't do it here but you know also why I must have that it's mine now even on that level the personal self can come in or it comes in oh that that looks like a tree that my aunt Mary had ten years ago in her garden I wonder if it's still there she was a strange person wasn't she but to be truly present there as a field of aware presence walking and then it may happen that in addition to the beauty that you see around you and give give walk sometimes and be with give some attention to perhaps a tree or flower for a little while just be with it without no wanting nothing just being with it and then you may notice there's the form you may notice in the background the presence that you are the light of consciousness in which this tree appears the presence the stillness that you are as a background to whatever you perceive birdsong trees flowers different noises in nature and so there's the that which appears the form and that which is the space that enables this form to appear which is the space of yourself the space of now the space of consciousness the one consciousness the light of consciousness in which forms forms appear so that is and even here as you sit here you can sense that in the foreground there's this room there's the voice the shapes and colours and yet what is it that makes all this possible to be the being being itself before it becomes something that is the one life the one consciousness that you are underneath the form so you are in two dimensions one could say at the same time the formless and form there's the and this is your practice in nature nature is not challenging it doesn't you can stay present easily with a tree or flower human beings are more challenging and so they pull you quickly into identification again with form with thought reaction because most humans still come from thought and they are thought entities and they want you to contribute to their universe and they say give me more thought confirm to me that my story is important and then you can tell me yours and I'll do the same for you and in bed tonight as you lie there you may find the mind wanting to drag you along with it again and think about okay there's only one more day or whatever it is one more day or three more days or four more days left here and then I have to think about the things that are waiting for me when I get home let me think about my problems now and then you suddenly remember ah the now all there ever is this moment where is it of course you can't see it but sometimes it happens that you wake up your sense perception suddenly wake up

[Speaker 7] (2:49:58 - 2:49:58)

ah

[Speaker 1] (2:49:58 - 3:08:54)

and then you feel the aliveness in the body and you can lie on your bed feeling the aliveness within it permeates the body yes this life it's subtle but it's there and then the need to think lessens and you can just be a field of aware presence and perhaps you can listen to certain noises that you hear from nature and if it's your roommate snoring that's fine too that's what is and be and if you have to remove yourself from that room that's fine or if you throw something at him or her you can do that too your ability to do things is not diminished when you live in surrender all it means I surrender to what is I could try let's see if he wakes up if I throw something at him ok still snoring and you see that things that before would have created frustration and upset and anger and there's so many that happen in a person's life all those things that before would have created that now are simply part of the is-ness of this moment and suddenly you have a space around it ok and that space is the space of presence and so and then you get to know yourself as the spaciousness around things so to speak not the thing you are that which allows the thing to be and then to disappear and then something else to come that's the now that's the deeper meaning of now is the space in which everything happens and so the now and yourself are one and the power of now of course is the power of life of the very being that you are and when I say yourself of course I don't mean the fictitious self of the story that is form based and thought based but the deeper being that you are being itself freedom from the world ultimately and then the world becomes a very pleasant place not frustrating anymore things still come and go gain and loss happen birth and death continuously happen and that's how it is and there is an underlying peace and that peace is inseparable from who you are that's our practice this weekend and that's the way we can live our life which isn't really our life at all which is simply life living us life living through us we don't have a life because then there is me and life not possible we are life the one life in many forms that are born and die continuously the one consciousness the one life and so life can then live freely through you and it can flower and that flowering may take form also as a creation or it may remain simply as an emanation that comes through this form and that emanation one could call love not the egoic love that says I want you you stay here I need you and I want you or it says make me happy sign here on the dotted line but the true love the love that is a recognition of oneness as an emanation that's the flowering I suggest you stay for a little while until you feel ready to move stay with the stillness that is here the sacred field the sacred sacred space until it's time to move thank you the bird is teaching much better than I could I'm sure they got it wrong when they say that Saint Francis was preaching to the birds of course he was listening to the birds they don't need preaching to such a divine sound and such a wonderful exquisite balance between stillness and sound that bird knows about balance there's always quite a long gap and then the next sound comes out of the stillness and it's always fresh and new it's never a repetition of the previous sound with this bird this is why it's so amazing and that would be enough if you had that around as your teacher what else do you need the bird is teaching the balance between form and formless that's the art of living to live in both dimensions sound and stillness form and formless things and nothingness in this teaching the dimension of stillness of the formless is emphasized because the entire civilization is lost in form in things in objects in thoughts the entire civilization is lost in that dimension of things that includes thoughts and that's why there is a particular emphasis in this teaching on that which is missing balance needs to reestablish itself because no civilization can survive without the balance between form and formless now everybody has form already more than enough that's why this teaching isn't based on knowledge or new facts interesting facts new information information because the world is full of that I mean you just any you can push any button of the many devices that you have and you get information and you're drowning in information and ultimately you see it's what is the point of it all if that's just more of that is that going to save the world more information or more things are we going to find the fullness of life through more things and greater and bigger shopping malls again form or are we going to find ourselves through improving our ability to think and analyze and solve problems analytically that were created by excessive thinking in the first place or as Carl Jung put it you cannot solve a problem on the same level of consciousness that created the problem and so what created the problem of our civilization is that humans lost touch with the formless dimension which we could also call spirit which we could call the sacred which we could call if that word were not had not been misused so much we could call God but we won't call it that and Jesus said what does it profit you if you gain the whole world and lose yourself or your soul that's really he could already see the tendency where things were going and form also includes time so we cannot deny that time has or seems to be real on the surface of life because it's everywhere as far as forms are concerned time seems to do something to the forms the life forms and it's strange it gradually grinds the forms down it erodes the forms it does something then you could some people have even looked upon time as some dreadful illness that inflicts everybody and that's one way of looking at it everybody is suffering from a lethal disease the outcome is the end of the form it's just a question of when and so you see it as my father says who is 87 now he says mirrors are not the same quality they used to be so the art is to live in this world where time seems on the one hand to be everywhere and control everything but where on the other hand time is also recognized as ultimately an illusion because if you look more deeply there is nothing there is no time there's only ever this moment and therefore that is the portal into the formless dimension it's the the narrow gate that Jesus talks about that leads to life the narrow gate that leads to life yes it's very narrow it's only this to find it and Jesus says there are not many who find it to find it you need to roll up the scroll of your life from which your story is written past future very unclear you can't quite figure out what's at all above and you roll up people usually live carrying a burden some more than others but every carrying the burden of past me my history and how I'm hoping or fearing it's going on going which way it's going hope fear so you have this okay you're walking with myself that's the self the form based mind based time based self and that has a heaviness to it and the more you carry of time of past and future and think about it and talk about it and refer to as your sense of identity gives you your sense of self things that happened in the past and future hoping to find yourself we talked about it

[Speaker 7] (3:08:54 - 3:08:55)

and

[Speaker 1] (3:08:56 - 3:30:24)

then you're lost in form because all these are thought forms time and form go together so you need to roll up you know these old scrolls you had to roll them they were before they were books you had scrolls you rolled them you can there's a beautiful story of a vision that the woman who wrote or wrote the course in miracles that came to her as an inner voice before the whole dictation started she had a vision in which she found a scroll in an old box a very ancient scroll and as she started to unfold unroll the scroll she saw symbols on the left and other symbols on the right and she heard a voice saying if you read what's on the left you know the past and if you read what is on the right you'll know the future and she looked to the left and the right and then she rolled it back to the central panel on which was written God is and she said this is all that I'm interested in I don't want anything else that's all I want God is and then the same voice that had explained to her that is past and that is future said congratulations you made it this time so her focal point had become the present moment if her focal point had not become the present moment the spaciousness that was necessary for the wisdom to come through her out of the formless it was then given form by her mind but the spaciousness would not have been there if she had said okay that's interesting let's see I'm going to look at the future and then years later she would still be looking at the oh wow and the past is interesting too and God is the isness of now just that and this is you can use that as an image for your own life as much as possible be interested in this and that is what we called getting out of the stream of the continuity between past and future as often as possible break that make space as if you had a veil and you say this is the veil of my life in which things are written this is a fabric and then you go in there and separate it ah and then you put your head through into another dimension the way you see it in some of these films of magic and that is ah the awakening into now and as we are all we are transitional humans at this evolutionary stage for humanity many humans alive now are transitional beings and they are dysfunctional as their manifestations of the old consciousness they are becoming more and more dysfunctional because the old consciousness that is totally identified with mind form and time that's been running human history for thousands of years is reaching the end of its lifespan it cannot survive much longer and so every human being carries the old also still inside and many humans and certainly those present here and many others are transitional beings in the sense that the old still has a momentum within them as the new is arising i call it new because ultimately it's timeless it's not new it's there's no time at all but it's let's say as i saw the name of one second hand shop was called new to you so no words can any really express ever express the exact truth you have to be allow for the fact that language is never quite right and especially is never quite right when you begin to speak of spiritual truth the formless because every word is form and ultimately can only function by expressing reflecting something in the world of form and then it becomes difficult when the language is used to express something that is beyond form and that's why jesus used parables and he never said this is the kingdom of heaven he said the kingdom of heaven is like or is a little bit like that or like that and he gives you little stories and then the form of the words as long as you don't get entangled in the words and say oh this is how it is if you allow the words to be pointers little signposts then it can work but if you say there's the truth it's not the truth the truth is not in the word and especially in spiritual discourse the truth is that to which the word points so you have to look beyond the words especially here and so we learn to bring a balance into our lives between time and timelessness between the world of things handling that situations things objects and not getting lost in things in the world of things in the world of situations in the world in the world not losing yourself in the world and that world includes not only the external world but also the world that you carry as the mind made world in the head because that one creates that one the human made world the so called external human made world and the inner state of consciousness of course one continuum the inner the outer only reflects the inner and so on the outer level for example we have a civilization that is extraordinarily noisy if somebody came from some past civilization even two hundred years back thousand years back and would arrive here in a city or even in a small town they would say what is going on this deafening noise everywhere and these the machines everywhere that make noise have I arrived in the hell realm and if they don't if they don't have the noises that are produced by machines they have to make noise just to for the sake of noise a lot of there is some good music but a lot of so called music that you hear in restaurants I don't know if it is the same here in North America hard to find a restaurant without loud music you just open the door and put your head in and you go out again and a lot of that is for the sake of making noise it is called music there are some exceptions of course some music can have a divine function too in some rare cases it still has music that comes out of the stillness that when you listen to music that came out of the stillness whoever created it or whoever is playing it or singing it it comes out of that state of consciousness and whatever then it assumes a form and yet the form has is fresh and new it has come out of that and the stillness still clings to it as a fragrance it still emanates that even if it's sound and that's the beauty of all art true art it reflects still that state of consciousness out of it it comes and then you have a lot of pseudo art in this world where clever minds are trying to be even more clever and think let's think of something new what can we do here let's oh maybe we could do that here or that could go there that would look clever and then okay oh no let's do and then you get they call it art but it's not it lacks something it's totally trapped in form there's only manipulating old forms nothing new has come in and nothing that can lead you back to the formless which is the original reason for all art is to it's the sacred to be a portal an access point for the sacred so that when you see it or experience it you experience yourself you find in it you see yourself reflected the formless reflected shining through the form that is why it's what is true art always there is more than what you see or hear it's not just what you see or hear there is more than that and that shines through the form and that is what can happen to you what is happening to you ultimately it's not everybody's purpose to create works of art a few humans do that that is their function partly in this world but much more importantly is for you to become that work of art your whole life and your very being becomes transparent so that the formless can shine through and that happens when you are no longer totally identified with the world of form and that happens when you have access to the realm of stillness within yourself and then something emanates through the form that is not nothing to do with the form it may emanate only as a silent emanation and not assume any form as such and so that is sometimes the case with so called there have been very few in the past holy people who simply in India they've always existed in any generation in India there have always been a few holy men or women who never did anything and that's very rare for the west they say what did they create what did they do and they never did anything they just sat there and the west says what a useless existence come on get a life do a get a job and some even because people when you are trapped in form you miss perceive it completely because all you see there is a useless form sitting and they say they are parasites on society they allow themselves to be fed by other people they bring them their food they should work for a living like myself and that is when the mind that knows nothing but form looks at the form it will totally misperceive it and so that's the beauty that in India they always recognized that because they haven't completely lost touch in fact they may have gone at some point too far in the opposite direction so that they lost interest in form because they went into being more now India is becoming western you read about India you move to other they're all into computers these days and cell phones and that's fine too but the question is where is finding a balance I was totally lost in like most people completely lost in form and then a shift happened and I lost the balance and I became completely lost in the formless we can't really be lost in the formless it's just a way of putting it because the formless is essentially who you are and yet from a normal perspective it looked as if I had lost it because there was somebody who had a promising career and suddenly just sits around on park benches not doing anything anymore just being and tasting continuously the sweetness of being of simply the beauty the sweetness of being alive the joy of simply being and then looking upon the world and seeing it reflected in all life forms reflected the joy of being in the trees and the birds and even the humans running around like mad and knowing that deep down there there's also the very same being and it's beautiful and so from an external perspective the ability to handle forms was gone to manipulate the world of form was gone for a while and then gradually had to reestablish itself so I could do again and of course be at the same time and that is the it is not the destiny of each one of you to move so deeply into being that you no longer capable of handling the world of form around you that happens occasionally but it tends to happen more to those people who those few who experience a dramatic shift from one to the other and then for a while they're gone that's of course the beautiful the beautiful sutra of Buddha gate gate gone gone gone to the farthest shore and yet it seems it is our destiny here while we are still in form to balance form and formulas here and that's why we are here and for most of you the transition to a news and what is the new state of consciousness that's arising it is the state that is balanced the two dimensions the manifested and the unmanifested balanced in a human being and that is such a radical transformation that when a certain number of humans live in that way so they become what before was a work of art you become the work of art you become that which is transparent to the formulas the divine and then that will change the entire world the way what you experience as the man human made world will be changed completely it is not necessary to speculate now what is the world going to look like when enough humans live in the new consciousness that's not important now the important thing is for us to enter that new state and then what that does to your story who knows how that changes the story the way in which your life unfolds in time what you do out here how that affects where you live what you do and so on you cannot predict nor do you need to predict that are you going to become a great artist are you going to win Wimbledon are you and of course bear in mind that great artists and the tennis players they are not enlightened masters they have access to that which is greater than the limited human mind in the small field of their activity and most of them when they go back into normal life away from there where they have mastery they are just as mad as everybody else and sometimes even more mad because sometimes the mind made entity gets in there and looks at what they did and says I did that that was me the greatest illusion and then of course it feels very special the ego then derives its it identifies with whatever came out of the state of no ego and says I did that and then begins to believe what other people are saying about you and that you are the greatest because they all they project their images of specialness onto you and then oh the great pop star whatever and the and the the great pop stars also they have the when they compose their songs or some of them where there is there's even a glimpse of aliveness and freshness yes there's something there and then the the personality the person the person comes back the moment they step back from the act of creation or the performance they step back and there's the old personality and sometimes it's a dreadful burden for some ability that comes from the non-personal realm to be integrated into the person and they just can't

[Speaker 6] (3:30:24 - 3:30:24)

do it

[Speaker 1] (3:30:24 - 4:01:02)

it's totally misperceived just as the world misperceives it and then they believe themselves to be very special and there comes a huge conflict between power that comes out of the formless and the limited person that misinterprets it and claims something out of that and the magic that comes from the formless realm into your life is what when you look at our civilization it seems to be gone completely because the civilization is almost totally not sacred it is profane it is a dreary burdensome structure that humans have created when you look at the mainstream civilization it's and so so many humans no matter what country you go to are they seem to be tired they are weary there's a there's a weariness that they carry and the civilization is grinding them down another day of dreary activity of pointless running around and even those who are still running around they know deep down it's pointless what is the point and you ask the big direct executives in companies where are you going why are you running around like mad and they can't give you an answer except that well we are expanding the organization is expanding we are swallowing up other organizations and that's our reason for being is to to grow to get bigger it's to accumulate more and so it's all this is why we are and it's totally meaningless activity and so there are many reasons why the entire civilization is reaching a point of collapse and one is that the humans who are still sustaining it they can't carry the burden of their self created structures anymore the over complicated world absurd complexity for the sake of complexity that they have created and they cannot carry their own burden of their own creation anymore mind created just a reflection of their state of consciousness in which there is no gap in the stream of one form after another one thought after another the voice in the head that never stops speaking becomes a civilization that is obsessed with form that is obsessed with things and therefore knows nothing of that which you could say is the most important dimension of human existence the sacred the stillness the formless the divine all these have become meaningless in our civilization and yet many humans are beginning to realize what's happening and so there is in many a search for something else and that number of humans is growing every day and that's the beauty of it so each one of us here is part of the transformation of consciousness that's happening on the planet it's not going to happen it is happening if it were not happening you could not even sit here it would be intolerable to sit here and yet there may be something in you that's the old consciousness that doesn't want to be here you may occasionally feel that arises there's something that doesn't even understand what is being said that hears only the sound of the words it can't go to where the words point so you get stuck with the form the sound stuck with the thought and there's presence stillness stillness well you haven't actually explained what you mean by stillness so this is a good example where the word is only the pointer and then you have to jump off the word stillness points to stillness it's not something to be believed in and the stillness of course is already in you it is not something that we need to create here we need to bring about by being doing the right things and then eventually we'll become still follow a certain course of a recipe if you do a b c and d you will finally become still that's very seductive but you have given yourself something to do before you can be still which means before you can find yourself and be yourself that is the problem of every method every spiritual method not that I would outright condemn all methods but the danger with any method is that it gives you it gives you time it says okay you will arrive and find yourself why not find yourself already why create something between yourself and yourself so the stillness that is already at this moment in you fully fully the stillness out of which the thoughts come every thought comes out and then goes back in sense perceptions get you a little closer to it when you perceive and do not label it whatever you perceive you just let it be then there is the perception the form and there is the one could almost say that this is a limited analogy no analogies are that great but you can say there is the canvas on which the perception is painted there is a background of spacious stillness that's yourself that's the consciousness that you are formless not the conditioned consciousness that is the forms in your mind thoughts they are there too but simply being able to sense that which underlies whatever you perceive or think or feel Gurdjieff put it the Russian teacher who lived at the beginning of the 20th century put it like he called it self-remembrance and of course that can be misinterpreted as if you had to think about ok let me remember who I am my name is such and such no he meant to remember not even to remember words are never right to know the knower to know who knows this who in a dream let's say you dream and then you wake up and say it was only a dream it was unreal of course it wasn't totally unreal because something within the forms that arose in the dream must have been there to enable these forms to exist there must have been a consciousness in which this dream unfolded and so in other words there must have been a dreamer of the dream as the consciousness in which it happened and that is the timeless and formless dimension without which forms would not exist and so our normal existence is very much like a dream because just like a dream everything dissolves fairly quickly every situation everything is and even the seemingly solid reality that surrounds us is not really that solid first of all it's there's nothing solid it just appears solid it's just energy fields in motion and they're not going to remain in that form for very long if you could look more deeply you could see everything is already dissolving it's a temporary it comes into form and dissolves the bodies that are sitting here are already dissolving even this table if we look in 200 years it'll still look more or less the same but if we could speed up on camera what happens to this room of a period of 3000 years which is very little on a global scale then you would see that even all seemingly solid objects are crumbling within one minute you would see everything becoming dust and then disappearing and it would be a shocking and liberating thing to watch a film like that that shows you what is actually happening to the seemingly solid world around you and deep down that is a it's a liberating thing when you see how short-lived every form is because what is it in you that sees that the short-lived nature of all forms and you witness that

that is the aware presence from the stillness you see that and actually you become more still the more you see how short-lived every form is and you don't run away from that fact just stay with let's see how death how important it is to face death in your life which is everywhere which is what our civilization is trying to hide continuously there is no death don't don't never look at a dead body because that's this just isn't done so there are people who have never seen a dead body and you certainly if it's not a close relative you would not be able to see a dead body because the civilization needs to hide death because it's the most threatening thing to somebody who is totally identified with the world of form death is the most dreadful thing and you must not think about it or talk about it and so whenever you are faced with death there is and even just watching it and when the table dissolves that's death too if you saw it over a period of three thousand years and saw it crumbling within a minute the entire room and everything in it goes or you would see a human being being born somebody showed me a clip apparently it was from an ad from some country it takes one minute a baby is coming out of the womb and shoots out like a cannonball into the sky and screams all the time but as the baby travels up into the sky it already begins to grow and grows and goes higher and higher and finally reaches full maturity and then starts going downhill and is still screaming and the closer and then becoming an old man as he approaches the ground hair is falling out and finally the last scream and he lands in the grave and it says underneath life is short now whether the people who made that film knew that they were making a spiritual film I think I don't know I think they were selling beer or something like that but that is deeply spiritual when you see how quickly everything dissolves and you don't run away from that fact and this that again what I mentioned yesterday the Old Testament prophet who said vanity of vanities all is vanity to see that is liberating because this now if everything were permanent it's the same as saying if the entire world were blue there would be no blue because you couldn't differentiate it the color blue wouldn't exist now if everything were impermanent you wouldn't even know it because you only know it if there's something that's different so I just give you this to consider and not to think about to consider there's something in you that recognizes the impermanent nature of all life forms and that is the formless and the more you realize the impermanence of all forms the more the form you're aware of the formless in yourself but you and the formless are ultimately one so when you say you are aware of the formless we're already making a little mistake that's created by language what we what it really is that you you are more fully yourself you are more aware of yourself not as two but as one you become more self-aware awareness becomes aware of itself and there was a question here written by somebody who probably doesn't like public speaking just this later we may have some more questions in the now sometimes I'm aware of expanding what is this it seems to be awareness itself if I am aware of awareness duality which am I good question I am aware this is what it seems like when we talk about it but that's not how it is it's only when we put it into language we formulate a sentence which has a subject and an object but really when you become aware of awareness which really is the secret to a balanced human life to become aware of awareness and then also the forms but what does that mean who is becoming aware of awareness the language that we use here creates the illusion of duality so it would be much better if we rephrase that and we say the awareness that I am becomes aware of itself no duality the awareness that is the essence of who I am becomes aware of itself and that is a miraculous beautiful incredible thing what traditionally has been called self-realization becoming aware awareness becoming aware of itself as simple stillness but every word reduces it again to something that is far greater and of course there is a sense of expansion because you are no longer trapped as the questioner mentions expanding you are no longer trapped your consciousness is no longer trapped in the form that's the incarnation the incarnation of consciousness into form and the realization of consciousness as the formless and so some spiritual traditions speak of reincarnating many times and you say you reincarnate again and again until you wake up until you realize who you are beyond form and that is true you are born again and again but I want to make it not as something that I want you to believe in but to make it true in your experience and to make it true in your experience all you need to look at is today how you reincarnate today now how does that happen how do I reincarnate today I thought it just happens once in a lifetime you know the sticker that the born again Christians have on their cars says born again Christians and the Buddhists have on their car born again and again and again how do you reincarnate today and how many times do you reincarnate today every time you lose you lose yourself in a thought or an emotion or something that happens out there which also of course you experience as thought and emotion let's say you lose yourself in a situation says this is important you must deal with this ok what's going on here let's deal with and then you lose yourself in the reactive pattern and in the mental interpretation oh this is awful you must do something oh let's do oh oh whatever it is you identify with a form every thought that arises in your mind that grips you completely there's a sense of self in it it's unconscious of course your sense of self means your sense of identity gets mixed up with the form of that thought or the emotion and so you're completely incarnated in the in the form that arises in your life and so humans go through life not knowing not realizing that every day they reincarnate many times they lose themselves continuously in forms they react to the forms and they're totally in the reaction there is not an awareness in the background of ok this is what's going on so there's no space there's only form there's no stillness there's only noise and that means being compulsively reincarnate reincarnating every day many times and even while you sit alone in your room and you start thinking about oh oh oh oh oh oh oh if you were talking out aloud the voice in your head that you identify with everybody would recognize it as insane but then on the other hand I don't know then what if I do that I wonder what happens if I go what oh that would be dreadful if that happens I just hope that the oh no I hadn't thought of that before and you reincarnate continuously into some new thought form and so of course that's why Buddhists talk about coming to the end of reincarnation simply means not losing yourself in form again and again and again and it doesn't mean you reject all forms some spiritual traditions go a little bit far in their attempt to find the formless dimension they say don't even look at anything beautiful because it's not going to be around for very long it's all dissolving already don't even look at the flower certainly don't they tell the monks never look at a beautiful woman you must not look and so they go because you would reincarnate in many ways you lose yourself in the attraction and that's dangerous so a monk mustn't even he can't hand a woman something because it's dangerous he has to he puts it on the table and she picks it up because otherwise there could be some indirect contact now the idea behind it may be a good one that you mustn't lose yourself in form and yet to reject the world of form is perhaps again losing balance again in the other direction say okay all beauty is dust because whatever I look upon is already dissolving the flower that looks beautiful today tomorrow will be gone with it and so in some traditions the entire world of form is rejected completely now occasionally that seems to work mostly it doesn't but here and there some people realize this even within that tradition but that probably doesn't have anything to do with the tradition they would have realized even if they were sitting in an office they were ready so it is always problematic if that which is a natural process of disidentification is forced into an artificially created structure it may work it works if there is a human being there who can who embodies the two dimensions who embodies the awakened state then it can work in many cases there is no human being there is only the tradition and then usually it doesn't get you there so the form not rejecting forms outright I work with to see that in every form something is hiding that is one with the essence of who you are and it is not just something you can think about it is if you anything that you look upon and you are still enough or listen to the bird whatever it may be anything that you can be with in stillness so that you sense yourself as the still space in which that object or that being is perceived then you sense that that essence that you know sense yourself to be is also there in that being and even in inanimate objects even a table has being has presence some people need to take acid for the first time to realize that the table is alive too but this is not what I recommend here all you need to be is present with it and truly be alert and still and then look the moment you call it table you are under the illusion that now you know what it is you don't know at all it is a mystery it remains totally unknown and mysterious just because you put a label on it doesn't mean now you know you just have a thought in your head or a sound comes out of your mouth and you say that's what it is and then you cannot go deeper into it because you get stuck at the label you hit the label and then you are stuck oh that's a table ok what's the next thing you never can go deeper into anything you only hit one label after another ok and therefore it's always a search ok because you only hit the surface of things you always then immediately the mind says ok I've done that I know what that is where is the next thing there is this continuous looking for the next thing because you can never stay with one thing where the depth that is in everything reveals itself to you and that's the restlessness of our civilization that always asks what's next what's next and you already see even in relatively young children these days that continuous need for the new stimulus they can't sit still for a moment they just ok because they are used they are addicted to the next thing some new mental stimulus because they live in a civilization that is totally on the only on the surface of things like completely in depth so now you can bring in depth even into your perceptions of things perception is much closer to the unmanifested or to being than thought thought is far removed it's an abstract you get when you for many people to become present when they realize oh I'm lost I'm lost I'm lost in some problem some world of problems where's the problem now and they wake up and the first thing they notice is sense perceptions around them and they hadn't been aware of that at all because all their attention was in the thoughts and suddenly they look at the floor their hand the table the light

[Speaker 7] (4:01:02 - 4:01:03)

oh

[Speaker 1] (4:01:03 - 4:15:30)

and in the looking there's a stillness in fact there is the strange thing is you cannot even look at anything without stillness because even the person who labels things compulsively which is almost everybody there's always a moment when they first let's just talk for a moment about the visual sense but it includes all sense perceptions there's always a first moment when you first look at something a tree a flower a table anything there is a one second or so in which there is stillness and then the mind interprets it or labels it but if you can catch yourself when you first look at something there is a brief moment of non-labeling otherwise you wouldn't even see it and then it recedes almost one could say the sense perception immediately loses its sharpness and aliveness because after one or two seconds the mental label replaces the aliveness that was there dead and then you look at the next thing or you listen to a bird and there is a moment of pure listening and then after two seconds the mind says something oh that must be a black bird or what's the name of I can't remember gone or whatever the mind says about it so if you can catch yourself whenever something new enters your awareness whether it's auditory or visual tactile smelling tasting even relatively undeveloped senses from contemporary humans there you can be there and be conscious of that first moment when there is no labeling there is the stillness and the aliveness and if you become conscious of that you may find that it becomes longer you don't need to automatically label it and so the stillness that is the background to sense perceptions becomes faster it's always fast but you didn't know it and so that is how another way in which the stillness in you expands so to speak everything is so to speak about stillness the stillness in you expands and then more and more you move about your life not just when you are passive passively perceiving but also bringing it into activity that that state of consciousness so to speak that is stillness flows into often also into what you do so that you notice it's you can actually do things better with if they are done in a state of still presence than if you are thinking what you want to achieve through this movement where you want to get to in the next moment no you're just present with so there's a stillness to what you perceive and there's a stillness that flows into the action and the action may be simple walking across the room opening a window turning on the tap feeling the water listening to the water looking out of the window in the morning you open the curtains and why it's simply a deep seated habit to immediately call this day something and say oh no not another grey day no just let it be and then there's immediately a depth to everything that wasn't there when you didn't you bring in this so called new consciousness into everyday situations and you break the continuity of the story then intelligence comes in more and more also love because the only way love can come into your life is through space not through form love has no form and again in the egoic state love gets entangled in form so you think you need only this form you love not realising that true love is the recognition of the formless in the other which is the recognition of yourself in the other and that is inseparable from looking upon the other in stillness without a form arising and saying this is who she is or what she is and if forms still arise in your mind recognise it's only a thought it's not who that human being is and then what beauty if you can recognise the formless in form and first you can recognise it in natural things very easily much more easily because natural things are less challenging than humans humans are were natural once but now they have become whatever the world of nature you approach first of all and relate through stillness and presence more and more and then gradually you bring it into human relationships easy with humans you meet for the first time let them be and as you listening vital to be able to listen to another human it doesn't mean that the words all your attention is on the words when you listen we are only listening almost as an analogy there is a field of attention of still attention that flows out towards that human being one could say you give him or her space and then that person may be speaking words arise in the space but you are there as the spaciousness that allows words to come you are there as a field of aware presence and then words may come out of your mouth suddenly and that is very different from so called normal human interaction that is all completely mind dominated to be still with another human being while you listen and sense yourself as the awareness while you listen so some of your attention is on the words and some of your attention is now with challenging humans get into your body so that you can be present with your entire energy field every cell of the body is present as you listen then you are because humans can be very challenging they want because they are dominated by mind they want you to contribute to their mental structures the drama whatever it is their pain body may be active everybody here probably knows about pain body which is another way of identifying with form the old emotion that arises slight trigger triggers pain body a pain body episode pain body being the old stored up emotion from the past human suffering human pain that hasn't gone away that is partly personal and partly collective humanity ultimately in a larger sense it's all just human pain it's not ultimately personal at all and that is a little entity energetic entity that lives in you sometimes dormant and sometimes active and sometimes half dormant half asleep with one eye open waiting for an opportunity I'm just for a trigger so that it can come up and the trigger could be your remark your partner makes are you accusing me of being no I didn't say that yes you did and then we start the drama that awakens the partner's pain body and that's supposed to happen they feed each other totally you totally reincarnate into old pain you live it it lives through you not knowing that you are going through another reincarnation and you may be a Buddhist and having thoughts in your head that you want to arrive at the end of the cycle of reincarnations and that some abstract edifice in your mind and you don't know that while you are fighting with your wife you are reincarnating at this very moment I must get back to my meditation I don't meditate an hour a day I'll have to reincarnate again and again and again while you're doing it now oh so this is one of the most frequent ways in which people reincarnate is to into the old emotion that wants to feed on the experience of more pain and it pretends to be you you identify with it it occupies your entire space and you feed on the other person's reaction and you love it not when I say you I mean the pain body at that moment there's a mistaking you the pain body for who you are that's reincarnation and then finally it subsides and then the next episode will be in a week's time just like the soap operas or it will feed on your mind if you have no partner it will feed on your thinking how dreadful my life is what he did to me she did to me they did to me the world politicians people whatever the mind can think of that's a negative thought the pain body loves it that is the the pain body is the addiction to negativity that humans carry and it's a little entity an energy form and all that is required is for you to see to recognize it then you don't reincarnate into it anymore and even if you were reincarnated it is possible in the middle of negative thinking or in the middle of a drama with your spouse to suddenly know what's happening that means some of your consciousness has has stepped out of the form and is there as pure awareness before it was totally trapped in the form and then when you suddenly see what's happening that means what's happened there some consciousness has stepped out of the incarnation and is there as pure consciousness watching and there you are the angry entities screaming oh look at that and then it can't it can't go on for that much longer because when there's when there's awareness there presence which is simply the still watcher then it it can't very well renew itself much longer because it needs your unawareness it needs your complete identification with it to really renew itself so then it quickly subsides it goes hmm

[Speaker 6] (4:15:35 - 4:15:35)

okay

[Speaker 1] (4:15:36 - 4:28:43)

well that was good at least I woke up in the middle of it sometimes you wake up afterwards there it was too late but it's not really too late because at least I'm awake now next time maybe I can catch it a little earlier and then next time it comes oh there it is and you can sometimes see how a little event can be used as an excuse by the pain body just a tiny thing going wrong somebody slams the door on your face and there's a reaction far greater than the relatively insignificant event and that's because the pain body was waiting for something so shining the light of attention of consciousness on it is all that's needed then you don't reincarnate completely into it every time and renew the old cycle it's always the same always the same if you're not present in thirty years time you'll still have the same episodes with your wife or husband or maybe a new wife and a new husband but it'll be the same and the strange thing is you look for somebody saying you get to divorce finally I can't live with this pain body anymore I mean the one that I live with you still have your own and so you get divorced and say okay now my next husband or wife I'm going to choose somebody who doesn't have a pain body who's conscious and then you meet somebody who looks conscious they've done spiritual work for twenty five years and then you start living together and within about four weeks you will encounter an aspect to that pain body that wasn't supposed to be there so that's the challenge of the pain body whether you are in a relationship or not it'll be there relationships are good opportunity because that's the favorite playground of pain body renewal but if the pain body doesn't have the relationship it'll just use your mind that works too so watch for that because there's a momentum there that's very strong because it's been there's such a huge amount of human pain collective human pain on this planet built up over many many thousands of years and really all that your pain body is or it looks personal it's really human pain although something in your so called personal life may have added to it but really it is basically impersonal just as the movement of thought is basically impersonal the emotions are human emotions the thoughts are all thoughts that are being thought by the collective human mind and people think that's me but it is impersonal it's just when you identify it it gives the illusion that of being personal of being a person there you are being thought by the collective mind and so well where is the personal then the strange thing is that stillness isn't personal either presence stillness is not personal and yet it is essentially the beingness that you are but it's not personal personal means a little thing that there's me and the others so ultimately there's nothing personal neither the unconsciousness that identifies with forms nor when the the consciousness arises is not personal either and yet the essence of who you are the I am that is nothing to do with person but it gets mixed up with the personal the forms that the person identifies with that make up the person as you know person is the word comes from latin it means persona the mask that you wear and that is are the roles that you play when you interact with other humans as long as you identified with mind and emotion you play the roles that are personal you play the the script in your mind the conditioning of your mind again and again and again born again and again and again until you've had enough and then you're fed up with the suffering that that entails and the readiness comes to step out of that and that's the end of reincarnation before we have a few questions there may not be any questions left that would be good too can you listen to the sound of the bell at the same time as you're aware of the awareness that is listening in other words aware of yourself as the presence in which the sound happens and then all that's left is spaciousness presence form and formless so even while you listen to the form which is the sound follow the sound as it slowly dies down into formlessness that is death too when the sound slowly dies down when I ring this bell again after the Royal Air Force has all passed follow the sound until it disappears that means the sound dies death means a form is dissolving dissolves and then what's left is formless consciousness you can do the same with your breath that's an old meditation method the simplest one one of the simplest doesn't really give you time to observe your breath the Buddha recommended that is perhaps the most direct meditation method because it doesn't give you time unless the meditator comes in as a conceptual identity and says I must get better at observing my breath when you observe how your breath moves out the end of the out-breath is also a little death and there's a moment of stillness any ending is helpful in that way because any ending is the ending of any form and it's always some kind of death when you accept it fully it's an opening into the formless even the ending of our little retreat can be like that because that too is a form and you could say oh what a pity this form is dissolving and you want to hang on to the form a recipe for unhappiness not realizing that the very reason why this gathering is meaningful is that it takes you beyond form so the more you welcome all the endings in your life goodbye form is going the more the formless is there in your life the egoic entity works the opposite way it hates it wants to think oh no I want to keep this but it's going going gone everything if you're old enough that you can see the death of this physical form approaching that can be very beautiful too to feel to accept that but not as a thought oh I'm going to die soon no let it push you into being present just that if any questions arise please ask one person there I think the microphone will travel to you

[Speaker 4] (4:28:49 - 4:28:51)

you use a lot of

[Speaker 2] (4:28:51 - 4:28:59)

humor in your a lot of laughter in your presentation and there appears to be a lot of laughter in you

[Speaker 4] (4:29:00 - 4:29:14)

I have this sense that once the humorous thing is said and the laughter begins that that too is a porthole into presence can you speak about that

[Speaker 1] (4:29:15 - 4:37:37)

the the humor arises spontaneously when you look at really whenever this humor arises we are looking at the world of form and see that the normal existence which is identification with form is a form of madness and when you see it in your own life the seeing is free in that moment of freedom from that old conditioned form there is a spontaneous relaxation and that produces the laughter so it's enormously liberating the more you laugh at the world of form not in a malicious way but in a free way to see the forms do not they pretend all the forms pretend that they are deadly serious the world wants to be taken really every situation says I'm so serious and if you have no inauspiciousness then indeed every situation is dreadfully serious and so the absolute seriousness of the world of form disappears when you are rooted in the formless and that means laughter arises more frequently even in relatively unlikely situations and it does not mean that you have no empathy or compassion it's sometimes when I used to see people individually they would come to me and usually they begin by telling their story at that time I just let them tell their story and sometimes while they were telling and sometimes it was a very unhappy story very unhappy and sometimes while I was listening there was a smile on my face and it just I don't know how it got there and sometimes the people who were telling suddenly stopped and said what are you smiling about are you laughing at me no and then I found it hard to explain there was a time when I didn't have really many words to explain so I found it hard to explain why the smile was there not smiling at anything they said smiling because I recognized both within myself and within them underneath the story I recognized the dimension in which that story is relatively meaningless I recognized that underneath the story you are absolutely fine I recognized the dimension in you where you are just was never touched by the unhappy story who you are and because I recognized that the smile came and so but quite a few times people got angry because they thought I was smiling at their story or at them it was it wasn't taken all that seriously anymore just as my own story lost its seriousness it continued in some way playing itself out but it wasn't serious business anymore it doesn't mean you don't honor the world of form it doesn't mean that you have become callous towards things no not at all there is you still here as this form identity you still carry a form also so you can empathize with the suffering that arises in anyone who is totally identified with form and yet that is one aspect of compassion that you know full well what it means to be trapped in form is is suffering and I've been through it I know what I know the suffering so there's the empathy on the level of form of suffering but there's also the recognition of that which is already beyond suffering in me in you it's one and there come the two aspects of compassion on the one hand we share being trapped in this form seemingly on the other hand we also share the timeless and formless dimension of existence where we are already free and you bring the two together and that's true compassion because true compassion doesn't just mean you weep when the other person weeps you weep also you may weep but underneath the weeping there's joy the joy that knows of the formless that knows that you are in your essence indestructible not as an abstract idea but as a feeling realization so to speak so humor is a wonderful thing and I I'm sure that Jesus and other teachers all had a lot of humor too all the teachers did and just the the disciples later on said oh we mustn't put that joke in that doesn't that that doesn't look serious enough beware of any spiritual teacher who is deadly serious because even the Zen the Zen masters who look dreadfully serious they only look like that there's an enormous amount of humor inside them that's hidden in all the Zen stories and the way they deal with people so they just look like that but if you look into their eyes or if you see a drawing done by a great artist of a Zen master you see underneath their perhaps frightening demeanor there is a softness also and there's a gentle smile hidden somewhere there and then of course you have the beautiful image traditionally all Buddha images have a slight smile this is the

Buddha smile a very slight hint of a smile that comes with knowing yourself knowing the essence of being and then you have the images influenced by Taoism in China of the fat Buddha they are wonderful there's this man with a huge belly toothless in many cases or just one tooth left and his belly is huge and he's continuously laughing and many people have that at home in China and nowadays in the West also and it's wonderful to see whenever you think you have a problem just look at him and he's laughing not at you he's laughing not because he despises the world or is callous towards human suffering he's laughing because he's rooted within in the formless and so it's a wonderful image you can also practice a laughing meditation that's I haven't done that yet and that frees up a lot of rigid structures inside but here the laughing happens spontaneously and it's wonderful okay one there and then we go there okay oh thank you can a fool realize his enlightenment thank you can a form realize

[Speaker 6] (4:37:37 - 4:37:38)

a fool

[Speaker 1] (4:37:38 - 4:49:38)

a fool silly person oh thank you wonderful question there are some wonderful images fool is a very ancient mythological figure the tarot card of the fool and so on now by fool let's say we mean someone whose mental capacities are undeveloped I would say somebody who is not trapped in the usual structures of compulsive thinking not because he or she has transcended compulsive thinking but has not arrived at compulsive thinking and in that sense that human being is already enlightened because he has not it's not the enlightenment that we are addressing here but that state of not yet being trapped in thought has many similarities with the enlightened state one could say he doesn't need enlightenment because in his own way he already is enlightened in modern contemporary mythology which is films there is a beautiful example of that in the figure of Forrest Gump the film somebody whose mental capacities are undeveloped but who lives in many ways just like an enlightened person would live first of all he doesn't have an ego everything that comes everything he needs naturally comes to him his life unfolds naturally he doesn't struggle for anything everything comes at the right moment and he achieves he even does great things but never says I did that because the I hasn't arisen yet he has to go to Vietnam and even there wherever he goes he is a force for good even when he has to go to the war in Vietnam he saves many people he is a great hero and he doesn't look at himself as a great hero because he doesn't have a mental image of myself having done that he just explains that's what happened I did that and so on and so in many ways he is already enlightened and you can say he doesn't need enlightenment because he is already there for us we can't go back there he doesn't really need to go through thinking he is fine it seems to be the destiny of some humans to be connected and there may be a few remaining civilizations remnants of ancient civilizations where humans live in oneness with nature and oneness with each other and they don't need the Buddha they already just as an animal there are some dogs or cats that I sometimes meet in some cases they have suffered a lot or they are very old and they have reached the enlightenment of the dog or cat being the old cat who cannot be bothered anymore with catching birds because the cat knows it's pointless anyway they're too old and so they go around and they're just completely there and the old dog there are beings who seem to have completely fulfilled the purpose of their existence in that form and have found the connectedness with the formless within they have the form has fulfilled its purpose and the connectedness is there this is not it is not our destiny to to return we are all we have been or are or most of us halfway stuck in the human the human mind so there's no way of going back we cannot become fools again and yet when you go beyond thinking from the point of view of mind it often appears that you no longer know anything so in that way we also become fools from the point of view of conceptual thought and there are many similarities with the way that an enlightened person lives who has transcended thought which is no longer trapped in thinking to somebody who has not yet gone through the evolutionary stage of being trapped in thinking didn't have to for some reason consciousness flowered there through that form and that's beautiful for us it's transcending thought and then becoming a fool again yes one could say and yet we don't become forest gum there is a knowing that comes when you have transcended thought there is an awareness that wasn't there before in the natural state it's a regaining of the natural state but the regaining of the natural state that also all ancient civilizations speak of the myth of the golden age that exists in India in almost every civilization you have the myth that there was a time when humans lived in peace and happily the world was a kind of paradise you have the same myth expressed in the beginning of the bible so there must be an ancient truth there there is a natural state that humans lost those humans who didn't lose it don't need it they are fine but it is the destiny the evolutionary destiny of consciousness is for humans to lose it and then to regain it and that's where we are and so in some ways you will look to humans who are still trapped in the same and you will find that they are still in the same state and you will are still trapped the same state so you don't need to seek a specialist in form anymore so what a freedom that comes to us now of not needing to be special anymore to get some sense of who you are to become ordinary you have that beautifully expressed in the Taoist sages the whole Tao Te Ching the Chinese book of wisdom is all an expression of ordinariness to be ordinary not to project yourself and wanting needing to be someone but happy to be no one and that looks quite foolish from the outside and people may look upon you as nobody and that's wonderful the only regret is not really regret I have about the power of now that became so well known and with it the being that gave it birth no more just is the projection of specialness whereas there was such beauty in being totally ordinary and nobody doubted that I was ordinary well a few people said you must go and see him he is so ordinary just to be to be with the just to live with the present moment see what you nothing could be more ordinary than just to live aligned with whatever is here now that's all you ever have to do it's pretty ordinary just this the famous Zen saying chopping wood carrying water it's expressed in that it's a very profound Zen saying this is meant to encapsulate the whole of Zen existence chopping wood carrying water two of the most ordinary activities at that time when people did that in our cases will be something else most people well don't chop wood well perhaps some people still do it's beautiful to be just just that whatever you happen to be doing at this moment there's no more than this moment chopping wood ah carrying water just that peace aliveness no interference of mind that says how many more weeks or years do I have to chop this wood if I don't do something now I'll still be stuck in ten years time chopping wood the illusion of time is back here but only on the external level not in here on the external level the clock keeps ticking or whatever modern clocks do this is not the end there is no end but this is not the end even on the level of form after our little break I will meet with you again here in about 30 so called minutes and we will sit together just in silence for a little while unless something else happens thank you music

[Speaker 3] (4:51:25 - 4:51:34)

It is our great great honor at Unity FM here at Unity to welcome our special guest today Ekhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (4:51:35 - 4:51:36)

Thank you. Welcome.

[Speaker 3] (4:51:36 - 4:52:35)

Applause Well, one of our co-founders, Myrtle Fillmore, this has been her vision and Charles's vision that and to have you here is such an honor. One of the things that she wrote, there's a letter that she wrote, is the oldest handwritten letter that Myrtle has been found by Myrtle Fillmore and in it, this is from 1891, and I brought this quote because it speaks so much to what you talk about in both of your books. She says, My dear, you ask why you do not enter into the understanding you so desire.

I will tell you, you are already in it, but you think you have some great thing to do to get there. The kingdom of God is within you. All you need to do is be still and know.

[Speaker 1] (4:52:36 - 4:52:38)

Yes, that's right.

[Speaker 3] (4:52:38 - 4:52:41)

So that would be, what would you like to add to that?

[Speaker 1] (4:52:44 - 5:02:21)

Well, the human mind has been conditioned over thousands of years to seek fulfillment elsewhere in space and time, and especially in time, so the human mind has been conditioned to look to the future or the next moment. Future sounds a little abstract. If we say the next moment, then we can actually feel what that means.

It always looks to the next moment, or most of the time, for fulfillment, completion. And in this way, the human mind, the conditioning of the human mind denies life because the only place where life takes place, the only place where life happens is in the present moment now, and outside the now there is no life. And even past and future don't actually exist outside human thought forms.

Now this may sound a little bit difficult at first to believe because past and future seem so real, but all you have to, this is not a philosophical exercise, it's easier than that, all you have to ask yourself is whether you've ever experienced past or future. And then if you look closely, you realize all you ever experienced was now. And when it happened, it was now because it's only in the space of now where anything can happen.

And when the future comes, it can only come as the now. So past and future are thought forms. They may be necessary on a practical level here.

We can make appointments and get together here at this particular time. But when it goes beyond practical, then they actually represent a great limitation when they take over our lives. Then time, past and future I call time, time then takes over our consciousness.

And so this is the time-bound state of consciousness that most people are possessed by. And it is an essential aspect of the egoic consciousness. The ego lives in and through time, ego being the false mind-made sense of self.

And so it comes as a surprise to people when they realize, well, it's actually true. My life is always now. And it's never not now.

And never will be not now. It never has been. And that is not just an idea that you add to your mind, the fact that life is always now.

This is almost like a little powerful pointer. It's always now. And really, that almost stops your mind.

If you really get that, to experience the truth of that statement, you have to step beyond the mind. Because by continuing to think analytically, is it actually true that there's only the now? Let me think.

It's a pointer that takes you, when you truly experience the reality of that, actually takes you into the now. And then there's an opening inside, there's a space that opens up inside, and you say, this is it? And what is this?

You can't quite at first define what this is. But all you know for the time being is this is life. Life itself is experienced now.

And so, for most people, now is what happens in the now. And that's why people believe that there are many different moments. Every hour consists of many different moments.

Every day consists of many moments. But if you look more closely, of course, there are not many moments. There's only ever this moment.

And the reason why people believe there are many moments is because they confuse the now with what happens in the now. What happens, of course, changes continuously. The now itself, however, is something that is, the moment we define it through words, of course, we limit it.

And yet, knowing that words are not quite it, or words can only point to it, we can continue to talk for a little bit about the now. So, the now then is the space in which everything happens, or the light in which everything appears. And the light in which things appear and disappear, they come.

This is how everything continues to change in life. The impermanence of that the Buddha speaks of. Everything continuously changes.

It comes into the light of now. But the essence of every experience is the light of consciousness, which is the space of now. So the secret of now is that it is the formless foundation of all manifested life.

It is the unmanifested, formless dimension in which the manifested appears. And in essence, you are that light. And knowing that yourself as that is not done through thinking.

It is not a thought that you add to your mind and say, OK, I'm light. OK, now I know it. You can only know yourself as the light if thought stops, even if only for this moment.

And you sense that underneath all the things that happen, sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions, feelings, there remains the substratum, which is the space of consciousness itself, which we could also call the stillness. Every word only shows you a tiny aspect of it. It's not it.

It's stillness, and it's vaster than stillness. It's consciousness, but even that limits it because it's only a word. So finding that space in yourself, and this is what the quote is about, you can only find that space in yourself now because essentially it is the now.

So who you are at the deepest level is inseparable from the now. And so that's the deepest meaning of now. And it's a realization.

Just one glimpse is enough to change your life. It doesn't mean that the time-bound consciousness won't take you over again. It will probably happen.

But you've had the glimpse, that is the initiation of the awakening process. And anybody who can see the truth of this must already have had the glimpse. Or in the moment of words like these being spoken, some people at that moment have the glimpse and wake up.

And so you realize the essence of yourself has nothing to do with the form of yourself, the body, whatever thoughts go through your mind, whatever emotions you have. That's fine. That's a level of form.

I call it the human part. But we are human beings. Human is form.

Being is formless. Most humans know only the human part and identify totally with the human part, which is the physical form, the thought forms, the emotional forms. You identify with external forms, possessions, achievements, this, that, and that becomes...

But really, external forms are also thought forms. They get translated into mental images. So you're really always identified with mental images, even your my car.

You're not really identified with my car, but with the mental image of my car. So that is the world of form. That's the human.

And if that's all you know, then you're lost in the world because this world is the world of form. And most people still live like that. Lost in the world, which implies lost in their minds.

That's where the world starts. And the world being the world of form. And underneath it all is a timeless dimension, the spiritual dimension, the sacred dimension.

And that's the essence of who you are. And that is the deepest meaning of now.

[Speaker 3] (5:02:22 - 5:02:26)

And we access that through the stillness? Through the silence?

[Speaker 1] (5:02:26 - 5:03:03)

Yes. You could say the stillness, the silence, is it. But you cannot, of course, ever objectify it.

You can't say, there it is. That's why Jesus said, the kingdom of heaven does not come with signs to be perceived. Because if it's a sign, you say, oh, there it is, the kingdom of heaven, there it's coming.

It doesn't. First, of course, it cannot come because it's already here. And it can't be there because it's the essence of here.

It's here.

[Speaker 3] (5:03:03 - 5:03:17)

Well, to experience that, do we have to, when I think of going into silence, I think of this quiet, meditative state. Is it possible to experience that as we are doing in our life?

[Speaker 1] (5:03:17 - 5:07:47)

Yes. And this is the part of the art of living in this world, of living, of conscious living in this world, so that you are able to balance in your life the two dimensions, form and formlessness, world and spirit. So that you provide, you are a bridge, so to speak.

You, as this human being, are the bridge between the being and the human, the world, form and formlessness. And across this bridge flows something into this world from the other, from the timeless, sacred dimension that is not to be found, it is not to be found somewhere in space or time. God, you could say, God is not found in space or time.

God is not hiding somewhere in outer space. We know that by now. Even conventional Christianity is beginning to realize that God is not out there somewhere, although, well, anyway, let's not.

So we are here bridging the two worlds, and through you, as you live consciously, the dimension of the sacred or the divine or the timeless flows through you, through your words, if you are conscious and present, through your actions, not necessarily big significant actions, every action is significant, even lifting a cup, consciousness can flow into that, presence can flow into that, into power when you interact with other humans, and you are not preparing mentally what you are going to say, you are not judging them in any way, you are the space for them.

That means, at that moment, something through you as this form, something from the formless, the sacred dimension of God flows into this world of form. And in a strange way, it gradually transforms the world of form. The world of form loses its density and heaviness.

And what I'm describing is actually the deepest meaning of love, because when this flows into what you say, do, into your interactions, that space is essentially what love is, not the egoic understanding of love, which says, I need you, don't you ever dare leave me. But the love that recognizes that whatever you see out there in the world of form is a manifestation or an appearance in disguise, disguised as that particular temporary form of who you are in your essence, on the formless. So there's always a self-recognition when that dimension is open and flows through you into this world.

When I say you, at this moment I mean the form of you, which is ultimately not who you are, it's just an appearance. And that's our mission then, is to bring that dimension of consciousness into this world. And that is what the universe wants.

And if we bring this dimension of consciousness into what we do and say, especially into interactions, we are fulfilling not only our purpose as humans, we are fulfilling the purpose of the universe, because the universe is moving continuously towards the greater and greater expression of consciousness. And gradually, we don't want to go too much into this, but my feeling is that gradually matter is becoming, through this, matter gradually becomes spirit and loses its density.

[Speaker 3] (5:07:48 - 5:08:01)

Well, would you like to lead us into that stillness? I know we would all be very honored to experience that. And it is our tradition in Unity to begin with prayer and stillness and meditation.

[Speaker 1] (5:08:02 - 5:18:35)

Well, we can, but the strange thing also happens when these words are spoken, you can actually experience in the background, you're hearing the words, you understand the words without needing to analyze them, and in the background of your perceptions, there is already the space. So even as we speak, in order to find the space, it is not necessary, it can be helpful from time to time to go into stillness, wonderful thing to do, but it is not confined to moments of stillness. The question is whether you are able to be aware in the background of your life, and that means of course now, whether you can be aware of this thing that cannot be defined, we could call it, can you be aware of the consciousness that you are, not the awareness of something, the awareness of awareness.

Can you sense the presence that you are? Yes, and again, it's not as Jesus said, you can't say, oh yeah, I've got it now, or you can't say, okay, I have achieved presence, and then claim, because you can only have it now. You can't say, now I have it, I'm an achiever of presence, or even if you say, I'm enlightened, it's dangerous to say that, because you're forming another form identity, you give yourself another form identity and imply that I'm going to be present forever, but there's only now, so the only question is, are you able to sense this background to all experience right now, and still be able to deal with things, perceive things, even take action, so that there's always a stillness in the background, even while you talk to people. What do we need to do now?

One can lose oneself so easily when you begin to use your mind, touch, start, words flow, they come out of you, they come out of the other person, and there's an enormous momentum behind the human mind, thousands of years of unconsciousness, and so the human mind is used to drawing your entire consciousness, and using it, making thoughts, more and more thoughts, so for many people still, all their consciousness is thought, they are not aware that underneath thought there is the vastness of unconditioned consciousness, out of which thoughts are not separate from consciousness, they are a form that consciousness takes, and then the question is whether consciousness identifies completely with a form, and loses itself consciousness, or whether the forms can arise, and you are still conscious of the background, of the space of awareness, and as you say, it can be helpful at first to find it in moments of, when you say, okay, I'm going to be still now, still, and perhaps many of you, perhaps already practicing that, this is an advanced spiritual group, so I'll tell you what it is, to be able to simply say, there's nothing to think about now, so why should I think, there's no need to think, to voluntarily say, I will surrender right now, I'll surrender thought, relinquish thought, and what's left?

Now, two things are possible now, you can either fall below thought, or you rise above thought, that is an alertness, relaxed alertness, still alertness, you rise above thought, and you can then, this could be a spiritual practice, you can practice perceiving things through stillness, without naming, without labeling, whether you use auditory perception, or visual perception, or tactile, it doesn't matter, the predominant sense for most people is the visual, so you look around, you see everything, you even somehow know what it is you're looking, but you're not defining it, and limiting it by calling it something, that means the mystery of life is still there, you have not reduced the mystery, and the incredible beauty of this, by calling it something, and then believing if you attach a name to it, you know what it is, there's always, this is a great illusion, if you call it, I don't know what that plant is, but if I knew it, if you call it something, and then most people believe, now they know what it is, nothing has happened, you've just attached a sound to it. And it's not even a real ficus. So, but even inanimate objects, even inanimate objects are intensely alive, everything is mysterious, and the mysteries there surrounding you, the universe, and the delusion is that by naming it, that suddenly you know what it is.

So here the spiritual practice is to refrain from naming and labeling mentally. And that's the beauty, you practice at first in easy environments, out in nature is helpful, easier than being in a city, because in a city everything is man-made and can stimulate thought, especially you see writing everywhere, advertising, and that stimulates thought. It's very hard to look at something written and then not, let that become a thought.

You'd have to turn it around, upside down, and then perhaps it works. But even then the mind will try to figure out what to say. So out in nature, anything natural, just looking, listening, and this is being there fully, no matter where it is, you're absolutely present then.

You're above thought, in the state of alert presence. And everything becomes alive. You suddenly realize that when you were immersed in thinking and always labeling everything mentally, the universe was no longer alive to you.

You couldn't sense the aliveness of the universe anymore. And unfortunately millions still live like that. They inhabit a universe that has become deadened by mental abstractions, continuous thinking, because every thought is some form of abstraction.

It's not it. And so the practice then is to bring that alert presence into perceptions and look around. You might even do it in your room, too, when you sit in your bedroom or living room.

Sit there for a while and just look around. Just to practice, can I perceive without this compulsion to label everything? And that's a beautiful thing to do.

Your perceptions become innocent. This is why Jesus said, unless you become like little children, you cannot enter the kingdom of God. He means that those are little children whose minds have not yet started to conceptualize everything and judge everything.

And yet it's not quite the same as a little child because you have already transcended thought. The little child is still at a pre-thought level, and you have gone through it. So there's an added depth or dimension to that state, but it has certain similarities with the state of the innocent perception of a child.

And imagine if you can bring that into human interactions so that whatever, whoever you meet, any human being you meet, you don't label them. You just are there as the space for that perception of that. And so another way of putting this is that you are here as the aware space rather than as a person.

So the aware space, the being part of the human, becomes more important than the human. The human is still honored to the level of form. Yes, you have a name, you have a personal history, but you no longer derive your identity from your personal history, which after all is only a story you tell yourself in your head.

And certain emotions still go with that story. That's your personal history. Your personal history consists of thought and your photo albums.

And your photo albums are not going to survive for that long either. So two generations later they end up in some antique store and then somebody looks at them and all they see is some old, some human form. Who's that?

[Speaker 3] (5:18:35 - 5:19:17)

I wonder who that was. We're talking today with Eckhart Tolle, and more information is online at www.eckharttolle.com. We thank you for being with us for this very special edition of The Leading Edge.

So Eckhart, what would the role then be of having the multitudes gather in prayer or having multiple people gather in the silence?

[Speaker 1] (5:19:18 - 5:21:44)

There's an energy field that arises when a group of people, even just two, come together and enter the state of presence. And that affects not only does it strengthen the presence in each member of the group, it helps, it's not presence, it's not your possession by the way, it's not, one might sometimes say your presence or my presence, that's only a way of speaking. Ultimately there isn't your presence or my presence, there's only presence.

You could say it's the divine presence or the presence of God in this world. And it can be very helpful to come together in a group with the purpose of being present, so you're present together. The difficulty often arises when the period of stillness comes to an end and the group starts to speak again.

The moment you start to speak, then the challenge is not to lose that sense of stillness or presence even while you start to think and speak again. And that can be quite a challenge because the momentum of the mind can be so overpowering, especially when you start discussing something. So after sitting together in presence, somebody says, OK, now let's discuss the meaning of presence.

Well, I think it, no, no, you're wrong. And before you know it, two minutes later, you're completely in some mind stream, identified with some mind stream. Off you go and suddenly you're fighting with somebody who is identified with a slightly different mind stream.

And so the presence is gone. Oh, where has it gone? It's become obscured.

You were not alert enough to remain. The alertness was lost. Alertness is consciousness without thought.

Presence ultimately is just bare, pure consciousness.

[Speaker 3] (5:21:44 - 5:22:07)

So this morning we were all gathered here in the Silent Unity Chapel and Rev. Dorothy Pearson led us into the silence in a very powerful way. And I had this experience, and I'm wondering if you've ever had this experience, where in the silence there is such a feeling of being connected and feeling the presence of source that for me I get very emotional.

[Speaker 1] (5:22:07 - 5:22:16)

Yes, it touches all levels. You can feel it physically even. You can feel it on the emotional level.

It reverberates on all levels.

[Speaker 3] (5:22:16 - 5:22:21)

So is that an emotional release? What is that emotion that we feel?

[Speaker 1] (5:22:21 - 5:22:52)

Well, it's like it's almost, I would say, it's an expression of love. That's how I experience that. When love arises, because this is how love arises, sometimes it touches the emotion and you cry.

It doesn't mean you're sad. There's great joy in that. So the joy can be so overpowering that it touches the emotional level also.

And it's very beautiful.

[Speaker 3] (5:22:52 - 5:23:24)

We have many questions that people through our online community, the UnityFM online community, and those that are here with us, many, many questions people have for you. This one is from Shirley Bowman, and she's a member of our online community. She says that in your book you say that there is nothing you can do to prepare yourself for attaining enlightenment, and we've talked about that.

So what about prayer and meditation and what Unity calls the silence? Are those processes that is the intention for those to lead us to enlightenment?

[Speaker 1] (5:23:25 - 5:23:25)

Yes.

[Speaker 3] (5:23:25 - 5:23:26)

How does that connect?

[Speaker 1] (5:23:26 - 5:23:59)

Yes. In fact, what I say in the book is that there's nothing you can do to bring about awakening. Awakening is the first separation of consciousness from thinking.

And so somebody who is able to go into stillness and practice stillness has already gone through that. So that person has already begun to awaken. But if we're doing it in order to...

That means you haven't found the stillness yet. You're trying to find the stillness, but you can't find it.

[Speaker 3] (5:24:01 - 5:24:02)

More silence, more silence.

[Speaker 1] (5:24:03 - 5:24:59)

Yes, it would be very frustrating, because you would continue to come here and then... I just can't get there. And then you would have to, after a while, you would stay home and you can't do it anymore.

And then you have to wait for grace. In some form, the grace will then come, perhaps not by you going to a group. It might come in a different form.

Maybe you suddenly slip, you're walking on a wet road, and suddenly you fall and whatever, you break your arm or you don't, and suddenly your mind stops. The shock is so great that for a few seconds you're there in presence. Oh, that's it.

That would be the beginning of the awakening. And then you'll be able to come to a group and you've had a glimpse.

[Speaker 3] (5:24:59 - 5:25:01)

Can we do it without suffering?

[Speaker 1] (5:25:01 - 5:25:02)

Yes.

[Speaker 3] (5:25:02 - 5:25:07)

Can we do it without the dark night of the soul? For those of us happy people, can we get there eventually?

[Speaker 1] (5:25:07 - 5:26:12)

Yes. Most people here, probably to a greater or lesser extent, have already gone through that phase of suffering. And for many of us, it's only because of the suffering that we've gone through we are here now.

If we hadn't had it, we would still be completely identified with the egoic self, the little me, and pursuing its little aims and ambitions and problem-making and so on. So most of us have gone through that stage, and the more you're able to invite presence into your life, the less you need suffering to force you into presence, or to break the egoic shell. Because for some people the density of the ego is just enormous, and they need some kind of shock.

I don't know what you're talking about there.

[Speaker 5] (5:26:12 - 5:26:14)

Maybe a few.

[Speaker 1] (5:26:15 - 5:26:36)

There was a spiritual teacher in India who called people with, I don't know if some of you know Indian terminology, you can actually suffix G to a name as a form of respect. So if somebody is called Krishna, you can call them Krishna G, which is a form of respect. So he called people with big egos, Ego Gs.

[Speaker 3] (5:26:39 - 5:26:42)

I just had to respect. Respect the ego.

[Speaker 1] (5:26:43 - 5:26:44)

Accept the ego.

[Speaker 3] (5:26:44 - 5:27:48)

Accept the ego. Here on Unity Campus, of course, the grounds are spectacular, and I was walking yesterday, of course, greeting a new earth, and there is a garden not far from where we're staying here. It's the Lowell Fillmore Garden, and there is a plaque and a poem is on it that is written by Lowell.

And as I read it, I thought, this is a new earth. So I brought it to share just to hear your comments on this. He writes, When for a purpose I had prayed and prayed and prayed Until my words seemed worn and bare with arduous use And all my fervor and persistence brought no hope I paused to give my weary brain a rest And ceased my anxious cry In that still moment, after self had tried and failed There came a glorious vision of God's power And, lo, my prayer was answered in that hour.

Very good. That's right here on campus.

[Speaker 7] (5:27:49 - 5:27:49)

Wonderful.

[Speaker 3] (5:27:49 - 5:27:50)

Like, that's a new earth.

[Speaker 7] (5:27:51 - 5:27:51)

Yes.

[Speaker 3] (5:27:51 - 5:27:57)

Is that what you're trying... Because we've all had those fervent prayers. We pray and pray and pray and pray.

[Speaker 1] (5:27:57 - 5:27:57)

Yes.

[Speaker 3] (5:27:57 - 5:28:00)

And that doesn't lead us to where we want to go. Yes. Why?

[Speaker 1] (5:28:01 - 5:30:19)

Well, for many people, prayer is still part of the old conditioning of your consciousness, which basically means you're looking to some future for fulfillment. Please let this happen. Then I'll be happy.

Please give me that. Then I'll be happy. Please don't let that happen.

And then I'll be happy. So the old mind structure, which believes it needs the future for fulfillment, is still operating even when people think they're being spiritual. And so they don't realize that the very same structure that worldly people are possessed by, they say, I can only get that bigger house or better job if only people could recognize that I'm the greatest, then I'll be happy.

Or if I see my picture in People magazine, then I'll be happy. And it's the same mind structure, or the same mind structure even with spiritual people. Whereas this prayer is where the old conditioning still operates.

It could also operate in people who are seeking enlightenment. Now that seems something more advanced than asking in prayer to be given something so that you can be happy, not realizing that the only place where you can be fulfilled and happy is now. You just have to go deeper into it.

Let's see. So if you are spiritual, then you might think, okay, you hear of enlightenment or liberation, whatever it's called, salvation. And okay, I need to attain that.

I need to become enlightened. You read books about it and so on. And you can become very knowledgeable.

And what is actually stopping you from realizing enlightenment or awakening, whatever, is the belief that it's going to come at some future moment. It's only when future is surrendered that it opens up. So it's only when you let go of that old mind structure that says, I need time.

[Speaker 3] (5:30:20 - 5:30:31)

So, for example, let's say someone is scheduled for surgery. So they might want to go into a prayerful state about a future upcoming surgery. What would be the best way?

[Speaker 1] (5:30:32 - 5:39:28)

The most powerful way is to absolutely not leave this moment, to refuse to budge from just now, so that time virtually collapses. And then there's such intensity behind that state, and that can be there also if you believe that the body may go soon, may dissolve soon, not much time left. So there's no point in looking for something in time.

If you know that the body might go in two weeks' time, two months' time, then there's no point in looking towards time for some fulfillment. So then it can happen that even unspiritual people who've spent their whole lives in worldly pursuits are suddenly driven, otherwise they become extremely miserable and unhappy, the depths of depression, of course. But even then it can happen that even unspiritual people are driven out of time into the now.

And suddenly the sacred, the spiritual dimension opens up in them, and they go, and you know they can sense the transformation. Light shines through the decaying form. And it's an amazing thing.

I've met a few people who, as they were going towards the dissolution of the body, entered that state of absolute intense presence, which is not a forced state, it's not a state of, I need to be present. It's a very relaxed intensity. And that's also where the spiritual master lives, so to speak, has his or her home, which is in the present moment, always aligned with now.

No matter what appears in the now, you say yes to the appearance of the now. If the appearance of now is a difficult person, an ego-G, then that's what is now. You don't say you should behave differently.

No. Of course, action is always possible. You can remove yourself from the ego-G and look the other way or leave the room.

But if you can't, you're stuck in an elevator with the ego-G, then you have to say, there you are. You are this now. The form that this now takes.

So the primordial spiritual practice is, whether you do it shortly before death, hopefully you do it sooner. Hence the ancient dictum, die before you die. This is the collapse of time.

Time then only has a practical purpose but is no longer important in your life. You're not looking for time to find yourself. You can only find yourself now because you are the presence.

And so there's an uncompromising yes to whatever form this moment takes. And even if it seems difficult, and even if it seems limiting, because the world of form is always limiting in one way or another. You cannot find the limitless in the world of form.

Even if you achieve everything that you wanted to achieve, wealth, great fame, everybody loves me, everybody admires me, then you will find, even there you will find your new life situation would have new limitations. You cannot find the limitless. Oprah can't go for walks in the street or go shopping.

She can't go out by herself. She would get mobbed. So that's a big limitation.

What great joy there is in just walking around, looking around. Can't do it anymore. Big limitation.

So if she had thought that fame would make her happy, she would now become unhappy again. So whatever you achieve in the world of form, sooner or later you will hit upon... It doesn't mean you cannot do things to go beyond certain limitations in your life.

Scarcity, well, there may be a period in your life when you do things to go beyond scarcity. Or healing your body, there may be things you can do to heal your body. These are all wonderful things.

But no matter what you do on the level of form, you will always hit upon some limitation. So when you encounter the limitation, it appears in the now. You say, OK, this is what is.

You don't judge it. You don't run away from it. And sometimes for some people the limitation is drastic.

The body may become incapacitated. It might not heal. Some people may experience healing, but not everybody experiences healing.

Or some limitation where everything that you've worked on for 25 years, 30 years of your life, collapses around you. You pick up your phone and say, How are my shares? The stockbroker says, It's all gone.

The stock market has collapsed. And your house has collapsed. Your wife has left you.

Now, this is what is. And if you bring an acceptance to the limitations that arise in the now, the very limitations become an opening into the space. Because the surrender and the acceptance of something that is seen as inevitable, in the form of this present moment, is always inevitable, because everything is as it is.

At this moment, it is as it is. You can't argue with that. You can take action.

Yes. But right now, is means is. It's already is.

And not to recognize the is-ness and become one with the is-ness means to be out of alignment with life. So if you recognize, all you have to accept is the is-ness of this moment. It doesn't mean you can't take action.

But right now, this is what is. And then action arises out of a state of acceptance. And enormous empowerment flows into it, not out of a state of negativity.

But the important thing is, when you accept the form, no matter what limitation it seems to be, completely, the so-called limitation becomes an opening into the inner space. Because through the acceptance of the outer limitation, the inner space of the formless opens up. This is how sometimes people who have suffered enormously were driven into awakening and enlightenment through their suffering.

They were driven to a point where they just couldn't struggle, couldn't have any more resistance to the suffering, because they realized at some point, the suffering arises not because of what's going on, but my resistance to what's going on. And so, surrender happens. With surrender, the inner space opens up.

The stillness underneath all that. And then, the very limitation becomes an open door. I believe that's the meaning of the crucified Jesus on the cross, because the meaning of the cross is that it's an expression of the most extreme limitation a human being can encounter, the most extreme suffering.

Totally helpless. So the cross is a torture instrument, but for some reason, the cross is also a symbol for the divine. And at first, this might seem very strange, especially if you come from outer space, and you're not used to it, you see it for the first time.

How is it that the humans have made the torture instrument into a symbol for the divine? And that is because behind the suffering that is totally accepted, not my will, but thy will be done, not the will of the little me, there's an acceptance. And through the acceptance, the very thing that was the torture instrument becomes the divine.

It opens up. And that's the transmutation of suffering.

[Speaker 3] (5:39:29 - 5:39:50)

We've had many of our questions relate to prayer, and this one in particular connects to what you're talking about, because it's asking, this is from our audience today, what is prayer to those who are attempting to live in the now? And who are we praying to, and is it a monologue? If we're living in the now, what is prayer?

[Speaker 1] (5:39:52 - 5:41:23)

Prayer, of course, is many different things according to where you are at in your consciousness. And as long as a person is still not, has not yet realized his or her oneness with the divine, then you're at a stage where the divine is approached on the level of duality. And for those people, prayer can be helpful up to a point until they need to let go of it.

So if you still see God as outside of you somewhere, then you're addressing God or asking for something. But increasingly, as you realize your essential oneness with the source, then your prayer would change and perhaps would become more simple. And so perhaps would just be little pointers that you use sometimes to remind yourself of the oneness.

Some lessons in A Course in Miracles, for example, have nice pointers like, let me remember who I am. Let me be still. These can be little pointers that take you into the reality of the realization of oneness.

[Speaker 3] (5:41:23 - 5:41:26)

In Unity, we talk about affirmative prayer.

[Speaker 1] (5:41:26 - 5:41:27)

Affirmative prayer, that's right.

[Speaker 3] (5:41:27 - 5:41:28)

The knowing. The knowing.

[Speaker 1] (5:41:28 - 5:41:47)

Yes, yes. And that can be helpful. So personally, I don't use the dualistic prayer.

But occasionally, affirmations come into my head as just spontaneous thoughts, and that's beautiful.

[Speaker 3] (5:41:48 - 5:42:06)

Well, David, from our online community, says that you suggest that we are not our thoughts. The Fillmore's have been quoted as saying that every thought is a prayer. He says, well, both statements resonate with me since I struggle with reconciling them.

Are we separate from even our intentional, positive, prayerful thoughts?

[Speaker 1] (5:42:07 - 5:44:43)

Now, thought, of course, for most people in the old consciousness, thought is a manifestation of the old conditioning of your mind. It comes from the past, and all the thought structures are repetitive, to a large extent negative. They feed the ego, which needs, of course, the negativity, which needs to have problems, which needs to have enemies.

So the continuous thought activity that most people are immersed in, involuntary and compulsive, they don't even know they're immersed in thought activity because they're so identified with thought activity that is who they are, or think they are. So for those people, thought is totally repetitive, and it tends to recreate also experiences because thought is creative, so you are identified with certain conditioned thinking, so no matter what you do, you create a similar reality because you're still totally identified with the same thought structures. So people, for example, they think, okay, I need to get out of this relationship, and then they have another relationship and get married to another person, and finally, after a little while, you see you've recreated the same thing.

And some people get married three, four, five times, and they recreate always the same thing. Some people even recreate very abusive partners sometimes, and they think, okay, finally, marriage number three, I finally found this person is not abusive, and after a few months, he or she turns out to be abusive. The same thoughts that you are immersed in tend to create the same reality, and so the awakening is the realization that there is conditioned thinking, the voice in the head, continuously going through your mind, interpreting your experiences according to your past.

So whatever you experience, there's a filter of your thinking, and you don't really experience the world, only in a very remote and indirect way, you really only then ever experience your thinking, the structure of your thoughts. You only ever really experience the past in you. It's a dreadful state to be in.

[Speaker 3] (5:44:43 - 5:44:45)

For most of us, yes.

[Speaker 1] (5:44:46 - 5:45:08)

And it's called normal, normal human consciousness. And this is why for many humans, unless they begin to awaken spiritually, no real change ever happens. And even if you win in the lottery, it's not real change.

It just means you have the same drama and the same unhappiness in a luxury environment.

[Speaker 3] (5:45:09 - 5:45:14)

Laughter Until we can recreate that old reality.

[Speaker 1] (5:45:14 - 5:45:19)

Yes, until you lose the luxury environment because your old thoughts are to do with scarcity.

[Speaker 3] (5:45:19 - 5:45:35)

And that is one of the fundamental, one of our basic unity teachings is that our thoughts do create, that thoughts held in mind produce after their kind. And so part of the spiritual discipline that we talk about is how do we become conscious in guiding our thoughts.

[Speaker 1] (5:45:35 - 5:49:29)

And this of course is why so little change happens in the world so far because the old thoughts are recreating the old reality. If you look at human history, 20th century history, dreadful. And the warfare that goes on.

But some change is coming in, it's true. So this is the fundamental shift that begins to happen when you're aware that there is old conditioned thinking that is continuously coloring your experiences, that is continuously interpreting your relationships, misinterpreting your relationships, imposing your own past on your present relationships. And so it's recreating the same madness again and again.

So whatever you, all your interpretations are erroneous because they are colored by the past in you. And this is why the Course in Miracles, for example, starts with little exercises which, for example, tells you to look around the room and say, I see only the past in this mug. I see only the past in this table.

I see only the past in this carpet. It might seem strange at first, but it's attempting to make you aware that this is what operates in you so that you can become free. And then it has another lesson which says, nothing I see in this room means anything.

This is one of the very early lessons in the Course. Nothing I see in this room means anything. Why is that a lesson?

Because it's attempting to remove the meaning that you impose on the world through your old conditioning. So this is all the old thought that recreates the old reality. And then, at some point, awakening begins to happen.

You begin to be aware of your thoughts. It means you're not free yet, but a little bit of freedom has come in. And then you can sometimes, you can already become aware of the most obvious, repetitive, negative, life-denying thoughts that have been going around in your head for years and years and years.

And suddenly, once you bring the awareness to it, the thoughts lose their intensity. And at some point you can choose to, you can recognize this as an old thought and say, oh, there's another old thought, and you can let go of it. You can replace it with another thought, or you can simply be present, even better.

Just bring presence, where before there was a thought that said, oh, he's a jerk, I know this kind of person, I've met so many of them. So immediately you relate to this person through this judgment. And he may not be.

On a deeper level, he isn't. But even on a surface level he may not be. He may just be your interpretation.

And then you recognize the thought, and then you can say, well, I honor the divinity in this human being, and that improves your relationships. And it goes even deeper if you can be simply present. And not, no judgment at all, just be the aware presence and listen to this person, or look at this person, and bring that into the relationship.

Then you become free of karma. Karma is all the old conditioning you carry around inside you that you are unconscious of, with which the past is recreated again and again. And karma can only dissolve through the arising of presence.

That's the miracle of human transformation.

[Speaker 3] (5:49:30 - 5:50:58)

We're talking with Eckhart Tolle, the best-selling author of A New Earth Awakening to Your Life's Purpose, online at www.eckharttolle.com. We thank you for joining us for this special edition of The Leading Edge. I'm Mindy Odlin, and we'll be back with more in just a moment.

Welcome back to The Leading Edge. I am Mindy Odlin, and this is a very special presentation of The Leading Edge. Our guest today, best-selling author Eckhart Tolle.

We've been talking about prayer, about presence, and I know many people from our audience today. We are here at the Silent Unity Chapel at Unity Village. They've been asking questions.

We have many people from our Unity FM online community asking questions. And this is one that just really jumped out to me because it's one that I want to know the answer to, too. This is from our audience today.

It says that they were listening to an interview with Barbara Walters on NPR this morning, and she says that she always asks people, What's the biggest misconception that people have about you? I would love to know. I get to be Barbara Walters here for a moment.

What is the biggest misconception that people have about you?

[Speaker 1] (5:50:59 - 5:57:04)

Well, there are probably different kinds depending where people are coming from. But I believe one is that they see me as special or enlightened. So there's a form identity that's created and projected that is almost the opposite of the reality because the reality of who you are is by relinquishing any kind of conceptual identity and any sense that you as this form is special, that you are more special than somebody else.

Enlightenment, that somebody is enlightened, is itself a contradiction. Enlightenment means that the sense of self, of I, the erroneous, the false mind-made I, has become transparent or given way to the light of consciousness that shines through. The light of consciousness is nobody's achievement or possession.

So even to say, I have achieved enlightenment is a big error. It means you haven't? Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

Nobody achieves enlightenment. It's only when the self that claims enlightenment gets out of the way or becomes at least transparent enough so that it doesn't cause problems anymore, then that which is beyond the form shines through, and that is the power. It's not my power.

The misconception is that this is my power. And, of course, it's happened sometimes even to people who have touched that and have that power flow through them. At some point, their mind came back and identified with it, and they've got another conceptual identity as me as very special.

And then the power becomes obscured again. It's like the clouds are coming back and obscure the sun. And the clouds are, of course, the stream of thinking, and then you have a new conceptual identity.

And it's more likely to happen to spiritual teachers who are surrounded only by disciples or followers, and so they project certain things onto the teachers and continuously bombarded with projections. You are the greatest. And then after a few years, some remnant of egoic consciousness gets triggered, and he begins to believe, he or she, that this is true.

So it's continuously going back into being nobody in particular. For example, being a spiritual teacher is not an identity as I see it, people believe this is my identity, but it's only an identity, it's only a function while the so-called teaching happens. Even the teaching doesn't come from this form, it's a process.

If there was nobody here, I would have nothing to say. The words come out because there's a space here that pulls out the words. I don't come here with some cumulative knowledge and this is what I'm going to say.

Nobody here, nothing, it is a complete, just a space, I don't know anything. And then when I go away from here, the function is relinquished. The important thing is then not to carry the conceptual identity of me being a spiritual teacher, because then I would still be a spiritual teacher when I'm walking around the supermarket, and I would feel special.

So always coming back to, I am just the, I am the space for this. I am, so it's no thing, no body in particular. That's the main, so the misconception is the projection of specialness.

That's how it is. And so when people, sometimes people when they come to talk, they feel an enormous arising inside of aliveness and presence and they might think it comes from here, but it can only come from within them. Perhaps something that's here can pull it out, but it must be in you if you can sense it.

Whatever you feel is there and the other person must also be in you. For example, stillness. In order to be aware, for example, that there's silence in this room, for a moment you have to be silent inside.

It's only the silence that can be aware of the silence, or the stillness which can be aware of the silence outside. If you have no stillness, you don't even know that there's silence because there's mental noise. So the strange thing is the specialness as opposed to others who are not special.

That's the delusion. I do feel special, but I know that everybody is equally special. So there's a sense of this life that I am is precious and it's everybody's identity.

[Speaker 3] (5:57:06 - 5:58:28)

You mentioned yourself, the role of spiritual teacher, and I noticed in today's Daily Word, the Daily Word has this uncanny ability to provide the perfect word on a perfect day. So here we are with Eckhart Tolle, the author of A New Earth, Awakening to Your Life's Purpose, and the Daily Word today is purpose. It says, I love what I do and I do it with purpose.

As I reflect upon my talents and interests, which is what you were talking about, that you are a spiritual teacher, that is a role you play, the activities that bring me joy and fulfillment, I realize that these are the things that give shape to my purpose in life, and each one is a gift from God meant to be developed and shared. Each new day I welcome the opportunity to put my spiritual gifts into practice, to grow them and expand the blessing that they are. I confidently share my talents with the people around me with commitment and enthusiasm.

When I love what I do and I do it with purpose, I am a blessing to the world. I am a unique and divine expression of spirit. My life is filled with purpose and meaning as I develop and share my spiritual gifts with others.

So could you talk about what is a spiritual gift? Because it does seem like there are those of us who are spiritual teachers, there are those of us who are healers, there are those of us who nurture in different ways. How does that tie into what you were saying?

[Speaker 1] (5:58:30 - 5:59:03)

As I say in the book, I see there's your inner purpose and your outer purpose. Outer purpose varies from person to person. It's to do with your activity, your outer function in this world.

Inner purpose is primary. It's the foundation for a satisfying and fruitful outer purpose. So inner purpose is the same for everybody.

Inner purpose, and of course the subtitle to the book is Awakening to Your Inner Purpose.

[Speaker 3] (5:59:04 - 5:59:07)

Awakening to Your Life's Purpose. You read this, right?

[Speaker 1] (5:59:08 - 5:59:14)

Laughter The subtitle actually was the idea of the editor.

[Speaker 3] (5:59:14 - 5:59:14)

Really?

[Speaker 1] (5:59:16 - 5:59:38)

Laughter He called and said I've had a great idea and said Awakening to Your Life's Purpose. That's it. That's good.

So Awakening to Your Life's Purpose already contains the answer because your life's purpose, your inner purpose, your primordial primary purpose is awakening.

[Speaker 3] (5:59:38 - 5:59:46)

Yes. One of the things that Reverend Paul Hasselbeck always says at the end of his program is to go out and be the best Christ you can be.

[Speaker 1] (5:59:46 - 5:59:46)

Yes.

[Speaker 3] (5:59:47 - 5:59:49)

Our primary purpose. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (5:59:49 - 6:04:27)

The primary purpose is to be here as the awakened consciousness, present, conscious, and let that energy off, which is spiritual energy, which is a very fine vibration. Ultimately all energy is one, but the spiritual is the finest vibration. To let that flow into this world through whatever you do.

And what you do is secondary. Primary is always how you do what you do. So it doesn't necessarily mean that you need to find something great, some great enterprise, creating some great structure in this world.

Some people will do that. But the primary thing is what energy flows into every little thing you do. And even if you're engaged in some great enterprise, even if your name is Oprah, for example, every great thing consists of a hundred little steps that you take every moment.

Even for Oprah, at some point she steps onto the stage. One step, two, three, walks to a chair, sits in a chair, looks at the person, a question comes. Spontaneously a lot of questions.

Enormous ability she has to tune into the other person, and then the right question comes, funny comments come spontaneously, all these things that developed in her over 30 years of practice. And so that's one example. Many people look for some significant life purpose, but the first question is, have you made every little action that you take significant?

There's no point in looking for some great, abstract, significant thing. What's the great purpose of my life? And you neglect to pay attention to what is at hand, whatever you are doing now in search for something significant and believing that this moment is not significant.

You're just looking for the significant thing. And then, of course, you're not going to find it because you're neglecting the very foundation for all significance, which is this moment. So are you getting this moment right?

Is this whatever you're doing at this moment done with presence, with attention? Are you honoring this moment? And if you're honoring this moment, even if you don't know exactly where you want to go, if you honor this moment and see this moment as primary, then it's much more likely that if you are, if it is your destiny to create something out there in this world, it will come much more quickly.

Even if you're doing something at this moment that you perhaps wouldn't want to do for the rest of your life. Maybe you've got a job that doesn't pay well and is repetitive. And yet, this is what is now.

You can be, if you're in a negative state there, at this moment doing that, it's much less likely that you will be finding your true life purpose. So always come to make the present moment your friend. That's the foundation.

If you're friendly with the present moment, then you're friendly with life. Then life comes and will offer you whatever is most appropriate for you, which may have all kinds of things, working with people, working with plants, working with animals, working with structures, working with art, working with writing, whatever it is, in whatever form. And you may use perhaps already what you are doing, but as you bring presence into it, it becomes empowered and deeper.

Let's say you're a hairdresser and you are quite good, but then suddenly you realize how important the present moment is and you pay attention to every moment, the person who is there, the hair, the doing, the words come, which means what you do will become not only very good, that you're a very good hairdresser, it means another dimension will come into what you do when people come to you.

[Speaker 3] (6:04:27 - 6:04:29)

Do you ever get tired of being so aware?

[Speaker 1] (6:04:30 - 6:04:31)

Ha ha ha!

[Speaker 3] (6:04:33 - 6:04:40)

I mean, when I think about every step, you know, being present with every step, with every snip of the scissors, it sounds like it could be kind of exhausting.

[Speaker 1] (6:04:43 - 6:05:13)

There's not perhaps an equal intensity all throughout your day. It's when you're engaged. You just zone out.

Well, of course, one gets tired sometimes, and there's a point at which although you endeavor to live above thought, always a moment comes late at night, or sometimes for me in the afternoon when it's time to take a nap. A moment comes around 5 o'clock. Uh-oh!

[Speaker 7] (6:05:14 - 6:05:14)

Ha ha ha!

[Speaker 1] (6:05:18 - 6:05:47)

When my level of consciousness falls below thought. Ha ha ha! And there's a little nap, and then wake up again.

Oh, and then it's fine. And then I go about things. So sometimes, at the moment, I don't have television, so that doesn't work.

Sometimes we watch films. We rent DVDs.

[Speaker 3] (6:05:48 - 6:06:02)

Well, that was the next question. Someone said, you are such an enlightened soul. I'm very grateful for your awareness, your wisdom, and your willingness to share your insights with the world.

Just out of curiosity, what do you do for fun? Ha ha ha! Do you have any hobbies?

[Speaker 1] (6:06:02 - 6:06:51)

Ha ha ha! Well, it doesn't sound very interesting. I like walking out in nature every day.

I go for a walk in the forest every day when I'm at home with a dog. That's fun. My hobby for a long time was photography.

And at the moment, I'm trying to switch from... I'm always late with technology. At the moment, I'm trying to switch from the old-fashioned film photography, which I know very well, to digital, which I don't know anything about.

But I have a little digital camera now. I'm trying to take photos and master that.

[Speaker 3] (6:06:51 - 6:06:52)

Capturing moments?

[Speaker 1] (6:06:53 - 6:06:53)

What?

[Speaker 3] (6:06:53 - 6:06:54)

You're capturing moments.

[Speaker 1] (6:06:54 - 6:07:49)

Yes. What I capture most, what I do with the camera when I use it, I walk around nature with the camera, and I look. There's no thought involved.

And I look at some whatever. There's little, relatively insignificant things usually, leaves, trees, flowers, blades of grass, stones, whatever, or clouds. And at some point, there's something that particularly conveys the sense of divine presence that's there, the sacredness of nature.

And then I walk around a bit more, looking. And then there's something else. So it's not so much to capture something from the past.

It's to capture the sacredness. I'm not a master photographer. It's just a joyful thing to do, that's all.

[Speaker 3] (6:07:49 - 6:07:56)

Do you email us some pictures? We'll put them up on the website. One with a digital camera, I'll help you.

[Speaker 1] (6:07:59 - 6:08:04)

There are a few pictures in the little booklet that comes with a DVD of my Fintan retreat.

[Speaker 3] (6:08:05 - 6:08:06)

Oh, very nice.

[Speaker 1] (6:08:06 - 6:08:08)

And that has some photos that I took of nature.

[Speaker 3] (6:08:09 - 6:08:47)

Lovely, lovely. Well, speaking of pictures, one thing that many of our listeners are talking about, and there's many books coming out on the topic of treasure maps, the idea of taking pictures of things that we want to manifest and putting them up in front of us. This question is from one of our listeners on our online community.

He says, My husband and I happen to be starting a treasure map. When we first started reading your book, I found it really difficult to continue the treasure map, sort of announcing to the universe all the things that I hope to see manifest in my life, and at the same time, stay in the present moment. Do you think the idea of treasure mapping is inconsistent with being in the now moment?

[Speaker 1] (6:08:48 - 6:21:25)

I don't think it is, because the only time when you can practice it is in the now. But the question is whether you have found the foundation for all power in the present moment, or whether you are still looking to the future for some kind of self-fulfillment, for the future to finally give you the sense that you have arrived, that you are somebody, that you are being recognized, that finally you can feel, at some point when you have the house and the car, that finally you can feel abundant when that comes, because right now you are not feeling abundant.

Why are you not feeling abundant? Because you are denying the now. So, you have to first find the foundation for abundance.

Abundance has very little to do with the number of things in your life. Abundance is the state of being. Abundance arises out of life itself, the being of life, which life is being, the I am.

Being and I am is the same thing, it just sounds like different words, because I am is the first person singular of the infinitive to be, for those who have missed grammar at school. The infinitive is to be, the first person singular is I am, so it's the same word. So, when we talk about being, how do you experience being?

You can only experience being as the I am. And the I am is the foundation for all abundance, it's the realization of the fullness of being in yourself, which has nothing to do with the number of objects in your life. So, you find the fullness of being, Jesus pointed to it when he said, I want you to have life and I want you to have the fullness of life.

In some Bibles it's translated as abundant life. I want you to have abundant life, he said. Now, if you look deeply, you will see very soon that he is not talking about many possessions, he is talking about the sense of the fullness of being in yourself.

Not shopping malls, not that he wasn't prophesying the arrival of shopping malls. But finding that present moment, that deeply satisfying sense of beingness that comes when you enter the present moment fully and become friendly with now, go deeply into now. That's the vertical dimension of life, the now, which to most people doesn't exist.

They only know the horizontal, past, future, things, where am I, where can I find myself, I need to attain this. And then they might say, I want to make a treasure map, and then finally I can attain that. And so often, of course, people are not successful quite often with their treasure maps because there is the erroneous belief that they need to achieve something that's over there in the future, that they need to get that in order to feel the fulfillment and the fulfilled sense of self.

And even if they do get what they want, it will still not lead them to the fulfillment. Even if they do get the house and the car, they may sometimes do, even if they do get it, but they haven't found the fullness of life that can only be found in the now. Then for a little while they are elated, I made it, I made it.

And then they sit there in the big house and say, okay, what now, where do I go from here? Okay, I need to invite lots of people so that they can reaffirm to me that I'm somebody, that my house is bigger than theirs. And so you do that for a while, and then that doesn't work either.

And so you come to an emptiness when it often has happened with people who have achieved materially what they wanted to achieve, and yet they still feel empty. And sometimes it's at that point, either they become even more miserable or they begin taking drugs just to don't feel the pain anymore of the unfulfilled life, and you can't fool yourself anymore when you have achieved materially almost everything, and you're still unhappy, where can you go from there? You can't fool yourself that even more houses would make you finally happy.

Well, some try even that. So the foundation is the present moment and the fullness of life now, and so when you feel the fullness and then you look at a treasure map, you are now, the approach is very different, you are playing. There's a playfulness in the world of form.

You are playing because you are in this world of form, and part of being in this world of form is to interact with the forms of life. And why not try this out, see if I can manifest, not to find some fulfillment, but as a joyful, playful game with form. And then you look at your treasure map and you feel, whatever it is you are looking at, the house, you feel totally fulfilled already in that moment.

Obtaining the house couldn't possibly lead you to greater fulfillment. This happened to me, I drew spontaneously a picture, a circle on a sheet of paper before I ever wrote a book, and that said, book, it came to me one day spontaneously with colors, I drew the circle, book, and then I wrote, this was not so much me wanting to write a book, as something in me expressing what it wanted, the consciousness, and I wrote, translating into many languages, changing the lives of hundreds of thousands of people.

Millions. Millions, I didn't know that. And so it all came to pass, I had completely forgotten about this sheet of paper, and a few years ago I unpacked things that had been forwarded from England, a trunk, and I looked through it and I saw this old paper, and there was the power of now, and I looked in amazement, it had all come to pass, but I didn't want, this was so much a reality, this sheet of paper, that I already felt the fullness and the power of the power of now, I felt it already there, I didn't feel any greater or better when the book was out.

It was the same, the same feeling. So if you can feel the power, the unmanifested power, and then you can look at certain forms and play with forms, what flows into the manifestation is the unmanifested power, that expresses itself in many ways. One of the ways in which the unmanifested power, the one power, the one life, can express itself and wants to express itself, because this is a universe that creates form continuously, on so many levels, billions of life forms, so on that level, the universe wants to experience form, so you are part of that, you can take part in that game, the universe, this is the game of creating forms, and enjoying forms, and so you can do that if the foundation is the present moment, and then you are not dependent on your creation, and you realize, of course, whatever you create, at some point it will leave you again, or you leave it, and that's fine, so you are not dependent on the outer form to give you a sense of fulfillment, only then can you be successful at truly manifesting.

So that's the finding the power first within yourself. In this world there are two movements, one is the outgoing movement of the universe, which is the creation of form, greater and greater differentiation, the universe, they say, they may be right on some level, not on the deepest level, it started from a zero point of oneness, the astronomers say there was a big bang, and the zero point, and nobody can say what was there before then, before then they say there was nothing, very strange, so out of the nothingness came the thingness of the world, the multitude of things, what the ancient Chinese texts call the ten thousand things, they didn't realize at that time it's billions of things, and so there is the outward movement of the universe, the creation of form, and the wanting to experience the form, but there is another movement in the universe, which is the return to the source, the two movements are there, the forms go out, but there is also, and every human being has the two movements inside him or her, one is the outward movement into creation, and one is the return movement home to the source, to the oneness, which in essence is the spiritual dimension, the spiritual dimension is the return movement of the universe, and the universe also wants that, it wants to know itself in its essence, it not only wants to create forms and lose itself in the forms, that's part of the game, it also wants to find itself after having lost itself, it wants to find itself and know itself deeply for the first time, and this actually is happening through the human form, and probably through other forms in the universe, which has the same movement, because as above, so below, so you are an expression of this universal cosmic two-fold movement, the outer and the return home, the outgoing and the return home, and you are in between these two, so don't lose yourself in the outgoing, that's a great danger, and this has happened to a large part of humanity, they lost themselves in the outgoing cycle, but ultimately even that the universe wanted, because nothing happens that the universe doesn't want, so you lose yourself in the outgoing, until finally the outgoing becomes so problematic and so differentiated, and then the return starts, back to the source, and then you can actually live balancing the two, connected to the source, and this I believe is the new earth, the new reality that's being created in this dimension, and humans can create that, which is create form without losing their connectedness with the essence of being, with God, and then that could lead to a kind of dimension that would be absolute bliss, also temporary, nothing last, but this would be a beautiful dimension, when on the planet humans live, who create things, but don't lose their connectedness with being, so then you could say that it's conscious creation, rather than unconscious creation.

[Speaker 3] (6:21:26 - 6:22:04)

Yes, well our guest today is Eckhart Tolle, Eckhart thank you so much for being with us this hour on The Leading Edge, I'm Mindy Odlin, if you feel nourished and uplifted by this program, or any of our programs on Unity FM, we invite you to make a contribution, and help us continue to be this voice, to bring this voice of truth and awakening to the planet, to the planet earth, and we thank you Eckhart for being here, more information is available online at www.EckhartTolle.com, thank you for tuning in, thank you for being a part of The Leading Edge, and for being a part of the voice of an awakening world, God bless.

[Speaker 1] (6:22:04 - 6:22:05)

Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (6:22:05 - 6:22:11)

Thank you. Thank you. That's our Tる.

Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (6:22:34 - 9:29:51)

This is question, I would see if I can keep the answers a little shorter than usual. But who knows? I can't guarantee it.

This is a question from somebody living in Saudi Arabia. "'Peace, Mr. Eckhart, I live in Saudi Arabia. "'I'm afraid if I stay in Saudi Arabia, "'I might lose this little light.

"'Should I emigrate to another culture? "'I feel responsible for my parents.' "'It is true that some places are more conducive "'to living consciously than others. "'There are energy fields, "'there are places where the energy field is more helpful, "'and there are places where the energy field "'seems to be more of a hindrance than a help.

"'So if you are able to move to an energy field "'that is more conducive, then do it. "'If there are strong reasons why you cannot, "'or you decide there are factors in your life, "'like in this case, this person's parents may need him, "'who knows, I don't know how old the questioner is. "'It is also true that anywhere, wherever you are, "'you can be present.

"'And if you are in a place "'that would not normally be considered conducive "'to being present, it is sometimes precisely there "'that you are forced to go deeper, "'as it is precisely, very often, "'in life circumstances that would usually be considered "'unfavorable or not suitable for spiritual advancement. "'It's precisely there that the motivation "'for awakening becomes particularly strong.'" I have, a while ago, when I was, I believe I gave a talk on Sufism, maybe one or two years ago, and I may have read from a little book of Sufi stories, the story about the young man, a wandering Sufi, although nobody recognized him as a Sufi, somewhere in the Middle East or North Africa. He looked a bit lost, so he was walking through a city, and this one of the most powerful men in the city looked at him and came and said, "'You must be an escaped slave.

"'You don't seem to know where you're going, "'so you come and work for me. "'You're now my slave. "'Have you been looking for your master?' And the young man said, "'Yes, I've been looking for my master for a long time.'" And so this powerful man said, "'Okay, you can work in my mansion or palace, and the young man said, "'Okay.'" And for several years, I don't know how many, 10 years or whatever, he worked as a servant and slave for this powerful man. And then after a number of years, this man, perhaps he became a little bit more conscious. He became a little bit guilty about having made this man into his servant or slave. So he said, "'Okay, you can go now.

"'I'll give you your freedom.'" And the young man said, "'Oh, thank you.'" And he wandered on to his next destination. And he eventually became, unfortunately, I don't remember his name. He became, this young man became one of the great Sufi masters and became the teacher of many other Sufi masters.

So what is the significance of that story? The significance of that story is that you can use any life circumstance for awakening. And of course, we are speaking here not of overcoming, but of transcending.

So it seems that almost this young man consciously entered that to see, to discover within himself the transcendent dimension where outer circumstances become virtually irrelevant. So being a slave, that drove him deeper. And perhaps he knew that when he agreed and said, perhaps he knew already that he needed that limitation on his life in order to embrace more deeply the transcendent dimension.

So it was, one could say, in spite of his conditions, he was able to go deeper. And probably when he went to the deepest place of realization, it was then that the master said to him, the man said to him, you are free to go now. So the entire, that entire period in his life became really his spiritual practice.

And he must have known that he needed that limitation on his life in order to go deeper into the vertical dimension. If he had wandered on totally freely, perhaps it would not have happened. So, or perhaps life probably eventually would have given him some other limitation.

Life tends to do that. And so whatever limitation there is in your life then has that function of taking the focus into the vertical dimension. So more and more, he, this young man, disidentified from the external form of his position and so on.

There was a disidentification from all the forms of his life. And he went deeper and deeper into the formless and realizing himself as awareness, as consciousness. And my interpretation of the story is that at the moment of his deepest realization, the man said, you're now free to go.

And then as the story goes, he wandered on to Mecca and then started teaching. So his spiritual training was being a slave. A lovely story.

So this might be helpful. So the, if you can change the circumstances, usually I would say, don't, this is an extreme. The story is an extreme form of the spiritual awakening.

Usually I would not recommend that you seek out limitations in your life because there's enough with life. So whatever life gives you, use that. Spiritual history is full of people who were seeking for, well, all these penance and deprivation, self deprivation.

And of course there is a reason why to Western eyes, it sometimes looks very strange. There are people who deprive themselves of every comfort, who sleep on the rough surface in cold weather and who meditate in the middle of the winter in cold rooms for hours on end, or more extreme forms that you find sometimes in India, people who stand on one leg for years or whatever. And the Western, I say, why are they doing that?

There is a reason for that. And that is to bring about a dissident, complete disidentification from form and from whatever pain arises. So it's an attempt.

I don't know whether they know this or whether they just inherited as an almost a tradition, an attempt to reclaim, to take all identification out so that consciousness can be experienced in its pure non-form. This is for us, it's unlikely that for any of you standing on one leg for several years is the path, but it's to be, I respect all forms of spiritual practice, but in many cases, even that can become ego. And there are many holy men walking around India too who are making a living being a holy man.

It's a living and you get quite a bit of respect. There are others that are genuine. So you have to be able to tell the difference.

Is this a holy, is this an ego, ego G, holy man? Or is this a true holy man or woman? So in India, being a spiritual holy person can be a living.

In the West, it would be difficult, but who knows? So use with the limitations that life gives you. You don't have to seek out further suffering.

It's enough what you get. Life gives you what you need. That's all you need to know.

So whatever comes to you is for you to work with, to practice with, to either overcome or transcend or both overcome at the same time with detachment. Transcendence happens. I haven't been invited yet to Saudi Arabia, but if it should happen, then I may go.

And it's a very traditional country, I understand. Welcome. We are live in the present moment.

Usually when we do our live teaching or live meditation, I'm on the North American West Coast and it's one o'clock PM. But today I'm in Amsterdam and it's 10 o'clock PM. And for the first time, I'm using a webcam, which is quite close to my face.

So I feel really close to you. The room we are sitting in here is quite still apart from the occasional car passing by, not very often. And you may also hear the ticking of a clock, which is actually a very old Dutch standing clock.

And it may also chime. The main thing for our meditation tonight is becoming still or rather noticing that the stillness is already in you, waiting to be discovered. So our session today probably is going to be a kind of transmission of stillness.

For the transmission to be received, it requires you to have access to a little bit of stillness inside you. And that little bit of stillness can receive the transmission, recognize itself in the transmission and then know itself more fully. If you can hear the ticking of the clock, that's of course, that signifies time.

And underneath and in between the ticking of the clock is the stillness, which signifies the timeless. Timeless consciousness. That timeless consciousness is the essence of who you are.

So as we sit here together, if it works for you, it means that the person is receding and presence is arising. And there's a shift suddenly in identity. Your sense of self is no longer derived from the silly person.

Every person is more or less silly with its judgments and all the mind stuff and the expectations and the shoulds and the shouldn'ts and the complaints and the regrets and the constant focus on future or past. Its resentments and grievances and anxieties and problems. God.

And there is another dimension of consciousness in you that's far deeper than the person. The person is a surface movement of that consciousness, fleeting, insubstantial, the ripples on the surface. And as the presence arises in you, you feel suddenly your connectedness with enormous power.

Energy, intelligence, and you're rooted in that. It is who you are ultimately, and that's always there. And that is where fear ends.

Fear can only exist on the surface where the person lives. And the natural condition of the surface entity is fear, often disguised as other things. And the absence of fear really means that for the first time you can actually feel the deep trust.

Absence of fear means trust. So you can feel a deep trust in life. You are connected with, you are one with something vast.

And through you, it emanates into this world, and either directly without your mind, like here now, this is an emanation of presence, but also it can flow into your mind and use your mind and inspire your thoughts and words and actions. Presence is felt or sensed with your entire body. Every cell of the body is alive with that presence.

Can you be in that state of alert presence continuously? Well, probably not, but it can be there in the background of your life, even while you are active, doing things, speaking, thinking, and yet you sense that spacious stillness in the background, in between two thoughts, and perhaps even while you're thinking. Then thinking happens in the foreground and that spacious, aware presence is in the background.

This, for example, is happening here now when I speak. The mind is being used and that's the foreground and there is in the background, this wonderful, vast, spacious stillness. Even though you may be able to enter the presence here, you may still find in certain situations, you lose it completely.

That's okay. Afterwards, you realize you'd lost it. While you lose the presence, you don't know you're losing the presence.

It just happens. A reaction takes over. The habitual mind pattern takes over.

The habitual mental, emotional reaction and some people have very deeply entrenched patterns in their mental, emotional field. Those patterns are an aspect of what the East calls karma and some people carry quite a heavy burden of karma. Usually, karma is interpreted as the things that happen to you in your life, the situation you're born into, parents, things that happen to you, the country, the energy field in which you grow up, all the relationships and so on and so on.

That is an aspect of karma, but more fundamentally, karma is not what happens to you, but more fundamentally, karma is how you react to what happens to you, how you deal with situations and people and challenges. You can magnify the difficulties and the challenges through reactivity, so you have heavy karma, or you may have so-called good karma, in which case the conditioning of your mind is relatively okay, it will have its limitations. There may be some presence already, but the only thing that really transmutes karma is the arising of presence and it will transmute even deeply entrenched karmic patterns, reactions that you don't seem to be able to get rid of.

It happened again and again, but it may take time. For the timeless to burn up, karma may take a little bit of time, not as much time as it took for karma, for those patterns to form thousands and thousands of years. And there's no reason why those dysfunctional patterns that make your life difficult cannot be transmuted or burned up through presence in this lifetime.

But you have to want presence, you have to choose presence. You have to want to be free. You have to want peace within yourself and not think something is more important out there than the inner peace within me.

And so the Course in Miracles says, I quote now, I want the peace of God. To say these words means nothing, but to mean these words means everything. Nobody can mean these words and not be healed, end of quote.

And those of you who have deeply entrenched heavy karmic patterns will be forced to go deeper into presence. Presence needs to be more acute to burn up those patterns. So you're forced to go deeper into greater alertness.

Otherwise the patterns will not become transmuted. Some harmless patterns may always remain. Every human has a certain form, there may be certain habit patterns that do not cause any problems, and they may well survive in the light of presence.

Destructive patterns, destructive of yourself and others, problem making patterns, deeply negative patterns cannot survive in the light of presence. But you need to choose presence as much as possible. And I'm saying this to you because there is enough presence in you to be able to choose presence.

Without any presence, you cannot choose it. So ultimately it is presence that chooses presence. And it helps to be a little bit fed up with you, the person, same old stuff again and again, same old conflicts and problems, same thoughts, same complaints, same grievances, same anxieties, just small changes on the surface, but basically the same.

And so you may be fed up with the kind of life that those patterns produce, and that's a good thing. Some people at that point may consider suicide. I don't advise it.

There's something much better than that. And that is called, and I hope you are not shocked when I say it, or run away and switch on the television. That which is so much better than suicide, which I do not recommend because the unconscious patterns survive and they will seek a new body and then you'll end up with the same problems.

So that which is much better than suicide and which may shock you, but I'm telling this to you because you are all advanced. You're all well on the way to wake, full awakening. That which is much better than the person is self-annihilation of the person.

It's a kind of suicide, but a good one, which simply means you'd rather be present than the person. You'd rather be the presence than the person. And it means you're no longer addicted to thinking, which keeps the person continuously going.

But as much as possible, you choose not to think right now. The present moment. You can never be fully aligned with the present moment if you're imposing thought on it, and you cannot be truly aligned with life if you are imposing continuously your conditioned interpretations on.

So you choose, many of you are already able to do that as much as possible when thinking is not required. When you do your work, it may be required. Depends what kind of work you do.

In certain professions, very little thinking is required. You won't be good at it if you think. If you're a dancer, you can't be thinking while you dance.

Quite a few other professions, jobs, activities can be performed better in presence than when you're thinking. Other things may require thinking. If you're an accountant, you have to think.

Many other jobs may require thinking. That's fine. Using the mind for practical purposes.

But as much as possible, find the space. Don't be engaged in a continuous stream of thinking the whole day long. Find the spaces.

Choose. Why chime so many times when it's only half past 10? I don't know.

That's a mystery. So choose not to think. That's the self annihilation of the person.

You do it in the present moment. You just are alert and you face the present moment wherever it's there, whatever is there in alert presence. Why do you need to think?

If there is something to think, you will think beautifully. That, so that's why I said it may be good if you feel fed up with you, the person, because then you're ready to enter, embark on the process of self annihilation where the person is ready to go. There's so much presence that the person recedes and the patterns that make up the person become weaker and weaker, especially their deeply unconscious patterns that have been holding the ego in place for a long, long time.

The incarnation, your incarnation and mine and everybody's incarnation is relatively short in this lifetime. In addition, the planet is rapidly approaching a critical point. So the time is now and you need an almost, not quite, but almost aggressive determination to be present and that's not really aggression.

There's a sharpness to it. There is a power to it that cuts through all the BS that makes up the person. And I sometimes call that the sword of presence that cuts through time.

So if not now, when? When are you going to be ready? And then another being, one could almost say, emerges out of the dissolving person.

That's one way of putting it. And that's the true meaning of rebirth, which Jesus used that term. Rebirth is not some emotional high followed by a low, but something much more profound.

And as presence emerges where there was a person for a while, the aspect of the person always remain as long as you're in this incarnation. But the presence becomes stronger than the person. Who you are becomes predominantly the presence and just in the background, there's still the person.

And sometimes the person is in the foreground again, because we call this the awakening process. So a being, one could almost say, emerges, but the chicken cannot come out of the shell, the egg, until it cracks open. And that is the self-annihilation of the person.

And I'm saying self-annihilation for some people, it happens naturally, life does it to them. It annihilates their fictitious sense of identity by creating enormous amount of loss or suffering. And it can happen through that, in the absence of any spiritual teaching, no spiritual teaching, just suffering, suffering, suffering.

And suddenly it can happen that way also, can eliminate all the unconscious pattern that pretend to be somebody. But you don't have to wait for that. It's actually much more pleasant to choose and easier.

And you may find the strange thing is, even as the being, this new being or the being, it's being itself shines through more and more. It's quite possible that some people that have known you for a long time, may not notice anything. They may, but it's also quite possible that they may not notice anything.

Family members, friends, you feel a different, a completely different being, and yet they don't seem to notice anything. And that is because many people, who are unconscious, people who are unconscious, they don't see you, they see the image they have of you in their minds. And if they've had an image of you for many, many years, they may not be able to see beyond the mental image they have of you.

So they won't know, that's fine. Wonderful, one of the many ways in which you'll feel liberated as presence arises, you do not need other people's recognition or acknowledgement. You do not even need other people to notice you.

In fact, it feels quite good not to be noticed. And you've realized you're more powerful as the valley than the mountain. There's greater depths to you as the valley.

So the ego situation arises, so the ego says, he completely ignored me. I was there in the room and he completely ignored me. How dare he completely ignore me?

And presence loves it. Don't need to be acknowledged. Because you're already sufficient unto yourself, at least you're in touch with life itself.

You don't need the substitutes anymore. But the wonderful thing is when you don't need the substitute anymore, you get them. Tend to recognition, people liking you.

Thank you. Welcome to our meditation. People all over the planet at the same time, now opening up to the spaciousness inside, inner space, that which is prior to thoughts, prior to emotions, prior to sense perceptions.

Always there, can be called stillness, presence, inner space. You just have to pay attention to it. And that attention already is it.

Attention to awareness or awareness of awareness. In other words, you become conscious right now of the fact that you are conscious. You can actually sense consciousness that you are beyond the person.

Completely non-conceptual, nothing to do with thinking. It's that which transcends the person and that which transcends the world. Without awareness of that, the world and the person are troublesome.

And without awareness of that, the world will inspire fear because it's not all that stable, continuous flux, especially at this time, even if we are not affected directly by upheavals that are happening or have recently happened in different parts of the world, Japan, earthquake, tsunami, nuclear reactors, North Africa, upheavals, Middle East. Even if we are not directly affected, we can get a heightened sense, just knowing that this is going on, we can get a heightened sense of the fact that the world is not all that safe. Some people would say it's not safe anymore.

It never was safe, of course. It never is safe. It cannot be and is not meant to be safe.

It's the world of form continuously changing. So whether it's your personal life, if you're clinging for security, there's nothing wrong with arranging your life so that externally you have a certain degree of security to the extent to which it is possible. But if you're looking to, beyond the practical, if you're looking to the world of form, whether it is the structures around you, whether it's in your personal life, through relationship or through your job or through your life insurance, whether you look to that for a sense of inner peace, what is sometimes called peace of mind, or whether you look to the collective structures of your economy, social structures, whether you look to that for a sense of security, it cannot provide you with that for too long. So it's finding something within where a true sense of safety arises that has nothing to do with the externals of your life, personal or collective.

Then if some kind of disaster comes, and of course, inevitably, some kind of disaster will come because this body is going to die, that's a big disaster, sooner or later. And of course, other disasters may happen or may not happen or small, small ways in which things around you dissolve, doesn't have to be a big disaster. It's often those collective disasters that can bring about a leap in awareness in many people who are personally affected by that.

If that is your destiny, that's fine. It may not be your destiny to be affected by some collective disaster. I am sitting here in California at the moment, probably on a fault line.

So there is no absolute security that this chair that I'm sitting on and the floor the chair's on is still going to be here in 20 minutes time before we finish. It probably will be, we can't be sure. Or even that this body will still be alive in 20 minutes time, probably, we can't be sure.

Now it's for many people, it's the challenge of major or minor disasters in their lives that can push them into awakening. Without disaster, and I'm using this term now in a very wide sense, meaning any kind of dissolution of form around you, without that, consciousness would not even evolve. So although on one level, it is true to say that disaster, it is tragic.

Yes, it's terrible. Yes, true. On another level, that also is part of, is a part of a much larger context.

And that larger context is the evolution of consciousness here. Consciousness, of course, is the formless essence within you, not a personal possession. So somehow the fluctuation of forms is part of the way in which consciousness evolves here in this dimension and comes into this dimension more fully.

The dimension of time, the timeless coming into the dimension of time. There's a paradox here, but that's how it is. The timeless within you coming into your personal life of time, that which is beyond the person, shining through the person.

And that is security. Because you can then sense beyond any conceptual explanations or beliefs, you can sense that which is timeless in you, which means eternal, which means indestructible beyond death. It's not that consciousness, don't believe mainstream culture, which tells you that consciousness is an epiphenomenon or a by-product of brain activity.

The brain is born out of consciousness, not the other way around. There's a modicum of consciousness, even in this chair or wherever you look, even inanimate, all around you. All the forms around you are consciousness having taken on a temporary form.

Life, another word for it. So there's life and there are forms of life. You move in that between the two, that's the balancing act, the dance of life between who you are in your essence, which you can sense at this very moment.

If this has any meaning to you, you can sense at this very moment that which is beyond the person in you, which is just the light of consciousness. And you're also aware of, you're still a person in the form. But the security, sense of security can never come from the forms.

That's always an illusory security if it's there. And illusory security is always threatened by an underlying fear. True security, true peace of mind, to use that expression, although it's not the mind, we do not need for disaster to happen in our lives to find that.

And perhaps if we find that without a disaster, or because we've already had our disasters and it has taken us there, perhaps we don't need to experience further external disaster. But if we do, it'll just be a deepening. It will result in a deepening.

Please know that the words that are being spoken here are only moving on the surface. Underneath the words, which you hear, which become concepts in your mind, underneath that is that to which the words point, that which is beyond concepts, beyond words, the underlying, deeper sense of beingness, which is consciousness itself. So as you sit here, as we sit here, as I sit here, I can sense that.

It's a little silly to quantify it, but I could say as I speak here, and this can also be true for you as you listen, 80% of my consciousness, or maybe 90% is just an aware presence. And the remaining 20 or 10% is the mind formulating thoughts, which become words. But the mind that is formulating thoughts is inspired by that which is beyond thoughts.

It's just giving expression, always very limited, to that which cannot be spoken, but can be sensed in here and now. Some traditions may call it the higher self or whatever. It doesn't, as long as higher doesn't mean that you, that concept could mislead you into thinking that it's floating up there.

I'm looking for my higher self. So you're already looking somewhere else. Maybe inner, if your inner self would be a better, deeper self, essential self, or don't call it a self at all as the Buddhists do, the no self, the empty space, or call it the fullness.

The main thing is not to get attached to any concept, but just use it as a pointer. What's important is not the concept as an explanation, but that to which it points. That's why we're here.

So it's important when you listen to the news to be in touch with that space within. And then you can, if you feel compelled to take action, inspired to take action on the outer level to help one way or another, that's fine. But be rooted in the formless.

Every human being is a temporary manifestation in form of the one formless consciousness, which is evolving. And death and destruction is tragic on one level, which cannot be denied, and is part of something greater that can be sensed, not made into some explanation, but it needs to be known directly within you where death and destruction is no longer terrible. So as you sit here, it's an opportunity to be in spacious awareness.

And that is, of course, an enormous shift in consciousness from the normal state of compulsive thinking to spacious awareness right now, in which it seems that you don't know anything anymore. But in which you are connected to the source of all knowing. For any creative person, and everybody is meant to be creative, to fulfill his or her function, it's essential to enter the state of not knowing.

And then let action come out of that. Let words come out of that if they want to. Or just contemplation of the beauty of this world, which is also creative, if you can look around and see the aliveness and depths and beauty of everything.

Because you're no longer burdening the world with your mental concepts, which become the heavy person. And billions of heavy persons are strangling the planet. The act of just creative perception of everything around you.

A sense of wonder and aliveness. Even that's enough. Because what is that?

It is the universe becoming aware of itself. What it, it's saying, wow. You're not separate from the totality of the universe.

Whatever happens in you is part of the totality of the universe. And if you become conscious of the beauty of everything around you, the aliveness, the sacredness, then the universe is becoming conscious of its own creations. The consciousness that you are manifested the plants behind me, in front of me, everything.

The consciousness that you are. So you, you created all that. You are creating it at this moment by perceiving it.

So a conscious person cannot not be creative. And this is conscious, consciousness becoming conscious because it's been a dreamlike state of creating the world dream. Of course, the world dream continues, but in the middle of the world dream, the dreamer is becoming conscious.

And then the dream is no longer threatening. And even the nature of the dream changes. Not that anything is permanent, even in a more pleasant dream, but that's fine.

The demands that things should be permanent isn't there anymore. Freedom from what kept you imprisoned, the conditioned, mind made, sense of self, which we call the person or personality, freedom from that is just the most incredible liberation. And for the rest of your life, you still function as a person, but always at the back, there's the spacious awareness, even while in the foreground, you function as a person or personality.

If that's, that is a shift. And so the rest of your life here is living consciously in that way. Never becoming absorbed by the foreground of your life, which is so seductive, the pull of every thought, the pull of every emotion, every reaction, very seductive.

But your challenge is not to be completely pulled into these arising forms all the time. Yes, you interact with them, you deal with them, but always having a sense of spaciousness there, even as you discuss things, respond to people, deal with situations, listen, speak. The vital question for any person who is in the process of awakening at any moment is, at this moment, is there space in me?

Can I still sense that spaciousness in the background, so to speak? Or am I totally being absorbed by the foreground? That is the dreadful condition.

It's still normal. So nobody knows it's dreadful because it's, everybody's doing it. And then the rest of your life, your so-called life, is an adventure where you experiment with that, you continuously, and you will lose yourself many times in the foreground.

And suddenly you come back. The important thing is coming back. The important thing is not how many, the losing yourself is not important, but are you coming back?

Every time you come back, aware again of the spacious background, there's a growth in consciousness. More consciousness has come into this world through this form. And as a byproduct of that, relatively insignificant, your life becomes more pleasant.

Flows with greater ease. A deeper intelligence takes over. And of course, love.

You approach things, situations, with awareness of the spacious background, as you deal with the foreground, is loving. Very different from what the ego would call love. Welcome to our live meditation, or whatever you want to call it.

Becoming comfortable with just being, but remaining alert. Become aware that there are moments when you're not thinking. And then thought happens again.

And then there's another moment of just spacious presence. Which could arise spontaneously, or you could invite it into your life. Consciously bring more spacious presence into your life.

In daily life, with a simple thing like, for example, occasionally looking up in the sky Well, I don't see the sky here, because there are trees out there, but mostly, usually there's some sky somewhere. Look up at the sky. And for a moment, be aware of whatever is there, whether it's clouds, or clear sky, or completely overcast.

Just be aware of the totality of the sky, which is a vast spaciousness, without calling it anything in your mind. Just looking at the sky during the day. It's amazing that people go throughout, many people go throughout the day without ever really being aware of the sky above.

Because they're so concerned with what's happening down here below. So they're never aware of that spaciousness that surrounds them. So just looking at the sky, brings about a moment of spaciousness, and an interruption in the flow, or the stream of thinking, identification with which constitutes the person, the personal selfhood, sense of self.

So sometimes that arises spontaneously in the mind. In your daily life, a moment of space, a gap between thoughts. And when you don't know, you're not really aware of it, then you only sense it as a moment that feels good, a moment where you feel some joy, or a heightened sense of aliveness, or some inner peace, or even just a contentment with what is.

And usually that means, there's been a gap has arisen in the stream of thinking. You may not know that, and may only interpret it as, as I said, peace, joy, aliveness, happiness, generic term that covers all of those. And when you become conscious of it, when it arises spontaneously, then it can deepen, and you can be in it for longer.

You can be in the timeless dimension for longer. Slight paradox, I'm talking about it from the dimension of form, where there's time, looking at the times, and then the paradoxical statement arises, you can be in the timeless for longer. I've told the story before, some of you may know it, when I lived in London, and traveled on the underground, or the tube, or the subway, every day, there were a couple of stations where there was a more than usually wide gap between the train and the platform.

So when the train arrived at the platform, the doors opened, and the recorded announcement would say, mind the gap, and repeat again and again, mind the gap, mind the gap. Well, and of course, some tourists who didn't know English well enough, there was something more, gap, what's gap, where's the gap? And then they would fall into the gap.

But that could be a spiritual pointer. Be aware of the gap, the inner gap, be aware of what is a gap? A gap is a space between two things.

I don't think that's a dictionary definition of it, but I would define it as the space between two things. There's one thing there, and there's one thing there, in the middle, there's nothing, there's the gap, no thing. So finding the gap inside you between two thoughts, either being aware of it as it arises spontaneously in your life, when you're looking at beauty, or something new and unusual before you interpret it, there's a moment of just spacious perception, and there's the gap.

Look at the sky. Okay? So let's say you're working on your computer, and then the phone rings, you answer, and the text messages come in, and then you become aware of, okay, the moment of spaciousness, and then you look at the sky, completely different state of consciousness immediately arises.

And give yourself half a minute, or one minute to look at the sky. Half a minute is fine. It's not that long.

It brings about a gap when the stream of thinking subsides. And this, the most important thing you can do, if you even want to call it doing, because it frees you from being here only as the person, and you become aware that there is another dimension to who you are, which is the, traditionally called the spiritual dimension. The spiritual dimension is not elsewhere.

It's a dimension within you, where who you are as a person is transcended. And if you don't find that transcendence in your daily life, then there is no spiritual dimension in your daily life. Even if you talk about it, quote spiritual books, there's still no spiritual dimension in your daily life, unless there's the gap.

And it becomes as familiar to be the space as it is to be the person. In fact, more familiar, more satisfying. You really feel that there you are yourself.

In that space. Of course, there are other ways in which you can invite that gap, that space into your life apart from looking at the sky. Anything natural you look at can be helpful and bring about the gap, the tree.

But you have to look innocently with innocent perception, not judging it, comparing it, or referring to your knowledge or memory about it or associations, mental associations, none of that. Just looking like a child who hasn't learned the names yet. So you can either look at one thing and sense the spaciousness behind the perception, the peace, or you can look at the totality of whatever surrounds you.

Whether it's the room or you look out of the window, or if you're outside, just take in the totality of your surroundings, no matter where you are. You could be in a mansion or in a prison cell. It works in the same way.

And then you become aware of, yes, there's all these perceptions, but there's also a sense of spaciousness behind them. Peace. And when you access that dimension, whether you live in a mansion or a prison cell, still, of course, makes a difference in your life, but it's no longer of absolute importance, that's how I put it.

It is of relative importance. Before you have access to that dimension, whatever happens in your life is of absolute importance. It absorbs you completely.

It determines your happiness or unhappiness. Would I rather be in the mansion than in a prison cell? Yes, of course I would.

That doesn't have to be a mansion. It could be a lovely cabin in the woods. But if I had to be in a prison cell, I could still be the space for it and look around and surrender to whatever is there.

So just looking around you is another way of, if you don't name it, of being the space rather than being the person. Then after a while, the person comes back and you start thinking again about your past and your future and your problems and what you have to deal with and people around you. But imagine living all your life with nothing but that, thinking about things you have to deal with and people around you, the situation and liking it and disliking it, and reacting to it and your inner state, depending on whatever happens to be happening around you whether the person close to you is nice or not nice.

Terrible. At the mercy of whatever happens, a little thing falls and you go, you're upset. And never really happy anywhere.

There's always something missing. And then figuring out in your mind how you can become happy. Never getting there.

Because you haven't found who you are beyond the person. Having moments of insight while you meditate in formal meditation, where suddenly perhaps you have a glimpse of, just being the presence, being the space. That's wonderful.

But it needs to translate into everyday life. Otherwise you can only be free when you sit cross-legged on the floor and have your eyes closed and your hands in a particular position and then you go, oh, and then you open your eyes again and it's time to get up. And immediately you're flooded with mental stuff, stream of things.

So you're just meditating. What do I have to do now? So therefore I say it is more important if you have formal meditation, it can be a wonderful help.

Even more important it is to have spacious moments throughout the day so that you become liberated from your attachment to the person, your complete identification with the person. And then the depths within you is there. You suddenly feel, sense that you are deeper than you thought and ever could think.

Because in that spacious presence where you are the unconditioned consciousness that is not confined to this body, that is where you are connected with the one universal consciousness and it merges with the one universal consciousness. So when you look at a statue of the Buddha, this is not the statue of a person that once lived. Nobody knows what the Buddha looked like.

The statue of the Buddha represents a state of consciousness and it is the state of consciousness of being the presence, transcending the person. And that's why the good statues of the Buddha have a hint of a smile because that is where true peace is found, alive peace. And so the Buddha goes like freedom from the person.

And therefore, of course, enlightenment, so-called enlightenment would mean, means to be throughout in your daily life in continuous connection with that dimension, the transcendent dimension. So the person never takes over completely. It still operates.

Therefore, enlightenment is, of course, not a personal achievement. It's there when the person makes room for something deeper. With some people it comes when the person gets battered by life so much that it crumbles the personal sense of self, suffers so much that finally it crumbles and suddenly there's that sense of deep peace and people don't know where that comes from.

Don't wait for that. It doesn't have to be that way. But if it is, then that's fine too.

So noticing when that spacious presence arises spontaneously in your life, perhaps when you look at a baby, it could be there, when you, there's a dog and you look at the dog and you feel the essence of the dog, the life essence, the being of the dog. Perhaps you feel it more easily than the being of another person because the person has a lot of mental stuff in the way. And for a moment, there's a sense of joy or aliveness.

It arises spontaneously. And then in addition, you're invited. I'd mentioned looking at the sky.

I mentioned looking at nature, either one particular thing or looking at the totality of whatever surrounds you, even if it's not nature, even if it's just the room, just look around. And so you, the person in that moment, are not there. You're not, the person is no longer operating when you really look around you because you don't remember at that moment your past or your problems or your name or your date of birth or your ex-wife or ex-husband.

And you don't remember to think about the future. You're not interested in the next moment, what might come tomorrow. At that moment of pure perception, none of this operates.

So that's why I say the person isn't there in that moment. And you are, you become the perceiving consciousness and you are aware of yourself as the perceiving consciousness. If that doesn't, if you can't bring that into your life daily, then there's no spiritual dimension in your life.

Even if you've read a thousand spiritual books, even if you've attended many retreats and workshops, even if you have lived in a monastery for 30 years. Another way of inviting presence, of course, is a conscious breath, as I've often said, and it's well known that that is a good way of meditating, breath awareness. It doesn't have to be, however, a long meditation.

It can be a moment of one conscious breath in and out. Conscious means you're aware as you breathe in. You feel the air flowing into your body and you're there with your attention.

And there's no effort involved. You're not doing anything. You're just observing what's happening.

So the breath awareness is not a doing. If it's a doing, then it's not really working. So there's just, and during that gap or space, you are not a person.

You are the presence. So that's another way of inviting that dimension into your life. And you may notice that gradually, your absorption in the stream of thinking becomes less complete as you bring more spaces, moments of spaciousness into your life.

That also affects the way in which your mind operates. So thought still can draw you in, but after a while you notice it doesn't draw you in 100%. And that's the next step is that you find even while you're thinking, there's still an awareness of yourself as the space in which these thoughts happen.

So you're not totally identified with the thinking anymore. And that's the beginning of the end of ego because ego is complete identification with thoughts and the emotions that go with the thoughts. They come to come together.

And then after a while, there's a continuous realization of the depths within you, even while you speak and think and listen. And you might just notice that thoughts are not that overpowering or important anymore. You become less interested in the stories and then he did this.

And you know what he said to me then? And then I said, how dare he? What was he thinking when he did that?

I wonder why he did that. And then comes the interpretation. Oh, he did that because, who knows?

It doesn't have to be that complicated. You can look into another person's eyes or right now, you can look into my eyes and just be the presence that's looking, just as I am the presence behind the looking, feeling, sensing yourself as the presence, not the person. So that means there is more than a connection between us.

There's a sense of non-separation because there's no more interference of thoughts, judgments, et cetera, et cetera. And the same presence is only one consciousness manifesting through and as different forms. And then comes the realization that when you look at me or into my eyes as the presence, you know that I am the presence just as you are and as such, we are one.

And that's why you love me. You love me as yourself. You recognize the oneness.

Any true love is always that. No separation, no sense of separation. So the person cannot love.

You cannot be a person, only a person in the absence of the transcendent dimension, which is obscured, the same as the other person. And then there are two persons thinking they love each other, but you can't. And of course it always goes wrong.

It never was love. It was a need for the other. And you can know that it wasn't love because if for whatever reason, the other suddenly leaves you or says, I love somebody else, suddenly, immediately you'll hate them.

And then the mind comes with the stories. He betrayed me. Of course, it's all true from the point of view of the ego, yes.

But if you're trapped in that thought, you're trapped in some prison cell, perhaps for the next 20 years, the prison of your mind. So let's just be here as the presence, look around, look back at me being the presence. Thank you.

Thank you. This is our evening meditation, which means more silence than words, hopefully, because you never know what comes out of this mouth. I don't.

And hopefully your stomach is not too full of good Italian food so that you can stay awake during the meditation. And if you notice somebody next to you drifting off and falling below thought, instead of rising above thought, maybe you can, or somebody in front of you, tap them on the shoulder gently. You don't need to hit them like the Zen masters.

If you feel at any point you want to close your eyes, it's fine. There's a common belief that when you meditate, your eyes need to be closed, but they don't need to be closed. It's wonderful to realize you can meditate with your eyes open.

Of course, what do I mean by meditate? Quite simply, being in thoughtless awareness. That's meditation.

And as I speak, and as you listen, you can be in thoughtless awareness, just a presence. Why not? You don't have to be always a heavy person carrying the baggage of past and a mind full of stuff.

There is another way of being in this world, and that's to be the presence. And this is all meditation. And even as I speak, you can be the presence because there's nothing to think about.

What I'm saying is so simple that you cannot figure it out by thinking about it because there's nothing to figure out. You can't work, what is he saying? What he's saying, exactly what he's saying.

You can't say, oh, I'm trying to understand what he's saying. There's nothing to understand. Stepping out of thinking does not involve further understanding through thinking.

That may be a little insulting, particularly to those of you who are highly educated and identify excessively with the content of your mind, that thinking is not the highest faculty in a human being. And that is a revolutionary statement that not many people in the mainstream culture would agree with, because all they know themselves is as thinking entities. But once you discover that thinking is not the highest, because you've touched something, a dimension in yourself that's beyond thinking, that is an evolutionary leap.

Even if you fall back into thinking, for a moment you have leapt like the first fish trying to leap out of the sea because they say life has developed in the sea and trying to crawl on land. It's you stopping thinking. And then it gets too difficult and then the fish gets back into the sea.

But that analogy, of course, we need to forget now because it's not going to take us several million years as it took to the fishes before they could start walking on land. If that whole story is true, who knows? It doesn't matter.

So as you might have noticed, what I'm talking about is very simple because I'm simply guiding you into presence, that's all. But more important than the words is what's behind and in between the words. And we could call that spaciousness or we could call that stillness.

Stillness doesn't matter what you call it, but you become more aware of the spaciousness than the words and the spaciousness is within you. It's there the moment the stream of thinking subsides. And there's only the presence left.

If your mind still tends to interfere and take you out of presence, allow the body, your body, to participate in the meditation so that you become present with every cell of the body. Every cell of the body becomes present. Now, somebody might say, okay, please explain what you mean by that.

No, I won't. It's too simple for that. Just sense the aliveness in your body.

Anywhere where you can feel it first is fine, the hands or the legs or the feet. And then the entire energy field that pervades the body becomes part of presence. And at first it seems that you, the consciousness, are observing the inner body feeling but if you go into it more deeply, you realize that there's no longer a subject, object relationship between you, the presence, and the feeling of the inner body.

You, the presence, and the feeling of the inner body merge and the totality of that becomes the state of presence. So it's no longer an observer and the observed. There's a merging of the observer and the observed.

So it means the entire being becomes aware. And that's a lovely state. Peaceful.

And then it's fairly easy not to drift off into thinking tomorrow's breakfast or next week's problems. Or last year's disappointments. And many other things that thinking is concerned with.

My problematic life. Somebody, perhaps it was Carl Jung, I'm not sure, said you cannot solve the problems of this world on the same level of consciousness that created the problems. So you can't solve your personal problems, which everybody has, unless you rise to a different state of consciousness, which is why we are here.

And when you solve your personal problems, that a sufficient number of humans do that, then that will affect the world problems. And that's how truly you can change the world, or to put it more accurately, how that change can happen. Through you.

It's not you, the doer, who is going to change the world, but it can happen through you. In the meantime, there's nothing wrong. In fact, it's wonderful to alleviate suffering where you see it in this world, where you feel called upon to help in your immediate environment or elsewhere.

That's a wonderful thing to do. But the causal level of the world's problems lies in the collective consciousness or unconsciousness of the world. And that is the only place, the consciousness, where deep and permanent change can happen so that eventually you don't need to help other humans anymore.

They don't need your help anymore. You can just commune joyfully with them. So you deal, of course, with the effects of unconsciousness in this world.

There's a lot of suffering, physical and psychological. And your focal point, even as you help others, your focal point needs to be this shift in consciousness. So the entire body is meditating, so to speak, is present as you sit here.

And you can now perhaps easily verify the effectiveness of a meditation question that was one of the favorite meditations of Ramana Maharshi, the Indian sage. And that was the simple question, who am I? He said, just ask yourself that question and go deeply into it and then see what happens.

Who am I? And a little hint, I don't know if he gave that hint. The answer is not in words.

The answer is, let's see if it comes to you. Who am I? And you need to be, of course, alert and still after the question has been asked so that you can find out, who am I?

I'll give you another hint. You can't think about it. Then you get confused.

And then you will say, either you'll say, of course, I'm so and so, of course, then you're certain, but you're well below the answer. Or you say, I don't know, I'm so confused now. You're confusing me.

That's because you're trying to find an answer through thinking. Who am I? What remains is just an alertness, an alert space.

That's consciousness, let's call it your consciousness, but it's not yours. That's your consciousness minus the content, minus forms. Who am I?

And if you had, if somebody were forcing you to give an answer in words, the truthful answer would be, I don't know. Because it is not through any word or concept that you can know who you are. So on the level of words or concepts, you have to say, I don't know.

And yet there is undoubtedly a presence there that has no name and has no content and has no past and no future and no problems. Totally intangible, formless. This was what Jesus referred to as the kingdom of heaven.

Heaven, the vastness of sky. Heaven and sky in some words are the same word in some languages. He had to find some kind of word to describe the spaciousness of that inner state.

So he called it the kingdom in modern terminology, the dimension or the realm of vastness or spaciousness. But it's not the outer spaciousness, it's the inner. But of course, all words refer to outer things.

The kingdom of heaven is within you. And that's why, as it has no content and no form, the Buddha called it emptiness. So that is there, you don't need to sit in meditation to be that, to sense that.

In the background, in daily life, you practice thoughtlessness. Thoughtless in English has negative connotations, but it shouldn't have. It implies it's unawareness and you don't know what you're doing.

But there's a positive here when we use thoughtlessness, it has a very positive meaning. You've risen above thought. The way it's used in normal culture is you've fallen below thought and you don't know what you're doing.

This spaciousness, this inner spaciousness can be there at any time in your daily life. You bring in until it becomes permanent in the background of your being so that no matter what you do and even while you're thinking, there's still something you sense that's deeper than thinking so you're no longer lost in thinking. In other words, you are not the slave of the mind anymore.

You're not possessed by that entity anymore. And then it functions beautifully. Being here should help you to grow in, as I sometimes call it, presence power so that this presence arises more through you, in you.

So in your daily life, you can suddenly enter the state of spaciousness. Spacious awareness in between two actions, for example. Walking from here to there, picking something up, looking out of the window, five seconds of alert, spacious awareness as you're looking at the clouds instead of looking out of the window and having some kind of commentary about what you're looking at.

Not another rainy day. You don't need that. And even more beautiful sunshine, you can go beyond that too and just spacious awareness.

Five minutes, five seconds looking out of the window. Getting dressed while you put on your shoes. Just be alert, the alert presence instead of projecting yourself mentally to some future moment.

And as I said before, whenever you're waiting for something, a wonderful opportunity for entering that, go into the body. That can very easily take you there or pay attention to sense perceptions and feel as you pay attention to sense perceptions, feel the presence without which there would be no sense perceptions. You can do that now.

So there's what you see and what you hear. These are the two predominant sense perceptions here. There's what you see and what you hear.

That makes up what I call it, as you might know, the surface of the present moment. All the sense perceptions are the surface of the present moment. Changes all the time.

And then there's the depths of the present moment that does not change. The now that is forever here, totally timeless. That is your presence, that space.

So you are what arises and more fundamentally, you are the space in which it arises. Ultimately, they're not separate, but we don't know to go into that now. You are the space for whatever arises in that space of consciousness.

So content, I call it, there's content. The content of your consciousness is sense perceptions, seeing, hearing, smelling, touching. Feeling.

The content of your consciousness is thoughts. The content of your consciousness is emotions. Those are basically, your life consists of, put these into a pot, sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions, stir.

Add a little bit of cayenne pepper. That's the drama. And whatever else, other spices that you want to add.

But basically, that is your life. The life which changes, your life is different from your life and your life and your life. They're all different lives and different worlds, but basically, the basic ingredients of your life and whatever your life situation is, are sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions.

Is there anything else on the surface? No. Now, all of that is content.

All of that is form. Now, for most people, that's all they know about their lives. They only know their life and themselves as a mixture, and every mixture is somehow different, of sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions.

And that's all there is, as far as they know. What they don't realize is, without the light of awareness, in which sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions appear, they wouldn't even, they couldn't exist. That is the space for them, and that is the consciousness itself.

And that, once you realize that dimension within yourself, the content of your life is of secondary importance. Before, it mattered so much what happened, or didn't happen, or failed to happen, or success, or failure, and it was, and you were so miserable when things went wrong, and you're elated when you fall in love. Of course, it doesn't last.

It doesn't last. When you only know content, you get more and more frustrated with life. And then you realize there is a deeper dimension, and that deeper dimension is who I am, essentially.

That is the true I, not the I that identifies with content, forms that arise. So that is truly the secret of life for humans, and others, I suppose, wherever they are, on this planet, and elsewhere in the galaxy, and other galaxies, because it cannot be that much different in other places in this galaxy, or other galaxies. There will be form and space, both externally, you can look around, and you can always see stuff.

In a room, you see the furniture. If you're outside, you see trees, and so on. Or if you look up into space at night, you see stars, most of which are suns, distant suns.

And what else do you see? Well, you don't see it, but there's vast spaciousness there. And even in this room, you might not pay attention to it, but this room could not exist if, in addition to the furniture in this room, and the physical bodies in this room, and all the other things in this room, and the ceiling, floor, and the walls of this room, if there were not space.

The space is the essence of this room. You can't say the room, if you describe the room, usually people would write down, give children a school exercise, describe this room, ceiling, walls, floor, what's in this room. Is that all there is?

Yes. Forgotten anything? No.

Except the most important thing, forgotten. It's the space. There's already a beautiful few short verses about this in the ancient Chinese Tao Te Ching, where it says, if you have a vessel or bowl, that which makes it useful is the space within it.

It's not the vessel. It's the space that's the essence of it. Those are lines.

So, in the same way, your life, or life anywhere in this galaxy, or the most distant galaxy, I can guarantee you that, even if they don't have physical bodies, there will be some forms, and there will be space in which these forms exist. So, no matter where you look, out there, here, the room, outside, it always applies. There is form, content, and space.

And space seems to be infinite. If you look into outer space, if you try to comprehend, nobody has reached the end of space. Nobody can say, does it end anywhere?

That was a problem for me when I was eight or nine years old. I tried to imagine the end of space. You go on, and you go on, and then suddenly, but what's beyond that?

And if there is something beyond, it is not the end. And I asked my father, and he tried also to envision, and he couldn't do it either. And this is why it's called infinity.

Infinity, and another lovely word, that's one with it, really, eternity. Infinity and eternity. They're really one.

I think that Einstein would agree with that. Time and space, space-time continuum. And infinity and eternity are your own essence.

Because what you discover within is the very foundation for the universe. That spaciousness is the space out of which everything came before the big bang. Just timeless, eternal, eternity and infinity, no form.

Scientists, they stop there. Sometimes they try to figure out the big bang, but nobody tries to go before the big bang because you can't. There was no before because there was no time.

Can't understand that. You go mad if you try to understand it. But you can know this experientially within yourself as inner space, just presence.

And as we saw the other day, we talked about the medieval form of spirituality like St. Francis attempting, not seeking, pleasant forms. St. Francis never sought out, he appreciated when they came, flowers and so on, but not seeking them out. In fact, being very happy with unpleasant forms, almost seeking out unpleasant forms.

And seeking out, like in the story that we heard, the man who went to the city square, sat there in the middle and got mocked and things thrown at him every day. And he went back every day in an attempt, I would call it, he wouldn't have called it that because he used different terminology, in an attempt at self annihilation, the annihilation of the ego. If you go back to the same square where you're mocked and people throw things at you and pull your hair and laugh at you and you go back every day, it is an attempt at inviting the death of the ego, the ego being identification with form, with content.

And if you make it so unpleasant, the content in your life, the idea behind it is that it forces you into transcendence. It forces you into going beyond content. And suddenly you find that deep peace inside and you don't know where it comes from.

And externally, there's the unpleasant conditions, but you have disidentified from them, thereby the ego has died. And then whatever terminology used to explain what happens to you then depends on your culture. As this man might have said, the monk, I don't know what he would have said, I became one with God or the sacredness or infinity, eternal peace.

And traditionally, one spiritual path in Christianity is closely related to that. And that is identification with the suffering of Jesus on the cross. So any suffering that you undergo, in your mind, you undergo it together with, you're repeating the archetype of the suffering of Jesus.

And that is how the image of the man on the cross can lead, if you identify with it, can, there's no guarantee it could mislead you too. There are lots of ways in which it can go wrong. It can lead to self-annihilation of the ego and then to an awakening into the formless.

And you're then in whatever terminology you use, you're one with the one, you're one with God. You are self-realized, enlightened, whatever you want to use, or you're simply at peace. So that can work too.

Most Christians have no idea these days that that can be a spiritual path. But for them, they practice a more superficial form of Christianity, mostly fairly superficial. A few Christians may go deep, but many practice it.

They don't see the depths in their own tradition. And because so many people don't see it anymore, Christianity is now at a dangerous point where nothing is forever, even everything evolves. So Christianity will either deepen or change or disappear.

And even the Pope knows that. He said, pointed to the fact that it was a critical time for the Christian religion. If you are a practicing Christian, this can still be a viable path to reaching that egoless state of oneness with whatever you want to call it.

If you're a Buddhist, that can still be a viable path or whatever it is, or you may not follow any tradition. And this is for the first time, as far as I know in the history of humanity, that spirituality arises without belonging to any particular, any one tradition without rejecting any of the older traditions. So self-annihilation, basically that's the basis of St. Francis, also practiced by many yogis and sadhus in India who practice extreme austerities and seek out unpleasantness. You don't have to do that. That's why you're here. But if you were not here, there are many other ways.

You could go to India and sit in a cave for 20 years, being stung by mosquitoes, but not minding anymore. And all kinds of bugs come and creep on you. And a few people will come and feed you.

It won't be gourmet food, but that's okay. You don't want gourmet food anymore. You want the worst, so that you can disidentify from form, so that life forces you deeper so that you go beyond all form.

That's the idea behind it. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. And if it doesn't work, then you just become more and more lifeless.

Have another go next time. But the most rapid way to self-annihilation and easier, more pleasant, but you need to be up to it. Your consciousness needs to have reached a certain level where this becomes a viable path for you.

And that is simply the cessation of compulsive thinking. To end compulsive thinking, so that you can enter by choice, I would say, and choose when you want to think and you don't want to think. And this is why, as I've quoted before, the wonderful words of the sage Nisargadatta Maharaj, who defined meditation, when they asked him, what is meditation?

And in his unique way of speaking, he said, meditation, it's the radical refusal to harbor thoughts. That's how he spoke. I saw some old videos.

The radical refusal to harbor thoughts. And that stopped some people's minds. I used to quote years ago in talks I haven't in a long time, the Zen master who, when asked to explain the true meaning of Zen, which even the monks who had been in the monastery for 10, 15, and 20 years didn't understand, please explain the true meaning of Zen.

And wherever he went and he was asked that question, he would never give a verbal answer. He would only raise his finger and look at you. And so the questioner would go, did you hear what I said?

But a few questioners got it. And that's called Satori. Satori is a moment of a flash of enlightenment.

It might not last, but it's a flash. Great teaching. Zen originally came into being because Buddhism had already become burdened with conceptualization and intellectualism.

And then Zen represented a renewal, a complete doing away with all scriptures, everything, just a direct pointing to the heart of humans or whatever the scriptures later said about it. Direct pointing, no more reference to old ancient scriptures. And you even have stories like the Buddha statues, the Buddha rupas, not to venerate them excessively.

In fact, if the Zen master got cold in the winter, he would be quite capable of throwing the wooden Buddha statue into the fire to keep. So Zen was a very radical thing. And then over the centuries, it became assumed more form.

Some of the power was lost, except in a few masters here and there. Then in itself, all became already also burdened to some extent. But originally Zen is a wonderful, wonderful teaching.

Basically, as you know, don't think. That's Zen. I just saved you 20 years in the monastery.

Let's just go within for a moment and close our eyes. I will use the bell as a signal to bring you back here and then we'll finish our meditation. You can go into the body if you like.

[Speaker 5] (9:34:24 - 9:34:28)

In honor of Maya. Of Maya. Your Maya.

[Speaker 7] (9:34:28 - 9:34:29)

Yeah.

[Speaker 5] (9:34:29 - 9:34:48)

My question is that killing and eating other sentient beings, animals, seems on some level just fundamentally wrong to me. But yet I can't find any spiritual justification for being a vegetarian. So I just wondered if you would speak to that.

If you would speak to that issue of eating meat or not.

[Speaker 2] (9:34:48 - 9:34:51)

Okay. Are you a vegetarian?

[Speaker 5] (9:34:51 - 9:34:59)

I'm not. I have been on a couple different occasions in my life, but it's real difficult living with a meat-loving husband.

[Speaker 2] (9:35:03 - 9:35:10)

And in what ways do you, you said it seems fundamentally wrong. What ways do you see it as fundamentally wrong?

[Speaker 5] (9:35:11 - 9:35:43)

Well, that's where my conflict comes in. I understand that that's the way of life, is that even animals eat other animals sort of thing. And maybe what bothers me probably more than actually eating animals is the way our society processes, keeps animals in an inhumane way.

I live in a rural area and I pass dairy farms and chicken houses all the time. And I can't eat veal anymore, once you see how these animals are kept.

[Speaker 2] (9:35:43 - 9:35:44)

Yes.

[Speaker 5] (9:35:44 - 9:35:48)

So some of it might not be meat itself so much as what we do to these creatures.

[Speaker 2] (9:35:48 - 9:45:16)

Yes, the unconsciousness of how the meat is raised. Right, exactly. Yeah.

Yeah. Yes, I believe that too. I mean, the unconsciousness on the planet and how we grow our food and what we do to these animals.

And I can't remember which documentary film it was. Was it Food Inc. or something like that?

Where it showed how chickens are raised and it's like, you're right, it's inhumane. And it's interesting what I, in the movie Avatar, what I found so beautiful in that movie is when the aliens knew that somehow sometimes killing happens, death has to happen, you kill something. But it was beautiful that there was this blessing that was said.

After the killing took place, before the killing took place, it's like, wow, thank you for this, I'm so sorry. Whatever, I can't remember the words that were used. I know there are some religions that believe that you should be vegetarian.

I was, in fact, in one of those religions for a time in my early 20s where you should be vegetarian. And they gave these reasons of, you know, well, in the beginning of Adam and Eve's time, they only ate fruits and vegetables. And it wasn't later until, you know, in the Bible, they started eating meat and all this sort of stuff.

And yes, that may be the case in the biblical sort of story. But only each person in themselves can really know within themselves what feels right for them. But I do believe that if you eat meat, if you want to eat meat, to buy and eat organic, humanely raised meat, and bless it, wow, you have a blessing for this life that has given its life to us.

And it's the same with fruits and vegetables. Actually, that's a living being as well. They're living.

So is one wrong and the other right? It's all life. So the blessing can be given for everything, for the vegetables that we take the life of by picking it out of the ground.

So it is life. Now, whether or not we were actually meant to, I have no idea, you know? I mean, it's, in nature, there are some animals that are meat-eating animals.

They have fangs, they can bite into it, they eat it. On the other hand, one can say, well, we don't really have those fangs. So are we supposed to eat meat?

Don't know. But only you will know what's right for you. When you're in colder climates and the plants and vegetables can't grow on the ground, what do you do?

So the question really is, is how, if you can just remain without judgment of anyone else in what they do in terms of eating, what foods they eat, but just go deeply within and feel what's right for you, this is how you will know. Now, how we get there to feel what's right for us it's like we have to, in a way, we have been living so numbly. I mean, we have been eating food that is truly not healthy for us.

It's been full of preservatives, you know, full of antibiotics. So, I mean, it's like we've lost all sensitivity within our whole body to know truly what's good for us. We don't even know when we're hungry anymore.

We'll just sometimes eat and eat and eat. We don't even know when we're hungry. We can't feel it.

We've lost that connection of feeling our bodies. So when you actually clean yourself out, there are many ways to do that. I do cleanses all the time.

You know, not all the time, but you know, at least three or four times a year. In fact, I was saying to Shannon and Anthony, I said, you know, I think I want to do a retreat that we're fasting. And they're like, well, does that mean we have to fast too?

But it's a cleansing. It's like a purifying of the body because we've grown sluggish inside. So as we awaken every cell of our body, we begin to feel what's right for us.

And it's amazing when you clean yourself on the physical level, when you can taste the difference between, like say you're eating a nice raw salad, your body, my body goes, wow, yes, yes. I'm getting some nutrients and food. And then when I eat something that say, for example, cooked and all the life has been out of it, you know, cooked out of it, or, you know, you eat something that's kind of junky and you go, oh, why did I eat that?

Only the next day you go eat it again. Because we lose this connection. We've lost connection, not only to the essence of who we are, but even in this, the form, our holy temples, this is our holy bodies here.

So it, get in touch with your holy body. It's so sad when, you know, it's interesting. We were staying with a family one time and they have a young boy and he was eating, you know, like Kentucky fried chicken and, you know, chips and cookies and all that sort of stuff.

And his mother offered this fruit and it's just like, no, no, no, I don't want that. But I ended up having some fruit there and I took one bite into it. I realized this is not a peach.

I remember what peaches taste like. This is not a peach. Like even, I mean, if we don't buy the organic things, we're not even eating fruit.

I don't know what we're eating, but we're not eating fruit. This is not a strawberry. It doesn't even taste like a strawberry.

Remember that lush, just juicy feeling when you would bite into it when we were kids? Well, those of us who are old enough. Remember that, you know, you just pick it from the tree.

It was just so juicy. You buy it from the store. It was just so juicy.

It was all natural. All the sugar already there inherent in that fruit was so sweet. Well, it's not even sweet anymore.

And I thought, no wonder these kids are not eating fruit. It's not even fruit. It doesn't even taste sweet.

It doesn't even taste like fruit. I love fruit because I remember what it tastes like. So I'll eat it and I'll buy something.

If I end up eating something, it's like, oh, I don't want to eat this because it's not fruit. So they are starving. Our children are starving for something real, but they don't have it available to them for whatever reasons.

There's not enough money to buy organic food. What a shame. You know, it's like we can't even feed our children organic, fresh fruits and vegetables.

They don't know what it tastes like. They can grow up and not even know what an apple really tastes like. That's sad.

So, but they have to fill themselves with something. They are dying for that sweetness. So they grab that.

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[Speaker 5] (0:00 - 3:32)

what an apple really tastes like. That's sad. So, but they have to fill themselves with something.

They are dying for that sweetness, so they grab that sugar, that chocolate bar, the candy, anything. They're filling themselves up. And they don't know what they're really, what the body is really calling for is something living, organic, fresh.

So whether or not we are meant to eat meat, I don't know. Only you can know, and don't judge another. It's going to be different for everyone.

Eckhart eats everything. He'll eat meat sometimes, rarely, but he'll eat, you know, mainly if he does eat meat, it's chicken. I, on the other hand, will really not, once in a blue moon will eat meat, but mainly I eat a lot of just vegan food.

Fish, occasionally. But that's this makeup here. And Eckhart has his makeup.

He comes from Europe. Where there is a lot of meat eating over there. So only you can really know for yourself in the moment.

And even if you are a vegetarian, are you only a vegetarian because your mind is telling you it's better to be one? Maybe that once in a while, if you're in touch with your body, you do need that fish, or you do need that meat. Go within and find out what is it that my body wants.

You're looking at a menu. Oh, what do I want today? You know, you're going through all the menu and sometimes you just got to, okay, I just got to tap within and see what my body needs right now.

So being a vegetarian and being spiritual are not necessarily hand in hand. You don't really necessarily go together. Because if you think, well, I'm spiritual because I'm a vegetarian.

They're eating meat. There's something wrong with them. They're not very spiritual.

That's an idea, a thought. All thoughts are not the truth. And we get fooled by them all the time, believing in them, thinking that it's truth when it's not.

Not one thought is the truth.

[Speaker 1] (3:35 - 32:49)

Good to be here in this moment. If you're not fully here yet, I invite you to enter the present moment with your attention instead of being absorbed in your thinking. And that simple thing is a shift in consciousness.

How do I enter the present moment somebody is thinking right now? I can't get out of my head. An easy way is to direct your attention to sense perceptions, whatever you see and hear at this moment and become a little bit more alert and go, oh, there's an alertness that arises and that heightens your sense perceptions, auditory, visual, and you suddenly become conscious of your surroundings.

And you might notice that one's usual state, well, not yours because you're all advanced spiritual practitioners, but other people's usual state is they're hardly here. They're only present enough not to bump into furniture. Whatever is happening around them is peripheral to their attention.

And a huge amount of their attention is continuously absorbed by thinking. And a lot of that is actually not terribly relevant to anything, but it pretends to be extremely important. Every thought has this seductive quality to it.

It wants to draw you in. It has a pull like a magnet. And if you follow each thought, it'll take you, you're at the mercy of whatever arises in your mind.

And you live like that. What a terrible existence. And you go drawn this way and that way.

And then after a few years, you can see it in your face. Your face becomes very tense. And there's no longer a light shining through your eyes.

Because all the consciousness is being devoured by the mind. And that's a dreadful state. It's been like this for a long, long time, many thousands of years.

And that really your entire sense of who you are, which is the most vital thing to know who you are. This is why the ancient dictum at the Oracle in Delphi says, know yourself. And one of the very important meditation recommended by, for example, Ramana Maharshi and other teachers is the question, who am I?

So your sense of who you are when you are completely identified with every thought that comes into your head, a lot of it negative, by the way, because negative thoughts are more seductive than positive thoughts. You can think about an unpleasant person who did something to you yesterday or said something, or failed to say something, or failed to do something, or should have done something. You can think about that for a long time, but you can't think that much about a beautiful sunset.

Okay. So all the things that make life worth living actually involve less thinking for joy to come into your life, a moment of joy. You go, ah.

And you might not realize that in that moment, there is a space that opens up inside you when you are not thinking, but not falling asleep either. There's just a space of alertness. And that is really already a glimpse that is what in Zen they call Satori, which is a flash of enlightenment, a flash, a momentary realization.

Beauty, to recognize beauty anywhere, for a moment, the thinking mind needs to subside and a little bit of space opens up and you go and then you truly look. And you might not notice it, but for a few seconds, you're not thinking. If you're thinking, you're not really seeing.

You can say, oh, that's a lovely flower. I wish I had that in my garden, but you're not really seeing it. To really see it, there needs to be a moment of alert presence in which thinking subsides.

Oh, there it is. And that's how beauty reveals itself to you. And that's how joy arises.

And that's how any feeling that is empathy with another human being, you cannot arrive at empathy or compassion through the judgmental mind. There needs to be a space within you that opens up and you can look at another human being without any conceptualization in your head. You look at them and you sense something in them that is deeper than their psychological makeup.

But there is a presence. It can only be realized through the presence within you. So that is the dimension within you without which your life, you're not really truly alive.

Or as Confucius would say, you're not fully human yet. If that dimension has not yet arisen in you, has not revealed itself to you, you are just on your, yes, of course, you are on your way. Everybody's on their way to becoming fully human, but you're not that, not quite there yet.

And some people are so deeply trapped in their minds that they live in a total, completely conceptualized universe where every human they meet, they immediately judge. And they take entire groups of humans and judge them. And so they dehumanize them.

And this is how violence can happen. Total loss of empathy. You no longer know what you're doing.

You no longer know what you're doing to other humans. We all know from recent events last week, people asked, how is it possible that humans can perpetrate such atrocities? Well, they are possessed by certain thoughts in your head.

They have taken over their minds. They're called religious thoughts. Nothing to do with anything.

It's not, it's not true religion. It's an ideology. It is a viral infection, so to speak, of your mind.

Thoughts can act like viruses. If you're not careful, they can take over completely. So a few groups of thoughts possess your entire mind and control everything.

Everything is seen through that viral infection in your mind, to use that analogy. And it's an amazing thing. So these are extreme ways, but millions are suffering from that, not perhaps as an extreme way as the terrorists, but millions are experiencing symptoms of that kind, lesser symptoms of the same disease.

So to know yourself, for most people, means it's an identification with certain images in their mind. First of all, there's the image, I am this physical body. And then, what is it that people derive their sense of identity from, the sense of who they are?

Usually it's with their physical appearance, and then the inner world of their thoughts, accompanied by emotions. And lots of emotions are, lots of very heavy emotions are created by dysfunctional thinking. We all know that.

And in the past, before you were spiritually awakened, you experienced that also. So there is a vast dimension in yourself that isn't, now, let's call it the transcendent dimension of who you are. There, where the person or the personality that you usually identify with, that usually gives you your sense of self, which consists of self-talk, basically.

The habitual self-talk in the head explains to you who you are. And it takes on board what others tell you who you are. It starts with what your mother might have told you who you are, and your siblings, and parents, and your environment, and your culture tells you who you are.

And this is absorbed by the mind, and then it becomes your story. And then that becomes a foundation for your sense of identity. This is where you derive your sense of self from.

So it's a conceptualized, because thoughts are concepts, a conceptualized sense of self. It's not, and then it attempts to make itself feel a little better by adding more concepts to their mind. There might be possessions.

Maybe if I get further more possessions, I can feel better about myself. Maybe if I find the right person who is going to make me happy, then my life will be fine. But these are all really concepts.

Even the big house or the big car gets translated into a concept in your mind, and then you identify with it, and it becomes part of the sense of me. But always uneasy and never enough, and never satisfied for very long, and always things seem to go wrong.

The Buddha already recognized that.

He said, wherever you go and whatever you do, you'll find dukkha, which is translated traditionally as suffering, but can also be translated as misery or unhappiness or unsatisfactoriness. So on that level, you can never be satisfied for very long. If you don't know who you are, but you're trying to enhance that mind-made sense of self.

So the most important dimension, one could say you only know one half of yourself, and that half is who you are on the level of form, physical form and the psychological form of me. And that's how most people live their lives, and they don't know what they are missing. Now, spiritual people have the idea that there is such a thing as a state of enlightenment that can be reached at some point.

Many Buddhists believe that a few more incarnations are definitely need, but then perhaps I will eventually get there. So it is made into some idea in the head that I need to reach and not realizing that that dimension, which we could call the spiritual dimension, which we could call the transcendent dimension, or which we could call who you really are, that is always already there. That is already present here and now.

And why do some people not know it? Because they are continuously completely overlooking it. Because the movement of thought plus the emotions that go with it has an enormous seductive quality that it hypnotizes you into continuously identifying with form that arise.

And every thought is a thought form, and every emotion that arises is an emotional, it's not a physical form, but it's an energy formation. Every thought is an energy formation, every emotion is an energy formation. You cannot see it, but you can feel it, and it has certain, it affects the body in certain ways.

So those things continuously absorb your attention, and there's something very vital that you overlook, and that is something deeper without which you couldn't even think. There would be no thought, there would be no sense perception. So what you then overlook is the presence, the formless presence of consciousness itself, which is always there.

If you stop thinking for three seconds, there it is. Where? Because if you look for it as if you could say, there it is, you'll never find it.

So if you look for enlightenment as if it could be something that arises, and you can say, ah, there it is, and now I have it, then you will never find it, because you would, it's not, that's not how you, you cannot grasp it. Can you, now let's bring this to what really matters right now. Can you sense that apart from any thoughts that may be going through your head right now, hopefully not many, maybe none, there is also in you the dimension of simple, formless presence.

To get you there, I could ask you the question, what does it really feel like to be you right now? What is that feeling of, what does it, what is it sense, what does it feel like to be you? Now, when I say you, I don't mean your personal history, you don't have to remember that for this practice.

What does it, something deeper that has never left you, that has always been there and always will be there, what does it feel like? Can you sense the presence that you are, that has nothing to do with your personal history at all? There is simply the light of presence.

And meditation, of course, is supposed to get you there, but you can, at any moment, you can be aware of it. How? Not by making it an object of your attention that doesn't work, because that awareness or that consciousness that is the essence of who you are, when you're looking for it and you go, okay, I'm looking for that great experience, the alertness behind the looking is it.

So if you're looking, if you're looking for yourself, if you're looking for the enlightened version of yourself in some future moment, you are missing that the very consciousness that becomes the looking, if you could catch it at a slightly earlier stage, where it's just pure consciousness, is it already. So if you can know yourself as consciousness, as the presence, then you realize the hidden dimension of life, or the transcendent dimension. I sometimes call that the other half.

It's not only a way of speaking, it's you can't divide life into two halves. But temporarily, just to help us approach this, see for a moment that your life consists of the life of form, physical form, mental form, but also of inner presence. In the same way, if you could, I could use an analogy of this room, if you wanted to investigate what is the essence of this room here, and you start looking at the people in it, let's maybe in this analogy, the people are the thoughts in your mind.

And then you're looking at the furniture and the walls, and the ceiling and everything. Okay, okay, I'm trying to get to the essence of this room. And then you can you can even analyze with microscopes.

Maybe it's hidden in the carpet, but maybe it's maybe with a telescope, maybe if I click my binoculars, maybe it's on that wall somewhere. And you miss the one thing that is pervades the entire room, which is the space of this room. So if you could pay attention to the space of this room, you would get the essence.

Without the space, the room means nothing. It we're using an analogy here, that there is a spaciousness within you, that is continuously missed, because you're so interested in the furniture in your head. And for many people, their mind is crammed full with furniture.

You can't even move anymore. And here comes another thought, and then here comes this. No space.

And the loss of spaciousness is the most terrible loss in life, because then joy, real joy cannot arise anymore. Love, which is a sense of connect, true connectedness with another, that all arises from a little bit of spaciousness inside you. Sometimes people become spacious for three seconds when they see a dog.

That's why I have this book about dogs and cats. You see a dog, and you look into the eyes of a dog, and you go, ah, it feels good. People love dogs, except people who don't.

But most people seem to love dogs. And they are drawn to them because for a moment, it frees you from your mind, because you know that the dog has no judgments about you. It doesn't, it is not that good.

It just looks at you and the tail wags. And for a moment, it can free you of your mind for a few seconds. And that's why it feels so good to look at the dog and say, oh, lovely dog.

And for a moment, there's just a connectedness. With humans, much more difficult, because the moment you meet another human, there's judgments, and you can sense that, except those humans who are no longer dominated by their mind, and they can meet you in that openness of presence. And they just look, and you know they're not judging you.

But this means those humans who don't judge you, they haven't fallen back to the level of consciousness of the dog. The dog, in a way, is in that beautiful state of connectedness with being, because the dog has not yet been totally seduced by thinking. But for us, we cannot go back.

We have to go forward. We have to rise above thinking, not fall below thinking. So here, the arising of presence is an evolutionary leap that humanity is now, we are beginning to enter this evolutionary shift where humans reach a new stage in evolution, which is a complete inner change where thinking still operates.

It's transcended, which means it isn't left behind completely. It is transcended so that you are no longer a thought-based entity, you are a presence-based entity. So you're no longer dominated by thought, and it's only then that your thinking can actually be used in a powerful and constructive way.

It's a wonderful tool to use your mind positively, to create. It's an miraculous instrument. It only becomes insane when it takes you over, and there's no space of awareness anymore.

So if you then derive your sense of identity from the presence within you, and more and more you become comfortable with spaces of not thinking, oh, you can walk from one building to another, or from the building to your car, and just be in that state of alert presence. It's beautiful. You see beauty everywhere.

You don't need to label everything anymore. That compulsion to label everything is the egoic mind. It doesn't operate anymore, and that's an enormous burden that falls away when you can go through not...

You don't need to judge everything. There is a deeper knowing there that is not conceptual. So one of the great spiritual practices is a very simple one, and that is practice not labeling or interpreting what you are perceiving.

And that you can practice anywhere, wherever you are. I always recommend do it when you're waiting for something somewhere, because you'll be amazed how much time we spend waiting for things. Waiting at the traffic light, waiting at the checkout counter, waiting at the airport, waiting, waiting, waiting.

Many people are waiting their entire life because they're waiting to start living, and then they reach 70, and they say, was that it? I'm still waiting. I haven't started living yet.

Awful. So use waiting. Instead of waiting, just bring an alertness.

Enter that state of... Invite that state of alertness in, and you go, oh. Why?

There's nothing wrong with waiting, because you always either stand, sit, or lie somewhere. Does it really matter where you stand, sit, or lie? But the mind says, I shouldn't be waiting at this checkout counter.

Why is this person so inefficient? Why is he talking to me? Why is he talking to this girl?

She shouldn't be talking to him. She should be doing her job. And you can discover that in yourself, and suddenly say, I choose something different.

The discovery of your mind, what your mind is doing to you, is an enormous step forward in evolutionary terms. The discovery of how your mind functions... Oh, I thought they'd shut me off.

They will in a minute. It implies that it's already that awareness arising in you, where you become aware of what your mind is doing. It's an enormous thing.

So the shift, then, you can use waiting periods instead of complaining, just being present. Enter the... Feel the presence that you are, the alertness.

And at that moment, you become a spiritual master, because all you have to do is wait. All that differentiates a person who is not yet awake from a spiritual master is that the spiritual master can be in the state of presence, which is complete alignment with the present moment without complaining about anything. Just is.

That's the Zen master. He goes, this is what is. What are you complaining about?

And this is why there was a Zen master who would never answer any questions. All he would ever do when people asked him questions about the meaning of Zen was, he would raise his finger and look at you. Can you explain the meaning of Zen, please?

Did you hear what I said? Did you hear my question? He's simply teaching presence, alert presence.

That's Zen, nothing else. And these people spend years in Zen monasteries and they still don't get it. Because they think, I need to understand something.

The Course in Miracles says, your understanding is not a powerful contribution to the truth. Now, the miracle is when you give up the need to understand yourself, my life, I need to figure out my life. What is your life?

It's a mental construct. So you're trying to figure out a mental construct that you call my life, and it's very complex. I need to figure out what it's all about.

Where am I going? What am I doing? Why not give up the need to understand and just invite presence in?

And then it looks for a moment from the point of view of the mind as if you didn't know anything anymore. And you don't, not conceptually. So you voluntarily enter that state of not knowing, and then you realize out of that state of not knowing, a deeper knowing arises, and a deeper sense of connectedness with life, and a deeper sense of connectedness with other humans and all life forms.

And that is the awakening of the shift in consciousness. And now I'm handing this chair over to Deepak.

[Speaker 3] (33:23 - 1:07:17)

So, right this moment as you're about to listen to me, just turn your attention to who's listening. So as you're looking at me, turn your attention to who's looking. That's you.

Okay. That you has always existed. It was there when you were a baby.

It was there, a different body, different mind. It was there when you were a teenager. Different body, different mind.

It's there now. And actually if you stay with it without anyone explaining to you, you'll realize that it's that timeless being in which time is born. Time is just the movement of thought.

Time is the movement of thought that creates a subject-object split. Me, Deepak, Eckhart. Okay, all of you.

That's a thought. That's a thought. And it is the movement of thought is not an observer in the midst of time-bound observation.

So as Eckhart said, you can spend your whole life studying scripture and spend your whole life in various practices. And it does help. It takes time for a fruit to ripen, but then one day it falls and the falling can be quite sudden, as in your case it was.

Transcendence is simply going beyond the subject-object split, which is artificial. It's not real. Nature and the universe is a single process.

So the subject-object split is an artificial split. And it is the cause of every single problem that we know. So I come from a tradition which is called Vedanta, which you referred to when you mentioned Sri Ramana Maharshi.

And Buddha came many years later and actually did refine in his own language the teachings of Vedanta. But in the Vedanta there are what I call the five kleshas. Klesha is a Sanskrit word which means the cause of suffering.

So the five kleshas are, number one, not knowing who you are. Number two, the addiction and the craving for permanence in a world that is inherently impermanent. Number three is the fear of impermanence.

Number four is identifying with your self-image instead of yourself. What Eckhart was saying, all the labels. So all the labels, all the definitions, all the evaluations, all the judgments, all the ideas, all the concepts that have come from conditioning, parents, your siblings, your culture, religion, history, economic conditions, all these things are collected and then identified with and that becomes the self-image.

The conditioned mind. So that's the fourth klesha. And the fifth klesha is the fear of death.

It's the fear of the unknown. The fear that actually is the basis of all religion, at least institutionalized religion, capitalizes on the fear of death. And in a way, all fears is the fear of death in disguise.

Because what is the fear of death? It's, as I said, the fear of the unknown, but it's also the fear of, I'm trying to hold on to something that's not going to be there in the next moment. Because in the real world, we do not have objects.

In the real world, objects do not exist. That's a perceptual artifact. There's only process.

Only process. A simple way of saying this is that there are no nouns, only verbs. The universe is a verb.

It's an activity. And being an activity, it never stops. Okay, so when even as you're looking at me or yourself, your body or your mind, your body is constantly changing.

Actually, even scientifically, the body that you have right now is not the body that you walked in with a little while ago. Because you're breathing, you're thinking, you're taking in information from the world, you have relationships, you eat, you eliminate. All these processes are constantly the flux of your physical body.

So, as I said, the body you walked in with is not the body that you have right now. And of course, in less than a year, every single atom in your body has been replaced, recycled. You don't have the same body you had as a kid, as a baby, as a teenager.

So if you think you're your body, you have a little bit of a dilemma. Which one are you talking about? And if you think you're your mind, you also have a dilemma because the mind is changing all the time.

And so here we go, bamboozled by the idea that things exist. Things don't exist. Only process exists.

Nouns are conventions of language. They're not facts of reality. It's a language convention.

There's no noun. Not even this microphone is not a noun. It has a little longer shelf life though than the body and the mind.

But there are no nouns. So all the suffering comes from nouns, things which don't exist. So we go over those five kleshas, not knowing who you are, trying to fix the flux, which won't be fixed, afraid of the flux, identifying with ideas instead of who you are, ideas about yourself, as you said, and the fear of death.

And the great teaching of the Vedanta is that all these five causes of suffering are contained in the first cause. And that is not knowing you, who you are. Confusing yourself with a socially induced hallucination that actually doesn't exist.

And the key therefore is, who am I? I mean, Sri Ramana Maharshi spent 20 years in silence and if people asked him a question, no matter what the question was, he would say, who's asking the question? And sometimes he would say, not only who's asking the question, but who is the who that is asking the question?

And you know, when you say, who am I? Then you could also ask yourself, who's asking, who am I? And if you go a little bit deeply into that, you'll come to the place that Eckhart was talking about, that who's asking the question is a transcendent being that is neither the subject of experience nor the object of experience.

So very frequently we say, I'm the observer, but even that is not correct. The observer and the observed, me and the other, simultaneously co-arise as the movement of thought. The real you is neither the observer nor the observed, but in which both the observer, the subject and the object of experience, simultaneously arise and simultaneously subside.

And they're doing so in every moment. That's the flux. Okay, it's a flux that is constantly creating a subject and object.

But the real being is neither the subject or the object. It's where the subject and object arise like waves on the ocean and subside. So before a wave arises, it's water.

As a wave, it's water. And when it subsides, it's water. It doesn't lose its wateriness.

And that's being. You are the being in which thought arises and subsides. Now that thought can have many qualities.

These qualities of thought are referred to in the consciousness literature. They're referred to as qualia. Now everybody has heard these days, thanks partly to my obsession with quanta.

Okay, quanta. What is quanta? It means quantity.

Okay, so quantum physics is the study of quantities of units of mass and energy. It's the smallest indivisible unit of information and energy is a quanta. But remember quanta units of measurement.

Qualia, on the other hand, are units of thought or qualities of consciousness. And they're usually just four of them. Anytime you have any experience, anytime you have any experience, you're either experiencing a sensation somewhere, or you're experiencing an image, or a feeling, emotion, or a thought.

Now Dan Siegel, who's a great friend of ours, is a neuropsychiatrist at UCLA. He says he uses an acronym SIFT, S-I-F-T. Every experience that you have is either a sensation, or an image, or a feeling, or a thought.

All of perceptual experience, all of perceptual experience, all of cognitive experience, or any experience, is actually just consciousness and its qualities. Okay, so right now I'm experiencing you as image and sensation in my body, in my consciousness. I experience my own body like that.

I experience you like that. Sensations, images, feelings, and thoughts are occurrences in consciousness of consciousness. So even though I see this as mine, and your body is different than mine, actually what I'm experiencing as you, and what I'm experiencing as my body, are just sensations, images, feelings, and thoughts.

And the whole universe is nothing other than that. Consciousness experiencing itself as the subject and the object, but both the subject, the individual subject, and the individual object, are movements of consciousness within consciousness. Okay, so that's why the great sayings of the great rishis, they say, I'm not in the world, the world is in me.

I'm not in the body, the body is in me. I'm not in the mind, the mind is in me. In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna, when he's talking to Arjuna, he says, Curving back within myself, I create again and again.

It's the mechanics of how we create our experience of the body, we create our experience of the mind, and we create our experience of the world. If we totally understand that, and come back to what Eckhart was saying, that you can't find this presence by looking for it, because it's the one that's looking. Okay, you can't find consciousness by looking for it, because consciousness is the one that's looking.

You know, in my field as a person who's trained in neuroscience, biology, endocrinology, today there's a lot of interest in consciousness as a brain phenomenon, because that's how we are trained. We think consciousness is a perceptual object, but where is the brain experience? When you think about the brain, where is that experience?

In consciousness. When you look at a brain as a perceptual object, that's also in consciousness. The consciousness is prior to brain.

Even the experience of the brain is, the perceptual experience of the brain, is a qualia. It's a quality of consciousness within consciousness. So, coming back to what he was saying, is all this neuroscience that we're doing, which is fun, a lot of fun to do, it's very inferential, but we will never understand consciousness by looking at a brain, or through neuroscience.

Why? Because only consciousness can know consciousness. Only consciousness can understand consciousness.

Only consciousness can experience consciousness. Any neuroscience validation of consciousness is inferential. It's not direct.

Direct is the presence this moment. So, when I started, I said, as you're listening to me, turn your attention to who's listening, or as you're looking at me, just turn your attention to the space between you and me. Presence is always there.

It gets overshadowed, as Eckhart was saying, by the furniture. You know, Rumi has a very beautiful poem. He says, who am I in the middle of all this thought traffic?

Because there's the center of being in which all the traffic is happening. And we are obviously identifying ourselves with the furniture and the traffic, instead of this presence around which the traffic is being generated as a result of self-interaction. The internal dialogue is, Eckhart was saying, speaking to yourself.

And that never stops, because we're so influenced by the quality of awareness, which is always looking out there for, ultimately, what is called happiness or fulfillment. Okay, get the right job, I'll be happy. Get the right person, I'll be happy.

Get a lot of money, win the lottery, I'll be happy. Get good health, I'll be happy. But realize what Eckhart said earlier.

All that is thought. Okay, all that is thought. If I do this, so before the thought arises, you're already happy.

And after the thought subsides, you're exactly where you started from. Okay, before the thought arises, you were at peace. Then the thought arose, then you did everything to fulfill that outcome of that thought, which we call desire.

And at the end, you're back where you started from. Just like before the wave arises, it's the ocean, and after the wave subsides, it's back into the ocean. So that makes it very obvious that happiness or joy is the starting point.

It's also the ending point. Now what's that poem T.S. Eliot, we shall not cease from exploration, and the end of our exploring is to arrive where we started from. At the end of our exploring is to arrive where we started from and know the place for the first time.

So what Eckhart was saying is, you know, instead of searching, just actually go back to where you started from. It's a journey without distance. And when you realize that, that there's a journey without distance, you turn the quality of your awareness to being present.

Now it's very interesting, we can say this many times, and you know, you can hear this, and you can go out, and then you get distracted. You get distracted, and then something happens at some point where you realize that you don't need to be distracted. You can be the timeless being in the midst of time-bound activity.

You can be the hub around which the whole universe arises and subsides. Because the universe, by the way, is nothing but sensations, images, feelings, and thoughts within consciousness. So there's a very important Mahavakya.

Mahavakya means big idea, and it's still an idea till you experience it in Sanskrit. Aham Brahmasmi. Aham means I am.

Brahmasmi, the universe. Because that's the only identity we have. We are the totality of the universe, the totality of the universe, as the continuum of space-time events now.

But that space-time events, the continuum is just a flux. It's coming and going, coming and going. So we go back to the fifth klesha, the fear of death.

People say, where do I go when I die? Okay, let me ask you a question just now. What did you have for lunch today?

What did you have for lunch? Salad? Where did you have lunch?

Now, as I'm asking you a question, the memory is coming, right? And you can experience it as a sensation, image, feeling, or thought, right? Where was that before I asked you the question?

Where was that experience before I asked you the question? Now, you know, traditional neuroscientists will say, it was in my brain, but I work with the best neuroscientists, my colleague, collaborators, Rudy Tanzi at Harvard, the chief neuroscientist and geneticist at Mass General Hospital. I said, Rudy, next time you have a conference, and you had 150 of the best scientists.

And I said, ask them, where is memory stored in a cellular level? Guess what? Not one of them could answer.

We know that when I asked you that question, and before you said salad, that there was a memory somewhere, but you can't find it in the brain. Can't find it in the brain. Do you remember the house you lived in when you were a teenager?

Can you see it now? So what are you seeing? You're experiencing sensations, images, feelings, thoughts, because those memories are associated with other memories.

If I go inside your brain, do you think I'll find a picture of your house? Or do you think there's some neural network where there is salad? So what happened?

When I asked you the question, a sensation, image, feeling, thought arose from consciousness, and then it subsided in consciousness. And that consciousness is transcendent. It doesn't exist in space-time.

So where do we go when we die? Where that salad was before I asked you the question. We don't go anywhere because we are there all the time.

Okay? In fact, every thought comes from there. Every memory comes from there.

Every desire comes from there. Every bit of imagination comes from there. Insights, intuition, imagination, creativity, choice, all comes from there.

And we have to be there in order to retrieve it. You retrieved it from your transcendent self. And being transcendent, it's not a space-time event.

But as you actualized it, then there was a little space-time. Okay? Ramana Maharshi, when he was dying, people said, we are going to miss you.

He said, but where am I going? Okay? What we call the physical world is a quality of awareness within awareness.

What we call the mental world is a quality of awareness within awareness. What we call the universe is a quality of awareness within awareness. And if you can just anchor yourself in that little space, the openness that Eckhart was saying, it's your ticket to freedom.

It's the ticket to freedom. Why? Because it's the you that never dies.

In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna says, water cannot wet it. Wind cannot dry it. Weapons cannot shatter it.

Fire cannot burn it. It's eternal. It's unborn because birth is a space-time event.

It doesn't die because death is a space-time event. A space-time event is part of the flux. So I think that's all I really want to say.

Okay? Now, just one minute. You know, we do these retreats, we do these retreats because sometimes people haven't sat down or been quiet for a long time, and it's almost impossible for them to be present.

So the retreat helps in taking you there. In fact, I do retreats myself in silence. So about two years ago, I took the opportunity to go to a monastery in Thailand, in the north of Thailand, and we had a very interesting routine over there.

Okay, and the routine was that, first of all, we shaved our head and our eyebrows, and we were barefoot, and so it was, you know, everybody looked the same, and there was no social mask. Secondly, we had to go begging. It wasn't called begging, it was called the arms round to find our food every day, and then, you know, people were so generous that we came back as if we had gone shopping to Whole Foods.

And then we shared our meal, and one meal a day, and the rest of the time was spent in silence and observing impermanence, because, you know, you soon realize that everything you're looking at is this flux. It's impermanent, and it had a very dramatic effect on all of us because it threw us in the present moment in a very interesting way. And so, when we were leaving, and the abbot, the senior abbot, who was the head of the monasteries, about half my age, you know, and we were in silence most of the time, but, you know, in the evenings, we had like two hours where we could talk to him, and he would ask me questions about quantum physics, and I realized he knew everything.

There was nothing I couldn't tell him. He had never read a book, he'd never learned mathematics or anything, but he had the experience that it wasn't difficult to explain to him what I knew intellectually. And on the day we were leaving, we were all in his presence, and he had a very gracious presence, just like Eckhart has, and he left us with two things, and I want to leave you with those two things, okay?

The first is, and this is both scientific insight and real insight, okay? There are no boundaries in the universe. Every boundary is conceptual.

In reality, there are no boundaries. We create them, just like we create latitude and longitude for purposes of convenience. So if I say, you know, meet me on 56th and Broadway on Tuesday at 6 p.m., now we've created an agreement for a boundary, but in reality, there are no boundaries at all. And the second thing, which you already know, is the present moment is the only moment that never ends, okay? The situations and circumstances around the present moment will change, but the moment won't change, because it's timeless, it's transcendent, it's eternal. So I'll leave you with what my abbot said to me, he said, the most important time in your life is now, the most important person in your life is the one you're with now, the most important activity in your life is the one you're involved with now.

And if you do that, the unknown will become known to you. The unknown is actually known only in the present moment, and that ultimately will lead to the conquest of death, because death happens in time. Only that which is born dies, but that which is never born cannot die.

Okay, thank you. I'm going to invite Eckhart, please welcome. So by the way, thank you.

By the way, you know, in the spiritual literature and in the yoga sutras of Patanjali, they talk about supernormal powers, they're called siddhis. Have you heard the word siddhi? Siddhis are dormant potentials, the ability to see in the future, the ability to experience the past, know previous lifetimes, remote viewing, remote healing.

And I'm experiencing a siddhi right now, and it says that Wayne Dyer is in this room. There he is, and you thought I wasn't psychic. So I'm going to first have a conversation with Eckhart, and then perhaps you can join us for a few moments.

Okay, so Eckhart, these questions have come through Facebook, and I picked up the ones that have come most frequently.

[Speaker 1] (1:07:18 - 1:08:09)

Just before we were talking, you were in the Buddhist monastery in Thailand, and there's this Buddhist scripture that came to mind that is one of my favorite sutras. I don't remember what it's called. It's a famous sutra.

The Buddha is supposed to have said it, but of course you never know. It says, so the Buddha is speaking to the monks. So he says, there is, oh monks, the unborn, the uncreated, the unmanifested.

If there were not the unborn, the uncreated, and the unmanifested, there would be no escape from the born, the created, and the manifested.

[Speaker 3] (1:08:11 - 1:08:34)

The idea of freedom is an idea. Beautiful. So I actually think I know the answer to this, but this is for you.

It says, can you describe your daily spiritual practices? Have they changed over the years?

[Speaker 1] (1:08:37 - 1:10:18)

Well, I don't, as you probably know, I don't have a practice as such, not a formal practice as a separate activity from ordinary daily living. But what naturally arises a lot of the time is spacious awareness. So I sometimes say it's a humorous, meant to be taken humorously.

It's my greatest achievement in life is that I don't need to think all the time anymore. And that makes life into a much more pleasant experience if you can be there as just as the presence. And so it's the intensity as I experience it may sometimes vary.

Sometimes presence can in certain occasions almost obliterate everything else. And at other times, it's always there's that space in the background. So it's hard to describe, but I'm sure you all know, you've already, almost all of you have experienced it.

If you're not yet permanently in presence, that's fine, but it is arising. So actually, alignment with the present moment is, you could say is my practice, but it's become second nature. So I can't call it practice anymore.

[Speaker 3] (1:10:20 - 1:11:21)

I would like to say what my practice is, because I actually was a disciple of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi for many, many years. And he did, in fact, initiate me into the practice that we all do here. And after a while, I did realize that the practice was like a tool.

And for me, I still do it because I'm so used to it. And besides that, sometimes even though I ignore the thoughts, they give me great ideas. And I make a living by selling words.

So I stay with the practice. Eckhart, how would you define happiness? Is being happy a realistic goal?

[Speaker 1] (1:11:22 - 1:14:25)

Is it a realistic goal? Well, it's partly a question of semantics, by which I mean how, what do we mean when we say happy? I personally don't use that term very much, but I know that, for example, Ramana Maharshi said, your true nature is happiness.

Happiness is your true nature. So he uses that term in a particular way. I don't use the word, I wouldn't use the word that much, because for most people, in common usage, happiness is a high.

You experience a high, and usually a temporary high. Ah, I'm so great! Yeah!

And so it's, you can't really, you cannot be on a permanent high. So if you have a high, you also experience the low. Oh, I thought that was going to be it, but it wasn't it.

So the term that I would use is spaciousness, joy, perhaps. It's that which makes the Buddha smile, when you look at statues, the good ones, of the Buddha. In the bad ones, he looks miserable.

But in the good ones, there's a very, there's just a hint of a smile on his lips. And why, why is the Buddha smiling? If you approach Buddhism from a purely intellectual viewpoint, in some universities, they'll tell you that Buddhism is a life-denying religion, because they don't really understand it.

They only understand the statements. And Buddha said, emptiness is the ultimate answer, which of course is true. But you cannot, if you've never had even a glimpse of emptiness, you will think it's life-denying.

So the Buddha has a slight smile, because no matter what the Buddha experiences, he experiences everything against the background of emptiness. Another word for which would be spaciousness, or another word for which would be stillness. There's always that stillness, and the Buddha is the stillness.

The Buddha is rooted in the stillness, which is when we use words, we create a duality, but the Buddha is the stillness. So that is really, I think when Ramana Maharshi used the term happiness, and I don't know what, whether it's even a correct translation from what he used in his native language, that is, I believe, what he pointed to. I personally would not use the term happiness.

I don't know about you.

[Speaker 3] (1:14:25 - 1:15:55)

Well, in the Buddha's teaching, there are four qualities of consciousness that he calls divine. So the first is loving-kindness. The second is joy, which is not happiness.

Happiness is a thought, okay? Joy is without thought. The third is compassion, and the fourth is equanimity.

And if you really think of these qualities of consciousness, they're actually, at a very primordial level, they are not thought, okay? None of them is thought. All these are very subtle ways of communion, which means me and the other is one.

Okay, so when Eckhart said, you know, happiness is high and low, yeah, happiness is a melodrama, in a way, and joy is not. Joy is essential. This question on Facebook, I'm an artist and drew inspiration for my work from the simple and genuine love that existed between me and my husband until I found out that he betrayed me.

Now I feel like my core is empty and my creativity is dead. How do I inspire myself to dream and imagine again?

[Speaker 1] (1:15:58 - 1:18:51)

Well, that's a sad story, but it comes from... It is, of course, it's a story. But as long as that is very real to you, it's there's suffering in it.

And there's a way out. I'd like to point the way beyond that for this person. Your husband betrayed you, okay.

Your husband is a human being, I assume. Now, I love that term, human being, because we have two words here. We have human and we have being.

Now, that which the love in you, when you were in the presence of your husband, that which you loved in the husband was the same in you. It was the being quality of that human. And the human is the form as which that he assumes that form.

And that form is imperfect. So when you don't know, when you bring them together, you think that love was an illusion, but it was not. You just haven't recognized that there is the dimension of being in him and in you.

And that's from that recognition, love arose. But the mind mixes it up with the form, and the form is imperfect. And so, because of that, now, because you have this thought, what you're telling yourself in your head is now blocking that deeper awareness.

The story that you believe in, in your head, that you are telling yourself, is blocking the deeper awareness of being. And that is, once you recognize that, you can feel that love again, because that love is who you essentially are. And so, and then the possibility of forgiveness also arises.

Your husband, you forgive the human, and whatever unconsciousness the human manifested. But the real forgiveness cannot arise until you know yourself as the formless, no longer identify with what arises in the world of form. And then you can look through that, and forgiveness arises naturally.

[Speaker 3] (1:18:52 - 1:19:13)

We say that the husband is a human being, but he is also being human? Yes. What is the best possible outcome of a life that one could hope for?

What should we strive to create for ourselves? Strive. Strive.

[Speaker 1] (1:19:16 - 1:23:41)

Well, the best and the one single worthwhile, truly worthwhile thing is to encounter, to realize, to discover transcendence in your life, so that you're no longer trapped in that narrow, personalized, form-identified, thought-identified sense of self. And if there's nothing to you but that, the person, then life is a very frustrating business. And this is what the Buddha referred to when he used the term suffering, and said, whatever you do, wherever you go, you will encounter that.

But he also pointed the way beyond, so there is the possibility of realizing your formless, true nature. And that begins with a gap between two thoughts. It begins this moment, when your attention moves fully into this moment, not just awareness of sense perceptions, but also, and this sounds a little strange, but it's key, awareness of awareness.

So if you can be aware at this moment, not only of that which arises in your immediate sense experience, or thoughts, or emotional field, but if you can be aware, that we're in a language, we always, of course, language always creates duality, so you have to make allowances for that. If you can be aware right now, you have to, it can only be realized now. If you can be aware that you are aware right now, in addition to the things that you perceive, there is a space of awareness.

That is what makes life worthwhile. And then, when that arises, and then becomes a living realization in you, that is really the one thing, as Jesus said, there's only one thing that truly matters. And then you have chosen that one thing.

That's the Mary and Martha story in the Gospels, where Jesus says to Mary, you have chosen the one thing that really matters. Whereas Martha was running around, oh, I have to think about this, do this, get this ready. There's only, there's one thing that truly matters.

And then, the rest of your life, what form it takes, is secondary. It will unfold beautifully, with, of course, comes, nothing is impermanent, and you won't need to cling to things anymore, and be afraid that they leave you. And, very important, you won't have expectations that the world is going to make you happy.

This is a very fundamental thing that many, it's an error in their mind. They believe that the world somehow has the ability, if they could only engineer things in such a way that everything would just fit neatly into place, and at some point, they can arrive at a place where the world is going to provide them with fulfillment. And, of course, advertising knows that, and so, advertising is built on that, to foster that belief that the world can do that.

So, once you know yourself as awareness, which is a joyous thing, there's a deep joy and satisfaction in knowing yourself as awareness, then you don't expect anymore that situations, conditions, or people should make you happy. And, the paradox is, when you don't have the expectation that people, situation of people, should make you happy and satisfy you, they are actually quite satisfying.

[Speaker 3] (1:23:51 - 1:24:25)

So, that's what, you know, stresses the universe is not behaving the way I think it should. Our culture seems to foster the desire to judge ourselves, honing in on what is wrong with our body, where we have fallen short, how we are not measuring us up. Many of us have a harsh inner critic, and we say things to ourselves that we would never say to a friend or loved one.

How do we learn to turn off this inner judge when it has been harping at us for many decades?

[Speaker 1] (1:24:26 - 1:29:23)

The inner critic, the, for some people have that very strongly, other people experience it from time to time. Sometimes the mind is, you feel happy with yourself, and then the next day, something else. But it manifests in different ways for different people.

For some, it's mainly the inner critic, criticizing myself. For others, others are very critical about other people. Others are very critical about situations they find themselves in.

They're always complaining. You may remember from before you awakened spiritually that you always, a lot of the time, there was this compulsive mind activity. A lot of that was actually complaining about things and people and where one is and why they should have, why didn't they, they should, countless stories that come.

And so people are trapped in this torture of their own minds. And the question is how to step out. Anything we say about how to go beyond that presupposes that there's already a minimum of awareness in you from where you can realize what your mind is doing.

So that needs to be there. And that is there in all of you and much more, of course. There are still millions of people on the planet.

They're also on their way. They don't have yet the minimum awareness. Tell a terrorist or any fundamentalist to be aware of their own thoughts and or question them.

They will get very angry. And so I don't recommend that. They are not ready for it.

So but you can recognize what your mind is doing to yourself. And you can then, if there is an awareness there, and then you can choose to direct your attention somewhere else. You don't have to follow everything.

You don't have to believe everything you think. Somebody even made that into a bumper sticker. I loved it.

You don't have to believe everything you think. And that is an enormous, you can disidentify from your mind and see what the mind is doing. And you can then also, by choice, place your attention on a flower or the sky or anything natural.

And you stepped out. I also recommend for people who are very much burdened by the mind, place your attention into the inner energy field of your body. Feel the aliveness that pervades the entire body.

And then you can't think that much anymore. You can't feel both the aliveness within your body and think a lot. So that takes your attention into wake up in this.

I don't know if anybody still experiences that here. You wake up at two or three in the morning and you're thinking. And it's not pleasant.

It's about my problems. And if you then suddenly you discover the futility of it, and then you also have a choice. At that moment, you have a choice.

And then you can say, I choose to place my attention on the inner energy field of the body. And from one moment, from one minute to the next, you're suddenly, you enjoy being awake at night and feel the intense aliveness in every cell of the body. That's one simple way.

It's a kind of meditation practice. It's one simple way of taking attention away from thinking. When you realize it is not only futile, it's also destructive.

And that needs to be then practiced if you have a meditation period. That's wonderful, of course, daily meditation period. But in addition, I always recommend mini meditations throughout the day, which could be a simple thing as taking two or three conscious breaths while you're waiting for the elevator.

Or do something consciously with full attention that usually you do unconsciously. Anything that is usually a means to an end, make it into an end in itself. Washing your hands.

Be totally present. You're getting out of your mind. Walking down a few steps.

Be totally present rather than needing to get to the bottom. Be there in every step. So little mini meditations gradually help you to disidentify from the movement of thought.

So this is what I would recommend to our questioner and to anybody else who is still burdened by their minds or tortured by their minds.

[Speaker 3] (1:29:31 - 1:31:01)

So for those of you who like formulas, here's one. Stop. Okay.

It's an acronym. S stands for stop. T stands for take three deep breaths as Eckhart just told us to.

And while you're taking those three deep breaths, smile everywhere in your body from head to toe. O stands for observe. Observe your body, as you said.

And P stands for proceed with love and kindness. Break the response. Okay.

So it's 9 o'clock and our live stream is ending. So I want to bring Uwain. We don't want to lose this opportunity at least.

I've known Uwain now for 25 years. We've grown up together. He just looks a little older.

But we are brothers. What am I doing here?

[Speaker 4] (1:31:06 - 1:43:52)

It was at the very last observation you made, Deepak, that the word love finally came in. And it's been my journey to learn to come to a new kind of love in my life. I have been reading a great teacher from Bulgaria whose name was Peter Dunov, of whom Einstein said at the height of his popularity back in the 30s that the whole world bows before me and I bow before Peter Dunov.

Peter Dunov was a man who talked about a different kind of love. He said there are basically three kinds of love. One is human love.

And human love is a love that changes and varies. So this is a love that, I love you, but you came home late and you forgot Valentine's Day, so I don't love you so much. And it's constantly changing.

I love you, I hate you, and on and on it goes. And then there's a love that he called spiritual love, which is a love that never changes, but it does vary. This is a love that I can only define as the love I have for my children.

I have eight of them. And it really doesn't matter what they do or how they behave, how they conduct themselves. The love is just there.

I'm sure the people who've committed some of these atrocities that we've been experiencing the last few months here in America, the mothers of these people still love them. Having eight children, I know that it varies. Sometimes it's a little stronger than others, but it's always there.

And I'm sure you know that with your children. And I see Rita there as we were talking about her children, your children. And then there's a love that Peter Doonough spoke about, which is a love that he calls divine love.

And this is a love that never changes. And this is a love that never varies. And this is a love I aspire to.

And the only way I can describe it, it's in the gospel of Thomas in the Nag Hammadi scrolls that were found in 1945. Jesus is quoted as saying that when you make the two one, then you can enter the kingdom. And the opening line of the Tao Te Ching, a book that I studied and lived and wrote a whole series of essays about, the opening line of the Tao says the Tao that can be named is not the Tao.

And so I try to imagine a love that Jesus spoke about when you take the two and make it one. So this is a love that has no opposites. So if I were to ask you the word, I said, what is joy?

And I say, what is the opposite of joy? Most of you would probably say something like despair or sadness and so on. And if I ask you to imagine a joy that has no opposite, it's just joy.

Or if I were to ask you, what's the opposite of love? We could come up with many antonyms to love. Try to imagine a love that has no opposite.

That's all there is. Nothing else can come up. I was thinking when Eckhart was speaking about what is it in us that you talk about happiness.

And I was thinking, I don't use the word happy either. Shakespeare in one of his plays said, I think he said it this way, my crown is in my heart, not on my head, not decked with diamonds, nor Indian stones, nor to be seen. My crown is called content.

A crown it is that seldom kings enjoy. And that kind of love is the love I aspire to. Contentment, a love that knows no opposite.

Now we're talking up here about being human, and of course we're all in human bodies, and making the two one is almost impossible for us. There's a woman here in the audience who I didn't even know yesterday that I was going to be here today. I just happened to be staying at a hotel nearby.

I'm going to see my publisher tomorrow to do some recording, and then I'm going to Denver to do a workshop on the weekend, a writer's workshop. And sitting next to me on the table is Eckhart Tolle, my friend, man who I've done a program with recently called The Importance of Being Extraordinary. And of course to my left is a man who we call each other brothers.

We've loved each other very, very much since the early 1990s. I think it was 1990. So the idea that I was going to be here, I didn't even know this was going on.

And Eckhart said, why don't you come, and here I am. And when I walked in, someone else walked up to me and said, Wayne, what are you doing here? And her name is Anita Moorjani.

Stand up, Anita. Where are you, dear? And Anita, I have written a foreword to a book that occurs called Dying to Be Me.

And she, I think she's speaking here, are you speaking here tomorrow? On Friday here at the Chopra Center? Right, right.

So Anita has described what it was like. I mean, she had end-stage lymphoma cancer for five years, was down to 82 pounds, had tumors the size of lemons throughout her entire body, and only had a few hours left to live. And became an observer and watched this whole process.

And I saw something about her experience on the internet and located her in Hong Kong. She happened to be in Dubai when I found her, and I asked her if she would write her story. And she wrote her story and sent it to me to see if we could publish it.

And I sent it back to her and said, it isn't good enough. I want you to go back to the state that you were in when you experienced the kind of love I'm speaking about here right now. A love that has no opposites.

The words awareness have been tossed around up here, higher awareness. But in that state, that state where there is only one, there is no opposite, whatever you place your attention on, you become. And the only thing that you can feel is a kind of unconditional love.

So for me, as I aspire, it is to live a love that has no judgment, no criticism, no condemnation towards any of God's creations. And if we can get to that place, and while we are human, there will still always be the two, the dichotomy will always be there, there will always be the opposite. But in the world that Eckhart describes so beautifully in The Power of Now, we can do this inside here.

In here, we don't have to have those judgments, those criticisms, those condemnations. And when we get to that place, because as many of you know, I was diagnosed with leukemia three years ago. And I had an experience of having a remote healing from John of God down in Brazil.

Many of you, probably everyone in this room knows who that is. And what I thought happened is that these entities entered into my body, and they just healed me of leukemia. But that isn't what happened.

What happened is that these entities entered my body, and they took out fear. The word leukemia is loaded with fear. It isn't about fear of dying.

It's just, it's such a word. It's just cancer of the blood, you know, every word going through your body. It's all of the things, all of the things about cancer, the cancer that Anita spoke about so brilliantly in her revised edition of the book, which was done so beautifully.

And so it is, I woke up the morning after I had had this remote healing from John of God. And my two of my children were there with me on Maui. One of them was my daughter, and I looked at her, and I just, I had never seen her the way I had seen her that morning.

And I put my arms around her, and I just said, I just can't describe to you how much I love you. And I looked at my son, and I put my arms around him, and I looked outside. I live on the ocean.

The ocean looked different. It's never, it never, I just had never seen it before. The palm trees just look different.

The birds, the grass, every stranger that I encountered. In the Course, it says there are two ways of reacting. There's love and there's fear.

And everything that is love cannot be fear. And everything that is fear cannot be love. So what I would ask you to do is to ask yourself, how much of my life and the decisions that I make are based upon fear?

Do you eat the foods that you eat because you're afraid that if you don't, you'll get sick? Or do you do it out of love? This is my body, this is the temple I live in, and I want to treat it that way.

Do you drive the speed limit because you love everyone around you and you want them to be safe? Or do you drive the speed limit because you're afraid that if you don't, you're going to get a ticket so you have a radar detector and on and on and on it goes. And I could go on with these kinds of, you can look at almost every single thing that we do in our life, and so many of them are based on fear.

And what Anita's experience was when she was in the other realm is that there is no such thing as fear. And cancer, and Deepak and I have done many programs on this. In fact, I remember in London at the Palladium, you and I standing up there one time asking that question, why so much cancer in our world?

Why so much illness? Why so much disease? Because you used to always say it's perfect health, you know, that we don't, our bodies do not have to, there's nothing physically in there that says these bodies have to get older and they have to deteriorate and they even have to die.

And if we could get the fear out of our hearts and just come from a place of no judgment, no criticism, no condemnation towards any of God's children, we could live what

Shakespeare was speaking about. We could just be content. And that's all I have to say.

[Speaker 9] (1:44:05 - 1:44:07)

Thank you so much. Thank you.

[Speaker 4] (1:44:16 - 1:44:18)

Thank you. Thank you very much.

[Speaker 1] (1:44:20 - 1:45:39)

And the fear, of course, perpetuate itself through judgments in the mind. And judgments are thoughts that we identify with, that possess us. So the key then is to disidentify from the judgments and to invite the place of no thought into our lives.

Ramana Maharshi was asked by a disciple or a visitor in his ashram, how can we know that we are making progress on the spiritual path? How do we know that? And Ramana Maharshi said, the degree of absence of thinking is the criterion for progress on the spiritual path.

So now you know whether you're making progress. The degree of absence of thinking is the criterion for progress on the spiritual path. It's as simple as that.

[Speaker 4] (1:45:40 - 1:46:20)

Well said, well said. One other observation, I've just spent the last six months or so in a secluded state of writing every single day. And I've written something called I Can See Clearly Now.

And it's just a look back at all of the things that just like, so there's look back at, I lived 10 years in an orphanage. And what did that result in? And all the way up right through just recently.

And I think about how I happen to be here on this stage tonight, with two people I admire so much and love so much.

[Speaker 1] (1:46:22 - 1:46:32)

Well, it was a synchronistic event brought you here because you were sitting behind the table behind ours last night. It was just amazing. Yes, to have you.

[Speaker 4] (1:46:32 - 1:51:29)

So let's look at, this is just fascinating to me, because having just written about all of this, like we're talking about, you were talking about time, both of you were talking about time earlier. And so I like to think that there's this thing called horizontal time. And just imagine a line going across here that represents time.

And this is called chronological time, or passing time, or cause and effect time. So what got me here? I made a decision to go down to that restaurant last night to meet with my friend Mark and his daughter.

I didn't even want to do that. But something said, go down there. So there's cause and effect.

So Mark called me. I said, okay, I'm not sure. I don't know.

And on how did I happen to get here to even to San Diego? That's a whole other story about why I'm even here. And you think that you're making all these choices, and cause and effect.

So I did this, and that caused this, and that caused this. And then we showed up in the lobby. And then some young woman from Russia recognized me and wanted me to be on her TV show that she's doing.

She's cooking raw foods. And I said, no, I can't do that. And then we went into the restaurant and then came over.

And I meet Stephen Goldhauer, who was the brother of someone that I was in love with for several years, years back, who I haven't seen in a long time. And I see Greg, who worked at the Omega Institute, and whom I've known. And all of these people are showing up.

And Eckhart comes over. And we just had a program that just come out. And all of this stuff is going on.

So this caused this, caused this, caused this. And then he said, well, we're having this program tomorrow. Would you like to come over?

I said, okay, but I'll go in the back. Because I don't really want the spotlight to be on me. I want it to be on these two guys.

This is their program. So I'll just come in. No, no, no.

We want you to be in the front. We'd like to have... So here I am in the front.

Then I had the psychic experience. And Deepak, my psychic brother, who knows everything anyway. So we've got this whole horizontal thing.

This caused this, caused this. And I could sit down and write them all out, all the reasons how I got here tonight. I'd have to go back to when I was born in 1940, and when my mother was born in 1916, and her mother.

We could just go all the way up to this moment. And here I am. And then there's another kind of time.

And this is a time that isn't represented by a horizontal line, but is represented by a vertical line. And this is a vertical line that goes right up to God. And this line is called eternal time, in which there is no time.

There is no, there's nothing but one. There's only oneness. Okay, so everything in eternal time has already been taken care of.

Carl Jung said, at the same moment that you are a protagonist in your own life, and you're making choices, at the very same moment, you're also the spear carrier, or the extra, in a much larger drama. You are all, he said, doomed to make choices. Now, you want to talk about a paradox, right?

You're doomed, that means it's all taken care of, and within that stance of being doomed, you're making choices. So now we've got this line going straight up, representing eternal time. So my being here right now was already handled.

It was handled the moment of my conception. But the point where this line crosses this line, and that cross is made, at that very point, is where you can see both times operating at the same moment. You can literally see that you are making choices, and they're already taken care of.

Everything is taken care of for you. And so what Deepak and Eckhart have been saying is, there is no need to worry about anything. It's all just taken care of.

And even your worry is a part of the eternal time thing here. And here was the conclusion. This was from a book called, To Know We Are Loved, by Rashad Field.

You know Rashad Field? You know that man? He's still alive.

To Know We Are Loved. He said, and this is the one I want you to walk out of here with, and really think about. Your conception and your death are happening at exactly the same time.

It's the same experience. When you get that, you can get back, and you can see yourself making all of these decisions, but you can also see that it's all handled for you. And in eternal time, there's no opposite, which means there's no past, and there's no future.

There's only... Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (1:51:32 - 1:53:30)

Okay, so I'm going to conclude now, this evening with just three simple observations out of this whole experience. The first is, every event is a conspiracy of the total universe. So go with the flow, okay?

Second is that love actually does heal, and there's a biological reason why it heals. It creates what is called limbic resonance in your brain, and it starts self-repair mechanisms, what in medicine we call homeostasis. It takes you back to your original state, which is well-being.

And the third is, the love he was speaking for is really so well articulated in the teaching of Nisargadatta Maharaj, who you introduced me to and became my teacher, absolutely. He says, my love radiates from me like light from a bonfire, focused on none and denied to none. So good night and thank you.

I think I understand. I definitely feel the interconnectedness of all of us and the oneness. What I'd love to hear your thoughts on are the unique aspects of our individual existence beyond the world of form and ego.

In other words, is there a part of us, a soul or energy that transcends death?

[Speaker 1] (1:53:32 - 2:29:38)

Well, there's the form which is not just the physical form that you are. There's also the mental form, the psychological form that you are. And deeper than that, there's an energetic formation.

Also consciousness has taken form temporarily and appears as a human being. But what you see on the surface is only a surface appearance. And underneath that, there's the energy that animates the form and that temporarily takes on that particular form.

Also, even that energy, as long as it's behind the body, is there and outlives the body for quite some time. And it's still form, but form is not separate from that which animates the form ultimately. It just appears to be.

So in the same way that the wave movement of the sea is not separate from the sea, the ripple on the ocean is not separate from the ocean, but for a little while it appears as something separate. So on the level of form here, you are a man or a woman, you are of a certain age, you have a certain psychological makeup according to your past and perhaps even past lifetimes, that all operates on the level of form. So you can honor the level of form for what it is without worshiping it or identifying with it and believing that this is who you truly are.

But it doesn't mean that you totally reject it, because it is not separate from the one life, the one unmanifested, timeless life that appears in billions of life forms that continuously come and go, appear, disappear, appear, disappear. Anybody would very quickly find it easy to be connected with the formless dimension if you could see a speeded-up version of life forms as they come and go. And bodies being born, growing up, reaching maturity, getting old, finally becoming decrepit and dissolving.

If you could see these things in one room, if you could see within two minutes of the people sitting in this room popping out of existence, at least on the level of body, one after the other, dissolving as if they'd never been like soap bubbles, you would very quickly sense an underlying... First, you would be amazed. Here you go.

Even with flowers, sometimes you see it in films, a flower comes out of the ground and immediately withers, and it's gone. If you could see that, you would easily connect with that which is beyond form, and that is the power of becoming aware of the fleetingness of all forms. The essential thing is to be connected with that, and then you can honor the form as which you appear for a while, and be active on the level of form.

It doesn't say, I'm the formless, so I'm never going to do anything again. No, you can take up things, learn to do this, learn to do that, not expecting ultimate fulfillment because nothing is going to give you that on the outside, nothing that you can do or possess or knowledge. None of that can tell you who you essentially are, can give you ultimate fulfillment, and yet you can pursue these things, acquire knowledge, read some more books, enjoy it.

As long as you enjoy it, the level of form has its place. There's no need to say, I'm never going to read another book because it's all illusion. Or you learn to play an instrument, you learn this, you learn that, you deal...

Artistic creation, whatever it is, dance, whatever, enjoy the level of form, but you can only truly enjoy the level of form if you are rooted in the formless. If you're not rooted in, if you don't have that point of stillness, that space of stillness in you while you pursue things, then things will become frustrating to you, and they will, for a little while they might be great, they give you excitement or whatever, or some egoic fulfillment for a little while. Ego is never fulfilled for very long, as the song says, I can't get no satisfaction.

So if you pursue forms and you're not rooted in that essential reality within yourself, all forms will eventually become bitter. Even the most pleasant thing that you pursue, even if you learn to play the piano, you become the greatest pianist, and one day you won't be the greatest pianist, or somebody is greater than you, or arthritis comes into your hands, or whatever, or it's no longer fulfilling after a few years. But whatever it is, all forms that you pursue, for the sake of the form alone, expecting something through your pursuit that it cannot give you, that always life is just one frustrating thing after another, and then people, very many people become disillusioned or cynical and don't believe in anything anymore.

Well, of course, you've been pursuing all the illusions all your life, and some people lose all interest suddenly in anything because they've seen, but that's, perhaps it was, there was a man who wrote, I don't know how it got into the New Testament, one book of the New Testament, Vanity of Vanities, All is Vanity, written by somebody who's done it all, and has seen how vain, now vanity in that sense is the old meaning of the word, it means useless, empty of meaning.

Vanity of Vanities, All is Vanity, I've done it all, he says, I can't quote it literally, but it's worth going back to, it's a lovely piece of writing, it's nothing to do with God or anything, or how it got into the New Testament, I don't know, but I'm glad it's there because it's a beautiful piece of writing, it expresses a state of consciousness of somebody who has pursued things on the level of form, and expresses his dissatisfaction, his deep dissatisfaction with things.

And then all he comes up with, well, you just eat and drink and be merry, that's a superficial thing, it's not no true solution there, it's just, it's an expression of a disillusioned state of consciousness, but it's a beautiful expression of it, and so it's a lovely work of art to read that, and it's a faithful reflection of a state of consciousness that is disconnected, that thought there was some answer on the level of form, when you know that there is no ultimate answer and otherwise no ultimate fulfillment, no ultimate self-realization, I want to find myself through this or that, then the world of form becomes actually quite a pleasant place when you do not have unreasonable expectations, you honor it, you play with it, you participate to some extent, or to a large extent, and yet one of the things, of course, that's expressed in many ancient scriptures, such as the Bhagavad Gita, you are not attached to the results. Now the Bhagavad Gita tells you, don't be attached to the results, but it's, what comes prior to that is to be connected with the formless stillness, the alive stillness inside you, it's very hard, if not impossible, not to be attached to the result if you are not rooted in the being.

If you're not rooted in the being, you need the result of your doing. Do not be attached to a result really only works if you are connected, and then you can see, you can enjoy action in the world of form without being attached to the outcome, and that's an enormous freedom, and only then can you truly enjoy the doing. If you're attached to the outcome, you have a mental projection of where you want to get to, and that spoils to a large extent the joy in doing what you do, because you need to get there, you think, it's a future point that doesn't really exist, and even if you get what you wanted, if you're not, if you're disconnected, it's not going to make you happy.

Even if the outcome that you wanted comes, it's still not happy, or the very outcome that before you thought would make you happy makes you unhappy. Hence the saying, there are two ways of being unhappy, not getting what you want, and getting what you want. So as we sit here with nothing happening except one little thing, the mind can drift off and create some imaginary happening, so you start thinking about past, future, dreamland, because the mind is not comfortable with nothing happening.

So you can, as you sit here, drift off into dreamland of past and future until finally the session actually starts, not realising that it has started already. In the same way that people wait for their lives to start, not realising that it started already. So what's the alternative then to drifting off?

The alternative is to just be present with your attention in the simplicity of this moment where there's almost nothing happening. So what's left of you when you're not following some train of thought, and the space opens up? What's left then of this moment?

What's the content of this moment? Just whatever your senses are perceiving, the totality of the room, the lights, some noises, the voice, and that which makes it all possible, there's a light in which it appears, the consciousness behind it all, that's what's left. It has no form, no time, just presence, and that's who you are beyond past and future, nothing to do with your personal history, except that your personal history has brought you to this moment of being aware that there is a dimension in you that has nothing to do with your personal history, and nothing to do with conceptualisation in the mind, any kind of mental noise, just a kind of an aware space, and that's the ground, all what arises out of that is joy and aliveness, and it's peaceful to know yourself as that is peaceful, it is peace, but a live peace. So the peace is already there as the essence, never in conditions, outer conditions, or mental conditions, cannot provide you with peace except the delusion of peace for short moments. So to seek peace in conditions, whether mental conditions, or external conditions, is frustrating, and you overlook the simple fact that the realm of peace, which is the unconditioned consciousness in you, the timeless, the light of the world, Jesus called it, is already there, in its fullness, has always been there, will always be there, although saying has and will doesn't make sense because it's timeless, but it's being, it's overlooked, the essence is overlooked because of the seductive nature of the world of form, thoughts that continuously arise, sense perceptions, and you lose yourself in forms, thought forms, and external forms, and following up, and then you're full of stuff, looking for yourself in some other stuff, more stuff for my mind, and then so you overlook the essence that's always there, so it's a redirecting of attention from attention to form, and now we have to be careful, if I say, attention to the formless dimension in you, that sounds as if the formless dimension in you could become an object of your attention, but it can't, because the formless dimension in you cannot become an object of your attention, of your consciousness, because the formless dimension is consciousness, consciousness can't become an object to itself, so in that sense you can never find the essence of who you are as if you say, I know, I have it, you can never say, I have it, all you can ever say is, I am it, so it can't be an object, you cannot make yourself into an object, and I know myself, you can't know yourself, you can know lots of things about yourself, all to do with mental content, but you cannot know yourself in its, who you are in your essence, because you are the eternal subject, the basis of all knowing, the moment you say, I know myself, then there's I and myself, you've already split yourself into two, and basically that's the ego, where you split yourself into two and say, oh, that's me, and then you have a relationship with yourself, which my dog does not have a relationship with himself, the cat doesn't have a relationship with itself, the split hasn't occurred yet, me and who I think I am, so usually the progression for people is, first you have a dysfunctional relationship with yourself, you hate yourself a lot of the time, and sometimes you say, oh, I'm really great, but not for long, and then you doubt yourself, and then you're learning about becoming more loving towards yourself, that's great, that's the stage of stickers on your bathroom mirror, I love myself, that's the intermediate stage, and then from there you go on to the realization that there are not two of you, that you are yourself, and what's left is the simple fact that I am who I am, or I am that I am, which by the way was God's answer from the Old Testament, when they asked God, who are you? So you can't know yourself, you can only be yourself, there's nothing conceptual to know, if it's conceptual, that's not who you are, in other words, you have to embrace ignorance, as the Course in Miracles says, your understanding is not an important contribution to the truth, and of course, there's something in you that wants to, I want to understand myself more, because you can go that way for a long time, and of course, there's always more, and eventually you get to the end of the road where you give up, and that's the moment when you're no longer a problem to yourself, and when you're not a problem to yourself, by the way, you're not a problem to others anymore either, how many people walk around with an identity, the sense of identity, that basically consists of the belief that they are a problem, which seeks a solution, of course, there is a solution, but that's not where the ego itself is seeking, the solution is already here, it's not in time, this moment, the realization that at this moment, you already are who you are, as the awareness in which the form of this moment appears, in other words, you become aware that you are aware, you know yourself as the awareness, the awareness knows itself, that's an amazing realization, that's the I am realization, but not this or that, just I am, and that's peace, to know yourself through that act of not knowing, not to know yourself in any conceptual sense, to be yourself as the awareness, and then the dance of forms, of course, continues in life, and there's a piece in the background, the art of living is to be aware that you are the awareness, be aware that you are the presence, be aware as the presence, the awareness, while not only you look at things and observe things, but even while you do and talk, and you'll notice spaces in your life, and that's vital, spaces while in between things, where before there was no space, at least you didn't notice it, but now you notice that there are spaces, many spaces in your life where there's an opening into just pure presence, and it could just be picking up an object and putting it down again, looking at a tree without labeling it in any way, just being the perceiving presence for it, walking from here to there without making each step a means to an end, but just be present with every step, the spacious stillness when you're listening to another human being, just being there as the space, not as an object of some mental noise, and so there's a gradual thing where the personality recedes a bit in your life, still operates when it's needed, but more and more there's awareness that arises, you are there as an aware presence rather than as a person with a past and a future, so the person begins to become transparent somewhat to the light of awareness that shines through the form, whereas before it was dense, it's just pushing against, trying to get through little chinks, occasionally get through, you have moments of ah, and then it's gone, so it gets through. Now you may notice a certain alertness is required, no tension or strain, but a certain alertness so that thought does not get hold of you and drag you along where it wants to go, the old conditioned thinking, so certain alertness is required, and we are here, this is our meditation today here, the alertness needs to be there for otherwise you drift off into the dream state of identification with thinking, and then suddenly, oh, out of that alertness, thoughts can come, but they will be not a replay of the old conditioned thinking, but more vitally alive thoughts when they do come, insights, realizations, a new way of aliveness when you, that is there, a fresh new thought, inspired, creative, and at other times, there's just, of course, love is part of what comes out of that unconditioned space, can't come from anywhere else. We are lucky today to have an honored guest here, it's becoming a tradition as part of our sessions, and I'd like, this guest does not need introduction, but I would like to introduce her by telling you how I first got introduced to her, she doesn't know that, I haven't told you yet, in, it was about 1986 perhaps, and I was living in London, and the Course in Miracles had just been published, I think the year before, in England, in a one-volume paperback, and whereas at first I, when I heard Course in Miracles, I said, that's probably just, it's another weird thing that's come through from California, I had the European prejudice, later I realized that many wonderful things do also come from California, some weird things too, of course I didn't realize the Course in Miracles didn't really originally come from California at all, it came from Manhattan, Columbia University, well unofficially, not sponsored by Columbia University, and so I was visiting a friend, having tea, and talking a bit about this Course in Miracles, that I had actually discovered was actually quite profound, so I had bought a copy, and my friend said, oh I want you to listen to this, somebody gave me this tape, a copy of a copy, sound isn't too good, but you'll still understand, this is a woman, she gives talks about the Course in Miracles, okay I'll just put it on, now listen to this, and he put it on, and I, it almost seemed like I breathed in at the beginning of the talk, and I didn't breathe out until the end of it, half an hour later, there was such fire and empowerment in it, when the talk finished after half an hour, I went, wow, that's amazing, and I, what's her name, and she said, oh I can't remember, oh it's Marianne Williamson, oh never heard of her, at that time there was no, there were no books yet, and so on, so the, I still remember how the talk finished, she said at the end, and it's almost over, thank you very much, now I can't remember what that refers to, I think it must refer to the egoic insanity of the world, and it's almost over, and I, we have her here, and I'm going to ask her in a minute, whether she still thinks it's almost over, please welcome Marianne Williamson, please, so is it almost over?

[Speaker 2] (2:29:40 - 2:30:12)

Well, as you well know, even though it began in millions, millions of years ago, in time as we know it, it's not actually happening, it's a hallucination, which is all just the twinkling of an eye, anyway, so from that perspective, it's always beginning, it's always almost over, and it's always ending,

[Speaker 1] (2:30:12 - 2:30:16)

in any of these moments that you discuss, and in another sense, it's over already,

[Speaker 2] (2:30:17 - 2:30:29)

yeah, exactly, in any moment, which you so profoundly describe, it can't exist, yes, yes, so when we're with you, it's over, yes,

[Speaker 1] (2:30:32 - 2:31:34)

yes, and so how is the, now the thing is the realization in humans, that that dimension is there, where this is recognized as a kind of dream, that the important thing is, whether humans realize that, because as long as you don't realize it, you are part of that dream, which very often turns into a nightmare, how is the, I know that Marianne is much more in touch with, I am with the world, the current affairs, and so on, especially in the States, how do you see the collective consciousness in, let's just maybe talk about North America, and later about the world, how do you see the state of the collective consciousness now?

[Speaker 2] (2:31:35 - 2:36:15)

Well, from a spiritual perspective, we can't have a meaningful inquiry about anything in the world, without the context of that inquiry being what's happening in the realm of spirit or pure consciousness, and one of the main points of the Course, and any study of truth with a capital T, is that there is only one of us here, and that in truth there is no world, it's all happening inside us, and because within that perspective, all minds are joined, because there's only one of us here, in whatever moment we as individuals reach that place of pure consciousness, the presence of which you speak, holy instant, and Course in Miracles, we don't just create that greater opening for ourselves, but simultaneously it's created for everyone else as well.

I was telling you yesterday about a fascinating documentary I saw the other night called I Am, and in the documentary there's a conversation about cruelty versus cooperation in the animal kingdom, and there was something there that I'd never seen, and it was if a group of deer, or a group of gazelle, or a group of any animals that all travel together, how do they decide which waterhole to go to, or when birds are flying, what happens to make the whole flock fly a certain way, and what was so fascinating to me was it was in this documentary they were saying that in this group, I can't remember if it was gazelle, or deer, or something along that line, there is an alpha male leader of the pack, but that in the decision of what waterhole to go to, and there were three of them, it wasn't the alpha male who made the decision. It was as each individual gazelle, or deer, whatever it was, turned their head towards a particular waterhole. When 51 percent of the animals turned their head in one direction, the whole group of them went there, and that often the alpha male was just like, oh, okay, we'll go there, and I thought that was so amazing.

We talk about that in terms of 100th monkey, or the tipping point, whatever that is, but this elucidation of the 51 percent in nature I thought was fascinating. So I feel hopeful. First of all, I think hope itself is a moral imperative.

I feel hopeful about the state of humanity, because there are so many groups just like this, because you, people like yourself, are being filmed, and people literally all over the world are participating in this deeper inquiry and experience. It's not just an abstract teaching, it's the entire journey trickling down, and this is clearly happening, and it does not belong to any one ethnic group, or geographical region, or religion. So the state of humanity, for me personally, is just fine, thank you.

The problem we have, or the challenge we have, the situation we have, is that there are institutional identities, mainly political, financial, in terms of business, technology, wielding tremendous material power, and that material power takes profound forms, such as nuclear bombs. And even though those material identities are never the source of the enlightened progress, I believe that they are there in a way as a signal to us not to tarry.

[Speaker 1] (2:36:18 - 2:36:18)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:36:19 - 2:36:46)

Not to tarry, because, as the Course in Miracles says, the ego is suspicious at best and vicious at worst. And as soon as we reach that vibratory field of whether it's 51 percent or whatever it is, then all of those material forms will fall of their own dead weight. Yes.

As soon as there's enough light, darkness cannot exist.

[Speaker 1] (2:36:47 - 2:37:13)

Yes. We already see that happening to some extent, some of the monolithic, egoically created structures are... The wall in Germany.

Yes, collapsing from within. Of course. Russian communism collapsing from within.

It's almost the saving grace, perhaps, of the ego that it seems to have built into it a self-destruct mechanism that eventually gets triggered.

[Speaker 2] (2:37:14 - 2:39:39)

Well, the Course in Miracles says there is a limit beyond which we cannot miscreate. However, in Course in Miracles terms, it is not up to you what you learn, it is merely up to you whether you learn through joy or through pain. Oh, the ego's dominance will fall.

The only issue is, do we go away of wisdom or do we go away, which would involve immeasurable amounts of human suffering? And that is our choice in the matter. Not whether the ego's dominance will end, because like you said, it's got a built-in self-destruct.

The issue is, how is this going to end? Is it going to end through joy or through suffering? I'm a mother, and any parent has had the experience of something that happens when this fierce impulse arises within you and you say to your child about whatever it is, that will not happen in his house.

And I look forward to the collective uprising in humanity, realizing that every child on this planet is one of our children, and realizing now that this entire earth is our house, it's our home. I think when it comes to certain forms of possibility, which are nothing short of catastrophic, just as we would, seeing that possibility of catastrophe inherent in a situation, say to one child, that will not happen here, that we will get to that place about this planet, that will not happen here. Because as we do, as that conviction, because the Course in Miracles says miracles arise from conviction, as the realization that the transformation will occur, but that it is in our hands, how quickly it occurs, and how much suffering it does or does not involve, when that understanding is met with a conviction, we will not go that way.

Then I believe something joyful beyond, just like the night of the falling of the Berlin Wall, times what? A million?

[Speaker 1] (2:39:40 - 2:40:12)

Yes, yes. So what is the individual's role as far as the huge egoically created structures is concerned? I'm a kind of person, I'm almost withdrawn a bit from the world, except for the teaching that goes out into the world.

You're a little bit more of an activist, so how do you see your role as far as the...

[Speaker 2] (2:40:12 - 2:40:32)

Well, from a Course in Miracles perspective, we are all given our own assignment. We all have a particular part to play. You are a profound player in the world, as everybody here knows, because you are acting so profoundly on the level of cause.

[Speaker 1] (2:40:32 - 2:40:32)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:40:34 - 2:42:41)

And when we are in that state that you mentioned earlier, of pure consciousness, we receive nothing short of instruction, whether it's conceived of that way or not. It's interesting, looking at you, having been born in Germany, moving to London, ending up in Canada, I feel strongly that there's something here about honoring one's incarnation, where you were born, nationality, sex, sexuality. And even though in your case, clearly, there's a profound internationalism to your assignment.

And you and I have discussed how my daughter lives in England, and she's got some soul connection to England, even though she was born in the United States. I have some... I take very personally and deeply the successes and failures, both contributions and mistakes of the United States as an American woman.

But from a Course in Miracles perspective, which is just one statement of truth, of course, at the deepest level, we're neither male, female, black, white, Jew, Gentile, American, Canadian. I mean, those are all... But when we are in that place of depth inquiry, and depth knowing, and experience, we're beyond all of that.

And yet we are sent to work. And you work plenty out there. And the Course in Miracles says every day, we are to say, where would you have me go?

What would you have me do? What would you have me say? And to whom?

So I just try to do that as much as the next person does.

[Speaker 1] (2:42:41 - 2:42:48)

So honoring the form without identifying with it and believing that's who you are.

[Speaker 2] (2:42:48 - 2:42:50)

Or taking it too seriously.

[Speaker 1] (2:42:50 - 2:42:52)

Yes, that's an important...

[Speaker 2] (2:42:52 - 2:42:57)

Gandhi said, the greatest service I can be to my country is if I can reduce myself to zero.

[Speaker 1] (2:42:59 - 2:43:52)

Oh, that's a wonderful statement. So that really means discovering the unconditioned dimension in yourself. That's when you...

The form as which you appear ultimately is recognized as an illusion, not who you are. So the elimination of ego is the really inherently connected with the... What is perhaps the central point of this teaching?

The possibility of compulsive thinking coming to an end, old conditioned compulsive thinking, so that a space arises in you where there is no thinking, but just pure awareness.

[Speaker 2] (2:43:53 - 2:46:03)

It's counterintuitive. But when we are there, realizing the illusionary nature of the realm of form, that's when we have power within that realm. Because we don't take it seriously at the same level, we no longer fear it.

We no longer fear its dance because we know that we are not that. We are not its success or its failures. And that's when we have the power from this perspective that we so embrace to do that which we are sent to do within it.

Like that slogan, what would you do with your life if you had no fear of what the outcome would be? Because when you were talking before about how the dream has become a nightmare, I don't know if you were saying that here or when we were talking before, that this world is a dream and it has become a nightmare. In A Course in Miracles, it says we do not go from the nightmare to awakening.

We go from the nightmare to a happy dream. So that when, you know, right now we have 17,000 children on this earth who starve every day, just that fact alone. We have a billion people on this planet who live on $1, $1.25 and less a day. Now when we have a planet where, and no dearth of food by the way, when we have a planet where everyone is fed, where basically there is no unnecessary human suffering, it will still be a world of bodies, therefore it will still be a dream, but it will have become a happy dream and then we can wake up. Which is real different from a lot of those people with the stickers in their bathroom, I love myself, I love myself, I love myself, because it's a real slippery slope to therefore I don't have to engage in the world because it's all an illusion anyway. It's not my karma if a child is starving, etc.

Right? Am I correct?

[Speaker 1] (2:46:03 - 2:50:06)

Yes. So as sometimes happens in people's dreams, in the middle of the dream they realize they are dreaming. The dream can still continue and this is very much when you wake up here, you realize what comes to an end is the identification with form, because you are rooted, I'm using of course somewhat different terminology from The Course in

Miracles, but you know it's the same thing.

So you're rooted in the formless. When you're rooted in the formless, the eternal in yourself, which we can call inner space, which we can call stillness, which we can call pure awareness, when you're rooted in that, then the world of form not only, as you said, is no longer taken absolutely seriously, I sometimes put it this way, I say it matters, but it does not matter absolutely. It has an importance, but its importance is relative, it's not absolute.

The only absolute importance is whether you know who you are in your essence, and that's, Jesus said that with Mary and Martha, when Martha was running around getting concerned with all the things that need to be doing, and Mary's only chosen to listen, but that means you have chosen, he said only one thing is ultimately needed, and you have chosen that one thing. So I don't think he said never to do anything again or work in the kitchen, but to know what is primary, and then what is secondary, tends to unfold with much greater ease, and no longer creates the suffering that is there inevitably when you believe that that's all there is and take it for absolutely real, and everything is deadly serious and matters. That's why people walk around through life, they're really frightened throughout their life, what's going to happen next, it's all, it's the world of form is threatening to them, and the world is perceived as hostile basically, and that's the reason is, and they're trying to rearrange the world so that it's no longer hostile, but it doesn't work.

No matter how you rearrange things, it's still, you feel it as hostile, and so, and then the realization comes, well it doesn't work that way, you have to first find the peace that is an essential part of who you are beyond form, that's always there, not dependent on time, and then from there, you can deal with the things of the world, give the world of form its due, even participate, but it is no longer that nightmarish thing that it was before, when you were trying to get something out of the world, to find fulfillment or whatever, and so that is perhaps what Causing Miracles means, and what you just mentioned, where as you begin to wake up, it turns into a pleasant dream, it's still the world of form, but it's as you're rooted in being, first of all, you no longer create suffering for yourself, because usually your mind is the thing that creates suffering for you, and you don't create suffering for others, that's an enormous contribution, it's a contribution of not adding to the suffering of the world, enormous thing, so that's the first thing that happens, and then, that's how the world changes, but it becomes a more benign dream.

[Speaker 2] (2:50:07 - 2:52:59)

In A Course in Miracles, when it's talking about the world of form, it says about the world and the illusion form, it's not that it's bad, it's that it's nothing, and that it's holiness or unholiness has to do with the purposes the mind ascribes to it, so when we, I love in the Course when he says, let me use your hands, let me use your feet, when we look at the realm of form with a kind of divine attachment, we are not less invested in what occurs here, we are invested in love, I love that line, be fully invested in an effort, but not attached to the result, and I think that this is a very important issue, because if we get this wrong, it makes the spiritual seeker ineffective in ways that perhaps we do not wish to be, look at something like you're here in Canada, you can turn on television, Canada humanitarian aid workers, your servicemen and women are all over the world, um, doing profound work, risking their lives, that's significant, you don't want to not let that in, you want to let that in deeply, because once again, it is a realm of form and a realm of profound power, anytime our spiritual, to me, anytime our spiritual inquiry in any way ignores the suffering of human beings, it does not include that as a factor, the unnecessary suffering of human beings, then perhaps there's a little insidious ego influence that we want to look at there, yes, I mean, from A Course in Miracles, this perspective, this entire room is filled with illusion, the fact that your body is separate from your body is all an illusion, but that doesn't mean this room is not filled with profound reality, which is the love inside us, so for me, in the realm of form, yes, it's all nothing, but when I got a call, would you like to go be with Eckhart Tolle and do this, and what seems to me the obvious blessing, a personal conversation with you as well, it's not like nothing real was going on here, it's something profoundly real, using the realm of form as a teaching device, so that's how I've...

Yes, yes, yes, it's beautiful.

[Speaker 1] (2:53:08 - 2:54:03)

The importance of the present moment, I was telling you earlier, many years ago, I copied from A Course in Miracles all the sayings about the importance of being present, and it says, for example, the closest, the present moment, or the holy instant, as it's called, is the closest approximation to eternity that this world offers, so the eternity, of course, is the timeless dimension, not everlasting time. The Course in Miracles is full of the importance of what I call presence, of the importance of salvation is offered to you in this instant.

It says it has taken time to misguide you so completely, but it takes no time at all to be who you are.

[Speaker 2] (2:54:03 - 2:54:08)

And the only place where eternity intersects with linear time is in the present moment.

[Speaker 1] (2:54:08 - 2:54:10)

Yes, yes, yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:54:11 - 2:54:13)

You've led the world to a profound understanding.

[Speaker 1] (2:54:15 - 2:54:19)

That's the vertical dimension of depth, yeah.

[Speaker 2] (2:54:19 - 2:54:58)

You know, in both the Christian cross and in the Jewish Star of David, the visual symbol is that of the intersecting dimensions of the vertical and the horizontal, and the way The Course in Miracles talks about Jesus, it says, he lived on the earth, but thought only the thoughts of heaven, which takes us back to that, how do you dwell within the realm of form, with your feet planted firmly here, but you're thinking so above this realm that the two intersect divinely and harmoniously and beautifully. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:55:04 - 2:55:33)

So you've come since the talk that I listened to in 86, or whenever the talk that you gave, and then after that for a few years, I didn't hear anything more about, except that I went to a talk you gave, because I loved that recorded talk so much. The following year, you came to London, you gave a talk at the Mind-Body-Spirit Festival, and I went there and enjoyed that very much.

[Speaker 2] (2:55:33 - 2:55:34)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (2:55:34 - 2:55:35)

You didn't see me, but I saw you.

[Speaker 2] (2:55:36 - 2:55:37)

Although, maybe I did.

[Speaker 1] (2:55:40 - 2:56:16)

Yeah. And then, I didn't hear from Marianne Williamson for a few years, and I don't know how many years passed, and I had moved from London to Somerset in England, and one Sunday, in the Sunday paper, the front headline mentioned Marianne Williamson in big letters. I said, what is this?

What's she done? Do you remember that, when suddenly you got out into the world? I think it has something to do with Elizabeth Taylor.

[Speaker 2] (2:56:17 - 2:56:19)

Oh, I thought you were going to say my first book.

[Speaker 1] (2:56:19 - 2:56:26)

No, that wouldn't be in the front page of the News of the World.

[Speaker 2] (2:56:27 - 2:56:29)

I remember in the London Times, in my picture.

[Speaker 1] (2:56:30 - 2:56:48)

Suddenly, and then the book came out soon after that, and that first book was Return to Love. Wonderful book. I'm sure many of you have read it, and millions of people, I'm sure, have been helped and are continuing to be helped by it.

[Speaker 9] (2:56:49 - 2:56:49)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (2:56:50 - 2:56:59)

And then, of course, many more books came after that, and the most recent book, which I haven't read yet, I was very surprised.

[Speaker 2] (2:56:59 - 2:57:02)

You shouldn't read it, because it might have an effect on you that one wouldn't wish for it to have.

[Speaker 1] (2:57:03 - 2:57:27)

It's about weight loss. That's right. So, it's a book about the spiritual aspects of weight loss.

[Speaker 2] (2:57:27 - 2:59:58)

And it, of course, is an extension of the conversation we've been having that the epidemic, I don't know how much Canada is experiencing, but certainly south of here in the United States, we have a very serious problem here. And, of course, that stems from exactly, you know, as the Course in Miracles says, you think you have many different problems, but you really only have one, and that is your separation from God. So, the answer is that the answer with a capital A, no matter what the form of is.

But this idea that when we identify too much with the body, our dense thinking about the body actually is an erroneous perception of the body, which produces dis-ease and dysfunction related to the body. And it is when we see the body as merely a container for light, having been thus reminded in consciousness, it returns the cells themselves to their native intelligence. So, there are cells in our body that know how to keep the lungs breathing and the heart beating, and that same perfection, because we are a perfect idea in the mind of God, that perfect imprint is expressed in every aspect of ourselves.

But for people who are dealing with a serious compulsion or even addiction in regards to physical weight, it's like a breaker switch has gone off. And we are, as the Course in Miracles would say, temporarily inaccessible to the power of the atonement in this one area where the perfect appetites are no longer operative. The cells of the nervous system, the cells in the brain, have literally been knocked out of their native knowing.

And so, knowing that everything that you talk about is the answer, no matter what the problem, achieving that pure state of consciousness that you speak of, literally takes pressure off the body and gives the body an opportunity to heal. The Course in Miracles says the body heals when we're not looking at it. And that all disease or dysfunction of the body arises from over-identification with the body.

So, this book, of course, in Weight Loss and Spiritual Lessons in Surrendering Weight, is taking this spiritual inquiry and applying it specifically to the issue of problems with one's body and weight.

[Speaker 1] (2:59:59 - 3:00:04)

And that could, of course, apply to other forms of addiction also.

[Speaker 2] (3:00:04 - 3:02:04)

Absolutely correct. It just seems to me that when it comes to drugs and alcohol, it is part of the mainstream conversation, whether someone has gone to a 12-step meeting or not, it is part of a mainstream understanding that it is a spiritual disease that needs a spiritual solution. I mean, that's kind of in part of the cultural jargon about the 12-step.

And even though Overeaters Anonymous exists and is a fine program, it doesn't seem to me that the issue of the spiritual problem and the spiritual answer has quite saturated the popular conversation about weight yet. It tends to be more on the level of effect diets and exercise. And they could be great diets that absolutely work, and great exercise programs that absolutely work.

The deeper problem is our inability to stay on the diet, or sometimes so painfully for people, the diet did work, the exercise did work, but within a certain amount of time, the subconscious force of the addiction or compulsion just comes right back. So, there's only one truth spoken many different ways, and I don't think any of this is so much something that we don't already know by now. You know, that path towards the 51%, and you're a large part of this.

You know, the Course in Miracles says, enlightenment begins as an abstract intellectual construct, and it makes its journey without distance. So, I believe enough of us actually, for a tipping point, get it intellectually. You know, we've all read the same books by now.

We've all listened to the same tapes. So, in a way, and you're a perfect example of this, someone didn't come here today so much to hear something they didn't already know. People are here to access more deeply those things which by now we do already know.

[Speaker 1] (3:02:05 - 3:02:05)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:02:06 - 3:02:09)

And the era of data collection is over, I think.

[Speaker 1] (3:02:10 - 3:02:11)

That's a good saying.

[Speaker 2] (3:02:11 - 3:02:27)

I have to remember to quote you. And I think you are one of the few on the planet, I'm not saying this to pander, one gets more than information, one gets a transmission listening to you, and it's truly an honor to be in your presence and to learn from you. Thank you.

[Speaker 9] (3:02:27 - 3:02:28)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (3:02:34 - 3:04:04)

I'd just like to ask one question, your view on, because I'm often asked that question, and I'll tell you my general perception. It's, I know you were very much supported President Obama during the elections, and often people ask me, how do you feel now about President Obama? And I still have to say the underlying state of consciousness that he represents is so vastly more awakened than what preceded him and what surrounds him.

That still applies. I still have a feeling that there's an underlying state of consciousness that is more evolved than what we've seen before and what is around him. On the level of form, which does not mean that he is free of mistakes, and I, from the beginning I thought, why cannot he see that Afghanistan is not going to work, but I hope I'm wrong.

How do you see it now after a couple of years, him in relation to the country as a whole and the world as a whole? What is his function? Is he being dragged down, or is he still able to, in your view, to remain conscious while dealing with all these unconscious forces?

[Speaker 2] (3:04:07 - 3:05:38)

I don't want to have a codependent relationship with Barack Obama. I don't want to always be basing my views on what his potential is. He's responsible for his actions.

I passionately supported the president, and the way his administration has unfolded, I have come to believe that you simply cannot put new wine in old bottles. And in the United States, the Democratic and Republican Party have a lock on the narrative. Mm-hmm.

And within that conversation, I have begun to doubt whether or not the kind of profound transformational shifts that we were led to believe the president believed in during the campaign can occur. Mm-hmm. I'm disappointed.

And as a woman, I think that's part of what we learn in relationships. At a certain point, what you do is what matters, not what you say or what I think in your heart you really believe. He's an adult.

[Speaker 1] (3:05:39 - 3:05:48)

Yes. Of course, your expression was the Democrats and the Republicans have something about the narrative.

[Speaker 2] (3:05:48 - 3:08:50)

There's a lock on the narrative. And that goes back to what you and I were saying earlier about the state of humanity, the state of everywhere. And this is not just in the United States.

This is really Western civilization and actually global civilization to some extent. You see it everywhere, this new conversation bubbling up. You see it in education, you see it in the arts, you see it in politics, you see it in spirituality.

In politics, it's an old conversation. It doesn't allow for the bubbling up of this spiritual renaissance that is trying to occur. And it's too powerful a segment of our collective expression of power to be ignored.

And therefore, and yet for me as an American looking at this last election where, well, not this very last one, but before where the Democrats got the House, the Senate, the White House. See, I'm of a generation that still remembers a great moral force at the center of the Democratic Party in the United States. I remember Bobby Kennedy and I remember Martin Luther King.

And the way I see it, we're now living at a time where one major political party in the United States sees the desperate amount of human suffering on the planet. And they say, well, it's really sad, but it's not government's job to fix it. And if the private sector does something about it, that's great.

The other major political party, which I grew up believing saw addressing that suffering, the suffering of the oppressed, the injustice that so many people endure as the core of its reason for being there, now has become, at least in its current behavioral patterns, a party that looks at all that suffering, does what it can to ameliorate it on the periphery, but if we are honest with ourselves, is not fundamentally addressing the underlying causes that make all that suffering inevitable.

And I don't know how the Canadian system works, but in the United States, our first president, George Washington, warned us about political parties. There's nothing in the Constitution. So in the United States, third-party involvement has been extremely important.

Abolition came from the abolitionist party. Women's suffrage came from the suffrage party. Social security came from the socialist party.

So it is, as they say in AA, it is about principle, not personality. I don't care how cool that personality is. Something is rotten and it's not being fixed.

And I'm a mother and I'm too concerned about our planet and my country and all of our great-grandchildren to be willing to act patient when patience is perhaps not the virtue that it might appear to be.

[Speaker 1] (3:08:50 - 3:09:20)

Yes, so there is a rising new consciousness, but some structures that have been around for a long time, egoically created by the collective ego, some structures cannot perhaps be reached sufficiently by the rising new consciousness for them to change, to become instruments for change. And that might also apply to many economic structures, banking and so on.

[Speaker 2] (3:09:20 - 3:09:30)

Absolutely. And that is the question where we are right now. And for myself personally, I'm new wine.

Yes, you can't be put in those old bottles.

[Speaker 1] (3:09:31 - 3:09:32)

Yes, that's right.

[Speaker 2] (3:09:32 - 3:09:35)

And that's how form was never meant to be permanent.

[Speaker 1] (3:09:35 - 3:10:08)

Oh, no. And especially at this time, as there's an enormous power behind the arising of the new consciousness. And already we saw how the monolithic structure of Soviet communism collapsed because it was so rigid, nothing new could reach it.

And so what then is really, we are destined to see is the eventual collapse of those structures in this transformational period on the planet, that those structures that cannot be reached, they will, they cannot survive.

[Speaker 2] (3:10:09 - 3:10:46)

And then it takes us back to the concern about human suffering. You're right, they'll fall. But do they fall through tender care and careful midwifing?

Or do they fall chaotically and with harm that might not have been there had the new not been midwifed more consciously? That seems to me to be the right conversation. And then every individual has to ask for themselves, what part do I play both conceptually and in terms of our behavior?

[Speaker 1] (3:10:46 - 3:11:37)

Yes. And just coming just a little bit, your own evolutionary journey as you, The Course in Miracles was a decisive transformation for you when you discovered that. So that was the beginning of your, for most people, awakening is a process, the awakening process, I call it.

And so this has been going on for you for since you discovered The Course in Miracles, whenever it was 30 years ago. And how do you feel in your present evolutionary process here? Peace is arising more and more in your life?

[Speaker 2] (3:11:38 - 3:11:49)

I had this question that was like a boulder in the road for me. And I think you answered it for me today.

[Speaker 1] (3:11:49 - 3:11:50)

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (3:11:50 - 3:11:53)

So I'm feeling quite grateful.

[Speaker 1] (3:11:53 - 3:11:53)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:11:54 - 3:11:57)

Thank you. Good. Good.

[Speaker 1] (3:11:59 - 3:12:09)

Thank you. Marianne has a weekly class if anybody's in LA. Where?

[Speaker 2] (3:12:10 - 3:12:21)

At a place called the Regent Theater right now that might be moving at some point. So if someone looks at my website, www.marianne.com, the information is there.

[Speaker 1] (3:12:22 - 3:12:28)

Yeah. Weekly class and you discuss, you talk about a lesson in The Course in Miracles, usually how to apply it.

[Speaker 2] (3:12:28 - 3:12:36)

Or some situation in life with the perspective. Like you, Eckhart, I try my best to listen and whatever. Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (3:12:36 - 3:12:41)

And I am going to read your book anyway, The Weight Loss Book.

[Speaker 2] (3:12:41 - 3:12:46)

Thank you. Just don't do the lessons, okay?

[Speaker 1] (3:12:48 - 3:12:50)

Maybe you shouldn't do it either.

[Speaker 2] (3:12:50 - 3:12:52)

Well, I did them. That was kind of the point.

[Speaker 1] (3:12:57 - 3:13:04)

Marianne doesn't seem to have aged because I remember seeing photos of her from 20 years ago and she looked exactly the same then as she does now.

[Speaker 2] (3:13:04 - 3:13:05)

Well, my clothes are on.

[Speaker 1] (3:13:13 - 3:13:55)

Well, it's been just wonderful to sit with you and you've brought The Course in Miracles perhaps to so many people who otherwise would not have been open to it. And I think, I'm sure for many others, they took it from you rather than going to The Course because you've kind of, in some ways you have translated The Course in Miracles to make it more accessible to people.

[Speaker 2] (3:13:56 - 3:14:15)

I'm like the Russian literature professor. I'm not Dostoevsky. So I think, I always look at my book, A Return to Love, I see it as like the cliff notes of A Course in Miracles.

But obviously, you don't just attend the Russian lit class, you read the Russian novel.

[Speaker 1] (3:14:15 - 3:15:13)

I used for about two or three years, I used The Course in Miracles as a teaching device also in small seminars and workshops. So I still love it and picked it up again last night because I knew we were going to meet here today. And it's just, it's always fresh and new and every line is inspiring.

It's not for everybody, as you know, and as The Course in Miracles itself says. No, it's only one version of the universal curriculum, which is, as in the words of The Course in Miracles, the universal curriculum is the evolutionary path for all human beings, which is the same. And there are different versions of it and The Course in Miracles is one.

So if it's for you, you will know it probably when you pick it up and start reading it. And if it's not, that's fine.

[Speaker 2] (3:15:13 - 3:15:28)

I think it's so beautiful. One of the ways you can tell something is true, with a capital T, is if it dovetails with everything else you know is true. That's what's so beautiful about the multifaceted nature of the universal curriculum.

[Speaker 1] (3:15:28 - 3:17:20)

Yes, it's a wonderful thing being able to recognize the truth, the essential truth, no matter in what form it appears. I couldn't do that until this inner transformation occurred in me. Before that, I could only see the differences in the different teachings.

They looked so different. There's the Christian teaching and there's the Buddhist and Hindu and then other Course in Miracles. I wasn't able to see that they're all one.

And after the awakening that I experienced, I still remember picking up an old copy of the New Testament at my mother's place. I was visiting my mother and there was an old copy, New Testament, which the Jehovah's Witnesses had given her, although she didn't want it. But it was there waiting for me.

And so I picked it up and I suddenly saw the deeper truth that's in the, although some of it has come down to us in a distorted way, but even beyond, I could still see the power behind the teaching and the deeper truth to which it pointed. And then a little later, I saw the Bhagavad Gita and the same, this all points to the same fundamental truth that's there. And then there's an inner recognition that says, yes.

And of course, whatever it says, you know it already, although you might not have been able to formulate it, but then you see it reflected. The same listening to a teacher who teaches from that deep place of realization. Immediately, I still love listening to other spiritual teachers when it's teaching that truly comes from that deep place because it's such joy to listen to it in somewhat different form, the same truth.

[Speaker 2] (3:17:20 - 3:18:01)

Universal spiritual themes is the I was giving a talk in New York City with Robert Thurman, Professor Thurman, who is really the foremost North American Tibetan Buddhist, right? And so he was, it was on Buddha and Christ from the Course in Miracles perspective. And so he was going to talk about Buddha and then I was going to talk about Christ as in the context of A Course in Miracles.

So he spoke and then they said, okay, Marianne, tell us now about Christ. I said, everything he just said. It's been called a Christian Vedanta, actually, by the man who scribed it.

Yes. Bill Thetford said that of A Course in Miracles.

[Speaker 1] (3:18:02 - 3:18:05)

Christian Vedanta. Oh, that's interesting. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:18:05 - 3:18:08)

And here's the Jew. So, you know, it's all one.

[Speaker 1] (3:18:09 - 3:18:19)

Yes. And other forms of Christian teachings that not the conventional Christian teachings. Do you have you, do you know Joel Goldsmith?

[Speaker 2] (3:18:19 - 3:18:50)

Of course, Joel Goldsmith. And I think a lot of what Elaine Pagels wrote about in about the Nag Hammadi manuscripts and the Gnostic Gospels, there's more and more of an understanding that A Course in Miracles belongs in a broader category of the Gnostic mystical Christian tradition, which it's kind of interesting because you look at A Course in Miracles and then you look at a lot of traditional Christian interpretation and you see 80 percent's the same.

And then, boy, where it deviates 20 percent is huge.

[Speaker 1] (3:18:50 - 3:19:32)

Yes. Yes. Joel Goldsmith, to me, is the really a Christian version of what in India is called Advaita, which means non-duality teaching because he uses Christian terminology, but it all points to the absolute non-duality of life.

And Advaita teachings have become very popular in the West in the last few years. There's only one, there's only God and it's the oneness of all life. And to some extent, the A Course in Miracles is also pointing continuously to oneness.

[Speaker 2] (3:19:33 - 3:19:47)

Oh, absolutely. Sure, because nothing else exists. Yes.

If you're, God is all and what is all-encompassing can have no opposite. So when you're thinking without love, which is God, you're actually not thinking, you're hallucinating. Yes.

Which, once again, is like Buddhism. It's all Maya, it's all illusion. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (3:19:48 - 3:20:31)

The one obstacle that is common for people is that I've seen it with people who are drawn to Advaita teachings, the Indian non-duality. They begin to believe, they believe that the belief in non-duality is the realization of non-duality. And then they stop there.

And so there are people who teach Advaita, they have become maybe even quite well-known teachers, and they teach from intellectual level. They have mastered the terminology of non-duality and they can answer any questions by applying the terminology of non-duality. And it sounds quite convincing.

[Speaker 2] (3:20:31 - 3:20:34)

But it hasn't trickled down from their head.

[Speaker 1] (3:20:34 - 3:20:34)

Yes, that's right.

[Speaker 2] (3:20:34 - 3:20:36)

They're still triggered when their mother calls.

[Speaker 1] (3:20:36 - 3:21:04)

That's exactly it. Exactly. And so, very good.

And so a good criterion you can have is after you've listened to it, it doesn't feel good in here. Something in here tells you that's not it. You can feel it here.

There are some Advaita teachers who have realized, and then it's true teaching. But if it's only an intellectual realization, basically it's a fallacy.

[Speaker 2] (3:21:05 - 3:21:18)

You passed the test. Thank you so much.

[Speaker 1] (3:21:19 - 3:21:27)

Thank you, Marianne. Maybe just a little moment of stillness.

[Speaker 5] (3:21:27 - 3:24:37)

I understand there's probably only one answer to this question, like so many that will be asked. How can a movement that is so inwardly focused demonstrate political power in the same way that some corporate interests and evangelical interests have done so, I think much to the detriment of our political process?

[Speaker 1] (3:24:37 - 3:24:41)

I didn't quite understand. Can you just repeat again?

[Speaker 5] (3:24:41 - 3:24:54)

How can an inwardly focused movement demonstrate political power to beneficial effect instead of the detriment of our nations?

[Speaker 1] (3:24:54 - 3:24:57)

Thank you. This is a question for Marianne.

[Speaker 2] (3:25:01 - 3:28:49)

How did the Indians get the British to leave? What was Gandhi's movement of nonviolence if not an inwardly focused movement? Martin Luther King went to India.

He studied the principles of nonviolence, and he brought those principles back for application in the civil rights movement, struggle for civil rights in the United States during the 1960s. Please forgive me for some level of ignorance about Canada's history, but most of our countries have had pretty much the same trajectories of places where there were levels of injustice that moved to justice. If you looked at the abolitionist movement in the United States, all the power, when you were just talking about the corporate power, the abolitionists didn't even have cell phones.

They had no computers. They had no way of connecting. The economic power behind slavery, the institution of slavery in the United States, in the southern states of the United States at that time, was the equivalent of corporate power today.

But they had a better idea. They had what was ultimately a more life-sustaining idea. That's the power of that line that Martin Luther King used to quote, that the moral arc of the universe is long, but it bends towards justice.

Because ultimately, if you stand on something which is life-sustaining, freedom and liberty and fairness for life and all its forms, then you have what Martin Luther King called cosmic companionship. This is what is the symbol of the Christ child in front of the three kings. They bowed to him.

When you are in the presence, ultimately, no amount of money, no amount of corporate power, no amount of governmental power, none of those external powers, which are false anyway, will ultimately stand for all the reasons we were talking about earlier. They are powers of an illusionary world. And when we recognize, as Martin Luther King said, there is a power in us more powerful than the presence of bullets, in the presence that Eckhart so eloquently describes, as there is a collective field of presence, which is what the Indian non-violent movement was.

It was a collective field of presence led by Gandhi. A collective field of presence led by Martin Luther King in the United States. Then ultimately, all powers of form will fall in the presence of light.

The Course in Miracles defines light as understanding, and in the presence of light, darkness cannot be. And also, the Course in Miracles says faith. There is no such thing as a faithless person.

Faith is an aspect of consciousness. But we tend to have more faith in the power of the disaster than we have faith in the power of presence. We have too much faith in corporate power.

We need to have more faith in the power of presence, the power of love, which is not saying that all corporate power is bad, by the way, but corporate dominance. So I think sometimes political activists today are disturbed by an ignorance of history. Because if you want to see political miracles, we've already had them.

From suffrage to the abolition of slavery, to many examples. It's not like, well, it's never happened. Thank you.

[Speaker 10] (3:28:49 - 3:28:50)

Thank you.

[Speaker 8] (3:29:08 - 3:29:47)

I have a question about ignorance. I find myself to become quite ignorant. I have compassion and love and come from that place, but I don't seem to respond to what's happening around me so much because I understand it's an illusion.

And every time I see it, I just feel it is an illusion and it's okay for what it is. But now listening to you, I'm thinking maybe I should go back and be more active and participate. I used to be that way, but now I'm more like, it is what it is.

[Speaker 1] (3:29:50 - 3:35:11)

Well, I'll say a few words and then... Well, in any situation, prior to any action, the main factor is your state of consciousness. And any action you take arises out of a state of consciousness.

If you see something that maybe suffering is being inflicted on another human being, it would be a misunderstanding of what spirituality is to say, well, this is just another illusion. So on the other hand, if you take whatever you see out in the world to be an absolute reality and nothing else, then you get lost in trying to solve the problems of the world on the level of effect. So that is the danger of people who are activists or try to help and do things.

There is a place for this one dimension that is the level of effect where you can take action and do things. But at the same time, you need to be aware of the level of cause where the causal level of human suffering and unconsciousness and the causal level of human suffering is in state of consciousness and it starts with your own. Are you connected to the deeper level of who you are?

That's what we always address here. Are you connected with that? Or if you are connected with that, then what your mind calls illusion, then you truly know that this is not ultimate reality and yet it has a relative reality.

And you can take action and at the same time be connected with a deep inherent peace, an energy field of peace. The action that you then take, spontaneous action, is imbued with that peace. And if you don't know who you are, then you're trying to solve the problems of the world exclusively on the level of form and they cannot be solved on the level of form.

The level of form is an addition, an added thing that comes. Your state of consciousness is the primary factor in any action you take. Now, one needs to be careful with teachings that say it's all illusion, not that it is not true, but like Advaita teachings or Course in Miracle teachings, all illusion.

On what level do you know that? Is that just a belief in your mind that tells you, oh, it's all illusion? You don't really know that.

It's actually not true as far as you are concerned. As Marianne said, you still get, when you visit your mother-in-law or whatever, you still get triggered by whoever your mother or your mother-in-law or whoever it is. And to say then, well, it's all illusion, well, you don't actually, you don't seem to know that your mother-in-law is illusion because you react as if she were absolutely real.

So they don't really know it. Whether you know that, truly know that it's illusion is determined by your state of consciousness. So when the deep peace is lacking, then you don't really know it in the depths of your being.

You only know it intellectually. And if you only know intellectually that it's all illusion, that's not the truth. You're fooling yourself that it needs to be a living truth inside you.

Then it becomes true for you. So really it's only spiritual teachers who have reached that place, they say it, and they are absolutely right when they say it. And then somebody repeats it who just hears those words and then thinks that's the solution to the world.

It's not. It's a lie when you just repeat it for as far as you are concerned, because you haven't gone to that place where you truly know it. So that is your primary responsibility is going to that place where you know at the deepest level.

And then you can be of benefit in this world because then any action you take is connected to a deeper level. And there's more than just the action you take. There's an entire energy field behind it that is that that changes the world.

And so the difference then between head knowledge and lived living knowledge.

[Speaker 2] (3:35:13 - 3:38:30)

There are monasteries, both Western and Eastern, both in the Eastern religions as well as Western orientations, where people just live in silence, monks in silence. They are probably doing as much to keep this world from blowing up in a nuclear catastrophe as is anyone. So what someone is, quote unquote, doing is on the outside does not even say, because just as Eckhart was just saying, if someone is acting in the realm of form, but they're bringing the old consciousness, they're actually recreating the old no matter what they're doing.

And similarly, people who are, quote unquote, doing nothing, but they're praying all day for all living things are doing plenty. When books like The Course in Miracles say the world is an illusion or I need do nothing as Eckhart was just saying, this is extremely important. When you hear these lines out of context, that is a profound misunderstanding of A Course in Miracles or any serious spiritual teaching to think that the conversation stops there.

Because The Course in Miracles says we are to do whatever we are sent out to do. Now, I would never presume to know you might be in a phase where a doing of nothingness was necessary for a part of your own purification of consciousness. And just as true as that might be that you were meant to be here today to hear talk about a quickening.

If you're only acting on the world of form and not addressing causal issues, then you are only creating more of a problem. But if, just as Eckhart already said all this, if you're only dealing on the realm of cause, you're not like those monks praying for the world. You're just using it's all an illusion anyway, so I don't have to do anything as an excuse.

You're also perpetuating the problem. So it's both and. I want to tell you one quote from Martin Luther King Jr. He said, you have very little morally persuasive power with people who can feel your underlying contempt. So that's the spiritual activist's creed. Dear God, I want to yell and scream at this person on television. I can't stand them.

And you come to understand that your own self-righteousness, your own spiritual superiority, your own sense that you know and they don't know is the problem. So first you pray, please help me get rid of my own craziness. The Course in Miracles says the primary work of the miracle worker is to accept the atonement for himself.

Dear God, I really believe I'm better than they are, smarter than they are. And if only they were gone, the country would be fine. Dear God, heal me.

Right? But then the issue is when you're flat on that, you won't feel moved to just sit there. You will, when and to the extent to which it is your assignment, do that which you are called to do if you are called to do it.

But just as Eckhart was saying, you will do it from a different place. So the answer is both and, isn't it?

[Speaker 8] (3:38:31 - 3:39:17)

Everything seems to be always is one thing yet is another. It seems that actually it's really funny because you say something but the opposite is truth as well. So it kind of contradicts everything in life, contradicts itself.

Give us an example. Yes, I can be out there active and fight and that would be great and it will be beneficial for the energy of this planet and mine. Yet, if I don't and just sit in peace and love and just be still, it's the same.

No, if you go out there and you fight, you will only be temporarily managing an effect.

[Speaker 2] (3:39:17 - 3:40:37)

It will only be an allopathic suppression of the symptoms. The issue is how much time did you spend in the presence that morning? Did you meditate and prepare inwardly before you went?

And then if you went, you might have gone to the rally but you wouldn't be coming to fight. You would be coming to be the presence in the midst of this chaos. You would come in a whole different way and that is what the world needs now.

These are illusions but there's a part in the Course in Miracles where it talks about how you could take a spiritual teaching, you could take the power of now. It's a book, it's a form, it's an illusion but it's an illusion that leads beyond illusion. So the Course in Miracles talks about the highest level of thinking of which the ego is capable.

It's still the ego's world, we're bodies, we're talking but it's the highest level of thinking of ego which ultimately will lead us. So I think it's both and. You pray, you meditate, then you show up if you feel moved to show up but you will show up emanating something much more profound and causal than just, well man, I'm angry.

Which means you're just part of the problem. You're as much a hawk as they are.

[Speaker 1] (3:40:39 - 3:43:52)

Or take an example, let's say very often whenever humans come together in institutions and companies they sit, the enormous amount of conflict that's generated, let's say there's a committee meeting, there's conflict, I mean not only where you might expect conflict in the big financial institutions, there's the same amount of conflict when egos come together in hospital administrations, churches, church administration and so on. So let's say you are there at a committee meeting where everybody is energized egoically and in other words it's quite insane and your job is to embody, before you even think of what you are going to say or what you want prior to all that, your job is to embody a different state of consciousness as you sit there.

That comes first. It doesn't, what you want to happen or your point of view is you can forget for the time being. First is what is my state of consciousness?

Are you there as another agitated and egoic presence and saying things should be done the spiritual way? I totally disagree with everybody. Or do you embody the presence and then you sit there and you begin to listen to all the people discussing things without saying oh you're all so ignorant.

You should be, without the judgments of the mind, you simply watch and you're there as a still alert presence and you watch and then you may find at some point words may come out of your mouth and you say something. It will be totally different energy from the energy that these people are putting out but it's not that you are saying now I'm going to show you the right energy. No it doesn't.

It comes out of presence. Words that come out of presence are not, they don't generate more confrontation and human unconsciousness and it may well be that suddenly people listen but that's the result. You're not attached to the result and you cannot predict what will come out of your mouth.

Maybe nothing will come out of your mouth and you will just be there and perhaps the very fact that there's one human being who holds the presence might change what these people say or do in the room. It could happen. It doesn't matter but that your primary responsibility is embodying a different state of consciousness.

Whether action comes out of that, words come out of that is secondary. So that's that really is we've all had experiences of how dysfunctional these all these places are where egos come together. Where egos come together it cannot not be dysfunctional.

[Speaker 2] (3:43:53 - 3:45:32)

Now this is it you know the whole these inquiries are so endlessly fascinating because once you're on that level of pure consciousness or reality with a capital R you are in the realm where there is no time or space. So when you are in that meeting of the hospital administration in Vancouver and you go into pure consciousness which by the way cannot but affect the people in the room in ways that you will never know there could be a suicide bomber somewhere who says I'm not going to do it. Literally there could be a soldier somewhere who says I'm putting my gun down.

So once we're in that realm of pure consciousness we're in the one mind that's the esoteric meaning of the line there is only one begotten son means we're all it. So it is not just as you were saying which is well if where you find yourself is the hospital administration meeting that's your assignment today. But it's also that place where spirituality intersects spiritual practice intersecting global activism because you actually are affecting the entire globe and contributing to that 51 percent.

But also affecting you have no idea where this might be. We know that when the butterfly flaps its wings in this southern tip of the planet that it affects the wind currents at the North Pole. We know that this is the same on the level of consciousness.

So you are working on the world if you're working on yourself deeply.

[Speaker 1] (3:45:33 - 3:45:58)

Yes and you're very powerful in that sense you are very powerful the power the wonderful quote that you're what's the most famous quote from Marianne which is usually attributed to Nelson Mandela but it's actually by Marianne which is our deep it's from it's from a return to love of course it's of

[Speaker 2] (3:45:58 - 3:46:12)

course content our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure it is our light not our darkness that most frightens us that yes of course and then I'm the only person I know doesn't have the rest of it memorized

[Speaker 1] (3:46:16 - 3:46:30)

it's lovely thank you now I believe that did you say Marianne needs to go soon yeah so let's thank her for being here a wonderful valuable incredible additional thank you

[Speaker 2] (3:46:31 - 3:46:37)

thank you thank you great honor great honor god bless you

[Speaker 1] (3:46:51 - 3:59:56)

now here we have another question another person who is dissatisfied for another reason I'm on a path of awakening but my deep loneliness at loneliness at not having a life partner is an obstacle to my spiritual development I get deeply depressed though I do my best to stay present in the now instead of dwelling on my longing what advice could you offer okay well I won't say internet dating um there is a part in every person the form you the the form identity of who you are and the level of form tends either towards the male or the female it might not necessarily be the physical the physical male may tend more to hit the other so it doesn't necessarily depend on your the physical form but you tend to pretend either to towards the male or the female and therefore you're not complete because you're only one half on the level of form which is the physical form or the just underneath that the the psychological or emotional form and so there is a natural longing for the other polarity the completeness in a human being and you can feel that as a sex is only part of that but it goes beyond sexual longing it's there's more to it than that there's also an emotional longing for the other and you can so they come they go together and there's that pull that you can feel as on the level of form and when that is not satisfied then that can lead to unhappiness particularly if you have not transcended at all your identification with form if you are still totally totally identified with you as this physical form and psychological form the transcendent dimension has not come into your life at all then you would become very dissatisfied and depending also to some extent what culture you live in there are traditional cultures still on our planet where it's almost whether you have to find a partner and if you're not everybody would look down on you as being a total and miserable failure in in some traditional cultures if you if you're not married at a certain by a certain age or you cannot give birth to children people look down on you and despise you and you're miserable for the rest of your life you have not fulfilled your form identity and and so and also in some traditional cultures the the sense of self is very strongly bound up with whether you're a man or a woman so more so than in the west it still persists to some extent in the west but much less so than in some traditional cultures where if you're a man in certain cultures you are this because 70 percent of who you feel you are your self-identity is the male you are the male and you look at every woman as a as a that's a female you can't relate to a human to a woman as a human being you are the male and she is a female and she of course not your equal and the woman is totally identified with being the female form and behaves according to that kind of collective conditioning so depending on where it is i won't act it out but here in the west it's a little easier to step out of those collective expectations it is more acceptable in the west to say my choice is not to get married and you can even say my choice is not to have children and people say okay so there's a bit more freedom there and yet the longing for the other on the form level is still there emotional sexual the essence is to be able to transcend who you are on the level of form whether or not you find a partner that meets that longing or whether you go from one partner to another and another or you find one life partner with whom you're for the rest of your life that is secondary really because even if you have a partner if you have not gone deeper and and encounter the transcendent dimension to who you are beyond the form identity of you as the male or the female or whatever the nationality or the particular status in society whatever makes up your form identity in addition to gender if you haven't gone beyond that then even the relationships yes you might have found your partner but you won't be satisfied in the relationship with in the absence of the transcendent dimension the spiritual dimension you may come to some kind of compromise and living together somehow managing to stay together but it you'll be actually you have a longing to get out so the people who are who are outside the relationships have a longing to get in or marriage and those who are in have a longing to get out so the young the young the young girl or man late teens early twenties they want to get into the cage and those who are in the cage want to get out of the cage it is quite possible to to notice the sense of if in in the absence of a partner it is quite possible to notice a certain sense of lack on the level of form and yet have a lot of spaciousness around that sense of lack yes i can feel that there is a longing but the longing does not consume you the longing has not taken possession of you and making you into an unhappy person a totally unfulfilled and bitter person perhaps no the longing is there but the longing that arises from your particular form of you exists within a spaciousness because that is the transcendent dimension and who you are is not the unfulfilled longing who you are is the presence or the stillness around it that is the shift so the longing may persist but you can live with it however if you are no longer trapped in the longing it's also quite possible that a change will come into your life particularly if the intense neediness goes i need somebody and then everybody you everybody you meet can feel the the neediness and you're when you when you've given somebody your phone number you've just met and then you're waiting for them to call and they they're less likely to call when the neediness is there they're more likely to call when a certain spaciousness is there i'd like i'd love you to call i'd love this person to call me but he may or she may or may not and there's a again a spaciousness around it so you of course you can take action towards meeting somebody i don't know the question whether the questioner has taken any action and actually gone to places perhaps where one meets people are not necessarily nightclubs we might not meet the most conscious people in bars but there are other places one can go to where you meet people and even the internet why not this is the way many people read that way but even there if you haven't gone beyond the then the absolute neediness of needing somebody then it's less likely to work out for you but if you have that sense of inner some inner spaciousness around the longing then the way in which you approach others changes without that absolute that pull so that's my suggestion then is see if you can on the outer level see how and where you could meet people and explore perhaps you will find somebody here or there why to realize that the transcendence is the most vital thing does not exclude the possibility of taking action on an outer level of course that is always secondary but why not and maybe you find a good website where you meet conscious is there such a thing conscious dating if there isn't maybe it's a business idea conscious dating of course the the difficulty is a person who thinks of themselves as conscious maybe deluded so find that place where the polarities actually don't are not there anymore in the being the I am-ness that's deeper than the form and go there as much as you can it may not totally free you of the longing but that's okay the longing will just become a thing that's no longer overwhelming and then if take action and see what happens

[Speaker 7] (4:00:17 - 4:01:17)

Hi Eckhart, I just want to thank your consciousness for your teachings Thank you very much. Did I say it right this time?

I strive to be a role model of presence for my two-year-old son Teddy but if I send him to preschool he may be influenced by unconscious teachers and other adults there who do not know about your teachings my instinct tells me to homeschool him until he can reach a certain level of consciousness if my son was your child what would you do and my second question is this millions of parents teachers grandparents parents educators are crying out for a roadmap for applying your teachings can you please create a lecture series and a book to help adults raise the consciousness of the next generation

[Speaker 1] (4:01:19 - 4:03:19)

thank you well the second question let's start with that first if that happens then that will happen I don't I don't start with an intention it's just when something wants to come through it comes right now I feel that the consciousness is increasingly moving through human beings and quite a few teachers too that that thing will be created through them through consciousness moving through people who are already in the educational establishment and they will have experienced with that they know what's wrong with it and they will consciousness will use them to bring about what you are talking about maybe it'll use this form too we'll see so that I'm sure will happen I already know individual teachers who are bringing in consciousness it's not not part of the official curriculum but they are doing it it's happening so if this is how change usually starts it's from the bottom up not by imposing a new system from the top but the change starts from the bottom and then seeps up and then reaches the top until finally it becomes part of the curriculum in a few years we would love that hopefully we'll see and then your child when the what at what age would you would your child right now so because of your teachings

[Speaker 7] (4:03:19 - 4:04:17)

I'm able to be very aware of how I act with him and I'm you know soaking up this time to give him formless attention being the presence letting him play in the dirt and not label it having him use his senses and just be with the dirt and not care about if he gets dirty or not it's because of your teachings that my parenting philosophy has drastically changed and I don't meet a lot of educators out there that I I feel that could kind of give him that you know presence for him while he's soaking up pain bodies here and there I kind of want to be that foundation and so the only solution I can come up with is that I should home school him until he gets a little bit older and he's able to practice you know certain he has a certain level of consciousness

[Speaker 1] (4:04:17 - 4:08:23)

so I don't know if you have any other case it's not too good to send them to school to at too early an age so you also have to there are some types of schools that are better than others if such a school is in your vicinity where you live they Rudolf Steiner schools or Montessori or these alternative schools and some of those schools are aware that a child at an early age should not yet be burdened with too much conceptual knowledge or mathematics also and keep the child in touch with sensory reality they encourage that so if you can find a school like that a kind of alternative school that may be acceptable and then you have to look at what other if those are not where you live see what the schools are like there eventually the child will have to interact with other children I wouldn't send a child to school at such an early age in any case or even teach writing too soon sometimes these days it's taught far too soon if the school is not it's not alternative but not too bad because there are huge differences in levels of consciousness in schools then you may have to send him to school and then compensate for what he learns there to some extent at home the home environment is still very very important for a child and to some extent can compensate for what happens at school school is much harder to compensate when the home environment is bad it's harder for the school to compensate for the bad home environment bad meaning unconscious than for home to compensate for relatively unconscious school environment so the home environment is more fundamental than the school but be careful and use your intuition and then you'll do the right thing you cannot protect your child too much from the unconsciousness of the world that this may be a temptation but sooner or later your child one way or another will come into contact with the unconsciousness if you prolong it for not extreme forms of unconsciousness but some forms of unconsciousness if you delay it for too long then it's like like keeping a plant in a in the hothouse for too long and then finally when you think okay well it's the plan is big enough to put outside now but it's never been outside and then it may struggle to survive outside the challenges of life and many of the challenges of life are challenges of unconsciousness in the world that we live in they are actually a vital part also of the awakening so many parents want to remove challenges to some extent it's a good thing to of course not to expose a child to damaging environments yes that's all good but you cannot remove all the challenges nor would that be a good thing so the child will grow in consciousness by encountering unconscious humans including unconscious children so of course you wouldn't want to send a child to a school where there's a lot of physical violence definitely not but milder forms of unconsciousness the child will come into contact with and at first it's yes it's a form of suffering but then he will grow in consciousness through that that generates more consciousness that's all right thank you so

[Speaker 6] (4:08:23 - 4:10:23)

much thank you i'm bringing on the mick jagger bruce springsteen and bono all rolled into one this is the guy now when you see him you're going to go really but he is the rock star of the spiritual movement he is the rock star eckhart tolle is the person who embodies and is literally walking presence so when i first read eckhart tolle's book a new earth everybody of course had read the power of now and i read a new earth new earth life changing i would have to say central most important book i ever read i mean if you never read any if you only want to read one book in your life i would say a new earth is it his teaching and his definition and understanding of ego turned the concept inside out for me and for a lot of other people who followed us on um those a new earth lessons uh we actually broke the web back in 2008 when we first did those 10 lessons of uh of a new earth his writings allowed us to understand for the first time actually didn't you guys what ego was because we always thought it meant just being arrogant so he calls his uh session the awakening of consciousness that's it that's what we're here to do the awakening of consciousness from the rock star himself eckhart tolle

[Speaker 1] (4:10:46 - 8:45:16)

nice to be here and now as you can see this speaker must be really dynamic they had to bring out a chair for him a few days ago a question that oprah likes to ask came to mind uh i'm sure you've heard it then the question is what do you know for sure what do i know for sure she asked me that question a few years ago i don't remember what the answer was because it came out of the present moment but it's a very interesting question it can take you to a very deep level as it can be answered on many levels and what may be true on one level may not be true on a deeper level i prefer the word deeper to higher because higher kind of takes you out of yourself deeper takes you more deeply within so an example i could say what do you what do i know for sure i know for sure that i'm sitting on a chair that's the most surface level of things i know for sure that this is a table and of course on one level that is true if you take it to a deeper level if you really looked at these atomic and subatomic structure of this thing that i call chair and that i call table then you would realize maybe it's not a table on that level it's not a table it's atoms and molecules and 99 empty space in between so it's no longer a table it's true on this level but not on a deeper level and so you can go to many i can say what do i know i know for sure that my books have changed the lives of millions of people because people keep telling me that i assume that they are honest and that's true on one level but if you take it to a deeper level are they my books who am i where did these books come from am i the consciousness out of which these books came i what come what i what level of i so you can you can then deeper and deeper whether it's not me the person who wrote the books it's the consciousness that used this so-called person as an instrument and used the mind so you can go deeper and deeper and so as i was pondering this i finally arrived at the most the at the deepest answer that you cannot doubt what do i know for sure what do i know for sure and if you go to the deepest level because everything else can be questioned including whether us sitting here is actually absolutely real it seems to be but on the other hand tomorrow you might wake up and for a moment you might not know did i dream yesterday what happened that this wonderful spiritual gathering or did that actually happen or when you're desperate you remember many things and they suddenly your life seems to have a dream-like quality because things evaporate very quickly things arise situations and it's gone there are many dream-like qualities to a person's life and many philosophers has questioned they said is is life a dream on some level one could say that it is nobody can prove that this event here you sitting here listening to this man on the chair that you are not dreaming this you could be or the one consciousness is dreaming it this is possible nobody can prove otherwise so i cannot know for sure yet that that we are actually here you are so it means you have to go deeper what if i can't be sure that this is actually happening what can i be sure of it's maybe a dream and then suddenly you arrive at something they arrive at the realization that in order for a dream even if it is a dream or reality for anything to be there needs to be a consciousness in which it appears so even if it's a dream the dream must appear in a consciousness without consciousness there is nothing there needs to be a light of consciousness for a dream to be experienced so even if it's a dream there is still a you that's experiencing the dream now that you may not be the personality you with a name and a personal history a limited personal history and a limited personal future but there is a there is a presence there in which if it is a dream or reality in which this dream is is being perceived becomes appears in the light of what it appears in consciousness there is an awareness in which the dream appears if it is a dream and now that now we have reached the deepest level of the question what do i know for sure what i know for sure and i speak for everyone is that at this moment i am conscious otherwise there would be nothing i must be conscious i may be dreaming but i'm i'm the dream is i'm conscious so that is the substratum to use a geological term for everything one could use certain analogies you could say it is like the canvas on which paintings appear the difference between in this analogy is this canvas that is you the consciousness is in the background for it enables everything to be and to appear and to arise and to subside to form and to go back into formlessness and the pictures that appears on this canvas is your entire life experience whatever happens to you the changing pictures on the canvas of your awareness and so the only difference between the actual the artist's canvas and this canvas is the pictures change constantly they're not static the one thing that's constant about your life is changed everything is in flux as the ancient greek philosophers already found you cannot step into the same river twice everything is subject to change that was the philosopher heraclitus or heraclitus 2,500 years ago he said eris panta rei is the greek term everything flows everything is in flux that was his main teaching heraclitus is a pre-socratic philosopher he was he taught before famous socrates but then there was another pre-socratic philosopher parmenides who said the exact opposite he said change is an illusion nothing ever changes and they are both right parmenides refers to the canvas and heraclitus refers to what appears on the canvas what appears on the canvas is your life situation you're the continuously changing life situation but who is experiencing that life that is sometimes fine sometimes not so fine sometimes disaster sometimes elation continuous change continuous changes what do i know for sure i know for sure that i am at this moment conscious this this is a first-hand realization you don't need secondary evidence you cannot even have secondary evidence that you are conscious now that even that is perhaps not absolutely correct when we use those words because when i say i am conscious that still implies that there is a duality that there is an i who has a certain quality that's called conscious to it there's a duality when you say i'm conscious so let's change that and say i am consciousness that is the essence of who i am presence consciousness now most people don't know that they are so hypnotized by what appears on the canvas of their awareness that everything that appears on this canvas of their awareness draws their attention incompletely there's all the things that happen around you all the time they draw your you can see how they draw your attention out continuously and want you to identify with go into them especially nowadays with all the devices that we have early in the morning first goes the first text message thing and then and then your attention goes to the next thing let's need to check the emails now this is why and then your attention what you have to do now and so it's not and then not only external things draw your attention continuously even more so the mind the thought every thought that arises absorbs your attention and you identify with it it goes so most people are so drawn into that that them all that exists is all the stuff that appears on that to continue for a moment with that analogy all the stuff that appears on the screen of their awareness that hypnotizes them and so they are not aware of the essential background to their lives they are not aware of their essential beingness they are not aware of the essential I am I am is the most profound truth so what do I know for sure so the most profound and unquestionable answer is I am I know that for sure but don't add anything to it because that's temporary that's a temporary appearance on the screen of of the I am awareness now spiritual awakening or the awakening of consciousness because when you don't know that when you're hypnotized by everything that arises externally and internally in your mind well ultimately it's all internal because for anything for you to know anything it must arise within you so you need to be aware most people don't are not aware that that dimension exists in them so and that's a terrible one could almost say their life is deprived the most essential dimension is missing they don't they don't know the I am and the I am is an interesting thing that's used in different in different spiritual traditions God's definition of him her or itself is I am that I am Jesus is said or is supposed to have said nobody knows for sure of course because it went through so many people writing and translating I am the light of the world that's in the gospel of John and in another gospel he said you are the light of the world and both of course are correct so what is the light of what does he mean you are the light of the world that is his way if he had said you are consciousness people would have said what what but at least by using the light they have some analogy so perhaps they could get a little bit of a sense of what he was talking about now the important thing is as we sit here for you to come to this realization and many of you already are in touch with that dimension within themselves to actually realize at first hand what it means when you say I am and add nothing to it and then what follows the I am or you can use a little mantra that in especially the Indian sage Ramana Maharshi recommended highly he said sit down in meditation ask yourself the question who am I and so many people tried that and some succeeded and some didn't a little secret if you find an answer to who am I on a level of concepts then you didn't get it so on the level of concepts there is no answer to who am I the answer is wrong that's a bit of zen like thing they whatever answer you give is wrong because when you ask yourself who am I and do you need to enter a state of alertness almost as if you were listening this is just an analogy but the kind of alertness that you may you may be familiar with when you let's say you are in a room or outside someone you're trying to listen to a distant noise I gave an example of that in the new earth trying to listen to dissonance you need to be alert to so that you can hear it and that alertness is is a is is an aware presence without thinking it is just an an alert presence that goes who am I is meant to take you into that state of presence and that state of presence is the answer so there's no conceptual answer there's only the answer of experiencing yourself as pure presence and that is not difficult it's bit between two thoughts the gap between two thoughts is the I am presence you experience yourself as the canvas as the consciousness so here's one thought comes to an end the other one hasn't arisen yet and in between two thoughts for example now you have a moment of spaciousness and in that spaciousness you sit here and you just look around and you take everything in and you come to the amazing realization that you do not always need to conceptualize interpret or label everything that comes into your awareness you can just be there as a pure presence and then that is a another way of knowing things in our intellectualized mentally overstimulated civilization we believe that the only way of knowing things is to analyze and to conceptualize but that's only one way yes there is a place for it but if that's all you know let's take an example you go into a forest and you walk in the forest there's one way of perceiving the forest and that is looking interpreting what you see you know the name of that tree you know that bird or you ask why wonder what that's called on and so you label it you interpret it you might be very knowledgeable so you can explain to people what these things are how these plants grow how old that tree might be and so on and that's fine that's one way of knowing the forest but there's another way of knowing the forest and that is going through the forest with very little thought but just an alert presence and that is a very different way of experiencing the forest from the way of interpreting it so and in that way you would go and you notice your mind becomes very still and in that stillness you perceive everything but in addition to perceiving everything you are aware of a an underlying presence and that underlying presence is both yourself at the most essential level beyond the egoic personality that is short-lived anyway there is the yourself as the conscious presence but then you can also sense a presence the presence of the forest that science could never reveal to you that the analytical knowledge could never reveal to you you become aware of the sacredness of the forest and you connect with whatever you're perceiving at a deep level you feel a connectedness with the trees and the plants and the totality of the forest in a way that you could never have experienced if your only way of knowing the forest had been the conceptualizing mind so and it is not necessarily the case that you need to be in either one or the other it is possible for us to be in the in both dimensions so that we are not obsessively interpreting when but we can occasionally interpret and then go back into alert stillness being the awareness in which all this arises then you feel a connectedness with everything that before you could not feel when you it only related to to it through the conceptualizing mind because the conceptualizing mind brings up barriers between yourself and the other and the same thing applies to human beings when you meet a human being if you're not aware with a deeper dimension within yourself the essence dimension as i sometimes call it or your essence identity then you cannot be aware of the essence of another human being that you meet all you see then is the physical form that's often the first thing you see which either you find pleasing or not pleasing or it attracts you or it leaves you indifferent you like it or you don't like it and then as you start speaking to another person you interact on the mind level and the emotional level also and so you get the emotion mental emotional conditioning of that person and then you relate on that level to that person and immediately you interpret that person you have opinions about that person you have judgments about that person many people are very quick to judge the moment they meet somebody they've two minutes later they've formulated an opinion about you and i often find it difficult people sometimes ask me after i meet some what did you think of such of such and such a person that you met this morning and i go nothing because i now if you ask me now i can start thinking and i can probably come up with something and tell you something in a few minutes but so far i had not formulated any thought about that just come just communicated with that person and i had no thoughts about that person i enjoyed the interaction but i have no particular opinion so the what we call the ability of humans to have empathy to have empathy not only for other human beings but also to have empathy for nature to have that sense of uh benevolence towards other life forms benevolence another word for which is goodwill or we could even be daring and say love not in the conventional sense but true love which is a sense of connectedness with another in order to sense that and it is vital for you to be a true human being you're not even truly human i would agree with confucius who said that 2500 years ago you're not fully human if you do not manifest those qualities of benevolence goodwill compassion towards others so you're still not it doesn't mean you're evil it means you haven't arrived yet at being fully human humanity of course is a work in progress and some some are lagging behind a little bit more than others and that doesn't make them evil you just have to see oh they're a little bit behind but make sure the ego doesn't get hold of that thought so humans are evolving and the vital thing is for the world that we inhabit to change is a shift in consciousness so that humans can relate to other humans and the deeper level of essence and not the conceptualizing judgmental mind because that operates not only on the personal level it also operates on the collective level on the collective level where people have collective egos political egos religious egos dreadful things as we all know are happening there and they cannot sense anymore that which unites them with others they cannot feel the other anymore as a living being they cannot sense the shared consciousness that you share with every life form with every human being with everything that exists ultimately there's a beautiful saying an ancient saying which goes consciousness sleeps in the stone meaning the mineral of the stone even that has a glimmer of consciousness but it's sleep consciousness dreams in the plant consciousness awakens in the animal and consciousness awakens to itself in the human and so that that is the awakening of consciousness that is the call also be called spiritual awakening that is happening to a certain segment percentage of population on the planet still a minority but that's fine so the essence of this awakening is to realize now i'm this is not an absolute truth it's a temporary way of putting it there are two of you there is the form identity of you with a personal history and a personal future and you do your best there it's good you'd have to do your best you learn things you improve your skills you experience things you have you travel you get a good job as good as you can improve yourself as a person good but not enough then there is the other you one could say the other half that is the formless you the formless and timeless essence of who you are that you need to know that as your ultimate self otherwise if you only know the form you the form identity life becomes very frustrating you never really get any any lasting peace or joy in your life because everything changes so quickly but whatever you achieve you for a moment gives you pleasure or annoyance and then either it's taken away or it dissolves or it no no longer gives you pleasure because you've had it for too long it's so life becomes very frustrating if the deeper dimension is missing in your life and that is the formless knowing yourself as the essential i am and that is a sensing that is a the ability to just become still the ability to look at something or someone without imposing immediately conceptual thought on on it or him or her the ability to become still i said in my book the stillness stillness speaks a little meditative book you're never more essentially yourself than when you are still you're never more essentially yourself than we are when you are still because when you are still you you are you can sense yourself as the awareness as the consciousness and it has no qualities as such you you cannot make it into an object of knowledge and say ah there it is you can you but you can sense there is a presence that presence you don't need to remember your name you don't remember your personal history to know that to know yourself as presence it's it's available here and now it's just has always been available here and now but has always been overlooked jesus said the kingdom of heaven he talked continuously about the kingdom of heaven what does that mean completely misinterpreted for a long long time my interpretation of what he said called kingdom of heaven is i translate or paraphrase where kingdom no longer fits our world kingdom is dimension realm or dimension heaven heaven in english is a word that in most other languages is the same word as sky in french in spanish in german heaven and sky are the same word so this kingdom of the sky the dimension of what is the sky what is heaven when you look at the sky you see vast spaciousness so my translation of kingdom of heaven is the realm or dimension of spaciousness so jesus used that analogy to point people to an inner dimension of consciousness that is available to them here and now not in some future not some future point that i need to get to i need to get to the kingdom of heaven it's here and now he said that all the time but but still they made it into some future point and and he also said the kingdom of heaven does not come with signs to be perceived you cannot say it's over here or it's over there but truly i tell you it is here within you what was he talking to talking about the inner realm of spaciousness or stillness where the mind subsides and you know yourself as an i am presence that is your true identity and once you know your true identity in the background of your daily life then you can deal with the foreground of your life in a much better way and the foreground of your life becomes a pleasant playground where you actually do good and enjoy yourself without demanding that something in the foreground of your life should make you happy including a person terrible demand to make upon a person to say make me happy it's a recipe for disaster as you might might have experienced it this make me happy usually ends in divorce and it usually means it usually means make me unhappy so anything that you expect to make you happy in this world is not going to make you happy short short while short brief moments perhaps but not any lasting happiness nothing can give you lasting happiness except the realization of the i am presence there is a peace and and a joy is very subtle joy in there and then the world is no longer such a frustrating place yes challenges come still come but the way you deal with them is more peaceful you don't create drama out of little challenges you don't create huge unhappiness when things go wrong that's the shift that's the awakening of consciousness and this is the purpose of your life is to embody that whatever other other purpose there is and that varies from person to person but whatever the your individual purpose is it needs to be aligned with the universal purpose of your life and that is awakening consciousness thank you does being in the now or awareness alter the dream or movie that is being played i understand that the dream or movie is not real now what that's quite a good question i understand okay you can have some conceptual understanding if you see that all forms are fleeting that is undoubtedly true it gives you and you say god it's it is eckhart says it's like a dream and if i look at it it's actually true it is a bit like a dream because yesterday is dissolved already just like last night's dream is gone it's evaporated and and my people that i knew have dissolved and and what i did years ago the my vacation five years ago we were in europe look there are the photos where is that now it's dissolved already it's just a figure standing in front of the eiffel tower what is what is on that it's gone already so all the fleetingness is just amazing thing so conceptually you can understand it and say okay it is all of it is a bit like a movie now what now that doesn't free you really from because the next moment something happens and you're totally part of it again you're totally trapped in the movie and compulsively you're you're acting out your part your script your conditioned behavior patterns your conditioned thinking your conditioned reactions so one moment intellectually you can say yeah it really is like a movie and then the phone rings what you're playing your part again you're in the middle of it you've completely forgotten that it's a movie it is only when you are when nothing is happening no phone is ringing nobody's knocking on your door and then you can sit again say yeah it's all like a movie so there needs to be a deeper realization that goes beyond the conceptual and that is the opening up of what i sometimes call space consciousness in you when you truly contemplate the impermanence of all things not just as an intellectual idea that you agree with but to look at it without any going beyond concepts and look look face the fact of impermanence directly for example by looking at if somebody close to you dies sitting with their body for quite a while and then go through the emotions then go perhaps beyond the emotions or go to see any dead body although for that in the west you can't do it in india you can you can't just go somewhere and say i would like to see a dead body you have to they won't allow it in india you just sit in certain street corners or in certain places and you see them they're carrying them past to the funeral pyre and you can just sit there and the most powerful thing would be then to see a dead body being burned without any concepts just face the fact directly that opens up space consciousness that opens up the depths in you where you begin to disidentify from form when you see a form dissolving in front of you and you don't conceptualize you just face it it is so amazing and even me talking about it can to some extent help you to go through that as you imagine it it's sometimes enough to imagine it the form dissolving being burned the body that was so real a few hours ago it's now dissolving in flames and that is such a it's so incredible to if you had totally believed in the solidity of the physical universe it's so incredible that you become speechless and thoughtless and in that when the form dissolves and you face it completely something opens up within you that we can call the formless and it's deeply peaceful not happy no deeply peaceful and it can even happen when there's sadness deep sadness and yet and behind the sadness there's a deep peace and this would be the case if somebody close to you dies and you see that happening to somebody you could not not weep if you see your father or your mother being burned now here you want they won't allow you to see it but if you could you would weep but there's a possibility that at the same time you because you see it is it is you live it is not the universal condition of all humans in all forms and it's your turn quite soon too you seeing all that something in you would or that there are tears and yet you see how short-lived it all is and then something opens up in you which is spacious and has no form it's and that's consciousness itself so consciousness can dis-identify the dis-identification can happen when you deeply contemplate the fleetingness of a form a human form can even be with an an animal your your dog dies it could happen also some people become very deeply very close to an animal after living with an animal for many years and suddenly it goes so any again this is where loss comes in any loss that can also do it but of course the deepest loss is the loss of a human and so when it's not resisted then you see it oh and you can't any idea that you formulate will be running away from the simple and bare fact of impermanence any any conceptualization explanation will stop you from going deeper even if you have the explanation you say well they're not really dead they're really moving on and i just have to okay but that if you don't explain anything that you go deeper beyond form rather than explaining to yourself that they exist in some other form which of course then eventually will also go through transformation again and so on and so on that's the power of contemplating transience which is everywhere for me it's always even a spiritual thing to to look at old photos of people nobody knows who they were and i always whenever i see them in magazines or sometimes in antiquarian bookshops they have collections of you see these old photos and they're just they've all dissolved and that's i find that this is deeply peaceful old films made let's say film made in 19 30 1935 40 and all these people that are running out the screen in getting excited about this in that the actors are all gone they've all dissolved and if you see a crowd scene people walking along the streets of new york or wherever all the crowds all long dissolved and the crowds that you see now in a few years gone and that's those are incredible meditations when you face that and so that's the the power of facing the fact of what the buddha called in the pali language anicca impermanence all phenomena are impermanent fleeting anicca buddha said wow and if you attach yourself and identify with any form you will experience dukkha suffering also be translated as misery also can be translated as unsatisfactoriness and so on unhappiness because the buddha said there is no self in any form that's the truth of anatta no self so if you're seeking a self in a form if you identify with a form with a body even a thought form or the psychological form of me then you identify with impermanence you're seeking a self where there's only impermanence and that self is the delusion and she saw that two thousand six hundred years ago the truth of the impermanence of all things but he saw it i mean people knew already but just to see it and to look he said look so those three are to me the most essential parts of the buddha's teaching dukkha anicca anatta dukkha is the fact of suffering if you identify with which means seek a self in impermanent forms not just in bodies but also in thought forms emotional forms and the psychological form of me so the entire buddhist teaching and is really the disidentification from form in order to realize the formless that underlies all that and of course the buddha called that emptiness which is not a very inspiring concept and he did that on purpose because if he had given us an inspiring concept we could start believing in it and the belief in the concept would become a substitute for the realization emptiness can't do that with emptiness emptiness can't have a name what's it called but emptiness oh jesus used the word kingdom of heaven it's the same thing it's a formless realm of course that is on the one hand you feel ah kingdom of heaven of course much easier to misinterpret it's more inspiring of course but much easier to misinterpret and very easy to make into something somewhere that is somewhere else which they did for a long time and many still do kingdom of heaven is we go to it some people are good enough you'll go to kingdom in in many languages actually the word for heaven and the word for sky are the same so in spanish cielo in german himmel you go you go to the sky and so although jesus said the kingdom of heaven you cannot observe the kingdom of heaven cannot be well it does not appear with signs to be observed it is not here or there you can't say there it is that's what jesus said nevertheless people say the sky you the kingdom of the sky it's that's the in many languages that's what it is i believe i got sidetracked a little with impermanence but really this is what it's all about it is a movie because it's like a movie or a dream because it is impermanent and so when you know that as a deep fact when you experience the impermanence by facing it directly then you are not so unconscious anymore more that you act out the script unconsciously continuously for the rest of your life the script means the conditioned patterns of your mind the reactive patterns the thought patterns the emotional patterns if there is an awareness that becomes the most important factor then and then you move back into the movie because you participate in your life situation and your life with an added factor you could imagine a little bit like an actor in a movie who suddenly realizes that he or she is not really the character that's being played out but he still plays his role or her role does his things but then the realization that he is not that will affect the role so he's not going to stick to the script as before the script will still be there but changes will come into the script because the awareness brings an additional factor into it so where in this whereas the script for example dictates that when this woman leaves him he goes into dreadful despair and contemplates suicide perhaps as this happens that was the script but suddenly in the movie because the awareness is there he just instead of going to the roof and contemplating jumping off the building he finds himself going to the beach and looking at the sea and breathing things change in the script suddenly spaciousness comes into the script where before there was and another thing that happens in the script he may look at a leaves moving in the wind a little breeze coming through the tree and you can if you see that in the film isn't that amazing suddenly the camera goes from the script into suddenly another dimension is present in the film you look some films actually do that those those films where there is a spiritual dimension that's i've seen films where suddenly the camera goes into and show something that's not part of the not part of the action it on the way almost takes you out of the action it brings a depth to it like the as i mentioned in some before there's a paper piece of paper or a paper bag being tossed about in the wind in the american beauty that film and and the and you watch the amazing thing of wow nothing to do with the action and so a dimension comes into the script and then the movie begins to change because another dimension flows into it so that's the answer to now what but so it's not enough to to say oh well it's all like a dream or movie that's a that's not a realization that's only a concept in your head for the realization you need to deeply see the impermanence which we just talked about or really face it then something opens up within you and then saying that it's like a dream or movie is not just a thought in your head it's a realization you're actually fully aware of the impermanent nature of all things and that changes the way in which you interact hope you had a good lunch abundant but not excessive otherwise you might go to sleep beautiful day particularly appreciated by those of us who come from the northern hemisphere where it's getting cold now we will have plenty of opportunity in the next few days for questions also questions from you answers perhaps too today i may just answer some written questions this is only a very small selection out of several hundred it's hard to choose it's only almost random choice not totally random but almost but before i do that perhaps just a few words and this will take between five minutes and one hour when you want to strengthen the physical body what do you do you exercise but what what is that actually when you exercise what do you do when you exercise one way of putting it is to say that you create difficulty for the body you create obstacles for the body to overcome there it is running on the treadmill lifting weight it's an you're creating a difficulty for the body any exercise is making life difficult for the body but that's a way of looking at it that's not a normal way of looking at it you take the body out of its comfort zone although there is a stage where the body once it gets going the body may enjoy the energy of it but until that flows there's a discomfort and that's the only way the body can get stronger if the body stays in its comfort zone then well you would be lying on a sofa or in a deck chair it's very nice but the body doesn't change so that's an interesting almost an analogy for something that happens to humans because it seems that life for everybody creates difficulties so it's not one would have thought if i were god i would make life easy for everybody and you would then see most likely if you did that most likely there would be no evolution would ever have happened or no further evolution if you do it right now because it's only it seems both on the physical level and beyond it's only through facing difficulties which you could also call challenges which you could also call problems if you like which you could also call one damn thing after another the strange thing is only by encountering these challenges do we grow in consciousness and generate energy it awakens us eventually now if you overdo physical exercise you put too much strain on the body you could kill the body you could kill yourself and this has happened people who were so obsessed with physical exercise that they overdid it i've read for example whenever it was one or two years ago a man who wrote about the incredible benefits of jogging died of a heart attack while he was jogging he wasn't that old so you can overdo it and then instead of the body getting stronger it dies and you could also say when you look at life and humans life on this planet probably many other planets you would say well it's all very well sometimes it seems to work that through facing challenges and problems we grow we grow out of identification with mind we grow out of the ego we transcend our conditioned state of consciousness and a new consciousness arises and if i know not actually speaking for myself without facing difficulties and challenges there would not have been any growth in consciousness and no awakening if i had had a what's the word for example a trust fund where you know from a very early age your parents have already looked after your security and you know from an early age you if you don't want to work or anything you don't have to you can have a comfortable life without ever doing anything so there are people like that there may even be one or two here but if you are here and you are a trust fund baby then other things must have happened to you that created difficulties it wasn't financial but there were other things and even eventually to a trust fund baby other difficulties will happen but for quite a while it could be that this person remains stagnant or might enjoy certain activities or indulge in sensory pleasures until it gets too much it's no longer satisfying and then reaches a critical stage and sometimes there was a man in i met him many many years ago i was taken to an a kind of cocktail party i wasn't i didn't move in those circles but it just happened accidentally that i ended up there and somebody took me and says you must come and look this is you're going to meet the sixth richest man in england or somebody somebody a friend of mine who was impressed by these things so i met this man who became rich apparently because he invented one little thing one he had one idea and became a billionaire this is not uncommon these days by the way with the internet but this was before the internet he had one idea and that's called tetra pack the drinks that come in a carton and it has a carton that has a particular kind of opens in a particular way so that you can pour out the liquid it's called it's a patent tetra pack so he came up with that and he became a billionaire and i've talked to him briefly and then had forgot about many many years past and forgot about it and two or three years ago i happened to read in the paper that his son who was by now he was probably 40 years old was a drug addict seriously addicted to drugs and lost completely control of his life was drift completely and he was they arrested him he was driving under the influence of some drugs and when the police entered his house they found in one of the bedrooms in big house in belgravia in london they found his wife the dead body of his wife had been in that bed for several months and he just couldn't say he hadn't killed her but he she probably died of a dark drug overdose and he just couldn't face dealing with it so he just closed the door and there was a dead body this can happen to the extreme cases of trust fund dysfunction so in other words when life gets too easy for you things can quickly deteriorate but that's your opportunity then because first life gets too easy then because it gets too easy it deteriorates and you lose more and more consciousness and then it is possible that you encounter so much suffering that then finally experience the difficulty of life and then there's a possibility of growth so this could happen to this man too now there's always the possibility of awakening so you could say of course well this is all very good it works in some cases in some cases physical exercise makes the body stronger and in some cases encountering difficulties in life helps you to awaken but you might say there are many other cases where all that happens is just seems to be just difficulties with no growth that's not at least that what it looks like on the surface people who have not enough food who are starving or diseases not to mention human-made difficulties which probably like warfare and violence inflicted by humans and other humans which improbably has created far more suffering for humanity than man-made disasters the madness of of humans who having not yet evolved into full humans because they lack benevolence and empathy and goodwill towards their fellow humans at least those who don't fit into their mental concepts of us and them so they're inflicted enormous suffering so part of the difficulties faced by humans have been inflicted by other unconscious humans so when you look at the life on the planet many people use this as an argument to prove that god there can be no god they say this is a very common argument they say look at the suffering if there were a god how would he allow all that suffering to take place and if there is a god this is how the argument goes if there is a god who allows that suffering then that god whether we call him he or she or it would be morally inferior to us because we see that this suffering is not just so these are arguments that you often hear people who want to prove that there is no god there cannot be a god and if there is a god it's a malevolent god but they may not be right the premise from which they start may already be erroneous and that premise is that there is a controlling figure somewhere who who from somewhere looked at everything and who could if he wanted to change things here and there and arrange things so that there's absolutely everything is absolutely fine all the time so there's a projection of a powerful figure who could exert and sometimes does exert influence and at other times withholds help and inflicts suffering or of course then you have to project come up with another figure if you want you don't want to have a malevolent god you have to predict there's a devil okay then now we have to divide we have two deities then the good one and the bad one gets very complicated but it's quite possible just as an alternative suggestion that the basic premise is already erroneous there is no controlling father figure what about god let's call god now a universal intelligence expressing him her itself through billions of life forms taking form incarnating into form so to speak throughout the universe so gradually the universe is becomes an expression of that underlying intelligence which comes from a dimension that has no time and space to it but gradually in this dimension gradually brings about this multiplicity of life forms which at first is asleep there's a dreamlike state and then gradually there's an awakening in this dimension i do not attempt it would be presumptuous and absurd for me to attempt to explain the universe so i'm going to stop right now because anybody who thinks he can explain the universe using a few sounds produced by the vocal chords which after all only consists of five vowels a e i o u and then you add a few what are the others diphthongs or whatever consonants it's been a long time consonants are produced by air pressure in the mouth so by combining the sound these five basic sounds produced by the vocal chords with a little bit of air pressure here and there and attempting to explain the universe is obviously absurd but one can give little hints it's okay it's it's a little bit like more like a poetic image it's a little bit like that and then you go and then you may find that on some deeper level which is non-conceptual there can be a different kind of insight or understanding of what the universe is all about but you may not be able to talk about it very much and if you do talk about it you might talk about it in the form of a poem or a poetic image or just a little analogy or as jesus used parables and so there's no ultimate explanation through words it would be totally impossible words can point to something give a little hint and then they can also point to a state of consciousness where you can realize certain things i don't want to say intuitively but some some almost intuitively knowing non-conceptually certain the nature of reality because you have looked deeply enough within yourself and if you've looked deeply enough within yourself then you understand not conceptually but on another level many of the secrets of the universe so because it's all in you you're a microcosm of the entire universe if you understand the universe understand yourself not conceptually you can't go very far conceptually so i've had a few insights here and there of that i wanted to put on paper when i wrote the power of now as i mentioned before i wrote for example there is a black hole at the center of each galaxy and in that time nobody said that and i believe the editor said you can't say that because you can't prove it nobody knows so i took it out and how do you know even that there is a black hole at the center have you been there no i know that there's a black hole inside me and that's the emptiness i think that's what i said but he didn't understand and later years later i read about they actually now say that there is such a thing well or such a no thing because it's not a thing it's formless so the argument then could be a fallacy that says if if there is a god there can be no god because he would do something god may be awakening in this dimension in the other dimension god is there's no time the universal intelligence is already complete timeless or but in this dimension it moves in and and it awakens in this dimension that's the only way i can put it don't want to go any further so if you consider that possibility that and also humanity you would say it's not fair that one person is born into relative easy circumstances well in the west another person is born into third world country and it never is given a chance and this is true also if you look at it only from a surface point of view but what if all humanity is one consciousness that is going through a certain degree of suffering and each entity seemingly independent entity going through his or her own suffering and only briefly appearing as one body and then appearing again in a different form so you could look at all of humanity as one a single consciousness that is awakening said you are a cell so to speak in that single awakening consciousness another interesting intuition i had that you could write a science fiction book about that the eventually there will only be one human being left when the evolution is complete there will only be not no longer billions of humans all humans will be contained in this one conscious being and probably not only all humans but all life on the planet will be contained in that one conscious being which is not male and not female and of course has no physical form anymore and that's where it's all going and then on all the other planets similar things happen so each planet produces one magnificent consciousness and that's where we are moving to and that the essential identity of that magnificent consciousness which is part of the greater consciousness that again is a cell in the greater consciousness that the essential identity of that one magnificent conscious being is already your essential identity here and now so it's not nothing separate from you it already is awakening in you the one consciousness is awakening in you and in every human and in you it's already a fairly advanced stage of awakening relative to many other humans on the planet you have come into contact with the spiritual teaching which already signifies that you are at a relatively advanced stage for millions and millions of humans the only teacher they have unfortunately as yet is their suffering in the same way as you until you came to a point where you were ready to embrace conscious evolution your teacher was your suffering my teacher was my suffering that it brought me to that point of the beginning of the awakening and the opening stepping out of ego so retrospectively i can be grateful for the suffering and also retrospectively you can be grateful for the suffering that you have encountered because it has brought you here here not just the physical place here it has brought you where you are at right now in your state of consciousness which is awakening and that is wonderful so that to just add a practical afterthought to this if possible at all do not resent encountering difficulties or problems in your life because that's how it works and it doesn't stop even even if you awaken even if you're awakened there's still things that you get challenged further everybody gets challenged by life in one way or another you can't even the trust fund baby gets challenged by life eventually so so when you encounter difficulties small or big see if you don't say this should not be happening this is the underlying attitude if that's your underlying attitude you're in a state of resistance for example many difficulties come in the form of other humans humans are difficult you might have noticed many so they come in in the form of other humans and then the underlying mindset for many people is this shouldn't be happening these these people shouldn't behave like that what we're really saying is they should be enlightened and why aren't they well what about you so difficulties come in the form of other humans and then you see this is meant to be you're meant to be challenged by other humans and you cannot not be challenged no matter how conscious you are you will encounter other humans who are not or not yet and they will try to create problems for you and sometimes they achieve that it is true also that you attract fewer unconscious humans into your life as you awaken more the awakening it is true that you are you're not going to move in circles where you surround it completely by completely unconscious humans but you can you cannot totally avoid contact with unconscious humans in fact they need to come into your field of consciousness because they can be helped in many cases by being in your field of consciousness but they can only be helped if you do not react when you encounter them if you say you do what you have to do but you don't the the underlying mindset is not this shouldn't be they shouldn't do that they should know better well they don't so then other difficulties come in other ways because you can encounter so we just really talked about relationship if other humans means relationships they can be the intimate relationships of people living together there can be relationships of people working together other kinds of relationships then now this already makes up for a lot of problems that people face it's relationship problems and then you can and then you have others if you don't have relationship problems and life says okay i'll give him or her something else then you have a work problem at work usually connected with the relationship too but maybe some additional factors or you have a health problem you have a problem where you live you have a financial problem that's a big one for many not enough or maybe is enough but the mind says it's not enough who knows shortage the problem of losing your job the problem of insecurity which isn't a problem unless you think it you should have security that life is insecure you don't know what's going to happen next to you that can be a huge challenge but once you accept that actually insecurity can contribute if you no longer fight it if you don't demand that your life should be secure it can contribute to the arising of presence because it forces you more into the present moment insecurity means you go into the future and see you can't control it anymore you don't know what's going to happen next oh dear i wish i knew i wish i had secure job a secure income a secure family environment i wish i had a secure pension plan i wish i had a secure life insurance i wish i had secure this insecure that then i would be okay of course you wouldn't these things are if you remove the element of risk or insecurity from a person's life this is similar to the trust fund baby then you remove one of the most important areas where you can grow by being challenged so sometimes the emphasis in our societies in the west is too much on security these days the i i mentioned somewhere before i read last year in i was going by a school secondary school and it was the beginning of the summer vacation and they have a big sign outside where there's always notices they post notices and then on that big sign at the school it said have a great vacation be safe that sounds reasonable advice because you don't want to be unsafe but is that the main thing of your vacation i was you come back after the summer the teacher asks you and say i was really safe what did you do i didn't leave my room because i wanted to be really safe so there is life again needs to be a balance between security and risk taking and accepting the insecure the basic insecurity of all of all life i when i wrote the power of now i was already in my uh late 40s and i had didn't have a home anymore there was that wasn't the time that the original time when i didn't have a home because after the rest time i did have a home but then i let go of it and then i had a limited amount of money as i briefly mentioned in the book to finish the book what would happen after that in my late 40s no life insurance no job prospects no income no savings except those that were running out no home no relationship even nothing so and that insecurity contributed to the intensity of present presence through which the book came it could have led to fear and it could have blocked me if i had demanded that my life should be more secure than it is but i did not demand that security i accepted the insecurity and it became enormous presence presence because all security is has to do with future orientation so the more you have future orientation the more insecure you feel because you cannot control the outcome so the fact that my money was running out that i had no home of my own anymore i was just going from place to place contributed to the energy behind the writing and the book so that's a wonderful thing some people cannot take that step they feel if i'm if i let's step into the unknown the impulse that came to me was so strong at the time when i knew i had to leave england for the reason i didn't know and i had to move to the west coast of north america didn't know why but the impulse was so strong i had to obey it well i didn't have to but i did but i'm sure if i had not obeyed that impulse which wasn't didn't just come once it was there every day i would have probably fallen ill and maybe would be dead already by now so the life demanded that i step out into the unknown if that is the case with you then you know what to do without being rash about it you still need to look at the practicalities so insecurity is one of the great challenges wonderful and all these things of course life insurance these are just illusions how can you ensure your life first of all life insurance isn't life insurance it's death insurance because that's that's what it is about they just don't call it death insurance because nobody would want to buy it so the universe the one consciousness whatever you want to call it is awakening in every human and every human's essential identity is that one consciousness so it's not a it's not a personal thing because if you think yourself only as a person then you have the delusion that you're an autonomous entity cut off from everything and everybody else but you're not an autonomous entity you are just a cell in this vastness and for a few years the cell gives itself a name or is given a name so and so that's me me me it really changes your life when you're the way you feel you sense your own life to be if you are the awakening consciousness in this body it's wonderful the retreat in australia will be held at a resort owned by a colorful politician is it possible for mr palmer and yourself to do a talk together as it would be an interesting comparison of the different states of human spiritual evolution besides he may for the first time be still and listen well it is not nothing is impossible it could happen he could suddenly awaken spiritually if he hasn't yet i don't know much about him i only saw one little clip on youtube in which he expressed his opinions and so who knows it may happen still waiting to hear from donald trump about it sometimes when you think certain people are you think this person definitely is not going to awaken it's just impossible but you may be wrong it's things can happen to any human that can suddenly trigger a spiritual awakening so let's see what happens this is a question uh somebody who does not have any pressing challenge his only challenge right now seems to be the repetitive nature of ordinary existence and he asks i notice the repetitive daily patterns of waking washing eating doing this and that eating washing sleeping groundhog day it causes a low feeling when i notice the repetitiveness there's a misprint here is this conscious awareness or just a thought or feeling and how to not feel low about this cycle how to not feel low the repetitive nature of waking up eating going to work the answer to that is expressed in the zen famous zen saying chopping wood carrying water chopping wood carrying water describes life i suppose in a zen monastery where you in the morning you chop the wood and then you go about your daily tasks and then you carry the water and what what chopping wood carrying water means what it implies is that you bring absolute presence to these repetitive tasks so you do them with that high degree of alertness and you're present with every movement then it's no longer a repetitive task because it only happens this time and it can be a helpful way of bringing presence into this world so use the everyday tasks so with you it's not just well not that many people these days chop wood or carry water because you've got running water but there are other things that you do repetitively you could make a list for things that you do every day certainly and those bring conscious attention to those things so that the doing becomes a meditation so to speak and not a means to an end but an end in itself whereas usually all those repetitive tasks are a means to an end and you want to get it over with as quick as quickly as you can and mentally you're somewhere totally different somewhere else probably or you're complaining how boring this life is so if you can bring that alert presence to the menial tasks of everyday life those can be transformed into a meditation and then you might not even need to sit in meditation if you can use all those things and bring presence to them and do that within presence and through presence then you don't need to sit for a long time you're already doing it in the do this the doing so it's a re complete reef i don't know what a reversal of the usual approach to these things and you can then welcome these daily tasks and then you can see the beauty of chopping wood and carrying water when when it's done in full consciousness this is by somebody who does not want to sit in a cave for 20 years sitting in the cave for 20 years is lifeless that is no more living than being taken up with ego form shouldn't be being manifest into form is self-annihilating and unnecessary being throwing down itself into form only to require the denial of form seems masochistic and self-annihilating okay i think i know what she means we are not in we are not denying form we want to appreciate the forms deeply all the beautiful life forms around us humans nature the sky everything yes there are it is true some spiritual traditions that deny form and that say that all form is evil whatever uh there was even a time in christianity when christianity was very much engaged in asceticism uh even washing your body was considered as an unholy thing to do because it would be giving too much attention to the physical form and the more dirty you were the more holy you were so that's not that is not necessary and really the answer to this question summarizes what we've been talking about you in order to really appreciate the all the life forms around you you need to be rooted in the formless and with one foot in the in one dimension the other foot in the other dimension and that is when you become still and then you look around that is one example of having one foot just to simplify it to have one foot in one dimension and the other so to speak in the other dimension if you become still thinking subsides and then you look around when you look around that's the dimension of form and you see the multiplicity of forms people flowers trees animals objects light forms but you also you're also aware that there's a stillness but what is that stillness that stillness is a presence an awareness it has no form it is essentially who you are and from there you perceive and you're rooted in that one foot in being and you perceive one foot is in form and then you can even start to think sometimes when you have to you think about something without losing an underlying sense of presence there's still a stillness behind the thinking and in between the thoughts there's still there's still that there that means having one foot in one dimension the other in the one formless being and form so you're not denying form it's only the deep appreciation of form can only happen when you realize what lies behind all forms and that is the one being or the one consciousness otherwise without having one foot in the being dimension all you have is do is the multiplicity of forms and then you grasp at one and you think that might satisfy you and you look something else or you reject that one and grasp at that one and you look out now what do i need now i need i need that i need that not necessarily an object it could be an object but i need that kind of situation i need that kind of acknowledgement i need that kind of i need the respect from you i need this and i need that i need to be acknowledged i need to be given attention i need your love so there's always that why do you need all those things i need a new car why do you need all those things because you don't have you're completely lost only in the world of form and you look for ultimate satisfaction through the world of form and nothing in this world of form can ultimately satisfy you not for briefly yes briefly a good big meal good meal can satisfy you that was a great meal sex can satisfy you briefly it doesn't last that long so it goes and then and then that's then it's over and then you go okay who are you what was your name and then the problems start so and and then you you have to use forms you want to use them to enhance yourself with it just doesn't work so that's why you need to you can only appreciate really the world of form when you have one foot in in being awareness stillness and then relate to the world and then think if you have to think and when thinking comes to an end your back is a stillness again and even while you think you can still think within that field of stillness you never lose awareness of the stillness or the awareness itself which is the stillness you feel yourself as a conscious presence that's having the foot in the in being and it's only from there that you can love the other as yourself and all those things because loving the other as yourself means recognizing the other as yourself and of course the body of the other is not yourself that's very different from you even the psychological makeup of the other is not yourself but there is a there is a deep dimension to the other and that is what you share with the other it's the same consciousness has taken a different form but the underlying consciousness is the same it's your consciousness ultimately there isn't my consciousness and your consciousness there's only consciousness and that's so the recognition of that one consciousness expressing itself through countless forms is love or if you want to call it goodwill or benevolence or agape meta loving kindness and then you don't need love anymore because you give love not in the conventional sense of the ego oh i love you it's no no it's you give you give the goodwill it comes you're the giver of love not the d not the demander of love but the the irony is when you give love you get it back so and you don't need it you don't need it back but you get it back and you appreciate it when it comes back it's lovely the bell is a spiritual alarm clock it says wake up be present and it's strange to see myself reflected so many times in this room just slight differences on the surface one consciousness you won't really know that for yourself until or unless you're able to stop thinking if only for a moment and in that moment when you're not thinking then you know yourself as consciousness it's so subtle and so easily overlooked that most people have no idea that such a thing is possible although certain sages or teachers since ancient times have pointed to it using different pointers and as usually happens the pointer is mistaken for that towards which it points in india the ancient spiritual philosophy there's a term called turiya which means the fourth it refers to the fourth state of consciousness the normal state of consciousness in normal existence are the waking state which is although there are different levels to the but let's leave that aside the waking state which is everybody's normal life experience unfolds in the waking state there's the dream state when you go to bed at night and as we know psychologists agree who have tested what happens to your consciousness when you're going to sleep when you sleep are there fundamentally two stages there's dreamless sleep and there's a dream state and this is what the three states of consciousness mean dreamless sleep which is wonderful but you don't know it but it's amazing that every night and sometimes not just in the night sometimes it happens in the day the dreamless state of merging with the one pulls you and that's why all life forms on the planet periodically go unconscious in the conventional term of the word isn't it strange let's say if you came from some other planet where this doesn't happen you would arrive here and say isn't that strange all these people every day every night they they drop completely unconscious they go it must be very strange if you come from a place where this doesn't happen but whether there is such a place i don't know probably not dreamless sleep the dream stage which is measured we can also watch if you look at your cat or your dog you can observe the differences between dreamless sleep exactly the same as with humans dreamless sleep when they're totally still and the dream state when there is some twitching or movement there's eye movement as in humans rapid eye movement it's called and when psychologists measure sleep then they measure the moment eyes move you're dreaming in the same if you watch your dog or your cat the same thing happens in addition the dog or cat may exhibit other signs of dreaming in the case of a cat the whiskers go the mouth may move i wonder what they're dreaming about i at some i had three cats at some point when i lived in england so i observed them very closely and this is what happens and with dogs sometimes the legs move in when they're they're running obviously somewhere or the tail goes quite amazing dreamless sleep dream and normal wakefulness is there anything else yes there is but most humans don't know that there's the fourth state of consciousness which is thoughtless awareness and to the other fourth and that's um reserved for a few yogis in the past who through strenuous effort realized that they are consciousness and yet now it becomes more accessible and this would be in a more enlightened society or world the most fundamental thing that is taught at school lesson number one the fourth state of consciousness and every day that is a lesson so that they become familiar with that but that's not happening yet that's fine we are here to make it happen but first it needs to happen within yourself a moment of cessation of thinking and what's left is a simple a clear field of spaciousness one can use other words and whether this lasts for you for a few seconds at a time or longer as long as it's there it doesn't matter how long more important is how frequently it arises in your life you might become a very good meditator if you practice some form of meditation and it may be although most meditators don't actually get there well maybe maybe most or half of them don't actually get there because they're trying to get there in their meditation so they cannot be because they're trying to become so the very meditation method may be misleading because you're trying to become good at it you have some goal you need to arrive at but that's not that takes you away from the realization of the spacious awareness which is already here now it's not a state to be achieved and that's another thing that has been misleading and has misled countless spiritual seekers and continues to mislead countless spiritual seekers they believe that there is a state that they need to achieve or somehow bring about or produce but that way of looking at it one can look at it that way yes but that way of looking at it actually is not helpful and it's not absolutely correct it is much closer to the truth to say that is that state that you want to achieve or thought you had to achieve is already here in you but why don't you know that because it's continuously overlooked so why is it overlooked because the world which consists of the multiplicity of sense perceptions stuff happening plus thoughts have such a hypnotic pull that that's all there is to most humans they only know themselves as that the this content-based consciousness the content of your mind is sense perceptions your life whatever is going on in your life and what you're thinking about what's going on in your life the story that is imposed on the bare facts of this present moment which really is always quite simple and not complicated but the story brings in a lot of heaviness and stuff so you put the mental story on top of the simplicity of the present moment and then your life becomes problematic i don't know anybody whose life is not problematic on that level so you're not the only one or life has not treated you unfairly because it's problematic so the most important life lesson apart from any other goal or purpose you may have in your life which of course varies from person to person many different goals and purposes and that is good but those are all the differences on the surface level of reality your what you do in your daily life or what you aspire to on this that level may be very different from person next to you but on a more fundamental level a deeper goal that is every human's destiny and should be the underlying goal before any personal goal arises and before you pursue any personal goal and while you pursue any personal goal to realize that the most important life lesson to be learned while you are here in this form or as this form is the realization of who you are in essence beyond the person and then you have you live and this is the mastery of life so to speak that you are moving towards and some of you already virtually there or there and you're just here because it's you enjoy being here the mastery of life is to to live in the two dimensions simultaneously so you don't deny the level of forms you don't say i'm not going to do anything anymore i'm not going to take any action anymore because it's all illusion some spiritual seekers will tell you that it's all illusion anyway so what's the point of doing anything i'm just going to sit and there may be a few very few individuals here and there whose destiny it may be to become just an opening in into that dimension and to have no longer any personal destiny whatsoever those are very few and most of them live in india and that's good they they they provide those few provide a kind of selfless service because whatever one human being the state of consciousness any one human being affects the state of consciousness of the totality of human beings because there's only one human consciousness and beyond the human consciousness there's only one universal consciousness so there are a few who are meant to be whose purpose it is to go just for one year five years ten years so if that is your destiny if you think it might be your destiny i would recommend that you move to india where that destiny is recognized and respected which of course is also the reason why in india there quite a few who make a living by pretending that that's their destiny that's another matter for most of humanity the destiny is balance balancing one way of putting it balancing being and doing or we could say balancing being and becoming so on the level of doing or becoming there there are certain things still perhaps that you want to achieve there are maybe certain things that you want to become you might be at right now you you might be engaged in learning this or that music or some whatever some science some skills whatever it is dance engineering astronomy astrology you can't immediately be a master at that that involves becoming and it involves doing so you're not complete on the level of becoming yet and that level of doing and becoming is one part of life the emphasis in this teaching is not on becoming not because i reject becoming but because what the world needs more at this time because it's the balance is totally lost what the world needs more is the awareness of being the being awareness so that a balance can happen in the world whereas most of the world is lost in becoming and doing go to any big city and they're all running around and they're all becoming now it might be for a few years it might be exhilarating but then the frustration sets in and your body begins to suffer and become ill we constantly achieve the next thing but part of becoming is what i often describe as always the next thing never this this is never fully acknowledged because the full acknowledgement of the present moment belongs to the being realm so a person who is constantly engaged in becoming does not can never fully acknowledge the present moment because he or she is always running away from the present moment and there is of course there needs to be the balance between yes you're going somewhere you have a life goal or either a huge life goal or a limited life goal like you want to learn this or that subject you have that life goal but as you pursue that goal whatever it is are you losing continuously the present moment so you're no longer you're never comfortable with the isness of the present moment you never see the not except perhaps for brief glances you never see the beauty around you and the aliveness there's never a full appreciation of the miraculous nature of life that that is always around you there's because you're too absorbed in becoming and so if you went to the other extreme then you be you would become that you would be the yogi who renounces all becoming and as i said in india that works if you do it here they will lock you up so what in your life as you pursue a goal another way of putting of approaching it is to ask yourself if you are not really enjoying while you pursue the goal whatever it is in your life if you are not really enjoying the doing because you are so focused on becoming and achieving and arriving at this future point that the enjoyment of the doing is so is greatly diminished or disappears completely because all you want to do is arrive but you're not there yet that's the nature of stress how stress arises stress means there is a continuous focus on the next moment so you are torn away and this is a produced by the human mind through thinking you are torn away internally from the present moment into a non-existent because future never exists except as a thought you are torn into this so-called future which is a never never land because it can never arrive you can never reach the future because the moment it becomes reality in your life it's the present moment so by having this mindset an excessive focus on becoming or arriving or achieving you lose completely the being dimension and then your life is completely out of balance even if you achieve in the eyes of the world fame or wealth or worldly success and yet you are a frustrated and unhappy human being perhaps pretending that you are happy but you're not and then you have to take drugs or alcohol or go from one relationship to another or compulsively pursue the next thing and the next thing and the next thing accumulate more of this and this and so it's well that's not a mastery of life even if you have your private jet does not mean you have achieved mastery of life in fact you may be completely deluded not necessarily you could have a private jet and have achieved the master wouldn't that be great so that that is our purpose here is to have that balance and here the emphasis of course on of this teaching is on finding the being dimension awareness of being which is why i talk so much about the present moment because this is always the moment your attention goes fully into the present moment you have withdrawn attention from becoming and doing and you are that what arises is the being dimension so and that is associated also with a sometimes brief but vitally important cessation of thinking in that moment when you become completely aware of the present moment and it starts with sense perception you're suddenly aware of your surroundings you may also suddenly be aware of the inner energy field that you feel you're alive in this present moment there is aliveness all around you and you can perceive it through your senses you hear you feel you see you smell but there's also an aliveness an inherent aliveness in your body so you become aware simultaneously in the present moment of a sense of aliveness within and without so in addition to what you see with your senses there is a an underlying field of aliveness that you can be aware of in the present moment and that's the being dimension or presence and that's who you are in essence but that's not only who you are in essence that is the essence of everything so when you realize that for yourself it's not the person who has that realization the universe has that realization the universe which for a moment because your life is a moment and on a cosmic scale your life here as a person has a very short duration it goes well then was that it yeah then the the element of continuous frustration and discontent and the feeling there's something not right here or the feeling there's something vital missing in my life but always looking to the next thing to find the vital thing that's missing in my life i have to find it if you don't realize it's already here so you there's something i don't feel i don't feel complete there's still something lacking a sense of lack something is missing i don't know what it is you might even not verbally say that there's just a feeling that something is missing or something is not right of course not because your life is completely out of balance but you're i'm not nothing personal i'm not talking to you i'm talking general terms if you if your life were completely out of bounds you wouldn't be here or if you had accidentally stumbled upon this place you would soon leave so the being dimension is accessed obviously in the present moment and the doing of course requires time you cannot do anything without some dimension of time make a cup of tea you need some time to make a cup of tea learn to become this or that you need time to become a doctor or to become a musician or to become a dancer or to become whatever you need time that's the time temporal dimension and yet although you need time the paradox is that you never really not really that you never never actually experience time or the passing of time except in your head as a thought as an anticipation of the next moment or memory of the last or other moments from the past that's how you experience time but the never is a direct experience time you can never experience directly because whenever you ask yourself where's time all you ever get is the present moment so on one level of your life time seems vital or to do things now on another side of that coin of time what on one hand time seems useful because you can on the level surface level of reality you can do things in time and become from being an ignorant person become a very knowledgeable person in time it takes time to acquire knowledge on that level and yet that's a good aspect of time but then there's something else aspect of time which you discover when you compare a photo of yourself taken at the age of 20 let's say you are now 40 or 50 or or whatever and you discover oh that's me 20 years ago and then you look in the mirror or 30 years ago what happened to me time who did this to me time oh my god and if you're young and beautiful or strong and healthy then you can still know that eventually time is going to erode your good looks no this is not tragic unless you're very much identified you derive your sense of identity from your physical body which might look good right now but won't in time it time will and then of course what ultimately time of course what time does it kills you so fast it enables you to do things and to become but then at the same time uh you begin to wilt like a flower it does the time does that to a flower too much more quickly than a human but very similar it does it to a fruit a piece of fruit if you want to observe the passing of time or the all you can do is to observe the effect that time has on things but you cannot observe time because it's never there it's a paradox one could go into this or make it into a huge philosophical thing which i won't do it's enough for you to see in your personal your immediate experience time is not something that you can ever experience directly it only leaves behind evidence it's been there a dead body for example or an apple that's that's that three two weeks ago was very fresh and now it's all wrinkled and has gone and two weeks before it was the apple looked and it's the same with young humans the strokes can be very radiant and then gradually now an interesting thing happens for those humans who are not totally identified with that level of form but to have access the being dimension as they grow older the being dimension as the physical vehicle gets gradually eroded by time the physical sorry the being dimension is actually able to shine through more as the body weakens and gets old there is a light the light of consciousness that can shine through and send then you find certain old people who as the body weakens the light increases of consciousness and the ego is completely gone and there's just a beautiful presence left let's see at the latest as you grow old that's still your last opportunity but if you've missed it for the first 75 years of your life because you were too concerned with doing all the time and acquiring and becoming whether i don't know whether you can still find it i think if you fall or something like that happens to you yes you can it's preferable not to wait until you're close to death to look for the being dimension because you might not find it anymore because you're so absorbed in the doing and in time you won't even look for it if you had no interest whatsoever throughout your life in any of this it's a bit late that's fine the universe is abundant and patient and every life has a purpose we'll talk about that some other time time you see can't get away from it so as i i believe i wrote in the new earth that time is like a on the like a criminal you can never catch this criminal but the criminal always leaves evidence behind but that he he's he's been he she who knows it's he's been there and the evidence is the dead bodies so the mastery of life is to reconcile and to balance in your life being acknowledging the present moment being appreciating what's here now and going within and finding the stillness and in being engaged in doing now for meditators many meditators can access many i don't know some can access the being dimension in during their meditation so they go maybe half an hour a day or twice or half an hour and that's beautiful it does not necessarily translate into however doesn't necessarily translate into continuing to have one foot in the being dimension while you're engaged in doing so sometimes these meditators who may be good it's a wonderful thing they can have that they may still got very much drawn into that they lose themselves like everybody else in in the doing they get losing yourself in the doing means you get upset with things you get stressed you get anxious because you need to arrive there but you're not there yet to a great thing to reconcile being and doing is to make sure that you only do things that you can actually enjoy doing or at least fully accept i wrote about that somewhere too at least fully accept that at this moment this is what needs you need to do so an acceptance of whatever you are doing at this moment a full acceptance so that your attention is fully in it or actually an enjoyment of what you're doing then the excessive focus on where you want to get to is removed it does not mean the focus is removed completely you still know that you want to achieve certain things so you need to get there this is why you're doing this but the there does not take up so much of your attention that the doing of this becomes just an unpleasant thing that you want to get it get it over with already that's how many people live their whole lives they would rather be somewhere else they want to i wish i didn't have to do this but i have to get there that's why i'm doing this and then you can the bumper sticker on your car then says i'd rather be fishing golfing surfing but this i'd rather be is a mindset that many humans have which basically says i'd rather be somewhere else and doing something else and it's an unconscious mindset and that brings a unhappiness into your doing which can express itself as stress and so on anxiety being upset easily with other people who are not doing what they should be doing to help you to do what you need to do to get where you need to get to so you get because others are not you might have noticed they often do not what they're supposed to do i don't know why that is why don't they they should know better and then you get upset because others are not doing what they're supposed to do and once you're upset with somebody you cannot relate to them fully as a human being because you relate to them as somebody who's not doing what they're supposed to do so it's hard to love a person or to have some human connection or empathy with somebody who is maybe their mind tells you it's not supposed what they're supposed to do now this doesn't mean you cannot ever tell anybody that they're supposed to do something or they fail to do something else if you're still connected with the being within yourself so that they can still still be connected with their being and then there's still a true human interaction and while there's a there's still some there's a an underlying sense of benevolence or goodwill towards that other human being that gets obscured if your focus is exclusively on doing if you lose being the benevolence the goodwill this is the same word one is of latin origin one is of germanic origin the benevolence or goodwill which is a vital thing for you to be really fully human as already confucius in china who i only started to read recently because it was never that attracted to confucius seemed very hard to get into but then i saw there's some fundamental truths that he expresses so after being confused by confucius for many years i saw that he talks about benevolence and goodwill as one of the most fundamental characteristics of a fully evolved human being so he says we are still basically paraphrasing we are not fully human yet or many humans are not fully human yet and a sign of being fully human one of the signs of being fully human is there is in your life continuously a benevolence or a goodwill flowing towards other humans whoever you come into contact with and that's the underlying current now it does not mean that in addition to the underlying current of benevolence you cannot tell a human being what you did was wrong or you forgot to do this you should have done this so maybe next time you try that again do that you can still function on the level of form and tell them that this wasn't right you made that mistake or you can say you've already i've told you 10 times and 10 times you've made the same mistake i may have to let you go if you employ this person or you'll arrange to meet somebody at a particular place and the person doesn't turn up and then you call and say oh i've completely forgot okay let's meet the next weekend okay next week person turns up one hour late okay the next week turn doesn't turn up again so eventually you tell this person i'd rather not meet you again because i don't want to wait around just i have other things to do and so i enjoyed your company when it's there but it's not not working for me although you say these things there can still be an under current of benevolence and that is the vital thing if that's not there then you get that person becomes an enemy to you virtually so to be a fully evolved human being one of the signs is goodwill which in some traditions is called love love your neighbor as yourself but love is a misleading term because it's used in many different ways that are not love at all egoic love and so on and romantic love and the clinging love i love you which means i need you and that's egoic love in spanish of course te quiero means i love you but it also means i want you so that's egoic love then you have as i wrote in a book somewhere there's another word in spanish which is more poetic rarely used because it's rarely practiced would mean i love you but the usual one is i want you i love you because i want you and if you leave me i'll hate you and that can happen from one second to the next you love this person suddenly this person says i found somebody else i love even more than you and then the story starts in the mind he she betrayed me plus long other words that go with that i was deceived etc etc and and that's a very satisfying story for the ego and it makes it creates a lot of suffering of course for yourself but the ego loves that kind of suffering because it can be can be so right and can make somebody else so wrong and the bare facts of the situation are he or she left she found somebody else is that it yeah is that so dreadful no not really if you are if you if the being dimension is there in your life so you're not totally focused on the on the outer and yes well there can be if if a relation relationship ends in that way there can be a period of emotional sadness that then passes because it's a little death especially if the relationship has lasted for a long several years there's a little death and then the emotional sadness is there and then it passes but what often happens the story that develops then that can become lodged in your mind for years to the rest of your life what he or she did to me and all it was that they left you so that's i'm sorry if i am removing from one or two of you a story that you have has been very important to you and i don't want to take anything away from you that you feel is actually valuable but you need to ask yourself perhaps i'm not saying let go of that story no i can't tell you what to do you have to look for yourself to see whether that story is a helpful one how it makes you feel what emotions it produces does it create happiness or unhappiness is the suffering that arises when somebody leaves you how much of that suffering or unhappiness comes from the fact that this person has left you and how much of the suffering or unhappiness comes from the continuous storytelling about it in your head and so as you as the story goes on on in your head years later he is still or she is still leaving you it's just happening right now story is still alive in the head terrible burden but that happens through unconscious thinking and that happens through a complete lack of presence and and the being dimension because without access to the being dimension here now you are dependent on the doing and on the level of form and on what forms are there around you you're not rooted in the source of life you're looking to forms of life to satisfy you possessions achievements appearance people appearance of the physical body all those things you're looking to those things to provide a sense of identity that's normal and that's the unbalanced life if you're looking to what you can do or what you have or what other people think of you what you own as a source of identity then it's frustrating so who am i is the vital question and you cannot know that that can find the true answer to who am i if you have no access to the being dimension because only from there arises your sense of beingness you have everybody has a sense of self a sense of identity for most people it's bound up with a story in the head so we just talked about short story little short stories about somebody did something to you but then there's a somewhat longer story which is your entire life history or at least those parts of it that you remember or interpret in a certain way because memories are already interpretations so you have a selection of memories in your head and those this bundle of memories is me now they're not as i said they're not really memories they are already every memory is already a way of interpreting something what happened but that becomes the me and that is not a satisfying or true sense of identity it's always something missing to that me that's why that me needs the future to complete itself and never does the sense the completion always happens briefly and then you say oh that wasn't it need something else the next thing so we're talking i'm talking simultaneously about unbalanced living so you see it and the possibility of mastery of life fulfilling the true purpose of your life which is bringing into balance the two dimensions of being and doing or being and becoming whether you call it doing becoming and one aspect of doing and becoming is thinking so all thinking is associated with the doing or becoming dimension because all thinking is doing you're doing the thinking well in most cases it's not really that you are doing the thinking but the thinking is done to you by your mind the thinking happens to you people don't people are at the mercy of their conditioned mind whatever thoughts want to arrive in your mind they just come and there's nothing you they think there's nothing they can do about it they don't even know that these thoughts just come into their heads because they are so taken over by every thought that comes into head they are it there's not a single there's not the slightest space between the thoughts and who they are they are the thoughts so these are very unconscious humans now what the percentage of humans on this planet is who are totally unconscious which is totally identified with every arising thought i don't know it varies also i do know that it varies from place to place there are certain pockets even within one country if it's a very large country where there are certain pockets where people tend to be more conscious and others where they tend to be less conscious and there are certain parts of the world where at the moment there's a continuous violence and conflict and those tend to be the areas where there is complete identification with mental structure collective ego and so on tribal egos religious egos ideological egos collective egos complete identification with that europe what the whole world went to the face in the 20th century in the first world war in second world war happens there was a wave of deep unconsciousness because it can come in waves taking over millions of people in germany in russia the so thinking is really the foundation or really of the doing dimension so to access being you need to access the space in you where thinking subsides and that is really if i had to reduce to one to just a few words to describe how to access the being dimension i would say stop thinking without going to sleep that's another way you can stop thinking but that's not this way we're not stopping thinking by falling below thought and eventually i would fall off the chair if i fell below thought here isn't that wonderful i'm not thinking anymore ah it is but you're moving below thinking yes it frees you too from the compulsive thinking that otherwise happens continuously in your head it frees you as can a couple of whiskies but it pulls you below thought do you really want to go below thought well if you're totally miserable perhaps you say yes i would really go if you can't go above thought at least let me go below thought but you can go above thought it's not that hard it's just that you don't know that that's possible talking generally you don't know that that is possible that there is another state of consciousness in addition to dreamless sleep dreaming and wakeful state there is the state of aware presence present moment awareness in which there's no thinking just a present space shh so that goes and as this this the present space is always the same space about we're using language let me call it spaces these spaces of aware presence need to first open up in your daily life as much as possible and that is your spiritual practice and you can start here well many of you are doing that already at some point you don't need to i say doing it's not a doing it's a relinquishment of doing but whenever you use language doing comes in so the space comes in the space of no thought doesn't matter how long five seconds ten seconds while you look at something you look at something all right now here and now as you sit here do you need to think to figure out what it is that i'm saying no you know what i'm saying you don't need to start thinking what's he really saying when he says stop thinking what do you really mean by stopping thinking i don't understand of course you don't understand because you can't understand what presence is through thinking about it so what opens up in you is a little space of aware presence like so to sometimes like to physically this symbolizes it so you're thinking thinking and then you remember aware presence for a while the thinking still happens here on the periphery and then it's ah you feel alive aliveness and then thinking comes back and then there's a next moment one conscious breath in and out and then you're working on your computer and then you're looking at a flower that's next to your computer for five seconds and then you're looking out of the window five minutes later for three seconds at the sky there's much you can't do much thinking about the sky either there are clouds or it's clear there's not much to think about so that's good you look at the sky and you can just look without thinking sky is a great thing for i'll say and again and then somebody comes into the room and starts talking to you about something and you suddenly realize you're able to listen without thinking so as you listen you go and then the person stops speaking at some point hopefully and then you need to answer something and you will find your ability to answer is still there so the thinking resumes but because you accessed the deeper dimension it is more likely that your answer will be just right for this person for this moment and be effective or come up with some effective solution whatever it is that needs to be talked about so in other words the thinking becomes more productive and powerful when you access the deeper dimension of not thinking because in the deeper image of not thinking there resides true intelligence not conceptual intelligence which is a small expression of a much vaster intelligence whatever can measured be measured through iq tests it's a very small section of fragment of intelligence tiny some people are good at it some are not but i've looked at simple iq tests and most of them i can't do so i probably my iq probably would be quite low but in the eyes of the world maybe that would be called low intelligence but there are other intelligence is much vaster than certain abilities to manipulate numbers or concepts so if it's not just that you there is a an aliveness and that comes into your life and a peace an alive peace as you access the being dimension but it also means the doing dimension becomes more intelligent when you are in touch with the being when there is that balance in your life whatever you do is now more helpful to the world and to yourself because it is no longer completely run by the ego and its needs so you become an expression in your doing of a greater intelligence so it's not just balancing the doing and the being as you balance doing and being it changes the nature of the doing so it's not it's not just that and so you become a more effective doer and not a compulsive doer quite a bit of the doing may fall away and what remains is the essential doing if you're not in touch with the being a lot of the doing is unnecessary superfluous and quite often harmful as the doing is informed by the being then it becomes more intelligent and that includes speaking what you say to a person it includes the arising of ideas that are fresh and new it includes even yes a spontaneous insight a fresh way of looking at something all those things are there as you reconcile or bring into balance doing and being and so your spiritual practice is to as much as possible have little spaces of no thought all that remains is an enlarged presence then you will find your daily life becomes interspersed with spaces this could be compared to a sky that is when there are no spaces is totally cloudy because every cloud represents a thought and every thought leads to another thought and they're so linked together that there's no can't see the spacious blue sky behind it there's just and that's the person who's totally trapped in their self-talk in the mind and as you bring in little moments little spaces of presence the clouds there's little gaps in the clouds here and there start to happen clouds oh and then they come back and then as that becomes more second nature to you you find actually sometimes the spaces become actually larger and you might spend a certain period of time in just aware presence which may not necessarily mean that not a single thought arises but no longer these vast streams of thought occasional thoughts come in just little puffy clouds go and then they drift past and another cloud comes and you more or less you feel yourself to be the sky the vast the empty you are the empty sky and you are the space where these clouds arise but before you were the clouds and as i just said it affects also the nature of the doing it also affects being in balance it also affects the nature of your thinking one thing that occurs is that thinking which is still there loses its capacity to make you unhappy and that's an amazing thing because if you look closely you'll see that a large percentage of unhappiness in whatever form whether it comes in as grievances regrets anxiety remorse blaming whatever a lot of a large percentage of unhappiness in your life it comes not from the situation in your life but from the story that you're telling yourself about it that was already discovered by certain greek philosophers they said epictetus not very well-known philosopher said that what makes you unhappy is not the situation but your thoughts about the situation so this example i just gave a mile ago he betrayed me that thought is very unhappy makes you very unhappy because a terrible thing to betray somebody now if you simplify that story and just give the bare facts of the situation he left me okay that's a very difference it's not really a story it's simple fact or i'm ruined or or i have zero balance in my bank account one is an unhappy story and one is just the fact the world's just reflecting the fact so the thinking as you bring balance being and doing into balance tends to just reflect bare facts it's no longer some unhappy story around them so you go you shift as you bring balance being and doing not thinking and thinking it changes the nature of your thinking so he betrayed me becomes he left me i'm ruined becomes at the moment there's zero in my bank statement okay or i have that amount of dollars in my pocket okay and then you see what is anything i can do now but the story i'm ruined already prevents you from taking intelligent action it becomes a burden and this is just one example of and could give countless examples of stories that are so heavy that they prevent you from taking intelligent action and that does not happen anymore as the your ability to access the being through not thinking little spaces of not thinking your ability to access that increases so i talked about the sky just now this is another little if you want some external reflection of what the being dimension is and this is been talked about for thousands of years in spiritual traditions you can look at the sky and here the sky continuously changes it's wonderful every few minutes there are clouds and suddenly totally blue then it totally overcast for 20 minutes and then some clouds in the blue sky continues so if you look up at the sky there's a vast space in the sky in a way the only forms that are in the sky is the clouds there's the clouds and this formless spaciousness of the sky so here you have the world of form so if you want an external representation of the formless you can look at this the sky and especially the the clear sky in where the clouds beyond the clouds there's the clear sky and you look at that and see yourself feel yourself to be the clear sky it's the reflect external reflection of an inner spaciousness and this is why both in china heavens is a term frequently used in chinese spiritual ancient spiritual books the heavens the jesus talks about the heavens the kingdom of heaven and in most language in many languages sky and heaven are the same word in french in spanish in german ciel cielo himmel sky and heaven are the same word so jesus really was saying the kingdom of the sky so why does he say the kingdom of the sky kingdom means in modern terminology the dimension so he was saying the dimension of the sky kingdom of heaven is the original translation so if we now substitute sky for heaven kingdom of dimension of the sky and what is the sky formlessness spaciousness so if we then translate even change the word sky what jesus was saying is the dimension of formlessness the formless dimension the spaciousness that's what he was talking about and that kingdom of heaven is within you and it is here and now that's what's the teaching is that do they understand that in the churches mostly not so he was talking about that dimension that dimension of consciousness that is possible for you and he was trying to put it into words that people at that time within that cultural context could understand he was trying to get them to see something to realize something and what did the buddha say when they asked him about the ultimate nature of life or existence the ultimate nature of realization well jesus said the kingdom of heaven is within you that's and buddha said um emptiness what is emptiness that stops the mind kingdom of heaven doesn't necessarily stop the mind because you can start thinking about what happens in the kingdom of heaven or what happens when i get there who will i find there who will be waiting for me there different religions have different ideas about it but when the buddha said emptiness that really stops the mind so that was perhaps the most effective pointer ever to that dimension because it denies everything in the world of form emptiness so and i'm sure when he taught at the time 2 500 years ago when he said emptiness he would look at you and as he said emptiness you could suddenly realize the emptiness emptiness spaciousness formlessness no thought so the same thing kingdom of heaven this is the dimension of spaciousness emptiness the fourth dimension of consciousness it's here and now it's and the only reason why people don't know that is they and this is how we started today they overlook it you cannot if you try to achieve it you get lost in the doing again because it's already your innermost reality you overlook the nature of consciousness itself because the world of objects is so noisy so to speak it's so hypnotic and it's every object that arises give me attention but more than objects thoughts every thought that arises which is a mental formation which is an energy form wants to draw all your attention to itself it wants to grow it wants to have little children other thoughts it wants to produce more children it wants and for a thought to be able to produce little children which then grow into big thoughts it needs it absorbs your consciousness it's it's for more let me suggest that you look at thoughts in your mind as as little entities because in a way they are they are energy forms we don't scientists by the way if any scientist tells you that they know the nature of thought they don't scientists who have studied the brain it's only the ego in scientists that prevents them from admitting that they have no idea what a thought is what is a memory how is it that i can suddenly remember something that happened 30 years ago and i hadn't thought about since then and suddenly that memory is back where was that memory was that certain molecules in my mind that were waiting to be able to to come some back into balance we just don't know is thought matter-based let's not even go there because this is more practical so i've forgotten what i was going to say but as we started earlier when i started at the beginning say it's overlooked that's overlooking in the same way that a fish would overlook the presence of water where is it i need to achieve water no it's already here you basically are water well the fish so what is it what is overlooked is the simple fact that you are conscious and let me correct that you are consciousness the essence of who you are is consciousness and you can sense the essence of who you are at this very moment because without thinking about your past right now you can get a very clear and powerful sense of beingness right here and now and you know that without any doubt you are conscious and you are consciousness here and now then that is your identity your sense of i who am i is a question that is sometimes used in as a meditation subject ask yourself ramana maharshi in india who lived in the 20th century first half mainly of the 20th century recommended that when you meditate you ask yourself the question who am i but you cannot find the answer by thinking about it so who am i is a pointer to finding that which had been continuously overlooked and that point is who am i now what is the answer if if the answer is not a thought if the answer is not found in the realm of thinking who am i after you ask the question there's a space and that's the answer ah so what then happens the being dimension is present in your life continuously in the background and sometimes in the foreground it's in the foreground if thinking completely stops and you just you might even close your eyes and be completely just as what's left is just a sense of being as our presence and then you open again and then thinking starts and the awareness of being recedes somewhat into the background and then you can now this is the real mastery where even while you think you can still feel the spaciousness behind the thinking and in between the thoughts that is the fulfillment of your of your destiny and if you can live your life like that and you can then whatever you do in your life the other dimension of your purpose your life purpose will be wonderful and fruitful because it will flow from that dimension of connectedness with being and what you do what you will no longer create suffering for yourself and others what you do in fact will no longer be karmic it comes from a deeper level it's not karmic action anymore there can be action that is not karmic and that flows from it's that deeper benevolence towards others so it's a wonderful thing to be practicing thoughtlessness thoughtless is a negative term in conventional usage but we use it in a different way here it means presence so this is what we practice here as you sit here of course and as you in between our sessions and while you do your movement sessions with kim but very helpful is to realize that the doing which is movement and the being don't need to be separate and that's a way of practicing bringing the doing and being together and that can start with physical movement and then whenever you are not totally focused on the goal that you want to achieve once unless your attention is in the doing in fact there's more attention in the doing than there is in the mental mentally projected goal you still have a goal a life goal let's say you want to become a writer my goal is to become a writer okay that's fine so how do you achieve your goal of becoming a writer well the main thing is yes you have to start reading some books if you haven't if that helps and then the next thing is to write anybody wants to become a writer so let's presume that you have already read quite a few books otherwise if you love books and writing the next step is you need to write now if you are excessively focused on becoming a writer or producing books or even becoming well known as a writer or all those things then your fullest attention will not be on the writing and your enjoyment of it if there's any enjoyment at all will become diminished because you want to arrive there there's always some attention is taken away by this goal but if you have the goal and yet you give your fullest attention while the goal some of your attention yes is on the goal but most of it is on the act of writing which you can actually enjoy then you enjoy the writing you might not enjoy it all the time because every writer occasionally has writer's blocks so then you just have to wait and left and sometimes or just pick up the pen well i i write with a pen but most people these days don't they have a computer enjoy what you're doing even if you never get published you enjoyed and you're enjoying the writing what's wrong with that and if you are enjoying the writing the possibility that somebody will enjoy reading your writing is greater the possibility that people will enjoy reading it so and so whatever it is you might have a course of study i want to become this or that yes but are you enjoying this moment while you are studying if not there's something not right and you lose yourself in doing so always make sure that there's an enjoyment of the present moment of whatever you're doing in the present moment if you can enjoy what you're doing in the present moment then the being dimension is present in the doing and if you absolutely cannot enjoy it for certain things that you may have to do this moment demands that you do that at least you can accept this moment fully that you accept that you have to do that at this moment and then also the being dimension is still present and when the being dimension is present there's a piece in the background of the doing that's the sign that the being dimension is present when you get completely upset with external doings then the being dimension is not present when there's a piece in the background the likelihood also that you're doing will be effective and lead to quick and effective results is much greater and that's slightly miraculous almost so when the then all the negativities that otherwise are associated with doing when you're not connected with being if they fall away there's just clear doing this either enjoyment of what you're doing or there is an acceptance of what you have to do right now but there's never there's not anymore that entity that complains incessantly about what it's doing but doesn't want to be doing it and as I've quoted before Ramana Maharshi the spiritual teacher from India who lived in the 20th century first part of the 20th century wonderful teacher when he was asked how do we know whether somebody asked him how do I know whether I'm making progress on the spiritual path how do I know that well if he could have said of course a Zen teacher might have said there is no progress on the spiritual path for example uh or he might have said let go of your idea of progress on the spiritual path it's all nonsense maybe a Zen teacher might have said that but Ramana Maharshi said oh yeah that's it's easy you can know how how you're making progress on the spiritual path how well the degree of absence of thinking is the criterion or the measure for progress on the spiritual path that's what he said the degree of absence of thinking or thoughts is the measure of progress on the spiritual path and he was not talking about falling below thought no he was talking about rising above thought if you fall below thought you become a fool as it's traditionally called and if you rise above thought you become a sage but the fool and the sage have certain things in common they are both connected to being more than the ordinary man or woman and that's why in ancient mythology the fool is an important figure even in lord of the rings where the hobbit is a little bit of a fool but he is the only one who can do the great job not the more evolved people so the fool and the sage and sometimes they are mistaken too you can mistake the sage for a fool and you can mistake the fool for a sage a lovely movie that's quite old now that where a fool is mistaken for a sage is with peter sellers it's an old movie and it's called being there being there whereas there's a man who lives below thought but people think he's so evolved that he's he's a sage and it's happened in the past that certain spiritual teachers were not recognized and taken to be fools that's not uncommon so sufi masters some zen teachers another one of course as i mentioned before where the fool is the fool is more than a fool is forrest gump that movie where forrest gump is below thought has no ego and yet he's so connected that life all always brings to him what he needs and he does good without claiming any ownership or so he does he does heroic things in the war but never even realizes that he did on something heroic in the war he's not evolved enough to have an ego and so that's a lovely another lovely illustration of fool and sage it's having certain similarities now this does not we are not going back to the fool stage so as you know we will have many opportunities for asking questions and so on either today or tomorrow or the day after or the day after that or the day after that it's all the present moment anyway so in the meantime your practice is gaps of no thought being the presence rather than being the person so welcome or perhaps i should thank you for welcoming me since about 75 percent of you are from australia so thank you for welcoming me myself and kim and the whole team back here and it's been maybe six years since we were here at the at this very place the last time it had a different name then and since then there have been many improvements here the most notable one the addition of dinosaurs i knew six years ago that there was something missing here but i wasn't sure what it was so this is a retreat you've been taken out of your usual surroundings and put here for some of you who have come from more distant places this is a very exotic environment tropical with wonderfully exotic birds and animals and kangaroos and australian gigantic lizards and all kinds of wonderful things and trees that if you're not familiar with this part of the world that you've never seen before so all this is wonderful and helpful it can be a helpful thing to be in unusual surroundings because it's easier to be more present in unusual surroundings that's the advantage of traveling and that's why as i've written somewhere uh many people feel more alive when they travel and when they are at home their surroundings are so familiar that they lose presence completely they don't see things anymore they go from where they live to their office or wherever it is gone done it so many times they don't see it anymore and you would be surprised even at home your usual surroundings you might have a painting on your walls and haven't looked at it in the past three years might be very beautiful or your garden or the plants in there so this is the familiarity can lead to a kind of semi sleep-like state and when you're traveling you go oh and you the good thing is you might not even have a name for all the new things you see at home you know what everything is called but here you see things you might see a weird animal the mind stops because you can't name it and that's a wonderful thing or you see it trees that you haven't seen before and you go ah or you might say to your friend look at that and you might notice in the moment of looking at that you're not naming it in your mind because you don't know what it's called so there's a moment a few seconds of just being present just being the presence rather than the naming person and so let's hope you're here we're here for a few days let's hope that by the last day this place will not have become so familiar to you that you're not looking anymore so it helps to be wide awake to your sense perceptions because that is one way of coming into the present moment which is why we are here because there is more to the present moment than we realize most of the time there's more to it it's the access point to the deeper dimension within yourself so as a general theme underlying theme for our retreat i recommend surprisingly that you practice being in the present moment so we have this helpful thing that you are in unusual surroundings unless you live just a few miles from here then it may be a harder job or you might even live next door however although you've been taken out of your usual surroundings you have carried with you something else and of course that's your mind that travels with you wherever you go that is perhaps the meaning of the book that somebody wrote i believe the title is wherever you go there you are so wherever you go you carry your mind and the conditioning of your mind with you so that is the challenge here on our retreat to transcend the conditioning of your mind the habitual way of interpreting the habitual way of reacting to things habitual mind patterns if a mind pattern in you is that you frequently and very quickly become discontent with where you are if that's a pattern in you then that pattern will arise here also if your mind pattern is one that loves complaining and finding fault with things then it's very likely that very quickly this mind pattern will appear here also despite the fact that you are in these wonderful unusual surroundings the first thing you might complain about is the dinosaurs and the mind says i'd rather see a big buddha or something like that or the mind says we've come here on a spiritual retreat isn't there supposed to be a buddha somewhere so you get surprising things things that your expectations are not met in various ways and that is a challenge to the mind to the conditioned mind because the conditioned mind wants its expectations met and if they're not met it gets uneasy restless irritated angry starts talking about what's wrong either silently in your mind or to others and if others can agree with you then it's even better or you can go on the internet and then you get 1 000 people agreeing with you so you always find those in some of you but maybe one or two of you that have that complain pattern i'm not saying if there's something really wrong you shouldn't do something to rectify it so if if something is leaking in your room you say no i'm not going to say anything because you're not supposed to complain no of course you go to reception say there's something there that needs to be rectified it's not a complaint it's just information complaint means there is an emotion behind it and the emotion says this should not be happening then it becomes a complaint or it's your fault then it becomes a complaint if it's simply presenting information it's not a complaint it's just a fact and then the question is is can anything be done about it if yes good or if they say there's nothing we can do do you go on insisting that this is very bad and create suffering for yourself or do you simply then accept this is what is and there is no situation ever including at a retreat in a wonderful almost perfect place except for the dinosaurs for some of you almost perfect place as far as the natural environment is concerned it's you can't imagine anything more the profusion of of vegetation and aliveness that surrounds you you cannot imagine anything more wonderful and yet it's not perfect and not just because of the dinosaurs there will be other things too that are not perfect you cannot find a place where you go everything is just so perfect it doesn't exist if it did exist you would become incredibly unbearably bored with saying it's so perfect what am i going to do now but of course you're lucky there is no such place so there's always something that goes wrong and that's a wonderful thing you can not only anywhere as you might know in life i believe i'm not the only person who can say that since i was born life has been challenging ever since then and very rarely do you get a little bit of moment of freedom from challenges and then suddenly something drops behind you or falls on your head metaphorically speaking so something you can practice here is to have an expectation that things should should be in a certain way and nothing should go wrong and that reality external reality should conform to exactly the expectations of the conditioned mind that creates ultimately unhappiness because a lot of the time reality does not conform to the expectations of your mind in some ways it does in other ways it doesn't and not only in a retreat but also daily life as you might have noticed one damn thing after another one damn thing after another and then the mind says i can't take anymore of course that's just another thought completely untrue you can take anything if you drop the thought this is what is so you practice here letting go of the expectations of your mind and live in alignment with what is internal alignment with what is rather than demanding that something should be otherwise the exception is conveying information so that something can be changed if it can be changed that's understood or doing it yourself clean it up do this do that that's fine but other than that see if here make it your spiritual practice to live in alignment with the isness of the present moment and honor the present moment and bring a kind of appreciation to the present moment appreciate while you're here appreciate whatever the present moment presents to you another word for it is you welcome the present moment and that's not this is actually a relatively easy place to do that it's not one nothing is perfect we know that but this is a you're in a protected setting and it's relatively easy here to welcome the present moment it might be easier here than to be at a crowded airport and the flights have been canceled or to be stuck anywhere or to be in the hospital then things big things small things happen wherever you go welcoming the present moment is the practice that gives you access to the spiritual dimension to that which is beyond the person in yourself it seems too simple almost but let that be your practice here you may remember i mentioned it once or twice before there was a zen teacher and a disciple came to him and said i'm going away now on a journey for several years and since i haven't made it i've been in this monastery for five years and i still haven't got it can you give me some practice for my journey and the zen master said okay here's your spiritual practice for your journey come back in five years and let me know how it how it went wherever you are whatever situation you find yourself in whoever you are with whatever happens say thanks for everything i have no complaint whatsoever is that it one imagines spiritual practice some complicated meditation method that takes years to master but no he said make it your spiritual practice to say thanks for everything i have no complaint whatsoever no matter what happens so if you miss whether you catch the bus or you miss the bus you catch the bus say thanks for everything i have no complaint whatsoever you miss the bus thanks for everything i have no complaint whatsoever you you're in a in a lovely hotel room in a warm bed thanks for everything i have no complaint whatsoever or you're out in the cold with nowhere to sleep oh then it not only gets more challenging to say that but if you say it and you mean it saying it is just words but if you say it and mean it when instead of being in a luxury hotel you find yourself penniless in the street if you then say it and mean it that will take you much deeper than being in a luxury hotel bed and saying thanks for everything i have no complaint whatsoever that's relatively easy although you might say the pillow is not quite the way i wanted but it is it's relatively easy to say but say it where it's when you're out in the out in the cold and you can't get a hotel because you don't have the money or whatever yours there are no hotels nowhere to sleep cold wet thanks for everything thanks thanks that's a sarcastic thank you thanks god it's just what i needed that's not the thanks that's not it it's if you say thanks which means a total acceptance of this moment not a total acceptance of the okay i might as well accept it for the rest of tonight i'm going to be out in the cold you don't know maybe a minute from now something will happen and you'll find somewhere or somebody will offer you a place to sleep it's just this moment thanks for everything which is thanks for this moment so and thanks really here means a complete acceptance of this moment and if you accept a moment that seems difficult to accept that takes you much deeper than accepting a moment that's easy to accept if you have a nice meal you have a here you're drinking a cocktail and then you've ordered the starter which is whatever let's say oysters half of what if some people love them some don't but it's that's a general thing that people think oh that's okay and they can thanks for these oysters thanks for everything i have no complaint whatsoever thanks for everything and then you go home and suddenly you feel sick in your stomach so when you were eating the oyster you had thanks for everything i have no complaint right but what about now because you ate too many oysters so it's bringing your inner self into alignment with the present moment a very powerful spiritual practice why is it so powerful especially when it's when the situation is challenging and you still say it and you mean it because everything that sustains the person the exclusively personal sense of self in that act of complete surrender to what is the personal sense of self gives way to a deeper transcendent sense of self which the buddhists call no self a deeper consciousness suddenly shines through though really it's a kind of denying your form identity it doesn't mean you don't have it anymore but you are no longer trapped exclusively in your form identity the form identity is strengthened the more you can be in opposition to what is the stronger your form identity me the person the me the more you are in opposition to what is the stronger the the me becomes your form identity and if you can have enemies lots of enemies it loves that gets even stronger they all against me or us make if it's a collective ego the collective ego loves its enemies can't actually survive without them every collector even needs the others who are not us this is us and that's the others so that's the the wonderful thing that the person the exclusively personal sense of self becomes weakened subsides and another something else emerges when you're no longer habitually oppose what is something emerges that is deeper than the personal sense of self the transcendent dimension presence whatever we want to call it some people call it your higher self or you could call it your deeper self words doesn't matter but something emerges that is from beyond the person and that is a place of great power and aliveness and possibility and that is where you are connected with a vastness and with everybody else too so it's when you feel when you when that transcendent dimension arises you feel a greater sense of connectedness no longer the separation with not only with nature but also with other humans you no longer feel the otherness of the other it's just yourself in another disguise that's really becomes your experience whoever you meet there's yourself in another disguise isn't that a wonderful way of being with other humans that essentially you can sense not only your connectedness but you can also sense your inherent oneness with others so that is why this presence practice honoring the present moment welcoming the isness that's why that's so such a powerful practice so here we it is helpful to be here because it's a bit like a gym here in the gym you practice you can run on a treadmill lift weights eventually you're strong enough and then you go outside and do whatever you have to do the so this is a spiritual gym and it's easier here not only because there these humans here have come together with this common purpose of transcending the merely personal even though you might not have put it like that when you came here so it helps to be engaged in this with others don't become dependent on on others no but in here in this environment a protected setting where you can practice that new way of being in the world this new way of living that is what the ancient sages have pointed to using different words for thousands of years it's all they've said it not many people got it but now more people are getting it for the first time more than just a few and that's wonderful and that's why you're here don't believe that our sessions are the main thing and the rest is just waiting for the next session no then you would be wasting a valuable opportunity the retreat is every moment you are here is the retreat is not just our sessions here every moment you should incorporate into your presence practice so walking from here back to your room brushing your teeth wherever you are whatever you do be present that's your spiritual practice be aligned with the present moment rather than carry in your head this huge amount of mental content about your past and your future because the mind is primarily concerned with past and future so while you're walking here you're already thinking about in a week's time i'll be home again and then what then i'll have to do that and have those four calls to make and then i'll have to do that then those problems will be i shouldn't have come here because i've got so much on my plate at home why did i come here i should have dealt with my things there i should have waited gone to next year's retreat i said that's the self-talk in the head you will may encounter it here too as you walk from here to there you will encounter the self-talk in the head so how do you get out of the self-talk in the head one you need to know that that's self-talk in the head if you don't know it's self-talk in the head you become the self-talk in your head you become the voice in your head you don't know it you are it so you have to the the vital step and i cannot tell you how to do that and that minimum of awareness needs to be there where you know that there's self-talk happening in my head and it's telling you some kind of story it could be the briefest of stories like i shouldn't have come here or i don't fit in here all these people are too spiritual for me or i'm so spiritual these people are not spiritual at all it's all little stories in the head every every even every fragment of self-talk is a little story in the head that goes around and then you look at reality through the lens of the little story it's not just one story of course it comes another one and another and in some little some stories are not little they may be big stories about yourself and your life and what's gone wrong with it or what's gone right with it so even that's a story more pleasant than if it's gone wrong so you you need to know when the self self-talk happens in the head the knowing is not part of the self-talk the knowing is just an awareness that there is self-talk the moment there is an awareness that there is self-talk the possibility of freedom from the self-talk opens up if that awareness is not there there's nothing you can do you have to wait until life knocks you over the head so that finally some awareness comes in and you go so you might have to sleep on a banana skin or something because you're self-taught and suddenly you go oh life told you to wake up and awakening which is a term that's been used for thousands of years in the spiritual context not in the conventional context to awaken means to come out of sleep in conventional language terminology but in spiritual terminology to wake to awaken means to awaken one could say basically to awaken out of the self-talk in the head because the self-talk in the head is a form of hypnosis self-hypnosis you are hypnotized have been hypnotized by society your surroundings the surrounding culture you the even the language that you were taught to use that becomes a large part of the self-talk although some of the self-talk is also accompanied by images but a lot of it is language and all that you've been conditioned and this is you are possessed by that which is an energy formation and humans are possessed by that and mistake that conditioned entity which consists of thoughts they're so trapped in it they're so identified with it they believe in every thought that comes into your head it's absurd but normal well another word rather than absurd i could say it's mad but it's normal it creates incredible amount of suffering unnecessary suffering that humans create for themselves and for others you can't create suffering for yourself without making others suffer who are close to you and whoever comes into contact with you an enormous amount of suffering is created by not realizing that large percentage of your problems consist of self-talk in the head that's amazing and and once you see that you say okay and then you can have a little bit of awareness and say who am i am i that story or am i the one who sees that who recognizes that there's self-talk and in order to recognize that there's self-talk going on in you that's not a thought there's just an aware presence that and then the compulsive nature of self-talk lessens somewhat because some awareness has come in the light of awareness has come in and then you realize you are that light of awareness you are the awareness and there's a shift the the you the head may not immediately stop it'll want to carry on the self-talk wants to carry on there's a momentum to it you you can observe that momentum if you can't do it in yourself you can observe it in others once they have a story and they're telling you their story they can't stop they want to go on they don't and they and they don't want an end if they're talking about their problems they don't want an end to their problems they want a continuation of the story which is the problem they don't know that that's why we call it unconscious they don't know that their primary thing is they want the continuation of the story because that's the continuation of the fictitious person that cannot live without its story its storyline and so do so those people do they want an end to their problems of course they will probably tell you yeah i'd love no they don't they don't want an end to their problems because that would be an end to their story which is their identity they don't want an end to their sense of identity i need my story all the things that my i've been telling myself in my mind about myself and other people and my parents and my relatives and my co-workers and my ex-wife and my ex-husband and what people did to me and on what or what i did and shouldn't have done or failed to do who am i without i can't let go of that i need to think about this more so it becomes a habitual place the habitual place of the of the mental noise where you feel that's me and so every therapist knows that you always reach a point with your clients patients whatever depending on the school of therapy depends whatever you call your clients your patients whatever there comes a point when you hit that resistance they don't want to be free of their problems and that the big challenge is there is this person going to overcome that barrier because that barrier is not just becoming free of my problems but also becoming free of a very limited and ultimately fictitious sense of identity the me so that is what i've described is the next step one could say in the evolution of human consciousness is stepping out of self-talk which is the conditioned mind and realizing there is much more to who i am than this conditioned content of my mind and that is the beginning of awakening it's not it's not those words not not that you need to believe that there is much more to who i am than the self-talk in my head because that is still self-talk in the head i believe there's more to who i am and you better believe it too no that that needs to be and most of you are here because you already have had or not only had a glimpse many of you have already deeply been able to transcend the person because the person the exclusive personal sense of self wouldn't want to be here it would feel threatened by being sitting here it either would feel threatened or it would feel extremely restless and irritated i need to get out of here or suddenly your legs start twitching this is quite normal by the way many humans have twitching in their legs all the time or they go so if there's somebody here who is going like this when you you know their person the the personal self what is becoming uncomfortable with being here doesn't know it but goes stretching and that kind of twitching is very normal for humans but if it happened to your dog would take you would take your dog to the vet there's nothing if if you have been twitching and now suddenly you stop that's good so you've realized because a lot of that is unconscious and suddenly it's oh if you make it conscious it stops and if you really make the self-talk conscious it also stops and suddenly you go and your attention is suddenly in the present moment the self-talk is never in the present moment and suddenly your attention is in the present moment and you go and the whole person at that right now is not there anymore when you go you're not a person at that moment anymore you are an aware presence so that that shift in consciousness can happen very easily whether it stays with you for a few seconds or a few minutes or an hour or a day or longer doesn't matter that much the important thing is that it arises it arises and suddenly the unhappy self-talk entity is disappearing and what has taken its place just a sense of presence and that sense of presence is first of all aware of sense perceptions so you look more consciously you listen more consciously and this is a wonderful environment here for looking and listening because there's so much to look at and so much to listen to and it's not only looking and listening it's also feeling the breeze on your skin the air especially if you come from northern parts of our planet where it's beginning of winter and suddenly you come here and you feel the warmth of the air and and you there might be a scent in the air because there's so many plants and you become conscious of that but feeling the air the movement of air on your skin requires a considerable degree of awareness a person who is immersed in the self-talk in the head they cannot feel this light the breeze touching their skin they can't feel that it's a very subtle thing and to to feel subtle things you need to have that awareness aware presence that alert aware presence you cannot be immersed in the self-talk to really honor and appreciate deeply the present moment which is life we could call it we could say honor appreciate deeply life because present moment and life are synonymous there is no life away from the present moment if you cannot appreciate the present moment means you are away from life instead of life you have a substitute in your head just abstractions in the form of thoughts so to notice the breeze on their skin you need to be quite alert and basically still inside and then you can see and to notice big things requires less awareness than to notice small things so if there's a big if there's a kangaroo jumping right in front of you which may happen it's a wonderful thing of course there of course it's easy to for that moment to be present especially if you're not familiar with them and for a moment even if you were immersed in the self-talk in the head for a moment you're free of that as the kangaroo is jumping for the moment the unhappy person is subsided but then the kangaroo is gone and then there's nothing big to attract your attention and then your attention is reabsorbed again by thinking until the next kangaroo comes but after a few kangaroos you become so familiar with kangaroos that even a jumping kangaroo is not going to get you out of your self-talk anymore but to be to notice little things like a little beetle crawling there or a very subtle noise you need more awareness so it's very important as you are here in our retreat place don't just look for the big things because while you're looking for the kangaroo you might be missing many other things in the meantime pay attention to the little things a quivering leaf on a tree and for a moment you give it attention it's all miraculous it's a miraculous expression of life and the multiplicity of the profusion of life in millions of life forms on this planet life expressing itself and to go through life ignoring the miraculous nature of life is a terrible pity terrible to have to miss that rather than to love it of course that's the sense-perceived life there is deeper life too that is not sense-perceived but we start with the sense-perceived life and as we go deeper deeper during our retreat we will see that the sense-perceived life although beautiful is only the surface of reality but you have to start with that and it's beautiful and if you give it your fullest attention even then you already begin to go deeper than the surface because then you sense an aliveness in everything you can sense that the life in this flower i'm just making sure it's not plastic even if it were plastic there is some life in plastic too but not as intense life as in the natural flower the life that is expressive that expresses itself through this flower is the life that expresses itself through this form this body this mind and millions of other other forms and so you go around in a state of astonishment because there's so much that you had not really acknowledged before it's easier to be astonished here at the multiplicity of life perhaps than if you were in what's a boring place well there are many boring places i'm not going to name any it's easier but even if you're in a so-called boring place a suburb somewhere there's beauty there too you might have to look more and even if you were in a street without any vegetation there will still be beauty there too and there comes a moment when you actually see beauty in everything even in a simple pavement or a window the surface of a table how light gets reflected of objects the colors and when for i also suggest so look for be aware of the little things because that requires that brings your alertness up big things are fine that's nice to be aware of the little things and go go when you walk around here in between sessions you go a bit like a little bit like as if you had as if you had just arrived on this planet in some sense you have because the surroundings here may be so unusual to you if you live somewhere very different it's almost as if you had arrived on a new planet and how would you be if you arrived on a new planet you don't you go and you don't you don't do a lot of thinking you just you're just there as an aware presence perceiving like a child before a child learns the names of things but you're not regressing you're transcending that level of conceptualization that which most that most humans are trapped in you're not regressing to the child stage you are transcending but as you transcend the conceptualization level there is there certain things that are similar to a child or that's deeper than the child perceives because you've been through that growth you have transcended conceptualization there's a deeper knowing that the child does not have but in other ways there are certain similarities with how a child perceives the world and it's not for nothing that Jesus said truly i tell you if you want to enter the kingdom of heaven you must be like a little child that's a very important pointer and how is a little child before the child can name things when a child does not happen to be crying the child is going he takes everything in without naming it and there's a clarity of perception and then the naming stage comes and then the problems start another thing need to mention for to be aware of here i highly recommend that you do not switch on your television if you have one in your room and if you find that difficult it means you're addicted and so if you find yourself going to the tv or the remote and you go i can't swap myself oh that's a good way of realizing that you're addicted and even more addictive these days are the little gadgets well from laptops to to pads ipads and similar devices phones which are much more than phones these days which absorb many people's attention a lot of the time so much that for many humans their interaction with reality 50 percent or more of their interaction with reality is through a little screen that they hold in front of their eyes and they live for it they live for the next facebook post so you may find that you are addicted to some extent to that also i would recommend to keep to a minimum the devices if you absolutely have to set aside 10 minutes 15 minutes a day when you actually do interact or you look at your emails or facebook posts just to see what other people are eating or what they're wearing and you can say oh that looks great or you may compulsively take a selfie of yourself here look where i am and then hopefully everybody will feel jealous about you we may talk about those things a little bit more at a later time but in the meantime i would recommend that you break the habitual if for many of you what is habitual interaction with these devices while you're here in order to fully benefit from being here so that your attention is not absorbed by that because that really amplifies the mind unless you have something that you're looking there that promotes presence you might see a present moment reminder oh i have to remember to put in a present moment reminder it needs to come up on the screen says put away your phone we'll have to write that down for the next one stop looking at the screen look at the sky oh what else oh alcohol i believe you can buy alcohol here and there's nothing wrong with a glass of wine or beer occasionally but at least how i see it but it can easily pull you out of presence into unconsciousness especially if after one glass of wine you cannot stop if you feel you need one glass wine to enjoy your meal fine fine but if you're one of those many you cannot after one they need to have a second because and then they don't realize that before but when they started drinking their one first glass of wine they were totally determined determined only to have one glass of wine but by the end they get by the time they get to the end of the first glass of wine they forgot that they were totally determined to only have one glass of wine say oh i might as well have another and then you're gone so if you are one of those don't don't have the first one or beer if you cannot enjoy the meal without a beer you must have your beer before the meal okay but if you if you cannot stop you must have another one after that this is not this is would prevent you from benefiting from being here if you can avoid alcohol altogether it would be preferable while you're here so that is only there no this is not a boot camp retreat there are spreadsheets like that where you get strict instructions no alcohol you're not watching television you're not going to talk to anybody you're not going to look at anybody and we're going to meditate for 10 hours a day some of you may have been on that retreat now sit and close your eyes there's a place for that kind of retreat too if it's right for you if it's right for you you've already been to it or you're going to go to it so i'm not mentioning other drugs because i don't think i need to here i don't think you will indulge in those things here there's something much better than acid or pot and that's called presence it's not a drug it's true that some of these drugs can give you a little glimpse of of what it is to perceive the world without the intrusion of the habitual mind and this is why people who take some of these drugs have an experience that goes a wow experience and you look at something you look at a simple object and suddenly see its beauty and aliveness and you go wow wow look at that look at that glass of water i can't believe it and the truth is it is miraculous and the truth is we don't see it because of the habitual nature of the mind if you if you suspend thinking and look at this glass of water water is an amazing substance it's a miracle and what is a glass it's a solid thing and the light shines through it it's amazing it's completely solid but the light travels through it and yes you can go wow without any drug if you're real if you're present really present so and you again do this occasionally you can do it here people won't think you're mad if you do it out in the world they would think oh he must have taken something or she but if you go to really appreciate an object any object a natural object or even a man-made object pick it up give it your fullest attention feel it see it and then after a little while you can sense something else something that takes you beyond the sense perception a little bit first of all you you've sent you see it you give it fullest attention you feel it you might smell it or taste it and then as the mind becomes quite still you can sense there is a presence in that object let's say this for example there is a certain that there's a certain presence it has every object also has a presence that transcends the sense perception so you feel the presence of that thing as some artists did and then they were able to paint it this is why some artists painted extremely simple objects or some artists of impressionists for example painted landscapes that nobody would have looked at twice not remarkable landscapes ordinary landscapes and they became great works of art because those artists were able to look at an ordinary landscape through these unconditioned eyes unconditioned ways of perceiving they actually went and they saw something extraordinary in the ordinary and then they were able to paint and give expression something that nobody can define but many humans can sense that there is something there that they cannot define when they look at that painting and the painting is not of anything extraordinary it might be a simple landscape or like van Gogh an old chair nobody would look at this chair twice but that was a chair in his room and he looked at it and he went oh and he saw something extraordinary in the ordinary and then he was able to convey that and put it on canvas so some of the realization of those artists of seeing the extraordinary in the ordinary God is reflected still in what they produced and this is why we call it a great work of art the miraculous thing is that many humans can actually recognize there's something there that is great but they can't say what it is they can sense it so there's a there's a general agreement that these are great works of art I think the prices they pay for these things is absurd of course these days you can if you can have a painting like that that costs 50 million dollars so a person buys this painting for 50 million dollars and they never look when they go out they don't look at the landscapes that they look at their painting and say this is mine it's worth 50 million dollars the painting is supposed to show you how to look and see the extraordinary in the ordinary so instead of you don't have to spend 50 million dollars go out into a walk and there it is and it's not necessary to create a work of art unless you feel compelled or something arises from within you and then you produce something that could happen but the work of art is your your life is the work of art what becomes your reality is the work of art that's our so that is a little summary that was of our retreat here of how to be here oh yes one more thing I think it's one maybe more uh some of you may want to be in silence I don't know yet usually we have some tables reserved I don't know if that's going to work here for people who don't want to engage in social interactions and that's fine that's good others may prefer to engage in social

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[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 9:49)

Reserved, I don't know if that's going to work here for people who don't want to engage in social interactions and that's fine, that's good. Others may prefer to engage in social interaction. Who knows, you might meet somebody, but be careful with the habitual patterns of your mind that can become stimulated when you engage in conversation and then you can easily lose presence, especially when you start discussing things or expressing your opinions, where very quickly an identification with viewpoints can come into your mind, which is ego.

A viewpoint is a thought pattern or a thought. And as you talk to other people, you may find that their view or opinion is different from yours. And then you get into, you notice the energy arising and you defend your opinion, not knowing that it's just an opinion.

You think you're defending your very identity, that's unconscious. So be careful when you discuss things so that you don't lose presence. The wonderful practice is to look at another human when he or she is talking.

And while you listen, feel your inner body. We all are to some extent familiar with that. Feel your inner, the aliveness inside your body as you look at that other person and as you listen to the other person so that you don't need to comment mentally on what the other person is saying.

Allow the other person to fully express his or her viewpoint or opinion or whatever they have to say and be there as a presence. So be alert and still and listen. See if you can listen from that place of alert stillness.

So you look at them and you listen. They talk and you're still and alert. It's beautiful.

And then at first, it may be a little strange because you might think I won't be able to know what to say, but you do, you will find. Words too will come afterwards, but be careful that you don't get drawn back into your habitual patterns. So that's a presence practice while you interact with people.

Opinions are amazing. Amazing things can be huge obstacles if you're identified with them. Identified means your identity is bound up with your opinions.

And if you look on the internet, how worked up these people get, and so angry and irritated, and what's happened to them, they're completely identified with their viewpoints or opinions. Their whole sense of self is in it. And anybody who disagrees is the enemy.

And they love complaining. So we watch out for opinions. The Buddha already talked, there's a sutra of the Buddha about the beware of opinions, the thicket of opinions, the jungle of opinions.

Now, does that mean you can't have an opinion anymore? No, of course you can still have your viewpoints, perfectly fine, about politics, about social issues, about psychological things, whatever. You can have opinions, but is your identity bound up with them, or is it simply do you recognize it as a viewpoint, an opinion, without having to defend it as if it were your very life?

It's not your life. It's an abstraction in the head. Also, I recommend that from time to time, you take, even if you have come with a friend or a family member, that you spend certain periods of time by yourself where you're not with anybody.

Take some time away from other people where you just walk to the beach, walk around here, walk along the beach, a magnificent beach. You can walk for miles. I wouldn't say go swimming because it looks quite, the currents are probably quite strong, so we don't want that.

But walk along the beach and, or up the little mountain here, or walk around here by yourself. And as you walk by yourself, be the observing presence, be alert, and you go. And so sometimes you stop, you might sit somewhere and look around, notice the little things, the sky, and after a while, and we'll be going more deeply into this later, just a brief mention here.

After a while, you notice, you notice not only what you are noticing, you notice also your noticing. So you not only notice the things that you notice, you notice the noticing, which means you have become aware that you are aware. You can feel the awareness without which you wouldn't be able to see or perceive anything.

And that's the, that is the new consciousness when you can feel, sense yourself as the awareness. You're aware that you are aware. And as I'm saying this now, don't wait for it to happen.

Right now, can you be aware at this moment of the fact that you are aware? It has no shape or form. Awareness has no shape or form.

It's formless, but it is an enormous presence that gives rise to the entire world, the experience of the world, that is prior to the experience of the world. And from there, you look around. So you're now, you've gone deeper than the surface reality and still appreciate the surface reality.

That's who you are. You are the consciousness that underlies phenomenal existence You're not a person. You're temporarily, that consciousness takes on the form of a person, physical and psychological form.

It's a temporary formation. And it, that temporary formation may not even end or will not end when the physical body goes. That formation may have a life that continues for a while, but it is a formation, a form identity.

The essence of who you are is formless. It's consciousness. And what is consciousness?

You could ask. And all I can say right now is a little metaphor or analogy, rather, consciousness is the, it's like the light that comes from the sun. And then you may ask, what's the sun?

But I won't answer that. You will find that for yourself.

[Speaker 8] (12:37 - 13:52)

Thank you. Hello. I want to ask, I work with people and I notice, I work with people and talk about lifestyle change quite a lot and how it will relate to health.

And I notice in myself, as well as in those people that I work with, that sometimes in the face of really clear experience that making a certain health choice will make them better. And in sometimes serious situations, like say they've got diabetes or something. And I just want to make this distinct from things that we know that are addictions like smoking.

So I'm not talking about that, cause that's an addiction and that's got a different force. But sometimes people, for example, they'll go on a gluten-free diet, say, and they'll be much better for three months and then they'll come back and then they've started to lose that momentum, lose motivation and they're drifting back into the diet that doesn't suit so well. What is that force?

What is that in us, in me too, where I know that, for example, if I go to bed earlier, I'll feel better in the next day, but something in me sort of says, no, I don't want to go to bed early.

[Speaker 1] (13:53 - 13:53)

No.

[Speaker 8] (13:55 - 13:56)

What is that?

[Speaker 1] (13:57 - 24:55)

Yes. So there is a, these are forms of conditioning that has inertia and a certain momentum in certain ways in which people live that have been there for many, many years. They could also almost be seen as energy streams inside you and they have a certain momentum.

And some of these are sluggish energies, the inertia, the pull of gravity, gravitational force of deep seated habits that are associated with the person. It's part of conditioning, mental, emotional conditioning. So then the motivation goes away again.

And sometimes it's only in a crisis situation that people are able to break out of it. And sometimes not even then. If they really realize it's a crisis situation, then sometimes that can be the trigger that pushes people out of that, the gravitational pull of deep seated conditioned habits.

So there's also a reluctance because these things are associated with the egoic sense of identity. There's also reluctance sometimes to abandon these habits because it's almost as if you were abandoning a part of yourself and people don't want to die. The ego doesn't want to die.

So often the ego is stuck in unhealthy habits, but it's become so much of their sense of self that they can't do anything about it and they don't want to. So all you can do is explain what it is that they are doing and what there's only that much that you can do for somebody else. You cannot force them to evolve.

You can only provide the triggers for their evolution. So, and there are humans who don't want to evolve. They're not ready yet.

It's like an apple that's on the tree and it might be close to getting ripe, but it doesn't, or it might be, it doesn't want to fall. It was just clinged. Or let's say another example, the caterpillar says, no, I don't want to become a butterfly.

I know who I am and I'm comfortable with who I am. Why do you want me to become a butterfly? I don't fly around in the air, I belong here.

And then it munches, this is where I belong. And no matter how much you talk to the caterpillar, you have to wait until finally the caterpillars, when it gets close to the transformation or metamorphosis, then the caterpillar experiences life becoming quite unpleasant. He cannot be a caterpillar anymore and he can't even crawl anymore and something is very wrong suddenly.

And it's only when life becomes totally unbearable for the caterpillar, then finally he gives in and says, okay, I can't stand this anymore. I'd rather be a butterfly. And so humans are a bit like that.

And some are ready. Some need more suffering before they are ready. That's the unfortunate truth.

And not all not necessarily physical suffering. It can also be self-generated mental and emotional suffering. Some people are not ready to give up their self-generated mental, emotional suffering.

They're just not ready. They may come to you and say, help me, help me. But when it comes to the moment where they could be free, as happened to me years ago when I was still working with individual people, I was pointing out to a lady who came who had a terrible irritation with her husband.

For years, the very presence of her husband caused intense irritation. And everything her husband said and did, everything, the way he moved, the way he sat, the way he ate his food, I can't stand him. And so I explained or attempted to explain these in the early stages of, before any books were written, the early stages of the teachings when I sometimes surprised myself when I gave answers, things I didn't know beforehand.

They just came. So I explained to her the mechanism behind the suffering and the possibility of, of course, she could leave him or she could discover that this is self-generated suffering and she could be free of that. And then suddenly she began to see it and she began to see the possibility of letting go of all that self-generated suffering.

And then she suddenly said, if I let go of it, what have I got left? So she was so identified with her suffering, it was like not only a close friend, the suffering was an essential part of, had become over the years an essential part of her sense of identity, of her sense of self. She did not want to let go.

And soon after she didn't want to come and see me anymore. So, but I do know that some of the things I said to her, later I put in the power of now. So she's in there somewhere.

And hopefully she lived long enough so that she could read the book and perhaps saw herself in there. And then perhaps at that stage, perhaps she was ready. We don't know.

We just have to accept some people are not yet ready, but do all you can not to force them to change, but to provide that to them that triggers, has to come from within them. The readiness to let go or to change has to come from within them. So how you do it will vary from person to person.

Use your intuition, go to the place of not knowing so that the intuitive, you can say helpful things that come from that deeper level that might make a difference to them. What that is, I cannot tell you because you can only know that you in that situation with that person. So go to the place of not knowing when you are with people, not continuously, but be there sometimes.

And then it's possible that what they need that can trigger an awakening, you might say to them or do to them, well, do, what would you do? Like be the Zen master and hit them sometimes, but you don't want to do that, but life does that if they don't change. Thanks.

Can you sue in court, suing court case, can you sue in court consciously over a breach of contract if you are not attached to the outcome or is one promoting conflict by doing this? So whether to sue or not to sue, that's the question. Well, on a practical level, I would do, well, also on a spiritual level, I would do everything possible to avoid suing, whatever you can.

There may be some cases where you cannot avoid it. And then your challenge will be, as the questioner mentions, not being attached to the outcome. And so how can you not be attached to the outcome?

Well, the only way is by being fully present in whatever action you need to take at this moment, go see the lawyer, talk to the lawyer, what are the possibilities? And all that implies in order not to be attached to the outcome, you need to be, you need to have one foot in the realm of being or presence where you're already fulfilled. This moment is actually fine as it is, whether or not you've win that case or not is not that important.

And whether you lose the, whatever you're fighting about, whether you lose the money or you don't lose the money is not as important as the mind tells you it is. The primary thing is, are you connected to the essence of who you are? If you're connected while you talk to the lawyer, can you be present talking to the lawyer?

Just the facts of it. This is that, that, that, what can we do? I suggest you do that, that, bring presence to it.

It's just that, and you're continuously just in the here and now. And once you go to court, you still, you sit there, present your case without the drama around it, or the huge amount of drama that people create around it.

[Speaker 12] (24:55 - 25:00)

Ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah.

[Speaker 1] (25:00 - 55:14)

And drama when they talk to others, drama in their head at night when they can't sleep. Ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah. That is unnecessary baggage.

So it can be a spiritual challenge too. If you absolutely have to go to court because somebody did something to you that needs to be rectified, then make it a spiritual practice. And otherwise you create a lot of karma for yourself and others.

Present moment, one step at a time, one thing at a time. This, this, this. It's the same thing as chopping wood carrying water, really.

Same, just one, yes. What do you think about Facebook? Is it a healthy format?

It seems a bit egoic. Not a whole lot of transmission of connection, love, et cetera. Posting pictures of yourself and quantifying friends, likes, et cetera, seems like enhancing the ego.

Are we going down the wrong path with social media? Well, the questioner has a point. As even before the advent of Facebook and similar things for hundreds of years or thousands of years, people constructed for themselves an identity in their head.

That's me, me and my story, as I sometimes call it. And that was partly inherited from what your culture tells you you are, or your family and your culture, and partly by choice, certain things you choose to identify with and then incorporate into your sense of self. Certain possessions, certain achievements, or the lack of certain possessions and achievements can all be incorporated.

They become mind forms or thought forms, which you identify with. So there's a mental image that forms, and that's the essence of ego, a mental image that's me. So that's been going on for a long time.

And then people live through that mental image of me. They seek out things or people that can improve the mental image of me and try to keep away things or people that could weaken or threaten the mental image of me. It all means not being in touch with who you are beyond any mental image, which is why we are here, to go deep into that.

And now we got the technology of Facebook where you can externalize the image and you can create on the Facebook page, you can create the image of me and show it to the whole world. And so many young people, and maybe not so young, I believe the oldest Facebook user, I saw a video clip in the States, the world's oldest Facebook user is 105 years old. And it is often used unconsciously in enhancing the image one has of oneself and the image one wants to show to the world.

And then you read other people's images on their Facebook page, and you think that's who they are. And then you try to compete with that image and you try to polish up your image and compete with them. Most people want to show off, it seems, I'm not that familiar with it, but most people want to show the good things.

I'm having this great meal, here's a picture of it. Why would anybody want to see what you're eating right now? But they do, it seems.

Or I just bought this thing, do you want to see it? And then you can connect people to a place where you bought it, it's another thing. And all kinds of things that I don't understand.

So you can, in many cases, it becomes an artificial construct that you add to every day and everybody else has their artificial construct. And it can actually strengthens the delusion of the false self. Doesn't have to, but often it does.

Facebook can also be used in conveying interesting information and to connect with people at a deeper level or bringing about some spiritual knowledge. So that's not impossible. I used to post occasionally things, I don't do it myself, but I would send it to Steve and he would post it.

But I haven't, I must admit, I haven't done it in a while. Although some things do get posted, quotes and so on, that's fine. Twitter is another one that is a, there's a Twitter message coming in.

The last time I tweeted was when a few months ago in February, the Oprah Channel in the States, I don't know if you can get it here, it's called the OWN Channel, Oprah Winfrey Network. They showed a repeat of our webinar that we did a few years ago that I did with Oprah. They did a slightly shortened edited version of a period of 10 weeks, 10 Sundays.

The new earth was shown again on this time, not on the internet, but well, also on the internet, but on TV on, and Oprah sometimes is an active tweeter. And she said, it would be great if we could tweet at the same time while this program is being shown. And so I said, okay, I'll see what I can do.

So I was on the phone with Steve while the program was running and then I was watching it. And then people sent in these questions and they have to be answered immediately. So I was attempting to dictate answers to Steve and his assistant to put in the answers.

And my mind was quite, well, I felt almost dizzy afterwards. And because I tried to watch the program and at the same time watch the incoming tweets and think of an answer. But Oprah must have realized it wasn't from me because she said, Twitter is the exact opposite of how you operate.

And before Oprah said it, Kim said exactly the same thing to me. And that's true. So I was glad when it was over, but while it was happening, I was surrendered to it.

Although I did feel dizzy afterwards. So if you can avoid constructing some pseudo identity for yourself on Facebook and be more real, then you can avoid that trap of just the Facebook amplifying the human ego, which it does in many, many cases, especially for youngsters who have no idea what they're doing. Based on your teachings, the real me is the presence in me.

Also, there is the fake self, the ego in me, too. Most of the time I follow the ego and rarely I become the presence. So what is in me that follows or chooses from the two?

Or is there a third thing in me that does the following or the choosing? Okay. I think I understand the question.

There's a presence in me, the real me. There's a fake self, the ego. Most of the time I follow the ego and rarely I become the presence.

So what is it in me that chooses from the two? Or is there a third thing that does the choosing? It's a little complicated, but, well, the answer is there's neither the third nor the second, but only the one, only the one, the one consciousness.

The one consciousness, and again, it's a little bit, when I speak of it, it's a little bit of an analogy. It's not quite like that, but it is like that, but not, it's not it. The ego is really, one could say, consciousness dreaming, a dreamlike state.

It's an identification with form, mental, physical form. And consciousness is dreaming the dream of form. And when presence arises, consciousness awakens out of the dream of form.

And you suddenly recognize who you are is not the physical form, and who you are is not the psychological form, you and your story. You and who you are is the presence. And that's the awakening of consciousness through the human form.

So it's just a, the ego state is just consciousness dreaming, and presence is the awakened consciousness, but it's only one consciousness. So many, many philosophers and spiritual teachers, not surprisingly, have compared ordinary human existence with a dreamlike state. And they have also used the terminology, the awakening terminology, to describe the state of stepping out of the dream.

You can, when you observe a very unconscious human being, you can actually experience at firsthand what it means to live in a dreamlike state, because there's no awareness in them apart from the conditioned mind and the reactive patterns of the conditioned mind. So they go, they're just totally conditioned, and there's no freedom, there's no choice possible because the awareness isn't there that makes choice possible. So observing, or you can even observe entire collective entities of humans who are very unconscious, like a huge crowd of humans.

And a crowd of humans very often means that every individual in that crowd of humans, even though they may already be relatively unconscious, they become even more unconscious when they are part of a crowd, of a collective. So a crowd can perpetrate violence that the individual member of the crowd may not. They may not be that unconscious, but the moment a massive number of individuals come together, the level of consciousness is pulled lower of each individual.

And then the crowd become capable of inflicting terrible suffering on other humans. And the crowd can even be an entire machinery of a state or a government. They can be overtaken by deep unconsciousness and then inflict terrible.

We were a few months ago in Cambodia where they had this insane regime 20 or 25 years ago. The leader was called Pol Pot and the regime was called the Khmer Rouge. And they killed close to 50% of the population of their own country, totally deluded.

And we visited the killing fields where they keep thousands of skulls of people that were exterminated for no particular reason, just because in some cases they were educated. In some cases, because they looked at people's hands. Do you work manually with your hands?

No colors on your hands? Kill them because you're an exploiter. You don't work, you're not a peasant.

You work manually. They had a weird theory of the only good people are those who are peasants who work on the land, exterminate everybody else. You wore glasses, immediately they would kill you because it means you could read.

And the people who came up with that were actually intellectuals. Pol Pot was quite intellectual, totally, totally deluded. And the whole country was in the grip of enormous unconsciousness.

So babies were killed. They were unspeakable. You go there, and the same of course happens, you can go to other places, Nazi concentration camps.

I don't believe you can visit the gulags in Russia yet, but they had similar things, labor camps, people, millions died. So the unconsciousness of a collective can be incredibly deep, far greater than the unconsciousness of the individuals that make up the collective. If you took an individual out of the collective, he would still be a relatively unconscious person, but many of them would not be capable of perpetrating those acts of violence that they perpetrated when they are part of the collective.

I don't know why I'm talking about this because the question is, is there a third thing in me that chooses? Is that still the question? There is no third thing, and there is no second thing.

Yes, that's it. The consciousness can be asleep, and when consciousness is asleep, it sometimes dreams a nightmare. Life becomes a nightmare, just as a human, and a human is asleep, sometimes your dreams turn into terrible nightmares.

And sometimes it's a nightmare that awakens you because you can't stand it anymore. It becomes so dreadful that you go, ah, ah, ah, ah. And that's a little bit applies to the collective too.

When it becomes so dreadful, sometimes it leads to some form of awakening. So I also mentioned looking at, when you look at a very unconscious human, I think you will see what I mean when I say they are dreaming. Also a human who is totally in their mind, they're not really present with anybody.

When you meet them, they go, you see that 90% of their attention is absorbed by thought processes continuously. They, bzzz. So they just have enough left for outside so that they don't bump into furniture.

So there's a little bit of attention left for the outside. They still know there's something there, there's something there, but they don't really see anything. They don't look at the sky ever or the trees.

It's just nothing because it's not connected to my self-interest. What does the sky do for me? What does a tree do for me?

Well, if I can cut it down and use it here, then that's good. So, and so their attention is absorbed by, and so they have this, you know there's nobody there or the person, the being that's there is so behind their veil of thinking that it's hard to find. And so there's just a, and sometimes there's an emotional level in addition to that.

And the emotional level may be looking for some kind of reaction from you. Sometimes people are in a state of latent anger all the time. There's some humans who have this latent anger, which means they're just waiting for an excuse to be angry again at something.

That's how their ego functions. So they look at you and they try to get some emotion from you or may say something to provoke something and they get frustrated if they don't get a reaction. So this is being totally in a dreamlike state.

Many of you are experiencing or have experienced the shift from drifting back into dreamlike identification with mind and emotion into awakening. And some of you probably still fall back into the dreamlike state from time to time. And you talk to yourself.

And then what, you know what he did? He did, he never apologized for what he, and then I said to him, and you know what he said? And then I said, how dare you?

And he said, and of course you are always right. You're always the one who says the thing that is absolutely right. And he never even acknowledged me.

No gratitude whatsoever, didn't show any gratitude. What's story after story, after story. I have always felt a deep connection with animals and nature.

I feel drawn to them. This connection seems to be absent with most human beings. Why is this?

And this is the case with quite a few people have that. They feel a stronger connection to an animal or nature than they do with other human beings. As somebody said to me not long ago, she said, she was quite honest with me.

She said, I cried more when my dog died than when my mother died. Oh, so why is it that many humans find a deeper connection with the animal? Simply because the animal is being, is not as far removed through development of the mind from being as humans are.

The animal is in deeper connectedness with the origin of life, the source of life, of God, being, not obstructed by the human mind. So when you look at a dog, the dog, you can immediately sense the beingness of the dog because the beingness of the dog is not obscured by mental concepts. The dog has no concepts about you.

The dog just looks at you. And in most cases, the tail wags and you feel good suddenly. And when you look at a human, often there's a veil of, already a veil of judgments and interpretations because the being of the human is veiled by the mind.

And with some humans more than with others. You can sometimes just look at a human and you can see how thick or how thin the veil of mind and emotions is. It's a mental, emotional veil.

And that's there. And in that veil, that veil, they judge you. They might be looking at you, but they're already judging you.

So you can't sense the being of that human as easily as you can in the dog because the dog has no opinion about you. Isn't that amazing? The dog can sense, of course, your energy, but it doesn't have an opinion about you.

And that's so liberating. And that is why if you meet, if you become somebody who is no longer compulsively judging others, which all implies that you are no longer completely identified with the mind, with the stream of thinking, you become a very likable person, a person that everybody wants to be with and stay with. And they don't know why.

But the reason is they can sense that they are not being judged. And when you don't judge another, that's the real liking. That's where immediately the goodwill is there.

The goodwill is your natural state. Your natural state gets obscured by the mind. At the moment that the space opens up, the goodwill is there.

And then people will love you in the same way they love a dog or more. You know the prayer, please, dog, let me be the person my dog thinks I am. Now, of course, the dog doesn't think.

That's why the dog loves you. So anything natural can be a great help in when you look at it or you approach it or you touch it, whether it's a dog or a tree or flower, has that rootedness in being still. I don't know whether that, when I say that, whether that means anything to you, but I think it does.

It can only mean something to you if you can sense your rootedness in being. Otherwise it will be meaningless words. So anything natural has still that rootedness in being.

And that is so beautiful because it reflects back to you your own being. And not only that, when you go into nature and you go around, ultimately what's happening, because ultimately you are not separate from the rest of the world. You only seem to be encapsulated in a body, but really you become the consciousness through which nature recognizes its own beauty.

So when you look at a flower and you go, oh, because there's ultimately no separation between you and the flower, the flower through you becomes conscious of its own beauty. And then nature loves you for that. That is almost every, it welcomes you.

Oh, because you can contribute something that they want and need. The natural things want and need the consciousness which the human brings. Because without the human consciousness, the world is in a kind of, it's a, there's a beauty there, but the beauty isn't recognized.

And then the human consciousness comes in and it recognizes the beauty. It acknowledges the beauty. And that's an enormous step forward.

It's almost, as I believe I might have written that somewhere, it's almost as if nature had been waiting for humans to arrive, not to cut down the trees, no, to bring consciousness to it. And when you bring consciousness, you can sense how deeply rooted in being everything natural is. And when you can sense how deeply rooted in being it is, you can no longer want to destroy it or use it for egoic purposes or profit.

Then you actually know that that is, that nature is sacred and needs to be treated with great respect. This isn't something that you can, it's not something you need to learn. I need to treat nature with respect.

No, it's that arises spontaneously from within you. So nature loves you if you fully become conscious of it and bring your consciousness to the beauty of nature. It's only at that moment that it becomes beautiful.

The tree doesn't know it's beautiful, it just is. What the consciousness of the tree is, we can't even fathom. There is a consciousness there, but it's quite very different from the human consciousness, but it wants also the human.

That's my intuitive insight. And dogs and cats, of course, are drawn to humans. They love human interaction.

So it's enormously beneficial for both, for the dog and the human, or the cat and the human, to be together.

[Speaker 6] (55:39 - 58:23)

Thanks for the opportunity. I wrote it down, but it's not a fashion question. Over a period of six months or so, sickness or illness saw my dog get gradually sicker and sicker to the point where he was in much, much pain.

The x-rays and pills and probing did not find a cause that was treatable. We had a family meeting and collectively, we decided to have the vet end his life to ease his pain by injection. And you made a comment about a lady who felt more grief when she lost her dog than when her mother died.

And although it sounds mean, I had the same uncontrolled times of tears for many weeks afterwards, the death of my little buddy. I've considered the notion of ego and suffering and pain when remembering my companion in the now. I feel that in the final moments, that I betrayed our companionship.

My wife points out that it was a collective family decision based on the love of our missing, or of our family, pup. I was little to be in Spaniel. So my question, how do I remove the ego side of not having my buddy or companion around, whilst not removing and dismissing the love I continue to hold for him?

I realize that he's physically gone, but like in a recent interview with a quantum scientist author, I wondered about the connection. I met a nice chap here who lost a partner and he said that your talks help. And of course, I'm not comparing that loss, but I'm hoping you might find, or might contemplate and give pointers again to perhaps how I can let go of the form and then still remember the love part without getting sadder and getting attached.

Yes. Hope that makes sense.

[Speaker 1] (58:23 - 1:00:10)

Yes, thank you. I understand. And the same question would apply also to if somebody close to you dies.

People who have not had a close connection with an animal like a dog may not understand you. Only people who have had that will understand that it can be as painful as losing a human. And we had the same experience when our dog passed away under similar circumstances.

And in the end, because she was suffering too much, we had to ask the vet to come and she died peacefully. And she had a wonderful life, was loved and gave love for nine years. And her consciousness, she was a female, benefited greatly from being together with us, with humans and with us in particular.

And we benefited from her unconditional, continuously loving presence. She loved almost everybody.

[Speaker 6] (1:00:13 - 1:00:14)

Same.

[Speaker 1] (1:00:14 - 1:08:14)

She loved almost every other dog or animal and almost every other human with very few exceptions. And whenever somebody, whether it's an animal that you are very close to or a human, the moment a person dies or an animal dies, you realize what you loved was not the physical form or the physical form may be beautiful and part of the loving experience. But the moment the life is gone, that which you loved is not there anymore.

Something inhabits the physical form that is the essence, the organizing principle, the intelligence, whatever you want to call it behind that keeps the molecules and atoms of the physical form together and organizes, holds them together. Science has not, doesn't know about that yet. It only life, it equates life with matter, but life is beyond that.

And ultimately life is consciousness. And the dog is an expression of the one consciousness, different from a human. The human is an expression of the one consciousness or any non-physical entity can only also be an expression of the one consciousness.

The one consciousness expressing itself at different levels of evolution, so it's like a, you could say a ray of sunlight. You are a ray of sunlight and I am, and the dog is, and the flower is, all consciousness incarnating in form. So that does not die.

The essence doesn't die. And the dog, it's not a dog. I mean, we think we know what we are talking about when we say a dog.

No, it is a being, an energy field, a being, an expression of the one consciousness. It's not, we think we know when we label things and call it something, we think we know what it is. We don't know what a dog is.

And just by calling it dog, it's still, it's just pseudo knowledge. We don't know what a human is. Just the fact that somebody has a name, we think you know what that is.

No, it's an unknown phenomenon. It's through the language gives us illusion that we know, but we don't really know. And so here you have the dog, this wonderful presence closed in matter temporarily.

And something happened because consciousness evolves throughout the universe and evolves in billions of ways and forms, in and through billions of ways and forms. It's a magnificent, ultimately totally incomprehensible miracle, totally incomprehensible to the human mind. But consciousness is engaged in this evolutionary process, the one consciousness.

And whatever suffers is the one consciousness. It's not a coincidence that there's a religion on this planet where the main image is a suffering God. Isn't that strange?

I mean, we have some explanation for it. We say, well, that was Jesus who died for this. Let go of that explanation and just remain with the fact that here the main image of that religion is a suffering, basically, or that you call son of God or God, doesn't matter, a suffering God.

And there's a deep significance to that. You don't have to be a Christian. In fact, if you're a Christian, you probably don't want to go there where I'm going now.

There's a deep significance there because this suffering God is everybody. It is the fundamental human archetype. It's the suffering that every human and every life form, but in this case, a human, he represents the human, that every life form goes through when this life form assumes the form of the material form, the seemingly separate material, physical vehicle, and is then defined in form.

There were ancient teachings. They are quite close to the truth that say that consciousness fell into matter as if it were a mistake. But I don't think, I think it's a good image to say that consciousness, there was a kind of fall of consciousness into matter, but it wasn't a mistake.

There is no, there are no mistakes in the universe. So, and if there is a mistake, it has a higher purpose for learning, and so it's not a mistake anymore. So that, for those years that you lived together, you both, your consciousness and the dog's consciousness, which are not really separate, although we just call them that, benefited greatly and grew, evolved through being together.

So it helped the dog and it helped you. It added something to your consciousness, that being together with that entity, with that being. And that is not lost.

I cannot tell you in what way this, that which animated that entity that we call dog continues on its journey back to the source, but it continues on its journey as you continue on it, not as a person, not as a personal identity that survives, but an underlying energy field, the underlying consciousness that gives rise to this form, of course, continues on its journey and ultimately is never separate from its source.

It just believes itself to be separate. So it's an evolutionary journey. It's not, and every form will eventually die.

The form dissolves. So you keep the love in your heart and that's how you stay connected with that being. And don't go to where the ego wants to take you.

That is, have some kind of recrimination that you shouldn't have allowed the dog to die and all that kind of egoic stuff. The ego loves to go there. Of course, you know very well that you did and the family did what you felt was the right choice and you did.

So don't allow the mind to take you that road.

[Speaker 13] (1:08:15 - 1:08:18)

Thank you very much.

[Speaker 6] (1:08:18 - 1:08:18)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:08:36 - 1:21:40)

Here's a person who has a somewhat more interesting challenge than chopping wood, carrying water. I have always felt like most people hate me, that they wished I wasn't there. I felt as if I repulsed them, that they were all talking together about me and that I must be a very bad person.

I felt enormous pain from this and it has caused a lot of problems in my relationships. Can you help me? I have always felt like most people hate me, that they wished I wasn't there.

I felt as if I was repulsed, as if I repulsed them, that they were all talking together about me. It's likely that that goes back to certain childhood experiences. On the whole, to anybody who feels that people don't like them, my question would be, do you like people?

And it is virtually impossible that if you like people, that they do not like you. There may be certain individuals that don't like you, but on the whole, if you, if, and again, we come back to the word, benevolence or goodwill, if there is an outflow from you towards others of a basic underlying benevolence or goodwill, even though you might have arguments with them or discussions or whatever, or have to tell them this or that, if there isn't basic, that underlying emanation of benevolence or goodwill, that basically then in simplified terminology, that would mean you like people. And if you like people, with a few exceptions that may happen here and there, you can't please everybody, and you're not liking people in order to please them, that's, we are not talking about that.

This is, we're talking about a true emanation of benevolence towards them, which you can only really do if you are sufficiently connected with the being within yourself. Then from there comes the outflow of benevolence because you recognize the same being or the same consciousness in the other. And that brings about the goodwill and benevolence that flows from you to the other.

And that then becomes, so you're not attempting to get these people to like you, that doesn't work, it has to be genuine. You can't say, I'm trying to like people, but they still don't like me. So it has to come at a true goodwill towards others, which is almost an energy that flows and that connects you with the other.

And no matter whether it's somebody that you know or somebody you meet briefly and casual encounter, and even there, it's important because these are all relationships and they all leave behind something in the other person. If you are rude to that person, that could be amplified in that person. If that person is already unstable, it could be amplified and then lead to further karmic action of that person towards somebody else.

And you can travel around the planet and become magnified. So there's enormous responsibility, really, if you see the repercussions of whatever behavior you manifest towards others are enormous. And it's easy to overlook that.

Whatever energy you put out does not stop there. It goes into another person and then it does what, if the other person, let's say you get angry with someone and then that energy resonates in the other and strengthens that vibration that was already there in the other and gets amplified in the next person, in the next, and then spreads. So that's all collective karma.

So when I say, if you like people, then you find that people generally, not in every case, generally like you. You cannot be liked by everybody. You have to, and especially if you become, if you write a book or something and then you expect everybody to like that book, then you're going to suffer because no matter what book you write, there will be 10% of people who say that's the worst thing they've ever read.

You can look at the, on anywhere on the internet or Amazon about people criticizing. If it's a book that has had large readership, there will be 10% who say dreadful, although 90% might say it's the greatest thing we've ever read. And those 10%, the number grows, the more people read it.

And suddenly you have 10,000 people who say it's awful. So you can't be liked or your, whatever you produce cannot be liked by everybody. But generally speaking, the energy that you put out comes back to you.

And that's the famous, I believe it's called the golden rule that was not voiced by Jesus and before Jesus by others. Whatever you do, don't, it can be phrased negatively. That was already Confucius.

Don't do to others what you don't want others to do to you or do unto others how you, treat others the way you want to be treated, basically. Treat others the way you want to be treated. So the energy you put out comes back to you.

If you like people, generally speaking, people like you. So this person has not discovered in herself the dimension of being and the fullness of life that is within. If she goes deeper within, it's only there she can become free of this conditioning that may go back to childhood and probably does, that not the feeling of not being liked by anybody.

And it is quite possible or probable that she was not liked as a child. So there was no love given to her as a child. So she experienced humans as unloving and as not liking her.

Once this pattern became lodged in her, it was very difficult to experience the world in any other way. And unfortunately, a conditioning of that kind actually becomes self-fulfilling because it generates its reflection in the other. If you are convinced that people don't like you, that becomes true in your experience.

So this is why the pattern reinforces itself every day. Every day this person encounters somebody, the pattern gets kind of acknowledged. You see, I knew it.

Nobody likes me. And again and again, because that's the underlying. So you need to become, I'm not saying you, I don't think this person probably is not here, but you need to become, you need to transcend this pattern and this belief that tells you people don't like me.

You need to become more present with every person you meet. And become still, even before you meet anybody, become still, become present, and sense the essence of who you are beyond the form, which is conscious presence. Then you are no longer a person.

You are a conscious presence. This person is still trapped in the image of me, the person, and not a likable person. It's a limiting image.

And then once there's a connection with that conscious presence, you can meet another person and you look into their eyes and you can feel the connection and you can feel a goodwill towards the other. You begin to like others. So you cannot not be liked, generally speaking, if you like other people, you become a likable person.

And if you don't like other people, you are not a likable person. But the liking, as I just said, goes deeper than just the superficial liking. And it can never be a means to an end.

You're not kind to somebody because you want to be liked. It's not really. So it's a really, it's a giving rather than expecting something from the other.

You give to the other the goodwill. You give to the other the benevolence rather than standing back and saying, how is he going to react towards me? Or what's his behavior towards me?

You become then a passive recipient and you're just waiting for your underlying patterns to be confirmed. And usually they are. Oh, you see, he doesn't like me.

Nobody likes me. So instead of that, you become the active agent rather than a passive agent waiting for the behavior of others towards you. And then all the behavior of others towards you does is confirm your patterns.

So instead, you bring the energy to the other. You approach the other. You give attention to the other.

This is already love. People love being given attention. Some suck it up.

They want to get, suck it out of you. It's a different thing. But people love being, if you give your fullest attention to another person, they show that they are really, oh, this person is really interested in me.

I love meeting people in hotels when they bring, there's a room service. It's always, it's an encounter. It lasts only two minutes, but it's an encounter of goodwill.

There's a human, primarily you're meeting a human being. Only secondary is the function of that human being is a waiter or a waitress or whatever. Temporary disguise, this human wears a temporary disguise of waiter.

It's meaningless, but there's a human being. You're meeting a human being. And are you valuing this human being as a human being or is it just a waiter to you?

But this could apply to anything, to any human. Is that human just a function that this human performs or is there something deeper in that human? And you always address the deeper human, not the function.

The function is on the surface, that's fine, but you're not meeting a waiter, you're meeting a being, a human being.

[Speaker 9] (1:21:59 - 1:22:14)

Hi. Hi. I don't know, I don't really know what to ask, but I know I need to ask.

Maybe there is no question.

[Speaker 1] (1:22:15 - 1:22:18)

How are you experiencing this retreat?

[Speaker 9] (1:22:23 - 1:23:07)

I think I'm really below thinking. Okay. And I fell very, very deep.

Yeah. And here it feels more safe. And sometimes it's, I feel a little bit of my, I can barely feel my feet again and sometimes my right hand.

But often when I try to feel more and more, it's like I try to catch it and then it's gone. Yeah. And I'm afraid that I will fall much deeper.

Then that I'm now.

[Speaker 1] (1:23:25 - 1:23:40)

How do you experience being here as you sit there, you listen, how do you feel about sitting here and listening, is that a pleasant experience?

[Speaker 9] (1:23:42 - 1:23:52)

I'm always like, I'm never really here. Okay. Always thinking and.

Okay. But I always think where is my mind? Right.

[Speaker 1] (1:23:54 - 1:27:29)

So I think you briefly mentioned body awareness. So we haven't spoken too much about it yet here a little bit. That is of course, especially for people who are very much in their head, it's a powerful anchor for being present in the now to feel the inner body.

And you can feel at least parts of the inner body. You can feel your hands as you sit there. Sometimes.

Sometimes. Okay. That's good enough.

It's a starting point and you can feel your hands and you can feel your feet as you sit here or stand there and then keep your attention there. And then the mind will take your attention away then bring your attention back. It's really very helpful for you.

The movement practice, you will be in one of the groups with Kim. Do you have any physical practice of any kind so far? No.

So for you to take up either Tai Chi, Qigong or yoga would be very helpful. You have to, you can try the three and choose the one that you resonate with. I have a feeling it'll be either Tai Chi or yoga.

You know Tai Chi is, Tai Chi is, I don't know if you're familiar with Tai Chi. Tai Chi is some of what Kim does incorporates Tai Chi. Tai Chi is slow bodily movement that originated in China thousands of years ago.

And this I feel would help you greatly to take your attention. You'll be forced to take your attention away from thinking and into your movements and into your body. It's not enough for you to sit here.

It's helpful. It sinks in more than you know, not only the words, but also the energy field of being here is helpful. And whether or not your mind knows that or not, the energy is going into you, but you do need a practice and it's not meditation for you, at least not yet, or maybe not at all.

Meditation is not for everybody and you can evolve without meditation. I'm talking about this formal meditation. It's a wonderful thing for many people, but not for everybody.

But movement meditation would be absolutely what you need. So you need to explore where you live, whether any good teachers or places where you can take that up. I highly recommend, and my feeling is it's probably going to be Tai Chi, but you may also try yoga.

And don't believe your mind when it says, no, well, there's not really any point. I don't know if I'm going to do that. You have to do it.

[Speaker 9] (1:27:36 - 1:27:39)

Okay. Thank you. Okay.

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:27:39 - 1:27:49)

Okay. Next time I'm in Australia, I want to see you again. No, I'm not from here.

Where are you from?

[Speaker 9] (1:27:49 - 1:27:50)

Austria.

[Speaker 1] (1:27:51 - 1:27:54)

Okay. Austria. I'll be in Europe next year.

[Speaker 13] (1:27:54 - 1:27:58)

If I'm near Austria, I hope to see you. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:28:27 - 2:15:38)

Well, welcome to our live meditation or meditative talk and a special welcome to all of you who are joining us today through the Huffington Post. There may be quite a few newcomers to meditation or mindfulness as it's often called. So let's start with some very basic things.

The first thing is to enter that meditative state of consciousness because that's what it is all about. Meditation is about a shift in consciousness away from concern with doing and thinking and becoming aware, really directly aware of the present moment. And that's perhaps the easiest and most accessible starting point for most people to enter the state of presence, which is the aim of meditation is to get you into that state of absolute presence in this moment.

And that's being, becoming aware of being. Most people are always engaged in doing. That includes thinking continuously.

And a lot of the thinking that people do is not very uplifting. A lot of the thinking that happens compulsively creates negative feelings. And a lot of the thinking is actually harmful and dysfunctional.

It doesn't serve any useful purpose, but you just can't stop it. Well, you think you can't, but you can. And that's of course what meditation is about, to realize there is in you a deeper dimension of consciousness, deeper or higher, you could call it, depending from where you look at it, deeper or higher than thinking.

And that is the state of presence in the now. So it's an amazing realization for most people that they can actually easily access that state of presence by bringing their attention into the present moment, like now. So I'm kind of, although I'm talking, my aim is to talk you, so to speak, into that state of meditation.

And it helps if while I talk, you can become conscious or aware of the small gaps between words as I talk. So you're just aware, not only of the words, of course you hear the words, you take them in, but you're also aware that there are little spaces between the words. You just acknowledge that.

These are little meditative gaps, so to speak. And in order to be really aware of the meditative gaps, you can't be thinking. You are just aware of that space.

There is, what does that mean, aware? There is a presence in that awareness. You know in that awareness, like now, you know that you are here as a conscious presence without any thought telling you that.

And in other words, you become aware of yourself, not as a person, because to be a person, you need to be thinking about you and your life and your problems and so on. But there's a deeper dimension in you, deeper than the person. And this is what we are here to access.

So you become aware that really on the surface of your life, there is the person with a past and a future and all the thinking and the emotions that keep the person going, of course. And so you're happy one day, unhappy the next. Happy one day, unhappy.

The fluctuations of the person, it's quite normal. And the person is always concerned with doing and thinking and the next thing or the past, the future. The past is never really present.

When you become present, like now, you realize that there is a deeper part in you. There is a deeper dimension to who you are. Where you are more than a person, where you are a presence, a conscious presence.

The question is, can you sense, feel, or be aware of yourself at this moment as a conscious presence, without which there couldn't even be a person? So it's almost like saying, the person is the surface of the ocean or the ripples or the waves on the surface of the ocean, but you are not just the ripples or waves on the surface of the ocean, you are the ocean. So there's a deeper presence in you.

And to access that and to sense that in yourself, to sense yourself as the presence, a presence, that is what liberates you from being completely trapped and limited in an exclusively personal identity. In other words, there is more to you than meets the eye. You are deeper than you ever knew by thinking about yourself.

And it's not difficult to access that dimension in yourself. Can one describe it? Well, one can give a few pointers.

Let's see if that makes sense. The pointers I'm giving you now, let's see if they make sense in your own experience at this moment, sensing yourself as a presence. There is a peacefulness there.

There is a, that is really the essence of what is sometimes called inner peace. The person, the surface of the ocean, the waves and the ripples of the ocean cannot be at peace for long, it fluctuates. Occasionally if things happen to go well, yeah, I'm happy, it never lasts for very long.

And then the storm comes and big waves come or little, little irritated waves, whatever. Then you're unhappy, but there's a deeper, if let's say you are a ripple on the surface of the ocean with a name and a date of birth and a past and a future and problems. And suddenly the ripple realizes there's more to me and realizes, oh, I'm actually much deeper and faster.

I'm the ocean manifesting as the ripple. And so you are the universe or the consciousness that underlies the sense-perceived universe manifesting temporarily as a person. You are the universe becoming conscious of itself at this moment in your life as a person.

You are not separate from the totality of the universe. You are the universe. The universe has, or the consciousness that underlies the universe has given form to who you are temporarily in order to experience itself as a person.

It's an amazing thing. And the universe here is in the process of becoming more conscious. That's what the entire evolution of the universe is about.

It's consciousness. So you, your life is part of the evolutionary impulse towards greater consciousness. And if your life is not primarily about greater consciousness, which actually you can build into whatever you do, it doesn't mean you stop doing it, just say, all I'm interested in is consciousness.

No, it needs to flow into what you do. If that, if your life purpose is not aligned with the conscious, the evolving consciousness of the universe, then what is the point of it all? And then sooner or later, you get very frustrated and things become pointless.

So you are here to become more conscious because that's what the universe has put you here for. Instead of universe, you can use other terms. You're more comfortable with them.

The universal intelligence, God. So right now, in addition to being a person, which right now is not important, it becomes important again when we finish our meditation, I'm sure. But right now, something else is more important.

That's realizing yourself as the presence. Coming into the present moment and feeling, just being aware right now that you are conscious. If you were not conscious, you wouldn't be able to hear, see, perceive anything.

The fact that you can perceive things, the fact that you can think, the fact that you can have emotions, all implies that you are conscious. The meditative state is becoming aware directly of that consciousness. Sometimes the word that is used also is stillness.

Right now, you become still. You become aware of just being, of being that presence and that feels energizing. You don't go to sleep.

You're actually alert and still at the same time. And now you access an intelligence that is deeper than the thinking mind by entering that state of alert presence. And then when you think again, you are connected with a, with the source of all intelligence, with creativity.

You are, you become empowered. Your thinking and your doing and your actions are then aligned with a deeper purpose of the universe, not just little egoic desires. So all this is so terribly important.

Aligning your life with that presence. So you need to, during your normal day, I'll give you a few hints of how to invite that presence into your life, which by invite, I mean, direct your attention to it because it's always there. That really is what supports you in life.

And if you can be aware of that, fear, anxiety, happen less and less in your life because you can feel supported by that vast presence, which is not just your, it's not your own presence. It is the universal presence of consciousness. You connect with that.

You are that. So on a day, normal day, you go to work or whatever you do, as much as you can, become aware of just brief moments of yourself as the presence in addition to being a person. So one of the things I recommend is, it sounds almost too simple, but from time to time, look at the sky for a few seconds.

You look up, it doesn't matter whether it's blue or cloudy. Today here is the early afternoon, happens to be a sunny day. Look at the sky for a moment.

You're looking, but not thinking. You could do that with anything, but the sky is easier because there's this vast expanse that has some correlation with the presence of stillness within you. So you look, and for a moment, there's just, there's the sky, and you can sense yourself as the presence that is perceiving, and you're not thinking.

So there's a brief moment of not thinking, but not going to sleep. Alertness without thinking, that's the key. To bring that into your life more often.

And don't believe when your mind tells you that you need to think and think and think all the time. Bring in gaps of just alert presence. That's the being.

The rest is the doing. The two need to be, there needs to be a balance in your life between being and doing, otherwise you go mad. A civilization that completely loses touch with the being dimension is going to self-destruct.

And a person who completely loses touch with the being dimension is going to be very unhappy, unfulfilled, always anxious or depressed, or always stressed. What does, some, many people live in continuous stress. What does that mean?

They're always focused on the next thing, and the next thing pulls them away from where they are here and now. And always there's the promise, when I reach that point, I'll be okay. But of course, the reaching that point is always very brief.

And then they realize, oh, I'm not okay. I need to reach another point. It's a great thing, of course, to have goals in life.

But if the goal takes up so much of your attention continuously, where you need to get to, that you continuously miss the present moment, which after all is all there ever is, then your life is completely out of balance. The balance is, yes, having goals. You know where you're going.

That's good. But you are aware of the step you're taking at this moment. And you're aware of the flowers, the sky, the trees, life that continuously unfolds around you.

You acknowledge, you honor the present moment. And on a deeper level, you are aware of yourself as the presence. So I also recommend that during your normal day, you become familiar with perceiving things that are around you.

Without thinking, you need to judge or label or interpret them or name them all the time. So for example, you can look at a tree or the sky or anything, a piece of furniture, an animal, without naming it. You're just, this is a lovely practice.

You can do it right now because you're looking at me. Well, to you, I am an image on the screen and the words that you're hearing. You can look at this image on the screen, me, without saying anything mentally about it.

What for? You can actually perceive it better, more clearly, without the interference of thinking. So you're just there as the alert presence in the background of your perceptions.

Like now, you're looking at me and you're aware of yourself, which is more important than me. You're aware of yourself as that, which makes the perception possible. Presence, conscious presence.

And the same thing you can do, looking at anything. You look at a chair, a table for a few seconds and you're not labeling it mentally. You're not interpreting it, just clear perception.

So then there are two dimensions to the sense perception. There's whatever is being perceived by the senses, hearing, seeing, perhaps touching, whatever. And the presence behind it, which is a deeper dimension of who you are.

And so in that way, you bypass the person when you perceive things. You can bypass the person because the person interprets according to his or her conditioning. But if you want to get, if you want to transcend the conditioning of your mind, you can perceive without interpretation unless an interpretation is necessary.

So you bring, if people may ask you something, then you have to speak, or sometimes things will come. That's fine, thoughts come. You cannot be totally free of labeling and interpreting and you need it sometimes.

Sometimes you need to figure things out. At other times, trying to figure something out adds nothing to the experience. It detracts from the experience.

So be aware also of beauty around you. And the more present you are perceiving in this clear, nonjudgmental way, the more you will see beauty and aliveness around you that before you had ignored because you were always going somewhere else or your attention was so absorbed by thinking that you were only sufficiently aware, peripherally aware of your surroundings, just preventing you from bumping into things, but otherwise totally in your head, thinking about your problems.

So you get out of that into presence and so the balance comes into your life. So make it a practice to perceive things in that state of alert presence. And another little, very helpful, I don't want to call it technique, but let's, perhaps it is a kind of technique to enable you to be present is, as I call it, to feel the aliveness inside your body.

That sounds perhaps a little strange if you are not, you haven't heard this before. What do you mean, feel the aliveness in your body? Well, for those of you who have not had a glimpse of that yet, I suggest the following little practice right now.

If you hold your, let's say your right or your left hand, just hold it and close your eyes for a moment. And so your hand is kind of just floating there. Close your eyes for a moment and ask yourself, without opening my eyes, without moving my hand and without touching anything, is there any way I can know whether my right hand is still there?

So you're not moving your hand, you're not touching anything. You're not looking at it because your eyes are closed. Is there any way you can know whether, it's a weird question, it's true, but it gets you somewhere.

Is there any way you can know whether your right hand is still there? How can you know that without looking or moving your hand or touching anything? Okay, let's see now.

Is your right hand still there? And now you will notice, you can feel it. You can feel it, you can feel its presence from the inside.

At first it's very subtle, and then you feel it more strongly. And if you now open your eyes, you will notice that you can still feel your right hand, even though other perceptions have come in, you're looking again. But even as you're looking, you can still feel the aliveness inside your hand.

That takes some of your attention away from continuous thinking. And that, I would now recommend that you expand that a little. And even without closing your eyes now, see if you can feel the energy in both your hands at the same time.

Or if you like, close your eyes for a few seconds. And then you might notice it gets a little stronger, that feeling. Undoubtedly, your hands are alive.

There is an aliveness in there. Of course there is, because that's what keeps the body going. If that aliveness leaves, the molecules and atoms that make up your hand would very quickly depart.

They would not be together anymore, and that would be the end of your body. So what holds your body together, there is an energy there that is the organizing principle behind the physical form of the body. It's invisible.

And scientists haven't found it yet. Because the only way you can find it is by not by looking outside, but by introspection, by looking within. So you can sense the energy in your hands.

That's okay, that's good. And that takes some of your attention away from thinking. It brings you a little bit more into the present moment.

And then you might want to experiment, see if, well, if I can feel my hands, perhaps I can also feel the energy in my feet. So your attention goes, you direct your attention there. It goes there.

Are my feet still there? Yes, perhaps not as strong a feeling as the hands, but yes, you can feel your feet too. So initially you can just play around with that a little bit and feel, hold that attention for a couple of minutes in your feet and your hands, and see if you can feel your feet and your hands simultaneously, like, hmm.

And it's quite pleasant. And you may notice right now, as you're aware of the energy in your feet and your hands, and you keep your attention there, there isn't that much attention left for thinking. So this is where the state of alert presence opens up.

And then you may notice a little bit the rest of the body. Also, you begin to feel, not as strongly as the hands or feet, but you begin to feel that a sense of aliveness pervades your entire body. And that is a lovely meditation in itself.

A wonderful time to practice it, for example, is at night, before going to sleep, you lie on your bed, on your back, stretch out your hands flat on your back. And instead of thinking about your problems or about all the obnoxious people in your life, you take your attention into the energy field of the body and feel the aliveness. You always usually start with the hands, then gradually bring in other parts, the arms.

And as I speak now, I hope that you can verify in your own experience right now what it is I'm talking about, which is feeling the aliveness in your body. That is an, and then at night you can do it beautifully and actually enjoy feeling alive. It is joyful to feel that your body is being pervaded by this energy, which is not separate from who you are, which is who you are, which is consciousness.

The organizing principle behind the hundreds and thousands of functions that keep the body alive, that need to be coordinated every second, that is of such vast complexity that even now with all the advances we've made in science, we only understand a tiny fraction of how the body actually works. There is an expression of vast intelligence behind it. That is the organizing principle behind the body.

And so to get in touch with that deeper intelligence is a wonderful thing. And then you realize when you enter the state of presence, you become present with your entire body. Every cell feels more alive and you become still.

You might've noticed that when you really feel the inner body, as I call it, you're not thinking anymore. You're just present. And the more you access being just present, it's almost paradoxical, the more effective, creative, powerful your thinking becomes when you do think.

And the less negative and destructive, self-destructive your thinking becomes. So we are talking about finding the intelligence, the deeper intelligence within you. You don't want to always having to go to some other source for the really important answers in your life.

Please tell me I need to know this or that. Yes, it's good to want to know. That's part of the evolution, the evolutionary impulse.

But any spiritual teacher, whether the spiritual teacher is in the physical form or you have some other teacher as a spirit guide or whatever it is, any true teacher will teach you, show you, demonstrate how to access the source of all knowledge and wisdom in yourself. So that's what this evolution is about. Let's see if you can still feel yourself right now as that alive presence.

Your entire body is this being. And it's not a question of necessarily either being or doing although sometimes it's good to just be. But also even while you do, you can be aware of being.

For example, you're driving, you're stopping at the lights. What is there to do now? Nothing, no matter how much you think that you want to be somewhere else, you're not.

Why not use that opportunity whenever there's a red light and you stop your car if you drive, or if you're a pedestrian, you stop at the stand, you stop walking at the light. Use that, those moments or that one moment and feel the aliveness in your body and feel the presence. Whenever you're waiting for something, and it's amazing how much time we actually spend waiting.

Oh, but I read the other day that they figured out in the average person's life who drives from between the age of 20 and 70 or whatever, that person spends several days of his or her life waiting in the car at the red light. If you add it all up, it makes up several days of this person's life. Mm-hmm.

And then you have many other occasions when you wait, you wait for the elevator. Why not use all these waiting times? You wait in line at the supermarket, you wait in line at the airport.

Instead of complaining in your head that you would rather not be waiting or how inefficient these people are, and this creates negative emotion, doesn't make your life more pleasant. Instead of that, just be aware of the aliveness in your body and bring your attention into just this moment. Be comfortable with this moment.

You feel alive inside and you can even, you can look around at the aliveness outside people doing this, doing that, traffic moving there, moving there. And you can actually enjoy the world. It's miraculous.

All these life forms that continuously appear and dance their dance for a little while to be replaced by other life forms. But it's all the expression of one underlying consciousness, one life taking on many forms. But your true identity is that one life.

Life is one. But there's no need to believe that because then it's only just another belief, which you can say, oh no, somebody else. It's not one, okay?

So it's not a belief. When you get still and present without losing alertness, in fact, gaining more alertness, then you are in touch with the oneness, the one. And that is the source of all life that has form because that is formless.

What you call that one life is up to you. Universal intelligence, the one, God, or as the Buddha called it, emptiness, which really means formlessness. That's what the Buddha pointed to as the essence.

Or as Jesus called it, the kingdom of heaven. It's the same as Buddhist term, emptiness. Heaven is vast spaciousness.

In many languages, heaven and sky are the same word. Vast spaciousness, formless, one life. That's who you are.

So it's really, this is all about knowing yourself. That's the journey you are on. It's the journey to yourself.

It's a journey without distance. And I thank you for joining us and I wish you well on your journey. It's a wonderful adventure.

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (2:16:19 - 3:12:12)

The secret of dropping into this moment is really allowing this moment to be as it is. As Eckhart would say, and in the words of this person sitting here, it's really resist nothing, resist absolutely nothing. So whatever arises, you surrender to.

Even if there's resistance, you surrender to the resistance, allowing it to be here fully and completely. And what does that mean? What does that look like?

That means, say for example, if the pain body comes up, surrendering, accepting it, resisting nothing of what arises physically, mentally. But what it means is that you accept it so much so that you are willing to feel it and be with it forever. Because the moment that you have even the slightest bit of, I want it to go away, you're not allowing it to be as it is.

You're not accepting it. That slightest bit. And we all know that when that slightest bit comes, it's like, oh no, I want it to be different.

No, I want it to change. Oh no, please. Okay, I'll accept it, I'll accept it, I'll accept it.

But oh no. It's letting go of time completely, a future of past and fully being here in this moment. Just as it is.

Pain body and all. Or even physical pain. Or even emotional.

Any emotion. Sadness, grief, anger, doesn't matter. Just allowing it to be.

Being this space because you are that space. But the moment that you begin to resist what arises in that space, we've become identified with that form of whatever is arising. So by allowing it to be as it is, it's like we separate ourselves from the form.

Realizing that this space in which the form arises, this space is who we are. And all we are is that witness to what arises. But of course, it's more than just witnessing.

Because we are feeling human beings, we have to feel what arises. And feel it completely. Non-resistant to the present moment.

Demanding nothing. Accepting everything just as it is. And the moment that you accept it, it's like the space opens up.

And you can sense into that stillness. The stillness of who you really are. And realize, ah, okay, this is pretty cool.

I am this space. And all this, the form, the play of consciousness, is really nothing at all. It's not that important.

What's important is that we are this space. That recognition of that space. Then we don't lose consciousness.

In other words, become unconscious, identified with whatever is arising, thought, emotion, opinion, judgment. And believing that that is real. Of course, the miracles, their introduction, where it says, nothing real can be threatened.

Nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God. So it's not about getting rid of what's out here, what's playing.

It's about sensing into and realizing that you are the space in which the play happens. And then when that happens, it's like, you recognize, it's like the two become one. And not forgetting that you are the space, even though the play is all dancing around.

There's ups and downs and all forms being impermanent. And recognizing the impermanence of form. And that, then nothing becomes a real problem.

It doesn't mean that you won't ever feel emotions. You will. And that's all part of it.

Part of the play. But there isn't that resistance to the emotion. And here in the West, it's strongly ingrained in us that emotions are somehow not so good.

Eckhart and I will kind of quite often joke, because I'm this Asian woman. Lots of emotion, fire, you know. And when you hear Chinese people talk and they're speaking in their native language, and it looks like they're yelling at each other.

I mean, seriously, it does. It looks like they're yelling at each other. And Eckhart would say, well, actually, you know what they're saying?

They're saying, I love you, I love you, I love you. And you know, but here, you know, we're more conservative, more, you know. So it's actually quite interesting because I was born in Canada in this Asian body with the Asian cultural ancestry.

And even though I was born in Canada, I could still feel very, very much Asian and Chinese in the way that I just interact. And it's interesting because when I was younger, I felt like, because in Vancouver where I grew up, I think at that time, there were only maybe like three Chinese families at our school. So I was one of those kids who went through a lot of suffering and was teased a lot, get teased even walking home from school and such, to the point where I just said, I don't wanna be Chinese anymore.

And I stopped talking Chinese. I just stopped. I didn't wanna do it.

And none of us kids, I come from a family of four siblings, and it's interesting, but all of us went through the same thing. We all decided at a very young age to stop. And it's like, wow, you know, now that I'm older and it's like, wow, I can't even speak to my mother.

My mother was born in China and she was, and she speaks Chinese. In fact, she speaks very little English. That's how come we got along so well when growing up.

We couldn't talk to each other, we couldn't fight. We couldn't understand each other. But what I'm pointing to is that all of us, no matter where we have come from, we have somehow came to this point where all of us, for some reason or another, decided that we can't really be.

I mean, yes, it may be some part of cultural conditioning and the way that expressions come out, but we've all learned to somehow kind of hide ourselves. And we've all reaching that point where it's like, I can't hide myself any longer. Now, I don't mean the self as in the egoic sense of self.

But I mean our true self, the true identity of who we really are, which is really no identity at all. No identification with who we think we are, because we are not any thought. I am not Chinese.

Even though quite often, many people may look, and this is what happens, is that we begin to place labels. We become so identified with the thought process, with words, labels, that we actually can't see past them. Which the first lesson in the Course in Miracles is being able to look around the room or look wherever you are outside your window, and you look at things and you say, this table does not mean anything.

This room does not mean anything. And see how we label things and begin to view our perception through this filter of labels, of judgments, of ideas, opinions, whatever they are. And that's how we see it.

So when I was younger and being teased, that's all that people could see. And we even do this probably daily, especially if you've been married for a long time. You may come to your partner and you're viewing them through all the experiences that you've had with your partner, all maybe the hurts, all the ups and downs, and you no longer see the being that he or she is.

Yes. And we do this all the time, and it's beginning then to recognize when we do that. Can we let it go?

Can we just drop the veil? Drop all thoughts. I mean, thoughts are useful.

They bring in a form of communication, but that's all it is. It's a pointer. Can we let go of every thought and see that it's not real?

No thought can possibly be real. The only reason why you can understand me is because we have agreed that certain sounds make up a meaning. See how we give it meaning?

If you were in another country, you wouldn't understand at all. One of the best talks that I have been to with Eckhart was in Germany, the very first time we went to Germany, and he didn't think he could do a talk in German, although he spoke Deutsch. He didn't think he could use words to, like consciousness and all that sort of stuff in German.

So they had a translator to translate, and he did one talk, but it really felt like it just wasn't working. Translation wasn't working, because you know when Eckhart gets on a roll, I mean, he can get on a roll and it's hard to stop. When he stops, it's like the flow stops, the energy stops, so the second talk, which would have been a three-hour talk, he says, I have to do it in English.

I think enough German people understand English, and I'm just gonna have to do it in English. I can't have the translation. So anyway, so he started the talk off speaking German just to tell them that he was going to do the talk in English.

There was not gonna be any translation. So anyways, 20 minutes into the talk, he realized, I'm still talking German. So I'm gonna continue speaking German until I just can't do it anymore.

He did a three-hour talk in German, and at first I was like, oh boy, I'm disappointed. Like I can't understand anything, but then there's that surrender that happened, and all I can do is just be still. And I realized, I thought, oh my gosh, how often I've sat there listening to him, listening to the words, when really I just needed to listen and be in that stillness, listen to the space, the silence between the words.

It's just like in music. Music is half sound and half silence, and that's what makes it so great is that stillness. Well, that was the best talk I had ever been to.

Really, sincerely, just feeling that stillness. I walked out of there so high. It was just like, wow, okay, you can speak any language you want.

It doesn't matter. And we do this even in our everyday lives. We will put more of our attention, in fact, 100% of our attention on words, on what the other person is saying, or what is externally happening outside, or even in our thinking.

It doesn't even have to be coming at us, the words. We can be thinking it. 100% of our attention goes outward.

When really, if we could just take a breath and tap into that source of who we are, that stillness, which is always right there, and that was the great discovery for me in that talk was that, wow, that stillness, it's always here, but my attention with the form of this moment, how much attention I give to the form is what covers that stillness up. So can we then practice keeping some of our attention on that still, small place within as we go about our daily lives? And trust that if there's really anything important that's happening out there, you'll end up giving more attention to it, but really, most of it, probably, I don't know, 97% of it, I mean, I've heard that 97% of all humans are dysfunctional, so I guess it must be 97% of everything out there must be pretty well dysfunctional, so why give it all of our attention and place our importance out there and forget about who we are in here and that this is the most important, that vital connection, that communion with the divine essence of who we are, and then when that connection happens, then perhaps the outer world begins to change, because we have changed, and I don't mean changed in the sense of stillness change, but that who we think we are dissolves into the nothingness, the nothingness of who we are.

Then absolute stillness remains, and then our perception of the world shifts, changes, and when we begin to look out there or hear and listen to what is out there, we also begin to perceive and listen to the space, to see the space. So we begin to see through what we've given meaning to, what we've labeled, so it's like seeing through the person. You're saying, I feel like he sees right through me.

He's seen beyond the person. So then we begin to play in this world, yes, in this form, yes, with our cultural conditioning, which is fine. It's not a problem.

It only becomes a problem when you become truly identified with it and you believe that it's true about yourself or true about the other person, and then the beauty of the uniqueness of the form shines through. So we have all different colors popping up, just like the flowers and the human beings, and you go, wow, isn't that beautiful? Instead of, well, that's different.

I'm not so sure, so I'm a little frightened about that. But we begin to interact, seeing past the meaning and into the light of consciousness, of who we are. I am no different than you are, and you are no different than I am at the deepest level.

Only in the world of form are we different, and that's what is so beautiful as well. If we didn't have any mirrors to see ourselves in, we wouldn't be able to see our own face, but what I see is your face, and I would think that you are me. So resist nothing.

Feel everything completely, demanding nothing to be different than what is here now. Because quite often, it's really not so bad out there. It's more in here that makes it bad.

Nothing is neither good or bad, but thinking makes it so. So wherever and whatever you are feeling in this moment, you feel, you fully accept. And we'll do a little meditation of resist nothing.

The new CD that's out by Sounds True, and it's called Resist Nothing, and on that are several different meditations just to assist you, help you just to be present with whatever is that's going on for you in your life, situation, and we all have something going on sometime or another. And what's interesting is that after I, did this CD, my life has been pretty kind of even, not much up, not much down. There's some like this.

And it's easy to kind of be with something that goes like this, isn't it? It's quite easy. Oh, I could ride this wave.

It's quite easy. Very, and then suddenly, it was just like right after the CD, it was just like something just peaked, and it's like, whoa, my rollercoaster went right up. And it's like, wow, okay.

All right, I can do this. But it gave me another appreciation that, wow, when the rollercoaster is really high, so when things, something that happens in your life to bring up, to intensify that emotion or intensify whatever is going on that brings about some emotions, to really have to be with that, I began to appreciate, again, just how challenging it can be just to be present with something that is so intense and not expect it to dissolve so quickly. So if you listen to that CD, there's this thing where I say, and it can still happen. Believe me, it still can, because I have done this, was that oftentimes, if emotion is felt fully and completely, it can dissolve in 30 seconds.

And, you know, it was pretty good. I was getting pretty good at that until. That something happened where I had to really begin to say, okay, wow, wow, okay, I've got to, this is not taking 30 seconds.

I've got to be with this more and longer for whatever reason, and without going into the head about it, about why is this not changing, because as soon as I did that, realizing that, wow, okay, no, I have to listen to my own teaching and accept this moment fully, like as if I were going to experience this for eternity. And that's the moment that it begins to dissolve or change in that full acceptance. So when you do that, you just, something arises, step back just for a moment.

Close your eyes if you wish, and just drop into whatever it is that you feel. In this moment, you can try it now. Now, just observing, feeling what it is that you are feeling.

Take a breath into your body, into the sensations. Become aware of your breathing. Become aware of the sensations.

Just notice how you are feeling, and perhaps a label comes up of what you're feeling. Agitation, sadness, happiness. The label isn't so important.

So once the label arises, you just let that go and just feel, resisting nothing. Notice how you're holding your body. Are you holding?

Can you relax? If thoughts arise, just notice and let them go. Don't give any meaning to what is arising, to what is in you, but simply feel.

What does this emotion feel like? Be with the sensation of the emotion. Be with the sensation of this moment.

Judge nothing, labeling nothing, giving meaning to nothing. So no meaning to anything. Simply be, experience this moment.

And once you feel, experience what it is that you are feeling, sense into that space, the stillness in which the sensations arise, in which the thoughts arise. Just watching, feeling. There's nothing to do, nothing to get, but simply be, resisting nothing.

And if you notice that there's resistance there, then you be with that, dropping the label of resistance and feel the sensation. What does resistance feel like? What does it do to my body?

Brings tension and contraction. Can I even be with that tension and contraction? And the moment that's fully accepted, something in you shifts.

For all forms are impermanent. Breathing, neither running to or running away from what is, but simply be with what is. Any movement towards it, any movement away from it is resistance.

Can you feel that space? Can you feel that emotion, that sensation? The two are really inseparable, but only one is real.

If you're wondering how long this meditation is gonna go on for, you're in your thinking mind. If you're wondering how long you're gonna feel this sensation or feel an emotion, you're in your thinking mind. To be fully present in this moment requires the acceptance of whatever it is that shows up for you in this moment.

Neither past or future are real. What's real? What's real?

And tapping into that stillness, staying with that stillness, when you're ready, you can gently open your eyes, yet keeping some attention inward. And with that attention inward, and yet the outer form exists, is the true union, the true marriage, where the two become one. So the marriage is not out there between people.

It's between you as the form and God as that inner stillness within. That's the true marriage. That's the true merging.

So then we move about the world as this one singular movement. We have form and we have the stillness together in this world. And then we can dance this way.

In the dance, it's much more fluid, flowing. And still, we bring stillness then into this world. Rather than the separation, the separation is forgetting about the stillness.

It no longer exists, and all you are is this thinking entity, a body and mind. Instead of the trinity of bringing in that stillness. So then we live in this world and not be of this world.

As you can imagine Christ on the cross, and the world is the horizontal plane. And yet the connection is the divine essence of who you are, is the vertical dimension of that cross. And here you are in this world.

We're hidden there, all right? We can't go anywhere. I mean, we're in this body.

The temple, the church is your body. And we are the body of Christ. Christ consciousness, the divine consciousness.

So our connection still is that, is here, vertically. And yet we are in this world. Yes, pinned there on the cross.

Can't go anywhere. No way out. Can't.

Absolutely no way out. But then is there a way out? And that is through the dimension of Christ consciousness.

Of your connection, your marriage, your communion with the stillness within you. God is not outside, but God is within. It's the only place.

So it doesn't matter about these temples and churches. Yes, they're beautiful. And yes, there could be a space, which that's all it is, is a space to go so where you can go and commune.

But really, that space, if all those churches and temples were just blown to bits, all you have is yourself, which you are the temple. You are the body of Christ. And we embody Christ.

Or we're gonna embody the ego. You cannot have both. You cannot serve two gods.

God the Father or the God of the world. Can't have it both ways. We think we can for a while, but it only leads to suffering.

And all paths, whether you do the path of suffering, the path of devotion, the path of knowledge, all lead to the divine essence of who we are. And we'll see what happens. Will it be boring?

I doubt it. Only when you get bored is when you know that you're in the mind. We need to get to that place where there's this little sort of, I don't know if you call it a joke, but I've said this before, I've used this before, was that there's this famous English writer who was at a cocktail party.

And somebody came up to him and said, are you enjoying yourself here? And the famous English writer says, it's the only thing that I'm enjoying here. So, are you enjoying yourself here?

I don't hear anything, oh no. It's the only thing that you should be enjoying here. And that's yourself.

The true joy comes from within. Anything that makes you happy or laugh that's outside you, it's temporary, but what can bubble inside you continuously comes from within. Even in the midst of sadness or grief or loss of a loved one, there can be peace.

You can feel that sadness yet feel peace. And when your commitment is to this divine essence of who you are, then you use every single opportunity as a spiritual awakening, as a deepening. I'm faced with that, this moment, these days, with probably two potential beings that I love so dearly, whose lifespan in their bodies will be soon, will be coming to an end.

And that's my father, who's 88 years old. And he's ready. He says, I'm ready.

I'm ready to go. And our beloved Maya, who has a heart condition and we know that she will sooner or later leave body. And using this opportunity as a deepening spiritually, contemplating death, as we all have to sooner or later contemplate our own deaths, and feeling the beauty and the essence being with that essence.

And really the form passes away, but who we are at the core is eternal. We are eternity. Oh, I have to tell you guys this.

We drove from Vancouver to here and we were like stopped overnight in Red Bluff. And we went to a restaurant to have dinner. And somehow we got to talking about Eckhart's father who left body, I think about five years ago.

And Eckhart said, he mentioned about his father's ego. Because he had, even though he was very spiritual in a sense, he still had this big ego at times. And when he said that, the glass of water that was full of water and ice, burst.

It literally just, poof, burst. And we went, okay. We kind of forgot about what we were talking about.

We wondered what, wow, what was that? We didn't even touch it. And everyone was coming over that work there and they're like, oh yeah, well if you put it down maybe too hard.

And we go, we didn't touch it. It was nothing, we didn't do anything. It just burst.

And then I said, what were we talking about just before that happened? And we realized we were talking about his father and his ego. So he didn't like that.

So he may have left body, but he was definitely with us. And that, the experience of, of just feeling that energy, because it's energy. It's like water.

You boil water, yet all it does is change form. So the essence of who we are is of the one life. Is eternal.

Is stillness. With no limitations, no borders, nothing. The space.

So if you can imagine this universe, this space, we are at that space. And we would not recognize who we are as space consciousness if we were not in form. And we wouldn't know that space existed if there was no forms.

It'd be, what name could we give it? There'd be no even dimension to it. So we are awakening consciousness through the form.

We're recognizing ourselves. But from the moment we are born, we are taught to forget about ourself and begin to identify with our name. Oh, they keep calling me Johnny or Alice.

Oh, and they're looking at me. That must be me. Because they say I'm supposed to call them mommy and daddy.

That's who they are, is mommy and daddy. No, it's not. So we're coming back home to recognize and be in that space.

And that's the flowering. That's the purpose of our life. And there's no other purpose.

And I still have to even remind myself about that. There's no other purpose but just to recognize that space. There's nothing for me to do.

Sometimes I still wonder what I'm gonna do when I grow up. Honestly. I'm just like, well, what am I supposed to do?

Wow, I've got, you know, because contemplating now with my father being ill and with Maya being ill, it's like this contemplation of, geez, I've only got so many maybe years or minutes left on this planet in this form. What do I wanna do? And then it's like, oh, come on.

Just be, just be, just be still and move from that. And whatever it is that I'm supposed to be doing, it's only in this moment that I'm doing it. So what's the quality that you will bring to this moment?

Am I going to infuse this moment and what I'm doing in this moment in my thinking mind? Or am I going to create and infuse whatever I'm doing with presence? With just finding that inner stillness in this moment with whatever it is I am doing.

That's our work. That's our realization. That's our creation.

That's our creation is in this moment now. Not what I'm going to do in the future, but how am I bringing this moment into creation? Stillness or with thinking about it?

[Speaker 4] (3:12:34 - 3:12:54)

Today at Cartoli on Super Soul Sunday, it was one of the most exciting, eye-opening and meaningful moments of my career. Right now, you all are online with me from every corner on our planet. They say we practically crashed the internet when more than a million people logged on to watch.

[Speaker 11] (3:12:55 - 3:12:56)

Hi Oprah, hi Eckhart.

[Speaker 4] (3:12:56 - 3:16:36)

Learn and study with one of the great spiritual thinkers of our time, Eckhart Tolle. The world can't make you happy. Things cannot give you happiness.

It still thrills me to think about it. I just love that. I loved it so much, I wrote, wow.

Now Eckhart is back, and today you're going to see him in a whole new light. That's the first time anybody has said that. So get ready.

This was fun. Yes. Because Super Soul Sunday with Eckhart Tolle starts now.

I wanted a place for people to go every Sunday to wake up, thought provoking. Oh, you couldn't have said that better. Eye-opening and inspiring.

This is my favorite thing to talk about. This will lift you right on up. It's food for your soul.

Every single Sunday. This is Super Soul Sunday. The weekly webcast that Eckhart Tolle and I did together back in 2008, I describe as my first life class, teaching one of my favorite books of all time, A New Earth, chapter by chapter.

Millions of people got to know Eckhart during those 10 weeks, but not everyone knows his remarkable spiritual journey. At 29, this German-born author had become a research scholar in comparative literature at the University of Cambridge in England. Despite his academic success, it wasn't enough to halt bouts of anxiety and depression so severe that at one time he considered ending his life.

In his darkest hour, Eckhart says, he experienced an awakening that transformed his life. We'll hear more about that later. And he chose to walk away from his promising career to explore his newly discovered inner peace.

Eckhart's profound yet simple spiritual teachings are the basis for his best-selling books, The Power of Now and A New Earth. Too much time had passed since Eckhart and I sat down together, so I invited him back to Chicago to catch up, to reflect, and to have a Super Soul Sunday conversation. Ah, how fantastic is this?

So much has changed since we did A New Earth webcast. It was just four years ago, 2008. That was considered for me and our industry groundbreaking when we were broadcasting live around the world in our first webcast.

Remember that first night and people were Skyping in? We're like, oh, there's Brazil. Yes.

That first webcast was one of the, really, I think it was a seminal day for me because it said that our ability to, for me, doing this kind of work, using your voice to let people come closer to the one that is their own, that that was transmittable in a way around the world, in a way that we had never done before, but not only transmittable, but could actually be both physically, emotionally, and spiritually received. Yes.

Right now, we're on OWN, on the platform of the cable network. We're also streaming on Facebook. We're also on Oprah.com.

We're also on Oprah Radio, all at the same time, simulcasting as we speak what was cutting edge back then is now just normal. Yes. This is how we do it.

[Speaker 1] (3:16:36 - 3:16:36)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:16:36 - 3:16:44)

This is how we do it. Do you think technology is accelerating our consciousness or the opposite?

[Speaker 1] (3:16:45 - 3:17:25)

I think both are happening at the moment. I can see the negative effects of technology that it has, can have, and has on many, especially young people who get addicted to their devices, the computer, and the smartphones, and so on, so our mind can get totally filled up with useless facts, and so that can prevent us from actually being able to pay attention to what is here in the present moment. The most important ability a human being can have is to direct his or her full attention to the present moment.

[Speaker 4] (3:17:25 - 3:17:59)

Absolutely, absolutely. So there are obviously wonderful things, the fact that we can communicate now, hello world, with everybody throughout the world who is seeking this information. That's a good thing, and obviously there are dangers, particularly for people raising children in this environment.

One of the things that you did after the New Earth seminars, you wrote a book called Oneness with All Life, a companion to a new Earth, which says many of the things that are in New Earth, but it's not like a summarized version of New Earth.

[Speaker 12] (3:17:59 - 3:17:59)

Yeah.

[Speaker 4] (3:18:00 - 3:18:54)

Okay, now this is what I loved from Oneness with All Life. This is also right next to my bed, my signed copy from you. You say through the present moment, you have access to the power of life itself, the power of life itself, that which has traditionally been called God, which I thought is such a beautiful definition of God, the power of life itself.

As soon as you turn away from it, God ceases to be a reality in your life, and all you're left with is the mental concept of God, the mental concept, which is what a lot of people talk about, the mental concept of God, their belief in God. And what you go on to say is, which some people believe in and others deny. Even belief in God is only a poor substitute for the living reality of God manifesting every moment of your life.

[Speaker 1] (3:18:55 - 3:18:55)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:18:55 - 3:18:59)

I think that is such a beautiful offering for Super Soul Sunday.

[Speaker 1] (3:19:00 - 3:19:23)

Yes, it's stepping from belief, which is fine, going to the deeper level where belief becomes an actual realization or a knowing. And that can start with a simple thing like, and anybody can verify that in their own experience. How?

When you take your attention into the present moment, which implies, of course, a certain alertness arises.

[Speaker 4] (3:19:23 - 3:19:24)

Yes, yes.

[Speaker 1] (3:19:24 - 3:19:50)

Which is different from thinking. Thinking compared to that is almost like a kind of dreamlike state. You're up here, not present here.

So a certain alertness arises, you become more conscious of what surrounds you. But also, strangely, it's hard to talk about it, but I will, of a sense of presence that is both within and without.

[Speaker 4] (3:19:50 - 3:19:50)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (3:19:50 - 3:19:55)

A presence. We could call that a divine presence.

[Speaker 4] (3:19:56 - 3:19:56)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (3:19:57 - 3:19:58)

There is something.

[Speaker 4] (3:19:59 - 3:20:05)

And that presence, what everybody needs to know, is the presence that you feel when you're able to silence your mind.

[Speaker 1] (3:20:05 - 3:20:06)

Silence your mind.

[Speaker 4] (3:20:07 - 3:20:13)

And be aware of the silence that's in your mind. You are that awareness.

[Speaker 1] (3:20:13 - 3:20:13)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:20:14 - 3:20:15)

Disguised as a person.

[Speaker 1] (3:20:15 - 3:20:42)

Yes. And when you become conscious of the gap between two thoughts, for example, or even now, sometimes I even recommend to people that they hold their hands like this, and they create this, let's say, past is there, future is there, you let them go, and now you bring your attention to just the present. It can be a little reminder to help you hold that sense of presence.

[Speaker 4] (3:20:42 - 3:20:48)

And to recognize that the past is here, and the future is here, and that the only moment that matters is right now.

[Speaker 1] (3:20:48 - 3:20:51)

The only thing you ever have is now.

[Speaker 4] (3:20:51 - 3:20:53)

The only thing that matters is now.

[Speaker 1] (3:20:53 - 3:20:53)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:20:54 - 3:21:13)

I mean, I learned so much from that experience with you, the 10 weeks. It was like, it was the original life class. It is from which all the other life classes have stemmed.

And one of the most important things that I learned is that we all have the ability to awaken, correct?

[Speaker 1] (3:21:13 - 3:21:14)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:21:14 - 3:21:19)

Yes. And that if we don't awaken as a species, that the species will eventually.

[Speaker 1] (3:21:20 - 3:21:41)

Yes, I see it as the next step in our evolution as a species is to embrace that state of consciousness that we call awakening. And if we don't, then the problems that the unawakened mind has created on the planet will only increase and multiply.

[Speaker 4] (3:21:42 - 3:22:03)

Coming up, Eckhart and I get to the heart of what an aha moment really is. Only spirit can recognize spirit. That's what an aha moment is, isn't it?

Super Soul Sunday. We'll be right back.

[Speaker 5] (3:22:21 - 3:23:37)

Meditation is a gift because you can do it anytime, anywhere, in any location, quieten your mind and get in touch with your soul. You can improve your health, you can manage stress, improve the quality of your sleep, your creative process, the way you deal with people, your personal relationships. In other words, you're on your way to a happier, healthier human being with more abundance in your consciousness than you were ever before because of meditation.

If your child is over 10 years, they can join in the 21-day challenge for meditation. If your child is five years, then just tell them to keep quiet for five minutes every day. Not say a word.

At six years, six minutes. Seven years, seven minutes. Eight years, eight minutes.

Nine years, nine minutes. 10 years, teach them proper meditation just like you and me. The best advice I can give to anyone who's starting the 21-day meditation challenge is just do it, spend the time.

And if you do it, all will be well. Don't worry about whether you're doing it right or not. Just spend the time.

Put in the time.

[Speaker 11] (3:23:40 - 3:24:34)

Let me see, strawberry lavender, big honey baby, Asian champere, raspberry habanero. I'm the jam lady. I was a punk rock drummer and then the band broke up and you have to reinvent yourself.

When I first moved to California, in the backyard was this really prosperous orange tree. So I started making marmalade and I would send it home to my friends. They're like, this is the best jam ever.

I'm really excited with all the rains because I'm like, oh my God, everybody's fruit trees are going to be blowing up. A lot of my flavor profiles are just things I see at the farmer's market. There'll be like a strawberry, but right next to it, it'll be lavender.

I started testing things. It takes a long time to cook jam. I really do have crazy jam fans.

Before, I would walk around Chicago. It was like, yeah, drummer lady. And now it's like, hey, it's the jam lady.

Who's not happy when they're eating jam?

[Speaker 3] (3:24:38 - 3:25:02)

Super Soul Sunday has got viewers raving. Dawn posted, Super Soul Sunday has given birth to a new and peaceful way to watch television. Janie wrote, thank you so much for the best TV I've ever watched.

And Raven tweeted, this is how I refresh my soul and get ready for another wonderfully busy week. Be a part of the global experience. Super Soul Sunday is simulcasting worldwide on OWN, Facebook, and Oprah.com.

[Speaker 4] (3:25:02 - 3:25:03)

This was fun!

[Speaker 3] (3:25:03 - 3:25:08)

Super Soul Sunday, every Sunday, 11 a.m. 10 central, only on OWN.

[Speaker 4] (3:26:10 - 3:26:32)

One of the things that you say is that stress is wanting something to be the way that it isn't. So how do you know the difference between something isn't the way that I want it to be and I need to accept it, because you say what you resist persists. How do you know whether you're supposed to accept it or try to bring about change for whatever it is that you want to change?

[Speaker 1] (3:26:32 - 3:27:00)

First, you accept, even if change is possible, and you may need to focus some attention on the situation to realize what kind of steps you can take to change the situation. But in the meantime, the basis for effective action is to come into an inner alignment with the is-ness of this moment. This is how it is.

Let's say I gave the example in The Power of Now, I'm stuck in the mud, just as an example. This is the situation right now.

[Speaker 4] (3:27:00 - 3:27:05)

I'm so pissed off, I'm stuck in the mud. Damn this mud, how'd I get in this mud?

[Speaker 1] (3:27:05 - 3:27:10)

Oh, yes, or you become a victim in your own mind. Why did this happen?

[Speaker 4] (3:27:10 - 3:27:10)

There's always mud.

[Speaker 1] (3:27:10 - 3:27:16)

Why is there mud here? Why is this happening to me, always to me, and so on. Victim identity, complaining.

[Speaker 4] (3:27:17 - 3:27:20)

Yeah, what is the mud in your life? So you're just saying, using that as a metaphor.

[Speaker 1] (3:27:20 - 3:27:41)

Yes, but just look at the situation without labeling it. This is where I am right now, and you accept that this is how it is, the is-ness of life at this moment. And now, I will begin to think about how to change it.

And then you become, actually, a greater intelligence arises, because you become present with what is.

[Speaker 4] (3:27:42 - 3:27:54)

So if you're stuck in the mud, and you're angry about being stuck in the mud, and you're trying to resolve being stuck in the mud, from that point of anger, you will always remain stuck in the mud. Yes, yes. You gotta remove yourself from the mud.

[Speaker 1] (3:27:54 - 3:27:55)

That's right.

[Speaker 4] (3:27:55 - 3:28:14)

I got that. Okay, one of the things that you write in the very beginning of the book is that if you come across passages in this book that you feel are powerful, I want you to realize that what you're feeling is your own spiritual power. That is to say, who you are in your essence.

Only spirit can recognize spirit. That's what an aha moment is, isn't it?

[Speaker 1] (3:28:14 - 3:28:43)

Yes, it's always a recognition. The real truths of life are never entirely new to you or to anybody, because there is a level deep down within you where you already know all the things, all those spiritual truths that you read or hear, and then recognize them. I say recognize, because you're not, it's not new, ultimately, it's not new information.

You're very so- It's a resonation. Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:28:43 - 3:28:49)

It's a resonation. It's a resonating with what is somehow buried or suppressed.

[Speaker 1] (3:28:49 - 3:28:49)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:28:49 - 3:28:50)

That's what an aha is.

[Speaker 1] (3:28:51 - 3:28:51)

That's right.

[Speaker 4] (3:28:51 - 3:29:08)

So when you do hear something, like from what we're talking about this Sunday morning, and you want to tweet-tweet it, the reason it resonates with you, the reason it is an aha, because that is spirit recognizing spirit. Yes. Your consciousness recognizing the consciousness of whatever that message is.

[Speaker 1] (3:29:08 - 3:29:08)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:29:09 - 3:29:09)

That's great.

[Speaker 1] (3:29:09 - 3:29:10)

And that's an awakening.

[Speaker 4] (3:29:11 - 3:29:12)

That's an awakening, yeah.

[Speaker 1] (3:29:12 - 3:29:37)

And it also, it awakens that faculty in you. When there's a glimpse of recognition, then that knowing in you awakens, and then it grows. It comes to the surface more.

And the more it grows, the more open you are to hearing spiritual truths, and then you begin to live it in your life.

[Speaker 4] (3:29:37 - 3:30:09)

Absolutely. I think if the most important, if there was only one message, because I don't want to, you know, in the short time that we have this morning, to go over everything. It's impossible that we learn from new earth.

But if the essence of it, that if you wanted people to understand what the reason why you sat down and wrote that book, or that book wrote you, you said that book was burning inside you, right? The reason why you wanted to do it is because you want it to cause an awakening. Is that it?

[Speaker 1] (3:30:09 - 3:31:16)

Yes. Or one could say that it was kind of coming through me, so I just became the kind of almost the channel for it. So there was something in me that needed to write that book.

And I feel the essence of a new earth and of the power of now is the arising of the state of presence. And now for the first time, it is possible on a more widespread level for humans to undergo that shift in consciousness where they're no longer totally dominated by the continuous compulsive thinking in their heads, the voice that never stops talking. They're no longer totally in the grip of that because that's the old conditioned consciousness.

Something new arises, an inner spaciousness, a presence. And that presence transcends who you are as a person.

[Speaker 4] (3:31:17 - 3:31:21)

That's right. And it's what you call in the books going beyond thought.

[Speaker 1] (3:31:21 - 3:31:21)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:31:22 - 3:32:03)

All right, you say on page 13, see if you can catch, that is to say, notice the voice in the head. Whenever you notice that voice, you will also realize that you are not the voice, but the one who is aware of it. It's what you say in Stillness Speaks.

You are that awareness disguised as a person. Yes, yes. Wow, that's big.

I think, is that, would you say, is that, I know it's hard to measure your own words and your own work, but would you say that that is in terms of awakening and realization of your personal power, that that's really one of the most important things?

[Speaker 1] (3:32:03 - 3:32:08)

Yes, that is the most important thing. Feeling it for yourself, sensing it.

[Speaker 4] (3:32:08 - 3:32:09)

Yes, what one needs to know.

[Speaker 1] (3:32:10 - 3:32:27)

So the moment you become aware that you have certain kinds of thoughts in your head, there's already that awareness arising. There's still many people in this world who are so identified with every thought that arises in their head, there's not the slightest space of awareness there.

[Speaker 4] (3:32:27 - 3:32:27)

That's right.

[Speaker 1] (3:32:27 - 3:32:32)

And they may not even be ready to hear what we are saying. It would be totally meaningless to them.

[Speaker 4] (3:32:32 - 3:32:46)

Yes, so you have to be ready to hear it. That's why you were saying, why I was saying earlier, quoting from the book, that if you hear something that connects to you, it means you're already awakening enough to be able to hear it, because it's only spirit that recognizes spirit.

[Speaker 1] (3:32:46 - 3:32:46)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:32:46 - 3:32:49)

Truth recognizes truth. Yes. There you are.

[Speaker 1] (3:32:49 - 3:33:12)

Yes, it's the deepest sense of beingness. I sometimes ask people, can you be aware of your own presence? Not thinking, not the thoughts that you're having, not the emotions that you're having, but the very presence of your very being.

You become aware of your own presence by sensing the entire energy field in your body that is alive.

[Speaker 8] (3:33:12 - 3:33:12)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (3:33:12 - 3:33:14)

And that is the totality of your presence.

[Speaker 4] (3:33:14 - 3:33:36)

Because you know that no matter what's going on, all the trials and difficulties and challenges and whatever, that all of us have from time to time in our life, if you live past five years old, that there is a space that you can go to. Yes. That really is the ultimate connection to all there is, or God.

[Speaker 1] (3:33:37 - 3:33:37)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:33:37 - 3:33:38)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (3:33:38 - 3:33:48)

Yes. That's where you and God merge. So then you recognize your oneness with a source of life.

[Speaker 4] (3:33:48 - 3:33:49)

Of source of life.

[Speaker 1] (3:33:49 - 3:33:49)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:33:49 - 3:34:50)

What I find is, if you can go to that space, that's where your strength, that's where your true strength lies. Yes. That's where your true creativity, your power, your ability to be authentically yourself, everything comes from that space.

And you wanna be able to bring that space to everything that you do. Yes. Yes.

And bring that space forward to inhabit who you are. Yes. To be conscious of that.

Yes. Yeah, I got that. I got that.

Coming up, Eckhart answers your Facebook questions. Good questions. Thanks, Laura.

Many people will be thankful for that question. Yes. And later, what do you do for fun?

Eckhart's answer may surprise you. For those of you watching on OWN, around the world and on the web, let me know how you stay present and in the moment. Facebook me or tweet, tweet.

We'll be back in a moment.

[Speaker 5] (3:35:01 - 3:36:42)

People who say I have no time to meditate are just the ones who should be meditating because they're basically making excuses to ruin their life. If you can brush your teeth, if you can take a shower, you can meditate. It's part of your daily routine.

And the fact is you will be accomplishing a lot more by doing less. So meditation is the ultimate law of least effort. If people get interrupted a lot, then at least if they're interrupted by adults, they can set aside the time to go to a room, put a sign outside, meditating for the next 20 minutes.

Please don't interrupt. If your mind doesn't quiet, don't try to quieten it. Just sit there going through the procedure, which I'll be guiding you through.

And you'll find that soon it'll quieten by itself. If you're a fidgeter in meditation, then you can fidget. If you fall asleep in meditation, that means you are not getting enough sleep, so you should get more sleep.

If you're stuck in traffic or in a situation where you can't actually close your eyes and meditate, just stop and observe the sensations in your body and then feel your body, smile inside, everywhere in your body. Observe your breath and you're practicing some kind of meditation right there.

[Speaker 8] (3:36:52 - 3:36:57)

Dance is creating art to music using your body.

[Speaker 7] (3:37:01 - 3:37:03)

Dance is an expression of your soul.

[Speaker 9] (3:37:08 - 3:37:14)

When you perform, you just completely forget about everything. You're in that moment.

[Speaker 2] (3:37:19 - 3:37:27)

Going into a world that no one else is in. It's a time to be free.

[Speaker 7] (3:37:37 - 3:37:54)

I am a ballet dancer. That's me.

[Speaker 4] (3:38:28 - 3:38:53)

When we told you Eckhart would be coming on Super Soul Sunday, we heard the collective digital cheer online. You told us you had questions for Eckhart and he happily agreed to take a few. Laura, one of our Facebook followers, wanted to know how to calm the voice in her head.

She writes, I feel like my mind is racing at enormous speed and at night it's even worse. How can I stop the constant stream of consciousness in my mind? Yeah, good question.

[Speaker 12] (3:38:54 - 3:38:54)

Thanks, Laura.

[Speaker 1] (3:38:54 - 3:39:04)

Many people will be thankful for that question. Yes. So, first of all, the question implies that you know that your mind won't stop.

[Speaker 4] (3:39:04 - 3:39:05)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (3:39:05 - 3:39:13)

If you are totally immersed, you're so identified with your mind, even the thought that your mind won't stop doesn't even occur to you because you become your mind.

[Speaker 4] (3:39:13 - 3:39:15)

You don't know that it is your mind that won't stop.

[Speaker 1] (3:39:15 - 3:39:15)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:39:15 - 3:39:18)

So, Laura, that's a big, that's, you're ahead of the game.

[Speaker 1] (3:39:18 - 3:39:18)

Okay.

[Speaker 4] (3:39:18 - 3:39:21)

The fact that Laura knows that her mind won't stop is a good thing.

[Speaker 1] (3:39:21 - 3:40:15)

It's a good start. So, when you hear the thought, why can't I stop my mind? Don't believe it because you can stop your mind.

How? You can choose to take your attention away from thinking. And the first thing you do as you lie there in bed, you ask yourself, can I feel the energy inside my hands?

Yeah. In other words, can I feel that my hands are there without touching anything? Yes.

Can I feel that there's an energy inside my hands? And after a little while, most people can. There's a slight tingling or liveness that you can feel when the energy goes in there.

And that's an enormous step that you've already taken because immediately thinking will slow down because it no longer has your whole attention. Got it. And then, see, can you incorporate the whole body?

[Speaker 4] (3:40:16 - 3:40:16)

The whole body.

[Speaker 1] (3:40:16 - 3:40:17)

Can you sense your legs and arms?

[Speaker 4] (3:40:17 - 3:40:22)

Yes. So why does that work and not just Laura saying to herself, let me think about something else?

[Speaker 1] (3:40:23 - 3:40:30)

There's no anchor then for presence and the mind has such momentum that you won't be able to stop it.

[Speaker 4] (3:40:31 - 3:40:31)

Got it.

[Speaker 1] (3:40:31 - 3:40:38)

You need an anchor for presence. And the inner body, as I call this, is a wonderful anchor for the state of presence.

[Speaker 4] (3:40:38 - 3:40:43)

Laura, I hope you got that too. That's why you just can't say, okay, I'm going to think about something else.

[Speaker 1] (3:40:43 - 3:40:43)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:40:43 - 3:40:45)

And then the wonderful... You have to actively...

[Speaker 1] (3:40:46 - 3:41:10)

Choose. Choose. Not about something else.

Just go into the body and then thinking slows down. You might even stop completely for a while. And the amazing thing is what before was an unpleasant, dreadful, sleepless night, within a few minutes can actually be transformed into a very pleasant experience of feeling the inherent aliveness in your whole body and you lie there.

[Speaker 4] (3:41:10 - 3:41:13)

Because and then you recognize, oh, I have slowed down.

[Speaker 1] (3:41:13 - 3:41:20)

You have slowed down and the mind will do very little. When you're really in the body, there's not much thinking anymore.

[Speaker 4] (3:41:20 - 3:41:30)

So another Facebooker wanted to know, this is closely related to what Laura said. How does one clear one's mind of bad memories? Can you clear your mind of bad memories?

[Speaker 1] (3:41:30 - 3:41:52)

Well, not as such, but you can recognize that bad memories are thoughts that are arising in your mind. And when you recognize that these are thoughts arising in your mind, you don't need to identify with the thoughts any longer. So memories, for example, of something bad that happened to you.

[Speaker 4] (3:41:52 - 3:41:52)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (3:41:53 - 3:41:55)

It's not happening here and now.

[Speaker 4] (3:41:55 - 3:41:57)

It's already happened. Yes. It's done.

[Speaker 1] (3:41:57 - 3:42:23)

Yes. So memories are thoughts that arise. They're not reality.

It's only when you believe that they are real, then they have the power over you. But when you realize it's just another thought arising about the past, then you find a space, a spacious relationship with thought. So thought no longer has you in its grip.

I call it sometimes...

[Speaker 4] (3:42:23 - 3:42:25)

I hope people really get that.

[Speaker 1] (3:42:25 - 3:42:25)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:42:25 - 3:42:28)

That would be a gift for somebody who's tortured by the past.

[Speaker 1] (3:42:28 - 3:42:59)

Yes. Another aspect of that, of course, is guilt, which has to do with something one did to someone or something that they failed to do but should have done. And so guilt arises.

But of course, who you were then, no human being can act beyond their level of consciousness. At that time, you acted like that. The awareness was not there to act differently.

Now the awareness is there and the awareness is who you truly are.

[Speaker 4] (3:43:00 - 3:43:19)

Well, I think a lot of the reasons, any time I've ever felt guilty, it's because I kind of knew better. I knew better and didn't do it. There's nothing worse, I think, than being upset with yourself.

And you're upset with yourself not when you make a mistake, for me, I'm upset with myself when I make a mistake that I could have prevented.

[Speaker 1] (3:43:19 - 3:43:22)

Yes. Yes. But you didn't.

[Speaker 4] (3:43:22 - 3:43:23)

But I didn't.

[Speaker 12] (3:43:26 - 3:43:29)

But the ego...

[Speaker 4] (3:43:29 - 3:43:30)

But you didn't, so live with it.

[Speaker 1] (3:43:30 - 3:44:24)

Guilt is a strong way for the ego to strengthen itself because when you feel guilty about something, you identify, again, with certain thoughts in your mind, which is ego. And the thoughts say, I should have done better, I didn't do it, I, I, I. And every I thought that judges you, you identify with it, it becomes part of ego.

The ego loves guilt. It loves not only blaming others, that strengthens it too, if that doesn't work, you can blame yourself. But, of course, every human being has done things in the past that they now regret.

That's, I've done things that I regret, they were silly and stupid. And so, realizing the essence of who you are is, does not lie in the past, or thoughts about the past.

[Speaker 4] (3:44:24 - 3:44:26)

What matters is what you are willing to do now.

[Speaker 1] (3:44:26 - 3:44:28)

Oh, and you are the presence.

[Speaker 4] (3:44:28 - 3:44:30)

You are the presence.

[Speaker 1] (3:44:30 - 3:44:34)

You are the presence. Not any, no thought is who you are.

[Speaker 4] (3:44:34 - 3:44:49)

Yeah. Coming up, get ready to rethink your thoughts. Tell that thought, be gone with you, you have no power here.

You don't have to believe every thought that comes into your head. You don't. Super Soul Sunday, we'll be right back.

[Speaker 5] (3:44:55 - 3:45:27)

My shoes are made by a woman called Madison Steiner. She's a young woman in her 20s, she's a student. And she actually has a foundation, and she works to help children who are struggling with disabling problems, chronic illnesses, and including brain cancer.

And her effort is called Neat Peach. These are neat, and they're peachy.

[Speaker 7] (3:45:43 - 3:46:10)

We're on a mission to tackle life's big questions. I'm Golriz. And I'm Devin.

And this is SoulPancake. It can be all too easy to stress out over things we can't control. So, SoulPancake headed to a park with a giant balloon to give people an unusual way to just let go.

[Speaker 2] (3:46:48 - 3:46:54)

I wrote about anxiety, like pressure and things like that. Financial issues, money problems.

[Speaker 4] (3:46:55 - 3:46:57)

Student loans. I've been backed up for years on these.

[Speaker 2] (3:46:57 - 3:46:59)

I wrote menopause.

[Speaker 11] (3:46:59 - 3:47:02)

Writing about women. Hopefully find one that matches with me.

[Speaker 2] (3:47:02 - 3:47:08)

It's been a pretty tough journey having cancer, but I need it to be gone. Out of my life.

[Speaker 7] (3:47:42 - 3:47:49)

The physical act of writing it down and then watching it fly away, it was pretty cool. It made me feel really good.

[Speaker 11] (3:47:49 - 3:47:53)

To see them go away and just to reflect on a deeper level what it meant, it felt good.

[Speaker 8] (3:47:53 - 3:47:58)

It was nice to be able to get it off my chest and let it go and see it pop and fly away.

[Speaker 4] (3:48:07 - 3:48:27)

This is one of my favorite quotes from page 64. You do not become good by trying to be good, but by finding the goodness that is already within you and allowing that goodness to emerge. Again, we're talking about going to presence, the divine within you, and bringing that forth to whatever it is you do.

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (3:48:27 - 3:48:33)

Because trying to be good is often to improve one's self-image.

[Speaker 4] (3:48:33 - 3:48:35)

Right. That's ego-driven.

[Speaker 1] (3:48:35 - 3:49:10)

Ultimately, it's ego. Some people, for example, have been trying for centuries to love their neighbor as themselves. Right.

But most of them have been finding it very difficult. Because love your neighbor as yourself really means, first of all, you need to be in touch with yourself, the self that you are beyond the form, the consciousness that you are. Then you can love your neighbor as yourself because you recognize your oneness with your neighbor.

[Speaker 4] (3:49:10 - 3:49:21)

Yes. What you're saying is, that's so beautiful. I get it.

Lots of bing-bing-aha's here. Love your neighbor as yourself, as you're interpreting it, is not as yourself the personality.

[Speaker 12] (3:49:22 - 3:49:22)

No.

[Speaker 4] (3:49:22 - 3:49:35)

Not as yourself who's out there mowing the lawn. Not as yourself. It doesn't mean if you go to the theater, give your neighbor tickets to the theater, or whatever.

It means the deeper always. Yes. Inner self.

Yes. Higher self.

[Speaker 1] (3:49:36 - 3:50:18)

Yes. So love, I call love the recognizing yourself in the other. And yourself, your essential self, is consciousness.

Got it. Then I begin, when I then meet people and interact with people, I see them on two levels, or feel them on two levels. On one level, they are the form.

Yes. Which is the body and their psychological makeup. Correct.

On another level, they are the consciousness that I also am. Because underlying the body and the mind is the consciousness out of which the body and the mind have come. And that is still there.

That pure essence.

[Speaker 4] (3:50:18 - 3:50:20)

You see that in every person that you encounter.

[Speaker 1] (3:50:20 - 3:50:31)

Yes. Yeah. And that makes it much easier to interact with people and much more pleasant because sometimes the personality, the psychological makeup, is not that wonderful.

[Speaker 4] (3:50:32 - 3:50:32)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (3:50:33 - 3:50:42)

And then one is able to let that be because you can sense that beyond that, there is an essence to that human being.

[Speaker 4] (3:50:42 - 3:50:54)

That's what I mean when I am going into interviews, particularly that I think might be, you know, challenging. I will consciously meditate on the thought of the presence in me, speak to the presence in you.

[Speaker 1] (3:50:54 - 3:50:54)

Oh, yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:50:54 - 3:51:00)

That's wonderful. Yeah. Yes.

Because that's what I'm really looking for. Yes. That underlying thing.

[Speaker 1] (3:51:00 - 3:51:01)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:51:01 - 3:51:07)

That we all have. That oneness that we all have. That's right.

Which, as you know, that's when you get the best conversation.

[Speaker 1] (3:51:07 - 3:51:07)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:51:08 - 3:51:13)

What is your own personal spiritual practice? Do you have one?

[Speaker 1] (3:51:13 - 3:51:16)

I don't have a practice as such.

[Speaker 4] (3:51:16 - 3:51:17)

Do you meditate?

[Speaker 1] (3:51:19 - 3:51:27)

Not in a formal sense, but sometimes I sit and just be without doing anything.

[Speaker 4] (3:51:27 - 3:51:29)

I want everybody to know that you can just do that.

[Speaker 1] (3:51:29 - 3:51:30)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:51:30 - 3:51:43)

There was a wonderful line in the book, I can't remember where you said it, that stillness, I think it is stillness is the voice of God or stillness is how God speaks to us. Does anybody know where that quote is? 140.

140.

[Speaker 1] (3:51:44 - 3:51:49)

Stillness is the language God speaks. Everything else is a bad translation.

[Speaker 4] (3:51:49 - 3:51:55)

Oh, that's right. You wrote the book. Why not?

Say it again.

[Speaker 1] (3:51:56 - 3:52:14)

Stillness is the language God speaks. Everything else is a bad translation. And of course, in stillness you get closest to the source of life, which is God and which is essentially yourself.

[Speaker 4] (3:52:14 - 3:52:15)

Which is the one.

[Speaker 1] (3:52:15 - 3:52:16)

The one.

[Speaker 4] (3:52:16 - 3:52:37)

I love calling God the one now. The one. Yes.

I know you told my producers that it's wonderful to meditate. You have meditated. Sometimes you do meditate.

But meditation isn't the end all be all because there are a lot of people who go in and meditate and there's 20 minutes of let me connect to presence.

[Speaker 12] (3:52:37 - 3:52:37)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:52:37 - 3:52:43)

Then they get up from that 20 minutes and they are unconscious the rest of the 2340, right?

[Speaker 1] (3:52:44 - 3:52:50)

So their daily life is not interspersed with presence and space.

[Speaker 4] (3:52:50 - 3:52:56)

That's like people who go to church on Sunday and then leave church and come home and kick the dog.

[Speaker 1] (3:52:56 - 3:52:56)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:52:57 - 3:52:57)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (3:52:57 - 3:53:03)

That's why I often say meditation is, of course, wonderful. It's not for everybody.

[Speaker 4] (3:53:03 - 3:53:04)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (3:53:04 - 3:53:55)

But for many people it will be very helpful. But even more important than meditation, and especially those people who don't meditate and don't want to meditate, bring in little spaces of aware presence into everyday life. Choose a few things that you use as vehicles for bringing in presence.

For example, when you get into your car, you close the door. Why not spend 30 seconds just, for example, being aware of your breathing, which is another beautiful way of bringing that inner space, that presence into your life. Yes.

30 seconds is not that much. Even the busiest person can do that. Yes.

If they believe their minds, which their mind might say, I have no time for this now, but you don't have to believe every thought that comes into your head.

[Speaker 4] (3:53:55 - 3:53:56)

It's just a thought.

[Speaker 1] (3:53:56 - 3:53:56)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:53:57 - 3:54:00)

Tell that thought, be gone with you. You have no power here.

[Speaker 1] (3:54:00 - 3:54:03)

You don't have to believe every thought that comes into your head.

[Speaker 4] (3:54:03 - 3:54:04)

You don't. Because it's just a thought.

[Speaker 1] (3:54:05 - 3:54:05)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:54:05 - 3:54:06)

That's right.

[Speaker 1] (3:54:06 - 3:54:15)

For many people, no sense of spaciousness, presence inside at all. It's like living in a room that's crammed full with furniture. Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:54:15 - 3:54:35)

And I think of people who live their whole lives and hopefully this opportunity to join us on Super Soul Sunday starts to give a little crack of the space for people. That's my whole heart's desire is to do that for people. Yes.

Coming up. They all thought Eckhart has lost his mind. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (3:54:36 - 3:54:37)

And in a way you did. They were right.

[Speaker 4] (3:54:38 - 3:54:43)

We'll talk about the moment Eckhart says changed his life back in a moment.

[Speaker 7] (3:55:03 - 3:55:22)

We're on a mission. To tackle life's big questions. I'm Golriz.

And I'm Devin. And this is SoulPancake. It can be really hard to find a sense of calm, especially when life gets chaotic.

[Speaker 9] (3:55:30 - 3:55:39)

So, SoulPancake headed to one of the busiest streets in Hollywood to create an unusual space where people could find a few minutes of calm amidst the chaos.

[Speaker 7] (3:55:40 - 3:56:57)

We've got these little diagrams here and we're trying to put all of this pipe together and we've got X's and O's and little things. So, let's see how it goes. We called it the Zen Den and invited people in.

We're here. We're here. We're here.

We're here. We're here. We're here.

We're here. We're here. We're here.

We're here. We're here. We're here.

[Speaker 12] (3:57:00 - 3:57:00)

We're here.

[Speaker 11] (3:58:04 - 3:58:08)

Well, you're centered, ready to go. I wish I could do this every day.

[Speaker 6] (3:58:08 - 3:58:11)

I was weird enough to be a good situation.

[Speaker 4] (3:58:17 - 3:58:30)

Today was a very stressful day because I'm job searching and I was feeling a little down, a little weak, and then I got asked to do this. So just gave me some more hope that I'm not finished yet. I keep going.

[Speaker 3] (3:58:42 - 3:58:54)

What is the soul?

[Speaker 1] (3:58:56 - 3:59:14)

The soul is one of the words one can use to talk about your innermost being, the presence that you are beyond form, that which underlies the personality and the mind, the essence of who you are.

[Speaker 4] (3:59:14 - 3:59:21)

Have you always considered yourself a spiritual person or did you have an aha moment when you recognized your connection to something bigger than yourself?

[Speaker 1] (3:59:21 - 3:59:49)

I had a big aha moment where I disidentified from my mind and disidentified from the unhappy self that I was. You were suicidal. Yes.

So there was a mind created, unhappy sense of self, and somehow I separated from it. It happened, just happened, and realized that that is not who I am.

[Speaker 4] (3:59:49 - 3:59:51)

Was that what people call a nervous breakdown?

[Speaker 1] (3:59:52 - 4:00:03)

No, it was a state of acute anxiety which could have become a nervous breakdown or could have become suicide. So it was moving in that direction.

[Speaker 4] (4:00:03 - 4:00:08)

It was moving in that direction, where you literally separated. Tell the story one more time.

[Speaker 1] (4:00:09 - 4:01:04)

Well, the thought, I was in bed at night again, where a lot of the mental suffering happens for many people at night. Couldn't sleep and plagued by dreadful thoughts, and the thought arose, I can't live with myself any longer. I can't live with myself any longer.

And then there must have come some awareness, although I didn't know what it was at the time, and the awareness looked at the thought and said, what does that mean, I can't live with myself? Are there two? Who is the I and who is the self that I cannot live with?

That question came up. The answer didn't come on the level of words. The answer came as a separation suddenly of the self that I couldn't live with and the I, and the I was consciousness.

[Speaker 4] (4:01:04 - 4:01:05)

The awareness.

[Speaker 1] (4:01:05 - 4:01:08)

And the self was created by thoughts and emotions.

[Speaker 4] (4:01:09 - 4:01:10)

Yes, all those thoughts in the head.

[Speaker 1] (4:01:11 - 4:01:52)

And so then I recognized myself as consciousness, and so the self began to dissolve. The false sense of self, the unhappy me, the unhappy sense of self kind of crumbled. And all I knew suddenly, the next day I woke up, everything is so peaceful.

It took me years to understand what that actually was, that I had disidentified from the unhappy self, and I was simply there as a perceiving presence, which is a deeply peaceful way of being. So it was in London, England. So I walked around the streets going, wow, everything is so beautiful.

And there was just perceiving and peace underneath it.

[Speaker 4] (4:01:52 - 4:01:53)

Did your friends think you were nuts?

[Speaker 1] (4:01:55 - 4:02:04)

Some did. My mother did, especially when I then later walked out of my normal life.

[Speaker 4] (4:02:04 - 4:02:07)

So they all thought, Eckhart has lost his mind.

[Speaker 1] (4:02:07 - 4:02:09)

Yes. And in a way, you did, you did.

[Speaker 4] (4:02:10 - 4:02:17)

They were right, they were right. You did. How do you define spirituality versus religion?

What's the difference?

[Speaker 1] (4:02:18 - 4:02:38)

You can have religion with spirituality. You can also have religion without spirituality. Some people are so closely identified with their belief structure, they're really completely trapped in thinking.

And so there's no spaciousness. What we are doing here can actually be part of any religion.

[Speaker 4] (4:02:38 - 4:02:39)

Any religion, absolutely.

[Speaker 1] (4:02:40 - 4:02:41)

So as long as...

[Speaker 4] (4:02:41 - 4:02:44)

It can enhance the religion that you currently follow.

[Speaker 1] (4:02:44 - 4:02:44)

Yes, deepen it.

[Speaker 4] (4:02:45 - 4:02:45)

Deepen it.

[Speaker 1] (4:02:45 - 4:03:00)

Yes. For example, in Christianity, any Christian who wants to go deeper into their own religion and does not want to abandon their religion, there is enormous depth in Christian teaching in the words of Christ.

[Speaker 4] (4:03:02 - 4:03:07)

Absolutely. Everything that Christ came to teach is spirituality.

[Speaker 1] (4:03:07 - 4:03:08)

That's right.

[Speaker 4] (4:03:08 - 4:03:16)

That's what it is. Yes. Christ came to make manifest spirituality on earth.

What does prayer mean to you? Do you pray?

[Speaker 1] (4:03:17 - 4:03:29)

There's a saying that goes, if you talk to God, you pray. If God talks to you, you're insane. So it's very unlikely that God will speak to you in words, but...

[Speaker 4] (4:03:29 - 4:03:32)

Because God speaks through stillness.

[Speaker 12] (4:03:32 - 4:03:32)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (4:03:33 - 4:03:39)

That's where you find God. Yes. The Bible says, be still and know that I am God.

[Speaker 12] (4:03:39 - 4:03:39)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (4:03:39 - 4:03:40)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (4:03:40 - 4:03:48)

I think prayer to me could be called, I'm often in a state of listening, which really is an aspect of presence when you're just receptive.

[Speaker 4] (4:03:48 - 4:03:49)

That is your prayer.

[Speaker 1] (4:03:49 - 4:04:14)

Yes, like that. I could be like, it's wonderful just enjoying the presence that is there when you're not thinking and just being, just like this. And then when you become present, you become aware of a presence, a divine presence, both within and without.

[Speaker 4] (4:04:14 - 4:04:15)

Yes, in all things.

[Speaker 1] (4:04:15 - 4:04:18)

And that's why this is, I call it also prayer.

[Speaker 4] (4:04:18 - 4:04:22)

Prayer. So what do you do for fun?

[Speaker 1] (4:04:23 - 4:04:38)

Fun is every moment. I don't look for, where can I find some fun? Sometimes people ask me that and I cannot answer that question because I enjoy the present moment wherever I am.

And that's fun enough for me.

[Speaker 4] (4:04:40 - 4:04:42)

So you're having fun right now.

[Speaker 1] (4:04:42 - 4:04:43)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (4:04:43 - 4:04:43)

This is fun.

[Speaker 1] (4:04:44 - 4:04:44)

You are too.

[Speaker 4] (4:04:45 - 4:04:46)

I am too. You know I am.

[Speaker 1] (4:04:47 - 4:04:48)

I can see it.

[Speaker 4] (4:04:48 - 4:05:08)

You know I am. I know. That's what I feel too all the time.

Okay. That's really good. Coming up.

That cracks me up. That is an LOLer. I had no idea Eckhart could make me laugh so much.

And later, we find some breathing space at the dog beach. Back in a moment.

[Speaker 7] (4:05:16 - 4:06:10)

We're on a mission to tackle life's big questions. I'm Golriz. And I'm Devin.

And this is Soul Pancake. And now we gotta jump, jump. And now we gotta duck.

You go left. Go right. Made it.

Good job. All right. Ready?

It seems like every time we turn on the news, we're bombarded by negativity. And it can be hard not to let all that bad news drag us down. So Soul Pancake decided to switch it up and focus on all the good news in people's lives.

And this is good news. And now, over to you, Devin. Thanks, Devin.

I'm here with... My name is Tim Dunn. I'm from West Hartford, Connecticut.

[Speaker 12] (4:06:10 - 4:06:12)

Hello. Hi. How are you?

[Speaker 7] (4:06:12 - 4:06:13)

I'm good. How are you?

[Speaker 12] (4:06:13 - 4:06:15)

I'm good. Nice shoes.

[Speaker 7] (4:06:15 - 4:06:25)

They look comfortable and breathable. And what's your name? Ramsey.

What is one bit of good news that you've heard lately?

[Speaker 2] (4:06:25 - 4:06:29)

My grandson got a job. That was really good.

[Speaker 7] (4:06:29 - 4:06:37)

Actually, Ramsey's learning how to skateboard. And I think that's pretty, pretty tough business. Well, my sister, she actually got engaged to her boyfriend.

They've been together for like seven years.

[Speaker 4] (4:06:38 - 4:06:42)

My son got straight B's in school. It's great news. I was very proud of him.

[Speaker 2] (4:06:42 - 4:06:46)

My 16-year-old nephew, Eli, he's learning to sing. He's going to be on Broadway someday.

[Speaker 3] (4:06:50 - 4:06:59)

The best thing that happened to me this week was going to my sister's wedding in Las Vegas on Saturday. We had a 70s-themed wedding. So I actually got to have an afro again.

[Speaker 9] (4:07:00 - 4:07:05)

My friend, Yohan, was visiting from France. And he brought sausages on here.

[Speaker 2] (4:07:05 - 4:07:09)

I have a friend that I thought he was mad at me. And he said he wasn't. Now we're friends again.

[Speaker 9] (4:07:09 - 4:07:13)

That was really good. He kind of looks like a sausage. Hi.

[Speaker 3] (4:07:13 - 4:07:20)

Probably the thing that makes me the most happy is today, my daughter, my youngest daughter, just told me she's expecting a baby. So I'm going to be a grandfather for the first time.

[Speaker 2] (4:07:20 - 4:07:24)

In about two weeks, I am going to become a grandmother for the very first time.

[Speaker 8] (4:07:24 - 4:07:29)

The other good news is that I'm here with my best friend and husband of 52 years.

[Speaker 10] (4:07:30 - 4:07:36)

We were high school sweethearts. And now we just have reconnected, you know, after like 40 years. It's like being 16 again.

[Speaker 3] (4:07:37 - 4:07:42)

I got a lot of things to be happy about or positive about. And people are just positive with each other. And then I think it is contagious.

[Speaker 8] (4:07:42 - 4:07:53)

Just to breathe the air. Just to be alive. Just to be happy with who you are and what you do.

There's so much to just make your day perfect.

[Speaker 7] (4:07:54 - 4:08:01)

Oh, that's wonderful. Thank you for sharing that. Yeah, high five.

High five. High five? Yeah.

Yeah.

[Speaker 4] (4:08:13 - 4:08:20)

Where do you feel most at home or at peace?

[Speaker 1] (4:08:21 - 4:08:34)

Wherever I am in the stillness. That is wherever I go, the stillness is there. And that's my home.

I actually feel that being rooted in that as my home.

[Speaker 4] (4:08:34 - 4:08:36)

So are you always happy, Eckhart?

[Speaker 1] (4:08:36 - 4:08:46)

I don't call it happy, although I have used happy occasionally in the book. But it's more a state of peaceful aliveness.

[Speaker 4] (4:08:47 - 4:08:48)

Oh, I love that.

[Speaker 1] (4:08:48 - 4:08:48)

Yeah.

[Speaker 4] (4:08:49 - 4:08:51)

Yeah. Have you lost your ego?

[Speaker 1] (4:08:51 - 4:08:51)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (4:08:52 - 4:08:53)

You have completely?

[Speaker 1] (4:08:54 - 4:09:02)

Well, let's see. Who knows? Tomorrow it may suddenly appear again.

Let me know if it does. Because I wouldn't know it if it's really the ego.

[Speaker 4] (4:09:02 - 4:09:07)

Really? Because people, if you're acting in the ego, you don't even know it.

[Speaker 1] (4:09:07 - 4:09:09)

If you're really in the ego, you don't know it.

[Speaker 4] (4:09:12 - 4:09:30)

But how can that be so when what you teach us in A New Earth is that to be aware of it. And the more you're aware of it, you can say, because I've been able to see it. Oh, there's my ego.

There's my ego. There it is showing up again. I see it.

I see it. I see it. So there is an awareness.

[Speaker 1] (4:09:31 - 4:09:31)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (4:09:31 - 4:09:32)

Because mine's still alive.

[Speaker 1] (4:09:32 - 4:09:45)

But that's already, the shift is already happening. The awareness is there. You're not totally in the grip of it because the awareness arises also.

But there are many others who are still totally in the grip.

[Speaker 4] (4:09:45 - 4:09:51)

So if you're totally in the grip of it, you can't be aware that it has shown up. Finish this sentence. The world needs?

[Speaker 1] (4:09:52 - 4:09:53)

Spiritual awakening.

[Speaker 4] (4:09:54 - 4:09:57)

Awakening. I believe in?

[Speaker 1] (4:09:59 - 4:10:00)

Nothing in particular.

[Speaker 12] (4:10:07 - 4:10:13)

Oh, that cracks me up.

[Speaker 4] (4:10:14 - 4:10:22)

That is an LOLer. Okay. Love is.

Love is.

[Speaker 1] (4:10:23 - 4:10:32)

The recognition of yourself, the essence of yourself in the other. The recognition of the essence of who you are in the other.

[Speaker 4] (4:10:32 - 4:10:33)

In the other?

[Speaker 1] (4:10:33 - 4:10:39)

In the other. You recognize yourself in the other. As the other.

The oneness.

[Speaker 4] (4:10:39 - 4:10:41)

The oneness of all life.

[Speaker 1] (4:10:41 - 4:10:42)

The recognition of oneness.

[Speaker 4] (4:10:43 - 4:10:47)

Wow, that is love. That's a good definition. I'm grateful for?

[Speaker 1] (4:10:48 - 4:10:59)

I'm grateful for always this moment. The now. No matter what form it takes.

[Speaker 4] (4:10:59 - 4:11:04)

That's great. That is great. This was fun.

[Speaker 1] (4:11:04 - 4:11:04)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (4:11:06 - 4:12:20)

Wow, I believe in nothing in particular. That's the first time anybody is like that. I believe in nothing in particular.

That's great. In today's breathing space, I can't think of a more joyful place to be than here at a dog beach along the shores of Lake Michigan. As Eckhart Tolle wrote in the book, The Guardians of Being, just watching an animal closely can take you out of your mind and bring you into the present moment.

Which is where the animal lives all the time. Surrendered to life. That's probably one of the reasons we love our dogs as much as we do.

See you next Sunday.

[Speaker 12] (4:12:38 - 4:12:39)

Welcome.

[Speaker 1] (4:12:42 - 4:45:01)

It's time again to talk about, experience another book. And what I've chosen for today could be called one of the greatest spiritual treasures of humanity. It has also been called India's greatest contribution to the world.

The name of the book, which I have here, well, I have four books here, but it's just different translations of the one book. The name of this book is, of course, some of you will know it. Some may know it quite well and others may never have heard of it.

The Bhagavad Gita, which means translated something like the song of God or the divine song. The book dates back to very ancient times. Nobody knows exactly how old it is.

Some people say it's 2000 years old. Others say it's pre-Buddhistic. Which would date it older than 2,500 years.

And others say, as it's claimed on the back cover of one of the translations that I have here, says that this book is 5,000 years old. That doesn't really matter. It certainly is ancient.

But we are not looking at it from an analytical or academic point of view. So whether it's 2,000 or 5,000 years old doesn't really matter because a book of this kind is timeless. It has survived thousands of years because it goes far beyond the culture out of which it came.

It transcends the particular culture out of which it arose in the same way that the Tao Te Ching transcends culture. The language the book was written in is, of course, the ancient sacred language of India. It's called Sanskrit.

The author is unknown. And the book is presented as a dialogue between disciple and Krishna. Krishna was a spiritual teacher or an incarnation of the divine.

Krishna, we know very little about Krishna or whether an actual person once lived long before the Buddha whose name was Krishna. It probably is the case that there was such a being. It is also likely, by the way, that his name, Krishna, is related to the originally Greek term Christos, Christ, Krishna, Christos, referring to an enlightened being.

But in this book, Krishna is the mouthpiece of, verbalizes the teaching. The disciple is Arjuna. His name is Arjuna.

And he asks Krishna questions. And Krishna gives a spiritual teaching, which is the book, the Bhagavad Gita. If you haven't read it yet, I suggest that you do.

There's a wide choice of translations, all different. This book is the Penguin Classic. Whether the cover is still the same as here, I don't know.

And when I opened it the other day, I saw that I put the date in here when I bought this book, 1977. Miraculously, it survived. I lost most of my books because I moved around so much.

But this one miraculously stayed with me. And this is when I first read it and immediately realized how profound it is. And I still have many things underlined in it.

The translation is by somebody called Juan Mascaro, a Spanish person, but he was bilingual in English, Spanish, and he also was a scholar of Sanskrit. A good poetic translation, I recommend it. Another good translation is Stephen Mitchell's translation, the Bhagavad Gita.

Again, somewhat different, also very good. The translation that we are going to use here, it wasn't easy to decide which translation to use here. But I decided on this very unusual translation by Jack Hawley, the Bhagavad Gita, A Walkthrough for Westerners, it's called.

Translated by Jack Hawley, published by New World Library, who, by the way, also published The Power of Now and Stillness Speaks. And this is a highly unusual translation. It is a free translation.

It is not particularly poetic. So some of that poetry that is there, of course, much more strongly in the original than in any translation, some of the poetry is lost. However, what is gained is greater accessibility, especially for Western readers.

And purists might frown upon this translation, but I believe it's the one that is the easiest at least to start with. Once you have absorbed the content, you can have a look at a more poetic translation. This translation successfully, from time to time, incorporates what one could call almost an interpretation, a brief interpretation into the text, but it's so well incorporated that you don't actually notice it.

So sometimes when certain terms are mentioned that are not explained in the original or in any of the other translations, the translator builds into the translation a very brief explanation of the term, not as a separate footnote, but as part of the text, and that most of the time works quite well. When you begin reading the Bhagavad Gita, you will, of course, you start with chapter one, and there you encounter the one, the greatest stumbling block, chapter one. Now I have to explain why that is a stumbling block.

Many people start reading it and give up before they reach the end of chapter one, but that's not necessary. Chapter one is not particularly important as far as the whole of the Bhagavad Gita is concerned. The reason why it's there, chapter one concerns Arjuna's question to Krishna whether Arjuna is a warrior, whether he should fight this impending battle or not.

Now before I explain that further, one thing needs to be mentioned. This scripture, this sacred scripture, the Bhagavad Gita, was at some point incorporated, put into a huge epic, the world's longest religious, to some extent, epic called the Mahabharata. It's a long epic.

It's about warfare between, one could say, the good side, the evil side, but all the people who are engaged in this, the kings and the princes, are related. So it's the Mahabharata is a huge epic about struggle between good and evil. It's not particularly spiritual.

It's interesting, but not particularly spiritual. And then suddenly in the middle of that, as they're about to fight a huge battle, there's Arjuna in his chariot and Krishna, the charioteer. And suddenly in the middle of this, just before the battle starts, on the huge army on the left, another huge army on the right, Krishna, Arjuna asks Krishna, I don't want to fight this battle.

And Krishna says, but you should fight because that's your duty. And so many people have questioned that advice and said, why is the incarnation of God telling Krishna to engage in warfare? And that's a legitimate question.

The answer, you can choose which answer most appeals to you, could be that it is used metaphorically, which means carry on doing what you are doing, engage with life and don't withdraw from life, but engage with life. And you'll see that's part of the teaching is to engage with life, not to withdraw from action, but to be active. So it could also be seen metaphorically as the warfare against the false self.

The reason could also be that the first chapter provides a link between the rest of the epic and the Bhagavad Gita. The rest of the epic is about warfare. So that it doesn't look totally alien, the first chapter is a link between what happens in the epic and connects it to it.

It's a little bit like, let's say, give an analogy, you have soap operas. I hope Indian people are not offended if I compare the Mahabharata with a soap opera, but basically it's big egos fighting each other. So it's a soap opera.

Let's say you had a soap opera, like a long running, extremely long soap opera. In England, perhaps they have the longest running soap opera called Coronation Street on television. It's about a working class street where things happen all the time, dramas unfold, and so on.

And people meet in the pub every day. So imagine one of the, out of 500 episodes of Coronation Street, one episode suddenly starts like this. The people meet in the pub again, drinking their beer, and suddenly somebody walks in who is an incarnation of the divine and starts talking to the characters there who ask questions, say, well, what about our lives?

What do we do? And suddenly this character gives a spiritual teaching and that the entire episode of this Coronation Street is the spiritual teaching that is given in the pub there. And the next episode is the usual thing.

You carry on. So this, and of course, somehow you'd have to connect this with the rest of the episodes. So there would be an introductory remarks, perhaps by this person who walks in that connects it somehow to the rest of the episodes.

So here we have an analogy of how the Bhagavad Gita fits into the Mahabharata. And so the interesting thing happens then as this dialogue begins to unfold, the entire action, the army on the left, the army on the right gets frozen as if imagine suddenly everything, nothing moving anymore except the two characters in the middle, Arjuna and Krishna. So while the dialogue unfolds, the entire length of the book, the armies don't move.

Nothing moves. So everything gets frozen. So imagine visually huge army preparing for battle and suddenly everybody's, it's not mentioned as such, but that's how it is.

And while they talk, the armies just seem to disappear. They don't play a part in this anymore. So they're in the middle of the battlefield before the battle, but everything freezes.

And then the teaching is given. So the first chapter, you can just quickly read through knowing that it provides a link to the rest of this epic. And then it really starts with chapter two.

And occasionally even in chapter two, there's still occasional brief mentions of the battle, but mostly that's the actual beginning of the teaching. And most chapters, chapter two is no exception, already contain the entirety of the Bhagavad Gita. So the main themes occur again and again in every chapter.

So all we need to do today perhaps is look at chapter two, which already really contains the essence of it, especially one particular teaching. And perhaps we'll also look at one other segment in a later part of the Bhagavad Gita as before we finish our session today. And again, as is usually the case, when we talk about a book, it is ultimately not about the book.

It is ultimately about you. It's about consciousness. It's about spiritual awakening.

So it's a spiritual teaching seen through the eyes of this particular book. It's not something external to you ultimately. It's not an academic subject.

You can look at this as an academic subject too, but you can go to university and study it, but then it's no longer truly alive. And so Krishna begins to teach Arjuna about, begins already with a profound teaching about death and eternal life. And Krishna says, this is in chapter two, which I don't start from the very beginning, but a little bit into chapter two, there has never been a time when I, or you, or any of these kings and soldiers here did not exist.

And there will never be a time when we cease to exist. Physical bodies appear and disappear, but not the atma, which could be translated as the soul, the spirit, the life force, the formless. So physical bodies appear and disappear, but not the atma that lives within them.

This life force comes and dwells in a body for a while. While they're in, it experiences infancy, childhood, youth, and old age. And then upon death, passes eventually to a new body.

Changes such as death pertain to the body, not the atma. The wise person does not get caught up in the delusion that he or she is this body. This delusion is the very definition of ego.

So the importance, he points out the importance of not identifying with the physical form, because the physical form dissolves quickly. And if you've ever experienced, looked at a dead body, even a dead body of an animal, a pet, your dog, your cat, and even more so the dead body of a human being, then it's so obvious and so clear that that is just a shell, that that being never was the body. It's never more clear than in the moment when the spirit has departed, the animating presence is no longer animating that physical form, after which very quickly, of course, it dissolves.

It's no longer, it's so clear, even beyond, you don't need to think about it, that that person never was the body. That this is just an empty shell that's left. And if you wait for long enough, you can see the empty shell dissolving very quickly.

Just a few days and it's unrecognizable. And so this doesn't require a lot of thought to see, to realize something that's so obvious. Because something that was there is no longer there animating this form.

And therefore, the true being was never that physical form. Now, you might have mistaken it, but now it's totally, if you didn't know it before, and once you realize that, then you can look at all the people in your life, whether they're close to you or anybody, but particularly, perhaps, people who are close to you and see that the essence of who they are is not their body, their physical body. And if you go a little deeper, then you see that the essence of who they are is not their physical body.

It's not their psychological form either. The psychological entity, the me entity. I have often spoken about that, so I won't go into that now.

But just here's the immediate realization then that to equate the body with who somebody is or to equate the body with who you are is an illusion. Arjuna, Krishna addresses Arjuna. Arjuna, he says, the contact of bodily senses with objects and attractions in the world creates feelings like sorrow or happiness and sensations like heat or cold.

But these are impermanent, transitory, coming and going like passing clouds. Just endure them patiently and bravely learn to be unaffected by them. So he's teaching to accept whatever sensory perception arises to accept it as it is.

And talks about sensations like heat and cold and other physical sensations arise and if you don't react to them you step out to some extent of identification with form because the more you react against something the more you get trapped in form, identification with form. It says here, contact of bodily senses with objects and attractions in the world creates feelings like sorrow or happiness and sensations like heat or cold. One could differentiate that a little bit more.

On the one hand you have sensations that arise as you go through life, pain sometimes, but happiness and sorrow arise not really immediately through sensations but through a mental interpretation of sensations. So you need to look of course how your mind interprets what's happening around you, how your mind interprets your sensory input and see that the happiness, the misery, it's a mental choice, it's a judgment of the mind rather than the immediate sensory perception. The serene person unaffected by these worldly feelings and sensations is the same in pain and pleasure and does not allow him or herself to get disturbed or sidetracked.

This is the person fit for immortality. Realize this and assert your strengths, Arjuna. Do not identify your true self merely with your mortal body.

So it's through, it really comes down to accepting what is, whether it's a physical thing or a situation, accepting what is rather than reacting. Now an interesting sentence here, if you do not get disturbed by the external things that happen, then you are the person, as it says here, fit for immortality. That's an interesting thing to say because on the one hand, they just said that the essence of every human being is immortal.

And then here they say, it's when you not identify with external forms and sensory perceptions, but allow them to be, then you are fit for immortality. So one would need to add here what Krishna is talking about is conscious immortality, to be conscious of your own immortality, which is very different from unconscious immortality. When you are not conscious of your immortality, there's great fear of death.

So conscious immortality is realizing within yourself the essence of who you are beyond the form. That is conscious immortality. And you can only realize the essence of who you are beyond the form if you don't react continuously to the forms that arise around you as sensory perceptions.

Situations, people, they all become sensory perceptions. If you live in reactivity, I want to have that, I must introduce you, then of course you're trapped more and more in form, especially psychological form. So allowing things to be, not being dependent on externals is part of the spiritual practice, is part of realizing yourself as formless consciousness.

So this is the teaching of detachment. Without detachment, you can talk about spiritual things for a hundred years and talk about God in every other sentence, and it makes no difference. There's nothing spiritual in anything you say or believe in.

Without detachment, the spiritual dimension is not open, hasn't opened up. And Krishna continues, real as used in spirituality means that which is eternal, never changing, indestructible. This is a very definition of reality.

That which is real in spiritual language, spiritual terms, that which is real never ceases to be. Anything that is impermanent, even if it lasts a very long time and seems durable, eventually changes and thus does not have true reality. The wise ones understand the difference between the real and the not real.

When you fully understand this profound fact, you will have attained the zenith or pinnacle of all knowledge. This needs to be qualified a little bit. He says, when you fully understand this profound fact, which is the difference between real and unreal, now this translation here may not be the ideal one because it's not, this gives the impression that there's intellectual understanding required for you to realize the real.

So when he says, when you fully understand this profound fact, it really means when you fully realize this profound fact, understanding would be an intellectual work, analytical work. And just, oh, now I get it. The real doesn't change and the unreal is whatever changes.

I'm beginning to understand now. No, that's not it. So it's not understanding as such, it's realizing.

So I would suggest a different translation here. When you fully realize this profound fact, you will have attained the pinnacle of all knowledge. And how do you realize that?

Well, that's what it's all about, to realize that in you that's not subject to change. Well, where is that? Well, you could approach it very simply.

What is it that never changes in your life? One could ask.

[Speaker 12] (4:45:04 - 4:45:06)

Well, I don't know.

[Speaker 1] (4:45:07 - 7:17:36)

Well, if you look closely, you see one thing never changes. Your life is always now. It's always the present moment.

It has never not been the present moment, undoubtedly. No, could it ever not be the present moment? So your life is always the present moment.

Not what happens in the present moment that changes, but it's always the space of the present moment. That space, that there's content in it, but in itself it is just space for the content, that is unchanging. And that is consciousness, not the content of consciousness.

The space of consciousness. And so if you become acutely aware of the present moment as the very foundation of your life, or the very essence really of who you are, you are the present moment in which everything arises and then disappears again. Forms come and go.

What he talks about, the impermanence of all forms. Therefore, the forms are not ultimately real. Only that which is beyond form is real.

So what arises in the present moment is not ultimately real, but that which gives rise to it is real. It's consciousness itself. One's body, then Krishna says, is not real.

Not in those terms. And yet there is something that dwells within the body that is real.

And it is called here the atma, which is existence itself, says this translation.

I would suggest another translation here, which is being itself. Because it's not existence, because existence is something that stands out, that has form. X means out, Latin.

Sistens, standing. So he's not talking about existence. He's talking that which underlies existence, which is being.

But then he suggests two other terms for it. Awareness or pure consciousness, which is correct. So I'll read one more time this little part.

One's body, then, is not real. And yet there is something that dwells within the body that is real. The atma, which is being, I've changed the translation, which is being itself.

Awareness, pure consciousness. The wonderful thing, just a brief mention, when you are in touch with the truth within yourself, the truth of being, of who you are, and you read a spiritual text or the translation of a text or something handed down over centuries, you can immediately see what's wrong or what's right. I can see what's wrong or right in this translation without knowing Sanskrit.

Because immediately you see it, oh, that's the wrong translation. Don't even need to look up what the original is because the truth is realized within. And whether or not it's accurately shown when you see a text, you know it immediately.

I'll just, again, I'm jumping ahead now just to illustrate what I just said. In the same, still chapter two where we are, just a little bit further, it says this, just an illustration of what I just said to you. A reservoir that is necessary for a person during a dry spell is of little use during a flood.

Similarly to the enlightened person, even scriptures are superfluous. Yes, live amicably with worldly existence, but know you must transcend it. Prepare yourself for nothing less than union with divinity itself.

The important part here that I, why I read it is a reservoir of water that is necessary during a dry spell is of little use during a flood. So to the enlightened person, the scriptures are superfluous. You don't need books and scriptures anymore, but you may enjoy them.

And if something is not correct in them, also the mistranslation or because it's been misquoted, trans had been like some of the sayings of Jesus. You can, when I first saw the New Testament after my shift in consciousness and read it, I could see the truth of it. And I also saw occasionally that can't be right.

That's not how it is. So how the person, the evangelist or whoever wrote it had misinterpreted the original teaching. So that's a wonderful thing.

You recognize the truth when you see it. And when it's not quite right, you immediately know it. So he talks about the reality of who you are beyond the physical form.

And the next sentence here is, get to know this reality. It pervades the entire cosmos and is unchanging and indestructible. No power can affect it.

No one can change the changeless. And I like that translation, get to know this reality, which is better than understand because you can't understand it. It pervades the entire cosmos and is unchanging and indestructible.

This Atma is like space or sky. Clouds appear in the sky, but their presence does not cause the sky to grow apart to make room for them. In the same manner, the Atma, the true self within, remains ever itself.

Things of the material universe come and go, appear and disappear, but the Atma never changes. So I often, of course, use space also as one of the most appropriate words to point to that formless essence of all life. It is like space.

What we experience as space, and you can't even experience space, but somehow it's there. The Atma, the real us, was never born, nor will it ever die. This eternal reality within is never destroyed.

When your ego takes over and you erroneously identify yourself with the body, you feel that physical death is death to the self, and that is frightening. But the self, the Atma, can never be killed. When the body is slain, the Atma remains unaffected.

As a person sheds a worn-out garment, the dweller within the body casts aside its time-worn human frame and dons a new one. The cessation of your present pain and sorrow will depend on how well you overcome your ignorance of your true self that lives within you. So the only way of being free of suffering, of sorrow, is to overcome the ignorance of your true self that lives within you.

And then it continues to talk more and more again. We're still in the same chapter of the nature of the self. It's in some way repetitious, but that is how the reading of it, or the listening to it, can in itself become a transformational process if you listen in a state of openness and receptivity.

So I'll read just another two little paragraphs. He says, nothing new now that hasn't already been said, but in slightly different words, repeats the same, to drive it home, to drive it into you, where the truth can be recognized, not by the ego, but by the underlying intelligence. It is not easy to fathom this mysterious concept of the true self.

Everything else in the world changes. Every creature, rock, blade of grass, human being, element or component of any kind changes. Only the atma never changes.

Because it is never modified, it is termed immutable. Because it is invisible, has no form and cannot be heard, smelled or touched, it is termed unmanifested. Because the human mind cannot perceive or conceive it, it is said to be unknowable.

Unknowable means you cannot understand it. Ah yes, he actually says that. No one really understands the atma.

One person sees it as wondrous, another speaks of its glory, another say it's, others say it is strange. And there are many who listen but do not comprehend it at all. Very few even think of inquiring into what is beyond this physical world.

Humans who are not ready yet for this realization have no interest in even asking the question. They continue to be identified with form, believing that that is all there is and all they want and all they need. And as they continue to be identified with form, gradually their suffering grows.

Increases more and more until finally something in them cracks open. A little crack appears in their otherwise impenetrable form identity and then they begin to be open to the deeper message. Open to, they begin to, they can then suddenly hear the truth of this and then want to know more, go more deeply into it.

And we'll skip a few paragraphs now. In the next sentence here, there's a brief reference again to the battle but already it's used metaphorically. Rather than the real battle, heed this important point about life in general.

The way to win this great war is to react alike to both pain and pleasure, profit and loss, victory and defeat. You may remember I wrote in the A New Earth about the Zen master who, when accused of having done something, falsely accused, all he ever said is, is that so? He immediately accepted.

He reacted alike to pain and pleasure, victory and defeat. Just completely at one with the is-ness, as I sometimes call it, of the present moment. That's what it is.

So the way to this realization is the inner alignment, the inner oneness with what is now. And the spiritual practice is, as I sometimes put it, saying yes to whatever arises in this moment. So pain or pleasure, it is what it is at this moment.

Profit or loss is what it is. Victory or defeat is what it is. But it also implies, it's not that you become devastated when there is a defeat, you lose your job, but also means when there is a victory or gain, you don't become ecstatic.

You say, oh, that's nice. Well, okay. You don't go, well, yeah, I got it.

Yeah, yeah. Because you're creating a high and before you know it, the thing that created that high is taken away from you or dissolves or loses its ability to make you feel that. And then you, oh, no.

So the continuous dependency on external factors. So the good and the bad is accepted as it is. But you can only do that when you are rooted in the stillness of being and know that as the source of all satisfaction.

Then the defeat does not remove that and the victory doesn't really add anything to that. It's just what happens in the world of form. Things come and go.

Things are given and taken away. And now we come still in the same chapter to what some people, including Mahatma Gandhi, who read the Bhagavad Gita throughout his life, whenever he needed inspiration, he would go back to it. And according to him, what comes now and other interpreters and teachers is the central, the most important teaching of the Bhagavad Gita.

So Krishna continues to speak. You have now heard an intellectual explanation of the principle of atma, the true self, and of the need to discriminate between the real, the unchanging, and the not real, anything that changes. Now pay attention while I explain a practical spiritual discipline called karma yoga for living a more effective, happier life in this vexing, ever-changing world.

This is the path of selfless, God-dedicated action. By making this your path, you can live a spiritual life and yet stay fully active in the world. You can remain a man of action, achieving your very best, and yet not be bound or caught by the worldly.

So the term is karma yoga. Of this spiritual practice, yoga, don't think of yoga as the physical yoga that's only a small aspect of the larger yoga. Yoga means union.

So it's union with God. Karma yoga, karma, the literal meaning of the word karma is action. So when we usually talk about karma, we talk about action and reaction, and reaction, reaction, but the meaning of karma is action.

So karma yoga means union with God, the universal spirit, consciousness, through action. This was a revolutionary teaching, and for many people it still is. Traditionally in India, many other places too, the only way people thought you could achieve spiritual awakening was to withdraw from the world and become a hermit, become a monk, to renounce, to become a renunciate, renounce all worldly goods, renounce involvement in the things of this world.

That was traditionally what was regarded as the only way to spiritual awakening. And here in the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna teaches that yes, renunciation is one of the possible paths to spiritual awakening, but it is not the one for most humans. And he teaches that there is another path that does not involve turning away from involvement in worldly things.

Now he explains further what karma yoga is. When one's actions are not based on desire for personal reward, one can more easily steady the mind and direct it towards the atma, the true self within. For the person of steady mind, there's always just one decision.

Your attention is on being, on consciousness. But for the quivering mind pulled in a thousand directions, the decisions that plague it are endless and they exhaust one's mental strength. Further explanation of what karma yoga is, work hard in the world, but for work's sake only.

That's the translation here. Now that I've scribbled here, I looked it up, how this person, Mascaro translates the same sentence and it's quite beautiful. And this sentence is the essence of karma yoga, that spiritual practice.

Set thy heart upon thy work, but never on its reward. And there we have the essence of the whole thing. And that becomes a spiritual practice.

Now what does it mean exactly? Set thy heart upon thy work. Give whatever, and work does not just mean the work that you do for a living.

Work means any action that you perform. Set thy heart upon thy work means give whatever action you perform in this moment your fullest attention. Do it fully, be fully in it.

But never, don't set your heart on its reward. Setting your heart on its reward means where's your attention? Most people who don't live like this, they don't practice karma yoga.

When they perform an action, whether it's the work they do for a living or any action that they perform from the most insignificant things to wiping a table clean or making a cup of tea or putting on your shoes. These are all actions. But for most people, they set their heart, to use the terminology used here, upon the reward of the action.

Now the reward of the action comes, of course, is not now. It's a future thing. You're focusing on some desired outcome.

So in other words, large part of your attention is not in what you're doing. A large part of your attention is on the future moment that you want to get to through this particular doing. And when I say large part of your attention is on the future moment that you want to get to, what I'm really saying is that a large part of your attention is in your mind, in your thoughts, rather than in the doing.

Because the future that you want to get to is no more than thought forms. There is no actual future anywhere, ever. So when you are focused mentally on the reward in the terminology of the Gita, you're really trapped in thought patterns of future.

Those thoughts of future reward, outcome, where I want to get to, what I want to achieve through this, takes attention away from the doing itself. And the doing becomes inferior in your mind to the desired outcome. And so the energy that flows into the doing is karmic energy in terminology of this.

It creates further suffering. And you're already, you're not connected to the deeper intelligence within you when you are focused on the reward of the, sometimes it's called also the fruit of your action in some translations. So when you are focused on the action itself, then the ego is no longer operating through you.

The egoic self, the false self, is no longer performing the action. But you connect with a deeper level within yourself when you are fully giving your fullest attention to what you are doing. Egoic action is always a means to an end.

This is why the ego also, every human being the ego meets becomes somehow a means to an end. You're never, the ego cannot fully appreciate the presence or the being of another human being. It cannot honor another human being.

It cannot love another human being. It unconsciously can only use another human being for some egoic purpose. It doesn't know that.

It might even think it's in love with another human being, not knowing that what they call in love is the ego wanting to have this human being in your life because it adds something to who you think you are or it fills a feeling of lack inside you temporarily. And then this other human being is there to make you feel complete. You make me feel complete, but it doesn't work for very long, of course, because that incompleteness is always part of the egoic consciousness.

So this is a vital practice of not, as I sometimes put it, not making this moment, whatever you're doing in this moment, not making that into a means to an end. That's basically the same teaching as the Gita in slightly different words. Don't do anything as primarily, yes, it may also be a means to an end, of course, if you put on your shoes or you put on your pants.

Of course, you know that the end is you want to have the shoes on your feet or you want to have the pants on your body. But while you're putting them on, you can give your fullest attention and appreciation to that movement also. So yes, on the periphery of your consciousness, there is an end that you want to achieve, but the focal point of your attention is on the doing.

That's the reversal of normal consciousness or unconsciousness, where on the periphery, you're aware of what you're doing in the present moment, but your main attention is where you want to get to with that action, the fruit of the action. And that keeps you trapped in the bondage and in ego and in identification with form, in future, in thought.

Set thy heart upon thy work, but never on its reward.

You have every right to work, but you should not crave the fruits of it. Although no one may deny you the outcomes of your efforts, you can, through determination, refuse to be attached to or affected by the results, whether favorable or unfavorable. Desire for the fruits of one's actions brings worry about possible failure.

This is the quivering mind I mentioned. When you are preoccupied with end results, you pull yourself from the present into an imagined, usually fearful future. Then your anxiety robs your energy and making matters worse, you may lapse into inaction and laziness.

So you either get stressed, in continuous stress, or you can't stand it anymore and then you can't do anything anymore. And now a very important statement follows. One does not accomplish great ends in some by and by future.

Only in the present can you hammer out real achievement. The worried mind tends to veer from the only real goal, realizing the Atma, uniting with divinity, the true self within. So you cannot accomplish great ends in some future moment.

Only the present, only in the present, can you hammer out, as he translates, real achievement. So all true achievement is in the present moment, and that determines the quality of your life, as I call it. How present you are in what you do immediately brings quality into what you do.

It's hard to define what I mean by quality if you cannot feel it. There's a, do something totally as a means to an end or observe somebody performing some action, only concerned about the outcome. And you can see what I mean by low quality action.

You'll be doing, going, I want to get, I need to get there to this, not paying attention to really to anything because you have some thought of future outcome. And you get upset at the slightest obstacle that comes into you. Of course, obstacles arise all the time, of course, in one's life.

I want to get there, but then something stops me. And immediately when an obstacle comes in, somebody even questions something. They don't, you get either angry or fearful.

It shouldn't be happening. Whereas if you're aligned with the doing, then when an obstacle comes, immediately it's accepted and you look, you give it attention. And then you see, you immediately adjust to the newly arisen situation and take action.

You don't complain, oh, about somebody or some situation that has arisen. There's no huffing and puffing, as I sometimes call it. Because many humans go through life, huffing and puffing about this, complaining about this, shouldn't be this.

All that drops away because they're huffing, puffing because they have some idea of what they want in some future moment. It's never going to come anyway. So as an obstacle arises, immediately you look at it.

And then intelligent action arises. Because you're aligned with the present moment, you become much more intelligent. Not knowledgeable, necessarily, but intelligent.

Because you connect with a deeper level within yourself. And then what you say and do is more intelligent when you are aligned with what is, instead of trying to get it out of the way. That's the only way you can truly become intelligent.

That is the, that's why there's a book by Krishnamurti called The Awakening of Intelligence. Because that's what it is. The true intelligence is not really awakened at universities.

There you acquire knowledge or you develop your ability to analyze. But it's not yet true intelligence. The ideal, then, Krishna says, is to be intensely active and at the same time have no selfish motives, no thoughts of personal gain or loss.

Duty uncontaminated by desire leads to inner peacefulness and increased effectiveness. This is the secret art of living a life of real achievement. So real achievement is always in the present moment.

How are you dealing with this moment? How are you performing whatever action you are performing at this moment? What is the underlying state of consciousness with which the action is being performed?

That is achievement, to be at one with the doing rather than some future idea. And that is success, true success. True success is a successful present moment.

And a successful present moment is being one with the present moment. And Krishna goes on to say, work performed with anxiety about results is far inferior to work done in a state of calmness. So he's saying something similar to what I just said about quality.

When he says it's far inferior, work performed with anxiety is far inferior to work done in a state of calmness. There's an incredible difference between something done in a state of oneness with what is and something done with some projected goal that I need to get to. Equanimity, the serene mental state free from likes and dislikes, attractions and repulsions is truly the ideal attitude in which to live your life.

To be in this state of mind is to be lodged in the divine. Pitiful are those pulled by the fruits of their action. And Krishna goes on to say that the living in this way gradually eliminates karma from your life.

When you're endowed with this basic detachment, you shed the karmic consequences of both your good and bad deeds, casting aside the inevitable effects of your actions. Never lose sight of the overriding goal, which is to free yourself from bondage during this lifetime, to shed attachment to worldly things, detach from ego and truly release yourself from the wheel of birth and death. When you do this, you actually become one with God.

And Krishna says to Arjuna, I see that you sigh at this breathtaking goal, Arjuna. Know that you can achieve this by first uniting your heart with God and only then pursuing worldly things. Proceed in this order, not in the reverse order, and then your actions will be linked to the very purpose of life, which is again union with the divine.

By first uniting your heart with God, I would put it somewhat differently. First, you need to be rooted in being, which means honoring the present moment, which means being aware of the stillness within you. Being aware that you are aware, being conscious that you're conscious, being conscious of consciousness, that space in you, so that you touch the source of all satisfaction.

And then you act. And then you don't lose yourself in the action. It's a continuous vigilance is required in this practice so that you don't lose yourself in the action.

And then that always means you become stressed or angry or upset or nervous. And there's always something more important that you need to get to and you're lost out there. The knowledge of the true self, which is called atmic wisdom, atmic comes from atma, this is the true self within, is not for all.

Those with agitated, uncontrolled minds cannot even guess that the atma is present here within. So not everybody is able yet to hear the truth of this or even to be interested in this, and that's fine. It just means they have to suffer a little bit more first.

Here's a brief description of how people lose themselves in unconsciousness. Brooding on or merely thinking about worldly attractions develops attachments to them, getting drawn into thought. From attachments to sense objects come selfish desires.

Thwarted desires cause anger to erupt. From anger arises delusion. This causes confusion of the mind and makes one forget the lessons of experience.

Forgotten lessons of experience cloud the reason which results in loss of discrimination between truth and non-truth, real and not real. Finally, losing the faculty of discrimination makes one veer from life's only purpose, achieving union with the divinity within. And so one's life itself is wasted.

One lifetime is wasted, but ultimately nothing is wasted. I'd like to add it's all part of the awakening of consciousness. So what a beautiful teaching.

And we've only looked at one chapter of the Bhagavad Gita. And we've seen the essence of it, union with the one, as it's called, or the divinity within, realizing who you are beyond form and the spiritual practice of karma yoga, which one translator also translates as consecrated action. That's also a beautiful translation of karma yoga, action that is like a consecration of its, this almost like a religious, like a sacramental act, even the most seemingly the most insignificant action that you do.

But let's see. So no matter really where you are in life or what actions you perform, you start wherever you are right now. You don't need to wait for conditions to get better for your spiritual practice or that you can withdraw from the world.

The revolutionary teaching of the Bhagavad Gita, it was revolutionary then, it still is in a way, that everyday life can be used as a spiritual practice. And no matter what form it takes and whatever form it takes for you is the most appropriate one for you at this moment. You have to see that and then start practicing.

And when you no longer resist the present moment, you may also be surprised how quickly certain situations change when the habitual resistance isn't there anymore. How often things change for the better. They're actually kept in place, situations that are difficult are often kept in place by the very resistance.

The unhappiness that arises through that resistance creates further unhappy experiences. And then you end up interpreting everything that happens through your unhappiness. And many humans live like that.

So let's be grateful that such a lovely teaching exists. As I said, this is perhaps the one to start with. If you want to read the Bhagavad Gita, there's so much in there that I would like to spend at least one other session soon going more deeply into some of the other chapters of the Bhagavad Gita.

Here I have a little Bhagavad Gita that I bought many years ago, also survived miraculously, published in India by the Theosophical Society, which has the Sanskrit and the English together. Not that probably you won't understand the Sanskrit, but it's just lovely to look at the writing. I believe the writing is called Devanagari, which means the writing of the gods.

This is a somewhat more literal translation, which you can look at later after you've read the more accessible translation. And I'd like to end from the literal translation of the end of chapter two. So all the chapters end in the following way.

Thus in the glorious Upanishads of the Bhagavad Gita, the science of the eternal, the scripture of yoga, the dialogue between Shri Krishna and Arjuna, the second discourse ended. Welcome. Today, we're going to look at a book again, not an entirely new book.

It's the second, our second session on the ancient Indian scripture called Bhagavad Gita, which translated means the song of God or the divine song. I'll just, as a way of introduction, I'll just for a few minutes talk about the background, Bhagavad Gita. I talked already in more detail at the beginning of the first session on the Bhagavad Gita, which many of you will have already seen.

So the Bhagavad Gita, nobody knows when exactly it was written and nobody knows who wrote it. But it is beyond any doubt, one of the most profound spiritual writings, teachings in existence. Some people say or believe it was written 2000 years ago and some go back as far as 3000 years.

So nobody really knows. And of course, the language it was written in is the ancient language of India, Sanskrit. There are many translations of the Bhagavad Gita.

And if you become interested in it, I recommend that you look at least at two or three different translations. Each translation may have some merit. No translation can be absolutely perfect.

If you really want to get to the bottom of it, you'll have to learn Sanskrit, which will take you 10 years or so, and then you can pick it up. But as an alternative to that, I recommend that you go within and find the source of consciousness within yourself, in which case you don't need to learn Sanskrit for 10 years. Because all any scripture can do is point you back to the source within yourself.

It's a map, not more than that. So some maps are very helpful, but no map is the territory. So don't become a collector of maps.

You can appreciate the maps, but the important thing is the destination, going there yourself. And the translation I will mostly use today is the same, of course, I used in our first session on the Bhagavad Gita. It is a free translation.

This is it, Bhagavad Gita. It's called A Walkthrough for Westerners. And this, I believe, is the most accessible translation.

It's unusual. The purist probably would frown upon it. It's a free translation.

It even incorporates a little bit of interpretation in a very subtle way. It incorporates some interpretation into the translation, which is very helpful for Westerners. Other translations that are very good are the Penguin Classic.

This is, I bought this one in 1977. It has the date in. This is a good translation.

Stephen Mitchell also did a good translation, and various others. So what we'll do today, I'll just select a few passages, brief passages, read them to you, and then comment on them. Now, let's start with a very interesting little passage.

As you may, everybody nowadays is familiar with the scientific theory of the Big Bang, that the universe started an inconceivable time ago out of nothingness, seemingly. The scientists, of course, have no idea. They don't even question what was there before the entire universe came into existence.

But they believe that it all started with a primordial kind of explosion. And what was there before then, nobody can even talk about it, because if there was no universe before the Big Bang, the entire question was, how long did it take for the universe before the universe was born? All that is totally meaningless.

You cannot ask that, because there is no time without the universe. But it is interesting that a scripture written 2,000 or 3,000 years ago already talks about basically this very event and puts it into a larger perspective. So I'll read this to you now, and then we can briefly talk about it.

When Brahma, the creator, that means God, basically, when Brahma, the creator, wakes up at the dawn of each cosmic day, this entire universe and all creatures in it are instantly manifested, only to be dissolved back into the unmanifested, formless at Brahma's cosmic nightfall. So the Bhagavad Gita says that the universe comes into existence when God, of course, it's a kind of analogy, it's not the absolute truth, which could not be expressed in words, but it could be a distant glimpse of the truth. God wakes up, and as God, the primordial one consciousness that underlies all of existence, as God wakes up, the universe begins to come into existence.

And it's called the day of Brahma, the day of God. But there's not only one day, there are many days when the same thing happens again and again. Let's listen to this.

But each cosmic day and night of Brahma lasts thousands of yugas, which are time periods, eons, and each yuga lasts 10,000 to 400,000 years. So it consists of countless periods, each period lasts 10,000 to 400,000 years. The time is all but incomprehensible to humans in succeeding days and nights of Brahma, the same multitude of beings helplessly comes to birth and death again and again as the physical universe continues its expanding and contracting.

So again and again, according to this, it happens that the universe, as God awakens, the universe comes into existence out of the unmanifested and out of nothing seemingly. And then the nightfall comes when the universe returns back into the nothingness out of which it came, the unmanifested. And that, according to this, that is the night of Brahma of God when God goes to sleep.

And here they compare it with human beings, this eternal cosmic play is the same in the microcosm of the individual soul as it is in the cosmos. When an individual goes to sleep, the entire world his or her mind experiences as real withdraws only to come alive again at waking. So there's the general dictum as above, so below.

So everything that is true for the macrocosm must also apply to the microcosm and vice versa. So if we look at certain things within ourselves, we can draw certain conclusions as to the nature of the universe. And this is, of course, something that scientists have neglected so far.

They only look at the outside world to find out how the universe works. But one can also look within into oneself and you can find out things there that you can then apply to the macrocosm. For example, one was mentioned here, you wake up in the morning and then at night you disappear into, especially in dreamless sleep, you disappear into nothingness.

In dreamless sleep, there's absolutely nothing. You kind of, you go back to the source, but you don't know it. Then you wake up again.

Isn't it strange that the entire population of the planet at a certain time, they all suddenly become unconscious as the planet revolves. Well, we are so used to it, we don't even question it, the fact that people go to sleep every night. It's so normal, nobody ever questions it.

But let's say you come from some other planet where things are not like that, although there must be similar things happening everywhere. It's strange that the entire population suddenly drops unconscious. Once every 24 hours, they all go, and then they wake up again.

It's called sleep. And then we also have the heart. The heart expands and contracts as it works, the human heart, it goes.

So you have the same expansion and contraction as it's here described, the expansion and even scientists are talking about it. The expansion of the universe and on a vast, inconceivable scale, the universe, an inconceivable spatial scale, an inconceivable time scale, the entire universe goes, this is the God awakens and becomes the universe, and then it goes just like the human heart. The entire universe goes.

And similarly, the in-breaths and the out-breaths, you could say that the in-breath of the universe is the coming back to the source. That's again, you can observe yourself, you breathe in and out all the time. These are the cycles, the heartbeat, the in-breaths and the out-breaths, waking up, going to sleep.

You breathe in and you breathe out. And so as above, so below, the entire universe in some way, we could say operates in the same way, the out-breath of God and the in-breath of God. Those are the cycles.

Now, when the universe awakens, which would be the big bang, it does not mean there's one slight word here that I would disagree with in this translation, where it says when the creator wakes up at the dawn of each cosmic day, this entire universe and all creatures in it are instantly manifested. I wouldn't say they're instantly manifested, they are gradually manifested. And in some sense, we could say, which it would not be right to say that the universe is completely awake already.

The universe is in the process of awakening. It didn't awaken with the big bang, that was the big bang, it was just like the human going like this in the morning after a good night's sleep, the eyes open a bit and you are just still fairly unconscious. And then gradually more consciousness comes in.

And now the universe is awakening. We are you sitting there, me sitting here, this book, this scripture are beyond what it seems to be on the surface, the universe awakening. One of billions, countless ways in which the universe is awakening.

So we are part of an intrinsic part of the awakening universe and human awakening. Now, I don't mean now the awakening from sleep for humans, but spiritual awakening, human awakening is an intrinsic part of the awakening of the universe. So we are in the midst of the awakening of God, you could say, into this world.

And as God awakens and this one consciousness, which is the light of God, God animates countless life forms, the flower, that the life within the flower, that which animates the flower or the life within your body or the life within your mind, the one underlying consciousness creates forms through which it expresses itself, one could say. And the forms become more complex. It all started with very simple life forms and now become more complex.

Humans are much more complex than microbes or bacteria or even fishes in the sea. So gradually, this is an adventure. So we are not in the universe that's already awake.

We are part and essential part of the awakening of the universe. You are the universe that's awakening. And of course, according to this, there's that cycle of going back.

Why and so on, we can't even go there. Even what we talk about is not the absolute truth. Perhaps it is a distant approximation of what it is like.

No human mind could possibly understand how the universe operates and the vastness of it would be absurd to even try it. But this is just a distant glimpse of what it's like, a very limited way of understanding it. But now we come to a more important part even, Bhagavad Gita continues.

But beyond even the mysterious unmanifested state into which all beings dissolve at cosmic nightfall, there is another unmanifested reality. It is Brahman, the Godhead, the thing in itself that is beyond time, that does not perish even when existence itself dissolves. It is this eternal, absolute thing in itself that is the ultimate goal.

I am that, Arjuna. I am is Krishna talking, which is the personification of the divine. I am that, Arjuna.

Arjuna is the person Krishna is talking to in this dialogue, that is the Bhagavad Gita. All those who come to this ultimate home come to me, that's the ultimate reality speaking, God, never again to be separate, never again to return. So beyond the world of manifestation that we perceive and experience as the universe, there is the unmanifested one life out of which, of course, the entire universe arose.

But this unmanifested one life did not disappear when the universe came into existence, it continues. It is, I would say, it is present within each life form, within you, within me, as God. There is something in you that is one with the source of all life.

The core of who you are is the unmanifested one that was already there when the universe came into existence and never remains at the core of each life form, untouched by time. And human existence and what the true awakening is, is the universe becoming aware of itself as that unmanifested, and that is the spiritual awakening. So as you, the human being, awaken spiritually, you realize that you are not the form that you took yourself to be, that you took to be your absolute reality, the body, the psychological form, the mind, but you realize, you sense something within you.

It's not something, but we have to use language. There's something within you that has nothing to do with the physical body or the thoughts that go through your mind. There's a spaciousness there in between two thoughts, for example, now.

You don't disappear when you're not thinking, when one thought comes to an end and the other one hasn't come yet. There's just a little space there. In that space, there's nothing.

And yet that space in which there's nothing, there is a very subtle presence, but it has no form. It's consciousness itself. And that's the, if it's not the unmanifested, one could say it is the emanation of the unmanifested to use almost poetic language.

So you can sense something within you, an aliveness that has nothing to do with you as a person, but without which the person could not be. There's something formless in you that underlies your personal existence, but is usually overlooked. So to become aware of that, which I sometimes call stillness, that really is the goal of spirituality to know yourself as that.

Now let's look at another little passage here. Now Krishna, the personification of God here explains a little bit more about human life, human existence. It says, I will now explain more about the individual soul, which is called jiva in Sanskrit.

I'm now using for one or two sentences, which I scribbled in here, this translation, which I thought was slightly more, slightly better in this case. A spark of my eternal spirit becomes in this world a living soul, and it draws around its center, the five senses and the mind. So this is again, the divine God, the one consciousness talking.

A spark of my eternal spirit becomes in this world, a living soul, and it draws around its center, the five senses and the mind. A body comes into existence. The atma, which is a part of divinity, atma, a part of this God within, enters into a body in the womb before birth.

Thus, it enters the world of matter. And in this translation, it says, it draws around itself the five senses with the mind as the sixth sense. Now comes a very poetic way of looking what happens.

Like a breeze wafting the scent of perfume, the atma, when it migrates from one body to the next, carries with it the mind and the senses. So the atma is the consciousness, and it carries with it this scent of fragrance of previous existence. That means it brings along the intellect, the ego, the sense of being a separate identity and the lower mind, thought, mind, transferring thoughts and tendencies from previous lifetimes.

The individual soul, because it has drawn the senses around itself, experiences the pleasures, desires, and pains of the world. Now, important part comes now. Now, people who are unaware of the true self within, the underlying atma, the underlying timeless consciousness, do not recognize this soul in them that is using the senses.

As the senses are limited to the mind level, they are incapable of comprehending atma, which is above the mind. The yogi, however, the yogi is the person engaged in spiritual practice or spiritual living. The yogis, however, possessing the eye of wisdom, the yogis, however, possessing the eye of wisdom, do see me, their atmic self within.

The eye of wisdom. The translator here put in brackets intuitive faculty. Now, this is according to the Bhagavad Gita, the faculty of becoming aware within oneself of that which is deeper than the person, it calls the eye of wisdom.

And the translator to explain a little bit, as I said, put in brackets the intuitive faculty. And really, this is what my teaching, it's not my teaching, is all about is of course, becoming aware of yourself as consciousness. So that there is the dimension, the timeless dimension suddenly is realized within you.

And you do it at any moment by becoming aware that you are aware. Like right now, can you become aware at this moment that there is a presence there, that you are awake, that there is an underlying presence, even when you're not thinking, without which you couldn't exist. There's an underlying aliveness, a presence, whatever you want to call it.

You don't have to think to know that. In fact, it's only when there is a gap between two thoughts, you become aware that you haven't disappeared, or that you don't remember your personal history. You don't even, at this moment, you don't even remember your name, you don't need it.

But there is an essential aliveness or presence there. And that is the eye of wisdom that suddenly arises. Knowing yourself as that, you could also say what's left of you when you stop thinking.

Now you can't think about that. The usual tendency when I ask a question like that, that seems difficult to comprehend is you start thinking about it. So when I ask what's left when you stop thinking, then you might say, oh, I have to think about that.

But that's never the answer. So there is that which has assumed form in you, which is the person with its history, and there is that which is timeless and formless that underlies it all, that is actually the essence of your sense of identity, atman, and that is self-realization. It says here, to obtain this eye of wisdom, you must do two things, surrender your ego and purify your mind.

And that is done, I would say, by realizing that you are not your mind. Because if you're identified with every thought that comes into your head, as many humans still are, then basically you are your mind, and beyond the thoughts that go through your head, there is nothing else, that's all you know. And the thoughts that go through your head are conditioned by your upbringing, by your past, by your environment, the country you live in, the time period you live in, your family background, all those things determine what kind of thoughts go through your head.

And all those thoughts that go through your head habitually make up who you consider yourself to be. That's a certain story arises in the mind, and that becomes the mind-made self. And that is the reality for most humans.

And it's also a fact that for most humans, that is a very limited reality. They don't realize how limited their worldview is, how limited all their opinions are. They don't realize that they're inhabiting these little presence in their minds, that's their reality.

And when you're totally trapped in your mind, then you create a lot of conflict because then you, all the other minds become like enemies to you. And then you can become an extremist, whether political or religious, or you just have a lot of conflict in your personal life. You're just totally stuck in your little, in your head.

Cannot recognize your connectedness with nature, your connectedness with other human beings. You're cut off by concepts, by thoughts. And so that's most people's reality.

And spiritual awakening is realizing that there is a dimension in you that is far deeper than that. And that here, according to the ancient teachings, it's Atma, which is the God within, the divine within, whatever you want to call it. And that's a liberation.

That's even just having glimpses of that is liberating, that there's more to you than the little person that before was running your life. And with that, an intelligence comes into your life that is greater than the intelligence of your conditioned mind. And that's what all spiritual teachings are about.

I'd like to read now a poetic passage where the timeless one consciousness talks about itself. And we really have to look at this as a kind of poem rather than philosophy or anything like that. It's quite inspiring.

I am pure consciousness, the underlying essence of all elements and beings. Nothing whatsoever exists separate from my divinity. There's no power in the cosmos that does not emanate from me and belong to me.

The entire universe is suspended from me as if I wear the string in a necklace of jewels. The gems may differ vastly, but the force holding them all together, the central thread is me, divinity. I am the innate nature of everything.

In pure water, I am the sweet taste. In the sun and moon, I am the radiance. In the very center of human beings, I live as virility and courage.

I am the sacred word om, which designates the divine, and I am the sound of it heard throughout the universe. I am the slight delicate scent, the sweet fragrance of the earth. I am the brilliance in both fire and sun.

I am the light of divinity in all beings. I am the subtle spirit in spiritual practices that gives them their existence. I am the love in the devotee, the austerity in the ascetic, or the sweet sense of charity in the giver.

I am the primordial seed of all entities, the power of discrimination in those who are intelligent, the splendor within all resplendent beings and things. Of the strong, I am their might and vigor. As I am beyond all attachments, I am the power in unselfish desire.

I am the subtle force in good actions that puts them in harmony with the welfare of humanity. I am the innate urge to help others. So this is a beautiful poem.

And as you listen to something like that, or if you go back and get the book and read it, it's essential and it really works for you when you not just read it or listen to it with your mind, but you can actually sense something. For example, as this talks about the I am, I am, I am this, and that if you can feel, if you can sense the inherent I am that you are, then it's not just an external scripture anymore. Then the external scripture has become a pointer that actually works.

It points you back to your very source. And then you can go around and you can look at all the life forms in this world and sensing your inherent oneness with them. You see, you look at the flower suddenly.

Of course, there's that one consciousness has given birth to this life form. It's real. That, and so, and you can sense an aliveness within you as you look at that, an aliveness that has nothing to do with who you are as a person.

There is an aware presence there, which is especially noticeable if you don't label the flower mentally. Just look at it. Don't have to call it anything.

A nice, what a lovely flower. You don't need it. Well, if that thought arises, it's fine, but then you can drop it and just, and look.

And what's there when you look at a flower? There's the looking, there's the color, there's the shape, there's the scent or fragrance, perhaps. You can even touch it.

And what else is there when you look at a flower and you're not calling it anything? You're just looking and smelling, perhaps. Is there anything else there then at that moment?

Yes, there is the presence that makes the looking and the perception of the flower possible. There is the consciousness, the light of consciousness in which this perception arises. That is the, in you, the divine, the unmanifested, recognizing itself in the manifested, and seeing that the essence of the flower, sensing that the essence of the flower is one with your own essence.

And then you feel a connectedness that wasn't there before when you had ideas about the flower. When you were talking about the flower, thinking about it or learning facts about it, that may have its place. But if that takes up all your attention, then you live in a very limited world.

So beyond thinking about things and talking about it and labeling it and judging it, make sure there is another dimension in you, present and consciously present, where you can sense that there's a presence in you that makes all this possible. Would there even be a flower if you were not perceiving that flower? If there was no perceiving entity here, what would there be, what we call flower here?

Well, a physicist would, of course, say, well, it's a conglomeration of atoms and molecules. They're dancing around for a while until they separate and go their separate ways. It's not a flower.

There's a dance of atoms and molecules, but somehow the flower is born with the act of perception. And the act of perception is only possible because there's a consciousness there underlying it. And you are that consciousness beyond your personal history on a much more fundamental level.

You are the consciousness of the universe. That's what the entire Bhagavad Gita is really about. When you realize that, you don't need any scriptures anymore, but you might still enjoy them.

Often people make scriptures into gods. They just, oh, this is it. So you externalize again.

Of course, it's only a map or a pointer or signpost. You are the consciousness of the universe, and you can sense that. There's something deeper in you than the person, not separate from it.

The person has come out of it. One could almost say, let's say, you are the ocean and the person is the ripple on the surface of the ocean that appears there very briefly. Tick, tock, tick, tock.

Now, the ripple that only knows itself as the ripple, or a little wave, let's say, if you're a big guy, a VIP, you're a wave. If you're a normal person, you're a ripple. But a wave or ripple, they don't survive for that long.

No wave or ripple survives for that long, and then it's gone. If the ripple on the surface of the water, let's say, that has a certain amount of consciousness, if it only knows itself as a ripple, that's a very limited view of itself because really it is the ocean expressing itself temporarily as the ripple. So if the ripple could realize that it's the ocean in addition to being a temporary ripple, that would add an enormous dimension to its life that it was ignorant of before.

It's true. I mean, if you're just a ripple surrounded by all these other ripples threatening, it's, oh, scary. So you are that.

Another analogy we could use, a ray of sunlight. You could say that you are a ray of sunlight, and the ray of sunlight forgot where it came from and where it continues to come from and what it is connected to and ultimately what it is one with because the sunlight that comes from the sun is not separate from the sun. It really is an extension of the sun.

So when you feel the sunlight on your skin, it's an extension of the sun. If this ray of sunlight couldn't feel anymore its connectedness to the sun, then again, existence would become very limited. So the ray of sunlight needs to suddenly go within and say, oh, I can now feel that I'm connected to this vast thing and I'm just a temporary expression of this vastness.

And suddenly you have a trust in life because you are the vastness and an enormous trust comes in. What is trust? Which in some religious traditions is called faith, but I would prefer to use the word trust because that's really what faith is.

But not trust in some abstract idea, but trust in something that you are being carried. You're one with something vast and you are essentially it. And what is trust?

It's the end of fear. Until you feel the depth of you, that there's more to you than you thought there was, there must be fear. You can't really have trust in life if you cannot feel the life, the true life within you.

So fear goes as you become still and as you become present and you realize the most essential thing about you is consciousness, you're conscious, the light of consciousness. And very much a secondary thing is the person that's the ripple. So there are two ways of looking at a flower.

You can look at a flower as a person and through the eyes of a person in which case you say, what a nice flower. I'd like to give that to my mom on Mother's Day. I will order it tomorrow, whenever it is.

Or, oh, why don't you, I'd like to cut those flowers and take them home or put them, they would look good on my living room table or whatever else. Or you say, oh, this is called such and such in Latin. I know its name and all kinds of things about it.

That's one way, that's fine. That's one way of looking at the flower. Then you look at the flower as a person and for flower, you can take anything else, another human being, anything.

And another way of looking at the flower is to just look and be alert and present as you look without any label and sense the alertness in the background of the looking. Ah, then suddenly there's a depth there. And then more and more you function in this dance between being a person, looking through the eyes of the person, but never, not anymore completely losing yourself as being in this personal sense of self.

Yes, still occasionally applying it. It still occasionally operates in you. It has its place.

Labeling things has its place. Sometimes you need it, but not again losing yourself in all the thoughts that come this, that. Always having access to the spaciousness that's deeper than the person.

Then you become, the life becomes quite wondrous. You look around, but in a fresh, new way. It's always fresh and new.

And the world is then alive again. The more you get trapped in concepts, the less alive the universe is because then the concepts are old. I've seen it all and done it all.

Then they don't look anymore. And of course, then you know it all. It's even worse.

Opinions, trapped in opinions. Now, here's an interesting little paragraph on the Bhagavad Gita. What kind of people become spiritual seekers?

And it divides into, there are four types of persons, according to here. And this still applies very much nowadays. And this was two or 3,000 years ago.

There are four different types of persons who seek spirituality or God. He saw Krishna talks again as the personification of the one. Four types of people seek a connection with me.

One, the world weary. People who worship God for the alleviation of physical or mental agony or to be released from fears and adversity. There's many people, of course, who come to a spiritual teacher or teaching or a spiritual book, come for that reason.

And it is a good reason to be, want to be free of suffering. And of course, the whole Buddha's teaching is about freedom from suffering. So that's one type.

Two, the other seekers of happiness. They are seeking happiness through worldly things. People who pray to God to obtain wealth, family, power, prestige, and so forth.

So they get, they, maybe those are people also who do go into manifest, manifesting things through positive thinking and affirmations. But come out connecting with a somewhat deeper level, yes. In a limited way still, yes.

So they're seeking spirituality because they want something in this world. It still applies. Not that much has changed apparently.

And then there are the seekers of, this number three now, the third group, are the seekers of spiritual advancement. People whose motive for connecting within divinity is to gain knowledge and experience to aid their self-realization. And I would add people also who want to have the high of what they conceive of as the high that surely enlightenment must be.

As I sometimes call it, they want the fireworks, they're waiting for some ultimate experience. So that's another group. I have many like that.

And of course, I'll talk about that in a minute. Number four, these are relatively rare, according to the Bhagavad Gita, are people who want to know God, who truly want to know the atma, the self, who know that God alone exists and whose only impulse is for the divine and nothing else. And those are relatively rare.

I just want God. So the ones numbers whose motive for connecting with divinity is to gain knowledge and experience to aid their self-realization. So we have wanting to be free of suffering, wanting to be happy through this, that, or the other.

Three, wanting knowledge or experience or some high. And four, the direct wanting the one. I just want that.

So it's, of course, Bhagavad Gita says, of these four, the last is the highest because they know my truth and are devoted to me. As I'm supremely dear to them, they are very dear to me. The first three are attached to the worldly objects or mental states they desire.

But certainly all four types are noble because any reason for turning Godward or inwards will in due time lead to spiritual transformation and is therefore ultimately good. So my comment on this is the, it is true that the ones who just want God are rare and that's fine, it's not needed. Wanting to be free of suffering is more helpful.

Those who want to be free of suffering or adversity who've had enough suffering, that is a very powerful motivation for seeking spiritual awakening. It's a more powerful motivation and more likely to lead to realization or awakening than those who are seeking either happiness because they will have to experience that none of the things they seek, even when they get them, is really going to fulfill that purpose of making them happy and fulfilled. And then they begin to suffer.

And so they join group one. So first you're in that group for quite a while and then when you realize, okay, my manifestation is great, it works, but still it's not quite right because nothing fulfills me. Then you go back to group one, you're suffering.

And if you're seeking, now many spiritual seekers seek some kind of enlightenment experience or awakening. And sometimes I get, they write in and say, I've been trying so hard for so many years and it's not happening yet. I want to be free.

I want to be enlightened or whatever they call it. And they are expecting some kind of experience or they believe that if they acquire enough knowledge about it, finally it's going to work. And so they become very knowledgeable.

They can quote all kinds of scriptures. It's all there. And they know more and more about it and more and more.

And for those people, it's quite hard. In fact, unless they join another group, they're not going to make it. But they will have to join another group, which again is group number one, suffering.

Because if you try and try and try to get enlightened and then you get so frustrated, it's just not happening. So you join the suffering group and then you're much more likely to find it. So I'm really very fond of group one, suffering.

As long as you are not identified with yourself as the suffering entity, when that becomes your identity, then you have another problem. But nothing that cannot be addressed and recognized in yourself. Now, the most important teaching in the Bhagavad Gita that runs through, that it's mentioned in almost every chapter is what's called karma yoga, which is a way in which you perform action in this world.

I already briefly talked about it in our first session, but since this is perhaps the central theme and it's the main spiritual practice, one could say recommended in the Bhagavad Gita is to do whatever you do in a certain way. And what that is, I'll explain again briefly. And if you do whatever life gives you to do in a certain way, that will lead to a deepening and spiritual realization.

And that can be really, you can summarize that as in the words of the Bhagavad Gita, do not be attached to the fruit of your action. Which of course simply means, don't look to the goal of what you want to achieve through whatever you're doing now. Give your complete attention to the doing rather than where you want to get to through the doing.

And that's again, a very important lesson nowadays because most humans don't know that yet. They are always one moment ahead. They want to get there.

You may find in your own life still a lot of the time, you are not present moment centered. You are focused on the next moment that you need to get to. So whatever you are doing at this moment is designed to get you to the next moment.

And internally, you project yourself away from what you're doing now because the doing becomes a means to an end. This is very normal. Everybody lives like that.

Whatever they do is a means to an end. And in their mind, the end is more important than what they're doing. That is so habitual and unconscious that most humans don't even know that that is how they live.

That they always live for the next moment but they're never completely in this moment. They also don't know that by living in that way, they create frustration and suffering and stress and discontent. And basically, they're condemning themselves to continuous discontent and to stress because if you ignore the present moment continuously and ignore means, you make it into a means to an end because the next one is so important that you need to get to, then you miss life completely.

You miss the depths that potentially is there in life and life becomes shallow because it's all mental, because the next moment is always a mind formation. The next moment is a mental projection. The next moment is never a reality because it doesn't exist.

When the next moment comes, okay, one minute from now, I've got one minute to finish this. And then after one minute, it's not one minute, it's always now again. And then there's the next thing to do, of course.

Immediately, you look to the next thing because you have become used to being uncomfortable with the present moment, conditioned since childhood to feel ill at ease in the present moment. Oh, I should be doing something and doing implies some future projection. You can never be, you're always doing.

And now the Bhagavad Gita by recommending as a spiritual practice to renounce, as it's called here, to renounce the fruit of your action. Sometimes that is called a sacrifice. And what is really in this ancient terminology, what is to put this into modern terminology is really designed telling you to pay attention to what you are doing in this moment and make this moment the primary focus of your life, whatever you're doing in this moment.

And the secondary focus is what you want to achieve through whatever you're doing. So, and that is called a sacrifice. One could say you sacrifice the future if you renounce the fruit.

It says if you renounce the fruit, a different energy flows into what you do. And then many helpful factors come in. And that is the truth.

And it's a new way of living where you actually, whatever you're doing now, you give it your complete attention. This is more important than what I want to achieve through it. Yes, I know what I want to achieve through it.

But since there's only ever the present moment and nothing else, surely this must be important than the projected future moment. And then you can give your fullest attention to the doing and not to the desired outcome. And also then you are not dependent for your sense of fulfillment on the way things turn out.

Because if you're dependent for your sense of fulfillment on the way things turn out, quite often you will become frustrated because they may not turn out the way you want them to turn out. And especially, and the more dependent you become on the way things are going to turn out, the more likely it is that they're not going to turn out the way you want them to turn out because there's fear in you. And when you need things to be in a certain way, there's already fear in you.

So the fear flows into what you do and contaminates what you're doing now. The quality of your doing is contaminated by fear. And so the very thing that you were dependent on is less likely to happen because the quality of your doing diminishes.

In other words, you are less conscious in the way in which you act. And the less consciousness flows into the way in which you act, the less likely it is that the outcome is going to be productive and satisfying. So the more you depend on a satisfying outcome internally for your wellbeing and sense of identity or sense of worthiness or whatever it may be, the more you depend on the desired outcome, the more likely it is that you're not going to get it.

It'll fail in some way. And that makes life very frustrating. But if your sense of fulfillment is derived from the doing itself, that is that the outcome is secondary.

You no longer need it to make you feel fulfilled. The fulfilling thing is what you're doing now, the attention behind it, the consciousness behind the doing. If you can feel the consciousness flowing through you as you do something with your hands or as you speak or whatever it is you do, relate to other humans.

If you feel that and you enjoy the doing of this moment, in any, let's say you have a business negotiation, the outcome is you want the contract to be signed. And if your focus is excessively on wanting the contract to be signed for the company you work for or whatever, then the quality of your interaction with the other humans, the humans that you need to sign the contract, diminishes. The other human, the other person will intuitively feel your unease.

You are uneasy because you're fearful about the outcome. So will also intuitively feel that you are not truly relating to him or her as a human being. You are making him or her a means to an end unconsciously because you want them to sign the contract.

Now these, the people that you're dealing with, they don't know these things consciously that I just mentioned, but they can feel that and they will feel, no, I don't think I want to sign the contract with this person. It doesn't feel quite right. Whatever, or something will come in, they'll verbalize it in some way.

No, it doesn't feel right. Or they see, bring up some obstacle and magnify it and say, no, no, I can't do that. And then you have the alternative, somebody who doesn't need the outcome, but who gives his or her complete attention to the other person and actually enjoys the negotiation, the talking, enjoys not just what is, not just the words that are being spoken, but enjoys the presence of the other human being there behind the words.

But you can only enjoy the presence of the other human being if you can enjoy your own presence beyond the mental constructs in touch with yourself. So there comes a sense of goodness and rightness in the present moment of being with this other human. So you acknowledge their being.

You're not using them as a means to an end. Primarily, yes, it would still be nice if they signed the contract, you know that, but that is not your primary focus anymore. And if they don't sign it, you're not suddenly turning hostile.

As in many, in the business world, often you find if the people, if you don't do what they want you to do, they become hostile or they walk away, immediately lose interest in you. You haven't signed the deal. And that's quite normal.

The people who are most effective and successful actually are people who perhaps without even knowing it, perhaps because they have good karma, as the Bhagavad Gita would say, they live in this way. They like every moment of it, of interacting with you if you are the client. They love interacting.

They love that present moment. They don't transform the present moment into some means to a future end. And this teaching about renouncing the fruit of your action is the primary teaching of the Bhagavad Gita, which is 2,000 or 3,000 years old.

And still, most humans haven't learned that lesson. But that's all. If you have no other spiritual practice, then this would be quite enough.

And that is making the present moment the primary focus of your life. And not a means to an end. Then if that becomes your practice, you will not make another human being into a means to an end.

Because the only place where you can experience another human being is in this present moment. If you make the present moment habitually into a means to an end, you make this human being that you're encountering in the present moment into a means to an end. And then the quality of your interaction deteriorates, and you won't be loved.

The ego wants to be loved. But since you are not loving, the love can only come when you don't make the other human into a means to an end. Then there is a loving kindness there that flows through you.

Then there is benevolence there, the goodwill is there that is all missing when the present moment is a means to an end. And then all the things that the ego said it wanted, I want to be loved, and I want people to think I'm great. Well, as long as the ego operates in its old usual way, and the ego always operates in its old usual way, you won't get it, the very thing that you needed.

And then as you shift to, I can only be, instead of believing, I can only be happy if the world and other people recognize me and tell me that I'm important. And so you'll be trying to use people in order to get there. When there's a shift, you renounce the fruit of your action.

You begin to enjoy whatever you're doing in the present moment. And then suddenly, suddenly the things that you thought you needed, recognition, people liking you, people recommending you to others, people seeking you out, wanting to come to you, the ego always wanted that. And suddenly you have it when you don't really need it anymore, because the present moment is already fine.

It's good. You're enjoying it. At least if you can't enjoy it, you're surrendered to what is at this moment.

So there is a spaciousness there. And then all the things you thought you needed, as Jesus said, will be added onto you. You get the icing on the cake when you don't need it anymore.

Well, that's the irony. You'll get the things when you don't need them anymore. And you will still enjoy the things, but they won't make you happy because nothing external can make you happy for very long.

The happiness is something deeper that arises out of dwelling fully in the present moment. Then you feel alive and happy. I don't actually use the word happiness that much because it sounds a little bit too superficial, but the true, the true, the joyfulness of being alive, that inner spaciousness.

So that is karma yoga, which means the practice of action. Karma really means action. And yoga in a wider sense is spiritual practice.

And so the Bhagavad Gita here's comments says about this, action normally ties the human being to the wheel of birth and death, but not when performed as an act of sacrifice. So the act of sacrifice means you renounce the fruit of the action. And the terminology of the Bhagavad Gita, you offer up the action to divinity or to God.

That means you're completely present in the doing as if you were offering, whatever you do at this moment is an offering to the universe. And that's a, it's a giving. You actually enjoy the giving.

So that's the offering of this. It's not really a sacrifice anymore because it's quite enjoyable. Sacrifice we think can't be enjoyable.

You give. Then it says here, the action is non-binding. Sacrifice in this spiritual meaning of the word, the translator has added in a very subtle way, a little bit of explanation to the text.

Sacrifice in this spiritual meaning of the word is a universal rule, a fundamental law of nature. Sacrifice as the spirit of giving, which permeates all of creation. This sacrifice is a way for mankind to convert earthly misery into happiness.

So the giving is, you can look at the sun, how the sun pours out energy for millions of years continuously. And that is, according to the Biography of Eden, that is the principle behind the universe is the giving, the outpouring of energy. And that is what you enjoy rather than what you want to achieve through it.

That's a secondary thing. And when you live in such a way, everything changes. When you engage in selfless service, that is really selfless action because when you look to the fruit of the action, you really want something to enhance your sense of self through it.

And so surrendered action is also selfless action. When you engage in selfless service, which is sacrifice, your desires are fulfilled unasked by nature. Righteous people give more than they receive.

Indebted ones get more than they give. The one who receives without giving is stealing. So it's essential to, it's a spirit of giving, giving of yourself, giving of your energy, which is inherently enjoyable.

The eternal is present consciously in every act of service. Work performed with the best of motives becomes sacrifice. Life itself is turned into a sacrifice when directed to the service of divinity.

When people perform service as sacrifice, no matter what their work or profession, the universe itself becomes elevated and sublime. So you transform the universe itself by performing action that is selfless. And important sentence that I just read, the eternal is present consciously in every act of service.

So when you work or act in that way, what does it mean the eternal is present? It means something flows into what you do that comes from a deeper level within yourself than the personal identity consciousness. So as you are present in what you do, the doing becomes imbued with consciousness.

So there's more than, let's take a simple example. I can wipe this table. Let's say there's some spots on this table and I take a cloth to wipe a table.

I can wipe it wanting the fruit of the action, which is just want to get this done. And what I really want is the clean table. I'm not particularly enjoying the wiping of the table because I want a clean table.

And you can feel when you do that, certain energy frequency flows into what you do. And it can be very extreme, it can be even angry. Oh, this is dirty again.

At least I want it clean or in a very subtle way, just in any case, what you want is the fruit of the action. You're not enjoying the movement or the energy that flows into the movement or the sounds that the cloth makes on the surface or the sound that comes out of the cloth. Scent of spray that you use to clean the table.

You don't enjoy all that. That's a means to an end. Or you can actually go, and it smells quite good and you can feel the cloth and you can enjoy the movement of it.

You do the same thing, maybe slightly more slowly, maybe not even that. And it's the same thing. And if you are, you can feel it.

It feels different the way, to it in that way. It feels different because the energy that flows into it is of a different kind or of a different frequency. And it says in the Bhagavad Gita that the work performed like this, the eternal is present in every act of service like that.

So consciousness itself moves through you beyond the personal sense of self. Consciousness flows into what you do. Presence, as I sometimes call it, flows into what you do and it becomes a lovely thing.

And of course, yes, at the end, the table is clean. When you started, the table was not clean. But you are not more fulfilled or happy at the end than you were during the action.

In fact, the end is only insignificant compared to the doing because you're always doing something. So that's just a tiny example. Just you can take another example, going from here to there.

Again, is it just a means to an end? Or driving from here to there, driving to the store to buy something. Is that trip, let's say it's 10 minutes, is that something that you would rather not be engaged in?

You would rather be at the store already, in which case your mind is somewhere else. It's already where it wants to be or some total, I just need to get there. And then you run into the store and then you're looking for what you need.

Where is it? Oh, it's there. Okay, and then you run back to the cash.

Okay, but there's a line up. Oh, what are they? Why are they so slow?

Oh God, I need to be back home. And then finally you get to, you pay for it. Then you go back to the car and another 10 minutes driving back home.

Then you got into the kitchen and the wife is there. Oh, come on, let's get, we're running late. Get on with that.

We need to get this done by, okay. Always, always trying to get somewhere, but never quite getting there. And then your whole life like that.

It wasn't just an episode of half an hour. It's basically your whole life like that. No, that's not a pleasant way to live.

And how could it be? It could be that you actually enjoy the drive to the store because that's the present moment. Why can't you enjoy the drive to the store and look and enjoy even when you're stopping at the traffic light, it glows red.

Well, it's alive. It's a deep red color. That too is a form of life produced by humans, but it's an energy there.

An energy feed can even, you can look at the sky for a while. You can look at the trees. You can enjoy the movement of the car and the people that walk around.

There's all movement of life everywhere and you're breathing and it's fine and you do the same thing, but you're in it fully. It's beautiful. You can enjoy even going from one aisle to another and looking for it, and you don't even have to slow down to enjoy what you're doing.

Sometimes you may want to slow down, it's fine, but at other times when you actually need to go somewhere, be somewhere, you can enjoy or even doing something fast as in Zen saying, you might know the Zen saying, hurry slowly. That's what they tell you, hurry slowly. What does that mean?

How can I hurry slowly? That means if you have to hurry, keep the slowness inside you where you're totally present. Then you actually feel a centeredness even while you're running and actually enjoy the running.

Why can't you enjoy running to get back home or whatever? It all comes back to present moment. That's all there is.

You achieve what you want to achieve, but you will be assisted by the power behind all creation. That's a, don't believe me, you have to start living this way and find out for yourself whether this is true or not, whether you are assisted by the power behind all creation when you begin to live in such a way, present moment centered, then things actually turn out better. Not always absolutely perfect, doesn't mean nothing will ever go wrong again, so to speak.

No, but even the going wrong is all part of the isness of this moment. So that's the spiritual practice of karma yoga in the Bhagavad Gita. And so humans have for two or 3000 years been reading these things and a few managed to do it, but most don't know yet that there is another way to live.

And that's what it is. There is another way. Now you have nothing to lose by trying it out.

If it doesn't work, do it for months. If it doesn't work, you go back to your old way. But how could it not work?

How could enjoying what you do in the present moment, how could one even say it doesn't work? So this is the walkthrough for Westerners. This is the Penguin Classic.

I don't know whether it still has the same picture on it. Let me just finish by reading just a few from this translation, which is slightly different in character. The visible forms of my nature are eight.

This is an ancient division. Earth, water, fire, air, ether, the mind, reason, and the sense of I, which is a mental self. So these are the physical forms of my nature.

My nature means divinity is speaking. The visible forms of my nature are eight. Everything here is made up of these elements, it says, which is also in the West, I had a similar view.

Earth, water, fire, air, ether. And then comes the non-material, the mind, the intelligence, the mental sense of self. But beyond my visible nature is my invisible spirit.

This is the fountain of life whereby this universe has its being. All things have their life in this life. And I am their beginning and end.

So beyond my visible nature, all the things you can see, the things that you can think, your sense of your mental sense of self, the egoic sense of self, beyond my visible nature is my invisible spirit. This is a fountain of life whereby this universe has its being, the fountain of life, the invisible spirit, which you can realize within. It's not a thought, it's not an emotion, it's not a sense perception.

Then what is it? It's that which makes all thoughts and emotions and sense perceptions possible. Oh, consciousness, the light of consciousness, feeling it, sensing it as yourself.

Just one or two more lines to finish. Again, what I've just been talking about, let's see how the Bhagavad Gita puts it. Set thy heart upon thy work, but never on its reward.

Work not for reward, but never cease to do thy work. Do thy work in the peace of yoga and free from selfish desires. Be not moved in success or in failure.

Yoga is evenness of mind, a peace that is ever the same. Work done for reward is much lower than work done in the yoga of wisdom. And it says, be not moved in success or failure.

Well, that comes, rather than telling somebody not to be moved in success or failure, I would tell them how to be in that state of consciousness where you are not moved by success or failure and that of course is presence. Then if the outcome is good, oh, it's appreciated. If the outcome is so-called not what you wanted, well, that's how it is.

And you move on. It's still the present moment. And that means your success or failure don't make that much difference.

And the success does not give you the incredible high that it gives you when you desperately needed it. Oh, wow, yeah, I got it, yeah, yeah. You'll quickly come down from that.

And often you find the very success that you attained has a downside to it when you experience that. So it's the appreciation of what you wanted comes. It's lovely, it's great, but it doesn't change your state of being or consciousness anymore.

Good, that's it for now. So I wish you happy practice in present moment living or as the Gita calls it, karma yoga. Karma yoga, the practice of action or action as a spiritual practice.

[Speaker 10] (7:17:58 - 7:18:52)

Thank you, Eckhart, for sharing the presence once again. My question is somewhat related to that last one, but from a different perspective. As the consciousness rises around us, there are many more resources and many new technologies to ease the suffering of humankind around the world.

But the white elephant in the room that no one seems to want to acknowledge in that process is the fact that the population is increasing faster and faster, it seems. I guess you can phrase that question so the answer is included, but I'd like to hear your perspective on what we might do to facilitate that process or how that process will take care of itself.

[Speaker 1] (7:18:53 - 7:18:59)

Can you be clear what is the process you refer to?

[Speaker 10] (7:19:00 - 7:19:13)

How the strain on the planet's resources as a result of the population increasing ever faster, how we'll be able to resolve that conflict.

[Speaker 1] (7:19:14 - 7:24:19)

Well, it's obvious that the population cannot go on increasing because that would lead to disastrous consequences. Ultimately, that's fine too because the one consciousness will manifest through any form it chooses again and again and is evolving. But it is quite possible that the larger intelligence that is, that underlies the planet, the planet, there is an intelligence that pervades the planet itself.

The planet is an intelligent being which mainstream science would, of course, not agree with. But I very strongly feel that and anybody who becomes sensitive enough and no longer totally absorbed in conceptual thinking can sense that the entire planet is an intelligent being. It has a regulating intelligence and I feel that if humans don't take action to reduce this proliferation of bodies, they continuously produce, if humans don't take positive action, then the regulating intelligence of the planet, planetary intelligence, with just one another expression of the one universal intelligence, will take action and will do something to reduce the number of human beings on the planet. This is my feeling. I cannot prove to you that this is a correct prediction or agnostication, but the intelligence will take action and whether the action it takes is a violent form of action or whether the action it takes is non-violent, I don't know.

For planetary intelligence, it would be very easy to reduce humans within one generation by reducing the fertility in the sperm of men so that very far fewer babies are produced. And within one or two generations, the population could be reduced by 50% if many men are not able to father children anymore simply because something is missing there. That would be problemless.

So if I, I'm not in charge of planetary intelligence, but if I were, that's what I would do. It's totally painless. Don't have to kill anybody.

So, but we shouldn't wait for that. We need to look and see if we first, of course, we need to discover the wisdom inside. If we only approach it from the analytical mind, we'll just create, we tackle one problem here and we'll create a series of more problems on top of

that.

So we need to become, go within, find the wisdom that is in the stillness, go within, and then the question is whether those people who are able to do that are those people that take decisions. Probably not because the politicians are not there yet. Well, most of them, but we are making a start here.

So first, so that you can take intelligent action, go within, never act from fear or kind of panic. We need to save the planet. Oh my God.

This is you generate fear. If you generate fear, nothing good can come out of that. Even if your intentions are good, any action that is taken on the basis of fear is going to have negative consequences and secondary effects.

So first we become still and peaceful and realize the truth of the beginning of the course in miracles, which says, nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God.

[Speaker 12] (7:24:23 - 7:24:23)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (7:24:24 - 7:25:28)

Now, what action can we take? If you are not in a powerful position, at least perhaps you can come up with ideas that come from out of the stillness. I don't have a series of actions that mankind should take because this teaching doesn't work in that way.

This teaching is designed to take the individual human being deep enough within so that they can connect with a source of who they are and everything else other people will have to do. So I can't give, tell you what course of action to take because the focus of this teaching isn't in outer action, but it goes to the source of all intelligence and all wisdom. But I have a feeling that you have some ideas already.

Is that right?

[Speaker 10] (7:25:29 - 7:25:31)

A small contribution, perhaps.

[Speaker 1] (7:25:31 - 8:11:28)

Yes. So, and that's a good start. And see where that takes you because you are able to access the stillness and fruitful, creative ideas come out of that.

So all I can say to you to carry on with what you're doing and see what else comes to you and in what other ways you can be helpful and useful so that planetary intelligence does not have to intervene. Welcome. I'm speaking to you from British Columbia, Canada.

It's about just after one o'clock in the afternoon on a beautiful spring day. The purpose of our meditation, of course, is always getting in touch with that which transcends the person to discover that there's more to you than the person. Person meaning both the physical body and your mind plus emotions and so on.

So all your thinking is to do with the person, emotions, your history, successes, failures, so-called. And even if you've reached a very high point in your life right now, you've just succeeded at something, just gained something, just fallen in love, you will find that it won't be long until that is no longer a real source of satisfaction for you. And it may even turn into its opposite.

High becomes low. Now, that's not a negative way, a gloomy, pessimistic way of looking at things. And it's not saying that you should not appreciate when good things happen to you or you achieve things.

It's wonderful. And it's to be enjoyed. So you can enjoy it knowing that, of course, it's not going to last forever.

And it cannot be a source of continuous satisfaction forever. If you were suddenly transplanted to the most beautiful place, let's say you're not happy where you are living now, maybe the climate isn't good enough or the environment isn't good enough. There's nothing wrong with striving towards finding a better place.

But even if you were suddenly transplanted to the most beautiful location you could imagine, perhaps for some people, that would be an island where it's always warm and pleasant. And there's the blue sea and there's white sand or whatever else you could imagine to be the ideal place. And suddenly you're there and you have nothing to worry about.

All your needs are met. And of course you might say, well, then I could really get into the spiritual stuff because we're living in a world where we wouldn't have to worry about all these other things anymore, making a living or succeeding or helping my family members or whatever. So it's all ideal suddenly and you would be happy for a while.

And then gradually you would become dissatisfied. First, boredom sets in. And after a while, your energy level would go down too because in the absence of challenges, you would, the degree of alertness would diminish.

So as far as your spiritual life is concerned, the best place is where you are right now and discover the dimension, the transcendent dimension here and now. And use whatever problems or difficulties you have as an encouragement or an incentive to go deeper into yourself, not running away from problems. Of course, you still may have to take action if action is possible or necessary or desirable.

You can take action to change situations, to improve situations in your life. But at the same time, see if you can discover the deeper dimension within that has nothing to do with what goes on in your external life. And that's why we're here, to discover that.

This is not about managing your external life better. There's nothing wrong with that, but you can, there are other teachings that can help you with that if you still need them. But it's discovering a deeper dimension within.

And that also has a by-product of discovering that is actually that it improves your external life immeasurably because you're no longer dependent on the ups and downs, the gains and losses, the good days and the bad days of your external life. You're not dependent on those things anymore for your sense of well-being or fulfillment or inner peace. And isn't that an incredible thing when you can enjoy things, deal with things?

Yes, but you're no longer dependent on the ups and downs. So all of you already have some access to that dimension within, and we're just here to deepen it. Or if you're completely new to this, this may be an occasion when you have your first glimpse of that in you that, which transcends your person, the personal life, the personal dimension.

So just like the universe, and the universe is whatever is around you, or the room you're sitting in, or if you look at the stars at night, or look out of the window, there's the universe with lots of things in it. And it's easily overlooked that the most essential thing is not the things, but the space in between things, even the room that you're sitting in. There's stuff in it, furniture, there's a floor, a ceiling, walls, but the essence of every room is the space.

The space in the room. So there are two dimensions, form, furniture, walls, ceilings, floor, ceiling, floor, and space, formlessness. Or you look up into the sky at night, what you see, countless stars, most of which are suns, just like our sun, many of them much bigger, countless stars, and the vastness of space.

Well, you can't actually see the vastness of space, you cannot see space, that's the strange thing. You can never say, oh, here is space. Because space is not something, everything else is something.

And now the amazing thing is there's an equivalent in you of what we call outer space, space, we could call it inner space. And that's the essence of who you are, just as the space in this room is the essence of this room or the space that allows billions of stars and galaxies to exist out there is the essence. And yet you can never pinpoint it or examine it under a microscope.

So the essence of you, you also cannot pinpoint, scientists can examine your brain, but they won't find you there. We know almost nothing about the brain. Of course, there's a connection between the brain and consciousness.

But the brain is a kind of transmitter of consciousness or receiver, it does not actually generate consciousness. Most scientists haven't discovered that yet. They claim to know what the brain is all about.

We don't even know what a thought is. No scientist knows what a thought, what is, does it exist as molecules? Nobody knows what a thought is.

And that's still the level of form, thought. So the essence of who you are cannot be defined just as the space around you cannot be defined. It has no boundary.

It's absolutely mysterious. You cannot know it in the sense that you know something in this world. You can only become aware of it by unknowing, by letting go of all that you know for a moment and just be conscious and realize you can be conscious of something, which is normal for everybody.

You're conscious of perception, and so on, but you can also be conscious of being conscious. And that is the transcendent dimension. And that at first people may not understand what it is that these words are pointing to.

Be conscious of being conscious. Sounds like some kind of duality, but that's only because we're using language. Now, as you know, as I've often pointed out, life or your life could be compared to a dream.

Things happen and then they evaporate. When you get towards the end of your life, it may begin to look more and more like a dream when you think back. And of course, a real dream, when you wake up in the morning, it dissolves and you say it was just a dream.

Many philosophers have argued about whether what you experience as your life is real or it's a dream. It's a question of perspective, of course. But it does have a very strong dream-like quality.

Or if you want to use modern terminology, it's your movie, the movie of your life. Some movies are very dramatic with lots of sound and fury, to use the words of Shakespeare, Shakespeare, full of sound and fury. And then Shakespeare adds signifying nothing.

Or another expression, Shakespeare's actually a play, much ado about nothing. And that's many people's lives. And it may not be until you reach the end of your life that you realize that most of it was really, you got upset about nothing much.

It's better not to wait until the end of your life to realize that you often still get upset about nothing much, the movie, that's all. So is your life real? Yes and no.

Is it a dream? Depends how you look at it. It certainly is dream-like.

Is this moment really happening or am I just imagining it? Am I imagining that I'm looking at the screen and somebody's talking to me and saying, are you dreaming? You just don't know.

What you do know is that this is what you are experiencing at this moment. It is being experienced. And a prerequisite for this, so that it can be experienced, whether it's a dream or not, is what we could call the light of consciousness.

Without consciousness, there could be no dream or no experience. So the one thing you know without any doubt is that you are conscious. And even that is not absolutely right when we put it like that.

Let's put it differently. The one thing that you know without any doubt is not that you are conscious because there's, again, a duality. I am conscious as if we're conscious with something added onto you.

No. The one thing that you know beyond any doubt is that you are consciousness or the light of consciousness, like the light of the sun, the light of consciousness. And in that light of consciousness, things come and go, arise and subside.

The good day, the bad day, the wedding, the divorce, or the death of your partner or your husband or your wife, the birth, the death. But all this happens, appears and then disappears. It appears in the light of consciousness.

And that's you. So you are not the form that happens. You're not really the dream or the experience.

You are the space for it, the light in which it happens, space or light, whatever you want to call it. They're just words. And that is the liberating, the great liberation, knowing yourself as the space of the light, as the consciousness.

And you can sense that at this very moment. What is it that makes this moment possible? What makes it possible for you to have the experience of this moment, whatever happens in this moment, the light of consciousness?

Presence. You suddenly become aware that you are aware or that there's awareness, the arising of self-awareness. And that is traditionally in spiritual language terminology, it means that is the real meaning of knowing yourself.

In ancient Greece, already the dictum, know thyself. On a more superficial level, knowing yourself is knowing what makes up the conditioning of your personality and having some knowledge of ways in which you operate in daily life. And that already is something good.

There needs to be some awareness so that you become aware of your own patterns. But you're still aware of something. And then at a deeper level, knowing yourself is knowing yourself as consciousness, as the space.

And that is essence knowledge. You can actually get this feeling of your essence. It's not yours, but temporarily just, let's call it yours.

You can get the sense of the essence of who you are. The essence of your identity is nothing that can be defined. It's formless.

It also has nothing to do with time. It's timeless. The challenge comes is whether there can be an awareness of essence, the essence awareness in your life, even when things happen.

Not just at this moment, but when you have to go back into your normal daily life and you start doing things, dealing with situations, working on the computer, making a phone call, doing your shopping, driving. Can you be there perceiving everything, speaking, and yet not lose that essence awareness in the background of your life? And that's an amazing challenge.

And that's an amazing achievement, which is traditionally called liberation or enlightenment. And I believe that really Jesus was talking about that when he used the term salvation. So there are different ways one can speak of it or point to it.

Can you feel, can you sense a certain spaciousness in you? Even when you make a phone call to talk to your accountant. Now you might say, no, I can't.

I lose it every time. And that may be true that you lost it many times, but I don't think it is true when you say you cannot. What does happen when you lose that awareness of depth within you, that awareness of awareness, what does happen when you lose it is because you thought that something else was more important than your inner state.

Something else was more important than awakening, spiritual awakening. You actually thought your conversation with the accountant or whoever it is is more important than what is the destiny of you as a human being, which is to flower, to be an expression of the flowering of consciousness. So you think all the little things in your life are more important than that in the moment that they happen.

Or you say, oh, let me first deal with that and then I'll be spiritual. But of course, there's no end to dealing with that. Life gives you one damn thing after another to deal with.

So peace, of course, is not an outer condition. You cannot find it out there. It's something that arises and that is intrinsically one with the transcendent dimension.

And then you don't get drawn into drama anymore because out there things still happen. And then you may notice that the transcendent dimension and the awareness is always there when there is a little gap between two thoughts. It's always there when there's a certain spaciousness, even while you're thinking, excuse me, so you no longer have one thought after another.

You have a thought and a little space, another thought and a little space. For example, whenever you're listening to somebody, you're not thinking. That's part of the practice of spaciousness.

You're listening. There's just an alert listening. You're looking at something.

There's an alert visual perception or an alertness behind the visual perception. That means you're there as the spaciousness. Then you begin to talk.

Then you move into form. And you can still sense the spaciousness in the background. And then you stop speaking.

And the spaciousness, the alert awareness comes again into the foreground. So when you use your mind and you or you become active, do things, the spaciousness recedes, still you can sense it somewhere. And then very often you find moments of brief stillness, could just be three seconds.

And then immediately, the awareness or you as you suddenly, the person in that moment, the person momentarily dissolves. And what arises instead is conscious presence. Then you come back into form.

Another thought comes, you speak, you do things. The awareness right goes into the background. The person operates again, but not disconnected anymore from the dimension of awareness.

So it's a very strange way. It's a totally new way. This is why it's a leap.

It's a leap in an evolutionary leap in consciousness. It's a totally new way of living. So that you are only temporarily a person, even on a normal day.

You're the person and then you are the awareness. And even when you're the person, you're still connected to the essence of yourself as conscious awareness. So you continuously appear and disappear, so to speak, as a person.

So imagine many human beings living in that state of consciousness. And of course you are, one could say, without making it into some kind of egoic belief. Of course, you are at the forefront of this evolutionary leap, not you as a person.

It happens because the person has become transparent to it. The person has made room for it. It comes through the person, but it's nothing to do with the person.

It's not the person. So in that way, of course, a totally different world would arise as more humans live in that way. But we don't need to be concerned about that.

We just need to be concerned about awakening, the absolute importance of awakening in our own life, in your own life. As you know, there is no such thing as your life. We just call it that.

So let's just, just one briefly drift was one example, just to recapitulate on the essence of what I said here, and what hopefully you verify in your own experience. Let's say you're going to make a phone call. There's a phone.

And about something requiring some information, having to deal with some problem, whatever it is. So there's a phone. You're still for a moment, 10 seconds, whatever, alert, still.

Anybody can spare 10 seconds, five seconds. And then you pick up the phone. And while it rings, you're still, there's just an aware presence, an alert, aware presence.

Then the person answers at the other end. And then you begin to speak. And then the alert presence recedes.

And then the mind begins to operate. And you speak. The person has come in.

Then you're waiting for an answer. You have just said something to that other person at the other end. And the reply is going to come.

And as the reply comes, the alertness suddenly is there fully again. And so you just listen in that state of alertness, which means the person recedes, temporarily dissolves, and you're just there as an aware presence. Then you find yourself speaking again.

The person is back. The awareness recedes into the background, but it's still, you can still sense it there. And this means you are speaking from the level of awareness, which means you're speaking much more intelligently and more effectively without creating conflict out of nothing, because all conflict is out of nothing, ultimately.

So the way in which the situation is handled is very different now, because you're not there exclusively as the person. Because if you're there exclusively as a person, that's the ego, of course. Ego means you only know yourself as the person.

You are completely identified with that conditioning that creates the person. And so that's the phone call. Just I gave that as an example of how you're in a situation where there's form, speaking, thinking, doing, and there is the deeper dimension of formlessness.

And that's a dance. So that's very exciting because to master that dance between the form and formlessness, that's the purpose of your life. No matter what else you do, that whatever you do is a vehicle for that.

In itself, it's not important at all, but it is a vehicle for something that is important. All the stuff that you think is important may be relatively important, but it is not absolutely important. Only one thing is of absolute importance, and that's consciousness, the arising of consciousness.

And of course, when the consciousness arises, it also transforms the relative. So I wish you well. And let's see how the dance goes for you between the relative and the absolute, between the person and the transcendent essence.

[Speaker 10] (8:11:38 - 8:11:39)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (8:12:54 - 8:13:35)

So our special guest is someone whose books have changed countless people's lives all over the world. And his name is Neil Donald Walsh, and he's here to join me here and now. Thank you so much for coming.

[Speaker 3] (8:13:35 - 8:13:39)

Oh, thanks for having me. I'm totally in love with you.

[Speaker 1] (8:13:45 - 8:14:52)

I'd like to, of course, I don't need to, everybody's aware of his books. And I also saw the movie, Conversations with God, if you haven't seen it, it's based on a very faithful history of your life at that period when you're beginning to write. And it's wonderful to watch.

Now, in a little while, I want to ask you what your message to the world is right now. But before we do that, I'd like to ask you a little bit about the creative process in you, especially at the very beginning, because not everybody, or not many people may be aware that in the period before the first book came through you, Conversations with God, you were homeless. Is that right?

[Speaker 3] (8:14:53 - 8:14:53)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (8:14:53 - 8:15:41)

And you were living in a tent. And that is shown in the movie. And so it was a time period when all the structures around you that most people would consider necessary, they would think, I need security so that I can write.

I need... And of course, that's not the case. It happened to you when there was complete insecurity and the structures around you had collapsed.

I would say there is a connection between this enormous creative impulse suddenly coming through you and the prior collapse of the external structures around you.

[Speaker 3] (8:15:41 - 8:21:35)

How do you see that? Well, Eckhart, that's my experience as well in the following sense. But let me back up.

Let me just take one step back, may I please. I didn't set out to write a book. So I wasn't thinking in terms of having a creative moment or producing a book.

That didn't happen, actually producing a book with foreknowledge that it would be a book. Or that it would ever be seen by anybody until what became book three. So books, what are popularly known as books one and two in the Conversations with God cosmology were not written with any foreknowledge that anyone would ever see it without ever any intent that it would be published as a book.

It was a process of personal revelation, personal connection. And it was a process as well as, excuse me, a personal expiation. That is, I was ridding myself of all the thoughts I had about how I thought life was.

Because it began, really the process of my Conversation with God began when I realized that nothing in my life was working the way I thought it was supposed to work. My relationships with my significant other was falling apart. And with all of my others, my life work had come to a grinding halt.

I was doing nothing. I was on the street, unemployed, and I had a broken neck. I should explain that why I was on the street was that I had a car accident in which I broke my neck.

And very few people really survive a broken neck, or at least survive it intact. I'm very fortunate that I'm still alive, very fortunate that I'm not paralyzed, frankly. But I was one of the very rare people who can actually have a broken neck and be more or less normal afterward.

Except that for about two years, I couldn't do much. I couldn't lift this. I was not allowed to extend my arm.

So I couldn't do very, very little because they were wanting me to be very careful with this skeletal structure of mine. So I could do nothing. And I wound up on the street because the social welfare system fell out from beneath me.

So now, there I am finally sitting, and I had too much pride, by the way, to ask people who love me for help. That was interesting. I had a thought about it that I'm going to look bad.

How could I look any worse than I looked? But I had to. I didn't want to call my father.

He would have rushed to my aid, but I didn't want him to know that I was... I thought, well, I'll be out of this in just a few weeks. I can pull myself out of it.

Well, a few weeks turned into a few months, and a few months turned into a year, two weeks shy of one year that I was on the street asking people for dimes and dollars. Could you give me a quarter? Could you help?

And then I became so upset with myself. And so I began to ask myself because I finally got a job and I finally got off the street. But this is when the game got interesting.

Am I telling too much of this now? No, no, it's wonderful to hear. It was when I got off the street, when I finally managed to find a little weekend job as a radio announcer that I earned a few dollars, enough dollars to get off the street that I wound up back in the game, back in the game of life, back in the drama.

And that's when I realized the utter vacuousness of life. I thought, is this really all there is? Is this, am I back in it?

And for what? It doesn't, none of it made any sense to me. I felt like I was on another planet.

I didn't understand why do we bother? And so I woke up one night and I said to myself, what does it take to make life work? What is this life?

What's going on here? What is really going on here? And I asked the eternal questions that we all ask.

Why am I here? And who am I? And how did I get to this place?

And to what? You know, and I really begged God, my perception of God. I just begged for an answer, as many of us have done.

And God was good to me. She said, do you really want answers to all of these questions or are you just venting? I said, you know, I really would, I really would, I really would like answers if you've got them, you know, give them to me because at this point I'm really searching.

So, and so this voice, I heard a voice, Eckhart, over my right shoulder that began, and it was as clear and as present. It was a physical voice. It was not a voice inside my head.

It was a voice I heard audibly in the room, right next to me, such that I turned around to see who was in the room. It's 4.15 in the morning. I had gotten up in the middle of the night to just pacing back and forth, trying to, and then I sat down and I thought, you know, I was hearing things, but I thought, fair enough.

I'm going to write down, it happened to be, there happened to be a yellow legal pad on the table in front of me. And I picked it up just to, just to write down what I was hearing.

[Speaker 1] (8:21:35 - 8:21:38)

It's funny. I write everything on yellow legal pads.

[Speaker 3] (8:21:46 - 8:28:30)

Why am I not surprised by that? So, and I began to ask questions. Who am I?

What does it take to make life work? What is it that I don't understand? Help me, just help me.

Mind you, I wasn't a young person at this time. I was 50 years old and I thought, gosh, a half century. I've been here a half century and I don't understand what's going on.

Very not okay. So I was given, this information began flowing through me and I began writing. And I began asking questions because what I was writing, as I was, I want to say, by the way, that the voice very quickly moved into my head.

It left this physical realm and became a part of my inner experience. But I began hearing and I began writing everything that I was hearing. And of course, what I was hearing was bringing up other questions in me.

How could that be? I don't understand. I was always taught this.

I was always told that. How can that be? And I remember when I really got clear that I was talking to my, what I call my conceptualization of God, because I was, we were talking about the 10 Commandments and I said, I said, you know, I began writing questions and getting answers or writing questions, questioning what I was writing.

And at one point I asked, you know, I tried so hard to live a good life. I've obeyed the rules. Some of the rules.

Hardly none of the rules, but the point is I tried. I tried really, you know, and I, and I, so I said to God, I said, you know, and I was being very sincere. I said, you know, I tried to follow the 10 Commandments and the golden rule and the rest.

What does it take? God said, actually, Neil, there's no such thing as the 10 Commandments. Oh, well, that was just the bedrock of my entire life.

How, then what, then what are there? And from then, I knew that I had connected with some place of grander awareness that I call God just for a convenient short word, but a place of grander awareness that I'm clear resides in all of us. And that I want to say, if I could dare say it, not only that resides in all of us, but that is the identity of all of us, that all of us are, that we, that, and I, and I sat there and I thought, my gosh, I'm not just hearing from that.

I am that. That's who I am. And all of the rest of this is, I'm making it up.

I'm making it all up. So I began to continue this dialogue. And at one point, this other part of me, which I would now call it that, that I call God said, this will one day become a book.

And I'm just writing, journaling, by the way, this had gone on now for a couple of weeks. Every, every night at 4.15 in the morning, I was awakened. Like someone was pulling me by the, you know, by the shirt front, getting me back to this thing.

And so I was in my little one room cottage that I had managed to rent after getting a job, finally, a part-time job. And I'm every morning at 4.15 in the morning, I'm up, I'm up, I'm writing more and more and more. And at one point the dialogue said, this will one day become a book.

And you know, my first thought, of course, is yeah, right. You and a hundred other people are going to send your middle of the night, mental meanderings to a publisher who's going to say, let's get this out at once. Guy is talking to God.

But in fact, you know what? I sent it to a publisher and I've been asked many times, many times, why did you send that off to a publisher if you didn't intend for it to be a book? And I tell you, I did it, Eckhart, so that I could prove something to myself, because I thought really the truth is, without being funny about it, the odds of something like that being published were one in a gazillion.

And I thought, you know, it says this will be a book. That was the only measurable outcome I had received in all the downloads I was receiving. Everything else was conceptual, theoretical in nature.

But here was something that could be measured. It would either be a book or it wouldn't be a book. So I thought, you know, I'm going to test God.

So I sent it to a publisher just to see what would happen and let it go. And within not too long a time, I got a call from one of the publishers that I sent it to. I sent it to five.

I got rejection letters, predictably from everybody except this last person sent me a rejection letter and it said, no, you know, this book doesn't fit our titles list. I sent it back to the publisher and I said, would you at least read it? Because I know that it fits your titles list.

All you publish are books like this. So I sent it back to the publisher and he took another look at it. Actually, he looked at it for the first time.

His acquisitions editor had turned it down. He looked at it and he said, we're going to publish this. And they did, you know, and the rest is, as they say in the business, publishing history, you know, the book actually was rushed to print.

It sold seven and a half million copies in 37 languages. And it was on that crazy New York Times list for 137 weeks consecutively. And suddenly there I am, the guy who's supposed to be talking to God.

So you ask how the creative process works. It wasn't for me a process where I sat down to see how could I create a series of bestselling books. For me, it was an internal experience of my soul meeting my mind and blending with my essence to become one.

And then my mind giving itself permission to just shut the hell up. And I mean that literally, I mean, shut the hell up and just get out of the way so that my soul could join my mind in a collaborative expression of who I really am. And what is really true.

So that's how the process worked for me. And I'm sure you're sorry you asked a two second question to get a 24 minute answer, but that's how it happened.

[Speaker 1] (8:28:31 - 8:29:04)

And very helpful to hear for everybody. And it's very inspiring to hear. Because of course, the dimension that you described, as you said, is in everyone.

And basically the human being is one with that dimension. Is that in essence? Just another question to you.

Then after that, do you feel that dimension is still in you? Do you still access that when you write nowadays?

[Speaker 3] (8:29:04 - 8:34:11)

Or how does that? I don't write unless I can. My writing, I mean, I write a newsletter or a little piece for the blog or things.

But I don't write that kind of material unless I can come from that place. I don't try to get to that place. I try real hard to put this.

The answer to your question is yes. Why am I using all these words? The answer to your question is yes.

But what I want to say is, I think it's possible. I have learned that it's possible for me to deliberately access that place. And I think that everyone can deliberately access that place of knownness, nothingness, that place where thought recedes and wisdom emerges from the soul.

I use words that my conceptualizations allow me to understand. So I go to that place of the soul and I just get very quiet. And you know what happens to me sometimes when I'm writing?

My friends who are around me know this. I'll be sitting there writing from that place and literally fall asleep at the keyboard. I will literally be writing for maybe six or seven minutes and then I'll sleep for 10 or 12 minutes.

And then I'll wake up and realize, this just happened to me the other day. Again, it happens all the time. Not because the effort is so great, not because I'm so exhausted, but because I'm so completely out of my body, so completely out of my physicality, so completely in another place that literally I just, and I'm out of there.

And then I kind of come back and I continue to, but I think that, I don't suggest you do this while you're driving or at the dinner table, but sometimes when you're alone, it's possible to just let go of every idea you ever had and just go to that place. And I do it with a request. But you know what?

I want to ask you a question. Let me just finish that thought. So they're not, well, what does he mean by that?

I do it with a request. And the request is, dear God, if there's something that wants to come through me now, that wants to emerge and present itself now, I'm open, allow it to, and it doesn't have to. If it doesn't, that's fine.

Then I just don't write this morning. I don't have a need to just, and then the impulse will come through. Literally an idea or a thought that will just come through.

And I'll find myself following that thought almost like I'm being led by the nose. I don't have a thought about the thought. It's just whatever.

And the thing writes, I was saying to my dear wife, Em, when I finished my last book, when everything changes, change everything, I walked upstairs with it and I said, I didn't have any idea when I started this, what it was going to say. No idea at all. No outline.

Sounds familiar. No outline. No thought.

I know what chapter one will be about this and chapter two will be about that. It'd be a logical progression. And no, I had no idea.

And then out came all of this stuff, the mechanics of the mind, the system of the soul that was astonishing me as I saw it. I was just, wow, what is that? And then, okay.

And then it would reveal itself and reveal itself and reveal itself. So I have to, I've had to turn back my last 20 or 30 royalty checks out of confessions. I didn't write it at all.

No, I didn't really. I kept the money. But I almost have to, you know, I almost have to do it with my hand.

You know, I can't, I have to take it like this way. I can't look at the person directly because I didn't really. But you know, it's that way with all gifts.

In truth, the gifts of life, it seems to us, come through us, not from us. And as do the joys, you know, whether it's a royalty check or a smile on a person's face or a squeeze or a hug or whatever it is. It feels to me like all the joys of life come to us just as freely as the gifts come through us.

If we just allow ourselves to get caught in the flow and get our self out of the way, get any thought out of the way that you think you're doing it. Oh, I'm reading, I'm a wonderful writer. Watch this.

Because whenever I, and I do have those thoughts, mind you. I want to confess, I have those thoughts. I'm a great writer, but this is gonna be a great book.

And it turns out to be crap. And I gotta throw it away. So, okay, great, I got it.

So, but I wanted to ask a question. What the hell was the question?

[Speaker 1] (8:34:12 - 8:34:14)

Well, very often questions dissolve.

[Speaker 10] (8:34:14 - 8:34:15)

Yes.

[Speaker 3] (8:34:20 - 8:38:34)

Either they are answered or they dissolve. I know what the question is. Thank you.

This has bought me 10 seconds. I have long wanted to know, once I got in touch with the, please forgive me, I cry at my own stuff. I've wanted to know, what is the purpose if I'm not this body?

By the way, one of the first things I was told in conversations with God is you're not your body. Your body is something you have. It's not something you are.

Now it's got to be old news, but 15 years ago, that was brand new for me. Okay, I'm not my body. Then God said, you're not your mind.

Okay, not my body, not my mind. Then God said, you're not even what you think of as your soul. You're not even that.

That's another idea you have, that you are your soul. Okay, great. I said, then who am I?

God said, isn't that an interesting question? Why don't you tell me? And I said to God, no, no, you know the answer.

And God said to me, no, no, you know the answer. And I said to God, no, I'm really coming to you to tell me. And God says, no, no, I'm really coming to you to tell me.

What God said to me was the difficulty here, Neil, is that you are convinced that you and I are separate, that you're something other than me. Only when you're clear that you are nothing other than me will you understand that I don't have your answer. You have your answer.

But you may be whatever you choose to be. You may have whatever you choose to have. You may do whatever you choose to do.

Such is the wonder and the glory of life that you may create all of it as you wish. And so I thought, wow, but why? That was the question I asked.

If I'm none of all of this and all these things are happening to me in the exterior world and the events, the tragedies of life, of life in general out there in my own life, why, why, why must it be so hard? Why must it be so difficult? What am I doing here?

And God said, being me. For me, the answer that I got, Eckhart, was the answer to the eternal question why was you exist in your present form that I might know myself through you and through all of life. And so I got that the opportunity for me was to let go of all my prior thoughts about who I am and why I'm here and actually make it up, decide.

If I wanted truly to be my conceptualization of divinity, what would that look like? If I wanted to really be in this exact moment when I came up here to say hello to you, if I was really being who I wanted to be, expressing what I really am, I'd go and I'd give that guy the greatest, biggest smooch on the face he ever had. And I thought, dare I do that?

You know, Neil Donald Walsh doesn't smooch Eckhart Tolle. That's crazy. Because I have these concepts, you know, that you're not supposed to.

But I thought, you know, I got up to this guy and I felt his energy. I felt your wonderful energy come out. I thought, you know what?

I'm going to give you a smooch. I'm glad you did. Because that was what was arising, to use your words.

And so that really is the answer to the question why? Why? So that life might know itself as life itself through the process of life itself.

That you might demonstrate through the living of your life what life is. And if you don't like what it is-ness, change it. You're at liberty to change it.

And that was the greatest experience.

[Speaker 1] (8:38:44 - 8:39:04)

Thank you. Very inspiring to listen to you. So even when you speak, you're connected with that level, that dimension within yourself.

It speaks through you. And that's inspired speaking. It's not prepared.

It just comes.

[Speaker 3] (8:39:04 - 8:44:27)

Yeah, except when it's not, you know, across the breakfast table. I try, the greatest challenge of my life is to access that level of awareness in the day-to-day of my life. Yes.

I find for some reason that if I'm talking to people, or I want to say presenting, or doing a television interview or whatever, that somehow I'm able to step aside from my need for it to go well, be right, look good. You know, somehow or another, I just let go of that. I'm not sure I know how, but I just do.

I remember Matt Lauer on the Today Show asked me a stunning question. He did a little interview with me, you know, and he asked me this question. They always do this, you know, when you have 30 seconds left.

He said, Neil, we have about 30 seconds left, but could you tell us if God had one thing that he could say to the world, what would it be? He said, could you get it down to one paragraph? I said, actually, Matt, I could give it to you in five words.

He said, really? So he kind of turned to the camera, you know, a little bit of a smile on his face. Ladies and gentlemen, from Neil Donald Walsh, here's God's message to the world in five words.

You've got me all wrong. So, if that's true, of course, we have a lot to talk about. We have a lot of fun to explore, a lot to say, why did I start?

Why did I even tell you that? Where was I going just before that? Huh?

No, I asked the question why. There's more than that. Wrong.

You're out. You're out. But anyway, thank you, thank you, day-to-day life.

My challenge is to somehow, when I am, I'm disattached, I'm more attached in private than I am in public. I'm more attached over the breakfast table with my beloved to my idea, how it should be and who I am and, you know, how could you have said that to me just now, and do you understand, you know, all this, than I am in public. So I do have a question, you were right after all, you can stay.

I do have a question for you. This is a terribly personal question and we can edit this out of the tape if you don't want it in the program, but I want to know whether, because I want to tell you, and I'm not pumping sunshine into your ear, this is the truth for me. You have stood for me as as close as I have come to see on this planet as a living master, who understands, but who does more than understand, because to be honest with you, I think I understand.

But the difference I see between you and me, to be honest and totally transparent is, we both understand it, we can both say it really well, but he lives it and I don't, except when I do. What I notice is that I live at probably 20, who can give a number, not enough of the time, and when I'm with my beloved, with my family, in private, I somehow get into all of my, you know, thoughts, and I forget what I'm saying right here to you, as if I didn't even say it, to the point where my loved ones look at me sometimes and say, you ought to read one of your own books, and it's well deserved, it's well deserved.

So I've come to you for a personal counseling session on television, how do I take what I think that I am, how do I take what I've experienced, I'm going to not even say what I think I am, because it's out of thought, it's not from thought, how do I take what I experience myself to be, and wash the canvas of my life with it, especially when it matters to me the most. In the end, honestly, I don't really care how it is with you, I'll never see any of you again, that's the truth. But that lady sitting over there, my wife, I see her every day, every hour, why can't I summon this, then?

[Speaker 1] (8:44:37 - 8:45:12)

First of all, in certain situations, the presence is there fully in you and comes through you, such as here, you know that, in a so-called teaching situation or writing situation, the presence moves through you, and then there's the rest of your life, and it is sometimes there, I would assume, and sometimes not, is that right, or is it mostly not?

[Speaker 3] (8:45:13 - 8:45:22)

I think it's more there now than it used to be, but it's still the majority of time not, and people who know me would tell you that, they'd say, you think this is a nice person, you should work for him.

[Speaker 1] (8:45:26 - 8:47:42)

So all it means is your mind still takes over, and either you relinquish it voluntarily in your daily life, which requires the minimum of awareness that this is what's happening right now, my mind has taken over, but I believe that you do have that, it comes in sometimes that you realize that your mind has taken over, and in that moment you can relinquish that and invite presence into your life, and whenever any conflict situation arises or any kind of suffering arises, irritation, anger, whatever it is, then it can be used as an alarm clock to tell you, oh, something has happened here, I sometimes say it's an alarm clock that tells you, I've lost the present moment, I'm not present in the now, so in other words, you are trapped in your mind, so you can use any conflict situation and the moment you notice it, you can invite presence back into your life and so immediately the alertness comes back, it's a voluntary death, if you don't do it, you'll need more suffering and then it'll happen, but if you voluntarily relinquish, because you know how it works, you know how it works because you experience what you do in a situation like this, there's that complete openness, you're not identified with old mind, your mind is simply a servant of the deeper awareness, as you speak to us, it's beautiful, you're not here, you're not protecting your ego, which is a wonderful thing, and because there is one thing much vaster here, speaking through you than the limited ego that still arises in your daily life, so as you sit here, the ego is not operating, otherwise you would have to hide the fact that you don't live it in your daily life, but something much greater than the ego is speaking through you right now.

[Speaker 3] (8:47:43 - 8:47:46)

You think he's going to miss a chance to talk to Eckhart Tolle about this, you're crazy.

[Speaker 1] (8:47:50 - 8:48:59)

So all it, alertness, be more interested in your inner state in any given situation than what's happening in the outer situation, what's happening inside me at this moment, what is my inner state at this moment is always primary, dealing with external situations, whatever happens, the outcome of this situation or that situation, or this person agrees with me or does not agree with me, all these are secondary things, if you can shift your attention primarily to what's going on inside me right now, nothing is more important than your state of consciousness now, it's not the external world is never more important than your state of consciousness, but one loses sense of that and you believe that some external situation is more important than your consciousness, your state of consciousness, it's not, that's the illusion, but the world is here to seduce us into believing that because it's very seductive, every situation.

[Speaker 3] (8:49:00 - 8:51:29)

And I think I've, I think I've discovered the reason why, you know, when you say things like the world is here to, it's very seductive, it's here to seduce us, the thinking mind, and God bless it, it does have some purposes in our lives, the thinking mind says, why? Why would God, if there is a God or, you know, why would life create a world that is very seductive and that is constantly seducing us moment by moment into thinking that we are our thoughts and to stop, and I, what I got when I asked God that question and when

I was reconnected with just a moment ago when you talked about the alarm clock was, wouldn't it be interesting, my theory is, my viewpoint is, that the world in fact creates these moments of seduction, you know what, we need to write a book together called Moments of Seduction. You always come up with wonderful titles. So I think that the world creates these moments of seduction precisely to provide us a contextual field within which we can experience ourselves at the next grandest level to express our understanding and our awareness of who we are in the next grandest version of the greatest idea we ever held about that.

And what I notice is that yes, to be really honest with you, the number of times that this is true for me in my personal life are less now than they were before, and less than they were before that. But they're also becoming increasingly intensive and more challenging. Anybody get that in your life?

That they're more challenging and more intensive, even though they may be less, because we're rising in consciousness and the world creates a contextual field that says, you want to show us that next step of who you are? Watch this. Here comes a person walking down the hallway who's going to really challenge you.

If that's who you imagine yourself to be, not to make it a bad day for us, but in fact to make it a good day for us. To give us the next opportunity for God to demonstrate who and what it really is in us, through us, and as us. That's my thought about it.

Thank you. Because the alarm clock, when you said it's an alarm clock that goes off, that's what got me to remember it. That's right.

Of course, it's just life waking life up to life itself. And pulling us out of the dream. Okay, well.

[Speaker 1] (8:51:30 - 8:51:32)

Consciousness has answered.

[Speaker 3] (8:51:34 - 8:51:38)

Yeah. So now I did what I came here to do.

[Speaker 1] (8:51:43 - 8:51:45)

Let's have a moment of stillness.

[Speaker 4] (8:55:32 - 8:55:55)

My question to you is, in the book, The Secret, it's based on the law of attraction, where you attract everything into your life. Whereas your book, The Power of Now, is being in the moment and letting the universe guide your life. So I just want to know your thoughts on that, on the difference.

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (8:56:11 - 9:00:16)

Well, as we can see, if we look around, the universe, or life, creates life forms everywhere, wherever we look. So the universe loves to create form, it seems. It can also create form through the human form.

Humans can create as they do. And humans are not separate from the totality of the universe, so there isn't human creation and the universe creating. It's all one.

It's the totality. We are the universe. You are the universe.

So when you create, or when I create something externally, whatever it is, any structure that you build from simple thing, building something, or using your mind, your thoughts, to help in the act of creation, to create something on the mental level, before it becomes physical form. That's a way in which the universe can create through the human form. One could almost say indirectly, or secondary creation.

You may have heard the expression, we become co-creators with God. Your question is really, is it up to us to initiate the act of creation, or should we simply rest in presence and then see what happens? The foundation, of course, for creation is resting in presence.

That's the very foundation, because resting in presence, that is, touching the source of, true source of creativity, and the true source of fulfillment or satisfaction, which is not form, but the formless life itself. It is essentially fulfilling to sense the timeless presence that we could call I am, to sense that directly in yourself, not as an object in your awareness, but as yourself. It's a self-realization of consciousness, not a subject-object realization.

And that is essentially happiness, if we want to use that word, aliveness, fulfillment. That is essentially your identity, your true identity, which has no form. That's why the Buddhists say there is no self, self in the sense of anything that you consider yourself that has form, a psychological or physical form, is not who you are.

The essential self, which the Buddhists deny and just call emptiness, or which in India is called the Atman, that is the formless, and that's the very basis. If you go into, if you create before having consciously realized the source of creation, then you belong to all that.

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[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 12:55)

India is called the Atman, that is the formless, and that's the very basis. If you go into, if you create before having consciously realized the source of creation, then you belong to all those billions of humans who create out of the state of identification with form, which we could call the ego state. But that's also the universe.

If the universe did not want to experience itself as the egoic entity also, then it would not be, the ego would not exist. So it seems the universe loves that dream, or which becomes a nightmare sooner or later of the egoic consciousness. So whenever you create, because you believe that the object of your creation is going to make you happy or fulfilled, then you create out of the egoic consciousness and it's stressful and frustrating and never really fulfilling.

But that's the dream of the ignorance of who you are. And perhaps the universe needs to dream that dream and then wake up out of that dream into a conscious realization of itself. And that also is happening through the human form.

So the humans can create out of the ignorance, identification with form, in which case also they create a lot of havoc. Of course, they create a lot of conflict because the more deeply you identified with form, the more you come into conflict with other forms that are also deeply identified with their form. That it's not just the individual form, it's also the collective forms of tribes, religions, religions within religions.

You see what's when you listen to the news, you can see one Islamic sect is killing another one and the boss, even within the same religion, they hate each other. And this has happened. And that is complete identification with form.

It's not, it's happened, it has happened in Christianity. In Christianity, at the moment, they may not be killing each other. They did not enough of that in the Middle Ages, but they still, many still hate each other.

And whoever does not agree with your little group, of course, is the antichrist. That's a nice word you can pre-impose on others. Buddhists haven't come up with that yet.

I have never heard of the anti-Buddha, Buddha. So, and that's within the totality, that's fine too, because that's the dream of identification with form. And how do I know that?

Because I've been in that dream and I've come out of that dream of identification with form. And what is true for the individual is true for the totality. So it's a collective dream.

It's also an awakening that happens when the suffering and the madness becomes so pronounced that it forces you to open your eyes. And then you look and say, what am I doing? What are we doing?

What have I done? What have we done? So this happens when the suffering becomes very acute, as happened, for example, on a very large scale in the 20th century, when after the first world war, when for the first time, the tools of technology and science were used in warfare.

There had been warfare for thousands of years before. But now it became magnified through the tools of science and technology, bombs, gas, poison, the substances, artillery, tanks, submarines, machine guns. And suddenly they created havoc that they'd never seen before on such a huge scale, millions and millions of dead.

And nobody actually remembered how did it all start. What was the beginning of the first war? They just drifted into it totally blindly, identified with their little tribe, their little nation.

So that's one way of creating. And whenever you have not touched the source of life within yourself, touched it, realized it, live from it, then you create and add to the karmic burden on the planet because whatever you create has negativity attached to it and karma creates further resistance. It provokes resistance, creates more resistance, and though contributes to the continuation of the dream.

So to put it very simply, when you think something is going to make you happy, if you create this or that, that's not going to happen. That's the ignorance. If you're looking for fulfillment through something that you imagine you're going to create, it's not going to fulfill you, it can't.

You have to come from that state of fulfillment already. Then a different kind of creation can happen. You could, of course, just sit for the rest of your life somewhere and hope that somebody will put some food into your mouth as if you go to India and you're truly emanate peace, then that will happen.

They will put food into your mouth. If you do it in a Western country, it probably won't happen, but they'll put you away. And then they'll put food in your mouth.

That's okay. Most people find that even if they rest in presence, at some point, the impulse to act will be there. It could be action on a small scale, very small scale.

It could be action on a larger scale. It may not immediately be action. It may be an inspiration or an idea or a vision that suddenly rises into your mind.

And then you contemplate that and it feels empowered. And it is not something that says you need to achieve that in order to become happy or fulfilled. The energy that goes with it is so empowering that it is the same as if you had already achieved it.

That's the act of creation has that energy that flows with it. It is as powerful as the actual achievement in itself, if not more so, because the actual achievement is already the end of the creative process. The moment you have completed the creative act, you're already at the end of it.

And what now? So the empowerment is in the doing, not the arriving. That's the egoic delusion is that the empowerment is in the arriving, but the empowerment is in the doing, in the act of creation.

It's not just the empowerment, it's also the joy and aliveness that comes with it. So you don't need the, as it's called in the Bhagavad Gita, the fruit of the action. You're not looking or are more focused on the fruit of the action that it's called in the Bhagavad Gita, which means the outcome, the desired outcome.

You're not, your attention is not mainly in the desired outcome. Your attention is on the doing itself. Although, yes, you have a vision of what it is that wants to come into being, but your attention is fully in the doing and the enjoyment and the empowerment of doing.

It can be very intense, the act of creation. The energy that flows into it can be very intense. It's so intense that it might even look to an outsider as if you were stressed, but you're not.

But there can be that intensity of creation. So when something comes through or you, in whatever form, and that's beautiful, then you are the universe, the creative, the one intelligence, the one creative intelligence is creating through the human form, and that's beautiful. So it's this deep enjoyment in the act of creation.

It's the, the motivation is not egoic anymore. The motivation is not a sense of lack or fulfillment or of unfulfillment, but enjoyment. So in that sense, this, the secret, I don't remember if the secret talks about that, the book, that the foundation is the present moment as oneness with that, and then creation is fine when you no longer believe that certain things that you add to your life or create are going to make you happy or fulfilled.

So that's the difference. So the question then, do I need to make plans? I can't answer that as such.

You may be one of the few who will rest in being for the rest of their lives in this bodily form and just sit somewhere or walk around. And that's fine too, but it's less likely. There are very few.

It happens, maybe in India happens more than in the West, just as well, because the environment there is more receptive to that kind of thing. As for example, Ramana Maharshi, the, some of you may know, have heard the famous blue, wonderful spiritual teacher who passed away in the early 50s. He just sat, when he was a young boy, he left his home.

He had a realization of being, of awakening. And he sat next to a temple away from his hometown. He left his family.

Nobody knew where he was. And he just, there was no movement into action, just being, no speaking, didn't want to eat, just the bliss of total oneness with the source. But after a few years, he started to put food in his mouth and then he started to speak.

So a little bit of doing happened even to him, but no planning. So in his case, he didn't say, okay, I'm going to set up an ashram. That happened by itself.

The ashram organically grew. So it can happen to some people who are just either totally present and then something happens around you. In most cases, some kind of doing will be involved.

It could be a spontaneous unfolding of what is happening already. Let's say you're playing an instrument and you love it so much that you just, you enjoy playing it. And then gradually music comes to you.

You compose something or spontaneously play. And suddenly, without any vision of what you want to achieve, things can grow. This can happen.

It has happened to people. Just the intense enjoyment of the doing leading to organic growth into form. The Beatles loved making their music and I don't think they had necessarily a vision that we are going to be the greatest ever, but it happened out of the deep enjoyment and the intensity of that act of creation.

[Speaker 4] (12:56 - 12:56)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (13:21 - 1:41:27)

A couple of weeks ago, I spoke briefly at a conference in San Francisco. A big conference, close to 10,000 people. Annual conference, mostly for business people, but always towards the very end, they have a spiritual person.

Which is better than no spiritual person. And then the organizer invited a small group of people who spoke at the conference and some who attended the conference to his home for dinner. Small group, meaning 150.

And he organized even some entertainment. The main person providing the entertainment is a kind of yogi magician. Nobody knows exactly whether he's more of a yogi or more of a magician, or whether it's a combination, or whether everything is just tricks.

Anyway, this person, the main entertainment of the evening, when people had eaten in the garden, they had erected a tent, a big tent, enough for 150 people. In the middle of the area, there was a raised pedestal and on it was a gigantic water tank, glass, transparent, with a few fishes swimming in it. And then it was announced that this man would now come and get into this tank and hold his breath for seven minutes.

And that's what happened. He came, still wearing a few clothes, and he climbed up, submerged himself in the tank. And of course, everybody could see him.

He was floating in there and there was a countdown and for seven minutes, and while he was in there, he looked at everybody from inside the tank, like a fish would look at you, but completely kind of still. And he managed to hold his breath for seven minutes and then finally he came out. And then after he had recovered from that ordeal, the organizer wanted me to meet him.

So there were a few people standing around and he was there. And one of the people standing around said, can you do that, he asked me. And I said, I don't think I can, but I can stop thinking for seven minutes.

And the man who had been in the tank said, it's very much like that. He meant, I suppose, being in the tank. And he probably meant when he's in the tank, he's not thinking because if he were thinking, he wouldn't last for seven minutes.

Presuming that it's not a trick, we don't know, but it didn't seem to be a trick. He was just in there holding his breath. So I mentioned this story because I want to emphasize again this afternoon, the main point of why we're here.

And that is to fully realize that there are two dimensions, so to speak, to who you are. The one that is defined in form, which includes the physical form and the psychological form and the thinking entity. So your consciousness has the two dimensions.

There's an intermediate area, but we don't need to go there. There's the conscious dimension of thinking and that creates your conventional sense of identity. And there is the deeper space where there is a vast consciousness that is not defined in form.

So there's the two of you, the known, the person, and the unknown, the undefined, or as the Buddha called it, the unmanifested, the unborn, the uncreated. And the Buddha added, this is one of the sutras in my free translation. So he said, there is the unborn, the unmanifested, the uncreated.

If there were not, sorry, the sutras are a little bit repetitive. If there were not the unborn, the unmanifested, the uncreated, there would be no escape from the born, the manifested, and the created. And I'm adding in my free translation and you would be completely stuck in it and with it.

So there is a dimension in every human that is far deeper than what you conventionally consider is the I. So you can say there is the I that is just defined through thought, and there is a deeper I that is not defined. And the purpose of your existence really is in evolutionary terms, is to find that deeper being, the undefined, the unknown, and bring that into this dimension and into your life.

And you all have made the discovery already that you don't need to think continuously, and that your deeper sense of who you are does not depend on what your mind is saying about who you are. There is a more immediate, much more real sense of I than you could ever find through thinking about who you are. So to access the unmanifested, the unborn, the uncreated, if you want to use those words, you have to find within yourself the space of no thought, which is always there.

It's just covered up by continuous thought. Doesn't have to be. So gradually, you find that the unknown you comes through more and more.

First, you have to become comfortable. I mentioned it briefly the other day. First, you need to become comfortable when you enter that space with not knowing anything, because that is the, you're accessing the unknown, the undefined, which is primordial intelligence itself, not intelligence that has become thought.

That's the only thing you can measure to a limited degree, but there's primordial intelligence. In order to access that, you have to give up, not completely because it's still there, but your reliance, exclusive reliance, and main reliance on accumulated knowledge and on thinking. If you don't give up your reliance on conditioned knowledge and thinking, you can never go beyond.

So you would be very limited, not be creative, and ultimately, not wise. You can have a highly developed mind, but lacking in wisdom. And to have a highly developed mind and lacking in wisdom as an underlying guiding force, and that comes from the deeper level, to have that highly developed mind, whether it's a person or a society, culture, is a dangerous thing, because that mind can create havoc for yourself and others.

And the more developed it is, the more destructive it potentially is also. So you find that often with people who, some people who run countries, of course they have a university degree, and they, well, not all, but some might be considered intelligent in conventional terms. And yet very often their actions are actually very unintelligent.

They don't take into account the totality of the situation, the deeper implications of their actions. So they're not, whatever they say or do is not connected to the realm of wisdom. Don't need to mention any names, but look at any politician that comes to mind, look at the past 20 years.

Some may come to mind. Such lack of wisdom, quite amazing. And then you have the highly developed industry that creates dreadful weapons of destruction.

And these people who make these, they're all intelligent. Otherwise they wouldn't be able to do that. But how can you build an atom bomb without intelligence?

It requires highly intelligent people. So wisdom, intelligence needs to be guided by something deeper. And that deeper then needs to, can actually use the mind, the human mind, as an instrument for its expression.

And so, again, in order to get to that place, which is not a place, it's just a deeper dimension to who you are, you need to give up that reliance, that unconscious belief that you continuously need to think, to work things out, because otherwise things will get out of control. So every moment you need to have some kind of, comes to some kind of conclusion about this, what's happening at this moment. You immediately have some kind of opinion and conclusion and call it something.

And often at school, that quick, the quick, like a very quick comeback is often encouraged. The people who are, when the teacher asks questions, the one who can give the quickest answer is usually considered the best. And then there are others who may be slower and they don't even have time to raise their hand because it hasn't sunk in yet.

The question hasn't, the question needs to sink in and then at some point an answer may come, but they don't wait for them. There was, for example, when Einstein was four years old, his parents became concerned because their serious concern was that he might be mentally retarded because he was so slow at thinking. So we need to have that courage to go into that unknown place.

And what is that unknown place? Which is not a place. It's not to impose immediately interpretations on the world and on situations and on people and whatever arises.

So to be able to just look at things, look not just visually, but look in, also used metaphorically, which means to give attention to whatever is here now and to feel the power of your attention itself, which is intelligence, like a light that shines on a situation or on a person. And to feel that inherent power of consciousness that falls, is not, doesn't, is not produced by you. It comes through you.

Then you feel enormous amount of so-called self-confidence, not egoic self-confidence, but you are connected with, you can feel there's a power at the depth of who you are. And that power can flow into this moment. And it is there when you give your fullest attention to something and you're not thinking about it.

You're just looking, you're just giving attention. It could be a situation, a person you're looking at, whatever it is. You're just there as a field of attention, of awareness.

And so you are the bringer of awareness. And that flows from a deep place that is far transcends who you are as this physical form. That deep place connects you, not only with others or other humans, it also connects you with a source of all life.

And so you are not disconnected. You just seem to be. And the ego is a disconnected sense of self.

You are not disconnected from the totality of the universe. You are an aspect of the totality of the universe. You're not autonomous.

That's the delusion that every person is considered to be an independent consciousness, whereas the truth is every person is an expression of the one consciousness. So when you can feel that one consciousness as presence within yourself, you don't go around in continuous anxiety anymore. What's the next thing that's going to upset me?

And of course it always comes. So in other words, a certain confidence comes in that is not based on anything that you have perhaps achieved on the level of form. It's not confidence because you have an important position.

It's not confidence because you have accumulated wealth, not confidence because other people think you're great or not confidence because you have a certain ability that you have developed that you're better at than most people. Usually those things, or you look better than most people, or at least above average, either good looks or you have a great body. So all those things could give you your sense of confidence.

So a person who is very good looking would gain most, unless there are other factors, where that person is even more remarkable, but in the absence of other factors, the good looking person would predominantly gain self-confidence from looking in the mirror and seeing other people's reactions to who they are, which could be admiration and envy, depending on who is looking at you. And the ego would quite love that. It loves admiration and envy.

And so it feels, you feel confident because you're so good looking. And that lasts for, could last for a few years. And then it gets shaky because good looks don't last indefinitely.

And that's just one example. But whatever it is, it could be wealth. It could be what other people think of you.

So you derive confidence from some source, but that's always very shaky. And you may lose it when in certain situations, for example, the person who is confident because of their good looks might suddenly no longer be confident, surrounded by people who are intellectuals or have a lot of knowledge. And suddenly that person feels so stupid.

And so confidence collapses. So, and we often have examples of people who seem to have everything. They should have a lot of confidence.

They've got, they were born into wealth. They look relatively good. They've had a good education, conventional terms.

And yet even that for many people they still feel, I'm not really good enough. And they can't quite explain why. So for some people, those external things work.

And for many others, even those don't work. So the real self-confidence is only there when you transcend the self. So we can then drop the word self and then you have true confidence.

And confidence means trust. And trust means absence of fear or anxiety, or a sense of not good enough, or a continuous compulsion to compare yourself to others, which makes life very uncomfortable. You always look around at others.

So the true confidence is not really self-confidence. The self, because there is the self, which is, that's one name we can have for ego. The moment you're not thinking, but you are just a presence, where is the self?

Where is the ego? It's gone. It's only when you start thinking again about yourself and your problems, then there's the self.

Well, not always problems, but often. But when you start thinking about yourself and your life situation, and so all the things you're dealing with, there's the self. And what you have and what you don't have, and what you can do and what you cannot do, and what you are aspiring to, and what you are proud of, and what you regret, and what you feel guilty about, and all those things that make up the egoic self, that can be transcended in an instant if you stop thinking.

And then suddenly there's only that presence. And then you're connected with the deeper. And then, at first, it comes in glimpses.

And then you are connected to the source of intelligence, and power, and aliveness. And then you suddenly feel very confident. And we can't quite say why, because if a person asks you, why are you confident?

You're not particularly good at anything. You don't look particularly great. You have no wealth.

You haven't got that much of an education. And why are you feeling so confident? And you would say, I don't know.

Ultimately, confidence means absence of fear. And the spiritual word for confidence in spiritual terminology would be faith. That is the real meaning of faith.

Faith is not to have a belief in a particular story. That's often people think faith is the same as belief. So if you believe in this particular story, even the story that there is a God somewhere who protects you, it's still a story.

And you might have faith in the story that there is a God somewhere who looks after you. It's fine. It's probably a bit more comfortable to have that than to have the belief that there is no God who looks after you in the absence of anything else.

Slightly better to have the belief there's a God who looks after you, but that's going to be very shaky when something bad happens to you. Because you had a deal. You had a deal with God and you had all that faith.

And what has he done for you? He was supposed to look after you. Was he asleep when that bad thing happened?

So it often happens that people who say they have faith, they go to church, but when something really bad happens, it gets very shaky suddenly. Sometimes they lose their faith. Sometimes they take refuge again and find some explanation.

They say, well, the traditional explanation is, well, he's punishing me for my sins. So that's it. And then the story works again.

So you have repaired the story. But so that is what is conventionally called faith. But true faith is the absence of fear and is not derived from a story.

It is derived from a deeper place within yourself. And that's what, if Jesus uses faith, this is what he talks about. Not believe in a particular.

Later, the people who wrote down what he taught, they already had misunderstood to a large extent. So distortions already started there. And then they had to translate from the language that he spoke in into other languages and another language, oh, it's a long story.

So faith is trust. Trust is absence of fear. And that can only be there by accessing that deeper dimension within yourself.

And the quickest way there is suspend thinking and feel yourself as the presence. And you will then find that gradually presence increases in your life. It comes through more.

And gradually it begins to replace your ordinary conventional sense of identity, which is still has the remnants of it are still there, of course. For example, I can think about my childhood. I can think about my twenties and thirties and what happened then, what I was doing then.

And so in that sense, I can even meet people that I knew a long time ago and just re-recognize each other although we look different after many years, meet people again. So in that sense, of course, that still is that kind of continuity that is upheld by thought. And so you remember all those things.

And, but who you are, your sense of beingness, of identity, of who you are is not derived from that anymore. Nor is it derived from your current life situation, whether you are rich or poor or influential, don't know what that means, or non-influential. If you look at the hundred, once a year, they choose the hundred most influential people on the planet.

And with some of them, you can understand, okay, that makes sense. But with others, you say, what? One person can shake their body in a particular way.

It becomes the one most, one to a hundred most, well, it's interesting choice. And many other examples. Don't want to mention any names.

So all that influence, all that stuff, all those things no longer matter. So I found, for example, luckily my old sense of identity kind of dissolved. And then there was that confidence, but in the eyes of the world, that confidence was misplaced.

It was, nobody understood it. And most people didn't even notice it because I don't necessarily appear very confident in ordinary human interactions. I'm kind of, don't say that much.

And some people call me shy. So, but I knew I had this feeling of rootedness in being, but everybody else thought I, my life was ruined because I had abandoned my academic career and had nothing else to replace it with. So how, why do you feel okay with yourself?

You've, you have nothing. You've, you've thrown it all away. So my mom didn't understand me at all.

She only understood me again after I'd become successful. So there was, there was that quiet confidence in the background that wasn't based on anything external. I could have thought back, well, I was, I did get into Cambridge, so I must be great, but then I dropped out, so that's not good.

So I could have constructed some kind of story in my mind, I got into Cambridge, but I was too good for them, so that's why I dropped out. There could have been a story that temporarily would have been satisfying, but not for long. And some stories are quite absurd.

People actually, many people actually have fictitious stories about who they are based on events that never happened, but let's not go there. So my sense of identity then as the unsuccessful person, and then the so-called successful person didn't change, just exactly the same feeling of beingness, of I-ness. There was no change between being nobody in particular and being somebody special in the eyes of the world, but there was no change in the feeling of identity, unfortunately, because my ego would have, the big ego I had in my twenties would have loved that success, would have gone, yay, I made it, but it was too late.

So accessing the, that not knowing, state through presence, become comfortable with not knowing so that you don't compulsively interpret everything all the time. Then you access greater intelligence. And then at first, gradually, you notice it flows into, you might find yourself saying things that surprise you in certain situations, only when the situation requires it.

You don't just say it into nothingness. When the situation requires it, you find yourself saying something. Oh, what did I just say?

That's interesting. Or you take certain action or certain insights come to you. You're kind of carried or kind of guided, but not in a narrow sense.

Intuition arises more, more creative thoughts, because thoughts still come. But as you become comfortable with not knowing, the thoughts tend to be less destructive. And that element of destructiveness goes eventually out completely.

So thoughts don't torture you anymore. Your own, because millions on this planet are being tortured on a daily basis, not by anybody, but by their thoughts. An enormous amount of suffering is created on a daily basis by millions of people on the planet.

They create it for themselves. They don't know it. It's amazing state.

That's why we call it unconscious. So that doesn't happen anymore. So thoughts still operate.

Even some drifting thoughts still occasionally happen, but they are harmless. They're no longer poisonous vipers that bite you. They're thought, oh, oh.

And then another thought, oh no, what am I going to do? And then if that wasn't enough, more thoughts come. And so much fear is generated by thought, not by situations, but by thoughts.

So that's, you need to, as soon as possible, get out of that. Another wonderful shift that happens is the usual state is you're always confronted with situations and people, and they change all the time. And that makes up your external life, a continuous change of people that come in, situations change, places change, and things happen.

And mostly those who are unconsciously identified with the egoic self are, so to speak, underneath the situations, which means the situations determine their inner state, their state of happiness or unhappiness or well-being, their state of mind, their emotional state. So the simplest example, just to simplify, just to show you what I mean, it rains one day and they go, oh, what a miserable day. Next day, it's sunny.

Oh, it's sunny. That means you are under the situation. You're not above the situation, you're under it.

The situation controls you. And I've given them the simplest possible example, but even that happens very commonly. So, especially if you live in London or Seattle or Vancouver, where it rains quite a lot, then if you are dependent to some extent, even on the weather for feeling good or not good, then that's what happens.

But you will notice when you look out of the window, the real pain comes with saying, what a miserable day. It's, the rain is nothing in itself. It just is.

But you call it something. And it's not just a middle, it's another miserable day. And the moment you have used the word, the thought miserable, it connects to other things in your life that you can also call miserable.

And there we go, that's the beginning of a day. And that's the beginning of a storyline in your head. And you are under the situation.

So whatever situation you go into, and now of course there are many more complex situations in your life than the weather, you meet a person. Now, how does this person behave towards you? How that person behaves towards you, of course depends on the state of consciousness of that person.

Now, and then how do you behave to that person after you've had their reaction towards you? What is your reaction towards them? And usually if you're under the situation, your actions and words and how you feel are determined by the other person's actions and words.

In other words, an angry person will make you angry too. Or other states, a confrontational person, when you're discussing a certain subject, whatever state of consciousness that person manifests, you will follow if you're under the situation. Or things, of course, continuously, not continuously, but frequently in one's life, things in quotation marks go wrong because you've made plans to do something and something comes to interfere with your plans.

Things are going wrong. The usual thing, if you're under the situation, you get upset, you get miserable. You complain to yourself and others.

That's dreadful. Now, considering the fact that these things happen quite frequently in everybody's life, that is not a powerful way to live. If you are at the mercy of situations, you're at the mercy of things going exactly the way you planned them and the way they are supposed to go.

And if they don't, you get upset. Some people get sad or depressed, others get angry and irritated, whatever it is. So you are at the mercy of things happening or not happening or happening in a particular way, or people behaving towards you in a particular way.

So you're under, you're always at the mercy of stuff happening or not happening. And if you are more deeply connected with the presence, that is the source of satisfaction in your life. Every other source of satisfaction is kind of fake, pseudo, not the real thing.

Presence, that arising presence is the source of satisfaction, the primary source of satisfaction in your life. Yes, there are secondary sources of satisfaction. Of course, an apple pie.

You have a nice swim, feels good. You go for a hike. You have sex.

You have a drink. You even achieve something. You learn to master a certain skill.

And then as you practice, it's satisfying. And then you achieve it, it's satisfying. These are all secondary satisfactions in your life.

And there's nothing wrong with that, of course. And if you meet a long lost friend, suddenly, oh, it's great to meet you. It's so wonderful.

Of course, there is a satisfaction in that, but they are all secondary satisfactions. The main source of satisfaction is the presence. And even all those things that are secondary satisfaction, many of them are because for a moment, they bring you into presence.

For example, if you're climbing a mountain or you're hiking or you're walking on the beach or you're swimming, certain activities take you out of your mind and can bring you into presence while they last. And you feel so good. And you think it's caused by the activity, but it's caused by the fact that all the habitual torturous thinking subsided and you're suddenly completely there.

That was so good, that swim, that hike, that whatever it was, it was so good. Okay, why? Well, it was good because, were you thinking?

No. Were you thinking about yesterday or tomorrow or your problems or your difficult life or difficult people in your life? No.

Okay, you were completely present. So once you realize and sense that true satisfaction is derived from presence, that means when things go wrong in ordinary life, when you encounter undesirable, so-called undesirable circumstances, when things don't work out they were supposed to work out, things break, suddenly you lose something, a difficult person comes into your life. You can, even in that situation, you can continue to be in touch with the source of satisfaction.

Let's say you made great plans for some great wedding and suddenly on the wedding day, something happens and the groom or the bride are detained somewhere and they can't make it. And we've invited 300 people and we've paid thousands of dollars for this wedding and I've been looking forward to this for years. It was supposed to be the culmination of my life.

It's a fictitious situation, but it could happen and probably has happened. It's just one of many possible examples. So this is a very unpleasant thing if you're not in touch with a true source of satisfaction and you go all shaky and upset or hysterical, whatever, depending on your predispositions.

If you lock yourself in a room or you scream, depending on whatever kind of ego you have. But if you are in touch with the source of satisfaction, in presence, well, okay, that's a pity. But of course we'll have it some other day.

And you continue to feel a sense of aliveness because after all, this moment isn't that bad just because the wedding has collapsed and I'm using the collapsed wedding as a metaphor of whatever collapses or goes wrong. So here we have, and you are then above the situations in your life. They don't control you anymore.

And I wouldn't go so far as to say that you control them. To some extent, of course, you can manifest certain good things, but you're never totally in control of externals. There are many other factors.

So, and you don't need to be totally in control of externals. So question always arises, are you above the situation or are you below the situation? Are you at the mercy of situations and people or are you free of dependency on how other people behave towards you or how certain situations evolve or happen or dependent on whether something happens or does not happen?

Shortly after my, this shift in consciousness, I had saved some money to visit my dad in Spain. And because his wife was extremely challenging, it was agreed that I would stay in a small hotel. That was, I was in my, I think I was about 30 years old.

So I was looking forward, of course, to going to, I lived in England, going to a sunny Southern Spain, spending 10 days there. And I booked, or my dad booked for me a place. He didn't have any money at that time.

Well, he had some money, but not, I think not enough to book a great room for me. So he made a booking, but he hadn't looked at the hotel or the room. And when I arrived, the hotel was by the sea.

So I imagined a view of the beautiful blue Mediterranean Sea. And when I got there and I looked out the window, there was a brick wall. It was facing away from the sea, and there was a kind of cliff, and there was just a brick wall and a little bit of sky.

And so I stood there and looked at the brick wall, and suddenly I felt incredibly peaceful. And I suddenly realized it doesn't matter at all whether I have a sea view or a brick wall. Why didn't it matter?

Because there was a flow of satisfaction coming from within. If it had been my choice, I would have said, I prefer a sea view to a wall view. But I didn't have a choice.

And I was amazed because that was not long after this inner shift. So I wasn't yet familiar with all the effects it has on things in one's life. And there were many, many instances when I was amazed.

I said, why do I feel so peaceful? I don't know, I just feel, I did nothing. In this particular case, I knew that at some level, it did not, ultimately did not matter.

And that was so liberating. So liberating. That reminds me of a very similar story.

We had a retreat in probably Oregon many years ago. And one of the participants who was also a friend of ours had just started to unpack things in her room, the retreat room, when a woman burst into her room without knocking, in tears and sounding hysterical. And she said, this was supposed to be my room.

And they put me somewhere else. I asked specifically for this room. I've been waiting for this retreat for a long, long time.

And I'm having difficulties in my life. And he says, oh, just don't try to. And our friend, without even having, giving it a single thought, said, you can have it.

I'll move into yours. And the woman's, really? No, do you mean that?

Oh my God, how wonderful, thank you so much. I'm so happy. It is probably true that she had been through difficult times, yes.

But she was totally at the mercy of externals. And our friend, I didn't inquire further how she felt when she moved into that undesirable room, which probably wasn't that bad. I don't think there was a brick wall outside the window.

She was fine. So in her, there was some connectedness with the source of satisfaction. So her wellbeing did not depend on what kind of room she was in.

Now, does that mean whatever room they put you in, when you book a room in a hotel, you should say, okay, not necessarily. Why not, if that is not the right room, you can talk to the, actually, this isn't the room I booked. I'd rather have the room that I booked and paid for, and then see what happens.

But again, there is not going to be that, ah, ah, or the anger. This is, how dare you put me in this room? You lose all, there's no longer a flow of, do you remember we talked about what makes up a true human?

It's goodwill towards other humans, a flow of benevolence and goodwill, no matter what the situation is. And even if you're complaining about your room, you can complain, and there can still be a flow of benevolence and goodwill because there is a human being there. That human being may have nothing to do with the fact that they put you in the wrong room.

And you probably know that, but you're angry with him or her. So, of course you can change situations. And I think I probably asked, I don't remember all the details, I may have asked, I'm sure I did in that, when I got to that hotel with a brick wall outside, do you have another room with a sea view?

Sorry, that's all we have left. Okay. So it was a surprise to me that, one that I could be okay with that.

And I don't know how this woman from the retreat, whether she benefited from the retreat and whether by now, I haven't seen her in a long time, I wish her well, and I do hope that by now, she has found the source of true satisfaction within herself so that the wrong room does not create an enormous amount of suffering. If a wrong room creates an enormous amount of suffering, how much suffering when something really goes wrong? So connect to the source of satisfaction, otherwise you're at the mercy of stuff and people.

How do you connect? Access the space of aware presence and stop thinking for a moment. Stopping thinking is not an action that you do as if you were attacked your mind and told your mind, stop thinking.

It is possible to stop thinking if you hold your breath for long enough. But eventually, even if you hold it for seven minutes, eventually you have to breathe again and then we'd have to think again. So it's not, you cannot force that presence onto yourself.

And stopping thinking is not an action you take against thinking. It is rather a letting go of thinking. One could say a dropping, you relinquish, you realize that right now you don't want it, you don't need it.

It's superfluous to the situation. So you just, it's more a letting go than an active interference of what's happening in your mind. It's a surrender.

This is why it is often associated with surrendering to what is because surrendering to what is is not attacking what is or fighting with or through some kind of internal struggle, bring about surrender, that doesn't work. You cannot bring about surrender through some extra internal struggle. I must surrender.

But there's something in me that doesn't want to surrender. Surrender is just a, this is what is. So this moment brings you into presence and into yourself.

And so I would suggest even so that presence, give it a chance so that presence can arise more and more in you and use situations. I already pointed out a few, and there's some in the books where you invite the state of not thinking into your life. I talked about the waiting.

You remember whenever you're waiting for something, be alert, be present, be completely there and drop all the nonsense in your mind that says this shouldn't be happening. Be completely there with your attention. Feel your attention, feel the attention.

And then you look around and there is nothing wrong with this situation where you are waiting unless the mind tells you there is something wrong. But there's nothing wrong with the situation. That's an amazing realization.

Associated with that is you will be able to differentiate between a situation and your reaction to the situation. Unconscious people cannot distinguish something that happens and the way they react to what happens. They are a single thing.

So again, to bring it down to the simplest example, unconscious people cannot tell the difference between when they look out of the window in the morning and it's raining and their mind says what a miserable day. They actually believe that it is a miserable day. They can't distinguish between the situation and their mental, emotional interpretation of the situation.

They become a single phenomenon. That's a mark of unconsciousness. So if you can tell apart, perhaps even in the moment of calling something, something, you look out of the window and suddenly you realize, well, there's water coming down from the sky and it's raining.

And here's my reaction to it. Here's the story in my mind that says it's a miserable day. Suddenly you've separated the two.

Once you've separated the two, you realize you end up with this baggage in your hand of that which your mind added to the situation. Do you still want that miserable thing or you just drop it? And suddenly you look out of the window and it is as it is.

And that's freedom. So I've just gave a very simple example, can be applied to any situation. So there's always just the isness of this moment which cannot ever be otherwise.

Of course, you can take a step to change what is now, but right now it is. The mind, the egoic mind does not know the basic fact that what is right now already is and cannot be otherwise because it already is. This is perhaps the most basic truth you could utter, but the egoic mind doesn't know that.

It says, oh no, it is, but it shouldn't be. And, or this is another person, let's say it's a person. The isness comes to you in the form of a person.

So this is how this person, this is what this person says and does. And this is the emotional energy or mental energy that you can feel coming from that person. That's what it is.

Should it be otherwise? Your mind could say that, but if you become completely okay with that's what is, then immediately you are in touch with a deeper, because you are not, no longer ego-based. So you can, even if, even just that acceptance will drop you into presence and suddenly you can feel, even if you had lost it for a moment, suddenly you can feel it again by simply accepting this moment as it is.

And suddenly you feel, oh, there's a presence. Feel yourself as the presence. So you need to do little things to become more comfortable with the state of pure awareness and not thinking.

For example, it sounds a little silly, walk from point A to point B. It could be just as little as from the chair to that vase, or vase, as it's called in America. You can walk from the chair to the vase, vase.

It took me years, several years of living in North America before I could get myself to say tomato, because I'd lived in England for so many years and it was a tomato. But after a while, waiter smiled when I said tomato. And so eventually for a day came when I said tomato.

Okay. There's a vase, the vase. Can you walk from here to there?

This is point A, that's point B in pure awareness. So when you go for a walk, look at the tree that's right ahead of you there and say between here and now, I'll just be present with every step. And then you just walk and you are that field of presence.

It's not long, so it's not a big thing to achieve. So you just go, oh, wow, I wasn't thinking. Let's see if I can do it.

It's not a doing, it's you're letting go. The thinking is a doing. So you're letting go of the doing.

The only doing you do is the walking. And that happens by itself virtually because you don't have to do it. And while you walk, you can look around and be just very present.

You don't have to go as sometimes when they do walking meditation in Buddhist monasteries, they go. That's fine if it works for you, that's fine too. But it doesn't have to be that complicated, just walk.

And then the next tree, that's a little bit further. Just, so if you give yourself, you use that space, that external space and make it into a temporal space where in you practice the timeless presence between here and there. So that somehow it makes it a little easier rather than say, okay, I'll try and be present while I walk around here now.

Give you, later you don't need that anymore. Just a little, another thing that I often recommend as you may know, perform a small action in complete presence. It could be a simple thing as lifting a glass of water or any object and putting it from here and putting it there.

But the movement is not a means to an end. You're just present. You're not just looking to the end result.

You want to put it there, it's a normal thing, but just, or you can lift it and drink and just be, and then it travels back to the table and you're still not thinking. And then you put it down and then you can start thinking again. And then you need another zip of water.

In that way, you could get addicted to water. And if there is a source of suffering in your life right now, it can be, I'm not talking about any action that you can or need to take right now, then do it. But a lot of suffering in one's life does not involve any particular action that you can take right now.

It is, you carry it in your mental, emotional field. And any such suffering can be burned away, so to speak, through intense presence. Just go, no past, no future.

Just be the presence, intense. This is the sword, I occasionally use that expression, the sword of presence that cuts through time and suffering because in the absolute presence, suffering cannot survive. And people who evolve, awaken spiritually through being confronted with physical suffering or potentially life-threatening illness, some of them learn that lesson.

And the lesson is, I must not leave the present moment. We saw a clip yesterday where the woman learned to be in the present. I must not leave the present moment because the moment I leave the present moment, I begin to suffer.

That could be, if the doctor tells you you only have a limited time to live, then you have to, it's awful if you go thinking there, thinking about your past, thinking about your future, which is getting shorter and shorter. But just, so that some situations sometimes push you into presence, but you don't have to wait for life to push you into presence. You can actually choose presence.

So if you have a moderate amount of suffering in you at this moment, bring more alertness to this moment. Be more, turn up the light, the light of presence. It's a little bit like a dimmer switch.

You can turn it up and there's no tension involved in it. You just go, you're so present that past and future do not intrude anymore. And even thoughts, only little thoughts come and go, doesn't intrude anymore.

You just go, that is the mark of the Zen master. The Zen master is, you can see the old paintings, the old drawings of Zen masters, they all look. And what are they saying?

They're saying, I'm not leaving the present moment. And that's where their power comes from. And that burns away all suffering because suffering is here.

Of course, you could still have a toothache or you could still have physical pain, but that's not suffering, that's just pain. Suffering is what you built on top of that, psychological suffering. So once you separate to learn, once you learn to separate the situation from your interpretation, also you become present.

You can just as present with what the is-ness of the situation. Practice presence. Strange thing, I never write things down.

I was going to do questions, that the original idea was to do questions this afternoon. And suddenly I realized, no, well, it came from within. This needs to be about presence to remind them and bring back the energy of presence because that's the only thing this is about.

And what almost never happens, I'd scribble down a few notes. I never take notes to talks. I scribble down a few notes, I have to tell them this, this, this, this, this.

Very strange. Let's look at the notes. Oh, I've already said it all.

You see, you don't need notes. It's done. Another simple way, of course, is a conscious breath.

Brings you into presence. Conscious breath means now. A very quick way of taking attention away from thinking.

Just conscious means you feel the breath moving in and moving out. One conscious breath brings you into presence. And then you might even want to take a second conscious breath because it feels so good not to be stuck in your head, in your mind anymore.

And what does it mean it feels so good? You're getting in touch, perhaps just a little bit at first, with the source of all satisfaction in your life. I have had, as I mentioned before, I have had letters from people in prison who discovered this secret.

They were in prison, they are in prison, and discovered the source of true satisfaction, which is presence. And suddenly they go. They are free, internally free.

Being in the body is, of course, another way of being anchored in presence, particularly people who are very much in their minds. Feeling the inner body at the same time as you look around, feeling the aliveness pervading your inner body, and at the same time, having enough attention left to be aware of your surroundings, but no attention left for thinking. Because if you feel the inner body and you are perceiving your surroundings visually, through looking, listening, and feeling, you will not have anything left for thinking.

Try it now. Feel the aliveness. Can you feel the aliveness that pervades your body?

In your hands, your feet, your legs, the entire body? There it is. But you can still perceive the room.

Of course you can. And you can hear the sounds, the words. But there isn't much left for thinking now, because some of it is in the body and others is in sense perceptions.

Very little left for thinking, probably nothing. Isn't that wonderful? You don't have to think.

And then a moment comes, and that is your greatest achievement in life. You can achieve nothing greater. The moment comes when you simply say, okay, I'm not thinking now.

Don't need to think. And then you let go of thinking for a certain period of time. A minute, two minutes.

Occasional thought may come in and drifts out, doesn't matter anymore. And you perceive and you feel that presence. So you have the choice to think or not to think.

That's enormous power, that you're no longer at the mercy of your mind. That's the end of the matrix. And some of you, perhaps right here and now, I'm not going to ask, tell me whether you can do it or not.

Relinquish thinking at this moment. Just be, but it's not only, there's not just an absence of thought here. There is also the presence of presence.

It's not just a negative thing. There's no thought. But there's also something else and that you cannot define.

It has no shape or form. It's timeless. And that has always been there in your life.

But it was continuously overlooked because thoughts are so noisy and they took your attention away from it. So you may find something, or quite a few of you have already experienced similar things to what the stories I talked about that happened. Or you may find in the very soon, a similar situation where something goes wrong and you go, oh, well, that's a pity.

But the upset isn't there anymore. You still feel that underlying satisfaction. Or if there is upset, it's very much on the surface now.

It doesn't touch your deepest being anymore. There can still be a surface unhappiness, ripples on the surface, but it doesn't go very deep anymore. And sometimes not even that.

You lose something, something goes wrong, and immediately you focus, well, that's what it is. And the present moment isn't... Because of that, the present moment isn't really bad.

It's still the present moment, just as it was before. It always is. And you will find as presence arises more in you, something happens that when you are not very conscious yet, or fairly unconscious, when challenging things happen, you get more unconscious.

People, situations, you react, you get angry, reactive. And then when you reach a certain threshold, something challenging happens, and the presence in you intensifies and you go. So then any challenging situation pushes you into more presence rather than pulls you into unconsciousness.

That is a critical threshold where instead of pulling you into unconscious reaction, the same challenging situation forces you or pushes you into intensified presence. Because the degree of presence that comes through you, into you and through you can vary. It's not always the same intensity.

Sometimes it's a low intensity presence, and it tends to be a higher intensity presence when you're confronted with challenging people or situations. And when that happens, then you know that's a decisive dividing line between being pulled into unconsciousness by unconscious people in situations and being pushed into heightened presence by the same people or situations. So when that happens, you can go, wow, this is so great.

For example, when I sit in my room, there is an underlying presence. And so it's very pleasant. And I look around, don't necessarily have to do anything.

I look out of the window. I can sit there for a long time. I love sitting quietly, doing nothing.

So, I mean, not all the time. Sometimes I do things. And then the time comes, let's say, I look at my watch and say, oh, okay.

I realize even without words, oh, by the way, if you have a watch or a clock at home, you can practice, especially if it doesn't have numbers on it, but just can practice looking at it. And you can know what time it is without any concepts, words in your head, direct knowing. So you look and you know it's a quarter to six, but there are no words that say it's a quarter to six.

You can practice that. You just look and you know. And many things happen that in presence, you look and you know, but you don't have to call it anything.

That is non-conceptual knowledge. You can look at a person and know a lot about that person without any judgment. You can sense their being.

So the time approaches to come here and then give a talk. I've been sitting in my room and then I can feel, it's not a decision on my part at all. I can feel an intensification.

Suddenly, gradually it goes. Presence builds up. No tension in it whatsoever.

Just presence. The light goes up and then I go come here. There's a high intensity of presence.

It's very pleasant, it's beautiful. And when I go back to my room, the intensity decreases and it just goes. So it always responds to the situation, whatever it is.

When something goes wrong, it goes higher again. Not that there's anything wrong with talking here. That's a different matter.

Yeah. When a person comes, I used to see people a lot privately. I don't, haven't done it in a while.

Whenever they come into, they sit down, I look at them. They start talking to me usually about their problems and there's a presence goes. It almost seems to fill the room.

They go away. Presence goes, it doesn't disappear. It just goes, state of rest.

And there have been times, there are times when it comes for no reason whatsoever, very intensely. There have been times when I've, at night, I felt I was being connected to an electric socket and it goes, bleh. There was nothing to do.

But there may be a reason why that happened also, which I, my mind does not understand. So you are here to bring that into this world. Apart from the things you do in your life, they will flow into what you do in your life.

You bring presence through whatever you do. It doesn't matter what you do, whether you're a director or CEO of a company or whether you cut people's hair, makes no difference whatsoever. It comes through you.

Well, that's it, it seems.

[Speaker 5] (1:43:15 - 1:44:11)

My question is around, before you were talking about intensification of presence. So at times I've felt intense energy in my body, throughout my body, but that's more rare. And it's, I feel that I experience presence in more of an underlying calmness or, yeah, calmness.

So my question is, is presence experienced, is there something consistent with presence? Is there something that's felt or a consistent feeling?

[Speaker 1] (1:44:11 - 1:49:53)

Do you mean, does it always feel the same? Is that what you mean, perhaps? Well, the, as I said, the intensity of presence can vary.

Then, so presence is the energy field. Now, this is very hard to talk about, but I'll just, I will make an attempt. It is almost as if there's a place inside from where presence emanates.

And that place is timeless. And I can only compare it in the sense-perceived world, you could compare to this, like the sun that continuously shines, and yet it has no form. So it's like a space, rather, out of which presence emanates.

So the sun isn't actually positive presence, but if you imagine that the sun were an empty space out of which the light emanates, then you get a better, this is closer to the truth of how it is experienced as you go very deeply into it. So there is a space within, or a spaciousness, that is the point out of which the emanation of presence happens. And that space is absolute repose, absolute stillness.

And to feel that in yourself is joy, very joyful, for lack of a better word. There's an aliveness there, but it is absolutely still. That's the core.

And that is, perhaps as I speak of it, you can get a sense within yourself what that is. You can only sense it when you're not thinking. You can't be thinking and sense that.

That's the innermost stillness within you. Out of that emanates presence, which can emanate directly from the body, can also move into your mind and begin to use your mind and inform the mind and speak through the mind. So there were times in my life when I was very passive for, you know my episodes on seeking on park benches, but even after that, for long periods of time, I was so immersed in that inner stillness that there seemed no point in doing anything.

And you don't need to go that way. I didn't have any guidance, so nobody could tell me what to do with that. So I gradually had to learn for myself that you can be active in the world and at the same time completely rooted in the stillness.

So you particularly mentioned the state of calmness when you can feel it. So it may be that you have that connectedness with a still point within and feel that very strongly. It's very hard for people to, people also differ in their choice of words when they speak about it.

So you could ask, if you go to India or you go to any Buddhist country, you may find that, ask them about spiritual awakening, you may find that the words they use to describe it are very, very different. And only if you know already from direct experience what it is they're talking about, you can recognize that they're talking about the same thing. So I've already said too much about it because what I have said, those words may not be what the words that you would choose to talk about your experience of presence.

So are you able to suspend thinking for certain moments without going to sleep?

[Speaker 5] (1:49:54 - 1:49:55)

I'm not sure.

[Speaker 1] (1:49:56 - 1:49:58)

Okay, try it now.

[Speaker 5] (1:49:59 - 1:50:09)

Okay, stop. Okay, how was that? I don't remember a thought.

[Speaker 1] (1:50:10 - 1:50:15)

Okay, so there was no thought because not thinking is not memorable.

[Speaker 5] (1:50:16 - 1:50:18)

Yeah. Okay.

[Speaker 1] (1:50:19 - 2:06:03)

Now, this is very significant. So the mind doesn't know what to do with not thinking because the mind is thought. The mind cannot really appreciate how important not thinking is because what the mind is interested in is, let me ask another question.

That's what the mind is interested in. It's not interested in stepping aside and allowing no thought to arise. So the mind has a certain momentum.

The most important thing is to become familiar with that state of no thought. Far more important than any question that could arise in your mind or any answers that the greatest spiritual teacher could give you. So that's why I mentioned, I believe, in the New Earth, I was visiting that big center where they offer countless fascinating courses on developing this and that faculty and spiritual development and physical development and all kinds of huge number of courses are offered.

But you can have anything, a menu of courses. You can pursue any interest, wonderful and fascinating. So I don't know if you remember reading it.

I wrote, somebody came to me and showed me that program, that menu of fascinating courses and workshops. Said, which one do you think is most suitable for me? And I looked through it.

I said, there's so many, I don't know. But I can tell you this. What, well, the way I put it at that time was, be aware of your breathing just for a few days and you will gain more than attending any of these courses.

And it's free. Be aware of your breath as you go through daily life as much as you can. What does that imply?

That implies there's a space of no thought. Because you cannot be aware of your breath and think at the same time. So if you want rapid acceleration of spiritual awakening, this, by the way, is the last question for tonight appropriately.

If you want rapid acceleration of spiritual awakening, don't ask another question. Because the next question and the next and the next won't get you any closer, especially after. As you can see, I'm winding down the question.

Especially after being here for several days, I have said all that can be said about spiritual awakening. The next step is up to you and it does not consist in, well, let me see. No, I need to, something else I need to know.

I know that some questions are helpful because, but ultimately, the most essential thing is bring presence into your life now, for example, by being aware of your breath as much as you can. It's just one way of bringing presence in. Or feel the inner body as much as you can.

And that's rapid. Or if you can, just step out of thought already without using any of those portals. Just move out of thought.

And some of you can do that already. Then choose that as much as possible in your daily life. Choose to be in thoughtless awareness whenever you don't actually need to think.

And that's quite a lot of the time, especially moving from here to there, doing habitual things, listening to people talking. Be the presence. That's the spiritual practice.

There's no other spiritual practice. Everything else would point to that. But this is the most direct spiritual practice.

And very rapidly, you'll find the shift happening. But it's your choice now. Before, unconscious humans don't have a choice.

When there's no inkling of awareness in you, you don't even know that apart from your thoughts, there's anything else in you, you have no choice. You are being used, you are possessed by thought. You have a choice.

Now, with choice comes responsibility because the moment you have that choice, it implies that there is sufficient awareness in you for you to have choice. Once that has arisen, that choice becomes your responsibility. We have to look at it from that point of view because if people ask me, well, who is responsible?

Presence or you and all kinds of strange questions? The most useful approach is to see that you can choose to be present. That's your responsibility.

Choose to be present in many, many situations in your daily life. Choose presence over useless thinking, for example. When you're in bed at night, when you wake up in the morning, when you're walking in nature or walking to work from here to there or traveling on public transport or sitting in your car, stopping at a red light, choose presence over thinking.

You are able to do that. First, you have to remember that you have a choice. That comes one.

Okay, I have a choice. And then exercise the choice and take your attention away from thinking and put your attention on attention itself. Become conscious of being conscious.

That's your job now. And then you cannot not experience an accelerated arising of presence. It's that simple.

But the weird thing is many people who have the choice still do not exercise their choice. I'm now, what I just described is looking at it from one perspective. From another perspective, which is also true and actually more true but less helpful, it is true to say that when you exercise your choice of being present, what is really happening is that presence is choosing to manifest through you.

But what presence wants you is to feel that you can have that choice because it helps it to manifest. Ultimately, there isn't you and presence. You are an aspect of presence.

So forget about what I just said. But exercise your choice to be present, no matter where you are. And if you lose it, fine.

It's coming back again and again. Of course, you will drift off again sometimes. You drift off into thinking.

You may drift off into reactivity and find, but then come back. The moment you notice it, the moment you notice that you've drifted off into reactivity, your choice is to come back. If you cannot come back directly by saying, okay, I'll just be present, then use either your breath to bring you back, use the awareness of the inner body to bring you back, use some conscious movement to bring you back, or use sense perception to bring you back, looking without labeling.

It's all, all the, especially natural things are helpful. You look at them, look at your dog. He's not thinking.

So, and immediately, it's so easy to be present with an animal, with nature, with the sky. You can use those things as help. So, if you need some additional help to be present, use that.

I sometimes call that a portal into presence. Use the portal of the present moment, which is what present is. Okay, what's the problem right now?

What's wrong now? And then you have to, because the mind has been telling you for an hour that things are very wrong. And then you have to, well, what's wrong?

What's the actual problem at this moment, which after all, is all that ever exists? What's the actual problem at this moment? Well, this has just happened and this might happen.

No, this moment, nothing. I'm sitting here, breathing. There was a man working with Byron Katie, a spiritual teacher.

And he was talking about, oh, I'd love to have enough money and if I had enough money, what I would do, I thank you for your question. I don't know if this is still the answer to your question, but the man was saying, if I had enough money, I would move to Hawaii and that would be so great. That's my dream.

And she said, well, what would you do in Hawaii? He said, well, I would sit in a deck chair by the beach or in my backyard and look at the palm trees, breathe. And she pointed out to him, well, where are you sitting now?

Is the chair comfortable? Yeah. So what's wrong with that chair?

How different would it be to have just a slightly different view around you? You can be in Hawaii now. It's an inner state.

It's just the mind telling you, you need to be somewhere else in order to be happy. You need to be somewhere else. It's here now.

What's wise to seek, postpone fulfillment to some future imagined point, not realizing that the source of all satisfaction is within you already. And then sense that as your very presence. And then the rest is, as Einstein said, I want to know the mind of God.

The rest is details. The mind of God is consciousness. And everything else, whatever happens or doesn't happen, you catch the bus or you miss the bus, you lose money, you gain money, up and down, hot and cold.

That's all the details. So now you go to sleep, lie on your bed and feel the presence pervading the body. And when you wake up, before you do anything else, lie on your back, feel the aliveness in the body, and then look around.

That's a good way of going to sleep and coming out of sleep. Improves your dreams too. Waking up in a dream, you might have had that once or twice.

You suddenly realize you're dreaming. And usually quickly the dream comes to an end. And what's happening here is really very similar.

You're waking up to your essential reality. And then your whole life feels a little bit like a dream unfolding, at least it does to me. But it's quite pleasant.

So you're awake and in the dream. That's lucid dreaming, they call that. And what we are doing here is called lucid living.

Very similar. Oh, tastes so good.

[Speaker 6] (2:06:38 - 2:07:36)

Thank you for this opportunity, for being here and allowing us to become more aware. And my question is a little bit of a follow-up from what you've just said. I know you work with psychotherapists and therapists in helping others.

And my question is, how can we follow up on the analogy of the caterpillar? How can we support others? How can we know if they are there, if they are not there?

Is it possible to help? I don't know what the question is, but it's, can we support someone in this process? You obviously are and Kim is obviously supporting us.

So is there different stages that we can support different people in different processes?

[Speaker 1] (2:07:37 - 2:15:32)

The moment the spiritual awakening, if we want to call it that, happens in you, which is the disidentification from the thinking mind and certain degree of arising of presence. Well, not the moment it happens, but a little bit after that, as this process continues, you, many people find that more and more people come, you meet people sometimes seemingly accidentally, or it might be people who you know already who need you, who also are at a stage of readiness, but don't know it yet. And you may find and will find that these people are drawn to you.

You may not immediately recognize them. In fact, you may think, listen, this person is not going to awaken in this lifetime, but you can get surprise, big surprises. Sometimes the most unlikely people can come to you and you know that that's happening.

There's a moment usually when you notice there is a transmission either of presence as an energy field, or they ask you a question, you give an answer, and the answer has a certain power or aliveness to it. It comes through you spontaneously because the question was a genuine question and there was an opening in the other person. If it's not a genuine question, if it's a question asked out of curiosity, what's that spiritual stuff all about that you do or whatever, or tell me about that spirit stuff, but there's no real opening, then your answer will not be good, or there may be no answer.

But if it's a real question and there's some degree of presence in you, then there will be a real answer. And the helping then comes in two ways. One is through the energy that you emanate as you are present.

The second is through what you say to them. And that is the beginning of you becoming a spiritual teacher. And many of you, some of you are already spiritual teachers, whether formally or not formally, some of you will become formal spiritual teachers because the world is in great need of you.

Humans want you, they may not know it yet, but everybody, even if you do not become a formal spiritual teacher, you will do some teaching informally through everybody you meet because you spread, your state of consciousness spreads to others. That applies both to unconscious people who spread their negativity or the viral infection of their minds and to present people who spread presence. And it's not that you are doing it.

So an important obstacle could be if you think that you need to do something to help them. This is very seductive because it's a wonderful thing to help others. But the obstacle is you think that it is up to you to help them.

It's not. In fact, you wouldn't know how to. I wouldn't know how to.

So you have to allow it to happen by holding the presence, especially when somebody comes to you, ask the question or you say something, hold the presence and then see what happens. So it's not you who is doing it. Sometimes I've met some people who said they've been asked to, first they saw some individuals, helped them, they're growing and growing in presence.

And then somebody approached them, can you give a talk to our little group? And then they came to me and said, I don't think I'm ready to give it, to give a talk to a group. Somebody asked me to give a talk to a group.

I think I'm not ready. And I said, if you think you're ready, then that's not a good sign. Because there's probably a little ego in there that thinks I'm ready to be a spiritual teacher.

Just come to me and I will heal you. But if you feel that the most powerful place, whether you are with one person or with a group of people, the most powerful place is to not know. But you have to be comfortable with not knowing.

If you're uncomfortable with not knowing what to say, what to do, then you go, oh dear, what should I say? The mind says, quick, say something useful to this person. And then you think things you've read in a book.

Well, Eckhart says that, it doesn't mean you should never quote, but it's always more powerful if it comes from you. So it only comes if you are comfortable with, enter that space of not knowing, which is basically you surrender thought and you just look at the person and you listen and then see what answer comes, then see what you say, if anything. In some cases, you might not say anything.

So the help allow it to move through you. And that's a big relief. It means you don't have to do it.

You only become a vehicle for it, an opening for it. You become an opening for consciousness. So you don't have to heal people, help people.

I mean, you can help physically, that's a different matter. You can give somebody food or money to help, but at a deeper level, you can't do anything. So getting out of the way, and then it will happen through you.

In the course in miracles, it says the moment you become a student of the course in miracles, which by the way, is a lovely teaching, but not for everybody. So don't believe that because I mentioned it now, you have to go and get it. It's great for some people.

It's a beautiful spiritual work, but for others, it's not the right one. Nothing is right for everybody. Course in miracles, however, says the moment you start studying the course in miracles, which really implies the moment you begin to disidentify from the conditioned mind, you become a teacher of God.

Now the ego, of course, would probably love that term. That's just why I personally would not use it, but there is some truth in it. It's not a terminology that I would use, but the moment the presence arises, you begin to teach presence.

[Speaker 7] (2:15:32 - 2:15:39)

But really, presence does it through you. Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (2:15:56 - 2:16:19)

So if anybody here wants to, is asked to give a talk, a spiritual talk, you don't need to be ready. Just say, yeah, I'll do it. And then you go there and you sit in front of the people and stop thinking.

Stop thinking and see what happens.

[Speaker 3] (2:16:36 - 2:19:03)

Hello, Eka. My question, I don't know if it's a I don't know question or maybe I don't care question, but it's on the topic of, maybe you can call it the phenomena. As I've sort of been practicing the power of now on the new earth over the years, it's helped me a lot, reduce my ego and my pain body.

And as that's happened, there's lots more oneness now emerging just naturally. And I can sense it and see it. And sometimes there's some phenomena that appears in me.

You know, sometimes once I had a cat on my chest and there was a woman laying in a bed next to me. And I said to her, the cat has a, you know, sore ear in the right ear. And it turned out to be her ear.

So I didn't get that, but yes, little phenomenas of coming. Sometimes I've seen things from people as well that, you know, once I went to a clairvoyant class and saw a man, the teacher of the class, he, while the class was being taught, he stood up and he said, look at me, I'm tall. And he looked like he was tall.

And as he was giggling and then as he sat down and he stood five minutes later, he stood back up and said, look at me, everyone, I'm short. And it looked like he was short. So he still looked like the same height, but I don't know, there was something going on with the perception and, but this is just phenomena that just one thing that I've seen and a few other little things.

And, but yeah, lately I've just been interested in the last few years, like documentaries on, like there's a young boy in Tibet, several years ago, he meditated for up to nine months and Discovery Channel filmed him 24 seven where he didn't eat or drink or sleep. Apparently there's many other stories as well. He got bitten by a snake and all that.

And, you know, there's another man and he hasn't eaten in 80 years and the scientists studied him for 10 days and he's fine. So yeah, just, I don't know if it's a relevant question, Okay, I understand.

[Speaker 1] (2:19:04 - 2:22:59)

Thank you. It sometimes happens that as you awaken spiritually, some people develop also certain psychic abilities. They might see things that other people don't see or you might know something that's going to happen beforehand.

Now, psychic and spiritual awakening don't necessarily go together. There are quite a few people who have psychic abilities and a huge ego. So they haven't awakened spiritually, but have certain innate or developed psychic abilities.

But it's possible that as people awaken spiritually, there can also be certain phenomena accompanying their spiritual awakening. It's a well-known thing and those things in India are called siddhis, which are powers that develop as you awaken spiritually for some people, not everybody. And every true teacher will tell you that you should not give excessive importance to any powers, whether they be clairvoyant or clairsentient or whatever, that arise spontaneously during your spiritual awakening, because if you give them importance, they will lead you astray.

So you don't deny them, you recognize them, you say, hmm, that's great. If you give excessive importance, then instead of moving towards spiritual awakening, if that's like a, this is the channel towards spiritual awakening, then you have a little power that develops there. If you give that too much attention, you suddenly go off, you go off the main path.

And it usually involves ego. Look what I can do. I have met people who had powers of manifestation and many of these people have these powers at times and at other times they have to pretend that they have them, so they become half real and half charlatan.

Don't go that way and don't seek those powers because that would also be egoic seeking. And don't give too much attention to watching those things on YouTube and so on either, because that can also lead you astray. There are good things on YouTube.

I'm on YouTube too. So. And there are other teachers and teachings that you can watch.

So if you want to watch YouTube, although I mean the mind loves to get, oh, isn't that fascinating? But it doesn't get you anywhere. It doesn't contribute to your awakening.

So be careful with what you give your attention to. you can still occasionally enjoy a story like that. Like I watched this man who held his breath for seven minutes.

That was interesting. Later, I looked him up on, I must admit, I looked him up on YouTube and I saw a whole performance that he did on YouTube and I was impressed, but that's fine. I don't need to watch any more after this.

So stay with what really matters.

[Speaker 3] (2:22:59 - 2:23:01)

Wonderful, thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 4] (2:23:19 - 2:24:36)

Thank you. I'm interested in what your awareness is about the transgender issue. It seems to be more prevalent now, but that just could be my limited thinking, but I see it more with the 16-year-olds and the younger generation coming through now.

And I just wanna know from that compassionate place and also, because I'm interested, I get confused in myself about is it an ego attachment or is it actually the awareness coming through bringing androgyny and having respect for that, for the difficulty that these people are experiencing?

[Speaker 1] (2:24:38 - 2:29:44)

Right, thank you. Most people's sense of identity or part of most people's sense of identity is to do with their gender. So how large that part is varies from person to person and from culture to culture.

So by that, I mean a man feeling his sense of self consisting partly of his awareness of being a man. In some cultures, that makes up, in some cases, 70% of a man's identity is the fact that he's a male. These tend to be traditional cultures where the roles, the dividing division between genders is very pronounced.

And a woman equally in those cultures, a large part of her sense of identity or a sense of self would be around being a woman. In the Western world, this is not quite as pronounced, although it's still there, but there's less identification for a man or woman with being a woman than in some traditional cultures and than it was in the past in the West also. So especially with people becoming more conscious, the genders are coming a little closer together.

And that may well be true that there are more people now who may not even be certain what gender they are. And so that is not necessarily a bad thing, although it can be confusing for those people, because especially if they're young, because everybody's looking for a sense of identity, a clearly defined sense of identity. And if they don't know whether they're a man or a woman, then there seems to be something lacking.

They cannot form any clear sense of identity based on gender, which seems to be an obstacle, but does not have to be if they were given appropriate spiritual guidance. They could be shown. In fact, it could be an advantage to not know whether you are there or there, because it could make it easier for you to disidentify from identification with form, because ultimately that's what it is, male or female, male or female forms.

So if those people could be helped, then they would find out that actually it can be an advantage so that they can derive their sense of identity, not from the physical vehicle, because the physical vehicle may be uncertain. So they could perhaps more easily than somebody who feels very strongly, I am a man and you are my woman. Yeah.

Wasn't there a famous pop song? No, it was the other way around. It was the Canadian singer from Montreal.

What was her name? Celine Dion. I am a woman and you are my man, something like that.

So this is a good example of, and that was a very successful song because it strengthened every woman who listened to that could identify with, yeah, I'm a woman, and then you were out in a bar, and then you meet a man, this could be my man. And the man did the same, oh, there's my woman. So you can see how much identity there is in that.

And it's ego, it's really, there's a masculine ego and there's a feminine ego. In some cultures, a woman has a particularly defined, in some cultures, it seems that every woman has a high-pitched voice, but it's because it's part of the ego role that they adopt. In other cultures, a woman is conditioned to behave in a particular way.

She behaves in certain constrained way, just can't laugh too loud. There was even a pronouncement made by a politician in one of those countries, a woman should not laugh in public.

[Speaker 8] (2:29:44 - 2:29:48)

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

[Speaker 1] (2:29:48 - 2:34:18)

It's not becoming to a woman to laugh in public. So whereas in the United States, it's perfectly acceptable for a woman to laugh out loud. You see it often.

So it's a trap to derive your psychological identity from your male gender or your female gender. Both of them are trapped in their little worlds, their little identities. So we are going beyond that.

And I believe in the more distant future for mankind, the two will come together at some point. Anyway, that's, but for the time being, let's see if we can help those who are uncertain about their gender and point to them the possibility of not identifying with any gender and still, and so go deeper immediately. So maybe if you, anybody who comes into contact with young people who are uncertain, perhaps you could point that out.

It could be the beginning of a spiritual path. Sometimes the greatest difficulty in life or early in life is at the same time, the opening into spiritual awakening. So that can also be the case, or it used to be more so in the past for a gay person, man or woman, it still presents certain, even though now there's greater acceptance around it, it still presents certain challenges.

And in the past, it's been, it was a gigantic challenge because it was rejected by society. So in the past, if a man or woman was gay, immediately was an outsider, at least internally. And there was a, now it's much easier to, at least in Western countries, to accept that.

The trap here could be, there is another trap here that you find it sometimes with gay people that instead of going beyond gender identification they have a very strong identification with being gay. So, and then they overemphasize the gayness and that becomes an ego role that they play. That was a trap for those people.

So every, there's always, you need to be beware because there are many situations where the ego can come in and use it for its purposes. I mentioned in the power of now for a gay person, the advantage is that to some extent, even though there's greater acceptance nowadays, a gay person can still feel a little bit of an outsider. And so that's always a great advantage for anybody who does not fit in totally with the mainstream because that can create an early disidentification from mainstream egoic identities.

And then the arising of spiritual awakening can become easier. It's the greatest difficulty, people who have a handicap, a physical handicap, for example. A dreadful thing to be born with a physical handicap, but also a great opportunity of disidentifying from the body, identification with a physical vehicle at an early age.

And again, the trap there is they could go the other way and build an identity in their minds around being a person with this particular disability, in which case you are trapped, there's another prison you're trapped in, in your mind. So it's a subtle thing, but very interesting. I hope this helps a little bit.

[Speaker 7] (2:34:19 - 2:34:19)

Thank you.

[Speaker 4] (2:34:20 - 2:34:23)

Thank you very much. And thank you for your sensitivity. Thank you.

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (2:35:23 - 2:57:33)

Welcome. I'm on my little summer retreat. It's quite hot.

And I'm glad we were able to make it. Join us, despite the fact that I believe right now there's a very important event happening on the planet, which involves 24 men chasing one ball. So if you're here, despite that, I'm very happy.

And if you are tuning in from Brazil and you've been experiencing some unhappiness, also connected with these 24 men, or perhaps a different set of 24 men, then you may want to look more deeply into the cause of that. And if it hadn't been Brazil, it would be some other country. The mechanism is the same.

It all goes back to not realizing who you are. And identifying with something else, using an image in the mind, personal or collective, and endowing that personal or collective image with a sense of self. And if that happens, something happens to that mentally created image, personally or collectively, you feel injured, hurt, or diminished in your sense of self, and you become unhappy.

So that's a very normal thing. Most humans, except for those who already are in touch with that dimension within that lies beyond this superficial realm of delusion, most humans then have a number of things that they derive their sense of self from partly collective, partly personal. Collective could mean your nation, your tribal identity, which relates to sport teams and so on, religion, my religion, our religion, or a particular church or movement within one religion as opposed to another church that's different.

Nationalism, in some places, is still strong, not as insane as it, perhaps, as it was in the 20th century in many places. And many other collective identification from my club, my town, my this, my that, or our, and then personal possessions, status, recognition from others or lack of it, knowledge, personal appearance, external appearance, and so on, all things the mind identifies with. Very precarious because basically they're all mental fabrications, stories.

There's nothing wrong with mental fabrications and stories, you can enjoy those as long as you know that's what they are. But if you take them to be ultimate reality, then very quickly you begin to suffer. We continue to live surrounded by these stories.

Enjoy them, you can watch the game, you can even be happy if your team wins and the other team loses, but it doesn't go that deep anymore. So if your team loses, yes, there's a surface dissatisfaction which you observe, or if your team wins, there's a surface elation, you go, oh yeah, but it doesn't go that deep. Because on a deeper level, you know that that has nothing to do with who you are.

It's a game, it's a story, a play, a dreamlike formation. Now mostly in a dream, you don't know that you're dreaming. Occasionally it happens that you have a lucid dream and you suddenly, in the middle of a dream, realize that you're dreaming and then there's a fundamental shift in the way in which you experience the dream.

And the same in daily life, most people are so identified with mental formations, things, events, and so on, which all become mental formations, that the lucidity factor is missing. So they are in the dream of daily existence, but so identified with it, they don't know it is a kind of dream. So they try to derive a satisfying sense of self from it, which is impossible.

Now the equivalent of having a lucid dream or realizing in the middle of the dream that you're dreaming is, of course, to become aware in your daily life. Suddenly there is an awareness. Which is not a thought.

The awareness, sorry, from the dimension of awareness, you can recognize a thought as just a thought. And you realize who you are essentially is that deeper aware presence, the lucidity that enables you not only to have sense perceptions, but also enables you to have thoughts. That is lucid living.

So you have, you can have lucid dreaming, but more important, it's much more important to experience lucid living. And that is the beginning of the end of misidentification with who you are. And what then happens is that there can still be minor manifestations of happiness and unhappiness, but it doesn't go that deep anymore.

Now, some people might say, okay, I'm okay with unhappiness not going that deep, but they might feel uneasy with happiness not going that deep anymore. What I mean, of course, is the, what is conventionally called happiness is a temporary surface phenomenon. But there is a deeper happiness, if we even still want to use that term, usually I don't, but there is a deeper sense of presence, of rootedness, of vast spaciousness, of aliveness, that is sometimes called joy, but you can call it inner peace.

You can call it a deep sense of contentment in the background. And this is why we're here, to be reminded that that dimension is there within you, waiting to be discovered or waiting to reveal itself to you. Or if you already live in connectedness with that, to deepen it, that's why we're here.

So the question then, of course, is, do I know who I am? Beyond my physical body or beyond my external appearance, beyond my place in society, beyond whatever country I happen to belong to because I happen to be born there, beyond my religion, which again, in most cases, is my religion because I happen to be born in a particular place, beyond my social function, status in society, or beyond my possessions. And all those things I mentioned are really, they may have an external existence, but you experience them as images in your mind.

And of course, you are the presence behind those images and even within those images. So right now, there's a chance for you to stop thinking, not through any kind of effort, not through any willpower, act of will, not through suppression of thinking, but simply because you realize that right now, thinking is not really necessary. You don't need to figure out what I'm talking about by thinking about it.

You understand the words, so of course, there is some mental activity, but the words are not understood on the level of mental concepts. They are understood by you at a deeper level where the truth that these words point to is immediately recognized as your own presence. So the only presence, when words point towards presence, only the presence in you can recognize the meaning.

And you go, oh. And you might not be able to explain it to anybody. It's just the simple fact that you are conscious right now, which is beyond doubt.

Everything else may be a kind of dream. But there must be a consciousness for the dream to appear. It appears in the light of consciousness.

I am that. I'll speak for you and for myself. I am that I am.

I am. I am conscious presence. I am consciousness, formless, timeless.

And I know myself. As the formless, timeless consciousness. But that knowing can only arise between two thoughts or in the absence, temporary absence, cessation of thought, like now.

Between this moment, because on the external, there is a time, on the deeper, there's no time. Between this moment, now, and this moment, now, there's no thought. That's a very amazing thing.

So let's try it again. I say now twice, and in between the two nows, see if you can just be there as the presence. Now.

Now. Well, that wasn't that difficult. Now a little longer.

Now. Now.

[Speaker 8] (2:57:43 - 2:57:43)

Now.

[Speaker 1] (2:57:47 - 2:58:10)

You can either close your eyes, or you can look into my eyes. It may be helpful to look into my eyes because I'm not thinking. And that can connect you with the state of not thinking.

We'll do it again. Now.

[Speaker 8] (2:58:28 - 2:58:29)

Now.

[Speaker 1] (2:58:37 - 3:17:45)

There's nothing more important in your life, and I'm totally 100% confident and certain that that's the absolute truth. There's nothing more important in your life, no matter who you are, than accessing that dimension, which is not only the dimension of your true identity, but also the place where true intelligence arises, and creativity, and peace, and loving kindness towards all beings, because that is the formless realm of life itself, of consciousness itself, that then recognizes itself in all other forms. So it's vitally important.

And last but not least, you no longer get very unhappy when your team loses. So another way you can, if you want to practice with inner spaciousness, aware presence, you can also go like this, and for a moment, this, the hands, I'm holding my hands like this, this space between the two hands represents the space of presence. So you go, holding the space of presence.

This is the external equivalent of something inner. So you can think that past is here, future is here, thinking is here and here, which is past and future, and in between there's the space. So you can sometimes do it when you're alone.

Just go like, just for 10 seconds, 20 seconds, and just be present. No thinking. This is the space of no thought, but alertness.

Many moments of no thought during your daily life, and then if you invite them, they will happen more often, until at some point, the sense of presence is never lost even while you're thinking. They're still in the background. A certain sense of beingness or space that is recognized as more important than whatever is happening in your life.

Whatever you need to deal with at that moment, whatever is going on, there's something more real, and that also gives you a true perspective on the ups and downs of daily existence. It's almost as if you had a detached view of things, so that the term detachment is something that's associated with the state of presence. It enables you not to be attached to things, which ultimately means mind stuff, not to be attached.

Attached means seeking your identity, your sense of self in those things. Detached means realizing they are not yourself. They are anatta, as it's called in the Buddhist Pali scriptures, not self.

They are, another Buddhist term, anicca, would be impermanent. They don't last, they come and go. If you don't realize that, you don't realize who you are, then you suffer.

And then gradually the ability arises to do things and to observe things and to listen to somebody or listen to the sounds of nature or listen to any sound without any interpretation in the mind, without naming it, without immediately liking or disliking it, without wanting to attract a certain condition to yourself or feel wanting to reject a certain condition. So that's the ability to perceive without naming. You can look around the room or out of the window.

And it's an amazing thing if you can be just the presence behind the sense perception. You have gone beyond being merely a person. You have transcended all conditioning, thousands of years of conditioning, including, of course, all your family conditioning, cultural conditioning, and so on.

So being the presence, functioning as a person, but being the presence, and when that happens, then the person is a much more pleasant person than a person who is disconnected from the being dimension, doesn't know it. It's always there, but it's not recognized. That person who is disconnected from presence, who exists only as a person, not as being, that person is a troublemaker.

They don't know that, they think they're doing what they need to do, but they are creating. When I say troublemaker, I, of course, mean, unknowingly, they create suffering for themselves and others. And they get upset very easily.

Any little thing that goes wrong immediately, they get upset. They are totally at the mercy of conditions, things that happen around them, what people say or do to them or about them, or what people fail to do or should have done or said. It's all very upsetting, isn't it?

And then there comes the righteous indignation and the blaming and the accusing of others or groups of others. And the labeling. And that's all the madness that, in a more extreme form, becomes violence.

Why? They don't know who they are. They think they're only this person.

And they're totally in the grip of the person which is their conditioning. And the person is, to use an Eastern term, a karmic entity, a conditioned formation. Often when I observe people, I can feel the heaviness that they carry of that personal sense of self.

Completely in the grip of their conditioning. And it's a huge burden to walk through life totally in the grip of your conditioning. No spaciousness whatsoever.

Always concerned, thinking of this and that and waiting to react to the next thing and looking out where the next little bit of satisfaction can come from or where the next enemy may appear. Some people who perhaps haven't had prior contact with anything spiritual may reach a point where they get tired of being themselves. Can often be misperceived as being tired of life, but really they're tired of who they are.

They can somehow sense the repetitiveness of all the stuff that goes on in their lives. And so that can be a good point to reach. You're ready to go beyond.

And that is not the time when you dump off the Golden Gate Bridge. That's the time you dump out of your conditioned sense of self. Oh, what a liberation that is.

Freedom. Freedom from the person. Once presence has manifested in your life as the first initial glimpses, you can choose presence more often.

That becomes your responsibility. At a deeper level, presence is choosing you, but let's not to go there right now. It's a helpful perception to feel that you can choose to be present right now.

You've chosen to be here with us, with me, and you're choosing to be present at this very moment. So enjoy your freedom. The game of life by being lucid within it.

[Speaker 8] (3:17:54 - 3:17:55)

Thank you.

[Speaker 7] (3:18:42 - 3:18:45)

A moment of stillness before we start.

[Speaker 1] (3:18:46 - 4:06:50)

Not waiting for anything to happen, but just being in the moment now. Make sure you're comfortable in your own skin as you sit there. If you're not comfortable, then just notice that you're not comfortable and allow yourself to not be comfortable and then you become comfortable.

I have a little treat in store. We will talk about, not only talk about, but go into the essence of the book that has been with me, accompanied me for the past 30 years. A book that I've gone to, back to periodically.

I still go back to periodically, pick it up, read a page or two or three and meditate on it. It's one of the great treasures of spiritual literature and it is a book that was written in China 2,500 years ago, the Tao Te Ching. Now that's a huge, seemingly a huge gulf that separates us from that time period and yet the book is still vitally alive.

And if a book that was written so long ago is still vitally alive, it means it must have been written from a very deep place and point to something that is timeless. If it were not written from a deep, timeless place within the author and did not point to something that is beyond time, a book written 2,500 years ago would be irrelevant, meaningless, incomprehensible. Many books that were written 20 years ago are out of date or if you read yesterday's newspaper, it's out of date.

So for something to still be alive now and to be deeply meaningful to many people, there must be something there that is timeless and that is the essence of the book and that's what I would like to go into with you. So we are not going into a book, we are not just going to study a book, we are just using the text to go deeply within, to discover something within ourselves. So all that the book is, is a device that helps us discover ourselves, and our connection with the greater whole, the universe, whatever you want to call it.

So just very briefly, the historical context, it might be helpful to know just a little bit about that. This book was written about 2,500, 2,600 years ago in China, that in other words, 500 to 600 BC. Now that was a very exciting and meaningful time period, something incredible was happening during those, let's say, one and a half to two centuries.

For the first time in the history of humanity, as far as we can see, there was a universal wave of spiritual awakening coming over the planet. At that time. So the author of the Tao Te Ching, Lao Tse, is a contemporary more or less of the Buddha in India.

So the Buddha and his teaching arose at the same time, approximately as the teaching of Lao Tse, the author of the Tao Te Ching. So there was the Buddha arising in India, beginning to teach, and another significant teacher in India whose teaching did not go very much beyond in India even to this day, but has remained very meaningful and profound in India, Mahavira, taught at approximately the same time as the Buddha, and it developed into Jainism, the religion, a very beautiful religion, still practiced widely in India based on ahimsa, nonviolence, and respect for all living beings. All those things were revelations when they first came into being at the time, the teachings. So we have the Buddha in India, we have Mahavira in India, at all arising at the same time in Persia, we have Zoroaster, sometimes called Zarathustra, not to be confused with Nietzsche's Zarathustra, which is a completely different character.

Zarathustra, the prophet in Persia. We have at the same time in ancient Greece, and that was a time before the famous Greek philosophers started to teach, Plato, Aristotle, Socrates. It was earlier than that.

Those were philosophers that arose for the first time there. They are called pre-Socratic philosophers because they predate Socrates. We only have fragments of their philosophy, but those fragments are enough to show us that their teachings were in some ways, this is how I feel, more profound than the later, more differentiated teachings of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

My favorite pre-Socratic philosophers are Heraclitus and Parmenides, and we only have small fragments, but the fragments show us that those teachings were still in touch with the source of being, the source of life, the oneness that underlies all phenomena. And later, as the philosophy became more differentiated, that was becoming lost. The philosophies became very interesting and much more differentiated, but the connection with the root of all life, the unmanifested oneness, the transcendental dimension, gradually became lost.

So those philosophers, 500 and 600 BC, still had that connection. And they showed people, they also realized that humanity had lost it. So it was part of the wave of awakening that was coming over the planet, the teaching of those philosophers.

This is not philosophy as we understand it these days. It's about inner transformation, not speculation. Those were not speculative philosophers in the same way that Buddha wasn't speculative, Mahavira wasn't speculative.

So it is a transformational teaching. It's about inner transformation, not about figuring something out with your mind. So we have that arising, the awakening arising in Persia, the awakening arising in India, the awakening arising in ancient Greece.

And now we come to China, we have Lao Tse, his teaching at the same time was arising in China. All part of this wave of awakening that we are now experiencing again, even on a much larger scale now. So we are at a similar time period, except that the wave of awakening that is coming into this world of spiritual awakening is on a much larger and more powerful and all pervasive scale.

So we are in the middle of that. 100, 200 years ago, nobody in the West was discussing the Tao Te Ching. And this is why we can go back to it and understand it, because we are awakening.

Lao Tse was, we know very little about his life. He was, they say, in charge of the archives of a kingdom called Shu and reached, we don't know how old he was when he was becoming bored with the life of the court and the intrigues and the conflicts around him. And so he decided to leave his job and to leave his homeland and just go out into solitude.

And the story goes, nobody knows whether it is true, that he left and he got to the border of the kingdom. There was a front, a little border crossing and a gate. And the gatekeeper said, I'm not going to let you pass unless you write down your wisdom.

So he must already have had a certain reputation as a wise man, but he had never written anything. And so all he could do, he said, okay, then I'll write it down. We don't know how long it took.

He wrote it down and the gatekeeper let him go. And that is the Tao Te Ching. That is the teaching and that is the book.

And then according to one story, the last we ever know of him, he was sitting on a water buffalo riding off into nowhere. And that's the last that anybody ever heard of him. Nobody ever saw him again.

That's one version of the story. Another version of the story is that he continued to teach and reach the age of 160 years. The Tao Te Ching is the title of the book, which is not usually translated.

People have tried to translate it, but unsuccessfully. Usually they give you subtitles. So it says Tao Te Ching.

One of the traditional subtitles is the way and its virtue. And that's already somewhat of a mistranslation. Although Tao can be translated as the way, you just can't translate Tao.

Even if you translate it as way, it's pretty meaningless. And if you're a Chinese person, you're not at a great advantage. You still won't know what Tao is.

So you're not at a great advantage. The Tao is something that cannot be named. And we'll come to that in a minute.

So the subtitle, the way and its virtue. Virtue is a mistranslation of the Te in the Tao Te Ching. Virtue has become a dead word in our language.

When did you last say virtue? When did you last use that word? Probably many years ago, if ever.

So the word virtue is not alive. What it really refers to is the power. So to translate, it's the power of the, of spirit, of the transcendental dimension.

The way and its power is a better subtitle for the Tao Te Ching. The way, how to live. The way to living, living in alignment with the one power that underlies the universe.

The one thing that you cannot name, that is not a thing. Living in alignment with the ultimate, which sometimes is called God, but the moment you call it God, it's not it. You've made it into something.

It is not something. It is something that flows through the entire universe, animates the entire universe, and at the same time is beyond it. That is the Tao.

And that is something that you can discover within yourself. You can live in a way that connects you with the inner source of all life, of all being. So the way and its power, it's the, he's teaching us how to live so that we are in alignment with the power that underlies all life, which as Lao Tzu says, for lack of a better word, I'll call it the Tao.

And the Tao, that's a good thing because you can't do much with a word that you cannot exactly see what it means. The same way that Buddha used the word emptiness, you cannot worship emptiness. It's almost, it's a negative term.

It negates form. So it's always been the tendency for humans to worship concepts. The concept of God arises in your mind and then you start talking about God.

The concept of God becomes an idol because it's no more than a thought. So you can't do that with a Tao because you can't picture it. You can't form an image of it in the same way that you can't form a picture or an image of emptiness.

So that is the transcendental reality that the book points to and it shows us the way to it. So there's great power there. And the book came to me for the first time in my 20s, maybe mid 20s.

Somebody said, have a look at this. This is interesting. And I looked at it and something drew me into it but then I couldn't quite, it was so obscure that I couldn't, I knew there was something hiding there in the book.

There was some truth hiding but I couldn't get it. It was there and then I put it aside and okay, I have other things to do now. And then years passed and then in my early 30s, I rediscovered the book in a different translation.

There are many translations available and not only was the translation better, something had by then taken place within me and awakening a shift in consciousness. And through that new consciousness, I looked at the book and I said, wow, that's, he's talking, I know what he's talking about. I realized the depths and the profundity of what those words were saying.

And since then, the book in different versions, not the actual physical book, but the Tao Te Ching has never left me. It's always been with me in one way, one form or another. So that's the story behind the Tao Te Ching.

And now let's see if we can go a little deeper into it. We are going to use, there are two translations that at the moment are my favorites. We will use Stephen Mitchell's translation, fairly recent Tao Te Ching.

Another translation that I've had for a number of years that I'm very fond of is by Jia Fu Feng and Jane English. They together translated the Tao Te Ching. And that's another beautiful translation.

I will be using mainly for today, Stephen Mitchell's translation or version of it. And the first two lines of the Tao Te Ching are very famous. I've quoted it quite a few times, but even there, sometimes translations differ.

The first two lines are the Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao. What he's saying is you cannot really speak about the ultimate reality. Whatever you say about it is not it.

However, he then continues to talk about it. So how is that? Well, he's telling you not to attach yourself to the words, not to begin to believe in the words or in concepts, not to make it into some new belief.

The truth is not in the words. That's what he's saying. The truth, the words only point to the truth.

And the truth is only to be found within you beyond the realm of mind or of thinking or of concepts. So that's just a little, very important, those first two lines. The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao.

Okay, and now let me tell you about it. Because the Tao is in you and the only place where you can discover it is in you. And so the book shows the way to discover who you are beyond who you thought you are beyond whatever your mind is telling you who you are.

And now the closest he comes to defining the Tao, which cannot be defined. I'm just saying the closest he comes to defining it is in these little lines, which I will read to you now. And again, you need to listen to that, not just with your head, but you need to listen to that with your belly or your entire being, those words, because you cannot understand them just through the mind.

If they are meaningful, or if you can sense the power that is in the words, then you are sensing your own power beyond thought activity. There was something formless and perfect before the universe was born. It is serene, empty, solitary, unchanging, infinite, eternally present.

It is the mother of the universe. For lack of a better name, I call it the Tao. Note that he begins by saying there was something formless and perfect before the universe was born, before the arising of form, before the Big Bang, you could say.

He uses the past tense. In the next line, he says, it is serene, empty, solitary. It is not only that which was there before the world came into being, it is that which continues to be there timelessly at the core of your being.

That which was there before the Big Bang is still present in you, the unmanifested one life, one consciousness, without which you are nothing. It is the essence of who you are. And of course, if you say that to a normal materialist scientist, whatever, I'm saying a normal scientist, not a great scientist, then he will say, what is this nonsense?

Or if you tell it to somebody who is totally close to you, they'll say, this is mumbo-jumbo. There was something before the universe was born and there's something, what are you talking about? And now listen, he very wisely, Stephen Mitchell, put in a little quote by one of the great scientists, Albert Einstein, what he had to say about it.

Somebody who did a lot of thinking, but whose thinking was rooted in the stillness, which as we shall see is an essential part of the teaching of the Tao. His thinking was rooted in the Tao, in the stillness beyond the noisy mind. That's where Einstein's realizations came from.

And so he was not just trapped in his noisy mind like most scientists and then deny the reality of the transcendental, but he was connected with it. And he said, I'm not used to quoting from books and talks. Here's Einstein talking.

The scientist's religious feeling takes the form of a rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law, which reveals an intelligence of such superiority that in comparison with it, all systematic thinking of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection. This feeling is the guiding principle of my life and work. The recognition of a vast intelligence that underlies all of creation.

Instead of saying what, somebody, something more intelligent than me, that can't be, that's mumbo-jumbo. But something that I can't understand, I can't categorize, what mumbo-jumbo is that? This is what the Dowdy jingle standing on tiptoe and you're not stable.

It's in the flower. It creates that. It's in you.

It pervades the very space around us. It comes through the human brain, becomes, the brain is like a, gives it some form. And when the brain goes, it no longer goes through that form.

It's the very consciousness that you are. So this shows that Einstein was in touch with that dimension. That's why his thinking was inspired.

That's why he had sudden revelations. Now, now we come to the first slightly longer, just a few lines, never more than a few lines at a time. How to live, to be in touch with that.

Can, I'll read the whole, this little section first, and then we'll look at the lines and go into it. Not just, not with the intellectual mind, but sensing our way into it. Can you coax your mind from its wandering and keep to the original oneness?

Can you let your body become supple as a newborn child's? Can you cleanse your inner vision until you see nothing but the light? Can you love people and lead them without imposing your will?

Can you deal with the most vital matters by letting events take their course? Can you step back from your own mind and thus understand all things, giving birth and nourishing, having without possessing, acting with no expectation, leading and not trying to control? This is the supreme virtue.

For virtue, substitute power. The power moves through you. If you live in that way, you become it.

You realize your oneness with it. Back to the beginning. Can you coax your mind from its wandering?

It wanders about. If you look at your own mind, that's what it does. It goes from one thing to another, one thought leads to another thought, and it goes on and on.

Sometimes I call it the voice in the head. Can you coax your mind from its wandering and keep to the original oneness? In other words, is it possible for you to sit still for a moment and don't give attention to every thought that says, follow me, I'll show you the way.

That's what every thought is. I'm important. Think about this, think about this.

Okay, and once you follow up one thought, and then it becomes another one and another. Stream, then you get, that's how most people live. Continuously immersed in just chatter, mental chatter, streams of thinking.

It's even become literature in the 20th century. It's called the stream of consciousness. James Joyce, you get 30 pages without any punctuation marks.

Just, he wrote down how he observed his own mind and he wrote down how it works. It goes on and on. No period, no comma, nothing.

Normal. So once you know that, and most amazing is people don't even know that. They are so identified with it.

It's just, that's who I am. I just, I think. It's not even that they say, I think, because they are the thoughts.

And they miss the vast dimension with these underneath thoughts. That's why I say, okay, just don't give all that importance to your thoughts. Just come to a point of rest.

This is where the present moment becomes so important because it's the present moment that can take you out of the stream of thinking. Just becoming alert to this moment. There's nothing much to think about as you sit here.

What can you add to this moment that's better than what's already here? Or when you look at a flower, why add thought to it? Or when you look at another human being, why add thought to the beautiful perception of that?

So then you keep to the original oneness. The moment you're no longer dominated by thinking and you realize there's a realm beyond thinking inside me, you're connected to the oneness because it's only through thinking that the illusion of separation arises when you start calling things this and that and judging and naming. Doesn't mean you can't do it anymore, but you're not trapped in it anymore.

Can you let your body become supple as a newborn child? When you are immersed in thinking, your body becomes rigid because it reflects what's going on in here, a lot of which is problematic. I need to think about this.

And the more problematic your thinking is and all thinking is problematic, the more lifeless your body becomes and the flow of energy through the body diminishes. You get rigid, you get tense, you're holding in. Can you let your body become supple as a newborn child?

This is a free translation. If you go back to the more literal translation, he's actually saying, can you concentrate your chi or your vital energy until your body becomes supple as a little child? This is really, he's teaching body awareness.

Can you go within, take attention into the body and to feel that you're alive inside? Can you feel the aliveness in your hands? Can you feel the aliveness in your feet?

Can you feel the aliveness that pervades the entire body? Takes you out of your mind. Even as you sit here, can you feel that?

There's a very ancient Taoist practice, thousands of years old, almost as old as the Tao Te Ching, which tells you, you should breathe with your heels, from your heels upward. Says, can you breathe from your heels upward? Of course you can't because you can't suck in air with your feet.

But it's just, what it's saying is, it is directing attention to your feet and you imagine that you're breathing from down there. You're breathing through your heels. What that does is, you suddenly become aware it starts from the bottom of your entire energy field.

I'm breathing in, just simply imagine are you breathing in from your feet? Energy starts to move in from down there. Imagine that you're actually breathing in from your feet and then the energy of the breath flows into the body.

Very ancient practice. That particular one, I only discovered two days ago that somebody, thousands of years ago, they recommended that already. And I said, oh, that's the inner body.

That's what I was talking about. I always talk about. Can you cleanse your inner vision until you see nothing but the light?

That is perhaps a somewhat obscure, although there's light in it, but to the mind, it's a little obscure. What do you mean, cleanse your inner vision until you see nothing but the light? The light is the light of consciousness.

Cleansing your inner vision as to still the mind until you become aware of awareness, until you become aware that you are conscious. And then that remains always there. The entire, this entire little chapter is really how to be in the world, but at the same time, connected with the source.

At this moment, it might be easier if you forget. Don't think of yourself as somebody having a past. Don't think of yourself as somebody having a future.

What's left of you right now without that? Consciousness, just a presence, not an opinion or memory. That's the light of consciousness.

And that's the Tao, really. You cannot grasp it. You cannot make it your object of knowledge and say, oh, there it is, there's the light of, I can see the light of consciousness.

No, you are the light of consciousness through which everything is seen. You can't see it, you can't grasp it. It underlies everything.

It's so there, it's who you are. It's your presence. And when I say your presence, it's not quite right because it's not yours, it's you, it's oneness.

If I say your presence, then there's you and presence, but language works in that way. It creates duality. And that's what the Tao Te Ching is about, is realizing that that's an illusion.

Can you love people and lead them without imposing your will? This is imposing your will in another translation. It's always helpful to look at different translations.

It says, can you be without cleverness in this world? I talk about cleverness in one of the books, that the ego is clever because it tries to work out some advantage for myself or for us. It has its little schemes.

It tries to use people, that's cleverness. Politicians are clever, most of them. Very few are intelligent.

PhD doesn't mean you're intelligent. Well, whether they have PhDs or not, it has nothing to do with that. Intelligence is to see the larger whole of all and then not just act to enhance one little fragment and then be in opposition to the rest of the world of life.

But see the totality. Can you be without cleverness? Can you deal with the most vital matters by letting events take their course?

That's a very fundamental teaching of the Tao is not to interfere in the way things are moving. And even if, so you don't, there's no violence whatsoever. And that's of course beautifully practiced in all martial arts.

In martial arts, the opposing energy that is coming towards you is not resisted. This is deeply influenced by the Tao Te Ching, non-resistance going with the movement of life. The Western approach is somebody comes towards you and you hit back.

It comes towards you and you go. And the Eastern is it comes, the force is coming towards you and you go with it. And then suddenly your opponent falls.

The very energy of that attack movement is used to defeat the opponent. You have not opposed it, you go with it. There's almost, we can say, no violence in it and yet extremely powerful.

And that can be applied in many things. It can be applied in daily life and not getting involved in useless discussions, not identifying with mental positions of rightness. I'm right and you are wrong.

And then you start, this energy totally takes you out of yourself. Not engaging in useless discussions, being able to listen in a state of openness to another, not identifying with your opinions and then opposing somebody else's opinion. Can you step back?

Oh, before that, can you deal with the most vital matters by letting events take their course? Now, I looked at another translation. That's a little closer to the original, which says, instead of by letting events take your course, it says, by becoming the female.

Can you deal with the most vital matters by becoming the female? The female principle, female is often used as synonymous with the Tao. So one could almost say that the feminine principle is the principle of allowing, which is like this, whereas the male principle is this.

If you want to see it and express this, the male goes like that, the female goes like that. And according to this teaching, the female is, one could almost say, expresses the Tao more clearly than the male. It's somewhat easier to express the Tao through the female form than the male form.

If you're male, then you have to discover the female in yourself to be one with the Tao. Also, you have to discover that the allowing, for example, when I say, allow this moment to be as it is, that's a female, you're not fighting what is, you're allowing what is. There's an embracing, you see it when the, sometimes with Quan Yin statues, the holding hands like that or Virgin Mary statues, which are all expressions of the female, all embracing, all embracing.

Can you be the female in any situation? And that's, so in a discussion, can you be, now some women would say, oh, I don't like this idea, I want to be powerful, they don't realize that the power of the female is enormous. The power of allowing is far greater than the power of interfering.

Can you be the female? Let's see what else we have before we go to another longer one. How you receive this depends on your degree of openness to this message.

So this sounds very familiar to me, that's why I'm just reading it to you, just a few lines. Some say that my teaching is nonsense. Others call it lofty, but impractical.

But to those who have looked inside themselves, this nonsense makes perfect sense. And to those who put it into practice, this loftiness has roots that go deep. So there are some people in whom the openness is not there, and then whatever, what we are talking about here is totally nonsensical.

So you need, there needs to be something in you that recognizes the truth of this beyond words and concepts. Empty your mind of all thoughts. Let your heart be at peace.

I'm going to read the same again in a different translation, just give you a slightly different sense, different feel. Empty yourself of everything. Let the mind become still.

Empty yourself of everything. Empty everything. Let the mind become still.

Watch the turmoil of beings, but contemplate their return. Watch the turmoil of this world, of all the activity of this world, of all beings involved in running around. Watch it, which means be the awareness and contemplate their return.

They all return to the formless sooner or later. All the forms. Imagine you're seeing a movie.

I always, I love to see old movies, like movies made in the 30s or so, or 40s. And I love seeing, for example, you see street scenes, actual street scenes, big city, London, New York, whatever, people, hundreds of people running around to go about their business. But this is what the turmoil of beings, as it's called here, you have to see it.

And I see that in amazement, I watch that. This is for us to watch, but contemplate their return. And when I watch that, I realize all these people, the actual street scenes, all these people are no longer there.

They're all dead now. All, it was so important what they were doing, was it looked so important, running around, cars going. And if you had seen a speeded up version of the movie, as you see a speeded up version of anything, if you saw a speeded up version of this room, like you sometimes see how a flower, it's a wonderful image.

If you see, they do it on film, how a plant comes suddenly out of the soil. And so they, over a period of a few hours or a few days, it's filmed. So you see that period within a few seconds, contracted.

So you see actually how the plant comes out of the soil, then leaves come out of the plant, and the flower comes out. And suddenly you see the flower is wilting. The leaves are wilting and falling off.

And then the entire plant goes.

[Speaker 8] (4:06:51 - 4:06:52)

Gone.

[Speaker 1] (4:06:55 - 6:07:58)

This is what it's talking about. You have to actually see. It's an amazing thing.

When the touch, we'll touch to see that, when you truly watch that, something inside you goes, you can't put it into words, it goes, wow. Because you realize that applies to everything in this world is that way. It comes into being, every body.

I'm really, I'm looking at my own body when I see it. It's just a slightly different version of that. It lasts a few years longer than the plant.

But if you saw even the baby growing into an adult, you go, maturity, vitally alive, physically active. And then gradually, winding down. And then beginning to look like a wrinkled apple or a pear.

And then, suddenly the life force leaves. And then soon later, all the molecules and atoms say goodbye, we're going our own way now. And there's nothing left.

Just an emptiness. If you saw this room and the people in this room, and let's see if we didn't move from this room and we had a camera here, you would see gradually the body's dissolving or evaporating, whatever, it would go very quickly. I sometimes compare them to soap bubbles popping.

So if you saw this, we had this camera here over a period of, let's see, how long do you want to live? 50, another 50 years. You would, then the soap bubbles would pop one after another.

Pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, pop. Nothing left. And then for a little while longer, the physical forms would stay.

And then you would say gradually, even the physical forms crumbling, they could take 2000 years or whatever, depending on atmospheric conditions. And even then the chairs could become dust. So everything is dissolving, birth, dissolution, everything, every form, it's impermanent.

And to watch, it's extremely powerful to watch that. This is why he's telling you, watch the turmoil of beings, but contemplate their return, means be aware of the impermanence of all forms, not as a negative thing, but simply as you see it for what it is. And if you are aware of the impermanence of all forms, that all forms are short-lived, how can you be aware of it?

There must be something in you that is beyond that. It's only from, as I sometimes say, if the entire universe were blue, the color blue would not exist for you because there would be nothing to differentiate it from. If we said everything is blue, you say, what are you talking about?

There's blue, what's blue? There's no other color. If everything were impermanent, you wouldn't even know it.

But there is something in you that is beyond that. It's only from there. And that is why the contemplation of impermanence can put you in touch with that because that in you, which is the consciousness, the timeless presence, the light of consciousness, is not touched by that.

And then the question the mind asks is, well, but what about when I die, I lose consciousness, or if a brick falls on my head, I lose consciousness. What about that? That all it means is that consciousness can no longer flow through your brain into this world.

It then has to withdraw and seek another channel. Consciousness is not affected. You cannot lose consciousness.

Isn't that amazing? Why not? Because you are consciousness.

It's the essence of who you are. So you can't lose yourself. Consciousness, you can also say life.

You can call it life. You can call it Tao. It's the unmanifested, underlying the timeless essence of all life, that which animates all life forms for brief periods, each for a brief period.

You are that. You can't think about that. If you think about it, it doesn't make sense.

You have to sense that in yourself. Now, sense that. You can't know it as an object of knowledge.

You can only know it as yourself because it's the subject of all knowledge. Each separate being in the universe returns to the common source. Returning to the source is serenity.

Another word for serenity is stillness. All things return to the source out of which they have come, the life, the unmanifested one life. Returning to the source is stillness.

Now, the wonderful thing is we don't have to wait until we die to return to the source. To live a life that is filled with power and wisdom, we can return to the source before the body dies and live in a state of connectedness with the source of life. And that's why it says returning to the source is stillness.

When you find the stillness within yourself, you're returning to the source of all life. It is, what is stillness? Just a moment when you're not thinking, but still conscious.

Just an inner space, like now. Okay, ready for this? Here are all your thoughts, and now we go.

Then thoughts come creeping back, and then we go. And suddenly there's a, can you sense that there is a space inside you that's just conscious? Where you don't call yourself anything or call me anything.

You're returning to the source, to the formless, the timeless in you. If you don't realize the source, you stumble in confusion and sorrow. If you don't realize the source in yourself, you stumble in confusion and sorrow.

That's how most people live, unfortunately. Stumbling about, unconnected with who they, disconnected from who they are, not realizing the source of their being. There is immediately, there's confusion, which is mental confusion.

The mind creating all kinds of pseudo problems. You yourself, you become a problem to yourself. You become a problem to others.

You become a problem to the planet. You become a problem, or you contribute to the problem making of the world, and that's the normal way to be. You stumble in confusion, and so that's confusion, and sorrow is the suffering that comes when you are not connected with that dimension in yourself, in your daily life, you suffer.

That's the destiny, that's what the Buddha said, life is suffering, unless you go beyond suffering, which is the teaching, it shows you the way, say as the Tao Te Ching does. Confusion and sorrow, you can't get rid of it, no matter how you try to rearrange your outer life, or think if I achieve that or that, I'll be fine, you won't. So you stumble in confusion and sorrow.

You need to find the source, and it's not even hidden, it's just there underneath the mental noise. So when you realize the source, realize of course doesn't mean you have some kind of intellectual idea about it, realize is when you have no idea, when the ideas, the importance of ideas diminishes, and there's just a space of awareness. Ideas are secondary.

In fact, you will have some interesting ideas coming out of that, creative ideas, new ideas, new insights, but they are secondary. When you realize where you come from, you naturally become tolerant, disinterested, amused, kind-hearted as a grandmother, dignified as a king, immersed in the wonder of the Tao, you can deal with whatever life brings you, and when death comes, you're ready. Beautiful images explains who or what you become when you live in connectedness with that, no longer as a little entity that thinks itself to be separate from the universe and from other human beings and from everything.

You become tolerant, disinterested means not uninterested, disinterested, amused, there's a little bit of amusement at all the things that people in this world feel is so serious and so important, and all their fears and ambitions and all the things they run after. You then become a little bit amused at all this, what is called the turmoil of beings, running around like little rabbits. All this, I have so many problems to think about, oh my God, what's happening?

Oh no, God, you become a little bit, you become amused a little, there's a slight smile, you don't, but sometimes you might even laugh, but there's a slight, a little bit of a smile, because you know it's not ultimately real. What they believe to be so important is ultimately not that real, it's a temporary thing. It's relatively real, not ultimately real.

In other words, everything is a little bit like a dream. For example, what happened to you yesterday? Where is it now?

A little bit like a dream, whatever was important then, it's gone, even breakfast this morning. Okay, did I have breakfast or was it a dream? Not that much difference.

Or you come to the end of your life and suddenly you think back all those years, that was a long dream. Was it a nightmare? And you become kind-hearted as a grandmother.

Nice image, the grandmother who's already been through everything. It's a little bit like the big-bellied Buddha that you see that is influenced, the Taoist-influenced Buddha, the Chinese big-bellied Buddha. He sits there.

Sometimes people who think they have lots of problems in their lives, I recommend that they should get a big-bellied Buddha and look at it quite often when they think they have problems. And because the Buddha, he's actually laughing, he's had a huge belly and he always goes, ah, ah, ah, oh, it's not serious. It implies that he is connected with something deeper.

He doesn't take the world that seriously. And so his influence is beneficial. It's only people who take the world not that seriously, they can actually be of benefit to the world and improve the world.

But if you think that the world is absolutely serious, you're not going to improve it. You can just contribute to the madness. You will be fighting one or somebody or some organization or some group of people.

It's serious, serious. That little bit of detachment, you become the Buddha, the big-bellied Buddha or the grandmother, and dignified as a king with a certain dignity or integrity to who you are. The same dignity and integrity that each animal has that many humans have lost.

One with itself, every, I feel always when I look at a dog or a cat or a bird, whatever it is, it is one with itself, with who it is. It has enormous dignity. And then sometimes you can see the contrast if you look at a particularly silly human being.

And sometimes silly human beings have a dog that's very dignified. And the only times when they get out of their silliness is when they pet their dog. For a moment, they can truly be themselves for a moment.

With all other people, they're playing some kind of silly roles, not knowing that they're playing roles. And then they come in. For a moment, their dog gives them the ability to relax for a moment and be who they are without pretending.

And that's why they don't know it. That's why they love their dog or their cat so much, because they can be themselves. They find themselves through that.

That's the integrity of the animal, the dignity of the animal. But it's in you also. This is a nice one about people who are in control of something, of an organization or a country or whatever, how to rule a country or an organization.

When the master governs, the people are hardly aware that he exists. Next best is a leader who is loved. Next, one who is feared.

The worst is one who is despised. If you don't trust the people, you make them untrustworthy. The master doesn't talk, he acts.

When his work is done, the people say, amazing, we did it all by ourselves. So the greatest ruler is you don't even, are not even aware that he or she is there. Hardly aware that he or she is there, does not interfere.

Never says, look at me, I did that. Identifying with their actions and taking credit for what they did. Look, I did that.

Or arguing with somebody, you didn't do it, I did that. That same thing can exist. This is talks about having gone beyond ego and beyond mind and identification with action.

You also find this phenomenon in some very simple people who haven't developed an ego yet. They sometimes do wonderful things, but there's no entity that says, look, I did that or how it feels, I did that. Beautifully expressed in the film, Forrest Gump, where the hero or the antihero does not have an ego, but he is below ego.

He helps many people and many good things come into his life but he has no sense of a separate self. He lives in the right way, not what this describes because this describes of going beyond ego, but he hasn't arrived at ego yet. So he still lives in the sense of oneness.

And if you live in the sense of oneness, the universe to a large extent becomes helpful. Helpful things come into your life because you are no longer separating yourself from life. That begins with being in a state of oneness with the present moment, accepting the moment as it is.

That's really all you need to do. Then you're in a state of oneness with life, not imposing anything on the present moment, judgments, reactions, and if they are there, accept that they are there. So you can always accept what is, whatever level.

I'll accept what is externally or accept what is internally. And now here's a very wonderful thing about how your state of consciousness affects the world, that there's a correlation between the collective consciousness of humanity and the state of the planet. And there is a correlation between your state of consciousness and whatever happens to you, not always apparent immediately, but there is a correlation between what's within you and what happens to you or what you attract into your life.

And furthermore, it's not so much that what happens to you is your fate or your destiny. Your destiny is determined not by what happens to you, that's what people think, that what happens to me determines my life. Your life is determined, your destiny is determined by how you respond to what happens.

And what happens next is determined by how you react or respond to what happens now. So something seemingly bad happens, something goes wrong. If your reaction is negative, you attract the next negative thing.

If your reaction is a response that says, well, this is how it is, now let's deal with that. The next thing will reflect that state of consciousness. Many people are trapped their whole lives in a stream of same kind of unpleasant things happening continuously to them because they don't realize at any given moment there's a freedom for them to change their lives by reacting differently to what happens.

Your present reaction determines the future, not what happens. Your reaction to what happens determines the next moment. That's how you can change your life rather than being trapped in bad karma for a very long time.

Very easy, but it requires awareness. And here we talk, the Tao Te Ching talks about how the collective consciousness affects the planet. In harmony with the Tao, the sky is clear and spacious.

The earth is solid and full. All creatures flourish together, content with the way they are, endlessly repeating themselves, endlessly renewed. When man interferes with the Tao, the sky becomes filthy, the earth becomes depleted.

The equilibrium crumbles. Creatures become extinct. The master views the parts with compassion because he understands the whole.

His constant practice is humility. He doesn't glitter like a jewel, but lets himself be shaped by the Tao, as rugged and common as a stone. Beautiful images.

When humans collectively live out of touch with the greater consciousness, the Tao, the transcendent, the reality, whatever they manifest externally reflects that state of disconnectedness. And then the planet around them suffers. It's simply a reflection of a state of consciousness.

And so this eternal principle, he already saw 2,500 years ago. And that also implies that the solution to what is happening to the planet cannot be found exclusively on the external level. Yes, of course we need to change things that we do on the external level, but unless the consciousness, the state of consciousness that is our habitual state changes, even if we remove one evil from somewhere out there, it will be replaced by some other thing that has the same harmful influence on nature and the planet.

So the fundamental is the shift in consciousness in humans, in humanity, but not waiting for others to change. Humanity is you. Humanity is I.

You are humanity. The shift in consciousness needs to happen in you, and then the planet will be saved. So that is vital.

Here we have the two beautiful lines. The master, the master always means the enlightened being, the being in touch with the Tao. Here he happens to use the he pronoun, but he changes continuously in this translation.

Chinese doesn't differentiate apparently with the pronoun. Traditionally, it's always he in the old translation of the Tao Te Ching, but in this Stephen Mitchell translation, he shifts continuously from he to she. It happens to be he here, but it doesn't matter.

The master views the parts with compassion because he understands the whole. He understands the whole. He's connected with the whole.

Then you can look upon the parts, the individual human beings and the many different life forms with compassion, because you recognize them as expressions of, manifestations of the one life that you also are. Manifestations or expressions of the one consciousness that is the essence also of who you are. And you see it, you feel, when you don't impose thoughts on, continuously impose thoughts on reality, but allow things to be, allow a flower to be with that spaciousness, spacious perception, a moment, another human being.

That's compassion comes out of that state. It's, and compassion has a deeper level to it. And that is the recognition of oneness.

Out of that comes true compassion. The recognition that in essence, you and I share a common source and consciousness, not just not a source in the distant past, a source we share a common source now. And that's not an intellectual thing.

The realization comes, the less you impose thoughts on other people, judgments, definitions, and on yourself. You start thinking about my life. What about my life?

And then you define your life as either good or bad, fulfilling or unfulfilling, satisfying or unsatisfying. And you have all kinds of opinions, all kinds of opinions about me and my life. And you have a whole structure in your mind develops that you call my life.

And for many people, that's that mental consists of thoughts all clinging together. This is all part of the edifice of my life. And it's here and they're all clinging together.

And people think that's who they are. It's just thoughts about its definitions about them. They're just thoughts.

And when you don't know that, that cuts you off from the power that is there underneath all that, the power of consciousness itself, the Tao, you're cut off and you live as if that thing were real. And you try to somehow make it better on the level of the thought structure of my life, or try to convince yourself that, oh, my life isn't that bad after all. And then you get a little bit of, okay, I'm feeling a little bit better today because I just had the thought that my life isn't so bad after all.

Or you see somebody who is in suffering, say, oh, I'm better off than that person. Then you have a little bit of happiness. My life isn't so bad.

Many people's lives are far worse than my life. Okay, I should feel good. Okay, a little bit of feeling a little bit good for a few moments.

But the structure of my life is not a satisfying one for almost anybody. If you don't go beyond that structure, you might think the people you read about in People Magazine or wherever are better off. They're just as unhappy as everybody else because unless they've gone deeper, some may have.

My life, it's a figment of the imagination. There's no such thing as my life. I don't have a life.

How can I have, what does it mean I have a life? I am life. I am an expression of the one life, the one consciousness, the Tao, expressing itself briefly through this form.

And the very power of all life is here. Why have some mental structure that gives me a sense of identity, that tells me who I am with definitions and judgments and not good enough or better than all kinds. Unnecessary, as sometimes called in the Tao Te Ching, unnecessary baggage.

Walking around with unnecessary baggage. My life is so heavy and it's hard. I have a hard life.

Where's your hard life at this moment? Uh, can't see it. It's only when I start to think about it, this is back, oh yeah.

But where is it ever now? It's an imaginary entity. The me that is up there, it's consisting of all kinds of thoughts and opinions is an imaginary entity, unreal.

And it's wonderful to see that in this moment, you don't have that baggage of my life. You are life right now, I am. I don't need to define myself mentally as either good or bad or better than, or success or failure.

All that cuts you off from the power that's actually there of the Tao. So this is why it says, as we read earlier, empty yourself of everything it said, which means empty yourself of these ideas that otherwise dominate you, the ideas of who you are. Jesus said the same thing.

Almost literally to me, it means exactly the same. Blessed are the poor in spirit. Poor in spirit, that means inside you do not carry baggage.

The baggage of your thoughts of who you are. So the same thing, blessed are the poor in spirit means you are internally unencumbered by heavy thinking and identification and creating an image of who you think you are that becomes my life. And then you even believe that you could lose your life.

I'm going to lose, he lost his life. There must be, he must have been separate from life. Who was he if not life?

Without life, he isn't. He couldn't have been. You cannot be, you are life.

You can't separate yourself from life and say, I have a life. Who are you then? Separate from life?

What is it other than life? Well, I, that's life. But you don't have it, you are it.

Only the mind tells you that you have it. Insane. But normal, normal and insane.

One more, he who stands on tiptoe doesn't stand firm. He who rushes ahead doesn't go far. He who tries to shine dims his own light.

He who defines himself can't know who he really is. He who has power over others can't empower himself. He who clings to his work will create nothing that endures.

If you want to accord with the Tao, just do your job, then let go. He who stands on tiptoe doesn't stand firm. Look at me, me, my life.

Unhappy or look how miserable I am. Look how great I am. He who rushes ahead doesn't go far.

Always looking to the next thing. What do I have to do now? Always grasping for the next, or the next, what's the next thought that I need to worry about?

And the next thing rushes, entire civilization stressed, stressed out. All disconnected from the Tao. They're all rushing ahead.

No time for anything else. No time, no time. He who rushes ahead doesn't go far.

You don't really reach anywhere. He who tries to shine dims his own light. By trying to play roles or identifying with yourself as special, look at me, you cut yourself off from the power of the Tao.

It's by not directing attention to yourself, the power comes through you. Not identifying with anything, anything that you do because you don't do it. If it's a pity in a way that I wish sometimes, it's a little joke.

I wish I had written The Power of Now when I still had a big ego because now the ego would feel so great. Me, me. But then of course, The Power of Now couldn't have come through the ego.

And here, important, he who defines himself can't know who he really is. This is what we were talking about, this constant definitions of who you are in your mind. Why not just be the consciousness, be the presence right now?

That's where the power is. What a wonderful teaching, timeless. It helps, of course, to have a translation that makes it more accessible by somebody who is deeply in tune with that state of consciousness.

Traditionally, the Tao Te Ching has been always translated by academics who had a wonderful knowledge and command of ancient Chinese but absolutely no idea of the spiritual dimension. The alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end, stillness, we started with it, we end with it, moment of stillness. Well, I think it was Oprah who once said, silence doesn't look good on camera.

So we can always edit it out if necessary but Oprah tried it for a minute and that seemed to work. Usually the belief is that you can't have silence on a TV screen, at least not these days. When I was a child, there actually was silence.

Well, there were only two channels and often in between programs, you would just see an image and sometimes some background music, image of a building or city. Or it said, we'll be back soon. And so the TV wouldn't draw you into continuous, what comes next, one exciting image after another, each one lasting just a few seconds as it does these days but you could actually be still and look at the TV screen and so perhaps here's another opportunity for doing that and as you look at the stillness, become still inside, tune into the stillness.

The most precious thing there is, your deepest identity is stillness. If that gets covered up, then you don't really know who you are anymore and then you look for yourself in all kinds of things without ever finding yourself until you regain what had always been there covered up by the noise, the stillness. Stillness is very patient.

Stillness is space, inner space and it's as tolerant as outer space. It allows everything to be and it cannot be touched by anything, cannot be spoiled, only covered up. So every human being, that's the amazing thing, has that dimension within, no matter how insane they seem to be on the surface.

Becoming comfortable with stillness also means becoming comfortable with yourself, the rare state for many human beings and then you're able to be somewhere in your room, at home or outside in nature, wherever, without needing some kind of additional stimulus in your life, either some kind of excitement, nothing wrong with excitement, but you don't need it to give you a sense of aliveness anymore because the aliveness comes from a deeper place than any excitement could ever come from and then you don't need drama to give you a sense that you're still alive. That's another form of excitement and you don't need to desensitize yourself to mental or emotional pain that is there when you're not in touch with that dimension within and it's so close.

It's just, there's a mental noise or the emotional wave movement and underneath it, the sea or the lake is still. The deeper you go, the stiller it is. Now, most people can only go there when they go to sleep, so they go to a wonderful place but don't really know that they're there.

They just derive life energy from it. They wake up again and perhaps if they're lucky, say, I had a good night's sleep. I feel so good.

I don't know if you have ever done this consciously and that is, well, we all have experienced being tired and some people regard that as a negative thing but being tired, if you can bring some consciousness into being tired when you are tired, very tired. I'm not hypnotizing you. I hope nobody's going to sleep.

And your eyes are getting heavier and heavier. When you are very tired, what people call tired, what is that actually? What does it feel like?

What is that? So if you can put some attention into be alert, this is almost a paradox, have some awareness to investigate what does it actually mean and what does it actually feel like to be very tired? It feels like something from somewhere is pulling you and it almost says, come this way.

It's like a magnetic pull. And the pull is very sweet. The pull is to a place of such wonderful sweetness and rest and peace that it becomes irresistible.

And then people say, I can't keep my eyes open anymore. I'm going to, but really what that is is something is pulling you away from this world and it's so precious. And this is why when you finally go into bed and close your eyes and for the brief time span, when you're very tired, that you're still conscious, it's deeply, extremely enjoyable.

We all experience how nice it is when you're very tired and finally you lie down. All your problems are gone, forgotten. You can't, there's no energy left to think about your problems.

And so you're just moving towards that beautiful place and then you disappear in it. And it's, the pull is so powerful that even people who, there have been stories about people who were lost in the wilderness or lost out in the cold and snow and they got more and more tired. And finally, although they knew if I lie down and close my eyes and go to sleep, I'm not going to wake up again, they did it anyway because the pull became so irresistible and the beauty and sweetness of going into sleep, so overpowering that they gave in and there was no fear.

There was no fear of death, they knew they were going to die but in that moment, there was no fear of death anymore. There was just being pulled, giving in to that enormous pull. So that's the strange thing then for humans and other life forms on this planet is that every day or every night, they drop unconscious.

The entire population of the planet, half their lives they spend in gone. It could be a science fiction story, you visit a planet and then suddenly the whole population drops, becomes unconscious and it's normal. And it's called planet Earth.

So there's a, really where you're moving to the source, every human being and every life form that experiences sleep returns to the source, the unmanifested source and then comes back into the manifested, recharged but it's an unconscious return movement. It does not free you from suffering in this world of the outer world of manifestation when you come back to it. The spiritual path is about finding that realm without losing yourself in it, realizing your essential identity with it and remain conscious.

And that happens, for example, if you stop thinking without falling asleep. At first, you may not notice the same overpowering sweetness of being that you have that pulls you towards sleep. It's very subtle.

At first, there seems to be a kind of blank, empty space but there's enormous power there to the mind that looks like nothing and that's why it's sometimes described as nothing or no thing or emptiness because the mind is used to noise. It's not really capable of grasping that. It cannot be grasped.

I sometimes compare it to stepping after you're spending several hours in a noisy discotheque which is a metaphor here for normal existence. You step out, close the door behind you and you find yourself, it's the middle of the night and you're out in nature somewhere. There are very subtle sounds and there's an all-pervasive silence, an alive silence around you but because you're deafened by the noise, you cannot yet, it's too subtle for you to then perceive that.

So at first, you go into place, it seems, oh, there's nothing here. So it's gradually you become attuned to the inner stillness and realize its depth and its sweetness and its aliveness. I brought with me today a book.

We're just going to look at a few lines from that ancient book. This is our second session. We had at some previous point, we already had a session on the ancient Chinese book of wisdom, the Tao Te Ching and this is our second session on the Tao Te Ching and something important to remember is we are not really studying a book.

We are using the words of that book to look at our essential reality. We are not studying something outside ourselves and that applies whenever you read any book that is spiritually, vitally alive. You're not studying, it's not an academic subject.

You're not studying a book. You're not absorbing information outside of yourself. You are, if it's a spiritual, true spiritual book, the book is about you.

Every true spiritual book is about the most essential dimension of who you are. Rediscovering it, finding it, living from that dimension, that's what any spiritual book is about and so somebody even called the Tao Te Ching that was written 2,500 years ago, the world's first self-help book. Sometimes these days, people speak dismissively about self-help books and perhaps the reason is because there are so many and there's such varying quality and depth and inevitably, there are always more self-help books or books of any kind that are not so powerful and not so deep and relatively few that actually are vitally alive because they were written from that place within the author, which ultimately means they were written by consciousness itself. So there are always more false diamonds than real diamonds, of course.

Some and some books are mixed back, that you have some beautiful insides and a lot of fluff in between. That's fine too. It's sometimes worth reading a book just for the two pages.

If you could summarize all the insights in some books, you could get it down to two pages and that could change somebody's life and that's fine. If they had to read another 150 pages in the process, fine, at least they got that. But then you have some books that are almost undiluted wisdom.

What elsewhere is dispersed throughout a book. Sometimes you get it in literature. You get deep insights occasionally.

Every 30 pages, you get one sentence that stands out as wow. And so there are some books, however, that are the cream instead of skimmed milk. And those are the books that are eternal, well, not eternal, but relatively speaking, they survive for a very long time and they are beyond the particular culture out of which they came.

Otherwise, how could a book written 2,500 years ago in China speak to us now? It's like something coming from a different planet, from a different galaxy. But since it touches the deepest dimension of human existence, its essence is timeless.

And that's why it's still alive and that's why it's still read these days and valued, appreciated, and is helpful for many, many people. An amazing thing for a book to survive that long. One miracle is that even its physical form survived for that long.

And then to survive, to be still not just of interest to some historians, but of vital significance to a human being, amazing. Miraculous thing, 2,500 years ago. And of course, the same thing applies to the teaching of the Buddha, for example, which is still as vitally true and alive as it was about the same time, 2,500, 2,600 years ago.

The author of the Tao Te Ching is Lao Tse, who lived about the same time, give or take 100 years, which isn't much, as the Buddha in India. Lao Tse lived in China. The Buddha lived in India, as I pointed out already at some stage.

So at that time, just a brief recapitulation, there was an enormous wave movement of spiritual awakening, not as all-pervasive and powerful as it is now, but for that time, it was an incredible thing. When at the same time period, teachers arose in different parts of the planet and teachings, and many people, relatively few, but still, people responded to that. There was the Buddha in India.

There was Mahavira in India. There was Zoroaster in Persia. There were the ancient Greek pre-Socratic philosophers, very deep insights in ancient Greece, all at the same time.

All happened virtually simultaneously. And so this book, then, Tao Te Ching survived, and miraculously, of course, it has to get translated. How do you get that across from ancient Chinese symbols?

How do you, and there are about 100, translations into English available now. And sometimes you compare translations, and you see, are they translating the same book? Is that the same text?

So for the translator itself, now this is another important point. It's not only that the book, to be spiritually, vitally alive, needs to come from the deepest place. When a book like that gets translated, even the translator needs to be attuned to the essential message of the book.

And so many translations have been done of the Tao Te Ching, and all the translations that were done initially were done by academics at universities. They had great knowledge of Chinese language, but no attunement at all to the essential teaching. And so you got many mistranslations of that, and only recently, relatively recently, people came in who translated, who had both knowledge of Chinese, and most importantly, inner attunement to the essential message of that.

Tao Te Ching, a strange title, not to be confused, by the way, with the I Ching, which is another book, also Chinese, also interesting, but this is the Tao Te Ching. Tao has never been really successfully translated. It doesn't lend itself to that.

You need to keep that in Chinese, but even if you're Chinese, you won't be any wiser as to the meaning of Tao. So even Chinese people don't have that advantage. When you talk of Tao, their mouth opens, and you ask them, what does that really mean?

They go, oh, when I first heard of the Tao Te Ching and read it, that was a few years after a shift in consciousness. Immediately, I said, wow, yes, wow, wow. And then I asked my next-door neighbor at college, graduate school.

He was Chinese, student of mathematics. I wanted to talk to him about the Tao Te Ching, and he said, what? Never heard of it.

Just very briefly, the Tao has also different shades of meaning, dimensions of meaning. On the one hand, the Tao is the is-ness of all things. Tao is the suchness, the is-ness of this moment as it is.

That's the Tao in its manifested aspect. The Tao is also the source, the unmanifested source out of which the is-ness of all things emerges. So it's manifold meaning.

The Te, again, traditionally, that word Te is traditionally translated as virtue, which is not really a good thing anymore since virtue is a relatively dead word. When was the last time you said virtue? Really, the Te refers to the flow.

Anybody who is in tune with the Tao is an expression of Te, which is right action, right living. Ethics comes into it, but in the sense of virtue, but it's not something that needs to be learned externally, something that naturally comes from the source of life. When you're in tune with the Tao, the source of life, then all your actions and your speech are virtuous, which really means charged with the power of the Tao.

So Te really is power, the power of the Tao, the intelligence, the intelligent power of the Tao. When you're in tune with that, you don't need to think about ethics anymore because then that flows naturally from the core of your being. In that sense, you can say virtue, but the closer translation actually would be power.

And if the book didn't already exist, a good translation for Tao Te Ching, I think, would be the power of now. Because Tao is inseparable from the present moment. There is, Tao only is timeless presence.

There is no past or future in Tao. Let's look at a few lines. The translation, I have two translations here.

One that I like very much, or version, Stephen Mitchell's version, and another version is by Jane English and Jia Fu Feng. They translated it together. But you may have others that are your favorites.

You have to look around, whatever you respond to. Now, Stephen Mitchell, fortunately, does not exclusively use the masculine pronoun as it's done in most other translations. He, the master, he varies between she and he.

So sometimes the master is seen as feminine and sometimes the master is seen as masculine, which is a wonderful thing, since the Tao has many qualities that are closely related to the feminine, the openness and so on. There are many images in the Tao Te Ching that are feminine images to point to the essential nature of the Tao. Not that the Tao itself is feminine, but to get a feeling for what Tao is, the Tao Te Ching uses feminine imagery.

So here we have a little few lines about the master. The master keeps her mind always at one with the Tao. That is what gives her her radiance.

The Tao is ungraspable. How can her mind be at one with it? Because she doesn't cling to ideas.

The Tao is dark and unfathomable. How can it make her radiant? Because she lets it.

Since before time and space where the Tao is. It is beyond is and is not. How do I know this is true?

I look inside myself and see. Let's look at it again and see. The master keeps her mind always at one with the Tao.

That is what gives her her radiance. Keeps her mind at one with the Tao. In the next line it says, if it's ungraspable, how can her mind be at one with it?

And it says because she doesn't cling to ideas. Interesting. She doesn't cling to ideas.

That reminds me of the famous Zen saying. I don't remember who said it, but Zen master said it. Don't seek for the truth.

Just cease or stop cherishing opinions. That is, I believe, points to the same inner state of disidentification from thinking. Thinking.

She doesn't cling to ideas. Cling to, it doesn't mean she doesn't have ideas, the master, but the master does not cling to ideas. And the Zen master, when he said, don't look for the truth, just stop cherishing opinions.

Opinions. He didn't say, stop having opinions. Just as Lao Tzu does not say, don't have ideas.

Says, don't cling to ideas. And the other master says, stop cherishing opinions. So this clinging, which is the same as cherishing, is self-identification with thoughts that arise.

In other words, you then believe completely in every thought that comes into your head.

Amazing. You believe in it, that means you are it.

And that is self-identification with thinking. So how then to be at one, always at one with the Tao? So simple.

On the one hand, you could call it, stop cherishing opinions. Now, any thought that arises ultimately is an opinion, you could say. Stop cherishing, stop your self-identification with that.

Or don't cling to ideas, in the words of Lao Tzu, or this present translation here, so that there's always a space between you and your thoughts. Or rather, you are not the thought, you are the space for the thought. This is how I put it sometimes.

You're familiar with that. And perhaps in yourself, you know it. You don't have to be in your thoughts, but you can be the space for your thoughts.

Then no matter how weird your thoughts are, it doesn't matter that much. You don't say, oh my God, I shouldn't be having these weird thoughts. No, because that's another thought.

I'm supposed to be spiritually advanced, and why am I still having these thoughts? There must be something wrong with me. Does that sound familiar?

That's also thoughts. That's more thoughts that say, I shouldn't be having these thoughts, there's something wrong with me. And then you believe in those thoughts.

Thoughts that judge other thoughts. That may sound familiar to some of you, and there's nothing personal in it, it's the human mind. So you don't need to eliminate thoughts or to say, I should only have pure thoughts because I'm a spiritual person.

Because by now, I should have transcended all impure thoughts. Well, then you're in a dilemma because in this world of polarities, if you only want to have pure thoughts, you're creating the other polarity in the unseen. And sooner or later, the other polarity will come up from behind, creep up.

And this has been done sometimes by Christians who try to practice the teachings of Christ without entering the state of consciousness out of which that comes. So they try to be pure and spiritual and good Christians and denied the other polarity, repressed it. And then suddenly they get overpowered by something deeply destructive and negative.

So you have these occasion, you have a nice, wonderful person who always talks in spiritual, just so gentle spiritual. And before you know it, he's screaming at his wife or even hitting his wife. Whoa, where did that come from?

And he can't even admit to himself that this is what's happening. So if you push away certain thoughts because they do not fit into the mental image of who you are as this or that, then they assume a life of their own. And before you know it, they invade your mind again, if only in your dreams.

And suddenly you have dreadful nightmares. During a day, you're such a spiritual person. And at night, you suddenly have dreadful nightmares.

Monsters come or you become a monster. Oh my God, this shouldn't be happening. And that's because you're pushing something away.

The true spiritual does not lie in one thought or another thought. It lies in being there as the space for your thoughts. Then it doesn't matter anymore, really.

Whatever thought arises is no more than that. It's a form that arises at this moment. You don't resist it.

You don't need to resist it. But you are the space for it. You don't become it.

Somebody sent me a sticker to put on the car. I haven't put it on my car yet. A very wise sticker.

I don't know where it originated. It says, you don't need to believe every thought you think. So this is the practice then of being the space or the witness for your thoughts rather than being the thought.

And you can practice with your opinions. Many thoughts are actual, most thoughts can, all thoughts could be called opinions, but there are certain things that are definitely, clearly recognizable as opinions when you are talking to people every day, when you're having a discussion or talk with friends or colleagues or neighbors. So they will express their opinion, whatever it may be about, and you may express your opinion.

And you can then observe whether or not there is self-identification with your opinion. And your opinion, of course, is a mental position, the position of the mind. Are you identified with a mental position?

If you are, then you are cherishing opinions in the words of the Zen master, or you are clinging to ideas in the words of Lao Tse. And how do you know that? You know that when, as you discuss things, you become either defensive or aggressive in the expression of your opinion.

Emotion flows into, and you get worked up in, huh, why is that happening? Why are you becoming defensive or aggressive? And of course, you have to look inside yourself to see whether this is the case or not.

Are you becoming defensive or aggressive? You feel the influx of emotion. And why is this happening?

Because unconsciously, you feel threatened by somebody who attacks or questions or contradicts your mental position. Why do you feel threatened by somebody who questions your mental position? That is a sign that you had identified with a mental position.

And identified means your sense of self was in it. So the person is not attacking your opinion in your unconscious viewpoint. The person you're being attacked in your very, a life is being, is under attack because you identified this.

This is not true, but this is how it is perceived, as if they were attacking your very existence because you identified with a mental position. There was a self in it. So anybody who questions it questions your very existence.

It's unconscious process. So that's an amazing thing to realize in yourself. And it's a deep seated unconscious pattern in most human beings.

And of course, as you become conscious of that, you can usually see it much more clearly in others, more easily in your friend or whoever you're having, then in yourself. Usually says, oh, yes, that's what he always does. Of course, now I understand what my husband or my wife does.

I understand completely. That's step one. And that's why I was so happy when I heard Obama say, you don't have to be disagreeable when you disagree with someone.

What that really implies is, because if you do become disagreeable and you disagree with someone, you're identified with a mental position. So you can express, you don't have to relinquish all opinions or mental positions, no. But is that who you are?

Or is that something in you as a mind movement? Enormous difference. And if you can have a discussion between people who are not identified with their respective viewpoints, it's a wonderful thing.

It's quite beautiful. An exchange of ideas. But nobody is identified with their ideas.

And that's a conscious discussion, a conscious group of people. We call them then conscious, as opposed to unconscious people who are identified, because that's the difference in spiritual terms between conscious and unconscious. Conscious means non-identification with form.

That's what conscious is. And primarily, forms appear as thought forms. Those are the primary forms.

That's where you experience life, the life of form in yourself as arising thoughts. So occasionally one is able to witness that and it's always beautiful. Then a discussion is actually a beautiful thing.

Whereas normally in the old unconscious state, but as soon as people start discussing something, I feel the strong impulse to leave the room in the unconscious state. Or you can also try to be there as the one conscious presence while the others identified. Or it may be possible to pull the entire group into consciousness.

It may be, but depends how overwhelming the force of the unconsciousness is in the room and in the people. So either you stay there as the conscious presence in the room, and then you might say something from not against anything or anybody, just put forward your opinion. That might change the vibrational frequency in the room or you may have to remove yourself because ultimately it's insane and nothing good comes of it if each person is identified with their mental position.

Nothing will come of it. Perhaps some kind of compromise, if you're lucky, some kind of compromise that everybody dislikes. So to be at one with the Tao, with the source of life, so that the primordial intelligence can operate through you, you don't have to look for it.

Where's the, how can I connect with the primordial intelligence? He, Eckhart was talking about primordial intelligence. Well, it's already there.

Rather than looking for it as something, just stop doing certain things that block it. And then naturally it's there. So you can also, you don't have to find your true self.

That would be quite hard. Yeah, I'm looking for myself. Because how could you not be your, if it's your true self, how could you not already be it?

So it's just stop obscuring your true self if you want to use that expression. So the vital, a very vital practice then for everyone is stop identifying with thoughts. And that requires an alertness as you go about your life, especially when engaged with, in conversation with other people, but also in the continuous self-talk that goes on and on in most people's minds.

There also it is vital that you are not totally identified with the arising self-talk. And it's a very strange thing, that self-talk, that you have to look at your own self. Do you have one voice that says I in your head?

I, I'm this, I'm that. Or do you have a voice that addresses you as you? It varies from person to person.

What kind of self-talk do you have? Is there some self-talk that is predominantly negative? Is there self-talk that is very critical of yourself a lot of the time?

Is there self-talk that is very critical of others a lot of the time? Is there self-talk that is critical of situations? Is there self-talk that's critical of places where you are?

Or self-talk is critical about what you are doing, but really don't want to be doing. You just have to do it now. But really, as the sticker on the car says, I'd rather be fishing, or I'd rather be surfing, not driving.

Look at the kind of self-habitual self-talk, or do you have two voices that argue with each other? Why can't you ever do the right thing? Well, I'm doing my best, but...

All that is an amazing thing, that the voice in the head. I say the voice in the head, and of course, for many people, it's the voices in the head. What I just mentioned, I believe there was a psychologist who identified those two voices as the top dog and the underdog.

The top dog says, you're no good, why can't you do that? And the underdog says, oh, well, I'm trying so hard. And of course, which is the true one?

Are you truly the top dog, or you're neither? So you are the space for those thoughts. So all these things are really the vital spiritual practice is for you to become the awareness underneath your thoughts, the awareness around your thoughts so that you're no longer totally controlled by, and your life is not controlled by, the thoughts that arise that say this or that.

And then you don't feel good, this is a little superficial, and say, okay, I must think positive thoughts, otherwise I won't feel good. I'm really better off than most people on the planet. I have to remind myself that I'm actually, that most people are worse off than me.

Just think about that to make myself feel a little better. Okay, I have to think about all the poor people who are in this place, and then I can feel better about myself. The true sense of aliveness doesn't come through the medium of thought, it comes from a more vital place within.

It comes from the awareness itself or the consciousness itself. So the shift then is you step back from your thoughts and look at them and say, oh, the thought. Occasionally, sometimes Buddhists, they practice mindfulness, which is closely related to this, which is becoming aware of whatever your mind does.

I don't think the word mindfulness is such a wonderful translation because it sounds as if your mind were full. But we know what they mean. So it's awareness practice so that you are not your thoughts.

And then naturally you feel a deeper sense of aliveness and connectedness. And spaces, when you're not identified anymore with every thought, then you have spaces in between the thoughts where there's no thought but simply a conscious presence. And that is the Tao, and that is who you are.

And that has no form. And you couldn't say anything much about it, not really. It is ungraspable.

The Tao is ungraspable. And this is a pitfall of many spiritual seekers. They're looking for something to grasp, some kind of experience or some kind of realization, thunder and lightning experience, looking for something as if, or looking for God, as if God could be found as an object in consciousness.

And that's why the Zen master said, don't look for the truth. We could all say, don't look for God, don't look for yourself, just step out of the mind. Be the space.

The Tao is dark and unfathomable. How can it make her radiant? Because she lets it.

She doesn't need to understand it. It cannot be understood. In fact, in that becoming conscious, understanding plays a very insignificant role, if at all.

Perhaps understanding, the main part of understanding is understanding the obstacles to it, but not it. So again, many spiritual seekers think they need to arrive at some greater or deeper understanding of reality or of God or whatever, or of who they are. No, it's not.

The realization does not arise from increased understanding. And that's almost insulting to the human mind which says, well, why then have I been studying all these books for 25 years? Well, at least you're here now and realize that that's not the way.

So she lets it. The Tao is dark and unfathomable. This implies you cannot understand it because the moment you understand it, it's no longer unfathomable.

You say, oh, now I've got it. You can never say, now I've got it. If you say, now I've got it, you haven't got it.

How can it make her radiant? Radiant means when you are connected with that, the power flows through you. The radiance comes through.

And so she lets it. She doesn't understand it, but she is attuned with it. So in the Course in Miracles too, it says, you still think that your understanding is a great contribution to the truth, but that is actually not the case.

I don't know what the second part of that statement is, but basically it's your understanding is not an important contribution to the truth. Now, what is the case, however, is that when you are in tune with the Tao, if there is anything here in this world that you need to understand, you will understand it. You don't understand the essence.

You cannot understand that. You can't understand God. You can't understand consciousness.

You can only be consciousness. You can be conscious, in conscious connection with the consciousness, but you can't understand it. This is why I cannot answer questions when people ask me, can you please define what consciousness is?

No, I can't, nor can you. But you are it. You can be it.

You can realize that you are it. Then out of that realization, minor understandings arise as whatever in any situation that you find yourself in, the intelligence operates through you and suddenly you know what is right for this situation. In that sense, understanding comes out of it, but the understanding comes out of the prior position of non-understanding.

The most basic not knowing is vital because it is a state of not thinking. It doesn't come out of your own thinking. You embrace the spaciousness of not thinking.

And then understanding in a limited sense comes out of that, but not understanding of the deepest, that deepest unmanifested, uncreated dimension. Since before time and space were, the Tao is, is and Tao is one. It's just is in it, no past, no was, no will be.

It is beyond is and is not. What does that mean? It is beyond is and is not.

Beyond existence, what exists or does not exist. There's existence, which is the all forms of life exist. The vaster dimension, what I call being or what is the Tao is the unmanifested out of which all existence comes.

Existence comes from Latin. It means to stand out. X means out.

So, and existence means a form, but underneath and within each form, there is the formless essence of all life, the Tao. Underneath it, so to speak, all language is very limited because language comes from this world of up, down, left, right, and so on. Underneath it, there is the unmanifested, the being, and then there's the existence.

All existence comes out of being and is essentially being, expressing itself in form. So you yourself have the two aspects. You exist as a physical and psychological form temporarily, and in your innermost, there is the timeless dimension of being that frees you from being totally caught up in the temporal existence, which is a dreadful thing.

How do I know this is true? I look inside myself and see. The ultimate truth of the universe is within you.

You find the ultimate within you. Wherever you go, it will still apply. I'll read the first line of another verse, just the first line for the moment.

Verse 20, I mean a poem. I don't know if you call them poems. Chapter 20, stop thinking and end your problems.

Stop thinking and end your problems. All problems are generated by thinking. How do I know this is true?

The famous test that I've many times mentioned to people, and I recommend that you, if you still need it, that you write it on a little card and put it on your bathroom mirror or wherever else you tend to look quite often. And I'm not talking about affirmations such as I love myself. Well, that's fine too.

It's better than hating yourself, but it's still within the polarities. No, what I mean is to write something a little like, what's the problem now? What's the problem now?

If you think you have lots of problems in order to touch reality, because problems are generated by continuous thinking. It's not to do with right now, no. The problems exist in the mind in the future or the imaginary situation that's going to arise perhaps in the future.

Maybe it will arise, maybe it won't. But usually the imagined situations are far worse than the actual situations when they happen. So what's the problem now?

What happens when you look at that phrase? What's the problem now? Your attention then goes from being absorbed in, okay, oh my God, what's going to happen, to now, okay, is that a problem now?

And then you have to wake up into now to answer the question on this little card. What's the problem now? You have to actually wake up into the now because you never know there might be a problem now.

You have to focus attention and look. And so suddenly your attention moves into the present moment. And there you stand in front of your bathroom mirror and look, okay, what's the problem now?

I don't know. You look, well, then the mind says, oh, you're looking old. It looks in the mirror.

That's the problem. No, of course it's not a problem. It's a thought that arises.

And usually the mind has, of course, more complicated things to say, but then you realize that at this moment, it's not actually a problem. But the mind says, yes, but it will become a problem in the next moment. But of course, when the next moment comes, it comes again as this moment, and then you have to ask a question again.

What is the problem now? And the amazing realization will come to you that there never is a problem now. Only a situation.

You can deal with it or leave it alone for the time being. It's never a problem. Some situations demand immediate action.

And then, of course, it's not a problem. There's no time for it to become a problem. If it demands immediate action, you look and you act.

Other things you may have to think about, you might occasionally have to think, okay, what are the possible solutions to this situation? And what you do then is to apply focused thinking, but before you do that, you become still, present. And then you, out of that, then it comes, okay, what are the possibilities in this situation?

I could pick up the phone and make a phone call to that person. I can look, go to that place and ask for help. I can go there too, and I can do that.

One, two, three, four, five, write it down, put it aside, okay. And then, which one of these can I do now? And then you do it.

It's never, it's not a problem. If I juggle ideas, thoughts in my mind uselessly, that's a problem. What if, what if?

Attention back to now. What's the problem now? And so it's always amazing to realize that the now is free of problems because you're breathing, you're perceiving your senses, you feel the aliveness in the body.

More than enough to deal with any situation that may arise or may be there. Of course, that's why people love dangerous activities. Some people get addicted to danger because it stops their mind and they have no problems while they're climbing up the mountain.

They're totally present. So for a little while, they can't, you can't carry your problems up the mountain wall if you're climbing up a sheer wall of a mountain. If you carry your problems with you, you're going to fall off.

So you have to leave your problems and be totally present. And so that's why it is so, you feel so much more alive there because the mind, the parasite that otherwise sucks up your energy is not active at that time. Or you go surfing, you can't think about, I wonder how high this, you just, you look and you do, or you look and you don't do, or you fall in, it's all fine, there's no thinking.

You can't think, you're not going to go be very good at it if you're thinking. Stop thinking and end your problems. What difference between yes and no?

What difference between success and failure? Must you value what others value? Avoid what others avoid?

How ridiculous. What difference, it says, between success and failure? What is meant by that is that success and failure are mental labels that you attach.

And so the master, she does not live, or he does not live according to these mental labels where you go, wow, I am so good at this. I am so successful, and then attach yourself to that idea because it may turn into the opposite. Or you don't describe yourself as a failure or a success because both are ways of identifying with a form in your mind.

I am a great success. I am the best-selling author. Okay, what if three years from now, nobody buys the book anymore?

What happens to my sense of identity then? Well, I can still then cling to and then just say, I once was a best-selling author. So deriving your identity from a conceptual sense of self, and very often success or failure is part of one's conceptual sense of self, and it gives you your sense of who you are.

It's a very limited sense of who you are. Now, if you, a conceptual identity, either as a successful person, and of course there's always a fear that it may not last, and of course it probably won't because nothing lasts forever. So successful person, precarious conceptual sense of self, and continuously you'll find the more successful you are, the more things come in that the conceptual image is being attacked.

They're beginning to write about you in People magazine, or they're beginning to, People is still quite benign, but there are other magazines that will tear you to pieces. And so you have to, your conceptual sense is very shaky concept if your identity is derived from myself as the one who is successful. When many people want that, there's nothing wrong with achieving.

The question is whether you need that to give you an enhanced identity, or whether you simply enjoy the play of form in this world, and you contribute, but there's no self-identification in a conceptual way, and that is great freedom. Identity, then failure, another very strong sense of identity for people, another conceptual identity of thinking of yourself as somebody who has failed at something. My life has been a failure.

It's too late now. I've made so many mistakes. I've married the wrong person.

I chose the wrong career. I tried, but it didn't work out. The world didn't recognize my talents.

I never had a real chance. Life never gave me a chance. If only my parents had taught me at an early age, if only they had not, if only the system wasn't so, if only then perhaps, but it's too late now.

That's a heavy sense of self. It's a conceptual identity that is as heavy or heavier than the person who thinks I've made it in the world. Everybody, I'm the great one who has achieved wealth, fame, and so on.

They are both heavy, but I say perhaps the miserable one is even heavier. And of course, I'm giving you these two extremes which do exist in certain people. For many people, there's a movement, they fluctuate between these two of thinking of yourself as, oh, actually not bad, quite good.

I'm actually still better looking than most. Or, if that's your conceptual identity, or I still have more money than most of my friends or neighbors, okay? Or then you shift into, oh, I'm losing.

I'm losing it, I'm losing out. The others are overtaking me. People I was at school with, they're already there, and I'm still here.

Oh, dear. So, again, so here we have, where does your sense of self come from? The conceptual, the concepts in your mind, or does it come not from any kind of thought, but from that which is deeper than thought, the stillness, the depths, the presence that you are?

And that's the liberation. It's when your sense of who you are comes out of the presence of who you are, in essence, which is the consciousness that you are. And then it doesn't, it is secondary.

I sometimes say it is no longer of absolute importance then what your life situation is. Once you know who you are, and you can only know it in this moment, you can't say, okay, now I know it, what's next? No, once you know who you are in this now, the only place where you can know who you are, your life situation is only of relative importance.

It's still relatively important, the way I put it, whether you are poor or wealthy, well, it does make some difference in your life, yes, true. It's of relative importance whether you are healthy or the body is not doing very well, of course, it's relative importance. Whether you have satisfying relationships is important.

Whether you have a nice place to live or an unpleasant place to live, yes, of course, it's important, but it is not of absolute importance anymore. It is of relative, everything in your life situation then is of relative importance because only the one thing, there's only the one thing that matters absolutely, and that is knowing who you are beyond all the forms, knowing yourself as the presence underneath it all. And then you can live with any life situation and be at peace with it and still deal with it and still be active, but to be at peace with whatever the situation is at the moment, you are deeper than that, you are beyond that.

You are the consciousness, you are not ultimately the person who is having a life situation. The person who has a place where he or she lives, which may be good or not so good. The person who has relationships, the person who has money or no money.

Yes, these things matter, but they don't matter absolutely. If they matter absolutely, it means you don't know the absolute. Then they matter absolutely and they have the power to make you miserable, the things of this world.

Even success can make you then miserable as it's often the case. There are as many people made miserable by failure as people made miserable by success. So, who am I?

We had, at some point we talked about that as a meditation. Method, so to speak, the simplest meditation method to ask, who am I? And of course, that is the most vital question.

And none, whatever concepts are rising in your mind about who you are are not who you are. So the wonderful liberation is to go beyond a conceptual sense of self. And this is not only liberating to yourself, so to speak, but you liberate other people from imposing on them also a conceptual sense of self.

This is a dreadful thing to do to other human beings because you no longer recognize the essential aliveness and your essential oneness with that so-called other human being. You no longer recognize that. To you then, the other being, human being, becomes reduced to a concept in your head.

And so you have a set of beliefs about who that other human being is. And why are you doing that to another human being? Because before, you did it to yourself and you continuously do it to yourself.

Then you cannot not do it to another human being, imposing a conceptual identity onto others. And so that's the, an enormous improvement that then happens in relationships when you do not come from a conceptual sense of self and therefore no longer impose a conceptual sense of self on others. A set of judgments, a set of criticisms of who they are.

What's such a normal thing to do? It doesn't mean you can't, you don't see certain behavior patterns in another human being. It may well be that you see that the person who knocks on your door and wants to sell you something, what he's trying to sell you is a fake and he's trying to tell you that it is genuine, so you're not going to say in your mind, okay, I must not believe that he's an honest person.

No, you don't have to believe anything. And here comes something in that there's a knowing for which you don't need concepts. You can know if a person tries to deceive you, you know it without having to call him a thief or a manipulator.

You see it and that's all. You see what behavior pattern governs this person and then you also see there is something deeper than that behavior pattern. You don't react as if that behavior pattern were the ultimate reality of that human being.

And that's a wonderful thing that you can do for another human being is not to act as if the behavior they manifest were their ultimate reality, because it isn't. And sometimes the miracle happens that you can free without consciously doing it, not thinking that I'm going to free you, but by being in that state of consciousness, you can free, sometimes it happens, you can free a person from their limited, unconscious behavior patterns because you are not acknowledging it. You see it, but you don't acknowledge it.

If you acknowledge it, if you impose judgments, you reduce the human being to something that is not, but by doing it to another, you do it to yourself. And this is perhaps why Jesus said, judge not so that you are not judged, because you're really, you're judging always yourself. And so in the Course in Miracles, there's a beautiful line.

That was the first line I ever heard about a Course in Miracles when it came to England in the, in 1980 something. I was, I saw this strange thing. People said, Course in Miracles said, oh no, another weird thing has come from California.

And of course it turned out it wasn't from California. It came from New York, but was actually written at Columbia University. Would you believe that?

And this person, I asked the person, have you ever heard of this weird thing called a Course in Miracles? And the person said, I don't know much about it except one sentence. And that is, what you perceive in another, you strengthen in yourself.

So perceive here means what you focus on in the other. The very, if you focus on the other is dishonest, if the other is unconscious in some behavior in the other, you, what you focus on, you strengthen in yourself. If that becomes your reality, it draws you into the same.

So here, freedom then comes from not imposing conceptual identities on others, which you can only do if you no longer impose or believe in or derive your identity from conceptual sense of self in your own mind. And so you end up, of course, with something that the ego does not particularly like, because the opinions that you have about yourself are becoming quite insubstantial or weak. In other words, you're beginning to have fewer and fewer opinions about who you are.

That's being attuned with the Tao. And so when then people ask you about how do you see yourself, as I have occasionally once or twice have been asked by people who came to interview me, so how do you see yourself?

[Speaker 8] (6:08:04 - 6:08:05)

Well, I don't know.

[Speaker 1] (6:08:05 - 6:14:51)

No. Not in any particular way. I gave very unsatisfying answers to these questions.

I don't know how, I don't see myself. If I saw myself as a great spiritual teacher, that would be the beginning of delusion, because it would be the beginning of identification with a form identity. If I saw myself as a successful author now and derived some satisfaction from it, yes, it's fulfilling to know that many people are being helped, this is wonderful, but I didn't do that as such.

It happened through this form. I would have been very unhappy for many years when my conceptual reality was one of, if I had had one, my mother had it for me, of being unsuccessful in this world, a failure. A person who's made so many mistakes that now it's too late for everything.

So that would have been, for 20 years, I would have lived in that very painful conceptual reality. You have failed. Look at your friends from school.

They've got their big cars now. They've got their careers. What have you got to show for it?

Nothing. If I had had that, it would have been painful, but fortunately, even on the park bench already, there was no conceptual identity and the park bench was a beautiful place. It was fine.

Only others felt sorry for me and that was fine too. I remember my father, a little later, I acquired a bicycle. My father then came for a visit to London where I was living and at that time he was a businessman and he was staying in this hotel on the 10th floor and I visited him in his room and opposite the hotel was a park and there was a railings and I chained my bicycle to the railings and very proudly I said, I was about 30 or 31 then, my father, I said, look down there, there's my bike.

And he got very upset. He said, what, oh poor you, you have to go on a bike in London? That's terrible, what a terrible thing.

I never expected that response. I was, it was a nice new bike. And so deep down he felt, oh, my poor son, he failed, although not never as, never went that far in his belief as my mom did, but fortunately before she passed away, her son became successful.

I'll just read the rest of this chapter, 20. There's a little bit of humor in this chapter. Lao Tse talks about himself, but humorously, it's hidden humor.

Other people are excited as though they were at a parade. I alone don't care. I alone am expressionless, like an infant before it can smile.

Other people have what they need. I alone possess nothing. I alone drift about like someone without a home.

I'm like an idiot. My mind is so empty. Of course, that would be an external viewpoint.

There's always a certain similarity between the master who has gone beyond thinking and the simpleton who has not yet arrived at thinking, the so-called fool. The fool is pre-thought, the master is post-thought, but they can be confused. You can confuse one with the other, which is beautifully expressed in an old film with Peter Sellers called Being There, where being the main character in that film is a very simple person who has never even arrived at ego yet, and yet because of the similarity with that state and the transcendent state, he's mistaken by everybody for the wisest person around, and even in the end of the film, put forward to become president of the United States. I am like an idiot. My mind is so empty.

Other people are bright. I alone am dark. Other people are sharp.

I alone am dull. Other people have a purpose. I alone don't know.

I drift like a wave on the ocean. I blow as aimless as the wind. I'm different from ordinary people.

I drink from the great mother's breasts. In an alternative translation, the last line is, I am nourished by the great mother. I am nourished by the great mother.

He had quite a sense of humor, I would say. There's a lot of humor in here. It's not necessarily immediately visible, but it's there.

We didn't get very much done in the Dao De Jing, but that's fine. Only two little chapters. That doesn't matter because the truth is in every line.

It's like a hologram. Any spiritual teaching, really, it doesn't go, you have to know this first for you to understand that. The truth is everywhere, in every statement, in every sentence, on every page.

[Speaker 2] (6:17:16 - 6:22:37)

I've kind of just answered this question, but it's on love and soulmates. Is there such a thing as a soulmate? And is there something we should try to find?

I have a wonderful husband of many years with grown children, but I feel like there's something missing, and I want to find my true soulmate. Is this just a fantasy? Well, I answered it.

Our soulmate is ourself. Right? It truly is.

It's that hole in that flute. And yet, sometimes a soulmate can show up that hole in the flute, you can see that reflected in another person. And they see it reflected in you, and somehow we connect together.

That's the connection. I mean, that's my connection with Eckhart. Truly, it's, wow.

It's the one person that I could truly see myself reflected, because we're all reflections. So it's nice. But if I only solely just saw in him, I would become lost in him, right?

I'd become starting to grab on and hold on, thinking like, oh, I could only get it through him, I could only see it through him. I have to see it in myself. We were in Switzerland visiting this church, just doing some sightseeing between talks.

And it was also a Christian church. But they had this old part and then the new part of the church. And here I was, I went to this old part, and they had these beautiful sort of paintings on the wall of the church.

And I stood there, and I could not move. I was suddenly experiencing like no time, where there's past, present, and future was happening all at once, all at the same time. I could see it all.

I could see the past, everything that was going on. And I stood there frozen. I was like, oh my God, this is incredible.

And then I thought, well, okay, maybe I better go, because Eckhart's waiting for me. He kind of knows me by now when I go into something. He just leaves me, which is really nice.

He'll just sit and wait for me, because he knows I sometimes go into these different experiences. So I turned around, so I turned my body around, and I looked out there. And he's the only one out there.

But I looked at the church, and I'm like, oh, I'm not ready. So I turned myself back around, and I'm like, oh, yeah, this is great. The timeless realm, this is wonderful.

And then again, I turn around, because some time passes, and I'm like, no, I'm not ready to go back out there. Then somebody else comes, and they're too frozen. They're just stuck there.

And he mentioned this. He says, you guys were just standing there like looking at the wall. You're like, what were you looking at?

You know? And then, you know, she was standing there a long time, but then she left. So I turned, and I thought, okay, I better get going, because I don't know how long.

It felt like a very long time I was standing there. So I turned around. I took a deep breath, and I walked down the two steps that I had to walk down to the new part of the church.

And I'm like, oh, God, I'm back in this realm. And then I sat down beside Eckhart, and he looked at me, and I looked at him. And I said, oh, my God, no, I'm not.

Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha. All I had to do was look at him, and I'm just in that timeless realm again. And I went, oh, home.

That's home. And it's really nice to be able to find someone to reflect that back. And sometimes we can't find it.

And that's okay, because when we actually find it in ourselves and hold it, meaning maintain it in ourselves, so maintain that sort of, that feeling of, that sense of oneness, that hole in that flute, then we just see it. We look out, and we see it. It's just there.

It doesn't matter about the other person, whether they're in that realm or not. But it is really nice to meet somebody who else is in that realm. So though I consider Eckhart my soulmate, my soulmate is really that hole in the flute.

[Speaker 7] (6:22:38 - 6:22:40)

And he's just a reflection of that.

[Speaker 1] (6:23:11 - 7:32:20)

Thank you. Wonderful. Welcome.

My first time here, up north. And it is perhaps not mere coincidence, but synchronistic that we are coming together here at a time of crisis politically. And it is significant that a group of people are gathering here who are focused on spiritual awakening.

And of course, the inevitable thing that comes with spiritual awakening, that's inner peace. And that's what needed, not only here, but in the rest of the world too. So most of you are here because you're already undergoing what I call the awakening process.

And I'm sure some of you are here who are already awake and just enjoy listening to me. Don't need to be here anymore, but that's fine. And one or two may be here against their free will because your partner or a relative or a good friend told you that you really need to come here.

And it is a sad fact that the people who really need to be here are not going to be here mostly, but that's fine. If awakening eventually will come to the whole of humanity, but right now at this time, a certain segment of humanity is beginning to go through this evolutionary shift, which I sometimes call the awakening of consciousness. And I guess, although I have no plans, particular plans for this evening, but my feeling is that it's going to be about awakening, the awakening of human consciousness.

And not only about the awakening of human consciousness, I have a feeling that this evening is going to be an essential part of the awakening that's happening on the planet here and there. So I'd like this evening to be not only interesting for you on a conceptual level or entertaining, because that wouldn't be quite enough. And you might get bored after half an hour or so, but more importantly, I'd like this evening to be experiential for

you.

Something that goes beyond conceptual understanding or taking in new ideas, interesting ideas. And then you can go home afterwards and say, oh, that was interesting, what you talked about. I don't remember everything, but that was an interesting idea.

Maybe there may be one or two interesting ideas, but this is not what this evening is about. It's something deeper, a shift in consciousness. So I'd like you to experience as we spend this evening together, to experience or to deepen, because many of you are already going through this shift.

Then this evening is a deepening for you of this shift in consciousness. And for one or two of you, it may be the first time. And that may be one or two of those of you who didn't really want to come here, but were dragged here by someone else.

And you may get suddenly have your first glimpse of what is meant by awakening. And what in Zen they called Satori. And you suddenly go, oh, now I know what he's talking about.

That's what it is. And then you talk to a friend about it tomorrow and say, well, what is it? And say, well, I can't explain it, but I realized something.

Humanity is going through a very, what has been until now, a very slow evolutionary progression, human consciousness. So slow that you would hardly notice it. Humans are slow learners.

They repeat the same mistake again and again, the same thing that causes them suffering. They do it again and again and again, both personal on this personal level and on a collective level, the same mistakes politicians make and so on. Until a point comes when they can't stand the suffering anymore.

And that's always a good point to reach. And you go, and then suddenly an inner opening happens. Suffering has its purpose.

And many of you would not be here. I would even say most, perhaps even all of you would not be here if you had not had your share of human suffering. So retrospectively, we can be grateful for the suffering that we as individuals have gone through, because it has taken us to this point of the awakening of consciousness.

This also applies to the whole of humanity. Humanity is, you can consider it as an organism that is gradually evolving, the collective consciousness of humanity. Each individual is an expression of the collective consciousness of humanity.

And the collective consciousness of humanity is an expression of the one universal consciousness. The greatest mystery of the universe, and perhaps this is a good starting point for our evening. The greatest mystery of the universe is not out in outer space, the mysteries of the galaxies, the mysteries of the black holes, the billions of galaxies that exist, that it is phenomenal, it's unbelievable.

And the greatest mystery is not on the atomic level, which is also unbelievable, that the world that is there, the atomic and subatomic level that scientists explore, which we only understand a tiny fragment of, just as we only understand the tiniest of fragments of what is out there. So you have the two realms, the two mysteries, the outer space, and then the macrocosm, and you have the microcosm. And people write books, great scientists write books about the mysteries of the universe.

And the amazing thing is, many of these books, very good books, fail to mention one word. They explore the mysteries of the universe, but there's one word, you can have a whole book on the mysteries of the universe, either the macrocosm or the microcosm, or the two together. The one word that's not mentioned is consciousness, which is the foremost fundamental mystery, the fact that the universe is conscious.

That is the most amazing miracle. How do I know that the universe is conscious? Well, I am conscious, you are conscious.

The universe is conscious in us. The universe is experiencing itself for a brief moment, as a human being. It's also experiencing itself for brief moments as a plant or an animal, and that's an amazing thing.

Now, scientists are probably never going to figure out what consciousness is, if it's even possible to figure out what consciousness is, because scientists is concerned with looking out there. You can either look out into outer space, or you look into the most, the innermost of matter. But what scientists don't look at is their own consciousness, which is the universe looking at itself.

So the awakening of human consciousness is, and I'll give you now the answer, in case you have better things to do. So I'll tell you the secret of the universe now. And so if you want to have a pint after this, it's okay.

At least you know the secret of the universe. The realization that there is more to you than meets the eye. The realization that, yes, you are obviously this physical body, this physical form.

That is the first thing that meets the eye when somebody looks at you. And of course, you're also your thoughts and your emotions and feelings. That's another level of who you are.

And that again is a form. The body is a form. And then you have the next level of who you are, which is thoughts and emotions, which is thought forms and emotional forms.

And most people derive their sense of identity, their sense of who they are from the movement of thought in their head. Thought identifies with certain things as you begin to grow up. It identifies with the first possessions that you have, the toys.

It identifies with the name that you are given. That's me. Your parents tell you, that's you.

Then the beginning of identification is the name. That becomes the receptacle for all other identifications, possessions, the toy. And you can see how painful it is once you have identified with something.

When it's taken away from you, this child will scream if a toy is taken away because the identification has already happened with something. And five minutes later, the child might lose interest in the toy completely. But when somebody takes it away, it is extremely painful because already at that stage, the child experiences the beginning of ego identity and how painful it is when the ego identity is injured or something is removed from it.

It hurts on a psychological level as if you had sometimes even more than a physical injury, the pain you would experience with a physical injury. And then comes the child goes up, more and more identifications come. People that you know, your relationships, you identify with your knowledge, you identify with your physical strengths, your ability.

Look what I can do. You can't do that, but I can do that. Look what I know.

I know that, but you don't know that. Let me tell you, this is how it is. Opinions, you accumulate opinions about this and that, and nothing wrong.

Everybody has opinions, but the opinions become part of your sense of self. You identify with these thoughts that constitute those opinions. So the opinions, which are thought forms, are imbued with a sense of self.

There is a self in them, a me. And you can notice that when somebody starts to question your opinion, you get defensive or upset or aggressive or fearful. You might even, well, not you, but a very unconscious person may even become violent, physical aggression.

Why? Because somebody questioned my opinions. There are even the entire religions that would...

And in the past, it's been like that. In the Middle Ages, Christianity was like, they will kill you if you disagree with the conventional beliefs. What, you don't believe what I believe or we believe?

Okay, let's kill you. Ego, egoic identity, whether personal or collective ego. There are the two aspects of ego.

But ego is always identification with something. And identification means it gives you your sense of self. This is why for people, it is so precious and they hang on to it and they defend it with their life.

It's, that's all they know, that's me. And it's totally normal. It's been like that for thousands of years, ego.

In the past, ego, and in certain societies, even nowadays, the predominant ego is the collective still, whereas in Western societies, ego tends to be more individualized. It started, of course, thousands of years ago with tribal egos. You had tribes and you identified with this particular tribe and you were nice to the people in your tribe, but not very nice to the people outside of your tribe because there were less than you.

All these were primitive, rudimentary manifestations of ego. But whatever it is, ego means you have a bundle of thoughts, predominant thoughts, as I said, opinions, likes, dislikes, the story of who I am, what people did to me, what I did, what I've achieved, what I know, what I can do, what I possess. And these are all really thought forms and they give you your sense of self.

It's very normal and you cannot stop a child from developing that kind of identity. It's a normal progression. You can't tell a child, do not, there's no such thing as possession.

Don't identify with that toy, it's not yours. Stop, stop, don't. But one can, as you begin to awaken, you begin to see in yourself that you carry an ego.

You might see, for example, that you become defensive or when somebody disagrees with your opinions. You can even have an ego around the city you live in, the team, sports team that you identify with. These are rudimentary ego forms.

If you have little else, you can, a huge part of their identity can be your football team. And then you, and then the others are your enemies who identify with another football team. And then you fight it out on Sunday afternoons.

So you have different manifestations of ego, but it's ego. It's a sense of self. You can have a spiritual ego.

Some of you might remember that before you went beyond that, you had a spiritual ego and spiritual ego means you have a sense of self that begins to form in your head, a self image of yourself as a more spiritual person than most others. Very subtle ego. You can have an ego of yourself as egoless.

A self image that says, I am one of the most egoless humans on the planet. And it's hidden. It doesn't necessarily explicitly say I am the most egoless person on the planet.

Well, it might do, but usually it's more hidden. It's implied. You look down on others who still have their egos, whereas I'm free of it.

And these are more subtle forms. It's this ego, it's a more subtle form of ego than the person who gets into a fight against the opposing fans of the other football team, soccer team, whatever it is. But it's the same, the same mechanism is behind it.

And ego also, you always recognize it when that it compares itself with others. The moment you meet somebody or even just you see somebody in the street, the ego goes into comparison mode. And usually the result of comparison mode of the ego is it comes to the conclusion that you are either inferior or superior to the other.

Of course, it wants to be superior if it can, but some, it just doesn't work sometimes. So, and the ego tends to select the thing that is most, that is your strong point. That's what then we'll then focus on.

In my case, for example, the ego that, I could not develop an ego around a strong physical physique as a person who is good at sports or whatever. So, because I was a little guy who got bullied at school. So the ego said, what can I do?

What can I identify with? And wasn't particularly good looking. So it couldn't say, but I'm better looking than you.

Okay, that doesn't work either. Eventually it sought refuge in trying to be more knowledgeable and educated than others. So I started reading books and then in discussions, I could suddenly show off my knowledge and show that if you don't know that, let me tell you about that.

Okay, that worked for a while. Physical appearance is a very common thing for comparison. Do I look better than the other woman, man, whatever it is.

And then you look in the mirror and this is greatly enhanced these days by the technology that's available to us through Facebook and selfies. The original, in Greek mythology, the original story that shows the development, the beginning of ego was in the midst of Narcissus, who was a young man. Of course, at that time there were no mirrors, but he happened to look into a pool of water one day, this young man, and he saw that he was so beautiful and he fell in love with himself.

That's where the word narcissism comes from. So he fell in love with himself. There was an image of himself that he saw there.

He fell in love with the image, which to me means he identified with the image. This is a pictorial representation of an inner process. The image formation that gives you your sense of self, which is ego.

So that was the beginning of Narcissus. Now you don't need a pool of water anymore.

You have not only mirrors, more importantly, you have your smartphone and you can go.

And then you send it out into the world. You're not confined anymore to one person looking at you or two people. You send it out into the world and hundreds of people suddenly see you.

And then you're waiting for your egoic feedback, which usually comes in the form of little comments like, cool. Cool. I like it.

And if it's not you, you take a picture of the rest of you in a restaurant and you're eating this lovely meal. I am eating this meal, me. Look how great this meal is that I am eating.

Oh, and of course, many people who look at other people's posts feel diminished a little bit because their life is so interesting. And then what you do, you have to also pretend that your life is interesting and select all those things that make your life look interesting. In other words, and this is especially young people, you begin to, your life merges with a fiction, a fictional image, which is available to the public.

And you don't know it. This is an extension of egoic identity that has become possible through technology. Very seductive, but also extremely limiting.

It's a huge trap. The ego, of course, is never satisfied. Not for long.

It always is in a seeking mode because it doesn't feel fulfilled. It doesn't feel I am enough. It doesn't, it feels I'm lacking in something which may be either money or knowledge or looks or relationships, significant relationship, all kinds of things I'm lacking in, not enough.

So it's in seeking mode. But as it's pointed out in this book called The Cause in Miracles, it says the dictum of the ego is seek, but do not find. So it's always seek.

And because it's always seeking, it's always seeking for the next thing, which implies the future is extremely important for the ego. It looks to the next, the next thing. There's a continuous reaching out, an inability to be present here and now.

That's all part of the unconsciousness that I call. Unconsciousness is, in this terminology, complete identification with the mind. And this is where the ego resides.

It resides in your mind. It is a mental formation. It is a kind of fiction that every human being creates for themselves.

And of course you get a lot of feedback. So the particular fiction that you create for yourself depends to a large extent on the culture that you grew up in, the people you grew up with. They will tell you who you are as a child, and then you become conditioned by your surroundings, the surrounding culture, and your family, and so on.

So you are trapped with a mind-made sense of self. And this mind-made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive. That keeps the ego going.

If the ego can find that it opposes something or someone, it feels strengthened in its opposition. So the ego needs its enemies. It needs to say, no, you are wrong.

It needs to be right. Very strong tendency in the ego. It enhances itself by making others wrong.

It enhances itself by criticizing it, by condemning, by continuously judging, not only other people, but also places, situations you find yourself in. So it dwells much more on the negative than the positive. You may realize in your own life a positive event that happens in your life.

Let's say you see a beautiful sunset, and you go, oh, it's wonderful. And by the way, when you appreciate beauty like that for a moment, the ego is not operating. The ego is out of the way, and there's just, we'll come to that, there's just an aware presence, and you go, ah, ego is gone.

Thought has subsided momentarily, and then ego, there can be no ego without thought. There's just an awareness suddenly, and you look, there's a beautiful flower, the sunset, whatever it may be, and you go, oh, and then you may remember the next day, yes, I saw a beautiful sunset, but the egoic mind, the thinking might come to very much with that, says, yeah, that was a beautiful sunset, and then you tend to forget it. But take another event, somebody is rude to you, say something rude, you can think about that for hours.

You can tell others about it. You can elaborate on that, and you can think about what you're going to say back next time you meet him, you're going to say, oh, what you should have said, why didn't I say that? Then you call your friend, you know what he did?

I should have done that, why couldn't I think of that? Well, you're right, and you can, for hours, it goes on, and this is only a small example of how easy it is to, how a negative thought proliferates much more easily than a positive thought, and the ego loves it. It loves complaining, and there's always somebody who is not right.

When you sometimes listen to people telling others what others did, there's a common denominator in what they're saying that underlies whatever they're saying, that is, I'm always right, and the others are always wrong, and you know what he said then? But then I said to him, of course, you are always right. Amazing, and then the ego misinterprets people and events according to its conditioning.

So if you wanted to figure out all the elements that make up your ego, you would have to undergo several decades of psychoanalysis, so there wouldn't be much of a chance, really, to go beyond it by examining all the aspects of your ego, because it can be quite complex. So this is not what I recommend here, although there's nothing wrong with you. Enjoy psychoanalysis, that's great.

So the ego is associated with a voice in the head that continuously operates in you, and that for most people, that real ego is an intrinsic part of the voice in the head, and for most people, that is who they think they are. They are that entity, and that entity speaks through them. You can see it when you observe people.

There is, they are in the grip of something when they talk. Something is operating through them, and they can't stop it, they just, they talk. Whatever they say may vary a lot.

A person coming from a totally different culture will say totally different things from somebody from this culture, and yet the common thing is it comes out of them, and if they're not speaking out aloud, they are thinking it, and they can't stop thinking. And you can see it when you look at people. There's something going on inside them, and when they look at you, you know that they're commenting continuously on their sense perceptions.

What they say depends on their conditioning, but the fact that they are saying something, that's the common thing. So there's something missing there. It's almost as if this human being had been taken over by something, and in a way, that is the case.

In evolutionary terms, it's been a wonderful thing to have developed the ability to think. That's been an enormous evolutionary step forward. It's an incredible tool, the ability to conceptualize, to think.

But this incredible tool, there's been a huge downside to it, like everything else in this universe. Everything that you receive, every great thing will have some downside. We live in the world of polarities.

You can't have just great, just great. There's always, oh, I didn't know it came with that. So the downside to the ability to think is that over the centuries and millennia, more and more, people began to be trapped in the movement of thought.

And when I say people, what I really mean is consciousness began to be completely trapped in the conceptual image-making mind without knowing it, so that most humans these days, except those who are going through the awakening process, most humans are completely identified with their conditioned mind. And the awakening begins when you, this very simple thing, and I believe most of you know exactly what I'm talking about. The awakening begins when you become aware of your thoughts, especially repetitive thoughts.

And you suddenly say, whoa. You recognize that certain thoughts have been going through your head for the past 10 or 20 years, same kinds of things, comments, interpretations, and not only thoughts, but emotions that accompany those thoughts, because the emotion is, in many cases, a reflection of the thought. So if you worry at night, you feel fearful because the body reacts to the thought that there is something wrong, that you are in danger.

You're not, you're in bed. It's warm and cozy. But your mind is telling you that your life is critical.

It's you're in a critical situation. And if you're not in a critical situation now, you will be very soon. And you're completely identified with that movement of thought.

You are that. You truly believe every thought that arises in your mind that says, this is so, this is really critical. This is not going to work out.

I'm going to, what am I going to do? Am I going to lose my job? Where am I going to live?

What about the mortgage? Who's going to, can't, and it goes on. And your body says, this guy is in danger.

And fear arises, oh my God. And the emotion further amplifies the fearful thoughts because the thoughts react to the emotion now. There's a vicious circle.

First they create the emotion, then they react to the emotion and create even more thoughts of that kind. Until finally you're in, you have a panic attack. And you don't realize that you are creating it.

You don't realize that, and this is an amazing thing. The, let's call it unhappiness because these are all forms of, unhappiness is a generic term which covers all kinds of things. Unhappiness covers from a small upset to deep despair to irritation, to enormous anger.

They're all forms of unhappiness. Now, the amazing realization is the largest part of unhappiness that you experience in your life, let's say 90%, 95%, does not arise from the circumstances of your life. There remains 5% where obviously somebody close to you dies you weep, you become unhappy.

That's those 5%. Or suddenly you get home and your house has gone up in flames for a little while. You may be unhappy.

We'll come, these are more extreme cases. We may come to that. But 95% of your states of unhappiness, now to hear what I'm saying now, you need to verify in your own life in actual situations.

95% of your unhappiness is not caused by situations you find yourself in, work situation, living situation, financial situation, health situation. It is caused by the mental commentary about those situations. What your mind is saying makes you unhappy, not what's happening.

But you have to find, don't believe me, verify it for yourself. Start with simple situations when you're lining up at the supermarket or you're doing your shopping or at the airport or waiting for the bus or stuck in a traffic jam. So there you are waiting in this lineup or queue and you get, after a while, you get restless and your mind is starting to say things.

It says, why can't they train these people better? Why do they select the most stupid people to do these jobs? I just, I'm not, I need to be somewhere else.

Why are these people, why is it always, I always choose the wrong queue to wait in. Why? And the more the mind talks, the more upset you get.

And it's not pleasant. And when you finally reach the counter, you're very angry. And you might say something to the person and you're spreading the negative vibes to that person.

And then the cashier absorbs that to the person. How do you spread them to the next person? This is how negativity spreads.

Now, this is the simplest example of how unhappiness arises on a small scale. Now, in the same situation, if you're vigilant, you can observe that your irritation, your upset, your anger is not caused by standing there with your grocery in the basket, looking around. Because that situation is completely neutral.

It is caused by what your mind adds to the situation. That is the root cause of the emotions that you then experience, which are unhappy emotions. Now, the amazing thing is most people don't know that.

They think that what they are experiencing and the way in which their mind interprets their experience is a single phenomenon. They have never separated the two. So they are so identified with their interpretations and reactions that the event and the reaction are a single thing that they experience.

And that is deep unconsciousness. And so you go through life encountering all kinds of unpleasant situations, reacting to people. As you know, people are challenging.

But how much of what is happening between you and the other person is supplied, is manufactured by your mind, your mental interpretation of the other, how they should behave but don't, what they should have done but didn't do, what they should not have said but said, and so on. And you can go on to hold stories, making other people wrong, which is the ego loves it because it strengthens itself every time. You could criticize somebody by implication, you are better.

Whenever you can criticize someone, you are implied that you are in a superior position because you are judging the other. You can even do it to a situation or a place. You can criticize it.

So the ego inflates itself through that. And you don't know that this is happening. You get bigger and bigger.

The ego goes, and the more angry the ego gets, the better it is for the ego. Or if it's not angry, it can also be just miserable. Poor me.

Treated so unfairly by life. I had such a bad deal. Why did life do this to me?

Or you call it God, why did God do this to me? I don't believe in God anymore because he did such awful things to me. That's a huge ego too, because it's a mental image.

And you're superior in your own way too because you're superior in your misery to others. You are not as miserable as you. You have suffered so much more than they.

That ego is as big as the guy who works on Wall Street and says, I'm the master of the universe, or thinks it until the bank collapses. Amazing thing, the ego. So you begin to realize that the situations that you encounter are actually not that bad at all.

But the commentary that you supply, that your mind manufactures unconsciously, that's the cause of the largest part of unhappiness. I've even received, and I keep receiving, correspondents, even from people in prison, who tell me that they have learned this lesson. They are still in prison, some are in for life, or they say they're in for another 10 years.

And they say, I feel free now. What they have done, they have given up commenting mentally on their situation. And that means it's the end of the ego.

They're no longer fighting, they're no longer against. They just say, this is what is. And what has happened now is they've become completely present in the now, which is the end of the ego.

They have become internally aligned with the present moment, which is as it is, always. And in their particular case, in prison, there isn't much they can do. Well, they could plan an escape.

That might be an option, but it's a more distant option. This is a good example of surrender to what is in this moment. So an enormous realization is to see that situations are neutral and you lose a large part of your unhappiness by relinquishing the mental commentary that criticizes, judges, blames, complains.

Great thing, complain. Oh, that keeps the ego going. Complain, it's so awful what they complain about this, about them, about him, about her, about a place, what they did, what they.

And the ego doesn't want to let go, but there's a time when an awareness arises, suddenly you become aware of what your mind is saying and doing, aware. For a moment, you're able to step back and realize these are just thoughts. There's the movement of thought.

And this is the awakening is when you realize that in the gap between two thoughts, you have not disappeared. In the gap between two thoughts, there is something else that is much deeper than the ego. Let's look at this gap between two thoughts now.

Here's one thought and here it comes to an end. Now the other one hasn't started yet. And there's a gap.

The other thought is here. One thought here comes to an end. The other thought here hasn't started yet.

And here we go. That's an amazing thing. What was that?

Let's try it again. The space of no thought. And in that space of no thought, you can actually look around too.

And there's no mental commentary anymore. But have you become suddenly unconscious? Have you suddenly disappeared?

No. There is a deeper dimension in you that has suddenly emerged. We can call that stillness.

We can call that presence. We can call it awareness. So you can be conscious.

And this is the secret. This is the next step in the evolution of consciousness for humans. And this gives you, as we will see, that gives you your true and deeper sense of who you are than anything your ego could ever do.

You are the essence of who you are is this aware presence that is deeper than thinking. When you look around this room or anywhere, wherever you may be, you take in your sense, you are aware of your sense perceptions. When thoughts go through your head and you realize that certain thoughts are going through your head, you no longer necessarily believe in every thought that comes into your head.

You just say, oh, there it is. You just see it. And it goes.

Then it doesn't proliferate anymore when there's an awareness there. It only proliferates when the thought seduces you into giving it your total attention. It drags your consciousness with it.

And you go, hmm. Hmm. And then you start thinking one little negative thought goes to many others.

There's something wrong with me. There's something wrong with him. There's something wrong with the universe.

There's something very wrong here. Very wrong. So sense perceptions, you hear, you see, you're aware of that.

You can be aware of thoughts. You can be aware of feeling something. You're aware of an emotion.

Usually, that's what makes up a person's life is what is a person, what does your life consist of? Very simply, the ingredients are as follows. Sense perceptions.

Thoughts, many thoughts about previous sense perceptions. And possible future sense perceptions. And all kinds of other weird thoughts and emotions that accompany the thoughts.

So sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions. That's me. That's my life.

Whatever I perceive and think about, obviously, that's me. But you might've forgotten something important. That is, when you perceive, you're aware of your perceptions.

When the thought arises, you're aware of your thought. When you feel an emotion, you're aware of an emotion. So it all presupposes that there's something in you that makes sense perceptions possible.

There's something in you that makes thoughts possible. There's something in you that makes emotions possible. And can you become aware of that?

If you can become aware of that, then you become aware of really the essence of who you are. And what is that? Consciousness.

Can you become aware that you are conscious rather than always only be conscious of this and conscious of that and conscious of that? Can you become aware that you are conscious right here? And now, what is the most essential thing about you?

Ask yourself that. What's the most essential thing about you? Is it your memories?

Well, even if you lost half your memories, you would still be you. What's the most essential thing about you right now? Can you get to the essence of you?

What does it feel to be you? What is that most fundamental feeling of beingness, of I am? Not even I am this or I am that.

That is thought. You add some thought added to the... There's a sense of beingness, of presence, that is more fundamental than whether you are a man or a woman or whether you are young or old or whether your history is pleasant or unpleasant or predominantly terrible or not so bad.

All that becomes secondary to this feeling of the simple fact that you are present. Can you sense your own presence? It has no content to it.

It's just pure awareness. This is what Jesus was actually trying to explain when he said, the kingdom of heaven, you can't say it's there or it's over there because I tell you, it's the most, it is the most, the innermost part of who you are. That's my translation.

You can't say over there. So in other words, who you essentially are cannot be an object of your consciousness. Every thought you have about yourself is an object of your consciousness.

You're thinking a thought, but who is the you that's thinking the thought? The thought is arising out of your consciousness. So essentially you are conscious presence.

You can sometimes see it in a little baby much more clearly if you want to see it in another, a one-year-old looking back at you, eyes wide open. And the baby has not yet formulated concepts and thoughts. It's just a pure expression of consciousness.

And you look into the eyes of the baby and it can reflect back to you for a second or two who you are at the deepest level. This is why people love to look at little babies because the baby looks at you and has no opinion about you. It just goes.

And it's so lovely. It loves looking at you. And if you can't find a baby, even a dog will do that.

This is why it's so liberating to, there's something that many people are attracted to dogs, cats too, but let's just talk about one animal. You're attracted to the, because you look at the dog and the dog looks at you and there is the consciousness looking through the eyes of the dog. That's the essence of the dog.

And you look into the eyes of the dog who has not arrived yet at conceptualization. It's a species that is still pre-thought. We are not going pre-thought by the way.

We are going post-thought, but the dog is pre-thought and you meet the dog in the pre-thought state of consciousness. And it liberates you for a moment from your thought burdened sense of identity. When the dog like looks back at you and the tail is probably wagging, just because you looked at the dog, it's already in a state of joy.

And that reflects back to you, your innermost being too, because the same consciousness shines through all beings, but at different levels. So you'd look at that dog and you, oh, and for a moment it frees you of yourself. It frees you of the ego.

And you may even notice that for a moment there is no thought in your mind. There's just a sense of beingness and you get it from the dog. The dog reflects it back to you.

This is why I have a little book produced with a cartoonist and the title of, it's mostly about dogs, but cats are also in it. It's called Guardians of Being, which is what I call the animals that live with humans because they reflect something back to you. And this consciousness you can see in another human being too, if you can feel it in yourself, the consciousness that you are, the essence of who you are, that has nothing to do with your personal history.

The only thing your personal history may have been good for is it has taken you into this realization that you are deeper than that. And it could well be that because your personal history has been not a very happy one, that could be the very reason why it has taken you to this point where you are able to go beyond because you are fed up with the unhappiness that was produced mostly by your mind. So this is a wonderful point to reach.

And many of you have already reached it or reached it long time ago. You're fed up with unhappiness. I don't need anymore.

By the way, unhappiness is optional. Challenges continue to come. It doesn't mean when you awaken spiritually, suddenly life will not challenge you anymore and you go.

No. And with every challenge, there's a deepening of your presence. And some challenges might even pull you out of presence again, and you fall back into unconsciousness for a little while.

And then you emerge again. So we're talking about identity, which is the most fundamental thing. Where do you get your sense of self from?

This is the most fundamental thing in your life because if you derive your sense of self from a fiction in your mind, which ultimately is what the ego is, your whole life will reflect back to you that this is a fiction and it will color all your experiences. It will create a neediness. It will create all kinds of emotions that are completely unnecessary, that are manufactured by your mind and the identity in the mind that we call the ego.

The almost like a little entity that doesn't want to go away. It wants to, I want to suffer a bit more. I need my enemies.

I need to complain. What can I complain about now? Well, why does he talk so much?

He's been going on talking for so long. I can't stand it anymore. No.

So the words are pointing to something in you. Then of course you cannot undo your personal history. Of course you remember your personal history and there's your life situation.

Everybody has a life situation. You have relationships. You have a work situation probably or you have lost your job then you don't have a work situation, but that's similar.

You have a living situation. You have a health situation. You have a relationship situation, a huge source of suffering and occasional happiness.

Those things make up your life. You have those situations. But is that all there is to who you are?

So you need to be free. You awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation. The essence, your essential being is the aliveness of presence, consciousness.

And you can only get that in the gap between two thoughts. This is why stillness is an important pointer to it. Stillness does not mean you fall asleep.

It could mean you fall asleep because the habitual level where humans exist is thinking. Then the only time when you are free of thinking is when you fall asleep, if you haven't awakened yet. When you move towards sleep, thinking gradually slows down.

When you get very sleepy, there's very little thought going on in your head and you go... And you might even like that because suddenly you can't remember what your problems are anymore. And you feel the pull of sleep, which is so delicious.

What we call tiredness, it's so normal, we accept it. But if you really look at what tiredness is, something absolutely delicious is pulling you. Come this way.

You must come this way. It's so delicious. And at some point, even if you try not to go there, the attraction, attraction of that place becomes so overwhelming that you have to go there.

And in the last moment when you still have some consciousness, you feel, ah. Even if you were out in the cold and know if I fall asleep, I'm going to die. In the last moment, you would still feel the deliciousness of going, ah.

It wouldn't, the rest wouldn't matter anymore. You're moving towards the source. You're moving to regenerate.

You're moving, but you don't know it anymore. You're moving below thought towards sleep. Another way of moving below thought is having a few drinks.

And that can free you. For some people, it frees you. It frees them of their unhappiness and they become jolly.

Suddenly, suddenly they can enjoy life because they're not thinking much anymore. They're just, it's a way of being present too in some way. And then you think I need another one because if I feel jolly now, I'll be feeling even more jolly with the next one.

But that's not the case because the more you drink, the more you move towards unconsciousness. So you're falling again. You're falling below thought until finally you fall off the chair.

So we are not going there below thought. Yes, that can free you also. But as we awaken spiritually, as consciousness awakens in us, universal consciousness awakens in us, we become conscious of being conscious.

And the moment you are conscious of being conscious, you have risen above thought and you are still, you have transcended thought, which means you're able to think, but you're no longer trapped by it or in it. You're no longer at the mercy of your thoughts. You can use them.

They can still operate, but you can also by choice, and this possibility is coming to many of you already and to many more of you, I would say after this evening, to realize it is possible for you and even desirable in many, many instances to transcend thought and simply be aware. That is by the way, the state of, that is the entire teaching of Zen is contained in this. It Zen teaches you that you can rise above thought, become free of thought and just be aware.

This is why the Zen master often looks so fierce because he's in that fierce awareness and he goes in the old drawings of Zen masters or they might, one Zen master when asked, please explain Zen, the only thing he would ever do was raise his finger and look at you. That was his teaching and he became famous, famous teacher. Some people got it, others didn't.

If they didn't get it, they said, please explain Zen to me. And he would go. And some people went, wow.

[Speaker 8] (7:32:22 - 7:32:23)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (7:32:25 - 9:00:16)

And others didn't get it, they said, did you hear my question? There's in Zen, for those of you who are interested in Zen or might even have spent a decade in a Zen monastery, there is nothing to understand in Zen. You cannot understand Zen because there is nothing to understand.

Zen is about transcending thinking, not falling below thinking, but rising above thinking. This is why that is Zen. Oh, oh.

Now, many of you, especially after this evening, will discover in yourself the ability to step beyond thought when you don't want thought. Not perhaps always, sometimes the challenge is maybe too much and you fall back into thought for a while, it's fine. But from time to time, and you can actually invite it into your life in many, many situations that are relatively neutral, step out of thought and lose the illusion that in order to hold your life together, you need to think all the time about you and your life.

And if you stop thinking about you and your life, it's all going to fall apart. It's not going to, it's going to fall apart if you overthink, which most people do. Overthinking is a disease.

Overthinking means you're completely identified with thinking, you are in fact addicted to thinking, a lot of which is not only completely unnecessary, but actually harmful to your health, to your wellbeing, and to other people. It's harmful to you also because you're making yourself unhappy through it. And if you are making yourself unhappy, the chances are that you're making other people unhappy too.

So overthinking, identification with thinking, that is all part of the unconsciousness, or the old consciousness, as I call it. Now, a certain percentage of humans has reached a point of readiness where they are able to transcend thinking, become aware of themselves as awareness, as presence, as consciousness. And that becomes their sense of identity or sense of self, their presence.

It doesn't need, there's no longer any superiority or inferiority in it. There is in it a recognition. When you now look, not just the dog, it's easier with a dog or the baby, but when you look at another human being, and you can, you're not trapped in the conceptualizing, judgmental mind.

You are looking at another human being, and you can sense the background to your perception of this other human being, the sense perception. You may be looking and may be listening. The background to your sense perception is the space of awareness.

You're looking as a conscious presence, and not as a person, at this human being, because for a moment, your mind is still while you're looking and listening, or just looking at another, into the eyes of another human being. You, either somebody close to you or somebody you only meet casually in a shop or whatever, but for a moment, you're looking. And there is a recognition at that moment.

When you know yourself as consciousness, the wonderful thing is you recognize that essence in every other human being or any other living thing. And that recognition, you recognize that there's something of the same essence that is in you, also in the other. And you are able to, so to speak, look through the personality, which is there, which manifests through their words, whatever they are saying, the conditioned personality, which is their mind, their egoic mind, that of course will be there.

But you're able, if you are still and present, you can look at them, and then for a moment, you sense their essential beingness or consciousness, because you know your own consciousness, and that's the one, the recognition of oneness. And it is only there, out of that state of consciousness, that that which frees you from eternal conflict with other humans, which is ego condemns you to, it is only that that can free you from the eternal conflict. And out of that emanates that which makes you truly human or more than human, almost, empathy, a loving kindness towards another arises, a benevolence towards another human, despite, no matter what their personality is, a deeper goodwill towards another, benevolence, goodwill, love, not in the emotional sense, or certainly not in the egoic sense, love in the egoic sense is a clinging.

I want you, I need you, don't you dare leave me. You know what I'm going to do to you if you leave me. No, a different, a love that really, we should have other words for it in the Old Testament, in the old Greek, ancient Greek, agape is the word for that spiritual love, which is an outflow of goodwill, but all that really means you recognize your oneness with the other, not through some explanation in the head, but as a direct sensing, then you can really like another human.

You can even like another human being despite their personality, which has its quirks and idiosyncrasies like every personality has, you can look through. You can start with a dog, and then if your presence is strong enough with a human, and it may be easier, I wouldn't recommend that you immediately start with family members, because there are humans with whom you share a lot of history, and there's a lot of histories accumulated in the mental and emotional field, and that's not so easy then to see the essential beingness of uncle, John, or aunt, or whoever, or your parents. Start with strangers, somebody you meet in a shop, the receptionist, while you're talking briefly, you look at them, look into their eyes, and there's just a spacious presence, and it's beautiful. And some of them will notice that there's something there that they like when you're with them.

They may not know what it is. They may not know that you are present, and that they're not being judged by you. They just feel comfortable in your presence.

They like you. They don't know why. That is often the case.

Now, be careful that the ego is so cunning that it can come in through, even here, it can come in through the back door again, and then you get the sense that you are doing something to that person. And then you get sense, I'm going to free you of your ego. And you might even say, all right, now I'm doing something to you.

Oh. So just to be aware that ego can come back in at any point, but it is a beautiful way of interacting with another human. The next thing you can try is when you go to a meeting, in case you have meeting in your workplace, occasionally you have meetings, you sit around a table, all kinds of egoic stuff is going on.

People talk and disagree and argue, and some get angry. You can be the one person who holds the space of presence there. And you look at everybody while they talk in that alertness that is presence.

One could say it is a high frequency of presence that in that alertness, you look and you listen, and then the next person speaks, and you look and you listen, and the next person. And then at some point, you may find yourself contributing something, and suddenly words come out of your mouth. And that would be a helpful contribution and more likely to be something fresh and new than just a repetition of old opinions and old viewpoints.

Because you're now in touch with the dimension out of which creativity arises. You're in touch with that primordial intelligence that cannot be measured with IQ tests. It is deeper than that.

It all arises out of that. One thing that I briefly mentioned, some of you may question what this consciousness is. There's still in mainstream science, if they even ever mentioned the word consciousness, they say it is a by-product of the activity of the brain.

It is a by-product, an epiphenomenon, another fancy word for it, of the chemical soup in the brain. On one level, it's a chemical soup. On a deeper level, it's atoms swirling around.

And a by-product of the chemical soup in the brain is, they say, that there's consciousness. The chemical soup produces it. Somehow.

The amazing fact is any scientist who does not have a huge ego or will admit that we know almost nothing about the brain or how certainly not consciousness. Nobody knows what a thought is, where does it reside? What is a thought?

What is a memory? I believe a point will come perhaps soon when science will realize that consciousness transcends the brain, but is associated with the brain in the same way that a radio receiver or a television set receives transmissions and then gives them form. It does not mean that the radio produces the program or the television set.

So if a brick should fall on my head right now, I hope I'm not manifesting it by saying it, I would stop speaking and it would appear that I have lost consciousness, of course. Therefore, a scientist might say, you see, destroy the brain and you destroy consciousness. But it could be that the brain would then no longer be capable of transmitting, receiving consciousness, channeling consciousness into this dimension.

Just a brief, just a possibility. I don't want to go too far with philosophical speculation. This is how I see the secret of the universe.

You may know that in ancient, many ancient cultures, the sun was regarded as a deity and the people would pray to the sun. There's some, there's a certain reason behind it and that is that all life that on this planet, including your physical body, the warmth in your physical body and so on is given by the sun. It's an outpouring, a continuous outpouring of energy and it all comes from the sun.

So they worship the sun, regarded the sun as a deity. The sun is the closest approximation, if one wants to use an analogy of what God is. God is the transcendent, timeless, eternal consciousness that exists outside of this dimension.

Totally undefinable, totally incomprehensible. It would be absurd to say the human mind could even begin to comprehend that. But that central sun, consciousness to me is like the rays of the sun.

The sun sends out rays continuously. Every ray of consciousness becomes a human being or another life form. It incarnates into form.

And then the consciousness in you, therefore, the consciousness in me is all expression of the one consciousness that continuously emanates through all life forms and experience itself in this dimension and grows and evolves in this dimension gradually where there's time and experiences the universe and as it does, it creates the universe as it experiences. Creation still goes on. So that is the self-exploration of consciousness in this universe where every single one of us is an expression of this one consciousness.

So the consciousness is the light of God. It is not God. Yes, it is.

It's the light of God in the same way that the sunshine is not the sun, and yet it is the sun. It emanates from the sun. It is still connected to the sun.

So, and this is why some great mystics, both in the West and East, India, even medieval Europe, have said things like the closest you can get to God is becoming still, or somebody else said, stillness is the language God speaks. Everything else is a bad translation. And also in the, there's a beautiful line in the Old Testament, very profound, mystical statement.

It says, be still and know that I am God. It's an amazing and very profound spiritual statement. Now, the strange thing about this statement is, first it points to when you are still, you are aware of yourself as the stillness.

You are aware of yourself as consciousness, because that stillness is just pure presence, pure consciousness. Be still, know that I am God. All these words, each word that this sentence consists of, these words, each word is synonymous with each other word.

Be is the being. Still is the presence, which is the being. Know, there is a knowing, there's a deep intelligence in that stillness.

It is the essential I am, which Jesus also said, according to one of the Gospels, that he made this strange statement. Before Abraham was, I am. But what an amazing statement, that the juxtaposition of the past tense and the eternal present tense of I am.

So I am is also used in India for, to point to your essential identity. And it was Ramana Maharshi, the Indian sage, who recommended, he recommended that you meditate on the question, who am I? Who am I?

He said, take that question into meditation and see what happens. So what you do, then you go into meditation and you ask, who am I? Now, if you find an answer on a conceptual level to that question, you're wrong, you missed it.

So if you go into meditation and say, who am I? And then you go, oh, I got it now, I know who I am. Yeah, okay.

No, you haven't. The secret is, we can do it here now. Who am I?

The secret is that there is no answer that follows that question. There is only the space of awareness. And that's who you are.

Who am I? Oh, that's it. That is so simple.

It's so simple and subtle that humans have overlooked it for thousands of years. The simple realization of who you are, that is very much like the ray of sunlight that went continuously exploring the universe. Let's say that's you and looking everywhere and thinking, and getting involved in this and identifying with this and that.

And suddenly it gets very unhappy, can't stand it anymore. And then it goes, who am I? Still hasn't got the answer.

And suddenly the attention, suddenly the sunlight stops in its doing and becomes a way of being. And then it becomes aware that it's not just out here, it's, there's an enormous depth to it. And it becomes aware that it's connected to the sun.

And that frees it from the usual state that is associated with the ego, which is fear. Suddenly fear goes, a deep trust in life arises because you feel yourself connected to something vast that is you and yet transcends who you are. And to sense that connectedness is frees you from anxiety and fear.

And that I would suggest is the true meaning of the spiritual word, faith. Faith is absence of fear. That's faith is a deep trust, not in yourself as a person, but something deeper that is you and yet transcends you.

That is the next step in human evolution is for humans to live their lives in connectedness with that dimension rather than on the egoic level. And then you manifest a different world. You manifest no longer this absurd level of suffering that humans have been inflicting on each other that can only be described as a severe collective mental dysfunction.

Only then could you explain how in the 20th century alone, the first half of the 20th century alone, humans have killed in the excess of a million of their fellow humans. That's completely insane. But even that seen from a transcendent viewpoint, even that is part of the evolution of consciousness.

The realization that that is insane is part of the evolution of consciousness. And every death, of course, of every, every violent death of every human is tragic on this level. But it is also true that in every human, every human is an expression of the one consciousness that is experiencing itself as a human.

And as such, the essence of every human is beyond death. Death is the end of this form, this brief lived form. And even if on another level, the form continues, you will eventually awaken.

Every form is destined to awaken to its connectedness to the one consciousness. In Buddhism, there's a lovely saying which says, eventually, even the blade of grass will become enlightened. In meaning, eventually, all life forms return to the source.

All life forms begin to realize their connectedness to the source. The source discovers itself, its own nature, through the realization of these, all these life forms. But to keep it on the practical level, for us, the essential thing is inviting into our life these moments of presence.

On the one hand, inviting them into our life. On the other hand, also recognizing when they arise spontaneously. Next time you look at a dog, you're not only aware of the dog and how good it feels, but you're also aware of that for a moment, thinking has subsided for two or three seconds.

When you look at a beautiful tree, or you look at the sky in the morning, open the curtains, look at the sky, no matter whether it's cloudy or blue, for a moment, be there as the aware presence for the sense perception. When you're waiting for something, observe how your mind is resisting that moment, let go of that. You remember what we talked about, all the stuff that the mind adds, that is unnecessary baggage, that creates unhappiness, come into the present moment, alignment with this, and be the presence.

Waiting at the supermarket, if the mind starts up with its complaining, realizing that you are creating unhappiness for yourself, the mind is creating unhappiness for yourself, now suddenly you have a choice. You don't need to be at the mercy of automatic thinking anymore. You step out of automatic thinking, take two or three deep breaths, become aware of your breath in and out, takes you into the present moment and realize this moment is actually okay.

It's even quite pleasant. And the mind had been telling you that it's awful. And in many cases, you'll come to the realization, this moment is actually not that bad, but the mind has been telling you that it is.

And less and less do you then add the unnecessary interpretations to the present moment that spoil your joy of life. And suddenly you experience much more joy and in the beingness of the present moment. And you go around and appreciate, appreciate more the little things that arise continuously around you that are actually profound and beautiful in their simple presence, a cloud, a leaf on a tree, a flower, how the light is reflected off the floor.

You can, everywhere there's an aliveness around you in other human beings. You can appreciate their aliveness. And then comes also a very powerfully transformational way of relating to the present moment, which is gratitude for what is.

Not gratitude, I wouldn't recommend gratitude through creating some mental story that other people are worse off than me, so I really should be happy. So you depend on the misery of others to make you feel better. No, a gratitude that is deeper that comes directly from recognizing the goodness of things without any commentary.

To appreciate what is, to appreciate that you're breathing, to appreciate a glass of water that you're drinking, to appreciate the shape of a piece of furniture, a fruit, anything you see. So I'll give you as a last spiritual practice that was given by, I believe also it was a Zen teacher. A disciple came to him and said, I'm going to travel now for a year.

Can you give me a spiritual practice to take with me on my journey so that I can become enlightened? And the teacher said, yeah, okay. This is your spiritual practice.

No matter where you are or what you're doing or what the situation is that you are in, say the following mantra. Thanks for everything. I have no complaint whatsoever.

So he sent off the disciple. The disciple came back after a year, came back to the master, and the master said, well, the disciple said, didn't work. I used it a lot, but it didn't work.

And then the master said, thanks for everything. I have no complaint whatsoever. And at that moment, the disciple became enlightened.

Thank you. So as you know, here we are mainly concerned with entering the realm of being, of presence. There hasn't been a lot for you to do, just little doings, walking from here to there, eating your food, some talking, some thinking, which is a doing.

But mostly this has been and still is about connecting with being, the dimension of stillness beyond thinking, out of which all thinking arises. Now, when you leave here, many of you, if not most of you, are going back into more doing again. So your challenge will be not to lose the rootedness in that deeper dimension while you are engaged in whatever you do.

And the world will do all it can to challenge you, to pull you out of that rootedness. And it will tell you, not in so many words, but it will, in the form of events and people and happenings and things not working, and so will tell you, this is all important. Give me your fullest attention.

This really matters. It may matter, but as I put it, all those things matter relatively. They may be relatively important.

Whether or not you miss your plane, whether you're not, you find that great job or you lose that great job, or whatever happens, it's all relatively important. But only one thing is of absolute importance, and that is your connectedness with being so that that dimension is with you, as you, in your daily life. That's the challenge.

A few things will be helpful in this. One is letting go of the unconscious assumption that there should be no problems and difficulties. And if they are, that they are undesirable obstacles that really shouldn't be there in the form of events or people or situations.

But if you look back on your life, and I look back on my life, it's always been challenging. There are brief moments when it's not challenging, and that's great, but you know very well that life won't leave you alone. It'll challenge you one way or another.

If you look at the world situation, it's the same. There's all kinds of challenges in the news. First there were the communists, there was a Cold War, and then there are suddenly other huge challenges arising, and it goes on and on.

So in the words of the first sentence in the book called The Road Less Traveled, which I never read because the first few sentences were so good I didn't need to read the rest of it. And the first sentence is, now this might go against certain new age beliefs, and it might at first sound negative because the first sentence is, life is difficult. That doesn't sound very inspiring.

And then the next sentence, although I don't remember, it literally says, and if you know that, you're completely okay with the fact that life is difficult, then it's no longer difficult. So that's all I read, because that says it all already. How does that work?

How is life, when you know that life is difficult, it's no longer difficult? You try to work that out. Well, here's the explanation.

It's really only difficult if you think that it shouldn't be difficult. Because then you're in continuous resistance to things and people and events. But once you accept it's an essential part of life of being difficult, then whenever the next difficulty rises, you say, oh, there's life again, being difficult.

In other words, what does that do? It creates an acceptance of what is. If you carry around the assumption in your head, it shouldn't be difficult.

There should be no difficult people and obstacles and problems, and things should not get canceled, and plans should not be interrupted, and nobody should fall ill, and then people shouldn't die, certainly. That's a travesty. These things should not, they're all dreadful.

There's an underlying assumption, things should go smoothly. And of course, sometimes they do go smoothly. But the irony or the paradox is that once you recognize the fact that life is difficult, that life is not meant to make you happy, it's not meant to make you unhappy, but it makes you unhappy if you have a wrong attitude towards life.

Happiness comes with accepting the fact that challenges are an essential part of the evolutionary process for all life forms. So challenges for you, even if you don't call them challenges, challenge is a nice term because something positive is already implied within it. If you call it problems or bad stuff happening, then it doesn't sound so good.

Challenges are here to awaken you. And even if you're awakening, life continues to give you challenges, and then the awakening accelerates and deepens. And at whatever stage you're at, you won't be free as long as you're here of challenges.

So if you recognize that, you no longer need to be in a hostile, confrontational relationship with life, I don't, sorry about the term, you're not pissed off all the time with another thing happening, I'm still pissed off with life. Just can't go on. And people just can't take anymore, just.

Then you can, there's a kind of accepting, not necessarily welcoming, but sometimes welcoming every situation that arises. That is. So if you welcome it, there's a book by Byron Katie called Loving What Is.

That means you are in an accepting relationship with whatever arises. Of course, it all arises in the present moment. Anything else that arises is in your mind.

So you need to differentiate between challenges, problems, difficulties that are actual in the form of people, events, or situations, and challenges, problems, and difficulties that are fictitious, that are purely created by your mind, creating pseudo problems. For example, when you worry in the middle of the night, huge problems. Are those the real challenges of life?

No, these are fictitious problems created in your mind, dwelling on things, things that happened but should not have happened. Those are not the real challenges of life. Those are the challenges of your mind, the mind-created problems.

So you need to very clearly differentiate in your life between actual difficulties, challenges, or problems. There is a person who is shouting at you. That's an actual.

Or there is the thing you just missed your flight and you can't get on the next one or the next one. Or financial challenges, relationship challenges, family situations, work situations, actual things that happen that need to deal with. But then there's a huge amount of suffering that is generated not by the actual challenges of life, but by the fictitious problems that the mind creates, sometimes around the actual challenges of life.

And sometimes out of, no, out of thin air, things that could go wrong. So on the one hand, you have your mind creating a lot of useful, useless suffering through unconscious thinking. And then you have the actual situations in your life.

So you don't have to endure your mind. When it says life is difficult, that shouldn't really include your mind because that's something you can do something about immediately. You don't have to live with a dysfunctional mind.

Millions still do. That is something that can be transcended. And this is, of course, what we are doing here, what you are doing as part of the awakening is a huge amount of the life is difficult.

A huge percentage of that difficulty is created by the mind. That we can deal with, that can change. That does not have to be.

Once, when you do that, then the next part is actual situations will still occur. Once you know that, then you can come to a more surrendered approach to life and actually almost, or actually welcome the difficult people in your life, the difficult situations in your life, loss, and so on, without demanding unconsciously, not in so many words, perhaps, that demanding this should not be happening and there's something dreadfully wrong when things go wrong in your life. And that makes life really difficult.

This is what the man means at the beginning of the book, the author, when he says, life is difficult, but when you know that life is difficult and you fully come to terms with the fact that life is difficult, it's not difficult anymore because the greatest difficulty is the mental resistance to things that arise and the underlying assumption that they should not. And so once you have then a surrendered relationship with the present moment, because everything arises in the present moment, then it's not really that difficult anymore. And you can, even in the midst of turmoil, still be connected with the realm of being within yourself.

So there's always a core of stillness, if only in the background. And no matter what happens, that core of stillness is there, if you want to call it stillness. It's also, as we saw, and as you know, it's also the source of satisfaction, where true satisfaction or a true sense of wellbeing that goes beyond physical wellbeing, a true sense of wellbeing comes from.

It's the transcendent dimension. So life will challenge you with its difficulties, both small and big. Small happen probably every day in some form.

So you don't get upset anymore when things don't go according to plan. You don't get upset and complain or irritated or angry when people don't behave the way they should behave. And that makes it so much easier when you no longer demand that these things should not be the way they are.

Nobody should, they shouldn't cancel flights. Weather shouldn't be in such a way they can't fly anymore. The body shouldn't get old.

Nobody should have catch an illness. Now, a lot of illnesses are produced, or you're much more prone to have an illness if your mind is very dysfunctional because that lowers the physical resistance. It affects the body.

What the mind does obviously affects the body. Even mainstream medicine is beginning to recognize your mental emotional state affects your physical state. So if your mental emotional state is very dysfunctional, your body's resistance to illness decreases.

The likelihood increases that you catch something. There are other causes of illness. So nobody can be totally free and say, I'm never going to be ill.

The body is a physical vehicle with a certain lifespan. And as it approaches the later stages of its lifespan, it's just like an old car. Things start to go wrong with it.

It's another form. And the older your car gets, the more things need to be replaced. And the time comes when it's just not working anymore.

So it will be easier for you to deal with the challenges of life. If you actually realize that the challenges aren't good, they force you to awaken. And that's what's happening here.

For a long time, challenges, the only thing that challenges do is they make people suffer. And that can go on for a long, long time. I sometimes say everybody has a spiritual teacher, everybody on the planet.

For most people, their spiritual teacher is their suffering. Because eventually the suffering brings about an awakening. And then there are a few who are advanced enough who already have gone through their suffering.

And then they come into contact with an actual spiritual teaching in the form of wisdom, tradition, or an actual spiritual teacher, or even in the form of a book. And they suddenly say, oh, wow, yes. And then evolution accelerates.

So for you, there's already this acceleration because otherwise the evolution of consciousness is very slow. Evolution works very slowly. And for many humans, it's still the case.

That's why we repeat the same mistakes, politicians and so on. Haven't they read any history books? Just go back 50 years and then you make the same mistake again, go back 40 years.

So condemned to repeat the past, this is part of karma. And then you reach that stage where an acceleration begins and you're all at that stage, which is wonderful. So whenever confronted with a challenge in whatever form, look at it.

Be careful that your mind does not weave a whole huge web of useless thinking around it. Then it gets really difficult. And realize most challenges are actually fairly simple.

Here's the situation or the person. I can either do something about it. What action is possible now?

And with that comes that clear looking. What action is needed now? There's that presence flows.

And presence can become, there can be a presence-inspired doing. Before there is a presence-inspired doing, you need to look at the situation. And when you look, look not necessarily just visually, but put your awareness on the situation.

And there is a time span where you are in order to access primordial intelligence, which is in the stillness. Whenever a situation arises, you look at the situation and in the looking, which means giving it attention, there is no thinking. There's just an alert looking.

Facing it. And then how long that is varies. It could be a few seconds.

It could be a minute. It could be two minutes. But often a few seconds of giving it alert attention is enough.

Then whatever is needed will come to you. There are several possible causes of action. And then one that's responding to a situation.

Or you look and you realize nothing can be done right now. And that's perfectly fine. And while nothing can be done, you accept what is and are still connected and sometimes more deeply connected in the face of even sometimes unpleasant circumstances, more deeply connected with a true source of satisfaction, which you can quickly access if you become friendly with what is.

Just becoming friendly with what is, and immediately it's easier to access the source of satisfaction and that which transcends the ego. The ego is sustained by continuous resistance, denial, it's against it. Whatever it is, I'm against it.

And it's usually it's the present moment with brief exceptions. So coming to accept the is-ness of people and situations and realizing this situation cannot be otherwise from the way it is. Why not?

It should be. No, it can't be because it already is. The entire universe, the entire history of the universe has brought about, because since everything is connected to everything else, anything that happens is connected to the totality.

So the totality of the universe, since the Big Bang has brought about this event. So that's what is, there's nothing you can do. Then you can do something and take action, yes.

But prior to taking action, there's an acceptance of the is-ness. Then there is an insight into what is possible. And then action, if it is possible, happens.

Or there is a realization that nothing is possible. Then surrender happens. And in that surrender, you are internally free of the situation.

So in that surrender or acceptance, you can sense the satisfaction arising, not because something is going well, because it may not be right now, but because you are connected with the source of all satisfaction, all life. And it feels it's fine. You may be trapped somewhere and it's fine.

So people, every human acts, speaks, in the way that corresponds to their state of consciousness at that moment. Sometimes you encounter humans. It's very common for humans to fluctuate between being relatively more conscious and quite unconscious.

So you might meet the same person that you know well, a family member, in two or three or more different modalities of consciousness, as you might know. And when you're having breakfast in the morning and the family member or your roommate is coming down the stairs, you never know who is coming down the stairs that morning. It could be a very cheerful and lovely person.

Isn't it great to be alive? And the next morning, it comes to a completely different entity down the stairs and starts complaining. And why didn't you do this?

You should have told me long ago. I've been thinking about that all night. It's just awful.

You always do that, don't you? Who is that? Well, that was the person that was light and cheerful yesterday morning.

And who knows who is coming down the next day? So with people who are fairly unconscious, they are subject to enormous fluctuations. And you also, to the extent that you could call them virtually certain different personalities emerging at different times.

So you're not dealing with one human being, people that I'm talking about, people who have not yet enough presence to bring about a more continuous state of identity. So you have all these people and then you might talk to one person and he says, okay, I'm now very clear in my mind what I want and I promise you those things that I did yesterday, two days ago, this will never happen again. I'm really become very clear now.

It's all sorted out in my mind. And this person is genuinely believing that he's at a relatively, relatively slightly higher state of consciousness. And a few days or weeks pass and then he or she does exactly the same thing as before or worse.

And then you say, he's dishonest. He lied to me, he said he wouldn't do that again. He betrayed my trust.

I trusted him. We had a long talk. I started to trust him again.

And then what did he do? Turned around and did the same thing and worse. Not realizing these are, because the person is relatively unconscious, different sub-personality take that person over, which are just mental patterns, mental emotional patterns that could be called sub-personalities.

They take over that person and then there's somebody else there virtually. And so it's not, if you draw certain conclusions that this person now can never be trusted again. No, that wasn't the same person.

It's several different people there. If you draw some conclusion and even make some universal conclusion, then you yourself become deluded. If you say, you see, now I know people can't be trusted.

They do lie all the time, don't they? So suddenly the one sub-personality becomes everybody. And well, it does apply to the majority of people still.

You need to remember the majority of people are often completely possessed by mental, emotional forms of conditioning. And sometimes certain forms of conditioning arise very strongly and take over that person. And then that subsides.

There's a little bit of, so perhaps occasionally a little bit of awareness there before the next wave of conditioning comes and takes that person over. Once you see that, it's easier also to be with people because whatever behavior a person manifests towards you is the same as whatever the present moment presents. It cannot be otherwise.

At this present moment, nobody can act beyond their state of consciousness at this moment, but you should be more conscious, more conscious? What are you talking about? You talk about consciousness?

Let me tell you what you did. Start arguing with an ego. You can never win.

So dealing with your mind, life is difficult, yes. People are difficult, yes. Situations are often difficult, yes.

But they are much less difficult if your mind does not amplify the problems that you encounter and the people that you encounter in your life. That already takes away a huge burden so that your mind no longer complains and has those patterns that deny what is and that weaves huge stories around people and events and about the past and about the future, the worry, the regret, the anxiety. These are all mental events that do not, these do not have to be part of the difficulty of life.

These can be transcended here and now. What then remains is the actual, and once you have tackled the problem-making dysfunction of your mind, and this is, of course, what we are all here, one of the reasons why we are here, and that is part of the spiritual awakening. Once you go beyond the problem-making dysfunction of the mind, it becomes so much easier to deal with the difficult things in life.

They are far less complex than the mind made them out to be. And there's always just looking, giving attention. Then you become intelligent.

You only become really intelligent when you can suspend for a moment the thinking function. So you rise above thought, and then you become alert, and then you look, and then you'll know what to do. And if the doing succeeds, it's fine.

If it doesn't, you look again. It's the art of living. So without the dysfunctional mind, things get easier.

The dysfunctional mind isn't there anymore when you accept the is-ness of the present moment. So the challenges come, they are external and internal. Your own mind is a big challenge, but you're already in the process of transcending that.

The other challenges remain, and that is good. Do not wait, however, for difficult situations to push you into presence. It's good if that happens, but choose presence even when you're not being challenged because that is vital.

Otherwise, life will, the universal intelligence that underlies all phenomena will see that, oh, this guy needs more problems because otherwise he goes to sleep all the time. Let's give him a few more. All life sees, oh, you're so, you're using, whenever you're waiting, you become present.

When you're in nature, you're present. You invite presence into your life. In the middle of the night, when worry starts, you suddenly realize this is not only futile, it's also destructive, and you surrender that kind of thinking and put your attention on your breathing instead or into your body.

Those are things where you voluntarily invite presence into your life. And then presence power, so to speak, presence power grows in you. Then as when a bigger situation happens, there's so much more presence to deal with it.

I've spent years of my life just dwelling in presence. You don't have to do that. I mean, you can be active at the same time.

There were years of my life where there was very little doing and I was just sometimes spending hours on my bicycle or walking in a park, just being. And sometimes I had this strange feeling that there's a reason why I have to do that. It's not doing it, just call it.

So it's like going very deep in order to go out and make a difference in this world. I had to go very deep within first, very deep, and then the going out became possible. How much difference you make in this world is always relative to how deep you go within yourself, how much presence you access within yourself, how connected you are with the essence of who you are, the essence of life.

That determines how much difference you really make in this life. And so you're all going to make and are already making an enormous difference. And the universe loves you.

Consciousness, the universe is consciousness, and consciousness wants to emerge more fully on this planet and on many other planets, I'm sure, because that is what underlies the evolution of the whole universe. So by having the awakening of consciousness and your presence practice as your main life goal, no matter what you do on the surface of your life, your job, your relationships, your main goal is in your relationships, in your work situation, in your home situation, your main goal is being present wherever you are and whatever you do. Then your life becomes empowered and you will do a lot of good without necessarily feeling that I am doing it.

It flows through you. And those of you who are still looking for something to do, the question often people ask me, what am I meant to do? Where am I meant to be?

Who am I meant to be with? And of course, the first answer is the foundation for it all to find out where you're meant to be, what you're meant to do, who you're meant to be with, the first answer is you're meant to be here, you're meant to be doing what you're doing right now, and you're meant to be with whoever you are with right now at this moment. That's foundation.

I'm not talking about for the rest of your life, but right now, so you come to a full acceptance of whatever is in the present moment. Now, most people who are trying to figure out what they're supposed to do in their lives, they don't give their fullest attention and they're not fully aligned with the present moment, where they are, who they are with, they are rejecting it in some way. And that obstructs the power and obstructs the arising of presence.

So you become accepting and comfortable with where you are right now. So you're meant to be here right now. That's why I'm meant to be here.

So that can become a foundation for realizing what you should do once you accept the isness of present moment, what the doing then arises out of that state of alignment with life, with this alignment with the present moment. Then you might get insights into what it is you want to do, or rather what the universe or the one consciousness wants to use you for. So you no longer look at what do I want from life, but what does life want from me?

How can I be of service to the one consciousness, you could say. And if then it begins to flow through you, and it could be, it might start flowing through you in exactly the same doing that you already been doing, but now you're doing it fully presently. Let's say you're an aspiring actress, but in the meantime, you're working at a fast food restaurant.

So can you be fully accepting of where you are right now without losing your goal, but giving your fullest loving attention to whatever you're doing right now? Even if it seems repetitive, you give it your loving attention. And it is often the case when you are completely aligned and completely accept what is, things begin to change.

When you are in non-acceptance internally, you're stuck. Can also happen that once you accept the present moment completely, you realize this is not, I cannot be here any longer, and you just walk out. That can happen too.

But it would not be a confrontational thing. It's a very peaceful realization, what it is that you need to do. So honor whatever it is you're doing at this moment.

And I sometimes admire in some restaurants, you have waiters or waitresses who are wonderfully present. It doesn't necessarily mean the most expensive restaurant. In fact, the most expensive often, they are just snobbish and they don't, but in some, even in simple restaurants, some are just, when they put a glass down, they're present.

It's done with care and attention. And when they ask what you want, they're present. So anywhere you can practice presence and you can affect people no matter where you are, because you will come into contact with some people.

And presence is contagious, as Tammy just told us. In a good way, presence is contagious. Whoever you come into contact with will be affected by your presence.

And then you will attract almost miraculously the right people or the right situations into your life that then will bring about a change. So by being present, you are connected to the totality and you attract people and situations into your life that are helpful. And then once you realize, oh, this is what I want to do, the doing, the insight comes, or it could be just a continuation of what you're doing already, but now you're doing it in an empowered way.

Might be totally different too. Once you realize and you take more action, empowered by presence, then you find many helpful factors suddenly appearing. The moment you're aligned with the arising consciousness and your main goal is presence, sustaining presence, no matter where you are and what you're doing, then your actions become empowered by that one consciousness.

New ideas come, events, helpful things happen. It does not mean that obstacles do not happen. In fact, obstacles often do happen, but an obstacle, and this is vital, and you need to be very alert within yourself.

When an obstacle arises in the form of something not working out, in the form of a person who wants to block you, sabotage you, whatever it is, an obstacle, or difficult bureaucrats, government departments who don't want you to do whatever you want, many forms of obstacles, and an obstacle arises and you become negative and angry, irritated, upset. That means you've lost the power. You've lost presence.

It's no longer flowing through you. The ego has come in. So how you deal with obstacles in your chosen course of action determines whether there's a continuing power flowing through you or whether the ego has taken its place.

So an obstacle is never fought against. You either walk around it, so to speak, or you transform it by bringing a positive energy to it. So you don't make people who seem to be blocking you into enemies.

So you don't, you transform the seeming obstacle. Often it can be transformed into actually a helpful presence, because your state of consciousness determines the further development of that situation. The situation arises, what happens after the situation has arisen is determined by the state of consciousness in which you receive or respond to that situation.

So a difficult person, if you react egoically against a difficult person, then that person will become even more difficult. And in the process, you, your consciousness goes down, down. You become, and you may well end up at the same level of consciousness as that difficult person.

That happens by the moment you both shout at each other. And this has happened to spiritual people. They lost it.

It's okay. You have to lose it, and then you regain it, and then you lose it again, and then you regain it. So if you find yourself in a shouting argument with somebody, obviously you lost it.

And if you beat yourself up for being in a shouting argument with somebody, you lost it again. And then you say, okay, I lost it again. Am I going to beat myself up again for losing it the second time when I beat myself up?

No. So you become accepting also of your own shortcomings and start again. But it's so vital, any situation that comes, your attitude, your consciousness towards the situation determines how it develops further.

Whether it's a human being or a more complex situation at work or relation, in relationship, so there's an active part in you that determines what happens. In that sense, we could say that the universe, reality, so-called, tends to reflect back to you your state of consciousness. And some people create enormous drama out of very little, a tiny little thing, and their reaction, the egoic reaction, is so huge that the tiny little thing gets blown up out of all proportion.

And then they even convince others that this is a huge drama. One of my shortcomings is that I cannot respond to all the mail I get or read all the manuscripts and books people send. And I would need a staff of several full-time people just to respond to letters.

And if they're responding to letters, they will get more letters back and it would proliferate. I read some, and it's wonderful to read. Often it's a beautiful message, what we have been helped.

Some people, however, their ego may be quite strong. They expect an answer. They don't realize how many people write in.

When my power of now was published, somebody said to me, you should send it to a famous person, and that famous person could write an endorsement, and then the book will reach many more people. So I sent it to Deepak Chopra and Wayne Dyer.

2012 to 2015 Eckhart Tolle TV Part 7

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 13:55)

Somebody said to me, you should send it to a famous person and that famous person could write a endorsement and then the book will reach many more people. So I sent it to Deepak Chopra and Wayne Dyer and never heard from them. And I thought, okay, well, they may not have read it or they read it and didn't like it.

I didn't fully realize, I didn't have great expectations, didn't realize they can't read, but they get hundreds of books every month. How can they read my book? I didn't know that, but I didn't have an ego reaction about it.

Later, Deepak Chopra, of course, did read the poem now and wrote a lovely endorsement when I didn't need it anymore. But there are some people who got so angry with me because I didn't respond to their letters that it became gigantic drama. There was letters coming one after another, how dare you ignore me, gigantic drama.

I became the worst person on the planet to them. And this is just a little example of the same relatively insignificant thing can proliferate and grow into some huge tumor in consciousness. So it's a, you're actually, the development of your life and what situations you encounter is related to your state of consciousness.

And as your state of consciousness changes, the way in which you experience the world, in other words, people, events, situations, changes. That's, it doesn't mean it won't be challenging anymore, but the challenges will be of a different kind and dealing with them will become so much easier. And occasionally when a big one comes, that means you're meant to go even deeper into presence.

It's all, there's a, it all works beautifully once you see, because when you, many people, they look at the surface of life and it looks like it's all random events happening and it's all totally chaotic and meaningless and I don't understand any of it. There is an intelligence behind it, but when you only look at the surface of surface reality, you don't necessarily see it. You have a very limited view.

So it's up to you to be aligned with that real intelligence that's behind the entire world that creates form and lives in and through form and yet also exists in a timeless, formless dimension that we couldn't, cannot possibly conceive of. As you know, the universal belief, even now still held by mainstream science is that the universe is a random accidental event that is still the main belief of mainstream science. Every, all life is accidental.

There's no intelligence behind it and you are an accident, somehow happened. And the greatest mystery of the universe, which is not the atomic realm or the galaxies, is the greatest mystery of the universe science has hardly approached and doesn't know anything about. The greatest mystery of the universe is the fact that the universe is conscious and what consciousness is, science doesn't know and some scientists even deny that there is such a thing as consciousness.

What do they say about this? Must be the chemical soup in the brain is having a kind of illusion. But the only thing that you cannot doubt is that you are conscious, even if everything else is a dream, which it could be and in a way it is.

But the fact is the dream is appearing in the light of consciousness without which there would be no dream. So I am conscious and of course science tells you that consciousness is an epiphenomenon, another word for it would be by-product of the brain, of the material brain. So that consciousness, if they even use the word, is produced by something that happens in the material brain and there is certainly a correlation between your consciousness and your physical brain.

It would be absurd to deny the correlation between consciousness and your physical brain. One could easily prove it because if a brick falls on my head now, I won't be conscious anymore. Now, does that prove that the consciousness is produced by my brain?

Not necessarily. It could well be that my brain is a kind of transformer or transmitter of universal consciousness in the same way that a radio or TV picks up signal, transmits it and gives it a certain form. So when you destroy the television set or the radio, nothing significant is destroyed because the radio was never the producer of that radio program.

It was only created to bring those frequencies into this dimension and create a particular kind of world here that is created by consciousness that is permeated by consciousness. So where science is going, whether they will eventually realize, I believe they will, that consciousness is not confined to the human brain. They will see that there is a consciousness in the flower.

There's a consciousness, even in so-called, a tiny, tiny glimmer of consciousness, even in a stone. And so, in other words, the material world, we could use the analogy and say the material world, the world of hard matter is a bit like frozen consciousness in the same way that water can exist in different states. You can have frozen water, you can have liquid water, you can have water as vapor in the air or mist.

So you can, consciousness can manifest and does manifest as the physical universe. It can manifest as the human mind and thought, and it can manifest as presence. So you have the ice, you have the liquid, and you have the immaterial vapor or mist.

It's all water and it's all consciousness. In that, so there is only consciousness. That's just the one behind the many.

Everything is consciousness. The essence of who you are is consciousness. And then the mind says, so what is consciousness?

You can't say what it is because it's everything. So it's, if you said God, yes. And now as a final insight, my mystical insight, this consciousness emanates from a source that does not exist in space or time.

That is the, what Buddha calls the unmanifested, the unborn, the uncreated. That is truly what, if God has any meaning, it is that. You cannot conceive of it.

You cannot talk about it. You cannot name it. It's the, it's that which precedes the Big Bang.

What was there before the Big Bang? Nothing. Okay, so the whole universe came out of nothing?

Yeah. Okay, that's strange. That nothing, that no thing is God.

And then God appears as the world and begins to dream the dream of the world. And after God has dreamt the dream of the world, the dream gets a bit difficult. And all the entities in the dream, the cells in the universal consciousness believe themselves to be independent entities.

And then the dream becomes a nightmare. And then God begins to wake up. That was the plan all along.

And even as God begins to wake up, God continues to create, but at the same time realizes he is her own source. I'm trying to explain to you the entire universe, which is totally impossible, but it's a little hint. It's a bit like that.

That's all one can say. It's a bit like that. But you contain the entire universe and the secret of the entire universe is within you.

You just have to look within. If you want to know about what about the universe, well, look within. You are a microcosm of the macrocosm as the ancient dictum, as above, so below.

God is in you as you. Consciousness is the light emanated by God. Now, in the same way that the sun emanates light, is light different from the sun or is light connect part of the sun?

It's always part of the sun. It's not disconnected from the sun. It still is the sun.

So in that sense, each one of you, me, is a ray of that one consciousness, like a ray of sunlight. And then the ray goes out and creates a world and looks around. And then the ray doesn't realize it's part of the sun and thinks it's an independent entity that makes it really interesting, the dream.

Otherwise the dream wouldn't be that interesting. And then the universal dream starts.

[Speaker 9] (13:56 - 13:57)

Wow.

[Speaker 1] (13:57 - 22:24)

And then it gets difficult and dangerous. And then at some point, this ray of sunlight of consciousness begins to remember its origin, not only origin, but actually the source out of which it continuously emanates. Oh, oh, it's not that bad after all.

It's actually... And then it continues to exist in this world and create even in this world. But at the same time, it's conscious of the source.

That means a totally different world is created. That's the new us on our planet. When humans are aware of their connectedness to the source, what they then do and their activities and what they produce as the world is very different from the world that is created by humans who are not aware of their source.

In other words, egoic entities. And this is what's happening now. It's not that the dream of form is coming to an end, but there is a significant metamorphosis happening.

The dream is turning into a very different dream where humans, as humans become more aware of their connectedness to source, creation will become much easier. Time will come when humans can create by using thought only. Then you don't need factories anymore.

You can create through thought. But that cannot happen until humans are connected, aware of their source. Because if they had the power to create, to some extent, this already happens, but if they had the true full power to create through thought, they could create havoc.

Imagine an ego being able to create whatever it wanted just by thinking about it. But thought is potentially the creative tool. It's already operating now, but it's used unconsciously and often creating not very pleasant experiences.

So thought eventually can be used, but we don't need to go there. That happens by itself. For us, it is vital to live in connectedness with source.

And then that's called lucid, as I said the other day, lucid dreaming, lucid living. And so you become aware of the dreamlike nature of existence and you actually enjoy that. And you create a more pleasant dream for yourself and for others.

So that was the secret of the universe. I left it for the last session. So now you go off little rays of consciousness, reaching different parts of Australia and the rest of the world.

Don't you forget to wrap up warm and if you live in the central or Eastern parts of North America, it's very cold there at the moment, but that's okay, can enjoy that. So we've had a wonderful retreat. I'm grateful for being here with us in presence.

You know what your mission is. But don't become missionaries. Don't try to convince anybody of anything.

Just presence is enough. I'd like to thank our wonderful team to knowing such great work. Other people also here at our resort.

They've been very helpful. And let's, I'd like to ask Kim also to come and join me here to say goodbye to you. Can you jump up?

Yes. Okay. Okay.

I'll be back. Everybody seems awake, both in the original sense and in the spiritual sense. Awake spiritually means, of course, not to be identified with a stream of thinking, but have some sense of presence.

This is an evening of questions, maybe answers. Or I might quote the Dalai Lama in one of my answers. And one of his favorite answers is, I don't know.

And of course, you remember the importance of not knowing from our previous session. We're not waiting for the microphone to be adjusted. We're just present.

[Speaker 4] (22:30 - 24:36)

Thank you. I feel very blessed and grateful. And I have been all my life.

My question is around acceptance and responsibility. And the difference. We're talking about consciousness and our consciousness and the whole consciousness.

But there's some horrific things happening in the world. And recently, I heard of canned lion hunting as an example. And there are 162 cities marching against this horrible thing.

And so I lead Auckland. But what I found was there were as many egos in the camp of the animal lovers as in the hunters. And they were both threatening to kill each other.

And let's shoot the hunters for killing the lions. And I became quite depressed. I felt very alone.

I felt that I was being swallowed up by, I'm not sure what it felt like, but I knew I had to get out. And I wanted to be, I guess, in the light. And part of me feels guilty for this because I know there are people that go through an enormous amount of suffering and they're still there for other people.

So I guess my question is, where's the line between, what are we responsible for? And I know that seems an enormous question. But I'd really appreciate your wisdom.

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (24:38 - 34:19)

Thank you. Well, the foundation for everything that you do is the state of consciousness out of which the doing comes. So that's what ultimately you're responsible for, which is a foundation.

That's your state of consciousness. That implies there's already enough presence in you that you are able to, if not continuously, at least for part of the time, to take responsibility for your state of consciousness, to do things with presence, to speak with presence, to interact with other humans with presence and always realizing the main thing in this situation, no matter what I am dealing with or who I'm talking to or what this is all about, the main thing is for me to do it being present. And then, of course, you will find that many other humans are not present, but you can't just take responsibility for them if they're not present.

All you can do is to emanate presence, to be the voice of sanity, sometimes in a room full of people who are still trapped in egoic reaction. And as you say, sometimes or quite often, people who actually are very earnest and sincerely want to bring about a better world and to fight all those many manifestations of unconsciousness and suffering that humans inflict on other humans and other life forms on the planet and the planet itself. Many of those humans don't realize that their state of consciousness is extremely important.

So they create enemies and generate a lot of dysfunction in that way. The very thing often that you are fighting against, you can easily turn into. So there are so many causes in this world that seem worthy to be pursued, and everybody has to look, see for themselves what it is in the larger world out there, what it is that they feel passionately about.

You have a huge choice because there's so much unconsciousness still happening in this world, manifesting as violence and so on, exploitation. Once you have chosen an area where you want to be active, you need to realize that simultaneously you need to be working on the causal level and whatever else that you are fighting for, if it's working for hopefully not fighting, is a level of effect. These are all effects of human unconsciousness.

You cannot just tackle the effect of human unconsciousness because it's a never-ending battle. And if you only tackle the effects of unconsciousness, then there is a great danger that you yourself, after a while, will become unconscious, not knowing it and still thinking you're doing the right thing. So this could happen when you see people inflicting suffering on animals.

This can generate so much anger in other humans who have a greater sensitivity for the suffering of animals than other humans have who inflict the suffering on animals. But those humans, they can suddenly become so, or gradually become so angry that they actually, as you said, talk about killing the people who kill the animals. Then everything becomes completely distorted.

A very powerful way of changing things, well, first, foundation is your state of consciousness. Then rather than making certain people or groups of people into enemies and pronouncing them as evil, it's a very powerful way of helping to bringing about a change on the external level is simply to show what happens, to show people what these people do. You don't even need to talk against it.

You can just show this is what happens. We have photography, we have all those things, and explain what humans do to the environment or whatever it may be, what humans do to other humans. And the most powerful movies, for example, against war, because people try to, make movies that are didactic, that show, that are preaching against war.

This is unnecessary. All you have to do is show the reality of warfare and the greatest movies that have been made to show people what war is and not what it seems to be when you, politicians talk about it and the media talks about it. And traditionally, it's been talked as this great endeavor, heroic endeavor of our nation defeating the evil enemies and the others say exactly the same thing.

And so then people have written some novels or have made movies to simply show the reality behind those words. And those have been the most powerful anti-war novels and movies. All you need to show to people the reality of what happens.

And that often brings about a shift in the general consciousness of the planet. There are already, I know there's still reason to despair, you might think, but there have been significant advances. If you do look back a few hundred years ago, for example, we are still in quite a few places, torture is still practiced, but there are now, sometimes we regress again towards that, one or two countries temporarily regress.

But a few hundred years ago, torture was accepted by everybody. It was totally normal. Every country did it, every kingdom did it.

There is greater sensitivity now in many humans towards nature, towards animal, towards treating other humans with compassion. So there is a shift in consciousness happening, but the moment you go into areas of unconsciousness, you don't see that anymore, because if you want to tackle unconsciousness, you go into those areas where obviously those things still happen. So the practical advice is trust us, choose where you want to get in, become engaged.

If you feel there's so much going on in this world and I want to help somewhere, so that which is closest to your heart, go there, choose a group that is relatively, there are usually probably several groups working in that direction, talk to them, visit them, choose the one that seems the most conscious. None of them may be really conscious, but the one where there's least violence and anger, and then you make your contribution there. Don't demand that these people should be more conscious, but you can be the voice of reason or rather the voice of presence, the voice of sanity when you interact with the people in your group.

And don't be too attached to the results. So you can be active also with peace in your heart. If you cannot be active with peace in your heart, peaceful warrior is the term, then you will lose yourself.

And it's happened so many times that when you fight the devil you can easily turn into the very thing you're fighting. And I'm only using it metaphorically. So at the moment, are you active in anything?

[Speaker 4] (34:19 - 34:34)

No, I withdrew. I found it was, I was being swallowed up and I don't feel I'm strong enough to stay in the unconscious.

[Speaker 1] (34:34 - 42:10)

Yes, yes, yeah. It's also possible that you can create your own vehicle in whatever area it is closest to your heart. So you create your own vehicle for initiating external change.

And then you can very carefully attract people to you who resonate with your aims, not only with your external aims, but also with your inner aims, which are primary. So people will realize that it is of primary importance to stay present as you pursue your goals, not only to tackle the effects of unconsciousness, but the cause of unconsciousness. And the only place where you can really deal with the cause of unconsciousness is in yourself.

So maybe you can set up something rather than going into already existing structures, because quite often the already existing structures are a reflection of the state of consciousness of the people in there. And sometimes there's not much you can do. It's a sad fact that even in churches and places of healing, there's an enormous amount of infighting.

And the reason being that these people do not have enough self-awareness. A supreme example, of course, is the rise of communism, which was based on good intentions because they wanted to create a more, they saw all the evils in capitalistic capitalism and capitalist society, the exploitation of workers and so on. And they felt we need to do something about these injustices and the absurd exploitation of humans, millions of humans.

And so communism came into being, which sounded like a wonderful idea. In fact, for quite a long time, many intelligent people in Western countries were in sympathy with Soviet communism. They hadn't realized yet which way it was going.

And much later, we began to realize that it had become quite an insane system, because the people who wanted to bring about, wanted to create a better world had overlooked the one primary thing that is needed if you want to create a better world, which is your own state of consciousness. So as soon as these people assumed power, their latent egos suddenly got inflated to an absurd degree. And the mechanism is, of course, beautifully described in a satirical novel by, I believe it's Orwell, "'Animal Farm' is basically a description of what happened in the communist system."

And this just, and those, that book has made a very important contribution to bringing about the end of communism, because it has to start first in people's minds. Another writer, a less well-known novel about the insanity of Soviet communism is called, "'Darkness at Noon' by Arthur Koestner." Also very depressing to read, but if you see it, you can only say, oh my God, how can people be so unconscious?

So communism failed because it had neglected the primary dimension. At some point, there will be, of course, a society arising on this planet where there is more equality and so on, but it will arise out of a changed state of consciousness, not through violence. So focus on that.

Where do you want to put the focus of your peaceful attention? And then see if you yourself can create some kind of structure, foundation, whatever it may be, that, and then draw, see if you can, and you will, if you remain present, you state your intention verbally or just in your mind, stay present. Then you put out a few feelers.

You contact certain, whatever it is, media, whatever, but you will then draw to you people who resonate with your state of consciousness. And if one or two should come to you who you realize do not resonate, then you would ask them, say, there is another place that's more suitable for you. So it's, and these people working here, then once you have a group like that, the group will have two aims.

One of the aims of the group is to initiate the external change, whatever the focus of their attention is. The other aim of the group is to become more conscious as a group. So you would have, not all the meetings that you have would be about what to do about these evils out there.

You would have also regular meetings about how do we interact with each other? What are the problems that arise as we interact? Those things need to be dealt with.

What is our aim? You would sit together in silence and before each meeting, sit together in silence for a while. At the end of each meeting, sit together in silence for a while.

So you remain connected to the source. And then you would be working on both levels, the causal level and the level of effect simultaneously. And then you will see there will be powerful results.

My main function in this world is to work almost exclusively on the level of cause, which is the shift in human consciousness. There are many things that I would love to work for also in this world to help, but my attention is on that. I know that the universe has put me here to fulfill that particular function.

And that spreads out into the world and eventually, of course, it brings about an external change also.

[Speaker 4] (42:12 - 42:28)

Thank you, Eckhart. I just wanted to say as I'm going, I'm a sculptor and I bring your work into my sculpting. And one of, I write these rules for my sculpting.

And one of them is, all I have to do is get the hell out of the way.

[Speaker 1] (42:30 - 53:10)

It comes through. Thank you very much. Thank you, that's good advice.

Also getting out of the way when you do things. Just not be there as an eagle that wants to affirm your form identity, be right and prove others wrong. Get out of the way.

Some of them, there are some very successful people, even in some business, a few, who function with little or no ego while they perform their function. And that is rare, but it exists. Whether they still relate without ego in their personal life, I don't know.

But there are some that I have observed in their professional life. There are also some doctors and so on. There are nurses, certainly, many do wonderful, wonderful work.

They humanize the hospitals that to a large extent otherwise would be inhuman places full of technology and nervous people. So that is a wonderful thing to see, that you can bring that energy in. When you listen to the news, you may get a somewhat distorted perspective of what's happening in the world.

Because when you listen to the news, you will get the impression this is terrible and it's getting worse and worse and worse. It's not really quite like that because it's always been bad. Look at the first half of the 20th century.

What could be worse than that? Very little. The dreadful insanity of two world wars, the concentration camps, labor camps, awful insanity.

If you doubt that there's a serious dysfunction in the human mind, then you just read about 20th century history. Or if you like, go back a little bit further, other centuries. So when you listen to the news, what the news focuses on is those areas of the world where unconsciousness is rampant.

And those are the areas where violence happens and violence happens continuously. So these are pockets of unconsciousness, which does not mean that every inhabitant in those pockets of unconsciousness is unconscious. Within the pockets of unconsciousness where continuous violence happens, there may be individuals who are highly conscious.

So many things, for example, that happened in Afghanistan, you would say, well, this, they seem to be maybe 1,000 years behind the development. Their collective attitudes often seem to be comparable to what Europe was like in the year 1100 or 1200. Their religion seems to be very comparable to what Christianity was like in the Middle Ages.

And yet there are certain individuals there who are highly conscious, who are more conscious than the average Westerner, far more. So also human thoughts are little, every thought is a little energy formation. It's an, we could almost regard thought as a little entity.

It's an energy field in the mind. So when humans create thoughts, the thought then spreads through words and energy. The thought spreads to others.

These days it spreads easily through the internet, much more easily than before. So you put out one thought and that thought may be a deluded, egoic thought. One person puts it out.

Then thousands of people who see that, who are not very conscious, they take in the deluded thought. It goes into their minds. And this operates very much like a virus.

A thought can take over a human in the same way that a virus can take over the physical body and proliferate and grow. So there are, as I see it, there are viral infections of the collective human mind. And they sometimes move from place to place.

They affect certain areas for a certain period of time. They can affect a religion. They can affect a political system, a tribe.

So the, and then these people get taken over by these thoughts that occupy, almost obliterate all other thoughts in their mind. And they're totally possessed by this basically viral infection of thoughts. So this happened a lot in Nazi Germany, Soviet communism, China under Mao Zedong.

Everybody got totally, their minds got, not everybody, but 95% of people, their minds got taken over completely as if a virus had invaded the collective mind. And then after a while, years pass or a few decades pass and then a little bit of sanity comes back, not more relative to what was before, big sanity, not yet a spiritual awakening perhaps. So often, so what we see in the news is where the thought virus has infected groups of people who are now generating continuous violence.

I don't need to mention, we all know. And then we get the impression that all that is happening on the planet is this absolutely insane violence. Only heard today on the news that the, again, somebody bombed a school in Nigeria or something like that, and 50 or 60 schoolchildren died.

That is totally, totally insane. But these things you hear in the news, you don't hear that there are many other parts of the planet where you must live relatively peacefully. There's nothing happening.

Or that there's a group of people in Kulam who are awakening spiritually and that this is going to make an enormous difference to the planet when they all, when they leave here and go into their different, where they live, the different parts of the world. That won't be on the news tonight. Or that people went to work peacefully, went home peacefully, millions of people in many parts of the world.

So there's a lot of good things happening that are not reported before. Some reason the media has been conditioned or they've conditioned themselves in such a way that they focus on what is negative. One reason being that humans love because there's a pain body in humans that resonates with that.

And many of the media know that they just need to stimulate anger in their viewers or readers, and then they will get more viewers and readers because the human pain body resonates with that. So you get headlines that say, you bastards. And then everybody wants, what's this about?

And then what you get is they're not reporting facts. Every fact that they write about is written about through the emotion of anger that they want to generate in the reader. And people who are unconscious don't realize it.

They think they're reading some facts. What you're reading is you're taking in, again, a kind of virus or bacteria on the mental level, you're taking that into your mind. And something in humans, in unconscious humans, likes that.

And that is connected with the pain body, the dormant pain body that humans carry. So part of the media feeds the collective pain body and they can be quite successful. There are certain television stations like that.

I don't know about Australia, but in the States, there are big newspapers in England that love feeding that. They're very good at it, have been good at it for a long time. And often it's the biggest newspapers that are those that generate negative emotion.

Their main reason for being is not to inform people, but to make them angry. It's amazing. So when you watch the news, be careful so that you don't get drawn into that reactivity.

Just what you're watching is the effects of human unconsciousness. In many cases, you're watching the virus infection of the human mind, and it's been going on for a long time. The only way it can change is through your change in consciousness, because that spreads to others.

[Speaker 3] (53:30 - 55:26)

Three things. First of all, an expression of gratitude from myself and from my brother, who is currently in transit from overseas, but the way that you have distilled and articulated your information into your teachings over the years has proven very, very life-changing for us. So gratitude from both of us.

Thank you. The second was an observation after our session with Kim this afternoon. There was a lady who asked about the connection between the source and the energies of yin and yang.

So I just wanted to offer as an observation or a visualization that I had to see if it would be useful to other people that it struck me when you were talking about the analogy of the sky and the clouds as thought clouds the other day. That's an analogy that I've used with my clients as well. And when Kim was speaking this afternoon, it came to me an image of the source being like outer space of nothingness, just empty space.

And then the energies of yin and yang, even though they may not be visible, they're still very real, like light sources or light particles or sound waves moving through space. So for that lady who asked that question or for anybody else who might find that useful, I hope that that does create an image that can be useful for you. Thirdly, a question for you regarding dealing with unconscious people and whether you yourself, maybe more so earlier in your life, whether you have felt lonely or isolated or frustrated in dealing with unconscious people and what your approach was to that at different stages of your life.

[Speaker 1] (55:27 - 1:09:17)

Right, yes. Thank you. Well, that perhaps is the main challenge for everybody because it is people mostly to who we get challenged by.

Other sources of challenge are, of course, your physical body could present a challenge. There can be financial challenges. But most, a large part of challenges come through humans because humans are difficult.

Many humans are still very much trapped in ego. First part of your question, there was, I was relatively isolated for many years of my life when after the shift in consciousness, I carried on with my normal life. It had a certain momentum.

I was still in the academic world. And then three, four years later, I had to go out of that, leave it behind completely. And then many years happened when I was not related to the world through any of the usual channels.

I had no particular job. No relationships, no close relationships. And I spent many, many days, weeks, months not seeing that many people.

And gradually people would come to me for advice that happened gradually, slowly grew through word of mouth. And then I had that kind of relationship with humans. But throughout, there's always challenges.

Even if you live in relative isolation, you will come into contact with humans that are unconscious. So I think the, you need to welcome that because it's that, it's all these, those challenges force you to become more present. You remember, I talked about the other day, if you want to make the body stronger, you do exercise, you do physical exercise.

And what is physical exercise? It's making life difficult for the body. That's a new way of looking at it.

But if you look at it closely, you'll see it is true because the body suddenly has to make an enormous effort. You're forcing the body. You're giving the body challenges that were not there before.

Lift a heavy weight, run a mile or whatever it is you're doing. And so then through being challenged beyond its comfort zone, the body gets stronger. And in the case of spiritual growth, we need all those unconscious humans to challenge us.

Otherwise, the presence would not intensify and arise. So the first thing we need to do, and I learned that also, to regard these unconscious humans as blessings. So rather than believing you shouldn't be here making my life difficult, you shouldn't regard the unconscious human as a necessary part of being here on this planet at this time.

And so you can welcome them when they make life difficult for you. The important thing is, though, that the unconscious humans do not pull you into unconsciousness yourself. That is the challenge, the biggest challenge.

And what I mentioned in the previous session also applies here. When you are being challenged by situations or people up to a certain point of human development, the moment a situation gets challenging or you meet a challenging person, you become reactive and become more unconscious than you were before you were challenged. So you meet an angry person, you get angry yourself.

You meet a confrontational person and you become even more confrontational, you're fighting. Then a certain thing happens where you reach that level where beyond which the challenges make you more conscious. I think most of the people here will have reached the level where, you may occasionally be pulled back, yes, but may have reached the level where from now on, when challenges come into your life through situations or people, you become more present rather than be pulled into unconscious reaction.

And that's your spiritual practice. That can be your main spiritual practice. So if you realize relationships are your spiritual practice, whether they are short relationships or at work or family relationships, if you can shift the way you look at relationships and then regard relationships as spiritual practice, it's much easier to deal with unconscious humans.

And then the challenge is to stay present while they are being unconscious with you. I learned that early on when, after my shift in consciousness, my father's second wife was quite unconscious and then not only unconscious, she developed a mental illness, but the unconsciousness was already, the mental illness was already hidden in the unconsciousness. The mental illness she developed was acute paranoia and she was in a mental home for a while then came back home.

Whenever I visited them once or twice, as I mentioned before, I stayed in hotels, but many times I went there, visit, stayed with them. And I realized the moment I saw her, I would become intensely present. I would just go.

And then she would start talking to me. Usually the stories would start with talking about her enemies, the people who were waiting down in the street and would follow her, people she would see in shops. And according to those stories, there must be at least one or 200 people whose main occupation is to follow her and make her life difficult.

But that was the story. So I had to listen. The moment I arrived, she would tell me the latest events of what happened to all these people who were following her and doing things to sabotage her life, all fictitious.

And immediately I went into very intense presence. And by the second day, the stories would subside a little bit. And by the third day, she wouldn't talk that much.

And once or twice it happened that I was not acutely present when she was talking. And immediately the old stories would come back up. She would even look at me suspiciously and say, what do you, why are you really here?

What do you want from me? So I noticed there was a, my consciousness had an effect on her state of consciousness. So that was particularly noticeable in that case.

And she became more sane while I was there. And the moment I left, she went back into complete unconsciousness. And many times this has happened to me.

I describe even one or two instances in New Earth or Power of Now, when, for example, that my neighbor came to me in the middle of the night. And she said, she also had some paranoia. She said, these people want to, these are evil people who want to take over my place.

And so you must help me. We need to stand together, imaginary enemies. And I felt this shift into intense presence.

And after a few minutes, she stopped talking. And just, you may remember reading, she said, when she looked at all her papers, this isn't important at all, is it? And I said, no.

And then she left. So practice with humans. If you know what presence is, and if you can get some sense of what I'm talking about, within yourself at this very moment, when I speak of intensification of presence.

Intensification of presence will usually involve the entire body. And you will feel the intensification of presence in every cell of your body when it becomes very intense. And that energy field is not just in the body.

It's all around. It's almost as if presence were filling the space when it becomes very intense. And it's a beautiful, wonderful state to be in.

And it comes when it's needed. You cannot bring it about. It also comes sometimes when one talks about it.

It certainly comes in a setting like this when many people come together with this common endeavor. So the main, well, it's not a weapon, it's the wrong word, but the main tool dealing with unconscious people is the intensification of presence in you, which will result in a lack of reactivity to their unconsciousness so that you can respond to what they say or do and not react against them. And that is an art form and that you can only practice that art form of responding to an unconscious human instead of reacting against an unconscious human.

You can only practice that art form when you are present, intensely present. There are also degrees of unconsciousness in humans. Some are deeply unconscious.

Some have, many humans, you might found family members and so on, they temporarily get taken over by waves of unconsciousness. When sometimes when certain situations happen, suddenly that human being gets completely unconscious. And you can, it often involves the pain body.

So it gets taken over by ego, pain body, and you don't hardly recognize them. This often is a discovery made by people when they start like partners, they love each other. Then the next step is either they get married or before they get married, they move in together.

And that's, it's only then usually that when humans live together or work together, that you notice that periodically, many humans are completely, get completely taken over by some area in their life of unconsciousness. And that's a terrible discovery that people make when they start living together or getting married, because after a few weeks, you will discover another aspect of your partner that wasn't there before. You didn't know it was there and you go, oh dear.

Did I make a big mistake here? And the same thing might happen the other way around. So where, in what areas is it most difficult for you to deal with that?

Is it in your family situations or close relationships or at work, where's the main difficulty?

[Speaker 3] (1:09:20 - 1:09:45)

Predominantly with clients in a healthcare setting and some family members as well, although I've learned to deal with them over time, but particularly with clients who require a response from you and trying to shape that response in a conscious way can sometimes be very difficult.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:45 - 1:09:48)

What do you work, what work do you do?

[Speaker 3] (1:09:49 - 1:09:50)

Physical therapy, physio.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:51 - 1:10:07)

Physiotherapy. Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

Can you give just one example of what you just described to the client? Because it's always easier to understand when one hears a concrete example.

[Speaker 3] (1:10:08 - 1:10:42)

Well, a lot of my day is spent listening to people's stories about their pain. And some of them are very deep-seated beliefs that their pain will never change and that their physical pain comes from a source that can't be altered. And some clients who have mental health issues in relation to their physical problems as well and who are very attached to their mental health issues and very attached to their diagnoses as part of their identity.

[Speaker 2] (1:10:42 - 1:10:43)

Yes, yes.

[Speaker 3] (1:10:43 - 1:10:48)

And continually seek responses from other people that confirm that identity.

[Speaker 1] (1:10:48 - 1:12:08)

Exactly. To them. Yes, yes.

So when you are present, your intuition is also more accessible. So there may be certain things that at times you can say to them, a little hint, or whether you ask them to go into the body and feel the body so that there's a little bit of dis-identification from the mental image of who they are. So the more presence you bring in as your main tool, the easier it will become to deal with those humans and the more helpful you will be to them.

It doesn't mean that everybody will awaken who comes to you, but miracles do happen through presence. I told you before, I thought I was a healer for two or three years because people said to me I was doing healing. So that, and I became dissatisfied because the people who then started coming to me were only interested in their physical symptoms.

And I realized what they really need is a shift in consciousness. So there may be some similarities with what you do.

[Speaker 3] (1:12:09 - 1:12:30)

I think most definitely. And the trouble is that when you're in a consulting room with somebody for half an hour, you can't just go, I've had enough of this, and walk out. Whereas with other people in my personal spheres, I can say, okay, it's time for me to go now.

So that's where I think the biggest challenge lies therein.

[Speaker 1] (1:12:30 - 1:13:51)

Yes, people working with others in that capacity, whether it's physiotherapy or whether it's psychotherapy, at some point, something else takes over. And that then becomes, when presence takes over completely as you deal with people, then it will become much easier. Psychotherapists even who have been trained to apply a particular modality of psychotherapy to their patients, at some point, after a few years, some of them kind of gradually forget about the modality or it's no longer primary.

In some of them, presence arises spontaneously as they sit with people. And then they become really effective in what they do. And they may no longer even know what it is they do because it's not them that does it.

There's a line, of course, in miracles, which may help you because you are a kind of healer. A healer does not heal, he or she lets healing be. So, and then something else takes over.

And that's the key to your success with your clients.

[Speaker 3] (1:13:51 - 1:13:57)

Thank you very much. I will use the challenging people to strengthen my spiritual muscles.

[Speaker 1] (1:14:00 - 1:14:10)

There's no shortage. The universe is abundant.

[Speaker 8] (1:14:33 - 1:15:28)

My question is around, before you were talking about intensification of presence. So at times I've felt intense energy in my body, throughout my body. But that's more rare.

And it's, I feel that I experience presence in more of an underlying underlying calmness or, yeah, calmness. So my question is, is presence experienced, is there something consistent with presence? Is there something that's felt or a consistent feeling?

[Speaker 1] (1:15:28 - 1:21:10)

Do you mean, does it always feel the same? Is that what you mean, perhaps? Well, the, as I said, the intensity of presence can vary.

Then, so presence is the energy field. Now, this is very hard to talk about, but I'll just, I will make an attempt. It is almost as if there's a place inside from where presence emanates.

And that place is timeless. And I can only compare it in the sense perceived world, it could compare to this, like the sun that continuously shines and yet it has no form. So it's like a space rather out of which presence emanates.

So the sun is an actually positive presence. But if you imagine that the sun were an empty space out of which the light emanates, then you get a better, this is closer to the truth of how it is experienced as you go very deeply into it. So there is a space within or a spaciousness that is the point out of which the emanation of presence happens.

And that space is absolute repose, absolute stillness. And to feel that in yourself is joy, very joyful, in the, for lack of a better word. There's an aliveness there, but it is absolutely still.

That's the core. And that is, perhaps as I speak of it, you can get a sense within yourself what that is. You can only sense it when you're not thinking, you can't be thinking and sense that.

That's the innermost stillness within you. Out of that emanates presence, which can emanate directly from the body, can also move into your mind and begin to use your mind and inform the mind and speak through the mind. So there were times in my life when I was very passive for, you know, my episodes on seeking on park benches, but even after that for long periods of time, I was so immersed in that inner stillness that there seemed no point in doing anything.

And you don't need to go that way. I didn't have any guidance, so nobody could tell me what to do with that. So I gradually had to learn for myself that you can be active in the world.

And at the same time, completely rooted in the stillness. So you particularly mentioned the state of calmness when you can feel it. So it may be that you have that connectedness with a still point within and feel that very strongly.

It's very hard for people to, people also differ in their choice of words when they speak about it. So you could ask, if you go to India or you go to any Buddhist country, you may find that, ask them about spiritual awakening, you may find that the words they use to describe it are very, very different. And only if you know already from direct experience what it is they're talking about, you can recognize that they're talking about the same thing.

So I've already said too much about it because what I have said, those words may not be the words that you would choose to talk about your experience of presence. So are you able to suspend thinking for certain moments without going to sleep?

[Speaker 8] (1:21:12 - 1:21:13)

I'm not sure.

[Speaker 1] (1:21:14 - 1:21:23)

Okay, try it and try it now. Okay, stop. Okay, how was that?

[Speaker 8] (1:21:25 - 1:21:27)

I don't remember a thought.

[Speaker 1] (1:21:27 - 1:21:32)

Okay, so there was no thought. Because not thinking is not memorable.

[Speaker 8] (1:21:33 - 1:21:35)

Yeah. Okay.

[Speaker 1] (1:21:36 - 1:37:20)

Now, this is very significant. So the mind doesn't know what to do with not thinking because the mind is thought. The mind cannot really appreciate how important not thinking is because what the mind is interested in is, let me ask another question.

That's what the mind is interested in. It's not interested in stepping aside and allowing no thought to arise. So the mind has a certain momentum.

The most important thing is to become familiar with that state of no thought. Far more important than any question that could arise in your mind or any answer that the greatest spiritual teacher could give you. So that's why I mentioned in, I believe, in the New Earth, I was visiting that big center where they offer countless fascinating courses on developing this and that faculty and spiritual development and physical development and all kinds of huge number of courses are offered.

You can have anything, a menu of courses. You can pursue any interest, wonderful and fascinating. So I don't know if you remember reading it.

I wrote, somebody came to me and showed me that program, that menu of fascinating courses and workshops. Said, which one do you think is most suitable for me? And I looked through it.

There's so many, I don't know. But I can tell you this, what the way I put it at that time was be aware of your breathing, just for a few days, and you will gain more than attending any of these courses and it's free. Be aware of your breath as you go through daily life, as much as you can.

What does that imply? That implies there's a space of no thought because you cannot be aware of your breath and think at the same time. So if you want rapid acceleration of spiritual awakening, this, by the way, is the last question for tonight appropriately.

If you want rapid acceleration of spiritual awakening, don't ask another question because the next question and the next and the next won't get you any closer, especially after. Well, as you can see, I'm winding down the question. Especially after being here for several days, I have said all that can be said about spiritual awakening.

The next step is up to you and it does not consist in, well, let me see. No, I need to, something else I need to know. I know that some questions are helpful because, but ultimately the most essential thing is bring presence into your life now, for example, by being aware of your breath as much as you can.

It's just one way of bringing presence in. Or feel the inner body as much as you can. And that's rapid.

Or if you can just step out of thought already without using any of those portals, just move out of thought. And some of you can do that already. Then choose that as much as possible in your daily life.

Choose to be in thoughtless awareness whenever you don't actually need to think. And that's quite a lot of the time, especially moving from here to there, doing habitual things, listening to people talking. Be the presence.

That's the spiritual practice. There's no other spiritual practice. Everything else would point to that, but this is the most direct spiritual practice.

And very rapidly you'll find the shift happening. But it's your choice now. Before, unconscious humans don't have a choice.

When there's no inkling of awareness in you, you don't even know that apart from your thoughts there's anything else in you, you have no choice. You are being used, you are possessed by thought. You have a choice.

Now with choice comes responsibility because the moment you have that choice, it implies that there is sufficient awareness in you for you to have choice. Once that has arisen, that choice becomes your responsibility. We have to look at it from that point of view because if people ask me, well, who is responsible, presence or you and all kinds of strange questions, the most useful approach is to see that you can choose to be present.

That's your responsibility. Choose to be present in many, many situations in your daily life. Choose presence over useless thinking, for example.

When you're in bed at night, when you wake up in the morning, when you're walking in nature or walking to work from here to there or traveling on public transport or sitting in your car, stopping at a red light, choose presence over thinking. You are able to do that. First, you have to remember that you have a choice.

That comes one. Okay, I have a choice. And then exercise the choice and take your attention away from thinking and put your attention on attention itself.

Become conscious of being conscious. That's your job now. And then you cannot not experience an accelerated arising of presence.

It's that simple. But the weird thing is, many people who have the choice still do not exercise their choice. I'm now, what I just described is looking at it from one perspective.

From another perspective, which is also true and actually more true, but less helpful, it is true to say that when you exercise your choice of being present, what is really happening is that presence is choosing to manifest through you. But what presence wants you is to feel that you can have that choice because it helps it to manifest. Ultimately, there isn't you and presence.

You are an aspect of presence. So, forget about what I just said. But exercise your choice to be present, no matter where you are.

And if you lose it, fine. It's coming back again and again. Of course, you will drift off again sometimes.

You drift off into thinking. You may drift off into reactivity and find, and then come, but then come back. The moment you notice it, the moment you notice that you've drifted off into reactivity, your choice is to come back.

If you cannot come back directly by saying, okay, I'll just be present, then use either your breath to bring you back, use the awareness of the inner body to bring you back, use some conscious movement to bring you back, or use sense perception to bring you back, looking without labeling. It's all, all the, especially natural things are helpful. You look at them, look at your dog.

He's not thinking. So, and immediate, it's so easy to be present with an animal, with nature, with the sky. You can use those things as help.

So if you need some additional help to be present, use that. I sometimes call that a portal into presence. Use the portal of the present moment, which is what present is.

Okay, what's the problem right now? What's wrong now? And then you have to, because the mind has been telling you for an hour that things are very wrong.

And then you have to, well, what's, what's wrong? What's the, what's the actual problem at this moment, which after all is all that ever exists? What's the actual problem at this moment?

Well, this has just happened and this might happen. No, this moment, nothing. I'm sitting here breathing.

There was a man working with Byron Katie, a spiritual teacher, and he was talking about, oh, I'd love to have enough money. And if I had enough money, what I would do, I thank you for your question. I don't know if this is still the answer to your question, but the man was saying, if I had enough money, I would move to Hawaii and that would be so great.

That's my dream. And she said, well, what would you do in Hawaii? Said, well, I would sit in a deck chair by the beach or in my backyard and look at the palm trees, breathe.

And she pointed out to him, well, where are you sitting now? Is the chair comfortable? Yeah.

So what's wrong with that chair? How different would it be to have just a slightly different view around you? You can be in Hawaii now.

It's an inner state. It's just the mind telling you, you need to be somewhere else in order to be happy. You need to be somewhere else.

It's here now. What's wise to seek, postpone fulfillment to some future imagined point, not realizing that the source of all satisfaction is within you already. And then sense that as your very presence.

And then the rest is, as Einstein said, I want to know the mind of God. The rest is details. The mind of God is consciousness and everything else, whatever happens or doesn't happen, you catch the bus or you miss the bus, you lose money, you gain money, up and down.

Hot and cold. That's all the details. So now you go to sleep, lie on your bed and feel the presence pervading the body.

And when you wake up before you do anything else, lie on your back, feel the aliveness in the body, and then look around. That's a good way of going to sleep and coming out of sleep. Improves your dreams too.

Waking up in a dream, you might've had that once or twice. You suddenly realize you're dreaming. And usually quickly the dream comes to an end.

And what's happening here is really very similar. You're waking up to your essential reality and then your whole life feels a little bit like a dream unfolding. At least it does to me, but it's quite pleasant.

And so you're awake and in the dream. That's a lucid dreaming, they call that. And what we are doing here is called lucid living.

Very similar. Oh, tastes so good.

[Speaker 2] (1:39:12 - 1:44:38)

Welcome to another live meditation. Meditation is finding the inner stillness. It doesn't need to be created.

It's not an attainment. It's always there waiting to be discovered. It's underneath the stream of thinking and it is possible to sense it in the background even while you're thinking in daily life.

But most importantly, you discover it and you sense it most strongly when thinking subsides for a moment. But what's left is awareness or presence. And that's happening here.

This is an invitation to you to stop thinking, which does not mean going to sleep. It means being highly alert, present, without the movement of thought. Or if there is thought, just little fragments of thought.

When you know you're not interested in thought, then the power of thought that thought usually has to seduce you, to hypnotize you, becomes diminished. Most people live as if under some hypnotic spell throughout their lives. Hypnotized, mesmerized, drawn into, identified with completely, every thought that arises in their mind.

That's a very unfulfilled and unfulfilling existence. Existence. Emotions often reflect thought, mostly reflect thought.

And so certain types of thought often create certain types of emotion. And this becomes part of the hypnotic spell. So you're then trapped inside your own little world.

[Speaker 1] (1:44:44 - 1:44:56)

Whether it's predominantly a personal little world or predominantly a collective mind-made hypnotic spell.

[Speaker 2] (1:44:58 - 1:46:28)

It doesn't make much difference. And so that's why these, the term awaken, waking up, awaken, is used in many spiritual traditions. You awaken out of the hypnotic spell of being identified completely with a stream of thinking, which then gives you your sense of identity.

The thought-based identity, the person, the personality. In order to be able to think well, you need to also be able to step out of thought.

[Speaker 1] (1:46:30 - 1:46:42)

And then thinking can become a powerful tool that can be used by consciousness. Thinking being an aspect of consciousness. Consciousness has taken form.

[Speaker 2] (1:46:49 - 1:47:21)

But if you're not able to step out of thinking, thinking becomes self-serving and becomes the main source of the trouble difficulties in your life. So I won't say very much.

[Speaker 1] (1:47:24 - 1:47:37)

You can keep your eyes open if you like and look at me. I'm not thinking. This may help you to connect with that state within you.

[Speaker 2] (1:47:38 - 1:48:17)

You can close your eyes too, if you prefer that. Or you can alternate between looking and closing your eyes. If it's not enough for you to look at me and step out of thought as you look, if thought still intrudes, as you probably know, you can place your attention on your breathing that stops thinking.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:19 - 1:48:31)

Or you can place your attention on the inner body, feeling the aliveness inside your body that can become an anchor for presence and takes your attention out of thought.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:33 - 1:49:33)

So whatever it is, the important thing is that it's expressed negatively, so to speak, to be free of thinking. Expressed positively is to be aware of yourself as the awareness, to sense your essential presence. So it's the two perspective on the same thing.

Freedom from thinking, being able to sense your essential presence, the presence. I sometimes call it your presence, although it's not yours.

[Speaker 1] (1:49:40 - 1:49:47)

So I may occasionally say a word or two just to remind you why we're here.

[Speaker 2] (1:49:50 - 1:49:55)

And I'll use my bells.

[Speaker 1] (1:49:57 - 1:50:11)

I may use them occasionally for those of you who have drifted back into thinking and then the sound of the bell reminds you to step out of thinking.

[Speaker 2] (1:50:14 - 1:58:42)

Look at me, sense your own presence or close your eyes and be aware of the fact that you are conscious, that you are consciousness. Consciousness. No effort, no trying, no doing.

You're not doing a meditation. You can't do a meditation. You're becoming aware of being.

Doesn't involve any doing. The alertness arises naturally. You don't need to force it.

So the two seemingly incompatible states merge and they are alertness and relaxed. Alert and relaxed. Not trying to achieve anything.

On the level of doing, there are many things you can still do and accomplish. On the deeper level of being, there's nothing you can add to yourself and you're already complete.

[Speaker 7] (2:09:09 - 2:10:57)

Thank you. Thank you. I was watching a talk with you and Neil Donoghue Walsh and he said, you know, we both wrote great books but the difference between him and you is that you live it.

And so first I just gotta thank you for being such an example, for something that's truly missing in most of the world. But my question is, what's a day like in the life of Eckhart? It sounds like a bad reality TV show, but yeah.

[Speaker 1] (2:10:59 - 2:12:30)

It's not terribly interesting. It's very ordinary, unless when I'm traveling it gets a bit more interesting, because there's a plane to catch, and there's a hotel, and so on. But when I'm not traveling, it's extremely ordinary.

I love being, so there's always set aside time for just being still or walking in nature. I'm notorious for not meeting deadlines. And everybody knows when they say, there's a debt, this needs to be done, this thing needs to be done by, so and so.

Well, we'll see. And I love nighttimes, so I sometimes don't go to bed until 1.30 or 2, and sleep about five hours. And I like little things, going to a cafe, have a coffee somewhere.

Nature, as I said, love walking in nature. Reading occasionally, being, doing whatever needs to be done, people call, there's always things that need to be done, I do them quietly. Some things don't get done at all, and then they disappear.

[Speaker 7] (2:12:33 - 2:12:39)

Easier for you, right, yeah. Are you still able to go out in public, though?

[Speaker 1] (2:12:39 - 2:12:40)

What?

[Speaker 7] (2:12:40 - 2:12:41)

Still able to go out in public?

[Speaker 1] (2:12:41 - 2:17:04)

Well, that is interesting, it's, I go out, usually with a baseball cap, which I never really liked, but I've been wearing them for years now. Because I love privacy, I love to be invisible, I love to be in a room and being able to just observe what goes on in the room without anybody being aware that I'm there. That's more difficult now, so often people come up, even with a baseball cap, they come up, and usually it's lovely, they say some, that it's been so wonderful, my life has changed, it happens almost every day.

And that's wonderful, I prefer not to be recognized, but the moment it happens, I'm happy, and I respond, and it's a loving interaction. But my preference is not to be seen. I'm an introvert by nature, so even to go out and give talks was a very strange thing for me, I knew that this is what the universe wanted me to do, or the universe acting through me, so it's things, one surrenders into things, and then they're fine, it's not my nature to go out on stage and talk.

And so, every situation brings its own challenges, the loss of privacy and so on could be seen as a challenge, and requires then surrender, to see in this world, there are polarities, you gain something here, you lose something there, in the world of polarities on the surface level, you experience polarities. The gain here has to be paid for something. So the fact that the teaching has gone out to so many people, that's wonderful, of course then, yes, privacy is lost, then you need to accept that.

Before I had privacy, but very few people were reached by the teaching. When I did workshops in the 80s and early 90s, there was one evening talk in England that had been scheduled, nobody turned up. So I was alone, I just sat there.

But I had my privacy. And then I had a workshop once, usually I had about seven, 10, 12, 15 people for little workshops, or one workshop had been, somebody had organized a workshop for me, and I arrived for a weekend, Saturday and Sunday, one person turned up, waiting at the door, and said, okay, let's do it. So not that many people were reached, but wonderful privacy.

So that's how it is, it's simple. I don't live in an ashram where some spiritual teachers live in an ashram where they're surrounded by people who go. And that can be, of course, comforting for a while to the ego, if you still have an ego, hopefully not to the spiritual teacher.

But it's not, I prefer to be in every, normal, everyday life, and go to the supermarket, and so on, so it's not interesting, unfortunately. And not even glamorous, except occasionally when I visit Oprah, then suddenly it's, ah. Driving into the big, the gates open to the big mansion, and you drive in, shh, oh.

Oh. But otherwise, not that much glamor. Thank you.

[Speaker 6] (2:17:27 - 2:19:22)

Thank you for the opportunity. The last conversation that I had with my dying son, 14-year-old, with cancer, 13 years ago, after praying on that night, he asked me, mom, how can I become more aware of the presence of God? That was his last question.

So I remained silent, and then I answered, there's nothing that we can do, only to ask, and it will be given to you. And he didn't say a word. He just moved his hand, and kind of grasped what was in the atmosphere, and he just grasped it, smiled, and gave me a hug.

So, I felt I needed to share this to you and with the audience tonight. And my question, Eckhart, is, what's the relationship between the ego and consciousness, stillness, while we are sleeping, especially at night, long sleep, and our mind is active, and we are dreaming, and we feel that is a reality, but sometimes we are aware it's not a reality. But I want to continue in that reality.

I feel magnetized. So, what is that interaction that is happening there?

[Speaker 9] (2:19:24 - 2:19:24)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (2:19:40 - 2:26:28)

There are two dimensions to sleep. One is when you're asleep, and you're dreaming, and the other one is normal life, where there's also identification with all the things that the mind produces. And there's a connection, of course, between the two.

The focal point of what we do, of awakening, is to awaken in the dream that is called ordinary life. And the presence that comes into your life through that, which is a disidentification from the mind patterns, the mental, emotional conditionings, the ego, which is identification, complete identification with the mind, which is ego, that may also have an effect eventually on what happens in your dreams. It may transform the nature of your dreams.

Your dreams may become more benign or more pleasant, and you may find from time to time, or more often, within the dream, you suddenly become aware that you are dreaming. It can be quite nice. But the most important thing, of course, is that you become aware in ordinary life that you are dreaming when you are dreaming, when you're totally identified with the mind, to become aware then.

And then that awareness may come into the dream also, and suddenly you're like, oh, I can do anything. It's only a dream. Usually soon after you wake up.

The ego gradually diminishes as you stop identifying so much with the mind. And that is one of the reasons why the nature of your dreams becomes more benign, because the ego just lives in a violent reality. There's enemies and there's fighting and defensiveness and aggression, and that is reflected in the dreams.

Many dreams arise, usually often there are emotions associated with dreams. We tend to think that what we feel when we dream is emotions that we have when we dream are caused by the dream, but they're not. It's usually the other way around, that the dream is caused by preexisting emotions in you.

The mind is trying to explain the emotions that you feel, and it creates images as explanations for the emotions that you feel. This is the genesis of many dreams. When you look at it afterwards, it looks as if it were the other way around.

I felt fear because I saw this dreadful monster running after me in the dream. I've also really, no, the monster, there was an emotion of intense fear in you. The mind didn't know what to do with it, and then it created an image to correspond to the emotion, and that image became the dream.

It translated the emotion into an image, and it became, so you saw it there, and then you confuse, of course, cause and effect. The dream is the cause of the underlying emotion. The underlying emotion is there because of the egoic consciousness that creates an unpleasant reality and creates many negative emotions that are completely unnecessary, but it's created by the ego with its paranoid, delusional systems and many other dysfunctions.

So that is interesting because it can also be applied to everyday life. I saw, for example, dysfunctions in human consciousness. I observed a person who suffers from paranoia, and paranoia means you see enemies or you feel persecuted by people or groups of people or followed, you misinterpret reality, and when I looked closely at this, I saw that there was intense fear in that person, and the fear was so much, the fear could not be explained by the reality around this person because the reality around this person was fine.

The mind had to explain the fear. So the egoic mind came up with a delusional system and says, I am fearful because of this person who is following me, wasn't, he was just walking, and I'm fearful because these people are watching me while I'm here, they're here, they belong to this conspiracy of government conspiracy, they have a whole department wanting to control me, and that's why I feel this fear. So again, it's the other way around, and then eventually that person ended up with at least 100 people in full-time employment in their view just to follow me and to control me.

They're all around me. The government must be spending a lot of money on one person, but that is because the fear came there, the mind attempted to explain the fear and came up with that delusional system. So that's, the important thing is presence in the ordinary, the dream of ordinary life that bring presence into that more and more, and that will change also the nature of the dreams that you dream when you're asleep at night.

We have two dream worlds here, but for your focal point must be the dream world of ordinary existence.

[Speaker 10] (2:26:31 - 2:26:32)

Thank you.

[Speaker 5] (2:26:50 - 2:28:03)

It's a great opportunity to experience being in the same room with you. This is more of a personal question. Throughout my life, maybe most of you have experienced this where you feel like you're being guided or supported or helped along the way, and more recently, a couple of years ago, I had a major incident where I had like a, it was a near-death experience, and for some reason, I was, I survived it, and I'm here, and there's no real deal breakers that came out of it, but, so I, I mean, you know, I can walk, and you know, but, you know, so my question is more along the lines of did I make it from just pure luck? Is this the universe?

Is this my ego thinking I'm special? Is it, is it my karma to experience this?

[Speaker 1] (2:28:05 - 2:28:08)

To experience what you're experiencing now, or you?

[Speaker 5] (2:28:08 - 2:28:49)

Yeah, the experience of having gone through this near-death experience. Yes. Fortunately, I came out of it.

I've always had a good attitude. It was a medical accident that laid me out for a couple of years, and of course, I became much more spiritual, but before that, you know, I read your Power of Now and New Earth and followed it on Oprah, and I somehow, there was a feeling like, boy, I was almost set up for this.

[Speaker 1] (2:28:50 - 2:34:00)

Well, that's true, perhaps, for everybody, but in some, for some people it's much more obvious that you went through the life experiences that you went through, in your case, the near-death experience probably brought about, although you don't call it not a deal breaker, but it probably brought about a deepening in you, and it is through the difficulties, more than the good things, that we awaken spiritually.

That's the, that's unfortunately the case, sorry, but so it's through the huge challenges that the deepening happens and the awakening happens, and that's the reason, so you don't really, the mind might be very curious and say, yeah, but I want to know why me? Yeah. But I don't know why you, and I don't know why me.

The question didn't ever occur to me, because the me, I don't sense that there is a me to whom kind of it happened, really, although sometimes it might be expressed in that way. There is a, that sense of separate I-ness becomes more, less dense, loses its density, and this is why it happens, and through encountering the challenges of life and the losses and the suffering, some of it seemingly coming from the outside, some of it self-generated through egoic unconsciousness, and often a combination of both, through the suffering, it happens. It wouldn't happen without it, and really, that's all we need to know.

Any further thing you can speculate, perhaps you suffered in past lifetimes enough, so you just need it a little bit more now. It doesn't, it's not important. It's just to realize that when potentially bad things, there's always grace hiding behind the seemingly bad things.

It's hiding there, and we can be grateful retrospectively for the things that went wrong in our lives because it's brought us here. We wouldn't be here without that, and that really is all we need to know. The mind can never stop asking questions, and even for a little while, when I became peaceful, the mind said, it didn't say that much anymore, but occasionally it said, am I going to lose that again?

It started to write down in the first few months my daily experience. I said, I need to write this down because in case I lose it again, then at least I'll remember. So, but I didn't realize that the mind had already subsided considerably, and my mind activity had been reduced considerably, maybe by 70 or 80%.

So I experienced wonderful peace without knowing why and without knowing that my mind activity had been reduced considerably. I didn't know that. I experienced it as peace.

Somebody had said, why are you so peaceful? I don't know, and only years later, I realized, oh, I'm not thinking that much anymore. That's why I feel so peaceful, and then when I realized that, I could begin to help people step out of their minds.

Before, I couldn't have done that because I didn't know what was the causal factor behind this wonderful experience of peace. Didn't know that. And so, there are many questions, though, that the mind can ask that are not really helpful and unnecessary.

Understanding all kinds of things, in most cases, understanding doesn't necessarily bring you to awakening, but the need to understand, to relinquish the need to understand, well.

[Speaker 5] (2:34:01 - 2:34:04)

It's the great mistreatment. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:34:07 - 2:34:16)

And now, when I say to relinquish the need to understand, doesn't necessarily mean that I don't want anybody to ask any more questions. Yes. Ah.

2014 Eckhart Tolle Touching The Eternal India Retreat Part 1

[Speaker 2] (0:00 - 0:02)

This is audible.

[Speaker 1] (2:03 - 1:30:43)

These are called teaching sessions, but there's not really any teaching. Teaching, but words are limited, we have to find some words to describe it. Teaching would mean that I'm adding something to you, knowledge, information, facts, or an experience even, but that's not what this is about.

It's not about adding anything to you, there's so much there already, more than enough. You have more information than the Buddha ever had. And, of course, there are beautiful maps or signposts in existence, and that may be some of the spiritual information that you have, beautiful maps or signposts in the form of ancient scriptures that point the way to the transformation of human consciousness.

And here we are not using any of the existing maps or signposts, beautiful as they are, profound as they are, many of which originated in this country, which could be called the birthplace of spirituality. Not that there's anything wrong with those maps, they are beautiful, those signposts. But every age creates its new signposts that corresponds to the needs of the age.

The old ones can still work if used rightly, or they can become a hindrance if used wrongly. Now, you may notice I use the word maps or signposts to describe ancient teachings, spiritual teachings. And why?

What is a map is never it. The map is not the territory. The signpost is not the place to which it points.

So all teachings, ancient or contemporary, point beyond themselves. And the essence of all teachings is the possibility of the transformation of human consciousness to a state that is free of bondage, free of suffering, free of conditioning. So the teachings point the way to that.

And they are beautiful, because those genuine teachings came out of that transformed state of consciousness. Those few individuals in the past who became free of their conditioning, free of the false sense of self, false me, the egoic identity, they taught out of that state. The teaching arose out of that transformed state of consciousness.

And so it has beauty and power. And it has such beauty often that these ancient teachings drew so much attention to themselves, because they are so beautiful and you can compare one map with another, one signpost with another, that people began to study, compare and collect maps and signposts and interpret them. And from then it was just a small step to forgetting that to which they point, because one became so absorbed in the form of the teaching, and not only that, after a while when you began to love that signpost so much, that map so much, you had a sense of identity with it.

And all those other people also loved this signpost so much. And you could begin to argue with other groups of people who loved other signposts. Forgetting that they point to the same place.

And then you could carry, metaphorically speaking, the burden of signposts with you. That has happened, can still happen. And then it's also possible that a signpost, when there was readiness in a human being, he or she just needed to hear, to look once, twice and immediately realize the truth of it.

And it worked, as it should. This teaching is relatively neutral culturally. It's not Buddhist, not Christian, not Hindu.

And yet it embraces the essence of all of them. It is not rigid in its form. There's nothing to believe in.

And the essence of this teaching, which is our gathering here this week, is the possibility of the transformation of human consciousness. Your consciousness, so to speak. And since all language is limited, form is limited, these words are also signposts, of course, since all form is limited, every word that I speak is also limited and isn't quite it.

It's only one perspective on it. And even if I say the transformation of human consciousness, it's not quite true. No single statement that anybody makes can contain the truth.

It is a perspective on it. This is good to know, once you know that, so that you do not grasp one statement, one perspective, identify with one perspective and say, this is the truth. The transformation of human consciousness, yes, this is one perspective on it, but it implies then that something in you needs to change, become transformed before this new state arises.

Something in you needs fixing, it implies that, but that's not true. Transformation of consciousness also implies that you need time. For this change to happen.

But that is not the case. So what is the essence then of that transformation of consciousness that doesn't need time? Is that possible?

And here we come to the essence. And the only reason why we are here is to know that state of consciousness for ourselves, not as something that needs to be achieved in the future, but as something that is already in you now. Now, how do you know that beyond making it into another belief?

Because you could adopt that belief when you hear certain teachings, they tell you you're already enlightened. And that could be a very satisfying belief to add to the content of your mind. And then for a while you could convince yourself that this is true.

The teacher told me that nothing needs to change. I'm already enlightened. For a while that adds a little bit to the mind-made identity, the mind-made sense of self, and you feel great.

You finally made it. The mind-made sense of self always seeks to improve itself, to add something, to complete itself, to enhance its sense of self. And if you can catch a belief, a big powerful belief that somebody gives you, and you can then add it to the accumulated content of your mind with which you identify as yourself, then that for a while is very satisfying.

You've become big in that. The self has grown to an enlightened, me the enlightened one. But it's only satisfying for a while, and then life will show you that that wasn't it, and maybe you're not quite enlightened yet.

And then there's looking for the next thing to identify with, experience, another belief, more knowledge, then you look for the real spiritual attainment to add to me. And so the striving away from who you already are continues, the movement towards future continues, the grasping, the continuous reaching out and grasping to complete yourself spiritually, materially, you've gone beyond that, perhaps, and now spiritually. Relationships, maybe you've gone beyond that.

Self-completion, the looking for that. And here comes this strange teaching that says you can never find that. In the future.

And yet, don't believe me. If it is already the case, if you are already free, enlightened in your essence, then what is the difference between you and the spiritual master, if there is such a thing? Well, one could say the master knows this to be true, and you don't know it to be true.

Yes, but how do you know it to be true? How does that manifest? And it's very, very simple.

It's not the case that the master knows more than you. Some masters may do. Other masters may be very simple people, little education.

You know a thousand times more than they do on the level of knowledge. But they know the one thing that matters. And you know many things.

So the answer is simple, and I'll tell it to you now, in case you want to leave, go home early. Because I don't want to build up this and say, I'm going to tell you the answer on day six. The master is totally at one with this moment.

He or she does not oppose internally this moment. He or she offers no inner resistance to this moment, to the is-ness of now, to whatever arises now. It is not resisted internally.

And that is the end of all that is false in you. The entire egoic structure depends on your inner resistance to the suchness of this moment. It perpetuates itself.

The mind-made sense of self perpetuates itself basically through its resistance. It is a state of resistance, a state of insufficiency, a state of continuous wanting or fearing the mental projection that you call future. Wanting and needing the future as something that comes towards you, to add to me, to complete me, and fearing that something may arise in that mental projection that we call future that might diminish me.

The two movements connected with future, the enhancement of one's sense of self, no matter what form that may take, that is looked for in and through future. That is why there is this enormous mental pull away from the aliveness and fullness of now into future because what is being sought, the seeking is to add more. The future will complete you.

And this is true up to a point. You need future in your spiritual practice. I'm not completely saying this is all nonsense.

No. You need spiritual, for many people, spiritual practice implies a progressive movement, a progressive movement towards the liberated state. But a point comes in your progressive movement where you suddenly realize the fallacy of time as far as the one thing is concerned that truly matters in your life, which is knowing who you are beyond form.

Finding yourself beyond mental constructs. Then suddenly you realize the fallacy of future as far as your spiritual liberation is concerned. But before you could realize that, you needed your spiritual practices.

You needed time. You needed suffering. And spiritual practice is not necessarily spiritual practice in the conventional sense for people.

Spiritual practice for many people means suffering. There are many people who have no spiritual teacher except suffering. And suffering is the greatest, the greatest spiritual teacher.

So they needed that because there are two statements that are synonymous when I say you do not need, ultimately, you do not need time. This is not true for everybody. It is only true for that human being who can listen to that now and realize the depths and the truth of it.

And we are only here to explore the depths and the truth of that statement for the whole week, which is time. We explore the timeless state of consciousness here. Something in you doesn't even like what I am saying, perhaps in some of you, because you are still identified with time and the movement of time as the me that seeks completion through it.

And if only that me, the little egoic self in you listens to these words, it won't like that because its very existence is bound up with time. So it is quite possible that some of you may, if you haven't been here before, may feel a strong impulse to leave. And there is nothing wrong with that.

It simply means there is not yet the readiness to hear the simplicity of this truth and the depths of it that says you don't need time. And there is fear even to want to go more deeply into that statement to see what that means. There is fear.

Who fears that? The time-bound sense of self fears that statement. And that's fine.

That means you do not need more time. It's not true for you. It means you need more time.

It's fine. But this also is connected to suffering. There is a synonymous statement with you do not need more time.

It is the statement you do not need more suffering, which is the ultimate teaching of the Buddha, the end of suffering. You do not need more time implies you do not need more suffering. And again, this may be true for you or it may not be true for you.

It is not a statement that is true for everybody. So whatever your spiritual practice has been, whether it's been through teachings or through suffering or a combination of both, the question is whether there is an inner readiness to hear these words and to, if only, obscurely sense the truth of these words. Not understand.

If you start thinking about it, you won't get very far. You don't need more time is true, therefore is true and not true. And this is not satisfying to the mind.

I will often say things that are true and not true. That pointer may be true for you or it may not be true for you. The mind doesn't like that it says it is either true or untrue.

And in science, this is the case, well, has been until recently, until they discovered molecular physics in subatomic particles and see that they behave in such a way that those statements don't apply there anymore either. So the question then, do I need time? Do we need time for realization?

The answer would be you need time until you realize that you do not need time anymore. So all we are doing this week is to go deeper into this statement, to explore where this signpost, which is these words, to explore where this signpost points. You don't need more time.

I don't need more time to be who I am, to be myself fully, completely. How do I know that beyond making it into another belief? How do I know that beyond me giving you new practices that give you more time to practice, become good at, and then regard as an attainment, once you've become good at it, as an attainment you can add to yourself.

It feels a little bit bigger through that. So how do you know it? You know it, and here, through entering into, and I'll say it now, it may frighten some of you, entering here, as this is our only practice this week, only one practice, entering into the surrendered state of consciousness that does not need more of anything.

It does not need more of anything, because if you need more of anything, even spiritual attainment, that is not the surrendered state of consciousness. If you need more knowledge, that is not the surrendered state of consciousness. If you need more experience, that's not the surrendered state of consciousness, let alone other basic, we know all the other things, status, possessions, money.

If you need the psychological need for the next moment, which is deep in everyone, I need that inner reaching out to the next, what's next, what's next, that restless looking towards the next moment, which is part of the normal human state of consciousness, that's all the unsurrendered state of consciousness, the surrendered state of consciousness, and this is vital, and so I have to repeat this, because it's easy to forget, more, you don't need more anymore to complete yourself.

The more, more on the level of playing with phenomenal things is beautiful, I need, you need, of course you need more food later today, you need more, more skills, you can learn a few more new skills, that's part of living in this form, but more in the psychological, the psychological need for more, where the self needs to enhance itself through more, you're realizing that is the unsurrendered state.

And the last thing that people don't want to let go of, is you even surrender the need to understand more, and then you go beyond, you go into the surrendered state of consciousness, when you simply welcome the suchness of this moment, whatever form it takes. That at first looks like an absurd spiritual practice, because very often, in fact more often than not, this moment does not look all that satisfying. So to say, I totally surrender to the suchness of this moment, including all the, whatever I feel is not right with me, what I'm feeling at this moment, it may be restlessness, it may be anger, whatever it may be, you mean you want me to be stuck in this moment forever?

But of course that's not what it is. And what better place to enter the surrendered state than India? And maybe this is why this country has produced more spiritual masters than any other.

You have to surrender here. India teaches you to surrender. That is the, even without going to any teachers, it is a teaching in itself.

The illusion that you can control the material universe, the illusion that out there there is anything substantial that lasts, which you could have in the West, because you have substantial shopping malls and freeways, and everything works, it all works. And it gives you the illusion, it gives you the illusion that there's something lasting there. And this, sooner or later, even there, reveals itself as an illusion.

The shopping malls will crumble, unless you crumble first, your physical form. It's insubstantial, but the insubstantiality of the physical is more apparent here. And the only way to be here, unless you want to suffer, is to surrender to what is.

It doesn't mean you can't say, oh, could you please heat up this soup, or whatever. I prefer hot to cold, or whatever it is. You can say something and do something and initiate action, but in that, be surrendered, because it may not work.

And whatever action arises, let it arise out of the state of alignment with the form that this moment takes, even if it looks unsatisfying. During this week, sometimes the form that this moment takes will be beautiful. And then the next moment, or rather the next form that this one moment, the only moment there is, takes, may be not beautiful.

It may be a limitation on your freedom. For most of you, or all of you, unless you are ascetic practitioners, where you are now is not as comfortable as your home. Facilities, you haven't got, so you have limitations on your life here that you may not have at home.

You have others there. You have limitations on your life here, physical even. The food may be strange.

Many kinds of limitations. And so there is, you can observe the reactivity of the little me that says no to what is, internally, and wants to be somewhere else, or blames or criticizes or complains in the head about the form that this moment takes. That is the unsurrendered state.

That is how the egoic entity survives through resistance. And it can get very strong here if you don't know how it operates. So our spiritual practice here during this week is, just be watchful and alert and ask yourself, observe yourself internally, am I in the surrendered state or the unsurrendered state of consciousness?

The unsurrendered state denies, resists or tries to get away from what is. The surrendered state has surrendered its need for more, has surrendered its need for this moment to be different from what is, because it has recognized that what is, is already as it is. And it has recognized the futility of resisting that internally.

It embraces the suchness of this moment, whatever form this moment takes. You do not demand that the form that this moment takes should be different from what it is. You do not oppose that.

What happens when you no longer demand that the form that this moment takes, and please observe this little signpost I'm giving you when I say, the form that this moment takes, because this moment is eternal, there's only this eternal one now, never changes, it cannot, it is, remains eternally as now. What appears in it is the world of form. A form of life appears in the vastness of the field that is the eternal now.

In this vastness, forms appear. And they appear, and that is the appearance of this moment. The form that arises, a situation, a place, an event, a person, comes, it's happening now.

Of course it's happening now. Nothing can happen that is not now. Whatever happens must happen in this eternal field of now.

We cannot fully understand through the mind what that means, but it is an amazing realization that there is nothing that is not now. To be and now, life and now, are totally synonymous, totally one. Nothing has ever happened that wasn't now.

Nothing will, can ever happen that is not now. How? Future moment can only appear as now, otherwise it has no reality except a mental projection.

And when is it happening? Now. And the memory of a past moment, there is no such thing really of a past moment, as there is no such thing as a future moment, there's only form that it takes.

There's only one moment, which is now, one eternal now. Now, the form that this now takes, the form that appears in it, as you go through life, a continuous flux of forms. Now, most people, all they know is the forms that arise in the now.

They have a relationship with those forms, which is either a relationship of desire, or a relationship of fear. They want to have these forms, or they have aversion towards these forms. And you can observe this this week, how the good things come to you, how beautiful, the river, the holy river, the sunset.

And the next moment, there's something dreadful happens. It's the now, it's not really the next moment. Even I use those words sometimes, because language works in that way.

There's no such thing as the next moment. The next, the form that the moment takes, then changes. So, most people, all they relate to is the forms that arise in the now, and their relationship is one of fear or desire.

They fear or desire those forms, aversion or attraction towards these forms, because all they know is the forms. What they don't know is the now, beyond the forms. And this doesn't make sense to the mind, either.

This is a signpost that points... The truth of this cannot be understood through thought, because the transformed state of consciousness is beyond thought. This is where we are now moving.

Let's see why, what happens when, as is the normal, in the normal state of consciousness, when you resist internally, or deny, or run away from internally, from the isness of now, the form that this moment takes, the reaction against it, the reaction against the form that this moment takes, as an inner contraction, an inner no, an inner running away from it, it strengthens the form identity in you, that is the mind-made self, identified with mental, emotional forms, content of your mind. The mind-made self, the me, with its experiences and its conditioning, its knowledge, it strengthens its form identity through reacting to other forms.

So you get trapped in the world of form when you are in a reactive relationship towards what arises in the now. And to be in a reactive relationship, which is desire or fear, is part of the normal state of consciousness. And the reactive relationship to the world of form is what keeps the me, the egoic entity, going.

The more every time you react against, your form identity contracts and strengthens as the me, you feel stronger in your sense of self. And you can notice it in yourself when you argue with somebody and you are trying to be right. And this is a very common example of strengthening your sense of self by identifying with a mental position and fighting some other mental position there.

So you are reacting to form. Or an event comes into your life, a person comes, a situation comes, and there is a reaction, or you are strengthening your form identity through the reactivity to form. And that's what keeps the world going, that keeps that state of consciousness going.

To go beyond that, and it only works if you are not ready. You wouldn't even want to listen to this. The fact that you sit here and listen means the readiness is there.

The readiness to go beyond that and enter the state of non-resistance, enter the state of surrender, of welcoming whatever form arises. This is our spiritual practice, and this is the best place to practice it, and we are here welcoming whatever form arises, inner as an emotion, a feeling, or outer form. Because it is, it already is.

You say yes to that. You are no longer in a personalized relationship to whatever arises. You embrace what arises through that yes.

It is. Embrace. And what happens when you embrace the form of this moment?

You become who you already are. You become, and I'm only using pointers, the pointers are not it. Words.

You become who you already are and what you already are. You become very deep and spacious. As you allow the world of form to arise and to subside in that field of now, there's a great sense of spaciousness now around this form that arises, this event, this person, this thing.

It is not resisted. And suddenly, one could also say there's suddenly a vast peace around it, no matter what it is. The form itself may not be peaceful.

The form itself may be a limitation on your physical form. It may even be a limitation on your psychological form of me. But it is allowed to be.

The limitation is not resisted. Let's say you're trapped in a cold room. And it's just a simple example.

And that form that this moment takes, which is while the body feels, is simply allowed to be. Any condition is simply allowed to be. And suddenly, there's this vast space around the condition.

Anything that is, you could practice that with anything that is uncomfortable in your life. And there may be things here because you would probably be more comfortable at home. And sometimes you may wish you were at home in your comfortable armchair watching television.

Having your favorite drink, a meal. And all this is gone here. And suddenly, there's a limitation.

There is a discomfort that arises somewhere. There may even be pain. But let's just talk about a little thing like a discomfort that arises.

And so you can react. So the discomfort becomes a reaction which leads to mind movements, which strengthens the me. Because the me has made the moment, the now, into its enemy.

And it gets stronger through that, through the mind movement and the emotional movement that makes the now into its enemy. And you can complain about it in your head. Why did I ever come here?

I shouldn't. They shouldn't. Why don't they?

So you can... So the discomfort reacted against, is denied, resisted, and mind movement begins. Emotions that accompany that mind movement flow into and strengthen those mind movements.

And it's all connected. Your sense of self gets stronger in that. And you're complaining inside your head and maybe to somebody else.

I'm not saying you can't complain in the sense of telling somebody to change this from here, to do that. But I mean the psychological complaining. And many people live in a constant state of that.

There are marriages, people living, husbands and wives, who are in a constant state of mental complaining about their husband or their wife. It's so normal, they don't even know it anymore. For 30 years they've been complaining in the head.

It's their normal state. But with everybody it's like that. It may not be in your marriage, may not be like that.

But some are, quite a few are. So a discomfort arises. And instead of the reactivity strengthening the egoic entity that needs its enemies to feel I'm me, if only the enemy is this little situation that creates discomfort.

That will do, any enemy will do to strengthen the self, the me. And of course when you complain, you are right. And the situation is wrong.

That is the essence of the complaint, the inner complaint. I am right. Either the person, or it may not be a person, the situation is wrong.

That's the nature of complaining. You are putting yourself in a position of rightness, me, right, a mental position. Then your sense of self becomes identified with that mental position of rightness.

And therefore you are under the delusion, it's all unconscious, that you are more yourself now. It feels great, I'm against something. And it's unconscious.

People don't know that this is how the self, the false self, perpetuates itself. How it loves all the things it complains about. It needs them.

It's looking out for the next thing it can complain about. And then what happens if suddenly there is a shift? The discomfort arises, whatever it may be, and is met in that state of yes.

It's allowed to be. The discomfort is there and is allowed to be. And you actually embrace it.

That's all right. And that continues as a little movement, the discomfort movement, cold, a little pain here, whatever it may be, pain there. Water is cold, who knows.

And it's allowed, and there the discomfort continues. And you continue to simply be with it. And suddenly there is something more than that, or that little me.

Then what happens now is not something that one can put into words, because you go beyond form now. There is a space around the discomfort. And you can do that with any bodily condition, any physical condition.

Just stay with that. And suddenly there is a sense of spaciousness around it. And there is an enormous peace around that.

And the discomfort is still there. So the discomfort is any form of pain, suffering. You're simply allowing it to be as it is.

Allowing it to be as it is. So use... This is great that we have some discomforts here.

Theoretically one could have a retreat center that is so comfortable. Everything works totally perfectly to satisfy all your needs. Just the right temperature.

The thermostat works perfectly. The water is just right. The environment is totally soothing and peaceful.

You get a massage three times a day. The most exquisite food. Just the right amount.

Some celestial music in the background sometimes. Maybe one day, and it may be in California, they may create such a center. Wow, wouldn't that be great?

And yet, there wouldn't be very much spiritual practice there. It doesn't come in that way. Here you have the natural things that arise in an environment that to many of you is foreign and strange.

And many things arise here. In others there are schools, like Zen monasteries, where they consciously make your life as uncomfortable as possible. Where you get very little food, it's cold, they open the windows, and you meditate all night in this painful position, facing a wall with cold wind blowing in, and an empty stomach.

Then you can watch what arises in the now. And it may perhaps at one point you give up real resistance because you can't stand the pain of the resistance anymore. There is more to it than the form of this moment.

But you're suddenly aware of a vast space around this temporary form that includes the physical body. And that is, some people have described it as enormous peace, suddenly around. In the same awful place, the monastery, whatever it was, and there in the midst of that spaciousness, there's the physical pain, there's the empty stomach, there's the discomfort.

It's there somewhere, it's not a self anymore, there is simply, there is that discomfort, there is that feeling of empty stomach, and yet there is no me in it, it's just there. So your sense of self is no longer in the form, the psychological form or the physical form, your sense of self, where is, in some traditions, they now say you have discovered no self. The self has dissolved, which is true.

The false self has dissolved through entering the surrendered state. The false self has dissolved. And what arises then is, Buddhists may call it emptiness, or it may be called the self, the one, the unconditioned one consciousness, out of which the whole universe comes, out of which every phenomenon comes, that remains, and there it is, not known in a subject-object relationship, known as yourself.

Not that which arises, but the field in which everything arises, is who you are. You are not that which happens in the now, you are the field of now. That's the depth of what now means, the eternal.

Now is the eternal, unchanging one. And it's so easy to know that as the essence of who you are, and you can see how absurd it is to look for it in the future. The essence, eternal presence, the essence of who you are, to look for it in the future.

So, that's why this spiritual practice does not require time. And yet, and there's always a paradox whenever we speak about it, because all language is to do with time, and the phenomenal world. And yet, we are here for one week, which is time.

A whole week, exploring that which is beyond time. Sounds paradoxical, almost. Why do we need a whole week to explore the timeless?

Well, maybe you don't need it anymore. Maybe it's, once or twice it's happened that people have walked out and later contacted me and said, I'm the person who walked out after 10 minutes of your talk, because I realized the truth of it and I don't need to come anymore. That realization, of course, may be true or false.

If it's only a mind movement, life will soon tell you that, oh, this is not the surrendered state. I'm shouting and screaming at my wife. Is that the surrendered state?

So, our practice then is allowing this moment to be simple. The rest happens by itself. And there is enormous intelligence in this field of now.

It is the essence of all intelligence. The mind is a tiny aspect of that vast intelligence that is in the field of now. And one more pointer.

As you surrender to now, whatever form this now takes, the incessant mental noise that we call thinking, 90% of which is unnecessary, slows down. Because a large part of the compulsive streams of thinking that most people are identified with as me, as themselves, completely identified with those continuous streams of thoughts. And the reason why those thought streams have an addictive quality, a compulsive quality, is because your sense of self is in them, a me, your identification with those thought streams as a me.

And the me wants to sustain itself, so it can't stop. And the me can only perpetuate itself through non-surrender and resistance. And that gives fuel to the compulsion to think, because it's an expression of the non-surrendered state.

You're trying to control things somehow. And so you lie awake at night for two or three hours trying to work it out, control your life, fear what might come, rehearse something, project fantasies. With entering the surrendered state, the mental noise slows down by itself.

When you say yes to what is, mental noise will begin to subside. Still there to some extent, but you're not in a fighting mode anymore towards the universe. And to be in a fighting mode towards the universe is what creates that enormous momentum that is behind compulsive thinking.

It comes in waves and waves and waves. And there's always a me in it. And so with the surrendered state, that calms down.

So you don't need to stop your mind. That creates another problem. Just be with what is.

Allow this moment to be. Then the mind stops by itself. Because it's not compatible, compulsive thinking with allowing this moment to be.

And when the mind subsides, that continues stream of thinking, there's the spaciousness. There's the stillness that is underneath the mental noise in everyone. It's already there.

And that is none other than that spaciousness that is there beyond the form that this moment takes. And that stillness, again, every label is so limited. Every signpost is limited.

Stillness. Spaciousness. Awareness that does not need thought.

Beyond thought. Thought can arise in it. But it is beyond thought.

Vast intelligence. Unconditioned. What humans think of as intelligence is the ability of the mind to solve puzzles, to store knowledge, to analyze information.

It's very limited. The entire universe is an external expression in the manifested expression of vast intelligence expressing itself as form and most of it comes out of stillness. The flowers come out of stillness.

Exists in stillness. That beauty that no mind could create. Entire galaxies coming out of vast stillness.

They say the universe came about, scientists say there was a big bang when the universe out of one point suddenly exploded into existence. And then they ask, what was before then? And then their mind stops.

Well, it doesn't stop, but thought cannot reach there. What was there before the universe was there, before the big bang? That state of the unmanifested is still in you.

It's never gone away as your essence. The big bang happens continuously. The universe comes into existence every moment.

Don't think about that. Ultimately, this is now that there's a strong evolutionary impulse now on this planet that is forcing humanity to evolve into a state that before was the privilege of very few individuals here and there. They were the early flowerings of consciousness.

But it is the destiny of all humans to be, to express this flowering, to be openings for this flowering of consciousness to happen. So where the person, you come here as a person, which is the caterpillar, but you're already ready to go beyond that. Then the person was there and it's become dense and heavy in its last stages of personal selfhood.

And then the person gives way, just as the caterpillar dissolves as caterpillar and out comes this incredible, beautiful being. The person gives way to the flowering of human consciousness. Yes, you're still here in a physical form, but something far greater has emerged through this form.

And this is why we are here, to go beyond this absurdly limited sense of self with me, with my little bit of past and my little bit of history, my little story, and a pathetic little bit of future that I think is going to complete me. And there's so little, even for those who are young, it's not much. How can I complete me in those few years?

What can I possibly add to me to make me complete? It's an illusion. So to go beyond that absurdly limited sense of self to the vastness that you actually are, not as a limited me anymore.

You simply then become an expression of that, and it emanates then through this form. And so this is the only way now the planet can be saved, is human consciousness to become transformed. Until recently, it's been a luxury, that transformation.

A few here and there, and now, we have to. This is why it's happening. And we encounter a state of consciousness that is beyond thought, characterized by deep, vitally alive stillness.

And out of that, thought can still come. And those thoughts that come out of that are inspired thoughts, new thoughts, realizations. Thought is form, and this is the formless.

Knowing yourself as the formless, and then move through the world of form and enjoy that. This is the first time. It's only when you know yourself to be beyond that, not through some idea, but through being in the surrendered state, it's only then that you can enjoy the world of forms, truly.

When you are no longer in a personalized, reactive relationship to the forms that arise in your life, in the now, of course, then you no longer desire nor fear any particular forms. You enjoy the dance of form. And you may contribute to it.

You may create new forms. They come out of presence, not because egoic need to complete itself. So a completely different doing happens.

Completely different motivation for doing. No self-seeking through doing, not trying to get to some future point where you're going to complete yourself, and if you don't get there, you'll be unhappy. And if you do get there, you'll also be unhappy.

Of course, many of these things have been pointed to in ancient teachings. There's the Bhagavad Gita, a beautiful, one of the most beautiful signposts, the path of surrendered action, where this, the action, the doing, is not a means to an end. That is surrendered action.

The doing is not inferior to some mentally projected result that you want to achieve and thereby enhance your sense of self. Surrendered action is never a means to an end. It is sufficient unto itself.

So your practice is, be watchful of this moment. It's always this moment. A limited way of putting it would be to say, what is your relationship with this moment?

In ultimate terms, you don't have a relationship with this moment. You are this moment. But from a more limited perspective, you could ask yourself, what is my relationship with this moment or the form that this moment takes?

Surrendered or resistant? And you watch. And as you watch, many times you can watch non-surrender arising.

And then you watch non-surrender as a physical contraction, as an emotional movement, or as mental judgments. Often the three go together. Physical contraction, the emotion, and some mental judgment that says something about now or a total projection away from now.

And you see yourself in your favorite restaurant at home, having a meal there. And suddenly you come back to, oh, if you observe yourself in a non-surrendered state, that's all that's necessary. And allow that to be.

Physical contraction. Oh, look at that. Nothing personal in it.

It's the human state. Allow it. So it's as whenever a no arises in you, a no to what is, and you suddenly see it, accept it.

So the yes, you bring the yes into the no, always. You cannot fight non-surrender through more non-surrender or trying to achieve a surrendered state. It's enough to know that you are not surrendered.

That is the arising of presence. That is the arising of the unconditioned consciousness. And there you can allow, it allows that.

And then something happens to the non-surrendered state because it is not compatible with surrender. Of course, many teachings speak of surrender to God. And of course, this is what it is.

You can only surrender to God by surrendering to the form that this moment takes. When you ask, well, God couldn't possibly have created this dreadful form that this moment takes, this situation. It's a limitation.

It's a limitation. I want to know myself as unlimited. And here I'm faced with limitation wherever I look.

That's the form that this moment takes. The form that this moment takes cannot not be a limitation. Even if it looks like great, after a little while, the great has become a limitation on you.

Look at the West, it's become very wealthy and prosperous. And at first it means I'm now unlimited. I can buy whatever I like.

And then you buy more and more and another visit to the shopping mall and another visit and another. And suddenly all the things that you have bought have become a limitation on you. And everything is suddenly, buying doesn't fulfill you anymore.

And then you walk around the shopping mall depressed. So in the world of form, what looks sometimes like, now this form has come and freed me, always turns out to be another limitation because it is form and all form is limitation. So to project some situation mentally where you are going to be free of all limitations is absurd.

It is not in the nature of the world of form to be free of limitation. It would be a contradiction in terms. Form is limitation.

So wherever you go, you encounter limitations and every time you think, now this will free me, this person will make me happy, in other words, unlimited, then this very person that was supposed to make you happy will be the greatest limitation on your life. So it's not seeking where it cannot be found. So it's not by running away from the limitations, but by finding a new relationship towards the limitations.

And that new relationship towards the limitations, not that you can't take action to improve things and paint your house, but a new relationship towards the limitations in your life from one of feeling bad about them and thinking there must be some other situation that's better than this, well, maybe try another one and then the same arises again. Okay, try some other place, go live somewhere else, and then after a while the same arises. Okay, well, now just say yes to this.

The very limitation becomes an opening through the yes. That's the beauty of it. What before looked like a universe that was there to frustrate you, how could God allow this?

The universe looks, it was there just designed to frustrate you. And that's how some people live in such a reactive relationship. They're so angry.

Everything is just designed to make my life difficult. That's how it seems. And then your relationship changes towards what is.

And you allow it. And there's the limitation, whatever it may be, big, small, discomfort, little discomfort here, a little cold there, or present cell around you, fairly big limitation, physical condition of the body limiting you, can't move anymore, can't move fast anymore, who knows? Sooner or later, limitations will come.

Big ones will come too. Form. It's form.

And so it's not resisted anymore. Then something opens up where there before was limitation, becomes an opening into the formless and the unlimited. You've walked through the limitation.

Yes. This is the cross, the meaning of the cross. Crucifixion means limitation, at highest degree of limitation.

Can't move anymore. Totally limited. And then surrender happens in the face of the unacceptable.

And suddenly the cross becomes a symbol of the divine. The torture instrument becomes a symbol of the divine. And there's deep wisdom, no matter, you don't have to be a Christian to see the wisdom that is embedded in that, deepest, one of the deepest symbols of humanity.

And in most churches, they don't understand it at all. They don't understand the depths of it. They make it into some formal belief structures.

But the depths of it is to see that the non-duality that is there of the divine and the world of form, of the limited and the unlimited, they are one. It's through the world of form that the divine is reached. By going through it, not running away from it.

So, this is, to know this is our spiritual practice. To go deeper and deeper into this is our spiritual practice this week. Use, of course, there's great beauty here too, and there are limitations on you.

Use them wisely in your practice. Use this moment wisely, rightly. It's precious.

It's the only one there is. Ever. We will meet again in the now.

The hands of the clock will have shifted and show the 3.30 position, but it'll still be now. We may also have, as we go into this week, periods of silence. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:50 - 1:34:36)

Be as you are. Be as you are. Be as you are.

Be as you are. Be as you are. Be as you are.

Be as you are. Be as you are. Be as you are.

Be as you are. Be as you are. Be as you are.

Be as you are.

[Speaker 1] (1:36:32 - 2:49:40)

That's the wake up call. I'm not implying that anybody here is asleep. Wake up, awakening, the normal state of consciousness is the normal state of consciousness, which is thought, and then there's the state of sleep.

And what the normal state of consciousness is relative to sleep, the awakened state of consciousness is relative to the normal state. The normal state, in other words, and this is why for thousands of years the term awakening has been used, the normal state of consciousness compared to the awakened state of consciousness is very much like sleep, or rather dreams, dreamland. So the awakening is simply the awakening out of the dream of thought, out of being totally immersed in that dream.

Not that thought does not arise, it still can arise and does arise, and yet you dwell beyond thought in the state of presence, stillness, alert, awake, stillness, in which nothing is known and yet everything is known. So we've looked at a portal this morning, a portal into that state in which you're no longer trapped in thought, then that portal is surrender to what is. There's another portal that is continuously here, and that is the state of consciousness consciousness, out of which these words come, nothing personal about it.

Nobody's achievement, nobody's attainment. That would be to create another form identity around that which is beyond form. There's a state of consciousness out of which these words come.

You can tune into that, so to speak, I'm using language loosely, you can't use concise terms here, you can be receptive, tune into, become sensitive to the state of consciousness that could be described, because you might ask how you become alert and aware of an underlying field of stillness, one could say, out of which the words come, sound comes, it's gone, they're all pointers, point out of. And usually when you sit here only identified with thought, you would only be interested in that which arises, which is the words, and you would always be a little bit impatient for the next word to come, the next sentence, the next concept, the next idea, and you would find that we are not proceeding fast enough. The flow of information is insufficient for the mind, so you can detect, if you can detect within yourself a certain impatience or restlessness, which implies not enough, more please, more, more, that is, trapped in mind, trapped in thought, trapped in a thought-based sense of self, looking for more, and not getting enough here, and if on the other hand a state of alert presence, of just being here, in that open, spacious alertness, if that arises, then you become attuned to that field out of which the words come, the unconditioned consciousness, then of course every word carries some past, words come, words are old, every word is old, and yet something of the unconditioned flows even into the words, and then the words have a certain power that goes beyond any informational value that they may have, or not have. So, a portal that is continuously here, but it could elude you if you only look for content during these talks, if you only look for the content in these talks, then you would be missing that dimension that really matters here.

The content is only a relatively small part of the talks, so you become attuned to an underlying field, one could say, another way of putting it, you become aware of an underlying stillness here, whether you perceive it as external, or internal, or don't know where exactly it is, a certain stillness, and you notice that underneath the words, and in between the words, there is a field of stillness, that noticing, and you might, at first it might appear that that field of stillness is in this room, which to some extent is true, it might appear that that field of stillness comes from this form, which to some extent is true, but really, the moment you notice it, it's in you, because it can only notice itself, it can only know itself, not through thought can you know, or even notice, that field of stillness, because that field of stillness is beyond thought and beyond form, and thought is form, so through thought you have no access to it, and this is why the miracle happens, the moment you are aware of it, you have gone within yourself, beyond thought, and you have entered a dimension of consciousness that is unconditioned, whereas the whole realm of thought, or the mind, is the conditioned, consciousness has taken form as thought forms, the conditioned consciousness, what arises here is the dimension of consciousness that we could call unconditioned, and it is there, the moment you notice, become aware of, not so much one could say, what is there, but you become aware, and this is a slightly mystical statement, you become aware of what is not there, and ordinarily, in this world, nobody is aware, not very few, are aware of that dimension that underlies the conditioned, the vastness that underlies the conditioned, that is not separate from who you are, that is who you are, but you can never know it in the conventional sense, people look for self-realization and believe it is a state of knowing something about themselves that they hadn't known before, it is not a state of knowing something in a dualistic subject-object relationship, I know myself, you've already split yourself into two, in that sense you cannot know that unconditioned, it cannot be known as it cannot become an object of knowledge, so you cannot, because it is ultimately you, you cannot become an object of knowledge to yourself, because whatever you can know in the conventional sense is knowing something about yourself, which is the form in which you appear, and so you would know something about yourself if you underwent ten years of psychoanalysis, you would have a lot of knowledge about yourself, things you didn't know before, going back to childhood, reactive patterns, all kinds of very interesting things, and so, after ten years, the psychoanalysts might say, we have come to the end of our treatment sessions, your self-knowledge is now complete, and he would hand you a file, a huge file, containing all the self-knowledge, and you would then know a lot about yourself, and you could say, I know everything about myself, and then you might think, okay, I must be self-realized, but you only forgot when you said, I know everything about myself, you forgot about the I, who is it that knows, and what is it that it knows, it knows the conditioned, it's forgotten the knower, the knower, can the knower be known, no, the knower is the knowing itself, it cannot know itself, becomes very hard to talk about these things, because all language moves in the realm of duality, even every sentence structure has a subject and an object, this is why sometimes in teachings, paradoxical statements are used, or metaphor, or symbols, it's never it, it's maybe a little bit like that. So here, we enter, or we allow to arise, that dimension of consciousness, that is the prerequisite of all knowing, before any, before you can know any object of knowledge, there's the field of knowing, and the miracle is, be careful with words, don't think that they are the absolute truth, the miracle is, you can know yourself as that, not in a dualistic sense.

Let's forget about this now, let's return to, becoming simply alert to an underlying dimension of stillness, so that your total attention is not absorbed by that which arises, the words, and of course, no word is ever going to satisfy you on that level, so when you are fascinated by sense objects and mind objects that arise, not one is ever going to satisfy you, and you would always, any statement that I can make wouldn't be quite enough yet, there must be more, that's not the answer.

Yes, and then what? So you're no longer simply fascinated by that which arises, here it's the words, your total attention is not drawn into that, in other words, you're not, your incarnation into that form is not, is no longer total, because you reincarnate, so to speak, in a wider sense, every time you identify with a thought stream totally, you have reincarnated into that thought stream, your sense of self is completely in it, so you continuously reincarnate into arising phenomena, it could be external things, experiences, and you're totally, it matters absolutely, and so, one could say, the deeper sense of coming to the end of reincarnation is to no longer reincarnate into total identification with form, into seeking yourself, or believing that yourself is in a form, and here we are speaking at the moment primarily of thought forms, so to, this compulsion to reincarnate always into the next thought stream, to be totally fascinated by it, and always needing the more to make your reincarnation complete, and never getting there, that's, we are moving, that is being trapped in that normal state of consciousness, and that is still the majority of, on the planet, is still trapped in that, but very powerfully, something else is arising now, and it's arising here, so the words, you give them attention, but they no longer have your, they no longer have your total attention, there's some attention that you give to the words, but you also give attention to the underlying stillness, even as you listen, and of course, the moment you do that, the unconditioned consciousness is there in you, and your mind becomes still, without losing consciousness, you're fully aware, you're aware of the silence, but what really is that silence, or rather that stillness, the stillness is the unconditioned consciousness, awareness itself, and you're aware of that, now that sounds as if it were dualistic, but it's only because I'm using language, you're aware of awareness, when you are aware of stillness, and the moment you pay attention to stillness, you've become still, and that might at first be like a phenomenon outside of you, that you are attentive to, oh, and you may notice there is a certain alertness that comes with that awareness of stillness, and you cannot be aware of stillness through thinking, thought, stillness does not exist for thought, thought can come in subsequently and say, oh, that stillness, how nice, or it can say, oh, you see, you've lost it already, I had it, I had it, only a moment ago, how can I get back to it, that was such a wonderful experience, and it's not really an experience, because it is, the stillness is always there, so during these days here, learning what that means, to be aware of that underlying dimension, not only in these sessions, and then when you leave here, become totally absorbed again, or reincarnate again totally into arising thought streams and sense perceptions, but carry that awareness, awareness of underlying awareness, I'm speaking of things that you can't speak of, that's why it's sometimes a little funny, you carry that with you, not only here, although you can perhaps sense it more powerfully in these sessions, but then you walk out into, out there, into the gardens, and the river, and there, certain perceptions arise, and you're aware of those perceptions, and some of them will be very beautiful, and occasionally some may be ugly, this is the world, and you watch, and you, underlying the sense perception is a field of alert, still presence, in which the sense perception happens. And that means the compulsion to reincarnate into another thought stream is suddenly not there, you're happy not to reincarnate for a while into another thought stream, the true joy arises out of that state of presence, there is a very subtle joy in that, which in some teachings is called happiness, but I wouldn't use that word, it might even be a wrong translation, that joy is in essence an intrinsic aspect of yourself. I sometimes call it the joy of being, and so it does not depend on what forms are arising at this moment. So there is, you enjoy the play of forms, but the joy does not come from the forms.

If the joy comes from the forms, it's not joy, it's pleasure. Pleasure is something you derive because a new form has come in and makes you feel good for a while, and then it leaves you and makes you feel bad, or the good turns into bad. So if a form gives you joy, it's not really the deepest, the true joy that is an intrinsic part of your self nature, it gives you pleasure.

But pleasure exists in the realm of opposites, and what gives you pleasure will also give you pain, either because it leaves you or because it turns into its opposite, such as in a relationship, marriage, divorce, pleasure, pain. Or in business, gain, loss, and so Ramana Maharshi said, and of course that is a translation, and it may not be absolutely correct translation, happiness is your true nature. I would re-translate it, and perhaps in the original what he said is closer to that, joy is your true nature.

But don't look for joy, you would create some new object, mind object, you don't need to look for it, no, simply do not reincarnate continuously. And it's so simple, these sessions are helpful, and they are helpful beyond words, the words are helpful pointers, but there's much more to these sessions than the words. And so, be alert here to that dimension that is beyond the words, because that dimension is also beyond thought.

And that is where we are going, to know what that is, which one could describe as consciousness free of thought. And this is the next step, one could say, in the evolution of human consciousness. Which until now, we've just come to the end of thought, which means humanity, human consciousness being totally dominated, run by, identified with thought.

It started, as the myth tells us, in the Garden of Eden, which one could say is a symbolic representation of the arising of thought. They ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, evaluate, judge, the arising of thought, loss of Eden, and I'm told, the translation of that word, Eden is place of joy. Thought arose, and it was a great thing, and gradually, over many, many thousands of years, identification with thought came in, self and thought became one.

Mankind had to move through that. Now, that state of consciousness has become more and more dysfunctional. Look at the history of the 20th century.

Dreadful. Madness. So the dysfunction becomes apparent now, because we are arriving at the end time.

You may have seen people walking around, I don't know, they may not happen in India, but in the West, with placards, the end is near, the end is nigh, we have arrived at the end. And perhaps they don't realize how right they are, when they say, we have arrived at the, well, perhaps they should put a little another word in, we have arrived at the end of time. Because to be identified with thought, totally, is also to be governed by time, past and future, to live exclusively through memory and anticipation, and all that that implies.

So, and a completely limited and false sense of identity. We are moving out of that. A new state of consciousness is emerging.

This teaching would be pointless, nobody would even hear it, if it were not emerging already. So, this form is no more than a midwife, a mid husband, mid wife, I don't know, simply to help along the birth process. And not, I'm not here to make it happen, that would be frustrating.

Why aren't, and you are not here to make it happen in yourself, that would be equally frustrating. And you would come to the end of the six days, or seven days here, and say, I was looking for this great spiritual experience, and somehow it didn't happen. I was looking and looking and looking, and because you were looking for something, and you missed nothing.

So, you were looking to reincarnate into some experience, and didn't get it, or if you got it, maybe you got it, and say, oh, I had such a great experience there. And then you are back wherever you live, and then a few weeks later, it's wearing off. Oh, I wish I could get that back.

Where is it now? That was so great, and then you think, maybe I need to go back to India, back to India. That's where it is.

So, the essence of this gathering is very simple, but also very subtle. It can, it easily eludes you if you are too much in your mind. So, not only here, but also out there, be there as a field of alert presence.

That which you sense here, the underlying field, and know what it means, the beauty of this, to be free of thought. But don't look for that state. It comes by itself.

And in one moment, you are free of a million years of conditioning, as the unconditioned arises. Because if you had to undo the conditioned bit by bit, you would never see the end of it. There's so much.

So the unconditioned arises as the state of consciousness that is free of thought. That all the great teachings, not so directly, point to, some directly, some indirectly. When Ramana Maharshi was asked, how do we measure our progress on the spiritual path?

How do we know if we are making progress, they asked him. And he said, and some people don't like this, they say, no, no, he didn't really say that, but it's there. The degree of absence of thoughts is your measure of progress on the spiritual path.

It's as simple as that. And then some people say, no, what he really meant was, who is talking? Thought.

Trying to convince everybody else that that's not what he said. But be careful here not to make the state that is free of thinking into another future state to be achieved. Because you can't achieve it in that way in the future.

Not as something to be added to you. It is an enormous, the greatest renunciation, and the only ultimately true renunciation is not so much the renunciation of worldly things, the renunciation of sexuality, the renunciation of possessions, the renunciation of certain kinds of food, whatever it may be. The ultimate renunciation is, I'll say it, to renounce thought.

And thought, it says, tries to convince you that in that renunciation you would become, you would revert to the state of the cabbage, the vegetable. And it says this is not a desirable state. And that is true.

You don't want being a cabbage. It's beautiful for the cabbage. But the cabbage lives at one with the totality.

All vegetative life, all nature lives totally in the state of oneness still. So it's totally right for the cabbage to be the cabbage. But it is not the destiny of humans to revert to the vegetative or animal stage.

Although compared to humans, nature and animals are very, very sane compared to most of human life. There's enormous sanity there because they have not left, they haven't gone out into more and more highly differentiated form and form identification. They haven't left the source, they haven't gone that far from the source as humans have.

And so, yes, there's great, every animal is so rooted in being still compared to neurotic humans. Wow, just look how an animal moves and is itself, completely itself, not trying to be something, it is. But we are not going back there.

The animal also is free of thought, although occasionally the beginnings of thought movements can be observed in certain animals. We go beyond thought. One could say we are rising above thought where we do not lose the ability to think.

Simply means we are no longer reduced by thinking. We are no longer trapped in thought. We can now use thought.

Thought will operate when it's needed. It will be applied to a particular situation. But whenever even a situation that needs to be resolved, a challenge that arises, and it can only arise in the now, before thought arises, attention is given to it.

And that attention is the state of thoughtless awareness. Pure, you're looking at the totality of the situation in stillness, alert, alive stillness. There's a looking.

In that looking, enormous intelligence operates, and I'm looking in a wider sense, it may not necessarily be through the eyes. Attention is giving to the situation, complete attention in stillness. And then, perhaps, either spontaneous action or thought that then leads to action arises.

Spontaneous realization, perhaps in the form of thought, what needs to be done, or action without the intermediary of thought arises, and it's right for that situation. So thought can still operate. It already does in all creative people, people who create in whatever their field of activity is.

They become highly creative, and many of them don't know that they have the ability, even if it may only last for a few seconds, to be in the state of thoughtless awareness. That is the creative state. And there are many people, those who are creative, relatively few compared to the majority, they don't even know that this is how they create, and some of them do know it.

That it arises out of the state of still, alert presence, which is the higher intelligence, the unconditioned intelligence that operates. And then the insight comes, or the doing happens. But we are going beyond that.

We are not trying to do something with it, and those people have access to it in the limited field of their activity. The moment they move away from that, they are just as neurotic as everybody else. So we are moving beyond thought, not back, we step beyond thought.

This is humanity's destiny, and it's urgent now, not in the sense of, oh, we must get there. It's urgent in the sense that there is an intensity now to the arising consciousness, because the madness that is the dysfunction of the old consciousness is also getting accelerating. It gets worse, and at the same time, the new is already arising.

The two movements, the old still not even having reached yet the end of its madness, and the new arising at the same time. The old is still much more visible in this world. The madness of the old state of consciousness, with its need for conflict and problems, and the violence that arises out of that state, and the immeasurable suffering that humans inflict on each other and on themselves out of that state.

That madness is continuing on the planet, you only need to watch the news on TV or read the paper. That's a continuation of what we have seen in the 20th century and before that. And the new is arising, not so much visible on the surface of things yet, rarely mentioned in the media.

Occasionally it is mentioned already here and there. This is why we are here, simply not to make it happen, but to allow it to happen. We are simply opening the door wider, so that, unless we are not offering resistance to that anymore.

So, your practice here is continuous, but don't make impossible demands upon yourself.

Of course you will get drawn even here, back into mind streams, yes? You may reincarnate into a reactive mind stream.

And then a moment comes when suddenly there is an awakening out of that. Oh. As you can see, how clear, how obvious the difference between the states of the awakened state.

A moment ago you were in that heaviness, that dense energy. And suddenly you step out. And it's almost like having left, when you are on the plane, it goes through the clouds and suddenly the clouds are underneath you.

Oh, and there is vast, clear space. Infinite. And the clouds are still there, but you are not in them anymore.

Oh. And so, as you walk here, through the gardens, along the river, see if you can be in that state where the sense perception does not absorb your attention entirely. Nor the mental labels that arise to do with those sense perceptions, or to do with something totally different.

They don't absorb your attention totally. Attention remains free as the field of attention. In other words, you perceive in and through stillness, without needing to label everything immediately through the mind.

Of course, you know you're looking at this flower. You know it's a flower without having to tell yourself that this is a flower. You know it's beautiful without having to tell yourself that it's beautiful.

And so you realize that there is vast knowing beyond mental labels and concepts. And then you know far more than you could ever know through labels or concepts, because you sense there is a depth to that which we call flower and an aliveness to that which we call flower. That mystery that is not explained by the label flower at all.

That mystery that is covered up by the label flower and gives you the delusion that now you know what it is. Just a sound. You've made a sound that has come out of your mouth, or you've uttered the sound in your mind, and that gives you the delusion that you know what that is.

Children are told that when they learn a language, the delusion is reinforced every time you tell a child, that's called such and such, I have forgotten the names of flowers. What's that? Gladioli.

This is a gladioli, if that's what it is. And the child will believe you. Dreadful.

Dreadful. So what can you do? Do you tell a child, don't call it anything, that doesn't work either.

But you might say to a child, well, look at it, smell it, touch it. Look. And then, as an afterthought, you can say, oh, by the way, we call it such and such.

Instead of saying, it is such and such. Then that creates some distance from the label, so that the child doesn't totally believe in that label. Because then you get more and more trapped in concepts and labels until you reach the age of, then finally at 18, you're totally imprisoned, you've been through the system that has done it even more to you, and you're totally imprisoned in a conceptualized reality of mental labels that concern both the world around you, and they're all conditioning, all the surrounding culture has conditioned you with whatever mental labels they've put into you.

And you inhabit a conceptualized reality, not knowing how dead your universe has become, how dead and deadened your reality has become. And you live equally in a conceptualized sense of self. You make yourself into mental concepts, and so this is the essence of not knowing who you are.

That's the essence of this false self. Once you have a false self, nothing is seen as it is, and everything is misinterpreted through that conditioning. Everything is distorted and deadened through that conditioning.

And that's how people live. And that is, our entire civilization has come out of that. And is it surprising how mad the civilization is?

Of course it's not surprising considering the state of consciousness out of which it has come. So we are stepping out of that, the compulsion to label continuously, and so you move here, you walk through the gardens and along the river, and what arises is the state that is free of the need to label. And should a label arise in you as you walk, which is a thought, you recognize it as just a thought and not it.

And then it arises and passes and you're back in just... And then somebody comes towards you on the path, walking, and some mental judgment comes in concerning the form of this being. And you recognize it as a thought, no more.

You no longer completely believe in it, you're not completely in it anymore. You allow that to be also. So gaps arise in which there are no labels.

In which seemingly you no longer know anything. And that's why it's a little bit frightening for some people to enter that realm because it seems at first as if you no longer knew. How can I need to know what's going on here?

I need to judge it in some way, classify it in some way? No. And you see how beautiful, powerful, intelligent and deep that state is of not labeling.

And great intelligence operates here. But it is not the limited intelligence of the human mind. It's only a small aspect of the vastness of intelligence that ultimately you are.

So it's a little bit like you become like a child whose mind is not yet totally burdened by labels but a child who is already very much looking at everything because everything is new but hasn't got many accumulated labels yet. And that child looks in a state of great awe and wonder because everything is so alive and new. It hasn't got enough labels yet to deaden the entire world.

And the child is open and alert. And again, this is only to give you a little pointer. We are not going back to that.

We are going beyond where it has certain similarities with that state that a child is in whose mind is not yet totally burdened by labels. It has certain similarities with the state that an animal is in who is in a state with great connectedness with the one. The whole of plant life exists in such deep connectedness with the totality in such deep stillness being totally and completely and utterly itself, the tree.

So, and this is why Jesus said, truly I tell you, you must become like little children if you want to enter the kingdom of heaven. It is similar to the state of that child in that age and yet it is beyond because you've already moved through thought and you've come out the other end. But that one could say, that innocent perception, fresh, new, alive.

And there you can enjoy the play of phenomena. And there's such a wonderful play of phenomena in this country. Such multiplicity of forms and life forms and human beings.

Amazing. And so you walk as just an aware presence, a field of aware presence. And you know yourself as that awareness, not conceptually.

You perceive through stillness. With occasional interruptions of labels and there's not a problem. Because you know there's mind movement and then it subsides.

Space again. Another mind movement. It subsides.

Fine. Not a problem. And then perhaps a big mind movement comes and for one hour you're completely in it.

Perhaps it got triggered by something that wasn't quite right in your room or something that in your room something happened. And, ah! And then finally it comes to an end.

I must get out of here. Yes, you can get out or you can stay. Whatever it is.

It's fine. If you stay, you can surrender here. If you get out, you surrender there.

So the awakening, this is what it is. Out of it is a million years of conditioning. Out of mind.

And that's where the teaching comes from. Otherwise I would have to prepare what I'm going to tell you. That would be a lot of work.

I have to feed them information for six, seven days. No. It comes out of the stillness.

It does the teaching. I don't have to do much. And it's possible to live in such a way that whatever you do is almost, one could say, being done for you.

You're no longer in a struggle and conflict relationship with the world. Needing to complete myself by getting somewhere. Achieving something, becoming someone.

And suddenly it's done for you. And this is why Jesus used the term awakening. There are quite a few parables about staying awake, not going to sleep.

Buddha, the root of the word, means awake. One who is awake. There's a beautiful title, a book by Krishnamurti, called The Awakening of Intelligence.

And of course, that is what it is. It is the awakening of true intelligence. Not the limited ability to solve IQ puzzles.

Nothing wrong with that either. But much greater, vaster than that. Beautiful, we have the teaching of Krishnamurti that points to the same.

Not quite as directly, because he liked to teach through negation. So he asked, let's inquire. Can we get there through thinking?

Can we get there through thought? Is it possible to have... And so he asked more and more questions about whether thought can get you there.

And of course it can't. And he wouldn't agree with it, of course, but the entire teaching tells you, don't think. Rise above thought.

But that would be a positive teaching. His tradition was negation, which is a powerful teaching also. Now, in those of you in whom this is arising strongly already, those of you, and in some of you it is arising very strongly already, in others it's just beginning to arise, in those of you in whom it is arising strongly, you are able to say no to thought by saying yes to what is.

No to thought, to simply by choice say, I'm not thinking. If this is not willpower, it doesn't work. To suppress thought through sheer willpower can work for a little while, but the kettle will continue to boil, you're holding the lid down, and suddenly thought will erupt again, more strongly than ever.

So that doesn't work. But in those in whom it is arising strongly, you can simply choose to step out of thought and say, okay. And this is why Nisargadatta Maharaj, the teacher, defined the meditative state, and he was only talking, he must have been speaking to one or two people at the time, he defined the meditative state as the radical refusal to harbor thoughts.

And when you look at a photo of his, you can see how radical he is. He was speaking at the time to certain people. This does not yet apply to everyone.

The arising presence is not yet strong enough in everyone to be able to say, this is true for me, that I can simply radically refuse to harbor thoughts. I'm not having any thoughts, that's it. Now that looks like an act of choice.

And then of course you come into conflict with those teachers who say, there's nobody there to choose, and so on and so on. Of course it looks like choice because it still looks as if there was somebody here, there is a form here, and that form does something, and from the perspective of form, it looks like an act of choice. I refuse to harbor thoughts.

And then you walk through the gardens, refusing to think. That looks like choice, doesn't it? Because you could choose to think, but you choose not to think.

But how is it that you can make that choice? You can only make that choice because presence is arising in you, and it's only because of the arising presence that you can say, I'm making that choice. So who is choosing?

If presence were not arising, there would be no choice. Presence is beyond the person. Presence is the evolutionary impulse of the universe moving through you.

The totality, the one. So, of course, we have the relativity of language. On one level, it is true to say you have a choice.

On another level, it is not true at all to say that you have a choice. See, no statement is absolutely true ever. You have to see where it is at, what perspective, what level.

So both statements, you have a choice and you have no choice, are equally true. And the mind doesn't like that. This is so wonderful to be part of the evolution of consciousness on the planet.

Through this little form, it wants to flower. And you thought you were a little person. Needing this and needing that and protecting myself against this and that.

Now, as the unconditioned arises, as the stillness arises, through which you perceive the world and allow it to be this moment, allow it to be that realm of stillness, that dimension of consciousness, is also the dimension of the sacred. This is the only dimension where the sacred is and dwells. It's always there, but it's concealed.

The sacred, the dimension of the sacred, is always concealed in now. Why is it concealed? Because you are not in the now.

The now is obscured to you by mental noise. But the moment your attention enters now, you realize the now is always sacred, no matter what form it takes. The sacredness doesn't lie so much in the form, although it includes the form, there's a greater vastness to now.

And that is the realm of the sacred, that space of now. So there's a sacred river here. When you go down there, you can honor the sacred river by being, by perceiving it, and being with it in the state of still, alert presence.

Not conceptualize it, label it.

[Speaker 2] (2:53:08 - 3:00:10)

Copyright © 2020 Mooji Media Ltd. All Rights Reserved. No part of this recording may be reproduced without Mooji Media Ltd.'s express consent. Video extract from Satsang DVD Video extract from Satsang DVD Be as you are Be as you are Be as you are Be as you are Be as you are Be as you are Be as you are Be as you are Be as you are So the normal state of consciousness, which is being immersed in thinking, is replaced by the state of attention.

[Speaker 1] (3:00:25 - 4:17:55)

And that means the now is more important than past or future, because you realize it is life itself. In the normal state of consciousness, certainly past and future are more important than now. So the normal state of consciousness, which is unconsciousness, is characterized by that, the implicit assumption or belief that past and future are more important and more powerful than now.

And then a moment comes when you realize the now is all there ever is. In truth, life can only be now. Then you honor life by honoring this moment.

And then, whereas before the now existed in some obscure region on the periphery of your life, you were only peripherally aware of it because you were so absorbed in past and future, now past and future become peripheral. Yes, they still have, to some extent, they are needed to move in this world. You as this form, you can't get out of that, where you seem to be flowing in that stream of time, which is like a train you're on, and it won't stop.

You can't get off. I recently saw people that I hadn't seen in 15 or 20 years. 20, I think it was.

It's a little shocking what time does to the human form. On that level, yes, it seems to exist. And I almost felt inclined to say, my God, what did time do to you?

Yes, on the level of form, you as this form, you are subject to time and subject to the impermanence, which implies time, short-lived, fleeting, all forms. Everything, every form is quite fleeting. When you're totally identified with the form, you don't really know that.

You only exist in a state of fear and desire because you're identified, you don't know.

And it's an amazing realization when you realize how fleeting all forms are, that knowing is already the beginning of liberation, not as an intellectual fact or belief, but to see how short-lived all forms are. And when you grow older, you see it very clearly, when you reach the age of 60, 65, 70, 75, people around you begin to die, one after another.

My mother says there's nobody left now that I know. They're all gone. And then, of course, you see it everywhere, in every natural form.

Now the seeing of that, when you see it, realize it, that is already liberating because that seeing arises from that which is beyond form. If the entire world were green, the color green would not exist because there would be nothing to differentiate it from. If everything were fleeting, you wouldn't even know it.

But the fact that you know means there's something that is not fleeting. And that is why to contemplate the short-lived, impermanent nature of all forms is already liberating. And when it's contemplated and allowed to be, and this may mean at this moment, a form that's right in front of you shows signs of the passing of time.

It's become wrinkled. It could be a mango, it could be an apple, or it could be the human form. It's very similar, what happens to an apple is what happens to the human form.

What time does to an apple and what time does to a human. Very similar when you look at a fresh apple and a fresh young 20-year-old. All shiny and then time does its work.

And 50 years later, which isn't very much, it's all wrinkled. But with humans, there's the potential in that for the flowering of consciousness through the fading form. Now, I don't know about the apple.

The apple can only speak for itself. But I know that for humans, that is a great potential is hidden here and there's another portal here into the liberated state. And that portal is this form that is moving towards dissolution.

Of course, all forms are. And suddenly you see it, not only here, but you see it everywhere. And when there's no reaction, you allow that there's something incredibly peaceful in watching the form arise and dissolve.

And that which knows that is beyond form. That is why there are certain works in literature, they never talk about anything that is beyond form. But they show you the impermanent nature of life and they are spiritual works.

It is already spiritual, you don't need to talk about anything that is beyond the impermanent nature. Just to show you the impermanent nature is spiritual. Because it makes you into the seer of that.

So there are the Shakespeare sonnets, talk a lot about how beauty fades, how quickly, what time does to it. And to read it can be a spiritual experience because it puts you into the position of seeing impermanence. And even something that is not, you might think it's just entertainment, and on one level it is.

Even a film like Titanic, where you see all these forms that die and at the very end they appear again like actors on stage. They played their role. And you see how death, you're watching death.

So one could say what we really talk about is death. A form dissolves. Death.

Now there is a saying in a sacred scripture which says die before you die. And there is deep truth in that and in a way this is another perspective on why we are here, what this gathering is about. One could put it like this.

Death will find you, it's found you already, because we are all slowly dying. And eventually it will catch up with you. Now find death before it finds you.

And that's the essence of spiritual practice, is finding death, embracing death. There is another state of consciousness, which is the end of identification with form. The end of deriving your sense of self, identity, from form.

Because that is the normal state of consciousness. And the identification with form is twofold. The physical form, identifying with the appearance of the body.

And some people have that very strongly, that a large part of their sense of self is to do with identification with the physical form. And then you have the psychological form that you identify with as thought structures and emotions that accompany those thought structures. Accumulated content of the mind, images of who I am, what the world has told me about who I am, the surrounding culture has told me about who I am.

Or I may have reacted against what the surrounding culture has told me about who I am, but I'm still not free in that, because even the reaction is a conditioned reaction. So there's the psychological form of me, which is me and my story. Which may be mostly a personal story, it may be mixed up with a collective story of us, me and my tribe, my nation, my religion.

It's the story of me that is the psychological form of me. And everybody has their story that is the me. And everybody knows that the me lives in a state of dissatisfaction with its story.

It is a characteristic of the story not to be at ease or fulfilled for very long. It is not in the nature of that story-based identity to be at peace, fulfilled, or free. The very structure of it goes against that.

The very structure of that kind of identity doesn't allow it. It's based on fighting something or someone, being at odds with something or someone. It's based on a sense of separateness.

It needs that. So the identification with the body, sometimes they become very much mixed. You may identify with the appearance of the physical body, and the mental images may form as me, as such and such.

So especially people who have a beautiful body or good appearance, their psychological me is strongly bound up with their mental image of body. And for a while that gives people a very pleasant sense of self. Sense of self always is comparative, whether it's to do with body or with other identifications.

You will compare yourself to others and then see where you fit in, in your identity. There is an attempt to be more than others in the story-based. And if you cannot be more because you're better, greater, no more, look better, or stronger, if you cannot be more there, then what's left to you, you can be more miserable than others.

And that also works. And some people have that strongly. If they can't create a satisfying identity in having more knowledge or more beauty or more physical strength or more money than others, then at least I can feel more miserable and have a self-image of one that has been treated unfairly by life.

That's very satisfying. Because now you know who you are, so to speak. And then you seek to confirm that story-based, image-based identity by selectively interpreting life around you.

You see only, you begin to see only those things that conform with your sense of identity. There's selective interpretations of reality and selective perception. And everything that you perceive as you move about your life is totally filtered and distorted then through the self-image of me.

And only those things that conform to it are allowed in that strengthen the self-image. And so everything is interpreted according to that. And you think that's reality, but it's the conditioned, heavy filters through which you interact with people.

And then, so it becomes like a script in here that's been put into here, and you act it out. And that becomes then your life situation, your life drama, your life story. And you go through the movements looking for more of you through more, adding more, more future, never finding it.

And then it could happen that you're suddenly confronted with death close to you, someone close to you. Or the possibility of imminent death that might happen to this form. Or you're suddenly confronted with great loss in your life.

Which is another form of death, something you had identified with. Status, possessions, relationships, great loss. And suddenly forms dissolve.

Forms in which there was the self. The self was in those forms. And those forms dissolve through some disaster, some form of death.

And sometimes it affects even the mind forms with which you had identified. Because the trauma and the shock is such that it shakes the rigid mind patterns that before were running you and pretending to be you. And suddenly those also die.

And you don't know who you are anymore, you can't explain it anymore. Before you thought you had these ready opinions when people asked you, you would put out your opinions, you knew it all. And suddenly something comes and suddenly the explanations don't suffice anymore.

Death, that wasn't supposed to happen. Some religious people begin to doubt their beliefs when somebody close to them suddenly dies. That wasn't supposed to happen.

I had a contract with God and there was not supposed to be any death. Form dies. Thought forms die.

And the whole story based identity can come to an end in the face of great loss or death. Your whole story doesn't make sense anymore. Any great loss or death in your life has that potential, but not always is that potential realized.

It can also happen that great loss or disaster can make the story more heavy, more miserable and more unhappy. But the greatest potential is always death and wonderful portal is when a form dissolves. Or you see the dissolving form, it may not have dissolved yet, but it's moving there, so the portal is beginning to open.

And suddenly a form is gone and it leaves a hole, an emptiness. Someone close to you dies, you lose your entire possessions, whatever it may be. A hole is left.

There was the beautiful fabric of your existence, your life story, maybe it was all in place. Because some people, for a few years in their lives, they have it all arranged so neatly, that you look at their lives and say, how is it possible? Everything in his or her life seems to work so well.

It's rare, but occasionally you see it, it's like a picture book. A family, two children, both doing well. Happy marriage, beautiful house, good job, promotions, status in society, two or three big cars.

It's too much. Usually, when you scratch and look beyond the surface, you find something else. But let's just say that yes, they are happy in that they have neatly arranged their life situation in such a way that everything seems to be working.

And it's only a question of time before something in there collapses. Because the structures that they have created that look so solid, all these life insurance policies, or huge corporations are sustaining me with billions of dollars behind them, and I have shares in that. Surely my life is now secure, and my family's life is secure.

There's a true foundation. And then time does something to the seemingly solid structures. It's such a shock when the disaster happened on September 11th.

This huge structure, so solid, and it took only a few madmen, and they collapsed. And so, to some, it's only a question of time before something comes in, and somewhere, the solidity of those structures will reveal itself as illusory. It'll start to crumble somewhere.

And if you've had 10 or 15 years living in the illusion that these things are so solid, then it's a great shock you're not even prepared for it. That was supposed to happen. I was walking north of Los Angeles in a little park, and there was an old building that had burned down.

It was part of an estate, and it burned down 40, 50 years ago into a wild garden. There were only the ruins. This beautiful wild garden had grown up around it, trees growing inside the building.

And this is, nothing is solid. It's easier to realize that, that nothing is solid. That's why we are here.

And that's why this country has produced so many sages and enlightened beings. Because it's so obvious that things are not solid, and that it's so obvious that the physical structures are short-lived, and there isn't that sense of solidity around you. So I was walking there, and there was actually, the city council of Malibu had put up a sutra.

As you entered the garden, and the sutra read, Danger, all structures are unstable. And so I read the sutra and said, thank you. And then to walk there was a teaching to see, it's deeply, a deeply spiritual thing to walk around a decaying structure.

It's returning, for it was form once, differentiated, and it's returning into oneness. It's halfway between form and no form. Anything that is decaying is halfway between form and no form.

And that's why when you are there and allow it to be and watch, it's liberating. It liberates you from form. So what could also liberate you from form is the realization that your own physical vehicle is subject to that.

It may even be imminent. And that is a great portal, to know that you have little or no future as this form identity. Of course, there's great fear in that.

It can be potentially you could contract totally in a state of fear, but the potential is there for it to become an opening. And what arises, what then flowers through the decaying form is unconditioned consciousness. The form is decaying, and the flowering is there.

So I've seen it, there was a beautiful being in Vancouver, Joyce Frazee, passed away recently. She had come to many of our gatherings, and she herself had become an effective teacher. And her form, through an illness, began to dissolve.

And as it began to dissolve, and she found it more and more difficult to move, she would still come to our gatherings. More and more, the light of consciousness was shining through the fading form. And looking into her eyes was beautiful.

I hope somebody took a photo of her so that you can look into her eyes and see that the light of the unconditioned was shining through her eyes. And through her entire form, it was shining through. And that is the beauty, when death comes, that's the greatest portal.

And she was able to surrender to that, so it was open wide. And it didn't matter anymore how much longer this form would be here. The flowering had happened.

The fulfillment, consciousness flowering through this form. It happened. It doesn't need more time.

It's flowered. The whole evolutionary impulse of the universe is towards that. And somehow, and I cannot explain it in words, it's beyond, we don't even attempt to fully, to really understand what is behind that, it's far beyond understanding.

But just to say that there is the evolutionary impulse of the universe is behind that. Consciousness wants to flower through the form, the human. It will flower through any form.

It doesn't say, you are more worthy, I will choose this form because you are more worthy. It flowers where there is a transparency, where the form, the rigid mind structures give way. They die first.

And identification with that, me, mind made self, goes. And this is why we are here, because as you sit here, you are finding death before death finds you. And these, the heavy, the mind structures that you are identified with as me, the thought forms die.

So the flowering is happening here before death finds you. You embrace death already. But it doesn't matter when it happens.

And consciousness will move through. It could be a criminal, killed several people, inflicted suffering on others, and of course on himself. And in that midst of hell, in his cell, waiting for execution, suddenly, inside, the entire structure of the self, mental, emotional structures, dissolves.

Because the suffering is unbearable. And suddenly, something shines through. And now he doesn't care anymore whether the execution happens or not.

And there have been cases like that. There was a woman in Texas two or three years ago, who had killed two people with an axe. She had been a prostitute, a drug addict, and with her lover, killed two people with an axe.

And she was on death row for several years. And at some point, something happened in her, and surrender happened. And suddenly there was a being of great softness, beauty, through.

The strange thing is, there was not even guilt anymore, because guilt is still to be identified with unconscious movements as me, to derive your sense of self from the movement of unconsciousness, and saying, I did that, that was me. She saw the dreadful nature of that, but it no longer disturbed her peace. That wasn't her at all.

That was not the consciousness that had now emerged. And then she was executed. She interpreted it in a Christian sense, I believe, because that was her surrounding culture.

When this happens, sometimes when people speak about it, and tell others about what happened to them, they may use certain words that correspond to their language or culture. But when you look beyond the words, you will see that they all point to the same. And there are some of those to whom it happens, who can't even speak about it.

They just look at you, and you look at them. They may be uneducated, they may not have much to say. And yet you look, and you see there's something that shines through that is deeper than a person, than any person could be.

The personal dimension has given way to that. And so it is always, it is sacred when that happens. But so far it's been relatively few human beings to whom this has happened.

No longer the case now. It is the destiny of all humans to go through that transformation. It is certainly your destiny, otherwise you wouldn't be here.

The purpose of your life is to enable that to come through you, and it's happening already. So we embrace the death that is here, when you surrender to what is. That's the greatest death.

The resisting me entity gives way. You can surrender through suffering, or you can surrender through, voluntarily, through the yes to what is. Which, as we saw yesterday, takes you beyond the form.

You are no longer reactive to a form. So the yes, that simple thing, takes you beyond form. And I pointed out yesterday, often, that which you say yes to is some form of limitation, because it's form.

And that in other cases, that which you say yes to may be some form of death, some form of loss. And that is particularly powerful. Any kind of loss or death leaves an emptiness behind, when a form is no longer there.

And you don't run away from that empty space. And it's an opening into the formless. One could say, every form obscures God.

And the death of the form enables God, which is the formless, one life, to shine through. Therefore, death has long been recognized as sacred in ancient cultures, who had not denied death. Whereas the modern culture, modern western civilization, denies death.

It's not, they don't know it's sacred, they don't even want to talk about it. They don't want to see a dead body. You can't, it's not allowed.

It's illegal to see a dead body. They would send you to a psychiatrist if you asked to see a dead body. There must be something wrong with you.

So death is hidden, because the western culture is totally identified with form, with mind. So the worst possible thing for it is death. Oh my.

And even in hospitals, they don't know anything about death, where death happens continuously. Old people's homes. Every old people's home, potentially, would be a spiritual center.

The greatest ashrams would be old people's homes, because that is the potential of old age. But it's not recognized yet. So, they would be the most sacred places.

So these ancient cultures have recognized the sacredness of death, not knowing perhaps why. Intuitively, they knew it to be sacred. But now you can see why it is sacred.

Because the formless shines through where there was the form. And that can happen when there's physical death, but it can also happen when you die psychologically to the me. And that is the spiritual transformation.

And that can happen through intense suffering, or through the power of a spiritual teaching. Or in many cases, a combination of both. And I suspect that in many of you, it's a combination of both.

You've had the suffering, otherwise you wouldn't have come. And now there's the power of spiritual teaching, which tells you, you don't need to suffer anymore. And you don't need anymore time before you can enter the surrendered state.

Why would you need time to enter the surrendered state? Do you need more knowledge before you can enter the surrendered state? Yes, but before I enter the surrendered state, I need to understand the universe completely.

You've had many pointers already. Everybody here has read scriptures, beautiful pointers. No, I have not yet fully understood the nature of the universe.

I need a few more years, says the mind. And the amazing thing is, a deep understanding happens, not in the way that the mind imagines it. A deep understanding of the universe happens as you enter the surrendered state.

There is a deep knowing there that is beyond concepts or labels. A knowing that the mind knows nothing of. A knowing that can even inform the mind, and the mind then can give spiritual teaching.

Because it is linked into that, the unmanifested, the unconditioned, the seed of all intelligence. Pre-form, before it becomes a thought, it's there. And then there are other things.

I need to sort out my life situation before I can surrender. Because my life situation does not look balanced. There are so many loose ends, I need to sort it out.

I have so many problems to deal with, I cannot surrender yet. And you don't realize that the act of surrender deals with all problems beautifully. Because in surrender, you enter a state that is free of problems.

And yes, you still have a life situation. But you don't inhabit a conceptual identity based on your life situation. Yes, you have three court cases against you.

Yes, your wife has filed for divorce. Yes, you are on your way to meeting your lawyer to file for bankruptcy. At this moment, you are at the bus stop, waiting for the bus, knowing that you have court cases, your wife, divorce proceedings, and you are going towards your lawyer for bankruptcy proceedings.

Potentially, you could be very unhappy. You could be, because your story isn't going the way it was supposed to go. It has deteriorated.

And potentially, you would carry the burden of an extremely unhappy conceptual sense of self based on your life circumstances, your life situation, and you derive all your identity and your sense of self from that. Your me would be very unhappy and very heavy and dense. And you would be talking to yourself as you stand at the bus stop.

And saying, this is what it had to come to. Now, 30 years of work, all for nothing. The whole marriage has been an illusion.

She's left me. She's probably been unfaithful for years. It's all turned out to be for nothing.

I've lost it all. All that work that I've put into it. I even have to give up my credit cards.

What? Who am I? Nobody will want to talk to me.

You are confirming to yourself that your life situation is very bad. Your sense of identity is derived from the story, the deteriorating story that you are telling yourself. And perhaps, you start telling others the very dreadful story of you.

And what happened. And they will confirm to you that, yes, you have a right to be very unhappy. Surely, destiny has dealt you a dreadful blow.

And you should be unhappy. Or you could be standing at the bus stop and allow your attention to move into this moment. And with that, a certain alertness arises.

In that alertness, you feel yourself breathing. You become aware of the totality of this moment as the sky above you, the air you are breathing, the ground you are standing on, the moving energy forms that go past you called cars, and there's a tree, and there's the field of alert attention in which all those things arise. And there comes the bus.

The bus. The doors open, and you get in, and you sit, and then the bus moves, and in that state of alertness, you look out of the window, and the wonder of phenomenal existence goes past you, all these forms of life. And you are there as an alert field of presence.

And you still remember where you're going, but you're fully there. Your identity is not derived anymore from a story you're telling yourself. That is a conceptual identity.

You're not denying that there are situations that you need to deal with, because you're dealing with it already. You're sitting on a bus going somewhere to deal with it. You're dealing with it already, and this is a beautiful moment.

You're sitting there, perceiving, and more than perceiving, being the still field through which the universe is being perceived. And when you're as that alert, you can sense the entire body as alive. We may have come to that also.

And then you get off the bus, and then you walk into a door which says, Attorney at Law, and you sit down, and then you say, okay, this is the situation, he says. Your bank balance is zero. Your debts are five million dollars.

I recommend that you file for bankruptcy. Okay. And then you hand over your American Express Platinum cards.

You've lost your cards. And perhaps your sense of self was somehow in each card a little bit. Because whenever you paid in expensive restaurants with the American Express Platinum cards, they respected you.

That is satisfying. You are getting that confirmation that you are somebody. But as you hand over the American Express and other cards, that leaves a little bit of an emptiness.

And as you accept that emptiness, it feels incredibly peaceful not to have these cards anymore. They're gone. Not that you formulate some kind of new belief that says, it is more pure not to have credit cards.

I am now more pure because that's you creating another thought structure to reincarnate into and derive a new sense of self from somebody who is now so spiritual that he has no credit cards anymore. That's worse than having credit cards. No, that's not how it is.

You simply allow the loss to be there. And that is suddenly the peace that you were already in deepens. And then you might have to give up your big home.

And again, there it is. And the next moment you have to sign something and it's gone. And then you might live in a trailer for a while.

And as you sit there, this moment is still sacred and beautiful. It doesn't really matter so much anymore the forms around you because you don't need the forms to reinforce or enhance your sense of self. Where is your sense of self?

It is the field of alive presence. You know yourself to be that still alive. Field of attention.

The forms, you don't need them for an identity anymore. So the trailer, of course it's not as comfortable as the big mansion. The space around you is smaller, confined.

It makes a noise when it rains at night on the roof. And yet, all it means is there's a different scenery around you. You're still sitting somewhere.

A little less soft than before. Less, a bit less. Not that much space.

But what do you do? You just have to step out and you have a lot of space. I'm seeing when your sense of self is not story-based anymore, you can accept the ups and downs and the gain and loss that come with every life story.

As the changing forms around you, the comings and goings, the play of opposites, gain, loss, fine. And there's peace in that. And the strange thing is, great, you are now aligned with the totality.

Before you had tied yourself into a little knot of a me. Life cannot flow very well through a knot. It can flow a little bit, but it's not a free flow.

And that knot was the me. Then the knot gets untied. Not that anything gets destroyed.

Simply the illusion of that little me against the universe goes when the knot is untied. Energy is just the flow of energy. The difference is, two people running to catch a train.

It's moving already. One is in great stress trying to get there, catch that train. The other one is running and enjoying the movement of energy as he's running to catch the train.

He's more likely to catch it than the other one and not to fall off. So that suddenly, helpful factors come in that you didn't even know about were there. Suddenly they are there.

But it all, the strange thing is, the state of completion is already here. No matter what form your surroundings take, the completion of you is already here. The self does not need more anymore.

So any more that comes into your life is simply the play of forms. They come and you say, nice, if more comes again and maybe a year later you have another mansion. Maybe.

But you won't be the same. You will move in that mansion not feeling that this is mine. Not seeing it as my achievement.

Simply seeing, yes, another beautiful structure around me. Of course it won't last. A beautiful structure around me.

So the world of form doesn't give you that satisfaction anymore that it gives you, which of course is short-lived, but you need it for yourself. Your sense of self. The satisfaction that a big mansion would give you when your self is in that, it belongs to me.

And then you invite others and they come into the mansion. It's an extension of you. You feel, okay, you're coming to visit me.

This is me. Look at me. That doesn't happen anymore.

There's simply an innocent enjoyment of the forms, but no link of the self with the forms. Because you can see the whole idea of owning something is a fiction. How can you say that I own this house?

What does that mean? It's a fiction in the mind that others agree with. That means you own it.

If others don't agree with it, it's a delusion only in your mind, which could say, I own this ashram. Okay, you can live with, if that delusion gives you an enhanced sense of self, you can live with that and say, I'm not telling anybody, but you know the truth, I own this place. Nobody knows.

Now then, people would call you deluded, but there are people like that, but then if others agree with your delusion, then they will actually sign papers to tell you that you're right, you own it, they all agree with me, now I own it. But it's the same delusion except that others agree with my delusion. It means nothing.

This is how, of course, people move into a time will come, of course, when ownership will become totally meaningless. They try to do it with communism without going through transformation of consciousness first, and of course that didn't work. So the whole idea of me in that structure becomes absurd.

You can enjoy the physical structures knowing it's just that it's not going to last. It's fine. And so, you move into the mansion and then perhaps one day you walk out, you don't even want to be in it anymore.

It's possible. It makes no difference. So, it's the changing scenery around you that's different.

The circumstances of your life that change, the passing of time, means simply the scenery around you is changing and it's fine. You actually enjoy that. And you realize, yes, the famous sutra of Malibu, all structures are unstable.

That was, reading that was so, oh, yes. Did they know what they were saying? I don't know.

My suggestion is that we introduce some silence into our retreat. Of course, there's already an underlying silence here. But in addition, that we spend some time on the external.

It looks like spending time keeping silence. And those of you who want to keep silence throughout, of course are free to do so. I may recommend certain periods of time when we all keep noble silence.

Those of you who, beyond that, want to be in silence are free to do so. We may set aside a section in the dining hall for those who don't want to be along the walls. You don't have to face the walls as they do it.

That's a Zen practice. And so, if that is your choice, then if somebody approaches you, you can just go. But don't make sure that you don't discriminate to whom you do this.

If you do it, it's not a problem. Now, when there is a period of silence, then of course you are alone with your mind. And that's fine.

Recognize thought as thought. The thoughts that come. Recognize thought as mental noise.

Recognize every thought as a particular perspective on things, a limited perspective, a limited position. Every thought can only give you a fragment of what's there. Any thought concerning another human being that you may have is fragmentary.

And the opposite statement about that human being is that there's no absolute truth in any judgment that thought makes. Every thought is some form of judgment, some form of interpretation. And so you don't totally believe in everything that comes up because it's the conditioned mind.

You recognize that. So, in other words, as thoughts come to you, especially during the silent period, your spiritual practice is not to stop them, but simply not to take them that seriously. That's all.

To have a relationship to thought that doesn't take thought all that seriously. Thought, of course, wants to be taken seriously. I am the complete attention.

I matter. I am the truth. Believe me.

Every thought wants to draw your attention in because through that it grows and it can proliferate into more thoughts, related thoughts. That is to be trapped in the stream of thinking. That is to be trapped in form.

Every thought wants that also. But, of course, what is happening here on a beyond the personal level is that consciousness is moving out of its identification with form. Consciousness has played the dream of form for a long time.

It's become this universe. A beautiful dance of form. And now consciousness says, OK, it's waking up out of that beautiful dream.

And what is happening in you, whereas before consciousness was thought, it was in every thought, now consciousness is moving out of the thought forms. This is only a relative way of looking at it. You can't really explain it.

So it's freeing itself from the disguise of form. And that is the unconditioned consciousness that arises. And that happens with the simple thing of not taking your thoughts that seriously.

OK. And so then they pass through more quickly. If you don't take them that seriously, they come and go.

They're not fueled by identification with them. And then you will find yourself sometimes being in the state of simple, alert presence in which you can perceive without labeling. You just allow this moment to be so completely that the need to interpret it mentally isn't there anymore.

And yet there's a deep knowing here. But to the mind it looks like unknowing. A beautiful work written in the Middle Ages is called The Cloud of Unknowing.

It's a mystical treatise by an anonymous author written in the Middle Ages in England. How to know God. And he says you know God not through knowing, through entering the state of unknowing.

Non-interpretation. Because every interpretation that you have is conditioned. So to say yes so completely that you do not need to interpret whatever form this moment takes, that may include a human being that comes into the space of now.

And the enormous freedom that comes with not interpreting other human beings through mental judgment which is thought allowing that human being to be as he or she is. Giving him or her one could say space. That's true love is allowing each human being to be without imposing labels and interpretations.

Whatever label or interpretation you impose on another human being through the mind tells you nothing about who that human being truly is. It only tells you something perhaps at best about their particular conditioning, form of conditioning, behavior that they display which is due to their conditioning at best. At worst it's more than a projection of your own mental conditioning and in many cases it's a mixture of the two which accounts for a mixture of what you see is the conditioning in the other person through the eyes of your own conditioning and usually that is what creates human interactions and the conflict in human interactions.

So to be with a human and that just allow them to be and when you speak again they speak to you during those periods when we speak you may be speaking in the dining hall you may be speaking in the gardens while another human being speaks to you be in the state of alert attention which is the state of listening totally to giving total attention as you listen to the words complete attention not preparing the next statement or interpreting what the other person is saying just give complete attention maybe you won't say anything maybe some words will come who knows that is the unconditional consciousness into human interactions so in the meantime while you are alone with your mind don't take the mental noise too seriously it isn't all that serious don't carry around with you the burden of your life situation and start thinking about what you left behind all the unsolved stuff that you left behind things you have to face when you get back home where is it now?

if it has any reality it must be here now yes you will face it when you get back home in the now but you can't face it now you can only make a dream world of thoughts around it and an unhappy identity so don't carry the burden of a conceptualized self in the head and walk around this beautiful place with that burden of a me and what is going to happen to me nothing is happening to me this moment is all that there is so to start with I recommend that we keep noble silence between now liberation that we keep noble silence between now and our next meeting and then we'll see after that see how we feel so we keep noble silence between now and our gathering this afternoon and then let's see what happens after that you don't need to know that of course we will also have time for questions during this week later on in the week not that any question really matters because it will be thought and that which is beyond thought anyway we will have questions

[Speaker 2] (4:21:03 - 4:23:52)

God's name God's name God's name God's nameelf Parathy Parazza Bodhisattva

[Speaker 1] (4:26:38 - 5:10:27)

Bhuvana about portals. This is of course only a metaphor.

Access points into a state of presence. Of course you don't linger inside the portal. A portal is there to go through, or one could another way of putting it is that the unconditioned comes through it, emerges through it, or just a matter of perspective.

Even surrender after a while disappears. The portal disappears as a portal because it becomes your natural state, non-resistance as your natural state. Surrender is the transition between resistance and non-resistance.

You relinquish resistance, and that's surrender. When resistance doesn't arise anymore to what is, there's no surrender anymore. And even the present moment, which is the main portal one could say, becomes simply the state of presence, and not so much needing to not move to a past and future because that movement doesn't occur anymore.

There's simply the timeless now. So you use as your practice here, of course always the main portal is the now, and then surrender takes you into now. Every portal takes you into now.

Death takes you into now. The inner body, which we may address this afternoon, takes you into now, into the state of attention, awareness, aware presence, in which thought becomes secondary or disappears altogether. In any case, thought no longer dominates you.

Thought loses its power to make you unhappy because you don't take it that seriously anymore. Do you remember our practice for today? Not taking thoughts that seriously anymore.

And then you see that what has, to a large extent, what makes you unhappy is not that situation or that place or that person, that life situation. It's thoughts about it, and every life story consists of thoughts, and that's where people's identity lies. And those thoughts tell you something.

Those thoughts interpret something according to their conditioning. And there's never, suffering doesn't arise from pain could happen, but suffering is never in the situation. The situation is as it is.

Even several, Shakespeare saw that already. Nothing is either good or bad, but thinking makes it so. That, of course, started when the eight of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, beginning of thought.

So the interpretations may still happen, but you don't take them that seriously anymore.

And then you realize in any situation, the unhappiness arises out of thought, out of the story that you weave around the simplicity of this moment. And often this moment doesn't fit into the story.

So there's a clash between where you, as the story-based me, want to be, where you want to be, who you want to be, what you want to be, who you want to be with, what you want to be doing, as the story-based entity, me, and where you are. That clash. Who you are, where you are, who you are with, what you're doing.

This isn't, I'm not supposed to be doing this. It doesn't fit into this, the story of me, how it's supposed to unfold. So this is the great renunciation, compared to which other renunciations are quite insignificant, secondary, and often don't work.

Renounce material possessions, renounce sexuality, you can renounce all kinds of things, status. But very quickly a new mental image forms as me, the one who has renounced. And that happens very easily.

It happens so insidiously. The ego comes in through the back door. You can go and shave your head, renounce your name, adopt a spiritual name, put on robes.

And the idea behind it is beautiful. It's letting go of your whole form identity. But since the ego is so insidious, it comes in through the back door.

And now that you've put on the robes and shaved your head and walk with an alms bowl, if you become a Buddhist monk, it could be many other things, very subtly an image forms of you have a new identity. Of course you have. You're a respected Buddhist monk.

And people, well, if you live in the East, in the West, they wouldn't care less. So if you come with your alms bowl in Thailand, they will put things in and show their reverence. And then that could enhance your sense of self in a very subtle way.

Or if you go to the West with your alms bowl, they might say, why don't you work for a living? So that doesn't feed your ego that much. So very easy to renounce can very easily create a new self image and a new story.

Now you've become the renunciant. It's shifted. And there's an me that feels in some way special.

Can happen, doesn't always happen, can easily happen. But the alternate renunciation, there, those things cannot happen because now you renounce the very root of the false self. The very root is renounced.

And that is the need to think. Thought itself is renounced. And then you see how addictive thought is.

It is not easily renounced. It comes back in waves. Thought waves come back.

And what can you do? You watch the thought waves come back. You may get drawn in, lost in thought again, until you come out.

And then presence is there for a moment. You're awake, alert. And then another thought wave may come.

And you may still be there as the witness of the thought wave, not totally taken over, in which case it subsides quickly. If you get totally drawn in, it will linger for much longer, a whole thought movement. Now, this isn't something that we are trying to do.

It's something we are allowing to happen. If you get into the position of trying to do it, it becomes problematic again, and the me comes back in. We are not trying to become free of thought, but the state of presence is emerging already and wants to emerge.

We simply allow that to emerge. We cooperate with it. So a great help here, especially here, because there's such enormous momentum in the human mind, is to, again, I prefer to use the word allow, is to allow your attention to sink into the body, rather than being totally head-centered.

You allow your attention to sink down into the field of body. And that becomes an anchor for staying present. And there are ancient meditation methods that are designed precisely to take your attention out of thought stream, so that it's not all your attention is absorbed by thought streams, which is the normal state.

They take attention into a body. And so I believe the ashram is offering a meditation tonight, which I don't, have not experienced personally, but I'm told it puts you in touch with the body, so it must be good. And it's probably related in some way to the old Buddhist meditation called Vipassana, which some of you know, which takes attention into the body.

Here, I'm not making it into a technique as such. Simply, I'm pointing to the possibility of sensing, as you sit here, sensing the aliveness inside your body. And then the body becomes a portal.

And at first, it appears that, yes, the body, at first you might feel, sense certain feelings. And then you go a little deeper, and there's simply a sense of spaciousness. So the body becomes a portal.

At first, it might appear as if the, what I call the inner body is another object that arises in your awareness. But as you move deeper, and the observer and observed merge, so it's no longer a sense of me up here, sensing the body down here, but the two becoming one. So there is a generalized sense of aware presence that pervades the entire body.

So one could say that aliveness, it's not confined to the body, because the whole world comes alive when presence arises, and you're not deadening everything through conceptualization. But you sense great aliveness. And that is in the entire energy field of the body.

And you dwell in that. You are that. Then the mind hasn't got your attention anymore.

It can't manufacture thoughts continuously, because your attention is here. You also connect a vast field of intelligence that is the beginning of that vast intelligence, the one intelligence out of which the whole universe has come, that is, manifests itself as the flower, the tree, the planet, the sun, the galaxies, and is also, he has brought into being what appears to be a physical body temporarily, which contains great intelligence, every cell, every organ. No human mind could control the functions of the human body.

They put all the computers together in the world. It couldn't control the functions of a single body, because it requires enormous intelligence to coordinate thousands of functions. And this happens continuously through that intelligence that indwells here, not thinking.

The body doesn't think about how it's doing it, just as the flower doesn't think about how to become a flower. It happens. And so you already, by entering that portal, you have access to that vastness of intelligence.

So sensing that aliveness, at first you may feel certain parts of the body more strongly than others, hands or feet, and that's fine. And then sense a generalized aliveness in here. And that's where part of your attention is within.

Some people feel, as I said, certain parts more strongly. Some people feel the belly. Some people feel hands or arms.

Some people, eventually you will sense a generalized aliveness, and you cannot locate necessarily any particular part of the body anymore, nor do you have to. If you see certain Buddha statues, you'll see, I'm not talking now of the Chinese Buddha with a huge belly, but other Buddhas, they have a slight belly, very slight, and the Buddha is resting here in the body. So there are practices that can take you into the body.

What I'm suggesting here, these are helpful. I'm suggesting you can do it without needing to go through any practice, although if you have an additional practice, that is helpful. I may take you into the body today, or at some point, and make it almost into a meditation.

We may do that. But I want to avoid giving you techniques as such, and sensing the inner body is beyond technique. It's too simple for that.

And see how much easier it is when you inhabit the body with some of your attention, to be here in the state of simple blood awareness. And so there is, you're aware of what arises in your sense perceptions, the words in this case, and you sense the energy field of the inner body, and there's no thought arising anymore, or very little thought. And you can do that as you go out into nature.

You sit on a bench, on the grass, use the portal of the inner body, and then start looking around. Beautiful practice. And you look at all the different forms of life around you.

And you just look at each form in that innocent perception that does not interpret or label what is being perceived. And now it becomes easy, because your attention is anchored here. So that's perhaps the greatest, if you can, that transition from needing to interpret and needing to label, to being free of the need to interpret and label, not that you have lost your ability, you don't know what things are anymore.

No, the need is gone. You have the freedom not to think. The freedom not to label, not to interpret, to allow to be.

And in that, a greater intelligence comes in. It's almost as if, through your eyes, that greater intelligence, we're looking at the world of form and enjoying it, knowing deep down to be a manifestation of itself. Knowing the world of form to be a manifestation of itself.

So it sounds at first insignificant to be sitting there and simply practicing watching without interpretation. It's the greatest shift in consciousness that can happen to you. That simple thing of sitting somewhere, and that's, we are starting with an easy situation.

You're not being challenged. A different matter arises, we will address that, when life challenges you. And then thought will rush in.

And then all the patterns of thought and emotion will rush in, want to rush in. We'll put that aside for a moment. Let's first of all see in situations that are helpful, non-challenging.

This, of course, is one. And being in the ashram here is another. And here, to be able to sit somewhere, stand somewhere, connect with the inner body, and perceive free of thought.

Or, not perhaps entirely free of thought. Perhaps labels will come and go. And then there's a gap before the next label arises.

Another, it goes. You're not fighting any thought. If it comes, it's allowed.

Nothing important. Sometimes thought will want to take you out of that, and pretend. Any thought will want your attention back.

The mind will try, and it's very clever. The human mind is clever. It will try to get your attention back, through some interpretation to do with your sense perceptions, or something totally different, that you really must give your attention to now.

Right now. You must think about this. It's really important.

So the mind will attempt to get, to draw your attention out of the now, out of the body, back into itself. Once you know that, you can watch it and say, oh, there it is. And then you're back in presence.

You can watch the river. You can sit by the river, and watch it connect with the inner body, and be there. The miracle then has happened.

You are not perceiving any longer, through the conditioned mind. That's, and the need to think isn't there anymore. The compulsion.

You are free not to think. The only thing that I have achieved in life, although it's not an achievement at all, is I don't need to think. Somebody some years ago asked me, what have you achieved?

And at that time, I hadn't written a book yet, so I hadn't achieved anything. And all I could say was, well, I don't need to think anymore. This is not highly regarded in our culture.

And it's, but it's not the case that you cannot function anymore, although at first it is a new way of functioning. It took me some years to function in this world, in that state, because I had no guidance and no teacher. So that state at first overtook me, and I lost all interest even in functioning in this world.

And then gradually the ability to function in the new state came back. But you have better guidance than I had. And so you do not need to become dysfunctional as the new state of consciousness arises.

It's happened to people. Ramana Maharshi became, one could say, dysfunctional, because he didn't even put food in his mouth anymore. So in Western terms, certainly it would be called dysfunctional.

But fortunately, in India, they recognized here that there was something there that was of great value. And so they didn't put him away. In the West, they would have.

So as the new arises, of course, it's a new way of being in the world, a new way of interacting, a new way of perceiving. And of course, first, it's strange at first. So I'm suggesting, become familiar with that and allow it to happen at first, especially as you contemplate nature, the world of nature, whether it be the river or the trees, and enter that state of perception that is free of labeling.

And you can sense the alertness that is there underneath the perception, the alertness that makes the perception possible, the presence through which the perception happens, as you sense it as that underlying stillness that fills your entire being. But it's also all around. There's a field of stillness, and there are the phenomena that you are perceiving.

And you are the field. And that includes this. And so it's not really the body.

The body can give you access to that field as a portal. And then when you go through that portal, a vastness opens up, so you don't become confined in the body. And so you sit and watch the movement of the river, perhaps, the movement of the little animals, and perhaps the movement of people.

And there are always the two dimensions as you watch that which you are perceiving, and that which makes the perception possible, the field, the spaciousness, and so you have, you dwell in both worlds, the world of form and the world of space, and so you have, you dwell in both worlds, the world of form and the world of space, and so you have, you dwell in both worlds, the world of form and the world of space, and so you have, you dwell in both worlds, the world of form and the world of space, and so you have, you dwell in both worlds, the world of form and the world of space, and so you have, you dwell in both worlds, the world of form and the world of space, and so you have, you dwell in both worlds, the world of form and the world of space, and so you have, you dwell in both worlds, the world of form and the world of space, and so you have, you dwell in both worlds, the world of form and the world of space, and the formless, or rather you dwell within the formless, and can still interact with the world of form. and the formless, or rather you dwell within the formless, and can still interact with the world of form.

So this is how you can use these surroundings here, and the river, and then everything one could say that you contemplate is teaching you, especially nature, stillness, especially the river. And you bring something to it. Your perceptions complete, completes it.

I don't want to go into any kind of philosophical speculation or say anything that requires belief on your part, but I'm only suggesting would the river even be there if you were not there? Perceiving it, being conscious of it. Are not the two needed for the river to be there?

And that sacredness, is that not both within and without? Would the sacredness be there without anybody knowing it? And the same you practice in your room.

Now, almost certainly the room that you are in here is not as comfortable as home, unless you're an ascetic monk or nun. And there are certain things that you may dislike. It's not functional, it's not good enough, but you can sit there also and contemplate the things in the room, sit on a chair, just for a few minutes, 10 minutes, 15 minutes, 20 minutes, and you contemplate and allow it also to be as it is at this moment.

And no labeling, nothing's labeled. I was surprised by that state one morning when I woke up after dreadful suffering during the night, during which the mind made self dissolved. It couldn't sustain itself any longer.

It had created so much suffering that it self-destructed when I couldn't live with myself any longer. And the self that I couldn't live with dissolved suddenly. And what was left was I, presence, I am presence, nothing in particular, just that.

And so I woke up and I opened my eyes and I looked at the room. For the first time without labeling anything. And I knew without labeling it that everything was alive.

And I was astonished. And I walked around the city in that state of non-labeling and I didn't even know that I wasn't labeling. I knew nothing.

All I knew was there was so much peace suddenly, even in the city, so much, the peace is everywhere. I didn't know why. I didn't know that my mind had virtually stopped.

Later I realized it when a Buddhist monk had talked to me and talked about the cessation of mind. And I said, oh, that's what it is. And now I'm suggesting that this is not something that happens only to a few.

There are many human beings that I have met that have come to the teaching who are already stepping out of mind identification and entering that state. Not all at once in most cases, that's relatively rare, but it happens. It means not all at once do they dwell in that state continuously.

You can only enter it now, but dwelling in it continuously may take a little while. That's where time is still needed. Time is not needed to enter that state.

It's now. So that's the renunciation of thought. And an enormous depth opens up suddenly.

You become very deep and you realize how deep and mysterious every phenomenon is, every natural phenomenon, how you have been reducing it to something, to an abstraction by labeling everything, interpreting everything. So this is the practice that I suggest to you in the days to come, to be here as the observing presence, to invite that state that is free of thought. And if thought arises, you simply recognize it as thought without making it into a problem.

So then we come, this is perhaps the main practice and use it then also when you move, not just when you sit. It's first when you sit, then you start, you move between here and your room. And there are steps and be there with every step and to watch as you walk without making it into some formal, formalized thing.

In Buddhism, there's a walking meditation practice, but it's very heavily formalized. So you walk, the foot goes down, left foot touches and then goes. Right foot lifts up.

You cannot practice Tai Chi and be looking forward to the end of your movement. That wouldn't this bad practitioner. So that is, again, a helpful practice, but if it's confined to your practice and the rest of your life, you go back to the mind-identified state.

It's not helpful. It can be a helpful additional practice. Moving in Tai Chi, your hand moves from here to there, let's say.

I've never learned it. I don't know Tai Chi at all. I only know presence.

So the hand moves. And usually in every movement, you want to be at the end of the movement. That's the mind projection of wanting the end result, of wanting, of making this moment a means to an end.

Even when you reach out for a glass, you want to be there already. And then when you gasp the glass of water, you already want it to be here. And before it's here, you want the water already to be in your stomach.

It's always looking to the, you're being pulled by the mental projection of future. That's how most people live. The future pull, which is a mental projection, determines their actions and they're being pulled.

They're pursuing always the mental projection in every movement. And so to bring presence into a movement means it's, at no stage is this movement a means to an end. You don't need to arrive.

You're here already. You're here, here, here. And so you can practice little things like picking up a glass of water and drink it in the state of pure awareness, in which this moment is not a means to the next moment.

So if it's a means to the next moment, it would go like, now what's the next thing? And you can see that that is the grasping quality of, and the next thing might be a magazine or the TV because it's the mind seeks reincarnation into the next stream that it can identify with. Pick up the phone and talk to someone.

Unnecessary, but it gives something to do. And then there's the possibility of simply picking up. First, you might slow down a little when you do it like that, where you use the space, you use the physical movement from here to there as a space of awareness.

That movement while the glass travels to your lips, you're simply present with the movement. Sense everything, how you touch the glass, the temperature. And even as you drink, be so present that there's no thought around this activity.

And then it travels back and that is still another space of simple, pure, aware presence. It's not, it's very beautiful. And a different quality flows into that doing than when you're being pulled by a future projection.

And a simple thing like walking across your room from one end to the other, a state of simple presence, not needing to get there. Nothing is going to change when you get to the end of the room. It's still the now, not needing or walking up the stairs.

Beautiful, present at every step. Is your life going to be more fulfilled when you reach the top of the stairs? No, it's just another place.

It's the now again. Any movement, so you bring in little, you can only do it. Now this looks, you might mistake it as if you were trying to bring something about in you.

But the only reason why we are pointing to this, the only reason why you're able to do it is because presence is arising. And then it manifests as somebody who is picking up a glass in the state of thoughtless awareness. It's only happening because presence is arising in you.

But from the limited perspective of you being this entity, it looks as if this entity were doing some spiritual practice. So this is vital, this little bringing awareness in there and it wants to come in.

[Speaker 2] (5:10:34 - 5:10:40)

We sit on the floor when we're eating and the plates are on the floor and we lift the spoon up.

[Speaker 1] (5:10:40 - 5:10:42)

Right, okay.

[Speaker 2] (5:10:42 - 5:10:45)

And I was thinking that might be a good opportunity.

[Speaker 1] (5:10:45 - 5:38:45)

Yes, that's quite a long way. That's a good, and it's an unusual, for most people, an unusual way to eat. So you might have had some mental complaints about that in your head.

And so you do that. That's any situation. Allow the presence to be there.

So you do simple things at first. And of course here, it's arising as you sit here. And then, during those times when you interact through words here with other people, there comes the first challenge.

The first real challenge. You get small challenges even when you sit in nature. It's your own mind.

But the first bigger challenge comes through human beings because in most cases, human being means human mind, the conditioned mind. And the moment you speak words, the mind is there very strongly. Concepts, words, and you get drawn into a mind stream, reactive mind stream, and conversation.

And you lose the underlying awareness, totally dragged along by the mind stream. Don't know that you're being dragged along. You're just being dragged along completely in it.

So here again, as you interact with other people, the most helpful thing so that you don't get dragged along by the mind stream and into reactivity, listen, giving complete attention as you listen to the other person. So you make listening your practice, but listening combined with sensing the inner body as you listen and giving complete attention in that state of listening. Now, not many people can do that because they're all immersed in mind.

They're not really listening to you. They're listening to their own minds and they want to get in what they have to say. Or they are interpreting what they're listening to, labeling.

So the ability to truly listen is the ability to be still as you listen. That's the only way you can listen, to listen in the state of stillness, which is the state of thoughtless awareness. That is listening.

Nothing else is true listening. And that ability comes almost by accident to certain people who work with others as counselors or psychotherapists. After years of being with people, some of them develop the ability to be in this state as they listen.

And it's only then that they become truly effective in their profession, because it's only then that a greater intelligence is taking over, not the limited accumulated knowledge that they're trying to apply to you by labeling your condition and calling you this or that and putting you into some kind of pigeonhole and category. And sometimes after years of listening and applying accumulated knowledge, after a while, they get tired of applying the accumulated knowledge and they begin to just be there. And the state of attention arises and the spaciousness that is there, that is the state of thoughtless awareness arises.

And then the other person comes into that field and then true transformation and healing becomes possible because it's now that that intelligence that is unconditioned can begin to operate. It might not even come through you because there is the field. Through this form, the field is there of pure spacious presence.

That means it could come through the other person. When the field is there, it could even come through some external factor that at first doesn't seem to be connected at all. Do this.

listen whenever you interact with somebody. Be in the state of pure listening, pure attention. And to dwell in that, sense the inner body as you listen.

So you're almost listening with your whole body and you're giving total attention. It doesn't matter that much anymore what is coming out of the other person's mouth. You're not only reacting to that which is coming out of the other person's mouth because in that state of thoughtless awareness, you are connecting with that dimension in the other person.

You are able to go penetrate through the screen of mind that may still be coming at you and touching that unconditioned consciousness that is there underneath the mind stream in the other person. And not only that, often it is the case that through that, that unconditioned is being awakened and begins to come forward. And of course, that's the essence of spiritual teachings.

And to a large extent, this is also what is happening here. When you are in that state of pure listening, miraculous transformations happen in people around you. So you're no longer, your attention isn't absorbed anymore by the words that are coming out of the other person's mouth.

That's still, yes, the words are there. You listen to the words also, but there's more. There's the entire field, the spaciousness.

So you're looking through the conditioned person. And at first, again, this is a new way of being. And at first, you may feel a little awkward because you haven't prepared the next thing to say.

And the fear comes in that I've got nothing, what am I going to say? And then the other person may stop talking. Well, it occasionally happens that people stop talking.

Or ask you a question. And then you experience, at first, perhaps, suddenly an answer comes, unprepared, unrehearsed. And often it'll be just what that person needs to hear.

And you may be surprised what comes. Oh, that's good, I said that. That's good.

I must write that down. So that's the, because here you are interacting. There are these dimensions of interaction, especially here, anywhere, but there is the world of nature around, which includes plants, animals, river, sky.

And then you interact with humans, the world of humans. So how to be with those two dimensions? The human one, of course, is more challenging than the world of nature.

Humans are difficult. They are here to challenge you. You may find when you wake up in the morning, you open your eyes.

For many people, that is a natural no thought moment. When awareness is there, but thought hasn't come in yet. And there are other times when naturally that state arises in you, as it does in many people who don't even know it.

It arises naturally whenever you see beauty. There's a moment of no thought, and there's a deep inner response to the beauty. It arises naturally when there's a moment of danger.

And immediate action is needed. And there's no time to think, to work out mentally what you're going to do. And so there can be a sudden shift into awareness, from thought to awareness.

And right action happens immediately. And this is the reason why some people seek out danger. They don't know why.

In biological terms, they use this expression, they get an adrenaline high. That is a by-product, perhaps, of that life. But what really happens, they are in the state of thoughtless awareness, and they've never felt more alive before.

And so the only place where they can find that is through seeking out danger, where any mind movement would not be able to cope with that situation. So mind cannot work. It needs to subside, and presence takes over while you're climbing up the wall of a mountain.

And every movement, you're totally present in every movement. One movement of no presence, and you're gone. That's the hard way of learning presence.

But catch those times when presence arises naturally, as when you wake up in the morning and you open your eyes, and there's simply a field of awareness, and be aware of that awareness before the mind starts coming in. You can often see it in people. When they first wake up, and two minutes later, the mind has started up.

And then for the rest of the day, that is their state that I'm now expressing through this. They're not here. They're trying to get somewhere.

And of course, years and years of that wears out the body of that contraction. You may wake up in the middle of the night here, strange surroundings, not your comfortable bed, and thought may come up. And thought often wants you to be somewhere else.

And then you imagine being in the warm bed at home, so soft, why did I ever leave? I could be in my soft bed at home. And then that becomes a thought stream, and soon turns into unhappiness.

And so as you wake up in the middle of the night, immediately connect with the inner body, and you lie there, intense aliveness. And there you are in the state of thoughtless awareness, continuing to dwell in here. Whereas before, the mind was telling you your problems.

The favorite place and time for the mind to tell you what your problems are and to try and solve them is the middle of the night. And you step out of that into simple presence. And the longer you are sleepless, the better.

You welcome that because it's awareness is there. When you go to sleep here, you lie on your bed, sense the inner body, and just be there, present, alert, aware. And go to sleep from there, from that state.

Not only here, at home, that's helpful too. The worst place you can go to sleep from is TV. The second worst place is reading.

Unless it's a spiritual, a book that was written from presence, then any one statement can take you into presence, and then you put the book down. So what I'm saying now is there is enough presence in you. And so far we have, this afternoon, we are only addressing minor challenges.

We will also look at major challenges that come sooner or later in life. And sustaining presence there. But if you can't be present in your room, then how to be present when a big challenge comes?

Unless it's a life-threatening challenge, then sometimes it arises anyway. So what I am saying here is what some teachers would disagree with, but I'm saying it. That there is sufficient degree of presence in you now for you to choose to dwell in the state of presence rather than in the state of mind identification.

And so you only need to remember that you have that choice. Of being identified with mind or stepping out of mind. And I can hear one mind here asking the question, who is choosing?

And the answer is, of course, that it's not really you who is choosing. Presence is choosing to emerge through this form. And from the perspective of this form, it looks as if this form we're choosing.

But that is a helpful perspective. That is why I say you can choose presence. Don't try to work that out through the mind.

Very often, the truth can only, the deepest truth can only be expressed through paradox. Not through some neat, logical statement that says, this is how it is and that's how it is not. That's the fragmentary way of how thought happens.

And when you create thought systems, they may look spiritual, but they may be belief systems, then you have a very neat way of putting it, this is how it is, and there's no contradiction here. Everything is logically explained. Be suspicious when you encounter a teaching that is totally logically consistent that has no contradictions.

It's a mind structure. Here we are going beyond, there are only different pointers to take you beyond mind identification. And whatever pointer is helpful will be used.

The pointers are not there to contain the truth, to convey the truth and any absolute truth. They're only temporary means, that's all. So you can choose, the state of presence, that is a helpful perspective.

And all you need is remember that, that you have that choice and then you exercise that choice. At that moment, presence has chosen you, one could say. Okay, it doesn't matter.

So there come these philosophical questions when you listen to different teachings. There is a doer, there's no doer. And then people identify with one of these perspectives.

They go to one teacher who says there's no doer, and then they repeat that perspective mentally and start arguing with people who say, no, no, there is a doer. And the mind loves that, because then the egoic self has reincarnated into some new belief and has adopted a new mental position and says, this is me now. And I'm telling you that there is no doer.

And you're doing a lot while you're saying that. If questions arise, you're welcome to leave them here. And you can, if you like, write a question on a piece of paper.

And tomorrow or the next day, we will look at questions. I don't promise that there'll be an answer, but we'll look at the question. Avoid questions that are speculative, because they're not all that helpful.

Avoid questions that are too comparative, but you're comparing signposts. But vital questions concerning your own practice. Avoid questions that try to catch me out in some contradiction.

Contradiction. Contradiction, yeah. This morning, you said that, and in the afternoon, you said that.

Which one is true? I had a question not long ago. A very, very powerful mind, obviously, wrote a very elaborate question.

And he said, in your book, you say, you are here to enable the divine purpose of the universe to unfold. That is how important you are. And then on page so-and-so, I found that you say, no form is important.

Which one is true? They can't both be true. But they are.

So if you asked me, do you consider yourself important? I would have to say, not at all. Not at all, this form.

It's only, this teaching only happens because this form knows its own nothingness. It's complete unimportance. That's why the transparency is there, and the teaching can come through.

When you think you're special, the transparency isn't there, and it can't come through. It's completely unimportant. That's why this teaching is so important.

And just a suggestion, close your eyes for a moment, and just listen to the sound of the bell. Allow the sound to arise, and be aware of the field in which the sound arises, and the field into which the sound subsides. And then the sound subsides, and there's left the field of awareness.

The field of awareness is left. And even while you listen to the sound, you listen to the sound, and at the same time, you're aware of awareness, the underlying field, form and formless. One.

Close your eyes if you can.

[Speaker 2] (5:39:41 - 5:47:53)

♪ Gati ♪ ♪ Gati ♪ ♪ Gati ♪ ♪ Gati ♪ ♪ Gati ♪ ♪ Gati ♪ ♪ Gati ♪ ♪ Gati ♪ ♪ Gati ♪ ♪ Gati ♪ ♪ Bodhisattva ♪ ♪ Gati ♪ ♪ Gati ♪ ♪ Gati ♪ ♪ Gati ♪ ♪ Gati ♪ ♪ Bodhisattva ♪ ♪ Gati ♪ ♪ Gati ♪ ♪ Param ♪ ♪ Parasam ♪ ♪ Gati ♪ ♪ Bodhisattva ♪ The reason why there's silence and I don't speak, one way of putting it is, or the reason why I don't speak for a while is because I don't know what to say.

[Speaker 1] (5:47:56 - 7:09:59)

Ha, ha, ha. Ha, ha, ha. Ha, ha, ha.

Ha, ha, ha. Ha, ha, ha. Potentially, that could be a very uncomfortable state.

If I don't know what to say and I'm looking for something to say, it becomes uncomfortable. When I don't know what to say and think I should know, that's uncomfortable. I don't know what to say and feel bad about not knowing what to say.

It's very stressful. But to be comfortable with not knowing is a state of creativity and depth. And then you have access to a deep knowing.

And that's not just the case with a spiritual teacher. It applies to you. You're also a teacher.

To become comfortable with not knowing. Then by itself, a deeper knowing arises out of that. When the not knowing is not resisted, you surrender into the state of not knowing.

And it is the most beautiful state. State of deep inner connectedness. Then whatever needs to be known at this moment truly needs to be known, not satisfy mental curiosity.

What truly needs to be known or done is known. Right now when it needs to be known. And there's a lot that does not need to be known.

But what is truly needed is always there out of that state in which you seem to disappear as an existing entity that's... I know. And then all you realize that all thought knowledge, all knowledge that's derived from thought is kind of pseudo knowledge.

Because in thought, when you call it something, you think you know. When you have a label for something, you think that's what it is. Not realizing that every label is an abstraction.

It's because it's not it. The state of not knowing, of course, is also the state, as we talked about yesterday, when you walk around or sit and perceive without interpretation, without labeling. And again, that's the state of not knowing and yet of a deep knowing that is beyond mind.

So as the awareness, the unconditioned consciousness arises, separative knowledge, which is of the mind, because every label separates you from that which you label, it becomes a barrier. That separative knowledge is replaced by a unitive, one could say, knowing, which does not separate you from that which is known. And you can see how that transforms your relationship with nature and how it transforms your relationship with other human beings.

Because so far, 90% or more of human interaction has been through separative, attaching labels onto people, interpreting, judging, not realizing that every interpretation and every judgment is no more than a very limited perspective. One standpoint, one small perspective. No more.

Once you know that, you no longer get deceived by the mind and you believe that one perspective contains the truth, that one thought that you express could ever contain the truth. It is a small perspective. No more.

It is a fragment. No more. No more.

So the recognition of the relativity of all thought, and we are moving towards a different kind of knowing in which the sense of separateness does not arise. That knowing is also loving. It's one.

Because love is obscured through the delusion of separateness. Love as the realization of your oneness with all that is, is obscured by the labeling, interpreting, the knowing mind. And then whatever you look upon in that state of not knowing from the point of view of mind is looked upon with love, compassion.

They are all aspects of that state of deep knowing that to the mind looks like not knowing at all. And you can imagine how that changes human relationships when you can be with another human being in the state of not knowing, which either means you're totally present, totally still, allowing this form, the form that this moment takes the form of this human being to be completely. Or it could mean that certain thoughts still arise about that human being, who they are, that they should be doing this, should not be doing that, should know better.

They are this, they are that. But thought is recognized as thought. You don't believe in it totally anymore.

And you recognize it's a fragment. It's only a thought. And you allow it to pass.

Then you reenter the state of not knowing. You don't get tricked anymore by the mind. And so there is continuously that dimension of aware presence that may be all there is, or it may be the undercurrent.

And on the surface of it, there are mind movements. That's fine. Sense perceptions, also all sense perceptions are surface phenomena.

Ultimately in themselves, not all that satisfying. They're never satisfying for long. Nothing here in the world of form satisfies for long.

Even if it's beautiful initially, you can come to an exotic place like this because for many people who've traveled here, this is very exotic. It's not exotic if you live here. And it's not exotic if you spend a few weeks here, then the exotic is no longer exotic.

It's just, oh, it's no longer satisfying. For a little while, the new forms satisfy. And then that's not enough.

I need some new experience, some new forms. You may already have reached the point where it isn't satisfying because it never is. You might have had a mental projection, an ashram in India, me in an ashram in India that would add something to the story of me and make it much more interesting.

And then whenever you encounter the reality, very soon when the novelty wears off, which could be after a day, it's not all that satisfying, the world of form. There's always something, oh, that wasn't supposed to be there. The asterisk was supposed to be...

Oh, and that wasn't supposed to be there. And the spider in my bed and whatever. Or worse.

Sooner or later, and usually sooner, you hit upon that the unsatisfactory nature, if all that you know is that. And the unsatisfactory nature of your own mind and with its knowledge. So neither the external world of form and experiences is ever enough, nor is your own mind with its accumulated knowledge ever enough.

So life becomes frustrating, a continuous search. In many people, it manifests as a continuous, almost continuous desire to be somewhere else. When you were at home, you wanted to be in the ashram.

Now you're in the ashram, you want to be home. Does that sound familiar? You may have counted the days to your trip to India, and now you're counting the days to your departure.

So just that seeking through form, either the external forms or through mental forms, it's never satisfying. And so the search continues. You could try another ashram, or maybe a retreat center in California would be so much more comfortable.

Or you say, I'm done with spiritual things. If that's spiritual, I don't want it. And so I very rarely use or refer to old pointers or maps, signposts.

But what very much applies here is a very powerful signpost. One of the Upanishads, ancient scriptures, they contain some very powerful signposts. And I'll just, this is very relevant to what we've just been looking at.

I'll just give you, quote to you the first few lines approximately. What it refers to is nothing that you see or hear or think is it. Nothing in the world of form is it, is satisfying ultimately.

If you look for satisfaction through that, which is ultimately yourself, because the only ultimate and true and satisfaction you can ever find is finding and being totally yourself. That's the true satisfaction that everybody's looking for through this or through that. So the Upanishad says, this Upanishad says, not that which the eye sees, but that whereby the eye can see.

Know that alone to be Brahman the eternal and not what people here adore. Not that which the ear hears, but that whereby the ear can hear. Know that alone to be Brahman the eternal and not what people here adore.

Not that which the mind thinks, but that whereby the mind can think. Know that alone to be Brahman the eternal and not what people here adore. It gives a few more examples, but it's all points to it.

It's not in the form, not that which people here adore. It could even be the idea of God. Think about it.

And again, that is not it. That which makes all perception possible, that which makes thought possible, that is the eternal. And why is that?

Already here as the essence, as the now, that's what it is. The eternal that never leaves you. The now.

You are one with it. So the ultimate secret about now is that you are that. You are the now.

Of course you are. It's the only thing that has never left you. Always was the same.

It's always been now. And people have that sense of something very precious and they think that gets mixed up in their mind with their story. And they call it their individuality, their individual sense of individual existence.

I don't want to lose that. There's something so precious that I feel inside me. I don't want to lose that.

That gets mixed up with identifications, mental identifications with stories and that story-based sense of self. But if you look deeply at your innermost sense of I, your innermost sense of who you are, then you realize it has nothing to do with the story of me. You could forget your story.

You could forget your name. And in fact, it would be there. You would sense that innermost sense of I-ness more strongly as the essence of your being.

And this is why sometimes people find it when everything collapses in their lives, their sense of identity had become mixed up with all kinds of identifications, mental identifications, that suddenly through great loss or death, things collapse in their lives. The structures, the forms collapse external and internal. External as physical structures, the seeming solidity of my life crumbles.

Internal, belief structures, the whole story of me falls to pieces. And then it can happen that that innermost I is suddenly can shine because it had been covered up by multiple and multiple layers of identifications. And suddenly when they break, then you realize what was shining through.

The only thing that gave life to the story of me, the only thing that illuminated it was the innermost I. And you mistook the formations, physical and mental formations for I, because the light of I was shining through those structures, but you didn't know the essence of that light. You only knew it was shining through these forms.

Then suddenly the forms collapse and what is there then in its fullness and purity is the innermost sense of I or I am. No longer this or that, simply beingness, presence, unconditioned, is suddenly there. It's all fallen away.

And so people in the midst of great disaster in their lives suddenly stood there and said, this is incredible. Where does this peace come from? Enormous peace.

They didn't understand it. The peace that is beyond understanding. And of course, this is why suddenly all that was obscuring, the forms that were obscuring that innermost I gave way.

And it can happen in the case of death. We pointed it out yesterday, a person slowly dying, everything melting. And it can happen as the result of being in the presence of presence in a spiritual gathering, the energy field of presence that also is being drawn out.

The unconditioned is shining through the conditioned and the conditioned is becoming trans, more and more loses its density, even as you sit here, becomes more and more transparent in a way, dies, one could say. The conditioned I, the sense in which people usually use the word I, the most frequently used word in the English language or any language, the word I, the way in which people usually use the word I, what they refer to is me and my story, the conditioned entity. Ultimately, the fiction that I identify with as me is I.

That's what people, when they say I, they refer to that. But there is a deeper meaning to I that is the delusion of I, that's the delusion of self. But I is a sacred word, ultimately.

I is on the level of normal human consciousness expresses delusion, which is what the Buddha recognized when he saw the delusion of self. He referred to that I and he saw through that. And so when that delusion is recognized, that recognition already originates from the unconditioned consciousness.

The delusional entity cannot recognize its own delusion. So the recognition of it already is the light shining through from underneath, so to speak. From there arises the recognition of the delusion of the story-based, form-based, mind-based, identification-based identity.

So, and this is what Jesus referred to when he said, before Abraham was, I am. Not before Abraham was, I was already. There is no was nor will be in I.

It is eternal presence, eternal nowness. And this is what the Upanishad refers to. It is the formless, the unconditioned.

It is known, never in a subject-object relationship. It cannot be known in such a way. So one could say it cannot be known at all.

You can only be it. Realize that you are it, but cannot know it as you know an object in consciousness. So people have been for thousands of years trying to make God into an object in consciousness.

The idea of God, the image of God, statements about an object in consciousness, and this is why the Upanishad says, not what people here adore, that is not God, not that which you see, not that which you hear, not that which you think, not that which you believe in, because it's thought, belief is thought. You believe in God. That also is not what people here adore.

It is a mental idol, ultimately. It is an ideology. You believe in God, and the person next to you believes in communism.

Two ideologies. So it's not what people here adore, not that which the mind thinks, not that which the mind believes, but that which makes all thinking, all believing, all sense perception possible. The formless, out of which all forms arise, and that is the innermost I, the essence of what gets mixed up in your life with forms, and it flows.

The self gets mixed up with forms, the deepest, the innermost self. And here, here, the blessing and the grace is it in this energy field. It is, one could almost say, being pulled out of you from underneath all the formations, all that.

That in you responds, because it recognizes itself in what seems to be the outside. And, oh, so that state of still alert presence emerges. In the absence of that, the only thing that could get you there is suffering and disaster.

The breakdown of forms, which had obscured the formless. And this is the grace of the spiritual teaching. It saves suffering.

It saves a lot of time too, because suffering implies time. Eventually, you would get there through more suffering, but the suffering that you have had has been enough to get you here. Without it, you wouldn't have come, so it's worked, it's worked.

Suffering works, no doubt. It's worked. But it can take time before it really works.

For a long time, suffering can lead to increasing egoic delusion, increasing contraction, increasing density. But the point is always reached when it becomes, when the auto-destruction happens, the density and the heaviness of it cannot sustain itself anymore. It goes, it's like layers and layers falling off.

And then sometimes those beings who realized that, they looked back on their suffering and said, what a nightmare. And then they talked about it and realized how strongly it resembles a dream, what they, all the suffering that they have been through, now that they are awake, they say, what a nightmare that was. And so when they start teaching, they sometimes speak of the delusion of suffering, the unreality of it.

From their position, from where they are, their realization, this is true. It may not be true when you are in the middle of it. Of course, you could make it into another belief.

You go to a teacher and they say, all suffering is an illusion. And you say, okay, I believe that. And then you carry on suffering and you say, it's an illusion, it's an illusion.

But it's a pointer. Suffering is an illusion, it's a pointer. And one day, the little pointer may hit something.

The planet is heavy with pain. Human pain. In the energy field of the planet.

A long time of creating pain out of that egoic delusion. Each human creating pain for themselves. A painful form identity.

Not knowing who you are is suffering. Not knowing who you are beyond form is suffering. And so they created a whole world out of that state of consciousness.

And they created a lot of pain out of that primary delusion. Because that delusion flows into whatever you do and think and experience. It's colored, distorted by that delusion.

And sooner or later, it always turns into pain. So humans have been this, in the collective energy field of the planet, there's an enormous heaviness, which is human pain. And every human carries part of that in addition to the pain they've experienced in this form as children.

Residues of pain that people carry inside. Pain body, I call it. Which is partly personal, so to speak.

Ultimately, nothing is personal. It's nothing to do with who you are, but only in the sense that it comes from your childhood, your past, the past of this form. Residues left by suffering that you've gone through in this form.

And another large part of it is the collective energy field, the collective pain that is in the human unconscious, the heaviness of that. And that, when I began to teach, I pointed out, that when I began to understand this inner transformation that had happened to this form, I began to see that it's intimately connected with surrendering. It's intimately connected with the surrendered state that is totally aligned with now.

And I began to teach that. And as, of course, that is the ultimate, the root cause of suffering is the state of non-surrender, which humans have been in for thousands and thousands of years. So I began to teach that there's no need to suffer anymore.

And gradually, I saw that even those who were able to totally surrender to now still experienced wave movements of pain in their lives, even though they were surrendering. And then I began to learn about the human pain body as I observed that and realized that every human carries his or her share of collective human pain. And that's ultimately what the pain body is.

It is the manifestation of human unconsciousness and humans carry it in here, in the body. It is an emotional, an energy field that is not flowing, life energy that is stagnant, trapped, and manifests either as anger or as great fear or as the heaviness of depression, of hmm. So it's an energy field of pain that humans carry.

And sometimes they don't even know it's there. It's dormant at times. And they, and it's life works beautifully.

You surrender to now. And you might even think that's it. I've come to the end of it.

And then suddenly a little trigger happens. A little thing goes wrong or even a little thought comes into your head that suddenly proliferates and becomes a trigger for an enormous influx of pain in whatever form, anger, fear, heavy heaviness of sadness. And suddenly it's completely overtaken by that.

And it flows into your mind. It energizes all the mind structures of the ego. It energizes and amplifies the story, all the identifications.

And so the me, the self, the mind made self becomes extremely empowered through that. The delusion becomes empowered through that pain, human pain. Human pain.

And you start thinking all thoughts reflecting the energy field of the pain body. So the pain body has moved into your mind and is governing, controlling your thought processes and actually feeding on each thought. You strengthen the pain body through those thought processes because each thought corresponds to the energy vibrational frequency of the pain body.

If it's anger, it will be thoughts of anger. And that's how the pain body renews itself. And so the pain body becomes a self.

It becomes, you identify with it as self. You think it's me. It is you, really.

It possesses you, so to speak, and it feeds on other people. If it could speak openly, it doesn't say that openly. It wants to make somebody unhappy.

And it wants somebody else to make me even more unhappy. And usually it succeeds because one active pain body during its active period, once it's fed on your mind and other people's reactions, it will subside, go back to the dormant period, the dormancy. But during the active period, it will feed on your mind and on people around you, and it will easily awaken other people's pain bodies if their pain body is at a stage of readiness to come out of the dormant state.

And so one pain body can easily awaken several pain bodies in its vicinity. You can notice it in families. It sometimes happens at work, in your workplace, anywhere where people gather, a committee meeting, one heavy pain body in a committee meeting can awaken every other pain body that has been dormant in that committee, and you get big drama.

So it's wonderful to watch how it works. Oh. And if you go outside, if your pain body is active, and it may be active for an hour, it may be active for a whole day in some people.

It could be active for several days. It varies a lot. For some people, it's only a few minutes, but those tend to be people who are already becoming more conscious, so it cannot linger.

It's recognized. Sometimes before it can really get hold of your mind. We'll come to that.

But if you go outside and your pain body is active, you also attract other active pain bodies because active pain bodies recognize each other. So any situation that you walk into with an active pain body, you may be hiding it at that moment. It will be in your mind, yes.

It's active, it's using your mind, but you're smiling. And suddenly, somebody attacks you verbally or in whatever way, and that was somebody whose pain body recognized yours and said, oh, here's food. And then you go away from that and then you go around the corner and it happens again.

Somebody else attacks you and the whole world seems to be hostile because every pain body, unless they are totally dormant in certain people, maybe they've just gone through the active period and they just don't want any more pain, they haven't digested the pain yet, but every other pain body recognizes you. And they like to meet each other and feed on each other. And for some people, the pain body is associated also with the opposite sex.

That's a strange thing that is not that uncommon. And that is often the case when, not necessarily always, you've had a painful relationship with a parent, then your relationship with a man or your relationship with a woman is associated with pain body. And it is not uncommon for people to choose their partner through their pain body, unconsciously, of course, to choose.

When you fall in love, quite often, the pain body has a part in that. And this strong attraction you feel is partly the attraction through your pain body to somebody else's pain body who perfectly complements yours. And so you feel drawn to that person very strongly.

And we all know people, perhaps even ourselves, who... who again and again are drawn to the same kind of person that creates the same kind of pain for them. And they're doing it again.

And then they say, this time I'm not choosing a partner with a pain body anymore. I want somebody conscious. And so you choose somebody who is...

who practices meditation, who is a vegetarian. And then, and surely, he or she must be conscious. And maybe you forgot that Hitler was a vegetarian too.

And then you start living together. And then you realize, oh, suddenly it's happening again. The same...

I've fallen into the same... I've married the same man again. That's because the attraction was there through the pain body.

So, many marriages are like that, made in... impression, made in heaven, something, marriage made in heaven. And this one is made in hell.

So, pain bodies recognize each other. Pain bodies do not want to be recognized in themselves for what they are. They don't want the light of your attention on them.

They want to flow into your mind, renew themselves through using your mind and using other people. They can only continue to renew themselves if you don't recognize them for what they are. If the recognition isn't there, each time you get overtaken totally and immediately it's become self, it's become the me, an unhappy me.

So to break that is simply to be alert enough, and of course you cannot make yourself be alert enough, that the alertness, the presence that is required to watch the pain body, you can't make, through effort, make yourself alert enough. It's either there or it isn't there. In your case, it's there because you're here.

That is a clear sign that enough presence is there for you to meet the pain body with alertness and watch it. If possible, the moment it arises as an enormous energy impulse, and to watch that. Maybe you can't stop it yet.

You don't need to stop it. Just watch as it... If possible, catch it before it becomes a thought.

Catch it on the energetic level just as it begins to move into your mind. Now that is easier to do with certain pain bodies than with others. If your pain body's frequency is predominantly heavy, of enormous heaviness and density, so when it takes you over, you go slow and heavy thought processes about how dreadful everything is just.

Completely pointless and dreadful. And the whole world is just Now those are easier to catch because they arise more slowly. Oh, there it is.

And then there are other pain bodies that contain a great deal of fire, anger, and they come and that's very hard to catch them because there's virtually no gap. They arise as an energy phenomenon. But before you know it's an energy phenomenon, it's already become a thought and you're shouting at somebody.

Or if nobody's around, you're shouting in your head. And so the pain body has already taken over your mind. And so the most difficult one to catch is if it's predominantly angry.

And you may not be able to catch because the gap between seeing the pain body as an energy phenomenon and it becoming a thought and thereby a me, a self, the gap is too short or almost non-existent. In that case, all you can hope for is that in the middle of that, somewhere an observing presence watches you in motion. Oh.

And so from underneath the pain body there is a witnessing presence. But it may not happen yet. It may be that you wait until it's subsided and then very quickly the awareness is there and you suddenly realized that was the pain body.

There it was. It just been feeding on my mind and on this situation. And the more consciousness there is, the sooner you wake up as the anger subsided.

You can wake up as the anger subsides. There is sometimes a gap when the energy field goes down. The pain body begins to leave your mind, begins to withdraw because it's been feeding enough.

It begins to withdraw from your mind and there at this point when it begins to withdraw you can sense it Okay. You haven't failed. You're there now.

At any time you're there as the presence. It's fine. Now other pain bodies you can catch as they arise as an energy phenomenon.

There it is. And you watch it. You allow it to be.

This is the key. You allow it to be. The key, you cannot fight it.

The key is even here, even here to bring in the yes because it is. It is. What can you do?

It's right here. It is. It is the suchness of this moment.

And so there is a witnessing presence. So you embrace it. You allow it to be.

And the amazing thing is when you begin to realize that there can be even in the case of the pain body there can be a spaciousness around it. Even in the case of an angry pain body which fumes and shouts and suddenly you know it and allow that to be there there's suddenly a little bit of space around it. Freedom arises when you see the non-personal nature of the pain body.

When you see the non-personal nature of the emotional pain ultimately, although anger doesn't recognize itself as pain, you see the non-personal nature of all those energy movements that we call pain body movements. They are recognized as human pain. They only become personal when they amplify and energize a story in my head that is my story and that is me and that is the fictitious self.

That is a delusion that it is a personal matter. And you suddenly, when you allow the pain body to be there as an energy phenomenon, it's no longer a personal matter. And you realize it's very similar in every other person.

It's basically the same. Anger is anger, human anger. Fear is fear, human fear.

And sadness, the heaviness of depression is the sadness and the heaviness of human sadness. There is no person there and so it's an enormous liberation to see that this is not who I am, it's not me, it's human pain flowing through me. It's the human condition and here it is.

And what can you do with the human condition which is the condition of the unsurrendered consciousness for a million years? You bring surrender to that. The human pain body is only there because of a million years of non-surrender, of egoic delusion.

And so you simply bring surrender into that. And with that act of yes, it's impersonal nature is revealed. And it's not feeding on your mind anymore because it can only feed on your mind by pretending to be you.

It's only when you believe when it becomes a self the pain body energizes the mind structures that we call the self, the mind made self amplifies those mind structures then it's feeding. If the pain body does not flow into that it cannot gain new energy. And the energy that is there through allowing it becomes dissipated.

You can't kill it. There's nothing there to kill. It's life energy but it's trapped, that's all.

It becomes the heaviness or the anger. Anger, all it means is enormous amount of life energy at a particular frequency trapped. And then you bring acceptance to it and suddenly that transmutation is, could be described as the pain, the energy, the vibrational frequency that was in the pain becoming transmuted into the much higher vibrational frequency of presence.

It becomes consumed and this is why many people with extremely heavy pain bodies have, more people with heavy pain bodies have become liberated than people with relatively weak pain bodies. It's that, and that's why it's often in people where you would say he hasn't got a chance not in this lifetime. Look at his pain body I mean it's, and you could be very wrong.

So my pain body was extremely heavy, the pain body of this form and it was only through it becoming unbearable, unbearably heavy that it dissolved all at once and it became consciousness. For most people the dissolving happens over a period of time. This does not mean that you cannot already be free of suffering, no, because when you no longer identify with pain body as a personal matter, as a me, as self, when you simply recognize it as an energy movement within yourself, you recognize that, you bring presence to it, you allow it to be, then it cannot renew itself.

The transmutation has already started with that. You don't need to do anything as such to become free of pain body. No doing can do it.

One could say to be free of pain body, the opposite of doing works and the opposite of doing is allowing, but allowing implies that you are there as the witnessing presence because if you are not there as the witnessing presence, you cannot allow it and the very essence of the pain body is that it doesn't allow anything. It is the essence of not allowing. So, no doing to become free, the key is allowing it to be there and this applies on the inner realm to the pain body.

It ultimately also applies to certain situations on an external level that you have been stuck in for a long time or repeatedly. Situations, you always find yourself in a similar situation and you've tried to get out new place, new country, new partner and you're back in the same. In those cases also, no further doing can get you out of that.

It is only through allowing this moment to be totally as it is, in other words, the surrendered state that change will happen and it'll happen quickly through surrender. So, there are certain situations where of course you need to take action to do something about it to remedy a certain situation but particularly situations where you find yourself in a stuckness and you find yourself experiencing the same again and again, it calls for surrender. You can't run for the rest of your life, run away from something, run away from your partner and another partner and run away from that partner.

Or wherever you live or whatever relationships you're engaged in. So, both on the inner level, the inner realm and the outer realm, they are one. The greatest power for transformation lies not in doing but in allowing and allowing then implies another perspective on this.

It is the ability to look, I'm using it metaphorically, not necessarily with the eyes, to look at your pain body, to bring attention to it. You have to allow it before you can give it full attention. Giving full attention is allowing it.

If you don't allow it, you cannot give full attention. So that is the power of presence and you give attention similar, this is why we talked yesterday as a preliminary to this, about the simple and relatively easy act of giving your full attention to a sense perception, a tree, a flower, people moving, giving pure attention, watching it allowing it totally, no needing to interpret it and now we bring attention to that and that's the unconditioned consciousness, vast intelligence is looking. Vast intelligence is at work.

In Chinese terminology the Tao is there and you are totally aligned with it and it's looking. That the one intelligence is there and the looking is enough to initiate the transformation of that situation. The looking is enough.

No analysis required through mind. How can I get rid of my pain body? How can I get rid of this problematic situation that I've been in for 15 years and I've been thinking about it for 15 years and I've been analyzing it and I've tried this and I've tried that but what you haven't tried is to look.

Simply to look in that field of alert presence and allow it to be and see what happens but the looking when I say see what happens that could be misunderstood there's no expectancy of some future result in the looking there's simply the looking the watching the giving attention the allowing it to be and there's enormous power in that. Far greater intelligence is now released than is in the limited human mind even the greatest human mind and again because everything is connected we started our gathering today with pointing out the power of not knowing and so when you look at something you don't feel that you know so this is another aspect when you look even at the pain body you don't there's nothing much that you need to know about it you just there's just the looking in the state of where no further knowing is necessary and whatever is needed now comes it can come in many forms a sudden transformation from within the situation it can also come in the form of a sudden thought and it suddenly that thought is a realization oh ok a sudden insight ah it can come as an external factor or event suddenly coming into a situation and changing it completely it can come as a spontaneous impulse from within you that and you do what is needed without any doubt whatsoever the right action happens so in those in many forms the transformation can manifest itself but the basis for it is not to bring the conditioned mind to it and try to solve it through the extremely limited knowledge even in the greatest mind limited knowledge of the conditioned mind and what we call the greatest minds on the planet those great people we see we put on pedestals they are the greatest minds they're not really the greatest minds they had some access to that they had some ability perhaps only in their field of endeavor to be in that state of pure attention of pure looking and that's where Einstein looked perhaps as a mathematical formula which all these scribbles on the blackboard which of course was mind stuff but there were certain breakthroughs there were insights that came to him that nobody could have worked out through the mind he had the ability and other creative great creative minds as they are called and to look and he has made statements that are deeply mystical so he had deep insights he had access to that dimension he even said once I want to know the mind of God the rest is details in other words I want to know God the rest is details in other words he said I want to know that which is beyond time and form the rest is the world of form details so that power is your own power the power of the universe in you so look at your pain body in that way and whatever you look upon in that way is embraced is alright look at the worst conflict situation the world is full of dreadful conflict situation and anyone that comes into your field of attention now people in conflict can't work it out look give it full attention bring that alertness there people discussing and arguing and you sit there and then suddenly something happens suddenly maybe they stop talking or you say something a decisive thing that nobody had thought of and that changes everything anything could happen you don't know beforehand how that intelligence deals with the situation but it deals with the situation powerfully any person in turmoil who comes to you this has happened that has happened and he did to me and then he said and I and then see what happens I've told this story before when I first time I realized not long after the inner transformation an extremely excited woman came to me with a very strong ego talking about her drama you must do something you must help me come talk to the lawyers do this and for 15 or 20 minutes I listened to that pain body very heavy pain body and she of course she as the pain body wanted me to confirm the reality of the story the reality of the situation the reality of the problem please confirm that this is real and for 15 or 20 minutes I gave her attention that was just allowing that and that was the first time subsequently it happened many times when I realized the power the transformative power of that when suddenly she stopped talking looked at all the attorneys papers around her hundreds of papers and lawsuits that she had been involved in for years and suddenly she looked at me and said and all the papers and said this isn't important at all is it and I said no it isn't and then she just sat there for a few minutes and said all right I'll go now thank you and the next morning I saw her and she said what did you do to me last night last night was the first night in 20 years that I slept well what did you do to me her ego was back a little bit and there was a suspicious look on her face you did something to me and from then on she believed that I had hidden powers but if you believed that that power was your power it would very quickly become obscured and blocked to realize there is no me in that whatsoever if you ever made a me out of it and the ego could come back through any back door the ego will come back in and claim some attainment I healed that what did you do to me a woman that night it's possible the ego could come back which means the portal is closing again the openness is gone the little egoic identity has come back and claimed some attainment I did that you did nothing it happened because you were not there it happened because you were transparent you were open you were an opening that's why it happened not because you were there because you were not there beware of this little thing in the head the little egoic entity trying to where's the back door it says I need to get back in somewhere and it's happened even with spiritual teachers enormous power came coming through them and then at some point there was the claim of specialness I am the one you are also the one but not quite as one as me so that's of course something to watch in oneself special claims of specialness because every ego every egoic entity is special very special my problems are very special much greater than yours so my knowledge greater than yours my misery much more than yours I'm much more ill than you you have a headache I've had a headache for years

[Speaker 2] (7:13:21 - 7:17:02)

I'm much more ill you have a headache I've had a headache I'm much more ill you have a headache for years than you you have a headache for years I'm much more ill I'm much more ill I'm much more ill you have a headache for years you have a headache for years I'm much more ill I'm much more ill you have a headache for years I'm much more ill Param Parasam

[Speaker 1] (7:17:15 - 8:32:53)

Bodhisattva Of course you have long given up waiting as a state of mind So you are not waiting for anything I talked about the impersonal nature of the pain body We looked at that And just as impersonal really is a stream of thinking It's thought Thought Nobody's personal problem Well, that's a relief It's not my problem, the fact that my mind won't stop isn't my problem It's the human mind And then it stops, because you've given it space Let's look at a few questions I'll start with the smallest piece of paper It's a short question, so that's good By dissolving the ego, won't I be dissolving my self-esteem? Do I not need self-esteem to love myself and others?

Yes, self-esteem Many people seem to have a problem with that Lack of self-esteem, I read a while ago that When the Dalai Lama was younger He was meeting with a group of westerners And they were talking about the lack of self-esteem And he just couldn't understand that What that was, and they tried to explain it And then he went around the group and asked everybody Do you have that? And most people said yes It's very strange, self-esteem Now the human species It's the only species on the planet, of course That has a relationship with itself Where you have a relationship with yourself That's normal But the cat doesn't have a relationship with itself Or the bird doesn't have a relationship with itself Or the tree doesn't So birds, cats, trees, monkeys Trees, flowers None of them have a problem with self-esteem And even the most ugly looking cat Wouldn't have a problem with self-esteem It hasn't created a secondary, an image self Mind created And once, of course, that's created It walks with you, like next to you, behind you Or wherever it is You always walk with a mental image of me And you have a relationship with that And often you don't like what you see The image self That's poor self-esteem And then you may be in conflict with it With the self You may be talking to yourself in the head And telling yourself something about yourself Some people talk to themselves in the first person But many more people talk to themselves in the second person As you, you see You failed again You see, you are not as good as You see, you...

Why can't you... And then at times, perhaps The self feels suddenly great about itself Some people predominantly have low self-esteem In other words, feel bad about the mind-made image me Feel bad about that And then realize that Some realization comes in When they realize that it is mind created And they realize, and usually in the West It's connected with new age teachings And they realize that they can do something About their bad self-esteem, the image You can actually change your thinking about yourself First you discover that the thinking about yourself Is predominantly, or to a large extent, negative And then, you see A little bit of presence is arising It must be, because you are able to stand back a little bit And watch and see what you are creating with your thoughts And then the possibility comes of changing your thoughts Your self-esteem Through workshops Affirmations Visualization And all those practices And then after a while That image looks a little bit more comfortable And you feel more comfortable with that thing walking alongside you But since everything in form All mind creations, thoughts, are subject to polarities You can't walk with a high, continuously With high self-esteem And feel great about yourself There's always a polarity to it And it's usually bound up with what happens or not happens in your life What feedback you are getting from others And it is usually comparative The self-esteem is comparative How do I rate myself in relation to others? And that gives you the indication of where you are On one to ten, or whatever it may be So self-esteem is Mind is connected with the mind made me Lack of it Or in a good self-esteem But it exists within polarities Even if you spend a whole year Affirming continuously That I love myself I love myself And maybe until now you hated yourself And your house is full of little stickers And wherever you look You see I love myself And you look in the mirror And look into your eyes And repeat that I love myself To some extent it works To some extent You have a better relationship with yourself But there's always a downside It's hard to sustain that Because the other polarity will manifest also In your life And you go through life In order to know How you feel about yourself You need to compare yourself with others And then you say Oh, I'm actually better looking than this person So I actually feel quite good about myself I'm actually much more educated than that person I feel good about Or whatever you can get Well, this person is ill and I'm healthy So that's good So you need for self-esteem If you look You need relativity And you need comparison And ego is always comparing itself Is it possible to live Without having a relationship with yourself?

Neither good nor bad Is it possible to be So completely yourself That the mind-made image of me Dissolves Yes, this is why we're here This is the essence of our gathering The mind-made image Is connected to thought To continuous thinking It's fueled by Perpetuated by Upheld by The continuous thought processes Many of which are about me And myself And so I have through thought I have a relationship with a thought-made entity Which sometimes feels quite comfortable And sometimes feels not pleasant Don't want to live with that person And of course it's true Many people live with a self That is very unpleasant That creates a lot of trouble A lot of problems A lot of suffering That continuously criticizes them That continuously blames them That continuously tells them they're not enough And they live with that entity Mind-made, conditioned Mind-movements, conditioned in such a way That they attack you continuously And that's the self that they have a relationship with They would never live with a person like that You would run out of the room You couldn't live with a person for more than a day If your partner, somebody you live with Did that to you What your self-image is doing to you through thought You would have filed for divorce long ago But you can't do that With that, because it's on the mind It walks with you And there you have this complaining And whining and accusing And, oh, get away!

And a large part of that Is because you're identified with thought There isn't the ability to step back from thought And watch thought Watch that And here, the mind-made entity

Because that self that you have a relationship with Is part of the story-based self The me That was the self that I had a very unpleasant relationship with For many years I had a very, extremely painful relationship with myself I couldn't live with myself anymore And so I somehow said, that's it I can't live with it anymore That's it But that was so total That I no longer sustained, fueled the self through thought I didn't know anything about it It just happened So the mind-made image dissolved The self that I couldn't live with That was so heavy Dissolved And what was left was simply I So the I shifted from Whereas before when I said I I was referring to myself The unhappy, dense I The story-based I That dissolved And then the true I emerged Had always been there Presence I am Nothing in particular anymore A simple sense of presence or beingness And for the first time I could walk And be without having a relationship with myself And that, there is something So precious in that I or presence So It's beyond words You could say it's like a diamond Something extremely, very, very precious That's why perhaps Buddhism sometimes has the image of a diamond But this is not comparative It's not a sense of That deepest self Not the mind-made self Is so precious that it has It knows itself to be that In a non-dualistic way Without needing to compare itself to others It has nothing to do with a form Or any mind-form So as presence arises You don't need self-esteem anymore You don't depend on that anymore Because what dissolves is The mind-made entity with which you have a relationship And so self-esteem is an intermediate thing That for a little while makes your life more pleasant It's fine And then after a while you see the unsatisfactory nature Even of that Because you cannot uphold continuous self-esteem It's hard work All these affirmations And then things come into your life that tell you the opposite Inevitably, sooner or later So then suddenly you don't love yourself anymore Nor do you hate yourself Because there's no self to love There's simply the state of this Which is love It emanates But you don't create a fiction That now you have a good relationship and love So that is moving beyond self-esteem And now we see why the Dalai Lama couldn't understand He only learnt about that concept when he met Westerners Who have a highly developed mind and ego Others also have ego But even more developed in the West perhaps But he was surrounded perhaps by monks And not quite as highly developed mental image And perhaps he himself maybe never had it I don't know But anyway it was new to him, self-esteem How strange And I write about it in the book, there's a little paragraph on that The end of having a relationship with yourself You don't need to arrange certain thoughts in your head That you feel good about it So self-esteem is replaced by something deeper and more real I have found that I am able to surrender to many things But there are some things that I still struggle with In particular, my pain body still reacts vigorously to injustice of all kinds Particularly abuse of power and cruelty to animals And people who still insist on saving seats here at the front of the hall With their books or clothing despite being requested not to do so And it's always the same people OK I won't talk about the last part of the question It's enough that I read it But the first part OK Reacting to injustice of all kinds Particularly abuse of power, cruelty to animals Well, wherever you look on this planet You will find it In one form or another You will find violence and cruelty and injustice and abuse of power And corruption Perpetrated by humans Against other humans Against children, animals Against nature, against the planet itself You would be overwhelmed if you knew what is happening on the planet Even at this moment What humans are doing to other humans Even at this moment And it's been going on ever since anybody can remember Recorded history and beyond And of course there are certain pockets where that is particularly pronounced or marked So wherever you look you see that Unconsciousness, humans So identified with their form That they are totally trapped in it So identified with the mental form of me That other forms are dead They have deadened their sensitivity through identification with mind-made images So they don't know what they are doing to other humans Because they have reduced other humans to mere labels, mental labels They have attached judgments, images and labels onto other humans And now anything is possible Any act of violence Through conceptualizing other human beings And what you do to others you do to yourself So in the case of certain, let's say This is only one example Terrorists is one example But respectable scientists working on chemical weapons There is no end to it But let's just, how can a terrorist commit an act, kill thousands of people?

Well before he can do it He has to reduce those human beings to a mental concept He has to attach a label to them And that's what he does In the case of Muslim terrorists And it's not confined to that religion Christians did many similar things A few hundred years ago They would kill anybody they could label as heretic Or whatever label they had But didn't quite believe what we believe Kill him And the terrorists just to put the label of unbeliever Onto a group of people For some who are so identified with mind That just that simple label already deadens And they have reduced these human beings to a mental concept And they are now called unbelievers Once you have reduced human beings to a concept You can do anything to them And won't sense and feel it anymore It's a tiny example And so you are so identified with a form Totally identified with a form That all other forms are alien to you And you can do anything to them To use them Or in fear try to kill them Because they might do something to you So really it's a total identification With conceptual identity Which you manufacture for yourself and for others And so you don't know the aliveness that is there You don't know that anymore Because you inhabit a conceptual reality And that conceptual reality is amplified The madness of that is amplified By the pain that you carry inside That's been there for so long The pain body That energizes and amplifies The already mad conceptual reality So all the pain flows into those mental concepts And then any act of violence is possible Or exploitation What you are doing to the planet They don't know When they see a forest Totally identified with mind It's immediately labeled As they see only timber perhaps And how much it costs They look at it through their mental conditioning Wherever you look on the planet Humans are manifesting That degree of unconsciousness That's what it is Now of course you could feel angry about it You could feel sad about it You can feel upset about it It's only normal, isn't it? But you look through it And see also here The impersonal nature Of what is being done Not to manufacture an identity For those people Or groups of people Or tribes Or religions Doesn't matter Not to make an identity Out of the manifestation of unconsciousness And say that's who they are They are evil That is their nature It may look like that When you look at it on the surface But ultimately all evil reveals itself As total identification with form Which implies total identification with mind Complete absence of an observing presence Witness Not the slightest gap You're totally in mind And so of course it is tempting To make that into an identity You can do it for yourself too Because you can look back on your life At a time when you were less conscious than you are now And you may have done certain things in your life When you were younger To other people You may have failed to do something That you should have done Perhaps in relation to your children Whatever it may be So you may have done something Or failed to do something That now you see as bad It is very tempting To incorporate this Which after all was only The manifestation of human unconsciousness Through this form It's very tempting to make an identity For yourself out of that And say I did that That was me Then it's going to incorporate it Into the unpleasant story of me It becomes part of the mind created image Of who I am And the ego will hang on even to that Anything that gives food To strengthen your identity Your mind made identity The ego which is the mind made self Will grasp that And it will happily grasp at guilt Because guilt is To identify yourself With the movement of unconsciousness That happened through this form And say that was my identity Me I did that Me So it gives you It strengthens enormously Your mind made sense of self And this is why it's hard When you are You do not look through that mechanism People find it hard to get rid of guilt The feeling that I am bad because I did that And so they don't see They make an identity for themselves Out of something That was the expression Of human unconsciousness And the same thing for others You can do it to others Say that is who they are And then you may begin to Want to fight those people Because you must fight evil And so you get drawn into Having enemies You create enemies And it looks so just It is a just cause But you are attacking And without knowing it You get very subtly drawn into Unconsciousness Through attacking unconsciousness Manifestations of unconsciousness Very subtly you get drawn Into that yourself It does not mean that you cannot take action In order to remedy certain manifestations Of unconsciousness But all that is secondary to Getting to the root of human unconsciousness Which of course is in each one Getting to the root of it In yourself as mind identification Becoming free of that Then you can also Of course you can at the same time Also do good Where you see it is needed Help people, yes But being careful that you don't create Enemies to fight This will draw you into unconsciousness And before you know it You do the same things That those people that you are fighting against So to see also here The non-personal nature of human dysfunction Of human madness They are simply through those forms What is being expressed is the human condition In its present evolutionary stage Which is coming to an end This stage fortunately But you see it still everywhere So don't make it into an identity Nor an identity for yourself About something that you did once Nor something that you observe in others And that's called forgiveness Forgiveness means not to mistake Human unconsciousness For who that human being is The opposite of forgiveness Is to make that mistake So forgiveness is simply to see through that And see the true meaning of forgiveness That there is nothing to forgive That is the true meaning of forgiveness It's all contained in Because we have this beautiful That image of the cross and Jesus That contains so much wisdom That you could All contained in that image And it's all contained in the last words of Jesus Which were, forgive them For they know not what they do He did not make an identity For those people Out of what they did to him Now they know not what they do Means in modern terminology They are unconscious So if he had lived now He probably would have said They are completely unconscious It's okay They don't know So forgiveness arises As you stop manufacturing Mind created identities For people And then you become A manifestation of a different consciousness In this world And your presence Is then enough to change the world Because that transformation of consciousness Has already happened within you Very tempting That non-forgiveness Is very tempting And it's mind and it's ego Similarly your parents You might find You may still have some resentment Some of you They expressed Human unconsciousness They didn't have a choice It looks as if they had a choice But that comes only in with presence And that's the choice to be free of mind When you talked about the new consciousness arising Even as the old is getting louder in the world Can that also be on an individual basis?

I find the stronger presence gets in this room Form The more dramatic the pain body gets when it arises Could you talk a little about this? Yes, I've encountered this quite often That as presence arises You experience your pain body more acutely More Almost it feels sometimes As if it came up all at once And of course the pain body is trying to sabotage presence We are not making the pain body into an enemy But this is what the pain body tries to do So you simply see that this is what it tries to do So it will create It can be so much so That I'm tempted to say almost That it can be to such an extreme That it looks as if you were being faced With your entire karma all at once But ultimately it comes up to sabotage But the fact that it comes up is the opportunity for it To rise up into the light of consciousness And be transmuted there So it is right and good that it should come up Because there is sufficient presence Although it tries to sabotage presence There is enough presence in you To meet it In that state of attention and allowing And that's an accelerated transmutation That many people now experience Especially those people In whom presence is arising very quickly Who come into contact with this or other teachings That in slightly different ways point to the same So as presence arises The transmutation of all that accumulated pain Also accelerates So you are right, there is an equivalent movement You see in the outer world The old and the new The old becoming more mad Even as the new arises To the extent that You know how usually television expresses only The old consciousness With relatively rare that it Anything new comes through That is a manifestation of the liberation The liberation from mind To the extent that this teaching Was on national television in Canada In the evening news for three minutes All the other news were of course about The violence in the Middle East And this and that And the killings there And the uprisings there And suddenly there was Oh and then there is this teacher here How did this get into the news? And then I hadn't realized How closely the two go together This would have been inconceivable Even a couple of years ago To have something this isn't news I've always been saying This is underground This is happening underground It's not news and yet It's appearing even in the media That it filters through here and there Yes of course they had to have a little Thing to make it appear as if it were newsworthy And they said who is this teacher Who stills the minds of the rich and famous Oh that's news But the producer actually knew what he was doing And he knew that he needed that little thing To get it in there Otherwise his boss wouldn't have allowed it in So he had to get this in And it got in So it's there It's no longer totally underground And then the equivalent thing within human beings The madness is still there Even as the new arises And at times the wave of madness Which is both mind identification And the amplified mind through the pain body Can come in very powerful waves And you can feel And yet there is a reason why this is happening The transmutation is accelerating It has to come up into the light of presence The pain body cannot be transmuted If it doesn't come up into the light of presence Now the pain body wants I talk about the pain body as if it were an entity And it's a perspective on it The pain body really wants to sabotage it To get food back from your mind It wants to take your mind over again So it comes up very strongly But it doesn't know that There is a greater, larger reason why it's coming up And that is because it needs to become transmuted And perhaps deep down it wants to become transmuted Trying to sabotage really is wanting to dissolve Wanting to become dissolved into consciousness So you're faced sometimes with waves of pain or madness in your life And just, well, what can you do?

Just be there if you can And watch that And occasionally you will get lost in it That's part of it too And then you wake up out of it again And perhaps next time A witnessing presence remains even as the wave sweeps through you And if there is a witnessing presence Even if only in the background The wave will move through more quickly If there's no witnessing presence It gets lodged in here And it can hang on Through witnessing presence the pain body comes up Perhaps very strongly And you will experience it as an energy movement through you Which you may even shake with anger or fear As that happens The body may shake as this energy comes up And you meet it in the state of acceptance and surrender There's the fear And you allow it to happen Allow it to be Even as the body shakes One could say You are suffering If you can even call that suffering Because if there's an observing presence It's just pain So you're getting through the end of suffering Are you still suffering? A little bit And you suffer consciously By allowing that pain movement to be there You suffer It's okay That's enormously powerful To bring that acceptance into the suffering And then it's not suffering anymore It's simply pain Suffering requires an entity A me With a story With mind activity around it And a story around it A suffering entity But now you realize the pain body is simply energy movement Non-personal Nobody's It's not you So that's the So when it comes In those of you in whom it comes strongly Welcome it As it comes If you lose yourself in it It takes you over Okay That was it And next time See if you can be there as it arises And accept it Is it beneficial To the practice of being present To live in an ashram or monastery? If so, are there any you recommend?

Well I visited quite a few And everywhere they seem to be struggling With the same things Whether it's in the monastery Or in the outside world They're having the same conflicts And the same struggles In the utopian communities And you look underneath the surface And you find It's the same as the board meeting in the corporation When they get together So you can go To a monastery or ashram Realizing It's fine, you can surrender there Or you can surrender In everyday life as a householder Surrender there It doesn't really matter where you surrender Of course there are Certain monasteries or groups Where people come together In order to be present With varying degrees of success It helps to be with people Who are also Going through this transformation Entering presence Sangha To have a community It doesn't necessarily have to be A place where you live But to get together Occasionally In the state of presence Either in stillness Or listen to a talk That comes out of presence And then go into stillness That can be helpful Often people ask me When are you going to have your center? And I said, well It may be happening It hasn't happened yet Who knows In any kind of organization Ashram Whatever it may be You will find Unless the people are already free They will bring in Their mind structures Even if their reason for being there Is freedom They still carry with them The mind structures And there have been many examples Of utopian communities Who degenerated Very quickly Into the same madness That you see in the outside world Their intentions were good But The whole of communism The intentions were good Behind it Equality, justice No ownership Wonderful But they hadn't They thought the answers were in Some organizational structure Changed that Not realizing Whatever you create Out of your state of consciousness Is a reflection of that state of consciousness And they hadn't looked at that So communism In order to achieve a better world A future projection First they had to kill About 10 million people In their own countries In order to get There There Future Salvation was in the future And the moment, the now Was a means to getting there And if the now is a means To getting to a mental projection of future The now becomes hell And you can do that to yourself On a personal level Or you can do it collectively If you as a group need to get To a future projection So I would recommend That you visit some monasteries And see How it goes Visit See how you feel there Buddhist, whatever it may be Hindu, Buddhist, Christian Am I ever going to have a center? I don't know What's it going to be like? Is it going to generate into egoic madness?

Who knows Surrender wherever you are Wherever you are Now is the right place For your practice of surrender That is the primordial Truth Not seek a situation that is More conducive to surrender Seek a situation that is more conducive It may change Your external situation Is more likely to change If you surrender now If presence arises now Then it's more likely to change But to say The external change is a prerequisite For my practice That is a fallacy Wherever you are Whatever condition Whatever state Surrender to that No demand That this moment should be different That this place should be different A total alignment With what is And then who knows Perhaps suddenly an ashram grows around you Before you know it Especially in India This is easier to happen in India You just need to sit under a tree And if you are If you are Present and surrendered Of course there are many Who pretend also I know that There are many who pretend Because it's a living They couldn't do that in the west Because whether you are real or not real They won't recognize you Sorry But here if you sit under a tree Or in a cave Somebody will find you And somebody will know Be drawn to you To the state of consciousness That you embody And they'll come with some food And then Two years later Somebody else will come And then two more And then some more people sitting under trees Around you And then before you know it There's a little ashram All that doesn't happen in the west It's beautiful It's unstructured There's nobody saying Okay, let's have a planning committee You are in charge of that You are in charge of that Now let's go and do it Whereas here organically It suddenly comes into being And that's beautiful Less egoic intervention Not that some egos will get in there too Of course they will And then if you are unlucky A western person will come And write a book about you And then they'll transport you to the west And then the problems start I'm joking a little It is wonderful that So much of The essence of the spirituality Of this country Has spread now Throughout the world Beautiful phenomenon India has been like a seed One of these seeds You blow And all the seeds go And that's happened Fairly recently Very quickly And that's part of the transformation That ancient wisdom That was there, been there for thousands of years Now it's flowing there And it's still the same And yet there's Enormous intensity to it now Because of the evolutionary Stage that we are at On the planet One could almost say all those thousands of years Were preparation Getting ready for this evolutionary Transformation on the planet But we have come a long way In just half a century I read recently, I picked up Paul Brunton's book In Search of Secret India Through which Ramana Maharshi Became known in the west And in the introduction He's trying very hard to convince the reader That India has something To offer to the west Which was maybe 1930 Or whenever it was written Trying to convince that There is something valuable And now you don't need convincing anymore Nobody needs convincing anymore And then we have This strange phenomenon Which is very recent Western spiritual teachers Unheard of They haven't existed since The Middle Ages The last spiritual teachers Were the Christian mystics In Europe And after that all you had Was institutionalized religion Mind stuff Of course maybe a few Accidental realizations here and there But they were quickly Killed or shut away And now it's Appearing everywhere Western spiritual teachers In the west Spiritual teacher to many Is a meaningless term What do you do for a living Spiritual What's that And yet It's growing For many of them The seed was Here They were seeded here This teacher This form It happened accidentally But after that I was drawn to Certain Expressions of Indian Spirituality through Ramana Maharshi and Krishnamurti And I realized Through them what had happened To me And there was a strong Immediate sense of Connected, deep connectedness If not to say Oneness So Then people ask me often Have you been to India And then they were surprised And I said no I've never been to India What? You haven't been to India? And you are a spiritual teacher And I said I carry India in here Because India Represents the inner dimension And the west represents The outer one could say And so I always felt Drawn to that I never felt Really Not After the transformation That feel like a Westerner India is the The inner Not that it does not manifest Also human madness That is universal on the planet Of course you have manifestations Of human madness In different forms here But that is universal And yet It's the cradle Of the transformation Of consciousness Attention to the resistance Of the present If powerful enough Will dissolve that resistance And a state of presence will emerge What will dissolve The central core of the self So that it doesn't create Endless waves of resistance Can we explore The nature of the realization That is necessary What will dissolve The central core of self So that it doesn't create Endless waves of resistance Central So what is The central core of self The mind structures The mind movements That are The mental image of me With its accumulated content Plus the pain body The two in cooperation Form the central core Of the central core of self So What will dissolve That Of course that's easy Surrender Only now Surrender It's too easy isn't it It's too simple Surrender To whatever form This moment takes Then The self cannot Survive In the state of surrender To what is It's as simple as that The pain body cannot renew itself When you surrender to the fact That there is a pain body And so surrender I'm not telling you From now on You need to be In continuous surrender For 24 hours a day Oh no It's not that difficult It's only this moment That you need to surrender to Not Just this Whatever form this takes It's always this That you meet In and through surrender That you can do You can't surrender for 24 hours a day That's a problem But just this It's only now And so The egoic self Nor the pain body Can survive In surrender And so And then the question may arise Well, how long is it going to take Before The central core Of self And my pain body Have dissolved And that question implies That surrender is not yet complete Is this moment that bad That you need to get To a future one Where You achieve a certain state To realize The goodness and depth That is already here And only through surrender You realize that Who you are already You are greater Than in your wildest Egoic dreams You could ever be You are already Greater Than you could ever be Even if the wildest Egoic dreams of achievement Became realized Now Already You are that And you are not going to be Closer to God At some future point than you are now And God is yourself The deepest level Of your being You are not going to get closer Than you are now You are already so close That you are not even two Nor is anybody Closer than you are To God And If you want to be in silence For the rest of the day Feel free To do so Tomorrow You will do your own thing Or do nothing We may have a complete Day of silence on Thursday In the meantime Every moment Is now And no matter Where you go Or what you do Whether you stay here tomorrow In silence Or go out and experience This or that See this or that Don't walk around As a heavy person Just A field of presence And perceive Through that beautiful stillness That is there in you If you go somewhere Perceive the multiplicity of forms The beauty of it Be as much free of mental labeling As possible Surrender To this moment

[Speaker 2] (8:36:03 - 8:39:28)

Be as much free as possible Surrender To this moment Be as much free as possible To this moment Be as much free as possible Surrender To this moment Be as much free as possible Surrender To this moment Be as much free as possible Surrender To this moment Be as much free as possible To this moment Be as much free as possible Surrender Gati, Gati.

[Speaker 1] (8:41:32 - 9:45:11)

to Japanese shakuhachi, the essence of that music is of course not in the sounds, but in the spaces between the sounds. So when you listen to music like that, it's helpful to, one could say, almost pay more attention to the spaces than to the sounds. So the sounds point to that, and that is similar in some paintings, Japanese, Chinese, where you see a little rock in one corner, a branch somewhere in some other corner, and it's mostly empty space, nothing much there.

And so the contemplation of that can, if you pay attention to empty space instead of paying attention to the little that's there in the empty space and talk about that, but acknowledge, be aware of the empty space, which you can only do through the empty space within yourself, to be aware of the empty space, either the space in the music or the space in the painting, the emptiness there, to acknowledge it, to be aware of it, is through that within yourself, not never through thought, because the empty space is the formless, thought is form. And the formless is your essence identity. And then of course you have a temporary form identity, physical and psychological form.

But only knowing yourself as the form identity is bondage, is ignorance, is delusion, no matter how clever the form identity is, no matter how much knowledge the form identity has, no matter how many experiences the form identity has accumulated and identifies with as me, it is ignorance only to know yourself as the form, physical body, mental form, psychological form of me, the mind made image me.

And then in the truest sense of the word, you don't know who you are. And who you think you are is an illusory entity. And because it's illusory, it's never at ease.

You can never be yourself through the illusory entity. And then the illusory entity seeks because it knows its own incompleteness and lack. And then it seeks to strengthen the illusion.

It seeks to add more to the illusion, believing by adding more to the illusion, finally you arrive at something substantial and true and permanent and lasting beyond decay and can never find it because you don't know yourself as the formless. So we are here to know ourselves as the formless. And in any situation, as you move about this world, which is the world of form, the world will exert its pull upon you in any interaction with another human being.

The question is, is there space in the world in the interaction? Or is the interaction entirely through form, mind? And I'm often sometimes surprised, sometimes people who are already able to allow that stillness that is intrinsically one with the formless to arise, when they get challenged by the world, they get totally drawn into whatever form the challenge takes and the reaction takes.

They get immediately lost and believe that something out here, or in their minds, which is also out here, they believe that something out here matters, is vitally important. And so the world seduces you, that includes of course the mind, but the world seduces you into believing that this matters absolutely and you must give me your total attention. And so you get lost in your reaction, which is also a form, a conditioned form, and you're totally in it.

And then you're talking to someone. And it's very serious, very serious. You must listen to me.

This is what happened. And now, what are we going to do about it? Or there's fear, oh, what's going to, this dread, it's all.

Your whole self is drawn into the, space is lost and all you have is form. So that means you get lost completely in the form. And this is when you, the whole civilization is lost in that.

When you listen to the news, there's no sense of space. The newsreader is very serious and reads out all these things that matter so much and everything is very problematic because if it's not problematic, it doesn't reach the news. It doesn't need to be deep or meaningful or whatever.

No, it needs to be problematic. There must be something here that is news. So those people who are themselves lost in form, they select the news for you and then it's presented as it matters.

This is, these problems are so important. And the potentially redeeming dimension, redemptive, redeeming, whatever, they don't know it. There's no space around it whatsoever.

So you get seduced by the world into believing that that's all there is. And then the world becomes more important to you than God, to use theistic language. You might say, no, all I want is God's realization, whatever, liberation, self-realization.

All I really want is that. And five minutes later, what you really want is this situation matters absolutely. You get drawn into that.

And then, so the question is when you say, I want God, self-realization, it's true when you say it, it's true. But five minutes later, you don't want it anymore. You want the world.

Because to say, I want God, it means I'm willing to enter the surrendered state of consciousness. No, I'm willing to enter surrender and nothing else matters. It's also saying, I want peace.

And that is my main, the only true thing that I want is peace. And a little later, the world comes in and then you want something else. In the text called the Course in Miracles, which was a channeled teaching, there are the beautiful lines.

I want the peace of God. To say these words means nothing, is nothing, but to mean these words is everything. Nobody can mean these words and not be healed, which means, of course, not be whole, not be yourself, to truly want it.

So we have the two, when you are not in the state of surrender, are you, people say, I just, I can't, I can't surrender, I can't. Is it that you can't or that you're not willing? You have to look, there are two perspectives on the same thing.

I'm not able, or perhaps if you look closely, there's something in you that doesn't want to surrender, that wants the non-peace, and to see that, that there is a movement in you that is very deep, that is true, that wants realization, wants peace, there's another movement in you that does not want it, and that can very easily obscure the deeper, essence within yourself that wants peace. It's important to realize that there is a conditioned movement in you that wants problems and conflict rather than peace. Once you know it, it's fine, and once you can see it, even as it comes up and operates, and that may include, of course, the pain body, but it is a conditioned mind movement that is one with the egoic sense of self, which periodically and very frequently needs to enter the state of conflict to sustain itself.

The mind made egoic self cannot live for very long without entering conflict, and inhabiting a world of problems. It needs to create that to sustain itself. If you don't know that, you get lost in that compulsive need, which could also be called in humans the addiction to suffering in humans, and you need to see it within yourself that that is there, and it's not personal.

If you think it's a personal problem of mine, then you get trapped even more deeply. The addiction to suffering, the need for conflict is unconscious, and it is how that separate identity that is mine, the egoic identity, keeps its boundaries intact. The boundaries between me and all those others, all those out there, other people, my enemies in the form of people or situations or places, or this moment.

Occasionally you get a relief, and then for a little while you're, ah. And then the need, the addiction to suffering comes back, and when you don't know it, you believe that the world around you is making you suffer, is doing it to you. And that is the essence of unconsciousness.

You then believe that the world is basically out to put obstacles in your path. This is how most people experience life and the universe. It seems like I can never be at peace for long, and suddenly the world putting obstacles in my, it's happening again.

God, why does it always have to happen to me? And then you react. And so it looks as if the world were doing it to you, and you don't realize that you, that need comes from within.

That's already dysfunctional, it's normal and it's not personal. Then you take the dysfunction a little bit further, and then we can see that it's actually insane. The belief that the world is doing something to me becomes then paranoia or paranoid schizophrenia.

And when you take it just a little bit further, then you can see, oh, it's actually quite mad. But even before it's diagnosed as paranoia, it's already mad. And so if you're diagnosed with paranoia, then you can tell yourself, just because you have paranoia doesn't mean they are not out to get you.

But. So the, it is liberation already. It is liberating to see in oneself that movement that we could call the addiction to suffering, the need for conflict, to see it.

That's already, you're becoming free in seeing it in yourself, because the seeing, what you are seeing is the conditioned. That which sees the conditioned is the unconditioned that just looks. Oh.

And so you can see in your life how periodically, maybe once or twice or three times a day, or who knows what frequency, that comes in. And then any situation will do, and certain situations bring it up even more, that need. Many people coming here to a strange environment.

India is challenging. And so it is, you can watch what comes up, all the reactivity, the reactive patterns that come up, that bring a heaviness to something that is just a situation out there. And the reactivity flows in and becomes very heavy.

The condition that is simply a condition becomes heavy through the reactivity. So that's important to know. And so all that implies there's no space when that happens.

You get drawn totally into form, because when you react against something, you react against some form which strengthens your own form identity. That's the form identity loves its reactivity. So in any interaction, in any situation, the question is, are you lost in that situation?

Which means lost in the mind formations, the reaction, the mind stream, the words that are coming out of your mouth, the thoughts that are going through your head, and you're completely in it, no space. Where's the space? There's no space, it's just that.

And then you talk to someone and just said, it could be any kind of talking. It could be gossip, it could be fearful, it could be angry, it could be, we must get something done, we can't allow this to happen. Well, whatever it is, it could be sad, but you're completely lost in that.

And where's no space? Sometimes when people come to me and they talk to me and I can see they're totally lost in the mind interaction, I just wait until they come to an end, and that could take a while. And when they finally stop, then I just wait and look at them.

And it sometimes happens that at that moment, some space comes back in them and then they wake up. And then the strange thing is you can see that no situation is really that heavy when there is space around it. It's only a situation.

It's only different forms, limitations of forms appearing in some way. It's only one more situation expressing some form of limitation. Of course, it's the world of form, no more than that.

And that no situation truly has that density and heaviness to it unless you give it to it. The world, actually the world of form isn't that heavy and bad. It's the, what you add to it makes it dense and heavy.

And incredibly magnifies what is there as the simplicity of some kind of situation. But through that, which you carry inside, which is the need for suffering and for conflict, then magnifies, blows up that situation into something very big. And it's all ultimately constructs.

It's all ultimately illusory entities being created. But it can look very big, so big that it might reach the evening news on TV. And then you know it's really heavy.

If people knew that in certain places where this unconsciousness is particularly pronounced, there are certain parts in the world where there's enormous heaviness of conflict. They're just very simple situations which could be resolved by sitting together for a few minutes around a table with space around it. They would sit.

Could be resolved in a few minutes with just some space around it. Whatever situation, Middle East, Northern Ireland, all these where human unconsciousness is particularly heavy, dense. Of course, it's everywhere.

But it's not the outer situation. The outer situation is simple. It's always simple.

It's what people, and that is the essence of karma. What flows into it, the situation is used as an excuse. And that's not confined to Northern Ireland or the Middle East in everybody's life.

It's the same. It's simple. It's always so simple.

It's always just the now. And then you, through that conditioned reaction with its need for conflict, why is this need for conflict? To strengthen my sense of self.

That is the illusion. Why are the Middle East and Northern Ireland, they're in conflict because they are defending and attempting to strengthen their sense of identity, collective sense of identity. In Ireland, they have several times a year, certain one faction has to march through the other religion's district.

They go, they've been doing it for 300, 400 years because there was a battle 400 years ago and where they killed more than the others. And so they have to assert themselves by marching through whatever Protestant, Catholic. And they ask, why are they doing this?

What is the point? Well, this is, it gives them their sense of self. They don't have no other.

And the conflict sustains it. So to see that whatever life situation you may be in, it's simple. It is always simple.

It does not have the heaviness. The heaviness comes through the projection, which is the need to enhance yourself through problems and conflict. It is the addiction to suffering.

Which is connected to having no identity beyond the little me. So it uses the world and makes it into a very heavy place. And the limitations that are inherent in the world of form become a very problematic life situation and a very problematic me.

And slowly the world turns into hell. And so it's the little, just a little, is there space. Now, all that people are, when they are lost, they are lost in form, mind form, physical form.

Reaction, conditioned reaction. They're all conscious of all these things, the forms. Now, what we could call, one could say, I'm just offering you one more pointer.

If one doesn't work, the other one might. One could say space consciousness rather than object consciousness. The whole, almost everybody goes through this world totally occupied, totally dominated, totally identified with object consciousness.

It's all this. And every object matters because you have nothing beyond it. Every object, including every mind object, which is every thought, including every emotion that comes with a thought, is object consciousness and you're in it with your sense of self, each one.

And space consciousness is absent in most people. The one thing that could redeem you, they don't know it and it's so simple. It's all that is the essence of this teaching is to teach space consciousness, not to get lost in form, not to get lost in mind.

And what ultimately that is, I cannot explain. I'm doing the best perhaps that anybody can through language. It's a miracle that one can even talk about it because of course it eludes language because language is form.

It eludes thought. You cannot fully understand it. You can only get approximations of it through thought.

It also would not be helpful to continue to elaborate and differentiate more and more the concepts and vocabulary that I use to describe that consciousness. That would take you, give you the illusion of understanding it if I differentiate it more and more, created new words to get another instance, another instance, and it would become a mental construct again. So I'm going only so far as to give you enough pointers and that's it.

The rest is, one could say, a direct transmission. Not that I am doing anything, it just happens. It's a direct transmission of presence or space consciousness, whatever you want to call it.

And that is why I pointed out at the beginning of our retreat to be conscious of that dimension here that is beyond the words. So all that the words do, they point to that, but the essence is that dimension. Now, whether you call that space consciousness, whether you call that presence or you call it stillness or you call it the unconditioned consciousness or you call it pure awareness, it doesn't matter, these are just little pointers.

Or you call it consciousness without thought or you call it pure intelligence, just another pointer. The pointer is not it. It's beyond the words, it's beyond the world and yet it's here, it's beyond form, yet it's here.

How does it come into this world? Who knows? It's here.

So to be open to that dimension as we sit here which perhaps you can't say much about it and yet it arises as the ability to just sit here in that alert stillness, that sense of spaciousness and know for yourself at first hand what it is to be conscious without thought. Even if thought happens as occasional movement within that, it's fine, there's space around it. Space.

And that is the only absolute. Everything else is relative in your life. Everything in your life matters relatively whether you succeed in the world, in the eyes of the world, whatever that means, which means the world is telling you that you've made it.

Does that matter? Well, it matters relatively if you need the mad world to tell you that you've made it, okay. Whether you are poor or rich, it matters relatively whether you live in a tiny little hut or a huge mansion, it's relative.

Yes, it matters relatively. All the outer circumstances of your life, even whether your health is good or not, yes. But not absolutely.

There's only one thing that matters absolutely and that is whether you know yourself. Whether you know yourself beyond form. If you don't know yourself, none of those things that matter relatively can save you.

To be important in the eyes of the world can't save you, doesn't give you peace, doesn't give you anything ultimately. To be wealthy doesn't save you. To live in a mansion doesn't save you.

Mansions are full of unhappy people. Looking, still looking for themselves. They thought through the mansion, they would find themselves because the self suddenly expanded into this huge mansion.

And oh, they didn't find themselves in it. But only one thing matters absolutely and that is this. Then the rest becomes very much secondary.

It changes anyway. You can't rely on anything out here. You can't trust the world.

We can't trust any form because it's going to leave you or you leave it, it dissolves. True trust is something else. Not to trust in anything that is form, but the state of absolute trust is the state of presence where no form is needed to complete you.

And no form can threaten you. So we are learning here what space consciousness is, but we're not really learning it. We are unlearning all those conditioned habits.

We are relinquishing, looking through all those conditioned habits that obscure space consciousness, obscure presence, which is already here. It's strange this, there are some places where particularly spiritual seekers are drawn and this is one of them for thousands of years they've been drawn here. And many of them remain seekers.

They're looking for themselves in some, perhaps some experience or perhaps a vision or something to be added and don't know that the very seeking obscures what's already here. So remember what I said before, space consciousness, you can bring it into any interaction and it is your job to do that because that's how the world changes. The world consists of human interaction.

You can bring it into any interaction through being in the state of attentive listening. That is the space. And then the problem may come when you start speaking.

Then the tendency is as the mind stream arises, it has a pull. And to get pulled soon after the mind stream starts to be completely pulled into it and be completely dragged along by the mind stream as you speak, words compulsively coming out of your mouth. And it'll be some kind of problem or whatever, some kind of criticism, some kind of complaint, something that is matters.

And you are so identified with comes out that you believe it to be the truth. A thought being the truth, a fragment relative perspective, one of innumerable possible perspectives on a situation, on a person, and you take it to be the truth. Yes.

So the mind stream, and this is not your personal problem again, it's the collective human mind. We talked about the pain body not being a personal matter, nor is the whole stream of thinking a personal matter. It's the human mind.

And there was a philosopher in the first half of the 20th century who made a strange statement, we don't speak, language speaks through us. Perhaps to take it a step deeper, what he meant was we don't think, thought thinks us. He's actually said, sorry, language speaks us.

So we could say thought thinks us. It is a movement, an energy movement, an energy formation, collective human. And the momentum of it is enormous.

And so the moment you might be in a state of listening, you're just, you're listening to another person's space, and then you start to speak. At first, it may be fine, there's still space around it. And then it can happen that very before you know it, you get drawn into complete identification with that mind stream, and it pulls you along.

And then, of course, you completely believe in what you say, there's no perspective anymore, you're lost in the one little perspective. This could even be, even if you don't speak, it can happen, thoughts going through your head, and you're totally lost in that, in whatever they say you totally believe in, about yourself, perhaps, about somebody else. So you're lost in the mind stream.

And it could be a while before it comes to an end, because it will proliferate into another one, into another one. And it might need somebody to hit you on the head before you suddenly go, huh! As presence arises, there's the ability in you even when the mind stream comes in, in the middle of being dragged along the mind stream, still to know that this is what's happening.

And that's all that's needed, to know that you're being dragged along by a mind stream. That means consciousness is beginning to free itself from being totally trapped in thought. Just a little knowledge that you're being dragged along by a mind stream, a tiny witness in the background.

That, mm, oh, ah. The moment that arises, there is the arising of space. It might be very small at first.

You might, and, but that's all that's needed. So you don't need to fix yourself, change yourself in knowing, oh, I must get rid of my mind. No, know it when it's there.

That's all that's needed. If you had to fix yourself, it could take a long time. Just to see the conditioning as it operates, oh, oh.

And then it cannot sustain itself for that much longer if the witnessing presence remains. The unconscious mind stream will soon come to an end because when consciousness comes in, it's hard for an unconscious movement to sustain itself. So instead of trying to rewire yourself through this or through that, and there are many people who promise to fix you.

I don't. Instead of that, allow the awareness, the aware presence to be there. And that, of course, is not something you can make happen.

It's either there or it isn't there. But the fact that you are here means it's there because it's only that that made you come here. If you came here by mistake or because of some illusion that this was about something else, as it happened, occasionally people came when I, for a little while, I called this, when I gave some talks, I had the title, Freedom from Time.

And once or twice, people came by mistake because they thought it was a seminar about time management. That happened twice. One person who came for the seminar on time management walked out and told the organizer, I'm sorry, this is meaningless to me.

I've come for time management and I'm sorry. It was a big mistake. And the other one who came was a doctor who needed to sort out his time problems.

And he sat there in astonishment for three hours. And he said, I've never heard anything like this before. And I had come for time management and thought this is so much better.

So presence, you cannot, this is something you can't make happen whether the witnessing presence is there or not. I'm speaking to you and saying that you, because I know that it is arising in you. If you should have come here by mistake, believing it was about something else or believing that this was here so that you could acquire more spiritual knowledge or more beliefs or expecting something else, emotional experiences, jumping up and down, who knows?

And then you've probably already left. Or you're sitting here in a state of bitterness and resentment and loving every minute of it. And that certainly gives you a strong sense of self.

And when you are in that state, of course, it also implies that the entire world is wrong and you are right. And you have a right to be in that state because they are all wrong. No, no, that's, well, now you know who you are.

So you cannot make, presence is not something you can make happen through anything. It is perhaps grace. And if it is grace, it's happened to you.

And it may, perhaps your mind doesn't even know it. It says, has it happened to you? I'm not quite sure if it's happened to me.

Or the mind might say, no, you're wrong. It's not happening to me at all. And yet presence can happen without you knowing it through the mind.

It's happening to certain people in the world who have never read a single spiritual book and it can happen in them. And they can't say anything about it. When it happened to me, I knew nothing about it.

If somebody had said, presence has emerged in you, I said, what's that? I knew there was peace, yes. So that's a helpful, there's some peace there.

It's emerging already. And this is why I'm saying to you, and I can't say this to everybody, that in the middle of the mind stream, there's now the possibility that space consciousness or presence is there as the witness, because there's enough presence in you for this to be possible. Oh, and that's all you need.

Now, once it has began to emerge, it is perhaps in Ramana Maharshi's terms, maybe it's a current of unconditioned consciousness, a current of awareness. That has nothing to do with thought structures. It's just arises.

Once it has arisen, that's, it's not going to stop. It can again become obscured temporarily, and then it's there again. And if it became obscured for a longer period of time through some heavy identification in your life, it would break through.

It would make room to crack the shell of ego, but it's already cracked. But if the ego does a self-repair job, which it can do, the crack could disappear again for a little while, but then presence emerges more. And so if you need a disaster for the final crack, you'll get it.

And that is also grace. Very often, people don't realize that the disaster in their lives is the greatest grace possible. So grace sometimes is, as there's a book, a new book by Ram Dass, the spiritual teacher who suffered a stroke, and his new book is called, Fierce Grace.

So it's already there. You don't have to really, for once, I agree with those teachers who say you don't have to do anything. Allow it.

It's not really a doing. Allow it to emerge. That's the opening.

Rather than feel I have to make it happen, you can't. You allow it. And so you surrender until there's no further need to surrender, until surrender disappears.

Surrender is detecting non-surrender, watching non-surrender dissolve and entering surrender. Surrender is the bridge between resistance and non-resistance to life. Resistance and non-resistance to the present moment, to the form that this moment takes.

So this is why it is our practice. It's the bridge. And use that bridge.

No other bridge is needed to find yourself. The egoic structures cannot sustain themselves in surrender. That's the beauty of it and the simplicity of it.

So people ask, how do I get rid of ego? How do I get rid of self? Just this.

Everything happens then. Thought compulsive thinking subsides. And with that, the egoic structures weaken because they are thought.

Everything happens. As the compulsive thinking subsides, the mind becomes less noisy. You sense a stillness that arises.

In this now, and it's, is it within? Is it without? It is space consciousness and it arises.

And then the miracle is it can act upon even the situation that you have surrendered to, the form of this moment. That's presence, which is the unconditioned consciousness is the intelligence that then begins to operate outwardly. And that's a miracle.

And that is only a by-product of that. That's not why you do it. And it's beautiful when suddenly the forms change and become more harmonious, change very quickly.

Helpful factors come into your life. You don't know how, where from. Coincidences happen because the totality, you're connected with it now.

It's moving through you. But all that is only icing on the cake. There's a question I didn't bring.

We'll look this afternoon at more questions. One question that was asked was if consciousness moved through those human beings who became liberated, created the circumstances that are right for liberation to happen, why isn't consciousness doing it to everybody right now? What's the delay?

That's a, I'm paraphrasing the question. Why can't consciousness do it now if it did it for Jesus, or if it happened to this form or whoever? Of course, the answer is it is happening right now.

You are in the midst of an evolutionary transformation on this planet, not only in the midst, you're an essential part, a cell within the totality of the human organism because humanity one could consider as one organism with billions of cells. And this collective organism, which goes beyond the physical, is going through a transmutation as that organism. And part of the organism is still untransformed and it's beginning its transformation.

And what you perceive as your person is a cell in that organism that is going through that transformation. So from the limited point of view of the person, that is the greatest gift, the greatest adventure, the greatest purpose in your life. That greatest purpose is not in the future, but it's already being fulfilled at this moment.

People occasionally still come and say, what is my true life purpose? This.

2014 Eckhart Tolle Touching The Eternal India Retreat Part 2

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 16:49)

...future, but is already being fulfilled at this moment. People occasionally still come and say, what is my true life purpose? This!

The outer form is secondary. Am I destined to live here or there? Am I destined to move in this way or that way?

Or what words are destined to come out of my mouth? All that is the world of form, and that will look after itself. But what is the true purpose is the transformation of consciousness, which is now.

And there are people who are already in the midst of it, and their little mind still says, I'm looking for my life purpose. And then the outer will reflect the inner. You will teach.

In one form or another, you may be teaching already. Your very presence then becomes a teaching, because the good news is that just as unconsciousness can be contagious, unless you're very present, one unconscious person can create drama in an entire room full of people, can pull everybody just by starting to fume and shout, can pull everybody into reactivity until the whole room is totally unconscious and they're all shouting. And just like that, presence is also contagious.

Presence spreads, transmits itself beyond whether you speak or not. Your mere presence is the transmission of presence, space consciousness, and it will transmit itself to those who are ready. And so it means you're teaching.

Additionally, certain words may come out of your mouth, you may have some formal teaching function in this world, it's secondary what form it takes, it may be no form at all. The beautiful thing with many Indian teachers was there was almost no form to the teaching, no structure. They just sat under a tree or in a cave and it happened.

There was no time, they didn't say, we will meet from such and such. Of course the drawback is they might not be there when you get there. Or they've just run away somewhere and you have to find them.

That's a drawback, but we live in the world of polarities, so here you have the beauty, you know I'm going to be here, unless the universe has other plans. You know I'm going to be here at a certain time, but then we have almost too much structure and then there's the totally unstructured way of teaching and that has its great beauty, in a way it's nicer than this, and yet on the other hand, he may not be there, or he or she may have gone away. Or you have to hang around for hours and hours for him or her to make some appearance.

Finally at four o'clock in the morning he comes. So it doesn't really matter what the outer form of the teaching is. You will be teaching and you are teaching already.

As the course in miracles puts it, you are a teacher of God, not through pointing to the Bible and the beauty with teaching is that you don't have to do it. It does it. Your responsibility is to remain open, surrendered to it, so that what was a dense personal self becomes more and more transparent and then it can move through you.

And that is the purpose of your life and you are becoming transparent even as you sit here, less heavy as the self structures dissolve, the heaviness of me goes. Spiritual weight loss program. I spoke of the ability that comes with presence to look at a situation, to look without analytical interference through the mind and that that brings in the intelligence that will deal with the situation, whatever form that will take.

It will deal with it through an external factor or it will deal with it through this form. And prerequisite for this looking, and I'm using the word metaphorically in a wider sense, of course prerequisite for that is you must have surrendered to this moment before you can fully look at this moment, fully give it your complete attention. Your attention cannot be complete if you have not completely surrendered to the form that this now takes.

Then that intelligence can operate. But even the slightest resistance to what is will obscure, impair the ability to simply give attention to a situation, a person, a thing. The greatest transformative agent there is, but you need to have opened the doors first.

The portal of surrender must be open and the looking. That the greatest miracle is that. I suggest that we spend today in silence alone with your mind.

Allow the thoughts to be there if they come. Don't take them too seriously. Remember that they want to be taken seriously.

They pretend that they matter absolutely and no thought matters absolutely and no thought contains the absolute truth. So there is a compassionate relationship that you now have with your mind. You just see its limitations, which in themselves are not a problem.

They are the limitations of form. So you allow those limitations to be there. And there is the space around thought, in between thoughts.

Compassion and allowing go together. So when we speak of compassion, it's intrinsically linked to allowing what is to be. That is compassion.

And that has great power. Even your pain body. We looked at it yesterday.

What can you do? You allow it to be. There is space around it.

At first it seems very little space. And then a bit more. And so your relationship with your pain body is also one of compassion.

Allowing other people's minds. There is no really other people's minds. It's the human mind coming through this form.

Allowing that. Not demanding that they shouldn't manifest the human mind. Not demanding that they should be enlightened by now.

Why aren't you? You shouldn't behave like that anymore. You should be enlightened.

Compassion with human unconsciousness. What's unconsciousness? Complete identification with the conditioned mind.

That is unconsciousness. Wherever you go, you'll find it. Wherever you meet humans, you'll find it.

If you demand that it should be otherwise, you're in for big problems. Because wherever you go, you'll meet all those people who are unconscious. And you'll start complaining about it.

Saying they should be more conscious. And in that, become unconscious yourself. So you bring in consciousness through allowing, which is also compassion, that transforms.

So compassionate through allowing with the human condition, which is in yourself and in others. Not making, we looked at it yesterday, I put slightly different perspective on it, not making the human condition, which is unconsciousness, which is the human condition in its evolutionary, present evolutionary stage, which is coming to an end, but is still the predominant human condition, identification with mind, unconsciousness, pain body, identification with pain body, not making that into an identity for people. That's the opposite of compassion.

That is called judgment. Now judgment means to mistake unconsciousness for someone, to mistake the manifestation of human unconsciousness for a person. There is no person, there is simply the movement of human unconsciousness.

So judgment, you confuse the being, the identity, the true identity of that being, with the behavior that they manifest through manifesting human unconsciousness. And of course, there can be no compassion there. It is judgment.

You can do it to yourself too. You look back on what you did yesterday, and it was unconscious, and then you say, that was me. I'm bad.

Useless. Nothing to do with who you are. So wherever you meet unconsciousness, allow it.

Nobody there. Not a person. That is the transmission of presence, that allowing.

So you don't have to do anything to change them. The change happens. More questions.

This afternoon we may look at some. So we keep noble silence for the rest of the day, at least until after dinner, or beyond.

[Speaker 2] (18:21 - 24:43)

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[Speaker 1] (24:43 - 1:09:54)

You may look at some questions, later today or tomorrow, if anybody wants to ask verbal questions, you're also welcome, either do it today or tomorrow. You will find the answers to most questions, if they are vital questions, within yourself, or the solution to any problem, in the stillness. Take it into the stillness.

And even when you're engaged in thought, trying to solve something, a problem or a situation, step back from thought periodically. Thought has its place, but it is more important to step back from thought and to look. After a while, thought comes back, perhaps with an insight or a solution, or the problem itself dissolves, or other factors come in and you don't know how they got there.

This question I referred to this morning, I mentioned it briefly, we'll just have a quick look at it again. Question since childhood, if God consciousness was able to realize itself through you, Jesus, Buddha, et cetera, why doesn't it save itself all the time it takes for the rest of us, and just do the deed, whatever set of circumstances it took to create it, Jesus, Eckhart, whoever, just create those same circumstances in the rest of us. Boo hoo.

Many answers are possible depending on what perspective. The very thing that's being asked is actually happening. This is the best possible circumstance, and the best possible moment, as far as liberation is concerned, it's already happening.

Or you can change the question slightly. The question starts with, if God consciousness was able to realize itself through you, Jesus, Buddha, why doesn't it save itself all the time? You could put I instead.

If I realized myself through that form, why am I taking all this time to realize myself through this form? Why am I giving myself, if I am consciousness, why am I giving myself all that time? Why not now?

And be done with it. If you want it completely, it's here now. But that's not wanting to do with willpower, wanting nothing else.

Now, at the moment, perhaps you might say, yes, I don't want nothing else, but in 10 minutes time, you may want something else. You may want to be identified with a mind stream. Surrender now.

It takes no time. This spiritual practice takes no time. That's the beauty of it.

So a lot of time is saved in that way because surrender, which is the doorway, takes no time and requires no particular circumstances even, except what's here. What's here is already ideal. Within the totality, what's here, the totality has brought that which is here into manifestation.

It is connected with everything. This moment, the form that this moment takes, is connected to everything. It couldn't even be otherwise.

The totality has brought it about, and so you recognize the perfection of it, not through some mental concept that says, it really is perfect. I'm trying to convince myself. It really is perfect.

But through surrender to this. So all you ever need to do is get this moment right in your whole spiritual practice. Get this moment right, not the rest of your life, just this moment.

You get it right by recognizing the rightness of this moment. Why are so many seekers women and so many teachers are men? It is true that in many gatherings, there is a higher percentage of women than men.

I don't know about here. It's maybe equal here. But in many gatherings, sometimes you had 70% women.

And I speak about this in the book, that consciousness now moves more quickly through the female form. And what the questioner says was true until very recently. But it's no longer the case.

Even within the last year or year and a half, I've met more women teachers than men teachers. They are arising. Yesterday I met a woman teacher who has an ashram nearby, Shanti Mai.

And I met, even within a year, I met Catherine Ingram in the United States. I met Byron Katie. I met Gangaji.

There are many. It's always wonderful to meet them. And everywhere now, the female form is becoming more and more of a vehicle for that.

Until recently that was not the case. Not that women didn't become liberated, but it wasn't recognized in what was mostly patriarchal societies. Even those women, they were not readily recognized by the established patriarchal structures of whatever their religion was.

And we may come to a time soon when there are actually more female teachers than male teachers. There are some Indian female teachers also. And many of those women are destined also to become teachers.

We all teach in some way. Teacher in a more conventional sense, actual spiritual teachers. Perhaps quite a few of those present here will become teachers if you are not already doing it in one form or another.

And even in Tibetan Buddhism there are now some women teaching through a form that before had only allowed the male. Three questions which I may all read before any answer. All concerning sexuality and presence.

I'm a man stuck in a man's body and would like to understand more about sexual addiction, which seems to come as part of the package of this form. Is it just a primal instinct and can I ever truly evolve beyond it? Is celibacy required?

Helpful? I oftentimes hear people speak of Krishnamurti's sexual life. I don't think there was very much of that.

There may have been some. And so people say, I was a student of his until I heard about his sexual life. I feel he had to be writing from that place of presence to write what he did.

And it touched me deeply. Can you comment or is this too hypothetical? Do we have too many judgments around sexuality?

Why is a great teacher so judged and negated when it appears he falls out of the parameters? I have some confusion because I want to defend him and yet... Is celibacy required or helpful?

These questions are kind of connected. Yesterday evening I stepped out onto the lawn outside and I saw two monkeys engaged in procreative activities. It lasted for a few seconds.

And then it was over and the male monkey was eating. And I thought to myself, oh my God. And the thought came into my mind, this monkey has no problem with sex.

It's just... Is celibacy required or helpful? That depends.

It can be helpful or it can be a hindrance. It depends on the one who practices celibacy. Let's talk about the hindrance first.

If celibacy is the result of adopting a certain mental position, a thought, a perspective on what sexuality is, and it is this thought that touches something to sexuality, from that perspective it is called perhaps impure or unspiritual. That is one of many possible perspectives. It's a thought, it's a fragment.

It may contain a little bit of truth. The opposite thought may also be true. It is divine.

But if you are a practitioner and the basis for your practice is identifying with a mental position, a perspective, a concept in the head, if that is the motivating power, because you want to make your life conform to the mental concept that you identify with, the position that you adopt and identify with. And then you attempt to make your life conform to that mental position. And so, then celibacy becomes your practice and whenever sexual feelings arise, they will immediately, of course, be judged from that mental position.

As impure or as not spiritual. And then a time may come when you need to even deny to yourself that you have those feelings, if you are very extremely identified with those mental positions, because they clash with the mental image that you have of yourself as pure and spiritual. And so you have the reality, a sexual feeling arises, or a sexual thought arises, and it clashes with the mind-made image of me.

And it may go so far as to require you to deny completely that you even have it. Or if you don't deny it completely to yourself, feel guilty about it, because you are not living up to the high standards that you have set yourself, mental concepts. So you are not living up to your mental concepts.

And so the feelings that arise are not happy ones. And that further creates a problematic self-image as the struggling me who is still impure and hasn't made it yet. Guilt arises, perhaps self-doubt arises, self-hatred may arise.

All strengthening your false sense of self. The ego doesn't mind. It loves feelings of guilt.

And not good enough, because it strengthens your sense of self. It doesn't mind whether the sense of self is the master of the universe or not good enough. If I can't be the master of the universe, at least I can't be not good enough.

Mental concepts. Or you may deny altogether that you have sexual feelings, because they would shatter the image that you have of yourself as an advanced spiritual practitioner, having reached level 7 already. And at level 6 you go beyond sex.

And so if you deny to yourself even, and this has happened in Christianity in the past, happened often, you can't even admit it to yourself, because it would clash with that image, then it is totally suppressed. And if that is totally suppressed, which is a vital force, somehow, somewhere, it will come up again. And then it will overpower you completely.

If you're lucky, only in wild dreams while you're asleep, and then you wake up, oh, dreadful, and then you may have some interpretation that the devil put some dreams into your head. Or they may come as suddenly a sexual obsession, or some obsession to do with sex that you can't get rid of, and it becomes totally overpowering. And so you become extremely unhappy.

So here we have then somebody who practices celibacy and is making it into a hindrance. Through it, he, she is strengthening their false sense of self, is strengthening their identification with a mental position and a perspective and a judgment. Believing completely in the absolute truth of that particular thought or judgment.

And that person can practice celibacy for a lifetime, and all it will do is strengthen the false sense of self. At some point, maybe sexual feelings may not arise anymore, and then that person may continue to build a mental image on top of that and say, I finally made it, I am pure and spiritual, but it may only be old age. My father called me up three years ago.

He is now 85. So at 82, he called me up and said, I have finally transcended sex. And said, I don't know why people are interested in such things, it's so ridiculous.

I need to add that all his life he was very interested. And I said, that's good, congratulations. And last year he called me and said, I was wrong.

And he was very happy to tell me that he had not transcended yet. So I said, congratulations. And then there could be celibacy that arises naturally in your life situation.

And that enables you to observe, to bring presence to what is usually an enormous force that pulls you into great unconsciousness, an enormous life instinct. And celibacy could be helpful. A period of celibacy is good in anybody's life.

But not artificially created. Be open to see whether it naturally arises out of your life situation. And then you can observe, make it into spiritual practice.

You can observe the relationship, which can be a very powerful one, between your thought processes and sexuality. And it is often the case that even in people who are letting go of identification with mind, as a last resort, the mind will link into sexuality. And that can give renewed energy to mind activity.

And the mind knows that. So there is a very strong link in many people between the incessant mind stream and for a great number of people, a considerable part of the mind stream is connected with sexuality. Fantasies, images.

And that link between sexuality and thought processes can keep thought processes going for a long time. So you can bring presence to the feeling, a sexual feeling, without it identifying with it, and allowing it to rise up into the mind, and again becoming part of the psychological form of me. So that you have then sexual feelings that are not denied, because you do not adopt a particular mental position towards them.

Neither good nor bad. There it is. And you can watch how beautiful it is when a sexual feeling does not even turn anymore into sexual desire, that wants more than what is here now.

You can bring presence into the feeling, so that the feeling doesn't become a desire. There's simply, there's beauty, it's a manifestation of aliveness, to simply acknowledge a sexual feeling directly, feel it, sense it. It is part of, yes, being in this form which is limited.

The form, the physical form in which you come has certain limitations, and it's male or female, it's one half, it's another whole. So that half always has a longing for completion and completeness. And that's the sexual longing.

Now you cannot, of course, achieve that completeness through the sexual act. It gives you a momentary sense of completeness, but it's very short-lived. But the enormous desire behind is at the root, we could say, of sexual desire, which is to do with the incompleteness of this form, of being a half of the whole, either this or that, wanting union with the opposite polarity, that is a primordial spiritual impulse.

I would go so far as to say that everything is ultimately a primordial spiritual impulse. Even when an animal devours another animal, it is the most primeval expression of love, merging with, becoming one with. And it looks dreadful from our perspective.

So, not adopting a particular mental position towards what is. Use sexuality, whether you practice celibacy for a period of time or not, as long as celibacy arises out of the right motivation, it can be helpful. It can easily become a hindrance.

So you need to be very careful with that. Can one ever transcend sexual addiction is the question here. That's a purely human thing, of course.

Addiction means the mind has come in. And the mind wants to build a psychological me on top of your sexual exploits. The mind wants to repeat a past pleasurable experience when the body may not even want it.

And then anything can turn into an addiction, whether it be food or sex or any activity. Watch and see how the mind tries to link in with the sex center and how it uses that device to keep itself going. So, and if you practice sexuality, bring consciousness to it.

That's the essence of Tantra. So that it becomes not a means to an end, but you are totally present with the feeling as it arises. You can do that whether you have a partner or not, you can simply allow the feeling to be there.

And watch it and it doesn't turn into thought anymore. So you bring presence to that, you are not denying it. You cannot transcend anything by denying it.

And transcending does not mean that it is not there anymore, it means to go beyond. You transcend thought. Thought still operates, but you have gone beyond it.

You transcend sexuality. Sexuality, as long as there is a physical form, has its place. And it's embraced, accepted.

You are not creating a mental image around it. Allow Krishnamurti the little that he had. If you allow Krishna, and he was so liberated sexually, wasn't he?

If you allow Krishna to be so free, why not Krishnamurti? Beware of mental judgments and mental positions. That is the greatest hindrance.

Anything connected with thought and sexuality creates problem out of sexuality. The monkey had no thought around it. That's why I was so impressed.

That it is no longer addictive when the link between sexuality and thought is not there anymore. And then it's simply to be enjoyed, whether you practice it or not, if it arises. It is a manifestation of this physical form, and that's what it is.

It is completely non-problematic. Only through mind does it become problematic. The belief that there is something in me that I need to change, that is not right yet, that I need to transcend, keeps you stuck immediately in that very position that you seek to transcend.

It's bringing acceptance into what is, including the limitations of this form. Then you truly transcend, you go beyond. Whether or not celibacy is then your way of life is a secondary question.

It doesn't matter. Yesterday, on the bus tour of hell... Some of you must have been on this bus.

Yesterday, on the bus tour of hell, I was confronted with the fear of my death. This is not uncommon in Indian traffic. I realized that I do not fear my death for myself, but for the great suffering it would bring upon my children.

Last night, that suffering came back. As I tried to embrace it, it got bigger. The suffering wasn't only mine, but the suffering of all the mothers on earth.

It got bigger and bigger. I could not embrace such suffering. A thousand mothers could not embrace such pain.

What is there to do? How can a mother be a mother without the pain that goes with it? First, of course, the thing to realize is that you didn't die.

You just thought you might. And the thought was just as bad as if it had happened. The thought itself, the possibility of loss create the mind, says this is the real possibility of me dying before we get to this destination.

And the possibility of loss, that is a mental projection, often creates corresponding reactions that are just as painful, more painful in many cases, than if it had happened. So nothing actually happened on this bus, except that it was unpleasant, I assume. So we can see how the mind already creates a situation that might happen, and then the entire body reacts as if it had happened.

And this is a typical example of how the pain body gets triggered, by something relatively small or only a thought of a loss that might occur. And then the mind projects itself into that and sees your children as destitute already. I'm dead and now my children.

And then it's already basically happened in the mind. And then you experience the emotions that would go with that and worse. And it triggers the pain body.

So you experience not just the pain that is connected with that projected non-existing event, but in addition an enormous amount of pain that is totally non-personal, that is part of humanity's pain. Perhaps part of female pain connected with child loss, part of the female pain body. So the first thing, of course, sitting on this bus, to realize a mental projection is being created.

The reaction happens as if that event had already happened. So that you don't get drawn into further mental projections. But it happened and the pain body was there.

Far more pain than would be warranted by that situation in which nothing really happened. You didn't lose your life. So that's, there it is.

The mechanism of it you can see retrospectively. How the mind, through fear, projected loss, which is fear, created that and then you had far more pain than your own personal pain and far beyond that. And you couldn't embrace it.

But you survived. So somehow you must have embraced it. And perhaps you were not totally identified with it.

But there was a witnessing presence. You realized perhaps that it was far more than your own pain or your own, the personal part of the pain body. Many children lose their parents.

And quite often parents lose their children, which is worse. Both look dreadful. And yet each human being, sooner or later, will be confronted with death.

And to some children it happens that they become confronted with death at an early age. And they survive. And that becomes a very early spiritual teaching.

And those to whom life gives that insight, they are ready for it. It may not look like that on the surface. But to experience loss at an early age is very painful.

But potentially that is already the beginning of spiritual realization. That no form lasts. Perhaps even more painful than that is for parents to lose their children.

And if that is your lesson, and there may be some of you who had to go through that. And that may be one of the reasons why you are here. The suffering that you went through at that time.

When the fabric of your existence suddenly no longer was solid. But watch your mind to see whether it is creating future loss, possible loss. This is the essence of anxious thought.

The essence of worry. The essence of projections. In a dangerous situation, see if you can relinquish past and future.

Sometimes it happens naturally. Relinquish past and future. Renounce past and future.

Use the dangerous situation to push you into presence. When we arrived in India, we got picked up at the airport. And for the first time we experienced the traffic.

And all you can do is go... Any thought movement will tell you I will be dead in one minute from now. And there is so much grace here that so many people survive.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:55 - 1:09:55)

So...

[Speaker 1] (1:09:59 - 1:45:05)

After any trip, you say, by the grace of God, I survived. So it's certainly a great teaching. This is one of the many teachings here where you can practice total surrender.

And if you don't, you'll be very miserable. I talked to my mother last night. She said, you take a train, isn't that dangerous to go back to Delhi?

Isn't it better to go by car? And I said, you cannot imagine in your wildest dreams what traffic here is like. Has being itself different aspects or qualities?

It seems that even humans who are supposed to have no ego or personality, newborns and so-called enlightened masters have different energies or vibrations. That is true. When the unmanifested, even though the form through which it filters is quite transparent, otherwise it wouldn't shine through, it's still shining through some form and there is a slight influence of the form.

So when it finally reaches the outermost layers, which can be simply in the form of a silent emanation, it can reach the outermost layers as spiritual teaching through words, it can reach the outermost layers through actions done by a teacher, this is where it differs according to certain configurations of that form. So it's slightly or considerably changed by the lampshade through which it shines. And the lampshades are slightly different.

So it comes through some as very extremely gentle and soft and yet powerful. And it comes through others as fierce, you might almost be afraid of it. And in some teachers it may come predominantly in one way with occasional the opposite also expressing itself.

So the fierce teacher can suddenly be extremely gentle. And you don't know what's happening anymore. And the gentle teacher can occasionally be very fierce.

So you have, on the one hand, the Zen master, who may attack you or attack your unconsciousness to crack it, may insult you or hit you, shout at you. But the other aspect of being is always there underneath. If the fierce teacher expresses fierceness, there is a softness underneath the fierceness.

And if the soft teacher expresses softness, there is a fierceness underneath the softness, the gentleness of being, which is as challenging, you might think, oh I'd rather go to a gentle teacher, well this is perhaps why you're here. There are other teachers who are known for being extremely uncomfortable to be with. And that's the Zen tradition.

And yet Ramana Maharshi had a gentle, silent emanation of being, very different from Zen. And yet that is equally challenging when you ask a question, and all you get is silence. It can be very challenging.

As challenging as somebody who attacks the ego that perhaps was behind the question. So these qualities exist, and usually you would be drawn to a teacher that is right for you. And some people are drawn to aggressive teachers, and that is right for them.

They love it. They love being hit over the head. Now, there are certain teachers who are aggressive without realization underneath it.

And so they will attack your ego in order to strengthen theirs. And they may not even know it. But any teacher that you come to is right for you, even the false teacher.

That's the beauty of it. Because the false teacher means there's ego, and perhaps draws your ego. And you'll be learning something about ego.

Suffering will arise, sooner or later, and you will be learning exactly what you need to learn. So it would be futile to say to somebody, don't go to that teacher if that person feels drawn. Learn what you have to learn there.

And the same when spiritual teaching comes out in the form of language and thought, there's a great difference between the ways in which it's being expressed verbally. And again, there's a difference even astrologically. It might have an influence.

The Pisces may teach in a different way from a Leo. Basically, it's the same underneath that. But the form that the teaching takes.

When one is enlightened, awake as you are, does the pain body still exist? Do you have one? Do you have one?

I don't seem to have one in here. But I can feel the human pain body. And sometimes I feel it so much, the collective pain body, that I cry.

I can feel the pain that is in the collective field. The collective unconscious of humanity. And so it happens sometimes that I cry, and then if somebody sees me, they might think, oh, you must have a pain body.

In a way, I do, because there's still this physical form. The physical form is linked to the planet and to all humans. I have read your first book, The Power of Now, six times.

That's not uncommon. Each time I go deeper with it, the book seems to vibrate with energy. Even when I first saw it in a bookstore a year ago and knew nothing about you, period.

Your second book, a condensed version of your first book, seems to lack energy. Will you write another book that vibrates, a book that reflects your teaching as it evolves? It's true that it contains, as all spiritual writings do, that come straight from presence, they contain an energy field that goes far beyond the words or the informational value of the words.

The value of the words as information may be valuable, but the function of a truly spiritual text, as well as the function of spiritual discourse, verbal discourse, always goes far beyond the information that the words convey, because the words arise out of presence. They carry the energy frequency of presence. So they reach you, of course, they go into your ears, then they go through the filter of the brain where the meaning is extracted from the words, it's decoded because it's only sounds that go into your ear, then they're translated into nerve impulses, then they reach your brain, then the brain decodes the nerve impulses, and then, usually, that is the end of you hear something, you've decoded it, and that's it. With spiritual discourse, the same thing happens, it is being decoded, and then it continues to work inside you, even after the meaning has been decoded, the energy moves in and awakens presence within you.

It touches that which is beyond the conditioned mind, and that is the true power of spiritual teaching, which goes far beyond what the words mean, and that applies both in verbal teachings as in written teachings. In verbal teachings, it can be even more powerful, and I must admit, I have no idea how it gets into the written word. I didn't do it as such, it just happens.

How it happens is a mystery. How does it get, how is it possible? It's only words on a page, it's only symbols, and yet the text contains an energy field, and that is wonderful, and this is why people can read it many times, and that's the power of spiritual teaching.

Everything else is only information. Now most books you read, you buy in bookshops, even spiritual books, probably 90% are information based, and then there's 10% of books that contain power. If you read the words of Ramana Maharshi, you can see that they also contain power, spiritual power, and you can read them many times, and they're always fresh and new.

And there are other books, ancient ones too, certain ancient texts. Now it can happen in people who are totally identified with mind, they pay so much attention to the meaning of the words, that the words reach the decoder in the brain and never go beyond it. The net is there of thought that holds them is so strong, all they get is the information that the words convey, and it doesn't reach them.

This doesn't apply to you, any one of you, it applies to people who have very dense mind structures. They would come and only listen intellectually, or read from the point of view of the intellect, and then they might say, that was quite an interesting talk, he had quite a few ideas, I liked his ideas, not bad. Now what's the next thing, where's the next book?

So it's beautiful when it works for you, and this is how it should. It is also helpful because once you can sense that, all you need to do is pick up a book, open, read half a page or one page, or a few lines, and you will know whether this text carries power or not. And increasingly you may not want to read, especially spiritual, other things, information is useful, but spiritual books, you may not want to read any more spiritual books that simply give you more facts, stuff, even more signposts perhaps, but didn't come out of presence.

And you can save a lot of money that way. Just go into a bookshop and then you put it back. Okay, I don't need this book.

So, am I going to write? I don't know about the other selections from the book, some people say it works well for them, other people say it doesn't carry the same energy, because it's not a unified whole that varies from person to person. So if it works for you, fine, if it doesn't work for you, fine.

Are you going to write another book that vibrates? A book that reflects your teaching as it evolves? It is true that the teaching evolves.

It's already gone beyond what is in the book and continues to evolve. It is possible that after this long trip, I may sit down and focus on writing again. And some people are preparing edited transcripts of talks and retreat talks, and so I'm going to look at that.

And that may become the basis for a new book, which, if it works, is also going to vibrate. Let me know if it vibrates. I have heard many stories of how people found the book, how the book came to them.

Quite amazing. One could write a book about these different stories. And it is an energy field of its own, multiplied many, many times.

And it gets into the strangest places all over the planet. Amazing. How can I free myself from my enormous desire and longing for a spiritual love relationship with a man?

Although I do understand my desire for such a relationship after 25 lonely and painful years of marriage, during which I could not give myself nor my ex-husband the love and acceptance that we were both longing for, I feel at the same time that this desire is the biggest trigger of my pain body. Even during this beautiful retreat, my pain body is sometimes active for this reason. I'm aware of that.

Since a long, long time, I feel a huge attraction towards a man. I hardly talked with him. I feel a strong attraction towards a man.

I hardly talked with him because this attraction freezes me and makes me feel uncomfortable. Because it feels almost unspiritual to have this earthly longing. Anyhow, these are the moments which keep me away from the now.

Help needed. In brackets, ha-ha. I'm very grateful to be with you.

Thank you. That longing is in everyone. And as I mentioned earlier, it's to do with being this incomplete form.

And this form wants to unite with the other half to complete itself. So you, as this physical form, may never be quite free of that longing. But as you go beyond identification with the physical form and the psychological form of me, that longing becomes an almost peripheral manifestation in your life.

No longer makes you unhappy if it is not fulfilled. The psychological me uses that longing as a substitute for surrender. The belief that through some relationship I can complete myself.

That the psychological sense of self, which also is not complete, the physical is not complete because the physical is one half of the whole. The psychological is not complete because it can never be. In its essence, it exists in a state of lack, of not enough, of insufficiency, of needing to add more.

And the one thing that the psychological self believes often will make me complete is the relationship with the partner, the ideal, the one. And that can keep you going, that search can keep you going for a long time for the one human being who is going to complete me. On the physical, that pull remains.

On the psychological, that longing for completeness is transcended, is gone beyond as you no longer identify with the mental image of me. As you step out of identification with the mind-made self, which is always incomplete and will project its incompleteness in many cases onto that one thing that says, if I only had a partner I would feel saved, totally myself, complete myself through him or through her. And if you should find a partner for a while, that may work.

And then you find you cannot complete yourself through any form whatsoever. So what leaves you through surrender to what is, and which in your case might mean, the feeling of great lack, the feeling of aloneness, the longing for him, you may not know who. And there's this great lack at the center of your being.

And what do you do with that? That feeling of loneliness? If you're not vigilant, it becomes mind movements.

It adds more to the story of the incomplete me who needs, and you can think about it, project, imagine, and that only strengthens that. But if you allow what you feel to be there, let's say it's called loneliness, feel it, don't resist it, that you may not even label it anymore. Simply be attentive, look at it, no analysis, just bringing presence to it, that feeling that you never wanted, that you want to get away from, that otherwise would continuously turn into thinking.

Now you're saying, there it is, and it has a certain feeling quality to it, and you can give it so much attention that you're not even labeling it anymore as loneliness. Your attention that you give that feeling is just complete, and your acceptance of that feeling is complete, because it is now, it is the form that this moment takes. So you surrender into that, say, all right, embrace it, and see if it kills you, it won't.

It's not going to kill you, it's not going to consume you, but it might consume the ego if you surrender into it. And then, suddenly, you will see it has turned into something else. I don't want to put any ideas into your head and say, this is what it's going to turn into.

You surrender into that, the longing becomes intense aliveness itself. The longing, if totally accepted, and that is even the longing for God, which says, I want God so much, on the other side of the longing, God is already hiding. It is already, it's a misinterpretation through the mind, which says, you don't have it, it's not here.

And the beloved is on the other side of the loneliness. You then go, you suddenly experience a sense of completeness, because you've surrendered totally into that feeling. And then, you've gone beyond the need, the psychological need for a relationship to complete you.

There may still be a physical need on the level of physical body, on the level of sexuality or emotion, that if you're a man wanting close to you, the female energy field, if you're a woman wanting the male energy field, this form may have that. But that is relatively minor, it's a very small movement. But deep down, there's already such completion and completeness, that that's a very minor surface movement of the form, doesn't make you unhappy anymore.

And then it is quite possible that you meet someone, because you don't need him anymore. And then it is more likely that the relationship may work quite well, because the need for this person to make you complete, which no human being could ever fulfill, it's an impossible task and an impossible demand. Every human being will fail, will not make you complete.

So the need and the demand that this human being should provide that completion for you isn't there anymore. And that is why it is likely that the relationship may work quite well, when the need, the psychological, deep seated psychological need is gone. Then, if it happens, you welcome the relationship.

If it doesn't happen, that's fine too, it's beautiful too. It's not everybody's destiny. And that's beautiful too, to be alone.

Solitude is beautiful. Loneliness is not. Solitude is to be alone and to be surrendered into that aloneness.

Solitude, beautiful, even sacred. Loneliness is to be alone and hated and not wanting this. When you surrender into aloneness, it becomes solitude.

And solitude even becomes more than that. It becomes a deep sense of connectedness with being itself, because you had really been looking for God through somebody else. And it's only through surrender that you can find God.

So this is your spiritual practice, to work with that. Not to find him, that's not your spiritual practice. These are the moments which keep me away from the now.

Because that sense of incompleteness and lack still tends to become mind movements. So it keeps you away from now. But it doesn't have to be like that.

The very feeling that you experience, let it bring you into the now. Give it attention. Embrace it.

No need to run away from it. You welcome loneliness and then it turns into something else. Beautiful.

We may have some more questions next time we meet. Maybe also one or two verbal questions, if people prefer that. Gradually questions accumulate.

I keep them all. I have a huge collection of questions. Enough for a few more books.

Each question is valuable. And I like the funny ones too. A few questions may be a little bit abstract, but if we have time we'll even get to those.

[Speaker 2] (1:46:46 - 1:51:55)

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[Speaker 1] (1:52:51 - 3:01:49)

It's helpful to look upon this week here and realize that everything that happens during this week is part of the retreat and is helpful, even if it doesn't look like that on the surface. Include everything and realize that it's all part of the teaching. That includes the bus trip from hell.

It includes discomforts, strange food that you are not used to, bugs that you may encounter here or there, or other animals. And your physical body. Some of you are experiencing limitations of that here.

And whatever condition arises inside or outside, it's part of your practice. One can live like that. At the moment I'm just saying make it part of your retreat here, where nothing is denied or resisted, including physical weakness, physical pain, or physical discomfort.

Just relax into that. Only the condition of this moment. Otherwise, you may go home frustrated and say, I went to this retreat expecting to encounter spiritual liberation, the limitless, the transcendent and eternal, and all I encountered was sickness, strange food, bus trips from hell, bugs.

That wasn't supposed to happen. Of course, you also encountered other things, but it's easy for the mind to focus only on that. In other words, limitations all around.

And when you get home, you encounter the normal limitations of everyday life again. So here we, there's no, it would be pointless to try and eliminate the limitations. We looked at it before.

Use the limitations as the doorway. It's easy to forget there's a little spider on its journey somewhere. So every limitation becomes a doorway when you don't turn away from it, criticize it, blame it, judge it, good, bad, usually bad.

So whatever it is, I put it like that in the book. Whatever this moment presents to you, accept it as if you had chosen it. That is a totally new way of living and totally contrary to the old conditioned consciousness.

Accept this moment, no matter what it brings, as if you had chosen it. I'm not saying that you did choose it. Maybe you did.

If I say you chose it, that would require belief on your part. You can believe it or not believe it. And some of you would say, I definitely did not choose this.

I know that for sure. So although in some New Age teachings you hear, whenever you come to a person who has read these books and been to workshops, and you come and say, this is what's happening to me, or that's happening to me, they will ask, why did you manifest that? And then you already begin to feel a little bit guilty.

I must have made some mistake somewhere. I manifested this. Not good enough yet.

So I don't say you chose it. It's enough to say, as if. Accept as if you had chosen it.

And immediately the limitation becomes a doorway into peace. That's the miracle. No matter what condition you surrender to, accept fully, that very condition takes you into deep peace.

But if the condition is on the surface, appears on the surface, totally unacceptable, then the surrender would have to be correspondingly deep. The depth of surrender reflects the condition. So a little condition may be a discomfort in your stomach.

In larger conditions you're confined to bed, can't come to the talks anymore, you're missing out on the whole thing. And yet, here the surrender would have to be a little deeper. And then you can encounter conditions that seem dreadful on the surface.

Nobody could accept that. An illness that immobilizes you forever, perhaps, as defies what the doctors say. Death of loved ones all around you.

Loss of everything. Prison. And then the surrender, the yes to this moment, will be very deep.

And so the peace that then comes, if you find that deep yes in the face of seemingly unacceptable conditions, and to some people the threshold of unacceptable isn't very high. They very quickly reach the unacceptable. Some of you may have a few times during this week reached the threshold of the unacceptable, and yet it wasn't that much, but the reaction was as if it were huge.

Perhaps it was huge if you had used to an extremely comfortable existence. And this is why it has happened. Certain people who were faced with the unacceptable, even when they'd never heard any spiritual teaching before, they entered the surrendered state of consciousness, and the yes arose in the face of the unacceptable.

And the yes had to be so deep that that peace, all the reactive structures of the egoic self collapsed in that one deep yes. And the peace then never left them. They dwelled in that eternal peace.

Those were the first, thousands of years ago, the first spiritual teachers that arose. They didn't have teachers because they must have started somewhere. The first spiritual teachers that arose were those people who were faced with the unacceptable, great suffering, and then a deep yes.

The depth of that yes reflected the depth of the suffering and of the limitations that they encountered. And that was the shift. And then they, after a while, people came and said, there's something strange about you.

I don't know what it is. I feel drawn. What is it that you have something that I don't have?

I want that. And they said, well, I don't know. And then gradually some teaching started coming out of their mouth, a few pointers gradually.

And later on, perhaps they had an insight into what had happened to them. And then the teaching says, you don't need to go to the depths of despair, to an extreme form of limitation or suffering. Surrender can happen as a voluntary yes.

You don't have to be pushed into it by life, although eventually life would push you into it. Time. All that spiritual teachings do is they save time, by the grace of God.

Otherwise it gets drawn out, goes on and on. All the old patterns playing themselves out again and renewing themselves, including the pain body. So if you bring in continuous little acts of surrender in the face of relatively small limitations, then gradually you enter the surrendered state.

With every yes, there's a deepening. With every yes, there's a weakening of the egoic mind structures. So everything is included, whatever arises now is part of this retreat.

And when you go away from here, it's part of your spiritual practice. There's nothing that is not part of it. Oh no, not this.

No, give me something else to surrender to. This one, no, I don't want. I need a more secure life situation so that I can start my surrender practice.

And the mind saying, and this is also a subtle thing, I need to understand more before I can surrender. Please explain more about surrender. I haven't accumulated enough knowledge about it.

Okay, just one more question now about surrender. Oh, well, the answer comes, hmm. But then on the other hand, what about, ah, hmm.

Of course there's no end. Now surrender is the doorway into presence. May I also suggest not only that you work with whatever happens, apply the yes.

Remember the beautiful statement by the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius that I quote in the book. Marcus Aurelius was this very strange case of a wise man who had also worldly power. It's very rare that these two go together, extremely rare.

So he said in his beautiful little book that is now called Meditations, written 2,000 years ago, accept all that comes to you woven in the pattern of your destiny for what could more aptly fit your needs. Whatever comes to you is woven in the pattern of your destiny with the pattern of the totality of the cosmos. It appears as the form that this moment takes.

What could be better? What could more aptly fit your needs than that which comes to you woven in this pattern of the totality which appears as now? And so whatever it is here, and if you cannot come to a talk, that will be greater for you than the talk if you surrender into that condition.

But then you can observe the complainer. I'm missing out. Here I am, spend all this money on this long trip, and here I'm in bed.

It's not even comfortable. And the self-talk continues. It's even happened last year we had a retreat in Costa Rica, and one person who had come from the other side of the planet to come to this retreat, halfway between where he lives and where Costa Rica is, he got arrested.

And they put him in prison for two months. Later all the charges were waived, but he didn't know that then. That was his retreat.

And it was better than the retreat in Costa Rica would have been. Far greater deepening happened. First, much more suffering than could ever have been generated even by the most uncomfortable retreat.

And then in the face of the suffering, surrender happened. And then he realized later, not immediately, that that was the best that could ever have happened to him. So that's this enormous power that is released through welcoming now.

And then it becomes uncompromising. An uncompromising welcoming. It has both a feminine and masculine aspect to it, that welcoming.

The feminine aspect of welcoming whatever arises is what you sometimes see in statues of the Virgin Mary, Quan Yin perhaps also, the arms like that, which is the feminine principle of embracing all. So that is one aspect of welcoming what is, is you have to become the one that embraces all. You realize yourself as the field that allows this to be the space.

And then welcoming also has a fierce, another one could say more masculine aspect, which is like that. It has a certain fierceness to it also. It is uncompromising, the yes to what is.

The two combined, it seems impossible, but they merge into one. And with that you meet whatever arises in your life. With that gentle fierceness, you meet and face whatever arises in your life.

And of course it can only arise now. That's all there ever is. Whatever arises in this field, with that gentle fierceness, is embraced, received, met.

And then enormous transformation happens. First the entire state of consciousness shifts from resistance, ego, to complete openness, where the self, the one self, not the limited little mind-made self. That one consciousness then becomes free-flowing, so to speak.

And it acts for you, speaks for you. Life unfolds. Life suddenly seems to carry you, where before you struggled against it, now you're floating.

It comes always as a surprise to somebody who learns to swim, that at first it's a great struggle to keep yourself above water. This is the egoic condition, so to speak. You're always struggling to keep your head above water.

When is it ever going to end? I can't take anymore. And then suddenly you realize that the water is actually quite friendly.

It can carry you, and you can just breathe in, lie on your back, and you float. Just a few movements, and you become one with the water. You're no longer struggling against the water.

The water becomes friendly. And this is how life can become, when the shift happens from the resistant state to the surrendered state, suddenly the universe is no longer experienced as hostile. In the egoic state, mostly, the universe is a place to be feared, and a place that you also hope someday is going to deliver to you what you need.

Of course it won't. So it's the uncompromising, yes. And so you don't need to be worried about thoughts, how do I get rid of mental noise, there's so much going on in my head.

The uncompromising, yes, does it. Mental noise subsides. It has a certain momentum for a little while, it's still there, and then less.

And the noise that's still there is no longer a problem. Just a little bit of mental noise occasionally, okay. But watch the deep-seated pattern of the mental noise, the deep-seated pattern associated with the egoic mind structures.

They have enormous momentum behind them. Patterns of resistance. Watch particularly the two very important ones, and you will notice them very easily, as now that there's so much presence in you, you can notice how your mind operates unconsciously.

Two very important aspects of the pattern, the resistance, the continuous resistance patterns of the egoic mind. And this is what usually creates so much suffering in relationships, so much friction and conflict, continuous source of conflict in relationships. Two of the main, two main aspects of the resistance pattern is identification with mental positions and defensiveness.

And you can watch that as you interact with people, how the arguments in your relationship, how many of them are to do with unconscious identification with positions of the mind that you identify with. Maybe opinions, viewpoints, beliefs, ideas, perspectives, and this identification with this mind position as me. And then your partner has another position that conflicts with yours and identifies with that.

Both totally have their sense of self in their mental position. So the two things in relationships that usually bring about conflict in relationships is identification with the pain body and identification with mental positions. And often the two go together.

The mental positions can become amplified by the pain body. Hell, it's called. So watch it even in a simple discussion, a simple conversation.

Before you know it, you've put forward some position or belief or opinion or idea, and then the other person says, no, no, that's not how it is. And then you're beginning to defend yourself. This is the beginning of unconsciousness.

It's nothing to do with you, but you believe it's you because you have identified with mind. And the moment you identify with a belief, an idea, any mental position, a perspective on something, now you have to defend, you have to fight for your very life. And it's unconscious.

And you can see it everywhere. So to know, especially as you interact with people, it's simply a position. It's a mental position.

There's no self in it. It's just a perspective. And then comes defensiveness.

It's totally automatic. Defensiveness comes in whenever your sense of self, which is mind-made, is threatened by something, something somebody says. You did that.

You didn't do that. You failed to do that. And you can see how automatically the self goes into protection and defense, and the enormous emotion that comes with that.

And you go, if you feel the body, you feel it's totally contracted. I never said that. I never did that.

You did. You are the one who's unconscious. What are you telling me?

All you need to do is watch it in yourself. If the unconscious movement still operates, how quickly and automatic the process of defensiveness is. So you're defending yourself, but an illusory self.

Part of that is the need to be right. Very closely associated with needing to keep your sense of self intact, because your sense of self is identified with a position of rightness. And so the spiritual practice is, on the one hand, to observe this as it arises, if you can, or you observe it just after it's happened, the whole episode is over.

And then you say, oh, there it was again. Okay. And then perhaps next time, in the middle of it, you can suddenly see it.

That you are trapped in defending an illusion, put beautifully in the Course in Miracles, which says, whenever you become defensive about anything, know that you have identified yourself with an illusion. Whenever you become defensive about anything, you have identified yourself with an illusion. And that means your sense of self has become associated with thought movements, which is the illusion.

And then a time comes, and I suggest it is now, it's not for everybody yet, but for you, it's now, when you can relinquish a position, or allow it to be there without a self in it. See, that's the position. And that's your position.

Oh, okay. When you can relinquish defensiveness and realize you're still alive, even if you don't defend yourself. You are still alive, even if you're not right.

And if you say, oh, yes, you're right. I was wrong. You are enormously liberating to suddenly say, oh, yes, that's how it is.

And then already a great freedom arises when you give up the automatic self-repair programs of the ego. And there's so much in this world that could damage the mind-made self. As you move through every day, you have to watch out continuously.

Even the slightest remark from somebody can damage the mind-made self. And even when you're driving along, the driver shouting something at you doesn't feel good. You idiot, where did you get your license?

The driver shouts something. And usually, and this is a very simple example of how one's self-image, mind-made, immediately jumps into repair, because that shouting, you idiot, has injured your mind-made sense of self. Because you fear, you don't want to, you're not an idiot, I'm not an idiot.

And so immediately the self-repair thing is you shout something back, even louder, perhaps. And on its own level, it works, because you feel a little bit better. The damage has been repaired.

You've shouted back, and it's been patched up. Okay. The self is intact again, and so you drive on.

And this is a little example. And how often do things like that happen, through criticism, somebody telling you this or that, you're not, and then you get, occasionally you get the opposite, you lap it up, you say you are so good, you're so great. The world may tell you that, for a little while, until it changes its mind.

But to observe the automatic self-repair mechanism that immediately comes into place, and that, of course, can even degenerate in very unconscious people, in other words, people who have a very much complete absence of a witnessing presence. That need to be right, in very unconscious people, and there are many on this planet still, can degenerate into physical violence. Physical violence, even between nations, is the need to be right, and the other to be wrong.

Or when you're driving, you can see it as a phenomenon, I don't know if it happens in India, probably not, but in the West, road rage, where it's not confined to a physical shouting match, they actually get out of their cars and start physical violence. But it's simply a continuation of the self-repair mechanism. And so the final triumph in a very, very unconscious person, and there are many, is you have killed the other person.

The self is now, the fiction, the illusion of self is now totally repaired, and then they put you in prison. But at least you've triumphed as the self. And at that moment, when you're engaged in automatic and unconscious self-repair, you would go to prison for the rest of your life just to triumph in that moment.

It's all worth it, says the self. But then, life is very generous. It then allows you 50 years of spiritual practice in the prison cell.

So when you're talking to people, watch that, whether there's identification with mental positions, defensiveness in yourself. And then the enormous freedom comes when you don't need to defend anymore. The otherwise unconscious need to defend your sense of self is relinquished.

And then, to go back to the simple example, somebody shouts, you idiot, when you are driving, and you just, you look, and you drive on. There's nothing to repair. And then he'll shout again because he thinks you're deaf.

And that's an enormous liberation because it's the liberation from thought. It's the liberation from ego. Or the need to be right.

Or just saying, I don't know. Some people can't say, I don't know. They must know.

So you can play with that. There's enough presence in you, you can play with it. You can watch those movements when they are still there.

And you can play with, hmm, relinquishing that. They just fall away. It comes with the arising presence.

And of course, that's the arising of spaciousness. You did that and that, but you have to... Oh, maybe they're right, maybe they're wrong.

But there's space. I did. And then you look into it.

Did I do that? And you say, no, I don't think I did that. That's how you see it.

But it's a misinterpretation because that's what... Or you say, you're right. I did that.

And you're free. All reactions, all reactivity in yourself is egoic. And all reaction is always some opposition.

Then you go from reaction to response. You respond out of presence to the situation. Jesus used extreme examples to teach this, which is the state of non-reactivity.

And he used the extreme example in his parable of turning the other cheek. Somebody hits you on the cheek. Now, the normal reactive pattern is to immediately hit that person back.

That's normal. Of course, it's a parable. It's used as a metaphor.

And so he says, when somebody hits you on the cheek, you offer the other cheek. It's a very extreme example of non-defensiveness and non-reaction. Not necessarily to be taken literally, or perhaps...

But it's a parable. Another beautiful parable, which I've told some of you know it, from Zen Buddhism. The Zen master, with a high reputation, who lived in a town in Japan, was accused by a 16-year-old girl, who was a monk, who was pregnant, of being the father.

So this girl was pregnant and told her parents that the Zen master, whom she had visited some months ago, was the father of her child. The child she was carrying. She told this to her parents.

The parents ran to the Zen master, accusing him of having seduced their daughter, of being a false teacher, of being a fraud. And he listened. He said, you fathered this child, she just told us.

And he listened, and they kept talking, and all he would say was, is that so? Yes, you are the father of this child. Is that so?

Yes. And then the child was born, and the parents didn't want the child, so they brought the baby to the Zen master and said, here's the baby, you look after him, we don't want it, it's your child. And the Zen master said, is that so?

And so the parents went back home, and the Zen master, nobody would come to see him anymore, because he lost his reputation. All he had to do was look after the baby. And he did that, because it was there.

And he welcomed the form that this moment took. He didn't live through a mind-made self, so a lost reputation didn't become a mental story in his head that he derived his continued sense of identity from. The only fact was, here's the baby.

Nobody's coming to see me anymore. There's nobody here, and that's fine. Nobody is not a problem.

Whatsoever. There's a baby and empty space. It's beautiful.

There's no mind-derived identity which says, all that I've built up, my reputation is gone, my life is in ruins, what did they do to me? They did that to me. Nobody did anything.

He just non-reacted, welcomed this moment. A year later, the daughter became more mature and confessed to her parents that the Zen master was not the father, but to the boy next door. So the parents ran back to the Zen master and said, can you please forgive us?

We just realized that you're not the father. And the Zen master said, is that so? And then they said, yes, and we'll have the baby back now, please.

And he said, oh, is that so? All right, here's the baby. Nothing happened.

It's an extreme example of a life lived in the state of non-reactivity and the complete absence of drama, which is egoic, in such a life. The others may be playing their drama, but in the surrendered consciousness, there is no drama. It cannot arise.

And this is the amazing thing. His life remained clear, simple, totally unproblematic, because his sense of self was not derived from mind-created identifications and stories. His sense of self was derived from presence, the presence of now, the spaciousness of now, the field of now, the unconditioned consciousness.

What problem could there be in that? So, through non-reactivity, one could say, to use an old expression, the buck stops here. Otherwise, and this is the end of karma, when there's non-reactivity, karma immediately evaporates.

It's only through reactivity, because karma is action, reaction, action, reaction. Through non-reactivity, which is surrender, karma dissolves. It may come at you, human karma.

And this is the only way karma can dissolve. It doesn't dissolve through more and more time. It renews itself through time.

It's only through the timeless that it becomes dissolved. So, that's the power of all the teachings. Show that, Jesus in Buddhism, the enormous power that comes with non-reactivity, which is surrender.

The end of all drama in your life. How could there be? All right, that's how it is.

It's just this. It remains clear, unencumbered by problems, the field of now. And it doesn't, don't let the little mind tell you that then you become a doormat.

I will become a doormat. I don't want to be a doormat. It's not that there is enormous strength and power in that non-reactive state.

Totally non-defensive, but enormous strength and power go through you. There is also a story about the Buddha traveling from town to town and village to village. And occasionally he encountered people who abused him because they had certain mental positions.

And they would shout at him. He would always, people would ask him, why doesn't this bother you that people are shouting at you and abusing you? And he said, there's nobody here to abuse.

They think they're abusing somebody, but there's nobody here. So it just passed through him. There was no mind-made entity where this abuse was received and held.

It passed through in the absence of a mind-made sense of self. Somebody shouting, you idiot. There's nobody there to hold on to that.

And it passes through. Idiot? Where?

Who? So nothing can prevail against the power of presence. Yes, don't underestimate the momentum that is there in the collective human mind and its patterns.

But it's nothing compared to the power of presence. Yes, don't underestimate the madness of the ego. But it is nothing compared to the power of presence.

The Course in Miracles says, the ego is insane and do not underestimate the extent of its insanity. And this is very true. It is very insane.

Look at human history. Watch the news. I don't want to become more personal, but it's in everyone still, unless it's already dissolved.

But they are operating less in you now. These structures, those structures are becoming more, less solid. Beginning to, as presence arises, they begin to fade.

They still operate, but with less momentum. The same old patterns you will often observe have their momentum and they still arise in your life, but as the witness is there more and more, the witnessing presence, these patterns have less force to them. So gradually they fade, become transmuted.

But just taste, all that is required is just get a taste of the surrendered state and see the beauty and power that lies in that. So people ask sometimes, how do I get rid of thousands and thousands of years of conditioning, of all the accumulations, all the collective conditioning that you carry inside. And it's so simple.

Surrender. Surrender. And as this transformation happens in you, people around you, you will find, are being affected by that.

And others will leave you, who are not yet ready. You are no longer interesting to them. You don't participate in the drama anymore.

They can't use you anymore. What's the point? They leave you.

He's not playing anymore. If you have a partner, then as the shift happens in you, the shift in consciousness, it will frustrate, if it's not yet happened in your partner, it will frustrate those patterns, the conditioned mind patterns, including the pain body in your partner, that need your cooperation to keep themselves going. The reactivity needs something to react against.

The pain body needs another pain body to feed on. It needs your reactions. So in the absence of that, there's frustration.

And then there could be a shift in your partner. It's happened, it's enough for one partner to enter the surrendered state. And then there's disorientation in the other partner for a while.

And then either the openness is there and the shift will happen, or you will separate. But it will be loving. You would separate in love.

And it's sometimes the most unlikely people that are suddenly open. And all it requires is to come into your presence. You might say a word or two, and their lives from then on, that's the trigger, that awakens that which was already underneath all the mind structures.

As somebody wrote to me, whom I met a long time ago at university, he said, I wish I had never met you. My life would be simple, I would be conventional and normal. Of course, he doesn't know that it's not true.

He would be very unhappy, like everybody else. One more thing about physical conditions, because some of you, I'm told, are having certain physical limitations here.

Limitations of the physical body.

For some people, have been their only teacher. And some needed no other teacher, but some continuous pain or continuous disability in the body. And it drove them to the point of surrender.

The very same condition in other people drove them into more and more egoic contraction and misery and unhappiness. So you can see, and I have, you can see one person in a wheelchair, who is filled with anger, resentment and bitterness. And you can see another person in a wheelchair, and I have met people.

And there is a light shining through their eyes and complete openness and no unhappiness and no misery. And even occasionally you might encounter people in India where many people who in the west would be shut away, they are actually visible in the street. So people who may have only one limb or lost several limbs.

And occasionally you find that complete, there is peace in them. It happens. And they smile at you.

So the physical limitation then drove them into the state of surrender. If you surrender, otherwise it will drive you into more contraction. I met my brother again after three years, my half-brother, at Christmas.

And he is now only 32 or 33 years old. And I had observed, I would see him occasionally, how his ego was growing and growing and becoming more and more rigid over the years during his twenties. The roles, complete identification with the roles he was playing, with mental positions and rigidity setting in.

And well, that's how the ego grows. And then he encountered a serious illness in his late twenties. And he had a very major operation.

And then as a result of that operation, he would, for even now, almost every night he wakes up in acute pain, abdominal pain. And so his sleep is interrupted almost every night by acute pain for one, two, three hours. And that is almost, to some people that would be called unacceptable.

Never getting enough sleep, always this pain. And then I met him after three years at Christmas, and I could see his ego had diminished greatly. And there was enormous sweetness, openness, softness, gentleness coming through.

And only then he told me, I said, I said, wonderful. I didn't say it, I thought, this is beautiful. The rigidity is gone, there is a light coming through him now.

Which means the conditioned somehow is no longer totally dominating him. And the unconditioned is filtering now through the conditioned. Somehow it must have happened.

And then he told me that every night he wakes up in pain. And then I realized that was his teacher, and that still is his teacher. It is that that drove him into surrender.

And the moment surrender happened, all the conditioned structures begin to weaken. Now the beauty of this is, you don't have to be pushed into surrender now by life. It's the voluntary embracing of surrender.

That's the beauty of the spiritual teaching. You can choose the yes voluntarily. You choose the kingdom of heaven.

You don't have to be dragged into it, kicking and screaming, no, no, I don't want this. Perhaps you were pushed up to this point. Through some suffering or some condition pushed you here.

And from now on, it's a voluntary embracing of what is now, that's all. And that is an acceleration of the emergence of presence. You don't need more suffering.

Because this could be misunderstood, because I've been talking about the beauty of suffering. That it can become a teacher and push you into surrender. Suffering, the very thing that's generated by non-surrender, eventually brings about the transformation of consciousness.

You see how it's all connected? Even the suffering that is generated through ego, its very purpose is the transformation of consciousness. Even that is one with the liberation.

But I'm not saying that you need more suffering now. You don't need any more suffering now. Suffering has been your teacher until now or recently.

And now, that doesn't need to be your teacher anymore. Your teacher is whatever form this moment takes. And it's easy.

It's always easy. This moment is always easy. When you bring the yes to it.

Remember the Zen master. Whatever comes into now, he goes, Oh, so that's it? Oh, alright.

That's it? Is that what it is? Okay.

[Speaker 2] (3:01:50 - 3:01:50)

Oh.

[Speaker 1] (3:01:51 - 3:04:46)

Oh. And this is the goodness of now. So deep that it has no opposite.

Good and bad on the surface of things. The future cannot hold a greater good than now. And then you can renounce the future easily.

For practical matters it still works. That's okay. But you renounce it as a psychological need.

And that's a very easy renunciation when you realize the depth and goodness of now. And so you renounce the future before the future is taken away from you. That will happen anyway.

[Speaker 2] (3:06:22 - 3:11:23)

Satsang with Mooji Video extract from the Satsang DVD Satsang with Mooji God is love. God is... Gathe Gathe Paramate Parasamoriswa Gathe Gathe Param Parasam Oriswa Somebody just told me that some people bought a little photo of this form.

[Speaker 1] (3:11:26 - 3:49:05)

And if you did, it needs to be used with great care and rightly. It's not to be used as the photo of somebody. It only works if, when looking at it, you sense a deeper connectedness and presence with yourself.

So you need to know that you are looking at yourself. The light that shines through the form is yourself. The form is completely unimportant.

And you recognize it when, as you contemplate the photo, peace arises within. And then it's good to close your eyes or remove the photo. So you don't get attached to the form, because it's a reflection of yourself.

And somehow, when the unconditioned comes through a form, even on a photo, you can see it. It's still there, for some reason. It took me a while before I said yes to that, that people could have a photo, because it can so easily be misleading, can be misunderstood.

So that is always the case with a teacher. You are drawn to a teacher and the power of the teaching, which is the emanation, which is more important than the words. And you recognize that.

That in you that recognizes it is the same as that which is recognized. Presence, whatever you want to call it. If it were not in you, you wouldn't recognize it.

So that there's no attachment to the form. The form serves its purpose when it takes you to the formless, because the formless shines through the form. And then the form has served its purpose.

And that's the case also with your body, the person. It doesn't necessarily mean that your life comes to an end as this form, when the formless shines through. But the fulfillment is already there.

Then the fulfillment that is already there can manifest further in this world of form. There are two or three questions here that ask, is that really all entering the now and then nothing else happens after that? Is there no further advancement or progression?

Is there no further development? Is that the end of all spiritual practice? Is that the end of ever having a spiritual teacher?

Well, most likely, yes, it is the end of having a spiritual teacher. Because you're connected with the one teacher, you are that, the self. But it doesn't mean on the level of form, the formless cannot express itself and even flow into the forms that then you create or are being created through you.

And that evolves through time because the world of form is connected with time. So it took years for this teaching to evolve out of the initial realization, many years. The initial realization and the state of peace, that's the same state 25 years ago already.

It was there, the state of peace, but nothing had manifested. There was no teaching that hadn't manifested out of that. That took time.

And during those 25 years, there were periods of time when I also sat there and said, is that all that I'm meant to do in this world? There's deep peace, occasionally a person comes to see me, occasionally in little groups, once a month, twice a month. And that was good, but is that all?

So for years I was sitting there in seclusion, relative isolation, which I had chosen to live in the country. That would have been fine too, but the totality had other plans. And one morning I woke up with a realization.

And the realization was I need to move to the west coast of North America. Didn't know why. And so I moved.

And then later, much later, I realized that I needed to be in that energy field for the book and the teaching to come out of me. And then it unfolded from there. So it's not that everything stops on the phenomenal plane.

One could say it all begins. Your true life begins when the illusion of the self dissolves. The mind made little me self.

Then the true life begins. And then it unfolds from within. It's not so much me living my life, but life living me, through me, through this form.

And the goal of spiritual practice is not the now. The now is the portal. The goal of spiritual practice is the end of the false self.

The fading away of the egoic structures. And that is the flowering. And then it flowers and flowers and flowers.

So the fading away of the false self, the dissolving of the false self, I talked about it this morning. Just to encapsulate what I said this morning could be encapsulated by saying that what you can practice as you go through life and even here is not to resist the diminishment of your sense of self in whatever form it comes. Whether somebody insults you or somebody disagrees with you and doubts that your position is the right one.

Whatever it may be. Any time when your sense of self feels injured and normally the automatic repair mechanism would come into operation. To be so aware that you simply step back and not resist it.

That is contained in many teachings. The diminishment of self is not resisted. And then the need to be right is relinquished, for example, in an argument.

You're quite happy not to be right. And then immediately you can sense peace comes up. You haven't died, only the false has now given way.

There's an opening and you can sense immediately an influx of peace. So it's the opposite of death. But I wouldn't tell that to a child.

But it is the destiny of humans to have to go through the growth of self and then go beyond that. To go through. So a child needs to go through the stage, and it takes years, where the child begins by saying, my daddy has a bigger car than yours.

And, or, this is mine. My toy is nicer than yours. Look at me, I can do it.

Look, me, look, me. So it would be futile to say to a child, don't say that. Forget about me.

You mustn't talk about yourself. It won't work. So that the child wants attention.

That stage is there. And at other times doesn't want attention. But that's already, there's a self-image arising.

Self-consciousness. And gradually the mind's companion begins to walk next to him. The child begins to have a relationship with itself.

He's maturing. She's maturing, becoming an adult. And then the suffering begins.

Because you're trapped now in that. Your sense of self is trapped in that. And then through the suffering, you go beyond.

So it seems that humans so far, at least now, they need to go through that stage. The self-ego structures and then the suffering. But perhaps now humans can go through this more quickly.

So perhaps that the egoic structures can dissolve at a much earlier age. It sometimes happens that self-realization or the unconditioned emerges. There's another question concerning that here.

I may come to it or we talk about it anyway. It can sometimes happen that the unconditioned emerges through a form that is not yet, where the structures of the self are not yet fully there. Like a very young person.

And then sometimes that works also. There's no general rule which says you always need to go through this. In the case of Ramana Maharshi, he was extremely young, hardly developed a self.

There was a self and that died, but not a very strongly established one. And he was only 16 or whatever it was, 15 maybe. But it can happen also that the unconditioned emerges and the form through which it emerges doesn't know what to do with it.

It becomes totally dysfunctional. Even to the point of appearing mad. And so there are people in India that have been called, when they wander around, I suppose naked, and they look a bit mad, and sometimes they are called God-intoxicated.

And it is possible that that has emerged but through a form that isn't ready for it, one could say. In the West they would be in a mental home. And here they are God-intoxicated and they are free, preferable.

Strange things are possible. It can also emerge before the egoic structures have dissolved. So they just give way but they are still there.

And then mistakes happen that you identify with the enormous power of presence and realization and say, that's me. The mind comes back in and claims some achievement. And this has happened even to teachers.

And you can see it, they claim, I am he, the one. None other but me. And the teacher then, and this is a very strong pull to the ego in the follower, the claim of a teacher that I am the avatar of all ages.

That is an enormous, what is being pulled, the ego responds to that very strongly because by being close to the, you grow in your sense of self also. So always references to specialness, to me as the one. And also be careful when a teacher makes you special.

And there is a question here about that. I seem to be answering the questions without looking at them. It says here, aren't you making people special by saying it's happening through you, this transformation of consciousness?

Isn't the ego going to come back in and it could happen? Yes. The ego can come back in and claim something.

An improved image of yourself. One of those who have been chosen to be here. Then that feels better than the previous image.

It replaces a more defective self-image. Very subtle, can come in. But I don't, it can, I don't see a lot of that happening here.

I'm not looking into everybody's eyes. Really what happens as you sit here, I'm never telling you that you are special. And this form is certainly is not special.

It's only because of that, that the teaching can happen. If this form thought of itself as special, there would be no true spiritual teaching. So, you've been sitting here during these days, feeling less and less special.

A diminished sense of self, mind-made self. The possibility that in one or two of you, the ego comes back through the back door, of course that's possible. But it's likely that you will notice it after a while.

A sense of knowing it all, of little superiority, of just ask me. And you can witness that if it happens. Whenever you witness ego operating in yourself, that's great.

You're witnessing it. And it operates in hundreds and hundreds of subtle ways. Simply each little one designed to add a little bit to your sense of identity.

And it operates even in the tiniest things like telling somebody what has happened. Do you know what's happened in the latest news? Do you know what he did?

And the other person says for a moment, no. And at that moment, you are superior. It's very subtle.

You feel a little bit bigger than the other person. And that is the great thing about gossip. Because the other person doesn't know yet.

But you know. And you are telling. It's a very subtle movement.

And when you can criticize somebody, again, a very subtle sense of... You are, of course, higher than the one who is being criticized. Or made fun of.

Or gossiped about. Of course the implication is that you are... And all that underlies ego.

Even to the absurd things like silly jokes that say what is green and climbs up the wall. And then the person you're talking to says, I don't know. Ah, now let me tell you.

I don't know. I can't tell you. So in hundreds of subtle ways, the ego tries to add something to itself.

And when you are vigilant and present, you can watch that. We all know things like name dropping and all. But this is just...

One could have a list. Maybe in the next book I'll make a list of ego strategies. Minor and major.

Even things like somebody has just died in your vicinity. And you get the news. And you say, oh, that's dreadful.

And if you look very deep inside, there's a little exhilaration. Very subtle. Which says, I am still alive.

I haven't died yet. I'm still alive. And you feel good for a moment because it wasn't you.

It's very interesting to watch. Any kind of complaint in your head or verbal, unless it's something you're telling a person, something to change, a person who can do something about a situation. You're saying, please don't put this there.

Put that there. That's not complaint. But complaint, just for the sake of complaint, which is part of everybody's normal egoic mind functioning, which goes on in people's self-talk, and verbally in many people also, in addition to the self-talk in the head, complaining about whatever is going on now.

A person, a place, a situation, a thing. Fault finding, looking for the one fault to complain about. And then focus on that, and then the ego gets strong in that.

There's a beautiful carpet, but you're looking for the tiniest stain there, and say, oh, look at that. I've told that before. I don't know if you've heard.

Last year I talked to my publisher, and he said he often gets letters, people writing in, about how books that they've published have changed their lives. So he got one letter, and he read it. This book really changed my life, and it was great.

And it went on and on, and on page two of the letter, and then he suddenly said, but then there was a serious spelling with typo, spelling error, misprint on page so-and-so, and that spoiled the whole pleasure of reading my book, that book. And really, if you show so little respect for the books you published, you shouldn't be in the business of publishing books. And you can see how the ego, how good it felt to the ego.

Whatever is bad to you feels good to the ego. How good it felt to the ego to be writing this, and how it got stronger and stronger, the self, in criticizing that. Now I know who I am.

So subtle. And obvious at other times. So I've already answered a few questions.

They just came in. Here's a big one. Your words are like my own heart talking to itself.

Yes, there is this thread of eternity that is always present. This substratum of being out of which all states arise, waking, sleeping, and dreaming, in India this is called Turiya, Turiya, the fourth. In your experience, how and why does Turiya arise out of the absolute unmanifest?

So that question refers to the arising of, because I use different signposts from those, although of course it's all the same, the arising of the state of presence out of the unmanifested, which is connected with the whole reason why we are here and the universe is here. So this question is so big, what it's really asking is about the whole purpose of the universe. Why and how?

Now language consists of five vowels, a, e, i, o, u, these are sounds, plus the other ones, what are they called? I can't remember, consonants, and they are produced not through vocal chords, but through his air being under pressure and being let out of, now a combination of these five sounds produced by vocal chords, a, i, e, o, u, plus a few hissing sounds, how could I explain through that the entire purpose of the universe? One could give little stories to very distant approximations of it, or you could have a philosophical system and think now you know it, but it would only be a combination of those sounds, vowels and diphthongs, in a certain sequence, hoping to capture the vastness of that in those little sounds.

This is, you cannot understand through the mind the vastness of that, you can only be part of it as you are, knowing it directly, but not knowing it as a subject knows an object, it is impossible to know it through the mind in that way. How does it happen and why does it happen? One can give distant approximations, the world of the unmanifested God-Spirit moving into matter, the whole universe becoming transformed into Spirit, perhaps that's a distant approximation, but that would reduce it to something, a fragment, that's not it either.

It's the illusion of knowledge that arises the moment you speak and formulate words and concepts, and they are helpful as pointers, but so the vastness you cannot understand, you can't understand presence, I've said it before, don't try to understand, you can understand a little bit about it through the mind, through formulating concepts, and I'd never talk about presence for you to understand what presence is, but simply using words to point to the state of presence, and then as presence arises, you know what presence is, but can you talk about it? It's very difficult, and whatever you say about it is limited and reduced.

So very wisely the Tao Te Ching says the Tao that can be named or spoken of is not the true Tao, and the rest is simply little pointers. In that one statement he has said that nothing that I say is the truth in itself, it only points, so it cannot really be spoken of, but self-realization is not that means, doesn't mean you know more about yourself, or know more about anything, it's being one with that, and understand it through being one with it, but then there may not be much that you can say about it, there is a knowing in that, but it goes beyond words, there is a deep knowing, but it cannot filter through the mind, it's totally inadequate for that. So one could say you cannot know yourself at the deepest level, you can only be yourself. In being it, you know it, but not as a subject knows an object, and with that comes also there's a humility, and part of this is, you may remember, and it's vital, entering the state of not knowing.

In which a deeper knowing resides, but it is the state of not knowing. I'm always happy when people come to me and say, I don't know who I am anymore. Oh, that's great, because for a long time they thought they knew exactly who they were, they were not quite happy with it, but they knew who they were, and now they don't, and now the only step to take is to become comfortable with that, not knowing, and not feeling I should know, and of course with that comes a deep humility also, not I know, I don't know, when you say I don't know, you disappear, and the strange thing is that all these words come out of the not knowing state, and remember that is the state that you are in when you walk along here, and watch sense perceptions, listen, see all the different sense perceptions, and you don't interpret, you relinquish interpretation, and yet you know what you're looking at, and yet you don't know what you're looking at, it is not, no labels arise anymore, or if they do, they are recognized as mere labels, and then they subside, and there's again a space of not knowing.

All a label is, is the illusion of knowing. Please.

[Speaker 4] (3:49:16 - 3:50:44)

It's very nice to see you, I heard about you many years ago, about six years ago, and it's very nice to be in your presence, and you are this. A number of years ago in Bihar there was a prince, 2,546 years ago, and in his awakening he knew how the whole of manifestation arose, and he said, Mara, I have seen how you build this house of samsara, I have broken your rich pole, never will you build this house again. In the words of the great sage Ramana Maharishi, he said, there is a final truth, nothing has ever existed, nothing does exist, nothing will ever exist, this is the ultimate finality.

In awakening there is an inherent wisdom that is beyond mind, as you say, there is a knowingness that is beingness, that is beyond doubt, beyond any deceit. All these great masters say the same thing, this is all illusion, it does not exist now, and it never did exist, and it will never exist. Is this your experience?

[Speaker 1] (3:50:44 - 4:05:18)

Yes, I'm not telling you that in those words, because they only become true for you as you realize that for yourself. If I told you that, half of you would go home. I only tell you what works as a pointer into that state.

Certain realizations come out of that state by themselves that are deeply true, but do not work as pointers into that state so well. So some sages have uttered those words, and for a few isolated individuals they may work as pointers, and perhaps they were talking to certain people when they realized they could see the truth of those words, so they worked as pointers. But for most, in the teaching that comes through this form, certain pointers are used, and others are not used.

There may be very deep truths that you will realize only through that inner knowing, and then it becomes true for you. So, yes, this is the truth, but I've never said it like that. And I may not say it again unless you ask me directly, in which case I would say yes.

Yes, that's right. Now, it may well be that one day I may find myself with one person, and those words will come out of my mouth, because there's never any prior intention before a word comes out of my mouth. And then that will work as perhaps the final pointer for that being.

And those words suddenly will be true. Otherwise, if I said it, those words could easily be used by the mind and become a concept. And so, this is why the Buddha also said certain things and refrained from saying other things, because he realized how easily words are grasped by the mind and made into conceptual knowledge.

So, that is the beauty of teachings. They come in slightly different forms, and some statements you may find in some teachings and not in others. Buddha, as we all know, didn't speak of God wisely, because that is the greatest concept that the mind can grasp at and add to itself and create images out of and identify with.

And of course, it's been misunderstood, because Western intellectuals started studying Buddhism, professors at universities, and immediately, because they only saw those pointers, and they completely misunderstood and said, this is an atheistic religion and it is totally nihilistic, it is life-denying, they said. So, they wrote PhDs about Buddhism. You could become a professor on Buddhism without knowing anything really about Buddhism.

That's how easily the mind can misinterpret. So, this is the truth. Whether in this form it will come out of my mouth again, I don't know.

How to deal with the unconscious of your own people, especially your own children? That is hard for many people to accept, that your children need to make mistakes, do what they do, create suffering for themselves. And you can watch it, how they're doing it.

In front of your eyes, they're creating suffering for themselves, making mistakes, as you call it. And then you want to save them from the suffering. You want to save them from making mistakes.

In other words, you want to stop them from evolving and learning. You want to stop them from suffering. And no human being can go through this life without, it's an essential part of being human and then going beyond.

And so to realize, if you had your way, you would create, if you were omnipotent, of course, you would create an ideal situation for your children, an ideal environment, everything right. They're good at school, they do well there, isn't that great? And they go on to university, and they're brilliant minds, and they meet this beautiful partner, and they have beautiful children, and a nice house, and everything is working so well, they're making no mistakes, they're not suffering.

What would the end result be? It would be a very superficial family, to say the least. That arises, they would be happy doing their shopping.

No suffering has ever crossed their path. They haven't made any mistakes. And yet, it's every human being's destiny to make mistakes, and there are no mistakes.

Only from a limited perspective, there are mistakes. You never made a mistake in your life. You're here.

Whatever you ever did, brought you here. Where you hear the message of liberation. So there are no mistakes, only if you adopt a particular perspective, then it's called a mistake.

It's limited, it's a fragment of the truth, it's a thought. So of course you would want to spare them their suffering, their self-inflicted suffering. And some suffer more deeply than others.

I've had parents come to me with extremely tragic stories of what their children did to themselves or others. Dreadful. To the point of saying, no human being, no parent could live with that.

And yet, they do. And there's the learning. And if your child creates suffering for others and ends up in prison, there's the learning.

So it's the acceptance of that, allow them to make mistakes, allow them to be unconscious, allow them to create their own suffering. But you can be there, not being drawn into it, making it, giving more fuel to that. Allow it.

Some children are addicted to drugs. It can be very hard for a parent to have a child. And great suffering can be there until finally, and you've tried it all, you've tried everything.

Many times, and it happened again and again. And finally, you surrender. And then great love is there, but you allow that movement of unconscious.

You've done everything on the external level. And then finally, you surrender and you allow them to be unconscious. You still help, but there's an inner allowing.

So if people close to you are creating great suffering for themselves, are in states of great resistance, inner resistance, it may be that they cannot surrender. Even the word surrender or acceptance, when you say that, they say, what? Are you mad?

You're insane, acceptance, they don't hear, it doesn't go in. And so, in those cases, you surrender for them, so to speak. It could also be to do with a parent.

It's not always children. Often it's the parents who are in great suffering. And so, what do you do?

Your mother, your father, you surrender for them. You don't demand anymore that they should be more conscious. You don't demand anymore that they shouldn't be doing what they're doing.

You don't demand anymore that they should understand you. You surrender. And then you visit them for Christmas or Thanksgiving.

And for the first time, it's not a source of great conflict having to be there for a whole day or two or three days. Oh my God, not another Christmas with the family. In the surrendered state, no demands are made.

Your father, your mother, they display whatever behavior they display and have been displaying for 50, 60, 70 years. Maybe they have the same conversations they had 50 years ago, 20 years ago. It's fine, it's the human mind, nothing personal.

And you're simply there as a surrendered entity. So, this is already the beginning of, to come back to your question, which I don't talk about usually. This is already the beginning of the end of the world.

Because when you identify with form, all the forms are extremely heavy. There's the heaviness, the solidity of the world of form. And as you surrender, the world of form loses its seeming solidity.

It's not solid at all, but it feels and looks very solid. And it loses, and I'm telling you that because that is already something that you can know for yourself. How all the structures lose their heaviness, including the human beings.

So there is a, the forms become less substantial. And that includes the form of my father, my mother, my child, which before was heavy in its egoic density. Very much there.

And then in surrender, something happens. It's not, it's lighter. And that's the beginning of the end of illusion.

That's as far as I'll go. So it's allowing, even people close to you, allow them to be who they are in their present. It's not who they are, but to manifest whatever they manifest.

And often the change will happen then, suddenly. How did that happen? I didn't demand anymore that he or she should understand me.

And suddenly, at Christmas dinner, he asked me, So tell me a little bit about these strange retreats that you go to. And he always said before that, Why are you involved in these weird cults? You should go into business for yourself.

Do something real. Do something with your life. He's been repeating that for 20 years.

And you felt angry about that. Why doesn't he or she, he understands nothing about me. And then surrender happened.

And suddenly, oh. Or not.

[Speaker 2] (4:05:20 - 4:05:21)

Doesn't matter.

[Speaker 1] (4:05:35 - 4:36:31)

I have given up many addictions in my life, and the last addiction, it seems, is the addiction to food. Last night, I sat with the craving I felt, the energy in my body, without attaching a story to it. What happened was I experienced an incredible amount of fear as I glimpsed the power of being free.

Please talk more about this. Yes. Yes, fear can arise.

And that is the egoic fear. It fears its own death. And it's not real.

And what do you do with fear? As you enter the surrendered state, you may encounter the region of fear. Because the ego fears surrender, because it knows it to be its own end.

So as you surrender to a certain condition, inner or outer, and then suddenly, there's a pulling back. Don't go there. Don't go there.

And then you do surrender again. And then you don't allow the fear to push you out, but you can then allow the fear also to be. And it won't kill you.

And so that also. So then you've dropped into that. And when you accept it completely, the very fear turns into aliveness.

And you drop down. So whatever arises, there's that. There are many addictions, yes.

It's an external manifestation of the mind needing to add something to me. Now it does it on a psychological level a lot, but that's not enough for the mind. It will use the body to add to the incomplete sense of self.

That's the unconscious impulse behind addiction. And you can see addiction operates in the tiniest things that are not recognized as addiction. You can't stop eating the potato chips.

And if you watch the movement, they don't do much. And it goes. It's an adding.

Not a lot of nutritional value, or it could be other kinds of junk food. Smoking. So food is a big one for many people.

You don't only reincarnate into thought streams. You can reincarnate into food. And for a moment it seems to work.

You feel a little bit more complete after eating a box of chocolates. I spoke to one person who has a big problem with weight. And he said the mind, he began to observe his own mind.

And it always, he came up with one thought that always, the main thought that would justify his going to the fridge and eating, was, you've had a rough time, you deserve a break. And of course every day he was having a rough time. And then he observed that mind movement.

And next time it came, he allowed that mind movement to be there and he just sat there with it. Without moving to the fridge. Because he recognized that.

Kindly throw light on the following two points. One. Why one form loves the other form, even when the other form does not love the first form.

I know what you mean. We know what you mean. Why is love not reciprocated?

Why does one way love traffic situation arise? I'm placing my aching heart before you. Please operate.

Operate. Thank you, thank you. All right, I will begin the operation.

Now, one form loves and the other form doesn't reciprocate. Why is that? And the pain that comes with that, great pain for many people, it's enormous pain.

Now, you know that the basic condition of the self or the egoic self is one of a very deep-seated sense of lack, of not enough, of not complete. And then it tries to fill through strategies. The mind-made self tries to fill that lack that it knows and feels almost continuously except for brief moments when something has been put in there.

And then for a moment the lack is not felt. It never lasts long. So it looks for the next thing and it looks to the future, it looks to add to me to fill that hole that is always there where I'm not myself, I'm not complete, I'm not home, I haven't arrived.

And so all kinds of strategies are there. And one of the main areas where it looks to fulfill that lack is in the area of relationship, the other person, he or she. And then when that happens, the entire focus of the self becomes focused on one other person who is perceived unconsciously as the one who is going to complete me, make me whole.

He or she is the one. And so almost an obsessive attachment forms to that image, that form of that person. And that is called falling in love.

And sometimes if you're lucky, the other person feels the same about you, that you are going to complete him or her also. And of course that is great. You both feel that you are going to complete each other.

And then probably you will want to get married, sign a contract, just to make sure that for the rest of your life you are going to complete me and you are not going to leave me. Because that would have dire consequences if you broke that contract and left me. Don't you even think about that.

And then you marry, this is where the films end, the director says cut here, but life goes on. And you marry and after, perhaps even during the honeymoon, the first doubt comes into your mind whether this actually works. Whether the other is going to live up to that enormous task of fulfilling and completing you.

And then you start an ordinary existence, jobs, family, and gradually it doesn't seem to be working anymore. The completion, the sense of lack comes back. He or she isn't behaving in the way that he or she should to make me feel complete, make me happy.

You read it in ads, I don't know if you read it in India, looking for man or woman to make me happy. Oh, wow. Who could live up to that?

And nobody can. And then the lack that was covered up by the temporary delusion that this person was fulfilling you, this person who has a pain body, but you didn't know that, the temporary delusion that this person should be fulfilling you, that suddenly the sense of incompleteness, aloneness, fear, not being as re-emerges. But now through your mind you attach that to the other person and say he or she is the cause for what I feel.

You're feeling again the basic egoic condition. You're feeling it more strongly now because for a little while it was covered up by the love relationship. And so gradually the love then periodically turns into hate.

And every time the person is not fulfilling his obligations or her, the love turns into aggression, hostility. Withdrawal, complete withdrawal. What's wrong with you?

Nothing is wrong. Just don't want to talk. Whatever.

Or throwing something, whatever they do. And then the relationship fluctuates. For a while it works again, and then it doesn't work.

It works again, it doesn't work. And then it becomes, the periods when it doesn't work become longer. And you feel, it feels bad.

The happiness of marriage turns into the unhappiness of just co-existence. The happiness of the honeymoon becomes the divorce. And they're all one really.

So it was an attempt to fulfill you through some form, some outer form. And then all that happens in the end, you sense the unfulfillment more strongly. And then you blame that form for causing you that pain.

It's egoic pain. This is the pain that arises out of love-hate relationships. Now, the questioner, of course, is not at that stage, because it is one-way traffic, as he puts it.

That great love is felt for this form, but it's not reciprocated. What do you do then? Then you feel that lack even more strongly.

And it's painful. And there's a tendency for the mind to weave all kinds of fantasies around it, all kinds of stories. And the self gets in there and becomes a very painful self-image of me.

And it can then, if it goes on, it can happen that that attraction turns into hate. It can happen. I'm not saying it will happen in your case.

And then you see it never was love in the first place. So what is called love is the deep-seated need of the ego. It focuses on one form.

So your opportunity now is to feel what you feel as much as possible. Get out of the mind weaving stories about it, fantasies, images. Be more interested in that unpleasant, painful feeling.

And here is where you surrender. What you're really feeling is the egoic state, the egoic condition. And then the image will come up occasionally of that person.

But focus on the feeling. Surrender into that. Accept that suffering.

And any suffering that you accept in that way will work for you. It transmutes ego. Any suffering that is accepted completely transmutes ego, resolves ego, and also transmutes the suffering itself.

So it's an opportunity. If not now, you would have to practice it. If your love were reciprocated, you would have to practice in a couple of years.

You would have a year or two of illusion. That's nice. Second question.

This form realizes that some actions are wrong. Still the form does these actions knowing that they are not right. Why?

That's the movement of human unconsciousness. Conditioned, egoic mind structures operate. And they have such momentum that they still operate.

The question is, is there a witnessing presence as they operate and those actions are being performed? Or does the witnessing presence come in after the action has been performed? And initially, as presence arises, it will come in after it's happened.

You've gone through an unconscious movement. You've said something to someone. You have done something and it was totally egoic, totally conditioned.

Perhaps done it many times before. And millions of other human beings are doing or saying the same thing that you are at this very moment on the planet. Performing the same action that you are performing because it's basically the same human conditioning.

In other words, there's nothing personal in it whatsoever. There's no you who did something bad. You is the arising presence.

And you watch the movement of unconsciousness, the conditioned. At first, you can only watch it after it's happened. And then you can fall into the trap of feeling guilty about it and calling yourself bad.

The ego loves that. If you can't call yourself good, we said it before, it'll be very happy calling yourself bad. Because at least you know who you are.

I'm no good. Oh, okay, now I know who I am. Better than not knowing anything, says the ego.

So you can watch that and know it is human unconsciousness. And then as presence arises, you will wake up in the middle of it. And that may happen next time.

The same action, the same speech coming out of your mouth. And in the middle of it coming out of your mouth, there's a witnessing presence. And you can see it's like a script, an actor who has been conditioned to perform, to act out that script.

And many times before, the same strategy, the same, and now there's a witnessing presence there. And that is the beginning, this is now when those structures weaken, become less heavy. Suddenly, the moment the witness arises, those otherwise very heavy structures that you could never hope to get rid of, unless you enter a different consciousness, a deeper, non-conditioned, suddenly they could weaken.

And then it happens again, it may not be the last time, because there's a momentum to that. And all those other things that you know are there to enhance your sense of self and diminish somebody else's sense of self. Very favorable, one of the favorite ego strategies, delusions, through diminishing somebody else's sense of self by criticizing, accusing, saying something to hurt.

You know it's wrong, it happens. And then in that moment, the self feels bigger because it has diminished somebody else's self. A lot of suffering in human interactions is caused by that.

And it's a form of delusion, of course, because you've only strengthened the delusion in yourself through that. And then suddenly, first you see it after the event, and then you see it as it happens. And you look through it, you see the madness of it, that you have only strengthened an illusion.

And all those things that are connected with ego structures, envy. Envy means you feel diminished in that illusory self because somebody else has, or is able to do, more than you. Has more of this, is better at that, has a nicer looking that, more knowledge, better appearance.

You compare, and then you feel diminished, and then you feel hostility towards that entity that seemed to diminish you. It's all total madness, total illusion. But it operates as motivating factors in people's lives.

And then you try to add something to you to make somebody else feel envious, and then feel the self has grown. Are they looking at me? Is she seeing it?

Is he seeing it? Or more subtle as knowledge, spiritual knowledge, even that can be used. Quoting scriptures, you little worm, you know nothing, let me tell you.

So all this, always the attempts through mad strategies to enhance one's sense of self. And all those things, I assume you're among those, so you hurt other people without knowing it. Create suffering for others in the service of self.

And it always seems to work for a little while, and then you feel even worse, and you have to do it again. So the only way to get out of that, and I believe that's the question. So I've just explained why you do these things, that was the question.

And that's really all you need to know, and just be there when it happens. You can't be there when it happens, be there just after it happens. And don't create an additional identity out of that, just watch.

It has nothing to do with who you are, you're watching unconsciousness in motion, the human condition. And so more presence arises, even in the midst of it, you'll be present. And that is the fading out of all those movements and structures.

That's the beauty of it. One more question. The Enneagram is an old Sufi model of the different aspects, qualities of soul, spirit, being, and their relation to different personality types.

Have you studied it? I haven't studied it, but I've looked at it. Somebody gave me a book about it.

And there are certain models, certain frameworks, there's another word, it's not coming to me, grids through which you look. Astrology is another one, and there are others, many others. And you can look, and if they work, and some of them are quite helpful, they highlight those areas in which this particular form is particularly, where the concentrations of unconsciousness are greatest.

And although I only looked briefly, I spent maybe an hour with that book, and I found it very interesting. So it can be helpful, because it highlights areas where unconsciousness is particularly, this is the impression I got without really having studied it, the areas where there's particularly strong blockages, unconsciousness, particularly concentrated here, there, there, in those areas. So by applying that, it can be helpful, you can perhaps see in yourself where you need to look most.

So it is not, there's not one of these that you cannot do without. As presence arises, you will see those things anyway, but it can be a helpful additional tool. And eventually, you have to, you let go of that.

There's always the danger with any tool that people use, that they become attached to the tool and believe a way of looking to be some kind of ultimate truth, to mistake a particular, perhaps a temporarily helpful perspective for the truth. Particularly if it seems to work for you, then you get very much attached to it. But any system through which you interpret reality could be temporarily helpful, and then let go.

If this evening we are receiving a visit from Shanti Mai, who has an ashram. She's an American-born spiritual teacher and lives here now, has an ashram nearby. And she's coming with some of her people to perform songs for us, devotional songs, that may be quite beautiful.

That reminds me, there were some questions about devotion, but we may come to them tomorrow. Devotion, what's true devotion? All these, there are these words, but they really, they're all aspects of one state.

I have a strong feeling of devotion, continuously there's devotion. Not to any one particular thing or form, but when you know your own nothingness, you're in a state of devotion. It's hard to explain.

[Speaker 2] (4:39:45 - 4:46:34)

Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji Can you be aware of the two dimensions here?

[Speaker 1] (4:46:37 - 5:07:55)

You're listening to the sounds. And one could say the sounds, they're dancing on the surface of the silence, the stillness. And simultaneously be aware of both dimensions, manifested, unmanifested.

And that stillness, that is the unmanifested, is presence, divine presence. Sometimes the stillness, as it is now, is there also externally as silence. But if there were no silence externally in this world, often you may not find that externally.

But internally, there's the stillness within the aware presence. And whatever phenomena happen to be happening. So the awareness of the stillness that underlies all sense perception and all thought, is freedom from thought, consciousness without thought.

It's the essence of who you are. The awareness of stillness is not two, it's one. It is self-aware awareness.

Only through language does it appear to be two. Stay alert. You immediately, whatever arises, you allow the condition to be.

Now there's the sound. Some of the external stillness is lost, it seems, and yet, there's the stillness through which you listen to the sound. So the stillness cannot really ever be lost.

Silence can become obscured. Stillness can also become obscured within, never lost. In the busiest and most insane mind, underneath all that noise and turbulence, the realm of stillness is there.

Unconditioned. And there's a relaxed alertness in this state of awareness. That's the essence of our retreat here, the only teaching.

All the words really pointed to that state. And that's the one thing that doesn't come to an end when you leave here. The experience as the external form of all this comes to an end, as all experiences do, sooner or later, mostly sooner, fleeting.

It evaporates as an experience, the form of it. And when you wake up the first morning when you're back home, and then you wake up in your own bed again, and you open your eyes, and maybe for a moment, you don't know whether this India retreat was a dream, or did it happen. What a strange dream that was.

I was on this bus. Facing death every moment. And many other strange things.

Monkeys were climbing up buildings. Chanting going on at all hours. It must have been a dream.

So there isn't very much difference between a passing experience and a dream. In that sense, this as an experience evaporates as all experiences do. And on level of form, all you have then to prove to you that it actually happened, is maybe some photos or videos, and then the form of that was captured there.

And you see, oh, there it is. That's where I was. And in 150 years, one of your descendants will be looking at this and can't make out anymore what these figures are on the photo.

It's all fading. It must have been one of my ancestors, perhaps, but I can't recognize the face anymore. It's quickly fading.

And then that's gone too. The only thing that doesn't leave you is the essence of this gathering. It's now.

It's the now. As yourself. A walking now.

And you won't need to hang on to the form of this. Feel nostalgic. Or if I may predict, at first you might feel a relief that you're back in your comfortable place.

And a little bit later you feel nostalgic about being here. That's the human mind. And all these are states of mind that may come, and that's fine.

And they happen within the spaciousness, which doesn't change. So you are simply a field of aware presence. Not a person.

Although you still pretend to be a person. The world wants you to be a person. You don't have a new concept in your head that says, I am now a field of aware presence.

That means you are a person again. With a new concept about who you are. The field of aware presence has no concepts about who you are.

Or who anybody is. Or who anything is. And there's no need to announce to your friends and relatives that now that you've been on a retreat, you're a field of aware presence.

There's no need to announce through emails that I am now liberated. It could be misunderstood. And resented.

And what's that need to say it? Where does that come from? What did you learn on the retreat?

Maybe they'll ask you when you come home. And you say, nothing. Maybe you could say I got rid of some accumulated ignorance.

But I didn't learn anything. Anything that there's self-identification with is ultimately ignorance. It might look very clever from a human viewpoint.

Because the deepest meaning of ignorance, the true meaning of ignorance is not uneducated. It has nothing to do with that. There are many highly educated people who are ignorant.

And this is not a judgment. It's simply seeing that this is not the essential nature of being ignorant. They are trapped in the delusion.

And they don't know who they are. Not knowing who you are beyond form is ignorance. The one basic ignorance.

Ignorance means not knowing who you are, the one essential thing. But then to seek it as an object of knowledge is further ignorance. To seek for your true self as if it could ever become an object of knowledge takes you into more ignorance.

So any identification is ignorance. Oh, they'll give you a microphone.

[Speaker 2] (5:08:03 - 5:08:27)

I know I am beyond this form. I can feel it. But as this form right now, I am a mother.

And I do identify to that. But I know that if I do identify to that, there will be some suffering. I am willing to accept that suffering.

Is that ignorance?

[Speaker 6] (5:08:28 - 5:08:29)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (5:08:29 - 5:37:51)

So, the form as which you are here is also honored. It's not rejected. The form is honored.

Even the limitations, we saw that. The limitations that you encounter. Because you are a form, being a mother also imposes limitations on you.

That's all connected with assuming this temporary role. And it is honored, allowed to be. You can't get rid of form as long as you move here.

All that's needed is the spaciousness around the form. Then the form moves within the spaciousness and does what it has to do as that form. Better than any form could do that is self-identified with a form and there is complete lack of spaciousness.

And you are totally and only the mother. Then there comes in delusion. The form will act.

All those essential things that people want and are looking for can only come in if there is not complete identification with form. But you surrender to the form and there is a spaciousness. And then truly love flows in.

Love does not come through identification with the form. It comes through the realization of yourself as the space around the form. You know that.

And then love can flow into the form. Otherwise you get the typical love of the mother or the typical love of the lover that we talked about yesterday. And the typical love of the mother is very clinging because it's only form clinging to another form.

It looks like great love and what happens to many mothers. And then they can't let go. The form grows bigger.

18 years, 20, 25, 30. And they can't, there's the clinging because you only know yourself as form. You only know your child as form.

And there's the clinging. The mother still loves and doesn't realize that she's now stifling through her love. And that's again ignorance.

So all the functions that pertain to this temporary form, whatever its temporary role in this world may be, the way in which they are being performed, when you totally identify with form, there will be dysfunction flowing because the basic ignorance will be flowing into your actions. Whether you are a mother or a lover or whatever form it is, the basic ignorance of not knowing who you are beyond that will flow into it. And that accounts for the dysfunctional way in which people behave and interact largely.

So there's already an awareness that this is a role. This is a function, a form, and you honor that. But there's not total self-identification with that.

You already know that this is a function. So there is the spaciousness around it. And then you perform your duties, whatever duties in a wider sense, it's not maybe a nice word, whatever you have to do as this temporary form, you will do more beautifully with those essential ineffable qualities flowing into whatever you are doing that don't come from you as the person or the form.

Compassion, love, compassion, gentleness, joy. Many mothers think they are wonderful mothers and they are totally neurotic about it. And that's just one example of many other forms.

So the forms are honored. The limitations that come with form are accepted. And we saw, we've been talking about how the limitations of form actually become a doorway, an opening.

Not attempting to find some situation that is free of limitation. Of course you can exchange one situation for a nicer one, but that won't be free of limitation either. It may be a nicer house, a nicer this, that's fine.

And then you will encounter different kinds of limitations there. And one way or another you will find them, and so you don't run away from them, but accept, surrender to what is. So continuously that which is beyond the form is there as an underlying knowing, an underlying awareness, presence, spaciousness, whatever pointer works.

Not denying the form at all. It's honoring, honoring it. And so, there was a question, we may look at some more questions.

I have a backlog of questions. Some question, I read some questions this morning. One questioner asks, why do we blame form?

No, we're not blaming form at all. We are thankful to form. Because the form and that which is beyond form are ultimately one.

It will take you there. And that implies, for example, if you're a mother, the mother that is totally identified with form can't even truly listen to a child. That mother will tell the child what the child needs to do and worry.

But even if you can sit with a child and listen to a child, the stillness is there, the awareness, the aware presence is there. And there the child is talking and there's a spaciousness. And then from there you can allow, we talked about it yesterday, they allow the child also to manifest the unconsciousness that is part of the human condition, the suffering that comes with that inevitably.

And you help as much as you can. And then you allow the child to learn whatever he or she has to learn through that. Another example of a form, a function, a role.

You may have a job that is not interesting, that you dislike, try to get away from. Of course you can look for another job, but maybe you've been stuck in it, maybe you have looked. Maybe you're a waitress, in reality you're an actress, but since there are not enough jobs, you have to work in a restaurant for a while.

And then there could be resentment, you don't feel, you feel bad about having to fulfill this function, this role. And here's an opportunity to simply not to surrender, to say, OK, I might as well accept that now I'm a waitress. You're adding concepts to your mind, you're not a waitress.

I might as well accept that I'm poor. Nothing to do with surrender, you're adding more concepts to the mind. I might as well accept that I'm a failure.

More concepts to the mind, nothing to do with surrender. Acceptance is only of now. Now

I'm carrying a plate from the kitchen to the table.

That is the function I perform at this moment. And that is, that I give my attention to, surrender to, just this movement. And then I talk to the customer, and I give attention to this person.

Is there anything else you would like? And there's a true question. Not a formal, do you want anything else?

There's a true interaction, because when the moment is honored, whatever form this moment takes is honored, and the form that this moment takes right now is the customer in the restaurant. And he or she is honored. And will sense something, even only very deep down.

And you ask, is there anything else I can bring you? There's a true interaction, because the moment is honored. The now, the form that it takes.

You don't carry a self-concept in your head that you dislike, and you fight a battle inside yourself. You have me against my self-concept, and it gets more and more complicated. Nobody could even work it out.

You need years of psychoanalysis to get through that. There's a part of me that resents the image I have of myself, and then there's another part that has enormous complexity. And then you carry that, and the whole emanation is of you don't want to be where you are.

And you don't like the form that this moment takes, and you don't like this customer. Even if you're smiling. And the customer can sense that.

And then you shift from complaining about some conceptual identity as me as a waitress, and being unhappy about some illusory, because conceptual identity, you simply honor the form of this moment. And there you are, and you say, is there anything else I can give you? And each time the customer comes, there is that openness and the flow.

And who knows, it's there that transformation happens, in one way or another, when the openness is there to the suchness of the moment, suddenly the doors are open. And where the change will come from, we don't know. You don't demand change anymore for your happiness.

And then one day you ask, maybe, just one example, can I bring you anything else? And he says, no, but what's your name? Here's my card.

And you say, oh, Steven Spielberg. And he says, there's something about you, I don't know what it is, but... And then, three years later, you are the world-famous actress, no longer working in the restaurant, and you realize that you cannot step out of your house without creating a riot.

Wherever you go, they want something from you, and they all come running, and it's mad. You now encounter the limitations of that situation. Can't go anywhere anymore, without bodyguards.

Can't go out anymore for a walk. Each situation has its new limitations. Everybody wants something, wants to enhance their ego through being in contact with you.

Where is true human interaction? New limitations. And it doesn't mean that now you run away from that.

You recognize that each situation brings its new limitations. And you surrender to that. Otherwise, you'll be unhappy as the actress, and if despite your unhappiness you should become famous, you'll be unhappy there, too.

Complaining, trying to get away. This isn't it, it's never it, if you resist the form of now. So with that, the beauty is, your inner state of being is independent of external conditions.

The actress, the waitress, and the famous actress, basically, one could say two different incarnations of the same person, deep down, they feel the same. The famous actress says, I still feel the same that I was because I was surrendered then, and I'm surrendered now. The inner state is independent of fluctuating forms, conditions.

That means you're free of the world, needing it for something, to give to you. And the main thing that people want looking to the world for is a sense of self. You're free of that.

And of course, many other things are possible. The waitress, who knows what happens to any human being who is in the surrendered state. Suddenly, something totally different may appear, and she's not an actor, an actress at all.

That might have been an egoic delusion. Doesn't matter. Doesn't matter.

So not carrying the weight of conceptual identity in your head. Always back to this conceptual identity needs past and future. It's heavy.

Suffering comes. And then you go... Just this.

Honor this. Surrender to this. Always simple.

Always fine. Even in the midst of death, it's fine. I don't know if Bhakti spoke to you about meeting each person face to face.

Did you talk about that, Bhakti? Kim did. So you talked about that, and that's the...

I love hugging. But hugging is only the external form of that encounter. The essence of that encounter is always beyond that.

And so as I'd like to meet each one and simply look, and that's a strange thing. If you're not comfortable with it, it's fine, too. There's a great beauty in looking into the eyes of another person in the state that is free of thought.

That is, without sounding too esoteric, there is always a transmission of presence in that look that is free of thought. The unconditioned consciousness. It is not one way.

Whatever you look upon through stillness, and especially looking at another human being through stillness, that is a transmission of the state that we call presence. And it awakens. In your case, it doesn't need awakening because presence is already awakened in you, but it calls forth also from underneath your mind, even if your mind is active at that moment while the other person looking through stillness, it calls forth the unconditioned within you and then strengthens that.

It's a two-way process. But that is not the only way. Presence is transmitted in many, many ways, simply through the field of stillness itself in this room.

Presence is even transmitted through words, through sounds, if the sounds arise out of that. Some of that fragrance or energy field of presence is still in the words. We talked about that.

So the words have transformational power, not because of what they signify, but because of the space out of which they arise. Presence can be transmitted even through a work of art. Great art arises out of the state of presence.

The artist becomes still, and it happens. The greatest works of art were not created by persons, human beings. They always have something sublime there.

In form, yes, the form is limited. Every work of art is limited and impermanent. But something within that form still has an energy of that which is beyond form.

And that's what makes it into a great work of art. And in some strange way, people can recognize it, and they sense something but don't know what it is. Presence could be transmitted through touch.

So anything can flow into that simple sitting here also. A song, a sound. Then those become carriers, or simple stillness.

And this is now your function more and more in this world. Your function is to be there as the field of presence. One could say you redeem the world, not through thinking, I'm doing it, through being the field of presence that does something.

To whatever and whoever you come into contact with. It lessens the illusion of materiality of form. There's the form, and there's the formless.

And the more noisy it gets out in the world, and some lives are very noisy in many different ways, the more you can sense the stillness. If there were only stillness, there would be no knowing it. So perhaps, and I don't take this to be the truth, it's only sounds coming out of my mouth, so one could say God perhaps seeks to know him, her, itself, and so enters the world of form, identifies with form, disguises itself as form, plays the dream of form, and then wakes up out of the dream of form.

And in that waking up, there's a self-knowing. Before you, this is, forget about it now, but this is just a little approximation. It's not the explanation, there is no explanation.

And in your life, the two are beautiful. The form, which is noise in one way or another, and stillness. The manifested, the unmanifested.

Ultimately they are one. I'd like you to, yes please, another question.

[Speaker 4] (5:38:01 - 5:38:42)

Part of my question you have answered in your previous sentence, still that is bothering me for the last three days, the question is, are the presence and the form related? If yes, why blame the form? If no, how can the form exist without the presence?

Are the presence and the form related? If yes, why blame the form? If no, how can the form exist without the presence?

[Speaker 1] (5:38:43 - 5:41:20)

All right, thank you, yes. They are one. I'm going to talk about myself, what happened.

When I was in deep suffering for many years, I only knew myself as the suffering entity. Consciousness was totally identified with the forms, but it was consciousness. Consciousness was appearing in the disguise of forms, thought forms, material forms, a mental form of me.

Consciousness appeared in that disguise and only knew itself as that form. And then something happened and consciousness knew itself suddenly as both within the form and totally beyond the form. Consciousness suddenly knew itself as consciousness.

The forms were still there. None other than the appearance, the essence that was in every appearance. So, in both, all that, the difference between what presence means in the way in which we use this term here and in this teaching, because there's no universal meaning, what presence means in this teaching is self-aware awareness.

Awareness that knows itself, whereas consciousness embraces the totality. When the totality, when that becomes self-aware, then consciousness becomes presence. But it's all consciousness.

So this is the limit to which we can go through words. Further questions may arise if you start thinking about it, but they won't get you any closer to freedom. Thank you.

All right. The microphone is traveling there.

[Speaker 6] (5:41:40 - 5:42:24)

I've been to other retreats, one in New York, and one of the challenges I have when I go home is the desire to sustain the presence that I feel when I'm here. Because I notice people I'm around, a shift in them, when I have that higher presence. And then it seems to...

And I feel bad about that. What can I do? Okay.

[Speaker 1] (5:42:30 - 5:48:32)

One could say that when you notice that there's loss of presence, there's actually presence again. It's there. It's only when you no longer know that there's loss of presence, then you're lost.

As long as the knowing is there, there's presence. It can be very subtle in the background. There's a knowing that you're not present.

But in that moment of knowing that you're not present, you're present. Unless it's just a thought. I'm not present.

I'm never present. Why can't I ever be present? What's wrong?

But there can be a knowing. There's no presence. Oh, there's presence.

The knowing arises out of presence. So, as long as you know you're not present, you're fine. Now, another level of answer.

Another answer on another level. Use whatever means you have as helpful pointers to presence. And, well, there are many possible means.

One of them implies again that you know it. Am I in suffering in any way? Am I immersed in some form of suffering?

And suffering can take even impatience, irritation is a minor form of suffering. Whatever form it takes. Suffering can be an alarm clock that tells you you've lost the now.

Because if you hadn't lost the now, there would be no suffering. There isn't enough space. The now is so small for suffering to arise here in this form.

Suffering requires past and future and a me. Just this, a challenge can happen, but no problem. Problem needs past and future and a me that thinks about it and identifies with the situation, has a reactive and personal relationship to the situation.

That's a problem. So, suffering, lost the now. I must have lost the now.

Where is it? Oh, here. And the shift happens from mind identification to...

At first you may become aware of sense perceptions, suddenly again. Your inner energy field is back. And then you sense the underlying field of awareness.

Oh, back. So that's how even suffering can be a pointer, can take you there. And then you can use other things.

Open the book occasionally or any other book that has come out of that state. Read a few lines and then it's enough, very often, to be present again. Listen to tapes occasionally.

Don't get attached or dependent on anything. Wisdom is required to use help without becoming attached to the form that the help takes. The help is, of course, always pointing beyond the form.

Not getting attached to the teacher, the form of the teacher. Not getting attached to listening to tapes. Not getting attached to books.

Not getting attached to a photo. And yet, being able to use them as openings, as long as they're needed. So you can...

Any photo taken of someone in presence is helpful. Looking at that for brief moments and put it away. Listening to tapes, not excessively, but occasionally.

Nature, use anything natural and bring your attention to anything that is nature, because there's no mind activity in nature. It's an expression of consciousness, but not thought. Anything in nature, place attention on it, auditory, visually.

Acknowledge its being. Let it take you into presence. You can do that more easily than a man-made, human-made thing.

Most human-made things are mind-made things. Especially in cities, you're surrounded by the externalized human mind in all the forms around you in a city. But even in the middle of a city, you can look at the sky.

Or there may be a flower somewhere. So use what you get. But remember, knowing that you're not present, if it doesn't then immediately degenerate into thought, which says, you see, I'm not, never present, because that knowing can easily immediately degenerate into thought.

From the knowing that you're not present, you can formulate a concept or judgment, a thought that says, you see, I've lost it, not realizing. How do you know you lost it? There was a moment of knowing.

[Speaker 6] (5:48:38 - 5:48:51)

I think what I start judging is the strength of the presence, how strong it feels. Yes. Because it seems always via that knowing, the knowing is that it's not as strong.

[Speaker 1] (5:48:51 - 5:48:51)

No.

[Speaker 6] (5:48:51 - 5:48:53)

And then the desire to want it.

[Speaker 1] (5:48:53 - 5:49:02)

But if the knowing is acknowledged, the knowing is suddenly, you notice that there's a knowing, then it deepens by itself.

[Speaker 2] (5:49:07 - 5:49:08)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (5:49:10 - 5:49:13)

All right. The microphone is traveling there.

[Speaker 5] (5:49:29 - 5:49:29)

Hello?

[Speaker 2] (5:49:30 - 5:49:30)

Yes.

[Speaker 5] (5:49:31 - 5:50:50)

Well, I sent something to you that I woke up at 3 o'clock in the morning yesterday before the bells went off. And just some thoughts came into my head, and I wrote them down, and I sent them to you yesterday. And I'd like to read it to you before we end the session.

I just call it with you. When time has ceased its wheels turning, and that space between the breath of in and out has become my bed, you were there to see me go. A smile so warm it filled my heart fully, and eyes that would call my soul to play.

Your kindness keeping safe the joy I treasured till now when I become all that ever was joy. Oh, greatness, thanks be, you are my servant of sweetness, my bearer of warm tidings, with wood from the bodha tree that has carved this space in my heart. For leaving on this day has caused me no sorrow, for you who stayed, that clear bell ringing, this way, this way.

Thank you so much for everything.

[Speaker 1] (5:50:51 - 5:51:00)

Thank you. Beautiful. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 4] (5:51:10 - 5:51:49)

Eckhart, could you tell some words about prayer? In my experience, when I struggle in mind stream and non-acceptance of suffering, when I remember that God can do the work, that I cannot do it, it puts me in an open heart, and I feel like that prayer, to pray God, can be very helpful.

[Speaker 2] (5:51:51 - 5:51:52)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (5:51:57 - 6:01:05)

For many people, of course, prayer is asking for something or wanting something, but we talk now about a different, a deeper kind of prayer, where you're not making demands, seeking some kind of fulfillment, adding something to me, give me that, give me that. So we talk about a different kind of prayer that is also can be a very powerful pointer that you use for yourself to point to the surrendered state, which is the non-dualistic, the non-dual state. So the dual, which still exists whenever you pray, there is still a sense of duality between me and God.

And I'm not saying do not pray. There is a place for that. The dual can take you into the non-dual, if it is a pointer.

So use prayer, mantras also can be helpful. They are, again, only a signpost to take you into that state, expressions of openness, of surrender, of not demanding. So whatever words come to you, they can take you to the edge.

There's a whole book, which I like it very much, The Course in Miracles that was channeled. It is a book of spiritual teaching. And that the whole book, almost the entire book, is written within the dimensions of duality.

It's always you address God. You even call God He in that book. This is the old way.

God is seen as masculine. And so it has the limitations of all that, the limitations of form. But that is not usually what I teach, because this teaching is the non-dual teaching.

But for many people it is helpful, for those who feel drawn to it, a text like that, it meets you where you are. It comes to you, and you inhabit a world of duality, and it starts with a duality of you and God. And gradually, through the lessons, it's a little bit like a psychiatrist who joins the patient, instead of rejecting the delusion of the patient, and saying, no, you are not Napoleon.

This is silly. Just get this out of your mind. And then some psychiatrists have tried to accept the reality of the patient, and saying, okay, so that's who you are.

And then you meet. Suddenly there is a meeting. You meet the patient in his delusion.

Ultimately, duality of you and God is the last delusion. Delusion. Beautiful delusion.

Beautiful. So the psychiatrist joins the patient, and then suddenly they can talk. And from there it can happen that the psychologist takes the patient by the hand, metaphorically speaking, and they walk out of that delusion together.

But first he had to meet him there. So certain texts or teachings, there are some that seem to move within the realm of duality, only to take you out of it. So they are like the psychiatrist who meets you in the realm of duality in order to reach you.

So many people are reached in that way. They would not yet be ready, perhaps, to listen to this teaching. And so they are reached.

And at the end of the Course in Miracles, he says, you move into non-duality. Very slowly, very subtly, you move into that. So this teaching, again, is a more direct non-dual.

But if you still need the duality, use that wisely, simply as a pointer. So that... And after prayer, move into the stillness.

Whatever prayer it is, let the prayer, let there be a stillness after the prayer has been uttered. Whatever it may be, let go into stillness from there. And the stillness is the realm of the non-dual.

But prayer can point you there. Beautiful. The whole teaching here is a pointer, too.

So as long as you feel you love it, you need it, you can use that wisely. It's beautiful. And then observe the silence after you have uttered the prayer.

So... Many still in this world need to be reached in that way. And then they come, and then they are maybe ready to listen to this teaching.

And even this teaching, there are certain things that I don't say because it would be meaningless to you. This comes as realization, your own realization. But there's nothing important here that has been omitted.

There's nothing that you need to know that I haven't given you for liberation. Nothing has been withheld as far as liberation, the possibility of liberation is concerned. Absolutely nothing.

Now we need to meet those of you or some of you face to face as a brief meeting. The way we usually hug is that people come up, we stand face to face, look at each other, and there's a hug. This time, for those of you who want it, others can just stay and sit as part of the beautiful meditation.

And we simply here stand face to face in the sacred encounter, and then at the end I will greet you in this beautiful greeting that is used in India that acknowledges that you are God in your essence, no matter what the outer form is. But before we do that, since we listened to a lot of music yesterday, I'd like to listen to just one more piece of music, and this is interesting. All the devotional music that we listened to yesterday, of course, arose from India with so much spirituality.

Now there are things that arise that are devotional and point to the truth that even arise in the West. And it's a wonderful thing to see that those things, just as spiritual teachers now are arising in the West, because there is a transformation of consciousness, even beautiful, sacred, devotional songs and music are also arising now in the West. So it's wonderful.

We have that. Many of you know it. Sometimes this singer, Kirtana, comes to talks that we have and sings there.

And maybe we could just listen before we meet face to face. And this is a meditative listening listen to just one song of hers, Kirtana. Many of you may know it, but it's always fresh and new, because everything that comes from there is always fresh and new.

Who You Really Are. If we could just listen to that one song, it's only a few minutes. Who You Really Are by Kirtana.

[Speaker 3] (6:01:06 - 6:01:14)

Could there be more Up a little. To this life we call mine

[Speaker 1] (6:01:14 - 6:01:17)

Could there be more to this life we call mine

[Speaker 3] (6:01:17 - 6:03:49)

Than in journey through space For a storyline More to life Than the body can sense Than the mind can conclude From experience As who we are Begin with breath Depend on form Or end with death Strip away these rules, these names And tell me what remains Measure success As we accrue Or the bonds that we form Or the deeds we do These too shall pass It's hard as we try To hold on to the form For we'll die Inherent in this dance of form Is the chance to see What's yet unborn And the choice to throw this chance away And be caught up in the play

[Speaker 2] (6:03:51 - 6:04:01)

Who we think we are Who we think we are

[Speaker 3] (6:04:12 - 6:08:24)

This is your lifetime It could end at any time Where is your attention?

Where is your prayer? Where is your song? In fortunate life Comes a call to be free From the cycle of bondage Misidentity Wake from the dream Finally reap the truth of one's being Before the body dies So before the final scene is passed See the scream on which it's cast See what's seamless to me and you And then you will see Who we really are Who we think we are Where is your attention?

[Speaker 2] (6:08:30 - 6:12:22)

Where is your prayer? Where is your song? In fortunate life Comes a call to be free From the cycle of bondage Misidentity Wake from the dream Get me Get me But I Get me Get me But I can't Get me Who is Get me Get me Get me But I But I can't Get me Get me Get me But I But I can't Get me

[Speaker 1] (6:12:39 - 7:08:43)

When you listen to this kind of music and are very alert you can notice a sound at the point where it ceases the flute, the sound of the flute and then it dissolves there's a little point where the sound comes to an end and weakens and then disappears altogether so if you listen to this kind of music with complete attention that's a particularly beautiful point because that's where the manifested merges with the unmanifested the sound dies and so and with the master sometimes that's a very subtle thing to be to allow the sound because the masters don't they allow they allow the consciousness to play the instrument through them and so there's a very subtle movement towards cessation the sound weakens for a very short instant and then nothing so it's the interplay between almost something and nothing and that's your entire life talking about music there's a beautiful poem I believe it's by Hafiz the poet and he says about himself I am a hole in a flute that the Christ's breath moves through listen to this music note that he didn't say I am a flute that Christ plays, that's nice too but no, I'm a hole in the flute and that's the same with all spiritual teaching it arises in that way and you come to realize that you also are a hole in the flute and perhaps before you thought you were the flute and before that you thought you were the player of the flute and yet you are all these things also this is the last session of the retreat not that that means very much only the form we may look at a few written questions today but always at retreats and so on there are more questions than one could get through although I keep them all one day you may see the question that wasn't answered here in a book answered, by then you won't need the answer anymore and you may have forgotten that you asked it because in a way you didn't the human mind asks questions and a few questions are helpful pointers other questions take you into speculative regions some questions are helpful other questions could be distractions but all questions are interesting I like reading them now you may find if your question is not answered here that you may not have known it before that you may have a personal relationship with your question you may feel why didn't he answer my question it was so good and why did he answer all those there were such silly questions that he answered and mine he didn't mine, he didn't answer mine and then you feel diminished in your sense of self or you feel reactive angry with me which is designed to strengthen your sense of self or combat the diminishment and so we talked about the deeper sense of reincarnation and so it means you reincarnated into your question and that means your sense of self became entangled in a thought because the question is a thought so the sense of me, self, identity became entangled in the form of that thought and you derived some sense of selfhood from that and you may also derive it if a question is answered and maybe I said this is a good question oh I asked a good question I'm not talking about any particular person here because I'm simply this is how the mind works so if this happens to you and there is a sense of self in your question it is more important more useful far more vital to observe that in yourself than to receive an answer you learn much more from that inner observation than from any answer you could get we in this last session we are moving to this point where we allow questions to subside and we could also observe the inner impulse to ask more know more and watch that Ramana Maharshi was a great master although he did answer certain questions beautifully but many questions he didn't answer there were far more questions he didn't answer than he answered probably answered 5% of questions that people asked him and so most questions were met with silence stillness greater than any answer could be and then you learn something about attachment to a form and to a thought as a me a very subtle temporary form of me so we allow these silent spaces here we don't need to fill them with another question although I may shuffle some papers we allow the mind may come in when we have a silent space now and say this is my chance get your question in there now before it's too late it's always nice to have a funny question too so here's a funny, slightly funny I find some people get on my nerves without any particular reason and although I do some serious surrendering and being present they still get on my nerves on top of it I can't get my eyes off them it's almost as though I love hating them is there any redemption for me? and by the way where did you get those fabulous sounding bells?

the bells were given to me a few years ago I may have had them for 7 years or 8 years and I've seen somebody the Dalai Lama gave them to somebody who then had them for a few years and then they were passed on to me to be used in here otherwise the person knew they were used for this purpose so it was beautiful to let go of that gift it's rare, the sound is of a very rare purity so the people that get on your nerves that's an aspect of how the ego keeps itself going critical complaining, judging and then it loves that it loves those states and all you have to do here is observe that in yourself observe the people observe the reaction observe the addiction almost addiction to those reactive states observe them in yourself and from this the slightly humorous note of this question makes me feel that there's already some sense of distance from it because when you begin to observe those patterns in yourself they don't want to let go of a resentment, a reaction a grievance and get in there and hang on and you begin to observe it that means there's spaciousness around it quite often at some point you begin to smile and you see how like a dog that won't let go of the bone you won't let go of that grievance or that reaction or that resentment now the dog although the dog of course lives beautifully presence is a different matter it's extremely rare for a dog if it ever happens to have spaciousness around a bone maybe a very old dog and so that dog can then say I have transcended and perhaps when you look into the eyes of a very old dog there's some distance there some almost wisdom dog wisdom arising however most animals have to act according to their form whatever corresponds to the form and there's very rare that there's any spaciousness around that but humans for many thousands of years have been the same no spaciousness, totally conditioned and now that possibility is there to transcend the conditioning which does not immediately mean to exterminate the conditioning the conditioning then weakens so just watch yourself getting irritated and enjoy it rather than thinking I'm not perfect I'm far from perfect I need to achieve a completely different state this is not the state of perfection, of enlightenment that's a projection of the mind a state to be achieved any state will do if you only allow it it's enough when insights come when I feel connectedness with you teaching here and with other spiritual teachings a sometimes overwhelming need to cry rises in me why not joy, bliss is this identification with the pain body maybe it is joy why label it at all let that be let the tears come I cry not often but it happens and I don't know what label to attach to it it's not sadness, it's not pain it's more like joy but it never even occurred to me to ask myself, what is that it was beautiful to simply allow that when I listened to the song there were some tears this morning I didn't ask myself, why am I crying what label do I attach to these tears it was beautiful to simply allow without the need to find some position with regards to them adopt some mental perspective on them and if you don't adopt a mental perspective deep down it's all joy it's a beautiful thing not to label states that arise anymore if that doesn't, it's not possible then just recognize a label as a label and then it doesn't overpower you so you can be in that state of allowing no need to call it good or bad I want it, don't want it, it's here how will this happen to us what has happened to you when will we be fully realized the answer to that is the last answer in the book The Power of Now which is when you no longer need to ask that question because even that question is an obstacle put there by the mind and is a way of not fully accepting this because if ego gives superiority complex is inferiority complex being opposite preferable to superiority complex inferiority complex might look like ego getting lesser but it's not the case it's just as strong in both cases you have a mental image of yourself and patterns associated with that image inferiority complex means not as good as superiority complex means better than both are mental identifications with conceptual sense of self and the superiority ego the superior ego has underneath its apparent superiority the underlying fear of not as good as and the inferior ego despite its apparent sense of inferiority has an underlying desire to be more than greater than, bigger than just waiting so in either case you're trapped in mind and how to get out of that you know that already pay attention to this to what is surrender to this moment the end I've said it before but I have to say it again because it's easy to it's the end of conditioning or egoic conditioning whether it's superiority complex or inferiority whatever it may be most people actually move between the two maybe this is a slightly speculative question but the answer can be short the probability of intelligent life on other planets outside our solar system is generally accepted after all it is a conceit to think we are the only form of intelligent life in the cosmos assuming there are other forms of this intelligent life elsewhere would they also be a part of this supreme consciousness or be enlightened or working towards enlightenment as we are in this case under your guidance as we are doing well any form this is the one principle of liberation which surely because as above so below everything is reflected it applies to the entire life of form no matter where it cannot not apply to that so any wherever consciousness appears in the disguise of forms consciousness will also be awakening out of that play out of that disguise so wherever it may be it will be the same the awakening of consciousness out of the dream of form of matter must be the same anywhere no matter how distant the galaxy may be and I would say it happens simultaneously here and in many other parts of the cosmos one could say the entire cosmos is awakening out of that dream and now don't believe that this is the ultimate truth that I'm telling you, it's only a little pointer an approximation, a distant approximation or helpful as that not the final explanation I cannot give a final explanation of the cosmos by making sounds, it's not possible so treat any words with care the entire cosmos must be awakening otherwise we would not be awakening as above so below so this is a cosmic event that is happening here and it might look like a person becoming free of suffering and unhappiness on a personal level but it goes far beyond that and who knows perhaps there are some visitors in a non-human non-visible form in this room listening in to the teaching maybe technologically incredibly advanced and yet they come to this primitive planet because they hear the possibility of liberation and so on we could continue talking about this or write books about it can you assume the heavenly pleasure we have been feeling in your valuable presence and how we will be feeling after we depart in which way and how we can fully carry that peace and completeness till it blends with our life I wish the world was full of Eckharts it would have made realization easier and faster with regards at your feet the answer to this if it is a question maybe here last night I experienced poignant sadness I allowed this sadness and observed it with my presence the first part of the sadness was due to the end of the teaching until I realized that you have introduced me to the eternal teacher within me and I felt peace the second part of the sadness was in leaving my dear friend and teacher Eckhart until I realized that a part of you will always reside in my heart and I felt gratitude a part of not just a part of me but the whole is in your heart as yourself and this morning when I met many of you face to face I was meeting myself different forms but it's always myself so I know you very well without needing to know very much about you there is an enormous difference to the mind when the mind says I know you what the mind means is I know a lot about you and this is different when I know you not through mind I may not know anything about you and whatever I know about you isn't very important because the about means it concerns the world of form it concerns your past it concerns your story it concerns the content of your mind it concerns your conditioning that's all about but it's not you so there is this beauty and of course people believe that when they know about they know, they don't there are innumerable people living together as couples who don't know each other because they don't know themselves you cannot know anybody else except through knowing yourself and it is not through thought of course that you can know anyone all you can know through thought is about and that doesn't only apply to human beings it applies to anything that you have knowledge about nature, plants, the world any aspect of the world of form is knowledge about it's form knowledge not essence form knowledge always has a sense of separateness to it because it's known through concepts which is more form form knowledge has its place occasionally it's helpful occasionally it's needed to be trapped in form knowledge is a dreadful form of bondage not knowing anything beyond form knowledge is bondage no matter how much how knowledgeable you are about things about people so form knowledge needs to be balanced with the essence of knowing which is not through thought not through mind which only arises when the mind subsides and of course in this world so far we haven't had this balance everybody is lost in form knowledge schools that's all they teach so one could say they teach everything except the one thing that truly matters and at universities they know about everything proliferation of knowledge and increasing specialization so that PhDs are now written about a strand of hair it gets narrower and narrower the area of specialization so the mind is moving into greater and greater fragmentation and you can have people in the same field whatever it may be biology and that's now subdivided into little areas fields and so people go through these systems become conditioned a good friend of mine at university graduate school was writing a PhD on the inner ear of the field mouse and that is three years or four years of intensive research and study and a huge volume and I'm not saying this is bad but this is how much fragmentation we have gone and there is a great longing in humans for truth for true knowing especially strong now in societies that have moved very much into fragmentation and proliferation of both mind and things the proliferation of things in the highly developed world accompanies the proliferation of mind so many things everywhere so here we are concerned with something that perhaps at some point as more humans become conscious the main subject at school will be this what we have been dealing with this week it will be the most natural thing that will be the central core of every curriculum at school around which all the others revolve and then it's fine acknowledge and honor this field of external silence and inner stillness it's enough to notice it and then you honor it how could this leave you when you leave here you don't really leave anywhere just changing sense perceptions around you like a stage set you know in some theaters so that they don't have to change the scenery the stage moves it has already prepared the stage set for the next act and so the whole stage moves around and suddenly you find yourself in different scenery nothing has changed and this will happen to you of course when you leave here the scenery changes suddenly of course it's now always now it's actually the most enjoyable thing to allow the scenery to change to allow the impermanent nature of all things the continuous flux the short-lived nature of all experiences so fleeting and allow it see it and I mentioned it briefly before a few days ago allowing it, seeing it they go together and they imply that there is something that is beyond time change birth and death eternal the simple fact that you can see the impermanent nature of all phenomena and all forms that you can know it and see it not through mind by calling it this or that but simply see it means there is something that is beyond if there were nothing beyond you wouldn't see it I gave the example before if the entire world were green the color green would not exist there must be something that is not green for you to see green there must be something that is not subject to impermanence for you to recognize the fact of impermanence that's the seeing that's the consciousness the unconditioned that sees without calling it anything that is the eternal still presence that sees and that's why Buddhist monks in some countries visit morgues where dead bodies are kept and sit there for a few hours watching the dead bodies they are contemplating impermanence from a western point of view it's insane, what are they doing there? but there's deep wisdom in that the contemplation of impermanence and the greatest way in which you contemplate impermanence is to contemplate death as it arises, it always arises sooner or later, in the now some form of it the end of this retreat is a form of death it's beautiful every end, every farewell is a little tiny death that's why people have that need to say see you soon because there's a little death here so we must make sure that this is not final but you just allow it I don't say at retreat see you at the next retreat I'm very happy not to see you if you don't need to come beautiful, if I see you it's beautiful too don't be long, see you next time I will ring my fabulous bells and it's a call to presence to awakening out of mind blessings to you on your journey through space and time and more importantly your journey into the now ever more deeply into the now the timeless and that statement already contains a little paradox and that's how it is

[Speaker 2] (7:09:30 - 7:12:36)

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[Speaker 1] (0:08 - 12:57)

Welcome, we are settling into this moment, leaving behind the nervous energy of the city, which is very easy to absorb and carry around with you and then you become part of it. It may not be quite as nervous as New York or Hong Kong, but it's nervous enough. The location, it's beautiful, the room, the space.

The most important thing about any room is not what you see, but what you don't see, it's the space. That applies to yourself also. But the location, I didn't choose it, it just happened.

It's important, significant. Right in the middle of the old structures of our society, there's Whitehall, Westminster Abbey, Parliament. And they don't realize that in the midst of this, right here, a new consciousness arises out of the old.

And that's the larger context of our gathering this afternoon, the arising of a new human consciousness. Now, you don't need to believe that for this to work for you. You might say, I don't believe it's arising.

Nevermind, you are here, that's all that matters. Now, it seems that we are going to spend this afternoon together. And when I say that, that's already not totally true.

It's true in a conventional sense, in relative terms. Yes, of course, we are spending the afternoon together. In absolute terms, there is no afternoon, except in your mind as a thought form.

Afternoon is ultimately no more than a thought form in your mind. You're projecting forward, and you call it the afternoon. So in absolute terms, we are not spending the afternoon together.

We are only together here at this moment. Because when it's three o'clock, it'll be this moment. When it's four o'clock, it'll be this moment.

When it's five o'clock, it'll be this moment. The one thing almost everybody ignores. And so we are becoming acquainted here with a level of consciousness that we could call timeless, where the usual structures of the human mind are not operating anymore.

That you don't need to understand these words. Don't try to figure out what they mean. Just let them sink in.

Something from within responds. You already know all this. You are being reminded.

If you are new to this, I'd like to just point out, this is not a lecture. As you can see, the speaker has not prepared anything. No clipboard or lecture notes or program.

And it's not a workshop either. So if you expect a lecture or workshop, you would be disappointed. It's called an intensive.

Humans like to attach names to things, so we had to find a name. It's called an intensive. Now, you might ask, what could there possibly intensive about a man sitting on a chair and people listening?

What's intensive about that? Perhaps you can understand intensive if we were doing a workout for three hours, physically, energetically. That's an intensive, and then you feel you have achieved something.

You can understand it on that level. Not that there's anything wrong with workouts. They can take you into presence too.

Or if we were doing emotional work here, everybody going through weeping and screaming and having one catharsis after another, that could be called an intensive too, but it's unlikely to happen here either. It could, if it happens to one or two people, that's fine. And not that there's anything wrong with emotional work.

It has its place, and that also can take you into the state of consciousness, of presence, if you go into the emotion and through it. But that's not what we're doing here either. And then an intensive could be mental work.

We could be doing Sudoku all afternoon long, becoming more and more complex. Let's work that out. Or highly complex philosophical problems about the nature of the universe.

Let's try to understand all the nature of the human being, the complex makeup of a human being. That would all be, on the mental level, could be very intensive. Not that there's anything wrong with the mental level.

That also could take you, because eventually you get so exhausted that the mind stops. So if it's not physical, it's not emotional, it's not mental, although these three levels could occasionally arise in you. Of course, the mind will do say whatever it says while you sit here.

The body may go through this or that, and the emotions may arise and subside. That's fine. But that is not why this is an intensive.

It's not an intensive on that level. The intensity is the consciousness that arises. And the language, we don't even have a word for it in our language, this fine energy that arises here as we sit here together, which sometimes we call presence, which we could call stillness, which we could call pure awareness.

That is why you're here, for this to arise in you. So it is for you to tune into that energy field that arises here. It requires a certain alertness.

And you may find that occasionally your mind stops thinking. That's where we want to get to. And yet, you don't fall asleep.

Well, some of you may fall asleep. But that is not the worst defense mechanism against the new consciousness, because even if you fall asleep, a little bit will seep in, and maybe next year, suddenly it's there. There are other ways in which the habitual mind patterns in you try to come up and interfere with this moment.

I'm pointing out a few, just so that you recognize them when they arise. Especially helpful, perhaps, for people who haven't been to any of these talks, intensives. Boredom.

Boredom. Now, what is boredom? Boredom is the stream of thinking is not receiving enough stimulus.

So it gets restless, looking for something to absorb, and not finding it. That's the frustration. And that's boredom.

Now, you may notice in yourself, or the person sitting next to you, but most importantly, in yourself, you start losing the alertness, and perhaps the mind takes you away completely from here and now, and you start thinking about your problems. Tonight's dinner, where you have to go, what you did, what you're going to do. You may find a restlessness coming in.

You may find your legs start twitching or moving. You're not here anymore. This is a normal human condition.

If a dog did it, we would take him to the vet. But for humans, it's normal. And if that happens, observe it in yourself, and then say, oh, there's my leg twitching, shaking.

And you can then feel the energy that's behind that. Another defense mechanism could be anger in certain people in whom anger is more or less habitual.

[Speaker 5] (12:59 - 13:03)

And so the mind says, come on, get on with it. What are you talking about?

[Speaker 1] (13:16 - 2:04:53)

So whatever arises, as we sit here, if you can acknowledge that that's what's arising, then it doesn't have you in its power. Whatever thoughts come up, emotions come up, physical energy moving through, if you just be there as the space for whatever arises, it doesn't control you anymore. So you don't push it away.

You say, this is what is. And so gradually, we disidentify from the movement of thought that most people are totally overpowered by. We disidentify also from the emotions that go with these thoughts.

Disidentify, there's no repression. It's just know it's there, that is. If you can sit here and actually enjoy being here and listening, that enjoyment comes from the deep place within you.

That means you are connected beyond the person to that deeper dimension of consciousness. That's all that's needed. If you're not connected, it's hard to sit here the whole afternoon.

If you're only here as a head, a thinking mind, it would become very frustrating. So for those of you who have come, who are still just the thinking mind and wondering what this is all about, I'd like to now to take us into, take us to the doorway of the new state of consciousness. That's why we are here.

The doorway is always on top of the head. On top of it, it says present moment, all there is. This is the key to what we sometimes call self-realization is to be present with what is now so that you are not alienated from the present moment.

You're not a stranger to the present moment. Now, a very simple, many of you know this, a very simple way of anchoring yourself in the present moment is body, inner body, not the outer body. What is the inner body?

The sense of aliveness as you sit here and to take some attention into that right now. And I will continue to remind you throughout to use that as an anchor for presence. For those of you who cannot yet feel the inner body, a very simple way of finding out what it means to indwell, so to speak, the body is to hold up your right or left hand, close your eyes and ask yourself, how can I know if my right hand is still there or not without moving my hand, without touching anything?

How can I know it? Now, not from memory, not saying, of course I know because I just saw it, that's why I know it's there. No, not like that.

To know it's there energetically, then you can feel the energy in the right hand or the left hand. And in the same way, you can feel the energy in the rest of your body. And that is inhabiting your body.

That is not yet the ultimate, but it is the doorway. The doorway into presence, the doorway into being, the doorway into a sense of self that is infinitely deeper than who you thought you were, an eye of infinite depths, and it's only the doorway feeling the inner body into it. So you have the, when you use the word eye, which to most people is the most important word in their vocabulary, because they use it all the time, I decided, I don't know, or me, or mine, or I.

Usually that refers to a sense of self that is made up of thought, a mind-made sense of self. It's your story, it's your problems, it's all the things that make up your life. It is the content of your mind.

So when people say I, what they're referring to is the content of their mind, the predominant patterns, thought patterns that continuously revolve in your mind. And so you identify with those thought patterns and they give you your sense of self. And those thought patterns create emotions.

Emotions are the energy of the body responding to the activity of the mind. So the two together then form the so-called I, and that is your person, your personal me. And that is what absorbs most people's attention most of the time.

I have to look after me, I have to worry about me. And if they worry about other people, it's because these other people are important to me. So you could worry about your children, or your parents, or this or that, but they're important to me.

So it's all to do with me. And the me is problematic. There's no me that is not problematic, very problematic.

And you can never get away from the problems that this I encounters, and not only encounters, but generates. The mind-made me generates problems. It generates drama and conflict.

It needs that to feel. It doesn't know that it needs to generate it. It says these things just happen.

Wherever you go, people are in conflict. Go to families. If you find a family that's not in conflict, either they are all enlightened, or they are no longer fully alive.

So if you come home, drink your beer, switch on the TV, watch for four hours, go to bed, then get up in the morning, go to work, no conflict anymore, but you're not alive anymore. And then go to, at work. It's surprising that they get anything done at all, because they're all fighting.

And then come larger collectives, countries, political parties, governments, go to parliament. And that's relatively benign, those things, conflict in parliament, but then there's a larger conflict of countries, warfare, and so on. The false sense of self, disconnected from the deeper level of your being, generates suffering, suffering, unconscious suffering.

I'm not the first person to say that. The Buddha said it 2,600 years ago, the self is suffering. It generates suffering.

To live like that, disconnected from the depths of your being, generates suffering. Now this we need to see clearly, because we need to recognize dysfunction, suffering, madness, whatever you call it, we need to recognize it for what it is. Now, very unconscious people, who are totally identified with their mind, to them, everything seems to happen.

Other people do it to me. They don't realize that they generate suffering for themselves, make themselves suffer, and for others. So if you look at your life on that level, every life is very problematic.

And now, so we are not here to solve the problems of the surface self. On that level alone, they cannot be solved, unless you go deeper. I don't remember who said it, it was Jung or Einstein or somebody like that, said the problems of mankind cannot be solved from the same level of consciousness that created those problems.

Now, when I say there is the possibility of waking up out of that unconscious pattern, and that waking up is not some new thing that you add to your mind. We are not here because I'm trying to convince you that you are more than the person, the personal self, because then I would be creating a new religion that would say, we believe in the transcendent self. Another thought form.

And of course, to identify with mental concepts is everybody's religion. Even if they say they have no religion, they do. It's their opinions and viewpoints and mental concepts that they cling to.

If you challenge them, they will quickly go, no, not that. So we are not creating some new belief. We investigating, but not analytically, experientially, a deeper level within yourself.

And we call, this can be called self-realization. And that is not that we find a new self that is bigger than the little self, not quite, because when we say that we find a new self that's bigger than the little me, we've created some new structure. That's why the Buddha, very wisely, used the word emptiness, but that's misleading, unfortunately, too.

But it doesn't force it. One good thing about it, it doesn't give you anything to believe in. Very clever.

It's the most uninspiring term any spiritual teacher has ever used. What are you trying to achieve? Emptiness.

What is your ultimate reality? Emptiness. Oh.

Oh. But this may also be why Buddhism remained a relatively sane religion compared to others, because you cannot very well say that my emptiness is better than yours. But what does that word actually refer to?

It refers to your essential being as formless, not form. The little me is form. The body has a physical form for a little while.

It gradually withers like a fruit. Fruit does it within a week, 10 days. You leave an apple for 10 days.

Or if you put a camera on it and speed up the film, it would be quite amazing. You see how the form is short-lived and you see the apple goes with us and it's. And the same thing happens to the human body, of course.

And for people who have been identified, who derived their sense of self partly from the physical form, that is suffering. One of the forms in which suffering arises. And then there is the psychological form that we've been talking about, the me, with its problems and its stories and its past and its projected future, which it hopes will complete my experience of myself.

The future will complete the me, is the unconscious belief. That's why everybody is much more interested in the future than the present moment, because they are looking for themselves in the next moment. If you're rushing to get somewhere or to get something done, you believe that that moment that you want to get to is more important than this moment.

And that moment will, when you get there, somehow it will free you for a deeper sense of aliveness. That's why you're trying to get there. Why else would you try to get to the future?

And does the future ever do that? No, it can't. Why not?

Because it's only a thought form. It never has no existence except in your head as a thought. Is that true?

It cannot not be true because otherwise, somebody would have experienced the future. Sometimes some great explorer, the first man to ever experience the future, which everybody wants to get to, but you can't. Because a future is only a thought form.

It's fine for practical purposes, moving about bodies from here to there, catching a train, meeting a person, nothing wrong with that. Beyond that, it's a dreadful, dreadful limitation to be trapped in that thought form and be dominated by that thought form and expecting some kind of release or fulfillment or some kind of addition, thinking when I get there, I will have added enough to myself and I can finally be complete. Whatever and what people want to add to their deficient sense of self, because every sense of self is deficient.

And condemned to remain deficient. I don't want to destroy anybody's illusion prematurely. The deficient sense of self remains deficient.

What people are trying to add to their deficient sense of self so that they can feel fully dwelling in the aliveness of being, being fully yourself, that's what people want, being fully yourself. They may express it in different ways, how they want to achieve that. On a very rudimentary level, perhaps you want to rob a bank or make enough money so that you can buy the things that will complete you.

And then other things, relationships, when I get this or that possession, this or that achievement, recognition from other people when I get that, or some sense of creating something that makes a difference in the world. Of course, that's a wonderful thing, but as long as you need it to fulfill yourself, it's much less likely to happen. And then comes the spiritual people.

They want to add some spiritual attainment and then complete themselves through that. Oh, I forgot to mention the intellectual people or so-called, they're reaching for some kind of knowledge. When I've absorbed enough knowledge, then I'll be full and complete.

Now, knowledge, of course, grows every day because they cut things into smaller and smaller slithers. And so you can't possibly absorb, if you're writing a PhD, you realize how small the area of your expertise has become. You're no longer writing about the plant.

You're writing about the leaf of the plant or a section of the leaf of the plant. You're not writing about the animal. You're writing about, as a friend of mine did a PhD on the inner ear.

He didn't write a PhD on the field mouse, but the inner ear of the field mouse. It took three years. And now he's the expert, but now there are other people who are even dividing that into smaller slithers, a section of the inner ear of the field mouse.

So, and this is when increased knowledge is getting us. It has its place for practical purposes, but as human beings, it's not really getting us anywhere. Otherwise, the enlightening transformations would come from the universities, but there's a whole arising, a whole new consciousness totally divorced from the universities.

They don't teach any of the things that really matter for transformation. Maybe they did once. I don't want to discourage anybody, young person from going to university, but just realize the relativity of it.

That's not the answer. And when you become a professor, you will be just as unhappy as you are now, if you're unhappy now. So the adding to, including this event, if you move within the old structures of your mind, you are hoping that this event will add something to who you are, which you can then take home.

If I were distributing a handout, everybody gets a folder of 15, 20 pages of things that we have gone through this afternoon, it would be very satisfying because it would symbolize what something you've added to it. Oh, yes, I am more now than I was before. Now, it's so frustrating to sit here if you are totally identified with their mind, because when you leave here now, you're not going to be more, hopefully less, because it's only by realizing the relativity of relative insignificance of the person that you begin to go beyond and say, okay, first we need to look at that.

Yes, it's very narrow to be trapped in that person. That's a strange word. It comes from Latin and it means mask.

But now if you look, so why did the Latin, the Romans call the person, and per is means through, and the S-O-N is related to the English word sound, because the actors in the theater would wear masks and the sound would come when they speak, would come through the mask. That's why a person is called a person. That's where the sound comes through, per-son.

Now, every person is claustrophobic. It's a claustrophobic sense of self. Even those you think, oh, they have everything.

They've got a private plane. They can go anywhere they like. They have a villa here and a country house there and this there, and so their life seems limitless.

And you say, oh, this person's life must be, has no limits. This is what I want, and this is what the papers write about. They say these people are the ones that are to be imitated, or maybe when you're lucky, you will get there too.

And if you meet them, you realize that they are unhappy and fearful, just like everybody else. Their advantage, however, the advantage that they have over ordinary people is that they have nothing else to look forward to. I have met people and they have realized that's not it.

They've realized the whole absurdity of fame, the emptiness of fame and ultimately wealth. And then suddenly they were ready to go deeper. And those that have achieved everything and are not ready to go deeper become more and more unhappy.

They take drugs, the alcohol, and so on. So how do we leave? I'm not saying that you need to eliminate the person, but find that which is deeper than how do we do that?

First of all, we realize the fallacy of believing that you can complete yourself through future. So you're not going to find yourself there because it doesn't exist, future. So all you end up with then is, oh, something that everybody always overlooks.

Which is now. Now, when I say now, for many people, it's an abstract concept. It's now, okay.

Okay, you've said it now. Now I want to know the next thing. Now, the now is not an abstract concept.

The now needs to become a felt reality for you. What we call the now. Let's look at this now and see if we can get deeper into it.

Now, this room, sense perceptions, visual sense perceptions, auditory sense perceptions, feeling, sensing sense perceptions. So you're here, you see, yes, that's now, okay. You're breathing, that's now, okay.

There's the body, you can feel the contact body with the chair, okay, that's now. These are all still in the perceptual realm, now. Then you go a little bit deeper into the body.

And you feel, yes, it's alive. Because you can feel a certain, if only a little bit, a certain sense of aliveness in the body now. So you can be aware of what you see, yes.

What you hear, yes. Outer body, inner aliveness, okay. Now, if your attention moves into those things, already you may realize you're not thinking that much anymore.

Because we are taking attention away from thinking and putting attention into sense perceptions now. But some thoughts may still occasionally come up, even as we do this practice, if we want to call it that. And you remain visual, auditory.

Sensing the body, feeling the outer body, the inner body. Thoughts, okay, little thought comes here or there. Maybe there's still some emotion, maybe not.

If there's an emotion, then you perceive that, the inner realm, that's there. Maybe there's a little pain. Maybe somebody here has a toothache, or the little toe hurts, or some larger discomfort.

That's also what is now, that is now. So the now, at first instance, consists of a number of things which you can be aware of simultaneously. Although when I talk about it, I talk about it, of course, this whole language works in succession.

But you can be aware simultaneously of the room, the sounds, the inner feeling, whatever is within. You're aware of all that now. So is that the now?

No, not yet. You're not there yet. Why not?

This is where confusion arises. People confuse the now with the content of the now. Now, of course, the content of the now changes continuously.

This room is full of people now. In a few hours, it'll be empty, and so on. Or you can feel a pain here or there now, and in an hour, there won't be a pain.

Or you feel an emotion, and then it won't be there. Or thoughts, that's the most changeable thing of all. One thing after another arising.

It is all now, but it's not the now. It's what happens within the now. Okay, okay.

Now, don't try to understand that through thinking. This is not the way. You can't.

We are approaching the now, getting close, because when you get into sense perception and inner perception, you are getting closer. There's the content of now. And how does all this arise?

Where does all that arise? The content, the thoughts, the emotions, the sense perceptions, all the things that happen, experiences, events, good, bad, come and go, irritating things, frustrating things. Oh, by the way, there are no irritating things.

There are only things, and you bring the irritation to them, but that's a different matter. If you call something irritating, you're confusing the inner and outer. Everything is neutral.

The irritation is the suffering that you bring to the event, and it's the resistance, and it's habitual, and it's not personal. It's a human condition, but we are going beyond that. Now, things fill the now, we could say.

But there is only, there's always only now, which means there must be something unchangeable about all that. There's something that is not subject to this continuous flux, the impermanence, the fleetingness of this world. There's something that's not part of this coming and going.

Now, the moment I give it a name, I have already falsified it, that even if I say something, I have already falsified it. It's so fine. The moment you give it some form, that's not it.

However, I'll continue to speak and give it form continuously reminding you, that's not it. So the words are only pointers to a reality within yourself, and it is vital that you find that, because if you don't find it in this lifetime, you're like a seed that has fallen from a tree and never sprouts. Now, that doesn't matter to the tree, and the universe is infinitely abundant, it's fine, because consciousness is evolving anyway, but from a limited viewpoint, it's a pity.

From the limited viewpoint of the person, it's a pity if you go through life and never find that which is not subject to decay, to impermanence, what the Buddhists sometimes call the unborn, the uncreated, the unmanifested. All negative terms, very wise, because the moment you give it a positive term, you've made it into content, something, and that's not it. It is the space for all content.

Okay, it is essentially you, this moment, visual, auditory, perceptions, thoughts, emotions. What else is there that is continuously overlooked? The space of this moment.

Without that, nothing would be here. And what is that space? Now, when you ask that question, the mind wants, again, to give it a form.

The Lao Tse, who wrote this profound book, Tao Te Ching, line one is, the Tao that can be spoken of is not the true Tao. Tao meaning the ultimate reality, whatever you want. But that which you speak of, this is the warning at the beginning of the book.

Nothing that I say about it is true in absolute terms because language is form. But as long as you know that, that's fine, because then you can use language as a little arrow pointing no more. It's not an explanation.

It's not it. When I now say, the now is essentially who you are at the deepest level. That doesn't make sense to the analytical mind.

But if you let that statement sink in and feel that you are the now in which all things happen, then it arises, the human drama, and subsides. Now, for a moment, there is, you can feel this, the moment the sound of the police car subsided, there was a moment when you could feel a spaciousness that before was filled by the sound. So something disappears, and for a moment, you can feel the stillness, the spaciousness more strongly.

That is the blessing of death, because when something dies, which means the form dissolves, could be just a sound. There's a sound, it comes, and then it dies. There's always an opening into the formless, into the space, into the stillness, whatever you want to call it.

At the moment of dissolving, something dissolves. There's the, that is the pure, true now. And that is, I'm now using a word, so don't confuse the word with it, consciousness, pure consciousness.

Okay, now forget the word, because the word, if it's not used only as a temporary pointer, becomes a wall. It separates you from the reality. So always remembering, words are only pointers.

That's not it. So don't say, now I know what the now is. It's consciousness, and I know what I am.

I am the now, yes. But on what level do you know it? Knowing it means living it now, being the now, now, not just in the head.

Now, a very practical way of knowing that you are the unchanging space in which the world comes and goes, the things of the world come and go, an easy way, the most direct, the most practical way to know that reality in yourself, and this is the primordial spiritual practice, is, and it's so simple, not to oppose internally the content of now, not having an inner opposition, fighting, resisting, condemning, running away from what arises in the space of now.

Then you come to a new way of living, which is the content of now you become friendly with as your spiritual practice, and that's a very rare thing for most people because their habitual state is they are unfriendly with the present moment, sometimes to a small degree, sometimes to an enormous degree, they are unfriendly with the present moment, they are not in alignment with whatever fills the now at this moment, so to be aware of yourself as space, the deeper space, which is stillness, a deep sense of aliveness, stillness, something that you, when you have that, feel, sense that yourself as space, the world can't shake you anymore, it becomes only of relative significance, and conditions that arise are no longer able to determine your inner state, you are no longer at the mercy of external conditions, things that happen, situations, where you are, who you are with, what this person is doing or saying to you, and you are no longer at the mercy of inner conditions, which also change continuously your thought processes, most people are victims of their mind, conditioned by their past, by their culture, by their society, and all the stuff, all the unconsciousness and the madness of our society has gone in here and has conditioned the way in which your mind works, it's a dreadful fate, conditioned to be mad, now, because everybody else is mad, of course, you don't know it, and then you look to the mad world to give you some sense of recognition, I want to be somebody in this mad world, succeed, so true success is knowing yourself as, not as something, that's a temporary form, it's fine, but as space for something, I am not what happens, I am the space in which it happens, I am not my thoughts, I am the space in which the thoughts happen, so the quickest way to that realization is to come to an inner alignment with what happens inside or outside, not to deny it, run away from it, resist it, that's the primordial spiritual practice, and that's the only way in which you differ from the great spiritual master, there is no master as an identity, nobody can say, I have now achieved, I am now the master, the spiritual master, it's another delusion, because you have another form identity, master means the density of the form, or the form loses its density, then the unconditioned space, the formless life, the formless one life, the pure consciousness, whatever little pointer works best for you, that's why I give you several, the formless one life, the consciousness comes through the form, and how does the density of the person, the mind made, the mental and also emotional density, how does that become transparent to the, it becomes transparent through living in a state of, I reluctantly use that word, surrender, surrender, surrender to what is. At this moment, only this, only this moment, and let's say your outer circumstances are not the best at this moment, you've just been thrown out of your home, you lost your job, you have nothing in your, no money in your pocket, and there you are, what do you do now, how can you not dislike this moment, easy, you're breathing, and you look around, sky, bird, people, cars, feel the inner body, and you become, you say yes to this moment, not to a story that your mind is inventing about this moment, people confuse that here, when I say yes to what is, people think, okay, then I have to say, okay, I have to accept that I'm a homeless person now, that I have no prospects, that I've thrown away all that I had, or people have taken it away from me, blah, blah, blah, stories, no, that's just a story, I'm ruined, I'm ruined, I've no nothing, no, you're not ruined, you have 150 pence in your pocket, that's the reality, I'm ruined is the mental addition to the reality, which is a story, so what is your mental addition to the reality of now, and you'd be amazed what people add to the simplicity of now, the baggage they put onto the simplicity of now with their stories, which sometimes they've carried over from 10 years, 20 years, 30 years of stories, inflicted on the now, or whoever you're meeting in the now, or what is happening in the now, and people carry that baggage, and life gets heavier and heavier, no, what do you need a story for? Come to the simplicity of this moment, just this, and then it's fine, so we are stepping out of story by accepting the simplicity of this moment, and that means you become aligned with the power of life itself, which is not stupid, which is because it's intelligence itself, it's out of it, the entire universe comes out of it, and you're aligned with that, and then suddenly, even the external life flows with much greater ease, but that's not why you're doing it, it's not a means to an end, it's an end in itself, surrender to the present moment as it is. If it's unpleasant, you don't need stories, but there is such a thing as unpleasantness because you could be cold and hungry, I experienced a short time of not having a home and sitting around on park benches, fortunately, I was already comfortable with the present moment, so it was extremely enjoyable, something that other people might have said, it's a dreadful experience, so you have always the two levels in you, the level of the person who goes about its business, but it's very easy to get trapped in that dimension only, so you're going to an important meeting, let's say, okay, you've graduated from being homeless, now you've got a good job, you're going to an important meeting, traveling and talking to the lawyers about the contracts and this and that, there's a big project happening, it's all so important and you get so absorbed in it, everything becomes absolutely important, what is relative only becomes absolute, you get lost in the world, and very soon you're in a state of resistance because you need to get there, the contract hasn't been done yet and there's a time limit, don't you know you should get yourself together? These days, everything is deadline, there's never anything that people ask me to do that doesn't have a deadline, but it has to be done by Monday, tomorrow, next week, but it has to be ready by we have deadlines, most deadlines I don't meet, so people don't even expect deadlines to be met anymore, when they tell me we have a deadline, they already know, and I suspect now they give me false deadlines, if they need it in four months time, they say I need it in two weeks, so the world which is the human mind and the things of the world can absorb you totally, so is it possible for you to always come back into the other dimension and that is a beautiful practice, so you're sitting in the office, this person is talking, that person is talking, or you're driving somewhere, the important meeting, and there's a moment when you feel your inner body, there's a moment when you look up at his tree, there's a moment when you breathe, take one conscious breath, there's a moment when you step out of that stream of the world into now, and that becomes so enjoyable that more and more often, that dimension is there in your life, stepping out of the story, and there you are in the lawyer's office discussing divorce proceedings with your husband or wife, and you're looking out of the window, and see there's a beautiful tree, but you don't even call it a beautiful tree, you just see, and there's not only a tree, you can feel the very presence in which the tree arises, and the lawyer is talking about this or that, and you look, and then you look back to the lawyer and say, okay, do what you have to do, and then you look back at, take a conscious breath, you're continuously stepping out of the stream that wants to absorb your attention completely into the space of now, so you're bringing space into your life, you're bringing space into your life also by accepting, this is surrender, accepting what is brings space, because by saying yes to what arises in the present moment, you become the space for it, which you already are, but didn't know, couldn't feel it, couldn't know that you are the space for the world, by saying yes to the things that arise now, you become powerful, but not in the sense of ego power, not powerful over somebody or something else, but in the sense that the power of life itself is now able to fully flow through you, the power of consciousness itself, because we have two movements in this world, in a human being, one is the outgoing movement into form, that has its place in everybody, that's the outgoing movement that wants to strengthen and preserve the form of me, and there's nothing wrong with that, if you know also the other dimension, which goes the opposite way, it's the need to be connected to the formless vastness of being, that is also in you, that is essentially who you are, so there is this, every human life needs to be a balance between form and the depths of formlessness, otherwise the whole world is lost in form, so the dimension which is the sacred dimension, which is the spiritual dimension, whatever you want to call it, to a large extent in the world, modern culture is completely lacking, it's dreadfully unbalanced, dreadfully unhappy, dreadfully insane, and if humans do not encounter this within themselves now, then simply these forms will no longer be useful in the universe, or the human race would, as if it had never happened, and then the wind blows over the planet, and the animals are suddenly very happy, and all the plants give a sigh of relief, oh wow, what was that? Could happen, doesn't have to happen, but it could happen, at the moment the humans are so heavy and unenlightened, it's a dreadful burden on the planet, it's a dreadful, no, the planet is only just, the planet, of course, is an organism, but also is an expression of the one consciousness, it has its own consciousness, which is an expression of the one consciousness, so it's only beginning to realize now what the humans are doing, because the planet is a little bit slower, and on the planetary scale, the humans have only been here for a few minutes, so the planet is only just going, what is going on here?

Oh, what can I do to get rid of these? Maybe I'll raise the temperature, have a little fever, that's how the human body gets rid of bacteria, fever, that might work, or should I make them infertile? That would be the easiest.

Now, it's a new, when you become free of the illusion that the conditions of the world, whatever happens to you, that they are here to satisfy you, that things should always go the way you want them to go, the conditions are here to bring me fulfillment, that's a big delusion. Conditions are here to challenge you, to frustrate you, and to wake you up. So instead of seeking better and better conditions, you accept the condition of this moment, and paradoxically, that's when very quickly, even the outer conditions that are not all that important, improve, because power of life moves through you fully now.

So that's a practice, the practice of surrender, in which you become very effective, you don't become ineffective through surrender, which is a misconception. Surrender says, right, this is what is, and I might as well say yes to it. I'm verbalizing it, but true surrender, there's no words, it's just, you look at the what is, you perceive, you look, you become the presence, there's a consciousness, you're aware of yourself as consciousness, that's the little secret of self-realization, space, stillness, consciousness.

And you can feel, feel is not the right word, there is no right word, in the background of all that happens, you can feel yourself as the presence in which it happens. We could call that there is a stillness in the background. It's not the stillness of being dead, it's a vitally alive stillness.

Here things happen, and there's the, you're no longer reactive, responsive, if something needs to be done, yes, but not reactive. So the question is, can you, at this moment, be aware, not only of all the things that are taking place right here, externally and internally, but can you also be aware of yourself as the awareness? In which these things happen, which is not a thought, nothing to do with thinking.

It's a sensing of an aliveness in the background of things happening in the foreground. And when I say things happening, that includes thoughts, thinking. Thinking happens in the foreground.

But when you are aware of the background as your very own presence, I say your own because it is essentially who you are, it is being. It is the I am, which is timeless. The timeless sense of being in the background.

I am, being, I am and being are the same word. To be, I am. First person singular of the verb to be, I am.

It is being. Can you sense the very being that you are, and on that level, you are one with all beings. This is a level of non-differentiation.

And it is that level from where true love comes, true compassion comes, only when you can feel yourself as the underlying I am presence. Now, you can only do it now, because it is now. It is the now in essence.

So that's where freedom lies. Freedom from conditions. Conditions will carry on, coming and going, some good, some bad.

And that's also where creativity comes in, because through that, the very intelligence that is the I am may manifest through you. That's secondary, secondary thing. What it manifests, I don't know.

It varies from person to person. What does not vary from person to person is that which underlies the person. That is where the oneness is of all beings.

And from there, when you sense that, you can look at a forest and sense, if you go to an ancient forest and sense the sacredness of the forest in yourself, the very presence that you are, you feel is the very same beingness that is the life in the trees. You feel the life, the one life, because you are the one life. And in whatever manifestation you see the one life, it manifests in billions of forms.

In whatever manifestation you see the one life, you recognize it as yourself. And only then can you sense the essence of the forest or the essence of an animal or the essence of another human being. And only then is there true connection and more than connection, a realization of oneness.

And it's only then that humans are no longer compelled to fight each other continuously. That's the madness. If you are cut off from that, everything is alien to you.

Everything is other because you only have the form. So there can be no love, there can be no empathy, there's no compassion, no softness. And when you look at a forest, you say, how much does it cost?

If we cut all the trees, what will we get? You can't see anything else. Forgive them for they know not what they do.

They don't know who they are. That's why they don't know what they do. So that is the fundamental dysfunction in humans.

And it's fine. But that too is part of the evolution of human consciousness. The shift in consciousness that is happening is a movement from predominantly thinking human beings to predominantly aware human beings.

For several thousand years, humans have been completely identified with the movement of think, of thought. That's how the ego came into being. Alienation, separation, all illusions come into being.

Since it happened, it was a necessary stage in the evolution and we are coming to the end of that stage. Because thinking keeps you trapped in form because every thought is a thought form. And most human beings are compulsive thinkers because their sense of identity is derived from the movement of thought.

They cannot let go of thinking because to them it would be equivalent to dying. Who am I if I do not keep reminding myself of myself and my story? And my life, my life, it's my life.

That's a big, it's a huge illusion, just those two words. How can you, I have, do I have life? Then there's life and there's me.

If I have life, there's life and me and I could lose it and then all that's left is me. No, that can't be right. I have life, that's what people think, they have a life because it's an illusion created by thought.

They're separating themselves from life and saying this is life and that's me. I am life. There's no life apart from I.

So since I am life, how can I lose life? I am a temporary expression in this form, fleeting, of the one formless life. So thinking is compulsive for most humans and it is an addiction.

The great addiction, much greater than drugs, is the addiction to thinking. Most of which is not only unnecessary but represents an enormous burden and heaviness in your life. So all of you who are still here are ready to make that shift, which for most people is gradual, for very few it's sudden, the shift from continuously having to think to experiencing gaps in the stream of thinking.

And I'm not talking necessarily about when you're meditating. Meditation is wonderful for those who feel drawn to meditation. Not everybody may feel drawn to meditation.

Main spiritual practice is daily life, even for meditators. No matter how good you are at meditation, three hours a day, four hours a day, don't need to move. Even the Buddhist monks are impressed when you can sit for two hours as some Westerners have enormous willpower.

Of course, that's not true meditation, but true meditation is, of course, wonderful. But the main spiritual practice is daily life as you go about your daily life. And it is there where you experiment with meeting situations rather than through thinking, through awareness, which means there are periods in your life when you're doing things without the movement of thought that accompanies either commenting on what you're doing or experiencing or some completely different matter.

While you're doing this, you're thinking about that. There are moments when you can move across the room, go to the bathroom, open the door, go to the washbasin, wash your hands, dry your hands, and not a single thought has crossed your mind. But you were not lost.

You were present with every movement, but it happened in a field of stillness. And if that's too long, then less. Putting some honey in the tea, no thought.

And the spoon goes back in the saucer. Or you stir, and while you stir your tea, there's a clear space of awareness. Why do you have to fill that with some kind of thinking?

It's not profitable. It doesn't help you in any way. If there is something that you need to apply thought to, then you apply thought.

But there's a vast amount of things that actually you can tackle and be with much greater intelligence if you do not apply thought, but you apply awareness. Awareness means you look at a situation. There's a misconception about what intelligence is because we equate intelligence with the movement of thought and the ability to, through thought, dissect situations, analyze, label it, remember the labels, see how labels are related to other labels, and so on.

There is a deeper intelligence out of which all creativity comes, which is non-conceptual. And that, in our educational system, is completely unrecognized. There are many children at school who operate, who would operate wonderfully on the non-conceptual level, and they are called slow or even stupid because they do not have a highly developed conceptual intelligence.

They have a deeper intelligence. That is where creativity comes from. Albert Einstein, after graduating, was the only person in his class who couldn't get a job.

He was a bit slow. Of course, to be deep, you have to be slow. But in our civilization, everything is fine.

What's the answer to this? What's that? Quick, give me an answer.

So you remain on the surface. You dance around on the surface of life. You never go any...

To go deeper, you have to come still for a moment, and there's an awareness, and you look at a situation. And then, if something needs to be said or done, the words come, but they come from a deeper level. Every therapist who is effective, or anybody who works with people, you can only be effective if you come from awareness.

If you bring awareness, it is not through thought. It's miraculous, even the most conceptual schools of therapy, let's say you're a psychoanalyst. You learn a lot of stuff about the human mind, and you apply it.

And often, those psychoanalysts will become effective after 10 or 15 or 20 years. They suddenly get tired of applying their... Continuously applying what they have learned, and they're simply with the patient in a space of awareness.

So we, it is our practice, as much as possible, think when you have to think, and see if you can be free of thinking as much as possible in your daily life, which is in many, many situations. And of course, one thing that helps enormously in being free of thinking is to say yes to the present moment, because a lot of the compulsion to think arises out of the denial of what is. And so through thought, you want to destroy or run away from, you judge the present moment, you run to get away from it, you create fantasy world so that you get away from this, and so on.

So that's already a great help, as you, that primordial practice that I described, becoming one with what is, so that you are the space, and the space is thoughtless, the space is awareness. This is the rising level of consciousness in you. So you have, on the surface, the mind created me.

And then you have something coming up from underneath, pushing, which is awareness, the new consciousness wants to come through. Sometimes it comes through the gaps in the thinking stream. Ah, and suddenly you feel more alive.

There's a peace, but an alive peace, alert, unburdened by the little me and its problems. Don't carry that around anymore. So your practice, when you're on the bus, in the tube, walking from here to there, doing this or that, just aware, but not thinking.

And it doesn't matter how long, the length doesn't matter, the frequency is more important. How often you allow a gap in the stream of thinking, and the gap doesn't need to be long, just shh. And so you become, it's like the density of mind lessens, because gaps are appearing in the mind.

And so you become actually more intelligent. We can call it, it's a title by a book by Krishnamurti, the awakening of intelligence. And really that's what it is.

True intelligence comes in, which is not the ability to solve IQ tests. That is a small aspect of intelligence, but not intelligence itself. Now, there may be some of you who are very good at IQ tests and to feel offended right now.

And that's fine, because perhaps some of your identity was built on the fact that you have a very high IQ. If that's the case, and you feel some inner, ah, that can't be right, then you observe that. I don't have that problem, because I have never undergone an IQ test, but I am absolutely sure the result would not be very good.

My mind just doesn't work that way. Yesterday I picked up, where I'm staying, my friend's house, there's a book on Sudoku. I picked it up, I looked at the simplest one at the very beginning for five minutes, completely meaningless, can't do it.

And the most beautiful thing is if you can meet other human beings, whether it's a brief encounter or a longer encounter, or especially in your relationship, predominantly through being aware, rather than think, relate through awareness rather than thinking. What does that look like in practice? Somebody comes to you and says something.

While you listen, there is this space. You're listening, you're bringing space to it. You're not preparing what you're going to say or commenting on what the other person is saying, or thinking about something totally different, or trying to get out what you want to get out and say, but simply be there as awareness, a space of awareness.

And there's a clarity. And this is where a human relationship deepens. There's no depth in relationship that are completely mind dominated.

They're all thinking. And then it's so easy to get drawn into that, especially when more than two humans come together, the mind energy starts working and you get drawn. It's like a stream that carries you along.

And then he said to them, oh, I can't believe, you know what he did then? Can't get out of it anymore. It's for you to represent, be there, and bring a different dimension to human interaction.

And that dimension is not some new thought. Of course, it's better to have a good thought than a bad thought, but go deeper and have no thought. And so awareness replaces thinking.

And where you still need to think, actually your thinking will be much more focused and powerful because you're not wasting the mental abilities in useless thinking. Now can become focused. So that is the practice of being free of mental noise.

Be there, and when you're aware, you are not a person anymore. You're only a person when you're dominated by thought because the person consists of thought. When you're aware, you're there as not a person, but a deeper presence.

And this is what the world needs. It doesn't need more clever persons. It doesn't need for you to become more knowledgeable or even better as persons.

Many persons have very good intentions. They say, I want to become a better person. Of course, that's better than wanting to become a worse person, but it doesn't quite work.

Many people who are trying to be good people often do bad things and say, how could I have done that? I wanted to be a good person. And I shouted at him again.

So it's not improving the person that you are, but going beyond the person. That's where the goodness, true goodness comes through you. And then you become compassionate towards yourself also and towards the limitations of your little person.

It's never going, as a person, you're not going to be perfect. There will be shortcomings, this or that. That's fine.

This, it's form. You have your, but the non-personal dimension is coming in more and more into your life. Some people who practice certain arts or crafts can be in the space of awareness in the moment of creativity.

Sportsmen sometimes who are very good, they're not thinking while they're engaged in hitting this ball or that ball, whatever it is. There's absolute presence. The moment thought comes in, it's lost.

I remember hearing an interview with the actor who fell from his horse and broke his leg. He broke his back and he died two or three years ago. He played Superman and he fell from his horse.

And he was saying, I lost the present moment for a moment. Some thought came in and the horse reacted to the thought and it threw him. He had to, he was in complete oneness with the horse until a thought interfered and that created the accident.

So when you bring awareness to a situation, you and the situation become one. There is a, and it's almost as if the solution, if there is a problem that you encounter, which is not a problem, I would say, but a challenge. Problem is mind-made and needs time.

Challenge is something that's happening now and you need to do something. That's true. If there is a challenge, you look at the situation.

Now, the look means more than look visually. It means awareness is brought to it. And there's the total space of that situation where the solution emerges out of the totality of the situation.

And sometimes when you bring awareness to the situation, the solution may not even come through you because you have brought the awareness, suddenly the situation solves itself or it becomes solved by some external agency. Very often this happens. So problems become perpetuated if you meet them through mind and react through mind.

So the practice then is to be with situations people, and initially with very simple things so that you can practice, smell a flower and don't say, oh, that smells good. Say nothing, think nothing, just be with the perception, be the perceiving consciousness. Whenever you, if you use public transport, wonderful opportunity instead of putting something on your ears that feed the mind with boom, boom, boom, boom or even reading, why not practice being there as the conscious presence, look at people.

I love looking at people and seeing the many human forms, the multiplicity of the human form. I love sitting in public places or being on a bus or tube and watch the multiplicity of the human form without any thought, you don't need to think, just watch. And you actually become a blessing in that particular place, wherever you happen to be because something emanates from you that is of a very different frequency than what the mind generates.

And that emanates, it cannot not affect others even if you have no actual contact through words with others it affects the space that you are in. And that's also where true healing lies. You can, you heal the space that is around you but not by thinking I am healing you, it happens by itself.

So you become a benign presence in this world rather than a heavy person with big, heavy... Now, the compulsive mind has been dominating humans for thousands of years. It's not going to go away voluntarily.

It's not going to say, okay, I won't bother you anymore. It is an energy movement that wants to carry on because it has a certain momentum and it's the momentum of millennia of thousands of years at least six or 7,000 years that people differ in how they see it. Let's say it's been going for 6,000 or more years, that's long enough.

And so it has a momentum and it will overpower you that momentum and it's not a, that's fine, it's the human mind. You will lose yourself in it again and again and then you wake up out of it again and again and back you are lost in this stream of thinking. If nothing else this afternoon, for many of you, perhaps even without knowing it, as you sit here, you experience moments of no thought.

Just, oh. And so you can, you take that into your daily life. If it is arising in you, otherwise it would make no sense.

If you were totally identified with mind, you would get very angry saying that you don't have to think all the time. How dare, what a liberation! Something happened to me many years ago and that's unusual in the sense that it happened very suddenly, whereas for most people it is a gradual process of becoming free when the mind kind of subsided.

It created so much suffering and something happened, something snapped and then the mind just went, the compulsive mind. And I woke up the next morning and everything was alive and peaceful and beautiful, even the traffic. And I didn't know why.

How can everything be so peaceful when I've spent the last few years in agony and anxiety and depression and suddenly it's peaceful? What happened? I didn't know what happened.

All I knew was suddenly everything is very alive and peaceful and beautiful. I was on top of a bus traveling along Oxford Street, which I was living in London at the time, and all the thousands of people, shoppers, everything was peaceful. They always moved about in a field of peace.

Beautiful. The underground, beautiful. Northern line, which they used to call, they used to call the misery line.

I don't know if it still is. It was beautiful, peaceful, wonderful. Just enjoyed sitting in the tube.

Then a year later, I looked at some books and visited some teachers and say, what is it all about? And one monk said to me, a Buddhist monk, well, what it all comes down to is really not thinking, that's Zen. And suddenly I realized, that's what happened, I'm not thinking anymore.

The mind had stopped, I didn't even know that the mind had stopped. All I experienced was peace because it comes from the being that's underneath the mind. And so I suddenly understood, oh, it's the cessation of compulsive thinking.

Of course, I was still doing some thinking, but my thinking had become reduced by about 85%. So that enormous burden of mental noise had dropped away. And so I understood now what the nature of this transformation is, whereas at first I just underwent the transformation without understanding it.

And now, many humans are ready now for this shift. Otherwise there would be no point in sitting here. You would have to go to a monastery for 10, 20, 30 years.

And even then, there's no guarantee that you would get it. That was the traditional way. Humanity as a whole, the readiness wasn't such that so many humans could be open to this.

Without undergoing through arduous, no, sorry. If you've been engaged in arduous spiritual practice for the past 20 years, don't feel offended. I do not want to invalidate your spiritual practice.

It all served a purpose because you're here now. But there are many who have not gone through arduous spiritual practices and are ready for it. Oh, well, that's a pity.

Man says, why? All this work for nothing. Maybe that's what Jesus meant as a parable about the laborers and some laborers work all day.

And then some come in the last hour and they work just for one hour and they get the same wage. So many humans are now ready for this shift because humanity needs to go through this shift if it's not going to self-annihilate. Well, self-annihilation is fine on a psychological level because that's what we are doing.

The person begins to dissolve, but not on a physical level. Freedom from, freedom, liberation is a term that is traditionally used in many traditions. Freedom, liberation, freedom from what?

It's freedom from compulsive thinking, which implies freedom from time because it's only time as we experience it is generated by compulsive thinking. It's a mind-made thing. And freedom from the false sense of self is also implied in that because the false sense of me is mind-generated.

So it's freedom from mind, is freedom from time, is freedom from self. And self, the false self, is a dreadful, curse and burden on humanity to carry that weight around with you. Will it, so for a time now you are a transitional being, most of you, some of you have already gone, you're virtually there, with perhaps occasional incursions of the old consciousness.

But for many, you are a transitional being, which is a very strange thing to be between two levels of consciousness. This is the shift. One day you're in the old, the next day you're in the new, and you shift even on one day, even in one hour.

You're present with everything and suddenly something comes in, pulls you back into stream of thinking. Particularly challenges difficult humans coming into your life. And of course, let's face it, most humans are difficult in the unenlightened state.

They're very problematic. And sooner or later, when two humans come together, some conflict arises, which can only ultimately be resolved by the arising of awareness. Otherwise this conflict will grow and proliferate.

As you know, it was Ram Dass who said, if you think you're so enlightened, spend a week with your parents. But that of course is a big test for many people. But spend a week with anybody is a big enough test.

Spend three days with anybody. Somebody said to me the other day that they experienced the first three days when people come together on holiday or visiting others, the first three days are okay. But then after on the fourth day, something happens and the conflict arises.

And that conflict would proliferate unless awareness dissolves it again, it will proliferate. And many friendships have ended when people went together on holiday. And if any of you have lived in communes, communal living, then you know how difficult, how challenging that is.

It's a wonderful challenge if it's used rightly, but then you see how hard it is to live with humans in a space together. I lived in a community once or twice and it was already easy because I had already embraced surrender. But otherwise, if I hadn't, it would have been dreadful.

Some humans are very unpredictable. There's the mood swings that come through whether what kind of mind stream they happen to be occupied by, enormous. There were some people in the community, often I was sitting at breakfast and I could hear somebody coming down the stairs and you never knew who would be coming.

I knew who that person was, but what mood was in it could be an angelic mood or monstrous mood. You never knew who was going to come down the stairs on that particular day. And all that had to be received in the space of aware presence in which many dysfunctions actually dissolved, even in others.

So you dissolve conflict. You dissolve dissonance simply by, not by doing anything, never by feeling I am dissolving it, simply by being the presence, by being there as presence. When you watch the news, it's easy to be reactive.

Of course, when you see certain politicians on the screen, it's easy to go, oh, he is such an idiot, shocker, maybe so unconscious. But even there, you can just be there and see it and be there as, and perhaps this would even affect the world situation although you're only watching it on the screen. You cannot not affect others.

Your state of consciousness affects others. Whoever has even the slightest arising awareness will be helped by the awareness that arises through you. I don't call it your awareness.

It's, it is only, there's only one awareness. It arises through you. No thought.

So now this is not to be confused with falling below thought, which is one way of escaping the dilemma of the human mind. Drugs will do that for you. Some drugs, alcohol will do that for you.

Some entertainment will do it for you. Or if you're getting very tired, you fall below thought and you feel a bit better because you're not tortured by the mind. Oh, that feels good.

Oh, I feel a bit more alive now. And the next step is then unconsciousness. This is not the way we are going when I say go beyond thinking.

You can fall below thinking or you can rise above thinking. We are rising above thinking. And when you rise above thinking, there's an alertness and a presence compared to which thinking is a dream-like state.

Compulsive thinking is like a dream. This is why traditionally, many spiritual traditions use the term awakening. You awaken out of incessant compulsive thinking and a me created by thinking.

So we rise above thinking. It is sometimes the case that when you rise above thinking, you're there for a while. And suddenly there's a pull and you go straight through the level of thinking where the humans into below thinking.

Meditators know this. They're meditating. Perhaps they're free of thinking.

And before they know it, they've fallen asleep. So you were above thinking and very quickly you go. And I've seen Buddhist monks, especially in the early morning meditation at 4.30, going like daily life is our practice. And it is possible that some questions may have arisen in some of you concerning the transformation. Now you're welcome to ask. There are microphones, but before you do, first of all, the essence does not lie in any answer to any question.

The essence is already here. So whether your question gets answered or not is secondary. There are different types of questions.

Some questions are helpful. They are alive. Other questions are simply produced by the human mind.

And if possible, ask questions that are alive rather than questions like, how does your teaching relate to the doctrine of this or that in the Buddhist school of this and that? Or what did you have for breakfast this morning? If it's a vital question, it's helpful to everybody.

That's always the case.

[Speaker 3] (2:04:54 - 2:05:16)

I'm interested in with children, when would you start talking about the power of now and how would you do that, especially if you feel that the child is very conceptual and perhaps not a future Einstein as you mentioned before?

[Speaker 1] (2:05:17 - 2:13:43)

Okay, thank you. Nowadays, many children, because of all the entertainment, the media, the video games, and so on, their mind gets stimulated into conceptual thinking at a very early age. And they lose touch with the depths of their being.

They're completely in the mind. And then they lose themselves in the screen. They play this game.

All the energy flows out, completely cut off from the rest of their body, cut off from nature, a dreadful thing for children not to be in contact with nature. If they have a dog, at least that's something. But to be totally devoid of contact with nature and live in an artificial man-made environment is dreadful for their development.

So the question is important. First of all, it's the essence in bringing children to this consciousness and they have it innately. It's still there in the child.

Even in a modern child, it's perhaps less covered up than in an adult. However, the main way to teach a child is the way in which you lead your life. It's how you bring awareness into situations when you talk to the child.

How do you listen to your child? First question. When the child speaks to you, are you there as a thinking entity, reactive thinking, or are you there as an aware presence that is simply complete?

Aware presence is open and you take in the words of the child. There comes the first teaching. You're not saying anything, but you're teaching by being present.

You teach by being aware. So how you act in the world at home, how you interact with your partner and with the child or the other children, that is an essential part of the teaching already before we even come to the point of what you can do actively to show your child. First, it's so when children, sometimes you'll hear little children cursing already.

Where do they learn this? At home. Or they get into temper tantrums.

Well, probably the parents do, and so they learn it. So the way you are at home is the main teaching that will already transmit itself. Then in addition to that, it's essential to bring the child to nature.

A very young child will be very inquisitive because the mind needs to absorb labels and concepts. That's a necessary stage. So there's a stage where the child asks, what's this?

What's that? What's that? That's a critical stage.

Yes, the child needs the label. That's such and such a bird, that's a tree, that's that, that's that. But the moment the child is given a label, the label has also become a barrier.

It's not when the child hears the name of the bird, somebody said it, I don't know, it might have been Krishnamurti. When you give the name of the bird to the child, the child will never see that bird again. That's putting it strongly in strong terms because it will now relate mainly to the bird through the label of whatever the bird is called or whatever it is.

So you have to be careful when you transmit language to the child, that the child does not become imprisoned in concepts and language. So one way of avoiding is, for example, it's a simple way of saying, I just, what's this? You say, you don't say, this is a bird.

You say, we call it bird. We call it an oak tree. And then instead of leaving it at that, you take the child attention directly to the thing and say, look at it, touch, look, see that?

And bring in spaces where the child is just looking and interacting without the concepts so that the child's mind does not become dominated by concepts. Keep the reality. Look, listen, there.

You bring, you point the child's attention away from the conceptual world so that the child stays in touch with the tangible, can still perceive directly instead of through concepts. So don't get trapped in concepts. Again, in some alternative schools, they are reluctant to teach a child to read and write too soon.

And I think they're very wise. Let the child experience first the world before you bring in all that. So that's one way of teaching the child.

And then come other ways of teaching. Bring the child's attention to breathing, bring in little gaps in the child's, simply by pointing out attention, be it, can you listen? Listen to the silence, listen to this pain body.

Most children also have pain bodies. And I recommend in a new hours, I talk about how to bring a child's attention to the child's emotional field so that the child isn't, so that an awareness grows of the emotional fluctuations in the child. So in case of the child's pain body, I recommend that you, after a pain body attack, you say to the child, yesterday when you had the temper tantrum, how did you feel then?

What was that? When it come, what does it feel like when it comes up? Does it have a color?

What would it look like? You find your own words. The essence, what I'm saying is, bring the child's awareness to it so that the child, there's a beginning awareness rather than an identification with it.

But always, whatever you do, your main teaching is yourself, not what you say or do to the child. If you embody awareness at home, the child will absorb that. Of course, you will have to counteract the enormous influence of the culture, a mad culture to a large extent, the school and so on and so on.

Also not realize the child has, don't react to whatever, whether the child is doing well at school or not is secondary. So you, some teachers are bringing it in. That's a good, but they are up against the educational establishment.

But some are bringing it in without making it an official part of the curriculum. They just bring in presence and they teach the children presence, to be present with their mind and so on. So don't let the children get lost in a world of concepts.

But first, of course, you will have to step out of the world of concepts yourself. The religion, everybody's religion. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (2:13:46 - 2:14:03)

One, two, can you hear me? Yeah, I just wanted to ask, how do you deal with grief? I'm just going through, I lost my mother, not long ago, and it's very painful.

[Speaker 1] (2:14:04 - 2:14:04)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:14:05 - 2:14:17)

Just wanted to know what is your, kind of, you know, what would be the way to deal with this loss?

[Speaker 6] (2:14:18 - 2:14:20)

Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (2:14:35 - 2:22:54)

Acceptance can be at two levels. One is the acceptance of, let's say, of death of a loved one. But that's very hard for most people, to accept death immediately as it happens.

It's very hard. So if you cannot accept that somebody has just passed away, and it is a very strange thing, somebody that has been part of your life for 40, 50, a parent. Both my parents passed away last year.

My mother in August, and my father in November. It's strange, they didn't even live together. So I also became acquainted with that.

Grief arises as a natural thing, when somebody close to you passes away, and you meet grief with acceptance, rather than thinking, I must become free of grief, experience, and accept that this is what you feel. But if possible, don't let it go into your mind so much, but put attention on what you feel. If you need to weep, you weep.

So rather than trying to get away from it, you embrace the grief, but you don't feed it. So there's a difference between allowing it and embracing it, and feeding it with your mind. So the mind may have stories about the past that you spent with that person, or how unfair it is, and how dreadful it is, or that you are now alone, or whatever the mind creates.

And that would feed the grief. But if you can take, and of course it helps if you have practiced being in the body, you can easily take your attention into an emotion. And you are with that emotion, and whether it is grief, or whether it is some other emotion like fear, which is many people are familiar with, and some people, many are familiar with fear on a daily basis, almost everybody.

Rather than thinking, how can I become free of grief? How can I become free of fear? No, this is, fear is there.

Feel it, and allow it to be there, because it is what is at this moment. Through completely allowing it as it is, another dimension arises very slowly. And that's very hard to describe what that dimension is, but the word that I use is there's space around the grief.

When you allow the grief, suddenly you notice there's grief and there's a certain spaciousness there, which comes through saying yes to what is. And that spaciousness is the unconditioned that arises. And in that spaciousness, there is great peace also.

When my father and my mother passed away, both instances, I wept a few times briefly. Came, and of course, as you know, grief comes in waves. Sometimes you're free for a few hours and then another wave of grief comes, and then you have to allow that.

I had a few very short waves of grief and the rest was surrender. And when grief came, I surrendered to the grief. And when the very, in both cases, I saw the body left behind of my mother and later the body left behind by my father.

And again, a very deep meditation. There was grief, but there was peace around and underneath it. So it's quite possible to be in the state of grief.

And if you allow it to also feel some peace beyond it, you can be weeping and yet not be totally shaken by it and still feel some peace beyond if you completely accept the grief. And then after a while, the healing sets in and peace remains. There can be great, death is always a tremendous challenge, but it's a great opportunity, whether it's your own death or somebody else's death.

I love to contemplate death. A very enormous revelation of deep peace I felt there was a strange moment when my father's coffin was led, there were some men that had ropes around it and then they tried to lower it into the grave. And the last moment they dropped it a few inches and it suddenly made a thump.

Boom. That moment was, there was grief and peace simultaneously. It seemed to be that some seem to say that's how insignificant every life really is.

That's the, it was the last, that last noise was so, such an impact on me. It was just, that thump was embodied the whole of impermanence of everything. But it was more than an, it was, every cell of my body could feel that thump and there were tears and underneath the tears, there was deep peace.

Because when you truly accept the fleetingness of every form, because we are all here for just a little while in this form, if you truly accept the fleetingness of form, there's always deep peace behind it. It takes you into a very deep peace. I love, for example, looking at old photos or very old films.

And then I often say, look at that. For example, a scene of people, a street scene in London in 1910 or whatever. I said, look at that.

They're all dead now. Or you watch a film and they all look so alive. And you look at each one of these actors, they're all dissolved.

They're all dissolved into nothingness. And in a few years, all of us here, we could take a photo now and in 60, 70 years, almost everybody will be gone. Well, I'll give you a bit more, 80 years.

And in many cases, probably sooner. If we took a photo and then somebody finds the photo in an antiquarian bookseller and says, oh, look at all these people. They're all dead now.

And there is when you also have to remember that soon you'll be dead too. So it's not that tragic because we're all following very soon.

[Speaker 4] (2:22:56 - 2:23:16)

You observed in nature that after a stressful event, ducks vigorously flap their wings a few times in order to raise surplus energy, thus preventing it from becoming trapped in their body and turning into negativity. How should we flap our wings? For example, after a car accident.

[Speaker 1] (2:23:16 - 2:34:30)

Okay, thank you. After a traumatic event, such as a car accident, some of the trauma may be contained in your body as a contraction. Sit down quietly and bring attention to it.

Feel the contraction, feel the contracted energy that is there in the body. And again, the key is always not wanting to get rid of it, but bring a yes to it, bring a yes to whatever it is that you're experiencing at this moment. That initiates the healing process.

So for humans who don't have wings to flap anymore, the key to dissolving stuck energy in the body, no matter what caused it, is to bring attention to it and allow it to be there. And through allowing, the space is there around it. It is the space that heals it and dissolves it.

So rather than you trying to heal it or dissolve it, bring the attitude of allowing it to that moment and allow the space to do the rest within you. So that applies also after you've had a fight, not necessarily a physical fight with your partner or conflict situation with another human being. After the event, you may still feel the energy of it inside your body.

And the key is to actually feel it. Rather, otherwise, if you don't feel it, conscious, bring conscious attention to it, the energy will use your mind. So the energy movement, which is the emotional energy of the interaction, is still present in you and it will rise into your thought processes and it will, the inner voice that is the thinker will be the voice of that emotion that's left over from the fight.

So the emotion will use your mind to keep itself going when you're not attentive. But if you bring attention to it directly, it cannot use your mind to keep itself going. Now the ducks, of course, are very lucky because they don't have a mind that keeps the energy of the fight going.

So all you have to do is flap their wings and then they don't remember the fight. Certainly not as a self-reference, like he did something to me. I won't forget that, what he did to me.

I'm never going to trust him again or whatever it is. But these are the human stories. So for ducks, it's easy.

For humans, they need to bring awareness, bring awareness to it, which is allowing this energy to be there. Feel it, but don't, if you feel it, you don't need to think it. Think about it, feel it.

And through that, it will gradually dissolve. Whatever you bring awareness to will dissolve in the awareness. Awareness is another word for which is presence.

As you know, I've wrote about it somewhere. I said, it is like a fire that consumes everything. So you bring your suffering into the space of awareness rather than thinking I shouldn't be suffering.

That creates a lot of suffering. If you think I shouldn't be suffering. But if you accept that this is what I feel at this moment, and bring awareness to it, something happens.

Acceptance is part of awareness. You cannot bring awareness if you don't accept it. There's a book called, it may be, I don't know whether it's a book called The Road Less Traveled.

I think that's the title, The Road Less Traveled. Now that book has a first sentence that is maybe the best in any book. And if you understand that sentence, you don't need to read the rest.

The first sentence says, life is difficult. And then it explains, but if you accept the fact that life is difficult, it's no longer difficult. It's not literal, but this is basically the essence of what it says.

But if you believe life should not be difficult, there should not be any problems. I should not have to suffer. Then you suffer a lot and it gets very difficult.

But if you accept, yes, life is difficult. There is suffering that arises from time to time. This is the human condition.

You accept. The transformation comes through acceptance. I never read that book.

I read the first two lines and I said, that's it. That's it. Thank you.

A little reminder now. You're not a person, but this is not something that you should believe in. But realize for yourself that apart from being a person, there's a deeper level to who you are, and that is consciousness or awareness.

Yes. So don't return to being a little person because every person is a little person. Even the big VIPs are little persons.

Use that, play with being a person, but don't get absorbed into being a person. Realize in your daily life that the essence of who you are is not in form, not the body that dissolves quickly, not the psychological form of me, not where you come from, your past history, or where you're hoping to go as a little me, which is only the grave, ultimately. Although the little me tries to know.

Mm-hmm. More and more, be open to the arising awareness so that the person loses its density. And if you are still sitting here, obviously it's already happening in you, whether the mind says otherwise, it doesn't matter, because the mind cannot recognize transformation.

The mind might say, nothing is happening to me, and yet it is happening. The mind cannot recognize presence. The mind, how can the mind recognize, and it's not, presence is not memorable because presence is presence.

So you can't say, I was present once. Presence, you can't remember presence as such because it's not content, it's space. So it's not memorable.

The mind relies on memory. It can remember something bad that happens much more easily. And it loves doing that because it builds its identity around it to a great part.

So it is already arising, and in humanity as a whole, and those humans who are not open to it, who do not have the transparency, unfortunately, will encounter more intense suffering. That's just how it is. Because, simply because the evolutionary movement is blocked in them.

So you can help them, not by saying, I can help you, but by being aware. The more aware you are, the more it will, whoever has the slightest opening will be affected by it, and not including people you don't even meet. And other times you will meet people, and if there's a slight opening, something will be mentioned, maybe just a word, and then you will say something, and they will say, what do you mean by that?

And you will see suddenly their eyes open, and they want to, what do you mean by that? And you say a few more words, and suddenly say, wow, yes. Whatever you might be saying.

Being in the body, being present, being aware, there's only this moment, oh, if they're right. So you become, whether you want to or not, a teacher, but that doesn't become your identity anymore, just as I don't have an identity as a spiritual teacher, because whenever you have a, we rely on a form identity, sooner or later you suffer. So spiritual teacher, yes, teaching will come through you, through energy and through words, it's inevitable.

But that doesn't mean that you now have a new identity, and you see yourself as a teacher, just as I'm not, the moment I walk away from here, this is a teaching situation, but the moment I walk away from here, there's no longer, there is no teacher. There's no longer, there is no teacher.

2015 Eckhart Tolle Be Still and Know That I AM

[Speaker 1] (0:01 - 1:23:09)

On my way here, I was sitting in this room, in another part of the building, and I walked past this sign on the wall that said, The Kingdom of God is now or never. So we are here spending an afternoon together, which implies time, spending time together, to go into that which is beyond time, the Kingdom of God. Now, there's always a paradox that comes when you speak of the timeless, the timeless eternal present, the timeless dimension of consciousness, where you know your own essence as timeless.

And yet, out in this world, undoubtedly, time continues. So we are spending time to go into the timeless, already a paradox. The event itself, sitting here this afternoon, as an experience, an experience being here this afternoon, also passes fairly quickly.

It was a future event for a while, for you. In other words, it only existed as a thought form, which is all that future is. There is no future except as a thought form.

And now, it's here. But since time could be compared to an express train in which you are sitting, and it's traveling, and it doesn't stop, you can't get off. This experience also, of course, is fleeting.

It passes before you know it. Now it's now. It fills your perception.

It fills the space of now. It fills your awareness, your space of awareness. And then, before you know it, it's gone.

Or let's say, where does it move? Past, future, okay. It was future.

It's now. And before you know it, it's over. And the experience itself then only exists as another thought form.

It was. It's now past. And so, it's amazing how fleeting all experiences are in one's life.

And the older you get, the more you realize that truth. So much so, that some old people say, was that it? My father said a few years ago, ten years ago, I believe, he said it, he was 75.

He said, I feel my life hasn't quite started yet. And once something has happened, receded into the past, only exists as a thought form, or as a photo album, or as a video disc, which also gets old, just lasts a little bit longer, and eventually the photo fades. It's almost like a dream.

One's entire past has a dreamlike quality. Did that happen, or did I dream all that? My childhood, even yesterday.

And it doesn't stop. Further experiences come, and go. As one poet put it, to use another analogy, it seems that time is like a fire, and we are being burned in it.

Which is a good analogy. And not only, of course, the physical body will end up as ashes, which is what fire does, it burns things up and they become ash. The entire physical universe, this room, if you could see a speeded up version of the future of this room, being condensed into one minute, let's say 5,000 years, which isn't very much on a cosmic or even planetary scale, being condensed into one minute, you would see everything crumbling, ordinary things first.

It would be an amazing thing to watch all the seemingly solid structures around you within one minute would go, dust, and then a gust of wind. Did it ever happen? And so in this unstable universe, that sometimes looks solid and stable, some of the human-made structures, they look solid and stable, but we see how quickly, either through time or some other event, a seemingly solid structure collapses and becomes dust.

And so here we are as human beings, sometimes living in the illusion of solidity, not only the solidity of the external structures, also the illusion, ultimately, of a solidity of me, one's sense of self as having some ultimate reality. And yet it's also just forms, thought forms, that have a limited lifespan. And we talked about this last night, here we come again to time, we talked about not knowing yourself beyond thought forms, which is how the external world, certain things are selected from external forms.

Particularly, they become absorbed, cling to the name of me, my name, experiences, possessions, status, other people's opinions of me. All these are important thought forms that are accumulated in the mind, and a very thin skin is around them, which is my name, to hold them together as me, myself. The skin is a little bit like a soap bubble, skin, myself, into the thought form of self, which is my name, I collect things with which I identify.

From the simplest thing, as I pointed out last night, the child saying, my toy, not the toy being important as a material object, but the toy being important as a thought form that is invested with a sense of self. That is why the toy to the child becomes so important, because the child is entering the stage of limitation and delusion, it has to go through that, where an ultimately fictitious and illusory sense of self begins to grow. So the child has to say, at least still has to at where we are in this cycle, at this present stage of human evolution, the child has to go through that stage and say, mine, which means this thought form is the arising self, because the child already knows his name or her name, and then, my toy, one of the first thought forms that are collected in that receptacle of name.

And then we go on, further and further things are being collected, some knowledge, what other people tell the child, who he or she is, and very often this isn't by choice, so many things become collected, accumulate as mental content of self, many things accumulate there that were not chosen, one could say the toy is chosen by the child, the child chooses to identify with that thought form, just as the adult chooses to identify with the BMW, which is the toy of the adult, which becomes the thought form of my car, my sense of self has expanded temporarily into the thought form of car, for a while it fulfills oneself, just as the child feels fulfilled when it can say, this is mine, the self has grown a little, the mind made identity. So, some of these things are simply imposed upon you, your parents, what your parents tell you about yourself, what school tells you about who you are, the surrounding culture tells you about who you are, opinions and viewpoints of you, they get absorbed and they cling to the name, the thought form of name, or they are contained in the soap bubble, whatever image you want to use, of name.

So, if your parents tell you, you are stupid, which some parents tell their children, usually stupid parents tell their children, you are stupid. Parents who cannot see that such and such will sometimes drop things, things go wrong, it cannot manipulate the external world as well as an adult, but an adult of little intelligence then will interpret that as stupid. And so that child is told for the first eight years, ten years of his or her life, can't do, stupid, not good enough.

That becomes a thought form that is involuntary and it gets lodged in the mind and that can, if that never is made conscious, because many of the thought forms you identify with unconsciously, you just think them without knowing that they are thought forms, they are taken to be reality and your sense of self is entirely in those thoughts. So it could be that you live with involuntary things that have accumulated as content in your mind, as self, for the rest of your life. So the conditioning happens, the conditioning of that sense of self, especially in early years, and then finally we have an adult, behaves like an adult with a certain importance, which basically is also a role.

The teenager gradually learns to play the role of an adult, which is also a thought form, and then there are different types of adults according to their function in society. So then the role becomes important, that is, me. And so finally we have a ready-made conditioned entity moving through this world, trying to complete its unsatisfactory sense of self.

Not yet enough. My me is not complete yet. I'm seeking to complete myself by looking for more of whatever to add to me.

And this is why time becomes very important, the movement into future, because it's only through future that I can get the more that I need to complete my sense of self. More mental accumulations, material accumulations perhaps in the external, but it is not that, it's the thought form that matters. And it never fulfills you for long.

Dissatisfaction, sooner or later, usually sooner, returns. The sense of incompleteness comes back, the sense of lack, the sense of fear. And you need more.

So that's what you're condemned to when you are totally identified with the content of your mind which is conditioned and with the emotions that accompany the content of your mind, the thought movements. So we looked at that last night. And although now something is emerging in human beings that is, one could describe as a new state of consciousness, an unconditioned consciousness, most humans are still condemned to complete identification with thought, with the content of their mind.

And we are here this afternoon not to add more to the accumulations that are already there, not more knowledge, not more experiences, not more beliefs, satisfying as they might be for the sense of self, if I could tell you just a new fascinating belief, and if you believe this, then you will be fine. Just believe this. What does that mean, believe this?

It means cling to this thought form and let it complete your sense of self. Derive your sense of self from identification with this thought form. And for a while it's satisfying.

It's especially satisfying because now while you totally cling to this thought form, a new belief, I've just been converted to ism, this ism or that ism, and for that moment, for a while it's very satisfying, particularly because it puts you in a position of being right. And the rest of the world who don't share your belief, hopefully there are many who don't share it because that will strengthen your sense of separateness of me. Oh great, I know the truth and you don't.

So you don't get that here either. So we are here not to add more, so on that level it is not satisfying to be sitting here the whole afternoon because nothing is being given. Not even stimulating to the mind.

Not even interesting with the mind. You say, isn't that interesting? He really gave us food for thought.

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. So we are here to step out of, quite simply, identification with the content of the mind, to step out of the thought stream and reactive patterns that are part of that conditioning of the self, the mind-made self, and also the emotions that accompany the mind-made self, the thought movements of the mind-made self. We see it, and then even to see it is the first, you're taking one step out.

Most humans are still totally identified with the movement of thought and the reactive patterns that are part of the conditioned sense of me. And here, suddenly, you see it. So the moment you see that movement, you have one foot out.

It's still happening, but the seeing is the arising of a deeper dimension of consciousness. Sometimes in Buddhism they may call it the witness or the witnessing presence, where you can see a pattern in yourself, a mind pattern or an emotional pattern, which means your sense of self suddenly is no longer in it. You are not identified.

Identify means, comes from Latin, idem ficara. Ficara is to make. Idem is the same.

To make the same as I. So a thought becomes as if it were I, as if there were I in it, a self. So when you see it, there's the beginning of freedom.

When you see how usually one is totally identified, not just with the mental image of me, but the compulsive thought activity that goes with deriving one's sense of self from mental content. And because there's a sense of self in mind, in thought, thought has become compulsive. And the movement of thought, the stream of thinking, for most humans, hardly ever stops.

And a lot of the thinking, of course, is about me and my problems and my future. Problematic. My past.

Unsatisfying. Hasn't really fulfilled me. And so the compulsive mind movements that most people are trapped in all day long, which even psychologists who had no interest in anything spiritual, they observed the mind movements, the thought movements of normal human beings, and realized that 99% of the thoughts that go through a person's mind every day are repetitious.

They are the same thoughts that went through their minds yesterday and last year, and in many cases 20 years ago. Although sometimes certain changes can happen. Nothing fundamental.

And you know how futile thought movements can be when there's nothing you can do. And you would be so much better off if you could just be fully here without being compelled to have your attention in the mind stream. So we are here to step out of that.

And what I am suggesting to you, this is just a way of approaching it. And if it were not happening to you already, you wouldn't even be here. So it's not that you need to make it happen or I need to make it happen to you.

That would be frustrating. And it would be stressful for me too. Are they going to get it?

So what I am suggesting, and it only works because it's happening anyway, so my function here is the midwife to facilitate the birthing process, but it's the babies coming anyway. Babies came long before midwives ever existed, although that may be the earliest profession perhaps, midwife, contrary to what some people say. The earliest profession is probably to help in the birthing process, but even before there was anybody around, babies were coming.

So it's happening anyway. It's just to speed it up. One could say the planet is running out of time.

One could say humanity is running out of time, really. If the current dysfunction in the collective mind continues and we have another 20th century or worse, and it would be worse if there's no inner change, for another 100 years it would probably be the end of the planet, perhaps of humanity. So we are running out of time for the first time in the history of time.

On this planet, humanity, we are running out of time. And this is not bad news, but good news. It is good news for the individual human also.

I have met people who have come to listen to teachings who in their personal lives told me, I am running out of time. The doctor has given me six months. What now?

Some of the New Age teaching, beautiful as they may be, don't apply to me anymore, they say, because they say you can make it. And I'm sure six months isn't enough to complete me, not on that level. And so some teachers say, whatever you want to achieve, you can.

This is true on its own level, but when you're running out of time, there isn't time anymore for that. So there's something more fundamental. And whenever a human being runs out of time, that is the greatest opportunity opening up, because that human being is running out of future, which is the escape for the mind-made self.

This is where it perpetuates itself through continuous focus on future. The needing it and the fearing it and moving between the two, that's how the self perpetuates itself. And all it does, it brings the past, obscures the present, so the past is more of the same in future.

And so if a human being runs out of time, it's the most wonderful thing that can happen. From the point of view of the mind-made self, it is the most dreadful thing that could happen to me. Of course, the truth is, everybody is running out of time.

On a personal level, it doesn't really matter whether you have six months or one year, or 40 years or 50 years, it's not that much. And it's fleeting, it goes, as you're sitting on this express train of time. Was that it?

Yes, it's time to get off. The train stops for one moment, and then you get off, that's it. That was your life.

And maybe then you bought another train, who knows? We'll go through it again. I haven't arrived yet.

So, collectively running out of time, this is why there is an acceleration now in so many humans want to be free, are ready to go beyond the conditioning of thousands and thousands and thousands of years of collective conditioning, which is increasingly becoming more and more dysfunction in this world, because we're getting to the end of an evolutionary cycle. The closer you get to the end, the more dysfunctional it appears to be. And this is how it has to be, it's beautiful.

Ultimately, even the madness of human history, 20th century, ultimately, that's all how it happens. Within the totality, that also makes sense. But it also makes sense to see it now for us as madness and dysfunction.

That's part of the waking up, to recognize that. So, here's the midwife, helping just to speed up the birth process of a deeper dimension of consciousness that is emerging, that has nothing to do with your past, that has nothing to do with your life situation, whether it's good or bad at this moment. They vary a lot.

And that's allowing that to emerge, what I sometimes call the unconditioned consciousness. I may give you some more pointers. So, how?

I may suggest to you just a few helpful approaches, what I call portals, ways in which you can allow that which wants to emerge, to emerge, instead of resisting it. So, this one could call portals into the state of presence. A portal is an opening, it's a doorway.

It opens up. A portal into the state of presence, one could say, or you could say it is a portal through which presence comes, emerges. Now, some portals appear in everybody's life, and they can be called involuntary portals.

For example, great loss. The opposite of what the self wanted, which is more, happens to you, which is less. So life, an involuntary portal, happens to you, and it happens to every human being.

Usually it's not recognized as a portal, because it's only a potential portal. When you don't recognize it, it may not be able to fulfill its function. You run away from it into more future.

But any loss, especially significant loss in your life, is an involuntary portal into the state of presence, the unconditioned consciousness. So, this isn't something that we need to explore here, but because that simply happens. Life does that to you.

You can't make that happen. Life, sooner or later, will remove things from you. The movement of the self was in the opposite direction.

Accumulate more to be more of me. And then at some point, life comes in, and it tears something out of an external thing, disappears from your life that you had identified with as me. The thought form suddenly has no foundation anymore.

The building has collapsed. The company that I spent 30 years building up has gone bankrupt. 30 years of effort, of making myself and my family and 2,000 other people unhappy, of trying to make it, and it's all been in vain.

It's a little example. That means the thought form of me having achieved this great thing and built up this company, and a very temporarily satisfying thought form, suddenly has no foundation anymore because the external structures have collapsed. And the thought form then begins to shake.

Of course, it cannot sustain itself unless you become insane and say, no, it never happened. I still have it. This happens too.

It's total denial. And then you can keep the thought form that I am still important, but usually when the external foundation of a thought form has been removed, the thought form itself becomes shaky and then also crumbles. And that leads to great unhappiness in the human being because the very foundation of oneself has become threatened.

And this is the most dreadful thing. It happens to humans, and it is not usually recognized as a potential for something else, but occasionally it works. And then a person may experience great loss in his or her life and is so stunned.

And it sometimes happens when there's loss not of one thing but several things all at once. That means every time something is removed from you and a thought form collapses that was linked to that, an opening happens in the stream of mind. An opening happens because a form has dissolved.

First an external form and then the corresponding thought form. A sense of self was lodged in that thought form, and now it's gone. This is called death.

It is the experience of death on one level or another that is very painful from one side. The death is, oh! And so the temptation not to face that is very great, to run away into future and say, I'm going to build up another company.

I'll spend another 30 years. I'm going to show them that I can make it. And perhaps you can.

And then eventually the same thing happens. If the company doesn't collapse, you collapse. This is the most fundamental law of the physical universe, that the structures are unstable.

And it shocks humans every time. That is not supposed to happen. They are supposed to be stable.

I was walking, I saw this wonderful, I was going for a walk near Los Angeles, but outside in a park, a wild nature reserve, and there was a collapsed building that had burned down 40 years ago, and the roof was gone, and trees were growing inside the building, and beautiful, wonderful to see how, how form is returning to the formless. They left it there, and there was a waterfall nearby. But as you entered that space, the city council had put up a sign, which to me was a sacred sutra, but they probably didn't regard it as a sacred sutra.

The sign said, Danger, all structures are unstable. So that was a holy sign. Thank you.

So sooner or later that comes, and so the instability of that, comes into your life as an involuntary opening of a thought form that was invested with self dissolving. And sometimes it happens if you don't run away from it, you're so stunned that you can't even run away from it. That may happen if several things are lost at once.

And now a strange thing happens. There was a thought form, and the form dissolved, and when a form dissolves, something that is formless shines through the opening. I call that, although we must be careful not to mistake the labels for it, the label is only a little pointer, the unconditioned, pure consciousness, the light, metaphorically speaking, pure, unconditioned consciousness shines through.

Whenever there is an opening left by a great loss or death, form has dissolved in your life. And it's not resisted or denied or run away from. At first you shake, and then suddenly as you're not running away from it, you face what is, and people have reported that in the face of great disaster and tragedy, which they didn't run away from, suddenly an enormous influx of deep peace, aliveness, and joy.

And they couldn't understand it. And it changed them forever. And some people have glimpses of it, even through minor loss it can happen, that you get a glimpse of that when it's not resisted.

So this is important to know. Although we cannot bring that about here, nor do we need to, it's life's job to do that to you. And by the grace of the one God, life, the one intelligence, it'll happen.

And in many of you, it's already happened. And perhaps for quite a few of you, that was how the inner transformation began, through that opening of great loss. And that is the only reason why you are here now.

If that had not happened, you would be watching TV now, being happy in the ordinary state of unhappiness, asleep. So one could say it's the great awakener to go through loss. It is a potential opening if you don't run away from it.

But, so this is good to know. So what is usually condemned as bad by the mind, and the mind made self, is actually grace coming into your life. And sometimes grace is fierce.

There's a film that was recently made about the life of Ram Dass, the spiritual teacher, American born, who suffered a stroke and is in a wheelchair now. And the film about his life is called Fierce Grace, because he recognized that the stroke that he suffered, that made it difficult for him to speak, he can't move anymore except in a wheelchair, he recognized that that also was an act of grace. It was a loss, it was a form of death, it was an opening.

But here, we invite the opt to do it to you, instead of waiting for life to do it to you, which happens, but also there's never a guarantee that you'll recognize it as an opening, so let's not wait. Instead of that, we voluntarily invite the opening into our lives, and so portals into the state of presence. This is a way of looking at it.

All portals will take you, of course, deep into now. No matter where you go, you will end up in the now. You move very deeply into this.

One portal I pointed to last night, and it's very powerful, I would call it the primordial spiritual practice, the most effective, the core of all spiritual practices, almost, and that is the portal of bringing a yes into now, which means allowing this moment to be as it is. This is a voluntary portal opening up into the transformed state of consciousness. The mind-made self, its continued dominance depends on resistance, depends on reactivity, depends on not allowing what is to be, because what is is not completing me.

This isn't what I want. It shouldn't even be here. I need the future.

Get this moment out of the way. It's an obstacle to me. I need to get past this moment somehow.

This is how most people live. The now is an obstacle to finding me. It puts these obstacles in my path.

How dare you, God, put these obstacles in my path? And so you recognize that that is a deeply conditioned mind movement and reactive pattern. And so you see how you miss life itself by denying or devaluing now, how conventionally, habitually, in the old conditioned mindset, you make the now, the only thing there ever is, into a means to an end.

The end is, I need to get there. It's the future moment. The now is the means.

That's the only value it has for me, says the self. This moment enables me to get to that moment, and I'm on my way there. And the unconscious belief, it's rarely made conscious, is always that the next moment is superior, of greater value, more important than this one.

I'm just on my way there. Now, and then if you look more deeply into what that means, what I've done, I've used a thought form, which is future. Future only is a thought form.

It never can be experienced, or you can't meet it. You've never encountered it. You're making a thought into something of greater value than the reality of this moment.

So this is the essence of being totally absorbed in thought with your sense of self. So that's how humans live. And everybody's doing it, so it's unconscious.

It's never questioned. Always looking for the next thing you must get. And very rarely a sense of ease, of being here fully, honoring what is.

It's never quite right, or very rarely, not never right for long, and then the moment again is dissatisfying. So the possibility arises only because the unconditioned consciousness is arising from within you anyway. Now you're able to, one could say, speed it up by inviting it, allowing this moment to be as it is.

And also, of course, you do it because you recognize, I mentioned it briefly last night, that it could not be otherwise. Because there are no separate events. Every so-called separate event is totally connected with the totality of the cosmos.

Nothing is a separate event. So what happens in this now is as it is because the entire universe has brought this about. And there's a little me that argues with it and says, this shouldn't, that's all wrong.

So you align yourself with is. This you recognize is as inevitable. It already is.

So there's the inner state of yes. It's a beautiful state when the now is no longer an enemy. Yes, okay, you're the now, you're my friend.

You're the is-ness of this moment. And so I welcome that, no matter what form this moment takes. The form changes anyway, quickly.

And the mind, of course, would judge this moment. Good, bad, not enough, shouldn't. And a strange thing happens.

When you are against what is, the fictitious sense of self gets strengthened, the me in the head. Because you have made the now into an enemy, and the self thrives on enemies. The arch enemy of the mind made self is the present moment.

It's very uneasy with it. And most of the time it's against it somehow. And that strengthens the me, the boundary between me and that.

And if I can complain about is in my head, through the inner thought process of the monologues or dialogues, that's wonderful. It loves complaining about what is, and how it should be. Because by complaining it puts itself in a position of rightness.

I am right, and this situation is all wrong. So there is a secret search to be superior to the situation by complaining about it. And you can see it in extreme forms how humans, some humans are very deeply immersed in that form of conditioning.

They won't stop complaining. And always the universe or something or somebody is doing something to them, and the present moment is always interfering through people and situations. They're all out to get me.

They're all complaining. What are they? Deep-seated mind pattern.

And so you see it. And then you see the madness of it. And also you see it's not personal.

Madness is not personal. Dysfunction isn't personal. Nor is it ultimately to do with the content of your life.

Unhappiness. Non-satisfaction is ultimately not to do with the content of your life, something that's lacking in the content of your life, or something that you don't want but is there in your life situation. The unhappiness, the heaviness of most human lives, human existences, is not ultimately based on the content, but is structural.

It's the structure of the conditioned mind. And built into the structure of it is the denial of now. Because it's continued existence depends on that.

Resistance and denial. So possibility arises for you to live in such a way that you welcome what is. And thus going beyond being a merely reactive little entity, a little me that is continuously saying, you know, and something opens up that is deeper than form.

Because you're not reacting to the form that this moment takes. That would strengthen the reaction, strengthens your own form identity, which is the mind made self. It strengthens itself by reacting against other forms.

So the form of me gets stronger through the reaction. When that is relinquished and you allow, the form identity is no longer strengthened. And something arises from, one could say, deep within you that is beyond the form of who you are, which is thought forms, emotional forms, the unconditioned consciousness.

And that is encountered as a certain stillness that is suddenly there. At first perhaps in the background. And a certain field of spaciousness or peace that one could say is there around the form of now.

There is the form of now which may be turbulent. Something is happening, a lot of noise is going on, whatever it is that the form is. And you allow it.

And suddenly around the event, and I'm only speaking metaphorically because you can't really speak about it. Around the form of now there is a space, a spaciousness, when you allow what is. There is suddenly a depth in which this event happens.

That depth or that space in which this event happens is that in you that is unconditioned, the essence. One could say pure consciousness, that's only a word, whereas everything else, including the entire universe, is the conditioned consciousness. The conditioned consciousness is there as the human mind, as thought forms.

Consciousness is born into a form, a thought. That's the deeper meaning of rebirth, is consciousness takes on form, temporary. And the form might claim, me, me, that's me.

And so further rebirth is sought when, to complete me, I want to be born into other forms, identify with as me, thought forms. And this comes to an end when you allow the form of now, then you become conscious of the essence of now, which is space, which is stillness, which is intense aliveness, which is emptiness, as the Buddhists call it, but no word can contain it. It's also fullness of life.

Not fullness of life in its manifested forms, the fullness of life itself, because before life is born into this or that, there is already the fullness of life as yourself. That's what Jesus talks about when he said, I want you to have life and I want you to have it more abundantly. In other translations he says, I want you to have life, I want you to have the fullness of life, more abundant life, he said.

And of course he was not talking about the abundance of things. He didn't teach that if you work hard enough you can buy lots of things, and then you will have great abundance. That wasn't the teaching.

So when he talks about abundant life, he is not talking about things, life as life forms. He is not predicting the arrival of shopping malls and saying the kingdom of heaven will have arrived when every city has huge shopping malls, and you will live in great abundance. No, he points to something else that is not to do with the forms of life, but life, the essence of life, being itself.

And to know the fullness that is already there is liberation from seeking yourself in the forms of life. Knowing yourself to be beyond particular forms. And the mind says, yeah, but I can't quite work out how I can know myself like that.

Of course you can't work out, because the mind is thought. Thought is attempting to understand the formless, and it cannot. It simply is there with allowing what is to be.

Peace comes, stillness comes. When you allow what is to be, the compulsion to think continuously subsides. And a gap arises in the thought stream.

Or the thought stream loses some of its density, and something shines through that is stillness or peace. And that is the unconditioned, and one aspect of that, it's great intelligence suddenly. The intelligence of the one.

The one intelligence that manifests as billions of life forms in the universe, underlying it, there's an intelligence, one could say. This is one aspect, an aspect of it. And that can then move through the opening that is here, where before there was a dense little me, there is now an opening.

And through that, that one intelligence moves into this world, one could say. It flowers, it emanates. Life is, you are being lived by life suddenly, instead of needing to make a living.

I'm trying to make it. Already you are life, beyond form. And so it's, all you need to do is recognize yourself, the essence of your being, as already that.

You could never get there in time, through more future, more of this or more of that, that can only obscure it. And it's not, there's nothing wrong with more. If you play with more, you juggle the things of phenomenal existence, the balls, position, relationships, money, and you juggle with these things and occasionally you lose one, and then another one pops up and you juggle with that for a while.

Simply, it's the life of form. Without self-seeking, it loses its heaviness. When there's self-seeking through the forms, the me in everything, it's heavy and it's painful to live, because everything is so unstable, and you can't hang on for what's going to gain us.

So here's the portal that opens up with a yes to now, which is the, if you are interested in spiritual practice, a meditation method, keep the one you have, that's fine too, but here's a continuous meditation that is bringing the yes into now. And part of the meditation is to detect the no. When it comes habitually to detect, to observe, how you deny the now, run away from it, make it into a means to an end, it's happening again, there's the no.

There's the complaining, the whining about what is, and suddenly you see it. So often you detect the no, and then you say, oh. There's a tendency again for the mind to come in and then make some other judgment about it.

When you detect the habitual movement of no, wanting to, being in the future, then the mind says, you see, you can't do it. You're no good, you can't even be present. More thought forms, self-talk.

So often to see the no is very helpful. It's not personal, it's collective conditioning. And there you see it, and the seeing is freeing.

Oh. So the yes comes into the no. The yes, instead of saying no to no, which is more resistance, this includes emotions.

An emotion comes, and you watch the turbulent movement, perhaps, of that emotion, anger or sadness or fear, quivering, and what do you do with that emotion, the movement of emotion? It is as it is. And you allow it to be, which means there's no self in that anymore.

And you realize emotions are human emotions, not really personal. Fear, anger, anxiety, sadness, they are all ultimately non-personal, not me. Human, human emotions, human feelings.

So the self goes out of that, as you simply allow the emotion to be as it is, and suddenly, around that movement of the emotion, there is a spaciousness, through the allowing. It is being, it is, in other words, when you allow what is to be, you become aware of the depths of now. And you realize that now is not what happens, but the field or the space in which it happens.

And that never changes. And you can verify this in your own life. The one thing that, whatever happened to you, and whatever can happen to you, one thing is for certain, it was now, and it will be now.

Nothing can happen to you. So the one thing that remains forever, it's always now, the field of now. So the field of now is one with the essence of your being, and you can sense and know it directly, not in a subject-object relationship, but it knows itself.

You sense what that means, the depths of now. The space of now. The field of now.

And there's the event. And there's the depths of the field of now. At this very moment, what it is that fills up your now is the voice that you hear, the perception of this room, the space here.

And that's what's happening in the field of now, and if you're alert, you're aware that there's what's happening, and there's the field in which it happens, as stillness, as consciousness, awareness. And there's the sound of the bell, an object in consciousness. Beautiful.

And then it dies. The sound comes to an end. And there's a moment when the sound touches the silence.

Maybe you can pay attention to that. That's the moment of death. The form dissolves.

The formless remains as it always was, always will be. So now you can listen to this sound and be aware, not only of the sound, but also of the field, the space, the awareness itself in which the sound appears. That is the deepest meaning of now.

And that is inseparable from who you are in your essence. And that's an amazing thing. There's an object in consciousness which is there.

You know it's there, but it is not absorbing your entire attention. You're also conscious of attention itself, of awareness itself. And when I say that in language, it creates a non-existent duality.

When I say you are conscious of, it's not true. Language only creates that duality. Awareness is conscious of itself.

You are conscious of awareness as yourself. So while you listen, and the sound is only one example, we simplify it because as you move through life, objects in consciousness arise continuously, as thoughts, as emotions, as sense perceptions. Everywhere they pop up.

And most people move through life totally absorbed in all the arising objects and reacting to them as a little me entity, fearing some objects, wanting some other objects to add to me, totally absorbed in the arising objects in consciousness. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. In other words, they are lost in the world.

And the world is a promising place, because I'm hoping to fulfill me through some objects that I can add to me. And it's a threatening place because the world might take away what I have or may even remove me altogether from existence. So here we're reducing all the many objects that arise in consciousness to one.

And just watch that, see how it arises, and sense the awareness itself in which it happens. And that is what remains, what is there before the object arises, as the sound. It is there while the object has its limited lifespan, and it is there after the object has dissolved, the sound has come to an end.

So let's see what arises in the field of now. And it begins before the Big Bang, because the sound is the equivalent of the Big Bang, just on a smaller scale. It is what's there before the Big Bang happens.

Scientists trying to figure out what was there before there was nothing, there wasn't anything there. And of course, the mind can't work that out. So this is the beginning, just before the universe happens, there's this.

And of course, the bird. And suddenly, and then, and another universe. And the strange thing is, the state of the universe before it was a universe, you see, language becomes absurd, of course.

The state of the universe before there was a universe is still in you. Before there ever was a Big Bang, that is still in you. So you can't figure that out through thought, but you can know it as a thoughtless awareness, as stillness.

Oh, it knows itself. It's not so much that you know it, you are it. So that we could call also the unmanifested stillness.

Be still and know that I am God, says God. And that is a beautiful mantra, or pointer, to realization. And all the words that make up this mantra are really expressions of the one.

They are synonymous. Each word is synonymous with the other word. Be, being.

Still, the stillness of being. Know, there is deep knowing in that stillness. Vast intelligence before it becomes thought, before it becomes something.

Be still, know I am. The deepest meaning of I am is that the words that people use most frequently in the language I or I am, which usually refer to the illusory entity, ultimately, of me as the form, these words have a deeper meaning. When you no longer say, I am this, or I am that, which is identification with form, but the forms are gone, the essence remains of I am.

That. Presence. But it is saying too much.

I am. Just. So the essence of your identity is there.

It is that which even when you are completely absorbed in the story of me, the essence, I am essence, becomes mixed up with form, thought forms. But within each form, the essence of I am remains. It just gives the appearance that I am such and such and such and such, this is my story.

But the innermost feeling of I is actually true, even within a totally mad story. The innermost sense of identity of I is what is true. And that's what people fear most they might lose.

They sense somehow there's something incredibly precious that I am, somehow. And they're afraid that they might lose that. And of course the good thing is you lose everything else except that.

So the I am gets mixed up with forms. And so it's now moving out of, as we sit here, sometimes it happens through disaster, that the I am goes out of identification with form and knows itself as prior to any form.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:10 - 1:23:15)

Oh. Ah. Ah.

[Speaker 1] (1:23:16 - 1:41:08)

What a relief. I'm not this or that. And so that's why, again, be still and know, being, stillness, knowing, I am, all synonymous, and God, the one, before the one becomes many, the one that underlies the many.

There are even some spiritual practices that ask you to ask yourself continuously, who am I? Who am I? Until at first answers may come in your head.

Ah, ah. And then finally no answers come anymore and then you're beginning to realize who you are. Who am I?

Thought suddenly comes to an end. You've exhausted all the possible answers. Who am I?

And you enter the state of, I don't know. That is the state that the form-identified self, the mind-identified self, is most afraid of. I don't know.

And it imagines that the state of enlightenment or liberation is the state in which I'm going to know everything. And I'm going to know myself completely. Wow.

And then it's a shock to realize that the enlightened state, one could almost say, is the opposite of what the egoic entity imagines it to be. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. It is entering voluntarily the state of not knowing.

Particularly not knowing who you are anymore. What is that state of not knowing? It is a state in which thought has subsided.

And you become not uneasy with not knowing, I should know, but I don't know. No, you become comfortable with not knowing. You relax into not knowing.

Not knowing is fine. Is it? Feeling.

Feeling. Not quite, but it is closer to a feeling than to a thought. It's the cessation, it is the gap between two thoughts.

In that gap, there's a space of not knowing. You're trying to understand it through thought, but you can't. You can only know it through the arising of the gap, which means relinquish the next question that comes into your mind.

Just let it go. And the next. You see what...

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. You see what that... Yeah.

Because the mind will come up with more... Okay. Thank you.

Ha, ha. And... This.

And you realize that's only not knowing from the point of view of mind. In that not knowing, there is a deep knowing, but not through words, concepts, or mental labels. You can't describe it through thought.

What kind of knowing is that? A simple example. You can go to a tree or a flower and simply perceive that flower being comfortable with not labeling it in any way mentally.

So to have the perception to be totally... Give it your total attention. And this brings us now to another portal.

We've looked at the portal of yes to what is. Another portal opens up through perception, sense perception. Now sense perception, the predominant sense for most human beings is sight, seeing.

The second sense for most human beings is auditory, hearing. Then other senses come in that are much less important in human beings these days. They were very much more important millions of years ago.

Sensing, tasting, smelling, feeling. So the predominant two senses in us tend to be seeing and hearing. The others also.

Let's just focus for a moment on seeing and hearing and see that the possibility... So we're talking about the portal that can open up through sense perception. Now this is very subtle.

I would suggest that you observe yourself when you first look at something. Something arises in your field of consciousness. Let's say your head turns and there's a flower.

Or you're out in nature and suddenly you look at this flower. There is a moment when the perception is being taken in. When you notice, the moment of noticing a new perception that has come in.

There is a moment when you look. A space of pure looking. It could be a second.

It could be two seconds. It could be three seconds. And this is the space in which the perception happens through stillness.

You are looking, examining this stillness and after two or three seconds, if you observe yourself, most humans are completely unconscious of that, after two seconds or so, the mind will come in with an interpretation or a label. But always when you first notice something, and it could be a human being, suddenly this person that you haven't seen before comes in and you look into the face. And for the first few seconds, in some human beings it's only one second before the mind comes in.

And immediately the mind will interpret according to its conditioning. It's called knowledge. And so you look, and there is, whenever you first notice something or someone, there is a gap of no thought.

And this is where the true perception happens. And it is not that you are unintelligent in that gap. There is actually a deeper intelligence through which the perception happens.

And for a moment, through the unconditioned intelligence, there is the perception. And you can test it for yourself. You can walk somewhere and look at something and truly give attention and then the mind comes in.

Watch the gap that is there naturally. You don't have to make it happen. And then, whenever you first notice something, there is a small gap of no thought.

And this means of not knowing. But then most humans are not comfortable with staying in that state and habitually, it's conditioned, they need to interpret very quickly and label through some thought movement. And that means the conditioned mind comes in and obscures the pure, unconditioned perception of that.

And if you notice that, a strange thing happens. When you notice that gap, it tends to become longer. And then you may stay, it may remain for half a minute.

And then during that time, which is really timeless, the perception happens within a field of stillness. And that is amazing. That is the transformation of consciousness.

And you notice, this is beginning to happen to you. You are moving through the world no longer compulsively, immediately labeling everything and thinking that's knowledge. It's conditioning.

Now, it does not mean that you don't, that you lose your mental labels because they may still be useful occasionally. So you look upon something and what arises is the perception happens within the field of stillness. And then if somebody asks you, what are you looking at?

You don't say, I don't know anymore. No, the label is still there. When you need it to communicate, I'm looking at my hand.

But I'm not thinking about it. And this is very similar to the bells. This is the auditory equivalent of that.

It is possible to simply notice the sound, give it complete attention, notice it, and it happens within a field of no thought. And so that is, first of all, noticing the gap that is there when you first notice something. Or it could be a sound, it could be something you see, or even touch.

You can close your eyes and touch something and just completely sense the touch without trying to figure out what it is, just sensing what it feels like, sensing the perception. So there's the perception, and there's the field of stillness in which that happens. So this is the...

And then you can go out into nature and you may find that it becomes easier and easier to perceive what is around you without the compulsive interference of thinking. So the unconditioned consciousness is there. And this is a very...

It means you're not... From the point of view of the mind, you don't know what's there. And yet, there's a deeper knowing which most humans have lost touch with.

Maybe they had it once in a more innocent way, but now an incredible transformation to be able to perceive without compulsively interpreting immediately, labeling, judging, thinking about. Then a greater intelligence is at work. And this is not only when you are a passive perceiver, you can then bring that into situations.

Into situations where you... There's a flow of attention. One could also say there's a current of awareness.

And there is the form that this moment takes. And you simply look. And you have attention within a space of stillness.

You can... As you sit here, you can look aware of this room. No need to label it.

It is. And it doesn't mean that you become totally ignorant. You still know what it is even deeper without the label.

Just don't try to figure it all out in the mind. But through sense perceptions, the possibility of perceiving against the field of... through the field of stillness.

Now the third portal, and they come together, you can bring two together, so to speak, especially these two now. The third portal that is there, that is very simple, that anchors you, in presence, the state of it, is sensing the inner energy field of your body as you sit here. To have a little bit of attention in the inner energy field, to sense the aliveness that is in your hands, your feet, your legs.

It's there. It's alive. The entire body is alive.

But most humans don't notice that because their attention is in thought, in the head. They live only up here. So you simply notice suddenly that the body is alive.

It feels alive. Very subtle at first. There is an aliveness.

And some of your attention is in that aliveness.

[Speaker 2] (1:41:09 - 1:41:12)

Oh. Wow.

[Speaker 1] (1:41:14 - 2:19:53)

As you sit here, you're perceiving the sound. You may be perceiving also visually the room. And at the same time, sense the aliveness in the body.

You can also close your eyes and go more deeply into the sense of aliveness. Give it more attention, more attention flowing into the feeling, the sense of inner body. As you sit here.

At first you might feel one or two parts of the body more strongly. And then after a while a general sense of awareness in the body. It's quite easy.

It's very natural and you may notice some of your attention has moved from thinking into sensing. And now you can open your eyes without losing that sensing. So when you open your eyes, perception happens again and you continue to feel a little less strongly perhaps.

The feeling of inner body. And if you are rooted there, this anchors you in the present.

And from there it is easier to perceive in that clarity of not labeling mentally.

And when you can become comfortable with that, it's incredible what that does to your interaction with human beings that spacious clarity of looking at another human being without any, without the arising of judgments, labels, or interpretations. Which is the veil usually that descends when you meet someone, the veil of conditioned interpretations, what Jesus calls judgment, becomes between you and the other human being. The conditioned self begins to operate, wants something from the other human being, fears something from the other human being.

So that's, so ultimately in this transformation of consciousness, what arises when the unconditioned consciousness arises is simply, this is profound and incredible evolutionary transformation, the ability to dwell, transformation, the ability of no thought, in which actually a greater intelligence operates than could possibly operate through conditioned thinking. And you do not lose the ability to use the mind by the greater intelligence, And then the mind can still operate much more effectively, giving expression to that which comes from the deeper levels where all inspiration comes, all creative realization, creative activity comes out of the greater intelligence, not the conditioned mind, there's nothing new in the conditioned mind, but the mind has a function. It can give form to something that comes from the deeper level of the formless, and that will be powerful, sacred, new, alive, fresh, in all great human creation that operate it.

Wonderful! It's just, so we've seen the portal of allowing this moment to be the portal of sense perceptions, noticing when you first perceive something, there is a gap, that gap is the portal, and then you notice that can be there, then you can actually bring the gap into sense perceptions, starting with nature, which is easier because there's no thought in the flower, so it doesn't stimulate thought in you. If you look at a car, it's built by thought.

It's more likely to stimulate thought. So the natural world is a great help because it exists in that beautiful state of oneness still with the totality. It may not really know that, it just is that.

So nature teaches, it may not really know that, it does it beautifully. And that can be the ground of your practice, going out into nature and meeting it in that state. And then, and only then, you, when you meet other human beings, you can allow that state to be there.

More difficult because most human beings are walking noise factories, mental, and they come at you wanting something. Most you say, come, what's your opinion about, come on, stimulate thought. So there needs to be already intense presence for you not to get drawn, stimulated, because their mind will try to draw in your mind.

What's your position towards, you must, and just be, watch, look, alertness. And then action comes out of that intelligence when it's needed, sometimes through words. I am told that our bodies need to be moved and we will meet in 15 minutes according to clock time in this field of now again.

Thank you. We will meet, time passes very quickly in the now. We looked at the portals, some of them, the portal of loss, the portal of the inner body, of sense perceptions, of yes to now, one more portal, and this is a particularly appropriate place where we are here to look at that simple is silence, one could say, the absence of sound, which is here in this space very strongly, simply to pay attention to it.

To notice it. And one could almost say to listen to it. Now while I talk about it, you can also listen, not just to the words, usually your attention would be absorbed by the words or your attention would be absorbed by your own thought processes, that's possible too, about tomorrow's problem.

So that's the usual case. But now, as you sit here, you can pay attention to the words, but also to the silence that's still here in this room. Everywhere, in between every sound.

The sounds couldn't even happen. If the silence were not there, they stand out, the sounds stand out from that. So usually you would not notice it, because usually you would be sitting here as a thought-based entity looking only to what thought can relate to, which is form, which is more thought.

And you would forget a deeper dimension that is there. And that is the dimension of stillness, thoughtlessness, formless stillness. And it's a strange thing when you listen to the words, but at the same time you also listen to the silence.

One could say silent spaces, but they're not really spaces, because silence is one. So there is an underlying silence, and then the words come like wave movements. Now a strange thing happens.

You could, of course, listen to silence completely. No more words, just that. And to listen to silence, it requires a certain degree of alertness.

Almost the alertness of expectancy, although you're not looking to the future, but the kind of alertness you would have if you were expecting perhaps some very faint sound, and you have to catch it when it comes. But there's no strain in this, no tension, just an alert listening. Like, one could say, as if you were going like this.

And then you notice the strange thing, and that is whenever you listen to silence, and you may not be able to sustain that for very long, maybe only a few seconds at a time, whenever you listen to silence, there's no thought. And even if you can only sustain it for three seconds at a time, whenever you listen to silence, the mind must stop. Because the mind is mental noise.

It forms. Silence has no form. It's formless.

So you cannot, through noise, listen to silence. You cannot, through form, listen to or understand the formless. So the simple fact of allowing attention to be there, allowing the alertness to be there, that is needed for listening to, because silence is subtle.

Sounds are very much here, like big egos. Every sound is a here I am. And sounds can be fascinating.

And we live in a civilization that is very noisy. Everywhere we go, they're making noise. Even hard to find a restaurant that's not very bombarded by noise called music.

So it's very, silence is very subtle. And to the thinking mind, first of all, it doesn't know what to do with it. Silence.

And then it says, okay, that's not very interesting. No, of course not. It's completely uninteresting.

Because only thought is interesting to thought. And it might even say, this is boring. What's the next thing?

Of course it's boring. Silence is boring. Enlightenment is boring to the mind.

Because the mind is looking for the next food, the next stimulus. In its state of restlessness and discontent, it needs, quick, give me the next stimulus. And if it's not coming, it gets restless, impatient, bored, or worse.

So that's the movement of thought and the me, the thought-based me. Okay. So all this, if you've been sitting here and found an alive response to this, even if not necessarily a complete understanding, who could understand that which is beyond thought?

But you found, as you were sitting here, an alive response yes, a recognition almost, if not a complete understanding, that means that which is beyond mind is already emerging in you. It's being pulled out here because this gathering here is more than the words. There is an energy field of, one could say, presence, that state of consciousness.

So, it almost transmits itself. You can catch it. You can catch, but it's not in the words.

The words are helpful pointers, signposts, not in themselves, it. So here, you enter the alertness that is there, that is needed to be aware of silence. And the moment you're aware of silence, there's the equivalent of outer silence in you, which is stillness, the cessation of thought, without loss of consciousness, the opposite, enormous consciousness, but no form, unconditioned, formless.

It's only through that that you can be aware of silence. And what we've been talking about, language has created certain dualities here when I say you can be aware of silence, it's only a way of speaking. What's really happening when you're listening to silence and the mind stops, what's really happening, you become aware of awareness.

That still sounds a little bit dualistic, but that's because of language. Self-awareness, awareness of awareness. It's not two, but one.

The field of spacious, aware presence. And another word that, another pointer one could use to point to that, which I've been using recently, is space consciousness. Everything else is object consciousness.

Now, most human beings know only object consciousness. Consciousness as a thought. And they know themselves only as objects in consciousness.

And in the egoic state, you become an object to yourself in consciousness. You walk with a me, a companion, a self, which is an object in consciousness. So, if you're unaware of the dimension of space consciousness, all you know is objects in consciousness.

Sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions, and they're all quite important. And they matter to me, or they threaten me, or they promise something to me, and so you're in a reactive relationship you make an object out of yourself, a mind form of me, and then relate to other objects, wanting to accumulate some, reject others. And completely unaware of that deeper dimension.

So you become a conceptualized entity, thought object, me, inhabiting a conceptualized reality where everything is labeled and according to the conditioning of me. And you're trapped in the world of mental forms. So, in theistic language, you would say you know the world, very well perhaps.

You might be very knowledgeable about the world, about objects in consciousness. And if you watch TV, you can see with what gravity and importance these matters are being discussed. How is the stock market performing?

And then the experts will talk about it. It's very serious looking. With a lot of tension, this matters.

It's very important. They're completely, of course it matters relatively because you might have invested a million dollars and maybe you didn't know it, but it's now been reduced to a hundred dollars. So it's relatively important, but only relatively important in the world of relativity.

But people are so absorbed by the objects in consciousness that it draws them in totally. So they are lost in mind and they are lost in the world. And the world becomes a heavy place to be and the mind is a heavy place to be with.

Oh! And everything is heavy with, it matters, the matter matters. And then the freedom arises of realizing a deeper dimension in yourself.

Just go through one of the portals or allow one of the portals to be there and something arises that has nothing to do with objects in your consciousness, thoughts in your head, things that are happening in your life, your life situation, good, bad, happy, unhappy, pleasure, pain, trying to make it work. And it can, the portal can be there, it doesn't depend on what the particular configuration of objects in your consciousness has to be at this time. Maybe it's great at the moment, everything is working in my life.

Okay, we'll meet again in a year's time. Because it's not in the nature of things to stay around stable for too long. Or you might say, everything is collapsing in my life.

Great! Loss, loss, the structures of my life are becoming unstable. Oh, that's good news.

Loss is coming. A portal is opening up. So here, the arising of space consciousness and such a simple thing, simply acknowledging silence.

It's there. Noticing that it's there. It doesn't matter for how long you can notice it, just notice it.

And as long, every noticing of it is the arising of thoughtless awareness during that noticing of silence. And of course, the arising of that is sacred. It is.

I use largely non- religious language. In that way, it is more accessible to people who have lived with the terminology of religion that's been used by the mind without the actual experience or knowledge of it for so long. So misused, really, by the mind.

But that is the only state of being out of which that arises which makes life so precious on this earth. It is only out of that state that love arises. Anything you look upon that is not judged or labeled or interpreted according to one's conditioning, anything that you look upon and allow it to be as it is, you enter a completely different relationship to that whether it is a being, a human being, an animal, a plant, a completely different relationship from the relationship that you would have with it if you were looking at it through the conditioning of the mind and the self that goes with it. And that self cannot see the sacredness that is in every being. It is only looking at what is my relationship to this.

How does he or she or it fit in with me? So even when it looks at a beautiful plant it will have some kind of relation to me. It might want to pull it out.

I want to have that. Or it might say, I wonder where I can get that works great in my garden. But there needs to be some relationship of me or these are relatively mild, innocent manifestations of that relatively.

But then we come to the same thing that me comes in the form of a company and they look at an ancient forest been there for 20,000 years or more and all they see is what they can get out of it. They might only see it's worse, it's such and such on the market. This is what we can do with it.

They miss the deeper dimension in everything they miss it. The deeper dimension in each human being is missed when you're only there as a labeling entity judging when the spaciousness of presence isn't there you miss the essence of all beings and your own continuously. And that's why the sacredness of the ancient forest in order to sense the sacredness of the ancient forest there needs to be some space of stillness in you even if you didn't know it.

Otherwise you might be going to the forest and writing a PhD about this particular tree and again that's not really true that's mind knowledge it has its place occasionally but to be absorbed by mind knowledge completely then you miss the essence of all things. You miss the essence of the forest. You may know a lot about the forest you might have studied about forestry for six years and your mind may be full of knowledge about the forest but if the if the spaciousness isn't there in your perception if you cannot go there and for a moment be in the state of complete openness that is the state of perception in and through the stillness then the essence you cannot sense that.

And then you do it to human beings all you see is the form of that human being all you see is the physical form and all you see is the psychological form of the conditioning of that person which you are going to label very quickly and then the labels are the screen through which you interact with the other person you've reduced the person in many cases the labels are so one sided that some people do that more strongly than others that you reduce other human beings to mere caricatures through focusing on certain judgments it becomes just absurd reduction of who that human being is but one way or another that's what the mind does so if you are lost in it an awful existence to be totally lost in the conditioned forms not knowing who you are or who the other person not knowing the dimension of depth and even this gathering here there's a sacredness to that and that is missed unless there's some space inner space cessation of mental noise doesn't matter for how long and from then on as that arises thought no longer has that incredible importance you no longer totally believe in every thought that still comes you have some distance between the thought and you and you don't completely believe in every thought that arises anymore you're not completely in it otherwise you're totally conditioned so this simple portal of listening to silence and the mind becomes still and after a little while you can listen to the stillness within even if there's no stillness no silence outside you could be in the middle of a traffic and suddenly the mind is still that comes with all the portals are really one so that for example comes with allowing this moment to be totally noisy traffic not moving fumes machines noise the mind says I need to be there this is dreadful what's going on it is as it is and then you allow that moment to be and suddenly that same stillness is there there it is so you see all the portals are really one they're different entry points to the same state of consciousness and that is the state in which thinking becomes secondary in your life ah at last and the thinking that is still there it will still happen first of all on the one hand thinking loses its capacity to make you unhappy that's a relief because the unhappiness that arises in you is created by thought not by what happens it's created by thoughts about what happens obviously as I called it already Shakespeare nothing is either good or bad but thinking makes it so and for many people their minds are torture instruments that they are condemned it seems to live with

[Speaker 2] (2:19:54 - 2:19:55)

uh oh

[Speaker 1] (2:19:56 - 2:25:33)

and so many thoughts they have about themselves other people situations they are in are critical and judging and so much pain in those thoughts that transform simple situations into big problems of me so there are many people who live with a self mind made self that is a very cruel entity and they would never live with a person like that would you live I wouldn't live with somebody who is continuously critical criticizes me all the time disapproves of what I do all the time and yet people have many people have their self is predominantly negative there are many people like that who have to live with themselves if that were their husband or wife they would have gotten a divorce long ago but but you can't divorce yourself from yourself you can only be aware of yourself so thought then you have a space around thought increasingly as this presence arises thoughts still come even old thought patterns still happen for a while they're no longer so energized by total identification because it's only total identification with thought that gives them enormous energy there's a me in every thought what's going to happen at night you wake up as I used to three o'clock in the morning and suddenly the mind becomes hyperactive I have to think about this oh my god and then the emotions that you sense the mind is painting disasters that are going to happen you know and the emotions that you feel are as if these things that the mind is fantasizing about were already happening and people have to live with these entities that is a beautiful moment in bed warm silence all around the night very still they don't realize that they are in some kind of hell and so you must think about this as a mind you must think about this the mind is saying I'm trying to find a solution to this problem of course it's fueling the problem that's what people live with so on the one hand the mind loses its capacity to make you unhappy because now you have a distance even if the old thought patterns still arise they are recognized as thought so they don't you don't necessarily believe in what every thought says it loses its importance although thought will try to get importance back every thought wants to be taken very seriously because if you take it seriously you give it more energy every thought says give me your complete attention because I matter and it pulls it wants to pull it in that's how it is and so you there it is all that's required is to be there allow even the mental noise to be enter the state of non-resistance to what is you could even try that with unhappiness unhappiness is of course is some form of no to what is some form of non-alignment with now I'm so unhappy that you feel the unhappiness of me if you try this little thing okay I'm unhappy so what I accept I'm unhappy I don't mind being unhappy

[Speaker 2] (2:25:35 - 2:25:36)

so unhappy

[Speaker 1] (2:25:36 - 2:49:01)

there's the unhappiness there it is and suddenly you can have a space even around unhappiness anything that you accept becomes transformed that's the miracle and many of you have actually already experienced that in your life that by when you let go of needing a situation to be different from the way it is you wanted it to be different but nothing happens you let go you allow it to be and suddenly it changes so much so that the expression has been coined by somebody what you resist persists so the resistance to what is keeps you stuck with what is so thought loses its capacity to make you unhappy on the one hand but on the other hand as presence arises thought actually becomes more powerful too because thought that is inspired by the one intelligence that comes out of the state of presence is fresh alive new creative it contains insights it has energy to it that is transformative when you speak to somebody out of presence they will listen because they can sense there's more than the words there's an energy that comes with the words I talk a lot about these things and every time I talk it feels completely new to me because it comes out of the state of presence I've said these things many times in one way or another but the words are nevertheless fresh because they come out of presence and it's it's so alive so that is the thoughts then become more powerful less self-serving and you can create through thought of course you can everybody does it most of them unconsciously and then you create not so much as someone who needs something to complete him or herself but creation happens through you out of the joy of creating aliveness out of the joy of playing in this universe of form and so the new motivating factor for action as the old motivating factor for action disappears which is fear and wanting the two motivating factors in the egoic self-obsessed state desire or wanting and fear those two motivate people and that becomes replaced by the joy of acting of doing in the now not making this now into a means to an end but to enjoy the movement the doing every master whatever your master at in your field of mastery there will be a joy as you perform those actions and so thought becomes also more empowered the silence is still there and I will keep you here a little bit longer unless you need to go there's something that can easily obscure the portals into presence and that is what I call the pain body the pain body is accumulated residues of emotional pain from the past your personal past as a child you suffer emotional pain especially living on this mad planet emotional pain inflicted on you as a child especially children the pain of the child leaves residues of pain also the pain later on in relationships that you might suffer residues left emotional residues of painful emotion and they come together in the body as the pain body the past pain that still is an energy field that humans carry inside but part of it is actually goes back a long long time part of it is human pain collective human pain and humans have created so much of that in their history on the planet enormous self-created pain so every human in addition to accumulating more pain in their personal lives have their share of collective human pain and that's always more than whatever you can collect in your personal life and that is an energy field of stuck non-flowing aliveness the emotions live in the body one can say in your energy field and I will offer to you the helpful perspective of looking upon this pain body almost as an emotional entity that lives in you but you don't know it's there all the time it's not always visible so this emotional entity it is a way of looking but it comes quite close to the truth is some of the time dormant when things are going relatively okay in my life ups and downs yes I'm uneasy yes I'm restless yes I haven't found myself yet yes I'm struggling but I can live with it pain body is dormant then pain body occasionally needs to become active to feed on something the emotional entity of pain needs to feed on the further experience of pain more pain I want some more pain I need to not enough pain one could call this the human addiction to pain and that is the pain body and if you observe yourself or start with others it's always easier you can see that when the pain body is dormant it's fine you might not even notice it perhaps as a slight weight or turbulence in the background but you may not notice it at all then suddenly it becomes active when it becomes active it means it's feeding time it will then use any any trigger in your surroundings and react to something it will trigger usually something relatively minor it could even be just a thought in your head triggers far more pain than would be warranted by that situation out of proportion very often to the situation but the situation doesn't matter to the pain body it will use a trigger for the influx of pain a thought is enough if you live alone in your head one small negative thought about me and my life or my partner and the pain body will flow if it's ready to awaken it will move into that thought which then becomes empowered by emotion and that emotion will lead to further thoughts a whole stream of negative thoughts starting from the one thought and that stream is full of emotion so it's empowered the emotional stream is empowered by the pain body but the thought stream is empowered by the emotion and at that time the emotion renews itself by feeding on your thinking every thought is energy it feeds on that it loves the negativity of every thought how dreadful my life is how dreadful he is life is generally my life situation anger depression fear fearful thoughts one fearful thought after another and the pain body loves it and that means you are identified with that old pain pain body has become you it's feeding on your mind and at that time you don't want to let go of the negative stream of thinking you love it not ultimately you but you have identified with pain body that's why you love the pain it's an indulgence in the negativity of it more of it more please and it can become very destructive it can destroy sometimes a pain body episode which can last for a few hours can last even for a whole day in some cases two days it can stick around for three days it varies from person to person but a few hours is quite normal a few days is not uncommon longer periods are also possible in very heavy pain bodies they can be active for two weeks three weeks even in some extreme cases 90% of the time 100% of the time in deeply unhappy people who live almost exclusively through their pain body and everything they see and judge is through the pain every relationship gets immediately sabotaged through the pain that they carry so they bring it into the relationship but most people have dormant pain bodies and active they fluctuate once a week once every two weeks twice a week the pain body will need to feed on more pain and then it'll use your partner because it's not enough to feed on your mind it is looking to other people to feed on their reactions emotional pain give me some pain I need some more drama please and the right buttons are pushed especially in your partner and you get drama and they love it couples are forced in the unconscious state to reenact periodically their particular version of the drama and they're feeding their pain bodies please I want you to feed my pain body and so I'm going to provoke you and say something that will trigger pain in you and it works every time and so this is an unconscious movement and many people become so identified with this that it can easily obscure presence the portals that gaze the gates shut of the portals clong clong clong clong and then the pain body says all that nonsense about pain body and all that talk was so much nonsense this is real this is real and after it the pain body has fed on other people preferably your partner but colleagues will do other family members will do or if you're a hermit it'll feed on your mind and that'll be enough so then it gradually becomes dormant again and you feel a lot better so does the pain body the pain body feels a lot better when it feels a lot worse because to the pain body better means worse and so pain body is an important aspect of the self the mind made self because it is the old emotional accumulations that very often empower amplify the structures of the mind made self so here you have the mind made self that's already quite dysfunctional but added to the dysfunction that's already there comes all the pain from the human past human pain and it becomes a me a self that was already heavy even without that and now gets so heavy that you can't carry that burden of self anymore there's so much suffering in it so much anger so much fear whatever the predominant energy field of pain body is so such heaviness turbulence how to live with that but it periodically you get taken over by it again and there are people who've been meditating for 30 years and they don't recognize their pain body and it would be so easy to recognize it when the pain starts and simply watch it as the arising pain body so that it doesn't become a me when you don't watch it you're not aware of it it quickly slips into your mind and uses your thinking if you can watch it then there's a space around it and it cannot pretend to be you anymore it can't really use your thinking anymore it cannot feed anymore because you watch the turbulence you feel it inside you sometimes all over the body it might feel heaviness all over the body it's everywhere almost some people feel it only in the solar plexus or stomach area depends when you observe the pain body arising in another person in your partner you have a first hand view you can the shift in the energy field that comes over that person is so obvious that there is an entity there one could almost say that before there was that beautiful aliveness that may have been the person that you thought you married and suddenly this enormous heaviness or anger a little monster or big monster suddenly there next to you and the shift can happen within one minute how can the wife or the husband turn into that and it happens all the time it's not recognized as the pain body and then the pain body suddenly looks at you and thought processes whatever it thinks about is through its pain it interprets everything through the pain every interpretation of my life who you are who I am what my life situation is totally distorted because it's looked at through the pain so you get an absurd worldview inspired not by heaven but by hell and so most human beings unconscious so they are forced to feed it again and again and very often you will recognize pain bodies the transformation in somebody close to you there it is and you sense you don't need to be a psychic to feel to feel the emanation of that so all that's needed is know it see it for what it is and continue to watch its movement so that it doesn't turn into an unhappy me anymore it cannot flow into the mind structures of the unhappy self and amplify those so all that's left really of the pain body now is a heaviness or a turbulence inside you or a quiver of fear very much like atmospheric turbulence bad weather which isn't a personal problem except to very heavy egos who react even to the weather and say why is it always bad when I want to go out but if you're not such a heavy ego then weather is relatively neutral but really so is the atmospheric turbulence in your own energy field not there's no self in it it's human pain human turbulence okay not a person ultimately so it doesn't amplify anymore the story of me and makes it into some dreadfully unhappy nightmare you watch it almost as a physical symptom when it comes and that's the beginning of freedom because it can no longer replenish itself now as you watch it you recognize it when it comes you might recognize it first in your partner when it comes in your partner and then you might say there's your pain body or maybe not because you might be wrong it could be your pain body already speaking through you not impossible now you could talk to your partner and have an agreement that you will help each other when you notice the other person's pain body at least what you can do is not to confuse the pain body with who that person is so you recognize it as the human pain body now you might live with an extremely dense pain body next to you in your partner so you won't meet anybody who is totally free of pain body but as presence arises in you your partner will no longer be able to feed very much on your reactions so that's very frustrating and then it is quite possible that presence also arises in your partner or it won't be long before he or she will look for some better pain body to live with and there's no shortage of pain bodies

[Speaker 2] (2:49:04 - 2:49:05)

so

[Speaker 1] (2:49:18 - 2:54:54)

this is the one thing that needs to be recognized in yourself so that it cannot obscure the arising presence each time it comes in fact it can actually contribute to the arising presence usually pain body pain body would pull you back into unconsciousness identification with it and you're in the middle of the pain body and then finally it goes and then you wake up oh that must have been the pain body and so then a certain level of consciousness is reached when the pain body doesn't pull you into unconsciousness anymore but the pain that you feel the turbulence or the heaviness actually triggers more presence the pain body becomes like a little alarm clock for more intense aliveness of presence oh there it is and you stay really alert and watch it and it can't feed so usually what the pain body does then when you're very alert while it's there oh and alert means you allow it but you see it the pain body doesn't like that it comes into the light of consciousness and all that light you looking at it it withdraws and then it waits for a better moment when you're less conscious after drinking some alcohol it may come up that's a favorite not the first class the second or third suddenly the male pain body does that quite often that's why quite a few men become violent after a few drinks they trigger the male pain body or you could watch TV for hours three or four hours your level of consciousness goes down down and then you switch off and suddenly oh so there's a more modern phenomenon that relatively you have this huge and a few drinks they trigger a large part of the entertainment industry of course brings out violent movies in other words people pay money to feel bad they pay money to sit there and feel bad now who does that who is paying money to sit there and feel bad the pain bodies so the large part of the entertainment industry is financed by pain bodies and made by pain bodies they make the films the pain bodies make the films the pain bodies watch the films works oh that was a great film i feel really bad the human condition so that's all that we need to see time passes very quickly when the truth arises it doesn't really exist anymore that's why this afternoon passed almost in an instant and that's beautiful so this if we had more clock time we could spend more asking questions but ultimately it's not through any further questions or answers that presence arises in you it's arising already be alert there are portals let's just use them so to speak and it's happening anyway it's happening already no need to look to the future for some kind of attainment you are already yourself fully at the deepest level there's nothing you can add to you that is truly essential only on the world of form you can play with adding and losing and gaining and losing but you're already that already complete then the rest is easy you can play the world becomes a lighter place you can play in it and enjoy even the world of form don't need to say this is form

2015 Eckhart Tolle In The Presence of A Great Mystery

[Speaker 1] (0:01 - 2:49:26)

Welcome to our afternoon together. Many of you have only just arrived here, and perhaps some of you are not yet completely here. There may be parts of you that are still arriving.

So let's wait for them to get here. The truth, of course, is it's very rare for a human being to be completely here. The usual state is to be peripherally here, just enough so that you don't bump into things, and the rest of your attention is taken up by what appears to be much more important than here, and that's past and future, and somewhere else.

And almost everybody believes unconsciously, because when you make it conscious, you see the fallacy of it. Everybody believes, almost everybody believes past and future to be more important than here and now. That's an implicit assumption.

That's how people lead their lives. If you ask them, maybe they won't admit. They say, well, no, but how do you live?

Do you live as if past and future matter more than this? As if you didn't know that this now is all there ever is, that your entire life unfolds within the space of now, that your life is never not now. Now, you may start thinking and say, is that true?

It would be hard to argue with that, very hard, that your life is never not now. You can remember the past, only now. You can think of the future, only now.

Whatever you think, do, feel, experience can only happen now. I don't believe the greatest philosopher could argue with that, but the mind is very clever. It may find reasons why this is not the case, but in any way, humans live not recognizing the truth of that.

The shift in consciousness that is happening on the planet is very closely connected with that realization because the shift in consciousness that is an absolute necessity on this planet now is not something that is going to happen. It's happening now in you at this very moment or not at all, and that doesn't make sense to the mind either. The shift in consciousness is not to do with improving your ability to think or adding more information to the store of information that each one of you already has, your knowledge.

If you wanted to improve yourself on that level, there are many universities you can go to to add to yourself in terms of knowledge, but that adding to is not the shift in consciousness. It is a continuation of the same consciousness that is the state of being completely identified with your thought processes, with the content of your mind, the content of your mind, which is thought. One thought after another.

Identification with the content of your mind leads to a sense of self, a sense of identity, a me that is based on thought activity, based on a mentally constructed story, and the emotions that accompany that mentally constructed story, which is the most fascinating story on the planet, which is the story of me, and all the identifications that go with that, the reactive patterns that go with that, all the knowledge, the opinions, the viewpoints, the achievements and the non-achievements, the successes and failures which make up the story of me, your sense of who you are, that begins with your name, to which many other things are then added, identifications, which are all thought forms. The child begins to say, this is my toy, which means there is a beginning identity, and humans have to go through that. The tragedy is if they get stuck in that limited content-based, thought-based sense of self or identity.

For a child, it is good to say this is my toy, not yours. It's mine, and in that statement, which is the arising of a thought form that is invested with a sense of self, there's the beginning of a mind-made me. It's the beginning of a story, because you're telling the story that this is mine.

The thought form is what matters, not the toy, because the thought form is invested with a sense of self. 20 years later, the toy becomes the BMW, mine. Same thing, same thought form.

It's not the car that matters. It's the thought form that has a sense of self in it that matters, and that's only one level possessions. You may graduate beyond that.

Most of you in this room have gone beyond that level. Otherwise, you wouldn't be here of identifying with material possessions. Occasionally, it may still happen, but surely you have gone beyond that, except perhaps that then you identify with the thought that you are somebody who has gone beyond material possessions, which is another little story.

It looks more advanced, so the identification with thought forms, the identification with thought as me becomes more and more subtle as you progress spiritually. You recognize certain very simple identifications, and then more subtle identifications come in. There's the identification with other people's opinions of you, which you adopt becomes a thought form.

What the world thinks of me, am I important or not important? That may shift. One day, the world may tell you you are important, and the next day, it changes its mind.

So many things come in to form a bundle of thoughts and identifications and patterns. That is your sense of who, that's who I, that's me. The mind-made sense of self.

And this is, I sometimes call it the old consciousness. That's been the dominant state of consciousness on the planet for as long as we can remember, recorded history and beyond that, far beyond that, to be identified with that very limited self. And one of the first human beings to discover that cage, that trap, that dreadful limitation, and to see how much pain and suffering this delusion causes that all you are is a mental story, that identification with thought, to see how much suffering that sense of self causes to yourself, and if you cause suffering to yourself, you make others suffer.

One of the first human beings to see that was the person we now call the Buddha. 2,600 years ago, he saw the delusion of what he called self. That we could say is the self that we spell with a small s.

But if we now say there is a self with a big capital S, that's, we have to be very careful with statements like that, because very easily another concept forms in the mind with which one can identify. You then become somebody who believes in a greater self that can add something substantial to your sense of self. And most usefully, you can disagree with others who don't share that opinion or that viewpoint, which strengthens the self enormously.

If you can disagree with somebody, somebody who does not agree with your mental position, challenges it, questions it, and then you defend it. And an enormous amount of energy goes into the defense of mental positions, personally and collectively, warfare, collectively. They're defending collective mental positions, not a me, but an us against them.

We against them. On a personal level, it's me against all those who threaten me. An amazing state.

This is coming to an end now, but you don't need to believe that. We are here this afternoon because something else is arising or is being realized. We need to be very careful with words.

I often, I'd like to stop almost every other sentence and say, that's not quite it, it just points to it. So be careful with getting attached to a statement. No statement, statement is very rarely absolutely true.

They're all little pointers. And this afternoon, there's only one thing we ever talk about. What's that?

The flowering of human consciousness. Another pointer. What's that?

The mind will say, explain, give a definition, and then a definition comes. Then the mind says, okay, now define that. Or it adopts another mental position and say, this does not agree with the mental positions that I have formed in my head.

These are not my positions. Now, you may have noticed already that this afternoon does not work so well on the level of thought. It's not really a lecture.

It looks like it on the surface, but it isn't. It's not a workshop either. I don't know what it is.

If tonight you call somebody up and they ask you, what did he talk about? And if you can say, well, he talked about this and that and that and that, then you probably didn't get it. But if you say, well, I don't know, I can't, I don't really remember what he talked about.

It's more likely that then you got it. This is strange. This gathering here this afternoon is pointing to a dimension within you that is deeper than thought and deeper even than the flux of emotions, a dimension of consciousness within you.

The possibility of realizing that dimension within yourself, that realization is the flowering of consciousness and it is not, it has nothing to do with adding new concepts to the content of your mind. This afternoon does not work if you expect something to be added to you, but of course there is the unconscious belief that something needs to be added to me so that I can be complete and full and fulfilled and being completely myself. There is the unspoken, unconscious or semi-conscious belief that who or what I am is not yet enough and that is a walking entity that believes that.

That is one of the core beliefs of the mind-made sense of self. I am not yet enough. I need more to be fully and completely myself and that walking entity that needs more to be fully and completely itself will become frustrated this afternoon sitting here because it is not being fed more concepts or opinions, information, knowledge, interesting and fascinating ideas that it can add and then walk out a little bit expanded because you have added to the store of knowledge with which you can then identify the me, the story of me has expanded then a little bit. So it doesn't work like that. So if you cannot get beyond that entity with its very strong need for more, then you may not make it.

You may not be able to endure sitting here the whole afternoon because you will continuously be waiting for a statement that explains it all where suddenly it goes, click, now I know what enlightenment is. When is he going to say it? Come on.

And you may notice in yourself this enormously powerful need which is part of the conditioned mind made entity. This enormous need, there's nothing personal in that at all. Oh, that's a disappointment.

I thought it was my problem. This enormous need for the next moment where surely it's going to happen. And then what?

And you can see it in people's faces when they go about their daily business, the tension, the strain, because they need the next moment and they're saying, isn't it here yet? And this isn't, people live like that, it's normal. If you watch TV, a lot of what you see, how people, whatever you see, film, soap operas or whatever, or the news readers, they're all in that state of where's the next moment where surely things are going to be resolved.

So you may encounter frustration and when you find it, that's fine. Don't say, don't be frustrated. When you encounter frustration as you sit here, that's fine, you notice it, you see it for what it is.

That means you are not the frustration. That's a pattern that you then discover in yourself. And whatever you discover as a pattern is fine.

Because there it is, you see it. If you don't see it, you are it. And then you become fidgety and then finally you will jump up and run out of the room.

I don't want to discourage anybody from visiting the bathroom, but I mustn't get up, otherwise people will think that I am identified with it. Yes. Now, we are pointing here to a deeper dimension of consciousness within yourself where the need, that deep seated need for the next moment, which is very closely related, really one with the enormous needs that people have for needing to add more to me to make me complete, which is ultimately a delusion because you never get there.

We are here to go beyond that. And as I speak, that dimension may arise in you where the need for the next moment suddenly falls away. And you don't go to sleep.

If you go to sleep, that's fine too. But it is an enormous thing when you suddenly, you're able to simply be in that beautiful state of relaxed, alert presence and perceive whatever it is that you're perceiving without the need for more. Something now arises in you that is not conditioned.

We could say, but be careful with any word. They're only, all words are pointers, no more. We could say what is arising is the unconditioned dimension of consciousness.

Consciousness, sometimes called awareness. So the shift in consciousness that is happening on the planet in you, otherwise it's not happening, is something that you may not even have been aware of that shift because it was still so much identification with thinking and from the point of view of thinking, nothing much is happening here. And this shift is the shift and it is an enormous, incredible transformation in a human being.

When that happens, it is a shift from being based in thought to being based in awareness. It is the shift from being dominated in the grip of thinking, the continuous stream of thinking and self-identification with thinking to what I sometimes call consciousness without thought. Now, thought will jump in now and make that into a problem and into something to be achieved.

How? Through more future. Okay, that sounds great, how do I get there?

That dimension of consciousness is already fully developed in you underneath the stream of thinking. That's why you can't get there. If something is already fully here, you can't get there.

That could only take you away from it. So what a little hint before I continue that some of you may find very useful as you sit here, there are two dimensions one could say to this talk, the words and the spaces between the words. Usually an audience, when an audience comes to listen to a lecture or a talk, all they are interested in is the words, the concepts, the thoughts, which they can add to their mind, the content of their mind, the content of me.

It is rare, very rare for an audience, a listener to be conscious not only of the words which in you exist as thoughts, they go into your ears, become little nerve impulses, are then decoded and become a thought, that's on one level. On another level, the entire talk is happening within you to be conscious not only of the words, but of the ground that underlies the arising, the coming and going of words. Now in you, what is auditory perception becomes thought.

If you become conscious of, which all that that means is notice, this makes it more simple. If you notice not only the words, but the space or stillness between the words, which is there, usually ignored, then sitting here, can be a very powerful transformation within you. Why?

The mind wants to understand why, so will satisfy up to a point, the mind, only up to a point. Because if you become aware of the silent spaces, the ground, like the canvas, the space or the silence, the stillness, the gaps is where the canvas, so to speak, shines through. There's the words and there's the background.

The words are the foreground. Awareness of the background does something amazing inside you. Awareness of the foreground, all that it does, all that does is create new thoughts because that's the foreground, the words becoming thoughts.

And there's the mind grasping at each new one. And if you're sitting here only interested in the foreground, you're here with a tension in your head a little bit. And the tension implies, what's the next thing then?

Okay, go on. Oh, and now consciousness of the background, what happens inside you through the simple act of noticing the space or the stillness or the gaps? There's nothing much there.

Thought says, there's nothing there. What am I noticing? Nothing.

From the point of view of the mind, this is true. But every moment that you notice that little space, the underlying space, that is a moment of space inside you. And that is an amazing thing when space arises inside you.

What is that? What does that mean? The mind says, space arises.

It is a moment of pure consciousness with nothing in it except awareness. A space of pure awareness, I've already said too much, just unconditioned. I've recently come to call that space consciousness.

This is not a term from science fiction. We're talking about inner space. The one thing that in your lifetime here, any achievement, no matter what you achieve, if you are poor and deprived and ultimately have not flowered, if you have not found space within yourself, and then all that there was in your life, all that there is in your life is things.

Every thought is a thing. Then you are trapped in a world of things, both external things, and you know what that is like. So much going on, objects, situations, you have to deal with, and the next thing, and another thing that absorbs your attention.

A life dominated by things happening. What's the next thing? And then the inner things, one thought after another, and identified with each arising thought becomes a part of the problematic me, completely dominated by, we could call that object consciousness, objects everywhere.

And when people interact with each other, superficial interactions, relationships, close relationships, families, at work, every interaction is dominated by object consciousness. Something is very important here, and it's not the relationship, it's something that we need to get out of it, something we need to get to, some other point. It's not this moment, it's the next moment, that is always goes part of object consciousness.

What's the next object that matters? No space. No space also, by the way, means no love, because you are trapped in forms, form identities.

Every form reduces you, every form that you identify with reduces you to that form, every thought, and the bundle of thoughts, the me, that's the human condition. To be trapped in object consciousness, not knowing the freedom that is there, waiting underneath it as the vast spaciousness that is within you, that is the unconditioned consciousness itself, where you go beyond a purely personal sense of self. And the amazing thing is, that is so close to you, that you could never get there if you create a distance by believing that something will enable you to get there.

That is the danger that is built into every technique. Some techniques are very good. They are there to bring about space consciousness, but the person practicing the technique will have put the technique between him or herself and the space, and to create it a little bit of future.

So as you sit here, simply to be aware, not just of the words, but also of the underlying space or the gaps, you could call it, between words. And in every moment when you notice that, like now, and now, and now, there you have simple intelligence, and you can perceive this room, the body sitting on a chair, listen to the words, this perception happens, but you're perceiving it through the stillness that is there in between the words. You're no longer perceiving through the conditioned mind that labels every perception, compares it to something, or already projects itself forward to the next moment.

Well, there's going to be something that is more complete than this. And this is an amazing, if this is all, if you have only moments here, as you sit here, of perception through stillness or awareness, in which that which is perceived is not labeled mentally by calling it something, comparing it to something, putting some mental, just, that is an amazing thing. If you can then walk out of here, perhaps in the break, and take a cup of tea or coffee from someone, and while he or she gives it to you, your hand reaches out for the coffee or tea, and within that space of taking this coffee and lifting it, it's happening without mental commentary.

Wow, it's possible that the mind then will come in and say, oh, it's happening without mental commentary. That's okay. Afterwards, it comes in sometimes, but it is an amazing thing.

And from the point of view of the mind-made self, this is not significant at all, because it always says, okay, and yeah, okay, I got that now, what's next? Because the mind-made self is based on what's next and what, and that does not add anything to it. But that is the most amazing thing if, and this is only a tiny, it may arise initially, and many of you, it's arising already, you may not even know it fully, that already in your life, there are spaces.

And I'm absolutely sure that in many of those spaces are already arising, and you may not even have fully known this. You may only have noticed it as occasionally peace in your life as you go about your daily business, a space of peace. You may only have noticed it as inner peace in the midst of doing something perhaps, not beyond that and not perhaps recognized it as the arising of unconditioned consciousness within you.

Thousands and thousands of years of collective human conditioning subsiding as that space arises. And then you are looking at a cup of coffee or a flower or the sea, or you go from here, walk three, four steps down the stairs, staircase, in a state of simple, alert presence. That is an amazing thing, way to live.

What does it, how does that change my life? Says the little me. And above all, how does that solve my problems?

Don't I need to solve my problems first before I can allow myself to explore this dimension of consciousness? Or don't we need to tackle all the problems that are out there in the world, not all the enormous amount of suffering that is on the planet? Don't we need to sort that out first before we can allow ourself the luxury of transformation of human consciousness?

The mind asks. It may be a legitimate question, of course. So much suffering, yes, in oneself and in the world, but what comes first?

Can you tackle human suffering without going to the cause, the root cause of human suffering? Self-inflicted, humans inflicting it on themselves, each other and themselves, so ultimately self-inflicted by humanity on itself, as you saw the warfare, that is human history. Why is all that, where does that madness come from?

Why this need, this seemingly, this inability or unwillingness to live together peacefully? Why can't they do it? Why can't we do it?

What is it that impels humans to violence, not just the obvious violence out there that we see in the world, but also violence in relationships that may not even be physical violence, the violence at work, the fighting battles for a little bit of power, a little bit more position, more power, a little bit more money, a little more right than you, where does that come from, that self-inflicted suffering? It comes from not knowing yourself beyond the needy little entity that is the mind-identified me with its story, which needs, not only does it need more, it also needs conflict.

That's an amazing realization, that there is something in me that needs conflict to keep it going. Why is that? What is the mind-identified self that needs conflict?

Why does it need, look at a simple thing like the need to be right, which is a great source of conflict in relationships. If you look, a lot of conflict in relationships is based on the need to assert my position as right, me to be right, which implies I need you to be wrong. And an enormous amount of emotional force goes into defending one's mental position and proving that I am right and you are wrong.

This is one of the ways in which the mind-made me strengthens itself. Because if I can be right, I have added a little bit to my sense of self. I have diminished yours, it's all delusion, but it works, it's on the level of delusion, of course.

I have diminished your sense of self and I have added something to my sense of self. I am right, I have identified with a mental position and then asserted the position as me. And in some cases, it goes as far as physical violence that need to be right.

Collective entities need to be right too. We are right, our belief structure, which is not recognized as a belief structure, it's called the truth, it's not recognized as a story, it's called this is how it is. And so we are in possession of the truth, our interpretation is not recognized as an interpretation.

We, this is the truth, we are absolutely right, you are absolutely wrong. So we create an enemy and that's enormously satisfying to the mind-made self. You can see how satisfying it is inside you when you can be right.

And so finally, perhaps you've even triumphed and you've shown the whole world that you are right. Sometimes the mind-made me does that by, let's say there's a committee meeting or something and one person gets up and shouts his or her point of view and before anybody has a chance to question it, they walk out of the room. Just say, you are all totally wrong.

This is how it is and then quickly walk out before anybody can challenge it. And then you walk and then feel enormously enhanced in your sense of self and then it wears off. So then it has a need for enemies, the mind-made self, because it's a sense of the story of me is defined through those things that impinge upon me, that those things that are problematic.

This is how we all know people who is, where you would say, who would they be without their problems? I'm sure you've met one or two, but of course the question really, some have it more strongly than others. But everybody's sense of mind-made self, a lot of the story of me is the problems of me that go into my sense of identity.

And in many human beings, if you removed the problems, I'm in conflict with this situation and that's, and not much would be left of their sense of identity. With, if you remove the conflict out of the mentally constructed story, the story comes to collapses. What's not much left without my enemies, without my ex-wife and ex-husband and whatever things without the belief that the world has treated me unfairly, which surely is the truth, without the belief that I didn't make it, something prevented me.

So there is a need in the structure of the mind to be in opposition with something or someone. This is the mind-made self is looking for the next thing to be in opposition with, a human being or a situation or a place. Anything will do because, and that is one of the mind patterns that is very, very frequent, very common mind pattern when you are totally identified with the self is complaining about something or someone in the head.

If you're very alert, you can catch yourself complaining a lot of the time and looking for the next thing to complain about. Where's the stain in the carpet? There, that shouldn't be there.

Why didn't they remove that? They should have done something about it a long time ago. Shouldn't they?

Don't you agree? Oh, yes, yes. It's dreadful.

They are just awful. Yes, of course. Every time you complain, you've made something or someone wrong.

A situation, a person, a place, the weather. And when you make something or someone wrong, the fiction of me, the mind-made me, grows a little bit stronger. So every little complaint in the head that you have about a person, a situation or my life, my what happened to me, is satisfying to the mind-made self because at least now you think you know a little bit more strongly who you are.

Your sense of self has become a little bit enhanced through complaining. So some people have that pattern so strongly that their very identity is a complaining one. Me, what they did to me.

Me, life, what life did to me. Oh, let me tell you about it. And so to discover that pattern is liberating.

What does it mean to discover it? It simply means to see it. Oh, oh, okay.

There it goes again. That means you're no longer trapped in it. And that is another instance where when you see something like that, that was a habitual pattern in yourself, that you had identified with completely, when you see it, that also is one way in which the unconditioned consciousness is arising in you.

Because that in you that recognizes, that sees a pattern is free, is not part of the pattern. And the seeing doesn't need to label it. You simply see it.

Any inner pattern that's been habitual in you that was part of your sense of self, you see it internally. You recognize it. Oh.

And perhaps the next time the complainer comes as you walk out of here, and suddenly you see it. Oh, okay. There it was again.

Something is arising that is not part of that. And that is also the unconditioned. That is very similar to you noticing the gap between words here.

That is another way in which that dimension is arising. And so you are becoming free of thousands of years of collective mental conditioning that has created unbelievable suffering on this planet. A nightmare of suffering on this planet.

Simply because human beings have been completely trapped in a narrow, personalized, collective or personal, personalized sense of self, me, form totally identified with mental formations as a me. Human beings have been completely trapped in a narrow, personalized, collective or personal, personalized sense of self, me, form totally identified with mental formations as a me. Complete absence of space.

No space. Therefore, no love, because love arises out of the unconditioned, not through identification with a form as a me. The me form in the head, of course, needs other humans to add to it as a thought forms to enhance my sense of self.

Maybe, okay, you are the ideal person. You meet someone. And very often when there's a strong attraction, it means that this person is ideally enhancing my sense of self.

I feel more myself when I'm with you. You are here to fulfill me. And we are going to sign a contract that you are going to fulfill me for the rest of my life.

And I'll get very angry if you don't. And it usually happens. The anger comes.

The anger comes and the frustration comes because nothing in this world can live up to the expectations that you have as a mind-made little self with its story that's as yet incomplete. Nothing in this world can live up to those expectations because the story-based me says, okay, do something. Make me complete.

It's looking for places, situations, conditions, people. And sooner or later, and usually sooner, frustration sets in. It's not living up to expectations.

It's not at every retreat, we have some people who get extremely unhappy because their accommodation does not live up to expectation. I hadn't booked, I had booked a better room. I'm not saying you can't go to the office and say you made a mistake, I think.

I'm in a shed and I booked the best. Okay, we made a mistake. Or they say, no, well, nothing we can do about it now.

The world let me down again. And that's the strange thing. And you may have noticed the world lets you down a lot.

That includes people. And then the little me comes up with strange theories and interpretations. The story becomes very twisted.

And it says, I'm not trusting anybody anymore because they've all let me down. That's how they are. They're all like that.

They talk about spiritual, but even the spiritual people let me down. And the story then gets incorporated into the story. And that is a little bit satisfying at least.

The world lets you down, but then the story that you form out of that gives you a little bit of self-enhancement because obviously you are right and increasingly the entire world is wrong. That's, you can feel inflated in that way. It can go to the, it can go the borderline between what we call sanity and insanity is not clearly defined.

And when you look at what is usually called insanity, and then you see most of it is just a little bit more pronounced versions of what is normal. You can see it more clearly. Oh.

Oh. And we call a person insane, just a little bit more of identification with that. Identification with a story, complete absence of space.

Oh. So that a dreadful fate going through life and never realizing the most what is both the most simple and the most profound thing in a person's existence, which goes beyond the person. Never realizing that's something of such simplicity, which is knowing yourself, not as that which arises in your consciousness, in consciousness as objects, thoughts, sense perceptions, situations, events, emotions, knowing yourself, not as that which arises, but as the space in which all those things that make up your life, which ultimately is not your life, but only your life situation, all those things that make up your life, that conventionally you would identify with as my life, a dreadful limiting thing, those things that arise, come and go, knowing all those things ultimately not to be who you are and knowing yourself to be not that which arises in consciousness, but consciousness itself. As you sit here, what does that mean? What arises here, words, thoughts, sense perceptions, they come and go.

Underlying it, there's a space of awareness without which nothing would arise. If you were not aware, there would not be this room. They would, it all comes to life in your awareness and simply noticing the space, which is the inner space of no thought.

Oh, somebody said, truly, I tell you, unless you become as little children, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. Now, to know what he meant, you have to look at a little child and how a little child perceives the world and perceives you, one year old, one and a half, before the entire structure of the conceptualized mind, including the conceptualized me, before all that begins to come into operation. There is a time in a child's life when they perceive the universe through unconditioned consciousness and there's an innocence and a clarity and a love that flows through their eyes.

And you can see it when you are very alert and you watch a child and a joy, he or she looks at you and you look into the child's eyes and it's liberating because you are not being judged by the mind. There is a pure awareness looking. And with that pure awareness always comes a very subtle joy, which is a simple joy of aliveness itself.

It has nothing to do with your life situation. And the child has that for a brief moment as awareness grows before the mind takes over. Then we go through identification with mind, the story of me.

We begin to suffer, life gets difficult, heavy and serious. It's a serious business, this life, very serious. You better take it seriously too.

And you carry a burden of yourself. The conceptualized self becomes the burden. And then there's the possibility of realizing who you are beyond that.

And then you encounter the childlike state again. It's the same and not the same. In one way, it is the same openness, space of awareness.

And yet, if you have been through the dimension of thought and you've come out the other end, so to speak, which we all have, which humanity has now, there is an added dimension of depth to that awareness that is not yet there in the child. And yet, it's very similar to that state. Innocent perception, innocent, open perception.

The ability, and this is essential, the ability to look. And now I'm using look in a wider sense than just referring to visual perception. I'm using look as almost an analogy for something deeper, which the ability to hold in awareness whatever arises, the ability, one could say, to give attention to whatever arises in this moment, to meet everything that comes into the space of now with that innocent looking, which begins with looking at a flower without labeling it and thus realizing how alive that really is, that you don't really know what it is, that it remains a mystery, that it has a depth to it that you didn't know about it before because you thought you knew what it is when you gave it a name.

And so, to look at a flower in that way where you suddenly know its sacredness and its beauty so deeply as not being separate from who you are, and then to look at another human being in that way. In other words, to meet things and people through that inner dimension of space, which is also unconditioned intelligence itself, in which it appears that you don't know anything, and yet a far deeper intelligence than the conceptualized mind is suddenly flowing through you. And then to meet a problem, a challenging situation, not so much a problem because all problems exist in the head, or there is really a situation that may be challenging, to meet any life challenge, not a story in the head, but an actual challenge which can only be here now, to meet any challenge in that state of clear, aware, alert presence.

And to simply look at it within that alert spaciousness, that means an intelligence far greater than the conditioned mind with all the things that it has learned can now come in and deal with the situation. Some people have encountered that when they were faced with life or death situations, and they had never heard any spiritual teaching like that, say simply, suddenly the mind stopped and they were able to confront the situation in that state of complete alert presence. And they just looked.

Whenever there's a true emergency, the mind is far too slow and it doesn't have enough intelligence to deal with it. So it sometimes happens that the mind steps aside because you want to survive, the mind steps aside and the unconditioned consciousness comes through in that moment when there's a life-threatening crisis. And then you become far greater and deeper and more intelligent than you thought you were because it wasn't you.

You stepped aside, you as the mind made me stepped aside. And then that came through and out of that action sometimes comes and you find yourself doing without premeditated, saying, okay, now I need to run over there, jump into the water and pull this man out of the water, but it might be cold. Should I or shouldn't I?

No, none of this happens. You're just like a bird sitting on a branch. The bird, there are no thought processes involved.

In animals, they are beautiful expressions of consciousness but they're not thinking. Should I or shouldn't I jump off this branch now? It could be dangerous.

Let me think about it. Now, when you look at a bird, you will notice strange movements, the typical bird movements. Every animal has its own way of being in the world.

And the bird is, as all animals are extremely good at looking, there's an intelligence in an animal that operates beautifully, that has become obstructed in humans. Animal is limited, yes, through its form, it has certain limitations, but it lives in greater harmony with the totality because it is a more perfect expression of the totality than humans are. So the bird is sitting on a branch and it looks, and to a human observer, it might appear as if the bird were thinking about what to do next.

But it's not, it's simply looking. Or the cat, now, due to the limitations of animals, a cat cannot help feeling desirous of eating the bird. The cat cannot go beyond that condition pattern.

And yet, within the limitations of its form, it operates beautifully. The cat, when a cat also looks, whenever a cat comes into a new place, comes around a corner or up a hill, and then the cat doesn't just move on, it stops and it looks. And then at some point, movement happens.

No premeditation, it simply happens. And usually they do the right thing. And all, you can, anywhere in nature, you can observe how things function, how beings function without thought, beautifully.

Now, we as humans can learn from that realm of functioning as pure expressions of consciousness, but we cannot go back to the pre-thought stage, although we try sometimes very hard. We try very hard through all kinds of things that get us out of our minds that we can't stand anymore with its heaviness and its problems. Give me another drink.

Oh, I feel a little better now. I'm not thinking that much. I can't even remember my problems.

And then another one. Oh, that feels good. And so you are leaving the problematic evolutionary stage level that we call thinking, but you're not moving beyond thinking.

You're falling below thinking. And even that is liberating from pain. It liberates you a little bit from the dreadful pain of thinking.

I've identified with thinking. And then one more drink, and finally you drop off the chair, you fall off. So you have successfully left the thinking realm but you've moved into pre-thought and unconsciousness.

And you're now on your way towards the vegetable realm. And if you become even more unconscious, you will move to the mineral realm, which also have some consciousness. It's beautiful for minerals to be minerals.

They are not in a world of problems. Minerals are fine, but we are not moving back there. It is the destiny of humans to step beyond thought.

And it doesn't mean that they're not going to think anymore. From then on, thought operates quite beautifully when it's needed because thought has become free of self. It has become simply functional and it's a beautiful function.

It's become free of claiming to be someone, to a me. So where does that leave me? Who am I if I'm not that?

A pattern arises in you, for example, complaining, needing to be right, whatever the pattern is, and you see it. Look, you look at it. Before, you thought you were that pattern.

You didn't know it was a pattern. It was the problematic me. Now you see it as a pattern.

It loses its sense of self. And you are the space within which that is seen. You are that which sees it.

The awareness that sees the patterns. So the story continues of me until it comes to an end, which it does, sooner or later. But while it continues, yes, it's still there.

My past is still there. And yet you even honor it, but you are not seeking yourself in it anymore. This is the form as which you appeared or continue to appear for a little while in this world of form.

And yet you know yourself to be the consciousness that underlies all forms as that which sees, the aware presence. As you sit here, you listen to the words. You are that which listens.

Not what you're listening to, the listening. You are the listener or the listening. When you see, you are not that which you see.

You are the seeing, that which sees, not that which is seen. And that means self-realization beyond the little self that was conditioned. And even when you think, you are not looking for yourself in the thoughts as identified with each little thought.

You are that in which thinking happens, the space in which it happens. And that's a wonderful choice. Freedom, ultimately, freedom from form, freedom from the world, because the world is the world of forms.

And every form has a limited lifespan. It's amazing how quickly forms go. Everything in your life, every experience, every situation, it's here one day and the next day it's gone.

Even this morning, breakfast somewhere, where is that now? It's disappeared, the experience is already gone. You arrived here, you were looking forward to coming here, now you're here, but you're on the express train of time which operates on the surface of things, not in the depths of consciousness.

But on the surface of things in the world of form, time seems to be the dominant force. And it seems that you can't get out of that express train. It pulls you along.

And now you're sitting here and before you know it, the conference is past, it's gone. Oh, that was nice, we had a nice session. You can hang on then to a thought form.

And even that, eventually forget about the conference. And then you have a photo, that was the conference. And then the photo fades, and then you can't, what was that, there are few forms here.

They must be people, but I can't. It's amazing how quickly time dissolves things. And frightening to the mind itself that wants to hang on to something permanent.

Surely there must be something permanent that I can hang on to. No, and so that's why everybody lives in fear. Because deep down, everybody knows it's not going to last.

It's not going to last. I'm looking for something that's going to last. That is a sense of truly being being, of being rooted in life, of being impermanent, a sense of permanency, of, ah, at home.

I want to find home, I want to be at home. Let people live their life. They're never feeling at home.

I haven't arrived yet, wait. And you can't in the world of form. It is not in the nature of the world of form to satisfy you if you're looking for yourself.

That's why it's so frustrating, this world. And that's why you've all seen how, when you finally find the ideal form that you thought would complete you, which might be a situation or a person or a place, it didn't quite live up to expectations. Something came in there that spoiled it all again.

And that's how it is. Every form is already being consumed. That's why a poet wants to compare time to a fire, and it's burning you up.

And that's beautiful, to see how impermanent all the forms are in this life. To the little egoic entity, it is dreadful. Now, why is it liberating to see it, to see that the story of me will end, will finally become the dash between my date of birth and my date of death on my gravestone?

It will become reduced to a one-inch dash. And it mattered so much. It was so serious, my achievements, my successes, my failures, what people did to me and what I didn't achieve.

And it was so important. And then the soap bubble pops, and sometimes very suddenly, and that's usually regarded as the most dreadful thing. But death is something very strange.

What is death? A form dissolves. Where there was something, suddenly there's nothing.

And it could be the death of a person, or it could be the death of something that was important to me, a thought form, something I had identified with as me. It could be a whole way in which I had interpreted the universe. I had sorted it all out in my mind.

I knew exactly where things fitted in where. My little universe was my philosophy of life. And suddenly, death comes and goes whoop, whoop.

But my explanations don't make sense anymore. And that's what death can do. It removes form, not only from out here, it can also remove form inside you as thought forms.

That can be very painful, but it can also be an incredible spiritual opening into formlessness. Because what's left when a form dissolves, and this is why every death is sacred, whether it is the death of a person, or if you have even said, some of you may have sat with an animal that died, and even death of plants. There's always the dimension of the sacred that comes into this world through death.

And I'm not denying that death is also sad on the level of form, that tears may happen when a form dissolves. And yet, whenever a form dissolves, there is suddenly that space that is beyond form. It's like a little opening of space appearing in the fabric of existence that before was so neatly arranged, my house, my living room, every item of furniture was in its place.

And one day I come home and it's collapsed. Where there was a house, there's an empty space. That's a form of death too.

And when it's not resisted through running away internally into future, into some thoughts, some new thoughts, to explain it all, when my explanations, okay, there must be some explanation. Just be with it. Surrender to the factor of death, no matter in what form it comes, because it'll come.

It comes all the time in one form or another. How can you be in this world without encountering death? And is death the dreadful thing that it's made out to be on one level?

Yes, it is very sad. There is pain, perhaps emotional pain. But if you are in touch with who you are beyond thought, you will encounter the strange phenomenon of sensing peace underneath the emotion, which may be pain.

So in any kind of death, a form dissolves. And for a moment, there's an opening into the formless, the unconditioned consciousness, which is sacred, shines through. But you need to allow it internally.

When we are all conditioned into believing that it is the most dreadful thing and a terrible injustice, that there should be such a thing as death, the fact is, there is. And so ancient cultures that were still in touch, where people were not so completely absorbed in thought, they could sense the sacredness of death. And there are always signs of respect whenever a person dies.

In more ancient cultures, people would feel very reverent suddenly. They might have hated that person who suddenly died. And yet the moment this person dies, they show great respect.

They take off their hat, make the sign of the cross, and are very quiet and whisper, as if in the presence of something, some great mystery, which is the truth. They are in the presence of a great mystery. Okay.

But it's not hidden as it is in Western civilization. Death is denied that no dead body must ever be seen unless you're a close relative. Don't look at death.

In ancient cultures, you see the dead body. So welcoming death when it comes into your life as an opening into the formless one life, one consciousness, which is, as you sit here, we are all dying. We are dying to a false sense of self.

And it's beautiful. That's a beautiful death. You've probably died quite a bit already.

To be capable of sitting here and embracing that death of that self voluntarily, you must already have died perhaps a few times, so to speak. And that was painful because there was still resistance. You suffered, otherwise you wouldn't be here.

Suffering is another way. If you want to avoid spiritual teachings and omega conferences and retreats, then eventually suffering will work also for you. It may take a little longer.

The only thing with spiritual teaching is it speeds things up. If you're ready. You may not have noticed that we are talking only about one thing all the time.

Space, whether it's through death, whether it's through becoming aware of space space during this talk, perception, looking without the conditioned mind. It's only a habit, a deep seated habit of labeling everything. So all we are doing, we're going to move our bodies in a little while.

The secret is of this transformation is not so much to make it happen, but to allow it to happen. Because if you think that you have to make it happen, that can easily become another problem. And the fallacy of believing that you need to achieve a particular state, which is very widespread in spiritual circles.

I need to achieve a stage. It's called enlightenment. That's why I'm here because I want to achieve that state.

The truth is you've achieved it already. It's the unconditioned that is already there underneath the conditioned. So how do I fully know that?

I don't, why believe the speaker when he says you are enlightened already. You can add that to the content of your mind. How do you truly know it beyond believing?

And the key to that is, and this is a very powerful portal into space, inner space, the most powerful. We are going deeply into that for the rest of this afternoon, deeper and deeper into that space. And that powerful portal is simply called to allow what is now.

Because what is and now are inseparable. So I don't even need to say now. To allow what is to be as it is.

Because it already is. That is the most powerful opening, voluntary opening. Death is an involuntary opening.

To allow is a voluntary opening. To allow internally this moment to be as it is. The form that this moment takes, which changes all the time.

And a lot of the time, people don't want the form that this moment takes. They want another moment. Not this, I want that.

And when they get to that, they don't want that. Because the mind structure always wants the next and more. Allow this moment internally to be as it is.

And you will notice enormous power comes with that which the ego, egoic little self tells you. You will become powerless if you don't fight anymore. But you become empowered.

And space is that which arises. Whenever you allow this moment to be, no matter what form it takes, because there's only one moment ever, which is this one. The form it takes changes.

The moment doesn't change. It's a fallacy to believe that many more moments happen in your life. There's only ever this moment.

Can't get out of this moment. But the form changes. There's the space of now, which is the space of consciousness, which is you.

The form changes. And usually people resent the form it takes. It's not quite right yet.

This isn't what I wanted. So there's an internal no to the form that this moment takes which keeps the little of me going. But it's the story of no.

The no keeps the story very much alive of me. If I'm not fighting anymore, then the story will dissolve. Who am I without?

You bring a yes to now. With that, suddenly there is space around what happens. This is only a way of putting it.

And that's an inner space, spaciousness. So here's that annoying little thing happening again. And instead of the usual reaction, there's simply the recognition that you cannot argue with what is.

You can, but it's called suffering. And then you, internally, you become aligned with whatever form this moment takes. Instead of reacting to the form that this moment takes, which strengthens your own form identity, the illusion of me.

The reaction keeps it going. Ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah. Whatever the reaction is.

Complaint, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah. And so you bring a yes to now, uncompromising, because it is. Otherwise, you're accusing the universe of not doing a good job.

You say, I could do better. This isn't how things should be. This isn't how life should, but it is.

Now, don't mistake a mental interpretation of what is for what you need to allow. Now, this is very important because otherwise, you might think that, let's say, you lost your money on the stock market. There may be one or two here who experienced the dark night of the soul.

So, and that's good. It all makes sense. You lost 80% of your money, okay.

And 80% of your sense of self, perhaps that was part of what you possessed is also dissolved. And now, what is it that you allow? Do you allow the story that, okay, I worked for nothing.

I saved for the past 30 years. I've been working for nothing. I've had three marriages.

They failed. Now I failed at this. My business empire has also collapsed.

I've, it's all been quite pointless. And it's too late now to start anything new. What could I possibly do now?

So life has dealt me a dreadful blow. This is called a story of me. And as such, it's satisfying, even if it's an unpleasant story, at least it tells me who I think I am.

I still have an identity and I keep telling myself, my story of me. You want to listen to me? Listen what happened to me.

Dreadful. And so that's not when I say allow what is, we're not talking about allowing some fiction in your head because that isn't, it's a story. It's a thought movement.

It's much more simple, allowing what is to be. Allowing what is to be refers to is. This moment, which in the case of the person who lost his or her money on the stock market means standing at a bus stop, waiting to catch a bus, breathing, looking around at the sky, the trees, the aliveness in your body, other people walking past.

Then the bus comes, getting in, paying your fare, sitting down, watching. And there's an alertness and there's a beauty. You're watching the dance of life going on all around you.

You know at the back of your mind that you're going to visit your attorney to file for bankruptcy, but that's the story. Every moment you have a choice. It's not that you forget what this trip is about, but what is it that dominates your consciousness?

Is your consciousness being absorbed by your story or is your consciousness present? Are you totally absorbed in the conditioned consciousness or are you present here as an aware, a space of awareness, which is who you are beyond form? So another way of putting it is, are you here as the form only or are you here as the formless one consciousness honoring, yes, honoring the form that you are while you are in that form.

That's why you're going to see your attorney. So you honor it and then you see your attorney and then you shake hands and you look into his eyes. There's just, and you sit down and you breathe and then you sign a few papers and then you look for somewhere to live.

You pick up the phone and then you sit in a little room on a, not as comfortable as before and you're just present with what is. And occasionally the story will want to come in and get hold of you again. And occasionally you get lost in it again.

Now, the amazing thing is the more you are out of the story, the more intelligence begins to operate in your life that it even affects the story on the level of story. So the likelihood that something that is pointing towards harmony, something that is fits into your needs at this moment will come in is far greater when you're out of the story than when you're in the story. And perhaps trying to look for a solution from within the story where you are an unhappy, failed entity trying to become a happy, successful entity, that's hard work and it may not work at all.

And if you get happy, you won't be happy for long as just that entity. But if you can step out of the story as much as possible and be the aware presence, you'll be amazed how much intelligence comes into your life to support you, not just from within by finding yourself suddenly doing the right thing. You do something and it just happens.

You suddenly have an idea. It may even come as a thought. Oh, that's what I'm going to do.

And then you go and do it. Or you're walking through a park, not with the burden of the story of me, but as an alert, aware presence. And suddenly you run into somebody and he offers you a job and you just lost your last job and you lost your money.

And so synchronistic events, coincidences come very often, almost one could say miracles come into your life when you access the unconditioned consciousness. And when you don't access it, you are very limited. Life is still flowing through a little bit, but it can't flow through a tightly tied knot, which is the egoic me entity, which is, it's a state of contraction.

And so nothing can flow, not only the energy in your body, the entire intelligence of the universe cannot fully express itself through that knot. So an amazing power operates in your life when you access that, which is so simple. So it's essential not to get your life, have your life absorbed by the story of me, which is thoughts.

It's another way of putting, not to be absorbed, all your attention being devoured by thought, to step out of that, step out of the story as much as possible into the space of now, and then become friendly with the space of now instead of antagonistic towards now. Become friendly with whatever appears in the space of now. That great power lies in that when you no longer deny internally whatever appears, even if it is death, because sometimes death will appear in the space of now.

Whatever appears in the space of now, you become friendly with it. Whatever, because it is. If you talk to physicists, you will see that they tell you there's ultimately what we perceive as separate beings, objects, things.

They're all interconnected. There's a vast, the entire universe is one interconnected whole. Everything is part of everything else.

It's only on the surface of our sense perceptions where we see everything is separate. The chair you are sitting on, your body, the flower, all a web of interconnectedness. The entire universe is one being, one could say.

That means nothing that happens is a separate event. It's only appears to be a separate event. And it appears to the mind as if this should not be happening, at least not to me.

So when you look at events through the conditioned me entity, you will have a personalized and reactive relationship to whatever happens. And that's very problematic. You have a person that's complaining that this shouldn't be, and you would know.

Very personal, everything becomes a personal insult almost to you, to your story. How dare you say that to me? How dare he say, how dare he not call me back?

How just, he didn't call. He let me down. Three times he let me down, he didn't come.

Are you going again to meet him? No. Keep the story out of it and stay with the simple facts.

Nobody lets you down. They either gave you the money or they didn't. They either came or they didn't turn up.

That's how it was. And if they didn't turn up, that's how it was meant to be because every event is connected to the whole. Everything that is, is an expression of the whole.

So there is an inevitability to whatever happens because if everything is connected, nothing that is could be otherwise. And that's strange. And then the mind says, no, I don't agree with that because there's so many dreadful things.

Yes, of course. They're created by the unconscious human mind, most of them. But even there, you're not going to solve the problems of the universe through resentment or anger.

This is how it is. And then intelligence operates. And very often what is, changes.

And even non-disharmonious conditions change. But first they are allowed. There's the space with which they are being perceived.

You look, the power that lies in looking at a situation, just looking. And then intelligence operates from within and without. Miraculous.

So that's why we are here, to move into that space or rather to know ourselves as that space. So simple. And not reducing all there is, which is now, to a means to an end.

The end is the mentally projected future. And every human being becomes a means to an end. If you reduce this moment to a means to an end, the only place where you can meet another human being is in this moment.

So whatever appears in this moment then becomes a stepping stone to where you want to get through this person. Maybe he or she will enable you to get there. So it becomes a, it's being used.

The other human being is being reduced and used. And that's nothing personal in that. It's the collective conditioning of the human mind.

And then you slip into roles because part of the story of me is that you're through identifying with the thought forms that make up the story, you fall into a role that you play that is an essential aspect of being identified with a story because the story is that you identify with and it becomes also your role that you play in the world to yourself and when you relate to others. Whatever your function is can become the role that you play. Whatever relationships you are, you are then, you may be a successful role or a failure role or different roles put together.

You're a mother and you're a working mother or you're a divorced single parent or you're, and then many other things go into the role that things you identify with. Your function, it's dreadful when a function becomes, you identify with a function, a temporary function in this world and it becomes the role that you play which could be the CEO of a big corporation. If you get trapped in that, that's just as dreadful as getting trapped in a role of being a person who sweeps the road that you can get trapped in that role also.

It could be a role of me not being good enough, of me as a failure, of me as the great one. Then you relate to other humans through the role. You reduce them because you're imposing then other mental images onto the humans that you relate through your own story and your own role.

You impose another role and another, an image mind made self on the other person. Begins with a simple thing as meeting a shopkeeper, a waiter in a restaurant. You're going to a store, not to the man in the store or the woman, unless he or she is already going beyond that.

You probably are a customer. To you, he's the store assistant and you both want something from each other. You're not meeting.

You want the present moment in which you're meeting is a means to an end because you want to buy something, you want to get a good price. He wants you to sell you something. He wants you to use it for what he wants.

So yeah, he's meeting a customer and you are meeting a store assistant. No human beings. And then you behave according to the respective roles.

Just one tiny example. And you never meet. It's a pity.

Two humans are there and they never meet. Beyond their roles. Beyond their conditioned selves.

And so even that is a little missed opportunity. But imagine people living together and never really meeting. Families, married couples.

After 20 years, you're not meeting the other human anymore at breakfast table. You're meeting your conception of the other person. Last time you saw them was 15 years ago.

And so life becomes stale and lifeless. And then you do the same to other humans with you have formed already opinions about them. For years, you've carried the image of who they are.

And you meet your opinion of the other person. You meet your image of the other person. They might, sometimes it happens that the other person changes completely.

And this may have happened to some of you. You changed completely through the old consciousness, the old conditioned beginning to dissolve. And it's possible that nobody noticed in your family people you've been knowing for many years because they carry so much the mental image of you that they cannot, when they meet you, that's who they see.

And you have, it happened to me once. I went, there was this total inner transformation. And then I saw a person I hadn't seen in a few years.

And he said, oh, you haven't changed at all. If so, it's space. Give them space.

But first you have to give yourself space. Allow this moment to be. That's the key also to transformation in human relationships.

Very problematic, human relationships. I believe it was Ram Dass who said, human relationships are the sadhana, which means spiritual practice for the West. It was also Ram Dass who said, if you think you're so enlightened, go and spend a week with your parents.

And it's good that one is challenged through human relationships, because if you are not challenged, the patterns that are inside you, many of them might be dormant. You could only, certain patterns may still be there, but many you wouldn't see. It's through the challenges of things going wrong, so to speak, not going according to expectation, things no longer being in their proper place where they should be, things shifting around you.

Somebody wrote this book, Who Moved My Cheese? I haven't read it, but it must be about that. And something that comes very powerfully into human relationships is what, through so many thousands of years of not being who you are, being trapped in a limited conditioned identity and creating so much suffering out of that delusion, that suffering left traces in each human being, that suffering weighs heavily on the planet as the collective field of human pain, that suffering you can sense, sometimes in some places you can feel it almost in the air, that so much suffering created by human beings over millennia, and there's no human being on this planet who doesn't come into this life already with their share of human suffering, the heaviness of human pain.

I wouldn't be surprised if one day they found that in the DNA there's a certain amount of the enormous amount of data. There's also pain that is passed on genetically and in other ways. So humans carry what I have called the pain body, old, genetic, and personal, although ultimately nothing is personal, but let's just use it conventionally, pain from your lifetime, emotional pain, leaves behind traces, energy fields.

They come together. And the genetic pain that is already there that every human comes into this world with, that grows through childhood, through the pain suffered in childhood. The pain body as an emotional entity, each human being carries that.

And when I call it entity, there's nothing strange about it, and I'm not channeling anything here, although it's not in the convention. Many spirit guides call people entity, but this is not channeled in the conventional sense. It just comes from consciousness.

When I call the pain body entity, there's nothing spooky about it. One could say that every thought that you think is a life form. It has being, it has an existence, it's an energy field.

As such, it's a life form, not material, but semi-material. It's a thought, and it has, you know, some thoughts get lodged in people's minds for years. There are some thoughts that take possession, they become part of the thought bundle of self, and they get lodged in there and won't budge.

This is, you know exactly how things are, which means you're being possessed by a thought. This is, I know exactly how it is. That's how it is.

That's, you don't even say, I believe. I know this is how it is. This is how they are.

That's how, so some thoughts live there for years, and other thoughts are passing thoughts. They come, dissolve again. Other thoughts come, dissolve.

They are born out of the field of consciousness. And when you identify with a thought completely, you could say you are born into the thought. This is rebirth.

Your sense of self is in it. And each time a new thought comes, you completely identify with the next thought that comes into your mind. And every time, because your self is in each thought, in a wider sense, you are reborn into the thought when you identify with it completely.

That is the deeper meaning of the Buddhist term rebirth. So the Buddhists ask, I want to say, I want to reach the end of the cycle of rebirth. And when you study Buddhism, sometimes you read the text and it sounds very abstract, and you don't see how immediate the truth of rebirth is.

And there's no need to spend another 20 lifetimes before you can come to the end of rebirth. The question is, are you being reborn at this moment into another thought stream, which means complete identification with it? Are you being reborn into the pain body, which means are you completely identifying with the old pain, emotional pain that you carry inside you?

That's rebirth. And the end of rebirth is not to be identified with it as a self or a me. And so to see how the old pain is an emotional entity, just like a thought, except that this entity tends to be there, can be there throughout your lifetime, and things get added to it.

And you see how that pain body entity, that field of emotion is not always on the surface. You don't always notice it. To see how sometimes in your life, it goes away for periods of time, it's dormant, and you don't feel pain, at least not deep pain.

To see how periodically you go through the experience of intense pain in whatever form, whether it be anger, sadness, heaviness, fear, whatever form the pain takes, how periodically some slight, relatively insignificant triggers sometimes bring up an enormous amount of pain reaction. And how the emotion of pain gets linked into your thought structure, the structure of the self, which in itself is mad enough. It has its dysfunctional ways of keeping alive, as we've seen, how it needs its enemies, how it needs, it feels so incomplete that it always looks for more to add to itself, how it denies what is and makes it into a means to an end.

It lives for the next moment because the next moment will give it the more in which I can complete myself. All the structure of the self, what people perceive as a personal problem in their lives, not real, I think it's the structure of the human mind-made self that is the problem in their lives. The rest is interchangeable.

And so that is painful in itself and it creates further pain, but that gets linked up with the old emotion that people carry that periodically needs to feed on the experience of more pain. That is what the pain body needs to do, that humans carry, because it's a little entity. And periodically it wakes up and says, I want more, more pain.

And then it looks around, it begins to move. It looks through your eyes, the emotion, then you're looking, it's no longer spacious. You're looking becomes emotional and an emotion looks through.

There's nothing wrong with emotion except when it becomes a self. So the emotion looks through your eyes, looking for trouble. And so as somebody once described it, you could say, well, some people live like that.

They are in the grip of pain body 80% of the time, it happens. Somebody once described a person like that, a grievance looking for a cause. And of course there are many causes you can find to be angry about, sad about in this world.

And it's easy. And in your relationships and about yourself, when you look at the story of me, you only start thinking about the story of me and you start getting anxious or resentful or angry or sad. And if the pain body, it's time to awaken, the pain body will then move and become linked to your thought processes.

The emotion becomes linked with your thought processes. The emotion of pain, which ultimately is not you, it is human pain, becomes you, it becomes personal. It becomes part of the story of me, which then becomes amplified, which it was already painful even before the pain body awakened.

But when the pain body awakens, the story of me becomes amplified in its energy and becomes a very unhappy one, big drama. So the pain body will begin to feed on your thought processes because your thinking will reflect the energy field of pain body. The emotion then controls the thought processes.

So the work, so the egoic self, the mind made self, the pain body really is an aspect, an essential aspect of the mind made self. They work together and they are really one. And so the pain body periodically needs to feed on the experience of further pain.

And it will use your thought processes on the one hand to do that. The thoughts become very negative, self-destructive or destructive of others. Whether the thoughts are predominantly directed towards yourself or towards others, this just depends on the makeup of how your pain body works with your mind that varies from person to person.

But usually what is the case is that you believe that a certain situation that is part of the story that you're thinking about, that is part of your identity, you believe that the pain is caused by this, this and this, that person or the situation I'm in, the place I'm at, what happened to me. So it's not recognized as human pain that flows into a story and energizes the story and feeds on the thought. Every thought is an energy field and it feeds the emotion that corresponds to its vibrational frequency.

And you can, this is not an abstract thing. You can just, any self-observation will tell you that when you are in the grip of that, this is what happens when your thought processes go. Or whatever you then interpret, it was whatever you interpreted was already a distortion even without the pain body being active because you were looking at it through the conditioned mind.

But what you interpret once the pain body has moved into your conditioned mind and is amplifying the energy of that, whatever you interpret, any situation, any other human being in your life or your partner or whatever, will be a complete distortion because you will see life around you through the emotional pain that you feel and interpret the mind and interpret it through that. It will be a total distortion. This is already, you go a little bit further and it's called insanity.

Only a little bit further. And it's just complete. Then you, if it's fear, you might interpret a person's innocent behavior as threatening.

And that's already, take it a little bit further and it's called paranoia. Only a little bit more. Still basically the same.

And it's just one example of complete misinterpretation. So you inhabit your own fantasy world of pain and then it uses other people. It wants reactions from your partner, especially if you have one.

The experience of further pain coming back through enacting drama in your relationship.

Any excuse will do so that the pain body can experience more pain in the relationship. So it will provoke, attack, do whatever it knows will cause the other person to react.

Give me a, come on, give me a reaction. And usually it happens. And if it's not a partner, it might do it to somebody else at work.

Come on. Even if you can't find anybody because you're trapped in your car, the pain body is very active. It will try to pull another driver into the drama.

And if they knew what was happening, of course they don't know because they're so identified with it, they would know within themselves they are driving and just waiting for something to get in their way or not go fast enough. And then they can draw another driver into the pain body drama. And if that driver is unconscious enough, he or she will cooperate and it works.

They will feed. And if the other person also happens to have a pain body that is in the active period rather than the dormant period, they will meet. They might even get out of their car and the pain body is having a wonderful time.

Now, if you have few relationships, if you say, I'm not having any more human relationships relationships are so problematic that I want to do no more, no more relationships for me. I've suffered so much. I've been through hell.

And you will remember that John Paul Sartre, the philosopher said, hell is other people. And he say, I know exactly what he means. And I refuse to engage in relationships.

And so you sit alone in your room. Maybe you're making money through your computer or something. Or you still meet a few people that as abstractions on the screen.

What is your name? My name is. So the pain body will be feeding on your mind.

That's enough. It'll find enough food there because when the pain body moves from dormant to active, it will move into your thoughts. And then you will sit there brooding or being angry about all these dreadful unconscious people in the world.

So, how do we get out of that which has such enormous momentum? It is collective human pain. With an enormous momentum in everyone.

How do we get out of that? Don't even try to get out. The good news is just see it.

You remember the one lesson really here is to see how powerful it is. The simple act of giving attention, just attention, directing the light of consciousness, which is attention, onto it. This is looking, not labeling, but just looking.

And in the same way, when you feel the arising of emotional pain, you look, not with the eyes. You feel it. You sense it.

And you bring an awareness to it. And really another way of putting that is you allow this moment to be as it is. And if this moment means the arising of pain, emotional pain in you, that is what is at this moment.

And if you said, I don't want to feel this pain, you're creating more pain. Or if you say, I should be beyond this by now, that's more pain and more conflict. But simply, whatever it is, allow it to be, notice it.

So there it is. The fear, my pain body consists to a large extent of very enormous fear, like panic almost, with shaking. So I know what that feels like.

I remember it. And in my case, as it's usually when people are unconscious, the fear became fearful thinking. And so there was the vicious link between thinking and pain body.

But now, if you can be with the fear, not even label it as fear, perhaps, just be with what you feel there, half semi-physical, it'll have a physical component too. The body may be doing something. There may be a contraction, which you sense.

There may be a shaking, or if it's anger, it may feel like fire, raging fire inside you. There it is. And you simply, you can't argue with it.

It's there. And so you allow it. And you look.

Looking and allowing go together. You cannot really look at it internally if you don't, and looking doesn't mean you analyze. Simply look at the emotion, feel it, as almost a physical manifestation, an energy manifestation.

That's what it is. It may be trapped energy. It may be raging energy with some form of energy.

It has some form. And there it is. So by simply allowing it to be, it becomes depersonalized.

Not that you deny it, but the self, the illusion of self, of me, comes out of, taken out of the pain. And you begin to realize, not conceptually, but through its true realization that who you are is to be found in the looking, not in that which appears, but in who is looking, the space, the awareness, the presence, the witnessing presence. You are the witness.

And you see the pain. You feel it. No need to label it even.

It's just there. It is. That means the pain is not using your thought processes anymore.

It's not feeding on your mind. The link is cut between emotion and thought processes. Emotion is seen directly.

That is the end of the pain body masquerading as a self, a me. And that is how the vicious circle is broken. Otherwise, the vicious circle remains and you are forced to reenact the old pain again and again and recreate it in your life through situations.

So, and so the realization comes that karma, what the East called karma, which people usually think is to do with things that happen to me, things that happen to you are a tiny aspect of karma, maybe 10%. 90% of karma is your unconscious reactions to what happens. And a large part of that is the pain body.

So the pain body amplifies what happens, distorts it and creates drama out of it. It can do that with simple situations. I can often see it how people get angry with me because I cannot respond to everybody.

There's too much, so many letters come in as I don't still read them. It is wonderful to see, but then people expect, I wrote to you four weeks ago and you still have not even acknowledged my letter. They don't realize that there are 3,000 other letters, but it becomes personalized.

And there's pain flows into a relatively insignificant event that is nothing to do with this incident, it's old pain. Going back to childhood, perhaps not being acknowledged and going back beyond childhood into old human pain. And so, but they don't see the simple, the neutral event and their reaction to the event through pain, they become one.

Events are neutral, but people, as long as you're unconscious, you mix up your reaction with a neutral event. I managed, I mentioned before saying, he let me down. You're already constructing a story out of a neutral event.

And he promised me something and then he didn't give it to me, that's the fact. But especially if the pain body comes in, that's not enough. The pain, you will react to the fact through the pain.

You will react to the fact through the mind made entity which needs to be right. So can you imagine these two getting going together, really one getting together, the old pain that wants more pain and the mind made self that needs to be right and therefore needs to make somebody else wrong. So he did something to me.

A big drama develops out of that. And you don't, you miss the simplicity of things that there is without the story at this moment. Either he's here or he's not here.

He calls me, he doesn't call me, it's fine. Whatever the demands that are placed, you mentioned earlier, go. They don't understand, he doesn't understand me.

He should, but he doesn't, it's painful. You could have a lot of pain reaction because your father doesn't understand you. A big drama, what difference does it make?

No difference. Why not allow him not to understand you at this moment or Thanksgiving dinner, sit there. Haven't you, you're still not, you haven't found a good job yet.

You still haven't made money. You're still engaged in all that spiritual nonsense, wasting your time. Allow him to, nothing personal, just certain belief systems and mental positions.

And then you can sense who that being is underneath the belief systems and mental positions. Because you've, in yourself, you've gone beyond that. And then you meet your father who doesn't understand you.

And you have then the screen of belief systems and mental positions. And you don't mistake that screen for who he is. That is the true meaning of forgiveness.

In which you realize there's nothing to forgive. There's simply human unconsciousness, it's collective. And so to be able to look beyond that screen in another person, which you can only do if you've gone beyond that screen of mental positions and story in yourself, that is the transformation of human relationships.

That is liberating. You free yourself and you free him. The only freedom is freedom from identification with mind.

And so that's the opportunity in every encounter. Are you interpreting the encounter through the condition patterns in your mind, including the pain body? Are you thereby feeding those patterns in the other person?

Or are you able to allow human unconsciousness to be there because that's the evolutionary stage that humans are at on this planet. Yes, we are moving out of it. We are still trapped, half humans are half trapped in it and half out of it.

It's like coming out of an egg that's broken. The chicken is emerging, we're still half in the egg and half out. The shell of ego has given way and it's a birth.

One could almost say a new being is arising on the planet, but don't make too many concepts out of that. It's a new, almost a new species is arising, but be very careful when I say that because the mind may be looking for something to identify with. And then it might say, think of itself as a new species.

Although when I say that there is a truth in that, but when you get trapped in a concept, you can easily notice that by noticing the unconscious mind movement that we call comparison, because then you'll be looking and saying, is he part of the new species or not? And you will feel superior. That is a sign that mind has come in and you have a new concept of yourself because any feeling of superiority means there's comparison, there's this ego, and there's a new concept.

But yes, a new species, it is very much like that. And it's time for that to happen. That's why it's happening.

We've had precursors before, humans who have already pointed the way, but never on a large scale hasn't happened. This is the first time because it has to happen. So the truth is so simple that it doesn't need to be memorized.

Words have happened here today, not memorable, only as little pointers, not as explanations, only pointers. Pointers to a deeper dimension of consciousness in yourself. If that dimension were not already arising in you, the pointers would be completely meaningless.

Their truth would not be recognized. It's only because the truth is already in you of unconditioned consciousness that the pointers can be recognized and something within you is recognized. Yes, because you know that already.

So there's nothing outside of you that can give it to you. Little pointers can be helpful and that's all. And increasingly, you will become an agent of transformation as you move out into this world.

Because as the new consciousness begins to operate in you, through you, whoever you come into contact with will become affected by that. Even if you don't say anything about it, because the greatest transformative power is to be there as space, not as somebody, but as space. That is the simple truth.

And in this conference, many pointers will be given, perhaps very different ones, but the core truth is that they all will all point you ultimately to that moment of stillness, the stillness that has been here throughout the afternoon underneath the words, in between the words. The stillness that is the space within you and the space that ultimately is who you are.

2015 Eckhart Tolle with filmmaker 23-year-old-Sean Mulvihill for documentary film Living Luminaries Serious business of happiness

[Speaker 4] (0:17 - 0:28)

When I had been in my darkest moment, I happened to read The Power of Now. What Eckhart Tolle had to say about happiness had been the impetus to go on this journey. I was in Vancouver to meet him.

[Speaker 3] (0:32 - 0:39)

You were there on a park bench for two years, and you slept on the park bench?

[Speaker 1] (0:41 - 0:48)

Rarely, but I did spend most of the days on park benches in parks, different parks in London.

[Speaker 3] (0:51 - 0:52)

Did you eat three meals a day?

[Speaker 2] (0:53 - 0:57)

No, no. One meal a day if I was lucky.

[Speaker 1] (0:57 - 3:27)

As you sit here, is it possible for you to simply watch what's happening around you without adding any interpretation to it? To just be present with what is, and you get a taste of what it's like to be on a park bench with nothing further needing to be added to this moment. The sounds, sights, people, sound of the water, the light, just allow it to be as it is.

With that comes peace. You don't get continuously drawn into events and thoughts and emotions and reactions. You're the wider space in which all these things happen.

You're the awareness behind it without which none of this would be here. It would just be atoms and molecules in space. You are the awareness that enables this entire world to be.

And so knowing that that is who you truly are, not through a concept, but through the actual realization of stepping back and allowing the phenomenal world to be as it is at this moment. Allowing this moment to be as it is. That takes you deeper into yourself.

And you may notice there's a certain peace in the background that happens. An alertness is required for this. You need to stay alert to what is, to sense perceptions and the energy behind sense perceptions, which is the consciousness.

The alertness is there. Without the alertness you will drift off into thinking. And then you think about the next what's going to happen to me tomorrow.

There is a place for making plans, but not right here on the park bench. This isn't the place for thinking about tomorrow because you miss all this beauty and aliveness around you.

[Speaker 5] (3:30 - 3:34)

And you're in your cold. You don't even think about it as a cold.

[Speaker 1] (3:34 - 4:11)

No, it just is the sensation of it. You don't even need to call it cold. And then that's okay too.

It's okay. The reactivity goes out of life. Always against something or wanting to clutch at something.

What about the search for meaning? Now you notice that just a moment ago you were in that state of alert presence. And it never takes long for another thought to come in and ask a question.

[Speaker 2] (4:11 - 4:28)

Because thought cannot tolerate the state of presence. So it will always come in and say, yeah, but what about, I don't quite understand yet. Can you tell me what does it all mean?

So it wants to add something.

[Speaker 1] (4:28 - 4:33)

It wants to control in some way by understanding what this all means.

[Speaker 2] (4:36 - 4:40)

Now, if you can let go just for a moment, not for the rest of your life.

[Speaker 1] (4:40 - 5:04)

Just for this moment, let go of the need to understand anything. So that you're truly present in this moment. So you don't need to do it for the next hour or the next ten minutes.

Just right now. Just what is. But don't forget yourself because you are the consciousness behind it.

You are the space.

[Speaker 6] (5:07 - 5:08)

The presence.

[Speaker 1] (5:28 - 6:21)

Can you feel that your body is alive? So stay with that feeling and then perceive. It's easier to perceive without interpretation when you can feel that your body is alive.

You feel the inner aliveness throughout your body. So some of your attention is there. The rest is on the outside world.

That roots you in the present moment. It anchors you in the present moment. And if a thought comes into your mind, you can watch that also.

Just the same way as you watch a dog walking past. You can watch a thought arising in your mind and you don't have to follow it to where it wants to go.

[Speaker 2] (6:21 - 6:35)

So you simply watch the thought that arises in your mind and let it go in the same way that the dog walks past you. Or if you choose to, you can follow the thought and then you can say, I just thought of another question. You can do that too.

[Speaker 1] (6:37 - 7:05)

But to see the possibility that also in the same way that you observe the outer world here as you sit on the bench, you can also observe the inner world, the world of thoughts and emotions. Thoughts want to arise continuously and that's fine, that's what they do. But there's no need to get drawn into each thought that arises and immediately go with it to where it wants to go.

[Speaker 2] (7:06 - 7:15)

Otherwise you're always following every thought. Like a dog following the scent. Does it matter which?

[Speaker 1] (7:15 - 7:26)

No, it doesn't matter. You can experiment. You can experiment with thoughts.

You can follow some thoughts and you can watch other thoughts. You find out for yourself.

[Speaker 2] (7:26 - 7:42)

You can play. You can see that you are bigger than your thoughts. You don't have to be dominated by your thoughts.

Because thoughts create lots of problems too. Unnecessary problems.

[Speaker 1] (7:42 - 7:55)

And they can obscure the aliveness of life at this moment. There are many people walking around here who are thinking about other things. They're thinking about the next one.

They're thinking about tomorrow.

[Speaker 2] (7:56 - 9:01)

But this is not the place for that. There is a place for planning and thinking about tomorrow. But why spoil the beauty of this and the aliveness of this with thinking about the next moment?

Is that going to be better than this one? This is it. It's not going to get that much better.

This is what could be more beautiful than this. It's the awakening of something within you that is deeper than thought. That's really the main thing.

And that's already there.

[Speaker 1] (9:01 - 9:33)

You just didn't know it. Why didn't I know this? It's a deep-seated habit of being totally identified with thinking.

It's the human condition, which could be described as lost in thought. Because up to now evolution has been unconscious. It was automatic.

But now evolution is consciously chosen by a species. And that's a revolutionary thing. And you are part of that.

[Speaker 3] (9:41 - 9:44)

I can still make movies. I can still have a girlfriend.

[Speaker 2] (9:45 - 9:55)

Yes, it's beautiful. It's a playground. You play around with the world.

You take action. You relate.

[Speaker 1] (9:56 - 10:00)

But you're not lost in it. Most humans are lost in it.

[Speaker 3] (10:04 - 10:09)

What about pain? I mean, physical pain or emotional pain of losing someone?

[Speaker 1] (10:10 - 10:37)

Most of the human pain is psychologically created. There's an enormous amount of psychological pain. Suffering, I call that.

When suffering goes and there's a possibility for humans now to live without suffering, that is a possibility, there may still be some physical pain. It may be that you get toothaches or bodily pains from time to time. Suffering is another level that lies on top of the pain.

Suffering implies a story.

[Speaker 2] (10:38 - 10:43)

A little me that is unhappy. A mentally constructed entity.

[Speaker 1] (10:44 - 12:06)

A little me that has an unhappy story that is its identity. And that creates an enormous amount of suffering. Not only do you make yourself suffer, you make people around you suffer.

To be at one with life is to be at one with the present moment, because that's the only place where life can be found. You cannot leave the space of now that stays with you, whatever you do and wherever you go. Your life has never been not now, and will never be not now.

Are you making the present moment into an enemy in some way? Internally? Through thinking about something that has nothing to do with now, I need to figure something out.

Well, first of all, be here fully, and then whatever is needed in your life comes. It comes out of the power that dwells in the present moment, that most people overlook. There's an enormous power here, which is the power of life itself.

And most people look for something and ignore this. And the power of life itself is inseparable from who you are in the depth of your being.

[Speaker 2] (12:07 - 12:27)

Many times you will forget, but the moment you realize that you forgot, there's a possibility of saying, Ah, yes, I lost the present moment. And there's a possibility of choosing to re-enter the present moment. The first thing that happens when you re-enter the present moment, you become more aware of sense perceptions.

[Speaker 1] (12:28 - 12:58)

There's a greater alertness. And then you become more aware of the aliveness in your body. You feel the life within.

It's like the entire vibrational frequency of your body shifts when you become present. It's a different state of consciousness. Ah, more alert, more alive.

And many times you will lose it. And then you'll remember, Ah, that's good enough.

[Speaker 2] (13:00 - 13:25)

Now, they don't believe the mind when it tells you, Oh, you can't do it now, you've got too much on your mind, you can't be bothered with the present moment. Those are just thoughts. There's no need for you to follow those thoughts, just to watch them.

They are thoughts that the mind throws up. You don't need to believe in them because they're not true. When the mind tells you, You can't be present now because you've got too much on your mind, then, okay, you can say, Okay, let's see if that's true.

[Speaker 1] (13:26 - 13:57)

Then you feel, There's an aliveness in my hand. There's an aliveness in my body. There's beauty all around.

And you become present again. Alertness, the alertness returns. And when there is time to think, then you think.

Then you sit down and say, Okay, let's think. What plane am I going to catch tomorrow? What time do I have to go to the airport?

What do I have to do now? Pick up the phone, make a phone call? Fine.

It's beautiful. You're not losing yourself in future.

[Speaker 2] (13:57 - 14:07)

It's practical matters. And once you've done the practical matters, you've thought about, you've planned your next week, then you come back to the now.

[Speaker 1] (14:10 - 14:26)

The inner transformation is not really about finding lots of answers to your questions, but finding a new relationship to thought, where not every thought seduces you anymore.

[Speaker 2] (14:29 - 14:38)

And if a beautiful girl runs past and you find yourself following her, you don't have to think, Oh, I shouldn't be watching this girl because I'm not interested in her. I'm spiritual now.

[Speaker 1] (14:39 - 14:54)

No. If you can let go just for a moment, not for the rest of your life, just for this moment, let go of the need to understand anything so that you're truly present in this moment. Just right now.

[Speaker 2] (14:56 - 14:57)

Just what is.

[Speaker 1] (14:58 - 15:04)

But don't forget yourself because you are the consciousness behind it. You are the space.

[Speaker 6] (15:07 - 15:08)

The presence.

[Speaker 1] (15:49 - 16:04)

Life wants to support you, but first you need to be open to life. So you've probably come here with lots of questions, but let's start off with me asking you just one question and then you can ask yours.

[Speaker 3] (16:04 - 16:05)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (16:06 - 16:07)

May I ask how old you are?

[Speaker 3] (16:08 - 16:10)

Yes, I'm 24.

[Speaker 1] (16:11 - 16:22)

Not that it matters. So 24 means you've already had quite a few life experiences. You've been to school.

You've fallen in love.

[Speaker 3] (16:22 - 16:23)

I think so.

[Speaker 1] (16:23 - 16:24)

Fallen out of love.

[Speaker 3] (16:25 - 16:25)

I think so.

[Speaker 1] (16:26 - 18:15)

And have had all kinds of experiences, perhaps in different places, meeting different people, different circumstances. The body probably has been well most of the time, but you've also experienced maybe one or two illnesses. Now is there in all those things that you have experienced so far, which is a continuously changing flux of things, is there any ingredient in there that was always not the same, that didn't change?

I'd just like to ask you to see if you can find any ingredient in all the things that you have experienced so far that's always been the same. We could start perhaps by asking, could it be the things around you? Obviously not, because the things around you change continuously.

Could it be your thoughts? No, because the thoughts that go through your mind also change continuously. Could it be your feelings or your emotions?

No, as you know, they also change all the time. So what is it, if anything, that hasn't changed, that doesn't change? Is there one ingredient in all your experiences, good or bad, up or down, that's always been there?

[Speaker 3] (18:19 - 18:23)

I think I've been in here, I've been inside.

[Speaker 1] (18:24 - 19:08)

Now when you say I, what does that mean? What is that I? Now because we've already seen it can't be your thoughts, because they change all the time.

Your feelings or emotions, they change all the time. Your sense experiences, things that you perceive around you, change all the time. So wherever we look, there's change.

So when you say I and point to the I as that which doesn't change, it cannot be what happens to you. It cannot be the thoughts that go through your mind. It cannot be the emotions, the feelings that you experience.

So what is the nature of that I? What does that word mean or point to?

[Speaker 3] (19:11 - 19:18)

It's the listening. It's what's here, what's behind.

[Speaker 1] (19:20 - 31:10)

What's behind the thoughts? What's behind the sense perceptions? What's behind all the experiences and the feelings and so on?

So the question that I'm asking does not really require an abstract answer, but I want you to actually feel or sense inside yourself that which doesn't change. No matter where you go, no matter what you do, or who you're with, or whether the body is well or unwell, when I ask, you said it's I and I've asked what's the nature of that I? And now you may be stuck for words, but you said one word and that was listening.

Now, when you're truly listening, there is a certain alert spaciousness, because otherwise you're not truly listening. And so if that had to be expressed through a gesture, it could be, you could raise a finger gently and say, listen. So I say to you, listen.

And you listen, there's a moment of spacious awareness, and there's no thought in it. So when you said listening, you're actually getting very close to the nature of who you truly are underneath all the circumstances of your life. And circumstances includes thoughts and emotions.

If you don't find that, who or what you are underneath all the circumstances, no matter how many questions you ask and how many good answers you get, won't help you very much and there will be no end to the questioning, because every answer generates further questions. So we're talking about becoming familiar with a different state of consciousness. Not that that has never been there.

It's always been there because it's the I, but it's always been overlooked because the circumstances, things that happen to you and your thinking and your emotions have such overwhelming pulling force that they always pull your attention in completely. And so attention is that which is there when you're truly listening. And in the moment of attention there's no thinking, but there is an aware presence.

So, the answer that you gave is absolutely right. Not everybody would have put it this way, but listening points to who you truly are underneath all the things that continuously change. Now I'd like you to, as we speak, this is not an intellectual discussion because if this were intellectual you should have gone to a professor of philosophy or some intellectual at a university.

I've been there. And ultimately you get many answers, but all those answers will always make you end up with more questions because they don't get you to the core of who you are. So let's start off with that.

And what we are pointing to is a sense of I, of beingness, that is deeper than anything that happens in your life. It's always there, has always been there, right now. And that is closely related to the state of attentive listening, to get in touch with that, to sense it.

Underneath it all there is a timeless presence. Even in 50 years' time, in 60 years' time when this body is getting old and this body, the cells, it won't be the same body. The cells of the body will have been renewed many times.

There won't be a single cell materially. There won't be a single thing that's left in 50 years, even though you may still be alive. There won't be a single thing that's left materially, that's here now.

Every cell will have been renewed. And so the body will have grown older and yet something timeless, deep within, will still be exactly the same as it is now, untouched by time. I.

I before it becomes this or that, because the moment you say I am American, I am this or that, I am a professional, or I am a jobless person, or I am a millionaire, or I am a homeless person, those all form identifications with changing circumstances. And so people look for something there to provide permanency in their lives. They want to identify with something that they finally can say there, that's it, I found it.

What they really want to say is I found myself finally. So they look for themselves through external possessions, through acquired knowledge, through an accumulation of experiences, or sexual encounters. Some people derive their sense of self from that.

The more women you can conquer or seduce or have sex with, the more you feel I'm getting somewhere. Of course, after a few years you realize it's not getting you anywhere. Nothing will get you anywhere, which means to yourself, if you are looking for yourself in any experience.

And that's the fallacy of most people. They look for themselves in changing circumstances. They look for themselves in their thought processes.

They identify with their thoughts and opinions and their judgments and this and that, and it changes. Your opinions may change. You may be a democrat now in 50 years' time when you have become a solid citizen.

You may become a republican. You have a completely different set of opinions. It's just a different set of opinions.

And then you feel like the thoughts have changed, but the underlying I hasn't changed. So can you go through life being in touch with that, being in touch with that in different situations, different circumstances, different places, so that you're not completely lost in the things. I sometimes call it the thingness of life, one thing after another.

There's nothing wrong with that. But if you haven't found yourself yet, you don't know what that I is, then you're looking for the I in things. And things include your thinking, because every thought is also a formation.

It has a certain form, a thought form. It comes and then it goes. Every emotion, it comes.

It's an energy field inside you. It comes, has a certain lifespan, and then it subsides, and then another one comes. That's all the thingness of life.

It's forms that come and go all the time. The only thing that doesn't come and go is I, that which underlies all that. And that's not an intellectual thing that I'm trying to convince you of, because that would not be helpful.

The question is, at this moment, can I sense the presence that I am, that is prior to anything that happens to me or has ever happened or can ever happen? Can I sense that right now? Yes, you can, because if you couldn't, you wouldn't have said listening, because listening, you already knew.

It came from that deeper place of alert attention that in itself has no content. The content comes when things happen, but in itself, the I that you are, one could describe it as space. It's not lifeless, it's full of life.

All of life comes out of that, but in itself it is spacious. Buddha called it emptiness, and it's completely misunderstood by people because the university professors look at the word emptiness and then say, the Buddha's teachings are life-denying. The total opposite is true, because Jesus called the same space the fullness of life, because at the same time, it is life in its fullness.

To be able to sense that, at first it's very subtle in the background, but as you become familiar with that dimension, it's always there somewhere, no matter what you do, even when you meet a beautiful girl and you're talking to her. From there, you can listen to yourself talking, and it's fine. You're not totally lost in your experiences.

There's always a sense of aliveness and peace in the background, and that influences how you live your life. That sense, the I, the timeless I, because on the surface you have the time-bound I that grows older, it's identified with thinking and emotions and things happen to it and so on, but underneath it is the timeless I. Now, the word I is probably the most frequently used word in the language.

Whenever you listen to people, they say, what's the word they use most frequently when you listen to a conversation? Probably, you'll find it's the word I. Now, what they refer to is not the timeless, because they haven't found that.

They refer to a superficial sense of I, identification with things, with thinking, with emotions. I am angry. I am American.

I am this. I am that. Identification with something.

So, that I is the greatest delusion, because there is no substance there, nothing permanent.

[Speaker 3] (31:11 - 31:14)

So, if I'm not something, am I nothing?

[Speaker 1] (31:14 - 37:30)

Yes. I would pronounce that differently, though. I would say, you are no thing.

Now, there's a difference between no thing and nothing. Nothing is simply denial. But no thing means there is a presence there, but it has no form, nothing that you can grasp.

It has no shape, and no form, and no name. The ancient Chinese call it the Tao, which cannot be named. There's a beautiful, it's 3,000 years old, Chinese book of wisdom, the Tao Te Ching.

I recommend it to everybody. And the first line in it is, the Tao that can be named, or spoken of, is not the true Tao. And so that there is the presence that you sense, a presence that has no form.

In ancient language, Christian, Hebrew, there's the word spirit. But I don't use that word, because it's been used for hundreds of years and misunderstood. So if I used spirit, people would immediately have some image of what it is, some form, or call it the Holy Spirit, and there's hundreds of years of misconceptions of what spirit is, so we forget about the word spirit.

But in its original true meaning, that's what spirit points to. The essence of who you are is formless. Now we could use the word consciousness as the essence of who you are.

And you can sense it, but you can never grasp it, and you cannot really know it. You can only know something that is not you, an object, anything that becomes an object of consciousness. Once I look at this plant, and I know it by looking at it and by having a thought, a name for it, I say I know this plant.

This plant is an object that arises in consciousness. And I look at you. I see a shape, and a form, and obviously what I see, nobody knows whether what you see out there is actually there, because the image that you have in your mind of your surrounding environment, there's an optical, the eye, like a camera lens, they send a picture into the brain, the picture is translated into nerve impulses and chemicals that reach the brain, and the brain decodes what I see and then reassembles the picture.

And then suddenly I see you. Nobody knows what's actually out there. But let's just leave it.

Here we have, looking at you, this is an object that arises in consciousness, in the space that I am. Then I look away, and another object arises in the space that I am. Or I listen to something that arises in the space that I am.

A thought comes that arises in the space that I am, the presence that I am. But the presence itself, you can't know it in the way that you know a plant, or you know a person, or you know a sound, or you know a thought, because it would have to reflect back on itself. You cannot make it into an object, so you cannot make yourself into an object of knowledge.

You can only be that presence, but you can't know it, because you would externalize it. And this is the mistake that humans have made over thousands of years. They made themselves into an object.

And they talk about me and my story. I'm sure you have one. The story of me.

And so when you make yourself into an object, you live with yourself. Some people love themselves one day, and they hate themselves the next day. And the following day, they're not quite sure.

And then you have some other, and then you have feeling guilt. People have relationships with an image that they have in their mind of themselves, me. People talk to themselves in their mind.

Well, that wasn't very good. You didn't do a good thing. You shouldn't have done that.

Who is talking to whom? There's a voice in the head that talks to yourself. The mind has split itself in two and is talking to itself.

And out of that continuous talking comes the story of me and identification with that. And the questions that you are going to ask probably have a lot to do with the story of me. To find out more about it.

About my life. Because, after all, that's what everybody is most interested in. You are here because you are the main character in the story of yourself.

And the main character in that story has quite a few things that he feels puzzled about and doesn't understand and wants questions. And the story, in some ways, it's worked and in other ways it hasn't worked. And so, the character in the story has come here and wants to know how to make the story work better.

Isn't that so?

[Speaker 3] (37:31 - 37:31)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (37:32 - 54:21)

Now, whatever answers anybody can give you of how to make the story work better, there are things you can make the story work better, but all that doesn't really help unless you get to the bottom behind the story. The I behind the story. Then, if you are in touch with that throughout your life, the story will unfold with much greater ease because there is a deeper dimension that is there.

But if there's only the story, nothing will ever satisfy the main character in that story. You. If the main character in that story, you, has never known the deeper I, the timeless presence that is the consciousness that you are, the attentive, spacious.

Can you feel that your body is alive? Because when you feel the aliveness inside your body, I call it inner body, the usually hyperactive mind slows down. Now the hyperactive mind is extremely repetitive.

You might have noticed that ninety, probably ninety-nine percent of your thoughts, you've had them before, they are repetitive. So new thoughts are relatively rare when there's only the hyperactive mind. It's just the old, same old things going through your mind again and again.

The moment you feel the inner body, in order to be able to feel the aliveness here, some of your attention has to go from the head within, into the body. So you're removing some attention away from thinking. It doesn't necessarily mean that thinking stops totally, but it subsides, slows down.

There may even be little spaces in between one thought and the next thought. So thinking slows down because part of your attention is in the inner energy field, the aliveness that most people never feel because they're so absorbed in their thoughts they don't even feel that they are alive anymore. So thinking subsides, or even little spaces in between thoughts, and then it's much more likely that thoughts that come then are new thoughts, sometimes they are insights, they are new ways of looking at things, sudden realizations.

They can only come if you are able to calm the mind, but not as something that you feel I need to calm my mind, but simply by diverting attention away from it, not by making some effort to calm your mind. All you do is you take attention away from it, and so then there is more spaciousness, not just one thought after another. And then your thinking actually improves, which means it's more alive, more original, it's more powerful, you have better ideas, and the way in which you interact with people is more real.

Because the real comes not from the accumulated stuff in your mind, that's all the roles that you play, not just you, everybody. Everybody plays their roles, they've been conditioned to play certain roles. You have an image of who you are when you meet a beautiful woman, you play a certain role, you want to have the best possible image, you present the best possible image, and she does the same.

You can observe it when two young people are attracted to each other, they meet the first few days and weeks, they look different from the way they usually look, because they present an image that wants to attract the other, and it's unconscious, it's a role that they play. It's only after the honeymoon, when everyday life begins, that gradually, the image, and you believe that that image that you see in her is who she is, and she believes that you don't know that you're both playing roles, but you cannot keep up the roles indefinitely, so after the honeymoon gradually, they wear down the roles, and then there comes becomes some discontent arises, and suddenly the mask slips, the role is, you can't play your role continuously, the role of me, the attractive one, so that's, to get out of the role playing that otherwise you're stuck with for the rest of your life, you have a certain role for your partner for a while, you have another role for your work situation, you have another role for wherever you go, you slip into subtle differences in the way in which you behave, when you talk to the chairman of the board, or the Dalai Lama, you will behave in a certain way, and then you might notice when you talk to the plumber, there will be subtle differences in the way in which you talk, you play a different role, you think, oh, this is not appropriate here, it's only when you stop playing roles, when you observe the Dalai Lama, how he behaves, now you might have thought, well, the Dalai Lama probably plays the role of the Dalai Lama, but he doesn't, there's such simplicity, openness, and genuineness in him, he talks the same way to everybody, whether he meets the plumber or the Pope, makes no difference, because he doesn't play conditioned roles anymore, and that is only possible when you access a dimension within yourself that is deeper than the mind, and we just did it, or we're still doing it, simply by taking attention away from thought, and direct it into the aliveness of the body, that means suddenly there's some space between thoughts, and then you can relate to other human beings more genuinely, and you don't need to prepare things that you're going to say next, you don't say things in order to manipulate that person, you don't say things in order to create an effect, they simply, spontaneity comes out of that place, the spontaneity doesn't come out of the accumulated stuff in your mind, the spontaneity comes only to the extent that you can access the dimension that is deeper than mind, which we may call the deeper eye, which we may call alert stillness, that is always there, alert spaciousness, access that, so mind subsides, then you live differently, the more you access now at the moment, these are only glimpses for you, but that's good enough, a glimpse later becomes a wider space, so that is something to remember not as a memory, but to remember to do in your daily life as much as possible, wherever you are, whatever you're doing, whoever you're talking to, or even when you're alone, go within sometimes and feel that the body is alive, there's life in my hands, you're not imagining anything, you actually feel that there is an aliveness here, and then once you can feel the hands, you can feel the arms, the feet, the legs, you are inhabiting the body, and the body loves that, it loves your attention, most people don't give their body attention, even if they look after the body extremely, like you go to a gym every day, or you use all kinds of stuff to put on your body, you might think that these people are looking after their body, but all they're looking after is the external of the body, they are not necessarily present within, they cannot feel the aliveness, some maybe they can, but most not, they're only concerned with the external body, here we are concerned with the inner, and it doesn't matter the inner body has nothing to do with what the external body looks like, whether you're 80 years old, or 20 years old, whether you have a young body or an old body, the sensation of the inner body is always the same, it's alive, and the body loves your attention, it's a bit like when you don't give enough attention to a child, after a while the child cries because it wants to attract your attention, the baby does it, and then finally you give, because attention is energy, it's enormous energy, now most attention, attention is consciousness, most attention for most people is continuously absorbed by thinking, you can see it when you talk to them, they're not there, they're thinking, they're looking at you, but they're thinking about the next thought they're going to ask, as you sit there maybe you're thinking about ok, what's my next question? and that's normal, it's not a personal fault of yours, it's normal to lose yourself, and then you lose, that means you're not really present when you're thinking about the next thing, so that's normal, so you don't have to beat yourself up for that, it's normal, but there is another way to live, and that's the way to be present, to give attention not just to your thoughts, to give attention to your body, if you don't give enough attention to a child, of course a child can also become addicted to attention, but that's a different matter, there needs to be a balance, but a child does need attention, it's vital, not an excessive amount, but enough, because attention is energy, and the body loves it as much as a child, it wants to be noticed, it wants your attention, and if it doesn't, it cries, it might become ill, that's the crying of the body, you're neglecting it, you're not you're not you're not inhabiting it, you're inhabiting the uppermost loft in your house, you're in a big house, and you live always in the under the roof, you never go downstairs, there are lots of floors, you have no idea what's going on there, so that's a vital thing, and it is a way of also accessing the space within, that is the eye that has no form, that is the consciousness, that is also intelligence, we think of intelligence as the mind's ability to accumulate knowledge and to solve problems, that's probably what we consider to be intelligence, but that's an extremely narrow view of what intelligence is, what people can measure in IQ tests, is an extremely narrow view of intelligence, I cannot solve the simplest of IQ tests, so I've never done a total test, but I'm sure my IQ would be extremely low, because that is not how this mind works, solving little puzzles, I've never been able to do that, but intelligence is a much vaster thing than the ability to accumulate information, and then regurgitate it, or analyze it, or cut it into smaller and smaller pieces, what they do at universities, research projects, the pieces are getting smaller and smaller and smaller, the PhD subjects are getting more and more and more specialized, because so many people are working on things, and then you have to tiny pieces, like okay, I take this piece and write my PhD about that, you can cut that up a hundred times, and then once you've written your PhD, somebody else comes and takes a tiny piece out of that and says, oh, I can cut this up even further, and that's considered intelligence, but true intelligence, the true intelligence resides in that dimension of alert stillness, if you have access to that, that's where the original intelligence resides, so anybody who is creative, and there are not that many human beings in this world who are truly creative, anybody who is creative has some access, perhaps only in the little area of their field of expertise, they have some access to that dimension, the stillness. Einstein had it, he was very slow, he was not considered intelligent at school, because he was too slow, not suitable for mathematics, and physics, because his thinking was very slow, now what does that mean? It means there were lots of spaces in between the thoughts, he wasn't at school like one of the so-called intelligent children who always, when the teacher asks a question, the hand goes up immediately, I know, I know, that's very superficial, occasionally it may be okay, but there are some children, and that is not recognized by our society, who are very deeply intelligent, but not in the way that we consider, what we consider intelligence, and they tend to be slower. They don't immediately have an answer, because they know it's superficial to have a true answer, you have to go deeper within.

But if you allowed those children to go deeper, then you would see how original their thinking actually is. So when we just went into the, you went into the body, already you noticed some new thoughts came, not the old thoughts. It only requires a tiny space for something new to arise.

Not that you're doing it in order to have new thoughts, you're doing it because it feels good to feel the aliveness within you. And the more familiar you become with that, with inhabiting your body, the more strongly you can feel that aliveness. It's almost as if you could feel every cell of the body vibrating slightly.

And it's a beautiful feeling, just an aliveness there. And that is an enormously healing thing to do for the body.

[Speaker 3] (54:23 - 54:56)

I really want to know about guilt. I feel guilty all the time for little things I'm doing or that I'm not doing. And there are things that I know I did that were mistakes to other people.

So I know that you're supposed to be free and liberated in the now, but shouldn't I feel bad about this stuff? And what's going to keep me if I'm free and liberated in the now from doing bad things to people?

[Speaker 1] (54:56 - 1:08:05)

So, human beings act out of their conditioning. So, every human being is conditioned by their upbringing, by the surrounding culture, by many factors. Conditioned to think and feel and behave in certain ways.

And so people do all kinds of things to other people and even to themselves without knowing what they're doing. They're simply acting out the conditioning of their mind. And Jesus knew that because he said on the cross, Forgive them for they know not what they do.

So humans create an enormous amount of suffering for themselves and others, but they don't know that this is what they are doing. People act out of conditioning. So, when you suddenly see that something that you did in the past created suffering for yourself or others or both, when you see that, the seeing of it does not come out of the conditioning of your mind.

When you become aware of certain behavior or thought patterns in you, the awareness, the presence, the deeper presence that you are, has come in. And from there you can see what you did was very limited. It created suffering for yourself or somebody else or other people and you didn't even know it.

So what was acting at that time? If you say that was me and therefore I must be bad, you are equating the conditioned mind, your conditioned mind, the conditioning of your mind with who you are. If you say, I did that, therefore I'm bad and continuously think about it, you are equating who you are with what we could call unconsciousness.

Unconsciousness means to be totally identified with the conditioning of the mind. So you just have to act it out. Now there are still millions of humans on the planet who live in that way because the dimension of awareness hasn't arisen yet.

So they never know what they are doing. They continue to inflict suffering on themselves and others, to act unconsciously, but they don't know that this is what they are doing. They cannot do otherwise.

So the moment you realize, this is what I did, who you are is the awareness that sees that. Who you are is not what you did. What you did was the conditioning of your mind playing itself out.

So you become, you trap yourself in an illusory identity if you feel that I did that. No. Who is speaking?

Who is I? Are you the conditioned patterns of your mind or are you the awareness that sees, that's the spaciousness within the deeper eye, that sees what the mind is doing, it sees what the mind created in the past, it even sees what the mind is creating at this very moment. If you are aware of the things, the thoughts that go through your head, how you speak to another human being, you may be acting out a role and suddenly there's an awareness that you know that you are acting out a role.

And then comes the possibility of, instead of being the role, being the awareness, and then act in a truly genuine way, with enhanced intelligence. So, the unconscious action was unintelligent action, because it was action created by the conditioning of your mind, which has nothing to do with who you are. So there's a tendency for the mind to personalize the conditioning and say, I did that.

And that creates guilt, and that keeps you trapped in a very narrow sense of self, because you have equated who you consider to be yourself with conditioned patterns that you acted out at the time. It wasn't you, it was unconscious, human unconsciousness. No more.

And now you see it. So you see it and at this moment you would not act in this way, because the awareness is there. Maybe the awareness will stay, and this will never happen again.

It is also possible that the awareness becomes obscured again, and the same behavior pattern happens again, and you don't know it except afterwards, when the awareness comes again. Oh, I did it again. And this can happen quite frequently.

So it's important. It's good to be aware afterwards if you do not misuse the mind, don't allow the mind to misuse the awareness, and make some identity, manufacture some identity out of that for yourself and say, that was me. It wasn't me.

That's the main thing. Who are you? You are the awareness.

Anything else is forms that arise, thought forms, emotional forms, behavior patterns. So your destiny and your purpose in life is to increasingly be the awareness rather than the conditioned pattern. But as long as the conditioned pattern is there, it's there.

It's good if the moment of transformation comes if the awareness is there while the pattern plays itself out. That's the beginning of the end of the conditioned pattern. So if it's a certain kind of behavior, perhaps with women, you do essentially the same kind of thing, and it happens again and again and the awareness comes afterwards and one day the awareness comes in the middle of doing it.

In the middle of it you see what you're doing. There's a seeing of it. And that's the beginning of the end of the pattern.

Then it may just one or two more times the pattern may come up in a weaker form and it will then collapse. So in other words, you're making what was unconscious conscious. And that changes it.

So you do not have to manipulate yourself and try to engineer inner change. I have to make myself into a better person. That doesn't usually work.

It just creates conflict because you have one image of yourself as the good person that you want to be or that you would like to think of yourself as that or you'd like others to think of you as a good person and then you have unconscious behavior patterns that completely contradict that image of a good person. And then for the rest of your life you live in that conflict. The good person can talk to the bad one in your head.

It's just two thought patterns. So that doesn't work. What works is to be the awareness, to see it, to be awake enough, alert enough, and that when the present moment comes in, to see are you present in this moment to what happens in this moment, not only externally but internally also.

And are you allowing it? Don't reject anything. If you feel a thought comes in, an emotion comes in, and maybe it's not a good thought.

Maybe your mind says after the thought has come in, your mind says, oh that wasn't a good thought, I shouldn't have thought that. But they are both just thoughts. The so-called bad thought was just a thought, and the next thought that said that wasn't a good thought was just another thought.

Now, it's possible that the bad thought made you do something bad. That's possible. But the good thought cannot prevent that.

The only thing that can prevent that is to be conscious, so that the thought does not control you. The conditioned mind doesn't control you. Be there as the witness to your thoughts.

Just don't reject anything. So don't go wrong there. I know you're concerned about your mind and certain thoughts that go through your mind.

And you would rather be a good person and have good thoughts all the time, but it's not happening. And I can assure you it's not happening to anybody. Somebody is just having good thoughts.

Because the human mind is the human mind. It has polarities of good and bad and high and low. So don't try to bring about on that level the perfect me.

It doesn't exist. Allow yourself the imperfections. Allow the thoughts to be there.

They come. If you fight them, you make them stronger. People who have the worst problems with thoughts are people who are spiritual, so to speak.

They see themselves or are seen by others as spiritual. They have to live the role, for example, the vicar, the priest. They have to live the role of a spiritual person.

And they cannot admit to themselves that they have bad thoughts. So they suppress and they have bad emotions, anger, resentment. And they say, no, I'm not having bad emotions.

I'm a good Christian. They can't even admit to themselves and that makes it even worse. And then suddenly very bad behavior comes out of them and they don't know where it came from.

So all you have to with thoughts, all you need to be concerned about is to be the awareness. Allow the thoughts. Then they actually have less power over you because you are not don't look for yourself in any thought that comes into your head.

It's not who you are. They're just thoughts. It's not who you are.

If you have bad thoughts for two hours, it doesn't make you into a bad person. It just means that so-called bad thoughts are going through your head and then you watch it and as you allow them, there is a deeper space, the eye. From there you watch thoughts are like clouds passing.

You don't have to follow every thought and then thoughts can become very tedious. You can have one repetitive thought pattern going on in your mind for hours or even days. You don't have to follow every thought when you're aware.

You watch the thought. Then it comes what you're going to do to this obnoxious person. I'm going to kill this obnoxious person.

Comes the thought and then the thought drifts out and the awareness remains. And then it's lost power already. It's nothing.

So you find a spacious relationship with your thoughts that you are nothing that arises in that beautiful space of who you are, the consciousness that you are, which is spacious intelligence. None of that is who you are. They are forms.

They come and go. So thought is not a problem. Be there as the witness to what goes on inside you.

Then change happens by itself. The mind will always have good and bad, up and down. It has polarities.

But that's not who you are and you don't have to act on it. Increasingly you act from the state of aware presence. Action can come from the limited mind and it's not usually skillful action or action can arise out of the state of aware presence.

So that's the end of guilt.

[Speaker 3] (1:08:08 - 1:08:21)

What's the test? I mean, how do you know that this is out of the awareness after the fact? If you could go back and look at your actions and go, yeah, that was out of awareness, but that wasn't.

How would you know?

[Speaker 1] (1:08:21 - 1:11:30)

Well, you know, awareness doesn't create suffering for yourself or others when it comes out of awareness. So you know when you look at action it has a totally different quality to it. It's not self-serving.

The action did not happen because you needed something from that person. Awareness is not needy. When action arises out of awareness you do not need to use the other human being for some purpose, ulterior motive.

But when you act out of the conditioned mind, the egoic mind, you're not only trying to use the present moment because you're hoping to get to some better moment. You make the present moment into a means to an end. You also make other human beings into a means to an end because you want something through them.

So that's where you want to be with this beautiful woman because you want to be seen with her or you want to conquer her and so enhance your self-image. Or you want sexual pleasure from her. But you want something.

If you're acting out of awareness, the acting is not under the law of wanting. It's not that you want anything. And that's also where loving action can only arise out of that because love does not want anything.

True love does not want anything. So that's where it's totally selfless action. And when you look back on it, you can see very clearly whether there was self in the action.

You wanted something for yourself to enhance yourself or whether that was truly action totally free of self. And that's the most effective and the most powerful action is when the self, the image of me, the thought structure of me, goes out of the action and action arises that is totally selfless. That action doesn't create problems.

Such as the Buddhist monk said when he was asked, What's the meaning of Zen? Zen Buddhism. What's the meaning of Zen?

And the monk said, Oh, that's easy. No self. No problem.

That's it. So you begin to live and act without the mentally constructed self. You live from the aware presence.

But for a while, the two are there. And the awareness often comes in after something has happened that was unconscious. And you see it.

Don't beat yourself up. It's only the human condition. But whenever you see unconsciousness has just happened or happened the other day and now you see it or you see it in the middle of it, it's good to see it.

The more you see it, the more awake you become. Don't personalize it. It's nothing.

It's not who you are. That's the main thing.

[Speaker 3] (1:11:33 - 1:11:42)

So, can the now make me rich, powerful, free, happy, smarter, more loving, more loved?

[Speaker 1] (1:11:44 - 1:23:31)

Yes. All of those things. Rich?

Yes. Let's start with rich and then we'll look at the next one. Can the now make me rich?

Yes. Now what does it mean to be rich? Rich means it's not what people think it is.

It's not to have lots of possessions. That may be one aspect of being rich. But rich means to be in touch with the fullness of life.

And the only place where you can find the fullness of life, the intense aliveness that you sense when you are present to now, is here. When you are open to the present moment, what comes in is a gratitude for what is, no matter what it's, a little plant, the air you're breathing, the light that's coming through the window, the sound of a bird, whatever it is, there's a goodness to it. And even if it looks bad, even if it's a dead animal or a dead human, when you're totally aligned with the present moment, there's a peace that comes into your perceptions.

And with that peace comes a gratitude that is very deep. And so you're experiencing really life for the first time when you become present. And so to be in a state of gratitude for what is, is really what being wealthy means.

The present moment is always enough. And so the definition of wealthy, really, is to be, to have enough, to feel already the fullness of life, an expression that Jesus used, he said, I want you to have the fullness of life. And people didn't quite understand what he meant.

Was Jesus talking about shopping malls? That you have 500 shops in one huge shopping mall and you have thousands of things to choose from? Was he predicting the arrival of shopping malls?

Is that the fullness of life? You can walk around and you have lots of money and credit cards and you can buy anything you like. Now there are people who can do that.

They are not happy. So he's not talking about many, many things when he talks about the fullness of life. It's not, he's talking about the one thing.

It's to feel the intensity of being alive. And you can only feel that intensity of aliveness when you're in the present moment with your attention. One way of being in the present moment, as you know, is to feel the inner aliveness of the body.

To feel the aliveness that is in every cell of the body. Ah, it's alive. And the more you go there, the stronger that feeling becomes.

And once you are connected with that, you feel that the world around you is intensely alive too. It was alive before, but you didn't see it because there was too much thought stuff going through your mind continuously. The world became dead because everything was immediately labeled mentally.

That's a tree. That's a dog. The moment you label it, you don't look anymore.

It's not alive anymore. Everything gets deadened through mental abstraction when you go around the voice in your head immediately calling things, calling things names, giving things names. So when you become more present, there's this alert attention with which you meet your surroundings.

Once you know the fullness of life that is already here now, and then gratitude arises for what is, no matter what it is, then living in this way, eventually, that fullness that in essence is an inner realization rather than outer, that's the foundation for wealth, is to feel the fullness of life within. And then, if you live in that way, in connectedness with that, eventually, the fullness of life will also manifest for you externally in various ways. Meaningful activity is a form of wealth.

To know that what you're doing is helping other human beings brings an external fullness also into your life which is a form of wealth. And wealth may also come in the form of things coming to you, more conventional things, home or car or whatever it may be. Those things also come much more easily when basically you already feel the fullness even long before it comes externally.

So basically you feel already wealthy when you live fully in the present moment. You never feel really poor. I perhaps spent ten years of my life at least living what people would say below the poverty line.

And I never felt poor. I always felt rich although for a long time I had nothing. No external possessions.

But life was so fulfilling to live every moment fully present to the moment that I felt wealthy. Abundant. And much, much later did actually external abundance come into my life to some extent.

And that didn't make me feel better. I feel just when now I have a car during those years I used a bicycle mostly or the bus and I don't feel better now because I have a nice car. I feel exactly the same.

But it's nice to have a nice comfortable car with air conditioning in the summer. But it makes the fullness hasn't changed. It hasn't done anything to change that.

So the foundation is to be fully alive in the present moment. And then it is much more likely that external wealth will also come to you as an outer manifestation of an inner reality. If you feel wealthy already.

But if you feel poor and feel that you really need to make money now even if you achieve it, you will be unhappy with your wealth. Because it comes out of the unhappiness. So there are many people who are creating wealth these days.

They build up a big business or enterprise. But it comes out of a deep dissatisfaction with what is. It comes out of an enormous neediness to show to the world that you are somebody or to prove to yourself or the world how good you are.

And that is not conducive to true happiness. There are many wealthy people who are unhappy in their wealth. And they are not really wealthy.

And they are basically still deprived. They are deprived of the fullness of life. And they have perhaps five or ten houses in different places.

Houses, cars, yacht. And yet they are deprived of the fullness. And so they need more and more.

And it doesn't help. So here we have living in the present moment brings you into the fullness of life now and then eventually it will also manifest in different ways externally for you. Power was the other thing.

Will it bring me power? Yes, but not power to the ego. It will make your life more empowered.

That what you do much greater power flows into what you do. Because what you are doing, the action that you are performing, whatever it is, in the present moment, the only place where you can do anything, the action that you are performing in the present moment is not a means to an end. For most people they are active because they want to get there to that point in the future.

They want the end result. Their eyes are on the end result. So they may be busy building up a business because they want to become wealthy.

But they reduce the quality and aliveness of the present moment because they are reducing the present moment to a means to an end. They give it inferior status. In their minds the future is more important because that is where they are going to be wealthy.

But then the pattern remains inside them and even when they have the money they still have the same basic psychological pattern which means they need the next moment. And always they reduce the present moment to a means to an end. So the action is not of high quality.

It does not contribute to happiness. They don't make themselves happy and they don't make others happy with what they do. So that's not truly empowered and it is low quality action.

High quality action comes when you don't reduce the present moment to a means to an end. That's truly empowered action. Only when you no longer reduce this moment to a means to an end can you give your full attention to whatever it is that you are doing now.

Some great artists do it. Sportsmen do it. When they perform they are totally present.

It is not a means to an end. They are totally in the now. So high quality action comes out of that and this is empowered action.

So living in the now brings power into your life. True power. Not the pseudo power of the ego.

And then whatever comes out of it, out of that action will be good in one way or another. It will not be, one could say, I call it, it's not karmic action, which means karmic action, it's an eastern term, karma. Karmic action creates more unhappiness.

It comes out of unhappiness and creates more unhappiness for yourself and others. But out of presence alignment with now comes non-karmic action. It does not create more suffering on the planet.

Because so many people are very, very active but a lot of that activity ultimately creates more suffering on the planet. So that's the power. What's the next thing that the now will bring you?

What was the question?

[Speaker 3] (1:23:32 - 1:24:10)

I really want to know about guilt. I feel guilty all the time for little things I'm doing or that I'm not doing. And there are things that I know I did that were mistakes to other people.

So I know that you're supposed to be free and liberated in the now, but shouldn't I feel bad about this stuff? I mean, and what's going to keep me if I'm free and liberated in the now from like doing bad things to people? Because that's a fear I think.

[Speaker 1] (1:24:11 - 1:38:16)

The only place where you can be free of the conditioning of your mind because freedom is not an external thing, it's an internal thing. You can be in prison and you can be free. People have written to me from prison and they've read The Power of Now and they said they now feel free.

What does that mean? True freedom is freedom from your mind, from the conditioned, all the conditioned thoughts and emotions that otherwise control you. Freedom is the freedom to step back from the conditioning into the deeper I, the awareness that you are.

It's freedom from thought ultimately so that not every thought controls you. So it's the freedom from conditioning and basically it's the freedom from the past. So you're no longer determined, your behavior and your thinking is no longer determined by your past.

It's also freedom from future because most people have a desperate need for the next moment. I call it psychological future. They need the fulfillment that they think the future will bring them.

It won't. So this is something for you to be aware of because I know that pattern also still operates in you. Believing that something in the future will bring you greater fulfillment than you have now.

But it won't. If you don't have it now, you won't have it then. You have to access The Power of Now regardless of your external circumstances.

You can have that now. You can't wait for the future because once you're in the waiting mode, you'll always be waiting for the next moment. Even when you become a famous actor, it won't feel quite right.

Maybe you're already famous, I don't know. But it won't feel quite right and there will be many things when you're very famous. I've met one or two famous actors and they come to this teaching.

Why do they come? Don't they have everything? No, they've realized they don't have what really matters and suddenly they discover the spiritual dimension because they've achieved everything else on the worldly dimension.

So, go deeply into the present moment. Become deeply aligned and at one with the only thing there ever is in your life, the present moment. And that is where true power resides and that is the only place where you can be truly free.

What's the next thing that you want? Happiness. Can happiness come in the future?

When I achieve this or that, then I'll be happy when I make it. But every situation that you go into will have a downside. If you're expecting circumstances to make you happy, they can do that for a while and then you find, oh, it's not quite what I expected and there's always another side to it.

And very often the very thing that makes you happy, if you have an external thing that makes you happy, that very thing will also make you unhappy. An example, a woman comes into your life who makes you happy. One, two, three years later, the same woman makes you unhappy.

It's the same thing. Or a job, a great job is offered to you and it creates so much stress that you make yourself ill. It makes you happy first and it makes you unhappy.

You become famous and then you see the downside of fame. You can't go out in the street alone anymore. There's a riot the moment people see you.

You're a prisoner of your house. You can't go out without two or three bodyguards. Is that freedom?

And you thought you would be free when you become famous. I've met one or two famous people who can't go out alone. It's too dangerous.

And people stop them all the time and they gather around them. They have to stay inside. Everything has to be organized.

They have to jump in the car with tinted windows and bodyguards. Is that freedom? Are they happy because of their fame?

No, they have experienced the downside of fame. It doesn't mean that you should not pursue goals. There's nothing wrong with being famous.

But don't expect it to make you happy. The true happiness has to be found, it comes from being aligned with life internally. And where is that?

Now, here. A complete openness and yes to the present moment that takes you deep into the present moment. True happiness comes out of that.

And then you can go on and do things and see if you can become famous. Why not experience that? Experience as much as you can without hoping that some experience, or when you've accumulated enough experiences, you'll finally feel fulfilled and fully yourself.

That won't happen. There's no end to accumulating experiences and achieving this or that. You cannot find yourself there.

You can only find yourself in the present moment. For everything else you need time to achieve success in your career, to learn to play the piano, to learn a foreign language, even to meet a woman. It takes time.

You have to walk somewhere where beautiful women hang out. It takes time. Everything takes time.

And so the mind thinks okay, finding myself who I truly am will also take time. It thinks when I've added enough to who I think I am, maybe recognition from other people, fame, possessions, put all these things in the back, my back, and when I have enough things accumulated, then I will be full. And that moment will come at some point in the future.

It doesn't. Because the back, no matter how much you put in, it'll never feel full besides from the fact that also often things fall out of the back. You put something in here and then something else falls out.

You suddenly get wealth and then you're unhappy in your marriage. Or you're happy in your marriage and suddenly the job doesn't work anymore. Or you're...

There's always, there's nothing stability isn't to be found in the external world. It's in constant flux. This universe is not stable.

People have this absurd illusion that they're living in a stable universe and that they can achieve some kind of stability in their lives. They are shocked when suddenly big disasters happen and you realize how unstable really everything is. So if you look, that doesn't mean it's to be rejected.

Play in the world and enjoy the play. Play as much as you can. But don't expect anything out there to truly make you happy or fulfill you.

Happiness is to be found directly within yourself. It comes from being connected with who you are. This brings us back to where we started.

To be in touch, to feel the deeper I. And there's enormous joy in simply feeling the beingness that you are. To feel the I am that is deeper than this or that.

I am. The very life that you are. To feel that.

To feel alive. Out of that comes true happiness. And then you can play around in the world and you acquire things and then you lose things and you acquire some more and then you lose some more and in the end you lose everything that everybody does.

You lose the body. In the end its form dissolves sooner or later. But it's finding something that is deeper than any form inside yourself.

That's true happiness. Love also comes, true love comes only out of the true I. True love cannot come out of the pseudo I that says I the actor I the good looking actor, I the famous actor, I the American, I the poor one or I the wealthy one or I who is good with women True love doesn't come out of that I.

That's a pseudo I. That's what most people refer to when they use that word that's so common, I. But the true love comes out when you're connected with the deeper I.

The I that has no form. The one thing that never leaves you. The one ingredient that's always there no matter where you are what you do, what you experience that never changes the I.

The consciousness that you are. When you live in connectedness with that aligned with that, that's where true love comes. Because when you meet another human being you can sense in them also there's a depth of same I that is your identity.

You recognize yourself in the other and the other as yourself. And you feel a deep connectedness much deeper than anything that you can say or think with the other human being. And that's true love.

Love is to feel that you're ultimately not separate. You're one. It can only come out of the spaciousness that is part of the now.

The now is space. What happens in the now is form. Don't confuse the two.

The reason why people think there are many many moments in every day, in every in your lifetime, in every hour because what happens changes continuously. The forms around you change continuously. The thoughts that go through your head change.

The emotions that you feel change. The people around you change. So people think every time it's a new moment.

This moment and another moment and another moment. If you look more deeply you see it's not another moment. It's always now.

But the form that appears in the now changes continuously. But it's always now. And ultimately now is who you are.

The space of now is the space of I. And then things happen in it and they change continuously. So there are two ways of saying when they ask you, what is it that never changes?

What is it that's always there in your life no matter where you go and what you do? You can say it's always I. The deepest I.

Not the superficial I that changes the thoughts, the emotions, who you are in the world. But the deeper I that's always the same. And so another way of looking at it is to say it's always now.

And now never changes. And then you find the miraculous thing. They're actually one.

The space of now and who you are in the depth of your being is consciousness itself. Before it becomes something. The very foundation out of which all life comes.

You could say God. God dwells in the depth of your being. Not as some entity but as the formless one life itself.

That is the deepest meaning of what now is. And that's why the now can never leave you. So I am the now in essence.

I am not what happens. I am the space in which everything happens. That's your true identity.

And when you live one with that, knowing that, your life will be fruitful and a great and wonderful adventure. When you don't know who you are, then no matter what you do, what you achieve, where you go, who you meet, it won't satisfy you. That's how simple it is.

2016 Eckhart Tolle - Enlightened Relationships The Ultimate Training Ground for Practicing Presence

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 1:51:56)

This is Audible. Welcome. I was sitting in the green room 10 minutes ago, and was lucky enough to pick up a leaflet that was left there that told me that I'm speaking about enlightened relationships tonight.

And the arising of the new consciousness. The arising of the new consciousness is, of course, why we are here. And this could be misunderstood.

We are not here because we want a new consciousness to arise. When is it going to arise? We are here because it is arising.

And you wouldn't have come here if it were not arising in you, if you came voluntarily. And even if you came voluntarily, which I hope 99% at least of you did, even if you came voluntarily, not dragged here by your husband, wife, partner, friend, even there, it is possible that the arising new consciousness, which drew you here, which enabled you to recognize the truth, for example, in The Power of Now, A New Earth, or any other spiritual book that was written from and out of the awakened consciousness, yes, you recognized that because it's only the awakening consciousness in you that can recognize the truth when it's spoken that points to awakening. Otherwise, if somebody talks about awakening, it's no more than a mental concept, maybe interesting for a few minutes, and then you would quickly lose interest because it's not that interesting to the mind.

So even though the new consciousness is arising in many of you, it does not mean that it is continuously there yet. Many experience shifts between almost two dimensions, the mind-obsessed or the mind-possessed state, the thought-obsessed, mind-possessed state, which is the normal state of consciousness on the planet, has been for thousands of years, and the liberated or awakened state of simple, alert, spacious presence. And as you sit here, you may actually, or some of you, may experience moments when you're fully here, and then you may experience your mind taking you over, and you start thinking about what's going to happen tomorrow, or you start thinking about your problems, which are of course not here now, which have no reality at this moment, but the mind loves to dwell on those things because it keeps it going, it gives it renewed energy. And then perhaps, suddenly you wake up again, and you're back here in the room, and you're alert again. Or your mind may come in and tell you that it's better to go home now because you can't stand listening to this anymore.

And at that moment you have, well, at that moment, depending on whether there is some awareness that this is your mind talking to you, is there, that determines whether you have a choice. If you're totally identified with that thought, you will get up and go home. If you know that there's a thought arising that says something, then you can be there as the awareness behind the thought, and realize you don't necessarily have to do what the thought says, or even believe in it when the thought says, what the hell is it talking about?

I don't understand it. Because you can't really understand it from the conceptual mind. So let's see what your mind does.

Just be there as the witness of your mind, if you can. And as Tammy pointed out at the beginning, we have, I don't know if she pointed out, we have the words that you listen to, and we have an energy field out of which the words come. And the energy field out of which the words come, we could call presence or the awakened consciousness.

And there's nothing personal in it. It's not mine. It's here because the me got out of the way.

I have not achieved it. I don't possess it. So that is the energy field, and that operates here also.

And the same energy field in you may respond to that. And then we have here, to some extent it's arising already, a collective energy field of presence arising. That is very helpful to spend some time, which conventional language, it's only always the present moment, in this energy field, the collective energy field of presence.

So there are the words, they may be helpful pointers, but the most important thing is that which underlies the words. The arising new consciousness, often people have asked me and are asking me, how do you know that there is a new consciousness arising? Don't you, well, well, I must admit, there were times the last few years when I found it a bit difficult, when I was looking at world events, to answer that.

Because I knew the new consciousness is arising, but it is not it or it was not yet so visible in the outer manifestations, where the old consciousness was still operating. Now in the recent past, we had several events that are indications that the new consciousness is just beginning to reach the manifested structures of our civilization. We know that because some of the structures are beginning to dissolve.

And of course, if you believe too much in the media, you will think this is a dreadful thing. What's going to happen? You should be fearful, the media tells you, it's going to get worse and worse.

And of course, yes, it may be challenging for many people, huge shifts happening. The old structures that were created a long time ago by the old consciousness, dissolving. As I mentioned in the New Earth, it happened to communism.

Within a few years, two or three years, this rigid system one would have thought would never dissolve, at least not for a thousand years, gone. Of course, it was very challenging, and they followed times of upheavals in Russia. And in East Germany, I remember reading, many, many, many people needed urgent psychotherapeutic treatment, because their worldview that had been indoctrinated into them had collapsed.

It doesn't make sense anymore. And many of the structures nowadays that we believed in, the huge banks, massive power and money, suddenly they're not that stable. They're not as solid as they looked.

The buildings looked so solid. Huge structures. And the people who were running these organizations, they looked so confident.

And for many years, I was saying sometimes to groups, this is a very meaningful gathering tonight, as is this one. And I also sometimes added, but it's not going to be on the news tonight, because the media isn't interested in that. That was true until very recently.

And a good news is the good news and what is usually the bad news. It is on the news. Last night, ABC filmed part of our talk.

ABC News. It's unbelievable. It's an undreamt of a miracle.

How is that possible? And CBC News came to interview me. It can't be.

So it's, yes, there are signs that a shift is happening. Another hopeful sign is where there's a new man in the White House who, relative to some other world leaders or his predecessor, can be considered, if not a Buddha, at least a bodhisattva. And of course, the change is not going to come from one person.

He's not going to change the world. He is a manifestation of the change that is happening. Yes, he hopefully will be part of that change.

Yes, he will make mistakes, of course. But these are signs that these things could not have happened even 20, 30 years ago. The arising new consciousness.

What are the signs of the arising new consciousness? A lessening of, on the inner level, a lessening of mind possession, the normal state. Thinking no longer dominates your state of consciousness.

Thinking no longer gives you your sense of identity. You no longer derive your sense of who you are from what your mind tells you about you. The story of me and my life.

And you don't impose mental labels on others. There's a, not immediately, perhaps a complete absence, but there is a lessening of this compulsive conceptualizing, labeling, interpreting of the reality around you and yourself. Thought still operates, but your sense of who you are, of identity, does no longer, no longer comes from the movement of thought.

To experience that is one reason to experience more fully. That's why we are here. Who am I?

The mind will tell you who you are. I am this, this, my past, my history, my problems, my position in the world, whatever I identify with becomes part of my sense of self. And as presence arises, who you are deepens.

You suddenly realize there's a depth in that still alert space between thoughts that is here now. Very simple. A still alert space between thoughts.

And that alert space is just, if we want to call it anything, consciousness itself. And increasingly, that is where your sense of identity comes from. Not from some story that you tell yourself about who you are.

Now you will notice that in that clear space, you're not defining yourself anymore. In that clear space, we could even say, and this is frightening to the mind, you no longer know who you are in the sense of conceptual knowledge. And that is frightening to the mind.

But it is a beautiful state where you realize the essence of I, that until then had been mixed up always with thought forms. Now you go to the essence, the pure essence of I, no longer mixed up with, first you thought of I am this, I am that. And now you realize the simplicity of I am.

No definitions are needed. And you are, this is why I say, you are never more truly yourself than when you are still inside. You haven't gone to sleep.

You have not fallen below thought. You have risen above thought. You have transcended thought.

You have not returned to the realm of plants that are also very still. You haven't returned to that. You have gone through thinking.

You have transcended thinking. And then thinking becomes a helpful tool and a beautiful tool that the arising consciousness can actually use as it's doing at this very moment. It's using this little mind to express something that can't really be expressed in words.

And yet the mind is somehow managing to express that which is beyond definitions. So you find that space inside yourself. It's there.

And your personal history becomes, as far as your sense of self is concerned, your sense of who you are, is no longer important. One could almost say your personal history, as far as your sense of who you are is concerned, becomes irrelevant. What a liberation.

What a liberation not to carry around and mistaking the story in your mind, the story of me, the unhappy one. If it's happy, just wait a little and you'll turn unhappy. The story of me and my problems and my sufferings and my complaints about the world and other people and what they did to me and what I did to them and what shouldn't have happened but did happen.

All the continuous stream is no longer giving you your sense of illusory identity. But from the point of view of the conceptualizing mind, you have entered a very dangerous place. Ooh, don't go.

You don't know who you are anymore. Who am I? I have to remember my past quickly.

Oh yes, I remember now my childhood was very unhappy. Of course, people have suffered in the past. Some of you suffered more than I.

My suffering was moderate as a child, just mostly I was unhappy, but it could have been worse. And then it became more acute in early adulthood, but that also could have been worse probably, and some of you probably had worse sufferings than me. And if while I speak now you detect in yourself a slight irritation or anger because I am not acknowledging enough what you have suffered in the past, then that is helpful to know what is that that irritation or even slight anger that I'm not acknowledging your suffering.

Oh, there must have been some identification with my suffering. I'm not saying your suffering was not dreadful, but do you want that to be your sense of, form the basis for your sense of identity for the rest of your life? Or even if you have an illness, the illness is there, but the conceptual thing of saying, I am a sufferer of whatever it is, that also can be very seductive and in some cases becomes the main, the foundation for your sense of self.

And that's, it's, and once this has happened, you don't want to let go because there is a fear that when you let go of that sense of self, the unhappy sense of self, that perhaps blames, if you can blame somebody it's even better, blame people and you hang on and that comes a huge chunk in your mental, emotional structure. Okay, that's me. That's what happened to me.

That's why that, what they did to me. Yes, of course they did, but you are much deeper than that. There's a depth to who you are and at that level of depth and you begin to touch it in the space between two thoughts, where there's simple presence, that was never touched by your suffering.

Now that you may not have been aware of that because you were not conscious, there is a place in you that was never and can never be touched by suffering. And that is the pure I, the pure consciousness. So yes, of course you remember your story still, but your sense of identity is taken out of that.

And then you will be able to tell your story without the heaviness of a sense of self in it anymore. I sometimes talk about being a very unhappy child, but I don't feel the unhappiness still operating in me. I remember it, but I could, I no longer say, I was dreadful as a child, what my parents did.

My parents acted according, they did what they could do according to their level of consciousness. What they did reflected their level of awareness, their level of consciousness. And beyond that, there's the beautiful being underneath it.

So, the story, the past, the future also, not only does the past become less important, the future also loses its importance because in the egoic state of consciousness, which is the unhappy story of me, the mind forms with which you are identified, the future is extremely important because the unhappy me hopes to reach a state of freedom from unhappiness or fulfillment and satisfaction when this, that, or the other happens at some point in the future.

It looks to the future for fulfillment, release, completion. The always incomplete story of me, the always unsatisfying story of me, it didn't go the way it should have gone. It didn't go the way it should have gone.

But there's still the possibility that the story will complete itself in the future and finally I will arrive at some point of fulfillment. The only problem is the future doesn't exist, except as a thought. When it comes, it's the present, which I have, and if I habitually run away from the present, deny it, and look elsewhere, then I'm condemned to continuous dissatisfaction.

So, accessing the space or the stillness within now. You don't know anymore. It's a state of, from the point of view of the mind, you need to become comfortable, which from the point of view of the mind is a state of ignorance.

The absence of interpretation or definition. Not knowing. That's the place where the, for example, I embrace that when I come on to give a talk.

The becoming comfortable with not knowing what words are going to come out. Entering the space where, now what is that space that we are now pointing towards within? Entering that space of seemingly, seeming ignorance, where you don't, it's a place of no thought, but alertness.

Out, that is the place out of which all aliveness, all creativity, anything that is ever new, is born. It is not only emptiness, as it is called in Buddhism, it is also fullness, potential fullness. It is pure intelligence.

It is pure consciousness. It is the source of all life. The formless source of all life.

And where do you find it? At the center of your being. And at the center of your being, you actually find the center of the universe.

Because you're a microcosm. I mentioned last night these, the black holes at the center of galaxies, which I had written about, but was never published. And now I'm reading that scientists are saying, yes, there probably is a black hole at the center of each galaxy.

And they're almost certain there's a black hole at the center of our galaxy. There's an empty space, there is the empty fullness, the plenum void, as it's sometimes called by some mystics, the empty fullness at the center and the core of your being. Find that, and you have found the core of all, the source of all life.

Find that, and you have found yourself, the essence of who you are. Find that, and you have found the timeless dimension of pure consciousness, that which underlies all life. You have found the life.

Being is another word for it. Being before it becomes something. Being before it becomes existence.

Existence means to stand out. Being is the inner dimension, the uttermost innerness. Find that, and you have found what all humans have been and are actually looking for.

And most humans are looking for it where it cannot be found. In the phenomenal world, in mind forms, in the future. That is, we can call that stillness, we can call it space, I sometimes call it the inner space, you can call it consciousness, being, or you can call it sat-citta-nanda, which is the Indian term meaning, consisting of three words, being, consciousness, bliss.

Bliss means it feels, it is blissful to be connected with that, or to realize that as the essence of your being. And all that's needed is temporary cessation of thought. And once you have that, and you, then the spaces between thought become longer, and you can go about doing and experiencing life, at first tentatively, tentatively you may experience going towards the door across the room in the state of a large spacious presence.

And every step is, you'll find you're present with every step, and I'm not saying I'm going to do a walking meditation now, but it's a more natural thing, you may find yourself opening a door, and not making it into means to an end, while you're in the elevator, you're pressing a button, and you're going down in, you're just alert, a field of alertness in the elevator, not a person. And then when you need to use your mind, it'll, of course, if you're in that state, and somebody asks you a question, and immediately an answer comes out of you, I'm, let's say it's a question that is somewhat deeper than where is such and such a street, some other question, somebody asks you a question, and the question is received in the state of simple open presence. And there's a moment of a little gap, time gap, and then you will find a meaningful, powerful answer comes out of you.

And often you may find you didn't know that until it came, because it comes out of that, out of presence. This is how I began to be a spiritual teacher. I didn't know I was a spiritual teacher.

I was already, I was answering questions. People casually came, and said, asked some questions about life, or their problems, and I was just listening. I didn't know anything.

I had hardly understood what had happened to me. I'd hardly understood that state that is free of thought, and peaceful, and alive, and present. There was just listening to the question, and then I said something.

The answer came out, oh, that's interesting. And then the person said, wow, you are very wise. Well, I didn't know that I knew that, so I, and then they told a friend about it, and then the friend came and said, wow.

And then somebody came and said, oh, you, I wanted to talk to you, because I'm told, I was told you're a spiritual teacher. Oh, is that what I am? But this operates on all levels.

You just, if action is required in a certain situation, if you can become still for one moment, and then right action happens. Buddhists talk about all this kind of thing, I can never memorize these. Right action, right this, right that, right speech, right action, all these things come out of that state of consciousness by themselves.

And your thinking changes. The obsessive thinking, especially obsessed with negative thinking and so on, subsides slowly. Yes, you will still be overtaken by waves of thought occasionally, that's okay, and then you wake up again out of the wave of thought.

And the great test for the arising of the new consciousness, of course, comes in relationships, and which are also a great challenge. Relationships will reflect back to you your predominant state of consciousness. And that's why they are so useful.

And so if you are a hermit, then it's very easy to fool yourself as to your state of consciousness. If you avoid contact with other humans because it's just, you just don't want to know anymore, it's just too unsettling, then of course, yes, you can probably be in sustained states of, if you're lucky enough, somebody brings you food, you don't, you can be in sustained states of presence and believe that you have finally arrived, but it will not yet be deeply rooted within you because it has not been tested in the fire of relationships.

As a monk, I knew years ago, a Buddhist monk was telling me that he was in the east somewhere and he was a westerner, but he had become a Buddhist monk. And his teacher, the abbot of the monastery where he was, allowed him to go up a mountain and sit in a little hut for half a year. And somebody would bring him food every day, and he had nothing to do but meditate and sit.

And after a few, the first month was dreadful, unbearable, because he was sitting there with his mind. Torturing him on the inner and the mosquitoes torturing him on the outer level. And then gradually he was able to let go of that and become more and more presence was arising.

And he then said, and then in the last month or so, presence was almost continuous and he was convinced that he had reached the state of liberation. And then a message came from the monastery, which somebody had realized that your visa has expired. And so he had to travel to the big city and stand in line at the consulate or whatever it was.

And it took hours. And then he was in the wrong line and said, I've just been standing here for two hours. No, this is the wrong lineup.

You have to go to that one. And that was the wrong one too. And when he finally got to the official, he was hitting his table, I've been here for five hours.

And then he suddenly became aware. And he realized all that beautiful presence was gone. That's relationships.

And that was an easy relationship, just an official relationships. Now there are many kinds of relationships. We will talk about that.

But the essence of relationships, the question is always whether relationships are working harmoniously and beautifully, or whether they are conflict ridden, is determined by whether there is space in your relationship. And that applies to any relationship. The question is, is there space in this?

What does space mean? I don't mean space in the sense of distance between people. That's another aspect.

I mean inner space. There is a line in Khalil Gibran's Prophet, which talks about space, but this is not what I mean. This is also true, by the way.

He says, let there be spaces in your relationship, which means don't be clinging to each other all the time. Occasionally go your own way and then come back together. That's also true.

But what I'm talking about here is inner space in the relationship. And what that is, you probably know already, and we will come to that now as we address the different kinds of relationships that you encounter in life, and see how the arising new consciousness can be sustained in those challenging situations. Because there is no doubt that human beings are very challenging.

The others are the human beings. So you have, of course, the first thing that comes to mind when you talk about relationships is the intimate relationships, which usually start off as romantic and then become something else. This is what usually comes to mind, what many films are still about, movies that you see, a large part are still about that.

And it is what many people's lives are preoccupied with, is what people look to for their sense of fulfillment and happiness, and at the same time, those intimate relationships are one of the greatest sources of unhappiness. So a little contradiction here, of course, people look to it for their fulfillment and happiness, and in many, many cases, the opposite happens. And in many, many cases, the people experience a shift from the very person that was going to, was supposed to make me happy, now makes me unhappy.

That's the normal course of relationships. I read the other day, I don't know who said it, and he said there is no marriage in which a week after the wedding, there is no marriage in which one week after the wedding, you cannot find grounds for divorce. And the secret is in continuing to find grounds for marriage, he said.

Before we, let's put this aside, because that is the most problematic. But you are engaged, we will come to that, of course, but you are engaged throughout the day and throughout your life in many kinds of relationship, different types of relationship, you have relationships with your children, if you have children, you have relationships with your grown-up children, you have relationships with your parents, relationships with siblings, family members, relatives, you have relationships with friends, you have relationships, casual, brief relationships when you interact with people to do this or that, to buy something, to ask for information, on the telephone. These are all relationships, and they're all part of, if there is dysfunction in you, egoic dysfunction, that will manifest in all relationships.

Let's start with the simplest relationships, and that is where you don't know the people very well. Makes it a little easier, perhaps. Somebody, you go to a shop and you buy something, you are asking somebody for information, you're getting a ticket behind a counter, there's somebody giving you a ticket.

Now, all these, the supermarket, the cashier, all these things at the hotel, the porter, the bellboy, whatever, whoever it is, the waiter, the waitress, these are all people that continuously come into your life, usually is not given much attention, because those kinds of relationships and the people who represent, are part of those relationships, are usually considered a means to an end. Because, of course, you're only interacting with this person because you want to buy the newspaper, whatever it is, from this person. So the person becomes a means to an end.

Or you're asking for information, and the person is a means to an end. What you want is not the relationship, you want the information from that person, you want that person to do something for you. Yes, of course, on a functional level that is true, but it is also true that you are reducing a brief interaction between two human beings to something that is actually dehumanized.

When you interact with humans in that way, where you make another human being into a means to an end, and of course, the ego does not only do that in these brief functional relationships, the ego does the same thing with other more closer relationships would come to that. But you observe it to see what is the quality of your relationship, the casual relationships that happen throughout the day, that are brief encounters with other human beings. So there comes the first opportunity to bring in a little bit of space, so that you then have two dimensions to that relationship.

Let's say you are buying something. You're buying a book. You go to the bookstore, you buy a spiritual book.

You hand the book to the cashier, and now we have the beginning of a relationship. Now, and of course, the cashier, of course, has also a relationship with you, but what the cashier does is not your concern. Whether the cashier is treating you as a mental concept called customer is not your concern.

Whether the cashier sees you as a human being or sees the being behind the human is not your concern. Your concern is your state of consciousness. Your, is there some space while you interact?

Yes, you need this person because this person is going to take your money and give you the receipt. No question about that. Is that all there is?

Or have you missed a valuable opportunity for relating and connecting to another human being? And how do you do that? You do that by looking at that human being and not thinking anything while you look, in, have space inside you while you look, hand over your money, and take the book, and say, thank you.

During that interaction, there was a moment of stillness inside you, alert stillness. Let's do it again. He says, he or she says, okay, that'll be $16, or usually books cost like $15.99. Okay. You take the money out and you look. Very simple. Not that you want something, not like you say, I want something deeply meaningful with you.

But it, there is a human being there and you are a human being. Is there a, is there a meeting? Is it what in the Course in Miracles is described?

Is it a holy encounter? It says that potentially whenever you meet somebody, no matter how briefly, it can be a holy encounter. That means that which transcends the person, that which transcends the temporary function, that which transcends the label, customer, employee, shop assistant, that which transcends those things suddenly comes into being, emerges.

And it emerges because you were there as primarily as space rather than as a function or as a label, a concept. Now it is quite possible that you will get no response at all from the person serving you because it is possible that the person serving you is totally identified with the concept that you are a customer. You're not a human being.

You are a customer and you are treated as a customer. Okay. Thank you.

He may not even look at you. And of course you're not saying, please look at me. It's, it's a self-sufficient thing.

It's, you don't expect anything from him or her. You do it for yourself. But if you do that, you're offering space, one could say.

You're offering that person space, but they don't have to take it. You're offering a spacious, brief, spacious relationship. But the miracle is that often you will find, if they are not totally identified with their mind structures, a little opening in them.

And they look at you. And for a moment you connect as on the level of consciousness beyond the function, beyond the labels. And that is a bit, it adds a quality to your life.

If you just do that in ordinary, brief relationships already adds a depth that before wasn't there. And it can be a beautiful, I've had, I have many beautiful encounters with people that I meet very briefly and there is a, suddenly there is a depth to it that would have been completely missing if I had reduced the human being to a function, which is what the mind does. The mind has a label and it, and the mind makes, if you're only in the mind, everything is a means to an end, including human beings.

This is what the egoic mind does. It transforms the present moment, whether the, whether a human being comes into the present moment, or whether some action that you do in the present moment, whatever it is in the present moment, the ego transmakes it into a means to an end. It looks to the, it wants to get there and it uses this to get there.

So it's, the ego uses the present moment and people in the present moment, because the only place where you can meet people in the present moment. I've never met anybody not in the present moment. So if the egoic consciousness reduces other humans to a means, to reduces the present moment to a means to an end, it reduces anything and everything that comes into the space of now to a means to an end.

Dreadful way to live. And then you can see when, when that operates, human interactions become quite unpleasant. Dehumanized, desacralized, you could say.

So this is a beautiful practice. And if the other person shows no response, it's fine. You have, there was a space of presence in you.

So you're, you're the giver of space. And so you begin in all those, and sometimes you'll forget. Don't beat yourself up if you forget.

After paying at the supermarket, you realized you weren't, there was no awareness that there was another human being there, because mentally you were already in the car. Because when you're stuck in your mind mentally, you're always one, two, three, or four steps ahead. You're never here.

You're just here enough so that you don't bump into things. And so that is, well, I would say perhaps the easiest, as far as relationships are concerned, that's the easiest practice. And even that some people don't find easy to remember, to actually be present when you are there with another human being.

But then, of course, you don't have to spend a long time with them, so it makes it easier. Then you have relationships where you meet people at work, family members, friends. Now, many people real notice, for example, some friendships survive because you don't get together too often.

The longest lasting friendships are people who live a long way away, and you perhaps see them every two years, and you email occasionally or talk on the phone. Not too problematic. But spend a holiday with them.

Vacations are the end of many friendships. Why is that? Because the longer you are together, the more likely it is that the ego and its dysfunctional way of interpreting other people and being in the world, its identification with mental positions, will come in.

And so, after a few days together with another person, you realize that this person has sides that you had not known about. There are aspects to that person that, wow, I never knew he was like that. You might get a taste of their pain body.

And that's interesting. And they, of course, think the same of you. I had an interesting...

When I was living in England, I lived in a little cottage in the country for a few years, and since my income was very low, I rented out two bedrooms, usually two people who were there for a while. In that town, there were many people transient passing through. So in a period of three years, I probably had about 12 people or so coming as lodgers.

And with 10 out of the 12, there were serious forms of dysfunction that only came out after a few weeks or a few days in some... Or after one day with one person. And two people were free of that.

I had two out of 12 people. 10 people actually, by dysfunction, I mean not just some quirk of behavior or something, but causing themselves and others considerable and unnecessary suffering, causing suffering for themselves and others. That is what I mean by dysfunction.

So whether it be deep mood swings, some obsessive preoccupations with non-existent problems, needing to talk to me for five hours a day. Two people did not manifest it. That was beautiful to experience.

And the others were also interesting to experience. I was just there as a listening presence, listening to what they had to say and watching and being there. And one or two also experienced a shift, a certain shift in consciousness.

Interesting observation to be with people live so closely together and see how some people go through enormous shifts in mood and inner states. So much that you don't know when they come down from the upper floor from the bedroom. You don't know who is coming down the stairs for breakfast because you don't know what state of consciousness they are in.

It could be dreadful. They could be aggressive and shouting and all. It could be in a state of chaos.

Everything is fine. Close friends, family members, and so on. Here also becomes more important even to be, are you able to be there not as a reactive entity?

Especially relationships that have a lot of past in them. The more past there is in the relationship, and that for example applies to your parents, relationship with your parents, your grown-up children, relationships with relatives you've known your whole life. A lot of past means there's usually a lot of patterns have accumulated in the relationships.

The patterns play themselves out whenever you come together. And in some relationships when you visit your parents, when you visit those relatives, you can almost play the record or a CD of what happened last time you saw them. The same kind of comments, the same kind of irritations, provoking the same reaction in you, the same, the same responses, the same, just play the record.

You don't even need to see them. You can say, I'm not coming to us to the Thanksgiving dinner. I'm just listening to last year's conversation.

So if, but if you go there in a state of alertness and presence and then suddenly you see your father, your uncle talking to you and making the same kind of comment, disapproving of your lifestyle, for example, or whatever it may be, or showing irritation with what you're, who you are, and then you can be there as a, as a, this requires more alertness, more intensity of alertness than with the person selling you a newspaper. So it's, start with a newspaper person and wait a little and, and be in your room, do it with flowers, be present with a flower.

The flower almost asks you to be present with it. It says, please recognize my beauty because I recognize my own beauty through you. It's asking you, it wants to be recognized and seen.

It's, it's, if a flower can't do it, then what can? Well, maybe your dog can. All those are easier ways of being, of sustaining that state of alert presence, spacious presence in the face of another being.

And then finally say, okay, I'm ready now to visit my parents or I'm ready to see my grown up children. And then you go and then they start acting out the same. The important thing is that you are no longer run by your mind.

You are there as a presence. Hang on to your inner body. I recommend that highly.

By that I mean, have some attention in the inner energy field of the body as you listen to your child or your parent while they talk, ask you questions and also be rooted in here. Feel the aliveness throughout the energy field. And while you listen to your, whoever it is, your uncle, dad, grandfather, and they talk and then you give an answer out of, let it come out of that moment that's brief, the stillness, alertness.

Can you, and while you meet them, can you be free of thought in the moment of giving them a hug, if that's what they do? And be there. And then observe that that's not who they are.

The irritated comments they make about you, the accusations, perhaps they're keeping the past alive that they share with you in their minds. Well, you did that five years, 10 years ago, 20 years ago. Do you remember what you did?

I'll never forget that. Yes, I did. You're right.

Or if they may not be right at all, they might be wrong. And then you say, is that what I did? There's no need to say, I never did that.

I never said that. Yes, you said that. No, I didn't.

And immediately you're trapped in mind against mind, mental position against mental position. But all you need to say that is, I did. Is that how you remember it?

Or say nothing at all, even better. Oh, well, okay. Now, the amazing thing is, if you do not fight another person's mental position, it weakens.

So you're doing something wonderful for them. You are not strengthening their mental positions. Mental position means I'm identifying with a certain thought form.

And that's what I derive my sense of I. The sense of I is lodged in the thought form. So that's this identification with a mental position.

And if nobody resists it, it thrives on resistance. It thrives on opposition. Without opposition, the egoic mind form becomes weakened.

If nobody contradicts, what's going to happen? And they'll make another attempt to get some kind of contradiction. And again, they simply, oh, well, okay.

And it gets weaker and weaker. It's quite upsetting for that person. But you're doing something wonderful.

You're actually, there's an opportunity now for the mental position to dissolve. And sometimes this happens when you are able to be there as spacious presence. And this is close to a miracle.

But the important thing is, you are not doing it in order to change them. If you're doing it in order to change them, you're not there. There is a second motive, a hidden motive, and it's your mind coming in.

You're not really present. Or if you have, again, a little danger I need to point out, the mind may use the arising of this new consciousness and make a conceptual self out of it. And then you have a new self image, a concept of who you are as somebody who is superior to most of these people, like your relatives.

And so, and that can be confused with the state of presence. So then you go to the gathering of your family or relatives with that unconscious mental image of yourself as a superior spiritually advanced being. And you will notice that sooner or later, because then you will get irritated because they are so unadvanced.

And if you make a little comment to them that you will understand where I'm at when you are more conscious. So the mind is very cunning. It can use even presence and make it into a concept.

Of course, then you've lost presence. But I have seen people who think they are present without realizing that they've made presence into a concept. Presence means just the simplicity of inner space, not identified with content, neither the content of your mind, nor the content of somebody else's mind.

Be there as the space for the content, the content, external content, inner content. Don't be one with the content. Don't have your entire life run by content.

Be the space, be the space. That's the practice. And the more past there is, the more alertness is required.

As I said, Ram Dass, you remember what he said? If you think you're so enlightened, go and spend a week with your parents. That's the test.

Or other relatives. Or your ex-husband or your wife. If you have children still, I'm now talking about children rather than grown-up children, if there's such a thing.

Your relationship with your child, let's say your actual child. What is it that you transmit to the child? What is the state of consciousness that gets transmitted?

What is your habitual state of consciousness? That is what you teach the child, not what you tell the child. Your habitual state of consciousness.

Is your life one damn thing after another? Is that how your family lives at home, as many modern families do? What's the next thing we have to do?

Next thing. We're always hurrying to the next moment. You haven't done your homework yet.

Come on. What do you have to do? Go do this.

Do that. Continuous restlessness in the energy field. Of course you have to do things.

Yes, nobody's saying don't do anything. We're talking about whether you are lost in a continuous succession of doing and thinking and doing. When your child comes, first question, are you able to listen when the child speaks?

Listen means, true listening means you're there as a spacious presence. What the child is saying isn't so important. Are you giving your child space?

That is the question. Are you there as space? Not if you can't do it the whole day, it's fine, but occasionally when you interact.

Is the only time you interact with your child when you want your child to do something? Or when you have something to say about or stopping the child, don't do that. Is that the only interactions you have and you think you're responsible because you do all the right things?

You tell your child all the right things to do and not to do. You're a responsible parent. Well, not really, because the most vital dimension is missing.

The transcendent, the being. The consciousness, that which is beyond the personalized dimension. That's missing.

Life is missing. And your life is consumed by your life situation. And you're missing life.

Life is now. Life is beyond the content of your life. The content of your life, whatever happens in your life, the experiences, the events, that's all life situation.

But are you acknowledging life in the midst of your life situation? Or is your life, which includes your family life, is your life consumed by your life situation? By all the things that need doing, that need thinking about, that need one thing after another.

The life situation, past, future. What do we have to do next? Always, vital thing for any, not just relationships, for any sane life is find the life in your life situation.

And their life is not the forms of life, because the forms of life are always part of the life situation. I'm talking about the life prior to form that is the space of consciousness, of stillness. That is life.

That is eternal life, timeless. And that needs to be there. And then otherwise, the world is going to eat you alive.

It's going to eat you up. That's what it does. If you don't get your attention, your consciousness into the, find the space.

The world, your life situation, which is the world, is going to consume you, all your attention continuously. Every situation says, give me your attention, I matter. Attention, please, attention.

Every thought says, I matter, give me your attention. Every thought wants to proliferate into other thoughts. An insane way to live, but normal.

It's called normal. So the vital thing, where is the life in my life situation? And if you find the life, which is in the now, now is the entry point into life.

Okay, let's imagine then every one of you has a life situation as I have. Some of you have a life situation that is perhaps pretty bad, considered from the point of view of the mind. Many things have just gone wrong.

And a few more things are likely to go wrong, says the mind. Or you have a heavy burden of things that have not been solved in your life. Of course you have.

That's the life, your life situation. But if you are here and carry that with you, then you wouldn't really be here. So if you're here carrying your life situation with you, you would, your thoughts would continuously drift to your problems and what you have to do, what you fail to do, what has happened to you, what might happen to you.

And you would only occasionally hear a few words, a little, catch a few words, catch what, present moment. Okay. Space, consciousness.

Okay. But you're going with, you're here, you have your past and your future going, carrying that. Okay, where's the life now?

Here. Your life is the consciousness. Consciousness, space, whatever you want to call it, allowed stillness.

That is the fullness, the full emptiness, the unmanifested. Have a little space in the midst of your life situation, just a little, a little space opens up. I'll just do it here.

Just this, just this. That's alert, present. And suddenly you feel, ah, this moment is actually okay.

This moment, life now, because you're getting deeper into this moment, you're not just seeing the surface of this moment. You're getting into the essence of the space. This moment is the space for what happens.

This moment is actually okay. And you can have that test at any stage, when you feel the burden of your life situation, see, if your mind tells you your life is very problematic and chaotic or bad, then you find out if that applies to this moment. And then you find, well, this moment is actually not that bad at all.

And the deeper you go into this moment, the more life you feel, present, clear. Where's your life situation? It's not there unless you remember it.

Oh yes. And then attention back. That's where anything new comes from.

Otherwise, your life situation will just, one thing will lead to, there will be no true change. One damn thing will lead to another damn thing, and another damn thing, and another problem. And when you solve that problem, two new problems raise their head out of that solution.

That's karma in Eastern terms. One thing leads to another. Action, reaction, action, reaction, action, reaction, no space, no freedom.

But if you find the life, as much as possible, make space. And then that space even affects the externals. If not immediately, sometimes immediately, you will find changes taking place in the so-called life situation, because you have gone into that place out of which all life arises, anything that's new.

If you don't touch that in yourself, all you ever experience is a repetition of the old in your life. Sometimes it pretends to be new, it looks new on the surface, and you go into another relationship and say, now finally I've found, but you haven't accessed the unconditioned in yourself, and you find, oh god, it's turning into the same, my marriage is turning into the same marriage as my last one. Oh my god.

So we're all, we're at the, we're getting to the essence of this now, which you will need in your close intimate relationships. It is vital that you are there as space, as much as possible, that you're able to listen and be the space, because that's where true listening arises, to your partner, listen, be aware of the mind and its positions. Remember President Obama's spiritual advice, he says, if you disagree, you don't need to be disagreeable.

That sounds simple, but it's actually quite profound, because he's saying you don't need to be identified with your mental positions. You can still have mental positions and opinions, and as the Zen master said, you don't need to seek the truth, just stop cherishing opinions, and the truth emerges. What does that mean?

Stop cherishing opinions. Opinions are the mind, they are positions of the mind, of rightness, this is how it is, and you identify with the positions. That causes endless conflict, because the other person does the same, two mental positions fighting and strengthening each other.

So you don't need to be disagreeable when you disagree, means you don't need to be identified with mental positions, and how are you not identified with mental positions? How do you do that? By realizing that you, who you are is not the arising thoughts, who you are is the space behind your thoughts, and you come, you are, you are, that's who, that's, you are the space for your thoughts, you're not your thoughts.

Then you're not identified with the positions of the mind, and that means you're then not, if you're identified, you defend your mental positions as if you were defending your life. That's the, that's the absurdity. People, some people even get into physical fights, they start arguing, sometimes it's family members, you read these articles in the paper, two brothers, or father and son, they started discussing something about sports or politics, and then one person took a knife and killed the other one.

It happens for, what happened? They were defending, they were so identified with their mental positions that when the mental position was attacked or questioned, it was unconsciously considered an attack on their very life. And that is how you can observe it in others, and preferably in yourself, when you become emotional, when your discussions start, and you're defending your viewpoint, you're, you're defending your position of rightness, and you're feeling, you're getting upset.

It could even be something spiritual, and you're saying, the now is all there is, I'm telling you. Why do you never believe me? It requires, you can see it more easily in others, and then requires a little bit more alertness to see it in yourself.

But a good sign is getting upset when you start discussing something. Oh, I'm lost in a mental position. I've lost the space of now.

And then there's an opportunity to return. Then you can listen, you can talk about something. Listening, perhaps, is the greatest thing you can do for your partner.

And it's not so much what the partner says that has its place and importance, but to be there and connect on the level of awareness. And should you, listening implies that there is an open space. The words are received in that open space.

Partners evolve sometimes at different speed, the evolution of consciousness, and some may not evolve for a while at all. So it's possible that suddenly the awakened consciousness comes into you, into you, and your partner remains where he or she is. And you go into enormous presence, and aliveness, and newness, and you still see he or she is still no change.

And then wait a little, and see it is quite possible that your state transmits itself, even the slightest degree of readiness in the other. The fact that you do not strengthen his or her mind anymore by opposing his or her mind, the vital thing, don't oppose the mind. You can express your viewpoint without opposition.

Something may happen, an opening may happen. Or it is possible that you may have to separate, and it may be that the other partner will leave you, because it is no longer satisfying to live with you without the drama. The pain body, of course, many of you know about the pain body, and hopefully not only know about the pain body, but have direct knowledge, immediate knowledge of your own pain body.

The pain body, of course, is the favorite place for the pain body, which is the old accumulated pain, which is an energetic, almost an entity that lives in you, that lives on emotional suffering. It loves its vibrational frequency. It thrives on relations, close relationships.

That's where it gets its food, most of its food. There isn't much you can do with, if your pain body needs food, it can't do much when you go to the supermarket and only see the cashier for half a minute or one minute. Even there it could happen.

I've been standing here for 10 minutes and you've been talking to this customer instead of serving me. But favorite place for pain bodies to renew themselves are families and intimate relationships. That's their place.

And so you will know your partner has a pain body which occasionally takes them over and makes them say and do things that one could say they're completely out of character. Well, yes, it's unconscious. It comes as a surprise when you've started living with a person and you've experienced their pain body after perhaps two or three weeks for the first time.

And that used to be the big surprise when people got married. Nowadays often people live together for a while before they get married so they already know that the other has a pain body. It's good.

And you haven't committed yourself yet. You can still get out. But what a dreadful thing when you have to, when you marry somebody, start living with that person and two or three weeks after the honeymoon a totally different person is suddenly there.

A person who's in a deeply negative energy field, says hurtful things, misinterprets what you do. You say, who did I marry? And you think this must be the real person.

Maybe I married, this was all a disguise. The real person is coming out now. That's of course not the case.

It's not the real person, it's the pain body. And where's yours? Oh.

Your partner's pain body wants yours, wants your emotional reaction. Pain body is an emotional aspect of ego. It's part of the egoic consciousness.

Pain body needs to be recognized in yourself and the other as it arises. It's not usually there all the time, that would be dreadful, but it comes periodically. And then you go back to normal for a while and then it comes back.

And so you need to recognize it, be there as the space for it, be the presence in the other and in yourself. Perhaps the most destructive thing in relationships is the pain body that people carry around with them, that takes them over and makes them, even sometimes people who are already awakening, they still get periodically get taken over by their pain body and completely lose consciousness and then completely identified with that energy field. It uses their mind.

It rises up when the pain body needs to renew itself, feed on somebody else's reaction, it moves into your mind and every thought you think is the thought of the pain body. It completely, the emotional energy field takes possession of your mind, which is probably, if you're not conscious, is probably problematic enough as it is even without the pain body. But then the pain body rises into your mind and then if you observe it in your partner, because if it happens to you, you can't observe it anymore, the presence is lost, but you can observe it in another more easily.

Every word they say to you is the pain body speaking through them as if an entity, and in a way it is like that, has taken possession of them and is now using their mind and speaking through their mind. You need to know that so that you do not react as if that were who they are. So that is where a degree of compassion comes in when you recognize that they are being possessed at that moment by this entity called pain body.

That helps to know it, but this entity is very cunning and knows exactly how to get an emotional reaction from you. It will accuse you, blame you, mention, it knows your weakest points and it will go in there and press all the right buttons until you finally go, and your own pain body has awakened and you're in the grip of it and you start shouting and whatever form the pain body takes. Or you may be present enough and so that you don't get taken over by your own pain body.

But even being in the grip of the pain body, if you're awakening, if the new consciousness is arising, there is a good chance that at the back there is still an observing presence and you are able to say to your partner, I think my pain body has just come up. I can feel it. There it is.

And if your partner's pain body has not come up yet, then he or she can help you to stay present with it. You can address it, see it. It happened just at this moment when you said that or that happened, that and now I can feel it.

Okay, let's stay with it. You may also point out to your partner that the pain body has come up when you observe it. And if you're lucky, there's still enough awareness there to recognize it.

But the pain body is very cunning. It may even be that your own pain body is coming up and you're accusing your partner that their pain body is there. Whoa, very cunning.

And of course, the interesting thing is if somebody says to you, there's your pain body. If there's a reaction, then he or she was right. What do you mean my pain body?

If there is an open looking, you say, that's my pain body. Okay. Okay, let me just feel into this.

Then probably wasn't. My pain body. Well, that's strange.

Didn't feel like a pain body, but maybe. Space, space, space. Is there space in this relationship with your child, with your partner, with your relative, with a newspaper person, with anybody?

Is there space? That is a vital question. So relationships is where your degree of presence is being challenged.

And it's your opportunity for the deepening of presence and intensification of presence, because you will need it in relationships. The hermit doesn't need that intensification of presence. The hermit is not being challenged by the human mind in others.

Maybe challenged by his or her own mind. That's maybe big enough as an obstacle for some, but being challenged by other human minds around you, that is the challenge. So your relationship, the degree of conflict or absence of conflict in relationships is a reflector that tells you where you are at as far as the arising consciousness is concerned.

Otherwise you could fool yourself so easily. So there, see what is the quality and depth of relationships? The quality and the depth, that's the same thing really.

Is there a depth in it? That's what I mean by what space is. Space is the dimension of depth.

Without space, inner space, all you have is the horizontal dimension of life. Which is past and future and the stream of thinking. That's the horizontal dimension.

Most people on this planet still move exclusively in the horizontal dimension of life. Their life has no depths. Their relationships have no depths.

They have a pseudo-depth. When the ego falls in love with someone, it looks and feels very deep, but it isn't really. It is an intense clinging, a wanting to take possession of, saying to the other, be with me, I need you.

Play the part that I have assigned to you and I play the part that you want me to play. And that looks deep for a while. When you are in love, you feel, wow, it looks so intense.

You can observe people that I have only met recently, how they look at each other with that intensity that says, you are so special and I will play the role that you want me to play. You play the role that I want you to play. And then they sit in the restaurant looking at each other.

It's a role. It's clearly a role that you play, but it looks good on film. And everybody's doing it.

You can see it in the movies. And then one year passes and then that stage is over. And then they just sit there in the restaurant.

Horizontal dimension and the vertical dimension. The vertical dimension is the dimension of depth, which has nothing to do with the content of your life, which exists in the past and the future, but ultimately only in the mind, because that's where past and future are. Find the vertical dimension of depth in your life.

Find the life underneath your life situation. No matter how burdensome or problematic your life situation seems to be, and particularly there in difficult life situations, the more difficult and burdensome your life situation is, the more vital, the more important it is to find the vertical dimension, the life underneath your life situation, which you can only find by accessing the power of the present moment within. A refusal to dwell mentally on past and future.

As much as possible, bring attention to this, the depths of now. Not just the surface of now, which is what's happening, but the space in which all this is happening. That's the consciousness that's here.

So the depths of this moment, the surface of this moment is this room, the voice, all your sense perceptions, whatever you feel, any thoughts that come into your head, they are all part of the content of now, the surface dimension. And the surface dimension is happening where? In you.

This entire room, the people in this room, is happening in you. Where else? Philosophers have even questioned whether, what the correspondence is between external reality and the inner.

They have questioned if there even is such a thing as an external reality, and some have considered that we are all engaged in a dream. So you need to consider the possibility that you are dreaming this room. You need to consider the possibility that you are dreaming this voice, talking in your dream.

Have you had a character ever in your dream that says to you, maybe this is a dream?

I'm not saying this is a dream, but I'd like you to consider the possibility that it is a little bit like a dream, because just as a dream, very soon this situation evaporates, dissolves. And then you look back tomorrow and you say, there was this room and there was a man talking about the now.

Was that a dream? Or perhaps for a moment after you wake up, you can't remember whether it was a dream or did it happen. Not that much different, because this, every situation dissolves just like a dream.

And so some people will tell you, yes, it is like a dream, and yes, it is, but even if it is a dream, you can still find the reality that underlies the dream. Because even a dream could not be if there were not the space of consciousness in which the dream appears. Otherwise it wouldn't be.

For it to be, there needs to be a field or space of consciousness. And in that light of consciousness, the dream appears. Otherwise there would be no dream.

So at the bottom of the dream, there must be something that is not, that is real. Even if everything else is unreal. And in some ways it is, compared to the absolute reality of that which underlies this impermanent world of form.

Compared to the absolute reality, compared to the absolute reality, yes, the whole thing that we experience here is a dream-like thing. And that's fine. But where is the reality?

The reality is that which makes the dream possible. The light of consciousness in which it appears. And where is that?

It's you. So you are not the form of you. You are not the name, or your job, or your past history, or your future, or this or that.

You're not the person. Ultimately, the person is part of that dream-like thing. Go to a cemetery and look at the gravestones.

They were all persons. And they've dissolved. If you go to an old cemetery, nobody even remembers who these people were.

They're just names. They've dissolved long ago. Dissolved.

Even that maybe the last people who remembered them were their grandchildren, and then they died long ago. And so it all evaporates very quickly. And yet, what is the reality behind all that?

You are the reality behind that. Not the temporal appearance of the person, but the consciousness in which all this happens. And that consciousness is timeless.

The now is always the now. Never not now. And you go this next morning, tomorrow morning, the same now, the same space, something different appears.

So there's dwell there rather than lose yourself in that. And then the world of form is actually quite an interesting place. No longer a veil of tears.

It's a veil of tears if there's nothing else. If you don't know the reality that underlies it, then it becomes suffering. You lose yourself in the character that you play in this life.

And you lose yourself totally in it. And then you believe all the other characters you meet are absolutely real. Don't realize that their reality is only relative.

They have a relative reality just as your character. I'm talking character in the sense of somebody in a play. And so we see the absolute, and then we can deal with the relative with much greater ease.

We are not lost in the relative. We are not lost in the surface world, in the world of form, not lost in time, the world of past and future, not lost in the continuous stream of thinking, which is all the same thing. Just all that's needed is for you to become acquainted with the dimension of depths, and then realize that's your home.

That's who you are. And you can't define it in any way. There's no definition that you could find for who you are.

There is a not knowing in that from the point of view of the mind, and yet anything you need to know will come out of that. Anything that you truly need, not just need to know, also anything that you truly need comes out of that. Seek only that.

All else will be given unto you. It changes even the externals. Seek that and not just seek it, be it.

Realize you are it, not a person, and then play with the person. The kingdom of heaven does not come with signs to be observed, he said 2,000 years ago. And when he used that kingdom of heaven, he pointed to us.

So if it's not with signs to be observed, means it's not outside. Oh, there, there, there. It is within.

It is your innermost reality.

[Speaker 2] (1:52:28 - 1:52:41)

Thank you. Audible hopes you have enjoyed this program.

2017 Eckhart Tolle Becoming A Teacher of Presence Audiobook

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 2:33:50)

To have an intimate group again after quite a long time. I can look at everybody. We can exchange hugs.

Just got back a few days ago from a week-long retreat in New York with close to 400 people. In some ways, one could say that this little retreat is experimental. The form of it is experimental.

It seems we're going to address questions arising from working with people, having groups, working with individuals. That's the form or the content. And that's new.

What is not experimental is the essence of this retreat. And no matter whether this is the only one of this kind that is ever going to happen, or whether this particular form of retreat is the first of many, or whether it will develop into something else, the form is always secondary anyway, because the form is the content, whatever we talk about. Helpful, yes.

Helpful pointers. And yet, that's not the essence of our retreat. The essence is the state of presence.

If you can dwell in presence, whatever you need to know will come out of that. And more important than any of the things that we may talk about tonight is to recognize the depth of the state of presence and what it is that keeps you from living. In presence as a continuous state.

Because the moment you live in presence as a continuous state or predominant state, you are a teacher, as the Course in Miracles calls it, a teacher of God, whether you have formal groups or not. You cannot not teach presence when you live in presence. Teach in a wider sense.

Because whoever you meet is affected by presence. And we are here also to recognize what it is that keeps us from living in presence. And that is our belief in thought.

Not recognizing the relative nature of all thought. And completely believing in whatever thought arises in your mind. So we are here also to become aware of our relationship with thought.

Particularly this weekend. And I'll be reminding you of that. The non-recognition that every thought that arises in your mind is a perspective, a viewpoint from one angle.

It can never encapsulate the whole. It always is a fragment of the totality. Not seeing that, you become identified, drawn into, trapped by a fragmented way of being in the world.

Your sense of self clings especially to long-held thoughts and thought patterns. Like a bulldog not going to let go of this one. Because you derive a sense of self from identification with that.

Not recognizing that it is a perspective. No more. You could move a few steps, metaphorically speaking, and you would see the same reality from a different perspective.

I believe it was in the 70s, early 70s, a young girl called Patricia Hearst got kidnapped by terrorists. And after spending a few months with them, being kidnapped, and they must have spoken to her, she suddenly took part in bank robberies, and so on. She became one of them.

They explained to her their perspective, their viewpoint. And they explained, no, your perspective was totally wrong. The system is actually evil.

It's not us who are evil. It's the system that's evil, can't you see? And then it gives you the reasons, moi the system.

It's not difficult to convince you that the system is evil, easy. It's a fragment of the truth. And if you get drawn into a fragment, that becomes you.

Especially those ones that you've bitten into, and their long-held beliefs, or whatever it may be, on politics, diets, men, women, money, power. And then this is absolutely true. Stepping back from thought internally, one or two steps back, and their thoughts, quite useful sometimes, useless at other times, and seeing that not one thought could encapsulate the whole, the totality.

And you don't have to work out some kind of answer in your mind that explains the totality, the whole. Some kind of system of thought. They tried it.

A system of thought that explains it all. And communism became, was something like that. It could explain everything, everything you could explain from that particular perspective.

Any event would suddenly make sense, you would explain it. And then you try to impose the system on reality. So the greatest freedom is the freedom from thought.

Which first of all means not recognizing the relativity of thought. You're not free. Never being able to stop thinking.

That's the essence of bondage. And your effectiveness, as, for lack of a better word, as a teacher, depends to a large extent on your relationship with thought. And your non-identification with thought.

You don't need to demand that you should be free of thought from now on. No. Just step back from it and see its relative nature.

And anything that you cling to in the realm of thought eventually will obscure your ability to teach, to hold presence. And sooner or later, at some point, it'll come up and you'll be defending yourself. Defending your viewpoint.

Defending your position. And it's quite something to separate yourself from that. Enormous.

You can notice a clinging, yes, okay, I'll let go of, but not that one. Not this one. Surely that's right, what I believe about this situation or this person or that.

Surely that's right. Another way of putting it is that no thought is dreadfully important. But as I sometimes put it, don't take your thoughts too seriously.

As you sit here and the rest of the weekend, it's just thought. You're so much vaster than that. Tonight, this is just a meditation.

It doesn't look like a meditation, but it is. A meditation takes you out of identification with thought. And then tomorrow we'll be ready to use thought when it comes.

Maybe occasionally recognize that we have identified with a position, a mental position. It's become, a thought has become a me, has become a self. And then emotion comes in.

It's energized by an emotion. That's, I am, that is me. I must defend myself.

And watch that. Tonight, we are simply stepping out of thought. It's just a step back, one or two steps back.

Perhaps you can sense your body as you sit here, the aliveness in the energy field of the body. And it's easier to step back. And outside of thought, there is no problem.

And you have no problem. All problem is thought. So the moment you step out of thought, identification with thought, is also the realization that you have no problem.

Ever. Now. It's a collapse of a problematic sense of self.

It dissolves. And what's left, when there are no problems, are occasional challenges. But only in the now.

They cannot be anywhere else. Now, this moment, what's, is there a challenge? And you will recognize a challenge, that is.

And with every challenge, your alertness rises. You wake up a bit more. More intense presence.

And you may all be at this stage already, where that is possible. Instead of a challenge pulling you into more complete identification with thought and all the mental, emotional, reactive patterns, all strengthening a false sense of me, of self. Instead, the challenge, something goes wrong, you lose something, a difficult person, whatever form a challenge takes, if things are not going the way they should be, that's a pseudo-challenge, because the mind has created how things should be.

And then it's, if it's a true challenge, you face it. And there's an alertness in which it happens. And there's no reference to thought as to how am I going to solve this challenge, what am I going to do about it.

There's contact with an intelligence greater than thought. Alert stillness. No working out.

And out of that arises insight, realization, or right action. No longer right action, trying to figure out right and wrong, what's right and wrong, through the mind. And the mind can justify anything.

The state is right, the terrorist will justify this is right. Easy to find justifications, further thought to substantiate your position of rightness. So trying to figure out right and wrong through thought is impossible.

In the Koran it says, thou shalt not kill, but unfortunately the sentence continues, except for a just cause. Hmm, well, then thought comes in, of course I have a just cause, let me tell you why. And you lose the feeling of aliveness, because while I'm telling you why mine is a just cause, I get trapped more and more in a world of mental conceptualization.

I can no longer sense that which is beyond concept. Life, the aliveness in each human being, completely deadened through that. And I'm explaining why this is a just cause.

So the terrorist does that in an extreme form. He deadens the group of people through putting labels on them, concepts, and totally identified with them. You can no longer sense their aliveness, and you don't sense your own aliveness anymore, because the moment you trap other people in mental labels, you've trapped yourself.

You can do anything and you don't know what you're doing anymore. But everybody has that to some extent, that identification with thought. In a smaller way, nobody in this room would go out and blow up a hundred or a thousand or several thousand people.

Nobody is that unconscious. And everybody in this room is already moving out of that, and yet the root patterns which are at the core of human unconsciousness have been for thousands and thousands of years. The root patterns of that are in everyone, and it's only in you that it can be dissolved.

And what you've done then is immeasurable, not just you haven't done it for yourself. The whole of humanity, one human being becoming free of that, has an enormous effect on the rest of humanity. So to see that, and one label, if there's only one label left in you that you completely believe in concerning a situation or person, that one will keep you trapped.

And it looks harmless enough, but it'll keep you trapped in thought. It'll be that area where thought clings to you and you cling to thought, and your sense of self clings to thought. The deeper meaning of forgiveness, which is a spiritual term, is no longer clinging to thoughts, because every thought ultimately is a judgment.

And wisdom is not judgment, but the relinquishment of judgment. And what then emerges from within you is so much vaster than thought. The state of pure awareness that's already in you would be not quite right to think that is something that you need to attain.

One could say it's already there underneath thought in you, and never recognized by thought. Thought cannot understand it. And maybe arising in you far more than you realize when you start thinking about whether you live in presence or in awareness or not.

No, I don't remember being aware at any time. The mind doesn't understand it. Of course, you can't remember it through thought.

And yet, you may have walked from the door to where you're sitting now in the state of simple, clear, pure awareness. There's nothing spectacular about it. Or you may have put some sugar in your tea or honey, and there was no thought involved, and not absentmindedly either.

Just simple action without the involvement of thought. There may have been the state free of thought when you were listening to somebody sitting next to you at dinner, talking, and pure listening. Perhaps, perhaps not.

It is a wonderful thing when you catch yourself, so to speak, in that state, although the danger is that immediately the mind comes in and claims an attainment. I'm there now. I can do it.

But to catch yourself, it means to become aware directly of awareness. We all know spiritual traditions speak of the state of attention. Buddhists call it mindfulness.

But the most wonderful thing is when you can become aware of that field of a large stillness. And it's not that there's any dualistic relationship here. You are not becoming aware of it.

It's only language does that. It becomes aware of itself. And that is that which gives satsang.

Not you. Oh, that's a relief. I don't have to do it.

You don't have to even learn how to do it. You couldn't. Satsang is, means, sangha, company, something like that.

Sat means being, being in the company of being. And no person can give satsang. But only when there's the absence of the person.

And what is a person other than identification with thought and thought structures? So to be a highly effective teacher of presence, just don't be there as a person. The slightest clinging to any thought, especially the favorite ones, it keeps you there as a little person.

And for a while it may not interfere. There may even be some, and it'll always catch up in obscure presence. You will never feel ready to teach.

Or if you see, I'm ready now, that's the greatest delusion. And because it's the mind-made self that says, now it's time to teach. You will always feel inadequate as the little me.

But the little me doesn't need to teach. And so you come to love that state of not knowing. Not knowing even how to teach.

Not coming from another position that says, I know, or I know the answers. The most powerful teacher doesn't know and is happy with that. And I don't need to know how to interpret this moment.

And it might be a teaching situation or any moment. Increasingly, being able to live in that way that simply allows to express totally what is to be, don't need to interpret in any way. Especially human beings.

And your task while you're here is not move away from now. Then thought is superfluous. And while you're here, and quite a few times you may miss it, make nothing into a means to an end.

No movement thinking that the result that I want to achieve through this movement is more important than this movement. And now is not a means to a future end. It is completely for it.

So while you walk from here to there, you can be there in every step. While you drink, take off your shoes. Life consists of that.

There's lots full of little things like that. That's all of life, really. You're always sitting, standing and lying somewhere and doing something somewhere.

But the mind is saying big things about it. There's a huge, vast story that you don't really, this isn't the right moment. The story is going somewhere else.

But it's always all the many little things. That's all there is. And something deeper is there in the little things.

When you give them the fearful attention. What is that something deeper when you're just taking off your shoes? Isn't that insignificant?

Putting on your shoes. Surely there are more important things than putting on your shoes. What is the deeper thing about putting on your shoes when you give them your full attention?

It's the attention. In which it happens. That field of bare, alert, still attention.

In which a seemingly insignificant thing happens. But compared to the vastness of that field, everything is insignificant that happens. So it doesn't matter whether you encounter that when you put on your shoes.

Or they give you the Nobel Prize for something. As I saw they have advertisements for a certain watch. I can't remember what watch.

And they call it significant moments. And I don't know what they can express. Particularly those moments you look at your watch when you get the Nobel Prize.

But those come quite rarely. They come occasionally. Big things.

Ultimately no different from small things. And it's not the things, all the little or big things that you do that matter that much. There's something deeper there.

And never getting beyond the surface appearance of things. What a life. And always thinking, well, the next one surely is more important than this one.

Because I know that this one isn't important. Nor depth to life. Surface phenomenon.

The whole of life becomes a surface phenomenon. And you yourself become a surface phenomenon. And then you die.

What happened? I must have missed something. Yes, you did.

You missed the whole thing. So the importance is not in what happens in your life or doesn't happen. That's all relative importance.

Relative importance, yes. But not, one could say, what really matters is to whom it happens. One could put it like that.

Who are you? Who is this happening to? But there's no answer to that in the head as a concept.

So you're putting on your shoes here. Getting ready for breakfast. And honor this moment completely, fully.

Be there. And you don't need thought. You might have noticed to tie your shoelaces.

Thought is not required. So usually you would be thinking about something totally different. Just quickly get this done out of the way because the mind is already there.

And instead be with this. And it won't be long before you notice that everything that happens there is a dimension of depth. And everything that happens happens in that dimension of depth.

And that depth is an inner field of stillness. And it's very much alive. It's still.

And there you put on your shoes. And then the next thing. Nothing is dreadfully important ever really.

And another thing. And instead of losing yourself in the mind in the next thing, lose yourself in the world. And it's never significant enough.

That's why you always need the next moment. Maybe that one will be more significant than this one. And the completeness is already here.

That out of which everything arises. The ground of being is your essence. And it's here.

And it's so much greater than anything that happens. Vast. It holds.

It encompasses everything. So you know it at first as the alert still attention in which you look at a flower. It could be an action or it could be simply a perception.

And there's not just the flower there now. Because if you don't know the field in which the perception happens and know yourself as the field in which it happens, then all you know is the form that you see. And the tragic thing is it's not going to last very long.

And so that's sad if you don't know that which is beyond form. And then one day you sit there and you've invited a group of people into your home. And there's just that.

And you may look at people unless they are, you know they're not comfortable with it. People, so many people are not comfortable with being looked at. Because they think when you're looking at them, you're thinking something about them.

They don't know that when you're looking at them, there's just stillness. And that's a transmission of presence. And that is teaching beyond any form.

Anything you look at, to just use that particular perception, undergoes changes when you place pure attention on it. Anything. Especially humans.

And you're not doing anything. And you don't have to do it in an obvious way. So you gaze for five minutes.

It could just be a few seconds. And they may not even know it. There's simply a field of stillness around the perception.

And you don't have to wait for a formal teaching situation to teach. When you look at the supermarket cashier putting things through the computer that reads the barcode, it could be there. That's stillness.

And that's just the looking. And there's a transmission of presence. And you're not doing anything.

There's not me doing anything. The shortest interaction. And a lot of our lives is to do with brief.

We meet many people during the course of the day. Brief interactions. Can you bring the field of stillness into each interaction?

Or are you lost in mind? And so two minds are interacting, thinking they are human beings. Can you bring the field of stillness into each meeting, each encounter?

And be there predominantly as the stillness and not as the person. It doesn't mean you cannot use your form identity when it's needed and speak. But you are there as the essence of who you actually are.

Not the pseudo self, the little me. You are there as the field of stillness in any human interaction. And they may try very hard to pull you out of that.

Their mind says, don't you see that this matters? Come on, feed me this thought. Can't you see that this thought matters?

Come on, let's feed thought together. So the mind will try to draw you into the mind frequency. You know what he did?

And you know what he said then? And then, oh, and it matters. The most beautiful teaching situations are not recognized as teaching situations.

Teaching in the deepest sense, through the simple encounters. And it could just be two seconds, three seconds. And many of you are doing it already and you may not even know it.

I should use the word doing. It's not a doing, but it's like languages like that. Three seconds of stillness while you say hello.

And there's no thought. There's just a depth. That is true.

Healing, one could say, in the deepest sense. You give them their own reality and you haven't given anything. You reflect back to them their own reality and they may not even know it.

And of course, as you know, the essence of our gathering here is not what we talk about, that we do that anyway. But the essence is to know yourself as the stillness underneath the noise. To know yourself as that.

That's the essence. Otherwise, you can forget about having groups or anything. Know yourself as that.

And the practice here is to simply sit. When I'm not speaking, is there anything that you need to add to this moment? Is there anything that needs to be worked out through the head?

The mind might say, I'm not getting enough out of this. He's not, it's not enough. What's the next thing?

Okay, with stillness, yes, I understand that now, but what's the next thing? Now, to make that practice a little easier here, I suggest strongly that between the end of our evening session here tonight and the beginning of our morning session tomorrow, that we don't engage in talking. That makes it a little easier to be still.

Later, it's not required anymore. You can talk and you can allow others to talk. You don't need to demand that they should be still.

But initially, just because we're here to deepen stillness, to know it more fully, be it more fully, it helps occasionally to have a period of non-speaking. And then you can look at things and people and there's the form of that person and there's a stillness in which you're perceiving that. And if there's not the stillness, there's no need to condemn yourself and say, I can't get to the stillness.

I want to perceive people through the stillness, but there's always some noise going on in my head. I just, it's not working for me. I might as well go home.

What to do then? Whatever mental noise is happening while you perceive another human being or anything, you don't take it too seriously. You don't believe in it completely.

It's recognized as thought. Thought is still happening. And so there's the perception and there's thought.

And so the quickest way out of that, it's not even trying to get out of it, is allowing the fact that there is mental noise and not completely believing in it. That allowing creates a space even around the mental noise, that spaciousness, that stillness. So the spaciousness or the stillness can be around to the perception, but it can also be around, even around mental noise or even about emotional ups and downs, wave movements of emotions.

Even there, the spaciousness, which is another point for the stillness, another same thing, can be there around an emotion or around mental noise. How can it be there? How can you know the spaciousness around?

Mental noise seems to be the absence of spaciousness, the absence of stillness. How can you know it even with it there? And you won't know it as if you knew an object, there it is, because it's the nature of spaciousness, that it cannot be pinpointed or grasped.

Allowing it to be, because it is at this moment, you allow this moment and whatever is in it to be, and there's the spaciousness. At first, it's just not a complete involvement in the mind streams anymore. And that's the beginning of the arising of the spaciousness, the still spaciousness around the world of form, anything, external forms or inner forms as thoughts or emotions, external forms as situations and people.

So you cannot lose yourself completely in mental and emotional forms if you allow them to be. Allow, and this you may forget. And you get back home, and the moment you get back home, all patterns may return.

And the only thing that you forget there really is the allowing. The allowing refers to this moment. Allow it to be as it is.

Not even demand that you should be still. That can lead you astray too. If you're not still, you allow that.

It is. That's how it is. I'm full of mental noise.

That's how it is. It is, noise, and there's a spaciousness. And when that is there, even the mental noise will change.

You don't have to do anything. It then subsides because you're no longer involved that much in it. So you could perhaps put a few until it becomes a normal way to live.

You could put little stickers in every room and on your dashboard. Allow this moment. When you go to bed tonight, thought is unimportant.

Be in the body. Lie there on your back. Enter that field of aliveness.

Not much to think about there. Just that aliveness that is there in every cell. And if you wake up in the middle of the night, uh, uh, hmm, uh, my, me, my problems next week, there's, uh, uh, immediately go into the body.

Be there. Lie on your back. Inhabit the body fully.

And first thing in the morning, you wake up. Instead of going into here, and if you look more clearly, all that, if you go into here, it'll be connected with some, some, after two or three minutes, the first problem will be there. And another, and another.

Go and be in the body. And lie there. And so you, that's a practice.

You go to sleep from there. If you wake up, immediately you go into the body. Intensely.

Hold it. Hold that. And first thing in the morning, lie in that field, that energy field, and then get up.

You find yourself getting up suddenly. And then the alertness that is then there goes with you when you have a shower. And you feel the sense perceptions.

And then you have breakfast again. People won't be speaking, so it will be a little easier to be there. In presence, in stillness.

Now tomorrow we will speak, of course, when we meet. But we'll always go back into stillness. Always back.

You become very intelligent in that way. Because the stillness is pure intelligence. And that's only one aspect of it.

But whether or not you become better at solving IQ tests, that we don't know. It's not that kind of intelligence. It's deeper than that.

There's far greater depth to intelligence than the ability to solve little puzzles. Creative intelligence. I don't want to offend anybody who is good at IQ tests.

So a few reminders. Being in the body. Especially when you lie in bed.

And when you sit here also, of course. It's very helpful. Recognize that no thought is that important.

And it's always only an aspect of the truth. It's not the truth. If that small aspect, small fragment.

And often the opposite is also true. And to know the total truth, you'd have to hold them both together. So not a means to an end.

Any little activity that you do, do it fully. So that it's not serving a future goal. Because that next thing is not going to be that much bigger than this thing.

Be fully in every step. Of course, you'll miss quite a few times. But it doesn't matter.

And you notice a strange thing when you do that. You notice how your relationships, Thiele talk about relationships and they always mean it's relationships, intimate relationships with other humans. But the most common relationships are the relationships in the world of objects.

Nobody would ever pay much attention to that. You're always relating to some objects because you're sitting on them. You wear them, you touch them, handle them.

Continuously, there's a world of so-called inanimate objects around you. And it's completely ignored mostly unless some very spectacular object suddenly comes into your life and somebody gives you a gold bracelet or whatever. But usually you don't pay much attention.

It's a means to an end because the present moment is a means to an end. The world of objects are means to ends and they're handled in that way. And then a strange thing, a shift happens when suddenly the moment is not a means to an end.

Then the world of objects becomes more alive suddenly. It has beingness, it has presence. Every object has beingness and presence as the great artists knew who sometimes painted the most insignificant, seemingly insignificant objects that nobody would have looked at twice.

And now you have to pay $15,000 to buy the painting of an old chair. And somebody looked without the interference of mental labels and thought, truly looked at the most insignificant possible of you can think of, an old, cheap, rickety chair and looked and saw a depth there far beyond the form that appears. Of course, the depth was also in him.

And somehow that got on the canvas, the essence of that realization, the essence of perceiving in that deep way without the interference of thought, somehow God is still there in this work of art. So to see when you handle the world of objects more consciously that every object is alive too. You will almost feel as if it had its own rudimentary field of consciousness.

And you'll notice that the world of objects has a relationship with you. Ultimately, you're not separate, you're one. And ultimately, it's not outside of you anyway.

Let's just pretend for a moment that it is. I've observed a few people who are totally immersed in their mind continuously. And they're always at odds with the world of objects.

They break things, they lose things, things break down for no apparent reason. There's always something that goes wrong for them, as if the world of objects even were against them, let alone the human world. It's the antagonistic relationship to life that is even there in your relationship to objects, let alone human interactions when you live in that way.

So here, be aware of when you, it makes a noise, there's a little noise when you touch something, the shoes, whatever. And so there comes a loving, not love, I would say, a lovingness also towards the world of objects, no longer a fighting attitude towards the world of objects, but a lovingness. As long as you deny the now, you're in a fighting relationship even with the world of objects, let alone humans.

By becoming friendly with the now, the first, you also become friendly with the so-called inanimate world, and it's not really inanimate. And it's a beautiful thing when you see that objects are also treated with loving care in that, not a means to an end. So here, be conscious of your interaction with the world of objects.

I do strange things occasionally. Sometimes I pick something up, it just happens, a knife, a fork in the kitchen, or mug, or a pen, and just hold it and look and feel. And sometimes even a can with something in it, a metal can with baked beans in it or something, and you, oh, it has a presence too.

So there are all these little things here, little practices, ways in which to be, to interact. Attention, now. I know for sure, although I can't tell you how, that when you give attention in that way, full attention to an object or person, it changes, it does something.

Physicists realize that the first time when they notice that the observer who conducts the experiment influences the experiment. The very fact that you're observing changes it. And if you had a stone here and you give it attention, and you have it in your home, and you occasionally look at it, if you could examine the molecular structure, you would notice changes.

It's just a little aside. Don't need to believe that. No need to believe anything here, that's a good thing.

So we will keep, as the Buddhists say, normal silence, stay alert. What we are moving beyond is a personalized existence. And we realize that neither the unconscious state of identification with mind and ego, emotions, nor the state of presence that is arising is personal.

There's nothing personal with being unconscious, and there's nothing personal with being conscious. And that's a great liberation. There's nothing personal in it.

Not a me. The essence of the unconscious state is to look for me, the person, either to look in it, in its future projection of me as the one who is going to be enlightened and seek an enhanced person in that, or to make all movements of thought and the emotional fluctuations that go with it into a personal thing, not recognizing that anger is human anger. It's basically the same vibration, no matter in whom it appears, fear, sadness, any other emotions to do with mental machinery, jealousy, this and that.

They are human emotions. It's not a person. Complete identification with that causes the illusion that there's somebody there, an entity.

So in the unenlightened state, your life becomes difficult because you personalize the flux of emotions and the stream of thoughts, because thoughts are again human thoughts, the human mind, and identification with the thought stream as me, that's nobody's personal problem. That's the human condition. So it's great to see that there is nothing personal in it, neither here nor there.

And also see that there's a tendency in each one to perpetuate the personal sense of self rather than being a greater opening into life, a manifestation of the one life that expresses itself through this form, which nature is beautifully. Then we create an enclosed sense of self, what about me? That tendency can come up, you observe it in yourself.

Many times to personalize. Somebody wrote a book that's been on many bestseller lists. I've only looked at a few pages, and I only saw one page.

The book is called The Four Agreements. I only remember one of them, and that's take nothing personally. Expressed very simply there, he doesn't go into the detail that, although what I'm saying is not complex, but he doesn't even explain with all that.

He just says simply, don't take anything personally. Because when you personalize, you immediately enter into a reactive relationship with life. The personal selfhood strengthens itself through reactivity, and you gain a stronger sense of self through it, stronger illusion, stronger person.

It feels better for a while because you have fortified the illusion. So as you identify with the reactive force, on one level it feels good, to the illusion it feels good because it has strengthened itself. And now your identification with a position, a mental, and then emotions energize that, and you think you're defending some great truth, which is mental, and there's no absolute truth in the mental realm, but you believe at that time you're defending a great truth, and of course you're defending an illusion.

That's the reason. And it feels good to the illusion, not to you, but you don't know that. That illusion, which sometimes we could call ego, always confuses pleasure and pain.

And the wonderful thing is, as we are stepping out of that, you are no longer identified with mental positions. A me is no longer in, you can still have opinions, but they are not energized by a personal sense of self. You are not in it anymore, and you realize the relativity of every opinion, and then it's fine to have opinions.

And you could even listen to somebody else's opinion, contrary or opposite of yours, and say, oh, yeah, that's interesting, that's another perspective on it. I still prefer my perspective, but that one is valid too. The Buddha talked about this.

He used the expression, I believe the translation is, the thicket of opinions. And it's often emphasized in Buddhism to let go of opinions. But it really means to let go of identification with opinions that give you a me position.

If you hold the space of presence, and there's a group of people, if you start speaking, sharing, some people will express mental positions, perhaps. And just as you recognize mental positions in yourself, you recognize mental positions in others, and allow that. You don't counteract it with your position.

And other minds, there's only one mind, but it looks like different minds in different people. The mind will try to draw you into positions and reaction. When you facilitate a group, the alertness, the alert presence, that does all the work, will almost automatically rise as you hold the space of a group, and there's no body doing it, the dimmer switch, the degree of presence rises, just as it would if you were challenged by a critical situation, a danger situation.

The intensity, the alertness rises, and you feel it throughout the body, a more intense aliveness. And that is the state in which, as one could say, you're holding the space of presence. Presence is doing it, but we're just using language.

You're holding the space of presence. The easiest way to hold the space of presence is when nobody is speaking. So the easiest way to have a group is to have an agreement that nobody's going to say a word.

That's one way. That avoids many problems. But even there, the qualitative difference of that group, there'll be a great difference in the energy field if there's only one person, even if it's just one person who is able to remain in the state of thoughtless awareness, of just being here.

That has an enormous effect on that. And many others can be drawn, if only temporarily, into that state. And then to listen to some tape or for a little while can help also to deepen that state.

And after listening, return into some stillness and again, you will see others are drawn and then the field of presence becomes a collective field in the room. And that has an enormous, it gets an enormous help to enter the collective field of presence. It has nothing to do with emotions or as you sometimes find in meetings, often religious nature, we generate an emotion.

Of course, as you know, it has nothing to do with emotion. So to a pool, when humans meet in the state of presence, there is a pool, one could say, all language is limited, but a pool of presence. And each apparent individual can draw on that and contributes to that.

It's a two-way process. That is also the sacredness of groups that meet in that field because the field of presence is sacred beyond religion or belief systems. When the mind interprets it, you could say, there was strong Christ presence there.

Yes. Or Buddha nature, just different names. So just the simplest gathering of that kind has a powerful effect, not only on those people that are gathered, but also on the totality.

And that it was no coincidence because everything is connected. Everything is part of a larger whole that we had our gathering with almost 400 people for one week last week. And it happened to coincide in space and time, both space and time.

It happened to coincide with the extreme expressions of human insanity that were taking place not far from there, not far in space and time, very close. There was, it seems, an intensification of the insanity and almost simultaneously an intensification of something else arising. And that was almost 400 people for one week.

It was perhaps the most powerful retreat we've had. And before I didn't know, does a retreat work with almost 400 people? Can that still work?

And the answer is yes, it worked beautifully. So the collective pool of presence that then not only draws out that unconditioned consciousness that is beyond the conditioned mind, but also feeds it. It's a growth happens there of an arising and then it emanates.

And many who are even slightly open to it will benefit from it, no matter how distant they are in space. Slight openness and it makes it easier for everyone in whom presence is already arising through this form. It's like, always use that expression, the flowering, the flowering of consciousness.

Something, a new dimension suddenly coming into this world. So the simplest group already works, meeting in silence, listening maybe to a talk, more silence, and then everybody goes home. That's one way.

And if you facilitate it, you may notice that as people arrive, your alertness rises. It intensifies. It's not a social occasion.

Just as it can at this moment, as I point this out, what does it mean alertness rises? If suddenly this door opened and a bear walked into this room, your alertness would rise or it would fall and you would start screaming and probably do the wrong thing. Completely wrong.

Or the alertness rises. Or you're driving a critical moment, suddenly incredible alertness, no fear in it. I sometimes call it the dimmer.

It's like a dimmer switch. The degree of presence can be just in the background or it can become intense. And that is the intensity that Zen masters point to.

And that's the intensity of just this. And if you move away one inch, I'll hit you with a stick, says the Zen master. So it arises.

It's not consciously willed. It's an opening rather than you cannot try to be present because all trying means you're trying to reach some point in the future. That's the nature of trying.

I need to become more present. But there's not trying in presence. Presence is now.

It's rather all mental noise subsides and that arises. And there comes the bear into the room and you look and you're completely in a state of not knowing in that. At least nothing that the mind would call knowing, words or concepts.

That alertness would be there if you were looking at a stunning scenery, very spectacular. And there's this expression, the word is awe. Maybe that comes because people say, so there's actually a word now, onomatopoeia, whatever it's called, A-W-E.

The state of awe is that state of openness is presence. There's no mind in that state of that openness. And that intensifies when you are in a group situation.

The space, the spaciousness. Now, later I'm going to ask for your, from your experience, what you have learned already from groups, mistakes you have made, if there are mistakes, what worked for you, what didn't work. The next level is, perhaps at some point, words are coming out of your mouth.

Without being drawn into mind identification. So that thought is only giving form to that which arises from beyond thought. No old thought, your viewpoints or your opinions or your beliefs.

And I'm going to tell you what's right. Or facile explanations. That all comes from the accumulated knowledge of the mind.

And that applies even people who have suffered tragedy, people in recent events or in their personal lives, so-called personal. Some mental explanation that, but he said they're all in heaven now, there's nothing to worry about, all those people who died. That may be true, but it's a belief.

And is he really meeting those people who are suffering? I'm not going to give you any methodology or what to do in groups. It needs to arise organically out of presence, but just a few pointers.

What you do will arise, what works will arise from within organically. So not applying some method, you don't need that. It would be an alien thing imposed.

And when there's presence, that's not needed. If you speak, my suggestion would be that the first words direct people into the body so that their attention moves from the head to a deeper level. So you lead people into the body and there may be some people who are new and who've never been in the body before.

They've for 40, 50 years, they've never been in the body. And it may be meaningless. They feel the inner body.

They say, where? Doesn't make sense. I can't work that out.

What do you mean? The easiest device getting people into the body, and I've used it a few times and it works, even for people who've never been there, is you can do this with anybody, your grandparents, your grandmother, any little child. No understanding is required.

To just say, and some of you have heard me say that before, hold up your right hand or left hand, close your eyes. Is there any way you can know without touching anything or moving your hand or opening your eyes, without any of this, is there any way you can know whether your right hand is there, still there? Is there any way you can find out without moving it, touching anything, or looking at it, whether your right hand is still there?

You ask that question. And that question will direct their attention, after a little while, into the inner feeling of right hand. So it'll take their attention.

First, they'll try to work out mentally. Is there any way I can know? And then you ask that question again.

Perhaps you can find out. And so the attention then, for some people, it's a revelation. For the first time, they can feel that something in the body is alive and they feel, yes, there's a subtle sense of aliveness where my right hand is.

And they feel a very subtle flow of aliveness there. And then you will point out, right, you've entered the body. That's the beginning of it.

And that is, for some people, it's a beautiful revelation. And they are surprised that there is actually aliveness there. They had never even thought that there could be aliveness in the body.

They might have been concerned with their external physical body and how it looks, but never felt a deep inner aliveness there. And there it is. And then, so you can see if you can do it with the other hand, find out if that's still there.

Oh, that can then help work more quickly. And then bring the two together into one feeling, feel them both at the same time. Oh, and at first, it works beautifully.

And the strange thing is, feeling your hands immediately sensitizes you more to feeling other parts of the body, even if they're not specifically pointed out. So by entering your hands, through your hands, you could be the entry point. It's very easily felt for most people.

Already there's greater aliveness, even in those parts that are not specifically addressed yet. And particularly, if you've done this for a while, you can enter the body from anywhere and suddenly the aliveness is there all over. You can use any entry point.

And so that is for, this is a beautiful thing you can do for people who come and then gradually take them into the rest of the body and feel it. Can you sense also that your feet are equally alive? Equally.

And so gradually develop this ability to sense different parts of the body as one. There was a teacher called Jean Klein, who I believe he used that expression, a global sense of beingness or aliveness, global presence, meaning all over. And a few pointers are then needed to point out the significance of feeling the inner body, because otherwise the mind will dismiss it and say, this is not important.

Yes, it feels good, but I've got other things to worry about. So if it's not understood, the mind needs a little bit of understanding, then it's easier to see why, what is the significance of being in the body? And so you explain the vast intelligence that undoubtedly is in the body, in every cell, in every organ, in the DNA, so vast that no human mind and not all the computers put together could coordinate the functions of the body, not even a tiny percentage of it.

So you are connecting with an intelligence that is greater than what you had thought of as intelligence, which is just the human mind, not separate from it, but vaster. So the vastness begins by entering what looks like this limited little thing, the body, but it is only the doorway. So the entry point into that vastness is through that doorway and realize you're now connecting with that greater intelligence that dwells in there.

And you can also point out that you may notice that when you sense the inner body, less thinking is taking place in your mind, because you cannot simultaneously be in your body and have a lot of thought activity in your head. Because your consciousness is either consumed by thought, in which case consciousness continuously is being born into forms, or you can have your consciousness, instead of going out into form, returning back into the formless and the formless one life, one consciousness of which the mind is only an expression. So it's a reversal.

So you point out, people will notice that the mind becomes stiller as you enter the body. And people are not becoming less intelligent, but more intelligent because they connect with that greater intelligence, that vastness. And you just need to point that out that it is also the beginning of the inner realm of stillness as they enter within, out of which all great creations have come in this world.

Artists, some of the creative scientists, all created out of the decisive moments of realization were always stillness, preceded by stillness. And probably an aliveness in the body, even if they didn't know it, they were sitting there. That is the creative state of total openness and receptivity.

Boredom, there's no such thing in that state. Boredom is the mind trying to look for the next thing and not finding it. That's boredom.

Boredom means you're in your mind. If you're sitting here and you're bored, it's a clear indication you're in your mind. There's nothing wrong with that, just know it.

Because sitting here is not boring, but it's boring because this vital aliveness to this gathering. But if you cannot feel your body as you sit here, you'll be bored. There's not enough for the mind.

And the same, also that when people come to a gathering to point out what boredom is, because the mind can easily become bored in a gathering. And to point, what does that mean? Boredom means the mind is looking for the next thing to get born into, identification with the next thought or the next external interesting thing or the next thing it could react to.

And so be born, it seeks rebirth in Buddhist terms. The mind seeks continuously to be reborn into some new form. And that could be a reaction.

Okay, that's the egoic mind. Or it could be a thought it identifies with, which is where I'm going to be tomorrow. You flow into that.

Reaction's our favorite one, of course. It's a strong rebirth. Every time you react, it's a very powerful rebirth of me.

So the mind seeks that continuous rebirth. Or it could be an emotion that you identify with as me. That happens.

And it could be anger or heaviness. And it becomes, you're born into, you identify with that, it becomes personalized. It's a me.

It fuels further thought, which more form identity. And so if you point those simple things out that enable people to become aware of their basic inner processes, and this has to not just be pointed out once because the mind will forget it, obscure it, and maybe not even listen. Almost at every meeting, you may need to point out what the mind tends to do.

At this very moment, you may be in a state of boredom. You may be in a state of restlessness. And if it is, if it's the case, simply to observe that.

What does it mean? You're in the mind and looking for another birth. Maybe you already found another birth.

You found something to react to right here and now, in which case, congratulations, you achieved another rebirth into a stronger sense of me through the reactive force. Great, it worked again. And that is the deeper meaning.

In Buddhism, in popular Buddhism, when they talk about the end of rebirth, they think it's a grand, it's a cosmic thing that you finally achieve, perhaps in 2,000 years time, or another 100 incarnations, when you finally achieve the state in which you will no longer be reborn with the deeper meaning of that is immediate, to recognize the deeper meaning of rebirth, identification with form. So rebirth happens at this moment. And you're seeking rebirth at this moment.

And freedom from rebirth is possible at this moment. Now, this is the essence of truth, and it can be pointed out very simply. You may have to do it every time people come, because the mind will forget it and deny it.

Oh, yes. And then you can watch that process in yourself. And as you teach, you learn.

It deepens in yourself, because learning and teaching are not really two. You teach and you learn at the same time. That's the beauty, because you're not ultimately separate from those beings.

It is a single process, teaching and learning. What comes out of my mouth is always determined by the energy field of the group. If the group didn't draw it out of this form, nothing would happen.

And sometimes what comes out of the mouth varies. It depends on the collective field of the group. This form is not separate from those forms.

It's one. The ancient saying, the teacher and the torch together produce the teaching. It is not, and again, not falling into the illusion that you, that you personalize your function, the function of this form, and you personalize that, and then you see yourself as a teacher.

Then you get trapped again. There's a new rebirth of me in the head and an image identity of me in the head, and you have now become a teacher. Congratulations.

Another rebirth. It worked again. And that is a subtle trap for people.

Anybody who temporarily performs the function of facilitating that, you identify with the function and it becomes another self sense of self. And then in a very subtle sense, you feel that you are teaching and then you're walking to the supermarket and you're no longer a simple human. You are now a spiritual teacher.

And you carry that around with you. And if you become very successful as a spiritual teacher, then other people will project a form identity onto you. Because truth flows through the form, so they perceive the form as special.

Not realizing that truth is one and it's equally in everyone. It's only a question of to what extent it is obscured. That's all.

But there's an equal amount of truth in everyone. And as I put it last week at the retreat, nobody is closer to God than you are. And the illusion that somebody else is closer to God is another egoic illusion.

So that's a beautiful realization. But if you become successful, and you may, because there's an enormous longing for truth now. And before you know it, there may have been a great opening in you and suddenly truth flows through you.

You emanated as peace and aliveness and presence. And the words that you speak come out of that also. And then, of course, the beautiful thing is challenges always come.

Then your challenge is, people will project an image of you. For a while, you keep yourself clear of images. You remain in the state of openness.

And the moment people leave, you're not a spiritual teacher anymore. It's only a function, not an identity that you carry around. So when you go to the supermarket, you go as simply a field of presence, walking, floating, looking at the shelves.

That's no, you don't carry the burden of an identity, but people will project the identity. The more successful you become as a teacher, so to speak, the more powerful the teaching is. That means people will project some form identity onto you and you get bombarded by that, perhaps.

And after a few years or a few months, suddenly you are somebody again. It's happened to some teachers. You can sometimes see in some teachers, even the change from the earlier photos, where they are so simple, and the later photos when they've become successful gurus.

And that can happen quickly these days because there's such, so much coming through now. So before you know it, some of you could have turned into gurus. And so that's another beautiful challenge to recognize the projections of a form identity, not to hang on so that the openness remains.

That's, on one hand, you may never feel ready to teach the truth. The mind says, no, I'm not ready yet. Not yet.

I'll just wait a bit more. I'm not ready yet. And you'll never feel ready.

That is one movement of the mind. Not good enough. I'm not good enough yet.

Don't know enough yet. What am I going to tell them? I don't know that much.

You hardly need to know anything. There were some very great spiritual teachers who knew almost nothing on the level of knowledge. And even Jesus, each person in this room, I'm sure is more highly educated than Jesus was.

It's obvious. There wasn't that much knowledge around at the time. And according to all accounts, wasn't even highly educated, even according to the standards of the time.

You don't need more knowledge. That's for sure to become a teacher. But the mind will say, I don't know enough yet.

I need to know a bit more to be effective as an instrument for transformation. This form becomes an instrument for the transformation of consciousness to be effective. That does not depend on adding anything more to yourself.

In any realm or dimension, it is not an adding to who you are. Neither knowledge nor great firework spiritual experiences that come and go, but that you could remember and then add to that. Or just life experience, even that don't need.

It's not an adding. It's that the truth is already shining as the stillness that is underneath thought. The sun is already there.

What can you add to that? Nothing. So it is not true that you need to acquire anything more to become an effective instrument of transformation.

So one movement of the mind says, no, I just need to wait. There may be another movement of the mind that says, I really want to be a spiritual teacher. At the same time, it says, but I'm not quite ready yet, or maybe I'm ready now.

Again, the desire to be a spiritual teacher. Oh, there was one master who announced he already had followers and said, I've detected in myself a desire to be a spiritual teacher. So I've stopped.

I'm dissolving our group, our gathering. This is it, go home. So it's a very subtle thing.

But on the one hand, you never feel ready, not good enough, wanting to be great and good. I want to become that. Nothing is needed.

No further understanding is necessary to be effective. No further understanding, of course, in miracles goes so far as to say, there's nothing that you need to understand. And it says, your understanding is not a powerful contribution to the truth.

So what is it then? It is simply the state of presence. And you don't need to understand more to be present.

It's a letting go of even what you think you knew. And then the opening is there. Now, I've heard from some people who teach and they already become an instrument for transformation.

But occasionally in their private lives, they get drawn back into rebirth. They are reborn into reactivity. They are reborn into a mental image.

They are reborn into identification with their pain body. They are reborn into identification with mental noise and the heavy me. And then they think, oh, I must be a fraud, because I'm obviously not living it.

There I am. And then here I am. I'm not living it.

I must be a fraud. And somebody that comes to your gathering may even catch you. In a state of rebirth.

And say, oh, I thought you were free of that. Shouldn't you be free of that? You can still be effective as a teacher, even if your entire life is not yet an expression, 100% expression of absolute continuous presence.

It's not a requirement. You would have to wait a long time. But what will happen is that the moments of rebirth will be shorter.

They will not be a long, drawn-out rebirth, like hanging on to one reaction, to one belief structure or pattern. Or one emotion. Hang on.

It goes on and on. It'll be short. You will find shorter and shorter rebirth.

And again, not creating. Again, because the egoic thing is so subtle. It comes in.

You've discovered. You've seen how it works there. And then it comes in from here.

You've just looked at egoic mind structure there. Oh, I see it so clearly. And there it is.

I read the other day this beautiful joke about there's a priest and a rabbi praying in the holy city of Jerusalem. And the rabbi is overcome by the presence of God. And he falls to his knees and shouts, There's only God.

I am nobody. And the priest suddenly is also overcome by the presence of God. And the priest also shouts, Yes, there's nobody.

I am nobody. And a few steps away, a street sweeper stops sweeping the street and looks at them. And the street sweeper also falls to his knees and shouts, I am nobody.

And the priest looks at the rabbi and says, Look who thinks he's nobody. That's how cunning the ego is. But some people who have gatherings engage in prolonged eye contact with people called gazing.

Some people love it. Other people think it's weird. And you can turn off many people who first come to you if you do that.

So what is the significance of gazing? And is it necessary? Or what does it do?

Well, in some groups, it becomes an automatic thing. Whenever you meet somebody, you feel almost compelled to gaze. And if the perception of the other person happens in the field of stillness, in other words, while you're gazing, there's no thought arising.

That is quite a beautiful, actually a transmission of presence, but maybe you don't feel it. I am giving you presence. And yet, first of all, it is a transmission, but it awakens presence in the other because you look through the mental emotional screen in the other person.

You're not even interested. Even if you could read their minds while you look, some people can. You wouldn't because it's not that interesting.

It's like listening to gossip. You might listen, you might put your ear to the door, there are people next door gossiping. And then after a while, at first it sounds, you realize it's not really that interesting.

And so the human mind isn't really that interesting. So you look through that. And there's a deeper connection that is a deep knowing of the other person, and you might not even know their name or their history.

And you know the other person more deeply. Nothing that you would know about this form could add to the depth of knowing, and that knowing is beyond the mind. And that knowing is not separate from the state of connectedness, that is love in the highest sense, not the egoic love.

And that is the true meaning of gazing, is there is presence flowing between you. And even if the other person's mind is not still, and it may not be, it is enough if one person's mind is still and the gazing happens, and there's simply presence, complete stillness flowing through. And that awakens that in the other, or one could say almost it draws it out, something responds.

Now, that's a beautiful thing. When it happens, and it happens spontaneously, not necessarily as something that you always feel you need to do it, it happens when the moment is right. And gazing can be not necessarily so prolonged even that it becomes noticeable.

I pointed out last night, you can gaze at the shopkeeper or the supermarket cashier while you hand over your money, and all that it means is there's stillness. There's complete presence in this moment, and there's a field of stillness in which the perception happens, but in which also that connection happens, a deep inner connection. And it's unlikely that the shopkeeper or the supermarket cashier will be aware of that on a conscious level.

He or she may just feel good about you and feel you're such a nice person, or feel good about him or herself for a moment. Or there may be so much mental noise that even that they can't feel, and that's fine too. And yet, there's always something that happens within through bringing thoughtless awareness into your perceptions.

That's teaching. Really, that is the essence and core of teaching, is you bring thoughtless awareness into whatever you perceive around you. That is the deeper meaning of, there's a Course in Miracles lesson which says, my holiness envelops the world.

And the word my here goes beyond a personalized existence, personalized sense of self, to realize that, yes, that is a sacred space that we share at this moment. It is a sacred space. And our encounter is a sacred encounter.

If that were all you knew and that were all that you're teaching ever were, to realize that every encounter is sacred with another human being, that would be enough to transform the world if you just knew that every moment. But you cannot know it as a mental belief. There needs to be the reality of sacredness, not just the belief that it's sacred, it's nice to believe it.

If you only believe it, it's not enough to live it, to have a mental belief that it's sacred and you'll get drawn into reactivity five minutes later. But to hold that spaciousness of presence. And then gazing can be powerful.

And at some point you may have to explain if people come to you what the significance of it is, and the stillness that is the essence of gazing. But the most beautiful gazing happens when it's spontaneous and the other person doesn't even notice it as gazing, and you're not doing anything, it just happens. It basically happens with me whenever I'm with someone, whether I know them or not, names I forget very quickly.

And yet there's always a deep sense of knowing, even if I've never seen them before, a deep sense of connectedness beyond the story of the person or the idiosyncrasies of that particular form. That's only a temporary formation, a deep, and that is love. And that is what transforms the world, just knowing that.

So be careful with in groups so that it doesn't become automatic. People get turned off by it. You do it at first, it may happen just a few moments, and then at some point you may explain what it means.

Many people find eye contact threatening, and they believe that you're thinking something about them while you're looking, or they're afraid they could read their minds. Gazing at a human is exactly the same as looking at a flower in the state of thoughtless presence, which the flower responds to too, but you don't know that. The flower loves it just as the human loves it.

All of nature loves it to be recognized in their essence. Each form of life to be recognized in their essence is to be recognized in their essence. That really is you're saving the world, and to use an old-fashioned expression in that way.

Each form ultimately, through your recognition, recognizes itself. Two people gazing at each other, and both of them engaged in mind activity, doesn't do very much. But it's a beautiful thing for people who live together.

Partners, occasionally, to just sit and be and look at each other, and perhaps be in the body, and become still, and then look. That's also the state of listening. The state of gazing is the same state as the state of open, completely non-judgmental listening.

We may talk about that in the afternoon, when you're with one person, to be in that state of... Again, the sense perception, when you look, it's visual. When you listen to what the other person is saying, auditory sense perception, the sense perception is happening in and through a field of stillness.

That's teaching. What do you need to know in that? It's happening in and through stillness.

You look through the stillness. You listen through the stillness. It is being received by the stillness.

It is known, but not conceptually. You know, but from the point of view of the mind, you don't know anything anymore. You bring the greater intelligence to your perceptions.

The next step in groups is when people share. This is both a beautiful thing, they talk about their experiences of how presence, how they were present or not present in certain situations, or how they can bring presence into a certain situation. And that's a beautiful thing and requires very great alertness, because it is at that point where most easily the mind can take over.

And then, presence is lost and it degenerates into people expressing their positions. Or one people trying to tell somebody else what's right. You should, or whatever.

Or getting drawn into a story. You will have, perhaps, already have some experiences of that. A little helpful hint here, because you may find yourself speaking too, you contribute.

And you can point out to the others in the group also this little hint, that whenever they have expressed what they want to say, a thought movement to step back, take one or two steps back, so to speak, internally, and step away from that thought movement. Let it come to an end and step back into simply an alert beingness or presence. Otherwise, thought proliferates and you can find in a group that the collective thought suddenly goes, and all you have, the whole group is then being dragged along in thought streams, opinions, and this and that.

Sometimes you can see it in one person. It can happen, people who talk and talk, and one thought leads to another and another. No gap.

So when you have expressed a thought, not to continue in the stream of thought, to step out, you've said what you have to say, and then you step out of the thought. Your attention relinquishes the thought back into presence. So you don't hang on to that incarnation for longer than necessary.

And stepping out, always back into stillness, back into presence. After a thought stream is to notice the ending of thought streams is very important so that they don't proliferate, that is, mind. So because when you start speaking, this is a great challenge.

When you start speaking to another person, a group, shares this or that, words come, mind comes. So to then not lose the field of presence requires you not to get drawn into a mind stream, so you can always step back and out. And the ability of, you can point out to people also, they can do that also, so that they don't get dragged along by their mind stream.

And the ability of people, while one person is speaking, the ability of all others present to listen in a completely open and receptive way. And not to immediately counteract or react mentally to what that person is saying. And while that person is speaking, you're already formulating, which is a normal way, you're already formulating in your mind what you are going to say.

And you can see it when it happens in people, while they're listening to you, they have 20% of their attention on what you are saying, and 80% of their attention is in their thought processes. They're going to come out of your mouth in a second, and they're now being prepared. And your sense of self is in, of course, is in, that's what really matters, is in here, to you.

I say 20%, sometimes they're just peripherally aware of what you're saying, because what they're really waiting for is to tell you what they're preparing in the head, their position. And of course, there's the famous words between partners, you're not listening to me. Why don't you listen?

Because the inability to listen is widespread. And you can notice it even here, maybe, I don't know, maybe we'll talk again at lunchtime, maybe we won't. Somebody talks, and perhaps you can be a bit more aware of these processes that happen.

Is it possible to listen to the other person in spaciousness? With no thought being, no answer being prepared in your head. But then, of course, the mind created self feels less through that, because if no answer comes, I seem to be shrinking.

I need to put forward my viewpoint, my, and that I am somebody through that, I am someone. So I stand out, I have an opinion, I know better, I exist. Exist means to stand out, ex out, you're coming out of yourself.

And not to be in that state is, I'm disappearing. What am I going to say next? I don't know, maybe there's nothing to say.

And you may be surprised that sometimes when you haven't prepared anything, after a moment of stillness, something may come out of your mouth, and it may be much more powerful than anything that could have come if it had been prepared mentally. It may be more simple, too. But you get challenged by minds, the human mind, the collective human mind coming to you in the form of human beings, persons, and that is the challenge, whether it's in a teaching situation or in personal relationships, it's always the same challenge of the mind form pretending that it is absolutely important, that something in the mental realm is absolutely important.

My viewpoint, my position, this, this, give me, and build, raise belief that this matters. And so the spaciousness around it is lost. Well, it's not lost, but you don't know it's there.

The spaciousness around thought. Once you know the spaciousness around thought, you can even play with thought. You can say, I'm a Democrat, I'm a Republican, or whatever it is in Canada.

I can never get Canadian politics. I don't understand. It's complicated.

But Democrats, Republican is simple. Oh, yes. Identification with that.

You can have a preference. Maybe you thought that Al Gore would have been a better president than George Bush. You may be right, but you may be wrong.

Who knows? As Byron Katie says, do you really know this to be true? So the essence we've just spoken about of having groups.

The rest is, once you know the essence, that's all that's needed. The rest is how you do it in the world of form varies from group to group and person to person. If there are any, if you have groups, and here this morning, but it's just mainly addressed groups, if you have gatherings at home, if there's anything you want to contribute, you can either say what, you may have a question concerning one or two aspects of it, or you may have learned something there, something you did first, and then you learned, and it could help others to say what it is that you learned, what before you did it in this way, and then that didn't work, and then you did something else, or anything to do with groups. Some people have, before we open for questions, little cards, and you read, you know, these new age cards, but some people have cards with the power of now teachings, or something, and that is nice.

A person takes a card, and that's, then you have, it's a thought, of course, but the thought always points beyond itself. Then you read the thought, and you have a stillness around it. That's a beautiful pointer, each person taking a card, and, because some of it may yet be beyond a person's own experience, and so reactive reactivity comes in, but there's no need to be afraid of it.

Why not let people react, and hold that space? It's quite good to occasionally to be challenged, and that's the essence of why this person was there, is to learn that there is another dimension, and so the card actually pointed to the essence, but the little mind made self got frightened. Yes, so you may encounter, this is interesting, sometimes people can get angry, the pain body can get triggered in a gathering, and that's a beautiful challenge.

What is possible, then, that the whole group energy can become turbulent, and everybody gets pulled into pain body. So it's more likely to happen with people who are relatively new to the group, and thus they already, they know about the pain body, and they, when it comes up in them, they can be with it. They might even say at this very moment, my pain body has been triggered, and that it's being, there's a spaciousness around it when they point it out, and that's beautiful.

So as quickly as possible to explain certain things to people who are relatively new. I often do that in large groups, when I point out that some of you may experience, while you sit here, you may experience sudden restlessness. You may experience your pain body coming up.

You may experience strong mind movements. Point out the obstacles that may come up for them. You may experience boredom, as you sit here.

If they don't know it, they identify with the boredom, and then they can see inner states arising, and in the seeing, there's a spaciousness around inner states. So it's good, maybe a few basic points, when new people come, explain them what could happen here, how reactions that may come, and when they come, to be aware that that's what it is. It's a reaction, and it's good to be reminded, the group, you cannot be reminded often enough of those things.

As you sit here, you explain briefly what the pain body is that may come up. You explain the egoic entity, the me, with its identifications. You don't need at this point necessarily to use the respiration rebirth.

For some people that sounds too esoteric. And it also can happen, and you may have, once the group has a certain size, life does things in such a way that there always often be one person in the group that's difficult. There's always someone who's difficult.

And that could be a great teacher, that difficult person for everybody, to hold a spaciousness around that difficult person. Sometimes people who almost despise themselves feel drawn, it's almost as if they didn't want to be there, but yet they are there. Because the personality doesn't want to be there, but something deeper draws them there.

I had an extreme case of that, a woman in London I knew, with a very strong ego, and she would go to all spiritual teachers. Whenever there was a new spiritual teacher in town, she would be there, and she would always sit, and she said to me, I've seen them all, and I laugh at them all, but there was something deeper that she couldn't keep away. Her mind condemned the teachers, she always immediately found something to condemn, whatever it was, and yet she couldn't keep away.

It's beautiful to see. So let's see if there's anything, any questions that arise from groups, or something that you have already learned, or any difficulties you've experienced.

[Speaker 5] (2:33:55 - 2:36:19)

One of the things that John and I do together is we lead a non-denominational worship service at the county jail every week, and most of the men that are drawn to this are from a more fundamental Christian perspective, even though we bring in Buddhists and Taoist teachings and so forth, but they have a fairly simple faith, and so part of what we are concerned with is honoring where they are, because most of them it's their faith that has caused them to say, I can live in this world in a different way.

But I learned something very profound from two of these men. One was, he had just had a born-again experience, and he was, he just saw truth in a very narrow way, and I think he needed to, because that was the way he was making a choice. And I was trying to just come from presence in every experience with him, and be open-hearted, and one night he was really preaching kind of hard, and I was concerned, my mind became concerned that the rest of the men in the group would be having a problem with this, because some of them look kind of confused, and so I began trying to give him a broader perspective of truth.

And he was crushed that he had done something wrong, and I realized that this had not come from a place of presence in me. And then there's another young man who revealed that he sees himself as a channel for a new way of looking at the truth, and he speaks in a very authoritative way, and it was of some concern to me, because the other men were really confused. He was out there from a different place, and yet I was able to keep coming back to presence, and coming back to presence, and so one night John wasn't there.

He was away, and I was able to come back into a place of presence with it, and one of the other men asked a very innocent, simple question that just changed the whole energy. And this one young man said, oh no, this is just what I believe. This isn't something that I know to be the truth.

And it shifted the whole energy, and what I learned from that is that my job as a facilitator was to keep coming back to presence, and to allow presence to lead the service.

[Speaker 1] (2:36:19 - 2:48:21)

Yes, yes, that's very good. The moment, as you say, everything shifted, the moment he was no longer identified with what his mind was saying, no longer identified, and that is what I sometimes call the spaciousness around thought. He was no longer in the thought.

Suddenly he recognized, this is just what I believe. And the spaciousness, and that is immediately the shift in the whole energy field changes when it moves out of mind identification. And the teacher, the facilitator, whatever you want to call it, the function is never to tell anybody that they're wrong.

But to be there as the spaciousness around whatever they're saying. And never to attack the mental position. Some teachers do it, a few.

There are some spiritual teachers who are confrontational. What they do is, it looks as if they were attacking you, challenging you. Of course, what they're attacking is your mind identification, the egoic me entity, and they want to attack it in order to crack it open, so that then something deeper is revealed.

Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. It's not my way. So there are certain people who are drawn to those teachers who are confrontational and who attack the unconsciousness.

I have never done that. But sometimes that may work for certain people in certain cases. It is not something I would recommend that you do.

Because it can easily also strengthen the unconsciousness. Because by attacking it, you have made it real. You've given it reality.

And you could strengthen it. It could go either way when the teaching is confrontational. You can get through the ego, cut through it, or you can strengthen it.

So it's a little risky. There's another way that is not attack, and yet is a very clear cutting through mind. Cutting through.

And there's this teacher, Byron Katie, she does that. She simply cuts whatever the mind produces as a belief. She questions that.

Can you know that to be true? And you see, after a few seconds, you see the relativity of everything the mind throws up. So it's always, the mind is always seen as not absolute.

Nothing the mind produces is absolutely true. And so you cut, she cuts through but not confrontational, more gently. So there is a, it is an old, it is a tradition of confrontational teaching has existed for some centuries.

To some extent, Zen has a little bit of that, the fierceness of the Zen teacher. But I would not recommend it unless that is your nature, and unless that's what you do, and unless that is how, then you will draw to you perhaps people who need you, who need that. What works most powerfully, I find, is to give no reality to the unconsciousness, which is mind identification, mind stuff, to look through that.

And that implies also not to believe that there's any human being that needs fixing, that needs to be fixed, put right. There's something wrong with you, I know what it is, and I'm going to put you right, is a very common egoic perspective. I can change you, I know what's wrong with you.

Who is the you that you see something wrong with? Who is that you that you want to fix? An egoic entity, how could you fix that?

The beautiful thing is that humans don't need to be, to realize that humans don't need to be fixed. Because every human being living in this world, to a greater or lesser degree, except those few already completely free, they all express to a lesser or greater degree human unconsciousness, that's all. That's what needs to be fixed, but it can't be fixed.

It can only be recognized, primarily in yourself, and transcended in yourself. That's what the world needs. And not to make an identity out of human unconsciousness, in whatever way it expresses itself, to make an identity out of that for the other person.

That is the core, and if a teacher attacks the egoic entity, temporarily he is making it real. There's nothing there to be, it's an illusion anyway. But generally speaking, not to mistake human unconsciousness for the reality of that human being, and the expression of unconsciousness.

And sometimes the extreme case is, people may do something deeply unconscious, motivated by deep unconsciousness, which is the same unconsciousness that is in everyone, just a more extreme manifestation of it, it varies in degree, and there's no person in that, it's just degrees of unconsciousness, and it's not even those who express unconsciousness in greater degrees are less worthy, or less likely to become free, they may be more likely to become free, because they suffer more.

I had recently, some people came to me, and their son had perpetrated a dreadful crime, killed several people, 18-year-olds, 18-year-old, and they saw something that the whole world had created, out of that, what he did, in deep unconsciousness, the whole world had created, of course, that's what the world does, an identity for that person. He is a murderer, even mass murderer, he's killed four people. And they say, if they could only see what is, we know what is there underneath all that, we've seen it, but nobody else can see it anymore, if they could only see what we see in him.

Of course, they were in deep suffering, it's an extreme challenge, and I pointed out that that is not who he is, and they knew it, but they were becoming, there was in them a conflict between what the world was saying, who he is, and who deeply they knew who he is, and they were almost beginning to believe, but it was too painful to believe, that the world was right about him, there was that, and so I pointed out, that is, don't make an identity out of that for other people, or for yourself, if there's anything that you did through unconsciousness in the past, create a strength and sense of self through that, and that's called guilt, and that's a favorite egoic device, to keep a false sense of self going through guilt, which derives a sense of self from something that I now condemn, that I now see as bad, and I did that, that was me, I did that, I, I must be very bad, I failed, I, you derive through mind activity that is focused on that event that was an expression of human unconsciousness, you create a continued strong sense of me around it, that's why the ego loves guilt, that's why the ego doesn't want to let go of guilt, although it's so painful, guilt means you identify with unconsciousness, and make it into a self, a me, and if you do it for somebody else, then it's called blame, you did that, that is who you are, it's exactly the same movement, and so it's being trapped in a false identity, and to see that, in extreme cases, it's not easy, some, some people, unconsciousness, they embody human unconsciousness to such an extreme that it seems hard to, not to create an identity for them out of that, but the essence of so-called forgiveness, of course, simply means to realize that that is not who they are, that's forgiveness, as long as you think you did that, that is you did that, you, you, or I did that, I, I, still trapped in an egoic identity, you make it for another person, or you make it for yourself, if you make it for yourself, you'll make it for others, if you make it for others, you're also, you're yourself trapped in it, it's amazing, so not whatever people come up with, you may, sometimes coming back now to groups, it can happen that in groups, a few people can get hijacked by a strong mind movement, as perhaps that person temporarily got hijacked when he suddenly expressed his viewpoint, and in, and they believe it's God speaking through them, or they believe it's presence speaking through them, and yet you can always feel the vibrational field around what they are saying, when it comes from an egoic mind, there's a harshness about it, there's always something intolerant, something that condemns, something that says, I am right, and they are wrong, that identifies that the position of rightness, those are all characteristics of mind-induced, ego-induced speech, they're even channelings, it might happen to you that you have a group, and suddenly somebody starts channeling, and says, I am here, this is so-and-so, and some channelings are beautiful, some channelings come from a very deep level of truth, other channelings come from the egoic mind, pretending to be big and important, and don't you dare question me, I am whoever, from that planet, and

I'm evolved, I'm 5,000 years old, how could you ever question me? But once you know, you can easily feel where, what's the, what, where it is coming from, I'm not telling you what to do if somebody starts channeling, it turns out to be an egoic channel, you know what to do in that moment, maybe you just say, thank you, thank you.

[Speaker 2] (2:48:22 - 2:48:28)

We've had, been through a couple of cycles, but there's two things that, that I wanted to say this moment.

[Speaker 1] (2:48:29 - 2:48:29)

That's your group.

[Speaker 2] (2:48:30 - 2:51:12)

The group, yes, no channelers. One of the things, one we solved pretty well, I think, by having, I've been moderating our group for a couple years now, and initially, especially after you had come to town, and there was quite a bit of interest, we had, you know, 20, 30 people sometimes come, and what I found was that there, especially many of these people were, had been in therapy, or therapy groups, or been kind of new age thinkers and stuff, and so they, they had their rap down, you know, and one of the first things I learned to do, and at that point it was very instinctual, I only understood what I did afterwards, but, was when people started to do their story. Our routine would be to listen to some tape of yours, and then we'd talk a little bit. The idea would be to talk about where people are having trouble being present, and where they're having successes, like you were saying earlier, and then we would listen to some tape again.

So we would set up the presence through the tape, at least ideally that was the idea, but we'd often have these new people would come in, and they would sort of recognize this group as something familiar to them, and they would kind of go into their routine of, this is my story, and of course, we weren't very interested in the story. So by having, by being a fairly strong moderator, I would just bring them back to how is presence difficult for you to achieve, or what successes have you had, and kind of bring them. So I felt we successfully handled that particular diversion that the group kind of always wanted to go towards, and tell people, especially with new people.

The second problem that I don't think I ever really resolved very well, was when people come who've read a lot of conversations with God, or sometimes Course in Miracles, or some of these other chanted entities that are very popular in certain groups, especially in sort of new agey stuff. And then someone would be speaking about a problem of presence that they would have, say for example, and then another person who had all this other background, would start trying to address that person's issue about presence with a lot of complex techniques or ideas that came out of these other sources that I would consider to be less simple, less pure. Those situations, I don't know that I ever really adequately resolved them, or dealt with them, because it's very hard as a moderator to ask someone, well, let's not talk about that.

And so what would happen would be, if I did say something, frequently it would antagonize the person who was speaking. If I didn't say something, it would inject into the group all this stuff that was very far away from your teaching. And what we were trying to stay focused on, of course, was that.

That's one I never really adequately resolved. Do you have any answers?

[Speaker 1] (2:51:16 - 2:55:40)

That's what I mentioned earlier, how the mind can take over easily in a group setting. Have you ever pointed, in general terms, pointed out to the group that it's not about explanations, but the essence of that group is, so that each person understands? And you may have to point out what the essence of that gathering is at the beginning of each gathering.

That could be the starting point, and it's often still the starting point when I have retreats or talks. That question often is the beginning, why are we here? So to be reminded is very helpful.

And then you're present and you explain the state of consciousness that is presence. That's the reason why we're here, not to find or to get involved in new theories or new explanations or new beliefs, whatever it is, that state of consciousness. And once you have reminded people at the beginning, then they would be more likely to accept if you remind them again in the middle, or something happens.

To bring people back to presence, once you have observed a proliferation of mind in the group, you could even have an established signal. If it's an established signal, then people won't take it personally. But whatever it may be, let's come back to a presence, or that.

That could be misinterpreted as if you were telling somebody off, but that of course is the Zen master saying, be here now, attention now, awake now. That would be mine if I had a little group. I do use it still sometimes.

So a little sign to bring the group back to presence. And if you do that, perhaps, even if the group is not necessarily being taken over by some big mental theory, but even when there's simple sharing, bring back people to know this, feel the body. Help them to step out of mind streams that I mentioned earlier, the stepping back, the stepping out.

Always, of course, you have to do it for yourself, too. You step out. Then explain those basic points that are especially important in groups.

The stepping back from a mind stream, the ending, observing the ending of a mind stream, a statement, which is still rare. Then a different quality comes into the interaction, even the verbal interaction, when it's always stepping back. You've said what you have to say, and then others will get it, too.

Otherwise, you become a, it's just a minor version of those people that we've all met who go on and on. But that's the mind. That's the human mind.

There was a novel by an Irishman in the 20s. It goes on for 50 or 60 pages or something without punctuation, without a period. And it's called Stream of Consciousness, but it's really Stream of Mind.

The satirical magazine in England called Private Eye has a regular column in each issue, which is entitled Great Bores of Today. And each time, it's a mind stream. It's like sometimes it's a taxi driver or it's a politician.

So the taxi driver starts with, well, if you ask me, and then he goes on. And there's no end to it. And at the end, there's three dots to imply that he's carrying on even there.

[Speaker 8] (2:55:48 - 2:57:05)

First of all, I want to thank you for this incredible opportunity to be here. And already, I can feel myself just dropping back into myself within a day or so, and it's quite wonderful. The question I have is around this recent act of terrorism in regard to running groups and being with my individual clients.

And what has come up for me around that is that everyone has such a strong story about it. And of course, it has activated everyone's pain body, I think, certainly including my own. Although being here again, just dropping back, it's more silence around it, which is a miracle.

But because usually I haven't found my own pain body activated in the same way my clients are, so I've had more of an emotional distance. And I'm not sure exactly what I'm asking, except perhaps maybe you can lend some perspective about how to be with such extraordinary circumstances when the collective pain body has gotten so highly activated and our mind tends to get very agitated around that.

[Speaker 1] (2:57:05 - 3:24:11)

Yes, thank you. Yes, thank you. Of course, that's one more chapter in the history of human madness and pain inflicted by humans on other humans and on themselves.

It's a continuation of 20th century history and all the centuries beyond. The same mind set has produced it that reduces another human being or groups of human beings to mere concepts in the head. And once you have reduced their aliveness to a mere concept in the head, you can inflict pain and you don't know that you're doing it anymore.

You no longer know their aliveness or your aliveness. It's being trapped completely in a conceptualized reality that speaks of the Americans, the Jews, the blacks, the this, the that. You can do it to groups of people.

You can do it to an individual person. Call that person this or that. Once you have reduced a person to a mental concept, you no longer know what you're doing to them.

You've already done the worst thing that you could do to them. You've removed their aliveness. Of course, you've trapped yourself more deeply also, but that lies at the root.

And then it is easier for the accumulated human pain that some people carry in stronger measure than others to move into the mind. And so the madness of having an egoic identity that finds its strength through creating enemies, conceptualizes groups of people, labels them as the enemy. And then that is used by the enormous amount of pain and ultimately madness.

And anything can happen then. It uses those mind structures. But first, before the pain body can become an insane terrorist, manifest as an insane terrorist, certain things need to happen in the mind of the insane terrorist.

As long as he realizes that those are human beings, the pain body cannot control this being. But the moment he reduces the human beings to mere concepts and ciphers and labels, then the pain body can move through and use those mind structures. And then a very insane entity is suddenly there that wants to destruction.

It wants more pain, which was every pain body wants. It's more pain for myself and others. It wants that destruction.

So to see what lies at the root, but see that it is common to the human mind, to do that is a tendency that each person carries, if not to such an extreme, to reduce other human beings through judgments and mental labels. And that includes things when we unconscious behavior, make an identity for them out of it, and then call that person something. It's the same movement.

You may not want to kill them, but you've already covered up the sacredness of that being for yourself. You no longer know that that being is sacred because you have constructed an identity, a conceptual mental identity, and that is what you now relate to. And it's covering up the sacredness, but you cannot cover up the sacredness of another human being without losing at least some of that within yourself of knowing yourself as the sacredness also.

And that's an amazing thing to see. So that people are doing it constantly and it's a brutal thing. And that is what the mind, it may not look brutal in its less obvious manifestations, but it is.

And it's whenever labels, Jesus, if you look at Jesus, he always, he often associated with all kinds of people that humans had labels about. And he had no labels. So he looked through and he could see the sacredness in each one.

And humans had reduced those. How can he associate with tax collectors and prostitutes and all those anti, those people? Why is he hanging out with those people?

Mary Magdalene, why is she a hooker? She's a hooker. That's not in the New Testament because it's not that brutal, but the reality of the human mind when you put a label on a person is very brutal.

That's what they actually said, but it doesn't appear in the New Testament. And he saw that suddenly the sacredness and she knew her own sacredness. But all the humans around had reduced that human being and wanted to continue to reduce that human being.

Amazing. It happens in all these different forms until, and the worst one is what we've just witnessed. But to see that they know not what they do.

That's the truth. And yet pain comes because you witness so much pain there. You witness death on a large scale.

Premature, it looks like. It's come too soon for those people. It wasn't meant to happen.

It's come too soon. That's what it looks like. There is, however, a redemptive dimension to death, whether death comes at old age or whether death comes as it seems prematurely through an accident or an act of violence.

Now, what is that redemptive quality to death? If death were totally bad, totally evil, and the most dreadful thing that there is, which often looks like that. I even read in a newspaper an article that said, death, it wasn't talking about any particular death.

I read it a few years ago. It said death is an outrage. It's one, it's almost as if you could start having street demonstrations, carrying, I'm against death.

No more death. If death were totally dreadful, we would all be in a state of continuous depression. There would be no point in anything because we are all condemned to it.

We are all condemned to death. Of course, it would be more real if you had stamped somewhere on your body your date of death. Then all you had to do is look at it.

Oh. So everybody's under a death sentence. It's true.

And it could come. Sometimes it comes after a long life, but it could come at any time. It comes when you least expect it.

If humans didn't know on a very deep level that there is more to who they are, human existence would be dreadful and it would be pointless. What is the point in doing anything? You're going to die anyway.

And joy would not be possible. You're sentenced to death. How can you be in a state of joy?

Somehow humans know there's more to death than we realize by looking at the surface phenomenon of death, which looks dreadful. A few glimpses have come to us from humans who have faced death but haven't died. They have come back either from a situation where they were extremely close to death or a situation where they actually died, so it seems, and yet only for a moment entered that realm and then came back.

Near-death experience. And a large amount, a large majority of those accounts, both people who faced the danger of imminent death but escaped, as well as people who actually seemingly entered death but came back through a near-death experience. One thing is you don't find it in all the accounts, but in a large majority, there's a strange thing that many people tell you afterwards when they survive, and that is the last few moments before imminent death, there was a shift inside them.

People report that you've had accidents but escaped, didn't die. The accident seemed unavoidable, and in that moment, the last few seconds, they experienced a state of great alertness and peace and serenity and the absence of fear. I've read many accounts of that, and they say, this is very strange, just before it happened, suddenly all fear, fear was there until the last few moments, then suddenly all fear left me when death seemed inevitable, all fear left me and there was great peace that I suddenly felt and serenity, and everything seemed to move very slowly.

And occasionally, in those cases, people took action out of that state of consciousness in which there was no longer any thought. Basically, they had already died as their psychological form identity momentarily withdrew completely as if it died. In some cases, it died completely and something emerged from beyond their psychological form identity just before the imminent physical death.

And that is always when you go beyond your psychological form identity, there's always the reality of who you are beyond form is accompanied, the realization of that is accompanied by peace and serenity and a deep sense of all is well. And they've all said that, and many people had a near-death experience, they actually saw people sitting around them weeping because they thought this person had died. And they thought, oh, why are they weeping?

This is fine. This is so peaceful. There's such aliveness here.

So even if you don't believe, because this is not, I don't want you to necessarily believe in anything, but just take those people who faced death and see the many accounts that report a shift in consciousness in the face of death. And the sudden shift from fear to deep peace, a deep peace beyond mental explanations, a deep peace, if it could speak, that would say, there is no death, all is well, but they didn't even, they didn't need that thought. There just was a deep knowing that all is well.

And so that is one aspect of the redemptive quality of death. Something opens up when the form dissolves, there is an opening. And that can happen when the psychological form dissolves of me.

Some people have died before they died. That happened to me. The psychological form of me became so painful that it self-destructed.

And there was this peace that I couldn't explain, incredible peace and aliveness. And how is that possible? What is that peace?

And the absence of fear. And that it's knowing that there is beyond, that life is not the opposite of death, knowing that life is eternal, but knowing it beyond words, knowing it directly. Death in any form has this redemptive dimension, in any form, because a small form of death is when somebody leaves you that you had closely identified with.

A small form of death is when you lose your home. A small form of death is when you lose your social position. So there are small forms of death that are to do with the psychological form.

The psychological form of me. Death in any form is a possibility, the possibility of not resisting the opening that comes when a form dissolves, whether it's a psychological form of me or a physical form. So one could even go so far as to say the most sacred thing about human life is death.

It is where the form gives way to the formless, where the formless one life can shine through, the form dissolves. That's the redemptive quality of death. So knowing that, probably many of those people who die to violent deaths, and that is just one of many violent deaths that people are dying every day.

The violent deaths that people die through traffic accidents every year, even in the United States alone, is greater, I believe, than those people who died there. And they die every day, a violent death. And it happens, there's death happening every second on the planet.

Some violent, some not. So it is always, whether it's physical death or some aspect of psychological death through some loss, something is being, instead of being added to you, is being removed from you, from the me. You die a little bit.

And every death, even a loss, a slight loss, is a little opening. When you're faced with imminent death, it's a huge opening into who you are beyond form. A little death is a little opening.

When you're ready, even a little opening could transform you. I read of an Indian man who is now a spiritual teacher in India, and he was traveling through Canada as a young man, and he was staying in a youth hostel, and he was taking a shower, and he had left all his belongings in his room. And when he got back from the shower, all his belongings, his money and passport and everything was gone.

And that's a little death. It's not a big thing, really. And yet, he was so ready that that loss triggered an inner transformation in him, and he suddenly became extremely peaceful.

Later, he traveled back to India and became a spiritual teacher. And it's strange that such a relatively little death could trigger that in those who are ready. There's another aspect to the redemptive quality of death, and that is in those who are close to someone who goes through that, who are not personally involved in that death, but are close to somebody, close to you.

And in a way, these events of two weeks ago were close to you. They were close to everyone, almost. They were closer than even Europeans felt that these events were close to them.

So they were very close, just as close as if somebody close to you were dying or had had a violent death. And then, what is that redemptive quality that also affects those who are in the proximity of death, but not directly affected by death? You're watching these forms dissolving, as all forms must sooner or later.

So there's nothing tragic, really, in the fact that a form of life dissolves. The only tragic thing that seems to be there is that it has dissolved too soon. That's what it appears like.

It shouldn't have dissolved in that way. All these lives were not complete. They should have lived longer.

That is the mental interpretation. And yet, it happened. And it continues to happen every day.

On a smaller scale, people die premature, seemingly premature death. Others die at old age. But whenever you are in the proximity of that and watch that, and you're able to either surrender to the fact of death totally or surrender to the feelings that you have about it, which may be very sad, may be very turbulent, and you allow them to be.

I spoke to a woman last year whose son died at the age of 30 or so. Of an illness. And she was sitting with him in the hospital.

She was watching him. And that's a premature death, 30 years old. Life hardly started.

He shouldn't be dying. And she was sitting there. And at the moment of death, somehow, by grace, she was able to completely be there with him and accept there was no thought even.

And she sensed enormous sacredness in that space. And he went peacefully. And the room was filled with peace and sacredness.

And she realized at that moment that this is not a tragedy. For five or 10 minutes, he remained in that state. And then she started weeping and becoming almost hysterical, as she told me.

Then the mind came back in with its interpretation. But she was able to be there and realize the enormous sacredness as the moment a form dissolves. And especially if the form does not resist it too much.

And you don't resist it, then death is like a flower opening. And there have been a few. Some people who relinquish resistance in the face of death, actually, just before they die, a transformation happens in their face.

And it's almost a light shining through in some of them, not all. It's always just a potential. And enormous peace comes.

And we don't know how many of those who died two weeks ago violently in their last moments experienced a collapse of their form identity and an enormous influx of peace. And we've read so many accounts of people who survived and experienced that. So being aware of that death is not the ultimate tragedy.

And it comes sooner or later. It's actually the most beautiful thing, but that's hard to accept. So be with your feelings.

But when you see the redemptive dimension to death, then surrender will be easier. Surrender to this. Surrender to what you feel.

There may still be a turbulence, pain body. And with that, you die a little bit yourself. And that's how, when somebody is close to death, it might be somebody very close to you or a massive death like the one we witnessed.

Through being with that and watching that, you partake to some extent of that death. That's why you will never be the same if you spend time in the company of a dying person and are really present with that person. You will not be the same person after having witnessed, truly witnessed death.

You will be transformed also to some extent. You've died a little bit with it. Now a strange thing, also another observation that people made is in New York, people seem much more friendly after those events.

Whereas New Yorkers were famous for not being friendly. And suddenly in the street, people would talk to each other. It was as if a deepening had occurred in the collective field.

Also pain, yes. But underneath it, an opening and a deepening. Somebody even suggested on television that the American collective psyche was being transformed.

It had been up to now a type A personality, the collective American personality, which probably means outgoing and getting things done. And there was a shift now through the pain, a deepening. Because from the pain, you move to a deeper level of, at some point there's some acceptance.

And so there's a shift also in the collective psyche through the suffering. Everybody has died a little bit in that. But the beautiful thing about death is that it is sacred.

And to Western world, I completely forgotten that. Older cultures still know that and they treat death with great respect. And when somebody dies, they whisper.

And then they go past the dead body and they take off their hats. They may have hated that person. But when that person is dead, suddenly that person, there's something sacred there.

And instinctively, humans know that. But only the westernized mind has forgotten that it's too much up here.

[Speaker 6] (3:24:15 - 3:24:34)

The New York Times Sunday edition had the magazine in it. And the cover was the cityscape without the two towers, the two World Trade Towers. And in their place stood only two columns of light.

[Speaker 1] (3:24:35 - 3:24:44)

Oh. Yeah. Thank you.

Thank you. Wonderful. Yes.

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:24:47 - 3:25:02)

There's something with you talking about this that has been a question for me around facilitating groups that's come up. That I'm now seeing as me either facing or not facing death in the moment.

[Speaker 1] (3:25:03 - 3:25:03)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:25:05 - 3:25:57)

And what that is, is when I felt presence is talked, afterwards, I often don't remember what's said. And if somebody then says to me, could you repeat that? One way I've been able to explore it has been saying, well, maybe I'll talk around a different way and it will come.

Sometimes that's happened and there has been that poignancy, aliveness. Other times what I'm realizing is that it's me interfering, trying to explain it and not accepting that that moment has completed itself.

[Speaker 1] (3:25:57 - 3:25:59)

Yes. Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:25:59 - 3:26:06)

And whenever that happens, the energy in the room shifts.

[Speaker 10] (3:26:07 - 3:26:08)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:26:09 - 3:26:39)

And it may take time to get back on track, to haul the mind back in a way. And in one way, that's a very minor thing, really. But in another, I'm remembering in Hollyhock when you had used an example of somebody coming back in the room and asking a question and it didn't come back.

[Speaker 1] (3:26:39 - 3:26:39)

No.

[Speaker 4] (3:26:40 - 3:27:08)

And you used that example that it didn't come back. And so somewhere with the talk of death, for me it seemed that even in those moments to say it's not here now, what was said is gone. There's no retrieving.

[Speaker 1] (3:27:08 - 3:27:08)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:27:09 - 3:27:28)

And that there's perhaps a humbling in it and an admission that it has nothing to do with me, it has nothing to do with you, none of us can bring it back, just like none of us can bring back what those people or what has happened.

[Speaker 1] (3:27:29 - 3:27:29)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:27:29 - 3:27:40)

Thank you. And that gives me perhaps a sense of space and permission Yes. to be more accepting.

[Speaker 1] (3:27:41 - 4:33:42)

Yes, not being here as a form identity, but simply as an opening, which means you've died. You can only really be effective when you have died as a form identity. I had this wonderful thing, I was in China early this year, on a mountain, there was a something carved in stone on top of a mountain, Chinese writing.

And I asked, what does that mean? And my Chinese friend said, Buddha, that means Buddha. There seemed to be two signs put together.

I said, what does the individual sign mean? And how does it fit together as Buddha? He says, the first sign means man, which means human being.

And the next sign next to it means no. That's Buddha. It's a denial of the reality of your form identity.

It's an absence rather than the presence is there when there's an absence of the form identity is presence. It's like you go, man, no. It's death.

When we talk about teaching presence, not everybody is going to teach presence directly in such a way as this. There are many other ways in which the new state of consciousness can be taught. And some are already doing it.

It can flow into many different activities. There are already teachers teaching it at school, not out in the open. It's not mentioned on the curriculum, but in whatever subject is there.

They manage to teach the new state of consciousness. Body workers enter that state, the good ones. When they do their body work, it is performed in thoughtless awareness.

And you know exactly what is needed. And ultimately, more and more you find that the body work is a means to you actually teaching presence and presence is the healer. And so you may find you may be called upon to teach presence directly, such as this, or it may flow increasingly into what you're already doing.

So you teach in an indirect way. Whatever it is, important to realize that that is your life purpose to embody that state of consciousness. And then you cannot not teach it in one way or another.

Your life purpose is to live it, to embody it, to be the flowering of consciousness. And then any purpose on a personal level, which is to do with your personal situations and maybe to do with things you've already learned and know is subservient to the greater purpose of teaching presence, the new state of consciousness. So it may be that life will remove you completely from whatever you're doing now, or it may be that presence will flow into more and more into what you're doing already.

And then there's a deepening of that. And the doing and the interactions that you have with people as part of your doing are ultimately an excuse, a means of bringing presence. Whatever you are doing is no longer the main thing.

It's the surface thing is whatever you're doing, whatever your activity may be. And there are not many things that presence cannot flow into and transform that activity. And your interactions, it looks as many of your interactions, you had those interactions because they're part of your daily, the job, the business that you do, whatever you do, and you interact with all kinds of people to get things done, to sort things out, to discuss this and that as part of whatever your external activity is.

And the wonderful thing is when all that becomes secondary, one could almost say an excuse for presence flowing into it. So you may be in a meeting talking about the new advertising campaign. If anybody is in advertising, it's possible.

Presence can flow into even that, perhaps. Why not? I've seen a few ads where there was presence shining through here and there.

Not many yet. In sports also, it's the core essence of being really a master at anything is the state of presence. But this goes beyond that.

It's being a master in life. Being a master in any activity requires you to be in the state of aware presence while you're performing whatever it is, then that is mastery. But what we are engaged in and what humankind needs is more than that.

It's more than people becoming extremely good at this or that. That can be an entry point. I saw a film about golf a while ago, a video called Bagger Vance.

And that's about somebody's teaching golf, but really teaching presence. And I remember just a few scenes from it. The master golfer, how he suddenly before he hits that ball, I don't know the expressions for golf, he looks into the distance and goes, and it's actually mentioned, no thought.

There's a line about being free of thought. And then, oh, there's the truth. And that's about presence within the sphere of a limited activity.

Some therapists will become very effective in what they do, regardless of their therapeutic background and whatever they have learned, even psychoanalysts. I'm not, I'm saying that because psychoanalysis is a very mental mind. Even there, after 10 years of practicing, 15 years, 20 years or more of applying your mental knowledge, some of the psychoanalysts simply sit there after just, they've listened for 15 or 20 years and they've been interpreting for 15, 20 years or more, scribbled.

And more and more, they just, they give up. They just sit there and listen. And there comes the alertness and the stillness.

And then they speak from there, not from acquired knowledge anymore. That may still flow in here and there, certain terminologies, but that's where it comes from. And that's where the, then the, if they call it patient, strange word, it undergoes a change in the presence of the present therapist.

So see where it flows in and not have a compartment in your life where you practice presence, but not, then keep some of your life for business. That's serious. And then presence.

Somebody some years ago, I was talking about somebody who was doing a course in miracles. And I said something about his business. And he said, no, no, not there.

That's, I can't afford to do it. I can't afford to practice there. So your life purpose is to embody that.

And then it's not just having a group once or twice a week, or even seeing people. If you teach in such a direct way, that's very helpful too. But it's a continuous outflow.

I ran into a famous architect the other day. He had come to one or two talks of mine. He's the most famous Canadian architect.

And we talked for a while, and he told me that when he teaches, architect, he still teaches at university. He tries to teach what the state of presence is to his students and to create from there. And he tries to embody presence even in the buildings that he creates.

And he had been doing that before he came into contact with this more direct, the direct teaching of presence. And then he recognized what he had already been doing for years.

And that happens with some people who are already master at something and realize that in that field, they're already practicing presence.

So any external activity is an excuse for that. Otherwise, you might think that something you do out there really matters. And it doesn't.

If you die tomorrow, somebody else will take over your job. The moment you think that something that you do on the level of form ultimately matters, then you are lost again in the forms. And one characteristic of that new state of consciousness is a lightness, an intensity, but a lightness, not the intensity of egoic delusion, which is, this matters dreadfully, and we must get this done.

That's one kind of a totally different vibration. They may get it done, but in the process of getting it done, they're making themselves and 100 other people unhappy. And then they get it done, whatever it is.

It's called karmic action. All the employees are miserable, but the company is making a profit. For a while, but not that long anymore, because the old consciousness and all the structures that it has created are not going to survive that much longer.

So an intensity comes. There is an intensity about presence which is so different from what before you had regarded as intensity, which contained is always a strong element of fear. It doesn't, might not look like fear, if something matters dreadfully out there, there must be fear somewhere.

And so comes a lightness, but not without great intensity that flows into what you do. So that the master golfer doesn't go, I've got to hit that hole. I've got to get that, nothing is flowing.

There's an ego trying to do something. So there's a, as the title of that book goes, one of the many I haven't read, the lightness of being, well, the original title is actually the unbearable lightness of being. I don't know to whom it's unbearable.

In the book, it must be the ego, the lightness of being. And so to live in that state of lightness where nothing out there ultimately matters. It's not that you don't honor this moment and whatever you need to deal with, whatever arises, but you don't want anything through that to get something through it, to a bigger me, self.

And then comes that relaxed alertness, that is the intensity of presence, alert, but no tension. It's playing from then on, you play in the world of form. You still move within it, but you're free of needing a particular result, of needing to be confirmed in your identity through a particular result, outcome.

So the master, master, we use that for both men and women. I think that's right, isn't it? Master, or is there a female for master?

Just so I'm right. You're a master, the master of presence. Now, not to give you a new identity, that would be dreadful.

What are you into now? Well, I'm actually, I've become a master. How do you master presence, become a master of presence?

Not just in one little field. Well, all that means you become master of this moment, because presence is inseparable from this moment. How do you become master of this moment?

Do you try to control what happens in this moment? Are you that controlling master? No, it just means to be aligned with this moment.

This moment, to give it your attention, to look at it, whatever form it takes, the form changes, the moment remains. Whatever form it takes, you look at it. And in that moment of looking, there's thoughtless awareness.

That is the intensity of presence, and that is true intelligence operating. And then whatever needs to happen, happens through you, or it happens externally. It is amazing how many seemingly inexplicable events and connections suddenly come into play when one being is in the state of presence.

How many helpful factors suddenly come into play, and you cannot trace them back to causal factors. How did that connection, how did this person suddenly come in at the right moment? How did that happen just at the right moment?

It's because you're no longer cut off egoic entity. You're open to life. And life, then there's a great connectedness with other forms of life and the totality.

The intelligence of the whole operates through you. So it's not just we have realizations and insights and right action out of that state of acknowledging this moment without running away from it internally in any way, denying it internally in any way, an openness, and then see what happens. The master simply is master of this moment, which means completely open to whatever it is that arises at this moment.

That is the mastery, only this. And you're tested every moment. It's never a mastery that is an achievement that you can carry around with you.

Now I've made it. I'm a master. Every moment, again, determines whether or not you're a master.

An internal yes to what is, is the master completely. With that, all the stuff that the egoic mind likes dissolves. The complaining mind, the should into the shouldn't, and me and my story, and the rental projections of fear.

And then the central point of your life is no longer the story, but this moment. Neither past nor future, which are still there, fine. But the central point increasingly becomes just this moment.

That's the master. That's all. It's not a big thing.

And yet it's a radical transformation of consciousness. And it's both big and little. Just make this.

This moment becomes the central point of your life because that's all there is. So you might as well make it into that. And not the next one, and not the last one.

Just this. And this is an amazing thing to sense the power of this moment as the power of life itself. No matter what form it takes, you welcome every form that this moment takes.

And that could be a million dollar arriving in your bank account, a million dollar leaving your bank account, the car breaking down, it is. And the next moment, somebody giving you a ride, anything, gain or loss. Now, gain is more easily accepted when that is the form that this moment takes.

But that's only one half of the equation. The other half will always be loss. That's the phenomenal universe.

So one half of your life will be gain, recognition, money, status, gain, a relationship, whatever. And then there's loss. And that comes continuously.

The egoic entity wants more gain. And no matter how much it adds to itself, it's never enough. It dreads the loss, which is death, which we talked about this morning.

So the great thing is that you actually, you welcome the loss just as much as you welcome the gain, if not more. Looks very strange. And remember, you no longer need to add anything to who you are for your identity.

That's a great liberation. The need to add to me the completeness of this moment. Not to add to look for an enhanced self.

To add as the play of form. Yes, I learned something new. That's interesting.

The play of form. Or make some money. The play of form.

It's not going to, you're not going to find yourself in it. And then you lose it again. So what do you teach?

When you teach directly, you teach this. And directly, a few of you are going to teach presence directly. Not through some other form.

Either one-on-one or in groups. And then there's the teaching of presence through something else. Through a secondary form.

Which you simply, you perform in that state. And life will tell you what it is. You start with what you're doing already.

No matter what it is, what you're doing already. Presence needs to start with what you're doing already. If it's the most boring of jobs.

Presence, you cannot wait for presence for a better opportunity, more conducive surroundings. Before you can be present. That's a continuous excuse.

It starts where you are now. It arises where you are now. And there's no excuse.

There will be many mental excuses. Why not here, not now? Your life can only change when you totally become aligned with the now.

No matter where you are. And it could be a prison. And you can't say, I need to get out of here.

I want to have a spiritual life. I want to teach presence. How can I?

This is dreadful. Of course, it's dreadful from the judgmental point of view. You start it here and now.

And see the transformation that happens. You may, maybe you're working as a waiter, a waitress. But you think this is, I just need to get out of here.

Why not start there? And bring presence when you bring a soup to the person in the restaurant. And you put the soup on the table.

Would you like anything else? Can I help you with something else? The quality, whatever it is.

The disciple asked the Zen master, Master, how do I enter Zen? The question means, how do I enter the state of consciousness that is Zen? How do I enter Zen?

And they were just walking outside in nature. And the master said, can you hear the sound of that mountain stream? And it was a very distant sound.

And the disciple started, yes, I can. I hear it. And then the master said, enter Zen from there.

Oh, and then they walk on. And five minutes later, or 10 minutes later, the mind started working again. Because while you listen to the mountain stream, of course, there was no mind.

He was attentive, alert. And then the mind started, Master, I've been thinking, what would you have said if I said, no, I can't hear the mountain stream. And the Zen master says, disciple, yes, enter Zen from there.

No matter. Just a few words before we open again to questions. A few words about being with another person who may be coming to you for help.

And you already know the essence. Be in your body and listen. In many cases, you won't know the answer.

The problem may be very complex. Most people's problems are. Become comfortable with that.

If you're not comfortable with not knowing, you can't teach presence. The mind thinks, I must know. What can I possibly say to this person?

Or tries to say something that you read in a book and it'll lack power. It doesn't come out of the now. It doesn't come out of presence.

Or some explanation. Or a belief that makes you feel good. To become comfortable with not knowing.

That's an incredible state of great depth. And maybe even after a long session with that person, who knows? Maybe you won't have said a single word.

And yet, there's the field of presence. And maybe five minutes after the person walks out, suddenly a realization comes to him or her. Or suddenly, the illusory nature of his or her problems is suddenly recognized.

But it's most likely that at some point, words will come out of your mouth. Or a question. And another question.

A strange thing happens often. Not often now do people come to me with stories. Unhappy stories.

But there was a time when people would come to me with unhappy stories. Looking for some way out or solution. And the more they were telling their unhappy stories, the more happy I felt inside.

The deeper the peace and the aliveness. So much so that I couldn't help... I had to smile.

And they didn't understand that. Because there's nothing to smile about in their story. But I did it with one woman.

And she said... She stopped talking suddenly. Her story came to an end.

And said, Oh, I can feel it. You're doing healing. That was her framework for understanding what was happening.

And she called it healing. And it is healing in the deepest sense. Yes.

And that was the time when I myself didn't fully understand what I was doing. Even now I don't, of course. Nobody does.

No mind could do that. But I understood less than I do now. And I thought, She must be right.

This is healing. That's how I became a healer. But that word attracted quite a few people who were not interested in any transformation of consciousness.

But they said, I have this pain in my ankle. Can you take that away, please? Or this hurts here.

Can you do something about this? And for a while I did. And some came for physical healing and got something else.

But after a year or two, I dropped the label healer. But it's still what it is. It's healing in a very deep sense of the word.

But ultimately, there's not going to be a difference between meeting a person in that context and meeting somebody in the street, or meeting somebody in a restaurant, or in the store, or at work. For a while, it may well be that when somebody comes, you enter that state, as some therapists do. They enter the state of presence in the therapeutic setting or framework.

And they can be very effective within that. The moment they step out of the therapeutic framework, their presence is lost, and wrinkles reappear again, and the tension in their face comes back, and they're identified with mind. You can see it, how it comes back.

The moment they stop out of their office, or the wife rings, and then the next client or patient comes in, and they all... It's confined, even sometimes to a room, to a particular activity or function. And ultimately, you're no different in that teaching situation, to call it that, than in any other situation.

You meet everybody in the same state of open presence. And you look at them. If we only get this here, everything would be transformed.

The ability to look at another person, in the state of thoughtless awareness, for three seconds. Give them three seconds of that preciousness. Three seconds of thoughtless awareness, while you meet someone.

So, that's not a big thing, just the greatest gift. And then perhaps it becomes four seconds, five. People like to meet me, not because of the person, because of that state that they sense.

They sense something, that there's no judgment whatsoever in the mind. There's complete openness, complete, and there's that energy field of presence. And they find themselves in that.

They may carry around, of course they will, a mind-based sense of identity. Always inadequate, as all mind-based senses of identity are. And when you meet a person in presence, they find, for the first time, they recognize themselves through you, that form.

And it feels good to be yourself. For some people, for the first time. They haven't been themselves.

Who is themselves? They're all trying to be someone that's in the nature of human existence. Animals are themselves.

Unless they have lived with humans for too long. But most animals are just, even after living with humans, it's a miraculously, most animals still are themselves. Not playing a role, trying to be the cat.

It just is. It does. It moves.

It sits. It rests. It sleeps.

It jumps. It is completely itself. And humans are trying to be something.

Not enough yet. I'm not enough yet. Depending on what people's feedback you get from others.

And so, to be yourself for the first time, and to recognize yourself through another human being, that fullness that you are, and you totally accept it. And that's then misinterpreted by the mind, as if you had something that you can give them, and then they'll run after you. What was that?

I need to talk to you about that. And of course, for a while, that is your function. Your function for a while is to be the reflector of their reality, of who they are in the depths of their being.

And who they are is the spacious presence, the stillness underneath all the mental, emotional formations, the formless one. And that's what you reflect back to them. So for a while, people will love that they find themselves.

And that's your function. You don't immediately say, no, from now on, I don't want to see you anymore. It's all in you, which is true.

But for a while, it may be your function to be that reflection, that reflector. And to be that, all that is required is holding that space of thoughtless awareness. Then you reflect that.

That's all. If that were your only practice, whoever you meet for the first five seconds, you look at them in thoughtlessness, total innocence. And before you know it, it'll be more than five seconds.

That's the depths of true teaching. And I read only a few days ago, somebody said the decisive encounters in the world are not between two famous politicians or two statesmen meeting and shaking hands and having a talk. The decisive encounters in the world are you meeting the clerk in the store, because that's where it's at.

The decisive meetings are in the street, in the office, in the store, two human beings relating beyond mental concepts. It starts with one. You can't expect the other person to do it, too, because you expect nothing in that state.

So you're not demanding that the other person should be behaving in a certain way. They probably won't. And yet, change happens in the spaciousness of presence.

I will be present with you if you behave in such and such a way. Then I'll... Otherwise, I'm not going to be present with you.

So the teaching is no longer confined to a particular setting. It's a limited view that may also apply, that people come and say, but it's everywhere, everywhere. And just the arising of thoughtless awareness, the cessation of compulsive thinking is the new state of consciousness on the planet, without which the planet is not even going to make it.

Well, the planet might make it, but certainly humans won't if that shift doesn't happen within the next hundred years, because otherwise the old consciousness will continue and it'll create more violence, more chaos, more destruction of the environment, more of everything, more consumer goods until everybody's drowning and others have nothing and the others are drowning in consumer goods. The cessation of thought, and that's a pretty radical thing, arising above thought as your normal state of consciousness, not perhaps all at once. For a while, you have one foot in thought and one foot out of thought.

Sometimes thought drags you back into thought completely. And at other times, you're almost out. You say, oh, wow.

And for a while that's there and then suddenly you get dragged back into thought. So for a while, I can't predict how long, you move between the two. It is possible, if not likely, that teaching, if you do it in a more formal kind of teaching, may deepen the arising of that state in you, may accelerate it.

The arising of thoughtless awareness because there is a demand for it. When people come, life is demanding something of you and then when the demand is there, it comes. This is, I experience it always when there's a group.

It's the pull of the group that pulls the presence out of me and the words that come out.

They're being pulled out. Otherwise, if I sat here alone, I wouldn't be talking.

There would be presence. I would be present with the flowers with a little less intensity because it's not needed to be present with flowers. Not such great intensity is needed.

It's beautiful, just presence. But here the presence is cutting through and actually while you sit there is dissolving mental accumulations. So what is required here is a greater intensity of presence and when it's required, it comes.

The opening is there. That's the same with, it works even on a physical level, energy on a physical level. If you never move physically, then after a while you have less and less physical energy because the demand for it isn't there or people who are unemployed for long periods of time and do nothing for years, then they don't even have the energy to do anymore because it's not required.

But as soon as the demand is there, it comes and the demand on the planet, the overwhelming demand on the planet is for a new state of consciousness to arise. It wants to arise. And so all you, you become an opening and then it moves through.

People will pull it out of you. And don't believe the mind when it says, I'm not ready. You can't get ready for presence.

Prepare for the now. There's a single thing here that is the teaching. I don't know how I can talk about it for so long if it's just a single thing.

And that single thing is awareness, pure thoughtless awareness. And some of you, occasionally it arises in some of you, there is a state, I've just mentioned that one foot here, one foot there and another characteristic of that state in which some of you still are, one foot in the world of thought and thought-based identity and one foot out. One characteristic of that state is you move from contracted to the open state.

I'm sorry, I lost that thought. It's gone. It'll come back if it's necessary.

Foot in two worlds, in thought, out of thought. And that's how it is. You don't need to demand to be totally free of thought yet.

Not that you will never use thought either when you finally, to be free of thought, all it means you're free of self lodged in thought. A sense of self lodged in mind activity and the emotions that go with it, a me, an image that isn't complete, hasn't arrived yet. So to become free of thought is to become free of a self, sense of self lodged in thinking.

When it becomes free then, the compulsive nature of thinking gradually decreases. That compulsive stream. Because it's only compulsive because you equate who you are with thought activity and thought creations.

And of course you need to keep yourself going. That's why the compulsive thinker arises.

And then your sense of self shifts from being trapped in thought and the emotions that go with thought to being the spacious, still, thoughtless, aware presence.

The vastness in which a few thoughts happen. And that means you're free of thought. And you've gone beyond.

You're not incapable of thought. Thought can still operate for certain things here and there. To speak you need some thought.

But it's linked into presence. Not a self-serving, repetitive stream of noise. So that thought still arises, but it's no longer a problem.

It no longer has the power to make you unhappy, which is what thought likes to do. It loses that. It doesn't have the heaviness about it anymore when it's free of self, trapped sense of self, a me, my story, my life.

Then when you have one foot still in that old consciousness and one foot in the new, in that there's an intermediate stage here for many people. And that where you realize the relative nature of all thought. Thought is still there a lot of the time.

And yet you're not completely in it anymore. You're moving out already. And that you recognize it by, more and more you recognize thought is thought.

And you're not totally believe in every thought that comes up. Oh, oh, oh. You can see how thought drags you along.

You have one thought about yourself or somebody else and you go completely with it. And now the difference is the same thought may still come up, but it doesn't drag you along with it. The thought goes, oh, okay.

To some extent, the whole work that Byron Katie does is to see that ultimately no single thought has enormous validity. It's a relative position of perspective. I don't think she's ever said that, but that's how it is.

It helps you to step out of a complete belief in everything that the mind throws up, all conditioned. So that's what I was going to say when I said one foot here, one foot there. What comes with that is, you see that, and the way I started, I said that for the first time a few weeks ago at a retreat, at the beginning of a retreat, said one of our practices at our retreat, that is not to take our thoughts too seriously.

And that already is the arising of what I sometimes call spaciousness around thought. And that grows, the spaciousness around thought. And then thought loses its heaviness.

It loses its self, nature itself, the illusion that that's you. So the cessation of thought is the cessation of a thought-based sense of self. When the self is no longer thought in thought, then by itself thought becomes more quiet.

And it's no longer me, me. I need to keep myself. I need to, more of this, more of that.

I'm going to, that's, thought is fine. And then there are the spaces between thought that arise. It is quite possible, and I would, I don't like to make predictions, but I'll just keep it short.

A time will come when thought as we know it, as conceptualization and words going through your head, that won't happen anymore. And humans live continuously in stillness, a state of great intelligence and of deep inner connectedness with being. And at that time, if there are still schools, they will be teaching very different things from now, of course.

If there are still schools, you might hear something like a little five-year-old asking, teacher, is it really true that once human beings existed who thought that the future could be better than now? And the teacher says, yes, they existed once. Unbelievable as it may seem.

If they still speak, but in that state, they won't be speaking anymore. There will just be the immediate communication beyond words. Enough of that.

This is where that new state is emerging. And all teachings ultimately point to that. Take no thought for the moral.

Cause and miracles seem to be full of thought, and yet it takes you in the end into stillness. The end of words has almost come, it says towards the end. The teaching of Krishnamurti, what is the essence of Krishnamurti's teaching?

He's never said it. Don't think. All he said was, let's look at thought, can we look at thought?

Can thought get you there? Can you, let's investigate thought and let's look at it. Until finally you arrive at, no.

And he himself, for those of you who are familiar with Krishnamurti, was a great teacher. Would spend a large part of his life when he went for walks every day for two or three hours, and said, not touched by a single thought during the whole walk. Not needed, just stillness.

The essence of Buddhism is that. Ramana Maharshi, famous teacher in the first half of this century, what is the essence of his teaching? It's contained in his words, which was an answer to a question, how can we judge our spiritual progress?

How can we know whether we are making spiritual progress? And the answer was, the degree of absence of thoughts is the measure of progress on the spiritual path. Oh, and the minds don't like to hear that.

There's some people who say, no, he didn't say that. And you have to show them and say, yes, there it is. Ramana Maharshi was a great Indian teacher that some of you are familiar with.

I'm just pointing that it's all going to the same essence. Nisargadatta, they asked him, what's the real meaning of meditation? Of course, the real meaning of meditation is the changed state of consciousness.

And this meditation, he said, the radical refusal to harbor thoughts. He was a bit like a Zen master. So the radical refusal to harbor thoughts, it's a masculine approach.

The female is the dental, you relinquish thought, you let go. And then there's the male is the Zen, it's also male, no thought, I refuse to have thoughts. Now that could be mistaken for suppression of thoughts.

And it could be that if it's not practiced rightly. Now, that is also a powerful statement for those of you who are inclined that way, the male approach. And now this is meaningless unless there's enough presence in you already through which you understand that statement.

There cannot be the radical refusal to harbor thoughts if there's not enough presence in you. The fact that you can say no to thought means an enormous amount of presence is arising or you're suppressing through willpower, in which case you won't be rid of thoughts for very long. When the body becomes tense, okay, I'm not thinking.

And then after a while you blow up and then you think more than ever. But if there's a true thing that is the radical refusal to harbor thoughts and that simply means a great presence arising in which that becomes possible. I don't need thought.

And the thought comes in and just, no, don't want it. So in whatever way it comes, it may come in a more gentle way through you. Thought becomes less of a threat to you.

More important, less heavy, and gradually you move out. So this is the teaching, whatever, you will only teach one thing, just as I teach one thing, moving beyond thought. The cessation of thought as the basis for your life.

And that is, which is the title of the book by Krishnamurti, that is the awakening of intelligence. True intelligence. Great intelligence.

If this were a Zen monastery, we would be spending the whole night in rigorous meditation, that's the male approach, facing the walls, and we would open the windows to make it really uncomfortable. And you would experience the arising of suffering. More in the head than some pain in the body, yes, cold perhaps, but most suffering is in the head.

You're complaining about this dreadful situation until you can't stand it anymore. And there's the possibility of a moment when thought subsides because you can't stand that burden anymore. And it goes.

And all that remains is then cold and discomfort in the body. Not a problem. You're free of suffering.

All suffering came out of that. Surrender has happened. Complete yes to what is.

This moment, cold, painful body, hungry because we didn't have much to eat. This is the Zen ones. I'm hungry, I'm cold, my body is painful.

Awful place. What am I doing here? And suddenly thought subsides into just this.

And suddenly thoughtless awareness is there. And then perhaps after 10 minutes you say, Master, Master, I've got it! And then the master says, Drop that!

Because it's become a concept again. If any questions arise concerning the teaching of that one thing, framework, one-on-one groups, while you listen, just listen. Listen.

Spacious listening.

[Speaker 3] (4:33:44 - 4:35:16)

Thank you, Eckhart, for sharing so many things with us today. Last night, as you were talking about being with groups of people and having presence pulled through you, I'm reminded of, I guess I'd call it a challenge, something interesting that's been going on occasionally with me when I'm with a group of people whose pain bodies seem to be particularly present. It is quite interesting that I was declaring for myself that I wanted to work with people who are ready to really shift their consciousness.

And the phone rang, and it was to work with people who have been court-ordered for substance abuse to come to a program. So they're sort of involuntarily showing up, and they have a lot of issues. And I realized that the greater the pain, the greater the opportunity sometime for a presence to arise.

So I said yes. And sometimes afterward, for a couple of days, I don't want to talk to anyone on the phone. I just feel like I need to, I don't know what term to use, downtime, or I need quiet to sort of recuperate.

And at times that's true, and other times I don't seem to need that. And I'm wondering from your own experience if you can shed some light to that phenomenon that seems to happen.

[Speaker 1] (4:35:17 - 4:37:50)

Needing, after being with people, the need to withdraw and be alone for a while. Yes, I also have that. After a retreat or after an intensive, I love to be alone and simply be.

It's a strange, I enter a state of almost nothingness after a retreat or after an intensive. There's no thought, or almost no thought, and just a state of an absence of anybody there. And hard to describe.

It's very nice. Just nothing. And I can sit there for hours in a chair just like this.

And it's beautiful. It seems it's what is needed. And then the time comes to go out again.

It's a going in and then out. My natural inclination, this form, likes being a hermit or invisible. And life at the moment doesn't allow that.

So it's pulling me out. I was a hermit for several periods in my life and always loved it. And then the call came, no, you have to go out and do the complete opposite.

Be out there. And then I surrendered to that and that also became very enjoyable, deep joy in that. There may be some teachers who seem to continuously be interacting with people and perhaps that works for them.

Just like you, I also need to go within at times, be alone, not talk to anybody. So there's nothing wrong with that.

[Speaker 3] (4:37:58 - 4:39:05)

That leads to the other part of what's coming up for me is at the same time, what you talked about before about the terrorists and a way to look at that. I'm really comfortable with the way of looking at it that you talked about and that's really helped me be with other people. But it ties in also with a sense of inner urgency, a sense of needing to be out there, to be of service because of what caused that in the first place, the insanity, the rampant insanity that we do see.

And so in terms of trying to balance the quiet time and then being out there and feeling the pull to be out there, that's the challenge to me as well as looking at how to be at peace internally with what is, to say yes to what is, don't resist what is, and yet a call to step up to our true magnificent selves in a way that we need to apparently to continue.

[Speaker 1] (4:39:05 - 4:39:05)

Yes.

[Speaker 3] (4:39:06 - 4:39:21)

And I wonder if you could speak to that urgency in terms of what and how to balance in life that time where we're quiet in our time to move and then the message to convey to people about waking up.

[Speaker 1] (4:39:22 - 4:48:23)

Yes, the urgency is there because there's an acceleration of the insanity also in the world and we'll see more of that. So there's great urgency, the arising of the new consciousness and I feel it very strongly. That's why there's been such an acceleration of the work that I do because the urgency is there.

It doesn't stop me from occasionally withdrawing and then go out again. It's with going within and then you go out again into the world. Otherwise you might lose your inner peace.

If you thought you needed to fix something out there instead of realizing the difference, your state of consciousness makes the difference. That's what makes the difference, not fixing anything out there. You could be drawn into the illusion that there are things that need fixing.

You can, of course, do helpful things out there too. The essence of the work is not fixing anything out there. It's your state of consciousness and you would be contributing to the new consciousness even if you lived alone and simply, although most of you are not called to living alone and cut yourself off in a monastic setting perhaps, but if you did and lived in a state of freedom from thought and presence, that would have an effect on the world too.

Not anything that you could see on the visual, on the surface of things, but your state of consciousness will affect the world even if you never interacted with people. It would still have an effect and help many others who are also entering. Most of us are not meant to be hermits at this time.

Most of us are not even meant to be in a monastery. I loved my, quite a few times in my life, I felt, oh, it would be great to live here and I got very close to living in a Buddhist monastery. I could have lived in a Christian monastery too.

It didn't matter to me what monastery, the truth. I knew I could use any framework to express the truth. I could use exclusively Christian language or Buddhist language.

The truth is beyond that. And yet every time I got close to the monastery, I could see the heaviness of the form, the old forms. Although I have a great love for that, something didn't allow me to enter the monastery.

And most of us also, otherwise we would be in it. But that is not our path, is to be out there and bring that state of consciousness into the mad world, wherever you are, rather than withdrawing. It doesn't mean that you cannot occasionally step back, shut the doors, switch off the telephone and just be.

That's a beautiful regeneration. Or go out into nature occasionally. When you've been with people for a while, you've seen enough people, then you go into nature.

Enormously regenerating to be with nature or just sit, walk in a forest by the seashore, wherever. And it's easy to be in thoughtlessness in nature because everything in nature is thoughtless. Prior to thought, you are post-thought.

Everything in nature is pre-thought, before thought. Great inner, great connectedness. So to regenerate, you may occasionally need to do that.

And yet you are doing, you're out there teaching those people, some of whom don't even want to be there, and yet they are there. And perhaps something happens. Perhaps you can explain to them that they have a choice between happiness and unhappiness.

Explain about the pain body. Quite a few people are ready to listen to that because they immediately recognize the truth of when you address pain body, they know it so well. Many people who are drawn to drugs just cannot stand the pain.

The pain of ordinary existence, the pain that they carry inside, and they run away from that pain. And many of those people have great spiritual potential. Just the same as alcoholics.

Many people have gone through transformation through AA meetings. They've done great work. People for whom alcohol was their first teacher.

It was a kind of negative teacher, but without it, if they hadn't become addicted to that, the growth wouldn't have happened. So you could teach, perhaps, how to be with the pain instead of running away from it. And it's not going to kill them.

Of course, some pain bodies, if they rise up into the mind and take over your mind, they can drive a person to suicide. In that sense, pain bodies can sometimes kill a person. But pain that is looked at, as long as you're running away from it, it seems so enormous, that pain.

But when you're shown that you can actually be with that, and if you embrace it, it doesn't kill you. If you surrender to the pain, and then they have to do it with you, for you cannot do it alone yet. Let's do it together.

When the pain is there, let's surrender to that and hold. And let's be the spaciousness in which this pain happens. So some people may come to you with acute pain bodies, because it's often those people who are more ready than others, because they can't stand it anymore.

But it's a challenge to be working with pain bodies. It's a beautiful challenge. It's an interesting thing when a pain body becomes active in a person, and in that moment, provided that that person already understands the nature of pain body, and at that moment, the person gets taken over by pain body, you can then speak to the consciousness that is still there underneath it, and point out what's happening.

And something in that person will be listening, but the pain body on the surface will be denying. But you can still address the awareness that is still there underneath the pain body. So you bypass the pain body.

This is an interesting thing to do. In a person whose pain body has become very active, you address the sanity underneath it, and something will be listening. I've seen a few cases of people waking up even in the middle of a pain body attack, when the sanity in them, the awareness was being addressed, suddenly stepping out, and the pain body collapsed.

And I've occasionally been attacked by pain bodies, almost physically, got very close, not quite physically, but it got very close. Pain bodies who felt so threatened that they became like in some films, it's like the whole person is turning red. And one pain body who was close to attacking me, instead, he jumped up and ran out of the room.

And I thought I've seen the last of this person. And 10 minutes later, he came back, and the pain body had subsided. And he said, I'm okay now.

And this person had one of the heaviest pain bodies I've ever seen. And he became, in a relatively short period of time, as he continued to disidentify, got taken over again and again, and the pain body lost a great deal of its energy charge.

[Speaker 2] (4:48:28 - 4:49:12)

I, probably three quarters of the people I see actually come to me because of physical illness. And there's often emotional components to that, of course, but that's their principal problems, you know, common things and not so common things. And maybe a quarter are more obvious mental health kinds of things, anxiety, fear, depression.

But in regarding the physical illness, most of what you talk about, we might recognize more in the realm of the mental emotional kinds of clients. I was wondering if you could talk about, you know, the aspect of dealing with physical illness from this perspective.

[Speaker 1] (4:49:16 - 5:08:31)

So one aspect is dealing with physical illness in yourself. And then another aspect of it is dealing with physical illness, people who may be coming to you, not because that is your profession. Many people come to you in the professional setting who are suffering from physical illness.

When many others of you would not be meeting people in that setting, but it may well be that people who are seeking healing, who are seeking consciousness, freedom from suffering, also carry a physical illness within. So that may be, let's talk first about illness in yourself. I touched on it briefly in the book where I mentioned that there's a tendency to see yourself as a sick person.

When sickness arises, immediately the egoic needs, which is always looking for something to make your sense of self stronger and will devour and incorporate almost anything good or bad and say, that's me. So the tendency, as long as that tendency operates in you, an illness arises and it will be grasped by that mind conditioning and it will become part of your sense of self. And if it's a serious illness, it can obliterate a lot of the other identifications that you have, that who you think you are, and then you might see yourself derive your sense of identity from a mental image of a sick person.

And the moment an identification has happened and it happens easily because, as I'm sure you also know, some people who otherwise are not given a lot of attention get attention through an illness. The great doctors are going now to giving them attention and they think they are important. And in the mad ways of the ego looking for an enhanced identity, the ego will grasp that also and gain a sense of greater importance from illness, not in every case, but not in the same degree in everyone.

But the tendency is there, you then become an ill person, see yourself as that. And you will, the moment a mental identification with a physical condition has happened, the strange thing is that you don't want to let go of the illness, but that is unconscious, of course. Because the moment you have identified, it's become part of me, of course, you don't want to lose part of who you think you are.

And in some people's cases, illness that has become an important part, an important aspect of their inability to heal is because the mind doesn't want them to heal. That is often the case. So less so with you.

Healing, on the other hand, has enormous capacity. An illness has enormous capacity also to awaken. It has enormous capacity to pull you into greater unconsciousness.

And it has an even greater capacity to awaken you. And for many people, it's happened that a serious illness that they were faced with, which always contains the possibility of death, so it's any serious, it is serious because it contains the possibility of death, has led to a great awakening of consciousness, because you don't know how much time you've got anymore. And the whole time-bound consciousness that has, I still have a lot of future to complete myself, and you realize, I may not have.

And there may be pain associated with the illness, physical pain. And again, physical pain can lead to greater egoic contraction. And physical pain can lead also to surrender.

I've met some people for whom physical pain had become the only teacher they ever had, and it's led to surrender. I've seen people with AIDS already no longer being able to walk and looked into their eyes. And that's just one example.

I often, I like into, when you look into people's eyes, you can see the state of surrender or resistance. I've seen people with AIDS with light shining through their eyes. Their illness had driven them into surrender.

Not in each case. There are people with AIDS whose illness has driven them into greater egoic contraction. And so there are always the two possibilities.

Illness taking you into a more contracted ego, and then you become a bitter, unhappy, deeply suffering entity. And you're hanging on to the illness without knowing it, because at least you know who you are. Now, or it is becomes a teacher of surrender.

And even pain could do that. I've been free of pain for many years, except recently, for some reason, a few pains have appeared in my body. For a few days, a pain appeared here, and then a pain appeared there.

And it's simply being with it. I don't know why it appeared. Maybe the energy charge is getting too much for the body, a week-long retreat.

It's like the body perhaps is not made for such an energy charge. It's like taking a little toy that runs on two 1.5 volt batteries, and you push its button, as I have one. You push its button, and you push the belly, and it says, that tickles, that tickles.

And then you plug that toy into the socket, into the electric outlet, whatever it is, 190 volt. And for a while, it says more significant things than it tickles. But the mechanism isn't quite adjusted to that voltage yet.

So any pain is surrender. Instead of formulating an image of yourself as a sick person, reduce your illness, if it's your illness, to whatever the condition is at this moment, rather than having a big mental image of what has happened, what has led to it, and how the illness is going to develop, because it may not, and what's going to happen to me. So allow the illness to force you into the now, because if you're not in the now, and you suffer from a degenerative illness, that's like AIDS, or any other serious illness, if you're not in the now, you will suffer.

And I'm not speaking of the pain that is maybe caused, or the discomfort, or the disability that is being caused by the illness, because that's not suffering, it's pain. It's discomfort, or it's a disability, but it's not suffering. Suffering requires a mind-made entity that complains about my condition, and projects itself into an even worse future.

So allow the illness, only the condition of this moment, in whatever way the illness manifests at this moment, so it's not really a huge illness anymore, there is a pain here, there is a disability, there is a discomfort. Allow the illness, in some illnesses, you don't even have that, you just know that you're ill, and you might not even feel anything, they've just told you that, yes, you have a serious illness, but it hasn't manifested yet as a feeling. And there, just this moment, let the illness push you into intense presence, because when you leave presence, you will suffer.

So if you want to not suffer, refuse to leave this moment. This moment, you can live with. The pain of this moment, you can live with.

Or the discomfort, or the disability of this moment, you can live with. But if you leave mentally this moment, then you have an illness. So we deduce illness to just whatever it is now, then that takes away an identity built on that.

So you're not fighting an illness anymore, nor are you resigning yourself to being ill. You're simply surrendering to the condition of this moment. Not the idea that, okay, I might as well resign myself to the fact that I'm ill.

That's not surrender, you have a mental image. Surrender is just this moment is as it is. And I say yes to that.

And then the illness will transform your consciousness. If it has potentially the power to drive you into presence. Even in people who've never heard of presence, it's happened.

I've told a few times, and I told it again last week at the retreat, the example when I, talking about disability, when I was at university, I saw this person in a wheelchair who would come in. And this is an example of no greater disability could have happened than this person who was sitting in a wheelchair. And I saw him every day at lunchtime being fed by people.

And he couldn't talk anymore. He couldn't move a single limb. His head was slumped downwards.

His voice could only produce croaking sounds, which one or two people could interpret. And he couldn't keep the food in his mouth. Half the food could always fall out.

I asked, who is this man? They said, he teaches physics. He's a professor.

And he has, it has a name. Motor degenerative something. Motor neural disease.

A rare degenerative disease. And one day I looked into his eyes, because he was coming through the door at the same time as me. And for the first time, I realized deeply what happens, how illness can become a teacher.

Because there was no suffering in his eyes, just clarity, not a little complaining me. And nobody, a worse illness than that you can hardly imagine. Because the illness, you cannot, you're not supposed to live with that for more than three or four years.

Gradually everything becomes paralyzed, except your brain. The whole, everything, all functions are lost. But you can still think.

And that's what happened. And I looked into his eyes, and I saw he's not suffering. And they had given him two years.

They said, they told me this man was going to live for another two years. That's how much the doctors gave him to live. And 10 years later, I had long left the university environment behind.

I had spent time on my park bench. And I was, would often go into new stands to look at, to see what's happening in the world, because I didn't have a TV or radio, so just read the headlines. And then I looked at Newsweek magazine, and this very man was on the cover of Newsweek magazine in his wheelchair.

And he had become the most famous physicist in the world. 10 years after he'd been given two years to live. 10 years later, he was the most famous theoretical physicist in the world.

And they call him the successor of Einstein. And then I read the interview, and it said, the one sentence I remember in it, he said about his life, he could now speak because they constructed an artificial speech thing through which he can express himself, and said about his life, who could have wished for more? And that was about talking about his life.

Surrender had happened. And because surrender had happened, all the self-identification with the mentally created me wasn't there anymore. Not complete letting go of thought yet.

No, a lot of thought, because he had nothing else to do. Nobody had yet pointed out to him the possibility of going beyond thought, but yet his thought had become very creative. Because he had surrendered, presence had happened, and thought then arose out of presence.

So he had great insights. I believe he's still alive. Stephen Hawkins, and he's still at the same university.

And now it's 15 or 20 years since I met him. 20 probably, if not more. And I could see what the potential for, how illness can become your teacher, if used rightly.

Now, if an ill person comes to you, or any person, I never really differentiate between a physical condition, or a mental condition, or an emotional condition. In a way, they're all one. If anybody comes to you who cannot surrender, you have to surrender for them.

Sometimes people ask me, somebody close to them comes, and somebody very close to them is suffering, either physically or emotionally. And they're not letting go of the suffering. They cannot get out of that.

And so you suffer, because you see somebody so close to you suffer so much, and you want them to step beyond that. And it's the same that you would practice with reference to yourself, is to surrender that this person is in suffering, complete acceptance of this suffering person as not wanting to change them. That embracing, and then looking, the power of your attention moves.

And that is the great healer, the giving of full attention, which implies surrender, all resistance is out of the way. So, but it's not so much giving attention to the symptom, but to the totality of that person. Just embrace that person with your attention, and then see what happens.

You still do, in your case, there are certain things you do on the physical level, you give certain things, you administer. And yet there's the consciousness, the field into which they come when they come to you. Can you be, although you have to use your mind to some extent while you listen to them, I'm sure you practice also being in the state of thoughtless awareness.

So let them come into that spaciousness. If healing is possible, healing will happen in that spaciousness. That is your gift to them, into which they come.

So I wouldn't treat physical illness as a separate problem. It's always, and I know almost nothing about physical conditions. So I can't talk about it on that level.

All I, I always address the totality. I don't even know anything about emotional conditions or mental conditions, just the totality of that being here. And I accept the way they are completely.

And yet words may suddenly come, just as you may give, take that three drops a day, words out of that acceptance, words sometimes arise and they may be just right. The power of attention is very great, pure attention to the entire human being, not one aspect of that form. So don't underestimate the power of attention, just which is thoughtless.

And again, we don't have separate compartments anymore where we now we're dealing with a sick person. And here we're meeting the supermarket cashier. It's all the same because it's the same field of attention that you give when you say hello in thoughtless awareness for five seconds as the attention you give to a person who seems dreadfully ill, the same field of spacious presence, no differentiation anymore of who they are or what their condition is or whether they have 50 more years to live or one more week to live.

It's all the same. Attention is the greatest healer, which is presence.

[Speaker 6] (5:08:35 - 5:09:30)

Along the same lines, being present with pain, whether it's mental or emotional. Is there some pain that is just so great that one cannot stay present with? Example, coming across a car accident, even with a very conscious being.

My husband, I think, is a very conscious being. And two nights ago, back spasm, screaming. Now he's on a morphine drip in the hospital.

And during his screaming, I'm saying, look in my eyes, breathe. And he's just saying, I can't, I can't. There is pain.

I guess that's a question. Is there pain that just comes on so quickly and is so great that one, that being present with it is almost impossible? And when that, where do you go with that as an onlooker and as an experiencer?

Because that could have been me feeling that.

[Speaker 1] (5:09:30 - 5:12:08)

Yeah, thank you. Intense pain can consume a person almost completely. There seems to be nothing left except the pain.

And in that case, you, as the person close to that person, can bring presence, intense presence to that and hold it. In very intense pain is rarely prolonged, although some people suffer from that also. And that is, of course, the most dreadful thing that could happen to be continuously in pain.

If it happens to someone close to you, all you can do is hold the space of intense presence so that you don't get drawn also into the pain. That is a great healer. And you will rise, the degree of presence will reflect the intensity of the pain.

So it's possible that your degree of presence will be enormous if the pain that a person close to you suffers is very intense. And that could also be the case, there are forms of emotional pain of very great intensity too. And some person close to you may be in dreadful emotional pain, perhaps totally consumed by the pain body, completely identified with it.

And then your degree of presence, the intensity will correspond to the intensity of the pain and there will be enormous presence suddenly arising. If you don't get drawn into reaction, and then you will suffer with them, not as intensely, but you will also suffer. If they cannot surrender, you need to surrender.

If the person who is in such intense suffering that surrender is impossible, somebody close to them needs to surrender for them. It's secondary surrender. And it also works miracles.

Somebody who is close to you embraces completely that. And that's, again, there's always a redemptive dimension to illness and pain. Fortunately, that sharp pain, I don't know what is his condition now.

Is he still in pain?

[Speaker 6] (5:12:08 - 5:12:28)

He's on a morphine drip in the hospital, so there's no pain. But the pain was, it would go for 30 minutes at a time, just screaming pain. And breathing into it and staying present was impossible for him to do.

And I run across people like this. This is not unusual.

[Speaker 1] (5:12:30 - 5:18:28)

Intense pain can also consume the egoic entity. It can't survive anymore. Any intense, dreadful disability, as in the case of the person I just talked about, an egoic entity finds it hard to survive in the presence of such intense pain.

I had a pain probably much less intense last week on the retreat in New York. And for three days, I had a lower back pain, which I hadn't had before. And at one point, so much that I couldn't get out of bed.

I had to roll out of bed and then crawl on the floor. And finally, I could get up. And it wasn't so intense that I couldn't surrender to it.

It was just there. So I sat with that. There are greater, I know, in his case, probably of much greater intensity.

If it's all-consuming pain, physical or emotional, surrender for them. You become still, present. And your enormous energy suddenly rises.

And some people do that when they accompany a dying person also. The greatest thing, again, with a person who's dying is to bring the spaciousness to that moment. And maybe the dying person cannot do it.

Maybe in the last few moments, he or she can. But you are there to provide that space. And it's not you get out of the idea that this is so dreadful, this moment.

Everybody dies. And hold that thoughtlessness, pure awareness, field. Interesting thing, questions.

More and more, you will find people asking you questions. And the ability to differentiate between vital questions and mind-made questions. And so that you don't get drawn into trying to answer a mind-made question, any vital question, you will be surprised that the answer will be there.

If you receive the question in stillness, vital means that the questioner truly wants and needs to know, and it is not a curious question. I wonder, or what is there beyond? What happens when you are, is there another state after enlightenment?

I've read this book, and it says that after you become free, then there's another state. I want to know about that. That's not a vital question.

A vital question is how to be free now. But it's vital. It concerns me.

It concerns someone close to me. I need to know this. That's why I don't like to give interviews, because it's very rare that in an interview, it's an artificial situation.

The interviewer comes to the set of questions. They may be good questions, but because of the artificial setting, they're rarely vital questions. Do you truly want to know that at this, does a question arise out of this moment?

And you truly need to know that now. And often I find in interviews, what comes is less alive, has less power, than what comes when it's a true question. There may still be some power.

So recognize the question, is it vital? If it's vital and it is received by you in and through stillness, you just listen deeply to the question, and the answer will come. And sooner or later you can teach the other person to do that for him or herself.

And you will be amazed at how right your answer is when you don't come from a place of needing to know the answer, but simply the open listening. That's beautiful. And then if it's not vital, cut through it in whatever way.

Or say, I don't know. I'm not even interested. Nor are you, really.

Are there any vital questions left? Okay.

[Speaker 9] (5:18:28 - 5:19:29)

Well, it's a question about reflection. And I think that I've been drawn into a... I'm just, after listening to you this morning, I have a feeling that reflection is in disguise as thinking and analyzing.

And I'd thought it for a long time. I could feel and see the word reflection, that one was sitting very, in a kind of quiet posture. And I got a little caught up with that.

But it's a euphemism. I'm having a feeling after listening to you this morning that really it's... It's just old memories.

[Speaker 1] (5:19:30 - 5:19:31)

And... Yes.

[Speaker 9] (5:19:32 - 5:19:56)

But in me, or in this body-mind organism, arises like a reflex to go over stuff. And I think I've been calling it reflection, but I have a feeling that I could call it jack-in-the-beanstalk. I mean, I could call it anything.

[Speaker 10] (5:19:57 - 5:19:57)

Yes.

[Speaker 9] (5:19:57 - 5:20:05)

I feel it. I think I'd like to hear you say something about it, if you didn't mind.

[Speaker 1] (5:20:06 - 5:20:23)

Thank you. So you mean by reflection, the habit of going over past events, perhaps recent past or more distant past, and looking at them, what you did, said, what somebody else did and said. Is that your reflection?

That is habitual?

[Speaker 9] (5:20:24 - 5:20:35)

I might even think that reflection is what you have been talking about. And I think, oh, I will go and do this thing called reflect.

[Speaker 1] (5:20:35 - 5:20:40)

Ah, right. Now, you may remember, I occasionally use the word reflect.

[Speaker 9] (5:20:41 - 5:20:41)

Oh, do you?

[Speaker 1] (5:20:41 - 5:20:44)

I'm not using it in the normal sense of the word.

[Speaker 9] (5:20:45 - 5:20:45)

I see.

[Speaker 1] (5:20:45 - 5:26:22)

In the normal sense of the word, reflection is thought activity, contemplation, thought, contemplative thought, perhaps a quiet, you sit quietly and you look and you go through your mind concerning a situation. When I use the word reflection and I use expressions like, I reflect something to you, that is totally different. And that is also what you do when you are with people.

What you reflect to them has nothing to do with mental reflections. It's a different use of the word. It is to hold the spaciousness of presence because that is the essence of who you are underneath the mind.

When somebody then meets with you, that person recognizes in some way his or her own essence in that spaciousness. They may not even know it yet. They only may know it as a feeling of rightness and goodness at that moment when they are with you.

So when I use recognize, that is not usually an intellectual recognition, a mental recognition, a mental realization. It is often that recognition that is there when you reflect to someone as I've been reflecting all this weekend to you by simply holding, without doing anything, when I use language, it sounds as if I'm doing something, by holding that spaciousness of presence which is thoughtless awareness and something in you knows, it senses the goodness and the rightness of that. That sensing, I'm using these words because it's very hard to find the right words to describe something that is so beyond words.

That's, I'm using fairly simple words, perhaps they're less likely to mislead one, sensing the goodness and rightness of this moment, of being here at this moment. That is because through some form, some form has become transparent enough so that that spaciousness can shine through the form. The spaciousness reflects back to you who you are.

You recognize yourself, not through any thought activity. So it's being yourself. It's like arriving home.

This is good. Perhaps you have no idea about it, just as when my transformation happened, I had no idea in my head, I couldn't explain it. So that's the meaning of reflection in a different sense.

And that is your job is to hold the space of presence so that people can find themselves, their essence, when they come to you. They don't come to see you, they come to find themselves. Nobody comes to see me.

Why would they travel such a long distance to see me? And the strange thing is they travel a long distance to find themselves. If that works, fine.

At some point they realize I don't need to travel anymore. Except if I enjoy it. It may longer be a need, but you may still enjoy that reflection.

A deepening is still there, that your own realization deepens when in that reflection. And it's beautiful. So for a while you travel and it deepens and then you no longer need to travel, but you still do it because you enjoy it.

Until that may fall away too. And then people travel to come be with you and they enjoy that. And so that's beautiful.

It's not that really nobody comes to see you, never feel that they come to see me, because then you get into dilemma. Are they going to, am I going to disappoint them? Am I going to give them what they need and want?

Will I be able to give them what they need and want? They've come such a long way. Is it, do they think it's worth it?

What, oh my God, can I live up to their expectations and the image they have of me? What if I fail? What if I, but if you know they don't come to see you, oh, they come because there's less of you because you're transparent to the light, which is the case when you become present, the spaciousness is there.

They come for that transparency. Nothing to do with you. That's a relief.

I don't have to do anything. That's, oh, that's good to know. And there's no credit.

There's nobody who claims that I have transformed. This weekend, I transformed 30 people, 400 people. Nothing.

And I failed. And then there were another hundred with whom I failed miserably. They didn't become transformed.

[Speaker 6] (5:26:34 - 5:27:13)

This is a question about the mind and working with the mind. I can be in your presence and have no mind. I can sit in meditation sometimes and not go for a walk in the morning and all of a sudden the mind starts coming in.

Don't forget to order this. Don't forget to do that. I carry a piece of paper, notice myself taking it out, writing it down, more and more and more.

How do you work with a mind that is helping you to do your job? I run a retreat center and I have to listen to those things and work with them. But sometimes it's too much.

How do you work with the mind?

[Speaker 1] (5:27:14 - 5:33:54)

Yes. So, of course, it's very helpful at times. You need that.

You need to remember things. But the mind tends to come in the most inappropriate times and tell you, you must think about this now. You're out in nature.

You're not sitting in your office where you are. That is the space where you focus on what you need to deal with. Now, it may be simply a thought that you suddenly remember while you're walking out in nature.

And it may be a very valid thought. You might forget it and you write it down. The question is whether that thought then becomes a mind stream.

If it's just a thought, it might be a useful thought. You write it down and then you're back perceiving, walking, being present. But any thought has this tendency of wanting to prolong itself because it is a temporary, a very short-lived little being.

It's an energy field. It's a creation. It is a mind creation.

The thought is, almost every thought is an entity. No entity wants to go. It wants to carry on and, if possible, grow.

So there's a tendency for any thought to lead to proliferation of thought. And then when you don't know that, and the thought likes to pretend that it's more important than it really is, you need to think about this now. So more and more, it will be easier for you to see thoughts that come and to know whether this is truly important now or whether that is the mind simply trying to stay in control and not allow you to be present.

Is this truly important at this moment? No. If it's not important and you recognize it, what I'm just describing verbally, this question, Is this truly important at this moment?

becomes a non-verbal, non-mental way of looking at the thought and recognizing whether that thought has a place now or whether this is not its place. And then you recognize that this is not the thought that you need now. And then it drifts out.

You allow it to go so it doesn't proliferate. So we talked two days ago, perhaps, about your, I use that expression, your relationship to thought. And so the very fact that you are having a relationship to thought, which is just a way of speaking, a way of pointing, you are not making thought into an enemy.

You have no enemies. But your relationship to thought is to realize no thought is absolutely important. It's only important in the world of relativity.

Every thought likes to pretend that this matters. And a good example is waking up in the middle of the night. And of course, this is a case where often thoughts proliferate.

You can't sleep. And suddenly you remember all the things that you still need to do, one on top of the other. And it becomes suffocating almost because you're lying in bed and you can't do anything.

But you have all these, I need to deal with that. And then I will be faced with that problem. And then that person will come.

And what am I going to do about that? And you're not, this is not the space to deal with any of it. You are in bed.

To recognize that as the momentum of the mind, it wants to, we must think about this now. Think about this now. And so it will be easier for you now as presence is emerging to take one step back, even from a very agitated mind, and know that here is an agitated mind.

That is enough to have already some freedom from it, to know there's an agitated mind. And it goes on and on. And perhaps you cannot immediately switch it off.

But you start by simply saying, I accept that there's an agitated mind here, which means you're already out of it. But occasionally you get back in. And at that moment when you know that, there also comes a choice.

For example, the choice could be, even while you're having an agitated mind, to feel the aliveness in your hands. So you still allow the mind to be agitated. And while you allow your mind to be agitated, you could even combine it with this gesture that I like so much, and that is simply holding.

And while you hold in this gesture, which is the beautiful, essentially feminine, female gesture of total receptivity, often found in Virgin Mary, that beautiful openness of holding, the softness of that. And what you're holding is your agitated mind is in there, in that you're holding that. And while you hold, you sense the aliveness that is there.

And so the mind will then calm down without you trying to make the mind stop by itself. Simply this gentle holding. And you hold with here.

This is the gesture. And there's an energy field in that holding. It's symbolic, and it's a little bit more than symbolic too.

And you hold. So it's a gentle relationship with your mind. It's a little bit like the mind is like a child.

What do you do with it? You hold the child. So have that relationship with your mind.

It's not a big monster. It's the human mind. It does what it does.

[Speaker 8] (5:34:00 - 5:34:23)

Oh, Eckhart, I wanted to ask you if you would be kind enough, we talked yesterday about a situation that might be if you're facilitating a group, but if you're working individually, like in a group, you might play a video or an audio and then meditate. When you're seeing people individually in the years that you did that, how would that look? What could be one way that might be?

[Speaker 1] (5:34:26 - 5:44:30)

Do you mean when I saw people all those years? Do you mean what was the structure of it? Yes, yes.

There wasn't much structure. And people would come through word of mouth. I remember we sat together once or twice in London.

I've known Victoria for many, many, many years. And then there was a long gap when we lost touch. And then Victoria discovered the book.

And so we got in touch again. It was all wonderful. And we sat together in stillness once or twice in my living room.

And still it feels it's now. And you said, I can feel gentle. Something, I don't remember the exact words.

And we sat in silence. With some people, I would sit mostly in silence. And other people would come as if it were a therapeutic, a therapy session.

And they would do a lot of talking. And I would do a lot of listening, listening, listening. Didn't know yet the power that is in the listening until this lady came and said, you are a healer, you are healing.

That was the emanation that comes through the state of stillness. And I tried out different things for a while because my understanding wasn't yet fully developed. For a while, I used sometimes visualizations with people to get them to a place of peace.

And then that wasn't quite right until a totally natural way evolved of being with people. And the characteristic of that is, and that applies to all those people who are doing significant transformational work with others in whatever capacity. It's often the case that they do what they do and it comes so intuitively, they couldn't describe to you what they do.

And it's because it comes out of the state of presence. Before I could be fully effective so that that inner state became externalized as a teaching when I was, for quite a few years, I was working with people. It was in the process of becoming externalized through meeting those people and being with all those people at the time.

It was not yet fully grown, almost one could say. It took time. There was no time in that state, but it took time for that state to become externalized as a powerful teaching stream.

Not only the words that were part of that, but also the energy that emanates. It was already emanating there, but it was still growing the externalization of it. So all that was a process of externalization over time.

But even there, quite a few people already experienced a transformation there. For some people, it was already very powerful and it worked. Others, I couldn't get through yet.

Certain other people who came with very dense minds and yet wasn't, couldn't, the mind was still able to not receive. So I could, would be an interesting story to write about all these things. And what happened, less and less, the structure became less and less in a way.

And I couldn't call it anything anymore. What do you call it? Healer, spiritual therapy.

For a while, I thought, well, I need some label. What do you do? I just sit there and you come and we sit together and I listen.

And then what? Nothing. That was also the time perhaps when we sat together, I gave the first talk, public talk.

I met a man. There was a little gathering and I met this man who worked for the Theosophical Society and I talked to him for five minutes about nothing special. And he said, you must come and talk to us.

We need you at the Theosophical Society. So at about that time, that was the first talk. I gave a formal talk rather than talking to a few people informally.

That was things. So I went to the Theosophical Society and the title of my talk was, because they wanted, you need a label, spiritual dimension in psychotherapy. And there were maybe 25, 30 people there, maybe similar to this group.

And so that was the beginning of speaking and that also grew through time. So it's always the case, and you also are finding that already, I'm sure many of you, and increasingly find that you don't have to do much. It is being done for you.

You're just the opening. And so that's the case with even the effective, truly effective therapists. They don't do much.

It just happens. And then sometimes they come people and say they must have a secret. What is it that they...

There's this thing called NLP. I don't know. I haven't investigated too much about it.

But that started with people looking in detail how three effective therapists work. And they couldn't explain how they work because they just did it. It just happened.

But they started watching them and writing down whatever they do because they're so effective. We must know what they do. Now they're mirroring the other person's movements.

They didn't know they were doing that. They were so in tune that when the client they were listening to moved, they moved with him. They didn't even know it.

And then the eyes go that way when he asked that question, and then they go there. And that became a system. And I believe that is the same case with Tai Chi, which I feel very strongly because I've experienced that.

It doesn't happen often. Spontaneous movement, joyful expression of presence through the physical realm, the body spontaneously, suddenly beginning to move. And it looks as if I've been doing Tai Chi, I don't know anything about Tai Chi.

It's just moving like a very slow dance. And I'm sure the origin of Tai Chi was a few people spontaneously because they lived in presence moved because it was a joyful expression of presence. And then someone said, oh, that looks interesting.

And they became fascinated not just by watching the harmony of the movement, but by sensing the energy field behind the movement. And the more and more people looked and then they would come every day hoping that the master would move again. But of course, he or she wouldn't move every day.

And at some point they said, we have to learn this. And then they came with a piece of paper. Now his left leg goes up.

Now the arm moves slowly outward. And then over time, it became something that you can learn. No longer the real thing that originates directly from presence.

And yet, even if it's a system, it still has certain effectiveness. In fact, rather than arising from presence, the movement can take you into presence. But originally it arose out of presence.

So now we reverse that. It's become a bit of a system, a method, and it takes you into presence. So that works too.

But I know for sure, nobody, I haven't read this anywhere, that the origin was spontaneous expression. So it's a beautiful thing, Tai Chi, Qigong. You can't do it unless you're present.

You won't be very good at it unless at every stage, not trying to get from here to there, not hoping that, okay, I need to get there now. No, you're here, here, here, here, always here, never mentally there. And I know nothing about Tai Chi.

Now, was there one more question from you? Maybe then that'll maybe the last.

[Speaker 7] (5:44:31 - 5:44:51)

Before my question, I just want to add another perspective on charging or not charging that great healer in New York City who charged for his healing, and he was very effective laying on of hands. And he said, you don't charge for the healing, but you charge for your time.

[Speaker 1] (5:44:51 - 5:44:52)

Yes, yes.

[Speaker 7] (5:44:52 - 5:44:56)

In the Western society. What you have is your time.

[Speaker 1] (5:44:56 - 5:45:00)

Yes, that's another perspective on it, which also contains some truth. Yes.

[Speaker 7] (5:45:02 - 5:46:37)

And now my question. I have a private practice for many, many, many years, which transforms as I do. And at this point, I've been incorporating your teaching into every session, which has given new aliveness to my work, which was getting flat.

An aspect of what I do has to do with emotional healing, where the client lies down and I have them breathe and take them out of the mind and into the body and into what they're feeling. And I'm very aware now of not wanting to support a client being stuck in on the level of story. However, there is a place where, as you once said in a tape, where experiences, let's say with a parent that have not been accepted, get stuck and then becomes a cloud in which somebody perceives other relationships or themselves or whatever, and that could obscure their ability to experience presence.

And so my question is, when I'm bringing a client into the emotional body and there is an issue around a parent or around something that has to do with the past, where is that point where you're allowing the story to take over and the emotions to kind of just run through that and you're losing effectiveness and where is the place for working on the level of story?

[Speaker 1] (5:46:37 - 5:55:26)

Yes. The story is helpful to know. Sometimes the story is not even known.

Of course, it can happen that an emotion, a residue of emotion is there and there's not even a memory of where it came from. And sometimes as presence grows, it can happen that suddenly a memory comes back. That's not always necessarily reliable because it could be also sometimes a symbolic expression.

But the memory comes back, let's say it is a memory of what happened or the memory was already there, but a non-recognition of the emotion that went with it. So the memory was there, that is another possibility, but the person was unaware of the emotional charge that was because the child had to cut him or herself off from that in order to avoid unbearable suffering. So it's just as possible that the memory continued but not the person, the adult, then thinks, it remembers that incident or series of incidents or what used to happen at home, behavior of one of other parents, but no longer can feel and thinks I don't have emotion around it.

Yes, my father would do this or that whenever he got drunk, just an example, but I didn't feel, it felt I didn't feel bad about it. And then after a while, but that badness may come up at other times, not knowing that there is the origin. So it's good to recognize the connection between a memory and an emotion.

And once you have seen where it is, not to perpetuate these two so that they link into each other, because the emotion will want to perpetuate itself. And once the person knows where it originally came from, and even that may not have been the true origin, it may just have added to the pain body that was already there, already born into this world and just added more to that. So the pain body always tries to perpetuate the story, think more about it, talk more about it.

But once you have seen it, oh, I've recognized it now, that's what it was, then to focus more, to cut the link between the pain body and mind activity. You've already seen. And now just be aware of the emotion and hold it.

It is human fear. It is human anger. It is human sadness.

And recognizing that in one way or another, all humans experience those things who come into this world. And that's your way of experiencing those human emotions and holding them. And gradually that takes out the self out of the emotion, a continuous attempt to seek yourself even in that painful emotion and thinking that is essentially me.

That is the essence of me, of who I am. By holding it, that is allowing it to be. And that's good if they do it with you together until they can do it for themselves.

And if there's a gradual recognition of the unpersonal, non-personal nature of those emotions, although the events, the triggering events seemed a personal situation, but the resulting emotion is human pain, is human anger, is human fear. And in every human, to a lesser or greater degree, those things will become activated, those emotions, just by living in this world. And this is your essential teaching now is that as you hold the space of presence, they join you in presence and more and more recognize their essential identity as the observing presence, as the holding, as the space in which they're holding that emotion.

So with your help, as you hold the space of presence, it's almost you become one while they sit with you. You're one already anyway, but now you realize that you are one. There's that oneness.

And as presence grows in them, self-identification with the emotion will shrink. And when the self-identification with the emotion shrinks, that also means the link between thought processes and emotions is severed. And then it begins the transmutation of the energy that is trapped in those emotions.

And it's no longer consuming a large part of your aliveness, because if there's a heavy pain body, the heavy pain body will consume an enormous amount of energy and suck the aliveness out of you. It should not be stuck in there and become pain. And then the pain is freed.

And now as presence rises, that pain, the energy that is in that pain, its vibrational frequency changes into presence. That is why I have often found that people with heavy pain bodies have fairly quickly woken up because there was so much energy and actually the pain body fueled once a certain degree of presence is there and it's strong enough, the pain body fuels the growing presence. The energy that was trapped in there changes its, because there's only one energy, but the vibrational frequency of fear or sadness, of course, is very different from the highest of presence, changes its frequency.

Some of the most dreadfully unhappy people have woken up and some of them in the most miserable, unhappy conditions have suddenly woken up. And that pain became presence, fuel for presence. Also, an external situation that is dreadful that you may find yourself in can become fuel for presence.

That's the more unpleasant, the more fuel for presence. That's how this counts of people in the most dreadful situations suddenly waking up out of all that. So it's beautiful work and that is the essence of what you do now.

You're teaching presence and whoever comes joins you. It's like bringing a, I have this image of a log that's only burning a little or not burning, not even burning yet. Put it close to another log in the fire that's already burning and then quickly that one burns too.

So you're all logs. Let's become just... It's been a wonderful weekend of stillness, of words, but always stillness, even during the words, while words were being spoken, the essence of this gathering has always been and is the stillness, the spaciousness underneath or around the words.

And it's always been just about that one thing, nothing else at all. Only one thing matters absolutely. Everything else matters relatively.

Only one thing matters. That's actually in the New Testament. Only one thing matters and you have chosen that one thing.

That's a quotation from the New Testament, but it's right for this moment.

[Speaker 10] (5:56:01 - 5:56:02)

Thank you.

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[Speaker 1] (0:12 - 4:46:18)

Let's make sure we are at home in the present moment and inhabiting the body, so a little bit of your attention is in the body, the inner energy field of the body, and the rest of your attention is on sense perception, and in that way you are anchored in the present moment. The inner energy field provides the anchor for staying present. If you can't feel anything in your body, start with your hands, direct your attention into your hands, and see if you can feel a little bit of aliveness in there.

Oh yes, there it is. And your feet, are they alive? Oh yes, you can feel almost a kind of tingling.

There's energy there, there's life energy in there, and so you can connect with the entire body as a global sense of aliveness as you sit here, because wherever you are, you're here and now. And the mind will not be excessively active when your attention is in the inner energy field. You can be alert without unnecessary interference of thinking, without having to wait for the next moment to provide some kind of improvement.

So the realization comes that this moment is actually good enough, more than good enough, because you're beginning to feel the goodness that is underneath the phenomenal appearance of the present moment, the forms. You are getting in touch with the formless. One of the things we are doing as part of our new venture, which is a kind of experiment using the internet to reach many thousands of people, occasionally I present a book to you that has been very meaningful to me for many years.

There are a number of books that I've carried around, well sometimes I lost copies and then I bought another one, because I moved around so much. And we already in one of the previous sessions, we had one session on one of the greatest books ever written, the Tao Te Ching. We had a session on that and I feel that we are going to have another session on that at some point, not today though.

For today I've chosen a book and before I continue I need to tell you we're not studying something that's external to ourselves. We are not here, it's not a university setting, we are not learning philosophy, we are only using the subject matter of the book as an alternative pointer to the reality within ourselves. So it's not anything, we're not studying anything outside ourselves that would be useless.

So this book that actually I never lost, it's been with me for 25 or 30 years. I bought it new but now the pages are turning yellow, the edges, which means I'm getting old. When books that you bought new turn yellow around the edges you're getting old or the quality of the paper is deteriorating.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, essays which he became famous for. What I'm going to do is just read very brief extracts from one or two of the essays and then we will comment on that. As some of you know Emerson was born in Boston in 1803, died about 80 years later and most of his life he traveled around giving talks.

A very unusual thing, he was kind of a 19th century spiritual teacher, very unusual thing for the 19th century. And some of these essays have enormous power so he must have gone very deep within to be able to write these things. An important thing, just a very brief look at his life.

As many people who are destined to go very deep within he experienced a not very pleasant childhood and early life. At a very early age and this is the case with many people who are forced, either destined to go deeper within or if not they are forced by life's circumstances to go deeper within. And so in his case at the age of eight his father died.

So becoming acquainted with mortality at a very early age, a very painful thing. Then there were five children, his mother was relatively poor so they lived on very little, the mother had to feed five boys. Then later in his early 20s he developed tuberculosis, a potentially fatal illness but recovered from it.

Then he got married and two years later his wife died. So again it became very clear to him, it must have become very clear to him how fragile, how impermanent, fleeting the world of form is, of bodies and forms. So whether he already realized that on a conscious level, but there must have been a very deep having to go deeper within.

And then he studied at Harvard to become a theologian, to become a minister. He became a minister but was not happy with the constraints of the church and then left the church and started just giving talks. And some of the talks became the essays.

So you can see retrospectively how loss is very often a concealed blessing. You don't know it at the time. At the time it just seems a dreadful thing to be happening to you.

But if you look deeper, especially if you're able to come to a state of acceptance, then the moment you surrender to what is, the other side of loss reveals itself to you. There's grace hiding behind every loss. That's good to know next time loss comes to you, as it will of course, because you can't go through life without experiencing loss.

People around you are going to leave you, unless you leave them first. Bodies dissolve. And the older you get, the more clearly you see, wow, all these bodies are dissolving.

A very brief, just a few sentences here on being and the sense of being, finding that within yourself. He says, oh I must, before I read, this is mid-19th century English prose. So at first, it might be for some of you who are not used to reading that kind of thing, Jane Austen or whatever, that kind of thing, may find it a little bit unusual at first.

For the sense of being which in calm hours rises, we know not how in the soul, is not diverse from things, from space, from light, from time, from man, but one with them, and proceeds obviously from the same source whence their life and being also proceeds. We first share the life by which things exist and afterwards see them as appearances in nature and forget that we have shared their cause. Here is the fountain of action and the fountain of thought.

Here are the lungs of that inspiration which gives man wisdom, of that inspiration of man which cannot be denied without impiety and atheism. We lie in the lap of immense intelligence which makes us organs of its activity and receivers of its truth. When we discern justice, when we discern truth, we do nothing of ourselves but allow a passage to its beams, the beams of that great intelligence like the sunlight.

So the sense of being which in calm hours rises, we know not how in the soul, is not diverse from things, from space, from light, from time, from man, but one with them. In calm hours means when you become still inside, when the mind activity subsides. Then what arises is something that had been obscured by mental noise which is the sense of being and that really is the essence.

Sometimes it's called the sense of I am without any addition to the I am, not I am this or I am that. The sense of beingness, as you may remember from grammar lessons at school, to be and I am is part of the same verb. It's easy to forget when you say I am is the first person singular of to be.

So being and I am is the same. So getting that sense of your innermost identity which has no form to it, no mental concept, no physical appearance, it's deeper than that, a formless sense of being that is there clearly is revealed when the continuous flux of forms, especially mind forms, subsides. So that sense of being is always, has always been there underneath the mental noise.

And when that is realized as the essence of who you are, in other words, you are formless in essence, timeless. The Buddhists call it empty and of course Western scholars misinterpret that. They say it's a nihilistic religion or it's life denying.

They don't realize that what Buddhists call emptiness is the formless essence of all life and timeless. And that is something to be realized of course only in the, it's inextricably one with the what we call the present moment. We could say it is the present moment because it is the space in which everything arises.

All sense perception, all thoughts, all emotion, where do they appear? They appear in that space of being which you could also call unconditioned consciousness, timeless. And that is the eternal in you.

And once that is known directly, not as an intellectual fact or belief, but known directly.

And again, not known as you know the flower or the table or the tree, not known as a subject knows an object, but knowing yourself as the eternal subject, not making yourself into an object. And that's the ego.

That's what happened to the human mind. We made ourselves into objects and then you begin to have a relationship with yourself. And then you start liking or disliking yourself.

And then you talk about that you have a life, not realizing that you are life. And perhaps then only the dog or the cat can still remind you that they don't have a life, they are life. They don't have an unhappy or happy story.

They are life. That's why we talked about nature. Nature still lives in that state of connectedness.

And once you realize that, you recognize that formless essence that you are wherever you look. It is the underlying one, the one life, the one timeless life that you are. And then wherever you look, every tree, every animal, every blade of grass, even the sun, the stars, your dog or your cat, you recognize something there, something that any life form is also an expression of that one.

So you recognize yourself in others, which is the most beautiful thing when you recognize the essence of who you are in the flower. And you recognize it not through any mental concept but through the absence of mental concepts. It is only mental concepts that create the barrier between yourself and the flower when you start calling it something.

Or another human being, the beauty of being with another human being without the interference, the screen of conceptualization, just spacious presence. No matter what the other human being is doing or saying, you are there as spacious presence for whatever arises in this moment. That means you are connected with the one, you are that and recognize it, there is nothing alien anymore, there is ultimately no other anymore.

And this is what he is talking about. The sense of being which in calm hours rises, when we become still now, we know not how it rises within, is not diverse from things, from space, from light, from time, from man, but one with them and proceeds obviously from the same source when their life and being also proceeds. And then that is intelligence itself, not the intelligence that can be measured by IQ tests, but primordial, unconditioned intelligence is there when you discover that dimension in yourself.

Here is the fountain of action, spontaneous action arises out of that presence, and the fountain of thought, it can inspire the mind. Creative thought can only come when you become still, contact that dimension, realize that is who you are in essence, and then your mind starts to operate and it becomes inspired, it becomes an instrument rather than self-serving mind activity. And then all the repetitive thinking gradually subsides and more creative thinking happens.

And in between the creative thinking there are wonderful spaces of not thinking. The greatest thing that can happen to you, and hopefully is happening to you, is to discover within yourself spaces of not thinking. You have not reverted back to the vegetable realm, you have gone beyond thinking.

And from the point of view of the ego, that's not a big thing, it says, how does that solve my problems, not thinking? The conceptual mind does not understand the significance of that. I sometimes say that all I have achieved in life is I don't need to think unless I want to think.

That really is where everything comes from, just becoming comfortable with a state of not knowing from the point of view of the mind. Going to a talk, in my case, sitting down and having the feeling I have absolutely nothing to say, and becoming comfortable with not knowing. Not just when you are going to give a talk, in any situation, you don't need to work it out conceptually, what am I going to, how am I going to deal with this person, how am I going to deal with this situation.

Be there, bring the presence to it, and let that intelligence come through you. It can then use your mind and you find yourself saying something original, or you find yourself saying just the right thing that is helpful for that moment and that person. Or you find yourself taking spontaneous action, suddenly the right thing, the right action arises, you suddenly realize what it is that you need to do, you've been thinking about it for years, and suddenly you let go of thinking, space opened up, and the realization is there.

So, for a balanced life there needs to be the two dimensions in your life, the dimension of form, I call that human, the human dimension, where you are a person with a history, and you think, and you have relatives and relationships, and you have a life situation which is good or bad, or changes from good to bad and bad to good, and you are the being dimension of the human being, most humans don't know that yet, there is the being dimension that is the formless. So, a truly fruitful life is the balance between the formless essence within yourself and the world of form.

Most humans on this planet are lost in form, totally identified with form, that's all they know, totally identified with their mind, every thought form that comes into their head, they are completely identified with it, they are in the grip of form, and then they are surrounded by countless forms, and each form in their life situation demands attention, this matters, this matters, the phone rings, I need to do this, now I need to do that, completely absorbed by form, and everything is serious, has a heaviness and a seriousness to it, and the more you go on living like that, the heavier and the more serious your life becomes, it's a loss of balance, and then all you end up with, this is the subject matter of many movies that you see, is people who are totally trapped on that dimension only of form, complete absence of transcendence in their life, and sometimes these films are quite nice, you see, what a pity that there's not the slightest glimpse of any transcendence, they're trapped in their little life situations, and so for life to be balanced, there needs to be attention on consciousness, the underlying essence of life is formless consciousness, and that means your sense of identity comes from there, the true sense, so you don't need the world of form anymore to give you your sense of self, because as the Buddha said, when you identify with, when you're looking for yourself in things, I'm giving a very free translation of Buddha, when you identify with the world of form and looking for yourself in forms, in your thoughts, in your possessions, in your achievements, in other people's opinion of who you are, whatever form it is, if you're looking for yourself, or some kind of completion of your sense of self in form, you're going to suffer, that's the message of the Buddha, because there is no self in these things, you cannot find yourself, now Buddhism says, because there is no self, Hinduism will tell you, talks about the self, but they're really talking about the same thing, it's a formless self, now whether you say, no self or formless self, doesn't make any difference, these are just pointers, you may prefer one pointer to the other, I prefer this finger pointing to the moon, and then another, no, this finger pointing to the moon is much nicer, it doesn't matter, the moon matters, and so we lie in the lap of immense intelligence, it is within and without, we are pervaded by it, it fills the entire space of the universe, we lie in the lap of immense intelligence which makes us organs of its activity and receivers of its truth, if we are open to it, it's like having a house, if you close the shutters, no matter how bright the sunlight is, it can't come in, it doesn't mean the shutters are more powerful than the sunlight, it just means shutters are closed, and so if a human being is closed, the vast intelligence cannot operate, or can only operate as a trickle, everybody has a trickle of it, otherwise they wouldn't be alive, so everybody has a little trickle of that coming into their lives, but the full power of it, in most people's lives, is missing, so they live not knowing what vast power is available to them, or to put it more accurately, what vast power they themselves are, it's not, and I say it's not available to you that creates a separation, it is in essence is who you are, now I'd like to read to you a little thing that came to Emerson when he was sitting in his study, and outside there were roses growing outside his window, and here again we come to the power of nature that we talked about the other day, the power of nature to reconnect you with being, and so he looked at the rose, and then he saw this, or realized this, the context of this is that he's talking about people who are always quoting ancient texts only, they're not open to the power of the divine coming through them, they're quoting from the bible, they're quoting from other scriptures, but not realizing that the very power that spoke then is in them now also, it's just a question of opening yourself to it, and then he looked at the roses under his window, the roses under my window make no reference to former roses or to better ones, they are for what they are, they exist with god today, there is no time to them, they are simply the rose, it is perfect in every moment of its existence, before a leaf bud has burst, its whole life acts, in the full-blown flower there's no more, in the leafless root there's no less, its nature is satisfied, and it satisfies nature in all moments alike, there is no time to it, but man postpones or remembers, he does not live in the present, but with reverted eye laments the past, or heedless of the riches that surround him, stands on tiptoe to foresee the future, he cannot be happy and strong until he too lives with nature in the present above time.

There you have the rose teaching Emerson how to live, and then he put it into words, and this shows us that he actually, it was not just a superficial look at a rose, as one would normally, oh what a nice rose, there was a true, he truly gave attention to the rose, and realized how absolutely present the rose is, how absolutely devoid of time it is, carrying no past and no future, and he recognized that the same as Jesus did when he said look at the flowers of the field, look at the lilies, when he said that he didn't just say have a look at the lilies, he said really look, give it your full attention, and then you will realize something there, that human beings, there's a connectedness with being, they haven't gone out as far as humans, they have not left the source of all life, they have not become as differentiated as the humans have, so therefore what they can teach us, show us, is the connectedness with the source of all life, and that's what he saw when he looked at the rose, and then he realized that we can, when we reconnect with that, we don't just become, go back to the vegetative realm, which is beautiful for everything vegetative there, but not for us, it's not our destiny to go back to become a rose, or a tree, or a blade of grass, we transcend the thinking stage, we transcend the differentiation of the thinking stage, and we then regain the oneness that was once lost, that ancient mythologies point to as the lost paradise, and when you regain something, as I often point out, you regain it at a deeper level with knowing consciousness.

And so the last sentence here is important, he saw here, of course, that usually man does not live in the present, but with reverted eyes, reverted eyes, he doesn't look at what's right here, he reverts his eyes and looks, laments the past, oh dear, regrets about what happened, guilt, regret, memories, things went wrong in my life situation, this happened, that happened, or heedless of the riches that surround him, stands on tiptoe to foresee the future, I need to get, I need to get there, where is it, I need to get to the next moment, the riches that surround you that are part of the now. So the lesson then is to truly look so that something imparts itself to you from anything natural, so the anything natural reconnects you with, can reconnect you with being. By the way, when he uses his words in the 19th century, so there was still a tendency for there to use male pronouns, the same as the Bible, and so on, so obviously when he says man, he means man and woman, and he tends to use the masculine pronoun, so you have to excuse that.

Man is a stream whose source is hidden, always our being is descending into us from we know not whence. Most humans regard themselves as a surface phenomenon, you are here, no sense of deeper connectedness with life, you are here like as if somebody had put you here on this planet and there's me and there's the rest of the world, the rest of the universe, the lack of connectedness. If you go deeper within and you do it by finding the dimension of stillness underneath thinking, then you connect with the source, the depth within yourself, and there's vast depth.

Man is a stream whose source is hidden. And when, once it's open, so all you have to really do, if you can even call it doing, is open the door. And even that is not a doing because really keeping the door closed through continuous thinking is the doing.

So it's more like a stop doing and then it opens. In that sense, some of those teachers are right saying you can't do anything because it's the doing that obscures the being. And so once that is open, then you gradually learn to do and be at the same time.

You can act without losing connect. At first you find it only in very still moments, perhaps in nature, and you go, ah, ah. And then gradually you see if you can stay connected when you're going shopping for food, supermarket, or traveling from here to there, carrying alertness, alert presence, rather than continuously thinking entity.

Always about the next moment or the last moment. This is the only, you may have noticed that I only ever talk about one thing. And this is it.

Now he uses in one of his essays the term the over-soul. And by over-soul he means the unity of all things. The unity, the oneness of all things.

All things are ultimately one. Not only that all things are connected to everything else, which physicists now tell us is actually the case. There's no division between this body and this table and this flower and those other bodies.

There's no real division on the subatomic realm. And so not only is everything connected with everything else, a web of interconnectedness, but also everything is connected to a common source. It has come out of the common source.

It returns to the common source, which is formless and timeless. And the common source remains in every form as its innermost essence. And so this common source, this unity he calls the over-soul.

And he says, that unity, that over-soul, within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other, that common heart of which all sincere conversation is the worship, to which all right action is submission, that overpowering reality which confutes our tricks and talents and constrains everyone to pass for what he is and to speak from his character, which means from his essence, and not from his tongue, and which ever more tends and aims to pass into our thought and hand and become wisdom and virtue and power and beauty.

We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meantime, within man is the soul of the whole, the wise silence, the universal beauty to which every part and particle is equally related, the eternal one. And this deep power in which we exist and whose beatitude is all accessible to us is not only self-sufficing and perfect in every hour, but the act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object are one.

We see the world piece by piece as the sun, the moon, the animal, the tree, but the whole of which these are the shining parts is the soul, the oneness, seeing the oneness behind the multiplicity, seeing the oneness of all forms in every form. And what he calls the soul, we could also use the word the consciousness, the one unconditioned consciousness that pervades the entire universe, the one reality. So when he says here the soul, if you want to use consciously a different pointer, that's fine.

All goes to show that the soul in man is not an organ but animates and exercises all the organs, is not a function like the power of memory, of calculation, of comparison, but uses these as hands and feet, is not a faculty but a light, is not the intellect or the will but the master of the intellect and the will, is the vast background of our being in which they lie, an immensity not possessed and that cannot be possessed.

From within or from behind, a light shines through us upon things and makes us aware that we are nothing but the light is all, the background, the background space, consciousness looks through these eyes, speaks through this mouth, becomes form and yet remains untouched as a formless. So can you go through life dealing with the foreground of things that need doing, things that you need occasionally to think about and yet remain aware of the background to your life, the consciousness, the light of consciousness or the space in which everything appears. Another way of putting it, can you be aware that you are aware at this moment, can you sense the awareness underneath what you are perceiving with your senses at this moment without which there would be no perception, can you sense the awareness underneath any kind of emotional feeling you might be having at this moment, can you sense the awareness out of which any thought that might arise in your mind at this moment comes and comes, dissolves back into the presence that you are, that's the formless, that's timeless and so that is the vast background of your being, an immensity not possessed and that cannot be possessed. A man is the facade of a temple wherein all wisdom and all good abide. What you see is the facade of the temple, not only what you see as the physical form of this human being but also the psychological form of this human being is also the facade still of the temple, it is not in essence who that being is.

What we commonly call man or woman, the eating, drinking, planting and counting man, eating, drinking, planting, counting, doing all kinds of things, what we commonly call man, the eating, drinking, planting, counting man does not as we know him represent himself but misrepresents himself. Him we do not respect but the soul whose organ he is, would he let it appear through his action would make our knees bend. When it breathes through his intellect it is genius, when it breathes through his will it is virtue, when it flows through his affection it is love and the blindness of the intellect begins when it would be something of itself.

The weakness of the will begins when the individual would be something of himself. So the blindness of the intellect begins with the belief that you are something of yourself, that is the mind, the self-serving mind. The blindness of the, the weakness of the will begins when the individual would be something of himself, that is the ego, believing that you are an independent, autonomous, self-sufficient entity that has been put into this world from somewhere, not realizing you have come out of it and you are an intrinsic part of the totality and so there comes the sense of separateness, of alienation, with that comes the continuous neediness of the ego and with that comes the continuous underlying fear that's always there when you're not connected, there's fear no matter what you may have achieved in the world of form, the fear will not leave you until the sense of separateness leaves you, you reconnect. How wonderful to see that all spiritual teachings in essence are one.

This is why I love to go back to some of the ancient books and they might use very different words but once you recognize the truth in yourself, you see the truth wherever it comes, in whatever form it comes, and you say, yes, there it is, I recognize it. And so this is sometimes being called the perennial philosophy, there's a thread that goes back thousands of years, the same truth being expressed in different words and different forms throughout the ages, in the past by very rare individuals here and there, but somehow it survived, whatever form they left behind, writing or, it survived, somehow there were always enough humans who had at least an inkling that there was something extremely precious and valuable there. So that's the perennial philosophy that, I don't know who first used that word, there is a very wonderful book by Aldous Huxley of the same title, Perennial Philosophy. So the truth is there and there's no arguing once you have it in yourself, you don't attach yourself to the form in which it's being expressed, that's what religions traditionally do, you get attached to the form, not realizing the form points to an underlying essence, which is one, all religions are one, and you don't even need a religion to see the essence.

You are enough. If you have a religion, fine, you don't need it, but if you have it, it can take you, if you use it rightly, it can take you deeper, if you use it wrongly, you get more entangled in ego through your religion. There is no bar or wall in the soul where man, the effect ceases and God, the cause begins.

There is no separation between you and the source, it's a continuous, you could almost think of it, if you think of it visually, you are connected, if you are walking around a globe, and every being on the globe is connected to the center with a thread, it's a visual representation of it, you're connected. Now if you're only, if the surface reality of where you're walking around is all you have, then you see the separation between me, you, and the other human being, or what other life form, or you see the separateness. When you are aware of the center within, then you see the unity.

So you're walking around this globe, there's one human being, here's another human being, disconnected because they're only aware of the surface. If you're aware of the depths within yourself, then suddenly you see that you are one with the other, you're connected at the center. It's a visual, of course, somewhat incomplete representation.

The sovereignty of this nature whereof we speak is made known by its independency of those limitations which circumscribe us on every hand. The soul circumscribes all things. As I have said, it contradicts all experience.

In like manner, it abolishes time and space. The influence of the senses has, in most men, overpowered the mind to that degree that the walls of time and space have come to look solid, real, and insurmountable. And to speak with levity of these limits is, in the world, a sign of insanity.

Yet time and space are but inverse measures of the force of the soul. A man is capable of abolishing them both. You could say, now when he uses inverse measures, you could say, I said that somewhere also, the vastness of space that you see when you look out at night into this clear sky.

And that was when I was a child, even before... No, about the same time when I had mentioned previously, I would often go out into nature to reconnect with being when I was a child. And one other thing I did that helped me when I was a child, and that didn't happen until I went to live in Spain at the age of 13 and a half, where often the sky is clear, especially in the summer.

And so we lived on the top floor with a... I would climb up onto the roof of the building at night and lie in a deck chair and just look at the vastness of the night sky. And I didn't realize at that time that my mind actually became still.

I was just in a state of awe, and I didn't realize at the time I didn't even know anything about meditation. I didn't know I was in a state of meditative stillness. And there was a sense of awe and of feeling speechless.

And what made me speechless was not the... Well, it was wonderful to see all the thousands of points of light that we call stars or suns, but more than that, the vastness of the space itself. I already knew a little bit.

I was interested in astronomy, and I started reading, and I knew a little bit about the vast distances involved there and the vastness of space, of what a light year is. And it was so inconceivable and totally beyond anything the mind could understand. Even the greatest scientists cannot understand the limitless space.

So I sometimes ask myself, well, what is beyond space? And if it's limitless, it's inconceivable. There's a vastness there that is totally ungraspable and inconceivable.

And that, I believe, what he's pointing at, Emerson, here, is what you see as the vastness of space is the externalized vastness of your own being, of being itself. You see it spreading, spread out there. It contains all things.

It's the externalized vastness of consciousness itself, and it appears to us as space. Now, space, of course, is nothing, really. It just enables everything to be, but in itself, it is no thing.

It is nothing. So, and time equally, the vast stretches of time, inconceivable. And does time have an end?

Does time have a beginning? And here, too, what we perceive as endless vast time is the externalization of the timeless within. And that gets stretched out when we go into the sense-perceived world.

It gets stretched out like, it becomes skimmed milk. The cream is within you, and then the universe is the skimmed milk, diluted. So that also can put you in touch with yourself.

Just look into contemplation of space. It doesn't have, it could be the space of the night sky. It could even be the space of, in a room.

If you go into an ancient church or cathedral, it's particularly beautiful to have, to be, if you become aware of, but any room will do it, become aware of, okay, what's the essence of this room? There's the floor, the ceiling, the walls, the chairs, the furniture in it, the people. Okay, but is there more to it?

Yes, of course, there's more to it. What really matters about this room is the space. Without the space, there wouldn't be a room.

And there's usually, people would not be aware of the space, they would be aware only of what's in the space, the furniture, the walls, the people, whatever it is. And so, if you can become aware, not only of what's in the space and what circumscribes the space, but the space itself, the awareness of space creates in you the awareness of the formless within you. Because only the moment you become aware of space around you, and I can't tell you how, you just have to do it, because there's nothing to grasp, there's nothing to be aware of.

So, the mind asks, how can I be aware of space if there's nothing there to be aware of? And that's precisely it. What is left when you're aware of something where there's nothing?

What's left is awareness itself. That's why being aware of space is such a powerful thing, because what we really become aware of then is awareness, nothing, no content. And so, it's a beautiful meditation, wherever you go, you can do it.

There's even a line in the Tao Te Ching which speaks of what, I don't, I can't remember literally, that it says, there's a bowl and the essence of the vessel or the bowl is the emptiness inside the space. And so, to make it a bowl, there's the two aspects, and these are the two aspects to every life form, form and formless. Form and the essence, the formless.

And so, if you can be aware that that applies to you also, just like the bowl or like the room, in yourself also there is content, there's furniture inside you, thoughts. Some people have a lot of furniture inside. Room is just crammed full with furniture, one thought after another.

And so, but there must be some space there, because the furniture somehow has to get in there, so space is there. You just have to know it's there. There is space inside you already.

You don't have to produce it or achieve it somehow, just realize it's already there, because otherwise nothing could be there in your mind. The mind itself in essence is space, which is consciousness. So, most people are so seduced by the furniture, so seduced by all these fascinating bits of furniture or furniture they complain about, they don't want, but it's there, and so that they're never aware of the space around the furniture inside themselves.

What a limitation, which means all you're stuck with is your life situation, your limited life, which consists of content, content, the content of your life. And no matter what you do with the content of your life, it's never satisfying. On the level of content alone, you will always come to a point of frustration, because you never, no matter how you rearrange the furniture, I'm using of course, as you know, furniture as a metaphor for everything in your mind, no matter how you arrange the furniture, or even if you throw some bits out and take other bits in, you always find it's not quite it, it's not, you always very quickly come to a point of dissatisfaction, because the transcendent dimension is missing from your life.

And what is the transcendent dimension? The formless space, not realize that that is the essence of who you actually are. And so people go through life frustrated, complaining that the world isn't doing what it should be doing to make them happy, not realizing the world cannot make you happy, it's not in the, it's not in its power, because the world is the world of form.

It can challenge you so that you go deeper and finally find the formless, that's what it's there for really. And of course, the world is good at that. It always does that.

And once you know that, then every challenge you can actually welcome. And every loss, you can actually, even though you might weep, you can still welcome it. Because you can see how precious loss also is, because what is loss in whatever form?

Loss is, some form has been removed from your life and has left behind an empty space. And that happens when somebody close to you dies. Suddenly, there's an empty space.

And that is, from the point of view of form, is very painful. And of course, you will cry, you will weep, because there is the reality of form, but there's also the deeper reality of the formless. And if you can be with both, then in the presence of death, although you may weep, there will be a deep peace that you sense, because the formless shines through the space that's left behind.

And that's the sacred, the divine, God, whatever you want to call it. It shines through. Wherever there's loss, there's grace.

The grace is, something has opened up. And that's the essence, that is the essence of the form that passed away also. And that is the indestructible, that is the deathless, as it's in Buddhism, the closest Buddhism ever gets to talking about God is death, the deathless realm, Amaravati, the deathless.

That's how wonderful to see. And then, balance comes into your life. The dance between form and formlessness.

The dance between the world and spirit, if you want to call it that. I don't use it very often. It's too many associations there.

And then, the beautiful thing is, the world is no longer a frustrating place. When you realize that the world was actually meant to be frustrating, it's no longer frustrating, then you recognize whatever challenge comes, you say, oh, okay. Either you resist, or you go deeper.

That's always the choice. There's a beautiful line in a book, I believe it's called The Road Less Travelled. And it has the best first sentence, or first two sentences of any book.

That's why I never read the whole book. It says more or less this, life is difficult, and when you know that and accept that, it's no longer difficult. It's so simple.

Once you know, you don't expect something that the world cannot give you, happiness, fulfillment, peace. And once you realize you don't need the world to give you that, because that is already, that emanates from the formless dimension within yourself. Then, ironically, maybe the universe has a sense of humor or irony.

Then, ironically, the world and the things of the world are actually quite nice. They're quite satisfying, and you appreciate them. It's not that you deny.

I don't believe that those ancient practices that almost aggressively deny the reality of form are that helpful. I don't think you can get to the, find the formless within by fighting or aggressively denying the world of form. The world of form is also an expression, it's all an expression of the one.

And so, the world then becomes a much, a place where you can appreciate whatever form is around you arises, no matter whether it's large or small. Mostly it's small, because mostly your life consists of small things. There's a flower, there's the shopping to do, there's go from here to there, get into the car, take one step at a time.

It's all small, really, and you can appreciate the preciousness of all the things in your life. And it's suddenly, what before was frustrating, now is actually quite pleasant. Why has it become pleasant?

You no longer demand from the world, which includes places you go to, which includes people you meet or have relationships with, which includes situations in your life that arise, which includes achievements, successes or failures, whatever. You don't, you don't demand that they should give you what they can't. And you can let them be, you can honour them, but you never, you're not again going to a situation or a place and say, I demand that you fulfil me, or go into a relationship and say, I demand that you make me happy.

Or whatever condition you encounter, some success and expect ultimate fulfilment through it. No, briefly, yes, and then things happen. So with this comes then the freedom, freedom from, you could call it freedom from the world.

It doesn't mean you disengage from the world, but your attachment to things lessens and then goes. There is appreciation, there is honouring the beauty of life, the beauty of even the smallest things, yes, but without the attachment to that, you don't need that anymore. And you can let go when it's time to let go.

This always comes, wherever you go and whatever you do, at some point it's time to let go. And to the, as long as there's attachment, it's a painful thing when life says, okay, let go now. Oh, no, I can't.

It's part of who I am. And that's painful. And then life may even tear it out of your hands.

It's even more painful, but it could be so simple. You could say, there you go. And then some other form appears.

Oh, that's nice. And you know full well there's nothing that is yours ultimately. The whole thing that you can possess something is, of course, an illusion.

You only, for a little while, it comes into, you look after it and then you hand it on. You look after it, pass it on. Let's see what freedom, and then you appreciate the beauty of all things.

And you see beauty where before you didn't see beauty, also in the smallest things. And you don't have to take acid for that. But, of course, the truth is everything around you is intensely alive and beautiful.

It's only the judgmental mind that creates the screen, a barrier of conceptualization between yourself and the aliveness of the world. But the essential aliveness is within, in the formless. So don't look for the aliveness in there.

Nature can hint at it, can give you, connect you with the own aliveness. Yes. The essence of all life is within.

The action of the soul or consciousness is oftener in that which is felt and left unsaid than in that which is said in any conversation. It's not in the words, it's in the spaces. It broods over every society and they unconsciously seek for it in each other.

You unconsciously seek the formless in the other. We know better than we do. We do not yet possess ourselves and we know at the same time that we are much more.

I feel the same truth how often in my trivial conversation with my neighbors that somewhat higher in each of us overlooks this byplay and jove nods to jove from behind. Each of us. God nods to God from behind each of us.

You're engaged in superficial conversation but there's something in the background that far transcends anything in the world of form, which includes words and thoughts. And if you can sense that in yourself, then you can also sense it in the other. And if you sense that in the other, all relationships become holy relationships, as the Course in Miracles would put it.

And you recognize the holy in every relationship, even if it's a brief one. And there is something in you that knows and recognizes the truth. We know truth when we see it.

Let skeptic and scoffer say what they choose. Foolish people ask you when you have spoken what they do not wish to hear. How do you know it is truth and not an error of your own?

We know truth when we see it, as opposed to opinion, as we know when we are awake that we are awake. Do you know that you are awake? Yes, you must be.

So this is direct realization. So if you know that you are awake, that means what is it that you really know? You know that you're awake, you can subtract anything that appears in your consciousness at this moment, any form, and you could then be left with just the state of being awake.

And there's the formless. One more sentence. Under all this running sea of circumstance, whose waters ebb and flow with perfect balance, lies the aboriginal abyss of real being.

Circumstances, situations, world of form, comings, goings, underneath it all, the timeless, formless. Become familiar with the state of not needing to continuously interpret and judge what is happening to you or around you. You don't need that.

You actually become more intelligent when you don't continuously and compulsively interpret what's happening or what's in front of you, what you're perceiving. That's an old habit going back thousands and thousands of years. And the habit says, no, I have to interpret.

I become stupid if I don't. I won't know what's going on anymore if I can't judge this person that I'm meeting or I can have some kind of opinion or I like or dislike this situation or this, I want this, I don't want this, should be happening, that shouldn't. All the stuff that the mind produces continuously that detracts from the simplicity and power of the present moment, that the mind puts out the screen of conceptualization.

And so in living without the compulsive screen of conceptualization is the great liberation. And so you invite into your life the spaces, the one space really, but spaces of not knowing, not needing to know, not just being present with what is, just giving attention to what is at this moment. Which implies, of course, accepting the is-ness of whatever this moment brings, whatever form arises in this moment.

Can you say yes to what arises in whatever form? Because you should say yes because otherwise you suffer. Because what is already is.

So if you argue internally with what is, you really make the universe into an enemy. I don't want this, but there it is right in front of you. You say, okay, this is what is.

You become the space for it. And that's a very quick way of accessing the space consciousness in you, by simply bringing an acceptance into the present moment in whatever form it comes. Where before there was an irritation, where before there was a complaint, where before there was an angry reaction, there's now saying, oh, okay, that's what is.

You open your arms and say, yes to now. Present moment is my friend. I've had the enemy, present moment has been my enemy for long enough.

I'm now making friends with the present moment. Why? Because it's all I have.

There's nothing else ever. Why not make friends with the present moment in whatever form it appears? And the secret then, of course, the miracle is if you make friends with the present moment, no matter in what form it appears, then the formless opens up within you because you become who you already were, space for it.

You are the space for that. That's all. So the primordial spiritual practice, or if you want a mantra, can I be the space for this?

You can ask yourself the question when situations arise that before you might have complained about, been irritated about, whatever the reaction would have been, can I be the space for this? And usually, or I would say always, you will find, yes, I can be this. You just forgot that you can be the space for it.

You forgot that you are the space for whatever arises in your life because you are the now, you are the consciousness in which it arises. So you become who you already are. Can I be the space for this?

With that is the end of all irritation or angry reactions or complaining, inner no, don't want this, want something else. Yeah, but this is what you have now. And it doesn't mean that you get stuck with what is.

The amazing thing is you move on much more quickly when you bring a yes to the present moment. Then life moves on. You've passed the test.

If you bring no to the present moment, it means you haven't passed. Okay, you get stuck. It's all expressed beautifully in the film Groundhog Day.

You can live in resistance. You can try whatever you will. As long as you are stuck in your negativity, you have to do it the lesson again.

You wake up the same day. This protagonist wakes up in the same day every day until finally an inner shift happens and he begins to say yes to the present moment. And then suddenly all the unpleasantness of this day that he has to repeat again and again, all the unpleasantness of that day becomes actually quite pleasant.

He's beginning to help people because he says yes to situations. So he becomes a helpful, beneficial presence in that day. And suddenly everybody loves him in that town.

And finally he becomes so accepting, whereas before he dissed, he hated where he was and he hated his work. Many people live like that, hating everything, complaining continuously, nothing and nobody's ever good enough. And then suddenly the shift happens and finally he's in the same place and he says to his girlfriend, oh let's stay here, it's quite nice.

And then suddenly he's free and he's no longer forced to repeat the same day. Deep spiritual lesson in there and that's how it is. So it's the egoic mind tells you if you accept what is, you'll be stuck.

This is not the case. Acceptance is the beginning for powerful action if action is required. And non-acceptance, the action that you take on the basis of non-acceptance is never powerful.

It always is tainted with negativity and you could say I call it karmic action. It produces more unhappiness, more karma. So a very quick way then of accessing the space consciousness within, the formless, is not resisting the form that the present moment takes in your life internally.

Wow, huge shift. When you can try it in this evening, there may be little things happening on your way home. Wow, non-resistance, greatest power there is.

Welcome. It's time today to look at another book. This has become traditional.

From time to time I choose a book that I look at with you, books that are dear to me. And usually these books are part of the arising consciousness, what somebody once called the perennial philosophy, the arising awareness in the collective consciousness that started a long time ago. And sometimes for long periods of time became obscured, covered up and then arose again.

So there's a thread running through as almost as far as we can look back in the history of humanity. There's already an arising awareness which never reached the majority of the population, probably only always reached a few individual people. But it's been there.

I sometimes call them early flowers. In the same way I talk about it in a new earth. Before the first flower opened on the planet, there was already vegetation.

Had been there for millions of years and only then at some moment the first flower appeared. And probably didn't survive for very long and it perhaps took a long time before another one came and then gradually a few more and then perhaps conditions again became hostile to the flowering and then disappeared again for a while and then more came. Of course, there's a greater flowering now of consciousness than at other times.

But when we look back at the early flowers or flowerings, we see that what they show us still applies today and the patterns they talk about that have discovered in the human mind that prevent us from flowering, from being more conscious, those patterns still operate in all those humans even to this day. All humans who are not yet going through the awakening process. The patterns what the Buddha talked about, how suffering arises if one lives in disconnectedness with the deeper source and the patterns in the mind that create suffering and Jesus talked about it, how we create our suffering, how we are always in tomorrow but never today.

And all these things still apply so we can learn a lot by looking back at the early teachers and see that it still applies to a large part of humanity. So some of the people I choose are a little obscure perhaps. In other words, very few of you may have read them or even heard of them and this applies probably to today's book.

The book I've chosen for today is by a Greek philosopher called Plutarch. Probably in Latin, in Greek the name is Plutarchos and his Latin name is Plutarchus. Plutarch was born in the year 46 and he died in 120.

So whether he ever heard of Christianity, I don't know. Probably not. When he was born in 46, the first gospels that tell us of the life and teachings of Jesus weren't even written.

And this particular book is a collection or a selection of his essays. He was famous for writing essays. This is the Penguin Classic Edition, a selection of Plutarch's essays.

If you look up Plutarch in the dictionary, it will tell you or the encyclopedia, it'll tell you that he's most famous for his collection of biographies of famous Greek and Romans, Greeks and Romans called the Lives or the Parallel Lives. And that's good, but I find his essays more interesting. It's amazing when writings survive over such a long period of time.

It's a miracle that almost 2,000 year old writings have come to us through a time period where for several centuries almost nobody could read and write anymore after the collapse of the Roman Empire and the arising of what is sometimes called the Dark Ages. Almost nobody except some monks in monasteries were able to read and write. And so somehow these manuscripts survived.

People must have seen, appreciated their value and kept them safe and copied them again and again. And then the next generation again, some of those people saw their value, copied them and copied them and kept them safe and miraculously they survived. It's often the case that what's truly valuable does survive because somehow there is something, there's a faculty in humans in that even those humans who are not really awake yet, some of them can still recognize that there is a truth there that is very important.

And so they might not have been able to practice what these teachers talk about, but they saw the value and then they copied it. Oh, this sounds so good without being able to live it. Plutarch was Greek, but he lived much later than Socrates and Plato.

They lived 500 years or so before him. At the time he lived when the Roman Empire was already occupying the whole Mediterranean area and beyond. So he was born in Greece, but he also became famous in Rome and he lived in Rome for part of the time and was highly regarded as a writer and teacher.

And in Greece, his homeland, he also became a high priest at the most important spiritual site in ancient Greece at Delphi. He became a high priest at the Oracle of Delphi. Now this may look like a little book, but it's actually 400 pages of very small print.

So there's a lot here and I've chosen just one of the essays for us to look at and look at the important points, what we can still learn from him. And the essay I've chosen is called On Contentment. That's the translation from the Greek.

So it's traditionally called in English On Contentment. That is already questioned by some people whether that is a correct translation of the original. The original words that he uses as a title for this essay is euthymia, which means good spirits or cheerfulness.

It describes that state of consciousness that is, one could even say happiness, but happiness sounds a little bit too superficial. So there is good spirits, cheerfulness. Seneca, the famous Roman writer, translated some of his essays and this is one of the essays that he translated.

And he called it Tranquillitas Animae, which means something like tranquility of the spirit or tranquility of the soul. But he added a subtitle when Seneca translated it and the subtitle reads, how the mind may always pursue a uniform and unimpeded course at peace with itself, viewing its circumstances with a light heart and a joy that is unbroken so that it stays steady and calm, never raised or depressed. That's a long subtitle.

So he has already described the essence of this essay. It's about one's state of consciousness. It's about the state of inner peace.

It's about looking at what it is in humans, what it is in the human mind that tends to and habitually does obstruct the state of inner peace. He also points out somewhere there is an innate state of joyfulness in every human. And in most humans, that innate state of joy, of aliveness, of peace, but not a dead peace, but an intensely alive peace, that state is in many humans is covered up by unconscious mind activity, dysfunctional thinking.

And so humans are out of touch with that innate state, which is that really everybody's birthright, but they are out of touch with that. And we need to discover the reasons why they are out of touch. What is it that blocks that in humans?

It's not enough to say there is in you the kingdom of heaven. Of course, Jesus used that term, which is an inner state of being. It's wonderful to point to it, but it's, and occasionally it's the kingdom of heaven response when you hear that there is in you that deep peace that's always there.

And sometimes it happens that when it's pointed out, something goes within and says, yeah, I can feel that now. And that's wonderful. But it's equally if not more important to see, well, you can feel it now.

But what happens when in a minute from now, when something happens, the slightest thing goes wrong, and it's gone again, or some thought comes into your head, and you don't feel it anymore. So it's as important, if not more important to become aware what it is in us that blocks that. And this is so, that is a tradition of a teaching that points that out.

The Buddha belongs to that tradition also. He summarizes that which blocks that in us with the word desire. But there's many implications there.

When the Buddha talks about desire as the greatest obstacle, we would have to closely look at that. Perhaps on some other occasion, we'll be talking about the teaching of Buddha. So this essay is about that, what is called contentment.

Here really is the state of inner peace, alive peace. And mainly he teaches us to look at how this becomes obstructed. Once we know how the certain structures that are inherited in our minds, collective mind structures, once we recognize them when they happen in us, then that's the first step towards freedom.

If we don't know what the habitual patterns in the human mind are that block this awareness, then every time they arise, we get taken over by them. We haven't recognized them. Once we know how to recognize them, we already have one foot out of the unconsciousness.

We're already out. And the element of choice begins to be there, of not being drawn into that. There's another term that is used by ancient philosophers that expresses the same truths that I've just talked about in a negative way.

And that term is ataraxia in Greek, which is lack of mental disturbance or turmoil. So it doesn't say joy or inner peace, it explains it in negative terms. It says lack of turmoil or disturbance inside.

So many Greek philosophers, ancient philosophers talked about that. Now let's go to the essay itself. He talks at the beginning about what he calls there is an emotional or irrational part of the mind that always races away from what is actually here.

So that what he calls the emotional or irrational part of the mind is the unconscious mind. And he recognized that it has a tendency of always taking you away from what is right here, from the present moment. So that's his first insight, which of course is still very much the case.

Now he looks at what are the conditions necessary for inner peace or contentment. I'll read the first little bit to you. Whoever it was who said that contentment is impossible for anyone who busies himself with personal or public affairs makes contentment in the first place an expensive commodity if its price is inactivity.

So inactivity, he says, does not lead to contentment. In fact, it often leads to the opposite of contentment. So it's an illusion for people to believe that if I seek a life of withdrawal, I will be content and happy.

He gives an example from the Odyssey in Homer where one of the characters spent 20 years by himself away from civilization with an old woman to look after him who served his food and drink. And although he shunned his country, home and kingdom, nevertheless, his inactivity and boredom had distress as a constant close companion. Even absolute inactivity is likely to induce discontent in many cases.

And he says that people who seek fame and status should go along with this aspect of their nature and engage in politics and public life because they are inherently more likely to be thrown off balance and to be harmed by inactivity. So whatever it is that you feel drawn to, go there. Don't believe that by withdrawing from life or from getting engaged in life, you're going to find the true inner peace, which of course is spiritual awakening.

Undoubtedly, to occasionally withdraw into solitude can be a very helpful thing for anybody and a wonderful thing to occasionally withdraw. But to see that as a goal, as some people do, that if I didn't have my busy life and all the things that I have to deal with, then I could really grow spiritually. If I didn't have all the problems that I have, then I could really put all my effort into a spiritual awakening.

And that is a delusion. You start with spiritual awakening with where you are right now and consider your present circumstances as the ideal starting point and training ground for awareness of our presence. Instead of thinking, I need to get away from start here, then they may shift and change.

It doesn't mean you get stuck. If you resist your present circumstances, you get stuck. Showed wonderfully in the movie, if anybody is left on the planet who hasn't seen it, Groundhog Day, one of my favorite movies, which shows a man who is forced to repeat the same day again and again.

Every morning he wakes up, he wakes up into the same day. And it doesn't change until something within him changes. But so that expresses a very important universal truth.

There are people, he says, who think that freedom from distress resides in one way of life in particular. For instance, farming or being a bachelor or kingship, being a king or very VIP. And he called somebody who said, Menander, another philosopher, said, I used to think that rich people, because they have no debts, don't sigh at night.

I used to think that rich people, because they have no debts, don't sigh at night. Of course they do. Or toss and turn or moan, poor me.

I used to think they slept a pleasant, peaceful sleep. And this philosopher, he quotes, he then goes on to explain that in his experience, even the rich suffer exactly as the poor do. And then says, he asks himself, is grief related in some way to life?

Is grief inescapable? If you are alive, ask that question. But of course, the very reason why he writes this is, it is not inescapable.

Is grief related in some way to life? It consorts with a life of luxury, is inseparable from a life of fame, grows old with a life of poverty. Grief, grief, grief.

So if you exchange one way of life for another, it does not eradicate from the mind the factors which make it distressed and disturbed. And one of the main factors that make the mind distressed and disturbed is, it does not know how to make proper use of one's present circumstances. How to make proper use of one's present circumstances.

That's why I just said, you start with where you are now. And that's the spiritual practice is to be applied to your present circumstances. And it's extremely helpful to regard your present circumstances as ideal for your spiritual practice.

It doesn't mean you cannot take action to change them. It's being aligned with the is-ness of your present circumstances. Action can be taken on the basis of the alignment with the is-ness, on the basis of the acceptance of what is.

There's a peace suddenly, and then action can be taken if action is possible or desirable, necessary. So not being able how to use one's present circumstances is a very common thing, was then and is now. These are the storm winds that vex, both rich and poor, trouble both married and single.

They make men shun public life and then find a quiet life intolerable. They make men pursue promotion at court, imperial court, and be miserable as soon as they get it. He says it's like some people who fall ill and become very irritable when they are ill.

That's their inner state. And whatever they experience from that inner state, that's how they experience reality. So an example, their wives irritate them because they're ill and their wives irritate them.

They complain about their doctors, grumble about their beds. And for a friend to come is a nuisance, and for him to leave is an offense. So he describes a state of mind that underlies one's perception of reality that is dysfunctional.

And he gives the example of somebody who is ill, but he extrapolates from there and says it is normal for humans to have a similarly dysfunctional state of consciousness through which they then experience their daily life. And to continue the analogy of the sick person who is irritated, says when that person then becomes healthy, suddenly he's happy with everything and everybody is fine again. So something has shifted inside him, makes everything nice and pleasant.

And so the next step is then to look, what is it in us that needs to change and what needs to arise in us? And he calls it the engendering of rationality within us causes this kind of satisfaction and change of attitude towards any way of life. Now, what he calls the engendering of rationality within us, what he calls rationality is really applying one's intelligence to one's inner life, rather than applying one's intelligence exclusively to dealing with external things and conditions.

And that is an amazing discovery. It was for that time, because humans applied, they focused always on everything external. They never, I mean, even nowadays, a large part of humanity still does that.

They apply their intelligence. It's all outwardly directed, as if all the problems that I have were out there, not realizing that to a large extent, I create the problems that I seem to have out there by my unobserved mind. And the unobserved mind means I have not redirected the focus of my intelligence into my state of mind.

The reflective quality has been missing. Unawareness is the term or unconsciousness. And that's how humans generate their own suffering, not only for themselves, but also for others, whoever is around them will suffer.

So this is what he calls the engendering of rationality within us, intelligence directed, not outward, but within, self-awareness. And of course, he knew very well that the inscription at the, one of the most important inscriptions at the Oracle of Delphi, where he was the high priest, is know thyself. Know thyself has two levels.

One is to know the patterns in oneself. And once you have recognized the mind patterns in yourself, which is level one of knowing yourself, then you can go to a deeper level of knowing yourself, knowing who you are, who or what you are in your essence beyond the person. Now he gives a lovely example from history about somebody who lives in that unconscious way.

And this is Alexander the Great, the great conqueror. Once when Alexander was listening to a philosopher, and the philosopher was lecturing on the existence of an infinite number of worlds. And when Alexander listened to this philosopher lecturing on the existence of an infinite number of worlds, Alexander started to cry.

And his friends asked him what the matter was. And he replied, don't you think tears are called for if there are an infinite number of worlds, and I've not yet gained control of just this one? All this, I still haven't controlled this one.

Oh, terrible. A wonderful example of a dysfunctional state of mind. And then he gives another example of an ancient philosopher, Krates, and says, on the other hand, Krates, with his bag and threadbare cloak, spent his whole life joking and laughing as though he were on holiday.

This philosopher's threadbare cloak was, many philosophers would walk around wearing an ugly threadbare cloak, that was a sign that you were not that interested anymore in external things, but more in the inner. So this Krates walked around with one bag, and it's a little bit perhaps like the Chinese Taoist inspired Buddha with a big belly. And so threadbare would walk around with this old cloak and one bag, and his whole life he spent joking and laughing as though he were on holiday.

He had transcended the dysfunctional mind patterns, that is the implication. And so he juxtaposes Alexander the Great in his dysfunctional mind to this philosopher who had gone beyond that. He didn't need to conquer the world, because he had, one could say, conquered himself.

So then he continues to use that term that he just used, rational intelligence, which is, as I said, intelligence applied within. It is rational intelligence which makes the life one already has both the best one and the most pleasant one. So you become so aligned with the present moment that the life that you have now becomes the best one.

That would be an amazing shift if one could live in that way of inner alignment with what is. It follows, he says, that we should purify our innate well of contentment innate means we are born with it. We should purify our innate well of contentment.

There is in you a well, a spring of contentment. And we should purify it when he says that he means to get rid of the obstacles. We should purify our innate well of contentment and then external things will be in harmony with us too.

There comes a harmony between inner and outer. Whereas many humans live in a state of disharmony between the inner and the outer. It's quite, even nowadays, quite still, quite normal.

Never aligned fully with the present moment, which is life. So it follows that we should purify our innate well of contentment. What a wonderful expression.

And then external things will be in harmony with us too, provided we don't maltreat them and will seem congruent and congenial. There's no point in getting angry with one situation because it is utterly indifferent. The situation is indifferent.

In other words, it is as it is. But success will accrue to anyone who treats the situation he encounters correctly. And he gives a little example that Plato had said something similar.

Plato compared life to a game of dice in which it is not just important to throw something appropriate, but also to make good use of it, however the throw turns out. However the throw of dice turns out, you can make something, you accept that that's what is. A physical illness can make people incapable of enduring either heat or cold.

He says, I don't know if there must be some illness that makes people hard to tolerate either heat or cold. And those who muddle unintelligently through life are like that, in the sense that they get ecstatic at good fortune and depressed at bad fortune. And of course, one goes with the other because the good doesn't last or turns into its opposite.

So you go, oh, which is to say that both good and bad fortune knock them off balance. So you're at the mercy of external conditions. And again, many people still live like that.

Their inner state is at the mercy of external conditions. Intelligent people, intelligent meaning directing intelligence into yourself, intelligent people can invariably find something congruent and useful to themselves from the most forbidding of situations, even the most seemingly unpleasant situations. If you become aligned with it, something good will emerge from that.

Now he gives an example, which is a little bit humorous on this. The chief thing then to practice and pursue is the attitude exemplified by the man. This man, there was a dog that was pestering this man.

And he picked up a stone and he threw the stone at the dog to drive him away. But instead of hitting the dog, the stone hit his stepmother. And the man said, that's not bad either.

He gives a humorous example of something that we can practice not throwing stones at the stepmother. But what that means is it is possible to change opportunities so that they are no longer unwelcome. Diogenes, the philosopher, was exiled.

He was sent into exile, which was at that time always a dreadful fate because you lost your home and you were not allowed to come back. So you became homeless. So he was sent into exile.

And he says, that's not bad either, uses the term again. That's not bad either because he subsequently took up philosophy. So first he became homeless.

And if he hadn't become homeless, he would not have become a philosopher. So that's how something seemingly evil turns into good. Another famous example, he gives Zeno, the philosopher, who was the founder of what later came to be called Stoicism, a philosophy.

He was a wealthy merchant. He had many ships that transported his goods throughout the Mediterranean. And then things happened.

And he began losing money. And then several of his ships were lost at sea. And then he had just one left from his merchant fleet.

And when he was told that this one too was lost, sunk with all its cargo, his last ship, he said, thank you, fortune, for helping to drive me into a threadbare cloak. And you may remember I mentioned earlier, threadbare cloak was the philosopher's garment. So thank you, fortune, for driving me into a threadbare cloak, which means driving me to become a philosopher.

And of course he did. And he became a very famous and influential philosopher. And so this is just an example to show acceptance of a condition that arises always brings about something else that actually is often far greater value than what has been lost.

Usually things are lost on the outer. And there's something that then arises on the inner that is far more valuable than what was lost on the outer. So that's not bad either, is the phrase he repeats.

And he says, why can't the rest of us behave in the same way? Have you failed to capture some public position you were after? You can live in the country minding your own business.

Have you been spurned while courting the affection of someone in authority? You can now live a life free of risk and bother. Is your time again taken up with worldly business and worries?

Well, if that's the case, enjoy, I won't quote it all, just enjoy whatever it is that you're doing, do it fully. And then once you live in acceptance, work becomes pleasant and labor non-laborious. Now the next very common thing that another very common obstacle to living consciously and in alignment with what is and not losing one's state of inner peace and connectedness is other people.

So most people are hurt and provoked not only by the flaws of their enemies, but also by the flaws of their friends and relatives. And he says, in most, you will find in this world as you deal with people, you will find insolence, anger, spite, malice, jealousy, hostility. It then these things not only plague those people who have these weaknesses, but these things also annoy and irritate foolish people.

If you get annoyed and irritated by other humans unconsciousness, he doesn't use that term, of course, that doesn't exist then. But if you get irritated at other people's insolence, anger, spite, malice, jealousy, and hostility, then you are foolish. You're not applying your intelligence because that is the state of most humans.

So if you don't accept that, he mentions that again in a little while, you suffer continuously if you don't accept the unconsciousness of the humans around you. And once you accept it, you will regard them as doing what comes naturally to them, as dogs are when they bark. Dogs bark because that's what they do.

And humans behave because that's when they are unconscious, that's what they do. And so you will stop unwittingly being infected by other people's flaws. When you react, you get infected and you lose consciousness.

And another important thing, he tells us not to become discontented or depressed when you realize that you yourself have flawed and defective character. So you discover these things not only in yourself, in others, but you may discover in yourself also there are these unconscious traits. It's not only other humans who are jealous and hostile and whatever.

You may discover them in yourself, but don't become depressed or discontented. It's enough to discover it because that's the, you're beginning to step out of the unconsciousness. Another very common trait that is unconscious in the, they're all things in the structure of the human mind.

When an unwelcome incident occurs in your life, anything goes wrong, big or small, an unwelcome incident occurs in your life, it is good for contentment not to ignore all the gratifying and nice things that you have, but to use a process of blending to make the better aspect of our lives obscure the glare of the worst ones. Even when something unwelcome happens, there's still large areas of your life that are actually good. One event happens, yes, it may be challenging.

What happens easily is that the unwelcome event, the problem, whatever it is that arises, something that goes wrong in your life, and of course these things happen all the time, they can draw your attention in completely so that this incident takes over your entire life or your entire consciousness. You forget that there's a vast area of your life that is not touched by that. So there's the good still, and that is very true if some, you can verify it for yourself at any moment.

It's like seeing only the one spot in the beautiful carpet, suddenly a dark spot appears there, but that makes up 10% of the carpet or the rug, but it can easily draw your attention in so completely. That's all you see now, and that's all you react to. That's why I often say, take your attention back into the present moment, and you will always find the goodness that is there, not only outside of you, there's the sky, there's you're sitting on a chair, you're breathing, there's the aliveness all around you, there's the aliveness in your inner body that you can feel, and there's your consciousness.

And to be aware of that is, you see things then in a larger context, rather get a distorted view of life. We strain the mind to glimpse the aspects that hurt it, and we force it to occupy itself with thoughts of the things that hurt it. Things that irritate it, by tearing it almost violently away from the better aspects.

And yet the question addressed to the busy body can be transferred to this context and fit in nicely. Why are you so quick to spot someone else's weakness, but overlook your own? That's what Jesus also talked about.

And so we might ask, why, my friend, do you obsessively contemplate your own weakness and constantly clarify and revivify it, but fail to apply your mind to the good things you have? He's full of examples, some of them numerous. Now he gives another example of that state.

You are like the wine seller, a wine merchant, who sells plenty of quality wine. This wine merchant sells plenty of quality wine to other people. Whether this person actually existed or not, we don't know.

He probably did. But for his own meal, he used to taste wines until he found a vinegary one. So he sold the good wines.

But for himself, he tasted until he found really bad wine. And that's the one he would drink with his meal, this wine merchant. And when someone asked one of his servants what his master was doing right now, the servant replied, looking for bad when surrounded by good.

Looking for bad, in this analogy, he's looking for the bad wine. But he's surrounded by the good wine. And so this is an example for how in many humans the mind operates, looking for the bad when surrounded by good.

Does it sound familiar? A long time ago, perhaps your mind operated in that way too. The next statement that comes after this that I just read connects with that.

I actually put this quote on my Facebook two weeks ago. And as a matter of fact, most people do bypass what is good and refreshing in their lives and focus straight on the unpleasant and bad elements. Elements.

Most people bypass what is good and refreshing in their lives and go bad and focus straight on the unpleasant and bad elements. An amazing thing that people do to themselves. Another example, he says it's a bit like when something splits, somebody loses something or something happens.

Many people behave like little children who, when deprived of just one of their many toys, wail and scream and throw all the rest of their toys away. In the same way, if we let fortune distress us just once, then our whining and resentment deprives everything else as well of any benefit to us. Our whining and resentment deprives everything else as well of any benefit to us.

And this leads him now to talk to mention the importance of gratitude. It's not just a new age thing, gratitude. Somebody else discovered it 2000 years ago.

And we must not overlook even things we share with others, but take them into account and be thankful, be thankful that we have life and health and that we walk the earth. Be thankful that we walk the earth. That there's no war right now.

Here there isn't. There's no war, either foreign or civil. But that we may, if we so choose, farm the land and sail the seas without fear.

That the full range of possibilities is open to us from oratory and politics or to a quiet and inactive life. So it's important to appreciate these things and not wait until we don't have them anymore and then appreciate them and regret that we don't have them, but we took everything for granted when we had it. If we do this, then we will not rate and value any of these things highly only once it has been lost while discounting it altogether as long as it is in our keeping.

So, so important to not to have this attitude of taking things for granted, which means not appreciating the good that's in your life. Only like the wine merchant, always looking for the bad. And that is something embedded in the structure of the human mind.

And this is how still to this day, millions of people make themselves miserable in that way. And they don't know they're doing it. They think it's the world and situations and other people that's making them miserable, not realizing it's their mind.

It's the unconscious mind structure. And connected with that, most people think it is their duty to use their minds to explore and their eyes to examine other people's poems, paintings, and statues in precise and minute detail. They look at poems, paintings, statues, yet they forget their own lives, which could provide plenty of areas for pleasurable reflection.

They constantly look outwards and are impressed by other people's fame and fortune, just as adulterers are by other men's wives, but belittle themselves and what they already have. It's always the other looking at what others have. Oh, I don't have that.

Don't compare yourself to others, he says. What one should avoid is lining oneself up against people who are better off, despite the fact that this is a usual practice. Prisoners, for instance, envy those who have been freed.

And those people envy people who have always been free and never were in prison. And those envy those who have a citizen status that was highly regarded. To be a Roman citizen, not everybody had that.

The green card, I suppose. Envy those with citizen status, who in turn, those who have citizen status, envy rich people, who in turn envy province commanders, who in turn envy kings, who, because they almost aspire to making thunder and lightning, the kings, the kings envy the gods. There's always somebody you compare yourself to.

Consequently, since they never attain things which are out of their reach, they are never thankful for the things that are relevant to them. The only possible description of this is self-mortification and self-inflicted punishment as a result of scrambling for reasons to be ungrateful to fortune. Just find reasons why to be ungrateful to life.

Socrates tells a little story that actually probably happened. Socrates once heard one of his acquaintances remarking how expensive Athens was. Things are so expensive, he said.

A bottle of wine, you pay five drachma. For a purple dyed robe, you pay that amount of money. And for a pot of honey, you pay that amount of drachma.

It's terrible. Everything is so expensive, so he said. And Socrates grabbed hold of him and showed him some grain.

And he says, that costs us five pennies here. Essence is cheap. And then he showed him some olives and said, two drachma for these olives.

Essence is cheap. And then he showed him some simple cloaks, not purple dyed cloaks. Says, this costs 10 drachma.

Essence is cheap. Despite all this, we habitually live out of stupidity with our attention on others rather than on ourselves. So since human nature contains plenty of malicious envy and spite, with the result that the degree of pleasure we feel in what is ours is less than the degree of irritation we feel at other people's successes.

So we take less pleasure in what is ours than the amount of irritation we feel at somebody else's success. That's a very unconscious way to live, but still applies to quite a few millions of people. However, when you look more closely, he says, at those people that you admire, which may be rich or famous or whatever that you compare yourself to or resent, then you must also remove and draw aside the florid veil, so to speak, of their reputation and their facade and get inside where you will notice that they contain plenty of unsavory features and plenty of unpleasantness.

If you look behind the facade of those people, the rich, the famous, you will find lots of unpleasantness. Plenty of troubles accompany wealth, fame, and kingship, but most people fail to notice them under the showy veneer, the glossy surface that you see. Now he quotes something from Homer, the Odyssey, where somebody is told, son of Atreus, you are fortunate.

Your birth was favored by fate and your destiny is to prosper. And that kind of praise is given, he says, for weaponry, horses, and an extensive army, lots of external possessions. But from within come the contradictory emotional cries bearing witness against this hollow fame.

The same man who was told he was so fortunate said, I envy you, he said to an old man. I envy anyone whose life is at an end if he has kept himself safe by avoiding recognition and fame. He uses the term self-love, which really is a word for ego.

And another example of that, it's all really, whatever he's talking about is aspects of ego. The self-love which makes people ambitious and competitive, whatever the situation, and makes them greedily take on everything. They not only expect to be rich, erudite, strong, outgoing, pleasant, and intimate with kings and leaders of nations, but they are discontented if their dogs, horses, quails, and cocks, which were used in sport, are not the best at what they do.

Dionysus, the ruler, was not satisfied with being the most important tyrant of his time, but because his verse, he taught poetry, was worse than that of a famous poet, and he failed to do better than Plato at philosophical discussion, he got furiously angry. He imprisoned the poet in the quarries and sent Plato to be sold into slavery because they were better at something than he was. So he says to, not everything is for everyone.

One should follow the Delphic inscription and know oneself, and then engage in the single activity for which one is naturally suited, and one should avoid forcibly and unnaturally compelling oneself to envy alternative ways of life, to envy other people's ways of life. So the jars of good and bad do not sit on the threshold of Zeus, the god, but lie in our minds. Foolish people overlook and ignore good things even when they are present, because their thoughts are always straining towards the future.

Yes, their thoughts are always straining towards the future. This is one of the, I so often point it out. We all know it, everybody has experienced it within him or herself, but many of us are now going beyond that pattern.

Now comes another important point that people tend to ignore, that he mentions, and that is the, it is impossible to eradicate and exclude the gloomy aspects from your life altogether, because the world is fitted together by interchange between opposites, light and dark. And there's nothing in human life that only has one side. There's always the other side in external existence.

So to expect not to experience the other side is unrealistic and leads to suffering. There are polarities in this life, and often you can observe you gain something here, but by having gained this here, you lose something there. From my own life, I used to, for years, I did workshops with people, spiritual workshops and talks, 10 people coming together for a weekend, sometimes 15, and I've done workshops with two or three.

One workshop I did, one person turned up. The organizer forgot to advertise it properly, and so I came, I arrived on a Saturday morning, and there was a lineup at the door of one person, and I did it, and there was a lot of interaction, of course, with the people, especially with the one, but even with 10, there was this wonderful connectedness, and I was always available to, even people would come, they could call me up anytime, and I would help them. At some point then, of course, I was only very small scale, not reaching that many people.

Go forward a few more years, and suddenly you have 2,000 people coming to a talk. I get ushered in and out by people. If I linger, I get swarmed and can't get out of the place for an hour.

There's no longer the connectedness with humans isn't there anymore on that level that I enjoyed so much, and then go forward a bit more, comes Oprah, and then can't even sit in private in a coffee shop anymore because people quite often come up and want something or say something. Sometimes it's very nice, but I always loved privacy, and so to some extent, that's lost, but what is gained is an enormous amount, the teaching reaching huge numbers of people, which is wonderful, but what is gained here is lost there. The personal interaction that was so enjoyable is lost, and anonymity, I loved not being recognized, and for most of my life, nobody paid attention to me.

That was wonderful, and then that changed, so there was a loss of what I loved and valued. It's just recognizing that what you lose here, you gain something here, you lose something, there are polarities in life. If you're extremely strong physically, then perhaps your intellectual faculties may not be so highly developed, or if your intellectual faculties are highly developed, you may be a weakling, or as Arnold called somebody, Arnold from California, you're a puny loser.

You can't have it all. There's always polarities in everybody's life, and so you experience this, and if you then complain that there's something that you don't have, then it's a non-recognition of how life works, if you cannot surrender to the fact that there are polarities in life. Events too contain polarity.

Good and bad are inseparable, but blending is possible to make things fine. In music, there are low notes and high notes, and in grammar, there are vowels and consonants. And musicianship and literacy do not come from disliking and avoiding one or the other extreme, but from knowing how to make use of them all and how to blend them into an appropriate mixture.

Another philosopher, he quotes, says, each of us has two destinies or deities which take us in hand and into their power when we are born. Now comes a poetic expression of that. Earth was there and far-seeing sun, bloody discord and tranquil harmony, beauty and ugliness, speed and slowness, fair truth and dark-locked doubt.

So the potential for this is in everyone. There is the dark and the light, the transcendence is not achieved on the outer level of the polarities. The polarities continue to manifest on the external level.

The transcendence of the polarities, I'm adding a little bit here, the transcendence of the polarities is an inner thing. Within, there is a state of consciousness that is a transcendent state where, and from there, the polarities are allowed to be. You are no longer dependent on them for your state of consciousness.

Anyone with any sense prays for the better things but expects the others as well and copes with both sets by never behaving excessively. Increased enjoyment of wealth, fame, power and status depend on decreased dread of their opposites. If you dread the opposite, you can't enjoy what you have.

So if you have the so-called good now and if you dread the opposite, you might lose it. That will greatly diminish your ability to enjoy what you have now. A strong desire for each of these things, wealth, fame, power, whatever it may be, a strong desire for each of them instills a very strong fear of their departure.

And so it weakens and destabilizes the pleasure as if it were a candle flame in a draft. So the pleasure, there's a candle flame burning but there's a constant draft. Which is the mind fearing the loss that might come.

But there's the possibility of standing up to fortune fearlessly and unflinchingly and say, you are welcome if you bring a gift and no great ordeal if you leave. You welcome the good but you know it's all fleeting, no great thing if it's gone. So if you know that the coming and going, the polarities are always there, nothing in the world of form is permanent, then once you know that, you can actually appreciate what you have or what comes to you knowing at some point it will leave you again.

But if you don't know that it's a world of polarities, then you get attached to that which arises in your life, you attach yourself to it, your sense of who you are begins to depend on it. And then you begin to think, oh, it might, there are all kinds of threats, it may disappear, I may lose it, it may be taken away from me. And of course it will sooner or later because everything is impermanent.

But you cannot then enjoy, so when you identify with it, you are attached to it, the enjoyment is much less because attachment implies fear. You cannot have attachment without the fear of losing it. The very fact that you are attached means your sense of self goes into that, whether it's possessions or status or some function that you have or some role that you play, whatever it is.

The attachment means you seek yourself in it and then there is, even if you are not conscious of it all the time, there's fear underneath of losing it. But there's a possibility of enjoyment without attachment and really that's what he is talking about. And only then is there true enjoyment of things and you no longer fear their loss.

And in this way, you can solely enjoy whatever the present situation is. The next quote, I actually also quote it in the power of now, although at the time I only had it in my head, I didn't remember who said it. So in the power of now, I just said a Greek philosopher said, and this is a famous quote.

And this was an extreme case of acceptance when he was told by a messenger that his son had died, he said, I knew that I had fathered a mortal. I think the way I quoted it in the power of now was, I said, I knew he was not immortal. And I said in the power of now, now we might think this is, inhuman, but we don't know what the state of this man was when he said, I knew he was not immortal or I knew I had fathered a mortal, whether it was somebody who was incapable of experiencing emotion or whether he was somebody who had transcended attachment and gone so deep that he was in touch with that which is beyond death.

And it is quite possible that when he said, I knew he was not immortal, he might have wept at the same time because the loss of the form of his son would have been painful and he would have been at peace deep within at the same time. And so you can weep and say, I knew he was immortal and I know I always have known it. So there is a deeper dimension present and that is really true inner peace that is not disturbed by outer conditions, which does not mean you cannot feel the emotion of sadness that may be there.

These are wave movements, but you're not dragged along in them. You're not totally controlled by that. It's there and there's a transcendence at the same time.

And Plutarch recommends that we should mirror this person and say, for example, I know that the wealth I have is transitory and unstable. I know that the wealth I have is transitory and unstable. Or I know that I owe my position to people who have the power to remove it.

Or I know that although my wife is good, she's a woman and that my friend is human, a member of an inherently inconstant species. They are all humans and you know they might do certain things that are very unexpected. They are a member of an, this is a quote from Plato, he says, they are a member of an inherently inconstant species.

So trust everybody to do what they do. They might be, they maybe suddenly behave unconsciously. It could happen.

They are inconstant, subject to all kinds of mood swings and different states of consciousness. So once you know that, there is a trust without needing somebody to behave consistently in one particular way because they probably won't. It's again, it's all connected with coming to terms with the constant, the play of polarities in life.

And he says, the point is that if anything happens which may be unwelcome but is not unexpected, this kind of preparedness and character leaves no room for, I couldn't have imagined it or this isn't what I had hoped for or I didn't expect this. And so the heart, and so it stops the heart lurching and beating fast and so on and quickly settles derangement and disturbance back onto a foundation. So you're no longer surprised when the polarities manifest in your life.

Now, again, this all connected. Unwelcome events, of course, a part of the how we experience the dark side. To express the matter generally, while some unwelcome events do by their very nature entail distress and pain, there may be some events in your life that actually physically might involve distress and pain or somebody very close to you may die and there will be some distress and pain.

That's inevitable. Nevertheless, where the majority of such events are concerned, unwelcome events, where the majority of such events are concerned, it is our minds that condition and teach us to resent them. In the majority of cases, it is our mental reaction that creates the suffering.

And therefore, when faced with this second, this latter category of unwelcome events, it is useful to remember this philosopher's quote or line, which says, no experience is terrible unless you make it so. He is implicitly asking the question, unless your body or mind are actually affected, what difference does it make to you if, for example, your father was not an aristocrat, your wife is having an affair, you fail to win some prize or you lose your ride to the front seats in the theater. That was ancient Greece, so highly valued front seats in the theater.

For these occurrences do not stop a man being in excellent physical or mental condition. And where the former events are concerned, the ones which do seem by their very nature to cause distress, such as illness, a friend's or child's death, then he recommends us to remember the line of Euripides, who wrote, I say, poor me, but why? I am only experiencing what it is to be human.

I say, poor me, but why? I'm only experiencing what it is to be human. These are things which we cannot avoid.

This necessity, which is due to corporeality, to having a physical body here, a lot of wisdom that still applies nowadays as it did 2,000 years ago. Let's conclude. We are getting to the end of the essay on contentment.

Let's conclude the way he concludes here. A philosopher, Diogenes, was visiting Sparta, the city-state, and he saw his host busily getting ready for a festival day. And he said, isn't it the mark of a good man to regard every day as a festival day?

And Plutarch adds to this, and a particularly glorious festival too if we see things aright. The world is a temple of the highest sacredness, and nowhere could be more suitable for divinity. And man is introduced into this world by means of his birth, not to view manufactured, immobile images, but to gaze upon what Plato describes as the perceptible likeness of intelligible things which divine intelligence has manifested as containers of an inherent principle of life and movement, the sun, moon, and stars, the rivers with their continuous discharge of renewed water, and the earth with its supply of means of nourishment for plants and creatures.

Life is an initiation into these things, and there is no more perfect way to celebrate them. Life, therefore, should be full of contentment and joy, and we should not make the usual mistake of waiting for occasional days like the holidays sacred to Kronos, Zeus, or Athena for the opportunity to enjoy and revivify ourselves by paying mimes and dancers for bored entertainment. And we don't need to confine our sense of aliveness in our joy to those occasions when we pay dancers and mimes for entertainment or celebrate public festivals.

Every day and every moment is an occasion for the celebration of life. That's a wonderful way to end his discourse on how to live sanely or consciously, how to go beyond patterns in the collective mind that go back thousands of years. It was thousands of years, most probably, of the patterns that he describes and other teachers that were just operating totally unconsciously.

Everybody was totally in their grip until a few humans came who started directing their intelligence within. And even now, the majority of humanity still lives in the unconscious way, but more and more humans are awakening. And what we've just been talking about is more than just words, much more than just words.

It's part of the awakening of consciousness on the planet. And it's timeless. It's not really a 2,000-year-old teaching.

Thank you. Welcome. Make sure you are here with your attention rather than in your mind and in your thinking.

Then you'll be somewhere else. A helpful thing is to look at this from the point of view of the present moment. Come out of your mind means come into the present moment.

The present moment is this. The surface of this, your sense perceptions, and the depth of this. And that's the real present moment, the depth.

The depth cannot be defined conceptually. It can be pointed to. That's why I'm using words, but it cannot be understood conceptually.

And your mind will not know what I mean when I say depth. Depth, what does that mean? To the mind, it's just another concept.

But if depth can be a signpost, so rather than look at if this is the signpost, you say, depth, what's that? You have to then let go of the concept and sense, so to speak, inside right now, the depth that makes all the sense perceptions and the experience of this moment possible in you, the space in you, the light in you in which this room appears is seen, is perceived, in which this voice is heard. It appears in there, that has no form, but it makes all this possible.

This may be a dream, but even if it is a dream, there's something that makes this dream possible to be. And that's the essence of who you are. And you sense that within yourself.

And that is, when you do that, another way of putting it, you're then sensing what now actually means. So beyond what appears in the now, which is this room and this voice and the flowers and the light, there's something deeper that cannot be understood or conceptualized. We could say it's consciousness itself.

You are the light of the world, somebody said 2000 years ago. You are the light of the world. Now, that's not the you that has a name and a little history.

There's a deeper essence to you, the consciousness that you are. That's the light of the world. So we become aware of that.

And that's becoming aware of the now. It's one with the now, what we call the now. That's the power of now, is to become aware of that directly.

And that frees you from the temporary person. There's nothing wrong with the person. That you are for a while.

But if that's all there is, then it's very frustrating. Little me with a little history and the end will come soon. So you become still and alert and spacious inside.

Nothing needs to be understood at this moment. There's an intelligence there that doesn't need to understand conceptually, which means cut it up into little bits and pieces. That's conceptual understanding.

Oh, they're not small enough. I need to understand more. And then you get a grinder or whatever.

That's called a PhD. But you never get beyond. You just can cut smaller and smaller segments.

And then you need a big microscope. And of course, the ultimate mystery can never be known that way because it cannot be worked out conceptually. So you become still inside and alert, spacious.

The greatest thing is finding the spaciousness inside yourself. Right now, we don't need to know even who you are anymore. But for you are that light, but you don't need to call it light.

You are that space, but you don't need to call it space. Just be it. Of course, what's in the way of that?

Can that be a continuous realization rather than just when you are in a protected environment like here, nothing is impinging upon your senses. Everything is conducive towards this realization. No phone is ringing.

No computer screens flashing saying, give me attention. But then life, you go back into life. And then is it possible to live this realization as a continuous state of being?

Yes, that's the art. That's why you're here, to bring that into your daily, not just to have little experiences. And then you remember them and say, I had a great experience there five years ago.

And then life happened. So as we are here together in the background, there is that presence in the background of who you are. And that's the essence of this gathering.

And that's why we are here. And even while we look at seemingly other things, they are not other things. At the most, we look at the things that tend to obscure the realization of the depths within yourself.

Things that tend to interfere and take you away, obscure it. That is helpful to know what tends to habitually obscure that realization. Because if you don't know it, you get taken over by it without even knowing it.

And just, it has you. There's no recognition of it. So it's very helpful to recognize how it happens that the depths that you are becomes obscured through misuse of the mind, dysfunctional mind patterns and habitual ways of thinking.

It's also wonderful, of course, to be here and occasionally just experience the stillness in between the words without thinking that it needs to be filled with something. And then you can experience the same experience when you're at home. One of these habit patterns of the mind, dysfunctional habit patterns, is that this moment needs to be filled with something.

Of course, you have to do things, but also see if you can experience the spaciousness of this moment. The civilization tells you, you have to fill every moment with some kind of doing. And then you lose the sense of being.

And when you lose the sense of being, no doing is ever enough to satisfy you, except very briefly. Ah, I got that done. And 10 seconds later, the mind said, oh, okay, now I have to think about, oh, yeah, still, okay, all those things still to do.

Oh, and then I got, oh, I got that done. Throughout history, from time to time, there were individuals who recognized, even a long time ago, they recognized the habitual dysfunction of the human mind and they recognized it as a dysfunction. And they said, there is a way out.

There is a way beyond. They pointed to the nature of the dysfunction and they pointed to the way beyond. A very famous person, of course, is the Buddha, who saw that.

He described the dysfunction. He saw that if you live in the dysfunctional state, you suffer. So normal human existence, he said, is suffering.

But there is a way out of suffering. So that's, Buddha is a famous example of someone who had this recognition. One of the most important moments in the history of humanity, not the battles or the kings or the mad emperors or the politicians, that's not.

One of the most important moments in the history of humanity was the recognition on the part of one human being of what's wrong with humans and what's right with humans. So the Buddha said, I teach suffering and the end of suffering, which means I show you how you create your own suffering. I show you how you can go beyond your own suffering that you create by stopping to create it.

That's the message of the Buddha. And there were others also who had that realization. Jesus had the realization expressed in different terms according to the listener and the culture.

And always a few people here and there had that realization there's a thread running through history and that thread is sometimes called the perennial philosophy. There's a knowing there that surfaces from time to time and then gets buried again and then surfaces again. And a few people get changed by it in history.

But most humans don't understand, except now more humans are beginning to understand than before, not just understand, able to realize the truth of it. And I find it wonderful to discover when I read an ancient book to see, wow, there's already that basic realization there of the dysfunction of the human mind. And this is why in these sessions from time to time, I talk about a book or a teaching that is ancient or well, from some time past.

You may know that I've already spoke briefly about the Tao Te Ching, about the meditations by Marcus Aurelius and about the teachings of Ralph Waldo Emerson in the 19th century. But it's always, it's just looking at the fundamental truth through slightly different lenses. That's all it is.

And when we talk about it here, it's not like a university lecture. I don't want to give you knowledge about history. That's what, you don't need that.

It really, whatever we talk about here is about you. So if we talk about this philosophy that few people have heard of called Epictetus, ha, E-P-I-C-T-E-T-U-S, who lived about 2000 years ago. He was born in the year 55, Greek.

We're not really talking about Epictetus. We're not really talking about, we are talking about, it's always about you. So this, I only discovered this really a couple of years ago in his teachings.

I had a book that I bought a long, long time ago in England in a secondhand bookstore, but I never got into Epictetus in that way. The translation, I think, was not very good. And then I got this book and said, wow, this is wonderful.

It's the, it's a good, it's a wonderful translation too. This is the Penguin Classic, Epictetus. Just something that may be helpful to know about him, because how did he get this realization of the, how did he discover it?

What helped him to discover it? Yes, he had one or two teachers, but his main teacher was his personal circumstances and his personal circumstances were as follows. He was a slave.

He was born into slavery. His mother was already a slave. So he grew up as a slave and for part of his adult life, he was a slave.

His body was also crippled. He described himself as lame. Nobody knows exactly in what way.

And there is one ancient source says that his master, the person who owned him, mistreated him and he caused, he broke his legs or his leg or something. And that may be true. So here we have first two factors.

A person who is not free externally and a person who is not free as far as mobility is concerned. A person who has no status in society. And another factor is that his master, who was quite wealthy, lived in Rome and was always at the court, the imperial court of the infamous emperor Nero.

One of the many completely insane emperors. If you read that, any politician is very sane. He's relative to them.

Even the most insane Western, well, there've been some others, but let's not go there. So he also would often, for some reason, maybe he accompanied his master as a servant. He would actually observe what was happening in court.

He was a nobody, but he observed the most important people in the empire, how they behaved, what they did and what happened to them. Of course, the closer you were in court to the emperor, the more dangerous your life would be, especially if the empress is mad. So his teaching was his condition, which one would say would really probably create an unhappy human being.

If you're a slave, you're crippled, and you have to watch all these wealthy and powerful people. So on the surface, that would be enough reason to justify unhappiness or a low opinion of yourself. And perhaps that was the case initially, but he discovered in himself that the cause of his unhappiness was not the situation.

And here we come to one of the two central points of his teaching. The cause of any upset or unhappiness, he said, is not the situation or the condition, but the thoughts that my mind is creating concerning the situation or the condition. And the moment he realized that, there was no more suffering.

He became free from external condition. And that is the second point of his teaching, the possibility for humans to become free as far as their external, internal state is concerned, to become free of externals. That's his teaching.

The two are connected, of course, that any upset arises from your mind and not from the situation, the suffering, the unhappiness, arises through judgment or situations. And we always look to externals, he says, for our fulfillment, and we never find it. And he points to the possibility of becoming free of that.

And then no matter what the external situation is, inside you have a space of freedom. You are no longer a reactive entity. You are no longer governed by external events.

And that's an incredible freedom. Because if your inner state is always dependent on external events, then you're at the mercy of what happens or fails to happen but should happen. You're at the mercy of what people do and say or should do and say but don't.

You're at the mercy of everything. And so you live in that way. That is unconscious living, dysfunctional living.

And he saw all that through his own condition. So, wonderful thing. Then he became free internally.

And a little later, he was given his freedom externally. And this was not totally uncommon. It happened quite frequently that a slave, after working for 20 or 30 years, the master would say, I'll give you your freedom.

And he did. He became free, and he became a teacher of so-called philosophy, which is very different from what is called philosophy at university these days. This philosophy is intensely vital.

It is teaching you how to live. So he was more a spiritual teacher than a philosopher. But at the time, the word for it was philosopher.

He became a philosopher. And then he moved to Greece, and he set up a school of philosophy, which became quite famous. And people would travel, many Romans would travel to Thetis to learn with him.

And in the end, even when Nero was no longer emperor, the emperor Hadrian actually visited him to pay his respects. The slave become a philosopher. And even the emperor Marcus Aurelius considered him to be one of his teachers.

So his social condition and so on becomes irrelevant there. Marcus Aurelius had certain realizations, perhaps not the deepest possible, but he saw some things very clearly. And he was wealthy and powerful.

And Epictetus saw the same things very clearly. And he had no power and no wealth and wasn't interested. It made no difference.

External conditions then become irrelevant. So he also teaches to use all conditions in your life as something helpful, because you can practice. He compares it to having a sparring partner if you're training for the Olympics or whatever.

Every condition is something you can use. The ability grows in you, the freedom, if you are challenged by a condition, then how do you approach the challenge? With inner resistance, or are you able to accept what is?

There's great power in that. And then you grow internally, so to speak, in consciousness, the light grows. The more challenges you have, the better.

And he said, to quote one sentence, he said, if you look at tragedies, ancient Greek tragedies, they're really based on certain dysfunctional mind patterns, and that creates the tragedy. You can look the same way at any modern movie or novel. People behave in certain dysfunctional ways, and that creates the drama.

So he says, behold the birth of tragedy when idiots come face-to-face with the challenges of life. Idiot means a person who is unconsciously reacting, and then you create your own drama in life, when you come face-to-face with the challenges of life. But even in translation, this is a very good translation in this book, Penguin Classic.

It is powerful, and it is, I'm sure, more or less exactly how he spoke. And that's wonderful. I'll read a few things to you in a minute.

It still has the power to transform. So a little story in connection with that. You may remember, some of you, in 1992, Ross Perot was running as an independent for President of the United States, and he had chosen as his running mate a person called Stockdale.

And Stockdale, of course, Ross Perot didn't become president, so Stockdale didn't become vice president, but he later became the vice admiral in the Navy. What's important about Stockdale is that in Vietnam, he was a fighter pilot, and he was shot down, and he was a prisoner of war for seven years, four years of which he lived in solitary confinement. And he credits his survival to the teachings of Epictetus.

He had apparently a little book with him of the teachings, and he said that was what kept him alive. When he was shot down, the story goes, and he was ejected from the plane, and then he could see the soldiers coming towards him with rifles. He said he whispered to himself, I'm leaving the world of technology, and I'm entering the world of Epictetus.

And the next seven years were his, the application of the teaching. I will now take a few very short passages and read, and then talk about each one. I must warn you, sometimes he can be quite extreme, and you say, oh, no.

It is not events that disturb people, it is their judgment concerning them. Death, for example, is nothing frightening, otherwise it would have frightened Socrates. But the judgment that death is frightening, now that is something to be afraid of.

So when we are frustrated, angry, or unhappy, never hold anyone except ourselves, that is our judgments, accountable. When we are frustrated, angry, or unhappy, never hold anyone except ourselves, that is to say our judgments, accountable. An ignorant person is inclined to blame others for his own misfortune.

To blame oneself is proof of progress, but the wise man never has to blame another or himself. So you look to the root cause of where unhappiness arises, where upset arises, not the situation. It's my judgment about the situation.

A vital teaching. And as you practice that, gradually, you become free of attachment to your mind. You gradually disidentify from what your mind is saying.

And gradually, more spaciousness arises in you as you disidentify from the judgment of your mind by recognizing it as a judgment. So that's the work, you could call it. That's the practice.

And life continuously gives you stuff to practice with. Stuff happens continuously. And of course, if you say, why did I want to have some peace and quiet?

But life doesn't allow you. And if you do get peace and quiet, then that becomes the problem. There's nothing happening anymore.

And now he has a little bit of advice of how to approach things so that you become free of the dependency on externals. In the case of particular things that delight you or benefit you, or to which you have grown attached, remind yourself of what they are. Start with things of little value.

If it is a piece of china that you like, for instance, say, I am fond of a piece of china. Because otherwise the mind says, this is the precious thing from so-and-so that I inherited. It's a piece of china.

Yes, but I bought it at Sotheby's. It's a piece of china. Okay, so then because if you discover attachment, say, oh, I'm fond of a piece of china.

When it breaks, then you won't be as disconcerted. Now, the next step here is where you go. When giving your wife or child a kiss, repeat to yourself, I'm kissing a mortal.

Then you won't be as distraught if they are taken from you. Of course, it's a fact. You are kissing a mortal.

You are kissing a mortal, aren't you? Yes, it's a fact. Of course, the mind says, yeah, but why should I remind myself of that?

Well, it might seem a little extreme to you, but just to have the experience you don't have to say that verbally, but to know at the back of your mind that any human being that you're with or yourself, yes, you are mortals. The end could come at any moment. Of course, it could.

I'm kissing a mortal. And now comes a little bit, some other piece of advice. They're all very closely related, of course.

Whenever planning an action mentally, rehearse what the plan entails. If you're heading out to base, picture to yourself the typical scene at the bathhouse. That's where they used to go to place.

People splashing, pushing, yelling, and pinching your clothes. You will complete the act with more composure if you say at the outset, I want a bath, but at the same time, I want to keep my will aligned with nature. So you know what you want.

That's one aim that you have. Of course, you will go there to have a bath, but that's not all. I also want what he calls, keep my will aligned with nature, means not to fall out of alignment with the present moment and the flow of life internally, not to step out of alignment with that, to keep my will aligned with that.

In other words, let's translate it into our terminology. I'm going there to have a bath, but I'm also going there to stay present. So you have an inner aim and an outer aim.

So what he's really actually saying is, don't have just outer aims, because then you get lost in the outer. As you pursue your outer aims, remind yourself that you have also an inner aim that's even more important than the outer aim. That is to stay present as you engage in action and do things.

So that's extremely useful to remember, because otherwise you go into situations and they don't unfold as they should. The mind says, and you get upset. And upset, by the way, is a form of suffering.

Anger is a form of suffering. Now, the egoic mind doesn't know that. The egoic minds have a right to be angry in this situation, but you're suffering.

Suffering? No, I'm not suffering. Now, if you look into your body, then you will know that you're suffering, because if you look and see what the anger does to the physiology of the body, to your heart, to your breathing, to the circulation of your blood, and so on, you realize that your body is actually suffering from this emotional state.

It is suffering. For the first time, they discovered it when they discovered 200 years ago, whenever it was, somebody was shot in the stomach and the hole just didn't heal. So that was the first person, they could peer into his stomach and see when he got angry, the lining of the stomach became red.

The first time they saw that, whoa. And many other things happen in the body. So it is a form of suffering.

And so, two aims. I'm here to get from A to B, but I'm also here to practice presence, to be present. I'm here to discuss the important business deal, but I'm also here to be present.

The two, you have the inner aim and the outer aim. That's what he is saying. If you forget the inner, you get lost in stuff and it overpowers you and you get overwhelmed and life becomes frustrating.

Lost in externals, as he would say. Externals, all that matters. I want to bathe, but at the same time, I want to keep my will aligned with nature.

Do this with every act. That way, if something occurs to spoil your bath, you will have readied the thought, well, this was not my only intention. I also meant to keep my will in line with nature, which is impossible if I go all to pieces whenever anything bad happens.

If you go all to pieces when something bad happens, of course, you're not aligned with the flow of life. You're not aligned with what is in the present moment. That's the dysfunction.

Wonderful teaching. And it's as relevant now as it was then. Sickness is a problem for the body, not the mind, unless the mind decides that it is a problem.

Lameness too is the body's problem, not the mind's. Of course, he was talking from experience. Say this to yourself, whatever the circumstance, and you will find without fail that the problem pertains to something else, not to you.

In other words, you can be free of problems. Another way of putting it, there is no problem. There only is what is.

And that's your incredible liberation. If you can go through life realizing that there are no problems, there are only situations. If you can live that, then you're a master, living as a master.

There are no problems, only situations. Under no circumstances ever say, I have lost something. Only say, I returned it.

And now another one where you go, oh no. Because it could be misinterpreted as being insensitive. And it has, this has happened historically.

Some people did not fully understand the teaching and they thought it's to do with desensitizing yourself to life and putting up a barrier to life where you go, nothing touches me anymore, like a wall. You sometimes have that with Zen practitioners too. Because it can also, this is certain similarities with his teaching in Zen.

And the way he lived would be very much like a Zen master lives. Just, this is what is. Where's the problem?

Now, some people observe the Zen masters and they kind of, but they can't, they don't live it in the right way, which means they don't surrender to what is. They put up a wall to what is, against what is. And that, this is how this teaching could be misinterpreted and lead to insensitivity.

So this is not becoming insensitive to life or to other human beings. It's to open yourself more to life and other human beings. On the surface, it might look desensitizing yourself.

No, it's opening yourself because it's all to do with acceptance. So there's a huge difference between putting up a wall to life and accepting life. And people who put up an inner wall, it's a misunderstanding.

And of course, behind that wall, they suffer. But of course, they're hiding their suffering behind the wall. I don't suffer.

I'm a Zen practitioner. I have gone beyond. And then the wife says something.

Leave me alone. I'm in control. Don't talk to me.

I'm meditating. I can't deal with it now. Leave me alone.

I need to meditate. I can't meditate. It's acceptance.

So very different. But when you read this, the next thing especially, it could be misinterpreted. There is a deeper, there is a compassion there.

So don't misinterpret. Under no circumstances ever say, I have lost something, only I returned it. Did a child of yours die?

No, it was returned. Your wife died? No, she was returned.

My land was confiscated? No, it too was returned. And then somebody says, but the person who took it was a thief.

And he says, why concern yourself with the means by which the original giver effects its return? As long as he entrusts it to you, look after it as something yours to enjoy only for a time. The way a traveler regards a hotel.

Whatever it is, if it's there, enjoy it, knowing that, of course, it will leave you or you have to let go or it'll decay, whatever. Enjoy, no attachment. And this is real, that where true enjoyment becomes possible only then, because if you're attached, you're not really enjoying the thing.

You make it into a means of something else. Make me happy or make me bigger. I own this.

It makes me feel bigger. You're not really enjoying it. Whenever you see someone in tears, distraught because they are parted from a child or have met with some material loss, be careful lest the impression move you to believe that their circumstances are truly bad.

Have ready the reflection that they are not upset by what happened, but by their own view of the matter. Nevertheless, you should not disdain to sympathize with them, at least with comforting words or even to the extent of sharing outwardly in their grief, but do not commiserate with your whole heart and soul. It's interesting.

Do not commiserate, which means do not enter their unhappiness. Compassion, I wrote something like similar in the power of now that compassion has two aspects to it. One, you can feel their pain.

This is empathy. You feel the other person's suffering because you have had your suffering. It's probably if you have never suffered, compassion would be difficult.

But if you have suffered, you can feel the other person's suffering also. But for true compassion to arise, true compassion has a deeper aspect to it. In addition to that, there's a depth, and that is the depth that today we started with, the depths within yourself.

If you can feel that depth and there's peace in there, there is a space that is not touched by suffering in you. So in the background, so to speak, there can be that peace. You're connected with that deeper, the depths within yourself.

Even as you empathize and feel the suffering of the other person. So you have the two dimensions. Yes, I feel your suffering, but at the same time, there's a deep peace underlying that.

And then compassion is something that's actually very helpful to the other person. If you only commiserate, as he puts it, if you only commiserate with the other person, you're entering their frame of reference. You're entering their suffering.

There's no help in that, really, to the other person. The help comes if you stay rooted in the eternal within, and then you connect with the other person. That's really what he is saying.

So there's a peace in the background, even as you empathize with the other. And that's healing in the deepest sense. That is where healing flows from the depths of who you are to the other.

And that's where it sometimes happens that the other person suddenly also becomes peaceful, doesn't know why. So it doesn't work through verbalization. You can't say, well, you should have known that your husband or wife was mortal, shouldn't you?

No, that doesn't work. It comes from the depths of who you are. That's the eternal.

You don't need to talk about that. And that's also in any situation where you empathize with others, whatever their problems. It might not be a physical problem.

It could be that they are in a huge personal drama and they want to talk to you about their drama. Are you completely entering their reality? And then, of course, you get depleted after a while.

Some people love that. They say, this is what happened. Listen to me.

Listen. And they almost suck your energy in. And the energy, they need that energy to feed their drama.

So if you enter it, after an hour of listening or trying to figure out some solution, well, why don't you do that? And he said, no, I can't do that. Yeah, but all you could do, no, I've tried all that.

That doesn't work. Of course, they don't want an end to their drama. They are identified with that whole mind movement.

So that doesn't help, except an hour later, you feel, I'm trying to be compassionate and helping. It doesn't work. No, you don't enter their reality completely.

You recognize that as a construct, an artificial construct created by their mind. That's all the suffering. But you don't say that.

You know it, but you don't say it. Because the construct does not like to be challenged in that way. And you would not be reaching that human being.

You would be only talking to the unhappy self, the mental construct. And it is not receptive to that kind of talk. It doesn't want to look at itself because that's the end of it.

He was quite funny too, from time to time. What do we value? Externals.

What do we look after? Externals. So of course, we are going to experience fear and nervousness.

Faced with external circumstances that we judge to be bad, we cannot help but be frightened and apprehensive. Please, God, we say, relieve me of my anxiety. Listen, stupid, you have hands.

God gave them to you himself. You might as well get on your knees and pray that your nose won't run. A better idea would be to wipe your nose and forego the prayer.

Show me one person who cares how they act. Someone for whom success is less important than the manner in which it is achieved. While out walking, who gives any thought to the act of walking itself?

Who pays attention to the process of planning, not just the outcome? If the plan works, of course, the person is overjoyed and says, how well we planned it. Didn't I tell you with brains like ours, it couldn't possibly fail.

But a different result leaves the person devastated, incapable of even finding words to explain what happened. So not just joke to the result, how you do is more important than the end result that you want to achieve. How you do something is to do with your state of consciousness as you do it.

Is your state of conscious, does it come out of the inner power? That is this deep peace and a powerful energy flow. Your complete attention is on the doing.

Or are you looking to what you want to achieve through the doing? And then the doing is of a totally different quality. It goes, there's no, you get upset while you do things because you haven't arrived yet where you want to arrive.

You look there and you do here. And of course, I call that low quality action. And while you do, you're upset, you're angry with other people, you're blaming and accusing and shouting and angry with yourself, whatever.

Dysfunctional states, psychic disharmony. You're engaged in some big, important business enterprise, but how are you doing it? In a state of psychic disharmony, creating unhappiness all around you.

Yes, but I'm creating something great. No, you're creating unhappiness. Whoever comes into contact with you gets infected by your inner dysfunctional state.

And of course, and then if he does, he or she does finally achieve success, it's totally tainted by the energy that brought it about, karmic. And then he drops dead. So how you do, pay attention to how, not always look to the end result, because how is your state of consciousness now?

When you're driving somewhere, what's your state? What's more important? Your state of consciousness in the moment of driving or arriving where you want to arrive?

Of course, most people think arriving is more important than this moment, because there's something important at the other end. That is not true. What is more important is this moment, because, why?

Because it's the only reality ever, this moment, there is nothing else. So how could it be less important than some imagined future moment? And when that arrives, of course, then some other imagined future moment becomes more important than that one.

This is normal living, but it's insane. These are deep-seated mind patterns in humans.

They are insane, they're normal.

So many humans spend a lot of their lives in states of psychic disharmony or dysfunction, whatever you want to call it. They don't even know what they are doing. They don't know what they're doing to themselves, and they don't know what they're doing to others around them.

And they contaminate the planet, the world, with this negativity. They don't know it. So this is what, when you recognize that, you see it immediately in others around you.

And if you are very alert, you can see it in yourself also. But the seeing is the beginning of freedom. And you see, okay, I'm creating a dysfunctional state right now.

Oh, now you have a choice to step out and become present. When you see you're creating your own suffering, then you have a choice. You can step out of the stream of thinking.

And the mind says, no, I can't step out of the stream of thinking. I just can't stop thinking. I have to think about this.

What's going to happen when this happens? And what if he doesn't? Or that might go wrong and this can...

What if I don't get it and this happens? Oh, God. Oh, God.

And of course, sometimes life does that to you, but it doesn't say no, it goes whack. And then for a moment you're, oh, what was all that? It was all mental fictions.

Nothing to do with this moment, the only reality, this moment. God, I could read the whole book to you, it's so much in it. Let any danger loom and you will discover what we really practiced and trained for.

So what you learned as a spiritual teaching, when you are confronted with danger or challenge, then you can practice, that's the most important part, to apply it in actual life situations in your daily life. Now, if you don't practice because of our negligence, we forever compound our problems and make our situations out to be worse than they actually are, very common. So, for instance, whenever I'm on board a ship and gaze into the deep or look around me and see nothing but ocean, I'm gripped by terror, imagining that if we wreck, I will have to swallow all this sea.

It doesn't occur to me that around three pints will be about enough to do me in. So is it the sea that terrifies me? No, it is my imagination.

Again, in an earthquake, I am prone to picture the whole city coming down on top of me, whereas in fact a single brick is enough to dash my brains out. It's simple. The complexity is never in the present moment.

The complexity of one's problems and one's situation is in here. Not here. It's always simple.

A brick falls, okay. Or at the right moment, you step aside. Now, one important thing here when you become endeavoring to become free of externals and dependency on externals, there needs to be a balance between dealing with externals.

You can't say nothing. I'm not dealing with anything anymore because I'm free of externals. And he talks about this.

Let's read it a little bit. It isn't easy to combine and reconcile the two. The carefulness of a person devoted to externals and the dignity of one who is detached.

The person devoted to externals says, okay, now we need to do this and this and this and this. But without detachment, you don't have the dignity, which is the spaciousness while you do things. So it's the balance between giving attention, but at the same time, not attaching yourself to the external.

This is not impossible. Otherwise, happiness would be impossible. It's something like going on an ocean voyage that was at his time a little bit more hazardous than it is now.

What can I do? Pick the captain, the boat, the date, and the best time to sail. But then a storm hits.

Well, it's no longer my business. I've done everything I could. It's somebody else's problem now, namely the captain's.

But then the boat actually begins to sink. What are my options? I do the only thing I'm in a position to do, drown.

But fearlessly, without bawling or crying out to God, because I know that what is born must also die. I'm not father time. I'm a human being, a part of the whole, like an hour in a day.

Like the hour I must abide my time and like the hour pass. What difference does it make whether I go by drowning or disease? I have to go somehow.

So whatever you can control about externals, you do what you can. This I can do something about. This I can do.

This I can do. Then it begins to unfold. And then in ways that you could not have predicted very often.

And then it comes, you become aligned with what is as it unfolds. Now, there's one or two things that Epictetus did not yet see totally. One is to some extent, your inner state of consciousness and the external reality that you experience as your reality are linked.

They're not totally separate. So he doesn't talk about that. For him, there's the external that we need to accept.

Whatever is beyond our control. But as your inner state changes, your reality also changes. Not in ways that is exact.

You cannot trace everything that happens to some thought or something like that. But your habitual state, your habitual vibrational frequency, emotional state, habitual thinking patterns, they tend to create certain reflections also in the outer. Very simple examples, of course.

If you believe that most humans are dishonest and out to deceive you, then you meet those people all the time. Isn't it strange? Any deep-seated belief that you have about other people or life, it tends to confirm itself in your experience.

If only because perception becomes selective. If you believe that everybody is dishonest, then you will look for... your perception is selective and honest people, you won't even see them.

This is just one example. They could give hundreds of examples. You don't see...

If you look for the bad, you don't see the good. In humans, for example. So your perception becomes selective and then reality confirms to you that all your thought patterns are actually correct.

Yes, they are all evil. They're all dishonest because it becomes selective. That's one aspect.

And also there are certain attractions. You attract people that whatever you're afraid of, you tend to attract that. So if you're afraid of being robbed, you tend to attract that.

I asked a famous person that I met a couple of years ago, do you have a... You don't have a bodyguard? Because I met some other famous people who always walk around with bodyguards.

And he said, well, actually, I'll tell you what it is. I'm sure he doesn't mind. Sting, he said...

So I said, you don't have a bodyguard? No. That would be like walking around with a gun in your pocket and then you attract certain situations where you need the gun.

And of course, that's very true. So that's inner states and outer reality. Another thing he didn't quite see yet as deeply is that thinking can be transcended altogether.

Not continuously, but the ability to step out of the stream of thinking and just be present in that spaciousness. That's a creative state. Creative in the sense of not necessarily creating a work of art.

Could be that, but it doesn't. Creative in the sense of dealing with life as it happens in this moment in a creative fashion and not a conditioned way. Responding creatively to what this moment requires.

That's creativity. But that does not happen if you apply preconditioned thinking patterns to what happens in this moment, because then you will be judging, interpreting according to your past conditioning, what's happening in this moment. And it's never, that's never it.

You're imposing the past on the present. And so people do that with other humans. They immediately judge them according to their conditioning in the mind.

Can you meet another human without judgment? Well, to be able to do that, you have to stop thinking. Because every thought about that other human being is going to be some kind of judgment.

So is that possible? Can you come to be with and face another human being and look at him or her and listen to him or her and just be a spacious presence while you look and listen to him or her? Yes, you can try it.

Look at me in the same way that I look at you. Do I need some judgment about you? What can that add to the experience of this moment?

It doesn't add anything. It detracts from the aliveness that is in you and that is in me and that is in all, that is all around us. It detracts from that.

Any judgment and reality immediately gets, shrinks into, first as a space and then suddenly you judge the other human being or the situation that you are in. It immediately gets fixed. Like it becomes, it becomes like a piece of ice where before there was flowing water.

And suddenly you pronounce some mental judgment or some mental conclusion. This is how it is. This is how it is.

And the whole flow of water which suddenly gets frozen. And it's hard. Once you have fixed reality in your mind like that, you're stuck with that.

And whenever you meet that other human being that you have imposed that on, you get that rigidity that you might, you cannot allow the human to be other than the judgment that you have imposed upon him or her. And if they display other behavior that completely contradicts your judgment, you won't even see it. Or you will misinterpret that in some way.

So that's, can you be, and this is the, perhaps the essential teaching, can you be spacious this moment here? Spacious as a presence. Be here as a presence rather than a person.

You don't lose anything. You can pick up the person that you are when you walk out of here. The person will still be there.

Don't worry if you still want it. You can pick up the person with all its history and problems. But for the time being, just practice with other humans.

Let's practice being a spacious presence for them while you listen to them. Oh, or look at them. Don't tell them what you're doing because you're not, it's not a doing anyway.

Just, this is wonderful, not having to judge other humans. This is gradually the ability in you to do that. It's not a doing, judging is a doing, but the language is limited.

The ability for you to do that grows as you practice being with others, not impose judgments. And your mind says, yeah, but you become defenseless. Silly nonsense, you don't become defenseless.

And there are things, if there are obvious things about another person, you see it and you still don't judge it. If a person comes and says, look, I'll sell you this gold watch for $50. I paid 5,000 for it, I'll take 50.

Say, no thanks. You don't have to say you're a thief, you probably stole it somewhere. Or it's, or you got it in Thailand for $10 and now it's gone.

You're wanting to sell it to me. No, no thanks. You see, without even saying anything, you see the intention behind it and you still can be compassionate.

You don't say how bad this human is. You just walk away, it's fine. Don't need to, because who knows that human may awaken tomorrow through some drastic event.

And suddenly, if you had judged that person and said he's a thief, well, maybe tomorrow he suddenly awakens and the thief collapses. So that is not who he or she is in their essence. You don't get the essence through judgment.

The essence in the other human becomes obscured and the essence in yourself becomes obscured to yourself. I'll read a little, just a little bit more. Here, first of all, a very extreme one.

Don't judge it, just listen. It's a dialogue, very short. His son died.

What happened? His son died. Nothing else?

Nothing. The ship was lost. What happened?

The ship was lost. He was thrown into jail. What happened?

He was thrown into jail. He's in a bad situation is a stock comment that everyone adds on their own account. So the man I mentioned to you earlier, Stockdale, he practiced these extreme teachings in an extreme situation.

And as a prisoner of war in North Vietnam for seven years and he says it worked for him. Acceptance and non-judgments, no more suffering. Physical pain may still be there, but no suffering.

Suffering being the superstructure on top of the physical pain, the mentally created superstructure on top of it. And this is an interesting little piece now about people who are waking up. He doesn't use that term.

I use that term. People who are beginning to wake up, living in presence. The tendency can be for them to be drawn back into unconsciousness with the habitual people that they spent time with.

And he talks about that here. It is inevitable if you enter into relations with people on a regular basis, either for conversation, dining, or simple friendship, that you will grow to be like them unless you can get them to emulate you. So it's either you go there or they come to you.

Place an extinguished piece of coal next to a live one and either it will cause the other one to die out or the live one will make the other reignite. It's true. Since a lot is at stake, you should be careful about fraternizing with non-philosophers.

As he calls it. In these contexts, remember that if you consort with someone covered in dirt, you can hardly avoid getting a little grimy yourself. He's talking to people in whom this is just growing, not to people where it's already fully manifested.

They can associate with anybody. But in people in whom it is growing, the presence is arising, can very easily become obscured again by people you meet. It becomes obscured by a glass of alcohol.

Once presence is firmly there, even one or two glasses of alcohol won't make any difference. You can have it or you don't have it. But while it's arising, it's better not to protect it a little bit like a delicate flower that grows.

I mean, what are you going to do if your friends start nattering about gladiators, horses and sports stars? Or even worse, if he starts gossiping about shared acquaintances. He's good.

She's bad. It's good this happened. It's too bad about that.

What if he sneers, ridicules, and even plays slow down tricks? Do any of you have the musician's ability to pick up an instrument, immediately identify which strings need attention and bring the whole instrument into tune? Or Socrates' gift in every setting of winning over the company to his side?

Not likely. Inevitably, you're going to adopt the common person's mentality instead. So why are they stronger than you?

Because they talk such garbage from conviction. Whereas your fine talk is no more than lip service. It lacks life and vigor.

Anyone listening to your speeches might well come to hate that damned virtue you keep proclaiming. That's why those fools get the better of you. Conviction is quite a potent and irresistible force.

So until those fine principles take root in you so that you can begin to rely on them a little, I advise you to use discretion in associating with such people. Otherwise, whatever you write down in class will melt away like wax in the sun. Keep out of the sun then, so long as your principles are as pliant as wax.

This is why philosophers say that we should even leave our native land since old habits pull us back and make it hard to embark on new adventures. Also, we can't stand running into people who say, look at him, this so-and-so, trying to become a philosopher, ha-ha-ha. So it's better not to talk really about what you're practicing or learning, as little as possible, unless there's receptivity in the other human.

If there's no receptivity, then it's enough for you to practice, not talk about it. Let's see what else I can find. Here's a funny one.

It shows a lack of refinement to spend a lot of time exercising, eating, drinking, defecating, or copulating. Tending to the body's needs should be done incidentally, as it were. The mind and its functions require the bulk of your attention.

Give attention to your mind. That really means be present with your mind. So you've seen the wake-up call.

Thank you. Vigilance is required. Vigilance is that alertness.

Alertness, especially alert to see what your mind is, what kind of thoughts your mind is producing. A helpful thing also is the alertness to sense perceptions. That slows down the mind considerably and brings you into the present moment, the surface of the present moment.

Sense perceptions are the surface of the present moment. But if you touch the surface of the present moment, you can go deeper from there into the depths of the present moment, which is your spacious consciousness itself. So alertness to sense perceptions is really where the portal begins to open into the present moment.

If you ask, where is the present moment? How do I get out of my mind into now? The simplicity of now, the reality of now, the power of now.

Sense perceptions. Looking, listening, smelling, touching. Oh, you're suddenly back in the now.

It's the surface, but that's a good start. And then you sense, underlying the sense perceptions, the field of presence. You can't, it has no form, but it's there.

That which makes the perception possible. And that's the way to live, is to have that in the background while you deal, either just contemplate sense perceptions or begin to deal with things here. Continuing to sense the presence that you are in the background.

What is presence? This. And then you realize that it's not just inside you.

The presence is within and without. In other words, the universe around you begins to feel more alive. It's almost as if you could sense an aliveness even in the space.

So it's within and without. You sense that aliveness, which has no form. Formless aliveness.

You can't put it under a microscope. It is the precondition for everything. You cannot examine it as an object of consciousness.

Okay, I'm now going to look and examine the aliveness of presence. Who is looking? The aliveness of presence.

I'm now going to look at it. You can't. It is it.

I am it. I cannot look at I as if I cannot. If I make myself into an object that I'm going to analyze or look at, it doesn't work.

The presence is the eternal I. So you can only be it, but you cannot make it an object and say, oh, there it is. It is prior to everything.

So you are prior to everything. In that sense, there's nothing you need to understand to realize who you are. What you need to understand, perhaps, is what prevents you from realizing who you are.

That's helpful to know. But who you are, you can't know. Because it's the eternal subject.

It can never be an object. And so you don't need to understand more about yourself to wake up spiritually, to be who you are in your essence. You are already that.

The only understanding would be helpful to see how that realization is obscured in you. So what you understand is never the reality of who you are. It's the illusion that obscures who you are that you can understand to some extent.

So when you judge another human being, whatever you say about them also tends to be the illusory self that you see there. The mental construct, which either might actually be there or it's a total projection of your mind or a combination of the two. So you have the knowing, two types of knowing, conceptual knowing and non-conceptual knowing, which most humans don't realize yet the possibility of that.

So that's quite a relief that there's nothing you can add to who you are already by some further understanding through the mind. It's by relinquishing, trying to figure something out about who you are that suddenly who you are in your depths opens up now. So this is the same teaching as Epictetus going and taking it a little bit further.

We're in a different time period. More humans are open to it and the need for awakening is much greater now for humanity or to awaken. At his time, it was still a luxury.

Now we have to and that's good. The essence of the teaching is, of course, the freedom from having to think. That's really what it comes down to.

Yes, you don't have to think. You can if you want to, but increasingly you can go through life without an excessive baggage of thought. Suddenly you feel much lighter.

Situations are much lighter. Other human beings are lighter to you. They're not a problem to you.

Amazing things happen as you practice the ultimate renunciation. Renunciation is a religious, spiritual term. And usually it's used with reference to possessions, sexual relations, money, power, renunciation of whatever.

Traditionally, the renunciates in India possess nothing. And that was also for a long time a tradition in Europe in the Middle Ages and early Christianity. In early Christianity, people lived in the desert, renouncing everything.

The desert fathers, as they're called. And that's all very nice, but if the ultimate renunciation hasn't happened, then all that is not even that helpful. If thinking, the compulsion to think, and addiction to thinking, and identification with thinking is not renounced, all other renunciations don't really make that much difference because you would still be attached to whatever thoughts arise in your mind.

And if you've renounced possessions, the first thought that will arise in your mind will be, I am someone who has renounced all possessions. You haven't renounced thinking. So the possessions that you were identified with, which in reality, of course, was only a thought, which means this is mine.

It is part of who I am. That was a thought you had identified with, but now you let go of that. And that's replaced by another thought that you identify with, which is, I'm the one who has renounced.

And all these inferior humans have not renounced. Basically, nothing has changed. Now, you could, of course, have somebody who renounces all possessions and at the same time renounces self-reference to thinking, then that's fine.

And you could also have someone who has all possessions and renounces thinking, and possessions are still there, but don't matter anymore. Or perhaps he'll give them away. Who knows?

But the ultimate renunciation is breaking the addiction to thinking as a dysfunctional, useless activity. And then apply thought when it's needed for certain things. That's fine.

And be free when it's not needed, especially in relationships. A lot of the time, thought isn't needed in a true, deep relationship. Transcendence of thought is needed for a relationship to be deep and true.

Of course, you talk to each other, but the foundation of the relationship must be the space, the inner space in each one, which is ultimately one space, one consciousness. So, practice the ultimate renunciation. Ah, what a relief.

Don't have to think all the time. But don't go to sleep. Stay awake.

Okay.

[Speaker 2] (4:46:29 - 4:46:30)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (4:46:54 - 7:23:36)

From time to time, I have been sharing with you a book, books that have been dear to me for many years, and books that also I believe will be helpful to everybody. These are books that contain a message that goes far beyond, transcends the time period in which they were written. So, they're books that contain a timeless spiritual teaching or spiritual message that is still as helpful for us today as it was for people at the time when it was written.

So, the oldest book you may remember that we talked about some time ago was the Tao Te Ching, written 2,500 years ago. We also had a couple of books that were 2,000 years old. We talked about Marcus Aurelius' Meditations.

And we talked about the teachings of the philosopher Epictetus. And I've had some feedback from people who found it very helpful. So, the messages are as powerful today as they were at the time these books were written.

So, for today, I have a little treat in store for you, another book. And this time, it's a book that comes to us from the Middle Ages, written about 550 years ago. And that book, for several centuries, was considered one of the most important spiritual books within the Christian tradition.

But you don't need to be a Christian to benefit from the teaching that's contained in this book. In fact, I'm sure there are many evangelical Christians today for whom the teaching that's contained in this book would be as alien as Tibetan Buddhism. The book is called The Imitation of Christ.

The Imitation of Christ. Imitation nowadays has a name. It's a negative connotation.

But at that time, all it meant was copying, being the same as. So, the book teaches us to imitate Christ, which means to become as Christ, to become one with Christ or to become one with God. The author of the book was a monk who lived, was born in the year 1380.

But first of all, let me show you the book. This is a deluxe edition published by the Folio Society in England. The Imitation of Christ.

And the name of the author is Thomas R. Kempis. Thomas R.

Kempis, which means Thomas from Kempen. Kempen being a small town in northwest Germany by the River Rhine, not far from the Dutch border. So he's generally known as Thomas from Kempis, a Latinized version of Kempen, the town that he's from.

So Thomas R. Kempis was born in 1380 and he lived to the age of 90. Very rare in those times.

And of course, he was a monk because virtually all books written in the Middle Ages were written by monks for the simple reason that nobody else could read or write. Almost nobody else. So the books that were written and read were written and read by monks.

And so the Imitation of Christ is a book that contains short chapters. It does, the book does not need to be read consecutively. You can open it anywhere, read a chapter.

There's no buildup, there's no argumentation or anything. Every chapter is simply designed to make you aware on the one hand of that which separates you from your true identity or self, although it doesn't use those words. So you become more aware of your patterns, your inner patterns, the egoic patterns.

And again, of course, it doesn't use the word ego. It uses other terms, as we shall see. And also the book deals with the fact of suffering and how to approach human suffering.

The book, of course, was written originally in Latin and later was translated into the other European languages. The translation I'm using here today is the translation that was made 200 or 300 years ago. It's quite old.

So the English language is ancient old English. And it's been slightly revised in the early 20th century. I believe that this still most faithfully reflects the spirit of the original, that kind of language.

There have been other translations in recent times into contemporary English. But when I looked at one or two, I immediately felt this just doesn't work for this kind of text. So when I read short extracts to you, because that's what we are going to do, I'll read short extracts and we'll then comment.

I believe you will quickly get used to the language. Might be at first a little bit unfamiliar. So Thomas Acampis, The Imitation of Christ.

Let's have a look. Remember, we are not really studying something outside ourselves. So this is not an academic setting.

The beginning of me talking here sounds a little bit as if you were at a college or university, but that's not how we approach it here. We are not really studying a book. We are not really studying a text.

Why should we? What we are doing is we are using this text to look at ourselves. So we look at ourselves through that teaching, because every spiritual teaching is here so that we can direct it to ourselves.

The spiritual teaching is of no interest. The spiritual teaching directs your attention to yourself. It directs your attention in the first place to the obstacles in yourself, the obstacles to awakening, the ego.

And then it directs your attention to the deeper levels in yourself, the spiritual dimension, that which lies once you get through the obstacles so that they no longer obscure your awareness, your awareness of who you are, or simply your awareness is no longer obscured. That's the very purpose of all spiritual texts, no matter whether they are two and a half thousand years old or contemporary, any spiritual teaching. Its only value lies in that, that it directs your attention to that.

It awakens you in various ways. Now, every teaching, of course, has certain limitations that have to do with the time period out of which it comes. So there are certain limitations to this teaching also.

It's a medieval teaching. In some ways, the Middle Ages, medieval times, are very alien to us these days, usually regarded as the Dark Ages. And of course, it is true that there was an enormous amount of superstition and ignorance and cruelty and violence and absolute insecurity at that time.

That's all true. But it's also true that there were some human beings at that time who, despite all this, or maybe not despite, maybe because of the absolute insecurity of those times, who were able to access the deeper dimension within themselves. And became spiritually awakened.

So they had great mystics. They were called mystics. Of course, they all lived within the structure of the Christian religion and Christian terminology.

Although many of the greatest mystics were regarded with a suspicion by the church hierarchy. It was too dangerous, too alive, too threatening to the collective ego and to the personal ego. So let's look at this now.

At first, as I said, you might find it a little unfamiliar. The language will be strange. But we'll very quickly go more deeply into the text so that the language doesn't matter anymore.

I showed you this deluxe edition just now, which I haven't had for very long. But I'm going to read from this little edition here, which is more or less the same, which is a book that I've had for 25 years. I only recently removed the dust cover, so it looks nice and new again.

Let's start with something simple. A little chapter. I may not read the whole chapter.

It's only a page and a half. But it's called Of Self-Consideration. We may not trust too much to ourselves, for grace and understanding are often wanting to us.

There is in us but little light, and this we soon lose by negligence. Oftentimes, we are quite unconscious how interiorly blind we are. How true this is still today.

Oftentimes, we are quite unconscious how interiorly blind we are. The difficulty he is talking about of knowing, of recognizing your own patterns of reactive judgment, of negativity, egoic patterns, in other words. An inability to be aware that you are still run by unconscious patterns.

And so in many chapters, he directs attention, our attention, away from the external world so that we can direct attention within. As I often say, what really matters at any moment, no matter what you're doing or where you are, what matters, what is more important and more fundamental than whatever is happening outside you is what's happening inside you. If you lose awareness of that fact, then you lose yourself in the outer.

And we'll come to some wonderful little sayings about that in a minute. Oftentimes, we are quite unconscious how interiorly blind we are. We often do amiss and do worse in excusing ourselves.

A very common egoic pattern is to find excuses and justifications. That's easy to recognize in others. They do silly things, unconscious actions.

When you point something out, immediately the ego protects itself. It immediately finds justifications. It's an automatic ego protective mechanism.

As I said, easily recognized in other people, but it needs more awareness to recognize that in yourself. Sometimes we are moved by passion and think it's zeal. Passion here throughout the book is used in a negative sense.

Passion here does not mean what it means in modern English. Passion means reactivity, being possessed by mental, emotional, reactive patterns. And we mistake passion for zeal, which means we mistake it for something that is good, that is enthusiasm and energy that flows into what we do.

We blame little things in others and overlook great things in ourselves. We are quick enough in perceiving and weighing what we bear from others, but we think little of what others have to bear from us. He that should well and justly weigh his own doing would find little cause to judge harshly of another.

This is self-explanatory. If you were really aware of your own patterns, you would no longer judge others harshly. So that is, our task is to become more aware of our own egoic patterns from moment to moment in situations.

The interior, by the way, all the language here, of course, according to the times, is masculine. So when he says man, you have to, of course, include women. Also, the English language, unfortunately, doesn't have a word that includes men and women as the German language does.

He didn't write it in German, but just German has Mensch. Well, Jewish also has Mensch, but with a slightly different connotation. Yiddish, I mean, has Mensch.

So whenever I read man, think human being. The interior man regards the care of himself before all other cares. That means that's what matters most.

Look into yourself. He that looketh diligently to himself findeth it not difficult to be silent about others. He says here the interior man.

The interior man, again, is a term that's used frequently. Interior human being. It means he's talking about the aware human being, the human being at the level of awareness rather than the human being at the level of unconscious thinking.

So the interior man, the interior human being is the level of awareness, who you are at the level of awareness. Because, and that's a vital distinction, most humans who are not awakened, not awake spiritually, live at the level, exclusively at the level of thinking, plus the emotions that are generated by thinking. So that's the interior man is the dimension of who you are at the deeper dimension, the deeper level of awareness.

So that's the shift. You're quite a different being when the shift happens from thinking, the thinking being, we could see the exterior human being to the interior human being. And of course, for many, they fluctuate these days.

Many people are going through an awakening. They fluctuate between being the thinking entity, the thinking being, and being the aware, the awareness, the deeper self. Thou wilt never be interior and devout unless thou pass over in silence other men's affairs and look especially to thyself.

He's giving some advice here of not engaging the exterior man or human being, not engaging, not giving more food, not giving into the mental tendency of wanting to judge the egoic tendency of wanting to judge others. Pass over in silence other men's affairs. If you can let go of the almost compulsion to talk about other people's doings, usually in a critical way, then you're not giving food anymore to that mental habit.

He wrote, of course, the book was mostly written for monks or maybe also nuns, people who lived in monasteries. Nobody else could read anyway. So he refers often to situations that occur in monasteries, but basically it's the same as in everyday life because it's human interaction.

And it's just as challenging to be in a monastery as it is out here in the 21st century. In everyday existence. If thou attend wholly to thyself and to God, what thou seest abroad will affect thee but little.

Abroad in old usage means outside. If thou attend wholly to thyself and to God, what thou seest abroad, outside, will affect thee but little. So as you place more attention on the inner, where you become aware of your patterns and also become aware of God, which is the light of consciousness in yourself, then what happens outside of you no longer has that power over you.

You become, to some extent, free from being controlled by external events that all the teachings point to that. You can respond to external events, but your inner state is no longer controlled by what somebody says or does or by what is happening around you. So, one more time.

If thou attend wholly to thyself and to God, what thou seest abroad will affect thee but little. Where art thou when thou art absent from thyself? Absent from thyself, what's he saying?

When you're not present. Where are you? You're asleep.

Where are you? Where art thou when thou art absent from thyself? So, put this into this teaching.

When you're not, where are you when you're not present? You're not there. You're asleep.

Unconscious patterns are running you and pretend to be you. Normal existence. And when thou hast run over all things, what has it profited thee if thou hast neglected thyself?

Even if you achieve all kinds of things. If you have not grown in consciousness, what is the point? And in the end, it will make you unhappy.

So, we see the essence here expressed in old language, but in some ways we can recognize that how vital this message still is, because it is about the human ego. Now, a little bit from a different chapter. Very important.

He says, this is sometimes, by the way, sometimes the words seem to be spoken by God. An old version of conversations with God, perhaps. And occasionally there's even a dialogue here between the, perhaps the writer and God or higher consciousness, whatever you want to call it.

So, here it starts with the writer or the reader being addressed by, Son, thou oughtest diligently to aim at this, that in every place and in every action or external occupation, thou be inwardly free and master of thyself, and that all things be under thee and not thou under them. That thou mayest be Lord and ruler of thy actions and not a slave or mercenary. Be someone who stands above things present and contemplates the eternal, who with the left eye regards things passing and with the right, those of heaven.

We'll see that, we'll, now let's look what I just read. Son, thou oughtest diligently to aim at this, that in every place and in every action or external occupation, thou be inwardly free and master of thyself, and that all things be under thee and not thou under them. In other words, don't be the slave of things, of things that happen outside you, of actual material things, things that happen.

Don't lose yourself, as I sometimes put it, don't lose yourself in things. Don't lose yourself in the world. Don't lose yourself in your thoughts, which are also things.

It's all form, the world of form. So there's a love, this lovely image he uses here is, see that all things be under thee and not thou under them. And even nowadays for most people, that is not yet true, not yet the case, they are under the things, they are totally controlled, they give their total attention only to the things in their lives.

I call that life situation. Life situation absorbs your attention completely. What does that mean?

What is the life situation? Life situation is your health, your finances, your relationships, where you live, what you do for a living, your job, all those things, your relationships, your family, all those things make up your life situation. And for most people, of course, those things entirely occupy their attention.

So their attention or their consciousness is absorbed completely by their life situation, which exists in time. And what they miss, I put it in those words, what they miss is life. What they don't realize is something deeper and more vital than their life situation, which is only accessible in the present moment, which I call life, but you could also call it consciousness, awareness, or God.

And so you miss what really matters, the aliveness of life, the depths within yourself, and you spend a whole lifetime running around the surface of your life. That's one way of putting it. Or as he puts it, things are on top of you.

You are not on top of things. You are under the things, burdened by the things. And he points to the possibility, and I always talk about that, of course, in other different words, the possibility of living in a different way where you become aware of the formless dimension in yourself, the awareness, the presence, the inner space, whatever you want to call it.

And here he has a wonderful image that he uses here. He points to the possibility that you can stand above things present and contemplate the eternal. And you can, with the left eye, regard things passing, and with the right, those of heaven.

Meaning, the art of living is to find a balance between the world of form, all the stuff that make up your life situation, the world of form that continuously changes around you, yes, you have to deal with it, yes, you have to give it some attention. It requires action and this and that. But if that's all, if that absorbs all your attention, you are lost in it.

So he points to the possibility of giving due attention to that dimension that I call the life situation that he calls here things passing. So you contemplate, with the left eye, you regard things passing. That means one half of your attention is on your life situation and whatever it is that needs doing there.

With the right eye, you contemplate the eternal or the things of heaven, as he calls it. Then that means, in any situation, there then there's a dimension of form. You here as a body, a person who, yes, the thoughts that arise, relationships, dealing with this and that, without loss of awareness of the underlying dimension of consciousness itself.

What I sometimes call inner space or what I sometimes call presence. Awareness of that of the background, the spaces, the space in the background of your life, the inner space that is always there in which everything arises and subsides. And that's the essence of every spiritual teaching so that you don't lose yourself in the world, which is your mind.

Without totally denying the world for the time being, you, the form identity, is part of this world. And then there is the essence identity which has no form. This is not something to believe in.

It's something to realize here and now. The moment the mind becomes still, it's there. The moment you totally accept the form of the present moment, you feel a space in the background.

It's there. So what a lovely image. So with the stand above things present, contemplate the eternal.

You are someone who with the left eye regards things passing and with the right, those of heaven. The dance between form and formlessness. The dance between the temporal and the eternal.

Now let's look at a little bit from a different chapter. You can see that it doesn't really matter where you open the book. That's a not ideal for meditative reading.

He that knows how to walk interiorly and to make but little account of things exteriorly does not look for places nor wait for seasons to perform exercises of devotion. The man of interior life soon recollects himself because he never wholly porous force himself upon exterior things. Exterior labor is no prejudice to him nor any employment necessary for the time.

But as things happen, so he accommodates himself to them. Let's look at those two sentences. Very important.

The man, the past, the human being of interior life soon recollects himself because he never wholly porous himself force upon exterior things. A lovely way of putting it. The interior man, again, we had that before.

It means it points to the who you are at the level of awareness. The unconditioned being, the timeless in you, the essence of who you are, the interior being. Soon recollects himself.

The interior man never completely loses himself in the external. He or she soon recollects himself because he never wholly, I'll just put it into slightly more modern English, he never wholly force himself upon exterior things to pour yourself into exterior things, to completely lose yourself in exterior things. You observe it all the time.

When you just, before you see it in yourself, look at other humans around you, how they lose themselves, or the slightest challenge comes in the form of an unexpected setback, something going wrong here or there, some difficult situation, a person not doing what I expect them to do, whatever it is, how quickly people pour themselves into exterior things, and so this thing suddenly becomes of absolute importance.

That's what it means, pouring yourself out into things. Which ultimately, of course, you pour yourself into your thoughts. Every thought that arises takes complete possession of you.

You pour all your attention into that. So you're a continuously loss, a continuous loss. Amazing.

You can see it in others. Just wait, people around you, how, what they do when challenges come. Okay, you've done that.

Now you've recognized it in others. The next step is, oh, can you recognize it in yourself? Do you do that also when you wait for the next challenge?

Do you completely, does it completely draw you out of yourself? And when it does, don't beat yourself up, but even just noticing that that's what's happening is a huge gain in consciousness. So you don't beat yourself up and say, oh, I can't do it.

No, just notice it. Any pattern you notice in yourself means there is some consciousness. There's awareness there.

It's when you don't know it that you're completely trapped in it. And if you don't know it, there's not much you can do except after the challenge has passed, perhaps you can look back and say, oh, I completely lost it there again. And when that, so awareness comes after the challenge, which is even, which is still better than no awareness at all.

And because if there's no awareness at all, even the most unconscious reaction, you will justify afterwards to yourself and to others. The ego is good at finding excuses and justifications. The most absurd justifications will do.

It's an automatic defense mechanism of the ego. So if you're very unconscious, of course, you wouldn't even be listening to this. I'm not talking to people who are totally unconscious because they are not listening.

They can't. There's no space in them to listen to this. Without a little bit of space, at least you can't listen to this.

It's, it would be dreadful, completely meaningless or threatening. And so pouring yourself upon exterior things. And the next sentence here that I'm reading again now, exterior labor is no prejudice to him, nor any employment necessary for the time.

Translated into modern language, whatever you do externally, whatever action you perform, is no prejudice. Doesn't really matter what it is that you do. But as things happen, you accommodate yourself to them.

You go with whatever this moment requires. This moment is not an obstacle to awareness. That's what he's saying.

The, the ego regards to the ego. Anything is an obstacle to awareness. The ego is the obstacle.

So there's a possibility then of accommodating yourself to the present moment. That's what it really is. And whatever action is required in the present moment, you go with it.

This is what's required. And then awareness stays with you. If you react against what is required by the present moment, awareness is lost.

And that means you are absent, not present. If all were right within thee, and thou wert well purified, all things would tend to thy good and thy profit. If all were right within thee, and thou wert well purified, meaning, of course, if all were right within thee, if your inner state of consciousness were clear, present, aware, that's mean, that's what purified means.

All things would tend to thy good and thy profit. Even seemingly negative things will turn to thy good. You will use whatever situation arises, and it will be transformed into good.

Christ for the middle, another expression, can be used to mean to describe that. And so all that happens, a difficult situation, a difficult person, you become more present. You don't lose presence anymore.

You become more alert. Alertness, presence arises instead of reactivity. There's nothing that so defiles and entangles the heart of man as an impure attachment to created things.

Created things is the world of form. An impure attachment to created things is to seek your identity, yourself, in that world of form. And that means suffering.

As he puts it, there's nothing that so defiles and entangles the heart of man. You get defiled and entangled in created things if you seek an identity through this or that, possessions, whatever it is, ultimately thoughts that arise in you. If thou wilt refuse exterior consolations, then shalt thou be able to apply thy mind to heavenly things and experience frequent interior joy.

The joy comes with that as that dimension is awakened in you. What wonderful teaching teaching. Here's a little chapter that is called Of Avoiding Rash Judgment.

And he says, Turn thine eyes back upon thyself and see thou judge not the doings of others. In judging others, a man toileth in vain for the most part he is mistaken and he easily sinneth. But judging and scrutinizing himself, he always laboreth with profit.

Look at yourself. We often judge a thing according as we have it at heart, for true judgment is easily lost through private affection. What does that mean?

True judgment is easily lost through private affection. There is in you, he's saying, I would reduce it to the movement of either fear or desire. There are certain things that you want or fear from another human being and so or situation and you judge through your wanting and fearing without knowing it.

So whatever you perceive and judge is colored, distorted completely by your inner state, which basically is an egoic state. Your ego has some issue and through that, usually it involves desire or fear, some wanting, and through that it interprets and the interpretation of other humans and situations that involve humans, all situations involve humans more or less, is distorted. So you're really seeing only a reflection of your inner state and you think you're dealing with reality.

Next sentence he says is here, if God were always the only object of our desire, we should not be easily disturbed at our own opinions being resisted. Of course, that's a very, very, very common way of losing consciousness, happens all the time. Just look around or we better look at yourself.

Your opinions, your viewpoints are being resisted and we are easily disturbed, as he puts it, at our own opinions being. The moment somebody resists your opinion, your viewpoint, you are disturbed, upset, defensive, angry. And why is that?

Well, he says here, if God were always the only object of our desire, we should not be easily disturbed at our own opinions being resisted. If we reside deep enough within the dimension of aware presence, we are no longer identified with our viewpoints or opinions. Identified, of course, means we don't seek ourselves in them anymore.

So we are free to put forward our views, viewpoints or opinions without the element of self in them, because we don't need it for our self-identification, because we are already dwelling in our essential identity, which is awareness. We are already here as the aware presence, the space. Out within that space, you express a viewpoint or an opinion.

If it's resisted, it is no longer a threat to who you are. It never was a threat to who you are, but that was the delusion, that you regarded it as a threat to who you are, your identity, because you identified with it. It happens just all the time.

Wherever you look, how quickly somebody resists your viewpoint, challenges it, you're upset one way or another. Which means you're not aware. And here he adds the next sentence, many secretly seek themselves in what they do and are not aware of it.

It's amazing how deep psychological insights he has at a time when really nobody was talking about the unconscious or anything like that in the Middle Ages. Many secretly seek themselves in what they do and are not aware of it. I just talked about that because you seek yourself in your viewpoints and opinions, completely unaware that it's only a thought form.

So there's no, you're not rooted in being. And again, another way of looking at it, as he does in the previous chapter, you lose yourself continuously in things, in form. Next sentence here.

Every sentence is a little jewel. It's so precious. So just to connect with the previous sentence, many secretly seek themselves in what they do and are not aware of it.

They seem also to continue in good peace so long as things are done according to their will and judgment. But if ought happen otherwise than they desire, they are soon disturbed and become sad or angry or whatever. If ought happen otherwise, which means if anything happens otherwise than they desire, they soon become disturbed and become sad or angry.

So you continue in good peace so long as things are done according to your will and judgment. Things you're not being challenged, everybody, but of course that never lasts long. If anything happens other than they desire, they become disturbed and become sad.

Too often, says continues here, too often difference of feelings and opinions giveth rise to dissensions between friends and fellow citizens, between religious and devout persons. Even in the monastery, they do it. They identify with their view and opinions, and then suddenly there's conflict and aggression.

And of course, it was done on a huge scale by the collective ego of the church at that time. Because if you disagreed with the collective viewpoint at that time, you were regarded as a mortal enemy. And if you were lucky, they would put you in prison for the rest of your life.

And if you were not so lucky, you would be burned to death or tortured and then burned. What for? Different viewpoint.

That's the ego. That was a collective ego. An inveterate habit is with difficulty relinquished and no one is willingly led beyond his own views.

Everybody, in other words, is trapped in their own mind patterns, conditionings, viewpoints. Last sentence here in this chapter is, God will us to become perfectly subject to himself and by the love that burneth in us to transcend all reason. Reason, I would say, really means thinking.

God willeth us to become perfectly subject to himself. God, of course, is the formless reality. And by the love that burneth in us to transcend all reason.

To be rooted in the formless is, of course, also love. Because love is not the love of form, because that's egoic view of love. True love is not the love of a form, a human form or any other form.

True love is recognizing the formless in the other, which is God. So all true love is the love of God. But you can only recognize the formless in the other if you recognize the formless in yourself, because it's only through the formless in yourself that you can recognize it in another.

Recognize not visually, of course, you can't see the formless, but you can sense it. But there needs to be space in you, because the space is it. Presence, space, stillness, alert stillness.

Now let's look at some interesting aspect of his teaching. And that is transforming suffering into awareness. He's not talking about suffering that is produced by the human mind, which for many people is a very large part of their suffering, but true suffering, which could be physical suffering or could be suffering at some great loss, somebody loved one dies or some other great loss, whatever suffering it is.

The suffering, according to the medieval Christian tradition, is called the cross. And Jesus is the prototype of the suffering human. He's the great example.

So, and this is part of a larger medieval tradition. When you suffer, and this is a way of transcending suffering, whether that still works nowadays, perhaps for most people, not. But at that time, it did work for some people.

How many? I don't know. Their own suffering was looked at with reference to the suffering of Jesus on the cross.

So Jesus was the prototype. And then you would regard your suffering as participating in the suffering of Christ. And that was regarded as a kind of spiritual practice.

It's not, it's actually can be a very powerful thing because if you use that archetype of suffering that Jesus represents, human suffering, Jesus stands then for all humans. He's a representative of humanity, of all humans. And if you can feel that at the time, it was possible for many, probably, to feel they were suffering with him, participating.

And that led to letting go of all resistance. And of course, letting go of all resistance, when you can say yes to whatever arises in this moment, which could be suffering, that's the, you immediately transcend the ego. So he, in various chapters, he shows us how to go beyond suffering by embracing suffering.

Even, and this is, nowadays, we would regard it as a little perverse, but it is part of a very ancient tradition, not only in Christianity, but also in Hinduism, for example, to even welcome suffering. Now, I'm not asking you to go there, but that is, that was a way for hundreds of years. In India, it's still practiced by some, quite a few yogis.

Basically, they not only welcome suffering, go one step further. Don't go there, please. I'm just pointing out what, what is possible, what humans have done, although the modern humans find it hard to understand.

Not only, so, not only accepting suffering is one stage, and it's beautiful, because what else can you do if it's not mind-generated? If it's mind-generated, you have to look at your mind, how it generates suffering. But it could be physical suffering, accepting suffering, welcoming suffering, even, and then some would go so far as almost, or actually, to create suffering for themselves, as yogis do in, some yogis do in India.

The famous thing, the famous cliche, you sleep on a bed of nails. You create, and they've come up with all kinds of things to create suffering. And there's, it is doubtful that this will truly free you, because if you create suffering in order to achieve transcendence, there's a huge danger that instead of achieving transcendence, you achieve enhancement of the ego.

But let's look here at what he calls the Royal Road of the Holy Cross. So cross, or Jesus on the cross, stands for suffering. Go where thou wilt, seek what thou wilt, and thou shalt not find a higher way above, nor a safer way below than the way of the Holy Cross.

Dispose and order all things according as thou wilt, and as seems best to thee, and thou wilt still find something to suffer, either willingly or unwillingly. And so thou shalt always find the cross. For either thou shalt feel pain in the body, or sustain in thy soul tribulation of spirit.

Sometimes thou shalt be deserted by God, at other times shalt be afflicted by thy neighbor. And what is more, thou shalt often be a trouble to thyself. Neither canst thou be delivered or eased by any remedy or comfort, but as long as it shall please God, thou must bear it.

For God willeth that thou learn to suffer tribulation without comfort, and wholly submit thyself to him and become more humble by tribulation. The cross, therefore, is always ready and everywhere awaiteth thee. Thou canst not escape it, whithersoever thou runnest, for wheresoever thou goest, thou carryest thyself with thee and shalt always find thyself.

Turn thyself upward or turn thyself downward, turn thyself inward or turn thyself outward, everywhere thou shalt find the cross. If thou carry the cross willingly, it will carry thee and bring thee to thy desired end, namely to that place where there will be an end of suffering. If thou carry it unwillingly, thou makest it a burden to thee and loadest thyself the more, and nevertheless thou must bear it.

If thou fling away one cross, without doubt thou wilt find another and perhaps a heavier." So, beautiful writing. It resonates, of course, also with the teaching of the Buddha, especially here where he says, you cannot escape the cross, whithersoever thou runnest, wheresoever thou goest, thou carryest thyself with thee and shalt always find thyself.

And no matter where you go and what you do, then something, there will be something to cause you suffering. Again, he said, thou shalt feel pain in the body or sustain in thy soul tribulation of spirit. You are afflicted by your neighbor or afflicted by your trouble to yourself.

Of course, the Buddha teaches that and speaks of the universal fact of dukkha, which also means suffering. Although it's not just suffering, it embraces other things. The Buddhist term dukkha embraces any kind of unsatisfactoriness, non-fulfillment, misery.

All that is dukkha. So the Buddha says, no matter where you go or what condition you're experiencing, you will always find the element of dukkha in any situation, in any condition. And that's very true.

Any human who has lived long enough will find no matter where you go, where you live or what you do, there's always this element of suffering or unsatisfactoriness arises sooner or later. Relationships. So Buddha teaches then what he, wherever you go, you will find dukkha.

And Thomas Arkampis in the Christian tradition says, wherever you go, you will find the cross. Now, because people have not truly understood the teaching of the Buddha, especially people who only try to analyze it intellectually, therefore call Buddhism a negative or life-denying teaching. And many people nowadays would also regard Thomas Arkampis in the medieval spiritual tradition as negative.

But the fact remains, it is actually true. Anybody can verify it in their own life. However, something important needs to be added to the Buddhist teaching or the spiritual teaching of the, a Christian teaching of the cross.

This is only true until you realize the essence of yourself as beyond form, or as Buddhism puts it, you realize the truth of anatta, as it's called in the Pali language. You realize the truth of no self, that there is, you only suffer if there is self-seeking in the world of form. If you're identified, then you're identified with the world of form.

Then there's dukkha. Because the Buddha says everything is impermanent in the world of form, anicca. Everything is devoid of self, anatta.

And if you seek yourself in that which is impermanent, that's dukkha, suffering. But if you don't seek yourself in that which is impermanent, because you have realized your essential self, which Buddhism calls no self, as spaciousness, which Buddhism calls emptiness, which Jesus calls the kingdom of heaven, then you don't need the world of form anymore to give you your sense of self. You can have a loose relationship with the world of form.

Allow it. Play with it. Give it its due.

Don't expect from it more than it can give you, which isn't that much. You don't have unreasonable expectations of the world of form. Because if you have unreasonable expectations of the world of form, which includes other humans too, please fulfill me.

No, nobody's going to do that. Well, they may try. You might have an egoic marriage contract.

Say, I fulfill you, you fulfill me. That sounds good. But try it for a while and you'll see it doesn't work.

I'm sure many of you have tried it. So the cross, there's one way you can use. Suffering as it arises, and there accept what is in the midst of suffering and give up resistance.

And suddenly, it's one way of finding that which is beyond form. You suffer and you willingly, you can practice it if you have an illness or whatever, completely accept what is. Don't accept the idea of illness.

I've said that before somewhere. Accept simply whatever you feel at this moment. Bring acceptance to it.

Whatever arises in this moment, it is as it is. That frees you from the world of form. If you accept the form completely, it frees you from form.

That's a miracle. If you don't accept the form of this moment, you are trapped in a reactive movement, which means you are more trapped in form. So surrender means accepting whatever arises.

And that's the cross. And he says here, if you accept, then the cross carries you. You don't carry the cross anymore.

Isn't that amazing? Then the suffering turns around and suddenly becomes an opening into the realm of the transcendent through surrender. And in the ancient Christian tradition, that is a lesson of the human on the cross who says, not my will, but thy will be done.

So we see how the really seemingly very different spiritual traditions really all point to the same, the same place, take us to the same place. If thou carry the cross willingly, it will carry thee and bring thee to thy desired end, namely to that place where there will be an end. End of suffering, though here there will be no end.

Here means in this dimension, in this dimension only, there will be no end. You will continue to experience challenges. The difference is they no longer turn into suffering.

As long as there is suffering, you can practice surrender and through surrender, the ego gets eroded. Through complete acceptance, the ego gets eroded. Sometimes all at once, sometimes gradually.

And now he comes to the, the most extreme expression of this teaching. When thou shalt arrive thus far, that tribulation shall be sweet to thee and thou shalt relish it for the love of Christ, then think that it is well with thee, for thou hast found a paradise upon earth. As long as suffering is grievous to thee and thou seekest to fly from it, so long shall it be ill with thee and the desire of flying from tribulation shall pursue thee everywhere.

So if tribulation shall be sweet to thee, then immediately you find paradise on earth. Now that just means a complete yes to what is. That's pretty drastic.

You welcome whatever is. But basically that's the, is at the bottom of all teachings. And immediately inner transformation happens.

And then the ego is gone. And there's a beautiful saying here from Thomas Akempis. I'm just taking this one quote, one sentence.

For the Lord bestows his benediction there where he findeth vessels empty. Empty. If you're empty, now doesn't that sound like Buddhism?

If you are empty, you are blessed. God bestows his benediction there where he findeth vessels empty. Now Buddhism doesn't mention God, but basically it's the same.

It's the emptiness. The absence of ego is you become spacious inside. You already always were spacious, but didn't know it.

But now you know it. And then suddenly the blessing comes. Peace comes.

Joy comes. It's there. Let's look at one more chapter.

It's quite short again, just less than a page. Of the inconstancy of our heart and of directing our final intention to God. Trust not to thy feeling.

Whatever it may be now, it will be quickly changed into another. As long as thou livest, thou art subject to change even against thy will. So as to be sometimes joyful, at other times sad.

Now at peace, again troubled. At one time devout, at another indevout. Sometimes fervent, at other times sluggish.

One day heavy, another elated. But he that is wise and well-instructed in spirit stands above all these changes, not minding what he feels in himself, nor on what side the wind of instability bloweth. But that the whole bent of his soul may be made conducive towards the due and wished for end.

For thus one and the same and unshaken can he stand, directing through all this variety of events the single eye of his intention unflinchingly towards me. God is speaking here. And the purer the eye of thy intention is with so much greater constancy will thou pass through these diverse storms.

So this is a wonderful teaching again. We experience fluctuating inner states, mental and emotional. As long as thou livest, thou art subject to change even against thy will.

Sometimes you're joyful, at other times sad. Now at peace, then troubled. One day devout, another indevout.

Fervent, sluggish, heavy, elated. But he points to the possibility of not minding what you feel in yourself. Those are the words.

Not minding what you feel in yourself, nor on what side the wind of instability bloweth. Not minding what is. Inner states becoming, in other words, the aware witness of your fluctuating inner states.

Then you can allow them to be. They no longer, I would say, they still arise, but they no longer create suffering. It's only when you are totally engaged in the inner states, identified with the inner states, that's suffering.

When you are the aware presence, you allow this feeling to be there, whatever it is. One day you are sluggish. One day you are elated.

One day you are this or that. But you are, in other words, you are rooted in the inner spaciousness, the aware space, and then allow the states to come and go. And again, this is basically Buddhist teaching.

It all comes together. So you see the oneness of that. All spiritual, true spiritual teachings.

And so in that dimension, you are no longer dependent on what happens or doesn't happen, either outside or inside. So what a wonderful teaching. I could read many more chapters to you.

I almost feel compelled to read one more, two more. So let's just a few more lines. God himself, herself, itself speaking, which is the unconditioned consciousness, the universal intelligence that is, it dwells within all life forms and is, of course, also beyond all life forms.

If in anything thou seekest thyself, thou presently faintest away within thyself and growest dry, principally therefore refer all things to me, for it is I that have given thee all. Consider each thing as flowing from the sovereign good, and therefore all must be returned to me as to their origin. Out of me, both little and great, poor and rich, as out of a living fountain draw living water, and they who freely and willingly serve me shall receive grace for grace.

But he who would glory in anything else beside me or delight in any good as his own shall not be established in true joy nor enlarged in his heart, but in many ways shall be impeded and straightened. Therefore thou must not ascribe any good to thyself nor attribute virtue to any man, but give all to God without whom man has nothing. Again, to attribute anything to yourself is a delusion, because all, whatever energy you have, whatever the life that you are, the consciousness that you are, and whatever comes out of that consciousness that you are as a creation, something that you do or achieve, where does it all come from?

It all comes from the one source of all life. It's not yours. Nothing is yours.

Because the moment you say, this is mine, you've created the illusion of separateness from the source, and then the flow from the source becomes greatly restricted. The moment the illusion of separateness arises, the flow from the source of all life becomes narrower and narrower, it's not coming through anymore. Of course, Jesus said the same when somebody called Jesus good man or whatever somebody called him, and Jesus said, do not call me good.

There, none is good but God alone. So he was very much aware of that, not attributing anything to yourself, and then power can move through you much more freely. It all comes from the one source.

And so then you can, without the ego, but ego means there's a self, you attribute something to yourself, and that's me. Without that, you can be a full expression of universal intelligence in whatever form it wants to take. Let's end with reading me again just these few lines here.

Out of me, both little and great, poor and rich, as out of a living fountain draw living water, and they who freely and willingly serve me shall receive grace for grace. There's only God. That's the basic truth.

There's only the one. And you are it. Thank you.

Something I don't normally do is to share with you a book and there are some books that I've loved for many years that are powerful, timeless, and you may have seen, already started by sharing with the Tao Te Ching, the ancient Chinese book of wisdom written 2,500 years ago and just as powerful as it was then, even in translation. And I don't know if you've seen the second one was the Ralph Waldo Emerson, not that old, 19th century, also containing timeless, powerful, spiritual truth. Books like that are more than books.

They're, I feel, almost life energy fields and they have a life of their own. After giving birth to the first time, the power of now, I had this feeling that I had given birth, it came through this form and suddenly it went off into the world and it had a life of its own. Not that much to do with me anymore and it went into the strangest places and caused all over the planet reaching people who were ready.

At least one copy of the power of now even reached the bottom of the Pacific Ocean. Somebody told me that he was on a yacht and it sank and the book went down with it. So when we talk about a book and I have chosen another one for today, let's bear in mind that we are not at a college or university, that's not our approach.

We're not actually studying the book as such but the book is more than a book. It consists of powerful pointers towards spiritual truth, awakening, realization. So we're looking through the book, not at the book.

We're looking through the book at ourselves because every significant book is about you. That applies even to literature. If you read an important, deeply alive work of literature, it's about the human condition, always in the story, hidden underneath the story is a truth about the human condition, which is you.

And the book is powerful because it is about you and even more directly so in a spiritual book. So that's really what we are looking at through the book at ourselves, at the truth of awakening or at dysfunctional mind patterns in ourselves, becoming aware of that. So there is running through, as far as these books are concerned, there's running through history, this thread of spiritual realization or truth that has been called by some people, I don't know who coined the phrase, perennial philosophy.

Perennial means everlasting, always there. Philosophy, not in the modern sense of abstract solving of puzzles, but the original meaning of philosophy was about change in consciousness, about how to live sanely in this world. And so the book I've chosen for today, again, a book I've lived with for many years.

This book was written approximately 1,900 years ago. And the amazing thing about the author of this book, one quote from this book is in the power of now, I'll tell you in a minute what it is. The author of this book is highly unusual.

He belongs to the rare species, extremely rare species that are sometimes called philosopher kings. That refers to people who have worldly power, but are not unconscious. Rare combination.

Worldly power and a high degree of consciousness, perhaps not absolutely awakened state, but a very high degree of consciousness and self-awareness. And that's extremely rare. So I've seen it, for example, I remember when I lived in London, I would often go into the British Museum where there's a huge and wonderful section on Egypt.

And there are particularly two gigantic carved granite stone heads of pharaohs of Egypt one a man and one a woman, huge size. And when I saw them for the first time, I felt both of them emanated such serenity that that must be the depiction of somebody who is in a state of absolute peace. There was no doubt because even the stone statue emanated that serenity with a much more powerful, more powerfully than most Buddha images, although occasionally you get beautiful Buddha images like that too.

They both have a very slight smile on their face, just a hint of a smile and wonderfully serene gaze. And I actually took photos of these two and I had them on my wall for many years. But now the photos have gone the way of all world or earthly things and been lost or dissolved.

But that's fine for the time being. If you ever go there, they're still there. The stone, the original stone heads and I'm sure you will find them easily.

Just walk around the British section in the Egyptian section in the British Museum on the ground floor and you will very easily find them. So philosopher king, those were pharaohs, they were the rulers, but at the same time, perhaps they lived in that state of awakened state, perhaps not completely, but conscious, very conscious state. And the book I've chosen for today belongs to the same, written by the same kind of being, a Roman emperor called Marcus Aurelius, who was emperor for about 20 years between approximately the year 160 and 180 after Christ.

And while he was emperor, he wrote that book. He's considered one of the most just and wise emperors in a huge number of emperors, many of which were, I could almost say, completely crazy, completely insane, with occasional interludes of sanity, but he perhaps was the most sane. This unfortunately was not the case as far as his son was concerned, who became emperor after him, who was one of the worst.

So the awakened state is not easily transmitted genetically. If you have seen the film Gladiator, the emperor in that film is called Commodus, and that's his son. And in the film, actually, Marcus Aurelius appears at the beginning of the film, and if I remember correctly, in the film he is killed by his son.

I don't think there's historical evidence for that, but it's quite possible that he did kill his father. The actor is so good who played Commodus, the mad emperor, his son, I believe his name is Phoenix, Joachim Phoenix. He's so good.

That was the first time I ever saw this actor, and whenever I see him in some other role now, I think, oh, there's the mad Roman emperor. Now, the book that he wrote was not meant to be a book and was not meant to be published. It was to himself, and for a while that was the title.

When later it was published, it was called To Himself, and then later the title became Meditations, and that's what it's called nowadays, Meditations. And so when he died, people found this collection of notes to himself, and all just very short notes, very rarely more than half a page, and often just two or three sentences. So they found these notes, and people must have realized that they were deeply significant, and they were published.

In other words, copied by hand, of course, and then distributed to some people. And for about 300 years, 200 years, 300 years, gradually the book became better known. The book couldn't spread as quickly as it happens nowadays because first there was no print, and there was no opera.

So. And then what happened was, what started then were the so-called dark ages, when very few, the Roman Empire collapsed, the destiny of all form. The Roman Empire collapsed, the so-called barbarians took over, smashed everything up.

And for 1,000 years, the book disappeared. Nobody heard of it. And miraculously, one or two copies survived somewhere.

Nobody knows where, in a monastery perhaps, because the only people who could read and write during those 1,000 years were monks in monasteries. They kept alive the literary and philosophical tradition. And 1,000 years later, somewhere the book reappeared, and somebody read it and said, wow.

And they started copying it again. And ever since then, it's been, when it spread, it has been known to people, and many people found it meaningful, and many people still do. So that's amazing how the life of a book, it can disappear for 1,000 years, and suddenly reappear again and be just as alive.

And now here we are in the year 2009, looking at a book that was written 2,000 years ago, and it's alive for us, as you will see in a minute. It is alive. It is vitally alive.

Imagine the equivalent of this would be in the year 4,000 people reading The Power of Now. Now this is an ideal book if you don't want continuous reading, but either read it in bed or wherever you are, open it, read one entry, two entries, one page. They're all unrelated entries.

The book is divided into chapters, but it's meaningless. Originally, it didn't have chapters, but the publishers these days thought, well, every book must have chapters, so we call it chapter one, two, three, but it's meaningless. It has some themes that recur, but otherwise, there's no division into subject or themes.

It's just thoughts that came to him, insights, realizations, and reminders to himself of how to live. So that probably means that he didn't quite live the truth all the time. He was not totally conscious all the time.

He needed to remind himself of the truth. So these pointers that he wrote down were to himself, and not he didn't realize that anybody would find these pointers powerful and meaningful. Anybody who had even the slightest opening to the truth within, they would then recognize the truth that's there in the book.

Amazing. So I'll show you here what I have. I have two books here.

One is an old edition and an older translation, Penguin Classic. It probably looks different these days. It may have a different cover.

I've had this book maybe for 25 years. For a while, it disappeared too. This, I didn't.

And then I got it again. I had it stored somewhere. This is the Meditations Penguin Classic, an older translation.

This was sent to me one or two years ago. I received it in the mail from the publisher, said, we've just published a new translation of Marcus Aurelius. And we realized that you quoted him in The Power of Now.

And I think you would like to have a look at it. A very different translation by Gregory Hayes. The publisher is The Modern Library.

I love them both. This translation is more formal and serene. This translation is more modern and impactful and concise.

And this one is... So in a book like that, as with the Tao Te Ching, where I also gave you sometimes alternative translations, it's good to look at two different translations to have two different approaches to the same truth and see how different a translation can be. Now, you might think since he was a Roman emperor, he would have written this book in Latin, but he didn't.

The original is written in Greek. Every highly educated Roman would be virtually bilingual. And Greek was a language in ancient Rome of culture and philosophy.

And so naturally, when talking about these subjects, they would use the Greek language. So it's a translation from ancient Greek. Marcus Aurelius lived at a time when Christianity had just come to Rome.

But he doesn't mention Christianity. Apparently, there's one mentioned somewhere. I haven't found it yet.

But they believe that a later copyist put that in. He was aware, he must have been aware of Christianity. And many people have said that many of the truths that he speaks of seem to show a Christian influence.

But that is not an external influence. I believe it's something that came from within. Because the time of Christ was a second wave of spiritual awakening coming.

The one, well, not perhaps the second, perhaps third or fourth. One very powerful wave was, as I meant at some other time, the time of the Buddha. And Lao Tse, who wrote the Tao Te Ching, was an enormous influx of spiritual truth.

It seems to come in waves. The awakening of humanity comes in waves. There comes a wave of...

Suddenly, it flows from within. It flows into humans. And then the wave subsides.

And unconsciousness returns. Not completely, perhaps. But it's going...

Ooh. It's like somebody... Let's say humanity is a single human being that is asleep and dreaming.

And this human being doesn't wake up like... This human being wakes up out of the dream world. A lot of the dream is nightmares.

It goes... And dreams on. But perhaps not quite as deeply.

And then comes another... Oh. Self-awareness.

And then it's overtaken again by sleep. Can't keep my eyes open anymore. Another thousand years of the Dark Ages.

And then something shocks it. Perhaps some deep... Some suffering.

Some enormous collective pain. Like something hitting you. Wake up!

Life says, wake up! And you go... In our case, I believe that that hit by life on you that wakes you up was the 20th century.

The madness of the 20th century. The dreadfulness of history. 20th century history.

This dreadful suffering was... Like shaking you awake. And this is why from a larger perspective, even the dreadfulness has its place.

Because ultimately, it's part of the dream. The dreadfulness of the madness of it all. The 20th century.

Even that has its place. And perhaps we would not be here... It's almost...

Don't want to say something like that. But perhaps we would not be here if it hadn't been for the enormous suffering. Self-inflicted by humans on humans.

And so that served perhaps as an awakener. And this is why we are now experiencing another very powerful wave. Perhaps the last.

Perhaps leading to a permanent awakening. A permanent shift. I'm not absolutely sure that this wave is the last one that leads to a permanent shift in consciousness.

So that from now on, humanity or large section of humanity can live consciously without losing it again. However, if we look at history, we see that, yes, it seems to come in waves. Perhaps this is a wave.

Perhaps even this will have to subside again. Perhaps there will be another period of darkness. And then finally the shift will happen.

That's possible too. It doesn't really matter. There is an awakening here happening now.

That's all we need to know. And to be part of that. So that it happens through you.

That's all that matters. And it's never lost. No awakening is ever lost.

Even though humanity may go back to sleep for a while. Who knows? And yet, no gain in consciousness is ever lost.

Then the sleep won't be quite as deep. And there will always be some humans who stay awake. Even if collective sleep should return.

Hopefully not. Would be dreadful. But you can see there is the sleep state.

You can even when you watch the television. CNN. Partly there are some people who are very unconscious still.

And occasionally there are some people who bring in, who seem to be more awake than others. Much more. I'm not mentioning any names.

Now, Marcus Aurelius was not, you might have said, well, he must have had a great life. He was a Roman emperor. Lived in a life of luxury.

And well, he didn't. He spent many years fighting. It was a tradition for many emperors not to stay in Rome when there was a war.

They would actually go out and lead the soldiers into a battle. Maybe not personally with a sword. But they would be present where the Romans were defending their empire from the barbarians in the north.

And for years he lived there. Living through the agony of Germany's winters. And no central heating, of course.

And he was getting old. And not that many pleasures. And during that time, he wrote this book.

In The Power of Now, I mention one entry from the book. And I haven't looked at it recently. But I may actually have misquoted it.

Because when I wrote The Power of Now, I didn't have any books with me. So I caught it from memory. But the correct quote, I believe, from this is, and this is the old Serene Translation.

I didn't have this one then. It says, Love nothing but what comes to you woven in the pattern of your destiny for what could more aptly fit your needs. Love nothing but that which comes to you woven in the pattern of your destiny.

For what could more aptly fit your needs. The pattern of your destiny is the totality in which you move. And whatever you encounter, whatever situation you encounter in life, in this moment, the only moment there is, must be part of this web of the pattern of your destiny.

Where everything is connected with everything else. This is why I sometimes say, I speak of the inevitability of the form of the present moment. It happens because why is this happening now?

It could not happen otherwise. The entire history of the world has brought about the form of this moment, obviously. It has produced the form that this moment takes.

And that is the web, that is the pattern. And to go against that, is insane, to not accept it. So one theme that runs through it is to live in a state of non-resistance to what is.

Oh, so amazing that... He didn't call it non-resistance to what is, but that is the basic message. And that reoccurs many times in the book.

So let's have a look perhaps at one or two. The last few days I've been re-reading it and marking a few entries that I want to share with you. And I love it.

I can't put it down. And it's not because I can't put it down because there's some what's going to next in it, because there is no next. There's only this entry and then this entry, because it's so alive.

Oh, so much. That's good. I don't know where to start.

Let's start with a very, very short. To shrug it all off and wipe it clean, every annoyance and distraction and reach utter stillness. Don't need more than that.

Shrug it all off, wipe it all clean, every annoyance and distraction and reach utter stillness. That's the first and the last lesson. Now just, what does this serene translation say about this?

It's more poetic, but less powerful perhaps. Oh, the consolation of being able to thrust aside and cast into oblivion every tiresome intrusive impression and in an instant be utterly at peace. Now, as you notice, this translator uses stillness.

This translator uses peace. Of course, it is the same thing. Peace is inner stillness.

So according to your inclination, some may prefer one translation. Others may prefer the other. It is only the form in which it comes.

The essential truth behind the form is the same, of course. And that is so you may love. We talked previously about loving the form, having an affinity for the form and calling that love and recognizing the essence, which is love.

So you might have an affinity with one or the other form of this book, one translation or the other, that has nothing to do with it. The essence is the same. So that's fine.

It's just form and essence. Some forms are easier for others to use, for some people to use than others. So it doesn't really matter which one.

But that ability to shrug it all off and wipe it clean, every annoyance and distraction and reach utter stillness, that possibility is there at any moment to say, I'm just returning completely to this moment, which means you shrug it off, you wipe all distraction, all mental accumulations completely back in the present moment. No problem. There's no problem here now.

That in itself is a meditation. If you can remember that when you are not at peace, the possibility of returning to the present moment, you can call it like, usually one lives, one's intention is here in the past and here in the future. And so the focus of your consciousness is either there in the past or here in the future.

But it's not where life is happening, which is here. And you're interpreting the life that's here through the past or through fears and expectations about what you want, future, past and future, clouding your vision of what is. Of course, it's confusing.

You get confused. And so you separate. Ah, you wake up out of the dream.

The present moment is actually fine. Yeah, but what about tomorrow? Well, when it comes, it'll be the present moment.

The ability just to see how unproblematic the present moment is. The problem arises from something else, past and future. Where is past and future?

In thinking. Here, there are one or two translations. I've changed a word or two to make it even, well, in my view, better.

Nothing that goes on in anyone else's mind can harm you. Nothing that goes on in anyone else's mind can harm you. Nor can the shifts and changes in the world around you.

Then where is harm to be found? In your tendency to see it. It refers to harm.

In your tendency to see harm. Stop doing that and everything will be fine. Let the part of you that makes that judgment keep quiet.

Even if the body it's attached to is stabbed or burned or stinking with pus or consumed by cancer. Or to put it another way, it needs to realize that what happens to everyone, bad and good alike, is neither good nor bad. That what happens in every life, lived naturally or not, is neither natural nor unnatural.

Important phrase here is, let the part of you that makes that judgment keep quiet. The judgment that harm has happened. Without that, all you're ever faced with is the isness of the present moment.

The rest is an interpretation or a story. And it is in your power to let go of the interpretation which is unnecessary and simply be with what is. Don't impose a story on it and strengthen your identity by fighting what is.

It's about living in a different, from a different consciousness. People try to get away from it all, to the country, to the beach, to the mountains. You always wish that you could too, which is silly.

You can get away from it any time you like, by going within. Nowhere you can go is more peaceful, more free of interruptions than your own soul. In an instant's recollection, and there it is, an instant's recollection, and there it is, complete tranquility.

And by tranquility, I mean a kind of harmony. So keep getting away from it all like that. Renew yourself.

Getting away from it all, that expression, many people want that. And of course, ultimately, the only way to get away from it all is to go within. Now, in the little book, Guardians of Being, which some of you may have seen about dogs and cats, there's a little cartoon where the man walks with his dog and says to his dog, oh, isn't it nice to get away from it all?

They're walking out in the country. And the dog says, I suppose so, although I don't have that much of an all to get away from. Another theme that runs through it is impermanence, the fleetingness of all things.

And from the point of view of the practical man or woman, they would say, I don't want to hear, this is very negative, to be reminded of death or of the end of things. The practical man or woman says, no, I just want to get on with life. I don't want to be reminded of death.

And yet, eventually, it'll catch up with you. And then it's a bit late. And if you've been identified with form all your life, and finally the end approaches, it's very painful, extremely painful when the forms around you begin to collapse and you become aware of the imminent dissolution of your own form, it's dreadful.

And the dimension of depth cannot develop in you as long as you're identified with form. If you do not see the fleetingness of all forms, you remain shallow. So this is why I wrote somewhere, any civilization that denies death, that doesn't want to hear about it, like Western civilization still, doesn't want to hear about death, denies death, is shallow.

And the amazing thing about impermanence is that the realization of impermanence opens up in you the dimension of space or stillness when it is not resisted. This is why many spiritual teachings point to the fact of impermanence of all form as a device, as a teaching device. Because the moment you see that, how fleeting everything is, and don't resist it, something in you feels suddenly very spacious and peaceful.

And this could happen even if you go to, here in the West, you can't do it. But if you go to India, you could go when a person dies in India, the body is taken very, just a few hours after death, because it's hot, you can't keep bodies for very long. The body is taken to the cremation grounds, out in public, hot, dreadful, in public.

The body is taken to cremation grounds and there's a huge fire and is placed into the fire and all the relatives, they watch the body burn. And that, of course, many cry, but it is a deeply spiritual thing to watch the destiny, the fate of all forms, to actually see it, not as an abstract truth. You can have an abstract truth, it's, yes, everybody dies eventually, and when they die, the body dissolves.

Okay, that's an abstract, you don't really know it. And if you're a young person, up to the age of 30, perhaps, okay, you've been told, or you think, you know, you are going to die one day, you don't really believe it, that you are going to die, it's not me. Maybe at the age of 30, for the first time, for a second, an inkling comes to you that you may be mortal.

Or as I heard, I read an interview with a young person and she said, in her 20s, she said, oh, I'm not worried about death because by the time I reach that age, they will have invented something. So, soon you will be ashes or bones, a mere name at most, and even that is just a sound, an echo. The things we want in life are empty, stale and trivial, dogs snarling at each other, quarreling children, laughing and then bursting into tears a moment later.

Ordinary human existence, dogs, dogs snarling at each other. Children, quarreling children, laughing and then bursting into tears. And then they die.

So, he constantly reminds himself of the fleetingness of life. And why is he doing that? That must have given him inner peace and stillness.

And again, why is this happening? Why can, why potentially can the realization of fleetingness give you inner stillness? Because something in you, that that in you which recognizes the birth and death of forms is not form, it's consciousness.

So, there must be something eternal or timeless and non, something that is not form in you to recognize formlessness. I said somewhere in the book, if the whole world were blue, you wouldn't see any blue. In order to see blue, there must be something that's not blue.

So, in order to recognize the fact of impermanence, and to see there must be something in a faculty in you that is not part of that impermanence, and that is timeless, and that is consciousness itself. So, when you see the form, you disidentify, when you see the form dissolving, and this could be in your life with a simple thing, like some kind of loss. It doesn't have to be death every time.

Some kind of loss in your life. It could be the loss of a job, the loss of your investments, the loss of your partner, of someone close to you. Perhaps they leave you.

They may not die, but it's the same. Separation, the loss of certain life circumstances, the loss of your home. Many people in these economically difficult times are experiencing, for example, the loss of their home.

And again, home, your house where you live, is something important in the world of form that you identify with as part of who you are. It is very painful to be deprived of that, but potentially, there is here the possibility of disidentification from form. And there, suddenly, you find yourself, although most people in this country, you lose their home, most, some do, but most people eventually find some other home.

Most. And even if you don't find another home and you find yourself on a park bench, this could be a moment of complete disidentification from that which you thought you needed to sustain your life, or the forms, to psychologically sustain your sense of who you are. You've lost that.

And what are you left with then? What's left after you've been deprived of the forms that gave you your, what you thought was a foundation for your life? When life takes away the forms that you thought were the foundation of your life, what is left?

The life that needs no foundation, that is the foundation, the formless, the essence. And this is why many people, many people have to go through loss to awaken to that. Some of the happiest times in my life I spent on a park bench without a home was beautiful.

No, I'm not saying this will happen to you. Some people read the introduction to The Power of Now where I talk about having no home for a while and sitting around on park benches and they close. Oh no, I don't want to go that way.

Dealing with people, that was one of his things. He often reminds himself of how to deal with other people. Don't be irritated at people's smell or bad breath.

Now he's using really, he's using that as a metaphor for something else, being irritated at the behavior of people. But he uses that, don't be irritated at people's smell or bad breath. What's the point?

With that mouth, with those armpits, they are going to produce that odor. And then he argues with himself. The next line says, but they have a brain.

Can't they figure it out? Can't they recognize the problem? And then he answers, so you have a brain as well.

Good for you. Then use your logic to awaken his. Show him, make him realize it.

If he'll listen, then you'll have solved the problem without anger, which means point out, don't react to other people's unconsciousness. They, whatever behavior they manifest comes out of their state of consciousness. This is why he says, with that mouth and those armpits, have to produce that odor that just follows.

Why be angry about that? Why react? Use, you have a brain, which means you can, instead of asking them to be conscious, be conscious yourself.

And then he says, use your logic to awaken his. Now, when he uses the word logic, we have to, it's deeper than what we know as logic. According to the philosophy of which he was a part, which is called stoicism, there is such a thing or no thing that is called logos in Greek.

And logos is often translated wrongly, I believe, as the word. Logos is translated as the word, for example, at the beginning of the gospel of St. John, where it says, in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God. Now, what he translates, what in St. John is translated as the word is the Greek word logos. This is the origin because the gospels are written in Greek. The word logos says, in the beginning was the logos and the logos was with God and the logos was God. That is, logos, the fact that the writer of the gospel of John uses the word logos means that he was familiar with Greek philosophy.

So he uses a term that was already at the time of writing, was already 400 years old, logos, and incorporates that into the Christian teaching. So we have Greek philosophy coming into Christian teaching. But the logos in that school of philosophy, and that is why it's part of the perennial philosophy of spiritual truth, the logos really is consciousness.

The logos, they're regarded as an intelligence that pervades the entire universe, that animates and pervades. It is also the intelligence that makes it possible for you to think, but it is deeper than thinking. It is intelligence that sustains the body and created the body.

It is this intelligence that underlies the whole. That is the logos. And the teaching of Marcus Aurelius or what he reminds himself of is to live at one with that intelligence.

Consciously, in conscious oneness with that intelligence, with this consciousness itself.

So when he says use your logic, it means you live in alignment with that universal intelligence. And you cannot live in alignment with that universal intelligence if you resist life, if you resist what is, if you complain about life, if you have a quarrel with life, the present moment.

And there's a beautiful, if I can find it, piece on that. I can't find it. But I know it more or less from memory.

He says, if you quarrel with your circumstances, you are like a tumor or an abscess in reality, in the world of form. You become like a tumor or an abscess if you quarrel with what is internally or out aloud. You're like an abscess on the world.

And many people, of course, if you observe human life, many people live like that. They live in, if not continuous resistance to circumstances. Circumstances consisting of the other people, what people say or do, what people don't say, but should have said, or don't do, but should have done, and so on.

All that is circumstances. And the habitual state of consciousness is to quarrel with circumstances, with what is. And so he describes that, that you make yourself into an abscess.

You are out of alignment. It's like some growth. You may not realize how widespread that state of consciousness is, that lives, even if it's just 50%, that it's half your life living out of alignment with life.

And for many people, it's more than 50% of their life. There are many people who, almost 100% of their life, are quarreling with circumstances, internally or out aloud. Whatever is in the present.

They're complaining. Isn't that amazing to live like that? And he saw the insanity of that.

So do you want to be an abscess? And of course, most of you don't do that anymore, except occasionally. And this is a good moment for a humorous interlude.

Somebody gave me a card. A card that he gave to his wife. And he showed it to me.

And I liked it. I don't know why he gave it to his wife. And he showed it to me.

And I loved it so much. And I said, oh, I'd love to have that. And then he got one for me.

It's all about complaining, of course. So the card shows this woman. It's apparently from a TV show called Saturday Night Live.

And this woman looks very unhappy. And the card says so. I don't know if you'll be able to hear it.

It's a little digital recording. She's going to say something when I open the card. The card says so.

When you open the card, it says, how are things with you? And then she tells you how things are with her. I suppose I have to hold to my microphone here.

How are things with you?

[Speaker 2] (7:23:37 - 7:23:48)

I'm depressed, I guess.

[Speaker 1] (7:24:11 - 8:12:19)

Now, the reason why it's funny is because it's so close to the truth of many people. Just a slight, maybe very slight, exaggeration. Not that much.

Choose not to be harmed. And you won't feel harmed. Don't feel harmed.

And you haven't been. This, again, is about not creating a story in your mind. This is what he did to me.

This is what he did. And then it goes on. He did that.

Talk about it. Think about it. This is, you're creating a substitute reality.

You're creating a huge superstructure, mental superstructure, on top of the simplicity of what is. If you don't do that, it's almost as if nothing happened. Even if somebody cut off your arm, if you don't complain, if you don't make it into a story, nothing much happened.

Don't. So, choose not to be harmed, and you won't feel harmed. It's not, what he's really saying is, do not create a superstructure of story making.

Impose it on reality, and believe that to be more real than the simplicity of what is. It's amazing. And again, of course, this is still a lesson that most humans have to learn.

Impermanence. Little point, again, to impermanence. He is reminding himself of, he says, the age of Vespasian.

Vespasian was an emperor about 80 years before him. The age of Vespasian, for example. People doing the exact same things.

Marrying, raising children, getting sick, dying, waging war, throwing parties, doing business, farming, flattering, boasting, distrusting, plotting, hoping others will die, complaining about their own lives, falling in love, putting away money, seeking high office and power. And that life they led is nowhere to be found. Or the age of Trazan.

Trazan lived 40 years before him. He was emperor then. The exact same things.

And that life, too, gone. Survey the records of other eras and see how many others gave their all and soon died and decomposed into the elements that formed them. All gone.

But most of all, run through the list of those you knew yourself. Those who worked in vain, who failed to do what they should have, what they should have remained fixed on and found satisfaction in. This last sentence, what he means by that is, who worked in vain, who failed to do what they should have, what they should have remained fixed on and found satisfaction in.

Their entire attention was on the world of form. He's really saying their entire attention throughout their lives was on the world of form. And he gives this whole list.

And of course, the list that he gives, marrying, raising children, doing business, flattering, boasting, plotting, putting money away, is still exactly the same these days. No difference from 2,000 years ago. And so the entire attention is on the things, the stuff around you.

And this is why he says they worked in vain, because what they should have remained fixed on, or at least there should have been a balance in their life of what I previously called the formless and the world of form. What I express sometimes in, you may remember this, the formless and the world of form. It's your life to have a balance in your life.

And for most people, there is no balance. There is only form. And that is such a waste.

They are not focused on the eternal. They are unaware of the eternal within. Jesus talks about that also when the famous story of the two sisters, when he visits a house, Martha and Mary.

And Martha is concerned about getting everything ready. Let's see, you have to do this and that, and the cooking has to be done, and this has to be done. She's agitated and stressed.

And Mary is sitting there listening to Jesus. And Jesus says, Martha says to Jesus, please tell her to help me. She's just sitting there.

I've got so many important things to do. Jesus says, well, she has chosen only one thing is necessary, and she has chosen that one thing. When Jesus says only one thing is necessary, what he means is only one thing is absolute, is absolutely important.

Everything else may be important, but it is only relatively important. Your job, your relationships, your home situation, your financial situation, your health situation, whatever you have in the world of form is relatively important, yes, but not absolutely important. But what determines whether your life ultimately has meaning or not is whether the dimension of depth, the stillness, the spaciousness, the formless essence, whether you realize that within yourself or whether your life is consumed completely by the world of form, which includes the thinking mind.

Then your thoughts, this is primordial form. Thought is primordial form. Your thoughts then consume your entire consciousness and the things of this world, which are really all become thoughts in your head.

You don't have a relationship with your car or your house. What you really have a relationship with is the mental concept of car and house. And so ultimately, all the things of this world are your mind.

And you don't even know whether there is such a thing as a car out there. Maybe all the cars we see in LA are just in your mind. Philosophers have spoken about whether what we perceive out there is actually there.

And nobody can know for sure is there even such a thing as an outside. Amazing question, but let's not go into that. And ultimately, it actually is helpful as the Course in Miracles recommends that you consider everything that you see as being inside you.

This is almost as a kind of spiritual practice. And that's quite an amazing thing. If everything that you see, if you can practice it for a day or half a day or an hour, that everything inside is actually inside you.

What, that obnoxious person is inside me? And of course, if it's inside you, it changes. Ultimately, the division between inner and outer is not really there.

But let's put that aside. Let's stay with the practical. Again, a little entry about the story making in your mind, giving things a significance that they don't really have.

Like seeing roasted meat and other dishes in front of you and suddenly realizing this is a dead fish, a dead pig, or that this no longer exists. Noble vintage, whatever it's called, is grape juice. Of course, it is fermented grape juice.

And the purple robes, the Roman emperors would wear purple robes, and the purple robes are sheep wool dyed with shellfish blood or making love. Something rubbing against your penis, a brief seizure, and a little cloudy liquid. Well, that destroys many illusions.

Perceptions like that, latching onto things and piercing through them so we see what they really are. That's what we need to do all the time, all through our lives, when things lay claim to our trust, to lay them bare and see the truth. How pointless they are to strip away the legend that encrusts them so that you're not deceived by the world of form.

So good to see that when you see advertising. It doesn't mean you can't enjoy things, but not get into some illusory realm. They inhabit some illusory mental realm because then the world will take you over and devour your entire consciousness when you don't look through things.

Amazing. Our inward power, when it obeys nature, when it says nature, by the way, it again really is one of the many ways in which you can translate logos. So in alignment with consciousness itself, our inward power, when it obeys nature, reacts to events by accommodating itself to what it faces, to what is possible.

It needs no specific material. It pursues its own aims as circumstances allow. It turns obstacles into fuel as a fire overwhelms what would have quenched a lamp.

What's thrown on top of the conflagration is absorbed, consumed by it, and makes it burn still higher. Obstacles, challenges, when they are not avoided but faced, when they're not resisted internally, it uses the words reacting to events by accommodating yourself to what you face as a consciousness rather than rejecting what you face. Then whatever challenge comes into your life, and I say the same in The Power of Now, it becomes fuel for your, as I say, it becomes fuel for your consciousness.

Any difficulty in your life, any challenge in your life, if it's not avoided, denied, rejected, complained about, saying life shouldn't be happening to me, it's accepted as it happens, then it becomes fuel for the flame of consciousness. And you grow, consciousness grows, comes through you more and more. And then also at the same time, not only does that free you from the suffering, the self-inflicted suffering that is there when you reject what is, does not only free you from suffering, it also brings a power in that deals then with the situation.

So use whatever challenge comes into your life, you use it as a kind of fuel for the flame of consciousness. And that is done through surrender to what is. And some people need more of that than others.

If you choose presence in your daily life, you may not need the drastic challenges. You remember the, like life shaking you awake. If you wake up and stay awake, life doesn't need to shake you awake.

If you go to sleep continuously and the universal impulse of consciousness is of course towards awakening, then life needs to shake you. Let's look at something from the poetic translation. There's a type of person who, if he renders you a service, has no hesitation in claiming the credit for it.

Another, though not prepared to go so far as that, will nevertheless secretly regard you as in his debt and be fully conscious of what he has done. But there's also the man who one might almost say has no consciousness at all of what he has done, like the vine which produces a cluster of grapes and then having yielded its rightful fruit, looks to no more thanks than a horse that has run it through his race, a hound that has tracked his quarry or a bee that has hived her honey. Like them, the man who has done one good action does not cry it aloud, but passes straight on to a second as the vine passes on to the bearing of another summer's grapes.

How to live without ego, claim I did that for you, or claiming credit, but something is done and you move on, like nature. So, and then he sometimes has a dialogue with himself. So now he writes, according to you then, we should rank ourselves with things that act unconsciously.

Is that how we should live? Like the vine or like a horse that has run its race and then forgets about it, doesn't say I did that. And then he replies, exactly, yet we should do so consciously.

So be like, be as much in alignment as the things of nature that live unconsciously, live in the same kind of alignment with life as the vine, as the horse, as nature, but do that consciously. And that's an interesting point because that is the alignment that you naturally live in before the mind takes you over and before the mind creates separation between yourself and reality, yourself and the world, yourself and other people. Before that happens, you live in a natural alignment with what is.

So there's nobody, there's no ego that says, I did that. There are still some humans whose mind is not highly developed. They would perhaps be called retarded.

Some humans, their mind is not developed enough yet to have an ego. And those humans also can live in that simplicity. I've pointed out before, if this is, for example, in the film, Forrest Gump, you have a human who would be considered virtually almost on the brink of retarded.

And he does, first of all, life always gives him what he needs. Things come to him. Secondly, even when he accomplishes great things, for example, he goes to Vietnam, he saves many people out of the, carries them on his, he says, well, nobody there to claim credit for it.

He hasn't got an ego. He just tells the story of what he did. That's what happened.

That's what I did. There's no ego there to say, I did that. And so that's the pre-egoic state, like nature.

So this is what he talks about, is we can live like that, but consciously. That's the next stage. And this is the reason why the simpleton or the fool and the enlightened person have a lot in common.

And why sometimes the simpleton or the fool or the enlightened person can be mistaken. The enlightened person can be mistaken for a fool, and the fool can be mistaken for an enlightened person. The latter being the case in the nice film with Peter Sellers, Being There, where the fool is being mistaken for a highly unconscious being.

They are close. The human being in whom the ego has not yet arisen can be used more easily by the logos, to use that term, by universal intelligence, because it's not the power of the logos, which is consciousness, it's not obstructed by the ego. And this is why there are many ancient legends and myths, mythology, where the fool has an important mission.

That's an archetypal motive in mythology and literature. The fool can do something that the great heroes cannot do. And again, it's the power of the egoless state, even if it's pre-ego.

As the most recent example of that, of course, is the Hobbit, Lord of the Rings. The simple guy, little and not particularly intelligent, only he can do this important, accomplish this important mission, not the powerful heroes, because they have an ego. But our destiny is to live in that alignment with power, consciously.

And when that shift happens, your life becomes empowered by the universal consciousness, the logos, and it manifests through you, one way or another. Then the sense of I, of the doer, I have to do that, goes. And that's good news and bad news.

Then suddenly, you achieve things when you have become free of ego, if not 100%, maybe 90%. It's enough for you to achieve great things. If you become free of ego, you achieve things that before the ego would have done anything to get you there.

But of course, you couldn't do it with the ego. And when you've achieved it, unfortunately, the sense of I did that isn't there. So you don't get that satisfaction.

You get a satisfaction of being in alignment with power, but you have no personal satisfaction. Oh, that's a pity. My ego would have liked to have written the power of now at the age of 25.

I did that. Of course, I couldn't have. The ego can't write that.

It's not in alignment with power, the power of now. The ego is a denial of the power of now, so it can't write the power of now. I'll just open it at random now.

There's so much good in here, it's so wonderful. Don't let your imagination be crushed by life as a whole. Don't try to picture everything bad that could possibly happen.

Stick with the situation at hand, which means the present moment, and ask, why is this so unbearable? Why can't I endure it? You'll be embarrassed to answer.

Then remind yourself that past and future have no power over you, only the present. And even that can be minimized, which means the power that the present circumstances have over you, even that can be minimized. Just mark off its limits.

And if your mind tries to claim that it can't hold out against that, well then, heap shame upon it. The simplicity, if you keep to the simplicity of the present moment, can I deal with this situation? Always.

The power is there. Can I deal with what might happen tomorrow? No.

You don't have the power to do that for the simple reason that it doesn't exist. It's not here. Will I be able to deal with?

No, you won't. You can only deal with the present. The power can only come into the present.

You don't need to have it for tomorrow. Oh, sorry, I forgot that you were there. So you see that the perennial philosophy of the spiritual truth runs through from the most ancient times to now the same truth coming through different words, different forms, it's there.

The truth of awakening, living in alignment with the greater intelligence, the truth of surrender to the present moment, the truth of letting go, of imposing stories on reality, the mind, not live in the mind, compulsive thinking, waking up to sanity. You can read a book like that. That is part of the perennial philosophy.

When you need it, you can read it because you need a reminder, a little pointer. You can even have several copies, one in your bathroom, one by your bedside, one in your office. Book like that, Tao Te Ching is like that, meditations by Marx Aurelius.

There's no continuous text. It's not, you can open anywhere, read a line or two. You can do it with Stillness Speaks also.

Open it, read a line or two. Even The Power of Now on New Earth, you can do that and other spiritually alive books. And they're to be used as a reminder, but not a substitute, a substitute for living it.

So if you use the device that is here meant to remind you and to point the way, if you, anything that is done to excess, no matter how good, turns into bad. So there is such a thing as an over-reliance, over-use of reminders, of pointers, where you almost compulsively read. Yes, you're taking in some energy.

Yes, it does something. And yet in your daily life, you're still not, you're not living it. And so it can happen.

It does happen to some people that the reading of spiritual books or going to seminars or workshops or retreats or listening to speakers becomes a substitute for living it in every moment of your life. So you need to find the balance between using the help that the universe offers you. It's beautiful in the form of a teacher or so-called teacher.

It's just, there is no teacher as such. It's only, teacher is a function. I am a teacher when I sit in this chair.

But when I leave this room, I'm not a teacher anymore. It's only a function. It's not my identity to be a teacher.

It's a, that would be a form identity. So, but use the so-called teacher or teaching as a help. Don't get attached too much to the form of the teaching so that you can't let go.

Some people get attached to teachers. That's not the case with me because I work mostly with large groups. So it's more difficult to get attached to me as a teacher.

It's all in you. And if this book is powerful or any other spiritual book is powerful, how do you feel? Where is that power that you feel that's in the book?

Or the clarity or the spiritual power that you feel is in the teacher? How do you know that this is in the, that it's in the teacher? There must be something in you that recognizes it.

Because there are others to whom a spiritual book would be meaningless. So that in them which could recognize is not awake. They don't, a spiritual book is empty words.

This is still the case with some newspapers and magazines. They just, there's nobody in the entire newspaper or magazine that has any inner access to spiritual teaching, any form. And it could be a, I believe the entire New York Times, although it's a good paper, they don't have a single person who is open to it.

So whenever anything spiritual is mentioned, I read something again yesterday in the New York Times, they have to kind of distort it and make it into something slightly absurd. It says a certain number of people in the States have said they've had some kind of realization of the divine or God. And when they report it, they have to make it into something absurd.

There must be a funny angle to that. They have a realization of God. This is weird.

So there are still people who don't. So when you see that you feel the truth of it, it must be in you, otherwise you wouldn't see it. So the power is in you.

And the answer is in you. And you are the answer to all your searches, whatever your search is. You are the goal.

You are the answer. It's never outside. And then, of course, a time comes when you don't need any more spiritual books, but you can still enjoy them.

And it's a different kind of reading. You read a spiritual book. Wow, this is beautiful.

Yes, yes, yes. You read like, oh, yes, yes. That's it.

And there is an enjoyment in reading it. That's beautiful. And you don't need it anymore, but you enjoy it.

If the impulse comes, write down your own insights. When they come, they may come to you. You can be like Marcus Aurelius and write down a little out of the stillness, little, oh, even if they seem not that significant, write it down.

Then perhaps more comes because you've given it some attention. It has come as an original thought and you've given it some attention. Everybody knows, well, psychotherapists who work with analyzed dreams, they know that if you pay attention to your dreams, then more comes.

You remember them more and more and more significant dreams. That's at least about what Jung said. Carl Jung said, if you give attention to your dreams then and write them down.

This is not what I recommend here. Daily life is enough of a dream. You can do it.

I'm not saying don't, but what I'm saying is you give attention you appreciate, then more comes. So if you give attention to an original thought that comes to you rather than saying, oh, this is not important enough to write down, just write it down, then perhaps more comes. And then perhaps after a while, you have another book like this or whatever form it takes.

You don't write. You don't write. You can't write a book like that.

I can't write a book that is powerful. You as the person, no person can do that and you don't have to. It's only if there's openness in you.

And again, it's the, if you're too much in the form, the power doesn't flow through. If you access the formless stillness space, that's where the power flows through. And it does it through this form.

And if some of you become spiritual teachers, in quotation marks, or you already are in some way, in some way you already, if that consciousness, if the awakening consciousness is arising in you, you cannot not teach because your daily life and your interactions with other people become, you teach by being present. You teach presence. Even if you say nothing about presence.

By being present in daily life and in your interactions with others, you teach presence. And so that is part of your purpose in life. Now, whether it or not becomes a more formal teaching situation, that may be the case or may not be the case with you.

But again, you can't do it. If you feel, I'm now ready to be a spiritual teacher, that's probably not it. But if you have the feeling, I don't really know anything, that could be it.

And not afraid of not knowing anything. If you have the feeling, I don't know anything, and you get what I should know, then that's not, doesn't work. But not knowing is the most powerful state.

I said that previously. Not knowing and then see what words come. You can start by giving, if you have not doing so already, give little talks in your living room or somebody else's living room or not to your relatives, because they may not listen to you.

Remember what happened to Jesus when he went back to his own village. Nobody wanted to listen to him. Who is this guy here?

Do we know who he is? He's the son of such and such. Who does he think he is?

And if they'd had newspaper at the time, they would have had self-proclaimed master misleading the multitudes. Well, thank you to the form of Marcus Aurelius. The consciousness, of course, wrote the book, The Timeless Consciousness.

But it came through the form. The form was transparent enough for it to come through. We don't need to ask, well, was he enlightened or not?

Irrelevant. It was transparent enough for that power to come through. And of course, in your life also, that's the important question, is not, am I enlightened?

Am I going to be enlightened or fully awake or whatever? No. At this moment, are you dense as the form, opaque?

The more negative, the more identified with thought, the more dense you are as an energy field, not transparent. So the only important question is, at this moment, are you that transparency? So the form is still there, but it has lost its density, that is the ego, that is identification with thinking, that is every negative emotion.

You become contracted and dense. And when that goes through acceptance, surrender, alignment with what is, space opens up rather than space becomes more important than form. And you feel that.

You feel that in yourself. The space that you are is more important than the form that you are. And you feel that in yourself as you feel that primarily, you are your space.

Very much secondary is, yes, you're also here as a body with a past and certain psychological makeup and some thoughts, but it's secondary. And with that comes an enormous trust. If you can feel that primarily, you are space, which you cannot define.

You can't say, you don't really have a concept anymore of exactly who you are. As long as you think you know who you are, that's not who you are. But when you no longer know who you are and become comfortable with not knowing who you are, then you're beginning to be who you are.

No opinion really anymore of who you are. You're just a space of consciousness. Can't really just say much more.

And so you're neither good or bad as that space of consciousness. You're not good or bad. You're beyond good and bad.

The opposites don't apply anymore. Your past becomes irrelevant if you are that space of timeless consciousness, which is what you are. Your past is secondary.

You can talk about it still and laugh about it, but it's not important, which is good news if your past isn't... It's good news if your past isn't that great. But if you're very proud of your past and your achievements, then perhaps you want to hang on.

So that can be an obstacle. The great things that I did, I did them. And so the trust that comes when you are a space, when you feel that you move around simply as a simple space of consciousness, fear goes, disappears from life, because fear is only...

Identification with form produces fear. Identification with space is freedom from fear.

2018 Eckhart Tolle Transmuting Suffering Into Peace Audiobook

[Speaker 1] (2:01 - 48:59)

The story that has not fulfilled itself yet, but is hoping to fulfill itself at some point in the future. That's why I'm always looking there. And when you're looking to future, you are immersed in your mind.

In the mind, the noise machine in the head is acting. So one could almost say that almost everybody is possessed. Not in a spooky way, don't...

But one could almost say everybody is possessed by their mind, which is the continuous movement of thought, out of which has crystallized a thought made entity. That consists of all kinds of identifications. My past, things that happened to me, my possessions, my this, my that.

Or it could also be in part a collective sense of identity, equally thought made, that is even more restless and unhappy and destructive, ultimately, than the personal egoic identity, the us, the tribe, the nation, our little group, our race, our political party or position. So most humans go through life mistaking the mind made entity that lives for the next moment, because it's never fulfilled in this moment. And the past wasn't all that great either.

It wasn't supposed to happen. So many things in the story of me were not supposed to happen. And usually, this moment, most of the time, isn't the greatest place either.

It's not supposed to happen either. I want something else, but not this. I want that, not this.

But unfortunately, this cannot be denied because it is. Is is something you can't really argue with, and if you do, you're insane. The form that this moment takes is already as it is.

But for most humans, there is the gap between I want and what is. They are not aligned. So humans are continuously out of alignment with the suchness the isness of now.

Internally, out of alignment. An unpleasant place to be, especially if you're there for most of your life. Now in nature, nature is so beautiful because things are aligned with now.

Plant life, animals, they're just present. Of course, every form has its own limitations. Animals too have their limitations, and in some ways, greater limitations than humans.

And yet, compared to most humans, the whole world of nature looks very sane, whereas the human world looks, to a large extent, quite insane, which means mad. So to be out of alignment with the isness of this moment is the normal state of the mind-made egoic self. How do we become free of that?

And the first, the most important step is being taken already at this moment, which is to see this. If you see that you are out of alignment or have been out of alignment with now, something arises in you, that which makes that seeing possible is not part of the egoic structure. It's presence.

It's only through being present that you can see the conditioned patterns in your own life. And only by remaining present and continuing to look can you avoid making the seeing of these conditioned patterns in yourself into a personal problem that you need to solve at some point in the future. The fallacy on the spiritual path of hoping, striving to achieve an imagined state of consciousness in the future.

Yes, but I'm not there now, so where else can I look for it except in the future? Who is speaking? The mind.

The ego. The ego telling you, the only way you can get there is in the future. That's the only place where you can find yourself.

Now, am I asking you to forget your personal past? No. There's no need to forget your personal past or to forget what you have learned, your personal history.

But if that gives you your sense of identity, that limits your life enormously. So remember your personal history. Of course, it's fine.

But don't look to it for yourself, a sense of self that can only come out of the aliveness of this moment. Now, you need to bring present moment awareness into your everyday life. Otherwise, you walk out of here.

Yes, you will have received an enormous boost of presence in this collective energy field. Most of you, except those few who are totally close to it and are sitting there at this moment thinking, what the hell is he talking about? As you sit here, most of you are absorbing as part of the collective field which can be quite powerful when people together enter the state of presence.

It intensifies it. So it can be very helpful. And yet, as you walk away from here, the momentum of the conditioning, the old conditioning in your mind, will attempt to reassert itself quickly.

At the latest, it will come when the first little challenge comes into your life where the present moment isn't as it should be. There's a traffic jam or something falls or somebody says something that they shouldn't have said. And you feel you have reason to complain again.

What are you complaining about? Well, somebody did something or the situation that... You're complaining about the now, which the egoic entity loves to do because it strengthens itself through every little internal...

You don't have to complain out loud. It's enough to complain in your head, which for some people is 80% of their mind activity. And they go through life unconsciously looking for the next thing to complain about.

Let's hope they don't find you because they find you, very soon they will find something in you to complain about. And to feel personally offended. And in that, the ego, in its imaginary sense of self, feels stronger for a moment.

You got like a little balloon. The complaining entity gets a little bigger. And you feel, I'm more fully myself now because I'm complaining about something.

And again, it's unconscious. And another unconscious aspect of this is that for that moment, the ego feels superior to the person or the situation that it is complaining about. That's another fantasy, of course.

And imagine superiority because when you can complain about a situation or a person, what he said and what he did and what they did and shouldn't have done and whatever, it could even be the weather. Why don't the government do something about the weather? It's a little exaggeration, but it's almost like that.

Some people continuously have arguments with God. They say, this isn't right. How can you do such a thing?

And some people angrily deny the existence of God because surely this moment would be different if I were in charge. So there is an imagined superiority when you complain about something because you feel superior to what you complain about. You're morally superior now.

And you're very right and somebody else is wrong. Oh, that's great. That makes me feel much bigger, says the ego.

The ego loves to be right. Now, to be right, unfortunately, somebody else has to be wrong. So as you walk away from here, you may notice habitual reactions coming back.

Habitual thought patterns and reactive patterns. And you may then suddenly lose the now, just as I demonstrated before. You go from alive to half dead.

When you meet a person like that, you know they are not really there. They are in their thoughts. But in most of you, there is enough presence to notice very quickly when an old pattern, conditioned pattern comes back, a reaction, a reactive pattern comes back.

And after a short while, you see it for what it is. So you're no longer totally in it. The moment you notice, you see, you are aware of an old pattern in you, you are no longer trapped in it.

The awareness frees you from it. You become present again, and you have a choice then. You choose to be in this moment instead of complaining about the traffic jam or whatever the situation is.

Or the bad food that you are given in the restaurant. Am I saying that whatever happens to you, you are to say yes to? Only internally, not necessarily externally.

Why should you accept a fish that's gone off if you're ordering fish? It doesn't smell good anymore, and it costs 20 euros on the menu. So some people misunderstand this teaching and think, okay.

I have to say yes to this moment and eat this. But that is not the case. An inner yes, yes.

That means you are internally not complaining about the situation. You are accepting that yes, this fish is not really fit to eat. You can't eat it anymore.

That's the reality. And then you told the waiter and say, oh, can you take this back, please? It doesn't smell good.

Bring me some fresh fish if you have some. That's not complaining. That's rectifying the situation.

But you are not personalizing it. You are not using the situation to blow yourself up as the ego. How dare you serve me this?

Me? To me? And that usually produces a corresponding egoic reaction in the other person.

And the waiter says, what do you mean? Nobody else has complained about the fish that we serve here. And that's one typical human situation.

So very well it is possible that quite often the situation may require a firm no. I am not eating this. And yet, do you notice a difference between the complaining no that feels personally offended and a clear no.

This is not what I want. Please take it back. Internally, there is still an acceptance of the fact that this fish you don't want to eat and you should take it back.

That's fine. So it is, as I mentioned briefly in The Power of Now, which you may remember, it is a high quality no. And high quality no's are fine.

They are often required in life. Now, if you were stranded in some place and there's no food and the only food there is is this fish that doesn't smell good, you may have to eat it. And then you say somebody gives it to you and nobody else is giving you any food and it's the only food there is in that place.

Then there would be the internal and external saying, yeah, okay, I'll eat this because there's nothing else to eat. That's fine. So at times you go along with the situation.

At other times you may have to say no. And yet, without the egoic involvement in the no that makes somebody wrong and makes yourself right, then life unfolds with much greater ease. You are less likely to fuel the unconsciousness in others if you are conscious.

If you are not there as an egoic entity needing to be bigger. So you're less likely and so your state always transmits itself to others. Whoever you come into contact with, your state of consciousness transmits itself to others.

And the more unconscious they are, the less presence there is in them, the more they will react and reflect back to you your state of consciousness. In order not to compulsively reflect back to people their state of consciousness, there needs to be great alertness and presence in you. And so, let's reverse the situation in the restaurant.

You are the waiter and the customer says, how dare you serve me this bad fish? If you are present, this is the isness of this moment, an angry customer wanting to be right and wanting you to be wrong. And you see that.

You see it without needing to label it. You see, there's the human ego and it does what it always does. That's all.

There's not even a person there. It's just the human ego operating through this being. There's a being underneath, but it's asleep.

There's a beautiful being underneath, but it's... And the ego is talking. Hello.

Welcome. It seems that we are going to be here together for three hours, except for those who leave early. That seems a long time when the only subject matter of our gathering is the now.

And the only real topic that we speak about is the now. And if you are not fully in the now as you sit here, the three hours may seem a long time. If you are not fully in the now as you sit here, which is the normal state, the normal state is not to be in the now, you're already becoming impatient at this moment.

Ultimately, what that means is not that you cannot stand the speaker because he's not interesting enough, but you can't really stand being with yourself for that long. But this gathering, the purpose of it is to help you in your ability to be present. So if you're not yet fully present now and thinking about tonight's dinner, or that you'd rather be somewhere else, or about something that happened this morning, or 20 years ago, that's okay.

I'm inviting you to be here, present, at this moment as if there were no past and future. Just pretend for one moment that there is no past and future. If the past is here, the future is here, you go and don't move away with your attention, your conscious attention, from this moment and whatever appears in this moment.

Sense perceptions, the room, visual sense perceptions, seeing, auditory, hearing, the voice, background noises, feeling perception, the body on the chair, breathing, and perhaps even the inner aliveness that is in your body. The cells are alive. You may be able to feel that in a very subtle way.

This is what appears in this moment. And to know it, you don't need to label it, just look at it. Let it be.

Allow this moment to be as it is. And if there is impatience with what we are doing, which is the mind saying give me something to think about, and it's not getting very much to think about, if there is impatience, allow that to be, observe it, there it is, that movement. So in addition to those things that make up this moment, outer and inner, is there anything else that perhaps we may have overlooked?

Yes. There is a presence in which those perceptions appear, are perceived. That is you.

A field of aware presence. A field of attention. There is enormous energy in that field.

And if you could sense that in the background of your life, always, but that is not a requirement, the requirement now is just this moment, because it's always only this moment. If you could sense in the background the presence that you are, you are putting this whole puzzle together. The floating atoms and molecules become a world.

But they wouldn't become a world without you. The conscious presence that you are. So you are the light that illuminates the world.

The light that makes it possible. So to sense, to be able to sense in the background of your life, which is always this moment, to be able to sense in the background of the now, your own presence. And you cannot grasp it because it has no form.

It is formless. And then it may start with feeling the aliveness in the inner body. That's part of the presence that you are.

A field of awareness. And then there's the world. There's the outer world.

And there's the inner world of thoughts, occasional thoughts, of feelings, emotions, physical sensations. And then when you go about your life, there are experiences. Things happen all the time.

Good, bad, continuous flux of things happening. And this is why people say there are so many moments in every day. That's not true.

There's only ever this moment. But it takes on form that changes. The form that it takes changes continuously.

Nothing lasts for long. Every form that this moment takes is fleeting. This morning is gone already.

You were having breakfast. Where is that moment? Gone.

You walking through the door here, that's gone. Your whole childhood, distant memory. And even our gathering seems very real at the moment.

And yet, eventually it will be just dissolved. Then there remains a memory. Except for one thing.

There is something deeper here. We are here to touch a deeper dimension that does not come and go in yourself. And that deeper dimension is inseparable from the present moment.

It is one with the present moment. So in essence, one could say, although it sounds a little strange, that you are the present moment. You are the now.

The field of now. The space of now. And you can sense that as your own presence.

As you sit here, allowing this moment to be as it is, and feeling that which cannot really even be named or grasped in the background of your life. Your consciousness, you could call it. And that's just another word again, a little pointer.

Knowing yourself as that and that there is an intense aliveness in you when you touch that. And you thought perhaps that all that you were or all that you are is confined to your personal history. What a dreadful limitation of the depths of who you are to believe that who you are can be defined through your personal history.

That little story of me. The unfulfilling and unfulfilled story of me. Hoping that one day it will fulfill itself and I will find the completion of myself, the fullness of myself that I'm looking for in the future.

Hoping to get what I think I need to add to myself, to make myself full, complete, alive, fully alive. Missing continuously the aliveness that is already in you. It is almost a joke how humans live.

How they look for something where it can never be found. How they look for themselves the fullness of who they are, the completion of their sense of self. How they look for that in the future, in some next moment.

And how compulsively they are driven to seek always the next moment. And how compulsively they ignore and even actively resist this moment that is the door that's always open. Not realizing that future has no reality except as a thought in your head that it can never come, that it can never fulfill you.

You can never find yourself in it because it's only a mental concept. When it comes, the future is the now. And then again, there's the next moment where I'm hoping to get to.

Now this is not the normal way to live. Most humans live predominantly for the next moment or the one after that. And that compulsion is deep seated.

The denial of the now which ultimately is the denial of life itself and the denial of your own reality is deep seated in every human being because inherited collective conditioning. And it can reappear at any moment. Even while you're sitting here it can reappear.

And if you looked at somebody at that moment of transition from being present to being lost in future which is lost in thought then you would notice an absence replacing the presence. And you can see it in people's eyes and in their expression. It goes like this.

Presence is beautiful, alive. And then a thought comes in and it draws attention, consciousness to itself. It sucks up consciousness and then you notice the aliveness and the power that you could see in the eyes is disappearing and it goes you're gone.

Now most people are gone all the time. They go through their entire life with perhaps a few rare moments of presence. They go through their entire life being absent from the present moment the only thing there ever is.

And of course also that implies being absent from themselves. And who are they? Who is taking the place of the beautiful alive powerful being that potentially they are?

Who is pretending to be you a little mind made entity called me and my story. And some there are I have met some waiters observed some waiters the way they deal with their customers is beautiful. There are some waiters who are like spiritual teachers and they go oh I'll see what I can do.

Certainly I'll take it back to the kitchen and if we have some fresh fish he will bring it to you. And then the person that wanted an ego boost from that situation will feel a little uncomfortable because of the lack of reaction it's not getting the desired ego boost and it might make another attempt and add something and say something else. I thought this was supposed to be a good restaurant.

I'm going to write to the papers about this. And again the conscious waiter says doesn't reply reaction I'll see what I can do. And then either comes back and says we have no more fish or bring something fresh.

So you will be confronted continuously in this world with people who want to use you without knowing it to enhance their sense of self. And if you then resent that I resent that you want to use me to enhance your sense of self you are personalizing something that looks personal but isn't personal at all because the ego is a collective entity there's nothing personal in it it is a form of unconsciousness that many humans in their current evolutionary stage manifest. That's all.

Nobody there. Just a form of unconsciousness. So you meet these people and that doesn't make you superior because the moment you feel superior you have fallen back into some identification with form as the me the egoic form without knowing it.

So if you feel spiritually superior you have another ego the ego has assumed another disguise. So as you walk away from here you will encounter many situations where the world often in the form of other humans most of the time will pull you back wanting to pull you back to its own level of consciousness wanting you to participate in the game of feeding egos and using others to feed yours and if there's enough presence in you you can actually choose not to participate anymore in that game. You can remain clear as people attempt to pull your get some emotional reaction or mental reaction from you and you need to you need to turn up the light of consciousness when you're confronted with a challenge when everything is going fine it kind of it's consciousness you're present it's good you look at this beautiful tree the sky feel the underlying presence that you are and then an unconscious humans comes knocking at the window of your car that's standing at the traffic light shouting obscenities

[Speaker 3] (49:03 - 49:04)

you idiot

[Speaker 1] (49:04 - 1:28:24)

you what you know what you just did no you what you my whatever it is it may be totally imaginary he needs an outlet for his emotion that's been he's been carrying for three or four hours and he's chosen you and at that moment not to be drawn into a reaction at that moment there's a critical moment either you will be pulled into his unconsciousness or you will stay present more intensely present than a moment ago when you were looking at the tree so looking at the tree is like this when you're present and when you're confronted with an unconscious human you have to go you have to look almost like a Zen master not quite as fierce and you have to be in touch with your whole body in that situation you can't just be in the head only if you feel the entire energy field of your body the inner aliveness that will provide the anchor for staying present and you can feel it it's almost tingle sometimes when you're very much in there with your attention and that anchors you in yourself your true being and prevents you from losing yourself in some egoic reaction emotional mental reaction calling the other person an even greater idiot in order to compensate for the ego loss because to the ego when somebody calls you something it's like the ego feels injured in its artificial sense of self as if somebody had come with a hammer and knocked off part of you when somebody calls you you idiot it feels to the ego as if somebody had come with a hammer and knocked off part of who you are and the unconscious repair mechanism immediately jumps in and will call the other person something else even worse so that you can repair your diminished ego when somebody insults you the ego feels diminished in its sense of self it then automatically reacts and insults back if possible even worse and that is the automatic ego repair mechanism expressed beautifully by an ancient teacher when he talked about somebody hitting you on one cheek the normal reaction is and it's totally automatic there's no nobody says okay now I'm going to hit you back I'm going to be as unconscious as you are just like that's of course not formulated because when unconsciousness is recognized as unconsciousness it's no longer unconscious so the compulsion to repair your ego is very strong the ego immediately jumps into action but the loss the diminishment of the ego that is experienced is actually an illusion because the entire egoic structure has no reality so it is also an illusory loss nothing is lost when somebody calls you you incapable fool are you talking to me now if ten people within the space of a week in your new job call you incapable there may well be something to look at in your life that is a different matter but more often than not those things are egoic games that people play and so what to the ego feels like a diminishment is not a diminishment at all and you can simply find that out if you allow an apparent diminishment of the ego to be there without reciprocating in any way so that looks like this somebody says you stupid fool and you have to be really present now in your entire body because you are not resisting any kind of resistance or shutting yourself off against the energy of the other person is not the solution it's intense presence you fool and you feel something in you wanting to react you simply allow it because you see the madness of it and that is a very strange thing if you allow what to the ego feels a diminishment just to be there immediately after you may experience a boost of aliveness that comes from underneath the ego so what who you are can suddenly emerge a little bit more and that's almost it's very strange some people get angry when I talk about these things because they say oh I should not defend myself in some cases you may have to say certain things in many cases defense is only a reactive mechanism and so this is of course part of the teaching of Jesus also dealt with this to allow the diminishment of the ego and simply be present with it and then you feel there's great power underneath it and there's a stillness in that it is a very still power and that's why Jesus said don't do to people what they do to you don't love your enemies it's a strange way of putting it and so life always gives you exactly what you need and you've had all the pain that you needed you have had to bring you here some needed a lot of pain to get here others may only have needed a little that's fine and then comes a point where you realize I'm done with pain I don't need it anymore now when that realization comes you no longer create pain for yourself and how do you do that simply by becoming externally aligned with this moment because it's only that which really creates pain and what happens to your pain body then when you say I'm done with the pain that will still come up occasionally because it has old momentum it's old momentum is still there it goes vroom vroom vroom but then a bit more slowly vroom vroom vroom vroom vroom it's gone the less you personalize the pain that you feel and associate it with this mental story that in your head the more you're able to allow it to be there and watch it the more quickly it becomes transmuted and it becomes fuel for your consciousness the pain becomes fuel for awakening so that may be the reason why there is so much pain but don't tell anybody because not everybody is ready to hear this and if pain is still if new pain comes into your life in some form as physical pain or enormous loss suddenly in your life you lose someone close to you your job and your home all within the space of three months and I know people to whom this has happened she left me I lost my house they sacked me from my job and the stock market has collapsed and then I crash my car and then the doctor says there is something wrong with the body life may do this it does that to some people what then if that should happen to you and you can bring it uncompromising surrender to what is to it and stick to this moment only because if you leave this moment you will be very unhappy especially if everything around you has collapsed stick to just what is there at this moment just this and the rest is surrender to what is as it is always then the enormous loss will become transmuted very quickly the more you surrender which is bring inner acceptance to something that is anyway as it is the more quickly the seemingly negative in your life will become transmuted not only will it become transmuted in you it will become it will provide the fuel for consciousness in you strangely enough it also becomes transmuted on an external level where once you surrender situations very quickly change and the more you are aligned with what is and that alignment needs to be uncompromising when what is looks dreadful on the surface collapse great loss and so on illness the doctor saying you only have a few more months to live and I personally know people who have gone through in deep one incredible awakening you can almost see they're shining like a sun and they may die in a few months they know life has taken away time from them no more future which really is the greatest thing that can happen to you because time is the ultimate illusion that you have more future to find yourself in you don't find yourself there anyway so if life takes away future from you all that's left is this and surrender to this and for some people what could have been the most dreadful thing that could happen to a human being through uncompromising surrender has become the awakening and the flowering of the entire being so if you encounter great suffering external things going wrong in your life it's a it is truly a great opportunity for transmutation a very great opportunity and in the absence of that you will have to make do with all the little things that continuously happen in your life the unconscious humans you meet the egoic entities the little egos that meet every day wanting this and wanting that and the pain bodies wanting something from you you have to work with that bring the yes to that let's take a little break now and move the physical vehicle without losing presence and return when the clock hand indicates number four in the present moment similar case would be to be wrong in a discussion you have an argument with your partner and suddenly to let go of your mental position that you have clinging to this is how it is and suddenly you let go of the position and are simply present at that moment and you feel much greater aliveness you haven't died when you're wrong or you might even say oh you're right I was completely wrong there you haven't died you're more alive to the ego being wrong is a kind of death so bringing into everyday life presence what I've said here what I'm saying here implies that there is enough presence power in you so to speak so that you can be there when those things happen you can be there as the witnessing consciousness when the old patterns are happening if you are not there there's nothing you can do no matter how much any teacher can say if you're not if you're totally identified there's nothing you can do because you don't even know what you're doing and then there's the pain body that makes that gives an added dimension to the momentum of the ego the pain body as you know is the accumulation of old emotional pain from the past in you all the pain that has not been fully faced and since humans very rarely fully face anything because that would imply they have to be present in the now there is an accumulation remnants energetic remnants of past emotional pain suffered especially in your childhood but also afterwards and not only that that's only the personal aspect of the pain body then it has another aspect and that is the collective aspect of the pain body whatever group of people you live with the surrounding culture or nation that you live in also will have some influence on how heavy your pain body is because for most people a part of their personal pain body is actually the collective pain body of their country or in some cases their race if the race has suffered a lot as a race so countries have different degrees of pain body you can feel it as a heaviness when you enter a certain country that's in the air everybody walks around looking heaviness in the collective there is also the pain body of humanity because humanity has suffered so much dreadful pain most of which is self inflicted in other words by humans on other humans that is inherited by every human who comes into this world it's probably in the DNA somewhere we could decipher all the information that the DNA carries I'm sure we would find there oh there is all the pain in that little segment there this is the human pain so the pain body that humans carry is one could say the shadow of the ego because they have lived through in and through ego for so long that so much pain has accumulated because the ego creates always more pain it lives on separation it loves conflict it loves to oppose it is continuously in a state of fear fearful that the little things that I have identified with are going to be taken away from me and fearful that I may not find all the things that I still need to be fully myself so all that continuous fear creates emotion continuous fear thoughts create fear emotions over thousands of years and the actual physical violence inflicted on humans whether you believe in reincarnation or not doesn't matter it is inherited pain to a large extent plus the personal enough for your own lifetime there's nobody you could come into this world without suffering pain and so therefore you live with the pain body which is an aspect of the egoic self and as you probably know the pain body for most people is sometimes dormant and sometimes active when it's dormant it's just in the background or you may not notice it at all and all there is of course is still the ego doing its playing its games but at times the pain body arises needing to feed on the experience of further pain so it works in conjunction with the egoic mind structures it's the emotional field that lives in you as a little emotional entity i saw a nice this film as a character in the lord of the rings that to me is a beautiful image of the pain body a little little devious being and that is really an image of the human pain body the emotional entity that lives in you and is cunning and knows exactly when the right time has come to move to rise into your mind and then the emotion the old emotion in you is looking out through your eyes and that is another thing i've already demonstrated what happens when presence is obscured by identification with thinking the lifelessness that comes now a somewhat different thing happens when presence is obscured by an arising pain body something different than comes through the eyes and not only through the eyes it emanates when it's strong it emanates through every pore of your body and people around you if they have a minimum of a minimum of sensitivity even if you did not utter a word and try to smile they could sense the energy that you are emitting at that moment and it would feel heavy some psychics may even see it visually as dark dark force coming out of you but let's just talk about the eyes when the pain body rises then this raw painful emotion that is looking through your eyes out into the world and it's looking for some feedback of pain who can give me more pain sometimes it will inflict pain so that it can experience a dramatic painful situation or it may provoke someone or a situation so that I get an emotional feedback so it looks and it's cunning it knows it's the right moment to come up and look through your eyes at the world and occasionally you meet people in the street or in a place and they are looking at you and you know there is an active pain body looking at you and it's better not to interact too much with that person unless you are so present that you can stand and look back into the eyes of that person without feeling corresponding emotion you look into the emotion the turmoil of it holding that your feeling sensing your enormous power of presence that ultimately you are and that is like probably what Jesus did who walked around continuously meeting as it's described in the new testament every village he went into every town he went into he meets all these people possessed by evil spirits are there so many people possessed by evil spirits in every town in every village or is that just one way of putting it and his presence was such that he only needed to look and the pain body would shrink so that is possible but if there is not enormous presence in you and you are confronted with the pain body it's better to move away move out of the way don't interact too much because very soon a provocation will happen and then the pain bodies are so clever to getting what they want this is the game played between partners most frequently people two people living together feed my pain bodies the name of the game and so that if ego were not enough pain body amplifies or magnifies the madness of the ego they are they work together they are ultimately one you could say pain body is the emotional aspect of ego so humans live with old pain that periodically needs to experience more pain now recognizing it in others of course is easier than seeing it in yourself you can probably see it in your wife or your husband when it happens now that's already great because then you don't mistake the pain body for who that person is periodically most people who live together as couples will go through their pain body episodes and usually you know it is pain body when a relatively insignificant thing that one partner says or does provokes an enormous reaction in the other person that means the pain body is using it as an excuse for coming up and once it's taken you over it wants more it doesn't want an end to the pain it doesn't want peace it wants more until it has fulfilled itself for a while taken on enough new energy through the feedback of others or if you are a hermit or live alone the pain body then will have to look to your thoughts to feed on in that case when the pain body awakens suddenly your thinking will turn very negative every thought will say something negative about yourself or about the world or about other people or about the place where you live anything but it's all negative it's all dreadful my life is dreadful people are all dreadful or it may focus on one person that once was in your life and that spoiled the rest just knowing that person spoiled the rest of your life my ex wife my ex husband whoever it may be my mother my father what they did to me and I'm not saying that humans do not do dreadful things to other humans yes they do but is the emotional residue left by something dreadful that somebody did to you once and the memory left by something dreadful that someone once did to you is that going to determine who you feel and think you are is that becoming the foundation for your identity for sense of self do you want to give so much power to an unconscious person that years ago was in your life unconsciousness and make the memory of pain and the feeling of emotional pain into part of who you are how dreadful and yet many humans are so identified with the emotional pain they feel that it's they don't want to let go they feel this is who they are they talk about they may even say I'm a survivor of this or that it's wonderful that you survived this dreadful thing that happened to you in your childhood it's wonderful but to make an identity for yourself out of that limits you enormously what a dreadful limitation for the rest of your life you are a survivor of physical abuse it's you make yourself very small and you say this is my identity and then the resentment or the grievance remains as a thought form in your head that needs to be revived periodically you need to think about what somebody once did to you and then you feel the corresponding old emotion and so people then become so identified with certain thought forms old thought forms the thought form has self in it I am that that thought I am I am the grievance I am the resentment the resentment is an essential part then of the ego so some egos consist they are they don't they consist of many different things that you identify with there are some egos that consist 80% of one chunk of memory or emotion one huge grievance that has taken hold of your mind and wants to stay there for the rest of your life so we all meet people like that and again if you see it in yourself it may not some of you may have a little bit of that also I am just describing the more extreme forms that are also quite common and if this should be the case for some of you you may notice somebody is getting angry at hearing this because the identity is being threatened who is angry you or the egoic identity that feels threatened and if you can bring awareness to that you can see it and become the one who sees and feels the emotion in you so that the emotion itself is not denied or repressed but it is becoming depersonalized you are no longer deriving your sense of self from it the pain body when you notice it in yourself that emotional pain is it's very important as you feel it to be very alert and to sense not only the pain but also the one who is feeling it the looking at it the awareness through which you can feel the pain body the power of attention that is there the light that is shining on the pain in you so if you wake up in the middle of the night in emotional turmoil the emotion will want to survive in you as long as possible and use your brain to renew itself through your thinking every thought is an energy field that can feed the emotion the old emotion and then the mind becomes hyperactive and you don't know that you are feeding through your thinking the negative thoughts feeding the old emotion and people can be stuck in that for a long time so if that happens you wake up at night emotional turmoil be there in the body start by feeling your hands or arms the inner aliveness use that as an anchor for presence and continue to feel the turmoil that you feel perhaps in your chest area or belly area and watch feel it and feel also the power of attention that is the light shining on it you don't need to think thoughts about it it is unnecessary you can just look in the same way you can just look at a fruit on apple you hold it there and you look and you can also look internally and feel what you feel and realize that you are the light that is shining on it on this little movement of energy it doesn't like the light shining on it which means it doesn't like to be made conscious because it lives only as long as you are unconscious of it only if it can pretend to be you can it continue to revive to renew itself through you so that's beautiful practice and then the pain body is no longer renewing itself and all it has then is its old momentum and every time it comes up and is recognized it loses some of its energy charge and that energy charge in the pain body is not lost really it becomes transmuted because it was trapped energy that couldn't get out held in and then it becomes transmuted and the image that I would use to compare it to is like a block of ice that the sun shines on it and then it becomes freed so as the energy that was trapped in the emotional pain body is freed through simply watching it then there is much greater energy in you that provides a sense of aliveness grows in you because the aliveness was trapped in here in a low frequency vibration and then it's freed and it goes

[Speaker 3] (1:28:25 - 1:28:25)

ah

[Speaker 1] (1:28:27 - 1:54:20)

and so it's because it is often people with heavy pain bodies that are suddenly make the fastest progress on the spiritual path because it's too painful there's it's pain is an enormous incentive for becoming conscious until you have the direct means of becoming conscious in the absence of any spiritual teaching or teacher pain is great life does that life gives you pain it's part of living as a form identity so pain pushes you everyone here nobody here would be here if they hadn't had the pain that they did have and certainly I wouldn't be here if I hadn't had a heavy pain body so heavy that I couldn't live with it anymore and something had to give and then you realize you reach a critical point where the pain ceases to be your spiritual teacher but it's brought you to this point that's great it's worked it worked no matter what pain you suffered you're here now you're not watching TV or whatever playing video games so it's brought you here it's I'm enormously grateful for the pain my pain because the inner transformation would never have happened if I had had a comfortable pain body that I could live with it would just mean okay every two weeks I get a mood or I throw something at my wife or whatever but not so bad and then after a few hours I get out of it again but a pain body that wakes you up every night and you're actually shaking in agony of fear a pain body that makes the whole world appear like a that almost as Jean-Paul Sartre once described in a book nausea the whole world gives you nausea makes you feel sick that's hard to live with we're all back well most of us are back and reentering in case we lost it temporarily the present moment of course you can't lose it you can be lost to it but you can't lose it because that's all there is but it becomes obscured the bell is the awakening into now and the bell for you can be any form of suffering that arises in your life little or small let it let it push you back into presence some forms of suffering don't look like suffering on the surface anger while the ego is angry it loves the anger it doesn't look like suffering at all but if you could examine what happens to the body the physical body while that is happening you would see that it affects many functions of the body the body suffers when there's anger but the ego loves it as you know to say don't be angry anymore that doesn't work but to recognize anger as an egoic reaction and to watch it when it happens that brings consciousness to it feel the energy of it we may have some questions one or two questions somebody just gave me written question I'm a woman a widow and I had a very fulfilling love relation to a married man during eight and a half years who was very lonely and unhappy with his wife the only wish he had was to live with me but he felt too much responsible for the care of his wife as he could not find his way in this situation he killed himself five weeks ago how can I find peace in the moment of now and get power from the moment of now it takes a long time to leave the emotions it seems that you loved this man what you loved was not the flesh and bones that are no more or in the process of decay now when there is true love there is always the unseen that which loves in you that which you love is a recognition of yourself in the other and the other in yourself recognition of oneness the flesh and bones and also the story that in many cases is a tragic one in many people's lives neither the flesh and bones nor the story of our life situation is destined to survive and most stories don't ever really work themselves out it seems when somebody dies too soon or in the middle of a seemingly unfinished situation or when a child dies or somebody dies through an act of violence by the hands of someone else or by his or her own hands through suicide it makes it a little harder to accept for those left behind but the human form is very fragile there's no guarantee that any one of us in as this physical form is going to make it even to the rest of this day the end of this day when you love someone not the egoic sense of love that always wants something that always wants to use the other but when there's true love I recommend if there's someone in your life that you love that sometimes you look at that person or if that person is not with you you look at a photo of that person and feel the love arising and when you feel it fully close your eyes and let go of the image of the form of the other person and only feel that love inseparable from your being and then the other not in form is also present there because that which you feel is that which is the answer the underlying oneness between what seems like different human beings millions of human beings most of us can only recognize the underlying oneness in a few one or two individuals in their lives with increasing consciousness comes the ability which is beautiful to recognize the underlying oneness in every human being that you meet and that recognition is love and it is ultimately nothing to do with the form of that person the physical form or the external life situation the story the often unhappy story that a person is trapped in it goes beyond that the forms already are always destined to dissolve so there is a reality there that is timeless in every human being a timeless essence that is formless and timeless love is the recognition of that essence in the other through your own if you can love at all there must be even though you may still have an ego the ego it must mean there is an opening in the egoic structure through which reality can shine and it's only through that opening in the egoic structures true love can appear so if you love that being feel that love in yourself and feel the presence of the other ultimately not separate from who you are so shortly after the sudden death of a human being it is inevitable that some sadness will come in waves and that is simply something to be acknowledged and accepted when the sadness comes and after somebody has died in the weeks after that days weeks sometimes months you feel waves of sadness coming and then leaving you again and then coming back and when that happens surrender to the sadness that you feel and if you have to weep allow yourself to weep focus even attention on what you feel and surrender it completely surrender to that when you surrender to sadness accept that it's there don't feel I shouldn't be sad or this shouldn't have happened this surrender means there's no arguing with this moment and this deep sadness you may find when there's true surrender to sadness that there's peace underneath it one could almost say you see the other side of sadness as peace it turns around and you can be weeping and feel inner peace at the same time the weeping is to do with the form that has dissolved and when the acceptance of that is there the inner peace is to do with the recognition that life that is the essence of each human being does not die events happen that seem meaningless you do not understand why this should have happened especially when someone commits suicide or dies violently or prematurely or when a child dies it doesn't make sense and there are events that we cannot figure out through the mind why they took place but everything that happens strangely has its place within the totality of things no event is separate from the totality and even seemingly senseless events have their place within the totality of things everything is connected and once you can accept that you don't try to find some explanation work out in your mind to make you feel better work something out and this is not what I want to give you here work out some explanation in the mind that gives you some consolation it's more it needs to be something real and the answer is in the love that you felt and if you don't mistake the love for the form of the person can still feel now that is real and now that this is springtime look at the flowers the blossoms and feel that that too is an expression of love and then close your eyes because those flowers and blossoms are not going to stay around for that long either all human beings are expressions of the one the one life the one consciousness assuming temporarily a physical form and then perhaps a little longer another form that is non physical or if you believe I don't want to put any idea in your head it's irrelevant whether you even believe in reincarnation or not but just to see that there's more to me than the flesh and bones there's more to you than the flesh and bones that seems clear you can find your loved one in every flower that you look at one more question on the piece of paper and then there may be some questions that some people may want to ask do you accept people as disciples well you may know the nice beautiful eastern saying I don't remember whether it is from sufism or some other eastern tradition the teacher and the taught together produce a teaching the words that are being spoken here could not be spoken if you were not sitting there this event is one event one phenomenon that arises I do not see myself as a teacher it is not an identity simply a temporary function it looks as if this form were a teacher it's not quite right depending on how you want to use words from a more superficial level you could say anybody who reads the power of now is a disciple but that's a conceptual thing that wouldn't be very helpful at the moment the teaching happens in this way there are no disciples as such and it is spreading to many thousands of people what form the teaching will take at any time I don't know everything is continuously changing if ever the form changes and I work with just a few people for a certain period of time I'll let you know at the moment this is the only form that the teaching takes that's all I know if there are any questions before anybody asks questions just a little reminder if possible ask questions that are vital and alive a vital and alive question concerns perhaps yourself or somebody close to you but that is your self it's something that is that you truly need or want to know a non-vital question is an abstract mental question such as do the people on mars have pain bodies or your concept of this or that doesn't quite agree with what I've read somewhere else so those are questions that are not truly alive the mind likes to play around or be right or say this is in an exact contradiction to the ancient scripture so such and such could be if one looks at the surface of things things are full of contradictions if you only look at the form every religion seems to be totally different if you look a little deeper it's all one so please I don't know where the microphones are there must be somewhere

[Speaker 3] (1:54:39 - 1:54:40)

hello

[Speaker 1] (1:54:41 - 1:54:41)

hello

[Speaker 3] (1:54:42 - 1:55:41)

my name is Margaret and I have one situation what I would like to tell last night after your teaching I came home cold tired hungry etc and I fixed it this morning I woke up with this terrible headache which is familiar to me and the name is migraine what I did because I wanted to be here again today what I did was I took a lot of medication which was effective so now I am here but my question is I asked myself if this is the most effective way that I am dealing with it and maybe I would like to hear your view on this problem which is happening more often in my life

[Speaker 1] (1:55:41 - 1:55:43)

thank you

[Speaker 3] (1:55:43 - 1:55:44)

am I expressing myself clearly

[Speaker 1] (1:55:44 - 2:14:33)

yes thank you many recurring forms of pain or illness tend to disappear as you bring more presence into your life there may be a number of reasons why these migraines appear but there could be a pressure of something that is not yet been fully lived there could be pressure of unexpressed emotions it could be as some forms of pain are actually physical manifestations of the pain body the pain body can manifest itself also as a physical symptom so the quickest way to heal your body is to bring as much consciousness as possible into the body to give as much attention as possible conscious attention to the body and that is the practice of inner body awareness so you feel the aliveness that is in the body and in that bringing consciousness in that may also sometimes activate a dormant pain body there are some pain bodies that hardly ever express themselves and only manifest as physical symptoms and they thrive on your reaction against those physical symptoms that's what they live on because they need some kind of food so as you bring more consciousness into the body you may encounter suddenly certain emotions arising inside you that you didn't know were there the pain body you're shining the light on the hiding pain body that is the case with many people I'm only suggesting that as a possibility there are other reasons why such pains can be there including even a very rapid transmutation of your entire being there was a physical teacher there was a spiritual teacher called Krishna Murti who for many years suffered extreme pain in the head almost every day to the point of unconsciousness falling unconscious and nobody even he did not know why he never saw a doctor about it he knew that the doctor in his case would not have the answer but he believed it was a kind of transmutation that was happening to him and he said sometimes they are working on me no matter what the actual cause is I believe it will either disappear the condition will disappear or the cause for the condition will reveal itself and then become transmuted as you bring more consciousness into yourself in the meantime you may occasionally need to take some medication pressure of something unexpressed is often the case of migraine headaches but not necessarily it may well be that you never find the answer of where it comes from and yet it may suddenly dissipate in the meantime while the pain is there and not just that pain any kind of physical pain it is your job to surrender to the fact that right now it's there and I have met people for whom physical pain became a teacher I have met some people who suffered pain for years almost constant physical pain and one or two people I met they had never heard of any spiritual teaching they had never read a spiritual book but what happened to them when I met them I saw they were intensely alive and they were still in pain and yet something had happened I recognized the pain that was going on for years eventually drove them into surrender very hard to surrender to physical pain but it drove them to surrender and it eroded their ego because in surrender the ego dissipates the ego can only exist in the state of non-surrender we could even say the ego is the state of non-surrender and so some people were driven to surrender by physical pain and few others I met by having a so called incurable condition and some people through surrender became cured quite frequently that happens I read some years ago a book written by a doctor about healing and he found the greatest number of healing happened in those people who were not those people who internally considered the illness as an enemy but who came to an acceptance of their condition a deep acceptance and that was the state he found through research that it was most likely to lead to a healing that acceptance my father is 86 now and he's a strange person I love him dearly and one of his characteristics he's always refused to see a doctor and he's always had aches and pains nothing too acute but quite a few things that were with him for years certain pains ear some head bones and a number of symptoms that would be there with him always and people said you have to see a doctor about this and that was one area of his life where he early on in his life learned to surrender in other areas he still has a big ego but in that area he had this wonderful thought that came to him he said I live in pacific coexistence with my illnesses and he said if I attack one of these illnesses a greater one will develop so that was I'm not giving as a recipe for everybody not to see a doctor bringing awareness into the body is essential in any case that is always absolutely essential if you have a pain when you go home from here if something happens in the next day today or tonight or in the next few days and you experience a pain that you have not had before or rarely have then it could have something to do with being here and an inner change happening I know that some people who have fairly heavy pain bodies and are now very present with their pain bodies that means the pain body tries to come up and not that presence ever pushes the emotional pain down it never does that presence simply looks at it but when a pain body needs to come up and he finds that you are very present and you immediately detect it it will shrink back it will go oh and then it will lie in a little corner and wait for a better opportunity and you think it's asleep it's not there at all but it's very much like when a cat is asleep the cat is never really totally asleep and that's an amazing thing if you watch a cat it knows any kind of noise you can make and it will go but the slightest thing an unusual noise a little tapping that is could be a little animal walking past or and suddenly you know there's always some some something in the cat is always awake because there could be a mouse there something in the pain body it's always like this and then it waits for an opportunity and an opportunity for pain body to arise in a moment of less presence in you could be when you're suddenly for example you're upset in a situation you're just fed up with the what somebody is doing or the traffic isn't moving and there's a moment of reaction and the pain body will go ah there's my chance and suddenly the reaction will become magnified and from being an irritation with the traffic will quickly turn into how dreadful my life is anyway what and a huge stream of negative thinking what did it all start with a little upset about the traffic and the pain body and the was there waiting another opportunity for pain bodies to watch bad films where violent things happen and of course those films are made by pain bodies the script writer it's written through the script writer's pain body the producer has a heavy pain body and the people who pay money to watch these dreadful things are paying money to feed their pain bodies while they watch and they love feeling bad they pay money to feel bad and some almost advertise it this film will make you feel really bad and all the pain bodies running to the box office thus is the state of our society our civilization so when you're very present the pain body may want to wait and if there's very little opportunity after a while the pain body almost says this is not I can't renew myself in this way anymore if the pain body doesn't actually think but it has an intelligence there and then it sometimes happens that it produces physical symptoms in people who before didn't have them usually not serious it's pain here back pain there this that headache and aches and pains and suddenly there are people sometimes who sit in our intensives and who suddenly experience some extreme physical pain they haven't had before can't sit anymore and can't pay attention anymore I need to get out of here the pain body wants you to get out of here and because there's too much presence here it's the only way it can do that is by creating some physical pain now pain bodies can also create illness and they sometimes do and that is usually in people in whom the pain body does not have a chance to express itself in their everyday life and those would be people for example who repress their emotions because they conflict with the self image that they have it has happened in the past with Christians some Christians who misunderstood the deeper truth of the Christian teaching which is beautiful but they misunderstood and they tried to live up to an image of myself as a good Christian who cannot who just does not do certain things a good Christian loves his neighbor he doesn't get mad at his neighbor so I can't allow myself because it would conflict with my self image to be angry with somebody close to me my children my wife and so I can't afford myself to express these emotions I need to they need to be pushed down because I I'm living an image which is an egoic thing to do I'm living this image of myself as a good Christian because that is sin and so then after a few years the pain body is being pushed down and down and finally a serious illness develops the emotion has created the unexpressed emotion has created a serious illness and then that makes me unhappy and then the pain body has something to feed on so it's better to than to repress is to express if you have to but be there while it happens be there as long as it happens see if you can be there as the watcher of what happens be there as the watcher of your pain body when it happens a marvelous thing to do never misunderstand this teaching and try to okay I mustn't have a I can feel something coming on I mustn't have a pain body attack I must remain present and then you notice the body gets tight and will power comes in meditation this is sometimes what you do when westerners meditate meditation of course is surrender to what is there's only the now that's all that meditation is about to show you that this moment is all there is and so that it's all about the surrender and then you can see even eastern people even buddhist monks I'm impressed they say oh they sit there they can sit for 3 hours wow what an achievement and there's a boiling there's a lid on a boiling kettle and should the door open while they meditate and the child or the wife comes in leave me alone I'm meditating another question

[Speaker 2] (2:14:38 - 2:14:49)

my name is Purnima and I want to ask if you can speak a little bit about forgiving forgiveness something I find very difficult and in the light of your teachings

[Speaker 1] (2:14:51 - 2:29:03)

yes thank you non forgiveness is there when you mistake human unconsciousness for a person when you make an identity for someone and this is what the mind does when you make an identity for someone out of the movement of human unconsciousness when what somebody did once to you or to someone else or to large numbers of people somebody injured someone inflicted violence on someone showed cruelty perhaps your father your mother whoever it may be there's a temptation there is the tendency for the mind to make an identity out of that whereas all such actions they look as if somebody there knew what they were doing but all such actions are expressions of human unconsciousness the expressions of the collective ego expressing itself through one so called person and the expressions of the pain body which also is not personal it is human pain so it's only when you mistake that the expression of human pain as violence or cruelty or the expression of the human ego with its absurd needs to use others to enhance itself to make itself stronger when you mistake what is collective a collective state of humanity you mistake that for an identity then you create a perpetrator somebody who did something and that is a mind made identity for someone and of course then you have it is impossible to forgive when you believe that there is actually an identity behind what was being done there is someone there whose identity it is to be responsible for that now the question arises so what does that mean is nobody responsible for what they do this can't be right is no human being responsible for what they do for the evil that we see in the world the cruelty ultimately no and yet all human beings suffer the consequences of their unconsciousness whoever manifests unconscious behavior will experience further unconsciousness from others it's called karma so you suffer the consequences and in the process of that pain arises you inflict pain and you suffer pain it's what all humans in life what humanity in life has been doing inflicting pain receiving pain in varying degrees and in that process that looks pretty mad out of that occasionally here and there somebody woke up out of that cycle and recognized the fact that when such things are being done ultimately there's nobody there doing it it's unconsciousness when you see that compassion arises compassion even with the one who became the instrument of unconsciousness compassion with yourself because the equivalent of non-forgiveness towards another is to harbor feelings of guilt in yourself and both are very strong in the egoic mind if you cannot forgive yourself that is very similar of course to not being able to forgive another you are making an identity for yourself out of something that you did because you didn't know any better which is a colloquial way of saying you were not conscious enough to know better so there are some people who there are parents now who think back and say I made dreadful mistakes when I brought up my children I am guilty of that you didn't know what you were doing you acted according to your conditioning you acted out your conditioning and this is what people do in the same family for generations and generations one generation after another acts out the same conditioning there are people in America now whose families immigrated three generations ago from somewhere in Europe and the dysfunction the particular kind of egoic dysfunction in that family may go back to Roman times two thousand three thousand years and it's a cycle the parents teach the children the same particular kind of unconscious dysfunction because unconscious can take different forms often it's violence it can be other forms cruelty using others whatever it may be and so you can see the same thing handed down from parent to children they grow up they do the same to their children until finally one person is there who wakes up and sees it for what it is and so forgiveness happens by itself when you recognize that none of that is personal it's it is something to do with the evolutionary stage of humanity and you happen to be here on this planet somehow you ended up here on this in many ways mad planet as far as humanity is concerned also potentially paradise as far as the planet itself is concerned paradise in many ways potentially and you happen to be here in the midst of considerable unconsciousness so you cannot try to forgive it's not possible unless you look through the form that this unconsciousness took you recognize it as not nobody there ultimately then forgiveness happens automatically but there is something in the egoic mind that doesn't want to let go of a grievance or a resentment and that's another aspect there is something in here because resentment or grievance is very powerful ego food there are some egos that keep themselves alive through one big grievance one big resentment that I have harbored for years and in other areas the person may be engaged in spiritual work and experience states of presence experience peace and yet there is something hanging on in there in here and what it's hanging on to is my this big resentment and the ego is enough one big resentment is enough to keep the ego going and that's why it's got its teeth in that thought form that thought form is there and says I'm not going away I am you I'm who you are and so there's a reluctance even once you see the unconsciousness it's not personal you can still feel there's something in here that says no no I'm hanging on to this grievance I'm not letting go I've had it for years all those years are going to be wasted and then you see that and the seeing seeing means you have already one foot out of it and then once you see it for what it is it will change it's whatever you bring consciousness to will become transmuted and what you bring consciousness to that is false in you a false identification will dissolve if anything you bring consciousness to that is real deepens that's the beauty of it so two levels here to work to become aware of as far as forgiveness is concerned recognize it for what it is and see in yourself perhaps the reluctance even though you have already recognized that ultimately it's human unconsciousness no more than that and it's been going on for thousands and thousands of years millions of humans inflicting acts of cruelty on others it's going and it's going on even now in varying degrees the unconsciousness varies from person to person the roots of it are in everyone so you recognize that and then level 2 is observing in yourself that something in there does not want to let go and then say oh isn't that interesting and watch it it even has a feeling quality to it there is an accompaniment of an accompanying emotion perhaps that reflects that thought it's become an identity it's become an identity I don't want to lose my identity I'm hanging on in here but once you see it it won't survive for very long because it needs your unconsciousness to survive and so the beautiful words of Jesus he actually tells us why we should forgive it's all there forgive them for they know not what they do he not only tells you that you should forgive he tells you why a modern Jesus would have said they are completely unconscious that would be the modern translation of for they know not what they do another question

[Speaker 2] (2:29:04 - 2:29:42)

thank you I'm Sasha I would like to ask a question the pain

[Speaker 1] (2:29:44 - 2:37:39)

good good thank you you have to watch in yourself to see if the crying is associated with a story that goes through your head perhaps an old one it is possible that the crying happens as soon as the story replaces itself in your head of something that happened or something that never happened but should have happened who knows what the story is there is the crying could be something that I never got but deserved or should have had life passed me by that is a big one a usual one for many people I am missing out it is too late now I didn't make it or there may be the crying because of something that happened once an event and it is being replayed and as long as you are in the story in your head the emotions are there and the two work together you are not observing the emotion you are mainly fueling the emotion and the emotion is giving further energy to the story when you watch directly you feel the emotion itself sadness whatever it may be and watching implies that of course you allow it to be if it is there you cannot fully watch it if you are not happy with what is there you are not really watching it it is just there it is and you are watching and if that is how you are watching it and if then it stops that means simply that the emotion is being dissipated through your presence there is no repression here if you are truly watching the moment you look at it it stops that is possible that means the emotion may have been long-standing but not as deep as a pain body and then simply by separating cutting the link between the story and the emotion you have already done the most important thing and this cutting sounds almost violent you don't have to do anything to cut it but simply recognize the connection between the story and the feeling so you could think about if somebody died some years ago or some months ago or somebody left you or whatever it may be and that is the story that creates the emotion and then you dismiss the story and pay more attention to what you feel and then it may dissipate very quickly when you just give it attention and don't fuel it anymore and then suddenly there is peace underneath it so that may be happening to you and then the same mind thing may come in again and then the same you watch again pay more attention to what you feel than what you think I mean you know full well that it's those thoughts that create the emotion and so certain thoughts in the head have their own momentum too and some thoughts get lodged many thoughts pass through like clouds but there are other thoughts that stay in there they find a little corner in your mind and say okay I live here and I'm not going to go away and periodically the same kind of thought comes and creates the same kind of emotions and they just won't go away they're refusing to go away and it can also happen that one big thought obliterates most of your mind and that is almost regarded as pathological but even within a normal human being it can happen that thoughts can become obsessive and those are the recurring thoughts that say I'm not going anywhere and come back again and again what do you do with that watch the thought be there as the mind gets into your body so that you can sense yourself as the underlying presence then your mind becomes a ripple phenomenon you are the ocean or the deep lake that's here the depths of who and the deep in the depths the ocean or the deep is still on the surface there's a wave movement that's your mind so if you are rooted in yourself the movement of the mind can't drag you along with it totally you're here and then you just watch the movement and then it calms down because you're not identifying with each thought and that would even be the case in people who would be regarded as clinically insane for example people who have who hear voices which is no more than the normal voices that you hear in the head that everybody hears as their own thought processes some people hear them as auditory things auditory comments and that is usually regarded as insane if you cannot be drawn into what the voice says and this applies both to the pathological condition of hearing actual voices and to the normal condition of simply having the voice in your head which are your own thoughts if you can be there as the witness then they don't have power over you instead of being drawn in totally or reacting to them which creates further thoughts the in the film a beautiful mind which some of you may have seen which is about a scientist a brilliant scientist who goes mad and sees people that don't exist in his life he has these hallucinations everything they look very real but they don't exist but they're just right there in front of him he doesn't know it he thinks they're all real and the viewer of the film cleverly also thinks they're real until the moment he realizes that he's insane that these people are not actually there at that moment the viewer also realizes it but the important thing here for this character that is the beginning of his healing when an awareness arises so he doesn't need to react anymore he recognizes it as not real he knows he's mad and anybody who knows they're mad are not completely mad anymore the really mad people don't know that they're mad and many humans don't know that they're mad of course is there another question oh there yeah

[Speaker 2] (2:37:39 - 2:38:16)

thank you hello my name is Lotte I would like to know something about the effect that this process transformation into consciousness has on your old relationships friendships because I really feel it's difficult to be that compassionate tolerant open minded person that I feel I am when I'm alone but that's easy so I feel even that I get less tolerant and less um patient with people around me

[Speaker 1] (2:38:16 - 2:52:29)

thank you thank you yeah yes I this is sometimes what not infrequently do I hear that and somebody else asked a very similar question not long ago when she said I can be very spiritual when I sit alone in my room but the moment I go out and meet people it's gone now your question may not be quite as extreme but there's something similar here of course the ultimate challenge are people when you are alone with yourself some people find it it's considerably easier to be present when you're out in nature which doesn't mean not everybody's present when they're alone some are totally in their mind too but it's probably yes it is easier there and so really the most challenging thing in your spiritual evolution is other people and it reminds me of I believe Jean-Paul Sartre who said hell is other people or literally translated hell is the others and so yes humans are very challenging and you lose patience with them and think why can't you be more conscious why you have to act out this is same kind of stuff with your friends your acquaintances your family that's perhaps the most difficult for many people because the more past you share with a person the more difficult it sometimes seems to stay present when you're together with them so for some people the ultimate test is being with their when they're grown up visiting their parents and this is why Ram Dass made the famous statement if you think you're so enlightened go and spend two weeks with your parents so observing in your case be more interested in your reactions than in what seems to cause your reactions so if people's behavior causes your reactions or seems to pay more attention to the reaction itself what the mind is saying or what the emotion is expressing it sometimes happens that people who are evolving spiritually quickly they find sometimes that they don't enjoy being with their old friends anymore they don't enjoy participating in what they loved before for example getting together to gossip about others and that was so enjoyable for years gossip is a favorite ego one of the activities of the ego that the ego loves because whenever you can criticize somebody you can feel superior you feel more yourself more deluded of course but that's how the ego works so for years you loved gossiping and suddenly it's so empty and you think why are they doing that and suddenly you don't contribute anymore and you just sit there and at dinner parties where you used to tell your exaggerated story to make people laugh you exaggerated every story just an example and everybody loved inviting you to their dinner parties because they loved your so entertaining the way you exaggerated what people said or did and suddenly you don't want to do that anymore and then people say what's happened to you you've become so boring and it may be that you don't take part in the drinking sessions anymore like to get drunk together and feel free liberated and it does happen sometimes as you evolve quickly some people around you don't want to see you anymore and others in other cases you don't want to see them anymore but it also happens that people around you become affected by the change in you without you wanting them to change they notice something in you and then suddenly they also become interested they may ask you one or two questions and you may notice or not even that their behavior changes simply because they are around you simply because the old games are not working anymore sometimes between two people two old friends the same type of interaction develops but condition patterns that have been operating for years both are playing a kind of role and let's call it their friendship they play this one plays this role the other compliments it with that role and they play it out twice a week they meet and they are their game and suddenly you don't play anymore and then of course the other person's role collapses because it needs to feed the role what's going on and then either they will leave you or a change will happen in the other person but if you are reacting to perhaps what is unconsciousness in others that before perhaps you didn't react to because you were part of it then that is also still a form of ego in you that's the awareness that you have of others you have it for a moment and then it becomes a judgment so there is presence for a moment where you see oh they are completely stuck in their old behavior you see that the stuckness but it doesn't remain a seeing the seeing the the presence is lost and then the mind turns it into a judgment and then the reaction comes allow the people as long as they are around you and they can only be around you at this moment so they are part of the form that this moment takes if you are with them why not accept the way they are at this moment what else can you do you become unhappy otherwise so you bring an acceptance to whatever they do with that comes a compassion allow other humans their unconsciousness allow them as long as they manifest unconsciousness by getting angry about their unconsciousness nothing is changed in fact you turn unconscious yourself for god sake wake up why can't you be more conscious and of course what the ego is going to reply is you talk to me about consciousness look at yourself and the cycle starts again or they tell you what's this airy fairy stuff about consciousness what's happened to you you've gone are you on drugs or something so as long as these people are there in front of you in the moment that's the isness of this moment nobody can act beyond their level of consciousness although a few try and the wonderful thing is change in others happens most when you no longer need them to change their behaviour when the expectations that they should behave in a certain way is dropped and in that way even old standing relationships like with your parents become healed and become whole again when the expectation that your father or your mother should behave in a certain way towards you is dropped when the expectation that your father or your mother should understand you is dropped because there we have the gap between what I want why can't you understand me what difference does it ultimately make to you whether this person understands you or not none what is added to you if your father or mother understand you do you become a more fulfilled no nothing really so when that demand that demand is dropped that they should behave differently they should know better should understand me they should accept me I want them to accept me yeah but they don't and there you have the gap between I want and what is and strangely all those demands and all that fruitless wanting is actually fuel for more unconscious reactions in you towards them so you're back in unconsciousness and see what happens if you don't make demands that people should behave differently from the behave they behave at this moment this doesn't mean you cannot tell a child don't walk there you might fall off come here these are practical matters not talking about that so bring acceptance to whatever behavior they manifest and see you may be surprised especially in your relationship with long standing relationships a change is when you don't need them to change anymore to make you happy when you don't need those people parents whoever to change anymore to make you happy then very often it's almost a miracle change happens in them and suddenly they are more open and when you didn't need them to understand you anymore suddenly there is an openness and they ask questions about your life whereas before all they could do was criticize and all you could do was react against their criticism and get upset and every meeting every time you visited them it would end in that way it's amazing how in long standing relationships people almost go there when they meet with their scripts as if they were reading their scripts and every time they go they have to act out the same script and in the end they get angry and doors are slammed and of course it's in the script perhaps one or two more questions

[Speaker 2] (2:52:32 - 2:53:28)

hello my name is lucy and i have a question for you um i'm thinking of the suffering of so many animals and i can somehow deal with my own pain my own fears but i'm shocked and infuriated when i see that millions maybe billions of um innocent animals are slaughtered or exploited by human race um nothing triggers my pain body as much as that and um then i think what can i do about it but most of the time it doesn't make any difference now i would like to ask you please enlighten me what what can i how can i handle it how can i deal with it

[Speaker 1] (2:53:28 - 2:53:29)

thank you

[Speaker 2] (2:53:29 - 2:53:30)

thank you

[Speaker 1] (2:53:30 - 3:03:03)

thank you it is true that what humans are doing to animals in factory farms where living beings are treated as objects shows extreme extreme unconsciousness and in such situations there's always the external level and there's the inner level the primary level is the inner so that whatever you do does not come out of a deeply negative inner state because any action because sometimes action may be needed but be careful that action does not flow out of a deeply negative inner state so how can you not feel negative about that and this is not to be seen perhaps in isolation it is to be seen within the totality of what human beings are doing to other life forms on the planet to nature and to themselves to other humans they are also doing it to humans 20th century I believe more than a hundred million human beings were killed violently so at this very moment on the planet all this is happening humans are killing other humans humans are killing animals and treating animals as if they were inanimate objects simply for profit for greed for more which is the ego the greed of the collective human ego and the ego doesn't see what it is doing when it destroys the forests which perhaps are the very basis for life on the planet there again when an ego looks at a forest when in other words what does it mean an ego an ego sees is the human mind the ego is thought and to look through abstract thought it's something looking at an animal or a tree and you look at it through thought and thought will evaluate what it sees according to its form and what it can get out of it the tree will get a price put on it or at best you cut it into little pieces and examine it to find out how it works that's what the human mind does I'm not saying no more science but we have the tendency of the human mind is to de to make lifeless what it falls upon if there's nothing else in you except thought and you approach reality only through thought whatever you perceive only through the screen of thought you're going to make lifeless in other words thought cannot sense the life that is there thought cannot sense the holiness the sacredness that is in every life form because thought is an abstraction so all humans who are trapped in their heads and that's all especially those who run the big businesses but everybody to some extent is trapped politicians and so on I'm not saying there's one category of human that is worse than others but they see only what has become made lifeless through their mind and so through the dimension of being is missing and they don't know what they are doing when they kill life on the planet because they've already killed it they've killed the feeling of their own aliveness because they live exclusively in a conceptualised sense of self an egoic sense of self the ability to sense to feel the deeper being that is the sacredness of life in every life form is not there they don't find it in themselves the sacred stillness the sacred space that is within and if you don't find it in yourself you haven't touched it because you're totally in the mind movement you cannot recognise the sacredness in others so humans are suffering from a form of mental illness collective mental illness which is to be trapped exclusively in the upper floor of your being and so this is the closest perhaps if you want to use words that you can express the truth of this is to say that when humans engage in such behaviour they are simply manifesting a form of collective illness mental illness for hundreds of years Zen Buddhism actually has occasionally used that word the sickness of the mind use that expression the dysfunction of the illness of humanity which is such that they will destroy themselves if it doesn't change so you have to see that cruelty within the context of the whole which is the illness of humanity and when you see it as illness perhaps a little bit of almost compassion arises it doesn't make it less dreadful what is happening but perhaps when you see it as an illness there is no longer the need in you to make these the people who do this into those who are considered as evil that always we have to come back to Jesus they don't know what they are doing they don't know what they are doing and then you can still you will feel sad of course you will when you watch that you will feel the sadness and you can accept that you feel very deeply affected by what you see but when you see it in the larger context of human illness you may be able to be free of anger and if that is the case then you may be able to take also some action on the external level and the only action or the most useful action is not to try and convince people that what they are doing is wrong but simply to show them what they are doing because not enough people have seen it simply to show what is happening show them through disseminating information or whatever and many humans will be shocked many haven't really seen what's happening and anybody who is not totally trapped in their minds will feel something and there may be change coming but the true change happens through enough human beings to go through this inner transformation not until then will the collective illness on the planet become healed and our gathering here is part of that maybe one last question

[Speaker 3] (3:03:04 - 3:03:43)

good afternoon my name is Marianne thank you for being here I read in your book the power of now that women can be especially vulnerable to their pain bodies just before their menstrual period I recognize that and somehow I feel that it is not only my personal pain body it's bigger than that it also relates I think to the question that was just asked but could you please say something more about

[Speaker 1] (3:03:43 - 3:13:43)

that yes what you feel there is the I've spoke before of collective aspects of the pain body we mentioned countries and so on and there's also such a thing as the female collective pain body because we've lived in mainly patriarchal societies for several thousand years before then there were women where the female was respected greatly there were even there were matriarchal societies there was a time when most gods were goddesses they were female and then as humans moved more and more into their minds they created male gods more and more and then the female became more and more devalued and so because of violence inflicted on female on countless women who were over the centuries were treated as slaves sometimes sold treated as goods almost and so not not respected raped killed used exploited of course that happened also men they also did it to groups of men but talking at the moment just from that aspect so something that we could call the female collective pain body developed and that's the many women's pain body most probably all women's pain body is partly collective and so it's when your womanhood manifests itself most clearly it's through menstruation which should be a joyful time that tends to activate the collective woman pain body in women and many women are now conscious of that and actually become more alert when it happens because what how much of your pain body as a woman goes back to your personal pain and what portion of it is due to the collective female pain body ultimately doesn't matter when it arises and you begin to observe it you begin to become conscious of it and many women are now working in that way and are actually becoming more conscious at that time because they know they need to become more alert just as the time approaches they already know okay and then they may feel the first movement as a reaction as a thought as an emotion and then it depends on what level you can catch it with your attention you no longer need you don't need to question when you observe it in yourself is what I'm feeling now collective or personal it doesn't matter from the perspective of consciousness it's enough for you to look you don't need to know know its origin this applies to any kind of emotion that arises in you not just in this context for it to be transmuted and dissolved you do not need to know its origin although sometimes its origin will reveal itself to you as you pay attention to it but many things that are inside humans many emotions have their origin in at almost at the very beginning when you still lived in the sea perhaps and you got eaten up five million times that was already a form of pain so the it goes back sometimes you cannot trace it back and at other times it will suddenly see oh that's where it came from that's fine so allow the origin to reveal itself if it wants to reveal itself for the process to work it is not necessary for the origin to reveal itself although it is nice when it does so all that is required is your conscious presence as the emotional field becomes activated and if possible don't allow it to rise into your thinking once it gets hold of that then it's more difficult to be present you may need little reminders it really is like and not just in this context the female pain body any manifestation of pain body is really like going to sleep acting out a dream you may need little reminders as if you were going into a dream sometimes you see strange films like that and in the dream you could have a reminder that you are dreaming so you could put little reminders in your home so that when you walk into the bathroom you can have a face that looks like you know the masks the traditional masks for theatre comedy and tragedy one mouth goes up one mouth goes down you can have one with the mouth down and have a question mark pain body as a little sign to watch because you may be immersed in pain body so you walk into your bed into your bathroom and on the mirror you see that image with the question mark and then you oh it might wake you up there's no guarantee that it will another possibility is you will tear it down I don't want to hear any more of that nonsense about pain body sometimes it works sometimes it doesn't or you tell your partner to wake you up when the pain body attack comes wake me up when I fall asleep sometimes it works sometimes it doesn't so these are all things that arise as presence arises those things will arise also in the field of presence occasionally they will obscure presence temporarily but now that presence is already active has become activated in many of you long before you came here in some of you perhaps today presence has become activated in you there's no going back it can only become obscured temporarily and probably will that's fine at any given moment see if you can be accepting of that moment see if you can be not a walking pain body not a walking storyline but presence who you truly are consciousness taking on form temporarily as this body and this mind but you are more than the body and the condition mind the underlying consciousness knowing yourself as that at this moment you don't need to be present or surrender for the rest of your life that would be a problem oh no now I have to surrender for the every day of my life from now on that would be a big task ahead of you stressful am I going to make it but you don't need to only at this moment that's not a lot thank you

2019 Eckhart Tolle Living the Liberated Life and Dealing with Pain Body Audiobook

[Speaker 2] (0:14 - 0:26)

Sounds True and Namaste Publishing present Living the Liberated Life and Dealing with the Pain Body with the author of The Power of Now, Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (0:42 - 53:59)

It seems almost paradoxical we are going to spend some time together tonight in order to explore a dimension of consciousness that is beyond time. We are spending time together to move more deeply into the present moment and to experience a dimension of consciousness that opens up when your attention is completely present in this moment. And there are two levels of teaching, if you call it that, it's not really teaching, there are the words and there are the silent spaces in between the words.

Usually people don't pay attention to the silent spaces between words and in this, our civilization there actually aren't many silent spaces anymore. In your head there may be an almost continuous dialogue unless you are beginning to encounter within yourself a dimension of stillness. What happens when you pay attention to a gap between sentences or between words, a silent space, immediately there is some stillness inside you because it's only through the stillness that you can listen to the silence, to become aware of the silence of the gaps.

Now what does stillness mean, that's just a word, we could use other words, I sometimes use the word presence to describe this state of consciousness that is now emerging collectively on this planet, although at the moment only relatively few people are able to access it, but there is a state of consciousness that is emerging on the planet that is very different from the consciousness that has been dominant throughout human history. And compared to that new state of consciousness that is emerging, a state that has been pointed to by many teachers in the past, but has always been misinterpreted, the original purity of all those teachings has been misinterpreted by the human mind and completely misunderstood.

So what does it mean, stillness? The human mind says stillness isn't interesting enough, it's a state of consciousness that is free of thought and yet you're fully alert, fully awake, fully present. It doesn't mean you will never think again, thought will come in again, but you will always be rooted in that state as you learn to live in that state and this state emerges more fully, and us sitting here together this evening, what's really happening beyond the personal level is that this state of consciousness here is emerging.

On a personal level it might look as if I were telling you useful things, how to live free of problems, free of suffering, free of conflict, but it goes far beyond the personal level and the main, the essence of what I speak about and point to, you cannot actually understand through the mind because the essence is precisely beyond the mind. And by mind I mean thought activity, mental noise. Most humans are trapped in that continuous mental noise and identify with the mental noise as themselves, as me, and there's a continuous monologue or dialogue going on in the head and that grows already, young children start to develop it and gradually you identify with the mental noise, an image arises as this is, that's me, and you are completely trapped in this continuous stream of incessant thinking and that is, your sense of self, of me, gets identified with that, so my problems, my suffering, what about me, what's going to happen to me, it's a mental image of a sense of self that is never really at ease, never feels really at home, is always trying to get somewhere but never quite gets there. Many times it thinks it's got there but then realizes, oh no, I'm not there.

It tries to get to some state, some relief, some state of happiness or fulfillment, completion, perfection, in whatever way, no matter, the bank robber is trying to get there in some way but he's robbing a bank in order to get the money because he believes that the money will eventually enable him to feel a more intense aliveness, a more deeply rooted sense of self, of identity, and that's of course an illusion, but even the spiritual person who is practicing certain techniques for years is trying to get somewhere, a state of perfection, a future, this mind-made sense of self is always reaching out to the future because it believes there's salvation there somewhere for me, at some point in the future I'm going to make it, whether the making it is becoming wealthy or the making it is becoming a spiritual master or enlightened, basically it's the same mind structure still at work. So to be condemned to an almost continuous state of unease, something is never quite right, I need to get somewhere, this moment is never quite right, or very, very rarely, only when a desire has just been fulfilled there's a moment of relief and then immediately something else arises. That's something to observe in oneself, that state of unease with what is, with the present moment, that's part of the old consciousness, it's embedded in the very structure of the human mind, so no matter what you do you can't get rid of it on the level of mind, and then gradually all this mental noise becomes self-serving, it's simply is there to reinforce itself, you go around in vicious circles, and all we are doing here is allowing a deeper dimension of consciousness to emerge because it wants to emerge, otherwise there wouldn't be much chance, you can't make it happen, but you can allow it to happen. The very fulfilment of your existence as a human being on this planet is the flowering of consciousness, stepping out of the conditioned self, the conditioned mind, all the mental noise is conditioned by the past, stepping out of a conditioned sense of self, my history, my story, me, equating your sense of identity with your story, your history, all that's the conditioned, and it is possible to step out of that, and what is there beyond the conditioned little me, that little sense of self derived from the past, and that needs the future for its fulfilment, and at the same time feel threatened by the future, because the future is going to kill it, so it's a double edged sword that continues running towards the future, away from this moment, seeking fulfilment, at some future moment I'm going to get there, but at the same time feel deep down the future is also going to kill me, so humans live between these two, fear and desire movements, and for most people all their motivations, all their actions arise either out of fear or desire, they're all connected with future, and that also is embedded in the very structure of the human mind, it's interesting to observe it in oneself, even to observe that you're not at ease in this moment, even to observe that just ten seconds ago you were thinking about your dinner tonight, or the problem that you're going to have to face tomorrow, even to observe that is already the beginning of another consciousness emerging, if you can observe what the mind is doing, that is not part of the mind, you're not judging it, you're simply watching that, that is the stillness emerging in you, that is the dimension of consciousness that is deeper than the mind, vaster, of infinite potential, it contains infinite vast potential, and once you access that, you will be able to see that you are finding it amazing that humans have lived for thousands of years, trapped in a sense of self that was so limited, to see themselves as a little person, with a little history and a little future, and to be trapped in that sense of self is such an illusion, and it's so, it's a prison, so just to watch, even at this moment, is, am I at ease, am I not at ease, or is there some part of me that wants to be somewhere else, do I want to be in the future, or am I trying to get away from this moment, that's always, that is the essence of the old state of consciousness, and when you observe it, that's the beginning of a new consciousness, I sometimes, it's sometimes called the witnessing consciousness, you observe what the mind is doing, so you are not totally trapped in it, and that is only the beginning, that is only the beginning, and then it emerges more deeply, more fully, as the state of stillness, which you may get glimpses of even here, and perhaps at this moment, when the mind is not moving anymore, you are alert, completely present, completely open to the aliveness of this moment, and most humans are totally unaware of that, that the fact that there is an infinite source, potential, for aliveness, concealed, is not in what looks like so insignificant to the mind, and that's this moment, it's like the atom, the tiniest of things, contains vast energy, once it opens up, so the very life energy, the energy that sustains the whole universe, you can have access to it, through the little doorway that opens up when your attention moves into this moment, and it always means you become very alert, very present, that's stillness, stillness, alertness, presence, they are all one.

So stillness, don't misinterpret stillness as meaning you are going off to sleep, or the kind of stillness you have after a few drinks, you might drift off a bit in life, you can't remember your problems, so you feel a little bit better. But even drink can sometimes mean, people sometimes drink to get rid for a little while of the torture of their mind, telling them what their problems are, the problematic sense of self, the me, so they drink and for a moment they don't remember their problems, but of course there's a price to pay, because you go, there's a lowering of consciousness, so you go lower towards the vegetable realm. And what we are doing, we are not moving in that direction here, it's fine for vegetable, plant life has unbelievable beauty and aliveness to it, and in many ways it's more enlightened than humans, because it doesn't inhabit a world of problems, this flower has no problems, and even when it comes to die, it's not a problem, it just dies, and yet there is an aliveness there, and it's also an expression of consciousness, a beautiful expression of the divine consciousness, just as you are. So we are moving beyond thinking to a more awake state, a more alert state, a more present state, compared to which the thinking state is a dreamlike state.

To be immersed in thinking, this mental dialogue, you are only peripherally aware of your surroundings, because you might be walking in the woods in the most beautiful surroundings, but you are thinking about your problems, my problems, what about me? You are not there. If then something happened that would give you a little shock, you would suddenly, for a moment, enter a state that is present and alert.

If you were suddenly confronted with a bear, you would come out of your thinking state, out of your problems, and there would be the bear, and that's not a problem, it's a situation that requires probably some action. Either you move away, or you make a noise, whatever. But the difference between that state is so, and this is a state that can happen to some humans accidentally in certain situations.

You're driving, and suddenly something goes wrong, and you know an accident is imminent in two or three seconds. And you've been driving for two hours, immersed in your world of problems, stress, this, that, to deal with, and suddenly all that drops away. This is an example when the state of consciousness that I'm pointing to emerges accidentally, and many people have reported they knew an accident was inevitable within two or three seconds, or five seconds, and they suddenly found themselves in an inner state of extreme calm and serenity, and they were totally there, totally alert, all fear had left, and later they survived to tell about it.

They said, this was amazing, how could this be, because it's such a dangerous situation, and I felt so serene suddenly. There are many reports, many similar examples. So this state of consciousness can sometimes emerge briefly usually, accidentally.

Some people seek it out through dangerous activities. It's the only way they can be free of the burden of their mind. The burden of the problem personality, of the me, the burden of this problematic me that they think that's their reality, because when they're climbing up the wall of the mountain, they can't think about that.

They have to be present, totally alert in the now. But when they come down, they get back in their car, they re-enter the world of problems. So they can't be in the state, they think they need to be engaged in that activity to be in that state, but that is not the case.

You can choose that state now. If you're sitting here, what I'm saying now might not yet apply to all humanity, but if you're sitting here, there's enough consciousness in you to choose a state that is free of the problem-making mind. And you realize when you enter the now that there is no problem ever in this moment.

There may be a situation that you need to deal with. That is never a problem. Anything that comes into the now, you may need to take action, do this or that, and you do it.

It arises out of that state of consciousness, of presence. But dwelling mentally on situations, investing the situations with a sense of me, self, and going around in circles, lying in bed at night, sleepless, and wherever you go, you can't stop this machine, the noise machine in the head, because you don't remember where the button, the off switch is. That is torture.

The most wonderful realization is that in the state of consciousness that I call presence, there are no problems. Perhaps challenges, but they never turn into problems. If you cannot take action, everybody in this room is involved in a certain life situation.

Some better than others. Some life situations are relatively good and comfortable. Other life situations may be problematic.

There may be a shortage of money. There may be health problems. There may be relationship problems, work, and many kinds of completely fictitious problems created by the mind.

What if this happens, or that happens, or I lose this, or I don't get that, or he leaves me, or she leaves me. So another level of problems is total fiction. It comes about through the incessant mental noise.

It's a very radical reversal of the normal way to live. Take your attention, whenever you think you can't stand your problems anymore, and it's getting too much, and you wake up in the morning and say, oh, not another day. No human is meant to live like that, waking up in the morning and saying, I can't face another day.

And nor in nature that doesn't happen. The flower too, when the sun rises, the flower opens up, because it responds to the sun, and no flower has ever said, I can't face another day. No animal has ever said, I can't face another day, except perhaps animals that are suffering deeply because of what humans have done to them.

But no animal in the wild would, an animal wakes up, and a plant, a flower wakes up, and immediately is in a state of aliveness. And you can see it. Jesus talked about it, when he often would say, look at the flowers.

And when he said, look at the flowers, he meant it. He wants you to really look and see the incredible beauty and aliveness. And if you look deeply enough, you will see that they are actually celebrating life.

And this is how life is meant to be. Humans are meant to celebrate life too, in a completely different way. They also are an expression of the divine consciousness.

Now we impose our world view also on nature, so whatever world view you have gets projected. So humans these days say, the whole of nature is a struggle for survival, because that's their own life, that's their own mind. If you were free of that mindset that says everything is a struggle for survival, you would actually see that most of the time, nature is celebrating life.

And the moments of struggle are very short. Animals mostly live in a state of ease. When they get hungry, they might kill.

That's a very brief moment compared to most of their existence. So to carry this burden of survival is a burden of problems, which is the mind, which gets heavier as people grow older. Often the burden increases.

Past gets heavier and heavier inside. You carry a heavier and heavier burden of past. But even young people carry a heavy burden of future.

And gradually you can no longer feel life. You can no longer feel the aliveness that is in the very depths of your being, because of the mental noise. It covers up an incredible deep sense of vitality and aliveness that is life itself.

But it's covered up by mental noise. Jesus talked about it. He said, I want you to have life and more abundant life.

I want you to have more abundant life. He didn't mean more abundant consumer goods. He didn't mean more shopping malls.

He was not talking about the things in life. He was talking about life itself, the aliveness of life itself. And if the only place where you can be in touch with that is through the stillness underneath the mental noise, the vibrantly alive stillness presence underneath the mental noise.

There you get, because the stillness is also a feeling of intense aliveness. That's the place where you are connected with something much vaster than the little me. When you touch that incredible sense of aliveness, the only place in time where you can do that is now.

When you touch that, a vastness of life is there. And as you have access to that more and more, you begin to, that begins to be in your life, not just as a glimpse, but for longer periods, you dwell in the state of connectedness, as I sometimes call it connectedness with being. Where life feels good.

It feels good to be alive. This is the most simple terms I could, even a child would understand that. It feels good to be alive.

But in that goodness that is life itself, out of the goodness that is life itself, things emerge out of the vibrantly alive stillness that is in your very being. Things emerge out of that. Thoughts may come suddenly out of it, but they will be creative, new thoughts.

Not the old gramophone records that you've been thinking about for 10 or 20 years. Insights realizations come out of that, because that's the source of all creativity. So you're touching life itself, not the manifest it was.

Life before it becomes something in its original form, or rather no form. The formless life that you are. That is your essence.

That is to be connected with that, is to become free of the world, of attachment to the things of the world, of grasping and clinging and needing. And there's an incredible sense of you suddenly know how precious you are as that life. No matter whether on the external level you are an important person or a non-important person, that's the world telling you you are important or the world telling you you haven't made it, that has nothing to do with finding that place within yourself where you become free of that and you no longer believe what the world is telling you.

Because after all, the world is insane. And if you believe it, you believe what an insane world is telling you. If you doubt that the world is insane, pick up a history book.

Or switch on the news. It may not be 100% insane, but let's say 90%. So you're allowing an insane world to tell you either that you are important and believe that, and a few years later the same world will tell you that you are no longer important.

You've lost your position and somebody else is chairman of the board now. And you thought that was your identity. And you might even have to return your American Express Platinum card.

And that is painful. If your sense of identity was in that, something that is funny really to that person would be very painful. My God, I'm nobody again.

And I thought I was somebody. How can I survive without the Platinum card? And then somebody else believes it when they tell you you are no good because you haven't made it in the world.

Oh, I failed. Life has treated me unfairly. I've missed out on life.

I never had a chance. Or I had a chance, but I didn't use it. So the world telling you, the insane world now telling you you're not important or you're nobody.

Look who is regarded as important in the world. Actors, singers, whatever, politicians. And most of them are miserably unhappy with the facade of happiness.

And those are the idols of the world. So your sense of self is no longer derived from that. And that's a wonderful liberation.

You don't, what the world is telling you becomes completely irrelevant because your aliveness has such depth to it. You know that nobody could take that away from you. And you need nobody's confirmation that your life is incredibly valuable.

And self-esteem, you no longer need to tell you that you are good enough when you are in touch with the very goodness of life itself. Until that, it may be helpful to have little affirmations telling you that you are good enough. Then you move beyond when you are in touch with the very goodness of life in yourself.

Then you no longer need mental concepts of who you are. And this is what Jesus meant when he said, I have overcome the world. Not that he had any worldly power.

So that is, that depth of aliveness is here in you at this moment. But you need to be open to that. A very helpful point of entry and many of you are living it already, is to feel the aliveness that is in every cell of your body at this very moment.

Every cell is vibrant with life throughout your being. And to feel that, to be connected with that. You don't have to, and you'll notice when your attention moves into the body, the inner energy field of the body, I sometimes call it the inner body, but you could also call it the joy body because there is deep joy in that aliveness.

When your attention is there, you're not, the noise suddenly subsides in the head because the attention has moved from the head into your being. And you're then rooted in the now. You're rooted in your being.

And it's almost as if your whole body were coming to life suddenly. That's what Jesus meant when he said, your whole body will be filled with light. That is the light of consciousness.

And then there's still plenty of consciousness left to perceive the world. As you sit there and feel the aliveness in your being, you're rooted in the now. You're rooted through that, that's the opening, that's the doorway.

You're rooted in being. Everything is an expression of the divine consciousness, one form or another form. Every organ and cell, DNA and so on, has vast intelligence that the human mind could never understand.

Even a thousand years we'll still be exploring how the body works. It's so easy to be connected with an intelligence that is greater than the mind. Simply feel the aliveness of the inner body and you will soon come to a place of, feel there's joy there.

The joy of life itself. And it doesn't depend on what's in your life as the circumstances, because circumstances come and go. They may be negative at the moment, they may be positive at the moment, they rarely remain the same.

If they're positive now they may be negative next year. There are constant fluctuations out there, but there is a place that is free of that. And people in prison who have written to me are practicing that and living that and finding an intense joy and aliveness despite the dreadful conditions of their external circumstances.

So those external circumstances, I call that, that's your life situation. Good, bad, indifferent, it changes. You lose things, you gain things.

Life situations continuously fluctuate. And even the greatest success story eventually will move into old age, loss of beauty or loss of wealth or loss of the ability to move. On the external level nothing lasts.

The Buddha discovered that. Everything is impermanent on the external level. And yet there is a place where you're free of those things.

Those things can no longer influence, affect your state of being. So you become free of the world. And it doesn't matter if you're homeless now, you might think, OK, first I need to find a home and then I will practice going within and going deeply into the now.

Because there's a fear which is the mind's conditioning, if I go deeply into the now now, I will be stuck in this now that I don't like that I'm in now. That's a very subtle thing, a very subtle resistance. I don't like my life circumstances, the mind says, so I'm not going to go into the now because I don't want to be in the now.

I want to get to the future, and once I get to the future, then I'll go into the now. Perhaps the American Express Platinum Card will take me into the now. And of course the miracle is you do it now, no matter what the circumstances of your life are, there's no excuse for not doing it.

And the quickest way out of undesirable circumstances, homeless, even prison, penniless, or even physical condition, the quickest way out of that is to enter the present moment and find the now. Connect with the vast aliveness that is there, just waiting for you to touch it. And then, that vast aliveness, you're not just practicing that when you're sitting still in your room, it's not just a meditation practice, it's a way of being, so you begin to dwell in that state of connectedness, and you will notice how suddenly there's more creativity in your life, there are more insights, realizations of what is the right thing to do.

You will wake up and suddenly know, oh, this is what I have to do. Because they arise out of that state, life itself begins to live through you and move through you. The little person struggling to make a living, or to be a success, or to make it, is not really needed anymore, the struggling little me.

So life itself begins to move through you, and it does it much better than you could ever do, because ultimately, you are life. By you, I mean the fictitious little me in the head. And then, very quickly, life situations actually emerge.

And then you improve, because you bring to every moment that deep sense of aliveness, of being there, and you can honor this moment fully. That means immediately a sense of deep care flows into what you do, all your interactions. When you're completely there, you give your complete attention to whatever task is at hand, and even if you were in a job that the mind tells you is boring and you want to get out of, the quickest way out of that, and you might have been stuck in it for years, thinking, I need to get out of it, is to bring a different state of consciousness to it, giving care even to the tedious things that you have to do and bring that to it. That is meaning, that means the resistance to the now suddenly goes.

And the resistance to the now is an essential aspect of the conditioned human mind. It is always fighting this moment in one way or another. No, don't want to be here.

I need to be somewhere else. And that's when the resistance to the now goes, then life can move freely through you. Then problems disappear.

And of course nothing is made into a problem. Challenges still come, but you respond to them in the now, out of that sense of presence and aliveness. You see, what can I do about this situation now?

And you become still. And then action arises out of that state. No longer the agonizing, oh, me and my problems.

And you never again will wake up in the morning and say, I can't face another day. It's a dreadful condition, but many humans are in that. You will then wake up and you will open your eyes and the mind is not going to start immediately and tell you what your problems are, so immediately the burden descends on you of, oh, I can't face it anymore.

You wake up and immediately connect with the aliveness that is in every cell of the body and hold that state. It feels good to be alive and the mind hasn't, why does it feel good to be alive? Because the mind hasn't started up yet and reminded you of your problems.

Because underneath that, it always feels good. Life is always vitally alive and beautiful. And so life becomes a celebration continuously, not a needing to get to some future moment to become happy or become somebody or to make it.

And the miracle is that everything flows with greater ease then. And you're even likely to be more successful as if it mattered. Because whatever you do in that state is done with care and even love.

You honour the now. You honour life itself. You open your arms to life itself.

That is love. That is a deep sense of care that you give to whatever arises in the now. Yes.

How can life not be cooperative if that is your state of being? And how can life be cooperative if you continuously say, no, I don't want to be here. I want to be somewhere else.

Or even I want to be somebody else. So it's like being closed, resisting the now, denying the now, running away from the now. Anything but this, the mind says.

And then the shift happens. You honour life. Then life can help you.

It's been trying to help for years. You just can't get through. The sun tries to shine.

It doesn't mean you are big and powerful, so you can keep out even life. You're not separate from life. If you keep the shutters closed in a room, the sun just won't come in.

It would love to come in. But if you keep the shutters closed, the sun doesn't really mind. But it would love to come in.

So that is the state of non-resistance to the present moment. The most miraculous transformation of consciousness as a human being. Once you enter that state, it's there.

And there's always, as we started off by pointing to the stillness, when you do not resist what is, the incessant mental noise slows down, subsides, huge gaps arise in the mind stream. Because almost all the mental noise is continuous resistance. So you open yourself up to just this moment.

That is the ultimate spiritual practice. And nothing could be more simple, and yet it seems so difficult because of the conditioning of the mind. This concludes Session 1.

[Speaker 2] (54:00 - 54:50)

Our program continues with Session 2. Sounds True and Namaste Publishing present Living the Liberated Life and Dealing with the Pain Body, Session 2 with Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (55:06 - 1:52:39)

So the sense of power or aliveness that dwells there, this is what they talk about in trust, the word trust, trusting in life, to have to trust. It's hard to make yourself trust when your primordial condition is fear, which is the primordial human condition in the mind identified state. Fear and trust can't go together.

Trust is simply the absence of fear. So you cannot make yourself trust, or even affirmations won't do it. You can even repeat affirmations and put them on your bathroom mirror.

I trust in life. I trust that life is supporting me. But eventually you have to go even beyond the affirmation, and the trust arises naturally where you actually don't need any more affirmations because you're there, the reality of it is there.

Affirmations are maybe a transitional stage when you haven't quite arrived at the reality of it. Then you say, I'm wealthy, but when you have 50 million in the bank, you can take off the affirmation from your bathroom mirror. It's obvious you know you're wealthy.

You don't need to say it anymore. Bill Gates doesn't have the affirmation on his bathroom mirror. And that's only external wealth.

He's not, this is not going to save him. Even with that, he cannot buy peace. But just giving that example to see when you have, when the reality is obvious and it's there and you don't need the signpost anymore because every affirmation is a kind of signpost that points you in the right direction.

But there comes a point when the signpost isn't needed anymore because you have arrived. So that the trust, trust, when you feel you go into the inner body and then there's the first very subtle and then you feel increasingly more intensely the power, the aliveness, the stillness and yet the incredible energy behind that. And then you know that that is actually, that is most, on the most fundamental level, that's, I am that.

I'm not the little me in the head. And that is going to, that lives and acts through you. That power is there.

And when you know yourself as that, that's trust, then you suddenly trust is your natural state. No longer something you need to figure out how to get there. Trust is your natural state so that even the concept trust disappears because it's so natural you don't even have a word for it anymore.

Many concepts disappear when the reality that to which the concept points arrives. The very mental concept of it is not really necessary anymore. I rarely talk about love, although I did this morning, but I don't talk about it too often.

It arises naturally out of the state of presence. And you don't even, you don't need to keep the concept in your head and tell yourself that I'm loving, a loving being. It's not needed anymore.

I sometimes surprised when people tell me things and I say, oh, people sometimes, because I'm kind of present and people say, oh, you're so patient. Oh, I'm so patient? I didn't know I'm patient.

I hadn't thought about it as patient. It never occurred to me that I'm patient. I didn't have the whole, this concept at all because patient still means that you're trying hard to be here.

There's some kind of effort involved in being patient. But when true patience is there, you don't even know you're patient. You're just present.

Patient still means you're halfway, you're half there and half not there. You're practicing to be patient. Okay, I'll be patient for another half hour, but then I've had enough.

So it's wonderful when these, the world of, all these concepts are not really needed anymore. But there is a stage when they may be helpful. There is a stage when the affirmation on the bathroom mirror is okay.

But there also comes a time when you go beyond that. You wouldn't want to be staring at a signpost. If you want to get to Rome, you wouldn't be staring at a signpost for years that says Rome that way.

And then there are the collectors of signposts. They have a whole bunch stored up and then compare them. This compares to that one and this tradition and he said that and he said that and this.

And if you become a collector of signposts, then it's hard to let go because you have a precious collection. In a way, all teachings are signposts. And you don't need to even identify with any particular form of teaching.

There can be certain traps on the spiritual path. To identify with one particular form in which a teaching comes and then he says, okay, I'm a Buddhist. And the other says, no, I'm a Sufi.

And the other says, well, I'm a Zen Buddhist and you are Theravada. Zen is actually superior. Again, images come in and they can be obstacles when you identify.

Ego on the spiritual path can creep in at any stage. So to look out. Now ego means a new image has formed again in your mind of who you are.

Ego is a very subtle thing you can observe in yourself. Comparison. Ego likes to compare itself.

Comparison is an ego device. So ego compares itself to others in a subtle way. And whenever ego is a feeling of inferiority or superiority arises, as against others.

Both the feeling of, okay, I may not be as good as that person or as knowledgeable or as spiritual as that person. That's ego. Or feeling I'm more spiritual than that person.

I've been practicing for longer or my tradition is better than that person's. Then that's the superior ego coming in. Even to have an image of yourself as spiritual, let the ego go into that.

Trying to live according to an image in your head, trying to be spiritual, to see yourself as spiritual, that's another ego trap. And then you become more unconscious in a way. Ego means unconsciousness has returned.

And despite your meditation practice, then you find there are lots of things that if you have an image of yourself as spiritual, then there are lots of things you can't, you have to deny that arise inside you and that would be, if you looked at them openly, they would be telling you, oh no, you're not that spiritual. You have to push them aside. Anger, whatever comes up, if it no longer fits your self image, you push it aside.

And then it goes building up momentum like a boiling kettle, a boiling pot you have put the lid on, and the steam is building up. And then suddenly you get an outburst or a wave of depression. In Christianity, often they have tried to live according to what it's like to be a good Christian, trying hard, and anything that doesn't fit the self image of me as a good Christian has to be pushed aside.

And then you can't push it aside forever. At some point, the unconscious will again emerge and overwhelm you as rage, as anxiety, as depression, a mood, dark mood suddenly coming in. And so presence is to live free of self images, because that's mind, it's conditioning, free of needing some image to tell you who you are.

You don't really need that. And this is why I said you learn from animals, although animals have no self image. They are themselves.

They act naturally, spontaneously, or rather, life acts through them. They have, of course, the limitations of their particular form. And yet, they are more deeply connected to the source than humans, humans in their normal state.

So that's again, that's why it's so helpful to learn to botch an animal. It doesn't live through a self image. It is itself.

It's a natural, the natural state. And what we are returning to is the natural, that's in India, as I sometimes use that expression, the natural state that humans lost a long time ago. So that's wonderful.

You're returning to that. So simply observe when some new self image has formed, or some old self image has returned. Look so often, be aware of comparison.

Comparison as an ego device. In a subtle way, you're feeling better than or not as good as. There's the ego.

Better than, not as good as. Another sign that you're living through a self image is defensiveness. Defensiveness arises when somebody questions your beliefs, questions a statement that you've made, doubts this or that, that you associate with your self image.

So observe defensiveness coming in. And it's always, you're always defending an image, because who you truly are doesn't need any defense. It's so powerful, cannot be attacked, it's totally beyond anything that could be injured or attacked in any way.

It doesn't need any defenses. So observing when it happens. When you observe it, you're no longer trapped in that unconscious movement.

When you observe that an image has arisen in your mind, and you've identified with that, at that moment, oh, that's the, again, the unconditioned has come in. You're suddenly aware of it. When you're observing that you've become defensive about a position you have taken, may even be something spiritual, my mental position, it's, you've identified with a position, which means an image has formed in your mind of me, and that needs to be defended.

Therefore, the Course in Miracles says, it has some wonderful statements, whenever you become defensive about anything, know that you have identified yourself with an illusion. Whenever you become defensive about anything, know that you have identified yourself with an illusion. But the knowing is not part of the illusion.

That's the beauty of it. The moment you know that you have identified yourself with an illusion, the knowing is not the illusion. You have recognized the illusion, and in that knowing, you are free of the illusion.

So the more illusions like that you discover in yourself, the better. Because every time you discover a mind pattern, an old mind pattern acting itself out, a self-image, defensiveness, grasping, clinging, the moment you become aware of patterns, the awareness or the knowing is not part of that. That's why it's so wonderful.

The more you discover that's unconscious in you, the better. It doesn't mean that you have failed. Discovering it is, this is how it works, to recognize it.

To recognize illusion as illusion is not illusion. You have recognized. The recognition is not part of the conditioned mind.

The recognition is the unconditioned. It sees. It just sees.

So this is the wonderful thing that means you can afford the luxury of allowing whatever arises inside you to arise. You don't have to deny anything when we do this work, if you want to call it work. You don't need to deny anything, which you need to if you live through a self-image.

Anything that doesn't fit the self-image is denied. But in this work, whatever arises, you allow it. Emotional patterns, mind patterns arise, and there comes the recognition as they arise.

When I say allow whatever arises to arise, you might ask, well, doesn't everybody live in that way? No, they don't. The allowing implies that there is an awareness, and the awareness is not part of the conditioned.

When I say allow, it implies there is a presence that observes the pattern as it unfolds, either in your head or externally as a behavior pattern when you're talking to someone. So just watch. The more you see, the more consciousness grows.

The more unconscious patterns you discover in yourself, the more consciousness is growing. So it doesn't arise anymore to say, oh, I shouldn't be feeling this. I shouldn't have that thought.

I shouldn't. This doesn't arise anymore. The deep, the allowing of inner states, it's a wonderfully liberating practice.

And then you know that there's no inner state that is actually you, no inner, no conditioned state is who you really are. That's why you're free to allow them. Otherwise, if anger comes, and you identify with it, and say, oh, I shouldn't be that.

I've been on the spiritual path for so many years, and I'm still getting all this anger. I shouldn't. Then you want to repress it or deny it or say, no, I'm not angry.

I'm just, I'm never angry. Don't accuse me of being angry. You are angry.

The typical ego interactions, me unconscious, you are the one who is unconscious. And observe how mechanical defensiveness is, the mechanical nature, the condition. It arises almost like clockwork, almost automatically.

Somebody pushes a button and the reaction comes. And when people know you after a while, then if they want a reaction, they just push the button. It's like a robot.

A few months ago, I was walking in Stanley Park in Vancouver and by the pond. Just an example of, I was, I'm always watching around me because one can learn so much by simply watching people. Now, I don't mean, I also, animals, of course, are deeper learning, but you can learn about dysfunction by watching people.

There was a man, an old elderly man, feeding the ducks with breadcrumbs. And then two youngsters, teenagers on bicycles, 16 year old, came up and they were wearing a badge, some voluntary workers, ecological voluntary working brigade or something. And they talked to the man who was feeding the ducks and said, Oh, do you know that feeding the ducks is actually bad for them, feeding them breadcrumbs, because it fills up their stomach and doesn't give them enough nourishment.

And he was eating. And then he said, Yeah, yeah, I know. And he continued to feed the ducks.

And then they said a bit more. And then the defensiveness came up. He actually admitted that he knew it was bad for them.

But somehow, perhaps it gave him pleasure. Maybe it's the only interaction he has in life to feed the ducks. So the pleasure he derives from feeding the ducks was greater than knowing that it's actually harmful for them.

And then he said, Okay, well, no, I'm not stupid. Nobody's going to tell me what to do. I'm not stupid.

So ego reaction came like a like clockwork. And he started talking angrily and defending himself didn't make much sense, because you can't defend behavior that you've just recognized as wrong. But the ego doesn't care.

It was an automatic defense mechanism. And he talked for several minutes getting more and more angry, defending. Now, what was he defending?

A mental position, a mental image, his ego. And finally, the youngsters who were perhaps were present, seemed quite present, or well trained, at least. They said, Thank you for listening to us.

Bye, bye. And then the man walked on. And I walked on into 50 yards further on, I could see him, he was again feeding the ducks.

But it's now, let's just see if, if presence had been there in him at that moment. Let's say, let's replay the same scenario. He's feeding the ducks.

The youngsters come, say, Do you know it's harmful? And he's perhaps the first statement was actually true, is it? Yes, I know.

And then he would say, I know you're absolutely right. It just gives me so much pleasure. I can't help it.

I just feel that I need to feed the ducks. But you're right. I'll stop now.

Or I'll just give them the rest of what I have. But I know you're absolutely right. But it's just that I love the duck so much.

And it gives me so much pleasure to feed them. No, that is, that is his true power would be arising where the ego would have said, No, this is, you become annihilated. This is weakness.

Defend yourself. But if he had honestly expressed that, not needing to defend an image, then a true power would have arisen in him. His true power would have come forth.

And to the ego that looks like becoming vulnerable, like becoming vulnerable, but it's not. It's true strength. And the whole interaction, the quality would have changed with it.

There might have been a true communication between two human beings, the youngsters and the old man. There might even have been love. It could have been a wonderful encounter.

But the ego didn't allow that. It needed to defend itself. That's, you get, people get more and more trapped in that.

And this is just a tiny example. Now imagine somebody living like his whole life in that way. And most people are.

Not so much, perhaps, perhaps everybody in this room recognizes a little bit of that, sometimes more than a little bit, in their own lives. But most people in this room are not totally, nobody in this room is totally trapped in those ego patterns. Everybody who sits here, there's some already areas of freedom where you go beyond ego opening up.

Otherwise, you wouldn't be here. The ego wouldn't have allowed you to come here. Or if you had come anyway, it would have become too painful.

You would have gone home by now. Now, the interesting thing, when this, when presence, the dimension comes in, and you observe defensiveness, then, oh, God, there it is. And then sometimes, through the simple fact of observation, you go beyond it, because that's the power that is where you don't need the defensiveness anymore.

And then there's the shift suddenly. And always the mind will tell you, dangerous, defend yourself, protect yourself. So you learn by observing other human beings, and then observing yourself, of course.

The spiritual teaching or teacher, if it is true, says, okay, do you realize that you don't need to suffer anymore? Are you fed up enough with suffering? Or would you like to hang on to suffering?

Anybody who has come here today has already suffered enough. Otherwise, you wouldn't be here. So in a way, your suffering has been wonderful, because it's taken you to this point.

I know that I wouldn't be sitting here without having had dreadful suffering and pain. So it's, it's taken you here. And now the message that comes is, further suffering is not necessary if you voluntarily step into the new state of consciousness.

You choose the kingdom of heaven. Life doesn't have to drag you into it, kick you into the kingdom of heaven. It's painful.

It did that to me. But now my job is to tell people that you don't have to wait for that to happen to you. Choose the new state.

And you're able to do that. I wouldn't tell this to anybody, but not anybody comes here. If you come here, your level of consciousness, the new consciousness is sufficiently emerged already for you to understand what I mean when I say you can choose to live in the state that is free of suffering.

You can choose the state in which suffering is not possible anymore. Unhappiness does not arise. Not a state in which you close yourself and you become, okay, nothing can touch me anymore.

Protective shell, nothing to do with that. Because if nothing can touch, if you have a protective shell around you, that means that all the beautiful and good things can't touch you anymore either. That's not what it is.

It's a state of complete openness, a state of such intense presence that unhappiness has nowhere to cling to anymore. Because unhappiness can only cling to a mentally made sense of self, a little me, a past which moves continuously in past and future and continuously ignores the now. So the realization that in the now, there are no problems and there is no unhappiness.

And the unhappy me that lives through past and future dissolves as you become present. That's the teaching. That's the very same message that the Buddha gave 2,600 years ago and a few people got it.

And then misinterpretation started because the mind started getting in there and say, okay, let's work this out. What does it really mean? How can we categorize it?

How can we make a system out of that? So this heavy superstructure of mind stuff arose on top of the beautiful teaching. So this always happens.

The mind tries to get in there and so the heaviness of religion arises on top of the purity and simplicity of the original teaching. And this is the simplicity of the original teaching. We are going back to that freedom from pain is possible now.

Now first, that means you understand how pain arises. It arises by not being present to this moment, by running away, by fighting, by denying, by running away internally from what is. So that's how pain arises always.

When you accept what is, the new state of consciousness immediately is present. So you can't separate acceptance of what is from the new state of thoughtless awareness. The moment you fully accept what is, the new state of thoughtless awareness is present.

The whole mind stuff is resisting what is. Its very existence, the very ground for its existence is the continuous state of resistance to what is. So resistance to what is and the old consciousness go together.

So our practice is to not resist what is and thereby access the power of life. And yet, that may not immediately free you of all pain and suffering because humans have been in that state for many thousands of years. And there is an energy field of pain that every human being inherits simply by the very fact that you are born into the human condition, into the unenlightened, painful human condition, in ultimately mad human condition up to this point.

You are born into that so every human being has a share of human pain that comes even from very, as you're born into this world, you're already born with a burden of pain. So this is a very important part of our practice and realization. This is not a facile thing of saying okay from now on we can all be happy.

It goes deeper than that and we are not running away also, we are not running away from the fact that in you there lives an energy field of residue of past human pain. On a personal level, pain from childhood that leaves residues, energetic residues, different things, painful things have happened to you in childhood and of course far beyond that in time. But let's just talk from the level of your present existence in this form.

Pain that is carried over from your childhood and beyond and leaves, doesn't go away completely, it leaves residues of pain and energy fields. Everything is energy. Then those energy fields get together because they feel they vibrate at the same frequency.

So emotional pain gathers into one mass of pain, contracted energy that isn't flowing freely, an energy that I call the pain body that humans carry inside, an energy field of pain. If you don't recognize that, no matter how much spiritual practice you do and even what we are doing here, if you do not see, if you do not recognize how the pain body operates, it will trick you every time and you will lose consciousness through it. So I want to address it now.

So first we realize there is an energy field of pain in me that may manifest either as turbulence, anger, heaviness, like depression, tightness, fear, whatever way it manifests, it's not pleasant, it's painful, it's past pain, residues, but very much alive still. You carry it inside, but you're not always conscious of it. And I talk about it briefly in one chapter of the book, so we go into it a little bit more deeply now.

And now there's the added energy of presence that we take into the pain body. The pain body is sometimes dormant and sometimes active. It becomes active when you suddenly feel it very strongly, when it needs to feed on further experience of pain, as it always has to do regularly, like it's a little entity almost.

It needs feeding temporarily on the experience of further pain. And you will know that this has happened when a relatively insignificant trigger produces an incredible outburst reaction of pain. A minor thing goes wrong, or somebody says something, or your partner does something or says something, and there's suddenly a deep, or even a thought comes in, and suddenly it serves as a trigger for an immense, the arising of deep emotional pain.

At that moment, the pain body, this energy field, has come up out of its dormant state. It is ready to feed on more pain. It produces, first, two ways in which it, I haven't quite put it that clearly in the book.

I'll explain it in the next book. There are two ways in which it produces, it feeds on the further experience, because that's all you can feed on. You cannot, the pain body consists of that energy of pain.

It needs, please, where can I get more pain? It feeds on your thoughts when it's ready to rise up. It will control your thinking.

It rises into the mind, and the mind, which is your thought activity, becomes aligned with the pain body. Every thought you think is destructive and painful. And the pain body loves it.

It gobbles up the energy of every thought that you think, every destructive and deeply negative thought. It eats it up, so to speak, and it's having a good time. It's feeding.

And at that moment, one way of putting it is, one could say that that is the addictive quality of human pain. Addictive because it loves its pain. When the pain body has taken you over and has succeeded in pretending that that's who you are, all your thinking is completely aligned with it, and it's feeding on it.

At that very moment, the least thing you want, the last thing you want, is to be free of pain. At that moment, pain is what you want, because at that moment you are the pain body. And anybody who tells you that if I came into your life at that moment and gave you this message that a life free from pain is possible, you would hit me over the head.

Because the pain body would be there, and I would be talking to the pain body, and the pain body would be talking back at me. So the pain body needs to come in periodically, and you all have experienced it with partners, finding the ideal partner, and after a few weeks, realizing that there's another side to them, that periodically they become a little monster. And then thinking, oh, I must have made a dreadful mistake.

You haven't. Everybody has a pain body, including yourself, but it's a bit more difficult to see the little monster coming up in yourself. Now, the pain body will use your thinking.

It will feed on your negative and destructive thinking. It can go on. Now, how long the feeding time lasts of a particular pain body varies greatly from person to person.

It could be a brief one, a pain body that feeds very quickly, could be an hour or two. Some pain bodies have a feeding time of several weeks, even months. That's extreme.

And in very extreme cases, there are some pain bodies that have virtually no dormant stage. They are continuously feeding and active, but that's more rare. Much also happens.

You sometimes meet people who are, and you look into their eyes, and you can see the pain body is looking at you through their eyes, and they are waiting for an excuse to have more. They want you to give them a painful reaction. They want you to be angry with them.

They want you to attack them. That's people who are totally possessed by the pain body. So, level one, pain body feeds on your thinking.

Level two, pain body feeds on the feedback of emotional pain from other people. So, it'll not only use your thinking, it might even predominantly use somebody else's reactions. In relationships, when the pain body is ready to arise and feed, it will provoke a reaction in your partner, or the partner does it to you, pushes the right buttons, because it wants pain.

The pain body loves the drama. This is why drama is an essential part of most relationships. The pain body needs feeding, and you could be saying, suddenly it comes in.

At the slightest trigger, there it is. So, it feeds on the other person's reaction, and that's where drama arises in the relationship. And it'll give me more pain, please.

And the mind is aligned with it, so the mind will find wonderful ways of rationalizing why it'll add to it, through heated discussions or shouting matches. So, it's totally, and then the other person's pain body awakens, and the two feed on each other, until feeding time is over. And the two pain bodies subside, go to sleep, digesting food, and then the relationship, for a while, is harmonious again.

And then the cycle starts again. So, pain body feeding on thinking, pain body feeding on other people's reactions. Now, I mentioned the unhappy me, a mind pattern that people are identified with, an unhappy sense of self.

This mind pattern, when the pain body is active, becomes amplified, its energy, the energy of the unhappy me, when the pain body moves into that mind pattern, that already has been telling you, your life isn't good enough, and so on, and you may not make it, and life has passed me by, and so on. Now, the pain body moves into that mind pattern, and its energy gets amplified 10 times, 20 times, 50 times, 100 times. In other words, the unhappy me, when the pain body arises and flows into that mind structure, the emotion flows into the mind structure, the unhappy sense of me becomes dreadfully unhappy, and loves its unhappiness, because that's what it consists of.

Now, all that it is, it is not a foreign body that lives in you, it is, there's nothing that is not life energy, even the pain body is life energy, except that it isn't flowing freely, it's got stuck somewhere. And when energy gets stuck and cannot flow freely, pain arises, like a river, if a river cannot flow, the water accumulates, and pressure accumulates. But it's really, it's beautiful life energy, the water is still beautiful, but there's pressure accumulating inside, that's what the pain body is.

Now, as we bring presence, this consciousness, into the pain body, it no longer, can no longer fool you into completely identifying with it. The presence, as the pain arises, from now on, and many of you are already practicing that, pain arises, the pain body comes up, and at that moment you will recognize it as the pain body. That's the beginning of freedom from it.

The recognition, when it comes, slight trigger, provocation, even a thought, deep pain arises in whatever form, in some people it's a very active pain, active aggressive pain, in other persons it's a passive form of pain, poor little me, victim pain, doesn't matter which pain bodies have different qualities in different people, it may be turbulence or heaviness or tightness or constriction, it doesn't matter what it is, as it arises, you will know there is a witnessing presence, and you watch, oops, there's the pain body, and you feel the energy field of it in your body, often you can feel it in the solar plexus or stomach area, sometimes in the belly, as a dreadful sense of heaviness, or some people perceive it as a big hole, some gaping hole inside, or it may be intense anger. But whatever it is, you watch it, this is why sitting here is so helpful, because the witnessing presence, which is part of this new state of consciousness, gets so much strength simply by sitting in this energy field. So the watcher will be there, watching the pain, so the pain cannot use your mind anymore, it cannot feed on your thinking, because you're watching it directly, it cannot creep into your mind, and then become an unhappy me.

So all that's left of the pain is an energy field of turbulence or heaviness, but the pain has not become an unhappy me, an unhappy sense of self, of who you are. That's the beginning of the end of the pain. But our practice is allowing what is to be, and that also applies, as long as the pain body is there in you, allowing the pain that is there in you also to be.

That is a very powerful practice. So I'm not saying we are not fighting the pain, we are not even trying to get rid of it. But you bring the consciousness, which is a very compassionate state of allowing what is its very powerful state, it implies you are present as the one who is able to allow.

You are the one who is able to allow the pain to be. You know you're not creating this pain at this moment, because you practice accepting what is. So it's not pain that you are creating, it's old pain.

You bring the acceptance to the old pain. This wonderful state, this powerful practice, it does not just concern what happens to you externally, allowing this moment to be as it is. It includes the arising of pain in the pain body.

You watch it, feel it, allow it. So you bring presence into it. You meet, the presence meets the pain body.

Here's the pain body, and there comes the silent space of presence. Okay. And you hold the state of presence as the turbulence happens.

Then the pain body is not replenishing itself. You've cut the link between the pain body and your thought processes. It's not feeding on your thinking anymore.

You're watching it. Now, the best time to catch it and watch it is as it first arises in you, when you first notice it arising, to immediately become very alert with every cell of your body and feel it. There it is.

And stay alert, stay present, continue to watch. This is the beginning of the transmutation of pain. The more you watch, the less it can feed.

It loses its energy charge every time you stay present as the watcher of it. It's not gaining new energy. In fact, it's losing energy as the pain body, but the very energy that was trapped in there as the pain body becomes part of the aliveness of who you are.

Many people's life energy is, to a large extent, trapped in their pain body. They have little access to their aliveness because the pain absorbs so much of their aliveness, and it's all trapped in there, in a big, unhappy me. And nothing is flowing.

There's no flow whatsoever. There's only a big, huge contraction. Many human beings are one big contraction.

It's amazing, the egoic state. It's one big contracted, nothing flows. And as the energy becomes freed that's in the pain body, there's an incredible increase in aliveness and vitality.

And of course, pain goes. It won't, it will not go the very first time you do it. You will have to do it many times.

It will, many times it will try to arise again, and it will arise. Many times you will lose it. You will lose yourself in it again.

That's right. It's all part of this. There will be times when it will take you over again.

And afterwards, you remember, oh, there it was, and I missed it completely. You might have gone through three hours of drama with your partner, and afterwards you say, oh, that was the pain body. I missed it completely.

That's all right. Next time, maybe you'll catch it and know that it's there. The good thing is that the pain body becomes actually your ally in your presence practice.

Because without it, very few people would have enough motivation to enter the new state of consciousness. Every time the pain body comes, until you know this fact, the pain body will trick you every time, and you will lose consciousness every time. But now that you know this, whenever it comes, it becomes incorporated into your practice of presence.

So the more often it comes, the better it is. You're lucky. If you have a strong pain body, you're lucky.

It's good for your practice. It can become a great teacher. That is the most, actually, the most powerful part of your practice, is to work with the pain body and see how quickly the transmutation happens when it no longer is an unhappy me.

It's simply pain. Not pleasant, but you can allow it. And there's an incredible intensification of presence every time you bring it to the pain body.

Now those of you who have very dense or heavy pain bodies will need more intense presence. Most people who are that I know who have gone to become almost free of pain, they're not yet many who are completely free, but they will be, are people who've had very dense pain bodies, because their motivation is stronger to be free.

[Speaker 2] (1:52:53 - 1:53:36)

This concludes session two. Our program continues with session three. Sounds True and Namaste Publishing present Living the Liberated Life and Dealing with the Pain Body.

Session three with Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (1:53:52 - 2:09:16)

In Eastern terms, we are talking about karma. Karma really, ultimately, is all the conditioning from the past, including the past pain that you mistakenly believe is who you are. Karma is to be identified with all past conditioning and to be condemned to relive and act out continuously your past conditioning.

So pain body is an important aspect of karma. So what we are addressing here is going beyond the unconsciousness that is karma. What we are talking about here is actually the dissolving of karma.

There would be no end to karma otherwise, because it renews itself. That's why it's often likened to a wheel. It renews itself continuously.

This is an end to pain, an end to suffering. Use your relationships in your practice and realize that no matter who you choose as your partner, they will have a pain body. Don't look for the ideal partner without a pain body.

And that's good. And use the relationship because it's so much easier to become aware of your own pain body in a relationship than if you live alone. Great opportunity for practice.

Both of you, if both of you understand how it works, you could have an agreement that you will help each other when the pain body arises in the other person, so that the other can stay very, very present. Instead of going into reactivity, stay very, very present. And if the partner gets taken over by the pain body, stay so present that you allow it without reacting and thinking that that's who that person is.

Allowing it. If your partner doesn't want to cooperate, you just do it for yourself. It only takes one person ultimately to be free.

It's great if he or she does. For many women, pain body arises as the approaching menstrual cycle comes. I mentioned it briefly in the book, because there's so much collective female pain.

One aspect of pain body is collective human pain. Now collective may be the pain of a nation that you belong to. Certain nations have more of a heaviness to them than other nations.

The new world has relatively less heaviness to it than the old world, because the old world, Europe, Asia to some extent, there's so much past there, there's so much the heaviness of past, and the heaviness of past pain is very much apparent. Certain countries, you just get off the plane, and if you're sensitive, you feel the energy field of the collective pain body. Eastern Europe, in many countries, you can feel it the moment you step.

Germany, I feel it the moment I step off the plane. Russia. And every individual who lives, part of their pain body is the collective pain body.

So it's not just a past. Pain body is never a personal problem of yours. It's a human condition.

It's your share in the human condition, not a personal problem. There are no personal problem. Every pain that you have in your life is your share of the human condition manifesting in a particular form.

So there's one aspect of the collective pain body is the nation, the national. The United States has some pain body, but less karma. There's less karma here than European states, and certainly some European states.

And even such a thing as a relatively short-lived, like Vietnam War or something, adds a bit to the collective pain body, the experience. 50,000 men killed in some distant country, and Secretary of State at that time in his autobiography now says, well, in retrospect, it was probably a mistake. Human madness, just one more manifestation of human madness.

But if you, and some of you were actually, I know, had to go there and suffer pain there, and that's fine. You work with that now. Now there's also female pain, collective pain body, just as there's a male collective pain body.

The female collective pain body that every woman partakes in has to do with dreadful pain suffered particularly through women being treated as slaves and as worthless property for thousands of years. Not always. There was a time before that when women had their rightful place.

But for thousands of years in most countries, women became victim of the patriarchal, mind-dominated state of consciousness. So that becomes particularly pronounced when the menstrual cycle starts, the very thing that is the femininity in you on the biological level is very painful. It awakens the female pain body just as it happens.

And this is in the old traditional teachings in Buddhism, they say, no, women can never make it. They can't become enlightened because every time they go through their cycle, they lose consciousness. So they say, okay, we'll have to exclude women.

And they did. And so it's become more and more lifeless by doing that. And it's become more and more mind-dominated.

The very fact is that the opposite is true. If women can use that, knowing that that is the time, particularly when the pain body arises, and become present at that time, it will be through that, that women become very quickly now free of their pain body by bringing presence into, especially when the pain body arises at the approaching menstrual cycle, bring presence into that and become very alert, watch the pain arising, watch it, allow it to be, be compassionate towards it, which is what the allowing is, be compassionate, the compassionate one who allows the pain to be and who is able to hold it, to hold the turbulence.

And it's the state of presence is always a gentle embracing of what is. It's bringing a gentleness to it, which is a very powerful gentleness, bringing the gentleness to it and embracing what is and holding it in that embrace. And you stay present as you hold your pain, the pain, and watch the turbulence of it.

Hold it. The more you hold it, the stronger, very, very quickly your sense of presence grows much, much stronger as you hold the pain, and the pain will slowly lessen. But it no longer matters because your acceptance of the pain is so total, you're not making that moment into a means to an end because I want to get to the end of my pain.

Your acceptance of pain is complete and that's where your spiritual power lies, in fully accepting it. But of course now it hasn't become you. It hasn't become an unhappy me.

You are fully there. You're fully present with it. You fully accept that there is the pain body vibrating in you.

And you may have to hold that pain for quite a while when the cycle comes. It can go on for a while, and then you may lose it, and then remember again and be present with it again. By losing it, I mean it may succeed in moving into your mind and control your thinking again.

And then suddenly you'll remember and you hold it, holding it. So that pain becomes incredible teacher, and every time it happens you bring the presence to it. That's why women are going, it's already, there's always more women coming to consciousness groups than men.

Women will move forward more quickly now than men. I've seen that. I'm seeing it all the time.

And part of the reason is that they'll be able to work with their pain bodies, which up to now has looked, has been a great obstacle, now becomes a great help as you bring the presence to it. Men still have, are less in touch with their bodies, more, women of course are also in the mind, but men even more deeply entrenched in their mind structures. So there's a different, they of course also have pain bodies, but the predominant thing for men is identification with their head.

The predominant thing for women is identification with pain body. So that's, these are just the focal points. Wonderful practice, and I'd love to know, those of you who have already been practicing after reading the book, how you're doing and how it's, what obstacles there are, how, where it is becoming difficult or any questions that arise out of that.

But it is, it is so, this practice is so easy and so wonderful and so powerful that it's amazing that it's taken humans so long to get to this point. But transformation can be very quick now, very quick. So make your pain body into your ally, your pain body is not your enemy.

When you make it into an enemy, that's the old mind's thing starting over and making even the pain body into a problem. How can I get rid of it? Forget about getting rid of it, just watch it.

That does it. Just watch, hold. And then at first the pain seems overwhelming, and the more you bring the, your presence to it, you realize how powerful your presence actually is.

And that the pain ultimately is a, just ripples on the surface of the vastness of who you are. All human pain ultimately is surface ripples or little waves pretending to be very big waves. And when you realize the vastness of your being, then very quickly you realize it's only ultimately, it's just a little bit of pain, but it blew itself up to gigantic proportions.

That's the practice of liberation. And it doesn't take long. People ask me sometimes, well, how long do we have to do that for?

That can vary from person to person depending on the density of the pain body and other factors. It doesn't really matter. The practice itself is beautiful, but I have seen people with extremely heavy pain bodies going, reducing the energy charge of their pain body by about 80 to 90 percent in two years of practicing this.

Now that's people with incredibly dense pain bodies. So that is possible. It is not that you need a lifetime of practice to become, or even as some traditional, you will make it, you will need, some teachers may tell you, okay, you need five more lifetimes.

Or this is, you will make it in your next lifetime. Or in 20 years time, I will give you liberation if you, after you've given me all your money. And let's ask a question if one arises.

Would you want to ask a question? Is the microphone going there? While the microphone travels there, we are present, not waiting for anything to happen.

[Speaker 2] (2:09:27 - 2:09:52)

I'm wondering how you handle when two people's pain bodies collide. For example, there's, well, my wife, who I love very deeply, there's my raging pain body, and then there's my pain in the ass body, which sometimes rages back. And I'm wondering how one handles that.

[Speaker 1] (2:09:52 - 2:21:32)

Yes. Now use the relationship as an essential part of your practice. The pain body is not there continuously.

As you know, it arises at times. And it will start arising in one person, either you or your partner. Be there as it arises in yourself.

Watch the beginning of it, the beginning of pain. That implies, I wouldn't be telling this if you did not have the necessary degree of presence to be there as the witness. But you have now, if only after sitting here for three hours, there is enough presence for you to be there as the witness of the pain as it arises.

If you catch it at an early stage, it's easier to stay present and it won't take you over. If it arises so quickly, and that happens in certain pain bodies whose energy field predominantly is anger, anger has a fiery quality to it. And an angry pain body, as opposed to a heavy depressed pain body, an angry pain body, you have virtually no time to watch it arising, because it arises like an explosion, and is there fully fledged in one second.

So if it's an angry pain body, it's very hard to watch it arising because it arises explosively. If it's a different pain body, a heavy one, fearful one, it's easier to watch it arising and trying to get into your mind. So being there as it starts, the partner can be very helpful because you may already at an early stage become identified with it and start to argue, and of course the arguing will already be energized by the pain that lies behind the mental rationalizations and arguments.

And your partner may still be present and become intensely present and watch as your pain body arises, your partner watches the arising. If you can't watch the arising of your own pain body, which sometimes you may not be able to yet, your partner can do it for you almost. That's wonderful how the relationship can work.

Your partner becomes the witness. If you lose the witness, your partner becomes the witness. That can be a very powerful practice.

So what then happens if I'm with a partner, I can see the pain body arising and already creeping into her mind, wanting me to react, enter the state of intense presence, which is also a state of great openness. And you feel immediately every cell of your body vibrates with life. And you hold that state of complete openness and presence and you watch the arising of the partner's pain body going through the mind.

Now it will try every trick to pull you into unconscious reaction to the pain body. Pain bodies have extreme cleverness. Your partner will try every trick, it will try, it will push buttons that have worked in the past every time in making you unconscious, say just the right thing that he or she knows is going to make you unconscious and give an emotional reaction.

And you stay present. Do it for them. If they lose themselves in the pain body, you hold the presence and watch how the pain body tries every trick to get you, to pull you into unconsciousness.

And that presence is always, it emanates as an energy field around you. So if you're with someone, if you stay intensely present, there's an emanation of presence around you. It's very hard for a pain body to remain active for long in the energy field of presence, even if it comes from another person.

Now it may be that the pain body will remove itself, the person will run out of the room, or jump in the car and drive off, or there will be a sudden, and this can happen and it's miraculous, in the middle of being taken over by the pain body, there's an awakening and there's a sudden aware presence that suddenly is able to watch the intense pain taking place. It could even happen in the middle of a shouting. You're shouting at your partner and at that moment the presence arises.

And what that feels like is like you're waking, you're an actor on stage acting out a script, a very powerful script, forgotten that you're acting out a script and suddenly there's a remembering that this is just acting out, an acting out of a conditioned pattern. And there's suddenly a watching presence there. That's amazing.

So you help each other. If the other person loses him or herself, you stay present. Presence never means that you withdraw or protect yourself.

And you need to be, this is why being here is helpful, to become familiar with the state of presence. Some people mistake it for a state of aloofness, when let's say you're being attacked by your partner's pain body and then you go into withdrawal. It looks like this.

That's not presence. And then even the little me can say, okay, I'm beyond that. I'm not touched by the pain body.

I'm beyond such unconsciousness. So presence is open, complete. It's the allowing.

You allow your partner to be where he or she is. It's a deep allowing. That's a vast power comes with that.

And again, you're embracing, whether you embrace your own pain or you embrace your partner's pain, and you can remain in a state of love and you realize there's the movement of pain. And you don't need to point it out through words. That probably wouldn't work anyway at that point.

But also be careful that the pain bodies are very cunning. It is possible that your pain body may be arising and projecting something at that moment and saying to your partner, there's your pain body. All kinds of things can happen, but if you're present, that'll be fine.

I know of some couples who give themselves a secret signal when the other notices the pain body arising in the partner. And for some that works, a little hand signal or the just, but it can be, sometimes it doesn't work at all when the pain body has a, it can, the pain body is already there and is being told something. And of course, the reactive force can be very strong then.

One signal that definitely doesn't work that somebody suggested to me is this. So it is, it's helpful sometimes after you've had an interaction governed by the pain body to talk about it and see where it started, where it came in first, how it used the mind, how it used arguments and mental positions of me being right and you being wrong, how it moved into those mind structures, and talk about it afterwards. So it's a good practice occasionally to retrospectively bring presence into an event when you got completely taken over by it.

So after consciousness has returned, you kissed and made up and had a nice meal, or whatever else you have afterwards, and then talk about it. And isn't that, that was the pain body, did it start in you and me? Let's see, let's trace it back to the beginning.

There it was, the beginning movement when you didn't phone me to let me know you were going to be late, or you didn't put the garbage out. It can start with very insignificant things. So retrospectively to bring presence into the whole growth of it, and then next time see if you can be present as it happens.

Wonderful practice. And whenever you lose it, afterwards see where you lost it. Not in some kind of, oh I have failed to strengthen the little me that isn't good enough.

No, just looking at it objectively, see that's where it started. That's where the whole pain movement started. That's good practice too.

So see, talk to your partner and see, so you can help each other in it. It makes it easier if you help each other. Because it's always one partner when it comes into one person, the other will still be for a little while conscious.

So that can, that's a great advantage. The next time I come, let me know how it's going. The mic is coming.

[Speaker 2] (2:21:37 - 2:21:48)

I wanted to ask you about consciousness in children and if we can prevent them from having the pain.

[Speaker 1] (2:21:48 - 2:39:46)

Oh that's a good question, yes. Asking about consciousness in children and if we can prevent children from having or developing a pain body. Now many children absorb pain body at an early age from their parents' pain body.

That adds greatly to, some pain is already present in every human being, even as they come into this world, but that adds greatly to the personal pain body. You absorb the pain. It happened, my pain body grew very quickly in the first six, seven years of my life because my parents' pain bodies were both there with great intensity.

Many homes are like that, so children absorb their parents' pain body. Now of course this, you're asking the question for the people in this room and they're all, there's consciousness moving in. The most helpful thing you can do with children is to bring consciousness into your own pain body or if you live with a partner, you do it, both of you do it, so that you don't emanate and act out continuously pain body and then they absorb it.

Now, but even those, even children where parents are not getting lost in their pain body, they will still have a certain amount of pain and many children, even four, three or four year olds, you can often observe how an angel within a few seconds can be transformed into a screaming monster. It's, the transformation is so amazing, we take it for granted that that's normal. This beautiful being, light shining out of his or her eyes, not much mind started yet, the egoic me is not very strong yet, so there's still a lot of being flowing through their eyes and suddenly they go into dreadful contraction and throw themselves on the floor and start screaming.

That's the pain body. And it's relatively short-lived with children because it doesn't, their mind isn't developed enough for the pain body to hang on in their mind for a long period of time, so it goes through quickly and leaves them, it subsides again quickly. Now, the greatest thing you can do for children is to point out to them that there's something happening after an event like that, a screaming fate, or what other children may do other things, extreme withdrawal or something, to say what happened when this energy, when, do you remember yesterday when you had the screaming fate?

What happened there? Who was that? I see by talking, by pointing out that there was an energy movement in the child and perhaps giving it a name, you can help the child to stay present and watch it as it arises.

You can't do it in the middle of it, you'll have to do it afterwards. You can't talk to a screaming monster, but when the angel is back, you talk to the angel and say, who was that monster? Not to induce any guilt or anything like that, in an interested way, isn't that funny, where does that come from?

Has he got a name? And then next time it happens, just as it arises, oh, there, so-and-so is back. You can say it even while it's happening, although of course that won't wake them up at that point, but a little bit of awareness will be there at that point.

And after it has subsided, you say again, oh, there it was again, wasn't that funny? And if you can catch the arising of the pain body in the child just as it first starts, you can say, oh, it's coming on, can you feel it? That means very quickly the witnessing presence in the child will grow, and they can actually watch the movement of the pain body in themselves.

And that is wonderful, that's something that every parent, everybody who sits here can do easily. So you're not trying to get rid of it, it's almost like it's a phenomenon that you and the child together contemplate, say, wow. And you have to admit openly, if your own pain body has taken you over, you can say, you know what, that was the same thing happened in me, what happened this morning.

You talk to the child, that was mine. And a point may come when the child may tell you, oh, there's your pain body. That is a truly functional home when that happens.

And children can do that. And they would love to be there as the watcher. It's like a game, it's fun.

Here's something to surrender to. Now, even with something, before we ask the next question, even with something like that, this is a minor irritation, unless your pain body is ready to awaken, in which fact it could be a big irritation. Oh, unfortunately it stopped now.

Anything like that, you can practice even with little irritations, practice, see if you can be in complete acceptance of that, what was up to this point, irritating, just completely allowing it, allowing it totally. So you work with it, whatever it is, you work with it, allowing it totally, and see what happens. Anything that you allow totally takes you into peace, into the state of great peace.

It's amazing. Anything that you allow completely. So that's the work with children, it's wonderful.

All of us have pain bodies, as you point out, and most of us go to a job. And I'm wondering, if you can recommend ways in which we can use what we do at work to become free. Thank you.

Now at work, usually you go into an environment that is dominated by little me's and egos, and big ego structures, unconsciousness at work. Many big organizations are still run, there are maybe a few exceptions, but many organizations are still run by that consciousness, that state of consciousness. So, a great help is not to expect others to be conscious.

Not to expect consciousness where there isn't consciousness. You will be very often, as you do this practice for yourself, you will very easily observe unconsciousness and pain bodies arising in other people at work, being acted out through their mind. And it'll happen continuously, in some companies more than in others.

And it's the same practice because it's basically a relationship. It's bringing presence into relationships. When pain body arises in somebody else, don't go into the reactivity that would be the little me fighting somebody's pain body, which can easily trigger your own pain body, and you get a big argument.

It's, the practice is relinquishing the reactivity of the little me, so you allow unconsciousness in the other person. Doesn't mean you give in every time. There's a great, it's getting hold of the state of presence and bringing presence into your work, to the conference table, to the committee meeting, and as you sit there, little egos having their battles all around the table, you watch and perhaps for a moment you remember this moment, and that brings back the state of presence.

And then you sit there in the state of, you feel intensely connected with the body, and you watch everybody's contribution without mental judgment. You bring presence to the conference table, to the committee meeting, not the reactivity of the me, where you watch. And then you may find yourself making a contribution and saying something out of the state of presence.

And it will bring a different quality to the whole interaction. There's one person there who brings in a different consciousness, and then see what happens. So instead of, there's nothing you can do to change others as such.

And most of the world still lives in unconsciousness. That's how it is. Don't expect it to be otherwise.

So it's allowing, it's in the allowing people their unconsciousness. This, by the way, also implies to your relationships with other people, like long-standing relationships with parents, which to many people, or children, grown-up children and parents, for many people that's very problematic area, because there's so much past in there. There's often so much unconsciousness and dysfunction in families.

So the most beautiful thing happens when you can, let's say it's your parents, when you can allow your parents completely to be who they are. You give up, which is really the little me, you give up the desire to be understood by them. The little me says, you need to understand me.

They won't. But you will feel a weight being taken off your shoulders when there's a relinquishing of the need to be understood by your parents. Oh, that's a relief.

They don't need to understand me. And then there's a letting go, as this all comes with presence, there's a letting go of wanting them to be different, wanting them to behave differently, accusing them of having done this or that, or having failed to do this or that. There was nobody there to have failed.

There was just unconsciousness in motion, nothing personal in it. They did what they could do according to their level of consciousness. Really, there was nobody there to ever have done anything or not done anything.

It was unconsciousness playing itself out. That's why Jesus said, forgive them, for they know not what they do. When you realize they didn't know any better, there wasn't enough consciousness.

If Jesus had lived now, he would have said, forgive them, for they are completely unconscious. That's what it means. It's just unconsciousness playing itself out.

And then even that drops away, the feeling that they should have done something differently. And the more presence arises in you, the more you realize nobody ever did anything to you. The presence, it's only the little, the identity of the little me feels hurt or injured.

When the dimension of presence arises, presence always remained totally pristine, totally pure, totally fresh, and knew nothing ever happened to it. The reality of who you are, nothing ever happened to that, no matter what pain was inflicted on you in your childhood. As presence emerges, you realize there's a dimension in you that was never touched.

And then forgiveness happens automatically. You don't have to try to forgive. As long as you try to forgive, it's not really working.

Oh, I should be forgiving because I'm spiritual. You cannot really make yourself. Forgiveness happens naturally as presence arises and you feel the vastness of who you truly are beyond the little me.

Forgiveness is just there. You don't even have a word for it anymore. So it's really towards all relationships, whether at work or with parents, between parents and children, the most powerful tool is to allow everyone to be who they are, which is an aspect of allowing this moment to be as it is.

On the canvas of this moment, very often people will appear in it. Very often this moment will come to you as a person. It may come to you as a person's pain body coming out of this at you.

Okay. The practice is allow it to be. That's where power flows through.

The mind says, no, you can't allow it to be. You should be doing something about it. The most powerful transformation happens through allowing to be.

So when I say allow the present moment to be, very often that means allow this person to be. Allow the unconsciousness to be there. It's fine.

And then you will notice relationships with your parents improves dramatically when you give up the desire to be understood. You don't need that anymore. You realize there was nobody there who ever did anything to you or failed to do anything.

So you can see miraculous transformations in situations through allowing. That's where the vast power comes through. Whether it's at work or with, you can try it out.

What's coming up soon? Thanksgiving? Wonderful place to practice when all the family gets together.

For some people it's agony having to go through that. Now this time, see if you can bring in complete acceptance of what is. Everybody around the table happens to be part of this moment then.

Allow this moment, including the turkey dinner and whatever it is. People acting out their conditioned behavior. You can predict what they're going to say next because they said the same thing 10 years ago.

[Speaker 3] (2:39:46 - 2:39:52)

Allow it to be.

[Speaker 1] (2:39:52 - 2:40:15)

And then your next practice will be Christmas. They get together again. That's always a good and the ultimate test is parents.

Ram Dass said his famous statement, if you think you're so enlightened, go and spend a week with your parents.

[Speaker 2] (2:40:16 - 2:40:34)

Can you say a little bit about the intense pain of losing somebody through death, somebody who you're really close to, or the pain of a marriage dissolution?

[Speaker 1] (2:40:35 - 2:48:03)

Yes, thank you. Now the pain of great loss, either loss of a loved one through death or loss of a relationship, which is also a close relationship, is also a kind of death. There may be some situations where surrendering to what is seems impossible.

Some situations are intrinsically so painful that you just, no matter, you may have been successfully practicing surrendering to what is, but suddenly something happens and you just can't and intense pain arises. And this is the second level of surrender. The first level of surrender is surrendering to what is.

That's the most perfect surrender. But this may not always be possible yet. The second level of surrender is to surrender to what you feel.

So if pain arises because you couldn't surrender on level one to what is, it just wasn't possible, if pain arises, you surrender to the pain. You accept the pain. And that is a strange thing at first.

Everything inside you says, no, this is dreadful. I don't want the pain. The pain may flow into your mind, but if you surrender to the pain, that can be a wonderful opening, the pain of loss, deep loss.

Feel it and accept the pain that you feel so completely that almost as if there's not a person there anymore who is suffering the pain, there's only the pain. And there's complete acceptance of that. At first it seems unnatural to do that.

But as you continue to accept it and be with the pain instead of running away from it, after a while something happens and the pain turns around and there's suddenly a vast peace underneath the pain, which is not a denial of the pain, it's only by going into the pain and allowing it, you touch it suddenly. Whenever there's loss, whether a big loss or a little loss, it's an opportunity. You're the fabric of your existence, but suddenly a hole appears in it, something vital is gone.

That is an emptiness. The great loss leaves a feeling of great emptiness. And that great emptiness at first is deep pain because there's a reaction.

The emptiness is painful. The reactive me reacts, oh. Now if you allow the emptiness to be, that is there where there was that being is gone, there's a hole.

The winds of grace blow through that hole that is left when there's great loss. There's an incredible opportunity there if you only allow it. In the absence, whenever there's an absence of something that had been greatly valued, it leaves a nothingness.

The nothingness is at first very painful. As you surrender into the nothingness, there's a fullness that is hiding underneath, behind there. And some people have done that.

They have had, they lost everything all at once. There have been reports of people losing their position, their family, and their homes all at once. It's almost as if the fabric of your existence only holds in it now.

And at first there was an influx of incredible, unbearable pain, and then there was complete surrender, and suddenly there was what Jesus calls the peace that passes all understanding, coming out of what was intense pain through surrender. And so that, when somebody dies close to you, surrender to the pain, surrender to the feeling of the pain, and see how it becomes transformed. And what happens after that, it is, there's such an intense depth of peace and aliveness, if it could speak, of course it doesn't speak, if it could speak, it would say, all is well, there is no death, if it could speak.

That's what it feels like. But you don't even need the words. And it will happen to everybody.

Some loss, some great loss will come into everybody's life. Somebody close to you will die. Another great loss will come, your own death at some point will come approaching, and you can see, oh, and by, perhaps everybody in this room by then will have already gone beyond identification with the little person and the little me, and already has access to a dimension that is beyond death, the reality of who you are that is beyond death.

I don't want to give you any belief. That's why I don't want to talk about it too much. We are here to experience, to be the timeless consciousness, the timeless state of consciousness that is beyond birth and death, that is your reality and everybody else's reality.

It is often through pain that you have access to it, and here it's an easier way. But if pain is happening in your life at this time and coinciding with being here, that is wonderful. Life has given you this at this time.

The two come together, and that's beautiful. So anything you cannot accept externally, and pain arises, or something, whatever arises as a feeling, accept. Surrender to what you feel.

Surrender to what is. If you can't, surrender to what you feel about that.

[Speaker 2] (2:48:38 - 2:49:17)

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Thank you for listening.

2019 Eckhart Tolle Retreat For Those Who Serve Hoopla 8h27m

[Speaker 7] (0:28 - 0:45)

Sounds True presents, for those who serve, practical guidance for being of benefit to others by spiritual teacher and author Eckhart Tolle. And now session one, how to be here.

[Speaker 1] (1:02 - 2:32:06)

Welcome to our retreat. This evening, probably I'm mainly going to talk about how to be here, about your state of consciousness here. In other words, about the retreat itself.

I'm saying probably because you never know what comes out of the present moment. The most important thing here, which, by the way, is also the most important thing in your entire life. But it's easy to lose sight of that, because you get distracted by so many things.

But here in this protected setting, you can really practice remembering that the most important thing is your state of consciousness, no matter what's going on in your life, where you are, who you are with, or what you're doing. The primary factor in whatever you're experiencing is your state of consciousness, because it is through your particular state of consciousness that you experience things. So if you are heavily identified with the conditioned thinking mind, and all its preconditioned beliefs, opinions, judgments, then that's the way you perceive the world through the veil of that.

If there are turbulent or heavy emotions running through you that you identified with, then you will experience the world around you, other people, situations, through the veil of those emotions. And you think that's how the world is. That's reality.

So you know all that. And if you are present, then you experience people, situations, and whatever is going on in your life, places very differently. This opportunity here is for you to practice being absolutely present and make that the main focus the next few days here, rather than anything else.

Leave your mind as much as possible behind. Easier said than done. Your state of consciousness not only determines your life, it even becomes two, three, four, five times more important when you, as most of you, or all of you work with people in one way or another.

And no matter in what capacity you work with people, whatever your state of consciousness is, it will transmit itself to the people that you work with. Even if you, that doesn't matter, let's say you're working with a certain part of the body, if you're a reflexologist, if you're not just treating the body through the medium of the feet, there's all your state of consciousness also is part of that. It transmits itself.

And if you're, let's talk about the bottom, and if you're the top, if you're a hairdresser, you might think, I don't know if there are any hairdressers. I don't know whether they count as helping professionals, but they could be because they help people to have better hair, but there could be an additional dimension because they give a lot of attention to a person. And so if you're a hairdresser, also your state of consciousness transmits itself because you focus on the person.

So it transmits itself even more than in ordinary encounters when you are focused on another person, whatever the modality is that you work with. So here, this is as ideal as you can get for the practice of presence, but it won't be a hundred percent ideal. If you had a place that is a hundred percent ideal, it would not be the most ideal place because practicing presence is working with all the things that the mind would judge as not being perfect.

So you might think, well, this is a nice place, but I don't like my room that much. They should have given me a better room. If I had a better room, then I could really practice.

Or you could say, what I really miss is the massage treatment sessions. And I really need a spa. I can really completely relax into them now.

And if I had that ideal environment and just give me a week in an ideal environment, I could probably achieve enlightenment. If people came and gave me the most exquisite food, most healthy food, pure food, and treated my body, and that would be everything is no nothing disturbing around me. I have my own space.

I need my own space. I have my own space. And you would find most likely at the end of the week, when you go back into the normal world, you wouldn't function that well.

And you might even have gone to sleep, so to speak, a little bit. And because it was so, you were not being challenged, if that were even possible. You were not being challenged by any situation.

It would be like going to a movie and seeing a movie, and the characters in the movie are not challenged by anything. Everything goes so beautifully. That would be the most boring movie.

You would fall asleep. Nothing happened. Nothing went wrong.

So the characters didn't develop. They were not challenged. It was completely uninteresting.

So things, there need to be little things to challenge you. And sometimes there are big things to challenge you. But little things are everywhere.

Little things to challenge you occur all the time. Even here. You can arrive here and say, I didn't realize it was so cold here.

California was supposed to be warm and hot, I thought. Don't they grow lemons and oranges and things like that? Where do they grow?

So you can have your mind starting to comment and complain. And then you have a gap between what is and what your mind expects. So be aware of those things here, so that you can make it your practice to surrender into what is, and don't resist the challenges that come.

If anything can be changed, if your room is not good for some reason, you can ask if you can have another room. And if you can't, then that is the perfect room for you. So make it your practice to say that whatever happens here is the perfect situation for you.

It doesn't mean you cannot walk away from if somebody's talking too much, and you say, okay, I'd rather sit somewhere else next time, or this time. But whatever is, is the perfect situation. So let go of the judgmental mind, the complaining, entity, and see what happens if you approach each moment in that state of surrender.

And then the depths will reveal itself to you that you hadn't noticed before, because you were trapped in the veil of the judgmental mind. The very wonderful thing is being here with many others from all over the world, who are also awakening, or many of you already awake most of the time. And I was asked not long ago, when you travel, somebody asked me, how is it that you go to different countries and you meet different people, different nationalities?

Do they, how are there big differences in how people receive these teachings? And I was surprised when I answered, because I hadn't known it before, because I hadn't thought about it. Actually, all those humans who are in the awakening process, begin to resonate at a certain frequency that is the same for all of them.

So you may find here, when you meet somebody from a very distant country, I will read to you in a minute, that's why I brought the folder, the different countries here that people have come from. You may find, there may be some exceptions, but you're more likely to find when, let's say an American, many of you are from this country, meeting a Russian person, for example, or whatever, Chinese, and both of you may find that you resonate more with each other than with those of your own country, who are completely conditioned still, collectively and personally. So that you will, you find something that unites you, that transcends cultural conditioning and social conditioning.

And that's a wonderful thing. So it's because, it's almost like a new species is coming out of the old. And you are part of that.

And no matter where you go in the world, you will very quickly recognize those who are also in the awakening process. So I will tell you from what countries you can meet people here, although some of them are only one or two people per country, but that's okay. United States.

That reminds me, I was going to put this on before coming on stage, but I forgot. I've had it for years, a badge somebody gave me. It says USA if you read it vertically, but if you read it horizontally, it says United States of Awareness.

Now that is a work in progress, of course. And I need to find out where you can get these. And one interesting thing that might be helpful is to send one of these to each member of Congress in Washington.

Of course, the United States of Awareness would be the entire country. It would be all the awakening humans. And as humans awaken all over the planet, that would eventually become the United States of Awareness.

So we have people from Australia, Canada. Those are the two largest contingents. And then we have participants from Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.

I expect there to be a lot of interaction between us on this retreat. And I expect there will be many questions that people want to ask, whether there are any answers coming through this form here. We don't know.

We'll see. But there will be many questions. And now let's just focus, because it's the introduction to our retreat.

So let's focus on your state of consciousness right now. It's easy, relatively easy to be present as you sit here. The retreat, however, is not confined to our sessions, no matter where you are during the retreat, no matter what you're doing.

That is all part of the retreat. It's a totality of this experience. So use every moment here, whether you're walking, sitting, standing, eating, to practice presence.

First of all, nature. Nature that surrounds you here is remarkable. And there are not really any other parts of the world where you find this kind of vegetation.

There are trees here, and there's a magic to nature here. There's a magic to nature everywhere. There's a special kind of magic here, which part of that is the sky, the ocean, the fog that comes drifting in every hour, every couple of hours, you will notice.

And there's no fog. That kind of fog is unique to this area of Northern California. So there's a magic to just watching nature as you walk or sit or go to the beach.

And as you watch nature, be there as, not as a person, but as a conscious presence that is perceiving all that amazing magic. You listen, you might, all your senses are alert because that is part of presence. And you not only look, you listen, the sounds, the wind, birds, or the ocean.

You can feel the breeze on your skin. You smell the air. And this practice is, you're practicing being in this world as a walking presence rather than as a person with a history that's still going to be there.

Don't worry. You still have your history. Remember who you are or your past.

But that is, the shift is that the formless you, the timeless you, which is consciousness itself, emerges more and more fully through the gaps in the temporal you, through the gaps between two thoughts. It emerges even through the cells of your body so that there's a likeness to who you are. This has nothing to do with your physical weight.

There's a likeness to who you are as presence emerges and you as the personality loses, the personality loses its opaqueness, its density. If you look at any human who has not, has no access to the spirit dimension, has had no separation yet between who they are as consciousness and their thought processes and emotional processes, there is a density to those humans. And it doesn't mean that the spirit dimension is not present in them.

It is, but it's being obscured by the density of mental, emotional conditioning. And this density of mental, emotional conditioning is called a person. And it has a name tag attached to it.

And that's me. And all the things that make up the identity of the person consists of accumulations of certain predominant emotions and certain predominant thought patterns that go through their minds. So the combination of those predominant emotions and thought patterns make up the personality.

Whatever might be happy looking or predominantly looking out for the next thing that's going wrong, it might be a fearful conditioning, emotional, mental, where's the next blow that the universe is going to give me, going to come from, or predominantly angry, looking for another excuse to be angry again. Please make me angry. I'm waiting for something.

I'm waiting for something to react to. So you have the person, some persons are relatively well adjusted, but no person is really happy for long. No person has really any depth to him or herself.

Well, they do, but they don't know it. So if you have a depth, but you don't sense your own depth, you just live on the, yours is a surface reality, then it's as if you didn't have it. As I've said, you could be a beggar sitting by the side of the road, because you've forgotten that you have $10 million in your Swiss bank account, and you can't remember the number.

But this is nothing because $10 million wouldn't make man happy either. So it's not a good analogy, but it's the best I can find. But this is an experiential thing.

And I believe that almost everyone here can verify in their own experience, what it is that I'm talking about, because many of you will experience yourself, sometimes what the personality predominates again, sometimes in certain situations in your life, the heaviness, the opaqueness, the density of the personality returns when you become very reactive. It happens easily in family situations, which are always the most difficult training ground, but the best for staying conscious, usually relationships, close relationships, and then come work situations, and so on. You get challenged, and the personality reasserts itself completely, and you become just as unconscious as all the others who've never gone through any awakening process, and then you wake up suddenly after a few hours, or a day, or a few minutes, if you're lucky, and say, oh, what was that?

And then whatever words you used to describe that, you said, I lost it completely. What did you lose? I lost it.

What? I lost, well, of course, you lost consciousness, awareness. You didn't know who you were anymore.

You thought you were the little person again. So a retreat situation is ideal for practicing being the presence rather than being the person, because you don't need the person that much here. The one, the most challenging thing in the retreat situation is interacting with others.

Although everybody here is awakening, it does not mean when you start talking to somebody that their personality will not, especially as you start discussing something, their personality will not very quickly come up and predominate so that the presence is lost and recedes. It's covered up. It's not lost.

It suddenly gets covered up again. That may happen to you too, because the awakening humans are like transitional entities. They are hybrids.

The awakening humans are hybrids. I can compare them to, we all know the caterpillar and the butterfly, the most incredible metamorphosis when the caterpillar dies and the butterfly becomes transformed into the butterfly. The awakening humans, many of them are like a butterfly that's emerging from the caterpillar.

And then as it emerges from the caterpillar, it still experiences him or herself as a caterpillar. Although he or she is already emerging as a butterfly, then he still falls back into thinking he's a caterpillar and behaves like one. Although he's already become a butterfly.

So then the butterfly starts behaving like a caterpillar again. Can't fly anymore. And then you need something to remind you that you're not the caterpillar anymore.

So the caterpillar in this analogy is the person without any awareness. Now, as presence arises in you, it does not mean that certain aspects of your personality will not remain. Certain aspects of your personality will remain because you have a form identity.

Everybody has a form identity. There are certain things, certain ways in which you do things. There may be ways in which you speak.

And if they are not dysfunctional, but just certain characteristics, they may remain. So if they are dysfunctional, that means there's an unconsciousness and those will dissolve as awareness shines through the person. So then what happens to us is, yes, you are still a person, but a different dimension of consciousness that is not conditioned shines through the personality.

And as that grows, the personality of the person recedes more and more and just enough remains so that you can function as a form in this world. All that remains. You can function well.

You may find in your daily life fluctuations in the intensity of to what extent you are a person and to what extent you are the presence. And in your work situation, and we will go into that in greater depth in the next few days, in your work situation, you will be of the greatest benefit if the personality can operate as little as possible. If the personality is in the background so that when you work with people, you are predominantly presence.

And that is a wonderful shift. I noticed that there was many years ago when I went through my shift in consciousness, people started coming to me to ask questions initially. Later I said, okay, I'm doing counseling sessions, but at first it was just people asking questions and then I would give answers.

And one of the first people who came to me was this lady who was a former Catholic nun. She had spent, I think, 20 years in a monastery, nunnery, whatever it's called. And she couldn't find God there, so she left.

And then she came to me, not because I'm God, well, I am God too, but so is she. She came to me to find herself. She realized it wasn't a question of finding God, it was finding the depths of who she is, and then she would find her connectedness with source, and that's God.

So, and as I listened to her talking about her difficulties and so on, and this was not the first time, but I was beginning to realize when I listened to people and when I spoke to them, there was this intense, peaceful, but a very intense presence arising, whether it was arising within or in the room or both, I didn't know, but it was there. It seemed to be within and without. And then she said, in one session, she stopped speaking suddenly and she said, oh, I can feel it, you are doing healing on me.

And I said, am I? Because I wasn't doing anything. But there was definitely what she could sense was the energy.

There was this intense energy field of presence filling the room. And so it wasn't just within, it was there. And I believed her when she said, you are a healer.

And then she talked to other people about it, and then people started coming to me who wanted physical healing. And that was fine for a while. Some got healed, some didn't.

And then I realized the people who wanted just the physical healing were not interested in anything else. So that's not right. I'm not really a healer.

So I stopped doing that kind of healing. But the important thing here is when you work with somebody, there is you, there is the other person, there is whatever modality you apply to that situation that you have learned. You might be a doctor, which you spent many years accumulating knowledge, and you apply that modality to this therapeutic situation.

You may be a nurse. Also, you have to study several years to be a nurse. You apply that.

If you're a therapist, you probably have gone to therapy training, university. You have certain modalities of how you approach the therapeutic situation, how, what kind of questions you ask, what you're supposed to say, what you're not supposed to say. Or if you do body work, of course, you have learned that.

That's your modality. Whatever it is, that's fine. This is what you practice.

But if that's all there is, you, a person practicing a modality of a therapeutic modality, then the most vital element is still missing. So there's always a third element there, in addition to you, the person practicing the modality. And that can only be there if, despite the fact that you have to use your mind to some extent to help the person, if you're a doctor, very much so, because you have to think, okay, what can I, how am I going to treat this person?

What is this person suffering from? But in between, there needs to be that alertness that you bring to the situation, which basically is, there need to be moments when you're not thinking. That's basically, and that is how presence arises.

When, if you are continuously thinking, when working with somebody, what to do, how can I be, how I want to be helpful, it's just say something that can really help this person. If you let go of that and become comfortable with not knowing for moments, then this depth dimension begins to come into the room through you. And that really is the sacred dimension of two people being together.

So you invite the presence and the presence is the really, what really matters there. Many of you know that already. Many of you probably have been doing it for perhaps for quite a long time, perhaps without even knowing it, that this is what it is.

So we have a line in the Course in Miracles that says, a healer does not heal, he lets healing be. So even though you practice a modality, it's a balance between still applying your knowledge to the situation, whether it's physical knowledge or whatever it is that you do, and yet not be confined to that in your interaction with that person. So this is the balance between what you know on the level of form and inviting the other dimension into the situation.

And that is the real healing in a wider sense, which may result in physical healing, but there's a deeper healing that is much more important. Because what that really means, the deeper healing is the awakening. It's the realization who you are beyond the person.

And that can come to whoever you are working with, if you are not there predominantly as a person. So I'd love to, in the next few days, answer questions about that, how that works in specific situations. But that is the essence of the healing situation, no matter what you do.

So here we practice being the presence rather than the person. This becomes challenging the moment you interact with people here. Some of you may not want to speak.

I believe we will have some tables set aside for people who don't want to talk, who just want to be on a silent retreat. And for them, it's enough to come to the sessions here and the rest of the time, they want to be in silence, which is wonderful. Others may want to connect with others and speak, which is also wonderful.

But here the challenge is, and I'd ask you to use that as an opportunity, because the moment you start to interact through your mind with the mind of another, you can very easily get pulled out of presence. And before you know it, after two minutes of talking, you're completely in the mind, which is your ego. And especially if there's a disagreement or something like that about spirituality.

And you know absolutely that you are right. This is, a particular skill is required, and I ask you to practice here if you interact with people. To stay present while you speak and listen to somebody, so that you don't get lost in the mental stream, which is often accompanied by certain emotions too.

Don't get lost because it can drag you along. That mental stream can pull you, and then you say all the usual stuff that you've been saying for years. All the old positions and all the things that you're so sure of, and that is how it is.

Now many of you are not that deeply entrenched anymore, but it could happen that you fall back into this caterpillar existence. So to remain present when you begin to use the mind to interact with another, it requires enormous skill and alertness. Now how does that look in practice?

Well first of all, you bring an alertness to the situation. First of all, when you listen to the other, you're not preparing your next statement in the mind. There's complete listening, and that's of course in any client situation also, that is a vital practice, even though you might have an enormous amount of knowledge about what this person needs.

And there needs to be, before you apply this enormous amount of knowledge that you have, which is good, there needs to be a space where you're not applying it yet. There needs to be a space where you give this person complete and utter attention. So you are there as an alert, receptive presence with the other person.

Do not get buried underneath your knowledge that what you have learned to help others, but you can, this can completely occupy your mind to such an extent that there's no space left to even realize that there is a human being there. We all know the cases of certain physicians and doctors, some of them who do not, don't see you anymore as a human being. They see you as a symptom.

They only address the symptom. There are some doctors, of course they wouldn't be here, they're not here, but there are some, I know there are some doctors here, but they are different, they are conscious, that's why they're here. But there are many, quite a few doctors who, of course, they have little time, they have so many patients, they hardly look at you.

Okay, good morning, what's the problem? And then they're already looking at their papers. Okay, yeah, okay.

So then they think about what the symptoms are. Okay, that's it. Okay, I'll give you that, take these pills and come back in a week's time.

Okay, next please. There's no, you're not a human being anymore, and it's a pity because they themselves are lost, they lost themselves in the system, in the mind, in their knowledge, in the pressures exerted upon them through the system that they work in, lost. So no matter how much knowledge you have acquired, don't let the knowledge absorb you completely, don't let it, so that there's no longer the spaciousness in you.

The more you know, the more important it becomes, the more vital it is. Some of you may be here who are practicing spiritual healing, in which case your natural state would be to be in that thoughtless awareness, and you're not, you wouldn't be thinking about, okay, what can I prescribe this person, or what, what is the history, or what are many different types of healing? Anyway, I hope some healers will also ask questions.

So, as you are with the person, there need to be spaces when you don't know anything. No matter how much knowledge you have acquired, you need to have spaces with that other person, they don't need to be long, spaces, it's hard, I don't really want to put a figure to them, but let's, even if it's just 10 seconds, you have 20, 10, 20 seconds of when you're just looking and listening. And during that time, you're not searching your memory banks, or in your mind for the thing, what is, how can I help this person, what do I need to do?

And after you've given that person your complete attention, then the mind may operate, and then you're, okay, this is, you may get insights, or you may apply your knowledge, and then you do that, and then again, there comes a moment when you're just, you give a fullest attention, and then you can, if you're a doctor, you suddenly, there's a true relationship, you're not relating to a patient predominantly anymore, yes, on the level of form, he or she is a patient, but you are also there as a human being.

As I say, you might have heard me say, I like the fact, for a long time I thought, what a pity that the English language doesn't have a word that means both man and woman, as German has, but now I'm quite happy that English doesn't have one word that means both man and woman, the German word would be Mensch, which is human being, the Yiddish Mensch is a slightly different thing, it has a particular meaning, it means a real human being, so the human being, the human is the form, your person, your body, your mental conditioning, your mind, the being is the formless dimension in you, so you are coming together of form and formlessness, that's basically the two dimensions of who you are, you are both form and space, the essence of who you are is space, you can find the same when you look into the night sky at night, what do you see?

Space, well you don't see space, there is space and there are stars, things and space, so you'd also, this entire universe consists of space, without which nothing could be, but it has no actual, you can't say here is space, you can never point to space, where? And the same thing, you cannot point to who you are in your essence, you are formlessness, formless consciousness and form, human being, there are many humans in whom the being has not emerged yet, it's covered up by the human, so as you practice, don't be a practitioner who is only human, without any access to being, that's a very impoverished life and a very impoverished therapeutic situation too, when you are just there as a human, so the being element is that, so no matter what you do, have the courage to be there both, not just as a person and as whatever you are, nurse, doctor, therapist, massage therapist, yoga instructor, whatever, hairdresser, not just, you are both a person and the presence, in the therapeutic situation, the presence intensifies, the moment a person comes, the session, whatever you call it, begins, there's the presence arises more than it would be in a normal situation, this is I encountered as soon as I started many years ago, seeing people privately for counseling, the moment they came, they came into the room, first they were on a park bench and then eventually they came to a room, and the moment they came in, they sat down and the moment I looked at them, and they started speaking, and there was not a single thought in my head, nobody had taught me that, it just happened naturally, and I didn't have much knowledge about psychotherapy and what to do or what to say, later I read some books about it, but at the beginning I didn't, so there was just, my mind was totally still, and there was just, okay, and then they started to talk, and then I could feel the presence, and it was, it is a wonderful intensity, but a peaceful intensity to it, and out of that usually came the first things that came out of my mouth, and often it was an additional question, what about that, and another question, again without any prior decision what I was going to say, it just came out of that field of presence, so I was lucky that I didn't know much about therapeutic situations, so there was not that much knowledge that I had to relinquish for those moments, I realize now that that is the essence of every therapeutic situation, or every, any helping situation, is that factor, and that can only come in if you know, it sounds a little drastic, if you know how to stop thinking in that situation, for just brief moments, not by suppressing thought, because you could stop thinking if you stop breathing, you can by forcing yourself, you can keep thought at bay, but the moment you start breathing again, you also start thinking again, and then you'll be thinking two or three times as much as before, because you have some catching up to do, so it's not through willpower, and I want to get some feedback, not tonight, but in the next two days from you, how many of you are already able to, by choice, not by willpower, but by simply relinquishing the need to think, in other words, stop thinking, without any pushing, without any pressure, without any, without any exerting any kind of violence or pressure to yourself, none of that, simply by being so alert, raising the frequency through that alertness, that thought just doesn't happen, so you can start with, I sometimes, it helps to, you can, you can say, while I hold this, this represents the space between my two hands, represents the moment of no thought, and you go like that, you don't have to do it now, but you go like that, and let's say, let's give it 10 seconds right now, later you'll give me some feedback, are you able to simply let go of thinking, and just remain as an aware presence, here and now, start now, okay, that was about 10 seconds, now, some of you may, you may feel it's almost like saying, don't think of a white elephant, or something like that, and the moment you say, don't think of a white, are you thinking of a white elephant, you may find fragments of thought coming, like little wisps of, like the fog that comes in from the ocean here, and it comes and then floats past, and if you don't follow it up with your attention, it floats into that space of presence in your mind, like a fragment, and then disappears, and then it could be that another fragment of thought floats in, but if you give it attention, then it'll become a full-fledged thought, and then you follow it where it wants to take, where it wants you to go, this is the essence, really, of all spirituality, is to be able to relinquish thought, and not by falling below thought, which would be getting sleepy and tired, so you can't think much anymore, because you're too tired to think, this is your falling below thought, and it feels good, it's better than a tortured mind, you might think, and that would also be the state of the fool in mythology, who doesn't think much, but he's more connected with source than the more highly developed human in mythology, but no, this is not falling below thought, we are talking about rising above thought, so it's not, if I act it out, it's not necessarily like, although I must say, it probably feels good, I tried it, we were in Amsterdam a few years ago, and somebody got it for us, and then in the hotel room, I mean, I'm sorry, it doesn't, it's fine, but it's, I mean, it's just a little plant, so why not smoke it?

It was interesting, oh, but it was, I wouldn't want to do it again, because my usual state of consciousness is preferable to that, but I can see how somebody who is very burdened by the, by his or her mind, experiences that as an enormous relief, but it does tend to pull you, especially if you overdo it, below thought, and if you overdo it a lot, then you can become lethargic, so I'm not saying don't do it, if you enjoy it, it's probably fine, but we don't really need it, we are rising above thought, this is what, this is, and no, this is, applies, this is the next step in human evolution, is transcend thought, transcend doesn't mean it doesn't happen anymore, but you go beyond it, you can use it, but you're no longer confined by it, now those humans who are not awakened are confined by their thinking, they are trapped in the conditioned mind, and so we are becoming free of this prison, which is the being imprisoned by your conditioned mind, and mistaking it for who you are, this is the essence of not knowing who you are in reality, so the practice then, practice it here, when you are not thinking, you are still there as the essential you, is still there, and it's there more strongly, I believe when I wrote in the little book, stillness speaks, I think in the first sentence, it says something like, you're never more essentially yourself than when you are still, that is the true essence of your being, that you can feel that as consciousness, as presence itself, that is who you are, so stillness, really when I use the word stillness, it means rising above thought, it doesn't matter right now for how long you rise above thought, little moments of presence are enough, and you will find if you are able in your daily life, and practice here, because here, it's a very conducive environment for practicing, practice rising above thought here, in whatever city, walking, looking around at nature, perceiving nature, what do you need to think? You don't need to know that this is called the Monterey pine tree, you know that already, so when you walk around, you don't need to think, oh here's another Monterey pine tree, this one, this one is particularly big, I wonder how old it is, and you have all kinds of men, there is a place for that also, there is a place for thinking about trees, but not right here now, there's a different purpose, you actually, there's two ways, let's talk about the Monterey pine tree, there is a way, there are two ways of knowing this tree, or anything else, or human being, you can know it through conceptual mind, through your knowledge, this, you know how old it is, how it grows, what kind of climate it grows in, and so on, you know, for example, the amazing fact that when the cones fall, I read that, I was in the green room, when the, when the cones fall, they, the seeds are trapped in them, until there's a forest fire, which could take years, and years, and years, and only when there's a forest fire, which looks like a very bad thing, but like many bad things, are not really bad, because there's something else behind them, when these pine cones are in this extreme heat of the forest fire, then they release their seeds, and then when trees have burned down around them, there's more light for the new trees to grow, so they trap their seeds until there's extreme heat, isn't that amazing, they're waiting for a disaster, they're waiting for destruction, so that they can grow again, and now this is all knowledge, and this is wonderful too, to know that, but you would be missing something very important, if that were the only way in which you can really know that tree, there is another way of knowing that tree, which is not as just as important, even more important, and that is to know it directly without the conceptual mind, and you do that by approaching it in that state of thoughtless awareness, and you look at it, and as you look at it without thought, you can sense a kind of space of oneness with it, because the tree really arises in that space of consciousness, there's no longer you and the tree, there's just an awareness of the tree, and you can sense that awareness as yourself, and in that you know the tree, that's you could call it unitive knowing, where there's no longer a sense of separation between that which you perceive and you, and imagine doing that with another human being, where you can look at another human being without any conceptualization, and then you can sense that this presence that is you, also in them, it's the same presence, the same one consciousness, you sense it in the other, if the mind is still, then suddenly you have the true empathy, which means really another word for it is really love, or lovingness, is to recognize that you and the other are in essence one, but that recognition is not conceptual, it might become conceptual when you start talking about it, when I talk about it, it becomes conceptual, but I'm talking about it using the concepts as pointers, in the hope that as I talk about it, you realize the actual place to which these words point, which is that realization, so if you can practice that here, not only with trees, but also with other humans, which is a mind, so it's easy to be still with a tree and present, you can even sense the stillness of the tree, if you are still enough, because only the stillness in you can sense the fact that the tree is very still, but can you sense the stillness in another human who can't stop talking to you, that's possible too, but you have to sense it within, so no matter where you go, if you look at teachings, Jesus teachings, we only really have it as fragments, we don't have a complete teaching, it's miraculous that these fragments survive, but in the fragments of the teachings of Jesus, you can also see that he talks about the importance of take no thought for the moral, but just give attention to what is here now, don't be worried, don't judge, it's all the mind, we have it very clearly in the Buddha's teaching, we have it in more recent Ramana Maharshi's teaching in India, as I've quoted before, I'll quote it again in case you don't know it yet, Ramana Maharshi, wonderful Indian spirit teacher, lived in the first half of the 20th century, when they asked him, how can I know that I'm making progress on the spiritual path, how do I know that I'm making progress, he said, oh, that's easy, the degree of absence of thinking is the measure of progress on the spiritual path, oh, okay, let me think, did I understand that right, the degree of absence of thinking, can you explain that a bit more, please, so whether you get, you can only get it when you hear an answer like that, the degree of absence of thoughts is the measure for progress on the spiritual path, you can't start thinking about this answer now, obviously, this answer is a pointer, and you can only understand what he's talking about by not thinking, oh, and that is the Zen moment of Satori, when your mind stops and you go, ah, thank you, oh, thank you, master, thank you, I got it now, okay, that's good, not whether he still got it a minute later, it's secondary, but at least he got it now, so that's, or if you're interested in some of you may have read Krishnamurti's writings, he was not aligned to any religion or spiritual tradition, he always said, no, no, this is all rubbish, and he would talk and he talked and talked and talked for 50 years, 60 years or longer, but if you, it all comes down to one thing that he never explicitly said, and that is stop thinking, he just gets you there gradually, he says, can the mind actually understand, is it possible for the mind to grasp the reality of this, no, it isn't, well, he didn't say no, it isn't, but you were supposed to say no, and then your mind is supposed to stop. Now, the greatest achievement, it does not matter your life situation, whether you consider your life up to this point as a great success, or medium success, or not so good, or failed at most things that I tried, or never failed because I never tried anything, no, these are all conceptual judgments of the mind, of course, whatever you say, but no matter where you're at, whether your world, the world is telling you that you're a great success, or the world is telling you that you're not particularly important, all this is irrelevant if you consider what really matters is where you are in the evolution of human consciousness, how, what, how does the evolution of human consciousness manifest through you, that determines failure or success in life, and of course, the world doesn't know much about that, it doesn't know that, it can't, so if you are able to no longer be trapped in compulsive and involuntary thinking, then your life has succeeded beyond any measure, beyond measure, if you are able to transcend you, this means consciousness, not you, the person, the person cannot transcend itself, the person is the identification with thought, the person is consciousness dreaming, the awakening is consciousness awakens, and then, yes, the person continues to be there, but you are then in lucid, the lucid dreaming, which is lucid living, if you are able to step out of thought by choice, then you embody the next step in the evolution of consciousness on the planet, and you are vital here, no matter what you do externally, and that state, which is a state of connectedness with source, with source consciousness, what repercussions that has in your life, we don't know, how it manifests, we don't know, it will manifest in different ways for different people, it could just be that you sit somewhere and just emanate, this is one extreme, you just sit somewhere and emanate presence, I would recommend that you do that in India, not here, because they would recognize you as, and they would call you a holy man or a holy woman, simply because you emanate presence, and somehow, even people who haven't got it, because it's in their, somewhere, their genes, or something, they recognize it, and then they go, oh, if you do it here, of course, you will be put away, or you can have a very simple job, where you simply, no matter who you come into contact with, you emanate, and everybody who has contact with you gets a little whiff of that, the presence, oh, or doing something that you hadn't thought of before, the presence does it through you, I spent, as you may know, I spent many years of my life, before anything much happened, after the shift in consciousness, just being, I did occasional jobs, eventually, I had temporary jobs here and there, except gradually, I was helping people with becoming more present, but even that took a while, there were still huge spaces, I wasn't seeing five people a day, I might, at the beginning, see two people a week, and there were these huge spaces, so me just being there, and think, okay, and occasionally, the mind would say, what's your life all about, you're not doing anything, well, okay, that's how it is, and that goes on and on, and then at some point, something happened, it's almost as if I had to be in presence for a long, long time, before it started to manifest, first as a teaching to individuals, and then it became a book, and then it became this, but it's all, I'm not doing it as a person, it's presence operating, just raise your frequency by being very alert and still, and then you go, occasionally, you might feel your mind coming, saying, okay, I'm not thinking now, that's okay, and then you let go of that, it's a little cloud that comes, and then it evaporates, and that is enormously satisfying, because in that moment, you are free of the person, complete, the person is just relatively unimportant, there is a presence, many people, most people drive on automatic, they are thinking while they're driving, one small part of their mind is doing the driving, and the rest of their mind is thinking about something completely different, and sometimes they think so much, that even the small part that's driving gets absorbed in their thinking, and then the accident happens, but driving also, it's a beautiful thing, your entire life experience gets transformed, as you bring in more and more spaces of not thinking, and then, when you resume thinking, when it's needed, because you have, at some point, you have to think, you actually think much more clearly, because you had spaces of no thought, because the thought that you think, the thinking that then happens, is, you still have that connectedness with the depth of who you are, the source consciousness, which then inspires your thought processes, rather than having thought processes that are repetitive, as most people have, same thoughts again and again and again, year after year after year, so the inspired thinking can only come by bringing in no thinking, inspired thinking depends on your ability to stop thinking, but stop thinking is an end in itself, it is so satisfying in itself, because you experience life in a much more joyful way, through not judging things, it's an amazing thing, if you compare that with the so-called normal human state of continuously finding fault, complaining, judging, criticizing, what a nightmare, and suddenly you go in that clarity of perception, that's again, that's the entire essence of Zen, the same, all the teachings is that, so and being totally present is no thought, and then the mind made self, the person, is no longer the foundation for your sense of identity, your sense of identity has shifted from being this limited person with its ups and downs and successes and failures, likes and dislikes, opinions, viewpoints, has shifted from there, your identity is consciousness itself, and that's the foundation for your sense of identity, so you don't need the, what the ego, the ego is the false identity, and the ego needs defensiveness, it needs to be fed all the time, it needs to incorporate people and things into its sense of self, it feels always insufficient, not enough, ill at ease, irritated, angry, sad, complaining, all the different states, so I'm looking forward to feedback from you about your ability to refrain from thinking, your ability to transcend thinking, allowing this moment to be as it is, is one of the doorways into the state of not thinking, if you just always work with the present moment, allow it to be, because it already is, so what else can you do, it is, so align yourself with the is-ness of what is, and then you realize a lot of the thinking is arguing with the is-ness, so when you align yourself with the is-ness of things, then there's no need to think that much anymore, unless there's a specific problem to solve, but even there, if you have a problem to solve, to have fruitful thinking, go into no thinking fast before you start to think, become still, present, alert. Thank you very much, we will, this evening, have our first session dealing with questions, if possible, write as legibly as you can, otherwise I'll get really irritated, and my mind will say, do they expect me to read this, to be able to read this, why can't they write more legibly, isn't it common sense that they should write legibly, why do people do things like that, that would be a normal ego reaction to something that in itself is perfectly okay, because you can either read it or you can't, but the ego adds a story to it, and behind the story is always an attempt to be more right than the other person, there's always an attempt to have in some kind of superiority, it's unconscious, of course, ego is always unconscious, alternatively, what actually, I don't get irritated, as you might have guessed, if there's a paper that's not legible, I look at it, okay, I'll put this aside and give it more attention later, in the meantime, I'll read the legible ones, and then if there's time later, I'll give it more attention, there's no problem without a story, and there's no, you are not wrong, and I'm not right, this is just what is, it's just a tiny example of the difference between aligning yourself to the simple isness of the present moment and imposing a story on it in the service of the self that wants to inflate itself, indignation, irritation, they should, why do they, don't they know better? I said, oh, they're all stories in the service of a false sense of self.

In presence, all this, what I sometimes call unnecessary baggage that people manufacture mentally and emotionally, all that unnecessary baggage, the heaviness to it that they carry around doesn't arise anymore, and this is simple, this is what is, I can either do this, or I can do that, I can deal with it now, I can put it aside, no story, but this is frustrating to the ego, because when there's no longer any story where you oppose the other, where you make yourself feel superior to the other, then there's no food for the ego anymore, but there's an incredible lightness, and the lightness of being comes, and the heaviness goes out of situations, that really, that's what the ego is, a heavy me, and even when it attempts to make itself superior, what it doesn't recognize is that all these are really forms of suffering, the ego doesn't even recognize suffering as suffering, it doesn't realize that when you get angry or irritated about somebody else's behavior and bring up a big story about it, you are actually in a state of suffering, if you were able to have attention in your body, you would notice that your body is suffering, because those things affect the smooth, harmonious working of the energy field that goes through the body, so an angry thought has an effect on the body, small irritation all has an effect, and the body doesn't really like it, but the ego, the ego itself is not in touch with the body, so it, and it mistakes suffering for something good, anger, I can really get into this, so you can look at your own life and see where you are manufacturing unnecessary stories, both in small situations and in bigger life situations, and in situations to do with relatives, family members, partners, ex-partners, a wonderful source of egoic stories, you can talk about your ex-husband or wife for hours, either to somebody else if they're ready to listen, or in your own mind, or you had a confrontation or an exchange with somebody yesterday, and you can go on, continue that in your mind and say so many hurtful things to the other person that unfortunately you couldn't think of in the situation, but you can relive it now, and it's almost as good as the real thing, so in that fantasy world of the mind, you can be right again and again, and the other person can be wrong again and again, how wonderful, these things are not, all this is what we call unconscious, so people don't know what they are doing, for them that is their reality, now can we understand why Jesus said, forgive them for they know not what they do, they are unconscious, it's an automatic process of ego inflation, of ego reinforcement, it's conditioned, learned, it's part of the structure of the mind, so that is something important to recognize, you might have, stories can be new stories, like the one I just talked about, a simple event, you get irritated about something because they are not doing it right, they should know better, or why don't they, or whatever, or it can be a long-standing story that has been going on in your life for years, a story about your parents, for example, a story about somebody in your life, years ago, what they did, often people approach me with questions like, how do I deal with betrayal in relationship, how do I, my husband, my wife, had for a long time an affair with somebody else and then finally he walked off with her or him, he or she, he betrayed me and I've had this, how can I get beyond that terrible thing of having been betrayed by him, well, the terrible, much more terrible than what happened is the word betrayal, because that word is already a story, so if you remove that, what is left, just the simple events, he, while we were still, or she, while we were still married, was in a relationship with somebody else but didn't tell me about it, and in the end, he, she walked off with him or her, and I felt very hurt, and I can still feel that pain inside me now, that's basically, that's what there is to it, but the reason why you still feel that pain is because you went beyond the simple facts of the situation, you added the betrayal story to it, and by dwelling on that mentally, it continuously renewed the pain, the initial pain of the event, so it is normal when somebody you are close to walks off with somebody else that you feel emotional pain, but this does not have to be carried on one year into the next and into the next and into the next, that is like a wound, like a physical wound, a wound is inflicted on you, and then the wound has a certain time span within which it heals, it may leave a scar behind, but it's healed, the wound itself is healed, the scar may still be there, and in the same way, an event like that, yes, there may be some suffering there, but if you add the story to it, which of course is in the service of the ego, then it can go on, the hurt goes on for years, because you relive it, by calling it the betrayal, you relive it continuously, the fact is, no human being can act beyond their level of consciousness, so your husband, your ex-husband or ex-wife manifested the particular level of consciousness that they were at at the time, and that's what happened, so he didn't realize, she didn't realize that she was hurting you, or she realized, or he realized that he was hurting you, but something else was more important for him or her, and so that corresponded to his or her level of consciousness at the time, everybody has to suffer the consequences of their actions, because most probably, this new relationship of your ex-wife or ex-husband didn't work out either, because again, the same level of consciousness or unconsciousness manifested in that relationship, and the same thing started all over again, most likely, or they became a bit more conscious, in fact, they might be awakening now, and you might meet him or her again accidentally in the street, and they might now manifest a completely different level of consciousness, but if you are stuck in the story about them, you won't even see that, you will see the old person still, there will be no resolution possible, if you are not stuck in the old story, if you simply accept the facts of the situation, then you would be open to meeting this person again, and realizing, oh, this is not the same unconscious jerk that I was married to, jerk is, of course, the story again, he is now much more awake than I knew him, what a pity, why couldn't he be awake when I was married to him, why does the universe always does that to me, and this new person, she gets to live with a conscious person, so the two levels of story, observe the spontaneous stories that arise when little things don't go according to expectations, and in an unconscious attempt to make somebody wrong, and the old longstanding stories that, in some cases, have provided you with a sense of identity, so longstanding stories that are frequently repeated in the mind about what some, you and somebody else, and what happened and what they did or failed to do, it is not unusual for a human being to derive a significant part of their sense of identity from such collection of three or four of those stories, or even just one big one, we all know the expression victim identity, you cannot see yourself as a victim without a story around it, you must have a story, and of course, people do bad things to other people, there's no doubt about that, but when you construct a story, you are doing something to yourself, unconsciously, that is often worse than the initial event that the story is about, because it prolongs it indefinitely, what otherwise would have a certain time span, the injury, the healing process, and the scar remaining, and that's it, then yes, you can still look at the scar and say that's the scar, metaphorically speaking, but it's basically, you have gone beyond it, so it requires vigilance to discover in yourself the arising of stories around things, and the old stories that you may still carry in your mind, that gives you a false sense of identity, that strengthens the ego, it's so common that most people do it to a greater or lesser degree, so when you are present, gradually, perhaps even suddenly, you don't do that anymore, you relinquish the stories, and then a certain simplicity comes into your life, and your relationships become much easier, stories are even little things, when you tell somebody, oh, yesterday, you did that, but you should have done that, it can be expressed even without that, without the should, yesterday you gave me that, could you from now on do that, the way in which you communicate can be done in such a way that you don't make the other person wrong, many years ago, I was staying with, in somebody's, when I didn't have a, I was actually writing, it doesn't really matter what I was doing, I was writing the beginning of the power of now, somebody offered me a room in his apartment, and he had three cars, and he said, you can have one of them, you can use it, I don't use it anymore, he would always buy the next more expensive car, because he got dissatisfied with the old one, so I got one of the old ones that he was dissatisfied with to drive around, and it was a beautiful car, a few years old, one day I left the car, and there was a signal when I closed the door, but I didn't realize why the sound was beeping, and when he realized the next day, well, I wanted to use again, and the engine wouldn't start, so it seems that the light stayed on, the sound was to invite me to the light, but why I'm telling you this is, he had done some spiritual work, and I was very impressed when he left me a note, because he got up before me, he left a note which said, the lights were on, and the battery got depleted, you need to call the triple A too, that's all, and I was very impressed by that note, because he didn't, a normal person who had not done any consciousness work would have said, you left the lights on, despite the fact that you must have heard the warning signs on the engine, so I was saying, well, this person has some awareness, he's not making me wrong, although it was my mistake, but he's not making somebody else wrong in the service of being more right than me, so that's a, it's a wonderful thing, also, of course, you may remember the stories, I, some stories in the power of now or the new earth, the Zen master who got accused of having fathered a baby, and again, the way he responded to the situation was without any story whatsoever, not making anybody wrong, just, is that so, that's an extreme example of non-reactivity to an event, so everybody got angry with him, he lost his reputation for a while, and all he would say is, is that so, you are the father of this baby, oh yeah, now he, this is not the only possible way of dealing with that situation, he could just have been, this is an extreme way of having no story, he could have said, no, I'm not the father of the baby, he can still present the facts, that's, I'm not, that's not the case that I'm the father, okay, and there still would be no story, so there's enormous power behind that, and also things resolve themselves much more quickly if you don't add the story to the event without the baggage, the resolution comes about much more quickly, the egoic self that adds a story to a simple event does not want a resolution, it wants a continuation of its assumed sense of superiority, in other words, you want the problem to continue, unconsciously, where consciously you say, I don't want this problem, I can't, I don't want to have to deal with these people anymore, that's what you say, but you do, because they help you feel superior, and of course, again, that's unconscious, so it's amazing what mind patterns humans are trapped in, forgive them, for they know not what they do, so it's your job to identify stories, and if you have any questions, please either, when we have questions in future sessions, ask them here, or put them in on a piece of paper, if you have any doubt about what is a story, and where does the fact end and the story begin, please ask, but I believe most of you are clear, and you can identify stories in your mind, both the ones that arise spontaneously in situations, and the old ones, they are very important to identify, and there is a reluctance, if they have become part of your sense of self, there is a reluctance, there will be a reluctance in you to let go of them, I'm not letting go of that one, because then my sense of self will be partly collapsing, but that, of course, is a wonderful thing, because that is a false sense of self, you are not that victimized person, and you are not superior to somebody else, you are presence, so don't attempt to strengthen your form identity, that is there anyway, you don't need to strengthen it, the form identity, you might remember I wrote about, and sometimes speak about, you have two identities, one is the temporal identity, the conditioned identity of you as a person, temporal, of course, you have a certain lifespan, you as the person who has a body and a mind that has been conditioned by your past, and by your surroundings, and the past of the world that you grew up in, conditioned by many, many factors, including even your native language is already a form of conditioning, so you've been conditioned by that, it's the temporal self, and that's the form identity, and there is an essence identity, which is the timeless, formless consciousness, without which the form identity could not even exist, the form identity is not separate from essence identity, it's just a temporary form that your deeper essence, of which is consciousness itself, has taken for this lifetime, remember I used the analogy of the ocean, and the ripple on top, so your form identity is a ripple on the surface of the ocean, your essence identity is the ocean, when your mind becomes still, the thinking subsides, and only awareness is left, that awareness is the ocean, now sometimes people say, but don't you need the ego, the ego, you can't live here without the ego, the way I use the word ego, is ego meaning complete and utter identification with your form identity, nothing else, there's nothing else that you know about yourself, only you know yourself as the body and the conditioned mind, that's ego, form identity itself is not the ego, it's only form identity, so you don't have to get rid of your form identity, and say, I want to be nobody in particular anymore, no, you don't, that's not unnecessary, you honor, you can honor your form identity, it includes the physical body, it includes what you have achieved in this lifetime, it includes all the relationships that you have and have had, what you have experienced, it's all beautiful, you can honor, and you can have plans for the future, what you want to add to your form identity, I'd like to learn to play the piano, why not, you add this and that to your form identity, or I'd like to achieve that on the level of form, that's fine, but what is the foundation for your sense of self, the foundation for your sense of self, if that is the form identity, then that's ego, but if the foundation for your sense of self is your essence identity, which has no form, and is timeless, and it is what the Buddha called formlessness, which is a better translation than emptiness, sunyata, that is your essence, and you can know that here and now, the moment thinking subsides and you have not gone to sleep, thinking subsides, there's this little gap that arises in the stream of otherwise continuous stream of thinking, and this little gap is, there's a gap between this hand and this hand, so to speak, in your mind, and there suddenly you have this space of simple, what's left of you when you're not, you don't remember any story, you're not thinking about anything, you're not even thinking about your name, or how old you are, why, and yet something is left of you, how do we describe that? A spacious sense of presence, stillness, inner stillness, beingness, a sense of I am without anything added to it, because usually I am follows, I am a man, I am a woman, I am a success, I am a failure, that's the form identity, so if you add something to I am, that's your form identity, but if nothing is added to that sense of beingness or presence, I am, this is the I am that has no form, this is why certain teachers recommend it as a meditation to ask yourself, who am I? That meditation fails when your mind comes up with an answer, it is not a puzzle that has an answer on a conceptual level, and you cannot solve the question, who am I, by thinking, let's see, I should just start thinking about that, no, you need to allow the question, and then the question can take you into beingness or presence, because who you essentially are is consciousness itself, who am I, I don't know, and you don't feel that you need to know or should know, become comfortable with not knowing who you are, if you are comfortable with not knowing who you are, then that makes it much easier to realize who you are beyond form, if you become uncomfortable with not knowing who you are, then you get fearful, I should know who I am, so there is a level of not knowing that's extremely important in your life, and that the ego does not like to go there, it fears to go into that not knowing, because it's not only that you don't know who you are on that level of consciousness, on that level of consciousness, conceptually, you don't really know anything, you can look at a tree in that way, as I mentioned yesterday, and don't know a single thing about the tree, while you look at the tree, but you can sense its presence, but that's not a mental concept, you sense its presence, you sense its presence, because it resonates or is one with your own presence, and that is the realization of oneness, when you can sense the presence, even of a tree, in order to sense the presence of the tree, you need to relinquish your knowledge about the tree, at least temporarily, it doesn't mean you don't completely forgotten, no, when you need it, the knowledge about the tree will be there, but if you are confined in your relationship to the tree, if you are confined to the knowledge that you have about the tree, that's extremely limiting, and this also applies to a human being, relating to other human beings, when all there is, when you relate to another human being, is your perspectives, your judgments, your opinions, about that human being, that's extremely limiting, you are not really relating to that human being, you're relating to your, the screen of mental concepts about that person, and this is how this huge obstacle arises in many, many relationships, because you never really meet the essence of that person, why can you not meet the essence of that person, because you have not met your own essence, you identified only with your form identity as a man or a woman, or whatever conditioning makes up the person, but if you have met yourself as the essence identity, and it's easy, here and now, what's left of you is still space of presence, it's your essence identity, and the more you surrender into that and allow it to be there, the more peaceful, deeply peaceful, but also there's a subtle sense of joy in that, that presence, it's to know yourself as consciousness is inherently joyful, not the ecstatic joy that goes, ah, I'm consciousness, it's a subtle, it's a very subtle joy, like a distant sound, and this is the realization of being, and the realization of being is the realization of consciousness, the self-realization of consciousness, consciousness realizing itself, and that is joyful, being, consciousness, this, this is one traditional translation, sat, cit, ananda, sat is being, cit is consciousness, ananda is the joy, but there's a single thing, not three, there are three aspects of that realization, so that's the, it's so simple, so ego, ego is, if ever you have a discussion with somebody about ego, make sure that you're talking about the same thing, because I have met other spiritual teachers who said, I don't agree that we should get rid of our egos, we need our egos, and then I always say, okay, just a moment, what do you mean when you use the word ego, and then usually we resolve it because they mean something else, often what they mean is form identity, so you don't need to get rid of your form identity, but you need to transcend complete identification with your form identity, that is ego, and that is the spiritual awakening.

At any time while you're here on this retreat, if you engage in a discussion with somebody, some other participants about, probably about spiritual matters, hopefully not about what happens in Washington, but it could happen, again, be very, be aware, first of all, clarify your terms, and in any discussion, again, look for the need to be right, are you looking for the truth, or is the need to be right more important to you, and to the ego, the need to be right is much more important than the truth, because it will even distort the truth, it might, initially, you might both have been very interested in finding the truth about it, then the other person is proving you wrong, and then the ego in its attempt not to be annihilated will come up with anything to justify its position, it's quite amazing, so recognize in any conversation that you have, here particularly, pay attention, are you completely identified with the stream of the mind that is, you speak, that speaks through you, or is there a residual sense of spaciousness behind it, this is hard to describe, but you can always bring it in by attentive listening to the other, you can make sure to remain spacious if you can practice attentive listening in a state of complete openness, while the other person says, let's say, well, let's say you do happen to talk about politics, and the other person says something, the Republican Party is definitely the better choice, and then you're circled, observe that, are you able to listen to somebody else's viewpoint or perspective in that state of complete openness, that is not being drawn into the reactive conditioned mind, and you can have a real conversation with another person, because spaciousness is part of the conversation, and this brings us again, you might have noticed, by the way, I always talk about the same thing, only one thing, essentially, I can talk for hours, but ultimately and essentially, I'm always talking about only one thing, and it's not even a thing, so it's like approaching that core, approaching it from here, and approaching it from there, and you're approaching it from there, and you look around, and sometimes it looks something totally different, but then you realize, oh, it's still the same thing. So spaciousness, again, I pointed out briefly last night, how important it is if you work with people in whatever capacity, not to be completely taken over by whatever modality you use when you work with people, not to become completely taken over by the knowledge that you have about what you do, because obviously you apply your knowledge, there's nothing wrong with that, that's part of the world of form, but if you get taken over completely by the accumulated knowledge, the forms, then what is lost in your relationship is that sense of spaciousness, so a vital question in any relationship, and even more so in the helping relationship, therapeutic, whatever you want to call it, a vital question is always be vigilant and say, is there space here, in addition to dealing with things on the level of form, is there still a sense of space within me and between us, and here, the space between us is awareness present, is stillness present in some way, and that is vital in therapeutic relationships, but it's vital in any relationship to have not a one-dimensional relationship with another human being, which is only on the level of form, but to have, to acknowledge the form level, to honor the form level, but not be confined to the form level, and that means, in addition to your knowledge that you have in your whatever work you do with another person, in addition to that, there needs to be something else, and that is, and that is almost contradictory to knowledge, because you need to be able to enter the spaces of not knowing anything, in between applying your knowledge, so you become still, even if it's just listening while the other speaks, you're not responding while you listen, you're not formulating the next question yet, there's open and spacious, attentive listening, and that is an energy field, that is the presence, that is the energy field of presence is suddenly there between you, and that transmits itself to the other also, and that is more foundational than anything else that you do on the level of form, you can be helpful to a limited extent, even on the level of form alone, but if you want a true therapeutic relationship with another human being, the presence needs to be there, the stillness needs to be there as part of the relationship, so in some kinds of work that you do, intuition may be important, if you are a counselor for example, or a therapist, then for a while you just apply, when you first start, you just apply what you have learned, you apply it through the therapeutic counseling situation, after a while you'll notice, you begin to go beyond what you have learned, and it takes sometimes years before a therapist has the courage to let go of what he or she has learned, even a psychoanalyst, which is a very mental thing, in some places psychoanalysis is still popular, Freudian psychoanalysis, I believe the two places where still psychoanalysis is still very popular is New York and Argentina for some reason, and even there, there are some psychoanalysts who after years of practicing are able, maybe they just don't want to listen to these continuous stories about people's past, and then at some point they just become present without even having a word for it, and then just go hmm, and then they begin to say intuitively out of that spaciousness, out of that stillness, they say things that they never learned, and then they never knew that they knew that, because they didn't know it until they said it, until the situation required this knowledge to come forth, and then you become a truly effective therapist when more and more intuition takes over, but intuition can only take over if you become comfortable with not knowing, instead of thinking immediately that you have the answer, or you're just applying the model that you have learned, and becoming comfortable with not knowing gives you access to a much deeper knowing, almost paradoxically, it gives you access to intuitive knowing, which is primordial intelligence arising, and then it uses your mind, and then you speak, so the mind still has a purpose, because then suddenly, out of the stillness, the words come and say, oh, that's interesting, I didn't know that, what I just said, I didn't know it before I said it, it's there, that's beautiful, then there are modalities like, I don't know if it's still popular these days, I haven't done any reading in a few years, NLP used to be very popular, maybe still is, and if I remember correctly, that started by a couple of people who observed three extremely effective therapists, they were extremely good, whether they were hypnotherapists or something bordering on hypnosis, I don't know, they observed what they did, and they wrote down every detail, and all the things that they observed in these therapists was intuitive, the therapists just did it, after years of, they become so aligned with the present moment and the situation in the present moment, that even body movements that they did were totally intuitive, and totally right for that situation in that moment, and the people who developed NLP, if I remember correctly, started to observe how these people work with patients, and they made it into a system, the question is, can that really still be taught, something that was so vitally alive with those people, I won't go that way, I don't know, but the important thing is, is how vital it is not to become completely identified with your knowledge, so that you have both your knowledge and the space of not knowing, which is when the mind subsides and only this alert presence remains, so that is space in the relationship, is there space in the relationship, and this really applies to any relationship, but becomes even more important in the therapeutic relationship, it is certainly important in your relationship with your partner, wife, husband, children, family members, colleagues at work, in any situation, you have to bring spaciousness to the situation, in addition to the things that you know you have to talk about, and so on, so that the two dimensions of you are always present in any situation, you as the form identity, and you as the underlying unconditioned consciousness, the two, if there's only the unconditioned consciousness, then you would just become very, very still, and probably you wouldn't be able to deal with the situation, because you would just go, which is beautiful too, if that is your destiny, then it may well be that you just become you emanate presence, and you have to go to an ashram to live there, but for most, there's a balance between form and formlessness, so both of you, so to speak, need to be there, you as form, and you as your essence, that requires vigilance, the normal thing to happen is that the connectedness with your essence identity is lost very easily in human relationships, because the mind is so active, and we live in a civilization that provides continuous and incessant stimulus, stimuli is the plural, continuous incessant stimuli for the mind, even more than even 30 years ago, 30 years ago, it was just radio and television, and you would, people would sit there for hours, but nowadays you have countless sources of stimulus for the mind that draws you into continuously thinking about what's your next Facebook post, what's it going to be, and you look at the ones that are coming in, all these people are doing these fantastic things, and me, I'm just sitting here, and then you have to pretend that you're also doing fantastic things, then you project your self-image, which has existed for a long, long time before in humans, they have a, they have this part of ego is to have this image of who I am, now we have the opportunity to project that image into the world, and it'll reach hundreds or thousands of people all at once, and then you construct your life, there are many people alive these days without knowing it, they partly live for their Facebook image, you might remember the myth of Narcissus, the Greek, ancient Greek myth, there was this young man who had never seen himself before, because they didn't have mirrors at the time, but one day he happened to look into a little pool of water, and he saw himself, and he realized that he was extremely beautiful, he said, oh that's me, and the story goes he fell in love with himself, not in a good way, not by becoming one with who he is, but the separation happened, this myth shows the beginning stage of the egoic sense of self, expressed as a story, the image that he saw of himself in the pool is the mental image of the ego, and stories are part of that image, that's me, I'm me and my story, so you have the image of me, and then, oh, so this guy, Narcissus, he experienced that separation, and then I think something bad happened to him, but I don't remember what, so and then you have other things that continuously stimulate the mind that almost designed for you not to become still, it's like the civilization has made a great effort to come up with as many things as possible to prevent people from becoming still and spacious, and taking a moment of sensing that stillness within, and of course, a minute later, another text message is coming in, of course you have to look at it immediately, I gave a talk last year at a conference, a big conference with people, business people, and so on, and they talked about how there's been articles in the paper too, how people's lives get taken over by their devices, they leave work, they go home, and the emails are still coming in, even in the evening, and they're still answering emails when they're in bed at night, and this is, some people are beginning to realize how dreadful that kind of life is, and some more enlightened companies, they may not be totally enlightened, but they're beginning signs of enlightenment, they even forbid you to answer emails after a certain time in the evening, they might even, some have even disabled your phones, and this is very wise, because otherwise, people will go insane, eventually, so there are great opportunities in this new technology also, but it's also very dangerous, there are both, you can spread messages of awareness, you can spread enlightenment through that also, it can travel, and incredible madness too, the essence then is the two dimensions, let's just put it like that, of who you are, balance them in your life and at work, and you will find inevitably, in certain situations, one will become stronger than the other, and then the situation changes, and the other will become stronger, when you have to deal with detailed information, conveying detailed information to somebody else, the mind has to be very active, you have to remember this, this and that, then the being dimension will recede, and perhaps you will be 80% in the mind, but then it's still possible to, even while that happens, to have that being dimension there, and other times when the mind is not required very much, the presence will come forth more, and there will be very little thinking, you will be filled with this wonderful sense of beingness or presence, when you're out in nature, for example, in critical situations, two things can happen, when you're being challenged, by many challenges come through human beings, you might have noticed, most, well, there could be an earthquake too, but it's relatively rare compared to the challenges you get from human beings, and you can either lose spaciousness or presence, or the challenge can intensify spaciousness or presence, and this is a vital threshold, where you might be at in your evolution of consciousness, does a challenge, when it comes into your life, a challenge means a difficulty, a problem, a difficult person, a difficult situation, something going unexpectedly, something going wrong, so to speak, that's a challenge, now does that pull you into unconscious reactivity, so that you completely lose awareness of who you are beyond that situation, formless self, normal self, or does the challenge intensify presence, there comes a point in the evolution of human consciousness, and this is a wonderful thing, when you reach that line, from then on, whenever a challenge comes, presence intensifies and you go, and then you deal with the situation through presence rather than the egoic reactivity, until that happens, every challenge that comes into your life will pull you into unconsciousness again, you become reactive, you get upset, you get irritated, you get angry, whatever you turn, you shout back at somebody, you manufacture stories about situations to be superior to somebody else, so look at your own life and see how you, and this is a vital, can give you a reflection of where you are at in your spiritual life, how do you respond to the challenges when they come, from the little ones to the big ones, that's the critical line, how do you deal with challenges in your daily life, the little ones and the big ones, only you can know that, and it's very common for people to pretend that these things don't happen, or to justify them, they want to keep their mental image of that they are spiritual, and some even suppress emotions because you're not supposed to have negative emotions when you're spiritual, so I'm not angry, I'm just letting you know what I think, I'm not angry at all, why do you always accuse me of being angry, you should look at yourself, denial, so that you can keep your self-image intact, so it's how do you deal with challenges tells you how conscious you are, not so much whether you have visions of angels, or communicate with extraterrestrial entities, that is wonderful too, if you do that, it's great, but it does not determine how conscious you actually are, it might be an ability that's wonderful, but that can be used in the service of the ego too, if you're not conscious, so you may be in touch with Ashtar, commander of the galactic fleet, but how do you deal with when a plumber comes to repair your pipes and he does a bad job and charges you too much for it, our retreat of course is a wonderful opportunity to go more deeply into spaciousness, and also to some extent, practicing when you talk to people, practicing here, being spacious even while your mind is engaged, so that your consciousness is not completely drawn into the mind stream, so that you can speak, at first people can be present when they're sitting quietly, and then the next lesson is to be present when you start communicating with another human being, which is a huge step forward, more challenging than just sitting quietly in a room, as somebody said to me on a retreat, I got a, I think she spoke, also wrote, I can be present when I'm sitting alone in my room, I can be really present and still, but the moment I go out into the world, I lose it, this is why some people think if I could live in an ashram, in a community, in a protected setting, in a way it's like, imagine that we are here and we are not going home anymore, while let's live here, let's all live together, wouldn't that be wonderful, I would come and visit you occasionally, although compared to the mainstream population, it is true that our group here embodies a more awakened state of consciousness than the one that is still normal in the world, that is undoubtedly true, but even though if you started to live together for a longer period of time, you would encounter many situations that would require you to be absolutely present, because ego would still surface, the best situation for most of us is to be out in the world and face the challenges of the world, there may be a good reason for withdrawing temporarily from the world for certain periods of time, if you have the chance or if you have that inclination, it's not absolutely important, yes, of course, in a way you're doing it here for a short period of time, you could, might be doing it for a few months, some people might do it for a year, if you can, but it's not vital, because you face, use the world and whatever the world presents you with as your spiritual practice, rather than hoping for ideal situations, so that you can really start practicing spiritually, because what the mind or the ego envisages as an ideal situation is not the ideal situation, the ideal situation is one that provides you with challenges, because without that, there's no awakening, that's the truth of it, so once you know that, you also know that life is meant to be challenging, it's not meant to be, oh, it's meant to be challenging, because that forces evolution to happen, it's challenging for every life form on the planet, every life form has its own challenge, and there would have been no evolution without life forms being challenged and being forced to evolve, and so you might have noticed that the universe brings you one challenge after another, and some people get very upset and despondent of this, why can't I want to, why can't life leave me alone, I want to, why is there always the next thing, just when I've achieved this, and I thought everything was fine, something else happened, everything was fine here, and then somebody crashed there, why is there never, because it's not, this is how it is meant to be, I have quoted before the first few lines in the book, the first line in the book, the road less traveled, says life is difficult, if we know that fact, that life is difficult, then it's no longer difficult, what does that mean, it means when you know that challenges are an important part of being here, an important part of your evolution, you no longer get reactive when the next thing happens, it goes wrong, you actually can say, oh, it's meant for you to show you something, it always reflects your state of consciousness and gives you an opportunity to go deeper, every challenge gives you an opportunity to go deeper, to be more awake, to let go of ego, so you can welcome all those things when they arise, in the same way that you welcome things going wrong when you watch a movie, as I mentioned last night, you wouldn't want to watch a movie when nothing ever goes wrong, the crossing of the Atlantic Ocean by a wonderful ship called Titanic, and everybody was happy until they all arrived safely in New York, and you can watch two and a half or three hours of people having a good time on the ship, that would not have been a successful movie, but here they're faced with the possibility of imminent death, how do people respond to that, what does that do to them, there's a challenge, and that's why when you watch the movie you go, what's going to happen now, and in a good movie, the character evolves as a result of being confronted with a challenge, in a bad movie, the situation gets resolved on an external level, but there's no change in the character, eventually the criminal gets apprehended or killed and then you say, ah great, okay, so do you want your life to be a bad movie or a good movie, so if it's a bad movie then all your problems get solved on an external level by some deity perhaps, who just arranges and removes the problems from your life, and that's the end of the movie, or if it's a good movie, then you change as a result of being confronted with the challenges of life, you deepen, the ego is transcended, and who you are in your essence arises, that could be a significant shift in the way in which you experience life, when you no longer get upset when the next challenge happens, or if you do get upset, suddenly you notice that you're upset, and then you go, oh, isn't that interesting, I just, I missed the bus or the plane, and I got upset, for what, how important is that whole thing, missing a bus or a plane, on a universal scale, when there's a gravestone with my date of birth and date of death on it, and a dash in between, is that missed plane going to be very important, or a year from now, or a hundred years from now, and normally even remembers who I was, no, it's completely unimportant, I thought it was terribly important, isn't that interesting, sometimes being upset is fine too, that's part of the learning too, because then your awareness comes in at some point and says, oh, I can feel the upset, why, because I missed the plane, I have to wait here for another three hours or another night, and then you ask, I'm just giving one example out of hundreds, does it matter where you wait, where you breathe, you can breathe at the airport for the next three hours, or somewhere else, or you can sit on a plane, or at home in a chair, or at the airport in a chair, you sit, always sit somewhere, or stand somewhere, or lie somewhere, does it really matter when the mind, I should be home by now, what do you do at home, well, I would sit or lie or stand somewhere, or I would check my email, well, you can do that now too, a certain independence comes, you are no longer, there's a certain freedom from externals that begins to come in as you live more consciously, you are free of being totally, your inner state being totally determined by external conditions, and that's a wonderful sense of freedom, otherwise you're at the mercy of whatever happens out there, and things, as the Buddha already realized and told us, things are unstable in the universe, everything is changing, impermanent and in flux, continuous flux, so if you're dependent on things being stable, you get upset a lot of the time, if you're dependent on your inner state on things going as they should, you get upset and suffer, you suffer a lot, and the freedom comes when you can be with, immediately go with what is internally, oh, no longer construct a story about how unfairly the universe or somebody else has treated you, or how dreadful they are, none of that, just immediately align with the present moment, freedom from externals, wonderful, especially from unconscious people, because otherwise every unconscious person makes you unconscious, every angry person makes you angry, so we transcend, just a brief recapitulation in one minute, essence identity, I don't know if it's going to be one minute or 10, but that's, essence identity, form identity, the two, bring them together so that they are both there in your daily life, form identity alone is ego, form identity with presence is just what it is, form identity, nothing wrong with it, you can see how religious people fight, different religions, why?

Because they're completely identified with their form identity, which if you're a religious person, your form identity is the particular form of your religion, and then another one is identified that brings their sense of identity is in that, it's collective, form identity is always partly personal and partly collective, so let's say two people meet, two religious men or women, a monk from a Christian tradition meets a Muslim man and they start talking, if they are both identified with their form identity, they will violently disagree and think the other is terribly wrong, if both are in touch with their essence identity, they would have a wonderful meeting together because they would immediately recognize the oneness, their own oneness, and the oneness that all their respective religions actually point to if they are understood at the deepest level, so you find that the disagreement between religious people happens because these people are trapped in their egos and the religion has become part of their sense of self, and you can still honor your religion, which is part of the form of life, if you have gone deeper into the essence of yourself, then you recognize the essence in your religion, and then you can meet somebody else and recognize that no matter what the outer form of their religion is, you realize you meet, you truly meet the other, so moment of stillness.

[Speaker 7] (2:33:57 - 2:34:06)

Our program continues with session three, Conscious Awareness Beyond Form and Thinking with Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (2:34:21 - 5:08:35)

Most people around here know the famous saying, what Mark Twain said about San Francisco, he said, the coldest winter I've ever spent was the summer in San Francisco. The good news is, according to the weather forecast, the sun is going to come out shortly before sunset, and the other good news is it doesn't really matter what the weather is like out there, being independent of external conditions, not reactive to external conditions, accepting of external conditions because they already are, the isness of things here and now, that's the quickest way to inner peace, is to align yourself with the isness of what is, even if you think you can, it requires some action to do something about it, but in the meantime, it is, then you can do something, not about the weather, probably, you can try through focused power of consciousness, not impossible, but unnecessary, and that's also a quick way to not being burdened by unnecessary thinking, to align yourself with the isness, we are primarily here to deepen our realization of who we are beyond form. Both the Buddha and Jesus talked about an inner dimension that is formless, that you need to realize in order to become free of complete dependency on the forms that your life takes, the Buddha talked about what's traditionally translated as emptiness, as the essential you, better translation would have been, now we've got emptiness in all the scriptures, it's been translated, but spaciousness or formlessness would have been a better translation, Jesus talks about the sky that's within you, that's another word for heaven, the kingdom of the sky, translated into modern terminology, the dimension of spaciousness, the kingdom of heaven is the old translation, this is hard to relate to nowadays, kingdom of heaven, but if he had been speaking today, he would have said the dimension of spaciousness, because when you look up at the sky, you see spaciousness, especially when it's not cloudy, the clouds kind of represent the thoughts in your consciousness, and the sky is the vast expanse without which there wouldn't be any room for the clouds, there couldn't be any clouds, so the empty sky is spaciousness, now an interesting thing about the sky is, although we have a word for it, it doesn't actually exist in the world of forms, because if you ever traveled upwards and wanted to encounter the sky, you would never find it, because there's no such thing as the sky really, so you can't say, oh, here's the sky, I'm touching it now, or you can't even say, I'm in the sky, where? It's just a way of perceiving the spaciousness, we call it sky, and the color blue appears because of the juxtaposition of the sunlight and the blackness of space behind it in some strange way, but the main thing is, there isn't a thing that's the sky, so very cleverly, Jesus used that, because he was trying to point to something that is very hard to point to, using concepts and words, so he chose the most suitable pointer in the language, in words, that he could find, and the most suitable one that he could find to point to this inner dimension that is in every human being, but ignored and unknown to most humans, so to point to it, he chose sky, because he realized, just like that inner dimension of spaciousness, you can never actually pinpoint it and say, I've got it, I have got it, there would already be a duality of it, the spaciousness, and I, but the spaciousness is the essence of I, so there's no duality there, you can never say, here it is, and this is another thing that he actually said, those are some things that you read in the New Testament, I can feel very strongly, he actually almost literally said that, then there are other things that were distorted when they started writing it down, and then there are other things that he never said, but somebody said it might be a good idea if he had said that, so the kingdom of heaven, you can never say, that's in a free translation, he said, you can never say, oh, it's over there, or oh, it's over there, look, here it is, you can never say that, because it is within you, in the same way, consciousness, which is what we are talking about, consciousness is the formless consciousness, that's the essence of who you are, it cannot become an object of knowledge, like everything else can, where you have, you are the perceiving or the acting subject, I see the chair, I realize it's consciousness, you can't really say that, because consciousness is the primordial subject of all experience, it cannot be an object in your experience, that's an interesting thing, so in the form identified consciousness, you become an object to yourself, in ego, you have a relationship with yourself, and when you realize the essence of who you are, you realize yourself as consciousness, which is not an object, it's the I, the most fundamental subject of all experience, an example, some people say, I'm looking for myself, I'm looking for my real self, I'm looking for something more real than what I know about myself, there must be a deeper dimension, and I'm looking for it, other people might say they're looking for God, or for realization of God, looking for something, and when you become aware of the, that in you that's looking, without having found any answer, without having found anything, and you're still looking for that thing, God, your true self, where is it, I haven't found it, and then the mind stops, and then you realize all the consciousness behind the looking, is what you were looking for, but the consciousness became thought, and then you believe that there's something external to look for, this is very hard to put into words, but when the mind stops, what's left is just the spaciousness of consciousness, and that is the substratum, to use a geological term, of everything, of all experience, and that is the most liberating thing, the only truly liberating thing, is to realize, in essence, you are formless consciousness, and then all the seeking stops, you no longer need to look for your true self, or God, because you realize that is the essence, is now, you might say, you mean, you're then, do you then realize that you are God, I wouldn't put it like that, it's a little bit like you realize that you are, let's use an analogy, you are a ray of sunlight, and as this ray of sunlight, you've always been looking out here, so you are the little ray of sunlight, thinking you're an independent entity, with other rays of sunlight, everywhere around you, and they're all looking for things, and then the ray of sunlight, that considers itself to be an independent entity, autonomous, having certain relationships with other rays of sunlight, and even with itself, so me, becomes still for a moment, and then realizes there is a depth to who I am, that goes all the way back to the sun, but can only realize that when you stop thinking, then you become aware, the ray of sunlight, you become aware of your own depth, you don't, there's no end to you, there isn't this finite little thing, as the mind's, the thinking mind stops, there is a suddenly a depth, and in that, you realize that you are not a disconnected fragment that has been thrown into this universe by some malignant deity that enjoys your suffering, no, but that you are an essential part of the universe, you haven't been thrown into the universe, you have come out of the universe, and so in this analogy, you have come out of the sun, and as the mind stops, and then you can actually sense how far you go back, but there's no distance, you are actually never, never separate from the sun, the ray of sunlight realizes suddenly that it is still actually part of the sun, nor we can say where the sun actually finishes, because it's, it doesn't have a boundary, so the light that reaches us from the sun, one could say, is still part of the sun, it's, we are all within this vast energy field of the sun, this is an analogy, sun is the closest you can get in the sense-perceived universe to the source of all life, because in the sense-perceived universe, here, the sun is the source of all life, the very heat in your body comes actually from the sun, all the energy we use is stored up energy from the sun, and we, one day we'll find a way of using sun energy in a much more intelligent way than fossil fuels and so on, but that's another matter, so you realize, the sun, the ray of sunlight realizes that it's still connected to this vastness, to the source, and that's the self-realization of the ray of sunlight, that it was never separate and could not even exist as a separate entity, it's totally impossible, and then the ray of sunlight actually becomes a much more peaceful and relaxed being while it's still there, I'm talking about you, of course, because you've realized without any needing to convince yourself of anything, or take up some new belief, no, through actual direct realization, you realize your connectedness with something very deep, so you're not just a little person, you're also the kingdom of heaven, or as the Buddha called it, spaciousness, sunyata, so there's two of you, and this is not an ultimate truth, ultimately there's only one, but let's just temporarily, it sometimes helps to have a certain perspective on things, there's two of you, that which expresses itself in form, the physical body and all the stuff that's in your mind and in your emotional field, that all that makes up the person, that has a limited lifespan, even if there's a continuation of that after the body dissolves, it has a limited lifespan because all forms, no form is permanent, so all forms are continuously changing, I would be dreadful if you survived as this personality that you are now, I mean, who would want to be the same personality for centuries and millennia, there's an evolution of consciousness, so the body is short-lived, that which is beyond the body may continue for a while as it continues on its journey of self-realization, but you are that which is the form identity, and more essentially, you are that essence identity, the two, and all the great spiritual teachings, all they do is point to the possibility for you to realize that there's more to you than meets the eye, to use an expression, what meets the eye is first when you see another human being, or you look in the mirror, or you look down yourself, what meets the eye is first the physical body, then what meets the eye, metaphorically speaking, when you meet another human being is their personality, the things, how they act, what they say, how they behave, that's already unseen, but it manifests in the scene, so it meets the eye, that's all the form of the person and your own form, and all spiritual teachings really come down to somebody trying to show you that there is another dimension to who you are, and whether they call it the kingdom of heaven that's within you, or the emptiness that's the essence of who you are, or in other teachings, the true self, in India, they talk about the true self, or the self, it's sometimes called, and then people who haven't had any, not even a glimpse of a realization, they may be religious scholars, they say that Hinduism, the Hindu talk of a true self, or the great self, and the Buddhist teachings of no self, is totally opposite, they don't realize that they're talking about the same thing from a different perspective, when Buddha talks about the unreality of the self, he's talking about the unreality of your form identity, the relative, the dreamlike nature of your form identity, and in order to get you to realize your essence identity, he talked about inner spaciousness, and what is meditation all about, that he taught, is to help you stop the mind, not as an active thing, but as a relinquishing, and then there's the spaciousness, and then you know who you are, without having any added concept in your mind to who you are, when we think of knowing who you are, we think you must know more about you, but that's not that knowing, if you want to know more about you, then you'd have to perhaps go to psychoanalysis, and then you can delve deeply into your form identity, and many things will come up, but eventually you'd have to go deeper beyond that, in order to be free of complete identification with form, so let me just remind you, that the essential practice is to relinquish thinking, not by falling below thinking, but by rising above thinking, some of you are already advanced enough presence, there's enough presence power in you, that you can actually, by choice, say, there's nothing to think about, and I won't think for a while now, and then you can even do things in that state of complete inner alert stillness, prepare a cup of tea, and every moment happens against a background of alert stillness, walk from point A to point B, and every step happens against this background of alert stillness, look around you, whatever it may be, in a room or outside, perceive everything with your senses, and all the sense perceptions happen against this background of alert stillness, without any mental commentary, and you know what you're looking at, without imposing any mental label on it, when you look at a tree, you don't impose the label tree on it, but you know that you're looking at a manifestation of life, the moment you put a label on it, we, of course, we need labels on a certain level, but we also need not to be trapped in the labels that we have given things, we need to be able to use the mental labels when they are needed, but to be entirely trapped in the mental labels that we've given to everything, that's a dreadful limitation, because the tree is, everything is absolutely mysterious, everything is miraculous and mysterious, and when you put a label on it, a mental label, you think you know what it is, but you don't, it's just a mental label, so to really get to the inner realization of a tree, for example, you have to let go of the labels, then you can sense there's more to the tree than when you utter the word tree, than you think you know, but there's a depth to that, it's an alive being also, and I'm using just tree as an example, this is the practice, inviting presence, thoughtless awareness into your life as much as possible, and see how much more enjoyable things become, how you notice things around you that before were meaningless, you didn't ever look at them, you notice beauty in many places that would be called ordinary, not just beauty in things that are absolutely stand out, but beauty in seemingly unremarkable things, and aliveness in seemingly inanimate things, and that comes when you perceive the world against this background of alert, inner stillness, and that is, in those times, the personality recedes, occasionally, certain thoughts may come, and then they go away again, and then the spaciousness is back, so you will be amazed how, as you become more familiar with that state of alert stillness, how that changes how you experience life, so you no longer experience life only as that old person that you've been stuck with since you were born, that person is still, you honor that, because that's your form identity, and that person can also improve, it can learn things, it can improve in many ways, it can play in the world of form, but then the wonderful thing is, the formless self, or no self, and who you are as a person do not remain separate, there isn't that, there are times when you are completely in the formless, still, and alert, and then there are other times when you're involved in thinking, there's a possibility of bringing the two together, and that happens kind of naturally after a while, as you invite the alert stillness into your life more often, then you'll notice that even when you think, that you continue to be aware of the tiniest gaps in between your thoughts, like now, and then I speak again, and then there's another little gap, you're aware of the gaps between thoughts, and you're aware, so to speak, also of a background to all thinking, that the alert stillness is still there, and then you could engage in a discussion with someone without losing yourself in the stream of thinking, of mind, and without identifying with any mental position, which is seeking your identity to reinforce, to strengthen your identity by defending your mental position about something, you don't need it anymore, because you realize no mental position is your true identity, you can still have mental positions, but without the self in them, so there's no longer a sense of me or self in your mental, you can, why not keep your opinions, everybody has certain perspective on things, you have a certain perspective on whatever, politics, philosophy, spirituality, that's fine, but you don't, you're not looking for an identity anymore in being right about something, it still put forward your viewpoint, because you're in touch with a more essential identity, and that's the stillness behind your thinking, and in between the thoughts, so you can sense an alertness even while you speak, in the background and in between, so the two dimensions come together, and so the way in which you use your mind changes, in fact, you're now able to use your mind, you as the consciousness, the mind is connected, linking into that deeper dimension of no thought, which is primordial intelligence, it's where all creative insight comes from, and then your mind becomes a much more helpful tool, and it can create, it can manifest things, but what it manifests comes from the consciousness, rather than a little person that thinks, I need to manifest this or that in order to be happy, and of course, once you have manifested it, you're happy for a little while, and then you're unhappy again, needing something else to manifest, and now I need this, okay, I've got the house now, now I need the relationship, and then I need that, and then I need to be recognized by people, and there's no end to it, and the more you have achieved on the level of form, the more you realize that that's not it, so the two dimensions of you, here we are primarily concerned with the formless dimension, because that's what spirituality is about, there are many other things where you can go to workshops to learn how to improve your form identity, how to strengthen that, you can do it, yeah, yeah, and that's fine too, that has its place also, you could go to that kind of workshop, as long as you're in touch with something deeper, you can try it, I'm still planning to have a joint event together with Tony Robbins, but my idea about it, I don't know if it will happen, is that we would both exchange our positions so that we are not in our comfort zone, uh, I, I, he would be sitting in a chair, and I would be pacing up and down and gesticulate, and I wonder if that, that position would change our teachings, so we'll see, so there is a place for manifesting on the level of form, because the universe is manifesting continuously on the level of form, so if we realize that we can manifest things on the level of form, that's a wonderful realization through the power of thinking, the question is, do you know yourself only as form, or do you know yourself also as the formless? If you know yourself also as the formless consciousness, then actually what happens is, the formless consciousness inspires you to manifest certain things, not the ego anymore, the ego says, I need this to be happy, and then I need that to be happy, and then I need to get rid of that to be happy, but if the, that primordial intelligence, if you are in touch with that as your essence, that can inspire you, your mind, to manifest what it wants to manifest, so then, because the universe delights in manifestation, as you can see when you look at the life forms on this planet alone, in the sea, I don't know how many different life forms in the sea alone, and on land, and in the seen and the unseen, the universe must delight in creation and exploring, and every life form is an expression of the one consciousness exploring the universe that it created in different ways, the fly that's flying around here is another expression of the one consciousness, and really is another universe, the fly doesn't experience the universe that we experience, it's in the same place, but experience something different, as the one consciousness, all these temporary forms, that's the Leela, the divine play of forms, what in India is called the Leela, the divine play, and we can participate in that divine play, become co-creators, and that is part of our destiny, that a point comes, will come, when human consciousness will be able to manifest forms very easily, even now it can be done, a time will come when we don't need to make anything anymore with our hands, we can just go, oh, there it is, but at that point, we are not going to create countless stuff, because without the stuff, we can't be happy, we would probably create simple things, because we don't need stuff to complete us or to make us happy, so there is the creation of the universe, I call that the outgoing movement of the universe into manifestation, and then there is the ingoing movement of the universe, the universe also wants to know itself, its own essence, and it does that through you, and through me, how do I know all this? I know this because I have observed the two movements within myself, and I am a microcosm of the macrocosm, you can discover all the secrets of the universe by looking into yourself, so I can find within myself the, sometimes, the desire to create and to manifest, and then there comes a seemingly contradictory desire to return to the source, to become still, you don't need anything anymore, you just are totally, totally at peace in that beautiful stillness, that's the return, the universe realizes itself as the underlying formless consciousness, when you realize the underlying formless consciousness, that is the essence of who you are, it's not really you realizing it, because you are only the universe appearing temporarily as this particular person, but it's only a temporary appearance, so when you realize your own essence as consciousness, that's, the universe is realizing its own essence as consciousness, because you are the universe, you are an essential part of the universe, so there is no personal realization, really, there's universal realization, it's a miraculous thing, so the universe wants, it's seemingly contradictory things, there's a cycle, it seems, perhaps scientists have had some glimpse of the truth when they say, the universe expands, and then at some point, it starts to contract again, and then at some point, it disappears into the no thingness, out of which it all came, so it goes, it's like the heartbeat, or the in-breath and the out-breath, the universe goes into multiplicity, creation, billions and billions, count trillions of life forms, and that's also, there's a cycle for humans, too, when they go out, and then comes the cycle of returning home to the source, but if you hadn't gone out, you wouldn't realize your own source, so they depend on each other, creation and the outgoing movement and the return movement, and you can find that in your own life, it may well be that we are drawn to the return movement of self-realization as consciousness, because the universe is beginning to go in that direction, after billions of years of creation, and then comes a period, and this would be a miraculous period on this planet, on many other planets, when humans, as expressions of the one consciousness, are in connection with a source, while they are engaged in creation, rather than, as it happens until very recently, losing yourself in your creations, losing yourself in the mind, losing touch with the source of who you are, and losing yourself in stuff out there, your mind primarily, and thinking everything else is out, all the answers are out there, and this is, you're fighting out there against this and that, and this is a dream, the dream of consciousness, the dream of the universe, and the universe wanted to experience, in order to really experience the dream, you need to believe that it's absolutely real, so it needs to go out there and lose itself, and every life form, then to some extent, the humans mostly see themselves as totally separate against all the others, it's part of the dream, and then the dream gradually comes to an end, and then the awakening begins, and in the middle of the dream, you start to realize something, oh, the source, and you become still, and an awareness arises, and that spiritual awakening for the human being, and it's a spiritual awakening for the universe, your spiritual awakening is the spiritual awakening of the universe, and then the awareness comes, and then you begin to live with awareness, rather than losing yourself in every mind form, in every perception, in every drama, lucid living, it's a bit like we all know about lucid dreaming, which happens when in the middle of a dream at night, you suddenly know, oh, this is a dream, this is quite an interesting realization, for most people, it doesn't last very long, because wakefulness and dream are not that compatible, so then you have perhaps only a few seconds, you can say, this is a dream, I couldn't make anything happen here, and I know, because I know it's only a dream, what am I going to do now? So that's lucid dreaming, but here we have, as the awareness arises, which we call spiritual awakening, you can have lucid living, which means you're still participate in this ultimate dream of form, the dream of life, and yet you're aware of your own essence, as the timeless space, without which there couldn't be any dream, it's the very condition for any dream even to exist, that's lucid living, when you're not drawn totally anymore into all the creations of your mind, you're able to play with it, and that would bring, when more humans are able to live in that way, then we can engage in joyful creation of things, not the neediness, joyful creation, enjoy the beauty and multiplicity of the universe, and of our own creations without self-seeking, which is of the ego, so we no longer create in the service of the ego, but as expressions of the one consciousness, delighting in conscious creation, and that's already part of the return journey, but all this is just, I'm saying this just to point to the fact that the change in consciousness that's happening in you is a universal movement, it's not just a personal thing, it would not happen if it were not part of a larger movement, universal movement of awakening, so there are probably countless life forms awakening elsewhere in our galaxy, and many other galaxies, and some probably started to awaken a long time ago, who would now look at us as, oh, these poor little things, they're only just beginning, that's okay, now, not each one of you, not every one of you is able to yet step into no thought, without some kind of help, and meditation is designed to help you with that, but as you probably know, the main thing I recommend is to have some attention in the inner energy field of your body, and that keeps thought at bay in a gentle, non-violent way, not willpower, it involves no willpower, so it involves just a decision that right now you would prefer to be alert and still and not be thinking, and that decision you could arrive at because you've realized that, let's say, for the past hour, you've been engaged in futile, useless thinking that all it did was make you unhappy, and suddenly the awareness is there again that had been temporarily lost, and you say, what's all this futile thinking about, it's just making me unhappy, it has no point whatsoever, and then a decision comes to not to think, because you realize there is another dimension in you that is deeper than thinking, so you, okay, I'd rather be there than up there in the mind, and how can I get there, because the mind will have its momentum, so unless your presence power, so to speak, is already quite developed, you may find it very hard to stop the momentum once it started, to stop the momentum of thinking, there's an enormous pull, a gravitational pull behind it, and for some, if presence power is not yet that developed, you can say, I need to stop thinking, but I can't, because it goes on and on, and I can't stop it, it's like a river, you can't get out of this raging river, it drags you along, just try, especially when you're stuck in a train of negative thinking, or fearful thinking, or angry thinking, you don't even want to get out, because you're so identified with a stream of thinking that your sense of self is in it, and you don't want to lose that sense of self, it's a fictitious sense of self, but it's a sense of self, and so you don't want to stop your train of angry thinking, you want more angry thinking, and if possible, you're looking for more feedback from others to reinforce your angry thinking, I need another argument, and after you've walked back out of the room, after a one-hour argument, you walk back into the room, because you haven't had enough, you need to talk to that person again, oh, one more thing I want to tell you, and even when that person is no longer there, you're still thinking, and then you need to pick up the phone and tell your friend about it, and then you repeat the whole argument you just had, and how right you are, and how wrong the other person was, and then when you hang up the phone, it still goes on in your head, and at that moment, to tell somebody you need to stop thinking would be futile, the person doesn't even want to stop thinking, because that person is thinking, total identification with thought, so there needs to be a realization, some awareness needs to be there, it's totally pointless to talk to anybody about stopping thinking without having at least some access to awareness, maybe not in the moment of enormously empowered thinking, empowered not in a good way, but the awareness needs to bear that what's going on inside me right now, and then at some point you might be able to realize what's happening to you, it's happening to you, you didn't actually do it, it just happened to you, because you're being possessed by your mind, and then at some point you realize that there is a choice, you can actually, perhaps not when you're in the middle of it, at some point a very strong mind stream subsides, you might get tired of it, and then it goes, and then finally you go, oops, oh, and then do I choose to carry on, is that, does it make me feel happy? No, it doesn't, I thought it did, because I felt so good to be angry about that, but it's not, doesn't make you feel, the body doesn't really feel, if you asked your body it would tell you this feels horrible, but of course if you're not in touch with your body, you're only up here, you don't even know that, and then at some moment the choice comes in, and so at other moments the choice may come much more quickly, because it's just the usual stream of futile, in the middle of the night you wake up, the usual stream of futile thinking, and then awareness comes in, there's a choice, and then a decision comes, and that decision is just no willpower, it's just a decision, I'd rather be still than not be thinking, and once you know that, then you can take your attention into the inner energy of the body, that's your choice, instead of giving more attention to your thinking, you just take your attention into the inner energy field of the body, and suddenly you feel the aliveness that pervades the entire body, and so you have taken consciousness away from the mind, and put it in here, and you can't think that much anymore, you can't feel the body and be engaged in a lot of thinking, and if you really fully experience the aliveness in the inner body, the mind stops, and so that becomes an anchor for awareness, an anchor for presence, even if you cannot feel the entire body, it would be enough to just go into your hands with your attention, just take consciousness into your hands, and feel the aliveness in your hands, that alone can take attention away from useless thinking, and you continue to feel, because that is part of experiencing the present moment, which actually feels quite good, it feels good to be alive, that's an amazing realization, so inner body, or even just a part of the body, the totality of the body is best if you can, it's not that difficult, you start with one part, hands, and you, can I feel my feet also, yeah, I can feel hands and feet, can I feel my legs, yeah, a little bit less, but, and then the totality of, oh, okay, I got it, you might also notice that you're breathing then, which is the other way, it can be combined with body awareness, but breathing is the other way of taking attention away from the mind, the most ancient meditation method is breath awareness, because breath awareness takes attention away from thinking, but keeps you alert, and breath happens all the time, and breath is virtually formless, so it's easier to get in touch with a formless consciousness by placing attention on the formless breath, other meditation objects are clearly defined in form, you can have an object that you focus on, you can have a mental object that you focus on, you can have a mantra that you focus on, those can work too, but they are more clearly defined in form, the breath is a kind of, where is the breath, you can't say, here it is, it's semi-formless or formless, so to place attention on that, which can also automatically bring you in touch with the body, the in-breath, the out-breath, it's so beautiful to have attention on your breath and the out-breath, and immediately your mind becomes still, so you can either be thinking or can have your attention on your breathing, but you can't have both, the moment you think, you're not aware of your breath anymore, and that also really applies to the inner body, to have full attention in the inner body, you can't be thinking, so those two things, which are really closely linked, breath awareness, you can make it into a meditation, so you can sit in meditation, and then you can observe the in-going and out-going breaths, you can also observe the gaps between the in-going and out-going breaths, you breathe out, breathe gap of nothingness, and then you start breathing in again, a brief gap of neither in nor out, and the cycle continues. I read somewhere that the Buddha said, if you're aware of your breath for one hour, I don't know if they even had hours at the time, but if you're aware of your breath for one hour, you'll be completely enlightened, but if you lose it, you have to start from the beginning again, just one thought coming in, okay, start all over. Okay, I can see one or two of you saying, I'm going to do that.

We were going to have questions this morning, but of course, the present moment is unpredictable, so we would certainly have questions, as certain as one can be about something to come, in the next session, there's one or two things that I wanted to add to from last night, and I realized when I looked at the questions after the last night session, that I had not fully answered this question, I am a therapist, and I now feel that I don't take people's problems seriously, I don't know if I can continue to be a psychotherapist, okay, you may remember the essence of the answer I gave, and that is, I also find myself, when I listen to people's problems, a smile arises sometimes, not because of their problems, but because I'm in touch with a deeper reality, where their problems are relatively unimportant, and to be in touch with that deeper reality is liberating, and there is a joy in there, in knowing who you are beyond your problems, there is still, there is that joy that's there, and I can feel the reality for that person beyond their problems, and that is, I'm not laughing or smiling at them, but at the relative unreality of their, relative unreality of their problems, so, and that is actually a form of healing, so if that is the case with you, then you can continue to be a psychotherapist, you're not just, you can continue to listen to their problems without giving their problems this absolute reality, a relative reality, yes, but be in touch with that level deep within, where there is no problem, where that person is already complete and whole, and that is the formless consciousness, every form identity is not complete, it never has a feeling of being complete and whole, there's always stuff missing in your form identity, and there are things that didn't go according to what you imagined when you were young, and how did you imagine your life to unfold, well, you had all kinds of ideas, in many cases, that didn't quite happen, and then people come and say things like, oh, I would have imagined, when I was, I imagined my life to unfold very differently from the way it did unfold, it's really a sad story, and I feel I haven't, my form identity is really, there's so much still missing in who I am, there's so much that I could have achieved, but things happen to stop me from achieving it, and then there's that stuff that I did achieve, and it all came to nothing, it dissolved, I tried so many things, but why didn't I, why didn't I succeed in this or that, or if you did succeed greatly in this or that area, you go, why was I, why am I still so restless and unhappy, I've had, everybody thinks I'm so great, and I've got all these fans on Twitter and Facebook, why am I still, why am I still unhappy, why do I need more of this or that, even though my picture is in People magazine, and other magazines that are not that great, so whatever it is, there's always something wrong with your form identity, and if you think everything is right about your form identity, it won't last for very long, then you happen to just have hit a period, a brief period, when you feel it's all, everything is going great in my life, I've got a great place to live, I've got a great relationship, I've got a great job, I've got a great income, I have a great car, and people recognize my importance, they tell me I'm a VIP, everything is great, that's how life should be, now it is possible for human to, for brief periods to be in that place, but they would be quite brief, because life just isn't like that, it is designed for things to go wrong, no matter how much positive thinking you do, which is all good, but no matter how much positive thinking you do, there is this thing designed into life, it's a, we could call it a sabotage element, of sabotage or disruption, in which universal intelligence has built into everybody's life, you might have noticed it, but you, what you might not have noticed is that it is built into everybody's life, and you might have thought that life singled you out to sabotage your life, because some people are very good at hiding the, that element in their life from others, and they wouldn't even admit it, that at night they lie in agony and, or whatever it is, so that's an interesting fact, once you know that this disruptive thing is built into your life, then you may come to actually accept that fact, that that is a universal thing that every human is meant to face, so there's always in some area of your life, there's always some disruption happening, or just happened, or happened a few years ago, but still leaving a lot of traces around, and you're still influencing the way in which you experience life, and then the next thing comes in, and the next, and once you've resolved your financial problems, and you're okay there, finally I've got financial security, and suddenly a health problem comes up, or the other way around, or the great job, you suddenly have this wonderful fulfilling job, and suddenly your company gets taken over by another company, and suddenly you're told we don't need you anymore, who am I now without that, you all know examples from your own life, and with some of you, it seems to be just a succession of things going wrong, but they can't have gone that wrong if you are sitting here now, because it's taken you to a spiritual awakening, nobody would go to a spiritual awakening, well, nobody I know, without experiencing the unsatisfactory nature of one's life situation, so I am grateful to that in my life, and you can be grateful to that in your life, because otherwise the evolution of consciousness would not have happened, if you had been totally happy all your life, no evolution is possible, no development is possible, no deepening is possible, you would be dancing on the surface of things, let's have another drink, and good food, and watch another good movie, and sensory pleasures, and sex, and let's travel, and go to another place, and explore that, and isn't that nice, and just no depths whatsoever, of course you would be incapable of compassion, or empathy with other human beings, you would have no deep insights, which all come out of suffering, just surface existence, but fortunately very few humans, or no humans have that, and if they had it, that would become the disruptive element, the fact that there is nothing disruptive, would become the disruptive element in your life, so on the level of form identity, you never arrive at complete satisfaction, you can't, I can't get no satisfaction, and once you realize that, you're actually, it's liberating to know, okay, you can still try to improve your life, it's wonderful thing, of course you try to make your life better, if you're not happy where you live, if you can find a better place to live, or if your health is not well, maybe you can do something about it, maybe you can't, if you can't do something about it, take action, but the foundation for action needs to be present moment acceptance of the isness of now, and then you take action, but the, it will never be totally satisfying, therefore the only satisfying thing is to to realize that there is another dimension to who you are, and that's where all satisfaction comes from, the realization that there's more to you than the person, the personality, and the personal history, and that is consciousness, you are, in essence, timeless consciousness, knowing yourself as timeless consciousness is the only true, truly satisfying thing that can ever happen in your life, and once you know yourself as timeless consciousness and sense this in the background of your life, so to speak, then your form identity and all the various situations that you encounter in your life are no longer that frustrating, because you no longer look to the various situations that you encounter in your life for ultimate satisfaction, you know that they cannot ultimately satisfy you, and therefore, because you're neither looking for ultimate satisfaction, nor are you looking to the various situations in your life, relationships, possessions, achievements, nor are you looking to these things to have a more complete sense of who you are, a sense of self, you know that it doesn't work, it cannot give you that, and you don't need it anymore, because your sense of self is rooted in something deeper, and then you can enjoy the play of forms without making demands upon it, the world, situations, without demanding that they should fulfill you or tell you who you are, and then with that sense of freedom, you can enjoy the phenomena in your life, you can enjoy a relationship, you enjoy visiting a new place, and if the weather is not the way you had wanted it to be, I came all the way to California thinking I could get to not only go to the retreat, but also have a little bit of vacation in the sunshine, and look what I get, the sky looks like November sky in London, and why did I spend all this money coming all the way out here, but so, and the other possibility is to arrive and say, oh, this is what is, and it's never quite the way you imagined it, you always get a surprise, sometimes it's a nice surprise, and sometimes it's a different kind of surprise, but no situation can actually satisfy you for very long, when you look to it for satisfaction, when you no longer look to a situation for satisfaction, it's actually quite nice, so you can enjoy life when you don't need things to be satisfying, you can actually enjoy, this reminds me that I'm told that quite a few people have not arrived here yet, because we're booked to come here, because there were many, many flights were canceled, because some computer hacking thing happened, talking about sabotaging things, computers for airlines got hacked, or something like that, and quite a few people still haven't arrived here, and this is another example of how life sabotages things, and that is a pity, and some may still arrive, and that's fine, and some may not arrive, and then that becomes, if they are not looking for satisfaction, then that could be a great thing too, I was going to go to this spiritual retreat, and something, I never made it, that would be, I had somebody years ago, we were going to have a retreat in the States, here somewhere, no, was it in Canada, and he arrived from Hong Kong, and when he arrived for the spiritual retreat, he got arrested, at Vancouver airport, and so they put him in prison, and then for the duration of the retreat, he was actually in prison in Vancouver, and approximately when the retreat finished, they released him, and now why he was in prison seems that it goes back many years, there was a disagreement that he had with the IRS, which is the tax authorities here in the States, he had a business in the States, and there was the IRS, they don't, they're not compassionate it seems, but that was, I'm not sure if he realized it, but that potentially is a more profound retreat, I have one other example to tell of a similar thing that happened many years ago, not similar, but related, I mentioned before this Buddhist monastery in England that I sometimes visited to talk to the monks, and I already told you the story of this man who was giving me a ride, and who was a very committed Buddhist, he got extremely angry while he was in a driving situation, now this was another occasion a few years later, when I said to a friend of mine, who became interested in Buddhism, I'll show you this Buddhist monastery, we can drive there together, he had just bought a car, we were graduate students at the time, and his parents wanted to make him happy, so he bought this red BMW brand new, and a lot of his sense of self got suddenly invested in that, and halfway to the Buddhist monastery, we got stopped at a traffic light, a car from behind drove right into his car, and there was one other passenger, his girlfriend who got whiplash, but otherwise we were okay, but the car was basically a write-off, and that was a deeper lesson in Buddhism than he could ever have had, much deeper than he could ever have had in a monastery, because he was identified with the car, his sense of self was in this, a relatively young person can happen, so it was painful for him, and I pointed out that it was a potentially very useful lesson, I don't remember whether he got it or not, but he did say to me once, I wish I had never met you, because then I, he didn't mean it totally, because he added, I would be happy in my ignorance, of course he wouldn't be happy, so sometimes the unexpected is the greatest lesson, and often the unexpected thing going wrong, if you can surrender to that, is often the greatest lesson, and so these things do tend to happen, so just wait for the next thing, don't expect it, just know when it comes, say, oh, there it is, and you can say, oh, that's great, something else going wrong, isn't it wonderful, there's a disruption again that life puts in there, the strange thing is, when you surrender to that, it tends to dissolve much more quickly, when you resist it internally, the disruption stays in place, the sabotage element stays in place, when you surrender to it, very often the situation suddenly resolves itself, and you're free again, until the next challenge happens, let's take a moment of stillness, a few more minutes of stillness, if you are still thinking, remember, put your attention on your breath, or the inner body, or both, so as part of our session this morning, we may spend a little bit longer in stillness than we have done before, some of you will love it, and a few of you may become a little bit restless, if we go on for too long, but I promise you, we won't go on for too long, many of you probably have a meditation practice, I don't usually talk about formal meditation, but it's wonderful if people have a formal meditation and practice it, this is more about bringing the so-called meditative state into your normal life, presence, meditation is an attempt to become present, sometimes it works, sometimes it remains an attempt, for years, and you can become a good meditator by sitting for an hour every day, and all you're still doing is attempting to become present, meditation can be helpful, it can also become an obstacle to being present, because almost inevitably when you meditate, you have this underlying assumption that you are doing something, you're doing a meditation, and in that doing the meditation, you're trying to get somewhere, for example, trying to become still, and so trying to become still is having a projection of a future place that you want to get to, and there's an underlying sense that you are doing something, you could even put it in your schedule, you can say at such a time you're meeting someone, meeting, committee meeting at 11, meditation at 12, and so there's just another doing, whereas the true meditation involves no doing, but simply the essence of it is the realization of being, so you can relinquish all doing, when you have a meditation technique, which may be helpful, but if it's not used rightly, it becomes part of your doing, and then it can actually stop you from the realization of being, which is already here now, you don't need to, nothing needs to be added to realize that you are now to realize your own being, so often when you meditate, the underlying assumption is that something needs to be added, you need to become good at it, you need to succeed at it, you need to, and that in itself becomes a hindrance, so in Zen, very often, they don't give you any technique, they just go, now sit here, and you won't get up again for three hours, and so and then you say, well, what do I do? Just sit, and in Zen, when they use the word sit, they usually mean meditate, so when you arrive in a Zen monastery, they greet you, and they might say, how long have you been sitting?

Oh, I've been sitting for 15 years, and then when you sit in Zen, there may be other similar traditions, it's not comfortable, because it gets very painful for the body, unless you're extremely flexible, which I'm not, and most people are not, so if you sit for two or three or four hours or all night facing a wall, they love doing that, and then they open the windows, although it's freezing cold, so they create very unpleasant conditions for your meditation, and not only that, the instructor or master may walk around and hit you when he sees that you're dropping or falling, yet you suddenly feel, with a little cane on your back, and then you have to thank him, but it doesn't, they don't give you a technique as such, and they just watch, you might say, watch your breath, but really even that, often they just say, just watch what arises, thoughts and emotions will arise, and the longer you sit, the more powerfully thoughts and emotions will arise, and the thoughts and emotions will say, get me out of here, how could I have been so mad to come here? And then you start thinking about, what excuse could I give? I could pretend to be really sick suddenly.

So in other words, and then they create conditions that are designed, one could say almost, to produce suffering without actually injuring yourself, they don't go that far, but they are conditions designed to produce an enormous amount of suffering, and so you sit there, facing your own suffering and an enormous amount of resistance, and then if it works for you, at some point, you come to the realization that the suffering is not produced by the conditions, which cannot be described as pleasant, but are as they are, but the real suffering is the resistance to the conditions, which happens on the level of thinking, plus emotions that reflect the thoughts. So you become aware of yourself as the resisting entity, and realize you've come to a point where you can't stand being there anymore, then either you leave or you break through to surrender, and you suddenly let go of any thought about it, and then the emotion subsides too.

When you're no longer telling your body that this is terrible, then eventually the emotion that reflects the thought that this is a terrible place to be, and the emotion also subsides, and then all that's left is the conditions of that moment, which are pain in the body, pain in the neck, or wherever else, and a cold and some hunger, there you are, and then it's possible to break through to a deeper level where suddenly, despite the conditions of that moment, you feel peace, because your mind has stopped commenting in any way. But your mind is not even trying, if your mind is saying, this is really good for you, you should be liking this, that doesn't really work. So your mind is not trying to go to the opposite of from where it was first, where it said, this is awful, where your mind simply surrenders completely, and so it doesn't say anything anymore.

And this is to repeat something that happens to, can happen to a human being naturally by being faced with the challenges of life, which can pile up, and your life situation, as I call it, which means all the circumstances of your life can become so unpleasant and painful that you can't stand the suffering anymore. And that is a wonderful point to reach, not being able to stand the suffering anymore, because at that point, you may realize, not just conceptually, but deep to every fiber of your being, that the suffering comes from the resistance. The resistance happens on the level of the mind.

And so it happens to people naturally that when faced with unpleasant life situations, they suddenly can't stand it anymore, and something in them surrenders, which means the mind subsides. Without the mind creating thinking, all that's left is really the present moment. That's the awakening into the present moment, which is more likely to come when things are not going well than when everything is totally fine.

You may be at a point, most of you, where you don't need the suffering anymore to be pushed into surrender, because that's what life is trying to do. It gives you all the challenge, and eventually you have to surrender. But there is another wave, and perhaps you're here because you've already had enough suffering.

You can voluntarily choose it even without having to be pushed into surrender through suffering. So you can choose to relinquish thought, for example, which otherwise a human being would always do, and even then only a minority, would only do facing extreme conditions in their life. And here, some humans have reached this, the level of consciousness where they no longer need to be faced with extreme conditions.

Although if you were, and if you are here, because at some point in your life, you were faced with extreme conditions, then obviously that's a wonderful thing because that brought you here. And now here you realize, for the further evolution of your consciousness and the emergence of presence through you, you don't need more suffering because you now voluntarily are able, and this is the evolutionary leap forward for humanity, when a human being can do that, can relinquish thought by choice and simply say, I'll be present now. And you can let go of resistance if you still notice resistance arising in certain conditions in your life, you can very quickly notice it.

Anytime you get upset about anything, that is actually quite helpful. Don't fall into the trap of thinking, why am I getting upset? I should be spiritual enough not to get upset about these things.

Why have I been going to all these classes and workshops? Why can't you? You know, the voice in the head, you can talk to yourself, why do you still do that?

Why can't you? And then the other you says, well, I'm trying, I've been trying. And then the other one says, well, you're not trying hard enough.

And then at some point you realize it's the voice in the head that this time has split itself in two, as I believe in one therapy, more doubt it's called the top dog and the underdog. And so you have a discussion with yourself. One says you and the other one, yeah, I couldn't help it.

But of course it's all, it's the voice in the head and even having that inner dialogue with yourself is a form of suffering. It's in a conflict and it's simply produced by the voice in the head, which sometimes seems to be two voices in the head. Sometimes even three.

And sometimes, of course, as you well know, sometimes the voice in the head is your mother's voice. Eat your vegetables. But that would be relatively harmless.

But it says many other things probably. But whatever voice it is, it's the voice. So you recognize when you get upset, you recognize the mechanism behind it.

It was resistance, mind, mental, emotional resistance to the present moment. You lost presence. And at that moment, when you notice upset any kind of upset, that can be a little alarm bell and says, oh, you lost the present moment.

You lost presence. And at that moment, you can have presence. It's here already.

So becoming upset can be very helpful if you know how to use it. If you don't know how to use it, then the upset is something that is unconscious and operates in you and makes you unconscious. But if you know how to use it, it's very helpful.

It can always bring you back into the present moment and acceptance of the present moment. And it's amazing what things people get upset about. Many very unimportant things can create upset.

You might have noticed. But at the moment of being upset, you don't know that these are unimportant. They seem to be overwhelmingly important.

The tiniest things can become overwhelmingly important. So what you are growing into is in any situation that you encounter, not to be exclusively focused on the situation, but to have some focus, some awareness at a deeper level. And you might, as you know, when I say awareness, at that deeper level, you are not aware of anything.

On the outer level of your life, you are aware of whatever goes on. Usually in normal usage, when you use the word aware, you say aware of what? You can't use the word aware without saying aware of what?

You sometimes read in newspapers and so on, increasing awareness, but it's usually followed by about certain issues, increasing awareness about the environment, increasing awareness about what climate change, increasing awareness about what we need to do in education. And all this is wonderful. You're increasing awareness about all these things.

In all the various situations of your life, at any given moment, your awareness is aware of whatever goes on around you. Then that is not enough. But the awareness of what gone around you, you need to be aware of, at a deeper level, of the awareness itself.

You need to be aware that you are aware, right at this moment, for example, you're aware of my voice, you're aware of this room, you're aware of whatever sense perceptions you can now register in your consciousness. But at the same time, this wonderful thing is possible. That is, you can be aware of awareness.

In other words, you realize you are conscious that you are conscious. This is the one fact in your life that is beyond any doubt, because it is so obviously the case. Right now, you are conscious.

And even that may be a distortion that happens through language, because there is no real you apart from that consciousness. So if I express it verbally, and if I say, you are conscious, or if I say, I am conscious, but this language operates like that, but even that is a slight distortion, because that implies that I and conscious are two things. The essence of who I am, apart from consciousness, there is no me, there is no I.

It would be nothing. Consciousness is who I am. It would be more accurate to say, I am consciousness.

That is who you are. To realize you are consciousness is at the same time a realization of this vast realm of inner stillness, because that consciousness is the unconditioned consciousness. It is just vast spaciousness and great depths.

I am consciousness. After you say it, you can... How do you know that you are conscious or you are consciousness?

It's so obvious you cannot possibly doubt it. This is the one fact about your life that you cannot doubt, because all the rest may be a dream. There's no way of proving that us sitting in this room here now is a dream that you are having.

You can... There's no way of disproving that this is not a dream. This may be a bit...

And many philosophers have looked at ordinary human existence and described it as dream, dreamlike. In many ways, it is a kind of dream because what does a dream do? It appears and then suddenly it's gone.

And the situation too, it appears and then next week it'll be gone. And then you might wake up one morning and say, retreat, asylum. Was that a dream or did that happen?

So this may be a dream, but even if it is a dream, it still applies that you are conscious in that dream, right? Now, if you were not conscious, there would be no dream. Nobody could have a dream.

The dream could not appear. So it becomes irrelevant whether this is so-called reality or so-called dream. The actual reality is that you are conscious, whether it's a dream or reality.

Consciousness is still required even for a dream to exist. Then it needs to exist in the light of a consciousness. So you could well say, and this is getting closer to the truth, that everything that happens in the world, in your life or in the world at large, is the dream that the one consciousness is having, including yourself, including your person.

That vast consciousness is infinite. It can have dreams, dream that includes an infinite number of scenarios and entities and beings and life forms, all coming together in this web of interconnectedness and appearing as the vast dream that appears as the entire universe and what happens in it. Consciousness dreaming and consciousness dreams so that all these things in the dream, which are part of the one consciousness, seem to have an independent existence.

They don't realize that they are part of the dream of the one consciousness until they wake up. And they wake up in the dream. And in the dream, the one consciousness wakes up after a few million years of dreaming, or billion years.

The one consciousness wakes up in the middle of the dream and says, I know who I am now. I am consciousness. And then you look around and it's quite a nice dream.

It's quite interesting. So when you realize that you are consciousness, the universe realizes itself through you. After a few billion years of dreaming and creating this incredible multiplicity of life forms and the universe, which is dream-like, consciousness wakes up and becomes aware of itself.

You could say God becomes aware of itself in this dimension. Words can only give you an approximation. I cannot explain the universe in words.

I mean, it would be absurd to even try. So whatever I say is like, it's a bit like this, or it's a bit like that. That's not it.

The words could not express it. I mean, I've said it before. When you speak, it's just a few sounds produced by the vocal cords plus air pressure produced by the tongue.

So the rest is the five vowels, A, I, E, O, U, R, O, E, O. So you put these together, a little bit of air pressure and a few sounds produced by the vocal cords. And you are trying to explain the meaning of the universe.

But you can give a hint that's all an approximation. Or the same thing on paper, just a few symbols, scribbles, printed page on a computer screen. No, of course you cannot encapsulate the secret of the universe, but one can get a sense of what it is.

And then there is a deeper knowing that cannot really be expressed through language or words or any other symbol. And so the reason why I am pointing to it with words now is when you are ready to hear this and you are ready to experience, to realize that within yourself, this awakening of consciousness. And in that there is a deep, you kind of know what is at the heart of the universe.

But could you explain it? No, you can give a few hints. If you are poetically inclined, you might write a poem about it.

Or if you are musically inclined, you might write a musical piece that points to it. It's not it, it points to it. All these things can only point to it.

Or you're an artist or you may dance and point to it through your dance. But when you become aware of yourself as consciousness, you realize what lies at the heart of the universe. Because the heart, meaning the innermost dimension of yourself, the core, the heart, is when you find that within yourself, that is the heart of the universe, because you are a microcosm of the entire universe.

So to explore the secret of the universe, you will not find it, although I love science fiction and I love spaceships, but you won't find the secret of the universe by traveling out there to explore the last, what is it? The space, the last frontier, yes. Of course, the last frontier is the inner space.

So, but the outer space is very interesting, but you won't find the heart of the universe out there. So that doesn't mean never go there. That's one dimension of human existence is the outward dimension.

But the secret of the universe, you can only find that within yourself. What is the essence behind it all? The essence behind it all is that one thing that is not mentioned when you read books about cosmology, you read books by famous scientists trying to figure out the mystery of the universe and the galaxies and the black holes.

And you can read these books and often you find the greatest mystery of the universe, they never mentioned once. You can have these books and read the entire book without the word consciousness ever appearing once in the whole entire book that's about figuring out the secret of the universe. And the greatest mystery of the universe, far greater than any number of galaxies, the greatest mystery of the universe and the greatest miracle is that the universe is conscious.

And to ignore that and try to figure out what the secret of the universe is, you ignore the most obvious thing that's right, not just in front of your nose, but behind your nose. And you try to figure out what the great mystery is of the universe. Well, you forget the most important factor, which is yourself, your innermost being, because you're looking so much out there, trying to figure it all out.

And you overlook the fact that the secret you already carry it within you, the secret of the universe. And because it's easy to overlook the consciousness that you are, because sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions are so noisy and clamor for your attention. You need to think about this thing.

Oh, look at me. Look at this. It's so important, this situation.

Look what he just did. Are you going to do something about it? Yes, I need to do something about it.

And then another thought and emotion comes in. So everything demands your attention all the time. Thoughts demand your attention.

Other people demand your attention. The incoming email demands your attention. Another Facebook posting demands your attention.

A text message is coming in demanding your attention. And then there's a traffic to cope with. And then you're running late already.

So it's so easy to overlook because the gravitational pull, both of the external world and the world of thought and emotion is so enormous that it's not surprising that people lose themselves totally in the world of form. And then they start believing that the solution to everything must be found in the world of form. They just need to look harder.

And then you get that restlessness of a person who is never at ease anywhere because they're trying to figure something out. And they're really trying to figure out how to get to a place of where they can be at peace. And so they need to get this done first.

Let me first do this. And then the next thing, you have to deal with this now. And the only thing I have to achieve this and I'll be okay, I think.

Never get there because then something else demands your attention. And when you deal with this, you just sort it on one situation. Another one collapses behind you, describing ordinary existence.

And not surprising that people overlook this very gentle but incredibly powerful thing that is at the core of who you are because your attention gets continuously, you get hypnotized by everything. You get hypnotized by every situation, by every thought that comes in, by every emotion. And so you're always identified with this and that and reactive to this or that.

And of course, then you get, people get very exhausted with life. They get tired of life. Can't take it anymore.

So this overlooking is important because when you realize that there is something vital that you tend to, until recently, you have always overlooked. And what is that? You overlook the very thing that makes it possible for the world that you experience to exist.

The very thing or no thing that makes it possible for you to think. To experience anything. And that's consciousness.

So the moment you become aware of consciousness and that has always been there, but you always overlooked it. Another way of putting it is become aware of your own presence. You become aware of yourself, not as a historical person, a person with a history, but become aware of yourself at a deeper level.

Become aware of yourself as a conscious presence. And that had always been there, but it was continuously overlooked because other things were seen to be so important. And even for humans who are awakening into this now, they still experience being hypnotized and completely distracted easily by other things.

Even if you're already awakening, you can still find that a relatively unimportant situation can draw you in completely. And again, you forgot who you are because that's what it is. When you get upset about anything, you have forgotten who you are, essentially.

And all you think, you're this little me. So self-forgetfulness is the main unconsciousness. So this is why an early teacher in the 20th century, Gurdjieff used the expression self-remembering.

So he was trying to teach people to be aware of themselves. He didn't use, I don't think he used the word presence, but he said self-remembering is the most important thing. And this can be misunderstood as meaning, I need to think about myself, my life, here, me, here.

That's not it. It's realizing yourself as the presence. What Gurdjieff did, sometimes he had various devices with his students.

He would sometimes, when his students were talking, I could try that at lunch hour, when you're having lunch, he would come into the room and he would suddenly shout, stop. So everybody had to freeze, whatever they were doing. And the idea behind it was to become conscious of yourself, to step out of the stream of mind and emotions and suddenly become conscious of your presence.

Whether it works or not, I don't know. But that's what he did. He was so eccentric and unusual, he even tried to get his students drunk and find out if he can remain conscious.

So we don't need to go there. Self-remembering, that's an expression he used. I would say, be aware of your own presence and practice that first.

The easiest practice is when you're in nature or perceiving anything around nature. So you can be aware of the perceiving presence and letting go of labeling, unless you need the label to explain something to somebody. But otherwise you walk around, you watch the ocean, you watch the trees, the sand here, the sky, even if it's gray, let go of the thought, oh no, not another June gloom day.

Let go of the thought and just be the presence behind your sense perceptions. That's the easiest practice. It's also, you can practice with an animal, a dog or a cat also to just be present.

This is why people love being with dogs and cats because they don't stimulate your complicating thinking mind. They are simple creatures. They are conscious, but pre-thought.

They don't have an opinion about you. So the dog doesn't have judgments. The dog simply loves you unconditionally because the mind hasn't started up yet, the conceptual mind.

So the dog doesn't think, what a jerk. He just responds to the present moment. And you can come back after three hours or two hours and the dog greets you as if you had been away for two or three years because he's so deeply connected with the present moment, with life.

So humans are much more difficult to stay present with, you might have noticed. The natural world is easier to be present with. And as you perceive, and you might even do things in the natural world.

You may do gardening. You may be walking. You may whatever.

And you can still be there as a presence more than a person. There may be a bit of a person too because occasionally you have thoughts. You may not be able to remain, nor do you need to in thoughtless awareness for long stretches of time.

But predominantly be there the presence and then the person occasionally will come in. Of course, the thought might say, I wonder what's for dinner tonight. Or it might say, oh, that's a nice tree.

I wonder what that's called. But it's not really that important right now what that's called. And then you let go of that thought.

And so there's more experiencing without thought than through thought. The two fundamental ways of experiencing the world through thought and conceptual knowledge and without thought and conceptual knowledge, which is awareness or presence. Most humans don't know that.

Why don't they teach at school that there are two fundamental ways of experiencing things? One is through thought and so on. And one is through simple looking, listening, hearing, being present with.

Shouldn't that be the most, even more important than count from one to a hundred or to be able to write or read? The most fundamental thing, the possibility that there is another consciousness in you that's possible rather than just the thinking. But at school, all they stimulate, unless it's an alternative school, all they stimulate is the conceptual mind only.

And the continuous doing through the conceptual mind, never being, doing, doing, thinking, thinking, adding more and more concepts. And the best students are the ones who are the quickest thinkers, not those who are the most profound thinkers, because to be a profound thinker means there are moments of stillness. You are not a profound thinker if you're always thinking.

If you're always thinking, you're a superficial thinker. Profound thinking doesn't really exist. All it means is you have spaces of no thought.

And if you have spaces of no thought, then your thinking becomes more inspired. It is inspired by the depths of awareness. And so, but at school, these children who are slower because they go deeper, they're encouraged to let go of that and think more, accumulate knowledge.

Albert Einstein, until up to the age of five, his parents and his nannies suspected that he was mentally retarded because he was so slow. Because he was naturally, there were spaces in him. So he wasn't, he wouldn't give fast answers because you could ask a simple question and he would just, hmm.

And in the meantime, all the other children all went, I know, I know. But the question probably had, there was a much more profound answer possible, but he needed to go within for that. All this is not recognized in our, it hasn't been for a long time, but we are getting back.

We're now rediscovering something or not. Whether the people in the past had glimpses of knowledge of the importance of stillness and awareness. For example, the importance that ancient tribal societies give to the elders, because the elders represent the deeper dimension of life.

And again, there was a reason why the elders were important. The elders represented the dimension of stillness. What function do elders have in our society?

None. They are just put away into homes and then they sit there and watch television, unfortunately. So there's another huge area where new structures need to be created.

If some of you may want to do that, I would encourage you. Old age is a wonderful opportunity for surrender, deepening, becoming aware of yourself as presence, but it's better not to wait until you're old because it may be too late because many old people don't realize who they are just because they get old. They get just more entrenched in their patterns.

So instead of becoming like this and the ageless consciousness shining through, they become cranky, continuous. They've been in resistance even before they got old, but now that they're old, they're even more in resistance. I don't want that.

That's a pity. Missed the opportunity of old age. Become aware of yourself as presence.

You're reaching the heart of the universe. Whether or not you can say anything about it doesn't matter. Consciousness, the greatest mystery of the universe, and you embody it.

What could be a greater mystery than the fact that the universe is conscious? There are some books where philosophers, modern philosophers try to explain consciousness. I tried to read some of them, but they are so tedious that I had to give up.

If you're interested in going a little bit further in conceptualizing consciousness and understanding as much as is possible, and it's not much is possible to understand conceptually what consciousness is, but Ken Wilber has some good insights into consciousness and he would be one of the few contemporary philosophers that have something useful to say about consciousness. But even there, you cannot really explain what it is except it can only be realized non-conceptually. I may occasionally, we'll just go on for a little while, see what it feels like.

And I may occasionally say a few words while we meditate, which may be helpful to some of you, just to wake you up in case you drift. The challenge in meditation is that you are drifting below thought. Of course, when you drift far enough below thought, you fall asleep.

So if you hear any snoring, it is a sign that somebody has drifted significantly below thought. But real meditation, of course, is being alert and awake, so alert and so awake that thoughts just don't come in anymore. You remember in the power of now, I used the analogy of the cat watching the mouse hole.

And the cat watching the mouse hole is extremely alert. And I once lived with three cats, so I know a lot about cats. I've observed them a lot.

And the cat watching a mouse hole is like this, very alert. Now, the cat, of course, is focused only on the mouse hole. But here in meditation, if you have a meditation object, if you cannot stop thinking without a meditation object, you may need to focus on something, a mantra or an inner image or whatever.

But the real meditation is choiceless awareness. So sometimes you need this first, and then when the mind has stopped, then you go like that. Then so you're not focused on any one thing in particular anymore.

It's just expansive awareness. You can even look around in that state. I can look around this room without a single thought in my head.

So can you, probably some of you. You look around this room, without a single thought in your head, and be aware simultaneously of your surroundings and your own presence as consciousness. Another way of putting it, you can be aware of the stillness underneath your sense perceptions.

That's consciousness. You can meditate with your eyes closed. Most people do it with their eyes closed.

You can also occasionally open your eyes and still remain in that state of presence. So that one important step for meditators is to realize they don't need to keep their eyes closed to be present. Because if you associate being present with your eyes closed, the moment you open your eyes, you're not present again.

So, but as initially, it can be helpful to have your eyes closed. If you cannot keep thoughts at bay simply by choosing not to think, as we sit here, you may need to put your attention on something. And I suggest, as I mentioned yesterday, feeling the aliveness in the inner body, or be aware of your breathing flowing in the air, flowing in and out of the body.

Or even simultaneously, be aware of the aliveness in your body and be aware of the fact that you're breathing. So yeah, there's just that awareness that can help you to be still, to be free of thinking. So when you hear the bell once, it's not the end of the meditation.

I just ring it to remind you to be present. If you're drifting off into thinking, put your attention back into the body. Now open your eyes and continue your meditation with your eyes open.

So just being present with your sense perceptions. I will talk just a little bit more, but with lots of spaces between the words, so that you can practice meditative listening, which means you're aware of the words that you're hearing, but you're also aware of the spaces between the words. And while you're aware of the spaces between the words, you may notice you're not thinking.

If you are thinking, you cannot be aware of the spaces between the words. And this is good practice to be aware simultaneously of form and formlessness of things and of space. And you may notice when you are aware of that space, you're really aware of yourself as the presence, because that presence is inner space.

And you may notice when you're aware of space, you're not waiting for the next thing to happen. You're not waiting for what I'm going to say next. No need, because you know that what I'm going to say next, whatever I'm going to say next, cannot add anything important to the realization of your presence.

And so intentionally, I'm not saying anything very interesting right now, because if it's too interesting, you will get drawn back into the words and into thought and into form. So it's good that this talk is boring, that leaves more room for the awareness of space. Music, when it has a spiritual dimension, also has spaces in it or an underlying spaciousness.

Some visual art also has spaciousness in it. And when you look at it, you may find there isn't much there. For example, certain Asian paintings, a little tree in a corner, a little distant mountain, a tiny human standing somewhere, and 85% of the painting is empty space.

It might be the sky or just empty space. And if you really look at it, you become aware that the essence of the painting is not what's there to be seen, but the essence is what's not there, space. And so looking at that can be a realization of your own spaciousness.

It's so liberating to realize the essence of yourself as stillness. Space. One little practice I would recommend, take five minutes or so.

You can practice here, of course, but at home, everybody has five minutes. Don't believe your mind when it tells you you don't have five minutes. And the practice is sit somewhere outside or indoors for five minutes and practice perception without interference of thinking, which means you just look around wherever you are.

You may look at occasionally your gaze rests upon one thing for a little while, and then you look on, then you take in the totality of whatever surrounds you. And as you do, you're aware simultaneously of what you are seeing, but without calling it anything. And you're aware of the stillness that is your essence.

That's the background to the visual sense perceptions. And so this is a blank canvas. And whatever you see is the painting on the canvas that appears and disappears, appears and disappears.

But the canvas is the spacious stillness. It's a beautiful way of perceiving the world. And another practice, particularly good when you're outside, but also indoors, sit for five minutes again and be very alert.

Pay attention to whatever you are hearing, alert listening. The slightest sounds. No sound is better or worse than another.

Just every sound is received. Beautiful bird song, the motorbikes driving past. But you are again the canvas for the sound this time.

And it's all just register. And you have no preference. Any sound is fine.

And you're aware of yourself as the presence, the listening presence, the alertness that makes the hearing possible. And again, as much as possible, no mental labeling. The subtlest sounds are the best that way because they require your greatest alertness, some distant sound.

So if you sit in a very still place, in nature, perhaps, see how far you can hear. Do you remember the story in the new earth, the Zen master walking with a disciple and they sit down, have something to eat. And then the disciple says, can you explain how to enter Zen?

Which means, can you explain how to enter the state of consciousness? That is Zen. And the master says, can you hear that distant mountain stream?

And the sound must have been really distant. The disciple at first can't hear and then he becomes more alert. And of course, as he becomes more alert, he stops thinking because you cannot be really alert and think.

Thinking implies a certain degree of non-alertness. So the disciple listened. Can you?

Yeah, I can hear now. And the master says, enter Zen from there. In other words, that's a portal into presence.

And that's how you can use sense perceptions in your presence practice. So do this today, tomorrow, wherever you are, sit somewhere. If you're comfortable standing, I wouldn't lie because lying while you do this is often an invitation to go below thought.

So sitting and sitting without leaning back is better. There's a natural alertness that comes as you sit upright. And then you go first to visual practice.

You may do that. Some other time you do five minutes auditory presence practice. So it's good.

I think I will talk like this all the time from now on.

[Speaker 7] (5:09:39 - 5:09:54)

Our program continues with session five, examining the ways we see observation, perspective, and labels with Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (5:10:07 - 6:21:13)

I noticed there's a huge amount of written questions. I've been spending a long time going through them and getting terribly frustrated, stressed out. So in this session, I'll address some of the written questions.

I selected as much as possible those that occurred frequently, similar questions asked by different people. Later tonight, we will probably have spontaneous questions that spontaneously arise in your mind in that moment. I've put a couple of lighthearted ones on top.

Is it a good sign if I have no more questions for you? That would have been a good sign. And here somebody has a big problem with surrender.

There's an ugly telephone pole outside my living room window. I try to accept it, but it ruins my view. Sometimes I feel compassion towards it because it is working hard at doing its job and no one loves it.

How can I accept the telephone pole? Am I trying too hard? Should I just accept my non-acceptance?

Well, that's an interesting question. This may not be a profound example of resistance causing some suffering, but even here, the basic mechanism behind non-acceptance is still the same. And going beyond non-acceptance, I can see that the questioner is attempting to go beyond non-acceptance in one particular way.

First by formulating certain thoughts that are designed to make it easier to accept what's there. So in this case, the thought is, it's doing its job, so I should be compassionate towards it. Or it's working hard and nobody loves it, so I should love it.

That's a kind of rationalization that is a little bit better than complete non-acceptance. You can do it, people try to do it with their own lives. They say, I really should be, I shouldn't be unhappy because look at all these people who are worse off than me, and so I should really be happy.

And so then you try to think of all the people worse off than you, hoping that that will generate the feeling of happiness, which of course means you depend on other people's unhappiness in order to feel more happy about yourself. So that is not the real, or it's lovely to love the pole, but it's not the real surrender. The real surrender is when you look out of your window and you have no thought about what it is that you see there.

In the absence of any kind of judgment in your mind, the pole is just as perfect as the trees behind it, because the pole was a tree once. It still is in a way, it's the same substance, but you don't need to think that. What I'm saying is it's all there as it is.

If you can bring the simple aware perception to it, there's no longer anything to surrender to. And then you have got this feeling that everything is where it's supposed to be, it's fine. You just look out, you do the same, let's say it might've happened to you, you wake up in the morning, here the past few days it's been gloomy, and you open the curtains and then the mind might've commented on the weather and said something like, is this dreary, how can people live here in this?

Is it like this every day of the year? Why is it so always, we are in the summer, why is it so, it's just terrible. Instead, you could just look out of the window and just be, ah, a space of openness, what is, no judgment.

This is one thing I would recommend. I call that the window meditation, not just in the morning. Anytime you look out of the window anywhere, consciously look out of a window, make it into a moment of meditation because you will be seeing something on the other side of the window.

You see something out there and you can spend a minute looking out of any window, wherever you are and giving it your fullest attention. So that becomes the focus of your attention, whatever you see out there without, and you look at it as we've been practicing, if necessary, feel the inner body and then look out of the window. I started a while ago taking photos with my iPhone of different windows that I find when we travel and so on, looking out of different windows in different places in the world.

And they're little meditations. Every window is a little meditation. And if you've been on one or two of my previous retreats, when I had a spiritual entertainment evening, showing little video clips, I showed one video clip of a little two minute video that Oprah produced, well, not herself, but her people.

They were handing out empty frames to people about this size, like picture frames, but they were empty, there was nothing inside, picture frames. And they were asking people in the street somewhere to take this picture frame and hold it anywhere to any place. It doesn't have to be remarkable and in fact, it's better if it's not remarkable and give attention to whatever you see on the other side of the frame and appreciate and acknowledge, not through thinking, but through giving it attention, what it is there.

And people found that quite amazing. They went around with this picture frame. One person was just looking at a wall.

Another person was looking at an insignificant flower that's grown. Or you can look at a glass of water. You can look at the sky through it.

That was a wonderful practice of giving your fullest attention to something that's usually overlooked, all the ordinary things. In the normal mind identified state of consciousness, you overlook almost everything. The entire, whatever the present moment is continuously habitually overlooked because you have something more important to think about.

Not realizing that your entire life unfolds in the space of this moment. But, oh no, there's something I need to think about. Maybe at some point when I've sorted out my stuff, I can do that when I'm retired.

So the overlooking, you overlook that, but you overlook it because the main thing that's overlooked is of course the consciousness, the unconditioned consciousness, the stillness underneath the thinking that's there in everyone, the spaciousness. We talked about that. You get hypnotized into believing that everything out there is of absolute importance and every thought that arises in your mind you need to give it attention.

Come this way. Okay, where are you taking me? Oh, you'll see.

I'm going to take you to a very nice place, but first you need to worry about how you get there. And so looking and just be with it. A person who has not yet arrived at thinking can do that in some way, but a person who has transcended thinking like you can do it more profoundly.

There's an added dimension of depth. A one-year-old child will also look at the world like that. A one-year-old child in whom the conceptualization has not started yet, looks at the world in that open, totally open way.

The world not yet burdened by concepts. And this is, I would say, Jesus was talking about it, that if you want to enter the kingdom of heaven, you must become like little children. Okay, so in order to know what he's talking about, you need to look at a little child and how a little child observes the world.

But of course, yes, there is a similarity there, except that the child is at a pre-verbal and pre-conceptual stage. And you, as you become present, are at a post-conceptual stage where the entire conceptual dimension can still be used perfectly, but you are no longer confined to it. To be confined to just the conceptual dimension in your mind is the most dreadful prison because then you're confined also to a conceptual sense of self.

Your entire sense of who you are is derived from certain things that your mind is telling you about who or what you are. Just concepts, stories, whatever you want to call it, thoughts, little bundles of thoughts that reoccur again and again. And they say, that's me, with reactive patterns associated with them.

Dreadful prison. Of course, concepts are wonderful if you use them. If they use you, and if you identify completely with them, then that's a dreadful state.

Then it would be better to regress, be a little child or a tree or a dog and wag your tail and be joyful again. But we are not here to regress. We're here to transcend.

Are there specific suggestions for cerebral helpers, physicians, therapists, et cetera, to help us become present and stop thinking, to listen better just prior to encounter, taking deep breaths prior to entering patient room, perhaps? So what suggestions for cerebral helpers? I mentioned that a little bit a couple of days ago.

People who use a lot of knowledge in their work with others. So if you are a certain type of spiritual healer, then you would most probably not apply your conceptual mind in the healing situation. But if you are a physician or whatever, then you have to apply your knowledge to the healing situation acquired over many years.

And so just to remind you of what I said a couple of days ago or three days ago, you need to be able to still use whatever modality you use, your knowledge, apply it, but see if you can also have the application of your knowledge interspersed with little spaces of aware presence. Sometimes that happens when you listen to whatever the patient is telling you. Sometimes it may happen when you look at the patient.

Sometimes it may happen when you place attention on a particular symptom. And you might notice before you come to a conclusion about whatever the condition of this patient may be, there is a moment when you are looking at the patient or at the presenting symptoms. And there's a moment perhaps of three seconds when there's no thinking yet.

Anybody to look at something first, in the first moment of looking at something, you're not yet thinking. Most people miss that completely. They don't realize that for the first two or three seconds when you're looking at a patient, let's call him a patient, client, whatever, you're looking.

And before the mind begins to the application of its knowledge to the situation, there is a space of just aware looking. And that many people do that without knowing it at all. It's a natural thing to do.

There's a moment of space. But if you are aware of that moment of space of looking, then it becomes a little deeper and longer it goes. And that is, you become aware of what already you're doing naturally without knowing it.

When you become aware of it, it actually deepens and it might get a little bit longer. Instead of looking for three seconds, you might look for five seconds before the mind comes in and that's, okay, this is what this person needs. Now I need to do this, this, this.

And this is interesting. Whenever you encounter a new situation and not just not, let's take it beyond the therapeutic situation. Whenever you encounter a new person comes into your field of vision, you're walking, you're going around a corner, a new vista opens up.

Anything, somebody is knocking at your door, you open the door and then you look who is standing there. And for the first two seconds, there's no thinking. You need to take it in first.

You need to take in the sense perception. So naturally in daily life, people have the tiniest moments when they're not thinking. And it's always something new arises in your field of consciousness.

And in the first few moments or in the first moment, there's not yet an interpretation of it. There's only an absorbing it. If you find you're particularly peaceful or at ease, then you find there are longer periods when you're out in nature, then you spend longer periods, perhaps five seconds looking at a tree before your mind says anything.

You go, oh, this is so nice. Be aware in your daily life of the first, whenever something new comes into your field of vision, there will be a moment when you're just aware of it. And usually the mind tries to come in as quickly as possible because it does not like, the egoic mind does not like to be in a state of not knowing what's going on.

It needs to adopt some kind of position towards what you're seeing, what you're perceiving. So as quickly as possible, it wants to come in with some kind of judgment or interpretation. I need to know.

If you become aware of these naturally arising moments of presence that are very, very brief, then you can, they will be there consciously. And if they're there consciously, they naturally become a little bit longer and there's a deeper awareness. So catch those things in your daily life.

They will be there. Every time something new arises, you need to look first. And there's that space before the mind steps in.

And if you are a deep person, so to speak, then you're, that space that precedes thinking is longer. That's all, then you become a deeper human being. If that space is incredibly short, almost non-existent in some people immediately, then they are superficial.

They might have two PhDs, but they are superficial. There's no depth to them, which may, well, there is a depth, but it is as if it wasn't there because it's totally covered up.

So a deep human being has longer spaces of no thinking before that person replies or that person, now don't, this is a natural thing.

If you can make it into a practice, yes, too, as long as the ego doesn't get in there and say, I want to appear. I want to be a deep person. So I'm going to take a long time in answering any questions from now on.

So in the therapeutic situation, also be aware of this. So bring in the spaces and observe the spaces that occur naturally in that situation. They will be brief.

In addition to the spaces that occur naturally in the situation, bring in these spaces, for example, when listening to the patient, just listen. When you may also occasionally be aware of your breathing as you did. So any way you can, bring in little spaces, give fullest attention to whatever you're doing.

You're preparing something. Perhaps you're going to administer something to the patient. If you're a physician, you're preparing something.

In that moment, there's another opportunity for absolute presence. So it's an art to have your knowledge not completely obliterating these little moments of spaciousness in you. It's an art that needs to be practiced.

Otherwise the effect that it has on you after many years of being completely, completely absorbed only in your knowledge when you work with people, then you live in a world complete conceptualization and you will no longer be able to see the human being. You will see a patient. You will not relate to a human being anymore.

You will relate to a patient or you will only relate to a symptom in a patient. And some doctors, unfortunately have gone that way because nobody has taught them that another way is possible. So perhaps many of you have experienced being with certain doctors who actually don't see you as a human.

They see you as a patient. Or they're only interested in the symptom. Some doctors even hardly look at you.

Of course, there's pressure of work. They have to have a few minutes to see you. So it's all those physicians and other cerebral, as the questioner says, practitioners.

Of course, obviously you are here because you have already gone beyond that to some extent. So you're not totally burdened by the acquired knowledge so that it obliterates everything else. Interspersed.

So what applies to the therapeutic situation applies to anybody's daily life too. You must have your daily life interspersed with presence. Otherwise, it's just the human mind dragging you along.

I feel a deep sense of peace and awareness arising within me. I see myself in others and feel an abundance of unconditional love. How can I best communicate love and loving kindness to people, Irina?

Your mind is saying that in addition to the arising of loving kindness, which comes through presence, you need to do something else, but you don't. The arising of loving kindness is enough and then it will flow into the way in which you relate to others. It flows into your speech.

It flows into the way you look at them. It emanates from you. You don't need to figure out mentally what you're going to do with it because it knows.

It goes where it wants to go. It is the essence of who you are. So the question is really unnecessary because you're already there.

Now allow it to manifest through you. And it does in every encounter. It cannot not manifest.

So that is beautiful. Many questions have come from people asking about feeling drained after working with people for a long time. For example, I work in a healing capacity and often find helping professionals come to us asking for help when they find their energy to be drained by those they support.

Health professionals, social workers, even hairdressers who spend much of their time listening to the problems of others can feel exhausted at the end of each day. Any advice from you would be welcome. This is Sally asking and quite a few other people.

The energy loss mostly happens if you engage too much with the mind stream of those people. Now this is for people who listen and to people talk like counselors and so on. If you engage with the mind stream that comes through the words and follow it, that tends to take energy out of you.

So the art is to remain, while you listen, to remain aware of your own presence so that you don't allow the mind to link in with your mind and then pull you along. And this is why you may remember I mentioned when I used to work with individuals, I would sometimes, a smile would come to my lips when I was listening to them, their problems. And the smile comes because the presence is so peaceful and beautiful.

And it knows that that person also, their essence is also that presence. So you listen to the words, but instead of being drawn into that mind stream, you allow it to go through you. So to continuous to have your awareness in your inner space while you are engaged in listening so that I would almost say at least more than 50%, if one could even quantify it, more than 50% of your attention, 70% of your attention needs to be in the energy field of presence, your stillness.

And then you listen from there. Then it's not draining to listen. But if you listen with, then it draws your attention.

If you link into the other person's mental stream, your mental stream unites with the other person's mental stream and then you get dragged along. So that almost looks as if you were a little detached. And I don't know if detachment is the right word.

Perhaps it is. But detachment limits it because you're not only detached, you're on a deeper level. You are more at one with that person than you could ever be on the mental level.

So on the mental level, there is some detachment, but on a deeper level, there is a sense of, there's the unifying field of awareness that is there between you of presence. So there's no separation. Yes, detachment on one level, but on another level, there's the realization of oneness beyond the conceptualized identity.

It's again, it's a practice. It's an art. Another related question.

Do you have a comment about labeling of people, diagnostic evaluation and so on for psychiatrists and others? Counselors, psychiatrists, of course, that's what they've been trained to do. You find certain labels for certain conditions.

And again, finding a balance between, yes, you may still want to apply your modality through which you look. It's a kind of map or a lens through which you look at that person. And then you figure out according to your training, what's wrong with that person and what you come up with, of course, is a certain concepts that you apply.

And say, this person suffers from narcissistic personality disorder because he won't stop talking about himself, has no interest in anybody else and gets angry when anybody disagrees with him and is desperate for attention and acknowledgement. Okay, that's narcissistic personality disorder. Okay, so that label may have a certain validity, but if you think that that is who that human being is, if you equate the labels that you apply to the person with who that person is, which is the danger when you have lots of labels at your disposition, which you can apply to people, you then mistake the label for who that person is and you're treating a narcissistic personality disorder person and you can no longer sense that although this person may display all those symptoms, there is a being underneath it. There is a consciousness underneath it that is one with the consciousness that you are. So the danger is that you mistake the labels for the identity of that person.

As long as you know that it's only a label and it's a temporary label because anybody can suddenly change, sometimes through suffering, through a miracle, or they can change gradually. Anybody can suddenly change and suddenly there's somebody else there. There are many people in prisons when they went into prison where one person and some of them experience a transformation.

Most of them unfortunately don't, but some of them experience a transformation of consciousness while they are in there. So the dreadful person who did dreadful things disappears. There have been cases of the most people have committed the most dreadful atrocities and then through intense suffering, perhaps on death row over years, all their, whatever blocked their essential being got burned up, burned out of them.

The totally dysfunctional ego, the absurdly dysfunctional ego, the violent ego, the murderous ego, got burned out of them. And there's, what's left is just the presence. So you cannot, there's never, whatever the conditioning of that person is, that's never who that human being truly is.

Or you could say in the way I use the word, the human is the conditioned level. The being is the unconditioned. The human is temporal and the being is timeless.

So it's vital, not just in the therapeutic situation, not to mistake labels for who, not to equate mental labels that you give to people, not to equate that with who they are. And also not to equate what they did with who they are, because what they did was the result of their conditioning, their unconsciousness. So that is as important for professionals who have labels that they apply.

And it's important in general for everybody not to believe in the labels that the mind comes up with, not for yourself either. Who am I, me and my life, conceptual identity. You don't want to live through a conceptual identity for the rest of your life.

It's so limiting. Now, I don't know how this got here, but it's here. My Christian friend thinks I am going to hell because I have not accepted Jesus as my personal savior.

I disagree. I think he is stuck in an ego-based belief system. Who is right?

Well, I'm sure your friend thinks he is right. And I'm sure you think you are right. And now you want me to confirm that you are right.

There are certain levels of evolution and there are also certain levels of spirituality. And what works on one level for certain people may not work on another level for others. So there's another question here somewhere about whether one needs to have a master, a spiritual master, not to worship, but as a means of attaining salvation, it's a wonderfully asked, do we need a spiritual master or guru?

Because there are certain people who will tell you that you absolutely need to surrender to a spiritual master or guru to attain salvation. And again, if that is your path, then you will find one. And you may surrender to him until you grow out of that stage, but it works while you do it.

It brings you to some degree of surrender. If the master is a real master, he will send you away at some point and say, find yourself. I've been teaching you for long enough.

Goodbye. Or if you are lucky, he dies and then you're alone suddenly. Jesus or Jesus Christ can be seen also on many levels.

At a certain level of consciousness, you regard Jesus as your personal savior. There are other levels of consciousness where you may regard Jesus as a representation of Christ consciousness. And Christians can go that way.

You can go very deeply and still be a Christian. You can transcend the lower level belief systems that are associated with not only with Christianity, with any religion. They are the lower level belief systems that corresponds to certain degree levels of consciousness in humans.

And you can go to a deeper, deeper level of realization and can still have Jesus or Christ as the representation of transcendent consciousness. And then that may still work for you. So there are teachings that are quite profound.

For example, A Course in Miracles that use Christian terminology, but take it to a deeper level. Other teachings, Joel Goldsmith, for anybody who has read, he was a spiritual teacher in the earlier first half of the 20th century. He also took Christianity to a deeper level.

There were medieval mystics like Meister Eckhart, perhaps the most profound, who took Christianity, even medieval Christianity, which was extremely absurdly limited and totally intolerant and just incredibly unconscious. And he took that and he revealed, he interpreted in such a way that it suddenly had enormous depth. And miraculously, he didn't get killed or burned, but he just, just before he died, apparently the Pope, whoever the Pope was at the time, condemned his teachings.

And then very conveniently, Meister Eckhart died. So you can have, if you go to a Buddhist country, you see many practices that are, that correspond to a certain level of consciousness where the Buddha is basically a god and you carry a little thing around here for your personal protection. And even the thieves and bandits, they carry the Buddha here for protection.

They may go around killing people, but they want the Buddha for protection. And if you go into a Buddhist monastery in a Buddhist country, you may, after a little while, you may be a little disappointed because at first, when you're a Westerner, you think every Buddhist monk looks so enlightened because they are. But if you actually go there, you see most of them are not enlightened at all.

Some of them have gone into a monastery because they were escaping from the police and others because it's a living, they look after you and your family wanted you to go in. So it might have sent you there as a young child. And so you're there, it's okay.

But here and there, there are some monks who have gone very deep. So they represent a different level of consciousness. On the whole, Buddhism is the closest, perhaps, to the spiritual truths than other religions have gone further out into mythology or Buddhism has too.

But the original teaching is still fairly intact. If you look, you have to sometimes dig deep to get to it, but it's there. So these teachings correspond to different levels of consciousness.

So let your friend be saved and allow him to believe that you are not saved and that you are going to hell. And perhaps one day you can talk to him about, not about presence, but about Christ consciousness. You might even select certain passages in the New Testament where I believe St. Paul, for example, says somewhere, I must diminish and Christ in me must grow. This is a free, I don't know the literal translation anymore. I must shrink and Christ in me must grow. Really, that means Christ, the consciousness, the mind of Christ, as it's called sometimes by St. Paul, the mind of Christ, as opposed to the little me. So there are certain hints there of a more transcendent truth shining through here and there. You have to look for it. It takes a while to find it.

Little pearls here and there. So if you want to have a talk with your friend at some point when he feels a bit relaxed, or you can give him a book by Joel Goldsmith, for example, and see what he says about that. One thing about the archetype of suffering that is embodied in the figure of Jesus, because the person who is suffering on the cross is an archetype of human suffering.

A very strange image. And over the centuries, it has, I believe, to some extent helped many people to enter the state of surrender when suffering arose for them, because they felt that they relived or reflected the suffering of Jesus on the cross. And by feeling that they went through the same suffering as Jesus on the cross, they were able to surrender to their suffering.

And if you surrender, then something else arises, inner peace arises, no matter how your mind interprets it. It doesn't really matter when presence arises in a human being, the mind may interpret it in certain ways. For example, a Hindu person might say something about Krishna, or the interpretation of the mind comes after something happens that is beyond the mind, and then the mind comes in.

So over the centuries, the identifying with the suffering, Jesus has helped, I believe, many people to surrender to their own suffering. Because in a way, Jesus stands for every human being, and the cross stands for, is the amazing thing. I've mentioned it before, but I'll mention it again.

The cross is, amazingly, it's a torture instrument and a symbol for the divine in the Christian religion. It's a torture instrument and a symbol for the divine. Isn't that weird?

How can a torture instrument symbolize God or the divine? But there is a deeper meaning behind that. Suffering, which is symbolized by the cross, can become the doorway into the divine.

And then the very thing, the worst thing in your life that created the suffering, when you surrender, becomes the doorway into presence. For example, we had a questioner the other day who had developed bowel cancer, and then through that, which normally would be, it was suffering, and then suddenly there was surrender to it. And then that is the cross.

The condition that she suffered from is the cross and the cross as a torture instrument. And when surrender happens, the reversal occurs, the torture instrument becomes a symbol. The cross is now suddenly a symbol for the divine because it becomes a doorway.

And that's an amazing thing. Now, this is when mythology works to some extent because it embodies a truth that for a long, long time, people would not have been able to understand intellectually as we do. When I explain it to you, you can understand this truth intellectually.

But for a long time, people couldn't understand this truth intellectually. They just intuitively grasped what was behind it. Now, I'm talking about it when in those cases when the mythology actually worked because it was a living teaching.

In many other cases, it got so misinterpreted that it did the complete opposite from liberating people. So in many, many cases, for religions to survive, to survive the arising of a new consciousness, they would have to undergo a fundamental transformation and if they can't, then they will eventually disappear. But it is possible for religions to survive, but it would be a very significant change.

One thing that happens, the religion and the mythology have to separate so that because the age of mythology, we have outlived, we cannot believe in these stories anymore, nor do we need to. Buddhism has mythologies too. There are weird stories of the birth of the Buddha.

When the Buddha came out of his mother's womb, he's supposed to have said, I have come here for the salvation of the world. And that's very misleading because the Buddha was a normal human being who transcended eventually the limitations of the human condition. A few people asked a similar question.

This is not directly related to helping people, but it seems to be important, an important question for many people. For example, here, you and Krishnamurti both talk about the importance of choiceless awareness, directly confronting what is without judgment. You also talk about the primacy of presence as the way to transcend thought, the improper use of which is the cause of our suffering.

Another teaching respected by many celebrates thought and desire as being responsible for our evolution and the expansion of the universe. While both teachings have much in common, this appears to be an important point of departure that I cannot reconcile. Can you help clarify?

Hi. Is that the same Jeff who asked the previous question? Anyway, it doesn't matter.

It's only one consciousness, so. So there seems to be basically two teachings, he says, and many people have asked similar question. One is accept what is choiceless awareness, presence.

The other one is using thought to create, to manifest, to transform. Are they separate? Can they be reconciled?

As I mentioned the other day, the two represent the two movements of the universe. One is into creation, multiplicity, increasing complexity of life forms. It experienced itself as that.

It loves to create. That's for sure because if you look around, even on this planet alone, how many life forms there are, all perceiving the universe in a different way or saying the universe, the one consciousness, perceiving itself through all these different forms in different ways. You could call it a dream.

You could call it reality. It doesn't matter. These are just words.

And then the universe also wants to know its own source. And that's the return movement is first as the outboard movement. And then there's the return moon.

This might correspond to the big bang, what scientists call, which the universe came out of nothing. Nobody knows what that is. It started from nothing.

And suddenly it expanded and went into creativity. And my forms began to multiply over billions of years. And then the story goes, some scientists say, and even in ancient Hindu mythology and others, there's a story that eventually it will come together again and return to the one.

In that case, that would be like the inbreath and the outbreath of God. The entire universe, God breathes out and then it all returns back to the source for some reason that we could not even fathom. And even if we even just start thinking about it, what might the reason be, you would never find it through the conceptual mind.

But that seems to correspond to what we do because we have a heart that also goes, and we also breathe in and breathe out. And we also wake up in the morning and do all our activities. And at nighttime, we go, and then we go, now everything is reflected on every level.

You are a microcosm of the entire universe. So if you observe yourself, if you observe how the heart works, how the breathing operates, how the sleep and wakefulness, dreamless sleep, dream state, the so-called wakeful state, which is not that wakeful for most people. But here we have similar, there may be, there certainly is a similar pattern everywhere.

So the universe has both movements, the creative and the return to stillness, the return to source. Every human has that incredible irresistible impulse every night to return to source. If you can't resist it, it's called tiredness.

And if you try to keep your eyes open, you can for a while, but you would go insane if you didn't sleep. We regard it as normal that people just drop unconscious every 15 hours or whatever. Everybody drops unconscious.

Isn't that weird? But it's so normal that nobody questions it. You will also notice when you get really tired, how irresistible the pull is towards sleep.

What does it, when you, feeling tired is a, there's a sweetness to sleep. The more tired you get, the more you feel, I need to get there. Something the pull is so irresistible that people give up their life to sleep.

People who have been lost in the wilderness, out in the cold, in the snow, nowhere, can't walk anymore. And they know if I fall asleep, I'm never going to wake up again. And yet at some point, they do it because it feels so good.

They have to go there. Doesn't matter if I don't wake up again. I want to go back to the source.

So every human goes back to oneness, but doesn't know it unknowingly. And then comes back out. So here we have, if you really look at yourself, that will tell you many secrets about the universe.

I'm talking about this because this is how the two movements are reconciled. The universe needs both. It needs the creativity.

It needs also the stillness. And for humans, it's not enough to go unconsciously to the source. It's our destiny because it's the destiny of the universe to consciously unite with source, source consciousness.

And that's why we are here. So your life needs to be a balance, a dance between creating and not getting lost in your creations, which means not getting lost in the mind, being able to use the mind to create, but for conscious creation, because for a long, long time, the universe, the humans created their lives, but unconsciously. And they lost themselves in their creation.

They lost themselves in the mind. Whenever you get stressed, you are lost in your creation. You are lost in your activity.

So allowing the unconditioned consciousness, which is the universe to create through you, rather than being a little ego that says, I need to be happy. I need this and this and this and this and this in my life. And then, okay, I'm going to create this.

And when you get it, you realize it doesn't make you happy. The Course in Miracles says, how do I know when something is ego motivated, something has been ego motivated? Well, it's easy to know.

It says, when you achieve it, it doesn't satisfy you. Maybe for a little while, but not for long, very briefly. So no egoic achievement satisfies you.

What is the motivation for creation if you're already accepting of the present moment? If you feel completely at one with the is-ness of the present moment? There are two reasons why you take action here.

One may be as a response to a situation that requires action. You may be stranded somewhere without food. So you need to walk somewhere to get food and shelter.

In the meantime, you can internally accept where you are. You are right here. And then you see what this present moment requires.

It requires you to take a step and then another step and another step until the situation is resolved. So certain situations, somebody may need help. You can sit at ease contemplating nature and suddenly there's a human being who says, oh, help me.

Do you sit there and say, no, I'm too at ease in the present moment. So a situation, you respond to whatever the situation, the present moment requires you to do. You respond from within.

That's a natural thing. So certain situations obviously need a response. If you live in a place that is noisy and cold or unpleasant in some way, yes, you have to surrender while you're here.

If you don't want to suffer, you have to accept this moment as it is. It's cold, it's noisy. The bugs come in at night.

I was in the lucky position when I was a teenager. We lived in, I lived with my dad in Spain for a few years and he had gone to Spain to drop out and lead an alternative life and then he ran out of money. And then when I was there, we had so little money, we had not even a fridge.

I mean, almost everybody had a fridge but there in the hot summer in Spain, no fridge, no radio, no television. Of course, I couldn't even think of it. So basically just the minimum and I wasn't dreadfully unhappy because of that.

To some extent, I accepted it because I was still young enough, children find it perhaps easier to accept situations that they go into. But normally, if I lived in a place like that now, I have no fridge, I have only basic things to live with, things get, I can't buy anything in advance. I have to go shopping every day because everything goes off immediately.

Oh, yes, and if you leave anything on the kitchen counter, immediately armies of ants come in and eat it. Okay, I'd rather move than be here. You can accept that this is where I am right now, it can still be fine, but you would start looking or I'd like to live somewhere else.

You see, this situation can have a preference and why not have a, everybody has a preference. Some Buddhists might talk to you about or some masters say, I have no preference whatsoever, but they live in an ashram, so they'd rather be in an ashram than be on Wall Street and work there, so there must be some preference. And so everybody has some, there's nothing wrong with having a preference.

I'd rather have a comfortable place than an uncomfortable place. But if I cannot have a comfortable place, I will be perfectly okay with an uncomfortable place. If it's not possible, fine, that's what's wrong.

I can, it's fine. So this is one thing is dealing with, responding to situation and having preferences and then taking action. Another one is bringing about something entirely new into this world.

And that comes when you are able to become still enough, so that you know what the universe or the one consciousness wants you to do, if it wants you to do something. It may take a while before you know that. I lived for years doing relatively little except doing occasional counseling sessions, sometimes only two a week.

And then the years passed and I was just continuously just in presence on my bicycle, chopping wood, carrying water. And the years passed and I spent hours in thoughtless awareness in London, sitting on the Hampstead Heath. Three hours later, I go home having a little salad and then having a counseling session at five, could live on one person a day, one counseling session a day.

And I wondered, my mind wondered sometimes, there must be something else that I'm supposed to do. And there was even slight moments of, what am I doing here? But there was nothing else to do there, be present, just be, go back to Hampstead Heath, sit there again.

But there were long periods also of incredibly blissful states that people noticed, even people who are not tuned into spirituality, particularly say, I can feel something. What is that? There were great states, emanation of peace, but I wasn't doing anything.

It was just that emanation, sometimes waiters and waitresses, occasionally went to little restaurants. They felt something, but still nothing. The universe still wasn't telling me what I was supposed to do.

And I believe the decisive change came, perhaps I should have thought of that earlier. There was a, I had moved out of London to Somerset and lived in Glastonbury, the spiritual Mecca that attracts all kinds of weird people, including myself. And just outside, there was a village just a few miles out of Glastonbury.

I would sometimes go there and there was an ancient, like the English villages, they have their ancient church, sometimes a thousand years old, a few houses around it. There was an oak tree. I would go to an ancient oak tree in the middle of the field, magnificent.

I had a wonderful relationship with that tree. But that church that was always empty, I went into that church and one day I went in and suddenly I had this impulse to say, I want acceleration now. I want, I knew there was something for me to do, but I clearly demanded acceleration of my life purpose.

And then I went home again and for maybe three months, two or three months, nothing happened. I'd forgotten about it already. And then one day it came.

It came when I woke up and I suddenly, I knew as a thought and a deeper knowing, I have to move to the West Coast of North America. Why? I don't know.

It wasn't just one day it stayed. The next day it was still there. The next week it was still there.

The week is still there. And then finally I had to leave. Couldn't not leave.

If I had not left, I would have died. So that was the first step in writing The Power of Now because I needed to be in the energy field of the West Coast for some reason to write it. And that's how the book started when a few weeks after arriving on the West Coast, it started.

And then it accelerated from there. Slowly it went, just the book took three years with on and off because I had to go back to England several times. The visa had expired and I came back.

Canadian West Coast, US West Coast, anywhere on the West Coast I could write. Back in England, I couldn't write for some reason. So I'm not saying you can't write in England.

I couldn't write. There are lots of wonderful writers in England. And then the acceleration, it came more and more after The Power of Now came out.

And then it'd be so much that I almost wanted to put the brake on. But it was, the power just grew and grew. But it came because for years I went so deep within that eventually the outer movement into creation, the outward creation reflected the depths of years of going within into just into stillness and deep into stillness.

So the outward creation reflected the inward movement. It was just, it was as powerful out there as it was in the inward movement. So you too will find that the more you align yourself with the essence, the stillness within, the unconditioned consciousness, the more the power will, there might be a time gap, but hopefully not as many years as in my case.

There may be a time gap, that the power that is within you, that you sense when you become aware of yourself as the consciousness, then flows through you. And that is what creates through you, not the little ego anymore. So you don't create because you think, when I achieve this or that, I'm going to be happy and fulfilled.

No, the happiness and the, well, happiness, something deeper than happiness, the fulfillment is already here now. The true creation cannot come out of a neediness. That's egoic creation.

That doesn't make you happy. It'll make you unhappy. Whatever you create, eventually either will not satisfy you or make you unhappy.

That comes out of a neediness. The egoic creation believes, I need to attract something to me. I need to attract this.

I need to attract that into my life. The non-egoic creation, the consciousness uses you as an instrument, uses this form as an instrument, comes out of the inner fullness. So the creation comes from within to without.

It creates the outward from within, rather than needing to attract something from the outside. Although in a language, you might sometimes express it that way. You might say, I attracted this or that person into my life.

But really it's the other way around. You can only create out of this fullness that you sense when you're in touch with presence. And only for those people who are meant to create, as I said before, there are certain others who will not be drawn towards that.

In them, consciousness will express itself in different ways that will not be creating something new out there. It will just be bringing this new consciousness into this world wherever they are and contributing to the new consciousness simply by embodying it. So it is not the case that the two seemingly incompatible camps, those who say the important thing is to use thought to create and the others say, no, just be with what is.

The two actually need to be together. You need to be deeply aligned with the present moment before you can be a real creator. And you are not the creator.

The consciousness creates through you. If you are not fully aligned with the present moment, you are not fully aligned with the unconditioned consciousness. And then it can only come through in little trickles through you, but it's not a real flow.

[Speaker 7] (6:21:34 - 6:21:40)

Our program continues with session six, questions and answers with Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (6:21:56 - 6:23:25)

I assume that most questions have dissolved in the stillness or found an answer out of the stillness. But just in case, there are one or two questions left. Perhaps we can listen to them and then see if an answer comes or not.

I'd also like to allow a little bit of time for an evening meditation after the questions. Be here now. Don't be mentally at the airport or driving home as you're sitting here.

So if there are any questions, feel free to put up your hand. And Barbara is going to be the omnipotent person selecting.

[Speaker 4] (6:23:29 - 6:24:24)

Your interaction with the ER physician that you had was quite powerful. And I felt a lot of energy in the room from that. I'm a physician also.

I'm a gynecologic cancer specialist. So I take care of patients from surgery, chemotherapy, hospice, end of life. And there's that same pressure on all aspects, not to spend the time and take care of them maybe the way that we would like to if we could.

So I'm doing this to help take care of me, which is great. But my question is related to all the other physicians that I work with. Who are suffering and I can see it in them.

And it's the more that I learn your teachings, the more I see the suffering in them. And I don't know what to do to help them.

[Speaker 1] (6:24:27 - 6:25:03)

Right. I think I saw your question. I had selected it to answer it.

If it was a written question, that might've been yours. That was good. So I'm glad you were chosen.

Have you had made any attempt to somehow convey to your colleagues maybe unsuccessful attempts so far?

[Speaker 4] (6:25:03 - 6:25:28)

To some degree. Just over the last couple of years, there's been real research showing burnout. And that's a definable thing.

And so we can use the term burnout, which doesn't seem to offend people to talk about it. And then I've introduced some mindfulness strategies because that's another term that doesn't seem to offend people.

[Speaker 1] (6:25:28 - 6:26:58)

I was just going to say that mindfulness has become almost acceptable. So if you use that word, that might be more acceptable than presence. It's the same thing, of course, but I don't use mindfulness because it implies that your mind is full, but that's okay.

So what about creating a support group for people who work in similar capacities, both people that you know personally and perhaps other people? Because nowadays, the strange thing is the wonderful thing about the technology that we have nowadays, not only it amplifies human madness, because any person can put out any thought and immediately, no matter how crazy it is, there'll be a few thousand people in the world who will respond to it and agree with you and participate in the craziness. But on the other hand, there's also, you can reach so many people through the media, those things, internet and so on.

But you would start on a small scale. What about a mindfulness group for physicians? You could call it that.

You can become the leader of that because...

[Speaker 4] (6:27:05 - 6:27:06)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (6:27:12 - 6:32:46)

Sometimes life asks you to do something. It may ask you to do something before you may think you're ready for it, but life knows better. And the strange thing is, you as a person would never really feel ready for this because it's hard to do.

But if you can become still and get out of the way, because becoming still means getting out of the way, if you can become still, you'll be amazed. And I'm not only talking to you, but many others. You'll be amazed how empowered suddenly the words that you speak become or the energy that flows through you and how inspired you become and what it might lead to.

Because things need to change if the system, not only in medicine, but in many other areas, is ripe for either collapse or complete change. It cannot go on the way it's going because it can only become more disintegrating. And no matter where you look, it's a question of it'll either collapse or change.

And if it collapses, that's fine too. Now I'm talking about social systems and so on in general. Eventually something more conscious will arise or something more conscious may arise and transform the old before it collapses completely.

So what is it that you could, the ideas will come to you. You can just offer to them, for example, have a meditation, show them what mindfulness is, see if they like it and then go on from there and then transmit it, go on the internet, contact others, it may suddenly spread. There are people in mainstream who are doing this.

I got invited by a scientist to Stanford University a couple of years ago. I gave a talk there and you would have thought they would not be interested in what I have to say, but that I was wrong. They were very interested.

Now, not everybody came, but many people did come. And this is a scientist who actually he is a, I believe he's a neurosurgeon and he teaches at Stanford. He is extremely interested in mindfulness and spreading the message.

He's connected also to Buddhism and Buddhist teachings. So maybe he can also, you can talk to him and see what feedback you get from him. It's good if you can, I don't know if you've met other physicians here, if you can build up a support network of people who can then support others.

There are infinite possibilities, but anybody who is here would have to consider themselves as a leader in this, because you may not yet be fully present all the time and fully enlightened on a daily basis, but you know much more than most. I mean, and I don't mean conceptual knowledge. There's a knowing in you of that dimension of consciousness that is still new, still many.

And I believe that the world desperately needs you and you start in your world. You can reach the most appropriate place for you to reach others is within your sphere of influence. And that is your work.

So what exactly, what form that will take, only you can know. It will be helpful to connect with others, get feedback, talk about it. What can we do?

And then the person at Stanford, I believe is Professor James Doty, Doty. Unfortunately, I don't know how to spell it, D-O-T-Y, something like that. I can let you know.

So see yourself as a spearheading this movement of awakening because they need you. So not only your patients need you, your colleagues need you. And then the work that you do, which is wonderful, will be enhanced immeasurably by bringing a different state of consciousness to it.

And once that happens, then the entire system may begin to undergo a change. Change always begins within. How do you feel about this?

[Speaker 4] (6:32:51 - 6:33:28)

I'm a little speechless, but it's a crisis. And I think that it really is a crisis. And so I know you're speaking not just to me, but to others that are here.

And I think that we need to do this in all aspects of medicine. So if I can help. Thank you.

So thank you for giving me the push. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (6:33:29 - 6:33:46)

I know that Dr. Patel and his wife is here. He's been coming for many years. And have you met him?

I believe he has in his cancer clinic in Bakersfield. He introduces also counseling and mindfulness. Maybe you can connect with him.

[Speaker 4] (6:33:47 - 6:33:48)

Great.

[Speaker 7] (6:33:49 - 6:33:49)

Good.

[Speaker 1] (6:33:50 - 6:33:51)

Thank you.

[Speaker 7] (6:33:54 - 6:33:54)

Hello.

[Speaker 2] (6:33:58 - 6:36:12)

I'm very nervous to be asking my question because I feel like I have a lot of confusion. But I know that that's a good place to be asking my question from. I've been a financial planner for 33 years and went back to school six years ago to become an energy healer.

And I love it because I don't have to know. As a financial planner, I had to know. You know, I had to give answers.

But with energy healing, I get to hang out in the unknown. And it's really fun for me. And I'm not attached to the outcome for my clients.

I know something's happening, but I don't know what is happening always. And I love that. So the question that I have for you has to do with something you said this afternoon that I got very confused about.

Any resistance closes the channel. And I know that I have a powerful effect on anyone that I come in contact with. I know I vibrate at a very high consciousness level.

And that I'm here to contribute on that level. And I'm very good at manifesting. But the place that I'm confused about is that I don't know how to figure out those internal resistances.

I'm not clear on that. I'm clear on all the external resistances. Like, do you want to do this or that?

No, yes. But I get confused about being in the source and knowing when I'm in the source versus when I'm maybe in my egoic creation because I'm so good at manifesting.

[Speaker 1] (6:36:16 - 6:37:04)

So what is in your daily life, your state of consciousness? Do you undergo great fluctuations in your state of consciousness? Do you still experience the pain body occasionally coming up?

What are your thought patterns throughout the day? Do you have episodes of negative thinking that you identify with? To what extent are you able to be aware of your thoughts?

Do you get taken over by streams of thinking on a daily basis? What is your state of consciousness in your daily life?

[Speaker 2] (6:37:04 - 6:38:06)

I'm very good at witnessing myself. I'm fairly good at being able to make a choice in the moment, a different choice in the moment when I'm witnessing myself. I've done a lot of work on my pain body.

I think where I have a challenge is in something along the lines of clarity as to there's like a fear or something that runs maybe in me along the lines of knowing that I'm good at manifesting and not wanting to go in a direction of manifesting when I'm not sure that that's the direction. So there's that confusion and the piece that you said this afternoon, any resistance closes the channel. I just keep sitting with that going, where's my resistance that's closing the channel?

[Speaker 1] (6:38:08 - 6:38:33)

Well, only you can know that resistance arises as negative thinking that you're identified with and then an emotional contraction that reflects the negative thinking. Maybe there isn't very much resistance and that's why you get confused. You're looking for something that isn't there anymore.

Maybe you think there must be some resistance. Where is it? I'm confused now.

So.

[Speaker 2] (6:38:37 - 6:38:46)

It could be because I have spent my life on a very deep healing journey and been very open to always looking at those places.

[Speaker 1] (6:38:46 - 6:40:21)

Yes. So trust yourself and not only not the personal self, but the deeper self and what emanates from that. And it seems to me that you're fine.

You don't need to be concerned about resistance right now. There's already enough presence in you to dissolve it when it comes. Nobody needs to be demanded that they should be totally free of resistance or that they should be totally conscious on a continuous basis.

That is not necessary. Just detecting when you're not conscious is fine. Every time you detect a dysfunctional state that you have slipped into in a relationship or at work or wherever you may be, then the moment you know it, the moment you lost it, so to speak, that's an expression, I lost it, which usually means in common usage, I got very angry.

But here I'm using it in a wider sense when you say, I lost it means I lost presence. I lost consciousness. I got totally identified with the stream of thinking.

I got totally identified with the pain body. I lost it in the way we use it here or I use it means I lost presence completely. So you may sometimes still lose it, but I believe you're fine.

I don't think there's that much resistance. Your mind is perhaps looking for a problem where there isn't one.

[Speaker 2] (6:40:22 - 6:40:23)

You're good.

[Speaker 1] (6:40:26 - 6:41:08)

You're good. And that, by the way, is not uncommon because the mind always looks for a problem somewhere. It's amazing.

You could take a person to heaven, person who is not, no, you are okay. You'll be fine in heaven. But if you take a normal person to heaven, normal meaning unconscious, he would get very unhappy because, well, why is the problem?

He will find something wrong. Peace would be very threatening. They're not ready for that.

You are ready for heaven, it seems. So embrace it.

[Speaker 2] (6:41:09 - 6:41:10)

Okay. Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (6:41:13 - 6:41:57)

Thank you, Eckhart, for waking us all up. My question concerns the cultivation of virtue. I hear many traditions speak about cultivating loving-kindness, cultivating compassion.

And in our previous session, I heard you say that loving-kindness comes naturally out of presence. So can we cultivate virtues like you practice, you practice and you become it?

[Speaker 1] (6:42:01 - 6:59:20)

Thanks. That term tends to be used a lot in Buddhist teachings, the term cultivate, cultivating virtues. And so in Buddhism, there's a list of nice things that you, I only know the essential Buddhism.

I can't remember the long lists that you get in Buddhism of virtues and so on. I know the basic thing, which undoubtedly is what the Buddha taught is the origin of suffering and the way beyond suffering. That's the Buddha.

I think all the longer lists were compiled at a later stage by monks who wanted to make things more understandable and accessible to other monks, but they were not fully present when they did these long lists, but that's okay. So ultimately you're, of course it is better that somebody should at least attempt to cultivate the various virtues. The primary one in Christianity would be, of course, love your neighbor as yourself.

That's the primary. And really it all boils down to that in Buddhism, metta, loving kindness towards others is important. But ultimately to cultivate this, it's a wonderful intention and it's better than not trying to cultivate it, but ultimately you won't really succeed unless there's a shift in consciousness in you.

That is primary. Once there is that shift in consciousness and this is what our gathering is all about, it's virtually impossible to sustain the virtues for very long from the old state of consciousness because the old state of consciousness is dominated by ego. And if you want to cultivate the virtues, it's very often a desire of the ego to improve one's self image, not only for others, but for oneself too, because one wants to feel virtuous.

And so the ego feels better if it can convert its sometimes negative self image into a good one. And so the ego, it's like, okay, I'm doing this. I'm virtuous now.

But in Christianity, this for hundreds, thousands, 2,000 years, Christians have tried to live, well, not all, many haven't even tried, but to love your neighbor as yourself. Not that many succeeded because I don't believe that Jesus actually said, love your neighbor as yourself. I believe that they took, they were, that was taken out of context.

He said, the kingdom of heaven, which I translated, as you may remember, as the dimension of formlessness or the dimension of spaciousness is within you. And there's only one thing that matters. There's only one thing that of primary importance.

There may be many other things that are important, but there's only one thing that is of primary importance. And that is to find within you that dimension of consciousness and then live from that dimension of consciousness. And if you live from that dimension of consciousness, then naturally you will love your neighbor as yourself because you recognize your neighbor as essentially one with who you are.

And then you will also love God as yourself because you will then recognize essentially that God is the source of your very being. That's what he said. But perhaps people who wrote it down, they got to the bottom of the page where it said about the kingdom of heaven.

And if you enter the kingdom of heaven, if that's the dimension of consciousness, turn over the page, then you love your neighbor as yourself. And then at some point, the two pages got separated. And so all the virtues arise naturally out of that state of connectedness with being, which is presence, love, benevolence, goodwill towards other human beings, which is all aspects of love and whatever else, whatever other virtues, really it all comes down to no longer feeling that acute sense of separation between yourself and other human beings and between yourself and the source of who you are, the source of all life.

So God being the source of all life, the unmanifested source of all life, not when I use the word God, I'm not speaking of an authority figure, a controlling authority figure, but the source of all life. So your question was good. I had selected your question.

I saw it on a piece of paper and it had been selected for an answer too, but I'm glad you asked it. What is the difference between facing life without resistance and standing up for yourself, asserting yourself? Many times I am asked of something and I acquiesce.

The third or fourth time this happens, I feel a lot of resistance and annoyance and I don't want to do it, but I still grim and bear it because I think this is my karma or my lot in life and I'm not to resist what is and go against the present. Please help. A slight understanding of the meaning of non-resistance, which is internal non-resistance.

What you do externally may very well be to refuse to do something or to say no. But even when you say no to something or somebody, you say it without any inner resistance, without making the other person wrong, without feeling the other person should not have asked that question, without feeling that you're offended by being asked to do something that you don't want to do, all the unnecessary baggage that involuntary mind activity creates. Without all that baggage, there's just a clear, no, I'd rather not do that.

And you're still in inner non-resistance. So inner non-resistance does not always mean that you go with everything, you go along with everything that somebody wants you to do. You say, oh yeah, okay, I'll do that.

If you want to see a funny movie about that, it's called Yes Man with Jim Carrey. And that's about a man who is very negative. He loves saying no because he's a mortgage responsible for giving mortgages to people at a bank.

And he loves saying no, he always says no. And he's very negative, no, with life. One day, somebody takes him to a new age motivational speaker and the motivational speaker says, all you have to do is say yes to life, say yes to the present moment.

That sounds familiar. And at first he scoffs at it and says, oh, this is rubbish. But then he thinks, well, maybe there's something there.

And then he starts saying yes to everything in life, whatever happens, and he gets into the most absurd situations, right? And finally, at the end, he learns it's, I believe he learns it, I'm not sure what the end is, but I think I have a vague memory that he learns that there is another way. That it doesn't necessarily mean that you go along with everybody people ask you to do, although it did change his life when he went along.

It made his life so much more interesting, but nevertheless, it led to near disaster too. So the inner non-resistance, the non-resistance is an inner phenomenon because when you say yes to something that you don't really want to do, that's not non-resistance. You are actually in resistance while you do what this person wants you to do.

So when you go against, when you have a certain feeling that you don't want to do something, but to please somebody, you do it anyway, there's inner resistance. So whether or not there's inner resistance determined by your inner state, it's inner resistance. And it's a wonderful thing when you are able to say no to something without feeling any negativity whatsoever inside you.

Just to clear, it's still a very loving no. Or as I call it somewhere, I believe I wrote that somewhere, it's a high quality no. Because the low quality, the high quality no has no negativity whatsoever, just no.

The low quality no is no, no. Leave me alone. And the low quality yes is, can you please do this one?

Yeah, okay, I'll do it. Or okay, okay, I'll do it. Here's a long one, it seems.

How did that get here? Okay, I'll give a very short answer to this, although I could give a one hour long answer to this. While I've read all of your books, listened to countless audios, videos, retreats, and even attended events with you, I'm just now experiencing a difference in my perception of the now.

I thought the now was a destination, a place to go to or better to try to stay in, a place of no problems, a kind of heaven on earth. Then I thought it was a specific point in time, the moment in time where things are happening. Then last night, I opened up your little book, Oneness With All Life, and I read on page 22, the present moment is confused with what happens, confused with content.

The space of now is confused with what happens in that space. The confusion of the present moment with content gives rise not only to the illusion of time, but also to the illusion of ego. End of quote.

Now, I don't even know how to ask this question about the now, but I sense that there's something deeper than I'm going to experience about this. As a helping professional who wants to understand this, can you please say more about the now and its reality and truthful place for the benefit of our own growth, our work, and of course, extending through us into the lives of our patients and clients? You would be a, the questioner would be a wonderful speech writer.

So the present moment is confused with what happens, confused with content. So what is the now? First of all, most people believe the now is what's going on right now.

That's the now. They say, okay, this is the now, this room, people here, I'm breathing or something is happening or nothing is happening. This is the now, whatever I'm perceiving now is the now or whatever is going on is the now.

And here I'm saying, what happens is not the now. Well, everything happens now. That's for sure.

Nothing can happen that is not now. I don't think even the greatest philosopher could argue with that. That nothing has ever happened that wasn't now.

Nothing will ever happen that's not now because for something to even being and now is the same. Nothing can be outside of the present moment. But what is, so here we go.

This is what's happening now. Everything happens in the now means that the now is deeper than what happens. The now is the space in which it happens because if the now people believe there are many moments in every hour, many moments in the day and millions of moments in your life and a moment could be anything from a few seconds.

I don't know moment is a very vague term, but there's one moment after another and in every moment something happens. That's how people, but that's not the case. There are not many moments.

That's only how it looks like. If you look more deeply, you realize there's only ever this moment. This is it now.

Many moments because you remember something or you project yourself into the future, which of course can only be now too. There's only one moment ever, which is this now moment. But what happens in this now changes continuously.

Right now it's this room. Later the now will be something else. What forms come into it changes.

So what is this deeper thing that does not change that is always now? And the strange thing is you will notice the now is actually consciousness, the unconditioned consciousness, which is timeless, which is the essence of who you are. So that is the inner space, the unconditioned consciousness.

And in that everything happens. So the realization came to me a little bit too late. I had already written the power of now and then two years later, I said in a talk, you are the now in essence.

So you can put that in the power of now, write it in. You are, in essence, you are the now because you are the consciousness, the conscious space in which everything happens. It comes, dissolves.

Let's see, you are timeless. So you can actually verify that in your own, your realization of, you can actually, the strange thing is, you can actually sense the now. You can't, not with your sense perceptions, but you can feel the essence of now as the essence of, as consciousness right now.

The stillness is perhaps the closest, the easiest way to convey it through words.

[Speaker 5] (6:59:23 - 6:59:36)

Thank you for spreading such a positive, shining light. It's a fun kind of question. I was wondering, is it possible to have a conscious conversation?

[Speaker 1] (6:59:39 - 6:59:46)

Yes, yes. Have you experimented with that?

[Speaker 5] (6:59:48 - 7:00:02)

Yes, I have. I came to the conclusion that maybe two people wouldn't actually be talking to each other in a conscious conversation. They would be sitting opposite each other in awareness.

[Speaker 1] (7:00:02 - 7:02:29)

Oh, well, that's even better. But a conscious conversation is basically a conversation where it's between two people. Each person is not identified with their viewpoint, their perspective, their mental position.

They put forward their perspective, their positions, their viewpoints without any sense of self in it because they don't need that because their sense of self is derived from the presence that they can sense throughout the conversation in the background of their being. And then they can play with concepts. They can play with opinions.

They can play with words. They can play with arguments even. My argument is this, and then the other person, well, and mine is that.

The famous saying, what is it? We agree to disagree or something like that. That sounds relatively conscious because if you're not identified with your positions, then that's fine.

We agree. That's okay. It's interesting.

Self-identification with mental positions is the unconsciousness because then you will be defending your mental positions, but you're really defending your sense of self. And this is why these conversations become easily and very quickly become very unpleasant. They are unconscious.

So in unconscious conversation and with very unconscious people, it can even happen. I mean, you can probably read about it in the papers all the time. They get so defensive and aggressive about their respective mental positions.

They start physically attacking each other. It even happens. Sometimes you can see it in certain parliaments in some places.

And suddenly all these members of parliament start attacking each other. Washington sometimes gets close, but it probably hasn't quite happened that way. It could happen there too, who knows?

So what is your experience with being engaged in conversation? Do you easily get into that position where you start to defend your sense of self?

[Speaker 5] (7:02:30 - 7:02:59)

In my case, I've been experimenting with thoughtless awareness. Yes. And I've been present, appreciating and being aware of the essence of the individual in front of me.

Yes. Listening to their words, but just allowing that presence of acceptance. However, I've struggled with returning a conversation point in that state.

[Speaker 1] (7:02:59 - 7:03:40)

Yes. That's right. And that's where the real practice begins.

Yes. Because if you kind of withdraw from engagement, then it's relatively easy to sustain presence. But when you begin to actually interact verbally and thoughts, of course, thoughts become words, then the real practice begins.

And especially if you engage in a conversation with certain things that you feel strongly about. And ideally you choose somebody who has the opposite viewpoints, then you can really practice.

[Speaker 5] (7:03:44 - 7:03:48)

It's funny you should mention that because I'm an acupuncturist.

[Speaker 1] (7:03:48 - 7:03:49)

Sorry?

[Speaker 5] (7:03:49 - 7:04:31)

I'm an acupuncturist. Oh, yeah. And I've just started a position in a hospital in central Sydney.

And the way I operate with energy medicine is in an opposite position to Western medicine in many respects from a thought-based point of view. And so I'm meeting a lot of individuals who have got a very strong position and I'm trying my best to allow this concept into this new institution. So I should imagine I'll be facing a lot of challenges.

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (7:04:31 - 7:06:19)

So you can, there's a lot of, you can be practicing conscious conversation, especially with physicians who say, I don't believe in all that. And I know that's all, it's a lot of rubbish, but you do what you do. But then that's, that could be an interesting conscious conversation.

So very, it can be challenging, but the art is to remain present, even as you put forward your point of view, so that, and this is important, I've said it before, but I say it again, so that you don't identify with whatever thoughts you are expressing. Identify meaning that they constitute your sense of self. And that's unconscious.

That is self-identification with thinking. That's the essence of unconsciousness. And so in order to counteract that, because there is an enormous pull when you start arguing with somebody or they argue with you, you need to, there needs to be a high degree of alertness in you.

And that alertness is presence. And that alertness needs to be there. And then the words need to come out of that state of alertness.

And that gives you your sense of who you are. Your sense of self is in the presence. Then you can play with concepts and words.

Then you can put forward your viewpoints. And even if they are, your viewpoints are being challenged, you will not feel attacked in your sense of self. And so that's the, that is the essence of conscious conversation.

I wish you luck.

[Speaker 5] (7:06:21 - 7:06:22)

Thank you very much.

[Speaker 6] (7:06:28 - 7:08:33)

Namaste, Eckhart. Thank you. Thank you.

I feel very much, as you describe, like the butterfly coming out of the cocoon in the awakening process. Still finding times of complete identification with the body-mind. Thinking that I'm a caterpillar or a person.

My ultimate truth is complete disidentification from the ego permanently. Like what you have. Or maybe better said, like what you are.

I'm not nervous. I'm observing nervousness. I've had the experience, even yesterday morning in your meditation, of no mind.

Zero. Nothing left but the self only. However, this cannot be it because this experience is phenomenal.

and can be observed. And on a deeper level, even the observing of this experience is observable. It seems that there are so many beings like myself in this awakening process, yet very, very few beings like yourself awakened.

So I guess my question for you, what is the one thing, if any, that prevents a true spiritual seeker of the truth from complete utter divulgence into just complete self permanently?

[Speaker 1] (7:08:36 - 7:09:46)

You would make it easier on yourself if the focus of your attention is on the present moment at any given time and ask yourself whether you are awake at this moment, rather than projecting some future state where you might be, quote, unquote, permanently awakened. Because by having that mind form, pursuing that mind form, you would condemn yourself to the eternal pursuit of the mind form of permanently awake. Maybe one more, and then we will have our evening meditation.

Not that we haven't been meditating already.

[Speaker 3] (7:09:50 - 7:11:39)

My name's Jenny. I'm a physician assistant, and I practice in Michigan in the Midwest, in an area that's still very conservative. I'm excited to say I'm involved on two wellness committees, and I have dreams of bringing mindfulness to not just other providers, but to our patients.

And in the 12 years that I've been practicing, I've done lots of different things, worked in surgery, critical care, gastroenterology, and as I've been listening to you, it seems like the imbalance is truly this codependency that is encouraged by modern day healthcare. Not just patients dissociating from their role in wellness, but the pressure of providers to assume that responsibility. And what I heard from you, and please tell me if I'm on the right track, is that as we, whether we're providers or patients, enter into the present moment, we can trust the now.

We can trust our connection to source and what's manifesting in our experience. And as long as we have that connection, that there's no need to fear what is being said, that the proper energy transference will happen, and that time as we know it dissolves. And so, we as persons who feel called to be healers do the greatest service by teaching through example, by being present, and leading others back to the truth of their wholeness.

[Speaker 1] (7:11:39 - 7:11:40)

Yeah.

[Speaker 3] (7:11:40 - 7:11:41)

Right?

[Speaker 1] (7:11:41 - 7:12:51)

Thank you. Well, that's all. I think we needed to, everybody needed to listen to you.

It's one, there's no answer because there's no question, and the truth, you've been speaking the truth. So, it's wonderful. Now, let's have our lovely evening meditation.

I'll use the bell to mark the beginning and the end of our meditation. So, yeah, stillness is all that's needed now. I probably won't say anything, but you never know.

[Speaker 7] (7:26:14 - 7:26:24)

So, our program continues with session seven, contemplating the impermanence of all things with Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (7:26:37 - 7:32:03)

Ideally, we would spend our last session in complete silence, but I'll speak anyway. As long as you're not waiting for the next thing that I'm going to say, the next thing you're going to do, which is the old state of consciousness, which is almost continuously waiting, preparing for the next thing, never fully here. But if you're fully here, you'll notice that even while you're moving, as you, of course, you're going to do soon, one can actually move and be at rest at the same time.

You can rest in the stillness within and move externally. And that's another way of looking at connectedness with being while you do. That's the art of living.

So one way of practicing it is when you're actually physically moving from A to B, still have that connectedness with being and have that still place. And so it feels almost as if the world is moving around you, the scenery is moving, and you are never moving inside. It's a bit like if you were watching a, maybe at some point as a movie technology develops, we'll have movies where you can experience being totally immersed in the action.

So you're sitting in, this is a science fiction idea, you're sitting in a movie theater and then everything, it looks totally real and you might even interact with the characters. And so when you rest within, it's a little bit like that, how the world, what it does to me, feels that you are actually never going anywhere. You remain continuously in the one, no place, but the world continuously shifts around you as you move.

And so you're resting in the stillness. And then of course there's noise around you and all kinds of things. The scenery changes, right now it's this room.

Maybe in a couple of hours, it'll be the windscreen of the car. And you're resting in the same place still. And then it might be an airport, people running around.

And you yourself may be running around. You don't, you can, perhaps you have to run to the gate and you can still feel resting. There's still that place that's unmoved.

The stillness, the timeless you, the spaciousness. And you can, this is where the, as I mentioned before, the Zen saying, hurry slowly comes from. What that means is, the slowly means this really, that's the unmovable within.

And basically also means you're always at home. No matter where you are, you have that feeling of being at home in yourself. And that is also fundamentally different from the normal state of consciousness where most people carry around or are burdened with a continuous sense of unease.

And then there's always a sense they've never really arrived. They're always trying to arrive somewhere. One could almost say, metaphorically speaking, they are trying to get home.

But even when they are actually at home where they live, they're not at ease. There's always something lacking. I'm not fully myself or whatever it is.

However, the mind might interpret it. You don't feel at home. Home, by the way, is a lovely word in the English language.

I believe it has a Germanic origin. But all these languages, of course, are Indo-European. They go back.

Many of them have certain roots in Sanskrit even. So home, what does that sound like? Home.

[Speaker 8] (7:32:10 - 7:32:12)

Home. Home.

[Speaker 1] (7:32:25 - 8:27:46)

And then the world is not experienced as stressful anymore, even when it moves fast or might even require you to move fast sometimes. But there's always another way of putting it is the center of the wheel, the absolute center. The wheel is spinning, but you, your conscious, the focus, partly of your consciousness, attention, conscious attention, is in the center of the wheel.

That's the space within your stillness. And then there's the wheel. And that's the movie show of your life that spins sometimes slow, sometimes fast.

And then it slows down again, but it's always doing something. So this may also help you because a few of you or many might feel a little bit sorry that the retreat is coming to an end. Whenever something ends, it's a little death.

Even saying, I mentioned it somewhere in a book too, even saying goodbye to someone is a little death, a temporary, because one situation comes to an end. And this, as I mentioned, I believe in the new earth of power now, most languages to say goodbye, the word, the expression they use is see you again. Au revoir, auf Wiedersehen, arrivederci, see you again.

Later, alligator. But making sure, so just as an affirmation that, okay, this is not the last time because to cover up this feeling of sudden emptiness. Now, if you realize that this place within is what this entire retreat is about, being rooted in that at the center of the wheel or the unmoved, timeless, unconditioned stillness, consciousness, whatever pointer works best for you, then you realize you don't actually, that's the real retreat.

The real retreat is that place within. Everything else about the retreat, the externals, and that's fine. So the retreat actually never goes away because the retreat is, that is the retreat, being home within yourself in that place.

Then you are on permanent retreat, permanent retreat from the world and yet able to interact with the world and interact consciously, no longer in the dysfunctional way. And if your interactions are not perfect, that's fine. You also become comfortable with the imperfections of this world, the so-called imperfections, including the imperfections of your particular form identity, which may make mistakes, sometimes do something unconscious.

It's not impossible. And you become okay with that also, that in that place is okay with what is. You can interact.

What I just explained is the actual meaning of the expression it goes back to, who first used that expression? I don't know. Being in the world, but not off it.

It's an expression used in Christian terminology teachings, being the possibility of living in such a way that you are in the world, but not off it. It's a Christian expression term, but it could be anything. It could be Buddhist, could be anything.

Being in the world, but not off it, is exactly, this is the meaning of what I just described and what you can verify in yourself. When you rest in that inner stillness, you are obviously in the world. That's the movie show around you that changes all the time.

But not off it means your sense of self is not entangled in all these things that continuously arise and pass away. As the Buddha would have said, all phenomena continuously arise and pass away, arise and pass away all the time. And so you don't get entangled.

Entangled means having your sense of self entangled in all the things that continuously arise and pass away. But because if you have your sense of who you are, your sense of identity, your sense of self, entangled in the things that continuously arise and pass away, that is, as the Buddha said, dukkha, suffering. Can also be translated as general unhappiness, misery, discontent, or unsatisfactoriness, or something not right here.

What is it? Why do you always feel that something isn't quite right? That's dukkha.

And that means you are not connected with the essence of who you are. So you got entangled. You seek your sense of self in those things that cannot give you a satisfying and true sense of self.

All those things that arise and pass away. So to look for yourself in this movie show that continuously changes the impermanence of all things is a form of suffering. So wanting to hang on to this, identify with this.

And the movie show includes, it's not just all the things that happen externally around you. So the movie show is also the thoughts that pass through your mind. That's also really, that's also part of the movie.

And they come and go. And what people get entangled with, even more than the so-called external world, ultimately it's all the inner world anyway, we'll put that aside. What you get entangled with is the much more so every thought that comes, you get entangled in that.

And look for your sense of self in that. You identify with the thoughts that come, your opinions, viewpoints, likes, dislikes. You believe every thought that comes that tells you what your life is.

All of my life, I have to think about my life. It hasn't worked out. Not the way I wanted it to work out.

Why did all this have to happen? And then I failed at this, I failed at that. Maybe I can still make it, maybe not.

I need to think harder about me and my life. There must be a solution to the problem of me. Maybe if I see several psychotherapists, psychiatrists, maybe eventually they can help me find a solution to the problem of me because I perceive myself as a problem, like a knot, K-N-O-T, like a knot that wants to be entangled but can't.

Well, how do I do that? And then the psychotherapist, psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, a counselor may help you and untie this knot of the unhappy me. But it takes a long time and never really managed to do it until you realize that the entire knot is a kind of illusory construct.

And on that level, you can't do much about it. But if you realize it consists of thought plus emotion that you had identified with, then suddenly it's not a problem anymore. And suddenly you become aware of who you are beyond that.

And then you let it be, as the song goes. And suddenly you are not a problem to yourself anymore because you're not looking for your sense of identity anymore on the level of thought or emotion. And then thought becomes less problematic.

Thought loses its capacity to make you unhappy because before you might've noticed, most of the time when you get unhappy, it's because of certain thoughts that arise in your head that you completely believe in, interpretations of situations, events, people, misinterpretations, very one-sided interpretation as every interpretation is, it's just a viewpoint. And those things create unhappiness. Most of the time, that's what makes you miserable.

If you become miserable, anxious, regretful, it's believing the thoughts that arise continuously, which are part of the movie show. So it's not just the movie show out here. It's also the movie show in your head.

And so if you get dragged along in it, then it's a very confusing way to live. You have no central sense of identity. And this is why so many people manifest in different situations.

They manifest different aspects of their conditioned mind, which are sometimes called sub-personalities, or whatever. And you might have noticed people, those people in whom there is little or no awareness, they can change from one moment to the next, from one day to the next, or one situation to the next. When they encounter certain situations, suddenly some other sub-personality comes up.

This is still considered, this is not schizophrenia or anything like that. That's all, that's still considered within the realm of what is normal. I was always amazed for the short periods in my life when I lived communally, how changeable people are.

And every morning I would sit at breakfast in a community where I lived in England for a little while. And I'm always wondering, who is going to come down the stairs from the bedroom? What aspect of their personalities?

One day, it's a great, wonderful day, isn't it? It's so great to be alive. And then the next day, leave me alone.

This is a dreadful place. I'm trying to get out of here. I don't know how can people live in this place.

It's so dreadful. And this is only, and other sub-personalities in humans are triggered by specific situations, sometimes involving money or somebody dies. And then who is going to get the heritage, the funds?

And then suddenly everybody comes totally. Or certain people can do it because one person may remind you of somebody that you once knew who wasn't pleasant. All these things that you get entangled in with your sense of self, and that does not happen anymore, or if it does still happen occasionally to you, you fairly quickly wake up again and realize who you actually and essentially are.

You are not your thoughts or not your emotions and not whatever arises and happens around you. The still center, so to speak. It's a way of experiencing the world that frees you from the world internally without leading to a sense of separation.

When I say it frees you from a world, it sounds almost as if you felt a sense of separation now between yourself and the movie show. There is a detachment, yes. But also as you interact with everybody, there is more of a feeling of non-separation that we interact with because it's not your sense of self anymore that you're seeking to reinforce by interacting with other humans.

So you can allow them to be as they are. And the judgmental mind either subsides completely or you no longer believe in every judgment that comes into your head, every thought that arises. So that's a wonderful way that removes fear from your life because if you're entangled in the movie show of your life, it's fearful because nothing, you cannot really hang on to anything for too long.

And it cannot give you your sense of who you are. And it's fearful because you're ultimately the inability to trust life, which traditionally in, for example, in Christian terminology is called faith. Faith is the ability to have a basic trust in life.

It's not faith in something. In some languages, faith and believe are the same word, but faith basically is a belief as you believe that a certain story that you've been told is absolutely true and it once happened and it's absolutely true, okay? And if somebody else doesn't believe it, then he's going to hell.

Well, he's going to hell because he doesn't believe the story, okay? You don't believe my story, I'm going to kill you. That sounds funny, but it's still many people's reality.

It's still many people's state of consciousness. Faith is something deeper. It's nothing to do with any story.

Faith is a basic trust in life that can only come from this inner connectedness with that place of stillness within. That the absence of fear is trust. The inability to have this basic rootedness in being, rootedness in being.

If you don't have that, you will have fear, one form or another. You may not always be conscious of it, but you'll always be somewhere in the background and sometimes very much in the foreground. And of course, every anxiety that you have is, it's all fear and many other emotions that are not pleasant, anger and so on.

If you look deeply, you will usually find underneath the anger, there is a fear of something. There's a fear of losing, there's a fear of your sense of identity, the fear of not enough and so on. So, and the state of disconnectedness from being automatically results in a fearful state.

And the fearful state is an inherent part of the egoic state of consciousness. You can't have ego without fear. And even the most seemingly confident ego that looks, look at me, and you'll find it's a big act.

They're good at acting out. Why are they acting to cover up the fear that's behind it? Some egos are obviously fearful.

The moment you meet them, you can see the fear in their eyes, which might express itself as distrust, suspicion. What are you going to do to them? What do you want from me?

So everybody they meet, there's never an openness towards another human being because the ego thinks I need to protect myself. And then you start, the mind starts working out, what are this person's motivations? What does he want from me?

So there can never be an open, there's always some assumption about what the other person is all about. Never an openness. It's a dreadful state to live in.

Millions still live in that state. It's normal. It's considered normal.

So faith, to use a traditional term, is a deep trust. Now you're not trusting anything specific in the universe. You don't need to say, I completely trust this person or I completely trust this situation.

If you do, you will probably be disappointed because every human being manifests sooner or later certain imperfections and certain areas of unconsciousness. So they will make mistakes. They might offend you without knowing it.

They may omit. They may be dishonest once or twice with you. They may tell you a lie for whatever reason.

He lied to me. Oh my God, he lied to me. So I'd never want to see him again.

Well, that's enough. So you never lie to anybody? Well, that's not the point.

And then the mind, the egoic mind reaches some absurd conclusions. For example, after somebody said something, did something unconscious towards you and then the egoic mind says, I'm never going to trust anybody again. And it formulates some kind of judgment concerning all human beings or the world or God.

God, don't talk to me about God. You know what he did to me? I'll tell you.

I'll tell you. It's good to recognize the normal human state of consciousness than to see the amusing side to it. It's quite liberating.

So you don't trust. People sometimes ask me, how can I trust? I've told many times, I've tried to trust another person and always get disappointed.

Of course you do, because you can't trust, you don't trust a person. Or you can say, as Byron Katie said, I trust them to do whatever they do. I trust them that they'll do what comes naturally to them.

In other words, it doesn't matter. But you are, the trust is the place within you, the connectedness with being. That's where the trust arises.

And when the stillness, the space, and then you have a generalized trust in life, which includes all human beings and includes the fact that humans are not totally conscious and will manifest certain unconsciousness to you from time to time. And it makes no difference whatever to your trust because you don't need to behave, you don't need another human being to behave in a certain way to reinforce this idea that you can allow yourself to have trust. You'd simply recognize that all things around you are impermanent and that includes human beings.

They may change their opinion about you. They might say you are the greatest they've ever met. And a few months later, they hate you.

Egos do that. And people do that also to spiritual teachers or gurus and say, ah, and then something happens and they hate him. Or you fall in love.

You fall in love and this is the person that's going to liberate you from your sense of insufficiency and incompleteness. And this is the person that's going to make you happy now for the rest of your life. How wonderful that is.

And then you get disappointed. That wasn't supposed to happen. He was meant to make me happy.

And so the so-called love suddenly turns around into its opposite. So all that happened was initially the so-called love relationship covered up that feeling of distrust in life, that feeling of lack and insufficiency. And it was temporarily, it wasn't removed.

It was temporarily covered up. And then when the other person does not behave in the way that he or she was supposed to behave, the feeling reemerges and you feel it even more strongly than before. But the mind misinterprets it as meaning that he caused me to have that feeling or she caused me to have that feeling now, that terrible feeling.

But of course, the terrible feeling was there before. You just feel it more strongly now because the cover has been removed again. And this basic distrust and unease emerges and you feel it even more now after having been deceived, deceived yourself.

So human relationships change fundamentally once you do not look to other humans as a source of finding completion for yourself or somebody that you actually can place trust in. This is a very important point. I even remember having looked at two or three questions on the pieces of paper that I'm still reading.

I even feel inclined to do something on the internet and spend a few hours answering some of these questions. But whether this is going to happen, of course, I don't know. I'll say it again so that it doesn't disappear from your mind.

You don't need to trust another human being. It's not necessary. The trust is a state of consciousness and it's a trust in life.

You don't trust that a particular thing is going to happen and so on. You know that all phenomena around you are impermanent and cannot satisfy you. And that is a liberating realization because then you stop looking to this movie show around you and find something in there that's going to make your sense of self more complete and satisfying.

Of course, occasionally things do that, but not for long. So when you don't look at this movie show anymore for satisfaction, personal fulfillment, then, and you can only not look for it when you are connected with being within. So you begin to enjoy even the fact that things are impermanent.

There can be a sense of peace when you contemplate the impermanence of all things. I sound like the Buddha now, but that was a very deep teaching that he gave and it's still alive now. When you become aware of the impermanence of all things, it's quite amazing.

And that can strengthen that sense of beingness within you. The more you watch impermanence, the more you feel the something within you that is not touched by that. Consciousness itself, stillness, whatever you want to call it, the timeless being, the timeless you, the timeless deepest essence of who you are, the center of the wheel is not touched by that.

And the more you become aware of impermanence, which to the ego is a fearful thing. Oh, don't remind me of death. I don't want to be reminded that I'm going to die one day.

Don't be negative. Don't talk to me about that. I don't want to visit a graveyard and walk around and look at the gravestones.

That's awful, but it can be a wonderful thing. It can be a deep, suddenly you feel more deeply connected, more deeply connected because of the fact of impermanence around you. By becoming aware of impermanence and not running away from it internally, not denying it, but facing it fully, that actually will have the effect of strengthening your connectedness with being.

And this is the idea, of course, behind in some Buddhist traditions, the monks go to the morgue and meditate surrounded by dead bodies. Periodically they go there. And of course the egoic self, particularly the Western conditioned egoic self, there's how morbid, how absurd, why do they do that?

It's just absurd, isn't it? There's a deep reason why they do that in order to strengthen that connectedness with being, which they call emptiness. And somebody else calls fullness, it's the same place.

And so you might have seen, those of you who came to the last retreat, some of you were, or the one before that, I had a spiritual entertainment evening when I showed little clips from video clips. And one video clip was a commercial that was never shown because it was regarded as too shocking. It's a one minute thing.

It shows a woman giving birth in a hospital and the baby comes out of her womb and shoots up into the sky, out of the window into the sky. And then the camera follows the baby's flight, goes up first. And as the baby flies up into the sky, the baby, it's a boy, begins to grow already.

It grows, it becomes a young man and then grows. And then it reaches the highest point and then the descent starts. Now the baby's no longer a baby.

It's a middle-aged man. And gradually the speed increases and all the time the man is kind of screaming. He goes, ah, and then finally, descent, the man has become old, beginning to lose, has lost his hair and his teeth.

And, and then he goes up into, he hits the grave and he's in, and there's a graveyard, and that's the end. So that's basically the story of everybody's life. And to me, that's the most spiritual commercial ever shown.

And why is it spiritual? Because it shows you the impermanence and the short-lived nature of a human existence. The human part of it.

And if you contemplate that, you go, wow, wow. And if you don't run away from it internally, don't deny it, you suddenly feel a deeper sense of connectedness. For a long time, I didn't know what this commercial was actually for.

And for a long time, I thought it was for beer. Yeah. Yeah.

Because what it is for is only shown at the very end, because at the very end on the screen, you read, life is short. And then it says, play more. And then there's an X.

And I thought the X referred to a Mexican beer that has three Xs, but it's not. It refers to something called Xbox, which is a video game, apparently. And of course, what it should have said at the end, we did say, life is short, but the next sentence should have been, don't waste it playing video games.

Yes. Yes. Yes.

Much more interesting and more profitable, you'll learn so much more from this game. That reminds me of a little photo I saw somewhere, humorous picture on the internet, where a man is sitting, he has his computer there with the mouse, and he's looking out of the window with the computer, and the writing on it says, reality, the worst game ever. But of course, that's not true.

It's the, it is the best game because that's what makes you conscious. Eventually you realize through realizing who you are not, you realize who you are. First, you lose yourself in the world, you lose yourself in the mind, and then you find yourself.

And then there's a realization of consciousness realizes who it is in essence, because consciousness had lost itself in his own dream. And consciousness, that was the plan from the beginning, so to speak. Consciousness had lost itself, and then it found itself.

The Buddhists say, if there were no ignorance, there would be no enlightenment. So in other words, even losing yourself is part of it all, and it's fine. And you realize if you hadn't lost yourself, consciousness would not have realized its own nature.

So it's all, it's all fine. And the Buddhists also say, funny thing, they say eventually everything, even the blade of grass will become enlightened, which means the entire sense-perceived universe, the so-called physical universe is not really physical, it's just our sense perceptions make it appear physical, matter, but the limitations of our sense perceptions and our state of consciousness. So eventually even the blade of grass will become enlightened, meaning the entire so-called sense-perceived universe is undergoing a process of, we could say, spiritualization.

It's undergoing a transformation into something else. And it's really what is, it's the consciousness that is undergoing that transformation, because everything that you see is an aspect of consciousness in different, one could say different frequencies of consciousness, so to speak. So even human beings too, human beings are not going to remain in this particular form that they are in now.

Basically, we are the way it seems, we are like 80% or something water. Or as in one science fiction movie, the, where the artificial intelligence interacted with humans, the artificial intelligence called the humans meatbags. So it seems that the artificial intelligence had a kind of ego too, and looked, and looked down on humans and called them meatbags.

Good morning, meatbag. So humans are also going through the entire human form. We are not going to have these physical forms for the rest of our lives.

I mean, humanity, human lives. And, and this sounds almost, it came to me as a kind of insight. At first I thought it sounds a bit like science fiction, but then I realized it's actually true.

Human consciousness, all these human beings on the planet, and I mentioned that a few days ago here, are aspects of the one, there's only, there's one collective consciousness, which in itself is one aspect or one stream in the one consciousness that constitutes the universe. All human beings that have ever lived, will ever live or are living now on this planet are very, very temporary manifestations of the collective human consciousness. And so the collective has all kinds of tentacles and every tentacle is a human being.

And it appears briefly as in the commercial that I just described, except it's even more brief than one minute, really on a cosmic scale. Every human life of the human entity is a, it goes like a spark of light on the surface of the planet and it goes, that was it? Yes.

On a cosmic scale, this is how you would see a human life. But in that brief spark that arises, something is learned. Something is the one consciousness is undergoing a process of evolution in this dimension.

And with each spark, something is learned. Every spark contributes to the growth of consciousness, but no spark has an autonomous existence. It is always connected to the ultimately timeless consciousness, the human consciousness, which is an aspect of the one timeless consciousness.

So we are all a spark of the one human consciousness that's evolving. So we are in the middle of this little, and then it's gone again, but it doesn't mean anything has been lost in consciousness. Once humanity approaches the end of its evolutionary cycle as separate entities, when it reaches the end, all humans will appear as a single being in the universal consciousness.

And this single being, of course, won't have a body. This single being, of course, will not be man or woman. This single being, this single consciousness that has evolved then over a million years, contains the essence identity of all humans that have ever lived.

It is basically you. And it will know itself as I, as you. And what its further destiny is, I cannot tell you, but it is connected to the universal consciousness and will contribute and then unite with the universal consciousness.

Or before it does that, it may interact with other evolved, highly evolved beings or entities that already exist. And what it does, I have no idea, but I know the destiny is, your destiny is something that you cannot even conceive of through the mind. This only came to me as an insight, but it's comforting to know that you are actually timeless and you can't die.

It's only the temporary appearance of you that disappears. The essence does not.

Anyway, let's not go too far with philosophy.

Coming back to what the practical thing that we need to, just need to be concerned with to fulfill our destiny in this lifetime is awakening to who you are and continuing to embody the awakened state so that you can interact with this movie show that is called your life and interact with it, but increasingly not getting entangled in it anymore. And then actually that changes the nature of the movie show too. And it becomes, first of all, more enjoyable because you don't have to demand anymore that something in that movie show should permanently satisfy you.

And so when you don't place the demands anymore on those things that continuously arise and pass away around you, you can enjoy them much more. You can enjoy situations as they arise instead of complaining about them because they don't make you completely happy. They don't satisfy you.

They were supposed to satisfy me. Well, the situation don't tend to do that. And if they do it for a little while, you get disappointed soon, people, situations, and so on.

So the awakened consciousness, see what your relationship is with the movie show of your life and see how it changes in its nature, becomes less frustrating than it was before because the frustration of living in this world is making demands upon it that it cannot meet. That's frustrating. Make me happy.

How much longer until you make me happy? The egoic self says to the world, to people, to situations, places, I'm looking for a place that's ideal where I can be happy. And of course, occasionally you may find, think, oh yeah, I've got it now.

And then after you stay there for a little while, you discover, oh, I thought this was ideal. It's not. There's no place that's ideal or every place is ideal.

Another wonderful thing you discover as you no longer live exclusively from the level of your personality, something else shines through the personality, the unconditioned consciousness. You have noticed it here. I mentioned it at the beginning of the retreat.

Normally humans are totally conditioned by their upbringing and the culture they grow up in. And when two people from totally different cultures or sometimes totally different social backgrounds or whatever it may be, whatever their conditioning may be, religion sometimes. So people have been conditioned either by the surrounding culture, by the religion they grew up in, the particular family environment, all those things that constitute a person's personality.

And usually it's the case when you meet people either from totally different social backgrounds and they just can't communicate. You can even go to certain countries in Europe where still stronger divisions between social classes. Then sometimes let's say, well, it's beginning to disappear gradually in England too, but there used to be a very strong division of classes in England.

There was the upper class who talked in a particular way, same language, but talked in a particular way. And then there was the middle class and there was the lower classes and they all had their particular way of speaking. To some extent they still have, but more people are going beyond it now.

And so you could tell in England when you met somebody, after they opened their mouth, you would immediately, the mind would go, okay, working class. Or they would go, oh, that's upper class or trying to be upper class, but it's not really upper class. And nowadays in England, you get the phenomenon of people who are born into a quite privileged family background, wealthy and traditionally called upper class.

Now, some of them are pretending to be working class. They put on a false working class accent because they have certain ideas about social justice and so on. But it's all a game and it's quite division between people.

And I mentioned at the beginning, here's so many people from different countries have come here. And the strange thing is that you probably found, there may be some exceptions, but as a general rule, there was a connectedness that you felt that transcended any kind of conditioning, national, cultural conditioning, religious conditioning, personal conditioning. When two people from totally different cultures meet, it's hard to communicate.

A Chinese man meets an American person, a Russian person meets an Italian. Each person has been conditioned by their own culture. But as spiritual awakening happens, something else, the unconditioned self being emerges through the conditioning and you can hear, meet people from other cultures and feel a strong sense of connectedness and not the division to the extent that, let's say you are American and here, let's say you meet a person from Russia, a person from India, a person from Egypt, you may feel a stronger connectedness with that person than with any other American who is still totally conditioned by their culture in whom this awakening has not happened yet. And that's a very interesting thing that there's something that unites you that is far deeper than the relatively superficial conditioning of your particular culture.

And that is the way forward for humanity. It's not to carry inside the divisions that arise through the conditioning by particular cultures or religions, but to transcend that so that the transcendent you emerges. And then the divisions between human beings disappear.

And that is the, you can experience it to have been able to experience it to some extent here. Wherever I go in the world, the people who come to the groups, the talks or the retreats, there is something in them that is to me almost immediately recognizable no matter where they come from. And I can often easily tell even in the street or in a restaurant or wherever I am, in many cases, I could tell by looking at a person whether the spiritual dimension is there to some extent and shining through the personality or not yet shining through the personality.

So remember when you go away here, when you're not really going anywhere, you never go anywhere, you are in that timeless place, timeless and has no particular location, that place of consciousness, unconditioned consciousness and enjoy the movement around you. And then you don't have to think back and say, oh, I wish I was back at the retreat place. And you realize when you get home, you're still on retreat.

And then when you go to your workplace tomorrow or whenever, you're still on retreat, you're on permanent retreat within, you're at the center of the wheel. And that's a wonderful realization that you can be on permanent retreat and still be active in the world, but not off it. Yeah, so that's the secret of life.

So now you know it. So this has been a most wonderful gathering and the energy field has just been amazing. And everybody here is part of that.

And I'm sure for all of you has contributed greatly to the arising of presence in you, of sometimes call it presence power in you. So whether we meet again in this physical form or not, doesn't matter. There is already the realization that at the deepest level, there isn't you and me.

And if you like me, all it means is that you recognize something in me that is almost like a reflection, your own being. So all a spiritual teacher ultimately can do is reflect back to you who you are in your essence. And if you recognize something in the teacher and you say, wow, that's you, because it's only that in you can recognize it in the same way that you cannot be aware of stillness unless you become still for a moment.

And then you say, oh, it's so still, that's lovely. But the stillness is suddenly new. If you were not still, you wouldn't know it.

So if you recognize something in a teacher and you say, well, it's in you, otherwise you wouldn't recognize it. And that's where we are one, one consciousness coming through different forms. So that realization of oneness is, of course, what we could call love, not in the egoic sense, oh, I love you.

Come, don't ever leave me. But love in a deeper sense as an emanation of loving kindness, which is a recognition of the other as yourself.

2020 Eckhart Tolle Journeys into Stillness Hemisync 2020 Hoopla Audiobook

[Speaker 2] (0:11 - 0:30)

Sounds True presents Journeys into Stillness. Experience Eckhart Tolle guided meditations with HemiSync, with author and spiritual teacher Eckhart Tolle. And now session one, You Are Consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (1:14 - 39:23)

What meditation really is, is becoming aware that there's more to you than meets the eye. Becoming aware that there's more to who you are, more than what is apparent on the surface. It's also true there's more to you than what you see when you look in the mirror.

As one writer put it, what is essential is invisible to the eye. So it all means what is essential to who you are, is invisible. What is invisible?

Then your mind, the thoughts that you have, and the emotions, feelings, these things are invisible. Often they come out as words, as an energy emanation, the type of thoughts that a person has, habitually becomes energetic emanation of that person, the emotional field also. So you can feel certain energies coming from people, positive, negative.

So it is invisible, but it enters the realm of the visible quite often. And the thoughts and emotions make up the person or the personality. So you have the physical body, which is visible, then you have the thoughts and emotions, which are not visible as such, but still manifest here through words and actions and reactions, and energy emanation.

All that is still your surface self. The physical body, thoughts that go through your mind continuously, feelings, emotions, they really are not the depths of who you are. They're all part of your surface consciousness.

For most people, that's where their sense of identity stops. Habitual thoughts, habitual stories, habitual reactions. So people derive their sense of who they are from thinking and emotions.

Mind made entity, which is the ego, and it's all surface. It is not who you are in the depths of your being. Meditation is becoming aware that there's a deeper dimension to who you are than the physical world, the physical body, or your thoughts or emotions.

Why we're here? Not to believe that there is a deeper dimension to who you are. It would just be another thought.

But to actually realize firsthand that dimension where from a viewpoint of mental conceptualization, you cannot explain who you are anymore. There's an unknown dimension to who you are, and that's the depths of your being. You become aware that there is a background to that experience, which is a little bit like the canvas on which the artist paints.

The difference here is, of course, this metaphorical painting, which is the experience that you are having at this moment, is not fixed. The painting, once it's done, is fixed on the canvas. This is a fluid, continuously moving painting, which is your present experience.

In addition to the experience you're having, there is a silent presence that has no form. You can't grasp it. You can't analyze it.

In fact, you can't know anything about it, and yet it's there. It's the one thing that is beyond doubt about the reality of this moment. Everything you're experiencing at this moment could be a dream.

It evaporates quickly, dissolves, and then something new appears. The dream is happening right now. What is it that enables the reality of this moment to be?

Since I use the word to be, we could say it is the being that is behind everything. The silent presence, which is being. That silent presence is the essence of you.

You become aware of that underlying silent space, which has no form, which is probably why the Buddha called it emptiness. Emptiness could also be translated as formlessness, the essence of who you are, which is much deeper than the person, and is not really as you go deeper into yourself, you come to a dimension that transcends yourself. You are suddenly consciously connected with the universal self, the source of it all.

The source of who you are is the source of the entire universe. And when you become aware of that indwelling silent presence, for a moment the canvas becomes blank again. The painting is temporarily dissolved, and suddenly the canvas becomes aware of itself.

As things reappear on the canvas again, further experiences happen to you. You start thinking again, interacting with the world. You can begin to live in a way that enables you to be aware of yourself, even while you're having your own life experiences, to be aware of yourself as the canvas on which your various experiences, good, bad, indifferent, happen.

So you're not just aware of the depths of who you are as the silent presence, you're not just aware of that when you are so-called meditating, but you can be aware of that all the time. Even while you're thinking, there's always a part of you that's background to your thinking. The awareness behind the thinking, the silent space between two thoughts.

And it is you, it is consciousness, it is awareness. In your daily life, there's always a background of stillness or peace, something that is not touched by the comings and goings, gain and loss, turmoil, or whatever is happening in your outer life experience. Something that is not touched by that, that is inner peace.

It's not just peace, it's also a sense of joyful presence. It becomes most amazing when you have that, even while things are not going well around you. Feel that strange peace in the background.

What's that? For some people, that realization comes to them spontaneously when they suddenly lose everything that they thought was important in their lives, possessions, position, relationship. And some of those people suddenly, when everything that made up the surface reality that they identified with as themselves is taken away, either they go insane or become dreadfully unhappy, or they suddenly transcend the surface reality.

For the simple reason that the surface reality becomes so completely unsatisfying, those were probably the first people who in the distant past who ever realized the transcendent dimension within them. People who lost everything. I believe some of those people then began to show others what is possible.

And then they started their first monasteries or ashrams where they tried to repeat that realization that had come to those people spontaneously because they lost everything. And they saw what is possible for a human being to be in touch with the transcendent dimension. Then they tried to show it to others.

And they said, okay, you come and live in this monastery or ashram and you give up your possessions and your personal relationships. In other words, they tried to repeat the things that were taken away from these original people. They tried to repeat the experience of loss.

The good news is you do not need that extreme experience of loss because right here and now you can realize this deeper underlying essence that is essentially who you are. But it's more than who you are. It connects you to something vast.

It connects you to the intelligence that underlies the sense-perceived universe. Liberation, which is a word that is sometimes used in certain spiritual traditions. Liberation.

Or in the teachings of Jesus, suddenly you are saved from the suffering that inevitably accompanies a deluded sense of self. What are you saved from? You are saved from an absurdly limited sense of identity.

And you're saved from the suffering that inevitably accompanies a deluded sense of self. A sense of that believes implicitly that I am this physical body and my thoughts and emotions. And there's nothing else.

If my thoughts clash with your thoughts, then you become my enemy. All these absurd delusions arise through an absurdly limited sense of who you are. So liberation, salvation is transcending free of that delusion.

So you no longer seek your identity through your thinking, your narratives, your stories, neither the individual narratives nor the collective narratives of your tribe or religion or political party. You can still have your narratives. It's fine.

But they are not who you are. As you may know, the question that is sometimes asked, who am I? Make it into a meditation.

So, who am I? Now, you can't go into your thinking. Let's see.

No. You ask, who am I? And then you experience the silent space after those words.

The true answer is to be found in the stillness that follows the question. That's the answer.

[Speaker 3] (39:29 - 41:52)

Who am I? Who am I? Who am I?

[Speaker 1] (43:15 - 1:00:07)

Who am I? Becoming aware that you are conscious right now. That's a strange thing.

There's no content to that. There's simply a presence. And for that to happen, there needs to be the cessation of thought.

And this is my invitation to you. You do not need to think continuously in your daily life. If your mind tells you that if you do not think and do not worry, then your life is going to collapse.

That is not true. It's a lie. But your mind might either explicitly or implicitly say, I need to really think about my life.

Thinking has its place. It's a wonderful tool. It can be used for manifesting.

It can be used for creating. It's a tool. But if it takes you over, you're identified with a tool, then it becomes to possess you.

And that's a terrible limitation. The new state of consciousness is a mixture of thought and spaciousness, so that you can go about your daily life, walking from point A to point B, in that state of simple aware presence. Let's do it now.

I'm calling it do, best not doing involved. Simply become aware of yourself as you sit here, just as I am aware of myself as a conscious presence. This is a very strange thing.

You cannot become an object to yourself. Everything else is an object that arises in your consciousness, an object of consciousness. Knowing yourself, you cannot be an object in your own consciousness.

So you cannot know yourself in a subject-object relationship at the deepest level. You can only know yourself as the eternal subject. There is a space of stillness in that moment of knowing yourself as the essence identity.

There is a live sense of stillness and presence. Let's separate. Let's just say my two hands, this is thought, your thinking, and here's a space of no thought, just awareness.

You can't define what that is. You can't think about it. You can only be it.

Stillness is one word we could use to point to it. Stillness has nothing to do whether there's noise outside or not. Inner stillness is the cessation of thinking without loss of consciousness.

That is, realizing yourself as the unconditioned consciousness, because everything else is conditioned by the past. But that is the unconditioned in you. That is your essence identity.

Simply become so alert that thinking stops by itself. One way you can do it is by becoming aware of sense perceptions, hugely aware of sense perceptions. I give the example in The Power of Now of a cat watching the mouse hole and the cat watching the mouse hole in the state of absolute attention.

This state of awareness, consciousness, that's the only thing in your life that you cannot question, the only thing that is absolutely and undoubtedly real. Everything else you can question, for example, whether our gathering here is a dream or not, you don't really know. It could be that you are dreaming and there's a man suggesting to you that you might be dreaming.

You cannot know for sure that this life that you're experiencing is not a kind of dream. And from one perspective, it is a kind of dream. Sometimes I like to look at old photographs taken in 1900, early days of photography, street scenes or gatherings.

You can go to second-hand shops and they sell old photographs. You can buy one for a penny or two. You have no idea who these people are, nor has anybody else have an idea who these people are.

But they're running around the city street excited about this or that. And then there's people sitting around a table eating and laughing in this old photo. Where is that now?

It has evaporated like a dream. Nobody even remembers who they are. It quickly evaporates.

So there is a dream-like quality to human existence, any existence. So you could say, okay, maybe it's all a dream. That may well be.

But one thing you cannot doubt, that is that you are conscious. Because if you're not conscious, there couldn't be a dream. A dream can only arise in the light of consciousness.

So the one thing, whether or not it's a dream or not, it becomes irrelevant. The only thing that matters is whether you can realize what the essence of the dream is. Consciousness.

You can only realize it directly, here and now, as this. So this realization of, we could call inner stillness, of spaciousness, of presence, of, well, there's a term that's very popular these days, and that's a good thing. It's called mindfulness, which I use almost never, except when I explain why I don't use it.

I don't use it because it seems to imply that your mind is full. But it's not what mindfulness is. It really should be called mind emptiness.

The entire practice of, for example, people find certain esoteric spiritual practices very strange and hard to understand. Zen, what does it all mean? What's Zen all about?

Cessation of thinking without loss of consciousness. That's what the Zen master's trying to show you, non-conceptually. The Zen master became famous because when he was asked, please explain the meaning of Zen, all he would do is raise his finger and look at you.

Sometimes it takes a long time before realizing that it doesn't take time to know who you are. That's the paradox. I'm not saying don't go to a Zen monastery.

Perhaps you have to. But it may take time to realize that it does not take time, but it doesn't have to take time. It's here and now.

I'm saying this to especially the spiritual seekers among you who have made it your life purpose to seek whatever it is, the ultimate spiritual experience of transformation. And the very seeking has become, without you knowing it, the greatest obstacle to spiritual realization. By being in the seeking mode for some spiritual realization or awakening, you're in basically the same state of consciousness that everybody else is in, except they are seeking through material possessions, achievement, relationships.

They're seeking there. It's a mind structure, the seeking mode. And spiritual seekers adopt that.

They see themselves as more spiritual than the one who is seeking after the latest model of that particular car or seeking life partner who enhances their sense of self, the trophy husband, the trophy wife, the beautiful arm hang. And never being satisfied, because if you're in the seeking mode, you get stuck in the seeking mode.

[Speaker 2] (1:00:16 - 1:00:22)

Our program continues with session two, from doing to being.

[Speaker 1] (1:01:07 - 1:45:02)

You have to have the courage to enter that space in which you do not know anything about who you are, letting go of attachment to opinions that you have had about yourself, seeing yourself as a success or failure or mixture in life, seeing yourself as a spiritual person or as not enough spiritual person or superior to others or inferior to others, any kind of comparison. This is the liberation that comes when you find the courage to be in the space of not knowing in which there's simply a space of awareness in you, where before there was a stream of thinking. Now there is a space of not thinking.

I invite you to find that in yourself, just that. The same space is here in me, and the words come out of it. When there are no words, there's no thinking.

The mind only operates the moment words come. And that's a precious thing of finding in yourself the space of emptiness in Buddhist terms, fullness in Christian terms, but not full of things, full of life, the fullness of life. It doesn't mean many things.

It means life before it becomes many things. It's basically the state before the big bang, which still subsists in you now, before the universe came into being. They say before the universe came into being, there was an empty space or something like that.

There was no time and there was nothing, no thing. That's all you can say. You cannot then start thinking about that no thing because there's nothing to think about.

And yet the origin of all things was never lost and isn't really touched by time. So to know who you are beyond concepts, embrace the not knowing in yourself. In other words, thoughts subside for a moment, and then you're getting closer to the essence of who you are.

The strange thing is there is something that is still present there. I say something, but it's not something, but language is limited because language is about the world of things. There's something, even when you're not thinking, you're actually present.

Even if you were not perceiving at that time, you could say, yes, I'm present because there's sense perception happening. Even if you close your eyes, and even if you put ear plugs in, or there's total silence, you close your eyes, all visual sense perceptions have become obliterated. And there isn't noise going on either.

So before you were aware of visual sense perceptions, and you were aware of this voice. And now there's neither visual sense perceptions, nor auditory sense perceptions for a moment. What's left?

Ah, you are still there. The amazing thing is even if you're not reminding yourself of your past or your future or your present life situation or your name, or looking at your body, there is something that is still present. You know that, but it is not differentiated.

It doesn't have a history, what is still present. It has no past and no future to it. You can't really say much about it.

You can't define it further because it is what is called empty. It is emptiness. It is formlessness.

It is formless consciousness. If you find that in yourself, and it's always there underneath the movement of form, which is thinking and emotions and even sense perceptions, underneath it is always there. If you find that even the most unprofitable life has become redeemed, because you have found the one thing that really matters.

Yourself. All that's happening here is we become comfortable with nothing happening. So that we can shift our consciousness from doing to being.

Doing is not just physical doing, which obviously we are not engaged in right now. The mouse is moving, but that's all. Or you may be twitching a bit, but basically we are sitting or lying.

That's physical doing, so we stop doing on the external. And more importantly, the mind. So we are here to experience, get a taste of, or perhaps even more than that, go deeply into the state of being, which in itself has no content.

It's a bit like having lived in a room full of furniture, stuff, for many years. Always being worried about polishing it or getting more stuff or getting rid of this stuff, talking about the stuff in your room, and for the first time you become aware also of the space of the room, which is the essence without which there wouldn't be a room. And you realize the furniture in the room is secondary to the space in the room.

But space you cannot grasp. You sense it, you become aware of it, you sense the presence of the space, and to do that, you can't be thinking. Thinking is to do with the furniture in the room.

Thinking is never to do with the space in the room. A different faculty, inner faculty, is required to sense the space wherever you are. That is not thinking.

Most humans still don't know that they potentially have that ability or that faculty. We are here for some of you to awaken that, and for many others to deepen it. So let's go back to the room.

When you become aware of the space in the room, you might notice it's very peaceful to be aware of the space. There is suddenly an added dimension to where you are, because before you were concerned with the furniture and whatever filled the room. Every bit of stuff has a history.

The old room that you've lived in for many years suddenly becomes peaceful in the moment that you can sense the space of the room rather than always focusing on the different bits and pieces in the room. Suddenly you take in the totality which transcends what's in it, the spaciousness of it, there's a sense of peace and a peaceful presence. You could say it's in the room, but of course it's in you.

In our analogy, the furniture in the room, the bits and pieces, the stuff, corresponds of course to the content of your mind. Whatever is occupying your mind is the stuff, the furniture. Every item wants your attention.

You keep the old stuff alive by continuously giving it your attention. If you become aware of the space in the room, you withdraw attention from what is in the room. It could be described as the essence of the room.

Without any room there's no room, there's space. The spaciousness, the presence, presence that you can sense as if it were an external presence in filling the room is also in you. Now this is very deeply peaceful in many traditions.

Let's call it the presence of God that all the mystics, whether Christian or Buddhist or Hindu or Sufis, they all point to that. It's not the ideological God, not the person, but that which underlies all manifestation, the eternal. So the eternal is both within and without.

The moment you notice that presence outside of you, you're no longer focusing on individual things. You're focusing on the space between things and you sense that as a silent presence. You can't say much about it.

Some poets have written about it quite beautifully. Wordsworth, the English poet, went out into nature and wrote beautiful things all pointing to that. But the moment you notice it outside of you, it's within you the same.

Your most fundamental responsibility is to find that which is beyond the stuff, to access that dimension in you. That's why you're here. That's what the universe wants through you to awaken to that dimension, to be it consciously.

First it seems that it's something outside of you. It's the space in the room or how here in nature and then you realize, oh, it's within me too. And it's more essentially me than anything else.

That's where the whole feeling of who you are actually originates in that deep sense of being, of presence. And then it gets mixed up with things, with stuff. And then you sense the through the stuff.

And then possession can give you a little bit of aliveness. You can sense your car if you just got it after a while it wears off. If you just got it, it can give you a little bit of sense of deeper sense of identity.

Any identity sense of essential self comes from, is from the formless dimension of presence. And for most people, it can only a little bit filter through all the things in their lives. And it's never very satisfying because it's obscured and it's mistaken for the thing.

It's like having a lampshade. You're mistaking the lampshade for the light. And then you attach yourself to the lampshade and not realizing what you love about the lampshade is the light that shines through it.

Whenever anything upsets you in life, or you get despondent or angry or whatever, then you lost awareness of that presence. The presence is obscured. And something then in your life is regarded as absolutely important.

The lampshade, you don't realize how insubstantial that is. And you're not aware of the light in your life. You are the light said Jesus, the light of the world.

Nothing in life can satisfy you except this. No, you don't have to believe that. I'm not saying believe me, nothing is going to satisfy you.

Either you know that already, because you've tried many times to be satisfied by lampshades, or you don't know it yet, which is fine too. You experience a little bit more frustration and suffering. But look for real satisfaction in whatever fills your life, in things, in people, in situations, in positions, in what other people think of you, or better opinion of yourself in your mind.

Begin to live this, live in what we could call continuous connectedness with being. Then you can enjoy also the furniture in the room. And then the famous word that we know is non-attachment.

Of course implies that you're rooted in something deeper or more real than whatever things you might be attached to. Very often the attachment is attachment to a thought, that's the biggest attachments. Non-attachment is not really possible unless you are rooted in something more fundamental than stuff that you might be attached to.

So I wouldn't even say practice non-attachment. No, find the essence of who you are and then, as a natural consequence, that attachment to things and people and places and situations, success and failure and so on and so on, falls away by itself. So true happiness is deeper than what is conventionally called happiness.

It's a sense of deep, alive peace, which can be there even if on the outer level you experience a wave of unhappiness, such as would be the case if somebody close to you dies. The central part of all this is becoming comfortable with, of course, not thinking, just being, just awareness. That's the inner space of awareness right now.

Do you need to think? Do you need to fill this space with thoughts?

[Speaker 3] (1:45:02 - 1:45:02)

No.

[Speaker 1] (1:45:04 - 2:03:43)

It's a life without thoughts. You can sense your own aliveness without telling yourself anything, being it. We call it meditation, but that's not really what it is.

Meditation is another concept that creates a compartment in your mind or your life, different from other things. But we're not really here to do a meditation as such, but to realize the essential you, or to put it more accurately and directly, to realize the essential I. Because one could say, and don't take this too literally, because whatever language one uses is always somewhat wrong.

So they're only approximations. They are only helpful hints used temporarily. Whatever words we use here are helpful pointers, not the absolute truth, can't be expressed in words.

All pointers, of course, have certain limitations. Knowing that I can use one or two pointers, we could say then that there's two of you here or at any time. There's the I that is circumstantial, relative, fleeting, and it's not a unified body.

It includes all kinds of sub-I's and patterns. It's form, the form of who you are, a psychological form, physical form, conditioned by circumstances, reacting to circumstances, having fears and desires. And then there's the deeper I, which one could say is the dreamer of all the circumstances, and the events, and the experiences that make up a person's so-called life.

So I'm comparing then circumstantial existence to a kind of dream, which is what it is, because it dissolves fairly quickly. Not only your life, but every event and circumstance in your life changes continuously. And that's why we can compare it to a kind of dream, which also is not substantial.

It's also fleeting and subject to change and subject to impermanence, just as this world that looks deceptively solid, but is also subject to constant change. Physicists agree, if you look deeply to matter, you see that there is ultimately no solid matter, only energy fluctuations. But the energy fluctuations appear to us, it's an illusion, they appear to us as solid.

So there's a solidity to the world that is not absolutely real, it's a part of the illusion. And then people always get shocked when they realize how fleeting it all is. And whenever you think your life has a secure basis, very quickly you realize, oh, it wasn't that secure.

Because something happens, you realize that sense of security that one seeks in circumstances is also an illusion. So the deeper I is that which illuminates the circumstances, creates them in a way, like a dream creates the dream. The question is whether that deeper I, which is the light behind it all, without which there would be no world, question is whether the deeper I is totally lost in the dream, or whether it knows itself as the deeper I, even while the dream continues.

Lucid living, similar to lucid dreaming, which some people are interested in, which is staying conscious while you're dreaming and knowing that you're dreaming. But here we're talking about lucid living, which is to know yourself as the light behind it all, the presence behind it all. And to sense that presence that has no form as the life that you are, or the consciousness that you are.

It's no longer the separate you that's behind it all. Now the important thing is to know that, not conceptually, but in the background. In all the years I've used many different pointers to point to it.

Every pointer is of course limits it, it's not that. But it can be temporarily helpful. I've said the stillness in the background, the space, inner space, the spaciousness, or the light.

Light, Jesus also used that term to point to it. You are the light of the world. There's the world, and there's the light in which it appears.

You are the light of the world. Is the light God? Well, if we use that term, I would say the light is the emanation of God, in the same way that the sunlight emanates from the sun and is not really separate from the sun.

God is the absolute unmanifested, timeless. And from the absolute unmanifested, something shines into this world and creates this world. I've used other pointers also.

Yes, stillness, inner space, spaciousness, presence, or in negative terms, the cessation of thinking, the end of compulsive thinking. And that's why we're here, to realize that possibility. What's left of you when you stop thinking?

And of course, I'm inviting you to stop thinking now. You can't make it happen, but you can allow yourself to just be present. There's the essential I.

You enter that dimension, power flows into you. You could call it spiritual power. It may not immediately become transformed into something in this world.

It could become creative action, could become an emanation of love towards your fellow human beings. It could become other things as it flows into this world, but it doesn't immediately necessarily have to do that. You're plugged into the source of all power.

And it's not the power that the ego would call power, which is noisy. It's silent power, which from the point of view of the ego looks like weakness. The dotted thing sometimes compares that power to water.

It seems very soft, but it can erode the hardest rock and does. And that of course is the power of now. Don't expect immediate results.

Be content with opening yourself to this influx of silent power. The ups and downs of circumstantial existence. One day everything is going great.

Next day things collapse and then it's fine again. New things arise. And while all that happens, you feel yourself, you sense yourself as the presence behind it all.

You don't lose yourself in the circumstantial I. You stay rooted in the essential I. You are essentially that, of course.

Now they are not absolutely separate. The circumstantial I is the waves on the surface of being, the ripples and waves. Of course there's no division between the waves on the surface of the ocean and the ocean.

It just sometimes looks as if every wave had a separate existence. So the secret of life is, here it comes, in any situation, can you be there not only as a circumstantial entity, the person, but also as the deeper presence of I. To know yourself as that while you participate in circumstantial existence.

There may still be ups and downs and even happiness and unhappiness, but not touching you anymore in the core of your being. Neither the happiness nor the unhappiness. There's something deeper than happiness, which is permanent peace.

A vitally and vibrantly alive peace could also be called joy or love. In Indians, Brijal is called Sat Chit Ananda, which is being, consciousness, bliss. Awareness of being, Chit, consciousness, Ananda, bliss.

The joy of sensing the being that you are. The awareness of being. The awareness of the one life that you are.

To sense that even while you go about your business. Circumstantial business. That's the challenge and that's the secret.

[Speaker 2] (2:04:17 - 2:04:22)

Our program continues with session three, Transcending the Self.

[Speaker 1] (2:04:23 - 3:07:01)

So our purpose, of course, just to remind you is not to become still. Then you create a problem, but you'll discover that you are still already underneath the thinking. Your sense of identity, the sense of who you are, derives from the stillness underneath the thinking.

That's the essence of your sense of I am, or your sense of being. Most people don't know that because that essence shines through the veil of thinking and emotions. You could also call it the light that shines through the essence of who you are.

I am, that sense of I am. And most people don't know that it derives from that which is deeper than thinking in you. And they think the thinking and the emotions are who they are.

So they confuse the I am with what happens in their minds. And that's the state we call ignorance. Nothing to do with education.

How much or how little. As I speak, really every word or every sentence is a pointer to that dimension. But as we sit here together, be aware of the gaps between the words.

That's more important than the words. Because that's what the words point to. What is that gap?

It's stillness. Space. The light of consciousness itself.

Formless. Spirit. Nothing in it to understand.

Nothing you can work out to get closer to it. Work out conceptually, mentally, by asking another question and waiting for another answer. You have to give up trying to understand spirit.

God. Even understand yourself. So as we sit here, thinking is not important.

If it arises, allow it to arise. But be the presence behind the thinking. Be the deeper I am that you are already.

Otherwise the I am gets lost in the thinking. And then the thinking assumes the pseudo identity of I am. Dreadful condition.

Normal, of course. So as we sit here, we have the courage to embrace the state of not knowing. There's no knowing, no judgment.

It's a wonderful liberation when you no longer need to look to mind activity to tell you who you are. And that's why we are here, to access that state of connectedness with being. The depths of being.

You are this formless light that shines through anything that arises in your life. It's formless. So there's always, at any moment, now, there's always that which happens in your life.

Here, very little happens. Just the words that are being perceived. Peripheral sense perceptions.

Where you are sitting, perhaps the periphery. You're aware of that a little bit. Maybe some thoughts come occasionally.

So there's always that which happens. And then there's always something more vital. And that is, we could say, the light in which that which happens appears.

That is also the only thing that is, that cannot be doubted. You can doubt the reality of whatever is happening around you. And of course, it has a dreamlike quality.

It comes and goes. But you cannot doubt, because it's immediately obvious that you are conscious. Or that there is consciousness.

Even if it is a dream, there is a light in which that dream appears. That's the timeless. And knowing that, you can be awake in the dream.

Because things continue to happen in your so-called life. But you can be aware of the dimension of depth. Aware of formless consciousness itself, like now.

And this is the meaning of what you read in the New Testament, where Jesus says, you are the light of the world. That is, to know yourself as that, not conceptually, but directly. To know yourself as the light that underlies everything.

To know yourself as consciousness is liberation from the world. Liberation from taking apparent reality as something that is absolutely real. It is not absolutely real.

It is borrowed from the light of consciousness. It's like the light of the moon. The moon has no light of its own.

It looks like that, but it's the sunlight. So the world has no life of its own. You have no life of your own.

There is no such thing as my life. You are an expression of the one life. So I don't have a life.

I am life. Not my life, just life. The moment you say my, you create a duality.

Me and life. You can learn one thing, so to speak. Discover your ability, to put it in the most simple terms, to stop thinking without going to sleep.

Or allow thinking to stop. If you discover that you're able to do that, to allow thinking to stop and be present, you don't need to read any more spiritual books. That's the essence of spirituality.

Because that's the realization of the formless dimension of consciousness. And that's spirit. When you realize that's who you are, what comes and goes in your so-called life is only of secondary importance.

If what comes and goes in your life is of primary importance to you, in other words, there's nothing else, that's a dreadful state of ignorance and suffering. But if you realize that what comes and goes is secondary, it may be important, but it is not absolutely important. It is relatively important.

No matter what you are doing, what discussions you are having with somebody, what you're dealing with in your life, the problems in your life, or an extension of that in the life of the community, the collective, the country, the world, all that is relatively important. But not absolutely. It comes and goes.

Absolutely important is to be rooted in that which doesn't come and go. And only from there can you see that what comes and goes in your life is of secondary importance. And that is spiritual realization.

I sometimes speak of bringing the transcendent dimension into your life, without which your life, no matter what you achieve, is very limited. The transcendent dimension is not an achievement. It's more like a discovery, because it's already here.

So it's not something you need to get, which would imply future, but the discovery of something that's already here. No matter who you are or what your function is in this world, this is about the most important thing there is. So we are here right now, so that you can deepen your access to it.

Or some of you discover for yourself what it is. Discover it directly. Experience yourself as presence, the presence that you are, that is the transcendence of the person.

And the transcendent of the person and the discovery of yourself as presence is here and now, when you become so alert, so awake, you discover that alertness, wakefulness in you. There's no thinking. There are spaces in between thinking of simple, alert presence.

As that space opens up, you suddenly realize there's a depth to you that you didn't know before. You have to have enough courage to go there, because you have to give up everything that you thought you knew, thoughts that you identified with. So you step into the unknown.

You become as nothing. And I like that English word. You don't have that in other languages.

The English word nothing consists of no thing. Thing meaning form. You realize the presence of that which has no form.

As you experience yourself as presence, an alert consciousness, you don't know who you are anymore. And that may require some courage to go there. So when you look at something, the presence is looking, not the person.

How do you know whether the presence is looking at something or the person? When you don't interpret mentally what you're looking at, that's presence. But you're very alert or you listen to something, but you don't interpret it.

There's just the listening and the presence without which there could be no listening. Then in little situations in your life, you discover that it's much more pleasant to be there as the presence rather than as the person. So if you can encounter people, situations, places as a simple presence without taking a position towards them, allow everything to be in this moment as it is.

The ego doesn't like that. The ego is the mind-made self that lives on judgment. If you relinquish judgment, the ego disappears.

You realize that life becomes a much more pleasant experience without that person continuously judging everything and everybody. And you connect if you have that courage or you've suffered so much through your own judgments that you just can't take anymore and you go into just presence. That presence is also intelligence.

It does not originate in your body, in your physical brain, but there is a relationship, of course, between it and your brain. You could use the analogy of a radio transmitter. The radio transmits something.

It doesn't produce it. But when you destroy the radio, it seems that it's gone. It isn't.

It's not just the absence of judgment. It also begins to operate in your life. In other words, the way in which you deal with things and situations and people changes because a greater intelligence, not the egoic mind, deals with situations and people.

It's also the source of all creativity. Our focus here is the transcendent dimension itself. The rest looks after itself, how it manifests in your life and so on.

Spiritual awakening means the person shrinks and presence grows. But enough of the person remains to be an effective instrument for presence. Sometimes the presence can speak through you or inspire your mind.

Other times it's just an emanation, just a peaceful, vibrantly alive space. The person becomes an instrument through which presence can express itself. You no longer confuse that instrument, which is really predominantly the mind, with who you truly are.

As the awakening process continues to unfold in you, you find more and more situations in your life where you are the presence predominantly rather than the person. Less and less judgment comes into your mind and is replaced with just an aliveness. It's not easy.

Don't underestimate the momentum behind the ego, the pull of the ego, which has been there for thousands of years. It will reassert itself at first quite frequently. And when the time comes, when you are able, as it asserts itself, you can still be there as the observing presence.

That's a huge step forward. There's a light in you, not a visual light, a presence that is essentially who you are. It has nothing to do with your past or future.

We are here to become familiar with being that presence consciously. If it feels good and right for you this moment to be here and almost, let's say, to recognize the truth of it, that means that's it. And you can't say where if there's nowhere.

If it feels irritating or boring to be here, that means you have not yet been able to step out of content, your mind, thought, or anything to identify with. But if it feels just a sense of goodness and rightness of being here, that means that dimension that has no form is already arising. It's the sky, the spacious sky.

We are here to find or to realize it's already there, the spacious sky within. You can't say, look, there it is, or over here, or look, it's over there. But truly, I tell you, the kingdom of heaven, the dimension of spaciousness is within you and it's without.

And it is essentially who you are. You begin to realize that within you there's not just a succession of thoughts, there is also a space there in between thoughts and behind the thoughts. And that space is there when you realize that sometimes you're actually not thinking.

You don't even have to try. Everybody who feels drawn to this has already at least had glimpses of that within which is not thought, just spacious awareness. It frees you from spending the rest of your life in that awful prison of your mind.

As spaciousness comes into a life, things still happen in your daily life. Challenges still happen. Things go wrong.

You lose something or something is taken away or something arrives that you don't really want. These things still happen. That's okay.

But against the background of spaciousness and you're not totally trapped in every thought that arises, not identified with every thought that arises, and more and more you become aware of space. This is really what the spiritual term detachment that's been around for a while. True detachment, which in some traditions they tell you you must become detached from the things of the world, and spiritual practitioners have been trying to do that by detaching themselves from their normal surroundings, becoming renunciates.

Of course that in itself does not mean that you have really detached. True detachment is an inner non-identification with form. Non-identification primarily with mental formations that arise continuously.

And more and more you become the awareness in which they arise. You are that already. You're the awareness, the space, the sky, and there are the clouds, and there's the drama.

You may still experience some around you because that's what humans generate. You don't feed into it anymore. You don't contribute more drama to it.

So there's a certain change happens even in the realm of form as this inner shift happens from form identification, mind identification, to being the awareness that affects even the world of form. The world of form will never become absolutely satisfying. It's not even meant to be satisfying.

It's only meant to awaken you. In some ways you could even say the world of form is meant to frustrate you in order to awaken you. And once you've awakened, the world of form is actually quite a pleasant realm because you don't need it anymore for your identity or your fulfillment.

You become peaceful. Confucius talks about benevolence, which is an inner quality, metta, goodwill, benevolence, loving-kindness. The Dalai Lama talks about it.

He didn't say, my religion is Buddhism. He said, my religion is kindness. So it is a quality in a human being that is in many humans only potential that arises from non-identification with the mind.

It arises out of that spaciousness. Benevolence is a word, of course, that comes from Latin. Bene means good.

Volence is willing. It's good will towards the other. This is in the New Testament, is called love.

In the Greek, agape, not the love of the ego, but the love that is benevolence, goodwill. That comes then only out of that spaciousness, not out of thought. And that changes the world, really, when loving-kindness comes in between human beings, then that becomes part of the collective.

Entities like nations interact. It must start with the individual, that quality arising in the individual. You can see the unconsciousness, perhaps, in the other person.

That's not what they are. That is not their identity. That is what they have inherited in the course of human evolution, the unconsciousness that we inherit.

Spaciousness, the gap between two thoughts, for example, now. So instead of bringing it about, realizing that it's there already, ah, well, that doesn't give much food to the ego anymore because then there's nothing I can attain if it's there already. So the ego has nothing to do there anymore.

So a wonderful thing that you can all find in your own life now, and most of you already do, is to realize that there's no need to be engaged in continuous thinking. Naturally, the state of awareness arises in you. Just look for it.

It's a good thing to start and end this by looking around wherever you happen to be before you close your eyes. So you just become comfortable with wherever you are, and you're beginning to step out of thought. Close your eyes, and what helps is to take a few breaths into the abdomen.

That can put you in touch easily with the entire energy field of the inner body. As you breathe in, the abdomen expands a little. Then you hold it, the end of the in-breath for two or three seconds.

Feel the energy expanding then throughout the body, and then you breathe out, and in again. And you follow the breath with your attention. This is the ancient breath awareness practice.

You can't be thinking at the same time and follow the breath with your attention. That's why it's such a good practice. You become aware of your body, the inner body, the aliveness.

Now gradually you feel that the awareness of the inner body, the aliveness of the inner body, and the inner body become a single thing or single no-thing. So you merge with the sense of aliveness and stillness. Instead of observing it, you feel that you are it, and it is awake.

You may still have remnants of visual image of the body, but it's not necessary anymore. Just focus on that sense of all-pervasive presence that is not other than you, that is essentially you, that is the essence of who you are, that is the I before it becomes something. Just pure presence.

There is a meditation that starts with the question, Who am I? The answer is not to be found in thought or in words. The answer is this, the presence that you sense.

You sense yourself as the presence. That's the answer to Who am I? A criterion for success in this practice is sense of enjoyment or joy.

We could call it the joy of being. Not being anything in particular, just being. Eventually you encounter a state, this deep sense of beingness, of I.

It cannot be improved upon. Nothing needs to be added to it. It doesn't get any better than this, to use a common expression.

This moment, being conscious of being, feeling your connectedness with the source of all life, from which the consciousness emanates, the consciousness that you are, that realization is the very fulfillment of your life in this moment. What is there to add to it? On the level of being, you're already complete.

There's nothing that you need to become. There's nothing missing. There may be things missing on the human level, the human dimension, but not on the being level.

There's nothing missing. You don't need time to become anything. That's the fullness of life that Jesus talked about, or the emptiness that Buddha talks about.

Spaciousness is a better word for it. Inner spaciousness. Then as you open your eyes and look around the room again, continue to feel the stillness or the spaciousness within, you realize the possibility of being present within and without.

[Speaker 2] (3:07:55 - 3:08:11)

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Waking up the world.

2020 Eckhart Tolle Retreat Journey of Awakening-FULL

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 3:07:55)

Welcome, I should say welcome in many languages, so many nationalities here. So, some of you have come a long way, travelled a long distance to be with yourself. And sometimes that's how it works.

To be with yourself, I don't mean the self that is such a burden to carry. You may be carrying that also, but that's not why you've come here, but something deeper than the story or the conceptual self in the head that needs and wants something. Of course, that's also come with you here, the self that needs or wants something.

And it may be expecting to get it here, to add something to itself. But that's not how it works. So I sometimes use the expression portals, openings into yourself, a new state of consciousness, one could say, unconditioned.

And portals are here all the time. One could consider our entire retreat as a portal into that state of consciousness that we may call presence. So the retreat is not here to add anything to you.

One could almost say it's here to remove something. But not even that. To show something that's already there.

And the teaching, to use that word, it's not really any teaching. The totality of this weekend, long weekend, is the teaching. The words are not that important.

While we sit here in this beautiful space, you may be a little tightly packed in the back. Maybe tomorrow we can move forward a little bit more. But while we sit in this beautiful space, always remember, and I will keep reminding you, so that you don't get attached only to the words, to pay attention to this, this is one important portal that is here, to pay attention to the silent space that is here.

It's here in this room, so while we sit here, there's always the dimension of silence or silent space. And all that's required of you for it to become a portal is to pay attention to it. It does not mean that you cannot pay attention to the words.

You listen, the words are there, they go in. But as you listen, you also listen to the silence. And the mind, the thinking mind might say, this doesn't make sense, because listening to the silence, there's nothing to listen to.

All that's required is simply to acknowledge, to pay attention, to notice the silence. To the thinking mind, that is not a significant event. It is a non-event.

It is a non-happening. It is completely uninteresting, has no fascination whatsoever, and adds nothing to who you are. That's why the mind-made self, the heavy self that you carry with you, is not interested in it and can't even do that.

In other words, you cannot listen to silence through thought. The moment you notice the silent space, the stream of thinking ceases, and you haven't lost consciousness. That's why we are here.

That is one portal that is opening up. There's only one thing here to learn, and it's not even learning, because learning would imply that you need to absorb something new. There's only one thing here to discover.

And in many of you, probably most of you, that has already emerged, which I sometimes call the unconditioned consciousness, the state of presence, or more recently, I've been calling it space consciousness, as opposed to object consciousness. Most humans in this world know only object consciousness and are identified with object consciousness react. Object consciousness is anything that takes on form.

Thought is a form, a thought form, an object in consciousness. Every sense perception is an object in consciousness. Object consciousness, the words that you hear, are object consciousness forms.

The silent space has no form, can't grasp it, space consciousness. That dimension of depth or stillness that is already in you, and in many, I know that, that has already emerged, although it may get obscured from time to time again by total absorption in object consciousness, thought reactions, me. And you yourself become an object to yourself, a mind made me with its story.

You have made yourself into an object in consciousness, an uneasy entity, and that uneasy entity is also here. The reason why you are here is that something else has emerged, which one could call a new consciousness on this planet, because it's been so rare until, even now it's still rare, but until recently it's been so rare for that dimension to be realized in a human being. And suddenly now, many people are beginning to realize it.

Still rare, relatively speaking, relative to the population on the planet, but in more humans it is emerging already. And you may not even know that this is why you've come here. But the self, the object consciousness me, has also traveled here.

And it may have its own agenda here. It wants something, because it is never enough, never complete, never fulfilled except for short intervals between two wantings, or two fears, and two not enoughs, so that self, what is traditionally called the self, in Buddhism that is called the self, has come with you, and of course wherever you go it will travel with you also, and it won't leave you alone for too long, and it's back. And that is that part in you that, after a little while here, maybe tomorrow afternoon, will already begin to feel restless, because not enough is being added to it here.

And it will start thinking, how much longer have I got here? I have to stay another two days. And then it will project itself to the third day when you're going to leave, because that then becomes the next significant event, whereas this retreat to that self is a non-event.

So it will project itself away, because it always wants to be in the next moment, not in this one that is a characteristic of object consciousness, of the self. So it won't be happy with this for long. So that, it's good to know that that also is there in you, and it does other things.

It's not happy with what is for very long, and it likes to complain and react. And I don't mean complain in saying, you're stepping on my foot, please remove your foot from my foot. That's a simple statement.

You can do something to alleviate this, please do it. That's not a complaint. I mean the mind pattern of inner and sometimes outer complaining, which is to do with a deep seated pattern in the mind made self, that is the reactive.

And although these are beautiful surroundings, some of them perhaps hard to find a more beautiful spot on the planet. Yes, and yet the self will easily find things to be unhappy about, because we live in the world of forms. It's in the nature of the world of form that it is not totally satisfying.

Things go wrong in it. And the self loves that fact, because then it can complain. And here there are many people in a relatively small space, plenty of opportunity to complain about other people, maybe in the head only, or whatever conditions are not quite right.

And in complaining, which is a deep seated pattern, reacting, complaining of the deep seated pattern of the mind made self, the conditioned entity, in complaining and reacting, it momentarily strengthens its sense of self. Because when you complain, you are right and somebody else is wrong. And so it's unconscious, it is an unconscious attempt to strengthen one's sense of me, of self, which is never quite enough.

So you need to strengthen it somehow, so here there may not be much else left to it than to feel unhappy about something and focus on that. Could happen. The pain body may come in and add to it.

We are having a full moon on Saturday, which sometimes triggers pain bodies. So just to know that there is a dimension in you of depth, which has brought you here, and there is the dimension, the shallowness of a mind made me, that cooperated enough for you to be here. Okay, I'll go along with that.

In quite a few people, it didn't allow them to come here. At every retreat, there are people who at the last minute, or the day before, think, should I go? What's the point?

And after much agonizing, they cancel. So something in them prevented them. This is quite normal, maybe they'll come to the next one.

Or they get other teachings or teachers, maybe taught situations. Everybody gets what they need. So sometimes it interferes enough, but with you, at least it cooperated to allow you.

And some of you hardly made it here, because even a few days ago, you weren't quite sure whether you would actually go. So to observe, I may be talking a little bit more about it tomorrow, so that you recognize it clearly when it's there. Because that's really all that's required, for it to recognize the conditioned entity, that until recently, was your entire identity.

And it's really enough to recognize it. And of course, there is something deeper in you, that's arising and opening up. And that has brought you here.

Throughout, we're using the portals that are available to us here. And one is silence. Not only in this room, but also out in nature, which is the other teacher here.

There are quite a few teachers this weekend. The beautiful nature that you're going to walk in, move in. It's not only all the beautiful things that you see, thousands of life forms.

That's beautiful. There's also a vast sense of space, of spaciousness, and a silence that underlies it all. If you can listen to it first thing in the morning, you will hear the birds.

Beautiful sounds. They are objects in consciousness, perceptions. Beautiful.

And then notice, just as you do it here, the silence or the stillness out of which the sounds come. And suddenly the sounds have greater depth to them. That depth is your own depth, ultimately.

It's the depth of the universe. And you can then listen to that beautiful sound. Just the joy of life celebrating its own existence through these little forms.

You can listen to that. If simultaneously you are aware of space, you can listen to those sounds without any interference by thought. And that is the arising of the new consciousness.

In which a vast intelligence of far greater than thought. And you haven't lost thought. When you need it, it's there.

So we use the portals that are here naturally, and through a silent space here, no matter what you listen to in nature, no matter what you see, there's also a vast spaciousness, a harmonious whole that holds it all together. All these thousands of beautiful life forms. You can be aware of that also.

So the more you are aware of silence and space, the more that inner spaciousness, that inner stillness, they open up. And that is the depths of who you are beyond a little mind-made entity. That also has its own level of existence.

It will continue, yes. But you are no longer captivated by it and thinking that that's all there is to you. This uneasy, fearful, needy entity.

And then we are using here, well, other portals of course, the main one you could say, and I'm sure you are familiar with that already, is now, every portal takes you into now, to be internally aligned with what is. That's a wonderful portal. Whatever is, is as it is.

Now, allowing this moment to be. And this is our practice this weekend. Internally to be aligned with this, to actually pay more attention to now than past and future.

You're not going to lose them. If during this weekend you don't pay that much attention to past and future, although they will want to reassert themselves, return attention to now. Welcome now.

Whatever happens in now. Some things, the little me might react. And then you notice.

And you realize it's important. Whatever is, you can't really argue with, because it already is. Action then arises out of the surrendered state, not out of the resistant state.

That's intelligent action. If action should be needed. So, whatever happens at this moment, and nothing can happen anywhere else except this moment.

Nothing ever happened that wasn't this moment. Nothing will ever happen that's not now. Whatever happens can only happen now.

And is, one could say, although that little me doesn't like that. Whatever happens is connected with the totality of all life. The totality of the universe.

Buddhists knew that 2,600 years ago already. The interconnectedness of all things. Modern physicists know that.

That there are no separate events. There only seem to be separate events. There's no such thing as a separate event or separate entity.

Everything is connected, interconnected to the totality, the web of the entire cosmos. Therefore, whatever happens is inevitable. Otherwise it would not be.

It's connected to the fabric of the whole. So, the is-ness of this moment could not be otherwise. And the mind says, oh yes, it could.

If he hadn't done that, this wouldn't have happened. But he did that. If I had acted differently, it wouldn't have happened.

So it could be otherwise. The mind argues in that way. But the fact of the matter is, it isn't otherwise.

I can raise my arm. Now it's raised. And the mind said, yeah, but you didn't have to do that.

You could have not raised it. But now it's here. Perhaps another universe has already branched off from this moment where I did not raise my arm.

This is what physicists speculate about, that every moment different universes come out of infinite possibilities. If we carry on talking about this, this will take us into philosophy. The fact remains, this moment is as it is.

Yeah. But, but, yeah. And then it changes.

And again, it is as it is. It may change through you, because you accepted the is-ness, which led to intelligent action. Because it's only now that the portal is open into true intelligence, when you're not the reactive little entity that can't accept the is-ness and needs a future, which is no more than a thought form.

Isn't it? Nobody has ever encountered the future, except as a thought. Nobody has met it, ever.

It only exists as a third form. The past too only exists as a thought form. They seem so real.

Time, past and future seem so real. And you can say, yeah, they must be real, because I'm getting old. I'm burning up in time.

And I'm shriveling, just like a fruit. A fresh fruit. And then it shrivels.

And then it's gone. Everything is being burned up in time. That's true.

On one level it looks so real. And then if you look, yes, but time, past, future, never here, never. Nobody has ever met them, except as a thought.

So, it seems to do things to things, and yet if you look more closely, it doesn't even exist. No conclusions. Because then it becomes philosophy.

There's nothing wrong with philosophy, but not here. Just to see. Even to see a paradox.

To see the paradox of time, and the timeless. So, on this retreat, we use the portals of silent space, here and in nature. We use nature itself.

We may talk about that. Tomorrow, which doesn't exist, except as a thought form. We use the portal of now, which simply means our practice this weekend, is to become friendly with now.

It doesn't sound important enough. I want ultimate realization. Well, just become friendly with now.

I want to attain the ultimate. Just become friendly with now. Yes, but what about the ultimate?

I want to add it to me. And finally, I'll be complete when I attain the ultimate, in the future. So, the entire retreat, then, can be considered as a portal, potential portal, into that unconditioned consciousness, space consciousness, just words, pointers.

It also helps, and here is another portal, to feel the inner body, as you sit here, a certain aliveness, in your energy field. Simply to sense that the body is alive, a little bit, anchors you in now. And that I recommend, when you go to bed here, because here you don't have television to stimulate your mind, or other things, radio, and if you're not staying here, in the retreat place, and you happen to have a television in your room, I would recommend that you don't switch it on, this weekend, or the radio.

Are you going to miss something terribly important? Probably not. When you listen to the news on Monday, it'll be the same.

20 years ago, it was the same. Anyway, in the 20th century, similar things happened, and worse. So, when you go to bed, lie there, on your back, feel the energy field of the body.

Just notice it. It's not a big deal, or complicated matter. Simply start somewhere in the body, hands, feet, oh, there's the hand.

And then attention is there, and then attention, is in the general, overall feeling of inner body, that anchors you quite simply in now. Thoughts will slow down, may even stop, if your attention is fully in the body. So instead of being immersed in some kind of thought stream, which is going to be about tomorrow, or your return trip home, or the problems that are waiting for you when you get home, and it'll be saying, you should have stayed home, you have too many things to deal with, you shouldn't have come.

Those usual things that happen in mental noise. Then you step out of that, into the aliveness of now. And you use the inner body as a portal.

And should you wake up, in the middle of the night, and the mind wants to start up again, me, my story, my problems. And then you notice, oh, let's go into the body. The mind will be saying, no, you can't.

There's no point. You can't, not now, you can't feel your body now. There's too much to think about, too restless.

And then you feel the body. You don't necessarily have to believe what the head tells you. Not now.

It says, not now. Think, think. Every thought says, I matter.

Give me attention. It doesn't say that openly. But it wants, because it's a little energetic entity, and it wants more energy for itself.

So it wants to be taken very seriously. It says, I matter. Give me more attention.

And then usually it gets it. It just pulls, okay, this matters. And then it leads to more proliferation of thought streams coming out of that one.

And it's probably problematic. And you're lying there, in a nice bed. There is no problem, except as thought forms.

If there were a true problem, it would be right in front of your eyes, and you have to take action. It wouldn't be a challenge. It would be a challenge that exists a lot in life.

But problem and accumulation of thought forms, concerning future, sometimes past, has no actual existence, except as a thought form. So it says, I matter. Give me your attention.

Off you go into a stream of thinking. I can't sleep, just so much on my mind. And it burns up life energy.

And then you wake up, and there's the heaviness of me. Can't face another day. So notice the tendency for mind to want to draw in all your attention.

Sometimes coupled with certain emotions. Let's say me. Then the emotion energizes the thought.

And that becomes a person's sense of self. No space around it. Just that, trapped in the form of me.

And then you suddenly notice emotional turbulence and mental noise. Okay. Noticing is the arising of something that is not conditioned.

Just to see it. And with the seeing comes the possibility of stepping out. And then say, okay, I can actually feel my hand.

Feel your hand, says thought. Think about your problems. So you sense, and you lie there.

And you don't even want to go back to sleep because it's so beautiful to be anchored in your inner energy field. And now, why go back to sleep? Enjoy your sleeplessness.

Oh, it's great. For a while I went a little mad. I loved that state so much of not being able to sleep that I would drink two or three cups of strong coffee before going to bed just so that I could enjoy that incredible sense of aliveness in the body.

Not through the coffee, the aliveness was there anyway, but I wanted to stay awake as long as possible. No need for that. That reminds me, I would recommend that you don't, although we are in Italy, I'm sorry, that you don't indulge in alcohol this weekend.

You can indulge after. Because when presence is fully there, it doesn't matter anymore. But the arising presence can easily become obscured through a couple of drinks and then you go back into...

So this is simply a recommendation. We are also going to spend some of this weekend in silence. Again, a recommendation.

There's no thought police or speech police. So I may recommend certain periods during the weekend when we are simply in silence, at least external silence. So it's good to notice and just a few days here are enough to encounter many different states in yourself.

Loving it here, oh, this is great, and two hours later, hating it. Just notice. Something in you, as I said, wants to be here.

Something else doesn't really want to be here. It went along and might regret it now. And just notice that.

This room is open during the day, so you could come in any time also. Just if you want to, just sit, be still, listen to silence. Going out into nature, I recommend that even if you've come with a friend, every day to spend some time alone in nature also.

Just walking, sitting, looking, listening. We will talk more about that. One recommendation then, we've been talking about thought, is not to take any thought that arises this weekend too seriously.

Remember, the thought says, I am serious, I matter. But it's not that serious. In this evolutionary leap that humanity is now taking, of which you, the form, is an important part.

You are that evolutionary leap of human consciousness. In that leap, we go beyond thought. We've gone through the whole huge evolutionary cycle of being totally identified with thought.

And now it's time to go beyond, because if we linger any longer in this state of consciousness, which has become dysfunctional, because it is the end of a cycle, if we linger any longer, humanity will not survive as a species. It will destroy itself and the planet. The madness will simply increase, as it's been doing throughout the 20th century.

So we are stepping out of thought. Thought can still be used beautifully, creatively, but no longer have our self in it. We are also going to spend certain periods of time, or rather no time, in stillness together.

If there is a lot of interference through thought, simply use a portal to silence. Feel the inner body. Or simply say, OK, there's mental noise.

That's how it is. What can I do? There it is.

All right. And the arising of that new consciousness, one aspect of it, one way of looking at it, very limited way, everything, every perspective is limited. One aspect of that is, one can say it is the arising of stillness from within, alive, vibrantly alive, but still.

And out of that, sometimes dynamic action can flow. It is not a passive state. Our little opening ceremony, I almost forgot.

Awakening. The bell signifies awakening. Out of thought.

Thank you. I will see you in the now at 10 o'clock. As you walk back to your room, and throughout this weekend, walk on the, what I call, the razor's edge of now.

One step at a time. It's miraculous, that now. Miraculous.

Open the door. Take off a glass. Drink a glass of water.

Just that. Who cares about the story of me? You can go back to it.

This is where something new can come in. Only through that opening. Look at sense perceptions as a portal, as we sit here.

Usually, the primary sense is sight. Unless you lose it, then it becomes hearing. But as we sit here in this space, probably, the primary sense perception is hearing.

When you walk out into the beauty, then it will shift to seeing. Hearing will become secondary. So let's start, since we are sitting here, in this space.

It's hearing, because there isn't that much to see, except this body sitting on a chair. Not very interesting. So, there are words being spoken.

So that's hearing. There are little sounds around us. A few little sounds produced by the people in this room.

Moving. Occasional sounds. And a few sounds coming in from the outside.

You'll be aware of that also. Birds. Some human-made sounds from the outside.

And I said just now, you'll be aware of that also. There's the sense perception. How does that become possible?

What you perceive is fleeting. It's a form. A sound.

Most sounds don't last very long. When you look at something, then you get the impression you may be looking at something lasting. A tree.

Or a person. That seems to last longer. But sounds come and go.

And I said yesterday, to listen to the silence in between and underneath the sounds. That's one way of putting it. But what does that mean?

What is that? That is, at first it looks dualistic. I am listening to the silence.

But since you can't really listen to silence, there's nothing there, then you realise silence as an inner state. The state of listening is the silent state. The state of listening to silence is the stillness within.

It's not really two. So that listening to the silence is the doorway into the non-dualistic state of consciousness. Everything else is dualistic.

There's a subject and an object. And that's what yesterday I called object consciousness, which fills most people's lives. And so, awareness arises.

It's strange that I can't really talk about this, but I'm talking. Awareness arises, and it is recognised as the primary ground in which all perceptions happen. And that is the deeper meaning, the true meaning of stillness.

It is knowing the awareness in which the sense perception happens. Not knowing it as I know it. It's only through language that it becomes an object, because language functions like that.

One could, to get a little closer to the truth, I know the ground of being, the awareness as myself. I as the sound perceptions. Who is listening?

Who is listening to the sounds? I, the stillness. And so we could call this awareness of awareness.

And the same happens when you go out and you look at something, visual perception happens. Now, in every human being, in most humans, the moment they hear something or they look at something, there is a mental commentary. Thought objects arise.

The me, the mind made, object based, mental content based me, interprets and comments on what's going on. That's usually what happens. According to its conditioning, it labels, interprets, there's mental noise, there's a sense perception and immediately it's made into concepts.

You might be walking around beautiful nature and commenting mentally on very normal. And it's also normal to have some, some personal relationship to what you're seeing. The me comes in.

It compares that with something that I saw in that other place last year. It's not quite as nice as that forest that I saw then, but it's nice. But I was in that forest last year, that was really something.

It's normal. Or even more, this plant, I wonder if I can, this little sapling, maybe I could take that home. I could put it in my garden.

There is a relationship, a personal thing that comes in through which things are being seen. Comparative. And if you're walking with someone, you can, this inner noise very often becomes outer noise.

And then there's a comment. Oh, look at that, what's that called? I can't remember.

Look at that beautiful flower. There's nothing wrong with saying things like that, but for most people, all their attention is immediately in commentaries. And when in the, Jesus teaching, there's one little, I'll just take this fragment from the New Testament, which simply says, look at the flowers.

Look at the flowers. Now, there's a greater depth to it than people realize. When he said, look, he meant look.

Now, that is a different looking. And that looking happens not through the conditioned mind with its accumulation of content, but a looking that happens within an unconditioned field of spaciousness. That is true looking.

Now, the strange thing is, although most people wouldn't even know what I'm talking about, everybody has that already within themselves. They don't know it. For example, it happens each time you look at something that just arises in your field of vision.

A flower, a tree, a little beetle, a rock, a stone. And there's a moment when your vision focuses on this new sense object. And there's a little gap before the first mental commentary comes in.

For most people, the gap is too small for them to even be conscious of it. It's tiny. And then something is being said in the head, out loud.

But there was a moment of true spaciousness within which first you explored visually the object in consciousness. There was a true moment of spaciousness in which the true looking happened. And it could be a second, two seconds.

If something comes into your field of vision that is an unusual object that cannot immediately be interpreted, categorized, or compared to something else, then it may be that the gap of not labeling may be a little longer. And that is called astonishment. And that would happen and it's a beautiful state, the state of astonishment that might happen if a UFO suddenly appeared and you can't quite...

or if it's half dark and some kind of animal is coming but you can't quite figure out what it is. And there's a moment of... So then the gap may be a little bit longer.

But then the mind will quickly try some interpretations. That could be... No, it looks like...

And then there's also if something arises in your field of perception that is a huge challenge, perhaps even a threat to your survival as a physical entity, then it's possible suddenly, as the tiger jumps from the tree and then leaps towards you, that would be a moment of complete spaciousness. Thought cannot operate because it can't cope with that situation. There's nothing in your past that you can refer to that would enable you to deal with that situation.

You can look back, when was the last time a tiger attacked me? Or what have I read in handbooks about tigers? I can't remember.

And even if you have read handbooks of what to do in case of a tiger attack, as you read in... I live in Canada. Sometimes in guidebooks you read what to do when you meet a bear.

And they even have signs as you enter the forest, bear encounters, how to behave, what to do. But when it happens, you won't remember. And so, this is, it sometimes happens that an emergency situation accidentally produces that state of consciousness that is arising here, that is actually the next evolutionary level for mankind.

Humankind. And suddenly there is complete presence, alertness, stillness, and no commentary. And action may arise.

If it's possible or necessary, suddenly you go into action. Run away, maybe. Or do something that isn't right for that moment.

Maybe you just stand there and look. And I've read accounts of people who were face to face with a tiger or some other animal, and they just stood and looked in such presence in which there was not even fear. Fear is the anticipation of seeing myself being eaten up by the animal.

Fear is always the next moment. What's going to happen to me next? But in complete presence, there's no movement away from this.

It's just this. And then, that's the state of connectedness with the one intelligence, the one unconditioned intelligence of the universe, which then operates in that situation through you or by itself, through some other factor. So that's, accidentally it can arise, and here, on our retreat, we are inviting that state, which otherwise happens accidentally.

Or you leave, sometimes you might receive something, stunning news. Somebody has just died. The same thing can happen.

So simply to notice, here, when you first look upon something in nature, or even sitting in your room, there's a moment of clear perception before the mind comes in. If you notice that moment, it tends to get longer, so there's more space in you, in which the perception happens. That is a depth that suddenly is there.

You become deep, that which you perceive suddenly has an aliveness and a depth to it, that otherwise it doesn't have. Nature, for most people, because they immediately label everything, is quite flat. Beautiful, but flat.

It's like walking surrounded by walls or screens, because the label becomes the screen or the wall. The depth isn't there. The unbelievable delusion of thinking that when you have formulated a sound about something, then you know what it is.

Oak tree. Now I know what it is. You've produced a few sounds, or if you don't speak them, it's a thought form in the head.

That is an oak tree. It's an absurd assertion and delusion. And now you go no further, because the label has become the screen between you and it.

It's become flat and quite lifeless, because now you start thinking about oak trees and another oak tree or somewhere else. And the more you know about oak trees, the more labels you have, screens. It doesn't mean to completely forget what it is.

Sometimes to communicate, you may need the labels. Somebody may ask, what is that? What are you looking at?

Or a little child may ask, as they do when the mind starts to accumulate knowledge, so called, when the mind starts to grow and starts to accumulate concepts, there comes a stage in the child's life when they continuously ask, what's that? What's that? And most parents feed them the concepts, the labels.

That's an oak tree. Okay, let's go on to the next thing. And immediately, from now on, they will, or let's just say tree, from now on, the moment they see a tree, they say, tree!

So already, at that early age, not that it could be, accumulation of concepts needs to happen. But a parent who is aware could create some more space. And not just say, that's a tree.

But to invite the child to look more, look, touch, see that? Look at that. Look there.

Can you feel that? How the leaves move? Can you listen to the sound of the leaves?

And then the child begins to, oh! And then it might even have forgotten that it asked, what's that? And after you've invited the child to look, and you can only do it if you yourself have gone beyond being imprisoned by labels, then you can say, and that's called a tree.

We call it tree. Then, the illusion isn't there that that sound is what it is. That thought form is what it is.

It remains alive. It has a depth, an aliveness, and in some way it remains a mystery, unfathomable mystery that has no end. And you're comfortable with that, because that is what depth is.

The entire universe is deep. Because you are so deep. So, it's becoming free, as this is why we're here, of being imprisoned by mental labels.

Not only about nature, whatever it is, it goes hand in hand that we also become free of labels about ourselves, labels I have accumulated about me, and walk around as an accumulation, a bundle of labels of me, certain conditioned mental contents, patterns, experiences, a name around it. And then, that's, don't know yourself beyond that, and everything you look upon is looked through the screen of those labels. The self, the mind-made self.

And then everything gets interpreted through that. And there's some personal relationship of the self towards everything, even nature. And that is why so many people, when they walk out into the beauty of nature, they have this slight feeling of uneasiness.

And they can't wait after a while, saying, I need to get back to the city, or back to my usual surroundings. There's a sense of not quite, of being an alien entity in here. A sense of not quite belonging here.

It's so quiet here. So we are paying attention here, and this is so significant, paying attention to sense perceptions, allowing the sense perceptions to be there without the labels. And if labels come, as you listen, or watch, recognize them as mental labels.

So that you don't totally believe in it, totally drawn into it. So thought is recognized as thought when it comes. And it's not that important here.

Remember, the theme for our weekend here is thoughts are not that important. And before, perhaps until recently, your entire life was absorbed by thought. It was all about that, and emotions that go with those thoughts, and give added fuel to those thoughts.

And the primary thought form was the me, the self. The liberation of stepping out of that here. Not even waiting for disaster because of intense suffering, because eventually that will push you out, and life will do it to you.

Eventually, it could take a while. And then a human being reaches a point the evolution of consciousness, when the readiness is there for this to happen without further suffering. So either that state is consciously chosen now, the state of awareness, aware presence, or life will push you into it.

Drag you, pull you into the kicking and screaming until the last moment. No! Consciously chosen, you can choose that state now.

This is not ultimately true, because you're not separate from the totality. It's a perspective. Every statement is only a perspective.

It is a helpful perspective to say you can choose to step out of identification with thought. You can choose when you walk between here and the dining hall. You can choose when you walk between here and your room to be there, present in every step, and you're walking in a field of stillness and alertness.

Instead of being a walking story, a walking conceptualized self. And that is a hundred times as heavy on the planet if you could hear, if you had the psychic ears to hear how a conceptualized self walks on the planet, it would sound like a dinosaur steps. You know in the films about dinosaurs how everything vibrates when they walk.

And once they step somewhere, nothing grows for a long time. And of course this is true for human beings. When you visit, this is where humans have been, nothing grows anymore.

You don't need to be destructive, quite destructive species in that mad state, quite destructive on the planet. Not as destructive as in Star Trek, there's a species called Bok. Wherever they go, there's nothing left.

But humans can get quite close to that. But every human, the heaviness of a personalized self on this planet, the heaviness in your own life that comes when you don't know yourself beyond a conceptualized sense of self, of me, which is accumulation of thought forms, past and future are overriding importance in that sense of self. Because the past gives you your identity, the future promises your completion or fulfillment.

That's why you need it desperately. That's the illusion of self. And it's heavy.

Collectively humanity in that state is heavy on the planet and personally in your personal life ultimately there is no personal life. In your personal life there is also a heaviness of your problems that are such an essential intrinsic part of one's sense of self. Me and my problems remove problems from the conceptualized sense of self and not very much remains.

And the strange thing is just as future and past are thought forms only, have no reality, at least I haven't met anybody who has seen them or touched them or experienced them, past or future, they only touched and felt and experienced the now, ever. Just the same the thought form of problem only exists as a thought form which is essential to the conceptualized sense of self. I'm carrying around these problems and some problems are long lived.

I've carried them for years and I'm still working. Every night I wake up and I think about it. I haven't found the solution yet.

But maybe I will if I wake up often enough in the middle of the night and think about my problems. Perhaps a solution will come. And of course the thoughts are the same thoughts that I thought last year and five years ago.

It's the same circular thoughts. And to the body your problems are real. The body reacts as if you were in the midst of a very dangerous situation which is created in the head.

And of course you're lying in your bed. And so again to step out of that and a good question to ask is always to see whether the problem is actually real or not. What's the problem at this moment?

Here. Now. What problem do I have now?

Now. Not tomorrow. Now.

And then there's no problem left. A challenge may be left but it doesn't turn into thought structures that go round and round and build up a sense of self around this challenge. If it's a true challenge you face it and then action arises.

So we're stepping out of all that here. And psychically we are losing weight. The heaviness.

So as you walk between here and the dining hall as you walk between here and your room you can choose to walk along the razor's edge one step at a time. And some of the places where you walk here are quite noisy. This gravel.

And it's helpful because then there's the sound. It's not a means to an end when you get to the dining hall or to your room it's just not more important. The future moment, the next moment isn't more important than this one.

That's the delusion of the mind. Deep-seated delusion that the next moment is more important than this one. So this is always a means to an end.

All that is part of being trapped in thought and needing the thought-form future to fulfill the insufficient thought-form of me. And we can practice here living in the new way of not making the now into a means to an end. This is enough.

One step is enough. It's not going to get any better with the next step. This is as good as it gets.

And the more you are present with this step the more there is a depth to it. It's more than the step. There's a spaciousness to it.

It's not just the step that you're taking right now. There's a depth to it. It's not just the tree that you're looking at right now.

It's beautiful, yes, but there is a depth to that tree and that is the inner depth but ultimately inner and outer are one. It is the depth of the universe that's suddenly there. And so the step, of course, is also an object in consciousness.

The tree is an object in consciousness. Who knows what that is beyond the object that arises in consciousness? Who knows what that tree is?

Because all we know about the tree is certain impulses that are transmitted to the brain, to the mind through the nerves. Electrical impulses and then it reaches the brain and then a mental image forms. Who knows what that is beyond that?

It's a mystery. Is there even anything there? Would there be a tree if nobody saw it, perceived it?

You know the famous question, if a tree falls in the forest, does it make a sound if nobody's there? Does it make a sound or does it make no sound? Then you have to imagine nobody there.

And so you imagine, I'm not there to listen to it. And of course you can now, one could talk about that and it can be, this is sometimes called a Zen question but it's not really a Zen question, this one. Because one could say with certainty that Zen questions have no real answer.

They're there to stop the mind. This can stop the mind a little bit but you can see, no, there is no sound. Of course there's no sound if there's no ear.

There's no sound. For a sound to be there requires an ear. And more than an ear, it requires an awareness.

The ear produces the sense perception and that requires an awareness. So there is a depth suddenly to everything and that is the depth of what I called last night, and these are just temporary pointers, nothing to cling to. What I called last night space consciousness and object consciousness.

Object consciousness and the depth of that. But really ultimately that is awareness itself, consciousness itself before it becomes something. And the moment you name it, as I've just done, it becomes limited again.

Because it's faster than anything that one could name or encapsulate in some kind of thought. It can only be known directly, not in a subject-object relationship. Ultimately known, it can only be known as yourself.

The depth of yourself, not the self that consists of accumulated mental content. Not the I am this, that and the other, the story, but the I am in its essence. That which remains beyond all forms.

The only thing that you can know without any doubt whatsoever, because everything else may be a delusion, and in a way it is, because everything is so fleeting in the world of form. But this one thing that beyond any doubt is real, and that is the ground, the depth of I. If it's all illusion, there must be the illusion must be happening somewhere.

It is known somewhere. It arises somewhere. Even in every illusion there must be something in it that's real, otherwise it wouldn't be.

So even if our entire sense-perceived life, phenomenal life, the life of form is an illusion or a dream, and yes it is very much like a dream, because it all passes and then it might have been a dream. When you get home after this weekend, your first day, you wake up at home again, and first did I dream that retreat in Italy, or was I there? For a moment there may be a doubt, because they are quite similar.

It's gone. Now the difference is you can then get your photos and say, ah, it actually happened. But then if you lived for long enough, the photos would fade, and then you can't see anymore.

Where was that? It's fading, it's a fading photo. It looks like a photo of a dream.

Blurred out, the blurred edges around things. It's gone. Nobody remembers anymore.

Maybe your grandchild says, my grandfather once went to a retreat in Italy. And then that's the last thing anybody ever heard of it. It's gone.

Did it ever happen? Nobody remembers it. Did it ever happen?

And so the history is full of events that nobody remembers. A tiny fraction of human history got written down, or you see it in stone. But most of it, nobody remembers.

It's gone. And it was perhaps very dramatic. And then it evaporated.

And if nobody, did it ever happen? Maybe. Maybe not.

It's a strange, there is a dream-like quality to all of our lives. And yet, there is something in each dream that must be real because otherwise the dream couldn't happen. There is nobody to dream it.

So there is an innermost essence to each dream, which is the substance. And those are the forms. And so there came this philosopher, Descartes, who wanted to find out, what is the one thing that I can know with absolute certainty?

And then he started thinking. And he spent several years thinking about what he could know with absolute certainty and beyond any doubt because he had just come after hundreds of years of humanity being totally trapped in belief structures and saying things, taking things for absolute reality that could be total fantasy. He said, maybe this is all total Theologians were talking about angels, how many angels could dance on a needle or something like that.

And he thought, maybe this is all fantasy. What is it that we can know with absolute certainty? And he thought and thought and thought for years and suddenly he realized, I'm always thinking.

That must be it. So he didn't quite go far enough. He got trapped in thought and because he couldn't stop thinking he finally came up with a famous statement, I think, therefore I am.

And of course that's the expression of an illusion to equate being with thinking, to equate an identity of who you are with a movement of thought. Not that he created the illusion he just saw the illusion that was already there, that all humans were already trapped in. But the approach that he adopted was a good one to ask is there anything that I can know beyond any doubt because this world looks so ephemeral, so fleeting.

And so you have to go deeper there's a kind of inner listening what is it that remains when the form dissolves, you wake up the next morning after the retreat and before even thought operates after you wake up, maybe you open your eyes there's already the essence there. A spacious aware presence which has not yet identified with this thought or that thought or that memory it just is a field of spacious alive presence that is there also now in fact it's exactly the same when you wake up at home in the morning it's exactly the same as now just I am beyond even the words I am, the sense of I am-ness and that some people realize that when life knocked down all the things that I am had identified with I am had become mixed up with forms in the mind, a story and so you think that I am my story I am my history that sense of I am-ness gets mixed with thought forms and you cannot distinguish it anymore from thought forms and so that's the delusion that I am this or I am that and sometimes it happens that life knocks these thought forms out of you through great suffering or great loss you don't know who you are anymore because all the things that you thought you were you lost them position, possessions beliefs even you don't know what you believe anymore there are some people who doubt their beliefs when they lose something there are people who go to church every Sunday and suddenly sometimes in old age the partner, the husband or the wife dies and they suddenly say I don't this doesn't seem to be working that's not supposed to happen they doubt their belief because it doesn't work anymore, the partner died but you had a contract with God and that's not supposed to happen nobody told me that these days thought belief forms get shattered too, through some disaster and beliefs, mental positions the self, the mind itself loves these things this is my position and then life knocks them down they become difficult when things around you get knocked down, suddenly you can't explain the universe anymore my explanations suddenly don't fit the universe anymore and I had it arranged so neatly and when people asked me, I knew exactly my viewpoint and my opinions I could tell them exactly how things were and suddenly I don't know anymore sometimes when some collective disaster happens like September 11th and that's only one collective disaster that's happened everywhere on the planet suddenly couldn't explain things anymore, and even the people in churches found it difficult to find something to say about it what can you say?

because people ask these strange questions how can God allow this if God was a separate entity controlling everything not knowing God is the essence so these things either through disaster or through a more gentle opening which is the case here these thought structures give way to something deeper, a deeper dimension within yourself that emerges so we are inviting this in here please come and the easiest way of course when you open the portals this is the evolutionary impulse of the universe it will happen even if you say no, no or you can open the door the inner door and a very easy opening of the inner door is just as you know this is why I call it the portal the yes to now that's the opening so that's really all that's needed is that opening the mind made self can't do that if you were only here as that mind made egoic entity that is based on thought you wouldn't even know what these words mean you wouldn't recognize the truth of what yes to now is you would be frightened of that and run away but you already know the truth of it because the opening is already happening in you and now here's the midwife that's all so that the birth process happens more quickly before humanity destroys itself completely if that happened it would be okay too on a cosmic level it doesn't matter consciousness flowers anywhere through any form many life forms didn't make it on the planet but it would be beautiful if consciousness flowered through the human form so that's why we are here, so we are inviting that so it's the death of the old the death of the me but it's a gentle, beautiful death maybe it's gentle now, maybe life has already knocked you on the head a few times and that's why you're here and now this is simply completing your death as the mind made entity and so you can you choose presence here and you choose the portals that are here the sense perception presence in every step and then the deep seated mental habits of labeling subside the possibility arises of allowing a sense perception not just for a moment which everybody has the first moment they look upon something there's the gap there's the true looking but here the possibility arises to be with something especially nature without needing to call it anything clear perception spacious perception so one could say you sense that who you are is a deep space and the entire world happens in that deep space spaciousness, stillness and that is also a peace that is deep choose also when you are out in nature, choose for a little while to sit somewhere or stand somewhere and look upon something whether it be a plant or a stone or a little patch of ground, let's say one square meter even one square meter so many life forms so many shapes and forms so it's so alive even that little square patch of ground and you simply stay with that there's moss growing there a little beetle running there tiny every little stone is different and you're not labeling it in any way you're just allowing the sense perception to be there and you stay with it for a while as a spacious presence in which that sense perception arises and then you see even this seemingly totally insignificant patch of ground is almost one could say an entire universe is so alive has such depth to it which is not different from your own depth because you and it in that non-labeling perception you and it are no longer two because it arises within the spaciousness of yourself so that is unitive knowing, not separative knowing through little labels so and that's I recommend this this weekend to occasionally go somewhere, just choose a little field, a little area whatever it may be and just give it attention, let it be there and watch without getting totally lost in the watching you watch and you know yourself as the spaciousness so it's this is perceiving through stillness, unconditioned perception occasionally it's happened that great artists looked upon a seemingly insignificant object in that way because there are some great artists who painted landscapes that were nothing special nobody would have looked at them twice just an ordinary field and an ordinary tree but they must have stood there and looked and there was suddenly a depth and then they went to a canvas and some of that depth perception some of that spacious perception that they had also got somehow onto the canvas the fragrance of that state of space perception somehow got onto so we call it a great work of art if you see only the forms when you look at that work of art it's not, nothing special there, and then you see some other works of art that are totally spectacular, there's a huge stack with horns there a huge mountain dramatic looking and somehow and a huge river flowing, but somehow it doesn't have that depth to it, there may even as van Gogh looked at a straw chair a wooden old rickety chair in his room and he must have looked, looked and so a depth and spaciousness arose it's not just the chair, then he painted that chair which probably he paid the equivalent of one euro for because it was so old one euro for the chair ten million dollars for the painting of the chair and that's because there's some of that then most of the artists, the moment they can only do that for brief moments in the rest of their lives, the space perception isn't there they are just as mad as everybody else sometimes even more mad and so we learn this perception which goes far beyond perception and you don't need to become an artist maybe you will, but it's not necessary and so we begin it is nature is helpful in that and later when we may address that this afternoon or tomorrow in the now of course that same perception can flow into doing when you begin to do things because that's where people lose themselves even people who can already be present in nature they still lose themselves when the world impinges upon them and they lose themselves in the doing and the spaciousness is lost and they are trying to do good but the essence of good isn't there anymore.

They think this is what matters the doing is what matters but it's always secondary and then bring that into human interaction the spaciousness that's the great art and that's only then the world changes for the time being, right let's stay with nature and then we bring it into human interactions nature exists in a state of thoughtlessness no mind so it can teach you the state of no mind the fact that nature is free mind and humans are going beyond mind doesn't matter you both meet in the state of oneness the connectedness humans lost it for a long time they got lost in time they got lost in thought that was the human condition for a long time and maybe even that was an illusion, maybe it wasn't it was just a long dream maybe it was a short dream that seemed very long I recommend that until this afternoon we spend this day in silence and so give attention to the little things that you do today we mentioned walking there's the walking and there's the field of awareness in which the walking happens there's the picking up of a glass of water it's moving towards the mouth in its journey and then there's the drinking and then it moves back in the normal state of consciousness picking up of the glass of water and moving it to the mouth is a means to an end because the end is wanting the water in here so it's what's next because what's next is always a question of the mind made self what can I add to me next, I've just added some water because even that of course the body needs a certain amount of food and water but there's a strong psychological element to that created by the mind made self and it's need to add more and that becomes the problem of eating more than you need which is a very common thing for many people and it's just one aspect of needing more but it doesn't really matter on what level you add more to complete me could be chocolate comes next and then that movement is also a means to an end and always after it's happened what is the next thing and the next thing may be a book spiritual book even if it's truly spiritual it may not be that satisfying because it doesn't give you much but if it gives you information or interesting theories that's when it works and then after a while it doesn't work anymore you need more of something else but you've just absorbed some new belief perhaps through that or some new opinion and so here in a relatively simple environment there isn't that much that you can add well so let's see if we can be with the little movements that occur here and see certain things we can perform in a state of simple presence even picking up a glass of water and during that space while the water travels and this to the mind seems insignificant it says is that going to solve my problems drinking a glass of water and the amazing thing is yes it will solve your problems because all your problems were structurally created by the structure of your mind we're going beyond that the problems are structural in every case so yes it will but the space in which the water moves could be a space of simple presence in which this movement is not a means to an end it's just fine as it is and there's no thinking while this happens and that is truly an evolutionary leap while the water is being picked up there's simply a sense of spacious presence in which this movement happens and while you drink the water also it tastes much more alive than when I needed to get it down as quickly as possible and then it travels back and that was that physical movement of coming and going there was no thought just spacious presence that is an evolutionary change if movement happens within the space of simple awareness not a means to an end just that and simple things because here you only do simple things maybe at home you do important things, I don't know but in this retreat there's nothing important not what the mind calls my business or whatever is important you haven't got your business here well you could carry it in your head and think about my importance but it's not really, whatever you do here the movements are not important in themselves and that's why it's such an opportunity and then you might walk a few steps that go up five steps and again and again during that movement there's no thought there's just a step spacious presence nothing much from the point of view of mind and so that movement in space that external movement happens within a deeper spaciousness of simple thoughtless awareness the arising of thoughtless awareness not just while you sit in meditation but in life and it could arise if we are spending this after this from between now and our next meeting in silence you'll be eating nothing to talk about of course you could talk to yourself in the head while you eat or you could be there with a simple movement and you look simple so it happens within the spaciousness and then you may carry the plates back to the kitchen and don't just, it's enough even sometimes to put one plate pick up the plate put it from here to there without the interference of thought not a great thing and yet it is incredible totally different energy field that comes into that there is also a care that flows into that kind of doing even just picking up the water even just walking up the five steps or cleaning something in your room or removing your shoes there is suddenly what one could call almost quality of doing when it is done not as a means to an end not with a view to some future moment but it is done in presence no thought because thought will reduce it to a means to an end or it will bring in something old, some people think they are present when they are saying mentally, I am now walking up five steps one, two three, four five, of course you are creating mental accumulations there is a past already, you remember one, two, three no this is unnecessary you are just walking, you don't need to tell yourself that you are walking up the steps this is thought simply paying attention to the movement enough so that's all the little things and often you will miss it you will walk up the steps and then you say how did I get up here you might miss it you may eat something and then you look at the empty plate of your dessert and say, did I eat that so it happened in that you were somewhere else already ok you won't be there every time, there is still the old conditioning of course still operates also the two shifting in and out of that state of freedom that's why we are here if you go for walks you can feel the sound that your steps make a generalized field of attention alertness, openness and then remember occasionally stop stay with one little area or tree or plant give it attention the arising of the unconditioned consciousness space inner space outer space and during this retreat you can observe thought streams emotions emotional streams coming and going and it becomes so obvious the impersonal nature of thinking and of emotions energy streams sometimes when I listen to a distant conversation two humans speaking really it's thought speaking energy form of thought thought streams sometimes enormous momentum behind it in a simple conversation an enormous momentum behind that often energized by emotion and as the presence arises you can watch and sense those energy streams first perhaps you see them in someone else and you realize thought is speaking it reminds me of what one existentialist philosopher said we don't speak language speaks us we can extend it because language really is thought we don't think thought thinks us emotions also as you are here it's long enough these few days for different emotional streams to come up including sadness perhaps including anger or discontent whatever it is and to see that also is ultimately impersonal your anger is very much like anybody else's anger the story which other thought forms that are attached to anger may differ from person to person one person might say I am angry because and the other says well I am angry because and then comes the story anger if you could feel somebody else's anger it feels basically the same as your anger no matter what the mental story that attaches itself to it is sad or sadness fear in itself fine not problematic at all thought streams emotional streams only when a self is lodged in there when the I am who you are in your essence which is consciousness itself awareness itself becomes mixed up with that and it's there's a me in every emotion and in every thought that's the entity the egoic entity a little analogy you could think of a cinema projection a film is being projected the figures on the screen are acting out the drama of the film according to what's in the script and in this analogy let's say these figures have an actual existence and they know themselves only as the forms that appear in this film on the screen and in the middle somebody could begin to suddenly realize their essence as light because every film is only modifications of light the projector is a powerful source of light the light is obscured by the film in various ways so if an actor in a film could wake up and realize his or her true nature he would realize I am light not who I thought I was and everything else in this film is also that another analogy you could have an actor on stage who's been acting out his or her role for so long that he or she has become that role and every day forced to act out the same role the same words come out the same reactions come and he or she no longer knows themselves as who they are beyond the script or the role or the conditioning and that's very much like a normal human being every day the things that come out of their mouth or that go around in their heads are the conditioned thinking the entity, the mind created entity engaged in thought thought has created the entity identification with thought as me and the emotions and the reactions predictable you know how predictable people are people you've known for a long time unless something comes in that is not the conditioned then suddenly something new has come in but if you meet your relatives at Christmas then you'll see you can predict what they're going to say how they're going to react the same conversation will happen this year as last year and before and before so to wake up out of that and doesn't mean you immediately become free because the conditioning has a momentum behind it the thought streams have a momentum and although here you may be able to step out in nature, you may be able to step out and know what it means to be free of the compulsion to think and suddenly enter that state of clear awareness just presence stillness but then it doesn't mean the momentum is now gone thought has subsided the moment you begin to interact with another human being it has a chance to come back in conversation starts and before you know it you express your opinions and there's a self in it and then you're dragged along by thought and when you listen often to two people talking and if there's no presence no spaciousness around the thoughts that are being expressed there are thoughts here too, otherwise the words wouldn't come out of the mouth but there is a spaciousness around the thoughts there's also a depth or sense of space out of which the thoughts come now you recognize that as you sit here you recognize that thoughts are not all that matters not even the main thing here but the space out of which they come that means it's also in you the depths the space of no thought or as I call it sometimes space consciousness is also in you and it deepens as you sit here, all you need to do is sit here and it deepens and it recognizes itself in recognizing itself it deepens and yet within it thought operates it doesn't mean you can't think anymore thinking can still happen without that compulsive addictive quality to it when there is a me in every thought mental positions identified with a position of me and then with that comes sometimes almost if you are very sensitive you can sense almost a kind of violence even when people are discussing something there is already that underneath don't you question my position so when you go back the challenge is human interaction and the tendency is to get drawn back completely into identification with thought and emotional patterns and you can see when people talk how the stream of speech of thought goes on and on sometimes they sit there is no gap between the thoughts between the speech they are being dragged along you can't get sometimes you can't get a word in it's there is no gap even for you to say something if a person is very much identified with that so when you interact here with you will be speaking we may talk again after this because it's good to have a balance here between not speaking and speaking because we can learn a lot through interacting because the challenge will become back anyway when you leave here you could spend the entire weekend in silence and then you have to move back into the world and interact so great alertness is required when you interact with other humans human beings and when you begin to speak before we address that you are listening somebody is speaking you are listening the first important thing to remember is not to listen in the usual way but listen in the state that we are in here when we sit here attention bare attention a complete openness so that the words simply are being received without a commenting response inside you no preparing the next statement no immediately taking another position reacting to the other person's position, mental position and you immediately internally have another thought come up that conflicts with that person's position and you are just waiting for him or her to stop and then you with great energy you put forward your position and you can you may watch the tendency for that to want to come up and allow it, just watch it and then go back into the state of attentive listening the greatest thing, only that to be able to listen to another human being in the state of openness would transform every relationship in that listening this is the secret and perhaps while you listen to these words that is relatively easy yes, you are paying attention to the words but while you listen you are aware of this place of awareness through which the listening happens the field which I sometimes call the now in which everything happens because that's what it is it never leaves you so you could say you are aware of that now and that which happens in the now which is that voice, those words it helps people find it helpful sometimes to be anchored in the inner body while they listen so you listen almost with every cell of the body one could say you are here, attention is in here there is a great spaciousness if you go deep enough into the body first you may encounter certain energy movements and then you go deeper, there is simply spaciousness in there, so that also is a doorway into spaciousness basically the body is empty ask a physicist and they will tell you 99% of the body is empty space more than 99% and what the rest is they don't quite know so what looks so solid isn't solid at all the distances between the atoms molecules is so vast and even within the atom there is mostly empty space it's all completely empty so you go into the emptiness and listen from there and that is you can now listen without the compulsive reactivity coming in and occasionally you may notice the reactivity wanting to adopt a position wanting to and you notice it as a movement within the spaciousness and it comes and it subsides and so that is the spacious listening and if anybody works with people in the capacity of whatever it may be body worker counselor, therapist the key lies always in that state of attentive open field of awareness that comes through you but is far beyond the person the person is identification with the mental emotional stream then you become an opening for that current of awareness spaciousness, space consciousness to come through and even therapists who have received training in very mind dominated therapies after a few years of practice they get tired of categorizing and analyzing and applying their particular intellectual framework and after 10 years of practice they one day they begin to just sit there and listen and suddenly their practice becomes 100 times more effective there is the field of presence suddenly they can still occasionally use things that they have learned but more and more they will be speaking when speaking happens because it happens out of that stillness it's spontaneous it's right it's what is needed for that moment comes out of that unprepared and sometimes it comes through the other person because the field is there that state of consciousness also of course other people know it some great sportsmen know that they sometimes call it the zone entering the zone which is the transformed consciousness through which it happens the Tao is playing tennis which is another word for that unconditioned intelligence and I'm sure that's why people like to watch two people hitting a ball for hours on end which in itself can't be that interesting but somehow they get there is something else at work it's more than two people hitting a ball it's the play of total at oneness with the totality so what the Chinese call the Tao is actually playing tennis there is no thought if the tennis player was thinking it wouldn't be very good they would lose the game the interference of thought means gone, you would lose within five minutes how could thought think I wonder where the next ball is coming from or imagine the most powerful computer created by thought trying to work out where the next ball is coming from you could put all the computers together and they would self destruct because it's too complicated can't, couldn't do it what the computer would have to totally different way of knowing it breaks everything down the mind it has its place for certain things but the mind breaks everything down into little bits and pieces and further bits and pieces and the more you develop your mind at universities the more advanced you become at a university the more tiny your little piece becomes and the pieces have become so tiny that when you start trying to work out what you are going to do a PhD on you have to ask the professor is there a tiny piece left for me and the professor says yes here is a tiny piece but you can cut it up two more times and then you do it and then there is maybe three or four other people in the world who understand what you have written because you are now a specialist and so if for most humans that's all they know, that is called intelligence and it's a tiny aspect of what real intelligence is, it's not separate yes it's a small expression of intelligence but imagine losing yourself in the cutting up and in the analysis and leading your own life through the thought process of thought how inadequate so imagine the computer working out even the simplest things the bird flying from one branch to another which is totally intuitive there is no decision making involved it just looks from a human point of view it might look as if the bird were waiting or trying to figure out when is the right moment to jump off this branch but it's not like that the bird is simply the jumping off hasn't happened yet it's not figuring out anything and then jumps off and in that harmonious flight lands on the other branch now imagine a computer or you might needing to figure out the trajectory beforehand what is the speed what is the wind resistance what is the ratio between this and that gravity has to be taken into account too what is the weight of the feathers it becomes a complex mathematical problem just getting from one branch to another, it would and so how does the bird work that all out without mathematics because it's not it's using thought it's not using the analytical intelligence of thought another intelligence is at work that does not need to break life or information into little bits and pieces and make a lot of noise about it it simply happens and it's this flower again humans could get together and say let's create a incredibly beautiful flower and how are we going to do it so committee meetings start discussions it needs to shape ok let's consult the computer about how it's years they could never create and it's come out of stillness not a single thought has gone into the creation of the flower just so that in nature that still that operates that unproblematic different intelligence deeper, not recognized by the human mind even as intelligence everyone has that potential within but unfortunately everybody is conditioned by our culture into only accepting the analytical as physical as intelligent so one could talk of if you talk of in physical terms physiological terms right brain, left brain there's perhaps a correspondence but it goes deeper so to see that an intelligence that is far greater than anything you could work out through the mind which has its place for certain things is there and why not bring that into your normal everyday life human interactions it operates through stillness not through noise it doesn't need to break things down so when you listen to another person and you are there in a helping capacity thought movement in the state of attentive listening the movement of thought comes to an end and thought is not trying to figure out how can I help this person, I need to think of something or make some reference to something I have learned case history number 223 was similar to this one and then you go to the book and look at case history 223 yes there's certain similarities and there's another case history there what you can do like that is very limited and now comes the possibility of just just allowing the aware spaciousness to be there and then through that through healing through transformation real insights suddenly they happen change happens and you are not trying to change anything or anybody there is no trying in that and what is implied here that of course is the total yes to the suchness of now even when you sit with another person because when you sit with another person the suchness of now comes in the form of that person and there is no judgment of any kind a simple yes this is the suchness of this moment no thinking this person should be different should this, should that it's not the case this moment is as it is there was a therapist some years ago in the United States who realized the power that lies in what he called unconditional acceptance of the person that before they called the person the patient but he didn't use the word patient anymore which implies many things unconditional acceptance and that transformation happens not through categorizing analyzing, labeling calling him or her pathological or finding some kind of label for the disease another label but simply unconditional acceptance now they try to teach that sometimes to their people sometimes the basis is not taught which is the basis for unconditional acceptance is the ability to step out of thought and rest in the state of no thought if you're trying to practice unconditional acceptance through thought then you get into trouble again, this is like Christians who try to love their neighbor as themselves without having gone beyond the judgments of thought, every thought is a judgment so they try to do it and since the teaching of Jesus exists has only come down to us in fragments they couldn't quite see that what he's talking about is the transformed state of consciousness in which you take no thought for the moral future and then it happens naturally that you love your neighbor as yourself because in that knowing that comes out of that state that is a unitive knowing very similar to what we talked about this morning when you look at a tree you look at nature you know that tree no longer through the labels of the mind but on a deeper level and you can know the other person in the same way without knowing anything necessarily about their story there can be a deep knowing that goes beyond the story in the other person, although mostly if you're a therapist what you will hear is the story and that's fine you listen to that but you listen beyond there is a field of presence and that awakens presence in the other person which is also even in the most mad person and mad means totally identified with thought not the slightest gap that's already madness and so you listen and suddenly there is an intelligence at work which operates out of the totality of that situation, not necessarily through you and that applies to any situation in life to which you bring or which you meet in that state of consciousness in which you totally face the is-ness of now and there is language is never quite right but I'll say it anyway, there is a current of awareness that flows and that's that then deals with the situation whether you're sitting with a person or whether it is a difficult situation in your life, not the mind created problem making which in many cases has no reality whatsoever but let us say it's a true challenge and so you bring to that you face that completely in the state of attention and in that facing it doesn't matter for how long thought comes to an end maybe not for long there's a space, a spaciousness of no thought and that is the power that lies dormant in most, in all human beings, the power is in all human beings but it is still dormant in most human beings one could say so the simple ability to give attention to a situation one could say look in a wider sense we talked about you can see how it's all connected how important it is to be able to look at a tree in that state and that is relatively easy because a tree is not very challenging a tree even helps you along the tree says let me teach you stillness that's where I live my home is called stillness and the tree would love to teach you stillness so the tree is helpful you can go to the tree now that's beautiful and then comes challenges, humans so with people you become still good then you start the other way around that's ok that is more rare it happens usually that people they even then say I want to leave the world I want to live alone I can't face all that madness anymore but the beautiful thing is it's through the challenges that presence deepens through the challenges of being with people and the situations that they create so to be able to look first at nature then to be able to look at a person at a situation just looking in a wider sense now or giving attention and there's one common denominator here and that is there is a space in which the movement of thought has come to an end thought can then operate again out of that space which is much more empowered thought not the repetitive self-serving thinking that most people are trapped in just as these words come out of the state of no thought so the words have a certain aliveness which even I sense and I speak continuously about the same things almost every day now one would have thought finally you must get tired of saying the same it's never literally the same but it always points to the same and sometimes it's almost literally the same you must get tired of saying the same things and the strange thing is it's each time it seems new and alive because it comes out of presence and so you could when you identify it with the structures of thought only everything becomes jaded and old in your life and the older you get the more stale the world becomes to you through your perception so everything you know the expression been there done that and so you go through the world and nothing can it's like almost the world gradually turning black and white and more and more lifeless there's actually nothing happening to the world it's because you're looking at the world through the old mind structures and the accumulated content in your head that is the filter through which you look at people even at nature and then it gets there's a line in Hamlet how weary stale and unprofitable are the uses of this world or something like that weary, stale and unprofitable, it's the heaviness of one's own mind structures and as presence arises you see that everything is new it has no real past nature is fresh and new and every time you see it, it's fresh and new, you don't look at it through the filter of conditioned thought. There's a beautiful book I would recommend it's by Krishnamurti it's one of maybe the only book or one of very two or three books that he actually wrote by hand and it's called Krishnamurti's Notebook in which he records not only his states of consciousness every day but every day, every little chapter, he wrote a little chapter every day for about a year year and a half and he always, every chapter contains a description of nature as he saw it on that day the trees, the leaves, the sky and each time it's fresh as if he had never seen it before the description still contains the freshness of that it's new every time because it is not looked upon through the filter of conditioned thought and this state is arising now in many human beings this is the liberation liberation from time liberation from thought liberation from self self mind made little self heavy but little so when you interact here you can bring just as you listen here in that attentive listening listen to the other person even if they are talking nonsense ultimately it's all nonsense even if they are talking nonsense you listen so there are the words and there is the the field of awareness through which the listening happens and as you listen you are aware of the field through which the listening happens as yourself so one could say you are there as the I am presence the deepest that is usually confused with thought I am I am this and that and you are that but the deepest that's what's left when you step out of identification with form that's what's left that's what Descartes the philosopher couldn't get to because he never could step beyond thought so he thought I think therefore I am is the ultimate truth one could almost go so far as to say if he had said I don't think therefore I am would have been truer I don't think therefore I know who I am we can have all kinds of variations but they would get closer to the truth and from that simple presence you listen and then at some point you may find words may come simple you may say something you may not you may just listen a different quality a different energy field is there now from what usually would be there which is mind interaction as a depth and then you can bring it into situations where humans meet which are usually full of conflict because whenever two humans meet potentially it's a holy encounter as the Course in Miracles puts it potentially there's the presence of God I am, the I am is there but usually wherever two humans meet that's the beginning two is a crowd and before long and then if three or four get together you don't need to wait long before you have egoic conflict before you have mental positions that they identify with as me and then you have two who agree on one mental position and the other two agree on a different mental position so any human situation that you go into you will find the conflict go to big companies awful unless there are few companies where there's a little bit of the enlightened consciousness coming in but most companies are dominated totally by the mind structures of the self which says it's totally dominated by right and wrong and power and more more it doesn't know what for it just wants more to grow see Enron corporation nothing, it's not that these people were evil they just, the ego itself was there magnified through that organization and the ego wants more because it doesn't feel fulfilled yet and that gets translated into a corporation which feels I'm not big enough yet we need more profit more, what for we don't know but more until finally it self-destructs or you can see it in nations they want to conquer other nations Germany was possessed by in the last century by that egoic mind pattern which said we need more land what for don't know more and we need more enemies what for because then we feel more strongly who we are it strengthens our sense of self so then finally if we end up having enemies north, south, east and west then we will really know who we are because we define our form identity through the other forms that are alien to us and so we get strengthened in our collective form identity and for a while that feels good both on a personal level and a collective level during that time in Germany almost nobody committed suicide so it was a strengthening of the illusory self but of course you get drawn into great madness and suffering is inflicted on other human beings and ultimately also on yourself and finally the whole thing self-destructs the illusion you cannot sustain illusion for that long oh ok there comes a microphone

[Speaker 2] (3:07:57 - 3:08:31)

when I am interacting with people and I'm trying to be present but for some reason there's a pattern of behavior whatever in that person that really annoys me I really don't know I try to keep it to myself into it's my problem, it's not the person's problem but it's really annoying so I don't know, is there a moment that I can express my annoyance without falling into egotistical patterns

[Speaker 1] (3:08:31 - 3:08:35)

ok, so is that at work or private?

[Speaker 2] (3:08:36 - 3:08:38)

any situation could be

[Speaker 1] (3:08:38 - 3:08:40)

any situation yes

[Speaker 2] (3:08:40 - 3:08:43)

with a taxi driver yes

[Speaker 1] (3:08:44 - 3:29:49)

taxi driver or anybody restaurant waiter whatever yeah, colleague at work so that's a reactive pattern which has an energy to it that you can actually feel inside you and really all that's needed is to feel the energy that's behind that which is an emotional energy coupled with usually a thought which comes first, sometimes the emotional reaction comes first or the thought may come first that you should be doing something different that thought is there whether it's expressed or not you should not behave the way you behave, you should know better, you should or you should not the should is there and so be aware of the thought and be aware of the feeling the emotion that comes be aware of how it feels the awareness may only come at first after you've shouted something and you may still feel the lingering emotion or thought movement after the event with a little bit less power and then suddenly you're aware of it and it seems that you had no choice, it just happened and so as presence arises you will notice in the middle of a reaction the awareness is suddenly there and while you're shouting you idiot, you should know better do you even have a driving license or whatever and in the middle of it, you notice it as a conditioned pattern and before you know it you will feel it before it happens the reaction as an energy movement and as a thought movement in you you may be driving many people feel annoyed when they drive because they take it all personally they take other drivers other cars personally if there came a strong wind and pushed them aside, they wouldn't get angry they might have some fear but because they realize that the wind is non-personal but with humans you think they should know better or they shouldn't do this they shouldn't behave like that but they do so you watch the reactions and if there's enough presence in you you will find the reaction will come and move through you as a wave movement and you're no longer compelled to act it out and you also as presence arises, you see the ultimate futility of the reaction at most it is self-serving it serves to strengthen your thought-based sense of self whenever you get annoyed at somebody that pattern is there because what is implied here is that you are right surely and the other person that you are annoyed about or the situation probably created by other people that you are annoyed about is wrong surely that's why you are totally justified in being annoyed because you are right and you're always right that is the when you're totally identified with thought you're always right in your own belief when a gap comes then you can sometimes see afterwards that maybe you were not right maybe that was just a position that you identified with and you can see the other person's position is also equally right but that only comes as awareness comes in and we all know people I'm sure you are not one of them we all know people who are always absolutely right that they are right and nobody else can be right I'm sure everybody knows people like that who are so identified with their mental position that nobody is ever right until they say it and so those are people who are very much identified with a conditioned self the self loves being right it loves somebody else to be wrong because for a little moment it feels stronger so when you get annoyed that feels good on some strange level because you feel you're more strongly yourself now this is usually unconscious but if you make it conscious you can actually see it that it is actually in the service of strengthening my sense of self because the sense of self that is derived from mind is never quite strong enough it always seeks more to strengthen itself and very often the more means more right than somebody else and this can be added and some people have that as their main way of strengthening their self they may not have good looks or great wealth or fame, VIPs or great knowledge because these are all ways in which people try to add something to themselves and some people may have none of that but they can feel the whole world they are all idiots they are all totally wrong, look at them what they do, everybody is doing it, look, look at and there are people who complain all day long about other people in the world what they are doing, occasionally they may even get a little bit of truth because there is a lot of madness but they derive their sense of self from that in the absence of other things but there are others who have plenty of other things and still also use this mind pattern to strengthen themselves it is one of the ways in which the self seeks to add more to itself and everybody has it to a greater or lesser degree, the need to be right the need therefore for somebody else to be wrong so when you now that you can see that and now that your sense of self since you are here is less and less dependent on thought forms the need to be annoyed with others which means to make them wrong will also lessen because you no longer need to strengthen that ultimately illusory sense of self and so gradually comes then a freedom from that mind pattern and then suddenly you may find that very mind pattern, the same person who made annoyed you so many times, suddenly the same situation happens again and you just go, oh it's gone the reaction may be gone traffic, driving there are people who are looking for someone to be annoyed with even while they drive and before they, you know it and everybody in this room who drives a car probably has experienced being shouted at by another driver well I have and the driver shouts you idiot get your license or whoever gave you a license or something worse and now this is what then happens if you inside you sense what that feels like when somebody does that even if you know that that person obviously is very stupid you might say and yet you feel injured you feel a little bit less in your sense of self that is the mind based image of me if somebody calls you you idiot a little bit it removes something from you that feels I'm a great person and suddenly your sense of self is a little bit diminished this can also happen through any criticism or anything you are not and again usually the unconscious repair mechanism immediately jumps into action and in a simple traffic situation you repair your sense of self simply by shouting back something worse and you suddenly feel repaired and that process is unconscious usually people just do it and this to jump in and repair an injured sense of self the little me is always waiting to do the repair job in any situation to justify something to become defensive if somebody says you didn't do that yes I did maybe you very well know that you didn't but in that criticism the mind made self feels diminished and whether it's true or not doesn't matter to the mind made self it's not interested in truth it's interested in preserving its sense of self the same can happen in a discussion or an argument you put forward your mental position with great conviction and the other person very simply tells you you're completely wrong your facts are all wrong and shows you this is how it is and suddenly the unconscious and automatic repair mechanism jumps into action and you say no these figures are wrong I know they are wrong and you fabricate something simply to preserve your sense of self you say this is how it is because he said that you quote something from somebody who never said that just because when you need to preserve your sense of self it's a question of life or death when you have no other identity it's a question of life or death whether you are right or wrong so the truth becomes unimportant whether I survive in my sense of self that's what matters and again it's an unconscious movement and it's all part of the mad world that humans create when they don't know who they are beyond mental content beyond thought forms of me so they struggle and struggle to preserve their sense of self and strengthen it another mad way of strengthening it is to diminish somebody else's sense of self through some comment through saying something and in its madness the egoic sense of self feels stronger when it can diminish somebody else so you can you criticize somebody and suddenly you feel you have grown because that person has shrunk and it's all in the realm of illusion a similar thing is envy a certain structure of somebody has something and because the mind made self equates having with identity because the object that you possess has a corresponding thought form to it the thought form is what really matters not the object because out of the thought form I derive my sense of self so here I, let's say I buy a certain type of car on the most simple level and my thought the thought form of my car is there, mine now this word mine in the mind made sense of self is an extremely important word mine, it's used all the time and all kinds of claims are made through using the word mine the child already starts when he says my toy it has identified the toy isn't important but the toy becomes a thought form invested with self so I am in the thought form of that thing this is the beginning of the illusion unfortunately children have to go through that it seems at least so far they've had to so you can't you can't tell a child you must not use the word mine because it will take you into illusion that's so it starts with that and in that the child feels it has grown a little because the child has added the toy as a thought form to its sense of self and then the child suffers tremendously when somebody destroys the toy or takes it away because then the thought form has no basis anymore there and begins to crumble again it loses some of its little sense of self it's not fully developed at all the little that's there in the content of the mind crumbles and it's very painful and that same pattern when this child becomes an adult he or she has added many minds already, my this my knowledge, my opinions my maybe my good looks, if they have good looks my whatever and so there's somebody you buy a new car which is the equivalent of the toy of the child exactly the same the thought form mine associated with that mine, new, whatever and in that you have expanded a little because your car is bigger than many other people's cars therefore you must be bigger the thought form is very attractive of my car big, me big, bigger than bigger than most people because of course you have to compare yourself so you look around how many bigger cars are there than mine, mine and you feel while you're sitting in it, you feel a sense of expansion self has grown grown and then your colleague drives into the parking lot with one that's twice as expensive as yours and this is called then envy because you think you have shrunk again and you don't want him to feel good about this car and then you say by any chance have you read the latest quality ratings for Mercedes cars are not what they used to be it's fallen to 12th place, you may have paid too much for your car laughter and then you feel you have removed the thought form from him, the self in the egoic madness you believe that by diminishing his sense of self which you have just done of course because he will say no I haven't read the quality ratings and so you feel you have grown because one person has shrunk and in the comparative evaluation of me you have grown again and this is how envy often works envy means I feel less because you have more and then I'm going to try to take that away from you so that you can't derive a self from that anymore or if you might say even friends do that you might say you meet your friend and she bought a new dress and you feel suddenly yours is not as good this diminished and without knowing it, without thinking of it, just something comes out of your mouth and says oh this would look great on your sister laughter

[Speaker 4] (3:29:53 - 3:29:54)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (3:30:04 - 3:43:24)

and so these are the games that this entity plays and it goes into other forms of madness worse than this the need to be right can take on many forms it can but it's amazing when you see it it's so obvious what it's trying to do it's also so obvious it doesn't really work, it never for long and then you have to look to the next thing and the defensiveness that comes with it, the needing the amazing this is humans have been trapped in that state of consciousness for such a long time and so deeper and deeper identified with thought forms until finally that human state becomes very dysfunctional and there's nothing wrong with that, being dysfunctional it is as it is and right now it's dysfunctional, it has to be, otherwise it wouldn't be it's an evolutionary cycle that humans have gone through which started when they ate the apple because that is the arising of thought as it says clearly they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil suddenly they were able to think and judge and evaluate good bad like, dislike separate, the beginning of separation a little separation from the totality and separating the world up into segments and compartments until finally from the first apple and finally you get the PhD about the tiniest of segments and Shakespeare said nothing is either good or bad but thinking makes it so in one of his plays nothing is either good or bad but thinking makes it so he saw that it always is as it is but thinking makes good and bad and there we have the story of the apple they ate of the tree of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and immediately what then developed was a self consciousness a sense of self and what is also told in the story of that is they suddenly felt uncomfortable with themselves oh no clothes it was a bit past they felt ashamed they had the beginning of a self image arose a me uneasy and that was only the beginning that was the loss of Eden which I'm told, the translation of which means the place of joy and so then after a while things came in like work work unheard of before they started thinking life wouldn't be divided into these things leisure and work but then work started a new word came into work condemned to work whatever beautiful way it's put in the story of Genesis effort comes in, sweating by the sweat of your I can't remember what it says so it was the beginning of effort and so gradually gradually thought it became an incredible thing very empowering on the one hand the arising of thought amazing, humans became the dominant species very quickly through thought and could do all kinds of things through thought it couldn't be an evolutionary cycle and gradually they lost their natural state of connectedness with the one with the source of all life which they had as their natural state didn't even know it and gradually all their sense of self was derived from thought movement and that's where in this evolutionary cycle things became more and more dysfunctional more and more suffering more and more violence more and more humans killed by other humans worse and worse and then gradually in its final stages that state of consciousness becomes a threat to the planet itself that state of consciousness because it's in its final stage it's so dysfunctional and this is why now humans change or they die out as a species because the state of consciousness that they are in is too dysfunctional for humanity to survive if nothing changes and that's why it has to change or we die one or the other as a species which isn't such sad but millions of planets billions of planets galaxies billions of galaxies each galaxy come to express it how many life forms how many forms consciousness takes how many forms it can flower through any form if the planet then ever recovers consciousness might flower through birds or some totally new life form but we are here which is a good sign perhaps humanity is going to make it and perhaps you are part of this transformation that is happening in human consciousness happening now not going to happen let's not make it into some future event projecting again a thought form of future something is going to happen to free me no it can only happen now how?

by inner alignment with is you can the doorway into freedom is in the now the doorway into freedom is not in the future it cannot come in the future because there is no such thing otherwise you create a new idealized version of a perfect self me enhanced version of me improved just as they say with advertising greatly improved better than ever me and not realize that you need to again you would be looking to some adding and not realizing that the essence is already there in you nothing needs to be added you can play with adding learning something new adding new friends even adding a new car not anymore in the service of self you might just enjoy sitting in this comfortable car it's not fulfilling when it's there to feed yourself after a little while the car becomes unfulfilling when it's designed to feed your sense of self and then you might switch to a bicycle there are people on bicycles who have a stronger sense of self than people in BMWs that's possible too it's not necessarily the people in the BMWs usually yes, but not always that they because a person in a bicycle can have a self image of me the one who has gone beyond attachment to all these material things and that becomes a thought form just as strong as the thought form of me in my big BMW the thought form of me is the one who is superior to all these unevolved humans in their big cars and so you can be on your bicycle and go I am so much more evolved than you is the assumption the thought might not even arise literally in that way but it's implied so thought forms the self is very cunning it may have rejected the BMW, maybe it had all the money and you gave it away but still a new thought form came of me grown in stature it will grasp at anything to strengthen its sense of self at any way you can be more of something because the comparative element is very strong in the egoic sense of self there must be more of something more right more wealthy, more strong more spiritual more, if all that fails more miserable than you nobody has been treated more unfairly by life than me a new thought form develops that's what life did to me that's what they did to me, human beings did that to me a strong thought form can develop around failure which is another story in the head me, the one who has failed it's all been in vain all for nothing all the struggling, I failed miserably I failed in my relationship I failed in my business I failed my exams and so a very unhappy thought form of me, the miserable one, can be just as strong as a thought form of me, the one who is better than most others both can be equally strong thought forms and both are comparative and both operate on the principle of more me, more than whatever that more is doesn't really matter as long as more and you find the strangest things that which goes even so far as to say I am more ill than you I knew somebody who would say whenever you said I have a headache he would say you have a headache? I have had a headache for weeks now

[Speaker 4] (3:43:31 - 3:43:44)

and so what he is really saying is

[Speaker 1] (3:43:44 - 5:41:54)

you little worm, you talk to me about, tell me about pain, I know more about pain than you and this is, wherever you look you see those structures at work in humans of course when you look you see it's quite mad but it's normal, all the human drama is made out of that stuff what humans, what they preoccupy themselves with what occupies their mind their thoughts is that drama that comes out of those mind structures of the self and it's all they talk about it and think about it and finally it's reduced to smoke they drop dead and the drama dissolves and again we must go to Shakespeare with his beautiful words full of sound and fury signifying nothing human existence full of sound and fury signifying nothing so this is the dilemma of human existence in its present evolutionary stage that is coming to an end, undoubtedly ah amazing and there's a nice line out of one Star Trek movie when they travel back to the 20th century in some time warp and they walk through the city San Francisco wherever it is in the 20th century coming from the 24th century and they say they see the paranoia of people, everybody looking at them suspiciously and they say it's a miracle they ever made it out of the 20th century it's very liberating for us here to recognize human dysfunction and human madness and see it for what it is one might think that it's depressing to see it but it's liberating because when you recognize dysfunction, human dysfunction when you see it the seeing is the arising of that which is beyond the madness when you see madness even in yourself you are no longer completely mad because the seeing is there the conscious, the awareness is there that sees the seeing does not need to adopt some kind of position towards it and say dreadful or feel guilty about being mad madness is not a personal matter it's not your personal problem if there are still elements of madness in your life and it may well be it's not a personal problem it's simply the human condition in its present evolutionary stage is still operating in you, that's all and so you sometimes get annoyed with people or shout at them not a personal matter at all this is just and you're already seeing it so the freedom is already beginning now of seeing that mind movement the conditioned mind movement I saw this film recently Beautiful Mind which is about the actual life of a person who later received the Nobel Prize for something he was an academic at university totally immersed in his thoughts a genius on some level of thought and one small area of thought but he became insane, he had hallucinations he saw people that weren't there he had discussions with people that were not there and he got totally drawn into that became totally dysfunctional his thought was taken to a mental home the viewer of the film does not know that these are hallucinations until he himself begins to recognize that these are hallucinations that's quite well done and then comes the moment of freedom when he realizes the madness of it he realizes these things are not real and yet they are still there that's the arising of sanity which is not the immediate end of madness the hallucinations continue but he actually talks to the people that appear in front of him and says I'm not going to talk to you again he knows that it's a hallucination and he says I'll leave you now I won't interact with you before he reacted now awareness has come in and there's the space of presence and to the end of his life apparently he still would occasionally see these hallucinations but no longer reacting as if they were real simply allowed them watched them, allowed them to be and so gradually something must have emerged in him that was from a deeper place than the conditioned mind that comes out in the film, it could have come out a little bit more but it comes out anyway so the end of madness is seeing madness and not adopting some position and say oh there's something wrong with me, I am mad deriving a sense of self from what is the human condition and feel guilty about it or inadequate or not good enough nothing to do with you you are the arising presence you are the witnessing consciousness not the forms the conditioned forms in your mind or in your emotional field it's not who you are so then it's not a personal problem anymore oh that's a relief and so evolution is happening by itself and these words are part of the evolution that is happening by itself the words also happen by themselves they are not planned beforehand they just happen they are created by the collective energy field of this group there's nothing personal in this and they happen to come out of this form because it's hollow enough hollow enough open enough for it to come through this form that's all it could come through any other hollow form wherever there's an opening consciousness will move through it does not evaluate people and say you are worthy I am going to move through you it moves where there's an opening it doesn't matter whether before there was a human being who was a criminal and suddenly an opening happens there suddenly complete surrender happens there and the opening is there and then consciousness moves and maybe in the person who thought he or she was worthy because he'd been practicing meditation for 30 years it doesn't come through because the opening isn't there because there's a continuing self-image of me the spiritual one me better than and there may be a criminal in prison who is driven into total surrender to what is by unbearable suffering self-created so nobody is worthy or not worthy because some people feel and these are two aspects of self-image some people feel they are more worthy than others and other people feel surely I'm not worthy yet for enlightenment or liberation surely I have to struggle a bit more so that I can really be worthy which is again an image of me, the worthy one so wonderful to see madness and then as we have happened here later arises also liberating in itself you can laugh at the human condition you could also cry of course it's quite just the other polarity it is a tragedy and a comedy at the same time you could cry at the end of your life if you think that's all there is to humanity you would never stop crying but because something new is arising now you can laugh and there's already freedom in that so the rest of this day feel free to laugh or to cry or both and if you choose to remain silent, maybe we can set aside a few tables, dinner tables for those who don't want to speak and then other tables for those who want to engage in speech and perhaps also in listening or in putting forward their point of view a moment of stillness is there still a little bit of waiting if there is you can notice it it's the mind it's the movement of thought it's enough to notice it because thought waits for the next thought the next event the next object in consciousness and when you notice it notice is a little word it doesn't seem to mean very much to notice something but it's very significant whether you are waiting completely identified with the movement of waiting or whether you notice suddenly there's waiting in you, that's the mind and the noticing is presence the seeing so you can see the movement a slight perhaps very slight here, impatience very slight get on with it I once gave a talk in one of the busiest cities in the world Hong Kong and somebody who later came to almost every talk he came to the first talk ever in between two business appointments I think and there was a silent space before the talk as there usually is and later he described to me his mind movements while he was waiting for the talk to start for God's sake get on with it we are busy people here we haven't got what are you waiting for, what are you trying to do what's this and he almost got up and left when finally I started to speak now here maybe just a remnant of that mind movement which isn't personal a tiny habit a mental habit and you discover even here perhaps particularly here many mental habits habit patterns that still operate even here including perhaps certain patterns to do with ego that we talked about that was so funny yesterday and you may catch yourself while talking to somebody after lunch and you may suddenly detect a little statement coming out of your mouth whose purpose was to impress the other person which means to enhance improve the view that the other person has of you and then the ego can use that thought form somebody else's view of me becomes similar to an object not everything is to do with the ego it's material objects intangible things are equally important somebody's opinion of me and then this person suddenly oh, if you know so much or whatever it may be and then the ego seeks to add it to itself in its illusion it feels bigger when you've just managed to impress somebody with your knowledge or even more absurd things somebody you know or this famous person your friend you just it just slips into a conversation and through association with that thought form this is also an attempt to add more to the self to the sense of self it feels a little bit bigger and that's usually called ego but it really is only ego when you don't know what you're doing when you're completely in that movement, it's ego the moment you know it it's not really ego, it's a mind pattern and they still those mind patterns have a certain momentum still so ego really definition of ego is unconscious identification with mind but when the mind and its content and its patterns are seen are noticed it's not really ego anymore you've already stepped out of ego but what is still operating is patterns they have a momentum you may not become free that quickly of those mind patterns and emotional patterns that go with that freedom is not in eliminating all of that but in no longer mistaking all of that for yourself that's freedom patterns still operate the human form has certain limitations on all levels certain patterns may operate until the very end there have even been liberated teachers who continued smoking every day and people said how can you do this you're supposed to be liberated so there is a looseness or rather a spaciousness that in which some of these patterns still operate a few may suddenly disappear a few may be persistent and they operate for a while and so the spaciousness that is there when a space consciousness arises in that those things are being seen oh accept it because whatever is whether on the outer level or the inner level whatever is is as it is right now you have to what can you do it is other things change very quickly when presence or space consciousness is there suddenly that pattern is dissolved and other patterns stick around for longer it doesn't become a problem you don't become a problem to yourself anymore you don't you're not a cause of trouble to yourself and then it spreads to others if you're a problem to yourself it's almost certain that you will be a problem to other people because problem making spreads a very deep seated pattern also we may have touched on that briefly is the need to talk about other people in a slightly superior way sometimes called gossip and in certain circles when people get together 80% or more of their conversation is about some absent person and it's usually what he or she did or said or didn't do just imagine what he said to me he said and then I said it's a very deep seated thing in a very subtle sense every time you talk about somebody else in that way it's the illusory self gets strengthened because it puts itself by implication not, it doesn't say so openly in a superior position I am more than better than is implied because you are the judge of this person's behavior and it is judged as inadequate or whatever somehow inadequate at least not up to your standards and so that's a subtle satisfying way for the self to feel bigger to add more because the need for more we talked about it, I am more and also right comes in again to be right the other in some way is made wrong and so you have this group of people and then that person comes and then they stop talking of course and then other person leaves and then they talk about that person, it happens in relatively unconscious circles but some of that most people carry inside and this may linger for a while and then you notice it, sometimes the noticing comes after it's just happened hmm and then the noticing may come in the middle of a pattern and then the noticing may come when the impulse to say something comes and then it's just noticed the energy behind it and then freedom comes in there it's possible for the impulse to come as an energy form and pass through you without becoming a thought or word and so it passes through and and then after a while it may not even come anymore so some, quite a few things dissolve through the awareness the spacious awareness other things may stick around for quite some time and none of them is personal patterns in consciousness one could say ultimately there is absolutely nothing personal in your life there's only the essential I am underneath all the patterns and that is the most personal or the only personal thing but really it goes far beyond the person the thing that Descartes looked for but he got stuck in the level of thought that which is beyond any doubt at any moment right now this whole gathering may be a dream who knows you can't be sure that it's not a dream and I mentioned when you wake up at home next week there may be a doubt in your mind was that a dream only for a moment but even if this is a dream somebody must be dreaming it there must be a a conscious place a consciousness in which that dream happens and that is real in any dream or in any illusion at the core of it there must be something real otherwise it wouldn't be it could not be known there's nobody there to know it so there's the knower at the deepest level and that is a sense of I am-ness all the other patterns are temporary forms external forms inner forms content all this is content the external content of this moment this room this place the voice whatever inner content may be operating inside you as patterns in consciousness thought movements emotions emotional movements one thing that remains one way in which we can put it is to say what remains is it's always now it can only happen in now the deeper meaning of that is now is the unchanging space in which it happens and now is not separate from who you are in your essence that's why now could never leave you and no matter what happens to you on the level of form or on the level of content because it's possible that your life may dramatically change within a year all the external situations of your life could change dramatically totally you may be rich now and you may suddenly be penniless or the other way around everything changes or there could even be deeper changes even the inner on the level of conditioning things could change and there are people in this room who have already experienced in this lifetime what seems like different incarnations they've gone through so many changes they've been so many different people they've been a stock broker they've been a hippie they've been a successful businessman they've been a sadhu in India they've done it all squeezed into one lifetime different incarnations it seems completely different roles but in each role if that person had looked deeply within there would always have remained an essence that is nothing changed the deepest sense of I am-ness doesn't matter whether you're a sadhu in India or a stock broker in New York there are people who are stock brokers and then become sadhus and they're looking for something that is available to them both as a stock broker or as a sadhu the innermost sense of being or knowing beyond form beyond roles beyond content of consciousness which is simply the space of consciousness which is the essence of now so on the deepest level the sense of I am is always there and it doesn't depend on this or that so you don't need to change the outer form, although this may happen to know yourself you could know yourself sitting at your desk in New York there have been people going to India and become sadhus and after a few years became frustrated still not found myself they adopted a new role in a very subtle way the ego came back in and a new mental form arose as me the holy man the spiritual one identification with form comes back it creeps in amazing and to go beyond that all that's needed is to go deeply into the isness of this no change is required for you to know yourself at the deepest level no time is required no change is required what is now is always enough you have to align yourself with that isness and then there is a depth to it before it's not fulfilling, this now isn't fulfilling I want a different fulfilling now not this unfulfilling now that's the pattern so they never go into the depth they remain shallow look to the future, a thought form and the strange thing is the form of now the forms change now in a couple of days the now will be filled with other forms it won't be this scenery it will be some other scenery but the form that this moment takes, the only moment there is is never that fulfilling it quickly turns into unfulfilling an obstacle almost to where I want to go normal that's normal existence the now is an obstacle to where I want to go to that state of being fully myself free fully me not yet, I'm not yet that so most people run away from the now because they see it as an obstacle as not enough as limiting the form of it so they never got to the essence of now because they don't go deep enough into the form of now they don't accept the form of now, they run away from this so they never reach the essence of now and it's after you've run away from now for a few years you may be ready and you may realize no matter what form there is in my life what form appears in the now it's not that satisfying for very long the form changes or it loses its satisfactoriness and then you stay with what is and the rejection of the form that this moment takes drops away you realize what I call the inevitability of whatever happens because it's connected to the totality nothing is separate even raising my right arm like this, you could say there's something inevitable to it or the mind, we've looked at that the mind could question it and say you didn't have to raise your right arm but it happened, it could not have been otherwise if it happened the entire universe is brought this about and this movement made it connected to countless other movements in the universe because ultimately space and time have no absolute reality so just one movement on this plane could be connected to millions of other movements on other planes and almost certainly is so because of that deep connectedness, nothing that is could be otherwise because it is connected to the whole, it is one with the whole the human mind because it cuts things up we looked at that takes a segment out of the web of the totality and calls it a separate event itself it makes the human mind itself into a segment and calls it a separate me and to this separate me these separate events happen to me and the me is a reactive me, it doesn't like what's happening and so you realize there is no separate event, there is just the form that this now takes, inevitable has to be the way it is because the entire universe has created this moment and then you can let go of the absurd belief that it should be otherwise you don't argue with is that is the transition that's all that happens no longer you realize you can't argue with what is then you could call surrender the deepest meaning you enter the surrendered state of consciousness surrendered means aligned with what is, no more only what is now, not surrendered to a story, resigned to a story in the head if you've just lost ten million dollars you've lost your big house you've lost your car and all the mind forms that go with this have crumbled the story of me that was so great has collapsed and there you are sitting standing at a bus stop waiting for the bus now to some people surrender they think means to say okay I might as well accept that my life has failed, that I'm nobody now I might as well accept that twenty years of hard work was in vain I have to accept it that my marriage also has collapsed I've failed at that so I might as well accept that my children have rejected me okay I have to accept that that's that's being becoming more deeply involved in a story and strengthening the story of me and saying this is how it is I have to resign myself to the fact that this story of mine is so sad this is all on the level of telling yourself a story and deriving your sense of self from the telling of that story and that sense of self here will be a sad one but the egoic pattern will cling to anything it will happily adjust itself to a sad sense of self from a victorious sense of self and change its story and then tell other people about how all their life collapsed and then you can get an identity from that, it's nothing to do with surrender you might call that resignation, so resignation is not what we are talking about surrender only concerns this moment because the rest is thought forms anything that is not now is a thought form that's well you might say but didn't it happen, yes but you have to remember it now and it's a thought form so all you surrender means to align yourself with this moment only, so in the case of the stock broker who lost it all who is now standing at the bus stop the surrender in his case is here I am standing and it's not so much telling himself anything just aligning himself with that moment that he begins to look around there's a tree and there's a spaciousness in which the tree is being perceived as we've been living that here the spaciousness and the sky is there, it was there when he had ten million dollars in the bank, it's still there and there's a bird alive has no story and the body is breathing the air is fresh, or not fresh but breathing happens cars are going past it might be wet or who knows you got splashed now if you were in the story, getting splashed would add to the sad story this is what my life has come to so and then there's simply water it is as it is what can you do, it must be part of the totality of the universe for me to get splashed, otherwise it wouldn't happen, so you know how incredible it can be when you live in alignment with what is with this, and you suddenly feel an aliveness inside you the body is still alive, the cells of the body are alive and there's a this moment isn't really that bad unless I begin to judge it in some way through a mind form it is, and then the bus comes and you sit on it and you watch the landscape go past beautiful, I spent many years travelling on buses and watching the landscapes go past and if there had been a mind with a story, it would say, you're now in your forties, you still haven't got a car you have no pension plan you have no insurance nobody thinks anything of you I actually heard that story from my family but it was very satisfying to sit on a bus yes so it's we can step out of the story which is the conceptualized sense of self into the immediacy and the aliveness of now and that's the only thing that requires alignment that's the only thing that's real is this moment and the amazing thing is that change happens much more quickly when the form of this moment is not resisted first you go beyond the form because the form in this particular example the form now looks very limiting because this person before might have had more freedom on one level, and now because of no money, he's limited to waiting for a bus and suddenly a deep sense of space is around the form of now a peace is around it a spaciousness is around it a deeper sense of presence is there, while the form happens, and that comes when the form is not resisted then you go beyond the form, and that means no matter what happens there is a depth to that there's a space in which this happens and you are the space you could say the entire room here is happening in the space that you are, that is consciousness if it suddenly went dark here, the content would suddenly have disappeared, you couldn't see anything anymore, the content of this room would have disappeared the content in the space and all that's left is spaciousness, stillness presence, these are only words, just that the innermost sense of being being space so one could say that nothing ever happens outside of you, everything that happens in your field of consciousness happens within the space that you are so in the deeper sense you never actually go anywhere now remains always as the space the forms change in that space and it looks as if you were going somewhere but all it means is the scenery changes the same space is always there, doesn't change so all that's needed for freedom is to align yourself with this moment not the story that you step out of the story you don't get stuck in the story of me, you don't repeat the story to yourself in your head which is what people do because it strengthens their sense of self which is thought based here you go beyond the thought based sense of self to somewhere deeper and then the most amazing things happen often to change the situation all that you've needed to open the portal so that intelligence could operate in your life and the portal is opened through alignment to now, then the intelligence the one intelligence can suddenly operate in your life and you suddenly encounter a helpful something helpful comes into the space of now because now isn't resisted now becomes friendly you've become friendly with now first then now becomes friendly with you and so you get on the bus to continue with the failed stockbroker and suddenly you meet an old friend there oh I haven't seen you in 10 years who has some suggestion to make oh I have a house I need somebody to look after my house on a beautiful lake in the north of Italy and you say ok I have nowhere to live I'll go there the strange thing is helpful factors come in very quickly when the resistance to life which is the resistance to now is let go and that's amazing not that you will ever encounter some external situation that is totally and forever fulfilling and never limiting that cannot happen the only thing that is unlimited and continuously forever timelessly fulfilling is the space of now which is the essence of who you are but that which happens in the space of now is not forever eternally limitless and fulfilling it's in the nature of forms that arise in the space of now to embody some kind of limitation in your life and that begins with the physical form of your body no matter how strong and developed and beautiful or whatever your physical body is, at some point you encounter the limitations that come with having a physical body for a long time if you have a wonderful body you have a thought form, a corresponding thought form as me, great body and that is satisfying for a while it's as to the story of me you can add that as important content, that's me and then if that doesn't move the thought form of great body persists and gradually you reach the age of 70 80, 90 and then there comes the conflict between the thought form and the actual body which shows its limitations more and more and in that conflict it's possible that there's a denial for a long time that no I'm still strong and finally when you're walking up 10 flights of stairs at age 80 and somebody, a 20 year old woman rushes up past you and suddenly you feel totally inadequate and it can come as a shock the thought form suddenly crumbles and so it's amazing what people cling to in their search for self, it could also be somebody who is extremely good looking, then it becomes a thought form of me and you get a lot of feedback from other people, the other who want you or want something from you and then inevitably if you live long enough old age comes and then that goes away, the thought form is still there and that crumbles and then the thought form begins to shake and that is called suffering when the self, the thought form that was imbued with self begins to be shaky because it can't sustain itself anymore in reality and if the thought form continues despite the reality, eventually it's called madness because then you have a totally distorted view of reality in that case you might lose your ten million dollars and live in the story that you are still extremely wealthy, it's called madness but it's very close to so called normal states of consciousness so we have the thought forms limited every form that arises in the space of now sooner or later the form will be a limitation on your life somehow even if you lived here you might think if I had a house here and enough money, don't have to work anymore, I could just live here completely at peace in these beautiful surroundings and I would be totally okay I would invite my friends and have good meals meditations that would be and if that actually happened you would encounter even here the limitations of the forms for a while it's satisfying and then you sit here and suddenly restlessness comes in boredom, not enough oh it's always the same view and after a year you may catch yourself not looking anymore it's there and maybe this wasn't the right place it's not that fulfilling here I must have chosen the wrong place I have to start looking again or it may come in some other way if you go to a pacific island beautiful climate everything wonderful as friends of mine went to Bali and paradise, surrounded by paradise and they were cooking their first meal in open air and then they saw a rat looking through the window oh that wasn't supposed to happen and so you can't so you have one limitation as I've just told the story before somebody who is unknown works as a waitress, wants to be an actress can't get a job has an unhappy story very limiting you get paid, whatever ten dollars an hour can't even go anywhere limiting three years later she's famous everybody knows her big house, big car in all the papers but she's trapped in her house she can't go out anymore because riots happen whenever she comes, people go there she is it's always some new limitation that comes in and they say that wasn't supposed to happen it's in the nature of the world of form to offer you some limitation so you can't run away for the rest of your life you can improve your life situation that's good, you can play with it it's good to make a million dollars it's probably nicer than to have one dollar in the bank but to believe that that will free you or fulfill you or make you complete in some way doesn't happen that can be found whether you have one dollar or ten million in the bank the rest is a game with form which you cannot even not play because you are here as a form so you play the game with form you do things but no longer seeking something in the world of form that it cannot give you which ultimately means yourself that deepest satisfaction that deepest fulfillment seeking that in the world of content because that's what form is content in consciousness is what form is seeking that there is continuous frustration, disappointment and then you can use expressions like that he let me down she let me down which means disappointed me strange expression that situation lets me down every situation every person that you look to for self-fulfillment is going to let you down and that's the complaint of the mind that people let you down and situations let you down and fame even fame wasn't supposed to be like that so content has to be seen for what it is as ultimately limiting and limited and that's good to express that in general language not in specific language that we use here where we speak of the content of consciousness or object consciousness and space consciousness space consciousness is fulfillment by itself it needs nothing it is already fully what it is object consciousness is limited now to use a different language we could say when you realize that you no longer demand that something or someone in this world a situation, a place, a person should make you happy because they won't it's not in the nature of a situation a place or a person to make you happy fulfilled, complete you because that's really what making you happy means when people say I'm looking for the man or woman to make me happy what they mean is an innermost sense of being fully yourself now through adding this man or woman to your life, then he or she makes you happy for a while it works and then it doesn't work everybody who falls in love realizes that illusion that this person is going to complete me doesn't last very long if there are two people living together and they say well we are happy what you are saying doesn't apply to us that means in their relationship whether they know it or not something has already emerged that is beyond object consciousness in other words the space in their relationship is already there space consciousness is already there in their relationship and the relationship happens no longer you are no longer looking to the relationship as such to make you happy but the context one could say in which the relationship happens is fulfilling and the context is space or spaciousness that simply means in concrete terms to be with your partner and sit be, lie with him or her in that state of presence state of no thought just spacious presence it can begin with listening listening to your partner giving him or her space to be not immediately imposing thought forms so then a relationship can work but it's not the relationship then that is making you fulfilled or happy it's because you dwell in the deeper dimension of space consciousness and that is why the relationship is fulfilling and a place is fulfilling suddenly no matter where you go it's actually okay because that so we could say if you still don't know what these words are pointing to you become familiar with the space of now which is deeper than what happens in it you know what that is the space of now as spacious awareness just that then the world is suddenly quite alright even very nice and the fact that things come and go is actually welcomed, you don't need to cling to one or not want that one forms are still limiting but inside you are free of those limitations and this realization has happened to people who became totally limited by some physical form either people who whose body became ill who couldn't move by themselves anymore, who encountered extreme forms of limitation people who were in prison sitting in his little cell all day long people who were in very dangerous life situation where they didn't know whether they would survive another day situations that usually would be called extremely unsatisfying, extremely extreme forms of limitation and some of those people through an intelligence that was greater than their mind let go completely of resistance to the seemingly unacceptable limitation in their lives and they just it became so painful to resist continuously and everybody would say isn't it normal to feel unhappy when you are in a prison cell yes of course it's normal isn't it normal to feel miserable when the body can't move anymore of course it's normal it's normal to feel that this situation is unacceptable and to suffer is normal but it is also possible to go beyond normal and some people have done it and they have spoken about it and what they described those probably were the first spiritual teachers to whom life did something that usually would be called dreadful and the suffering that came became so unbearable that something snapped inside and the resisting entity that said that hated themselves and life and everything suddenly snapped because the burden of suffering was becoming unbearable and suddenly something snapped and suddenly the prisoner or the person in the wheelchair sits there and says what's happening there's suddenly an influx of so much peace and aliveness and nothing has changed and they sit there and look at the walls it's the peace that suddenly overcomes them and they don't know how it happened and of course maybe at some point they understand it happened because the now which seemed so unacceptable was no longer resisted and so that entity the self, the mind made self that lives on resistance to now dissolves and suddenly space consciousness, unconditioned consciousness emerges and when that emerges in your life it is, there's always an important aspect of that is a great sense of peace no matter what is happening around you so it's people who are brought to it are not brought to it because suddenly usually because suddenly things get so much better in their lives and finally they get so much better and better and better and finally they become enlightened usually it's the other way they get worse and worse and they lose and become more limited and more limited until finally something snaps and there it is so it's through loss and limitation in the absence of a spiritual teaching that you become free internally through loss and limitation but only potentially not every human being can walk through that doorway that opens when there is loss and limitation in your life, most humans would still look the other way and look to more future don't look at the loss, don't look at the limitation, try to get away from this so then you're sitting in prison and then for 10 years you're working out plans to escape and you try this and you try that or you predict when I get out I'm going to do that and then you live totally there I'm finally going to make it when I get out so there's potentially through loss and limitation which are called the worst things that could happen to a person are actually because life is ultimately not cruel but benevolent through loss and limitation the doorway potentially is there otherwise it opens whether you walk through, we don't know and so that is, everybody has a spiritual teacher even people who have never looked at a spiritual book or even heard of any spiritual teaching and that is encountering loss and limitation in your life and then when that happens potentially the doors open through loss it opens because loss on whatever level, loss of possessions loss of status, loss of opinion that other people have of you whatever kind of loss the thought forms that are associated with those contents, opinions of other people, of me, possessions that are mine achievements that are mine and they are lost the thought forms that had been created that gave you a sense of self also crumble when the external object is lost the inner object the thought form crumbles and that is suffering, it's called suffering because the thought form had self in it, it was me in it and me is dying when there is great loss, me is dying, but potentially now where the form has just collapsed the thought form there is a little open space before there was a form an object covering up the open space now it's dissolved and an open space happens inside you when you don't run away from it and don't deny it and resist it through that open space comes unconditioned what I now sometimes call space consciousness and when it comes through it great peace suddenly something is gone, I should be feeling dreadfully unhappy but suddenly comes through the opening comes emptiness as they call it in Buddhism before there was something, now there is nothing and through the hole comes what Buddhists call emptiness which is also fullness, but nobody can not one designation is right space consciousness presence simple I am-ness because I am that and that and that has collapsed I thought I was that but that's gone and then I thought I was that I thought I was a successful stockbroker that's collapsed, I thought I was a husband that's collapsed I thought I was a good father but my children left me, that's collapsed one thing after another collapsed and leaves nothing but holes and that's great because the formless when a form dissolves, the formless is there, so I am that is gone, I'm not that anymore, I'm not and sometimes all that's left is I am but there's nothing anymore that all objects have gone and I'm left with bare, naked I am so life can do that to you, it removes things from you until you are left with the nakedness of all you know is a sense of beingness or presence but that is deep and beautiful before that got mixed up with being a stockbroker and being a father and being a husband and being some other role those have collapsed and so what's left is just being itself, I am-ness itself wow, that is called realisation liberation, on the mind level you may not be able to say anything about it and when people ask you who are you you might say I don't know I don't know anymore I thought for a long time I knew who I was but now I don't know anymore and yet, on some deep level there is some kind of knowing but I can't put it into words so those people became the first spiritual teachers who later had realised and could talk a little bit about what happened maybe they realised that surrender happened complete surrender happened the loss was not resisted the limitation was not resisted and it became an opening and then they talked about it and say this could also happen to you you are so unhappy it doesn't have to be like that I was even more unhappy than you and it came to an end and so that became that was the beginning of a spiritual teaching and then they even created so called monasteries places where others came and in some cases what they tried to do was to recreate the conditions that otherwise would happen to you naturally through life that might have happened to them through life, so what they did was people come into the monastery and they say ok now as you come in here you lose your identity here, first thing you shave your head because hair is to do with external appearance which is a thought form of me, then you leave behind your clothes because that's another thought form showing your status and all male and female whatever, you leave behind your clothes then you leave behind your name because that also is a thought form so you get a new name, a spiritual name dangerous but and they give you clothes that everybody wears the same clothes so you cannot differentiate yourself from others you can't compare yourself and say mine is a bit nicer than yours although they try to do that and so and then they create conditions that are not satisfying not very much food you have to no possessions nothing that really that you can call mine and then you many situations are created there that normally you would call unacceptable, you have to get up at four in the morning and then you sit in meditation in a cold room, in Zen they might even open the windows in the winter and you sit facing the wall facing the wall empty stomach a cold room you can imagine how much suffering arises if there is still a story and mind activity around this situation why did I ever come here? this is madness what am I doing here? and more mind activity more suffering they create the situation that would bring up a lot of resistance and so you can watch the resistance and it's possible if it works it can take a long time if it works and then they have other things in Zen you meet the master he asks you questions sometimes that have no logical answer famous Zen questions and you spend time, what's the answer?

and all designed to finally drive you to a point where the mind stops and suddenly there is this influx of peace and aliveness even while you are sitting facing the wall the stomach is still empty, the body is still cold and yet nobody is left to resist this moment and so there is suddenly this influx of spacious presence of aliveness and then the Zen master comes and asks you some nonsensical question and says give me the answer now and suddenly a spontaneous answer comes out of your mouth it may be nonsensical too but the Zen master is only listening to what level the answer is coming from and it comes from the deepest level spontaneously and the Zen master says good or says nothing, walks away because the answer came from there, from the deepest place and it's not what you say it's where the answer comes from so because whatever comes from directly out of the unconditioned consciousness has power, newness and freshness to it it doesn't matter what you say as an answer so that's because the Zen master could tell one person who says the same answer as the other person to one person he says you are wrong and hits you and to the other person he says good so when you go into traditional these monasteries the first monasteries that arose were often designed really to recreate what otherwise happens through life naturally what life does to you so things are taken away from you not more things are given you things are taken away it's not that you encounter less limitations you encounter more limitations through going into the monastery so the opposite of that would be the mind the little self saying if I could only find that ideal retreat place in California where we get up to a beautiful breakfast aesthetically enormous amounts of fresh fruit and everything is totally healthy and full of life and aliveness and there are flowers there are birds and the first thing after breakfast you get body work done for two hours and then you go into the pool and then you sit on a quiet terrace overlooking the ocean for one hour and when it's time then they have prepared your lunch and you might think well now surely the situations must be ideal for me to reach enlightenment and you'll find this isn't working either and after two months there boredom sets in and discontent comes in what am I doing here and you go to sleep you feel tired after getting up and it's sunny again everyday it's sunny the mind has certain ideas about how it's going to happen to me usually not correct ideas because the mind thinks in terms of adding something needs to be added for me for it to happen nothing needs to be added it's here now and you can know it now through no more adding being necessary at all nothing needs to be added nothing needs to be changed and if you cannot realize presence now at this moment in other words it's not going to get any better than this this is it if you can't realize it now then you will realize it through some not adding you'll realize it through some loss ok you can't lose I mean eventually you will realize but this is the most gentle way and if life hadn't already probably if you had not already come into contact in your life with limitation and with loss probably you wouldn't even be here so that's already the process has already started it's only for quite a few of you it's only by the grace of already having gone through major loss or having experienced major limitation in your life that you are here and you may not know it but the emergence of that which is unconditioned the I am is already happening it happened perhaps at that moment of great loss that you experienced and you didn't know it something crumbled something also still resisted it perhaps there was a reciprocal movement of resistance and something that you couldn't resist so really we are talking about death coming into your life in one form or another because loss means some form of death and death is usually called bad by the mind the worst thing that could happen any kind of loss is a kind of death if you derived your sense of self from thought forms because the thought forms crumble when there is loss which is the me crumbles and the good thing is you can't go through life without experiencing that it will come to everybody so the potential the doorway opens up even if you never come into contact with spiritual teaching but it gets much easier through the grace of a spiritual teaching the essence of which tells you you don't need more time to be free and you don't need more suffering you don't if you see that clearly you don't because this is your voluntarily embracing the end of the conceptualized sense of self in the head the end of deriving your identity from mental content you are here nobody forced you to come here so this is already happening in you you are dying already and perhaps the first part of that death was involuntary life did something to you removed something from you or made you encounter extreme limitation that part was involuntary but that initiated the process the emergence and that brought you here and this part of the process it gets much more pleasant because this is a voluntary embracing of the end of the conceptualized me in the head with its story and that's a beautiful death that we are dying here and ultimately nothing real dies only certain forms you don't even lose your memory, it's not a requirement memory remains you have a past but you don't derive your identity from the story of me the identity flows continuously out of the fullness of now the aliveness of now the power of now that is your essence and now, what is now except the space in which everything happens the alive space in which everything happens so, freedom is here the door is open wide open and you are walking through certain patterns certain configurations in consciousness may remain but the space is there around it the pain body may remain for a while, pain that humans carry in here from the past from the human past and your personal past first there's the pain from your personal past in childhood then there's the pain from human past, going back a long time of human madness, so much madness on the planet, so much suffering every human carries pain, which is human pain we know most of you know about the pain body and you carry that lives in here a little forms, emotional energy forms painful energy, residues of past pain, emotional trapped aliveness aliveness not flowing old emotion that comes pain that you suffer in your childhood is added to the pain that you already come into the world with that is human pain this is the pain body and so more pain clings to it it seeks pain, it's a little entity, an emotional entity dormant sometimes active at other times active it becomes when it needs more food and then suddenly a little trigger in your life creates an enormous influx of pain, the pain body is looking for more pain to feed on and it moves into your mind and then it gets hold of your thoughts and all your thoughts become painful thoughts because the emotional energy of the pain body flows into your thoughts it uses the structures of the egoic self it's thought structures and makes them very unhappy an already not so happy story then becomes dreadfully unhappy because it's energized by past emotional human pain and it becomes a self the illusion is there that this is my pain, me my painful story my drama you're totally in it and you're forced to think whatever the pain body energy dictates angry thoughts if the predominant energy of the pain body is anger sad thoughts fearful thoughts what's going to happen to me and then you imagine what's going to happen to you and it's all bad and the emotion loves that it feeds on thought because thought is energy everything is energy every thought you think is an energy form the emotional entity renews itself through your negative thinking it loves that and when it's active it's feeding on your mind and you are identified with it so much that you don't know it all you know is that you are miserably unhappy and there's a heaviness to your life and whatever you look once the pain body is in your mind whatever you look upon and interpret you will look through the screen of the conditioning which is human pain so you can imagine I'm sure you know how distorted your view of the world becomes your view of other people your view of your partner your view of your life situation your view of anything becomes how distorted it becomes when you look at it through the veil of your pain everything becomes very negative and dreadful and so the pain body is having a good time adding to its energy field through your thinking and this is the addiction to pain that humans carry, it's because of the pain body there is something in you that loves the drama and the heaviness of emotional pain it's not you who you are beyond form it's the pain body which you identify as yourself but it's not enough if you live with other people or partner, the pain body will feed on your partner first, the pain body has to make your partner unhappy it can do that easily by pushing the right buttons and then you get a feedback of pain from your partner drama in the relationship happens and at that moment you want more of it because you are the pain body at that moment more drama please and you will do everything to keep the drama going but you are the pain body at that moment and it's feeding on the other person's pain the other person's pain body probably has also awakened now and it's feeding on the reactions so most relationships have to go through their drama again and again, periodically this is how relationships work feeding their pain body then after a while the pain body withdraws, has had enough and you feel better, lighter for a while the relationship is ok again and you don't realize that you are condemned to repeating the same pattern again as soon as the pain body needs more pain that is the addiction that humans carry to pain which is usually totally unconscious and even people who have been engaged in spiritual work for many years sometimes many of them get totally overtaken by the pain body when it comes because it sometimes has enormous energy behind it so all that really you need to do is to see it for what it is to watch it recognize it as turbulence, as heaviness watch the energy of it feel it and what can you do?

allow it to be it is as it is at this moment but that is the key the key is to see it that means something is arising in you that is not part of that you see that turbulence in you or the fear, the heaviness and not even label it anymore simply feel the energy it is energy movement it becomes depersonalized when you see it it's no longer a self or me it's human pain even pain you can drop it's energy moving maybe it's not very pleasant it's heavy but it's energy it is as it is you recognize it as the pain body you allow it to be just watch it as it moves there that means you've broken the vicious circle it cannot then move into your mind and feet and your thinking it cannot then use other people if you watch it directly it cannot pretend to be you that's the work so pain body is can be a great awakener because every time it comes it can deepen your presence you have to be very alert to catch it when it comes if you are not alert before you know it it's already using your mind it's already taken possession of that even at that point it is possible to become conscious of it but a bit more difficult when it's already using your mind and you are involved in a stream of negative thinking to wake up at that moment is possible but more difficult catch it when it first comes but that requires alertness and so it helps to I sometimes say feel the inner body to have some attention in here is very helpful because that's where it starts it's it lives in the cells of your body then you can feel it and you watch it it doesn't turn into an unhappy me it is simply an energy movement in you it doesn't turn into a story anymore a self and that really is liberation you don't have to wait until there is no remnant of human pain left in you to become liberated really liberation means not to identify with the pain anymore as myself that's the illusion that's the opposite of liberation it's bondage but the fact that you live on this planet means that you very likely will carry a certain amount of pain in you as a human being on this planet at this time and that's fine that drives you in very often it just becomes an important motivating factor for wanting freedom for wanting to be free especially in people whose pain body is very dense very heavy they can't stand it anymore the heaviness of self of themselves because they equate it with self can't stand it anymore just as I couldn't stand I couldn't live with myself because myself a large part of what I thought I myself was was painful self it was because my pain body was very dense and heavy until I couldn't live with it anymore but I didn't know it was the pain body all I knew was I can't live with myself anymore so I was driven through suffering to the point of surrender where suddenly the sense of self disidentified from thought forms it came about through a thought that was the trigger the thought was I can't live with myself and the question that came after the thought was if I cannot live with myself what does that mean? am I one or two? who am I?

who is the self? there must be two here that was a strange question I couldn't answer the question but to see that there were two there I and the self that I couldn't live with brought about a separation between the thought forms of self including the emotional energy field of pain body and the sense of identity of I am which usually gets mixed up with thought forms a separation happened all that was left was I am but no longer the self and that was the peace that suddenly I found when I woke up in the morning because when there's only I am there's deep peace in that I am all the things that I thought I was were gone the structure of the self collapsed it's rare that it collapses all at once for most of you the demolishing process takes place gradually some buildings collapse all at once but most buildings get demolished you knock off something here life does that a chunk goes there and another chunk goes there and then finally voluntarily you come here and that does the rest so pain body is something that may still be there for a while but you can be free now simply by recognizing it as the pain body and by recognizing it, not making it into some personal self, the me then it renews itself every time when you believe this is me my story, my unhappy story and you're totally immersed in your unhappiness with all the thought movements that go with it there's certain collective aspects also to pain body there's a male pain body that has certain male elements female pain body the pain suffered by women over thousands of years so there's a female aspect there's a female collective pain body I point it out in the book through menstruation that often awakens just before the female pain body tends to awaken at that time so that's very helpful to know because then you can be alert when you know it's about to happen bring in the alertness and wait, actually can watch for it the time is coming and you can actually see what the first sign of it is and what it feels like and then suddenly something comes, an emotion or physical feeling and it wants to become a thought very quickly and you catch it in its attempt to become a thought and then you just watch it on the physical level, the vibration the pain body then waits for when you are there, present with it almost looking for it it cannot fully come up then because you're watching, it doesn't like to be looked at then it goes back and then when you're looking somewhere else again, less conscious after a few drinks or after watching television you lose some consciousness and then the pain body will come in or you're tired after a heavy day's work and you lose alertness and if the pain body wants to come up then to feed, it will use that opportunity when you're not so conscious and quickly creep into your thoughts and before you know it your thoughts are completely aligned with the pain so, interesting to work with the pain body a time comes when pain body will, and this is the case with most of you when it comes instead of pulling you into unconsciousness, as it usually does when a certain level of consciousness has been reached and most of you have reached that then when the pain body comes, you just become more alert and from that place of alert presence, you can accept it and the acceptance brings about the change, the transmutation it can't feed anymore on your mind the entire pain body, at the root of it lies non-acceptance so the only way beyond pain body is to bring acceptance to it because it is it is part of the isness of now and suddenly, you may sense a little bit of space around the pain that you feel a little bit here's the turbulence of the pain and there's a little bit I'm talking about something one can't really put into words there's a little bit of space around it there's the anger, let's say it's anger and it wants to become thought but you watch it only on the level of the turbulence and the watching and the accepting brings about a sense of spaciousness around it and so the turbulence is moving still within the spaciousness that's liberation and then the spaciousness deepens, or you know it suddenly you notice how much spaciousness there actually is and the pain body is no longer that huge before it looked like some huge monster and suddenly it's a little turbulence in vast spaciousness is that all? yeah and that was so dreadful, yes that made my life so miserable for so many years, yes and of course there may be other collective aspects to pain body some people's personal pain body may also have their share of the pain body of your country because certain countries have pain bodies too, some more than others, countries where there have been a lot of pain and turbulence in history have a heavier collective pain body, so every person in that country, part of their pain body is the country's pain body, you carry that too wow so in some countries it's heavier than others the old European countries have a heavier pain body the further east you go in Europe the heavier it gets usually the collective of that but every country, there's so much past in these European countries there's also a lot of pain body and some more than others the little countries a little bit less the new world also has a pain body not quite as deeply seated as the new as the old, but in America you have in the collective pain body what was done to the native people what was done to black people in North America those two great forms of suffering that were inflicted there have become part of the collective pain body of that country which means everybody has some of that inside but collective or not it's the same it's your responsibility to see it in yourself to recognize it in yourself for what it is to accept it as it is to bring presence to it, which is all one and so allow it to be and then change happens the pain body is one deep no if it could speak its essence it would be continuously saying no, no, no because humans have lived in that state for thousands of years, the egoic no to life and more no can't free you of no if you say, no I don't want this pain body, more no, more pain so you bring a gentle yes into the no it is as it is that's the yes that's the yes to now yes, compassion arises compassion with human pain no matter whether it's in yourself or you see it in somebody else, compassion arises when you depersonalize the pain body and don't mistake it for a person neither in yourself nor in somebody else if you mistake it for who you are in yourself, it becomes the unhappy story of me it energizes the already unhappy story of me and makes it miserably unhappy then it becomes a person if you do it to somebody else then you mistake the human pain that person that is in front of you maybe at that time possessed by the pain body maybe in his or her mind and what pain bodies want from you is some reaction they will challenge you somehow they will try the pain body would say, it doesn't say it openly but it would say I am unhappy and I want you to be as unhappy as I am and that's the challenge when you meet another pain body near you, he wants you to draw you into that and so compassion, first you don't mistake it for who that person is, you realize this is human pain it's a human condition nobody there really, there's no self there that's an illusion and then there's no need to react you can actually allow it to be not only in yourself you can also allow it to be in the other person and that's compassion too gentle realizing the human condition there it is nobody can be blamed for that you can't blame yourself if pain body comes back in yourself, you could, the mind will try to do that, it will say you see, you still have it after all these years you might as well give up all that spiritual nonsense you still have the same pain that you've had for years and you're not going to be free, you're deluding yourself the pain body is speaking go, get drunk, do something and it'll it can sound very convincing once it's using your mind it can have very convincing arguments, that how real and this whole idea of pain body is just so much nonsense I mean, it's always you know how real this is, it's not the pain body it's me that's what the pain body says so it has all kinds of convincing arguments that will then, once it uses your mind your thoughts will reflect what the pain body, they will be controlled by the pain body you will think through the pain body and so some human beings only experience the pain body once a month or so and others more frequently once a week once every two days how long it stays to feed it depends on how much presence there is in you, if presence is there it passes through fairly quickly and it can't feed very much if there's no presence it can get lodged and stuck in your mind for several days and finally it'll have enough and withdraw for a while and some people walk around with a pain body that is active 90% of the time it's more rare but it exists they exist we probably all know one or two people who are almost continuously trapped in pain emotional pain old pain and whatever they say to you whatever they interpret is through the filter of their pain so they inhabit of course a very unhappy universe so that's part of our transformation is to become free of pain body to become free is not a future state to be achieved it is recognizing it now accepting it for what it is now, bring a yes to that now that is becoming free so you can only become free now free is not to mistake it any longer for who you are you are the space you are not the object in space and when pain body is there that happens to be the object in your consciousness but you are the much vaster consciousness in which it arises and you know yourself you know that you are the much vaster consciousness because we don't want that to become some kind of belief in your head I want you to believe that you are consciousness how do I know that I am right you know it by bringing a yes to it an acceptance, a yes to now through that you know that there is a deeper dimension in you so to speak it's no separation ultimately between inner and outer, it's just a way of speaking, there is a deeper dimension in you that is beyond that pain, beyond anything that has a form beyond content and you know it through yes to now that's the portal anything that you accept takes you to that realization doesn't matter what it is so anything takes you to peace if you accept it whatever happens you bring the yes to it you welcome it that condition takes you into deeper peace no matter what that's the miracle of transformation and here we are learning to accept the now, even if it doesn't contain great disaster, even if it doesn't contain the pain body at this moment we just accept whatever form the now takes whatever form it takes is fine, could not be otherwise welcome that could be the mantra welcome or yes even shorter the most powerful mantra, yes that's all you need let's go into stillness if any questions arise we may look at them this afternoon about pain body or whatever it may be if nobody is waiting anymore, then I can start laughter laughter there's a dynamic quality to that stillness even when nothing is happening it's awake and then when things start happening action may be necessary and yet the spaciousness is not lost even in the midst of action, having to deal with things and people that's our challenge to bring the spaciousness that we find here, glimpse here, find it realize it into the world when we meet people and also when we sit still, not to fall from the state that is above thought so to speak to the state that is below thought it can happen you sit there and then suddenly a tiredness comes

[Speaker 4] (5:42:00 - 5:42:01)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (5:42:02 - 5:48:14)

and then you suddenly before you know it, you're also in a state of relative peace but you're moving towards sleep and you may have met people in this world who have so little thought intelligence as you know, thought is only a small aspect of intelligence but there are people who have so little thought going on in their heads, they would be called ignorant maybe retarded they have so little thought that they seem to exist in a state of continuous peace, they may even laugh all the time and perhaps they are compared to most humans and they look at you and just laugh and they know they're not thinking anything, similar to a little baby and very similar to the to a liberated person who is no longer judging you forming mental images he also laughs in a very similar way and so it can happen that some people, many people are longing to be free of the torture of their own minds and that's why many people are reaching for some drug and some of the drugs free you for a little while from the continuous torture of your own mind even just drink a couple of stiff drinks, whiskey and then suddenly you feel a little bit more more harmonious the jagged frantic mind quiets down a little for a while it can also happen that drink can awaken your pain body, that's another matter especially in males it can happen but and so there are other drugs that have a similar effect and people don't know why they feel so much better, they feel so much better because thinking subsides it's less active and they don't know that they in most cases moving towards the sleep state, the unconscious they are falling below thought but that can be liberating if thought is torture, as it is for many people, their own minds to even to fall below thought, at least you have a little bit of relief there with your daily whiskey or whatever drug it may be for that reason I once tried LSD because people were telling me, oh it's like meditation, it's like presence and so I tried it once so that I can answer questions about it and what seemed to happen was an enormous heightening of sense perceptions now we talked about sense perceptions this weekend that there is a portal there also when you look at something and this presence spaciousness non-labelling perception then happens within that field of stillness and for there needs to be alertness for that presence when you take that drug what happened, I found the sensory perception became heightened it's like turning up the volume on all senses so visual senses everything the colours are vitally alive, every visual perception jumps at you almost, auditory perceptions as if somebody had literally turned the volume up and now you can hear even the slightest sound and it sounds loud smell becomes very acute, you could even smell a glass of water touch becomes almost too much even to touch the texture and so what happens, you're being pushed into presence you can't move much away from now because the now is jumping at you through all the senses so it can be liberating, I can see why sometimes people say it was a great thing to take that they had a glimpse into what it means not to live continuously in the future they were actually being forced into the now you can't get away if everything shouts at you, every sense you're in the now so it can be a little glimpse for people of how wonderful it is not to be continuously away from now and you haven't got much time for thinking when everything shouts at you every sense is so acute you haven't got time to think about it because you're simply perceiving well at least that's how I experienced it but it was it seemed the usual state I prefer it it's much more it's more gentle and it's actually more awake it's more you don't need we could achieve the same effect if we went into a discotheque and this is perhaps why people are drawn to places like that where the music is almost deafening it's amazing that they can come out of that after three hours undamaged and of course that also shouts

[Speaker 3] (5:48:14 - 5:48:34)

this morning you talked about the pain body and how it brings it goes into your mind and creates thought and I always assumed that negative emotions were triggered by thoughts so I'm not quite sure how it works now

[Speaker 1] (5:48:34 - 5:53:00)

ok, thank you the pain body originally developed in humans because of the arising of a mind made sense of self which becomes suffering so the egoic state that we've been talking about creates an enormous amount of suffering on this planet humans create that suffering out of that state which is a state of great lack of fear of unfulfillment which they need to they look to fill that sense of lack through greed through reinforcing their sense of self at the expense of other humans to use other humans to enhance their self to accumulate possessions so that they have more to identify with and take them away from others to adopt a position of rightness we are right, our belief, our positions and then you fight a war with others who have a different mental position in order to make them wrong and so over thousands thousands and thousands of years more and more suffering is created out of this mental delusion ultimately of not knowing who you are in that sense, you are right that comes it's created by self-serving thoughts thoughts that are imbued with self so that's the that structure, structurally is never aligned with what is and that in itself is a state of suffering so the origin of the pain body lies in identifying with thought and now what happens is that this accumulated energy of pain body becomes works as a vicious circle where it energizes those thought structures that created it in the first place and feeds on them again and that's called a vicious circle so the origin of it is in losing for humanity lost itself in thought and so it became suffering was the normal lot for most humans still is and that accumulated suffering became the pain body which now energizes the thought structures that created it in the first place and still feeds on them so it's still thought is feeding the pain body thought created it in the first place now thought is maintaining it and feeding it and the pain body in turn energizes those thought structures and amplifies them and that's called, therefore we call it a vicious circle where one feeds and energizes the other and this is what when you don't know that that's happening you're trapped in that vicious circle which one could say in eastern terms that's the wheel an aspect of the wheel of karma karma renews itself, action, reaction which is pain body needs the reaction pain body is an aspect of karma karma meaning simply unconscious patterns mental, emotional patterns that you identify with as yourself and those patterns renew themselves, they create situations and reaction, you could never really come to the end of karma unless the power of the present moment is accessed otherwise you have a continuity of time, past becomes the future the present is continuously obscured, the future becomes a continuation of the past so you're right thought creates it, created it in the first place but now there is a reciprocal movement a vicious circle in human beings

[Speaker 3] (5:53:11 - 5:53:50)

okay so this relates to something that happened before I came on the retreat the day before I was in a phone conversation with someone and I got very angry with them I put down the phone and so there was a reaction some pain and reaction to the pain and I'm still not clear about whether the other person actually could hurt me for real I felt like like he hurt me and then I'm not sure now whether it's possible okay

[Speaker 1] (5:53:51 - 5:53:54)

so the person said something to you

[Speaker 3] (5:53:56 - 5:54:13)

well how it was was that while I was listening I had half of my consciousness in the body and half listening to the words and was coming this very strong feeling of pain and then before I know it I shout at him

[Speaker 1] (5:54:13 - 5:59:05)

yes okay so this is something like that is the pain body reacting because the reaction very often is much stronger than the trigger the trigger may just be a few words but the pain is far greater often that you feel when the pain body comes up then would be warranted by the words that you hear the words must have touched the pain bodies some pain bodies are awakened by certain words that remind the person of a form of pain perhaps in their childhood for example children who were abandoned by their parents even the slightest hint, this is only one of many possible examples and this is to do with your personal pain body but the personal and the collective become mixed so if a child was abandoned by their parents the slightest hint when you are talking to somebody a friend or a partner the slightest hint of abandonment even a person saying I can't come, we can't meet tonight I have a headache or we can't could trigger it when this pain body that accumulated so much pain when that abandonment happened and it can serve as a trigger for enormous pain and all the person said I don't think I can make it tonight and it was far more than that so that became the trigger and particularly happens when the pain body hasn't taken in much food for a while so it's ready, actually ready to awaken and then the right trigger comes and then that influx of pain comes in so it's gone now the event is gone but of course all you can ever do with a pain body is to be there while it happens to watch it to feel the pain so that it doesn't use your mind in a little closer relationship you may be able to say to the person what you just said triggered enormous pain in me, it's strange but I can feel it right now, if that person is open to it you may not be able to say it in certain relationships that are more superficial but with some people it is wonderful if you live with someone and you have an agreement that whenever you feel pain body, the other person seems to trigger it that you immediately say what you just said brought up I suddenly feel an enormous amount of pain then it's fine, then you can both say oh you can bring acceptance to it, it doesn't become thought forms in this case it's possible that after you put the phone down the pain continued because it linked in with your thinking yes, so that is a few moments and it is gone because there is already an enormous amount of presence in you if it hadn't been for that it would have stayed for much longer, perhaps a few hours even a day or two so it's watching it of course nobody can really hurt you what they can hurt is the mind form or they can touch the pain that still lives in you in that sense they could hurt but all they do is activate that which is already there ultimately people do it to themselves they hurt themselves so it's it is wonderful and many of you will be finding that pain body attacks become much more short lived now because of the arising presence, pain bodies don't stick around for that long anymore and hang in there for days as sometimes happens if presence is not yet there, feeding for days and days so pain body is still feeding a little bit but isn't getting that much food anymore yeah

[Speaker 2] (5:59:05 - 5:59:23)

I was breathing pain I was very strong and then suddenly I saw the wind caressing the grass

[Speaker 1] (5:59:23 - 5:59:26)

the wind caressing the grass yes

[Speaker 2] (5:59:26 - 5:59:43)

and the grass was green so green and the pain was gone like a little poison yes

[Speaker 1] (5:59:46 - 6:11:58)

that the open that seeing of the grass was also thoughtless awareness, it was the arising the grass is beautiful but there was more, there was the arising of spacious presence space consciousness and suddenly the little personal self dissolved because there's such vast power there that the insignificance of that personal event was so clear that it dissolved without any doing on your part nature can, any reference to nature can be very helpful, just to look at nature and sometimes amazing to see when the pain body is occupying your body sometimes if it's strong it is all over, it can be in some places, in some cases it's only in the stomach or solar plexus area as a throbbing or a heaviness here in other cases the pain body can occupy your entire body and actually feel it feels like glue and then if you sit next to a tree and maybe some grass or some flowers and you see how free the tree is compared to this and you see the little area of pain is just here the pain is here there's a blade of grass here and there's no pain there and there's a flower here it exists in that beautiful state of just is and so you can sometimes see in nature all around you sanity and the attention suddenly moves from the thoughts that were feeding the pain body from being trapped in thought moves out of the prison of thought and becomes presence and then you can truly see nature suddenly so you will encounter strange things changes in the ways in which your pain bodies manifest now because of the arising presence and very often you may find the pain body arises in its beginning stage and immediately you feel it you recognize it you look at it oh and you feel that energy and it stays for a little while and it's gone it couldn't feed this is not, don't mistake this for suppressing it there's no willpower involved there's no effort involved you're not holding it down you're not saying, I will not feel this pain body I am beyond it I am the spiritual warrior, which you are but not as a mind form you are the spiritual warrior the spiritual warrior as a sword which I call the sword of presence and with that sword you cut through time time is the continuity between past and future and with a sword of presence you cut through and suddenly it opens and there's the gap of now but that cutting through time is also the cutting through thought the stream of thought it's the same thing, when you cut through time, you cut through the stream of thought with that sword of now, of presence and you even cut through suffering in the intensity of now suffering can't survive some pain can survive for a little while, not long either suffering cannot survive suffering is an unhappy me with a story, that cannot survive in now so yes, you are a spiritual warrior but don't develop the concept of me I am the spiritual warrior I am more of a warrior than you or whatever at any moment the mind can come in with some new self concept it's looking because now that it's losing its self concepts it's looking for the next one that is maybe a new one that it can get hold of and that is often the dilemma for people on the spiritual path and suddenly you end up with a new self image that was maybe stronger than the one that just went away and you've gone all the way to the Buddhist monastery and before you know it you become a very important person, because you are now a Buddhist monk it could happen it doesn't have to happen sometimes it works beautifully I've met some Buddhist monks who were like little children, free and the younger monks sometimes are very dignified they still carry, they have just adopted a new self concept now in the west being a Buddhist monk isn't that rewarding for your sense of self, because if you go to a big city with your robes, little children will shout Hare Krishna at you but if you go to some eastern countries then you get a bit more feedback respect and some Buddhist monks I know travel first class on Thai airways because they are given the seats and so there's potential here for feeling an enhanced sense of self through being a Buddhist monk only potential, it doesn't have to happen the whole structure is designed to remove it and sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't the mind is cunning it's waiting for something else to get hold of teacher, the microphone if you have a question in the back row two people in the back in the meantime I'll say something teachers people who become spiritual teachers now the first thing to realize if you believe that being a teacher is an identity then you're trapped again it's nobody's identity to be a spiritual teacher it's a temporary function I'm a teacher because words come out of my mouth they come out of my mouth because there's an empty space, so they come that makes me into a teacher not in my identity but the temporary function the moment I walk out of here what teacher is there?

there's no teacher left, it's just a person walking the teaching is over while it happens I may be a teacher it's a function, not an identity and so the challenge of every spiritual teacher and some of you are already teachers in your own capacity and many others of you are becoming spiritual teachers how could you not? you could not not teach as this new state of consciousness arises in you you have to teach, not always in the same way not necessarily this directly but in one way or another you will teach and you may even teach directly and then the challenge is again even at that stage the mind can come in and claim some new identity especially if you get projections of other people they project something onto you because they've sensed the power that comes through you and they may equate that power with the form of the teacher but the form is only the hole in the flute that's a hole has also a form it's round now this form is not round it's a different shape but it's the same and so if you equate the power that comes through with the form through which it comes then you will project an image onto the teacher of specialness and that's quite normal for the mind to do to believe that this form is special must be more special than me for example or I will also want to become as special as this one and if a teacher is bombarded by projections of specialness for years it's possible that he or she could succumb to the bombardment of specialness and one day it could interfere with the teaching and suddenly the teacher might say I am the one no greater teacher has ever been or will ever be than I it becomes a distortion comes in yes of course there is only one teacher ever which comes through many forms and then some form of specialness can creep in it happens more easily to teachers who live only surrounded by devotees disciples or followers who don't do their own shopping anymore who are totally sheltered and protected and don't meet anybody else anymore except all these people who think this being is the one and then they themselves don't realize that the same power that is in you that even prevents you from realizing it in yourself it's a great temptation for the teacher and it's stopping you from realizing that which you are projecting outward this is not to say that you cannot use the power that comes through the form of the teacher as a temporary help to draw out that which is also in you so to be able to use the help that is there in the temporary form of the teacher this is good but not to confuse the power and the form some teachers free their students by dying laughter and at last the form has dissolved and then some of their followers then suddenly realize oh I am the same ok the microphone has reached

[Speaker 2] (6:12:00 - 6:12:39)

hi I am having more and more problems with planning making planning and then having to follow up the things I plan and to make an example to come here was very difficult I was happy where I was very far and in the last week I got very miserable and confused why should I go so far and on to India afterwards and the whole thing and then I got confused for example in that instance what was what is it to surrender to the now and also what is it that beyond what I think is right or wrong what is it that make me move finally

[Speaker 4] (6:12:40 - 6:12:41)

ok thank you

[Speaker 1] (6:12:53 - 6:22:34)

when you are identified with a self, a mind made self a very common state is doubt you are in doubt as to what to do and some people remain in that state of doubt for a long time, sometimes it's doubt with one reference to just one particular situation where should I live should I go to this retreat or should I stay home and then you could sit and start to think about it and it's agonizing sometimes to finally arrive at a decision and even in the last moment when you pick up the phone and says yes I'm going the last doubt creeps in do I really want to go and this is particularly I mentioned this perhaps on the first day of the retreat and every retreat particularly retreats and some people don't turn up and you don't know they have gone and they sometimes the organizer says they called up and they really wanted to come and then suddenly they're gone or they cancel at the last moment sometimes it's a true emergency and they cannot make it but in other cases here in this situation something in you feels drawn here that is the emerging presence and something else in you doesn't want to be here and even during this time here you may feel the two something feels wonderful being here there's an opening and something else perhaps a mental commentary is saying what are you doing here or has doubts whether you even should have come is this really working what's he talking about some kind of commentary and you may shift between the two at every retreat quite a few people are prevented from coming because of arising doubt and that is the mind really not allowing you to come to the retreat and it uses doubt as a means of confusing you and this is in this particular situation now what is the motive in other situations, normal situations you have to make decisions should I go there or not what is the motivation for doing in the normal dysfunctional state the motivation for doing is some kind of need that through that situation I can add something to me or some kind of fear the doing comes out of the two movements of desire or fear they are the motivating factors in the normal state of consciousness and they may also cancel each other out you may want to go to meet, go to a dinner party and you feel desire maybe I will meet the one person who is going to make me happy there, so there is the desire movement and then you are getting ready you are getting dressed and then comes the fear movement maybe I won't meet him or her and maybe I will have to, these people will ask me questions that I can't answer, maybe they know more than me, maybe I will feel inadequate there, maybe fear and you can sometimes remain immobile through because fear and desire cancel each other out in other cases at some point one predominates and then you are moved into you do it or you don't do it you do it out of fear or you don't do it out of fear or you do it out of desire or you don't go there desire can be very very strong desire is often mistaken for willpower you could have for example a great desire for food which is psychological, the body's need for food is limited the mind's need for food is only one aspect of the mind's need for more and if it's not more in some other area it will take in more food, as long as it's more, it's a taking in of more it's a psychological need which is a very strong desire and then some people go on a diet and they say okay and that's considered willpower, they have the willpower to say no to the food and then they lose weight but that's just a stronger desire, a stronger desire is to look attractive to attract someone and that desire cancels out the desire for food so there's a continuous movement and fluctuation of desire and fear and you move between the two desire implies future more in future so the doing is governed by needing to arrive at some point in the future or fearing that point in the future, because the future is promising and threatening at the same time it promises fulfillment perhaps I can complete myself, my story my sense of self, can be finally myself through more future or the future is a threat because it might kill you in one sense it does, because eventually you die eventually so the little self needs the future and fears the future but future is the dominant force that governs your actions now is it possible as the alignment with now arises how do we live if we don't, if we no longer have the psychological need for future how are we going to be motivated to take action and that is an interesting question what replaces desire as a motivating factor or fear as a motivating factor because some people work extremely hard out of the fear of being insignificant out of the fear of being nobody, they become millionaires and for 30 years all their energy came out of fear of not being good enough and finally they build up an empire big corporation is there they've made thousands of people unhappy including themselves but they've created money yes, and a lot of unhappiness so at first I didn't have a teacher the shift happened to me suddenly and it left me in a state of one could say an external observer would have said a state of confusion because suddenly I had no motivation anymore to do anything because the future had become unnecessary, the psychological future had become unnecessary the present was so deeply fulfilling that I said why do anything this is so beautiful so I sat around for two years miraculously I survived and gradually doing happened by itself I found myself getting up seeing someone, a person coming to see me some doing arose that didn't have the future as a goal it arose out of the joy of doing what you are doing at this moment not out of the psychological need of future of course in everybody's life some planning is necessary everybody had to plan to come here I had to put it in my diary a year before which already said retreat in Italy so that was of course future came in but that kind of future is very easy that you cannot avoid it's called practical future it's called clock time you cannot avoid that living here you can live in a monastery and they also wake up at a particular time tomorrow morning you are going to make breakfast they say ok that's time you can't get away from practical time when you live in this world and so even I wear a watch sometimes I hide it because so many people say to me you wear a watch that doesn't make sense

[Speaker 4] (6:22:39 - 6:22:45)

but it's helpful

[Speaker 1] (6:22:45 - 6:41:18)

if you don't wear a watch that's fine too but it helps me to get here on time otherwise I might turn up an hour late and I just drift in and say well there's no time and some gurus do that in India they don't wear a watch and there's one guru who could turn up at any time and often during the night he doesn't sleep he could suddenly turn up for satsang at three in the morning and so his followers wait around no time has been specified there's no structure he could turn up at any moment that's fine too but this would not be possible there this meeting would be difficult in that way that's fine, those structures work in that context and here there are other structures where time is used time that is used for practical planning is simply totally unproblematic you pick up a phone and say book a flight for next week whatever it is but then the other time the psychological time the mental projection into some future moment that is where the heaviness of future comes in that's where time becomes a burden that's where time becomes a desperate need for future so how do you live when the shift happens well psychological time becomes unimportant practical time you can still use now when psychological time becomes unimportant which is the great inner need for the next moment isn't there anymore then action that arises out of you is no longer a means to an end there may be an end but the doing is always of greater importance than the arriving you could find yourself writing a book don't write a book too soon just wait a little but you could find yourself suddenly the writing happens and that can be a powerful movement in my case it was a pen and notepad for most people these days it would be the computer that can be a very powerful movement and very energizing when power flows into writing an intense field of aliveness suddenly arises that is deeply fulfilling in itself of course the writing you might say I'm writing a book it may become a book at some future moment some future time it may be a book but now the writing is that I'm giving my full attention to that if the writing is a means to an end because I want to publish a book I also want to be a successful writer I want to that is a mind image future, thought of future where you see yourself as having achieved enhanced recognition through publishing a book then the writing is a means of getting you there and you might put a lot of energy into it but that energy comes out of I must get there and you could even write a very clever book that contains a lot of thought thought structures but not a truly alive book the truly alive book that contains power comes out of the state of being aligned with now and so the motivating factor for doing is no longer the pull towards future the motivating factor is the joy, aliveness and fullness that is there in the doing and joy is an important part of that power also so that is the that replaces desire and fear which are future pulls for doing and any doing that comes out of that joy is also the doing that comes is no longer what it is that you need to do or that wants to be done through you is not arrived at anymore through mental decision making which involves a lot of doubt when you start thinking should I write a book or should I not write a book on the one hand if I write a book I might lose three years of my life, already an absurd thought because you are already projecting that you are not going to enjoy yourself you might spend three years of your life and you are projecting future I might lose three years where I could earn money and instead I am going to write that book which might not even get published on the other hand if I don't risk that I will get stuck with my job so that requires a lot of thinking and you wake up in the middle of the night on the one hand, on the other hand but then what should I do and then you can talk about it think about it and years could pass before you have decided whether to write a book or not not uncommon this is just one example now in the state of alignment what it is that needs doing or one could say that wants to be done through you what it is that emerges one could almost say ready made as a realisation this is what I have to do spontaneous the doing arises in some cases it might mean leaving somewhere we talked about that you might be in your office and suddenly you get up and walk out no decision making involved or the book you might one day you get a notepad and a pen and after one page you might know this is going to be a book because you can sense the power that's in there but you didn't sit down and try to decide am I going to write a book or not, suddenly the writing happens through you and so spontaneity also intuitive realisations come out of the state of alignment with now so that replaces the old way of doing which is very problematic and you know how problematic it can be yes, no, but if, what if and thought and thought and thought ok there's another question one more question in the back and then the microphone will travel to you yes now that's an interesting thought this really isn't working now if you recognise that as a thought then you don't need to believe in that thought completely because the mind will throw up all kinds of thoughts of a similar nature that are telling you that it's pointless, it's not working or now say yes to now no, not now I will practice again tomorrow the mind says this is not the right moment I have too much on my mind now it just won't work the mind has these thoughts and they will come up in you if you don't recognise them as thoughts then you're identified with the thought and then you act on it and each time the thought will say give up don't even you have too much too many problems to deal with you just can't get into all that stuff about portals and all that just think about your problems, that's more important and when a thought like that comes you see the thought and then you say oh there goes another one of those thoughts or you simply you watch that and that's already presence arising, the moment you even notice a thought as a thought the simple fact of noticing that here's a thought, there's already the dimension that is beyond thought, presence arising because it's through presence that you can notice the thought so the very thought that is noticed, the thought that says I can't remember what that thought that there's no point, you might as well give up, whatever the thought says there's no point in all this and as this thought is noticed the seeing of it as a thought is the arising presence in other words, as you see that thought, there is a space around the thought and that is the witnessing presence and then once you recognize that the thoughts in themselves are no longer a problem because you're no longer completely identified or one could say, you don't believe in every thought as if it were some truth it is the mind attempting to stay in control it's only an energy movement it has a momentum and then comes the next thought that might say whatever I can't be present now there's just too much going on so many disturbing things going on around me I can't be present now it's impossible to be present here not in this place and then you watch that thought and you're present yes, how would that look in practice for example you're using the portal of yes yes yes yes that's a good point now you may notice I would never say stop thinking because that would be like saying don't think of a green elephant or pink, pink elephant there is the possibility that the state of thoughtless awareness may arise here through one of the portals so if you are looking at something you may be looking at a tree and then it's possible that thoughts arise that either have nothing to do with what you're looking at or thoughts arise that are commenting on what you are looking at or thoughts arise that are saying I'm looking at this tree and I'm still thinking but I shouldn't be thinking it doesn't matter what kind of thought arises even the thought that says you see you're still thinking and you should be not thinking no matter what the thought says it's enough to recognize thought as thought because that also is a portal and now at this moment your mind is saying that this is not possible which is another thought so that thought loses its power to draw you in completely, to draw all your attention in completely so here goes another thought you could say that which is a thought also but that can free you from taking the thoughts so seriously or regarding them as obstacles because when you regard thought as an obstacle that you need to overcome you energize the thoughts what happens when you use a portal like the inner body can you feel the aliveness in your body no can you feel the aliveness in your right hand no no if you closed your eyes close your eyes hold your right hand like this without opening your hand without opening your eyes without moving your hand without touching anything you're not looking you're not touching anything you're not moving your hand can you know whether your right hand is still there or not how can you know whether it's still there directly not as a memory I haven't yet met anybody who cannot feel a little bit of energy where there is a right hand and you also there is some energy there may not be much that is entering the inner body and if you just hold attention there for a while at least it's not in the head it's there some thoughts may still happen dance on the surface but you've taken attention away from thoughts and it's there now if you can feel one hand you can feel other parts of the body you can feel the other hand you've entered the body once you've entered it other parts you will also feel it comes by itself so that may be certain portals work better for certain people that's why there are more than one portal they all take you to the same place and that's why I recommend different portals so that you can find the one that works best for you it may well be that the one that you said you couldn't feel could well be the best portal for you and so if you can feel that that's all that's needed thought loses its importance when you inhabit the inner body and it becomes an anchor for presence so I would say the one that you haven't tried is the best one for you and eventually all the portals take you to the same place you end up in the same place one portal goes that way, one goes that way they all end up there so which one you use doesn't matter the one that works best for you and for some it's sense perception for some it's listening to silence for some it's the inner body for some it's to say I allow this moment to be as it is they all become portals that take you to the same place so it works and thoughts may still come in occasionally which might say I can't be in the body now there's too much going on and then you see the thought and you feel your right hand oh we may need to we have clock time here ok

[Speaker 4] (6:41:20 - 6:42:06)

I'm sorry um ok I guess I'm looking for perhaps a humorous picture or a hint um much of my time is just passing by without being present and you said before when presents arise from the formless there is nothing that we do so it's some kind of need from there or grace or whatever on the other hand I found being in intense situations being faced with difficulties or duty it works quite often there are many times when I'm just busy with little things or dealing with people I'm just unconscious is it just something I have to wait for then or just impatient nothing I can do

[Speaker 1] (6:42:06 - 7:28:03)

that is the challenge that everybody faces that as presence arises the arising presence will be challenged by the human mind both from within you we could call that your mind ultimately the human mind is the human mind but let's just call it your mind it will be challenged by your mind in cooperation with your pain body the arising presence will also be challenged by other human minds people around you situations around you because these structures the human made structures of our world social economic political, work structures they are all made by the unenlightened human mind the egoic mind so work situations the way people do things all those pre-existing structures are created by the madness ultimately so you are moving in external structures created by the human mind and you are meeting in those mind structures other human minds for example if you are a teacher many schools these days are quite mad places and to be a teacher is extremely stressful even hospitals if you are a nurse or a doctor again hospitals many hospitals are quite mad places potentially they could be great places of healing or regeneration but there are people running around and it's a miracle that healing still happens and it happens sometimes despite the mind some of it comes through the nurses that still bring some presence or perhaps nurses have been coming here too and doctors so they bring something to balance the madness that is there so almost any situation that you move into you will still encounter the agitated human mind coming at you if not from within you from without and so that's the great challenge whether you teach at a school or work in a hospital or work in a corporation or work for social services helping people everybody is unhappy and everybody is complaining and you go to committee meetings and there is continuous arguments and position taking and disagreement all those things that make up the egoic mind and your challenge is to bring presence to that situation but the human mind will want to draw you in and its pull can be quite strong come and join us in our madness it says and the pull is there and the pain body can be very active too in those situations and the pain body is saying come, be as unhappy as we are and so it's this is how presence deepens, it's through the challenges of living in this world that presence deepens and then one day you find yourself being in the same conflict situation and simply being there as a spacious presence not a reactive entity and you watch what people are saying you look, watch not thinking they should be more sane they should behave differently they shouldn't be so unconscious and selfish and greedy and power hungry what you are looking at is simply the human condition compassion comes but really there is a spacious presence but it needs to be intense and then nothing else is needed but to hold the non-reactive space of presence which of course doesn't involve effort, there is an intensity to it there is even a fierceness to it you cannot explain through words the qualities of presence in one sense one can say it has no qualities because it has all qualities but there is a fierceness to presence particularly in challenging situations, remember the sword what I call the sword of presence, the fierceness that you can see when you look at old paintings of Zen masters there is a look that is almost frightening in its fierceness with bulging eyes they are challenging very challenging to encounter that's the fierce aspect of presence underneath it there is a softness a gentleness and sometimes the fierceness is necessary where there is just an intensity the fierceness is not fighting anything, it's just there and that any situation that you bring that into hang on to your body if necessary the inner body while you are there and to be deeply really rooted here and then you watch and that is enough to change the situation not that you even want to change the situation then you are creating some future again the presence that arises is not a means towards changing the situation you give up the desire or the need to change the situation because that also is a need for something to be different from the way it is it's a psychological need for future so in any situation that is full of conflict, full of unhappiness full of problems even also healing situations where a person comes to you for advice or healing not believing that you need to change the situation you need to improve the situation and then you make presence into a means to an end and it's not presence anymore you're trying to achieve something through being present presence is enough in itself and whatever is needed to change the situation comes out of presence without prior intention that says this is what I'm going to do in this situation and you find yourself the doing happens and sometimes no doing happens and something changes in the energy field around you something changes around the conference table something changes in the family where they're having dinner in the kitchen at the table and everybody is shouting and suddenly the mother or the father is holds presence and the shift comes invariably things change when you no longer demand, because that is an important part of the arising presence because you no longer demand that this situation should be different because it isn't it is as it is and only through the recognition of is as is does presence arise and that is the miracle when the need for it to be different goes, then it changes because presence always means yes and that yes will have to very often be a yes to human, whatever humans, whatever stage humans are at in their present evolution, which is called extreme dysfunction but it's not that you're saying I say yes to extreme dysfunction no, that's a mental stuff again there's simply a yes to what is you're not condemning any of these people that are participating in the drama and thinking they should know better they should be enlightened they shouldn't be so unconscious they shouldn't be like that and like that and like that they are as they are and there's nothing personal to it it is simply a manifestation of human consciousness or unconsciousness so let's simply be there as the space in which it happens and healing happens transformation happens sometimes words come out of your mouth, you contribute something to the situation but the words that come have a different energy quality to them than before they have a power you may not say anything somebody else may suddenly wake up and say something that is for the first time something deep and true that is not designed to create more conflict and so that's when I've realized for the first time the most agitated people very often become wake up when you are there as spacious presence and this happened to me at first I was astonished when it happened several times when agitated people came to me and said you must do something about this, this needs to be done, look at these papers this is a dreadful problem this is fear it's just presence and with one person she dropped, suddenly dropped all her papers and said this isn't important is it and then she said there's only love isn't there yes nothing was needed no doing was necessary just that beautiful well, the clock says 6.20 it's now of course several people have given me watches that have, wherever the numbers are, it says now, now, now and they're always accurate let's enter stillness it seems that time moves on every experience first it's only a thought form retreat in Italy for some people it never became a reality it remained a thought form they never turned up and they're still thinking should I have gone and some are beating themselves up I didn't go, I missed it again I should have I had booked and then I cancelled how stupid so it remained a thought form future for others, those who are here the thought form seemed to get closer future thought thought form is future is a thought form and then it seemed to get closer, it didn't get closer it's just a perspective and then suddenly it opens up, it's the now it's actually it's here and then and then and then it's a thought form again a memory supported perhaps by some photos or even moving images on the screen video, who knows but it's gone and so it seems the express train of time never really stops and you see the landscape it's coming every experience fleeting and you may find the same when you reach the end of this lifetime, a collection of experiences that went by quickly and then your entire life was that it? maybe it was a dream the dreamlike quality we talked about it of something that has moved into past so time we seem to be trapped in it and now time is dragging us along we can't stay here time is dragging us away from here no, I want to stay here but that whole idea of time is only thought both future and past and although the experience of this gathering is fleeting and comes to an end and seems like whenever any experience comes to an end it's a little death a little bit dying you die many times whenever something ends it's not without reason that in many languages the word for goodbye includes the affirmation that we are going to meet again to make that death a little easier because there seems to be something missing when you say goodbye and not many people leave it like that although in English that word itself doesn't have the notion usually in English you then add see you see you soon see you next year see you at the next retreat other languages you don't have to add that because au revoir, auf wiedersehen and so on, they already have that idea built in, see you again which means goodbye so it makes the death a little easier and there's the promise of future, another event in the future, a rebirth we can have a similar experience again but this is not what I'm promising you here I'm not saying don't worry, we're going to have another retreat we may but when that comes it will be the same as this a thought form it's here and it's gone and then there we are again so the experience comes to an end but as an experience this wasn't a great thing anyway as an experience it could have been much more exciting with all kinds of very exciting things happening well maybe for one or two of you something exciting did happen I won't inquire but probably for most as an experience there wasn't that much in it, not that much happening, yes beautiful but not that much happening in it and that wasn't the purpose of this gathering to fill it up with some kind of content some content is inevitable the words are content the sense perceptions are content but as content goes you've probably had more exciting experiences where there was more content so on the level of content this was ok and that is the experience the content of it the form that it takes ends but the real reason for us meeting here was to point to something else to that which is beyond content both content the external content of your life which we could call the life situation and beyond the inner content of your life thought forms emotional forms the stream of thinking the emotional fluctuations including the pain body to see that which is before content and after content arise, after it comes and goes it's born and dies this experience was born and then it dies now it's dying that's beautiful too so the entire gathering was pointing to another dimension that is even beyond an experience as such because experience implies that it comes and goes it has a beginning and an end and it exists in time beginning, end and then you see that anything to do with content external or internal has a certain lifespan it's fleeting everything and because it's so fleeting it has a dreamlike quality there's something in Shakespeare somewhere we are the stuff dreams are made of or something like that a dreamlike quality to one's life because of the fleetingness of everything and so we see that which already of course the Buddha pointed to as one of the characteristics of existence is impermanence and to see that in a strange way is already a kind of liberation even just to recognize how impermanent all experiences are how can you recognize it if everything were of the same color in this world yellow or green every object whatever you look upon then obviously that color wouldn't exist because you have nothing to differentiate it from if everything were yellow there would be no yellow you wouldn't recognize yellow because everything is yellow if everything were impermanent one could say perhaps even the recognition of impermanence would not be possible to see it means that there is something that is beyond the fleetingness of all phenomena and when you see how fleeting it is that seeing arises out of the unconditioned timeless consciousness presence, space consciousness from there you see the world of form it is not judged you take no perspective, position, standpoint reaction it's simply seen the moment it becomes a judgment you turn and say isn't it sad we live in this dreadful place where everything is turning to ashes it's already turning to ashes even at this moment every object, every body we just don't see it right there but if we saw a speeded up version of this room, 2000 years compressed into one minute everything would be turning to ashes and that would be an amazing spiritual realization if you could see here let's imagine film is speeding up let's say 4000 years which is very little on a planetary or cosmic scale 4000 years here, nobody is interfering with what's happening compressed into one minute and then you see it on a film and then you would see first of all the bodies sitting here they would shrink, get old and wrinkled and suddenly dissolve, the flesh melts bones remain for a little while and they also crumble and then the wood would go and even metal would get rusty and then dissolve and then after that minute just maybe a little bit of dust and then a gust of wind comes and it's all gone in one minute and you're watching that watching in which no judgment arises a simple seeing is the witnessing presence is the space in which all phenomena come and go and that is the essential nature of yourself it looks from an external viewpoint as if you were dragged away from here by time you can't get out of time, so this comes to an end you have to leave but really when you go here all that happens is the space of now which is the space of aware presence which is the space of this consciousness all that happens is that some other forms some other experiences come into appear in the space of now your field of awareness for example a train appears the body moves then it sits on the train and goes landscape and then maybe an airport appears and then the vision of the inside of an aeroplane appears and then another airport appears space and there remains things appear and disappear in the field of awareness, that's all now it has one thinks of that as I am going there and then I'm going there ultimately on a deeper level, you're not going anywhere the scenery changes the hologram changes the holodeck for Star Trek enthusiasts it's like forms appear for a moment and then if even at any moment you could close your eyes and then the visual dimension disappears except the memory traces you could sit on an aeroplane close your eyes then a huge amount of content disappears unless it's replaced immediately by thought you close your eyes and then there's just a dark space and then there's auditory perceptions left if they also disappeared there would be some touch but let's say that goes to simply there's a deep vast space, there's something there and yet nothing there you in your essence would be there, the I am-ness and so it's that to see that the changing phenomena they happen within an unchanging space and most humans are totally unaware of the unchanging space which I sometimes call it's a useful perspective which I sometimes call the space of now people are unaware of the space of now, all they know is the content of now what happens because the content changes all the time people believe that every day consists of many nows, many moments every hour seems to consist of many moments if you look more deeply you realize there are no many moments your life consists of the one unchanging now moment it is never not the now, this so it's an illusion to think that my life consists of many moments I'm mistaking the form that the now takes for the essence the space of now that's why it seems that there are many moments in one's life, whereas there's only one moment, that also brings out the delusion of time ultimately a delusion which is connected with the workings of your thought processes and there it has its place but you don't need a lot of philosophical ability first of all to see perhaps even a 10 year old maybe a 10 year old could see it more clearly than an adult who is trying to figure out what this means there's nothing much to figure out except to see that it's always now this is self evident that nothing ever happens nothing ever is experienced felt, even thought you can think about the future, but you have to be thinking it now you cannot do anything life and now you and now are inseparable it always is this then the form of now of course changes here we have this form, this room a body sitting here words coming out of the mouth ears perceiving the words the space of this room the body is filling this room the space of this room when you become aware of that, that already takes you beyond identification with content the content is this, and in a few hours it may be something totally different the space of now will have different content to it, as I just described comes goes so usually all that people know and are aware of and are identified with is the content of now and as such it never lasts very long like this experience the content is this the external form of our retreat coming to an end the content is about to disappear from the field of now all the forms then there may be left mental content, memories of this event they could linger for longer but it's no longer the actual reality, but even those things you can only think in the field of now those thoughts come up in the field of now it is possible that while you're sitting on an aeroplane the field, the space of now may be filled primarily with memories of this event rather than the sense perceptions of that moment so, sense perceptions and thoughts and emotions fill up the space of now and most people, that's people's lives, that's what people see as my life it's the content of my life and there's something not that satisfying about it because of the short-lived nature of all those content things, and I called that at the beginning of our retreat, I used the expression object consciousness for that to be only conscious of content not conscious of space in which it happens, in other words to be only conscious of the content of now but not of the now, which is the space space consciousness arises when there is a sudden awareness of this underlying field which defies which cannot be really put into words because every word is content again so we are using words and thoughts to point to something that cannot possibly be understood through words or thoughts so it's, one could say it's an impossibility for us to understand what these words point to and the reason why we are here is not to understand that don't even try the words, the purpose of the words is simply to point there so I can say there is that which happens and there is that which enables it to happen the space sometimes described as stillness but no word is totally adequate and I suggest to you, I've been suggesting this to know for yourself this such, so intangible thing that people spend a lifetime in a Zen monastery trying to get it and often don't but now it's getting easier that I suggested that little portals appear in your life through which that dimension can be realized one is silence because it's the absence of content to acknowledge the absence of content that which corresponds to that inside you can acknowledge that nothing else silence, no content so you listen to it you notice it and suddenly the noticing is the arising of no content in your mind until a thought comes in that says oh, it's very silent that may come in after 3 seconds that's ok it may come in after 2 seconds it's ok, but there were 2 seconds of no content the first moment of listening to the silence, which is listening to nothing that was and that is not significant from the point of view of content but it is deeply significant because something is arising a dimension of consciousness that is unconditioned in which nothing is born or dies because there is no form in it the formless, unconditioned dimension that is the essence of who you are and that such a seemingly insignificant thing as noticing silence if only for a few seconds 2 or 3 seconds that is arising it's then immediately perhaps covered up again by content because a thought comes in that says, why can't you listen to it for longer and then perhaps again the attention goes and there is a listening again and during that moment of listening there is a little space in which there is not a single thought because you cannot listen to silence through thought thought is mental noise thought knows nothing of silence it is unaware of silence to even have an awareness of silence as a dimension even though there may be a few noises as an underlying dimension which is always there somewhere the dimension of silence is there here very much so to even be aware that silence exists requires you to be without thought for an instant and in many cases it is only an opening and that is the same opening that I suggested to you when you first look at something sense perception it comes into your field of vision it arises in the space of now when you first look at something in that first perception there is a spaciousness in which you have not had time yet to formulate a thought about it to call it something to label it so when I turn my head and look at this for the first second or two there is simply the looking it is actually longer than a second or two and if you could truly see that you would be amazed truly see means stay with the spaciousness in which the labels don't arise that comes, don't demand that as I should be seeing it without it's enough to notice that in the first moment the perception arises in a field of stillness that's all that field of stillness most people are totally unaware of as a deeper dimension within themselves, words are limited it's within and without let's call it within as a deeper dimension within themselves, unaware of that so unaware of space consciousness and so the liberation is the liberation from the world of form the world of content seeking yourself there somewhere in some content mental form of me, it's the same so just capturing, noticing the moment of stillness that is there, when you first look it doesn't have to be nature it could be anything nature has a lot of stillness already in there some man made things have a nervousness built into them, but nevertheless in the first moment there's always the clear perception and when you notice it it is possible that it may be there for longer the space, if not it doesn't matter yes, please no, no

[Speaker 2] (7:28:08 - 7:28:39)

the more I try to bring the space into my life I've noticed that I face a lot of fear I perceive layers of my personality and I can get a small distance and I get closer and closer and there is this huge fear and I wish if you could talk about this fear I feel that I want something wonderful to happen to me, but for this to happen, I cannot be there and there is a fear of death or whatever

[Speaker 1] (7:28:39 - 8:04:57)

yes, thank you that's an important point and you are not the only one who feels that and the fear is the fear of the mind made entity the self because in that it seems to disappear and it's like, no it doesn't want to disappear and so what do you do with the fear? all you can do is also notice it as a feeling a movement nothing is needed beyond noticing it in the same way that you notice a sense perception and look on it feel it otherwise, the fear becomes a reaction and you withdraw and run back into identification with thinking, the familiar place, it feels so familiar so then the fear pushes you when you touch the space consciousness sometimes it happens that fear arises and then you touch it again and if you don't know that this is a very natural reaction then the fear you identify with the fear, you become the fearful entity that withdraws again into the normal state of so to notice the fear is there, brings about a freedom so that the fear is not totally possessing you, you are not totally identified with the movement of fear you can see the fear in your energy field and don't have to do anything, you allow that and then you can look again at something, the same thing that brought the fear, there is a gentleness when you allow the fear there is a gentleness around it, because so you are using the other portal now with the fear which is allowing it to be then the fear itself is turned into a portal first it seems to prevent you from getting there, but if you then apply the portal of allowing it what is to be it is, then the fear itself becomes a portal again so first there was the portal of perception, clear perception which brought about fear, or listening to the silence which brought about fear then you notice the fear and allow it the allowing is best expressed in the gesture that I would describe as this where you almost you hold it in a spaciousness which is also one could say that gesture and that particular portal very much connected with the female principle of embracing that's why that's you see sometimes with Mary statues the arms like that that is the female principle there is enormous power in that holding embracing receptivity and there is a gentleness there, so when you allow something, including fear, there is that, an inner holding it within this larger spaciousness and it might even help for a little while to actually hold your arms like that and then because you can almost feel the space around it and then whatever it is that you allow to be will turn into the portal the worst things will turn into a portal but the worse they get the deeper the yes would have to be the deeper the allowing so see how everything that looks like an obstacle in your life an obstacle to enlightenment an obstacle to whatever can easily be turned into an opening, simply through non-resistance and then every situation, even if it looks from a conventional mental viewpoint even if it looks dreadful, very bad indeed if you allow that which looks dreadful and very bad indeed the strange thing is that every situation, it's not just on the inner level that the shift happens that the portal opens, the situation itself is turned from good to bad, it's the transmutation of good to bad it's not there's a famous story unfortunately I don't remember the details of it there are different versions when a poor farmer a horse comes to him, a wild horse and all the people in the village come to him and say aren't you lucky you're so lucky that this horse, you have a horse now, and the farmer says well, maybe, maybe so and then the next day the horse, I think, leaves him again and they all come, oh, you've lost the horse you're so unlucky first you had it maybe, maybe and then the horse comes back the next day with five other horses, and they come back and say, maybe then the farmer's son rides on the wild horse and then he's thrown off and breaks his leg and the villagers come and say, oh, poor man you know, he cannot help you with the harvest and the farmer's perhaps, maybe the next day the army comes to seek conscripts for the next war and the son can't go with them and they all get killed, of course so the villagers come and say, aren't you lucky you've kept your son because he has a broken leg every event, he doesn't resist anything and every seemingly bad event turns into good again there are quite a few people in this room who have experienced bad events that they would never have chosen if somebody said, do you want this to happen to you, you would just say, no but it happened and at some point surrender happened if not complete substantial surrender happened, and then you see that which you never wanted was actually the best possible thing to happen for you and it's a strange realization that whatever happens to you when you align yourself with it will turn out to be the best possible thing for you the universe is not mad only you are mad it's nothing personal and of course your madness is part of the universe too it's a little game so to see that whatever happens through the yes turns around it's not only that you become free internally and a dimension opens up that is beyond the form that this moment takes even on the level of form a shift happens and it turns around and that's an amazing thing to realize a similar story which I have told a few times the Zen master who was accused by a 17 year old girl who was pregnant of being the father in a town in Japan and the parents came to him and said she has just told us she has given birth to this baby and she has just confessed to us that you are the father when she came to see you 9 months ago it happened she had a session with you and all over the town the gossip started and they all said how dreadful he could have done such a thing but when they came to him the parents and told him about it all he said was is that so? in Japanese I don't know what the Japanese it may be something like ah so or something like that so the parents come and say here we don't want this baby it's your baby, you look after it first they say you are the father and he didn't deny it and then they said here you have the baby, you look after it we don't want it is that so?

and then they left and he started looking after the baby feeding it, buying food nobody came to see him anymore because he had lost his reputation but because he didn't live through a conceptualized sense of self all that mattered to him was what this moment required this moment there was this baby so he was feeding the baby without the conceptualized sense of self the drama was in all the other people they talked about it for months and months the drama was not in him it was only this moment and he cared for the baby a year later the girl confessed that the master wasn't the father but the boy next door so the parents came running to the Zen master and said she's just told us that you are not the father and he said ah, so we are terribly sorry, we made a mistake and can we have the baby back now please we want the baby now is that so? ok, here it is that situation which is potentially a dreadful thing for the Zen master turned into good, only good the baby was brought up the first year of his or her life by a Zen master that's a good start in life and this is the story symbolizes the state of non it's an extreme version of non resistance to what is it wouldn't have to be literally like that you could say you could have said no, I'm not the father but if you believe that I'm the father, what can I do you could say that also this is an extreme form of being aligned totally with now never resisting and the good that comes out of a seemingly bad event through alignment inner alignment with it so it describes the state of not resisting the isness of now Jesus has an even more extreme example and again it's a symbol it's to turning the other cheek means simply complete non reaction it's not necessarily you don't have to take it literally it's inner non reaction inner non reaction because usually somebody hitting you on the cheek would immediately produce a strong reaction so he's not giving any prescription for external conduct, it's pointing to an inner state of being aligned non reaction so that's and all evil turns into good through that the situation turns around you have to try it out in your life but one could say that is only a byproduct of something deeper the fact that the external situation also turns around is a byproduct of something deeper at the deepest level what matters is the inner the arising of that depth that spaciousness within yourself to know that through non resistance and then there's the event there's and yet the allowing the space that comes when you allow and so you become free of depending on content of your life as a byproduct of that a little irony of the universe when internally you become free of the content of your life needing to be in one particular way to satisfy you you become free of that need for your life situation to be in a particular way to satisfy you which most people have that great need you become free of that because knowing the depth of space consciousness is the most satisfying of all that is the only satisfying state so then the need for content to be in a particular way isn't there and the irony of the universe is such that when you don't need for the content of your life to be in a particular way it turns into the tendency is for content to turn into good not without limitations ever, but it becomes harmonious because you're aligned with the totality so a harmonious flow comes into your life which often means it also improves the content as a byproduct precisely at the point when you don't need it anymore as a desperate inner need so people have demands they demand that the world should make them happy it doesn't it's not in the nature of the world to make you happy you can try for a while one could say the world is here to make you conscious not to make you happy and then when you're conscious happiness is there or something deeper than happiness is there a joy that has a depth to it that is deeper than happiness happy, unhappy, happy, unhappy something deeper is there so not to see the ultimate non satisfactory nature of content when you see that it gets better because you don't need it anymore so strange and many people realize in their own lives when they let go of a demand that this or that should be in a particular way or should happen the moment you completely let go of this inner should it happens so only Jesus said only be concerned with the kingdom of heaven which means kingdom of heaven is a strange description he uses to describe the transformed state of consciousness he has other descriptions for it the pearl of great price and all kinds of parables pointing to it he's talking of only be concerned with finding the essence of who you are then everything else comes and he I believe he said all the things that you thought you needed will be added onto you because you no longer need them and of course those things they won't stay around forever either nothing does they still have certain limitations which are the limitations inherent in every form but it's nice when certain things come for a while oh nice and then perhaps goes again something else comes forms arise are born die and you are beyond that so you leave here change of content same space and on the deepest level it's true to say that you never really go anywhere and so phenomenal existence with the world of form the world of phenomena continues in your life in the space the space that you are different configurations forms, your life situation make up your life situation you may have certain problems in your life your life situation the more you access the space of now the more quickly problematic situations become resolved not by lying awake for hours on end and thinking about them they don't become resolved in fact they don't become resolved through thought thought may be a final form that your realization takes of what the answer is sometimes but problems do not become resolved through thought they were actually created by thought in the first place so it's only by going beyond thought that the problem suddenly disappears it may not even become resolved it disappears from your field of vision it may reveal itself to be only a mind form people carry problems around many people that have no existence whatsoever except as a thought form for example, fear of certain things that may happen to me he may leave me she may leave me, what if this could happen and this can develop as if it were an actual situation and you look more deeply, you see, we pointed at this briefly already, when you look more deeply you see that the entire existence of the level of human problems are only thought forms not reality only a challenge can be there in the reality of now what are the problems in people's lives? physical relationship financial finding life purpose profession work problems and ultimately all of them thought forms relationship problem let's talk about our relationship problems maybe we can work it out yes up to a limited point a little bit of talking may be helpful like pain bodies but unless presence arises in the relationship you can't work it out it's only the arising of space consciousness of presence in the relationship that it can deepen and it can go beyond problems and the need for problems and as you know that begins with listening to your partner when he or she speaks the art of true listening listening in the field of aware presence not exclusively focusing on the content when you listen the words because then your vision becomes immediately content based thought you listen to the words and then your face goes what do you mean what do you mean by that and immediately the reactive thought forms come up no that's completely untrue I never said that why do you always accuse me of that yes you always do no it's not true I don't always do there's no listening there's just true mind forms so not exclusively focusing on the form because in true listening you are there as space you're not there as form it's only you can only truly listen if you are there as space the space in which these words appear and you allow them to appear it's again of course connected with allowing what is to be completely so you listen to another person you are the space in which these words happen and as you listen you listen not as a reactive entity but as receptive space and that is the arising of presence, unconditioned consciousness in the relationship and the words, if words come are very different if finally you do say something those words are very different from words that arise out of the reactivity of the mind, so to be able to be with each other beyond the movement of thought and not try to solve the so called problems of the relationship only on the level of thought, the same applies with not just partner relationships, relationships with children space give the child space, be there as space, as spacious presence for the child but if you are totally identified with a thought form which is father, mother and you are totally identified with a role which is a thought form, a conditioned thought form then you interact with a child only through the role of mother or father and how this role identity thinks a father or mother should behave to be a good father or mother and the way they should behave is to tell them what's best for you because I must be, I'm a good father I'm responsible, do this, don't do that no, you must do this have you done that trying to be good and you get totally identified in the role and then the mother or the father the father becomes excessively only father the mother is only mother and for the rest of their lives they can't get out of the role then the mother becomes stifling if you only know yourself as mother without any spaciousness beyond the role to be a mother without spaciousness is stifling for the child it's narrow when the child is 30 and you are 60 you will still be in the role of mother and you won't even see that the child is an adult and you'll be calling them up and telling them what's best for them because you are trapped in the role in a thought form a conditioned thought form and so yes you are also a mother you are also a father but that's a tiny aspect, that's the form aspect and any role that you totally slip into and identify with which is a conditioned thought form limits you and limits other people so whatever role you play in life, you will have to play some roles that's because on the level of form we have roles but to be trapped in a role is to be trapped in thought in a conditioned thought form and then you yourself are imprisoned and the role will further imprison other people because it will only interact with other people as roles also because if you are trapped in the role of mother, for example, you will push the child into the role of child and keep the child imprisoned in the role of child until they are 50 and you die and you still imprison them in the role of child as you imprison yourself in the role of mother not that you cannot honour the form of being a mother but all your profession you can become I've seen people at universities so identified with their role of professor after 30 years they're totally that and they speak like a book and I sometimes you can only watch and sometimes wonder is there anything beyond the role left there?

There's such identification with roles and a few people are able to play their role and yet something that is not conditioned remains as the essence of spaciousness and then always remains there is a simplicity that remains there is a gentleness that remains you play the role whatever your profession is whatever your function in society is you can honour it but let it be there in the spaciousness of presence and then you can be with a child not exclusively as your role but you can be there in the child's life as spacious presence and the child comes into that space and then you don't talk to the child out of that like a mother talks to a child, a mother who knows better of course, a child who always doesn't quite know what's best no, from spacious presence all is equal and you actually speak to the child words that come out of that are words that are being spoken to an equal and you can listen to the child and be amazed how much wisdom can come of the child's mouth if you can only listen wisdom that if you were exclusively identified with the role you wouldn't even hear because you are convinced that the child doesn't know and you know because it's the role of mother to know and so all relationships never confuse the role with the depths of who that being is and that depth is unconditioned so the same in business in many business interactions people meet as their function, as their role it's a prison and it's liberating and it, people who are not trapped exclusively in the role tend to be much more successful than people who are totally trapped in their role everybody loves them little human interactions going to a restaurant there is a human being playing the role of waiter or waitress and temporarily while you are sitting there, you are playing the role of customer and people slip into these roles the moment they sit at a restaurant table and the waiter imposes the role on you and you impose the role of waiter on him or her it's an absurd limitation of yourself and the other person so can you be there when the waiter comes or the waitress comes a moment of spacious presence as the waiter or waitress comes into your field of vision and you look and then you honour the role that you are you don't have to behave in a weird way when you say I'd like the soup followed by this and that and the waiter also the waiter tends to see you as your function there as your role and then traps you in that if a waiter or waitress can be there for the customer also as spacious presence that is so liberating as a byproduct of that they would get three times or four times the tips they would otherwise get that's a little byproduct because it is so liberating to be in the presence of presence the space, anybody who comes to you offering space

[Speaker 4] (8:04:57 - 8:04:58)

oh

[Speaker 1] (8:04:59 - 8:15:05)

people may not know why they feel so good and so it's everybody's it's so important not to get trapped in this thought form of roles honour them but be larger than that so that the little role is there but the unconditioned is known and that is actually what true intelligence operates not through the little role with the conditioned thinking that goes with that role so in all human interactions bringing you are the bringer of space consciousness it comes naturally with complete yes to what is this moment there is you go beyond the form of this moment this is how we started off today saying knowing the difference between form and formless between the form as which you appear here and the formless reality that you are the difference between the form as which I appear here and the formless reality that I am I mentioned yesterday if I saw myself as a spiritual teacher would be a delusion it's a temporary form identity in other words not really an identity but simply a function and then I walk out and there's no what teacher there's a being walking between the trees there's no teacher left, why carry that I am a spiritual teacher and then with that would come other illusions, there would come the illusion that people come from different parts of the world to see me and that would be the source for ego, it would be ego fuel on the one hand the self would feel bigger they have all come to see me but on the other hand there would be hidden fear I hope I can live up to their expectations of me I hope oh my god all these people have come I'm not ready, I don't know what to say so you're drawn between feeling bigger and feeling threatened and this happens to everybody who is trapped in a form identity and of course nobody comes to see me what for, they come for space which is themselves so they come because there happens to be an empty space here and then they recognize themselves in that and so the empty space within them the unconditioned consciousness arises that's why they come not to see a person so knowing the difference between the form that arises in the now and the depth or the space of now and in this life there are the two dimensions the dimensions of form in which there seems to be time and the dimension of the formless and most humans are lost in form in this world you don't need to learn more about form the world is full of learning about form universities are full of form knowledge but essence, the world is hungry to know that which is beyond form because that's the liberation from being trapped in form physical forms but more importantly trapped in thought forms conceptualized identities of me which link into certain physical things make thought forms out of them and then you carry that role that conceptualized identity around with you and it's never at ease for long always incomplete uneasy fearful needing more I need more followers I want people to follow me just come and follow me I need more Enron Corporation we need more capital more money in an absurd attempt of the ego to complete itself so this is the madness of the level of form when you only know that when you know that which is beyond form the world of form is quite okay actually quite nice beautiful there's a dance that goes on the dance of form of phenomenal which you experience as you walk away from here this place of now is filled with other forms and the dance continues so the essence of our retreat is not something that is now going to recede into the past the form of this retreat as an experience is about to move into past and become a thought form as all forms do future present and it's gone the essence doesn't move this gathering was not about experiencing certain interesting events on the level of form even though one or two of you may have done that the essence of this is to see that which is deeper than content sense perception and thought and emotion spaciousness stillness, aware presence thank you for making this retreat possible there would be no teaching without you the ancient saying says the teacher and the taught together produce the teaching it's a single process ultimately it comes out of you ultimately you just recognized what you already knew the teaching comes out of you thank you to Marina for organizing this and Christina and Kim and help us many people have helped to make this happen enjoy what comes into the field of now and you are not what happens you are the space in which it happens as long as you know that there's no problem there can't be

2020 Essential Meditations with Eckhart Tolle 7h42m Audiobook

[Speaker 3] (0:52 - 1:10)

Sounds True presents Essential Meditations with Eckhart Tolle. Guided sessions and practical teachings. And now session one, entering the meditative state and sitting together with Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (1:54 - 1:14:15)

Welcome to our meditation or meditative talk. There may be quite a few newcomers to meditation or mindfulness as it's often called. So let's start with some very basic things to enter that meditative state of consciousness because that's what it is all about.

Meditation is about a shift in consciousness away from concern with doing and thinking and becoming aware, really directly aware of the present moment. And that's perhaps the easiest and most accessible starting point for most people to enter the state of presence which is the aim of meditation is to get you into that state of absolute presence in this moment. And that's being, becoming aware of being.

Most people are always engaged in doing that includes thinking continuously. And a lot of the thinking that people do is not very uplifting. A lot of the thinking that happens compulsively creates negative feelings.

And a lot of the thinking is actually harmful and dysfunctional. It doesn't serve any useful purpose but you just can't stop it. Or you think you can't, but you can.

And that's of course what meditation is about to realize there is in you a deeper dimension of consciousness, deeper or higher you could call it depending from where you look at it, deeper or higher than thinking. And that is the state of presence in the now. So it's an amazing realization for most people that they can actually easily access that state of presence by bringing their attention into the present moment like now.

So I'm kind of, although I'm talking, my aim is to talk you, so to speak, into that state of meditation. And it helps if while I talk, you can become conscious or aware of the small gaps between words as I talk. So you're just aware not only of the words, of course you hear the words, you take them in, but you're also aware that there are little spaces between the words.

You just acknowledge that. These are little meditative gaps, so to speak. And in order to be really aware of the meditative gaps, you can't be thinking.

You're just aware of that space. There is, what does that mean, aware? There is a presence in that awareness.

You know in that awareness right now, you know that you are here as a conscious presence without any thought telling you that. In other words, you become aware of yourself, not as a person, because to be a person, you need to be thinking about you and your life and your problems and so on. But there's a deeper dimension in you, deeper than the person.

And this is what we are here to access. So you become aware that really, on the surface of your life, there is the person with a past and a future and all the thinking and the emotions that keep the person going, of course. And so you're happy one day, unhappy the next.

Happy one day, unhappy. The fluctuations of the person, it's quite normal. And the person is always concerned with doing and thinking and the next thing or the past, the future.

The past is never really present. When you become present, like now, you realize that there is a deeper part of you in you, there is a deeper dimension to who you are, where you are more than a person, where you are a presence, a conscious presence. The question is, can you sense, feel, or be aware of yourself at this moment as a conscious presence, without which there couldn't even be a person?

So it's almost like saying the person is the surface of the ocean or the ripples or the waves on the surface of the ocean, but you are not just the ripples or waves on the surface of the ocean, you are the ocean. So there's a deeper presence in you. And to access that and to sense that in yourself, to sense yourself as the presence, a presence, that is what liberates you from being completely trapped and limited in an exclusively personal identity.

In other words, there is more to you than meets the eye. You are deeper than you ever knew by thinking about yourself, and it's not difficult to access that dimension in yourself. Can one describe it?

Well, one can give a few pointers. Let's see if that makes sense. The pointers I'm giving you now, let's see if they make sense in your own experience at this moment.

Sensing yourself as a presence. There is a peacefulness there that is really the essence of what is sometimes called inner peace. The person, the surface of the ocean, the waves and the ripples of the ocean cannot be at peace for long, it fluctuates.

Occasionally, if things happen to go well, yeah, I'm happy, it never lasts for very long. And then the storm comes and big waves come or little irritated waves, whatever, then you're unhappy, but there's a deeper. If let's say you are a ripple on the surface of the ocean with a name and a date of birth and a past and a future and problems, and suddenly the ripple realizes there's more to me and realizes, oh, I'm actually much deeper and vaster.

I'm the ocean manifesting as the ripple. And so you are the universe or the consciousness that underlies the sense-perceived universe manifesting temporarily as a person. You are the universe becoming conscious of itself at this moment in your life as a person.

You are not separate from the totality of the universe. You are the universe. The universe has, or the consciousness that underlies the universe has given form to who you are temporarily in order to experience itself as a person.

It's an amazing thing. And the universe here is in the process of becoming more conscious. That's what the entire evolution of the universe is about.

It's consciousness. So you, your life is part of the evolutionary impulse towards greater consciousness. And if your life is not primarily about greater consciousness, which actually you can build into whatever you do, it doesn't mean you stop doing and just say, all I'm interested in is consciousness.

No, it needs to flow into what you do. If your life purpose is not aligned with the evolving consciousness of the universe, then what is the point of it all? And then sooner or later, you get very frustrated.

And things become pointless. So you are here to become more conscious because that's what the universe has put you here for. Instead of universe, you can use other terms.

You're more comfortable with them. The universal intelligence, God. So right now, in addition to being a person, which right now is not important, it becomes important again when we finish our meditation, I'm sure.

But right now, something else is more important. That's realizing yourself as the presence, coming into the present moment and feeling, just being aware right now that you are conscious. If you were not conscious, you wouldn't be able to hear, see, perceive anything.

The fact that you can perceive things, the fact that you can think, the fact that you can have emotions, all implies that you are conscious. The meditative state is becoming aware directly of that consciousness. Sometimes the word that is used also is stillness.

Right now, you become still. You become aware of just being, of being that presence. And that feels energizing.

You don't go to sleep. You're actually alert and still at the same time. And now you access an intelligence that is deeper than the thinking mind by entering that state of alert presence.

And then when you think again, you are connected with the source of all intelligence, with creativity. You become empowered. Your thinking and your doing and your actions are then aligned with a deeper purpose of the universe, not just little egoic desires.

So all this is so terribly important, aligning your life with that presence. So you need to, during your normal day, I'll give you a few hints of how to invite that presence into your life, which by invite, I mean direct your attention to it because it's always there. That really is what supports you in life.

And if you can be aware of that, fear, anxiety happen less and less in your life because you can feel supported by that vast presence, which is not just your, it's not your own presence. It is the universal presence of consciousness. You connect with that.

You are that. So on a normal day, you go to work or whatever you do, as much as you can, become aware of just brief moments of yourself as the presence in addition to being a person. So one of the things I recommend is, it sounds almost too simple, but from time to time, look at the sky for a few seconds.

You look up, it doesn't matter whether it's blue or cloudy. Today here is the early afternoon, happens to be a sunny day. Look at the sky for a moment.

You're looking, but not thinking. You could do that with anything, but sky is easier because it's this vast expanse that has some correlation with the presence of stillness within you. So you look and for a moment there's just, there's the sky and you can sense yourself as the presence that is perceiving and you're not thinking.

So there's a brief moment of not thinking, but not going to sleep. Alertness without thinking, that's the key. To bring that into your life more often and don't believe when your mind tells you that you need to think and think and think all the time.

Bring in gaps of just alert presence. That's the being. The rest is the doing.

The two need to be, there needs to be a balance in your life between being and doing. Otherwise you go mad. The civilization that completely loses touch with the being dimension is going to self-destruct.

And a person who completely loses touch with the being dimension is going to be very unhappy, unfulfilled, always anxious or depressed or always stressed. Many people live in continuous stress. What does that mean?

They're always focused on the next thing and the next thing pulls them away from where they are here and now. And always there's the promise, when I reach that point, I'll be okay. But of course the reaching that point is always very brief.

And then they realize, oh, I'm not okay, I need to reach another point. It's a great thing, of course, to have goals in life. But if the goal takes up so much of your attention continuously, where you need to get to, that you continuously miss the present moment, which after all is all there ever is, then your life is completely out of balance.

The balance is, yes, having goals. You know where you're going. That's good.

But you are aware of the step you're taking at this moment. And you're aware of the flowers, the sky, the trees, life that continuously unfolds around you. You acknowledge, you honor the present moment.

And on a deeper level, you are aware of yourself as the presence. So I also recommend that during your normal day, you become familiar with perceiving things that are around you without thinking you need to judge or label or interpret them or name them all the time. So for example, you can look at a tree or the sky or anything, a piece of furniture, an animal, without naming it.

You're just, this is a lovely practice. You can do it right now because you're looking at me. Well, to you, I am an image on the screen and the words that you're hearing.

You can look at this image on the screen, me, without saying anything mentally about it. What for? You can actually perceive it better, more clearly, without the interference of thinking.

So you're just there as the alert presence in the background of your perceptions. Like now, you're looking at me and you're aware of yourself, which is more important than me. You're aware of yourself as that which makes the perception possible.

Presence, conscious presence. And the same thing you can do looking at anything. You look at a chair, a table for a few seconds and you're not labeling it mentally.

You're not interpreting it, just clear perception. So then there are two dimensions to the sense perception. There's whatever is being perceived by the senses, hearing, seeing, perhaps touching, whatever.

And the presence behind it, which is a deeper dimension of who you are. And so in that way, you bypass a person when you perceive things. You can bypass the person because the person interprets according to his or her conditioning.

But if you want to transcend the conditioning of your mind, you can perceive without interpretation unless an interpretation is necessary. So you bring, if people may ask you something, then you have to speak or sometimes things will come. That's fine, thoughts come.

You cannot be totally free of labeling and interpreting and you need it sometimes. Sometimes you need to figure things out. At other times, trying to figure something out adds nothing to the experience.

It detracts from the experience. So be aware also of beauty around you. And the more present you are perceiving in this clear, nonjudgmental way, the more you will see beauty and aliveness around you that before you had ignored because you were always going somewhere else or your attention was so absorbed by thinking that you are only sufficiently aware, peripherally aware of your surroundings, just preventing you from bumping into things, but otherwise totally in your head, thinking about your problems. So you get out of that into presence and so the balance comes into your life. So make it a practice to perceive things in that state of alert presence.

And another little, very helpful, perhaps it is a kind of technique to enable you to be present is, as I call it, to feel the aliveness inside your body. That sounds perhaps a little strange if you are not, you haven't heard this before. What do you mean, feel the aliveness in your body?

Well, for those of you who have not had a glimpse of that yet, I suggest the following little practice right now. If you hold your, let's say your right or your left hand, just hold it and close your eyes for a moment. And so your hand is kind of just floating there.

Close your eyes for a moment and ask yourself, without opening my eyes, without moving my hand and without touching anything, is there any way I can know whether my right hand is still there? So you're not moving your hand, you're not touching anything. You're not looking at it because your eyes are closed.

Is there any way you can know whether, it's a weird question, that's true, but it gets you somewhere. Is there any way you can know whether your right hand is still there? How can you know that without looking or moving your hand or touching anything?

Okay, let's see now. Is your right hand still there? And now you will notice you can feel it.

You can feel it. You can feel its presence from the inside. At first it's very subtle and then you feel it more strongly.

And if you now open your eyes, you will notice that you can still feel your right hand, even though other perceptions have come in, you're looking again. But even as you're looking, you can still feel the aliveness inside your hand. That takes some of your attention away from continuous thinking.

I would now recommend that you expand that a little and even without closing your eyes now, see if you can feel the energy in both your hands at the same time. Or if you like, close your eyes for a few seconds and then you might notice it gets a little stronger, that feeling. Undoubtedly, your hands are alive.

There is an aliveness in there. Of course there is, because that's what keeps the body going. If that aliveness leaves, the molecules and atoms that make up your hand would very quickly depart.

They would not be together anymore and that would be the end of your body. So what holds your body together, there is an energy there that is the organizing principle behind the physical form of the body. It's invisible.

And scientists haven't found it yet because the only way you can find it is by not by looking outside, but by introspection, by looking within. So you can sense the energy in your hands. That's okay, that's good.

That takes some of your attention away from thinking. It brings you a little bit more into the present moment. And then you might want to experience, see if I can feel my hands, perhaps I can also feel the energy in my feet.

So your attention goes, you direct your attention there, it goes there. Are my feet still there? Yes, perhaps not as strong a feeling as the hands, but yes, you can feel your feet too.

So initially you can just play around with that a little bit and feel, hold that attention for a couple of minutes in your feet and your hands and see if you can feel your feet and your hands simultaneously like now. And it's quite pleasant. And you may notice right now, as you're aware of the energy in your feet and your hands and you keep your attention there, there isn't that much attention left for thinking.

So this is where the state of alert presence opens up. And then you may notice a little bit the rest of the body. Also, you begin to feel, not as strongly as the hands or feet, but you begin to feel that a sense of aliveness pervades your entire body.

And that is a lovely meditation in itself, a wonderful time to practice it, for example, is at night before going to sleep, you lie on your bed, on your back, stretch out your hands, flat on your back. And instead of thinking about your problems or about all the obnoxious people in your life, you take your attention into the energy field of the body and feel the aliveness. You always usually start with the hands, then gradually bring in other parts, the arms.

And as I speak now, I hope that you can verify in your own experience right now, what it is I'm talking about, which is feeling the aliveness in your body. And then at night, you can do it beautifully and actually enjoy feeling alive. It is joyful to feel that your body is being pervaded by this energy, which is not separate from who you are, which is who you are, which is consciousness.

The organizing principle behind the hundreds and thousands of functions that keep the body alive, that need to be coordinated every second, that is of such vast complexity that even now with all the advances we've made in science, we only understand a tiny fraction of how the body actually works. There is an expression of vast intelligence behind it. That is the organizing principle behind the body.

And so to get in touch with that deeper intelligence is a wonderful thing. And then you realize when you enter the state of presence, you become present with your entire body. Every cell feels more alive and you become still.

You might've noticed that when you really feel the inner body, as I call it, you're not thinking anymore. You're just present. And the more you access being just present, it's almost paradoxical, the more effective, creative, powerful your thinking becomes when you do think.

And the less negative and destructive, self-destructive your thinking becomes. So we are talking about finding the intelligence, the deeper intelligence within you. You don't want to always having to go to some other source for the really important answers in your life.

Please tell me I need to know this or that. Yes, it's good to want to know that's part of the evolution, the evolutionary impulse, but any spiritual teacher, any, whether the spiritual teachers in the physical form or you have some other teacher as a spirit guide or whatever it is, any true teacher will teach you, show you, demonstrate how to access the source of all knowledge and wisdom in yourself. So that's what this evolution is about.

Let's see if you can still feel yourself right now as that alive presence, your entire body is this being. And it's not a question of necessarily either being or doing, although sometimes it's good to just be, but also even while you do, you can be aware of being. For example, you're driving, you're stopping at the lights.

What is there to do now? Nothing, no matter how much you think that you want to be somewhere else, you're not. Why not use that opportunity whenever there's a red light and you stop your car, if you drive, or if you're a pedestrian, you stop at the stand, you stop walking at the light, use that, those moments or that one moment and feel the aliveness in your body and feel the presence.

Whenever you're waiting for something, and it's amazing how much time we actually spend waiting. Oh, but I read the other day that they figured out in the average person's life, who drives between the age of 20 and 70 or whatever, that person spends several days of his or her life waiting in the car at the red light. You add it all up, it makes up several days of this person's life.

And then you have many other occasions when you wait, you wait for the elevator. Why not use all these waiting times, you wait in line at the supermarket, you wait in line at the airport, instead of complaining in your head that you would rather not be waiting or how inefficient these people are. And this creates negative emotion, doesn't make your life more pleasant.

Instead of that, just be aware of the aliveness in your body and bring your attention into just this moment, be comfortable with this moment. You feel alive inside, and you can even, you can look around at the aliveness outside people, doing this, doing that, traffic, moving there, moving there. And you can actually enjoy the world.

It's miraculous. All these life forms that continuously appear and dance their dance for a little while to be replaced by other life forms. But it's all the expression of one underlying consciousness, one life taking on many forms.

But your true identity is that one life. Life is one, but there's no need to believe that because then it's only just another belief, which can say, oh no, somebody else, it's not one, okay? So it's not a belief.

When you get still and present without losing alertness, in fact, gaining more alertness, then you are in touch with the oneness, the one. And that is the source of all life that has form because that is formless. What you call that one life is up to you.

Universal intelligence, the one God, or as the Buddha called it, emptiness. Which really means formlessness. It's what the Buddha pointed to as the essence.

Or as Jesus called it, the kingdom of heaven. The same as Buddhist term, emptiness. Heaven is vast spaciousness.

In many languages, heaven and sky are the same word. Vast spaciousness, formless, one life. That's who you are.

Really, this is all about knowing yourself. That's the journey you are on. It's the journey to yourself.

It's a journey without distance. And I thank you for joining us. And I wish you well on your journey.

It's a wonderful adventure. Welcome to our live meditation. We're only interested in one thing here for our live meditation.

And that is to sit together, not physically together, but nevertheless together in presence. Thinking is not important here. As much as possible, let go of thinking without any effort and realize that you are more fully yourself when you're not thinking.

And when you're not thinking, you can realize what being is, what it means to be. And you can sense the being that you are, which can be expressed as the first person singular of the verb to be, I am. So you sense or you are the presence prior to thinking, the clear space of presence.

That's why we're here, to be that, to realize that we are that. I don't think as I sit here, the words just come out of the stillness. There's no thinking prior to the words.

And as soon as a word has been uttered, there's just presence or stillness. So you can join me in that as I don't need to think, you don't need to think right now, but just be present. The great teacher Ramana Maharshi, who taught during the first half of the 20th century in India, was once asked by a visitor to his ashram, this question, how do I know whether I'm making progress on the spiritual path?

And he said, the degree of absence of thought is the only true criterion for your progress on the spiritual path. The extent, in other words, to which you are free of thought in daily life, still able to use thought whenever it's needed, to meditate perfectly, more efficiently than before, more creatively, because you have access to the unconditioned intelligence itself, which is presence. How long you can sit in meditation, formal meditation, is not a good criterion for progress on the spiritual path, but to what extent presence comes into your daily life, which initially may just mean little moments of presence in between all the doings of your life, little moments of being, awareness, alertness, alert stillness, consciously looking at something, consciously listening, consciously walking across the room, consciously washing your hands, which does not mean when you walk across the room, you're thinking, I am now crossing the room, or when you look at something, I'm now looking at that tree, that you're not present yet. It can be an intermediate step, but the actual presence is when there's no background commentary, and when there's virtually no background commentary throughout your life, that is the awakened state. There may still be fragments of thoughts saying this or that, but basically or fundamentally, free of the involuntary, compulsive background commentary in your daily life.

That's an enormous evolutionary leap to live like that. But you don't need to have that as some aim. I want to be totally free.

Just be free of background commentary now. That's easier than to say throughout my life, I want to be free of that, or just do it now. Renounce unnecessary thinking.

Be present instead. Then the ego diminishes and eventually cannot survive in you when you are present. People have practiced traditionally all kinds of renunciations in spiritual life, in Christianity and Buddhism and Hinduism and so on, and they're still being practiced in many cultures to some extent.

Renunciation of possessions, renunciation of your name, let go of your old name, adopt a new spiritual name, renunciation of physical comforts, exposing the body to discomfort. All these can be helpful, but if the most basic renunciation is not known, then the most basic attachment will still be there, and that's attachment to your thoughts. You haven't renounced unnecessary thinking.

Setting aside a period for being present is traditionally called meditation. So you could say that's what we are doing here, although we're not really doing anything. All we are doing, which is not a doing, is realizing our presence, realizing presence.

Right now, in different parts of the planet, little points of consciousness waking up, where before there was only a person, there's now conscious presence arising. Different parts of the planet at the same time. And this, of course, has no form, and there's no time.

Past and future become irrelevant in presence. And that's an amazing realization that who you essentially are, your feeling of identity, of essential identity, does not need the future to complete itself. It is already complete.

It does not need the past. So you don't need past to know who you are. That's a delusion, it's a story.

You don't need future to finally arrive at some more complete version of yourself, because presence is already complete. You are already complete in presence. One could say presence is the cream, and whatever happens in time, and whatever happens in future to you is the skimmed milk.

But once you know the cream and have the cream, then skimmed milk is not that important anymore. So as more presence arises, you lose the fear of death, which, of course, arises because you unconsciously think you need more time to be fully yourself. Of course, the truth is you need to get out of time to be fully yourself.

So we are here relaxed and alert at the same time. Alertness does not require tension, and to be free of tension does not mean that you're going towards sleep. And at this moment, who are you?

With no reference to your story, the space of presence, not a person. You still look like a person from the outside. So with this shift, the person recedes, and presence arises.

You don't lose anything real in this. But what about my personal identity? I don't want to lose that.

If you look more deeply, at the bottom of what you feel is your personal identity, there's the fact that right now you are conscious. That's the foundation of what you sense and call your personal identity. It's consciousness is your personal identity.

It gives light to the story of who you are, which consists of thoughts and past. Past is thoughts. The consciousness is the light behind your story.

Without it, there would be nothing. Let's close our eyes for a moment and just continue to be present without any visual perception. If thoughts interfere, take your attention into the inner body.

Feel the aliveness inside the body. Be present with every cell of the body. Presence, of course, transcends the body, but it shines through the form.

Open your eyes. Look around the room, wherever you are, and stay present. Be the awareness behind the perceptions.

Innocent, fresh perception. Alert perception. The hand back at the screen.

As we finish our meditation, you may want to sit a little longer in the stillness. And when you then start moving again, start doing things, carry that presence as much as possible with you.

[Speaker 3] (1:15:37 - 1:15:44)

Our program continues with session two, living a presence-based life.

[Speaker 2] (1:16:26 - 1:16:30)

Some people have requested a little bit more stillness.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:34 - 1:21:15)

And of course, there's always stillness behind the words because they kind of come out of the stillness. But I cannot guarantee that I will not speak at all because who knows what the present moment brings. A couple of hours ago, I looked at this book that came out not that long ago, and I got inspired to read a poem to you before we start our meditation.

That's by Steve Taylor, who is a British writer of mostly of non-fiction. He writes about awakening and the ego and so on. But in his spare time, when he's on a train or in between looking after his, if they have several little children, he writes poems.

And he's privately sent me occasionally a few. And I said, they are so good. You need to write a few more and then you can publish them.

And here's the result. So that's, The Calm Center by Steve Taylor. And these are beautiful poems that can take you into presence.

The title of this poem is, The Story. Your story is always there if you need to remind yourself of who you are, like a stream flowing beside you that you can always step into and swim with for a while whenever you lose direction or feel vulnerable and need to refresh your sense of self. And when you're flowing with that stream of memories, you might feel proud of how far you've come to this moment of bright achievement.

Look back upstream and smile with vindication at the fools who slighted and doubted you. Or you might ache inside with failure, looking back at the meandering muddy tracks that haven't led anywhere except to this place of pain. You can be a hero or a villain depending on your story.

Or you can let the stream flow by and accept this moment in its wholeness without reference to any other before or after. You can sit and observe outside the story, not as a character, but as the author, grounded in another identity that was never created and doesn't need a plot or conclusion because it's already complete. Remember, you're not doing a meditation, you're just being.

For some people, it works better to have their eyes closed. Others could keep their eyes open.

[Speaker 2] (1:21:20 - 1:21:55)

You can meditate with your eyes open, or you can alternate. Inevitably, some of you may get drawn into a stream of thinking.

[Speaker 1] (1:21:58 - 1:22:08)

If your eyes are closed and you're losing yourself in a stream of thinking, when you notice it, you can open your eyes to break the stream.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:25 - 1:22:29)

Breath is a good entry point into presence.

[Speaker 1] (1:24:13 - 1:24:41)

You need to find out for yourself if you can just be present without any particular method or technique. That's what they do in Zen. There's no method.

They call meditation sitting, just sitting, observing what arises.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:56 - 1:25:00)

Thoughts can be like little clouds or big ones.

[Speaker 1] (1:25:02 - 1:28:40)

You are the sky, the empty sky, being aware of the clouds passing. And there may be moments when no cloud passes. So there's just spaciousness.

You can also use body awareness, inner body awareness, as an anchor for presence. If thoughts interfere a lot, or you tend to lose yourself in them, use the inner body awareness as an anchor to keep you present. Awareness of the energy in your hands, your arms, your legs, your knees, feet, belly, an important point in some forms of meditation, the belly and the entire inner body.

As long as you feel the inner body as one single energy field, you can't do much thinking. You can't do any thinking. And you may notice the body loves it, loves being noticed.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:18 - 1:32:05)

Can you be aware right now that you are aware, aware of awareness?

[Speaker 1] (1:32:13 - 1:33:05)

That sounds like duality, but only when you talk about it. Language works in that way. Self-aware, awareness is aware of itself.

Consciousness is aware of itself. They're not two, but one. Awareness can never be an object in consciousness.

It's the eternal subject.

[Speaker 2] (1:33:33 - 1:35:25)

Another beautiful pointer is the question, who am I? And then look for the answer, which is not a thought. That which is looking for the answer in you is the answer.

You can say the same about God. I allow myself to use that word tonight.

[Speaker 1] (1:35:28 - 1:35:46)

If you're looking for God, the very energy behind the looking is the light of God in you. That is consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (1:36:20 - 1:36:21)

Who am I?

[Speaker 1] (1:38:04 - 1:38:27)

The greatest skill is the ability to step out of thought and then back into thought when you need it.

[Speaker 2] (1:38:33 - 1:38:34)

Right now, you don't need it.

[Speaker 1] (1:38:55 - 1:39:21)

As more presence manifests in your life, even when you step back into thought, it's not the same kind of thinking that you had before when you were completely identified with it. Even while you're thinking, there will be tiny little gaps. So thought will no longer have the density that it had before.

[Speaker 2] (1:39:29 - 1:39:45)

There'll be awareness shining through your thoughts. Thoughts then no longer have the heaviness they had before.

[Speaker 1] (1:39:53 - 1:40:22)

They lose their ability to make you unhappy, to make your life miserable. You are no longer thought-based, a thought-based entity. You are presence-based.

[Speaker 2] (1:43:28 - 1:43:53)

Bringing attention back to your breathing whenever you feel getting lost in thinking. Just, am I still breathing? Oh yes.

Can I still feel the inner body? Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:43:59 - 1:44:05)

And you're out of thinking. You may have to do that several times, many times.

[Speaker 2] (1:47:36 - 1:47:47)

If discomfort arises or impatience, just allow it to be.

[Speaker 1] (1:47:48 - 1:48:07)

It's just, it's there, it arises. Something in you might want it to get up or do something. Just observe that it arises, you allow it to be.

And that impulse then subsides.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:09 - 1:48:11)

You become the space for it.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:48 - 1:50:09)

I'll ring this bell from time to time now so that to remind you of presence, calling you always back from thinking, back into presence. When thoughts do arise, you don't need to follow them with your attention. Every thought wants to grow.

Come this way, it says. It's really important to think about this now. Of course it isn't, and you just let it go.

You don't have to follow the thought, be drawn into it.

[Speaker 2] (1:50:13 - 1:50:19)

You don't fight it. It's fine if it comes as a thought.

[Speaker 1] (1:50:29 - 1:51:09)

There's your life situation. When you start thinking, you remember your past or your situation in life, circumstances. But underneath all that is your consciousness.

It comes out of that. And as in this little poem I read, there's the river of your story, good or bad. You can step out of the river.

[Speaker 2] (1:51:14 - 1:53:35)

It's still there. It's not going anywhere. If you choose to have your eyes open, you can notice how amazing and wonderful it is to be able to perceive this room, whatever is in it, without imposing any interpretation on it, just as an aware presence.

You can take in the totality of this room, be aware of it. And my voice, it's another perception.

[Speaker 1] (1:53:41 - 1:55:11)

And at the same time, be aware of yourself, not as the story self, but at the same time as you perceive this room with your senses, you hear, you see, you perhaps sense externally with your body. You're also aware of the inner body, perhaps at the same time. And underneath it all, that which makes it possible, is you as the awareness.

That is what the early 20th century spiritual teacher Gurdjieff called self-remembrance. And that is what the letter E referred to at the Temple of Apollo in Delphi. You are, and you know that you are, to be at the same time as you perceive the world.

[Speaker 2] (1:55:18 - 1:55:20)

You can sense your presence.

[Speaker 1] (1:55:20 - 1:56:41)

It's not yours, but we just call it yours. It's the presence. The presence in you is this presence in me.

It's not two presences, but temporarily, let's call it your presence as a pointer. So you perceive this room, perceive this man sitting on a chair talking, the lights, you hear the sounds, the voice, some other background sounds. You sense your body, both the external body, your skin and the inner energy in the body.

This all makes up the present moment, the now. But that's not the essence of the now. That's the surface of the now.

Whatever you perceive is the surface of the now. It changes. Right now, it seems to be static for a little while.

We're sitting here and then we move and it changes.

[Speaker 2] (1:56:48 - 1:56:55)

The now is not what happens because that changes all the time. So there's only one now.

[Speaker 1] (1:57:00 - 1:57:43)

People think they're different moments. So many moments every day, every hour, because things happen. Different things happen all the time.

And they think each happening is a moment. But the now is not what happens. It's the space in which it happens.

Never changes. And you are it. And that's the heart of the universe, which is in you.

You are it, that space. You are the now.

[Speaker 2] (1:57:47 - 1:57:52)

You can just sense that. Sense yourself as the space for it all.

[Speaker 1] (1:58:05 - 2:00:27)

Then the personality becomes less important. It's a character in the story. That's okay.

You have compassion with the character. You can like the character. Be gentle with it.

Don't beat him or her up. Say you are not good enough. Yet, the more you're rooted in that which is deeper than the character in your story, the name and so on, the story, the history of you, that is the greatest thing you can do to improve the character.

The character becomes more sane, more peaceful. There may still be little bits of insanity surfacing now and then. That's okay.

Otherwise, the story would become boring. But on the whole, the character of you becomes more loving and peaceful, compassionate, and even in whatever activity the character pursues, more effective. There's more intelligence that flows into the actions of that character.

That intelligence flows from that underlying presence in which your identity rests. That is your identity. Now, no longer the character.

That's a relief. Oh, because otherwise, that character can be so obnoxious. God.

Troublemaker, either for yourself or for others.

[Speaker 2] (2:00:29 - 2:01:30)

Usually both. I'm inspired to read one more poem to you. The title?

Well, A Moment Without Thought.

[Speaker 1] (2:01:35 - 2:05:30)

A moment without thought and the background noise ceases and I can suddenly hear the silence between sounds, the silence beneath sound from which all sounds emerge like waves from the sea. A moment without thought and the fog disperses and the world is filled with translucent light, new dimensions of detail and sharpness and color and depth. A moment without thought and these suburban streets are a pristine new world like a garden glistening with dew the morning after creation, as if a husk of familiarity has cracked and fallen away, leaving naked primal is-ness.

A moment without thought and I'm no longer standing separate, no longer an island, but part of the sea, no longer a static center, but part of the flowing stream. A moment without thought and the train has stopped between stations and there was never any motion, never any track. A moment like a wormhole, infinitely expanding, like stepping through a narrow gate to find an endless open plane, the panorama of the present.

And this new world of no thought is neither alien nor unfamiliar, but a place where benevolence blows through the air and soft shimmering energy fills every space. And the sunlight is the translucent white light of spirit, the deepest, closest, warmest place, the ground where I am rooted. This ability to look at things or listen to things or with other senses, smell, taste, touch, as the awareness rather than the interpreting mind, practice that in your daily life.

It's a primordial spiritual practice. If that's your only spiritual practice, it would be quite enough. So innocent perception, it requires awareness, it requires an alertness in the background of your perception.

Without the alertness, thinking will always overpower you.

[Speaker 2] (2:05:32 - 2:05:36)

The alertness keeps thinking at bay.

[Speaker 1] (2:05:47 - 2:06:07)

You remember the story I wrote about in the, A New Earth, it's an ancient Zen story where the disciple and the Zen master are walking on a long journey through the mountains.

[Speaker 2] (2:06:11 - 2:06:13)

And then they stop for a little picnic.

[Speaker 1] (2:06:15 - 2:16:35)

And then the disciple who is still having problems understanding what Zen is all about, he's only been there for 10 years, he asks the master, I don't quite get it yet, how do I enter Zen? Meaning how do I enter the state of consciousness that is Zen? How do I?

And the master looks at him and says, can you hear the sound of that mountain stream? And the disciple says, no, I can't hear it. The master says, just see if you can listen, see if you can hear it.

And this is the point of the master to the disciple to become more alert. The master associates the alertness with the auditory perception there. So the alertness flows into the auditory perception.

And as the master tells him, you have to listen more carefully to hear that mountain stream. And then the disciple, at that moment, the alertness, the awareness in the disciple rises and he goes. And of course, at that very moment, while he's in that intense listening, he's no longer thinking or trying to figure out what Zen is all about.

And then he can hear in the far distance is a tiny mountain stream that makes a sound. And suddenly he can hear it. And he says, yes, I can hear it.

And the master says, that's it, enter Zen from there. Oh, this is a practical, to show by means of practical example, what that means, that alertness. Jesus talks about it too.

He says, be so awake as if you were, he gives the parable of a servant waiting for the master. He doesn't know when the master come. He may come in very silently.

So you have to be alert. Don't go to sleep, be alert and wait for the master. So the servant is sitting in that house.

The door, maybe it's my version of the story. The servant is on the upper floor and the master is going, could come in any moment. And he's fairly, the master is very quiet.

So you go. So the sound basically would be in continuous presence. Otherwise he might miss the master.

Again, it's an example to show what that state of consciousness is. Again, using the analogy with associating awareness with the auditory perception. You can associate it with other perceptions too, or with all perception or with no perception.

And there's no stress or strain in that alertness. There isn't a willfulness behind it. That's not it.

You can't hold your breath and make yourself be more alert. Ooh. I still can't hear the mountain stream.

You have to, it's a relaxed alertness. That is one, if you, I'll sometimes use the expression vibrational frequency and there is a truth behind it, whether or not it's scientific. I don't care by the way.

I can sense when, because I also experienced fluctuations. There's always a certain alertness in the background, but sometimes there's an increase in alertness. And sometimes it's just, it recedes.

It's in the background, the awareness. And then the awareness, the light gets a little bit like a dimmer switch. It goes, and then it goes, hmm, it's still there.

According to the situation, now the so-called enlightened state, which is a destiny of each human to reach, although many won't reach it in this lifetime, but, that's okay. That would mean there's a continuous background awareness, Indian continuous. And you, many of you already have it sporadically.

And there may be some of you who already have it continuously in the background. The only reason why you're here, because it's enjoyable. But there's no point in asking, oh, when is it going to be continuous for me?

Irrelevant question. The only true question is, is it there now? That's the only place where it can be now.

Whether it's going to be there 10 minutes from now, who knows? Is it going to be there next week when I get home? Who knows?

But when you get home, it's now. So the only relevant question is, am I aware now? And if you even remember to ask that question, which is a powerful pointer to awareness, very easily you can step from the question, which is still a thought.

I call it a pointer. Certain thoughts are pointers that point beyond thought. So that says, am I aware now?

It's a powerful pointer. And after that, yes. That can immediately bring you to that heightened alertness.

Am I aware now? Let me just check. And that checking creates a rise in the vibrational frequency.

You can feel that. And you can observe. You can learn to observe in people.

It's not judgmental. It's a simple fact. You can look at a person and to some extent, you can see what degree of awareness is there.

There are many humans who might never have heard of any spiritual teaching, who have some awareness in their life. They don't know what it is, but it's there. I don't like to be stopped and recognized in the street all the time, but it does happen a lot.

And when it happens, it's lovely. So it's a paradox. I try to wear sometimes sunglasses and a baseball cap.

A funny incident, I was in a supermarket and I was wearing dark sunglasses and a baseball cap and just looking at the shelves and a man came up to me and said, hi, Eckhart, may I shake your hands? Do people recognize you a lot? No, I am saying this is not infrequently.

I know a few seconds, I look at a person, a few seconds before they recognize me, I recognize them. I've never seen them before, but I recognize them. I know there is a fairly strong presence there.

And then I know, oh, this person is going, and this is not a thought, it's just a realization. This person is going to recognize me. And most of the time I'm right.

The opposite sometimes applies too. This person won't recognize me, though. That's a relief, but sometimes I'm wrong, not often.

But you do, you can observe that there are people who carry a very heavy burden of their own personality. And they are so burdened by this personality, that personality has such density that this completely obscures the essence of that person. Not that it isn't there, it's there, but it's so obscured.

It's just behind this dense layers of mental, emotional layers of years and years of resistance, self-generated suffering, unnecessary problem-making. And so you get this absent look and the burdens look.

[Speaker 2] (2:16:44 - 2:16:56)

And sometimes it happens that these people too can awaken. In most cases, it means they need a shock.

[Speaker 1] (2:16:58 - 2:17:00)

Life sometimes does that to them.

[Speaker 2] (2:17:01 - 2:17:06)

And that can, like it hits you.

[Speaker 1] (2:17:21 - 2:28:38)

So one way of putting it is there's two of you, ultimately there's only one, of course, all is one, but I've suggested as an helpful pointer, temporarily, there's two of you. One is the one that, the character that you know, you have a name and a physical body and a psychological body, your history, narrative of you, an identity based on your past, certain patterns that tend to predominate in your life, mental, emotional, and reactive patterns that make up the personality. That's you, the form identity, I call it.

The form is both the physical form and the psychological form, the form identity. That's one you, that's the you as form identity. And for most people, that's it, that's all they know.

Then there is a more essential identity, which is the formless you that you cannot, there's nothing much, there's nothing to know about it. It is the consciousness of you, it is the spaciousness. It is the unconditioned dimension in you.

And for a fruitful and balanced life, both need to be in some kind of balance. If you only have form identity, which is a destiny, well, let me correct myself. Anybody who is not completely insane will have some, if limited, access to the unconditioned without knowing it.

So there's still some sanity there, some occasional joy, not last, doesn't last long, but unless a person is so, so filled with mental clutter, mental emotional clutter, there's no space for anything left, which is close to extremely dysfunctional behavior, violent behavior. But most people are not really aware of, truly aware of that dimension within themselves, which is the essence for everything else. The mastery of life is to have some balance, so there's a formless you, and you're rooted there.

And then you deal with the stuff in the world of form and yourself as a form identity, where this form identity has certain things to do. But if it's connected consciously to the essence identity, then that changes how the form identity operates. I mentioned it earlier in other words, I used other words for it.

Very few people are right in the middle where they are very effective in the world of form as a highly developed character who can operate very effective in the world of form. And at the same time, being rooted in the formless, well, most people who are very effective in that way are like 70% in their form identity and 30% essence. That would be a person who can do a lot of good in this world.

I'm more the other way. This doesn't seem to matter so much because I teach that dimension, so it doesn't matter. But I'm not all that effective in the world of form in dealing with stuff in the world of form.

In fact, a little bit dysfunctional quite often. And that is the destiny of some people who have one particular function in this world. And my function is to show the being dimension.

So I'm 80% being and 20%, 80% essence identity and 20% form, which means often things don't get done on the level of form or I need help. So a little bit unbalanced, but I'm happy with that. It happens to be my function to show that dimension to the world.

That's why I need to be unbalanced. That's my excuse by being. I'm happy.

I'm happy. But apart from being an excuse, I also believe it's true, it's both. Erin is sitting in the front row and smiling.

She knows that often her emails don't get answered for a long time. So you have to see where you are and what you resonate with. Are you more drawn to contemplative, the being essence or the more active or somewhere in the middle, which is a good place to be.

Oprah operates very well. I'm always amazed how incredibly effective she is and how much energy she puts out into this world to create and do and do. When I'm exhausted, she's still going on.

And yet she's also rooted in being. So it's an amazing thing. I can't judge exactly the percentage, but now most humans in this world, especially if you go to big cities, go to Manhattan, go to the city of London, go to anywhere in the big cities, they are full of people who are lost in the doing dimension, in their form identity.

And it looks a little bit crazy when you see it, but there is high energy there. There is a high energy. So when I walk through Manhattan or London, I know it's a bit crazy, this running around.

What are they all trying to do? And they're all in a hurry. And obviously they're all trying to get to the next moment.

They're not rooted in this moment, but there is this high energy, this. This energy can be converted also into presence. And there are other places in the world where people hang around street corners.

Sometimes they are tropical places, but it's so hot, you can't do much. And so you hang around. And sometimes it seems, well, maybe it's easier for them to be present, but not necessarily because there's a lower energy there that's, I have high hopes for the people in the big cities that they are able to see, especially when things start going wrong for them.

I've had several former stock brokers and investment people who experienced a collapse who suddenly went deeper. So for them, it's very hard for a Wall Street, big, successful guy, man or woman, from there to go into the essence identity from this highly, so much emphasis on form identity is almost impossible without the intervening collapse of something that they had completely identified with. And then this high energy can suddenly manifest as presence, but something has to happen that first to demolish their form identity.

And usually life looks after that anyway. Sooner or later. And if they don't go into their essence identity and discover that dimension and become rooted in that dimension, then they are incredibly unhappy when there's a collapse of a highly developed form identity.

For example, there was this Madoff banker who had all these invest scam, many, many people lost all their savings through Mr. Madoff, who is now in a prison somewhere. And his sons, I think both of one quickly died of cancer after it all happened. The sons did not go to prison, although they were working in his company.

And the other one committed suicide. Potentially these two sons could have gone deeply into spiritual realization by losing their identity, by losing their money, losing their position in this world. It's an incredible opportunity, but unfortunately, probably nobody pointed it out to them.

So let's go back into stillness for just a little while. And then I will ring the bell and with three times, and that will be the end of our evening meditation. But if you want to stay for a little while longer, take your own time and to be with, stay with it for a little bit longer, if you feel like it.

[Speaker 3] (2:29:47 - 2:29:55)

Our program continues with stillness. Session three, rising above thinking in the unconditioned consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (2:30:29 - 3:38:38)

Welcome to our live meditation. I'm glad you could make it. I trust you're okay with stillness.

To be okay with stillness, you have to access the stillness within you. Otherwise it gets uncomfortable. If you experience joy or moments of joy or beauty, aliveness, a sense of aliveness, a loving connection with another human being or a loving connection with another life form, or if you have any creative idea in your life, or anything creative comes to you, all those things that I just mentioned imply that you have some access already to the stillness inside you.

Because all those things, the joy, the sense of aliveness, the lovingness towards others, the creative impulse, the creative idea, all that comes from that dimension in you. Now, many humans have some access to that dimension. That's why they feel it's good to be alive.

And for most humans, that access gets, for long periods of time, covered up again by excessive mind activity. And then it resurfaces again. It's not recognized usually directly for what it is.

It is recognized indirectly. So you may be aware that suddenly you feel a sense of joy and aliveness, or you look at another human being and you feel a deep sense of connection. So what happens there is that dimension arises.

You don't recognize it directly. You recognize it as joy. You recognize it as a loving connection or loving kindness or a creative impulse or a sense of heightened aliveness or the recognition of beauty.

You look and, ah, isn't that beautiful? And in the looking and the recognition of the beauty, you may not realize that what underlies that, that which makes it possible, is that for a moment, there was no thought activity in your mind. A space opened up.

That space, that is the stillness. And that is why you could recognize the beauty. Or that is why you felt the connection with another human or a simple aliveness, arose within you.

So it comes spontaneously to you. There are some humans, quite a few, who almost never experience that opening into the alive stillness. And their lives are truly miserable.

They may not even know that. They may not even know that their lives are miserable. They think it's normal to be continuously immersed in the thinking.

Isn't everybody else? Now, a deepening happens when you recognize that stillness directly. It may happen spontaneously in a situation.

You're looking at a tree, and for a moment, there's no thought. There's just the perception and the stillness in the background. So you begin to recognize it directly as the foundation for joy, for love, for also compassion, empathy with another.

You can't arrive at empathy through conceptual thinking. You cannot sense the aliveness of another human being through conceptual thinking. But only thinking needs to subside for a moment, and then the sense of separation that's created by continuous thinking disappears in that moment.

So I'm inviting you to enter the stillness. Another way of putting it, I'm inviting you to stop thinking without falling asleep. That's one way, but that's not the way here.

And this is the next evolutionary level for humans, rising above thinking, not abandoning thinking altogether, transcending thinking. Thinking can still operate much more powerfully, by the way, when it's rooted consciously in the stillness. Now, if you're still thinking, this becomes boring or uncomfortable.

If it's not boring or uncomfortable, then you are in that state of freedom from thought. You may sense your presence, so to speak, the presence that you are, the essence of you, sense it as a whole body realization, just a sense of presence throughout the body as you sit here. And that is a sense of heightened aliveness.

And if you choose to look around, still sensing this heightened aliveness in your entire energy field, if you then look around, you see that also whatever you are perceiving feels more alive. Even inanimate objects have a certain beingness. They are.

Even a table, chair. Even there, there is some life. They are called inanimate, which means, I suppose, lifeless.

But if you looked more deeply into the molecular structure of the chair or the table, you would see intense aliveness and intense movement. So at this very moment, the universe, we could say, appearing as you experiences itself. Of course, that's the truth.

You're not separate from the universe. It's an amazing thing. The universe appearing briefly as what we call a person, a cell within the totality, experiencing itself both on the level of multiplicity of life forms, which has included everything, through perceptions, but also on the deeper level, the universe experiencing itself as the unmanifested underlying life.

The manifested is the world of form. The unmanifested is the formless one life. Timeless, that which preceded the Big Bang that the physicists talk about.

The timeless one that did not cease to exist when the universe came into existence, but this timeless one that continues to be at the core of every life form. That which gave birth to the universe did not cease to exist by giving birth to the universe. Exist is the wrong word because it doesn't exist.

Because exist means to stand out. Ex is out, Latin. To stand exist means to stand out.

So that's all life forms exist. But the one unmanifested life does not exist because it doesn't stand out, it's in. It is, you could say.

It's being, but not existence. No, everything that exists has being. Being is at the core of each thing, the unmanifested timeless one life.

Don't think about this. I'm not using this so that you conceptually arrive at some conclusion, but for you to experience within yourself that this one timeless unmanifested life that precedes the Big Bang is the very cause of who you are. And it's absolutely still.

And it's absolutely alive. And it's absolutely empty and absolutely full. And it's you.

It's I, the one I, appearing as many I's and U's. Now, you can only really become comfortable with the continuous flux of life forms that come and go and are born and die, are born and die. You can only really become comfortable with that when you are aware of the core of yourself as the timeless stillness.

Otherwise, the continuous birth and death around you is upsetting. The continuous gain and loss and birth and death and the continuous coming and going and change is no foothold. And we have the two dimensions expressed beautifully in very ancient Greek philosophy.

I may have mentioned before, Heraclitus, Heraclitus, Heraclitus says, you cannot step into the same river twice because of this continuous flux. It's not this, it's different water. It's Pantare is the Greek.

Everything flows. Everything is subject to continuous change and metamorphosis, everything around you. He said that's the basis of his philosophy, 500 BC.

And then came another philosopher, Parmenides, I believe, who said, nothing ever changes. It's all an illusion. And he's right too, they're both right, of course.

Heraclitus talks about the manifested world. And Parmenides talks about the unmanifested one life. What the Buddha, I don't know whether the Buddha actually used that term, but I think he probably did.

Or whether it comes, it's a later, sometimes hard to tell in Buddhism scriptures whether they go as far back as the actual Buddha teaching. The unborn is a Buddhist term, meaning that which is prior to existence, the timeless one, the unborn within you. So the wonderful thing is the heart of the universe, this vast incomprehensible thing that you see the tiniest fraction of when you look at the stars at night.

This is a tiny, tiny fraction of what's then, and even that's not just tiny because you only see a few thousand stars out of billions and billions and billions, but also tiny because of the limitations of what your senses can perceive. The heart of it all, the core of it all, although on the outer level you seem pretty insignificant and me, we look pretty insignificant when we see the vastness of the universe, but there is something within you that transcends the world of form. And that is why the secret of the universe is in you.

And obviously you can't comprehend it conceptually, but there's a realization there. And it's only there that there's deep peace. That's the only place where you can find true peace.

The realization easily becomes obscured the moment you believe that you, the person, that you as the person are important. You are important, more than important, but not as the person. The person is a temporary appearance in form.

For example, you become important in your own eyes when you sit in judgment of other people, places, situations, or even yourself. So to find the place of power within you, it's almost paradoxical. All deep truths when they're expressed in words are paradoxical.

If it's not paradoxical, be careful it's not the truth. But of course the mind prefers it not to be paradoxical. To find the power within you, you need to realize your own nothingness.

And only if you realize that you are nothing, then there's the power. And since it's a paradox, I'm not going to explain that further, but I'll say it again. When you realize your own nothingness, then you realize the power at the core of your being.

And of course, that's the egoless state, the realization of one's own nothingness. That's the end of the ego, which does not mean that you go around declaring your own nothingness, because then you're somebody again who has attained nothingness. And really, if you're interested in Buddhism, what I've just been pointing to, that's the real meaning of what the Buddha pointed to the nirvana.

That is the nothingness, which is the realization of that is the aim of the Buddha's teaching. It's also the aim of the teaching of Jesus, although it's come down to us in a somewhat more distorted way, because the people who were recording it didn't quite get it. And yet, some of it still has come across in such statements as deny thyself, misunderstood mostly.

Deny thyself means recognize your own nothingness, recognize the illusion of what you thought was the self, me, triumphant me, or miserable me, doesn't matter, me. Complaining me, unfairly treated me. So as we sit here in just the simple, still presence, that also is the denying of yourself, because in that still simple presence, the self or the person, where is it?

It's gone. It's just the light of consciousness. And as you go about your life, you as the so-called person still operates in the world of form, but you don't need to go around trying to strengthen that dimension of yourself, the form.

That's the ego's reason for being there is to strengthen that. So the person becomes transparent, so to speak. And more and more, you operate as the presence behind the person.

When you do things, perceive things, so your life becomes no longer a manifestation of your conditioning, but something arises, the deeper intelligence that's unconditioned comes through you. Thank you. Welcome to our meditation.

An interesting thing to notice as you sit there, or rather here, is whether the usual voice in your head, which is the term I sometimes use to refer to your thought processes, thinking, thinking, thinking, whether the usual voice in your head is still very active or whether it's beginning to subside and is replaced, to put it like that, by a sense of spacious presence, which is a very different state of consciousness from the usual state of thinking. A great opportunity to become aware of that spacious presence, which of course is awareness itself, is to notice in yourself that whenever I'm not speaking, like now, you're not thinking, if it works for you, as it should.

So in the gaps between words, between sentences, there's an opportunity for you to access that presence in which you are conscious, but not thinking. You're not only conscious, you're much more conscious in this state than in the usual thinking state. You're much more alert, more fully here and now, and ultimately also more fully yourself.

Yourself, not the historical self that you usually identify with, you and your story, me and my story, the sense of identity derived from your life situation, which is also a story, but a deeper sense of self, much more real to sense the beingness that you are, the I am, the presence, the consciousness, the awareness. It's very satisfying to enter that dimension, or let's put it this way, to allow that dimension to arise and realize that is who essentially you are. It's very satisfying.

It liberates you from the personality which can still operate and does still operate in your life, but it no longer defines who you perceive yourself to be, who you are. But something else also happens as you become more familiar with presence and allow it into your life more often. The otherwise very dense and cumbersome personality gradually becomes transmuted, becomes one could say transparent so that the light of consciousness can shine through it.

And gradually a very deep shift happens in you. More and more, you become the unconditioned consciousness. In other words, as the personality no longer controls everything you say and do, personality of course is the conditioned mind, conditioned thinking.

As the personality no longer controls what you do, something else arises and that presence begins to run your life. And eventually there are only remnants left of that personality, enough for you to function very well on that level in this world. And nobody who is not present would even perhaps notice that you are not a personality anymore.

Another word for personality is self. The self that Jesus talked about, that the Buddha talked about, the self that the Buddha described as the fundamental delusion and that Jesus talked about when he said, deny thyself. What does that mean?

Deny thyself. It means it is implied that the self is not ultimately real and you recognize it's unreality and then the self is denied. So it means recognize the unreality of the self.

If it were real, why would you want to deny it? So when he says deny it, the implication is that it is not real, a false sense of self, a limiting sense of self. And whatever you think and do on the basis of this limiting sense of self brings conflict and suffering.

You project limitation into everything you do and say and think. You create separation continuously through the false sense of self, which is a conceptualized sense of self. And as you sit here, perhaps something within you responds powerfully to this and enjoys the arising presence.

It's also possible that the personality in you comes back up and does not like what's happening here. That's the conditioned self. So when you become restless or irritated or suddenly switch off completely and start thinking about your problems, or even when you have thoughts in your head that says, I have no idea what he's talking about, that's the conditioned self or the personality, which does not like what's happening here because what's happening here is ultimately voluntary self-annihilation, which is not really scary because if the self were real, it would be scary. But since the self is ultimately not real, self-annihilation is the end of a delusion. And if your mind is saying, I don't understand what he's talking about, of course you don't because you can't really comprehend this conceptually, although I'm using words, which are concepts, but you cannot understand this through concepts.

So why are we using words and concepts? The words and concepts point beyond themselves. They are pointers.

They are not it. In the same way that the map is not the territory. And as the Buddhists say, the finger pointing to the moon is not the moon.

So let's use another pointer. As the personality subsides here and now, something more essential emerges, an essence. The essence of who you are.

Some philosophers have used the term being to describe it, to point to it. And being, which you experience as the feeling or the sense of I am, your very beingness or essence. Being is the one thing, of course it's not a thing.

We're just using words. It's the one thing that you can be absolutely sure about. The only thing that is beyond doubt in your life.

The only thing whose reality is beyond doubt. Everything else could be a dream or an illusion. Whatever you perceive could be a dream, an illusion.

You don't know that it's not a dream or an illusion because when this meditation comes to an end, then it evaporates into the so-called past. And everything that happens quickly dissolves, dissolves, dissolves. The same way that a dream comes to an end when you wake up.

Except that this dream seems to go on and on, replaced by another and another, if it is a dream. But something, what is it then that cannot be doubted? That there is a consciousness in which, if it is a dream, whether it's a reality or a dream, doesn't matter, in which it arises, in which it is known, the light in which it appears.

So your presence cannot be doubted. Whatever happens in that presence can be doubted. But for it to happen, there must be a presence.

And of course, I said your presence, it's not your presence. It's the one universal presence, consciousness. I particularly welcome those of you who are getting tired of their personality, that cumbersome thing, that weight you carry around, and creates the same old stuff again and again.

It's a good point to reach, to become tired of yourself. That is sometimes misperceived. And then you think you're tired of the world, you're tired of living, you're tired of, that's a misperception.

What you're really tired of is the self. And the world that it creates, or seems to create out there. With the same old conflict, the same old problems, or different problems, but basically the same, deep down.

Same old thoughts in your head again and again, the same complaints, oh dear. So the spiritual path, there are many practices you can use in order to access the dimension of presence, which is the spiritual dimension. But the most direct practice that immediately accesses that dimension, we could call that surrender.

What is that? It is to offer no resistance or opposition to whatever arises in the present moment. Whatever happens, whatever arises, whatever people say or do, to become one with the is-ness of the present moment.

The present moment always already is the way it is. There's no doubt about that. Whatever form this moment takes, it is as it is.

And if internally, then you give up opposing, which is the normal state associated with dense personalities. Instead of opposing internally what is, getting upset, getting angry, arguing with what is either just in your head or out loud. Telling people what they should have done or should be doing, but are not doing.

What it should be like, but it isn't like. What I should be doing, but I'm not doing. I should be whatever form the opposition takes.

And I mentioned a few minutes ago, those of you who are getting tired of the old personality, and of course, this is part of the old personality, the way in which it interacts with people and events and places. It's not usually pleasant. There's always some resistance, always something not good enough, always something missing here and now.

Wherever you go, the structure stays with you, goes with you. And so you recognize that that's an important part of the false self that lives through opposition to what is. It strengthens itself through that sense of separation, separating itself from what's going on, condemning it, judging it, and people.

And then you realize what happens if I just accept that whatever arises in the present moment, say, oh, that's what is. You can still take action, but the foundation is acceptance, surrender. And then immediately the false self can't really operate anymore.

And something else comes in, which is essence, which is awareness, which is consciousness itself. So the most fundamental spiritual practice is surrender so that internally you're one with what is. And immediately you are a spiritual master because that's all a master.

A master does not necessarily have more knowledge than you. You may have much more knowledge than a spiritual master, but the master lives in alignment with the is-ness of the present moment. That's all.

And that's where the power arises. Because when you're aligned with the is-ness, that inner spaciousness opens up, essence is there, and that is the power that then moves through you and can become a thought. It can express itself in form through a thought, an action.

A movement, something you do or make in many ways or just as an emanation. That is true power, but it's not your power. It's universal power.

And you become one with it.

[Speaker 3] (3:40:37 - 3:40:46)

Our program continues with session four, the dimension of being and stillness within.

[Speaker 1] (3:41:18 - 4:47:57)

Welcome, and I wish you success in all your endeavors. Do what you can, but don't expect ultimate satisfaction through what you do or what you achieve through the doing. It can give you temporary satisfaction, a feeling of increased aliveness, a stronger sense of identity, of being somebody, a feeling of expansion on the outer level, a certain satisfaction which comes with having overcome obstacles, generated inner resources that perhaps you didn't know you had until you were faced with these obstacles.

That's all good, but the sense of satisfaction is not a lasting one. As long as you know that, it's fine, because satisfaction ultimately, true satisfaction is not arrived at through doing or whatever you achieve through the doing. This satisfaction, which we could also call happiness, joyous aliveness, whatever, comes from being rather than doing.

So if you do and do and do but forget to be, then you encounter frustrations one after the other. But what do I mean when I say forget to be? How can you forget to be?

The forgetfulness of being is to overlook continuously a dimension in you that's always there, but in the case of most people, never realized. So our meditation here, of course, is all about being, going into that dimension within that is formless and timeless, that dimension of consciousness, where you really step back from thinking because all thinking is also a kind of doing, where you step back from thinking. Another way of putting it, rise above thinking and realize beyond all the doing and the successes and failures and conditions and situations of your life and beyond your usual sense of self based on your past, there is something else in you and it is that which is continuously overlooked.

And it's very hard to put it into words because every word is a thought that has become a sound. So it's never it. You can only know what I'm talking about by realizing that dimension in yourself, which is by the way, the most important thing in your life, to realize that you can only realize it for yourself in the present moment, to know that you are, I am consciously to know the beingness that you are.

And by know, I don't mean intellectual or conceptual knowing, but a direct realization. You don't know the apple by talking about it or describing it, or even painting it. You can only know the apple by biting into it.

So in that sense, you can only know that in the present moment, the realization of beingness, becoming aware of your very being, make it conscious, it was always there, is always there, but had been overlooked in all the doing, which includes thinking, becoming aware of your essential beingness. You cannot understand what that means conceptually, but only directly. So if you understand what I'm talking about, then you're there.

So let's step back from thinking, don't need it right now. And when you don't remember through thinking who you are on that level of mind, what is it that remains? Let's say at this moment, if you're not thinking, a space opens up within you and you don't remember your past because all your past consists of is thoughts.

And when you're thinking, you don't remember your problems because really also problems are thoughts. So what is left when that space opens up? There is something left, but what you cannot really call it anything because it seems to be a nothingness from the point of view of the thinking mind.

But what is beyond doubt is what's left and that is beyond doubt is that you are. There is a presence there and you are that presence and that presence has no form. And that's the most amazing realization is that beyond the person that you are, more fundamentally, you are that underlying presence.

And in that presence, you are nobody in particular. You are not something that is defined and that is the source of true satisfaction to know yourself as that which is beyond form. And to some people that comes not through a spiritual teaching.

It can come when the forms of their lives are destroyed. Life does that periodically. It creates and destroys forms.

When there's loss in your life and sometimes what's left when you lose everything is that sense of beingness of just a conscious presence. Suddenly in amazement, you as the conscious presence, not as a person are looking at the world and you're amazed how lovely it is when you don't look at the world through the eyes of the person, which is thought and past. And that is the remembrance of being.

There was a spiritual teacher in the early 20th century, Gurdjieff, who called it self-remembering and he would sometimes interrupt his students when they were doing things, talking amongst each other or engaged in this or that kind of doing. And he would suddenly shout, stop. And everybody had to freeze.

And in that moment, the stop signal was meant for them to remind them of the possibility of remembering that deeper level of who they are where thought subsides and all that's left is the presence that you are. It's not a question of living either in that connectedness with being or in the doing that is normal existence in this world. It's not either or, but both fuse, merge together.

So that even while you do things and even while you think, there's still an underlying awareness of presence, of that spaciousness within. And it is that which brings about the possibility of yes, doing if necessary, with an intensity of energy, but at the same time with a detachment. So you do, but you are not in the grip of the doing.

You think, but you're not in the grip of thinking. You may have emotions, but you are not possessed by them. There is an awareness of that inner spaciousness beyond the awareness of your presence or presence, we could call it.

It's not yours. It's just how we use language. There's a presence there and you are that presence.

And that presence is essentially what is traditionally called divine presence. It is the light of the world. It is the light of consciousness.

Perhaps it is not absolutely right to say this is God, but it is the light of God because God is absolutely ineffable. God is beyond anything that we could say, talk about. So that presence is very much like the light of the sun.

That's why we sometimes use that expression. In some sense, the light of the sun is the sun. The light of the sun is still connected to the sun.

It's an emanation of the sun, but it's not the sun, that incredible, seemingly inexhaustible energy that gives of itself for billions of years or millions or billions. Of course, God is infinitely more than the sun, but in our sense-perceived universe, the analogy we can find for God is to call it the sun. That's why in some traditional societies, there was sun worshiping.

Of course, there's far more to the sun also than we know. That's another story. So there's the sun and there's the light of the sun.

So the presence is the light of the one, the God, and you are that. And there is your true identity, which is not a comparative identity as the usual sense of identity is, the egoic. You're not, you don't have a sense of who you are because you're not that, you're not, you don't get a sense of identity through differentiating yourself from others.

It is deeper than that. It's not comparative. It's also a deep sense of what the ego always looks for, the sense of worthiness.

So who you are beyond form is very precious. And you know that, you sense that. And when that's present in you, you know it's there.

You sense it sometimes more strongly than other times. Then you are detached, as I said, from what you do. There's a spaciousness in which you do things.

You're also detached from the outcome that you want to achieve. If it works, fine. If it doesn't work, that's fine too.

Loss and gain, success and failure, when you succeed or you gain, yes, you're pleased. You can go out and celebrate, but it's not, it's no longer that artificial high that it gives you when that's all you know, and then you suddenly feel invincible and you've made it and you go, oh yeah, just wait. Wait a week or a year or three years or five years, and you'll see that the very success has turned into problems or dissatisfaction or leaves you.

So when things are going fine, it's fine, you're pleased. And when you lose or you fail, there's the same detachment there because you're in touch with something deeper than the world of form. So you're not devastated at loss or failure.

It doesn't destroy your sense of who you are in your essence. If you're out of touch with being, then of course it does destroy your sense of who you are. And some people commit suicide when they lose all their money or when they lose their reputation.

They commit suicide because they feel their very sense of identity has been diminished to such an extent that they can't live anymore. But if you're connected with a deeper level, the transcendent, as I sometimes call it, the I am that is beyond form, then what often happens at some great loss, you actually feel it more strongly. You sense who you are beyond form more strongly when you lose forms.

And that's an amazing experience, an amazing realization. Stepping back from thinking, from remembering who you are on the level of form and sensing who you are on a more essential level, small essential dimension right now. And this is the only thing that is beyond any doubt.

I am. Everything else may be an illusion. You may be dreaming right now.

In some sense, you are. And in that dream, let's say you are dreaming, you dream of looking at a screen and a person says, remember that you are. You couldn't have the dream if you were not there having the dream.

The consciousness, the light in which the dream appears. There couldn't be a dream without a presence to whom the dream appears. You are that.

So it's the one thing that is real and beyond any doubt. Philosophers have been looking for it. What's the one thing that cannot be doubted?

And has, of course, the famous Descartes, philosopher Descartes, mistook thinking for that. But if he had gone one step further within, he would have realized it's not thinking, not I think, therefore I am. It's I know that I am, therefore I am.

I sense the I am-ness that I am. I sense the presence that I am. And there's no duality.

The duality appears when I formulate a sentence. I sense the presence that I am, subject and object. But really, the presence senses itself.

So it's called self-realization, the transcendent self, not the egoic self. Welcome. Welcome.

I just want to remind you that we are not here to do anything. We are here to, one could say, experience something rather than do something. And what we are here to experience, and even that's not quite right, I'll come to that in a minute, what we're here to experience is very subtle, but very powerful.

Whatever name we give that reduces it. It's not that. It's very vast.

For the time being, let's just call it stillness. Now, when I said we're here to experience something, that's not absolutely right. But whenever we use language, we are bound to falsify that which goes far beyond concepts.

It's not so much that we're here to experience something as to find that which underlies all experience, a dimension that is deeper than any experience, becoming aware of that within yourself. So some of you may have written down or have in your mind goals you want to achieve in life, and that's good. It's unlikely that achieving stillness will figure prominently as one of your goals, or even number one, and yet it's the most important thing in your life.

But it's a good thing that it's not on your list of goals to be achieved, because if you make it into a goal to be achieved, it implies that you need the future to achieve stillness, which is, of course, true for all other goals, but not for that which we call stillness. Temporarily, we just call it, for the time being, stillness. If you make it into a goal to be achieved, you place it into the future, and you'll never find it, because it's inseparable from the present moment, the now, the now that usually people are not aware of as an actual presence.

And here we have another pointer we could use instead of stillness, and that is presence. And as the word implies, presence is inseparable from the present, the now. Now, for most people, yet the now is not a living realization.

They are only aware of what happens in the now, and even that's not quite right. They're not really aware of it. They are reactive towards it, and they are identified with it.

They are identified with their thoughts that arise. They are reactive to what happens outside. So I'm here just talking a little bit, giving you pointers with every sentence, every word is really a pointer towards that.

And I trust that as we sit here together, giving up the idea that we are here, to do something, as we sit here together, a realization arises within you that is the living presence within. The thinking mind stops for a moment, and there's just spacious awareness, stillness. You haven't gone to sleep.

You've become still without falling into dreamless sleep, without falling into dreams. Just something has arisen that usually you would have overlooked. And our meditation here, if we want to call it that, is to become aware of this space within, another pointer, the stillness, this space, becoming totally at ease with the present moment, a very rare state for most humans.

Usually they're only at ease when some desire has just been fulfilled, and then they're at ease for a little while, a few minutes, perhaps. Or they are at ease because they're so tired. They're moving towards sleep.

So I'm here to lead you into that realization of inner stillness, of that dimension within, lead you through words, which are only pointers, and through the demonstration of presence, which you can sense if you pay attention to the underlying stillness that is here as I speak, behind the words, between the words. Tune into that, nothing personal in that, nothing to do with this person. And as you tune into that, the same dimension arises within you, which again has nothing to do with that person that you think you are.

So there is a dimension that transcends the person. It's in this person, and it's in that person. The dimension that transcends the personal and the person, and everything to do with the person, the personal history, the personal problems, the life situation, the ups and downs of the life situation.

They will always be there, the ups and downs of the life situation. But the miracle is finding the transcendent dimension within you, without which life cannot be a pleasant experience, not for long. It cannot be satisfying, not for long, never for long.

So without the realization of the transcendent dimension, the formless, spacious stillness, nothing will satisfy you. It's frustrating. Life is very frustrating without that dimension, if you haven't found it.

But of course, the dimension is there in everyone. It's not something that you need to achieve. You can't achieve it, let alone achieve it in the future.

You can discover it here and now within. It's lurking there underneath all the doing, underneath all the thinking. It's always there, completely ignored by most people.

If you're comfortable with theistic terms, you could say God is always present, but completely ignored by most people. Because if God has any meaning, it is the transcendent dimension of life. It transcends means it is beyond whatever arises in life, beyond thought, beyond physical forms, beyond form.

It transcends form. It is beyond past and future. It transcends time.

It has nothing to do with time. It is presence. Eternal presence.

And presence, eternal presence or eternity is not some weird abstract philosophical concept. It can be, and it points to a living realization. So the most precious thing to find in life is that there's stillness inside you always.

You just have to pay attention to it. But then the strange thing is that when you become aware of stillness, you realize that the awareness and the stillness are not two, but one. So it's only when we use language, we say I'm aware of stillness.

You put it into language. So when you're aware of stillness, there is a knowing where concepts are not needed. Words are not needed.

And there is no duality really. It's only when you translate it into words, there's a duality and you say, I'm aware of stillness. But what really happens is that awareness and stillness are a single realization.

There is no subject and object in this realization. When we talk about it, it sometimes seems that there is a subject. I am aware of stillness.

I can feel the stillness inside me. When you put it into words, that's how it's the subject and object. But when you look more deeply beyond words, you see that there's not me as an entity who is aware of stillness as something in me.

It's only when we use language and that duality appears. When I'm aware of stillness, really the awareness and the stillness are one. And the I am, when you say I am aware of stillness, you could say, no, in this moment, I am aware of stillness.

That's through words. It's not the actual truth of it, it's not quite, it's not how it is because the I am, the awareness and the stillness are all one. So when you say I'm aware of stillness, it really means I am aware of I am.

I am aware of the I am, that I am. There's a hint of that in the Old Testament. When God is asked, what's your name?

God says, I am that I am. The essence of all identity is I am. So you could say, instead of I'm aware of stillness, you can say, I'm aware that I am.

Or you could say, the I am that I am is aware of itself. So instead of saying, I'm aware of stillness, you can also say, the awareness that I am, that I am is aware of itself. Because I am and awareness is one.

And I am and awareness and stillness are one. The stillness is aware of itself. The awareness is aware of itself.

Duality collapses in that realization because duality applies to the world of form. That which underlies the world of form, the transcendent, the divine, if you're comfortable with that word, transcends duality because duality is the beginning of multiplicity of billions of forms. But what is the source of the billions of life forms?

The one, the source out of which all life forms arise. And all life forms are an emanation arising from the one source of all life. The one life that transcends all forms of life is beyond all forms of life.

The one, the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end, the timeless, eternal one. And that is not some abstract philosophical concept, although sometimes it becomes that when people only talk about it. It's a realization within yourself because the one is within you.

It is the core, the space that is the essence of who you are, the source of all life, the timeless source of all life. So we could say then we're here to realize the I am that I am. So let's stay with that for a moment.

I am, can you become aware of the fact that you are? That's what it is. This is one way of realizing that stillness.

Can you become aware of the fact that you are? I am. Really we're talking about becoming aware of the being.

To be, I am. Your presence, the presence that underlies the person at this moment. Can you sense that, feel that?

We don't have words really that are adequate. The spaciousness of being, the stillness of being. And then you get a sense that without needing to remember your past, you get a very strong sense of the essence of your being, the beingness of who you are.

Without remembering your past, so your past has very little or virtually nothing to do with who you actually are, where your sense of identity arises, the sense of presence, of aliveness. So I am. How do you know that you are?

Well, I know it. You can't go beyond that. It knows itself.

You know yourself as the very presence, which is not an object in your experience. It's the eternal subject of all experience. And that eternal subject of all experience knows itself, but not conceptually.

It doesn't know anything about itself. It knows itself directly. And that is the transcendent dimension within you, or the divine within you.

And then you realize that everything that you perceive in the world of form is an emanation of that and is also divine. But you don't know that everything in the world of form is also divine unless you find that dimension within yourself. And only from the realization of that dimension as a continuing underlying sense of presence or stillness, then you can look at the world of forms and sense the divine in each form.

But you can only sense the divine in each form because you sense it in yourself. Only through the divine in yourself can you sense the divine in each form, in each other human being, including all the human beings that have no idea of the divine within themselves that you encounter. And any human being that has no idea of the essence of who they are, are to a greater or lesser degree mad.

So this is the normal humans you encounter in the world. There's an overlay of madness, but in essence they are divine. So that's what you see, that's what you sense when you interact with them and that what you truly relate to in others can only relate to that in others because you can sense that in yourself.

So to put in very simple terms, there is a stillness in you even when you talk to people. And that stillness in you senses that underneath the mad mind of the other human being, nothing personal in that, there's also that dimension and that's what you sense in the other. But you only sense it because in the background of who you are, you can sense an alive stillness.

While you listen, even while you speak, there's still an awareness of the I am, the stillness, the presence. Now, many people are worried about saving the world and the only thing that can save a world that is otherwise somewhat insane is for humans to come to that self-realization, the realization of who they are in essence, the realization of the divine within and that's what will save the world. Because whatever you do then is imbued with that realization.

And in the absence of that realization as a continuing knowing in the background, continuing sensing of presence, in the absence of that, whatever you do, no matter how good your intentions are, will have unforeseeable consequences, consequences, repercussions and will create new problems. Let's go back for a moment to I am, aware of the stillness within. Those three words, I am, aware of the stillness, are all one.

The I am is the awareness, the awareness is the stillness, the I am is the stillness. The stillness becomes aware of itself, God becomes aware of itself, here and now, through this form, through this form.

[Speaker 3] (4:52:19 - 4:52:27)

Our program continues with session five, abiding in inner stillness.

[Speaker 4] (4:52:32 - 4:53:07)

Welcome to our meditation.

[Speaker 1] (4:53:17 - 5:26:14)

The focus of our meditation is inner stillness. What happens outside of our meditation doesn't really matter so much. Stillness is just a word, a pointer.

To most people it means absence of noise and in that sense, stillness could be called a negative pointer. It points to the absence of something but it doesn't really refer to the absence of noise, even the absence of inner noise, although it is true that when the inner noise stops, there is stillness. But every pointer we use is not really it.

It's not quite right ever. It reduces that to which it points to something we think we can understand. So it's much more than the absence of something or as a pointer that works.

Another word for stillness is presence and that's a positive pointer. By implication, presence points to the presence of something. The presence of what?

All you can say here is the presence of presence. So there are two levels. One could say to who you are.

On the one hand, on one level, you are the presence of certain things, the existence of certain things. You are the existence of the body, the existence of sense perceptions, the existence of emotions, the existence of thoughts. So we can call that the presence of something.

That's you as a person. And here we are not concerned with that. We're concerned with who you are beyond the person, that deeper level.

And we are here together, a few thousand people perhaps in different parts of the planet, going beyond the individual persons, personalities, to a deeper level of being. And that's our meditation. And I am speaking, the words point to it.

The words, of course, are not it. The silence, the stillness, the presence which cannot be perceived with the senses is what matters here. So there's nothing for you to do except be who you are beyond the personality and realize there is a stillness in you that has nothing to do with the personality and its problems.

Because a large part of your personality consists of your problems. As you access the deeper level of stillness or where you just sense, as I sometimes put it, your own presence, it's not your own, but let's just put it this way, where you sense your own presence or rather where you sense the presence that you are. You are that presence.

Before you become this or that person, there is a presence, an aliveness. There's a light of consciousness in which the person arises. But the light of consciousness itself is not the person.

It transcends the person. It is not separate from it. The light assumes a certain form and becomes a person in the same way that when you watch a movie, there's a light, the projector light, and the ways in which the light is obstructed by the film and those obstructions of the light, not never total obstructions because then you wouldn't see anything, partial obstructions of the light, and that becomes the movie, the characters, the events, and so on.

That's a little analogy. And normal life isn't really that much different. So if you only know the obstructions to the light of consciousness, the light of God, then you are trapped on the level of problems and drama and difficulties, anxieties, regrets, past, future, me, me.

But here we become aware of the presence, not the presence of something in us that would make it into some formal thing again, but more simply the presence of presence. So the presence underlies the words that I speak. It underlies the words that you hear.

And so I am inviting you to be aware of that in you that underlies the sense perceptions and the thoughts. We could call that the essence of who you are that transcends the person. That's the most important realization in your life, but it seems to be still a secret because nobody, very few seem to know about it.

And many are not interested yet until existence as the person only becomes increasingly frustrating, both for the individual and for the collective on the planet, society, civilizations, where the transcendent dimension is missing completely. Nothing, no individual or civilization can remain sane for long without it. There's an increasing madness, if that is all you know.

And the presence, the realization of presence frees you from bondage to the person, the personality with all its little concerns that keep it busy all day long. And on a larger scale, the collective realize that the concerns of the collective that you hear through the media and so on may be relatively important, but ultimately they are not. Just as your problems, which sometimes are related to the problems of the collective, for example, now in times of the recession and so on, your problems too are ultimately not that important.

They certainly won't be important in 50, 60 years' time to anybody. They're not to you because you as the person probably won't be there anymore. That's quite soon.

I suggest you visit a graveyard from time to time and look at the gravestones with the names on them. All these people thought that their problems were incredibly important, that their successes were important, incredibly important, their failures were very important. And none of this suddenly matters 50 years later, all gone.

And another generation is there with the same beliefs, totally absorbed in their life, their so-called life. But without connection to the transcendent dimension, they're not really fully alive. And they're not really enjoying life except as temporary passing sense pleasures, a high followed by a low.

And on that level only, life, so-called life will always disappoint you, even when you achieve change that you wanted, which is fine, but it cannot give you real satisfaction for long. Only discovering the transcendent in you can do that. So real satisfaction is realizing who you are beyond that level of person, form, we could call it.

Realizing who you are sounds as if you suddenly understood something. It's not, you can't really understand it, but you can, it's a being it rather than understanding it. So you'll notice when you join me here in the state of not thinking, just being present, at that time, something other than the person with its past and future and concerns has arisen.

Something other than the usual person. So the person has stepped aside or receded temporarily and as a presence, which has no content as such because it's space. Let's give a little analogy that may be a little bit weird to you, almost humorous.

Let's imagine, I'm inviting you to imagine that you are a bowl, like a salad bowl or a fruit bowl. There's nothing in it, but you could put things in there, of course. Now, if the bowl wanted to realize its true identity, only in terms of the form, it would not have a total understanding of its true identity, even its true purpose, if it only were aware of its own form, even if it's beautiful, because of course, the essence of the bowl is the space within it.

That's why it's there, why it has come into being. So the bowl would only gain a full understanding of itself if it were aware of itself, not only as a form, but it would also realize that space is actually more essentially who I am than the form around it. You can have the same analogy for room.

Think that you are a room, am I? And then including the furniture. So on the level of form only, you would think of yourself as consisting of the walls and ceiling and floor, which would be, in this analogy, the physical body.

And then you would also think of yourself as the furniture in the room, which in this analogy would be all your thoughts and feelings, emotions and sense perceptions, all the things that happen, the stuff in your mind. And you would be missing the essence, which is the space of any room. The essence of any room is the space.

So if you are a room and only aware of yourself as the floor, the ceiling and the walls and the furniture in it, you would have a very limited understanding of yourself. It's just an analogy, but that's how most humans live, with that very limited view or understanding of themselves. So there is an essence to who you are that is formless.

And that is why we are here in between the words, behind the words that I speak and that you hear. That essence is there in you, but it applies not just to you. The entire universe has a formless essence, and that is the, in Indian philosophy, the essence in you would be called Atman, and the external essence is Brahman, God within and God without.

God has no form. God is the only thing that has no form, and therefore, of course, God is not a thing or a being. God is being, but not a being.

If you believe that God is a being rather than transcendent being, then you're trapped in a religion where the transcendent is missing, and you would have been trapped in an ideology. But you can have a religion where the transcendent is there if you realize that God is not a personality, God is not an entity somewhere in space or time, not a being, but being itself, which pervades the entire universe. And it's in you.

You are it. You can have that realization with a religion. You can have that realization even without the belief structures of a religion.

It's the spiritual dimension. It's a joy to sense that. It's liberating.

And then you go through life knowing, not just on the level of thought, a deeper knowing, knowing, let's put it like this for a moment, nothing that words can say is absolutely true, just pointers, knowing that there's two of you, so to speak. When I say so to speak, it means don't take that as an absolute statement. It's a helpful pointer.

You can go through life knowing that there's two of you, the person, the form, including all your psychological makeup and so on, and the essence, the formless, timeless presence of presence, consciousness, whatever. And let's see the master, the spiritual master knows that and believes that, and that is that mastery to realize that in your life. That's why you are here, wonderfully liberating, knowing as a direct and immediate realization that there's the person that still operates in the world, but you can sense the presence, the stillness in the background, sometimes even in the foreground, and it doesn't say anything, of course, but it changes also slowly the way in which the person operates in the world, because the person who only knows that, when you know yourself only as the person, you don't operate very well in this world.

You create a lot of problems and conflict for yourself and others. You contribute to the soap opera of daily existence or the drama of daily existence, but when the dimension of essence is there, it gradually changes the way in which the person relates to others, interacts, responds to situations, a more intelligent way of living in this world, and also a loving way of living in this world, a kind way of living in this world, which the person alone is not really capable of. It tries sometimes.

Ultimately, even a more effective way of being in the world in what you do, because you don't create any longer unnecessary obstacles, which is what the person, if there's nothing else, does. In the absence of realization.

[Speaker 3] (5:31:10 - 5:31:18)

Our program continues with session six, being in thoughtless awareness.

[Speaker 1] (5:31:30 - 6:22:28)

This is our evening meditation, which means more silence than words, hopefully, because you never know what comes out of this mouth. I don't. I don't.

If you feel at any point you want to close your eyes, it's fine. There's a common belief that when you meditate, your eyes need to be closed, but they don't need to be closed. It's wonderful to realize you can meditate with your eyes open.

Of course, what do I mean by meditate? Quite simply, being in thoughtless awareness. That's meditation.

And as I speak, and as you listen, you can be in thoughtless awareness, just a presence, why not? You don't have to be always a heavy person, carrying the baggage of past and a mind full of stuff. There is another way of being in this world, and that's to be the presence, and this is our meditation.

And even as I speak, you can be the presence because there's nothing to think about. What I'm saying is so simple that you cannot figure it out by thinking about it because there's nothing to figure out. You can't, what is he saying?

What he's saying, exactly what he's saying, you can't say, oh, I'm trying to understand what he's saying. There's nothing to understand. Stepping out of thinking does not involve further understanding through thinking.

That may be a little insulting, particularly to those of you who are highly educated and identify excessively with the content of your mind, that thinking is not the highest faculty in a human being. And that is a revolutionary statement that not many people in the mainstream culture would agree with because all they know themselves is as thinking entities. But once you discover that thinking is not the highest because you've touched something, a dimension in yourself that's beyond thinking, that is an evolutionary leap.

Even if you fall back into thinking, for a moment you have leapt like the first fish trying to leap out of the sea because they say life has developed in the sea and trying to crawl on land. It's you stopping thinking. And then it gets too difficult and then the fish runs back, gets back into the sea.

But that analogy, of course, we need to forget now because it's not going to take us several million years as it took to the fishes before they could start walking on land. If that whole story is true, who knows? It doesn't matter.

So as you might have noticed, what I'm talking about is very simple because I'm simply guiding you into presence, that's all. But more important than the words is what's behind and in between the words. And we could call that spaciousness or we could call that stillness.

Doesn't matter what you call it, but you become more aware of the spaciousness than the words and the spaciousness is within you. It's there the moment the stream of thinking subsides and there's only the presence left. If your mind still tends to interfere and take you out of presence, allow the body, your body, to participate in the meditation so that you become present with every cell of the body.

Every cell of the body becomes present. Now, somebody might say, please explain what you mean by that. No, I won't.

It's too simple for that. Just sense the aliveness in your body. Anywhere where you can feel it first is fine, the hands or the legs or the feet, and then the entire energy field that pervades the body becomes part of presence.

And at first it seems that you, the consciousness, are observing the inner body feeling. But if you go into it more deeply, you realize that there's no longer a subject-object relationship between you, the presence, and the feeling of the inner body. You, the presence, and the feeling of the inner body merge, and the totality of that becomes the state of presence.

So it's no longer an observer and the observed. There's a merging of the observer and the observed. So it means the entire being becomes aware.

And that's a lovely state, peaceful. And then it's fairly easy not to drift off into thinking tomorrow's breakfast or next week's problems or last year's disappointments. And many other things that thinking is concerned with.

My problematic life. Somebody, perhaps it was Carl Jung, I'm not sure, said you cannot solve the problems of this world on the same level of consciousness that created the problems. So you can't solve your personal problems, which everybody has, unless you rise to a different state of consciousness, which is why we are here.

And when you solve your personal problems, that a sufficient number of humans do that, then that will affect the world problems. And that's a true, how truly you can change the world or to put it more accurately, how that change can happen through you. It's not you, the doer, who is going to change the world, but it can happen through you.

In the meantime, there's nothing wrong. In fact, it's wonderful to alleviate suffering where you see it in this world, where you feel called upon to help in your immediate environment or elsewhere. That's a wonderful thing to do.

But the causal level of the world's problems lies in the collective consciousness or unconsciousness of the world. And that is the only place, the consciousness, where deep and permanent change can happen so that eventually you don't need to help other humans anymore. They don't need your help anymore.

You can commune joyfully with them. So you deal, of course, with the effects of unconsciousness in this world. There's a lot of suffering, physical and psychological.

And your focal point, even as you help others, your focal point needs to be this shift in consciousness. So the entire body is meditating, so to speak, is present as you sit here. And you can now perhaps easily verify the effectiveness of a meditation question that was one of the favorite meditations of Ramana Maharshi, the Indian sage.

And that was the simple question, who am I? He said, just ask yourself that question and go deeply into it and then see what happens. Who am I?

And a little hint. I don't know if he gave that hint. The answer is not in words.

The answer is, let's see if it comes to you. Who am I? And you need to be, of course, alert and still after the question has been asked so that you can find out, who am I?

I'll give you another hint. You can't think about it. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

Then you get confused and then you will say, either you'll say, of course, I'm so-and-so. Of course, then you're certain, but you're well below the answer. Or you say, I don't know, I'm so confused now.

You're confusing me. That's because you're trying to find an answer through thinking. Who am I?

What remains is just an alertness, an alert space. That's consciousness. Let's call it your consciousness, but it's not yours.

That's your consciousness minus the content, minus forms. Who am I? And if you had, if somebody were forcing you to give an answer in words, the truthful answer would be, I don't know, because it is not through any word or concept that you can know who you are.

So on the level of words or concepts, you have to say, I don't know. And yet there is undoubtedly a presence there that has no name and has no content and has no past and no future and no problems. Totally intangible, formless.

This was what Jesus referred to as the kingdom of heaven, heaven, the vastness of sky. Heaven and sky, in some words, are the same word in some languages. He had to find some kind of word to describe the spaciousness of that inner state.

So he called it the kingdom in modern terminology, the dimension or the realm of vastness or spaciousness. But it's not the outer spaciousness, it's the inner. But of course, all words refer to outer things.

The kingdom of heaven is within you. And that's why, as it has no content and no form, the Buddha called it emptiness. So that is there.

You don't need to sit in meditation to be that, to sense that in the background, in daily life. You practice thoughtlessness. Thoughtless in English has negative connotations, but it shouldn't have.

It implies it's unawareness, and you don't know what you're doing. But there's a positive. Here, when we use thoughtlessness, it has a very positive meaning.

You've risen above thought. The way it's used in normal culture is you've fallen below thought, and you don't know what you're doing. This spaciousness, this inner spaciousness, can be there at any time in your daily life.

You bring in until it becomes permanent in the background of your being, so that no matter what you do, and even while you're thinking, there's still something you sense that's deeper than thinking. So you're no longer lost in thinking. In other words, you are not the slave of the mind anymore.

You're not possessed by that entity anymore. And then it functions beautifully. Being here should help you to grow in, as I sometimes call it, presence power, so that this presence arises more through you, in you.

So in your daily life, you can suddenly enter the state of spacious awareness in between two actions, for example. Walking from here to there, picking something up, looking out of the window. Five seconds of alert, spacious awareness as you're looking at the clouds, instead of looking out of the window and having some kind of commentary about what you're looking at.

Not another rainy day. You don't need that. And even more beautiful sunshine, you can go beyond that too, and just spacious awareness.

Five seconds looking out of the window, getting dressed while you put on your shoes, just the alert presence, instead of projecting yourself mentally to some future moment. And as I said before, whenever you're waiting for something, a wonderful opportunity for entering that, go into the body, that can very easily take you there, or pay attention to sense perceptions, and feel, as you pay attention to sense perceptions, feel the presence without which there would be no sense perceptions. You can do that now, that's quite...

So there's what you see and what you hear. These are the two predominant sense perceptions here. There's what you see and what you hear.

That makes up what I call it, as you might know, the surface of the present moment, or the sense perceptions are the surface of the present moment, changes all the time. And then there's the depths of the present moment that does not change, the now that is forever here, totally timeless. That is your presence, that space.

So you are what arises, and more fundamentally, you are the space in which it arises. Ultimately, they're not separate, but we don't know to go into that now. You are the space for whatever arises in that space of consciousness.

So content, I call it, there's content, the content of your consciousness is sense perceptions, seeing, hearing, smelling, touching. The content of your consciousness is thoughts. The content of your consciousness is emotions.

Those are basically, your life consists of put these into a pot, sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions, stir, add a little bit of cayenne pepper. That's the drama. And whatever else, other spices that you want to add.

But basically that is your life. The life which changes, your life is different from your life and your life and your life. They're all different lives and different worlds, but basically the basic ingredients of your life and whatever your life situation is, are sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions.

Is there anything else on the surface? No. Now, all of that is content.

All of that is form. Now, for most people, that's all they know about their lives. They only know their life and themselves as a mixture.

And every mixture is somehow different of sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions. And that's all there is, as far as they know. What they don't realize is without the light of awareness in which sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions appear, they wouldn't even, they couldn't exist.

That is the space for them. And that is the consciousness itself. And that, once you realize that dimension within yourself, the content of your life is of secondary importance.

Before, it mattered so much what happened or didn't happen or failed to happen or success or failure that was, and you were so miserable when things went wrong and still elated when you fall in love. Of course, it doesn't last. When you only know content, you get more and more frustrated with life.

And then you realize there is a deeper dimension, and that deeper dimension is who I am essentially. That is the true I, not the I that identifies with content forms that arise. So that is truly the secret of life for humans and others, I suppose, wherever they are, on this planet and elsewhere in the galaxy and other galaxies, because it cannot be that much different in other places in this galaxy or other galaxies.

There will be form and space. Both externally, you can look around and you can always see stuff in a room. You see the furniture.

If you're outside, you see trees and so on. Or if you look up into space at night, you see stars, most of which are suns, distant suns. And what else do you see?

Well, you don't see it, but there's vast spaciousness there. And even in this room, you might not pay attention to it, but this room could not exist if in addition to the furniture in this room and the physical bodies in this room and all the other things in this room and the ceiling floor and the walls of this room, if there were not space. The space is the essence of this room.

You can't say the room, if you describe the room, usually people would write down, give children a school exercise, describe this room, ceiling, walls, floor, what's in this room. Is that all there is? Yes.

Forgotten anything? No. Except the most important thing, forgotten.

It's the space. There's already a beautiful few short verses about this in the ancient Chinese Tao Te Ching, where it says, if you have a vessel or bowl, that which makes it useful is the space within it. It's not the vessel, it's the space, that's the essence of it.

Those are lines. So in the same way, your life, or life anywhere in this galaxy or the most distant galaxy, I can guarantee you that even if they don't have physical bodies, there will be some forms and there will be space in which these forms exist. So no matter where you look, out there, here, the room, outside, it always applies, there is form, content, and space.

And space seems to be infinite. If you look into outer space, if you try to comprehend, nobody has reached the end of space. Nobody can say, does it end anywhere?

That was a problem for me when I was eight or nine years old. I tried to imagine the end of space. And go on, and go on, and then suddenly, but what's beyond that?

And if there is something beyond it, it's not the end. And I asked my father, and he tried also to visualize, and he couldn't do it either. And this is why it's called infinity.

Infinity, infinity, and another lovely word that's one with it, really, eternity. Infinity and eternity, they're really one. I think that Einstein would agree with that.

Time and space, space-time continuum. And infinity and eternity are your own essence, because what you discover within is the very foundation for the universe. That spaciousness is the space out of which everything came before the Big Bang.

Just timeless, eternal, eternity and infinity, no form. Scientists, they stop there. Sometimes they try to figure out the Big Bang, but nobody tries to go before the Big Bang, because you can't.

There was no before because there was no time. I can't understand that. You go mad if you try to understand it.

But you can know this experientially within yourself as inner space, just presence. And as we saw the other day, we talked about the medieval form of spirituality like St. Francis attempting, not seeking, pleasant forms. St. Francis never sought out. He appreciated when they came, flowers and so on, but not seeking them out. In fact, being very happy with unpleasant forms, almost seeking out unpleasant forms. And seeking out, like in the story that we heard, the man who went to the city square, sat there in the middle and got mocked and things thrown at him every day.

And he went back every day in an attempt, I would call it, he wouldn't have called it that because he used different terminology, in an attempt at self-annihilation, the annihilation of the ego. If you go back to the same square where you're mocked and people throw things at you and pull your hair and laugh at you and you go back every day, it is an attempt at inviting the death of the ego the ego being identification with form, with content. And if you make it so unpleasant of content in your life, the idea behind it is that it forces you into transcendence.

It forces you into going beyond content and suddenly you find that deep peace inside and you don't know where it comes from. And externally, there's the unpleasant conditions, but you have disidentified from them, thereby the ego has died. And then whatever terminology used to explain what happens to you then depends on your culture.

As this man might have said, the monk, I don't know what he would have said, I became one with God or the sacredness or infinity, eternal peace. And traditionally, one spiritual path in Christianity is closely related to that. And that is identification with the suffering of Jesus.

On the cross. So any suffering that you undergo in your mind, you undergo it together with you, you're repeating the archetype of the suffering of Jesus. That is how the image of the man on the cross can lead, if you identify with it, can, there's no guarantee it could mislead you to, there are lots of ways in which it can go wrong.

It can lead to self-annihilation of the ego and then to an awakening into the formless. And you're then, in whatever terminology you use, you're one with the one, you're one with God, you are self-realized, enlightened, whatever you want to use, or you're simply at peace. So that can work too.

Most Christians have no idea these days that that can be a spiritual path. For them, they practice a more superficial form of Christianity, mostly fairly superficial. A few Christians may go deep, but many practice it.

They don't see the depths in their own tradition. And because so many people don't see it anymore, Christianity is now at a dangerous point. Nothing is forever, even everything evolves.

So Christianity will either deepen or change or disappear. And even the Pope knows that. He said, pointed to the fact that it was a critical time for Christian religion.

If you are a practicing Christian, this can still be a viable path to reaching that egoless state of oneness with whatever you want to call it. If you're a Buddhist, that can still be a viable path or whatever it is. Or you may not follow any tradition.

And this is for the first time, as far as I know in the history of humanity, that spirituality arises without belonging to any particular, any one tradition, without rejecting any of the older traditions. So self-annihilation, basically that's the basis of St. Francis. Also practiced by many yogis and sadhus in India who practice extreme austerities and seek out unpleasantness.

You don't have to do that. That's why you're here. But if you were not here, there are many other ways.

You could go to India and sit in a cave for 20 years, being stung by mosquitoes, but not minding anymore. And all kinds of bugs come and creep on you. And a few people will come and feed you.

It won't be gourmet food, but that's okay. You don't want gourmet food anymore. You want the worst so that you can disidentify from form, so that life forces you deeper, so that you go beyond all form.

That's the idea behind it. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. And if it doesn't work, then you just become more and more lifeless.

Have another go next time. But the most rapid way to self-annihilation and easier, more pleasant, but you need to be up to it. Your consciousness needs to have reached a certain level where this becomes a viable path for you.

And that is simply the cessation of compulsive thinking to end compulsive thinking, so that you can enter by choice, I would say, and choose when you want to think and don't want to think. And this is why, as I've quoted the wonderful words of the sage Nisargadatta Maharaj, who defined meditation when they asked him, what is meditation? And in his unique way of speaking, he said, meditation, it's the radical refusal to harbor thoughts.

That's how he spoke. I saw some old videos. The radical refusal to harbor thoughts.

And that stopped some people's minds. I used to quote years ago in talks I haven't in a long time, the Zen master who, when asked to explain the true meaning of Zen, which even the monks who had been in the monastery for 10, 15, and 20 years didn't understand, please explain the true meaning of Zen. And wherever he went and he was asked that question, he would never give a verbal answer.

He would only raise his finger and look at you. And so the questioner would go, did you hear what I said? But a few questioners got it.

And that's called Satori. Satori is a moment of a flash of enlightenment. It might not last, but it's a flash.

Great teaching. Zen originally came into being because Buddhism had already become burdened with conceptualization and intellectualism. And then Zen represented a renewal, a complete doing away with all scriptures, everything, just a direct pointing to the heart of humans or whatever the scriptures later said about it.

Direct pointing, no more reference to ancient scriptures. And you even have stories like the Buddha statues, the Buddha rupas, not to venerate them excessively. In fact, if the Zen master got cold in the winter, he would be quite capable of throwing the wooden Buddha statue into the fire to keep.

So Zen was a very radical thing. And then over the centuries, it became assumed more form. Some of the power was lost, except in a few masters here and there.

Then in itself, it became already also burdened to some extent. But originally, Zen is a wonderful, wonderful teaching. Basically, as you know, it says, don't think.

That's Zen. I just saved you 20 years in the monastery. Let's just go within for a moment and close our eyes.

I will use the bell as a signal to bring you back here. And then we'll finish our meditation. You can go into the body if you like.

[Speaker 3] (6:26:17 - 6:26:30)

Thank you. Our program continues with session seven, the transcendence of no thinking.

[Speaker 1] (6:27:08 - 7:41:50)

I sometimes speak of bringing the transcendent dimension into your life, without which your life, no matter what you achieve, is very limited. The transcendent dimension is not an achievement. It's more like a discovery because it's already here.

So it's not something you need to get, which would imply future, but the discovery of something that's already here. It's not something, but we have to use words. And this is about the most important thing, no matter who you are or what your function is in this world, this is about the most important thing there is.

So we are here right now so that you can deepen your access to it, or for some of you, discover for yourself what it is. Discover it directly. So here today, see if you can experience yourself as presence rather than as a person.

When you experience yourself as presence, we could also say the presence within you, the presence that you are, that is the transcendence of the person. And the transcendent of the person and the discovery of yourself as presence is here and now, when you become so alert, so awake, to discover that alertness, that wakefulness in you, that there's no thinking. There are spaces in between thinking of simple, alert presence.

And the opening up of those spaces, or that one space is the transcendence of the person because as that space opens up, you suddenly realize there's a depth to you that you didn't know before. But you have to have enough courage to go there because you have to give up everything that you thought you knew, all the thoughts that you identified with. So you step into the unknown in which one could almost say you become as nothing.

And I like that English word. You don't have that in other languages. The English word nothing consists of no thing.

Thing meaning form, something that has a particular form. And you realize the presence of that which has no form. And as you experience yourself as presence in which there's no thought, just an alert consciousness, you don't know who you are anymore.

And that may require some courage to go there. Some people go there without any spiritual teaching because they just cannot stand who they are anymore. The person and the life that that person creates for them can't take anymore of that suffering, the unhappiness, the conflict, the agony, the negativity that they generate.

I can't take anymore. That's a good point to reach too. At that moment, you have a choice.

You can commit suicide or preferably step into the unknown and discover that presence that's deeper than the person, and then live in and through, predominantly in and through that presence. So when you look at something, the presence is looking, not the person. How do you know whether the presence is looking at something or the person?

When you don't interpret mentally what you're looking at, that's presence, but you're very alert or you listen to something, but you don't interpret it. There's just the listening and the presence without which there could be no listening. And then in little situations in your life, you discover that it's much more pleasant to be there as the presence rather than as the person.

You do perhaps simple routine activities as the presence, an alert space without calling things that happen good or bad anymore, because when you call things good or bad, it's the person, the conceptual self, the mind-made self that includes other people. You don't call other people good or bad anymore. Places, situations, whenever you fall into good and bad, you are again a person, you lose transcendence.

Transcendence is lost, covered up, no longer realized. It's never really lost, but it seems to be completely lost. And then you're trying to get rid of what you called bad, and that doesn't really work.

So as long as you call certain people bad, you will continue to meet. Even if you run away or eliminate those people, you'll meet more bad people. And what you focus on mentally grows.

So if you can encounter people, situations, places as a simple presence without taking a position towards them, allow everything to be in this moment as it is. Now that's, the ego doesn't like that. The ego is the mind-made self that lives on judgment.

If you relinquish judgment, the ego disappears. Of course, it doesn't want to disappear, but you realize that life becomes a much more pleasant experience without that person continuously judging everything and everybody. And you connect if you have that courage or you've suffered so much through their own judgments and that you just can't take anymore, and suddenly you go into just presence.

That presence is also intelligence, universal intelligence, you could call it. It does not originate in your body. It does not originate in your physical brain, but there is a relationship, of course, between it and your physical brain.

You could use the analogy of a radio transmitter. The radio transmits something, it doesn't produce it. But when you destroy the radio, it seems that it's gone.

It isn't. It's the presence that pervades the entire universe. So it's intelligence, universal intelligence.

So it's not just the absence of judgment. It also begins to operate in your life. In other words, the way in which you deal with things and situations and people changes because the greater intelligence, but not the egoic mind, deals with situations and people.

It's also the source of all creativity. So encountering the transcendent dimension improves your life, but this is not what we are focusing on here. What can happen as a result of discovering and bringing into your life the transcendent dimension, our focus here is the transcendent dimension itself.

The rest looks after itself, how it manifests in your life and so on. Spiritual awakening means the person shrinks, so to speak, and presence grows. But enough of the person remains to be an effective instrument for presence because sometimes the presence can speak through you or inspire your mind.

At other times, it's just an emanation, just a peaceful, but vibrantly alive space. So the person then just becomes an instrument through which presence can express itself. You no longer confuse that instrument, which is really predominantly the mind and of course also the physical body.

You no longer confuse that with who you truly are. And as the awakening process continues to unfold in you, you find more and more situations in your life where you are the presence predominantly rather than the person. In other words, less and less judgment comes into your mind, which of course means thoughts.

And it's replaced with just an alertness. It's not easy. Don't underestimate the momentum behind the ego, the pull of the ego, which has been there for thousands of years.

It will reassert itself at first very quite frequently. And the time comes when you are able, as it asserts itself, you can still be there as the observing presence. That's a huge step forward.

You know it's there. You're not totally in the grip of your reactions and your opinions and your judgment. At the moment of judgment comes out of your mouth, you know, oh, there it goes, it's the ego.

And you don't need to verbalize that. You just know it. It depends on your degree of readiness, but the ego can be quite persistent.

That's fine. We are part of an evolutionary shift, a shift in consciousness. And the ego is something that's a collective phenomenon.

You inherit it. The greatest thing is the discovery of yourself as presence. So my suggestion is to practice when you're alone most times and you're not being challenged by anything in particular, do routine activities, perhaps perform this or that activity as and be the presence rather than the person, which means you're not thinking while you do it.

You're just present while you do it. All the simple contemplation of things around you. You listen, you look, you perceive, that alertness is there.

No interpretation, no labeling. If you are one of those people who is reactive in traffic, gets angry about other drivers or the traffic situation, that's another area you can practice and realize you're generating totally unnecessary suffering for yourself through unconsciousness. The ego gets stronger.

If you get angry even at another driver, you grow as an ego. The other day I was trying to get to turn left from an intersection and a driver shouted at me and he shouted, bad driver. Now, whether he was right or wrong, I don't know.

He meant me. Now the ego would have reacted because when somebody judges you, you feel the ego feels diminished, but I just allowed it to be and it passed through me and that was it. And then you are there when you listen to people, you ask somebody a question, you listen, you're there as the presence, not the person.

More and more situations, feel yourself as that presence. And that presence is inherently alive and alert. And that's where you then derive your sense of worthiness from.

Because as long as you are only in the mind, only the person, you're always comparing yourself to other people. And then you derive your sense of worthiness or unworthiness from your mental comparison with others or what the world tells you about how worthy you are. Am I a VIP in the eyes of the world or am I nobody in the eyes of the world?

Am I important or am I unimportant? And people agonize about these things. They feel I'm not good enough.

Or if you have a superiority complex and you have to prove yourself all the time against others and you become a jerk, but you don't know that. Only others know that. And that's very important for the human being to feel his or her essential value, worthiness.

But is it possible to arrive at that without comparison? What do I possess relative to that person? Where do I live relative to where that person lives?

What have I achieved relative to what somebody else has achieved? How do I look? What do you think of me?

Very interesting to the ego. But it's never enough. Even if the world tells you you're a VIP, it's not enough.

They still fear that tomorrow you may no longer be a VIP. So the worthiness has to come from a deeper place where you don't need any comparison. It has nothing to do with your past or anything you have done or failed to do or achieved or not achieved.

A more essential sense of your, that value, that infinite worthiness, and that's presence. Albert Einstein said the true value of a human being is determined by the extent to which he or she is free of the self. The self, of course, meaning the egoic entity.

Wonderful insight. And when this true worthiness value emerges, you don't compare yourself to others anymore. You don't have to.

And what the world tells you is not important. What the world tells you who you are. Now, somebody might say, well, if I no longer have that sense of unworthiness, I'm not going to strive to become worthy.

And I may not be motivated to achieve great things if I already have the sense of worthiness and don't need to become better than others to enhance how I see myself and how others see myself. Maybe I'm not going to do anything anymore. It is true, of course, that many people, many people's strongest motivation for doing whatever they do is to feel more worthy in their own eyes and in the eyes of others.

But if that is your motivation, you never really arrive at that place of true worthiness. Even if you achieve whatever it is you thought would make you worthy, it does for a while and to some extent, but it doesn't last. If you meet people who have been very rich and famous for more than a couple of years, you can talk to them and they will tell you that they also encounter the sense of unworthiness.

The moment they achieve what they wanted to achieve, they feel good for a while. And then I'm not enough. You might remember Princess Diana who married Prince Charles.

She had everything. She was born in a castle. She had wealth and high social status and good looks.

And the entire world thought she was a kind of goddess, at least that what the magazines said. And later on, we realized she was very unhappy and had this deep sense of unworthiness. And many of the people that you read about and see in the news, and they are shown as if they were the great examples of what you also should strive for.

If you look underneath the surface, they are unhappy. So true worthiness comes from a much deeper place and it is inseparable from that presence. It emanates, so to speak, from the transcendent dimension.

It goes beyond who you are as a person. That is the essence of who you are. That's the only thing of absolute value.

And that is why ancient philosophers, philosophers in ancient Greece and so on, to talk about this, they used the word, the good. There were huge discussions with Plato and others, discussion of what is the good. They all talked about that.

And of course, this is the one absolute good. It's not the good of the polarity, good and bad, it's the good that is deeper than good and bad. It is the absolute, it is the one, it is in you, but it is not confined to this body.

It's not the body. And also Jesus, when somebody addressed him and said, good teacher, can you tell us this or that? He said, don't call me good.

There's only one good, or only one is good. Really, he's saying only the one is good. And that is the good that is in you, in me, it can be realized.

But don't confuse the person that you see with the good. I am the good, not as the person, but as the presence. You are the good, not as the person, but as the presence which animates, which shines through the person.

And ultimately they are not separate. There isn't a person and the good. The person is the ripple on the surface of the ocean.

That's all. If you think you are the ripple, and that's your identity, then you're in for trouble because you're not going to be around for very long. And you are threatened by many other ripples.

But if you realize that you're not really the ripple of the ocean, then that's liberation. This is our live meditation, which basically is learning to stop thinking, which sounds a little paradoxical because usually learning involves thinking. So it's more like unlearning because we are conditioned to think continuously.

And a lot of the time it's not only unnecessary, but also destructive. Cuts you off from the depths of being, of who you are beyond the thinker. The most dreadful limitation for a human being is to know him or herself only as the thinker with its opinions and beliefs and reactions and whatever else the mind continuously comes up with.

And that cuts you off from that vast dimension of consciousness that is there beyond thinking, not separate from thinking. It makes thinking possible, but it's deeper than that. And here as we meditate, which is probably not the right word because it sounds as if we were doing something, but we're not doing anything.

We're not doing a meditation, but we're here to realize that beyond doing, there's another dimension more vital and that we could call being. And to sense that in yourself, there needs to be at least a gap in the stream of thinking. Even a few seconds is already a slight deepening and a little bit of peace and aliveness and a little bit of joy coming through the cracks, so to speak, in what is otherwise a solid wall of thought.

But we are here to go beyond that, not just wait for the little cracks to appear occasionally, but to embrace that dimension without which your life is not really that enjoyable, frustrating, in fact, pointless, the continuous worry and upset, anxiety, complaining. That's what most people's lives consist of. Maybe, yes, the occasional crack is there, or maybe when they get tired, they feel a little bit better because they can't think anymore, and then they go to sleep.

But really, without that deeper dimension, life, is it worth living? I don't think so. What for?

Do you think you'll ever sort out the problems in your life? Never. You sort out one and another two appear.

So there's nothing more important than this. And realize when you stop thinking, or thinking subsides, we could say, you essentially are still there as a conscious presence, a still, conscious, aware space. And that still, conscious, aware space needs to be there in daily life, in the background.

It can only be there when you don't think. You access it most deeply when thinking subsides. But as you sense it, you realize even when you think again, it doesn't go away completely anymore.

That conscious, aware space can be there even while thinking happens, or while you're talking to someone, or dealing with things that need to be done. And then you can enjoy life every moment, but the enjoyment doesn't come from all the things that happen in your life. It comes from a deeper place.

And then what happens or does not happen is of secondary importance. You're not dependent on what happens or is not happening, and you want it to happen. And then you move through life embodying two dimensions.

The dimension of form, which is thinking and doing, and the dimension of the formless presence, the conscious, aware space. The two are there simultaneously. The conscious, aware space interpenetrates, if that's the word, the world of form.

And then perhaps you realize the truth of the ancient Buddhist scripture, one of the most famous sutras, which says, form is emptiness, emptiness is form. Form and formlessness being there as one. And so the way I put it occasionally, you may have heard it before, it's not the absolute truth.

It's a way of talking about it. There's two of you in any moment, in any situation. There's the person who thinks and does things and deals with life situations and people.

There's you as the person. And then there's the other you as the conscious presence. So you can still deal with things as a person, but behind that, and even within that, there is the aware space.

So you become a spacious person, so to speak. Anybody who has not realized that dimension within themselves are not spacious. And of course, that still applies to many humans.

They are, what's the opposite of spacious, let's say, they are dense, the density of the person. You can look at anybody that you know, or even strangers when you observe them, how they go about life, how they deal with things, how they interact with people, how they react or respond to changing circumstances. Especially when things go wrong, so to speak, by just observing them, you can sense and see how dense or how spacious they are.

And that's not a judgment. You just see it in just the same way as you see whether it's light or dark. You're not judging when you say, oh, there's, it's getting dark.

It's not a judgment, you just see it. So you can see it in others. And sometimes so-called people who are into spiritual awakening, even they can sometimes very quickly, when they are challenged by events, become very dense.

The spaciousness is lost. So that's your spiritual practice. Of course, it's everyday life.

Can you embody the spaciousness in addition to being a person? So you don't need to achieve perfection as a person. The person will always have certain limitations and shortcomings.

And when Jesus said, be ye perfect as your father in heaven is perfect, he doesn't refer to the world of form, but the deeper perfection, the wholeness that is spacious presence. In ancient Greek philosophy, they often use the term, the good. What is the good?

Where is the good? And of course we know what it is and where it is. The good is not in the world of form.

The world of form is good and bad. Nothing stays good for that long. And then it either disappears or turns into its opposite.

The good is within you and it is the formless presence, the source of aliveness, of joy, the source of identity, the sense of who you are. The source of that is beingness, presence, spacious awareness, I am. So when you say, I am, that's formless presence.

When you add something to it, it's form, but you can add something to it. You can say, I am a man. You can say, I am a woman and realize that which you add to I am is form.

And the essence is the formless. So as a man or a woman, yes, you accept and realize you are, you embody this or the other polarity, but at the same time, you are the formless I am. So you're not totally identified with the polarity.

You're not totally identified with being a man and totally identified with being a woman. Yes, you are that in the world of form as a temporary appearance, yes. And so you are no longer totally identified with anything in the world of form.

To be identified with form is ego, of course. So remember in daily life to check, make sure there's some spaciousness left in you, whatever you're doing, wherever you are, some stillness in the background and awareness and presence. And that is, we could call that lucid living.

You've heard of lucid dreaming when you are asleep and dreaming, and you're suddenly aware that you are dreaming. And more importantly, you can have lucid living. I really recommend as a practice, when you're not being challenged by anything, you're sitting alone in a room or wherever you may be, waiting for this or that, see if you can let go of thinking and just be there as a conscious presence rather than as a person.

Then it's more likely to stay with you when the challenges come. And you will find life becomes much more enjoyable that way. If you need something as a little help to take your attention away from thinking, breathe consciously, which means be aware of your breathing as the breath goes in and out, and or feel the inner body, the energy inside your body, feel that, and or become aware of your surroundings, sense perceptions, alertness arises.

And that alertness is always there, whether it's to do with sense perceptions or becoming aware of your breath or feeling the inner body, that presence is always a heightened alertness without any tension, of course, but heightened. Without that alertness, the waves of thinking will very easily roll back in very quickly. So it's only the alertness that lifts you out of thinking.

And thinking has a gravitational pull. It's been there for so long. It's very easy to get drawn back.

You need to be very careful with electronic gadgets so that you're not continuously engaging in interacting with your cell phones and computers and so on. That continuously stimulates thinking and can lead to intensify the lack of spaciousness in your life. So life, the universe, the cosmos wants to awaken.

You are part of that. You are not in the universe. You are it.

And through you and of course, other life forms, billions of life forms throughout the universe, the universe wants to go through this awakening. If you don't embrace it consciously and voluntarily and cooperate with that awakening impulse, then it'll happen through intense suffering. So you either cooperate with it or it happens through suffering.

If suffering should come in, surrender. Then it can work very quickly. You don't resist it, accept what is this moment only, and that takes you beyond suffering.

So what we've just been practicing, what I've been talking about is the actual true purpose of your life, to live that, to bring that into your life, to embody that, and everything else really is self. Secondary, whatever you do is secondary, but the consciousness that you embody is primary. Even success or failure, the so-called success or failure is secondary.

And quite easily, success could make you completely unconscious again, and failure could really awaken you. And there's no absolute failure and absolute success. Success turns into failure because there are limitations and it comes to an end.

And failure is often a great opportunity, an opportunity to disidentify from the world of form internally. And suddenly there's a formless essence and there's peace. So there's this beautiful Christian greeting, "'Peace be with you."

Maybe it's not just Christian, it's a, "'Peace be with you.'" You can, of course, what that means is, may that dimension from where peace arises be there with you. There's no lasting peace in the world or the things of the world. Form.

So with that, I leave you, because the essence of who I am is in you. And we are one, one consciousness, one life. Peace be with you.

2020-Eckhart-Tolle-Conscious-Manifestation-Aligning-with-One-Universal-Intelligence-Online-Course part 1 of 3 Webinar

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 2:14:42)

So, we're talking about manifesting, exploring what it means. Not everybody may be familiar with this concept, so I will explain just very briefly what we mean when we use the term manifesting. And the idea behind that term is that there is a correspondence between your state of consciousness and the thoughts in your mind and your circumstances, external circumstances.

And also that you can influence or change your external circumstances by changing your thoughts, your thinking. Now, some people believe that that's complete nonsense, sometimes when you read in the mainstream media about things like that they say this is just absolute nonsense, just by thinking about something you're not going to create it. That of course is a misunderstanding, it's not as simple as that, it doesn't mean that just by thinking about something you then create it, but there is undoubtedly an important truth hiding there and that is that there is a relationship between your predominant state of consciousness, your predominant thinking, type of thinking, and what you experience as your reality.

First of all what you experience as your reality already goes through the filter of your mind. And you have sensory perceptions, which is the prime substance of your so-called reality, and then you have the filter of your mind that interprets and labels your reality. And of course the filter of your mind, what kind of a filter you have depends on the way in which your mind has been conditioned to evaluate things, to label things, to judge them, and so you incorporate the primary level of reality, sensory perceptions, whatever happens to you or what you do, and that is then interpreted through your conditioned mind.

Your mind is conditioned to interpret these events in certain ways. And not only interpret, the interpretation of your mind also determines how you respond or react to things that happen around you. So in that sense already you can see that there is clearly a relationship between what you call your reality, or some people call it your life, and the content of your mind.

So how you experience your life is not so much determined by what happens to you, but much more so by the way in which you react or respond to what happens. And your reaction then has further repercussions because your reaction creates further events in the external, and that is why people get trapped in their own kind of world or reality without realizing their contribution towards it. So perhaps you have known people or you know people that experience similar situations, often unpleasant situations, again and again, no matter where they go.

Sometimes it applies to relationships. You have one relationship, it comes to an end in a negative, bad way, then you encounter somebody else, similar thing tends to happen again and again. And sometimes the outside observer can see clearly that there must be a pattern there because this person has the same, seems to recreate the same partner, in some cases an abusive partner, and again the same pattern repeats itself.

And often the person to whom this happens, they may not be able to see it because they cannot differentiate between what happens to them externally and their contribution to what happens to them externally. So that means they are manifesting their reality unconsciously, they don't know it. And that is something perhaps you also experienced that in the past, and most probably you have already awakened from that state of unconsciousness.

But of course, yes, it's much more difficult to discover it in yourself, to realize that this is what you are doing, than to see it in somebody else doing it. So, manifesting, one could say, everybody does it. I believe nobody could argue with the fact that there is a connection between external circumstances and one's inner state of consciousness, conditioning of your mind, mental-emotional conditioning.

So it's not just the way in which you, just to repeat, it's not just the way in which you interpret events, it's the way, the condition of your mind, the conditioning of your mind determines also what you say and what you do as a reaction to those events. So undoubtedly that's the case, so everybody manifests, and most humans manifest the way in which they experience their life, and then comes the realization, maybe if I change the way in which I react to things, and if I change the way in which I interpret things, then perhaps not only will I experience my life in a different way, but perhaps I can even bring about changes in my so-called life. And the deep idea underlying this conscious manifestation, consciously choosing certain thoughts, letting go of other thoughts that perhaps have been dominant in your mind for many years, underlying that is the idea that your thoughts are connected to the underlying consciousness beyond the surface of things, your thoughts are connected to the invisible dimension of reality, and that which governs the creation of form, and by changing your thoughts, you can change the forms in which life appears to you. The idea that this is possible came to me when I was 17 years old through some books.

We were living in Spain at the time, and a German woman, a friend of ours, came and she said, I'm going back to Germany and I want to leave a few things with you, I'll pick them up again when I return. And she left a few of her possessions, and among her possessions were five or six old books. And I picked up these books, they were written by a German writer who used the pseudonym or his spiritual name, Bo-Yin Ra, and I started reading these books, which were written in a biblical style, like a biblical prophet speaking, very strange, old-fashioned style.

And these books spoke of aligning yourself with the spiritual dimension of life, and they spoke of the possibility of changing your way of thinking, and thereby changing the way in which you experience reality, and changing your entire life. And this was so revolutionary, I couldn't believe what I was reading, and yet I realized deep down that this is actually true. And I also became aware that I had been trapped in negative thinking for many years already, I was only 17 years old, but I realized how much of my thinking was of a negative kind.

So that was my first, it was by no means an enlightenment experience, but it was a first dis-identification from thinking, and recognizing my own thinking, rather than being totally trapped in my own thinking. So I just want to show you, I have a couple of these books that she left, miraculously these books survived my many moves from country to country, and place to place. And so these are just two of them, Boyin Ra.

This one is called Das Buch der Liebe, The Book of Love. This one is called Das Buch der Königlichen Kunst, The Book of the Royal Art. Most of them are published in Switzerland in the 20s and 30s.

So I read these books, and I found a while ago, looking through some old boxes, miraculously something survived from that time that I actually copied from these books. And that's here, I wrote this when I was 17, and I copied what I thought were the most important ideas in these books. And I'll just read a few sentences to you, then you'll see how, why they were so important to me.

I have to translate into English as I read the original German. Every thought is a building block in your developing destiny, a building block towards the good or towards evil. According to the nature of your daydreams, you are accumulating either gold or explosive material in your destiny.

Every thought picture, if imagined with sufficient intensity, could be materialized immediately. In every human being, this power is there in potential. So to surrender to a helpless mood of anxiety or irritation means you're opening yourself up to the thought streams of every negative and irritated human being in your whole city.

And therefore, charging the magnet of your mind with harmful and destructive energy streams and so on. And I was realizing, as I read this, that in a way I had been doing that to a large extent. I had certain thoughts in my mind about myself that were very negative.

One of the thoughts was, whenever something happened to me that wasn't good, challenging, the thought came into my mind, of course, bad things always happen to you. I was always talking to myself as you, many people do that. Of course, bad things always happen to you.

And often they did. So I started to become aware of my thinking and changing it. And not only my thinking, but also my moods, the emotions that go with the thoughts.

And there was a, later on, I realized that the term one could use is, I was raising my frequency, vibrational frequency. And suddenly, I was 17, I was longing to get away from my dad and his wife, who were in a dysfunctional marriage. And a few months later, I was offered my first vacation job in England.

And that was in itself miraculous, how that came about. Then I had to come back after three months, and I continued to practice becoming aware of my thinking, letting go as much as possible of negative thinking. And then the next thing that happened was I was offered a job in England without an interview with virtually no qualifications, actually no qualifications, no, not even no high school graduation or anything.

I was offered an actually good job in London, in a very miraculous way. And I realized that was the result of having changed my thinking. So that was a very important thing for me.

It did not mean, however, that I was free of ego. It did not mean that the new situation that I went into did not, after a while, also become problematic and present its own challenges. And it did not free me from becoming depressed in my early, mid, and late twenties.

So I fell back into negative thinking and so on. But I had a glimpse of what is possible. And so the teaching that then developed is, as you probably know, I primarily teach being.

Doing is secondary. These two dimensions are the primary dimensions in your life, doing and being. Most humans are lost in doing.

They are completely identified with their doing. When I use the word doing, I include thinking in it. When you think, you do.

Most humans only know the dimension of doing, so they live in a state of stress, anxiety, and completely unaware of the dimension of being. My primary teaching, as you may have noticed, is to bring you to the awareness of being. And that is also the primary teaching in the teaching of Jesus.

Jesus taught primarily how to be consciously. And he used the term, the kingdom of heaven, or the kingdom of God, which, by the way, as you might know already, I translate as, I've changed the translation, kingdom of heaven, in my contemporary translation, is the dimension of spaciousness. Heaven is the sky, the spaciousness of the sky.

He used that term in order to point to something that is within you. So he used the word from the outer sense perception reality to point to a reality that is within you. And the closest word that he could find in the sense perceived realm, as an analogy for something that is within you, is the sky or the heavens.

Because when you look up into the heavens, the sky, in many languages it's the same word, then what is it that you see? You see the vast spaciousness. There may be clouds here and there, and beyond the clouds, there's vast spaciousness.

There isn't actually anything there, that is, the sky or heavens is not an object. Or we have a word for it, but the fact that we have a word for it does not mean that the sky actually is something that has an actual existence. What do I mean by that?

I mean, you can never arrive there. You can go up in a balloon or in a rocket, and you can never say, oh, I'm now in the sky. Where is it?

You can never touch it, because it's not, it's just an appearance. The sky is just spaciousness. You can go into a cloud, but not into the sky.

The sky, you never reach it. If you go up in a rocket, suddenly you're in outer space, and there's no more sky, just just absolute spaciousness. So what we perceive as sky during the daytime is something to do with the visual, what the sun does, seeing the light of the sun against the darkness of space creates that luminous sky.

But the sky is not an object. And that's why Jesus very wisely used that term to talk of something that is within you in consciousness, which I call the formless consciousness, or pure consciousness, or pure awareness, as opposed to consciousness that has taken on a form that is thought. Every thought is a formation, a thought form, an energetic formation.

Most humans are so identified with the energetic formations of their thinking, every thought that comes that they are trapped in it, and that is, you're trapped in doing. So the doing begins with being trapped in every arising thought, and then, of course, externally, the external world makes demands upon you, and so you're constantly seeing what's the next thing that I need to do, and so you're constantly being pulled out of yourself, out of the deeper dimension of who you are, the essence of who you are, you're not even aware of it, you're always out here, and then, what's the next thing that I need to think about, even if you're in bed, you're still doing, because what's going to happen tomorrow, what if that happens, or that, you're still doing, and you're never free. When you relate to people in your family, you relate to your children and your spouse, your partner, always talk about something that needs to be done, and this, have you done that, and now, what do we do now?

People can't listen to others, because there's too much interference, there's never that spaciousness there. And so, being lost in doing is the fate of millions and millions of humans on the planet, and Jesus was talking about that when he used the, well, this is a story, whether it happened or not, we don't know, the story goes that Jesus was invited to lunch in the home of two sisters, and there were some other people there too, and these two sisters, the names of these two sisters were Martha and Mary.

Now, Jesus was sitting there, Mary, he was talking, Mary was sitting at the feet of Jesus listening to him, in a state of rapt attention, and Martha was busy doing, working in the kitchen, getting lunch ready, and she got very upset with her sister, Mary, because she wasn't helping, and she went to Jesus, and said, Jesus, why don't you tell my sister that she should help in the kitchen, because we're not going to get the lunch ready on time. And Jesus surprisingly said, Martha, Martha, you are worried and anxious about many things, but only one thing is absolutely needed, and Mary has chosen that one thing, more or less.

And that's very interesting, if you look at that, you could say, well, if everybody lived like that, if Martha lived like that, then who would be preparing the lunch? You would just be sitting there, nobody's doing anything anymore, but that's not what it means. Jesus was pointing to what is primary, and what he is saying is that primary is to be in a state of connectedness with being.

Everything else, any doing, is secondary. And ultimately, Martha and Mary ultimately should be seen as one human being. You have to be both Martha and Mary to live a life that is fruitful and balanced and sane.

So that is finding the balance in your life between being and doing. And manifestation can only be satisfying and truly effective when it arises out of the being state of consciousness, rather than the doing state of consciousness, which says, now I need to do the manifestation. And when you are trapped in doing, and identified with doing, you're also obviously identified with ego.

Ego ultimately means complete identification with the mind, the thinking mind. And that's the basis of ego, and the emotions that accompany the thinking mind. And then you're identified with all the things that arise from the thinking mind, all the things that you do and want to achieve, and so on.

So primary is being, and we need to go a little bit more deeply into that experientially, so that being is not a concept that we are trying to understand, but being is something that we experience or realize at first hand here and now. For the experience of being, you need to become aware that that which underlies, or is, one could say, is behind all your thinking, is a state of still, alert presence. So to realize being, you need to step out of thinking, if only for just a moment, like now, and when you step out of thinking, you cease to be a person for a moment.

You're no longer a person, because you don't remember your past or anything. You don't need to. In that moment, when you step out of thinking, you don't know anything conceptually.

And while I talk about it right now, of course, I'm inviting you, if it's not happening already, I'm inviting you to experience or realize what it is that I'm talking about. It is unbelievably important, it is the most important thing in your life, to realize that dimension of consciousness within you. So, is it possible for you at this moment to be in that state of alert, relaxed attention, just aware of whatever sense perceptions may be there, but not thinking at all?

So there's this gap, there's a space, a space, an inner space, where you are conscious and aware, but not thinking. And that is, that space is, there's enormous power there, at first it seems like nothing, it seems like you've disappeared and you don't know anything anymore. And yet, if you look more deeply, you realize that you have a very strong sense of beingness, you know that you are.

That sense of beingness or presence, when you acknowledge it, you realize that that is your, I sometimes call it essence identity, and more recently I've been calling it the deep I. When you say I, usually you refer to the historical person, which is your conditioned mind. But here, so that is the, that historical person, I say historical because it's derived from the past, the conditioning of your mind becomes who you are, that is the surface I.

And then there is the deep I, is the I that is consciousness itself, I am. When thinking stops for a moment, you come to a very deep realization of I am. You know that you are, and you know that that is the essence of your identity, the essence of your identity is that sense of presence.

And what is that? Of course, you can ask that question afterwards, but you don't need to ask that question in the moment of experiencing it, because that question is thought again. The mind may come in later and say, well, what was that sense of presence?

Maybe I lost it, or maybe it's still there even when you start thinking again, which is how ideally it should be, this is to aim for, is that you can think without losing the sense of presence, the underlying I am, Martha and Mary, a single being. So then you are able to do, to think and to take action without being completely lost in the thinking and in the actions, without going, there's always a dreadful way to be totally lost, reacting, and even if you come up with things, new things, what do you have to do now? Let's come up with, okay, I need to create this, I need to build up, you could start trying to do manifestation on the basis of what the needs of the historical person are, what the needs of the ego are, and of course the ego has many needs.

The ego is a sense of, one of the characteristics of the ego is a sense of insufficiency, a sense of not enough, a sense of lack, that is the mind made self, which is looking always to enhance its identity, its sense of self, so it's, because it's never enough and it always feels threatened by, you could lose something that you had identified with, so that's a threat, or a threat is you might never get what you think you need for your ultimate fulfillment, that's a threat, that's in the future, I may never get there, and then there's the threat of other people who threaten your mind made identity, because other people might have more than you, they might know more than you, they might be better looking than you, they may be more powerful than you, and to the egoic self, anybody who achieves something or has something nice is already perceived as a diminishment of their sense of self. So somebody has a nice, let's say your friend buys a lovely dress and your ego feels diminished, you can see how, this is not uncommon, it's just one of many examples, or somebody gets a promotion and you feel diminished, or somebody you went to school with has already a achieved more than you and is now driving a Ferrari and you are driving a VW and then you meet again and you feel diminished in your sense of self, because you're deriving your identity from certain things that the egoic self wants to identify with and it compares itself to others continuously, and if it feels superior then for a while it feels bigger, that's great, I have more than you, I know more than you, I can do more than you, and yet there's always a fear that somebody else may come or I might lose it, so you're continuously dependent on what happens out there, what other people do or have, almost always a sense of non-fulfillment, of lack, of insufficiency, that is part of the egoic state of consciousness. Now if you go, you might then read books on manifestation and say, oh, now I know what to do and how to achieve the things that I need in order to find that ultimate fulfillment, and then you follow all these books, because the books might say, if you only think certain thoughts, you can bring about those things, so then perhaps you begin to imagine, okay, what I want is to drive this car, the Ferrari, and see, okay, what I need to do is see myself in the Ferrari and I'll make affirmations that, of whatever it is I want, I affirm that I have my own company and I'm making a lot of money and I have this big house and this great car and a good-looking spouse that enhances my sense of self, and so some people then practice manifestation, but all the things that they are attempting to manifest are designed to free them from that underlying sense of insufficiency, not enough, not having arrived yet at this, you know, not being fully yourself, and they may have some success in their manifestation, although if you're only coming from ego, your powers of manifestation won't be that great, but you may have some success, but the downfall is that none of these things, they're going to fulfill you, so they're not going to free you, in fact, everything that you achieve will create new problems for you, because you're still living trapped in ego, and none of the things that you achieve will free you for long from that sense of insufficiency, and you will continue to look for yourself in other things and achievements and situations, but always reaching out, never quite, never arriving, so that is the fate if you are not, your fate if you are not in touch with the depth dimension within you, the deep I, so it's impossible to underestimate the importance of this, and that is absolutely primary, and any true spiritual teaching must apply, it would apply to a person who is just starting off their adult life, or to a person who is 95 years old and coming to the end of their lifespan, the superficial teachings of manifestation, those teachings that claim that the ultimate in spiritual living is to manifest what it is you want or need, those would become meaningless if presented to a person who has come close to the end of their lifespan, what is a 95 year old person is unlikely to be very interested in manifesting this or that, as you approach the end of your lifespan it becomes even more important to go deeper within yourself, you don't need to manifest anything anymore, you need to make sure that you are in touch with the essence of who you are, and that the ego dissolves, so a true spiritual teaching must be valid no matter what your life situation is, so if you take the deep manifestation teachings and isolate them and say that that is the essence of spiritual living, it's not, you would find one frustration after another even if you achieve what it is that you want or think you need, so the downfall then is to practice or attempt to practice manifestation techniques without having realized the essence of who you are, and now of course the question arises, but if you realize the essence of who you are, would you still want or need to practice manifestation, would you still need to do it, would you still want to do it, and we'll come to answer that in a little while, for the time being however, right here and now, it's more important before we look at manifesting from the possibility or the desirability of manifesting from your essence, before we look at that, let's make sure that we experience that deep I, we realize that deep I, Jesus said more or less, the only thing that matters, I'm paraphrasing a little bit, the only thing that matters is the kingdom of heaven, seek the kingdom of heaven, and when you find the kingdom of heaven that is within you, all the things that you think you need will be added unto you, that was his teaching, and this is a very profound statement, if you find the kingdom of heaven and all the things that you need will be added unto you, that means all the things that for people who are not in touch with depth dimension, all those things are primary for those people, but when you are in touch with the depth dimension, you may still, of course, you have needs for certain things in your life, and you may appreciate certain things in your life, but they are no longer primary, nothing in the realm of things, nothing in the realm of achievements is primary anymore, but you can still appreciate things, but it's not, they're not primary, possessions, how your body looks, even relationships, all these things, the words I use are these things, there are many things in your life that are relatively important, there's no denying that whether you are rich or poor, you have no money at all or plenty of money, it makes a difference of you, of course, is a relatively important, whether you are healthy or not healthy, is of importance, it makes a difference, but it's still relatively important, even your relationships, whether you have a wonderful family or you live alone, makes a difference undoubtedly, but it's even that is relatively important, and so the terms that I use is there's only one thing that's absolutely important, and that is finding the essence of who you are and living from the essence of who you are, then all the things that before were of primary importance, and when you lost them, you were devastated, now when you lose something in the realm of secondary importance, of relative importance, it still affects you, yes, let's say your partner suddenly leaves you, let's say your business enterprise suddenly collapses, of course, yes, it is perceived as it affects you to some extent, but it does not affect you in the very depths of your being, that is a difference, you are no longer absolutely devastated, it does not mean you have deadened yourself to feeling anything, not at all, you still feel somebody dies, you cry, a loved one dies, you weep, tears come, and yet you are not devastated, you don't condemn the entire universe because somebody has died prematurely, so there is still the connectedness with the deep I, which we can also call the transcendent dimension of life, loss of the transcendent dimension is the, or not even ever finding the transcendent dimension to life, that is the greatest deprivation there could be, loss of the transcendent dimension, and that unfortunately is the fate of still the majority of humans on the planet, perhaps even more in the more developed countries than others, loss of the transcendent dimension, you can always, you can see it when you observe people's behavior, how they are completely identified with the things that happen, the anxiety, the reactivity, you can see if you read, you read occasionally about people whose reputation has lost their reputation, they've lost their money, they were very well, and then they commit suicide because that's all they know, because their entire sense of self was bound up with their reputation and their money, who they were in the eyes of others, and when that collapses, either you have, either you're in terrible, terrible suffering, or you commit suicide, or the transcendent dimension suddenly opens up for you, that is the, that is the grace that's hiding behind every misfortune or disaster, there's always the possibility that, yes, it makes you deeply unhappy at first, but it is a potential opening into transcendence, when something in the world of form has left you, so that the mind-made sense of self that consisted of identifying with this, this, this, and this, so you were a bundle of identifications, ultimately all thought, because ultimately you're not identified with the car, the house, your social position, or whatever it may be, because the car, the house, your social position, and so on, they are thoughts in your mind, and so, although we could say, yes, you are identified, you derive your sense of self from those things, but those things, ultimately, you experience them as thoughts in your mind, and these are thoughts that are invested with a sense of self, these are self-thoughts, that is the self that the Buddha talks about when he talks about delusion, when he, when the Buddha talks about wherever you go, whatever you do, you will encounter suffering, he said, and, of course, that's absolutely true, but what he, that statement, taken in isolation, sounds very negative, but only if you take in isolation that the Buddhist teaching is to show you the possibility of transcendence, so it's only when you have not encountered transcendence in your life, then whatever situation you go into, whatever you achieve, either through hard work, or through your techniques of manifestation, or combination of hard work and techniques of manifestation, yes, you might achieve things, but you will encounter, again, suffering.

So, when you hear the Buddha's teaching on suffering, it sounds initially as if it were a negative teaching, and some academics who study Buddhism will tell you that Buddhism is a life-denying religion, which is complete nonsense. It is, but, transcendence is relatively meaningless when you have not experienced it in yourself, you can't even see what he's talking about. When the Buddha talks about, what is the Buddha's word for kingdom of heaven, for that spaciousness, what does he say?

He says, sunyata, which is translated as emptiness. Oh, well, that is the least inspiring teaching any great teacher has given. What's at the bottom of it all?

What is the secret of life, they ask him, and he says, emptiness. What? How can you strive for emptiness?

What's the point? Jesus is a little bit more inspiring, because he says kingdom of heaven, but that can be very misleading, because then you start looking up, that's misleading. Heaven is a good, potentially a good term, because it means spaciousness.

The same thing as the Buddha said, emptiness is spaciousness. That would be my translation of sunyata, that term, is spaciousness, formless consciousness, unconditioned consciousness, beingness itself. That's the essence, and that's the realization.

So, they're all pointing to exactly, it's exactly the same thing, or the same no thing. So, yes, of course, you encounter suffering, as the Buddha says, no matter what you do and where you go, sooner or later, and usually sooner, it makes you suffer again. And you're back in anxiety, and not enough, and continuous conflict with other people, and you're making yourself, continuously, you're making yourself and others unhappy.

And so, it's amazing to see that the teachings are all the same, but you only realize that when you experientially realize what it is that they're talking about. Let's read something, a little line from, I've never done this before, reading out aloud something from the Bible during a talk. This is a wonderful thing here.

He's talking about things and giving importance to things. But I would say things include anything that you identify with. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moss and rust consume, and where thieves break in and steal.

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moss nor rust consumes, and where thieves do not break in and steal. Thieves break in and steal, and moss consume. Of course, the moss consumes clothes, and so on, they eat it up, and rust consumes anything material is subject to decay, anything.

And this teaching is the equivalent to Buddha's teaching on impermanence. All phenomena are impermanent. Anything that arises in your life is impermanent.

You can have any achievement, or any possession, or anything, it is impermanent. So, do not attach yourself to it, because if you attach yourself to it, which means use it in the service of your ego identity, then because it is impermanent, it is subject to decay, moss and rust, a wonderful image, then you suffer. So, what is, Jesus says, instead, realize, now the words I use, realize what is of primary importance.

Then, once you realize, now realize is not something that you realize now and then it's gone. When I say realize, it needs to be in the background of your life continuously. That is the realization of the transcendent dimension.

When you're able to step out of thinking frequently, and experience these little spaces of aware presence, that's the beginning of it, and acknowledge the moments when you're not thinking. Acknowledge when you're just looking at something, and there's an underlying sense of beingness or presence. And so, there's less of you as a person, and more of you as unconditioned consciousness.

And so, gradually, the person diminishes, the unconditioned consciousness grows, so to speak. The person begins to recede. It will always be there a little bit, because that's just your form identity.

As long as you're here in the body, there's a form, you have a form identity, and you're increasingly, the essence identity shines through. And there's then a, you connect with the power, a huge power that frees you from the pseudo ego power. The ego looks for power to control, power over others.

But this is a totally different kind of power that you connect with, that you realize you are part of. And that's the power of presence, the power of consciousness itself, the power of life itself. And you can't think about that, it's not arrived at through thinking, and it's not arrived at through any doing.

Any spiritual practice, meditation is wonderful, but as long as you regard it as a doing, it is only of limited usefulness. But when suddenly you realize that the essence of meditation is not trying to get anywhere, it's trying to be where you are already, to experience the being of here and now, then you're no longer doing a meditation. Meditation is the real art, true meditation is the realization of being, it's not a doing, so you cannot do a meditation.

So you realize the underlying I am, and you don't add anything to it, not this or that anymore. I am, beingness itself. To be is the infinitive, I am, strangely enough, is the first person singular of the same.

They sound totally different, it's how it came about, I don't know. With most words you have the infinitive, to love, and then you say first person singular is I love. Okay, but here we have to be, and you don't say I be, you say I am.

How that came about, I don't know. The be still survives in the German language, because I am in German is ich bin, be, bin, I am. So really in English it should be I be.

I am is beingness, and to realize your beingness is the most freeing and the only truly satisfying thing. And the important thing again is to realize this isn't something that you need to achieve, it's something that's already here, but it has been overlooked because of the noisy mind and the noisy world that you inhabit, that bombards you with continuous barrage of sense perceptions and things that you need to give attention to, the same way that you are overwhelmed by your mind with every thought saying, give me more attention, follow me, plus the intensification or the amplification of that already inherent tendency of you is in through technology those days.

The mind, if the mind wasn't cluttered enough before the advent of text messages and Facebook and Twitter and so on, if it wasn't cluttered enough before then, it's even more cluttered now, this continuous input of largely meaningless communication, and in many cases negative communication, that is potentially very, very destructive for a human being and very destructive for an entire civilization that could collapse very quickly.

Any civilization where the majority of humans lose the connectedness with the transcendent dimension cannot survive for very long. Now we have in our Western society, in many Western countries, the religion has become less and less important, and in many Western countries, Germany, France, Scandinavia, England, the churches are empty. It's become meaningless.

Not that religion as it was practiced before was necessarily a deeply spiritual thing, it was to a large extent a cultural thing and an ideological thing that served the collective ego, that is true. In that sense it's maybe a good thing that we're no longer trapped in the ideological kind of religion, which is really an ideology, and yet in the religion there was always a little potential opening into the spiritual dimension, because at the very core, deeply hidden of, let's say, Christianity, at the core of it there is a very powerful and deep spiritual message. It's inherent in the teaching of Jesus and in some of the wisdom of the Old Testament, too.

It's a mixed bag, yes. It's there. It's there in the mythological figure of Jesus, it's man, the crucifixion, which is an image of human suffering.

It's there in what the mythological story points to, that you can, Christ, your suffering, you're participating in the suffering of Christ, if you encounter suffering, thereby you're able to surrender to the suffering, thereby the transcendent dimension opens up, at least to some extent, in your life. There was always the possibility of, although religions had degenerated into ideologies, there was always the possibility of still encountering the surviving remnants of spirituality that are there, and yet for many humans that's gone, and of course there is an awakening spirituality there, but that's still a small percentage of humans. I don't know what the percentage is in Western countries or in other so-called advanced countries, technologically, Japan and so on.

My estimation is that 10% are awakening spiritually, which would be a substantial amount, but still a minority of people who are realizing this beginning to go through a spiritual transformation, disidentifying from the egoic mind and so on. If it is 10%, that would be still a huge number, and yet 90% still don't have it yet, and they don't even have the old religion anymore, so all they're left with is consumption and pleasure-seeking and drugs or work yourself to death to make more money to buy useless things. That's always an emptiness at the core of Western civilization.

It's very dangerous. So either we go back to religion, which is very unlikely, to the old-fashioned religion, or those to whom religion is still meaningful, they don't need to abandon it. They can perceive the deeper essence, the alive essence that's hiding within their religious tradition.

That's a wonderful thing if you're able to do that. Or there's a spiritual awakening outside the religions that is happening. That's the 10% probably that I'm speaking of.

It is vital, then, you don't need to think about the civilization that you live in. Your main responsibility is your life is the spiritual dimension present in your life, which is the transcendent dimension. Now we'll go into it again now, and then we will see whether there's still any need or desirability when the transcendent dimension is there in your life, whether there's still any need or desirability to engage in conscious manifestation.

Would you still want to manifest things by using the mind? So we'll be looking at that. But right here now, let's become aware of ourselves, or let's use the, let me use the first person singular, because that's you and that's me.

Become aware of the I am, become aware that you are, and then it becomes the realization of I am. And you may find that it is helpful to be in touch with your body, although you are not your body, not the physical body. And yet there is an inhabiting presence within the body.

And I would say that is the underlying intelligence that coordinates the countless, extremely complicated functions of the body that are all coordinated. There's an underlying intelligence, which is an aspect of the consciousness that you are, and that underlying intelligence is the field that gives it life, that holds the atoms and molecules together. So there's an underlying intelligence that you can sense as a sense of aliveness pervading the entire body.

And so when you become present, you become present with your whole body. It's not a head phenomenon. It's an entire body phenomenon.

You become present and you can sense that the aliveness that pervades the body. And that's an amazing thing that there is that vast intelligence, even now with all the science, we only understand a fraction of how the body operates. And this underlying field of intelligence underlies the entire universe.

It is the underlying intelligence behind the arising of all life forms. And it gradually comes into this dimension more fully. That is the evolutionary process of the universe.

The underlying invisible intelligence expresses itself gradually more fully. On the planet, you can see how gradually life over millions and millions of years, life forms became more complex, more conscious, and the same happening, certainly, all over the universe. So in other words, we're inhabiting an awakening universe.

So something in the transcendent dimension, the transcendent realm, is coming into this dimension. And from the point of view of this dimension, it can be seen as an awakening. The universe is awakening.

How do I know that? I am awakening. How do you know that?

You are awakening. This consciousness is growing. First, there's a dream-like state of being completely identified with thought.

It's like a dream world. And the dream is conditioned by the past. And you go, you aren't even there.

There's a fictitious entity that says, I, but it's a dream-like entity conditioned by the past. And the past goes back, not just personal past, it goes back a million years of the whole species and beyond. So there's a conditioned entity.

But it inhabits a dream-like world that's already, it is so conditioned that there's no, there's no real freedom there. There's just acting out the conditioning. It's a dream that's determined already.

And many humans still live in that dream-like state. And they might have a PhD and yet they're still in, are completely identified with their mind, haven't woken up. And so there's a, this awakening is happening.

So the universe is waking up and out of the dream of form, the dream, from the point of view of the wakefulness, it's a dream. When you're in it, it's reality. Depends from what perspective you look at it.

So the universe has delighted in creating more and more complex life forms. The universe delights obviously in creating, because just look, for example, at the oceans, the life in the oceans is just unbelievable in its manifold complexity. It's just, even in your wildest imagination, you couldn't think up all those life forms that are in the ocean.

It's so miraculous and so incredible. An infinitely creative intelligence is behind all that. It brings forth an abundance of form, just unbelievable.

And then the life forms on land. So the universe delights in creating, undoubtedly. So that means you also delight in creating, but the next stage in creating is a different one from the way in which the universe has been creating the past few thousand, a few million years.

And we will come to that very soon in our next segment. Welcome to our meditation. An interesting question to ask yourself, and you can find out the answer right now, is whether you're able to stop thinking for a few seconds or so, or whether it's impossible to find any gap in the stream of thinking.

And you don't stop thinking by exercising willpower that would not be helpful. For example, holding your breath, I don't recommend that. Because you, yes, you could stop thinking by holding your breath and getting very tense.

And then you're feeling you're holding thought at bay like this. But the moment you start breathing again, thought will rush back in even more strongly than before. So it's holding your breath, I don't recommend.

But if you're not able to just stop thinking, not that many people can do that, you may want to use something to help you to not think. And that is, for example, not holding your breath, but being aware that you're breathing. Observing that you're breathing, observing the in-breath, feeling it, sensing it.

And the out-breath. And even being aware of a short gap at the end of each in- and out-breath. You breathe in, hold for two seconds or so, but don't even have to do that.

And out. And there's a cessation at end of the out-breath, a natural cessation. And then you breathe in again, and you continue to be aware of your breathing.

And when you do that, you're not thinking. That's why breath awareness is an ancient meditation method. It's also very pleasant.

And then after a while, you may notice there's a sense of aliveness behind the breath, so to speak. So if you're looking for a very simple meditation technique, observing your breath is a good one. Just as inner body awareness that I've written and spoken about, they are related.

If you're observing your breath, you're also becoming aware of the energy field inside your body. It's all very pleasant, very simple, peaceful. Sometimes thinking may come back in, and if that happens, you just return your attention to your breathing.

And in daily life, when you want a moment of no thought, which is extremely important to get into the habit of cultivating the state of not thinking, when you don't actually need to think, so that when you do need to think, your thinking is actually more effective, more powerful, more intelligent. When you are connected with a deeper realm of not thinking, which is the unconditioned consciousness. So in daily life, you cultivate as much as possible, just finding brief moments of no thought throughout your daily life.

You could associate it with the breath. I call it, the briefest one is one conscious breath, as I call it, which is you breathe in, you breathe out. And while you breathe in and out, just one in-breath, one out-breath.

And while you do that, you're just very much aware of the air flowing into the body, the air flowing out of the body. Conscious, one conscious breath, means you're not thinking during that brief moment. And that's very significant.

When you're not thinking without losing consciousness, in fact, being more alert than when you are thinking, that is finding a new dimension of consciousness within yourself. And it's perhaps, well not perhaps, it is, if I had to single out the most significant thing, the most significant achievement, so to speak, for a human being in this lifetime, it would be the ability to step out of thinking, or to put it differently, the ability to rise above thinking. Another way of putting it is that's spiritual awakening.

Spiritual awakening has nothing to do with seeing spirits or angels or talking to God or having past life experiences. All these things are wonderful, but they're not necessarily spiritual awakening. They could be associated with spiritual awakening, but they are not in themselves spiritual awakening.

Spiritual awakening is the realization of a new dimension of consciousness in you that perhaps, not perhaps, had already been there before, but okay, spontaneously arising occasionally, but had been always overlooked by you. Yes, but you had experienced moments of joy, moments of heightened aliveness, moments of inner peace, but you probably had not associated those moments with not thinking. And yet, if you look more deeply into how these moments of heightened aliveness, joy, inner peace happened, and if you looked more closely, you would realize there was little or no thinking while you were experiencing those moments.

Being astonished at something, going, ah, wow, isn't that beautiful? A few seconds of no thought. So thinking is a wonderful thing if you are not possessed by it.

If you're able to use thinking, it's a beautiful, amazing tool for creation, but if thinking becomes the basis for your sense of identity, in other words, the narrative in your mind of who you are, the story of me, then thinking becomes a kind of present. And, or to use a different analogy, thinking becomes then almost like something that possesses you, and you don't even know it. And when you make the statement, I think, I am thinking, it's not quite accurate.

It would be more accurate to say, thinking is happening to me. If you can't stop it, that means it must be happening to you. If you don't even want to stop it, it must be because you are almost addicted to it.

You think you would die without it. So if you can't stop thinking, then you are not thinking, thinking is happening to you. Or you could say, you are being thought, you're not thinking.

Oh, by the way, while I speak to you, and many of you know this, but it's easy to forget too, since this is a kind of meditation session, although not a conventional one, while I'm speaking to you, be aware of the silent gaps between sentences, between words. Be aware, notice them, be aware of them. Because the meditation part of our session together here is in the silent gaps.

The rest is just the words, the pointers towards the silent gaps, the pointers towards stillness. When you become aware of the silent gaps while I speak, breathe, like now, and now, and now. While you notice the silent gaps, acknowledge them.

You may also notice that you are not thinking while you notice the gaps, and that's meditation. In that way, I can talk you into the meditative state. But you have to be aware that our session has two dimensions, the words and the space.

The space is the silent gaps. And not only the silent gaps, it's also an underlying silence, or stillness would be a better word. So you notice those gaps, that's meditation, and in the moment of noticing, you're not thinking.

And as you practice here, when you go back into your daily life, you may notice silent gaps within yourself, between two thoughts. The space of no thought between two thoughts. Don't need to measure it in time, who knows, three seconds, four.

So you have now, you have then access to a deeper or higher, depending how you want to use the word, dimension of consciousness. And when you notice the gaps between two thoughts in yourself, in daily life, then they deepen, or you become more aware of them, and they get a little longer. Another word for the gaps between thoughts is stillness.

To realize that behind all thoughts, there is a realm of stillness. And you become aware of it, when one thought comes to an end, and the other one hasn't started yet, suddenly you come aware of what is beyond thought, consciousness. And then you begin to embody that dimension in your daily life.

And then you become a two-dimensional being, you're a person, and you are an expression of consciousness, which transcends the person. It's the consciousness of the universe, of which you are in your personal self, a temporary expression. You are the universe being conscious in you.

You are the consciousness of the universe. That's a very significant thing. It doesn't matter what you have achieved or not achieved as a person.

More fundamentally, you are the consciousness of the universe. You are a focal point of that consciousness. Of course, the consciousness of the universe pervades all space, but you are a focal point of that consciousness.

Appearing temporarily under the guise of a person, not for too long, and the person evaporates, like a soap bubble, it goes pop. Many people have a problem with self-esteem, with thoughts arising that say, I'm not good enough. I'm not as good as those people or that person.

Not as good-looking, not as physically strong, not as knowledgeable, not as intelligent, not as popular. But when you, of course, you could work on self-esteem on the level of the person with limited success, some success, yes. You can repeat affirmations.

I am good enough. I am good at everything I do. I'm getting better and better every day in every way.

I'm getting better and better. No doubt that was one of the first affirmations that somebody came up with a long time ago when books started to appear about positive thinking. Yes, it is a positive statement.

Every day, in every way, I am getting better and better. But who is that I am? The person?

Not the person. Yes, things can get better, and then they get worse. And then they get better again.

And then something else happens. So the person exists within the polarities of gain and loss, good and bad, up and down. That's inevitable.

There's nobody who can continuously be successful. The life will put obstacles in your path of different kinds. That's how it is.

So you can get better up to a point, but not continuously. There are polarities. But there's a deeper dimension in you that exists beyond the polarities of good and bad, gain and loss.

This dimension is not dependent on the polarities, good and bad, gain and loss. That's a transcendent dimension. And then you're in touch with something which we could call, if we wanted to use the terminology used by the ancient Greek philosophers such as Socrates, the good.

The good is the ultimate. Sometimes the good, as they use this term, means perhaps something like God. It just happens to be that the English language good and God are very similar words.

Perhaps that's no coincidence, but that's only in English. Well, in some Germanic languages too. So you feel there is a good deep down, a something.

It's not something. Let's just call it something. Language always refers to things.

Something that is beyond the polarities, that there's a good that's also even when you're experiencing great loss. And sometimes, particularly in those times, when you experience great loss, you feel that which is beyond the polarities of good and bad. There's a deep peace.

It's nothing to do with a person. It transcends the person. But when there's no cessation in the continuous stream of thinking, then you're unaware of that dimension.

People don't realize how much of a burden they carry through overthinking. Excessive thinking, purposeless. How many people are making themselves unhappy continuously through unconscious mind activity, judgments, interpretations, negative interpretations of themselves, of other people, of situations.

So thinking is perhaps the greatest addiction for most humans. And when it's an addiction, which means you can't stop it. I mean, if you wanted to define an addiction, you'd say there's something, it's a habit, something you need to do.

And you no longer have the ability to stop. It is stronger than you, or seems to be stronger than you. Or perhaps to say, you don't have the ability to stop, perhaps one could say, you no longer are willing to stop.

Perhaps you have the ability. But you're not willing to stop because it gives you a sense of temporary satisfaction. But you always need more.

It's never enough. It's again, you can see how it relates to drugs. That type of thinking, which is most of thinking, is not useful.

It's harmful. So that self-esteem, coming back to that, you can work on self-esteem on the level of the person, but true self-esteem or a sense of self-worth actually is derived from or emanates from who you are beyond the person. A sense of worthiness, a sense of something precious that is the essence of yourself.

That has nothing to do with the achievements, the successes or failures of you as a person. Something beyond that. That's not touched by the ups and downs of your everyday existence as a person.

So there's a goodness at the core of you that has always been there. And that is the light of consciousness itself. When you realize that, not intellectually, but experientially here and now, then you are no longer dependent on what's happening out there in your life for your sense of worthiness or self-esteem.

You regularly hear about people who have achieved fame or fortune and then experienced a reversal. They lost everything and they can't live with it. And they commit suicide because when they are deprived of what they consider to be the basis for their sense of self, there's nothing left of them.

All sense of worthiness that had rested on your worldly success or your finances, that sense of worthiness suddenly disappears with the disappearance of your money or fame. And so you often read of people jumping out of the windows or whatever they do when they lose everything. When there was a big crash in the 30s, it was famous.

There must have been many people in New York, probably particularly Wall Street, jumped out of their windows. They couldn't stand it anymore, having lost everything. Great despair.

But that means your life was, you lived only on the surface of reality. Your entire life was a surface phenomenon. There was only a surface I, not a deep I.

I meaning in the sense of I am. You lived as a surface I, never realized that beyond the surface, beyond who you are on the surface of your life, you are more fundamentally a deep I, a deeper sense of beingness or presence. And that's where true worthiness arises.

Now, it happens also occasionally that people who lose everything go into deep despair. And then suddenly, the surface self that now has become so unsatisfactory, self-destructs and suddenly they are in touch with the deeper I. So you can go either way when you lose a lot or you lose everything.

Either you go into deep pain and despair and maybe even suicide or it forces you deeper because remaining on the surface level of reality becomes too painful. So you're forced to go deeper. And then the loss that you experienced was the best thing that ever happened to you.

It could also be a serious illness. It could be the loss of a loved one. Close to you.

Reputation, loss of reputation. Who am I? Am I who people think I am?

All surface. So learn to sense within yourself the deep I so that you're not, you don't exclusively live through the surface I. And then be rooted in that.

And then the ups and downs of your life are of secondary importance. You still give your life attention. You do the best you can.

But your sense of who you are, your sense of worthiness is not dependent on your achievements. Although you can welcome your achievements, they're nice. It's not dependent on your losses or your non-achievements or your failures.

These are just concepts. So there are many people who have the concept in their head that I have failed at life. I have made so many mistakes.

Maybe they blame society or they blame somebody or they blame themselves or there's regret. I didn't make it. These are all stories.

Every one of these sentences is a story in your head. It's a narrative. And the narrative, you believe in it, and it makes you unhappy.

And that becomes your identity. I haven't made it in life is a narrative. It's a story you tell yourself.

And that gives you your sense of identity. I'm a great success is another story that gives you a sense of identity, which is a more satisfying sense of identity while it lasts, yes. But it's just as superficial.

And it could happen that when the stories in your head, the narratives that give you a sense of identity become very painful, there's a better chance of transcending the narratives and finding out who you are beyond the narratives than a pleasant narrative that temporarily makes you feel good about yourself because you have your fame or you have your private jet or whatever it is that you base your sense of identity on, then that the narrative of I am a greatest makes you happy for a while. But that will come to an end too, as many famous people had to experience for themselves. Temporarily, it can be satisfying and actually prevent you while it's satisfying, prevent you from finding who you are at the deeper level of your being.

So the successful financier on Wall Street is less likely to find spiritual awakening than the one who has just lost everything. The unsuccessful financier potentially is closer, more likely to find it. Or the successful one becomes so dissatisfied with the so-called success that he realizes the emptiness of his success and so goes into suffering too.

And then the suffering, again, potentially can bring about a deepening. Let's go back to where we started, which is the cessation of compulsive and involuntary thinking. Thinking.

Cultivate that, bring it into your life, your daily life. Moments of no thought. It doesn't mean you fall below thought.

No, you're not having no thought because you just had three whiskeys. You're falling below thought. You become more alert, more present, and you rise above thought.

So your life becomes interspersed with moments of spaciousness, inner spaciousness, no thought. That's what no thought is, inner spaciousness. If you don't find inner spaciousness, stillness, no thought, nothing that you achieve will satisfy you.

Temporarily, perhaps, but not for long. No person, no relationship, no location or place, no possession, no achievement will satisfy you truly for long. Will always prove to be, oh, have a downside.

Everything has a big downside. Every person you meet, you get married to. And when you start living together, you experience the downside of that person.

So no matter what it is, you're condemned to continuous frustration if you don't find inner spaciousness. Inner spaciousness frees you from the attachment to all the things in this world, which ultimately is attachment to your mind. Because whatever you experience in this world, you experience as a mental formation.

You might have a Rolls-Royce in your garage, but ultimately, how do you experience the Rolls-Royce? As a mental formation, my car. And so ultimately, you're attached to not ultimately the Rolls-Royce, you're attached to the idea, the thought of me and my car.

So it's again, always comes back to thought. Thought giving you your identity, which is the limitation. Cultivate the sensation of thought, alert presence, stillness, spaciousness.

Bring it into your life in moments. Moments when there's nothing to do for a minute, why you can either get your cell phone out of your pocket and start looking at it like everybody else, like all the zombies that you see around you, people that really look becoming like zombies, they all go. Then the attention is absorbed by the cell phone, which is an extension of thought, a reflection, an extension of it.

It reflects thought back to you and you link into the collective thinking. It's just, the cell phone is an extension of identification with thinking. You can use it, it's an incredible device.

Of course it is, it's amazing, but it's also highly dangerous. So instead of automatically pulling the thing out of your pocket, what for? You invite a moment of no thought into your life, cultivate presence.

Either just go into no thought and alert presence or take a conscious breath or two conscious breaths. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (2:15:26 - 3:11:34)

To begin, find your comfortable seating place, or if you're lying down, you're welcome to lie down. But when you, if you're lying down, if you choose to lie down, please stay awake through this. So if you're feeling tired, I'd suggest that you don't lie down.

It's to sit up and let's sit up nice and sort of as straight as we possibly can in a chair, having our feet flat on the floor. If you're sitting cross-legged, that's okay too. Just find your comfortable edge where you can close your eyes, take a deep breath, maybe exhale with a sigh and just let your entire day go.

One more time, deep breath in and exhale, let it go and relax. As you're seated, there's an awareness, the awareness that you are seated, the awareness with your feet on the floor, or if you're in another position, the awareness of just feeling the ground beneath you. And then there's the awareness of your breath.

Don't try to change the breath, but just be aware of your breathing in this moment. And just allow the awareness to take your breathing deeper. If thoughts arise, just notice them and just let them float away and bring your attention back to your breath.

And scan your body from head to toe, toe to head, just relaxing every inch of your body, your brows, forehead, your cheeks, your jaw, your shoulders, your arms, your legs, your feet, your toes. Just become aware of the body. Notice any tension or tightness, then consciously choose to relax.

If you're experiencing any tension or pain, just notice it, drop the label, tension, drop the label, pain, and simply feel. When you drop all labels, all it is a sensation. Again, if thoughts arise, just let them go.

Return your awareness to breathing, to the sensations in your body. Or perhaps you even hear some sounds, just notice them. Let's bring our awareness to the inner body, that feeling of aliveness within.

If you don't know what that feels like, don't worry about it. See if we can just feel it in our hands. So it might be best if you allow your hands to come up away from your body, so not resting on anything and just hold your hands up in a relaxed position.

With your eyes closed, you can ask yourself, how do I know I even have hands? And simply feel. So let go of the label hands and just feel.

What does it feel like? Is there some tingling? Does it feel numb?

As soon as you label it, just let the label feel. Labels go and continue feeling. You can keep your hands where they are or you can rest them back down onto your lap.

But keep feeling your hands. Now let's bring our attention to your arms. How do you know you even have arms?

What do your arms feel like? Your elbows? Your forearms?

Your biceps? Your shoulders? Breathing and feeling your arms.

And if you can't feel your arms, don't worry about it. Just go back to your hands. The hands are the easiest to feel.

Now feel your hands and your arms together. Now feel your shoulder blades. Feel your chest.

Feel your belly. Feel a spine. Your entire back.

Feel your belly button. How do you know you even have a belly button? How do you know you have a back?

A chest? A belly? A spine?

So feeling your entire torso and the lower lumbar up to your shoulders. Feeling the arms and feeling the hands together. And bring your attention to your hips, to your buttocks, to your hip flexors.

How do you know you have a buttocks? How do you know you have hips? And if you can't feel them, don't worry about it.

Just go back to an area you can feel. And when you're ready, connect your hips, your buttocks, your back, your front body, your shoulders, your arms, and your hands together. And let's bring your attention to the legs.

How do you know you even have legs? How do you know you have thighs and knees and shins and calves? What do your knees feel like?

What do your thighs feel like? And if you're ready, let's connect your hands, your arms, your back, your front body, your hips, your buttocks, and your legs. And become aware of your feet, your ankles, your heels, your arches, the tops of your feet, your toes.

Feeling each toe. How do you know you even have feet? When we drop the label, all there is is just sensation, the sensation of the inner body.

Now let's feel the body from the shoulders down, connecting your hands with your arms, your arms with the shoulders, your shoulders with your back, with the front body. Your hips with your buttocks, your legs, and your feet and your toes. And bring your attention to your neck, to your head, your ears, your cheeks, your lips, your nose, your eyes, your eyebrows, the top of your head, the sides, the back.

How do you know you even have a head and a neck? Relaxing your face, relaxing your entire body, and just feel. And remember, if you can't feel it, just go back to an area of the body that you can feel.

Let's connect your neck and your head with the rest of your body and feel your entire body. Noticing and feeling the inner body is one energy field. So there's this awareness, let's call it the outer forms, the form of breathing, the form of sensations in your body, such as tension, tightness, or pain, thought forms, thoughts, forms of emotions, sounds, and even the form of your inner body.

It's the purest life form, but it's still a form. And there's awareness of these forms. And staying connected to your inner body, allow your awareness to take you deeper into yourself.

In other words, allow awareness become aware of itself, the dimension of stillness, formlessness, and emptiness, that there's a potential for fullness. And going into this formless dimension, this stillness, is that peace that passes all understanding, the peace before any form arises. And we awaken to that stillness, to that formless dimension that we can also call your soul level, your soul self, unencumbered by any thoughts, any identities, anything.

And that practice of staying connected to that inner body, to your soul self, is the practice to be able to bring that into your everyday life, to find a way to have this in your everyday life, a life that is a constant pulling at you, constant demands. And it is essential if we are to be our true selves, to be at one with life, to be at peace in this world, is to find that inner peace within. You can still stay connected to this inner body, and that practice is staying connected.

You can gently just slowly open your eyes, taking in the world of form, which is another dimension, kind of added it and pulling at you to come out, to come out. But the spiritual awakening is to actually go back in. It's almost like the reverse to go back in, to go in and to find that balance between inner and outer living.

This meditation helps to reset your nervous system, your body and brain to function as one with consciousness. At some point in the meditation, we may go into some movement, presence through movement, while sitting or lying comfortably. Let's begin by finding your comfortable seat or lying flat on your back.

You may close your eyes or keep them open with a soft gaze. Become aware of your breathing. Bring attention to your body, noticing any tension, tightness or pain.

Simply feeling the sensations without labeling. Inhale, feeling the belly and lungs with pure oxygen. Exhaling slowly, letting go of all thoughts, emotions and unease.

Inhaling, aware of the body and the sensations in the body. Exhaling, relaxing your body. With each exhale, relax the body even more.

Bring your attention to the feet, relaxing the toes, relaxing the tops and the bottoms of your feet. Relax your ankles, the calves, the shins, knees and thighs. Relax your pelvis, hips and buttocks.

Bringing your awareness to your abdomen, relaxing your stomach, relaxing the intestines, relaxing the area around the solar plexus, liver and spleen. Moving your attention to the chest area, relaxing the muscles surrounding your heart and lungs. Become aware of your throat and relax the throat.

Relax your shoulders, relax your arms, your elbows, your hands and your fingers. Feel the heaviness in your arms. Become aware of your back, relaxing each vertebra of the spine from the top of the neck to the tailbone.

Relax the kidney area and relax your shoulder blades. Bring your attention to the head, relaxing your skull. Releasing tension in your jaw by separating the lips.

Feel yourself let go of the tension in your face, forehead and eyes, allowing movement in the eyes to occur spontaneously. The eyes hold a lot of tension. The movements allow your eye muscles to unwind, allow subtle movements in your body to happen, but only if it occurs naturally.

The subtle movements allows the body to slowly unwind and reset itself to its authentic rhythm. Become aware of your head, resting upon the first vertebra at the top of the neck. With awareness of that vertebra, slowly tilt your head toward one shoulder.

The ear is facing the shoulder. Inhale into the stretch side of your neck, inhaling particularly between the base of the skull and the first vertebra. Exhale, relax your neck and shoulders.

Sense an opening, a feeling of space between the base of the skull and the first vertebra. Breathe into this space. This meditative pose with breath and awareness creates an opening, a space, for the brain and body to communicate and work together as one.

Slowly, raising your head to center, repeat on the other side. Gently return your head to center. Inhale oxygen into every cell of your body and exhaling, relaxing your body, relaxing your mind.

Awareness of your body and breathing. Turn your attention to who or what is aware. In other words, you become aware of awareness itself.

Continue breathing with attention on awareness or in your body or with your breath. Sensing into that inner stillness, slowly begin to wiggle your fingers and wiggle your toes, stretching your jaw by opening your mouth wide, perhaps circling your wrists and circling your shoulders. Return to stillness.

Take a deep inhale and exhale with a sigh. Gently open your eyes. Place your palms together in prayer position at the heart, slightly bowing your head in gratitude for this moment, the aware presence that you are.

Namaste.

[Speaker 4] (3:12:09 - 3:13:04)

Hello, everyone, and welcome to this Conscious Manifestation 2020 live question and answer session with Eckhart Tolle. My name is Tammy Simon. I'm the founder of Sounds True, and I'm honored and delighted to be your host for this session.

Eckhart is joining us today from his home in Vancouver, while I and the whole Sounds True studio team are safely joining from our homes in the Boulder, Colorado area. We've received many, many questions, as I'm sure you can imagine, from course participants all around the world, and we're pleased to invite several people currently taking the course to join us and ask their questions live on video today. All right, so let's get started.

Eckhart, welcome.

[Speaker 1] (3:13:05 - 3:18:26)

Thank you, Tammy. Welcome, everybody, wherever you are in the here and now. I'm just looking at the screen here on the laptop.

I don't know what you can see on your screen, but I can see about 15 people in squares. Everybody has their square. It's Zoom.

It's a Zoom meeting. One of them is myself somewhere in the room. Among these 15, there's me, and then there's Tammy and other people.

And I'm looking at the totality of the people in the squares without thinking. I'm just sharing with you what I just experienced just now before starting, and even at this very moment. And if you're not thinking, but just being aware of that, those 15, which one of you is you?

Those people that you see in the squares on the screen, if you're not particularly focusing on anybody, I mean, peripherally, you know I'm there, so that's me. But if you're not thinking, you take in the totality. I am each one that you see on the screen, because without thinking, you don't bring in the historical person.

You don't bring in the personality. You're simply there as a conscious presence. And everybody else is there as a conscious presence.

The one conscious presence that is behind all the temporary manifestations of consciousness that we call people, that one conscious presence is there expressing itself through all these, these right on my screen, 15 forms, but I am the one behind all these appearances. It's an amazing realization. I'm not the one in that one little square that looks like me.

I am each one of you, and you can have the same experience perhaps. If you're, if not here now, next time you have a Zoom meeting, which apparently most people these days have, you can have that as a little meditation. Don't think, look at the screen, all those beings, but behind all that, there's only, there's the one consciousness, the one being.

And all you can say is that I am that. And so there's no other anymore. It's all the I am, manifestations of the I am.

So I've just discovered what I'm hoping will become a Zoom meditation for many people. I'm going to talk about it again some other time, but it's only just came to me at this very moment. And it's quite amazing.

So I'm quiet, going to be quiet just for half a minute or so, and to continue to enjoy that presence that is behind each one of you, that is one, the one presence. And then the amazing thing is, in conventional language, I love each one of you. I don't know you on a personal level, but it's unnecessary.

But what does that mean? I recognize myself, the essence of who I am in each one of you, and that recognition is love. Quite amazing.

So let's move on to the first question about, I believe it's about, yes, I'm sure it's about manifestation, conscious manifestation. So let's go ahead with the first question and the first questioner.

[Speaker 4] (3:18:27 - 3:18:38)

Wonderful. We have Haifa with us from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Haifa, thank you for being with us.

Please go ahead and share your question with Eckhart.

[Speaker 6] (3:18:39 - 3:18:53)

Hello. Thank you, Tammy and Eckhart for being with us. Thank you.

My question is, in the spiritual world, I've often encountered the notion that instead of asking, what do I expect from life?

[Speaker 4] (3:18:54 - 3:19:15)

One needs to ask, what does life expect of me? And to rise to whatever the present moment calls for us to do. How do you reconcile that notion with the notion of conscious manifestation, where we're inherently attracting what we maybe wish or hope to see more of into our lives rather than accepting whatever arises?

[Speaker 1] (3:19:17 - 3:58:07)

Thank you. Thank you. Good question.

Let's hope there's going to be a good answer. A good question deserves a good answer. So how to reconcile accepting what arises in the present moment and at the same time, perhaps holding in your mind an image of what you want to manifest in your life or using affirmations.

Now that's the, perhaps that's the most important part of manifesting, living in this world, is to bring the two together, accepting whatever arises in the present moment without losing the ability to, in your day-to-day life, in your personal and professional life, without losing the ability to have goals, for example, and move towards goals or to have certain aims when you practice manifestation techniques, it might, you might do it as set aside a few minutes every day, maybe twice a day, maybe in the morning and in the evening. When you focus on something that you want to manifest, the rest of the time you live your life without continuously thinking about something that is other than what arises in the present moment. So it's important, the very foundation for successful living, but also the very foundation for manifesting things is to be deeply accepting of whatever the present moment brings to face it in that state of acceptance.

If you're not in a state of acceptance, it's a state of acceptance that takes you deeper into the vertical dimension, which is beyond ego. The state of non-acceptance keeps you trapped in very limited egoic consciousness. So when you are in opposition to the present moment, in whatever form it arises, and that's very easy to fall back into that, even for spiritual practitioners, so to speak, it's fall back into this deep seated habit of being in opposition to what arises in the present moment.

So it's vital to recognize that something that is the case now cannot be otherwise in this moment. This is beyond any doubt. It is because that's how it is.

You cannot wish it away or say it shouldn't be. It is whatever is arising now is. It's dysfunctional to argue with it or to create some kind of mental, emotional resistance to it.

It does not mean that change cannot take place. It does not mean that you cannot take action in order to manifest something that you would prefer. But the important thing is at this moment, there's no division, no, there's no antagonism between you and what you experience as your reality.

That's very important. Not to have an antagonistic relationship with whatever arises in the present moment. One could give many examples.

You may find yourself in a place that's not so pleasant. You may be stuck somewhere that perhaps may have become a familiar experience for many people these last few months. They are stuck at home, I suppose, many.

And for some, that might be nice. If you have a home with a nice big garden or something like that, it's perhaps not so bad. If you have a small apartment, can't get out, several more people are there, then it might be more difficult to accept what is.

But that is precisely the practice. The more difficult that act of acceptance is, the deeper it will take you if you succeed in that act of non-resistance. If you succeed in not resisting in a situation that looks on the surface unacceptable, it can take you very quickly, very deep beyond ego.

So what opens up in the state of acceptance is the vertical dimension where that you are cut off from when you argue with what is mentally or emotionally even, one could say. So if, and then you see that in the present, if that is your starting point, the very foundation is to be in alignment with the isness of this. This is not to be confused with some kind of interpretation of what arises in the present moment.

The acceptance of the present moment does not depend because you could interpret things in many different ways. People usually impose some kind of interpretation on what's happening around them. And if you have a positive interpretation, you're closer to acceptance than when you have a negative interpretation of what's happening around you.

Let's say you lose your home because of the current situation. You can't pay your rent or mortgage anymore. And perhaps for a while you have to live in a tent or in your car.

And there's always, of course, always ever just this moment. This moment is as it is. So there you sit in your tent or in your car and you take this moment.

Now you can interpret, if you give it a positive interpretation, you say, well, it's a challenge for me to be here. And it's not so bad actually living in the car. I can manage, I can survive.

I hope it doesn't last for too long, but I can, it's okay. I shouldn't complain because other people have it much worse than me. They don't even have a car to live in or a tent.

I could be without a tent, but I have a tent. This is not bad. It's actually takes you a bit closer to acceptance, but it's not really the full acceptance.

It's some kind of, you have to spin a pleasant story to make you feel good. So you are still somehow dependent on what's going on in your mind. For your state of deep wellbeing.

But in order to become independent, not only of the, as far as your inner state of consciousness is concerned, to become independent, not only of whatever is at the present moment, your external circumstances and external includes even what's happening in your body. Let's say something, some disability, illness, disability, any external circumstance to become free of dependency, as far as your state of consciousness, your inner state is concerned, to become free of this reactivity to external conditions so that your inner state is no longer determined by external conditions, but not only is not determined by external conditions, your inner state is also not determined by your mind, what your mind is saying, whatever your mind is.

So if your mind is interpreting your external conditions in a negative way, then of course you experience emotions that reflect those negative thoughts. And it's not a pleasant state, you're stuck, you are resistant. And it's much less likely that you will be able to move on quickly from that situation because you are not connected with the power of life itself that is beyond the conditioned mind, that is the consciousness.

So a positive interpretation is better than a negative one. It takes you a little closer to full acceptance, but it's not full acceptance yet. You're still dependent on what, and your mind could change its mind quickly.

So for a few days, you're good with telling yourself a nice narrative about what's happening in your life. And then you get, I'm really tired of telling myself this nice narrative when I really know it isn't nice at all. So it could quickly shift and you start to complain.

So even that is not the solution. It's not full acceptance. Full acceptance is to give up calling it good or bad.

That sounds almost like being asked, asking somebody to be super human. Isn't it human to interpret? Yes, it is.

But there is another way if you want to awaken spiritually and the universe wants you to awaken spiritually. There's something that is beyond the polarities of good and bad, but that is transcendent dimension of consciousness. And to discover that possibility and that reality in yourself is the most amazing thing that could happen to you in this lifetime or any other lifetime.

To discover the transcendent dimension where your inner state through that absolute yes to what is, which is no longer a mental thing, you let go of needing to interpret this moment. And this moment becomes the foundation for your life. You still have a history.

Yes, of course. But you're not interpreting anymore this moment. You just accept it.

And then you may see that certain things may be needed to change the external appearance of this moment. For example, let's say you're in your tent and you realize fully that it would be helpful to get out of your tent before it gets too cold, before the summer is over. And you realize that you need to take certain steps on a practical level in order to change your external situation with which you are totally okay here and now.

You're not complaining at all. In fact, there are many aspects of it that are deeply enjoyable because when you accept the present moment, everything that you perceive, that you look on, that you hear is, there's not only an acceptance, there's also an appreciation of the fullness of life that's always around you. It's nature, the simple act of breathing, the still presence of a tree, of a plant, the still presence even of a so-called inanimate object.

Everything is lovely in its beingness. There's the fullness of life around you. There's the sky, there's the sun, sunshine, water.

That's lovely. And at the same time, you've entered the vertical dimension and from that deeper state of consciousness, then action that then you need to take on the external horizontal dimension of life becomes more empowered and more inspired because it's no longer coming from some kind of negative state, either arising of some kind of angry state or some kind of fearful state. Action that is motivated by fear is not pleasant, does not create pleasant experiences for yourself or other people.

You will make yourself and others unhappy. But if you can be deeply accepting of the present moment and then you make, if you don't know yet what action to take, you close your eyes or you don't, it doesn't matter. And then you see what it is that you need to do in order to change the external situation because you may have a preference, you have preferences.

As far as this person is concerned for living in a house that's rather than a tent in the long term. And so you can have a certain visualization of what it is, or you want to engage in a certain activity, a certain type of work. We'll be talking more about this, I'm sure, in the next few answers to the questions.

But the very foundation is the acceptance. And then it does not mean that change cannot happen in your life once you become aligned with the is-ness of the present moment. It does not mean that you become incapable of action or that the motivation for taking action isn't there anymore.

The motivation changes from neediness or wanting to either to protect or enhance your egoic identity through something that you acquire, feeling getting rid of the sense of lack or insufficiency that is part of egoic identity. Those motivations disappear and another motivation arises. And that is the motivation, that the joy of manifesting something, because the universe optimally enjoys it too.

And you're a part of the universe. The universe loves manifesting life forms and all kinds of things in this world and everywhere. If you look at the millions of life forms on this planet that the universal intelligence has manifested and continues to manifest gradually becoming over millions or billions of years, greater complexity and more consciousness flows into these life forms that the universe delights in manifesting.

So the universe loves manifesting form. And the human manifestation, conscious manifestation is none other than an extension of what the universe is already doing. And now it can do it through you.

And if you look at, I saw the, I'm not a diver into the ocean. It's lovely, it's a lovely thing. People are able to dive and look at the life forms in the sea, but I saw it on the screen the other day.

The unbelievable life forms that you see in the ocean, like creations of some incredible fantasy that nobody could even have dreamt of, the life forms that you, such incredible beauty and exquisite forms. What, there's obvious, there's some kind of, there's an under, behind the world of appearances, there is a vast intelligence that is the, that creates continuously these delights. It must delight in creating all these forms.

And that's you yourself are a creation of that, you are one of these life forms that created by this underlying intelligence, which is an emanation of the source of all life, God. You're an emanation of that. And then that can, when you're no longer coming from egoic separation, you can be a conscious participant in the act of creation that the universe is engaged in.

The entire sense-perceived universe could be regarded as a vast act of creation that, and it's growing, the complexity is growing. And that's the outward movement of the universe. The universe has this, the outward movement is the creation of form and your reflection of that.

But there's also an inward movement. It's like an out-breath and in-breath. So when the universe creates either, it creates directly, well, I don't want to go into that too much, but there is an underlying intelligence that expresses itself through life forms.

And there are strands or branches or in this underlying intelligence that they are creative forces that emanate from the source. We don't see them and they are responsible for the creation of various life forms. Sometimes in older civilization, they call them spirits or nature spirits and other things.

They are all, they're in the unseen and they create. Plato said, what Socrates said, according to Plato, that underlying the world of forms that we see, there are mental formations. There's already, it's translated as ideas in the mind of God.

There's a blueprint, so to speak, a pattern in the unseen. And that is the creative force behind plants and animals. But we don't know, don't want to go too far into this.

The important thing to realize is that the universe has two movements and most humans need to, the human being is a microcosm of the entire universe. The human being loves to and should be engaged in the act of creation as a co-creator with the greater intelligence. Only an expression of it.

There's a tendency of the universe to, and that is meant to be like that, to lose itself in the creation. So it's the, every life form is then, especially in the human, the human loses its connectedness, its awareness that it is only a temporary expression of the one. And then you take everything that happens absolutely real.

And that's a very frightening thing, that everything has an absolute reality, everything around you, because you have lost yourself in the dream of form, because ultimately what the universe is creating is this incredibly beautiful dream-like world. It's an artistic, gigantic artistic creation. But that's the outward movement, that's the out-breath.

The whole world comes into being. And then there's the in-breath, when the universe again becomes conscious of itself, because before it had lost itself in the millions, billions of life forms, it wanted to do that, to experience this beauty. And then the other movement is necessary, just as you need to breathe in and breathe out.

Both movements are necessary. Sometimes I call it the outward journey, which is when you manifest things, and the inward journey, which is the journey into yourself, into the timeless now, the vertical dimension. And that's the in-breath, one could say.

And it is quite possible that that is the entire universe reflected in the human in and out-breath. The entire universe is probably being breathed out and breathed in. The big bang is the out-breath, and it's still continuing.

It is a continuous creation. And then at some point during the out-breath, the other factor comes in, and that is the desire to breathe in again, because you're approaching the end of the out-breath. And then the universe breathes in, which would be the end of the world.

The entire universe is returning to absolute oneness. And then perhaps there's another out-breath, as in similar things I said in ancient Indian philosophy, Brahman, that one is breathing out the universe. And so in your own life, if you are connected with the unconditioned, deeper intelligence, then it's a joy to be engaged in the act of creation, because you are no longer engaged in it as a person, but as an extension of the one intelligence.

And so there's no contradiction anymore between being deeply rooted in the present moment, which is a transcendent you, the transcendence, the being of you is in deeply, is in the timeless transcendent dimension of consciousness, that is the being. Then there's the human being, right? You are a human being.

The being is the transcendent dimension of who you are. The human is the things where you lives in, moves in the horizontal dimension in time. There you take steps and there are things that, when you look at the horizontal dimension, there are things that it would be good to do.

You see things with the, after losing your connectedness to the deeper dimension, from there you look and then you see things, how you can improve your so-called life on the horizontal dimension where the person lives, what you call the person. There are things that you can do to improve your life or to bring in, to contribute some good, what some form to this world. And by doing that, improve your, what you call your life.

So that, and to bring some good into this world is the essence of any good that you bring into this world is always you bring in more consciousness. You connect it to the consciousness, you bring in through whatever activity. Let's see, the being and the human, you are not only a human, human is a conditioned person.

And more fundamentally, you are the being. If you forget that, then the human is lost. And if the human goes through life without ever, even having a glimpse of the being that is the transcendent dimension, who they are, then no life can be fulfilling.

Life will be very frustrating, even if through sheer hard work of willpower, you can achieve things, yes. Through sheer hard work and willpower, you can achieve things. They will not be deeply creative, not really bringing something really new into this world.

But you could create wealth, you could create a big thing through sheer willpower. But in the process, you're making yourself and many other people unhappy. And you're creating in Eastern times, you're creating a lot of karma.

So that's not, so the conscious manifestation is not the application of willpower to make things happen. It's a very different process. It's aligning yourself to an underlying power so that things happen without exercising your willpower.

And they happen much more powerfully in that way. It's a, when one speaks to talk about it, it's quite complex. When you actually live it, it's very simple.

But when one tries to explain it in words, it becomes very seemingly complex. Also, it's worth mentioning before we go on to the next question that the, in a person's life, there may be periods when living in the present moment is more important than creating anything. When you're, you may not feel called upon to manifest something other than what is for certain periods of your life.

And you're simply in alignment with the present moment. With what is here now. And even that is manifestation, but it's a different kind of manifestation.

You are, you're still, you're manifesting your reality still. Even if you have no particular aim about wanting to achieve this or to bring about that, you're still manifesting the way in which, how do you experience your life? How do you experience your reality?

How do you respond to challenges that life brings? How that is also, one could also call that conscious manifestation because you manifest the reality of the, how you experience the things that are happening in this moment. That in itself is a creative act.

So to be in alignment with the present moment, and if you're not, and some people have little interest, that's fine too, in creating too much. They're very much drawn to the being dimension. And I believe in further, we may talk about this a little bit more in questions to come, because these things are, they're all connected.

And I'd like to talk about this a little bit more, the doing and the being. But in the meantime, realize that ultimately there's no contradiction between being and the human or being and doing. The human is the doing, but the being is the awareness.

So that's a practice that you have to experience for yourself how it feels to be completely fine with this moment and yet realize that just as a person, there are certain things that you may want to bring about or create. Your wellbeing is not dependent on the outcome. That's vital in any manifestation practice, the non-attachment to the outcome.

If you are attached to the outcome and you are excessively focused on that which you want to achieve, then the journey towards it becomes something that is of low quality because there's not much consciousness in it. It's not a pleasant journey. If all you want is arriving, the journey is not pleasant.

And once you have arrived, that's it. Some other journey starts. So just to finish the way I experienced it, I've spent quite a long time in a state of very peaceful alignment with the present moment and just responding to things that arose in the present moment.

After I spent time just drifting a little bit, but being very much in a state of joy, people came to me occasionally asking questions and gradually answering people's questions became my job, but that wasn't through any kind of manifestation practice. I was so aligned with the present moment that at that point, I didn't want to manifest anything because the present moment was so deeply fulfilling that it was fine. It was somehow lack of balance to some extent.

I can hear that now. The balance came a little bit later. So in the meantime, people came asking questions.

It went on for some years, things gradually on the external level, they got a little better. I had a home and so on. And then at some point, I could feel an impulse from within, something wanted to come out.

It's like giving birth or being pregnant. Something wanted to come out and there was a feeling of almost a kind of, in a not disturbance, but something in the energy field that usually was very, very peaceful. There was something going.

And at first I didn't know what it was and I knew something had to come out. And I made some, I knew it was something that wanted to manifest itself through me, but it was happening very slowly. I was just occasionally giving workshops.

I knew something was wanting to happen. And at that point I made some affirmations. I said, I wanted an acceleration of what I was meant to do.

The acceleration then came in the form of me writing the power of now. Suddenly I knew what it was that I had to do. And that was the energy of that, when the creative period comes in whatever form, there's an enormous intensity behind it that could perhaps be mistaken by an external observer as stress, but it's not stress.

It's just intense energy and you go, and it's quite joyful, but it's this very high vibration of intensity behind it. And I didn't want to get away. There was no need to get away from the present moment.

The entire creation came out of the present moment. So just to summarize, it's not, you don't need to get away. You go more deeply into the present moment.

If you want to change your external situation, on a personal level, there are things to be done. Not continuously, but there are time periods, definitely when there are things to be done. And you can see more clearly what it is, because then it's connected to the unconditioned intelligence.

And then it can operate from it, rather than just a limited person doing things in order to satisfy its illusory needs. To satisfy its illusory needs and wants. Well, let's look at the next question, because basically it's all the same.

[Speaker 4] (3:58:11 - 3:58:16)

Very good. And thank you so much, Haifa. Thank you.

[Speaker 8] (3:58:16 - 3:58:17)

Thank you.

[Speaker 4] (3:58:18 - 3:58:35)

Our next question comes from Annie. And Annie is joining us today from Las Vegas, Nevada. Annie, welcome.

And please go ahead and share your question with Eckhart.

[Speaker 5] (3:58:35 - 3:58:36)

Hi.

[Speaker 4] (3:58:37 - 3:58:37)

Hi.

[Speaker 5] (3:58:37 - 3:59:14)

Thank you. You already touched on it, because like you said, it's all connected. My question was, as you practice presence and conscious living, the definition between wants and needs changed.

And sometimes it can get confusing. And so I was wondering if you could elaborate for us a simple way to define between egoic wants and needs versus a divine need, like you said, that's calling forth to be manifest through us. Right.

[Speaker 1] (3:59:16 - 3:59:28)

And to you, what is the... How do you see the difference between wanting and needing something? Or do you see that they're very similar or are they fundamentally different?

How do you see that?

[Speaker 5] (3:59:30 - 4:00:15)

Fundamentally, from my religion, they were very different. You know, needs were food, water, shelter, everything else was... But I live in Las Vegas and I have five kids.

And a pool really feels like a need and not a want. But they did change where I realized there's a lot more up to me than I thought about what my needs are, like you said, to... I'm fine if nothing changes.

I'm happy and content and fulfilled. And yet, you know, that would be nice kind of thing versus I need this to be happy. I need this to...

[Speaker 1] (4:00:17 - 4:00:54)

That's a good starting point. So maybe without... I don't want to be too intrude into your personal sphere, but maybe you could share what it is at the present time that you would...

Let's say that one... Let's forget about want or need. That you would want to...

Well, I'm using want again. Something that you would want or need or like to manifest at the present time. Did you mention pool?

Yes. Do you have one?

[Speaker 5] (4:00:55 - 4:00:55)

No.

[Speaker 1] (4:00:56 - 4:01:31)

Ah, okay. Well, that's good. That's a good goal to have to practice manifestation.

And it's something reasonable if you live in this extreme heat. And have you already done some practice in manifesting it? Or are you doubting whether it would be a good idea or whether you become drawn into ego if you start wanting to manifest that?

[Speaker 5] (4:01:33 - 4:02:22)

Yeah, I've done a lot of work with it and I feel really good about it. I feel like it is... You know, like you said, that feeling of that energy, almost like turbulence.

Like it does need to come forth and I find myself balanced between this new beautiful way of living in presence that, oh, it's just totally possible. And I don't have... I'm surrendered to how it's going to show up and how it's going to happen.

I don't have to stress. I've done that. I'm not going to do it again.

And then I think I slipped back into those old... And maybe that's my ego, but you have to have a plan and you have to work hard and there's a certain way to do it. And then I get...

I don't know how to explain what happens then.

[Speaker 1] (4:02:23 - 4:13:36)

Yes, yes. Well, I would suggest that you practice with that visualization. As far as I can tell, it's not something that you do to enhance your egoic sense of self.

I can see the reason why it would be good for you and your family to have that. And do you know how to... The best way to manifest to...

You know the very essence of manifestation is, as I mentioned already a few times, is to, as Jesus said, of course, believe that you have it and it will be given to you. So that's the key for all successful manifestation is to believe that you already have it. And of course, people ask...

I've spoken about that a few times, but it's always helpful to mention it again. People... I mean, Jesus even said you can say to a mountain, move from here to there and it will happen.

In other words, he's saying that what we regard as the external world ultimately is inseparable from your consciousness and your state of consciousness. And this promise that you can at the moment in the human development, what he said there, right now it's to be understood metaphorically to say you can tell a mountain because nobody on this planet has yet... Even Jesus didn't do it.

He didn't say to a mountain, move from here to there. But it is at the moment to be something metaphorical. It means you have enormous...

There's enormous power in you to affect change in the external world, external reality. In the long term, you could even take that literally as where humans are moving in the so-called future as humans because it's... Humans are engaged in an evolutionary process.

We are not finished. I don't know if we're even halfway there, but that doesn't... We can't know where we are because we're in the middle of it.

We don't have a bird's eye view of where we are in the evolutionary process. Retrospectively, it's always easy to see things. So that's where we were in the middle.

Are we halfway there? Are we a quarter there? 10%?

90%? No, I don't think so. The evolutionary goal for humans is ultimately to realize the oneness of everything that arises in consciousness is really an aspect of consciousness.

And the time would come when humans, once they've left ego behind a long time ago, then where humans can simply manifest by holding a thought. And there it is. In the meantime, we practice the way that we do.

There's a time gap and not everything appears, but often they do if you do it rightly and if it's not egoically contaminated. The image, the foundation is the feeling of well-being. The well-being is not the physical well-being, it's the deeper well-being that arrives from the depths of who you are.

I've just realized that the English word, the well is a deep thing. You go down and at the bottom of the well, there's the water, the living water. So the well-being, you have to find that well-being in the present moment, in the depths of who you are, by becoming still, becoming aware of yourself as awareness, becoming aware of yourself as consciousness.

There's no longer you and consciousness. Your sense of identity merges, it becomes, it is the consciousness. That's the wellspring, the well-being that is.

Then you have an image, the pool in your mind and you bring the image, you merge it with a sense of well-being. So it's already as if you were enjoying the pool because the well-being contains every experience that you could have. It's already there.

So the well, and this means when the pool comes, you will not, you will enjoy it, but fundamentally, it will not make any difference to your sense of well-being. It's on the surface. Yes, it's nice to jump into the cooling water when it's so hot outside.

So on the surface, it's very nice. You can enjoy that. But deeper down, there's no change in that because you already, so that means you already have the pool.

When you bring it, you merge it with the sense of, and that empowers it. You can then either keep the image in your mind. You can, you know the famous things that people, you can read about it in many books about how to manifest.

You can have a vision board that people do. Sometimes it can be quite nice and it has worked for many people and does work for many people. And again, when you have a vision board where you put an image of something that you look at often, again, not making the mistake of believing that this is something that you need for your happiness.

It almost seems contradictory that excessive attachment to the outcome prevents you from manifesting powerfully because that will take it into the future and you would create a sense of lack. So you're already, this feeling that as Jesus said, when you pray for something, believe that you have it. It has been granted.

You have it and it will be given to you. That's the important part is that you have it already. It doesn't say believe that you will get it.

You can also use, I don't know if you do, affirmations, verbal affirmations that your gratitude, well, the one that starts with gratitude is very good because gratitude is a very powerful manifesting tool. The gratitude for something, not only gratitude for something, it's generally a wonderful thing to practice gratitude for whatever's in your life. Now I have, every day I have enormous gratitude for the trees that I see from my living room.

And just to contemplate, I don't have a thought in my mind, I'm so great anymore. I'm grateful for these trees. The gratitude is there.

Well, sometimes a thought comes in and I've been here for many years. Thought comes in that says, probably every day, several times, I look and I say, so beautiful, so beautiful. And then I look at the sky and then I go, so beautiful.

That's my gratitude. But other people may say, more explicitly, what they're grateful for in their life, in the here and now, not some abstract thing that you call your life. What can you be grateful for in the here and now?

This simple, a simple object, just whatever it is. But you can also be grateful for something that has not yet appeared in the external, like your pool. The same feeling that you have for something that is here now, visible to your senses, can have the same feeling for something that is not yet there.

So then if you use verbal affirmations, I'm so grateful for this lovely swimming pool that myself and my family are able to enjoy every day. It's very simple, but you have to repeat it for several minutes. But it's not just the power, it's not ultimately the words.

The power is the gratitude already derives from the connectedness with the wellbeing within you. That's the source of gratitude. So you bring it together.

And then it don't, again, in practical terms, don't overdo it, don't do too much of it. Enjoy the rest of your life in between, do an affirmation twice a day for maybe 10 minutes each time. For example, whatever feels comfortable or maybe in between occasionally when you're waiting for something, still feeling.

Not in an obsessive way. Again, that's not powerful. Never bringing in willpower.

I will get this pool. I must have this pool. But if you do, maybe you would get it, but it's not pleasant journey.

And even then, it probably wouldn't make you happy. So this is a simple thing to practice with. And then other things may come in your life that you may want to manifest.

And that's all, that's the surface of life. You need to honor the surface of life. It has its place.

You need to honor your personal needs. You have certain needs or preferences on a personal level, but they don't dominate your life. So it's again, living in the two dimensions, being and doing, the human and the being.

So, well, at least you have air conditioning, right?

[Speaker 5] (4:13:36 - 4:13:41)

It almost broke the other day. But yes, we do.

[Speaker 1] (4:13:41 - 4:15:50)

Yes, it's, I know it must be so incredibly hot there. But the nighttimes are perhaps very pleasant. The summer nights, I remember when I, as a teenager, I lived in the South of Spain and the summer nights were just, the daytimes were very hard for me.

I didn't know about surrender yet. So there was a lot of complaining during the daytime, but no, of course, no air conditioning. We lived in a kind of oven under the roof of a tall building, not insulated.

So it got heated like an oven, lived there for four years. And then, but the summer nights were so, of such beauty and the fragrance of flowers and distant pine trees and the starry sky, the Milky Way. My first meditations were when I looked up at the Milky Way in the nighttime and becoming completely still and overawed by the universe.

And then you hear those insects in the night, what are they called? Crickets, something like crickets. They go all night, thousands of them.

They go, beautiful. So wherever you are, yes, we lived in this oven. It was, it would have been, if I had not complained, it wouldn't have been so bad during the daytime because the complaining made it much, much worse.

But then there was the beauty of the nighttimes. I was fortunately not so dysfunctional even at that time that I wasn't able to enjoy that. Thanks.

[Speaker 5] (4:15:50 - 4:15:51)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (4:15:51 - 4:15:54)

Thank you. Let's go on to another question.

[Speaker 4] (4:15:56 - 4:16:16)

Very good. This is our final question. For the evening.

And it comes from Zainab, who's in the same part of the world that you're in, Eckhart. Zainab's from British Columbia in Canada. Zainab, thanks for being with us.

And please go ahead and share your question with Eckhart.

[Speaker 6] (4:16:17 - 4:17:18)

Okay. Thank you, Tammy. Hi, Eckhart.

Thank you for taking my question. So my question is about that balance between being and doing that you keep reminding us about. And you see, I understand that it is okay to have worldly, to desire worldly things as long as we remain rooted in being.

Now, for those of us who aren't fully awakened yet, by default, we're not rooted in being. We're in and out of being. So could we actually achieve that balance?

And if we can't, aren't we then, by trying to manifest some worldly thing, aren't we then jeopardizing our main purpose, which is to awaken?

[Speaker 1] (4:17:19 - 4:35:38)

Okay. Thank you. Good question.

Very good. Yeah. You're more likely to awaken if you participate in this world by doing, rather than withdrawing as much as is possible and focusing exclusively on being.

One could imagine perfect circumstances to connect with being. Some people may have enough money not to have to work. They can live in the most environment that is most conducive to meditative practice.

They can have the healthiest food imaginable. All things that are most conducive to spiritual practice and deeply connect with being. That perhaps would be, for many people, an ideal situation, but not attainable for most people, but perhaps attainable for some people.

Perhaps there are people around these days, young people who've made a lot of money through whatever they do on the Silicon Valley internet apps or whatever they develop. And suddenly they have a billion dollars in the bank. And so you could imagine perhaps if that...

I would not recommend that you try to manifest such a situation because it would not be the most conducive for spiritual realization because it would be like a plant that grows in a greenhouse under ideal circumstances, ideal conditions, moisture, warmth, water, air, gets everything, it grows very quickly. But the slightest thing going wrong, the draft, somebody opens the door at the greenhouse for too long, the draft comes in and the plant quickly withers and dies. It hasn't, there has been no...

This is only an analogy. I've had many stories like that of people who were in that, including Buddhist monks I've spoken to, they lived in ideal environment in Buddhist monasteries. And the moment they got out and had to interact with the world again, they told, I don't need to retell the stories now, but basically one monk told me he had attained blissful states of being in the monastery over a period of...

He was there for several... Then he had to go out into the world and interact with the world again, in the city, people had to talk to various reasons, he had to do it, talk to people and he could feel himself very quickly losing what he thought was the state of enlightenment. And suddenly he was in a state of angry resistance and he even found himself shouting at somebody.

The humans, the deepening happens through the challenges of life. If you could remove the challenges of life, it's virtually impossible to remove the challenges of life, but if you could remove for a period of time the challenges of life by living in a totally protected environment, that would become your greatest... The lack of challenges would become your greatest obstacle to spiritual awakening.

So the very thing that you thought was the greatest thing that could happen to you would become the greatest hindrance, the greatest... The lack of challenge would after a while turn into your biggest challenge. And it would be huge.

So humans develop growth through being faced with challenges. Now, some challenges come to you are seemingly out, suddenly out of nowhere, they suddenly appear in your life. As you know, some challenges of a collective nature as happened recently for millions of people all over the planet, out of nowhere, suddenly millions of people got faced with the challenge of this virus, suddenly came out of nowhere and affected everybody's life.

It suddenly was that these collective challenges can happen affecting millions at the same time. In addition to the collective challenges, similar things can happen on your personal level. Suddenly, there's a health challenge.

Suddenly, there's a financial challenge. Suddenly, there's a challenge of somebody close to you in distress or suffering, somebody dying close to you, many loss of home, breakdown of a relationship or marriage, all kinds of suddenly these things appear. They have to be dealt with.

Suddenly they come. Then there are also voluntary challenges that you can create for yourself, which is quite a good thing too. The something that you want to achieve because then you create it.

It is a challenge. Let's say there's a gap between I'd like to become a, I don't know, whatever it may be, a musician. If you're already practicing music, I want to write a book.

I want to open up a hairdressing salon. I want to open a restaurant because most restaurants are going bust now. Maybe a good idea to open a new one.

That's a challenge for so many people who have worked in these fields now. Huge challenges. It's to be recommended to have some goals in your life, maybe not at all periods in your life because a person's life has different stages.

There may be a stage in your life when you don't feel called to come to create a challenge for yourself in order to manifest this or that. There may be a period of life when you're fine with what is, but if you stay there for very long, if you don't challenge yourself, the world will challenge you. If you challenge yourself, the world will also challenge you.

That's true. But if you don't challenge yourself at all, then the world will create something for you, a big one. So people who want to escape from, they don't want to interact, they don't want to participate in life.

So they try to just keep away. No, I don't want a relationship. It's just too complicated.

I want it to be just too messy. Don't want to get it. I'm more interested in spiritual awakening.

So leave relationships alone. And then I know I don't love particular creating, don't want to create anything or learn something new. It's just, it's stressful and it's hard work.

I'm more interested in spiritual awakening. Now just sit here and just do the minimum to keep myself alive. And so there are people like that.

And after a while, the universe gives you a huge challenge that you never chose, but there it is now face that because you haven't faced anything else. You haven't voluntarily created anything in your life. You refuse to participate in life.

Now here I'll give you something because the humans need the challenge. And that could be the beginning of your awakening. It will be painful at first, of course, but the beginning of your awakening, we grow through the challenges of life.

So instead of imagining some situation that would be ideal, work with what you have. That is the training ground for your spiritual awakening is working with what you have. And within that practice, if you wish to do so, practice manifestation for this or that.

But the challenge is here, not just the manifestation, to stay connected with the present without losing yourself in what you want to manifest. Not losing yourself in the doing. Do, you can't escape.

You have to do while you're here in this form. You have to somehow participate in the doing of things, but don't lose yourself in the doing. That's equivalent to lose also to losing yourself in your mind, the thinking.

They go together. If you lose yourself in your mind, you also lose yourself because mind is the most fundamental doing is the thinking that you do, that you people do all the time. They do the thinking.

So if you're completely identified with the thinking, you lose yourself in your mind and you do things, you're lost in the dimension of doing. That's vitally important to always bring back awareness to the present moment. Always, that's the entry point into the being dimension.

So always as much as possible, return attention to the present moment so that you can, you discover the wellbeing that is there within you that is inseparable from the vertical dimension that's the present moment. And then yes, if you're engaged in doing, you will make sure that what you want to manifest, that's not something that ultimately you do. It's something that happens for you.

So when you, let's say you have a goal and you visualize it, if you feel that you have to create it, that's not it. There's a power greater than you that creates it for you. If you have to write a book, if you have to give a speech, if I have, let's say, well, not these days, but often I give talks to people.

Let's say the average number is 3,000 people. I give a talk to 3,000 people. If I thought I have to do that, now I have to do this talk, that would be very stressful.

And that stress would prevent me from giving a good talk because it would not be connected. The talk happens, is the talk comes from the depths of the being, uses my mind, and then the words come. So there's no sense of doer.

That is perhaps the secret. And then also the Indian teachings such as Advaita, the teachings of non-duality, they often, very profound teachings, non-duality, it means that you are not the doer. If you think you are the doer, then that's a state of illusion.

And then you're, of course, still trapped in ego. The doing happens, that happens through you. So you allow it to happen.

Your mind just, it focuses, but it's a bit like, you can have a steering wheel or something, your mind wants to achieve, it says, wants to achieve this or that, but the power comes from somewhere else. It's not you, you don't have to do it. Also very important to lose the sense of doer once you have achieved something, some kind of great success or small success.

One could fall back into the sense of, I did this, oh, I did it, yeah, I did it. That would be falling back into illusion. All the great, let's say, the people have achieved very great things.

They have the greatest composers or artists or brilliant insights that certain scientists had that were not arrived at ultimately through thinking, was a preparation for the inside, like theory of relativity suddenly came to Einstein. Suddenly the realization comes, the deepest things come as gifts from that realm of unconditioned intelligence. That's where the power lies.

If then you have achieved something and you have the sense, I did it, your ego claims possession, it takes credit. If your ego takes credit for something, then you're beginning, the power becomes obscured again. For example, when I had in my twenties, when I thought I was very concerned about how is my life going to be?

What am I going to achieve? Am I going to achieve nothing? I wanted to be, the ego was very strong, wanted to, it was fearful all the time, anxious all the time.

If somebody had told me, you're going to be a great spiritual teacher, the ego would have said, oh, that's great, it's wonderful. Well, let's say a psychic had told me that, and the psychic, if it had been a good psychic, he or she would also have added, but you have to die to yourself first. So when you become a real teacher, it won't feel as if you had achieved something.

So if this, then I would, my ego probably would have said, oh, let me think about it. I don't know if I want that. And as to this day, I don't have the feeling that I have achieved these books.

It's just, it's nothing. It's not, I didn't do it. It's, yes, there is a sense of satisfaction when people come and say, often happens, people say your books changed my life or something like that.

It's lovely. It's satisfying. But I know there's no, who am I?

I think there's just, there's just a consciousness. That's, there's no, there's no separate entity that has achieved something. This separate entity got out of the way, and then the consciousness could use that mind.

That's all. I haven't achieved anything. So spiritual awakening is not an achievement.

It's a realization. That's very important. So your practice then is the doing and the being, be engaged in doing and manifesting and then losing yourself.

It'll happen several times. You will lose yourself in the doing, and then you realize you lost yourself. For example, when some negative state arises, stress arises, very clear indicator that you've lost yourself in the doing, stress arising.

Impatience, anger, complaining, you lost yourself in the doing. That's, and then it's, ah, and then return. And then it deepens, it deepens.

And then you truly, through the challenges, partly challenges that you create for yourself in a good way, because you want to create this or that. And the challenges that seemingly come out of nowhere, personal or collective, you work with that. Those are necessary for the evolutionary process.

Even the viruses are necessary. It's strange to say that. The viruses are necessary for the evolution of human consciousness.

Very strange, but true.

[Speaker 4] (4:35:40 - 4:35:55)

Thank you. And a big thank you to Haifa, Annie, and Zainab for your very good questions.

[Speaker 1] (4:35:56 - 4:35:56)

Thank you.

[Speaker 4] (4:35:57 - 4:36:12)

And Eckhart, a big thank you to you for your very good answers to these very good questions. I wonder if we could end together, just in a few moments together in presence, if you could lead us in that.

[Speaker 1] (4:36:13 - 4:36:21)

Yes. I don't know if everybody can see the number of people on the screen. I'm not sure how that works.

Tammy, do you know?

[Speaker 4] (4:36:22 - 4:36:24)

I don't know, Eckhart.

[Speaker 1] (4:36:24 - 4:41:24)

No. I was going to suggest if you do see several people on the screen, then that could be your meditation practice as we started with that. If it's not, if you don't see the images on the screen, I'll just briefly describe it to you again.

And then we'll have a moment of stillness. So if you're, it's so beautiful. I'm looking at 15 humans, including myself.

Each one has it in its box. And I'm not thinking, I'm simply, I can also look at each one of you briefly in turn and feel the consciousness that does the looking and the consciousness looking back at me. It's the one consciousness.

There's only, we are one, the one being, the one consciousness. Then names and forms become almost irrelevant. Also other things become almost irrelevant, such as gender, age, personal history, color of your skin.

Those things recede to the periphery, the background. And you realize that which is beyond those external appearances. So if you can't see it now, next time you see people on Skype or Zoom and you have several people, practice a moment of thoughtless awareness, looking at each person and then the totality and realize there's only the one consciousness in disguise, disguising itself as a man or woman or black or white or whatever color or whatever age or personal life situation, whatever it may be, is the one consciousness.

And so a moment of stillness when we become aware of ourselves, or let's put it in the first person, I become aware of myself as consciousness, not the person. The person is a temporary appearance. In essence, I am consciousness.

And that in itself, for a limited period of time, occasionally, you could use that as a pointer, I am consciousness, to occasionally say to yourself. But after that, there's a stillness. The truth is not in the words.

The truth is the words are the pointer. I am consciousness. And that consciousness is the consciousness of the universe, of course.

It's not a separate consciousness. That's amazing. It frees you from this limited, absurdly limited sense of identity of who you are.

And yet you honor that also. It has its place, short-lived as it is, it has its place. Whatever it is, you honor it.

Race, gender, whatever you, it's fine. It has its place. Essentially, it's not who you are.

Thank you to all of you. We will meet again.

[Speaker 4] (4:41:30 - 4:41:39)

Thank you, Eckhart. And thanks everyone for joining us and for the work and joy of Conscious Manifestation. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (4:41:39 - 6:27:53)

Thank you. Well, Darwin made a great discovery. As everybody knows, it's the discovery of the evolutionary process of life forms.

So that's which is undoubtedly the case. Unfortunately, at the same time, there's also what I see as a very grave error in that. It has had enormous consequences.

And the error behind the theory of evolution is that it is purely chance that there's absolutely no guiding intelligence behind it. And that has seeped into the collective consciousness of humanity, has affected millions of humans, whether they know it or not. And it's there in the mainstream culture.

And that is that the universe is largely purposeless. Everything is a product of chance events. And at one stroke, that has removed meaning and purpose from the whole of existence.

Although some philosopher tried to rebel against it and come up with some secondary purpose, existentialist philosophers and so on. Or Nietzsche said, of course, his famous statement, God is dead. And he also said somewhere that humanity must give itself a purpose since God is dead.

But I don't see how that could work, to come up or invent some kind of purpose. But if you look with an unprejudiced mind at all the phenomena on our planet, the life forms on our planet, I believe you will find that there could not possibly be not a guiding intelligence behind it all. The whole idea of manifestation is, of course, based on the premise that there is underlying the world of phenomena, the sense-perceived world, that there is a substratum of intelligence that is, of course, invisible to our senses, that there's a substratum that underlies all the phenomena in the universe.

Whether you call that God or divine intelligence or the emanation of God, if it's not God, there may be a source from which this field of intelligence continuously emanates in the same way that light emanates from the sun. And it's not only through looking at the phenomena around you with an unprejudiced eye that you will discover that there must be an intelligence behind that. Even more importantly, you look into yourself.

And I've been using the expression a substratum of an unseen space or field. And of course, if that's in the universe, it must also be in yourself. And so the best place to look for it is in yourself.

But if you look for it, you may not find it. That's the problem. In fact, if you look for it, you probably won't find it.

And the reason is that this intelligence is formless. So it cannot become an object in your consciousness like everything else that you perceive or are aware of is an object that arises in your consciousness. I call it your consciousness, but it's not yours.

An object that arises in consciousness. It could be a sense perception. There's a table, a tree.

You're aware of it, the object arises. It could be a thought. The thought form arises in consciousness.

It could be an emotion or feeling arises in consciousness. But if you look for the underlying intelligence, it cannot become an object in your consciousness because that intelligence is the eternal subject. So you can never say, there it is, I found it.

All you could say if you realized it is, I am it. If you say, I am it, there's no duality because it and I are one. But if you say, there it is, or I found it, then there's a duality.

There's you and there's it. And who is talking if you found the intelligence? Who are you?

So the answer is quite simple. And that is, if we now come, let's say, let's use an analogy that you're looking for it. And this looking is like a beam of light.

I'm looking for, where is that intelligence? That thing that's looking, which is not a thing, is it. So the very consciousness with which you're looking for it is it.

That's why you are what you're looking for. So if you're looking for God, ultimately that applies because God is another word for it, whether, although I would say that the intelligence that underlies the universe in my worldview is the emanation of God. It emanates like the light emanates from the sun, but it is as an emanation, it is inseparable from God, from the source.

And the consciousness that you are is essentially that emanation. The consciousness is the light, so to speak, that emanates from the source. So you, the essence of who you are, which is consciousness, emanates from the source of all life continuously and is not separate from it.

In that sense, if you say, I am God, you are both right and wrong. In the same way that if a ray of sunlight said, I am the sun, it would be absurd because the ray of sunlight is nothing compared to the sun. So you could laugh and yet the ray of sunlight is undoubtedly still in connectedness with the sun and is part of the sun.

Although I would recommend to the ray of sunlight not to say I am the sun because it sounds a little absurd, but ultimately it's true. So can you become aware of yourself as that consciousness? And when you become aware of that consciousness, then you are in touch with the underlying intelligence of the universe.

But even that is not totally correct when I put it in, use those words. You are in touch with the other, again, immediately as the moment you use language, you create a duality. So it's better to say you realize yourself but when you realize yourself, then you're ultimately there is no you apart from the universe.

So that realization is the universe realizing itself. The universe that temporarily comes in the disguise of a person, a little brief, very fleeting emanation, a very fleeting form it takes, but in that very fleeting form, it realizes itself, its own nature. Now we've talked before about the universe delighting in creation.

It delights to create, it creates continuously, it's continuously active. Everywhere there's life arising, continuously active and infinitely abundant. So there is at the source of all life, there is an infinitely abundant source that is the sun is a good analogy or example of that because the sun, it's unbelievable that there's an outpouring of energy.

It goes on for millions, millions, millions of years, although it has also a lifespan, but relative to our lifespan, we could virtually say the sun is virtually eternal. It's not eternal, but for millions and millions of years, it's an inexhaustible source of energy that gives life to everything, physical life. And so there's a deeper source out of which the sun has also come.

That is, the sun is also a creation of that. So life, the universe loves to create, it's infinitely abundant and you are an intrinsic part of the universe. So creation or creativity is also part of what your purpose here is.

And we'll look at that in more detail. So that's it. You could say then that the universe delights in, you remember we use the two terms being and doing.

The universe delights in doing. But now we could say that this, the doing is the outward movement of the universe. It is the creative outward flow of the universe.

It flows out, but there is an opposite movement at work in the universe and that is the pull back to the source. So there are two movements in the universe. There's the outward flow into manifestation and there is a pull back into the unmanifested source.

So the universe exists. There's a tension that is part of the universe that is the pull back to the source and the outward flow of continuing creativity. The pull back to the source is manifested as you experience even the most unconscious human experiences every few hours.

The universe pulls you back into the unmanifested and it does that not only to humans, it does that to every life form, except perhaps the most rudimentary life forms. And we call that sleep. There's an irresistible pull that pulls you into that state where you disappear temporarily.

First you go through the dream stage and then, as is well known, you go into dreamless sleep, the deepest sleep where there's nothing. And you have to go there every... Isn't it amazing that all human beings and all life forms, every few hours, they become completely and now literally unconscious.

Every few hours, the entire planet goes... Now, to us, it's so normal that nobody... You don't even wonder, of course, I need to sleep.

But isn't it strange that there's that movement that nobody could resist? And if you try to resist it, you would become insane and you would die. If you resist that pull.

And that's very unconscious. It's unconscious, you have to go there. That's one manifestation of the movement back to the source, without which the universe could not exist.

It needs that continuous movement back to the source. But another manifestation of that is the fact that every life form is short-lived. So, sleep and death are manifestations of the pull back to the source.

Everything needs to not only sleep, it also needs to... And sleep is a form of death, although the physical body still survives. You temporarily die.

When you die, if you go to sleep... For people, death is such a terrible idea. They think, oh my God, death.

You die every night. Except when death, you don't come back into this dimension anymore, which would just be another sleep form. Is it so terrible that you go to sleep and then you don't wake up in this dimension anymore?

Or you don't wake up at all, even if that's where the case, that's not so bad. I believe it was Mark Twain who said, he said, I don't understand why people are so afraid of death. He said, you were already dead for millions of years before you were born.

Was that so bad? But of course, you were not dead. The essence of who you are is consciousness and consciousness is timeless.

But the important thing here is to see that there is a pullback to source. There is a pullback out of that every life form, that which animates the life form is pulled back after a little while. And that's called death.

The form then collapses. But then a point is reached in the evolution of the universe where this pullback manifests in a different way. And this is what is happening to us here.

We return consciously to the source, not unconsciously. When the mind ceases, consciousness remains. It's like being awake in dreamless sleep.

And that's an amazing thing that is possible. That is a conscious return to source. And that is something that, as far as humans are concerned, is a relatively recent thing.

Only a few thousand years, which is not much. And only a few, of course, have consciously realized that this return to the source is possible. Then some of those didn't want to come back and to join the outward movement again.

So there've been, in the past few thousand years, spiritual, humans who had spiritual realization lost all interest in participating anymore in the outward movement of the universe because it was so fulfilling to realize the source of their being that they said, what, I have no reason for doing anything anymore. What would the reason be for doing anything? This is the source.

This is the time, this essence of who I am. Now, these people still, even in India, they're still ascetics who have given up all desires as far as participation in the creative process is concerned. And they're just immersed in being.

In Christianity, you have to go back a little bit into the past to find people like that in the Middle Ages. There were hermits and ascetics also in certain monastic traditions. Or if you go back to the early times of Christianity, there were the desert fathers.

These were hermits that lived, they didn't want any more contact with any other humans. And they lived on almost nothing. They eating locusts and living in the middle of the desert.

Some of them became almost, became spiritual teachers. So they attracted some people who thought, wow, this person has something incredible. He has this emanation.

What is that? So some attracted followers, but they were not interested in followers. So when you realize the essence of who you are, then this also happened to me for a while.

I lost all interest in future because future implies that it's still something for you to do. And all doing happens, of course, when you have a, it needs time. Any doing needs time.

And I'd lost interest in future because the present was so fulfilling. And for a couple of years or so, I lost that interest completely. And then gradually, as I was approached by people, they asking questions and I started to explain more things that I didn't know I knew, just came out of my mouth.

And so in a way, ever since I've been doing, but paradoxically, my doing is the teaching of being. So when I travel to give a talk or something like that, I seem to be doing something. And then I give it or I write a book that's doing.

But all the doing that I do is in the service of being. So it's a little paradox there. But I still do other doing too, of course.

I take a shower in the morning and go shopping. And so there's the doing that's associated with everyday living. So you will discover in yourself the two movements also.

You will be pulled into just wanting to be and then also you realize, oh, there's something for me to do here. You will feel a desire arising to create. The Buddha said, the greatest obstacle to awakening is desire.

Now he was speaking of this longing for fulfillment that arises from the egoic state of consciousness, which is always unfulfilled. And so the longing of the egoic state of consciousness is the desire that the Buddha speaks of. But now the question arises, does the universe come to the end of its desire?

Because the universe has a desire to create too. I don't know if we probably should call it desire in the case of the universe. It just does it.

It creates. Does it stop creating when through a human it realizes its own source? It realizes its essence?

Or is it possible that then a different stage happens in the way in which the universe creates? A different stage of the evolutionary process of the universe. Before the universe created, all the life forms were undergoing an involuntary movement, were part of the creative process.

Involuntary way. But now as humans awaken, yes, the temptation may arise in some to seize from all creation and to simply enjoy being. And I'm not saying that every human needs to create.

There is a long contemplative tradition in many spiritual movements, many spiritual traditions. There's a contemplative stream. The contemplative stream is there in Christianity, in mystical Christianity.

It's there very strongly in Buddhism. It's there obviously in Hinduism. The Sufism in the Islamic tradition could also be considered as the contemplative tradition.

The contemplative tradition is your main purpose is to remain rooted in being. There are not many humans that are called to that. There are not many humans for whom that is a purpose, but there are some.

I have a name that I've given them in one of my books. They are the frequency holders. These are humans who have no particular external purpose except to be.

Of course, they have to do something. Every human has to engage in some kind of activity, but the activity may be very simple. It may be something to do with plants or gardening or something to do with their hands.

So that might be a lovely, beautiful activity or a very simple job perhaps. It could be anything. It could be working in a simple job that gives them enough income to live on.

And they have no desire beyond that. That there are some humans, but there's a danger in that also. And that is that they will gradually, without knowing it, experience a decrease in their alertness and they may fall below thought instead of remaining above thought.

This course is primarily directed at the majority of humans who still have a purpose in this lifetime. And the question is, what form does this purpose take when the ego is no longer active in you or the ego has subsided substantially or has even disappeared? Because anybody who is in connectedness with being, with the essence, is no longer dominated by the ego.

Although it is possible that, and this is very common, that humans fluctuate in the degree of their realization. They fluctuate, especially after they first discover the possibility of living in connectedness with source. They fluctuate, they lose themselves again and again in the world and ego returns.

Then they suffer. The suffering wakes them up again. Then they return to being and then they remain rooted in being.

And it is often the challenges that every human encounters that are actually the most vital thing that drives you back when you've lost connectedness with being. The challenges, which means the difficulties you encounter in life, the obstacles you encounter, the breakdowns you encounter, the illnesses, the losses. Those challenges, the difficult periods for many people, those challenges increase your readiness to reconnect with source.

They drive you back into yourself once you have reached a certain stage. So you need the challenges. Be grateful for the challenges because they will gradually help you to stay connected with source.

And then the challenges still arise, but they are not all that problematic anymore. Now, when you are connected with source, many of your aims will change. At first, you may experience a complete absence of aim for a while because you're simply, it is so enjoyable to remain immersed in the joy, I could call it the joy of being, because there's a deep underlying joy in being, in just being, in experiencing yourself as being.

This is why in India, in Indian spirituality, they have a word for it. And that word is sat, chit, ananda, which is really stringing together three words, sat, chit, and ananda. Sat means being.

Chit means consciousness. And ananda means bliss. And these three are three aspects of that state of connectedness with being.

Sat, chit, ananda. Awareness of being, sat, chit, chit, consciousness. Sat, being, consciousness of being, is, at the same time, ananda, which is usually translated as bliss, but it could also be translated as, I would prefer joy, deep, it's not pleasure, because pleasure is some substance that's something you take on from the outside.

That pleasure is something from the outside. Even if it's the outside, even your body is the outside. So even sexual pleasure would be, I would consider an outside thing.

You derive pleasure from your body. You derive pleasure from a substance, from food, from whatever it may be. Pleasure, joy, is not taken from the outside.

Joy arises from within your innermost nature. So I prefer joy to bliss, because bliss sounds a little bit too out there, ecstatic, and you go, oh, I'm in bliss. It's not that kind of, joy is a deep abiding sense of deep alive peace.

So being, consciousness, bliss, the connectedness with source. And your first inclination may be, well, this is, I don't really want to do anything anymore. And often people have approached me with that question and have said, I have lost the desire to do anything or I don't have ambitions anymore.

And I'm getting a little worried sometimes when I'm start thinking about it. But otherwise, when I'm not thinking about it, I'm actually fine with it. So that you may experience that.

And now the important thing is for you to become alert. And it's almost in a kind of listening, attitude of listening. Ask yourself, what is there while I'm still here in this dimension?

What is there for me to do? So this is the doing that does not imply loss of being. It is a doing that is inspired by being.

So you have to enter a state of a kind of alert listening and ask yourself, well, do I continue with my job? For example, you may have to go there anyway to earn a living. Do I continue with my job and don't?

Or are there other things for me to do? Or is there a way in which I can deepen what I'm doing already? What is it that the universe or the intelligence that underlies the universe wants me to do?

So it's not a question anymore of what do I want. It's not a question anymore of what do I need. The question is, what does the universe want from me?

How does the universe want me to contribute? And then you can treat it as a kind of meditation. It's also possible that you will know it very quickly that there is something for you to do.

And a vision may come to you, or you may find that what you're doing already, you now bring a different state of consciousness to what you're doing already. And that changes the way in how you do what you're doing already. It could be a job that you're doing, but suddenly you're doing it very consciously.

Suddenly the way in which you treat your job changes because you bring an attention to it. And then you may not necessarily be called upon to change what you're doing, but how you do what you're doing changes. And how you do what you're doing is always more important than the what.

The how, how implies what is the state of consciousness behind the doing. The how is always more important than the what. So then people have reported to me that they realized that their present activity was not the best vehicle for bringing consciousness into this world because they began to realize that actually my purpose is to bring the flow of consciousness into this world.

I am the bringer of consciousness. I am the vehicle through which consciousness enters this dimension. And it can enter this dimension in different ways.

Consciousness through me when I'm connected with the spacious source, the formless unconditioned consciousness, then this intelligence is no longer obstructed by the egoic mind. But this intelligence will use your mind. It will use and inspire your mind.

Your mind becomes a vital instrument for the expression of this intelligence. Not the only, not the only, but a vital instrument. When I say not the only, I mean that this intelligence can also simply emanate from you wherever you are or whoever you are with.

If you are connected with that, then you represent that stillness, that it comes, that people can sense that there is something in you that is so deeply rooted in being that people just want to be near you or they ask, they want to figure out what you're all about. And so, or even if they don't, that you just, in any interaction, you emanate that vitally alive peace that transcends the person or the personality. That has nothing to do with the person or the personality.

So you can bring consciousness into this world simply by emanating, yes, but probably there will be more for you. There will be also doing involved. You can also, yes, of course, you can also emanate consciousness through, you could emanate through any activity that you engaged in and you find that it gets taken over.

Suddenly the activity becomes empowered or inspired by this greater intelligence. So the wonderful thing is it could be a dance, it could be artistic creation. It's, you're in a connectedness with this unconditioned intelligence.

Now, the unconditioned intelligence can only express itself if it uses your mind in certain ways that have to do with the actual conditioning of your mind. So in other words, the unconditioned intelligence through my mind cannot come up with the greater intelligence or a great answer to what is a solution to Einstein's problem that he never solved of the unified field theory. And I can predict that the answer to this will not come through my mind, nor will the answer to any great mathematical problem come through my mind or whatever else that my mind is not suitable for, has not been trained in that way.

But my mind is good with, it's been trained with words. So it, perhaps the only really useful thing at university was it trained my mind to be able to formulate sentences coherently in writing and able to analyze and look at how to use words and learning to think more clearly. And that's fine because the mind is a beautiful, wonderful tool.

We've been talking about the mind as an obstacle, which it is when you are possessed by it. When you are possessed by it, the mind is your pseudo self. The mind is the false self.

The mind is a great troublemaker. The mind creates havoc on the planet. The mind is lethal.

The mind is the unobserved egoic mind in its collective aspect is dangerously insane. Just look at the history of humanity. Look at the hundreds and hundreds of millions humans killed by other humans in only half a century, the first half of the 20th century.

Not only world wars, but hundreds of millions of humans killed by their own governments. Is it Germany is well-known, Russia is not as well-known. Hundreds of millions of humans killed come in China, Cambodia, the most recent thing.

Half, we visited Cambodia a few years ago and saw the havoc that when they had their regime of the communist regime of Khmer Rouge, almost 50% of the population killed. So it's totally the, don't underestimate the insanity of the human mind in the absence of awareness, in the absence of that deeper consciousness, the mind that is totally self-possessed. It's an entity that inhabits human beings, pretends to be who they are, is bad enough as the individual egoic mind, but infinitely worse as the collective egoic mind.

The infinite says, I, I, and it's looking for enhancing its I and the collective mind says, we, we. And so it needs its enemies and it will create enemies and it loves its enemies. It defines itself through its enemies and then it seeks to destroy its enemies.

Although if all enemies were destroyed, its whole pseudo identity would collapse because without the enemies, you have no identity whatsoever. So don't underestimate, but also see once the shift has happened, the mind is no longer egoically possessed. Then for the first time, you can actually think clearly.

You can only think clearly when you have the ability to be still. It's only, you can only think clearly when you have the ability to not think. Not, it's not even a requirement to not think for long periods of time, just the requirement to not think for, to have these, the spaces when you, when thought subsides and you're just present.

We'll do some exercises later on. Thought subsides and you're just present and there's a stillness, an alert stillness. And any situation that you, that needs some kind of action, that is a challenge, a problem, a situation that you need to deal with, you look at it, so to speak.

Which means you direct your attention to it and you become still and alert. And after that, whether that lasts for half a minute or five minutes, then you start thinking again. And if not the first time, after a few times, or perhaps the first time, when you start thinking again, the likelihood of coming to a, an intelligent decision, an intelligent action is far greater now because you're in touch with the unconditioned dimension of your consciousness.

And so that your mind is able to be much more intelligent suddenly, truly intelligent. That is not necessarily the intelligence that is measured by IQ tests. IQ tests measure a certain aspect of intelligence, but intelligence is vast.

And the intelligence that you are now in touch with is not in its raw primordial state, isn't the conceptual intelligence. Although eventually it might be translated into concepts when you start thinking and speaking and this thinking and speaking is empowered, but you contact this intelligence, you are this intelligence in its non-conceptual form or no form. It is non-conceptual intelligence.

This is not something you could measure. Certainly no IQ tests for it. You might be interested to know that I just cannot do IQ tests.

My mind does not work in that way. So my mind, the underlying intelligence would not be able to use this mind for certain purposes that require the IQ type of intelligence. So I'm not going to come up with any great discovery in the field of mathematics, physics, and so on.

But other people may. Einstein had a mind that was naturally, without even having to read any spiritual books or going into spiritual teachings, Einstein's mind was naturally attuned with that stillness. So he was not, he was a very slow, his mind had a natural slowness.

His mind was so slow, which meant he could think deeply, thinking deeply means becoming still and then thinking. Becoming still and then thinking again. Stillness, thinking.

That's what we mean when the actual meaning of thinking deeply as anybody who has made great discoveries whether in science or incredible creations in the works, in philosophy or literature or music, anybody who is able to be truly creative is able to think deeply. But think deeply means you have a balance between being and doing. Being and doing in balance and you think, deep thinking deeply means to periodically dip into no thinking.

Then thinking becomes deep and creative. So the underlying intelligence will use your mind and it will use it in a way that it is able to use your mind so your mind is not going to be, the intelligence cannot use your mind for something that your mind is not suitable for or trained for. Of course it could be trained in the future, but it would seek an avenue of expression that corresponds to an ability that is already there in you, but perhaps undeveloped as yet or already developed.

So you become a vehicle for consciousness to come into this world in one way or another. It could just be in personal relationships of, let's say you're in a helping profession. If you're in a helping profession, the way in which you relate to others, let's say you are a nurse, you are a doctor, you are a therapist, you are a hospice worker, the way in which, or you bring up your work in a kindergarten or you're a teacher teaching children, the way in which you relate to other humans will change.

There is a dimension, an added dimension to it that changes the way in which you affect other humans. And so it may be the case as you become more conscious, the conscious manifestation does not always mean something totally new. You could manifest a higher consciousness without changing what you're doing.

Simply a change just happens in the way in which you are doing it because when you are rooted in being, every human interaction, in addition to whatever the interaction is about on a superficial level, in addition to that interaction, there is an energy frequency, so to speak. There's an energy field, even in short interactions. And you don't do it by choice.

There's no thinking involved for that. You don't think, okay, I'm now affecting this human being. None of that.

But there's simply this underlying stillness brings in a deeper connectedness with every human being. And in that deeper connectedness with every human being, something responds in the other humans. They may not know that, but something you call forth their essential being too.

And it might not have any lasting effects or it might, but it might just be something. And then they meet you again and there's something there. So this is potentially wonderful for anybody whose job involves dealing with human beings in whatever capacity.

So as this shift in consciousness happens, the way in which you do what you do changes and for those people, that may well be that you continue doing what you're doing, but now with this added dimension. Or it could be that you, as you go into that stillness periodically and you realize there's something else for me to do rather than doing what I'm doing now, but what is it? You ask the question and you may get an answer as a thought or a mental image or as an external event, meeting a person or someone who says this or that, or something coming to you from the external and seeing, oh, there's something there, something for me to do.

So the first step is often if you feel, but the important thing is, whatever it is that you are doing at present, continue to do it until you find something else arising. But while you do it, even if it's a repetitive thing, bring as much consciousness to it as you can. So the manifesting, the deepest level of manifestation is not the manifestation of external structures or events that may come later.

In the first instance, manifestation is the manifestation of a new state of consciousness that emanates from you. And that happens naturally when you live in connectedness with being. The transcendent dimension, which is what it is, then changes the entire way in which you experience reality.

Initially, before the transcendent dimension remains a permanent thing within you, permanently manifesting within you, you need to invite it into your life. Remember to invite it into your life. And that's a practice.

And that's a practice that your mind, egoic mind will tell you that you are too busy right now and you just have to deal with this and that and the other first before you can bring the transcendent dimension into this moment. You say, well, not now, but let me first do that. And then there's something else.

And then there comes the excuse in your mind. And this is something after you've already had glimpses of it, perhaps here and now. You've had glimpses of it in yourself that there have been brief moments when thinking subsided and there was a sense of well-being and connectedness and peace.

And then the mind came in and said, yeah, but you've got problems. You should really, should be thinking and solving your problems first, shouldn't you? Now you have to be aware of this trap when you've had glimpses of realization and then be aware of the trap of the mind coming in, the conditioned mind and says, this doesn't help you deal with your problems.

There's so much you have to sort out. Why don't you do your spiritual work when you have sorted out your problematic life situation? First, I need to find more job security because my job is so uncertain.

I just can't settle down to any kind of inner work. I've got too much to deal with there and there and there, too many demands. I can't, maybe next year when I'm on vacation, I can try it.

Or you can think some imaginary thoughts that if only I had enough money and I could be at this very peaceful, I wouldn't need to work anymore and then I could really do it. That doesn't work. So you start with where you are.

When your mind says no time to do it, then you do it anyway. And I'm using the word do in the wrong way because actually what happens is you relinquish doing for a moment. Bring in transcendent moments into everyday life.

Transcendent moments. One conscious breath. Looking at the sky for a few seconds.

Looking at a plant in your office, in a plant in a pot. Looking at the plant for a few seconds. Feeling your inner body for a few seconds.

Looking at any object for a few seconds. Listening to any noise for a few seconds without labeling it mentally, without interpreting, without judging. Looking at something without interpreting, without judging.

Appreciating it for what it is. Every day I'll tell you this, and it's not a practice, it's a natural thing. I sit in my living room or my study or I stand and I look around at the room and the pieces of furniture and I love that presence of those things.

They have that lovely, they're just so still. They have a still, just a very simple beingness, a very simple presence. They just are.

And I look and it's lovely. Or I look out of this window, there's the sky. I had to resist, become aware when I got my first iPhone.

The screen is so seductive that I noticed after a while, usually I would wake up in the morning and I look out of the window and well, then you see what the weather is like or look at the sky. And then I noticed I had the phone next to my bed and one day arrived when I woke up and I reached out and took my phone to find out what the weather was like. Why didn't I look out of the window?

There was an abstract weather app and it said, oh, today it's cloudy. Oh, well, I could have known that by just looking out of the window, that much better. This is just a tiny example how seductive these things are.

So leave them well alone so that they don't impinge upon your life unnecessarily. You have to be really careful because this inviting transcendence into your life is greatly impeded, hindered, not only by all the things that happen in your life around you, not only by your own mind, but also by all the devices that the mind has created in order to amplify itself. I'm not saying that these devices are all negative.

Potentially, they could also help to live more consciously, but it's still the influence they have on the mind at the moment, especially in the young generation, cannot possibly be regarded as helpful as far as awakening is concerned. In fact, could probably have the opposite effect because the clutter they inflict on your mind is just inconceivable. The clutter of totally useless information and knowledge, the clutter of amplifying your egoic mind by creating an image on the screen of who you are that you present to the world, that you send out into all your hundreds of so-called friends, many of which have never met you.

And you send, this I'm talking, young people do that a lot. Up to what age, I don't know. And you have to be really careful with that because if you get so involved in that, how can the transcendent dimension arise in you if your mind is continuously cluttered and continuously barred with new input?

So you need to create spaces as much as you can. Invite the transcendent dimension into your life. It perhaps can be done with the devices because there are some apps on there that are actually miraculously, that you can get apps that actually create stillness in you.

You can find out what they are. It's not difficult to find. So they can be used in a good way too, but better than any device, invite transcendence into your life as much as you can.

We'll do more exercises later. This is for daily living. And then gradually it stays with you even while you're engaged in other things.

And then you are asking what remains for me to do while I'm still here in this body, so to speak, in this dimension? What is it that the universe wants me to do in order to bring consciousness? Is it just to bring more consciousness to what I'm doing already?

Is it writing a book? Is it writing, creating artwork? Is it setting up a company as a conscious business?

Is it going somewhere in the world and help people? So many, is it creating a YouTube channel and teach people to live consciously? Anybody can do that.

So there are some good aspects to the technological revolution. Anybody can get any message out into the world. And in many cases, it's insane or mad or meaningless, but there are people who are doing wonderful work.

There are individuals who are affecting thousands and hundreds of thousands of people through just creating a YouTube channel and there are now some spiritual teachers that have become well-known only through YouTube. So there are possibilities. The universe will then show you.

Now, how does it show you that? It shows you that as a vision, a realization, or something coming from outside of you, somebody talking to you and suddenly suggesting this or that. The interesting thing is when you are connected with a transcendent dimension, the intelligence works not only through your mind, although it does that too, the intelligence works under the surface of things, affecting other people and situations that become helpful to you.

And this especially applies once you know what it is what you want. Once you have said, now I know I need to do this, then you begin conscious manifestation. Once you know this is the course of action I want to take, this is the vision I have, this is what I want to do.

That is, and you realize, how do you know that that's not your ego? Well, you know that because it arises not out of a sense of lack or neediness. The best recognition that it's not your ego is first of all, the act of doing whatever you are doing towards what it is that you want to achieve.

And it may be that you're starting to use conscious manifestation techniques such as affirmations or visualizations. Those are the two main techniques. We may look in detail later.

Affirmations that state certain things, visualizations. Everybody has, most people have heard of vision boards. And again, this is something that the universe wants to create through you.

That is not something that you come up with because you need this to make you feel better or more complete or more fulfilled. Once you start acting, in addition to using affirmations, you begin to take action because you need the two. The affirmation is putting out a thought into the universe and thought is creative.

This is a thought that's not a conditioned thought, but a thought that is a statement and that goes into the formless and creates form. And you think you are doing it, but really you are not doing anything. The universe is doing it through you and through your mind.

So it's a secondary creation. The universe, instead of creating directly a plant, a fish, an animal, a tree, it creates through you. And when the universe creates through you, secondary creation, and that's the next stage in evolution, the universe uses your mind.

The intelligence uses your mind. And then there may be a case here for affirmations because an affirmation is a thought that you send out that is the blueprint, so to speak, for creation of form. Before form arises, it's a thought that applies on every level.

Before you build something, you have the thought of what it is. Before the architect builds a house, the architect has a thought and then the architect takes action. Now, let's stay with the architect for a moment.

This architect, the usual way is, let's say the architect has a plan for most fantastic building. And so the architect begins to work. First, it's in the mind and then it's on paper and then it's on the computer.

But first, the house is in the mind and then it gradually translates into external form. It goes on paper, goes into the computer. And then, of course, let's say the architect, then there are other factors involved.

And while he or she is engaged in the act of creation, still, if the architect is in touch with the transcendent dimension, he or she will be able to, in the act of creation, become still and then create. Become still and then create. Or continue to create with sensing the power of presence in the background and then create and think and draw and think and draw.

So the creation becomes inspired and then perhaps there's a stage where the architect says, okay, I haven't actually found anybody to finance my building. This is the most fantastic. Most architects don't work like that.

But let's say this one does. The architect, okay, now this is the most fantastic thing. It's coming through me.

But now I need somebody to finance it. This building will have wonderful feng shui and wonderful emanation. People who are in it will greatly enhance their wellbeing.

And I know this is going to be wonderful. Not like the carbuncles, as Prince Charles calls modern architecture. No, it will be very different.

And this may be a place where the next step could be an affirmation that you're stating that you're finding someone who is happy to finance this. And this affirmation would never say, no, we'll look at it in more detail later, but let's just start with this. If the architect says, I'm going to find somebody, or let's say, I want to find somebody who is happy to finance this beautiful building, that's not a good affirmation.

Because you say, I want to find somebody means you haven't, it's not, that person isn't there yet. I don't have that person. You never say, I want, you never say, I need.

You never say, I will, because that's put it into the future. All affirmations need to be stated in the present tense. I, there is somebody who is happy to finance this wonderful project.

There is somebody who is already waiting, only waiting to finance such a beautiful project as I have. And I know this person is in my life now. And next, you always add a little thankfulness to it.

I'm grateful for having this person who is financing my great work of art. Now, I'm going to read from the Bible. This is very important in case you don't know it yet, what Jesus says about manifestation of this kind.

Here it is. Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, prayer is a term for affirmation here. Whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it and it will be yours.

Believe that you have received it and it will be yours. Now, that's the key statement. It's not that you're going to receive it.

On an inner dimension of consciousness, it has already happened or is happening. It's the present. It's not something that's going to, then no affirmation is powerful and it's going to work unless it's already the case.

And that is called faith, that you have the faith that this already, now, what does that mean? To have the faith means you can sense the power that creates this, the power that is inseparable, the power of being that you sense is the unformed version of what it is, the form that you want to bring about. So you can already sense, to put it, let's put it in more simple terms for a moment.

There's no difference between making that statement and at the same time feeling what does it feel like to sense the reality of what you're saying. So there's a person who is happy to finance this wonderful project. And at this moment, you feel the aliveness of that already.

You can feel how the power that's behind that is making no difference whether it's actually an external reality or only an internal reality, you feel exactly the same. So you already, the feeling is exactly the same as if this were reality already because on an inner level, it is reality. So this comes out of the fullness of being.

So the event that you want to create comes out of the fullness of being. It comes out of you, so to speak. It's not so much, not that you attract it from the outside.

It's more that it comes, it flows from the power that is within you, the abundance, the fullness of life as Jesus puts it. He said, I want you to have the fullness of life or in some translations, life in its fullness. And what does that mean?

It means to sense life in its fullness within you. It does not mean having countless possessions although it can be sometimes translated into form but the fullness itself is the formless life, the formless consciousness. I want you to have life in its fullness means I want you to have, to be rooted in that aware, spacious presence, the unconditioned consciousness, the eternal I am.

And out of that, you create. So any statement you make, it's called an affirmation. It's always in the present tense and you always feel that it's already here.

And most importantly, making that statement, there's no willpower behind it. You don't say there's somebody who is financing my, and then you increase your willpower or you start shouting. That does not work.

You don't have to do it. You just state it. The power does it for you.

It does not involve any kind of, in fact, that would be a great obstacle and it would be the ego coming in through the back door. The important thing is the enjoyment in this practice that is part of the power. The practice is not inferior to the desired outcome.

You're not going to feel better when the desired outcome materializes than you feel already. And if the desired outcome should not materialize for whatever reason, you've had a good time practicing this wonderful energy and perhaps something else comes instead. So there's a joy in the, there's not only the joy in the affirmation because there's an energy, it's an energy outflow from you, from within you.

That is the, there's a joy in the affirmation. Then the intelligence, the underlying intelligence of the universe then gives it form according to the words. You have spoken the word.

You remember, this is the same act of creation through you as the act of creation. You remember in the Bible, at the beginning of the gospel of John, in the beginning was the word, says John, the word. The translation is the logos.

Logos is the Greek, the original term. In the beginning was the word which was spoken. The word comes, emanates from God.

And the word creates, is the underlying intelligence that creates form. In the beginning was the word. And John didn't come up with that in the gospel.

It wasn't originally part of the Christian teaching. The term is borrowed from ancient Greek philosophy, the concept of logos, that's the underlying intelligence. It doesn't mean logic, although the word is derived from it.

So, and that word that is the creative element in the universe, so it can come through you also. That's the next, as I said, the next stage in creation. It says here, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received and will be yours.

I would add here the words within reason, because you cannot ask just anything because that would be absurd. Imagine me asking, I want to be the heavyweight boxing champion of the world. That's my real aim and that will fulfill me.

No matter how much I ask in prayer, that's not going to happen unless, of course, I leave this body and look for another one. So there are certain things that are outside the realm of the limitations of form, but yet there are many possibilities. There are miraculous possibilities, yes, but there are also limitations of form and you have to look at that and don't be crazy and ask for something that is virtually impossible as yet for you.

Now, here comes another statement that's just before Jesus says that. He says this, truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, be taken up and cast into the sea and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. So this is a very extreme statement, but I believe ultimately true, but not yet for humanity.

The way humanity is going, if humanity survives the upcoming critical transition from one state of conscience to another, there's no guarantee of anything. If humanity survives and makes it to the next level of consciousness, a time will come. I'm convinced of that at the moment, it's not yet possible except in small measure that humans will create simply by applying thought and create form simply through applying thought and move anything in this world simply because everything, even seemingly material objects, the matter is just an appearance.

There is ultimately no such thing as matter. There's only energy and all energy exists in the one energy field of universal consciousness. So the mountain exists in the universal consciousness appearing to us as very heavy matter.

When we are totally aligned with universal consciousness, then anything within the universal consciousness can easily be created or changed or removed. So one day humans will be able to, but the strange paradox is they will use it very little because they don't need it. They're connected, they're connected with being and there is not that much that they need and they have long transcended ego.

So if humans were able to do that and still have ego, they would create total havoc in the universe. It will destroy the entire universe if they could do anything or create anything through the applied power of their minds. But once humans are free of ego and are connected, then it's no longer the humans who do it.

It's the universe that does it through the humans. And then that is the very, at the moment, seemingly very still, very distant stage in human evolution, whether it's in a, unless it gets speeded up, whether that happens in 5,000 years time or in half a million years time or in 1 million years time, we don't know. And then probably humans will not perceive themselves anymore as physical bodies.

And yes, then humans will have that seemingly divine power, but this is the beginning of it and this is very important that we are going that way. So you can move mountains with faith, but not yet. There's a funny story of the, there was a woman who, she read this or her pastor read this to her or she heard it in church and said, oh, and she had a little hill in front of her house that obstructed her view.

And so the woman said, oh, Jesus says we can move mountains. So I'll see if I can move that hill. So she thought very hard before going to bed says, okay, hill, you go away in the morning.

You're not going to be there anymore. I command you to go away. And so in the morning she woke up and she opened the curtains and the hill was still there.

And so she said, oh, I knew it wasn't going to work. So, so in the next session, we are going to look in more detail at how to practice this in the right way and possibly also look at the various ways in which this practice fails, how you can practice in the wrong way and why and see how we can improve on this and how we have an empowered practice. The practice, by the way, is not something to be done on a permanent basis.

I see manifestation practice as right for some people in certain situations, but not as a thing that you do throughout your life that would be counterproductive and unnecessary. You do it in certain situations. Those are basically two kinds of situations.

One is the situation when you feel called upon to create something new or to do something helpful, to help something that you already are in the process of creating, but you need additional help, or you need an insight into the kind of creation that you are envisaging. The other practice is when a big challenge comes into your life, things are getting chaotic around you, difficult people, difficult situation, loss of money, whatever it may be. There you need to combine accepting what is and changing what is.

They're not contradictory, and we will have to look at that. Accepting the isness of things and yet changing. Healing is another thing that we need to look at.

What is the role of conscious manifestation, possibly, in healing your body? Does it play a role? Is it effective?

Is it necessary? Is it pointless? We'll have to look at that.

So there's quite a bit to look at still, and in the meantime, don't forget to be in the present moment because being in the present moment connects you with being. Being in the present moment brings the transcendent dimension into your life. Just acknowledging the present moment, aligning yourself with the present moment, then something opens up in you that is peaceful.

And spacious. Just that acceptance creates a spacious place within you. So it's always just the quickest way to being aligned with presence.

The quickest way to being connected with the transcendent dimension is being aligned with the present moment. Very easy. And then, if there's something that needs to be created, you start, you create from there.

We also need to look at your habitual thought processes so that you become more aware of your habitual thought processes and to see whether they help or hinder your creation, your manifestation. How are your habitual thought processes? That's a very important point.

And we also need to look at action you can take, little things you can take that are almost symbolic affirmations. Symbolic affirmations of the goodness of life, symbolic affirmations of abundance. And we must not forget to look at the importance of the inner attitude of appreciation of little things, especially.

Appreciation that is sometimes called gratitude. The continuous appreciation of the small things of life. Because most of your life is small things.

Big events happen occasionally, but there's a wedding, there's a birthday, there's a trip, there's a vacation, there's Thanksgiving dinner, but in between there's ordinary everyday life consisting of little things. And how do you relate to the little things of life? That also could be either a help or a hindrance.

Thanks. It's wonderfully still here. And problem solving is sometimes necessary in life because problems drop up all the time.

Although I prefer not to call them problems, but that's a word that is mostly applied to situations that need some kind of response or action, challenges is another word. It's important to practice accessing non-conceptual intelligence before you apply, and even while you apply your analytical mind so that you approach the problem both with the non-conceptual intelligence and with the analytical mind that looks at a situation can divide up, for example, a complex situation into, for example, possible steps that I can take to solve the situation. One, two, three, four.

Cause of action, you think about it, you focus thought, analyze, look at the possibilities, but fluctuate between, this is quite an art, between thinking about it, applying focused thought, which is different from compulsive overthinking such as happens when you are worried and so on, to apply focused thought, but to really skillfully and effectively apply focused thought, you need to have access to the non-conceptual intelligence in you that is beyond thought. So there's a continuous stepping back out of thinking into where you take in the totality of a situation without breaking it down, where you look at the situation without any verbalization or conceptualization, just being very alert and very still. And you look at it, look, not necessarily visually, hold it in your awareness as a totality and then just become still.

Even let go for a moment of the entire situation, just become still, alert and still. And then an answer may come out of that or as you continue to, there could be one answer that solves the whole thing, or you may continue to apply thought after that. And then perhaps again, step back into still, alert stillness, and then apply thought if thought is called for.

And there's so much intelligence in you that is not accessed, potential intelligence. It's all this huge realm of non-conceptual intelligence that arises out of the unconditioned consciousness. So, and most people move only within the conditioned and they try to solve all their life's problems with the very same instrument that in many cases has created the problems.

Because many of your problems without you knowing it are actually created by unconscious use of the mind or rather the mind being doing what it does. You are not using it, it's using you. You're mistaking the mind for who you are.

So that's a huge set of problems in your life comes from that dimension. And if you are able to bring awareness into that dimension so that your mind creates as few problems as possible or perhaps even no problems at all anymore, then the mind can be left for solving problems. And what are those problems?

Those are not the problems that are generated by the mind, but the problems that come to you seemingly from the external world in the form of situations you encounter, in the form of things going wrong, so to speak, challenging people, very common source of problems. But again, very important to differentiate between is this really a problem or am I contributing to it being a problem? Am I contributing all of it?

If I did not argue with the is-ness of this moment, would there be a problem? No. So there would still be a challenge perhaps to deal with.

Yes, not a problem.

[Speaker 2] (6:28:04 - 6:40:22)

There is a, somebody came up to me after this morning's session, Presence, Your Movement. I just wanted to know the difference between when you're receiving an insight or perhaps intuition versus, how do you know if it's insight or intuition versus what's coming from the mind, you know? And it's a good question.

I get that question actually quite a bit. And the insight, it's like being able to view something, see something that is there without any thoughts. You're able to discern a situation that happens.

And intuition is understanding something but not with a reasoning mind. I'll give you an example. When my daughter was young, I think she was probably about maybe, I'm not sure, six or seven years old, and I had quit working so I can go back to school.

And at that time, her dad and I were divorced and we went through a divorce. And he was supposed to be paying child support but back then, there was nothing in place where they would garnish a person's wages, right? So if I wanted him to pay, I would have to take him back to court again and what was the point of that?

So I thought, wow, what do I do? Do I quit school, go back to work? But I didn't want to so I didn't.

So I just took out some more student loans and I also took my car off the road. I had a vehicle, took it off the road. And did one term.

So she was young and at a time I had to take her by bus to school, I had to get my groceries by bus or walk and carry them. And I was in school full time so it was, as you may know, very, very stressful. And then the end of the term came and Christmas was coming up and I just thought, I have to put my car back on the road.

I just have to. I can't do this. I either have to quit school, go back to work or I'm gonna put my car back on the road and just see what happens.

So I didn't have much money. So I looked in the fridge and I thought, I've got a full fridge and I'll have, I didn't know where the money was gonna come from but I had to pay my rent. I also, after the food ran out, I would have to get food.

So I just didn't know. But something inside of me was telling me to put my car back on the road. And I went, oh, wow, okay.

Of course, you know, my family and all my friends are going, are you crazy? What are you doing? You mean you'd rather just starve your daughter?

You can't put your car back on the road. Just kind of suck it up and go through it. You know, just go through the stress of it basically.

And I just didn't listen. I put my car on the road. And then a few days before Christmas, a friend calls me up and says, I'd like you to come down here.

I have somebody here who would like to give you a Christmas gift. You don't know this person but they want to give you a Christmas gift. So my daughter and I went down and he handed over this, it was a wrapped gift but it was very heavy.

So I said, what the hell could be in this? So my daughter unwrapped it and it was, you know, those cookie tins, opened it up. And it was full of loonies.

There were no toonies at the time so it was just loonies. And loonies, if you don't know what they are, they're the Canadian dollar bill basically. So she counted out how much there was and there was exactly the amount plus a little bit extra, I don't know, I can't remember if it was 20 or $50 extra.

But there was the exact amount of what I paid to put my car on the road for a year. And it taught me a really good lesson, the lesson of just trust in life. There was something inside me, no matter how just crazy it sounded.

And it did sound crazy. I look back and I'm thinking, yes, that sounded crazy. Anybody with some sort of logical mind would think, no, you don't put your car on the road when you don't have the money and then you won't have food and you won't be able to pay rent.

But there was just something in me that just is almost like I had to do it. No thought about it. The occasional thought was, okay, well, am I crazy doing this?

But it was like, no, I've got to do it. And it was that trust. So there was some sort of intuition in a way coming through to get me to do something that seemed really just not logical to do.

And consciousness, stillness, the spirit is not logical. It doesn't mean it can't be logical, but much of the time, it is not logical. There's no reasoning behind it.

Intuition, there's no reasoning. There's this understanding, there's this knowing. And insights, looking at a situation and viewing it.

And it's much like intuition where something arises, an insight is given to you where you can see something so clearly where perhaps nobody else can see it, but you can see it. And sometimes you won't know. Like I didn't know I was going to receive this gift.

Had no idea. But you are life, I am life. When you're connected to that life, that one life, that consciousness, something moves you to do something, to say something.

And much of the time, you won't know the reason why until after. And sometimes you may never even know it. It's trusting that inside of you that is moving you, that is speaking through you, which is the deeper consciousness and not the mind.

Now, how do you know that difference? You will only begin to discern that difference as you begin to directly experience that stillness within. When you haven't experienced that stillness within, or you haven't experienced it enough, then when something comes up, you're going there, hmm, hmm, is it my mind or is it my intuition?

Is it consciousness speaking to me? What is it? Now, it's not a problem.

It's just that we are evolving and unfolding into this realization of who we are and becoming that being more than the humanness part of us. But the being part is growing, expanding. It's unfolding.

We are evolving. So we'll begin to learn spiritual discernment. And it's hard to, you cannot say, ask somebody outside of you because this intuition comes through you.

And it's really only by directly experiencing and learning it, learning when your mind is in operation. So that saying, know thyself, yes, it's know thyself on the deeper sense, but it's also know thy little self so you can know the difference between the little self and then the bigger self. And as we begin to get that sense of that, inner self, that stillness, and that stillness whispering to you, oftentimes it's almost like a whisper.

It's nothing really big. Like it's almost like this whisper to me. No, I got to do it.

I just got to do it. And then it resonates in every part of your body. There's just this congruency of the connection of this thought of, okay, I've got to put the car on the road and it vibrating in my body with a sense of peace, with a sense of rightness.

Like it just feels right, even though it, on the logical sense, seemed really a stupid and crazy thing to do. And I, you know, my parents said I was crazy. They said, you're crazy.

What are you doing this for? So the only way to discern is by actually going through that experience, going through the motions of it, and perhaps maybe making the mistake of listening to, maybe it was your thought and realizing maybe later on, oh, maybe that was just like my head just telling me what to do. But the more that we can root ourselves in the depth of who we are, in that deeper sense of I, we will know without a doubt.

Because there is no doubt in the pure, true consciousness of being. There's just no doubt. You just know it.

And it's not a knowing where you can prove it, but there's a knowing where you don't have to prove it because it's already being shown to you. You just know it inside. Somebody else could say, you're wrong.

And they can think that. It's not, it's okay. It's not a problem.

But you have that knowing inside you, and you just, okay, so you think I'm crazy. That's fine. Maybe I am.

Let's see.

[Speaker 4] (6:40:25 - 6:41:20)

Hello, everyone, and welcome to this live question and answer session with Eckhart Tolle, part of our Conscious Manifestation 2020 online course. My name's Tammy Simon. I'm the founder of Sounds True, and it is a true joy and an honor to be your host for this session.

Eckhart is joining us from his home in Vancouver, while I and the whole Sounds True team are joining from our homes in the Boulder, Colorado area. We've received hundreds of questions this week and have lined up a handful of participants to ask their questions directly to Eckhart live as part of our session. We'll be moving to those questions in just a couple of moments, but first let's welcome Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (6:41:21 - 6:49:45)

Eckhart. Thank you. Welcome everybody joining us here, wherever you are, whatever time it is, where you are, it's certainly the present moment, even if you're in New Zealand or Australia.

To us, it's tomorrow, but to you, it's the present moment. Let's take a moment to just become aware of ourselves. We have a small Zoom audience participants here and let's for a moment connect with our audience and become aware that each being that you see on the screen is a point of consciousness, assuming a particular temporary form and you yourself are a point of consciousness or a ray of consciousness, the one consciousness, assuming a temporary disguise as a person.

And it may be possible for you to get a sense of non-separation or oneness by realizing that what you see externally as a point of consciousness different beings at a deeper level is the one being, the one consciousness taking on different appearances, person's personalities. And that becomes easier to realize if you contemplate the people on your screen and become aware of yourself without figuring anything out mentally through thinking, but just being aware. So in essence, you are that awareness and ultimately there's only one I, when you say I, it can either refer to the temporary person or when you say I, it can refer to the, your deeper identity as conscious awareness.

And there's only one I at that level and that realization transforms everything. It transforms how you perceive the world, how you interpret the world, transforms the way you do things. It even transforms your thinking when you do think because then thinking is no longer self-serving and you're not looking for yourself anymore in the realm of thinking, identifying with thinking.

So such a wonderful, simple realization. It's the realization of being, that's the foundation. But you still exist here as a person in this dimension and inevitably you become involved in doing as a person.

And that includes manifesting. Sometimes you may consciously want to manifest this or that, not necessarily all the time and not necessarily everybody will want to live in that way. We may be going into that, but you cannot escape the challenges of life in the realm of doing, but that's okay.

If you don't lose connectedness with being, that transforms the way you experience the world of doing, of phenomena. So we may be going into this more as we look at the questions, but this, our starting point, that's the foundation for your whole life, whatever you manifest in this play of forms. On the level of form, everything is temporary and that's just how it is.

And whatever you manifest in the world of form also is fine for a while, but it's all temporary and that's fine, that's a temporary realm that you also inhabit, but it's not terribly, terribly serious anymore when you're connected with being. You honor it, very different. You give it attention, you honor it.

You are thankful, important part of manifesting to being thankful for whatever is here in the present moment, to appreciate all the forms of life around you, animate or inanimate, and realizing that the essence of it all is inseparable from who you are in your essence. So let's move on to the first question.

[Speaker 4] (6:49:48 - 6:50:01)

Very good, Eckhart, our first question is from Devin from Little Rock, Arkansas. Devin, welcome and please go ahead and share your question with Eckhart.

[Speaker 7] (6:50:02 - 6:51:01)

Thank you, thank you. Well, I've realized that surrendering to source, surrendering to what source wants to create through me is important and I sometimes get fearful when I approach that place. My thoughts sometimes wonder, well, what if the universe wants me to get sick or what if the universe wants a loved one of mine to pass away?

And when I go there, of course, I feel this restriction. And so I think I have a fear of suffering. I'm just afraid to suffer.

So does the universe want us to suffer is one of my questions. And then how should I approach overcoming this? It's almost automatic restriction that I get when I get fearful.

[Speaker 1] (6:51:04 - 7:09:27)

Thank you, thank you for your question. It's a very profound question, the role of suffering. And suffering is an essential part of the evolution of consciousness.

But it's also a sign, of course, that the awakening hasn't happened yet. And a lot of suffering is generated by unconsciousness. And paradoxically, the very thing that's generated by unconsciousness will eventually awaken you.

So this unconsciousness is the egoic sense of self. And one could say the egoic sense of self has built into it a self-destruct mechanism. Was designed like that, let's put it like that.

And eventually it will create its own dissolution through suffering. Now, if you live consciously, if you, and this is an enormous step forward for a human being to become aware that it is possible to no longer be completely in the grip of the conditioned mind, which is the ego, and then to make the main purpose of your life, your inner state of consciousness, and to realize that the important thing in any situation is to be present.

When you make that the main priority in your life, then you don't really need, neither do you create a lot of suffering anymore because a lot of human suffering is self-created both on an individual level and on a collective level.

If you look at humans, all the humans that died violently the past 100 years, 200 years, the past millennium, whatever, the greater part of humans that died violent deaths, they were killed by other humans. Yes, there were also humans killed by epidemics and earthquakes and so on, but the greater part of humans killed in the 20th century, for example, because it's the closest to us, were killed or murdered, you could honestly, by other humans through warfare, internal strife, genocide, and so on. So a lot of that suffering is, of course, obviously human-created, and on an individual level also, a lot of the suffering, I could almost say all the suffering, I don't want to say anything that people find difficult to accept, so let's say a lot of suffering, is the greater part of your suffering is self-created through dysfunctional thought processes, through old forms of conditioning, through which you perceive reality and misinterpret and distort reality completely and react to events, thus amplifying the unconsciousness of others, thus creating more drama, and so that's the, the unconscious state creates a lot of suffering, but strangely, it's that suffering eventually wakes you up, maybe not always in this lifetime, but there's always the potential for it to wake you up.

When you begin to live consciously, however, you become aware of the conditioning of your mind, the element of freedom comes in for the first time, you are free to choose something different. There is another way, you realize there is another way rather than the old unconscious reactivity and so on, but when you're always at the mercy of other people and external conditions, as far as your inner state of consciousness is concerned, when you're in a reactive, in other words, unconscious mode, you're always at the mercy of external conditions, you are reactive to external conditions. So the world is, you ultimately see yourself as weak, although perhaps not consciously, and the world is there as a threatening thing that you perceive as something outside of you, always waiting to sabotage your plans and so on, that's how it sometimes seems.

So when you begin to live consciously, then yes, the element of freedom comes in, but also you no longer need the suffering to awaken you. When you suffer, that's an involuntary awakening, ultimately the universe is moving towards the awakening of consciousness. You are part of the awakening universe, and so the universe awakens when you are unconscious, there's the universe, ultimately through the suffering generated by the egoic consciousness or unconsciousness, forces you eventually into awakening.

But once when you voluntarily begin to make presence the main purpose of your life, the universe does not need to force you into awakening, it doesn't need to knock you on the head and to show you in order to shake you to wake up. You are less likely to encounter disasters and huge drama in your life, much less likely, suffering in other words, when you consciously participate in where the universe is going, which is awake. When you consciously participate in the awakening process, you no longer need to be forced through suffering to awaken, it doesn't mean that challenges do not come into your life anymore, challenges continue to come, but increasingly the challenges of life, they no longer create suffering in you, they make you more conscious.

Once you have embarked on that journey of awakening, the journey of awakening, there's an expression in Buddhism that says you become a stream enterer, you begin to enter the stream of awakening, you are a stream enterer. Once you're a stream enterer, you are voluntarily aligning yourself with the purpose of the whole, the purpose of the universe. And by voluntarily aligning yourself, you no longer need the violence of suffering, you no longer need the universe to shake you awake to create enormous suffering, and that means it implies you don't create it for yourself anymore, how you meet events, circumstances, people, no longer in a reactive way, this means you no longer amplify other people's unconsciousness, because you're in a state of presence when you meet others who are unconscious, big egos, difficult situations, challenges, the collective challenges like now, you meet them consciously in a different, in a non-reactive way.

So already the amount of suffering gets reduced, the more present you are, the more the amount of suffering is reduced, you don't need it anymore. Challenges, yes, you still need challenges because the challenges deepen your presence and there's always the possibility when challenges happen that you may fall back into a reactivity that's also possible. And then you begin to suffer again, and then you encounter suddenly the intensified suffering again, and then you wake up again and you move out of that.

So inevitably, of course, everybody here will encounter loss and ultimately your body will eventually dissolve. Everybody is moving in that direction, obviously, but that is no longer a source of suffering. If you're, for example, if you're completely identified with your body, as the body then gets older, no longer looks that good, becomes weak, you lose abilities, can't do this anymore, can't do that anymore.

And we're all moving in that direction. If you are completely identified with it, it's very enormous suffering involved in that. Let's say you were identified with your good looks and then the years pass, go by, and then there's no denying anymore that your good looks have completely disappeared.

But for decades, you derived your sense of identity from your good looks, better than others eager to seek superiority. Then you suffer enormously because your very sense of self crumbles. That is much more painful than the gradual dissolution of your physical body, that psychological pain, that psychological suffering.

So on many, many levels, the less conscious you are, the more you suffer. And the more conscious you are, the more you begin to transcend suffering. So your fear is unfounded.

You will continue to encounter challenges, but it is not the case that when you voluntarily embrace presence and make that the main purpose of your life, then suffering is no longer your main spiritual teacher. I sometimes say everybody, every human on this planet has a spiritual teacher. For most humans still, the majority, their spiritual teacher is their suffering.

And eventually their suffering will bring about an awakening, but perhaps not in this lifetime. But there's always a potential. And then you may encounter suddenly, as you begin to awaken, you might awaken to encountering an actual spiritual teacher that's not suffering.

It could be a teaching. It could be something you read in a book, something somebody says, and then suddenly the awakening process begins. At that point, the need for you to have suffering as a spiritual teacher decreases as the awakening process begins.

And it's a wonderful process. And if some great disaster should come into your life and you've already begun the awakening process, then it is, there's a good chance, very probably you will then, that will be the one thing that brings out a total flowering of consciousness. And that's, I've seen that a few times with people who had already been practicing presence for many years and then something went wrong with their body.

And that was the final realization, the final awakening suddenly came and complete transcendence of not only of suffering, transcendence of, complete transcendence of ego and so on. So in a word, the more present you are, the less the need for suffering as a spiritual teacher. Because when you're present, that presence becomes your teacher.

It's the unconsciousness creates the suffering and that suffering becomes a teacher. There's a deep, suffering is a very, in spirit, both in Christianity and Buddhism, suffering is a key concept. In Christianity, the archetypal image is Jesus on the cross, the archetypal image of human suffering.

In Buddhism, the Buddha said, I teach suffering and the end of suffering. Many things that you read in Buddhist scriptures were written much later after the Buddha, but there are some that I feel I have no doubt that the Buddha actually virtually literally said 2,500 years ago. And I have no doubt that he did say, I teach suffering and the end of suffering.

The Buddha said, wherever you go, whatever you do, you will find suffering, dukkha, suffering. But he was talking about the unconscious state. And then I teach suffering and the end of suffering means I'd show you how suffering arises and I'll show you how suffering can be transcended.

That's the teaching of the Buddha. It's just, that is ultimately all spiritual teaching. The image of Jesus on the cross shows the function of suffering.

So there's intense suffering, then the state of surrender, and then there's a transmutation and the rebirth and the cross, the torture instruments becomes a portal into awakening and is inseparable from the divine. So the suffering has a purpose until you don't need it anymore. So one could say suffering is necessary until you don't need it anymore.

And many of you, if not most of you, maybe all of you have reached the point where you really, you don't need suffering anymore as a spiritual teacher. So I trust my answer has given you some relief, but I didn't say to give you relief. I said it because that's just how it is.

Thank you.

[Speaker 4] (7:09:32 - 7:09:45)

Thank you, Eckhart. Our next questioner is Travis from Berkeley, California. Travis, please go ahead and share your question with Eckhart.

[Speaker 3] (7:09:46 - 7:11:39)

Okay. All right. Hi, Eckhart and everybody here.

It's such a wonderful thing to be here with all of you and be here with you, Eckhart. I'm so grateful. And well, it's a little bit funny to ask my question now.

It was very present with me the other day when it came up, but that's the question I've submitted. So I'll just go ahead and read my question and hopefully it will be of some service to all of us here. So my question is this.

It says, I have long since had a clear vision of what it is I'd like to create in this world. And this vision, it lives inside of me and it continually brings me such exquisite delight beyond description. It is as if it already is, very much to me.

That said, when I begin taking the necessary steps to begin bringing it into creation, into manifestation, I oftentimes, I experience gripping egoic contractions and some resistance in me. It is as if some part of me knows that to realize this dream that I must die to myself. Panic and self-sabotage come into play.

And at times it can feel as if there's a war going on inside of me. How can I best offer myself to the situation at hand?

[Speaker 1] (7:11:41 - 7:11:54)

Thank you. Thank you for your question. Interesting Egyptian motifs behind you, by the way.

Are they Egyptian? I think I froze there.

[Speaker 3] (7:11:55 - 7:12:10)

Yeah. Yeah, I somehow manifested this house that I'm living in now. Came with all these strange Egyptian things in it.

So it's kind of a theme for the moment.

[Speaker 1] (7:12:12 - 7:13:09)

I have an Egyptian picture in my bedroom. It's a picture of the goddess Marge with outstretched, arms are outstretched and their wings, huge wings on both sides, which ultimately stands for that which holds the universe together, which is the Tao in Chinese mythology. But let's not go this way.

So what do you describe that as fear? Those are fearful states. That's basically what you're describing, that which is sabotaging you and creates certain thoughts.

What do you describe the underlying emotion as fear? I guess so.

[Speaker 3] (7:13:09 - 7:14:26)

It's such a funny thing where I, for the past 20 plus years, I've had this sensation that I'm, it feels as if I'm on the brink of enlightenment. There's such ecstasy, such peace and clarity in my life. It's just been just utter, I don't even know how to begin to describe.

And I've known just what it is that I want and want to do. But anytime that I've ever gotten, when I get closer, it's as if these very kind of reactive things come up in me with such tremendous force that kind of seem to pull me back down into that. Yeah, I guess it is fear because it's into this, that safe sense of the familiar, but what's familiar isn't, is suffering.

Suffering is familiar. So these things, they keep me just kind of held down a little bit and I want to give myself fully to it.

[Speaker 1] (7:14:28 - 7:14:43)

So is there, are you referring also to something external that you have a vision of that you want to create or do you want to share with us what it is or would you rather keep it private?

[Speaker 3] (7:14:45 - 7:17:17)

No, I'm happy to share. So I had these tremendous awakening experiences when I was around 17. I've always loved music.

I play music. And I'm always very humorous in my self-talk and inside of myself. And so, but how I coined it over the years is the vision that I've had is to be a world famous, really not that I want fame, but I want to connect with as many people as possible on as deep a level as possible, spiritually enlightened.

And so again, I want to be in the deepest place of presence that I can be at within myself, a rock star or share. So basically to share that deepest, nameless truth through music primarily. There's also been, I've also been leading meditation groups for years now.

And I also see part of the vision as being a speaker. And then also in the last couple of years, there has been a woman has come into the picture who has a child and I would like so much to be able to fulfill that role of being a provider and a family man. I have never needed much.

I've always had plenty just for myself, but I've been a caregiver all my life. I've never really pursued a money, a career plan in that way. I've just cared for people and that's been a good part of my spiritual practice.

And so now it feels as though I'm embarking on this new chapter and want to share through music and speaking, but I grew up around a lot of drugs and poverty and difficult things like that. And so pretty extreme dysfunction in family. And so it's been a lot of pretty unhealthy behavior patterns and mental patterns ingrained in me pretty deeply from early on.

So I've spent a lifetime kind of unpacking and I'm- Yes. Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (7:17:17 - 7:24:26)

Yes. So there is, one could say there's two of you there. One is the conditioned entity with its very limited patterns, mind patterns and reactive patterns.

So they're all part of the ego. As long as you're completely identified with them, they are part of the ego. When you're no longer completely identified with them, they are just remaining patterns.

You're half way free. You're on your way to freedom when you no longer completely identify with the patterns. In other words, they don't take you over completely.

You're able to observe them. So to continue to realize that there's two of you, there's the unconditioned, aware, conscious being, the self that is emerging, but the old conditioned patterns don't want it to emerge because they realize, well, I'm saying they, but ultimately, yes, there are many patterns, but together they form the ego. So the ego, as you know, is afraid.

Of disappearing. It wants like everything in existence wants to remain in existence. Everything that is every life form wants to remain as this form, but it cannot remain as this form.

So the question is, and it's not a battle. So the awareness is not something that would need to fight the ego. You cannot fight the unconscious patterns in your mental, emotional field.

You can only be aware of them and not be taken over by them. It begins with when a thought comes into your head that is a thought of fear or doubt or questioning yourself, whatever it may be, not to believe in every thought that arises. You don't have to believe.

It's just, it's a thought that arises. It may be a complete lie. In many cases, thoughts are complete misinterpretations of events, other people, yourself.

Many people live with a self image that is just a completely erroneous narrative, but they believe in it. They are it. So there's the arising awareness and on top of it is the conditioned entity that feels threatened.

And so it's important for you to realize that who you essentially are, and that is the aware presence. And when obstacles arise in the form of thoughts or reactions, to be able to be aware of them and realize you don't need to act on them. You need to just observe them and realize what they are.

So to recognize what they are, it's a conditioned thought. And some conditioned thoughts have been there for a long time, for decades. Sometimes the same kind of thought comes up again and again.

And when it arises, do you lose awareness? Does the thought, the conditioned thought obliterate your awareness temporarily? Perhaps it sometimes does, but you need to...

Now, vigilance is very important. Vigilance is part of being aware. To be vigilant is to be acutely aware, to be acutely present.

So when you are, let's say you want to give a... You mentioned music and perhaps helping others by speaking. Let's say you want to have a speaking event.

So you put something online to say that I'm going to speak, please join me. And then while you're typing into this, you're in doubt suddenly. Am I ready for this?

Can I do it? And then you have this, I'm just imagining. I know the human mind.

It doubts you. It says, no, you can't. You shouldn't.

Who do you think you are? You're not ready for this. You have to wait.

And a good thing to know is when these thoughts come is to realize their egoic thoughts and say, thank you for coming up. But, and realize that you'll never be ready for a spiritual teaching. You will never be ready to be a spiritual teacher, but you have to get out of the way so that the teaching flows through you.

But you cannot do it. So if you think you can do it, then you're right, you can't. It's to kind of, for the teaching to happen, you need to step out of the way.

You need to, and you do that by cessation from thinking. You no longer, there's a state of clear, spacious presence. And then you become comfortable with not knowing what to say.

And so you are not doing it. It happens. The universe speaks through you.

It happens through you. And with music, I don't know what form that takes for you. But there may be opportunities that you have not taken advantage of and so on because of fear.

And again, it's the deep enjoyment is very important part of that. When you, I assume that you experienced that, when you, what music do you play? Sorry, I can't hear you.

Oh, here we go.

[Speaker 3] (7:24:28 - 7:25:01)

So, well, I play acoustic guitar and sing and write songs, but I also have taken on producing stuff at home and doing stuff that's a little bit more, kind of beat oriented as well. So, but it's mostly taken form that I think the focal point of it is the kind of presence through singing. And so it shines through my voice the most.

[Speaker 1] (7:25:04 - 7:59:47)

Yes, very good. Thank you. Well, whether or not you even need to manifest to have a vision of where you want to go with your music, in some cases, people do practice that.

They have a vision of where they want to go and others simply deep enjoyment of what they're doing and they continue to do what they're doing. And then at some point it grows and grows and grows. You reach suddenly a point where you're riding this wave and it suddenly grows.

And I haven't had any visualization or anything that I want to achieve for many, many, many years. So I'm simply happy with how things are unfolding and I'm happy with the present moment. I have no vision of where I want to go with the teaching in the next few years.

I may not even be around, who knows? So I'm quite happy with things unfolding. And that is also a way of manifesting.

Manifesting doesn't always mean that you have a clear vision of what it is that you want to achieve. Sometimes that is fine and works. But to be in a state of appreciation of life, in deep alignment with the present moment, so that you're not in an antagonistic relationship with the present moment anymore.

You're just deeply aligned with the flow of life in the now and you appreciate everything that is and the things you do, the things you do, you do them fully. You give your fullest attention to what you do. That's another obstacle of many people.

They somehow are not able to give themselves fully. They're not, there's something holding back. There's something that's holding them back.

You can sometimes see it with people who are on stage or sometimes singers or musicians. You can sometimes see they're not, the full energy is not there for some reason. Perhaps they're afraid for some reason of, they may be afraid of giving themselves fully.

To be fully in what you're doing, to give your fullest attention to what you're doing in the present moment is a very powerful way of manifesting. But whether or not you have a vision that you project and you feel it's already happening, the vision can only work if you continue giving your fullest attention to the present moment and to enjoy the energy of what it is that you are producing in the present moment that empowers the vision. The vision is always, the point of power is always in the present moment.

A great obstacle for achieving a vision or any success is to be, and this almost sounds paradoxical at first until you begin to understand it, is to have an excessive attachment to the outcome. That's a huge hindrance. Now you might think, well, if I have a vision of what it is I want to achieve, would it not be natural for me to be attached to the outcome that I want to get there?

I want to reach millions of people with my music and I want millions of people to feel better by listening to my music, perhaps to get a glimpse of presence by listening to my music. It's a great vision, but the mastery of the present moment of this lies in not attaching yourself to the vision so that you lose consciousness in what you are doing and it gets dissipated into the vision which ultimately is a mental thing. The point of power is always in the present moment.

Excessive attachment to the outcome, one could almost say any real attachment to the outcome weakens your ability to manifest. So you can hold an outcome in your mind and then return to, I give the example of a pilgrimage. Let's say you're on a pilgrimage.

Life could be regarded as a pilgrimage or journey. And you know where you're going, you want to go to whatever it is, your pilgrimage to a holy site in medieval times, to pilgrimages to Rome and other sacred places, your pilgrimage to Mecca, pilgrimage in Spain, you can go on this pilgrim trail in Northern Spain to Santiago de Compostela and you walk for many, many days. Now, the very purpose of pilgrimage is to bring about a transformation of who you are, transformation of consciousness.

The arriving is relatively unimportant. Arriving at your destination is just a short moment and there you are. But the journey is how conscious are you of the step you're taking at this moment?

If you're excessively attached to the outcome, which in this case would be your destination, then you're mentally, you already want to be there. That takes away from the quality of your step at this moment. Now, the step stands, it's an analogy for whatever it is you're doing at this moment.

And quality means how much consciousness flows into what you're doing in this moment. So if you are dissipating it and you lose yourself in an outcome that you need, you're expecting ultimate fulfillment through the outcome, that is a hindrance and a delusion. And many people who have achieved so-called great things in the eyes of the world, and things that are called great in the eyes of the world a lot of the time are not great at all.

So a lot of things, they have achieved it and then it became after initial elation, I made it. After an initial elation, they experienced a very deep disillusionment, a very deep disillusionment with fame, with wealth. And many of them became more unhappy than they had ever been before because there was an excessive attachment to outcome as some future point will provide me with fullest satisfaction, will make me into the fullest version of myself.

It doesn't happen. So you make it. And so there are many people who make it in the eyes of the world.

And this is the very thing that makes them extremely unhappy and they can't even take refuge anymore and say, oh, okay, it's going to get better in the future. They have arrived already, where do you go if you have all the things that people believe are signs of the ultimate success in this world? Now you have your private jet waiting for you.

You have your big houses in various places. You can do anything, go anywhere, have any sensory experience, feel important because people admire you. So you see yourself in magazines and so on.

And of course you have to be careful because these things are very precarious these days online. If you do one wrong tweet and you're gone, but that's another matter. So, and you're not, you're unhappy because you never learned to go into the vertical dimension of life and realize that fulfillment cannot be found in, this is the manifestation can only be successful if you do not expect to find yourself in whatever you want to manifest.

It's, you need to treat it as a play. Leela is a word used in Indian philosophy, spiritual philosophy, the divine play. It's a, you play with form.

There's not, whether or not it happens is a secondary and relatively unimportant thing when you already deeply rooted in the aliveness of the present moment. That's where it comes from. And then you give your fullest attention to the step you're taking at this moment instead of continuously losing yourself in your destination.

And if, because if you're losing, if you're mentally lost in your destination, the quality of the step you're taking at this moment decreases. Quality is something that is hard to, you may not know what I mean when I say quality. It means how much consciousness is in it.

There can be quality in the slightest thing you do because it means, are you doing it simply as a means to an end or are you giving your fullest attention to what you're doing? So many people are held back because they have excessive attachment to outcome. That is also, for example, that's one of the main teachings of the Indian Bhagavad Gita, the wonderful, one of the great books of Hinduism.

If you haven't read it, you should, Bhagavad Gita. And he talks about the importance of not looking to the fruit of your action. So be completely present in the action, but renounce the fruit of the action.

So that is a secret of successful manifestation. You know, and again, coming back to my analogy of pilgrimage, yes, there's a certain importance in your destination, but it's not the ultimate. The destination, it's a good thing to have a destination.

You know where you want to go. You know the direction in which you want to go. So you're conscious of that, but your fullest attention is in the present moment.

This is a reversal of normal living. In normal living, your awareness of the present moment is peripheral. And because you are so much more concerned with where you want to get to, or your past, or the future, and you're hardly aware of the present moment, it's just peripheral, that gets reversed.

Your awareness of where you want to get to continues to be there in the periphery of your attention, like a person on a pilgrimage. You know where you're going. Let's say you're in Spain, in Northern Spain, going towards Santiago de Compostela, and it's fine, you want to arrive there, but this step you're taking right now, this is what the ultimate, that's the whole journey consists of one step at one time.

The entire life journey consists of the step you're taking at this moment. And what is the quality of the step you're taking at this moment? What is the attention that you give it?

Give it your fullest attention. Then that is the transformation of happens through the journey of being, you become more and more present. And then finally you arrive.

Oh, fine. And where do you go from there? Well, you have to go on, you're not going to be there for that long, then you have to go somewhere else.

If that was the ultimate, it's you're going to be very disappointed by the things that you achieve. Oh, is that it? And I've been looking forward to this for years.

Is this really it? And of course it's not it, it's the present moment is it. That also means if the, for some reason you should not arrive at your destination, maybe you die before you can get there or something else happens, who knows?

Maybe something else prevents you. Suddenly there's a pandemic that suddenly stops you in your tracks. And so you don't make it, it's almost irrelevant whether or not you arrive at the destination because the important thing was the journey, the step at this moment that brings about the deepening into the vertical dimension.

Whether you arrive or not, who cares? Well, it's a nice when you arrive, it's fine, but that is not, that is not that which liberates you, that frees you, that gives you ultimate satisfaction, it cannot. And so you become liberated from needing to arrive somewhere, then you regard it as something that you in this world, you play with form, it's a play of form.

And yes, the universe may want to create something through you and maybe it will. And when it is, it's lovely, it's beautiful, but it's the act of creation, not the final product. Because the final product of any creation is already the beginning of dissolution and the level of form.

When you, let's say you write a great bestseller, okay, and where do you go now? Okay, you have to write another one. Okay, and then is it going to be as good as the first one?

Probably not, or maybe it is. There are many people in this world who feel they haven't arrived. That's a common disease, it's a misconception.

They feel this sense of lack, that there's something I haven't, there's also a syndrome that's called, somebody told me a while ago, it's called the fear of missing out. The fear of missing the field, that there's something, my life has failed, the terrible fear, or I haven't made it, I haven't achieved my goal, and maybe it's too late, the mind says too late to achieve it, or all kinds of narratives that are created on the basis of that misperception. So the important thing is, ultimately, what you achieve in this world is secondary.

Your greatest achievement is to be conscious now, is to realize this vertical dimension of being, to become aware of being, that is the awakening, that is your greatest achievement. Then the universe wants to awaken, otherwise you couldn't awaken. The universe was creating millions of life forms, manifesting continuously, increasingly complex life forms on this planet, many other planets, millions, billions of planets, and billions of life forms even on this planet, it creates life forms, gradually manifests more consciousness.

That's one, the universe wants that. The universe also wants to, one could call it the dream of creation, the dream of form. The consciousness loses itself in the forms, it loves to experience that, and the universe gradually grows and becomes more conscious.

And at some point, this expansion into multiplicity and complexity, increasing complexity, this expansion of the world of form, this is the outward journey, at some point that reaches a point where suddenly the universe begins to awaken out of the dream of form. It had lost itself in every form, every form experience itself as autonomous in the human form too. You were lost until you began to awaken, you were lost in the dream of your life, and that was, you derived your sense of identity from that.

The return movement, as I call it, is the awakening of the universe where it becomes aware of itself. The one consciousness becomes aware of itself. And that's, we're at this point now where the outbreath of the universe is approaching the end.

This is a, I'm talking mystical terms, don't be too concerned about it, science cannot verify this. The outbreath of the universe has come to an end and the universe is beginning to breathe in again where the multiplicity of things returns to oneness, complete oneness. Now, in our terms, that would happen in several billion years from now where the big bang was the expansion and then there's a contraction in physical terms.

The physical term is only the surface of things. It's like the beating heart too, the way you have the heart beats, it goes, shoop, shoop, shoop, shoop. The in-breath and the out-breath, whoosh, whoosh.

These are the two movements and you find these in yourself too. There's a tendency in you, you want to do things and create things, but you also want to be. And it's more fun, the being is becoming more important for you now.

And the two, we are at the point where you can bring the two together. I wrote about that a little bit in the New Earth. You can bring the two together, the awakening consciousness, that you become aware of yourself as the underlying being.

And from there, you can cooperate with the universe, co-create and create whatever it is that you want to create in this. Ultimately, it's not you because you as a separate entity do not exist. It's you as an expression of the one.

Then the one expresses itself and creates through you. But if that sounds too complicated, it's the important thing is to realize, coming back to practical things, to be very much, very careful of not attaching yourself to some outcome and to very careful not to fall into the delusion that your sense of self-worth, for example, let's put it like that, depends on achieving a particular outcome in the world of form. Now, that's a big one.

So that your sense of self-worth does not depend on what you know, what you can do, what you have achieved, how you look, what you possess. All these things are usually used by people to determine their sense of self-worth, what you own and what's mine, what you, the ability, I can do this, but other people can't do this. My body, how my body looks better than others for some people for a while until it doesn't.

What you know to be identified with some kinds of knowledge and opinions. So you derive your sense of self-worth from one or several of these achievements. What have I achieved?

And you look back and that's a delusion because you cannot find your ultimate sense of self, which is self-worth and self is the same thing in any of these things. They are nice when they happen to be appreciated. It's, oh, that's nice.

It's very nice. It's not the ultimate thing and it probably won't last. It'll either leave you or you will leave it or it no longer functions as something that gives you satisfaction.

It could suddenly turn into its opposite, something that makes you unhappy. So your sense of self or self-worth is derived from a more immediate place. And that is what I sometimes call, as you know, the vertical dimension.

Where you become aware of yourself as the aware presence. You say something in you that's far deeper than the person. That is the ultimate source of satisfaction in life.

What is that then? It's to know yourself as consciousness. Consciousness becoming aware of itself is the ultimate source of satisfaction in life.

Oh, you're free of the person. It's still there, but you don't look for yourself in it anymore. So the ultimate source of satisfaction is found in the present moment.

And that is the secret. And that the Indians knew that, the Indian teachers, and they described that realization, which is an awakening realization, by using the three words, stringing them together, there is one word, they have come from Sanskrit. Sat, cit, ananda.

Three words, stringed together as one word. Sat, cit, ananda. Sat, cit, ananda.

Sat means being. Cit means consciousness. Ananda means joy or bliss sometimes.

Bliss, I call it joy. Now these three are three facets of the same thing or no thing. Being, sat, cit, consciousness, bliss.

So sat and cit together, being in consciousness means the awareness of being conscious. Being is sat. Being, consciousness, joy.

They're one thing. It is the joy of knowing, of being conscious of your being. It's all one thing or no thing.

It's not a thing. Sat, cit, ananda is that the realization, being consciousness, bliss, to know that, to be aware of yourself as the conscious being. That is a joy.

That's a liberation from the person. And then you can play around with the person. It's fine.

And that's where your sense of self-worth arises because it's not the self in the conventional terms. It's the consciousness, what the Buddha called spaciousness or emptiness, spaciousness, and the Buddha also called it the non-self. The not, it's the not, but that is what we are talking about.

It's the ultimate realization. So I'm mentioning that because it's very important because otherwise, even if you master to some extent, the art of manifestation, if you don't know the underlying truth, even that will make you unhappy ultimately. Even if you achieve what you decide how to achieve, it's not going to fulfill you for very long.

There's a saying, I don't know who said it, who first said it. There's two ways of being unhappy. One is not getting what you want and the other is getting what you want.

Now getting what you want makes you happy for a little while until it doesn't. But if you were not attached to the outcome, not to the, as the Bhagavad Gita says, not attached to the fruit of the action, then whatever the fruit of the action is can be enjoyed for what it is. Oh, nice.

Very nice. Knowing that it's not going to last, nothing lasts and you might not even be that interested anymore after a while. While it's there, it's very nice.

Enjoy it. So you can, I need to mention that because sometimes when you read about manifestation, there are books, there are good books about how to manifest. Some of them omit the most important part and which is what we've just been talking about.

And that's the very foundation for your life. And by omitting the most important part, then people who achieve these things are not made happy by the achievement. In some cases, as I said, they're even more unhappy than before because after that, what else can they look forward to?

In the eyes of the world, once you have your private jet and your many houses and your yacht and your whatever it is that people look, think to determine success, adoration of others. Look, everybody loves me. Then that's a trap.

That's not it. So the self-esteem, there was a, I told the story a few years ago. I read it a long time ago.

The Dalai Lama was answering questions and somebody asked him a question about self-worth or self-esteem. He said, many people have a problem with self-worth or self-esteem. Can you please comment on that?

And then of course, he said, what is self-worth? And then he asked his interpreter to explain, what is self-esteem or self-worth? And the interpreter was talking to him for several minutes and he still didn't get it.

And he talked, he started trying to explain. He just couldn't get what self-worth or self-esteem was because he doesn't, he does not derive his sense of self from his position. You can see it when you listen to him that he's not attached at all.

He does not derive his sense of importance from his, one would think if you're the Dalai Lama, you must feel really important. You have achieved a great thing. Well, he hadn't even achieved it.

From birth, he was already, well, soon after he was born, he was already chosen. So he certainly may, but no, he didn't have, and it was almost impossible for him to understand that people have a problem with self-esteem. So, because his sense of worth, it does not derive from externals, from position, in no conceptual sense of self, but a deeper sense of self, not a conceptual sense.

It's all connected. Not to be lost in a conceptual sense of self that's associated with things that you achieve. And then the things that you achieve improve temporarily your conceptual sense of self.

And then you derive your identity for a little while, an enhanced sense of identity from your conceptual sense of self, because you add your so-called achievements to who you think you are. And again, it doesn't last. So the basis for all is, again, it's all very simple.

The step you're taking at this moment, give it your fullest attention on the, so the present moment is no longer relegated to the periphery of your consciousness. It becomes a focal point of your consciousness. What is relegated to the periphery of your consciousness is your destination, but you still have one.

It's good to know where you're going. To some extent, you have some kind of direction in life. You have a goal.

It's not bad to have a goal in life. That's the place on pilgrimage. You want to arrive at that site of where you, the holy site or whatever it is, you have that goal.

And that's fine. But in the meantime, the journey, the step you're taking, what is the quality of the step you're taking at this moment? That's the ultimate.

And if that is of high quality, then you can be assured, even if you do not practice any specific manifestation techniques, even if you do not practice them, you can be fairly assured that the so-called future will look after itself in a harmonious way, if you give your fullest attention to this moment. And because this moment is very deep, this moment is inseparable from who you are in the essence of your being, because ultimately what we call this moment is the consciousness of this moment, the consciousness that underlies everything. So let's see.

So I needed to say this because we do not want you to become a master at manifestation and still be unhappy when you manifest what you wanted to manifest.

[Speaker 4] (7:59:55 - 8:00:00)

Travis, thank you so much for your very excellent question. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (8:00:02 - 8:00:04)

Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 4] (8:00:04 - 8:00:11)

Eckhart, as we close together, can you bring us all into stillness together?

[Speaker 1] (8:00:12 - 8:04:18)

Yes, perhaps we have the people that we have here, these wonderful beings, but really ultimately one being in various disguises and you yourself, a being, an expression of the one being, the one consciousness, looking at other beings, temporary formations, destined to dissolve, and that's fine. And of course, when I say destined to dissolve, I'm talking of so-called death. We are all going there, of course.

It's not a bad thing. But realize what Jesus called eternal life. Eternal life, he talked about.

Eternal life, sometimes mistranslated as never-ending life. No, eternal is not never-ending. Eternal means timeless.

And that timeless life is the consciousness that you are. It is not produced by the physical body. Consciousness is not a by-product of matter.

Consciousness is the organizing principle behind matter, and ultimately inseparable from matter. One could almost say matter is frozen consciousness. And as far as death is concerned, we do not need to fear it, because you are, the life that you are, is timeless or eternal.

That's what the Course in Miracles says at the beginning, that encapsulates the entire course. Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists.

Herein lies the peace of God. In realizing that ultimately nothing real can be threatened, then you are free of the fear of death, because the body is a temporary appearance. In ultimate terms, it's not real.

So we are silent for a moment, realizing our essential being as the one consciousness. You are that. I am that.

Ah, so liberating to know that. Thank you. Thank you to all of you.

Thank you so much.

[Speaker 4] (8:04:22 - 8:04:33)

Thank you, Eckhart. A special thank you to Devin and Travis, and thank you to everyone for your presence and your commitment to conscious manifestation.

[Speaker 1] (8:04:51 - 9:30:15)

Let's look at how exactly to use an affirmation. This is just a suggestion. There's actually many ways of doing it.

And we will start with one or two general affirmations, verbal affirmations. And maybe practice that together. And after that, we may look at some more specific things concerning those areas that tend to be problematic for many people.

And those areas are usually either money, physical health, and relationships. Those are perhaps the most challenging areas in most people's lives. One of those may be particularly challenging for you.

There's another area that one could add, and that is the desire to be engaged in making a meaningful contribution to the world, the search for meaning. And so that something that you consider truly worthwhile, to want to make a difference in this world through your activity, that is a desire that people have, and that is a desire that is not necessarily an ego desire. It comes from a deeper place where you realize that you actually can make a difference.

You know there is a power within you, and that power just needs to be released, externalized. You need to find a way of accessing the power that is within you and bring it into this world in whatever form. So now a very important thing, however, yes, you need to deal with those things, and you do your best in your life to improve your life, to make it work more smoothly, to become more empowered, to make a contribution either in the form of a service that you give or a product that you make, something that adds good to the world.

So that's something you may already have found something, but you may look for more empowerment to what you have found. You may want to expand and see if you can reach more people through whatever it is you either you make, if it's a product or something you provide, if it's a service, or it may be that you don't know yet what your calling is. And of course, there are still many people who are looking for their ultimate life purpose.

Having said all that, it's important to realize, although yes, you need to deal with these things, you do your best, the best you can to create a harmonious relationships, to create a flow of, certain flow of abundance in your life, to see if you can stay as healthy as possible. All these things you need to, yes, take responsibility for and do the best you can, it's important. But don't look to it as the ultimate source of satisfaction in your life.

In fact, you need to find the ultimate source of satisfaction first, and that is here and now. And you don't need an affirmation for that, although pointers can be useful. There are certain statements that you can make that they are pointers or signposts.

And sometimes signposts are helpful as long as you don't confuse the signpost with the destination or what it points to. So the ultimate source of satisfaction in life is to recognize yourself as consciousness, as presence. And if you miss that, which I call sometimes the transcendent dimension, then no matter what you achieve in life, it's not going to make you happy, not for long.

And there's always, every situation is fragile. Every situation is impermanent. Every person, if you look to a person to provide some ultimate satisfaction to make you happy, it's not going to work.

So be careful with misinterpreting what a relationship can do for you. It's a wonderful thing to have a harmonious relationship with another human being or with other human beings. And of course, it's part of the awakened way, the conscious relationships, means they become more harmonious.

But the conscious relationship can only arise if you don't look to the relationship as the source of ultimate satisfaction in your life. Because if you do, every person in your life is eventually going to disappoint you, let you down. Because people are not just, they're not a single entity.

A human being consists of many energy formations that have come together. You can call them sub-personalities and so on. You're not relating to a single person.

A single person consists of different sub-personalities and some of them may not be very conscious. So ultimately, if you look to a person as the ultimate solution to your feeling of insufficiency, then you will be disappointed. But if you look into your feeling of insufficiency or not enough or something lacking, which is the most common thing, fear is part of that also.

If you look at that directly and see what is that, how does it arise, and then see if you can, might discover that it's created, a lot of it is created by unconscious mind activity. And it may be your pain body also. Your pain body that is periodically in a state of suffering.

It needs and wants to suffer. The addiction to suffering. The transcendent dimension frees you from dependency on external things, but also it empowers, it can empower your ability, it will empower your ability to create in the external without being dependent on the creation, without identifying with the creation, without using it in the service of your self and derive an enhanced sense of self from what you create.

So let's begin with acknowledging in ourselves the transcendent dimension, because it's always here now. You don't need time to get there. The transcendent dimension is in you here now, what the Buddha calls emptiness, but would be better translated as spaciousness.

What Jesus calls the kingdom of heaven, which would be better translated as the dimension of spaciousness. That's how I translate it. Where is that spaciousness that they talk about?

You have to come to a cessation in the stream of thinking right now. And you no longer know who you are right now. You don't know who you are.

And you don't need to know who you are right now. And when you become comfortable with not knowing who you are or actually knowing anything anymore, because you're no longer thinking, but you're awake, what remains is your essential self-or-beingness, which is consciousness. And that is, knowing yourself as that is the ultimate source of satisfaction in life.

And you can know yourself as that even if everything else has failed in your external life. And with that comes also a deep peace, but not a dead peace and a life peace. You feel that is the peace that passes all understanding, Jesus called it.

In other words, it's not derived from any cycle or circumstance or event in your external life. So it is, in a way, it is a way of self-denial. That's why Jesus said, deny thyself, deny thyself, which means recognize that ultimately it's not real.

And stay with what is real, which is your presence or the presence, which is consciousness. That is the primordial, ultimately only true spiritual practice. And after a while, it's no longer a spiritual practice.

It becomes your natural way of being to feel yourself not only to be a person, but more fundamentally a spacious field of presence, consciousness. So in other words, you are conscious that you are conscious. You're aware that you are aware.

You know that you're aware. That's the only thing that you know. And it's not only that you know in that moment, in this moment, you know that you're aware, even that's not quite right.

The awareness knows itself, and that's you. And if you go to that place, that is a transcendent dimension, and you need a high degree of alertness to sustain that in normal everyday life. It won't be as intense as it is perhaps at this moment, but it can be in the background.

And then you start to speak and deal with things, and yet there is an alertness in the background, and you can sense that continuously. And then you deal with the rest of your life, and then you do your affirmations. If you choose to do that, not everybody may want to do it.

Not everybody needs to do it. You could do a manifestation technique. Let's do a general one, but start always with going to the transcendent dimension and sense yourself as the presence.

If you then choose to do so, you say, for example, to have a very general affirmation, then my life is filled with creativeness and achievement and prosperity. Now, nobody can object with that. It's not an objectionable statement, but can you sense that this is a reality?

Now, here's where what traditionally is called faith comes in and this happens very easily. What you bring together is that sense of intense, alert presence and the words that you have uttered. My life is filled with creativeness and achievement and prosperity.

And you can sense the power of your presence and the power of your presence merges with the words. So the space after the words is important. My life is filled with creativeness and achievement and prosperity.

And then you sense the power of your presence, which is the source of the creativeness and achievement and prosperity. So in an undifferentiated state of consciousness, in an undifferentiated state, the achievement, prosperity, prosperity, achievement already there in the undifferentiated beingness or presence. Creativeness comes from there.

Achievement comes from there. Prosperity, true prosperity is the feeling of prosperity.

True prosperity is not countless things, but it could become manifested as things coming to you.

But true prosperity is to feel prosperity. And what is that? To feel the abundance of life.

Again, it is contained in an undifferentiated way in the sense of presence. The sense of presence is not yet differentiated, the source of abundance. So this means to have faith, to actually believe that the words that you are speaking are true.

This is how you do it. You need, at the same time, you need to feel the presence, which is the transcendent dimension. Everything comes out of the transcendent dimension.

So it is, my life is filled with creativeness and achievement and prosperity. Now, this, if you have a session, for example, where you, let's say you spend 10 minutes, up to 15 minutes, don't overdo it. Let's say you set aside a 15 minute session and you focus on one or two statements.

For example, these general ones, my life is filled with creativeness and achievement and prosperity. And you could add a little one, but you need to understand what it means. I am filled with power.

This is not egoic power, power over others. It's the creative power of the universe, which again is in the undifferentiated state of pure consciousness. That is power.

That's the power of now. My life is filled with power. My life is filled with creativeness and achievement and prosperity.

It actually, you bring together the words and the feeling of the presence, which is the reality behind the words. And that means face. Now, this is actually for you, is actually already a reality, because it is.

On the unseen, it's a reality. On that, in that dimension of the unseen, it's already a reality. So you, this is how you actually, it's so enjoyable to do this practice.

When the creativeness and the achievement and prosperity actually manifests externally in your life, you will feel no different from the way you will feel when you make that statement. It's totally the same. You won't feel better or more complete.

You might feel pleasantly pleased about it. You say, oh, that's great. You might feel a kind of happiness when it happens, but on a deeper level, deeper than the feeling of happiness, there's already, already here and now, there is that deep sense of connectedness with the power.

And that is, won't change. So then another way, how often do you say it? That's another point.

You can make that statement in a totally unforced way. Remember, there's no willpower. You're just stating a fact, and you can feel the reality that's behind it.

And so you could use it in one session, 15 times, just a suggestion. 10, 15, more than that is unnecessary. My life is filled with creativeness and achievement and prosperity.

10 times or just, or less. And you have a little pauses before you say it again, speaking out loud, maybe even more helpful than just thinking it. And continuously feel that presence.

It helps to, before you start a session, any session, go into the inner body, feel the aliveness within, and that is the entry point into presence. And then you continuously sense the entire body and the aliveness in it, and the presence that is underneath it all, that present, but the present that is everywhere, but initially it's experienced as within you. So it's a beautiful, it's a lovely statement.

My life is created with achievement. Whatever it was, I've forgotten already. And then the words disappear.

And then what's left is the feeling of it. And that's a successful session. Another way you can do, you can write it out 10 times.

And while you write it, you speak it. You can do that with any affirmation. So the words are creative force.

It's using your mind as a tool for creation. The words create the reality behind it in the moment of speaking. Now, this is a very general one.

So if you write, my life is filled with creativeness and achievement and prosperity. I am filled with power. This is a very pleasant meditation.

And even if it didn't do anything, it would be a very pleasant meditation. And so you can then have a more specific affirmation too concerning, for example, your financial situation. You can make statements about abundance, that there's a flow of abundance in my life.

I feel wealthy. I'm becoming wealthy. Now, make sure that you don't have some negative ideas in your mind about money, that there's something wrong with it.

So there are many people who are continuously suffering from shortage of money when they think money is bad. And of course, money can be used in the service of the ego, but the important thing is to generate the feeling of abundance, even while you have no money externally. In my own life, just to give an example, for many years, I lived with very little money, often not knowing what I would live on next week, the following week, sometimes even the next day.

And even when I was writing, I was already doing spiritual teaching, not writing a book yet. Again, there was just enough to survive. I never felt poor.

I was surprised when I read in some publication at the time what the poverty level is, what is considered the poverty level in people's income. And I realized, oh, I'm well below the poverty level. It's strange that I don't feel poor because in the external, I appreciated the little things of life, the objects, flowers, plants, appreciation even of a glass of water.

I was sometimes surprised. I remember there was so little money. I went out with a group of people.

I was still in England. We went to a nice self-service restaurant, good quality food. And these people, a young couple I just met, I was selecting, I was looking at the price and say, can I afford this?

And say, okay, no, maybe not. And I took one dish. And this couple, they didn't even look at the price.

They just put everything on there, all the desserts and put everything, their trays were full of stuff. And I said, wow, how can anybody have so much money that they can fill their tray with? By the way, later they got arrested for dealing with drugs, but that's another matter.

So that was not a way they did. Their abundance was very temporary and did not come from a true place. But when I was writing The Power of Now, that came as a result of, of course, my whole life was dedicated to first bringing the awakened state fully into my life and then to teach it.

I was already teaching for a number of years before I wrote anything on a small scale. And so I would do workshops once a month. I was then living in the country in Somerset, England.

Occasionally I would travel to London once a month to a workshop or some other place. And I would do a weekly talk in a B&B where people would often come. And so I had a weekly talk, spiritual talk every Sunday afternoon, and people would use, leave donations.

And I would occasionally see individuals for spiritual teaching. And that went on for some years. And I knew that my contribution was very important, but I realized it's growing very slowly.

And I was not, I was reaching people, but not that many. And my income was just enough to keep me going. And that was fine.

And then it came to me one day as I was sitting under an oak tree in a village in Somerset, that perhaps I should ask for acceleration of my contribution to this world. And there was a village church nearby, and I went in, it was empty, like these wonderful little village churches in England. So I sat there alone and I said, I want acceleration, please, of my function in this world and my teaching.

I could feel already on an inner level, I could feel already an energy building up the moment I said it. It was very intense energy, but pleasant. An enormous buildup of.

And then I said it a few more times, and then I went back home. And the following day at home, I said it again a few times. And as I said it, usually in an affirmation, you shouldn't say I want, but this time I did and it worked.

Because usually in affirmation, you're stating something as if it were already the case. But in a way, I said I want, and the moment I said it, it was there on an inner level, there was an intensification. I was doing writing at the time.

I would sometimes casually write down things that I was said during workshops that I didn't know before, but they just came out of my mouth. Things that came up during counseling sessions. But it was a very slow writing, just occasional.

And a few days after having stated this acceleration, something came to me and I already, I could see how things would develop. And I got a piece of paper. This would normally be called, what I drew on this piece of paper would normally be called a vision board.

A vision board is something that you present either in words or images, what it is that you envisage for yourself, and then you feel the reality of it already. But it wasn't, I didn't see it as a vision board, and I knew it was, I had this very strong feeling that it was going to happen without feeling that I need to make it happen. This is going to happen.

So I wrote down central point spiritual teaching. There was a kind of central point of light or sun. I colored it in and a book.

And then it said many things like, the book is changing the lives of millions of people. The book that I write, it's translated into many languages. I travel all over the world, changing the consciousness.

And suddenly I wrote all these things. Okay. And so suddenly I had this vision board that said read branching out from the central point, which was spiritual teaching.

There was the book affecting millions of people, translating into countless languages and abundant money coming to me. I also stated that as a result of that, changing human consciousness, all this was a single thing. I used some colors and then I looked at it the next day and it looked good.

And then I put it away. And then I carried on with my life as normal. And weeks passed, a few months, three months or so passed and nothing happened.

I kind of forgot about it after that. And then one day I woke up and with this incredibly strong feeling, I need to move away. And I didn't know why, but it was so strong.

I need to move to the West Coast of North America. So, and the next day it was there still. So it wasn't just one little thing.

I wouldn't have acted on just a spontaneous thought, but it remained day after day. So I don't want to go into too much detail, but I obeyed this. I left England and sold everything I had.

And then traveled to the West Coast. And when I arrived in the West Coast, first in Vancouver, then in California. In California, somebody, I had one or two acquaintances there, but when I arrived there, I said, what am I doing here?

But something drove me here. And somebody offered me a room in his apartment that was vacant, that I met through a friend. I knew there, but I hardly knew anybody.

And then while I was sitting there, and one day after a week or two, suddenly the impulse came very strongly to buy a notepad. And then I could feel the energy stream coming, which said, what is enlightenment? And I knew that was the beginning of the book, and I wrote it.

And then the energy stream came every day, the writing came. I didn't, by then I had forgotten that I had asked for acceleration because it was several months back now. But I was now actually experiencing the acceleration.

And I had forgotten about my affirmation, because I only used it for two or three days. And so why did I have to move to the West Coast? Well, I only realized that when my visa expired, I moved back to England, but I didn't have a home anymore.

I stayed in a community. The writing flow stopped. The moment I went back to the West Coast, whether it was British Columbia or Vancouver or California, it didn't matter.

The writing flow came back. So then I realized for some reason I had to go into this energy field, which has a specific kind of energy, the West Coast of North America, for the writing to happen. And then the acceleration continued.

The acceleration was first the writing, and then eventually it got published. I had by then completely forgotten that I had ever done this thing. Several years later, I was looking at some old boxes that somehow survived my many moves.

After the power of now was already a huge success and had affected the lives of millions of people. And I was looking at some old, and I had pulled out this thing I had drawn quite a few years before, because the whole process took several, the writing itself was three years. And then came the publication of probably six years or so, seven years before it had happened.

And I looked at it in amazement and suddenly remembered that I had drawn this. And I looked and said, everything has come to pass. How amazing.

So this is, but these are things that you can do as enjoy just in the energy of it. And you can, if you do a vision board of what a vision comes to you of how you can affect the world, then it's not so much of something that you want to achieve but of something that wants to happen through you. There's a difference here.

So you don't really ask, what is it that I want to achieve in this world? What is it that wants to happen through me? What is it that the world is asking me to do, but not so much the external world, but the underlying consciousness.

What is it that wants to be born through me into this world? And it could be, it doesn't have to be a book. It could be an activity that you do.

It could be something simple that you enjoy, but that has quality and that has affects people. Something, whatever it is, it could be so many things that consciousness can manifest in so many different ways. So you become still and say, what is it?

If you don't know yet, but not everybody needs necessarily to do affirmations or manifestation techniques. If you find the one thing that becomes the avenue or the channel through which consciousness mainly operates, brings about the creativity in your life, you find that it may just grow spontaneously. An interesting question, if I had not uttered these words asking for acceleration, what would have happened?

Who knows? Nobody knows. The most likely thing perhaps would be that I would still be in England and there would have been perhaps a slow growth of the teaching.

And probably I would by now have affected a few several thousands people doing workshops and so on, perhaps a gradual slow growth. This is just one possibility. And that would have been fine too, but the acceleration brought it out into the whole world.

When I was writing The Power of Now, and this is interesting, there was intense enjoyment in the, there was an intensity of, an intensity of creative flow, very intense creative flow. It was almost as if there was, the book was already there, but it just wanted me to, not that it was dictated in any way. I used my mind or not I, but the consciousness, the greater consciousness, not obstructed by the ego, was able to use my mind as an instrument.

And so it wasn't a dictation as such, although inspired, yes. I knew I wasn't doing it. It was just happening through me.

And there was no guarantee, obviously. I bought a, I remember buying a book when I was writing The Power of Now. I bought a book, how to self-publish your book, because I was writing, thinking, well, maybe I can self-publish when it's finished.

So I read the book. I had interesting ideas about it. And one of the things it said, I remember one sentence in it says, and no, you're not going to be an Oprah.

That was the author's advice to the writers because the author thought most writers have unreasonable expectations of what is possible. I had no expectation of being on Oprah, but it didn't even occur to me. And I said, of no on Oprah, well, I'd never thought of being on Oprah.

That wasn't, I had no specific ways that I envisaged how the book would go out in the world. In fact, I didn't know how it would do. And it didn't, I remember saying, if the book is, if I only sell a few hundred copies, that's fine.

And then I'll just do something else. I will sell tomatoes. I don't know why these words came to me.

I don't know what's, whether I would ever have sold tomatoes, probably not. But those are the words that came to me. I would have been fine with anything, but I would, the book had to come out.

What the book did in the world after it came out didn't matter to me that much, but because I had forgotten about the paper that I had drawn, the so-called vision board. Discouragement, interesting, when a few times people said, what are you writing? And I said, I'm writing a book.

I'm writing a book about the present moment and the now. And more than once people said, oh, well, isn't that an old idea that's been done already? Ram Dass did it.

I don't think you should, I think you should think of something different. And of course it didn't particularly stop me. I could, the energy was too strong to be in a state of doubt, but don't listen.

When you have a vision of what you want to do and you feel the power behind it and you do it, be very careful not to listen to people who say that this is not possible or that it's not a good idea. If you already have a service or a product and now you want an acceleration or an amplification of what you're going to do with this service or product or your activity, make sure that what you have there, that you want to grow is of high quality. And there's no point in having affirmations about you being a famous singer that inspires millions of people or a famous musician that inspires millions of people if you can't be bothered to practice very much.

It's just because it's, well, I want to be a famous singer and a famous musician, but I love how you practice. Three hours a week, you play, that's, you're not really dedicated fully to the work. That's what, sometimes people have delusions about what they are good at.

Years ago when we still had cable TV, we don't have it anymore, I don't watch TV, but there was this program called American Idol and I'm sure everybody has seen it and there are other versions of it in other countries. Britain has got talent and things like that. And I've always found the most, the funniest was the early stages of choosing a people.

So people come, hundreds of people line up and they are given three minutes to perform in front of this panel. And it's quite amusing to see how many people are totally deluded about their talents. They're the most awful, sometimes the most awful singers, the most dreadful voice, and they think they're the greatest.

And then, of course, very disappointed when they're told they don't qualify. Some people can be very deluded about their abilities and not only that, they haven't actually given it any, they haven't put any energy into it. They just have this idea, it would be great to be a rock star.

I think I can be a rock star. Why can't I be a rock star? Anything that you want to achieve, you have to be dedicated and enjoy what you're doing and focus energy has to flow into it, whatever it may be.

There's no point in doing an affirmation if you have a service or a product that is not developed enough that then you might be able to do an affirmation about that. Yes, I enjoy my practice. I enjoy, and that's fine.

In England, I lived for a few years in a house in London and there was downstairs, I was in the second floor, and on the ground floor, there was a musician, a classical pianist, and she was not well-known, but people had already heard of her. And I could hear her piano every day. She practiced about five hours a day on the piano every day.

And that was quite, normally I wouldn't like, continuously happen, but it was in the background and it was classical piano, so it was fine. And many years later, I saw her name again in a newspaper and she had become a world-famous pianist, but she did practice five hours a day. And she seemingly loved what she was doing because if you don't love what you're doing, do not practice five hours a day because then you make yourself ill and stressed.

But if you love what you're doing, then you give it your fullest. If you don't love it, and just because you have an egoic desire of being a great pianist, first of all, you won't achieve it, very unlikely, because there's ego there and you're never fully in the doing because you're too much focused on where you want to get to. Remember, the affirmation of what you want to achieve is in the present tense and it's here now, and you only use it for a short period of time.

You don't spend the rest of your day thinking of where you want to get to. The rest of your day you spend giving your fullest attention to what it is you're doing, your fullest attention. Now, whatever course of action you embark on, especially if you bring something new into this world, you will find obstacles arising in most cases, not necessarily, it could happen that everything immediately opens up for you and grows into something big.

But in most cases, whenever you bring something new into this world, you will find people who don't like it, they like the, they don't, they are distrustful or envious or don't appreciate anything new coming into this world. And so they will, people may try to sabotage or the very structures of the world may become an obstacle or hindrance to what you're doing. You may be criticized, people will put all kinds of, possibly all kinds of obstacles in your path.

You might meet unhelpful people. You can, if you're a writer, then the normal thing is you will be rejected, your manuscript, that is normal. There's a long string of famous books that were rejected by like 50 publishing companies, rejected their books and then they self-published and then became a huge bestseller that is possible.

Now, how do you deal with rejection and obstacles? Now, in the new age community, I don't like the word community because it's not really a community, new age people sometimes say they try to do something new and then they come up against the first obstacle or hindrance, say, oh, maybe I'm not supposed to do that because if I were supposed to do it, then everything would open up for me, everything would be easy. So maybe the universe isn't really, doesn't want me to do that.

So here wisdom is required and you need to look very carefully so that at the first sign of an obstacle, you don't immediately give up. So you persevere and wisdom again is required. You need to look at the situation because there may be situations where the universe is telling you this is not the right course of action, but it does not mean when the first obstacle arises or the second obstacle or the third does not necessarily mean that the universe is telling you that you're not supposed to do that.

It is true, however, that once you have decided on a course of action and you are committed to it, unless it's totally out of alignment with what the universe wants, the totality, universal intelligence, unless it's totally out of alignment at some point, if it is in alignment, at some point it will become empowered. And that is so that a power will flow into it at some point that wasn't there before. And then when that happens, that's it.

And you may need the face in it before that happens because the face is part of how the power is created. It activates it. But initially you may encounter obstacles.

The power may not immediately be there or it may be, but in many cases it's not. So do not be immediately discouraged when obstacles arise. They are bound to arise.

Now, a very important thing now, when you have an aim, you have a desire, a purpose, and you're aiming towards that, and obstacles arise, whether or not your ego has come back in, you can find out very easily by looking at how you deal with obstacles which come in the form of people or antagonistic people or situations. How do you, I mean, an obstacle can be a situation too, just you're going to an important meeting and you miss your plane or it's canceled. Oh, maybe the universe doesn't want me to go to the meeting.

It's just, it's an obstacle that arises. Now, how do you deal with it? How direct, it's a sign that ego has come in if the obstacle creates a negative reaction in you.

Then you have an egoic desire and attachment, an egoic attachment to the outcome. If, however, the obstacle arises and you just look at it in an alert way and you see, what can I do now? Or how can I circumvent this obstacle?

Or how can I use this obstacle? Perhaps you can even use it in some way. You change your approach towards it or whatever it may be.

So you either walk around it, you don't fight. There's not the, you don't fight against anything. And especially the case, if the obstacle or the hindrance comes in the form of people, you don't attack them.

I'm talking verbally on whatever way, obviously not physically, you don't attack them because that ego is always a sign of ego. So if anybody you perceive as being a, someone you seemingly wanting to sabotage what it is that you want to do, how do you deal with that? If ego is not involved, if you are aligned with the unconditioned consciousness, the great, the intelligence of the universe that then is operating through you, you don't have the negative reaction.

You just, you look at the situation and you see what is possible. You may have to change your approach. You may have to withdraw for a moment.

Perhaps there's nothing you can do. Perhaps there's something you can do, but there's not the hostility. There's no hostility that arises towards the obstacle.

If antagonism or hostility arise towards the obstacle, your ego is there. Either it was there from the beginning and you didn't know it or it has come because the ego can come in at a later stage when you are engaged, it can still come in. And if the ego comes in, then whatever you do becomes contaminated with the ego.

And you're setting yourself up for frustration, suffering ultimately. If a competitive element is involved in what you're doing, let's say you have a product or a service and if ego comes in, then you will perceive others as people you have to compete against. And almost, if the ego is strongly there, then almost as your enemies.

And anybody who offers a similar service or product, you really, you talk badly about them and say, that's all ego. You offer the best service or product that you can and you don't need to worry or be concerned. This would only be ego about what others offer.

They just have similar services or products. You can even, there is no, scarcity, you have to come from fullness, not scarcity. Again, it's the ego will always think in terms of not enough and scarcity.

And you need to take away something from others. But that is not the empowered way. Coming from fullness means that you create you create out of this, the fullness of being.

This is an interesting word and it's a way to describe the transcendent dimension. It seems to be the exact opposite of what the Buddha said when the Buddha talked about emptiness, which I translate as spaciousness. And yet, when you are in touch with this transcendent dimension, it is both fullness and emptiness.

It is undifferentiated power. It is undifferentiated consciousness. One could say it's a bit like gold, pure gold.

And then you can make many things out of gold. You can make many ornaments and jewelry and all kinds of interesting objects of made or they're all made of gold. But there is gold in its undifferentiated state.

And that is the, that's the fullness of life which we could call emptiness because it's formless in that state. Formless consciousness, spacious consciousness. The question is, can you, as I'm talking about it right now, can you sense that in the background?

I sense that all the time, that there's, that pure gold, so to speak, that is, that then becomes words. It becomes action. It becomes a thought.

It becomes a whole new physical creation out there. It takes on form, the formation of form out of the formless. And then eventually all forms return to the formless.

Yes, so don't get attached too much to the creation. The form, because the form is destined to dissolve again. It's not destined to last, but it's destined to have a certain function, to be enjoyed in this wonderful play of form to which you now contribute.

And it's all part of the growing consciousness. The fullness then. Scarcity, the idea of scarcity comes from ego.

There is in the universe, there is no scarcity. There is infinite abundance. There's, if you look to the wrong place for abundance, then yes, there is scarcity.

If we think the only way we can have energy is by using fossil fuels or whatever, of course, first of all, they're not going to last, and it's not the right place to look for it. If you look to the sun as an example of infinite abundance, then you can see how abundant the universe is. The sun producing unbelievable amounts of energy every second.

If you look at nature, how it produces seeds, millions and millions of seeds, all life, continuous proliferation of life forms, infinite, infinite abundance. So the universe is an abundant universe. There's not scarcity.

It's only in the, if you look to the wrong place for abundance, then there is scarcity. So make sure that you don't have ideas around money that are negative. The money is just, it's a symbol for energy in this dimension.

It is true, of course, that there are people who are very wealthy and have made zero contribution to the world that does exist. There are people who are just gamble. I mean, a lot of what happens in the stock market is just gambling these days.

We all know about that. They come up the most, the weirdest schemes. And there are people who become very rich, but there are many others who make actually a valuable contribution to the world.

And when you contribute something valuable in whatever form, almost inevitably, some money will come to you, and more than enough. And then make sure that you don't, that you recycle it also, so you don't. Some people get angry that there are some people who have so much money that, how can one person be allowed to have so much money?

Bill Gates has don't know how many billions. But I mean, Bill Gates, he has realized that he has so much that it becomes meaningless, and he's giving away 95% or so of his money. It makes so, or countless charities and so on, whether any of those actually, yes, they all alleviate suffering, which is a wonderful thing.

Whether any of those bring about a change in human consciousness, I don't know. So there is the alleviation of suffering, which is a good thing. And you can tackle the suffering of this world on one level, the level of effect, or you can address it on the level of cause, or both at the same time.

So if you help needy people, that's a wonderful thing. You are addressing human suffering on the level of effect, because human suffering is an effect of a dysfunction in the collective consciousness, unconsciousness. If you look at the suffering, ultimately the source of suffering, the main source of suffering is the dysfunction in the collective human mind.

That's where the suffering, there's more suffering inflicted by humans on other humans than suffering inflicted by let's say a natural disaster or something like that. So look, my main point, I address mainly suffering on the level of cause, the causal level. But in addition, it's a wonderful thing to help needy people.

Don't, as long as you don't build an identity for yourself around helping, and you are the great, and you then condemn others for not doing it. One more thing for this. An important part of manifesting is the vibrational frequency of your entire being.

So, and this is where the inner body awareness practice comes in. When you pay attention to the inner body and you feel the aliveness that pervades the inner body, you're actually raising the vibrational frequency of your entire being and of every cell in the body. And every negative thought lowers the vibrational frequency.

So even if you never do any kind of manifestation, if you could live in a relatively high frequency, you would attract relatively pleasant experiences and situations. Not that you won't be challenged anymore. There's no such thing as a life that's not challenged, but there would be a predominance of, you would not really come into contact too much with very unpleasant people.

Challenging, yes, here and there, there are people that are challenging, but there is a correspondence between your life experience, the experience of your reality and the vibrational frequency of your being, which includes the kinds of thoughts you think, predominantly, habitually. It includes the emotional state that predominates in you. And it includes the entire frequency of your body, which is raised when you become aware of the inner body.

And that's how presence also, in order to be present, you need to be aware of the inner body. It becomes part of the sense of presence. And so when you feel yourself going down, your mood comes over you.

It's important to become aware of that, catch yourself so that you don't identify with it. And you say, oh, there's a mood. It's just come over me.

It could be an anxiety, it could be expressed as a thought, a nihilistic thought, or everything is just pointless. What's the point? I can't, I don't, this world is just so dreadful.

I can't be bothered to do anything anymore. People are awful. Everybody's out for themselves.

Spiritual people, especially, are all hypocrites. And all kinds of statements about other people. And you can read, if you want to learn more about it, read stuff on the internet, what people say about others.

And they are not empowered. It's the ego speaking, all the ways in which you want to tear down other people and criticize and destroy them. And people that you don't even know, you only know them as lines of script.

And so you attack all those people. It's all egoic, an attempt of the ego to enhance itself. It's totally futile.

So be very careful, because these are all obstacles on your life path of manifesting, as Oprah puts it, your best life, living the best life you can. And it's a good aim to have. These obstacles, observe the obstacles that arise in your mind.

Criticism, making others wrong and thereby making yourself right. Complaining. These are all obstacles.

You cannot, you can learn a manifestation technique and you can sit down, you can sit down in your room twice a day and you go, I'm wealthy and I'm achieving great things or whatever could be more specific. My company is growing or I'm becoming the CEO of my, I am the CEO of my company and I'm expanding it greatly. And then for the rest of the day, you criticize others and you complain about what's wrong and everything is wrong, what people say and do and where you are and always out of alignment with the present moment.

Like every moment is a denial of your manifestation. So in a little while, we are going to look at dealing with health situation with your physical body and what can be done through conscious manifestation, whether that's helpful or not. We'll look at that and a few other things.

My ego is really aggressive. It comes up without me knowing, only after the ego is gone do I find out how can I manage my ego sooner? That is not uncommon.

There's probably more than you, the community that I work with, the questioner who has that, who experiences that. As more presence arises, so first of all, it's important to invite presence into your life in ordinary situations when you're not being challenged by another person. The anger mostly is probably with people or situations, but most situations involve people.

So be present when you're out in nature by not labeling things, by observing in that state of alert attention. And presence then emanates more and more through you. This doesn't mean that necessarily you will, next time the ego comes up being aggressive, it comes up so quickly that you can't catch it in the moment.

But as the presence in you grows, manifests more strongly, usually what happens is the time period that elapses after you've been taken over by anger gets shorter until you reach a point where a few seconds after it's happened, you suddenly realize it's happened again. Be aware, as before, you might have read it several minutes or even an hour. In some cases, the next day, you realize, what was that when you had a huge drama with somebody?

Probably involving the pain body, your pain body is probably, but predominantly has the anger vibration, predominantly, and pain body that is not recognized as pain body becomes part of the ego. In the same way that any thought that you completely identify with becomes part of the ego. In the same way, an emotion that you completely identify with becomes part of the ego.

Once you recognize the pain body as the pain body, then it is an energy field in you that still operates, but strictly speaking, it's no longer your ego. Ego can only operate as long as you're unconscious. So although sometimes people say to me, I'm able to observe my ego now, in the way I use the term ego, that's no longer true.

The moment you become aware of your ego, it's not really ego anymore. It is still a behavioral or mental emotional pattern that operates in you, but you are present when you know that there is this pattern operating in you, then you are not it. It operates in you and you are the space around it, which is the consciousness.

You know it's there. Then before it was ego, yes, but when you recognize it for what it is, it's no longer ego. Ego means unconsciousness.

Ego means complete identification. So whatever you recognize in yourself isn't really ego anymore. And so then as presence grows in you, you reach a point when immediately after this episode, pain body episode, anger episode has just happened, you suddenly realize, oh, it happened again.

And then I predict if it hasn't happened to you yet, it will, a time comes perhaps very soon when in the middle of it, it already has taken you over and you're shouting at someone and in the middle of it, you realize what's going on, that you've been taken over by that. You still may not be able to stop it, don't have to, but the awareness is there in the middle of it. And that may happen many times.

And then you may find the awareness is there just the moment it begins to arise. The moment the anger pattern wants to come in, the awareness is also already there. Now, whether or not at this moment you can stop it, we don't know, and never stop it by suppressing it.

You stop it simply by shining the light of awareness on it. That eventually stops it. So you can, and then at that, when the presence is strong enough for that, then you actually begin to have a choice.

Do I choose to engage in the same way through my pain body in this situation? Is this the best way of dealing with the situation? You may not literally ask yourself that question, but it is implied in that state of awareness.

You have a choice. You can no longer at the mercy of the old condition pattern. And then it begins to dissipate.

This is a question about unconscious people in group situations that draw others around them into their negativity. I've seen this, especially in meetings at work. Yes, this is very common.

It happens even at church meetings and meditation centers. When you go to a committee meeting, Center for Inner Peace committee meeting. I'm not referring to anything.

I don't know if there's a Center for Inner Peace, if there is, please excuse me. What do you recommend that would help change the situation? And while it is happening, is there something I could do or say in the moment with this person to get the meeting to a more constructive place?

I cannot specifically say what you could do or say, but the most important thing is that you don't react to the unconsciousness in the other, because that's the easiest, the most seductive thing is that reactivity arises. And the moment you react with negativity, even saying, why don't you just shut up? We are fed up with listening to you and we'll see what happens.

If you can be free of reaction or rather reactivity, then something is possible. If you react, you are being drawn into unconsciousness. And the same level as the person you're reacting to.

So in other words, you become what you are fighting against. And this is not uncommon. There are ways in which you fight against unconscious people or people, they might do things that look evil, but of course it arises out of unconsciousness.

And the fight, without you knowing it, gradually you are at the same level as those people. So that's very...

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[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 7:49)

Evil, but of course it arises out of unconsciousness and the fight without you knowing it, gradually you are at the same level as those people. So that's very, can happen very easily. So let's come back to the meetings.

So to be intensely present is so that your state of consciousness is one of intense presence as you look around the room. So in intense presence, there's no reaction and you see everything for what it is. You don't personalize the unconscious behavior of another person.

You don't say what a dreadful person that is. No, it's not a dreadful person. It's just human unconsciousness in action, a manifestation of the current evolutionary stage of the majority of humans.

That's all, nothing personal about it. Manifestation of the current evolutionary stage of most humans consciousness, nothing personal about it. Oh, well, that makes it perhaps a little easier, but you don't have to tell yourself even that in order to be present, you're just present and you feel go into the body so that every cell of the body is alive with presence and you feel the aliveness in every cell of the body because otherwise the body and the emotion that lives in the body will react to this person's emotion.

It'll come from there if it doesn't come from the mind. Be in the body, the body's your anchor for presence and there you are as a point of presence in this room. And whether or not you say something or what you say or what action you take, I don't know because it can only come out of presence or whether you say anything at all or whether you just totally ignore this level of discourse that the other person is involved in and just continue presenting the situation what we need to look at.

In some cases, you completely ignore. In other cases, you might address this person and speak to the sanity that's hiding somewhere underneath the insanity. You might address that, that might work.

We don't know, but you will know what the right thing to do is or if there's anything to do in that situation. But it's vital to be absolutely present, especially in the presence of very unconscious people. Sounds a little contradictory.

I'm using presence in another sense. When you are very unconscious people around you, then it's extremely important to be highly present so that you don't get drawn in. And then something can happen, the situation can change.

And so you represent a different level of consciousness there. You can probably even, I'm saying probably because I have little experience with it. You can probably even do it on the internet because the internet is full of things that have come out of very unconscious minds.

And so it is sometimes possible to just give your contribution as a conscious contribution that will contrast with all the unconscious, very negative or aggressive contributions of people, what they have said. And there's one person who says something that is, and a few people will respond to that and it might make some difference. So you're never attacking anybody, of course.

In any statement that comes out of consciousness, there's never, you're not attacking anybody. You might rectify a lie. You might rectify something that's totally false.

That's a different matter. In extreme cases, of course, if the entire room becomes wildly unconscious, you may have to remove yourself and you will find the right, when the moment comes, you'll find your body is getting up and you find yourself walking to the door. And it could even be that you never return to this office.

If you live in a very unconscious business environment or office environment, then it may be a place where no matter how present you are, there's not much that you can do. Perhaps we can affect one or two people, but if the entire, the collective energy field, because a company is also a kind of a collective entity consisting of all these humans. And if the majority of all of the humans are deeply unconscious, then you have a company structure that is deeply unconscious.

And the company has its own, is more than the sum total of the parts that make up the company. So it almost has its own ego identity. A company is an ego too.

Even a nation has an ego identity. So a company has an ego identity too. And it can do bad things that the individual human, although they are unconscious, might not be capable of doing if they were acting on their behalf, on their own behalf.

But if they are drawn into identification with the, I hinted at that yesterday too, last night, I believe. If they are identified with the collective, insane collective ego structure, then humans are capable of atrocities that as individuals, as individual egos, they would not be capable of. And this applies to, for example, also to cults and sects where people within the cult and sect, people are very honorable and helpful and loving to each other and give up their personal ego, but they have exchanged their personal ego for the collective ego.

And the collective ego with reference to the outside world is insane. So if you are in an totally insane environment, you may not, your presence may not be enough to bring about much change there. So there are certain environments that it is better to remove yourself from.

[Speaker 2] (8:00 - 52:45)

To begin, find your comfortable seating place. Or if you're lying down, you're welcome to lie down. But when you, if you're lying down, if you choose to lie down, please stay awake through this.

So if you're feeling tired, I'd suggest that you don't lie down. It's to sit up. And let's sit up nice and sort of as straight as we possibly can in a chair.

Having our feet flat on the floor, if you're sitting cross-legged, that's okay too. Just find your comfortable edge where you can close your eyes. Take a deep breath.

Maybe exhale with a sigh and just let your entire day go. One more time, deep breath in. And exhale, let it go and relax.

As you're seated, there's an awareness. The awareness that you are seated. The awareness with your feet on the floor.

Or if you're in another position, the awareness of just feeling the ground beneath you. And then there's the awareness of your breath. Don't try to change the breath, but just be aware of your breathing in this moment.

And just allow the awareness to take your breathing deeper. If thoughts arise, just notice them. And just let them float away.

And bring your attention back to your breath. And scan your body from head to toe, toe to head. Just relaxing every inch of your body.

Your brows, forehead, your cheeks, your jaw, your shoulders, your arms, your legs, your feet, your toes. Just become aware of the body. Notice any tension or tightness.

Then consciously choose to relax. If you're experiencing any tension or pain, just notice it. Drop the label, tension, drop the label, pain.

And simply feel. When you drop all labels, all it is is sensation. Again, if thoughts arise, just let them go.

And return your awareness to breathing, to the sensations in your body. Or perhaps you even hear some sounds. Just notice them.

Now let's bring our awareness to the inner body. That feeling of aliveness within. If you don't know what that feels like, don't worry about it.

Let's see if we can just feel it in our hands. So it might be best if you allow your hands to come up away from your body, so not resting on anything. And just hold your hands up in a relaxed position.

With your eyes closed, you can ask yourself, how do I know I even have hands? And simply feel. So let go of the label, hands, and just feel.

What does it feel like? Is there some tingling? Does it feel numb?

As soon as you label it, just let the labels go and continue feeling. You can keep your hands where they are, or you can rest them back down onto your lap. But keep feeling your hands.

And let's bring our attention to your arms. How do you know you even have arms? What do your arms feel like?

Your elbows. Your forearms. Biceps, your shoulders.

Breathing and feeling your arms. And if you can't feel your arms, don't worry about it. Just go back to your hands.

The hands are the easiest to feel. Now feel your hands and your arms together. Now feel your shoulder blades.

Feel your chest. Feel your belly. Feel a spine.

Your entire back. Feel your belly button. How do you know you even have a belly button?

How do you know you have a back? A chest. A belly.

A spine. So feeling your entire torso. And the lower lumbar up to your shoulders.

Feeling the arms and feeling the hands together. And bring your attention to your hips. To your buttocks.

To your hip flexors. How do you know you have a buttocks? How do you know you have hips?

And if you can't feel them, don't worry about it. Just go back to an area you can feel. And when you're ready, connect your hips, your buttocks, your back, your front body.

Your shoulders, your arms, and your hands together. And let's bring your attention to the legs. How do you know you even have legs?

How do you know you have thighs and knees and shins and calves? What do your knees feel like? What do your thighs feel like?

And if you're ready, let's connect your hands, your arms, your back, your front body, your hips, your buttocks, and your legs. And become aware of your feet. Your ankles, your heels.

Your arches, the tops of your feet, your toes. Feeling each toe. How do you know you even have feet?

And we drop the label. All there is, is just sensation. The sensation of the inner body.

Now let's feel the body from the shoulders down. Connecting your hands with your arms, your arms with the shoulders, your shoulders with your back, with the front, your hips, with your buttocks, with your legs, and your feet, and your toes. And bring your attention to your neck, to your head, your ears, your cheeks, your lips, your nose, your eyes, your eyebrows, the top of your head, the sides, the back.

How do you know you even have a head and a neck? Connecting your neck, relaxing your face, relaxing your entire body, and just feel. And remember, if you can't feel it, just go back to an area of the body that you can feel.

And let's connect your neck and your head with the rest of your body, and feel your entire body. Noticing and feeling the inner body. It's one energy field.

So there's this awareness, let's call it the outer forms, the form of breathing, the form of sensations in your body, such as tension, tightness, or pain. Thought forms. Forms of emotions.

Sounds. And even the form of your inner body. It's the purest life form, but it's still a form.

And there's awareness of these forms. And staying connected to your inner body, allow your awareness to take you deeper into yourself. In other words, allow awareness become aware of itself.

The dimension of stillness. Stillness. Formlessness.

Emptiness. That there's a potential for fullness. And going into this formless dimension, this stillness, is that peace that passes all understanding.

The peace before any form arises. And we awaken to that stillness. To that formless dimension that we can also call your soul level.

Your soul self. Unencumbered by any thoughts, any identities, anything. And that practice of staying connected to that inner body, to your soul self, is the practice to be able to bring that into your everyday life.

To find a way to have this in your everyday life. A life that is a constant pulling at you, constant demands. And it is essential, if we are to be our true selves, to be at one with life, to be at peace in this world, is to find that inner peace within.

You can still stay connected to this inner body and that practice is staying connected.

You can still be connected to your soul self. And gently, just slowly open your eyes.

Taking in the world of form, which is another dimension, kind of added and pulling at you to come out. To come out. But the spiritual awakening is to actually go back in.

It's almost like the reverse, to go back in. To go in. And to find that balance between inner and outer living.

This meditation will help you connect to the deep eye. When you are connected to the deep eye, you're able to manifest consciously, rather than unconsciously, through the ego. Begin by sitting comfortably with your eyes closed.

Surrendering all thoughts and emotions. Relaxing your physical body. Become aware of your breath.

And with each exhale, relax your body even more. Connect to the inner body, your chi, prana, or life force. Transcending time, for time is only a concept.

Be here now, in this eternal moment. The only moment there is. You are aware of the forms of this moment.

The form of your breath. Sensations in your body. The inner body.

Sense perceptions, such as the sound of my voice. The sounds in the room. And sounds from outside.

With the form dimension at the periphery, sense into the formless dimension. Stillness. Consciousness.

Awareness. Your presence. Sense deeper into stillness.

Your aware presence. Continue feeling the inner body. And sensing into stillness.

Once you are connected to the deep eye, a new way of manifesting would be to ask your soul, the deep eye, what does my soul want? What does the universe want to manifest and achieve through me? Then from an alert stillness, listen.

Without stillness, one hears the voice of the ego. Stop the ego chatter and impatience. Listen and wait.

Wait without waiting. Wait without expectation for a certain result or an immediate answer. Be still.

The answer will appear in its own time. In stillness, you allow consciousness, your soul, to speak to you and manifest through you in its own time. Feel free to remain sensing stillness.

Feeling the inner body. Remaining in meditation for as long as you like.

[Speaker 3] (53:51 - 54:26)

Welcome everyone to the Conscious Manifestation online course. My name's Tammy Simon. I'm the founder of Sounds True and it is my great joy and honor to be your host for this session.

We have some written questions that we think are relevant to very, very many people in the course. And we also have a couple of live callers who are queued up, ready to ask Eckhart Tolle their questions about conscious manifestation. Eckhart, welcome.

[Speaker 1] (54:27 - 57:04)

Thank you. Welcome everybody. I'm in Switzerland at the moment and you are wherever you are in the present moment.

So let's start by acknowledging the present moment. Becoming aware of the present moment, not only of the things that appear in the present moment, sense perceptions, perhaps thoughts and feelings, but go a little deeper into the present moment behind the thoughts and become aware of the essence of the present moment, which is consciousness itself. So right now you become aware of yourself as a conscious presence, not as a person, the conscious presence that is prior to the person.

And let's look at the first question now. Sammy.

[Speaker 3] (57:04 - 57:26)

Thank you, Eckhart. Here we go. How do you come to distinguish the difference between what could be called ego desires and what might be called true desires that arise from presence?

How do we distinguish the difference?

[Speaker 1] (57:29 - 1:17:56)

Well, that's a good question. I'm not sure if the word desire is the correct word or the most appropriate word to use in relation to presence. It's certainly the most appropriate word in relation to ego.

The ego has many desires. Presence itself may have a vision or an intention, but I wouldn't call it a desire. Well, let's see what the difference might be.

The easiest way to talk about this and to differentiate between ego and true desires endeavors and presence endeavors, just substituting words, is to realize that for the ego, the future is more important than the present. So when there's an egoically motivated desire, the need to arrive at the future is very great. And all the steps that you take towards that end or that goal are considered unconsciously inferior in importance to the moment of arriving at the goal, at the desired outcome.

So that's perhaps the easiest way you can differentiate between ego motivated action and action that arises from a deeper level. So I'll repeat that again because it's very important. And you have to be very vigilant to detect this, the difference in yourself.

If the future is more important than the present by implicitly regarded, not that it's explicit, and you might not even know it, it's an underlying belief that the future is of greater importance than the present moment. And then all the action that you're taking in the present moment is there in order to help you arrive at this final future moment that promises something that is not here in the present. And that's not just the external outcome or the result of what you want to achieve, but it promises something to you, a more complete sense of self, a more complete identity, a sense of deep fulfillment or ultimate happiness and satisfaction in whatever form it might be conceived, recognition, abundance and so on.

So in order to know whether there is an underlying belief in you that the future is more important than the present, you need to be very alert because if you're not, you won't be aware of that. How do you know it? Well, you know it by becoming aware of your state of consciousness at any given moment, which means in the present moment.

What is the energy field behind what you do? The energy field, is there stress involved? Are there, do you frequently experience in relation to pursuing your goal, sometimes even thinking about your goal?

Do you experience negative emotions? Do you experience frustration, anger, resentment when obstacles suddenly appear in the form of unforeseen situations or people? Do you experience anger, frustration, stress, any form of unhappiness as you go about pursuing your goal, in which in many cases when action is ego motivated, the journey to desired goal, when it's ego dominated is actually not a pleasant journey at all.

So while you're engaged in achieving your desire, you're actually, there may be exceptions, but on the whole, you're not very happy because you haven't arrived yet. So because you're postponing your happiness, your fulfillment, your sense of completion to some future moment. And in the meantime, you are desperately trying to get there.

So while you're on your journey, you experience a succession of, not infrequently, unpleasant circumstances, all kinds of obstacles on your path, which are normal whenever you pursue something. And the more ego dominated your action is, the more obstacles you will actually find. And because your ego motivated reactivity, when an obstacle appears, you amplify the obstacle.

So what could have been a minor obstacle on your path in the form of a personal situation, by reacting against it, the ego reacts against it, becomes aggressive, defensive, whatever the ego does, it reacts. The reaction actually amplifies the obstacle and it's all an unconscious process. So when there's ego dominated action, you're likely to find not just the obstacles that are to be expected, in a normal, whenever you're engaged in any endeavor, it's only to be expected that, yes, you will.

And especially when you create something new, there will be blockages and obstacles, as I said, in the form of unexpected things that seemingly go wrong, situations, people very frequently don't want you to be doing what you're doing, that's normal. But when you're ego motivated, the reactivity of the ego gives further fuel, energy to these obstacles. So for example, the obstacle rise in the form of a person, your reactivity then creates further reactivity in that other person and something that might have been a minor difference of opinion or disagreement about what's supposed to happen, suddenly becomes something very big.

And this is, of course, connected to the fact that the ego continuously makes enemies, it loves to make enemies. So it will make an enemy out of every obstacle and by doing that, will amplify every obstacle, whether it comes from a person or a situation. So when your ego motivated, your journey becomes very, very difficult.

It's not pleasant at all. You might still through sheer willpower and obstinate perseverance, you might arrive at your goal after a very unpleasant journey during which you've made yourself and many other people around you unhappy. So you arrive at your goal and you arrive at your goal finally.

And then what happens is as the, to quote a course in miracles, loving quote, the course in miracles says, whenever you have achieved something, you can know whether it was ego motivated because when it's ego motivated, it does not make you happy. It's not fulfilling. Very quickly, the achievement is no longer fulfilling or even from the very beginning, the state of unfulfillment, which is the normally going state actually goes with you.

And because you're not, you have not become free of ego at all. In fact, the ego probably has become more entrenched as you were engaged in your battle towards that goal. And so you're even, when you achieve the goal, you're even more deeply entrenched in the ego.

Wow. And the, when you encounter obstacles and you're not driven by the ego, then you recognize it as an obstacle, but you face it in that state of alert attention instead of the state of reactivity. So no obstacle is regarded as an enemy.

And by that, you can tell, if you regard obstacles as enemies, then you know that there's ego behind what you're doing. But if you're able to simply face an obstacle in that clear seeing, just face it, become alert and still, and see what the problem is or what this person is doing. And you're not, if it's a person, you're not, you're never dwelling on, let's say a person brought up something and did something to stop you or something perhaps not even intending to, but something becomes an obstacle in your path.

So you don't, you don't criticize it. You don't complain about what this person did either to the person or to yourself. It's all ego.

You immediately look at what the possibilities are instead of dwelling on what's gone wrong in the situation and complaining to yourself, to others, perhaps just in your mind or out aloud to others, complaining about this and why this is so bad. You immediately, now it implies continuously complete acceptance of the present moment. That's always part of a non-ego way of doing things.

You're always aligned with the present moment. And even if something unforeseen happens, you immediately align yourself with the present moment. This is what is.

And then you see what are the possibilities now. You're not complaining about what is. Another very clear sign that the ego is at work in you.

You are complaining about another person or a situation that you encounter. Uselessly, not complaining because your words are going to change something. No, you're complaining because the ego gets strengthened to complaining and the ego believes unconsciously and erroneously that by complaining about something, you can change the situation.

If you just shout loud enough, then something's going to change. Let's see the erroneous assumption, the unconscious erroneous assumption of every ego. It's a bit like you're stuck at a childlike state.

The little child just screams loud enough. Then the parents are going to run and do something about it. And many adults still have that in them and it's become part of their ego.

So the louder they complain, they believe the more quickly help will come. Of course, the opposite is true. The more you complain, the stronger your ego gets and the more you ultimately block yourself.

So when you're ego motivated, the greatest obstacle on your path ultimately is not other people or external situations. You yourself are the greatest obstacle to where you want to get to, but you don't know that. So this is how still millions of people still operate in that way.

And even collective entities, companies and so on often operate in that way. And occasionally, as I said before, occasionally they may achieve their goal, but they never get a sense of finally having arrived and made it because then immediately they have to project some other goal or something goes wrong with it. And most importantly, the journey, which your whole life is that, your whole life is a journey.

And the journey is not pleasant when ego is operating. You're not enjoying the journey in your desperate need to arrive. The future is more important than the present moment says the ego by implication.

In your desperate need to arrive, you spoil the entire journey. And also then the power that is available to you, which is the power of life itself, the power of consciousness is greatly reduced. Yes, through sheer effort you can still achieve, but it's not an enjoyable task at all.

So if you are non-ego motivated, if presence operates through you, then obstacles actually become in most cases very quickly either circumvented or transmuted into helpful factors. Like a person who comes towards you with perhaps angry with you because you're trying to do something that this person doesn't agree with. Ego would react and therefore amplify the other person's unconsciousness and your own.

And presence will simply look at that and not complain and just see what the possibilities are, point out what can be done, not dwell and what cannot be done. So the ego does not transform another person's behavior into their egoic behavior, into their identity. So when presence operates, obstacles are not only not amplified, they are very often dissolved much more quickly or become unimportant through the power of presence.

So there's an enormous difference, but not only that, although it is true to say that whenever you're engaged in any endeavor, especially creating something new, obstacles will appear on your path. It's just in the nature of life that wherever you want to go, you find occasionally life is blocking your path by presenting you with challenges. Life and challenges are virtually go together.

You can't conceive of life without challenges. Every life form is continuously challenged and that's good. Another thing that happens when you're present, of course, then yes, you do still encounter obstacles, but they're not amplified, but you also encounter very often helpful things happening suddenly that you could not have foreseen that sometimes seem to be due to pure chance or due to just some luck or some helpful coincidence or synchronistic encounter or event.

And that's when that happens, you know you're on the right path because you get the feeling that something is supporting you as a great as an energy behind what you do that is supporting you. And that's once you can sense that, then you know you're now aligned with the power of the present moment, with the power of now, with the power of presence. And then it gets much easier because once you can sense the energy stream of presence, then you are riding like it carries you.

And then sometimes great things can be achieved that you could not have achieved as just a simple person because you have transcended your personal sense of self and something far greater than the person is now operating through you. So one more thing, you cannot necessarily always very clearly divide whether an action is motivated by the deeper, comes out of the deeper presence or whether an action is ego motivated. It is possible that the initial impulse to do something might have arisen out of presence.

But when you start working towards your goal, it is possible that ego will come in at some point and try to take over. All of the initial impulse was good. It came from a deeper non-egoic place.

But ego can come in at any point and suddenly try to take you over again. And then the ego will want to run the show. And so you have to be really very alert so that you detect what energy is behind your words and actions, what the energy is, whether you're reactive or not.

So that when you're alert enough, you can get feedback quickly from events and circumstances. But to bring it all back to just the most single, the most simple thing is to say, beware when the future has become more important than the present, which of course is the fundamental error of the ego. And it's the one thing that makes life really dysfunctional and diminishes the quality of your doing in the present moment.

And by diminishing the quality, it also takes away the enjoyment of what you're doing in the present moment and thereby the enjoyment of life. Or it's really, the activity becomes completely pointless if it takes away the enjoyment of life.

[Speaker 3] (1:17:58 - 1:18:09)

Very helpful. Thank you, Eckhart. We now have a caller, Jeff, who is going to join our broadcast and ask you a question.

[Speaker 11] (1:18:10 - 1:19:29)

Jeff, welcome. Thank you, Tammy. Hello, Eckhart.

Hi, Jeff. Where are you? I'm in Phoenix, Arizona.

Oh, right. Okay. So many people approach conscious manifestation with something specific in mind, a clear vision of what they'd like to create.

And you've given the examples of a socially conscious business, a healing center and a work of art, perhaps a book. But some of us, and maybe it's many of us, don't have a clear vision or a specific calling yet, especially if in the process of awakening, the structures of our life have begun to crumble and we're no longer sure who we are in the world. What we do know, other than that the old ways are no longer working, is that we're hungry to live a life that makes sense, a life that's a natural expression of our deep self.

We're just not sure how to get there from where we are. So how do we manifest a life that aligns our inner and outer purpose, a life of clarity and direction, a life where being and doing are one?

[Speaker 1] (1:19:31 - 1:32:05)

Thank you. Thank you. Very good.

I have a feeling your question may have some relevance to your personal life circumstances. That's possible, yes. The universe has two movements and that is reflected also in every human being.

One, we could call that the outward movement into manifestation. It's the movement creation of more life, more and more complex life forms, the growth of consciousness, the growth of the universe, life on this planet, how all millions of years gradually, the life forms on this planet have become more conscious and more complex. And the entire universe is in the process of continuously creating.

It manifests. Universe delights in manifesting. So that every human being also has that movement within them because you may often notice within yourself the desire to create, to contribute, and so on.

But the universe has another movement that's equally important in that it wants to return home to its source. The two are, there's almost a kind of tension between the two. There is the desire of the universe to come to a place of full awakening to its own reality.

It's the return journey, I call it sometimes. You have the outward journeys into creativity and manifestation. And there's a return journey into being.

And every human being has these two polarities within. One could call them the doing mode, the universe loves to do, and the humans love to do, and the being mode. You also want to just be.

And in a person's life, it would not be a fruitful life to be continuously engaged in wanting to manifest things in this world. I must do this, I must do that, I must create. There comes a time, there come time periods in a person's life when the return journey becomes more important than the outward journey.

When the awakening into being, into who you are in your essence, is more important than creating anything out in the world of form. So it's important to realize when we talk about manifesting, it does not always necessarily apply to your life. There are time periods when manifesting is good and called for, and then you must take up, you must fulfill your task as a co-creator with the universe so that the universe can create through you, so you must not shrink from that task.

But there are other times when something else becomes more important, and that is the return journey, awaken to who you are in the essence of your being and go into that more fully. And for a while, creating outward forms becomes not very important. You just do enough to survive in the world of form, but something else has become more important.

And for a while, you don't need to manifest and create because you are called upon to be engaged in something that perhaps one could call even more foundational than manifesting and creating, and that's being, to awaken to the being that you are, which is inseparable. The essence of who you are is inseparable from the essence of the universe itself. So when you feel this, the journey home, as I sometimes call it, when you feel this call in yourself, you must respond also and not disregard this call and say, oh, I must continue to manifest.

I need to do this and do that. No, there comes a time when doing becomes of little importance, and that is a time for going into being. And you need both.

There are other times when the being mode and the doing have to be in some kind of balance. So even when you do create, the skill is the art of living is not to lose yourself in the outward journey completely, but the art of living is also not to lose yourself in the homework journey completely. That's true.

By refusing to do anything anymore, for example, by just saying, oh, I can't be bothered with any, I just want to go with it. You can't lose yourself completely, no. But there is a time in a person's life when being becomes vitally important, much more important than doing.

And this may be the case with you. I've had years, many years in my life when I was involved with very little doing because the homework journey was more important. And if the homework journey is foundational, it's the journey without time into the timeless dimension of yourself.

A journey without distance, one could say. So you probably know in the news in the New Testament, there's the story about Mary and Martha. I don't know, not everybody these days, I can't assume anymore that everybody has read those things nowadays, but in the New Testament, Jesus visits the house of two sisters, Mary and Martha.

They invited him and there are other people present too. And Jesus sits there and starts talking. And of course, whenever he talked, he would talk about the essence of the kingdom of heaven that is within you and so on.

So he started talking. Mary, the sister whose name was Mary, sat at the feet of Jesus, listening attentively and going, ah, and Martha was busy in the kitchen preparing the meal. Oh, so much to do.

And then finally Martha got angry and she went to Jesus and said, can't please tell Mary to help me in the kitchen. I've got so much to do. I'm doing it all by myself.

Tell her to help me. What's she just sitting there? And Jesus said, Martha, Martha, only one thing is needed.

And Mary has chosen that one thing. Now that's interesting. What he is pointing to, the one, only one thing is needed, which means, the way I translate it, one thing is foundational.

And the foundation is the being mode. So if the foundation for your life is not the doing mode, you need it. The universe wants it, but that's not the foundation for your life.

The foundation is the return journey to go into being. And when Jesus says, only one thing is needed, he is saying that there's only one thing that is foundational and of absolute importance. And that is to be rooted in the being mode and to find your essence identity.

So that is, these two people, Martha and Mary, symbolize the doing mode and the being, the outward journey into manifestation, into doing, into activity, into creativity, creation in the world of form. And Mary symbolizes the being, the importance of going deep within to the essence of who you are and becoming conscious of that and thereby become deeply rooted in that. And that is the awakening to who you are in your essence.

And when the call comes in your life, then it is, would be a grave mistake not to obey it and to say, oh no, I must continue to be completely active in that, in that, in that. And sometimes you know that the call has come when life is taking things away from you. Sometimes things collapse around you.

Things go wrong with the structures around you, collapse or dissolve and something is taken away from you. And that very often means this is not necessarily, sometimes it just comes on impulse, but yes, it very often means that this is the time to go deeper, to not be concerned so much with the world of form, but more can be concerned with the dimension of being. So you must respond to this call that is vitally important.

And then the time may come once you are rooted in being, then from there, something can flow through you and become creative in the world of form. And then you can continue in the outward dimension of creating. So that really is, you need to be alert and have the wisdom to know whether it is a time for doing or whether it is a time for being, but there's no absolute separation of call between the two because if, let's say, let us assume that for you, this is a time for going into the being mode more deeply.

When you come out of that and you resume some kind of outward activity, become creative again, it is likely that you will not lose yourself anymore in the activity, but the activity, you will, because you've gone deeply within, the activity will be, you will be rooted in the essence of who you are. And from there, the impulse to do something will arise and it will not come from ego anymore. And then you can have a balance in your life between doing and being.

Nobody has a complete balance. Everybody's put a little bit more towards being or doing. Or another example, of course, before I finish with this, it's a little bit connected sometimes also to a person's age.

It's obviously a 20-year-old is less likely to be called to go into being than a 90-year-old, but it's not necessarily dependent on age because a 20-year-old could encounter certain very adverse circumstances early on in life. Sometimes even a child can encounter very adverse circumstances that could force them to go into the being mode at a very early age. Those are more exceptional cases.

So I could carry on talking about this for a long time because it is perhaps the most important and the most fascinating subject there is for human beings to know. Thank you very much.

[Speaker 3] (1:32:09 - 1:32:24)

Eckhart, we have another written question here. This person would like to know, could you please help me understand how these teachings on conscious manifestation relate to the spiritual teaching, thy will be done?

[Speaker 1] (1:32:27 - 1:42:47)

Oh, okay. Sometimes you find that, especially spiritual people, people who have a spiritual path and so on, they find it hard to reconcile taking action with the state of just acceptance or surrender. And some of them remain in a kind of state of paralysis for many years because they can't figure out what the universe wants me to do.

So they know they maybe feel called upon to do something, to act, but they don't know what. I'm not talking about people who are going into the being mode. Those are periods of time when doing becomes relatively unimportant.

But there are people who are in a state of semi-paralysis, so to speak, because they are waiting for some message from the universe or something coming into their lives that tells them what it is that they're supposed to do. Because they believe they can't initiate anything because that might come from the ego. And that perhaps applies to quite a few people.

Thy will be done really should apply to the present moment. So what the acceptance or surrender to the is-ness of the present moment so that you have no reactivity against the is-ness of the present moment is, I would suggest, is what these words point to. The possibility of living in a state of non-resistance life.

And of course, life manifests always and only in the present moment. So thy will be done. What this thy refers to is up to you.

If you are theistically inclined, thy refers to God. Or if you are somewhat more just kind of spiritually inclined, some people could say the universe. And that can be interpreted in many ways, in whatever way life manifests around you.

Or the deeper intelligence that underlies all phenomena in the universe. So the sense that there is an intelligence that pervades all phenomena in the universe, every life form and everything in the universe. You only see what you see with your senses is only the surface appearance of things.

And behind that is a vast intelligence operating. That is the organizing principle behind the world of form and so on. So to be aligned with life is to be aligned with the present moment.

And that really is the key. And then if you are, in a state of inaction because of, not because you feel deeply called to go within, then there's no question here that you should follow that call. But if you feel there's already a connectedness with being in you, perhaps you've already feel you are connected with being, but you're reluctant to do because you don't know exactly what to do.

I would recommend that you, whatever it is that's the most obvious thing around you, observe that and see if you can, whatever gives you the most sense of aliveness or joy, if there's anything, to do it more fully and more completely so that you can get rid of this idea that what is it that I'm meant to be doing? The clearest answer to that is, wherever you are at this moment, that's where you're meant to be right now. Whatever you're doing at this moment is exactly what you're meant to be doing in your life.

By living in that way, you let go of this underlying inner resistance that otherwise accompanies you wherever you go and whatever you do, there's this little voice that speaks a lot or it's just an unspoken voice, so to speak, that says, do I really want to be here or am I meant to be somewhere else? Or when you're doing something, there's a little thing in your mind that says, should I really be doing, I shouldn't really be doing this, I should be doing something else, but I don't know what it is. That's, you need to be very much aware of that because that means you're not practicing what this dictum, spiritual dictum, thy will be done points to, which is to recognize that you need to fully be aligned with the present moment so that there's nothing left in you that tells you, oh, I don't really want to be doing this.

It must be something else. And often it's the case that people think this isn't big enough or this isn't important enough. I'm waiting for the big thing, the big break.

I'm waiting for something else. And by doing that, by being trapped in this mind pattern, they cannot be fully present with what they're doing right now. And that becomes a great obstacle because it's often the case, if you're fully present with what you're doing right now, even if it doesn't seem very important, it is more likely to deepen or to become amplified and become bigger and larger and affect more people and grow into something that you couldn't have conceived of before, simply because you gave your fullest attention to it.

Simple example, there could be many examples. Let's say you want to be a great actor, actress, actor. So you're trying to get a, you go to LA and you go to auditions and you have the big, in the meantime, if you're ego dominated, you haven't made it yet.

And so the ego would normally be not happy with anything else, except the thing that the big thing that you want to get to. So then like 90% of the actors living in LA get jobs in restaurants. So if you go to LA, in many restaurants, almost every waiter or waitress is an actor out of a job for the time being, but they're waiting for the break and that's fine.

But if in the meantime, if they could be giving their total complete attention to the doing of the present moment, the people they are serving, to give themselves fully to them, they would give their full attention, their presence, instead of being in the back of their minds, I'd rather be somewhere else. I'd rather be doing something else. That's an unspoken assumption in many humans.

I'd rather be doing something else. And that prevents you from realizing the power of presence, the power of the present moment, keeps you trapped in ego. So if you could give your fullest attention to what you're doing now, even if it's not the big thing that you have in mind, it could become the big thing, perhaps because you're so present, somebody says, oh, I'm doing an audition tomorrow, or come, just an example, because he's impressed by your presence.

Many miracles are possible when you bring your fullest attention to whatever it is you're doing now. So it's often a good thing to start with doing more fully what you're doing now. And even it might be something completely different that arises, but by being more fully in the doing now, the power can flow through you much more easily.

You're not blocking the power. So to be fully aligned with the present moment is the real, the meaning of thy will be done. So it's just wonderful.

So use it in whatever your life situation is. Where am I supposed to be right here now? What am I supposed to be doing?

Right now, I'm supposed to be doing this. I don't know about tomorrow, but right now I'm supposed to be doing this, and this is what I'm doing to the fullest of my ability, giving it my full attention without any resistance.

[Speaker 3] (1:42:50 - 1:43:01)

Finally, Eckhart, we have one more live caller who's going to join us. We have Dean who is ready to join our question and answer session. Dean, welcome.

[Speaker 4] (1:43:02 - 1:43:51)

Thank you, Tammy. And thank you, Eckhart, so much for the work that you've done. It's truly changed my life, and it's just such an honor to be here.

So really, thank you. But yeah, so my question is, let's say that there is something that you really want to do. It feels aligned with your evolutionary purpose, and somehow you just feel that it specifically won't work out.

I was wondering, how do you tell if that's your ego, trying to aggrandize yourself with this great thing that you think that you should be doing, or that it might really not work? Perhaps, possibly, what if you're meant to do it and fail to learn a lesson? So I was just wondering if you could say a bit more about that.

[Speaker 1] (1:43:52 - 1:46:24)

Okay, well, well, it is, of course, possible that the ego may have certain ideas that are totally realistic. That is possible. Just, I mean, to give an absurd example, if I had a desire to, my ego said, oh, I want to be a great skier, or I want to be, I want to get the gold medal in the next Olympics in whatever it is, swimming, boxing.

I want to be the heavyweight champion of the world. So totally absurd. I could have, I was giving a very absurd example, but sometimes people have totally unrealistic expectations.

And then, of course, no matter how much you practice, if nothing is going to happen, you're condemning yourself to frustration. Because in the absurd example I gave, obviously, considering my age and my physical constitution, it's not totally impossible. Or anything else, that's one thing.

The older you get, the more limited, to some extent, you become. Nor am I going to be a great pianist anymore. It's too late for that.

So, nor would I want to. But I don't, I may want to question you when you say, I think you said, you know it's not going to work, but you still want to do it. Now, is that because in your particular case, is there something that is truly very unrealistic?

Or is it simply certain doubts in your mind that telling you, either you may not succeed, or certain things in your mind that tell you that this isn't going to work. Is that a realistic way of looking at it? Or is it simply a mind pattern in you that operates that says it probably won't work?

Is that a mind pattern? Or is it a realistic way of looking at things? Okay.

[Speaker 4] (1:46:25 - 1:47:22)

So I guess the thing would be realistic to go for, but it just felt that the path that I was on was not going to work for me with the steps that I was taking. It still feels like the overall goal is something that could be attainable. But the individual steps that I was going towards, I could just tell that it wasn't right for me.

And I still went through it and I ended up trying and it didn't work out. And I'm still like hoping that at some point I can get through and eventually achieve this goal. But I was confused when I was trying because it seemed like, yes, I should continue down this path, but I know that I'm going to stumble.

And I couldn't tell what to do because of that.

[Speaker 1] (1:47:25 - 1:47:49)

So you already took steps towards it, some steps. And at some point you encountered obstacles and then you decided that it wasn't right for you or did you attempt to go beyond these obstacles?

[Speaker 4] (1:47:51 - 1:48:53)

Eventually what I ended up doing was just trying a different way of going about it. But it seemed like such a great opportunity at the time. And I was really enthusiastic and I just was so inspired to try this.

And it seemed like it could work, but as soon as I put it out there, the doubts started coming in and I was like, wait, this isn't the right individual step, even if in the long run it might actually end up working out. I am, for lack of a better word, like destined to fail right now. And it was the strangest feeling because normally when I get really inspired or enthusiastic and want to actualize something in my life, it feels aligned, but then it just didn't work.

And I just knew that it wasn't going to and I couldn't reconcile that.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:55 - 1:57:46)

Right. Well, it is sometimes the case that one might have an idea in one's mind of where one wants to be or who one wants to be in the world of form without realizing that the journey is not something that you would actually enjoy. There was a time when I didn't know what to do and I applied for certain jobs here and there.

And because I thought, oh, that might be nice when I do now be, I can make a good living without realizing that those things would have been totally impossible and absurd for me to do. They were out of alignment with who I am and my inner being. I once applied to go into accountancy because I didn't know what else to do.

I had already graduated and didn't know what else to do. And I applied, I once got an interview at a bank in the city of London. City of London means financial district and it was a merchant bank.

And I had a good result in my finals. So they invited me for an interview and I thought, oh, merchant bank, that must be so great because they make a lot of money and they have a great life. I could see myself as a merchant banker, not realizing I would have been, I mean, I don't relate to numbers at all and I would not have enjoyed a moment of it, but I had in my, there was an image in my mind, oh, that would be a great thing to be, but I would not enjoy the journey at all.

And fortunately, of course, I didn't get the job. And even academic job, I applied to once to be a lecturer, lecturer means assistant professor at a university after graduating. And again, was invited to an interview.

In that time, I thought I was still, my intellectual path was where I was going, pursuing my intellectual path. But in the interview, there were five or six professors present and I started talking and what I was really talking about, it turned into kind of spiritual teaching. I didn't know that yet.

And finally, one of the professors said, okay, thanks for coming and now tell us, what do you really want to do? That was a wonderful awakening question because I suddenly realized this is not what I really want to do. And that's the question to ask yourself, what this professor asked me, what do you really want to do?

It's not an image of what you want to be one day, but what do you want to be engaged in doing? Because it's all a journey. It's a journey.

If you can enjoy the steps you're taking, then that's the right journey for you. If you cannot enjoy the steps that are taking you to your final destination, that destination is not a good one for you. You will not even be happy when you get there and you will miss the whole journey will not be a pleasant one.

So perhaps the most important question when you want to manifest something by able to enjoy the steps to watch because it's all steps, amen, which is always in the present moment. And if you can enjoy the steps and if you can enjoy them, then you can also cope with the obstacles that arise while you travel there. Then that's fine.

You don't need to, there's enjoyment. You don't, you're not discouraged by the obstacles. Now, if all you ever encounter on your journey is one obstacle after another, after another, after another, after another, then there could be a sign that it is not for you.

But it's very unlikely that you will be enjoying the steps anyway, if you encounter one obstacle after another, after another, after another. So you need to ask yourself, is that, would I really, will I enjoy the journey? And if you enjoy the journey, even if you never arrive, it doesn't matter because you enjoyed the journey.

Let's say you want to become a pianist or whatever. Even if you don't perform at the greatest concert halls, at some point you might, but even if you don't perform at the greatest concert halls of the world, you love the music. You love every moment of it.

You don't, I'm not so fond of the, what people call defer, I don't know, there's an expression, I can't remember, defer satisfaction or something like that, where you work for something and you defer the satisfaction because you have a goal. I don't think that's the best way to live. You have to be able to, to enjoy what you're doing at the present moment.

You can't enjoy it, then perhaps you can learn to enjoy it. Let's say you're studying for some subject or you want to, let's say you want to write a book and do you enjoy the writing process? Yes, you do.

When the flow is there, you enjoy it deeply. That's a good sign. Will you encounter obstacles?

Yes, every writer does. There may be external obstacles. Maybe it's not quiet enough where you live or they don't have quite enough time or there may be inner obstacles.

Every writer, even great inspired writers find that sometimes they get blocked and the flow isn't there. Those are obstacles that arise in every writer. But so then you surrender to this moment where the block is there, you surrender to that, still set aside a space in writing.

That at some point the flow comes back. And so you enjoy the doing. And even if you, if the book doesn't get published, you enjoy it or maybe just a few people read it.

When I was writing The Power of Now, I had no idea how many people would want to read it. And I said to several people, I know I have to write this and I'm doing it. And I enjoyed the writing.

Sometimes the flow wasn't there, but a lot of the time it was there. And if I don't publish it, I'll sell tomatoes. I don't know why I said that.

I'd say I'd become a tomato seller. It just came into my head and I said it several times. I probably would have done.

And there would have been nothing wrong with selling tomatoes. I would have enjoyed. And perhaps the book would have reached 20 people, 50 people and maybe helped them a lot.

Would have been great too. But because I enjoyed the journey. So ask yourself if you can enjoy the journey, then the rest will be good, fine.

And then perhaps you make another attempt, start again and see if you can enjoy every step, including the obstacles. The obstacles you may not enjoy, but you can accept and then transform them by your acceptance. Circumvent them, transmute them and so on.

It's all, it's a lovely adventure. Don't take it too seriously. It's just a play of form.

It's not who you essentially are. The foundational is the being, it's the return journey. So to be rooted in the essence of who you are is the foundation.

The rest is just, is the icing on the cake is the world of form, the world of manifestation. So if you don't take it too seriously, it gets much easier. But if you're looking for yourself in some kind of achievement out there, then it becomes deadly serious because you're not going to find yourself.

And very frustrating. It's not only serious, but frustrating. So it's, there's a playful thing.

Yes, intense energy can be there, but it's not deadly serious. It's playful. That's what I recommend.

[Speaker 4] (1:57:47 - 1:58:21)

Thank you. Yeah, I guess I hadn't considered before you were saying this, that when the obstacle actually did come up, it still was actually enjoyable. And I think that the problem that I have is that I sort of have this image in my mind that any sort of an obstacle means that I'm on the wrong path and that I'm doing something wrong, but it actually still felt weirdly right.

And like, I'm realizing that as you're saying it, that it still was enjoyable, even though it was a block.

[Speaker 1] (1:58:21 - 1:58:28)

Exactly, yes. So I wish you well and have another go.

[Speaker 4] (1:58:31 - 1:58:34)

Okay, well, thank you so much, Eckhart.

[Speaker 3] (1:58:37 - 1:58:43)

Eckhart, as we conclude this session, maybe we can spend a few moments in presence together.

[Speaker 1] (1:58:44 - 1:58:49)

Yes, very good idea. Starting now.

[Speaker 13] (1:59:40 - 1:59:40)

Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (1:59:49 - 2:00:41)

Hello, everyone. Welcome to our Conscious Manifestation 2020 live question and answer session with Eckhart Tolle. I'm so glad that you're here with us.

Again, my name's Tammy Simon. I'm the founder of Sounds True, and it is a delight to be your host for this session. Eckhart is broadcasting from British Columbia, while I and the Sounds True team are all joining from our homes in the Boulder, Colorado area.

We've received hundreds of questions from course participants, and we're fortunate that some course participants are joining with us here to ask their questions live of Eckhart Tolle. Now, please join me in welcoming Eckhart.

[Speaker 1] (2:00:42 - 2:06:41)

Eckhart. Thank you, Tammy, and welcome, everybody. I'm just wondering if it would be possible for me to see more people on my screen.

At the moment, I'm seeing Tammy and two, one person, I forgot your name, and a man with a dog. So I don't know if technically this can be arranged so that I can see more people. And in the meantime, we can be still and become aware of the present moment, become aware of the present moment, not only the manifested form of the present moment, but also the unmanifested essence of the present moment.

Those are the two dimensions, the manifested, what you can see and hear and so on, sense perception, thoughts, emotions, and underlying that, the present moment itself, which is the unmanifested essence. That unmanifested that we call here the present moment is actually timeless and is inseparable from who you are. So at the deepest level, one could say that you are the present moment.

And what that means, of course, is that you are the consciousness, the timeless space or consciousness within which all manifestations of life unfold. It gives rise to all manifestations. So when we manifest, the manifestations arise out of the unmanifested.

It's important not to lose touch with the unmanifested, which is the stillness, the conscious awareness or presence, because if you don't, if you're not rooted in that, you're lost in the world of manifestation. And then no, nothing that you manifest can free you or make you happy or liberate you or tell you who you are. So that's always important to bear in mind when we talk about manifesting.

The Buddha actually said, I'm not able to quote it verbatim, but it's a famous sutra. The Buddha said, there is the unborn, the uncreated, the unmanifested. If there were not the unborn, the uncreated, and the unmanifested, there would be no escape from the born, the created and the manifested.

In other words, you would be lost completely in the world. Wonderful sutra saying of the Buddha. I'm sure more or less literally he said that.

So something to remember. So let's see. Let's come back to the technical dimension of the manifested on my screen here.

Can we manifest more participants so that I can see them on the screen? That's our first challenge of manifestation.

[Speaker 3] (2:06:41 - 2:06:58)

Eckhart, you and I are going to have to work together on this one as co-creators here, which is the top right corner of the Zoom window on your screen. Please click where it says gallery view.

[Speaker 1] (2:06:59 - 2:08:06)

Oh, okay. I'm getting, I'm on my way to the gallery view. Just a moment.

There. Huh. Wonderful to see you all.

I assume that I'm seeing all of you. You're all live and present, except Travis, who is there with his dog, but he's not moving, but that's okay. And I see a nice landscape.

Diego Castellanos has a very nice landscape there. Everybody else is moving about.

[Speaker 3] (2:08:11 - 2:08:14)

Are you ready, Eckhart, for our first questioner?

[Speaker 1] (2:08:16 - 2:08:16)

Yes.

[Speaker 3] (2:08:18 - 2:08:28)

Okay, we have Celia joining us from Portugal. Celia, welcome, and please go ahead and share your question with Eckhart.

[Speaker 12] (2:08:29 - 2:08:38)

Hello, thank you for having me. It's an honor, Eckhart, you have shined such a light on my path. Thank you so much.

[Speaker 1] (2:08:38 - 2:08:40)

Thank you, thank you very much.

[Speaker 12] (2:08:42 - 2:09:26)

So my question is, if I'm honest, what I really want to manifest is of a spiritual nature, and I find this is the same for many on this path. But these spiritual intentions are not so easy to simulate in terms of feeling like we have already received or to visualize. Can you address how manifestation can be applied to spiritual yearnings, or is manifestation only to be applied to practical purposes while we work on our spiritual practice?

[Speaker 1] (2:09:27 - 2:41:11)

Thank you, thank you, good question. One important thing to be aware of is that you don't make the mistake of regarding spiritual realization, or being enlightened, or being egoless, or being in permanent conscious connectedness with source, whatever you want to call it, not to regard that as a state to be achieved. It's very easy to fall into that error of wanting to become fully awakened, for example.

And then you might say, this is part of the question, is there something I can do perhaps to manifest this awakened version of myself? So, if you have this intention or this image in your mind, you want to arrive at a fully awakened state, whatever else you want to call it, that will become a great obstacle, because spiritual awakening, or the egoless state, or whatever it is, cannot be achieved in the future. You would be creating an image that you then pursue, wanting to reach or achieve, and you won't achieve it, as long as you have an image of yourself that you want to achieve, you're striving towards that.

In other words, you make it into a goal, like everything else, things that you want to achieve in this world. But the one thing that you will not achieve by making it into a goal is this state of awakening, or being fully yourself is another way of putting it, being, realizing the essence of who you are. So, you will be striving away from the only place where it is accessible to you, and that's in the vertical dimension of the present moment.

So, for everything else, manifestation practices can be helpful, but not for realizing who you are, because you don't achieve anything, you don't attain anything by spiritual awakening, that it's not an achievement, it's not an attainment, it's a realization, that means it's already here. So, if you look to the future for it, you miss the fact that it's already here, and you don't realize that that's the place where you haven't been looking, because you're looking to the future, and this is why I'm saying it becomes a great obstacle. If you look to the future for enlightenment, fulfillment, whatever it may be, that becomes the obstacle, and you won't find it and you will be striving.

Even you might be engaged in arduous spiritual practices, very determined to awaken, but you have in your mind a future goal that you want to achieve, you might not call it that, but underlying your practice is this assumption of arriving at a future goal, and that is the greatest obstacle to that realization, because what is future? Future is basically inseparable from thought, because the future exists only in your mind as a thought form. If any, I'd be very happy to listen to anybody who wants to prove me wrong, because then he would, somebody would come to me and say, here's a future, I have discovered it.

So far, nobody has come to me and said, here's a future, you are wrong, the future is more than just a thought form, and I don't think anybody will come. So now that means if you're looking to the future, you have a thought form that you are pursuing of yourself as the fully awakened one or whatever term you use. So you are pursuing a thought form in the future, which the inseparable future and thought, and then you reach the end of this incarnation and you become frustrated because you haven't found it.

Why not? Because the thought form or the future, the future self, prevented you from discovering what's already here, discovering who or what you already are. So it's a complete, it's a reversal of normal practice is yes, you need time for everything in this world in order to do this.

Any action unfolds in time for anything you pursue, you want to acquire something, achieve something, become good at something, all these things require time, yes. But the one thing that does not only not require time, but the one thing to which time is the obstacle is that self-realization. For everything else, you need time and that's fine.

But to find yourself, you don't need time. That is an amazing realization. The Buddha also had to learn that he didn't know that when he started off.

When the Buddha started off, he realized the unsatisfactory nature of normal human existence. He saw there's so much suffering and then you die. So he saw the unsatisfactory nature and said, there must be a transcendent dimension, there must be something beyond.

So for many years, he practiced seeking to find enlightenment, transcendence. And he practiced the most arduous disciplines with great teachers. He almost killed himself with the spiritual practice.

And after several years of spiritual practice, he still wasn't any further to his goal of enlightenment. And then he said, well, I've had enough of that. That by the way, is not a literal quote from the scriptures.

This is my free translation. He said, I've had enough. And he stopped his spiritual practice and he sat under three.

And then that was the big moment. He sat under three and suddenly the realization happened, enlightenment. What does that mean?

All doing came to a stop. He realized through the doing, he cannot achieve being. Being needs to be discovered, but not achieved.

So no matter what he did, he didn't achieve it because you cannot achieve it. You cannot achieve enlightenment. You can discover it.

It's already here. And when he sat under the tree, all doing came to a stop. All future came to a halt.

There was no more future. All seeking stopped. Seeking for an enlightened version of myself, basically.

That stopped. And then it happened. The realization came to him.

And that was the moment of enlightenment. So there's a deep lesson in that. Now, of course, some people say that the Buddha's search through spiritual practice was unnecessary.

You could say that. If he had realized before he started his arduous spiritual practice, if he had realized that that was unnecessary, not only unnecessary, that it was ultimately misleading, then he could have sat under the tree immediately. Okay, that's an interesting perspective on it.

But one could also say that he needed to go through that in order to realize the futility of it and then give up. The surrender only happened as a result of being frustrated with spiritual practice. So who knows whether one could say it wasn't necessary at all, or he had to go through it.

I have a way of putting this. And that is, the question is my answer to the question, do you need time for spiritual realization? Do you need time to wake up spiritually?

And my answer is, you need time until you realize that you don't need time. So you come to a point of the vertical dimension suddenly opens up. So one cannot really start.

Some spiritual teachers do that. They tell people there's nothing you can do. There's nothing you need to do about waking up.

You either wake up or not, or discover who you are. Very often it's not very helpful. It doesn't leave people.

And so I think the doing, it's helpful to do, to want to achieve this or that. Every human being needs to arrive at a point where the doing is realized as ultimately not leading to the ultimate goal or realization. But you may have to become frustrated several times, quite a few times before you realize that no amount of doing will ultimately lead to the realization of who you are.

In fact, the doing is the obstacle. But sometimes you need to go through that state of doing to fully realize that. So to pursue a state that you want to achieve is not to be encouraged, but to realize that there's nothing to achieve.

And who you are in your essence is already complete, full, perfect. In your essence, there's nothing that you could add to who you are. You're already one with God, to use that term, one with source, the source of all life.

You're already one with that. On the level of manifestation, there are many things where you could improve your life as this manifested being that you are temporarily. You can learn new things, explore new things, achieve, get, obtain.

And then of course it leaves you again. Nothing stays with you in the world of manifestation. It comes and then it goes.

So there's nothing wrong with doing and achieving and obtaining, but for realization, it's not helpful. It's a hindrance. So we come to the point of where doing and being are reconciled in yourself.

To reconcile in yourself the dimension of being with the dimension of doing. And that is the ultimate art of living, we could call it, that we need to learn or master is a reconciliation of these two dimensions in yourself. If you let go of all doing, then an important dimension is missing in your life.

It has happened to some people, some people who have had sudden realization. So they just lost all interest in doing anything. To some extent, it happened to me too.

For a few years, I lost interest in doing, and then I realized I'm still here and the universe requires me to do certain things. It requires me to do certain things. I could feel it and there was a pull and finally I had to do.

Now, the last part of my answer perhaps is, is there anything, any kind of affirmation? Could that possibly be helpful in realizing this essence of who you are? Could there be any affirmation that could be used as a pointer into the vertical dimension?

And yes, you could use certain affirmations. They don't express the truth, but they can be a pointer. For example, there was an Indian spiritual teacher, Nisargadatta Mahavash, he had a little store where he sold cigarettes.

Not karmically the most beneficial job, but that's what he did. And he went to a spiritual teacher and the spiritual teacher said to him, you are not a person, you're consciousness. Sorry, he wasn't highly educated, but he listened carefully.

And then for quite a look, don't remember for how long, several months or a year or two, often in his mind, the thought would come, you are conscious, I am consciousness. I am consciousness. And this little thing brought about his awakening.

Not the words, but the words were pointers. The important thing is what the words point to. So the words, I am consciousness, what comes after the words is the realization.

It's not in the words. So I am consciousness. And then you stop, the thought comes to an end.

And when this thought, I am consciousness comes to an end, the realization that I am consciousness is suddenly there. And in that sense, a verbal pointer can for a little while, if you don't overdo it, be useful. I am consciousness.

Or you could say, if you want to have a little bit of a link with creativity, the infinite creative power of the universe is within me and one with me, because that is the unconditioned consciousness. The infinite creative power of the universe is in me and one with me. But then you have to stop the thought.

Don't carry on continuously, or you can say it a few times, but the important thing is to stop the thought. Then the thought is used as a pointer, not as some kind of explanation to believe in. There's no point in, I believe that the infinite creative power of the universe is within me and I'm one with it, doesn't help you unless it becomes a deeper realization.

The realization comes when the thought stops. You need to leave the pointer behind after you have used the pointer, you go beyond the pointer. And then comes a moment of just silence, but it's alive, stillness, alive, spacious stillness.

And then there's the realization. And then you can sense it, the truth of what the pointer said, you realize the truth of it, and then you don't need it anymore. And so that's a little bit like one could say, spiritual practice can also have that function.

You need to know all spiritual practice needs to take you to the end of the spiritual practice. It needs to take you to the end of thought. And at the end of thought, you don't fall below thought, you rise above thought.

At the end of thought, there's awareness. So that sense, the Buddha said his teaching, he compared his teaching to a raft. The raft, there's a river, how do you cross the river?

You build a raft, a boat. And this boat or this raft, you step in and it takes you to the other shore of the river. Once you've reached the other shore of the river, you leave the raft or the boat behind.

You don't need to carry the boat around with you after you've reached. Now, in this teaching of the Buddha, the other shore, the other side of the river, of course, means the dimension of being, the transcendent dimension, the realization of the essence of who you are, that's the other. This shore is the manifested in this analogy or in this parable.

This shore is the world of the manifested. The other shore of the river is the world of the transcendent. So the raft is something that you may use and then you leave it behind, you don't carry a raft around with you.

And so if you use certain pointers, yes, you can. It's best to find your own, that are simple expressions of who you are, who or what you are in your essence. So certain affirmations, simple affirmations, even, I just mentioned, I am consciousness, Nisargadatta used for a while.

You could even drop consciousness. If you want the simplest affirmation that points to the vertical dimension, you just say, I am. You don't even need to add consciousness.

It might be even better. I am. And after you've said, I am, sense what that means, but you've left the words behind.

I am, sense the deep meaning of those words. So in that sense, it can work if you use it for a limited time. And so you could say it's a manifestation practice that you could use, very simple, to discover the unmanifested, an unmanifestation practice.

But you don't have to. Some people, for some people it's helpful to use pointers and others don't need to do that. Another simple one, of course, is there's only this moment, for example.

There's only this moment. This moment is all there is. The now.

And then realize deeply what that means. And that's beyond concepts. There's only now.

When your mind is taking you to all kinds of unpleasant places, you can always, you come back to this, only this moment, there's only this. And the now, of course, is the opening into the vertical dimension. So you become aware of the present.

Whenever suffering arises, you don't want to manifest suffering, but millions of people on a daily basis continuously manifest suffering. But you don't want to. And so when you, the beginning of an awakening is the realization that you are manifesting suffering.

Of course, that's already an awakening there because if you're very unconscious, the blame for all your suffering is always elsewhere. It's never in your own mind. When you're very unconscious, other people, the world situation, fate, God, destiny, your karma, your parents, the unjust system, whatever, all kinds of things, they're all to blame.

They cause your suffering. And you haven't realized that you are manifesting, your mind ultimately is manifesting. And in fact, if you tell this to a person who is not ready to hear that, they will get very angry, very angry.

But that realization, your mind, the unconscious mind manifests suffering. And when you discover that ultimately the suffering arises in your mind because your mind reacts to things, your mind creates a narrative that makes you unhappy. Not the situation, but the narrative that your mind creates around the situation makes you unhappy.

When you discover that, that's the first stage of the awakening is, oh, and at that moment, that's an amazing discovery that virtually all your suffering is created by your mind, amazing. And then you realize you don't want to manifest that anymore. And then you want to manifest something else.

But first, before you manifest something else, you need to stop manifesting suffering and a good way is bringing your attention into the present moment. This, what is my problem now? Nothing.

Nothing. What's wrong with this moment? This moment is as it is.

What's the problem? So bring your attention to now. Whenever you feel unhappiness arising, look at your mind and bring attention to the present moment, which always means the externals of the present moment.

That's a manifested dimension of the present moment. And then the essence of the now, which is consciousness, awareness, presence. And so that's how you stop manifesting suffering.

And then you can, if you want to manifest other things from once you have the foundation, which is the being, then you begin to work on the two levels. So you reconcile the two, the being and the doing in your life. And that's your purpose.

And you will not always succeed. It's you fall back into, usually you fall back into losing yourself in doing. And then you suffer.

And this unhappiness that arises, you can then use as a very helpful way of telling you, you've lost yourself, you've lost the present moment. And once you know that, you can come back. So let's leave it at that.

Yes, sometimes my answers are a little long, as you might've noticed, but there's so many things come in. Sometimes the questions that are going to be asked have already been answered in one. Sometimes the one answer that might take 40 minutes is already an answer to several questions.

I don't know, we'll see. I hope this makes sense. Celia, Celia.

Yes, well, thank you very much. How do you say thank you in Portuguese? Muito obrigado, something like that, muito obrigado.

[Speaker 12] (2:41:13 - 2:41:15)

Yes, that's right, muito obrigado.

[Speaker 1] (2:41:16 - 2:41:16)

Thank you.

[Speaker 12] (2:41:16 - 2:41:17)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (2:41:17 - 2:41:18)

Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (2:41:22 - 2:41:35)

We have our next question. Eckhart, this is Sarah from California. Sarah, please join us and share your question with Eckhart.

[Speaker 10] (2:41:37 - 2:41:38)

Hello, Mr. Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (2:41:38 - 2:41:40)

Hello, Sarah, hello.

[Speaker 10] (2:41:41 - 2:41:54)

If I may take a moment for this great opportunity and thank you for being my guiding light, my guru, my teacher, my hope in many moments of darkness and being the spark that awakened me and that continues to do so.

[Speaker 13] (2:41:55 - 2:41:56)

Thank you.

[Speaker 10] (2:41:56 - 2:42:47)

Thank you so much. My question for you today is, how do I, as an awakening soul, keep faith in manifesting global and personal love, peace and harmony at this time when there's so much chaos, corruption, fear, and a lot of hate, actually, and anger among the global population and among those close to me? In other words, how do I not fall into the darkness of fear and separation from my source, from my essence, and from separating from others and remembering that, as you say, it is not personal, it is not who they are?

How do I use conscious manifestation to achieve that? Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (2:42:47 - 3:34:07)

Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you.

To use the term manifestation in a wider sense, one could say that you manifest the way in which you experience what you might call reality or your life. You could call it your life, you could call it reality. How do you experience it?

And to what extent are you dependent upon external conditions as far as your state of consciousness is concerned? How much freedom do you have? Can you live peacefully in a world that is, to a large extent, not peaceful?

And if that is possible, how do you do that? How do you not get drawn into the conflict and anger, egoic dysfunction of the world? Egoic, both individually egoic and collectively egoic.

Let's start by looking at, to some extent, it might be helpful as a starting point to differentiate between what would conventionally be called your life, this is whatever in your daily experience of people that you interact with, whatever you do in this world, work situation, family situations, meeting people here and there, going from here to all your private sphere, there's that. So you meet all kinds of people, some familiar people, some people that you meet briefly, have interactions with. Then you have, in this technologically advanced society, you have another, well, not everybody, but most people have another level of interaction with other people that also becomes part of what they call my life.

And that is interaction through technology. You interact through social media with more people than you actually know. This is the case with many people these days.

They interact with more people than they actually know in their normal everyday existence. You interact with all kinds of people that you've never met, not everybody, but most these days, because people use Facebook and they use Twitter and they use all kinds of things, that sending messages and so on. And on social media, you also interact with people in a different way that you haven't.

So look at then the third level. So we have actual personal contact with people and whatever the nature of these interactions is, it could be, is it conflict-ridden? Is it conflict-ridden in your, or is there some conflict, but also a certain amount of harmony in your daily life?

Then you look at the other level of social interactions through the media, through social media. What kind of interactions do you have there with people that you might never have met, but nevertheless, you are in contact with them, you exchange what is the quality of that kind of interaction that you have? How much conflict is there?

How much negativity is there? And how much is there that is a manifestation of consciousness? You have to look at that.

Many people are, there are people, as I'm sure you know, there are many, especially younger people, but others too, there are many people in this world for whom the human interactions that they have through technology are much more important than the actual interactions they have with human beings. They interact through social media with countless people and the virtual world becomes to them more important than their actual surroundings. It's an amazing thing.

I don't believe that is a very helpful thing, but that's how it is. It's a huge challenge. So you have that level.

Then you have another level where you come in contact with the world through what we might call mainstream media. You get the news and you get commentaries. And mostly these days, the news and commentaries are mixed up, they come in one.

You can't just get the news anymore. Then you already have the news already embedded in a commentary. And you get, there's also that third level becomes also for many people almost more important than their daily existence with the people that they actually know and interact with.

Sometimes, of course, those levels can meet. For example, you're here in the news about people going into stores and not wearing their masks. And then there's a lot of upheaval about that and people get worked up about this and very angry.

And then you can see little clips of people shouting at each other because somebody is not wearing a mask. And then the other person is shouting something back. And to some extent, there can be that level and the person level can meet because 10 minutes later, you go into the store and you might witness something similar.

But, so your experience of reality or your world consists of these levels. So you have to look at these, I think I can perceive those three levels. First of all, it's important not to lose touch with the fact that level one, where you have actual human interactions with people in your daily life, which is relationships that you have, people you work with, people you meet casually, but actual human interactions, that really is the main part or should be the main part of your life, should be that the actual living experience.

And so what I'm recommending is that you separate for see if you can separate those levels and look at the primordial level of your actual experience with human beings. Leaving aside for a moment, social media and leaving aside watching the news every day and all the other things connected with the news, whatever, leave that aside for a moment. It's important to see the difference.

So when you talk about negativity and destructiveness and all anger and antagonism and conflict everywhere, first of all, look at your life, your actual life, does that apply there? Or to what extent does that apply there? Because that's an important part of your reality is the reality that you create, that you manifest in your personal life.

That is primary, I would say, is that sometimes, of course, the reality that you see in the mainstream, the media, when you watch the news, sometimes the two meet, as I said before, they can meet. But so first of all, take responsibility for you take, you need to take responsibility for your life here on the level of personal interactions. That's where it starts.

And that's where you can do a lot of good and you can do harm too. Do you contribute there to human unconsciousness? Or do you contribute there to the awakening of humanity?

Every encounter with another human being, whether it's a person you've known for a long time, family member, spouse, whatever it may be, or whoever it may be, every interaction with, true interaction, not talking about social media, every interaction with another human being is important. What is the quality of your consciousness as you interact with actual human beings? Not ciphers on the screen, if they expressed an opinion and then you attack this, actual human beings, what's the quality of your life on that level?

And that applies even if we were living in a, even more the situation we are moving, experiencing certain amount of upheaval in the collective, that could be worse, it has been worse, it could get worse too, but I don't know whether we'll talk about that. A certain amount of upheavals in the collective, yes. But what I'm saying now would apply, I would still even say this to you, even if you lived in a war situation, I would say it's still very important, every interaction that you have with another human being is of great importance because the world changes from there.

So you begin that, do you emanate, do you have empathy, do you operate from ego or do you judge people? Do you judge, do you confuse people's ego and unconscious behavior with who they are in their essence? Or are you able to see the unconsciousness in certain people that you may meet and then look deeper, realize it for what it is, a dysfunction, a temporary dysfunction in a human being, and you can still have compassion.

And do you emanate goodwill towards other humans, even humans that can't do anything for you? Do you have an empathy, do you feel their being and only feel their being if you can feel your own being and you can feel their being is a refraction of yours, you are this one consciousness, one being. So do you emanate goodwill towards others that you meet?

All these are important things to be aware of because that's where your world, that's the foundation for what you might call your reality, your world. So realizing potential, as the cause in miracles says, which is this cause for transformation, which some people find very helpful, but not everybody. Every time you meet a human, it says there, it's a holy encounter, a holy encounter.

I would add potentially a holy encounter because in actuality, in most cases, it's not a holy encounter, but potentially you can recognize the divinity, not just the humanity, the humanity is a conditioned part of every human being, that's the humanity. You see the humanity and every humanity is deficient and imperfect. Every human on the human level of being human, the humanity is very deficient and imperfect.

So you recognize that, but are you able to recognize what I could call, I rarely use that word, the divinity in every human? Because in every human, there's humanity, which is conditioned, mind, mental, emotional field. Are you able to see that without completely realizing, confusing this with the true identity of that human being?

Or are you able to see it and see beyond it? That means seeing beyond it means to recognize the beingness of the other, their essential beingness, which we could call their divinity. They are also, they emanate from this one source of all life.

All beings are emanations from the one source. And so you recognize that, and then it's a holy encounter. When you see more than the humanity, even though it may not be that easy, because the humanity may be quite overpowering in its negativity and destructiveness, but that's part of your spiritual practice with every time you meet a human being, to see their divinity and their humanity.

Then after a while, you see the divinity more than the humanity, so to speak. And this is why I use the English term human being, which we use because the English language does not have a word that includes both men and women. Traditionally in old books and so on, people use the masculine, all men, and they included women, but the women were never mentioned because English language doesn't have a word for man and woman.

The German language does, which is Mensch. Mensch means could be, is a man or a woman. But English, you have to say human being.

But I think that's a good thing because it shows the two dimensions. You are a human being. On the human level, you're a conditioned entity.

That's your condition by your past, by your culture, even by the language that you grew up with, by the parental background, all kinds of things. You are a human. And the human only is ego.

So there's a human ego. And then you have the being, the human being. Being is the unconditioned, the consciousness, the unconditioned consciousness.

So in your daily life, what reality do you manifest in your daily life on your personal, so-called personal level? That's an important question. Now, there's so many people in this world who pay relatively little attention to that level of reality.

They give more attention to social media and listening to and watching mainstream media. They're so absorbed by what's wrong with the world, they don't realize what's wrong on the foundational level of their own life. And they try to find some kind of solution up there, but they haven't even, there's so much unconsciousness in their own life.

So the foundation is, I'm not saying completely disregard things that happen in the world, but that is important too, but it comes next, it comes second. It doesn't, also does not mean your reality needs to be perfect. No, you, but you practice, you realize that it's, this level is very important.

And then is the world really on that level, the world, if you are relatively conscious and you're awakening or awakened, then you realize on that level, your world isn't that bad. In fact, you are improving the world because whenever you meet somebody, something, you emanate something. It comes through your words or your actual action, you help in some way, or you simply, they simply feel good in your presence because they can feel, they feel recognized.

They feel recognized in their innermost being. And this is so wonderful. So you bring a different, completely a different vibrational frequency into this world on this level.

So that's, that's something to deal with. And there, you have a, there's a lot that you can do there to live more consciously, and then you look at the other levels. Then how do you use social media?

How, to what extent is it taking over your mind? Are you addicted to it? How much time do you spend there?

Do you realize that, or do you still participate in creating false images or for example, on Facebook, people create images of who they are, how they want to be seen. And then they put out all these pictures of them. They are, and everybody's, most people fabricate an image and they put that out.

It's part of the ego. Technology helps to, helps the ego to become more and more inflated. And then you get, you have more and more so-called friends, people you've never met.

100 friends, 200 friends, 300 friends. Who are they? I don't know, but it feels good to the ego.

Everybody loves me. They don't, they don't even know you. They like the image that you have presented.

And then many people feel bad about themselves because other people, they read other people's images. They see it's all a fabrication. So don't lose yourself in that world because you lose consciousness.

You can use Facebook, but in a real way, I think it's possible to use it in a real way without presenting some absurd image. Now, the next level is what's happening out there. What's happening in the collective.

And the way in which you mostly learn about it is through consuming the media, mainstream media. You use it either on television or on one of your devices. You learn about what's happening in the world and it doesn't look good.

In fact, a lot of it looks dreadful. And so now what's very important, what is the state of consciousness that you are in while you watch these things? To what extent do these things draw you in completely?

Are you aware, how much awareness is there in you while you watch, for example, mainstream media, news accounts, and so on? Do you realize what you are seeing? First of all, there are some people who select what's newsworthy.

They say, this is what we want to show people out of many, many events every day. A certain number of events are selected. Now they don't select, very rarely do they select anything good that has happened.

It's almost as if nothing good would ever happen when you watch the news. Anything good happen today? No, because it's not news.

Nobody wants to see it, it seems. The ego thrives on conflict. The ego, because it takes sides.

And by taking sides, it becomes more inflated, the false image. So the news, then they focus on the most, I'm not saying these things do not happen, but they focus on the most dysfunctional aspects of human interactions. And by focusing on the most dysfunctional aspects of human interactions, they amplify the most dysfunctional aspects of human interaction.

And this is not easy to see that they actually contribute to the unconsciousness. First by selecting all the things that are bad and presenting them, and then out of those things, they focus on, take a few things and focus on that. And by focusing on one particular type of dysfunction or unconsciousness, they amplify it.

And I don't think they even know that this is what they are doing. They are in the grip of unconscious forces. They're in the grip of unconscious thought streams, collective energy.

Humans don't realize that thought streams to a large extent are collective. And thought streams, they live in you and through you. They are like energy formations that use your mind.

And these energy formations, you absorb them from the collective when you watch media. And ultimately, every thought is an energy formation. And now, everybody has experienced occasionally, some thoughts can become obsessive.

Some people, it could be a melody that doesn't come out, doesn't leave your mind, or you have some kind of thought, can't stop thinking about this. It goes on and on. So this can happen, but on a much larger scale, huge groups of humans can be taken over by certain collective thought streams.

And they don't even know that they are being taken over by certain, and usually very negative and destructive thought streams. An entire country can be taken over by, it happened, for example, let's say, Maoist China. When Maoist China, like for several decades, everybody got taken over by particular, everybody said the same thing.

Very destructive behavior, parents would denounce, children would denounce their own parents for having said the wrong thing. And would be taken away to prison. The most absurd things, at the height of the Cultural Revolution, they would even, they would tear flowers out of the parks.

They said, flowers are bourgeois. We don't want any flowers. You must get rid of flowers.

The most absurd behavior. And millions of people, all dressed in the same way, all holding up a red book and shouting the same thing and believing in it, not realizing that they are possessed by an energy stream, a collective mind form. And then they come out of it.

Now, it's no longer, China has grown a lot. It's no longer in national socialism. In Germany was a similar movement.

Soviet communism in Russia was similar. These are collective energy streams that people, they possess millions of people. But people are so identified with it because they are spiritually totally asleep.

They don't know who they are beyond those thought forms. And so when you watch the media, you have to be careful that realize how this functions. Yes, these things are happening, what they preserve.

And many of these things are not good. But first of all, you get a considerably distorted view of what's going on in the outer world. First of all, for the very fact that all they focus on is the worst aspects of society, of what's happening.

The most dysfunctional things are newsworthy. Many good things, because continuously millions of good things happen, people helping others. Many things happen, but they're not usually reported.

There would not be news. There was a time, a funny story just remembered. When in England, when the BBC first started, they had the first, they had daily news.

Once a day on the radio in the 30s or whenever it was, the first newscasts on the radio, BBC. Now, that was, those news were still relatively uncontaminated. Of course, already, yes, they selected certain items, but it wasn't sensational and so on.

It was, they tried to be as objective as possible. And one day, the news reader said, it is five o'clock, here's the BBC news, and said, there is no news today. It actually happened.

It was in the early days of broadcasting. There's no news today. Well, how wonderful, let's celebrate.

No news. Can you imagine that's CNN? The Situation Room on CNN.

There's no situation today. Let's all go and be happy. That's just a little aside.

But, so when you, yes, of course you want to be informed. It's good, you want to know what's going on in this world. And some, perhaps you can help in some way integrate the larger issues that are happening in this world.

Perhaps there's something that you can do. But first of all, the important thing is, when you consume these new mainstream news, be aware that it is a distorted view of reality. It's distorted because first, they select dysfunctional unconscious behavior as most newsworthy.

Second, it's also distorted because there's already, once they have selected out of those things, they amplify certain things, give it special attention that it gets blown up. And then it's not just reporting. The reporting of the news is also interpreted as they are reporting it.

It's not just the news, it's they're already giving you their perspective. It's seen through their eyes. If you're slightly different, if you will look, CNN has their way of, Fox News has another way of showing their perspective.

And so they also, they create further events by amplifying very unconscious behavior. They create further events in this world until they don't even know that that's what they're doing. But the important question is, are they drawing you as you watch and consume?

Are they drawing you into unconsciousness while you watch and consume? Are they pulling you down? Are you able to be aware as you watch so that you don't forget the connectedness with source or consciousness, are you, do you know that you are aware and don't get completely drawn in, feel?

What you are watching is human unconsciousness happening. It's not the totality of what is happening. It's you're seeing a partial view of the most unconscious things happening on the planet at this time.

I just have to draw the blinds and sun is shining in my eye. Right. So it's important to know that.

And then the question is, are you able to stay conscious, to realize it for what it is, to realize, yes, these things are happening, but also it's a distorted view of reality, yes. And what is most likely happening right now, we need to be aware of that. It is true that there is an increase in the collective at the present time.

Of what we might call dysfunction or disorder or even chaos, disruption. We are entering, or we have already entered collectively a time period of collective disorder or disruption or chaos. There are time periods that they fluctuate.

There's always there. It's true that the media, the media actually is part of it. They don't just report it.

They amplify the disruption and the chaos, unfortunately. I'm not blaming anybody there. Some people say there's all some evil plan behind it all.

Maybe there is, who knows some conspiracy theories, maybe one out of 10 conspiracy theories that actually be true, but we don't even need to go there. The fact is that the mainstream media is part of the disorder that is increasing disorder in this world. And my feeling is there's more to come.

So be spiritually prepared, very important. Be spiritually prepared so that you do not become part of the disorder that's happening. And increasingly, I believe, going to happen even more in this world.

We are moving, the world always moves between order and chaos. There are two polarities. You should always strive for order.

That's important in your life, in the world, but realize the world for its evolutionary progress also needs chaos, periods of chaos and disorder. And out of chaos and disorder, a new order develops. And so there's a gradual evolution of consciousness.

When there is disorder, there is a regressive movement, which means most people become relatively more unconscious. And in the present time, anybody who is not awakening even to some extent spiritually will be drawn into deeper unconsciousness because they become part of the collective movement towards disorder or chaos when structures dissolve. And that is a challenge for humans.

Now, especially for you, everybody I'm talking to and many others, of course, it is your challenge to stay conscious while this is happening so that you do not become contaminated by the collective negativity and unconsciousness. It doesn't mean that you necessarily need to completely withdraw from the world. You can still attempt to the best of your abilities to create a better world.

If you have whatever your sphere of influence may be, see if you can bring in more consciousness into whatever you do, whoever you're in contact with, be a bringer of consciousness. You bring consciousness into an unconscious world without creating some mental conceptual image, I am the bringer of consciousness, then you're lost in ego again. But be prepared for increasing challenges in the collective.

Do not be drawn into reactivity. And do not be hypnotized by these events when you watch what's happening in the media and so on. Stay present.

What you're watching is an evolutionary story. Humanity is displaying, probably entering a regressive period as they sometimes happen before there's a further awakening of consciousness. We perhaps, I'm not for sure, but there's a good chance we're entering a regressive period, which is perfectly fine.

It's what you're watching is the evolutionary growth of the human species. And so they are manifesting whatever behavior corresponds to the particular stage in the evolution of humanity. And the evolution is towards more consciousness.

That's for sure. So don't lose yourself, be present while you watch. And don't watch too much, just watch enough to know what's going on.

But don't be hypnotized by the media and so you can't stop watching. Very important is don't be drawn into the unconsciousness, for example, by regarding certain groups of people as enemies of your dehumanizing certain groups of people by calling them this, attaching certain labels to certain people. The dehumanization, of course, racism is one example of dehumanization when you attach mental labels to a group of people and you egoically identified with these mental labels.

So you're imposing collective identities on other humans and you completely, it's a deep form of unconsciousness. So there are many ways of you can even demonizing other groups of humans in the collective, very dangerous things that, but it's unlikely that this will happen to you, but it could if you're not careful, if you're not alert. So be present and see it for what it is.

Don't be part of it, but do not necessarily refrain from taking conscious action wherever you can, even conscious action if you're engaged in social media, be careful that you're not drawn into anything reactive from social media, you don't attack other people on social media that was very unconscious. You can present a viewpoint, you can present an opinion, an alternative viewpoint, whatever it is, but stay conscious in all your interactions. So the greatest challenge is in an age when there is a growth of temporary increase in unconsciousness on a collective level, your challenge is to stay conscious as a human being who is conscious while this happens.

And I therefore recommend on a very practical level, next time you watch the news, while you watch the news is be aware of yourself, your presence, your awareness while you watch so that you don't lose touch with the deeper level of who you are and see that these are, see that yes, it is a distorted view of reality, but yes, these things are happening, but nevertheless, it's not the totality of what's happening and it no longer has the power to draw you in, to make you unconscious, it has a gravitational pull, the media, social media too has a gravitational pull and you're not careful, you go, and it's, you notice when you watch it and you're not aware, your mind stops, you're not thinking, so your mind gets completely taken over by what you're watching, all the words while you're watching, you're not thinking your own thoughts or very rarely and you're just, so your mind gets completely taken over, it's quite dangerous.

So, but this cannot happen if you're aware, how do you, how are you aware? Well, one way that I recommend is if you find it difficult, be aware of the inner energy field of your body, the inner body, as I call it, incorporate that into your sense of presence, so every, you're present with every cell of the body and then you can watch and then you realize that which is beyond all the unconsciousness and it's in you, it's also in every one person that they don't know it, it's in every human, but so you can remain peaceful even while the world is chaotic, that's a challenge, I'm not saying it's not a challenge, but you, this can be a huge, and the world needs that, of course, it needs that, especially in periods of chaos, it needs a certain number of humans who remain essentially at peace, they remain peaceful, they don't contribute to the chaos of the world.

So let's see, we're moving into very interesting times and there's nothing to fear if you are in touch with who you are, who or what you are, on that level, there's nothing to fear because ultimately what people are afraid of is death and death, of course, is assured to the physical body, will dissolve, but find death before death finds you and then there's nothing to fear, how do you find death before death finds you? Well, by dying to the mind created egoic sense of self, that is a conceptual identity and by dying to that, you realize your essential identity, which is pure consciousness and that essential identity, Jesus called it eternal life and in Buddhism, eternal, of course, means timeless, eternal life, in Buddhism, it's sometimes called Amaravati, which means the deathless realm, which the dimension of the deathless, the dimension where there's no death, that's a wonderful description, that's the transcendent dimension and it's your mission in this world is to awaken to that and then you'd no longer fear things in this world. In 90 years from now, let's say 100 years from now, everybody who is alive on this planet will be gone and it's short-lived, the life of the human is short-lived, but the being, the being is the timeless dimension of who you are, it's who you are beyond form and then you can watch the news, not being fearful and then even if some huge disaster were approaching, it wouldn't matter that much because you know that everything that we perceive here is one could say the surface of reality, all the things you perceive with our senses is a surface dimension and underlying that there is something deeper, it's like the surface of the ocean and the ocean, don't just live on the surface of the ocean as a little ripple but realize you're not only a ripple because the ripple is going to die soon but more essentially you are the ocean but the ocean would not have realized its own essential identity if it hadn't first lost itself in the ripple identity and this is why the Buddhists say, if there were no illusion, there would be no enlightenment so even that is all part of the evolutionary process which is so vast, we cannot possibly understand it through the mind, perhaps this is enough for today, I'm sorry I've only answered a few questions but ultimately the answer to the essence of every answer is always the same as you might have noticed.

[Speaker 3] (3:34:10 - 3:34:27)

And thank you both to Sarah and Celia for your very good questions, brought out such depth in our session this evening and of course, thank you, Eckhart, shall we end in a few moments of stillness together?

[Speaker 1] (3:34:29 - 3:37:36)

That's an excellent idea, three moments of stillness right now, be aware of the people you see on the screen, they are points of consciousness and you yourself are a point of consciousness, the one consciousness, assuming form, different forms and so you are that one consciousness, ultimately, I should be saying not you are but I am the one consciousness, there's only one I, there's only one I and I am that one I, there's no you, there's only I, you are I. And so for consciousness to become conscious of itself is very joyful when you feel yourself, you become aware of being, you become aware of awareness and there's joy in that, being, consciousness, joy, or as they say in India, Sat, Shit, Ananda, being, consciousness, joy. Thank you, thank you, everybody.

[Speaker 3] (3:37:39 - 3:37:42)

Thank you, Eckhart, thanks everyone for being with us.

[Speaker 1] (3:38:04 - 4:56:24)

So apart from money, the problem areas for many people are relationships, intimate relationships and physical body, the health or lack of health of the physical body. Life will challenge you always somewhere. Life is not easy.

Life is difficult for everybody, for every life form, which by the word difficult, I mean, it's challenging. And whether the challenge comes to you through some form of limitation to do with financial limitations or limitations of the body, what the body is able to do or illness of the body, or the challenges come to you in the form of other people. So don't, even if you're very good at manifestations, the challenges will always come.

It's important to realize that it is not happening normal when things don't go according to your expectations. There's a lot you can do by conscious living, by eliminating negativity as much as possible from your mind. But there's a lot you can do and coming aligned with the present moment.

It will improve your life immeasurably, but you will still get challenged by situations, people, and possibly your body, because eventually your body grows old and it'll fail somewhere sooner or later. It's important to have a right relationship to challenges. Because if you don't realize the challenge is an essential part of being here, then you think something is wrong when something goes wrong in your life.

Relationship, money or job situation, living situation, health situation. And so let's look for a moment at the body. The normal way of the body is to be harmonious coordination of all the various, countless functions of the body are being coordinated by an underlying intelligence.

It cannot be otherwise. The complexity of the body is only understood, only fractions of it through medical science has been around for quite a while, but even now we only understand a fraction of how the body actually works. And we continuously discover new things.

There's an incredible intelligence there at work, but you can't see that intelligence. It underlies and it coordinates, it sustains the physical vehicle. It holds the molecules, atoms and molecules together.

So the body is the surface phenomenon. The physical body that you see is a surface phenomenon. The important thing in healing is to be able to sense that which underlies the physical vehicle, which is that intelligent energy field, which is an aspect of universal intelligence.

You cannot see it. You cannot look at it under a microscope, no scientist has discovered it. And yet when it's gone, immediately the atoms and molecules of the body that on an atomic level begin to go their own way.

They're no longer interested in being together. They become dispersed. The vehicle, the physical vehicle dissolves.

When you look at a dead person, a dead body, and you realize then that that person isn't there anymore, there's still a resemblance, but the being that you knew, the loved one, isn't there anymore. So he or she never was the body. He or she always was the invisible being behind the body.

As the famous line in the book, the Little Prince by Saint-Exupéry says, what is essential is invisible to the eye. Whatever is essential in this world is invisible to the eye. That implies not just the eye, not just a visual sense.

You cannot detect it with any of your senses. It is not perceivable, detectable in the sensory realm. And every human being is mostly invisible.

All you see is the surface phenomenon, which is the body, begins with your thoughts. They're invisible. Your emotions are invisible.

You sometimes see traces of what is going through a person's mind in a facial expression or an emotion. You can see the facial expression or bodily posture betraying what emotion is active, but the emotion itself or the thought itself is invisible. And then you go deeper and you get to the consciousness that is the essence of that person that's invisible.

So for bodily healing and sustaining the body as much as possible for as long as possible, at some point, as you grow older, at some point, the body will begin to show signs of decay or begin to fail here and there. In the meantime, since we're talking about conscious manifesting, can that help in healing the body? And can it help in sustaining the body in a healthy condition?

To some extent, perhaps, to make certain statements that all the functions of the body are working harmoniously together, that to certain statements or affirmations that the intelligent energy field that's sustaining the body is not encountering any obstructions and healing and sustaining your body. And those similar affirmations can be helpful, especially if while you say it and after you say it, you can sense what it is that you're talking about. And here again comes the face, which really means, face really means to be in touch with a power that underlies the affirmation that the affirmation points to, and that's the face.

So when you talk about the intelligent energy field that sustains a body, that is shining through the body, that is cleansing the body, that is pervading the body, and it's keeping the body healthy, or it's healing the body. And as you speak, as you make that statement that your body is being healed, your body is healthy, is being sustained by that vast intelligence that coordinates every function of your body, as you speak those words, you can actually feel how your body is being energized, which means you feel the underlying invisible energy field more strongly than before. And the more you feel it, that means the more it manifests through the physical body, and the more it is able to function and keep the body in harmonious state.

There are, nobody is totally immune from illness, so their illness can have different causes, many different causes. So don't fall into the error of misinterpreting the arising of illness, some kind of malfunction in your body, and then misinterpreting as something that you have done or failed to do, that sometimes in new age terminology, when you have a disease, people ask you, why did you manifest that? And that becomes very problematic if somebody, or you ask yourself, okay, I have a flu or I have something more serious.

Oh my God, I manifested that. How did I manifest that? Or somebody else asks you and then you feel guilty.

There have been spiritual teachers who, good spiritual, very good spiritual teachers who talked a lot about healing of the body as an essential part of spiritual realization. And some have put somewhat too much emphasis on physical healing so that they even had to deny when they fell ill, the teachers, that had to be kept secret. And this is a sign that there's an imbalance there.

The physical body is always susceptible to all kinds of influences. You do the best you can. If something goes wrong with the body, then it becomes doubly important not to judge or to say you created it or anything like that.

You don't need to figure out why this is happening to you unless you ate the wrong food or made serious mistakes in nutrition. But just be with the condition that is, let's say you're ill, whatever it may be. It's been found that the one, perhaps the most effective healing thing you can do is to surrender to what is, which does not mean surrender to what you call the illness.

Surrender means acceptance. The acceptance initiates the healing power. Whether or not you want to amplify the acceptance by using certain words, certain statements is up to you.

The foundation for healing is you accept this moment as it is, and in this moment, the so-called illness may manifest either as pain or as discomfort or as some kind of disability. And this is what you surrender to. You never surrender to the idea of illness.

So you don't say, oh, I must surrender to the fact that I have this, or whatever the name the illness has. I must surrender to the fact that I have, or even worse, you say, I must surrender to the fact that I have this incurable condition. That's not it.

That doesn't work very well. All you surrender to is the present moment, whatever the body manifests in the present moment. That's what it is.

With that surrender, any kind of surrender, immediately a little bit of a doorway opens a little bit towards the transcendence, and that's where the power comes through. So first, you don't deny the illness, but you also don't dwell on this concept of illness and build an identity around it. As is done, the ego will use anything for an enhanced identity.

And if in the absence of other things that it can use, it will happily or unhappily use the idea of illness, which then becomes incorporated into your sense of self, especially a prolonged illness, becomes incorporated into your sense of self, and then you become the sufferer of such and such an illness, and that becomes part of your sense of who you are. And you are given a lot of attention. Important people, doctors, physicians, nurses, give you a lot of attention.

You become quite important. And the ego loves that because perhaps it didn't get enough attention otherwise. So the ego can invest in illness, and it doesn't want to get better.

This is very unconscious, of course. It's unlikely to happen to you if you are watching this here now. I don't believe you are that unconscious anymore, but it's something to look out for in case the ego attempts to do something like that.

So to certain statements that say that the body is being sustained and energized by the spiritual power that underlies the body, it can be a very helpful statement that you occasionally use in your affirmation or manifestation practice for 10 minutes at a time. Don't overdo it. Don't use it continuously.

It's unnecessary. No affirmation you should use continuously. You do it for a period of 10 minutes at a time for a few days, and then forget it.

And then after a while, return to it. But it's important, of course, and this applies to all other affirmations too, when you want to manifest something, to utter the words, and even to feel the energy behind the words, that to which they point, even that's not enough because in most cases, you will also require to take action. So when you want to build up a business or you create something new in this world, you manifest, you practice conscious manifestation through uttering the words, sensing the energy, but always the other ingredient is action.

You need to take action towards that in the present moment. So then the action becomes empowered. It's doubly empowered by the words that you spoke and the energy behind the words.

And it's unlikely that you won't take action because when you speak the words and you've sensed the energy behind the words, then the action, you cannot not take action. When you've come to the end of your manifestation practice, you will go, okay, then you will know what's the next I can do it, and then you'll do it, and then you do the other. And always your attention is in the action itself.

You give your fullest attention to conscious action towards your goal. As far as the body is concerned, action is required twofold. One is become aware of nutrition, become aware of your food intake, and if necessary, change certain things there.

There's no point in creating wonderful manifestation techniques for the body and continuing to disregard the nutritional requirements of the body. Disregard them completely. Continue to eat huge amounts of junk food and whatever it is that you might have become addicted to.

Another factor is exercise. There's no point in having the most wonderful manifestation practice about the body, and yet you're a couch potato all day long. You sit in a couch, and you're not on your couch.

You're sitting in your office chair, and then you're sitting in your car, and the body is not getting sufficient exercise. So these are simple things. So you cannot use just manifestation techniques within disregard the element of positive action.

The more you sense the underlying energy field, what I call the inner body, the more you will be able to know what's right for you to eat just by listening or by sensing the body's response. When you can even just look at a food item or even just think of it, imagine that you're eating it, and you can sense whether the body says yes or no to it. The mind might say, yes, this chocolate was great yesterday, and it'll be great again today, but if you listen to the body, your body might say, no, there's a contraction.

I personally listen to my body most as far as food intake is concerned, but you may want to learn more about it too. So you cannot mistreat your body either by harmful food intake or complete absence of exercise in the same way that you cannot refrain from taking action and think the conscious manifestation techniques are enough. They all need to be used together, but you may have tried, if your body is overweight, you may have tried to do various things.

Don't be unhappy with yourself. Don't create an identity with yourself out of neither positive nor negative. That, again, is the ego.

You could have a negative identity around being overweight and say, feel guilty, that you're not good enough, you feel less than others, you feel inferior to others, and you can build a very painful identity around it, or you can go to the other extreme and say, I'm proud of being fat and overweight. It's so wonderful, and that's how I am. And that's an identity also.

You don't need that. Let go, just accept this moment as it is. You are not your physical body, anyway, I've always been underweight most of all my life.

So people even sometimes thought often, oh, this person must be ill, he's so thin. Why are you so thin? I don't know, it's just thin.

I've come to accept the body as it is. Instead of building an unhappy identity around it, this is what is, and then you get in touch with that which is beyond the physical body. And that's beautiful and alive.

And the more you're in touch with that, the more that will come forth into the physical vehicle and begin to transform the physical vehicle into something more harmonious. And it frees you from deriving an identification from your physical body. Whether that is positive or negative, it really is misleading, it's ego.

Now, it doesn't mean you cannot appreciate the body. If your body is healthy and strong and good looking, great, you're lucky. You can appreciate that and do the best you can to sustain that for as long as possible.

But again, here, pride could come in. If your body is better looking than most other bodies, the ego will get in there and pride will arise and you will feel superior, at least in that aspect. Other people might have other, more money or more power or influence or be more intelligent or knowledgeable.

But you, at least, you have the body, either strong or sexy or whatever it is, and you can show it off and then for a while you can feel good about it. Of course, it doesn't last. Whatever it is, don't build an identity, don't identify with a physical body because it leads to suffering.

If you look fantastic, then you begin to suffer when your looks begin to fade and then your suffering starts. Your whole identity then begins to crumble. This has happened, especially, I think, it might happen to, perhaps, to men also, but to beautiful women who are very much identified with their beauty and then they get older and older and then their ego self was associated with their appearance and the appearance begins to fade and then the suffering begins and the suffering increases.

So, you feel that you are being, your entire being is being eroded. It's terrible suffering. So, the body is as it is right now, that's fine.

The physical body is not who you are. The inner body, there you begin to touch your true essence. So, statements regarding the body can be helpful if accompanied by correct action.

Then they can be really very powerful. Illness, healing of illness or serious illness, it may or may not happen. Spontaneous healings do happen.

Research has shown that when spontaneous healing happens, it's much more likely to happen if you come to a place of acceptance, not acceptance of the illness, the idea of illness, but acceptance of whatever the condition is at this moment because acceptance brings in and creates an opening into the transcendent dimension, any kind of acceptance. So, in this case, acceptance of what is happening in your physical vehicle. The physical vehicle is precarious.

There's no doubt about it. There could, accident could happen anytime. Everybody's one heartbeat away from death, death of the physical vehicle.

Of course, physically it is precarious, but that's not who you are. So, the more you live in connectedness with the underlying energy, the more likely it is that the physical vehicle will be relatively okay and healing can happen, is much more likely to happen if the more intensely present you are connected to the inner energy field. It's particularly effective when you, the onset, at the first stage, the onset of a disease, of an illness, you feel the first signs of a flu, for example, and then immediately go into the body and sense the energy that pervades the entire body, the presence within the body.

You can feel it in a very subtle way. It pervades the entire body. And if you hold that, that's the most healing thing you can do.

The words can be a little bit of a help that can remind you to go there, the words that you speak, the statement that you make, that your body's being sustained by this underlying intelligent energy field. These words can be a reminder, but the important thing is to feel the reality to which the words point. So here we have the practice, the manifestation practice as the words, and the underlying practice of the actual getting in touch with the underlying energy.

And if you're ill, then you have to do it more, more intensely, not exerting willpower. That never involves willpower. You cannot will yourself to be free of an illness.

And even the expression fighting this or that illness, you must fight this, we must fight that, is not the right approach in the same way that fighting against drugs didn't work, fighting against an illness doesn't work, but getting in touch with that deeper organizing principle that's behind the body, that may work. So, and you should be strongly motivated when you are threatened by a serious illness, you should be strongly motivated to go there and hold that for as much as possible, more than you would do when you're well. It's good to go there when you're well too, so that the body continues to be energized by this, by the conscious realization of the inner body.

But when you have a serious illness, it becomes so much more important to go there.

And that is a manifestation technique also, not all manifestation techniques are words or vision boards. This is a manifestation technique that is energetic.

So you're energetically manifesting healing. Healings do happen to people who are able to sustain that and you may have to practice it for days and weeks and every day as much as you can. And it's now, it may not, there is no guarantee because many factors are involved.

There is no guarantee that healing can still happen once an illness come in. And it is possible that your lifespan here may be limited or it is limited for everybody, but it may be more limited for you than it would otherwise be if you didn't have the illness. Every life is, everybody already has a death sentence hanging over him or her.

As they say, life is a sexually transmitted disease with a fatal outcome, fatal prognosis always. Now, if you practice connecting with the inner body, that has, there's something there that, a benefit that is even more important than physical healing, which may or may not happen. And that benefit is that by holding your connectedness to the inner body, you're continuously living in presence.

And by holding this connectedness and being as much present as you can, which is especially if people have told you that you have little future left. And there are people every day in every country who hear from the doctor, who hear the doctor tell them, well, I'm afraid you only have six months at the most, maybe three months, six, maybe a year. In other words, who get the dreadful news that time is, they're running out of time.

In other words, time is being removed from them. There is no more future. Well, they have the past still, but the future is being removed, nowhere to go.

And then comes the feeling, but I haven't done all the things that I'm meant to do. I haven't lived fully. In fact, I've been waiting to live all my life, waiting to some, for some future moment.

And now that's, it's the end. How is this possible? It can't be dreadful, but there's a great, the possibility of future is removed from you.

Then you suffer until you surrender. And when you surrender, the whole psychological structure of time collapses in your mind. When you surrender just to this moment, time as a psychological thing dissolves in you.

And you may be practicing the inner body awareness or presence practice, perhaps because you might think, well, it could heal my body and it could, but there's no guarantee. But even if it doesn't, there's something infinitely more significant happening if you live in that, if you are forced into that state of presence by that condition, because otherwise you suffer terribly. So you have no choice, but be totally, totally in the present moment, which is you step out of thought and you're mostly just here as a presence and continuously what's happening then, even if the healing, the physical healing does not happen, your ego, your pseudo identity is being eroded every minute that you hold presence.

Gradually the ego is being eroded, or you could say transmuted, burned up in the fire of your presence. And that is a true benefit. And then the illness has had the, the true purpose of the illness then was to bring about that tremendous inner transformation where the egoic self, you die before you die.

It might just be three months before you die physically, you die as the ego, the egoic self. And all that's left then is the radiant being. And I've met several people close to their deaths who had the prognosis and who were in continuous spiritual practice.

And in the last few, shortly before they die, they were totally, just totally open and radiant. And they looked at me like, in the same way that a baby looks at you, but with an added dimension of awareness. Then they go, there's no person left.

There's just, the flowering has happened. They have fulfilled their purpose, why they came here. And they don't need time anymore after that.

So the illness can have, if you allow the illness to force you almost, one could say to force you into presence, then either you will, you may get healed, but almost it's an adding on. What really matters is that you will be forced into complete awakening, the awakening of consciousness. So this is a potential where an illness happens.

Healing, physical healing may or may not happen. Even if physical healing does happen, it just means you get a little bit more time. You get a few more years, whether a few more means that you get another five years or you get another 30 years, it's not that much.

You get a few more years and then you will be faced again with approaching death. So die before you die. If you can do it by choice without even having to be forced into it by an illness, that's even better.

So perhaps this is the case with you because if you are advanced enough to choose presence, to choose as much as possible to live in presence, then perhaps you don't need the illness anymore to force you into awakening. So the body is always just the surface phenomenon. You choose the healing.

You don't look to the body for the healing. You look deeper than the body for the healing. The healing comes from a deeper place that is the invisible energy field.

It's not the body itself. And the joy that comes, there's a certain joy when you are present. That joy itself is life affirming, that joy that you feel in the present moment without needing to be some, it's an uncaused joy.

It's not caused by any event or anything. You just, it's the joy. You remember the words, you might know them from India.

It's satchitananda, being, consciousness, bliss. Bliss can also be translated as joy. When you are in that state of the realization of satchitananda, of feeling the being that you are, the consciousness, the joy, that is incredibly healing.

And it keeps the body in a state of harmonious functioning until it doesn't anymore, because in the end, eventually something will break down. And it has to, because every form is impermanent and the physical vehicle is impermanent. Sooner or later, something will begin to malfunction and that's fine.

So looking at relationships in connection with the spiritual practice of affirmation or manifestation techniques, relationships for many people, relationships hold the promise of ultimate happiness. And for many, many people, they are a source of great suffering. So the important thing is that again, we must go to essentials and the foundation of it all.

Before you can be in a relationship that truly works, even though there may be areas in it that are problematic, but a relationship that where short brief moments of conflict exist within a greater whole of harmony within the greater context of love ultimately, no relationship can be satisfying for long in the absence of the transcendent dimension. The transcendent dimension needs to be there for a truly loving relationship, because that love arises from the transcendent dimension. Love is, when we talk about love, it's not, we're not talking about the emotional thing that is also called love.

There really should be many different words for it because different kinds of love. There is the emotional or mental emotional intense attachment or infatuation with a person that comes when you fall in love with a person. There is, it's almost a kind of addiction to the other, and it has a limited lifespan, and that's called falling in love.

And sometimes people get married while they're in the process of this relatively short-lived addiction. The addiction of being in love rather than loving, being in love or falling in love is not sustainable for too long, especially when you start living with a person. Remember, we are talking about the phenomenon that is known as being in love or falling in love, which is an intense attraction that is sexual, emotional, mental, where you have this often an idealized image of who that person is, and there's a huge amount of emotion around it, and a neediness and a clinging.

It's a little bit like the other person becomes a drug for you, but it's not usually called that. You know it's like a drug because if that other person should withdraw while you are experiencing that, you will experience very painful withdrawal symptoms from very intense emotional pain to the point of suicide almost, to extreme and insane anger, even to the point of physical violence if people are very unconscious. So this happens when the drug that is the other person is being withdrawn.

The other person removes him or herself while you're in that, while this, during that time when you are in love. And then, of course, the moment the object of your attachment is withdrawn, then you experience the opposite of being in love. In many cases, it turns into intense hatred.

So if that was love, which is often mistaken for that, by people who don't know what's going on and on all the popular culture that still treats that as true love, then how can that, within one minute, if the person says, I'm leaving you, I found somebody else, this so-called love turns into intense hatred. Its opposite immediately manifests. So if you have, let's say you are longing for a partner and you may have, perhaps through coming into contact with popular culture, maybe certain pop songs or certain movies or romantic novels or whatever it is, you may have certain expectations in your mind of what a relationship is like, or you may have experienced falling in love once and then it ended, but you are longing to have this again with somebody. If you practice affirmation or manifestation techniques such as formulating certain statements that say that there is somebody in your life who is what you might want to include certain qualities or whatever it is that you want from that person.

Some people want, like to be very specific in their, when they place their order to the universe, what they want, but you may have unrealistic expectations of to what extent another human being can be the source of lasting satisfaction in your life. And even though you may manifest through good practice of stating what it is that you feel, you always practice this, I have this person in my life who is loving and kind, if that's what you want, or you might say, I have this person in life who is sexy and exciting. And if you have unrealistic expectations, you may be successful in manifesting this person, but then you experience that what you were looking for, you've created a kind of illusion again in your life.

The illusion is come back. So before you practice affirmations concerning finding a partner or being in a loving relationship, you have to look at your past relationships and what happened there. Is there a pattern?

Have you had a number of past relationships that failed for some reason? Is there a pattern? Did you always choose people who turned out to be quite unconscious, jerks?

Why are all the men that I date turn out to be jerks? Maybe all men are jerks. Why do I always choose these?

Why do you always choose this kind of woman? So there may be certain patterns. Now, by just creating some kind of affirmation or manifestation techniques, you have not resolved certain unconscious patterns that may be in you that become activated as soon as you enter into a relationship.

And not only that, certain patterns that actually make you choose a certain type of person, a certain type of person that perhaps is absolutely wrong for you, but there's a pattern that makes you do that. So before you practice any kind of manifestation techniques, look, just be alert and look at your past relationships if there are past relationships. See if there's some pattern there.

And then, and now this applies to everybody. As I said before, you cannot have a lasting, successful, and truly loving relationship unless the spiritual dimension, which is the transcendent dimension, is present in the relationship. If you're only relating to another human being as a person, from one person to another, one conditioned entity with another conditioned entity, then all you have is, basically, you have three ingredients in the relationship.

You have the physical ingredient, which is the body, which is sexuality. You have the emotional ingredient, the emotional attachment that gets mixed up with sexuality. And you have the mental attachment to that person, and the image-making, who that person is in your mind.

And those three are fine. Of course, they are there. Nobody can say that these should not be there.

Well, except perhaps the mental, which is a mental image that you might have of that person that is not who that person is. But of course, there is an emotional relationship, and there's a sexual relationship. Now, often it happens these days that a relationship may begin with sexual attraction.

And there's many, with young people, often they meet in a bar or somewhere, and immediately the first thing you see, what you see is the least important part, in a way, of that person, which is the physical body. And maybe the physical body looks very attractive, sexy, beautiful, or you've had several drinks, so anybody will look beautiful to you. So it begins with sexual attraction, and some relationships, the short-lived relationships, are based on sexuality alone, and they can finish after one night, or they finish after a few weeks, or a few months, or even a year.

Then there's the emotional connectedness, and that's where you begin to experience something that is emotional love. And it could be as intense as falling in love, which is a kind of addiction, or it could be somewhat less intense. You don't feel you've really fallen totally in love with that person, but there is a, you feel an emotional connection, and then it can last a little, the relationship can last a little longer.

And then there's the mental connection, which is you have something to talk about, that becomes more important the longer the relationship lasts on that level. Can you communicate and have conversations and meet there? But even that's not enough.

Then the question is, is there access in you and in your partner to the spiritual dimension? And the spiritual dimension transcends the physical body. It transcends the emotion, the emotional body.

It transcends the mind. It can be a simple thing. So how does it manifest?

You can be with the other person and feel a connection to the other person and a oneness with the other person. That is nothing to do with any thought in your head or even any emotion. You can sit still together in a room.

You can look at the other. I often recommend that practice as a way of bringing the transcendent dimension into relationship. You can look at the other person and the other person looks at you for two or three minutes or four or five and practice, use it as a meditation.

It might open up the spiritual dimension in your relationship. If you're looking at the other into the eyes of the other and you're not thinking, you practice thoughtless, spacious awareness and connect with the other just through, gazing is a name for it. It's a great, wonderful practice.

If you can be with the other without needing words or some kind of emotion or the emotional wave may come or discomfort may come and pass or an emotional wave may come and pass. Even a sexual feeling may come in that it'll pass. And then what remains is just spacious presence.

And you no longer know where you are and where you end and the other person starts. You're basically looking at yourself because the consciousness that you can sense in the other is the same consciousness that you sense in yourself. You can sense that there is not my consciousness.

There is not his or her consciousness. There's only consciousness. And we are manifestations of that one consciousness.

And there's suddenly the realization of oneness. And you realize this human being is consciousness, consciousness essentially. And then the failings of this, because every human being has certain areas that you may find irritating or that may be flaws in the way in which they behave, areas of unconsciousness, because surprisingly not everybody is a Buddha.

So the moment you start living with somebody, you notice that they have areas of unconsciousness and they do or say things that you find irritating or don't like. And that can, in some cases, it brings about the end of a relationship. Suddenly you might discover the other person has a pain body.

Oh my God. So you never really know a person until you start living with them. And after a while, you'll encounter other sub-personalities that are very different from the person that you thought this person was.

But if you're able to connect with that past beyond the person through the transcendent dimension, then that, then you realize that the imperfections of this form exist within the larger context of this, that this being is consciousness. And you can relate to that even when the person temporarily manifests unconscious behavior, if it's not too disruptive, because some people are just so unconscious that you wouldn't want to be with them. But just, you can then, so those things exist within the larger context of who that person really is beyond the body, beyond the emotion and beyond their conditioned mind.

But you can only sense that when you know yourself beyond your conditioned mind, beyond the emotions and beyond the physical body. So when the spiritual dimension comes in, then there's a possibility for this relationship to last. And not that there's nothing wrong with relationship coming to an end.

That's, it may be, there may be many factors in the way in which human beings evolve. So, but a relationship cannot be satisfying for long, truly satisfying in the absence of the spiritual dimension, the transcendent dimension. So, yet you have to find it in yourself first.

You don't, a relationship does not help you to find it. You have to find it first. Now, this comes to an important point, which is if you are uncomfortable with yourself when you're alone, then it's very unlikely that you can have a truly satisfying lasting relationship with another human being.

If you're uncomfortable with yourself, if you cannot be with yourself, if you need constant distraction, if you need constant stimulus, if you get restless and uneasy when you sit alone in a room or even you're alone in nature, whenever you're alone, you feel, and you need maybe some kind of noise or you need to continuously look at your Facebook or Twitter feed or Facebook, whatever it's called. And that can keep you going. And yet you don't like to be with yourself because you haven't really found yourself.

And there was a famous French philosopher whose name I don't remember. Maybe it was Pascal who said that all the troubles of humanity derive from one single thing. And that is a person's inability to sit alone in a room, to sit quietly alone in a room.

A person's inability to sit quietly alone in a room. What does that, what does he mean? Well, it means to be, to be in touch with yourself, where you yourself, it is, it is your own company is pleasant to you, but how is that possible?

That's possible because you realize who you are. You realize the consciousness that you are. And you need to be alone for that first realization.

And for a while, every human being should spend some time alone before they enter into a relationship. Or if you have come to a relation, a relationship has come to an end, then set some time apart to just to be alone, practice being alone with yourself until you come to a point of enjoying being alone, enjoying yourself. And so you step, you go beyond thought and you go beyond emotion.

We always come back to this and finding the essence of who you are. Then let's say you have no relationship, no intimate relationship. You may still, even if you are, become comfortable with yourself because you realize what that self is, because it's the unconditioned self, which is consciousness.

You may still find that on a level of physicality, and even on the level of emotion, there may be a continued longing for the other. Even if you have gone deep in that rough within yourself to find the transcendent dimension, you as a physical vehicle may still have, you may have the physical desire for the other, and you may have an emotional longing for the other, the other polarity you feel. So you find on the physical and emotional level, you're not complete.

There's a neediness there that you can sense. There's a longing there that you can sense. Now, in the absence of this transcendent dimension, that would be, that longing would consume you.

It would drive you crazy. It would either make you very unhappy if it is not met, or it would drive you out into a place you need to meet. You need to meet the other.

So you go to a bar, or these days, of course, it's easy. You just pick up your phone and you go on Tinder, and there are all the others. So you don't have to be with your longing for very long.

You just go on Tinder, and apparently, I'm told, you just flick, and you go from one person to another, and then you like somebody, and he or she likes you, and then you meet, and so on, so long. I don't know much about it, but it's fascinating. So there's the longing.

Either the longing makes you unhappy, and there are people who are longing, they're just longing for the physical embrace of the other. They're longing for the sexual union. They're longing for the emotional closeness with the other, and it's not there.

For some reason, they can't find the other. There are still, despite Tinder, there are still people who can't find the other, and so they're unhappy, and there's some deep, deep sense of lack, of not, now, if the spiritual, or the transcendent dimension is in you, the longing is still there for the other, or may still be there, not necessarily, but it may be there, and especially if you're in the younger years, the longing is there, emotional, sexual, union, connection, but it is contained within the larger vastness of the transcendent dimension that you can sense in the background of everything. There's the transcendent dimension, and here you are as a form identity with an emotional body and a physical body, and the emotional and physical body want a longing for the other, and yet the transcendent dimension, in that dimension, there's an underlying sense of completeness, but on the more surface level, there is a sense of incompleteness. It's hard to explain, but that's the, which means the absence of the other does not make you unhappy anymore.

You'd simply accept it right now, this, the needs on the emotional and physical level are not met, and yet there's a transcendence there, and then, if there's a transcendence there, then the physical, emotional, longing may not be there continuously. There'll be many times when you're just very happy being alone with yourself. Then, if you then enter into a relationship, no longer, deep down, not needing it anymore, just, yes, on the emotional, physical level, you would still like to have somebody, but the intense neediness to be fulfilled by the other isn't there anymore, because the true fulfillment has already happened to you.

The true fulfillment is already the realization that you are consciousness, that is the fulfillment. Then you, the great freedom is, and the likelihood that a relationship is going to work is that if you no longer need the other as fulfillment, ultimate fulfillment to who you are, then you do not place impossible demands on the other person, and the impossible demand can be summed up in three words. The unreasonable and unrealistic emotional demand can be summed up in three words, and those three words are, make me happy.

If you place that demand on somebody, you're going to be unhappy, and you're probably going to make the other unhappy too, because he or she is not making you happy, so you will make sure that the other is unhappy too. Now, this applies, this is a general thing that applies to all manifestation techniques and all affirmations, and that is an overvaluation of what the world or anything in this world can do for you, an overvaluation of what any possession or expression or experience or achievement or ability can do for you. In other words, there's an expectation that the something that you're able to achieve, to do, to attain, is going to lead to the sense of complete fulfillment and ultimate happiness.

And so in other words, you think that if you only get what you want, then you will be fine and happy, and that's the fulfillment of your life, and this is where some of the books that are about manifestation techniques go wrong. They overlook the fact that even if you became a master at manifestation, you could still be, and you could still end up an unhappy human being, because you have expectations, placed expectations on the world that it cannot meet. But once you know that, once you know that affirmations and manifestations are a lovely tool within certain limitations, they have their limitations, anything that you attain or achieve in this world is limited and comes to an end, and it cannot tell you who you are, and it can't make you happy.

Temporarily, yes, and very often, the very thing that makes you happy today makes you unhappy tomorrow. That's what the Buddha talked about when he said, wherever you go in whatever you do, you'll end up in suffering. So if the spiritual dimension, the transcendent dimension, if you have some access to it in yourself, and then you could practice affirmations, or techniques of manifestation, and you can write down maybe just, not a huge laundry list of exact description of that person that you want, but perhaps just a few things, and this is the person that I have in my life, and that's fine, that's, thank you, that's wonderful to have this person in my life who is, and don't forget the word conscious. So you can put in all kinds of qualities that you want in the other person, but if you forget conscious, then you forget about all the rest.

So you want a person that is a, at least shares your level of consciousness, and that ultimately means, has some access to the transcendent dimension within them. So again, like with the other manifestations, you just write down a few things, you could imagine in your mind what kind of a person that is, and then send it out into the universe, and then go back to your room, and sit quietly in your room, and look around, and look out of the window, and the sky, and look around at the objects near you, and be, have, feel that contentment of just being. This contentment of being, and there's a stillness, and there's a presence in and around you.

And that's great. So you've sent out your order form to the universe, so to speak, and then see what happens. And then you send it out again the next day, but not too much, because, and then wait and see.

And in the meantime, you enjoy yourself. And meeting somebody who is okay with him or herself, with themselves, is just so different from meeting somebody in the state of intense neediness, and the, where the implied unspoken demand is fulfill me, make me happy, tell me who I am, and remove the pain that I feel that comes from not knowing myself.

[Speaker 5] (4:56:44 - 4:58:30)

My thing was about attachment you were talking about, and forms, and as I am progressing in this path, come to know that identification with any form like mom, or a wife, or a professional, just brings more misery. And so, but I'm struggling with, when it comes to your own child, and when I've been in a situation where my own 16-year-old child has not spoken to me for two, like almost one year now. So when it comes to that intimate relationship, it's very easy, like, you know, the attachment, the attachment part with the form, and I go into that pain body, which we already talked about how to dissolve that.

And so the linked question with that is, you were talking in the afternoon about, you know, bringing your vision to in the present moment, and to ask from a state of contentment, like, you know, you have to ask from the full, that you're from full, rather than asking from a space of lack. So I just wanted you to elaborate more on that, that how, if we want to really manifest, like sometimes I visualize that I'm back with my daughter, and we're having a beautiful, like, you know, we had a wonderful relationship. So have that back and visualize that.

And you said the answer for everything is in the present moment. And so how, like the vision, the present moment, and coming from a space of contentment. And I just wanted to, if you could more elaborate on that.

[Speaker 1] (4:58:31 - 4:58:38)

So let's see if I understood correctly. You have a, you're talking about your daughter or your son?

[Speaker 5] (4:58:38 - 4:58:41)

My daughter. I have a 16-year-old daughter.

[Speaker 1] (4:58:41 - 4:58:45)

And she has not spoken to you in a year?

[Speaker 5] (4:58:45 - 4:59:23)

A year. So it was a very complicated divorce we went through, and it was a custody thing. And so we shared like 50-50 custody.

And so I think whenever she's with the father, like, you know, the child is used to get back, in my case. And as we were talking about yesterday, I use my ex-husband as my spiritual practice. Like what we talked about Donald Trump yesterday.

So he's like spiritual practice for so many people. And so is my ex-husband. So the thing is, you know, it's sad when a child is used.

[Speaker 1] (4:59:24 - 4:59:28)

So how do you, what do you experience? What emotion do you experience?

[Speaker 5] (4:59:30 - 5:00:33)

Emotions I experience is obviously there is a lot of pain. And there is a, like, you know, and then again, I feel this, it's the attachment to her form. Like, you know, we used to be together.

She used to be in front of me. And so again, I feel that the connection is deeper, not at the level of the form. It's much more deeper than that.

But there are times when I miss that attachment. And so I feel that this is an opportunity for me to stretch beyond that. And to connect.

And I do meditate and I do visualize that, you know, Monday it will manifest as, again, a healthy relationship. And so I just wanted you to elaborate that how in the present moment, which is so profound, that we have that vision as well as the, and I have learned through the process that everything should start with the fullness and contentment rather than a place of lack.

[Speaker 1] (5:00:35 - 5:08:18)

Okay, there's a sense of lack that is understandable that you don't have that contact anymore. And that to, that sense of lack, I'm just going to amplify it a little because there could be other things also that cause, I mean, not in your case, but for other people present here who have this sense of lack. There could be a sense of lack because you're not, you don't have a partner or you don't have a relationship with a, and you feel something vital is missing in you or a child in your case that you don't have contact with.

And you sense like some, like a hole almost inside you, it leaves that. And it's, there's not, eventually that will heal. So all you can do right now is to acknowledge that that's there, not fuel it too much with memories and thinking, but stay in touch with your daughter at a deeper level of pure love because the attachment is at a more of a, it's an emotional thing, that's fine.

But love is not an emotion. I mean, love often pretends, emotion is interpreted often as love, but true love is deeper than an emotion. And so that true love is there in you towards her.

And although this sense of lack will continue for a while until either the situation changes or some kind of healing happens, time can heal too. But more importantly, to focus on the love that you feel for your daughter so that you can virtually feel her presence within you. You can virtually feel that she is here because in that love, you are connected.

Love is the realization of oneness. So you feel, at a deeper level, you feel one with her. And then the fact that she's not physically there becomes less painful.

There's still some pain there, but you're no longer consumed by it. So you have to go deeper where you feel that love and then you can live with the sense of lack that still exists there. And that also applies to those who feel the sense of lack because of an absence of close relationship.

You feel, I need somebody, I feel this, the loneliness, I feel something so important missing. And it is natural to feel that you're either a man or a woman and so you want the other polarity to feel wholeness. And even if you are, even if you man and man and woman and woman, it's still, you still want, it's still polarity, other polarities meeting.

Doesn't necessarily have to be a biological polarity. But so you feel the longing for wholeness because no human being in the physical vehicle is whole because you're one half of the whole. You're either a man or a woman, you're one half of the whole.

And so the wholeness needs to be there. It's deeper than biological because you can, the longing is there. Also, if you are, if you were gay, either a man or a woman, you would still feel that longing.

So it's not ultimately biological, but energetic. One needing the other to feel complete. There's another longing that is in women and women are obviously programmed to give birth to new life and a woman, but nowadays in our society, in our civilization, a woman can choose not to have children and some women do, they choose for some reason not to have children.

In older, ancient, more traditional societies in our planet, a woman is virtually compelled to get married and to have children because she's regarded as worthless if she doesn't get married and have children. In our Western society, there is a choice, but even if the woman chooses not to have a child, she will feel because of the biological programming, there's a sense of something missing. But that does not mean that every woman should have a child.

If you are in touch with a deeper, the essence of who you are, you can feel a sense of completeness within yourself. And when you feel that, the sense of lack continues, but it's on that more surface level, but it's no longer all-consuming, you can live with it. So in otherwise, in traditional, if you're not connected, if you're a woman and you haven't given birth and you're not connected with the essence of who you are, then you feel that perhaps the most important thing in your life is you've missed it.

So the secret then is connect with your daughter at the deepest level. And I would suggest to you that you act, it's not just something that you do for yourself, you actually do reach her at the deepest level when you do that. Whether she knows it or not, she might not know it in her conscious mind, but she will feel that because space becomes irrelevant at that deepest level.

Doesn't matter where she is, she could be on another planet and she would feel that. So you have to go there, feel that love. And that love is already, it's no longer the form, it goes deeper than the form because the form, of course, is not there, the form of her, but the love takes you beyond form within yourself and you reach the essence of her beyond the form that she is.

And there is a, there will be a connection and you may find that in time, even on the surface level, there will be a reconnection. So that is the practice and the way beyond. I'm not saying there will not be some pain anymore, but you will be able to live with it.

[Speaker 8] (5:08:34 - 5:09:11)

It's the teachings I manage to be often in the present, much more often than before. How do you manage bigger situations than the ones that you can encounter in daily life? For instance, I have a lawsuit right now and that forces me into the past because I have to deal with it, answer questions quite often.

And of course, it pushes me into the future as well because it is a fearful situation. How do I manage to remain present when something big like this comes to the surface quite often and needs to be dealt with?

[Speaker 2] (5:09:11 - 5:09:16)

Right. How are you managing right now?

[Speaker 8] (5:09:19 - 5:09:44)

So right now, I only thought about it because I think about it often. How could I, well, the question I asked you. Otherwise, I tend to think, well, when I receive the next legal letter, I will just deal with it at that moment.

But invariably, because it is quite a big issue in my life situation, it comes back often, as often as before.

[Speaker 2] (5:09:45 - 5:09:52)

And do you have a hidden expectation of the outcome?

[Speaker 8] (5:09:56 - 5:10:01)

For example, do you wanna win? Yes, that it would be manageable, yeah, and it probably will, actually.

[Speaker 2] (5:10:02 - 5:10:03)

What's that, say that again?

[Speaker 8] (5:10:03 - 5:10:16)

That it would be manageable and it probably will, actually, when I think of that, I think it will be because I have to trust the system. It's a divorce, it's a very long, protracted divorce, so it brings.

[Speaker 2] (5:10:16 - 5:10:17)

Oh yeah, I know that one.

[Speaker 8] (5:10:17 - 5:10:20)

Yes. I know, yeah.

[Speaker 2] (5:10:21 - 5:10:21)

Yeah.

[Speaker 8] (5:10:21 - 5:10:22)

Yes, basically.

[Speaker 2] (5:10:27 - 5:11:15)

And those are stressful situations, so it's not about thinking that you shouldn't be stressed. It is stressful, and that's just how it is. But how can you then manage the stress in you when you don't have an attachment to the outcome that takes away some of the stress?

Either way, this event is going to be stressful. It can become less stressful by not attaching yourself to the outcome, by coming to this point. Is there any anger about this, any anger at your partner?

[Speaker 8] (5:11:16 - 5:11:20)

Much less now, I mean, really, not really anymore. Not really? It was, yeah.

[Speaker 2] (5:11:20 - 5:12:20)

But there's some. So, by coming to that point of, I'm going to use the word forgiveness. Forgiveness.

Forgiveness for perhaps the unconsciousness that happened in the relationship. So, Jesus said, forgive them for they do not know what they do. That could even include us if we're unconscious.

Forgive them, not just this one time, but forgive them, I can't remember the exact saying, 70 times, seven times, or whatever it is. So, it's almost this continual forgiveness because this unconsciousness brings about a lot of turmoil inside. It was in, probably, the relationship.

Am I right about that?

[Speaker 8] (5:12:20 - 5:12:21)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (5:12:21 - 5:12:31)

Yeah. And when you came to this spiritual teaching, were you already in the relationship? Or did you come to it after the relationship?

[Speaker 8] (5:12:31 - 5:12:37)

After, when it became dysfunctional, it was actually a humpty-dumpty to be put back together.

[Speaker 2] (5:12:39 - 5:14:39)

Well, that's wonderful because oftentimes, so we can see that dysfunction, something dysfunctional can actually bring about something wonderful, and that is finding yourself again. Finding that love inside of you. So, maybe that relationship won't ever work again, but you can still release it with love.

You can release it with presence. I remember when I had gone through my divorce and then I found out, even though I'm the one who wanted it, I'm the one who wanted the separation, I remember when my ex began to see this woman and had a girlfriend, and I started to feel angry inside. I thought, what is this anger inside me?

I don't even want him. Like, why am I feeling angry? Because this is part of me that started feeling this, brought up a rejection issue.

And how did I work with that? By actually, I actually went into the feeling of it. Feeling the anger, feeling the rejection, feeling every single emotion and feeling it right through.

No thinking about it anymore, just feeling it. And when I went straight in through the feeling, then I came out of it with this love, I thought, and this happiness that he had found somebody. It was a complete opposite of what I just felt like moments ago.

It was this coming out. So there's that saying, the only way out is through. The only way out is through that emotion of what you're picking up and what you're feeling.

So that stress, and you're in this lawsuit. Well, first of all, do you even have to be in a lawsuit?

[Speaker 8] (5:14:40 - 5:14:43)

Well, I tried every negotiation now, there's no more talk.

[Speaker 2] (5:14:44 - 5:15:01)

Okay, so now the only way is to play it, to play it out and see what happens. So how can you bring yourself to that ease of being again? So there's still, because of what I'm hearing you say, there's still some emotion in you.

[Speaker 8] (5:15:02 - 5:15:04)

Some, yeah, a little bit.

[Speaker 2] (5:15:04 - 5:20:43)

Yeah, even that little bit can create that obstacle to inner peace and to a release and to forgiveness. Even that little bit. So it's having to go through it again.

Just go through it. Spend some time alone and don't put a timeframe on it. You might want to put a timeframe on it because you have other things you have to do, but then if you haven't gone all the way through, then you spend some more time on it when you can.

But you can actually release emotion in 30 seconds if you truly accept it and you let go of time and let go of the expectation that it should be any different, that you should be feeling something else other than what you're feeling now. And when you go through that, you will be able to come into this lawsuit with more presence, more love, and a clearer insight on what needs to happen. So maybe it might be, ah, you know what?

I'm just going to give it to her. Give her what she wants. I've been with her and I love her, man.

I do love her. Even though I don't want to live with her anymore, I do love her. Just let it go.

So you know that time when I was speaking about my ex-husband not giving the child support and I was in school and not having that money and we had gone through court about that. And I could have asked for money for myself, but I didn't. I just wanted money for my daughter.

I knew I could take care of myself, but I just wanted that money for my daughter. And then when he stopped paying, because he could. You go through the courts, but now it's different.

And I thought about, okay, what do I do? Do I go back to court again? Do I have to go through this all again?

And then I just went, you know what? No, it's not worth it. It's not worth it to my peace of mind.

I'm not suggesting that this is what you do. I'm just giving you my experience. You find when you're in that stillness, what will give you that peace of mind and what is right action for you.

Not what somebody else tells you, but what is right action for you. And if that means you just play it out, go through the courts, you know in yourself what that limit is, and really it's not gonna be up to you anymore when it comes to the courts. You just present your case.

She presents her case, or he presents her case. And you just see, you already know inside. There's something in you that's settled about this and okay.

But you have to work through and go through those emotions first so that you can gain that clarity and that awareness and that pure understanding of that right action. And nobody can tell you what that's going to be. It will come to you.

It comes through you the more that we are present. And we work through, on that human level, those emotions. And the stuck emotions, the anger that we might feel, the betrayal that we might feel, the resistance that we feel.

All those human spectrum of emotions. Not meant for any judgment, although the mind will judge, people will judge, but they're just human emotions and that's it. They're human emotions and they're just meant to go through and the wisdom comes when you go through it.

After you go through it and you've gone all the way through, wisdom comes and that love appears. The acceptance is fully there. And you wish your partner well.

You want them to feel happiness. You loved them at one point, just as I loved my ex at one point, and I still love him, but not in that way anymore where I want to be with him. So you want to wish your loved ones well.

So there's this, I think there's this saying, I think Gwyneth Paltrow, the actress, came out and said that when she was going through her separation divorce that there's separating consciously. So she may not be on that level, I don't know whether she is or not, but it doesn't matter, it's only you. It doesn't matter about her, it's you.

Are you on that level of consciousness where you can now separate consciously? And that includes going through those emotions until they aren't there anymore. It literally burst like a bubble when I went through it.

It came out the other end, went through those deep emotions.

[Speaker 8] (5:20:46 - 5:20:47)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (5:20:48 - 5:20:49)

You're welcome.

[Speaker 13] (5:21:00 - 5:21:11)

My question raises the issue of trauma. People having survived earthquakes, crimes, car accidents, what would you recommend for their practice?

[Speaker 1] (5:21:12 - 5:33:45)

I'm a crime survivor and sometimes dealing with heavy pain, body attacks, or difficult emotions during meditations. Thank you. Thank you.

Do you want to say it again? Because we never know how long the answer is going to be. It could be a minute, it could be 30 minutes.

It may well be that for humans who have suffered trauma, catastrophic events, anything of that kind, deep suffering, it may well be that, not necessarily, but it may be that during this lifetime, they will not become entirely free of the remnants of the energy left behind by the trauma. But the important thing is the realization that there is in you a dimension that is beyond anything that could ever suffer. And you have to get in touch with that in you that has always been and will always be and always is the transcendent, the formless dimension within you, the formless essence of who you are.

And of course, this is our entire reason for being here is to go deep enough within where you encounter that presence or that spaciousness. Within that presence or spaciousness, it can still happen that the old pain from time to time arises, or it could happen that the presence gradually consumes, burns up the accumulated pain from the past, the pain body. Either way is fine, even if the presence does not completely burn up the accumulated pain or suffering and which therefore then occasionally resurfaces, at least you know your essential being to be the spaciousness.

So from the difference from not having access to the transcendent dimension within yourself and having access is when you don't have access to it, you're completely in the grip of the pain. It occupies you completely. You become it.

It may also use your mind to renew itself because then you remember what happened. And then by using those thoughts, you feed the old pain through the memory of what happened. And so you're trapped in it.

It has a grip on you. Now, when you have access to the transcendent dimension, you realize that you, the pain is there, but you are there. So here's the pain.

And you are the space. And the more you practice, the more you realize you are the space around it. Or another useful practice is to, when you feel it, to accept what you feel at any given moment, the present moment, accept when it arises, but know that it is the old pain.

And the acceptance itself creates the space. And so you, more and more, who you are is not lodged in, identified with the pain, but who you are. So what I'm saying is the sense of self begins to move out of the pain, although the pain may still be there.

The sense of self shifts from being identified with the pain and the suffering me, to being the space behind or around it. And it's a very subtle thing. You have to practice.

The important thing is practice being the space when you are not, at times, when you are not in the grip of the pain, because then you need to see if you can be the space in ordinary circumstances and surroundings. And especially here, of course, a great opportunity for dis-identifying from all the mental, emotional content that still lives in you. Some fine, some painful, some extremely painful, but to dis-identify from it so that it no longer has a sense of self in it, including all thoughts.

Thoughts still arise, but without the me in them. Emotions still come, painful emotions come, but they become divested of the sense of self. And that's a big difference between feeling that you are the pain.

It has taken possession of you completely, and it can easily define your sense of who you are, especially in the case of deep trauma. The pain can easily define your sense of identity. So I have encountered people, I'm sure it's not the case with you, but I have had sometimes questioners and people who have asked about their deep suffering, and they were so identified with their old pain, when I suggested a way of going beyond it, they got angry because they felt that their sense of self had been threatened.

And then in a few cases, when I pointed that out to them, they realized, in one or two cases, they didn't want to realize. But when I pointed out, can you feel that you are angry now? Because I just made a suggestion that it may be possible to, not perhaps to eliminate the pain at once, but to transcend it.

And then, so the egoic sense of self, because here too, whatever you identify with becomes part of ego, and it can happen that people identify with some pain or something they suffered in the past. In fact, it's almost a normal process, and it needs to be pointed out. You need to realize that is not who you are.

And compared to who you are, one could say it's like a bad dream compared to who you really are. You are beyond that and have always been beyond that. You have to access that in you which cannot be touched by that.

And it doesn't mean you cut yourself off. No, the difference is make sure your sense of identity is not in the old pain. That is very important because if it is, you will always fight any attempt to get rid of it.

It's an unconscious attempt of the ego to survive. Very normal egoic motivation. It wants to survive.

So the same thing can happen with deeply held viewpoints or opinions. You have certain, whatever it is, political, religious, or whatever thing you might have seen on the internet, which suddenly has taken possession of your mind and become a kind of mental virus in your head that has taken over 75% of your thought processes. And then your identity is in it and you don't want to let go, or the ego doesn't want to let go.

So a presence, access the presence when the pain is not obvious at those times so that when it comes, you can continue to be there as the accepting witness or presence behind and around it. So when it comes, you accept it. It forces you to go beyond identification with form.

And a point will come where you are thankful for anything, even though it seemed, at the time, seemed terrible, for anything that forced you to disidentify from the egoic sense of self. That's why retrospectively, often people become thankful for their suffering, but then you have to realize you can't just go through the motions. It has to be a true thing.

And that may happen to you also. That's the, the important thing is that the old pain is no longer able to use your thought processes and control your thinking so that you can feel when it comes, it comes in waves, occasionally it comes up so that you can be there as the presence and accept it without it moving into your mind and make you think the memories of what happened and so on, all kinds of thoughts associated with the energy of the pain. That keeps it in place and renews it all the time.

And then you get into a vicious circle. So, and for this, this is why it's helpful to be here as you sit here, even if you don't do anything, presence power grows in you. So it comes more and more.

And then that begins to surround, so to speak, that begins to surround the accumulated pain. It may dissolve it, don't know, but even if it doesn't, basically, if you're no longer self-identified with it, you are free already.

[Speaker 3] (5:33:51 - 5:34:58)

Hello, everyone. And welcome to our Conscious Manifestation 2020 live question and answer session with Eckhart Tolle. I'm so glad that you're here with us.

My name's Tammy Simon. I'm the founder of Sounds True. And it is a total delight and honor to be your host for this session.

Eckhart is broadcasting from his home in British Columbia, while I and the Sounds True team are all in our homes in Boulder, Colorado. We've received many, many questions for Eckhart as part of our Conscious Manifestation 2020 course. And for this question and answer session, which is our last, our final of four question and answer sessions, we've asked several course participants to join us here to ask their questions to Eckhart live.

And we'll be going to those questions in just a moment. First, please join me in welcoming Eckhart. Hi, Eckhart.

[Speaker 1] (5:34:59 - 5:46:35)

Hello, everybody. Wonderful to share this moment with you, this moment. And perhaps we can start with the foundation for your entire life, which is always the present moment.

That's also the foundation for manifestation. Manifesting things externally requires time, but the foundation for all manifestation is in the present moment and lies in the power of the present moment. So let's begin with acknowledging the present moment.

And now you might think that's a normal thing to do, but not for most people. So acknowledging the present moment is to become aware of your sense perceptions at this moment. Visual, let's bring up for a moment the people who are here with us in our gallery room, a number of human beings, many humans, well, quite a few and many others who are not here on the screen, but they're here.

Many humans, I'm going to use the words in a strange way now, not many human beings, just many humans, but one being. That's an incredible realization. It changes the way in which you perceive others.

It also changes the way in which you perceive yourself. You are human, a conditioned entity, a person which has a body, a name, a race, a gender, other things that make up the identity of the person. That's the human.

Beyond that, at a deeper level, is the consciousness, not the conditioned consciousness, which is the mind and the emotional field, but the unconditioned, the light of consciousness that emanates from the source of all life and can be sensed or realized within here and now, only here in this moment. So in this moment, we see the humans. You yourself are one of them.

I am one of them. And if you go deeply into the now, that is inseparable from going deeply within, beyond the conditioned entity. And when you go deep within, thinking subsides, but you stay conscious.

You continue to perceive this world. You perceive other so-called humans. You perceive yourself, your body, but you become aware of, one could say, that without which no perception would be possible.

What is it that makes it possible for you to perceive this world, including the humans that you see there? That doesn't have an answer on a conceptual level, but only on an experiential level. For this world to be perceived, what is indispensable, an indispensable prerequisite is you.

You as the consciousness, without which you couldn't perceive anything. So you are both, on the one hand, you are the human, and at a deeper level, you are the being.

Many humans, one being.

That's the amazing realization that takes you to both. Sensing, as thinking subsides, awareness remains, presence remains, and you can't define it. It doesn't have an age or gender or race or anything.

You just know that you are conscious. It is indisputable. Not only are you conscious, you are consciousness.

If you say, I am conscious, it's not entirely correct, because there's a duality. There's I, who has something that's consciousness, but I, the fundamental I and consciousness are one. So I am conscious is a conventional way of putting it, but the truth is, I am consciousness.

You can even drop the consciousness. I am, and that is the deepest meditation, and that's the foundation for everything. If you lose that, if you don't know yourself as the being, if you only know yourself as the human, no manifestation will be of much use.

You might succeed here and there, but no manifestation will be of very much use. And the world is going to be very frustrating if you miss the foundation, which is inseparable from who you are in your essence, and that essentially is also the essence of what we call the now or the present moment, because the now or the present moment is actually the space for everything, and that is the, for lack of a better word, the unconditioned consciousness. So that's the foundation.

Once you know that, manifestation is a secondary thing that you, from time to time, practice or engaged in, but to put it differently, one could say that when you are in touch with that deeper dimension, then you are manifesting, even when you're not explicitly manifesting something specifically in this world, you manifest a different reality. So this manifestation is, sometimes you may want to manifest specifically, not in order to achieve something that will eventually bring you to some kind of ultimate fulfillment, because it won't, if you have missed the depth dimension, the being, but because that's part of being here in this world, because the universe delights in manifesting, in creating forms. So you might as well participate.

In fact, you're meant to participate in it, the process of creation, but become, be conscious in it. Otherwise there's a dream that you're in, you live in a dream-like world, oftentimes into a nightmare. So you're manifesting.

The reality that you manifest is different when you know yourself as a being, primarily, and then you can accept what you are, who you are as a human, and you accept other humans, humanness, which is always imperfect and limited, but your humanness is no longer a huge troublemaker when you are connected with a depth dimension of who you are, the being that you are, the awareness. Then the human is no longer crazy. Okay, let's go on to the first question.

[Speaker 3] (5:46:38 - 5:46:48)

Very well, yes, we have Pearl here from Chicago, Illinois. Pearl, please go ahead and share your question with Eckhart.

[Speaker 9] (5:46:50 - 5:46:53)

Thank you, Tammy. Can you hear me, Mr. Tolle?

[Speaker 1] (5:46:54 - 5:46:55)

Yes, I can hear you, Pearl.

[Speaker 9] (5:46:55 - 5:48:19)

Okay, thank you. It's nice to speak with you, and it's an honor to be here to ask my question. So interestingly, in your introduction, you just answered my question.

So I'm gonna ask it anyway. So the question I wrote a few weeks ago was about a human being who manifests as a person of color. So I self-identify as a woman of color.

So in spiritual teachings that use some of the language you use, that includes the stories and thoughts, in quotation marks, cause suffering, when someone who identifies as a minority or person of color, and if you're in a predominantly white, middle-class spiritual community, that particular phrase can feel more like spiritually bypassing a human existence that includes race and gender. And so sometimes as a human body, I struggle with those phrases. So I'm just, when I wrote to you, I was really desperate to understand how the teachings that come through you help with that experience of being a human body that has identified with a race and a gender, but also here's your teachings or the things that you can say, but not sure how to reconcile that in our communities that might not look like us.

So that was my question.

[Speaker 1] (5:48:20 - 6:15:28)

Thank you, thank you. So bypassing, that's an interesting term. That you used, and it is something that can easily happen.

It can happen externally. I'll give you one or two examples in a minute, in a second, I suppose. It can happen externally, it can happen internally.

There's an external bypassing and an internal bypassing. The external bypassing would be your encounter situation that is damaging, harmful. It could be that you are living with somebody who is abusive, just an example.

But, and it continues, the behavior of that person continues towards you. And this example can stand for many other things, collective things, other things of a personal nature. So you continue to live with this person and you meditate instead of taking action in order to change the situation Now, in this particular example, it's not likely that you will change the abuser, but you can change the situation, for example, by removing yourself from that situation.

That's one way. But if you are so spiritual that you practice external spiritual bypassing, then you meditate, all you do is meditate every day and kind of denying that the person you are living with is deeply unconscious. And actually the behavior is actually harmful.

It might hurt you or kill you eventually, but you're not taking action because you believe that perhaps it's unspiritual to take action or whatever. You don't want to hurt him or whatever justification you may have for that. The completely different thing would be, before I go on to talk about internal bypassing, if you were trapped in a prison cell with a person who is maybe abusive or extremely obnoxious, whatever it may be, and there's absolutely no way of getting out, then you would have to go in a state of complete surrender.

And that is, there's nothing you can do unless there's something you can do, but in that moment, there's nothing you can do. There are certain situations where action is not possible, at least not right now. Those situations require complete surrender, but many other situations can be changed by taking action.

So bypassing is to avoid taking action for whatever reason the mind comes up with. And that is the external bypassing, but even more importantly than that, internal bypassing is not to acknowledge the emotions that you feel, to deny the emotions that you feel, that emotional pain, for example, not to look at emotional pain. So when you deny, now this spiritual people have been, and religious people, have been doing it for a very long time.

The internal bypassing is to deny the reality of what you're feeling. Traditionally, if you're a religious person, let's say, maybe you're a Christian and you've been taught that a Christian is a good person, you may deny certain destructive emotions, extreme anger within yourself. You cannot admit to yourself that you are angry because it would conflict with the mental image that you have of who you are.

Most people live through a mental image of who they are. And if there's an inner, an emotion, certain emotions that conflict with the mental image, the emotions are denied. So that's internal bypassing.

And you continue to be a highly spiritual person who does not have these painful emotions. But of course, they will come out and they will force you to, you will be taken over by them periodically. That's how a person in the past, Christians often who were unconscious, well, have this image, and then they were very cruel to their spouses or their children and could not admit that the cruelty came from their anger, never acknowledged.

So the trauma happens in many humans, both on a personal level and on a collective level. And the trauma can be of a personal kind and let something very bad happens to you. Your pain is inflicted on you by other humans, often in childhood, but also later on.

And that leaves behind emotional pain. So you live with emotional pain. This can be collective also.

It could be the emotional pain of, it could be, there could be a racial foundation to the emotional pain. In other words, the collective of an entire race could, in the collective energy field, they could have the accumulation of pain that goes back centuries sometimes. And so this I call, as you probably know, I call the pain body, which has a personal aspect, but things you experience in your personal life that leaves that pain, but also a collective aspect.

Here we are talking about, relevant to your question, there is a, for obvious reasons, a collective pain that is of a racial kind in the United States, because it all started with slavery. The fact of slavery that leaves behind this energy field of pain that primarily black people have to recognize within themselves, some have already transcended it. You can transcend it by some more, but it's not fooling yourself and bypassing and saying you have transcended it when you haven't.

So that is, it's also there in the Native American energy field that they experience another kind of pain. It's by the way, it's also there in entire nations in the world where huge suffering happened on a very large scale, such as Germany and Russia, enormous suffering, and that left behind a collective remnant of collective pain in the entire energy field. And virtually every human who lives there has some share in that collective pain body.

So then every human has partly a personal pain body and partly a collective pain body. And sometimes one is stronger than the other. So it's very important to recognize that.

Even white Americans, to some extent, not far less than black Americans, but white men to some extent also have a share in that pain body. They have the collective pain body that is generated through the suffering because both the victim and the perpetrator have a share. This is how the collective pain arises.

So, but how do you deal with it? You have to deal with it. Every individual has to deal with it within themselves.

That's where it is recognized. To recognize that it's there, to recognize it directly so that, let's say it is, it could be anger. It could be things that are related to anger.

It could be resentment. It could be any kind of, it could even be rage, but it needs to, that's fine as long as you recognize it within yourself for what it is. And then you can begin to use it and transmute it into awareness.

And that is why humans who have a strong pain body, whether it's personal or collective, actually the strange thing is, are more likely to awaken spiritually than those who have a weaker pain body. So that's very important to recognize. If you don't recognize the accumulated suffering within yourself for what it is, then it becomes unconscious.

When it's unconscious, it can easily rise up into your mind and create certain thoughts. Then your thinking becomes controlled almost by the pain body. And then your thinking becomes emotionally controlled thinking and it can no longer be rational.

And you would then, the ego would be there without awareness, the ego is there. The great danger is to any human who has suffered, who has a strong pain body, the danger is that you develop an image, which is a mental creation of yourself as a victim. And that is a pitfall.

It's a danger to have any, whether it's a personal or collective, when you, there's a huge difference between recognizing the pain within yourself and realize, know what it is. If it's of a personal kind, you know that it's your dad who did that to you and that to you and your unconscious parents or somebody else did this or that to you. And you recognize that it's there.

If it's collective, you recognize that you not only carry suffering from your personal life, you also carry the suffering of your ancestors. And that is, if you don't recognize it, the suffering becomes incorporated into a mental image. Then your identity, which means your sense of self, becomes predominantly that of a victim.

And that's very dangerous because when you see yourself as a victim, this, to not see yourself as a victim is not a denial that something bad happened to you. It's not transforming something bad that happened to you in the past, transforming it into an identity. That's the trap because then you completely, you become completely disempowered.

But for the ego, the seductive thing is the ego likes it. The stronger, it is always looking for a strong sense of identity. It's looking for a stronger, it always needs enemies.

It needs the other. And so when you see us, it's very, to the ego, it's a wonderful thing to see itself as a victim. It gives you a very strong ego identity.

And that is the case with anybody who has a pain body. A great danger is that you see yourself as a victim of others. This is not to deny that you actually, you or your ancestors were a victim of others, but does that become your identity in the present?

The huge difference is to acknowledge that, yes, you or your aunt or your ancestors were victims. Yes, an undeniable fact. The danger is, is that becoming the main part of your sense of self?

That's where you would go astray. And that's where, then you're not really, all the suffering of your ancestors would be in vain, one could say, because it has not brought you then to a point of consciousness. It has brought you to further unconsciousness.

In Eastern terms, it's called perpetuating karma. Because then you are a victim, then you have enemies. And of course, as a victim, you have, the ego always wants to be superior to others.

That's, it seeks superiority. It lives on, it thrives on superiority. Now, a victim has enormous superiority towards others.

It's moral superiority, of course. So there's a lot of that these days in the energy field. And that's the ego is manifest in that way.

It's highly important for people to be aware of that. And to remember, we are not denying that people were victimized and even are victimized still. On the one hand, that's a fact.

Not denying what you feel in your energy field, but then realize that is what happened, or that is to do with a human, that's how it is. But not to derive your sense of who you are from it. So every, highly important to be aware of that so that you don't perpetuate human unconsciousness so that you can use the suffering in your own life and the suffering of your ancestors and find that the transmutation needs to happen in you.

I know it's happening in you, Pearl. I know it's already happening in you. I can see that.

And perhaps you can help many others also to awaken to that. But you have to be very careful because when you question anything that is ego, the ego can easily hit back at you if you don't explain it carefully and point it out. And if anybody who's not ready to hear it, you will get a reaction.

If you question people's victim identity, you will get an enormous reaction. If they don't understand what you mean by that, because they will, the ego will immediately defend itself. You will immediately become the enemy.

They haven't understood the difference between having been a victim or even to some extent still experiencing discrimination and so on, that those are facts. On the other hand, basing your sense of who you are on that because then the opening into presence or awareness is then completely shut to you when you have a strong egoic identity, or in this case, victim identity, then awareness doesn't rise, which means the power that is there accessible to humans potentially, then you would have no access to it. But the ego feels enormously strengthened and satisfied in its, so that's a, it's a very subtle thing that needs to be recognized.

So that bypassing then is avoided by becoming aware of what it is that you're feeling so that there's an awareness and you allow yourself to feel and recognize it for what it is. It's accumulated emotional suffering from the past, personal as well as collective. And then as you recognize it, it cannot use your mind anymore and it doesn't become an identity, but it's acknowledged, but doesn't become an identity.

So you become, now what happens if you acknowledge the pain body within yourself, it means you're conscious of it. There it is. And a very subtle thing happens when you become conscious of it.

There's this, suddenly you are not it anymore. You are the one who is conscious. You are the awareness for that.

You are the space for it. So you can, you are this, one could, here's the, let's say here's the accumulated pain and here's the awareness around it. You're aware of it.

And as you continue to be aware of it, whenever it arises, one could say that space around it grows, gets bigger. And that space is the space of awareness or presence. And that space is inseparable from who you are as a being.

What you are observing there is the human part, the conditioned, the suffering entity, the human. So you have the being and the human. And then this, as the, what I sometimes call it the light of consciousness, as the light of consciousness shines on it, it becomes transmuted into more consciousness.

So the suffering is like something that you put like a, I think in the power of now, I wrote about it. It's like a log you put into the fire and the fire, it becomes, whatever you put into the fire becomes fire. It consumes it.

So the suffering is transmuted into awareness. And that is part of the awakening. And that's a wonderful process.

And all those who have achieved great things to bring mankind, humankind, a little bit further in the evolutionary process, which means awakening, none of these people had a victim identity. You cannot make a useful contribution to this world if you have a victim identity. So also the great, let's look at the great black teachers who made a huge difference.

Martin Luther King, when you read the writings, there is no victim identity there. You look at Nelson Mandela in South Africa. No, he was for many, many years in prison.

When he came out of prison, he was not the same person as the person who went into prison. He went through a transformation in prison. And when in prison, he no longer had a victim identity.

So he was, power was suddenly came through him. And what he said was very wise. What he did was very wise.

He also, I mean, he could have had enormous justification for making all white people into enemies, but he had already, he had transcended that. And those are the people who can make a wonderful, the only people who can make a contribution to true change is not the people who demonize others or who make others into enemies because that's always a sign of consciousness. Sometimes, yes, you have to defend yourself when you're being attacked.

You have to defend yourself. But to transform others into enemies is thereby strengthening your righteous, egoic victim identity is unconscious. So if anybody, you look at the Gandhi, how he brought about the independence of India, again, not coming from a victim identity.

They all had found that those humans were able to transcend that within themselves and then became enormous power came through them. That's the teaching for, and that's the promise and the incredible opportunity in, let's say, in America for black people to use the suffering and transmute it. And it's been happening.

I know black people, it's happening to you. It's happening to many others. And then experience the power that comes through and they can play an enormous part in the awakening of the country as a whole.

There's enormous potential for the transmutation of all that into consciousness, enormous possibilities. So this is a possibility that's opening up now as a growing awareness of race and so on in the United States, a growing awareness. So that is a possibility.

It can go that way. It can also go, can draw the country further back into unconsciousness. It could be a regressive step too, it can go either way.

In the long-term, even it's a regressive step, in the most extreme scenario, it could lead to civil war or whatever. If that were to happen, even that in the long-term would lead to an awakening, but it's long and painful. Or the awareness that's arising now could lead to a very positive change when an increasing number of humans transcend the suffering within themselves, not by ignoring it, but by acknowledging it and not transforming it into an identity and then becoming aware of the power that lies within them.

So that's the promise and the possibility of the present age.

[Speaker 9] (6:15:30 - 6:15:32)

Thank you. Thank you very much.

[Speaker 3] (6:15:32 - 6:15:49)

Thank you, Pearl. We now have with us Anurag, who's joining us from Bombay, India. Anurag, please go ahead and share with Eckhart your question.

[Speaker 6] (6:15:50 - 6:18:19)

Thank you, Tammy. Hi, Eckhart. It's an absolute honor and a pleasure to see you even through Zoom.

It's uncanny how you've answered the question that I've had since a long time. I've been studying the Upanishads and the Vedas for a while. And the thing that everyone, Adi Shankaracharya also talks about is asangatvam.

And he says the non-attachment. And somewhere, what I had written to you, and I think you've answered it in very specific details already. Somewhere, I began to feel somewhere that it was almost selfish not to identify with the pain of someone else because individual pain body, I can understand, I can wrap my head around it.

But this collective pain body, you sometimes feel so helpless about the things that are happening around. And it sometimes almost feels very, very small to not identify with it and yet do what is required. But sometimes it feels that am I missing out on feeling that emotion and identifying with it?

Because if you bring that awareness of being the witness consciousness to what is happening, there is no feeling that you feel there. And then you look at people around you suffering and then you feel like, am I being insensitive? So it's a very confusing state sometimes.

[Speaker 1] (6:18:20 - 6:41:02)

And yeah. Yes, I understand exactly what you're talking about. Thank you.

It does make sense. So let's see what there is to say about it. There's a wonderful quality that is possible for human beings.

We could call that empathy. Empathy. Empathy is to feel what the other is feeling, to have a, to tune into another and to some extent feel the suffering, the pain of the other.

You can even have, you can have empathy with animals too. You can feel the suffering of an animal. You can feel the suffering of a human.

And the ego is not capable of empathy. So people who are ego possessed to a high degree feel little or no empathy for other humans because their sense of separateness, separation is so strong that the other only exists for them as a conceptual entity. They cannot sense the other as human and they cannot let alone sense the other as the being beyond the human.

So to have the, when you have empathy, this can only arise when there's some absence of ego. So they said it doesn't mean that a person with empathy is completely egoless, but even empathy could be used by the ego. Anything can be used by the ego.

Your spiritual practice can be used by the ego, anything. So, but there's an opening there. And I remember various occasions when I felt what you describe, traveling and so on, looking at human suffering.

And I wept. One can only help a little, but what I wept, that's the human, on a human level, you feel that. Compassion is another word that's sometimes used.

It's very closely related to empathy. Compassion is a feeling, can lead to action, but you know that whatever action you take in the face of human suffering is probably limited. So there's compassion, there's empathy.

The German word for compassion is quite interesting when you break it up and translate it literally. The German word for compassion is mitleid, which translated literally is suffering with, to suffer with someone. Mit means with, leid means suffering.

Mitleid means with suffering, to suffer with someone together. That's a German word for compassion. So as the, it's inevitable that you, that that arises as you gradually free yourself from egoic consciousness, more and more empathy arises, and then you feel that.

I feel it for many instances when I just, I don't, I was in a country somewhere, saw a beggar sitting in the street and I felt tears. Another strange thing I remember, we were in Italy in a small town, perhaps it was Assisi where we had a retreat. I walked, there was a church and the bells were ringing very slowly and then people were coming out of the church carrying a coffin.

So I realized it was a funeral. I don't know who died, somebody died. And I couldn't stop crying for 10 minutes.

I was, it was, I cried because this for me meant the death of every human being. And I, I just was very strange for 10 minutes, I was just crying and crying. And even when I talk about it now, I almost cry.

Why, how could you cry? Because that was on the human level, that's, that everybody's, every human's destiny is that. And on a human level alone, it's tragic.

But as I cried, now this is hard to describe, underneath the crying, there was a very, very deep peace underneath it. One could say almost, perhaps when one talks about it, it's incompatible almost, say, how can, but there was, there was peace and on the surface there was the weeping. I can feel it even now.

Because on a human level, human destiny is tragic. Everybody's attention's to death. It's just amazing.

On a human level alone, each one of us in the not too distant future is going to die. And that's it. And sometimes before you die, you may have to suffer a bit more, physical suffering, whatever it may be.

But now where's the peace? Where does that come from? That you feel in the face of, where you even, you feel it even more strongly in the face of death, which when you observe the fact of impermanence, as the Buddha called it, the fact of impermanence of all forms, and don't deny it, but really face it.

Then by completely looking in the face of impermanence, something, you become aware of something that is beyond impermanence in you. The Buddhists sometimes call it the deathless. Buddhism likes negative terms.

It denies something. The end of suffering, the deathless. Jesus didn't use those terms mostly.

He used more positive terms. He said the equivalent of the deathless dimension in Buddhism, Amaravati, is the term that Jesus used, which is eternal life. Jesus spoke about eternal life, the possibility of finding eternal life.

Sometimes in bad translations of the Bible, it's translated as everlasting life. That's the wrong translation. Eternal doesn't mean everlasting.

It goes on and on and on. No, eternal means timeless. The timeless dimension of consciousness.

Now, I believe I wrote that in a Stillness Speaks book. This is just a little analogy to explain what I'm talking about. If the entire world were green, let's say everything is green in this world.

There's no other color other than green. That means green would not exist. There would be no word for it.

Because for anything to exist, you need the other. So everything is green. There's no green.

You could even apply it to race. If everybody were exactly the same skin color, there would be no race. You could not derive your identity from your race because you can only have an identity because somebody else has a different identity on that level of the human level.

Now, impermanence, the fact that you become aware of impermanence, you can become aware of it, brings up that which is beyond it. Because if there were nothing beyond impermanence, you wouldn't even know it. You'd be so much part of it.

But there is a knowing. So if there's a knowing that this is green, there must be something that's not green. It's a little, just an analogy.

So to become aware of the fact of impermanence means there's something that is beyond impermanence. That can become aware of impermanence. And this is why it's so helpful to, and I love going to cemeteries.

For meditations. So you walk through the cemeteries and you look at the gravestones. What could be better reminder of impermanence than a cemetery?

You look at the gravestones. One of the greatest meditations, highly recommend, walk around and then experience two things. The sadness of impermanence and the deeper peace underneath it.

And again, that brings us back to where we started. The human and the being. The human and the being.

The human is subject to impermanence. The being is the transcendent dimension. The consciousness, the being that is not yours, but it's the essence of it all.

And to be aware of both simultaneously is very liberating. And it's really, it's ultimately, that in itself is a healing thing. When you are aware, when you, let's say you're with a human who is dying, that can also be a very deep meditation.

If you sit with someone, perhaps a loved one, a father, mother, whoever it may be, and you sit with a dying person, and if you become still and alert without any more denial or anything like that, without needing some kind of explanation in your mind or seeking some kind of explanation for it all, you'll become aware of the two levels, the sadness of it, but as you completely accept that, the impermanence of all forms, you become aware of something underlying, something deeper, that's the consciousness.

And that's also the essence of this human who died, the being, that is eternal life. And you know very well when the moment this person has passed away, only the body remains, and you realize he or she is gone. And the physical body was never who that being was.

The physical body was never it. And so it brings you to the realization that you also, that you are essentially invisible. What you see, what I see of myself or what I see of you is very little, almost the body.

You see the body. You see the, you can't even see the thoughts. The thoughts already exist already in the realm of the invisible.

You cannot find a thought. You can examine the brain, but you cannot find a thought. We don't even know exactly what a thought is.

I can remember this moment, my grandmother who died when I was 11, but only this one, where was she all this time? As a thought, as a memory, would a scientist, if he opened up my brain, would he or she have found my grandmother there, the memory of my grandmother? No, because thought already is invisible, exists in the realm of the invisible, and thought is only the upper layer of consciousness.

It's the, so thought is a ripple on the surface of the ocean. So if you can sense that you are also invisible, nobody can find you through the senses. You don't exist ultimately in the so-called material realm.

Nobody would find you. They open up your brain. Where are you?

Gone. So the death is something that is a very important portal into awakening potentially the fact of impermanence. And it's both, it's tragic and it's perfectly fine.

Nothing real can be threatened as the Course in Miracles says at the beginning. Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists.

Herein lies the peace of God. Nothing real can be threatened. So in ultimate terms, the body is not real.

It's just a temporary apparition. Nothing real, nothing unreal exists. Ultimately, it doesn't even exist.

We don't need to go into that. It's like a dream. Herein lies the peace of God.

In knowing this, you have this deep peace. And that's the being, the realization of being. And you can still weep.

And you can also take action to remedy to some extent, as much as possible, the suffering of others. Without being consumed by the suffering of others. Because there are many humans who feel they want to help and eventually they experience burnout and frustration.

That's the danger when you feel like I must help, help, help. Yes, it's wonderful to help. But are you losing yourself in that?

Or are you able to help without losing connectedness to the source? And then an additional dimension flows into what you do. And that is through help.

Then you emanate that. And that also then changes the way in which you act upon the world and help others. A very last, before we finish the answer to this question, a very good question.

A great form of healing, if you want to help others by healing in whatever sense, whether it's physical healing or deeper healing. Deeper healing, of course, means self-realization. Awakening is the only, the true healing.

To heal, to help others with, to heal others is to recognize the, let's say somebody is seriously ill, instead of focusing on the illness, which is on the human level, you focus on the being. On the level of being, that human is already complete and healed forever in the state of oneness with source, with oneness with God. So you can, if you focus in another human being, not on the external manifestation of the human, but on the, who that human is in the essence of their being, where they don't even need any healing, where they are already complete.

Nothing can be added on that level to who you already are. Nothing can be added, needs to be added. And if you focus on that, sometimes a person suddenly feels better or gets better.

So you acknowledge the deeper reality in that human being. The, that's, if you want to go more into that and if you are Christian or if you have Christian leanings or you're still practicing Christian or you still feel a certain affinity with Christian teachings, then that kind of healing is explained very well by a writer called Joel Goldsmith. Joel Goldsmith talks particularly about, he was a healer and a teacher, spiritual teacher.

He did a lot of healing and all his healing is done in that way. Sometimes people would call him up on the phone from another part of the world talking about somebody who needed healing. And he would, even while he was talking, he had never even met that person.

He would close his eyes and completely forget about what they said about this person and just go totally within to the realization of being. And quite often it resulted in a healing on an external level of that person that he had never met. So that's, Joel Goldsmith talks, uses Christian terminology and takes it very, very deep.

So anybody who's interested in that Goldsmith, you need an affinity with Christian teachings, otherwise you won't like the terminology. Thank you so much. Thank you.

Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (6:41:03 - 6:41:17)

Thank you, Anurag. Our final questioner, Eckhart, is from La Jolla, California, Vu. Vu, please come join and share with Eckhart your question.

[Speaker 2] (6:41:18 - 6:41:27)

Hello, thank you. Yeah. So my question is, what do you classify as a true limitation to manifestation?

[Speaker 9] (6:41:28 - 6:41:32)

Something that's really unfeasible. Can you hear me?

[Speaker 1] (6:41:32 - 6:41:40)

I'm just turning up the volume, just a second. I have to find- I have to find- Let me get a little closer. Yeah.

[Speaker 9] (6:41:41 - 6:41:42)

That better?

[Speaker 1] (6:41:43 - 6:41:44)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (6:41:44 - 6:41:45)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (6:41:45 - 6:41:45)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (6:41:45 - 6:41:53)

So what do you consider a true limitation to manifestation versus a limitation of the mind?

[Speaker 1] (6:41:56 - 6:52:34)

Good question. Thank you. Now, when you read what Jesus said, when you have faith, faith in the terms that Jesus used is to be connected with the power within you that is inseparable from the source consciousness.

When you have faith, you can tell a mountain move from here to there and it will happen. Now, that could be a kind of parable or analogy, or some people might want to take it literally. He also said, as you know, I've had before the one statement that encapsulates the entire secret about manifestation.

Jesus said, when you ask for something, believe that you have received it and it will be yours. They just encapsulate. Believe that you have received it.

I've spoken about that at length in other sessions. To believe that you have received it is to feel connected with the source consciousness the essence of being where anything else is. That's the cream, everything else is the skimmed milk.

So if you have the cream, you can manifest anything in the realm of the skimmed milk. Now, that would mean that you can entirely change if the statement about the mountain is to be taken literally, then it would be saying that it is possible to completely change external reality, so-called physical reality, simply by the power of your mind. And I believe that is the destiny of humans.

Eventually, humans will be able to simply manifest through the mind. If that were the, at the moment, no, to some, a few, you can manifest quite a bit. Not immediately.

You always need a little bit of time, mostly. There's a lot you can do. And even sometimes things that you think might be almost impossible, that is too far, that is possible to manifest.

But there are limitations. You're absolutely right to what, and you need to recognize those limitations so that you are not engaged in completely useless manifestation practice, aiming at something that is not within the realm of possibility. For example, let's say I suddenly got it into my mind that I'm going to participate in whatever capacity in the Olympic Games, the next Olympic Games, whenever they are going to be, and I'm going to win a gold medal in boxing or whatever, or jumping or whatever it is.

And no matter how powerful my manifestation is, that is not going to happen. So I know that is an impossibility. Or I want, let's say I got it into my mind, I want to become the world's greatest ballet dancer.

Okay. Now, if I'd been 10 years old, it might've worked, but it's not going to happen, that's for sure. No matter how powerful my manifestation practice is.

So there are, now these things are kind of obvious that there are physical limitations to what you can do or what your body can do. There may also be mental manifestations. Sometimes people have an image in their mind of what they want to be.

But I remember watching years ago when we still had cable television, American Idol. American Idol is all these people who perform, they want to be chosen as the great, the next American Idol in all kinds of singing and dancing and so on. And one is sometimes amazed at the discrepancy between what people thought of themselves, how good they were at singing or dancing and how bad they actually were when they performed.

It's just, the discrepancy was just incredible. They thought they were the potential greatest singer, but they were just awful. Just everybody could see that they can.

Now, that's, now that could be that they haven't practiced enough. It could be that they haven't, that they forgot that in order to achieve mastery in anything, you have to focus your mind and you have to enjoy what you're doing for quite some time before power flows into what you do. So they have just a mental projection.

I'm going to be a rock star, but then all this, the practice, you have to live it. You have to live the music. You have to live or you compose the music and you live it every day.

And you live, your instrument becomes part of your very being and you live it. And you enjoy it. And then you go into the subway and you play there for a year or two.

And then you go somewhere else, a little bar and you play there. That's how many great stars have started. And then you leave.

And there was this book, I can't remember the title. He found him and he looked at various great musicians and dancers who had achieved great things. He calculated that they had 10,000 hours of practice before mastery was achieved and something was able to flow through them that made them great.

With the Beatles, for example, he examined for how many years the Beatles performed in just little bars in Liverpool and then in Hamburg. They were performing in little beer cellars and tiny bars and he calculated and he came to the average figure of 10,000 hours. 10,000 hours of practice.

And that's, so very often the people don't achieve they haven't, the goal may not be totally unrealistic. It may be within the realm of possibility but what they miss is the intervening the journey towards the goal and they don't enjoy the journey and they don't want to, the energy is not there to practice every day, to do every day so that the power of increases and flows through them. Now, many, quite a few of those people, they never consciously manifested something the Beatles, I'm sure it just was a gradual evolutionary process for them before they, what they created was very deeply inspiring.

I mean, the songs are relatively simple but they have an essence. There's something there that makes them that they'll still be around in two or 300 years time. There's something there that's suddenly came and that wasn't there initially.

So are you able to enjoy the doing if the present moment really comes back to the present moment? Do you enjoy the journey towards it? I have the, let's all, let's say you want to become a, people have an image of what they want to become but are not able to give it attention in the continuous, in the present moment so that the journey must be joyful to be empowered.

So many things are possible. Now, even people who seem to have a very bad voice that say this person could never sing, that's not necessarily true. If this person continues, it could happen that something will become through.

Look at somebody like, who was this jazz singer, very famous African-American, very famous jazz singer who had this deep croaky voice. The name escaped me right now. One of the most famous, Louis Armstrong, I think.

Was he a jazz singer?

[Speaker 13] (6:52:34 - 6:52:35)

Mm-hmm.

[Speaker 1] (6:52:36 - 6:52:38)

Was he? I think he was.

[Speaker 13] (6:52:39 - 6:52:39)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (6:52:39 - 7:04:42)

So he had this. I mean, you would say, how could this person ever have a singing career? It's totally impossible.

But the strange thing is, everybody would have said there's no chance for you, just do something else. When he did, eventually something happened. It didn't matter anymore that this wasn't normally regarded as a good singing voice.

There was an essence that came through him that used the voice and touched everybody. So that was incredible. If this person had asked anybody, I want to be a singer, and they said, okay, of course, what you can do, please think of something else.

So often, it is the case, and I don't know, I haven't read his biography. I don't know what his past was, what his journey was. But it's amazing that somebody who has such a bad singing voice can create such wonderful songs.

Louis Armstrong's quite amazing. So there are incredible possibilities that the mind would exclude by saying prematurely. Prematurely.

So many things are possible, but some things are not possible, often involving, as the examples I gave for myself, well, I think to get a medal in the Olympic Games, there may be one or two disciplines that I could still be good at, who knows? One could be, there's a Canadian, favorite Canadian discipline called curling, where you push that thing on the ice. It doesn't require too much physical strength, so there might be a chance for me participating in the Canadian team of curling, but I doubt it.

That's a little aside. Yes, knowing what is possible, but without limiting yourself, as in the example of Louis Armstrong, he would have done if he had listened to others and said, probably told him, your voice is no good. If he had listened to others, and he didn't, fortunately.

And when I was writing The Power of Now, people sometimes ask me, what do you do? And I said, I'm writing a book, spiritual book. And they say, what about?

I said, it's about present moment, living in the present moment. And several times people said, oh, forget about it. It's been done so many times.

This is something that's already been overdone. You should think of something else. This possibly present moment is old hat.

Just don't do it. There's no point. You're wasting your time.

Somebody actually told me, literally, he had read many spiritual books, and said, if you are writing another book about the present moment, you're wasting your time. And I was writing The Power of Now. I didn't listen to him.

I knew I wasn't wasting it. I left the process. It was an empowerment that happened.

It didn't matter to me very much whether the book would be successful or not, which was very much secondary. I knew the book had to be read. If I had not written it, I would have become ill, and I would have died.

That's how strong the energy flow was. If I had not responded to it, I would have died or become seriously ill. So don't necessarily listen to others.

But yes, it is true. On the one hand, there are things that are not possible. For example, physical flying.

Right now, it's not yet possible, at least not in this dimension. You can probably fly in the astral dimension. And when you dream, you might travel to the astral dimension and experience, as I sometimes do, that you actually lift off and you can, there you go.

But in this dimension, I would not step off my balcony and jump off or start practicing flying. I don't recommend it. Certain things are impossible, and you need to just use your discrimination and look at it without limiting yourself unduly, because many things that other people might tell you are impossible are actually within the realm of possibility.

And even certain things that your mind will tell you are impossible may be within the realm of possibility. And again, there's a fine line there. Important thing is make sure that you enjoy the doing of it.

And then you focus on your destination, but enjoy the doing in the present moment. And then whether or not you even arrive at your destination becomes secondary, because there's such deep enjoyment in the present moment. So, because the arriving at your destination, which means achieving your goal, is a relatively short-lived phenomenon.

Let's say your goal is, I want to live in a nice big house. And then you've somehow, you're able to manifest it. And in the meantime, you're presumably engaged in a certain activity that enables you to have that.

And then you sit in your big house. And very quickly, you will experience the state of unsatisfactoriness again, very quickly. Any destination you arrive at is already the end.

And this, many people who have become famous, actors and others, I've spoken to quite a few. And most of them have said, a little while after they became famous, after the initial euphoric high that they were on subsided, they became very unhappy. Although they would have, before they thought when I'm famous, I'll now be happy because everybody will love me.

And everybody will acknowledge how great I am. I'll be happy. I can do anything, go anywhere.

I'll be happy. Yeah, the euphoria was there initially. And then suddenly there was a huge depression set in, unhappiness set in, and they didn't understand it.

So the arriving is very little unless you break through into the deeper dimension of who you are, but you do that now. The realization of being needs to happen now. Then you're not looking to the arriving to free you from a state of unsatisfactoriness.

Your manifestation will become useless if you look to the arriving for state of liberation, from state of unsatisfactoriness or insufficiency or feeling you're not, there's something missing. This feeling that there's something missing does not derive ultimately from not achieving this or that. It derives from not having accessed the vertical dimension in your life, which is to realize the being, and you're still trapped on the level of the human, the doing.

That's where ultimately the feeling of something missing arises. Because in the level of being, nothing is missing. You're already complete.

The rest is a more, is a secondary thing. You could, it's certainly, it's quite nice to achieve certain things on that level. It's fine.

You enjoy it up to a point. You enjoy what you achieve. If you don't look to these achievements for some kind of liberation or fulfillment of who you are, that's true, expecting too much.

The world can't give you that. A certain amount of satisfaction can come, not ultimate, lasting satisfaction. A certain amount of superficial satisfaction when you achieve this or that is fine.

And then of course it changes. Sometimes it leaves you or it evaporates again. So that's, it's a very subtle thing to know, just to summarize the answer to your question.

Yes, on the one hand, there are things that you should not pursue because they are not, clearly not within the realm of possibility. But on the other hand, quite a few other things you could pursue because they are possible, even though people may tell you they are not, or your mind may tell you they're not. But whatever it is, don't, do make sure that you enjoy the present moment.

The step you're taking at this moment is really the most important step ever. There's only ever the step you're taking at this moment. If you don't honor that and give it your fullest attention, then the rest would be very frustrating to honor this, the step you're taking at this moment.

And then perhaps in order to achieve mastery, you need to take 10,000 steps, the 10,000 hours that this man, okay. But you enjoy, you enjoy. While you take this step, you're not counting and saying, okay.

Or you don't count the hours. If you practice dance or music or being an artist or a writer, you don't say, okay, this guy said I need 10,000 hours. So I better start now.

And then you count, okay, I've now done 150 hours. How many more to go? You're not present.

You're not, you don't. The step you're taking now is, then there's a quality in what you do. When you give it attention and honor it, acknowledge it, there's a quality in the doing.

It's hard to define, but there's a quality in how you do what you do. And that empowers it.

[Speaker 3] (7:04:46 - 7:05:03)

Thank you, Vu. And thanks to Anurag and Pearl as well. Eckhart, as we bring our session to a close, could you lead us all together in some moments of stillness?

[Speaker 1] (7:05:04 - 7:07:37)

Yes, thank you. Thank you so much, everybody, for being here, sharing presence. Not your presence, not my presence, just presence.

And become aware of yourself, not only or not mainly as a human with a history, a past and a future, but become aware of the invisible being that you are. So easy. You just have to remember to be aware.

Not, it's not a memory. It's coming back from, get lost in the human, reconnect with being. Stop thinking for a moment and sense that you are still there, not as a historical person, but as a living presence.

Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (7:07:41 - 7:07:43)

Thanks, everyone. Thanks for being with us.

[Speaker 1] (7:08:01 - 8:28:31)

There was a time in my life when I had three cats. I lived with three cats and I mentioned it, I think in the power of now. And I mentioned that I lived with three Zen masters, all of them cats.

I very much enjoyed watching cats, how they rest, how they move. Now, in connection with manifestation, I'll give you a little example of how cats manifest, how you can learn manifestation from cats. When a cat comes up to a very high fence and wants to get across, and sometimes it seems, how could this cat possibly jump over that fence?

It's just too high. And then the cat sits at the foot of the fence and then looks around and then looks at the top. You know, it wants to get up there, but it knows it's very high and then looks around a bit more and looks up.

And you wonder what's going to happen. She can't possibly do that. And then a moment comes when suddenly the cat stops looking around and she just looks at the top of the fence.

And then something happens, an energetic moment comes when you can sense, you can both in a way see and sense, can see that some shift happens in the cat. And she senses, she like shoots an energy stream to the top of the fence. And the moment comes when she basically, she's already at the top of the fence, but she's still down there.

She's already, you can know there's an energy that suddenly comes into the cat. And you know, first of all, any second now she's going to jump. There's no doubt.

Second, you know that the energy suddenly in her that wasn't there before. And three, she has projected herself to the top. Basically, she's already there.

She's just catching up physically with where she is already in the non-physical realm. And then she jumps and up, she's at this incredible height and she made it to the top and then she's down the other end. And you say, wow, I observed that many times when the cat projects itself and then the energy happens.

But in the moment of projection, I get a very strong sense that the cat is mentally already at the top of the fence and just following the mental image with her body.

Anyway, that's how I perceived it and learned from it. If you could manifest in that way, so you create that you have the situation already in absolute certainty, and then just the physical just has to follow.

The physical dimension just follows what's already there in the non-physical realm. That could be a very powerful manifestation. Quite amazing.

You can learn a lot from animals, of course, from nature. Now, many people have already tried certain techniques and for some of them it worked. And they got what they wanted.

Whether or not it made them happy, that's another story. Because whatever you achieve through manifestation, of course, has the limitations that are inherent in all phenomena and that's fine. So it's not the ultimate solution to anything, but it can be part of being here in this dimension and creating in this dimension.

But remember, and if you don't have to remember it, you will experience it, getting what you want probably won't make you happy for very long in the absence of realization of the essence of who you are, the transcendent dimension. No matter what you get is not going to provide some ultimate satisfaction and it will bring up its own problems again. Every new situation will bring up a new set of challenges.

That's just how life is. You will never encounter a situation that represents the end of challenges. Whether that's a relationship, a marriage, some attainment in business or your profession, even becoming famous, if that should happen to you, you will find that any new situation, whatever you create, either through manifestation or just through being attuned without practicing any kind of technique, whatever it is that you attain or achieve will present a new set of challenges that you didn't have before.

Before you had other challenges, now you have new challenges. Sometimes with the greater attainment, it's possible that also bigger challenges come. That's just how life is.

Life is meant to challenge us and that's fine. That's how we grow. And some challenges you overcome through generating enhanced energy or generating more power, inner resources that are generated because of the challenge you didn't know you had them.

And the inner resources enable you to, which ultimately is consciousness expressing itself in some form, helping you to overcome the challenge and then you grow. Or the challenge might be so big that you cannot overcome the challenge. And that's fine too, because that means it's time to completely transcend the limitation.

Through complete acceptance of what is, your inner state becomes independent of external conditions. And so you're free internally, although you may not be free externally. Now, an important thing to bear in mind for manifestation techniques is not to treat it as a deadly serious thing.

Not to, I've mentioned before and I'd say it again, not to exercise willpower, like a strong wanting, doesn't work, to have a playful attitude towards it. You are playing in the realm of form in the same way that sometimes in India, they say that the universe is playing the divine game of creation of form. Leela is the word for it, the divine play.

So the seriousness is not a help. The most powerful thing while you do it is enjoyment, enjoying the practice of it. And even if it comes to nothing, if you enjoyed whatever it is you were doing towards something, what is there to regret?

What you enjoy is the energy of it. And maybe something else will come instead. Maybe you were mistaken and the universe didn't have the same plans as you.

So many people have practiced and succeeded to greater or lesser extent. And many other people have practiced and not succeeded. And so you may ask, you said, well, I read these books about and I practiced but nothing happened.

Well, that can have various reasons. One is you were not practicing in the correct way. Two is you were having unrealistic goals, for example, those two.

Or you were sabotaging yourself through deep seated, semi-conscious thoughts that were deeply ingrained in you. And those thoughts were saying the opposite of what your affirmation was saying. Your affirmation might have been saying the universe is abundant and more and more abundance is coming into my life in many different forms, for example.

And your deep seated conditioning said, I'm not worthy of abundance. Or it says, I feel guilty about having more than other people. For example, so there can be a clash between the statements that you make and more deeply ingrained thought patterns.

So it requires certain awareness, considerable awareness to be aware of deeply ingrained thought patterns that may be semi-conscious. They kind of sometimes almost unspoken thoughts or they exist almost more as feelings than thoughts. Feelings, for example, of not being good enough.

You don't deserve it. Or feelings of you are no good. You're not as good as other people.

Perhaps this goes back to your childhood, what you were taught by parents or school. Feelings about money, that money is very negative feelings around money because in your, perhaps your background, your family background, whenever money was talking about, they were quarreling and there was always shortage and anger and insufficiency about money. I'm associated with fear and so on.

And then you have a statement on top of it that says abundant money is coming to me through my work. And so whatever your statement may be, and it's not coming because there's a more deep seated pattern that says I'm not worth it or money is not good or I don't want it. So it's sometimes not easy to even detect those things because as I said, they may be on a level where they are more like feelings than thoughts or semi-conscious thoughts just under the threshold of awareness.

So you have to go into your, what are your feelings about money, for example, or achievement, any kind of achievement. What are your feelings about achievement? Do you feel bad about achieving for some reason?

And there are other ways in which you can sabotage yourself. You could practice manifestation techniques and those techniques, by the way, should not be practiced not throughout the day or anything like that. Just if you do it, you do it maybe for a week, every day, twice a day for a certain period of time, 10, 15 minutes for a week, two weeks, but definitely not more than that.

And then you let go. And even after practicing certain affirmations or visualizations, when you've done it after 10, 15 minutes, you let go completely. You don't carry it around in your mind.

It's done, you send it off. And then you do it for a while. And then if you overdo it, it has a counterproductive effect.

You do it for a while and then let things happen. Perhaps nothing will happen at all. Perhaps there's a time gap of, and I've experienced a time gap of several weeks to several months even after manifesting.

And then suddenly a shift happens that reflects the original manifestation. And it's important while nothing happens not to become negative or say, oh, I knew it wasn't going to work. Like the woman who wanted to move the hill in front of her house.

And of course, that's another error is to approach a manifestation techniques with a deep seated or say, okay, I'll try it. But really it's unlikely that it's going to work. Obviously then if you believe it's not going to work and obviously that becomes true for you.

So you're also being sabotaged possibly by habitual thought processes that go through your head during the day. And many people have deep seated, habitual and negative thoughts about themselves, about the world in general, about other people. People have, many people have a, see themselves as victims of other people, victims of one person did that to me.

Maybe they, maybe you were a victim, but the problem is, do you have a victim identity? Do you acknowledge that somebody did something to you when you were a child? Yes, that was bad, but it's in the past.

It was bad, it was painful. That person who did it probably most certainly was unconscious, but the important thing is don't make it into an essential part of your sense of self, the fact that you have become a victim. That's a very seductive thing that many people, is a trap many people fall into that would prevent you from any kind of true achievement.

Victim identity, whether it is a victim identity on a personal level or a victim identity on a collective level, that you belong to a group of people who have been wronged or discriminated against. Now, the fact is there have been and are groups of people who have been wronged or discriminated against. That's undoubtedly the case, but if you derive from that fact, if you identify, derive your identity from your group, whatever that may be, political, racial, whatever, gender, all those things can be group identities.

If you derive your sense of self from, belong to that group that is a victim group, and this has become very fashionable these days if you only look on the internet. It's very satisfying to the ego to have that very strong identity, and then because you can be right and enormous amounts of people, they're all very, very wrong and you are morally superior, of course. The moment you become a victim, you're morally superior to many, many others, especially those who victimized you.

You have a strong, very strong identity, and this is very satisfying to the ego and it's seductive and it's very dangerous because if you get trapped in a victim identity, although so satisfying to the ego, it prevents you from any true achievement in life. It would be a huge, huge hindrance, a huge obstacle. Yes, you can still achieve through building up anger and so on.

I'll show them I'm better than them. It's still possible. It's an achievement, however, that is tainted with negativity and with anger and it won't make you happy and fulfilled.

So it's very important to be aware of that kind of thing in your life. And of course, the more you are connected with who you are beyond your form identity, which is what this is all about, the being that you are, that has nothing to do with your gender, with your race, with your political views, with your religious views, whatever they may be. It goes beyond all that.

And so you can send something that is more fundamental, a more fundamental sense of identity than any sense of identity that you could derive from a narrative in your mind because that's ultimately what it is. The victim identity is a narrative in their mind. This is who I am.

This is what they did to us. And this is implied that we are superior to them morally and so on. Even if those things are true, happened in the past, whatever, what's the standard is deriving a sense of identity from that.

That's very, that could be just, that is enough to nullify any effective manifestation statements or whatever visualizations or even achievements in life. It kind of drains you of energy because ultimately a victim is powerless and all you have left then is righteous indignation, making others wrong. So be aware that they're not these thought patterns in you that are completely invalidating what you are trying to achieve.

And another one is the pattern of complaining. They are related, but complaining is not necessarily victim, but there's always an element of victimhood when you complain about other people, situations, places, if you're very critical, if you see more what's wrong than what's good, you see the bad and emphasize what's wrong with the situation, you talk about that, you pay, give attention to that. What's wrong with a person?

Because a person is a conglomeration of all kinds of things. A human being is not just one single thing. There's many, many strands and energies coming together and different ones manifest at different times.

There's never just one human being. You think this is one human being. What aspect of that human being that can be a deeply unconscious aspect manifesting?

There can be another relatively more conscious aspect. So when you, through judgment, be very careful that you don't single out one aspect, a negative one of that person and say that's who he or she is. And then you start complaining about it.

And every time you complain again, it brings you back into ego. And the more you're in ego, the less effective your ability to create is, whether it's through manifestation techniques or just create in any way to have the creative flow go through you. The more you're trapped in ego, the narrower the channel is through which creativity can move.

You can still have a trickle, yes. There are people with big egos who have achieved certain things, but it's made them unhappy. And often the flow is very limited.

They have limited success and then it evaporates. Now, it sometimes happens that when you access a creative energy stream within you, and this is not something that happens very commonly to people. It's still a relatively rare thing, but when you know how it works, then you can actually take positive steps to bring it about or to at least to the possibility of it happening for you.

And sometimes it happens then that you access one creative energy stream that comes out of the unconditioned consciousness. But it's unlikely that you will access that unless you already have a vehicle that is prepared for it, which means this vehicle is some kind of activity that you have already been engaged in for quite a long period of time, repetitive, repeatedly, and certain activity, whether it is to do with writing, creative writing, whether it's to do with some artistic expression like dancing or singing, whether it is to do with even scientific endeavors, scientific research, whether it's to do with what anything that is where a creativity comes in that can enormously empower what you do, the vehicle needs to be prepared. And there has been a study done. I don't remember the details of it.

Somebody worked out that you need to, before the possibility arises of this enormous energy flowing through you, you need like 10,000, I think it was 10,000 hours of practice, dedication in whatever field it may be. So they worked out, for example, how many hours the Beatles, the wonderful, the greatest pop group that produced incredibly, deeply inspired music, how many hours they actually played in little nightclubs in cellars in Hamburg and in Liverpool and they played for years and played and played. And they came up with, I think it was like 10,000 hours, something like that.

And then at some point, suddenly there was another dimension coming in and they became incredibly empowered. And once that comes in, you are capable of inhuman achievements, superhuman achievements. And this is an act of grace, but there's a reason why consciousness chose you because you were prepared.

And perhaps without knowing it, and I don't think, for example, the Beatles ever practiced manifestation techniques. I think they just, I don't know, but what just happened is they laughed, they enjoyed what they were doing. That's an important element.

And they did it. And then at some point, the vehicle was ready and something else came in that lifted them up far beyond anything that any other pop group achieved. There's this.

Now, when this comes, you don't need any manifestation technique that goes far beyond anything when you can touch the creative stream that suddenly empowers what you do to a degree that makes you, well, people might even think you're superhuman, but of course, the danger is that even then, the ego was probably, for this to happen, the ego was out of the way while you practice. And that's important. The ego's out of the way.

You enjoyed the deep enjoyment of the practice without an excessive projection of the desired result, because you need to, even though you know where you want to go, while you're engaged in the practice, it's important not to be attached to some desired outcome because that will disempower you. So you know what your desired outcome is. You have stated it perhaps in your practices, but while you are practicing, you let go of all that.

While you are engaged in the work, whatever it is you do, there's no mental projection of, this is where I want to go that would take away the power. There was a story of, there was an archery competition in Japan, and one of the archers, very experienced one, wasn't doing very well, and the Zen master was observing. And somebody asked the Zen master, why is this person not doing so well in this competition?

And the Zen master said, well, his desire to win drains him of power. His desire to win drains him of power. The desire to win, of course, is an egoic thing.

There are some people who egoically can win, but it's enormous effort and not very healthy. But in most cases, the ego actually prevents you from finding true power. So when you're engaged in activity, the outcome, you must let go of the desired outcome.

Then it's more likely that you will touch that power, that suddenly whatever activity you are doing becomes empowered. So part of manifestation practice is not just affirmations and visualizations. Part of meditation practice is what you let go of rather than what you add to what you're doing.

So instead of adding, not necessarily add a technique to what you do, but just let go of something, then the letting go becomes part of your practice. And the letting go is you let go of needing a particular result, being excessively attached to a desired outcome. Instead, because that takes part of your energy and attention away from the present moment and what you're doing.

You're not totally in it because you want that particular outcome. But when you're so completely immersed in the doing, when you're totally at one with the doing, then you also touch the being. When you're totally at one with the doing, then the being flows because you're totally surrendered in the doing and the energy flows through you.

And then the empowerment can happen. And of course, that is a desired state. Many people see it when you see it in others.

You say, well, this person, I could never do that, but that person does, no matter what field it may be. It can also be in sports. Some achievements, sportsmen and women do incredible things.

And because something else has taken over, it's not just them. And when you say, I could never do that, you're absolutely right, because you as a person could never do that. But if you can access that power that comes from the unconditioned consciousness that can take over, then it can do it through you.

You couldn't do it, of course not. So when it happens, it's grace. But when you know that there are certain things that you can do to open the door, at least to the possibility of it happening.

Again, let's come back for a moment to the time you need. As I said before, the vehicle needs to be ready. And there you need to have focused application of practice, whatever it may be.

I don't know what your work is. You practice. If you're a writer, it's not enough to read about writing or to think about writing.

You need to write every day. And if you throw away most of it, that's fine. But you write and you need to enjoy writing.

And even if the writer's block is there, then you stay with it. You accept, right now it's nothing. You give it, you focus.

And then you write a bit more. You write, write, write. That's just one example.

Dance, whatever it is. Even practice, let's say you work with people in some capacity, helping profession. You're a therapist, whatever.

So at first you're with people and you may apply a certain technique that you have learned and you apply that and then you have some successes and some you're okay, you're not a bad therapist, but not a great therapist. And then after some years or no matter how many, whatever, maybe it's a 10,000 therapy sessions, suddenly you find yourself, you sit there and an energy suddenly comes through you. And you say things that you didn't know you knew.

And you can even feel energetically, there is a, you suddenly, you connect with the person who is with you, the patient, the client, whatever you call him or her. And you feel suddenly an energy arising between you and suddenly enormous healing takes place. That has nothing to do with any technique you've ever learned.

So that is something that you can open the door to it. There's no guarantee that it will happen to you. And if it doesn't happen, that's fine too.

There is, your life is not determined by whatever you achieve or not achieve. Your life is determined by your state of consciousness in the present moment. So the, when it happens, I asked Oprah at some point, if I remember correctly, I asked her, did you ever practice manifestation techniques?

Perhaps when you were very young, just started off in television. And she said, no, I never did that. Although later on, I think she very much appreciates those things.

But if I remember correctly, she said she never did it for herself, at least not in those, at those stages. I don't know if at a later stage she did it. The only thing that happened, she enjoyed what she was doing and she did it more and more.

She started at a very early age, local television newscaster, and gradually the energy came more and more and more and more. And then, and once you touch it, then it gets amplified. And then you get more and more opportunities and possibilities.

You're starting to get bombarded with opportunities and so on, just crazy in a good sense. However, using crazy, it can also be very unsettling because the energy can be so powerful that it takes over your life and then it destroys many other aspects of your life, your relationships and so on, because you're totally in possession of these energy streams, which is neither good nor bad, but when something so powerful takes over your life, then you have to be very careful that it can absorb everything. This is why you get people who have one great, incredible talent, incredible power, but the rest of their lives are in turmoil and they can be unhappy.

So that can become unbalanced if there's not, some people almost accidentally touch that and they have no idea what it is. And then the ego can come in once the achievement grows and grows. The worst thing that can happen to you then is that the ego was still there.

It was just out of the way whenever you practice whatever it is you practice, your work. During your work, the ego got out of the way, but it doesn't mean that it was out of the way completely. And then you go back into your private life and in your private life, the ego that was subsiding while you're doing your work, which is why in your work you have access to that, comes back when you're not engaged in your work and then the ego actually thinks that it is doing it.

That's me and you think you are superhuman. And then you believe in what other people, the projections of all your fans or whatever and you suddenly believe that you actually are a demigod. You can be, and this is how rock stars, for example, they get when they're on stage, they're on this incredible high and when they walk off the stage, suddenly they sit in the room and then suddenly they, ooh, and they need drugs to keep that high.

And they get addicted to the attention, the high and the ego is there very strongly and says, I want more, I need more of this, I need more. So again, it happens when it happens accidentally as it does to certain performers and so on, then it can be, because this is what you're touching is enormous, enormous power. So Michael Jackson, for example, a person who's very kind of, doesn't have much of a personality in his private life, he didn't, kind of very weak kind of as a person, not much personal power, just not particularly intelligent or anything, but the moment he started doing his music and his dance, some, this power came and he didn't know what to do, it just destroyed him.

So when it does happen to you, I believe you would be more conscious so that it's then people to whom it happens accidentally. Whether or not you would even wish for it, I don't know. And this is not something that you, I would even recommend that you do manifestation techniques for, be careful with what you wish for.

Yes, that's another very helpful saying, be careful with what you wish for, because you may, to use another expression, you may get more than you bargained for. And many, I've met people who were made miserable by their success and destroyed by their success. And I've met others who were made miserable by their lack of success.

So it's being, rising above all these things so that if that should happen to you, you realize that you are not that, you are not who other people think you are. Albert Einstein, without, probably without, I don't, as far as I know, he never read any spiritual books but he had a natural spiritual, deep spiritual connectedness. And he immediately, he saw as he became famous, extremely famous, even in his lifetime, he talked about the discrepancy, he used that word, the unbelievable discrepancy between who he is and who people think he is.

Now that is true absence of ego, that is true, it's not faint modesty, it's he was truly humble, which means his ego was not big. He probably had some, but it was not big. It did not claim that it achieved what he achieved.

He remained humble and that was wonderful to see. So he's talking about the absurd discrepancy between who one is and who, and the projections of other people. So he did not form a conceptual image of who he is, he remained simple.

And if you want continued success in life, if you achieve success, the danger comes that the ego, if you achieve success, it means in some area of your life, you are free of ego because the ego is a huge obstacle. The ego wants to be successful, but it can't really be successful. It's a pseudo success, it could be temporary success, and then it'll mess it all up.

So if you achieve success in some area, be very careful that then you identify with your success rather than identify with who you are on the level of the unconditioned consciousness, the presence. And so it can happen then that the ego comes back in and says, I did that. And then you begin to believe in that narrative that you are superior to most humans.

And without knowing it, you have the ego is there and will then represent the greatest obstacle to your continued success. And you become unhappy in your fame or your wealth or whatever it is. I'll tell you that now because it could happen to you that it's a huge, huge challenge to become extremely famous or wealthy or a great master at this or that, very challenging.

And everything that you achieve has a downside. Everything has a, it's important to not to get attached, don't get attached to the achievement. I talked before about don't get attached to the outcome while you are engaged in, that's very important.

That takes away your power. Be fully engaged in what you're doing, fully engaged. But it's already mentioned in the ancient scripture of the Bhagavad Gita in the wonderful, one of the greatest books of the world.

If you haven't read it, Bhagavad Gita. Nobody knows exactly when it was written, maybe 2000 years ago, maybe two and a half thousand years ago, some say even older. It's written in Sanskrit and it's a spiritual teaching.

And one of the things it emphasizes is don't look to the fruit of the action, but be focused on the action itself, but let go of the fruit of the action. Now, what it calls the fruit of the action is a desired outcome. Now you might say, well, if I practice manifestation techniques, don't I focus on the desired outcome?

Well, you focus on the, you can, yes, you focus on the desired outcome for certain moments. But during those moments, you're not engaged in whatever it is you're doing. You do your practice for a limited period of time, as I mentioned, but you don't do it for a long period of time.

You focus on that and then you let go. After you've practiced, you see like the cat at the foot of the wall, the cat projects itself to the top of the wall and then the body follows. In the same way, when you do a manifestation techniques, you project yourself to the desired outcome.

That is, yes, that's the fruit of the action, but that's only for a few minutes. Then you let go, you don't carry that around with you. Then you give your complete attention to the doing, your complete attention to the step you're taking at this moment.

You've already stated to the universe where you want to go. Now, you don't need to look there while you're taking a step here. You look here because that enhances the quality of the step you're taking at whatever that step may be.

I'm using it symbolically. That enhances the quality and the power of the step you're taking at this moment. You need to be fully there instead of thinking of where you want to get to.

That has already been dealt with. You've put that out into the universe. And then how could you not succeed if you enjoy the present moment, the doing of it in the present moment?

That in itself is success. And perhaps, who knows, you may never get there. Something else may arise as you are engaged in this, a totally new possibility that you hadn't thought of, but that would not have arisen if you had not been fully engaged in the doing.

And if nothing happens, at least you had a good time. You enjoyed the activity. What else can you do?

The arriving is overestimated. What the moment of success does for you, any moment of success is basically the end already. And then what now?

This is why, in itself, it's an adding onto, as Jesus puts it, be only concerned with the kingdom of heaven, which is within you. All else will be added onto you. Whatever you may achieve or get is an adding on.

It is not of absolute importance. You may not keep it. You may not be able to keep it, whether it's the success or the fame or the recognition or a possession or wealth, whatever it may be.

You may have to let go of it again, and that's fine. Or it may never even come to you. Does it matter that much?

No. What matters is what state of consciousness do you live in? What is your predominant state of consciousness?

That even if you produce nothing in the external world, if your predominant state of consciousness is presence, I'm not necessarily saying you are present continuously, but substantially, you're present for a large section of your life, you are present. And that is that the way in which you deal with situations, the way in which you relate to other people, your relationships, all that is affected by that state of consciousness. And all that is every human exchange, everything you put out there, everything you write on the, if you write stuff on the internet, as most people do, you're sending out all kinds of messages into the world.

All these things contain a little bit of the trace of your state of consciousness. And they will change the world, even if you don't see how. So anybody who lives in presence predominantly contributes to a change in the world in what I call the new earth.

So whether or not there is a tangible result in some kind of creation, ultimately is also secondary. So you don't need it for your sense of identity because your sense of identity, if it ever became your sense of identity of make me a successful person, you would be back in delusion. Me, the one who has achieved this or that, me, the great, famous, this or that, you would be back in delusion.

You would be back in a conceptual identity, which is ego in the head. You would lose connectedness with being. The challenge when you do have success and or whatever it is, is realize that ultimately, let's put it like this.

You have a form identity. The form identity is a vehicle. The form identity includes your mind, your thinking mind.

That's the vehicle for consciousness. And you have that, and that's fine. That's not who you are.

Ultimately, it's a short-lived formation. So it's only if you realize that, that ultimately to put it in a blunt and perhaps a term that you may not like is, but it's ultimately true, is the continued realization that you as a person are nothing, because that's only a short-lived vehicle, the person, ultimately nothing. You as consciousness are everything, but that consciousness you share with every other human being and life form on the planet.

They may not know it. So don't get too hung up in external success. You can pursue it as a game without excessive attachment to the desired outcome, but as a game, but you can be totally dedicated to it.

Why not be totally focused, participate in the dance of creation, but without the attachment to any outcome, without that sense of deadly seriousness of, ooh, I need to get there. And then life is enjoyable no matter what you achieve or don't achieve. You no longer measure your worth in terms of achievement.

When it comes, it's a pleasant adding onto. So it's very important to, just reminding you again, be aware of your habitual thought processes and to what extent they create a false ego based on condemnation, continuous criticism, complaining, victim identity. Those are the most common obstacles.

And then in addition, be aware of negative states, negative moods that arise so that you can be aware of them rather than in the grip of them. Any negativity is an obstacle to consciousness, but not if you're aware of it, only if it catches you unaware. If you're aware of it, that's fine.

Affirmations or visualizations cannot bring about spiritual awakening. So they're not really designed for that. No matter how often you say, I am enlightened, when you become enlightened, unless you realize the deeper meaning of it.

And then I would phrase it differently. If you said, I am consciousness. Now, that is not a statement of something that you want to achieve.

It's not something in the future. You're simply stating a fact. Now, you may not, you may not, and you probably won't yet fully realize the deep meaning of that.

If you say, I am consciousness, but it is a pointer. I don't, I wouldn't call it a manifestation technique because the realization that you are consciousness has nothing to do with manifesting anything. The realization that you are in essence consciousness is the realization of who you are in the dimension of the unmanifested.

So you don't manifest that you are consciousness. The manifestation is more to do with going out. The realization of your consciousness is the return journey of the universe.

You remember, we talked earlier about the universe one has two directions and they seem to be contradictory. One is it wants to create out there, but it also wants to, there's a pull, always a magnetic pull back to the source. Everything that exists, exists in this tension between the outward and the desire to return home.

And on an unconscious level that manifests as sleep periodically and at death, everything needs to die very soon. It's a return home continuously. Then on a conscious level, the return journey is the realization of there's a spiritual desire in you to know, to go deeper into your being.

And that's, again, the source is calling, but it's not the same as sleep or death. It is, has some similarities with sleep or death and a way in which it's expressed in some spiritual additions is to say, die before you die, die before you die. You die to the conceptual self of who you think you are.

You die before you die. And then you realize who you are beyond that. And let's see, that is the conscious return home of the universe through you.

It realizes, and it does not mean that you now disappear from this dimension. You remain in this dimension and yet you are now, you're connected to the source. That's your return.

You embody the return. And then as you're connected to the source and you remain connected, the source, the intelligence that emanates from the source is using your mind to continue to create, but no longer in a dream-like state, now in an awake state. This is how the universe can create consciously, whereas before all the creations of the universe were a dream-like creations.

The consciousness lost itself voluntarily in every form, in every life form, it represents the dream of consciousness. And then consciousness awakens. Now that's a momentous event, but it doesn't immediately mean the end of the world.

The world continues, but in a different way. It now continues through a conscious creation, very different type of creation. And we have reached this threshold now where this just is beginning to become possible.

Now the threshold is only reached because we're in a critical situation. The shifts can only happen in critical situations. When a critical situation where the old consciousness or the unconsciousness, the collective unconsciousness is threatening to destroy the whole species through its craziness.

It's crazy. It was fine up to a point, that was the evolution. It's only crazy now because it has come to the end of its lifespan, where it's no longer functioning in the same way that the caterpillar doesn't function anymore as a caterpillar when it's destined to become the butterfly, to go through the metamorphosis to butterfly.

The caterpillar becomes very dysfunctional. I can't, oh, I can't crawl anymore. What's happening to me?

Everything is breaking apart. So we have reached the critical threshold now. It is even possible that before the new consciousness arises fully, we may even have to go through a regressive period, but whatever has been realized up to this point remains in a few humans.

If we have to go through regression, it remains in the human collective consciousness. Nothing, no gain in consciousness is ever lost. Ultimately, it remains if we have to go because evolution doesn't happen in a straight upward line.

Evolution happens in cycles and it always, the evolution happens only after a period of regression. So this could happen. There's no, I don't know whether it will or whether we go from here immediately to, because things are also speeding up that hasn't happened before.

Evolution before was a very, very slow process. Things are speeding up. Whether or not we have to go through a regressive period, which on a smaller scale was after Greek and Roman civilization, which was relatively highly developed with philosophy and architecture and art and literature and so on.

And then came 800 years or so of the so-called dark ages, which were not totally dark because there were individuals here and there who were enlightened, but as a whole, it was an age of regression. And then came the Renaissance. And so we have cycles.

And it's possible that we may be at the beginning of a regressive cycle or not. It doesn't matter ultimately. What matters is you.

What matters is your state of consciousness that ultimately becomes the world. So as you can see, there's a lot here. There's more to conscious manifestation.

Manifestation is a small aspect of the huge thing that's happening, but it can be a very, very interesting and necessary part of the arising of the new consciousness. It arises in many ways. It will create through humans.

It will find many avenues, ways of expressing itself through humans. It's a huge, a huge adventure, the evolution to be part of this. Don't let yourself get distracted excessively by politics.

That's, there's no solution in politics. Politics is an externalization of the collective consciousness. So as a 19th century French philosopher once said, every country has the government it deserves.

A challenging statement, but ultimately true. All that it means is it's an expression of the collective consciousness. If a country has one corrupt government after another, then that's an expression of the unconsciousness in the collective still.

And that's fine. It's a learning process. So the government has, is a reflection of the sum total of the collective.

And if you want to change the government, then the most effective way is to work on the level of consciousness, primarily your own. And then that spreads. And then you become a vehicle for the spreading of more consciousness.

And then the, on the external, then things change in the structures also of the social, political, economic structures, which are still mostly to a large extent externalizations of the old egoic consciousness, economic structures, political structures, these are, have been created to a large extent. There've been some, there's some consciousness there too, but still a lot of unconsciousness. There's some consciousness in the constitution of the United States, for example, that yes, there is some consciousness there.

There's a progress to what was there before. But on the whole, there's a lot of unconsciousness in the structures still, so that it would be hard for a really conscious person to become president or prime minister or whatever, because then you will be dragged down by the structures. But that's another story.

So there's a lot more to say, and we will go on with our exploration of manifestation next time. And it'll be the present moment again. Let's take a moment just to be, to return to, if we haven't been there all the time, the present moment, awareness of your own presence.

It's not your own, I just call it your own. It's the presence, a moment of no thought, but awareness. We are not falling below thought.

We are rising above thought, alert presence. You are that, you are that, or even better, I am that. There's only ultimately one.

There's only one consciousness. There's only one being. Is it really possible somehow to be present and work fast and nevertheless be conscious at the same time?

Interesting. Yes, it seems at first that when you are in presence, it almost seems to people that they are forced to do things slowly. And sometimes I'm described as slow by some people close to me.

And it's true. It's true. But sometimes I can be fast too.

There are occasions, there are occasions when I'm quite, when it is demanded, I can be fast. It's presence does not have to be slow. Remember the famous Zen saying, hurry slowly, hurry slowly, translated into Spanish.

Date prisa lentamente. I think that's a good translation. So what does that mean?

How can you go fast and yet be present at the same time? It has a lot to do with the focus of your attention. So you're working here.

If a large part of your attention is where you want to get to, the result you want to achieve, then you're working here. If you said, I can't really put it in numbers or percentages, but I'll do it anyway. So if 80% of your attention is where you need to be, I need to get this finished.

And in the meantime, this creates a tension in you. There's a mental projection where you need to go. And in the meantime, you are doing this in order to get there.

If you can be more present and have 80% of your attention, reverse it, have 80% of your attention in the doing itself and 20% on where you want to get to, because you have to get somewhere, then you can work fast. And working fast with presence implies enjoyment of the activity. And not being present usually implies lack of enjoyment of the activity and the arising of stress or to be working with distaste or some kind of resistance.

And that's not good for anybody. It's not good for you, for your physical body, the people around you. So you can practice with practical, just practice with practical things or even pretend that you're in a hurry.

If you want to have just a trial practice, just pretend that you're in a hurry and you need to get these things, or maybe you don't even need to pretend because it happens often enough in real life that you're in a hurry, you need to get ready in order to leave the house or go out. And is it possible to do what you have to do within that space of a few minutes or whatever time you need to get ready and do it actually being fully conscious of every movement and enjoy the energy behind it. But it's really getting in touch with your conscious attention.

Enjoy the energy that's behind the doing rather than mentally projecting to the future, do it and that's hurry slowly is the meaning is what that means. Running the same, if you have to run to catch a plane or a train or a bus or whatever, you can run and be totally centered and yet run fast. So it's a different kind of running.

It's a smooth, more smooth, less stressful running. You will actually enjoy every step of it because you're not excessively focused on the next moment. And of course, realizing as the Zen master says, Zen is doing one thing at a time.

That's another way of pointing to this way of acting and working. Zen is doing one thing at a time, which means giving your fullest attention to whatever you're doing at this moment. Then you know peripherally, of course, why you're doing it, where you want to go to.

But in the meantime, you do it. And then you're running. And it's not a stressful running anymore.

You're actually, and if you miss the plane, what does it matter? It's just you're standing somewhere else and you're sitting somewhere else and not on the plane. Does it, and you're breathing somewhere.

I need to be on that plane. Maybe not. So that's a, it's a practice of hurrying slowly.

There's also a tendency in our civilization to create more deadlines than are actually necessary for good functioning of things. I find there are often people create for themselves organizations and so on, create unnecessarily tight deadlines that often do not allow things to mature. And so that's, this has to be done by tomorrow night.

Why? And then often they don't even publish us do that. Sometimes they bring out books.

Some books have a slow time to, they gradually acquire their readers by word of mouth and so on. And some publishers, many publishers say, if not enough books are sold in the first six months, it's never printed again. There's not even given a chance.

There are some TV series that may actually be quite good and they have one run and say, not quite enough viewers, but it was so good. It was just allow things to mature a little bit. Why the constant deadlines?

But you may be trapped in an organization that does that, which more likely than not, because of this world functions. So it's ultimately, you may have to create your own organization or if the organization is flexible enough, you may be able to create a different environment. I'm famous for not meeting deadlines.

And the world hasn't collapsed for some reason. But if I were an employee, I would have lost my job many times or probably would have walked out unless I could have introduced a different way of doing things. If there's room for that, that's good.

So your concerns then are about health, you said, and finances.

[Speaker 10] (8:28:32 - 8:28:44)

Finances, yes. And facing that reality and finding peace and staying with peace through the struggle of both.

[Speaker 1] (8:28:44 - 8:36:25)

Yes. Well, the solution is simple. Your main concern needs to be peace.

Then there will be a great improvement in health and finances rather than trying to find peace by improving your health and finances. So your primary aim is peace. Now, the strange thing about peace is you can't find it in the future.

You can improve your health. You need perhaps some future. You need a course of action, your diet or whatever.

Finances, of course, you need to take steps to improve your finances. But peace, you can't find peace in the future. So the portal into peace is through the present moment.

So once you realize that peace is primary, then peace becomes your priority. And peace is found by embracing the is-ness of this moment. Peace is also synonymous with what I sometimes call space, inner space, or stillness.

It's synonymous, same thing. So when you become one with the present moment by not resisting it, the is-ness, I call it the is-ness of whatever is here now, the form that this moment takes. The moment itself is eternal.

It's the now. It's formless. Form comes into the now, or you could say it takes on form by accepting the now, the is-ness of now, peace arises.

The mind can't really do that because the mind argues with the is-ness of now. That's normal. But if you look at it closely, you see that arguing with the is-ness of now is a form of insanity.

Why? Because what is already is as it is now. And it's the simplicity of now.

I'm not talking about a judgment about now. I'm talking about the actuality of now. Now, the difference is the judgment about now says, I'm poor, I've become useless, nobody wants me anymore, for example.

The actuality of now is I'm sitting here on a chair, breathing with $1.50 in my pocket, and there's the sky, and there's the tree, and I can feel the breeze, and I can feel the presence that I am now. This is what is. And the mind says, yes, but you need to find somewhere to stay tonight, okay?

Then you find yourself getting up and doing something, taking some action and going one step after another. And sometimes you find yourself just being taken somewhere if you're present, or a thought comes into your head, says, go there, do that. Make a phone call there.

Or suddenly somebody comes into your life and says, oh, you need that? I have it, whatever. But that's not why you do it.

It's not a means to an end, it's an end in itself. The now, the isness of now, you can't argue with, unless you want to suffer. And the isness of now is not I'm ill, I'm unemployed, I am ruined.

Those are all conceptualizations. The actuality of now is whatever you feel at this moment in the body, if it's, the mind would call it an illness, but what it really is, is there's pain at this moment, there's a disability at this moment, there's discomfort at this moment that I feel. That's what I feel, that's here now.

Can you accept that? Yes, it is. Or there is some other limitation here.

It's cold, but I can't remove myself from here. For some reason, I'm at a bus stop. It's cold and wet, and here I'm standing.

This is what is. Wet, cold, standing, there's no suffering until the mind calls it something and associates with it as yourself. Self-identification with some thought, it's happening to me.

Here I have to stand and wait in the rain and all these people who are probably crooks, they're driving past in their big cars, or whatever the thought brings, and there's the suffering. There's the unhappy me arising, the fictitious edifice in the mind. So if you keep it simple, it's what is the actuality of now?

And you can't live with that? Yes, you can live with the actuality of now. What you can't live with is the judgment of it.

And so that's the practice. And then that brings you to a very simple place in life where all you ever have to deal with is with the actuality of now. If you don't bring the judgments to it, not a problem, and no suffering.

And you're more empowered. Suddenly you become, through not bringing the judgment to it, something deeper arises in you that's power. And then you can be in the situation and suddenly things work for you.

But even if they didn't, it wouldn't matter. So it's not a means to an end. It is already an end in itself.

And then the rest is bonuses. Jesus taught it when he said, all the things that you thought you needed will be added unto you. That means bonus.

Be only concerned with the one thing that matters. That's what he said. Now, they don't understand him in most churches.

Maybe in some they do, but that's what he said. And it's the simplest truth. Just be concerned with that.

And then life becomes reduced to something very simple. And you become very powerful, but not as personal power, as transcendent power coming through you. And that's the beauty of it.

That's the practice. And so use whatever situation arises and then you find peace directly, not through this or through that. Peace directly now, and you're at peace.

Then everything flows more easily because that's your predominant state of consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (8:36:37 - 8:50:00)

I'll answer a question from one of the live stream participants. My ego is very fearful when it comes to money. It is very easy to trigger my pain body as a result of the fears that come from not having enough money to survive.

The terror around this is horrible. And most of the work I do in practicing presence seems to stem from fear of money running out. Life is not great in this area at the moment.

Anyway, and the fears are easy to believe and are very convincing. The fear itself is okay. It's the thoughts that come along with it.

And your fear is deeper than just the so-called money. My guess is is that even when you have the money, you'll still be afraid that you might lose it. So money itself is not the issue.

I've met many people who are on low income and they don't have that fear. They may have that sense of, you know, I would like to have more. I would like to be able to buy this.

But it's those thoughts, the fear of losing, or that the thought that somehow money will complete you, a certain amount will complete you, and you'll be okay, which is an illusion. That's false thinking. So I would suggest that you look at within yourself what exactly are you really afraid of?

I'll give an example. I don't think I was afraid of so much of money, but money was tied to work. And for those of you who don't know my background, I had to work from the age of 12.

Our family had a grocery store. And by all sort of standards now, that would be child labor. But coming from an Asian family, it was perfectly normal to my parents to have the whole family contribute.

And of course, I was born in Canada, and then I see my friends not having to work. I'm like, why do I have to work? And if I didn't work, I was beaten up.

Or I was threatened that I would be killed, and I believed it. So in the process, even though I broke away from that in my teens, I think when I was 16 maybe, maybe 15, where I finally sort of had enough inside myself, because that fear of dying was so great. Fear of being killed or being beaten was so great that I broke away from that, where I finally said to my father one day, because my life consisted of going to school, coming home after school, I get to have a little snack, and then I had to be in at work.

Then I would have a dinner break around six, and then after dinner, I'd have to go back into work. And at 10 o'clock, when the store closed, but we got to leave at nine, and then I had to do my homework. So that was my life for many years.

So I had enough, and then one day, I came home from school, made myself something to eat, and at four o'clock, I wasn't in that store. So he came in and threatened me, of course, to kill me, but I still, and he said, if you're not in the store in five minutes, I'm coming back here, and you know, the first one is I'm gonna beat you, and then again, I wasn't in the store, and then I'm gonna kill you. And when he said, I'm gonna kill you, something inside me just took over and looked at him straight in the eye and said, go ahead.

And I meant it. Every bone in my body would rather die than have to live the way that I lived. Okay, but anyways, let's go a little bit fast forward into the future and as I'm an adult.

So anytime, even though I broke free of that as a teenager, it actually came back to me as an adult. So anytime that I had to discuss anything about business or money in the business, I reacted. So that was my reaction of, I don't know how I'd react.

Sometimes it would be like getting angry or, you know, just getting like all uptight. So I was aware that the money isn't really the issue. The work isn't really the issue.

It was the past experience. So my pain body that was the issue and what I reacted from and had to constantly remind myself while working or conducting any business or about money that this is not true for this moment now. Everything of my reaction and how I felt about it and my fear around it and my anger around it was to do with the past, the pain body.

So the fear here is something else and this is what you need to discover for yourself. Maybe something happened to you when you were younger or maybe it's just that your parents feared it and then passed it on to you for I believe the sins of the father get passed from generation to generation. So it's not just the father.

That's a biblical sort of text. Your parents, the family gets passed down and passed down. So look to see what it is that you are really afraid of and it could be true that, I mean, maybe it is.

Money itself is tight. That's true. I have been almost at the poverty line at one point but interesting enough, my pain body wasn't triggered then and I was actually okay with it.

Yes, I wanted more. I remember writing in my journal how you wanna have goals. Well, my goal was $40,000 and one year later, I met that goal.

But you know, in a way, when I met that goal, it seemed like, well, I can get more things but I was still short on money. So no matter how much money you have, if you have this fear of something that is in you that is from the past, no amount of money is gonna make you free of this fear. You have to face the fear directly and in each moment as it comes up to work with it and sometimes it just takes some time and I'm not saying it's an easy exercise to do is to work with your fears.

It could be very challenging but you have some awareness here. I read that in here that you have some awareness. I see it.

So you can do it. You can work through this and be free of your fear and really only you can do it. We can get suggestions and you have to go through that fear, look at that fear, feel that fear, feel the pain just as I had to feel the pain of each time when I had to sit in a business meeting or talk about money and I'm like, wow, I know.

I knew on one level and that was through awareness that this was something old that I was experiencing but that in itself doesn't make it completely go away. What needs to go away now is that pain body. It's the old accumulation wounds that's lodged in the body and not only that but your thought form around it.

So your story, the attachment to the story. So even though there's awareness there and the awareness is growing in the end and you are aware of it, just as I was aware of it didn't necessarily mean that it completely made this pain body go away. It was over time that it starts to fade and go away.

So look at that and as you experience it each time when you are present and you are practicing presence and you're feeling the fear come up, ask yourself, what is this fear really about? Maybe you already know but maybe you don't. So you can ask yourself, what is this really about?

Then you can ask yourself, even if I have a lot of money, would I still feel afraid? The mind might say no because the mind is trying to convince you already that you just need more in order to get your fear, eliminate your fear but it won't be the case. So it's a process but I know you can work through it.

Just as each and every one of us when we have our fears in our pain body, we can work through it. It may be hard sometimes, yeah. But we can do it, we're doing it.

It's gonna come up. Life will bring this to you so you can transcend it. So you can be that shining light and be the vessel so the light shines through instead of the vessel with all these, the pain body and all these thoughts, the attachment to the thoughts and identification with thoughts and emotions where the light then is covered by this pain body.

So we're doing it. All I can say is really for each and one of us who is working through the pain body, it's good work. You're freeing yourself and not only that but as you begin to work through it and free yourself, you will gain the most profound insights not only about yourself but about human beings.

Just about nature in itself and how the human form works and it's wonderful. And we gain compassion through that because we've actually worked through our own pain body.

[Speaker 3] (8:50:02 - 8:51:00)

Welcome everyone. My name's Tammy Simon. I'm the founder of Sounds True and it is my great joy and privilege to welcome you to this question and answer session as part of the Conscious Manifestation online course with Eckhart Tolle.

Eckhart tonight is with us live from Vancouver and I'm here in the Sounds True studio with our team, all of us having braved about two feet of snow to come join you for this live broadcast. We also have two callers who are already queued up who have questions for Eckhart and we've received many, many written questions and we've chosen a handful that we'll also be covering in tonight's session. And now please join me in welcoming Eckhart Tolle.

Hi, Eckhart.

[Speaker 1] (8:51:00 - 8:51:13)

Hi, Tammy. Hi, everybody. Good evening.

Here we are. I'm glad, Tammy, you made it. Yeah, there's no storm this morning, apparently.

[Speaker 3] (8:51:14 - 8:51:16)

Indeed. Wouldn't miss it.

[Speaker 1] (8:51:17 - 8:55:18)

Right, yeah. So, and here in Vancouver, it's been quite a nice day, mostly sunny, a little bit of wet snow this morning and that's all. So Thanksgiving is coming up in the States day after tomorrow, a wonderful opportunity for everybody to enjoy the company of their loved ones and or practice presence while they are sitting, having dinner with family members.

Maybe we'll be talking about that later on. But I suggest that we start with a short meditation. Wonderful.

Meditation has just started. Meditation doesn't mean that you do anything. You stop doing, so we're not doing a meditation.

I often say that. Meditation is becoming aware of being, so you'll stop doing. Later on, you can become aware, be aware of being, even while you're doing, but for right here and now, we refrain from doing, which also means thinking, but thinking is a kind of doing.

And we are just aware, present. We are not only aware of being, we are aware of what is there on our sense perceptions or emotions. We are also aware that we are aware.

So we are aware of awareness, consciousness. We are aware of ourselves as awareness and that awareness, we could also call it stillness. And let's see if now that we begin to talk, rather I'm beginning to talk and you listen to the words.

In a way, I'm also listening to the words that I speak, but at the same time, have some of that stillness in the background. So we continue to be aware of ourselves as awareness, as consciousness. And so perhaps we can start with the first question.

[Speaker 3] (8:55:20 - 8:55:44)

Here we go, Eckhart. Looking into the future, should we be manifesting our lives in a way that coincides with being present and finding joy in the most obvious thing we can think of? Or should we have certain life goals in mind, which we aspire to while we're being present?

[Speaker 1] (8:55:48 - 9:08:47)

Right. There isn't one answer that applies to everybody and at every time. Before I talk about goals or pursuing goals or achieving goals, it's important to remember that the success of your life, true success is not dependent on attaining goals.

It's a secondary thing. True success is being present with whatever you do, which is being present in the moment. And there's not a contradiction with being present, however, and pursuing goals.

I've spoken to many people who have achieved enormous success in the eyes of the world. And they realized that even that did not bring them ultimate satisfaction. And in some cases, even unhappiness.

And then at some point, those people that I spoke to realized there's a deeper meaning to life than achieving goals. Although goals may be an important part of your life journey but the foundation for your life journey is always consciousness in the present moment and of the present moment. Some people are drawn to a particular activity and they enjoy that activity so much that it gradually blossoms and unfolds and becomes something very big.

And then in the eyes of the world, they have achieved great success. And those people, some of whom I have met, never had a particular life plan. They were so immersed in this deep enjoyment of whatever activity they were pursuing that it seemed not very important what they wanted to achieve through it.

For example, some musicians, the Beatles just continued to make their music and it gradually, it grew and grew and became more and more inspired. And then it became something huge. I also asked Oprah whether she ever had a plan for manifesting.

Did she, when she was young, did she have a master plan for manifesting or whatever she achieved later? And if I remember correctly, she said she did not have a plan. It was just a gradual unfolding of what she was doing.

And she was so immersed in the doing and enjoying it that it wasn't necessary for her to have a great plan. The unfolding happened organically and naturally. So with some people, that is the case.

And then with others, they have a vision that they want to manifest. So I talked to some years ago, I remember Jim Carrey was telling me, the actor, before he became famous, he wrote himself a check for, I think it was $10 million to himself. He was, I don't know whether he's already acting or hadn't started acting yet.

I think he had just started. And he put this check for $10 million to himself in his wallet and it was there for several years until one day, and he often took it out and looked at it. Until one day he was offered a film role and he was paid $10 million.

He actually got the check. So this is an interesting example of somebody who consciously manifested something and then it came to happen. But the other factor we mustn't overlook is that he also deeply enjoyed what he was doing.

He was so good at what he was doing that there was enormous energy that continuously was channeled into his acting. So the vital factor, whether or not you have a goal that you pursue or whether you're simply in deep enjoyment of whatever it is that you're doing, the vital factor is that you enjoy whatever it is that you are doing in the present moment. And that is very empowering.

So whether you are one of those people who have already found something that they deeply enjoy and then they just continue pursuing that or whether somebody who has a vision of what they want to achieve, only you can tell where you belong, whether it's one or the other. Another factor that's important to remember is there may be different time periods in your life. There is a time for becoming extremely active, for manifesting, for creating, for making something happen.

And there may be another time period in your life when you feel what is needed is just to be completely aligned with the present moment without any particular goal for the future, just be completely present in whatever it is that you do in the present moment, where you are more engaged in being, you're being rather than doing. The important thing is, so obviously as you get old, it's more likely that the time periods of being will grow. When you reach the age of 80 or 90, it's more likely that you will be more drawn to being than doing.

But even for a younger person, there may be time periods when being becomes much more important than doing. And you need to recognize what in your life, what period you are at at any given time. If you're a young person, it's much more likely that you will be drawn to doing, but not always.

There are exceptions to this also. When I was in my early 30s, I spent a considerable period of time just immersed in being rather than doing. So there's no general rule.

The important thing is that the present moment should not be regarded as a means to an end if you have goals that you pursue. The present moment is of primary importance. The attention that you give to the present moment is of primary importance.

Whether your inner alignment with whatever is in the present moment is of primary importance. Where you want to get to is always of secondary importance. If your goal becomes of primary importance, then the present moment, the activity that you're engaged in in the present moment assumes secondary importance.

And that is not a recipe for true success. Even though you might achieve your goals, but you're more likely to achieve them when you are not making the present moment into a means to an end. So you give your fullest attention to the present moment.

You know where you want to... Sometimes compared to walking somewhere towards a particular place, you know where it is, how long it might take to get there. So you have a sense of direction and you have a goal, but you're not so focused on arriving at the goal that you disregard the steps you're taking or the step you're taking at this moment.

Then the step you're taking at this moment becomes of inferior quality because your attention is in the future. So the power that lies behind manifesting is the power of the present moment, is the power of now. That is the power that lies behind manifesting.

Then you can bring a vision of what you want to achieve into this power of presence. And the vision of what you want to achieve merges with the power of presence. And then it is, as I've mentioned before, then it feels as if that goal were already a reality.

And arriving at this goal is no longer regarded as absolutely the ultimate fulfillment. The ultimate fulfillment is the present moment. So that's, I've spoken about that already.

So it's being present and having a goal are absolutely compatible as long as you remember that the present moment is of primary importance and it is the point of power is always in the present moment. Whether or not you have goals that you pursue depends, as I said, on your life circumstances at any given time and perhaps other factors. Enjoy what you're doing.

That's really important. If you cannot enjoy what you're doing, then do something else or discover inside yourself what the obstacles are in your conditioned mind to the enjoyment of the present moment.

[Speaker 3] (9:08:53 - 9:09:33)

We have one more written question here, Eckhart, that we're gonna go to next. This person writes in, I started manifesting something very important to me, but instead of being happy and enjoying it, I'm experiencing fear, a lot of fear. Questions arise such as, can I do this?

Am I worthy of success? I'm working to shift my inner beliefs and I know that fear is the ego's game. However, this knowledge doesn't help me much.

How do you suggest I work with my fear? Right.

[Speaker 1] (9:09:35 - 9:22:44)

Yes, good question. The ego itself is almost never at ease with the present moment and in the present moment. So whenever you achieve something, there's a mental pattern inside of you that is a vital part of the ego.

And that mental pattern is an inability to truly be aligned with the present moment and therefore an inability to truly enjoy the present moment. So whenever you achieve something, it's a very common thing that many people experience, they achieve something, then there's something inside them that prevents them from actually enjoying their achievement. They're not happy with it.

Something doesn't feel quite right. Even when they get what they wanted to get, there's a mental pattern that they carry inside that says, oh, there's something not right. Now, in what way that manifests varies from person to person.

It could be that something in your sense, I don't really deserve this or I'm not, why isn't it making me happy? Or there's a fear that, yes, I have achieved that, but I may lose it. What if I lose it?

Or there's a fear that, yes, I have achieved that, but now I see that that isn't enough. I need something else in addition to that. But there's always, in whatever way it manifests, there's always in the egoic mind, there's always something that prevents you from enjoying and fully honoring the present moment.

And that's all part of the egoic sense of self. So it's important to recognize that this mind pattern is a conditioned pattern. And no matter what you achieve and where you go, it will always resurface very quickly.

And that's why many people are always compulsively driven towards the next thing that they need to get to, rather than being able to enjoy something that they have achieved. And then perhaps go on from there in a state of enjoyment and see where that leads. But there are people who are compulsively driven through continuous dissatisfaction with the present moment.

They're compulsively driven towards so-called achievement in order to escape the state of dissatisfaction with the present moment. And so there are many people who live like that. Some are successful or successful in the eyes of the world.

They are successful for a while, but they're not happy in their success. And while they are not happy in their success, in the meantime, they make others around them also unhappy and stressful. So a lot of our civilization still operates in that way, driven by people who are basically dissatisfied and driven, attempting to eliminate their state of dissatisfaction by overdoing, overthinking, sometimes activity that becomes almost purposeless.

So you need to discover these patterns within yourself, the patterns that prevent you from fully being in the present moment, from aligning yourself with the present moment. And you start doing that here and now in the present moment and see, are you able to take your attention into the present moment rather than have your attention continuously absorbed by compulsive thinking? The fear arises through compulsive thinking.

And because the thinker says, which is the egoic self, the thinker says, well, I don't deserve this or do I deserve this? Or the thinker says, oh, that wasn't enough. Why isn't it making me happy?

Why am I still anxious? Why am I still concerned? Why do I have this fear of losing it?

And you will see that those states are generated by unconscious thinking. And so you need to be able to step out of compulsive and unconscious thinking and become more and more familiar with the state of awareness or presence so that these conditioned patterns in the egoic mind no longer operate. So the, how to go beyond the fear is you need to develop the ability to step out of compulsive and unconscious thinking.

And that, because that is where fear gets generated in unconscious thought processes. It is possible even when you step out of thinking for a little while, there may still be emotional remnants inside you that are fearful. They are the remnants of many years of unconscious thinking.

So there may be remnants of emotional anxiety, even when you're not thinking about anything anymore, when you're able to have some inner spaciousness in between thoughts that may be there for a while, but it's no longer being fueled by thinking and it will gradually dissolve. So the key then to becoming free of those unconscious mind patterns is to step out of, to practice stepping out of compulsive thought activity. And now, how do you do that?

Now, we've already, I believe, addressed it quite a few times, but just to briefly summarize, you need to realize that a lot of the thinking that your mind is doing serves no particular purpose except to make you unhappy, for example, fearful, or for example, by telling you that you haven't got enough yet, you need something else, something more, that's not it. You realize a lot of the thinking you do, the overthinking that you do, not only fulfills no purpose, except it makes you stressed and anxious and unhappy, and you live in a continuous state of unfulfillment. Once you realize that, that it has no particular purpose, well, it has one purpose, and that is to keep the ego going.

But other than that, it fulfills no useful purpose. It's useful to the ego, but it's useless and destructive to you. So the ego wants to continue in that there is a momentum behind those mind patterns, and you need to recognize that also, that there is a momentum behind these mind patterns.

When you recognize there is a, behind this, it is a compulsion, it is one of the greatest addictions, is not drugs, one of the greatest addictions, or the greatest addiction, is the addiction to compulsive thinking. Why are you addicted to compulsive thinking? Because you're identified with thought.

You're identified with the movement, you derive your sense of self from the movement of thought. So here, the key to liberation lies in realizing that it fulfills no purpose, it's actually destructive, and then realizing that you have a choice and your choice is as much as possible to step out of thinking, so that in addition to thinking, you have moments of spaciousness in your psyche, in your mind, there are moments of spaciousness. It's not continuously cluttered anymore, your mind.

So you have a choice. How do you step out of compulsive thinking? You have a choice, you realize you have a choice, and then you, okay, I will take my attention somewhere else.

And you take your attention, very powerful ways to take your attention to your breathing, feel your breath going into the body, reaching the abdomen, feel the energy that's there, then breathe out, and again, breathe in, follow the breath with your attention, feel it going into the body, as into the abdomen, that's how it feels, although the air doesn't actually go there, but your attention goes there as you breathe in. And from there, you can feel energy spreading out into the rest of your body, and then you begin to become aware of the inner body, the inner energy of the body, which is an anchor for presence. And then you stepped out of compulsive thinking, you're doing little or no thinking, you've become present.

Every cell of the body has become present. And then all these fearful thoughts, anxious thoughts that come, that spoil your enjoyment of life, that spoil every achievement in your life, that always say, this is not enough, or no, that wasn't it. All these things then disappear, but the key is becoming free of compulsive thinking.

That's where these things arise. Because no matter what you achieve, you could be a master at manifestation, if you never enjoy when you get to where you get, and you always have a sense of, oh, I might lose this again, and the fear travels with you wherever you go, the fear is there with you, the anxiety is there with you, the feeling of I'm not enough yet is there with you. What point does achievement have?

If there's always a sense of that's not it, or I might lose it. So this, why live like that? So become free of that by realizing that the key to liberation is becoming free of the conditioned mind of conditioned thought processes.

And then you can manifest in a non-anxious and non-stressful way, and you can actually enjoy the arriving, the achievement, but you can only enjoy the achievement fully because you enjoyed every step on the way towards that achievement. And then there's not a huge difference actually anymore between the steps, all the steps, that each step that you enjoy as part of your journey, and finally arriving, and you achieve what you wanted to achieve, the achievement becomes the icing on the cake, so to speak. It's no longer the ultimate thing.

And then you live in a different way. Then all you're doing is no longer stressful. And you enjoy as much the step that you're taking at this moment as arriving at this big goal, whatever it is in your life.

And so that's the art of living.

[Speaker 3] (9:22:48 - 9:22:58)

Thank you, Eckhart. We now have a live caller that is ready to join us, Yumi from Vancouver. Yumi, welcome.

[Speaker 1] (9:23:01 - 9:23:02)

Nice to meet you.

[Speaker 3] (9:23:03 - 9:23:06)

Nice to meet you. Go ahead and ask Eckhart your question.

[Speaker 1] (9:23:06 - 9:23:26)

I can't see Yumi yet or hear her. Oh, there she is. Hello, but I can't hear you yet.

I can see your mouse is moving, but I can't. Let's wait. Can you see me?

No, I can see you and I can hear you.

[Speaker 7] (9:23:26 - 9:23:27)

Oh, great.

[Speaker 1] (9:23:28 - 9:23:29)

Oh, you're in Vancouver.

[Speaker 7] (9:23:30 - 9:23:31)

Yes, I am.

[Speaker 1] (9:23:31 - 9:23:33)

Oh, wonderful, wonderful.

[Speaker 7] (9:23:34 - 9:25:14)

Thank you for your time today. Hi, I have a stage four cancer with a very short life expectancy. I have been in treatment for last 20 years.

So many treatments, so many surgeries, and unfortunately the cancer is winning still and growing. I'm making the decision of whether I wanted to continue more treatments, could cause more side effects, or could even destroy me during that treatment in order to prolong my life, who knows how long. Or they say just no to any treatments at this point and let nature take its course.

I have been practicing your teaching. I'm still a beginner, newbie, but I would like to make a decision by using my conceptual mind, but also being inspired by awareness. So my question is, how can I approach to that?

And once I make a decision, how would I know the decision was inspired by awareness? I would like to know your thoughts on that. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (9:25:17 - 9:25:46)

Well, it's, I can see that you are quite present. Have you allowed your condition to be changed? To force you into a state of presence?

Are you present a lot of the time on a normal day?

[Speaker 7] (9:25:46 - 9:26:38)

I do meditation in the morning and at night. I try to be in the nature with my dog every day, spend my own time more than ever. I also take a different mindful meditation class on the top of this.

But so many thoughts are coming in and goes, of course, to make a decision. But I think physically, I'm so exhausted and tired of all the side effects I get to the treatments I've had so many years. And this point, I'm not sure if it's my ego wants to give up, or I wanted to give up, or I just don't want it to get on much harder suffering.

[Speaker 1] (9:26:43 - 9:30:15)

Well, you can have to look within yourself and see whether the, when the thought comes to you that you want to give up, does that arise out of fear or anxiety, or is it if there's a peace behind the thought, there's a peaceful energy out of which the thought arises that this is what you want. For example, a thought might be, you don't want to continue with further treatment if that is your choice after many years. And I'm not saying that you should do this or that, but when the thought comes, be aware of what the energy is behind the thought.

If the energy is fear or anxiety or whatever it may be, then it is generated by the egoic sense of self. But if there's a deep peace behind the thought, then you know it comes from a deeper place and then you can trust in that thought, then it is a true thought that is right for you. So you have to be, see whether the, what the state of consciousness is out of which the thought arises.

For example, when the thought comes that I now want to allow this to take its course and just use the rest of the time to an intense presence practice, most intense presence practice. So that, for example, that would imply that a lot of the time during the day, you would be continuously aware, not just during meditation periods, but continuously in a state of presence, presence with your whole body, every cell of the body, feel the aliveness in every cell of the body, no matter where you are or what you're doing, your primary purpose becomes presence, presence, presence. And then it becomes secondary.

Then you'll know whether or not to pursue further treatment or not. You will know for sure, the more present you are, the easier it is to know for sure what it is you want to do, what it is you need to do. So it's good that you meditate, but in addition to meditation, every minute of the day, don't waste any time.

Allow this condition to force you into absolute presence practice. I can see you're already quite present and this can deepen and will deepen. And what happens then is by this presence practice, you eliminate the egoic sense of self completely.

It dissolves, the ego dissolves. And all that's left then, there is a luminous sense of presence. And this is something that I call

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[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 5:38)

Egoic sense of self completely, it dissolves. The ego dissolves. And all that's left then, there is a luminous sense of presence.

And this is something that I call and has been called in other spiritual traditions, you die before you die. You die to your egoic sense of self. And you realize the essence of who you are is not the body and the essence of who you are is not even not the mind, the thinking mind.

The essence of who you are is the consciousness that you are. And then the ego dissolves and consciousness remains. And that means all fear of death disappears also because you've died already.

And by dying to your fictitious, ultimately fictitious sense of self that everybody lives in, that's the egoic sense of self and realizing yourself as consciousness, then your illness has been the greatest blessing possible because it has brought you into that flowering of consciousness. That is the grace that's hiding behind what looks like a very negative event, but it can become, and I believe it is already becoming for you a doorway into awakening, complete awakening. And once the complete awakening is there, it no longer matters how much time you have left.

It becomes irrelevant. You don't need, if you have more time, it's fine. You say, oh, that's nice.

If you don't have more time, it's fine too. I have already died to my egoic sense of self. So I have already experienced that death.

Whether I have time, more time or not is irrelevant to me. If I have more time, yes, it's lovely to have it. And it's fine not to have it too.

We all, everybody who is listening to this, myself, you, everybody who is here with us, in a few years, we're all going to reach that point of death is coming. Everybody in a few years, it doesn't matter whether it's in two years or in 75 years, it's not that much that passes very quickly too. In a few years, everybody will reach this point of you can see death approaching.

And then, and some people, they're not prepared. They're not ready for it. It becomes a dreadful thing.

If you're not prepared for this, they get completely devastated by death. Whether death happens to somebody close to them or death, they can see death approaching, their own death approaching. It's the most devastating thing.

They've never given it any consideration whatsoever. And that's awful. One of the most important things a conscious civilization should teach people is how to live and how to die.

They go together. They cannot be separated. In order to learn how to live consciously, you have to learn how to die, to die to your egoic sense of self.

So what is happening to you, it's enabling you to go through this process of death consciously. The other people might die in an accident or they die suddenly, or they lose their mind completely for several years and then they die. But it's a great privilege to be able to face death consciously.

It's a wonderful opportunity. So your practice needs to be, your daily practice, and it's no longer even a practice, it's your way of being every day is to be absolutely present and step out of thought as much as possible and just be in the body, in your breath. Every cell of the body is alive with presence.

That's all you have to do. There's nothing else to do. You can't even call it doing, but just the language is limited.

So that's all. And then the deepening, you deepen and deepen and deepen, and then you're already, you die before you die. And whether or not the death of the so-called death of the body comes soon or sooner or later, no longer matters that much.

It's an opportunity for awakening. Life has given you this opportunity and you're already using it because obviously I'm talking to you, you're already engaged in it. And I can see in your eyes, I can see that it's already considerable amount of presence.

It is already happening and it deepens. So it's actually, it's a wonderful thing. And I just, I'm completely with you in this and I've done it.

[Speaker 5] (5:38 - 5:41)

Yes, I'll do this every day.

[Speaker 1] (5:41 - 5:42)

Yes.

[Speaker 5] (5:42 - 5:45)

And I promise you, I'm gonna talk to you next year.

[Speaker 1] (5:45 - 5:46)

Thank you.

[Speaker 5] (5:47 - 5:49)

Yes, I'm gonna be here again.

[Speaker 1] (5:49 - 5:51)

Yes, it is a blessing.

[Speaker 5] (5:52 - 5:52)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (5:53 - 5:54)

It is a blessing that's happened to you.

[Speaker 5] (5:54 - 5:57)

Thank you, thank you so much. Thank you so much.

[Speaker 3] (5:57 - 6:01)

Thank you. Thank you, Yumi.

[Speaker 5] (6:02 - 6:03)

Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (6:05 - 6:21)

Eckhart, another written question here for you. How can we, in a non-egoic way, help our loved ones awaken? Even if we're not fully awakened ourselves, can we help our loved ones?

[Speaker 1] (6:24 - 15:32)

Yes. As long as you don't have the idea in your mind that you are helping somebody to awaken. To have the idea in your mind that I'm going to help you to awaken would become a great obstacle to awakening.

So you awaken, also, if you have the idea in your mind, let me help you to awaken, then there's also the danger that this idea becomes incorporated into your egoic sense of self, because the implication would be that you are superior to the other person. So letting go of the idea that I can help you, that's the first step. And then the greatest help is whenever you are with this person or people, person, whoever they are, family members, the greatest help is for you to be as present as you can.

As present and as non-reactive as you can. So, because just as the unconsciousness, a very unconscious person can infect, so to speak, other people with their unconsciousness in the same way, but in a positive sense, the state of presence can spread or be transmitted to others if you are present, but it doesn't happen if you have this idea in your mind, I'm transmitting presence to you, because that ego has come back in, come through the back door. If you have the idea, I'm so present that I'm going to transmit presence to you, or if you're telling somebody that you are going to heal them or whatever it is, don't do that, it's the ego.

However, the state of consciousness that you are in at any given time is the greatest teaching and you don't have to necessarily say anything. So, whether or not, let's say it's a family member, whether or not a family member recognizes that you are no longer the same person that they knew 10 years ago or 15 years ago, is secondary, it could be that they say, oh, you're not the same anymore, what happened to you? Or maybe they don't see it at all, Thanksgiving is coming up, so many people have the opportunity of coming together with family members and for some of them it's challenging, for quite a few people it's challenging because there's so much past that you share.

And it could be that you might have gone a complete transformation in your consciousness, but whether or not other people in your family or whoever recognize that, we don't know. It could be, and it's not uncommon that people have such a rigid image of who you are in their mind, conditioned by the past, the image of who you are is so deeply lodged in their mind that no matter what transformation happens to you, they won't see it because all they relate to, they relate to you through the mental image they have of you. And that mental image may not have changed in 20 or 30 or 40 years.

So they don't actually ever see you, they only relate to you through the mental image that they have of you. So you don't expect them to recognize that you are present necessarily, may not happen. The important thing is that you are present and you are non-reactive, so you're no longer coming from ego.

You may not be completely free of ego, so you may not be able to sustain it all the time, that's fine, but as much as possible, you practice, especially when you realize you're meeting people with whom you share a lot of past and perhaps a lot of emotions that come from the past or grievances, resentments, whatever it may be. So the greatest teaching is your state of consciousness that somehow will affect other people, not always, not necessarily, but there is a good chance that it will have some effect on others. As long as you don't, I cannot emphasize enough, as long as you don't have the idea that you are doing something for them or to them.

There's a line in the Course in Miracles says, a healer does not heal, he lets healing be. Now, healing is used here in a wider sense, not just healing of a physical condition, but healing of the entire, the mind, the unconscious mind. The healing is the awakening.

So a healer does not heal, he lets healing be. So it's not, you are not doing it. Something may happen through you, but you allow presence to be there.

Then another question is then, there may be rare moments when there's something that you can say that you can, that is conducive to presence or some realization. And if you're present enough, you will know when the moment is right. For example, when there's a true question that the other person is asking, the other person may be asking, what do you mean by that?

When you might have made an innocent remark or something that maybe it's, maybe you say, I don't know what is, surrender or something, but maybe not, it's too spiritual. Breathing or feeling the inner body or feeling the life, aliveness in your hands, that's not spiritual. So it's not too risky.

And then they may ask, well, what do you mean by that? And then perhaps you can say a few things and then they may or may not respond. So at times there may be something helpful that you can say, or if they're in deep suffering, there may be something you can say, but very often better than giving some kind of advice is asking the right questions.

So that often the answer may come through that other person because you asked the right questions. Never come from a place of, I know, and you don't know. That's sometimes the people who begin to awaken spiritually, get the ego comes back, comes through the back door, and then the ego tells it, I know something, I'm going to tell you how it is, and I'm going to tell you what you need, all that is spiritual ego.

The idea that I know something that you don't know. So that is not helpful. And mostly there will be resistance and the other person come up very quickly and then you get into an argument.

And then you will try to convince them that you are free of ego and present. And that would be the most amusing argument possible. So sometimes you may be able to say, or ask the right questions so that person can arrive at their own realization.

So these are ways in which help can happen. Presence can transmit itself, so to speak, but you are never doing it. You step out of the way and something may happen through you, but you are not the doer, you are not doing it.

Then that can be of great help to the other person's awakening.

[Speaker 3] (15:36 - 15:46)

Eckhart, we have one final question, which is going to come from a live caller, Nelly from Puerto Rico. Nelly, welcome.

[Speaker 4] (15:49 - 15:50)

Hi.

[Speaker 1] (15:50 - 15:52)

Hi, Nelly. Hi.

[Speaker 4] (15:53 - 16:07)

Hi, Eckhart. I want to manifest a harmonious relationship with my family. Yes.

I have been able to practice presence in difficult situations at work.

[Speaker 6] (16:08 - 16:08)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (16:08 - 16:29)

But when I'm dealing with family members with whom I have a long history of resentment, I'm not present. I can feel their resentment and although I observe what is happening to me, it's almost like I'm choosing to be unconscious.

[Speaker 1] (16:30 - 16:30)

Right.

[Speaker 4] (16:30 - 16:44)

After the interaction is over, I often feel guilty for not being able to remain conscious. Right. Can you recommend a specific practice I can use in these situations?

[Speaker 1] (16:44 - 24:48)

Oh, right. Okay. Well, you're already halfway there.

Halfway there already, because in the moment when it happens, you know there is an awareness there. It's not strong enough to free you completely from being controlled by these conditioned patterns which are part of the ego, but the awareness is there in the background. They're in the background.

So the thing is that it's interesting that you said it's almost as if choosing to be unconscious and that's a true remark, but one thing that's not correct about it is not that you choose to be unconscious, the ego in you chooses it. So the ego in you, because it needs those patterns, it needs to perpetuate patterns in order to survive in you. So the ego actually needs the unconsciousness.

It chooses the reactivity. It loves the reactivity. But the ego in you, in the background, you are there in the background and the ego is in the foreground.

So you could start, for example, by after something like that has happened, you describe where you become unconscious and you react and then afterwards you feel guilty, which is also the ego, by the way, because the ego loves guilty. So after something has happened, you could replay in your mind what this person said and then responded that, you replay it and so you become very much aware of how your unconscious reactivity but the energy will be less because it's only a memory in your mind now after the, and then when it's just a memory in your mind, then the awareness can be there more strongly because it's not actually happening now. It's not as strong.

And then you can replay the same and in your mind with you being very conscious as you played, how would you have reacted or responded to what this person said? You have been completely conscious. How would you, then you can see, oh, you have a little Buddha there behind you.

Or that little Buddha, what would he have said or not said? How would he have reacted or not reacted? Because the little Buddha is you, that's the awareness in you.

Buddha is not the Buddha statue that we have there. I don't see a Buddha statue as representing a person who lived 2,500 years ago. The true meaning of the Buddha statue is a state of consciousness.

The Buddha is a personification of the state of presence or awareness. The Buddha is awareness. So the Buddha is in you.

And so if you ask, what would the Buddha have said in this particular case, then really you get in touch with your true self, with the awareness, you as the awareness. And if you do that a few times, in other words, you become conscious retrospectively after you've lost it. Oh, there, I lost it, but instead of feeling guilty, let's go through it again.

And then the awareness will grow. And then you go into a same situation again, when perhaps it's the same person, because after a few years, you know the usual thing that usually creates a reaction and you know exactly the patterns, how they operate. And then you say, okay, I'm going to meet this person again now.

But my main purpose for meeting this person now that I can remember whatever it is, known for 30 years, whatever it is, my main purpose for meeting this person is spiritual practice now. Nothing is, everything else is secondary. What you talk about with this person is secondary.

You might be discussing this or that, it's secondary. It's fine, but your primary purpose for being with this person is to help, to allow this person to keep your presence, because this person is there to make you conscious. The entire world is here to make you conscious, not to make you happy.

This person is not here to make you happy. This person is there to make you conscious. The world is not here to make you happy.

The world is here to awaken you, to make you conscious. How does he do that? He does that by making life difficult for you until you're conscious.

You have to confront the problems of the challenges of life are there to awaken you. And if they come in the form of this particular family member or whatever it is, then that's absolutely ideal for you in that moment. So that's the whole purpose of being here.

Your life needs to be made difficult so that you awaken, and then it's no longer difficult. It might still be challenging, but it's not really difficult anymore. I mean, if you want to strengthen your physical body, let's say you want to become stronger.

How do you become stronger? You have to make life difficult for the body. How do you do that?

You have to lift a weight, for example. It's difficult. You have to lift a heavy.

It's difficult. The body doesn't like it at first, but that's how it gets stronger, becomes a new energy comes in. And this is only on the physical level.

And once you start jogging or you start running, you're making life difficult. It's not a comfort zone anymore. If you want to strengthen the body, you have to leave the comfort zone.

But after a while, the new energy comes in, and then it becomes comfortable to actually be engaged in this physical activity. But at first, it's very uncomfortable. Life becomes difficult for the body.

So you only grow. I'm using just this as a physical example on a physical level, but more importantly, it happens also on the level of the awakening of consciousness. It's all the difficult situations and the difficult people are the best thing that could happen to you if you only recognize that and then use them as spiritual practice.

And part of your spiritual practice is you can actually love them, despite all the quirks of their personality and all the weird things that they do and say. You can sense something that's beyond their personality and love them for that. And that's a bonus of being awakened.

You are able to love these people again. So it's a wonderful practice. Do you celebrate Thanksgiving in Costa, in Puerto Rico?

[Speaker 4] (24:49 - 24:51)

Oh, yes, yes, we do.

[Speaker 1] (24:52 - 24:57)

It's great. Day after tomorrow, wonderful opportunity if you're meeting family members.

[Speaker 4] (25:00 - 25:03)

This time will be extra special.

[Speaker 1] (25:04 - 25:16)

Right, yeah. So it makes you understand what your work is now. Yes.

Yeah. Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (25:16 - 26:05)

Thank you. Thank you, Nelly. Eckhart, just one final question relating to our conscious manifestation course specifically.

And I think this is a question that many people have. When it comes to conscious manifestation, I'm confused about the difference between accepting what is and working to change what is. For example, I can accept that humans are behaving in destructive ways towards the natural world, but I feel moved to speak out and help manifest something different and work to protect our environment.

Can you help me understand this paradox in the light of your teachings on conscious manifestation?

[Speaker 1] (26:06 - 35:33)

Right. Yes, yes. Thank you.

Continuously in a person's life, things happen that can be regarded as disruptions. Things go wrong. This happens, that happens.

There's always something that goes wrong periodically. People, for example, people, a person, let's say you're in business, you've come to an agreement with a person and then a couple of days later they call you and they say, no, I've changed my mind. I don't want to stick to it.

I'm not, I'm not, I'm canceling the contract. I've complained about this, that. Just one of countless examples, things go wrong that normally when you're not conscious, it would bring about a state of resistance.

You need to change a situation. The situation is no longer as it should be. And you feel you need to change the situation.

When you're dealing with things in daily life and in business, something comes in, how do you approach, what kind of action do you take when something needs to be done in order to change a situation? Well, one is you treat the situation as something that is, you consider antagonistic. It's a kind of enemy.

Then if the person who breaks the agreement in business or something suddenly becomes your enemy and then you have an enemy and you're fighting the enemy or you start complaining about what a person said or did or failed to do, but should have done. All these, instead of aligning yourself with the situation and saying, oh, the situation has changed. What can I do now that the situation has changed?

Instead of doing that, you make the situation into an enemy, whether it's a person or an event or the enemy can appear in many different forms. So the unconscious way of living is to make a person or situation or group of people or event into an enemy. And then you'd start fighting and you take action in order to change the situation, in order to remove the enemy or whatever it is that you want to do.

And that is action that arises out of state of resistance. It is more effective and 100 times more powerful to, instead of converting people or situation into enemies, immediately see, accept that this is how it is. The person has broken the contract or the person now, suddenly he wants more, I'm taking an example from business, could take hundreds of other examples.

We had agreed on this particular price. Now he wants another higher price. What's happened?

And you can complain about this person. You can shout at him and say, you are dishonest. Instead you see what is possible in this situation, perhaps talking to him, perhaps simply withdrawing, say, oh, it's not, it hasn't worked.

Or you have a conversation, you use the situation instead of fighting it, you align yourself with the situation in the same way that a martial arts practitioner, perhaps the greatest secret of Eastern martial arts is not to oppose the enemy, but to use the force of the enemy's attack and turn it around so that you're not opposing anything or anybody. So you yield in order to win, you yield. And then you can, the very same energy, you can turn around and it's not aggressive, but it's very powerful.

So in any situation that you feel it needs change, what is the state of consciousness in you that gives rise to the action that you feel you need to take? Is it a state of antagonism that you're fighting something or someone, or does it come from a state of, this is how it is? What is possible now?

So the key word is, this is how it is right now. The situation has changed. I'm no longer comparing, well, but yesterday it was like this and it shouldn't have changed, but it has changed.

Now the situation is like this. What can I do now? Of course, yes, you need to take, so acceptance of what is, does not mean you're no longer capable of taking action.

It means the action can actually be more, much more empowered than before, because you're no longer treating a person or situation as an enemy. So you're no longer reactive. If you are reactive, you're also, the action is not, there's no, wherever any wisdom, when you're reactive, there's complete absence of wisdom.

You may be intelligent. What you say is, okay, you may be very clever. You say, okay, now I'm going to show him that I can be more clever than him.

I'm going to do this, this, this, and this. Okay, you can be clever. You can have a limited intelligence that we call cleverness.

You can apply that, but there's no wisdom. And usually the results, you can solve one situation with cleverness, but the solution, your solution brings about two or three more problems that weren't there before. You solve one problem with this particular type of action, and then you create two or three more problems out of that.

So this does not happen when you are, when you are, when the action comes out of the state of alignment with the present moment, then it is powerful. It becomes, well, first, a truly intelligent action. By truly intelligent, I mean there's wisdom in it.

That's truly intelligent action. Because by being aligned with the present moment, you are in touch with the, I call it the deep eye, as I call it sometimes, the depth dimension within you, which is the source of all creativity, the unconditioned intelligence in you, you're in touch with that. And the action can be truly intelligent rather than reactive.

If we want to use semantics, you can be, if you're coming from reaction, you're reactive, that's ego, or you can respond. You can respond that is intelligent in the sense of wisdom, or you can react, which comes from the ego, it's in itself, you have an enemy, you have enemies. The person mentioned, the questioner mentioned climate change.

There's something here that requires action. The question is, are you creating enemies? Are you making this large section of humanity into an enemy and you're fighting them?

Instead of taking positive action, see what is out of the positive things that we can do, rather than that, you are, the ego loves to be right and make others wrong, that you will simply, you're not making a world into a better place by being reactive and by having enemies. So the conscious person is capable of taking powerful action, but he or she has no enemies, and that's vital. And then, enemy in a wider sense, enemy can be a situation, or a person, or whatever it is, or a group of people.

The conscious person has no enemies and if you have no enemies, you can take much more, your action is much more powerful, much more empowered and truly intelligent.

[Speaker 3] (35:36 - 35:43)

Thank you, thank you, Eckhart. Can we end in some shared silence together?

[Speaker 1] (35:44 - 36:44)

Yes, yes, thank you.

[Speaker 3] (36:45 - 36:57)

Thank you, Eckhart. Thank you for this beautiful course on conscious manifestation. Thanks everyone for being with us.

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[Speaker 1] (37:20 - 1:53:26)

So to some degree, if you live consciously and the practice of manifestation techniques could be, but doesn't have to be, a small part of it or a larger part of it, living consciously will greatly enhance the quality of your life, make relationships more harmonious. Probably also your body will function better and you activate certain elements powers that can be very helpful. Helpful, you may find that helpful things happen once you are committed to a certain course of action, wanting to create this or that, and you perhaps speak those words to empower your manifestation, take corresponding action.

Don't go into negative reaction when obstacles appear, then something happens that goes beyond the things that you yourself do and initiate, which is the action, the words, and so on. Something in the universal consciousness comes to help you, and this happens sometimes through just the right thing happening at the right moment, just the right person appearing to solve a problem. Synchronistic events, these tend to happen quite a bit, not to mention, we had it earlier on, we talked about it, not to mention touching an energy stream that is powerful, but you initiated it, you created it, you had this aim, you took correct action, correct manifestation, words, correct aim, and then suddenly it becomes empowered.

There's far more power than you yourself could ever generate, so power that you can, it's a little bit like, it can happen, but it doesn't have to happen. When it happens, fine, be grateful, but it may not happen, or it may. It's like riding on a huge wave, like a surfer riding on the crest of a wave.

And so these are people who have achieved great things, often have said it's a little bit like that. An energetic wave, again, that has its own challenges, as I believe we talked about it before. The greatest challenge being if what you do is being supported by huge influx of energy, bringing about helpful events and so on and so on, and huge amount of, reaching countless people that is usually involved, the greatest danger there is that the ego claims that it did it, and then it'll go to your head, and that will be the beginning of a rapid end.

So what is, so some people who practice some craft, music, it may be writers, composers, it can happen when you're totally focused and you do it for a long time, these people may never have read any spiritual book or may never have practiced any manifestation techniques or anything like that, so it's not, and yet suddenly what they do becomes incredibly hard. So that could happen to you, but if it doesn't happen, you can still have a very pleasant life experience by living in a conscious way. And again, remember, not putting undue expectations upon the world.

Satisfaction is derived from within you here and now, the true sense of beingness or presence, and you can be, you can do without losing yourself in the doing because there's always a sense of beingness or presence in the background. Now, it can happen that people who are into spiritual practice and so on develop the erroneous idea that now that they practice manifestation, that they can control every aspect of their life and their life experience, but that's not the case. No matter how great a master you are at conscious living or conscious manifestation, it does not mean that you are in control of every aspect of your life.

Life is multidimensional, and no matter what you achieve or do, I sometimes call it the script writer in the sky who is infinitely inventive, will surprise you always. You're not, nobody is in total control. There will be unexpected events.

There will be unexpected losses. There will be things happening that you can't explain. There will be, you will experience the polarities.

You cannot escape the polarities. The more you emphasize one polarity, especially if you go to an extreme, let's say you want a life that is, I want total order in my life. I want everything to be ordered.

I want all my schedules in order, my relationships with people, my home situation, everything is controlled. And my garden is all, everything is clipped and looks park-like and there's order in everything in my life. I'm in total control.

I'm the master of the universe. Even your dogs don't misbehave anymore. And then don't be surprised if you take it to one extreme, you will experience, and to some extent, you will have contributed to the arising of the opposite extreme, which of course, the opposite extreme to order is chaos.

And you will experience somewhere in your ordered life, suddenly the eruption of chaos. And you'll be totally flabbergasted. That wasn't meant to happen.

And then you say, I failed in my practice. I need to practice more. No.

You were deluded into thinking that everything could be controlled. You can be, you can guide your life in the right direction. You are not in control.

In many cases, very, very often what you think is best for you may not be best for you. And if you actually create what you think is best for you and suddenly it collapses and maybe only retrospectively, you realize that the collapse of that which he thought was best for you was actually a much better thing. You had to experience a collapse in order to go deeper.

It brought about a shift in consciousness or deepening in your realization. So don't be a control freak. Don't delude yourself into thinking that you can control the whole thing.

And stay in the middle. Life unfolds between the polarities of order and chaos. If you had continuous order only, whether it's in a person's life or in the life of a country, you would create the other polarity, chaos.

There have been and there are countries that have such a dictatorial government that there is very little crime and everything seems to be very orderly. And yet, usually they don't end well. And usually, sooner or later, chaos erupts.

To eliminate all crime, of course, the government would have to become the criminal, as was the case under National Socialism in Germany. There was relatively little crime compared to now. Of course, the government itself was responsible for the crime, so then they didn't need the criminals.

North Korea may be a bit similar. Soviet Russia might have been similar. So don't be afraid of some chaos when it does come.

You have to experience, and this is not bad. It always means something dissolves and to make room for something new, to be engaged in conscious creation through applied power of human consciousness is something relatively new, although Jesus obviously talked about it, but I don't think many people actually understood for the past 2,000 years what he meant when, for example, when he said, when you pray for something, believe or feel that you have already received it and it will be given to you.

I don't think people really understood what he points to, what that means in your consciousness, but we begin to understand it now. And the ability to create consciously as a co-creator with the universe, because the universe itself creates countless things, how it does that on the unseen, it is very complex. We don't know what happens as the emanation that comes from source brings about the manifold phenomena and life forms in our universe, what is underneath the surface, the energy fields, that create form and that's the universe.

And now humans can now begin to realize that they can also create through application of their mind. They can create, participate in the creative process, but this cannot be fully realized until or unless the human ego subsides, because the ego is a kind of dysfunction within the human consciousness, the collective consciousness. And as long as the ego is there, the ability of humans to bring about better things through conscious creation is greatly diminished.

One thing is for sure, and that is that we are living at a time of crisis, which at the moment looks like a regression, because there's an enormous amount of unconsciousness manifesting in the political situation in many countries. And you can see it in the media, the mainstream media, you can see it on the internet. Where this is going, it could be the beginning of a regressive movement.

In other words, chaos. The Western countries and some other countries in the East also have lived in relative order since the end of the Second World War, with a few exceptions. Almost excessive order in some countries where life became just very easy, but also empty.

Just consumption, pleasure, not no depth dimension anymore to life. And so it could well be that a period of collective chaos or disorder will have to be experienced. And if that is the case, it's a necessary prelude to the arising of a new order.

But in the meantime, it's important for us to stay conscious, even while things enter a state of disorder or chaos, not to get drawn into that so that we can hold the frequency, so to speak, collectively, we can hold the frequency of presence, even while the large part of the world is experiencing disorder or chaos. Be careful that you do not absorb unconscious collective thoughts from the media and the internet. It's hard to see how manipulated everything is these days, unless you are really careful.

And then you believe everything you hear in the news, but what you see in the news is one perspective, and often it is a limited and distorted perspective. I listen to the news every day for a little while because I just want to know what's going on. It's interesting.

And I usually listen to news from several countries. If you only listen to news from one country, you may get a very limited view. You get at least other perspectives on situations.

And you can have a certain detachment and stay present and be, if you participate in the discourse that happens, the collective public discourse that happens through countless avenues on the internet, online, then really make sure that your communication is an expression of consciousness, that it's conscious, your statements are conscious. It's easy to get drawn into unconsciousness through reactions. You can see how easy it is if people are meeting in one room.

There's a meeting, let's say there are 10 people present, and one person is very unconscious. And this one person starts shouting and accusing and so on. It's very easy for one person to pull everybody else to a lower reactive level of consciousness.

And before you know it, the whole room erupts. So stay conscious. Affirmations.

If you want an affirmation or a manifestation, words to use to remind you, it's not so much a manifestation technique or an affirmation, but a pointer that reminds you to be conscious, I recommend something like, this is actually taken from Jesus, Jesus' words, so that you don't forget who you are. If you forget who you are, obviously you're lost. I am the light of the world.

That's a beautiful, I don't know whether to call it an affirmation, but it is a useful reminder or pointer if you know what it is, what that means. You need to know what that means. And what that means is when Jesus said, there are two quotes I can give you from the gospels what Jesus said.

He said, you are the light of the world. And in another gospel, he says, I am the light of the world. So you are the light of the world.

What does that mean? What is that light? What could that be?

Does it mean you're very special? No, because Jesus was talking to very simple people. His disciples were not special, not educated or had social positions.

They were simple people. And yet he said to them, you are the light of the world. So if they were not special, what did he mean?

Obviously he meant the light of the world is that which illuminates everything, that would make, that which brings everything into existence, one could say, which is consciousness. Imagine this room or wherever you are without your consciousness or anybody's consciousness. Is there still a room?

Is there still a table? Is there still a ceiling, lights? No, of course not.

One could say, well, maybe there's still molecules and atoms floating around, but they don't constitute a table or a chair or because it needs an organizing, perceiving consciousness that then interprets certain configurations of molecules and atoms in a certain way and perhaps even creates certain combinations of molecules and atoms. So you are the light of the world means you are the consciousness of the world. That's the essence of who you are.

The consciousness of the world emanates from the source of all life in the same way that the light emanates from the sun. So this consciousness emanates from God, God, not in the traditional sense, but in a transcendent sense, God not as an imagined big daddy, but the transcendent divine dimension, the intelligence, the inconceivable, source of all life that continuously gives rise to continuously emanates and wants to create. And so we talked about it earlier.

So what you sense as your consciousness is not your consciousness, it's the universe's consciousness. And when you can feel yourself as a light of the world, that's your consciousness is that light that makes your sense perception possible, that makes your thinking possible, that makes your feeling and emotions possible. That is what this consciousness is in Buddhism.

It's called the unborn, which means the unmanifested. In other words, it does not exist. It itself doesn't manifest in this world, but something emanates from it that creates the manifestation of the universe.

And you are that emanation from God's emanation. In other words, there's a continuity between you and God in the same way that there is a connection, a continuity between the light of the sun and the sun, the light of the sun is continuously still in contact with the sun, or in itself, you couldn't say it is the sun, but it is and it isn't. So you couldn't, you could say, I am God, but that would not be quite right, but you are an emanation of God and the essence of who you are is that.

I am the light of the world then, that's what it means. And you can use that as a reminder because otherwise you might begin to believe that you are a person and there's nothing else to you except your personal history and a little bit of future. And you could believe that as the mainstream, our mainstream culture still does, that the universe is purely a chance creation with no intelligence behind it whatsoever, with no purpose.

It has come about purely by chance, it means nothing. And you yourself, this is a belief that started with Darwin, have you myself have come about through just chance accumulation of atoms and molecules. And that's a delusion.

And it brings you to nihilism. And if we don't get beyond that and realize that although evolution is probably the case, in that sense, Darwin was correct. There is an intelligence that drives the evolutionary process.

And that intelligence is the consciousness, is ultimately God. And God is not an entity. It's not a controlling entity.

God, people say absurd things like, well, obviously there is no God because there's so much suffering. And if God is omnipotent and otherwise, if he's not omnipotent, then there's no God, but he doesn't end the suffering. He allows the suffering, maybe even creates it, who knows, but he doesn't put an end to it.

And therefore it means obviously there is no God because if there were God, he wouldn't allow all this suffering. That's a very limited view of God as a controlling father figure. He's sitting at a control board and pulling all the strings, or he refuses to pull the strings, but he could.

But no, God is the life in every life form. God is incarnated in every life form and is gradually coming more fully into this dimension with your help. And that is the step in human evolution where you can facilitate this, not because ultimately it happens through you.

It's always a question of whether you say, well, do I have a choice? Do I have free will? Well, from one perspective you do, from another you don't, that's fine.

We don't need to go into that now. All you need to remember is you can live consciously as much as possible. And as a last thing, important to emphasize, even if you never practice any of these manifestation, practices, if you could only do one, remember one thing that would change your life.

And this one thing is to practice gratitude, gratitude for whatever it is, gratitude for the breath that you're taking at this moment. Gratitude does not necessarily involve words. It could involve words.

It goes through your mind and says, thank you for this moment. Thank you for the breath that I'm, but then that you would need lots of words if you do that. Some people do it.

I thank you for this lovely water that's in this glass that I'm going to drink now, and then you can drink it and be thankful. Thank you for the sky, the clouds. Thank you for anything, the carpet, how the light reflects off the table.

Thank you. But you don't have to actually say it to be gratitude. You don't need to say it anymore.

And then gratitude becomes something else. It's not so much a thank you because people ask, well, doesn't that imply that you are thanking someone or something? And they say, Buddhists have said to me or people who don't believe in God, how do I practice gratitude?

Because I don't believe that there's a God. So if I don't talk to God and say, thank you, who am I saying thank you to? Well, if you're a Buddhist, well, you could say thank you to the Buddha, but that is not quite right either.

Buddha is not a God, although conventionally he's treated like a God. So then the attitude of thankfulness or gratitude really is the giving of attention briefly and your attention rests upon something and you appreciate its beingness. If it's a man-made thing or a human-made thing, you might even think of the humans that made that thing.

And so you appreciate how it came here. You don't even have to, you don't have to think conceptual words to do that. I can look at, I can look at even the phone, I can look at this and I can appreciate, I mean, it is a miraculous thing.

In itself, it's neither good nor bad. It can have all kinds of repercussions, but it is miraculous. There's no doubt about it.

It's been human-made. People made, people designed it and people made it and put it together and you can appreciate it. So it's not only something that is a means to an end, but it's also something that you appreciate from what it is.

And there's always a moment of stillness when you appreciate something. You appreciate its existence. So that is basically still gratitude, but without any words.

And that appreciation is extremely important and occasionally you may still have the words arising in your mind as some kind of affirmation. Thank you for this. Thank you.

All the words may not be there anymore. And the more you, and that means you acknowledge the good in your life, and there's a lot of good. If you listen to what's happening on the media, listen to CNN for four hours a day or five, it's hard after that to acknowledge the good that's around you.

So acknowledge the good in your life because it's everywhere. And if you acknowledge the good and appreciate it, that you open yourself up to more of it. More good comes into your life when you acknowledge the good.

That is a secret that is, I don't know how many people know that. It works always. So if you want to just do that as a general practice in your life, then that would change many things.

Continuously acknowledging the good. And now it always requires a moment of no thought. When your attention rests upon something, to acknowledge the good, there needs to be a moment of no thought when your attention, which is consciousness, rests upon something.

You can look at it or you can feel it or sense it. And then, you don't even need the words in your head anymore. Just a moment of just attention.

And then you know that it is good without having to formulate the word in your mind. That's a very powerful practice. And you'll be amazed how much you find that's around you.

No matter where you are, that is good. Some things will be natural things that are good. The tree, the flower, the blade of grass.

Other things will be man-made, human-made things. Humans have made it. It's a miraculous thing.

Some objects involve many humans before it gets to you, and they all made it. And it's wonderful. Gratitude.

Power, very powerful manifestation. So you don't need to even think of, what do I want and what do I need? Many things will come to you with just the attitude of gratitude, of appreciation.

And just see if you can help transforming the otherwise insane online world, the internet world. Let's see if you can, if you participate in it at all, and most of you probably do, if you can transform it into something that is helpful for the evolution of consciousness instead of a regressive movement. Because a lot of it at the moment is regressive, destructive, toxic.

So let your contribution be a conscious one. So the words you formulate when you post something, don't create an absurd manufactured image of yourself on Facebook. Be honest.

Don't live through a mental image, as many people still do. A mental image of me, the righteous one, the morally superior one. And then you make your toxic comments about all the others who are morally inferior to you because they have a different opinion.

Very unconscious. So that could be part of your practice too. You change the world by, you might just, who knows, maybe you put occasionally positive affirmations there, whatever it is.

Or how your life is changing through the practice of presence. Have some compassion towards others, allow others their opinions. Don't confuse somebody's mental position with who they are.

Don't confuse your opinions and viewpoints with who you are. When somebody questions your opinions or viewpoints, don't react as if they had been attacking you. Don't be identified with mental positions.

Be the consciousness. I am the light of the world. So our aim is to manifest the more harmonious, more sane life.

It begins with your personal sphere, and then it spreads out. And things spread easily these days, much more easily before. They can spread within seconds.

So a conscious person can use the media and spread a message of consciousness. However, even if you didn't use the media, it is true that any person that awakens will affect the collective consciousness of humanity to a small degree and make it easier for others to also awaken. Even if that person never spoke about it, it would still be true.

So we have various ways in which consciousness can be disseminated. One is the way it does it naturally through the underlying collective consciousness of humanity. And then it does it through the new technology too.

I wish you well in your practice. And you may want to share with others how it's going. It's helpful to be in touch with others who are also engaged in living more consciously.

Hopefully. We have some related questions, so I'll answer them as one. How do you suggest one find balance and maintain presence regarding current political issues and situations that seem so dangerous to freedom and humane policies, both for our presence and when interfacing with others?

How to deal with that within ourselves and when relating to others? And one or two similar questions, for example. Any tips for how I can be a good citizen who does her part to stand against social and environmental injustice while simultaneously staying true to my own awakening and my need for tranquility?

There is a, what I've been talking about just now, and this, there's a relationship. When you communicate with others, let's say about political situation or whatever it may be, we communicate verbally or in writing or just have a monologue in your head. People have monologues in their head.

This is normal. The important thing to avoid so that ego doesn't come in is again, to make other human beings wrong, to make wrong who they are. I'm not talking about what they do, but to make wrong who they are, there is a difference.

You can criticize what a person says or does, but if you then use whatever this person says or does and say that is his or her identity, then you've created an enemy in your mind and that is a dangerous thing to do because it strengthens the unconsciousness in the collective energy field and produces a corresponding reactive effect in the other. And then there's a mutual strengthening of that and that leads to huge conflict. And you get more and more trapped in your ego and in being right.

So if you can take action and communicate, take action without having your sense of self invested in it so that you point out your perspective, you explain it, you substantiate it, you illustrate it, this is how I see it, this is how the situation is, this is what we need to do or be careful of, all this is fine. You can attack another person's point of view or perspective without attacking who that person is. You can attack because that is the, and you attack it by presenting, by showing that it is not right and presenting an alternative so that your communication is not just pointing out what in your view is wrong, but also suggesting an alternative so that there is the positive and negative both coming in.

It's extremely satisfying to the ego to make people wrong and entire groups of people wrong. So you have to be careful with that. But you can only really, the prerequisite for being able to do that is that you need to, and here we come again to the foundation for it all, for conscious living and conscious doing.

The foundation is that you derive your sense of identity from that deeper place of consciousness, of presence. You are the awareness. You are not the thought.

The thought is fine, but if there is self-seeking in the thought structures, that means you are identified with your thoughts, which being identified with your thoughts means seeking your sense of self in those thoughts. So then when you present your opinion or your viewpoint, you are so identified with it that anybody who even questions, not even attack, anybody who questions your viewpoint or perspective is, and this is unconscious, deeply unconscious, ego, anybody who questions your perspective or viewpoint, which you don't know is a perspective or viewpoint, to you it is the absolute truth because you're identified with the thought. Anybody who questions it will be regarded as somebody who is attacking who you are. He is actually an enemy, your enemy.

And this is the essence of unconsciousness, to be identified completely with your mental positions. Instead of, but how can you not be identified with your mental positions if you have never known the deeper place within yourself where your true identity resides? So I cannot even tell, if you tell somebody, don't be identified with your mental positions and your thoughts, your perspectives, your viewpoint, don't mistake them for the absolute truth.

They don't know what you're talking about and they can't do, what do you mean? That's all there is. So the foundation for being able to use your mind consciously instead of being used by your mind, which is the essence of unconsciousness, the foundation for that is be, find out who you are in the essence of your being.

And that is here and now, the consciousness that you are, the awareness, the presence. That's what's left when right now you don't remember your history. Right now you don't remember even your name, unless I ask you, you're not thinking your name, no, okay.

So you can be yourself without remembering your name. And if I don't ask you about your history right at this moment, you probably don't remember any of your personal history unless you go there, you have to retrieve it in your mind. But you don't need it now.

Now, does it mean you cannot be yourself now? Does it mean if you don't remember your telephone number and your email address and your personal history, you can't be yourself? No, these are just things that are added onto you.

But even without remembering any of these things, I don't remember my email address, I don't remember my name, I don't remember my history even, but in here I am sitting

and perceiving, and I get, can you still, can you feel yourself? Can you feel the essence of you right now without the memory of you? Yes, in fact, you can feel it more strongly, but you cannot define what exactly that is.

You can sense this inherent presence that you are, and you can sense it, and that inherent presence is the same whether you are a huge success story in the eyes of the world, you are a big VIP and a celebrity, there may be one or two here, not that it makes much difference here, or you may be somebody who has failed in everything that he or she has done, a failed career, three failed marriages, many other failed relationships, bankruptcy, gone to prison, then come out of prison, then come back into prison, made a mess of the whole thing, total failure, and yet in the moment of not remembering your history, that sense of presence is exactly the same as that sense of presence of the VIP who has a big success story. That is the unconditioned consciousness, the presence that frees you from your personality and your person. And that is, and also connects you to a much vaster intelligence, the intelligence that underlies the entire creation that is behind everything, the organizing principle behind the physical universe, the intelligence that gradually expresses itself more and more into this world.

The light, I call it the light of the source, like the sun, the sun shines its light into this world, the sun is the source of the light. Now the source of the world, we could call, if God means anything, then God is the source of all life. And of course, the source of all life has no location in space or time, obviously it's not somewhere in the universe God lives, God is transcendent to the universe.

It is the source, God is the source of all life in the same way that the sun is the source of all light. And so the relationship between your consciousness, which is not your consciousness, it is universal consciousness expressing itself through you, the relationship between that consciousness that you are and the source is the same as the sun and the sunlight. So the consciousness in you is the light of the source.

Or God, shine. And that is the source itself, you cannot know, it is totally beyond anything that you could possibly even understand or think about. And yet you are an inseparable part of it in the same way that the ray of sunlight is an inseparable part still of the sun.

And yet the ray of sunlight would be both right and not right in saying, I am the sun. If the ray of sunlight says, I am the sun, in one way it is true, but in another way, it is not true because the sun is so much vaster than the ray of sunlight and yet it is a emanation of the sun and it is eternally connected to the sun. It is always one with the sun.

So as you know, there have been mystics in various traditions, in Sufism, for example, it's not uncommon, mystics have said, suddenly they realized after they went through their dancing, the mind stopped completely and presence arose. And of course they lived very simply and they came to that realization of their essence identity. And then they said to others who did not have the realization of their essence identity, they said, I am God, I realized it now, I'm God.

This was not well received. And many of them did not survive for long after that. So I don't recommend it either, although you probably won't get killed, but they will send you to somebody to see someone and be given some pills.

So that is the foundation is to know who you are, then your mind, you can use your mind in a way that is actually very effective, but it's no longer egoic. It's not no longer in the service of ego, it no longer becomes the ego. The unobserved mind is the ego, the human ego.

There's just the mind, it does what it does and you think you are it. So the foundation for it all is consciousness. Becoming conscious here and now, conscious of what?

Usually when you read about consciousness in normal discourse, it's always raising consciousness. You read about it in newspapers and so on. They talk about raising consciousness, but it's always raising consciousness about what?

So it could be raising consciousness about the environment. It's a good thing to raise consciousness about, yes. Raising consciousness about certain political situations, raising consciousness about certain injustices here and there, it's all very good.

But more fundamental is raising consciousness, period. Not talking about raising consciousness of something that comes secondary, raising consciousness of consciousness. And so this is a little strange, almost paradox, but you all probably know what I'm talking about.

Not knowing conceptually, but know in the essence of your being, what it means when I say become conscious that you are conscious or we can use the word aware. Be aware that you are aware, be aware of awareness. Be aware of awareness.

Be conscious of consciousness. Be conscious that you are conscious. Sense your consciousness, which is not yours.

I just call it yours. As promised, I checked the news this morning. So that you don't have to do it.

And I didn't find anything extraordinary. But as I was reading, I got inspired to share with you the first, well, it's not extraordinary, to share with you the first news item today as a spiritual practice. And for this reason, I brought this device.

The good thing about it, it saves trees, which otherwise would be used for newsprint. So what I'll share with you is a very brief news item, which was at the top. If I read it to you in a normal way, it would take 30 seconds to read, but I'll read it to you in a different way so that it can become a spiritual practice.

Listening to it can become a spiritual practice. And that is with lots of spaces between the words. And the spaces between the words and sentences, while they happen, I'd ask you, as part of your spiritual practice, to pay attention to the silence in this room.

Because the silence in this room is ultimately, one could say, what makes the sounds possible. If there were not silence in this room, there could be no sounds. And as you know, I mentioned yesterday, and you probably know it already, both conceptually and from your own experience, that when you pay attention to external silence, immediately there's inner stillness.

So that's one way of accessing inner stillness is to notice when it's there, to notice external silence around you. Once you are able to connect with inner stillness, you no longer need silent conditions around you, although you might welcome them when you encounter them. It's lovely.

But you could be still in the midst of traffic and a shopping mall and a noisy restaurant, because most restaurants these days are noisy. I don't know if it's the same here. It's hard to find a restaurant without loud music.

Because people who are identified with a mental noise actually become very uncomfortable with silence. And so you have, in some places in North America, or elevators, some of them even have music playing, and some elevators not only have music, they have a TV screen too. So while you're ascending or descending, you're not condemned to having to suffer this dreadful silence for a few seconds.

You can continue to clutter your mind by watching the screen and continue in your state of habitual hypnosis. So to be able to listen to something and then be aware of that dimension, the underlying dimension, ultimately, of course, it's consciousness, the formless dimension, so that you don't get totally drawn into a hypnotized by the world, the mind. And by doing that, you bring sanity into this world.

Now, the news item I'm going to read is it could be regarded as funny, it could be regarded as potentially terribly, terribly serious, it's a mixture, but no matter what perspective you have on it, whether it's funny or potentially terribly, terribly serious, it is important that you connect with the transcendent dimension. Otherwise, you contribute to the lostness, if that's a word, the lostness of the world. The world is lost.

Humans are lost, lost in their minds, lost in crazy, compulsive, habitual mind patterns, collective mind patterns. So even if it's serious, it's very important to be aware of the transcendent dimension. And even if it affected you, it's particularly important to be connected with that.

And then you no longer, you become free of fear by being connected to the stillness within, which is more than that. We just, it's one of the words we can use to talk about it. So be as interested in the words that I read, be as interested in the silence, noticing, listening to, being aware of the silence in this room, which ultimately is the stillness within you, because only with the stillness within you can you be aware of outer silence.

So be as interested in, so to speak. It's not the right word because silence is not interesting. It's deeper than interesting.

Only things that you can dissect and think about are interesting. So the news item may be interesting. The underlying silence is not interesting.

There's a vast depth to it, but it's as uninteresting as the most spectacular sunrise or sunset. You go, wow, but nobody says, oh, that's such an interesting sunset. Let's think about it.

What can be so interesting, this sunset, isn't it? No, you don't, because when you respond to beauty, some vast beauty out in nature, you don't approach it with a thinking mind, because the moment when you really are overwhelmed by some grand spectacle in nature, your mind stops and awareness remains, and you go, ah. And you might not even know that for a few seconds or half a minute or 10 seconds, your mind stopped.

And only in that moment was that true response. Something within you resonated with that, and you are not thinking. So all those things are not interesting because interesting operates within the realm of thinking.

So silence is not interesting. So when I say be more interested in the silence, it was a wrong choice of words. Be more focused on, be more aware of the silence than the words, but you can take in the words, but have the two dimensions in your consciousness, form and formlessness.

And of course, we are doing it now with a news item, but it could be anything else in your life. We may come back to that. Okay.

So as I said, it's a very short item, but I'll read it slowly. So you pay attention to the spaces around the words. Kim says, deranged Trump shows need for a nuclear program.

I need to mention that. This Kim is not to be confused with the, not to be confused with the conscious Kim that was sitting here talking to you this morning. This is the, probably the unconscious Kim.

So there are two, at least two Kims in this world. Kim Jong-un has said remarks by deranged US president Donald Trump have convinced him his right to develop weapons for North Korea. In an unprecedented personal statement, Mr. Kim said, Mr. Trump would pay dearly for his recent speech to the UN. The US president said on Tuesday that if America was forced to defend itself, it would totally destroy North Korea. Mr. Trump also mockingly called the US and Mr. Kim, a rocket man on a suicide mission. North Korea has been testing missiles at an unprecedented rate and conducted its sixth nuclear test, despite international condemnation.

North Korean foreign minister, Ri Yong-ho, who had earlier compared Mr. Trump's speech to the sound of a barking dog, has warned that Pyongyang could test a hydrogen bomb in the Pacific Ocean in response to the US president's threat. So maybe we have heard enough for today. Oh, no.

A tweet came in just after I read this from the president himself, which said, Madman Kim Jong-un will be tested like never before. End of tweet. No doubt this latest tweet will excite the people in CNN's Situation Room and they will talk about it excitedly for half an hour.

You can see how important it is to bring sanity into this world.

[Speaker 2] (1:53:37 - 2:20:06)

You're connected to something deeper, something much more divine and real. For all things old shall pass away so the new can arise, birth and death. So we gave birth to the ego and now we allow that to die so that that new state of consciousness can now give rise and create a new earth.

So as you listen to these words, as you sit there and listen, make it a receptive listening where your whole body and just not only your ears, but there's a listening quality because that listening quality is you speaking to yourself. It's the reminder that we are consciousness, that we are the evolution, the next evolution of consciousness on this planet. No judgments to what is old because that old too was in us.

But then as we grow in this consciousness, we realize that there is then this compassion because we see and we've gone through the old and fully experienced it. We didn't turn it away, we didn't turn our back on it, but we saw it, we see it in ourselves, we went through it and fully going through it. And this is why some of this pain body that we may experience now isn't a bad thing because once we actually go through and clear out the pain body and we do it ourselves because nobody's gonna do it for us, you have to do it yourself, compassion then arises because then we can look at the unconsciousness that's really happening in almost every human being and have compassion, wow, yeah, I know, I've been there. And yet hold that space of consciousness because as a human being, we have no control in turning this all around, but the one life, the one consciousness is turning it around and it does so at its own pace and in its own time.

But then the mind will go, oh, but yeah, I wanted to hurry up or it needs to change, there's gotta be something I can do. Yes, there is something that you can do. When you're in stillness, that stillness will be doing it.

That stillness will be the movement, the action that you will take to transform this world. But the only way to access it is in yourself, is in you, is that to find that connection to be that stillness, to breathe in that stillness, to sit in that stillness, to walk in that stillness, to lay down in that stillness. Every single moment is your opportunity that you can choose stillness or choose the egoic mind.

And it's always your choice. Consciousness has the patience of eternity, but we have a choice. And that choice, because you're here today, your soul is already calling you home to consciousness, to that state of stillness, to begin the actions, the thoughts, the words, the speaking, the movement from your essence, which is consciousness.

So let's, for a few minutes, go into that state of consciousness even deeper. Sitting upright in your chair, your feet firmly planted on the floor. Your hands could be face up or face down on your lap.

The crown of your head lifted towards the ceiling. Feeling your sit bones on the chair, closing your eyes. Become aware of your breathing.

Become aware of your body, the sensations in your body. Noticing whether there's any tension, any tightness, any pain. Just let that go and relax the body and just feel the sensation.

So let go of the label and feel the sensation. The occasional thoughts may arise, but just notice it. Don't need to follow it or hang on to it, just let it go.

Let it pass through you. Emotions arise, allow them to just arise and pass through you. Just letting go of all concepts, including the concept of time.

Because time is man-made. It's in the mind. In the true reality, there is no time that exists.

It's timeless. It's the eternal now. Let go of the concept that you're in Costa Rica, for that too is in the mind.

There is no Costa Rica, there is no China, there is no Canada, there is no United States and so on and so forth. That too is a concept in the mind. There are no boundaries, except the ones that we create through the mind.

We're aware of external sounds. Here we are aware of breath. We're aware of other body, the sense perceptions.

Sound. Become aware of your inner body. The life force within.

If you can't feel that, just feel your hands for now. Ask yourself, how do I know I even have hands? And just feel the sensation.

So all this that we're aware of, the breath, sensations, the inner body, thoughts, emotions, sounds, aware of the world of form. Now turn your attention deeper in to the attention of awareness itself. Who or what is aware?

Seeking refuge in that inner stillness. The stillness, the consciousness which is infinite, eternal. This is the kingdom of heaven.

This is your home. Keeping connected to this state of consciousness that we call stillness, amidst the world of form, of your breathing, of your breathing, sense perceptions, inner body, sensations of the body. The two, form and formlessness, arise together in your awareness, in consciousness.

Life, which you are life, can only be found in the present moment. Not in thoughts, not in yesterday, not in tomorrow, but here now. You can gently open your eyes and thank you, thank yourself.

At times, spiritual practice calls for periods of self-isolation, a time to reflect, reconnect with being, the deep eye, an opportunity to reset our body, mind and spirit, and reimagine a new way of being in this world. How do we reemerge back to the present moment? How do we reemerge back into the world and do the things our being wishes to bring into manifestation without losing presence?

This meditation may help you stay connected with being while doing. At some point in the meditation, we will do a presence through movement practice. Begin by sitting comfortably with your eyes closed.

Connect with being with stillness. If there are any emotions lingering within, take two or three deep breaths, exhaling with a sigh. Let go of your emotional body and all thoughts.

Sensing stillness, surrender time, past and future. Be completely in the present. Slowly open your eyes, look at the image on your screen.

Look around the room while keeping some attention within. Perceive the objects in the room without labeling them. If you have a flower or a plant nearby, look at it, sense its aliveness.

Let's go on to a movement practice. Please stand up, get a glass of water or any small object from across the room. Something that will take a half a minute or so to bring back to where you are seated.

Please do this now. Reflect on your movements. If you lost presence, at what point did you lose it?

Were you thinking or were you free of thought? If you remain present during the exercise, congratulations. At some point, you may practice with more challenging situations, such as talking with friends or family.

In your daily life, you can practice presence through movement, starting with simple things and gradually go on to more challenging situations. It's of course easier to practice being while doing with the simple things first. Let's try the exercise again.

Connect with being first. When you sense inner stillness, stand up and get another object. Keep some attention within.

Don't give all of it to the outer world. Find out if you're able to perform this action without adding any thought to it. Please begin now.

Reflect, how did that feel? What was your experience? Let's go back to closing your eyes.

Sense deeper into stillness, being aware of your essence. Be aware of form and the formless consciousness at the same time. When you are ready, slowly open your eyes.

Enjoy practicing presence. Through movement in your daily life.

2020-Kim Eng - Compassion For Our Evolution [iA1IDYxn]

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 13:38)

We are connected to something deeper, something much more divine and real. For all things old shall pass away, so the new can arise, birth and death. So we gave birth to the ego, and now we allow that to die, so that that new state of consciousness can now give rise and create a new earth.

So as you listen to these words, as you sit there and listen, make it a receptive listening where your whole body, and just not only your ears, but there's a listening quality, because that listening quality is you speaking to yourself. It's the reminder that we are consciousness, that we are the evolution, the next evolution of consciousness on this planet. No judgments to what is old, because that old too was in us.

But then as we grow in this consciousness, we realize that there is then this compassion, because we see and we've gone through the old and fully experienced it. We didn't turn it away, we didn't turn our back on it, but we saw it, we see it in ourselves, we went through it and fully going through it, and this is why some of this pain body that we may experience now isn't a bad thing, because once we actually go through and clear out the pain body and we do it ourselves, because nobody is going to do it for us, you have to do it yourself, compassion then arises, because then we can look at the unconsciousness that's really happening in almost every human being and have compassion, wow, yeah, I know, I've been there, and yet hold that space of consciousness, because as a human being we have no control in turning this all around, but the one life, the one consciousness is turning it around, and it does so at its own pace and in its own time, but then the mind will go, oh, but yeah, I wanted to hurry up, or it needs to change, there's got to be something I can do, yes, there is something that you can do.

When you're in stillness, that stillness will be doing it, that stillness will be the movement, the action that you will take to transform this world, but the only way to access it is in yourself, is in you, is that to find that connection to be that stillness, to breathe in that stillness, to sit in that stillness, to walk in that stillness, to lay down in that stillness, every single moment is your opportunity that you can choose stillness or choose the egoic mind, and it's always your choice, consciousness has the patience of eternity, but we have a choice, and that choice, because you're here today, your soul is already calling you home to consciousness, to that state of stillness, to begin the actions, the thoughts, the words, the speaking, the movement from your essence, which is consciousness.

So let's for a few minutes go into that state of consciousness even deeper, sitting upright in your chair, your feet firmly planted on the floor, your hands could be face up or face down on your lap, the crown of your head lifted towards the ceiling, feeling your sit bones on the chair, closing your eyes, become aware of your breathing, become aware of your body, the sensations in your body, noticing whether there's any tension, any tightness, any pain, just let that go and relax the body and just feel the sensation, so let go of the label and feel the sensation, the occasional thoughts may arise, but just notice it, don't need to follow it or hang on to it, just let it go, let it pass through you.

Emotions arise, allow them to just arise and pass through you, just letting go of all concepts, including the concept of time, because time is man-made, it's in the mind, in the true reality there is no time that exists, it's timeless, it's the eternal now. Let go of the concept that you're in Costa Rica, for that too is in the mind, there is no Costa Rica, there is no China, there is no Canada, there is no United States and so on and so forth, that too is a concept in the mind, there are no boundaries except the ones that we create through the mind. We're aware of external sounds, here we are aware of breath, we're aware of other body, the sense perceptions, sound, become aware of your inner body, the life force within.

If you can't feel that, just feel your hands for now, ask yourself how do I know I even have hands and just feel the sensation. So all this that we're aware of, the breath, sensations, the inner body, thoughts, emotions, sounds, aware of the world of form. Now turn your attention deeper in to the attention of awareness itself, who or what is aware, seeking refuge in that inner stillness, the consciousness which is infinite and eternal.

This is the kingdom of heaven, this is your home, keeping connected to this state of consciousness that we call stillness. It makes the world the form of your breathing, sense perceptions, inner body, sensations of the body. The two, form and formlessness, arise together in your awareness, in consciousness.

Life, which you are life, can only be found in the present moment, not in thoughts, not in yesterday, not in tomorrow, but here now. You can gently open your eyes and thank you, thank yourself.

2021 Eckhart Tolle Talk Forgiveness is Freeing

[Speaker 4] (0:19 - 0:32)

Eckhart's teachings and sounds true, present forgiveness is freeing, teachings to let go of judgments and conflict with Eckhart Tolle. And now session one.

[Speaker 1] (0:55 - 36:26)

And this question comes up periodically, it must be important for many people. Can you please give me pointers on how to forgive myself for the hurts I've done to others and also to myself? Yes, as I said, the question comes up quite often.

It's because it is often asked by people who have grown in consciousness, who have become more conscious over the years. And suddenly, they look back on their life and realize how unconscious they were in the past. And they realize the things that they did in the past, for example, how they brought up their children, or how they behaved in a past relationship, or how they dealt with a situation in the past, very reactive way, perhaps, and they look back on it, and then suddenly see, how could I have been so unconscious?

How could I have acted in that way? How could I have done that? And this is why the question is often asked in our meetings here, because all the people who come here have grown in consciousness.

This question is not asked by people who don't grow in consciousness. They continue to behave in the same way. And they think they're absolutely right.

And everybody else is wrong. So unconscious people don't ask that question. It's only people who have grown in consciousness who ask that question, because you see the discrepancy now between who, what you were before and what you are now, how you would behave now in the same situation.

Now, it's important not to identify with unconscious behavior that happened in the past. Because now, what does it mean when I say identify? It means to derive your sense of self from something that you did in the past that you now see was wrong, or unconscious.

And then you say, I did that. So if you identify with unconscious behavior in the past, you identify with unconsciousness and make it into your identity, which means your sense of self. And you feel bad about yourself.

That happened very easily. So you have to see that what happened in the past was unconsciousness acting through you, which you inherited. When you came into this world, you could not act beyond your level of consciousness, nobody can.

So to make that into an identity and say, I am responsible for that would be an illusion. You are not responsible for that. It happened.

If you had your present level of consciousness, you would act differently. You really become responsible only when you reach a certain level of consciousness. It does not mean that if you perpetrate or somebody perpetrates dreadful crimes, that they should not be held responsible because there are karmic consequences for unconsciousness.

And that's part of how the universe evolves. The human consciousness evolves partly through humans experiencing the karmic consequences of their actions, which means they suffer. And that's perfectly how it should be.

So I'm not saying, when we say a person is not responsible for what they do, this is ultimately true. I want to say of a certain level of consciousness, they're not responsible. They're at the mercy of their conditioning, which in many cases is dreadful.

Grown into a violent family, abused as children, dreadful conditioning. Does it mean when they perpetrate crimes, kill people, they are not responsible? Yes, it's true they're not responsible, but there are karmic consequences nevertheless.

And sometimes the karmic consequences come in the form of the justice system. Sometimes the justice system is karma, and they put you away. So you experience the consequences of your unconsciousness.

But then you might say, well, that's unfair, isn't it? If they are not responsible, then why do they need to? Well, the law of karma is that humans will experience the consequences of their unconsciousness because humans are meant to move beyond that.

And if you're not moving beyond that, you suffer. But that's ultimately part of the awakening because many humans awaken because they have tasted the consequences of their unconsciousness. And sometimes it happens in prison.

Sometimes it happens because they inflicted so much suffering on themselves ultimately that they awoke. They are not responsible, and yet the consequences are there. But because they're not responsible, also this we need to remember that we should not make their, if it's somebody else, we should not make their crimes or their unconsciousness into their identity.

Again, separate what they do from who they essentially are. They just represent the evolution of consciousness through suffering. Entire nations do it to each other.

So coming back to you yourself, don't make unconscious behavior from your past into your sense of self. You fall back into unconsciousness by doing that. You have moved on.

If there's any action you take to remedy something that you did in the past, then by all means do it. If you need to talk to somebody whom you treated unfairly or badly, and if you feel that is the right thing to do, then do that. But realize that who you essentially are has nothing to do with that.

Who you essentially are was covered up at that time. The consciousness that you are was covered up by karmic layers. So that is, that frees you from guilt.

Guilt is not helpful, and guilt ultimately is also ego. Ego doesn't only love to make other people feel guilty and make other people wrong. The ego can also do it to itself, and you can have a huge ego by having an enormous amount of guilt in your psyche, in your energy field.

And again, the wonderful saying, Jesus said it all, as reported on the cross, forgive them for they know not what they do. Forgive them means don't think that this is who they are, that this is their identity. Forgive really means don't realize that's not who they are.

It does not mean that they should be spared the consequences of their action. That doesn't, not even possible. How do I truly forgive myself for not being present with another?

I assume the question refers to something that happened in the past, not in the present, because if the other is here with you now, then there's nothing to forgive. You just be present. So it must be something that you were not present with someone in the past, because there was not enough presence in you.

You cannot manifest any behavior beyond your level of consciousness. Either you had no idea what presence was, you were not yet able to access that dimension of consciousness, or it was there very weak in you, not strong enough perhaps to survive in that particular interaction or relationship. Some parents have that feeling also because when they look back upon how they brought up their children, they cannot believe how unconscious they were as parents.

Now, there's no such thing as totally conscious parents. No matter what you do, there's always something that you don't do right. Absolute perfection is just not possible, but there are now for the first time perhaps in history, there are parents who are relatively conscious, who are endeavoring to be conscious as parents.

In my generation, it was unheard of. Conscious parents, what is that? You just, the parents brought you up in the same way that they were brought up, in the same way that was sanctioned by the surrounding culture.

That's how you were brought up. Conscious parents, what's that nonsense? And of course, in my generation, I didn't know anybody who had even remotely conscious parents.

My parents, of course, they did the best they could. They loved me to the best of their ability, but they were both very unconscious. Later, when my dad was very old, some of the egoic self broke off, little bits of pieces of his ego disintegrated.

There was still an ego left, but the massive ego that he had before started to dissolve. If he had lived beyond his age, he reached the age of 90. Perhaps if he had lived to 100 or 110, he might've gone much further still.

But my parents were deeply unconscious. There was constant conflict at home, terrible drama and scenes and shouting and screaming and physical violence. It was a nightmare.

And that was not uncommon. Of course, even nowadays, there are children, still many who have to endure that, still many, but there are conscious parents. And I have met children who are born into a conscious family.

And that's a wonderful thing. It's a new thing. So forgiving yourself for not being present, there's always a tendency of the ego to identify with certain conditions.

So the ego identifies with the condition of unconsciousness and says, that was me. And I was wrong. I should have been conscious at the time.

But you were not, you couldn't have been more conscious at the time than you were at the time. So there comes a, you forgive yourself by realizing that nobody can act beyond their level of consciousness. And whatever you did in the past was an expression of, on your personal level, of the evolutionary state of yourself.

And on a collective level, you manifest the evolutionary state of humanity until you begin to awaken. And then you become a forerunner at the forefront, spearheading the growth of consciousness. There were many silly things I did in relationships when I was in my 20s, unconscious, nothing drastic, fortunately, but it could have been, but hurting people, but not being aware of it, ego, egoic motivations, and so on.

I wasn't even there. I was, there was conditioning operating through me, the ways in which my mind had been conditioned. I wasn't awake yet.

So it was a kind of dreamlike state. It shouldn't be that difficult to forgive yourself for something that you did in a dream. And it's the unconscious state is very much like that.

If you have still an opportunity to be with, to go to this person and perhaps explain that you were unconscious, if that is, we don't know what level of consciousness this person's at, whether this person would be able to listen to you and even understand what you're saying. So, or this person may not be alive anymore, or there may not be an opportunity to speak, but either way, you forgive yourself by realizing that there is ultimately nothing to forgive. And that even applies to another person because if forgiving goes both ways, sometimes you have to forgive yourself, but you also have to forgive somebody else.

If you do not want to carry the enormous burden of carrying a grievance, which is a dreadful thing, just one grievance towards another human being, that is a heavy grievance that you carry, can stop the rising of presence in you. So letting go of grievances is vital. And again, it's whatever somebody else did to you, they acted out of their level of unconsciousness.

Rather than make it into an identity, somebody does something that's unconscious to you, and then you transform it mentally into that person's identity that makes it almost impossible to forgive. In ordinary human interaction, it is very important to overlook things that humans do, because every human being that you come into contact with will manifest, even if they are awakening, they are in the awakening process, they will still manifest occasionally areas of unconsciousness when they interact with you. They might lie to you for some reason here and there, they might do this or that.

And then if you focus on that excessively, you say, he lied to me. Okay, have you ever lied to anybody? No, I never lie.

Okay, then you need to. He lied to me. And then you focus on that, and you amplify that, and you make that into part of his or her identity.

And then you, it's very easy to do that, and this is judgment, and you focus on that little thing, and you amplify it, and it becomes part of who you think that person is. So if you want to have a relatively harmonious relationship, many things you need to overlook in the other person, because every person has his or her unconsciousness that occasionally manifests, hopefully not massive unconsciousness, because you might not want to be with him or her, to have a close interaction. But some unconsciousness, yes, some insensitivity may arise in there.

They may say or do something that is selfish, or that they may have a very one-sided perspective of something. They may misperceive you, they may misperceive your motivation, you misperceive their motivation, all kinds of things. So to forgive in the presence situation means to overlook.

So it's not the big forgiving, but an overlooking of things, so that you can focus on the being of the other person, rather than focus on the faults, which are unconsciousness. So the same applies to human beings. If you see a fault, don't dwell on it, as applies to you if you're looking for a home in California.

If you see a fault, don't dwell on it. My question, forgiveness. Is forgiveness just a requirement of our ego?

As we awaken, do we lose the need to forgive? Now, to forgive someone, of course, implies that there's something to forgive. If there's nothing to forgive, you won't even think or talk about forgiveness, because there's nothing to forgive.

So to forgive implies that there was something there that was non-forgiving, and that is dropped. And so there was some kind of grudge, grievance, whatever it is, some issue with somebody blaming, holding, longstanding grievance, whatever. It was there.

It's then recognized. You recognize that it is not healthy. If that's the only reason, good enough reason to drop it.

It's not healthy. It doesn't promote aliveness and well-being in yourself. Good enough reason to let go of that.

It does nothing to right the balance. If there's a karmic imbalance, somebody took something away from you, or somebody did something to you, the grievance does nothing to redress the balance. You can allow the universe to redress the balance automatically, but you don't want to be stuck in that dysfunctional mind pattern.

So you let go, and that means you forgive. You say, I have forgiven that person. I'm no longer holding an emotional energy around, mental emotional energy field around that, and derive a strange sense of satisfaction from that, which is what it is.

It's not true satisfaction. It's an ego satisfaction. It strengthens the ego.

To have a grievance strengthens the ego enormously. Some countries, whole religions, or groups within religions, or tribes and nations have collective grievances for centuries, which make up an important part of their collective sense of identity, egoic identity. So yes, you're right when there's an acceptance of other people and what they do, which can only be there, of course, if you're really awake and present, because then you realize that whatever unconscious behavior other human beings manifest towards you, or towards others, is not ultimately who they are.

It's not their true identity. It's part of where humanity is in the evolution of consciousness. So they are manifesting consciousness in the state of torpor or sleep, and they don't know what they're doing.

It looks as if they did. They're in the grip of certain energies and lack of presence. They're forced to act it out.

They're in the grip of very strong mind patterns and totally identified with their minds, which prevents them, many of them, people who inflict suffering on others, it prevents being stuck so deeply in their mind patterns, which is all abstract, prevents them from having any empathy with other humans, because they look through other humans through the density of their mental judgments and labels of who they are. They don't see you.

They see their label of you. It may be a personal label. It may be a collective label that they adopt, and that's what they see.

It's a mental abstraction, an inability to feel that you are an alive human being. They can't even feel that they are an alive human being. They are a mental construct to themselves.

They're so identified with whatever it is. It may be an ideology, a belief system, or a set of grievances or judgments. It's trapped in conceptual mental thinking, which prevents you from sensing the aliveness of others and yourself.

And then, of course, you do violent things to others, because really they're all dead, as far as you're concerned. You've labeled people. You've killed them already by imposing a label on them.

That's the first step in killing them. And then the next step becomes much easier. You don't feel anything anymore.

And once you realize that, then you see that they're suffering from mental illness. And so you would not want to equate somebody's mental illness with who that human being is. It's not who they are.

The fact that they are mentally ill, by the way, does not mean that they will not suffer the consequences of their unconsciousness. They will. That's how they generate their own suffering.

They generate suffering for themselves and others. But when you recognize that, then that which would need forgiveness doesn't even arise, because all you forgive is the illusion that somebody's unconscious behavior was who they are, and then the reaction that comes with that. Yes, if you're so really awake, then forgiveness is no longer necessary, because there's an acceptance and a recognition immediately of what it is in the other human that is perpetrating whatever they do, and it's not who they essentially are.

It is a manifestation of unconsciousness. Then there's nothing to forgive. You may still have to protect yourself to some extent or cross the road when you see a very unconscious being on one side of the road.

It's much better to cross over to the other side. But if contact is unavoidable, then all you can do is be there as presence, and sometimes it's possible, even in deeply unconscious humans, that you, by not reacting to their unconsciousness, that some consciousness is pulled out from underneath the unconscious patterns in that other human being, and suddenly you see, oh, there's still a human being there somewhere. It may respond when you're present.

There's no guarantee, but it may, and that's beautiful. So you treat the other not according to the behavior that they manifest towards you. You treat the other as if he or she were already conscious, that you honor their presence.

And sometimes then the dysfunctional patterns thrives and lives on reaction of others. The dysfunctional pattern wants a reaction and fight. Now, if there is no reaction, and you look through it, so to speak, then it sometimes happens that the dysfunctional pattern subsides, maybe not for good, but in that moment it subsides and something else shines through.

And so when you're dealing with another human, always assume, so to speak, that there's something deeper there than the behavior that he or she manifests. So it may just be a simple situation, an unfriendly person. You're asking somebody in a restaurant or wherever, you're asking for information.

It's just an unfriendly person who regards you as a disturbance. And so you're not a human being, you're a disturbance, even though their job may be to give information. I have seen some people who are behind information counters who treated everybody who came with a question as a disturbance that shouldn't be there.

And again, that's a mind pattern, so there's no human being there, there's just an obnoxious disturbance. And if you cannot react to that and treat them like a disturbance, which would be quite normal, which just strengthens their mind pattern because it confirms that you really are a disturbance, if you treat them as if they were conscious and awake humans with respect and friendliness and kindness, then something surprising may happen. You don't need that to happen.

It's enough of a reward for you to treat the other with kindness, assuming that there is a deeper part that is more genuine and kind also. And sometimes it comes out then, and sometimes it doesn't, it's fine. But that's a beautiful practice, not to be drawn to the same level of interaction as what you are getting from the other, because that means if an unfriendly or unkind person provokes a new unfriendliness and unkindness, that means you are being drawn to the level of that person.

That means that person determines your state of consciousness. That means also you're not present enough. And that's the beauty of meeting difficult people in this world, which of course happens all the time.

And you can look at it as obnoxious, I don't want to deal with people anymore, I'm just happier with my dog. It is true that dogs are much easier to live with than many humans, but for us it's here to practice with humans, and the challenge is that that's how you get stronger through the practice. So every unfriendly and unkind human is an opportunity for you to practice non-reaction and inner freedom.

So it's wonderful. And if you're not successful in your practice and five hours later you're still harboring negative thoughts about that awful person, then it's time to forgive. How do I deal with negative family members while maintaining inner peace?

That's related, of course, to the earlier questions about parents trying to teach them about consciousness. Allow them their state of consciousness. Accept their limitations and realize that whatever they're saying to you is simply, they're manifesting their conditioning, that's all.

So you don't need to take it personally anymore. There's really not anybody there. There's just a bundle of ideas and concepts, the egoic self, and that wants something from you or tells you something.

It doesn't mean very much. So they're conditioned by their mind, which is conditioned by their past. Really, compassion is the answer to this, so that you don't condemn them for not having gone beyond their conditioning, for not being free of ego, for being stuck in the same consciousness for the past 30 or 40 years.

You don't condemn them for that. You just see it. And you may even be able to empathically, that's the word, sense something in them occasionally, perhaps only, that is deeper and more real than their conditioning, what they manifest on the surface.

So you may even be able to love them despite the fact that the person that they are on the surface may not be lovable at all, not equating the conditioning, the ego with who that human being is in their essence. Of course, there may still be some conditioning in you from your childhood, and they have a shared past with all those people, and it is more challenging to be present with humans with whom you have a lot of shared past than humans that you have not actually known for that long. The more past you share with a human, the more intense presence is required.

And of course, the most intense presence is required with your parents, because with whom share your entire past. That's why, as Ram Dass says, spending time with your parents is always the ultimate test, unless you're one of those few whose parents are relatively conscious. That's becoming, happens more often these days than in past generations.

In the generation of my parents, conscious parents were unheard of. I never met any conscious parents and anybody I knew, but in my generation, I never had children, but in my generation, there are a few more, because there were people who already participated in the spiritual awakening that happened in the 60s and early 70s. There was the human potential movement, all kinds of things coming in, and some people were beginning to wake up, and so some had children, and they were relatively, if not completely awakened, but perhaps relatively more conscious than other previous generations.

So you're then able to be non-reactive when you meet them, and that's a huge shift in your consciousness, to become non-reactive with people with whom you share a lot of past. And then you just, you look around them, and you're the witness, you're the witnessing consciousness of whatever behavior they manifest, and you look in amazement, you don't judge, just, same old thing, of course. Whatever they do or say, it's the same old thing, that's for sure.

Whatever form the same old thing takes, it's the same old thing. They are trapped in it. They don't know that.

That's why it's easy to forgive them, because they don't know.

[Speaker 3] (36:36 - 37:16)

I feel that I need to apologize to, and to ask forgiveness from my teenage daughter who has died. And since she is no longer here, how do I work through that? And that makes me wonder, what is an apology?

And what does forgiveness mean? Why do I feel that I need it?

[Speaker 1] (37:17 - 37:24)

Do you feel you did something or failed to do something with regards to her?

[Speaker 3] (37:26 - 37:40)

Without the numerous examples that I feel I have, I feel that I was a very young mother, but looking back, I feel that I parented mostly with my pain body.

[Speaker 1] (37:41 - 37:41)

Yes.

[Speaker 3] (37:42 - 38:15)

And so, I didn't have ever a moment of sort of conscious awakening prior to her death and finding your teachings. And so, looking back, I have a lot of regret, and I have a lot of guilt that I feel that only she can relieve me from that.

[Speaker 1] (38:20 - 50:28)

Well, it's not the primary thing is that for you to relieve yourself by forgiving yourself. Now, what that means we have to look at now, forgiving yourself, what forgiving means, what forgiving another person means or forgiving yourself means. Usually forgiving refers to, is used with reference to certain things that somebody or yourself did or failed to do that you now recognized, that are now recognized as having caused pain or suffering to another human being.

But at the time when it happened, you didn't know what you now know. Because if you knew then what you know now, you would have acted differently. So, you were in the grip of unconscious forces.

You did not have a choice at the time, because without that knowing, which we could call awareness that is there in you now, without that awareness, the element of choice was not there. So, you got taken over by conditioned behavior that you inherited. That was either you inherited through your upbringing and your parents inherited from their parents, or that you inherited genetically, or that you inherited through past lifetimes, whatever it is.

It's conditioned behavior, unconscious behavior, and you now recognize it because there has been an awakening of awareness. Now, the danger that when you are trapped in unconscious behavior, you don't know what you're doing. That's the, as Jesus said on the cross, that they know not what they do.

Forgive them, for they know not what they do. Forgiveness applies when the humans don't know what they do. But it's very easy to look at either what one's own or somebody else's past actions, and make those past actions in one's mind, and even with one's feelings, make those past actions into somebody's identity of who they are.

You can do it to another human being, and you can do it to yourself, rather than recognizing that basically, you were asleep when you acted in those ways. You were not really awake. Another word for it, by the way, is karma, karmic action.

Karma means inherited patterns that you're not conscious of, that operate through you. They have nothing to do with who you are in your essence. They obscure who you are in your essence, and that is not a personal shortcoming of yours, but it applies to humanity as a whole.

It operates in every human being to a greater or lesser degree. The unconsciousness that we all inherit, that moves through us, that is not who we are, that covers up who we are. That is, so we are in the grip of unconscious forces until you actually awaken, and suddenly you see, and then, of course, the mind comes in and says, I did that, or I failed to do that, and therefore, I am guilty, or I am bad, and the mind does not realize that who you are now, you did not do that.

Karmic, you were in the grip of old conditioning, of unconscious karmic forces. This is not who you are. It has nothing to do, really, with who you are, and so the tendency is, this is an egoic thing also, to feel guilty about something that you think I did that in the past, and then an ego, a guilty ego, can become a very heavy ego, and ego is always a false sense of self, so you need to step, forgiving means to recognize that unconscious action is not your identity.

Don't make it into an identity. You have to recognize it for what it is, and not believing that you and it are one, and when you recognize that, that really is forgiveness. You can do, with regards to another person, you can also, and may have to do that, for example, let's say, talk about just one example from my life, my father.

My father was, in many ways, a good person, because I could, I can sense his essence, especially after the awakening, I could sense his essence before it was hard. He was, he came into this world with an enormous amount of anger, or it, when he was a child, he became more and more angry. There are certain reasons why he felt neglected by his family.

He was the seventh child. When they didn't want any more children, it was an accident. The mother was tired of bringing up all these children, couldn't deal with another child anymore.

All his sisters were given much more attention. His dad died when he was 15. My dad was 15, and he got taken out of boarding school because they couldn't afford paying for it anymore, but they did pay for the sister's education, and so he saw all that.

Then he had to go into, become an apprentice in some little store, and his, this is not what I'm supposed to be doing. I'm supposed to be university and studying, and they've, what they did, enormous anger, was building up, and more anger, and more anger, and then he married my mom, and then, of course, this enormous energy field of anger came up almost every other day, and me, as a child, I would, I lived with like an unexploded bomb in the house. There was always a powder keg.

I never knew when it would blow off. Fortunately, the anger was not directed usually to me, but always to my mother, but it was a dreadful thing to live for years with an unexploded bomb, which many times would explode, and the energy of intense anger would fill the house. It was a nightmare.

Now, at that time, I was just suffering, and I do remember having had, I had a dream one night. I dreamt that I had cut my dad into little pieces and put them in a sack and hid it under the bed, and after I'd done that in the dream, the door opened and my dad came home from work, and I gave him a hug, and that dream shows the ambivalence of the child towards him. I hated him, and I loved him, so I then, as awareness came into my life, I realized, and the resentment was there until really I woke up and then suddenly realized the way he behaved.

He had no choice. He was in the grip of this unconsciousness. There was no awareness there that they could separate from the anger and look at it and observe it.

He became it. He was it. No element of choice whatsoever, and when you see that, then you can no longer make this behavior, unconscious behavior, into a person's identity.

You kind of, you look beyond it. You see it for what it is, and seeing unconsciousness for what it is is forgiveness, and so once that has happened, forgiveness really means recognizing that there's nothing to forgive. That's true forgiveness.

When you recognize, as I did with my dad, I couldn't, I can no longer say, I forgave my dad. No, I recognized it for what it was, and suddenly there was nothing to forgive anymore, and the same with you. You recognize something in yourself.

You recognize it for what it was, and suddenly that wasn't me at all, and then that's the greatest thing that you can do for your daughter, whether she's still, she's not here in the body anymore, but that shift in consciousness where you become free of identification with unconsciousness, that is the great, most wonderful thing that you can do for your daughter, because then you find inner peace, and in that peace, there's also love, and in that love and peace, you can connect with her, whether she's still in the body or not. That is the connection, and then she loved you, too, although it might not have been deep down, so you don't need her to forgive you. You need to forgive yourself, and the rest will follow from there, and once you've done that, you will find that she also forgives you if she hasn't done it already, and suddenly the bond, you recognize, she recognizes you, you recognize her in your essence, so forgiveness is seeing it for what it is, what it was, and realizing, oh, I don't really need to.

Forgiveness is as if, in spiritual people, so-called spiritual people, they often say, okay, I need to forgive this person. Real forgiveness is, I'll say it again, is realizing there is nothing to forgive, and then that's forgiveness, and you have to apply that to yourself by seeing it, and you can still see the unconsciousness that was in you, in many humans around you. Maybe you can see it in your parents, you can see it in other people you're close to, you can see it in your partner, whoever, you can see, you can still see it manifests in different ways.

Forgive them, for they know not what they do, and I could add, and it is not who they are.

[Speaker 4] (50:39 - 50:42)

And now, forgiveness is freeing, session two.

[Speaker 2] (51:03 - 51:42)

When I grew up, it was a Methodist teaching, and it was sort of dry, yet there was this prayer, Lord, forgive us our trespasses, and forgive us those who trespass against us, and when you opened the door last time to the Course in Miracles, then I came across that principle of forgiveness, and I had a question on that. What is forgiveness? Is it different from compassion?

Is it different from the Buddhist concept of bodhicitta? I don't know.

[Speaker 1] (51:43 - 1:12:06)

Thank you. Thank you. And again, it comes back to the state of connectedness with being.

It's only from that state of connectedness with the deeper dimension of who you are, from there, it becomes easier to forgive, because forgive means there was something that was done on the level of form, by one life form to you, perhaps another life form, pain was inflicted, or whatever it may be, whatever the transgression is, and it's only from there that you can see the relative nature of what was done, because you are in touch with a space within you that was never hurt by that. That dimension in you is beyond what can be injured. It's only the form that can be injured.

The psychological form, somebody might have insulted you deeply, the psychological form of who you are can feel pain, or the physical form of who you are can feel pain, and somebody inflicted that out of unconsciousness, then recognizing the first step in forgiving is to recognize that this was an act of unconsciousness, and you do not equate what this person did with who that person is, and it's only from the place of connectedness with being that you can say, no longer hold a grievance about that, because you are in touch with that inside you that is beyond what can be injured. If you're not in touch with that space, then you're still, it's hard to forgive. Forgiving means not to harbor grievance, or resentment, or any negative feeling about it, and really that's only possible when you are connected with the formless in yourself.

As Cause and Miracle says, nothing real can be threatened, nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God. Nothing real can be threatened, this means what is ultimately real cannot be threatened, but what is ultimately real is not the form, it's that which is deeper than the form.

That cannot be threatened. Nothing real can be threatened, nothing unreal ultimately exists, it just seems to. Herein lies the peace of God means in the knowing of that lies the peace of God, but it needs to be not conceptual knowing, but a knowing on the level of the depth of your being.

And then from there you can look at anything anybody did to you and say it's almost as if it didn't happen. For a while, for example, I harbored grievances against my father for many years because he suffered from enormous amount of bottled up anger, and living with him as a child was like living with a powder keg or an unexploded bomb somewhere in the house, and everybody one knew that at any moment the slightest thing somebody said, and usually it was my mother, the slightest thing somebody said and this bomb would explode and the entire house would be filled with destructive energy. And for a sensitive child, and any child is sensitive, young child, it's a terrible thing to live in constant anguish. Any explosion could be happening at any moment, whenever he's in the house.

So I had the ambivalent feelings of fearing his return home after work and wanting him to come home, divided. And that was expressed once in a dream that I had as a child, and in the dream I had cut my father up into little pieces and put in a plastic or some kind of sack and hid it under the bed. And after I had done that in the dream, my father arrived home and I greeted him and loved him.

And of course all this resulted, even after when I was an adult already, resulted in quite a bit of grievance towards him because my childhood was fearful and unpleasant as a result. And it was only when a transformation happened inside me and there was suddenly that deep inner peace that I realized he did what he did according to the way in which life had conditioned him. When he was a child, he had an enormous amount of resentment against his family because of, and of course the story can go on many generations, he was the seventh child.

His father died when he was 15 and they took him out of the school. They had to pay for boarding school. They took him out of boarding school because they said we can't afford it anymore.

But his sisters were still kept in boarding school. And then he had to do menial jobs. And every day his anger was growing and growing and growing.

He carried it around for the rest of his life. There was not enough consciousness in him to disidentify from the anger. The anger was using him.

It lived in him as an energy field and he could come up any time. He was as much a victim as I was. And I saw that after I had gone through the transformation and found inner peace, I could see that he was a victim of his own circumstances.

There was not enough consciousness in him to see what he was doing. And immediately forgiveness happened. I didn't even have to say I have to try to forgive.

He never did. It was as if he had never done anything to me because basically he hadn't. He wasn't even there.

There was only the unconsciousness in him acting up. As he grew older, some of that anger dissipated. Remnants of it remained.

He also came into touch with some spiritual teachings, especially the power of now, that helped to some extent. And so his ego grew less. It didn't quite disappear, but it grew less.

When I was a child, his ego was gigantic and it was continuously fuelled by anger. An angry ego is the incredible Hulk. So forgiveness happened naturally.

Very often you see that when an injury happens, very often there's a mental judgment of a situation and actually beyond that mental judgment, not that much happened. Let's take a simple example. You arrange to meet somebody or somebody.

He says, I'm going to help you with your moving. I'm going to help you move house. I'll be there at five o'clock to help you move with my car.

And he doesn't turn up. And that just is as it is. Now your mind then comes in and says, he let me down or he betrayed me or he was whatever the judgment of the mind is.

Very often it is the judgment of the situation that creates the emotion that feels injured. If you can just be with, oh, he said he would come, but he didn't turn up. That's the fact.

Whatever your mind wants to add to it gives you the sense of injury and strengthens the ego. So if you can just be with the pure facts, this is why all that stuff when people about talking about other people, what they failed to do or what they did, what he did to me, he betrayed me. Well, what did he do?

Well, he went off with another woman or man. He betrayed me. Betrayed me is an interpretation.

And the more you have that thought that he betrayed me, the more you feel the emotion that goes with that thought. And you feel, who is it that feels that emotion? The ego itself feels betrayed because who you deeply are, who you are in your essence, doesn't feel betrayed.

The fact is he went off with another woman. That's what he did. Is that all?

Yeah, that's what he did. If you refrain from adding a story to it, then you don't experience the, this may not be, this comes easy when you are connected with who you truly are. Then it is easy to let go of the unnecessary imposition of stories upon events.

The event is neutral. The story interpretation of it is what creates the anguish. And so, if you can just be with what is, but you can see how people cherish talking about what somebody did or failed to do.

And then he did, you can talk about it again and again and feel more and more aggrieved in who they are. Nothing really happened. He didn't turn up.

He didn't return the money that I lent him. I lent him the money, but he hasn't paid it back yet. That's the fact of it.

He is dishonest. Well, you don't need that. He did something to me.

He defrauded me. Mr. Madoff did it. A deeply unconscious person.

I wonder what he's doing now. He's sitting in his prison cell, and many, many people have not forgiven him. Interesting position to be in, to have aggrieved so many people and created so much anguish and suffering in humans.

But for every single one of them, beyond their financial loss, they have their own lesson to learn. He has his lesson to learn. And life has given you, if you lost money with Mr. Madoff or whoever else, yes, you lost that money, but there is a deeper lesson you can learn in any loss. And one lesson is, of course, don't invest with him again. That's understood. Or anybody else like that.

That's understood. That's easy to know. But beyond that, there's a deeper lesson to learn, and that is any lesson that comes with any kind of loss.

Any kind of loss is a potential opening into the formless, because what you lose is something on the level of form. Whether it's money, or reputation, or some possession, or even an ability to do something, and suddenly you can't do it anymore. Any kind of loss is a loss on the level of form.

So you react to that, and it's painful. But if you can see that the simple isness of that situation, one day you get your investment statement, just to continue with that example, from Mr. Madoff, and everything seems fine. You've added a few thousand dollars to your investment.

Of course, it was all fiction. And the next day, somebody rings you. As somebody wrote in the New York Times yesterday that I read, he got a phone call from his banker relative two years ago, and he said, are you sitting down?

No. Mr. Madoff has been arrested. What?

Lost everything. Potential, like any situation that you encounter in life, there is always hiding something there that is deeper than the actual surface situation. On the surface situation, of course, you take necessary action.

Whatever you need to do on the surface, you do it. But deeper than that, there is, what is the lesson here? And that lesson is acceptance of this moment as it is.

It includes the loss, the disappearance of this form. And there comes the possibility of awakening to the formless. That's the grace that's hiding behind every loss.

It might even happen to Mr. Madoff, because now you are saying he does not deserve to go beyond identification with form. I want him to suffer at least for a few more lifetimes. But nobody can predict what happens.

A person who had everything and suddenly lost everything, nobody wants to talk to him anymore. He is nobody. Everybody despises him.

What do you do? You either commit suicide or you go into total emptiness, because you're already empty. So forgiving then, forgiving Mr. Madoff, forgiving your father, forgiving your ex-husband, forgiving somebody who did something to you when you were a child, somebody who robbed you, somebody who defrauded you, that's all on the level of form. It has a relative reality, but not absolute reality. You are connected with the formless. You can feel that place where you were never injured by that event.

Even if you lost everything, you can suddenly feel it's actually okay to have lost everything. And you feel that which is the fullness of life itself. So forgiveness is then of what happened.

When you're connected with that level of being, it becomes easy, almost natural. When you're not connected, it's an effort, and it's never really true forgiveness. I'm trying to forgive him.

Another form of forgiveness is really the acceptance of the present moment. So we widen now the range of what forgiveness is, and non-forgiveness of the present moment is what non-acceptance of the present moment is. There's a resentment of what is in the present moment.

So you need to forgive the present as much as you need to forgive the past, which means allow what is to be. Don't argue with it. Allow it, and then that takes you immediately deeper, and then you can take action if that's what's needed.

But first you allow. You forgive this moment. Very often things happen that shouldn't be happening, the mind says, from a traffic jam to some kind of disaster to some kind of drama on a personal level to the tiniest thing to a bigger thing.

And you constantly need to be alert and aware so that you don't become a reactive entity, which means every event that happens determines your state of consciousness. Every person you meet determines your state of consciousness, reactive. You meet an unconscious person who is rude and unpleasant, and immediately you become rude and unpleasant.

In other words, you're at the mercy of circumstances and people. And any unconscious person can draw you to his or her level of consciousness immediately, and you live in reactivity. Non-reactivity, it's really a wider aspect of forgiveness if you forgive situations and people, which is allow them to be as they are because they already are as they are at this moment.

And then power comes that is deeper than form. It's only really then that you can feel your inherent power. And even if somebody took away your power on the level of form, let's say somebody conspired against you where you work and you lost your job as a result of this dishonest intrigues of this person, you lost your job as a result of that.

So on the level of form, you lost something. On the level of the formless, nothing was lost. There can be no loss there.

So you forgive what that person did. If you don't forgive, you get trapped not only in corrosive, negative, poisonous energy that your mind produces and the emotions reflect in the body. And you live with that.

Some people live with that for years. And that is an unconscious, also an unconscious way for the ego to continue to thrive. Because the more grievances you harbor, the stronger the ego gets.

With forgiveness, the ego shrinks because the ego needs its enemies. It always looks, where can I have my next enemy? So in the absence of enemies, the ego begins to dissolve.

So it's a really, it always comes back, as I said, to be connected with the deeper dimension of who you are. And then forgiveness comes naturally to you, rather than as an effort. No more grievances, because nothing real can be threatened.

And I am in touch with that within myself. That's what happened to me when I forgave my father. I didn't even know I had forgiven my father.

There was no actual act in my mind that says, okay, I'm now going to forgive him. I just discovered one day when he was visiting me, or I was visiting him, I suddenly discovered, oh, I have no negative feelings about him at all. There's nothing there anymore.

Occasionally, he would still get angry, not as much as when I was a child. But even then, it didn't matter anymore. I saw the conditioning that he was acting out.

So I never consciously said I need to forgive him. I just discovered that I had forgiven him.

[Speaker 2] (1:12:09 - 1:12:33)

Now, if I understand you, then it's the repetition of this process that changes, so there's a different flow in one's life, the repetition, and the attitude, if I understand you, that instead of resisting or reacting to be almost grateful for, oh, another opportunity.

[Speaker 1] (1:12:33 - 1:14:28)

Yes, really, every situation that comes is there. There's one reason, which is the surface reason why the situation is there, which is, for example, you invested with the wrong person, and so you lost it, for example. And then the deeper reason is life has given you an opportunity to use that situation to go deeper within yourself, to go to a place where that is more real than the level of form.

Doesn't mean you become inactive, necessarily, but every situation, especially loss and so on, is an opportunity. Be aware also, as I said, of the mind's interpretation of events, because as far as psychological injuries are concerned, what people, that includes, for example, what my father did unconsciously, as far as psychological injuries are concerned, then very often they are based on mental interpretations of what he did. So I was, for years, I kept it alive.

I kept the original emotional life by thinking about what he had done as when I was a young child. If you don't feed it with your thoughts, very often an emotion, a negative emotion gradually subsides. But if you're connected with the depth of who you are, it can sometimes disappear in an instant.

If it doesn't disappear in an instant, the pain body, we know about the pain body, the pain body may disappear suddenly all at once, or it may gradually, as you don't add to it, it will gradually become transformed. The energy that's trapped there becomes freed. It's a wonderful practice.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:29 - 1:14:50)

So it's those thoughts that then, again, they cause this forgetfulness that occurs. So as soon as, if I'm able to be present and then see the thoughts, then knowing that they cause forgetfulness, if I can then go deeper.

[Speaker 1] (1:14:51 - 1:23:16)

Yes, and very often it is a thought that creates the sense of injury that creates the sense, and that then creates the grievance. Unless there's a physical injury, then of course you have a pain or something like that. But if it's, very often you'll find it's the mental interpretation of an event that creates the emotion that we call grievance.

And so, and that again is to do with not being, not having your entire sense of identity in the movement of thinking, but go deeper. To be trapped in thinking, that's the main part of the problem. Because events are as they are.

And then there's a story that's built around it. I gave the example, I believe in Stillness Speaks, of a man who finds himself penniless on a park bench. Okay, well not penniless, but 50 cents left.

And so there's one way the man can say, I'm ruined. Or he can say, oh there, I have 50 cents left in my pocket. The first one is a story.

The second one is a fact. Now usually, and you could give hundreds of examples, it's just a very simple example. Usually, in unconscious humans, the story and the fact are confused.

They get mixed up. Because, and so they believe the way in which they interpret an event or what somebody did, is the reality of that event or what somebody did. Because they are trapped in their thinking only.

And that's the very fundamental unconsciousness, is to confuse fact and interpretation. And so then, whatever opinion you have of another, this person, you tell a story about another person. And very often, what you need to do is, when you listen to another person doing it, or even do it yourself, okay, what's the fact here?

And what's the addition that my mind is adding? What is my mind adding to it? The story that the mind is building up around it.

And then if you, if you suddenly, if you separate the story, then you're left with a bare fact. The bare fact doesn't even require forgiveness. That's just what happened.

But once you add the story to it, you get a sense of self that is part of the story, the me that was done something to me, the artificial mind-created sense of me. And so you have the story, and you confuse it with the reality. And it's an amazing, people do it all the time.

Whenever you listen to people, they cannot tell the difference between a simple fact and their interpretation of the fact. And sometimes the interpretation is totally, totally wrong. They can, it is often possible to interpret a fact in a way that doesn't apply at all.

I know what his real intentions are, and I'll tell you about that. He did that. How do you know you don't know?

You're perhaps just projecting your fears onto the other person. Don't even look for egoic intentions. I believe even the Course in Miracles says that somewhere.

It's pointless to look for what the egoic intentions are. You just end up with stories. Simplify life.

See the fact without adding unnecessary story to it. You have these many, many teachings from different traditions tell you that. I've mentioned a few in A New Earth.

You remember the story, somebody wins, my version of the story, it's an old story. Somebody wins a car in a lottery. Some people say, oh, isn't that great?

So you already have a story. The other one says, oh, it's bad. All the man says is, well, we'll see.

He doesn't add a story to it. The story about the monk who is accused of having fathered a child, you might remember that from A New Earth. There's a monk, the Zen monk lives, and the parents come and say, their teenage daughter says he's the father of my child, and they come and accuse him.

They have a story, and he refuses to manufacture a story, because normally you would say, these people, do you know what they did to me? They wrongly accused me of being the father of the child, and then you can elaborate from there. And the girl is totally evil, of course, because she's inventing all these lies about me.

These girls, she's not evil, she's just immature and fearful. So all these are stories that don't really apply, but the ego would create those stories. The Zen master refuses to create stories out of the situation.

So all he says is, is that so? He doesn't say the girl is evil. He doesn't say the parents are bad, inventing, they're spreading lies about me, whatever, can come up with a huge amount of grievance in the mind.

All that would be in the mind. So the Zen master would have a lot to forgive if he had come up with a story about this girl and the parents who wrongly accused him. Once you have a story, you have the emotions that reflect what the mind is saying.

You feel aggrieved, you're a victim, and then you need to think about forgiveness, but it's difficult. But if you don't create the story in the first place, there's nothing to forgive. And the strange thing is, you embody a different energy that turns every seemingly negative thing into what's ultimately something good, as happened in this teaching story, because the girl, after a year, became a little bit more mature and confessed who the real father was.

The parents then came back and took the baby that they'd given to the Zen master to look after, which he did. Not saying, no, look, they've given me the child. I'm supposed to look after this baby.

Look, how am I supposed? Stories, stories. He can either say yes or no, but he said yes, and he gave the baby fullest attention, never complained, just responding to the present moment, and there was no drama.

So the less drama you create out of events, because this is what we're talking about, transforming events into drama, the less drama you create out of events, the less you have to forgive, because a lot of forgiveness is to do with the stories, the grievance created by the stories that the mind invents. Now, apart from that, there are some real injuries. They may be physical injuries.

People who are very cruel, who do something to injure a person, no doubt these things exist. Children who have cruel parents or whatever, these things exist. In my case, this was not the case.

My father was not a cruel father. He was simply in the grip of his unconscious anger. So even in those cases where there is something real that happened, again, be connected with who you truly are, with the spacious stillness within you, and you see that ultimately you sense that realm where you were never injured, to feel that in the stillness of who you are.

It all comes back to the same thing, really. One could almost say that every answer, or sometimes the answers are a bit long, but basically at the bottom of every answer there is the fundamental fact of connectedness with being, with who you are.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:17 - 1:23:18)

Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:23:21 - 1:50:28)

Welcome to our live meditation. Last Sunday, many of you couldn't get on, and that's why we are here again this time, this Sunday. When things go wrong, little things like last Sunday, or bigger things, it's always a good test for your degree of presence.

So it gives you a reflection of how present you are or how non-present you are. When something goes wrong, so you can look back. It might be the case with you, maybe not.

If you look back to last Sunday, was there a reaction of whatever kind against what is? And what is was that Eckhart wasn't there. He didn't make it.

Well, I was here, but didn't reach many of you, so Eckhart didn't make it to our appointed meeting. What was your mind saying? What did you verbally say, comments to people around you?

Or what did your mind comment about it? That's an interesting thing to look at. And accompanying the mental commentary, what was the emotion that went with it?

And some of you, I'm sure, were already so present that there was no sense of upset, disappointment, anger, irritation, some kind of mental complaint. And perhaps some of you just went into meditation, just became present and realized you don't need Eckhart to be present. How wonderful.

But if there was a reaction, then it's very useful retrospectively. Usually, I don't like, as you know, don't like to go to the past, but from time to time, can be helpful to look at a past reaction in which perhaps you lost consciousness, you lost presence, and you don't beat yourself up. No, you just say, oh, that's interesting.

There was the mind talking. And there was an emotion going with it. And I was completely that.

I became that. It took me over. So whenever something goes wrong, big or small, you either react against it in one way or another.

In other words, you are against what is ultimately a dysfunctional state, which in extreme forms becomes insanity, normal insanity, I mean. So the reaction against what is or complete alignment with what is. And there you are.

That means whenever something goes wrong, you either react or you go deeper into presence, deeper into yourself. You can notice that with little things. When little things go wrong, you go a little bit deeper to a place where you don't need the external to be this way or that way, because you already sense the fullness of life at this moment.

You already sense yourself as consciousness, and nothing needs to be added to that. So sometimes it's only when things go wrong, quite often, it's only then for many people who are not yet able to voluntarily enter presence, only then the possibility of going deeper opens up for them, or they become reactive. So another example, you're standing at a street corner meeting somebody for an appointment, and he or she doesn't turn up.

So you stand there, 10 minutes, 15 minutes, 20 minutes. What happens during that time inside you, in your mind, and what is your mind saying about it? And then, of course, the emotions that go usually are a reflection of what the mind is saying about it.

It's an interesting thing to look at. What is it that your mind is commenting? And are you totally identified with what your mind is saying?

Or do you realize, oh, these are just judgments that are coming up? And there's the possibility, the opportunity for letting go of all interpretations at that moment, as you're standing there at the street corner, the person isn't turning up, letting go of all interpretations, and just be there as a field of presence. So to do that, you go deeper within, where whatever happens on the surface of life doesn't determine any longer your state of consciousness, your happiness or unhappiness.

And that's a wonderful sense of freedom, if you can be free of externals. And then at some point, you call the person and say, where are you? Or where were you?

And then there may be a perfectly reasonable explanation why he or she couldn't come, or in which case all your mental commentaries, which were perhaps negative, are revealed as totally invalid, totally inaccurate. It was total misinterpretation. That's possible.

Or it could be that your mental commentaries were justified, and that person says, oh, I completely forgot I was doing something else. What's the reaction then in you? Am I of so little importance to this person that he or she forgot about our appointment?

That's an interesting thought. And that thought can lead to many other thoughts. On a purely practical level, of course, if it happens several times and this person doesn't turn up, then you simply don't arrange to meet with this person anymore.

And can you do this without any negativity around it? That's just what is. A very powerful state to immediately be with what is.

That's what is. Instead of mentally saying it shouldn't be, or strengthen your ego by complaining about it. The same as saying it shouldn't be.

Because the more you can complain about somebody, somebody or something, the more the stronger the inflated ego becomes. Huffing and puffing, I call that. So the more you can huff and puff about people and what they do, or this person and that, the ego feels bigger and bigger.

It's like a balloon. The more you huff and puff, the bigger you get. Can you live without huffing and puffing?

Any complaining about others, what they do, what they fail to do, it's huffing and puffing. If you make a commentary in order to point something out so that something practical can be done about it, it's a different matter. But huffing and puffing is not like that at all.

It has nothing to do with changing the situation. What it changes is the way in which you deal with the situation, which becomes dysfunctional. So you can tell a person's presence by observing another person.

If that person never complains about anybody, that's a good sign. Presence doesn't complain about anybody. It's still relatively rare that you meet people like that.

But perhaps you're already on your way, or perhaps you're already at that state where you have relinquished all that futility of complaining about other people. Enormous step forward. So let's welcome the many ways in which things can go wrong in your life.

Not wrong means, of course, with quotation marks, go wrong. Doesn't go wrong. It's the mental interpretation says it's going wrong.

But we're using that conventional label, things going wrong, to point to something very important. Expectations are not being met. You're not getting what you want.

Something happens that shouldn't be happening. Or something fails to happen that should be happening like last Sunday. As you know, there are always two levels to this.

I'm speaking and pointing out something that is helpful in your daily life. At the same time, there is an underlying presence here. So that's why we call it meditation.

It's not a conventional meditation. But as I speak about becoming aware of a certain type of dysfunction, at the same time, there's a presence there. So it works on two levels here.

And that's also why the pause is important. And there are no words. So that next time there is a something goes wrong, little or big, there's either already such presence that the reaction doesn't even arise.

Or there's a reaction. And then there is the recognition immediately after, a second after, or a minute after, there's the recognition that there is a reaction. And there's a recognition that the mind is creating its story around the simplicity of what is.

And there's the recognition that you don't need it. You're better off without it. You're more effective in what you do when you're free of that.

So there's a choice of then being present instead of reactive. And then the reaction subsides and presence takes its place, arises, the reaction goes. And then that's an enormous thing when you suddenly realize in the very same situation, a minute ago, you were upset and reactive, and then recognized it.

The recognition comes, of course, from heightened presence. And then you became the presence instead of the reaction. And then the reaction crumbles.

And then in the very same situation, in that minute later, you're free of upset, and you feel empowered. It means externals no longer control you. So as I said, let's be grateful for all those occasions when things go wrong.

There's always an opportunity for going deeper. And if it's something big that goes wrong, something truly huge, something big crumbles in your life, then you'll have to go even deeper. So the depth increases.

When you just let go of a little upset, you go a little bit deeper. But when something big happens, some big loss in your life, then you have to go even deeper. It's always miraculous to suddenly discover that you can be free of externals, as far as your inner state is concerned.

You see that freedom from reactivity in many Zen stories, the freedom from reactivity, that Jesus really, the parable about turning the other cheek is about that. It's not practical advice on what to do if somebody hits you. It's a parable.

Or analogy, or whatever. Because if somebody slaps you, slaps your face, then the most normal thing is to hit back in the same way immediately. So in other words, you're totally controlled by the other person's state of consciousness and actions.

If you go on the internet, where people comment, all kinds, wherever you go on the internet, where people comment about this or that, you can see that a large part of the comments are huffing and puffing, complaining. It's great. The ego loves it.

So what we're really saying then is to live without imposing continuously mental interpretations on what's going on. Presence or awareness, consciousness, more and more takes the place of thinking. Thinking still has its place for certain things.

It's necessary. And of course, the more presence there is, the better your thinking function works. But a lot of the time, presence or awareness is much more appropriate in any given situation, rather than thinking about it.

So we're shifting from being based in thought to being based in presence. Thought is then transcended. It still happens.

Transcend doesn't mean you do away with it. It still happens when it's needed. It can be a beautiful tool, but you go beyond it.

And really, the main reason why we are here, for example, doing our meditations, sitting together, is to go deeper into presence. Of course, we also find out other things about dealing with the mind, as we've been talking about that today. But more fundamentally, we are here to deepen the presence, so that next time something goes wrong, which is probably quite soon, because little things tend to go wrong all the time.

And I'm using the conventional expression, go wrong. Nothing really goes wrong. Next time something goes wrong, discover your true power, which lies in non-reaction.

You respond if some action is needed. Different matter. You could take action, but reaction is an inner state.

It's not what you do or don't do externally. A fly is trying to land on my nose. Wants to get a little taste of presence.

So just let's say for the coming week, and hopefully beyond that, your spiritual practice is to welcome when things go wrong, and see if you can be free of interpretation. If interpretation happens, you can recognize it and allow presence to arise. So a little bit of presence is required when you miss your bus or your plane.

Much more presence, deeper presence, more intense presence is required when your partner suddenly says, I'm going to leave you. When something leaves you, something, someone, there may be some sadness. Somebody close to you dies, there will be sadness.

But if you're present underneath the sadness, you will feel peace. I have these postings on Facebook. I started to do a couple of months ago, or three months ago.

And the last one, if I remember correctly, was a quote from Leonard Cohen. There's a crack, a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in.

And really, this is what I've been talking about here today.

[Speaker 5] (1:50:45 - 1:50:46)

Thank you.

[Speaker 4] (1:50:53 - 1:51:01)

And now, forgiveness is freeing. Session three.

[Speaker 1] (1:51:14 - 2:19:29)

Well, as you know, the essence of our retreat is accessing the dimension that is beyond thought. That's the most important thing here, to learn that it is possible, that it is not all that difficult, or the mind may tell you that it's difficult. And so one way of putting it, and that may be helpful to have that perspective for a while, although it's not the ultimate truth, is to say that there's two of you.

It's not the ultimate truth. It's a way of looking that is temporarily helpful. And there's two of you, the person, and the unconditioned, transcendent being.

And that being is inseparable from the being that inhabits all life forms. That is basically, one could say, the soul of the universe. So if you can sense that within yourself, that there's these dimensions, this dimension of, one could say there are many dimensions, but it's all how one looks at things.

All divisions are ultimately only arbitrary, not arbitrary, but temporary. Not the ultimate truth, it's just the truth of oneness. But I'm talking now to the ripple on the surface of the ocean, and that's you.

If you are VIP, you are a wave. But it's basically the same, doesn't make much difference, ripple or wave, or tsunami. So I'm talking to the ripple and saying, that's how it is, basically.

There's two of you. There's you as a ripple, and there's you, the ocean. And that's in your life, so-called your life.

There's no your life. What almost anything one says, the moment you start to speak, you're wrong. So obviously, I sometimes say, your life, that's how one speaks.

There's no such thing as your life, unfortunately, but why not? Because if you say, my life, you've already created a division. There's you and there's your life.

Obviously, you are life. So you can actually learn to sense which dimension is uppermost at any given moment. The unconditioned, which is there when you are present, alert, still.

Or the conditions, the personality, the mind. So when you express an opinion, then already you can know whether you are completely identified with the opinion and then become defensive and angry when somebody has a different opinion. Or if you are totally, completely identified, you get very emotional when somebody puts forward a different viewpoint or opinion.

So you're totally in the personality, the person. Or you may be able to discuss something that means, that is the art of living in a conscious way, living consciously. I highly recommend this practice whenever there's a discussion about whatever it may be.

In the discussion, the tendency to be drawn into mind identification is huge. And it has, there's a gravitational pull that immediately exerts itself and it draws you into mind completely. But if you are present enough, then you can, you're able to discuss whatever it may be without self-identification.

I mentioned it briefly before, without self-identification with your opinion. So here's the, this is what I think, but that's not what I am. That is a mind formation.

I think it's important that I state that this is, and the reason why I think this is this and this and this. Another important thing is when you have a self-identified, it creates a lot of emotion, egoic emotion. And the emotion actually rises into your mind and makes you confused.

Then you get emotional thinking, which very often is irrational. That's not uncommon. And once you are trapped in that gravitational pull of emotional thinking, you're basically, it always means you're defending yourself in this, that, trying to enhance yourself, diminish the other.

Then once you're in it, it's not easy to get out. You may have to wait until the momentum exhausts itself, as was mentioned in the Seinfeld episode. So then you will compulsively and emotionally talk about something, in many cases, totally insignificant, like the doors on bathroom stalls, as in the episode, and it becomes important to you because your sense of self is in it.

And it can lead to a breakdown in relationship, a different opinion. Somebody has a different opinion, becomes your enemy because he or she has a different opinion. And as you're present, you practice with putting forward your, but so you need to be able to sense this, the deeper dimension still present within yourself, the deep I.

And then the surface I can discuss things. So there's an alertness in the background while you're speaking. That means there's a spaciousness even while you're discussing something.

And you don't confuse the mental position of the other person with who the other person essentially is. That's a continuous practice. Everyday life, almost any situation that arises can become part of your spiritual practice so that whatever you do in your life, any activity, anything you do, if you can realize from now on the rest of your so-called life, there's always something that is of primary importance, although you may easily forget that for a while.

And I mentioned before, your primary importance is the state of consciousness, your state of consciousness at this moment, not the sub, not whatever it is you're dealing with at this moment. Now it's very seductive. The world will try to tell you and your mind, which is inseparable from the world, will try to tell you that this is of primary importance.

Now it could be that there's an emergency, somebody has fallen into the water and you are going to jump in to save him or her. Hopefully you can swim. There may not be time to sense the unconditioned within yourself.

But what actually often happens in situations when people do courageous things where people afterwards say, oh, you're so, you're a hero. And the person says, well, I just did it. So if there's a real emergency, it often happens that the thinking faculty is totally switched off and you may find yourself taking right action.

And there's no, you may not sense the spaciousness, but it does come the thing in a true emergency, the thinking function stops and you go, you cannot think about what am I going to do? This really is a problem because then you become paralyzed. If a wild animal comes through this door running towards me, let's say it's a bear because they are around here somewhere.

It's a grizzly bear, they are huge. Then it's coming towards me. Is that a problem?

I really have a problem. I wonder what I should do. It's too late.

So in some situations you don't think, thinking stops and then nobody can predict what you will do. You can't predict what you will do. I can only guess that I might run away or I might try and make myself bigger than I am and make threatening sounds.

In the hope that it will think I'm stronger than it. Don't know if that will work. That's what is sometimes recommended when you come across a bear while you're out hiking, make yourself bigger than you are and then you go.

They say either it works with brown bears or black bears, but it doesn't work with grizzlies. The other option is you play dead. That's highly recommended.

And that might be what I would do. And we could all do that. I don't know how I got to the bears, but...

So if it's not an emergency, and most things are not an emergency situation, then the two dimensions, this is something you learn gradually. Many times you will forget. That's fine.

The two dimensions so that there is some spaciousness remains in you while you're dealing with the things of this world. And when you're sitting quietly in your room or out in nature, then it's not just some, but then the spaciousness, the stillness, the presence emerges a bit more fully and the personality recedes. When you go back into the world and deal with things, you need the personality.

Sometimes people ask me, don't you need the ego to deal with things in this world? Well, you need your form identity, which is the person or the personality to deal with things in this world, because otherwise you are very hard. If you didn't have a form identity, then you would just be the, well, you would become like the God intoxicated people in certain parts of the world where that they are.

I have a deep connection with source probably, but totally unable to deal with the things of this world. So you don't want to go that way because then you go and in the West, they won't think that you are a holy man or woman, they will put you away. So if you have to go there, move to India somewhere first.

But this is not, so you need not your ego. There's a difference between your form identity and your ego. The difference is complete identification with your form identity, which is the body and the psychological form of you.

Complete identification with the form identity is ego. But when you're no longer completely identified with your form identity, you still have a form identity, but it's no longer ego. That's the difference.

So you still, you have a person, a personality with opinions and viewpoints and abilities and certain flaws, some of which as presence becomes more integrated with the personality that takes time, some of those flaws will dissolve, especially serious flaws that cause you and other humans suffering. And there may be a few other idiosyncrasies in your personality that may remain, but most likely they would be things that are not huge things that cause suffering to yourself or others. So there's the difference between form identity and ego.

So it's not, you don't need your ego to function in this world, but you need your form identity to function in this world. But the only way you prevent your form identity from becoming ego is to be present while the form identity operates in this world. And it operates in this world, not only when you are actively doing something, your form identity is also your mind, or actually fundamentally your mind, even when you're just sitting somewhere, then your form identity is probably still operating when you're thinking about something, it's there.

And so a very subtle art then is to be able to think, but not be a hundred percent drawn into this movement of the mind. And this is something that is practice, and perhaps having been here for several days is helpful. So there's a remnant of the other you, the other you, the deeper, the deep I, as I sometimes call it, that's the other, the other half of you.

So this one could say there's the two halves, there's a form, form half, and there is the formless deep half, so to speak, you are both. So you don't want one to take over completely, probably not, but most humans, of course, in this world, for most of them, only one half exists, and that's the surface dimension of them. And that's great pity that they have missed the very purpose of human life.

It's a little bit like a seed that never sprouts, because in a way, every human is a seed, a potential for the flowering of consciousness. But if you look in nature, nature is infinitely abundant. One tree may shed thousands and thousands of seeds, and out of those, maybe one or two grow into another tree, if that.

So while you are acting, or even just thinking, practice having some spaciousness in the background. And another thing that helps is not to get drawn into an uninterrupted stream of thought. This also applies when you're having a conversation with someone.

We all have met people that talk uninterruptedly, one thing leading to another, and it's like having a passage in a book without any punctuation. Such writings actually exist. I personally am not very fond of those writings.

It's called stream of consciousness writing, like James Joyce and others. I could never get into that. By the way, it should not be called stream of consciousness, it should be called stream of unconsciousness.

So you've all met people who, they just, it never ends. There's one subject, and it emerges with another subject, and then they get off in that direction, in that direction, and you sit there, and it's time to leave, but you cannot say, I need to go now, because you're waiting for the gap that never comes. And you don't want to be rude, so...

Okay. But at some point, you may have to be rude. Oh, oh, oh, that may help.

So there's an element of surprise when you suddenly go, oh, I have to go. But this could happen in your own mind, even when you're alone. It could happen that your thoughts go in the same way, and there's no gap.

It just goes on and on. When people worry and have this fear, worry is also a, I mentioned just now, emotion contaminating your thought. The emotion rises into your thinking, and tends to make your thinking irrational and not very intelligent, dysfunctional kind of thinking.

So when fear rises into your mind, fearful thoughts arise, which fuel the emotion of fear even more, and that emotion comes back into your mind, and you get into this vicious circle, and your mind talks and talks, it becomes like that person. That you couldn't get away from, but there you can't even say, I need to get away, because it's, you're there. And you may not even know, you may be so identified that you don't know that there's a possibility.

You have lost, you're lost in your mind. You don't, you're not even there. You're asleep somewhere in the background.

Who you are is actually somewhere asleep, and in the foreground, you're dreaming the dream of unconscious thinking. And there are humans who spend their whole life in that state. Dreadful fate, dreadful.

So there, a very helpful thing, when you are thinking or speaking, let's say just a normal conversation, when you have said something, you come to the end of a statement, and go back for a few seconds into alert stillness. And then either the other person will say something, or you will start another sentence. But there's been a little, a small gap.

Always come to the end of a statement, so that you, so that you prevent a stream of unconscious thinking from taking you over. That's why I gave this little example of Seinfeld, George being taken over by his mind. This happens to humans continuously.

So you don't want to be taken over by your mind, kidnapped, possessed, mind possessed. So the practice is, find little spaces, always spaces, spaces, spaces of awareness, even if it's just three seconds. For example, looking at something.

And you may notice, it's not actually that you have to create awareness, you just have to be alert, and then the awareness is there. Now, if you're very subtle, if you're very, very alert, you may notice something very interesting. And that is, whenever your sensory perception, which is visual, and mainly visual and auditory, but it could also involve other senses, whenever they register something new, so it could be that you're walking out of a door in a building, you open the door, and then a totally different vista is there, just a moment ago you saw a room and a door, now you open a door, you take one step out, and then the first thing you look at, whatever is there, it could be a beautiful mountain landscape like here, or it could be a city street.

But then you may notice, if you're really alert, for two seconds or three, you're not labeling mentally what you're seeing, you're just perceiving it. And there's always a little, very small gap between the act of perception and the mental labeling of your perception. But if you can catch that little gap and become aware of it, because usually people are not aware, they just, they look at something, and then the mind interprets it, and says something about it, usually.

So if you can catch the gap and become conscious of it, you prolong it, it prolongs itself. And then you may be able to take several steps out without any interference of thinking, you're just present. There are also strange things you can do, you may sometimes find that you can know what you have to do next, for example, know what you have to do next, without any verbalization in your mind.

So you can look at a situation, and then the situation requires some kind of action, but you may develop the ability of looking and then knowing what you have to do without mentally formulating anything that says, oh, no, you should be doing that, I need to do that, what can I do here? Especially if it's problematic, what action can I take here? Then, if you can face a situation in alert stillness, then it's much more likely that your action will be intelligent, and will be just right for that situation.

That's a response. The other is a reaction, which relies on the conditioning of your mind. And so we all know people who, you know exactly how they're going to react when you say a certain thing, if you've lived with somebody, you know when you say this, they're going to react that way, or when that situation arises, they're going to react that way.

This may happen to you too. There's still, if you can isolate certain areas, certain pockets in your life, it's very important, certain pockets in your life where you tend to become unconscious, there may be certain situations, whenever that situation arises, it tends to draw you into unconsciousness. It could even be certain people, whenever you meet that particular person, you act more unconsciously, you get drawn into an old reactive pattern of the ego.

This could be, for example, if you're an adult, you're going back to visit your parents. It could be that, and some people experience it like that, whenever they visit their parents, they're drawn into old reactive patterns, and the parents probably too, and that becomes their relationship, and it doesn't work very well. And therefore, of course, it's highly recommended as a reflection to see how far you've come spiritually to visit your parents.

Famous statement by Ram Dass, if you think you're so enlightened, go and spend a week with your parents. But it doesn't have to be parents, it could be other people, often it's people with whom you share a lot of past, or it could be other people who trigger you, maybe at work, just looking at them triggers you. And if somebody triggers you, means he or she makes you unconscious, you become reactive.

So if you know that in your life, so either people or situations, or it could be, sometimes it happens when money is involved, people become very unconscious. Then let's say you're trying to sell your condo or your house, and then you're talking to the real time, there's difficulties arising, and suddenly the spiritual person who has been to 10 retreats with Eckhart gets very angry and upset with you.

[Speaker 2] (2:19:29 - 2:19:34)

What happened?

[Speaker 1] (2:19:43 - 2:57:03)

It's often people like realtors or lawyers, they often meet people at their most unconscious, so those professions could be potentially extremely enlightening because you really need to be present to deal with all those people you meet in unconscious states. All the people who go to court, of course, observe yourself, see where are the situations where I tend to lose, become very reactive. And then when you go into those situations, or meet those people, you need to know before, okay, here we go.

And then stay very, very present, turn up the light, the dimmer switch, it's a bit like that. How do you do that? How do you turn up the light, the dimmer switch, feeling intensely the energy field of your inner body helps to anchor you in presence.

So when you go into situations like that, now I'm going to talk to my stockbroker, if you have one, I don't. And you know from past experience that every time you talk to your stockbroker, you become reactive, because you have in your mind, fear is associated with money, and money is associated with the idea of scarcity, and scarcity, perhaps from your childhood, is associated with the idea of survival. And all kinds of things are unconscious thoughts that still live in you.

And so before you do, before you go into that situation, okay, I'm now calling rest. This is my spiritual practice. The primary goal then in that and any situation is to stay present.

But when you go into a situation where you're most likely to become unconscious, then turn up the light of presence just before you go in and while you're in it. And as I just said, it is very helpful to be intensely present within your inner energy field while you're talking. And then you realize there's a spaciousness because that is the doorway, a very good doorway into presence is the inner body is the doorway into presence, can be very helpful doorway into presence.

There's also the doorway into presence, of course, of totally accepting your experience of this moment. So if you can talk to your, whoever it is you're talking to, and just totally accept whatever he or she says in this moment, that's fine too. There are various doorways into presence, but it's presence.

So, or you meet your ex, as they call them, I'm meeting my ex about something. So all the stuff that happened, that accumulated before the divorce happened, all those years, it's back in your mind, and there's your ex and you have a very clear image of who he or she is. And it's not pleasant.

You're very unconscious ex. And then you have to be really, really present so that you don't go into the old reactive mode. And then you're meeting this person.

It's almost without the past. That's an amazing thing. Without your, yes, you know the past, but in the moment of meeting that person, there's only you, there's not you as the personality.

When you become really present, what emerges is that the other half of you emerges more. The personality becomes relatively unimportant. The other half, the unconditioned presence shines through.

And then you're able to meet another human being, even you might have shared a lot of unpleasant pasts with him or her, but you can meet this person when the other, the deep eye shines through you, you meet the person through the deep eye, which means you meet this person without reference to the past. You have that ability if, well, not you as a person, but that ability is in you of meeting a human being, even a human being with whom you share a lot of unpleasant past without reference to the past. So there's, you're meeting that person in the present, fully in the present.

That's an enormous thing. And I have, I know people who have practiced it and many of them have reported back and said that sometimes, not always, and you're not doing it in order to achieve something else through it, it is sufficient unto itself. However, almost miraculous transformations have happened in the other person when you met the other person without reference to the past.

So it's not that you want the other person to change, all that falls away. You're just not bringing the past into this encounter. And then it is not uncommon for the other person also, without them realizing what's happening, becoming freed, at this moment at least, from their heavy personality and something beyond the personality in them also shines through.

And that's a miracle of transformation. That's why sometimes people, when one of the two who share a lot of unpleasant past, one of them becomes conscious, it can lead also to the transformation of the other. Not necessarily.

If it doesn't, it's fine too. At least you are free and you don't need the other to be free too, to be feeling that you are free. And so it can also happen with your parents, that suddenly the way in which your parents relate to you changes when you meet your parents without reference to the past and in absolute absolute presence.

That's an amazing, amazing experience. So I suggest you try it out on, you have quite a bit of time to practice and then Thanksgiving is still a long way in the future. And that's where to try it out when you sit around the big table.

Well, that's for North Americans who celebrate Thanksgiving. You sit around the table and there's the, basically, this is the past, the past sitting around the table. Some people dreading it, Christmas too.

Oh no, because you're facing the living past. So it's a miraculous thing to, and again, one could say that is the real meaning of forgiveness. It's not so much a mental act, mental acrobatics that say, okay, you've done dreadful things, but I'm so spiritual that I forgive you.

I forgive you. At least I'm trying to, at least I'm trying. You're not even trying.

Why do I always have to be the first? It's always the same. You're lost again.

So forgive you is not so much a mental to formulate certain things in your mind and then trying to live up to a certain thought in your mind, which is very difficult, if not impossible. But the real forgiveness is to enter that state of presence so that you're not the personality that's conditioned by the past. And then you can meet the person, even the person who did something to you, if you choose to meet them.

You don't have to meet a person who did bad things to you, but the question is, does that person still exist in you as a mind form, as a thought form, as a mental emotional entity? Does this person who did bad things to you still live in you? They might even have passed away already, but they live in you as a mental emotional entity that you carry.

It's actually like a little gremlin that lives in you and it's not pleasant. And so forgiveness means to recognize that for what it is. It's not really the other person anymore.

The person maybe passed away 10 years ago. It's not the other person anymore. It's something you carry still in your mental emotional field that lives there.

And so that is, again, something to recognize. And if you recognize it as something that lives in your mental emotional field, then it's much easier to step back from it and by no longer getting drawn into it. So that's something to do with something that lives in you and you recognize it as something that you no longer want or need.

And then it gradually dissolves as you're no longer reacting against it. So you have one, you have a split in you, as long as it's there, there's that mental formation, mental emotional entity. And then there's you, there's another pattern in their mind that reacts against it.

It's a bit crazy. But forgiveness then is really meeting the other, if the other is still there and you're actually now meeting them in person without reference to the past. People with whom you have a grievance, people carry grievances.

And they actually like their grievance. The ego loves grievances. 20 years ago, he did that to me.

30 years ago. The ego loves grievances. But as long as you carry even one grievance towards, and grievance is a longstanding resentment.

Resentment could be short-lived, but grievance tends to be a very, very long thing, goes on and on. At least that's how I define it. The grievance goes on and on and you carry it in your mind.

And even just one surviving grievance in you can prevent you from fully accessing presence, from actually fully awakening. It's a very, it's a dark, a dark spot in you that prevents consciousness from arising fully. So you have to be really very careful to see what they do to you and see that the addiction to a grievance is only the personality derives, the egoic personality, the ego derives sustenance from the grievance and strength from the grievance.

So if you harbor a grievance, that means that the ego itself is still operating. It is not you who is harboring the grievance. It's the ego in you that is harboring the grievance.

So if you have a surviving grievance in you towards another person, you need to know that ultimately it's not you, it's the ego, it's still operating. So you can develop in other areas of your life and the ego remains, can attach itself, let's say you're awakening beautifully, but there's one corner in your mind where the ego survives because it has attached itself to a grievance. And there can be other corners too where the ego can attach itself to particular, anything to do with the past.

It attaches itself to a particular thing in your mind and there it's waiting. And occasionally it can, then even in other situations, the ego can still come back more easily because it's there, it's still feeding on the grievance. So it's not starving, it's still feeding on this grievance that you harbor.

So ultimately forgiveness is to realize that the dimension in you, which is the deeper half, remember you're the two halves, you're the personality, the person, and you have the unconditioned, the deep I. So by being the deeper half, the deep I, nothing ever was done to that deep I. Perhaps something was done for the deep I to be obscured completely, but the deep I in itself is beyond anything that could be done to it.

Nobody can injure it. That is untouchable. It is invulnerable.

It is the foremost dimension in you. Once you can sense that in yourself, forgiveness becomes very easy because not only are you present when you sense that in yourself, but also you are connected with a dimension in which nothing ever happened to you. Nothing ever happened at this deepest dimension.

And then the forgiveness happens almost automatically because nothing ever happened to who you are in the essence of your being. And that's an amazing realization. And it's not something that you arrive at through thinking or through some mental act of forgiveness, as if forgiveness was something that you could do.

You can't really do forgiveness. True forgiveness arises spontaneously from the essence of who you are, and that includes forgiveness of yourself. If in the past, this is a question I'm often asked, people carry a sense of guilt around, and that is very similar to the grievance.

That again is, guilt is like grievance. It is a mental, emotional entity that you carry within you, and you need to know that, that that's what it is. And forgiveness here to yourself for something that you did in the past, and you now recognize as bad, in whatever way, as immoral as you recognize, because now you're much more conscious than you were when you did that, but you still may carry this deep sense of guilt.

And how do you get rid of that? First, you need to observe that this lives in you as a mental, emotional energy field. And as long as you identify with it, it becomes part of your ego.

The ego is form identity. The ego would prefer to have something great to identify with, but it will readily also identify with something bad, and then you have a conceptual identity of yourself as a person who is bad. I'm a bad person because I did that.

Conceptual sense of self, conceptual reality again arises, and that does not help anybody. It causes you to be stuck in ego and unconsciousness. So again here, guilt dissolves.

Guilt involves forgiveness of yourself. Again, it's not something you can do. It's something that arises when you go deep enough so that you realize the essence of who you are.

And of course, as you know, you realize it beyond conceptualization. The essence of who you are is presence, conscious presence, alert, stillness, awareness, and you can sense the essence of who you are. Then, who you are is no longer, there's no reference anymore to anything in your mind or emotional field that gives you an identity.

You know that this is, this unconscious action happened through you because when this happened, you manifested in this form, basically your evolutionary stage. Nobody can act beyond the evolutionary stage of their consciousness. So you acted out the unconscious state of humanity.

It manifested through you. That happens continuously. And there is ultimately no true I in it.

There is no true identity in it. If you look to that for your identity, you are lost again in egoic identity and you're unconscious again. You recognize, perhaps you take action to do something good.

You might want to talk to that person or not. All this is secondary. You will know what is right to do if there's anything to do.

But the main thing is that you go deep enough and when you're there and know who you are beyond form, then forgiveness arises automatically. You don't have to do it. So that's either with reference to yourself or reference to another person.

So that's extremely important. There are pockets of egoic identity. So you have to be alert so that if they exist in you, non-forgiveness in whatever form, grievance, guilt, all those things, then you need to be very, very conscious of that and see, find the space where nothing ever happened there.

At this deepest level, nothing was ever done to you. And that's an enormous sense of freedom. But unfortunately, it deprives the ego, unfortunately to the ego, it deprives the ego from one of its favorite identities, and that's victim.

So the ego loves to see yourself as a victim or a victor. But victim is more common. I wonder why.

Well, not so many people can say, now I have triumphed. I am the great one for a little while. And then that dissolves.

But this victim identity is very strong. And it's there when you have a grievance, again, that one element of the grievance towards another person is always that you have become in the past, a victim of that person one way or another. And even one could almost even say that if you have a guilt, and you identify with the guilt, even there, there is an element of victimhood, you become a victim of yourself, of your own past.

A very subtle thing, this victimhood. And the ego loves it. And it's there in a small way, even whenever you complain about something, but there's no possibility of any change at this moment by voicing your complaint.

So you're complaining uselessly, either in your mind or out loud, about a place that you are at. There's something wrong with it. A person, there's something wrong with him or her.

They're not doing what they should be doing. Or they're doing the wrong thing. Or there's something about them that's not right.

Or they failed to do, but should have done that, but did that. All kinds of things. It could be complaining about what you are doing.

You're doing it, but you don't want to be doing it. It's awful to have to do this, but you're doing it. Every day of your life.

It's awful, but I'm enjoying it. Just, I'm stuck in this dreadful job. Contemplate many areas where you complain.

You complain about, you can abstract things. Government, politicians, or you single out a few. That is always an element of victimhood.

It's an element of, very often, moral superiority, because when you're a victim, that automatically makes you, this is an unconscious process behind it, it automatically makes you morally superior to whoever made you into a victim. Or whatever situation you're complaining about, you are pronouncing judgment. Therefore, you are elevating yourself to judge.

You are judging this situation as wanting, insufficient, not good enough. Therefore, one can even be morally superior to a situation. You can complain about the state of humanity, how dreadful it that is.

If I were to complain about God, of course God doesn't exist, otherwise there wouldn't be all that suffering in this world. I would do it differently. So, very subtle things, but these all things are easy to recognize when you're present, within.

I just mentioned them because these are so common. Well, I said they're easy to recognize. Sometimes they are not even that easy to recognize, and that is why I mentioned it.

So, be alert. Watch. Be alert.

Jesus says somewhere in the Gospels, watch, watch, be alert, watch. I don't think he said be alert, but watch, be watchful. So, as you go back into your normal life situation, in any situation, starts with going away from here, be aware of especially the background dimension of the deep eye.

When you are going into the bus or the car or the plane, as you start thinking again about what you have to do tomorrow or next week, the continuous practice of being aware of the background awareness, aware of awareness. It's a single thing, but it sounds like two things when you talk about it. Be aware of awareness.

Be aware of yourself as the awareness. That is the continuous practice, and sometimes the awareness will be perhaps when you're sitting on a bus traveling to Calgary or something like that. So, you're sitting on a bus and you're contemplating nature, which is better than thinking about what you're going to do tomorrow.

You're contemplating nature, and while you're contemplating nature, you sense this underlying presence. At the same time, you're present. Then the personality is receded.

The deeper eye is perceiving through you. It is you through the form. Then you step, let's say you fly back somewhere.

Then you're at the airport, checking in. If you're lucky, you get your first challenge there to practice with. Small challenge, two-hour delay to your flight.

Oh, okay. That's fine. I don't mind.

I'm spiritual. That's not the right approach, of course. The flight is canceled.

That's a slightly bigger one. Okay. That's what is, undoubtedly.

Whether you argue with it or not, that's what is. The only gain you have when you argue with what is, is the ego grows. It's a gain to the ego, not to you.

If you can stop arguing with the simple isness of the present moment, you're basically spiritual master. Just simple as that. The difference between you and the Zen master who looks like this great stern figure, he's no longer arguing with the isness of this moment.

He doesn't know more than you. You probably know more than most spiritual teachers that ever lived in the sense of data or information or so-called education. Undoubtedly, everybody here knows more than Jesus did in terms of information or data, obviously.

He didn't have reference to, he couldn't Google anything. The Buddha too, information is not more knowledge that makes you into a spiritually advanced or enlightened or awake being. It's something else.

It is non-resistance to the isness of life, which is always now. That's a huge portal into the deep eye. People tell me sometimes, that's so difficult.

That's the wrong way around. The other way makes life so difficult. Continuously arguing with the isness of this moment, that makes life into a huge burden.

It's so difficult to say yes to this moment. It is. It's a habit, a mental habit that's been there for thousands of years.

It may be difficult to break this habit, but once you're there, you realize that's the only easy way to live. The only way that produces a flow to your life is to let go of arguing with the isness of this moment. Also, that's the end of the ego, because it couldn't survive without the food of arguing the isness of what is.

The dysfunctional thinking, a lot of that is to do with arguing with what is, trying to get away from it, arguing with it. To welcome what is, is an amazing spiritual practice. That means no matter what form it takes, and if you cannot welcome it, you can accept it.

This is what is. You almost, we could say you welcome it. You might not necessarily say, let's say your flight is canceled.

You might not necessarily say, great, wonderful. Because that would be, probably you would be doing this because you want to strengthen your spiritual identity again. It's just, that's what is.

The amount of thinking you do, useless thinking immediately diminishes, because when you no longer argue with what is, you think much less. In fact, in order to truly accept the isness of this moment, you have to let go of thinking, at least in that moment, because that's just the isness of it. Okay.

And then the next thing arises. And then it becomes habitual that immediately you're aligned with the isness in your, that's the enlightened state. You may remember the story.

I've told it once or twice before, or more times. The disciple came to the master and said, I'm going away now. I want to leave you for a year because I'm not finding enlightenment with you.

So maybe I'll find it somewhere else. Can you give me some advice on what's my spiritual practice during that year while I seek out other situations and other experiences? The master said, yes, wherever you go, whatever situation you find yourself in, and whatever happens to you, say these words.

Thanks for everything. I have no complaint whatsoever. And that's your spiritual practice.

Okay. So I can do that. And after a year, he came back to the master and said, well, did you do your spiritual practice?

He said, yes, but it didn't work. And then the master said, thanks for everything. I have no complaint whatsoever.

And at that moment, the disciple became enlightened. Before, of course, he was just repeating the words. And suddenly, he went where the words pointed to.

That'd be amazing. Whatever happens to you, you have this, not the words anymore, but you have the attitude. Thanks for everything.

Thanks for this. I have no complaint whatsoever. And then have no complaint.

It will transform your life, obviously. And I'm giving you this because as a living presence, because you are like the disciple, hopefully you're not like the disciple, because the disciple didn't get it. He stayed for years with the master and he didn't get it.

But it is a very powerful spiritual practice. And yes, of course, it requires presence. And it's not in the words.

The words are just the signposts to that inner state. And of course, thanks for everything implies gratitude, and it implies appreciation of everything. And so you don't wait until something unpleasant happened, so that then you apply, thanks for everything, I have no complaint whatsoever.

No, the thanks for everything, and the absence of complaint is in every moment. You don't have to wait for a bad thing in order to practice alignment with the present moment. Then it probably wouldn't work.

You appreciate the present moment in all its little manifestations, the many, many things that you habitually overlook, all the beauty around you, the aliveness around you, that you appreciate. And that is part of the thanks for everything, thanks for this. And when you look at the glass, as I'm doing it again, the light shines, there's a glass of water, the light shines in, and it sparkles here and there.

And there's a little bit of a rainbow effect. And it's an amazing aliveness, this glass of water, the glass sparkles and the water in the glass, and it reflects the light. And if only for five seconds I look at this and appreciate it, instead of reducing it just to a utilitarian thing that I use in the service of something else, which would be drinking, it's a very big difference.

I appreciate the otherwise hidden thing in this life, and we are surrounded by them. So you no longer have to repeat in your mind, okay, you may want to occasionally as a signpost, thank you for this glass of water. That's okay.

But the deeper appreciation is beyond words. So let's have a moment of stillness.

[Speaker 4] (2:58:57 - 2:59:37)

This concludes Forgiveness is Freeing with Eckhart Tolle. Thank you for listening. For more information about Eckhart's work and teachings, please visit EckhartTolle.com.

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Thank you for listening.

2021 Eckhart Tolle and Kim Eng Next Stage in Human Evolution

[Speaker 3] (0:51 - 1:11)

Eckhart teachings and sounds true present the next step in human evolution. Essential teachings on the awakening of consciousness by author and teacher Eckhart Tolle. And now session one, falling below thought, rising above thinking.

[Speaker 1] (1:47 - 1:00:01)

What a wonderful space this is. I don't think a lot about the past, but when we did the soundtrack a little earlier, I was here and I suddenly remembered that I was here about 35 years ago, the last time. Not here, but there.

Very high up. It must have been a concert. So those are the top seats, the most expansive view.

That's why I chose them. Time is something very strange. It seems that you can't escape it.

It consumes you gradually, if you haven't noticed yet. Except if you look at the cover of the alternatives magazine, which has my photo on it, you will notice that time has not consumed me at all. I still look as ethereal as I did 35 or 40 years ago.

Nothing has changed. The secret is you can achieve that too, either through enlightenment or finding the right Photoshopping app. In this case, it's a Photoshopping app.

I just can't get rid of these photos. I tell them, can't we use some real photos? Well, it's hard to get by these days.

All the photographers do this. Okay. So let's, just a few words about our gathering in this amazing space.

I would recommend that you regard this as a mini retreat. Those hours that we are here, all of you, those of you who don't escape before we finish, most of you are here because you are awakening. The consciousness is awakening in you, even if you have no idea what it is that I mean by that on a conceptual level.

And there may be some who did not come voluntarily. A friend insisted that you should come and you couldn't say no. And if that is the case, I cannot guarantee that you will enjoy our gathering.

You may, or it may be that it becomes excruciatingly boring or irritating because this gathering operates, one could say, on two levels. One is the conceptual level, which means I speak and you hear the words and your mind deciphers the words. These are all concepts and that's fine.

But the more important level is the non-conceptual. A synchronistic answer from the universe. Now the non-conceptual dimension of consciousness, as we could call it, is already emerging in most of you.

And that is about the most important thing that could happen in a person's life, which is the emergence of a deeper dimension of consciousness. I would say that this is what Jesus referred to when he was talking to Mary in the parable of Mary and Martha. And just to quote one brief sentence of just a few words, he said to Martha, only one thing is needed.

Only one thing is needed. My translation of that is, there's only one thing in life that is of absolute importance. And everything else may also be important, but it is of relative importance.

So all the things that happen in your life and in the world may all be important, some more important than others. Your entire life situation, everybody has one. And everybody's life situation is somewhat, if not very problematic.

You know, you're not the only one. So there's that. There is all the things that happen, your financial situation, your health situation, your relationship situation, your work situation, your living situation.

Yes, these things matter, relatively speaking, but there's one thing that is more important that matters absolutely, and that is your state of consciousness. And whether or not you have awakened to what we could call, it in you, the transcendent dimension of consciousness. Now, I'm not going to immediately define what that means, because actually, it cannot be defined.

It can be pointed to, this is what these words are for. But these words are not a substitute for it. The words point, famous phrase in Buddhism, it's the finger pointing to the moon.

But the finger is not the moon. So there's nothing that I say tonight that you need to believe on a conceptual level. I'm not asking you to believe anything whatsoever.

There is what I sometimes call the two levels of consciousness, the conceptual, I sometimes call that object consciousness. These are all the things that happen in your perceptual field, and in your mental field, thinking, emotions, sense perceptions, things arise, things pass away, things come and go, sense perceptions, ideas, thoughts, opinions, feelings, emotions, all belong to object consciousness, one object after another happens, you perceive things, ah, oh, there, oh, and then thought objects arise continuously, a stream of thoughts.

Oh, no, for most people, the stream of thoughts has such a gravitational pull, that they get completely dragged along by this continuously proliferating stream of mental activity. I sometimes call it the voice in the head, it never stops speaking. It continuously comments on where you are, what you're doing, or takes you somewhere completely different in the so-called past, or the so-called future.

One thing after another, one damn thing after another, to paraphrase Churchill, Churchill was talking about history, history is just one damn thing after another, and that's true, but for many people, their conditioned mind, the experience of their conditioned mind is just one damn thing after another, because it never leaves you alone. So most humans who are not awakened, or even awakening, are completely trapped in their object consciousness. They are confined by it, and not only that, they are completely identified with all the arising thoughts and emotions that continuously go through their mind, and there's separation between the thoughts and the emotions that accompany the thoughts, and you, you don't, you're not even there, when you're totally identified with the voice in the head, you are, spiritually speaking, asleep, or another word for it is unconscious. So an unconscious person, in ordinary usage, unconscious means, of course, you've completely lost, you don't know what's going on, and this is unconscious. In conventional usage, unconscious means, in spiritual usage, unconscious means completely and continuously identified with a stream of thinking, and the emotions that go with a stream of thinking.

What does it mean to be identified? It means you derive your sense of who you are from the stream of thinking. Every thought is imbued with a sense of self, so you're identified, it gets, it has you in its grasp, and therefore, people conventionally say, I think, I think, what do you think?

As if thinking, for most people, were a voluntary activity, whereas for most, not you, but those who are not awakening yet, which is the majority of the population still on the planet, for most, that is, they are completely identified with a stream of thinking. They are, spiritually speaking, unconscious, and that is a terrible thing, because then everything that you perceive, reality itself, as you perceive it, goes through the filter of your mental emotional conditioning from the past. So you never see anything as it is, perceive anything clearly, and most importantly, there is never a sense of inner, true inner peace, spaciousness, joy, sense of aliveness, sense of connectedness with something that is deeper than your historical person.

You're always at the mercy of what goes on out there and the reactive patterns of your mind. So you're completely unaware of the possibility of realizing the other dimension of consciousness, which is not object consciousness, but space consciousness. I call it sometimes space consciousness.

Now, what is space consciousness? You cannot define it, because it's beyond concepts.

You can know what space consciousness is in this very moment by becoming aware of the gaps between words when I speak.

I'm just slowing down a little bit. So instead of being totally interested in the words, you're also interested, although that's probably not the right word, you're also giving attention to the empty spaces between the words, because they are needed. Without the spaces, there could be no sounds.

The sound needs the space to exist. Now that's interesting, to be aware of the gaps between words. Or in this room, in this hall, to be aware not only of the objects in this room, the objects that make up this room, what's in it, the bodies, the objects, that which confines and defines the room, the ceiling, the walls, the floor, this is the room.

You're not only aware of that, that would be in this analogy object consciousness, you're also aware of the space in this room. Now the space isn't something that you say, oh, it's there, or it's there. But it is the most important part of this room, is the space.

And it's a wonderful space, but you cannot define it. It has no actual, you can't even say that space exists, because exist means to manifest, to stand out. Exist, ex means out from Latin.

Exist means to be manifested. But space is not, doesn't manifest, it enables everything to manifest in the physical realm. Without space, these things could not be here.

So space is prior to existence. Space is prior to manifestation. And that's very interesting.

So there is something in you, which I sometimes call space consciousness, that is prior to who you are as a person, your personality. And you can know it, not conceptually, but immediately and experientially, by becoming aware either of the spaciousness outside of you, or becoming aware of spaces between sounds, spaces between words. Now how do you do that?

How do you become aware of a space between two words? There is no how, because it's too simple for how. Quite simply, there's an attention in you, a field of alert attention.

And this field of alert attention is aware of the space between words. And you notice that silent space. What does it mean to notice that silent space?

It means in this brief moment of noticing, or noticing the space in this room, in this brief moment, you're not thinking, you're just aware. Thinking, through thinking, you cannot be aware of those spaces between words, because thinking is object consciousness. The space between words takes you to space consciousness.

So the entire secret of our gathering here of all spirituality is just one thing. Now, amazingly, I'm going to talk about this one thing for hours. Using different pointers.

Also, perhaps, as you might have noticed, I haven't prepared anything. So I say perhaps because I don't know exactly what I'm going to speak about, but I assume I will also be speaking about the obstacles to this realization. This is very helpful to address the obstacles that may and probably will arise in you to the realization of that transcendent dimension of consciousness, which is the most important thing, this realization, the most important thing that can happen in your life.

Happen is the wrong word. The most important thing in your life is to connect with that depth dimension. Because without that, even if you don't fully awaken, whatever that is, but to have an inner connectedness with something that transcends the personality of the historical person, the historical person that you are has its place.

It's fine. You have to live with yourself on that level. And it's problematic.

Every person is problematic. Every person's life is problematic. Although you might not know this if you read people's Facebook posts, because they're all doing great.

And they're all looking so happy. And they're all eating their wonderful meals. And they look all so beautiful because the pictures are so overexposed, like the photo on the front cover of the magazine.

The photos are so overexposed that everybody looks so ethereal and beautiful. All that's left is you see the eyes and just a little bit of blurry outline of the face, but that's all. You don't know whether they're 20 years old or 60.

You wouldn't know. But people have a mental construct of what their life is. One is that project into the world through modern technology.

And then you have another mental construct that you live with in your life that you call me and my life, me and my life. That's the person talking. That's the personality talking.

So when you start questioning people, or you'll listen to people or listen to your own, the voice in your own head talking about me and my life. It's not the greatest story. It's a problematic story.

It's not easy being me. In fact, I don't think anybody is having a more difficult time than me. And I need to think about that a bit more.

How can I solve this dilemma of me? It's amazing that many people consider themselves without verbalizing it in that way. They consider themselves to be a problem to be solved.

There's something, and this is very interesting. There's something in the human psyche, if you're not awakening at all yet, so in the normal state of consciousness or unconsciousness, there's something there. There's always either in the background or in the foreground.

If it's in the background, there's a sense of unease, a sense of something is missing, something is lacking. And what it is that's missing, perhaps the mind will figure out, okay, what I need to be fulfilled is this, that, that, that. Or the mind might not even know, because whenever you achieve something that you think will liberate you from this permanent sense of insufficiency, then whenever you think you've found it, it doesn't take long.

And then you say, oh no, because something else goes wrong there too. There's a new relationship. There's a new work situation.

There's a new living situation. So there's often you deceive yourself. You say, no, I found the answer to the dilemma of me.

I'm liberated now because I have found the partner that I've been looking for, the one. I have found the one. And this delusion lasts for a little while.

We don't know how long it could last for a year, probably less. You can see when you look to anything for, let's use this almost spiritual term, salvation, because you're really looking to something out there for salvation. Salvation through a deeply satisfying relationship, permanently satisfying.

Salvation through some kind of acquisition of something adding to your life. Salvation through moving to a totally different country or place. Salvation through recognition from other people.

Once people recognize me, when I become famous, then I'll be fully myself. Then I will have found salvation. But all these people, when they find those things, it doesn't take long.

They take relationships. You go out, you go dating. I don't know if they still do it these days, dating.

Maybe dating is old fashioned because everything happens on the phone. Tinder swiping. And then you have a date.

When you go to a restaurant, you can see, you can immediately see with a couple sitting, whether a couple has been together already for quite a while, or whether they're only meeting for the first, second, or third time. We're dating. The others are not dating.

They're already living together. Totally different energy field. Because the ones who are dating, they still are under the delusion that they've found salvation through the other person.

And when you observe people, you can see it, the way they look at each other. They're both in a state of hypnosis because they go... It's so wonderful.

And you don't even know that you're playing a role unconsciously, and the other person is playing their role, and these two roles interact. And you think, well, this is the reality. And then you see another couple.

They've obviously been together for a while. And most likely these days, they are on their phones. So they're already living together.

And so when the dating goes to the next stage, you start moving in together. Then these days, it often happens before the wedding, if there even is a wedding. But so you move in together, and you quickly notice that this person is not the same person that you dated.

After a few days or weeks, sometimes months, but that's maximum, you find, who is this person? There are suddenly aspects of the personality that you find deeply irritating, if not disturbing. And then you question yourself, say, I must have made a mistake.

But it could also be that your partner feels the same thing about you. What happened? So you're experiencing a conditioned personality.

You're no longer experiencing a part that somebody is playing. You experience the conditioning of the person and every person is, if you live with them for a little while, everybody, you will display behavior that is not that pleasant. They also have a pain body.

If you have read my books and talks, you know what a pain body is. And we may talk about it later. It's an accumulation of past emotional pain that lives in you, but it's dormant.

And then after a while, it becomes active because it needs to feed on some kind of drama. And when you start living with somebody and for the first time you experience this person's pain body, when suddenly there's a shift in the entire energy field of that person, it's no longer the same person at all. It's a dreadful thing.

And you don't know what it is. You say, well, somebody wrote an article a while ago in the paper that says, why are you married to the wrong person? So in that sense, it's not pessimistic, but it sounds pessimistic.

You always marry the wrong person. Unless you awaken to a deeper dimension in yourself that transcends the conditioned personality, then you have something genuine, something that is not part of the conditioned entity that we call the person or the personality. Without that, the state of insufficiency, of lack, of not enough, of something missing, but you don't know what, or you think you know what, but that's not it.

You can never get rid of it. So if you remain trapped in the conditioned energy field of the personality, then you are condemned to perpetual dissatisfaction, to put it mildly, or to use an even more generic term, unhappiness. That's a translation of a generic term that the Buddha used when he used the term dukkha, which can be translated, it's usually translated as suffering, but in more generic terms, it means unhappiness, misery, unease.

Let's stay with unhappiness in whatever form. So you're condemned to it, that every situation turns into eventually, something turns up to mar the situation in some way, whether it's a person or a place or an activity or something that you add to your life that you obtain, there's always something, and that's in the nature of things, but it only happens. And that's the positive part of the Buddha's teaching is never really spoken of because he doesn't want you to believe in something.

So whatever happens, there's always something that goes wrong, so to speak, but that's not a pessimistic statement that only applies if you are dependent for your sense of well-being, your sense of who you are, if you are dependent on all those external factors for your sense of who you truly are, your sense of identity, your sense of well-being, because nothing can satisfy you for long. And if you leave it at that, it sounds a little pessimistic or nihilistic. Okay, so what's the point in anything, says the person who superficially studies Buddhism or other teachings.

So if nothing can satisfy, what's the point in anything? I might as well get drunk and then experience briefly that, and then the next hangover, and then get drunk again, and then eventually I'll kill myself. But that is only the first part.

He says, if you seek yourself in all those things that you think will bring you salvation, if you seek yourself in those things of the world that the world offers, then you will be unhappy. But now the unspoken part is, but if you find yourself in the formless realm of transcendent consciousness, then the world is actually no longer such a bad place, because you don't look to the world, which means other people, achievements, situations, and places, and acquisitions. You don't look to the world for completion of your sense of identity.

You don't seek yourself anymore in the things of this world. Then the things of the world are no longer as frustrating as they were before. And you can allow things to be, you can participate in the play of form, in manifesting.

You can even enjoy relationships, because you're no longer looking for completion of your sense of self through those things. Why are you no longer looking for completion of your sense of self through those things? Because you have found yourself not in the realm of object consciousness, not in the realm of thought or sensory perception.

You have found a deeper dimension within yourself, which we call temporarily space consciousness. I also sometimes call it the deep I. By that, I don't mean this I, it's a pronoun, first I, I am.

The deep I, as opposed to the surface I. Now, this, the two of you exist, well, the deep I doesn't really exist, it's a prior to existence that you have both in you. But most humans are only aware of the surface I, and that's a terrible deprivation that really is a non-fulfillment, permanent sense of non-fulfillment with brief interludes of deluded fulfillment.

Like, you can have a great sensory gratification through, you have a wonderful meal, and then you feel, okay, I'm really fulfilled now. Well, okay, the body is full for a moment. Or you can drink, you can take in some substances, and you have brief moments of, ah, a substance, whatever, can free you of yourself briefly too, but I don't recommend it.

But I can see why people and millions all over the world are longing, and many cannot live without some substance. There's an enormous pull, an enormous longing. What is it that they experience when they take this substance, whether it's alcohol or other things?

They experience briefly, never lasts, a sense of self-transcendence. So the substance can briefly free you of yourself. This mind-made thing that you live with, this problematic sense of I, this problematic me and my life.

Oh dear, how am I going to solve this problem? Well, you can't. So alcohol can briefly free you because you drink, take a few drinks, and you feel lighter for a while.

Ah, because it slows down your mind. You can't think that much anymore. And because you can't think that much anymore, life becomes somewhat less problematic, because if you don't remember your problems, they're gone.

All you're left with is immediate situations that you either deal with or you don't deal with. But the place where your problems live is in your mind, and they only exist if you think about them. Of course, they refer to situations, that is true, but every situation can only be experienced or faced or solved or simply accepted in the present moment.

Nothing ever arises in your life that's not in the present moment. And the present moment you can deal with. It's just here and now.

Either you take action or you don't, but this is the present moment. But then you have a whole superstructure of the problematic, my problematic life that lives in your mind. And that's an incredible burden to live with.

And everybody lives with this burden if they have not awakened to the deeper dimension of the deep eye. They are trapped in their surface eye. It's a terrible prison.

I can sometimes watch people how they are trapped in their personality, and everything they say and the way they perceive things is totally colored by the conditioning of their mind. They're identified with every thought that comes into their head. If you just question something, an opinion, they express an opinion, and you say, no, I don't think that's right.

And they immediately get defensive or aggressive or angry. Sometimes people get violent when you doubt their opinions. They say, no, you're wrong, wrong.

People sometimes kill each other because they can't agree on a subject. Why? Because you derive your sense of identity from thought.

An opinion is a thought or a group of thoughts in your mind that you identify with. When you identify with it, it becomes part of the ego. So we're talking here, of course, I haven't used the word so far.

We are talking about egoic consciousness. When you're identified with thought completely, you are in egoic consciousness. The ego is operating in you, and it pretends to be you.

So you are, spiritually speaking, asleep. You are a totally conditioned entity. And so every opinion that you have, anybody should question it.

This person is questioning your very sense of identity, and that's how you react. You feel threatened in your sense of identity. It's an absurd delusion, but millions live like that.

So the identification with mental positions is a very important part of the egoic consciousness. Now, does this mean as you awaken to the deeper levels, the transcendent dimension, does that mean you no longer have any opinions? No, it doesn't.

You continue to have opinions and, of course, thoughts also, but you do not derive your sense of who you are from those thoughts or opinions. Why do you no longer derive your sense of who you are from those thoughts? Because you have found something much more real, much more fundamental than any thought that tells you who you are.

A thought is, by the analogy I often use, is a ripple on the surface of the ocean. You as a personality, and the personality consists of the conditioning of your mind, you're like a ripple on the surface of the ocean, and you exist as this ripple. Some ripples are bigger than others, but it doesn't make that much difference.

Some ripples are even waves. They might have a private jet, so they have a, there's a wave, I'm a wave, I'm not a ripple on the surface of the ocean. And so the ripple considers, it looks at other ripples and feels uneasy, and it's never complete, and deep down it knows that its existence is short-lived.

So it hopes to become a little bigger ripple by looking to the future, because if I get this, that, or that, I'll be a bigger ripple, but it also knows deep down that the future that it looks to for fulfillment will eventually kill it, too. So the future is a two-edged sword. It promises fulfillment, but it really will kill you.

That's time. Well, we are all suffering as a physical entity. We are all suffering, of course, from that disease.

The prognosis is not good, because we all have this virus called time, and it's already consuming our bodies, and you don't have to wait long, and finally it kills you. They haven't found a remedy yet against time. So the ripple lives an uneasy existence on the surface of the ocean, looking for some kind of completion and fearing other ripples, or wanting to use other ripples.

Come, let's join. The two together, we can become a bigger ripple, but it probably won't work. And then, let's say, the ripple, in a moment of complete dissatisfaction with life, when it says nothing makes sense anymore, it finally comes to a stop in its incessant search for fulfillment, and it comes to a stop in its incessant doing, in looking to the next moment for some kind of fulfillment, and the ripple for a moment stops, but it doesn't stop because it has taken...

I don't know if this analogy still works if I continue with the ripple, but I talked about transcending a sense of self through taking in a substance. It frees you from a moment from this sense of insufficiency. The ripple feels a little bit better in just taking something, and it doesn't think about its problems anymore.

It doesn't always work, because sometimes it can awaken the pain body. Certain substances like alcohol can awaken your pain body, in which case, because it lowers your level of consciousness to an even lower level than your normal level. I'm not talking to you personally.

It lowers your level when you drink, lowers your level of consciousness to an even lower than the normal level, and then this gives the pain body an opportunity to completely take you over. But with other people, they become temporarily quite happy when they drink or take other substances. You can smoke.

It slows down your mind because, oh, and it feels so good. Your problem, the whole superstructure of problems begins to subside because you're not thinking about the problems. Therefore, they disappear.

So you have glimpses of self-transcendence, and that's why people feel drawn to it, because without knowing it, people are longing to become free of themselves. They don't know it, but there is a longing, and this is built into the evolution of the human being. This longing for self-transcendence is built into the evolution of human

consciousness.

Every human experiences it, but they look for a solution to this longing in the wrong ways, completely wrong places. So why is it wrong, then, to experience a glimpse of self-transcendence when you take in a substance? Because what happens is, yes, it frees you from temporarily, to some extent, from your egoic mind, but it takes you below the level of thought, where you habitually live.

You habitually live in the level of continuous thinking, thinking, thinking, voice in the head, talking to yourself, continuously commenting, this is the scientist. Oh, my God, look at this. Why can't he do this?

I should have done that. What's going to happen tomorrow? Oh, no, I can't think.

Well, yes, I should have said that. Why didn't I say that next time I'm meeting? Oh, look at this person, continuous.

Oh, it's horrible, horrible. And a substance takes you a bit out of that, but you fall below thought. You go, you're moving towards real unconsciousness.

You're moving towards sleep, so you can escape the self by falling below thought. But that is not, in evolutionary terms, that is not where we are going, because that would be a regression towards the state of an animal. An animal is totally fine with living below thought.

An animal does not have conceptual thinking. An animal manifests consciousness, but not conceptual consciousness. The dog manifests consciousness, but it does not have an opinion about you.

And also, the dog also does not have an opinion about itself. That's the amazing thing. Can you imagine that freedom of the dog?

It has no problem with self-esteem whatsoever. And even the most ugly dog has no problem with body image. Because the dog has not built a mental representation of itself, which is the ego, that consists of you telling yourself something about yourself.

The dog hasn't arrived there yet, luckily. That's why it's so liberating to be with a dog, because the dog has neither an opinion of itself nor of you. So it's liberating.

It is therapeutic to be with an animal such as a dog, because you can, by looking into the eyes of the dog, you can sense there is a consciousness there in the dog, but it's not a conceptual consciousness. There is a beingness that shines through the eyes of the dog, but there's not an egoic sense of self there. And so you feel, for a moment, you feel good when you look at, unless you hate dogs, because you were bitten when you were a child, then that's fine.

You look into the eyes of a dog and you feel, for a moment, you feel liberated even from yourself, this mental image. And you're, ah, so good. So some people are kept sane by their pet.

That's what I actually, millions of people are kept sane because there you have, I call them, I produced a little book with a cartoonist about, mostly about dogs, but some cats I need too. And the book is called Guardians of Being. I call these dogs Guardians of Being for Jung, because they represent being.

But it's not where we are going. It's wonderful to have these dogs, but we cannot regress. Well, theoretically, perhaps we could, but it is not our destiny in order to become free of unhappiness, to regress to a pre-egoic level, a pre-thought level consciousness.

We don't want to go there. This is not a human destiny. We could go even further.

The tree is even more deeply connected with being than the dog. The tree is rooted not only in the soil, the actual physical rootedness of the tree. When you approach a tree without the conceptual mind, you can sense that the tree is not only rooted in the soil, the tree is deeply connected with being.

It exudes a sense of beingness, of rootedness. It's a very wonderful emanation that humans cannot feel if they are too possessed by their conceptual mind. So you cannot, if you look at a tree and say, oh, that's an oak tree.

How nice. You haven't really seen the tree because you've only relating it through a mental concept. In order to experience and be with a tree, you need to let go of the mental concept and you perceive the tree, perhaps even touch it, but it's not necessary.

You perceive the tree. Perhaps there's sensory, also auditory perception. You can feel the rustling of leaves.

There's a breeze, perhaps even a sense of smell. And if you stay with it for a little while, you can sense its beingness. But why can you sense its beingness?

Because you have become still for a moment. For a moment, you're conscious, but not thinking. And that's the secret.

So we've just talked about falling below thought. And that's where the nature still lives on that dimension. And it's wonderful.

This is why nature, unless it comes into contact with humans, one cannot really say that nature is unhappy. The unhappiness exists in the human realm. That's where humans produce unhappiness.

And I would suggest that is the case because humans are transitional creatures between the animal realm and something that we are destined to evolve into, which is the next step in human evolution. So this is a very difficult time for our species. We exist in between two realms, the unconscious realm and the possibility of transcending the egoic unconsciousness.

So here we have falling below thought through taking substances and so on, experiencing glimpses of self-transcendence by falling below thought, but we don't want to go there. Now the possibility arises, and that's the essence of all spirituality ultimately, of rising above thought, of transcending thought. Transcending does not mean that you no longer think.

It means you are able to think, but you are no longer at the mercy of your conditioned thought processes. You are no longer seeking yourself in the movement of thought. What arises is a new dimension of consciousness, which we could call awareness or presence.

Awareness is rising above thinking. And I'd asked you before to become aware of gaps between words, and this is the secret, the entry point is there. By becoming aware of gaps between words, for example, you become aware that in those brief moments, you are actually not thinking.

This is the key to the evolution of human consciousness, is realizing the possibility of, let's put it like that, of becoming familiar with that space of pure awareness where you are able to think, but you don't have to think. This is rising above thinking instead of falling below thinking. Rising above thinking, there's an alertness to it.

This is the opposite of what happens when you take in certain substances. There's a decrease of alertness. You become less conscious.

When you rise above thinking, and I would suggest to you that as we talk about it here, that it's not just the words, that become aware of your state of consciousness right now when you listen to these words and realize that in order to understand and recognize the truth behind these words, you don't have to think. You don't have to figure out in your conceptual mind whether what I'm saying is true or not. At a deeper level, you know it's true, but how do you know that it's true?

Because you experience, if only briefly, here and now, you experience that beautiful space of pure awareness or presence. Wow. So there are moments when you're actually, you're not thinking right now.

I can stop speaking now for 10 seconds. Now, when I stop speaking now for 10 seconds, do you need to fill that space by adding thought to it, or are you able to just be with that 10-second space without adding any thought to it? And then I'll ask you a question after that.

But right now, I will stop speaking for 10 seconds, and I will just do something that certain Zen masters do in order to remind their disciples of the state of alert presence. They go like this. One Zen master never gave any other explanation when he was asked to explain the essence of Zen.

All he would ever do is raise his finger and look at you. Please, can you explain the essence of Zen to us again? We didn't understand it yesterday.

So for 10 seconds, I'll raise my finger, and please don't count the seconds.

[Speaker 4] (1:00:15 - 1:00:16)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (1:00:19 - 1:18:12)

Now, when you're not, did you disappear when you are not thinking, when you're not remembering your problems, when you're not remembering whether your life is a big success or a big failure, to take two extremes, if you think your life is a big success, you're in a state of temporary delusion, and just wait a little. Now, you may also find, because that sometimes in your daily life, you have moments when there is pure awareness, but you don't even know it. Now, throughout your daily life, you have brief moments when you're actually not thinking, but they may be quite short, but you have brief moments without wanting them.

Whenever you look at something, especially if it's something natural, like this might be the sky, or a flower, or a dog, but not necessarily even natural. It could be almost anything that does not immediately stimulate conceptualization like something written. So you look at something, let's say, especially you just step out of the building, you open the door, or you come into the building, and you open the door, and you step, and for a moment, something new enters your perceptual field.

Now, if you're very alert, in the first two or three seconds, you have to take it in, and you're not thinking. Then the mind kicks in, and calls it something. It says, oh, this is that, this is that, whatever the mind has to say about it.

It identifies it, it gives it, it attaches a label to whatever it is that you are perceiving. But in the first few moments, when something new enters your perceptual field, there is a moment of spacious awareness. You haven't interpreted it yet, because you did not have enough time to interpret it.

So there was a timeless moment of pure perception. And the more you have that in your life, it frees you very briefly from the egoic self, so you can continue to function without going totally insane. Because you have these moments, these brief moments of awareness.

Now, there are humans who almost never have them, but they are in a very serious state of mental dysfunction. So if you're not completely insane yet, and of course, all of you here have gone far beyond all that already. If you're not completely, continuously trapped in dreadful unhappiness, that means occasionally you experience these brief moments of awareness, but you don't even know it.

You might think, oh, this is caused by, let's say, let's say you witness something beautiful. Let's say you witness a sunset, and you go, ah, and you're really looking at that sunset. And for quite a while, the mind doesn't say anything.

There's a pure perception, and there's a stillness behind the perception. But all you're aware of is the perception itself. So when you then interpret it, you say, I felt so good because that sunset was so beautiful.

Another example, you might be engaged in strenuous physical activity, perhaps even dangerous physical activity. You might be surfing, or you might be climbing a mountain wall, or whatever it is, some dangerous or strenuous physical activity. And you feel so good.

You feel so alive. You only feel alive when you're engaged in that activity. So you get addicted to that activity.

Why? Because it frees you from yourself temporarily. And what does that mean?

It means while you're engaged in that activity, you are not thinking. You are just present. And so, but you don't know that.

You confuse the activity or the contemplation of the beautiful sunset, you confuse that with what caused that sense of being intensely alive. What was the cause of feeling so good in that moment? Well, you say, well, the sunset made me feel so good.

Or when I engaged in surfing, I feel so good. The surfing makes me feel good. That's not entirely true.

The deeper reason why you feel good is you are free of yourself in those moments. And what arises is intense presence. In that intense presence, you experience self-transcendence.

You are in touch with being. And then people get addicted to certain activities. Anything could happen.

Now the good news is, of course, if you enjoy certain activities or enjoy beauty in nature, it's wonderful. Just go into nature with all your senses alive and take in. It frees you.

It can also, if you're alert, it can free you from the problematic thinking mind. It can free you from yourself. And you take in the incredible aliveness that's all around you.

And you go in a state of astonishment and wonder. I think it was Plato or was it Socrates who said, philosophy begins with wonder or astonishment. And you go, oh, and what is wonder or astonishment?

In wonder or astonishment, you're not thinking and you're not even trying to think. You're just aware. And you're aware of it.

There's a depth. You're not just aware of what's on the surface of sensory perception. You're aware of something that is deeper than sensory perception, the intense aliveness that's behind all phenomena, all phenomena of nature, but ultimately all phenomena.

Whatever we perceive is a surface dimension of reality. There's something far deeper hiding behind the surface dimension of reality. So you take in nature and you go, wow.

So nature can free you temporarily. If you don't mistake the thing that you think frees you, it's not it. It frees you from your mind.

And because it frees you from habitual or obsessive compulsive thinking, addictive, obsessive, compulsive. These are good, three good words to describe most people's mind activity. Addictive, obsessive, compulsive, dreadful.

It frees you from that. And because it frees you from that, you suddenly feel good. Now, how do you feel good?

What does it mean? There's a deep sense of connectedness with, ah, let's return for a moment to the ripple, because we forgot about the ripple. Hadn't come to the end of the story of the ripple yet.

Because so far, the ripple is unhappy because it lives on the surface of the ocean. At some point, the ripple becomes so dissatisfied with what it can find on the surface of the ocean, it comes to a stop and it goes, ah. And it suddenly becomes aware there's more to it than it had thought.

There's more to it than meets the eye, so to speak, because what meets the eye is the surface phenomena of reality, sensory perception is there. So there's more to it than meets the eye. The ripple suddenly becomes aware that, oh, but it cannot define what this more is.

It goes, oh, it begins to realize that it's actually forever connected two and one with the ocean. And that's an enormous realization and liberation for the ripple. Wow.

And then perhaps the ripple is able to remain in connectedness with that sense of beingness or presence, even when it continues its ripple existence on the surface. It still operates as a ripple and yet no longer in the state of continuous fear, anxiety, dissatisfaction, regret, irritation, and all the things that make up people's lives and life situation very, very unsatisfactory, not pleasant at all. And it can then begin to even enjoy its ripple existence on the surface of things, because the neediness is gone.

The neediness of needing some kind of satisfaction, ultimate satisfaction on the level of surface reality of the surface of the ocean. And the strange paradox is, or irony, is that once you, because you are the ripple, once you find the connectedness with being, the surface existence of the surface I becomes a more satisfying experience because the neediness is gone. You do still do things, create things, you are active, you still acquire new things, you learn new things, new skills, more knowledge, you have experiences, you have relationships, you travel, you experience a new place, you continue to explore the sensory realm, but it becomes a much more satisfying place because you are not looking to it for ultimate satisfaction.

That's a wonderful liberation. Ultimate satisfaction is inseparable, actually, from the present moment. And everything else exists in time.

There's a past, there's a future, but there's no satisfaction ultimately in past or future because they don't really exist in themselves except as thought forms. And that's an amazing thing. No, very few people perhaps have realized, or it's incredibly obvious, that the future does not exist except in your mind and the past does not exist except as a thought form of past, as memories.

Is that true? If it were not true, somebody would have experienced the future already. Some intrepid explorer would have arrived and said, I have found the future.

But nobody has found it because when you find the future, it's the present. Oh, and when you go into the past, it's the present. Even if you could time travel, everything you experience would still be in the present moment.

So there's only this. There's only this present moment. And in this present moment, this is the vertical dimension of life.

You go deeper. The rest is the horizontal dimension of life. One could even interpret the cross as a spiritual symbol, use Christianity and pre-Christianity.

The cross, the two dimensions, the horizontal, which is surface dimension, and the vertical, which is now. So this is taking your attention into now, is inseparable from present moment. The consciousness that you are, the awareness, the consciousness, the essence of who you are is inseparable from the present moment.

In fact, in the deeper sense, it is the present moment. You are the present moment in its deepest sense, where everything unfolds. The one thing that doesn't change.

However, the habit patterns of the mind, we have inherited mental habits of being identified with thought forms, identified with external things. There's a gravitational pull that the mind has. There are few things you can do when you realize that you've become trapped again in the conceptual mind.

The moment comes, and whenever you become unhappy, that can be a little unhappy as a generic term. It could be even the slightest irritation is already a form of unhappiness. Then you could have huge forms of unhappiness.

You get very anxious, you get very depressed, you feel guilty, you feel grievances, you've all kinds. Whenever you become unhappy, it could be a little alarm bell that says, you've lost the present moment. Okay, but okay, where is it?

Or the mind says, I can't be bothered with the present moment, I'm too unhappy. Oh, don't come to me with all that spiritual stuff. I'm unhappy.

Let me be unhappy. I love it. I really want to talk about it more.

And if possible, I want to make you unhappy too. So you found, how do you get when you're trapped in there? Yes, you need to know, okay, I'm trapped in unhappiness.

And then there's a possibility of getting out. Although your mind might tell you, there's no way. I don't even want to get out.

I'm totally justified in being unhappy. Don't talk to me about freedom from unhappiness, I don't want it. But if you know that you don't want it because it's dysfunctional, it makes your life miserable, okay, then there's still a gravitational pull of the mind.

Something you can do then is use an anchor, use an anchor for the present moment. And there are various things you can do. The anchors that can take you out of the conceptual mind, the thinking mind, so that you can become aware.

The anchor is, could be sensory perception, or it could be, as I call it, the inner body. The inner body becoming aware of the inner energy field of the body can be a wonderful anchor for being present. And that can be either meditation in itself, or it can be something that even in your daily life while engaged in some other activity, you can still have some attention in the inner energy field of the body.

And that keeps you present and takes attention away from thinking without falling below thinking. You remain, rise above thinking. And that's a very powerful way of stepping out of the conditioned mind.

So it's good to remember that and closely associated with that is breathing. Whenever you breathe, you're aware that you're breathing, then you're not, this is an amazing thing, when you're aware that you're breathing, you're not thinking. One conscious breath, follow the breath with your attention, in and out.

During that brief moment, you're not thinking, you're just aware. If you're thinking, you're not following the breath with your attention. You can either think or breathe consciously.

These are little devices, I wouldn't even go so far as to call it techniques, things you can do in order to step out of the conditioned mind.

[Speaker 3] (1:18:35 - 1:18:42)

Our program continues with session two, meeting the aliveness within.

[Speaker 1] (1:19:02 - 1:20:54)

Now, Kim is going to do an inner body meditation with you to see if you can go deeply into that energy field, step out of the conceptual mind. And she will bring a little bit of yin energy to this stage. Perhaps I'm a little bit too young tonight.

The meditation will be for 30 minutes, and I hope that many of you will come back. Now, it's possible that some of you have already had enough, you may not want to come back. But if you do come back, I would suggest that in the next part, when I come back to here, we will go more deeply into the experiential realization of space consciousness, of the deep eye, and what else this is about the most important thing in your entire life.

So also, I suggest that you, in the intermission after the meditation, I would recommend that you do not fall below thinking by intake of intoxicating beverages. So that you don't come back here and in a state of having fallen below thinking and fooling yourself thinking that you have risen above thinking. I invite Kim now to come and do this inner body meditation with you.

And I'll see you again in the present moment in a little while. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:21:03 - 1:47:05)

Good evening, everyone. So I was asked to do a 30 minute meditation. And I have to admit, at first I thought 30 minutes.

You know, it used to be 20 years ago, 30 minutes was nothing. But with the wonderful invention of the internet and these devices, apparently the attention span of people, and especially the younger generation, is getting shorter and shorter. They have now done a study where the attention span is now 10 minutes.

But I'm with advanced souls here. So 30 minutes will be like a breeze. It'll be like nothing.

And it'll now be perhaps 27 minutes. So we'll be doing an inner body meditation. And Eckhart calls it the inner body, that feeling of aliveness within.

In Sanskrit, it's called prana. In Chinese, it's called qi. It's your life force.

And it's the purest life force energy arising out of stillness, out of the consciousness that you are. And so with this inner body, when you can access and feel the inner body, it acts as a bridge to stillness, and as a bridge to the manifested world. Because this life force is still we can call a form, but it's the purest life form.

And it's a creative life form. So when we access this inner body and begin to feel it in everyday life, it changes your entire way of being in this world. I'd like you to find your comfortable seat, whether that means, you know, you're sitting back in your chair.

But if you'd like, if you tend to maybe you think you might fall asleep, then you could sit forward up onto your chair, so you're not leaning back on your chair. And your feet are flat on the ground. And your palms could be face down or face up on your lap.

Welcome. Okay. So closing your eyes, if you wish.

Sitting up tall. Feeling your feet on the ground. Feeling your hands on your lap.

Become aware of your breathing. We're not changing our breath, but just be aware of it. How are you being breathed in this moment?

And you may notice as you become aware of your breathing, perhaps it deepens all on its own. You're aware of your inhale, and the belly expanding as you inhale, and aware of the exhale. And perhaps you're aware at the end of the exhale, just a small gap before the next inhale.

If thoughts arise, you just notice them and let them go. As if they're like balloons with helium in it, a thought arises and let it go. And bring your attention to your body, the physical body.

Noticing any tension, tightness, or perhaps pain. And drop those labels and just simply feel the sensations. And scan your body from head to toe and relax every part of your body.

Returning your attention to your breath as you take a deep inhale and exhale. And at the bottom of the exhale, let's hold the breath for perhaps a count of three or four, but without counting, allow the inhale to come naturally. And pay attention to your abdomen.

Being aware of the abdomen, perhaps you feel a sensation in there. Perhaps you feel a warmth. Inhaling and exhaling.

Holding and inhaling. And dropping any thoughts that may arise. And even dropping the concept of time.

Your time is man-made. Become aware of this moment. The only real moment there is.

This warmth, this sensation, this tingling in your belly region. It's the inner body. Allow it to expand throughout your whole body.

If you can't feel it in your body, let's see if we can feel it in our hands. Lifting your hands away from your lap, holding your hands up so it's not touching anything. You can ask yourself, how do I know I even have hands?

And then drop the label hands and simply feel. Keeping your awareness on your hands and bring your awareness to your arms, your forearms, your elbows, your upper arms. How do you know you even have arms?

Drop the label and feel. And feeling your hands and your arms together. And bring your awareness to your shoulders.

How do you know you even have shoulders? And if you can't feel your shoulders, don't worry about it. Maybe draw your attention back to your hands.

Hands are the easiest to feel the inner body. Just keep your attention on the inner body. And be aware of your shoulders, your arms, and your hands together.

If your hands get tired of holding them up, just lay them on your lap. Rest them for a few moments. Then raise them again.

When you feel ready, bring your attention to your feet. Feeling your toes, feeling your arches, your heels, the tops of your feet. Feel your feet, your hands, your arms, your shoulders together.

And bring your attention to your legs. Feeling your calves, your shins, your knees, your thighs. How do you know you have legs?

And feel your feet, your legs, your hands, your arms, and your shoulders together. And again, don't worry if you can't feel that. Just return your attention to your hands or to your abdomen where you can feel the inner body.

And bring your attention to your buttocks, your hips, your hip flexors. And bring your awareness to your hands, your legs, your arms, your shoulders, your feet, your buttocks, your hips together. You are the stillness.

You are the life force. Become aware of that. Feel it within you.

Now bring your attention to your upper body, your front body, and your back body. So you're feeling your belly, you feel the chest, you feel your spine, your shoulder blades. Now connect your feet, your legs, your buttocks, your hips, your torso, your back body, shoulders, arms, and hands together.

And bring your attention to your head, your neck, your ears, your face, your eyes. How do you know you have a head? How do you know you have a neck, eyes, and nose, and mouth?

Remember if you can't feel your head, just go back to a part of your body you can feel. And now feel the inner body as one energy field in your body. Connecting all the parts of your body and dropping the label that they're parts.

And just feel your inner body as one energy field. This is your prana. Your life force.

The creative energy arising from the stillness within. You can lower your hands down to your lap if they're not already there. So we're aware of the form dimension, the form of breathing, the form of your body, the form of the occasional thoughts that may arise or emotions that may be there.

And become aware of sounds, the form of sounds. So the awareness of the form dimension. Now let's become aware of the formless dimension.

Become aware that you are aware. You can even ask yourself, who or what is aware, but don't answer it with the mind. Just be aware of awareness itself.

Where form and formlessness exist together and you are the awareness of form and stillness. We enter the timeless dimension. We gently open our eyes and we come to the time dimension where the 30-minute meditation is complete.

When you're in the timeless, you're not even aware of time. It's just the present moment. So I invite you to practice the inner body meditation.

This is your portal to stillness. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:47:36 - 2:10:37)

Conscious sitting down. Now you're all spiritually advanced, which means you're not waiting for the next thing to happen all the time, which would be the normal state of consciousness. If one had to define the normal state of consciousness, one could virtually say in that state, you're always waiting for the next thing.

And when it comes, you start waiting for the one after that. Denial of the present moment, it's a mind pattern. And it's quite amazing when you become conscious of that, that you always live for the next moment, which could be a minute from now, or it could be a year from now, or next week, or tonight.

We're not saying, obviously, you cannot make plans for the so-called future. Of course, you need the future. We needed the future to meet here.

We did not meet here accidentally. It would have taken a long time to get us together.

When the universe brings us all together, then we will meet at the Albert Hall.

We just don't want to create any future plans. For practical purposes, you need the future. But to live more effectively, more harmoniously, to be in connectedness with a deeper essence identity, you need to bring the vertical dimension into your life and continuously be aware that you, one could say, inhabit two dimensions.

One is the dimension of form here, the horizontal dimension, and more vitally important is the vertical dimension, which is presence. So this implies present moment awareness to make that part of your normal, everyday existence, so that you're able to increasingly live in the present moment. That almost sounds paradoxical because increasingly implies time, but that's how it is.

We're bringing, we're having the horizontal, we're talking from the perspective of the horizontal dimension about the vertical. On the horizontal dimension, everything is subject to time. That's where time operates.

In the vertical dimension, there's only ever this moment. Nothing has ever happened in the past. Is that true?

It must be true because nothing can happen except in the present moment. So present moment awareness is the entry point into that transcendent state of consciousness. They're virtually inseparable, so that is the portal.

Present moment awareness is, what does it mean? How does it work? Well, you're becoming aligned with the present moment, becoming friendly with the present moment because it's all you ever have.

It's all there ever is. Whatever form it takes, the form it takes changes continuously. Everything changes, is subject to change in time, but it all unfolds in the present moment.

So you step out of egoic consciousness the moment you step into present moment awareness, which may start with suddenly becoming aware of your surroundings more acutely, not just peripherally aware as in a normal state of consciousness. You're kind of aware enough not to bump into things, but not more than that because your consciousness is continuously absorbed in mental processes. A lot of them add nothing useful or enjoyable to your life.

I mean, if these mental processes had a useful purpose, and some of them do, but most of them in the normal state of consciousness do not fulfill a useful purpose, except that they keep the ego going. When you worry, there's no useful purpose behind it. You cannot find a solution to your so-called problems by dwelling on them mentally at three o'clock in the morning when you're lying in bed.

Oh my God. And so in the unconscious state, you cannot tell the difference between reality, the isness of things, and your interpretation of the isness of things. So you continuously add something to the simplicity of the present moment that is determined by the conditioning of your mind.

Now, if you only take one thing away, I hope you take many things away, but ultimately all these things point to one thing anyway. So you take one thing away, and the dysfunctional way of adding unnecessary mental baggage to the present moment, for example, when you're in a situation that causes you seemingly, let's say, a mild form of unhappiness, irritation. What's going on here?

You have to wait for something. How many times human beings are waiting for something? There's so many occasions when you're waiting for something, and often you get irritated because they are keeping you waiting.

They're keeping me waiting. You wait on the phone, talking to your bank, to your insurance company. There's no human being you can talk to.

There's always machines, and you get irritated. You're at the airport waiting in line. Your flight is canceled.

It's painful, small pain. Then comes bigger, bigger pain is possible. You lose something.

Your car got stolen, whatever. Your bicycle has a flat tire, all kinds of weird things. I used to travel many, many years ago on the Tube in London.

For quite a while, it was a source of suffering for me. I don't know how it is now, but I had to take the northern line, and at the time that was considered particularly unpleasant. I don't know if that has changed or not.

They called it the misery line. At 29, I went through this weird shift in consciousness. Nothing had changed externally in my situation.

Before, the northern line was a source of suffering, and then I suddenly noticed to my surprise, I was sitting again after this shift in the northern line. I was sitting, or was I standing? It was more likely standing.

It's been a long time ago, and strangely, I realized this isn't as bad as I thought. I'm actually feeling quite peaceful. That's weird.

I'm on the northern line, and I feel peaceful. How is this possible? It's crowded.

The trains are overcrowded, and sometimes you have to, and I didn't realize at the time the mechanism behind it. Why was this the case? Only later did I realize it was a very simple fact, and that was I did not add any mental baggage to that present moment.

I did not interpret it in any way, whereas before, I interpreted it in a very negative way, which, of course, one would say, well, that's a very natural thing to do. Of course, you're hot. The air is bad.

The trains are overcrowded. You have to wait for too long. It's just a dreadful experience.

I don't want to be doing this for the rest of my life, but I have probably stuck doing it for the rest of my life, mental commentary, and so I was on the northern line without adding any mental commentary to it. I was just there. It was still just as hot, just as unpleasant smell, and long waiting periods, overcrowded, but where was the unhappiness?

In fact, it felt peaceful. It took me a while to understand why I felt peaceful. This is so weird, and later I understood, oh, I didn't add any more mental commentary to this moment, and then I realized what had made me unhappy ultimately was not the situation.

It was the narrative that my mind created around the situation, and that was a revelation. The narrative makes you unhappy in most cases, not the situation itself. When you realize that, then suddenly you have a choice.

Before, you didn't have a choice. Your inner state depended upon external conditions. You were at the mercy, your inner state was at the mercy of external conditions, what other people say to you, what other people do, where you find yourself, what you're doing, what's happening around you.

You're continuously reacting, and you're continuously creating a narrative for that situation, and in the unconscious state, which I was trapped in, of course, obviously, for many years, you cannot tell the difference between the is-ness of the situation and the narrative. They become a single thing, so you haven't separated the two, so when your mind is telling, this is a dreadful place to be, and I have been doing this already for two years, and I probably have to do it until I retire, and how my life is so, it really sucks, it sucks. And whatever, very complex, sometimes very complex narrative, it makes you, the body reacts to the narrative and feels very unhappy.

The emotion reflects the narrative, and an unconscious person cannot separate the is-ness from the narrative, they are experienced as a single phenomenon, so you're not actually experiencing reality, you're experiencing reality through the veil of your conditioning, so it gets completely distorted, so you add suffering to that moment. Then comes, once you realize that, you can actually experiment if you encounter a situation that causes you whatever form of unhappiness it may be, how would I experience this moment if I did not add any narrative to it? Let's just figure it out, and then that moment, you say, okay, I'm not adding anything, there's just this moment.

Now, in order to be in this moment without a narrative, you need to be present, and to be present, it helps to be in the body, for example, because you're present with every cell of the body, you're not just present with your head, you're present with the entire energy field of the body, can sense the aliveness that pervades the entire body, and that's the sense of presence, you're present, that can become the anchor, and then the compulsion to add a narrative isn't there anymore, because you've consciously taken away attention from the mind, and you've put it into your body, which is consciousness, and then you're able to be in the same situation, and simply be there and watch it.

So, let's get back to the northern line, you're sitting there, or standing there, hanging on to the thing, and your mind isn't saying anything anymore, it says nothing, there's just the bare facts of, yes, it's not pleasant, the body's, you're feeling hot, and that's all that's left, but that's not unhappiness, discomfort in the body, feeling too hot is not unhappiness, you're just there, whoa, and then you realize you've separated the is-ness from the narrative, and then you do it again, next morning, you get up, you open the curtains, and look out of the window, and if you're in England, it's probably raining, and your mind says, not another miserable day, I can't stand it anymore, and then it carries on with associated negative thoughts that may not have nothing particularly to do with it, but once you've said to yourself, not another miserable day, I can't take any more of this, how many more days do I have to experience this, life is awful anyway, and it goes on and on, and you don't know what you're doing, it happens to you, the narrative you had, you never chose it, the narrative happens to you, the thinking happens to you, you don't think, thinking happens to you, and then, so you're onto another miserable, okay, how would I experience this without adding any narrative, you open the curtains, and you can see maybe a bit of sky, raindrops falling, maybe on the windowpane, oh, is that so bad, it's fine, that's what is, it's rain, plants are happy, but you don't even have to tell yourself that, you don't have to tell yourself anything, you're not convincing yourself, we're not talking about convincing yourself mentally that this is actually okay, no, no, we don't want to lie to yourself, you have to go beyond that, you don't want to replace one narrative with another narrative that's a bit more, it sounds better, and then you have to make an effort to believe in the second narrative, instead, well, how do you experience this without it, oh, great, but you will notice it's, these are all moments of just being aware, you're aware, and then there's whatever it is that you're aware of, you're aware, and you're aware of something, now, your sense of identity, your sense of I, your sense of who you are, is no longer derived from that which you're aware of, it's derived from the awareness itself, that is the shift, and the awareness itself is always the awareness, no matter what the awareness is aware of, so the awareness could be aware of a gray, so-called miserable day, if you want to attach a label to it, but it's not, it's just is, or it could be beautiful sunshine, you could be somewhere in a different climate, and the sky is blue every day, the sun shines every day, and then you're aware of that, but if you had a narrative, after three months of sunshine every day, you would open the curtains, you would say, I can't stand another hot and sunny day, please give me some, I'm longing to get back to England, so if you're, the awareness remains the same, what you're aware of changes, but the, where you derive your sense of identity from has shifted from that thing that you're aware of, which could be a situation out there, it could be a thought, to the awareness, and that is an enormous liberation when you discover your ability to experience life, which is the present moment, without a narrative, unless you need some kind of interpretation in order to communicate something to another human being, the enormous freedom therefore comes, but you not only do it in, let's say, challenging or somewhat unpleasant situations there, it's of course doubly important, because then you realize the unhappiness is created by the mental commentary instead of the situation, the situation may be unpleasant, but there's no unhappiness in it, unhappiness is something else altogether, and this is what the Buddha meant when he used the term dukkha or suffering, the dukkha isn't in the situation, the dukkha is mind made, but you don't just wait for a situation that is challenging before you drop the narrative, you can drop the narrative in simple situations when you're simply perceiving something, or you're simply, let's say you are drinking a cup of coffee somewhere, you're sitting somewhere drinking a coffee, you're having a cup of tea, we're in England, tea, so you're drinking a cup of tea and you're looking around, and not many people, by the way, unfortunately with our advanced technology, technological devices, not many people anymore sit in a cafe looking around, you might have noticed almost nobody sits there and goes, no, everybody looks at something else and it's in their hand, and it draws their attention onto the screen, and that's when they are not here at all, they're not present at all, so we have to be really careful with these addictive things, which are an extension of the mind, created by the mind, the clever mind has created an extension of itself as a device, in order not to lose control over you, and it's working, so just as I briefly mentioned before, I carry on with the cafe, sitting there, be very much aware of how often you interact with your device, has it taken possession of you, or are you using it as an instrument, the same applies to the mind, has the mind taken possession of you, which is the case with all unawakened humans, they are at the mercy of their mind, is the mind running you, is the mind possessing you, or are you able to use the mind, now who are you, when I say you, you are the consciousness behind the mind, it's not separate from the mind, the consciousness is the ocean, the mind is the ripple, the consciousness is the ocean, but the ripple of course is not separate from the ocean, it just looks separate when you look at the surface, and you can only use your mind when the awareness that you are uses the mind as an instrument, and it's beautiful, without awareness, you are at the mercy of the conditioned mind, it's a dreadful state, it's a transitional state, and now imagine millions of humans, as is still the case, although more and more are awakening, but it's still a small minority, millions of humans living in that unconscious way at the mercy of the conditioning of their personal mind, and part of their personal mind is the collective mind of whatever culture, cultural surrounding they live in, their mind is conditioned, millions of humans living in that way without awareness, imagine what kind of world they create, what kind of problems they create, what problems they create, people create in their personal lives, through dysfunctional mental activity that they're not aware of, because they're at the mercy of it, and the havoc that's created collectively by the collective mind of humans, all you need to do is watch the news tonight, and you see manifestations of the collective human mind, and it creates this kind of so-called reality, so the solution lies, of course, in the transformation of human

[Speaker 4] (2:10:37 - 2:10:44)

consciousness, so that we are no longer at the mercy of the collective mind and its reactive modes, and so on.

[Speaker 3] (2:11:10 - 2:11:18)

Our program continues with session three, intense aliveness, astonishment, and wonder.

[Speaker 1] (2:11:35 - 3:07:01)

Be aware of the devices, so that they don't possess you, because they are extensions of your mind, and it's, they're also extensions of the collective mind. Use them when you need them, but this habit of when you're not doing anything in particular, immediately they get this thing out of their pocket, and look, they're not, there's nothing to look at, but they have to, there's some reason everybody else is doing it, and it seems to be calling to you, just look at me, you must look now, and you might even get little noises it makes, because somebody has posted something on Facebook, something really important, they're in a restaurant, and they take a picture of the soup, Instagram, what all these kinds, Twitter, what's the latest tweet, what's he tweeted now, you know who he is, I can't believe it, this time he has gone too far, well, he went too far yesterday too, and last year, and then people experience emotions when they interact with this, and then they have to reply to somebody who posted something, you, you bastard, you cunt, they've never met this human being, the human being is a cipher, just an absolute abstraction, little letters, and then they are attacking somebody they've never met, insane, so you need to be really conscious of how often, and to what purpose you interact with the device, it has some wonderful uses too, obviously, you can send text messages too, might be important, occasionally, some text messages are important, probably, well, five percent, not three, two percent of all text messages sent maybe have some importance, so nobody sits anymore in a place, just in a waiting room, for example, at the doctor, or in a cafe, or on a train, or on a bus, no, they're all here, but you don't have to, you can use that moment and practice, present moment awareness, again, perceiving the world around you, without labeling the world around you, that's a wonderful practice, in order to practice, you need to be alert, there needs to be, you need to be above thinking, you don't want to be below thinking, above thinking, and so you look around, now, this alertness you can feel in every cell of the body, you sit there drinking your tea, and you just look around, people, they're all on their phones, but that's okay, you drop the labels, you say, look at these people, how unconscious they are, I'm the only one not on the phone, you have to be really alert, because very easily, you can have, again, a conceptual reality for yourself, the moment you believe, you create a thought form, and it gives you a sense of self, you're drawn back into ego, and ego is always comparative, it compares me, which is a mental creation, me and the others, now, how do I rate, here's me, and there's the others, the ego attempts superiority or specialness, when it compares itself to others, if it cannot find superiority or specialness, it feels very uneasy, and diminished in its sense of self, so very unconscious people are totally possessed by this mental entity, this ego, and so whenever somebody either has more than you, or knows more than you, or can do more than you, or looks better than you, according to how you interpret their looks, has a better body than you, better looks than you, better clothes than you, or is so knowledgeable, you feel inferior, the ego feels diminished, but no ego remains diminished for very long, because the ego will immediately create, it's all automatic, it creates a narrative in order to compensate for its diminishment, so if somebody drives by in a Bentley, and you are on your bicycle, and there he goes fast, and you got, almost hits you, and then you or your ego looks at it, and feels diminished, here I am on this bicycle, and this guy's in a Bentley, you feel the ego is shrinking a bit, but not for long, the ego immediately will formulate a narrative, and say, you can see he's obviously a corrupt foreigner, and you can see how, I mean, just look at him, you see how unconscious he is, and I mean, look, he needs to buy this just to show off this absurdity, such a primitive stage of human development, and here I am, I attach no importance whatsoever to big cars, I'm more spiritual, obviously, than all these people, okay, the ego repair mechanism has worked again, it creates a narrative that feels, oh, the ego, it's better now, even in simple things, somebody shouts at you in traffic, happens quite often, people seem to get even more unconscious than they're normally when they're driving, somebody shouts at you, and you feel injured in your, even a simple thing like you idiot, it hits the ego, me idiot, and it takes two seconds for the ego repair mechanism to jump into action, and then it forces you to shout something back that's even worse than idiot, and with that, the ego has restored itself and feels better for a while, but it will spend another 10 minutes thinking of other things that it could have said, and it's when you see the craziness of the normal state of consciousness, it actually can be amusing sometimes, the ego does not like to be laughed at, so if anybody is angry right now, then it's your ego being angry, the ego does not like to be recognized, so all kinds of narratives it creates, and the favorite thing it ego does is it creates a narrative that emphasizes the otherness of other people, it emphasizes that these are not other, they're therefore inferior to me, now another, oh yes, this is very important, because it could be a pattern in one or two of you, most of you have overcome the ego of course already, now it may be the case that the ego doesn't have, it may be at a loss as to where to achieve superiority when it compares itself to others, I had that for a while, my ego was struggling in my late teens, my ego was struggling, it couldn't find anything to feel superior about, my body wasn't particularly good-looking or strong, couldn't compete with most other bodies, so I felt inferior, wasn't good-looking, so I felt inferior there, didn't have any money, they didn't have a family history going back several generations, eminent descendants, no, I couldn't even remember beyond my grandfather, who were they, I don't know, so didn't have social status, okay, what do I do, and then I was coming to England, there was still at that time even more of a class system than now, who am I, nobody, there's all these people with their wonderful accents and possessions, and some have titles, and oh my God, and well, eventually I found something, I say, okay, I can become an intellectual, and I can actually defeat these people by being more knowledgeable, and that for a few years it worked until it became more and more unhappy, and then it stopped working, ego people think of it in terms of always feeling, I'm the biggest, I'm the best, I'm superior to you, that's only one aspect of ego, specialness can be achieved in another way too, and that is if you don't have anything that you can compete with others in looks, possessions, knowledge, abilities, and so on, the ego will form a mental image of, I'm a victim of either a group of people, could be my parents, who were so unconscious, my whole life was destroyed already in childhood because my parents were so, or it could be other groups of people, you see, I'm a victim of such and such a group of people, oh, that's wonderful for the ego, a victim identity is a very strong identity, if I can be a victim, I'm not denying that people are victims, and have been victims, and continue to victims of other, in this unconscious world, obviously it happens all the time, what we're talking about is deriving an identity from things that happened to you personally, or to you if you feel you're part of a collective egoic entity, to acknowledge that these things have happened, good, but to derive a sense of self that is based on that, strengthens your ego enormously, and therefore is a recipe for unhappiness and dysfunction, so that we have to be very careful of victim identity, now in what way is a victim identity superior, because we are talking about the ego's need for specialness, well it is obviously when you're a victim, you are obviously morally superior to the others, to the perpetrators, or whatever, or those who don't recognize your victimhood, you are immediately morally superior, ah, I'm a much greater victim than these people, okay, great, it works, very, so you have to be, whenever you form a mental image of who you are, a conceptual sense of identity, and then derive your sense of self from that, it's ego, a mental, carrying around a mental image, it all started obviously with, in ancient Greece, it's a myth, probably this man called Narcissus didn't, whether he existed or not, we don't know, there was a man in ancient Greek mythology called Narcissus, which is where narcissism comes from, obviously, Narcissus was a happy young man, until he saw his image in a pool of water, that was before mirrors and before selfies, obviously, so, so he saw his image in a pool of water, the way I interpret it, that was the world's first selfie, and he saw himself, and he said, wow, I'm so beautiful, he couldn't look away, he fell in love with himself, and then he became very unhappy, and after that, his life became very miserable, there are different versions of the story, but nothing good happened after that, so this points to something in the human psyche, it's the arising of the human ego, it is a mentally constructed image of who you are, so you're no longer just yourself, you begin to have a relationship with yourself, which means there are two of you, I love myself is obviously better than I hate myself, but you still have a relationship with yourself, because you carry a mental image, and you call it me, or you might add me and my life, and so with narrative of me and my life, you walk around the world, and your identity is your life situation, and your past, my life, and every life has a heaviness to it, there are things that happen that shouldn't have happened, but they did, and so you hear people saying things like, when I was 18 or 20, I imagined my life to be very different from what it is now, something really went wrong there, along the way, something went wrong, but there's nothing I can do now, I can't put it right, it's too late now, oh my God, let me tell you about my life, there's a heaviness to it, oh dear, and you don't realize it's a mental abstraction, it's a narrative in your mind, there are millions of people suffering dreadful unhappiness on a daily basis, by not realizing that what makes them unhappy is a narrative that they have created in their mind that they call I, or me, and they call it my life, and they carry this very unhappy narrative, it's based on the past, on things that happened, or your interpretation of things that happened, and those get mixed up, and sometimes the interpretation has very little to do with what actually happened, but that doesn't really matter, it's a narrative in the mind, and that becomes the basis for a person's sense of self, a very unhappy sense of self, and you experience year after year, you experience the pain of being yourself, the pain of having to live with that heaviness, and it's a dysfunction of the human, it's called normal, when you go to the movies, almost every character in the movies is suffering from it, so it's so normal, people don't question it, but it's dysfunctional, and that's why I sometimes say normal equals insane, it's a somewhat radical statement, but there's a lot of truth in it, it almost sounds like, what was this, the last person I saw at alternatives in the church was RD Lang, the anti-psychiatrist, he was completely drunk when he gave his lecture in the church here, but people thought his talk was so complex, they just couldn't understand it, but he said his basic belief was the so-called insane people are more sane than the so-called normal people, he said the normal people are actually insane, and many of the so-called insane people are actually sane, that's a little bit extreme, but there's some truth to it, and the truth is that the normal human state of consciousness, which I've just been describing, is very dysfunctional, not a hundred percent dysfunctional, because then the whole world would have collapsed, but has a very strong element of dysfunction, which is reflected in world history, and is reflected in the evening news tonight, and on the internet, so to become free of this compulsive labeling and narrative forming tendency is a vital part of the awakening of consciousness, and now after this diversion, let's go back to the, you're sitting in the cafe, you're drinking a cup of tea, and you are the only one who is not looking at the device, you're the only one who is just there looking around, and you're observing, all your senses are alive, and you say, I don't need to label anything, I'm just observing, and you become alert, and you look around, you can do the same thing here now, just you're alert, you look around, and the amazing thing is you don't need to immediately conceptualize everything, it's a lie to think that you need to always immediately find some kind of interpretation for everything, the world is much more enjoyable, and you can look more deeply into things, into other humans, into natural things, if you refrain from this compulsive conceptualization of everything, so how do you perceive things when you are not compulsively labeling things, oh, so you're looking, and there's a human being, they're talking, they're on their phones, you allow this moment to be as it is, but at the same time, and this is a vital part of present moment awareness, at the same time, you're not just aware of what you're perceiving with your senses, you're also aware of yourself, that's the key, now what does that mean, to be aware of yourself, it's not your habitual self that is the conceptual identity in your mind, it's not that self, you're not aware of yourself as the person or the personality, but a deeper level of yourself, the deep I, the space consciousness, now what's that, that's consciousness itself, and what's that, how do you experience that, consciousness itself is experienced as, one could say, alert stillness, there's an alive, alert, still space, and against this alive, alert, still space, the sense perception happen, and the alert still space does not interpret them, doesn't need to, there is a deep knowing in there, there's a deep looking in there, there's a deep sensing of even that which is beyond the surface phenomena of sense perceived reality, there's a deep knowing, but it's not a conceptual knowing at all, and this is actually, whilst wonderful practice, whenever you can, practice sense perception without imposing any labeling on what you're perceiving, unless you need a label in order to communicate something to someone, there are situations when you need labels, that's beautiful, you're using your mind, the mind is not using you, you can use your mind much more effectively when you are connected with that which is deeper than the mind, which is the unconditioned consciousness, so just the ability to perceive without needing to label, so you practice that, and when you're being challenged, like I gave some example of challenging situations, you're waiting, it's not happening, you're losing something, something goes wrong in your life, you miss the plane, or something more serious happens, you have need to go to the doctor about something, you lose all your investments because Brexit might happen and the economy will collapse, that you are connected to a collective situation too, because your life situation is partly personal and partly collective, and so it's not imposing a narrative as much as possible, it's the most wonderful sense of freedom that suddenly arises in you, and you don't need to do that anymore, and you begin to practice that more and more, and then you can be in this world in that state of innocent perception, innocent just means that there's a clear space, perhaps this is why Jesus said, unless you become like little children, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven, now children are at a pre, very young children at a pre-thinking stage, especially before they learn language, concepts, one year olds are, they can see they are conscious, but they don't have opinions yet, they don't have thoughts about you, in that sense they are still a bit like the dog, the dog looks at you and does not judge you, the one year old baby looks at you and doesn't judge you, it doesn't have concepts yet, it will get them very soon, but at that moment, so that open perception, but that perception is pre-thinking stage, but Jesus mentioned that because he needed to find examples from people's own experience in order to point something that was as yet beyond their experience, so unless you become as little children, so that's, there's a one year old, how does a one year old look around the world when he's not wanting something or crying, when he's, the one year old is just like this, so the one year old would look around the room, no he doesn't know, he or she doesn't know anything, doesn't need to know anything, but he perceives, and then you look into their eyes and you're, oh what a beautiful thing, and something touches you deep within, what is it that touches you, the being is still easily revealed through the baby's eyes, it's not yet obscured by conceptualization, so what shines through the baby's eyes is the being, and that touches your own being beyond your ego, and for a moment you feel liberated, but you don't know that that's what's happening, you just say, and then the mind comes in and says, oh that's a lovely baby, yeah, but before the mind came in, you actually experienced something, you ultimately experienced yourself, the baby reflected something back to you, which is consciousness itself, but we are not regressing to that stage, we transcend the thinking stage, and then there are certain similarities with the pre-thinking stage, but there are also huge differences, because when you transcend the thinking stage, there is a deep knowing, you know a lot of what you see, but it's no longer conceptual, and that's the arising of wisdom, wisdom is a deep knowing, but it's not analytical knowledge or knowing, you don't cut things up into little pieces, it's non-conceptual, it can only arise out of awareness, and awareness then looks at a situation, awareness looks at a person, without conceptualization, and there's an intelligence there that is far greater than the conceptual intelligence, it's not totally separate from, but far greater than the conceptual intelligence of the human mind, and so you need to get in touch with that, then you get the source of wisdom, wisdom was so highly valued in ancient times, the word philosophy itself means the love of wisdom, philosophy, the love of wisdom, that was in ancient times, the ancient Greek philosophers were concerned with mainly that, and what the world needs desperately now, is the arising of wisdom, it can only come from the unconditioned consciousness in the human being, the world does not need more conceptualization, or even more knowledge, there's so much knowledge already, it's not, more knowledge is not going to save the world, it can, in fact the opposite would be the case, the world needs wisdom, the wisdom arises in the individual, it is not only wisdom that arises from there, also a certain, a sense of oneness with other humans, a sense of deep connectedness with other humans, which traditionally in spirituality is called love, but it's different from what we consider, what the mind calls love, loving kindness, metta, loving kindness, the Dalai Lama said, he didn't say my religion is Buddhism, he said my religion is kindness, so what does that mean? Kindness is the flow of goodwill, or benevolence, if you want to use that word, a flow of goodwill from you towards another human being, when you interact with them, you look at them, it's empathy, but it's more than that, there is a recognition, it only happens if you have stepped out of the conceptualizing mind, there's a recognition of the other as essentially one with you who you are, consciousness, you recognize beyond the personality of the other, you recognize the personality is only the ripple on the surface, but the essence of that human being is consciousness, and it's not his or her consciousness, and yours is not your consciousness, or we sometimes use those words, it is the one consciousness that manifests through all life forms, one being that manifests through all life forms, and temporarily takes on the disguise of countless, and gradually emerges in this dimension in more complex forms, and in more conscious forms, there's a growing consciousness, and the universe is moving towards consciousness, it's awakening, we live in an awakening universe, how do I know that?

Well, if you look at yourself deeply, most of the sequence of the universe will be reflected in you, because you are a microcosm of the entire universe, so if you look deeply enough into yourself, and you see that you are here to become more conscious, and you have already become more conscious, consciousness is flowing through you, this is the purpose of the universe, you are, you're not something that has been put, it's not you, and then there's the rest of the world, or the universe, you are an essential part of the universe, and the universe is not just the sense-perceived world, that's only the surface, there's, the universe is the intelligence that's behind the sense-perceived world, there's a vast intelligence, this universal consciousness, and how is that, is that God?

I don't use that word too often, because of many misconceptions, and I wouldn't quite say it's God, because God is beyond anything that could be named, or understood, or even talked about, as it has in the Tao Te Ching, first line, the beautiful Tao Te Ching, Chinese book of relations, the Tao that can be spoken of is not the true Tao, that means you can't speak of the ultimate reality, you can't speak of it, but that was the first sentence of the whole book, so he continued to speak, and I do too, but saying you cannot explain God, but you can give analogies, you can give poetic images of what God might be like, so the analogy I give, and I hope it's not just conceptual, but experiential, is like this, the consciousness that is the animating presence in you, and in this flower, the consciousness that is the animating presence that gives rise to form in this dimension, is not produced by the material, the physical brain, but the physical brain is, the consciousness has constructed the physical brain as a means through which to express itself into this world, so it's more like a receiving station than something that creates, so as you know, you are essentially an invisible entity, what you can see, the body that you are, is relatively little, but what makes up you, even on a personal level, let alone the deeper transpersonal, even on a personal level, who you are is completely invisible, people could open up your head and your brain, they won't find you, they won't find a single one of your memories, and you have memories, countless memories, I can just mention one thing, and suddenly you remember something, where was that?

It's there, we don't even know what a thought is, so you are, nobody can find you by using sensory perception, no matter how powerful the microscope are, they won't find you, you are invisible, beautiful line in the little prince, I believe it is, what is, everything is essential is invisible to the eye, you cannot see it, nor can you perceive it with your other senses, everything essential is invisible to the eye, compassion, love, joy, you, every thought, you're invisible, so the consciousness is that which comes into this world and creates the world of form, and gradually it evolves more and more, and that consciousness I see as emanating from the source of all life, which has no location in space or time, you cannot find it, the source of all life is transcendent to this dimension, and from the source of all life, something emanates into this dimension in the same way that light emanates from the sun. In ancient civilizations, many of them considered the sun to be God, and there's a reason for that, because they say there's something there that in this sense-perceived world, the closest you can get to God is a sun which is an outpouring of life, life energy, continuous outpouring of life energy, so there's a source of all life that emanates into this world and becomes you, the consciousness that you are is the light of the source, the light of God, this is what Jesus said, you are the light of the world, one statement by Jesus. In another gospel, he said, I am the light of the world, both are true. He recognized his essential reality as not separate from the source of all life, that his essential reality beyond the person, and he said, this is your essential reality is also you are the light of the world.

He did not speak to important people, so he wasn't talking about you are so important that you are superior to others, he was talking to everyone, simple people, you are the light of the world, and do you know there's another sentence he said, just three words, that he pointed to the possibility that your whole body can be full of light, your whole body will be full of light, said Jesus. If your eye is single, you point your attention into the body, your whole body will be full of light, inner body awareness. Whoa, why don't they talk about that in the churches?

Maybe they don't understand. So you are the light of the world is you are essentially that which emanates from this transcendent source, and that is consciousness. But you are internally connected in the same way that the ray of sunlight is never not connected from the sun.

If the ray of sunlight could speak, I don't know whether it would say I am the sun, or whether it would say I am an extension of the sun, that in words that would probably be the closest to reality, if the ray of sunlight said I am an extension of the sun, I'm a part of the sun, of course, it's not the sun because the sun is, you can't even approach it, you would be consumed. But the ray of sunlight is an extension of the sun, and you are an extension of source, and you are consciousness. Now this has to come as a realization that you're not just a person that's a temporary disguise, you're also an expression of the eternal and timeless consciousness that comes into this dimension from the transcendent realm.

Not just occasionally, but see if you can sense this deep connectedness to the source, which you can only do if you come to a cessation of habitual and compulsive thinking. And then the habitual and compulsive thinking is replaced with awareness. Awareness, so you're taking consciousness away from thought, and then it becomes pure consciousness.

And then your thinking becomes much more empowered when you actually do have to think, then you focus the mind and your thinking becomes creative, ch, ch, but not destructive. And no longer will the mind have the ability to make you unhappy, because you're no longer creating dysfunctional narratives about situations. Enormous freedom.

You approach situations, even people, without compulsively, immediately judging everybody. You just, they are as they are. At the present moment, you begin to become friendly with the present moment because you're not compulsively, continuously judging whatever arises in the present moment.

This is a vital thing to consider in your life, always, what is my relationship with the present moment? Now the present moment, the form that this moment takes, which changes all the time. What is my relationship?

Am I in a antagonistic relationship towards the present moment? And you'd be surprised how many millions or billions of humans still live habitually in an antagonistic relationship with the present moment. They're doing something, but they don't want to be doing it, but they're doing it anyway.

They're where they are. They don't want to be where they are, but they are there. They already want to be at the end of what they are doing, but they're not at the end yet.

They don't like who they are with, but they are with them anyway. It's a dreadful state. And wherever they are, they have something to complain about.

There's always something wrong. And that keeps the ego going. It laughs, complaining, complaining out aloud or in your mind.

Do you know what he said? Oh, I can't believe it. Oh, here we go again.

Detect in yourself, if you still have a pattern of occasional complaining, completely dysfunctional and pointless. And if you have the awareness, you can say, you can smile when it comes into your mind, complaining about whatever is arising in the present moment. The weather.

Oh, awful. Here we go. The ego can make anything into an enemy.

It loves that. Not just people can make situations into enemies. All kinds of whole collectives, entire countries.

That's what they do all the time. We need to have an enemy. So you see it in the media.

What country is the enemy now? Okay. Now we know they're the enemy.

Nobody questions it. Compulsive. They don't even know what they're doing.

You need a high degree of awareness when you are absorbing news from the media. You need to be really alert because otherwise you will be drawn into one particular interpretation of reality, which will be ego-induced, collective ego-induced. They don't even know they're doing it.

They are trapped in the collective egoic mind. So this is something that is, the wonderful thing is the awakened consciousness, the space consciousness, the deep eye or essence identity, all the same thing or no thing. It's not something that you can achieve or obtain or get.

You don't need to. That's the good news. It's not something you need to strive to get.

I want to get enlightened. That already is a mistake because you're projecting something in some future moment, a certain stage to be achieved in some future moment. Okay.

I'm striving to both this, especially I'm talking to those of you who are spiritual seekers or perhaps have been for many years. The tendency in spirit seekers is to strive for a certain state of consciousness that's not here yet, or a version of yourself that is considered to be highly advanced or perfect, whatever it may be. And that's a fallacy.

And that is a guarantee that you're not going to get there. The realization, even meditation can be a wonderful thing. But if it's not used correctly, then every time you meditate, you have this idea in your head that you're doing a meditation.

Okay. I'm doing meditation now. Let's do it.

Okay. Let's do it. And then immediately the implication is you want to get to one particular point, but you're not there yet.

Whereas true meditation is not a doing, it's the realization of being. The realization of being. What is that?

The realization I am, but you don't add anything to I am. Consciousness. That's already there.

So the awakening of consciousness is not something new that happens to you. It's something that you discover that has always already been there. That space consciousness, the unconditioned consciousness is already there.

Occasionally, as I said earlier, occasionally it comes into your life without you even knowing it. There are little spaces of, ah, oh, ah. It's there occasionally, but you overlook it.

So the unconditioned consciousness is habitually overlooked. That's why people don't find it. So it's already there.

That's where the funny, not funny, the weird saying comes from where some spiritual teachers tell you, you're already enlightened. I am? So why is my life so fucked up?

Of course, you're already enlightened, but you don't know it. Okay. Well, then I've never said you're already enlightened because it can be very misleading because then it might lead to the idea in the person's head, oh, he told me I'm already enlightened.

And then that becomes part of your conceptual sense of self. I've been certified enlightened. He asked me to teach.

But you're already enlightened. This unconditioned consciousness is already in you, but you simply overlook it. Why do you overlook it?

Well, because first of all, sense perceptions are very powerful. They pull you into different senses, visual and so on. But even more powerful is the thinking mind.

The thinking mind obscures the realization of the deeper, your essence identity almost completely. And this is hence the importance of finding gaps in the mind stream. That's the most vitally important.

And then you discover that the being has never been not there. It's inseparable from who you are. And then you become conscious of being, or one could say being becomes conscious of itself.

Consciousness becomes conscious of itself. Let's say for a moment that you don't have a past. Well, you don't.

Let's put it aside. You don't have a past. You don't remember your name.

You don't need to. You don't remember your email address or your latest Facebook posts. And you don't remember, there's also, you have no future.

Okay, if I didn't have a past or future, there would just be this moment. What would be left of me? Let's find out.

Okay, what's left of me? No, you're not thinking, but you're not thinking. You know that there is a, there's something there, there's a presence, but it doesn't have any particular form.

There is a, a live presence without thought. So one thing you know for sure, and what you know for sure is I am conscious at this moment. I am conscious.

And even that may not be expressed correctly in words, because that still implies that there's an I and there's a consciousness. So it would be more accurate to say this essence realization is I am consciousness, or simply I am. That's what remains without past and future and without thought.

A deep sense of I am. And that's an amazing, at first it may be very subtle, you hardly notice it. And then increasingly you, oh, the I am sounds almost paradoxical.

The I am emerges more fully as it emerges. And that is the presence, the I am presence. That's why the cessation of thinking is vitally important, but you need a high degree of alertness to keep thought at bay, not suppressing thought, but you keep thought at bay through high alertness.

And the alertness has no tension in it. It's not something that you create through willpower, not at all. It's a relaxed alertness.

And that's something, it wants to emerge in you and through you, because that is your destiny, is to embody that presence. And then the person or the personality was that which gave rise to it, including all the things that are part of your past that have actually brought you here. The person continues to exist, of course, after this realization, but is no longer the foundation for your sense of self.

It's just fine. You have compassion with the person. You know it has certain shortcomings, but it does influence the way in which the person operates in this world, because the serious dysfunction are no longer there.

The person is no longer as crazy as it was before. It doesn't create unhappiness for itself and others. You no longer have thoughts in your head that make you unhappy.

And then you realize most forms of unhappiness are created by thoughts in the head. And there were already ancient Greek philosophers who discovered that. Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, who wrote this lovely book, Meditations, 2,000 years ago, he already discovered that.

And the Buddha discovered it, all the ancient spiritual teachings. But the realization of I am, in ancient Greece, there was at the temple of Apollo, the inscription on the temple was, there were several inscriptions. One was Gnotheseoton, which is ancient Greek for know thyself.

And that goes back to Pythagoras, one of the first philosophers lived at the same time of the Buddha, 500 BC, 2,500 years ago. Know thyself, one of the deepest sayings. What does it mean?

It means, first of all, of course, you're able to know the makeup of your personality, your mind patterns, your emotional patterns, that which makes up the personality. But more fundamentally, it means know who you are in your essence, know who or what you are in your essence, know thyself. Now, there was another part of the same temple construct, where it said know thyself, that had another inscription in it.

And that inscription was simply the letter, I believe it was like the letter E, A. And for a long time, people couldn't interpret what that meant, until I believe it was the Roman philosopher, Plutarch, who interpreted it. And he said, obviously, that is, it's Greek, and it's the second person singular, and it means you are.

So on the temple, it said, on one part, it said, know thyself. Another part of it, it said, inscription read, you are. It didn't say what, it says, you are.

That's the secret message to those who came to the temple. How do I know myself? And the other inscription says, you are.

What does it mean? Oh, I am. So this deep realization of I am, is knowing yourself.

You know yourself, the essence identity has no form, and is not subject to time. And that's the most beautiful. If you realize that, even if not continuously, perhaps it gets obscured from time to time in your daily life, gets obscured by things that happen, and that pull all the attention out of you again, and you lose yourself in the things of this world.

More fundamentally, when you lose yourself, you lose yourself in your mind. That's where people lose themselves. It's very common.

There was one spiritual teacher, I can't remember his name, in India, who went, asked to define the human condition. He said, lost in their mind. That's the human condition.

So you've got this happening to you less now. And when you've noticed you lost yourself in your mind, when suffering arises, you start to believe in narratives that you create, and then say, this is my life. That's not your life.

Your life situation exists in time and is problematic, as every life situation is. We are continuously challenged by life. That's how life is.

If we were not challenged, we would not grow. We grow as a response to the challenges of life. That's why you are here.

That's why I'm here. And so comes the realization that to awaken, simply realize, I am consciousness. I am conscious.

I am consciousness. And let's say, the most fulfilling thing is to know yourself deeply as consciousness. And then the secondary thing, for a little while, you're also a person.

Nothing wrong with that. Why not? Short-lived little person.

But you are the consciousness of the universe. And that's how important you are. And with this, I leave you.

[Speaker 4] (3:07:03 - 3:07:04)

Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (3:07:57 - 3:08:19)

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Thank you for listening.

2022 Eckhart Tolle Breaking the Habit of Negative Thinking and Self-Talk Audiobook

[Speaker 2] (0:17 - 0:27)

Eckhart teachings present breaking the habit of negative thinking and self-talk with Eckhart Tolle and now session one.

[Speaker 1] (0:53 - 55:48)

So it seems we are going to spend the afternoon together for the whole afternoon with a short break listening to a man sitting on a chair talking it seems a little strange, how could that be interesting? There must be something extraordinarily important in what he has to say to keep you here and that is true but of course there needs to be something in you that recognizes that there's something extraordinarily important, not in the person speaking but ultimately in you. So that recognition needs to be there in you and that's nothing to do with how much knowledge you have, spiritual knowledge or accumulated education or PhDs or degrees, nothing to do with that kind of mental faculty.

There is another faculty in humans that in most humans on the planet is as yet dormant and in some a growing number of humans has awakened, I call it faculty, something a dimension of consciousness that's different from the prevailing ordinary dimension of consciousness on the planet. So that's a spiritual awakening that is the next step in human evolution because humans have not come to the end of their evolution the humans are a work in progress it's not finished yet it would be terrible imagine that humans as they are now a finished product crazy and that's why some people because they have misperceptions about humans and they have misperceptions about God and then they say how could God allow all this to happen all this this is based on two misperceptions that humans are a finished product created by God a long time ago and that God is a patriarchal figure controlling things from above or has lost interest completely and walked off maybe somewhere else because he realized that he didn't do a good job so the our afternoon here works on two levels there's the level of words and thoughts and that is necessary but more importantly there is that to which the words and thoughts that underlie the words point and that is the essence of our gathering here and that to which they point is the essence of who you are and the purpose of our afternoon is to either awaken or in the case of many of you to deepen the realization or the connectedness with who you truly are and when I say truly I mean in the depths of your being and I mean a dimension that is deeper than your personal history and most humans are completely unaware that there is a dimension of consciousness in them that is deeper than their personality their personal self so they are trapped on the surface level of reality and that is not a pleasant place to be you are basically then trapped in your conditioned personality the person the egoic self and you know somehow you know that there is something not right you know somewhere instinctively you know there's something so important that's not here yet and that's missing in my life there's something wrong and how humans interpret that mentally what they perceive or feel to be wrong varies from person to person one person might say what's wrong is that all humans don't have the same religion that we have there's something deeply wrong so we need to either convert them or kill them or other humans say there's something deeply wrong about society they project it outward of course there's a lot wrong with society but there's what is society it's the sum total of the individuals there's something deeply wrong with what I with my personal history it's so unsatisfying why why did so many things go wrong in my life things that weren't supposed to happen I imagined things going very differently failed marriage and divorce and all this dreadful suffering and then there was the illness and then there was that and then there were great achievements and then there were again the opposite something is looking for the next thing to feel fulfilled by possessions recognition something missing is always something missing what they don't know is that what is missing what they look for outside or they blame others for preventing them from finding it you can blame entire groups of people for making you feel unfulfilled it's a very common thing these days and very satisfying to the false sense of self because if you can see yourself as a victim either on a personal level or collective level that gives you a somewhat satisfying sense of identity satisfying in a completely non-satisfying way it's a paradox you feel good about feeling bad the more you can complain about others and the better you feel but it's bad but the ego thinks it's better and you feel now you know who you are more fully it's a fiction so you can you can emphasize your victim identity on the personal level to give you some kind of stronger sense of self or you can emphasize your identity as the one who is victorious in the world me the ego doesn't mind which one they're both equally strong and equally false usually ego the egoic self is interpreted by people as people who have a a high sense of exaggerated sense of who they are who think they're better than others and that is one aspect of ego but there is another aspect of ego which is equally strong and that is people who have a self-image a self-identity of being more of a victim than somebody else or others oh that works too so whichever is most convenient to you you can use that so people use all kinds of things to create a more satisfying sense of identity for themselves but it's all in the head it's ultimately all consists of the structure of thought and that is what i call to be trapped on the level of the person or the personality another way of putting it is to be to be trapped on the level of form the form of who you are which is the physical and the psychological form of who you are the me me and my story me and my personal history and then all the conditioning the opinions and viewpoints and convictions and through which you interpret everything according to the conditioning of the personality then you look at things and you immediately have immediately labeled things and situations and people as they come into your perception there's the immediate labeling and you think it's all true you don't realize that you are looking at reality truth through a veil of your conditioned mind and really what you're seeing is the veil of your conditioning and there's something there behind it but you can't clearly see it at all it's a dreadful state to be in but it's normal this is why i sometimes say normal equals insane so and this is not such a fundamental question the question of identity is the most important question in your life who am i and you know that you know that it's important but you don't know where your true identity is because at school nobody taught you should be the most important thing that children are taught discover your essence identity is that a subject at school i haven't heard of it never come across it so your form identity relies on external things you compare yourself to others and according to what is most appropriate you emphasize those aspects of your form identity where you swear you are a little bit superior to others and that's where the ego gets in and forms a mental construct it could be the history of your family as you come from a family not so much in the new world here but in the old world to some extent a little bit still in europe even more so in some more traditional cultures you think back you have your family history your ancestors and you have this long line of your ancestors going back and they're all more important than the rest of the population and you have come out of this long line of ancestry and that gives you your identity you might even have a title in some countries they still have titles so you grow up here and your 10 year old girl is told oh your name is lady so-and-so oh now if you're trapped in that to get out of that not easy you've been given that sense of specialness and you that's so the the main the core of your identity lies then in your ancestry and it can have you in its grip until you're on your deathbed and you never know that you are trapped in an illusory sense of identity now most people don't have that but they may have other things they may have more possessions than others from their family or they may have achievements in that they came out of nothing and then they achieved this that and that and then they identify with the material achievements and so on possessions and that can give you a great sense of identity too never satisfying for long that's the thing there's always this element of unsatisfactoriness of something really important is missing and even if you're if you have an aristocratic title lady diana for example going back she was not fulfilled by her title and her ancestry which goes back hundreds of years and but was very unhappy and this is quite normal that you have that identity but you're and you're trapped in it and you are there's always in the background the unhappiness and then of course you might have a body that's more beautiful than others then you can focus on that and that gives you a sense of superiority towards others so and that's a temporarily a nice thing and then as the years pass a day will come when you look in the mirror and something has changed that beautiful body has shrunk or expanded whatever the case may be i saw the other day in in sidley walking along the harbor front on a beautiful sunny morning pleasant not hot less warm than it is here people walking and there was one man who had taken off his shirt and he was walking through these crowds of people and the strange coincidence is that this man of course must have been so hot in this weather that he felt compelled to take off his shirt but but by a strange coincidence he had the most wonderful physique extremely muscular and just very impressive and many and many people looked and some tried not to look and just glanced and you could see how satisfying it was for him to walk through there so he was lucky that he felt so hot that he had to take off his shirt and of course there will there will have been other egos ego identities walking and looking at him who felt diminished by looking it's normal for the ego it felt diminished and so and then looked the other way i'm not going to look at him so it's normal for the ego to feel diminished if because it always compares itself to others and then the ego sometimes tries to compensate again you have to arrange your identity somehow then he tries to compensate for this diminishment for example by saying by just a few thoughts compensate for the diminishment of the ego and they're all it's all unconscious thinking for example the thoughts go oh look at that beach bum there i bet all he does is hang around the beach every day and surfing not a thought in his head okay then that makes you feel better for a little while if you're in your big car you can feel superior towards others and then others will look but then there may be a man on a bicycle he's looking at you in your big car and say look at this materialist whereas i am completely non-attached to these things and i'm totally happy on my bicycle because i'm beyond these things and that's a very subtle so-called spiritual ego you can feel superior because you're more spiritual than others not realizing that also is a mind-made sense of self a mind-made identity amazing and many people carry a very unhappy or predominantly uneasy unhappy complaining insufficient personality with them and that's who i think they are an awful way to be and nobody has taught them that that ultimately is not who you are that's the conditioning of your mind and that is the emotions that also accompany the conditioning of your mind and so the question arises well if i'm not that if i'm not that who am i and that is the most important question you can ask yourself now in our mainstream culture they will tell you that that question makes no sense whatsoever because they believe obviously you are your past and you are who you are as a person they deny that there is anything else so as you're here i would suggest that that which is beyond the personality in you has already awakened and that has brought you here and that goes far beyond a personal thing that which is beyond the personality a dimension of consciousness in you in the human that is deeper you could say higher but i prefer the term deeper than the personality and then the the continuous stream of thinking which is the basis for the personality has already awakened in you and has brought you here but that got something beyond the personal that is something what has ultimately brought you here is the fact that human consciousness is evolving and the evolving human consciousness through you has brought you here in order to deepen the awakening with a few exceptions there may be some who didn't come of their own free will they were dragged here by somebody and then they reluctantly agreed okay i'll come along and listen to this guy for four hours oh my god and then they sit here and say what's he talking about it's just makes no sense whatsoever and because the the words are being perceived by this person this imaginary person which may not be imaginary maybe the words are being perceived but they do not go beyond the clutter of his or her mind so they get trapped in the clutter of the mind because you listen to the words but there's nothing in you that recognize that to which the words point and so all you have is they get trapped in the clutter of your mind and so it's completely meaningless and so there needs to be a little opening in the stream of in the mind stream there needs to be a little opening a little crack and most of you that's there and in some of you so there's more than that already and in that opening then the words can go in and then that to which the words point is recognized so when i say for example the essence of who you are when i say beyond the personality beyond your personal history there is a deeper essence of who you are and for a moment you can sense the recognition within you of the truth of that and that's just the beginning it's just a tiny thing there's a just a little bit of a recognition of what that means beyond the words beyond the thoughts and so this is what i talk about so that needs to be if there's no opening in the mind stream which is the incessant compulsive involuntary thinking that goes through people's minds all day long the voice in the head if you could if you could walk in the street and if you could hear all the thoughts it would be crazy if you could hear what people are thinking in a crowded place imagine being able to hear everybody's mind everybody's whatever their mind is talking about at that moment you would realize this is crazy and a lot of the time you would realize that what you hear the voice in the head is unhappy about this unhappy about that complaining about that judging that anticipating that regretting that from the past looking towards the future for that and feeling anxious about that which is the next moment and this and that and there's never a moment of peace imagine walking around with a radio in your head and you can't turn it off it's just you know those radio stations where they talk and talk and talk in an excited voice if you go to a foreign country and you listen to that let's say you're in a taxi and the taxi driver has the radio on and they're talking in this very excited but you have no idea what they're talking about you just think this must be incredibly important maybe it's the end of the world if you in your own country if you can hear what these people who talk on the radio realize it's completely meaningless it's just noise and so a lot of the compulsive thinking in humans is pretty meaningless it's repetitive there's no creative insight or very rarely if ever through a new thought something that is a truly creative an insight a realization rare pretty rare so that's the the voice in the head that forms the personality and that's why in zen i don't know if you're familiar with the famous zen story everybody knows a bit about zen well for many people zen means simplicity of interior design or whatever but that's not what zen is it was not created by an interior designer there was a story about a man comes to the zen master and he's a university professor who has studied all the zen scriptures in all the other buddhist scriptures and so he comes to the famous master and the master says sit down please and the professor says well i've studied it all but i want to hear from you also what really zen is can you explain the essence to me and the master was making tea so the master was there was the cup the professor's cup and the master took a teapot and started pouring tea into his cup and he didn't stop pouring and then the tea overflowed and the professor was looking saying stop stop can't you see the cup is overflowing and the master said well just like this overflowing cup you are full of your opinions viewpoints knowledge and speculations how can i teach you zen unless you first empty your cup that was his main lesson how can i teach you zen unless you first empty your cup so the cup here stands for the full cup the cup that's overflowing with stuff refers to the clutter of your mind the incessant thought stream of your mind the accumulated clutter the incessant repetitive thought stream and that and the personality that i talk about the personal identity and the thought stream are really go together so you are familiar with that now the difference between you and a unawakened person is that you know that there is a voice in your head there's still millions of people out there who don't know that there's a voice in their head that never stops speaking because they are so identified with the voice that they have become it there is no separation there is no awareness there is no presence their entire consciousness is trapped in thought and that is the state of being trapped in your personality so every thought that comes into your head immediately grabs you and possesses you and you're so identified with it that you believe in every thought that comes into your head and that's how it is the simplest thing the simplest thing you don't see it clearly you see it through the thinking veil of thinking which is conditioned by your past your culture your upbringing that country you grew up in the culture the society the family your personal circumstances your collective circumstances determines the type of thinking that has you in its grip that varies from person to person and culture to culture but the basic mechanism behind it is the same they are all in the grip of the unobserved mind that is invested with a sense of self every thought has a sense of self in it this is what the word identify means you identify with every thought that comes into your head and you believe in every thought that comes into your head this is the case if there's no awareness whatsoever then that is your fate then awareness is the dormant faculty presence awareness whatever you want to call it that's the dormant faculty in you it's still dormant and as long as it's completely dormant you're totally in the grip of your conditioned personality in your conditioned mind you are basically possessed it thinks through you it acts through you it is an energy field that has you in its grip and you don't even know it because you think you are it and for many the beginning of spiritual awakening is the realize that there is this stream of continuous commentary in their minds and that is the thing oh that's interesting that's a thought of course but before the thought that's interesting there's the the recognition it's the it's the voice in the head and the recognition is not the voice in the head although you might say it after the recognition but in the moment of recognizing there's a voice in the head that's not a thought the recognition of thought is not a thought the recognition of thought comes through awareness or presence and awareness or presence is the higher consciousness the arising new consciousness wow so that's that is really the meaning of spiritual awakening so there's the voice there's a voice in the head and people say things like i think they don't think because thinking is not a voluntary action for them so it's a delusion to even say i think you don't think you are being thought by thought you are created by thought there's that energy field amazing so the master said how can i teach you zen unless you first empty your cup no that's a huge demand if i'm full of clutter mental clutter how am i going to empty my cup i would be immediately be enlightened if i could empty my cup but the the teaching points to something it points to this the word empty and that's interesting that is an important word in buddhism and i it's don't think it's a good translation who first came up with it i don't know with the 19th century the europeans started to translate ancient texts from sanskrit and one person came up with the translation but probably of the sanskrit terms sunyata and translated it as emptiness that doesn't sound so nice it sounds like a something missing or something like that so i have an alternative translation for the buddhist term emptiness so that empty is an important word so remember the zen master said how can i teach you zen unless you first empty your cup empty my alternative translation for that is spaciousness spaciousness is a dimension of consciousness in you and that is what we could call the spiritual dimension of consciousness the deeper or the higher consciousness just words doesn't matter and that is in every human it's there many don't know that it's there because the clutter is so dense that they have no realization of the underlying spaciousness and that is why i in millions of humans that is still a dormant faculty so to speak so the most important realization in your life much more important than what you have achieved on the level of the world whether your life in worldly terms is regarded as a huge success or additional failure or for most of you probably something in between that's normal sometimes you fail sometimes you succeed when you move back from gaining losing high low up and down that's the identity for most so the clutter of your mind is there but there are moments in your life when you become aware of something spacious underneath it but you may not call it like call it that you may not call it anything it may arise for example in many humans who never have heard of anything spiritual they're out there they don't know that a little bit of that is in them so but they don't know it there's little little glances come occasionally into their lives of that dimension it's not enough to actually say that the spiritual dimension has awakened in them but little flashes come up now and then into their lives and that is enough those little flashes from the that dimension come into their lives and that is enough to keep many people sane and those flashes can come you might think when you go out into nature and you see something extraordinarily beautiful like a sunset for a moment you go ah or the vastness of the ocean or the sky or the elements the wind the storm and for a moment you go and it's a moment of intense aliveness and you feel and then you may remember that moment a little later that was such a beautiful moment why was it yes maybe what you perceived was beautiful but you felt something in that moment you felt a heightened sense of aliveness and a deep peace and connectedness with being so to speak you see why because that moment of sense perception of something vast or beautiful freed you for a moment from the incessant stream of thinking so the incessant stream of thinking let's say you see this vast this incredible sunset or whatever and for a moment you give it your complete attention and for a moment you're not thinking about yourself your problems your problematic life history or your even more problematic future and actually you're not thinking about anything for a moment the stream of thinking subsides and it goes without knowing it you have a little flash that's come up from that dimension and then the next moment it may come up a few days later again when you look into the eyes of a baby one year old maybe just in the street or in a cafe and baby looks at you and the baby is one year old and the eyes are like the baby's and you know instinctively that the baby is not thinking about you because thinking hasn't started yet the words have not accumulated yet the thoughts haven't started yet and yet there's a consciousness there and you can see very clearly there's an intense consciousness that's looking through those eyes at you without judging you in any way and in that moment for just a few seconds you feel so good and you say ah why do you feel so good because at that moment the baby liberated you from your stream of thinking and again a little bit of spaciousness opened up inside you for those few seconds when you looked into the eyes of the baby you were not thinking and the baby wasn't thinking so the baby through the baby you are able to be in that dimension and it felt so good spontaneously they can arise they're not recognized by people as ultimately spiritual but they are and so many people there are millions of people who experience those things briefly but that's enough to give you a sense still of life is worth living and then there are others who are so burdened by their minds they cannot even communicate with a baby they cannot even perceive the beauty of nature anymore because their mind is so noisy that they never total veil so they don't look at the baby like they they look at the baby oh that's a nice baby they don't really see the baby immediately it's labeled dogs do the same thing they can free you from your mind to briefly whether it's your dog or somebody else's dog you know you're walking in the street somebody's coming with a dog for a moment you look at this dog and into the eyes of the dog and you go oh two seconds three seconds four seconds the dog is not thinking about you but you looked into the eyes of the dog and you sensed something there and what was that you well you say it's a dog well you sensed something there that you connected with and what was what was that that you sensed that you connected with your mind says oh that's a nice dog but that's rubbish you sensed something there what you sensed was the consciousness of the dog because the dog also is an expression of consciousness a manifestation of consciousness just as you are but the dog does not live on the level of consciousness of thinking the dog's consciousness is below thinking and so the dog is not burdened by thinking the dog is not burdened by a self-image created by the mind the dog has no problem with his or her personal history nor has the dog a problem with self-esteem dog doesn't have a problem with body image none of that the dog has no opinion about itself it is the dog just is because the dog lives below thought the consciousness of the dog is below conceptual thinking it doesn't have the egoic identity although in some dogs you can see the beginnings of an ego identity because they've lived with human egos for so long and some dogs are actually neurotic because after five years of living with a highly neurotic person they have succumbed but many dogs are surprisingly sane considering who they live with and you would say how can this dog still be so happy living with this miserable person so you look into the eyes of a dog and for three seconds four seconds five seconds you'd connect with the consciousness of the dog and that ultimately first of all that frees you without you knowing it frees you for this moment from the stream of thinking because the dog you can sense the dog isn't thinking the dog has no opinion about you you may have heard the prayer please god make me into the person my dog thinks i am but of course that's not true because the dog doesn't think what or who you are so it doesn't have an opinion it can sense yes so an animal by connecting with an animal it can free you for a moment from the noise of your mind and something opens up in you that is the emptiness the term emptiness in buddhism my term it is spaciousness something opens up that is a moment of no thought but no loss of consciousness normally no thought is associated with loss of consciousness you you stop thinking because you're going to sleep or you stop thinking because thoughtless is a negative term in conventional usage even when you say thoughtless is a negative term and i know what they mean but when we use the term thoughtless here it's a positive term thoughtless awareness awareness is to be able to be free of thought when these moments happen in you you relate to something something happens it for a moment it frees you from thinking and well sex can do it too well i don't know if you experience if you go to the expo here probably not but it frees you for a moment it can free you from thinking doesn't last that long i suppose and so it's just and then the interesting you have probably either experienced it or seen it in movies they make love and it's all it's so wonderful love and then they separate they and then they make a coffee cup of coffee and immediately they start fighting again oh because immediately the mind starts up again the egoic mind crazy so what you love in the dog is ultimately not the fur that it's lovely to touch certainly to hold a dog it's beautiful lovely to touch but what you really love in the dog is the consciousness of the dog and when you love the consciousness of the dog there is a recognition of oneness because there's only one universal consciousness this is not a scientifically verifiable statement but i don't care there's only one universal consciousness that emanates from the source of all life the source is a bit like the sun and from the source of all life which does not exist in space or time it's in the transcendent dimension from the source emanates like from the sun the light emanates continuously from the source of all life what emanates is consciousness the light of consciousness and then consciousness manifests in different vibrational frequencies in our so-called universe it manifests as physical forms in the case of humans consciousness can manifest it manifests as a physical form it can manifest as thought consciousness can manifest as pure consciousness in the same way that water can manifest as solid ice you can hit somebody over the head with water it is very painful when it's ice and then it becomes fluid but it's still water and then it becomes vaporous mist you can't even see it anymore but it's still water in the same way consciousness manifests in different vibrational frequencies or this talking about on the level of humans as the physical body the mind and what most humans don't know yet consciousness itself which is the spaciousness this so-called the buddhist emptiness so for a moment certain situations can free you from the incessant stream of thinking but it's not enough it's not enough you can't just wait for occasional once a week three second ten second encounters with a dog and if you're familiar with your dog that you live with every day then it could be less likely to happen because you become too familiar with a dog and so you you relate to the dog only through thinking and you start talking to the dog all the time don't do that go go what are you doing there you're not supposed to do that so a dimension of consciousness can occasionally emerge spontaneously once you know that this is possible those moments when it does happen like when you're out in nature or if you're surfing we are near the ocean here there may be some of you who go surfing and that can be a beautiful thing because you might realize when you are surfing if you're good at it you're not thinking while you're riding a wave you can't be thinking about tomorrow's dinner or yesterday's breakfast or your life problems your problematic identity no then you'll fall off there of course if you are good at you have to be absolutely present and you feel so alive during those moments because it frees you from the personality the activity frees you from the person briefly well yeah the activity frees you from the person and so you get extremely attached to that kind of activity that requires your complete presence requires your complete presence which means while you are engaged in that activity you are not thinking you are just present and so you experience it as extremely joyful and life-enhancing and you feel in some way you feel not only more alive you feel you're more fully yourself although you don't remember yourself and that's why you feel more fully yourself that's a strange paradox you feel your beingness more than before but your beingness your presence is not your history that has been removed temporarily when you're engaged when you're climbing a rock wall and you have to be absolutely present with every every moment and otherwise you'll fall off then it frees you from thinking completely it clears your mind any dangerous activity does that if you survive there was a man a famous actor who got thrown off his horse and then became completely paralyzed i think he's dead passed away he played superman which is a strange paradox but so he got thrown off the horse and broke his back and he said later at some point that while he was riding this horse he was started to think and so he lost presence and in that moment he fell let's hope that while he was disabled during those years that he was able i don't know if he was that he was able to go more deeply within and discover that which lies beyond the person and the personality but interesting that he said in that moment he he got lost in thought and then he fell the horse stumbled and he got thrown off these things can be very pleasant lovely to do because they free you temporarily but even that is not enough and it could be too risky to continuously engage in high-risk activities so but these are glimpses these can give people glimpses of what it means to experience the cessation of thinking the cessation of thinking without loss of consciousness in fact an intensification of consciousness and that is zen zen is that state of consciousness of intense presence where thinking can happen but you're not in the grip of thinking you're aware you're one with that inner spaciousness you're experiencing cessation of the stream of thinking and yet you're completely conscious conscious even of yourself but not of yourself as the history self the historical self not that self not the personal self the transcendent self which the buddhists call the no self or which in hinduism is called the great self or the atman they're just words of course so the important thing to realize is as you rise above thinking there's presence you're present and then you may fall back into thinking and then you come out of thinking again and that is a state of heightened alertness without tension relaxed alertness and you can then sense what is below thinking is also in a state of connectedness that you are in when you rise above thinking and so you connect more deeply with the world of nature with the animals and the plants because they exist below thinking and you can rise above thinking and sometimes all those beings that exist below thought can help you strangely can help you rise above thought because it is the human destiny to rise above thought it is not our destiny to fall back below thought enticing as it may be for some people who are so burdened by their minds that they say just anything anything i can't live with myself any longer if i have to be a cow i'll rather be a cow than a human because i won't be so unhappy anymore but please just let me be a cow either in switzerland or india not other places i would want to be a cow either in the alpine pastures of switzerland or in india where they respect you but still even there i would not choose for my next lifetime to return as a cow and probably you wouldn't or even at this moment to say if you could just push a button if you could from being if you were completely unhappy push a button say you can be completely free of unhappiness but you have to become a dog you have to become a cow you have to become a tree are you going to do it of course it means you're losing consciousness in some way because you are on the level of thought you would have to fall below thought so if you're totally unhappy you say i'll do it i can't stand it anymore of course an alternative to that imaginary situation is to have a few drinks because they also take you below thought free you briefly from the burden of the personality so you feel more alive and you laugh more and you sing and it's so wonderful until you completely become really unconscious it was so good i can't remember my problems anymore at all i don't even remember who i am this is so good you're falling below thinking feels good for a while and then you move to complete unconsciousness that's not the way to go but i can see why it has an attraction for many people who are on a daily basis burdened by their minds 24 hours a day almost except in dreamless sleep so falling below thinking you experience it naturally as you go from wakefulness to sleep in the intervening period just as you begin to move towards sleep at night in your bed you experience a very pleasant moments there when you don't remember your problems anymore so good and sleep says come this way come ah and you go there and then you're gone

[Speaker 2] (56:04 - 56:23)

and now breaking the habit of negative thinking and self-talk session two most humans are trapped

[Speaker 1] (56:24 - 1:27:57)

evolutionary terms in thought thought is a wonderful thing a wonderful thing to have evolved in human beings but it had a huge downside it doesn't mean we have to give up thinking we what we give up or what we transcend is being trapped in thinking being identified with thinking and then when we can free ourselves from thinking and realize that thinking the thoughts are not who we are then thinking can be a wonderful tool for creating and manifesting it is then used in the service of the deeper or higher consciousness through you and then it's wonderful but when thinking has taken up your entire sense of identity when you derive your entire sense of self from thinking that is a terrible fate but that is where we are at the moment in evolutionary terms because we are reaching the end of this period of egoic thinking of being trapped in thinking thinking has created great things enormous enormous achievements but as i said a huge huge downside massive downside of such seriousness that it could even lead to the destruction of the species that's the downside of thinking if thinking becomes more and more differentiated and developed for example science is a differentiated form of specialized form of thinking and that has grown and grown and grown and enormous achievements and yet thinking itself has never has not been transcended so the egoic nature of thinking has become intensified too so what where we are at now is we reach this stage where we have to jump to the next level of human evolution if we remain trapped in thinking that will be extremely destructive because what thinking can create will become so destructive it will show more and more the destructive side rather than the potentially helpful side and this is why what is happening here is so vitally important not just for you as a person but for humanity as a whole we have to transcend this being trapped in thought and so the incredible possibility arises for humans to and this is the awakening the incredible possibility arises for you to experience in your daily life increasingly states of consciousness or a state of consciousness when you're not thinking but you're completely there and this enormous power suddenly comes through you power that before was always trapped in thinking another way of putting it the light of consciousness was always heavily obscured by thinking thinking is the form consciousness takes it takes forms but the forms it gets trapped in the forms so the the unawakened state is complete identification of consciousness with the form consciousness takes and that manifests in simple in the simplest situations when you go into a situation i often give the examples because it's one of the simplest situations when thinking starts you get up in the morning you open the curtains and you look out and if the weather is not good which is less likely to happen here than in london or vancouver when the weather is not good you look out and immediately say oh it's another dreadful day another dreadful day look at that and you don't realize that it's not a dreadful day it's just what is dreadful is the thought the day is as it is there's water coming from the sky there are clouds and sunlight is filtering through the clouds that's what is it's not a dreadful day but you mistake your interpretation with reality so you can't separate the two and you go into every situation and you confuse your judgments with the reality of the situation and that begins to change when you become aware of your own thinking and then you no longer need to do that and then you can be in the same situation that before was perceived you told yourself it was terrible having to stand there and wait at the airline counter and there's the most inefficient and stupid people how did they get their jobs can't they train these people and you don't experience it like that anymore you experience the separation and then you experience 90 of your unhappiness falling away 90 and realizing that 90 of unhappiness in whatever form upset irritation anger resentment anxiety etc they're all forms of what the buddha called dukkha suffering misery unhappiness 90 of that falls away because you realize that every situation is as it is and you no longer impose judgments on it and because the judgments you impose on what is make you unhappy the unhappiness doesn't come because you have to wait there in line for so long and the flight is canceled and you get very irritated and very unhappy uh it comes from what your mind is telling you about the situation and when you let go of what your mind is telling you you suddenly see here it is and you look around you see you're standing there people lights you're breathing that's what is people running around or not running around and all kinds of movement that's this moment without an interpretation there's no suffering in it no irritation no unhappiness and so you have separated what the mind imposed on the situation and the situation itself and you realize the situation is neutral it has an easiness to it which is just easy it is the rest the suffering came over what your mind had to say about the situation and that's an incredible realization that 90 of your suffering to use the term suffering unhappiness upset etc etc comes from unconscious thinking and confusing what is with what your mind is saying about what is when you can be with what is and no longer impose unnecessary baggage commentary on what is life is enormously freed suddenly your life and a huge chunk of egoic identity has broken off and you go around in a sense of ease and lightness always aligning yourself with the isness of this moment which by the way is the only one there ever is people don't seem to know that it's a secret don't tell anybody there's only this moment people don't know that but i know there's only this moment and so you become aligned with the isness of this moment without imposing automatic unconscious conditioned commentaries on it and somehow always seeking a sense of self in it feeling diminished by one situation or wanting to hang on and complaining if it leaves you or having anticipating thoughts that something might change good change and then you think about that and you can't enjoy the moment because you're worried about the next moment worried means thinking useless thinking is worry so you're worried about the next moment which prevents you from enjoying this moment so you're thinking about the next moment which never comes you're thinking about something that cannot possibly ever come that must be crazy and the underlying assumption is that the next moment is definitely more important than this one because something big is going to happen there not here something big is going to happen there i don't know if it's good or bad yet but it's something big if the mind focuses on good it's called hope or hope for my life to really improve at some point but it's going to be good and but the content that has a downside that thought has a downside and the downside is it might get worse and that's that's fear oh my god what's going to happen to me what's going to happen to me that i don't know i have to think more about this there must be a solution to it there must be a solution to the dilemma of my existence perhaps a psychiatrist has the answer or you can go to a clairvoyant and says what's going to happen to me you're going to be fine oh thank you and then you're going to die what i didn't know that it's not supposed to happen thought so to develop the ability to to experience things and people and situations and places without imposing too much thought on it and then your life becomes much more enjoyable suddenly and people you can even enjoy people now as you probably know one of the most challenging things in your life is other people because they're so difficult people are so challenging and for many people one of their greatest sources of suffering or unhappiness strangely enough is other people sometimes of course it might be a situation but it's usually every situation is associated with certain people but of course another source of unhappiness of course could be your physical body which might become ill that's a different matter but yes people are difficult it's not surprising that Jean-Paul Sartre the french philosopher said hell is other people that's the ego talking of course life could be so much nicer with all all these dreadful people around and of course these are judgments these are judgments of the mind and the moment you encounter another human being the moment you meet another human being if you are trapped in the conditioned mind you will very quickly have things to say about him or her and you're the moment you have thought arising you're imposing judgments you can't really experience that human being anymore and so that happens very all the time when people meet others but what would it be if i could meet another human being and just look into his or her eyes without making it too obvious even in ordinary situations you go to a restaurant you go to a shop you buy something you pay for it there's a brief interaction with the person you give the money to are you able to just look at this person for a few seconds while the transaction happens and be free of thinking there's suddenly a connection there's no need to make it obvious you don't go like and you don't have to tell them i'm connecting with you on a spiritual level because they'll go what but it's a beautiful thing to be able to be spacious with another human being it's easier with a dog obviously because the dog is does not have the screen of mind that obscures that sense of presence of beingness in the dog the consciousness of the dog humans usually have this screen of mental stuff so it's not as easy to relate deeply you have to penetrate the level of mind which sometimes is not all that pleasant either it's like can be very difficult conditioning of this personality some personalities are very difficult and or might be aggressive or whatever but it's looking at another human being and just like this no thought and it's always pleasant it's always it's a pleasant suddenly you sense a connection and it's pleasant but don't try that too soon start with a tree because there's nothing in the way with a tree there's no mind the tree is an expression of consciousness but the tree is very still it's even stiller than the dog the tree is just it might have been there for 100 years 200 years 300 years some trees have been there for a thousand years and so you can you can look at a tree by looking means when you look at something you give it your attention then there's a tree and you give it your complete attention just look at the totality of it and then occasionally you look at little details and just be with it and the totality of the tree without needing to impose any thought on it you don't need to call it anything you don't need to know the name in order to experience the tree you don't need to know the name of the tree it's that's fine there's nothing wrong with knowing the name of the tree but the name of the tree can if you are too attached to the name of the tree can prevent you from experiencing the tree and that is a very common thing how the moment you name something you think that's it and then you don't realize there is a depth to that which the name obscures the spiritual teacher krishnamurti said to somebody the moment you teach a child the name of the bird he or she will never see that bird again slight exaggeration of course he'll see that bird again but what he means is the child will lose the deeper connectedness with the bird because the label the mental label will be in the way and the child will mistake the mental label for it the mental label keeps you trapped on the surface of reality and so very knowledgeable people and there's nothing wrong with knowledge but people are let's say people are very knowledgeable about nature sometimes are so trapped in their knowledge all they know is mental stuff about things so they know a lot about the tree but they never know the tree you have two kinds of knowing one is conceptual knowing through labels and one is a deeper knowing through immediate perception through awareness and then you've sensed a deep something deeper in the tree that is can never be known through conceptual knowledge you connect with the tree in a deeper level it becomes almost what i'm saying now conventionally one would say this is a mystical thing to say or it's a poetic thing to say but there's a real there's a reality behind this and if that dimension is missing from your life you run around the surface of reality never connecting with anything or anybody really deeply never sensing your connectedness with other life forms nature animals humans so it's important to develop this ability to experience without imposing labels so you can just be with the tree and look at it you don't have to hug it you can but it's not necessary if you will have to want to hug it it's fine because the touch can free you also from thinking to take your attention into the sense of touch yes but all the senses are involved in that experience the trees thing and then teach you stillness because the tree is so still but you have to tune in you can't tune in with mental labels you have to be there and then there's an alertness there and with that alertness you not only perceive the tree you sense the underlying consciousness of the tree because ultimately it's the same consciousness that is the essence of who you are but in a different manifestation a different frequency level so to speak but and then the tree can teach you to be still and you become but it's not the same stillness in you as the stillness of the tree because the tree is a long way below thought the stillness in you is above thought but in there you meet the tree you are above thought in presence and the tree is long below thought in beingness and you meet the tree and then the tree can teach you to be still and you can actually sense that the tree is just that's the trees the tree would be saying om if it could speak continuously because that's the rootedness of the tree is not only rooted in the soil the tree is rooted in being and being as the source of life it hasn't come out that far yet so it's it just is so that's a teaching in itself that's how nature can teach you to be free of mind it's what it's such an extraordinary an extraordinary adventure the awakening of higher consciousness in you it's just so amazing and to then experience to become free of their personality so they are no longer feel you're trapped in it of course you still have a history it's fine you have a personal history you have a life situation everybody has a life situation which is to do with relationships it's to do with your work situation your financial situation your home situation your health situation all these things make up your life situation now it's very rare that all these things are going absolutely fine for you my health's wonderful my relationships absolutely perfect my work career great finances great possessions home wonderful home children all healthy and intelligent and great everything is great not doesn't happen very often and if it does it doesn't last that long you just have to wait a little and then somewhere things break down here and there you get challenged something happens that does isn't supposed to happen as the mind you get challenged by life all the time and that's good that's how it's meant to be and you realize the world can't make you happy occasionally you might think oh yes it can because i've just fallen in love with the most amazing amazing person who is going to make me happy for the rest of my life oh dear that's a big thing to put on the person a huge expectation he or she is going to make me happy i know it okay so it gives you a high say that's finally life i don't need all that spiritual stuff anymore i found the ideal partner and then you wait a little after the wedding and very soon sooner or later usually sooner you discover there are aspects to your partner's personality that you didn't know existed something must have gone dreadfully wrong did i marry the wrong person yes my god all this happens is of course you experience the egoic the particularly unconscious aspects of that personality which every person has of course some to a much greater degree than others but every person has certain aspects that you experience that you will find irritating or unpleasant or upsetting in that sense you will always marry the wrong person if you're expecting them to make you happy you're definitely going to marry the wrong person so the real things the realization that the world whether it's people or situations or achievements does not have the capacity to make you happy because happiness arises from a deeper place within you which is inseparable from the essence of who you are and i don't even use the word happiness to describe it because it's deeper than that happiness sounds a little superficial to me happiness something so happy and then the next day you go oh no it's like oh something good happens and then but there's something deeper let's be i call it in one of the books beyond happiness and unhappiness this piece happiness and unhappiness exists in the polarities of this world something good happens of course you yes you're happy something bad happens if you're not connected with who you are in the essence of your being something bad so-called bad happens a challenge in relationships in work situation financial situation health situation wherever something happens can make you really can be devastating make you really totally miserable when you're connected with the who you are beyond the personality you will still experience a certain down when something bad happens you'll experience oh but it doesn't go very deep that oh there's a depth to who you are that is not touched by the fluctuations in this dimension so and that is that is the peace as jesus called it the peace that passes all understanding there is a there is a depth to an essence that is ultimately untouched but it's not in the sense that you're cut off from anything but a core a space in you that is timeless and from there arises what is sometimes called inner peace and then you can still experience fluctuations on the surface of your being but there's a depth that's not affected by it so you can cry and weep if a loved one dies of course you're not you will cry and weep it will be sad and yet you can sense a depth to you and in that depth you realize that which is beyond death it's the essence of who you are which is consciousness and the person who passed away the essence of that person is consciousness doesn't die the essence of who you are you are by the way you might not have known this you are almost completely invisible here you might i mean sometimes people think oh if i could be invisible wouldn't that be great you're already invisible because only what you see on the surface is the physical body every thought that you have is invisible nobody could find it even if they cut open your brain they're not going to find a single thought there they find all kinds of things chemistry and so on but not a thought i can ask you to go back to your childhood remember the teacher you had when you were 10 years old remember walking into where the house where you lived when you were 10 years old remember opening the door walking into the living room when you were 10 years old and you can go there yeah you didn't know that you remembered it but now you do now where where does that memory in what form does that memory survive in you and millions of other memories are there certain atoms or molecules that are your your living room when you were 10 years old if because if everything is matter every memory and every thought must be there in the form of atoms or molecules so are there living room molecules some teacher molecules that are memories no powerful microscopes could find any memory in your mind anything any thought nothing can find it it's not there and that's only level of thought you're already invisible on the level of thought thought is not visible to sensory perception is not visible to science brain science still hasn't figured out what a thought is and hasn't found it they have found many things associated with thought but not you can't find a single memory in your brain but there are millions there they say it's in the brain but it may not be in the brain and then you go deeper than thought the consciousness that underlies thought like the thoughts are waves on the ripple of the ocean consciousness is the ocean totally invisible so you can examine every brain where's the consciousness can't see it doesn't exist it's invisible so almost all of you is invisible starting from thought to emotion sometimes of course your facial expression might betray certain thoughts that you have but really your entire mind and all the memories and all the knowledge is totally invisible the greatest scientist cannot find a thought if he cuts open your brain so it's that we are basically invisible like even iceberg they say an iceberg 10 of the iceberg is above water and 90 is below and this is a bit like that except that is far more what is visibly so little i'm a little bit nervous that's fine nothing wrong with that i'm wondering you talk a lot of you know being present and you talk about conditioning and how we are conditioned and i think about my own negative thinking and and how some of that is conditioning i guess for me being in the present when you have that fight or flight like how do you tame that when you are anxious we mean or nervous

[Speaker 2] (1:27:57 - 1:28:03)

anxious and then it causes all that negative thinking negative thinking how to go beyond that

[Speaker 1] (1:28:03 - 1:45:37)

yes okay well there are various ways which i sometimes call portals into the state of presence i just for the previous questioner we could break really similar questions how do i get out of my mind for the previous questioner i talked about feeling the inner energy field of the body but for you i will talk about a different portal and that is a very universal portal all portals are closely related to each other so this portal is called the present moment and present moment awareness or attention to the present moment more than anything else it's a redirecting of your attention as soon as you discover within yourself you realize that you are entering a non-harmonious state of consciousness through irritation upset nervousness worry anxiety anger subsisting for a long period of time any kind of dysfunctional non-harmonious state of consciousness or to describe it in other words unhappiness in whatever form because unhappiness can take many forms the moment you realize that ah and for you to realize that already requires a small amount of awareness because the people who are really deeply unhappy almost as their normal state and there are many in this world they don't even know it because they don't know anything else so there are many there are millions of people running around this planet in a state of unhappiness and whatever form this unhappiness takes and if you ask them are you unhappy no i'm not unhappy what are you talking about i'm not unhappy it's like listening to some machine that goes on even let's say a noisy refrigerator that is always running in your room you don't know it's running until something happens to it and it suddenly stops and you say what happened suddenly that that dreadful noise is gone and suddenly it's so beautifully still here i never knew there was that noise going on all the time so for you to recognize that you are in a non-harmonious state requires already a small amount of awareness because it's only from the awareness we need to presuppose there's already some presence there where you can recognize that you don't want that you don't want the disharmonious state then you go into present moment awareness the disharmonious state arises usually because you are not you lose the present moment and believe something else is more important than the present moment it also often usually implies there's some form of resistance to something so present moment awareness is a conscious redirecting of your attention away from the thinking mind into the direct perception of present moment reality and present moment reality starts with you coming to your senses coming to your senses means so let's say i let me act it out you are you're trapped and you go and you get more and more unhappy or anxious or you can feel the anxiety and life is there's a heaviness there and then you notice oh do i want that do i need that does it have a useful purpose no redirect attention to the present moment okay where's the present moment okay the present moment always starts with sense perception you're looking suddenly what's around you look look carefully then you go oh and to really look you need to just be silent while you look it's the silent looking and this is you beginning to enter the present moment and then incorporate another sense listen so in you begin to take in what surrounds you in the present moment become aware that you're breathing it's all aspects of the present moment visual perception be where you are be here fully be here now inhabit the present moment be present to because that's all there ever is there is nothing else the mind will tell you that many things much more important than the present moment but it's a lie it's a delusion because there is nothing else even when your mind tells you there are many things more important than this moment it can only tell you that in this moment so give more importance to the present moment and so bring attention to the present moment first through sense perception through coming aware of your breathing and then the next step can be as you perceive the world around you also feel the energy field inside the body at the same time so you're more and more more and more present this is already a shift in consciousness very different from a few minutes before you were immersed in useless thinking so there's already a shift in consciousness happening you can notice the difference in the energy field as the consciousness shifts from being absorbed in thinking to being becoming present and so that is the you're waking up basically it's a process of waking up out of not out of sleep but out of what is like sleep which is being totally immersed in the in the voice in the head totally identified with the voice in the head so you become present sense perception feel yourself breathing and feel the inner body and then you can go one step deeper into what is the actual the deeper reality of the present moment because the present moment has a surface appearance which is fine it's often the first step it's what is around you through sense perceptions then you go into the body and then you go deeper and become aware that as you are perceiving the world around you there is a presence in you which you can sense as your very own being through which you are perceiving otherwise you couldn't press if you are not here as a conscious presence you would not be able to perceive this room and the plants and the flowers and whatever is in this room you would not be able to perceive it if you were not here as a consciousness so whether what you're perceiving is a reality or dream is immaterial the fact is whether it's a dream or reality it requires your presence the light of your presence in which everything appears now can you become aware of the light of presence or the presence directly in you in other words can you sense your own beingness right now as i'm talking about it i can feel it very strongly in me the fact that i am before anything else arises in consciousness i am so i know that i am not this or that not that i am a man or a woman or have particular age or a particular function deeper than that before you add anything to i am the i am is there before you add any sense perceptions to it the i am is there give you another little pointer to point to that place what does it feel like to be you in its most fundamental its most essential way what does it feel like to be you and as i said before no need to remember your personal history for that in fact that becomes an obstacle it's nothing to do with anything that ever happened to you nothing to do with past or future it's only to do with this moment what does it feel like to be you and it doesn't have a conceptual answer so don't answer it what does it feel like to be you at this moment what is the innermost self what does it feel like and you will notice that there is there is a powerful sense of presence there which has no particular form you can't say much about it or anything really about it and that's you that's the being the self the i am that i am and at that level you are connected with something far deeper and more powerful than the little entity the physical entity or the psychological entity it is there where you're connected to something vast you're you're connected to the very core of the universe and every human is that's the atman in india it's called the the divine within and the divine within connects you to the soul of the universe the outer the brahman the divine without what does it feel like to be yourself and then you suddenly yes yeah and you can't say anything about it it's just a presence it's the presence of consciousness it's consciousness another way of putting it as you can see i give you a little many different pointers because one word certain pointers work better for certain people another pointer now you become conscious that you are conscious right now you suddenly realize that you are conscious that's an amazing realization and to put it even more accurately because if i say you realize that you are conscious putting it like that there's still some duality in there i realize that i'm conscious no you realize that you are consciousness better way of putting it you realize that the essence of who you are your sense of self is consciousness not anything that happened ever or could or will happen ever and then this as you at first perhaps it comes to you in little glimpses and then gradually it is becomes the backdrop of your entire life that continuously no matter what situations you go into or whether you're thinking or not thinking there's always a part of you in the background that can that knows that you are consciousness you know yourself as consciousness consciousness knows itself is another way of putting it and that is the transcendent dimension that can always be there in the background of your life and sometimes it will come into the foreground when it obliterates every thought i'm talking from my personal life the non-personal life it obliterates every thought and you just go ah you are nobody in particular when it comes to the forefront then the human it shines away the human dimension temporarily and there's only the being when spiritual teaching happens the being takes over for me when spiritual teaching doesn't happen the human to some extent comes back but it doesn't only obliterate the being so there's always the being in the background there when i talk and i'm talking about this because you will experience the same and some of you already know exactly what i'm talking about then the being talks the words come it shines through it you will observe in your life as you become familiar with dancing between form and formlessness between the human and the being and bringing them together you will notice that sometimes the being becomes very strong when you get very still you may be surrounded by nature and you go or somebody comes to you who is in deep agony or suffering and suddenly you find yourself becoming totally alert and still and and perhaps you start even saying something to that person which is just right for that moment then the being takes over and then in other situations you become the human takes over and there's just 10 of being and that's fine there's still some awareness that of consciousness of space in you this is a wonderful process and the many of you are already beginning to experience that in your life this this shift from the mental self the usual self as i sometimes call it the human form self to the transcendent self which the buddhists call the no self and other traditions call the higher self these are just words if somebody who's never had a glimpse of it as many academics who study religions they say there's a total contradiction between what the hindus believe and what the buddhists believe because the buddhists say there's no self and the hindus say there's the higher self totally different they don't realize they just use different words to talk about the same thing or no thing if they've had if they had a glimpse of it within themselves they would know that but because they only approach it through the conceptual mind all they see is the differences this this is the this is the practice and hopefully as i've been talking you and everybody here perhaps to some extent been experiencing what it means to shift from the human to the deeper self what i call the being self right now even if you don't know it mentally if you are attentive here if you are not dying from boredom as you sit here listening to me that means it's working for you it's that simple but if your mind is saying when the hell is he going to stop talking that means it's not working for you but you've probably left already by now if you're here and there's actually there's something that captures your attention that's the truth in you that's the being level in you that recognizes itself and is coming forth that's all it is because what i'm saying otherwise unless you have some access to it within yourself what i'm saying otherwise would be absolutely boring and meaningless i'm not saying anything to to the just the mind what the hell is he talking about being so you need to have some access to it or you know in order to find this interesting or makes you feel more alive being here means yes you have it it's there that's it even though your mind might say i'm oh i do i really understand what he's talking about if you enjoy being here and listening and something in you feels alive then you understand it you don't you don't need to understand it conceptually you can't you get it

[Speaker 3] (1:45:39 - 1:45:41)

thank you

[Speaker 1] (1:45:46 - 1:46:27)

thank you hello um i live in las vegas nevada which is very mind dominated and it's tough there um there seems to be two forces in my mind that's build up energy and it's very strong and it keeps me from uh getting in touch with my true self into creating more space and cultivating that space um one of them is that it's not that interesting i'd rather go along with interesting thoughts and do interesting activities and also um i have this fear that

[Speaker 2] (1:46:28 - 1:46:39)

if i don't analyze and constantly think about like solutions and things in my life that everything's going to fall apart so it's hard uh those two forces that bill especially where i live it makes

[Speaker 1] (1:46:39 - 1:53:27)

it even more increases it more so the energy field there is a kind of nervous yes actually i work in a casino too so it's very well that's a wonderful challenge to stay conscious there yes it is lots of discipline yes that's your spiritual practice right i've been there i've walked through some of the casinos in amazement and the it's it's a quite a that seems to come out of some kind of dream when you walk around las vegas it's a but it's actually quite interesting when the mind doesn't label it it's actually quite amazing wow all these all these strange life forms and what they have created it's quite amazing it's there's an intense aliveness there would i want to live there i don't know there have been some spiritual teachers who moved there i know of at least two i think it was vegas and there was a spiritual teacher called vernon howard who lived near las vegas and there may be one or two others why they moved there i'm not sure perhaps they maybe they loved it or perhaps uh to pay less tax perhaps who knows the well the challenge of course is uh to stay present and have stillness inside you the what you mentioned now you need to think about your your life problems or your life this is a very very common assumption unconscious assumption in humans that if i don't think about my problems my life is going to fall apart i need i have to think about my life and what's going to happen of course nothing is going to fall apart if you stop thinking things will get better if you stop thinking with the exception of focused thinking in case there's a specific problem that needs to be addressed then focus thinking and then step even there stepping back into stillness so it's a wonderful thing if you're able to be present and still in las vegas then of course you're a master it's many people are able to be present and still out in nature a beautiful forest or the seashore or on top of a mountain and you watch the sunrise wow very still so still let's move here says the mind let's move here where it's so still and then wherever it is and if you do move there for a while it'll be wonderful oh it's so still and then of course the mind is becomes restless after a while there's nothing happening and you're not challenged by anything anymore if you have a meditation practice then you can of course convince yourself that you have finally achieved in you meditate five hours a day and let's say somehow food is brought to you as i remember a monk i knew buddhist monk telling me that story that he meditated in a hut up a mountain in thailand for half a year and he attained complete peacefulness peace nirvana he thought and every day somebody would bring him a bowl of food nothing to worry about nothing to do just be present and still the only challenge were mosquitoes he said but he learned to deal with that in other words to just completely accept and not mentally label it and just being used by them for food so he was came with that that was one challenge then he had to go back into the city to renew his visa because he was in thailand and he was a westerner and at the visa office they kept him waiting for one hour two hours and then he was in the wrong lineup for two hours and then he had to start lining up somewhere else and when he finally got to the window the man said oh no you haven't filled this out you do that again and he started so that was he then suddenly realized he had not attained nirvana so you're much better off in las vegas the thing is to use whatever environment you are in as part of their spiritual practice it does not mean that you have to be stuck it may be that a deep sense of the need to remove yourself currently comes to you and then you go somewhere else that could happen because it seems like it's probably in many ways a better place to practice than a monastery and worrying about your life or your problems is a very common belief that that is necessary to hold things together but it's not you have to recognize the futility of of worrying and realize your life is already together you're breathing you're eating when you need food you sleep when you sleep you go to work you do what you do you look around contemplate look at the sky look away las vegas is very much a man-made or human-made environment everything is kind of artificial not to say fake so everything is fake that's fine it's not everybody that much but there are trees there are some trees here and there there is the sky there's a light there's the desert you can easily get out and you're out in the in the stillness so you can take advantage of that when you need to and so be happy with where you are and accept where you are and then while you do what you do in the casino what do you do

[Speaker 2] (1:53:27 - 1:53:29)

i'm a dealer at night time

[Speaker 1] (1:53:34 - 1:54:02)

place your bets and then yeah and then you can observe human nature there around you observe human nature in its unconscious state mostly but that's fine that's where they're at you can be the the presence for them yeah it's hard not to judge them oh yes that's your practice not to judge because they are expressions of life of aliveness right in their form they're beautiful

[Speaker 2] (1:54:02 - 1:54:26)

too yeah okay thank you so much and now breaking the habit of negative thinking and self-talk

[Speaker 1] (1:54:26 - 2:02:33)

session three welcome we are live in real time as they say in the present moment no need to think right now there's nothing to add to this moment by thinking about it so all that thinking would do is obscure your awareness your awareness of the present moment which means obscure your awareness if you have problems waiting for you you can think about them when we finish and even then i would suggest and recommend that you set aside brief periods when you think about your so-called problems if they are real in other words a real problem is a situation that you need to deal with either right now in the moment when it arises in which case it's not a problem it's a challenge or something that tomorrow you may have to do or next week or next month and you may have to think about what you're going to do to the extent to which it's possible to plan and set aside a period of time when you do that and then when that's done come back into present moment awareness so the worst fate is for your mind to be occupied continuously with past and future and as you know past and future exist in the mind remove the mind thought there's no past or future past or future exists for you as thought it's indispensable for dealing with the practical aspects of life but it's a huge obstacle for going deeper within yourself deeper into reality a huge obstacle to finding that state of connectedness with a deeper reality a huge obstacle to knowing who you are so right now all you need to do and there's no doing but just use the word all you need to do is look at the image on the screen listen to the words which are all pointers signposts and as you look at the image on the screen and listen to the words be aware also of yourself as the still space the still presence without which you would not be able to look at the image on the screen or listen to the words it's only because there is that light of presence that receives the sense perception of seeing and hearing that there can be seeing and hearing the moment you start thinking about past and future the moment you start thinking some of your consciousness incarnates into form the incarnation the word incarnation is to become form to become physical form but it's not necessarily physical you become a psychological form every thought is that so some of the consciousness incarnates into mental formations and that's okay there's a there's nothing wrong with that it's a good thing you're able to think it's not a good thing to lose yourself in the thinking why is it not a good thing because it makes your life miserable and if you make your life miserable you make other people's lives miserable without even knowing what you're doing that's the essence of unconsciousness the really unconscious people which is still millions billions on the planet they don't know that they are making their lives miserable and other people's lives miserable or as somebody once put it they know not what they do

[Speaker 3] (2:02:47 - 2:03:00)

and here you can learn to become comfortable with the beautiful state of not thinking

[Speaker 1] (2:03:03 - 2:03:53)

become familiar with that experience how lovely it is not having to think just being aware not interpreting continuously drawing conclusions pronouncing judgment upon situations events people compulsion to judge whatever arises in the present moment immediately have a personalized relationship with it like dislike want should have should

[Speaker 3] (2:04:07 - 2:04:36)

all that kind of thinking becomes a false self and as you i'm sure realize

[Speaker 1] (2:04:39 - 2:10:25)

not to think is to be alert but in a relaxed way not a tense alertness not that kind of alertness it almost seems contradictory the relaxed alertness now if you're still it could happen that you suddenly become very tired and before you know it you have fallen from being above thinking you have fallen below thinking and from there you can go further into sleep but that's not what we're doing here we're not falling below thinking if it happens then when you notice it awareness the moment you notice it there's a choice and awareness can return has returned in a way already when you notice it so as i've said many times you can be free of thinking by falling below thinking you can be free of thinking by rising above thinking what this is about is rising above thinking and then you can use thinking even while you're thinking there could still be an awareness in the background so there's still the dimension that is above thinking is still there even while you're thinking in other words you don't lose yourself in the thinking it doesn't become a raging torrent a river that drags you along and most importantly you no longer derive your sense of who you are from thought from judgments in your head which are thoughts from opinions of who you are viewpoints not even knowing that these are opinions of viewpoints mistaking them for reality all those things like the thought that you are a success in life or the thought that you are a failure both if you believe in either one of them that's an important aspect of the ego that's the false self that is a thought it tells you who you are but what meaning does it really have the world in which we live the collective consciousness or unconsciousness has certain ideas about what success is and what failure is but they may be deluded because ultimately the world is not all that sane it has a strong element of craziness so if you believe in what the world tells you who you are then you believe the world is not a hundred percent crazy but has a strong element of insanity in it so you're not a success you're not a failure you are presence

[Speaker 3] (2:10:25 - 2:11:17)

conscious presence you're not young or you're not old you are conscious presence you're not a man or a woman you are conscious presence let's demand bathrooms for people who are present

[Speaker 1] (2:11:17 - 2:12:27)

that's a new idea who are neither man nor woman who have realized who they are beyond gender and yet on the outer levels you're still here as a form identity and that's fine but don't look for yourself in the form identity there's never any lasting satisfaction there i mentioned success and failure young and old male female all being constructs

[Speaker 3] (2:12:28 - 2:12:47)

that belong to the world of form don't look for your identity their thought forms

[Speaker 1] (2:12:48 - 2:13:49)

victim identity triumph are you the one who has power you see yourself as powerful and then a big one is victim victim identity is very prevalent and another trap satisfying to the ego it likes to attach itself to that you can be a victim of one person in a personal sense i'm not denying that there may have been people who did bad things to you that hurt you but to make that into a thought form and then derive your sense of who you are

[Speaker 3] (2:13:51 - 2:14:11)

from the mental image of victim keeps you trapped in ego and makes you ineffective and powerless

[Speaker 1] (2:14:12 - 2:19:10)

ultimately you are conscious presence and another trap is a collective victim identity very popular these days and of course yes things have been done to groups of people suffering inflicted by one group on another smaller group and you can see and acknowledge all that but the danger is to derive your sense of self from that mental image being a victim of other people and then with that comes the sense of righteousness condemnation of others sense of anger sense of resentment all these things that ultimately keep you trapped so the shift in consciousness is shaped from being identified with form being identified with thought emotions that go with thought the image of the body physical body identification with that is those things is ego and then you realize how insubstantial all that is and you go deeper and then you identify with presence you are the presence in bodhis terminology that's the no self but that is misunderstood by people who haven't accessed that dimension within themselves and that includes most academics and university professors who teach Buddhism and even many Buddhist scholars as the Buddha taught there is no self the self is an illusion and that's the egoic self and then there's the liberation from that delusion and whatever words you use to talk about the liberation from the delusion doesn't really matter they're just words you can say that's the big self that transcends all the small selves or that's no self just words as i've said before and also in wrote about it in a book jesus also talked about the self the illusory nature of the self in the simple teaching deny thyself in the old translation more modern deny yourself i don't know what they have in the most recent translations into modern very modern english or whatever language the danger is always that the people are trying to find a more contemporary translation have haven't understood the deeper meaning of the original saying and then they reduce it in their translation they reduce it to their limited ultimately erroneous understanding of it so the older one is actually not bad deny thyself

[Speaker 3] (2:19:12 - 2:19:23)

what does it mean it implies that the self

[Speaker 1] (2:19:24 - 2:55:15)

is not real otherwise what would be the point in denying something that is real would be absurd you can't deny reality so these two words by jesus deny thyself imply obviously that the self that is to be denied is not real and so to deny it's not real it's an illusion mirage to deny thyself then must mean to recognize the illusion to recognize the self as an illusion ultimately and that's the only way that that statement by jesus can make sense and it makes perfect sense on that level he is saying exactly the same as the buddha so i wanted to paraphrase that statement deny thyself i would say recognize the unreality of your self of that self and once you've recognized the unreality when you have denied it remove it let's spend just the last part of our meditative discourse or meditation in stillness you could close your eyes or you can look into my eyes and recognize your own presence there remember you are not looking at a person because i'm not thinking there is no person just awareness there there isn't my awareness and your awareness my consciousness and your consciousness there's only the one consciousness and i am that and you are that good evening so let's become present presence is a state of consciousness that transcends thinking thinking can happen against the background of presence speaking can happen against the background of presence which simply means the mind can be active and at the same time you can be aware of yourself which does not mean aware of the historical person but be aware of yourself as awareness now for you here now you're listening so there's a small amount of mind activity through the listening because after all your mind needs to decipher the sounds but that's quite easy for the mind to do and so as you listen and look you can be aware of yourself as a conscious presence being aware of yourself as a conscious presence as consciousness being aware of your own awareness so thinking can happen against that background of awareness speaking can happen but it's also possible for the complete cessation of mind activity to happen and happen is not the right word to be there that you may notice it in the gaps between words or sentences you can be aware so acutely aware that thinking does not arise anymore you have risen above thinking or transcended thinking a state of consciousness higher than thinking in which thinking can operate doesn't have to transcend means it's gone beyond it's not eliminated you're able to use your mind when needed but you have the choice and this is the radical step into a new state of consciousness you have the choice not to think that's an amazing thing and not everyone here tonight is able to have that choice yet but many of you are and we are here to strengthen that ability to rise above thinking when you rise above thinking you also rise above the person or the personality which of course can still operate and does operate in everyday life but another dimension is present another dimension to who you are and if you even want to use the word enlightenment what it means is that in addition to the personality the person a deeper dimension is present whether you call it deeper or higher it doesn't matter a deeper or higher dimension of consciousness that is more essentially you than thinking more essentially you than your personal history and in that all the other things that for most of your life you had been identified with as yourself such as the physical body whether you're a man or a woman your background your upbringing your achievements your failures your knowledge your abilities your likes your dislikes your opinions all these other things that in the so-called normal state of consciousness give people their sense of who they are all those things are recognized as not self of course if you know a little bit about buddhism or a lot about buddhism you recognize in this the teaching of the buddha and the pali scriptures the word is anatta not self or no self it's a recognition that all the things that had given you your sense of self are ultimately illusory and are not yourself so your sense of self is no longer in all those things although they still exist for you on the level of the person and that's a big relief because you're no longer looking for yourself where you can't be found you're no longer looking to strengthen yourself by strengthening an illusory construct with the inevitable frustration and suffering that it leads to and with the inevitable misinterpretation of other people of yourself of situations because if you live through an illusory construct of your mind whatever you perceive whatever situation you are in your relationships with people will reflect that illusion and that illusory construct the egoic self the mind made self creates an enormous amount of unhappiness in your life or as the buddha called it suffering which can also be translated as misery or unsatisfactoriness and in that illusory state when you derive your sense of self from this illusory construct you don't realize that most of your suffering is created by your state of consciousness and you think the cause of your suffering is suffering and suffering is a generic term it's any form of unhappiness upset discontent frustration anger despondency irritation you think that all your unhappiness in whatever form is caused by factors outside of you other people situations events things that happen or fail to happen when they should be happening according to your mind things that people do or fail to do according to your mind situations or places that are found unsatisfying when they should satisfy you according to your mind so you can observe this at work even when slight upsets arise in your life where do they come from or bigger upsets and then you can if you're aware enough in that moment and i recommend that you use any form of upset as a signal that more awareness is required that you need to become present and then you discover that in most cases the upset is caused by your mind and a misinterpretation of situations and people and so on the mind creates a gap between the isness of things which it cannot accept so there's a gap between what is and what should be and then you start complaining about situations and people and you become anxious or angry or frustrated it's tedious to live like that and people live like that all their life and all that is dukkha misery suffering and unsatisfactoriness unhappiness but the egoic mind doesn't even recognize it as such to the egoic mind it's enjoying itself the egoic mind enjoys unhappy states it strengthens itself through unhappy states so the egoic mind a lot of the time doesn't even recognize suffering as suffering it believes implicitly it's a good thing that you are angry now with that person or about that situation you have the right to be angry these people shouldn't behave like that the situation shouldn't be as it is he shouldn't have said that he should have said that you can apply to yourself i should have in other words normal existence is like that there's a line in the course in miracles says i'm never upset for the reason i think that's interesting so if you're upset about something that somebody did or failed to do how is that true that you're not upset for that reason well the reason is you're upset because your mind your unconscious unobserved mind is creating a gap between what is and what should be and by focusing on what isn't on what should be it creates dukkha and in creating dukkha unhappiness in whatever form upset it strengthens itself a simple mechanical operation so the upset isn't created by that thing it's created by a dysfunction in your mind and ultimately every upset is there because you are not rooted in that deeper or higher dimension of consciousness that is presence awareness not being in conscious connection connectedness with that means that life has that tendency of being upsetting frustrating and to the ego that's a good thing because without that it can't really even survive without complaining and saying what should and shouldn't be and so as you bring a deeper state of consciousness or higher state of consciousness to situations and people that make up your everyday life you find that things become greatly simplified without the egoic misinterpretations of reality and you don't continuously construct stories anymore on the simplest levels stories that create unhappiness upset stories that you completely believe in stories like he let me down and without that story all that's left is he didn't turn up he wasn't there was supposed to be there but he wasn't there that's all he promised something but he didn't follow up didn't do it don't impose any more any additional story on him that's all no longer a gap between what is and what should be should have been in which the ego strengthens itself she betrayed me deep betrayal another story she went off with another man or he with another woman or another man he or she acted according to his or her level of consciousness or unconsciousness at that time impulses rose whatever but you can see the difference is no longer a self in this misinterpretation that creates the misinterpretation of reality that creates the layer of suffering and that's what zen teaches it looks at the situation and this is what is finished not talking about picking up the phone telling stories of what he did or she did or didn't do and she goes on and on no this is what is finished no problem if you can take action to do something about it you do it if not you don't you don't expect any more that situations or people should be satisfying satisfy you or be fulfilling or be absolutely reliable reality is not it's a continuous flux it's not reliable you can't rely on stuff that is totally impermanent as the buddha kept saying everybody's state of consciousness is impermanent you know a person and that human being manifests different states at different times sometimes a person may be very unconscious and other times relatively more conscious and act according to that level at that time that's just how it is so the great liberation is that you don't go around this world as a judge of things and people whether you judge out loud or just in your mind it's the same thing pronouncing judgment upon the world situations and people always found wanting not good enough and once you recognize that it's actually funny so as a spiritual practice you could see if you can spend one day without judging just accepting everything immediately as it is if a day is too much just start with an hour no complaining no judging no blaming to be able to do that you need to be aware without the awareness your conditioned mind the egoic conditioned mind does what it always does creates unhappiness and loves it without knowing it doesn't know that it loves it so but you cannot change yourself only the awareness can do that not not the you as the person so in those moments when you're not being challenged by life become familiar with that beautiful state of pure presence pure awareness cessation of thought not through suppressing thought outshining thought and if you invite that into your life at those times when life is not challenging when you're looking around sitting in a room waiting somewhere then it's more likely that the awareness will still be there when challenges come which normally would trigger the egoic reactions so thank you for being here be well be present be at peace

[Speaker 2] (2:55:31 - 2:56:18)

and now breaking the habit of negative thinking and self-talk session four welcome to our live

[Speaker 1] (2:56:18 - 3:34:55)

meditation what's the most important thing in your life it's to discover the unconditioned dimension of consciousness the unconditioned dimension to who you are you the unconditioned you the unconditioned i which has nothing to do with your past or your physical body or your personal personality and the unconditioned dimension is not something that you achieve because it's already here it's something you just something to discover here and now achievement if you think in terms of achievement and associate achievement with spiritual awakening enlightenment realization achieving the unconditioned consciousness if you use the word achievement or if that's the underlying assumption that it is an achievement there's an implication that it's in the future because you need to achieve it there's something to achieve you're pushing it away out of the presence and so you miss it again because you're trying to achieve it and continuously as long as you're trying to achieve that spiritual realization or whatever you want to call it then it's always one step away from you or a hundred steps or a hundred miles or a million miles it doesn't matter whether it's one step or a million miles it's not here that's the underlying assumption and so you cannot discover it because you think it's something to achieve and the thought that there's something to achieve in the future prevents you from discovering what's in the present on other levels of your life achievement is fine it's it's good to achieve certain things to learn something new to bring something into manifestation to create something even to have goals but when it's about finding out the deepest reality of who you are the very foundation for your life your existence then the idea of achievement is a hindrance so the unconditioned dimension of consciousness is to be discovered it is one could almost say hiding or concealed covered up behind and in between your thoughts behind and even within all sense perceptions and so to discover it you need to find that space in your consciousness in consciousness where you're not thinking so to stop thinking may not be the best way of pointing towards it although i might have used that expression a few times to stop thinking again implies that there's some active doing involved it might also make you believe that thinking needs to be forcefully pushed out of your consciousness which is not how it works it's to discover that that space of not thinking is already there between when one thought subsides before the next thought comes there's a space of pure awareness without mind activity you can do it here because this is a live meditation whenever i'm not speaking which is part of the time here be aware that i'm not speaking so we have the gaps between one sentence and another sentence between one word and another word the moment you become aware of the gap like now you're not thinking it's very subtle and very simple and yet that's the most important thing in your life to become familiar with that dimension conscious without thought spacious still but alert not the stillness of moving towards sleep but alert stillness so in daily life become aware of that space that inner space of alert stillness as much as you can initially you may need a crutch so to speak something that helps you for example alert sense perception especially looking at something like the sky which is spacious without imposing any thought on it but being aware of the one who is looking whatever you look it might be the sky it could be other things too you're looking at something at the same time you're aware that you are looking not when i say you it's not the historical you not the person but you as the consciousness so there is a self-awareness behind the sense perception not the personality self the essence self which is formless and because it's formless the buddha used the expression no self because he associated self with form anything that is separate sense of identity that's what jesus pointed to nobody understood it at the time not even for 2 000 years afterwards deny thyself there are other translations that would be more suitable so look away from the self that what you can usually consider yourself look deeper recognize the ultimate unreality of the conditioned self so becoming familiar with awareness or presence pure awareness pure presence in daily life of course here especially becoming familiar with just being present as you know we can use your breath awareness to take you also out of thinking become present feel the inner body also can be a crutch or a portal into it and then a time comes and it may be now don't wait for it when you can just go step out of thinking without needing anything to help you step out of thinking you can just go okay i'm not thinking now and then you look around wherever you may be whether you are in surroundings that are pleasant conducive to meditation it could be could do it there or whether you're in surroundings that are challenging and you suddenly discover that the main challenge is not your surroundings or your situation but your thoughts about it and even at that moment you can step out of thinking which implies that you accept that moment completely because the moment you step out of thinking there's nobody there to argue with what is because arguing with what is is thinking the moment you step out of thinking it implies there's complete alignment with the business of this moment you're not arguing with it anymore which is totally futile which causes suffering unhappiness and suddenly the situation may still be challenging on a practical level but it's no longer challenging on a psychological level in other words it doesn't make you unhappy anymore you're not unhappy not because you've pushed unhappiness away suppressed it no it dissolved because it was created and sustained by thinking so it's wonderful to discover in challenging situation but you can step out of thinking there too and some people need a challenge to be able to to be motivated to take that step out of thinking and they can't stand this unhappiness anymore and suddenly realize it's basically my thinking that's making me unhappy and not what's happening and they step out of thinking and for people who go through extreme suffering that's the erosion of the ego that can happen in that way because the ego is identification with thinking when you're not thinking there's no ego and if your life situation is so unpleasant that you can't stand the suffering anymore then the unpleasantness the challenging life situation forces you if you are ready for it forces you out of thinking well that's through serious illness serious loss and so on but i suggest to you here that you don't wait for life to force you out of thinking but voluntarily step out of thinking it's an evolutionary leap that step it's your jump out of thinking either because you can't stand the suffering anymore or if you are advanced enough voluntarily and this is what why we're here what's happening here and even while you think after a while you can notice that there's not a complete loss of awareness in the background even while you're thinking so at times it's wonderful to have these spaces of no thought and it's vital whether it's five seconds or 20 seconds or half a minute doesn't matter that's the evolution of consciousness that's the awakening and gradually you no longer rely on thinking for your sense of identity who you are sense of self which is always a fragile sense of identity vulnerable always lacking this or that never satisfied for long and then the sense of self shifts to presence you are essentially the presence awareness no form no past no future so then you're no longer dependent on the ups and downs of the your personal existence because there'll always be ups and downs gain and loss but it's not that important anymore but you honor it of course that level of existence has a certain reality but not an absolute reality becomes a little bit like a dream whatever happens in your life but you can make it into a more pleasant dream some people need the dream to become a nightmare to be forced into forced out of thought and into awakening but when you're not identified with the conditions then this the dream of ordinary existence almost by itself becomes more pleasant not threatening anymore because you're awake in the dream lucid dreaming means you're awake when you're actually having an actual dream you suddenly realize that it is a dream that's called lucid dreaming that is quite an adventure if you can be awake within the dream at night you're dreaming and suddenly oh this is a dream it makes it so interesting and you're no longer totally controlled by the dream you're suddenly awake in it you'd say oh i could do anything go anywhere or if there's a monster then you still know well it's a dream so the monster isn't really that bad and as you can have lucid dreaming it's more important rather than trying to have lucid dreams at night it's more important to practice lucid living which is a bit similar so whether you are let's say in a luxury spa sitting in hawaii somewhere surrounded by palm trees and there's the ocean somebody's bringing you a delicious drink or your body is being rubbed with fragrant oils or whether you had a bus stop somewhere it's cold and rainy and it's night time and the bus isn't coming and you're waiting to get home to your dinner of baked beans on toast it used to be my dinner often when i had very little money in england it's not bad baked beans on toast so here you have two situations you're cold and shivering and the bus isn't coming and you have a little room somewhere in either case the question is can you be aware of your essential presence behind the phenomena that you're experiencing so if you can be aware of in other words able to step out of thinking and be there as the presence and against the background of presence you're perceiving this moment on one hand maybe it's the same person different times in his or her life there you are in hawaii perceiving the pleasurable sense perceptions there you are at the bus stop in the middle of the night in a cold country raining bus isn't coming not a great dinner to look forward to and there you step out of thinking and you can sense the underlying essential beingness of presence and then you take in those sense perceptions and then you'll find on a deeper level your state of consciousness is the same in either situation and that's an amazing thing it does not mean you cannot have a preference of course you have you would prefer to be in hawaii on a in a spa if that's what you like or some pleasant surroundings to being in surroundings that are not in terms of sense perception sensory experience not so pleasant or unpleasant of course you would prefer to be in a nice warm nicely furnished house rather than spending a night on a park bench in the cold or in a shelter for homeless people of course you have a preference and of course if you are in a shelter for homeless people you may want to take action towards changing your situation as soon as you can but while the moment is as it is you can be aware of your essential beingness of presence your true identity and that is lucid living you're awake in the dream which means the way in which you experience the dream of i'm not talking using the word dream as an analogy for normal life experience the way in which you experience the dream changes if you are lucid in the dream even at night time that applies to how you experience a dream at night if you're aware that you're dreaming changes you may still prefer to have a pleasant dream but even if you're having an unpleasant dream there is the essential awareness behind it that is not affected by it and the deepest satisfaction in life is to be aware of yourself as the underlying awareness i sometimes call that being rooted in being so there's being and then there is existence existence is whatever happens it changes all the time things come things go one challenge dissolves or is overcome and then quickly another challenge appears that's part of existence existence is never free of challenges both for the individual and for the collective you just need to listen to the news or watch the news to realize that on a collective level there's a never-ending succession of challenges that humanity faces or different groups face and sometimes it seems and people say what's it's really getting so much worse and it's never been as bad as it is now different challenges by the way if you think this is bad the collective situation now you would not think so if you had lived through the first half of the 20th century but what i'm really pointing to is the challenging nature of existence and i would suggest to you that why it is challenging is it's challenging first of all because human beings don't know who they are they pursue an egoic sense of self collective or individualized and then it's ego against ego collective or individualized a lot of human self-generated suffering comes out of that unawakened state of consciousness in other words the greater part of human suffering comes is generated by humans themselves they inflict it on themselves and on others and that creates suffering but eventually suffering becomes like an alarm clock that awakens you that pushes you out of the egoic state of consciousness so it's good that life is challenging because otherwise consciousness would not awaken we would continue in a state of semi-sleep or complete sleep and as i've said probably many times before i'll say it again the word existence another word for it is not here to make you happy it's here to wake you up because existence is challenging and only that forces you into awakening eventually so there's existence is whatever happens and there is being underneath it they're not really separate existence is the surface of life the waves on the surface of the ocean the ripples the storms and being is the depth of the ocean and you can enjoy the existence truly only when you're no longer dependent for your fulfillment on what happens or doesn't happen only if you're awake in the dream of existence can you really enjoy the existence as the play as it's called in india the divine leela the divine play of phenomena and you realize your sensual reality as the being underneath it i am to be and i am on the same word to be is the infinitive i am is the first person singular the beingness of you and that's the same thing as when i use the word human being existence is the human being is the unconditioned behind it so your task in this life is not to get totally identified with the human level but stay rooted in the being and then we bring the being into the human and only then do you become a true

[Speaker 2] (3:34:56 - 3:36:23)

human being thank you this concludes breaking the habit of negative thinking and self-talk with ekhart tolle thank you for listening for more information about ekhart tolle's work and his teachings please visit ekharttolle.com the music on this program is as clouds dance by byron metcalf from the sounds true release inner rhythm meditations copyright belongs to ekhart tolle 2022 phonographic rights belong to ekhart teachings inc 2022

2022 Eckhart Tolle Conscious Evolution Audiobook

[Speaker 2] (0:13 - 0:32)

Eckhart Teachings presents Conscious Evolution, how to embrace our challenges and opportunities in a new era for humanity, Eckhart Tolle. And now session one, experiencing change through challenge.

[Speaker 1] (0:46 - 1:42:17)

People usually impose some kind of interpretation on what's happening around them. And if you have a positive interpretation, you're closer to acceptance than when you have a negative interpretation of what's happening around you. Let's say you lose your home because of the current situation.

You can't pay your rent or mortgage anymore. And perhaps for a while you have to live in a tent or in your car. And there's always, of course, always ever just this moment, this moment is as it is.

So there you sit in your tent or in your car and you take this moment. Now you can interpret if you give it a positive interpretation, you say, well, it's a challenge for me to be here and it's not so bad actually living in the car. I can manage, I can survive, I hope it doesn't last for too long, but I can, it's okay.

I shouldn't complain because other people have it much worse than me. They don't even have a car to live in or a tent. They may, I could be without a tent, but I have a tent.

This is not bad. It actually takes you a bit closer to acceptance, but it's not really the full acceptance. It's some kind of, you have to spin a pleasant story to make you feel good.

So you are still somehow dependent on what's going on in your mind for a state of deep well-being, but in order to become independent, not only of the, as far as your inner state of consciousness is concerned, to become independent, not only of whatever is at the present moment, your external circumstances, and external includes even what's happening in your body, let's say some illness, disability, any external circumstance, to become free of dependency as far as your state of consciousness, your inner state is concerned, to become free of this reactivity to external conditions so that your inner state is no longer determined by external conditions. But not only is not determined by external conditions, your inner state is also not determined by your mind, what your mind is saying, whatever your mind is.

So if your mind is interpreting your external conditions in a negative way, then of course you experience emotions that reflect those negative thoughts, and it's not a pleasant state. You're stuck. You are resistant, and it's much less likely that you will be able to move on quickly from that situation because you are not connected with the power of life itself that is beyond the conditioned mind, that is the consciousness.

So a positive interpretation is better than a negative one. It takes you a little closer to full acceptance, but it's not full acceptance yet. You're still dependent on what, and your mind could, it could change its mind quickly.

So for a few days, you're good with telling yourself a nice narrative about what's happening in your life, and then you get, I'm really tired of telling myself this nice narrative when I really know it isn't nice at all. So it could quickly shift, and you start to complain. So even that is not the solution.

It's not full acceptance. Full acceptance is to give up calling it good or bad. That sounds almost like asking somebody to be superhuman.

Isn't it human to interpret? Yes, it is, but there is another way if you want to awaken spiritually, and the universe wants you to awaken spiritually. There's something that is beyond the polarities of good and bad, and that is transcendent dimension of consciousness.

And to discover that, that possibility and that reality in yourself is the most amazing thing that could happen to you in this lifetime or any other lifetime. To discover the transcendent dimension where your inner state, through that absolute yes to what is, which is no longer a mental thing, you let go of needing to interpret this moment, and this moment becomes the foundation for your life. You still have a history, yes, of course, but you're not interpreting anymore this moment.

You just accept it, and then you may see that certain things may be needed to change the external appearance of this moment. For example, let's say you're in your tent, and you realize fully that it would be helpful to get out of your tent before it gets too cold, before the summer is over. And you realize that you need to take certain steps on a practical level in order to change your external situation with which you are totally okay here and now.

You're not complaining at all. In fact, there are many aspects of it that are deeply enjoyable because when you accept the present moment, everything that you perceive, that you look on, there's not only an acceptance, there's also an appreciation of the fullness of life that's always around you. It's nature, the simple act of breathing, the still presence of a tree, of a plant, the still presence even of a so-called inanimate object.

Everything is lovely in its beingness, and there's the fullness of life around you. There's the sky, there's the sun, sunshine, water, breath. That's lovely, and at the same time, you've entered the vertical dimension, and from that deeper state of consciousness, then action that then you need to take on the external horizontal dimension of life becomes more empowered and more inspired because it's no longer coming from some kind of negative state, either arising of some kind of angry state or some kind of fearful state.

And action that is motivated by fear is not pleasant, does not create pleasant experiences for yourself or other people. You will make yourself and others unhappy, but if you can be deeply accepting of the present moment, and then you make, if you don't know yet what action to take, you close your eyes or you don't, it doesn't matter, and then you see what it is that you need to do in order to change the external situation. Because you may have a preference, you have preferences, as far as this person is concerned, for living in a house that's rather than a tent in the long term.

And so you can have a certain visualization of what it is, or you want to engage in a certain activity, a certain type of work. The very foundation is the acceptance, and then it does not mean that change cannot happen in your life once you become aligned with the isness of the present moment. It does not mean that you become incapable of action, or that the motivation for taking action isn't there anymore.

The motivation changes from neediness, or wanting to either to protect or enhance your egoic identity through something that you acquire, feeling getting rid of the sense of lack or insufficiency that is part of egoic identity. Those motivations disappear, and another motivation arises, and that is the motivation, the joy of manifesting something, because the universe optimally enjoys it too, and you're a part of the universe. The universe loves manifesting life forms and all kinds of things in this world.

And everywhere, if you look at the millions of life forms on this planet that the universal intelligence has manifested and continues to manifest, gradually becoming over millions or billions of years greater complexity and more consciousness flows into these life forms that the universe delights in manifesting. So the universe loves manifesting form. And the human manifestation, conscious manifestation, is none other than an extension of what the universe is already doing, and now it can do it through you.

And if you look at, I saw the, I'm not a diver into the ocean, it's lovely, it's a lovely thing, people are able to dive and look at the life forms in the sea, but I saw it on the screen the other day, the unbelievable life forms that you see in the ocean, like creations of some incredible fantasy that nobody could even have dreamt of, the life forms that you, such incredible beauty and exquisite forms. There's obviously some kind of, behind the world of appearances, there is a vast intelligence that is the, that creates continuously these, and delights, it must delight in creating all these forms.

And that's, you yourself are a creation of that, you are one of these life forms that created by this underlying intelligence, which is an emanation of the source of all life, God, you're an emanation of that. And then that can, when you're no longer coming from egoic separation, you can be a conscious participant in the act of creation that the universe is engaged in, the entire sense-perceived universe could be regarded as a vast act of creation that, and it's growing, the complexity is growing, and that's the outward movement of the universe, the universe has this, the outward movement is the creation of form, and you are a reflection of that, but there's also an inward movement, it's like an out-breath and in-breath. So when the universe creates either, it creates directly, well, I don't want to go into that too much, but there is an underlying intelligence that expresses itself through life forms, and there are strands or branches in this underlying intelligence that they are creative forces that emanate from the source, we don't see them, and they are responsible for the creation of various life forms. Sometimes in older civilization, they call them spirits, nature spirits and other things, they are all, they are in the unseen, and they create, Plato said, what Socrates said according to Plato, that underlying the world of forms that we see, there are mental formations, there's already, it's translated as ideas in the mind of God, there's a blueprint, so to speak, a pattern in the unseen, and that is the creative force behind plants, animals, but we don't know, don't want to go too far into this. The important thing to realize is that the universe has two movements, and most humans, the human being is a microcosm of the entire universe.

The human being loves to and should be engaged in the act of creation as a co-creator with the greater intelligence, only an expression of it, and that is meant to be like that, to lose itself in the creation, so it's the, every life form is then, especially in the human, the human loses its connectedness, its awareness that it is only a temporary expression of the one, and then you take everything that happens is absolutely real, and that's a very frightening thing, that then everything has an absolute reality, everything around you, because you have lost yourself in the dream of form, because ultimately what the universe is creating is this incredibly beautiful dream-like world, it's an artistic, gigantic, artistic creation, but that's the outward movement, that's the out-breath, the whole world comes into being, and then there's the in-breath, when the universe again becomes conscious of itself, because before it had lost itself in the millions, billions of life forms, it wanted to do that, to experience this beauty, and then the other movement is necessary, just as you need to breathe in and breathe out, both movements are necessary, sometimes I call it the outward journey, which is when you manifest things, and the inward journey, which is the journey into yourself, into the timeless now, the vertical dimension, and that's the in-breath, one could say, and it is quite possible that that is the entire universe reflected in the human in and out-breath, the entire universe is probably being breathed out and breathed in, the big bang is the out-breath, and it's still continuing, it's a continuous creation, and then at some point during the out-breath, the other factor comes in, and that is the desire to breathe in again, because you're approaching the end of the out-breath, and then the universe breathes in, which would be the end of the world, the entire universe is returning to absolute oneness, and then perhaps there's another out-breath, as in similar things I said in ancient Indian philosophy, Brahman, one is breathing out the universe, and so in your own life, if you are connected with the unconditioned deeper intelligence, then it's a joy to be engaged in the act of creation, because you are no longer engaged in it as a person, but as an extension of the one intelligence, there's no contradiction anymore between being deeply rooted in the present moment, which is a transcendent you, the transcendent, the being of you, is in the timeless transcendent dimension of consciousness, that is a being, then there's the human being, you are a human being, the being is the transcendent dimension of who you are, the human is the things where you live in the horizontal dimension in time, there you take steps, and there are things that, when you look at the horizontal dimension, there are things that it would be good to do, you see things, after losing your connectedness to the deeper dimension, from there you look and then you see things, how you can improve your so-called life on the horizontal dimension, where the person lives, what you call the person, there are things that you can do to improve your life or to bring in, to contribute some good, in some form to this world, and by doing that, improve what you call your life, so that, and to bring some good into this world is, the essence of any good that you bring into this world is always, you bring in more consciousness, you connect it to the consciousness, you bring in through whatever activity, let's see, the being and the human, you are not only a human, human is a conditioned person, more fundamentally you are the being, if you forget that, then the human is lost, and if the human goes through life without ever, even having a glimpse of the being, that is the transcendent dimension, who they are, then no life can be fulfilling, life will be very frustrating, even if through sheer hard work of willpower, you can achieve things, yes, through sheer hard work and willpower, you can achieve things, they will not be deeply creative, not really bringing something really new into this world, but you could create wealth, you could create a big thing through sheer willpower, but in the process, you're making yourself and many other people unhappy, and you're creating in Eastern times, you're creating a lot of karma, conscious manifestation is not the application of willpower to make things happen, it's a very different process, it's aligning yourself to an underlying power, so that the things happen without exercising your willpower, and they happen much more powerfully in that way, when one speaks to talk about it, it's quite complex, when you actually live it, it's very simple, also it's worth mentioning in a person's life, there may be periods when living in the present moment is more important than creating anything, when you may not feel called upon to manifest something other than what is, for certain periods of your life, and you're simply in alignment with what is here and now, and even that is manifestation, but it's a different kind of manifestation, you are you're still, you're manifesting your reality still, even if you have no particular aim about wanting to achieve this or to bring about that, you're still manifesting the way in which, how do you experience your life, how do you experience your reality, how do you respond to challenges that life brings, how that is also, one could also call that conscious manifestation, because you manifest the reality of the, how you experience the things that are happening in this moment, that in itself is a creative act, your well-being is not dependent on the outcome that's vital in any manifestation practice, the non-attachment to the outcome, if you are attached to the outcome and you are excessively focused on that which you want to achieve, then the journey towards it becomes something that is of low quality, because there's not much consciousness in it, it's not a pleasant journey, if all you want is arriving, the journey is not pleasant and once you have arrived, that's it, some other journey starts, if you want to change your external situation, if on a personal level there are things to be done, not continuously, but there are time periods, definitely when there are things to be done and you can see more clearly what it is, because that is connected to the unconditioned intelligence and then it can operate from it, rather just the limited person doing things in order to satisfy its illusory needs, to satisfy its illusory needs and wants, the foundation is the feeling of well-being, that the well-being is not the physical well-being, it's the deeper well-being that arrives from the depths of who you are, I've just realized that this is the English word, the well is a deep thing, you go down and the bottom of the well, there's the water, the living water, so the well-being, you have to find that well-being in the present moment, in the depths of who you are, by becoming still, becoming aware of yourself as awareness, becoming aware of yourself as consciousness, there's no longer you and consciousness, your sense of identity merges, it becomes, it is the consciousness, that's the wellspring, the well-being that is, then you have an image, the pool in your mind and you bring the image, you merge it with a sense of well-being, so it's already as if you were enjoying the pool, because the well-being contains every experience that you could have, it's already there, so the well, and this means when the pool comes, you will enjoy it, but fundamentally, it will not make any difference to your sense of well-being, it's on the surface, yes, it's nice to jump into the cooling water when it's so hot outside, so on the surface, it's very nice, you can enjoy that, but deeper down, there's no change in that, because you're so, that means you already have the pool, when you bring it, you merge it with the sense of, and that empowers it, you can then either keep the image in your mind, you can, you know the famous things that people, you can read about it in many books, about how to manifest, you can have a vision board, but people do, sometimes it's, it can be quite nice and it has worked for many people, it does work for many people, and again, when you have a vision board, where you put an image of something that you look at often, again, not making the mistake of believing that this is something that you need for your happiness, it almost seems contradictory that excessive attachment to the outcome prevents you from manifesting powerfully, because that would take it into the future, and they would, you would create a sense of lack, so you already, this feeling that, as Jesus said, when you pray for something, believe that you have it, it has been granted, you have it, and it will be, it will be given to you, that's the important part, is the, you have it already, it doesn't say believe that you will get it, you can also use affirmations, verbal affirmations, that your gratitude, well, the one that starts with gratitude is very good, because gratitude is a very powerful manifesting tool, the gratitude for something, not only gratitude for something, it's generally a wonderful thing to practice gratitude for whatever is in your life now, I have, every day I have enormous gratitude for the trees that I see from my living room, just to contemplate, I don't have a thought in my mind anymore, I'm grateful for these trees, the gratitude is there, well, sometimes the thought comes in, and I've been here for many years, thought comes in that says, probably every day, several times, I look and I say, so beautiful, so beautiful, and then I look at the sky, and then I go, so beautiful, that's my gratitude, but other people may say, I'm more explicitly what they're grateful for in their life, in the here and now, not some abstract thing that you call your life, what can you be grateful for in the here and now, this simple object, just whatever it is, but you can also be grateful for something that has not yet appeared in the external, the same feeling that you have for something that is here now, visible to your senses, can have the same feeling for something that is not yet there, so then, if you use verbal affirmations, it's very simple, but you have to repeat it for several minutes, but it's not just the power, it's not ultimately the words, the power is the gratitude already derives from the connectedness with the well-being within you.

In practical terms, don't overdo it, don't do too much of it, enjoy the rest of your life, in between, do an affirmation twice a day for maybe 10 minutes each time, for example, whatever feels comfortable, or maybe in between, occasionally, when you're waiting for something, still feeling, not in an obsessive way, again, that's not powerful, never bringing in willpower, so this is a simple thing to practice with, and other things may come in your life that you may want to manifest, and that's the surface of life, you need to honor the surface of life, it has its place, you need to honor your personal needs, you have certain needs or preferences on a personal level, but they don't dominate your life, so it's again living in the two dimensions, being and doing, the human and the being, you're more likely to awaken if you participate in this world by doing, rather than withdrawing as much as is possible, and focusing exclusively on being, one could imagine perfect circumstances to connect with being, some people may have enough money not to have to work, they can live in the most environment that is most conducive to meditative practice, they can have the healthiest food imaginable, all things that are most conducive to spiritual practice, and deeply connect with being, that perhaps would be for many people an ideal situation, but not attainable for most people, but perhaps attainable for some people, if perhaps you've, there are people around these days, young people who've made a lot of money through whatever they do on the Silicon Valley internet apps, or whatever they develop, and suddenly they have a billion dollars in the bank, I would not recommend that you try to manifest such a situation, because it would not be the most conducive for spiritual realization, because it would be like a plant that grows in a greenhouse under ideal circumstances, ideal conditions, moisture, warmth, water, air, gets everything, it grows very quickly, but the slightest thing going wrong, the draft, somebody opens the door at the greenhouse for too long, the draft comes in, and the plant quickly withers and dies, it hasn't, there has been no, this is only an analogy, I've had many stories like that of people who were in that, including Buddhist monks I've spoken to, they lived in ideal environment in Buddhist monasteries, they, and the moment they got out and had to interact with the world again, they told, I don't need to retell the stories now, but basically one monk told me, he had attained blissful states of being in the monastery over a period, he was there, then he had to go out into the world and interact with the world again, in the city, people had to talk to various reasons, he had to do it, talk to people, and he could feel himself very quickly losing what he thought was the state of enlightenment, and suddenly he was in a state of angry resistance, and he even found himself shouting at somebody, humans, the deepening happens through the challenges of life, if you could remove the challenges of life, not, it's virtually impossible to remove the challenges of life, but if you could remove for a period of time the challenges of life by living in a totally protected environment, that would be the, become your greatest, the lack of challenges would become your greatest obstacle to spiritual awakening, so the very thing that you thought was the greatest thing that could happen to you would become the greatest hindrance, the greatest, the greatest, the lack of challenge would after a while turn into your biggest challenge, it would be huge, so humans developed, grow through being faced with challenges, now some challenges come to you are seemingly out, suddenly out of nowhere, they suddenly appear in your life, as you know, some challenges are of a collective nature as happened recently for millions of people all over the planet, out of nowhere, suddenly millions of people got faced with the challenge of this virus, suddenly came out of nowhere and affected everybody's life, there suddenly was that's the collective, these collective challenges can happen affecting millions at the same time, in addition to the collective challenges, similar things can happen on your personal level, suddenly there's a health challenge, suddenly there's a financial challenge, suddenly there's a challenge of somebody close to you in distress or suffering, somebody dying close to you, many loss of home, breakdown of a relationship or marriage, all kinds of suddenly these things appear, they have to be dealt with, suddenly they come, then there are also voluntary challenges that you can create for yourself, which is a quite a good thing too, the something that you want to achieve, because then you create it, it is a challenge, let's say there's a gap between, I'd like to become a, I don't know, whatever it may be, a musician, if you're already practicing music, I want to write a book, I want to create a, open up a hairdressing salon, I want to open a restaurant, because most restaurants are going bust now, maybe good idea to open a new one, that's a challenge for so many people of work in these fields now, huge challenges, it's to be recommended to have some goals in your life, maybe not at all periods in your life, because a person's life has different stages and there may be a stage in your life when you don't feel called to come to create a challenge for yourself in order to manifest this or that, there may be a period of life when you're fine with what is, but if you stay there for very long, if you don't challenge yourself, the world will challenge you, if you challenge yourself, the world will also challenge you, that's true, but if you don't challenge yourself at all, then the world will create something for you, a big one, so people who want to escape from, they don't want to interact, they don't want to participate in life, so they try to just keep away, no, I don't want a relationship, it's just too complicated, it's just too messy, I don't want to get in, I'm more interested in spiritual awakening, so leave relationships alone, and then, no, I don't want to create anything, I learn something new, it's stressful and it's hard work, I'm more interested in spiritual awakening, and I just sit here and just do the minimum to keep myself alive, and so there are people like that, and after a while the universe gives you a huge challenge that you never chose, but there it is, now face that, because you haven't faced anything else, you haven't voluntarily created anything in your life, you refuse to participate in life, now here I'll give you something, because the humans need the challenge, and that could be the beginning of your awakening, it will be painful at first, of course, but the beginning of your awakening, we grow through the challenges of life, so instead of imagining some situation that would be ideal, work with what you have, that is the training ground for your spiritual awakening, is working with what you have, and within that, practice, if you wish to do so, practice manifestation for this or that, but the challenge is here, not just the manifestation, to stay connected with the present, without losing yourself in what you want to manifest, not losing yourself in the doing, do, you can't escape, you have to do while you're here in this form, you have to somehow participate in the doing of things, but don't lose yourself in the doing, that's equivalent also to losing yourself in your mind, the thinking, they go together, if you lose yourself in your mind, you also lose yourself, because mind is the most fundamental doing, it's the thinking that you do, that you people do all the time, they do the thinking, so if you're completely identified with the thinking, you lose yourself in your mind, and you then you do things, you're lost in the dimension of doing, that's vitally important to always bring back awareness to the present moment, always that's the entry point into the being dimension, so always as much as possible, return attention to the present moment, so that you discover the well-being that is there within you, that is inseparable from the vertical dimension, that's the present moment, and then yes, if you are engaged in doing, you will make sure that what you want to manifest, that's not something that ultimately you do, it's something that happens for you, so let's say you have a goal and you visualize it, if you feel that you have to create it, that's not it, there's a power greater than you, that creates it for you, if you have to write a book, you have to give a speech, if I have, let's say I, well not these days, but often I give talks to people, let's say the average number is 3000 people, I give a talk to 3000 people, if I thought I have to do that, now I have to do this talk, that would be very stressful, and that stress would prevent me from giving a good talk, because it would not be connected, the talk happens, is the talk comes from the depths of the being, uses my mind, and then the words come, so there's no sense of doer, that is perhaps the secret, and then also Indian teachings such as Advaita, the teachings of non-duality, they often, very profound teachings, non-duality, it means that you are not the doer, if you think you are the doer, then that's a state of illusion, and then you're of course still trapped in ego, the doing happens, that happens through you, so you allow it to happen, your mind just, it focuses, but the, it's a bit like a, you can have a steering wheel or something, your mind wants to achieve, it says wants to achieve this or that, but the power comes from somewhere else, it's not you, you don't have to do it, also very important to lose the sense of once you have achieved something, some kind of great success or small success, one could fall back into the sense of, I did this, I did it, yeah, I did it, that would be falling back into illusion, the, all the great, let's say the people have achieved very great things, they have the greatest composers or artists or brilliant insights that certain scientists had that were not arrived at ultimately through thinking, was a preparation for the inside, like the theory of relativity suddenly came to Einstein, suddenly the realization comes, the deepest things come as gifts from that realm of unconditioned intelligence, that's where the power lies, if then you have achieved something and you have the sense, I did it, your ego claims possession, it takes credit, if your ego takes credit for something, then you're beginning, the power becomes obscured again, for example, when I had in my 20s, when I thought I was very concerned about how is my life going to be, what am I going to achieve, am I going to achieve nothing, I wanted to be, the ego was very strong, wanted to, she was fearful all the time, anxious all the time, if somebody had told me, you're going to be a great spiritual teacher, the ego would have said, oh, that's great, it's wonderful, well, let's say a psychic had told me that, and the psychic, if it had been a good psychic, he or she would also have added, but you have to die to yourself first, so when you become a real teacher, it won't feel as if you had achieved something, so if this, then I would, my ego probably would have said, oh, let me think about it, I don't know if I want that, the, and as to this day, I don't have the feeling that I have achieved these books, it's just, it's nothing, it's not, I didn't do it, it's, yes, there is a sense of satisfaction when people come and say, often happens, people say, your books changed my life, or something like that, and it's lovely, it's satisfying, but I know, there's no, who am I, I think there's just, there's just a consciousness, that's, there's no, there's no separate entity that has achieved something, this separate entity got out of the way, and then the consciousness could use that mind, that's all, I haven't achieved anything, so spiritual awakening is not an achievement, it's a realization, that's so important, so your practice, then, is the doing and the being, be engaged in doing and manifesting, and then losing yourself, it'll happen several times, you will lose yourself in the doing, and then you realize you lost yourself, for example, when some negative state arises, stress arises, very clear indicator, that you've lost yourself in the doing, stress arising, impatience, anger, complaining, you lost yourself in the doing, that's, and then it's, ah, and then return, and then it deepens, it deepens, and then you, then it, you truly, through the challenges, partly challenges that you create for yourself in a good way, because you want to create this or that, and the answer challenges that seemingly come out of nowhere, personal or collective, you work with that, those are necessary for the evolutionary process, even the viruses are necessary, it's strange to say that, the viruses are necessary for the evolution of human consciousness, very strange, but true. Suffering is an essential part of the evolution of consciousness, but it's also a sign, of course, that the awakening hasn't happened yet, and a lot of suffering is generated by unconsciousness, and paradoxically, the very thing that's generated by unconsciousness will eventually awaken you, so the, this unconsciousness is the egoic sense of self, and one could say the egoic sense of self has built into it a self-destruct mechanism, was designed like that, let's put it like that, and eventually it will create its own dissolution through suffering. Now, if you live consciously, if you, and this is an enormous step forward for a human being to become aware that it is possible to no longer be completely in the grip of the conditioned mind, which is the ego, and then to make the main purpose of your life, your inner state of consciousness, and to realize that the important thing in any situation is to be present, when you make that the main priority in your life, then you don't really need, neither do you create a lot of suffering anymore, because a lot of human suffering is self-created, both on an individual level, and on a collective level.

If you look at humans, all the humans that died violently the past 100 years, 200 years, the past millennium, whatever, the greater part of humans that died violent deaths, they were killed by other humans. Yes, there were also humans killed by epidemics and earthquakes, and so on, but the greater part of humans killed in the 20th century, for example, because that's the closest to us, were killed or murdered, you could honestly, by other humans, through warfare, internal strife, genocide, and so on. So a lot of that suffering is, of course, obviously human-created.

And on an individual level also, a lot of the suffering, I could almost say all the suffering, I don't want to say anything that people find difficult to accept, so let's say a lot of suffering, is the greater part of your suffering is self-created through dysfunctional thought processes, through all forms of conditioning, through which you perceive reality and misinterpret and distort reality completely, and react to events, thus amplifying the unconsciousness of others, thus creating more drama. And so that's the unconscious state creates a lot of suffering. But strangely, it's that suffering eventually wakes you up.

Maybe not always in this lifetime, but there's always the potential for it to wake you up. When you begin to live consciously, however, you become aware of the conditioning of your mind, the element of freedom comes in, for the first time, you are free to choose something different. There is another way, you realize there is another way, rather than the old unconscious reactivity, and so on.

But when you're always at the mercy of other people and external conditions, as far as your inner state of consciousness is concerned, when you're in a reactive, in other words, unconscious mode, you're always at the mercy of external conditions, you are reactive to external conditions. So the world is, you ultimately see yourself as weak, or the main, perhaps not consciously, and the world is there, threatening, as a threatening thing that you perceive as something outside of you, always waiting to sabotage your plans and so on. That's how it sometimes seems.

So when you begin to live consciously, then yes, the element of freedom comes in. But also, you no longer need the suffering to awaken you. When you suffer, that's an involuntary awakening.

Ultimately, the universe is moving towards the awakening of consciousness, you are part of the awakening universe. When you are unconscious, there's the universe, ultimately through the suffering generated by the egoic consciousness, or unconsciousness, forces you eventually into awakening. But once when you voluntarily begin to make presence, the main purpose of your life, the universe does not need to force you into awakening, it doesn't need to knock you on the head, and to show you in order to shake you, wake up, you are less likely to encounter disasters and huge drama in your life, much less likely suffering, in other words, when you consciously participate in where the universe is going, which is awake. When you consciously participate in the awakening process, you no longer need to be forced through suffering to awaken.

It doesn't mean that challenges do not come into your life anymore. Challenges continue to come. But increasingly, the challenges of life no longer create suffering in you, they make you more conscious.

Once you have embarked on that journey of awakening, the journey of awakening, there's an expression in Buddhism that says you become a stream enterer, you begin to enter the stream of awakening, you are a stream enterer. Once you're a stream enterer, you are voluntarily aligning yourself with the purpose of the whole, the purpose of the universe. And by voluntarily aligning yourself, you no longer need the violence of suffering, you no longer need the universe to shake you awake, to create enormous suffering.

And that means it implies you don't create it for yourself anymore, in how you meet events, circumstances, people, no longer in a reactive way. This means you no longer amplify other people's unconsciousness, because you're in a state of presence when you meet others who are unconscious, big egos, difficult situations, challenges, collective challenges, like now, you meet them consciously in a different, in a non-reactive way. So already, the amount of suffering gets reduced, the more present you are, the more the amount of suffering is reduced, you don't need it anymore.

Challenges, yes, you still need challenges, because the challenge is deepen your presence. And there's always a possibility when challenges happen that you may fall back into a reactivity that's also possible. And then you begin to suffer again, and then you encounter suddenly intensified suffering again, and then you wake up again, and you move out of that.

So inevitably, of course, everybody here will encounter loss. And ultimately, your body will eventually dissolve. And everybody is moving in that direction, obviously.

But that is no longer a source of suffering. For example, if you're completely identified with your body, as the body then gets older, no longer looks that good, becomes weak, you lose abilities, can't do this anymore, can't do that anymore. And we're all moving in that direction.

If you are completely identified with it, it's very enormous suffering involved in that. Let's say you identified with your good looks, and then the years pass, go by. And then there's no denying anymore that your good looks have completely disappeared.

But for decades, you derived your sense of identity from your good looks. Better than others, ego seeks superiority. And then you suffer enormously because your very sense of self crumbles.

That is much more painful than the gradual dissolution of your physical body, that psychological pain, that psychological suffering. So on many, many levels, the less conscious you are, the more you suffer. And the more conscious you are, the more you begin to transcend suffering.

So your fear is unfounded. You will continue to encounter challenges. But it is not the case that when you voluntarily embrace presence, and make that the main purpose of your life, then suffering is no longer your main spiritual teacher.

I sometimes say, everybody, every human on this planet has a spiritual teacher. For most humans still, the majority, their spiritual teacher is their suffering. And eventually their suffering will bring about an awakening, but perhaps not in this lifetime.

But there's always the potential. And then you may encounter, suddenly as you begin to awaken, you might awaken to encountering an actual spiritual teacher that's not suffering. It could be a teaching, it could be something you read in a book, something somebody says, and then suddenly the awakening process begins.

At that point, the need for you to have suffering as a spiritual teacher decreases as the awakening process begins. And that's a wonderful process. And if some great disaster should come into your life, and you've already begun the awakening process, there's a good chance, probably you will then, that will be the one thing that brings out a total flowering of consciousness.

And that's a, I've seen that a few times with people who had already been practicing presence for many years, and then something went wrong with their body. And that was the final realization, the final awakening suddenly came into the complete transcendence of, not only of suffering, but transcendence of, complete transcendence of ego and so on. So in a word, the more present you are, the less the need for suffering as a spiritual teacher.

Because when you're present, that presence becomes your teacher. It's the unconsciousness creates the suffering, and that suffering becomes a teacher. There's a deep, suffering is a very, um, in spirit, both in Christianity and Buddhism, suffering is a key concept.

In Christianity, the archetypal image is Jesus on the cross, the archetypal image of human suffering. In Buddhism, the Buddha said, I teach suffering and the end of suffering. Many things that you read in Buddhist scriptures were written much later after the Buddha, but there are some that I feel, I have no doubt that the Buddha actually virtually literally said that 2,500 years ago.

And I have no doubt that he did say, I teach suffering and the end of suffering. The Buddha said, wherever you go, whatever you do, you will find suffering, dukkha, suffering. But he was talking about the unconscious state.

And then I teach suffering, and the end of suffering means I'd show you how suffering arises, and I show you how suffering can be transcended. That's the teaching of the Buddha. It's just that is ultimately all spiritual teaching.

The image of Jesus on the cross shows the function of suffering. So there's intense suffering, then the state of surrender, and then there's a transmutation, and the rebirth, and the cross, the torture instruments becomes a portal into awakening, and is inseparable from the divine. So the suffering has a purpose until you don't need it anymore.

So one could say, suffering is necessary until you don't need it anymore. When obstacles arise in the form of thoughts or reactions, to be able to be aware of them, and realize you don't need to act on them, you need to just observe them and realize what they are. So to recognize what they are, it's a conditioned thought.

And some conditioned thoughts have been there for a long time, for decades. Sometimes the same kind of thought comes up again and again. And when it arises, do you lose awareness?

Does the thought, the conditioned thought, obliterate your awareness temporarily? Perhaps it sometimes does. But you need to, now, vigilance is very important.

Vigilance is part of being aware. To be vigilant is to be acutely aware, to be acutely present. Let's say you want to have a speaking event, and you put something online to say that I'm going to speak, please join me.

And then while you're typing into this, you're in doubt suddenly, am I ready for this? Can I do it? And then you have this, I'm just imagining, I know the human mind.

It doubts you, it says, no, you can't, you shouldn't, who do you think you are? You're not ready for this, you have to wait. And a good thing to know when these thoughts come is to realize they're egoic thoughts and say, thank you for coming up, and realize that you'll never be ready for spiritual teaching.

You will never be ready to be a spiritual teacher, but you have to get out of the way so that the teaching flows through you, but you cannot do it. So if you think you can do it, then you're right, you can't. For the teaching to happen, you need to step out of the way, and you do that by a cessation from thinking, you're no longer, there's a state of clear, spacious presence, and then you become comfortable with not knowing what to say.

And so you are not doing it, it happens, the universe speaks through you, it happens through you. Whether or not you even need to manifest to have a vision of where you want to go, in some cases people do practice that, they have a vision of where they want to go, and others simply deep enjoyment of what they're doing, and they continue to do what they're doing, and then at some point it grows and grows and grows, you reach a suddenly a point where you're riding this wave, and it suddenly grows, and I haven't had any visualization or anything that I want to achieve for many, many, many years, so I'm simply happy with how things are unfolding, and I'm happy with the present moment, I have no vision of where I want to go with the teaching in the next few years, I may not even be around, who knows, so I'm quite happy with things unfolding, and that is also a way of manifesting. Manifesting doesn't always mean that you have a clear vision of what it is that you want to achieve, sometimes that is fine and works, but to be in a state of appreciation of life, in deep alignment with the present moment, so that you're not in an antagonistic relationship with the present moment anymore, you're just deeply aligned with the flow of life in the now, and you appreciate all everything that is, and the things you do, the things you do, you do them fully, you give your fullest attention to what you do, that's another obstacle of many people, they somehow are not able to give themselves fully, there's something that's holding them back, you can sometimes see it with people who are on stage, or sometimes singers or musicians, you can sometimes see they're not, the full energy is not there for some reason, and perhaps they're afraid for some reason, they may be afraid of giving themselves fully, to be fully in what you're doing, to give your fullest attention to what you're doing in the present moment, is a very powerful way of manifesting, but whether or not you have a vision that you project, and you feel it's already happening, the vision can only work if you continue giving your fullest attention to the present moment, and to enjoy the energy of what it is that you are producing in the present moment, that empowers the vision, the vision is always, the point of power is always in the present moment, a great obstacle for achieving a vision, or any success, is to be, and this almost sounds paradoxical at first, until you begin to understand it, is to have an excessive attachment to the outcome, that's a huge hindrance, now you might think, well if I have a vision of what it is I want to achieve, would it not be natural for me to be attached to the outcome that I want to get there, I want to reach millions of people with my music, and I want to millions of people to have, to feel better by listening to my music, perhaps to get a glimpse of presence by listening to my music, so you, that's a, it's a great vision, but the, the mastery of this lies in not attaching yourself to the vision, so that you lose, you lose consciousness in what you are doing, and it gets dissipated into the vision, which ultimately is a mental thing, the point of power is always in the present moment, excessive attachment to the outcome, one could almost say any real attachment to the outcome, weakens your ability to manifest, so you can, you can hold an outcome in your mind, and then return to, I give the example of a pilgrimage, let's say you're on a pilgrimage, life could be regarded as a pilgrimage or journey, and you know where you're going, you want to go to whatever it is, you pilgrimage to a holy site, in medieval times there were pilgrimages to Rome and other sacred places, you pilgrimage to Mecca, pilgrimage in Spain, you can go on this pilgrim trail in northern Spain to Santiago de Compostela, and you walk for many, many days, now the very purpose of pilgrimage is to bring about a transformation of who you are, transformation of consciousness, the arriving is relatively unimportant, arriving at your destination is just a short moment and there you are, but the journey is how conscious are you of the step you're taking at this moment, if you're excessively attached to your, the outcome, which in this case would be your destination, then you're mentally, you already want to be there, that takes away from the quality of your step at this moment, now the step stands, it's an analogy for whatever it is you're doing at this moment, and quality means how much consciousness flows into what you're doing in this moment, so if you are dissipating it and you lose yourself in an outcome that you need, the outcome you're expecting, ultimate fulfillment through the outcome, that is a hindrance and a delusion, and many people who have achieved so-called great things in the eyes of the world, and things that are called great in the eyes of the world, a lot of the time are not great at all, a lot of things, they have achieved it and they became, after initial elation, I made it, after an initial elation, they experienced a very deep disillusionment, a very deep disillusionment with fame, with wealth, and many of them became more unhappy than they had ever been before, because, and that is, there was an excessive attachment to outcome as some future point will provide me with fullest satisfaction, will make me into the fullest version of myself, it doesn't happen, so you make it, and so there are many people who make it in the eyes of the world, and this is the very thing that makes them extremely unhappy, and they can't even take refuge anymore and say, oh okay, it's going to get better in the future, because they have arrived already, where do you go if you have your, in the, all the things that people believe are signs of the ultimate success in this world, now you have your private jet waiting for you, you have your big houses in various places, you can do anything, go anywhere, have any sensory experience, feel important because people admire you, so you see yourself in magazines and so on, and of course you have to be careful, because these things are very precarious these days online, if you do one wrong tweet and you're gone, but that's another matter, so, and you're not, you're unhappy because you never learned to go into the vertical dimension of life and realize that fulfillment cannot be found in, this is the manifestation, can only be successful if you do not expect to find yourself in whatever you want to manifest, it's, you need to treat it as a play, Leela is a word used in Indian philosophy, spiritual philosophy, the divine play, it's a, you play with form, there's not, whether or not it happens is a secondary and relatively unimportant thing when you're already deeply rooted in the aliveness of the present moment, that's where it comes from, and then you give your fullest attention to the step you're taking at this moment, instead of continuously losing yourself in your destination, and if, because if you're mentally lost in your destination, the quality of the step you're taking at this moment decreases, quality is something that is hard to, you may not know what I mean when I say quality, it means how much consciousness is in it, there can be quality in the slightest thing you do, because it means, are you doing it simply as a means to an end, or are you giving your fullest attention to what you're doing, so many people are held back because they have an excessive attachment to outcome, that is also, for example, that's one of the main teachings of the Indian Bhagavad Gita, the wonderful, one of the great books of Hinduism, if you haven't read it, you should, Bhagavad Gita, and it talks about the importance of not looking to the fruit of your action, so be completely present in the action, but renounce the fruit of the action, so that is the secret of successful manifestation, you know, and again, coming back to my analogy of pilgrimage, yes, it's, there's a certain importance in your destination, but it's not, it's not the ultimate, the destination is, it's a good thing to have a destination, you know where you want to go, you know the direction in which you want to go, so you're conscious of that, but your fullest attention is in the present moment, this is a reversal of normal living, in normal living, your awareness of the present moment is peripheral, and because you're so much more concerned with where you want to get to, or your past, or the future, and you're hardly aware of the present moment, it's just peripheral, that gets reversed, the, your awareness of where you want to get to is, continues to be there in the periphery of your attention, like a person on a pilgrimage, you know where you're going, let's say you're in Spain, in northern Spain, going towards Santiago de Compostela, and that is, it's fine, you want to arrive there, but this step you're taking right now, this is what the ultimate, that's the, the whole journey consists of one step at one time, the entire, entire life journey consists of the step you're taking at this moment, and what is the quality of the step you're taking at this moment, what is the attention that you give it, give it at your fullest attention, then that is the, the transformation of happens through the journey of being, you become more and more present, and then finally you arrive, oh, fine, and where do you go from there, well, you have to go, you're not going to be there for that long, then you have to go somewhere else, if that was the ultimate, it's, you're going to be very disappointed by the things that you achieve, oh, is that it, and I've been looking forward to this for years, is this really it, and of course it's not it, it's the present moment is it, that also means if the, for some reason you should not arrive at your destination, maybe you die before you can get there, or something else happens, who knows, maybe some, something else prevents you, suddenly there's a, there's a pandemic that suddenly stops you in your tracks, and so you're, you don't make it, it's almost irrelevant whether or not you arrive at the destination, because this, what the important thing was the journey, the step at this moment, that brings about the deepening into the vertical dimension, whether you arrive or not, who cares, well, it's nice when you arrive, it's fine, but that is not, that is not that which liberates you, that frees you, that gives you ultimate satisfaction, it cannot, and so you become liberated from needing to arrive somewhere, then you regard it as a something that you, in this world, you play with form, it's a play of form, and yes, the universe may want to create something through you, and it, maybe it will, and when it is, it's lovely, it's beautiful, but it's the act of creation, not the final product, because the final product of any creation is already the beginning of dissolution, and the level of form, when you, when you, let's say you write a great, you write a great best seller, okay, and where do you go now, okay, you have to write another one, okay, and then is it going to be as good as the first one, probably not, or maybe it is, there are many people in this world who feel they haven't arrived, that's a common disease, it's a misconception, they feel this, this sense of lack, that's, there's something I haven't, I, there's also a syndrome that's called, somebody told me a while ago, it's called the fear of missing out, the fear of missing their field, that's, there's something, it's a, my life has failed, the terrible fear, or I haven't made it, I haven't achieved my goal, and maybe it's too late, the mind says too late to achieve it, or, and you have all kinds of narratives that are created on the basis of that misperception, so the important thing is, ultimately, what you achieve in this world is secondary, your greatest, your greatest achievement is to be conscious now, is to, to be, to realize this vertical dimension of being, to become aware of being, that is the awakening, that is your greatest achievement, then the, the universe wants to awaken, otherwise you couldn't awaken, the universe was creating millions of life forms manifesting continuously, increasingly complex life forms on this planet, many other planets, uh, millions, billions of planets, and billions of life forms, even on this planet, it creates life forms, gradually manifests more consciousness, that's one, the universe wants that, the universe also wants to, one could call it the dream of, the dream of creation, the dream of form, the consciousness loses itself in the forms, it loves to experience that, and the universe gradually grows and becomes more conscious, and at some point, this expansion into multiplicity and complexity, increasing complexity, this expansion of the, of the world of form, this is the outward journey, at some point, that reaches a point where suddenly, the universe begins to awaken out of the dream of form, it had lost itself in every form, every form, experience itself as autonomous in the human form too, you were lost until you began to awaken, you were lost in your, the dream of your life, and that was, you derived your sense of identity from that, the return movement, as I call it, is the awakening of the universe, where it becomes aware of itself, the one consciousness becomes aware of itself, and that's, we have it, we're at this point now, where the outbreath of the universe is approaching the end, this is a, I'm talking mystical terms, don't be too concerned about it, science cannot verify this, the outbreath of the universe has come to an end, and the universe is beginning to breathe in again, where the multiplicity of things returns to oneness, complete oneness, that's now in, in our terms, that would have happened in several billion years from now, where the, the big bang was the expansion, and then this contraction, in physical terms, we have basically this, that physical term is only the surface of things, it's like the beating heart too, the heart beats, it goes, the inbreath and the outbreath, these are the two movements, and you find these in yourself too, there's a tendency in you, you want to do things and create things, but you also want to be, and more fun, the being is becoming more important for you now, and the two, we are at the point where you can bring the two together, I wrote about that a little bit in the New Earth, you can bring the two together, the awakening consciousness, that you become aware of yourself as the underlying being, and from there, you can cooperate with the universe, co-create, and create whatever it is that you want to create in this, ultimately it's not you, because you as a separate entity do not exist, it's you as an expression of the one, then the one expresses itself and creates through you, but if that sounds too complicated, it's the important thing is to realize, coming back to practical things, to be very much, very careful of not attaching yourself to some outcome, and to very careful not to fall into the delusion that your sense of self-worth, for example, let's put it like that, depends on achieving a particular outcome in the world of form, now that's a big one, so that your sense of self-worth does not depend on what you know, what you can do, what you have achieved, how you look, what you possess, all these things are usually used by people to determine their sense of self-worth, what you own, what's mine, what you, the ability, I can do this, but other people can't do this, my body, how my body looks better than others, for some people for a while, until it doesn't, what you know to be identified with some kinds of knowledge and opinions, so you derive your sense of self-worth from one or several of these achievements, what have I achieved, and you look back, and that's a delusion, because you cannot find your ultimate sense of self, which is self-worth, and self is the same thing in any of these things, they are nice when they happen to be appreciated, it's, oh, that's nice, it's very nice, it's not the ultimate thing, and it probably won't last, it'll either leave you, or you will leave it, or it no longer functions as something that gives you satisfaction, it could suddenly turn into its opposite, something that makes you unhappy, so your sense of self or self-worth is derived from a more immediate place, and that is what I sometimes call, as you know, the vertical dimension, where you become aware of yourself as the aware presence, there's something in you that's far deeper than the person, that is the ultimate source of satisfaction in life, what is that then? It's to know yourself as consciousness, consciousness becoming aware of itself is the ultimate source of satisfaction in life, you're free of the person, it's still there, but you don't look for yourself in it anymore, so the ultimate source of satisfaction is found in the present moment, and that is the secret, and that the Indians knew that, the Indian teachers, and they described that realization, which is an awakening relation, by using the three words, stringing them together as one word, they have come from Sanskrit, sat, chit, ananda, three words, string together as one word, sat, chit, ananda, sat means being, chit means consciousness, ananda means joy, or bliss, sometimes it's like this, bliss, I call it joy, now these three are three facets of the same thing, or no thing, being, sat, chit, consciousness, bliss, so sat and chit together, being and consciousness means the awareness of being conscious, being is sat, being, consciousness, joy, they are one thing, it is the joy of knowing, of being conscious of your being, it's all one thing, or no thing, it's not a thing, sat, chit, ananda is the realization, being, consciousness, bliss, to be aware of yourself as the conscious being, that is a joy, that's the liberation from the person, and then you can play around with the person, it's fine, and that's where your sense of self-worth arises, because it's not the self in the conventional terms, it's the consciousness, what the Buddha called spaciousness, or emptiness, spaciousness, and the Buddha also called it the non-self, it's the not, but that is what we are talking about, that's the ultimate realization, so I'm mentioning that because it's very important, because otherwise, even if you master to some extent the art of manifestation, if you don't know the underlying truth, even that will make you unhappy ultimately, even if you achieve what you had set out to achieve, it's not going to fulfill you for very long, there's a saying, I don't know who first said it, there's two ways of being unhappy, one is not getting what you want, and the other is getting what you want, now getting what you want makes you happy for a little while, until it doesn't, but if you were not attached to the outcome, as the Bhagavad Gita says, not attached to the fruit of the action, then whatever the fruit of the action is, can be enjoyed for what it is, oh nice, very nice, knowing that it's not going to last, nothing lasts, and you might not even be that interested anymore after a while, but while it's there, it's very nice, enjoy it, so I need to mention that, because sometimes when you read about manifestation, there are good books about how to manifest, some of them omit the most important part, and which is what we've just been talking about, and that's the very foundation for your life, and by omitting the most important part, then people who achieve these things are not made happy by the achievement, in some cases, as I said, they're even more unhappy than before, because after that, what else can they look forward to, in the eyes of the world, once you have your private jet, and your many houses, and your yacht, and your whatever it is, the people look, think, determine success, adoration of others, look, everybody loves me, and then that's a trap, that's not it, so the self-esteem, there was a, I told the story a few years ago, I read it a long time ago, the Dalai Lama was answering questions, and somebody asked him a question about self-worth, or self-esteem, he said, many people have a problem with self-worth, or self-esteem, can you please comment on that, and then, of course, he said, what is self-worth, and then he asked his interpreter to explain, what is self-esteem, or self-worth, and the interpreter was talking to him for several minutes, and he still didn't get it, and he talked, he tried to explain, he just couldn't get what self-worth, or self-esteem was, he does not derive his sense of self from his position, you can see it when you listen to him, that he's not attached at all, he does not derive his sense of importance from his position, one would think if you're the Dalai Lama, you must feel really important, you have achieved a great thing, but he hadn't even achieved it, from birth, he was already, well, soon after he was born, he was already chosen, so he certainly, but no, he didn't have, and it was almost impossible for him to understand that people have a problem with self-esteem, and so, because his sense of worthiness does not derive from externals, from position, in no conceptual sense of self, but a deeper sense of self, not a conceptual sense, it's all connected, not to be lost in a conceptual sense of self, that's associated with things that you achieve, and then the things that you achieve improve temporarily your conceptual sense of self, and then you derive your identity, for a little while, an enhanced sense of identity, from your conceptual sense of self, because you add your so-called achievements to who you think you are, and again, it doesn't last, so the basis for all is, again, it's all very simple, the step you're taking at this moment, give it your fullest attention, on the, so that's, the present moment is no longer relegated to the periphery of your consciousness, it becomes the focal point of your consciousness, what is relegated to the periphery of your consciousness is your destination, but you still have one, it's good to know where you're going, to some extent, you have some kind of direction in life, you have a goal, it's not bad to have a goal in life, that's your, the place, on pilgrimage, you want to arrive at that, that site of where you, the holy site, or whatever it is, you have that goal, and that's fine, but in the meantime, the journey, the step you're taking, what is the quality of the step you're taking at this moment, that's the ultimate, and if that is of high quality, then you can be assured, even if you do not practice any specific manifestation techniques, even if you do not practice them, you can be fairly assured that the so-called future will look after itself in a harmonious way, if you give your fullest attention to this moment, and because this moment is very deep, this moment is inseparable from who you are in the essence of your being, because ultimately what we call this moment is the consciousness of this moment, the consciousness that underlies everything.

[Speaker 2] (1:42:31 - 1:42:37)

And now, Conscious Evolution, session three, recognizing divinity in every human.

[Speaker 1] (1:42:52 - 2:35:13)

The one thing that you will not achieve by making it into a goal is this state of awakening, or being fully yourself, is another way of putting it, being, realizing the essence of who you are, and so you will be striving away from the only place where it is accessible to you, and that's in the vertical dimension of the present moment. So for everything else, manifestation practices can be helpful, but not for realizing who you are, because there's no, you don't achieve anything, you don't attain anything by spiritual awakening, that it's not an achievement, it's not an attainment, it's a realization. That means it's already here.

So if you look to the future for it, you miss the fact that it's already here, and you don't realize that that's the place where you haven't been looking, because you're looking to the future, and this is why I'm saying it becomes a great obstacle, if you look to the future for enlightenment, fulfillment, whatever it may be, that becomes the obstacle, and you won't get, you won't find it, and you will be striving, even you might be engaged in arduous spiritual practices, very determined to awaken, but you have in your mind a future goal that you want to achieve, without, you might not call it that, but underlying your practice is this assumption of arriving at a future goal, and that is the greatest obstacle to that realization, because what is future?

Future is basically inseparable from thought, because the future exists only in your mind as a thought form. I'd be very happy to listen to anybody who wants to prove me wrong, because then somebody would come to me and say, here's a future, I have discovered it. So far, nobody has come to me and said, here's a future, you are wrong, the future is more than just a thought form, and I don't think anybody will come.

So now that means if you're looking to the future, you have a thought form that you are pursuing of yourself as the fully awakened one, or whatever term you use, so you are pursuing a thought form in the future, which the inseparable future in thought, and then you reach the end of this incarnation, and you become frustrated, because you haven't found it. Why not? Because the thought form, or the future, the future self, prevented you from discovering what's already here, discovering who or what you already are.

So, it's a reversal of normal practice, is yes, you need time for everything in this world, in order to do this, any action unfolds in time, for anything you pursue, you want to acquire something, achieve something, become good at something, all these things require time, yes, but the one thing that does not only not require time, but the one thing to which time is the obstacle, is that self-realization. For everything else, you need time, and that's fine, but to find yourself, you don't need time.

That is an amazing realization. The Buddha also had to learn that, he didn't know that when he started off. When the Buddha started off, he realized the unsatisfactory nature of normal human existence.

He saw, there's so much suffering, and then you die. So, he saw the unsatisfactory nature and said, there must be a transcendent dimension, there must be something beyond. So, for many years, he practiced seeking to find enlightenment, transcendence, and he practiced the most arduous disciplines with great teachers.

He almost killed himself with the spiritual practice, and after several years of spiritual practice, he still hadn't, wasn't any further to his goal of enlightenment, and then he said, well, I've had enough of that. That, by the way, is not a literal quote from the scriptures, this is my free translation. He said, I've had enough, and he stopped his spiritual practice and he sat under a tree, and then that was the big moment.

He sat under a tree, and suddenly, the realization happened, enlightenment. What does that mean? All doing came to a stop, he realized through the doing, he cannot achieve being.

Being needs to be discovered, but not achieved. So, no matter what he did, he didn't achieve it, because you cannot achieve it. You cannot achieve enlightenment, you can discover it, it's already here.

And when he sat under the tree, all doing came to a stop, all future came to a halt, there was no more future, all seeking stopped, seeking for an enlightened version of myself, basically, that stopped, and then it happened. The realization came to him, and that was the moment of enlightenment. So, there's a deep lesson in that.

Now, of course, some people say that the Buddha's search through spiritual practice was unnecessary, you could say that, if he had realized, before he started his arduous spiritual practice, if he had realized that that was unnecessary, not only unnecessary, that it was ultimately misleading, then he would have sat under the tree immediately. Okay, that's an interesting perspective on it. But one could also say that he needed to go through that in order to realize the futility of it, and then give up.

The surrender only happened as a result of being frustrated with spiritual practice. So, who knows whether one could say it wasn't necessary at all, or he had to go through it. I have a way of putting this, and that is, the question is, my answer to the question, do you need time for spiritual realization?

Do you need time to wake up spiritually? And my answer is, you need time until you realize that you don't need time. So, you come to a point of, the vertical dimension suddenly opens up.

So, one cannot really start, some spiritual teachers do that, they tell people, there's nothing you can do, there's nothing you need to do about waking up, you either wake up or discover who you are. Very often, it's not very helpful. It doesn't leave people, and so, it's helpful to do, to want to achieve this or that.

Every human being needs to arrive at a point where the doing is realized as ultimately not leading to the ultimate goal or realization. But you may have to become frustrated several times, quite a few times, before you realize that no amount of doing will ultimately lead to the realization of who you are. In fact, the doing is the obstacle.

But sometimes you need to go through that stage of doing to fully realize that. So, to project a, to pursue a state that you want to achieve is not to be encouraged, but to realize that there's nothing to achieve. And who you are in your essence is already complete, full, perfect.

In your essence, there's nothing that you could add to who you are. You're already one with God, to use that term, one with source, the source of all life. You're already one with that.

On the level of manifestation, there are many things that where you could improve your life as this manifested being that you are temporarily. You can learn new things, explore new things, achieve, get, obtain. And then, of course, it leaves you again.

Nothing stays with you in the world of manifestation. It comes and then it goes. So, there's nothing wrong with doing and achieving and obtaining.

But for realization, it's not helpful. It's a hindrance. So, we come to the point of where doing and being are reconciled in yourself.

To reconcile in yourself the dimension of being with the dimension of doing. And that is the ultimate art of living, we could call it, that we need to learn or master, is the reconciliation of these two dimensions in yourself. If you let go of all doing, then an important dimension is missing in your life.

It has happened to some people, some people who have had sudden realization. So, they just lost all interest in doing anything. To some extent, it happened to me too.

For a few years, I lost interest in doing. And then I realized I'm still here and the universe requires me to do certain things. It requires me to do certain things.

I could feel it and there was a pull. And finally, I had to do. Is there anything, any kind of affirmation, could that possibly be helpful in realizing this essence of who you are?

Could there be any affirmation that could be used as a pointer into the vertical dimension? And yes, you could use certain affirmations. They don't express the truth, but they can be a pointer.

For example, there was an Indian spiritual teacher, Nisargadatta Maharaj. He had a little store where he sold cigarettes. Not karmically the most beneficial job, but that's what he did.

And he went to a spiritual teacher and the spiritual teacher said to him, you are not a person, you are consciousness. Sorry, he wasn't highly educated, but he listened carefully. And then for quite a look, don't remember for how long, several months or a year or two, often in his mind, the thought would come, I am consciousness.

I am consciousness. And this little thing brought about his awakening. Not the words, but the words were pointers.

The important thing is what the words point to. So the words, I am consciousness, what comes after the words is the realization. It's not in the words.

So I am consciousness. And then you stop, the thought comes to an end. And when this thought, I am consciousness comes to an end, the realization that I am consciousness is suddenly there.

And in that sense, a verbal pointer can for a little while, if you don't overdo it, be useful. I am consciousness. Or you could say, if you want to have a little bit of a link with creativity, the infinite creative power of the universe is within me and one with me, because that is the unconditioned consciousness.

The infinite creative power of the universe is in me and one with me. But then you have to stop the thought. Don't carry on continuously.

You can say it a few times, but the important thing is to stop the thought. Then the thought is a pointer, not as some kind of explanation to believe in. There's no point in, I believe that the infinite creative power of the universe is within me and I'm one with it, doesn't help you unless it becomes a deeper realization.

The realization comes when the thought stops. You need to leave the pointer behind after you have used the pointer. You go beyond the pointer and then comes a moment of just silence, but it's alive, stillness, alive, spacious stillness.

And then there's the realization. And then you can sense it, the truth of what the pointer said. You realize the truth of it and then you don't need it anymore.

So that's a little bit like one could say spiritual practice can also have that function. You need to know all spiritual practice needs to take you to the end of the spiritual practice. It needs to take you to the end of thought.

And at the end of thought, you don't fall below thought, you rise above thought. At the end of thought, there's awareness. So that sense, the Buddha said his teaching, he compared his teaching to a raft, the raft, it's you go on the, there's a river.

How do you cross the river? You build a raft, the boat, and this boat or this raft, you step in and it takes you to the other shore of the river. Once you've reached the other shore of the river, you leave the raft or the boat behind you don't need to carry the boat around with you.

After you've reached now, in this teaching of the Buddha, the other shore, the other side of the river, of course, means the dimension of being the transcendent dimension, the realization of the essence of who you are, that's the other, the other. This shore is the manifested in this analogy or in this parable. This shore is the world of the manifested.

The other shore of the river is the world of the transcendent. So the raft is what you can, is something that you may use, and then you leave it behind, you don't carry a raft around with you. And so if you use certain pointers, yes, you can.

It's best to find your own that are simple expressions of who you are, who or what you are in your essence. So certain affirmations, simple affirmations, even I just mentioned, I am consciousness, Nisargadatta used for a while. You could even drop consciousness.

If you want the simplest affirmation that points to the vertical dimension, you just say, I am. You don't even need to add consciousness. Might be even better.

I am. And after you've said I am, sense what that means. But you've left the words behind.

I am. Sense the deep meaning of those words. So in that sense, it can work if you use it for a limited time.

And so you could say it's a manifestation practice that you could use, very simple, to discover the unmanifested. An unmanifestation practice. But you don't have to.

Some people, for some people it's helpful to use pointers and others don't need to do that. Another simple one, of course, is there's only this moment, for example. There's only this moment.

This moment is all there is. The now. And then realize deeply what that means.

And that's beyond concepts. There's only now. When your mind is taking you to all kinds of unpleasant places, you can always come back to this.

There's only this moment. There's only this. And the now, of course, is the opening into the vertical dimension.

So you become aware of the present. Whenever suffering arises, you don't want to manifest suffering, but millions of people on a daily basis continuously manifest suffering. But you don't want to.

So when you, the beginning of an awakening is the realization that you are manifesting suffering. Of course, that's already an awakening there, because if you're very unconscious, the blame for all your suffering is always elsewhere. It's never in your own mind.

When you're very unconscious, other people, the world situation, fate, God, destiny, your karma, your parents, the unjust system, whatever, all kinds of things, they're all to blame. They cause your suffering. And you haven't realized that you are manifesting, your mind ultimately is manifesting.

And in fact, if you tell this to a person who is not ready to hear that, they will get very angry. Very angry. So, but that realization, your mind, the unconscious mind, manifests suffering.

And when you discover that ultimately the suffering arises in your mind, because your mind reacts to things, your mind creates a narrative that makes you unhappy. Not the situation, but the narrative that your mind creates around the situation makes you unhappy. When you discover that, that's the first stage of the awakening is, oh, and at that moment, that's an amazing discovery that virtually all your suffering is created by your mind.

Amazing. And then you realize you don't want to manifest that anymore. And then you want to manifest something else.

But first, before you manifest something else, you need to stop manifesting suffering. And a good way is bringing your attention into the present moment. This, what is my problem now?

What, nothing. What's wrong with this moment? This moment is as it is.

What's the problem? So bring your attention to now. Whenever you feel unhappiness arising, look at your mind and bring attention to the present moment, which always means the externals of the present moment.

That's a manifested dimension of the present moment. And then the essence of the now, which is consciousness, awareness, presence. And so that's how you stop manifesting suffering.

And then you can, if you want to manifest other things from once you have the foundation, which is the being, then you begin to work on the two levels. So you reconcile the two, the being and the doing in your life. And that's your purpose.

And you will not always succeed. It's, you fall back into, usually you fall back into losing yourself in doing, and then you suffer. And this unhappiness that arises, you can then use as a very helpful way of telling you, you've lost yourself, you've lost the present moment.

And once you know that, you can come back. There are many people in this world for whom the human interactions that they have through technology are much more important than the actual interactions they have with human beings. They interact through social media with countless people.

And the virtual world comes to them more important than their actual surroundings. It's an amazing thing. I don't believe that is a very helpful thing, but that's how it is.

It's a huge challenge. So you have that level. Then you have another level where you come in contact with the world through what we might call mainstream media.

You get the news and you get commentaries. And mostly these days, the news and commentaries are mixed up. They come in one.

You can't just get the news anymore. Then you already have the news already embedded in a commentary. And you get, there's also that third level becomes also for many people almost more important than their daily existence with the people that they actually know and interact with.

Your experience of reality or your world consists of these levels. So you have to look at these. I think I can try to perceive those three levels.

First of all, it's important not to lose touch with the fact that level one, where you have actual human interactions with people in your daily life, which is relationships that you have, people you work with, people you meet casually, but actual human interactions, that really is the main part or should be the main part of your life should be that the actual living experience. And so what I'm recommending is that you separate for, see if you can separate those levels and look at the primordial level of your actual experience with human beings, leaving aside for a moment, social media and leaving aside watching the news every day and all the other things connected with the news, whatever, leave that aside for a moment. And it's important to see the difference.

So when you talk about negativity and destructiveness and or anger and antagonism and conflict everywhere, first of all, look at your life, your actual life, does that apply there? Or to what extent does that apply there? Because that's an important part of your reality is the reality that you create, that you manifest in your personal life.

That is primary, I would say, is that sometimes, of course, the reality that you see in the mainstream, the media, when you watch the news, sometimes the two meet, as I said before, they can meet, but you need to take responsibility for your life here, on the level of personal interactions, that's where it starts. And that's where you can do a lot of good and you can do harm too. Do you contribute there to human unconsciousness?

Do you contribute there to the awakening of humanity? Every encounter with another human being, whether it's a person you've known for a long time, family member, spouse, whatever it may be, or whoever it may be, every interaction with a true interaction, not talking about social media, every interaction with another human being is important. What is the quality of your consciousness as you interact with actual human beings on that level?

Every interaction that you have with another human being is of great importance, because the world changes from there. So you begin that, do you emanate, do you have empathy, do you operate from ego, or do you judge people, do you judge, do you confuse people's ego and unconscious behavior with who they are in their essence, or are you able to see the unconsciousness in certain people that you may meet, and then look deeper, realize it for what it is, a dysfunction, a temporary dysfunction in a human being, and you can still have compassion.

Do you emanate goodwill towards other humans, even humans that can't do anything for you? I have an empathy, do you feel their being, and only feel their being if you can feel your own being, and you can feel their being is a refraction of yours, you are, there's one consciousness, one being. So do you emanate goodwill towards others that you meet?

And all these are important things to be aware of, because that's where your world, that's the foundation for what you might call your reality, your world. So realizing potential, as the Course in Miracles says, which is this course for transformation, which some people find very helpful, but not everybody, every time you meet a human, it says that it's a holy encounter, a holy encounter. I would add potentially a holy encounter, because in actuality, in most cases, it's not a holy encounter.

But potentially, you can recognize the divinity, not just the humanity, the humanity is a conditioned part of every human being, that's the humanity. You see the humanity, and every humanity is deficient and imperfect. Every human on the level of being human, the humanity is very deficient and imperfect.

So you recognize that. But are you able to recognize what I could call, I rarely use that word, the divinity in every human, because in every human, there's humanity, which is conditioned mind, mental, emotional field. Are you able to see that without completely realizing, confusing this with the true identity of that human being?

Or are you able to see it and see beyond it? That means, seeing beyond it means to recognize the beingness of the other, their essential beingness, which we could call their divinity. They are also, they emanate from this one source of all life.

All beings are emanations from the one source. And so you recognize that. And then it's a holy encounter.

When you see more than the humanity, even though it may not be that easy, because the humanity may be quite overpowering in its negativity and destructiveness. But that's part of your spiritual practice with every time you meet a human being, to see their divinity and their humanity. Then, after a while, you see the divinity more than the humanity, so to speak.

And this is why I use the English term, human being, which we use because the English language does not have a word that includes both men and women. Traditionally, in old books and so on, people use the masculine, all men, and they included women, but the human were never mentioned. Because English language doesn't have a word for man and woman.

The German language does, which is mensch. Mensch means could be, is a man or a woman. But English, you have to say human being.

But I think that's a good thing, because that shows the two dimensions. You are a human being. On the human level, you're a conditioned entity.

That's your condition by your past, by your culture, even by the language that you grew up with, by the parental background, all kinds of things. You are a human. And the human only is ego, a human ego.

And then you have the being, the human being. Being is the unconditioned, the consciousness, the unconditioned consciousness. It is true that there is an increase in the collective at the present time of what we might call dysfunction or disorder, or even chaos, disruption.

We are entering, or we have already entered collectively, a time period of collective disorder or disruption or chaos. There are time periods that they fluctuate. It's always there.

It's true that the media, the media actually is part of it. They don't just report it. They amplify the disruption and the chaos, unfortunately.

I'm not blaming anybody there. Some people say there's all some evil plan behind it all. Maybe there is, who knows, some conspiracy theories.

Maybe one out of 10 conspiracy theories might actually be true, but we don't even need to go there. The fact is that the mainstream media is part of the disorder that is increasing disorder in this world. And my feeling is there's more to come.

So be spiritually prepared. Very important. Be spiritually prepared so that you do not become part of the disorder that's happening.

And increasingly, I believe, going to happen even more in this world. We are moving. The world always moves between order and chaos.

There are two polarities. You should always strive for order. That's important in your life, in the world.

But realize the world for its evolutionary progress also needs chaos, periods of chaos and disorder. And out of chaos and disorder, a new order develops. And so there's a gradual evolution of consciousness.

When there is disorder, there is a regressive movement, which means most people become relatively more unconscious. And in the present time, anybody who is not awakening, even to some extent spiritually, will be drawn into deeper unconsciousness because they become part of the collective movement towards disorder or chaos when structures dissolve. And that is a challenge for humans.

Now, especially for you, everybody I'm talking to, and many others, of course, it is your challenge to stay conscious while this is happening so that you do not become contaminated by the collective negativity and unconsciousness. It doesn't mean that you necessarily need to completely withdraw from the world. You can still attempt to the best of your abilities to create a better world.

If you have whatever your sphere of influence may be, see if you can bring in more consciousness into whatever you do, whoever you're in contact with. Be a bringer of consciousness. You bring consciousness into an unconscious world.

Without creating some mental conceptual image, I am the bringer consciousness, then you're lost in ego again. But be prepared for increasing challenges in the collective. Do not be drawn into reactivity and do not be hypnotized by these events when you watch what's happening in the media and so on.

Stay present. What you're watching is an evolutionary story. Humanity is displaying, probably entering a regressive period, as they sometimes happen before there's a further awakening of consciousness.

Perhaps, I'm not for sure, but there's a good chance we're entering a regressive period, which is perfectly fine. What you're watching is the evolutionary growth of the human species. So they are manifesting whatever behavior corresponds to the particular stage in the evolution of humanity.

The evolution is towards more consciousness. That's for sure. So don't lose yourself.

Be present while you watch. Don't watch too much. Just watch enough to know what's going on.

But don't be hypnotized by the media so you can't stop watching. Very important is don't be drawn into the unconsciousness, for example, by regarding certain groups of people as enemies of your dehumanizing certain groups of people by calling them this, attaching certain labels to certain people. The dehumanization, of course, racism is one example of dehumanization.

When you attach mental labels to a whole group of people and you egoically identify with these mental labels, so you're imposing collective identities on you, other humans, and you completely, it's a deep form of unconsciousness. So there are many ways of you can even demonizing other groups of humans in the collective, very dangerous things, but it's unlikely that this will happen to you, but it could if you're not careful, if you're not alert. So be present and see it for what it is.

Don't be part of it, but do not necessarily refrain from taking conscious action wherever you can. Even conscious action if you engage in social media, be careful that you're not drawn into anything reactive from social media. You don't attack other people on social media that was very unconscious.

You can present a viewpoint, you can present an opinion, an alternative viewpoint, whatever it is, but stay conscious in all your interactions. So the greatest challenge is in an age when there is a growth of temporary increase in unconsciousness on a collective level, your challenge is to stay conscious as a human being who is conscious while this happens. And I therefore recommend on a very practical level, next time you watch the news, while you watch the news is beware of yourself, your presence, your awareness while you watch, so that you don't lose touch with the deeper level of who you are and see that, yes, it is a distorted view of reality, but yes, these things are happening, but nevertheless, it's not the totality of what's happening.

And it no longer has the power to draw you in, to make you unconscious. It has a gravitational pull. The media, social media too, has a gravitational pull, and you're not careful, you go.

And you notice when you watch it, and you're not aware, your mind stops. You're not thinking, your mind gets completely taken over by what you're watching, all the words. While you're watching, you're not thinking your own thoughts very rarely, and you're just, so your mind gets completely taken over.

It's quite dangerous. So, but this cannot happen if you're aware. How do you, how are you aware?

Well, one way that I recommend is, if you find it difficult, be aware of the inner energy field of your body, the inner body, as I call it, incorporate that into your sense of presence. So every, you're present with every cell of the body, and then you can watch. And then you realize that which is beyond all the unconsciousness.

And it's in you. It's also in every one person that they don't know it. It's in every human, but so you, you can remain peaceful, even while the world is chaotic.

That's a challenge. I'm not saying it's not a challenge. But you, this can be a huge, and the world needs that, of course.

It needs that, especially in periods of chaos. It needs a certain number of humans who remain essentially at peace. They remain peaceful.

They don't contribute to the chaos of the world. So let's see, we're moving into very interesting times. And there's nothing to fear.

If you're because ultimately what people are afraid of is death. And death, of course, is assured to the physical body will dissolve. But find death before death finds you.

And then there's nothing to fear. How do you find death before death finds you? Well, by dying to the mind created egoic sense of self.

That is a conceptual identity. And by dying to that, you realize your essential identity, which is pure consciousness. And that essential identity, Jesus called it eternal life.

And in Buddhism, eternal, of course, means timeless, eternal life. In Buddhism, it's sometimes called Amaravati, which means the deathless realm, which the dimension of the deathless, the dimension where there's no death. That's a wonderful description.

Let's see, transcendent dimension. It's your mission in this world is to awaken to that. And then you no longer fear things in this world.

In 90 years from now, or let's say 100 years from now, everybody who is alive on this planet will be gone. And it's short lived. The life of the human is short lived.

But the being, the being is the timeless dimension of who you are. It's who you are, beyond form. And then you can watch the news, not being fearful.

And then even if some huge disaster were approaching, it wouldn't matter that much because you know that everything that we perceive here is one could say the surface of reality. All the things you perceive with our senses is a surface dimension. And underlying that there is something deeper.

It's like the surface of the ocean and the ocean. Don't just live on the surface of the ocean as a little ripple. But realize you're not only a ripple, because the ripple is going to die soon.

But more essentially, you are the ocean. But the ocean would not have realized its own essential identity if it hadn't first lost itself in the ripple identity. And this is why the Buddhists say, if there were no illusion, there would be no enlightenment.

So even that is all part of the evolutionary process, which is so vast, we cannot possibly understand it through the mind.

[Speaker 2] (2:35:19 - 2:35:35)

And now, Conscious Evolution, session four, the power and promise of the present age.

[Speaker 1] (2:35:48 - 3:29:24)

Sometimes you may want to manifest specifically, not in order to achieve something that will eventually bring you to some kind of ultimate fulfillment, because it won't, if you have missed the depth dimension, the being. But because that's part of being here in this world, because the universe delights in manifesting and creating forms. So you might as well participate.

In fact, you're meant to participate in it, the process of creation. The reality that you manifest is different when you know yourself as a being, primarily. And then you can accept what you are, who you are as a human, and you accept other humans, humanness, humanness, which is always imperfect and limited.

But your humanness is no longer a huge troublemaker when you are connected with a depth dimension of who you are, the being that you are, the awareness. There are certain situations where action is not possible, at least not right now. And those situations require complete surrender.

But many other situations can be changed by taking action. So bypassing is to avoid taking action, for whatever reason the mind comes up with. And that is the external bypassing.

But even more importantly than that, internal bypassing is not to acknowledge the emotions that you feel, to deny the emotions that you feel. That emotional pain, for example, not to look at emotional pain. So when you deny...

Now, spiritual people and religious people have been doing it for a very long time. The internal bypassing is to deny the reality of what you're feeling. Traditionally, if you're a religious person, let's say maybe you're a Christian and you've been taught that a Christian is a good person, then you may deny certain destructive emotions, extreme anger within yourself.

You cannot admit to yourself that you are angry because it would conflict with the mental image that you have of who you are. Most people live through a mental image of who they are. And if there's an emotion, certain emotions that conflict with the mental image, the emotions are denied.

So that's internal bypassing. And you continue to be a highly spiritual person who does not have these painful emotions. But of course, they will come out and they will force you to...

You will be taken over by them periodically. That's how a person in the past, but Christians often who are unconscious, have this image and then they were very cruel to their spouses or their children and could not admit that the cruelty came from their anger, never acknowledged. So the trauma that happens in many humans, both on a personal level and on a collective level, and the trauma can be of a personal kind and let something very bad happens to you, your pain is inflicted on you by other humans, often in childhood, but also later almost.

And that leaves behind emotional pain. So you live with emotional pain. This can be collective also.

It could be the emotional pain of... It could be... There could be a racial foundation to the emotional pain.

In other words, the collective of an entire race could, in the collective energy field, they could have the accumulation of pain that goes back centuries sometimes. And so this I call, as you probably know, I call the pain body, which has a personal aspect, but things you experience in your personal life that leaves that pain, but also a collective aspect. Some have already transcended it.

You can transcend it, but it's not fooling yourself and bypassing and saying you have transcended when you haven't. So that is... It was also there in the entire nations in the world where huge suffering happened on a very large scale, such as Germany and Russia, enormous suffering, and that left behind a collective a remnant of collective pain in the entire energy field.

And virtually every human who lives there has some share in that collective pain body. So then every human has partly a personal pain body and partly a collective pain body. And sometimes one is stronger than the other.

So it's very important to recognize that because both the victim and the perpetrator have a share. This is how the collective pain arises. But how do you deal with it?

You have to deal with it. Every individual has to deal with it within themselves. That's where it is recognized.

To recognize that it's there, to recognize it directly so that... Let's say it is... It could be anger.

It could be things that are related to anger. It could be resentment. It could be any kind of...

It could even be rage. That's fine as long as you recognize it within yourself for what it is, and then you can begin to use it and transmute it into awareness. And that is why humans who have a strong pain body, whether it's personal or collective, actually the strange thing is are more likely to awaken spiritually than those who have a weaker pain body.

If you don't recognize the accumulated suffering within yourself for what it is, then it becomes unconscious. When it's unconscious, it can easily rise up into your mind and create certain thoughts. Then your thinking becomes controlled almost by the pain body, and then your thinking becomes emotionally controlled thinking, and it can no longer be rational.

And you would then... The ego would be there without awareness. The ego is there.

The great danger is to any human who has suffered, who has a strong pain body, the danger is that the... You develop an image, which is a mental creation, of yourself as a victim. And that is a pitfall.

It's a danger to have any, whether it's personal or collective, when you... There's a huge difference between recognizing the pain within yourself and realize... Know what it is.

If it's of a personal kind, you know that it's your... Let's... Your dad, who did that to you and that to you, and your unconscious parents or somebody else did this or that to you, and you recognize that it's there.

If it's collective, you recognize that you not only carry suffering from your personal life, you also carry the suffering of your ancestors. And there it is. If you don't recognize it, the suffering becomes incorporated into a mental image.

Then your identity, which means your sense of self, becomes predominantly that of a victim. And that's very dangerous, because you... When you see yourself as a victim, to not see yourself as a victim is not a denial that something bad happened to you.

It's not transforming something bad that happened to you in the past, transforming it into an identity. That's the trap, because then you completely... You become completely disempowered.

But the... For the ego, the seductive thing is the ego likes it. The stronger...

It is always looking for a strong sense of identity. It's looking for a stronger... It always needs enemies.

It needs the other. And so when you see us, it's very... To the ego, it's a wonderful thing to see itself as a victim.

It gives you a very strong ego identity. And that is the case with anybody who has a pain body. A great danger is that you see yourself as a victim of others.

This is not to deny that you actually... You or your ancestors were a victim of others. But does that become your identity in the present?

The huge difference is to acknowledge that, yes, you or your aunt or ancestors were victims. Yes, an undeniable fact. The danger is, is that becoming your...

The main part of your sense of self. That's where you would go astray. And that's where then you're not really...

All the suffering of your ancestors would be in vain, one could say, because it has not brought you then to a point of consciousness. It has brought you to further unconsciousness. In Eastern times, it's called perpetuating karma.

Because then you're a victim, then you have enemies. And of course, as a victim, you have... The ego always wants to be superior to others.

It seeks superiority. It lives on, it thrives on superiority. Now, a victim has enormous superiority towards others.

It's moral superiority, of course. So there's a lot of that these days in the energy field. And that's the ego is manifesting in that way.

It's highly important for people to be aware of that. And to remember, we are not denying that people were victimized and even are victimized still. On the one hand, that's a fact.

Not denying what you feel in your energy field. But then realize that is what happened, or that is to do with a human. That's how it is.

But not to derive your sense of who you are from it. So highly important to be aware of that, so that you don't perpetuate human unconsciousness. So that you can use the suffering in your own life and the suffering of your ancestors.

And finally, the transmutation needs to happen in you. Bypassing then is avoided by becoming aware of what it is that you're feeling. So that there's an awareness and you allow yourself to feel and recognize it for what it is.

It's accumulated emotional suffering from the past, personal as well as collective. And then as you recognize it, it cannot use your mind anymore. It doesn't become an identity, but it's acknowledged.

But doesn't become an identity. So you become... Now what happens if you acknowledge the pain body within yourself?

It means you are conscious of it. There it is. And a very subtle thing happens when you become conscious of it.

There's this... Suddenly, you are not it anymore. You are the one who is conscious.

You are the awareness for that. You are the space for it. So you've got...

You are this. One could... Let's say here's the accumulated pain and here's the awareness around it.

You're aware of it. And as you continue to be aware of it, whenever it arises, one could say that space around it grows, gets bigger. And that space is the space of awareness or presence.

And that space is inseparable from who you are as a being. What you are observing there is the human part, the conditions, the suffering entity, the human. So you have the being and the human.

And then this, as the... What I sometimes call it the light of consciousness, as the light of consciousness shines on it, it becomes transmuted into more consciousness. So the suffering is like something that you put like a...

I think in The Power of Now, I wrote about it. It's like a log you put into the fire and the fire becomes... Whatever you put into the fire becomes fire.

It consumes it. So the suffering is transmuted into awareness. And that is part of the awakening.

And that's a wonderful process. And all those who have achieved great things to bring mankind, humankind, a little bit further in the evolutionary process, which means awakening, none of these people had a victim identity. You cannot make a useful contribution to this world if you have a victim identity.

In the long term, even it's a regressive step, in the most extreme scenario, it could lead to civil war or whatever. If that were to happen, even that in the long term would lead to an awakening, but it's long and painful. Or the awareness that's arising now could lead to a very positive change when an increasing number of humans transcend the suffering within themselves, not by ignoring it, but by acknowledging it and not transforming it into an identity and then becoming aware of the power that lies within them.

So that's the promise and the possibility of the present age. There's a wonderful quality that is possible for human beings. We could call that empathy.

Empathy. Empathy is to feel what the other is feeling, to tune into another, and to some extent, feel the suffering, the pain of the other. You can even have, you can have empathy with animals too.

You can feel the suffering of an animal. You can feel the suffering of a human. And the ego is not capable of empathy.

So people who are ego-possessed to a high degree feel little or no empathy for other humans because their sense of separateness, separation, is so strong that the other only exists for them as a conceptual entity. They cannot sense the other as human, and they cannot let alone sense the other as the being beyond the human. So when you have empathy, there's some absence of ego.

So that doesn't mean a person with empathy is completely egoless. But even empathy could be used by the ego. Anything can be used by the ego.

Your spiritual practice can be used by the ego. Anything. But there's an opening there.

Compassion is another word that's sometimes used. It's very closely related to empathy. Compassion is a feeling, can lead to action.

But you know that whatever action you take in the face of human suffering is probably limited. So there's compassion, there's empathy. The German word for compassion is quite interesting when you break it up and translate it literally.

The German word for compassion is mitleid, which translated literally is suffering with. To suffer with someone. Mit means with, leid means suffering.

Mitleid means with suffering, to suffer with someone together. That's the German word for compassion. So it's inevitable that that arises as you gradually free yourself from egoic consciousness.

More and more empathy arises. And then you feel that. I feel it for many instances when I just, I was in a country somewhere, saw a beggar sitting in the street, and I felt tears.

Another strange thing I remember, we were in Italy, in a small town, perhaps it was Assisi where we had a retreat. I walked, there was a church, and the bells were ringing very slowly. And then people are coming out of the church carrying a coffin.

So I realized it was a funeral. I don't know who died, somebody died. And I couldn't stop crying for 10 minutes.

I was, it was, I cried because this for me meant the death of every human being. And I, I just was very strange. For 10 minutes I just crying, crying.

And even when I talk about it now, I almost cry. Why, how could you cry? Because that was on the human level.

That's what everybody's every human's destiny is that. And on a human level alone, it's tragic. But as I cried, now this is hard to describe underneath the crying, there was a very, very deep peace underneath it.

One could say almost, perhaps when one talks about it, it's incompatible, almost say, how can, but there was, there was a, there was peace. And on the surface, there was the weeping. I can feel it even now.

Because on a human level, human destiny is tragic. Everybody's tendency to death. It's just amazing.

On a human level alone, each one of us in the not too distant future is going to die. Then that's it. And sometimes before you die, you may have to suffer a bit more physical suffering, maybe.

But now where's the peace? Where does that come from? That you feel in the face of where you even, you feel it even more strongly in the face of death, which when you observe the fact of impermanence, as the Buddha called it, the fact of impermanence of all forms, and don't deny it, but really face it, then by completely looking in the face of impermanence, something, you become aware of something that is beyond impermanence in you.

The Buddhists sometimes call it the deathless. Buddha, Buddhism likes negative terms, it denies something, the end of suffering, the deathless. Jesus didn't use those terms, mostly used more positive terms.

He said, the equivalent of the deathless dimension in Buddhism, Amaravati, is the term that Jesus used, which is eternal life. Jesus spoke about eternal life, the possibility of finding eternal life. Sometimes in bad translations of the Bible, it's translated as everlasting life, that's the wrong translation.

Eternal doesn't mean everlasting, it goes on and on and on. No, eternal means timeless, the timeless dimension of consciousness. One of the greatest meditations, highly recommend, walk around and then experience two things, the sadness of impermanence and the deeper peace underneath it.

And again, that brings us back to where we started, the human and the being, the human and the being. The human is subject to impermanence, the being is the transcendent dimension, the consciousness, the being that is not yours, but it's the essence of it all. And to be aware of both simultaneously is very liberating.

And it's really, it's ultimately, that in itself is a healing sling when you are aware, when you, let's say you're with a human who is dying, that can also be a very deep meditation. If you sit with someone, perhaps a loved one, a father, mother, whoever it may be, and you sit with a dying person, and if you become still and alert without any more denial or anything like that, without needing some kind of explanation in your mind or seeking some kind of explanation for it all, you'll become aware of the two levels, the sadness of it, but as you completely accept that, the impermanence of all forms, you become aware of something underlying, something deeper, that's the consciousness. And that's also the essence of this human who died, the being.

That is eternal life. And you know very well when the moment this person has passed away, only the body remains, and you realize he or she is gone. And the physical body was never who that being was.

The physical body was never it. And so it comes, it brings you to the realization that you also, that you are essentially invisible. But you see, what I see of myself or what I see of you is very little, almost the body.

You see the body. You see the, you can't even see the thoughts. The thoughts already exist already in the realm of the invisible.

You cannot find a thought. You can examine the brain, but you cannot find a thought. We don't even know exactly what a thought is.

I can remember this moment, my grandmother who died when I was 11. But only this moment, where was she all this time? As a thought, as a memory, would a scientist, if he opened up my brain, would he or she have found my grandmother there, the memory of my grandmother?

No. Because thought already is invisible, exists in the realm of the invisible. And thought is only the upper layer of consciousness.

It's the, so thought is a ripple on the surface of the ocean. So if you can sense that you are also invisible, what you, nobody can find you through the senses. You don't exist ultimately in the so-called material realm.

Nobody would find you. They open up your brain. Where are you?

Gone. So the death is something that is a very important portal into awakening, potentially, the fact of impermanence. And it's both, it's tragic, and it's perfectly fine.

Nothing real can be threatened, as the Course in Miracles says at the beginning. Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists.

Herein lies the peace of God. Nothing real can be threatened. So in ultimate terms, the body is not real, it's just a temporary apparition.

Nothing real, nothing unreal exists. Ultimately, it doesn't even exist. We don't need to go into that.

It is like a dream. Herein lies the peace of God. In knowing this, you have this deep peace.

And that's the being, the realization of being. And you can still weep. And you can also take action to remedy, to some extent, as much as possible, the suffering of others, without being consumed by the suffering of others.

Because there are many humans who feel they want to help, and eventually they experience burnout and frustration. That's the danger when you feel like, I must help, help, help. Yes, it's wonderful to help, but are you losing yourself in that?

Or are you able to help without losing connectedness to the source? And then an additional dimension flows into what you do, and that is through help. Then you emanate that, and that also then changes the way in which you act upon the world and help others.

Faith, in the terms that Jesus used, is to be connected with the power within you that is inseparable from the source consciousness. When you have faith, you can tell a mountain, move from here to there, and it will happen. Now, that could be a kind of parable or analogy, or some people might want to take it literally.

He also said, as you know, I've said before, the one statement that encapsulates the entire secret about manifestation. Jesus said, when you ask for something, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. That just encapsulates it.

Believe that you have received it. I've spoken about that at length in other sessions. To believe that you have received it is to feel connected with the essence of being where anything else is.

That's the cream, everything else is the skimmed milk. So, if you have the cream, you can manifest anything in the realm of the skimmed milk. Now, that would mean that you can entirely change, if the statement about the mountain is to be taken literally, then it would be saying that it is possible to completely change external reality, so-called physical reality, simply by the power of your mind.

And I believe that is the destiny of humans. Eventually, humans will be able to simply manifest through the mind. At the moment, to some, you can manifest quite a bit.

Not immediately, you always need a little bit of time, mostly. There's a lot you can do, and even sometimes things that you think might be almost impossible, that is too far, that is possible to manifest. But there are limitations, you're absolutely right, and you need to recognize those limitations so that you are not engaged in completely useless manifestation practice, aiming at something that is not within the realm of possibility.

For example, let's say I suddenly got it into my mind that I'm going to participate in whatever capacity in the Olympic Games, the next Olympic Games, whenever they are going to be, and I'm going to win a gold medal in boxing or whatever, or no matter how powerful my manifestation is, that is not going to happen. So I know that is an impossibility, or let's say I got it into my mind I want to become the world's greatest ballet dancer. Okay, now if I'd been 10 years old, it might have worked, but it's not going to happen, that's for sure, no matter how powerful my manifestation practice is.

So there are, now these things are kind of obvious, that there are physical limitations to what you can do or what your body can do, there may also be mental manifestations. Sometimes people have an image in their mind of what they want to be, but I remember watching years ago, when we still had cable television, American Idol. American Idol is all these people who perform, they want to be chosen as the great, the next American Idol, in all kinds of singing and dancing and so on.

And one is sometimes amazed at the discrepancy between what people thought of themselves, how good they were at singing or dancing, and how bad they actually were when they performed. It's just, the discrepancy was just incredible. They thought they were the potential greatest singer, but they were just awful, just everybody could see that they can.

Now that could be that they haven't practiced enough, it could be that they haven't, that they forgot that in order to achieve mastery in anything, you have to focus your mind and you have to enjoy what you're doing for quite some time before power flows into what you do. So they have just a mental projection, I'm going to be a rock star, but then all this, the practice, you have to live it, you have to live the music, you have to live, or you compose the music and you live it every day, and you live, your instrument becomes part of your very being, and you live it, and you enjoy it, and then you go into the subway and you play there for a year or two, and then you go somewhere else a little bar and you play there, that's how many great stars have started, and then you live, and there was this book, I can't remember the title, he found it and he looked at various great musicians and dancers which achieved great things, he calculated that they had 10,000 hours of practice before mastery was achieved and something was able to flow through them that was made them great, with the Beatles for example, he examined how many, for how many years the Beatles performed in little, in just little bars and in

Liverpool and in Hamburg, they were performing in little beer cellars and tiny bars, and he calculated and he came to the average figure of 10,000 hours, 10,000 hours of practice, and that's, so very often the people don't achieve the heaven, the goal may not be totally unrealistic, it may be within the realm of possibility, but what they miss is the intervening the journey towards the goal, and they don't enjoy the journey, and they don't want to, the energy is not there to practice every day, to do every day, so that the power of increases and flows through them. Now many, quite a few of those people, they never manifest, they never consciously manifested something, the Beatles I'm sure, it just was a gradual evolutionary process for them before they, what they created was very deeply inspiring, I mean the songs are relatively simple, but they have an essence, there's something there that makes them, that they'll still be around in two or three hundred years time, there's something there that suddenly came, and that wasn't there initially, so are you able to enjoy the doing, if the present moment really comes back to the present moment, do you enjoy the journey towards it, I have the, let's all, let's say you want to become a, people have an image of what they want to become, but are not able to give it attention in the continuous, in the present moment, so that the journey must be joyful to be empowered, so many things are possible, now even people who seem to have a very bad voice, let's say this person could never sing, that's not necessarily true, if this person continues, it could happen that something will become through, look at somebody like Louis Armstrong, I think, was he a jazz singer, and you would say how could this person ever have a singing career, it's totally impossible, but the strange thing is, although everybody would have said there's no chance for you, just do something else, when he did, eventually something happened, it didn't matter anymore that this wasn't normally regarded as a good singing voice, there was an essence that came through him, that used the voice and touched everybody, so that was incredible, if this person had asked anybody, I want to be a singer, and says okay, of course what you can do, please think of something else, so often it is the case, and I don't know, I haven't read his biography, I don't know what his path was, what his journey was, but it's amazing that somebody who has such a bad singing voice can create such wonderful songs, quite amazing, so there are incredible possibilities that the mind would exclude by saying prematurely, so many things are possible, but some things are not possible, often involving, as the examples I gave for myself, well I think to get a medal in the Olympic games, there may be one or two disciplines that I could still be good at, who knows, one could be that's a Canadian, favorite Canadian discipline called curling, where you push that thing on the ice, it doesn't require too much physical strength, so there might be a chance for me participating in the Canadian team of curling, but I doubt it, and that's a little aside, yes, knowing what is possible, but without limiting yourself, as in the example of Louis Armstrong, what he would have done if he had listened to others, and said, we probably told him your voice is no good, if he had listened to others, and he didn't fortunately, and when I was writing The Power of Now, people sometimes asked me what do you do, and I said I'm writing a book, spiritual book, and they said what about, I said it's about present moment, living in the present moment, and several times people said, oh forget about it, it's been done so many times, this is something that's already been overdone, you should think of something else, this possibly present moment is old hat, just don't do it, there's no point, you're wasting your time, somebody actually told me literally, he had read many spiritual books, and said if you are writing another book about the present moment, you're wasting your time, and I was writing The Power of Now, I didn't listen to him, I knew I wasn't voicing it, I loved the process, it was an empowerment that happened, it didn't matter to me very much, whether the book would be successful or not, which was very much secondary, I knew the book had to be read, if I had not written it, I would have become ill, and I would have died, that's how strong the energy flow was, if I had not responded to it, I would have died, or become seriously ill, so don't necessarily listen to others, but yes it is true, on the one hand there are things that are not possible, for example physical flying, right now it's not yet possible, at least not in this dimension, you can probably fly in the astral dimension, you can, and when you dream, you might travel to the astral dimension, and experience as I sometimes do, that you actually lift off, and you can, there you go, but in this dimension I would not step off my balcony, and jump off, or start practicing flying, I don't recommend it, certain things are impossible, and you need to just use your discrimination, and look at it, without limiting yourself unduly, because many things that other people might tell you are impossible, are actually within the realm of possibility, and even certain things that your mind will tell you are impossible, may be within the realm of possibility, focus on your destination, but enjoy the doing in the present moment, and then whether or not you even arrive at your destination, becomes secondary, because there's such deep enjoyment in the present moment, the arriving at your destination, which means achieving your goal, is a relatively short-lived phenomenon, let's say your goal is, I want to live in a nice big house, and then you've somehow, it, you're able to manifest it, and in the meantime, you presumably engage in a certain activity, that enables you to have that, and then you sit in the big house, and very quickly you will experience the state of unsatisfactoriness again, very quickly, any destination you arrive at, is already the end, and this many people have become famous actors, and others, I've spoken to quite a few, and most of them have said, a little while after they became famous, after the initial euphoric high that they were on, subsided, they became very unhappy, or they would have, before they thought, when I'm famous, and I'll be happy, because everybody will love me, and everybody will acknowledge how great I am, I'll be happy, I can do anything or anywhere, I'll be happy, yeah, the euphoria was there initially, and then suddenly there was a huge depression set in, unhappiness set in, and they didn't understand it, so the arriving is very little, unless you break through into the deeper dimension of who you are, but you do that now, the realization of being needs to happen now, then you're not looking to the arriving to free you from a state of unsatisfactoriness, your manifestation will become useless, if you look to the arriving from a state of liberation, from a state of unsatisfactoriness, or insufficiency, or feeling you're not something missing, this feeling that there's something missing, does not derive ultimately from not achieving this or that, it derives from not having accessed the vertical dimension in your life, which is to realize the being, and you're still trapped on the level of the human, the doing, that's where ultimately the feeling of something missing arises, it's because of from the, in the level of being, nothing is missing, you're already complete, the rest is a more, is a secondary thing, you could, it's quite nice to achieve certain things on that level, it's fine, you enjoy it up to a point, you enjoy what you achieve, if you don't look to these achievements for some kind of liberation or fulfillment of who you are, that's true, expecting too much, the world can't give you that, a certain amount of satisfaction can come, not ultimate lasting satisfaction, a certain amount of superficial satisfaction, when you achieve this or that is fine, and then of course it changes, sometimes it leaves you, or you, it evaporates again, so that's, it's a very subtle thing to know, just to summarize your, the answer to your question, yes, on the one hand, there are things that you should not pursue, because they are not, clearly not within the realm of possibility, but on the other hand, quite a few other things you could pursue, because they are possible, even though people may tell you they are not, or your mind may tell you they're not, but whatever it is, don't, do make sure that you enjoy the present moment, the step you're taking at this moment, is really the most important step ever, there's only ever the step you're taking at this moment, if you don't honor that, and give it your fullest attention, then the rest would be very frustrating, to honor this, the step you're taking at this moment, and then perhaps in order to achieve mastery, you need to take 10,000 steps, the 10,000 hours that this man, okay, but you enjoy, you enjoy, while you take this step, you're not counting and saying, okay, or you don't count the hours, if you practice dance or music, or being an artist or a writer, you don't say, okay, this guy said, I need 10,000 hours, so I better start now, and then you count, okay, I've now done 150 hours, how many more to go, you're not present, you're not, you don't, the step you're taking now is, then there's a quality in what you do, when you give it attention and honor it, acknowledge it, there's a quality in the doing, it's hard to define, but there's a quality in how you do what you do, and that empowers it.

[Speaker 2] (3:29:43 - 3:30:50)

This concludes Conscious Evolution, How to Embrace Our Challenges and Opportunities in a New Era for Humanity with Eckhart Tolle. Thank you for listening. For more information about Eckhart's work and teachings, please visit EckhartTolle.com.

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Thank you.

Eckhart Tolle - Breath, Awareness, Politics, Children

[Speaker 1] (1:23 - 1:56:14)

Still here. I've never had so many questions at a retreat. And I'm not here to flatter you.

The best question, of course, is no question. But I have never had as many good questions, so it's difficult. They all are, most of them are good questions, direct, alive, live questions.

I've never thrown away any questions yet. I keep even the silliest question. Might come in useful at some point.

I will dip my hand in the basket in a second. One question that came three or four times. There are a few recurring questions.

Can we sit with you in silence for a while? Yes. You're not dependent on external stillness, of course.

When you're just listening, there's stillness inside you. No commentary. So don't miss the stillness that's actually there even when the words are spoken here, both in you and in the speaker.

There's no thinking in between sentences or words. So whenever a word has been uttered, the stillness is there again. Who is speaking?

Not this person or this little mind. Stillness is speaking. It's not personal.

Not my stillness or your stillness. And as I said before, this person is listening the same as you to the words. This person doesn't know what word is going to be spoken next, as little as you know what word is going to be spoken next.

It's not prepared. To trust in life enough for this to happen. To trust in life means to trust in this moment, the power of this moment, that whatever this moment requires will be there.

There were also two or three questions by people to whom the stillness is yet only a mental concept. And so they ask, it's great to hear about it, but I've never experienced the stopping of my mind. My mind is continuously noisy, compulsive.

It continuously worries and thinks. So what can you tell me, they ask. There are also a few questions on meditation, the use, the purpose, usefulness, or otherwise of meditation.

And I'd like to bring the two together, the two questions. Especially if the mind is incessantly active, even here, as you sit here. If you cannot notice the gaps, if you cannot be attentive to the gaps, now make sure that this is actually the truth.

Because you may actually notice the gaps for a moment. There may be a momentary cessation. But because you're so used to listening to your mind, the mind is saying, no, nothing is going on, I don't get it.

Maybe you do, briefly. However it may be, if your mind has such overpowering momentum, meditation is a wonderful thing. There is a meditation, there are different methods.

One could say, of course, that being in the body is a kind of meditation. Feeling the inner body, directing attention into the inner body is a kind of meditation. The way it's presented here is in a non-formal, formalized way.

I just feel that. And it may be that people whose mind is extremely, extremely active may need a somewhat more formal approach to being in the body. And so there's a beautiful meditation technique, vipassana, that directs your attention slowly and gradually into the body.

So that would be a good thing to take up the practice of that. There are also mantras. If used rightly, they should stop the mind and replace all the various mental activities with just that, the mantra.

And eventually, of course, the mantra needs to come to an end and then the stillness is there. Buddhism has designed for hopeless cases the counting meditation. Ha, ha, ha, ha.

Ha, ha, ha, ha. Ha, ha, ha, ha. Not hopeless, no.

Ha, ha, ha, ha. Where you count mentally from one to ten and ten to one, or maybe you start at a hundred, I don't remember. But you just, you count backwards and forwards and backwards and forwards.

And then that gives your mind something to do. But at least it becomes more focused. And once the chaos of the mind has become a more focused kind of noise, it's easier eventually to drop it Once the chaotic noise has become focused noise, you can more easily drop once the noise has become focused, then you could drop the chaos.

It's hard to drop the chaos except in great suffering. The aim of all meditation, of course, is presence. Eventually, any technique needs to be let go of.

If there's anybody here who feels angry at that statement, it's a good sign that it's time to let go. Because there's a new identification with form. My method that I'm so good at, that I've spent 20 years getting better at.

So Vipassanā is excellent. They claim, and it may well be true, whether they have some sutras to prove it, but who knows how old they are, but it may well be true that Vipassanā is one of the original meditations taught by the Buddha. But it seems that the Buddha also taught another meditation that is breath awareness.

And that can be practiced not just as a meditation, when you sit in a particular way, but to be aware of your breathing is related already to being in the body, because the breath flows into the body. To notice your breath, to feel your in and out breath, is helpful. It does bring you into the now.

When you do it for any length of time, you soon encounter the threshold of boredom, because observing your breath is not interesting. And then if you stay with it, you will pass through the threshold of boredom, and then observing your breath is quite peaceful, the coming and going. And you notice great subtleties about your breath.

You notice, for example, that at the end of each out breath, there's a momentary cessation. In breath hasn't started yet. You're neither breathing in nor out.

And that's a point of great peace, if you can notice that. A very peaceful point. And also at the end of the in breath, there's a momentary cessation.

Before the out breath starts. You can watch that. Nature does it.

They say the whole universe breathes in and out. If that is true, it may well be, because it's as above, so below. They say the entire universe expands.

Maybe it does. And then comes together again into one. And then it happens again.

And the heart does that. And the seasons do that. This season is a kind of out breath.

Fall, autumn. Nature is breathing as it comes to the end of the out breath. And sometimes even when you get warm days in autumn, they are maybe the same temperature almost as summer, it has a different energy quality to it.

It is stiller. It's moving towards cessation. Nature has come to the end of the out breath.

Fall is the out breath. And the end of the out breath is the equivalent of death. And that's why the autumn days can be so peaceful.

Sometimes you can even sense the stillness in the air. Nature is ready to rest. So everywhere you really have the in and out breath.

Each time you breathe out, it's a little death. So you go into that death and realize when you reach the point of death, the end of the out breath, you haven't disappeared. It's the deepest peace there.

So that, now to come to another question. These just happen to be a few that I remember. A few questions on how to bring awareness into the everyday world.

Some people say, when I'm out in nature, it's wonderful. There's stillness. When I'm sitting here in the group, it's wonderful.

Stillness arises. But the moment I go back into the city and my usual activities, it's gone. How to bring it into that?

And of course, when you're in nature, your mind is not being stimulated because you're not surrounded by mind-made things. When you're in the city, everything around you is made by the human mind and there's a collective energy field that is nervous mental activity. That's why cities are so noisy.

The inner noise becomes externalized and then manifests as machines and amplifiers, producing so-called music. Very hard to find a restaurant these days where you're not bombarded with noise. And when you say, would you mind turning it down a little?

I say, what's wrong with you? And then there's your workplace, probably dominated by nervous mental energy, like most workplaces are. Even places that could potentially be places of great peace and healing, they're very nervous.

Hospitals are very nervous. Schools are very nervous. They're getting more and more nervous.

School teacher, one of the most stressful of all jobs. Only 50 years ago, it was one of the most comfortable jobs. It was great.

So bring in little returns to presence into the noise as you go about your activities. How to do that? Just little things.

You can even make a list of three, four, five things that you can do each day, periodically, simply to bring some return to presence. You may put next to your computer a little card that says, can you feel your feet? Can you feel your hands?

Or you may put in the bathroom, if they let you in the office, take two or three conscious breaths. When the phone rings, don't jump to it. Let it ring twice and then answer it.

And during that time, don't be in an inner state of, okay, I'm just holding back before I answer it. But, no, give it, allow it to ring. It wants to ring.

That's what it's doing. So you actually watch or listen to the ringing. You allow it.

It goes, whatever sound it makes these days. And there you are. You look at the phone and you hear the sound.

You've created a spaciousness inside. And that which drove you deeper and deeper into mind and into noise is reversed. Every time it rings, it becomes an instrument for some space, just a little bit of space, to rise inside you.

And nobody would even notice that it took two more rings before you answered it. If there are steps, you can walk up and down the steps consciously instead of making each step a means to an end. In other words, you're already where you want to be mentally.

You're being pulled by the next moment to the next thing. You take the opportunity to take one step at a time. You don't even have to slow down after a while.

You can actually walk fast without being pulled to where you need to get, without being pulled away from this moment. That's extremely enjoyable. It doesn't mean now as you bring presence into everyday life that you necessarily have to slow down.

At first, it may slow you down a little because it's an unusual way of doing things. But after a while, you realize that there's no need to slow down. If actually something needs to be done fast, you suddenly see your hands are moving fast.

You're putting this here, packing your suitcase to get to the airport, you're running late, and yet suddenly there's only each movement and looking what it is that needs to be put in without even noise, because there's only the looking now. There's an opening of a drawer. You see.

There's this right action that comes out of presence. You don't think, OK, what do I need? You can actually look, and it happens.

And then you walk fast, and you enjoy the energy of that. And then you shut it, and then you run down the stairs, still without being pulled, because if you're pulled away from the now into the future, that is the mental projection, so the mind projects itself there and says, I need to be there. And then you're being pulled out of yourself, and it's called stress.

And so you know when, but they also speak of stress in metal, which stress means there's one pull this way and one pull that way, and eventually it breaks. There's too much stress in metal. So humans live in continuous stress in this mad world, and stress is a form of fear.

I need to be there. So you bring in, first into little things, presence. There's the phone.

You could have a flower next to your computer screen. There's a flower. I always make sure there's a flower there, and something natural, because everything else, if you're in an office, is mind made.

There's a flower there, and periodically you look at it, truly look, just half a minute, a minute. The mind will tell you that you cannot spare 30 seconds to look at the flower.

You just don't have the time.

This cannot be true. Everybody has 30 seconds occasionally. If you can enter the body easily, feel that in your place of work, a great opportunity if you can do that.

It's the most wonderful transformation. Whenever somebody speaks to you on the phone or in person, while you listen to that person, feel the aliveness in the inner body. And now, what is speaking to you is the human mind.

It will try to get you entangled in what it's saying. But now you are rooted here. You listen from there.

And can you function in that way? Yes. Can you still reply intelligently, or are you just going to make unintelligible sounds?

No, you may be surprised that intelligible words come out of your mouth if you need to reply. They may be more intelligent than you would have said otherwise. Any time there's a meeting, dreadful things, meetings, committee meetings, conference tables, everybody has their agenda, everybody has their power positions, everybody's fighting everybody else, or two temporarily get together to fight those other two and all that madness.

Around the table, if there's only one human being who is in the body, it's often enough to change the entire energy field of the meeting. Even if it isn't, even if it doesn't do that, it gives you a degree of peace while you sit there. You will probably speak less, but when you speak, it is more likely that people will listen, because at last, somebody is saying something new and meaningful.

It does not come from ego. So in that sense, healing is taking place through you, through not the personal you, but through this form, healing is happening. So you're not doing it just for yourself, because if one person becomes transformed in that way and brings in a different vibration, vibrational energy field, then things will change around them, if they are capable of change.

Some structures are so heavy, old mind-made human structures, certain organizations. Some may be too heavy, they will just have to crumble eventually, and they will, sooner or later, probably sooner. Many other structures are still capable of change, because there are humans in there.

They're basically all mind structures. If you need to escape from the office, go to the bathroom, shut yourself in there, and sit there for two minutes, not complaining about the mad world, but perhaps being aware of your breathing. And this is another little one that you can introduce anywhere, being aware, watching the breath as you go up and down the elevator.

Wonderful. Who says that you cannot watch your breath when you're in the elevator, if that is at your workplace? And you yourself will come up with little things on how to introduce spaces into that which seems to make it impossible to have space, those surroundings.

And yet it's not impossible. I will dip my hand in the basket now. Ah, take a few.

There was a big one here. Maybe it works. Another big one got blown away by the wind.

Sometimes it doesn't. When I let go of my story, I feel less alive. What is the value of going to a place where I feel less alive?

It is true. Better than to be dead is to have a dramatic story. Better than not feel any aliveness is to have some drama, something interesting going on in your life.

And so you see often in relationships, the partners feel if they are not going through their periodic drama, they don't have a relationship anymore. It feels the aliveness is going out of it. But the story is a secondary kind of aliveness.

The drama that people get involved in, yes, it's a way of feeling some life in the absence of feeling something much deeper and more genuine. But you have to step out of the story temporarily to find that. And a good starting place is going into the body.

Not just for a minute, but make it into a daily practice for a while. And go deeply within and sense the enormous amount of vibrant life that is already there in the body. Bring attention to your sense perceptions and notice the enormous power of your conscious attention.

So it's a question of leaving your habitual world where you felt at home and entering something new. And at first the new you may not recognize. It happens also when people first encounter some stillness and it's such a strange place.

That they feel they want to run back to the mental noise and they say, well, I encountered some stillness but it felt completely empty and I don't see why I should go there. I compare these people to someone who just spent four hours in a noisy discotheque and then steps out and the heavy doors close behind and you're out in the countryside with only very subtle noises of the night going on and a breeze. But at first you step out, you hear nothing.

It will feel dreadful, that silence, because you're so used to that noise. So you might even in fear run back into the discotheque. At least that's familiar.

You have to stay for a while with the stillness because the power of that is more subtle, it's more powerful but also much more, it has a different density to it than the density of the mind, a different frequency. So you become attuned to that frequency. So you stay in the emptiness for a while and then realize the emptiness is also fullness.

Now, the desire to step out of your story only comes really when the story becomes too unpleasant to want to dwell in it. So it may be that some people have to wait a little bit longer until their story turns into something that they don't want to be in anymore. And eventually that will happen.

There is greater aliveness, true aliveness, outside of the story. What determines the intensity of a person's wish to be in the present moment? What one could perceive as the wish to be in the present moment is the arising of presence in you.

In that sense, there's nothing you can do about it. When the wish appears, presence is already arising. It's not separate from it.

But can you make it arise? No. So what determines whether or not presence is arising in you?

We could say grace, evolution, how much you've suffered. Maybe they're all the same. In any case, it is not something that you can want to happen, and you wouldn't.

You wouldn't even want to be present if presence were not arising. You wouldn't even ask the question how to be more present. So it is arising.

The wish to be present is the arising of presence. It's ultimately not personal. And yet, from a personal perspective, where language comes from and where we have to speak from a lot of the time, we can say that you can help the arising of presence being receptive to it.

But it's all really something that the universe is doing through you. When you think you are doing it, and it's great to believe that I can choose to be present. I can choose not to answer this phone and let it ring twice.

That's what it looks like. But how is it possible for you to even do that if there were not enough presence? You couldn't know what you want to do.

You would say, what is the point in waiting? I mean, it's ringing, answer it! And maybe that's what your boss will say when he sees what you're answering.

Ultimately, it's not you, because you are not separate from the totality of the universe. It just seems that way. But it's good to feel that you can choose.

Ultimately, the universe is choosing to be present through you. Nobody else can choose. Well, there's an interesting question.

Maybe it's connected with this. You've given us many portals to the stillness within, but I find that in day-to-day life my mind is in 100% control and does not want to be free of itself. How do we become aware when we don't want to?

When you don't want to, you don't want to. But there is something hidden in the question, which to me signifies that something in you does want to. Otherwise you would neither be sitting here nor be asking that question.

You'd be watching TV somewhere. I get discouraged when I think, well, Eckhart didn't awaken through the practice of presence. He awakened through a sudden act of grace that completely erased his mind's habit of resisting the present moment, and so did many other teachers I know of.

Presence was the result of your awakening, but it wasn't the method. Are you sure ordinary people can dissolve their ego through the practice of presence when that's not how you did it? Are you sure ordinary people can dissolve their ego through the practice of presence when that's not how you did it?

I worry that I'm trying to break down the boulder of my ego with a pocket knife when what I really need is a stick of dynamite. Sometimes it happens with a pocket knife, but this isn't a pocket knife. This here is a sword.

Now it may well be that even the sword is not enough, and it may be that you need a stick of dynamite in the form of some disaster, and if you need it, you'll get it. If you truly need it, life will provide. Life provides what you need, and then you will see the grace that is hidden there when it comes.

And another part of the question implied, is it something we can do or is it something that just happens to us? The doing and the happening are really one. When you think you're doing, it's also happening to you.

But it's good to feel that you're doing it. That's meant to be part of the happening. The mind can't figure that out because the mindset is either this or that.

The mind likes to separate. That's how the mind works. It cuts it into two.

It's this or that. How can it be both? But it is.

Something else that this touches on? A sudden liberation from being possessed by the mind or a gradual becoming free through, perhaps, some applied spiritual practice. What is true that ultimately spiritual practice or technique, let us say as such, I don't know of anybody who has become liberated by a technique.

But they may have become liberated when they dropped the technique. The technique may have had its place as a ladder that they then dropped or as a raft. Buddha uses the analogy of a raft crossing the river.

You use it to cross the river. When you've reached the other side, you do not continue to carry it around with you, the raft. It remains my raft.

Not all teachers, not to all of them did it come all at once. Many, yes. For example, many of you know the teachings of Nisargadatta who wrote one of the greatest spiritual books.

Well, he didn't write it. He spoke it. I Am That.

And he was at a stall in Bombay selling handmade cigarettes. One would have thought this is not very good karma. You're making other people ill.

And he smoked quite heavily apparently. And he just visited a guru, a teacher who said, well, just remember that you are consciousness. Just be aware of the I Am in whatever you do.

Feel yourself as consciousness. Oh, okay. And then he went off back to his daily business and he applied.

Can we call that a technique? It's too simple to be called a technique. All he remembered is, I am consciousness.

And he felt attempted to feel the I, the deeper I that underlies all experiences, awareness itself. And a few years later, it had emerged fully. It didn't come all at once, but it didn't take very long.

And then suddenly he started speaking wisdom. A cigarette seller, almost illiterate, suddenly people would come and ask him questions and intensely alive and wise answers came out of his mouth. Something had come through the form and so the cigarette seller became Nisargadatta Maharaj.

In India they like giving people names. Maharaj means the great king, spiritually, of course. So this is one teacher to whom it came not suddenly, although it didn't take very long, but after a few years it became a continuous living presence.

His presence was continuous in him. Now as it is becoming a more widespread phenomenon and this is happening, many people experience at first as a lessening of suffering, a considerable lessening of suffering in their lives. They can breathe.

There's some space. There may still be drama occasionally but there's space also. To many people it is coming gradually and to others it is coming in an accelerated form.

In this culture these days it often happens through an illness, AIDS, cancer and I know quite a few to whom it came in that way and I could see and I told them you are on an accelerated course what otherwise probably would have taken much, much longer is happening now through your illness that is forcing you into presence. And others don't need an illness. It's happening.

I cannot tell you whether you are better off with an illness or without it. If you choose presence and this is only a limited perspective it's not the ultimate truth then it's less likely that you'll need to be hit over the head in order to crack the remaining shell. If you die to the past every moment and return to just the freshness of this don't carry personal past the past in relationships, the past that you have with people yesterday they said that or whatever meet a person as if for the first time look at them and be there as a presence not as a heavy personal past be the attention be the attention that is looking at them because that's what you are be the consciousness that flows through your eyes as you look at them and listen to them you are that the beautiful expression in the Course in Miracles that is used for the present moment it's the holy instant to realize the only place that is sacred in life is this moment if you only pay attention to it you notice the sacredness of whatever form it takes even if it looks horrible at first because what looks horrible at first will be some kind of death, some kind of breaking down and there also is sacredness we already pointed to that particularly there how can I get over or release the outrage I among others feel about the political situation in the United States Bush and his policies which led to the invasion of Iraq the dismantlement of the US social services and civil liberties should I really let go, release this outrage outrage I assume is a kind of anger there are many places where you can look in this world countries, places institutions, governments and you see varying degrees of human unconsciousness at work wherever you look you see the manifestation of human unconsciousness unconsciousness of course I'm not saying they are totally they are identified with the mind and the old patterns of the mind the collective ego and wherever you look still you see it because the change that is happening in humanity to a large extent is on the inner it only slowly reaches the outer levels where you can actually detect it it takes a while before it reaches an institution before it reaches a politician before it reaches somebody in a position of power but occasionally it already happens Russia had a relatively enlightened human being after having had succession of leaders who seemed you didn't even know whether they were alive or dead when you saw them when they were having their there was actually speculation there was is whoever Brezhnev or whoever the names were is he still alive or did they just put a puppet there and some others speculated that it was an actor acting because they didn't dare say that he had died so they gave an actor the role to play and this may have been true, we don't know and that's one form of unconsciousness and the entire structure of that regime started from an ideal the mind saw something beautiful we must have equality no personal possessions but nothing had changed in the human mind the structures were still in place so we got that instead and then suddenly there was Gorbachev who compared to the previous leaders was a Buddha in consciousness I remember once a remark he made on television when he was still president they asked there was a little scandal about some western spies and eastern spies had been thrown out of the country the usual thing and what about this scandal about the Russian spies and the Russian embassy and he said, well, as the wise man said this too will pass and it did however it is rare for this shift that is happening in human consciousness to reach the outer forms the institutions, the political, the government the institutions whatever it may be the outer forms, business business is the way businesses are run companies in most cases they are dominated still by the old egoic consciousness and I have spoken to some people who work in corporations who say there is so much infighting and useless power struggles going on within the corporation it's a miracle that anything gets done at all and everybody lives in fear and they are not happy so wherever you look in the world you will find still on the surface of things varying degrees of unconsciousness and only occasionally something else comes through already here and there, it does even on television, sometimes you see it you see a conscious being speaking or a film that has a message pointing to conscious awareness or pointing to stillness, it happens maybe it happens more now it's always wonderful, I love it when I see a film that points to the truth and there are quite a few now, not the majority yet of course but there are so many things that you could feel angry about if you personalize human unconsciousness if you make it into an identity then you say, these dreadful bastards look what they are doing human unconsciousness Jesus saw it clearly when he said they know not what they do in other words, they are unconscious and so a country sometimes also can vary a country can be pulled into unconsciousness to some extent by an unconscious leader Germany is a best example of what happened there a country that compared to others on the planet was one of the most highly developed cultures scientifically, literature, culture philosophy, music, and all that to no avail, they dropped right down into unconsciousness but this wouldn't have happened if there had not been a strong, enormous amount of collective pain body still in the country and an enormous amount of collective ego despite the so-called cultural achievements so when you see it as unconsciousness you are less likely to feel angry about it because anger does not really fulfill a very useful purpose it doesn't really change things it contributes more you are being pulled into unconsciousness through anger you become unconscious yourself see it for what it is and then the next step is what can you do, you have to accept that this is so, which does not mean there is nothing you can do once you have accepted that there is still a considerable amount of unconsciousness here on the planet, wherever you see it wherever you feel it's mostly you feel called upon to do something in this or that area it could be the destruction of nature it could be the polluting of oceans and rivers it could be on the political scene American politics, other politics Middle East great focal point of unconsciousness just look at the situation there there is no stop no pause to the fighting between the two and they are both victims of the other and they are both totally convinced that they are victims of the other so when you see it, then you can point out certain things, write, speak to people have a website that says the truth about such and such, so and so and just state the facts as they are this is how it is if you want to, you can stand at a street corner and hold up something, a sign a few people may start talking to you they are more likely to listen if you are not angry, but simply explain look, this is how it is they are more likely to watch your website if it doesn't have the screaming anger about it you are not convincing anybody who has the opposite view to yours who says Bush is the greatest leader that has happened to America in a long time you are not going to convince them with your anger that you are right their own position will become more entrenched and so if you are right then state the facts this is how it is explain if you can see the futility of anger it is more likely to drop away and there is something more powerful then you can speak with passion without anger, but passion about what you feel is true be aware, very careful with identifying with mental positions when you do that identifying with a position that is me or us against be very careful with making wrong others, groups of people or individuals because it draws you back into unconsciousness don't personalize it in that way when doing projects of any sort, large or small I find I must keep my intent fiercely in mind or I end up doing something else by employing this fierce focus am I actually being counterproductive in the long run or in the big picture the focus when you have a project that needs to be done finished now the questioner is saying keeping my intent fiercely in mind now the intent I assume is where you want to get to the finished project the point that you want to arrive at to get it done, so my intent is getting to that point where the project is finished my intent is drawing up a plan a business plan the architect of the building draws up a huge high rise office building or whatever, or maybe a project of any kind that you need to finish there's the intent and that's very much compared to a journey when you're traveling from here to there maybe you're walking let's say the rudimentary form, the early form of journeying of being on a pilgrimage or journeying tourists didn't exist at that time it was unknown people would journey because they had to leave their country or they went on some kind of army expedition or pilgrimage, spiritual journey that was perhaps the most common journey that individuals would undertake pilgrimage you know where you need to go the question is what is it that takes up most of your attention the place that you need to get to or the step you're taking at this moment what's more important now in many cases these days what people are obsessed with is the outcome where they need to get to that causes the stress, I need to get this done finished, over with and I'm on a limited time scale here I can't waste any minute it needs to get done so there's an excessive projection to the finished end product the point in the future that I need to get to and then the doing itself it is done in a hurried way there's the energy ok, come on, what's the next it doesn't matter what you're doing let's say you have to complete something that you manufacture with your hands but this thing has to be ready by tomorrow the world is mad these days you have no time, you have to do it by tomorrow and so you become excessively focused on tomorrow I have to get the finished product or you're thinking that I can sell this when it's finished I can sell it so it's done quickly with the end in mind the end takes over your mind occupies your mind more than the present moment and you reduce the present moment to a means to an end that's how a lot of doing happens these days and all that doing is of low quality any doing that reduces this moment to a means to an end to a future moment is not high quality doing and you can observe that when you observe how a person works whether they are totally attentive give total attention to whatever they are doing at this moment which does not mean that they don't know where they are going to in their project that is peripherally in their field of attention the point they want to get to is peripherally in their field of attention like a traveler who is walking towards Rome let's say and they are taking this step and are fully conscious of each step they are taking but peripherally they know where they are going it's over there, it's a long way away but they know it's over there so the focal point is the quality of your step at this moment because if you are not careful you will stumble you will never get to Rome the quality of each step is what matters and the getting is secondary it is on the periphery, you have the goal in mind also but it does not occupy your mind it does not overpower you and so then the present moment is not a means to an end you give your full attention to this moment I have seen a few, not many and some of them are highly so called effective and successful people who did not become successful through strain and stress some did and they are very unhappy and won't be around for long but I have observed a few whoever they meet, whoever they talk to or whatever is presented to them they are totally there with it if you come to them and ask them a question they may be high up so to speak in social terms, the CEO of this or that corporation and somebody comes to them and there are a few, not many who will give you total attention no matter who you are and that is wonderful everybody loves doing what they tell them to do because they feel so valued because attention is the greatest gift you can give full attention you are acknowledging that human being beyond the roles that they play in the world so they are giving everything their fullest attention and they are extremely effective at what they do others look as if they were effective but everything they do is contaminated with extremely stressful raw energy that is really a form of suffering and they spread unhappiness so it is possible to work effectively in fact more effectively by focusing on what it is at hand here, right now, to do without losing in your peripheral vision the place you need to get to that remains here, there one step, Rome is there but this step is here and this step is more important whenever you see any work of quality that has been made by a human being it means some attention must have gone into it some human attention somewhere there must have been someone who did not reduce the moment in which that was being made to a means to an end so you have works of art that have that quality handicrafts, things made by artisans in the original way, not under stress of having to produce because attention is also loving care another aspect of attention is whatever you give attention to, there is a loving care that flows into the doing so if you give attention to a human being that comes into the now, the field of now and this is so beautiful to give each human being that comes into your field of vision to you with this or that demand or question or whatever it may be give them full and complete attention that doesn't mean you get drawn into their story, you don't give attention necessarily to their mind stream and energize that you simply give attention there is a spaciousness there is the awareness, the current of awareness flows into the, in the same way you look at a tree you hold, and that is beautiful so see how things work in that new way and observe if you can find anybody who is present in doing something, observe them it's wonderful to watch somebody at work in that way and it won't really be perceived as work by them, it's joyful this is one question that has appeared about 10 times in different forms how would you suggest imparting these teachings to children I assume that either you live with children or that you work with children or that you may have the desire perhaps to write a book for children whatever, if you live with children or work with children, then of course primary in imparting the teachings to children is not through words, but through living living the teaching especially applies if you have children at home if you live presence if you embody living presence then they will catch it from you and you don't need to say that much but there may be moments when they are receptive and perhaps a word or two may come out of your mouth pointing to presence because the children live in a culture that knows as yet nothing of presence it is most likely that they go to a school that is dominated by nervous mind energy unless you have chosen already a relatively conscious school for them they do exist here and there but if not, if they are still part of the mainstream culture then in a way you need to counteract that at home otherwise they will be very nervous children because school is making them tense stressed and nervous so most homes lack presence and when you go in there you see in many cases it is a madhouse it is your job to bring in presence and again we come back now to what we just spoke of in the previous question giving your children your fullest attention is the greatest gift many parents these days never listen to their children because it is the next thing already that they need to do and they are busy anyway how was school, ok, ok and what do you have to do now, ok never, when in the listening it doesn't matter so much what the children are telling you what matters is the space that arises as you listen the spacious presence that arises as you listen to the child giving them space to be that's how the teachings are imparted by living it in that way perhaps also certain things if you have very young children where the mind is just starting up in them to see if you can keep them aware that words and concepts are never the reality are not everything particularly at a stage when they demand to be fed with words and concepts when they are at the age where they ask what's this, what's that for, what's that and a hundred times a day they ask what's that, because there quickly the mind is absorbing it needs to do that it seems the mind is absorbing words, it wants to know but the openness also disappears so when you teach new words or show them this is that, what's this there's so much you can say about this leaf to a child, instead of saying it's a leaf, as you say it you put it in the child's hand you encourage the child to look so that the child does not stop looking the moment he or she has learned the word because that's what the mind does, the true looking isn't happening anymore the word takes the place of the reality it becomes immediately a screen and so that to reduce that when you explain as much as you can you may not be able to do it all the time but when you explain something, stay with the reality and perhaps instead of saying it's a leaf, you say we call it a leaf because it's not a leaf this is the illusion that when you attach a word to something you know what it is you have no idea what it is you've just attached a word to it and that's how people live they live in this make-believe world that they know all they have is a collection of labels and so that that doesn't happen to the child as you teach language and words and concepts see if you can keep the child in touch with the reality that is more alive deeper, more mysterious than any concept and here you can teach so much you can teach the child, can you see the colors can you see the shadings here isn't it beautiful can you feel that yes, it's called a leaf, but can you feel it can you see the colors and do you know what's happening to it no, why is it so beautiful, what's happening to it it's dying it's dying, soon it'll be gone and then the child may ask another dying, what's that well, I'm not saying what words will come out of your mouth because you will be present at that moment but then through this little thing where before you said that's a leaf or you might even know what tree it is so you have attached another label to it so you can give labels, the mind needs it but there's far more always remind the child and point out that which is beyond the words and concepts and so that would be wonderful for a child to grow up in that way so that the mind is not totally possessed by words and concepts so it remains, the seeing remains, the hearing remains you hear a bird and then encourage the child to hear more to hear, can you hear encourage, and children will be receptive to that of course there are many things in our culture that are there to stimulate the mind, to draw them out of their body to teach a child to feel the body they are very ready to feel that make it into a little game can you feel the inner body can you feel the aliveness that's there and they can, and they will love it and then if possible reduce the amount of gadgets they play with because they are all work on the level of abstraction computer screens, video game screens TV pulling them out of their body pulling their attention out into some hypnotic trance that gives them a secondary feeling of false aliveness the video game so much so that when they stop playing they don't feel alive anymore I need some other fix now this is what the culture is doing to the children I need another stimulus, another fix otherwise I will feel dead and then they look for the next thing and there's plenty of things switch something on, put headphones on and then you teach the children about the pain body children have them too some more than others so when the child goes into a rage or a screaming fit or maybe the pain body will take a different form the child totally withdraws into a corner and doesn't want to talk anymore the slightest thing might provoke the pain body it's the same with adults and there's then far more pain than you could ever have imagined coming out of that little situation some children become screaming monsters for a few minutes in the middle of it you can't say anything but when it's subsided you can say, what was that? where did that come from?

what did that feel like? does it feel good? and so you can direct attention within when the pain body is not active and then say, do you think it may happen again?

so we will see if it happens again and we can catch it when it starts and next time you can see the child starts, is it back? maybe it has a name the red big monster back? oh, can you feel it?

at that point whether they say they can feel it or not depends to what extent the pain body has already taken possession of their mind if they scream at you when you ask can you feel it? then it's too late to feel it or they throw something and then again afterwards you say, what was that? it was back, wasn't it?

and then you say, did you notice that mommy or daddy also has that? do you remember the other day when mommy screamed at you? or mommy dropped something and started shouting and screaming at daddy threw him out of the house that was the same thing mommy didn't catch it then either and so how wonderful if a child can grow up in a conscious environment, family surroundings that way not necessarily totally enlightened just conscious not necessarily a family with continuous and permanent peace throughout so that is imparting the teaching to children present moment, direct their attention redirect their attention to present moment, again and again to looking, to listening, to touching away from how you reduce the amount they spend addicted to the screens and electronic things you have to somehow do it and replace it with something more vital, more alive and they can feel that it's more vital and more alive pain bodies have an enormous capacity to pull you in even the pain body of a child has that already when it starts screaming it wants a negative reaction from you that's what the pain body always wants give me more pain and so it requires considerable presence to hold the space and many parents are completely flabbergasted when the children, the angel turns into a monster what is going on here and then they react the more unconscious they are, the stronger the more violent their reaction will be their own pain body reacts they know not what they do there are several questions there's just one here and about 6 or 7 others on prayer the use of prayer how to use it, whether to use it at all now that word can mean many different things it can mean going to church and saying please God let me have that job I promise I'll be good if you only let me have that job I practiced that as a child please let there be some peace in my family didn't work so from somebody who went to church every Sunday then at 12 I must have decided that there was no point anymore but there are many different kinds of prayer there are petitionary prayers you would like something they may sometimes work but you never know whether it was a prayer or you would have gotten it anyway there are more effective ways if you really feel that you need or want something but be careful, it won't make you happy but that's another story if you really feel you want something you can use affirmation and visualization and when you get it, enjoy it don't look for yourself in it don't look to it for deep inner fulfillment or some kind of permanently enhanced sense of self or permanent happiness nothing that you achieve can give you that knowing that, you can play around with the world of form and Jesus already explained how to pray for something and that is when he said when you pray for something, feel as if you already had it as if it had already been given so you're not saying, I want something because if you say, I want something it affirms a lack it says on the other side, the unexpressed side I don't have it so when you say, I want it you're also stating that you don't have it so you're praying at the same time not to have it if you affirm and visualize that it is already here and you feel as if you had it that the feeling that you want to get from it you already have that feeling, and that's the truth because you're imagining that it's going to give you feelings of peace or happiness which is always in you already if you just go inside deep enough but I don't want to discourage you from playing around in the world of form so why not try it out visualize that it is already yours you have it and you feel what you feel as you have it thank you for giving me that it's beautiful, whatever it may be the house, you're already in it feels good, thank you it's nice to have that house it's already there it's more likely to manifest in that way and then you move in and you go from there, and you sit there you feel, oh great, I've got it and then the old mind patterns come up in the new house then there are other prayers that are used in different religions and they can be called pointers they are more advanced prayers they are pointers to a particular state it's not that uttering those words produces magically the state what matters when you utter certain words or prayers and most of them are short is really the stillness that comes after that Buddhism, for example, has the metta meditation which is a kind of prayer which starts with I believe may everybody on this planet be well and happy and then after you've uttered those words there's a stillness and then it says may everybody in this country be well and happy metta means loving kindness and then there's a stillness may every being in this city be well and happy stillness may everybody in this house be well and happy may I be well and happy and it takes you into stillness and the being of well and happy is already there in the stillness it's there, it spreads you could become still it would spread anyway even without the words because whatever state of consciousness you are in affects the totality and in turn is the totality manifesting through you we have the beautiful Christian prayer by Saint Francis, I believe let me be an instrument of thy peace where there is hatred let me sow love and so on, where there is injury pardon, and so on and those prayers are openings, they open a door and they always take you into stillness and they are beautiful most prayers operate still on the level of duality even when you say let me be an instrument of thy peace you are still using the language of duality there's me and thy presumably is God there is me and there is God so God is perceived still as something or someone separate from me nevertheless, it's a beautiful prayer and if stillness follows the prayer in the stillness you have transcended duality there is some of you are familiar with the course in miracles many of those lessons are a kind of prayer and most of the lessons in it operate on the level of duality speaking of God as He and addressing God as something or someone outside of you course in miracles meets you where you are on the level of duality but as you reach the end of the course without you noticing it the lessons become more non-dualistic and in the end you end up in stillness and it says the use for words is almost over now towards the end of the course so it meets you where you are and takes you by the hand it only works if you can get hold if Christian terminology is appealing to you to some it is not and then there are many other ways to use something that you don't like the form of which you don't like so most prayers are dualistic and then you can have although the meta prayer in Buddhism is may all beings be well and happy duality is fine, there is no duality really there although you are still saying there are many beings ultimately there is only oneness but what can you do, you are using language and then there are short things that are almost like mantras just single words peace for example the word itself doesn't produce peace but it is a pointer, stillness one of the most beautiful pointers to be found in the Old Testament be still and know that I am God and this is why if we can call that a prayer it is a kind of prayer it is a prayer where duality is transcended and it is a miraculous prayer the words of which it consists are all synonyms for one single thing be still know I am God be being one being sat in Sanskrit being and stillness are one it is the stillness of being itself before it comes into existence as something be still, know in the stillness that is being there is a deep knowing non-conceptual a deep intelligence not words, not thoughts deeper than thought because it is the primordial seed of all intelligence be still, know I am, it is the innermost sense of beingness or I am God, the divine, the source, the one and you put these words together each word signifies also the other they are all one be still, know, I am God miraculous so those are advanced prayers and powerful they put you in touch be still and know that I am God is one of the most powerful and beautiful pointers to the truth and one of those rare ones that uses language without taking you into duality please talk more about the pain body and how to transcend it we already spoke a little bit but there are so many questions about the pain body that we may in tomorrow's session talk a little bit more about it unless something else arises in the now last one perhaps because they are cutting off the satellite dish as someone who has done a lot of yoga and body work for many years I always felt there was some correlation between spirituality and good posture then I saw you what a shock well my first thought was how can somebody with your posture be so blooming spiritually and wouldn't you be even more spiritual if you did some corrective body work my second thought was that I am a blooming idiot can you tell us how you experience the body and if it ever feels like an impediment to you that reminds me of I talked to Gangaji the spiritual teacher a couple of years ago and she was telling me she was doing some kind of body work years ago I can't remember what kind but at that time she heard of Ramana Maharshi and became interested in the teachings and read a book and then she saw a photo of him and she saw that and said a man with such bad posture can possibly have nothing to teach me he will certainly have nothing to teach me if he walks like that and it took her several years to transcend that belief and then she saw that it didn't matter anymore sometimes if the body has gone through a lot of suffering either physical suffering or psychological suffering it leaves traces in the body in the very bones of the body it leaves traces in some cases it's in the face I knew one spiritual teacher I won't say who who said look at my face I always look unhappy even when I'm happy I look unhappy and that is because I've been unhappy I was unhappy for so many years he didn't really, he only looked unhappy if you saw the external features of his face if you looked more deeply you could see he wasn't unhappy but you could see the lines in his face that showed, that were the traces left behind by unhappiness but something else was now shining through it through the form that had been affected by the suffering and that's the same here people are surprised when I tell them it's very rare that I ever feel any pain in the body only two years ago I was at Omega I had a back pain I don't know what that was to do with maybe the events in New York I don't know, but usually there's no pain, the body feels fine and it doesn't seem to be a problem at all and something else shines through it so the body has fulfilled its function of being an opening for that now I'm not saying that in many other cases body work is a wonderful thing to free emotions that may be stuck there even the pain body it's beautiful it's not, ultimately it could happen to anyone at any moment it could happen to somebody who is totally crippled and that has happened too there was a famous enlightened poet a teacher who hundreds of years ago wrote the Indian scripture called the Ashtavakra Gita and he is said to have been a cripple and it didn't matter anymore that was his suffering traces left behind by the suffering and then the body simply became something through which presence shines I'll put these back in the basket I'm sorry, your question hasn't come up yet there are many thank you, thank you stay a little while both here and if you are still there Austin, Hollyhock stay a little while with the empty chair or the empty screen thank you

Eckhart Tolle - From Feeling Upset to Being Peace

[Speaker 1] (0:03 - 3:06)

Now, I've quoted before a line in the Course in Miracles that says you are never upset for the reason you think, or you're supposed to say to yourself, I'm never upset for the reason I think. So when you're upset because you think you know why you're upset because of that, okay. The true reason, because there's no end to reasons why you could be upset in your life, in this world.

So those are not the true reasons, they're just the apparent reasons. I'm never upset for the reason I think, so what is the deeper reason why I'm upset? I've lost touch with who I am.

I've lost touch with the stillness, with the spacious awareness, with the space of no thought. I'm totally trapped in thought. I've lost touch with the space of no thought that is beneath or beyond or underneath, whatever you want to call it, the movement of thought.

There's that spaciousness, the stillness, whatever. In theistic language, you can say God is absent in your life. That's why you're upset.

Not God as a conceptual thing that you believe in, but God as the realization of that which is beyond form, the light of consciousness itself. So when you don't know God as yourself ultimately, the source of who you are, of course you get upset. The slightest thing will upset you.

When you don't know the source of your very being, you're out of touch with it, you don't know it. Just waiting for the next thing to upset me. I'm upset already basically, so I'm just looking for something to explain my upset to you.

So I look around, oh, there it is. Oh, and another one. Oh, what else can I be upset about?

[Speaker 2] (3:08 - 3:18)

Mosquito, the stock market, Goldman Sachs.

[Speaker 1] (3:33 - 12:03)

For those who don't read the papers, Goldman Sachs is a bank on Wall Street. And, of course, not only upset, but also part of that upset is to become reactive to things, because everything is a kind of threat. Why?

You lost God. You lost yourself. And, of course, we all remember the famous phrase from Shakespeare, there's nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so, which just means everything is as it is right now.

You can change it, you can take action, but it is as it is, and it's inevitable, otherwise it wouldn't be now. And so the world or other people or situations lose the power to upset you. Not because you've cut yourself off, or because you control yourself, no.

Because you're connected to something deeper than the surface reality. And then you walk around this world in a more benevolent state, as a peaceful energy field. And that changes the world.

The more peaceful energy fields walk around this world, the more quickly the world changes. The world reflects your state of consciousness. And the world out there, the collective, the political, the financial, the social, reflects the collective consciousness.

What the world needs is peaceful human beings. No, not peaceful in the sense of they're half asleep, not that kind of peace. They're alert, present, peaceful, risen above thinking, can still think, they've transcended thinking, which means you can still think better than before, when you have to, but you've transcended thinking.

You don't look at things and people and the world through thinking. And that is a truly peaceful human being. And then you go into situations where there's conflict, and you bring your peace, which is your state of consciousness.

And healing happens whenever possible. If not, you will be removed from there. So that's your priority in life, is that, that you want peace.

Not by going asleep, not the peace of unconsciousness, not the peace of a peaceful cow grazing on the meadow. That's fine for the cow, but not for you. The cow is beautiful, but that is not where you are going.

A conscious, alive, intelligent peace. So that's what the world needs, to be saved. But don't say, OK, I need to save the world.

No. Peace is your priority, not saving the world. That comes, that follows from that.

And that's what you could call the peace of God, because it's nothing to do with what's happening or not happening outside of you. I'm peaceful because all is going so well in my life. OK, it won't be going well for long, that's not how the world is.

It continuously challenges you. It's the peace of God, the transcendent peace. So that must be your priority, not achieving this or that.

Many achievements come out of that state of deep interconnectedness, but you can't make any external achievement into your main priority. The main thing in your life is that I want the peace of God, as the Course in Miracles puts it. And it says, I want the peace of God.

To say these words is nothing, but to mean these words is everything. Nobody can mean these words and not be healed. www.mooji.org

Eckhart Tolle - Hyperactive mind and Acquiring things

[Speaker 2] (0:06 - 1:08)

Just one comment for the benefit of everybody is that in the Indian custom today is the day of the full moon and on that day consciousness is enlivened the most and a lot of knowledge and energy and bliss comes from the guru so you're our guru today so we want to thank you for sharing that enlivened consciousness with us. So that's one comment and I had one question and that is that in order to maintain the unity and the diversity all the time would it be advisable to cut down activity and make your life a lot more simple with less belongings because according to Nisargadatta one of the things he comments is that you should give up pretty much everything in life and maintain as little as possible and your sole purpose in life should be just enlivenment of your own self and consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (1:09 - 13:00)

Thank you. Of course it's true that many people have many superfluous things they are not only concerned with innumerable things that are ultimately superfluous they also try to accumulate more and more things that are ultimately superfluous but the liberation does not lie in whether or not you have things but it's more important what is your inner relationship to what you have talking for a moment about things that you possess or acquire. Another aspect of your question of course is things that you do, activities that you are engaged in.

We have the two aspects as far as activities are concerned. Many people in our civilization are hyperactive, they are continuously active, they are stressed almost continuously, they are pursuing one thing after another and they never arrive, there is always the next thing to do and the next thing and then they hurry with everything. That's the stress disease of our civilization and that's a form of madness that has to be relinquished because it's an insane way to live.

Now people might say well I'm going to lose my job if I'm not stressed or if I don't do what I'm supposed to do and I cannot do what I'm supposed to do without stress because there's always deadlines, one deadline after another. Another aspect of living in our civilization is that you get continuous deadlines for obscure reasons. Publishers say the book has to be out by such-and-such a date.

Why does it have to be out by such-and-such a date? Can't you wait until the book is mature and complete? No, no, we have all the things, I don't know what the justifications are but they always say it has to be out and you need to hurry.

It's insane and so many things that our civilization produces are rushed, rushed jobs one could say, very rushed, they're not fully matured. Decisions are taken before they even know fully whether the all the facts that involve the decision. On TV executives they put on a show and then they look at the what are the audience numbers and if it's not kind of, no, take it off, take it off.

If they'd given it a chance it might have developed into something great. Or employees, companies not doing well, okay, we have to sack a thousand people, do it now. But no, there's no, no spaciousness at all, there's only rushed decision-making, all insane.

So to bring, not to be part of that is essential, your state of consciousness, you need to, it's not easy living in this world, to say I'm not going to live in this way, I will do what is required of me but I won't be part of the madness. I'll do what I can, I'll do it as well as I can, but I'm not going to live the rest of my life in a state of stress. You just give attention to whatever it is you're doing now and see if you can do it well, not looking to the fruit of the action, do it now.

Reducing unnecessary activities, but more important than that is reducing the unnecessary mind activity, because really that's where the whole thing originates. Because the mind is becoming more and more active, what is being projected is external activity. So a hyperactive mind produces a hyperactive life.

What's the next thought? What's the next thing really? What's the next thought about what I have to do?

And the next thought, so you're rushing after one thought after another, trying to capture this and this and this. So it goes back to the mind. So it needs to be tackled on the inner level primarily rather than the outer.

If you do not come to grips with or bring awareness to your hyperactive mind, there isn't that much you can do on the outer level, because you will continuously be driven by the hyperactive mind into all kinds of activities, many of them quite useless. Even useless, even people who have jobs, they're still doing many things that are quite unnecessary, superfluous, just hyperactive, can't stop doing, have to stop doing, inability to just be. So reducing the hyperactive mind, slowing that down is of the essence, that's the most important part of it.

And then that will then manifest in your active life, so that the hyperactivity will not be there. You will be actually more effective in what you do, but you'll do fewer things, but you'll do them better than countless things half done, because there's not enough time to really do it well. Of course that's all mind, and that's the dilemma our whole civilization is in, that dysfunctional state.

So to take yourself out of the dysfunctional state, so to speak, not physically, but internally, is not easy, it's a challenge, because you're surrounded by a certain state of consciousness, the collective consciousness that you move in. So it's your job to be awake enough so that you don't get drawn into that state of consciousness, which really should be called state of unconsciousness, the collective, so that some sanity comes into this world through you. And so that's the reduction of activity, begins with the reduction of thought in your hyperactive mind, and then automatically then that will flow into reduction of activity.

Now we come to the second part, that's to do with things, or acquiring things, as some people recommend, you should get rid of as many things as possible in your life. Now I'm speaking as somebody who has relatively few things, although I have more things now than I ever had before in my life, and that's strange, because usually it goes the other way, when as you get older you gradually let go, but life has been so strange that now I have more material possessions, although not vast amount, but more than before. I don't feel particularly attached to any one thing, in other words, if it disappeared it would be okay, that's fine.

So it's not, and I believe not everybody, it's not for everybody to let go of things on the physical level, it's not even necessary. You need to examine what your inner relationship to the things that surround you is, whether there is an identification with possessions, or whether you simply appreciate something beautiful that is in your life, without the attachment to it, or it giving you an enhanced sense of self, as it often is the case. And you need to see whether you are, whether there's some kind of acquisitive tendency in you that propels you to buy or acquire more and more and more, or whether you are simply just happy with what is already there, and simply appreciate what's there, or do you compulsively go to the shopping malls every weekend and look for something to buy to fill up this emptiness you feel inside.

And just the action of buying something confirms that you are somebody to the ego. It feels there's nothing wrong with buying, you can buy something beautiful, but not as an addictive thing, as a compulsive thing. So it's finding a right relationship with the external world, not an addictive relationship, but a free relationship.

The appreciation of nice things is not something that is non-spiritual, it's actually spiritual to appreciate nice things. Whether you call the nice things mine, or whether it's not yours, for me sometimes it's enough, well not anymore. When I lived in London, I would sometimes walk around the streets and look in shop windows, in Regent Street or Bond Street, and look at the nice things in the window and say, wow, that's beautiful.

I neither had the money nor the desire to buy these things, but I loved it. Now if I had had the money, I might have bought an occasional thing. It would be nice to have that at home and look at it and feel its presence, perhaps it was made with attention and care.

Why not appreciate beautiful things? The attachment is what keeps you unconscious. So I happen to know your home and I know that you are surrounded by beautiful things, and I also believe that although you are surrounded by beautiful things, you don't have an enormous attachment to those things.

I can sense that there's a certain spaciousness there between you and that. There's a simple appreciation of it, and that is fine. Now if the time comes in your life where you feel from within the urge comes to leave even that behind, although you may not be attached, but at some point in your life it is possible that you may feel, now I want to live in totally simple surroundings.

I just want to not have things anymore at all. If it comes, that's fine, and then you will take action. You might remove yourself or you might give away all the beautiful things that fill up your house and just be in the empty, relatively empty space.

Who knows? If that comes to you at some point, that's fine too, but primarily really is what your inner relationship is to the outer.

Eckhart Tolle - Inner Directions 2003 - Freeing Yourself From Identification with your Mind

[Speaker 2] (0:00 - 0:18)

This is the audio soundtrack from a videotape recording. As the video starts, Eckert's sitting on stage, looking at the audience. And the minute and a half of silence that follows is simply him looking at the audience.

Silence.

[Speaker 1] (1:46 - 1:45:23)

No expectancy, not waiting for anything to happen, being completely present here. We'll be sitting together here for an hour and a half or two hours, simply to allow that state of consciousness that is free of future, free of past, timeless state of simple presence to emerge here within yourself. Because that's why you're here.

You didn't come here to be fed new thoughts, concepts, ideas. Perhaps a few signposts, they are useful. But you didn't come here to collect more signposts, which say Rome or Mecca or Enlightenment, and then carry them home and put them in your library or living room.

Isn't that a beautiful signpost? Or worship the signpost, a concept, an idea, a thought. We're really here.

This is not a normal conference where information is conveyed that you take home. In a way, we're here so that the opposite of that can happen, a relinquishing of concepts and ideas. Ultimately, and that may sound a little bit frightening to the mind, relinquishing thought.

What is stillness other than a state of consciousness? That is free of noise. This is not some distant goal to be achieved in ten years' time or in a future lifetime.

If this state of consciousness were not emerging in you already, you wouldn't be sitting here. But to the mind and the egoic sense of self, which is a mind-identified sense of self, a mental image, me, my story, my past, my future, that may be a little bit frightening. Relinquishing no thought.

Who would I be without thought? Yesterday we saw Katie ask the question, who would you be without this particular thought? It's all about relinquishing attachment to thinking, and ultimately going beyond the compulsive need to think.

And what then arises is presence, a state of clarity, simplicity, of simple beingness, a very deep allowing, allowing this moment to be as it is. That is love, that is compassion, that is a deep care, an embracing of whatever is. In other words, embracing life, saying yes to life.

Where is life? Here, now. Life cannot exist separately from here and now.

So any denial of the now, resistance to the now, running away from the now mentally, always trying to get to the next moment because fulfillment is there somewhere, and you miss this life. And then you reach the age of 85, still looking for something, and you've missed the beloved, the divine that is here every moment. Now this moment, and there's only one moment, appears in different forms.

This moment happens to be beautiful externally, beautiful surroundings, wonderful people. So it's a little bit easier, as we sit here, to enter the state of allowing. There may be moments that appear not good on the surface, not good in little ways or big ways.

You miss a bus or a plane, something little, or something major happens, some breakdown in your life, some loss. What happens then, usually, resistance comes up, not a deep no to what is. That is the reactivity of the little me, the mind made sense of self, the story.

It gets stronger. The deeper the no is to this moment, and when a challenge comes, the no can become very intense, and that, of course, is pain, is suffering. The stronger the no, the deeper the challenge, the stronger the reactive no.

And what I call the little me, which is a mind made image of who I am, based on my past, things that happened to me. Not only that, more importantly, based on an interpretation of those things that happened to me. So the things that happened to me, together with a mental interpretation of those events and people from my past, over the years, an image forms in the head, me, I.

And there's a story, of course, that is an intrinsic part of the image of me. So everybody lives in that work of fiction created by the mind, and the me is the main protagonist in that work of fiction. It may be a big drama, it may be a tragic comedy, a mixture.

So being trapped in a sense of identity that is very small, my past, my story, which needs to be continuously revived mentally. And the little me lives in resistance to what is, because the artificial, the fictitious nature of that entity cannot be sustained except in the state of resistance to now or denial of now. Now, every life story, the little me story, is ultimately unsatisfactory.

It is not satisfying. Anybody who sits here, if you look at the story of me, it didn't quite work out the way it should have. That's not how I imagined my life to be.

It looks as if something had failed, it had gone wrong, something along the way. That shouldn't have happened like that, that wasn't meant to happen. So to discover this element of unsatisfactoriness in the story of me, always.

However, if there is a little me sitting here, there may be one or two who are thinking at this moment, and he may be talking about everybody else, but I'm okay, because I've just found the ideal partner, I've just fallen in love, and the story has now come to a satisfying conclusion. So the little me says, okay, he's wrong about me, but he may be right about everybody else. My story is actually fine if the happy ending is there, or you just got the dream job, or you just won five million dollars in the lottery, and then the little me says, oh, this is it.

If that's the case, we'll meet again here next year. You will have returned by then from the honeymoon. The fiction that there can be a satisfying end to the story of me is upheld, of course, by the media and all those things that you watch on TV and in cinemas.

And the end of most films tells you, yes, there is such a thing as an end, a satisfying end to the little me. So the director cuts after the wedding, or just before the cut here. And now for many others it may be a revelation, the realization that, oh, do you mean to say I'm not the only one whose story is not satisfying?

I thought everybody else was fine, and just me, I wasn't doing well. So to realize my story so far hasn't been all that satisfying as a story, the little me doesn't feel complete. What's looking for something?

What's... And there's pain in the story, suffering, sorrow. But then the little me says, okay, it may not have been a satisfying story up to this point, but you've still got the future.

And the little me says, this is where the satisfying conclusion is going to happen. So this is why when you live from that mindset of the little me story, the future is such an essential, such a vital part of everybody's existence because it's there where the little me says a satisfying conclusion to my story will be reached at some point, I will get there. Whatever the satisfying conclusion of the story is, it depends on what kind of story the little me has fabricated for itself.

It may be material success, it may be finding the ideal partner, it may be reaching a state of enlightenment. One day I'll get there. So the future promises fulfillment.

That's why everybody is running towards it. If you go to a big city, I was in New York a few days ago, and everybody's almost running. Continuously.

Imagine a visitor from another planet coming and looking at that. Where are they running to? And of course, they're running to the future.

They're trying to get away from this moment, because you're hurrying, moving to the future. Everybody is running towards the future, because this isn't good enough. I need to get there.

So it's a frantic attempt of the little me to reach the future. And if you cannot get out of the story of me, but of course here we are getting out, even just by recognizing the nature of the story, by looking at it, we are beginning to step out. Because it can only sustain itself if it remains uncontaminated.

It can only sustain itself, the fiction of the little me, can only sustain itself if it remains an unconscious movement. But when you look at it, that basically means you're now witnessing, you're watching the mind and the structure of the mind. And the recognition of that is already the beginning of the end of the unconsciousness that sustains that movement.

And it has been running like humanity for many, many thousands of years. So just here at the moment we are simply looking at the mechanical unconscious nature of the mind structures. But it's more than that.

By seeing it, the seeing is not part of it. The seeing is part of something that is arising that is not, nothing to do with the conditioned consciousness, the mind. And that's arising here.

So, if you have not stepped out of the story of me at all, the worst thing that could happen to you would be not to have any more future, because then the little me gets into a panic and says, what do I do without, the story will not reach a conclusion. If you take away future, you take away the possibility of a happy ending to my story. And it is the worst thing that could happen for me to tell you, to tell you have no more future or almost no more future.

And the strange thing is, really, this is what's happening here, in a subtle way, not, you know, not going to shock you in any way, but in a very subtle way, gradually, we are removing future. From our consciousness, so the whole, that level of consciousness, gradually, is replaced by something else. We are going into that gradually, so that the little me doesn't go into contraction, and you run out of the room.

The future seeking salvation in the future, seeking completion in the future. That's one aspect of future salvation for the little me. The other part of future is, the little me also knows that the future is very threatening.

It is drawn towards it as an answer to its story, but it knows at the same time that the future is going to kill it. Of course it will, the little me. So a dreadful dilemma arises for the little me.

It's drawn towards future as an answer, as salvation, as fulfillment, and at the same time it's continuously threatened by the future, because anything may happen, I may lose what I already have, which may not be all that satisfying, but at least I have that, and the future may take it away from me. So the two movements that govern, whatever the fictitious entity that humans are trapped in, whatever action it undertakes is governed by two motivating factors, which are to do with future. A deep striving towards future as an answer is the movement of wanting and needing.

That's why they're all running towards it. Traditionally this has been called desire in spiritual teachings. The other movement connected with future is, my God, what's going to happen to me?

What's the future going to do to me? That's called fear. Fear arises.

So humans move between these two in a continuous conflict or dilemma. Desire, which is wanting and needing, and fear, so drawn to future and fearing it at the same time. It's easy to see why humans live in such misery.

And then the whole fiction of me cannot be sustained without being in opposition to something. The me to be sustained needs to be in conflict with something, almost continuously, because its survival depends on not me, it depends on sustaining the illusion that this is a separate entity, this is my boundary, and here are the others and the rest of the world. And that can only be sustained, the illusion of separateness, of an encapsulated sense of self, and basically because of fear that underlies the little me, it's also a state of continuous contraction, both psychological contraction and even physical contraction, the protection of the little me and its encapsulated sense of self.

It needs, so that its illusion of separateness can be sustained, it needs enemies in some form or other. Why is it, if you open a history book, why is it that 90% of human history is a history of insanity? Anybody who opens a history book says, that is mad!

So we need to get to the root of human madness, to go beyond it, not say, oh, they are mad, it's to see, I am mad. To see, I am mad, is actually a very positive thing, because where does that seeing arise? Sanity.

It's only as sanity rises you can see the madness, and we can see the collective madness of humanity as human history. It's unbelievable. Madness, killing, suffering.

So, how does that arise? It arises in each individual, embedded in the very structure of the egoic sense of self, is the need to have enemies. Enemies not necessarily in the form of people, although often that is the case too.

Enemies in the form of situations, conditions, even places. And so what's the very root of that? What is the real arch enemy of the little me?

The present moment. The thing that always is in opposition to trying to get away from our fighting, if you look to the very root of its need for enemies, is to make the present moment into something that you need to oppose. And what is the present moment now?

Life. Because life cannot be in any other place, in any other moment, except now. So the little me lives in opposition to life.

Its enemy is life itself, which is now. If that's not mad, what is? So, it's me against the universe, the little me.

Now, without, there may be temporarily, the little me may have brief moments of relief, never for long because it cannot afford to be in a state of non-opposition to what is for long. It cannot afford to be in a state of peace for long. It cannot afford to be in a state of joy for long.

It cannot afford to be in a state of love for long, because all those things arise only when there is no opposition to what is, but a deep embracing of what is. So the little me fears that embracing of what is. Its very existence depends on not embracing what is.

To recognize that is a wonderful realization. Something within that recognition is there something in there that is nothing to do with the little me. So there are two movements, you may find it even within yourself here, something emerges that is deeper than that entity, egoic fiction, its emerging now.

And there is still the momentum behind the egoic fiction of me also maybe operating. And you can be sure that it doesn't like this. The deep need that is embedded in the very structure of the egoic mind, really a deep need for unhappiness, never made conscious because its survival, the survival of that mind structure depends on unconsciousness.

When you make it conscious, suddenly you see, wow, this is mad. My need to be unhappy, never recognized fully, always it comes in in a hidden concealed way because the reasons for my unhappiness are always out there. This is making me unhappy, that is making me unhappy, the present moment is making me unhappy, what is, is making me unhappy.

Now as long as there is unconsciousness, the causes of unhappiness are out there and there is always the interpretation, if only those things changed or I could change them, I would be okay and then you're engaged in continuing fighting with what is. I'm going to change these things out there to remove the causes of my unhappiness. If your behavior changes, if I can make you to change your behavior, then I can be happy, my unhappiness will go.

That's the illusion and many people reach the end of their incarnation trapped, the majority still, reach the end of their incarnation trapped in that illusion. Observation, if only things were different. Not seeing that unhappiness is embedded in the very structure of the mind, its need, because that is an intrinsic part of its need to fight, to sustain, its separate sense of me.

To see within oneself the need for conflict, the need for enemies and the need for unhappiness. You can see it in relationships, love, harmonious, if you meet a person, the first few days or weeks, sometimes even months, total harmony and then at first something arises that is very different, a completely different energy. The need returns for conflict.

And the longest humans are without conflict is often when they fall in love and that can last a few weeks or if you went to live on a South Pacific island, you may be free of unhappiness for a little while. But you can be sure that the unhappiness which is in here, not there, in the structure of the egoic mind will find a reason for you to be unhappy even there in paradise. There will be something that's not right.

It could be anything, mosquitoes, boredom, when there's, let's say somebody could create for you an environment that has removed all causes for unhappiness, deep unhappiness would still arise out of unbearable boredom, even to the point of suicide because you can sometimes see that with people who are born into great worlds where all their needs or desires are immediately met. And often one should say, oh, I mean they should be blissfully happy, they've got everything. And often deep misery arises, deep dissatisfaction with everything.

So you can't get away from that. But there's a deep reaction, a revulsion to what I'm saying in the little me that says well, he may be right, this may apply to other people, but really I'm unhappy because I have reason to be unhappy. The others may be in delusion, but my misery is real.

And so to see, to look through that is an amazing realization that you carry around within the structure of your mind unhappiness. I'm using that as a generic term, the Buddha used the term suffering, other traditions use the term delusion or illusion, or even sin. Christ is something not right, always sin has been misinterpreted, Jesus uses it.

Dukkha is the Buddha, unsatisfactoriness, suffering, unhappiness. In the seeing of that, it already begins to dissolve. If that level of consciousness out of which the recognition arises is sustained, the structures of human unhappiness, which are the structures of that egoic conditioned mindset, begin to dissolve.

And what then happens, it only happens if your attention moves into the now and sustains itself in the now. And so, in order for that deep conditioning to dissolve, the ego likes to make that into a problem too. It says, OK, oh my God, it must take so long to get rid of that illusion of all that unhappiness that is in my mind.

How long is it going to take to get rid of all that? If it's taken a hundred thousand years for it to arise in humans, unhappiness, suffering is not a personal problem of anybody, there's nothing personal in it, it's the human condition. If it's taken so long, will it take just as long to get out of it, another hundred thousand years?

And the ego says, yes, yes it will. Give me time. That's why there's a strong attraction to cults.

Every cult promises something. You are going to be very special, you are going to reach that, or we as a collective ego identity, that can easily happen, the little me joins with other little me's, and says, us, same illusion, slightly different form, we against the rest of the world. Some countries do that, we against the rest of the world, religions, we, us.

So sometimes the personal me becomes partly a collective me, moving out of that illusion. Now, cults give you time and promise something, and the leader usually says, if you stay with me for long enough, you can become like me, almost, not quite. So and there's an attraction because time is given, there's a spiritual longing, which is the longing to be free of all that, and the ego comes back and uses that very longing and makes more time, it needs more time.

So the illusion that a spiritual seeker can easily get trapped in, and not only in the cults, is that I need more time to become free of all that. And the amazing realization is, not only do you not need more time, time is the very illusion on which the existence of that mindset, the continuing existence and the survival of that depends. And so in a very subtle way it will always try to get in there and, please, more time.

You don't need another hundred thousand years to get out of the illusion that has taken a hundred thousand or a million years to build up. A beautiful line in the Course in Miracles says, it has taken time to misguide you so completely, but it takes no time at all to be who you are. To be who you are means who you are in your essence underneath the mind structures, the conditioned mind structures.

And the only access you have to that is through the little doorway of now. And it's only here, it's only through the power that is inherent in the present moment that all those mind structures dissolve. The power of the present moment is the power of life itself.

Your very being. And they dissolve here and now. What arises in the now is presence, allowing this moment to be.

Let's say truly that is, here we have the key. Since the survival of those mind structures depends on enemies and fighting the present moment, which is the root of its need for enemies, when you allow this moment to be, the whole illusion collapses. Now, sometimes people ask, can I make this happen?

Can I make this shift, this revolutionary, radical, this radical transformation of consciousness that you point to, that you talk about, that all the ancient teachings point to, in their essence, talk about, point to, can you make that happen? Sometimes people ask that question and say, you sound as if we could make it happen. Well, no, you can't really make it happen.

That's why I say, when you do not allow this moment to be, then you're trying to make something happen in the future. When you're allowing this moment to be, you're not trying anything. You're not trying to make anything happen.

It's the opposite of needing to make something happen. Allow, and the little knee says, this is a place of weakness, don't go there, because you will have no defenses anymore. You won't even know what's going on anymore if you don't continuously judge and label what's happening at this moment.

If you don't continuously interpret what is happening, so you know what's going on, he's like this, what does he want from me, how can I get something from him? Even looking at incredible beauty, the immediate need to say something, to relate it to something that you want, there's a flower, the need to pick it, now it's mine. To immediately, to relate to everything immediately through mental noise, instead of allowing it, because in the allowing, a stillness immediately arises, and there's no need to interpret.

Allowing implies you give up the need to interpret the world continuously through the mind. And the ego says, no, no, I will become totally ignorant at the mercy of everything and everybody. And the ego says, I will be stuck in this dreadful present moment for the rest of my life.

I will be stuck in whatever situation I'm in now, that situation that's making me so miserably unhappy, I will be stuck in it for the rest of my life if I allow it. I can't allow it. That's why I've been fighting it for 20 years, to get out of it.

Are you out of it? No, not yet, but I will. So the allowing really is something, when we talk about it, say allowing this moment to be, your ability to allow this moment to be is grace.

It arises. Not everybody in California, even California, has come here, so the message perhaps would not yet be meaningful to everybody, but to be able to sit here without running out of the room or falling asleep, which can be different defenses against the truth, or feeling what nonsense is he talking about? Or to be sitting here without that, or even if it arises, the need to run out of the room, to simply stay with it and watch that and see how it arises and how it subsides and then be back here.

That means through grace, whatever, something is already arising from within you that is not the egoic me. It's not part of the madness. It's arising.

That's why you are able to allow this moment to be. And whatever arises in the moment, yes, yes, it's good. This is relatively easy right now, although may not be easy for everybody even here, because you carry around still to some extent the burden of me.

So there's two things. There is the power of this moment here and the energy field here. Occasionally it may become obscured by a return movement of the me entity as a wave like a cloud.

Sun appears and then a big heavy cloud moves in again. And that happens when you sit here, you lose presence and begin to think about your problems. Which are never now, which exist in future, or the heaviness of past and the two together.

My problems. Let me remember what my problems are. Oh, yes, yes.

Waking up in the morning, open your eyes. For some people there can be a moment of when the noisy mind hasn't started yet. There's a simple presence.

And you look around after opening your eyes. Not everybody. Some people wake up immediately burdened by the heaviness of the little me.

Others have a moment of freedom. And then after a minute the mind starts... And you remember your problems.

Oh, this and that and that and that. Oh, my God. And immediately the heaviness descends.

The state of contraction returns. And then you turn around in bed. I can't face another day.

And that's the human condition. And we are moving beyond the human condition. No flower has ever said that, I can't face another day.

Because it also awakens when the sun rises. It has not yet removed itself out of the totality, its interconnectedness with all that is. It hasn't removed itself out of that and claimed a separate existence for itself, me.

And this flower isn't even saying, I want the sun. Why did they put me here? It's open to this and it's...

Because it's not denying what is, it's not resisting what is. It is open to something here that's even better than the sun. And it loves it.

But if it said, no, no, I want the sun, it would be closed to this. This. This moment being fully alive to the power of this moment.

And I often say to be fully alive to the power of this. Feel this moment with every cell of your body. Be here with every cell of the body.

Every cell is alive and you sense a subtle... Otherwise you're stuck in the head, trying to work out what I'm saying and there's nothing to work out. Being alive.

Feeling the very aliveness that you are. The entire energy field is present, every cell is present. You don't need to make an effort, it is present.

And you sense that you are everywhere, you are not just here, you are throughout. So keeping, be here completely, not as a head attached to a body. Be here totally.

Otherwise you can't allow, the head is not enough to allow this moment to be. The entire being allows this moment to be. The head is not enough to be present.

Be present with the entire being. Identification. Sometimes people ask, doesn't it mean that you become identified with the body if you feel the body?

No, it's a way of going beyond identification with the physical form of the body. To feel the very essence that gives life to the physical form is not the physical form. To feel it, and then the Advaita person may say, but aren't you saying that I should identify with an object that arises in consciousness as the feeling of the body?

And isn't that, isn't the truth that knowing that I am the very awareness underlying it all. But the body is that. It's a temporary appearance of the consciousness that underlies everything.

It temporarily appears as the body. It's not the body. In a way you could say it's an illusion, the body is an illusion.

But within the illusion there is something that is not an illusion. Otherwise even an illusion needs a little bit of reality. Otherwise it wouldn't be.

So to sense the aliveness, the presence in the body, this is just a temporary way of putting it, and feel the aliveness throughout. And then suddenly there's a field of aliveness, not only within but also without, that has nothing to do anymore with your story. There's a field of aliveness within at first, but suddenly also the surrounding world has an aliveness to it.

Not that you need anything. It's beautiful, but it's all form. It's temporary.

But that presence or beingness is beyond form. So you know that which is beyond form as yourself, which is a field of still presence, intense aliveness, still presence. And forms appear in that, and that's beautiful.

The body appears, and it's fine. Thoughts appear, that's fine too, because you're no longer trapped in the thoughts. You are that which makes every thought possible.

So the key is that stillness that is so alive, that is now. So when we talk about the present moment, the now, what does that mean? The mind says it doesn't mean anything.

The mind says there's no such thing as the now. Can you show me where it is? There's only past and future, and it's something very fleeting here that really has no meaning.

That's what the mind says. But there's, when we say the now, there's a mystery in there, and there's a key in there, what temporarily we call the now, something very strange. This moment, we're here.

Before this moment happened, as an event in time, it already had a shadowy existence in your mind as the anticipation of this moment. It was going to happen. You knew you were going to come here.

And soon it will be over, and it will recede into the past, and it will be a memory. Another present moment will be there, or the same moment filled with the appearance of some other event, phenomenal event. Your whole life, it's strange how when something is gone, it evaporates into nothingness.

Even this, there will come a time when nobody will remember this beautiful moment as an external appearance. These bodies will go, so the memories will go, and then a few photos may survive of this event, live a little bit longer, and then become yellow, and then there may even, some people may have videoed something, but that probably has a limited lifespan too. And so eventually, the external appearance of this moment will have evaporated completely, including the bodies, and yet there's something here that is beyond the external appearance of this moment.

There's something deeper. The very essence of your life, which is like a phantom, your childhood, where is it now? Events of last week, gone, dissolved.

It comes into the now, gone. What remains is the field of now, in which your whole life unfolds as form, the stillness that is underneath whatever happens. Things happen.

The stillness is there, it allows it to happen. To know yourself as that stillness is freedom. Freedom from form.

Freedom from the world. Freedom from self as the little me. And then the world is a beautiful place, it's no longer threatening, it's not threatening, and it's no longer promising.

It loses the qualities of promise, something there is going to give it to me. Nothing, you don't need, it's here now, you don't need to be given anything. Your very essence is life in its fullness now.

I don't want you to believe in that as an idea in your head. The words are only a little signpost. It's only if you are in the now, with every cell of your body, that's how it's initially, I put it, you can realize the truth of this, that life in its fullness, an expression Jesus used, he said, I want you to have the fullness of life.

Life in its fullness, beyond anything happening or not happening, nothing to do with how much time you still have as this firm, nothing to do with any life situation or condition, good or bad, life in its fullness is already here, and that's, I call it sometimes, the power of this moment, which is life. So, you don't need the world anymore then, and you don't fear the world anymore, and you don't need the future anymore, you don't fear the future anymore. It has a peripheral existence, only practical purposes, let's meet tomorrow at four o'clock, okay, that's practical, it works on that level.

Beyond that, future is no longer needed to give you a sense of its promise of some kind of deeper identity or fulfillment. It's an illusion, it never comes. How can it give you that?

There's only this. So it's going beyond your life situation and the conditions of the me, to a place of greater depth, where you need nothing, need nothing. And then, as a little gift, many things come to you on the phenomenal external level, life suddenly becomes so friendly, whereas before it was an enemy to be fighting, life suddenly becomes friendly, even the phenomenal existence has suddenly a friendly face.

Why? How can it change from being, from life being, what Churchill called, when he talked about human history, Churchill said about history is one damn thing after another. And for many people, that's how they perceive their existence, one damn thing after another.

And that doesn't happen anymore. Life is no longer perceived through, external existence is no longer perceived and created through the me, fictitious mindset of me. So, when you're not fighting life, when you're fighting life, life fights you.

It's a mirror. And when you allow and say yes, life suddenly says yes. Oh, you embrace it, that means life can flow through you freely, consciousness, life, God, just words, can move and even express itself through this form, freely.

And from being a burden on the planet, which is what humanity is right now, you become, and from being a burden to yourself, and a troublemaker to yourself and others, very little me, from being this burden, suddenly there's a blessing that walks on the planet, there's a lightness to it, no longer the heaviness of the person. And that's... Love is now present.

The person talks about love, but of course, it's all fiction. As Katie said yesterday, little personalities don't love, they want something. So the whole wanting the deep energy, the craving and wanting and needing in the future, goes.

And things you had, the little me said, I need that for my happiness. Often, they just come when you don't need them anymore. They may not, it doesn't matter.

But the strange thing is, many things simply come, icing on the cake. The cake is what matters. And you have the cake, or you are the cake.

Seek only the kingdom of heaven. Seeking is a temporary phase, you're not seeking anymore. Be who you are.

That's the kingdom of heaven which is within here, now. All the other things that you thought you needed will be added onto you. It doesn't matter anymore.

Seek. Seeking. To the end of seeking.

Seeking implies future. Seeking, even seeking to understand more. I need to understand more about spirituality.

I need to understand more about Buddhism. I need to understand more about Advaita, what are they really talking about. You don't need to understand more.

You've understood enough for you to have come here. What else is there? Then, that's the edge.

You've reached the edge of understanding mentally, working out. Any further, it's just the mind trying to get back, OK, I need some more knowledge. I can't quite work out what stillness is.

If you explain a bit more, perhaps I can get there. Is your concept of stillness the same as the Buddha's concept? You could do a PhD.

Stillness in Spirit, the Wild Religions. 400 pages. And then you become the world expert on stillness.

And perhaps, if it's all, if it's all mind, the world expert on honey who has never tasted honey. It's quite possible. You could be the world expert on honey without ever, because it's all concepts.

So, we are tasting, not just tasting, the honey. We are the honey. So, a state of consciousness arises in which thinking plays very much a secondary role.

It's becoming occasionally, this or that, your sense of who you are, of being. It's nothing to do anymore with any thought in your head about who you are. Story.

So, your history is fine. It's just things that happened to this form. You don't need to say, I'm trying to forget my history.

Burn your photo albums. No need. It's just no identification.

That's just so-and-so. My ex-husband, my ex-wife. Photo.

So, no longer seeking the self, seeking to strengthen itself through identification with your history. That was my ex, what he did to me, I'll never forget. Let me tell you about it.

That means seeking a stronger sense of self through the history. Then the history becomes the story and becomes the me. So, it's the self-seeking in your past goes.

It's just past, no problem in it whatsoever. Self-seeking in future goes. And future is only practical relevance to your life.

I'm booking a flight for next month. That's how future works, it's fine. No self-seeking in it.

I'm booking this flight which will take me to such and such a place and when I get there, there, I will find the answer, the fulfillment. So, all that self-seeking goes to strengthen the sense of self artificially. And that means just you are yourself already.

And as you always were, now. And maybe the mind goes, well, who am I then? Step beyond the edge of understanding.

Allow this moment to be. Be the stillness. You are not condemned from now on to permanent inactivity or passivity in stillness.

At first it's good as it arises. Let it arise in an environment that is conducive to stillness. Although sometimes it arises in people by itself or accidentally in an environment that looks totally non-conducive to stillness.

That's the other way, that's the way through suffering, as it happened to me. The stillness suddenly arose out of dreadful mental noise and resistance. And here, this is another way, not through suffering.

Suffering has played its part because it's taken you here and it's been good. And this is a voluntary embracing of that. Not to be pushed and kicked into the kingdom of heaven.

Life would do that to you anyway eventually, so there's no need. But it takes time. This saves time, removes time.

And as it removes time, it also removes suffering. So you can get to the end of suffering through time and further suffering until there's a self-destruction of the egoic entity when it has created so much misery for itself that it continues to exist. It cannot exist anymore and it self-destructs.

Or you've had enough suffering to come here. And the eternal message of all spiritual teachings is you don't need to suffer anymore. And the greater your suffering has been, or if you're sitting here and feel you've come here with a burden of suffering, perhaps physical, some dreadful situation, or not knowing how much more time you have as this form, not quite knowing, nobody knows.

Let's just go into it very deep. Yes. And the worse your suffering up to this point, the deeper your yes will have to be and the greater the opportunity.

It can happen that the yes uttered once can be so deep that the no never returns. One deep yes to life. The end of all no.

And that is your opportunity. You may be ready. It could be through the very fact that perhaps the form may not remain in existence for that long.

Maybe it will. There may be an element of uncertainty and that now deepens. You can go very deeply into the yes and into the now and into presence so that past and future falls away almost completely except a few practical matters.

And you walk on this straight path of now. I sometimes describe it as a tightrope of now. And that is the flowering of human consciousness.

If you walk the tightrope of now and on a tightrope, to walk a tightrope you have to be very present, totally present. Every step, there's no little me, you can't remember your problems on the tightrope, you would fall off immediately. Even fear, you can't fear the next step, you would fall off immediately.

There's only this step. And there's a total presence with every step. And this is the state that is arising and it's only in that utter and complete presence that the little me dissolves and all the problems that cling to the little me in fact make up its very existence, they cannot, they fall away, they cannot survive in intense presence.

Look at any problem in your life, no matter how serious it looks, and see if it can survive when your attention is totally here. And then you become what you have always been, which is consciousness itself, the field of still presence that underlies everything. So the person dissolves.

The heaviness is gone. That's the fulfillment of your human existence. Now, it doesn't matter how much longer this form then exists, a few weeks, 50 years, doesn't make that much difference.

Fulfillment is, this flowering is the realization of who you are. But you couldn't be able to say very much about it through the mind. If somebody asks, who are you?

There may just be a stillness. And now the strange thing is, from the point of view of the mind, it looks as if you knew less about who you are than before. And it's true.

It is a voluntary embracing of the state, and this is also key, a voluntary embracing and saying yes to the state of not knowing anything anymore. That's why it's so frightening to the little ego, an embracing of not knowing, this vast power in that not knowing. Whatever you need to know at any moment, which is always this moment, will arise out of what looks like the state of ignorance to the mind.

Whatever you need to know or anything you need to do to know at any moment, wherever, in relationships, in any situation, arises out of the state of not knowing. So to become comfortable, happy with not knowing. It's a great thing to discover if you work with people as a therapist, counselor, but of course everywhere, not to think, how can I help this person?

People sometimes come to me, sometimes with a story, sometimes a difficult story, less so these days with stories. How could I possibly help? I could try to work out how I'm going to, I don't know.

I'm happy with not knowing. So allowing this place of not knowing. And now this applies, this consciousness, it applies to your entire existence.

It's fine not to know and then you stay with the not knowing, which is the stillness. And whatever is needed suddenly comes. It may come as words, as an action, simply an emanation of love.

It happens, it's no longer, the totality, life moves through. And then you return to the state of not knowing. It could be a simple thing like going for a walk and watching everything around you in that attentive alertness.

You're not walking there as a little me with its problems. You're walking as a field of awareness that looks at the universe, the phenomenal universe and its beauty, not needing to impose mental noise on anything, interpret, just don't need to know what this tree is called. I mean, you might know it, it's no longer important, it won't interfere with the beauty of that moment.

We're just no longer at the heaviness of a person walking through the street. A field of consciousness, of awareness. And you look at the world and you see, if you had a few thoughts in your head, you would say, this is good, every moment is good.

And God saw his, her, its creation, and I can't remember the exact words, and saw that it was good. You look, that which looks through your eyes at the world is then pure consciousness, the light that emanates from the source. The light that emanates from the one source looks through your eyes, sense perceptions, and loves its creation, because you created it.

You are consciousness, appearing as form, and it's good. So you walk as a blessing on the earth, no longer as a burden. And everything and everybody loves you for that.

Even nature, you will feel nature, trees, flowers, love your presence. It's almost as if their very being moved a little bit towards you, because within the totality where there's no separation between this and that, when you see beauty without mind, it's a self-recognition, consciousness. The flower, which is an expression of consciousness, recognizes its own beauty through you, it's not you.

So even nature finds fulfillment through that. It knows itself through you, what looks like you. And yet, all that is form, the eternal is underneath the forms.

This very moment, what are the ingredients of this moment? The voice, your perception of the voice, the totality of this space, people, flowers, lights, sense perceptions, all things. Okay, that's good.

There's also silence, that's even better. And to acknowledge the silence, listen to it, alert presence, that's the arising of stillness. Silence is helpful, ultimately you don't need it.

Stillness doesn't depend on external silence, but it's good, it's helpful to listen to silence, and it's only the stillness in you that can even be aware of silence. If your mind were very noisy, sitting here, silence would be meaningless, a concept. The moment you listen to silence, a stillness arises.

Through the stillness, you become aware of silence. So it's within and without. And then the realization, it's always within, it may not always be without, but that dimension of consciousness is always there.

And then it may arise at the most unsuspected times, you may find yourself in the middle of a noisy situation at work, little me's fighting, and suddenly silence arises and you're watching without condemnation, without interpretation. Watch. And then perhaps some words arise, you say something very different, anything that arises out of your inner stillness has a very different quality, even if it becomes words, it always has some of that stillness, the place from where it came, it still has a fragrance of that, a freshness and a newness, and perhaps you say something, and it's come out of the stillness.

A completely different dimension of consciousness is coming. Love, basically, beyond what the ego thinks love is. We've been speaking about that which cannot be spoken of for quite a long time.

Life is full of paradox. Basically, we have moved beyond time, more deeply, into the now. It looks, according to the clock, as if we've been sitting here for one and a half or one and three quarter hours, but it wasn't really like that.

One deep moment, timeless, the timeless dimension of consciousness has come in. And that looks like an event in time, but you have to accept certain paradoxes. That's how it is.

Let's acknowledge the silence, without, through the stillness, within. And now meet everything, everybody, through the stillness. Bring the stillness, be it, because you are it.

And that is the dimension of the sacred, that is arising, inseparable from the stillness. Sometimes questions are fine, but I feel at this moment there's no need for that. It would only be the mind trying to figure something out that you already know.

And I know that you already know. And your mind says, no, no, I don't know. Yes, you know.

Eckhart Tolle - Live Meeting - Mainly on Inner Body - - 37min

[Speaker 1] (0:02 - 37:36)

If you notice a little bit of impatience coming in, that's the mind wanting to get away from this moment, that's what the mind does. I know most of you probably practice some form of meditation, and you have your techniques, but I would suggest a meditation that has no technique whatsoever, and that is simply practicing being fully present in this moment, so that the habitual mental movement away from this moment ceases. So there's a deep going into this.

And you then notice that our habitual state of consciousness is the opposite of that. There's always a movement away from this moment to some point in the future that's considered more important than this. If you look at your daily life, it's quite normal.

It's always a striving to get away from this to the next moment. You just got to get this done, and then I just need to get there. It's done on a small scale in daily life, and on a large scale.

One day, on a large scale, when this or that happens, I will be happy. I'll be fulfilled. When I find the right partner, get a better place to live, a better income, free of this or that, I will achieve some kind of state of perfection or fulfillment.

And everybody is striving away and making this moment the most precious thing there is, because there is nothing else ever in your life except the now. The now is life. So you make that into a means to an end.

You reduce the one thing, the only thing that is real in your life, the now, to a means to an end, getting to some future point, and that never arrives. I've never met the future, and I doubt that you have, because it doesn't exist. It's a mental projection.

When it comes, it's the now. If you have not learned to honor the now, to accept it, to be friendly with it, then you continuously miss the one thing that matters. And then you get to the end of your life, and you get a feeling that, what was this all about?

I haven't really lived. I've always been striving away from this. And you may reach the age of 80.

My father said to me, he called me the other day, he said he had the feeling that his life hadn't started yet, at 80. And he's still looking to the future, even now. Although at that age, many people start looking to the past, because they know there isn't that much future left.

But they're still not in the present, still not honoring the now. So one meditation that has no technique whatsoever, is to bring your attention fully into the now. Techniques may be helpful, but there is a drawback with any meditation technique, and that is, it also becomes a means to an end.

So people sit down, and they meditate, and they still have the old mindset, I need to get somewhere in this meditation. There's still a movement, a very subtle, more subtle perhaps than in everyday life, but there's still a subtle movement, wanting to get to some place of perfection. If I meditate, maybe in one or two years, I will find peace, or become enlightened.

So there's still, it's still a means to an end. So the old mindset is still there. And in spiritual life, many people are also striving towards some point of perfection that they want to reach.

So basically, that's still the old mindset of ignoring this moment, going fully into this. And for the rest of this talk, I suggest that you not only listen, have your attention on the words, but also stay connected with the inner energy field of your body, to feel the subtle life that's in every cell of the body. Feel that at the same time as you listen.

There's life, there's an animating presence, the invisible life, that which gives life to the body, you can connect with that, and feel that. What that does is that the mind no longer has this strong momentum, it doesn't pull you out of the now, because you're now taking attention away from thinking, and putting it into the body. And you can then perceive the world without constantly having that screen of mind between you and that which you perceive, the screen of labels and judgments and definitions.

So you can perceive directly, without mental commentary, continuous labeling of the present moment. So I call this, this is the anchor for being present, having your attention in the inner energy field of your body. And there's incredible intelligence in there, in every cell of the body, there's a much vaster intelligence than there is in the mind, and if you had to control the functions of your body, you would die within one or two seconds, because how could the mind coordinate all the functions of the body, of every organ, of every cell?

It's an unbelievable thing. The intelligence that is built into every cell is vast, and it's the same intelligence that runs the universe, the galaxies, there's only one intelligence. And what you perceive as the physical body is ultimately much more than that, but with our sense perceptions we see it as a physical body that is born and dies.

But even that is beautiful. So the intelligence that's in there is so far greater than anything the mind could ever even dream of. And in a thousand years we will still be researching how the body works, and we won't get to the bottom of it.

So vast is the intelligence that's there. So by having some attention in the inner energy field of the body, which is so simple that the mind says, this is too simple, there must be something more complex to practice. It's a way of being, to feel your inner being, and that's the way of connecting with that vast intelligence.

And you no longer need to rely on your limited mind with the acquired accumulated knowledge. And you no longer deal with situations and people out of the conditioning of your mind, the old reactions coming up, the old behavior patterns playing themselves out again and again, and many people are trapped in that because they are living through the conditioned mind, conditioned by the past. And connecting with the inner body is a way of freeing yourself from that mind dominance and freeing yourself from the conditioning of the mind.

Basically it's freeing yourself from the past, and realizing that ultimately your identity does not lie in the past, that you cannot derive a true sense of self from your past. Your true being, your true self, can only be felt by focusing on this present moment. Your being now underneath the mind, underneath all the ripples and waves that are there on the surface of the lake of your being, all the mental ripples, that continuous mental movement, and underneath there is the emotional movement, and underneath that, there is a pool of stillness.

Underneath all that noise, which is the mind, there is a pool of stillness inside you. Now stillness is not just absence of noise. There is a deep aliveness in that stillness.

And everybody carries that pool of stillness inside. But the strange thing is, most people don't know it's there, because it's covered up by continuous mind activity. They never connect with that place, and it's waiting for you, it says, here I am.

You have never really been away from it. So the doorway into that state of connectedness, with that stillness that is ultimately who you are, the stillness out of which everything arises, everything is born out of that stillness, and everything dies back, every form of life comes out of that state of stillness, and then returns into it, and that's what always remains. And it's right there inside you, and that's what all the spiritual teachers have been talking about.

They have pointed to this, the kingdom of heaven is right there, here and now, in you. Not some point in the future, but religious people have always created a future as the kingdom of heaven. One day we will get there.

The Buddhists have done it. One day we will become enlightened. The Christians have done it.

One day we will reach the kingdom of heaven. And Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is here and now. But that was too simple for the human mind to comprehend.

So it creates a future, and so it misinterprets those beautiful teachings, and makes them into something to strive towards in the future. And it's right here. And to lose that connectedness with the stillness, stillness is only one word for it.

There's a sacredness in that stillness. There's a deep sense of aliveness in that stillness. Anything creative, anything fresh and new comes out of that.

Every artist knows before they create, for a moment, they become still. And then whatever arises out of that, it's a new birth. And there are some artists who can't do that.

They try to invent things with their mind, and call that creativeness. And then they come up with absurd things that some of them fill the art galleries these days. That's the mind trying to be creative.

But there's nothing creative in the mind, because it's basically, it's a filing cabinet. It's good at analyzing, dealing with practical things. But there's no creativity in the human mind.

The mind can give form to a creative impulse that comes out of the stillness. But in itself, there's nothing creative in the mind. So every artist, true artist, becomes still, waits.

And then whatever form the art takes, the creative impulse is born out of that. But usually they lose it again when they stop doing their art. They go back into their mind-identified state.

But the secret is that actually your whole life can be like that. You can be connected with that stillness continuously. And the doorway into it is feeling the energy field of the body.

Just connect with that. Because that stillness is also infinite intelligence. Intelligence before it becomes form, before it rises and takes birth as form, as a thought, and then as the whole universe.

So feeling this energy field of the body. And then you can still deal with the world, look around, and there's always in the background then a peace, a silence, no matter what happens. And you can then respond to situations out of that stillness.

So you don't need to prepare beforehand what you're going to do, because it won't be right for this moment. Whatever this moment requires arises out of the state of stillness. So to connect with that, to connect with that continuously in your daily life, I call that bringing in a gap in the mind stream, because usually there's this mind stream that people are identified with.

And because of that continuous noise, the stillness cannot be felt. So to occasionally in your daily life create a gap in the stream of mind, which is simply put your attention into the inner energy field of the body. Just for half a minute.

Feel that. Or as you listen to somebody, listen with your entire being, not just with the head. Feel every cell in your body as you listen.

Your entire being becomes present there. This is the state of presence. Complete presence in the here and now.

You are fully there. If you don't bring... Relationships cannot thrive if you lose the dimension of stillness, which is the dimension of being in a relationship, and the relationship becomes mind-dominated, continuous mind stuff, that continuous nervous interaction.

Then conflicts start. Drama starts. That's why so many relationships break down, because that fundamental dimension of being, of simply being able to allow the other person to be, giving them space, becoming still, acknowledging the being of the other person, through your own being, giving yourself space first, feel your being, and then be with the other person.

Sit opposite each other, just a few minutes every day, look into each other's eyes, and feel your entire energy field. And through that, connect with the being of the other person, because on the deepest being level, we are one. Five minutes a day would change the relationship.

It seems impossible. But the energy is so incredibly powerful of that, it doesn't really matter how long you do it. Just five minutes a day, relate through being and not through the mind.

And then introduce it to your children. Very young children, they have it as their birthright, but they quickly lose it because they watch TV, and play video games, and the parents are totally mind-identified, so they are completely in their head. And children get very restless these days, disoriented, discontent.

Let's have some action. Fill my life with some action. Stimulus.

I need some new stimulus. And when their mom and they have no stimulus, no TV, discontent starts. And that's because their whole life has become mind-dominated.

And the parents are always busy doing this, like, let's get this done. Never an acknowledgement of the beauty of this moment, of the beauty of the child's being. And that's how children grow up in that.

And then we are surprised when they become confused. And children will love it if you introduce them to being, if you show them, let's look at each other for a minute or two. At first they may find it strange, and then they will quickly grow into that.

So it's bringing in the dimension of being, not continuous doing. Doing. Being.

And you don't even need to become inactive if you bring in being. You can still be doing things out of a state of stillness and peace. It can flow into your doing.

While you do your shopping, or wash the dishes, you feel your energy field, and you're not making this moment into a means to an end. You're fully there. Peace flows into what you do.

So it's getting out of that, being trapped in that insane noise machine in the head, that never stops. Being trapped in that, and even worse, believing that this continuous noise in the head is who you are. That's a dreadful reduction.

You're so much faster than that. It's just noise. To be identified with every thought, oh, I'm worried, to be completely identified, your whole sense of self goes into that thought stream.

When you wake up at night in a state of worry, what's going to happen? Your whole sense of self flows into that thought stream. In Buddhist terms, you reincarnate every moment into a new thought stream, which means your sense of self becomes one with that.

That is the deeper meaning of reincarnation. Every moment there's a new thought form that you identify with, and you reincarnate every moment into a new. At the end of reincarnation, the deeper meaning of that, which is what Buddhists are striving towards, is not to be identified with a mental noise, not to have a sense of self being pulled into a mind stream, but to keep it present in your being.

So you can allow some of the noise to be there, but it no longer has the compulsive quality that it has when you completely identify with the mind stream. So yet, you're getting out of mind into being. And that's the greatest miracle of transformation.

Stepping out of that noise machine that you thought was me, that's me. So when you wake up at night in a state of worry or anxiety, know that this is the noise machine in the head projecting yourself to some future point, which never arrives, and in the gap between the now and the future, fear continuously arises. That gap between the projected point and the now, there's the stress and the fear.

Of course, your sense of self is out there, and you are here, so there's a constant reaching out, oh my god, what's going to happen to me? So when you notice that, just put your attention like you can choose to step out of the mind stream, and simply feel the energy field of your body. You've taken the tension away from thinking, and putting it into your body.

And then, what was before a very unpleasant situation, being there in a state of anxiety in the middle of the night, becomes something very beautiful. You feel your own energy field, and that's beautiful, and suddenly there's some stillness. You've reached the stillness then, underneath the noise, the disturbance.

You have dropped down, your sense of self has dropped down to a deeper level, and there's suddenly, the stillness was always there, waiting to be found. And there it is. The most precious thing is the essence of your entire being, and not to know that is the most dreadful condition of loss, of poverty.

No matter whether you have a million or ten million dollars in the bank, you're in poverty when you lose that one vital thing that matters, which is the connectedness with who you are beyond mind. Your being. So, and you are, you can choose to step out of the mind stream, when you've noticed yourself being trapped in the mind stream, and you often know it when you start feeling restless.

Some negative thought patterns come in, some kind of pain or suffering arises in your life. This could be a wonderful thing when that happens. It can be like a little alarm clock saying, hello, you've lost the now.

You've moved away from your being. You're projecting yourself away. I'm not talking about dealing with the practical aspects of future.

You can make appointments to meet somebody next week. You can make lists of what you have to do. What we're talking about is a continuous mental projection away from this moment.

A mental movie that goes out into some imaginary future moment. And then the fear arises and you can use that fear as an alarm clock that tells you wake up, become present. OK, right.

And immediately your attention gets narrowed down to the now. As before, there was the burden of past and future. The heaviness of the person carrying that burden.

Life becomes a problem. All you can see is problems. Your whole identity becomes defined in terms of your problems.

That's normal. And it's mad. Your whole identity becomes defined in terms of problems.

Ultimately, that's what all spiritual teachings say. That's all illusion. Situations, of course, they are challenges that come into life every day and you deal with them in the now.

You take action or you wait. But to get your sense of self invested in those things, then they become the heaviness of problems arises. That's me, the unhappy self, which is a mind-made thing, with my problems, which my problems give me my identity.

That's me. And then you might go to a therapist and sort out that fictitious me that consists of problems. And that still, that whole fictitious me is the mind made based on thought activity.

Past, my past, things that happened to me, the future, maybe one day I'll be okay, or the fear, maybe I will never be okay, I'm not good enough, I have failed in life, my future. All that ultimately has nothing to do with who you are, because who you are you can only find in the immediacy of the now, by taking attention out of the mind stream. And so the whole, the problems suddenly drop away when you take away past and future.

I'm not saying become irresponsible, you do what you have to do, but not carry them unnecessarily, and 80-90% of our thinking is dwelling on problems, not, no solution, it's just a pointless mental movie making, when identified with that, and that drops away, and suddenly what problem could you possibly have at this moment? You can't have a problem, you may have a toothache, or an ache, even if you have an illness, it is, it becomes part of accepting the now. And the strange thing is, people have experienced wonderful healings, by going into the state of total acceptance, which means peace of this moment.

Incredible healings have happened, not by fighting an illness, but by going into the state of acceptance and peace now. So problems, how could I, how could you have a problem if your attention is in the now? If you have to deal with the situation now, you take action.

If there's nothing you can do, that's fine. You surrender to this moment continuously. So the whole, and then you begin to realize that all that problem making is actually a mental fiction that becomes a heaviness of the person, of the me, that ultimately has no reality.

Now there may be a part in you, that unhappy mind may itself, the me, may not like what I'm saying, because it can feel that that is its end. And I've even experienced sometimes people having to leave the room when I say that, even to say ultimately there is no problem in this moment. There cannot be.

And some people, that's too much for some people, they can't stand that, because their identity is challenged. I've invested all my identity for 30 years in problems and now this man is saying that it's not real. And this is a completely new way where you find a truer and deeper sense of self in your being, than the mind-made sense of self that's connected with past and future, moving between these two.

And that's, that is, there's the stillness. There's the deep peace. And even a joy arising out of that.

It's the joy of being. Which doesn't depend on whether you have one dollar in the bank, or ten million dollars in the bank. Or whatever is, whether you regard your life as a success or a failure.

It has nothing to do with that. That remains. That's always there.

It has nothing to do with what is happening or not happening in your life. That is the place where you are free from the world. That's what Jesus meant when he said I have overcome the world.

That is the state where I'm free of external conditions. My inner state, ultimately, is beyond what is happening or not happening out there. I call that, that's my life situation, what's happening and not happening.

Good things, bad things. My life situation unfolds in time. Past, future.

But then there's something much more vital. My life. Life itself.

Now. That's the only place where you can find it. The vibrancy and aliveness of your being at this moment.

The stillness. The infinite creative potential that lies in that stillness. That's life.

Nothing to do with your past or your future at all. That means you don't need the future anymore to give you fulfillment. Fulfillment is now.

Deep fulfillment in the now of your being. The future is still fine. Things will come into your life and you will say, oh, thank you, that's beautiful.

After a while you may have to relinquish them. And you say, ok, it's time to let go of that. That's alright.

I don't need that to make me happy or fulfilled. It's a gift. And then you let go.

You don't need the future for your salvation. Because ultimately everybody's looking to the future for their salvation. Whether they are robbing a bank or doing a meditation technique, they are looking to the future.

Through this money that I'm going to get when I rob the bank, I will find ultimately, eventually that state of really knowing who I am, of fulfillment, of aliveness. And the person is doing a meditation technique, very often just the same. If I do that for a few years, I will get to that point.

It's now. That's the mind. That's the mind stream.

So that is just stepping out of the mind stream, connecting with the energy field in the body, that's the doorway, and there you enter. It's so simple, and the reason why so few people seem to know about it, is because it's too simple. The mind has become such a complex piece of machinery, that the simplicity of the truth of who you are, escapes it.

It cannot grasp that. It only works in complexity. And the mind often, the message, what I'm saying, sometimes the mind says, no, it can't be.

This is too simple. He's not actually even saying anything. This is true.

Then the mind says, living in the now, oh, that's incredibly hard. It's the easiest thing in the world. The other way is the incredibly hard way.

And then, so you live with, suddenly, ease comes into your life. An ease that wasn't there before. Everything flows with ease.

The heaviness of the person with the burden by problem making and past and future isn't there anymore. The being underneath the person emerges. Joyfully.

The being that's beyond name and form, beyond your name or the physical form of your body, that emerges, it's timeless. And the more you connect with that, the more you realize that even death is not ultimately real. Because the timelessness in being can be felt so clearly and strongly that you know from direct knowledge, direct experience that there is no death because there is no time in that.

And that's not for a few mystics, a state for a few mystics to achieve. It's everybody's birthright to be connected with. So as you go away from here, if you only remember one thing, take attention out of the mind stream.

Connect with the energy field of the body. Become friendly with the present moment. Accept whatever arises in the now because it is.

It is. Don't become hostile to the present moment, because it's life. And stepping out of the mind stream, when you accept this moment as it is, you're already stepping out of the mind stream, because mind stream is continuous resistance to this moment.

Just to say, this is fine. OK. You can take action.

You can always take action, but it is. So you're not fighting existence anymore. That's all.

That's the simplicity. That's the spiritual truth that is so simple that it's remained a secret for thousands of years. Thank you very much.

Eckhart Tolle - Living Luminaries 2007 Film by Sean Mulvihill

[Speaker 3] (0:12 - 0:24)

When I had been in my darkest moment, I happened to read The Power of Now. What Eckhart Tolle had to say about happiness had been the impetus to go on this journey. I was in Vancouver to meet him.

[Speaker 2] (0:28 - 0:35)

You were there on a park bench for two years, and you slept on the park bench?

[Speaker 1] (0:36 - 0:43)

Rarely, but I did spend most of the days on park benches in parks, different parks in London.

[Speaker 2] (0:46 - 0:48)

Did you eat three meals a day?

[Speaker 1] (0:48 - 3:23)

No, no. One meal a day if I was lucky. As you sit here, is it possible for you to simply watch what's happening around you without adding any interpretation to it?

To just be present with what is, and you get a taste of what it's like to be on a park bench with nothing further needing to be added to this moment. The sounds, sights, people, sound of the water, the light, just allow it to be as it is. With that comes peace.

You don't get continuously drawn into events and thoughts and emotions and reactions. You are the wider space in which all these things happen. You are the awareness behind it without which none of this would be here.

It would just be atoms and molecules in space. You are the awareness that enables this entire world to be. And so knowing that that is who you truly are, not through a concept, but through the actual realization of stepping back and allowing the phenomenal world to be as it is at this moment.

Allowing this moment to be as it is. That takes you deeper into yourself. And you may notice there's a certain peace in the background that happens.

An alertness is required for this. You need to stay alert to what is, to sense perceptions and the energy behind sense perceptions, which is the consciousness. The alertness is there.

Without the alertness you will drift off into thinking. And then you think about the next, what's going to happen to me tomorrow. There is a place for making plans, but not right here on the park bench.

This isn't the place for thinking about tomorrow because you miss all this beauty and aliveness around you.

[Speaker 5] (3:26 - 3:29)

And then you're cold. You don't even think about it as a cold.

[Speaker 1] (3:30 - 4:57)

No, it just is. The sensation of it. You don't even need to call it cold.

And then that's okay too. It's okay. There's no, the reactivity goes out of life.

Against, always against something, wanting to clutch at something. What about the search for meaning? Now, you notice that just a moment ago you were in that state of alert presence.

And it never takes long for another thought to come in and ask a question. Because thought cannot tolerate the state of presence. So it will always come in and say, yeah, but what about, I don't quite understand yet.

Can you tell me, what does it all mean? So it wants to add something. It wants to control in some way by understanding what this all means.

Now, if you can let go, just for a moment, not for the rest of your life. Just for this moment, let go of the need to understand anything. So that you're truly present in this moment.

So you don't need to do it for the next hour or the next ten minutes. Just right now. Just what is.

But don't forget yourself, because you are the consciousness behind it.

[Speaker 4] (4:58 - 5:03)

You are the space. The presence.

[Speaker 1] (5:24 - 9:28)

Can you feel that your body is alive? Yeah. So stay with that feeling and then perceive.

It's easier to perceive without interpretation when you can feel that your body is alive. You feel the inner aliveness throughout your body. So some attention, some of your attention is there.

The rest is on the outside world. That roots you in the present moment. It anchors you in the present moment.

And if a thought comes into your mind, you can watch that also. Just the same way as you watch a dog walking past. You can watch a thought arising in your mind.

And you don't have to follow it to where it wants to go. You simply watch the thought that arises in your mind and let it go in the same way that the dog walks past you. Or if you choose to, you can follow the thought.

And then you can say, I just thought of another question. You can do that too. But to see the possibility that also in the same way that you observe the outer world, here as you sit on the bench, you can also observe the inner world, the world of thoughts and emotions.

Thoughts want to arise continuously, and that's fine, that's what they do. But there's no need to get drawn into each thought that arises and immediately go with it to where it wants to go. Otherwise you're always following every thought.

Like a dog following the scent. Does it matter which? No, it doesn't matter.

You can experiment. You can experiment with thoughts. You can follow some thoughts and you can watch other thoughts.

You find out for yourself. You can play. You can see that you are bigger than your thoughts.

You don't have to be dominated by your thoughts. Because thoughts create lots of problems too. Unnecessary problems.

And they can obscure the aliveness of life at this moment. There are many people walking around here who are thinking about other things. They're thinking about the next moment.

They're thinking about tomorrow. But this is not the place for that. There is a place for planning and thinking about tomorrow.

But why spoil the beauty of this and the aliveness of this with thinking about the next moment? Is that going to be better than this one? This is it.

It's not going to get that much better. What could be more beautiful than this? Hmm.

It's the awakening of something within you that is deeper than thought. That's really the main thing. And that's already there.

You just didn't know it. Why didn't I know this? It's a deep-seated habit of being totally identified with thinking.

It's the human condition which could be described as lost in thought. Because up to now evolution has been unconscious. It was automatic.

But now evolution is consciously chosen by a species. And that's a revolutionary thing. And you are part of that.

[Speaker 2] (9:37 - 9:40)

I can still make movies. I can still have a girlfriend. Oh, yes.

Even if I'm...

[Speaker 1] (9:40 - 9:55)

Yes, it's beautiful. It's a playground. You play around with the world.

You take action. You relate. But you're not lost in it.

Most humans are lost in it.

[Speaker 2] (9:59 - 10:05)

What about pain? Physical pain or emotional pain of losing someone?

[Speaker 1] (10:05 - 14:33)

Most of the human pain is psychologically created. There's an enormous amount of psychological pain. Suffering, I call that.

When suffering goes and there's a possibility for humans now to live without suffering, that is a possibility, there may still be some physical pain. It may be that you get toothaches or bodily pains from time to time. Suffering is another level that lies on top of the pain.

Suffering implies a story, a little me that is unhappy, a mentally constructed entity, a little me that has an unhappy story that is its identity. And that creates an enormous amount of suffering. Not only do you make yourself suffer, you make people around you suffer.

To be at one with life is to be at one with the present moment because that's the only place where life can be found. You cannot leave the space of now that stays with you whatever you do and wherever you go. Your life has never been not now and will never be not now.

Are you making the present moment into an enemy in some way? Internally? Through thinking about something that's nothing to do with now, I need to figure something out.

Well, first of all, be here fully and then whatever is needed in your life comes. It comes out of the power that dwells in the present moment that most people overlook. There's an enormous power here, which is the power of life itself.

And most people look for something and ignore this. And the power of life itself is inseparable from who you are in the depth of your being. Many times you will forget, but the moment you realize that you forgot, there's the possibility of saying, ah, yes, I lost the present moment.

And there's the possibility of choosing to re-enter the present moment. The first thing that happens when you re-enter the present moment, you become more aware of sense perceptions. There's a greater alertness.

And then you become more aware of the aliveness in your body. You feel the life within. It's like the entire vibrational frequency of your body shifts when you become present.

It's a different state of consciousness. More alert. More alive.

And many times you will lose it. And then you'll remember, ah, that's good enough. Now, they don't believe the mind when it tells you, oh, you can't do it now, you've put too much on your mind, you can't be bothered with the present moment.

Those are just thoughts. There's no need for you to follow those thoughts, just to watch them. They are thoughts that the mind throws up.

You don't need to believe in them because they're not true. When the mind tells you, you can't be present now because you've got too much on your mind, then, okay, you can say, okay, let's see if that's true. Then you feel, there's an aliveness in my hand.

There's an aliveness in my body. There's beauty all around. And you become present again.

Alertness, the alertness returns. And when there is time to think, then you think. Then you sit down and say, okay, let's think.

What plane am I going to catch tomorrow? What time do I have to go to the airport? What do I have to do now?

Pick up the phone, make a phone call. Fine. It's beautiful.

You're not losing yourself in future. It's practical matters. And once you've done the practical matters, you've thought about, you've planned your next week, then you come back to the now.

The inner transformation is not really about finding lots of answers to your questions. But finding a new relationship to thought. Where not every thought seduces you anymore.

And if a beautiful girl runs past and you find yourself following her, you don't have to think, oh, I shouldn't be watching this girl because I'm spiritual now.

[Speaker 5] (14:34 - 14:34)

No.

[Speaker 1] (14:36 - 14:59)

If you can let go, just for a moment, not for the rest of your life, just for this moment, let go of the need to understand anything so that you're truly present in this moment. Just right now. Just what is.

But don't forget yourself because you are the consciousness behind it. You are the space.

[Speaker 4] (15:02 - 15:04)

The presence.

[Speaker 1] (15:44 - 15:59)

Life wants to support you, but first you need to be open to life. So you've probably come here with lots of questions. Let's start off with me asking you just one question and then you can ask yours.

[Speaker 2] (15:59 - 16:00)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (16:01 - 16:03)

May I ask how old you are?

[Speaker 2] (16:04 - 16:05)

Yes. I'm 24.

[Speaker 1] (16:06 - 16:17)

Not that it matters. So 24 means you've already had quite a few life experiences. You've been to school.

You've fallen in love.

[Speaker 2] (16:18 - 16:18)

I think so.

[Speaker 1] (16:18 - 16:20)

Fallen out of love.

[Speaker 2] (16:20 - 16:21)

I think so.

[Speaker 1] (16:21 - 18:10)

And have had all kinds of experiences, perhaps in different places, meeting different people, different circumstances. The body probably has been well most of the time, but you've also experienced maybe one or two illnesses. Now is there in all those things that you have experienced so far, which is a continuously changing flux of things, is there any ingredient in there that was always not the same, that didn't change?

I'd just like to ask you to see if you can find any ingredient in all the things that you have experienced so far that's always been the same. We could start perhaps by asking, could it be the things around you? Obviously not, because the things around you change continuously.

Could it be your thoughts? No, because the thoughts that go through your mind also change continuously. Could it be your feelings or your emotions?

No, as you know, they also change all the time. So what is it, if anything, that hasn't changed, that doesn't change? Is there one ingredient in all your experiences, good or bad, up or down, that's always been there?

[Speaker 2] (18:14 - 18:18)

Well, I think I've been in here, I've been inside.

[Speaker 1] (18:19 - 31:05)

Now when you say, I, what does that mean? What is that I? No, because we've already seen, it can't be your thoughts, because they change all the time.

Your feelings or emotions, they change all the time. Your sense experiences, things that you perceive around you, change all the time. So wherever we look, there's change.

So when you say, I, and point to the I as that which doesn't change, it cannot be what happens to you, it cannot be the thoughts that go through your mind, it cannot be the emotions, the feelings that you experience. So what is the nature of that I? What does that word mean or point to?

It's listening. It's what hears, it's what's behind, what's behind the thoughts, what's behind the sense perceptions, what's behind all the experiences and the feelings and so on. So the question that I'm asking does not really require an abstract answer, but I want you to actually feel or sense inside yourself that which doesn't change, no matter where you go, no matter what you do, or who you're with, or whether the body is well or unwell.

When I ask, you said, it's I, and I've asked, what's the nature of that I? And now you may be stuck for words, but you said one word, and that was listening. Now, when you're truly listening, there is a certain alert spaciousness, because otherwise you're not truly listening.

And so if that had to be expressed through a gesture, it could be, you could raise a finger gently and say, listen. So I say to you, listen. And you listen.

There's a moment of spacious awareness, and there's no thought in it. So when you said listening, you were actually getting very close to the nature of who you truly are underneath all the circumstances of your life. And circumstances includes thoughts and emotions.

If you don't find that, who or what you are underneath all the circumstances, no matter how many questions you ask and how many good answers you get, it won't help you very much, and there will be no end to the questioning, because every answer generates further questions. So we're talking about becoming familiar with a different state of consciousness, not that that has never been there. It's always been there, because it's the I, but it's always been overlooked, because the circumstances, things that happen to you and your thinking and your emotions, have such overwhelming pulling force that they always pull your attention in completely.

And so attention is that which is there when you are truly listening. And in the moment of attention, there's no thinking, but there is an aware presence. So the answer that you gave is absolutely right.

Not everybody would have put it this way, but listening points to who you truly are underneath all the things that continuously change. Now I'd like you to, as we speak, this is not an intellectual discussion, because if this were intellectual, you should have gone to a professor of philosophy or some intellectual at a university. I've been there.

And ultimately you get many answers, but all those answers will always make you end up with more questions, because they don't get you to the core of who you are. So let's start off with that. And what we are pointing to is a sense of I, of beingness, that is deeper than anything that happens in your life.

It's always there, has always been there. And that is closely related to the state of attentive listening, to get in touch with that, to sense it. Underneath it all, there is a timeless presence.

Even in 50 years' time, in 60 years' time, when this body is getting old, and this body, the cells, it won't be the same body. The cells of the body will have been renewed many times. There won't be a single cell materially.

There won't be a single thing that's left in 50 years, even though you may still be alive. There won't be a single thing that's left materially that's here now. Every cell will have been renewed.

And so the body will have grown older, and yet something timeless, deep within, will still be exactly the same as it is now, untouched by time. I. I before it becomes this or that, because the moment you say, I am American, I am this or that, I am a professional, or I am a jobless person, or I am a millionaire, or I am a homeless person, those all form identifications with changing circumstances.

And so people look for something there to provide permanency in their lives. They want to identify with something that they finally can say, there, that's it, I found it. What they really want to say is, I found myself, finally.

So they look for themselves through external possessions, through acquired knowledge, through an accumulation of experiences or sexual encounters. Some people derive their sense of self from that. The more women you can conquer or seduce or have sex with, the more you feel, I'm getting somewhere.

Of course, after a few years you realize it's not getting you anywhere. Not if you are, nothing will get you anywhere, which means to yourself, if you are looking for yourself in any experience. And that's the fallacy of most people.

They look for themselves in changing circumstances. They look for themselves in their thought processes. They identify with their thoughts and opinions and their judgments and this and that.

And it changes. Your opinions may change. You may be a democrat now in 50 years' time when you have become a solid citizen.

You may become a republican. You have a completely different set of opinions. It's just a different set of opinions.

And then you feel like the thoughts have changed, but the underlying I hasn't changed. So can you go through life being in touch with that, being in touch with that in different situations, different circumstances, different places, so that you're not completely lost in the things. I sometimes call it the thingness of life.

One thing after another. There's nothing wrong with that. But if you haven't found yourself yet, you don't know what that I is, then you're looking for the I in things.

And things include your thinking, because every thought is also a formation. It has a certain form, a thought form. It comes and then it goes.

Every emotion, it comes. It's an energy field inside you. It comes, has a certain lifespan, and then it subsides, and then another one comes.

That's all the thingness of life. It's forms that come and go all the time. The only thing that doesn't come and go is I, that which underlies all that.

And that's not an intellectual thing that I'm trying to convince you of, because that would not be helpful. The question is, at this moment, can I sense the presence that I am, that is prior to anything that happens to me or has ever happened or can ever happen? Can I sense that right now?

Yes, you can. Because if you couldn't, you wouldn't have said listening, because listening, you already knew. It came from that deeper place of alert attention that in itself has no content.

The content comes when things happen. But in itself, the I that you are, one could describe it as space. It's not lifeless.

It's full of life. All of life comes out of that. But in itself, it is spacious.

Buddha called it emptiness. And it's completely misunderstood by people because the university professors look at the word emptiness and then say, the Buddha was, Buddhist teachings are life-denying. The total opposite is true, because Jesus called the same space the fullness of life.

Because at the same time, it is life in its fullness to be able to sense that. At first, it's very subtle in the background. But as you become familiar with that dimension, it's always there somewhere, no matter what you do, even when you meet a beautiful girl and you're talking to her.

From there, you can listen to yourself talking, and it's fine. You're not totally lost in your experiences. There's always a sense of aliveness and peace in the background.

And that influences how you live your life. That sense, the I, the timeless I, because on the surface, you have the time-bound I that grows older, it's identified with thinking and emotions and things happen to it and so on. But underneath it is the timeless I.

Now, the word I is probably the most frequently used word in the language. Whenever you listen to people, they say, what's the word they use most frequently when you listen to a conversation? Probably, you'll find it's the word I.

Now, what they refer to is not the timeless, because they haven't found that. They refer to a superficial sense of I, identification with things, with thinking, with emotions. I am angry.

I am American. I am this. I am that.

Identification with something. So that I is the greatest delusion, because there's no substance there, nothing permanent.

[Speaker 2] (31:06 - 31:09)

So if I'm not something, am I nothing?

[Speaker 1] (31:09 - 37:26)

Yes, I would pronounce that differently, though. I would say, you are no thing. Now, there's a difference between no thing and nothing.

Nothing is simply denial. But no thing means there is a presence there, but it has no form. Nothing that you can grasp.

It has no shape and no form and no name. The ancient Chinese call it the Tao, which cannot be named. There's a beautiful, it's 3,000 years old, Chinese book of wisdom, the Tao Te Ching.

I recommend it to everybody. And the first line in it is the Tao that can be named or spoken of is not the true Tao. And so that there is the presence that you sense, a presence that has no form.

In ancient language, Christian, Hebrew, there's the word spirit. But I don't use that word, because it's been used for hundreds of years and misunderstood. So if I used spirit, people would immediately have some image of what it is, some form, or call it the Holy Spirit.

And there's hundreds of years of misconceptions of what spirit is, so we forget about the word spirit. But in its original true meaning, that's what spirit points to. The essence of who you are is formless.

Now, we could use the word consciousness as the essence of who you are. And you can sense it, but you can never grasp it. And you cannot really know it.

You can only know something that is not you, an object, anything that becomes an object of consciousness. I look at this plant, and I know it by looking at it and by having a name for it. I say, I know this plant.

This plant is an object that arises in consciousness. And I look at you. I see a shape and a form, and obviously, what I see, nobody knows whether what you see out there is actually there, because the image that you have in your mind of your surrounding environment is an optical...

The eye is like a camera lens. They send a picture into the brain. The picture is translated into nerve impulses and chemicals that reach the brain, and the brain decodes what I see and then reassembles the picture.

And then suddenly I see you. Nobody knows what's actually out there. But let's just leave it.

Here we have, looking at you, this is an object that arises in consciousness, in the space that I am. Then I look away, and another object arises in the space that I am. Or I listen to something that arises in the space that I am.

A thought comes that arises in the space that I am, the presence that I am. But the presence itself, you can't know it in the way that you know a plant, or you know a person, or you know a sound, or you know a thought, because it would have to reflect back on itself. You cannot make it into an object.

So you cannot make yourself into an object of knowledge. You can only be that presence, but you can't know it because you would externalize it. And this is the mistake that humans have made over thousands of years.

They made themselves into an object. And they talk about me and my story. I'm sure you have one, the story of me.

And so when you make yourself into an object, you live with yourself. Some people love themselves one day, and they hate themselves the next day, and the following day they're not quite sure. And then you have some other, and then you have feeling guilt.

People have relationships with an image that they have in their mind of themselves, me. People talk to themselves in their mind. Well, that wasn't very good, you didn't do a good thing, you shouldn't have done that.

Who is talking to whom? There's a voice in the head that talks to yourself. The mind has split itself in two and is talking to itself.

And out of that continuous talking comes the story of me and identification with that. And the questions that you are going to ask probably have a lot to do with the story of me. To find out more about it.

About my life. Because, after all, that's what everybody is most interested in. You are here because you are the main character in the story of yourself.

And the main character in that story has quite a few things that he feels puzzled about.

And doesn't understand. And wants questions.

And the story, in some ways it's worked and in other ways it hasn't worked. And so the character in the story has come here and wants to know how to make the story work better. Isn't that so?

[Speaker 2] (37:26 - 37:26)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (37:28 - 54:16)

Now, whatever answers anybody can give you of how to make the story work better, there are things you can make the story work better. But all that doesn't really help unless you get to the bottom behind the story. The I behind the story.

Then, if you are in touch with that throughout your life, the story will unfold with much greater ease, because there is a deeper dimension that is there. But if there's only the story, nothing will ever satisfy the main character in that story. You.

If the main character in that story, you, has never known the deeper I, the timeless presence that is the consciousness that you are, the attentive, spacious. Can you feel that your body is alive? Mm-hmm.

Because when you feel the aliveness inside your body, I call it inner body, the usually hyperactive mind slows down. Now, the hyperactive mind is extremely repetitive. You might have noticed that 90, probably 99% of your thoughts, you've had them before, they are repetitive.

So new thoughts are relatively rare when there's only the hyperactive mind. It's just the old, same old things going through your mind again and again. The moment you feel the inner body, in order to be able to feel the aliveness here, some of your attention has to go from the head within, into the body.

So you're removing some attention away from thinking. It doesn't necessarily mean that thinking stops totally, but it subsides, slows down. There may even be little spaces in between one thought and the next thought.

So thinking slows down because part of your attention is in the inner energy field, the aliveness that most people never feel because they're so absorbed in their thoughts, they don't even feel that they are alive anymore. So, thinking subsides, and there are even little spaces in between thoughts, and then it's much more likely that thoughts that come then are new thoughts, sometimes they are insights, they are new ways of looking at things, sudden realizations. They can only come if you are able to calm the mind, but not as something that you feel, I need to calm my mind, but simply by diverting attention away from it, not by making some effort to calm your mind.

All you do is you take attention away from it, and so then there is more spaciousness, not just one thought after another, and then your thinking actually improves, which means it's more alive, more original, it's more powerful, you have better ideas, and the way in which you interact with people is more real, because the real comes not from the accumulated stuff in your mind, that's all the roles that you play, not just you, everybody. Everybody plays their roles, they've been conditioned to play certain roles, you have an image of who you are when you meet a beautiful woman, you play a certain role, you want to have the best possible image, you present the best possible image, and she does the same. You can observe it when two young people are attracted to each other, they meet the first few days and weeks, they look different from the way they usually look, because they present an image that wants to attract the other, and it's unconscious, it's a role that they play, it's only after the honeymoon when everyday life begins, that gradually the image, and you believe that that image that you see in her is who she is, and she believes that you don't know that you're both playing roles, but you cannot keep up the roles indefinitely, so after the honeymoon, gradually, they wear down the roles, and then there comes becomes some discontent arises, and suddenly the mask slips, you can't play any role continuously, the role of me, the attractive one, so that's, to get out of the role-playing that otherwise you're stuck with for the rest of your life, you have a certain role for your partner for a while, you have another role for your work situation, you have another role for wherever you go, you slip into subtle differences in the way in which you behave, when you talk to the chairman of the board or the Dalai Lama, you will behave in a certain way, and then you might notice when you talk to the plumber, there will be subtle differences in the way in which you talk, you play a different role, you think, oh, this is not appropriate here, it's only when you stop playing roles, when you observe the Dalai Lama, how he behaves, now you might have thought, well, the Dalai Lama probably plays the role of the Dalai Lama, but he doesn't, there's such simplicity, openness and genuineness in him, he talks the same way to everybody, whether he meets the plumber or the Pope, makes no difference, because he doesn't play conditioned roles anymore, and that is only possible when you access a dimension within yourself that is deeper than the mind, and we just did it, or we're still doing it, simply by taking attention away from thought and direct it into the aliveness of the body, that means suddenly there's some space between thoughts, and then you can relate to other human beings more genuinely, and you don't need to prepare things that you're going to say next, you don't say things in order to manipulate that person, you don't say things in order to create an effect, they simply, spontaneity comes out of that place, spontaneity doesn't come out of the accumulated stuff in your mind, the spontaneity comes only to the extent that you can access the dimension that is deeper than mind, which we may call the deeper eye, which we may call alert stillness, alert stillness, that is always there, alert spaciousness, access that, so mind subsides, then you live differently, the more you access, now at the moment, these are only glimpses for you, but that's good enough, a glimpse later becomes a wider space, so that is something to remember, not as a memory, but to remember to do in your daily life, as much as possible, wherever you are, whatever you are doing, whoever you are talking to, or even when you are alone, go within sometimes and feel that the body is alive, there is life in my hands, you are not imagining anything, you actually feel that there is an aliveness here, and then once you can feel the hands, you can feel the arms, the feet, the legs, you are inhabiting the body, and the body loves that, it loves your attention, most people don't give their body attention, even if they look after the body extremely, like you go to a gym every day, or you use all kinds of stuff to put on your body, you might think that these people are looking after their body, but all they are looking after is the external of the body, they are not necessarily present within, they cannot feel the aliveness, some maybe they can, but most not, they are only concerned with the external body, here we are concerned with the inner, and it doesn't matter, the inner body has nothing to do with what the external body looks like, whether you are 80 years old or 20 years old, whether you have a young body or an old body, the sensation of the inner body is always the same, it's alive, and the body loves your attention, it's a bit like when you don't give enough attention to a child, after a while the child cries, because it wants to attract your attention, the baby does it, and then you give, because attention is energy, it's enormous energy, now most attention, attention is consciousness, most attention for most people is continuously absorbed by thinking, you can see it when you talk to them, they are not there, they are thinking, they are looking at you, but they are thinking about the next thought they are going to ask, as you sit there, maybe you are thinking about, ok, what's my next question, and that's normal, it's not a personal fault of yours, it's normal to lose yourself, and then you lose, that means you are not really present, when you are thinking about the next thing, so it's normal, you don't have to beat yourself up for that, it's normal, but there is another way to live, and that's the way of to be present, to give attention, not just to your thoughts, to give attention to your body, if you don't give enough attention to a child, of course a child can also become addicted to attention, but that's a different matter, there needs to be a balance, but a child does need attention, it's vital, not an excessive amount, but enough, because attention is energy, and the body loves it as much as a child, it wants to be noticed, it wants your attention, and if it doesn't, it cries, it might become ill, that's the crying of the body, you're neglecting it, you're not, you're not, you're not inhabiting it, you're inhabiting the uppermost loft in your house, you're in a big house, and you live always in the, under the roof, you never go downstairs, there are lots of floors, you have no idea what's going on there, so that's a vital thing, and it is a way of also accessing the space within, that is the eye that has no form, that is the consciousness, that is also intelligence, we think of intelligence as the mind's ability to accumulate knowledge, and to solve problems, that's probably what we consider to be intelligence, but that's an extremely narrow view of what intelligence is, what people can measure in IQ tests, is an extremely narrow view of intelligence, I cannot solve the simplest of IQ tests, so I've never done a total test, but I'm sure my IQ would be extremely low, because that is not how this mind works, solving little puzzles, I've never been able to do that, but intelligence is a much vaster thing than the ability to accumulate information, and then regurgitate it, or analyze it, or cut it into smaller and smaller pieces, what they do at universities, research projects, the pieces are getting smaller and smaller and smaller, the PhD subjects are getting more and more and more specialized, because so many people are working on things, and then you have to put your tiny piece, okay, I take this piece and write my PhD about that, I can cut that up a hundred times, and then once you've written your PhD, somebody else comes and takes a tiny piece out of that, or I can cut this up even further, and that's considered intelligence, but true intelligence, the true intelligence resides in that dimension of alert stillness, if you have access to that, that's where the original intelligence resides, so anybody who is creative, and there are not that many human beings in this world who are truly creative, anybody who's creative has some access, perhaps only in the little area of their field of expertise, where they have some access to that dimension, the stillness. Einstein had it, he was very slow, he was not considered intelligent at school, because he was too slow, they said, not suitable for mathematics, they said, and physics, because his thinking was very slow, now what does it mean? It means, there were lots of spaces in between the thoughts, he didn't, he wasn't at school like one of the so-called intelligent children, who always when the teacher asks a question, the hand goes up immediately, I know, I know, that's very superficial, occasionally it may be okay, but there are some children, and it's not recognized by our society, who are very deeply intelligent, but not in the way that we consider, what we consider intelligence, and they tend to be slower, they don't immediately have an answer, because they know, it's superficial to have a true answer, you have to go deeper within, but if you allowed those children to go deeper, then you would see, how original their thinking actually is, so when we just went into the, you went into the body, already you noticed, some new thoughts came, not the old thoughts, it only requires a tiny space, for something new to arise, not that you are doing it in order to have new thoughts, you are doing it because it feels good, to feel the aliveness within you, and the more familiar you become with that, with inhabiting your body, the more strongly you can feel that aliveness, it's almost as if you could feel every cell of the body, vibrating slightly, and it's a beautiful feeling, just an aliveness there, and that is an enormously healing thing to do for the body.

[Speaker 2] (54:18 - 54:52)

I really want to know about guilt, I feel guilty all the time for little things I'm doing, or that I'm not doing, and there are things that I know I did that were mistakes to other people, so I know that you're supposed to be free and liberated in the now, but shouldn't I feel bad about this stuff? I mean, and what's going to keep me, if I'm free and liberated in the now, from like doing bad things to people?

[Speaker 1] (54:55 - 1:08:01)

Human beings act out of their conditioning, so every human being is conditioned by their upbringing, by the surrounding culture, by many factors, conditioned to think, and feel, and behave in certain ways, and so people do all kinds of things to other people, and even to themselves, without knowing what they're doing, they're simply acting out the conditioning of their mind, and Jesus knew that, because he said on the cross, forgive them for they know not what they do, so humans create an enormous amount of suffering for themselves and others, but they don't know that this is what they are doing. People act out of conditioning, so when you suddenly see that something that you did in the past created suffering for yourself, or others, or both, when you see that, the seeing of it does not come out of the conditioning of your mind. When you become aware of certain behavior, or thought patterns in you, the awareness, the presence, the deeper presence that you are, has come in, and from there you can see what you did was very limited.

It created suffering for yourself, or somebody else, or other people, and you didn't even know it. So what was acting at that time, if you say that was me, and therefore I must be bad, you are equating the conditioned mind, your conditioned mind, the conditioning of your mind, with who you are. If you say, I did that, therefore I am bad, and continuously think about it, you are equating who you are with what we could call unconsciousness.

Unconsciousness means to be totally identified with the conditioning of the mind, so you just have to act it out. Now there are still millions of humans on the planet who live in that way, because the dimension of awareness hasn't arisen yet, so they never know what they are doing. They continue to inflict suffering on themselves and others, to act unconsciously, but they don't know that this is what they are doing.

They cannot do otherwise. So the moment you realize this is what I did, who you are is the awareness that sees that. Who you are is not what you did.

What you did was the conditioning of your mind playing itself out. So you become, you trap yourself in an illusory identity if you feel that I did that. No.

Who is speaking? Who is I? Are you the conditioned patterns of your mind?

Or are you the awareness that sees that's the spaciousness within the deeper I, that sees what the mind is doing, it sees what the mind created in the past, it even sees what the mind is creating at this very moment. If you are aware of the things, the thoughts that go through your head, how you speak to another human being, you may be acting out a role and suddenly there's an awareness that you know that you are acting out a role. And then comes the possibility of instead of being the role, being the awareness and then act in a truly genuine way with enhanced intelligence.

So, the unconscious action was unintelligent action because it was action created by the conditioning of your mind which has nothing to do with who you are. So there's a tendency for the mind to personalize the conditioning and say I did that. And that creates guilt.

And that keeps you trapped in a very narrow sense of self because you have equated who you consider to be yourself with conditioned patterns that you acted out at the time. It wasn't you, it was unconscious, human unconsciousness. No more.

And now you see it. So you see it and at this moment you would not act in this way because the awareness is there. Maybe the awareness will stay and this will never happen again.

It's also possible that the awareness becomes obscured again and the same behavior pattern happens again and you don't know it except afterwards when the awareness comes again. Oh, I did it again. And this can happen quite frequently.

So it's important. It's good to be aware afterwards if you do not misuse the mind. Don't allow the mind to misuse the awareness and make some identity.

Manufacture some identity out of that for yourself and say that was me. It wasn't me. That's the main thing.

Who are you? You are the awareness. Anything else is forms that arise, thought forms, emotional forms, behavior patterns.

So your destiny and your purpose in life is to increasingly be the awareness rather than the conditioned pattern. But as long as the conditioned pattern is there, it's there. It's good if the moment of transformation comes, if the awareness is there while the pattern plays itself out.

That's the beginning of the end of the conditioned pattern. So if it's a certain kind of behavior, perhaps with women, you do essentially the same kind of thing. And it happens again and again and the awareness comes afterwards and one day the awareness comes in the middle of doing it.

In the middle of it you see what you're doing. There's a seeing of it. And that's the beginning of the end of the pattern.

Then it may just one or two more times the pattern may come up in a weaker form and it will then collapse. So in other words, you're making what was unconscious conscious. And that changes it.

So you do not have to manipulate yourself and try to engineer inner change. I have to make myself into a better person. That doesn't usually work.

That just creates conflict because you have one image of yourself as the good person that you want to be or that you would like to think of yourself as that or you'd like others to think of you as a good person. And then you have unconscious behavior patterns that completely contradict that image of a good person. And then for the rest of your life you live in that conflict.

The good person can talk to the bad one in your head. It's just two thought patterns. So that doesn't work.

What works is to be the awareness. To see it. To be awake enough, alert enough and that when the present moment comes in to see, are you present in this moment to what happens in this moment?

Not only externally, but internally also. And are you allowing it? Don't reject anything.

If you feel a thought comes in, an emotion comes in and maybe it's not a good thought. Maybe your mind says after the thought has come in, your mind says, oh that wasn't a good thought, I shouldn't have thought that. But they are both just thoughts.

The so-called bad thought was just a thought and the next thought that wasn't a good thought was just another thought. Now it's possible that the bad thought made you do something bad. That's possible.

But the good thought cannot prevent that. The only thing that can prevent that is to be conscious so that the thought does not control you. The conditioned mind doesn't control you.

Be there as the witness to your thoughts. Just don't reject anything. So don't go wrong there.

I know you're concerned about your mind and certain thoughts that go through your mind. And you would rather be a good person and have good thoughts all the time, but it's not happening. And I can assure you it's not happening to anybody.

Somebody is just having good thoughts. Because the human mind is the human mind. It has polarities of good and bad and high and low.

So don't try to bring about on that level the perfect me. It doesn't exist. Allow yourself the imperfections.

Allow the thoughts to be there. They come. If you fight them, you make them stronger.

People who have the worst problems with thoughts are people who are spiritual, so to speak. They see themselves or are seen by others as spiritual. They have to live the role, for example, the vicar, the priest.

They have to live the role of a spiritual person. And they cannot admit to themselves that they have bad thoughts. So they suppress and they may have bad emotions.

Anger, resentment. And they say, no, I'm not having bad emotions. I'm a good Christian.

They can't even admit to themselves and that makes it even worse. And then suddenly very bad behavior comes out of them and they don't know where it came from. So all you have to with thought, all you need to be concerned about is to be the awareness.

Allow the thoughts. Then they actually have less power over you. Because you are not don't look for yourself in any thought that comes into your head.

It's not who you are. They're just thoughts. It's not who you are.

If you have bad thoughts for two hours, it doesn't make you into a bad person. It just means that so-called bad thoughts are going through your head. And then you watch it and as you allow them, there is a deeper space, the I.

From there you watch thoughts are like clouds passing. You don't have to follow every thought. And then thoughts can become very tedious.

You can have one repetitive thought pattern going on in your mind for hours or even days. You don't have to follow every thought when you're aware. You watch the thought.

Then it comes. What you're going to do to this obnoxious person. I'm going to kill this obnoxious person.

Comes the thought and then the thought drifts out and the awareness remains. And then it's lost power already. It's nothing.

So you find a spacious relationship with your thoughts. That's you are not you are nothing that arises in that beautiful space of who you are. The consciousness that you are which is spacious intelligence.

None of that is who you. They are forms. They come and go.

So thought is not a problem. Be there as the witness to what goes on inside you. Then change happens by itself.

The mind will always have good and bad up and down. It has polarities. But that's not who you are and you don't have to act on it.

Increasingly you act from the state of aware presence. Action can come from the limited mind and it's not usually skillful action. Or action can arise out of the state of aware presence.

So that's the end of guilt.

[Speaker 2] (1:08:03 - 1:08:16)

What's the test? How do you know that this is out of the awareness after the fact? If you could go back and look at your actions and go, yeah, that was out of awareness, but that wasn't.

How would you know?

[Speaker 1] (1:08:16 - 1:11:26)

Well, you know, awareness doesn't create suffering for yourself or others when it comes out of awareness. So you know when you look at action, it has a totally different quality to it. It's not self-serving.

The action did not happen because you needed something from that person. Awareness is not needy. When action arises out of awareness, you do not need to use the other human being for some purpose, ulterior motive.

But when you act out of the conditioned mind, the egoic mind, you're always trying to you're not only trying to use the present moment because you're hoping to get to some better moment. You make the present moment into a means to an end. You also make other human beings into a means to an end because you want something through them.

So that's where you want to be with this beautiful woman because you want to be seen with her or you want to conquer her and so enhance your self-image. Or you want sexual pleasure from her. But you want something.

If you're acting out of awareness, it's not the acting is not under the law of wanting. It's not that you want anything. And that's also where loving action can only arise out of that because love does not want anything.

True love does not want anything. So that's where it's totally selfless action. And when you look back on it, you can see very clearly whether there was self in the action, you wanted something for yourself to enhance yourself or whether that was truly action totally free of self.

And that's the most effective and the most powerful action is when the self, the image of me, the thought structure of me, goes out of the action. And action arises that is totally selfless. That action doesn't create problems.

The Buddhist monk said when he was asked what's the meaning of Zen? Zen Buddhism. What's the meaning of Zen?

And the monk said, oh that's easy. No self, no problem. That's it.

So you begin to live and act without a mentally constructed self. You live from the aware presence. But for a while the two are there.

And the awareness often comes in after something has happened that was unconscious. And you see it. Don't beat yourself up.

It's only the human condition. But whenever you see unconsciousness has just happened or happened the other day and now you see it or you see it in the middle of it, it's good to see it. The more you see it, the more awake you become.

Don't personalize it. It's nothing. It's not who you are.

That's the main thing.

[Speaker 2] (1:11:28 - 1:11:37)

So can the now make me rich, powerful, free, happy, smarter, more loving, more loved?

[Speaker 1] (1:11:40 - 1:23:26)

Yes, all of those things. Rich? Yes.

Let's start with rich and then we'll look at the next one. Can the now make me rich? Yes.

Now what does it mean to be rich? Rich means it's not what people think it is. It's not to have lots of possessions.

That may be one aspect of being rich. But rich means to be in touch with the fullness of life. And the only place where you can find the fullness of life, the intense aliveness that you sense when you are present to now is here.

When you are open to the present moment, what comes in is a gratitude for what is, no matter what it is. A little plant, the air you're breathing, the light that's coming through the window, the sound of a bird, whatever it is, there's a goodness to it. And even if it looks bad, even if it's a dead animal or a dead human, when you're totally aligned with the present moment, there's a peace that comes into your perceptions.

And with that peace comes a gratitude that is very deep. And so you're experiencing really life for the first time when you become present. And so to be in a state of gratitude for what is, is really what being wealthy means.

The present moment is always enough. And so the definition of wealthy really is to be, to have enough. To feel already the fullness of life, an expression that Jesus used.

He said, I want you to have the fullness of life. And people didn't quite understand what he meant. Was Jesus talking about shopping malls?

That you have hundred, five hundred shops in one huge shopping mall and you have thousands of things to choose from? Was he predicting the arrival of shopping malls? Is that the fullness of life?

You can walk around and buy, and you have lots of money and credit cards and you can buy anything you like. Now there are people who can do that. They are not happy.

So there, he's not talking about many, many things when he talks about the fullness of life. It's not, he's talking about the one thing. It's to feel the intensity of being alive.

And you can only feel that intensity of aliveness when you're in the present moment, with your attention. One way of being in the present moment, as you know, is to feel the inner aliveness of the body. To feel the aliveness that is in every cell of the body.

It's alive. And the more you go there, the stronger that feeling becomes. And once you are connected with that, you feel that the world around you is intensely alive too.

It was alive before, but you didn't see it because there was too much thought stuff going through your mind continuously. The world became dead because everything was immediately labeled mentally. That's a tree, that's a dog.

The moment you label it, you don't look anymore. It's not alive anymore. Everything gets deadened through mental abstraction when you go around the voice in your head immediately calling things, calling things names, giving things names.

So when you become more present, there's this alert attention with which you meet your surroundings. Once you know the fullness of life that is already here now, and then gratitude arises for what is, no matter what it is, then living in this way, eventually, that fullness that in essence is an inner realization rather than outer. That's the foundation for wealth is to feel the fullness of life within, and then if you live in that way, in connectedness with that, eventually the fullness of life will also manifest for you externally in various ways.

Meaningful activity is a form of wealth. To know that what you're doing is helping other human beings brings an external fullness also into your life, which is a form of wealth. And wealth may also come in the form of things coming to you, more conventional things, home, or car, or whatever it may be.

Those things also come much more easily when basically you already feel the fullness even long before it comes externally. So basically you feel already wealthy when you live fully in the present moment. You never feel really poor.

I perhaps spent ten years of my life at least living what people would say below the poverty line, and I never felt poor. I always felt rich, although for a long time I had nothing, no external possessions. But life was so fulfilling to live every moment fully present to the moment that I felt wealthy, abundant.

And much, much later did actually external abundance come into my life to some extent. And that didn't make me feel better. I feel just when now I have a car, during those years

I used a bicycle mostly, or the bus, and I don't feel better now because I have a nice car.

I feel exactly the same, but it's nice to have a nice comfortable car with air conditioning in the summer. But the fullness hasn't changed. It hasn't done anything to change that.

So already the foundation is to be fully alive in the present moment. And then it is much more likely that external wealth will also come to you as an outer manifestation of an inner reality. If you feel wealthy already, but if you feel poor and feel that you really need to make money now, even if you achieve it, you'll be unhappy with your wealth, because it comes out of the unhappiness.

So there are many people who are creating wealth these days. They build up a big business or an enterprise, but it comes out of a deep dissatisfaction with what is. It comes out of an enormous neediness to show to the world that you are somebody, or to prove to yourself or the world how good you are.

And that is not conducive to true happiness. There are many wealthy people who are unhappy in their wealth. And they're not really wealthy.

And they are basically still deprived. They are deprived of the fullness of life. And they have perhaps five or ten houses in different places, cars, yacht, and yet they are deprived of the fullness.

And so they need more and more. And it doesn't help. So here we have living in the present moment brings you into the fullness of life now, and then eventually it will also manifest in different ways externally for you.

Power was the other thing. Will it bring me power? Yes, but not power to the ego.

It will make your life more empowered, that what you do, much greater power flows into what you do, because what you are doing, the action that you are performing, whatever it is, in the present moment, the only place where you can do anything, the action that you are performing in the present moment is not a means to an end. For most people, they are active, but they are active because they want to get there, to that point in the future. They want the end result.

Their eyes are on the end result. So they may be busy building up a business because they want to become wealthy, but they reduce the quality and aliveness of the present moment because they are reducing the present moment to a means to an end. They give it inferior status.

In their minds, the future is more important because that's where they are going to be wealthy. But then the pattern remains inside them, and even when they have the money, they still have the same basic psychological pattern, which means they need the next moment, and always they reduce the present moment to a means to an end. So, the action is not of high quality.

It does not contribute to happiness. They don't make themselves happy, and they don't make others happy with what they do. So, that's not truly empowered, and it is low-quality action.

High-quality action comes when you don't reduce the present moment to a means to an end. That's truly empowered action. When you no longer reduce this moment to a means to an end, can you give your full attention to whatever it is that you are doing now?

Some great artists do it, sportsmen do it. When they perform, they are totally present. It's not a means to an end.

They're totally in the now. And so, high-quality action comes out of that, and this is empowered action. So, living in the now brings power into your life, true power, not the pseudo power of the ego.

And then, whatever comes out of it, out of that action, will be good in one way or another. It will not be, one could say, I call it, it's not karmic action, which means, karmic action, it's an Eastern term, karma. Karmic action creates more unhappiness.

It comes out of unhappiness and creates more unhappiness for yourself and others. But out of presence, alignment with now comes non-karmic action. It does not create more suffering on the planet.

Because so many people are very, very active, but a lot of that activity ultimately creates more suffering on the planet. So, that's the power. What's the next thing that the now will bring you?

What was the question?

[Speaker 2] (1:23:27 - 1:24:05)

I really want to know about guilt. I feel guilty all the time for little things I'm doing or that I'm not doing. And there are things that I know I did that were mistakes to other people.

So, I know that you're supposed to be free and liberated in the now, but shouldn't I feel bad about this stuff? I mean, and what's gonna keep me if I'm free and liberated in the now from, like, doing bad things to people? Because that's a fear, I think.

[Speaker 1] (1:24:06 - 1:38:11)

The only place where you can be free of the conditioning of your mind because freedom is not an external thing, it's an internal thing. You can be in prison and you can be free. People have written to me from prison and they've read The Power of Now and they said they now feel free.

What does that mean? True freedom is freedom from your mind, from the conditioned, all the conditioned thoughts and emotions that otherwise control you. Freedom is the freedom to step back from the conditioning into the deeper I, the awareness that you are.

It's freedom from thought, ultimately. So that not every thought controls you. So that's, it's the freedom from conditioning and basically it's the freedom from the past.

So you're no longer determined, your behavior and your thinking is no longer determined by your past. It's also freedom from future because most people have a desperate need for the next moment. I call it psychological future.

They need the fulfillment that they think the future will bring them. It won't. So this is something for you to be aware of because I know that pattern also still operates in you.

Believing that something in the future will bring you greater fulfillment than you have now. But it won't. If you don't have it now, you won't have it then.

You have to access The Power of Now regardless of your external circumstances. You can have that now. You can't wait for the future because once you're in the waiting mode, you'll always be waiting for the next moment.

Even when you become a famous actor, it won't feel quite right. Maybe you're already famous, I don't know. But it won't feel quite right and there will be many things when you're very famous.

I've met one or two famous actors and they come to this teaching. Why do they come? Don't they have everything?

No. They've realized they don't have what really matters and suddenly they discover the spiritual dimension because they've achieved everything else on the worldly dimension. So, go deeply into the present moment.

Become deeply aligned and at one with the only thing there ever is in your life, the present moment. And that is where true power resides and that is the only place where you can be truly free. What's the next thing that you want?

Happiness. Can happiness come in the future? When I achieve this or that, then I'll be happy when I make it.

But every situation that you go into will have a downside. If you're expecting circumstances to make you happy, they can do that for a while and then you find oh, it's not quite what I expected and there's always another side to it. And very often, the very thing that makes you happy, if you have an external thing that makes you happy, that very thing will also make you unhappy.

An example, a woman comes into your life who makes you happy. One, two, three years later, the same woman makes you unhappy. It's the same thing.

Or a job, a great job is offered to you and it creates so much stress that you make yourself ill. It makes you happy first and it makes you unhappy. You become famous and then you see the downside of fame.

You can't go out in the street alone anymore. There's a riot the moment people see you. You're a prisoner of your house.

You can't go out without two or three bodyguards. Is that freedom? And you thought you would be free when you become famous.

I've met one or two famous people who, they can't go out alone. It's too dangerous. And people stop them all the time and they gather around them.

They have to stay inside. Everything has to be organized. They have to jump in the car with tinted windows and bodyguards.

Is that freedom? Are they happy because of their fame? No, they have experienced the downside of fame.

It doesn't mean that you should not pursue goals. There's nothing wrong with being famous. But don't expect it to make you happy.

The true happiness has to be found comes from being aligned with life internally. And where's that? Now, here.

A complete openness and yes to the present moment that takes you deep into the present moment. True happiness comes out of that. And then you can go on and do things and see if you can become famous.

Why not experience that? Experience as much as you can without hoping that some experience or when you've accumulated enough experiences you'll finally feel fulfilled and fully yourself. That won't happen.

There's no end to accumulating experiences and achieving this or that. You cannot find yourself there. You can only find yourself in the present moment.

For everything else you need time to achieve success in your career, to learn to play the piano to learn a foreign language even to if you want to meet a woman it takes time. You have to walk somewhere where beautiful women hang out. It takes time.

Everything takes time. And so the mind thinks okay, finding myself who I truly am will also take time. It thinks when I've added enough to who I think I am maybe recognition from other people fame possessions put all these things in the back my back.

When I have enough things accumulated then I will be full and that moment will come at some point in the future. It doesn't. Because the back, no matter how much you put in it'll never feel full besides from the fact that often things fall out of the back.

You put something in here and then something else falls out. You suddenly get wealth and then you're unhappy in your marriage or you're happy in your marriage and suddenly the job doesn't work anymore or you're there's always, there's nothing stability isn't to be found in the external world. It's in constant flux.

This universe is not stable. People have this absurd illusion that they're living in a stable universe and that they can achieve some kind of stability in their lives. They are shocked when suddenly big disasters happen and you realize how unstable really everything is.

So if you looked, that doesn't mean it's to be rejected. Play in the world and enjoy the play. Play as much as you can but don't expect anything out there to truly make you happy or fulfill you.

Happiness is to be found directly within yourself. It comes from being connected with who you are. This comes as, brings us back to where we started to be in touch, to feel the deeper I and there's enormous joy in simply feeling the beingness that you are.

To feel the I am that is deeper than this or that. I am. The very life that you are, to feel that.

To feel alive. That's, out of that comes true happiness and then you can play around in the world and you acquire things and then you lose things and you acquire some more and then you lose some more and then in the end you lose everything. That's what everybody does.

You lose the body. In the end its form dissolves sooner or later. But it's finding something that is deeper than any form inside yourself.

That's true happiness. Love also comes, true love comes only out of the true I. True love cannot come out of the pseudo I that says I the actor I the good looking actor I the famous actor I the American I the poor one or I the wealthy one or I who is good with women.

True love doesn't come out of that I. That's the pseudo I. That's what most people refer to when they use that word that's so common I.

But the true love comes out when you're connected with the deeper I. The I that has no form. The one thing that never leaves you.

The one ingredient that's always there no matter where you are what you do, what you experience. It never changes. The I.

The consciousness that you are. When you live in connectedness with that aligned with that, that's where true love comes. Because when you meet another human being you can sense in them also there is the depth of the same I that is your identity.

You recognize yourself in the other and the other as yourself. And you feel a deep connectedness much deeper than anything that you can say or think with the other human being. And that's true love.

Love is to feel that you're ultimately not separate. You're one. It can only come out of the spaciousness that is part of the now.

The now is space. What happens in the now is form. Don't confuse the two.

The reason why people think there are many, many moments in every day in every in your lifetime in every hour because what happens changes continuously. The forms around you change continuously. The thoughts that go through your head change.

The emotions that you feel change. The people around you change. So people think every time it's a new moment.

This moment and another moment and another moment. If you look more deeply you see it's not another moment, it's always now. But the form that appears in the now changes continuously.

But it's always now. And ultimately now is who you are. The space of now is the space of I.

And then things happen in it and they change continuously. So there are two ways of saying when they ask you what is it that never changes? What is it that's always there in your life no matter where you go and what you do?

You can say it's always I. The deepest I. Not the superficial I that changes.

The thoughts, the emotions, who you are in the world. But the deeper I that's always the same. And so another way of looking at it is to say it's always now.

The now never changes. And then you find the miraculous thing. They're actually one.

The space of now and who you are in the depths of your being is consciousness itself. Before it becomes something. The very foundation out of which all life comes.

You could say God. God dwells in the depths of your being. Not as some entity but as the formless one life itself.

That is the deepest meaning of what now is. And that's why the now can never leave you. So I am the now in essence.

I am not what happens. I am the space in which everything happens. That's your true identity.

And when you live one with that, knowing that, your life will be fruitful and a great and wonderful adventure. When you don't know who you are, then no matter what you do, what you achieve, where you go, who you meet, it won't satisfy you. That's how simple it is.

Eckhart Tolle - Reality Is Beyond Thought

[Speaker 1] (0:40 - 1:04:55)

On a day like this, maybe you'd rather be somewhere else. If the weather weren't so wonderful, I would be happy to be here in this pinal, but it's so nice out there. There was a Zen master walking with one of his disciples out in the country, and they sat down under a tree, and the disciple didn't quite get it yet what Zen is, he'd only been there for six years.

So the master was sitting there just being, watching, listening, and the disciple was thinking. And then he said, Master, I've been thinking, how do I enter Zen? The question means, how do I enter the state of consciousness that is Zen?

And there was a long silence before the master said anything, and then the master raised his finger and said, Can you hear the sound of that mountain stream? And the disciple said, he at first couldn't hear anything, and then, Yes, I can hear it. Suddenly he heard the distant mountain stream, and the master said, Enter Zen from there.

And for just a little while the disciple was there, attentive, alert, listening. And then, a few minutes later, the face of the disciple changed again from the openness to, Master, I've been thinking. Now, what if I had said, No, I can't hear the mountain stream.

What would you have said then? And the master raised his finger again and said, Disciple, yes, enter Zen from there. So the mountain stream is beautiful.

More beautiful and deeper is the state of consciousness. If he hadn't heard the mountain stream, it would have been the same. He would have been in the state of alert attention, and might have said, I can hear nothing, and the master says, Enter Zen from there.

So here, I take this as a little signpost, teaching story, for you also to work with sound here, because there are beautiful sounds here in this place, and to be attentive to the sounds that you hear today. I will remind you again tomorrow when we may spend the day in silence, particularly good opportunity to be attentive to the many subtle sounds that you hear here, from the crunching of gravel or little stones as you walk, to crickets, frogs, the leaves moving in the wind, many sounds that are beautiful and subtle. To hear them requires a certain degree of alertness.

That's why Zen masters often raise their finger. That symbolizes not, I'm telling you, you better believe me, no, not that. It says, be alert, awake.

So that's the state is required, so when you listen to a sound, there's a field of attention that is actually more important than the sound, no matter how beautiful the sound is. But the sound can draw your attention out, and then you learn to not just hear the sound and then immediately label it and then are done with it, but stay a while and remain attentive to that sound, or it might be a sequence of sounds, if it's crickets or birds, be attentive and remain there, and let the sound be there. And then you have what we mentioned this morning with reference to the visual, where you have the sense perception, the visual sense perception happens against the background of stillness, and now also the auditory sense perception happens also in the field of stillness, or against the background of stillness.

So to every sense perception, there is a background. We could also call it the ground. In ordinary consciousness, humans are not aware of the ground, which is awareness.

The background, the entire substratum, to use a term from geology. So as you listen to the sound, which is in the foreground of your consciousness, you're also aware of the background, and the background is very hard to describe in any way because it is not something. The sound is something.

And as it is something, it is born and eventually it dies. The background is not born and dies, it's always there, unchanging. So you are lost in a surface world of external appearances and things, when you do not know that dimension, the background dimension, that could also be called the unmanifested.

But I'm using a somewhat different pointer. Some pointers can be more helpful to certain people. So there is the background, and to see that as you sit, stand, lie, you listen, there's the sound.

Do I have a bell here? It dissolved. I want you to demonstrate how a sound comes into being and then goes out of existence, slowly fades out.

But we have something even better, the entire bell has faded out of existence. So to be aware of that is amazing. One can also call it a field of peace that underlies your perceptions.

A background peace. And imagine having that background peace in human interactions, how that changes everything between human beings. Let's put that aside for a moment and stay with just the sounds, it's a little easier.

Humans are complicated. And you will notice that when you fall back into the dream state of being identified with the stream of thinking, all the subtle sounds around you, you don't even notice. You don't hear them.

Your attention is elsewhere. Your attention, your consciousness, is being absorbed by thought continuously. There isn't much left for anything else.

There isn't also much left for creativity or anything new to come in. It's all repetitive. And so here, you are making space inside you for, there's no other way for something truly new to arise in your life.

You have something truly that comes out of the freshness of the unmanifested, the freshness of being itself, and takes on form, a thought, a word, an action, some creation perhaps, a work of art, a work of this or that, or simply a way of being with others that has a different quality than the normal way of being with others. So that's the only way something truly new can come in, because no matter how your life changes on the surface, it's not a true change. You could, if your bank account is empty now and you win 10 million dollars, on the external level things will change, but that's not very much.

The same set of problems that you have now, or a very similar one, will arise again. The fear of not enough is not going to go away, perhaps for a few weeks, and again it might become magnified because you have a bigger scenario for you to play out your drama. And if you are rich and famous, then they can write about you and your drama.

That's all, and it looks bigger, but it's just like everybody else's. It's just when the drama is played out between the two famous actors in a mansion, it looks interesting. It's not interesting at all.

It's the same drama that happens everywhere else, and there's nothing new, it's repetitive. And then they get a divorce and marry somebody else and it starts again. So for something truly new to arise, you need to find, not create as such, because it's already there, you need to find, one could say, that dimension of space.

One could say you have to make space, yes. In one way that's the space already wants to come through, the spatial consciousness. In another, one could say it requires your cooperation, you have to make room, and it's a beautiful, more harmonious emergence.

If it pushes, it wants to come through, and there's a heavy egoic structure, it may still come through, but it has to create havoc in your life first, because the shell has to break. And then you're struck by some disaster that breaks the shell of ego, whatever it may be. And so there are people here who have already experienced some kind of disaster in their lives, some great loss, where their life is threatened or where everything collapsed, and something began to come through that otherwise there was no space there, because there was all the mind objects that one had identified with as oneself, covering up the vastness, the infinite possibilities, the infinite potential that is there in the unmanifested, in the background, in the space consciousness. So these are two, these are beautiful pointers that there is in you object consciousness, which is thought, which is mental images, anything that has form is object consciousness.

For most humans, all they ever experience in their life is object consciousness. Their entire life experience consists of a succession of arising and subsiding objects, and they try to hang on to a bundle of mental objects that they think, that's me. Mental images, names, labels, what they think of me, how it has been taught to think of who they are.

But what are all these things? They are thought forms that you hang on to, and you put some, you wrap it with something, cling wrap, whatever, that holds it together, a very fragile structure, and this is, that's me, and it consists of mental objects, many of which are mental, the mental counterpart of material objects or material achievements. So there's the shiny, new, flashy car, which in itself, of course, is not important because it's going to rust in a few years, it'll be gone, and all it can do is take you from A to B.

It's nice, yes, we can appreciate these things, but if they become an object, then a mental form arises, which is not just car, it's my car, my is the important thing, because then the thought object of car becomes invested with a sense of self, it's not just a car, I relate to it, I'm looking for myself in it. So the mind object, the thought object car becomes very important to me. And if somebody scratches your car, or even dents it accidentally, it feels, if you identify with that as my car, it feels you are being injured personally.

And anger arises because somebody's attacking you, or let them say that somebody says, well, this may be a nice car, but my uncle has one that's much bigger than yours. Can't be. And you feel diminished in your sense of self, that's how people play their ego games.

One little ego tries to diminish another little ego by claiming that my uncle has something bigger than you. I don't have it, but it's enough, it's my uncle, so there's some association. Because it's my, so it's an indirect thing that I can identify with.

Of course it's absurd and funny, but a lot of human interaction works in that way. And so you identify with, you may then identify with other things that are a little bit more subtle. Other people's opinion of you, which becomes also a mind, a mental image, knowledge, acquired knowledge, a certain skill that you have.

You may be extremely good at hitting a ball, and it's a great thing. If you are a master at hitting a ball one way or another, then probably in that field of activity, if you are truly a master, you are probably present, at least during that time when you're hitting the ball, when you're playing the game, when you're in the zone, you're not thinking, you're not planning, there's no decision making. Right action happens every moment, and there's a power, and then people love to watch you.

But then what happens? When you stop playing the game, you re-enter the normal state of consciousness. And then you identify with that skill, it becomes a mind object.

You are better at it than anybody else, and the world is telling you that. So that is something also, and then somebody else suddenly comes who is even better than you and they chuck you out. You're no longer captain of the team or whatever it is.

Oh no. And that's very painful when a mind object, something you had identified with, is taken away, dissolves, great loss, great pain. So most humans only know themselves as objects, object in the realm of object consciousness.

Such a pity when it's, there is so much more to human life, there's an entire realm that's always been there and humans just haven't looked at it. They've been so seduced by the world of objects, both the external objects in their world as well as the inner objects in their mind, they've been so seduced by the world of objects, so fascinated by objects, so completely identified with the things of this world, that they forgot that there is an entirely different, other dimension to their being than that. Which has never gone away.

The great thing is that you cannot destroy space consciousness. You can ignore it. You cannot know that it's there underneath the accumulated object consciousness, yes, but it is there.

You cannot even, in the most obsessed person, obsessed with thinking, you see it's not a moment of continuously one next thing and the next thing, one damn thing after another. Churchill's definition of history, one damn thing after another. But we could also define the human mind as that, it comes one thing after another.

And never aware that there is this vast realm within them that would free them from dependency on the world of things, which includes their mind, because it's objects, object consciousness. That vast realm is there and they never know it. It's like a beggar sitting, trying to get a few cents from someone who's going to give, and he's been sitting on a box filled with gold.

I gave that example at the beginning of the book. He's been sitting on this box filled with gold, but he's never looked. He's only looked out there.

Or we could say a more modern version of that. He's been sitting there and never realized that he has a bank account in Switzerland and that has a hundred million dollars in it and he wants... Now this is a somewhat deficient parable, because even if somebody truly, if the beggar had a bank account in Switzerland with a million dollar in it, wouldn't really make that much difference to his life, because it's so much deeper than that.

But it's a parable for people who can think you've already gone beyond it. But I put it at the beginning of the book, because most people know only the realm of objects. So a box full of gold works as a metaphor for a while, but it's not ultimately the right metaphor, because it's so much greater than any entire gold in the world.

And so that space consciousness is in you, has never gone away, but been ignored. The peace, the stillness. And I'm presenting here, apart from the fact, which is more important, that as we sit here, it arises from within you, even if you didn't want it.

But I'm also pointing out little entry points into it. We've already seen bringing a yes to the present moment is an entry point. When you accept the form, form is a thing, is an object.

When you accept the form that this moment takes as something that happens, or an inner form, an emotion that arises, when you do not resist the form that arises, and the normal state of consciousness is almost continuous denial or resistance of the form, because you want another one in the next moment, a better one, a different one, a more fulfilling one, not this form of the present moment, I want a different form. Or if I don't have it, at least I can think about it, so I don't have to look at this.

I imagine the next moment is going to be better than this one. It won't if you haven't fully acknowledged this one. So, when you accept the form that this moment takes, that is the miracle, the form of this moment becomes an opening into the formless within you.

And the worse, the more challenging the form that this moment is, and you accept it, the deeper it takes you into the unconditioned space consciousness or into peace. So, if you were faced with a dreadful disaster in your life, it arises at this moment. Everything has collapsed, and you face it and see that the is-ness of this moment just is as it is.

You look death in the face. You accept the form that this moment takes completely, and suddenly you sense something that cannot really be described. It's a spaciousness or peace around that dreadful event.

It happens within a field of peace or space. And I wouldn't use here the word happy. You're not happy when that happens, nor are you unhappy.

It is beyond happiness and unhappiness. There's a serenity and a peace that come. But you can experience even with little things.

Surrender to a little thing, a little form that this moment takes, a little challenge, and you find a little peace. Oh, nice. You surrender to the cold soup that I mentioned yesterday.

And you find that the cold soup is giving you a little peace. It's not the soup. It's changed your state of consciousness.

It's gone, oh, okay, okay. You make room for it to happen. You allow it to happen.

You make space for it to happen. Humans don't make space for things to happen. They want to remove space from things.

So now, if something is happening and you make space for it, you become the space. And this is the grace that is hidden underneath so-called bad events. Now, bad events have a scale.

They start with a cold soup, very little, and go on to some dreadful accident, disaster, imminent death, or everybody around you died, or you lost everything, or somebody tells you you only have three more weeks to live. You have the scale. Something dreadful, something so-called bad happens in your life, and then there's a scale.

Cold soup is easy, but for some, that's a challenge too. And so, for some, it sets the whole pattern. They have a cold soup and the rest of the day is spoiled.

They don't make room for events. They don't allow an event to be. They argue with reality.

I saw a cartoon once. It's hard to describe, but I'll attempt it. It showed people wearing placards.

It's become some kind of protest march, and the placards contained only horizontal lines. And the entire surroundings, the street and the houses, were drawn in vertical lines. So the message is, we are against it.

Whatever it is, we are against it. So if you make room for something to be, it can only be this moment because nothing can be apart from the now. You make room for something to be.

It already is, so why not allow it? Allow it to be. And this act of allowing, easy to do when you face something beautiful.

I allow this beautiful tree with the magnificent colors to be. That's easy. And then you walk one more step and suddenly you think your right foot goes right into the mud.

And there comes a minor challenge. Can you immediately say, oh, it already has happened. It is already.

Not much you can do except, of course, pull your foot out and walk on. But usually, of course, it would lead to a reaction. So some words may then come out of your mouth.

Contraction happens. And maybe there could be an immediate attempt to blame someone. This is what the ego likes to do.

Something goes wrong. Who can I blame? It says the ego.

They should have warned people about this. Or if you are in the States, then the favorite thing is go to a lawyer and sue them. So, and this is a beautiful practice.

There are many things that in quotation marks, go wrong in your life, are actually the greatest things. In a way, even greater than the beautiful trees, because they can take you deeper. And so to a large extent, the world is here for you to experience things going wrong.

And that is the challenge of the world. And if you still think otherwise, you may have lived on this planet for 50, 60 or 70 years and still expect things not to go wrong. Now, the illusion that you can have things not going wrong, you can still live in that illusion if you live in an advanced industrialized country, perhaps.

Travel to India, and you can no longer live in the illusion that things around you are solid and that you are in control. You're not. Nothing that you plan is going to work out.

Everything is going to be totally different from the way you expect it. And things will constantly challenge you, forms. And wherever you look, the world is not as solid as it seems to be here.

Wherever you go, there are old people, dying people in the street. Are they not? Where are the old and dying people here?

I don't see any. They're shut away. We mustn't look.

Just pretend that they don't exist. We put them away there. The old go here, and the dying, we put them there.

And the dead bodies never look, must never see a dead. It's very hard, unless you have a very close relative. If you ever want to see a dead body, they won't let you.

They say, you're mad. But if you're in India, you see dead bodies very easily. It's normal.

And so you get a much better sense of the fragile nature of the world of things, objects, and forms, how insubstantial this world actually is. And it's only in the West that you have the illusion that the world of form is very substantial, solid, and is going to last. It has a solidity and permanency.

It doesn't. And when sometimes a gigantic man-made form collapses, like two years ago in New York, that comes as a dreadful shock to people, because it looked so solid and it collapsed. So the world of objects isn't as solid as it seems to be.

The world of bodies isn't as permanent and solid as it seems to be. It is very, very fragile, fleeting, insubstantial. So if that's all you know, then you are in this fleeting, insubstantial universe, and there's nothing.

And of course, there's constant fear when you identify with that, even though they try to just... It's very, very much like the Buddha, because the story goes that he was born into great wealth, and his father did not want him to see that there is poverty, that people grow old, and that people die. So he had already reached a fairly advanced age.

He was, I don't know, I can't remember, 25, 30, whatever, and wasn't really aware that there's such a thing as old and dying people, because he lived in what seems almost like the West these days, that's shut away. And one day he saw it. His father didn't want him to see it because it had been predicted he would either become a great king or a great spiritual teacher, and the father didn't want him to become a spiritual teacher.

He wanted him to carry on the business of being a king, the family business. And so, but the father had made the biggest mistake he could have made. He waited for so long when finally he did go out.

It was such a shock when he saw that people lying in the streets dying and ill and old, and he saw dead bodies. He said, what is this? Does this happen?

What happened to this man? He's not moving anymore. He said, he is dead.

Dead? Yes. And that happens to everyone?

And what's the point in anything? What's? Oh.

And soon later, he left everything behind. In the middle of the night, the story goes, when everybody was asleep, and this is a beautiful metaphor, everybody around him was asleep, and he walked out. If that's all there is, so his search then was for that dimension, is there something else to life than just that?

And it lasted a few years. And he tried all the practices, tried to achieve a state of perfection. He got very good at all the practices, and yet they didn't take him to the realization of space consciousness.

And one day, he almost starved himself to death when he said, I've had enough. This is my translation of the sutras again. He said, enough is enough.

Give me some food. And they brought him some food. Most disciples left him.

He said, oh, he's lost his way. He's eating again. And then he ate normally, and he sat under a tree.

And suddenly something happened. All resistance collapsed. He was no longer looking for anything to happen.

There was surrender to what is, not looking for some state anymore. And there it was. The last thing that, in this film, The Little Buddha, which has some nice things in it, although it's too much about the legendary Buddha, but there's still beautiful scenes in it.

The last thing that disturbs him is when he's sitting under a tree, and he sees his reflection in a little pool of puddle of water, self-reflection. And he sees his face in the little puddle of water next to him, and he's fascinated by that suddenly. And suddenly, an arm comes out of this pool of water and tries to pull him down.

This is, and he frees himself, and then the reflection is gone. This is the last attempt by the ego to be there as an object in his consciousness, to see himself as someone, to remain there as an object in his consciousness, a mental object, to make one, making himself into a mental, this is normal consciousness, making himself into a mental object, and then have a bathroom mirror that I love myself. I love myself.

You have a relationship with yourself. Of course, it's better to love yourself than to hate yourself. It makes life a little easier.

But when you love yourself, there's always, on the other side, the possibility that you might also hate yourself. Better to go beyond loving and hating yourself by not having a relationship with yourself at all, by simply being yourself. And you can only be yourself as space consciousness, not as an object.

So, anything that goes wrong in your life, a form that appears, and you allow it to be, that form becomes an opening into the formless within you. So, your spiritual practice is whenever something goes wrong in your life, and luckily enough, it happens a lot. Not saying that you cannot improve your life, you can improve your life greatly.

You can create a much better reality for yourself, which is nice. You can create through applying the power of thought and action and visualization, you can improve your life considerably. You can live in a bigger, more beautiful place, feel better about yourself, and so on.

But you cannot escape from the other arising, sooner or later. Another polarity, no matter what situation you go into, and I'm not saying you shouldn't improve your life, it's great. But do not expect it to be free of the other polarity, which will arise, even in the mansion, something will go wrong.

And that's what the gossip magazines are all about. The gossip magazines are about things going wrong in mansions. And that makes people feel a little bit better about things going on in their little houses, but it's the same.

And they love reading about famous people, things going wrong in their lives. Oh, isn't that great? Their lives are all collapsing, just like mine.

So one thing that usually happens that when something goes wrong, it pulls you into the old, it strengthens the reactivity of the old mind structures. There's complaining and running away and shouting and fighting. But there's the possibility, when you recognize the little thing, big thing going wrong, so to speak, that it isn't really wrong, you work with it.

You work with it by not resisting the is-ness of the suchness. Buddha has this beautiful expression, suchness, the suchness. And you work with that, rather than resisting it, allowing the suchness of what is right now, the form that this takes.

And if the form that this takes should be a limitation, may seem a limitation on your sense of freedom, your freedom of movement, a limitation on what you want to do, a limitation on where you want to get to, and suddenly something rises up in front of you, a door, a wall. You're trying to go that way, and suddenly there comes, there's a closed door, metaphorically speaking, or literally speaking. Once we arrived at a place to give a talk, rented a hall.

There was already a long line up outside. Nobody had the key. And there was nobody there.

They'd all gone home. So 200 people were lining up, some were getting angry. I arrived, can't get in.

So you're actually faced with a wall. So what do you do? You then start shouting?

No, of course, you take action. Can you call somebody? Maybe somebody somewhere has a key and maybe they can come.

Okay, somebody did that. But in the meantime, here we are. What was there to do except to cooperate with that moment?

So I would just go say, greet everybody in the lineup. And everybody was very happy. And almost by the time I reached the last person, somebody had arrived with a key, as if it had been planned.

Now the strange thing is, when you cooperate and allow something to be that initially looks like an obstacle, initially looks like something has gone wrong, and both little and small, when you allow it to be, it becomes an opening into something that you cannot predict what that is. It changes its face from hostile to benign and helpful. The very event that seemed hostile turns around on the external level very frequently.

Even more importantly, on an inner level, the shift happens. But you cannot really separate what happens on the outside from what happens on the inside. The inner shift happens and then the significance of that situation changes also.

So that really is the true spiritual practice, is to work with all the little and big things in one's life that seem to be obstacles or blockages. They, whatever arises in the now, I'm not talking about some mental formations and in the dream world of thinking, actual obstacles, actual things going wrong, losing this, missing that, meeting somebody and it's the wrong time, it's the wrong place. And don't try to figure out why this has happened.

It's very often, more often than not, it's impossible because you may not think there must be a deeper reason why this has gone wrong. That's a secondary thing. If you are to know the deeper reason, you would suddenly be staring you in the face.

You can't miss it. But in the meantime, you don't even need to figure out what the deeper reason is. It's enough to allow what is to be and then see what happens.

It doesn't prevent you from taking action. If you can't take action, you take action. But in the meantime, the form that this moment takes is given space to be.

And there's the key. Then that which had looked like an obstacle, a blockage, becomes an opening into space consciousness. So the archetypal image of that that humanity has is the cross.

And people misinterpret it and even Christians don't fully understand the deeper significance of the cross because the cross is the worst thing that could possibly happen. It's an archetypal suffering. The man on the cross is humanity.

The cross is the archetype of suffering. The cross is a torture instrument. The cross means complete helplessness, complete pain, extreme pain.

But also it means surrender. Not my will, but thy will be done. Thy will is the will of the whole that has brought about the form that this moment takes.

And then surrender happens. And it's strange that the torture instrument is a symbol for the divine at the same time. And it turns into a symbol for the divine through the act of surrender.

Somebody once said, I don't know who, but it is very wise, that which stands in the way is the way. And I said in this book, Stillness Speaks, that which seemed to deny the existence of any transcendental dimension to life becomes an opening into that dimension. Because it sometimes happens that a grave, a serious illness, a dreadful disaster in your life, something going dreadfully wrong to someone close to you, it seems to deny any meaning.

It destroys often people's belief. Christians sometimes come to me and say, I've lost my faith because this or that has happened to me or to my wife or to my children, my son. And I can't just, how could that happen?

I've been, they don't realize that they were still at a childish stage in their faith. They had some deal with God. If I do the right things, nothing bad.

Okay, do we have a deal? I do all the right things, then nothing bad will happen. But that's not how the universe, because what they're saying is no form will ever dissolve in my life.

I will not encounter death or the accidental dissolving of some form. And so they came, and it was good that they lost their faith, because then they went deeper. After losing their faith, they realized that that level of faith was childish, although it, for a while, it helped them, and then it didn't work anymore.

So they had to lose and then go deeper to something far more substantial than that and learn to, the deep lesson that is there, when you totally accept any form of death in your life, because very often it is that something dissolves, something leaves you, comes to an end, and it looks bad, and then you allow it to be. Now, you may not be able to allow it to be immediately. The pain, the pain that you feel, the emotional pain may be there, and there's nothing you can do.

You weep, but then you allow that to be. It does not matter where you begin to allow what is to be. Ideally, you allow the form at this moment to be as it is totally, and so there's no arising of any pain.

But that is not always possible yet for humans. So sometimes, an event like the death of somebody close to you, the death of a parent, the death of a sibling, or even more hard, more difficult, the death of a child, it happens. Forms dissolve in their own time.

There's no predicting when a life form, the form will dissolve, and so pain will come. You may weep, and you may experience that's the sadness, and there you can allow that to be, so that it comes to be space around what you feel. There's a deep allowing of the sadness that you feel, and then there's space around it.

And that's how you may feel that the sadness, underneath it, you've already touched the peace underneath the sadness. It's already there. But you have to allow the sadness, not saying, I shouldn't be feeling sad.

I should be feeling peace. I shouldn't be feeling sad. I should be allowing this moment.

No, but that's not the fact of this moment. The fact of this moment is what you feel at this moment. So the yes to what is, the primary yes is to whatever arises.

The secondary yes is the yes to whatever you feel about that which arises. In the smaller example, you're on the road, the car breaks down, a little thing goes wrong, depending what country you're in. In some country, your life may be threatened if you get stranded by the road, or in some big city in North America too, in some parts of big cities.

But so it could be a big thing or a relatively small thing. And again, you may just, you may succeed in this not-so-big event to say, that's how it is. And then you face it completely and say, okay, what action can I take?

You become still and then action happens. But it's possible also that you look at the engine and you go, oh, but no, this is not okay. And suddenly you become conscious of what you feel, the anger that arises.

And then you go, oh. And what can you do? You have to, it is what is.

At this moment, there's anger. And then comes the secondary allowing. You allow the inner, what is on the inner.

You give that space. Because the amazing thing is, whatever emotion is passing through your system, there's always far more space than the emotion. You just have to find it.

There's a vast spaciousness in you that is greater than any emotion that can hold any emotion and allow it to be. It's there. So there's suddenly some space around the anger.

You've stepped back from the anger into space. There's always more space than things in space. You can verify that tonight.

The sky may be clear tonight, still be clear. And you look up into, you go away from the few lights that there are. You can see vast stars, suns.

Most of the stars that you see, except for the few planets, are suns at great distances. And you only see a tiny fraction of the infinite vastness of the universe. And when you look, you can see there are two dimensions.

There are things in space, and there's space. So easy. There are things in space, and there is space.

But that which is awe-inspiring about when you look up there is not the things in space. What is awe-inspiring is the vastness of it. Infinite, unimaginable vastness of space.

Billions, not just billions of suns, billions of worlds of galaxies. Each galaxy consists of billions of suns. Vast.

And you look, it stops your mind when you truly look. Unimaginable vastness. Yes, the suns and whatever else is there is beautiful to look at, but that sense of sacredness of unimaginable vastness is the space that you look into.

And this is just the external version of what is within you. Within you also, because you're only a microcosm, microcosmic version of the universe, in you also there are things, objects in your consciousness, and there is the vastness of consciousness itself. The uncreated.

Buddha calls it the unborn, the uncreated, the unformed. He doesn't, and this is so wise to put it like that, because by saying that it is almost impossible to make it into a mental object, because the word itself denies itself as an object. It denies itself by saying the unborn, on the one hand you have a word that is an object in consciousness, but the object in consciousness denies its very existence as an object.

This is why the Buddhist teaching is so profound. So he says to his monks, there is, oh monks, that's how he addresses his monks in the translation, there is, oh monks, an unborn, uncreated, unformed, unmanifested. And then it goes on, it's a little bit stylized sutra, if there were not an unborn, uncreated, unformed, unmanifested, there would be no escape from the world of the born, the created, the formed, and the manifested.

Beautiful pointer. So isn't it amazing that you encounter it, not by running away from the world of forms around you, not by attempting to escape the limitations that the world of forms seems to impose on you continuously, and there's this longing for freedom in every human being. And most human beings look at their life situation as a set of limitations around them.

It usually is, because every form is limited. Even if you were extremely wealthy after a while, that would become a limitation on you. You have to have walls around your big house and need bodyguards to go out.

So, and then there are the limitations that the body at some point becomes a limitation on you, no matter how fit it is at this moment, eventually you'll grow old and it may be a little more difficult to get up.

[Speaker 2] (1:04:56 - 1:04:59)

Oh, my back hurts.

[Speaker 1] (1:05:00 - 1:27:42)

Or a more serious limitation, and many limitations happen because form is limitation. And there's a longing in humans for freedom from limitation. Freedom.

And people believe that this freedom can be found in some situation. This is not to say that you cannot improve your life situation, it is wonderful to do that, work to improve your life situation, live in a nicer place, but not as in believing that that will free you. It's nice because when you play with the world of form, it's nice to have beautiful forms around you if you can, but don't depend on them too much, because you juggle these forms and then one drops, and then before you know another one drops, and then somebody throws you on more.

Okay. So the escape from limitation is not the escape from the limitations of form in your life, it's through the seeming limitations, by allowing the form of this moment, which quite often seems to be a limitation on your life, by allowing it internally to be as it is. So one could almost say you walk through the limitation, not away from it, you don't run away from it, you face it.

And as you face it, allow it to be, it's no longer a limitation, that's inner freedom. So you find inner freedom often in the worst of circumstances people have found it. They found it in prison camps, they found it through serious illness, they found it through serious disability, they found it through loss of everything that they had and identified with, and suddenly they were driven into acceptance of what is.

And then the very limitation around them became an opening. And so some people in prison are living this teaching also. I get more and more letters from people in prison who have become free in prison.

And some reported, a couple, that they got released prematurely and they were not even up for parole. Suddenly it happened. But it was a secondary bonus.

The miracle is that often a difficult situation, even on the external level, changes and shows a more benign face. But that is a secondary bonus that you get as you surrender. And that it is truly miraculous what you can experience as you, as there's a shift in that consciousness, how quickly an external situation can turn around, how quickly help can come in, because you now cooperate with life, which is now, never not now.

You cooperate with this moment. There's no resistance to life, which is now. And then life can help, because the entire universe is a field of intelligence.

Nothing is dead. Everything is an expression of that intelligence, that consciousness. It's in the very space in this room.

And then it gets through the human, it becomes focalized, but it's all pervasive. The human is like a magnifying glass that you hold because there's sunshine and then you have, it concentrates it. But it's everywhere.

And then life becomes helpful in sometimes miraculous ways. Suddenly the right person comes, the right event comes, the right thing comes. But this is not, this is what Jesus calls the things that you need will be added unto you.

It is secondary. The inner shift is primary. What Jesus describes as finding the kingdom of heaven, which is here now, not over there, some other place, some other time, that is primary, that shift.

And then what happens in the world of things is secondary. But miraculously, more often than not, a shift in the world of things will reflect the inner shift. And if it doesn't, the energy that you bring to it will change it.

So in other words, maybe they won't release you yet from prison, maybe you're still there, and yet you become a factor in that place that usually would be called bad, that is healing and brings enormous help and healing to all, to those around you. There are people who are now teach, who are in prison and teach this already. So they are exactly where they are meant to be.

It's amazing how either the situation changes or that which you bring to the situation changes. And so the quality feel of the situation becomes different. And so the work then is, you can now see, to welcome the moment, no matter what form it takes, particularly if it looks not good on the surface.

That's where the power, your work, if you can call it work, I don't like that word, but particularly when this work becomes powerful, when applied to all those many events in your life that look not right, wrong, shouldn't have happened, it's not what I want. There you apply becoming friendly with what is. Then the limitation of what is becomes your portal into freedom from the form, your dependency on the forms, your inner dependency for your sense of who you are, your sense of well-being, of peace on forms.

That goes. And so then you can say what Jesus said, I have overcome the world, he said. People didn't understand what he was talking about.

Maybe one or two understood. How can he say I've overcome the world? He has no power at all.

Where's his army? He doesn't have, he's powerless. How he hasn't over, he was talking about the inner realm, dependency on things for his inner state.

Because all these, the teachings of humanity, the deep teachings, they do not come from a person. They are nobody's possession or achievement. They come when someone, a person, a human form becomes transparent in their personal selfhood.

The objects become loose and let through space consciousness. There are still some objects in the mind, yes, this and that, but not self-identification with the objects. So they don't form this crust of self that blocks that which is underneath.

So there's, it can come, it comes through. You become transparent to that spaciousness. And then something comes through you into this world.

It may be through words. It may be through action. It may be through a simple, invisible emanation of your being that does something to, even to this world of things.

It changes things here too. It makes it more harmonious, a more benign place to be, a less harsh place. Yes, where polarities still exist, but in a more benign way.

In other words, you become an instrument for healing, in a very wide sense of the word, for peace. Peace comes through you into this world. And it is the peace that you cannot understand, that Jesus didn't understand either, because he said, the peace that passes all understanding.

So in other words, he didn't understand it either. His mind didn't understand. The way it comes from the depths of it, you become a field of peace in this world.

It's almost as if something from another dimension came through you into this world of form and affects the world of form. So the, this is your destiny also, to become that transparency as you, as the crust of identification with mental objects breaks up, dissolves, something shines through. And so in many of you, you already bring, as you go out into the world, you bring peace into situations simply by being there, by not stepping out of the old reactive consciousness.

We'll be talking again what that means in relationships in more detail. So when you allow the form that this moment takes to be your own form, the psychological form of me, becomes somewhat transparent. When you resist the form that this moment takes, your own psychological form, the form of me, becomes more solidified, rigid, impenetrable.

And you can actually feel that in yourself. When you go into a situation and you have contraction and resistance, you argue you won't need to be right. And you can see in that need to argue, to be right, to win.

Your own psychological sense of self contracts and becomes more hardened. The me, you get a stronger sense of self, a stronger sense of who you are. But it's the illusion of who you are.

When you can triumph over somebody and show them that you are right and not they, or that you have more than they, or you know more than they, or can do more than they, or you are more miserable than anybody else, it works either way. As long as it's more, you are ill, I've been ill for years. I have more than you.

I may not have more money than you, but I'm more ill than you. And this is the madness of the human condition. When you resist what is, the form hardens the self.

And when you allow what is, it softens. And as it softens, it becomes transparent. And something shines through that is spacious.

You become spacious. And I am sure it also does something even to your physical form. Although scientists don't know, haven't discovered what that is.

Maybe they haven't examined a surrendered human being yet. Maybe they haven't heard about it yet. And as humanity begins to live in this way, or a larger part of humanity, of course, it is likely that the physical organism will also undergo changes.

Perhaps there'll be even more space than there is already. Already you consist of 99% empty space. Scientists know that.

The atoms, the space between the atoms that make up your body is so vast that you are more than 99% empty space. In Zen Buddhism, they have satori. Satori is a sudden flash, a sudden realization.

Not always lasting, but it's there. Sometimes accompanied by shouting or laughter. And then you have the Chinese fat Buddha who never stops laughing.

Continuous satori. Tomorrow evening, when it comes, of course, it won't be tomorrow. Tomorrow evening, I believe there's a film that you can go and see that is a very good film.

It's called Fierce Grace about the life of Ram Dass and his stroke and how that changed him and the meaning of adversity and pain. It kind of illustrates also what we have been addressing here. Also, if any questions need to be asked, there is no...

I don't want to devalue questions. No question, however, is ultimately vital. Many questions arise from the mind, but there are some questions that you feel you truly need to know the answer to, and it may not have yet come through you.

If you become still enough, the answer to any question, the answer if you need it, it will come through you. But if there should be questions, you can write them on a little piece of paper and leave them. There may be a basket or something like that there tomorrow, after the session tomorrow.

And I'll look through them, and maybe a few will jump out and address them. A few will maybe questions that are very helpful to everybody. And questions that are purely mental, I may not have time to answer, nor may I have the answer to them.

For example, can you describe the lives of the future Buddhas? Or who were the past Buddhas? Or what about the life on planet so-and-so?

It's not vital to know that right now, for your liberation. So use whatever the moment presents, both the beauty that is out here, and anything else that may happen. They're all openings.

The beauty too is an opening. The beauty that you see, the beauty that you listen to. Remember what we started with today?

Enter Zen from there, from this moment, whatever it is. Pay attention, be alert, watch. If you resist this moment, you cannot be attentive to what is.

Remember to work with the sounds, bring awareness to the sounds around you, and sense the awareness itself as yourself. So you are that awareness, you are that consciousness, and the personal appearance, the appearance of you as a person, is a temporary disguise of consciousness. Hide and seek.

Let's pretend that I'm a human, a person. Oh, that will be fun. And let's play some dramas.

Yes, but for the dramas, you have to forget completely who you are. Okay, then let me forget completely who I am, and play the drama. And then you get tired of the drama.

After a few hundred thousand years, and then after we've played, let's wake up. Oh, thank you.

Eckhart Tolle - Session 03 Video 02 Approved [PeZzYVzZ]

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 13:58)

But when I get really afraid of losing all my money in the stock market, of getting sick or losing a loved one, how do I handle that? Fear again. The question is about fear.

How do I handle the fear of catching a disease, of losing everything? Many people are experiencing not only the fear now of the virus, they're also experiencing the fear of the repercussions of what's happening. Businesses are closing down, everything is closing down.

It's a very strange thing that this is happening. It's like an enforced closing down of the business, not just the business, but the busyness of the world, an enforced sudden ending of all that. Many planes are not flying anymore.

Some cities are empty of people. Suddenly, as if, because until this happened, the world was absurdly busy. Noisy, busy, everything was in movement.

Everything was lost in the world, lost in the mind. And suddenly, as if somebody said, look, let's turn it off for a while. Oh, enforced stillness almost.

Exactly what millions of humans actually need to experience. It doesn't mean that they will automatically also experience the inner stillness, but there is a possibility of an awakening for many if they can go beyond the fear, the fearful thoughts. But how do you go beyond the fearful thoughts?

Well, it requires a little bit of awareness. But if you are here with us, you probably have that awareness. What I mean by that is the awareness of what's going on in your mind.

To recognize rather than total identification with what's going on in your mind, you have in the background an awareness of what's going on in your mind. Very different because it's a different dimension of consciousness, the awareness. It's I'm thinking all these useless thoughts, but that realization, I'm verbalizing it now, because we are communicating through language.

But that realization that all these useless and destructive thoughts are going through my head, that is a realization that is not verbal. It's pre or post-verbal because it comes through the awareness. And there's a simple recognition that what's going on in your mind is not helpful.

It's making you fearful and unhappy. So it is to be tackled there. All these, the problem that he mentions, he mentions, or he or she mentions three, fear of losing all my money or my savings, my investments, what I've been saving, of getting sick, or something bad could happen to a loved one.

So you have fear for yourself, you have fear for others. And of course, all these things are not happening now, the things that you fear, but they could happen, says the mind. So I better think about it now because in case it does, of course, if they did happen, you would face the situation you have with the power of your conscious awareness, you would face the sickness, you would face the loss of money, and you would even face the loss of a loved one or the suffering of a loved one.

With the power of your presence, you can face that. But what you cannot do, you cannot overcome these problems or face them because they only exist in your imagination. They haven't even happened yet.

Therefore, there's absolutely nothing you can do about them. In fact, they will simply amplify. The more you think about them, the more they become amplified.

It's a totally illusory realm that is making you suffer. And so if there's a minimum of awareness, you can suddenly become aware of what it is that you are doing to yourself. Well, it's not that you're voluntarily doing it to yourself, but I could say it is happening to you.

So you become aware of what is happening to you because the thoughts in your mind, virtually all the thoughts in the absence of awareness happen to you. They are not voluntary. So people say, I think this, I think, you don't think.

The thinking happens to you when you're not aware. You're at the mercy of thought. You are at the mercy of the energy field that is what we call thought.

It lives in you. You are possessed. You don't know it.

The moment you realize it, that this is not the fearful thinking, isn't something that you do. Because if it's something that you do, you say, yeah, I'm doing it, but I can't stop it. No, you are not doing it.

It happens to you. So some people say, well, perceive it as, well, why am I doing this to myself? Well, that's already, it's a good first step.

Why am I making myself suffer by thinking all that? And then the next step is you realize, well, it's not really me doing it. It's the self-serving thought forms that are swirling around in my mind continuously that are making me unhappy, that have no useful purpose.

I'm not helping myself or anybody by thinking these things, by projecting bad things that could or will, that could happen. And so with the awareness of what's going on in your mind comes the first time a moment of freedom. Because before you had no free will.

Without awareness, you have no free will. You're at the mercy of a conditioned mind. So what do you do?

So you have recognized that what's been happening to you fulfills no useful purpose. That's an important realization, because before you, there is an assumption in the unconscious mind that unless you worry a lot, then you're not controlling your life. There is the delusion that the more you think about useless, you don't know it's useless.

The more you think about the problems of your life, then you need to continue thinking in order to hold it all together. You need to really worry all the problems of the world. If you don't worry, then your life will fall to pieces.

It's the underlying assumption. Of course, it's a delusion. So the worrying, the fearful thinking does not want to end.

You need to know that, that it has a momentum. And you cannot fight it. If you fight it, you make it stronger.

You give it added energy. So it's not by willpower that you can stop it. Or, as I just said, you can stop it briefly, but not for long, through exercising willpower.

So you stop it simply by first recognizing the, not only the futility, but also the destructive nature of that type of thinking. And then you begin to see that a lot of the unhappiness is produced by the narratives in your mind. And at that moment, you have a choice.

You can continue being dragged along in the stream of fearful thinking. Or you can say, my choice is now to take my attention away from fearful thinking. I'm verbalizing it.

But where does it go? The fearful thinking wants all your, it wants all your consciousness continuously. It says, no, I'm letting go.

I want it. And then you say, no, I don't want to go that way anymore. It's very simple.

You bring your attention somewhere else. You need something at first. My recommendation is feel your inner body.

Direct your attention. Let's say you wake up in the night or in the morning. Direct your attention, instead of thinking, direct your attention into the inner energy field of your hands.

And then you hold it there. It's not, doesn't require willpower. It's just a simple decision.

And you hold it. You feel the inner aliveness in your hands. It becomes an anchor for stepping out of mind, being present.

Can you feel the energy in your hands? I can. And it's always wonderful.

I've been feeling the energy in my hands for many years. It's always fresh and new. And I don't tire speaking of it, because it's always fresh and new.

And of course, it's not just the hands. If you can't feel the energy in your hands, close your eyes and ask yourself if you're, let's say, your right hand, or if you're left-handed, your left hand. Ask yourself if your left or right hand is still there or not.

Is it still there? How do I know it's there? How can I know it's there right now?

Now, you can't know it because you remember it was there when you saw it a few seconds ago. That's not knowing that it's there, because it might have disappeared. You close your eyes.

You're not moving your hand. How can you know it's there? You can know it's there, but how does it happen?

What is it? How do you know it? You can feel it, but what is it that you feel?

You feel the energy within the hand. It's very subtle at first, so you need to be alert to feel it. But that alertness that then goes in the body is taken away from thinking.

And suddenly, your hand feels more alive than it was before. And that's only the beginning. You can feel both hands simultaneously, and then you realize you can also feel other parts of the body, your feet at the same time.

And legs. And then you become aware of an all-pervasive sense of aliveness in the entire body, energy field. And the amazing thing is, oh, by the way, you may also become aware that you're breathing, because that's connected with the body.

You're breathing into the body, and the breath flows in, and it flows out. And the more you become aware of your body, the more you become aware of your breathing. The more you become aware of your breathing, the more you become aware of the body.

There's a wonderful aliveness there. And what happened to your mind activity? It subsided almost completely or completely, because you cannot be aware of inner body and at the same time think.

A few fragments may be there of thoughts, but not a sustained stream of thinking. It's not possible, because all your attention, your consciousness has gone away from the conceptualizing mind into the inner body.

Eckhart Tolle - Talks at Google Eckhart Tolle in Conversation with Bradley Horowitz

[Speaker 3] (0:03 - 3:38)

Hello, everyone. Welcome. I'm Rich Fernandez from the Learning and Development Team here at Google.

So about six months ago, we wrote a letter to Eckhart Tolle inviting him to come here to Google. Eckhart, dude, come to Google, we said. Well, something along those lines.

We make some of the world's most valued and most used technology. We aspire to do epic stuff and to make a difference in the world. And yet, even as we create this dazzling technology, we want to be sure to pay attention to our own inner technology.

We want to ask ourselves the searching and far-ranging questions about how we're getting on in the world. As we optimize our technology, how can we also optimize our lives so that we can be our best selves? All of this is a lot easier said than done.

We operate in a hyperconnected world, always on. And we go at it with great pace and intensity. The urgent question of the day is how we can take an intelligent approach to our work and our lives with all of the demands of our time and attention.

Amidst this flood of information, how can we discern the signal from the noise in order to access and act on what is most essential to each of us? Eckhart Tolle takes a refreshingly contemporary approach to the question of what it means to live a meaningful and inspired life and with great intelligence. And in so being, how we can each experience a great sense of clarity, peace, and the joy of being alive.

So we're very lucky that Eckhart accepted our invitation and said yes to come here today. He knows our ethos, that we have a profound interest in being our best selves and doing meaningful and inspired work. We seek to change the world for the better.

And he understands that we understand that in order to transform the world, we must first render the necessary transformation within ourselves. So Eckhart is here today to assist and suggest with some things for us to consider. Eckhart Tolle has written best-selling books, including The Power of Now and A New Earth.

And they've sold millions of copies worldwide and have been translated into 33 languages. He is widely regarded as one of the foremost teachers on the subject of wisdom and conscious living. Joining Eckhart in conversation today is our vice president of product, Bradley Horowitz.

Now when we proposed to Bradley that he might engage in a dialogue with Eckhart as part of this tech talk, he was really excited, which makes sense because Bradley's cool like that. Bradley also helped create Google+, Google Apps, and Google+, which we all love. So without further ado, please join me in welcoming Eckhart Tolle and Bradley Horowitz as they discuss what it means to live with meaning, purpose, and wisdom in the digital age.

[Speaker 2] (3:52 - 4:47)

So on behalf of Google and all the many Googlers here and those tuning in from our overflow rooms, welcome. It's great to have you here. And it's very special to have you here.

I understand that you don't often visit corporations. And so this has been a journey we've taken together over the course of the day. Eckhart had a moment to meet with some of us earlier.

And we found that really valuable. And one of the things we discussed this morning was wisdom. And the difference between information and wisdom.

Google has a mission to organize the world's information. And I think if you think about the hierarchy, there's signal and data and information and knowledge. And at the very top of the pyramid is wisdom.

And I wondered if you could comment a little bit on what you understand to be the difference between information and wisdom.

[Speaker 1] (4:49 - 26:28)

Good question. Let's set that aside for just one moment to say how happy I am to be here, how impressed I am by what I have seen, and by the people who work here and the general energy field in the company. And if you have come, many young people here, if you've come straight from college, then I'm sure you don't know how lucky you are until you start working for another company.

Perhaps everybody who works here, as they would say in India, you must have very good karma to be working here. The openness of people that's reflected in the structure of the company, the way things are arranged, the little rooms that you have for quietness, for meditation, the cafeterias, and all that is just beyond belief. So I also experience an openness in the people who work here and far less ego, because many companies are still predominantly run by very big egos.

I'm not saying that everybody here is entirely free of ego yet, but much less so than in many other places. So it's wonderful to be here. And if my book sales ever decline and I need a job, I hope you will probably want, because first of all, I have no computer skills.

And secondly, I'm too old, since the average age here is probably about 30. So your question was important. I remember it.

I don't. Knowledge, information, and wisdom, how do they relate? Of course, with the technological revolution, information revolution, digital revolution, whatever you call it, there's an enormous amount of knowledge available to everybody.

Almost the whole of the world's knowledge, and there's the interconnectedness between people and so on. That's all very good, of course, to have all that accessible to you. Information, there's a danger, though, that you get drowned in too much information and too much knowledge.

And by drowned, I mean that the mind gets bombarded with an excess of input. And therefore, you miss something that is essential for a human life to be truly fulfilled. And that is a place of peace, inner peace or stillness, a place that one could describe as the source of all intelligence that many people don't actually don't even realize exists within them.

So I'd like to just talk briefly about that, that really, we're talking about the core of what spirituality means. Spirituality is not having a particular belief structure. It's not subscribing to a particular set of thoughts.

Spirituality is discovering a dimension within yourself that is, we can either say, deeper or higher than the continuous movement of thinking. And of course, all this information and knowledge is experienced in you as thought. So the thinking mind has always been active for many thousands of years in humans.

But now it's even more active than before, because it gets energized by the incredible increase in input. Before, all you had was the simple sensory input in your immediate surroundings. Then later came books, so you have the added input of that.

And then gradually came the mass media, and now this incredible revolution of information technology, computers, and so on. So it energizes that movement of thought that's taking place in every human, which in itself is not necessarily a bad thing. It only becomes a bad thing and self-destructive thing if that is all you experience inside you in your consciousness.

If all you ever experience is that, I call it sometimes mental noise, then you begin to derive your identity from the thoughts in your head, what the thoughts tell you about yourself, and you are trapped in that identity that is based on identification with thinking. All spiritual teachings point to the possibility of finding something in you that is deeper than thinking, a space, a stillness that's always there. And the informational excess of information, you can only successfully deal with that if you have a balance in your consciousness between using your mind to absorb information, to put out new information, to work on the information that you have taken in, input.

If you have a balance between that and something that is deeper than thought in you. And really, instead of giving you new knowledge here, I don't want to do that, because I don't want to add to the knowledge that you're taking in anyway, far more than you ever need. So instead of giving you knowledge here, I'd like to suggest that you experience at first hand in yourself that place of, I call it sometimes a presence, where you are alert, conscious, but not thinking.

And every creative person has some access to that realm. If you have a truly creative insight, you have to go to that place that is deeper than analytical thinking. Analytical thinking itself, or processing information, is not creative.

So even to find a creative, a new solution to a problem in your life requires some creative insight. So whether it's a problem in your work situation, or your personal life, or something that you need to build or do and you have come to a dead end, or you want to create something, whatever it is, a work of art, or a new system for the computer, I don't know the expressions for that, you need to go to the place where creativity arises. And every human who is creative has some access to that, even if they don't know it.

But it's not only the place where creativity arises, it's also the place that gives sanity to your life, to find a place of stillness, peace, aliveness, where you are not burdened by most, a lot of the time, unnecessary mental noise. So when you do start thinking again, it actually can be more productive. So where is that place?

How do you find that place if it's there in everyone? How do I realize that within myself? That's really the question.

I can just suggest to you three or four entry points into that state of consciousness. And after I've done that, we can carry on the conversation. A very simple entry point, and this is why my first book is called The Power of Now, is the realization that your entire life consists of the present moment and only the present moment ever.

Now, most people, perhaps in some abstract way, they know that, but they cannot sense or feel the truth of that. And I'd like to invite you to actually sense and feel the truth of what I'm saying, which even if there's a great philosopher here, he or she cannot argue with this statement that whatever you experience ever is present moment. Your entire life unfolds in the present moment.

That's all you ever have. Most people don't live as if this were true. They live as if the opposite almost were true, as if the future moment were more important always than the next one.

And that happens because of excessive identification with thinking, because usually the thoughts are about the next thing, the next, and the next, or what could happen, or might happen, and so on. So if you can just come to this realization, well, this is all I ever have and ever experience is this moment. This is undoubtedly true.

There is nothing else ever. And at that moment, when you fully realize that, you can only realize that an alertness arises in you, you become alert to, one could almost call it, the presence of the power of this moment, of the power of life itself in this present moment, which consists of, yes, it consists of sense perceptions. It also consists of, well, let's look, what is this present moment?

This present moment is this room, what we perceive here, what we visually, what we see here, the lights, the totality of the room. So let's become alert so that we can really perceive that. And beyond that which we perceive in this room, is there anything else that we could call the present moment?

Well, if you look deeply enough, yes, there is also the inner energy field in your body that you can actually feel, that you are alive, in your legs, your arms, your feet, that's also part of the present moment, to sense the energy field that pervades the physical body, that's also something you can feel. So there's external sense perceptions. And there's the feeling, the aliveness inside your body.

And if you're totally in thinking, you can't feel that at all, you don't feel alive, you're only alive in the upper story of the house, your head. The entire house you don't inhabit then. So you inhabit, you begin to inhabit the entire body.

This becomes part of your experience of the present moment. So sense perceptions, yes. And there is an aliveness even to artificial light.

Of course, you might say, I prefer sunlight. OK, me too. But there's a beauty and aliveness even to artificial light.

And there's a beauty and aliveness that is usually overlooked that's in the texture of this chair here, or whatever you're wearing, and certainly the flowers. And suddenly you become aware of that. And that's not all yet.

We're just going into the present moment. So you have that, externals, and you suddenly appreciate the aliveness of all the things that surround you. Other people have to take acid to get there.

So you don't need that. You know with acid people, sometimes they look at a teapot and they say, wow. Oh my god.

But you don't need to do that. Just be present. And then you appreciate the beauty even of a mass-produced teapot.

If it's handmade and hand-painted, even nicer. But even a mass-produced teapot has a presence there. It's there.

And it's in a live energy field. Every physicist will tell you it's not a dead teapot. It's molecules and atoms in continuous movement.

Everything is vitally alive. And you miss that if you're totally trapped in the mental noise all the time, taking in information. Present moment, sense perceptions.

So the inner energy field of the body. And then what else is there to the present moment? Then you have to go become really alert.

And the next thing that you notice about the present moment is really at the deeper level of the present moment. It's not something that arises in your consciousness, as does the table and this room, and even the inner energy field of the body. These are all things, objects, that arise in your consciousness.

But if you go deeper even into the present moment, what you encounter is the most incredible secret of human life, which is you encounter the fact that at the bottom of it all, you are conscious. There is the presence that you are, without which you couldn't perceive anything. You couldn't perceive this room.

And you couldn't feel the body without that consciousness that you essentially are, which Jesus, by the way, called the light of the world. He said to his disciples, you are the light of the world. And these disciples were not special people.

They were fishermen. So certainly he wasn't telling them that they are VIPs. They were the opposite of VIPs.

And yet he said, you are the light of the world. He also said it about himself. But he also said it about others.

And so you suddenly discover that essentially, at the most essential level, the essence of who you are is consciousness. But consciousness isn't something you can say, ah, there it is. Because consciousness cannot become an object to itself.

It's the eternal subject, the I am that I am of the Old Testament, where when God is asked for his or her name, God says, I am that I am. That is the essential identity of all beings. So when we talk about the present moment, we talk about different levels of the present moment, from sense perceptions, to the feeling of aliveness in the inner body, to the realization that ultimately, what we call the present moment and the light of consciousness are one and the same, because that's the thing that always remains.

And that consciousness, you can sense it as yourself, right now, the presence that you are, even beyond the physical presence. And that is the alertness, that is the realization that is sometimes called awakening. And that is the place of also of stillness, where you get out of the mental noise.

And that is the source place of creativity. That is intelligence that is non-conceptual. It's primordial intelligence.

And if you touch that in yourself, then at first as glimpses, as brief realizations, and then gradually integrated into your daily life, then you can live from that place, the source, and be not only a more productive human being, but also a more peaceful human being, because then you no longer contribute to the conflict in this world, because the conflict is only created by all those humans who don't know that level in themselves.

They don't know who they are. And again, to call Jesus again on the crosses and forgive them, they know not what they do. And why do they know not what they do?

They don't know who they are, essentially. So I've talked about this. And in the hope that as I'm speaking, there is an experience in you of really the depths of the present moment, because the present moment, people think its present moment is what happens.

And of course, because what happens changes all the time, people say there are many present moments. If you look more deeply, of course, there are not many present moments. There's only ever this present moment.

There's only this ever. So there are not many present moments. There's only the space of this moment.

So there's what happens in it, and there is the space in which it happens, and that space is consciousness. And that is who you are. And when you realize that, you become free of the false sense of self, which your mind tells you something about who you are, which has to do with your history, and your successes, or your failures, or what other people tell you who you are, a little present.

So that's really basically the essence of spirituality, which is very simple, but for some reason, it's not taught at school. All kinds of inessential things are taught at school. But what really matters, the very foundation of human life, and it's not some belief structure.

I'm not saying indoctrinate children. The children must believe. It's not belief at all.

It's an experience. It's a realization. That's what needs to be taught.

That needs to be subject number one at school. Who am I? And everything else is easy once you have that.

[Speaker 2] (26:32 - 27:37)

Well, I'm not sure I have any more questions. We'll press on. I want to ask you about the work that we do at Google.

And if you look at any given web page, it's almost a model of the mind. There's all of these jumping off points. You can jump to this story, or that story, or Hawaii vacation, or you can jump around so easily.

And in fact, the product I work on, Google+, allows me not only to examine the world, examine the contents of my own mind, but all of these people's minds as well, in a flood of a stream coming at me. And I'm wondering if the real reason you've chosen to come to Google today is because we're actively working against you. And you've come to help us get over that.

But more seriously, do you think there's a place for technology? And how do you make sense of the work that we're doing and how it impacts people's attention in relation to what you just described, sort of transcending the mind and going to a deeper place?

[Speaker 1] (27:40 - 42:13)

Well, the technology is quite miraculous, of course. In itself, it's neither good nor bad. I only recently, which means like two or three years, started using it.

I came to it very late. I've still haven't developed an addiction to it, as many people have. There are incredible possibilities here with that technology.

And there's also a great danger with that technology. It could lead to contribute to the awakening. And an example of that is our gathering here, which people can apparently see on their screen.

So this is just one example of how this technology can contribute to spreading a vital message. It goes far beyond any ideology or anything like that. Same thing, the work I did with Oprah some years ago for the first time, the webinar, as they call it, went out.

And the whole first time, the whole system broke down, because so many people tuned in. And then the second week, it started to work. We don't have that problem.

So there are incredible possibilities also for humans to connect with each other. Well, that's another topic, whether they're really connecting as human beings. But also, the fact that the flow of information is no longer monopolized by the powerful few corporations, but everybody can participate in that free flow of information, having led already to all these things, the Arab Spring and all those things that have been happening recently.

All that is potentially good. And the danger, of course, is, and again, that connects with what I've been talking about earlier, that you get more and more inundated with information, with knowledge, with mind stuff, so that you more and more lose a deeper sense of connectedness with being, with presence, that deeper level that I talked about just now. And that would then lead to increasing confusion in your mind and an inability, really, to create anything new anymore.

You would be just trapped in the continuously increasing mental noise. And if you look at people in this field who do come up with something really creative that is new, they all have some access to that deeper level in themselves, as I'm sure many of you have. And quite a few people don't even know that they have access to that.

It just happens. They become still. And they go for a moment, or a few, they go.

And you connect with the power inside you. You can actually feel that the power of consciousness inside you as you become still. And there's no mind movement in that.

It's a kind of open and listening that opens up. And then, after a while, the mind starts working again. And it's very often, then you have an answer, or then you have the creative solution on some new insight.

But if you don't go there anymore, if you get continuously drawn only into the noise, the mental noise, then you lose touch with your own power. And you become more and more confused. And it could easily happen that what now looks like miraculous technology, within two generations, could lead.

I'm not saying that it will. And we are here now, so there's hope. It could lead to a complete breakdown of civilization.

So here you have this miraculous technology. And two generations later, all humans walk around like zombies. It could happen.

It's an idea for a science fiction novel, perhaps. But it could happen because it's neither good nor bad. If we are not careful, it could draw us in to such an extent that we lose ourselves in our own creation, that we have created something that's an old mythological theme.

We create a kind of entity that becomes a monster. And then our own creation devours us. That could happen.

It doesn't have to happen. So this is, I believe, why I've come here, as a little warning. If you're not careful, then what looks so wonderful here could turn out to be a monster.

But it doesn't have to be. It could turn out into something wonderful that contributes to the awakening of humanity. We need to recognize its dangers.

The danger is that this screen that you look at, of course, connects with your mind. It links into your mind. And then you link into the collective mind on the screen.

And it grows and grows. The noise grows and grows. And you become more and more confused and completely uncentered.

You walk around. I mean, youngsters who are so addicted to their screen, they can't give attention anymore to another human being, to their parents or others. There's always something.

OK. What? I have an iPhone.

I have to hide this here. That's why it's so vital. If you work with your screen all the time, then what do you do?

You have to recognize the danger. And you have to give yourself some space many times during the day, even if it's just one minute at a time. Give yourself space so that a balance arises between that interaction with the screen, which is the collective mind, and connectedness with beings, the way we could put it.

So I sometimes suggest to people to put a flower or a potted flower next to their computer screen so that from time to time, they look at that for half a minute, even a few seconds, and really look or learn to take a breath, a conscious in and out breath. Let's call that a mini meditation. Meditation is very helpful for many people, not for everybody.

If you find it hard to meditate, use mini meditations. One mini meditation is one conscious breath. What does that mean, conscious breath?

It means you look away from the screen. If you can, look at something natural, a plant or the sky. But if not, that's fine.

Look at a light, artificial light, whatever it is. And breathe in and follow the breath with your attention into the body. And then follow it with your attention as it flows out of the body.

What does that do? It takes attention away from thought and puts it into the body. In other words, it creates a space in your consciousness.

Because while you are following the breath with your attention, you are not thinking. And when you are not thinking, but you haven't gone to sleep, you've created a space in your consciousness. And there, that's it.

So that's just one conscious breath occasionally. Two is even better, or three, but that's fine, that's enough. And of course, that's the oldest...

One of the oldest forms of meditation is conscious breath, probably already recommended by the Buddha, who was supposed to have said, just be conscious of your breath for one hour and you'll be totally enlightened. But if you miss just one, you have to go back to the beginning. LAUGHTER And feeling the inner body.

If you don't have... Nature is very helpful to take you out of your mind, although many people walk around nature and they're still in their minds. But if you can interact with the natural world, the trees, the park, the beach, the mountain, the forest, walking occasionally, and pay attention, truly pay attention to what you see without interpreting, that can bring you into connectedness with being and into the present moment.

Your dog, a wonderful thing I noticed here, people are allowed to bring their dogs. That makes an enormous difference to the energy field, not to every home and to the company. When you interact with a dog, there's a moment when you're not actually thinking.

That's why it feels so good, because you know the dog is not thinking about you. LAUGHTER Although you might have heard the saying, please, God, make me into the person that my dog thinks I am, the fact is the dog isn't thinking. That's why the dog relates to you with unconditional love, because the dog doesn't judge you, and you know that the dog doesn't judge you, and therefore the dog does not stimulate your thinking mind.

It actually frees you for a moment from your thinking mind. That's why people laugh when they see... Unless you have a phobia, that's a different matter.

Most people laugh interacting with a dog. Cats also, but let's talk about dogs, because they're here in the company. So when you pet a dog or even just look at a dog and the tail wags, there's something liberating there for a moment, and that's why humans respond to the dog, and you go, oh!

If you look very closely inside yourself, at that moment, there's a moment when you're not thinking, when you're interacting with a dog. Unless you're so obsessed with your mind that you immediately judge the dog. That can happen, too.

I've met people like that. But for most people, it's a liberating thing, because the dog is nature in its beauty and aliveness, has not arrived yet at the stage of thought that humans have had to go through. So you experience that aliveness of nature in the dog.

So, okay, you have that, and if you don't have a dog, that's fine, too. You can feel nature as the inner energy field in your body. And you can even practice on the computer screen while you're looking at something.

See if you can be in two dimensions at the same time while you are looking. Don't do it at first when there's something extremely demanding. But just when there's some kind of routine thing you're checking on the screen.

And see if you, while you're looking, you can feel the inner energy field of your body, as you do perhaps now, in the background, so to speak. I recommend that as a kind of meditation. You can practice it when nothing is happening on the screen first.

Or put a flower on the screen and look at that and see if you can, at the same time, feel the aliveness in your energy field that keeps you rooted in being. And then you don't lose yourself totally in the collective mind that comes at you through the screen. That's a beautiful, I highly recommend that.

Put a little reminder on your computer screen, a little thing that says, Inner Body, or whatever else you want to call it, so that you remember. And you will find you're more energized. It's extremely energizing to sense that, to be connected with that.

And so one could call that the balance between doing and being in your life. Because thinking is part of doing. Doing is not just what you do physically.

Thinking is also a kind of doing. But the human needs the two dimensions, being and doing. If that balance is lost, you could lose it in being, but that's not the danger of our civilization.

There may be some Indian yogis who get lost in being and don't want to get up anymore because they're so happy in being that there's no need to get up anymore, or even put food in their mouth. That's fine. I'm not talking to them.

I would have to have a different message for them. But I'm talking to this civilization, people who are lost, or who get too much doing, which really is thinking. There the balance is between being and doing.

And even if it doesn't have to be 50-50, 20%, it's hard to put a figure to it.

[Speaker 2] (42:13 - 42:14)

We like to measure things.

[Speaker 1] (42:15 - 42:32)

I know, yeah. So 25% being, 75% doing, then you're doing very well. Even 10% being would make your life much easier and much more enjoyable.

[Speaker 2] (42:34 - 42:44)

I want to remind the Googlers this dual presence technique of being and doing. Please don't do that while coding on the GFS, Big Table, or Megastore systems.

[Speaker 1] (42:45 - 42:47)

I don't know what you're talking about.

[Speaker 2] (42:50 - 43:16)

I do have a question. I think most of us are engineers and technologists, and we live a lot in the realm of thoughts and ideas and in our head, and not necessarily in our being. My wife has also described to me these things called feelings that some people have as well.

Could you speak about feelings of anger and frustration and happiness and how they relate to this experience of being?

[Speaker 1] (43:16 - 50:09)

Yes. Sometimes words are used in a loose way, and sometimes what I just described, I sometimes call it feeling the inner body. That word is a very vague word, so it can be used to describe what we are just talking about, feeling the inner body, but then there's a different kind of feeling, and that's feeling an emotion, for example, that arises.

So basically, there's thoughts. Let's look at your entire life. Your entire life consists of, basically, sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions.

I think that's about it, right? Sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions. Put them together, mix them up.

That's my life. Okay. So that applies to everybody.

Now, the particular mixture differs from person to person. What exactly goes into the sense perceptions and the thoughts and the emotions varies slightly from person to person, but basically, that's the mixture. Now, the question is, you can't escape that.

Of course, that's normal life. Is there anything else? Sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions.

Okay, let's see. There must be something else, because how do I know that there's sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions? Is the ability to recognize, to have a sense perception based on thinking?

No, because to have a sense perception, you don't really need to think. You can just look and see. So what else is there?

And this is a key thing. There is something else apart from sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions, which is, we could call it an awareness. There is a sense perception.

There is an emotion. There is a thought. And that is, we could call that pure consciousness.

Otherwise, how could you have a sense perception? So there is something there that enables sense perceptions to be there, that enables a thought to be there, that enables an emotion to be there. And that is the one, that is the thing that in most humans is hidden.

In other words, they don't know it's there, because that is presence, which we could also call consciousness, which we could also call awareness. And that is the spiritual dimension, and that is the awakening. Once you realize that that is there, we could also describe that as the space for all those other things.

So let's compare this room to your consciousness, and then we say, OK, there's the furniture in the room, there's the bodies in the room, and there are the other lights in this room. Those things are in this room. So if I asked you to describe the room, you would probably describe it in terms of the furniture in it, the walls, the ceiling, whatever you see.

When you describe that room, you would miss the most essential thing about this room, because it's so obvious that you miss it, which is the space that really is the essence of this room. It isn't the walls or the ceiling or the floor or the furniture or the bodies in this room. The essence of this room is the space in this room.

But space is not something tangible that you can say, Ah, there it is. Where? And the same thing applies to inside.

The space of consciousness is the very thing that enables everything else to be, but it's very much like the fish in water that's asked, that says, Why are you always talking about water? You haven't shown it to me yet, says one fish to the other. The other fish is a spiritual teacher.

So what water are you talking about? Where? What water?

And of course, you can't, it's everywhere. It's inside you, it's outside you. But the amazing thing is you can be aware of it, but not as an object, but as the awareness itself.

Ah, I got it now, I got it. But you can't say what it is. You can't say, there it is.

That reminds me of something I read in the New Testament where he said, The kingdom of heaven does not come with signs to be perceived. You cannot say, it's over here or it's over there. But truly, I tell you, the kingdom of heaven is within you.

Somebody said that 2,000 years ago, but very few people in the churches understand the depth of it. It gets completely misinterpreted. But that's the depth of, that's the deepest spiritual teaching.

Now that kingdom of heaven, that spaciousness that's in you, it cannot be observed as if it were a chair because it is the observing agent. It is that which makes all observation possible. So it cannot become an object to itself because it is the eternal subject, the I, consciousness itself, the light of the source, you could call it, the light of God, the light of the One.

The ancient Greek philosopher called it the One. It's a beautiful term. And the Buddha didn't call it anything because he said, If I call it something, people will make it into some idol.

So better not call it anything. So when they asked the Buddha, What about God? Well, what they say is, when he was asked that question, he kept noble silence.

And, of course, that noble silence itself is a state of presence. So they asked the Buddha, Tell us about God. And he went, And that's the answer.

[Speaker 2] (50:14 - 51:01)

So you've given us some clues on how to explore this within ourselves. You mentioned changing the balance and things we could do with the breath and a note on our computer monitor and looking at nature. These are some very practical suggestions.

I often find for myself that the time when I would probably most benefit from connecting to that part of myself is the time when I'm least able to. It's the time when I'm very activated and I'm either emotional about something or lost in thought or in the heat of the moment. Do you have any suggestions for how to sort of find that even in the midst of these sort of challenges that come along throughout life?

[Speaker 1] (51:05 - 1:01:25)

First, I recommend that you practice when you're not being challenged because if you can't do it then, then when you're being challenged, it's impossible. So first you practice when you're relatively undisturbed and there's a moment after getting up or you take a short break in your normal daily routine or several short breaks, one-minute breaks, half-minute breaks. So when you're not being challenged then you bring in that awareness.

You become the awareness. You go into the present moment perhaps as I described just now starting with sense perceptions, become alert. An alertness is required to truly perceive things and immediately things become more alive and less problematic when you go into sense perception because the problematic dimension is in the head and you go into sense perception suddenly you go into the present moment and in the present moment problems disappear.

Isn't that strange? So the mind says, well I still have them. Yeah, when you start thinking about them you have them again.

But when you're not thinking about them you have no problems. Now some of you will argue with that but let me explain. You have situations in your life that can be challenging and you have to deal with these situations but the only place where you can deal with the challenging situations is in the present moment.

And dealing with a challenging situation in the present moment is not a problem. You're dealing with a challenging situation. You're facing it.

You're looking at it. And that looking is important. What I call looking really is putting your attention on it which is the power of consciousness.

And while you're looking you're not thinking. Every person who has achieved mastery in any field knows what I mean by looking because there's an absolute presence and then that person does what he or she does. It flows from that presence.

So you look. There's no problem. Problem is when you dwell mentally on something that will happen, could happen, might happen.

A problem is something I have to face next week but not now. And you're totally absorbed in that. That's problem.

An interesting thing I may have even written that in the power of now if you think you have problems ask yourself what problem do I have at this moment? But this moment really means this moment. And then you have to go, hmm.

Well, I've got my wife, my ex-wife is suing me. I'm about to lose my home. A person close to me is ill.

I might lose my job. I have to look for a new job. Okay, what problem do you have at this moment?

You're breathing, feeling the aliveness in the body, looking around. Well, at this moment I don't actually have a problem. You have to then admit if you really go into the present moment the problem cannot survive in the present moment.

That's an amazing realization. Doesn't mean that you no longer deal with what you need to deal with. You deal with it when the moment comes more effectively when you don't waste your life energy in the mental realm of creating problems that you cannot be dealt with at this moment.

And if you wake up in the middle of the night thinking about your problems and what you can do about them it's extremely unlikely that you find any solution by worrying at 4 o'clock in the morning about it. But if you came still at 4 o'clock in the morning and wake up and go into the inner energy field of the body rather than thinking about your problems in other words, leave the dimension of problems come deeply into the present moment then perhaps the next morning when you wake up you suddenly say, Oh, I know what I have to do now. I know how I can deal with it now.

And the right course of action happens because you've gone there but not through the problem-making faculty in the human mind. So, again, coming back to your question when things are, when you're not being challenged practice it. And then when you are being challenged by little things that goes wrong, so to speak, in daily life tends to happen, you might have noticed things don't always go according to your expectations sometimes you miss the bus or something, you miss the plane or something else goes wrong it tends to happen actually quite a lot.

It seems to be part of life. That's, by the way, it's the reason why people go to see movies because the substructure of every movie that you see we could call it, it applies to virtually every movie you see if you can examine any movie you see what actually happens in the movie I can describe every movie to you in three words something goes wrong. Because there wouldn't be a movie otherwise nothing would happen nobody would evolve everything would be dead but in your own life you complain so you'd see movies to see something go wrong but when it happens in your own life you complain, not you personally you've transcended it perhaps already but so the strange thing is things are not meant not to go wrong going wrong is part of the totality of how life experiences itself if things didn't go wrong it would be very uninteresting and nobody would evolve because people only evolve through the challenges that they encounter and in a good movie the protagonist or the character changes as he or she faces that which goes wrong in the movie in a bad movie so to speak, the character does not go through any changes that which goes wrong is only solved on an external level in the end the bad guy is killed and that's the end of the movie but nothing else happens so something going wrong is part of how life experiences itself and again you can then bring awareness to that so that you don't always fall into reactivity when something goes wrong but you immediately align with it or when people behave in a way that you find offensive or they behave in a way that they create difficulties for you because you wanted this and they want something else you don't have to go into hostility or opposition you can immediately say, oh, that's you see me, this is what is and then how can I approach that without the negativity and just accept that something has gone wrong it's not wrong at all it's called life so something going wrong really what it means is it's called life so you welcome every little challenge so it's a shift in attitude and then your practice becomes easier when you see, you can almost, almost welcome when things happen that before you called things going wrong little things and later big things oh, ok and then you evolve just as a character in a good movie I gave a talk I'm talking about this now because a week ago I was in L.A. and I gave a talk about transformational movies bringing consciousness into the movie industry I gave as an example two movies by Clint Eastwood an early one I think it was called Dirty Harry and that's the, although it's a very entertaining movie it's quite satisfying to watch because the bad guy gets killed in the end nevertheless, it's not a transformational movie in the end you might remember the memorable lines make my day when he is about to shoot the bad guy make my day, punk and that's the most satisfying moment in the movie for the viewer not a transformational but entertaining movie and then many, 30 years later Clint Eastwood made a movie again about bad guys and that movie was called Gran Torino if you haven't seen it, I recommend that you see it and that perhaps shows a shift in his own evolution because again, we are faced with bad guys but how that is solved well, resolved in the end is very different from the early movie I'm not telling you how here because if you haven't seen it you want to experience it for yourself so that's transformational Gran Torino it's the same actor and I think Clint Eastwood directed the Gran Torino one that probably shows the evolution of his own consciousness from the early stage to the later stage but here this really is a reflection of life you can resist continuously life or you can internally align yourself with life so that your life becomes a good movie rather than a bad movie

[Speaker 2] (1:01:30 - 1:02:06)

so if there's hope for the movie industry there's certainly hope for us, I think so we're going to take the time we have left and take questions both from the Google Moderator online system as well as live in the room here there is one mic in the center and so if you have a question you can approach that mic and if the technicians could get the Google Moderator questions up on the monitor here too that would be helpful and why don't you introduce yourself and maybe what you do at Google and then ask the question

[Speaker 7] (1:02:06 - 1:02:31)

sure, my name is Yonika and I do marketing so I'm one of the, you mentioned there's lots of engineers I'm one of those people that agrees with you and all those codes and terms you mentioned I have no clue what you meant earlier so I just wanted to know about your journey you had explained a little bit in the Power Hour Now about the nightmare of waking up when you're 29, 30 and I just would love to hear about it how you went from that state of anxiety into where you are right now

[Speaker 1] (1:02:32 - 1:09:20)

well Esai for most people the shift is a gradual process from one state of consciousness to another and occasionally it happens in some people as it happened to me that it happened well virtually overnight the shift from one state of consciousness to another and I was deeply depressed for many years and close to suicide several times and that night as I described in the Power Hour Now at the beginning I disidentified from the thinking mind it happened I didn't know that was what was happening it just happened I can't live with myself any longer I thought I was so dreadful I can't live with myself any longer and then suddenly an awareness came in I didn't know it was called awareness an awareness came in and looked at the thought and the thought suddenly looked very strange the thought seemed to consist of two people I and myself I can't live with myself so then another thought came am I one or two and who am I and who is that self that I can't live with that's almost a Zen like question and like all Zen questions it didn't really have an answer on the conceptual level so on the conceptual level I didn't get an answer but the answer was that the myself and the I suddenly separated and I realized although

I couldn't have explained it then that the myself was a mind created entity the me the poor little unhappy me it consisted of mind movement an identity a mental identity of an unhappy human being with an unhappy history and a very uncertain future that probably applies to many humans not if you work at Google that there was a separation and what was there was an I suddenly that saw that and that I years later I realized what that I was it was consciousness itself that had so before there was consciousness and thinking forming one a unity my consciousness was trapped in my thinking through the suffering at that night and looking at that sentence the consciousness separated itself from the movement of thinking and the self that I couldn't live with was not being sustained anymore by consciousness it was and it it kind of crumbled it was a false self that crumbled and what was left was simply a space of awareness and the next morning I felt very peaceful never felt that peaceful before nothing had changed in my environment and I couldn't understand it it took probably at least three, four years before I could begin to understand what had happened all I realized I'm suddenly so peaceful the whole world is peaceful what happened? so this the mind itself had had dissolved and later I talked to some Buddhist monks and others and through listening to them I said I realized when they talked about the teaching of the Buddha later I also realized that Jesus was talking about the same thing but I realized the the Buddha talked about the the delusional self the unreality of the self that the self is not real as it's called in the talk there is no self really anatta is the word in the Pali language in the Buddhist teaching it's an illusion that self is an illusion so when I talked to Buddhist monks I began to realize it was three years later oh that must have been what happened this must be why I feel so peaceful so understanding came much later the realization it kind of just happened and then it became a teaching so I'm now showing to people this is something that you can that can happen in your life but for most people it's a gradual process of disidentification from the thinking mind which doesn't mean you don't think anymore it just means your identity or yourself isn't trapped in it so the thinking is free of self and that's very liberating and you essentially who you feel yourself to be and who I feel myself to be is not to do with the physical form or my personal history or what I have achieved in life fortunately because otherwise you get unhappy if you for many years before I wrote The Power of Now and it became successful I was basically a failure in the eyes of the world so he's already almost 50 and what has he achieved my mom said you have thrown away your life you had so many possibilities in your life you walked out of graduate school in Cambridge why did you walk out of there my mom and many other people said this person has failed in life he has no job he has no insurance policies nothing no pension plan just almost nothing in the bank failure and then a few years later people bought The Power of Now and became a best seller oh a big success ok if I had derived my identity at that time from what the world was telling me or my mind would have told me if I had been listening to my mind I would have been very unhappy and I didn't so I was fine because my identity wasn't derived from that anymore and fortunately even when in the eyes of the world I suddenly became a success I don't want to derive my identity from that it's a cheap substitute for who I really am so I don't see I don't derive but the satisfaction that comes is the satisfaction that the work that's happening the teaching that's happening is transforming people's lives that's very satisfying I don't get any personal satisfaction though because it's not I don't feel it as this separate me produced it

[Speaker 2] (1:09:23 - 1:09:41)

I have a question about that you mentioned for you the transformation came quite suddenly and for others it happens more gradually do you have any sense of why that is is it because you had bottomed out and were having these feelings or is it because of a certain ripeness that had brought you to that moment or is it just inexplicable

[Speaker 1] (1:09:41 - 1:11:22)

I don't have the answer to that I don't know why some people have said well it must have something to do with past lifetimes maybe or whatever it is or maybe I suffered more deeply than others I don't know I think there are many people who suffer deeply so I don't have the answer to that I'm quoting the Dalai Lama who loves saying I don't know but usually after he says that he starts talking and then the answer is actually quite meaningful the wonderful thing is really what he's starting with is this space I don't know and then something comes but he doesn't say yeah I know probably as Socrates if you've read any Plato ancient Greek philosophy Socrates also taught in that way although in Plato perhaps I'm only talking to a few people here in Plato Socrates, the way he teaches is he continuously when reported by Plato he teaches as if he didn't know so he asks these questions people ask him a question and he asks well what do you think how is this in Plato Socrates pretends not to know but I believe the real Socrates who never wrote anything the real Socrates actually came from that place of not knowing but that was misinterpreted by Plato as if Socrates were pretending not to know but let's not go into deeply into that laughter laughter

[Speaker 5] (1:11:24 - 1:12:09)

hello my name is Mary I work in HR so here at Google I have this really wonderful class called Search Inside Yourself created by Meng whom I believe you met with and yesterday was our last class and we talked about compassion and having compassion for the world so I work in HR so all of us HR people have lots of compassion for other people because it's our job but we also work at Google and Googlers are sort of a high achieving bunch not only high achieving in the eyes of the world but high achieving to ourselves meaning did I get up out of bed today and what did I accomplish if I didn't accomplish anything I'm a failure to myself so I was wondering if you had any advice for those of us who don't have as much compassion for ourselves

[Speaker 1] (1:12:10 - 1:18:08)

ok thanks well yes compassion for yourself of course is as important as compassion for others when often I get asked questions like people who did something that they now realize was deeply wrong in the past sometimes people ask questions about they brought up their children in a way that they now realize was not very conscious and so that they may have caused suffering to their children or other people find they have caused suffering to loved ones and they now realize that what they did was wrong and again I say this is an example where you need to be compassionate with yourself because no human being can act beyond their level of consciousness so that was your level of consciousness at the time and you could not go beyond that and again here to make demands upon yourself up to a point it might be a good thing to as long as you enjoy it it's a wonderful thing when the enjoyment of what you are doing is lost then you have to be careful because there you have to come to a stop and say ok there's something here that's not right because I'm no longer enjoying what I'm doing that really that's the danger and so as long as you enjoy you don't even need compassion don't listen some people have a very active mind the maybe that's what Freud called the super ego or some other entity that criticizes you some people have a particular function in their minds that's very critical of themselves perhaps everybody has it to some degree but some people have it to a high degree and that's a dreadful thing to live with, living with a voice in your head that continually criticizes you and tells you you haven't done well enough you're not good enough, you should have done better I mean if you had to live with a person like that you would leave I mean it would be horrible to live with a person who continuously tells you these things but if that thing is stuck in your head what can you do?

Now what you can do is to become aware that all that it is, it's a particular pattern in your mind it's a particular way in which your mind works and so it's a, you could call it a sub-personality but what it really is, it's a mind pattern that operates in you and when you bring awareness to it you can recognize it as a mind pattern in you in other words you no longer believe every thought that arises that it says you recognize it's an old pattern that says the same thing that it said five years ago or ten years ago and it says that all the time and you recognize it so in other words you're not trapped in the thoughts anymore, this is again the whole thing we are talking about you're not, you don't believe in every thought that comes into your head, what that really means is there's an awareness beyond the thought and you realize there's a voice in my head saying this again that's all it is and when you don't energize it with your identification it begins to subside and in this way you become free of the of this dreadful burden of having that thing in your head talking to you and making your life miserable but what matters is the awareness needs to be there that frees you because then you become the awareness rather than being the thought or being trapped in the thought or possessed by the thought again there's a movie that many of you have probably seen called A Beautiful Mind it's about a scientist actually based on a real person, what happened to him quite a genius in his field but he developed delusions he saw people that weren't there whatever it's called clinically schizophrenia or whatever and the great thing about the movie is the viewer up to the point where the protagonist realizes that these things are illusions and the viewer of the movie doesn't know it either, the viewer participates in the illusions of the protagonist he believes these people are real too until suddenly the protagonist realizes, oh my god I'm seeing things that are not there and then he continues to see these things but suddenly there's an awareness in him and so although these people still appear to him that are not really there there's an awareness in him there that he's no longer totally reactive to them, he doesn't feed them with his reaction and gradually they subside over years it takes years for them to subside but the decisive point is, although the word is never mentioned, the decisive point is the awareness, wow and that's the same thing that applies to any any pattern in the human mind, not just a totally totally insane pattern, bring awareness to it so that you're not tortured by that and really and real compassion always arises out of awareness anyway

[Speaker 2] (1:18:10 - 1:18:25)

my childhood violin teacher used to shake his finger at me and say, you hear but you don't listen and he didn't mean it as a compliment, but it seems like this may be the technique for dealing with the inner critic.

[Speaker 1] (1:18:26 - 1:18:27)

Oh yes very good, yes

[Speaker 4] (1:18:28 - 1:19:20)

laughter yes Hi, thank you first Eckhart for coming tip the microphone I wanted to ask you it seems like the state that you're talking about of being at peace and being in the moment it's a very appealing state you feel more in touch and I'm wondering why society or people why is there this attraction to distraction and what is it about us that leads us to develop these systems that take us away from that well distractions

[Speaker 1] (1:19:23 - 1:23:38)

excitement stimulus are kinds of drugs or substitutes for the true feeling of aliveness within yourself so in the absence of that true feeling of aliveness within yourself, which we could call connectedness with being connectedness with source you have to look to the outside for something to make you feel more alive because when you're totally trapped in your thinking mind there's a lack of aliveness there's a sense that something fundamental is missing in my life it's an unconscious sense for many people but that is the basis for many people's lives is actually a sense of lack and that's an amazing thing if you really look at that the basis for your life is there's something missing and there are millions of people on the planet who live their lives on that basis without even fully recognizing it as if continuously they were telling themselves and certainly feeling something missing here so they're always how can I fill that thing that's missing they don't know what's missing but there's something it may sound familiar to some of you because it's such a prevalent mind pattern something missing I need something and of course what's missing is the true sense of connectedness with being, with aliveness and then of course you look for okay what's the next fix that I can get because and then you kind of become a little bit greedy and addictive for some, for stimulus that's why the movies the bad movies they need to, they produce more and more things that stimulate it more and more into violence and so because at least it's a substitute feeling of aliveness and then you look for the next fix. Some people get it in drugs or alcohol it's as if you it's almost like needing to suck up something to fill that thing that's missing or you're looking to another human being to fill it sex where's my next the next or even the the the next affair the excitement that comes from you just starting a new love affair wow now it's really happening of course and then you start living together and then it goes downhill from there so that doesn't work and so always looking for something and not knowing that what you've been looking for is actually already within it's in you and just it's a taking attention instead of out there looking for it going there this is where I start in the power of now giving the parable about a beggar sitting on an old box holding his baseball cap and can you spare a dime for years he sits on this box can you spare a dime and until finally somebody comes along and he doesn't give him a dime and says what's in that box you're sitting on I'm telling that parable in the book nothing I've been sitting on it for years it's just an old box and the man says well look inside and he finally gets ok and it's full of gold he's been sitting on it for years begging it's just a little parable cause the real thing is not even close to you it's essentially part of who you are so that's the reason why people they even look for stimulus in drama in relationships because it makes them feel well at least we are still alive we are fighting we must be alive

[Speaker 2] (1:23:39 - 1:23:46)

I think we'll have time just for one more question

[Speaker 6] (1:23:49 - 1:24:29)

my name is Alex I am an equipment maintenance tech so I keep rooms like this operational so you gave us some very practical things to try to rid ourselves of distraction I'm curious about another issue really strong emotion for example like right now I'm like nervous there's no reason to be nervous nothing bad could possibly happen how do you overcome emotions like that jealousy hatred any strong emotion do you have any practical tips that we could try for that

[Speaker 1] (1:24:29 - 1:29:58)

well first it's helpful to see the connection which is usually the case between the particular thoughts that you are thinking and the emotion that you feel most of the time the emotions are caused by particular patterns in your mind for example anxiety is caused by thinking about possible future things that may happen or things that you want to happen but they may not happen you may not get what you want you may not get what you need you may lose what you already have these things are all mind patterns that create fear so very often it is the thought that creates the emotion and the thought creates the emotion because you totally believe in the thought in other words you are totally identified with the thought then the body responds as if the thought were reality I might lose my job if you think that you wake up in the middle of the night and then you start thinking more thoughts on those lines the body can't tell the difference the body kind of responds to the thoughts that go through your mind they affect the physiology of the body I mean if you doubt that you might think of biting into a lemon and you find saliva accumulating in your mouth so what you think affects the body the body believes your thoughts to be real so when you think that you might lose your job you've lost your job already according to the body and you're destitute and that's how the body reacts and that's how the emotion is created so it's often then by looking seeing a thought as untrue that you actually begin to become free you can only see it as untrue if there's an awareness there that is aware that there is a thought without the awareness there's only the thought the thought then swallows up your entire consciousness and there's nothing else you can do then but with awareness here's the awareness and here's the thought and then the thought may still operate for a while but it's not empowered anymore and the emotion then is also going to weaken there may be times when there's not much thought as in this one you just said when you came up to the microphone you felt nervous perhaps you didn't have any particular thought on this occasion you just came nervous because many people when they go up to a microphone and speak in public feel nervous and again in these cases it's a question of simply allowing, acknowledging the emotion and allowing it to be there as I sometimes put it you become the space for it you allow it to be there so you could step up to the microphone actually what you said is very helpful when you go to the microphone you start by saying I feel nervous my hands palms of my hands are sweaty because I'm here it's the beginning of allowing it to be there without feeling that I shouldn't be feeling nervous then you feel even more nervous but if you allow the emotion to be there there comes a little space around it and there's an aware space yes there's nervousness but there is an awareness around it so you're not totally in the nervousness you allow it and when you share it with others it's a lovely thing when you share an emotion in that way with others rather than inflicting your emotion on them and saying you did that to me but when you say when you said that this is what I felt there's an awareness there rather than you made me feel this you can say when you said that this is what I felt or at this moment this is what I feel everybody loves that and there's an honesty with that rather than coming out to the microphone and pretending not to be nervous it's actually much more powerful and you connect more deeply if you're ever going to public speaking perhaps you will you connect much more deeply to the audience when instead of hiding the fact that you're nervous you start off by saying I feel really nervous then you connect with everybody if you're pretending you don't connect so again just a brief summary see what thoughts are causing the emotion which is often the case or in other cases if an emotion just arises allow it to be be the space for it and it's part of your experience of the present moment and you might as well say yes to it because whatever arises in the present moment is as it is already whether you argue with it or not the present moment is always as it is that's the is-ness and when you become friendly with the is-ness that in itself is a transformation of consciousness

[Speaker 2] (1:30:02 - 1:30:35)

so there's a lot of people to thank I want to start by thanking those that tuned in on the webcast I want to thank all of you Googlers who chose to take your afternoon and spend it here with us I want to thank Rich and the learning and development team here at Google who make events like this possible and of course I want to thank Eckhart on behalf of all of us thank you for your wisdom thank you for your being and also your doing in the world your choice to share this knowledge with us you've given us a lot to think about and more importantly the ability not to think at all

[Speaker 1] (1:30:36 - 1:30:37)

thank you

Eckhart Tolle - The I that is Eternally Present 1

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 10:43)

It doesn't happen very often that I talk at a university. It's happened a few times, though. And every time, it feels a little strange, because universities are places whose purpose is the cultivation of thought, to train the mind, to add things to the mind, to improve your ability to think, to analyze, to absorb information, to regurgitate information, to dissect information.

So universities are to do with the cultivation of mind. And when I'm at a university, I ask myself, do they realize who they let in here? Subversive activity.

Because the very essence of what we talk about, and the essence of the teaching, if it can be called that, for lack of a better word, is that it's possible to go beyond mind, beyond thought. It's not to deny the validity and the importance of thought. Without thought, no words would be coming out of my mouth.

And thought is very helpful. But the essence of the teaching is, and it's not just this teaching, if you look deeply, you will see it's also the essence of all, ultimately, all spiritual teachings. Although it's never said so openly, the possibility for humans to go to a level of consciousness that includes thought, but is not reduced to thought.

But the realization that the realm of consciousness is much vaster than we thought through thought. So that consciousness is not, as most people would think, is not synonymous with the production of noise in the head, which is thought. That consciousness is much vaster than the human mind.

It does not exclude the human mind. The human mind is, of course, an essential part. It is one of many possible ways in which consciousness can express itself.

But the human dilemma is, and has been for a long, long time, that they identify almost exclusively with mind activity. First of all, if you look at the nature of the human mind in a very basic way, the first thing that strikes you is that it's extremely active. It goes on and on.

It hardly ever stops. It's a continuous stream of thought that goes through one's head. It's a noise that you can't really switch off.

And even psychologists who are not perhaps interested in, those psychologists who are not interested in going beyond thought or cannot see anything further than thought, they examined the nature of thought and came up with the conclusion, yes, that 98% of it is repetitive, completely repetitive. And a large percentage of that is also unnecessary. It does not address anything specific that needs to be done now.

Thought is not being applied specifically to a particular purpose. It just is there. And whether you want it or whether you need it or not, you are condemned to living with a noise machine in the head.

And it's so normal that hardly anybody ever questions that, that you can't stop thinking. And some thoughts are fine, there may be a few nice thoughts, and then many thoughts are problematic. You can look at your own mind to see how often thought is concerned with problems.

And very often, or in most cases, it is not a problem that is here now, that is actual, true actuality, true reality here now. It is a problem that is generated in and through mental noise. This, for example, is the case when you worry.

You are in bed, very warm, protected. It's all quiet and you're breathing, but you're worried. Mental noise is in a state of hyperactivity.

All this is very normal. And if that were all, that would be bad enough to be continuously trapped, not being able to get out, not being able to get out of that mental noise. Except very rarely, almost by accident.

But then there's more to it than that. Because after a while, because mental noise these days starts at a very early age. After a while, your whole sense of who you are, your sense of self, of identity, your essential sense of me, is bound up with thought activity.

You tell yourself who you are. A mental image comes into being, that is, who I think I am, a me. And you will find that a lot of the thought activity that goes on is to do with me.

It's the me. The me in the head. The image that who I think I am.

Me and my problems. A lot of thought focuses on me and my problems and how I'm going to get out of them. How I'm going to solve them.

Thought does not realise that its activity itself, to a large extent, creates the problems. It says, no, I'm thinking so hard and I'm boring about this because I need to be responsible for my life if I don't worry anymore, if I don't continuously think about me and my problems and what's going to happen to me, my life will collapse. So, seeking one's identity in and through thought is normal.

So, when one speaks the word I, which is perhaps the most frequently used word in the language, when you speak the word I, it usually refers to me, the mind-based sense of self. The me that I think I am. Me and my story, which I dwell on almost continuously.

So, to get your... And this is what in ancient spiritual traditions has been called the self. In Buddhism, in some traditions, it's called the false self.

The sense of self. And even in Christianity, Jesus said, straight statement, deny yourself.

And perhaps the meaning goes deeper than what we usually believe, how we usually interpret that sentence.

Perhaps it's even not a good translation of what he really said.

[Speaker 2] (10:46 - 11:02)

So, self is to do with really who you are, what the essence of your identity is. Is the essence of your identity thought, mind activity?

[Speaker 1] (11:03 - 11:45)

Is the essence of your identity of who you are the content of your mind? And the corresponding emotions that accompany or reflect in the body the content of your mind. Is that the essence of who you are?

And that's of course the famous statement by the philosopher Descartes, who wanted to examine, to find out what the most fundamental truth of human existence is. And he said, I think, therefore I am. That is the one statement that expresses the fundamental truth.

[Speaker 2] (11:45 - 11:50)

So he equated thought with being.

[Speaker 1] (11:54 - 12:06)

And that was, even at his time, already normal to equate who you are with mind activity.

[Speaker 2] (12:12 - 12:28)

And this evening, we are here to perhaps explore whether there is something deeper to who you are than thought.

[Speaker 1] (12:31 - 13:30)

We are not just here to address it intellectually, in other words, through thought, or formulate some new belief, which is also thought, that, oh, there is more to me than thought. I believe that. And I can have an argument with you if you don't believe that.

And if I can have an argument with you, the sense of self that I derive from thought, from my mind, will become strengthened, because I'm fighting with someone. I'm engaged in the process of being right, which means I identify my sense of self, of who I am, with a mental position. I say, this mental position, this opinion, this belief, this theory, and who I am, are one.

[Speaker 2] (13:30 - 13:43)

This is identity. Identify with means to make the same as. And when you identify with, you make it the same as yourself.

That's what identification means.

[Speaker 1] (13:44 - 14:23)

So you identify with a mental position, my opinion, my belief. So your sense of who you are is derived from that. And anybody who questions this belief, or this mental position, will be questioning and attacking your very sense of self.

That's why people get so worked up when you start doubting them or questioning that they are right. To be wrong is extremely threatening to a mind-based sense of self.

[Speaker 2] (14:24 - 14:52)

It's the worst thing. So it needs to defend itself. It's not defending the thought, the belief, or the position.

It's defending the illusion of that self, of being as if it were fighting for my life. And so the mind-based sense of self needs to be right.

[Speaker 1] (14:53 - 15:23)

It needs also, it loves also somebody else to be wrong. Because then my sense of self becomes strengthened. I can prove that you are wrong.

I have removed identity from who you are in the mad belief of this egoic self. I have removed identity essence from you and I've added it to me. I'm bigger now than you.

[Speaker 2] (15:26 - 15:30)

So we are not here to create a new belief.

[Speaker 1] (15:31 - 17:07)

But we are not here to add to thought. It may look at first as if they were. We are not here to add to the content of the mind, the accumulated content of the mind, which is already huge in everyone.

It's not a passing insult. The very fact that you live at this time in this world means that you have already a lot of accumulated content. I read recently that every day the New York Times contains more information and more data than the average person living in the 17th century would come across in a lifetime.

Let alone the weekend edition of the New York Times. Now, but there is also, because for most people their sense of self and mind are one, there is also a great need, a compulsion almost, to add more to the mind. There is a kind of greed one could say.

The mind wants more.

[Speaker 2] (17:09 - 17:23)

More information, more knowledge, more of this, add something to itself, because it strengthens the always unsatisfying sense of self that is derived from the mind.

[Speaker 1] (17:24 - 17:34)

What I'm saying now, one or two of you, if you are completely in the mind, they even sound frightening or you may get angry.

[Speaker 2] (17:35 - 17:36)

That's all right.

[Speaker 1] (17:37 - 17:51)

To observe that the mind looks for more and there is nothing wrong with learning new things, but it is looking for more in order to strengthen its sense of self.

[Speaker 2] (17:52 - 18:05)

And here, the essence of this gathering is not, normally it would be, anywhere else in this building I'm sure, people get together to add.

[Speaker 1] (18:06 - 43:27)

And here we are getting together not to add to the content of the mind, but to become aware of the content of your mind and of mental noise and see it as for what it is, which is mental noise. Thought. Helpful, very useful for many practical purposes.

Essential to survive in this world. Of course, your knowledge also, you couldn't do without it. What we are addressing here is your sense of self.

The moment your sense of self becomes equated with mind and thought, that is where the mind becomes very problematic and where your life becomes very problematic and where there is a heaviness to it or to the self, the mind-based sense of self or the self as they call it in Buddhism. And as Buddhism, I'm not a Buddhist, I'm not anything and you don't need to be anything, but if you are, it doesn't matter. We are not here to change your beliefs in any way.

To become aware of beliefs as beliefs. They are fine. We are not here to create a new belief, but we are here to enable a level of consciousness to arise and in most of you it's arising already, otherwise you wouldn't even have come here unless somebody dragged you here against your will.

We are here to become aware within ourselves of a dimension that is deeper than mental noise, that's all, where you are still very awake and very conscious, but there is a realm of vibrantly alive stillness within yourself in which thought activity subsides and we'll be going into that. So it's equating who you are with a mental image, that is the illusion of the self. You may have heard of the Buddhist master who when asked to define the essence of Buddhism said, that's very simple, the essence of Buddhism is no self, no problem.

He was talking of a mind-based sense of self. And that is to do with me and my story, the story of my life. And it begins in childhood.

It begins for a child at the age one and a half or two, whenever they start to speak, the first thing, one of the first things they learn is to speak their name. And the question that the parents ask the child is, who are you? Equate the name with who they are.

And then the child repeats his or her name. That sounds pretty harmless, and of course it's inevitable, I'm not saying don't tell the child the name, but you can see there's a transition there from a stage of the one year old, in whom the mind has not started up yet, but who is already conscious of you, and conscious of surroundings, and conscious of sense perceptions, but thought processes, conceptual thought, has not yet started. It has not yet accumulated words in the mind, noise.

So the mental accumulations haven't started, and you can look into the eyes of a one year old, and see something that is of such purity, and there's such aliveness and light, there is consciousness looking through those eyes at you. It is amazing when you look into the eyes of a child in whom the mind hasn't started up yet, and that child looks back at you, and there's complete openness, and aliveness, and trust, and joy, and the child is probably smiling at you, and you know you're not being judged by the child, because it hasn't yet got the instrument that would enable it to judge. There is simply aliveness, consciousness, light coming out of the eyes, so to speak.

And then the mind begins, your name, you learn what your name is, and that's the beginning of a mind-based sense of self. It looks fairly harmless, but from then onwards, you are such and such, that you tell yourself, that's me. Now the name is not enough, the name now needs to accumulate.

If you look at your name as a receptacle, or a basket, that provides the receptacle for further content with which you identify as yourself, experiences, opinions, your parents' opinions of who you are. That becomes very important content, and you ask, your parents tell you you are stupid, then you have already mental content accumulated in this basket that is your name, and it will be very hard to get rid of that. And other experiences, knowledge, sufferings, people that you know, cultural backgrounds, many things, they form the content of your mind, and around it, there is the name that holds it all together.

And that is the content, and that is added to, and the strange thing is, after a few years of accumulating content, then you think you know who you are, but it's never quite enough yet. And not only for a young person, as you grow older, you will find your sense of self is never, very rarely, and only for brief moments, really feels complete, that you are fully yourself. There's always, no, I am not enough yet, is the essential belief of a mind-based sense of self.

And on the level of doing, of course it's true, because there's always so much more that you could do. You would never be, there are innumerable things that you could do, but there just isn't enough time, and even if you lived for a thousand years, you couldn't explore all the possible things that you could do. So eventually you choose one course of action or one activity, and then suddenly you exclude so many others.

Or you're trying to get to some projected goal, the pinnacle of my profession, or whatever it is, and I need to get there to be myself, I need the recognition, I need, and for years you've worked towards that, and maybe you get there, and maybe you don't. Many don't, because not everybody can triumph. To make it, you can only make it, in other words, enhance your sense of self in the eyes of the world through making it, if many others don't make it.

Otherwise it doesn't make sense, making it becomes meaningless. So for anybody who makes it in the eyes of the world, in whatever field, you need at least a thousand others who don't make it, otherwise it will no longer serve your sense of identity, you don't feel special anymore. If everybody makes it, well, then I have to think of something else.

Maybe then I'll try not to make it, and then I can be a failure, and poor, and very special in that. And that's not as funny as it sounds, because quite a few people develop that as part of their sense of self. The sense of self needs to feel special in some way, if you can't make it and derive, and then of course you're telling that yourself in the mind, that you have made it, and others will confirm it to you, perhaps that you've made it.

But if you can't make it, then you can gain a specialness through failing. Poor me, who failed, who didn't make it because the world treated me unfairly, and life circumstances were hostile, and I had a bad start in life, or whatever, and an image forms of somebody who has been wronged, perhaps that's one of many possibilities, that you've been wronged by the world, or by a particular person, or your parents, and that can be a very strong sense of self too, a sense of having failed. I have failed in the eyes of the world.

I had a few chances, but somehow it didn't work out, and I didn't make it. These are perhaps two extremes, one person who thinks he or she made it, for most they fluctuate between one day, for a few days you think you're fine, and then suddenly some critical remark by somebody destroys your sense of self. So it's forming some image of who you are.

So it doesn't really matter to that sense of self whether you make it or not. If you have a very unhappy sense of self, a miserable sense of self, that works too. It gives you an identity.

You can talk to others about why you are miserable, and what the world has done to you, or whatever it is, and you can strengthen it, and others will confirm, they will listen and say, yes, you're right. Great, it works. And everybody knows the great reluctance in people, once a particular sense of self has established itself in the mind, a great reluctance to let go of that, and every therapist knows how strong the compulsion is to sabotage awareness.

How strong the compulsion is to hang on to the sense of self. I had a, I worked, when I saw people individually, a woman would come and see me, and her main story was how unhappy her marriage was, and she was continuously thinking about how difficult her husband was to live with, and how irritating he was, and continuously reacting, whatever he did was irritating to her, and that became, her sense of self was based on that reactive irritation, and all the mind activity around it, and after a little while, after a few months, I pointed out to her that she can either leave him, or she can observe that particular mindset, that mind pattern with which she was identified, the reactive pattern, and you can actually allow him to be, instead of reacting. She saw the possibility of freedom, there was a moment when she saw it, of stepping out of that mind-based sense of self, and then she said suddenly, but if I let go of that, what have I got left? If I let go of that, what have I got left?

Who am I then? A pattern that I've been identified with in the mind for 10, 20, or 30 years, if I let go of that, who am I? My sad story, if I let go of my sad story, and this applies to quite a few people, who am I without that?

That is now to see that no matter how successful you've been in the eyes of the world, the sense of self that is mind-derived, thought-derived, is never at ease and fulfilled for long. It's in its nature to feel a sense of lack and unfulfillment. That is the mind-based sense of self.

And everybody's story somehow didn't quite go the way it should have gone. Me and my story, it should have gone differently. I imagined it was going to be different.

It didn't quite work out, at least not yet. But I have future. I have enough future for it to work out.

In other words, my sense of self, of who I am, can become complete. I can be in a state of ease and fully myself. The belief is all I need is more future to add certain things to who I am.

And this is, now, this is very essential to add the belief that through adding certain things with which you identify content of the mind, image, whatever it may be, you identify with a car, this is an image, you identify with knowledge, I have accumulated knowledge, you become bigger, anything, the compulsion to add things, to have more, and through that, believing that your sense of self at some point will complete itself, then I will have arrived. The story will have found its happy ending. So it's seeking self, self-seeking through adding further content through future.

I'm not saying that your life, that you shouldn't add more knowledge or more expertise to your life. That's all wonderful. And for all that, of course, you need future to learn new things, to acquire new knowledge.

For all that, you need future. But seeking an enhanced or strengthened or more complete sense of self through that is futile. It's frustrating.

You never arrive at that sense of self even if you add in endless content. It's never enough. It may feel enough for a little while.

And then again, oh, and what, that wasn't quite it. That's being, and you try the material realm and add, identify with things that you call a mental image of successful in material terms. And after a while, that feels good for a little while.

And you have the car, the big house, and then you sit in your big car and it feels good. And then after a while, it's just you're sitting in this thing. It has four wheels and it takes you from A to B.

Yes, it is more comfortable than others. And then you need others to notice you. That's a relative rudimentary way of strengthening your sense of self.

And then it becomes more subtle adding then perhaps to knowledge through finding the person that's going to make you happy. Adding, I need to add, so then it becomes, you desperately need the future. And you desperately need whatever activity you're engaged in, you need desperately the result.

You become dependent on the outcome is all important, whether you make it or not. So you can't really enjoy the doing so much because you're so obsessed with getting there. So it's a compulsion to add in order to complete yourself.

Without that compulsion, learning new things, engaging in certain activities is very enjoyable. Wonderful joy of doing and learning. But if you're looking for yourself, that's always, that spoils the potential for great joy and aliveness while you do.

Because the result becomes all important, the outcome, I must get there. I need to become, so to see the fallacy of self-seeking in the future. So if it's not there, if you cannot find the essence of your being which is far beyond mental noise as the mind could tell you, if you cannot find it through adding more things to who you think you are, if you cannot find it through more future, where is it?

How can one go beyond the mind-made sense of self? How to step out of that? And the mind will be very interested in this.

The mind will say, well, I'd like to get out of that. Let me know what I have to do and how to get there. Let me know the steps I need to take.

In other words, the deep-seated mindset that needs future will operate again. Even if you now go into spiritual, because everybody is seeking for him or herself. That's why they are all rushing about needing to get to the future.

Why is everybody rushing about where are they all going to? Stop anybody and of course if you ask them, where are you going to? Where are you rushing to?

And they're all rushing even if they're not running, even at home, that stress, where are you going to? But ultimately, if you take away the particular, you will arrive at the general, which is they're all trying to get to the future as quickly as possible. I need to get to that future point.

And this is on a minor scale. It could be just the next moment when I have completed this task that I'm doing. Or it could be on a larger scale.

I need to get to that point in three years' time when I will have finally finished what I'm working at now. Finally. So everybody is on my way to the future, of course, that's where I'm going.

And then you say, yeah, but what about here? What about this moment? Well, this moment doesn't really fit into my story.

It shouldn't be the way it is. That's why I'm trying to get away from it. I don't want that.

I want the mentally projected next moment because the next moment is going to fit into my story. And that's why I'm in such a hurry to get away from this moment. This moment, of course, it's important because it's the stepping stone that enables me to get to the next one, which is so much more important.

So when you look, there's an enormous compulsion towards future and needing to not look at this moment, not, no. And when you observe people and you can see in their expression and the way they move and the way they speak, it's a denial of this moment in my story. And children learn that early on at school, how important, you need to get there.

So remember, we are not denying that you need future to get from A to B. We're not denying that you need future to learn a language or to learn how to cook or to learn how to use the computer or to look at your watch and it works well. You can meet somebody at five o'clock.

It's helpful, otherwise life would become difficult. We'll meet at some point. There's no problem with that level of time and future, but not talking about that.

We are talking about self-seeking in future. Trying to become happy in the future, but you're not. And that is an amazing thing if you see that most people live in that their whole life and then unless something happens and they get a dreadful shock and there's a moment of awakening.

You awaken out of a conditioned mindset and if spiritual awakening, which is a term that's been used for a long time in spirituality and ancient eastern traditions, awakening, if it has any meaning, awakening is not to be equated with suddenly having new ideas about spirituality or God in your head or suddenly reinterpret the universe and true awakening is far deeper than that. It's not exchanging one set of ideas for another set of ideas. Awakening is to awaken out of

Eckhart Tolle - The Light Behind the Unheard and the Unseen

[Speaker 1] (1:32 - 1:37:28)

The bells returned to the manifested realm. Refreshed. The ringing of the bells traditionally is a spiritual wake-up call, preceded usually by the alarm clock.

That's another kind of waking up. As we are speaking of waking up, I hope the people in Austin and Hollyhock are fully awake also. They are over there where the camera is.

I'm sorry you have to get up so early, but you're here. This is the day that we spend in silence, except for this person up here. Well, not really.

Although the words are there, there's still the dimension of silence, of stillness, is present. More important than the words. So if you can be attentive to both the words, and more importantly that which is between the words, which to the mind is nothing.

And indeed it is no thing. And yet it's an energy field. The wonderful thing is, you cannot become attentive to that without the same field of stillness being activated within you.

The very fact that you notice the silent gaps in between words, or in between sentences, means the very same silence, the very same stillness at that moment, is in you also. Otherwise you wouldn't even notice it. And you may also be surprised to find that in the moment of noticing the silent gap, you are not thinking.

You may also find if the gaps become too long, you notice it at first, and then you start thinking again. That's okay. Or you may not.

But that is the most significant thing that can happen to you in this lifetime, on this planet, where you've taken temporary form as a so-called person. Of course you are consciousness. The most significant thing is this cessation of thinking without loss of consciousness.

From our normal perspective, the perspective of the normal everyday mind, the perspective of thought, it looks like there's nothing there. There's nothing there that can be grasped or understood. And yet it's the ground of all being, the very ground of your existence.

Existence is the manifested. Being, the way I use these words, is the unmanifested life that you are, underneath the form, the background, we can also call it. So to be aware here continuously of the background to all this, the field of stillness, the field of aware presence, of self-aware stillness.

And also be aware of that which arises in the stillness. Words, sense perceptions, bodily sensations. But to have your roots, to be grounded in the stillness.

And here, all you have to do is be aware of the gaps between the words. Now there's something that cannot be manufactured, something that needs already to be there in you, a readiness, the ability even to be aware of the gaps. We could call that ability alertness.

And that's the true meaning of waking up out of the dream of thought, of being identified with a continuous stream of thought. So most of you, or almost everyone here has this ability already. There's enough presence in you so that you can notice, be aware of the silent spaces.

And in that awareness, the awareness of the silent space, really, what is a silent space? It's the absence of something. Where before there was a word, the word has returned, the sound has returned into nothingness.

Before there was something, now there is nothing. So what is the silent space? It's the absence of something, of the thingness of life.

So when we say you are aware of the silent space, it's a strange way of putting it. It works as a pointer. But what does that really mean?

You are aware, first you are aware of a word, your attention is on the word, then the word disappears. And it is not replaced by inner words arising in you, because attention remains, the word disappears. And so when we say you are now aware of the gap, what's really happening is you have become self-aware.

Awareness or consciousness has become, has recognized itself. Without, the object is gone, just the field of bare attention remains. And that's, that is a realm of, also of great peace, the silent peace that's always there in the background.

And as you realize that, it seems to become stronger. It seems to grow inside you. That's probably a perspective only, but it seems to grow and become stronger.

So as you sit here, you don't grow in knowledge very much, except a few Zen stories, but you grow in awareness. However, any words that we use to describe it are already somewhat misleading. Perhaps a better way of putting it is to say that as you sit here, you shrink.

The person shrinks. The personal sense of self that's identified with thought diminishes and something else emerges. And so I've pointed out before, maybe not here, this is not a personal development group.

Sometimes I say that when I arrive at the airport and the immigration officer says, what are you going to do here? What, what do you, what do you teach? In order to reach him at all, I sometimes say personal development and know that it's not true.

But if I said personal shrinkage, he wouldn't let me in. Now the person remains, but what gradually happens is there comes a shift. The transcendent dimension in you becomes stronger than the personal.

The personal can still be used, your name, the conventions that are to do with the way interacting with others. But more and more something, something else flows into that. And we could call that stillness, but not stillness as just an absence of noise, but stillness as a, an alive presence.

So stillness flows into your sense perceptions. It flows into your looking. That's why you've been looking at things in nature and realize that it becomes so much more alive when you don't label or interpret it.

So it flows into your looking. So the stillness is also attention. It's a stream.

A, one could call it a current of awareness, where before there was thought, very different energy frequency, thought. When you approach anything or perceive anything through thought, very different frequency. You can see when you look at a person, whether he or she is perceiving you through thought or through stillness, or when a person is looking at something, you can see whether they are classifying it, interpreting it, finding some kind of personal relationship to it.

People do that with trees and flowers too. Some people have the compulsion to pick flowers because they need to enter into a personal relationship with a flower, not realizing that they could be in a much deeper relationship if they went beyond the personal that says, I would like to have that. Or even if you don't pick it, you might think, how would that look in my garden, in my backyard?

Or have some kind of comparison to it. Put it in some kind of comparative category. It's not even necessarily to do with yourself, but it's still, I overheard a man saying, he was looking at the sun, at the sky after sunset, or was it after sunrise?

And he said to his companion, look at that Turner sky. Turner is a British artist who lived, I believe, in the 19th century, who painted beautiful paintings of light, sky, just light. And finally, yes, he was looking, but it also had to be compared to something.

You can look more deeply if you don't classify and compare it to anything. And it is likely that Turner himself looked at the sky in the state of complete open presence, with reference to nothing else, not to another word, to a word, or anything else. And sometimes you find people who are walking in nature, and it's beautiful, and lush.

But the mind comes in, and for a moment they look, and then they say to you, yeah, oh, you should go to Hawaii. It's even more lush there. And then they start telling you about

Hawaii while you carry on walking.

So this current of awareness flowing through you into your sense perceptions, your seeing, your hearing, but it also flows as a kind of emanation, because every human being has a certain emanation. Now, most humans have the emanation of mind. And many humans, in addition, have the emanation frequently of pain body.

And many humans have a very nervous emanation, tense. Where is the next thing? They want to get to the next thing, and at the same time feel threatened by the next thing that's going to come.

So that's what they emanate with their being. And that's the entire civilization. To a large extent, big cities have that energy field that's generated by millions of people.

There are certain other countries where at first it feels, ah, there's less nervousness here. But then you realize that actually the energy field, although it may not be nervous, is a little sleepy. Instead of going beyond thought, they are drifting below thought.

And so you tend to see lots of people sitting or lying around street corners in a state of semi-sleep. And yes, it feels, I've just arrived from New York, it feels great for a while. And you also sometimes find human beings who seem to be more peaceful.

And you yourself may find that in certain situations or conditions, you're not as nervous after a few drinks, after taking this or that substance. And it's great, it's a glimpse of what it means not to be thinking. That's how alive you can feel.

But in many of these cases when you've taken a few drinks, yes, you're beginning to step out of thought and you feel better. Oh, that feels good, I must have another drink. Oh, let's have another.

And before you know it, you're going towards unconsciousness and sleep. Yes, you have stepped out of the stream of thinking, but have stepped, as one could say, in evolutionary terms, you're stepping back. That too can be a relief.

But this is not what's happening here. We, from the stream of thinking, we are stepping beyond. And we do not go back to sleep when the mind no longer thinks.

We are more alert, far more awake than when we were immersed in thinking. So there comes that quality, that's the way we are going. Yes, we are transcending thought, not back to where we came from, but rising above thought.

Now that state of rising above thought, where you can still use thought beautifully, powerfully when it's needed, but you are no longer possessed by thought or consumed by thought. Thought, useless thinking, burning up a lot of your life energy. Not going anywhere, just going around, just like the car is in neutral, you're pressing, pushing down the accelerator, not going anywhere, just for hours and hours and hours.

So going, stepping beyond thought into that clarity and alertness that is both gentle and fierce, that has two aspects seemingly contradictory. It's very gentle, that energy field of alert presence, but also has a fierceness. It needs to have a fierceness because it needs to cut through thought, that substance that, and thought is heavy, dense.

So to cut through that density of thought, coupled with the density of the emotional field that goes with the thoughts, you have the two layers, the density of thought, the density of that emotional field, pain body, and they cling together as two layers of density. And then comes presence. And in this case here, it comes from two directions.

That's why it's possible for this to happen. From within you, that dimension of presence emerges, pushes forward. But it might not have enough in the absence of extreme and agonizing suffering that cracks it open from above.

It may not have enough power to cut through the density. So all you feel then is an extreme restlessness, something wanting to happen, and there may be searching and something wants to be almost be born here, but it can't be born. It's not because the shell is not cracking.

But here it's being also pierced from here, from this, the energy field that is here in this room that comes through this teaching, which is more than the words, so that the presence is cutting through from within you and from without. So it's just the way they built the channel tunnel from two ways. They started in England and in France digging, and finally they met in the middle, and they had cut through these layers of seemingly impenetrable rock.

So if it were not already happening from within you, it would be meaningless, and it wouldn't work for you to be here. So the layer of thought that stream is being cut through, and when you leave here, there will, we trust, be enough presence in you so that it can happen without the external help, although occasionally it's still helpful to listen, to be reminded, to open a book and read just a few lines that have come out of presence. That's helpful as long as you need it.

But there is enough presence in you now so that you can use it as a sword. And I'm now talking about the active side of presence, because presence is both fierce and gentle. It has an active aspect and a passive aspect.

It depends from what perspective you look on it. So when we say that allow this moment to be, in that there is an arising. There's surrender and presence go together.

Surrender to what is is one side of presence, and that looks passive, but that is not the full picture. You cannot surrender to what is, it would not work if there were not also a fierce aspect to presence, an active, very active aspect to presence. So on the one hand, it's very gentle and allowing, but it is also, it acts like a sword that cuts through accumulations collective of the collective human mind and pain body.

So there comes this attention. When the Zen master raises his finger and looks at you, there's a fierce look on his face. We see it in old drawings of Zen masters.

You wouldn't want to meet them in a dark street, eyes come bulging out of their heads. So they represent the fierce aspect of presence. Underneath it, if you look closely, if the artist who draw this drawing of the Zen master was in tune with the Zen master's inner state, if you look closely, you will find also hidden there underneath the fierceness, the gentle aspect of presence.

It's hidden. If you look into the eyes, they both are present there. So allowing what is to be needs to come together with a sword-like aspect, almost what seems the mind would say irreconcilable, but they're not irreconcilable, perhaps only from the point of view of the mind.

So how does that work? This moment, something arises. This moment takes form as an event that appears in front of you, a person or an event.

Now, allowing this moment to be as it is in whatever form it arises requires you to face fully what is, not opposing, facing in an open way, not facing as if you were fighting a battle against something. You face it in an open way, like this, to have your arms extended like this. So this is the gentle, and yet at the same time you look it straight in the eye, so to speak, whatever it is.

This is the gentle, the receptive, and the attention is the fierce. So you welcome what is, but there's a fierce attention that flows through you onto whatever it is that's happening, not fighting anything, just its fierce alertness, and that cuts through the old reactions that otherwise would, that are all accumulations in the reactive mind. They can then not operate anymore, and intelligence itself, which is attention, attention is great intelligence, but very different from the accumulated so-called intelligence of the human mind.

That is a limited aspect of the greater intelligence, a limited form that this greater intelligence can take, which is fine too. It's only not fine anymore if that is all you know, and all you think you are. If you are good at solving IQ tests, well, that is an aspect of the limited intelligence, and that's fine if you are good at that.

If you get your identity from that, it becomes problematic. I'm a member of, I think it's in England, they have Mensa, which is all the people who have very high IQs can become members of that. And some people let that flow into a conversation just casually.

Now, if I'm offending one or two people here, I'm sorry. That is beautiful. Why not?

If you can use your mind in such a way, it's a beautiful thing to do. If that becomes an important part of your sense of self, then you get trapped in an illusory identity, and you probably have a few more things to add to it. And that is part of identifying with the realm of content.

I don't qualify to become a member of Mensa, unfortunately. The mind doesn't work in that way anymore, or I think it never did. I could never solve mathematical problems, and I always admired people who could.

I can't even see where the problem is. When I was at school, after the age of 13, I stopped going to school. I couldn't stand it anymore.

But I still had, they had all these problems that you had to solve. I couldn't even, my mind would go blank after reading the first few lines. A man has five sacks of potatoes, and then he takes two away and takes half of that content out and puts it into another sack.

How much is left? And that's okay for a problem to solve if there actually is a man. So we are conditioned to create problems for ourselves.

That lies in the conditioning of the mind. And so often, when you think you have a problem, really, your mind is creating a problem for yourself. If it isn't happening at this moment, if there's no action you can take right now, and so comes the fierce aspect of presence.

Oh, I've got so much on my mind, so much, what is the expression, so much on my plate. And so you need to remember the sort of presence. What's the problem at this moment?

Can't find any. Yeah, but it's not this norm, but tomorrow when I get there, what's going to happen when I, when this or that, when the moment comes, there's more than enough power in you to face it and to take right action when right action is called for, because you will face the challenge when it's true in that state of welcoming attention and look it straight in the face. And in that moment, there is no thought.

When you face a challenge, truly, there is no thought. There is just the looking, and it may be an actual looking or metaphorically speaking, you're looking at the situation, the totality of what has arisen at this moment. What needs to be solved, responded to, dealt with at this moment.

And you look. And in that looking, that is fierce and gentle at the same time, there is an activation of a greater intelligence than what you have learned, whatever you may have learned. Now, what you have learned may eventually come into play also, because eventually perhaps you will take action, part of which is to do with certain things that you have learned to do.

Or you will speak words, which is to do with using language that you learned in the past. But that will be only an instrument of the, it will be inspired use of whatever form comes into play when you deal with it. But there's always, there's the moment of alert, aware sessions in which there's no thought and there's just the looking.

And any master does that in any field, has the ability to look for a moment and then respond out of that, the greater intelligence responds out of that. You just, in the same way that great sportsmen play their sports, no tennis player, great tennis player thinks, well, I think the ball is going to come there next, so I'll better move to the left now. Now, now better, now I've got to get ready for the other side to jump to there.

Now I have to two meters forward quickly. It would be impossible through conceptual thinking in the mind, there's no thought. And if thought interferes, they're not playing well today.

And they all have days when they're not playing well. And very great sportsmen actually enjoy tremendously the flow of energy and realize that they are not doing it, but there's the ability to just be there. So this is the non-conceptual intelligence in you, the non-conditioned, unconditioned intelligence in you that becomes activated.

And that deals with problems beautifully, true problems, or rather true challenges, because there are no problems. Problem arises when you are either imagining something happening to you now, it is not happening, you're somewhere else, it's not happening now. You're dwelling mentally on some possible situation, because even if you had an illness that is very problematic, you don't know the outcome.

Will I survive or will I not survive? Of course, eventually, nobody here survives as the form. How much longer will I survive?

Is that now some people, to some people, that becomes a dreadful burden, to know that you have a condition that you may not survive, which of course, everybody is suffering from it in a wider sense. It's called, it's an incurable disease called mortality. The diagnosis is fatal.

Mortality apparently always ends in death. So some people who see their lifespan, they cannot, they don't know how much future they have. It can become an enormous problem, because you think, I have not fully lived my life.

If you're 90 and the doctor tells you, you only have two years, maybe that's not so bad. But even then, some people say, oh no, I need a bit more time. But if you are 30, it seems more problematic, or if you're 20, and the doctor says, you may not have much time left.

And then comes panic, and then comes a sense of unfulfillment, in some sense, I haven't even started yet. I haven't fulfilled what I've come here to do. All the things that I potentially could do, I won't be able to do them.

It's, you become a huge problem suddenly, your enormous suffering arises. But in some cases, it happens that the uncertainty about how much future you have, or seeing that you have very little future left, future is removed from you, forces you more deeply into the present moment. So I have, I know some people who have a so-called serious, life, so-called life-threatening illness.

Of course, life is eternal, but it threatens the form that you are. A so-called life-threatening illness. And they have become enormously present, because they have no future to escape to anymore.

It's just always, they live totally in the now. The future is so uncertain, there may be nothing there, so there's no point in even projecting anything, it's just... And some have become spiritual teachers, and become transparent through this enormous current of awareness that goes through them.

And they smile, and they... Occasionally, waves of fear may still come even to them, and then it passes, and they're back in presence. And they realize, no matter what they could have achieved in or through time, because that has its place.

As long as you have what looks like time, why not do things in time? Of course, you learn a skill, you learn a language, you learn to do this or that, you travel here or there, see new places, have new experiences, all these things time is good for. Well, nothing helps you if you're always in the future, no matter what you experience.

So that is where usually you seek fulfillment of your life, by adding more things that only time can give you, because more implies more time. I need to add more to me to be fully myself. On the level of form, that is true.

If you are 20, you haven't started living, you haven't learned anything, perhaps you're just learning to become a pianist or great computer expert or whatever, and you suddenly get interrupted. On that level, it seems your life has come to nothing. But your life is not your life.

There isn't even you and life. There's only life of which you are a temporary expression. There's only the one consciousness of which you are a temporary expression.

And if that flowers, when you are 20, and the true flowering is not the achievement of this or that, sometimes a flowering happens indirectly through an achievement, which doesn't help the person either if they still identify with as a formal achievement. But the true flowering is the arising of presence in you, when you become transparent. And that can happen at any age.

And it doesn't matter where you are in your life situation. It doesn't matter whether, because there are some people here who have succeeded in the world, and others who in the eyes of the world have not succeeded. There are others here who have succeeded years ago and then failed.

And others who have failed miserably up to this point, and in a year from now, they'll be rich and famous. It all happens. I was a failure in the eyes of the world 10 years ago, 8 years ago.

Now the world thinks I'm a success. Completely meaningless. Completely meaningless.

But it doesn't matter where you are at or what life situation you're in at the present time. The ultimate purpose of your existence is for this form to manifest that which is beyond manifestation. To become an opening for the unconditioned, for the stillness, the awareness, that energy stream, that frequency, so to speak.

I believe it was Ramana Maharshi who sometimes used the expression, a current of awareness that flows through you that is non-conceptual intelligence. And intelligence, even that's a limitation. It's more than that.

It's love too. The first time I'm using this word here, because some words you have to be careful with. Words like God.

Words like love. Because the reality to which these words point is so far greater than the word that it's usually misleading to even say it. But now I've said it.

What flows through you, when we call it intelligence or great power that deals with any problem, any challenge, there is no problem, that arises, it's not just that. That which flows through you is also love, that energy stream that is there when that openness is there. And it doesn't matter what your life situation is or how much future you have left.

If that is there even an hour before you die, that is the flowering of your life. There's no thing as your life, we're just using it as an expression. It's the flowering of consciousness through this form.

It's the birth of that into this world. And then the mind comes, okay, then what happens after that? It wants to know what comes next.

What comes after it has flowered? Maybe there's a question in the basket about it. Let it flower first and then see what happens.

Extreme challenges have the ability potentially to push you into the state of presence, to force you into the state of presence. Little challenges, which are the majority of challenges, usually pull you into unconsciousness. Unless you now know that you can actually use whatever, so to speak, goes wrong in your life as your spiritual practice.

Ah, great, here's another one. And then you bring the allowing to it and the attention.

And you look.

You look at the cold soup. You look at the lost bell that was here. Oh, my bells, I've had them for years.

A friend of mine gave them to me, and the Dalai Lama gave them to my friend. And they are gone. Somebody must have taken them.

Oh, no, it can't be. And instead, you look where the bells were before. There's now an empty space.

Well, now they are back, but there was an empty space. Now, there's something deeply significant about the empty spaces that are left behind by any kind of loss. For example, these are the bells.

You may get back to your car or where your car once was. And in the parking lot, there's only an empty space. And here it is vital, if you can stop and face that empty space without running away from it or cursing the empty space or immediately going into reactive.

This is very strange. And this is one example. The empty space can also be left by relationships, the wife, the partner, the husband.

One day you get home and there's a letter which says, I'm gone. I'm out of here. And if you can, again, at that moment, the form that this moment takes, we use that expression here, and here we come to something very significant.

The form that this moment takes sometimes is an absence of the form that was there a moment before. And because suddenly there is a no form where there was a form before, that is an enormous opening into the deeper awareness of the formless consciousness, unconditioned formless that you are. If you can not run away from it, if you can face this death, because the loss of anything is a small death.

The loss of the bells that you've had for years is a small death because the form is gone. The loss of your BMW is a death. The Rolls Royce, an even bigger death.

And of course there may be an actual death, and this is an amazing thing. The person that was here every day in this room used to sit in this chair. That's the armchair.

That's where the desk where they sat. And one day the message comes, they're gone. Passed away.

And then you look at the empty chair. The person was so, it was so real, it seemed so permanent to have that personality sitting in that armchair doing its thing, its work, talking, having its opinions, being there. How is it, it's inconceivable that suddenly it's, that person is, where is he?

Dissolved. Just dissolved, like a soap bubble. Gone.

And so most people, this is the empty space that is left behind by death. Whenever a form dissolves in your life, it may be an actual death, it may be the loss of something that had been important to you. If you can face that hole that is left behind by the form that is no longer there, it's a temporary hole into the dimension of the formless.

Now, one could almost say, God, we're using that word again, the formless one life, the formless, timeless, one consciousness that underlies all manifestation momentarily shines through whenever there is a hole in the tapestry of physical existence. It's kind of the tapestry of forms. And in this tapestry of forms, which is gigantic, regularly, or all the time, holes appear.

If you were watching, let's just use the metaphor and say, the entire physical universe, sense-perceived universe, imagine it as an extremely complex tapestry, woven, huge, of course. And you look at it, and then you see, continuously, here and there, little things suddenly disappearing, and temporary holes being there, opening up in the tapestry. Then suddenly there and there.

So part of this tapestry, it's a continuously coming and going out and into form. No form in this tapestry remains for long. And so holes open up continuously in it, and then are replaced by something else.

But if you can be aware of the holes, the openings, something shines through them that is not to do with form, but it's the essence of all form. And that is enormously peaceful. There's enormous peace and aliveness there.

And that is the grace that lies concealed in any kind of death, accidental death, seemingly premature death, any kind of death, and any kind of loss. There is a grace there, potentially, but it does not help you if you deny it or run away from it. You say, no, I don't want to see that hole.

And you cover up the hole with reactions immediately, so that you don't have to face the emptiness. So when emptiness comes in your life, that is a beautiful, potentially, a beautiful opening in which you can actually find yourself. You find yourself by not resisting that.

And so you begin to welcome death when it comes, because it is an inseparable part of this world of form. And when we look at death, we judge it from the point of view of an identity, a sense of self that is identified with form. And from there, death looks horrible.

It looks dreadful. That's why nobody dares speak about it in Western culture, which is the most identified with egoic forms. Nobody dares.

Maybe one of the few countries left where death is still natural is India, where it's in the street. You can go to the bonfires where they burn the dead bodies every day. You can watch the very deep meditation.

If you can be there in a state of complete openness and just watch, that's the destiny of every form, is to dissolve again quickly. And when you watch, contemplate the dissolving of forms, that which is beyond form arises in you. You are in touch then with the formless in you.

That's the grace of death. Which is not the opposite of life. It's only the opposite of birth.

People think life and death, it's a question of life and death. No, it's a question of birth and death. Life is eternal.

Life cannot be destroyed. Forms, yes. Even physicists know that no energy is destroyed ever.

And in a wider sense, as you live in the present more and more, it's a continuous dying. As the expression goes, you die to the past every moment. You let go.

And this moment is always fresh. You can, of course, you remember what you need to remember, but you let go of any personalized attachment to a memory. There's nothing wrong with memories.

You need it. You wouldn't be able find your way back to your street, your house. Memory, of course, you need.

But self-identification with memory, you don't. So, as you live in presence, there's a continuous dying to this continuity of me, which is an accumulation of more and more things that I identify with. The continuity.

And that could be anything. You die to the past. When the bell is gone, it is gone.

It has disappeared. It is the past. And this moment remains fresh.

Oh, there is a freshness even in when something has dissolved. One could go so far as to say there is a breath of fresh air, metaphorically speaking, comes into this world of space-time, this world of physicality. Whenever a form dissolves, ah, ah, there's a lightness.

Ah. And with that, you welcome death. Stillness wanted to last a little longer.

Stillness is the death that you enter voluntarily, if you're ready for it. To relinquish your attachment to the structures of thought, to step out of the stream of thinking, is death, because thinking is form, primordial form. To step out of that is death.

The arising of stillness is your death, the death of the little me. Of course it is. And there are still many humans on the planet who are not ready for that.

They want to stay entangled in form. They want a continuation of the drama of form. They don't want an end to the drama.

There are humans, many humans still on the planet, who are not ready for the end of suffering. Even if the possibility were presented to them, they would run away in fear. It would seem like, no, the end of suffering would seem like a kind of death, the end of my drama.

I don't want that. But there are many humans also who are ready to stop suffering, to come to the end of suffering. It's an evolutionary development.

Now for this to, this shift to happen to you, there is one requirement, and we can put it in simple language. You need to be fed up with suffering. Not run away from it, not avoid it, but be fed up with it.

You've had enough. I've had enough. And if you are in psychological suffering, and all suffering is psychological suffering, the rest may be pain, toothache, whatever it may be, you can ask yourself at any moment, when you can see that you are in suffering, is that what I want?

Is that what I'm choosing at this moment? Is that what I'm creating at this moment? Humanity as a whole is coming to the point where the suffering is just too much.

It's been going on for so long. And for most of you, it is true, you have suffered enough. But it needs to be true for you.

That realization needs to come to you. So that no situation, nothing that happens to you, is converted into drama and suffering anymore. And the quickest way out of that, out of converting events, situations, interactions with people into drama and suffering, is to be present moment-centered, not story-centered, not thought-centered, not imposing interpretations and stories on the present moment, but allowing the moment to be as it is.

I gave a simple example of what is, what the mechanism that makes up the manufacture of drama and suffering in people's lives, the mental mechanism, the mechanicalness behind it. I gave a brief example in this little book, Stillness Speaks, where in one entry, one entry starts with three statements. One statement says, what a miserable day.

The other statement says, he didn't have the decency to return my call. The other statement says, she let me down. Then the text explains a little bit that these are stories that you impose on situations, events, and people in your life.

And those are simple, very simple examples, but even the complicated drama basically works according to that same principle. It's just that the stories that you impose become more complex. But this is where they start.

And the stories are imposed, in many cases, one of their main reasons for being there is to enhance your egoic, mind-made sense of self, to be right. Because if you are right, if you can complain about this miserable weather, unconsciously, the mechanism behind it is you've made the weather wrong and yourself right. You're in a superior position because you're complaining about it.

What this dreadful weather is just dreadful. If you can say, he didn't have the decency to return my call, it implies, this is unconscious, that you, of course, are morally superior in every way to this person. This is the position that you are coming from and identify with.

I'm not saying you do not see that certain people do very unconscious things. You see it, but the story then personalizes it, you find a reactive and personalized relationship to somebody's, perhaps, unconsciousness, and then use it to enhance your mind-made sense of self. This doesn't mean you don't see dysfunctional behavior for what it is, but you do not have a personalized reactive relationship to it anymore.

You allow that to be also. There's no person there. There's only human unconsciousness.

You don't enter into that personalized relationship that is story-based. She let me down. She wasn't there.

I was there. She was not. That's the event without the story.

It's raining. That's the miserable day without the story. He didn't call.

That's the event without the story. He didn't have the decency to return my call. It's amazing how simple things go.

If you take away the story, the simplicity of what is without the personalized story around it, how simple life then becomes. How simple this moment always is without imposing a story on it, which is, in any case, only there in the service of being right, in the service of feeling superior to the situation or the person, in the service of enhancing your always deficient mind-made egoic sense of self. This is all madness, dysfunction.

If you look and see how people complicate their lives for nothing, for an illusory identity. Then what is left then is things are as they are at this moment. People do what they do at this moment.

Beautifully illustrated in the story that you may have heard perhaps through this mouth before, in the story of the Zen master. Some of you probably don't know it, but it's such a beautiful story. The Zen master, who had an excellent reputation as a great teacher in a town in Japan, and one day was accused by the 17-year-old girl next door of being the father to her child that had just been born.

The parents asked, who is the father? They were shocked that she was giving birth to a baby. And she finally said, it was the master next door.

I went to see him nine months ago for a spiritual counseling session and then that's when he did it to me. And so the parents got extremely angry and started telling everybody about it. And they ran to the Zen master with the baby and put it there on his floor and said, we know what you did.

You are responsible. Now you look after the baby. We don't want anything to do with this baby anymore.

You take it. You are the father. We know it all now.

The Zen master looked and listened. And when they said, you are the father of this baby, he said, is that so? And then they said, yes, and we are leaving this baby here.

You can look after him. Is that so? Then they left.

The Zen master lost his reputation. Nobody came to him for counseling sessions anymore. Nobody wanted to hear him anymore.

All he had there was the baby. So that was the present moment. He picked up the baby and started getting some food, sent off somebody to get some food and spent one year mostly looking after the baby that was there.

A year later, the girl was a little bit more mature and cuddly confessed to her parents that the Zen master was actually not the father. It was the son of the butcher next door was the father. So, oh my God, they ran to the Zen master and said, please forgive us.

That is all a big mistake. We've just realized that you are not the father. The Zen master looked and said, is that so?

And they said, oh, can we have the baby back now, please? We now want the baby. We'll look after it.

So we want the baby back. Is that so? Okay.

And off they went. This is an extreme example of the good that comes. Only good is when no story, even stories that other people try to impose on you, is accepted.

No story is taken on. And this Zen is an extreme example of, it's a teaching story. It's an extreme example of non-reactive relationship to life and a non-story imposing relationship on life.

They had their story. They had to do, they had to make the Zen master wrong. The Zen master refused any kind of story, any kind of, he wasn't a victim of circumstance.

He didn't say, I can't look after this baby. What do I do? I can't have spent my time.

No, he did what was there to do at that moment. So the baby had the best possible start in life, because for one year grew up in this energy field of great peace with the Zen master. But then the Zen master did not cling, did not have a clinging relationship to that.

He was able to, in the moment, let go of the past and relinquished the baby and responded to this moment. The parents now, he so genuinely wanted the baby back. He, she was going to marry the butcher's son.

So this is an example of the simplicity. It may be a little bit extreme. You can, you can of course say, no, I am not the father.

There would be another possibility that is still not a story. No, I'm not the father. But if that is what you believe, I cannot help it.

Again, you are not buying into the story. But if you had your own, then people, you have a, you have a story to, to counteract their story, and so on, and so on, the stuff out of which drama is made. So look at your life and see, are you facing situations as they are?

Are you, or are you imposing and mixing up something here? Stories on simple, the simplicity that is always there in this moment. So that is, it's good to know that because the mind will always try to manufacture stories.

And the biggest one, of course, the most intriguing story, is the story of me, me and my life. That's so interesting. And if you can't tell anybody else about me and my life, then you can tell yourself about me and my, much about my life.

The story of me, the most fascinating story. And the story of me is part of the ego, the egoic sense of self. Not saying that you do not remember what happened to you.

Of course you remember what happened to you. Not saying don't have the photo albums anymore. You still have the photo albums, but to derive your identity from a story.

And when you look at the story of me, they can see that a lot of the identity that is derived from the story of me is to do, very often, with making other people wrong. And see how right you have been in that situation. And how wrong those people have been to you compared to, or situations, or God, him, her, or itself.

God itself has done something to you. And so attached to the story are certain emotions. Resentments, the story is enormously energized by resentments and anger, sadness, what they did to me, what they did to me.

Kinds of things. Can you look through the story and die to the story? Not lose your memory, but die to the story as a self-reference, as giving you your sense of self.

So where does your sense of self come from, then, if you let go of that? If you die to that, and see that's not who you are, and you die to the unconsciousness of manufacturing further stories. Even complaining, let's go back to the example of the cold soup.

Complaining about the cold soup is another story. The moment you complain about it, I'm not saying heat it up, please. That's not complaining.

But the inner complaining, or the outer verbal complaining, which implies making something or someone wrong, that's the story. So drama, unconscious people are waiting just for the next thing out of which they can manufacture drama. The egoic identity in conjunction with the pain body is just looking out for the next thing out of which to manufacture their next dramatic episode.

Now the kind of dramas that people are drawn into vary a little. Some people have the victim drama, somebody's always doing it to me. Other people have other kinds of drama.

They get very angry with situations and people. Others, they get very sad. Poor me.

Well, that's the victim. I can't remember what else. There's quite a few.

And then you see how they use the tiniest events to add a little bit to incorporate into their dramatic story. So if you can see that in others, that's already great. If you can see it in yourself, it's even greater when it happens.

See it. And so you see what that is. Some people have a greater amount of, a denser ego and a denser pain body than others.

But the basic principle is there in everyone to some extent, greater or lesser. But it ceases to operate the more you step into presence. Then there's still only remnants of that that occasionally come in.

And then your life becomes simplified. So simple. Simplify, simplify, said one famous writer.

Thoreau, I think it was. Simplify, simplify. Now people talk about simplifying their lives and think it's to do with not indulging in excessive consumption and so on, which of course is good too.

But that happens naturally. The true simplification happens on the inner level. Let go of the stories.

Pay more attention to this moment than anything else. This is the day that we spend in silence. The day that we spend listening.

Always just this moment. It sounds like a big thing if we say we'll spend the whole day listening, watching, being alert, attentive, alert to your surroundings and alert on the inner level. The more alert you are to sense perceptions, the more alertness you will also have within.

Stay for a little while with the empty chair.

[Speaker 2] (1:37:39 - 1:37:39)

Thank you.

Eckhart Tolle - The Transformation Of Consciousness

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 1:18:05)

Eckhart Tolle, The Transformation of Consciousness, released by Pagoo, so let's look at some of the great mysteries of human existence. Things that adults don't look at anymore, don't ask questions about anymore, only children still do. But while we sit here and listen to the words, realize there is another dimension than the words.

And what is that dimension? One could say, simply to notice the silent spaces. While the words happen, you hear the words, but some of your attention is also on the silent spaces, or the silent background.

It's very simple, it's simple to notice that there is, apart from the words, that there is also a stillness here. And a strange thing happens when you notice silence, which means pay attention to silence, a strange thing happens inside you at that moment, and that is, in that act of noticing silence, thought activity, the stream of thinking, stops during that moment when you notice silence. Und für einen Moment kommt der Fluss von Gedanken zum Ende, während man lauscht, der Stille lauscht.

So this is accessing a new dimension of consciousness that most people are not aware of. The possibility for the stream of thinking to come to an end without any loss of consciousness. And in the moment of noticing or listening to that dimension of silence, you're also completely present here in this moment, completely inhabiting this moment, being in it totally.

And this is the reason why we are here, to access that dimension in ourselves, to go beyond the continuous stream of thinking that most people are completely identified with as themselves, me. The self, the me, is in every thought, no distance. And that is the state of absence.

And here we are entering the state of presence. Otherwise you're completely trapped in the conditioning of the thinking mind with all its patterns, with its accumulated knowledge, experiences, past. You are simply acting out a script in the mind when you're totally one with that.

This is no freedom in that whatsoever. So the possibility arises of living in a different state of consciousness from the normal state. So you will have noticed already that here, in this talk, your mind, thinking mind, is not being fed or stimulated.

And if you sit here, and you are still completely identified with the stream of thinking, you will already notice restlessness, impatience, and discontent arising. And the thinking mind says, what's he talking about? I can't figure out.

He's not really saying anything. Because the thinking mind and the sense of self that comes with identification with the conditioned mind, a mind made sense of me, that sense of self is always looking for more to add to itself. So here it will be looking for some new ideas to put in here.

Oh, that's interesting. New beliefs. Now I know what I believe in.

Or maybe some new emotional experiences. And it's not being satisfied here because the thinking mind is not getting the food that it wants. That it wants to add to itself and then feel a little bit bigger when you leave here.

Added something to me. That's because the sense of self that is based on me and my story, my past, everybody's sense of identity, really, is what is it that people tell you when you ask them, who are you? Their identity.

They will give you the name. And they completely believe that that's who they are. They say it with great conviction.

This fact cannot be doubted that I am John Smith. Yes, I am. And then they will tell you what they do in relation to society, for a living.

And then if there's enough time left, they will tell you a little story. Or a long story. And that's the story of me.

And so the person will be talking about perhaps the roles that he or she plays in this world. And believing that that's who he or she is. I'm a mother of three.

I'm an accountant. I'm such and such. I'm unemployed.

I'm successful. I'm unemployed. They're little conceptual identities.

Concept in the head. Of course, everybody has certain roles to play in this life. But to believe that that's who you are, to be identified with that, that's a terrible prison, bondage.

You can honor the roles without believing that that's who you are. You can honor being a mother without this concept occupying your mind totally. Otherwise you will be a mother for the rest of your life, and your children will remain children to you.

And you always know better, and you'll tell them what to do. You are trapped in the role. And so the world is full of people who are trapped in the roles that society has given them, their conditioned roles.

Which is mindforms. That's what a role is, certain mindforms. Mental formations, thoughts.

So this is another aspect of being identified with the content of your mind. And that sense of self, identity, me, that is derived from identification with that, is never at ease, or fulfilled, at peace, for very long. Not for long.

So that self lives in a condition of not enough. And there is a feeling attached to it that is, I am not complete yet. I haven't made it yet.

I haven't arrived home yet. I need to be more. I need to grow in my sense of self.

And everybody, even if on the surface it looks as if the story of me had completed itself, and sometimes this culture tells you that the famous people, or the wealthy people, they have made it on the surface. So there is the illusion that you can arrive at a state of completion of your sense of self that is based on a story. The happy ending.

And if you meet the famous people, or wealthy people, you realize their state is the same as everybody else's. They don't feel that they have arrived. There is fear, there is discontent, a sense of lack.

And they have everything. So this sounds like bad news. As if you couldn't possibly make it in this life.

Now if you have enough time left, then that sense of self will still feel, OK, I have enough time to complete myself. I surely have another 40, 50 years ahead of me, and surely that is enough time to complete the story of me, and make it into a happy one that ends happily. So it's not realized that the discontent, unhappiness, that problematic me that everybody knows at first hand, people don't realize that this is not their personal problem, but it is built into the very structure of the mind.

It is a structural dysfunction, not a dysfunction based on content. And every sense of self, with its story, knows that the story didn't quite work out the way it should have up to this point. Things along the way did not go the way they were supposed to go.

And so, at this moment, and there is the belief that through future I can still complete myself. And then as you get older, you realize it never seems, that moment of completion never comes. And then future shrinks as you get older.

And so what many old people do, as the future shrinks, more and more they look to the past. At least I can hang on to that. And they keep that going through thinking and talking about it.

Just keep it going. And if the identity is an unhappy one, the mind-made identity, because life has done such dreadful things to you, treated you so unfairly, that you have an identity that is based on complaining, that's fine, it's better than no identity at all. I have to keep that going.

So there are many people who are trapped in a very unhappy sense of self, with continuous complaining in the mind about life, people around me, what they are doing to me, God, if there is a God, they believe in God. Or they say there can't possibly be a God, look at what he did. And once you are trapped in an identity, it becomes rigid, and you don't want to let go.

Through thinking and talking about yourself, to yourself and to others, you don't want to let go of the me. It doesn't matter how unhappy the me is. So if you have enough time, there is the search for more to complete me.

More possessions perhaps, maybe that would make me feel a little bit more secure, a little bit bigger, the bigger the car, maybe that would do it, it's bigger than other people's. And so the car becomes a thought form, it's not the car that really matters, because it's only metal, and in a few years it will be rust. It's not the car, it's the thought form of car that contains the self, and the me is in the thought form that identifies with the thought form of car, me, car, thought form.

And that is very normal. And if it's a big car, the me, the illusion of me has become a little bit bigger, through the thought form, for a little while. And after a little while, it doesn't work so well anymore as to satisfy the sense of self, it only works for a short period of time, and then you have to look for the next thing, that's the more.

And you look for the next thing, and this continuous looking for the next thing to complete me, is the psychological need, built into me, for the next moment, future. And everybody is looking for that, if you observe people, how they live, there's a need for the next moment, because it will enable me to get what I need to complete me. And then comes maybe the house, a big house, bigger than the car, and that's the thought form again arises, the me, the self is the thought form of my house, my.

My is a very interesting story, to say, mine. Children learn that very early on, one of the first things they learn, this is the beginning of the self, egoic self, that's mine. And so, an idea develops, and the whole civilization is based on that, the idea of owning something, ownership.

If you look at it clearly, you can see that to say, I own this, this table, whatever, this house, this car, it is mine, what does that mean? What? It's a story, you are telling yourself a story about this, it becomes a thought form.

Now, if you were mad, you might be telling yourself the story that, I own this huge office block, I own this 20 story office block, you walk past every day, and you say, that's mine. Now, and then it's possible that the rest of society may agree with your story, and they give you a piece of paper to show you that they agree with your story. So if you believe that you own something, and nobody else agrees with you, you're mad.

If everybody agrees with you, you're wealthy. Wealthy. And that wealthy is important because it makes the story bigger, until it becomes unhappy again.

So to see how important the concepts are in the head, and so people live in and through a conceptualized sense of self, mental concepts, and the moment you inhabit a conceptualized sense of self, then you also inhabit a conceptualized reality, because everything that you perceive is interpreted according through the eyes of the mind-made self, the me. So that is the compulsion to immediately interpret and label every experience, every perception. And those people who are very good at that, those people who can quickly label things, analyze things, store information, regurgitate information, cut things into tiny pieces to examine, they're good with concepts, that is called intelligent.

And if you're very good at cutting the tiniest piece of knowledge into even smaller pieces, then you get a PhD. If you have been to universities, you know how tiny the segments are that people do their research on. So that is the human condition.

And the need for more is not only a personal need, because that sense of self becomes a collective sense of self, through companies, corporations, nations, tribes, organizations. They are all created by that conceptual self, and they are an expression of that, a collective expression of that. So it's easy to say you look at a huge corporation and see how greedy that corporation is.

Only recently, the famous collapse of Enron Corporation in the United States, huge. And then you see the entire corporation was dominated by the greed for more, more it wanted to grow, grow. They would do anything to grow.

So it's easy to say look at this evil corporation, it's just a magnified ego. And so this, the self, the entity, the self, when it moves through life, the me, has two important things that it is concerned about. One is the wanting movement, wanting more.

And the other is the protective movement of I don't want to lose anything that I already have, the little that I have. So those two movements are wanting and fearing, desire, fear. And human beings move between these two.

Whatever, any action undertaken by the egoic self is either desire, the need for more, or fear, the need for protecting me. And every human being that you meet in that state, the little self, looks to see what can I get, it's unconscious of course, what can I get from him or her to add to me? And then it looks, is this person a threat to me?

So it looks through the eyes of fear and desire at each person you meet. And so this is how human beings live. And one more thing that makes it even worse, that self, the mind-made self, needs to have a clear boundary, which is also thought of course, a boundary between me and the rest of the world and others.

And with that comes the need, unconscious again, for that sense of self to define itself more strongly through opposition. The little self needs enemies somewhere, because without enemies, its sense of identity would no longer be rigid enough, it would become fluid. Collectively you can see it, how religions, nations, or different churches within the religions, tribes, how they love their enemies, they love them, not in the way that Jesus talks about it, they need their enemies because they define their sense of self, through that it becomes stronger.

Christians did this for a long, long time, some still do it. Muslims do it a lot these days, to define your sense of identity through having an enemy. This is not particular to any one religion, any religion lends itself to that.

Nations do it. Who would you be without the enemy that strengthens the illusory self enormously, to have, and on a personal level, that means the need for problems. So that's, again, it's unconscious, it's built into the structure of the mind.

So, we all know people who are attached to their problems, because it's always easier to see it in others than in oneself. And so many people's story-based self is mainly a collection of problems and conflict in my life. And when you ask them about their life, they will tell you their problems.

So if that is the human condition, personally, collectively, we can see why human history looks so insane, mad. Read 20th century history. It's a nightmare.

And if you watch TV tonight, the news, it's a continuation of that. So the world that human beings have created is an expression, a manifestation of their state of consciousness, rather unconsciousness. So now we can see why history is the way it's been ever since we started recording history.

So there is such a very strong element of dysfunction or madness in the human psyche. And all the great teachers, they saw that. Buddha, Jesus, Indian teachers from India, Hindu, they all saw that in the human condition there is an enormous dysfunction.

Buddhas called it suffering. The human condition is one of suffering, that's what he said. Jesus called it sin.

Of course it's been misinterpreted a lot. In India they call it illusion. So they saw that, and they also saw that there is a way beyond.

And a different state of consciousness is possible for humanity. Buddha calls it the end of suffering. Jesus calls it salvation or the kingdom of heaven.

Or in Indian teachings it may be called liberation or enlightenment. So at last we come to the good news. But you may have noticed sitting here and seeing the human condition, seeing it, just seeing it for what it is.

It is necessary because if there is no change in the human state of consciousness, the planet and humanity would probably not survive another 100 years. Because the dysfunction is now being magnified by the means of science and technology. And so for the first time humanity is faced with the possibility of bringing about its own extinction.

And so now a new state of consciousness has to arise in humans. And this is why it is arising. Now am I putting another idea into your head?

I don't want to put any ideas into your head. And some of you may ask, how do you know that a true change is happening? How do you know that?

This gathering here is part of that transformation of human consciousness. So this is what we are looking at now. The transformation of consciousness that is possible and is happening here.

Why? How? How do we get out of thousands and thousands of years of conditioning?

And the little self says, oh, this sounds very interesting. I want to become transformed. Yes.

And it says, tell me more and tell me how to get there. How do I get from here to there? In other words, another image forms in the mind of me attaining a state of consciousness, an ideal.

And so, okay, the big car didn't work, the big house didn't work, status in society didn't complete me, marriages didn't complete me, experiences, traveling, knowledge, Ph.D. But now, there's a possibility of attaining, of adding to me the ultimate attainment. And so you become a spiritual seeker. And don't realize that the same mindset with its need for more and need for future to complete me still operates.

And so after 20 years of seeking, you get a little tired. A few times you actually thought you found it, the great experience. And suddenly, it receded into the past.

And then you became somebody who once had a great experience. Better than nothing. You can talk about it, think about it, and feel unhappy about it.

And after a few years, that feels very familiar. So the self, the mind made self says, okay, well, tell me how to get there, no matter how much time it takes. In fact, give me time, and I'll get there.

And in some teachings, you get it, it feels good. The teachings say, there are 12 steps, and then you know exactly where you are. I'm at 4, where are you?

So in some teachings, you may have the 12 steps, and the only one who has attained 13 is the leader of the group. So the mind made self lives through time. Time is past, gives it its identity.

Future holds the possibility of completion, so it's time bound. And this is why that sense of self and time go together, that's why time is so important to us in this civilization. And time is a strange thing, it goes on and on, and yet the most common expression you hear about time is, I don't have it, not enough.

And there's so much everywhere, time. And time is a very strange mystery, a great mystery. On the one hand, it seems so real, nobody could deny it, because we are spending time here, you spend time coming here, and then very soon this will be over because time is passing.

And then, before you know it, you're going home again, time is passing. And you can't stop the thing, it drags you along, it's like you're sitting on an express train and it never stops, you see the landscape. Even our gathering here, for a long time it was a future event, there it was coming.

Another three days, two days, one day, and then it's here, and it goes... Was that it? The express train is gone, it's gone into the past, the future approaches slowly, the more distant the more slowly, just like space.

The more distant, the slower, and then suddenly it comes, and before you know it, it's gone. It's so fleeting, before you know it, it's gone. It's strange.

There was a, I believe a poet, talked about time as a fire that consumes us all. And, in a way, this is true, because what fire leaves behind is ashes, and that will remain of these bodies, burnt by time. At Christmas I visited old friends I hadn't seen in many, many years, and when I saw them at first, I thought they must be ill.

And then I realized, no, it's time did that. This is terrible, time did that to you, I didn't say that. So it's a very strange thing, time.

It seems we can't get out of it, but on the other hand we never have enough of it. It consumes us, okay. But then there's something else, and that's strange.

Time really is past and future. That's time. That's time.

Now the strange thing is, you never actually really encounter past or future, ever. So the strange thing is, all there ever is, is now. It's always now.

And the strange thing is that nothing ever happened to you, you never did anything or experienced anything in the past. Whatever ever happened to you must have happened in the now. And as the future never comes, of course, because when it comes, it's now.

And so we can see even when we remember the past. What you remember is a memory trace that you are giving attention to now. You can only remember it now.

And what you remember, the event, the thought form that happened in the now. So the memory must have happened in the now and you can only remember it now, so you can't get away from now. And so we realize the strange thing that actually there is, ultimately, there is no past and no future in your life.

The future is what you project now. So there is no life apart from now. So it's strange that on the one hand, time seems to be so powerful, but on the other hand, this is not philosophy, it's too simple.

Philosophy would be more complicated. We'll keep it simple. Time seems so real and seems to do things to us.

And yet, if you look closely, you can't find it. You can't find it. All you ever find is this moment.

So what it does to the body, if time is ultimately not real, maybe the body is ultimately not real. Maybe both are aspects of the same illusion. But this we will now put aside.

To realize that your entire life unfolds in the space of now, never was not now, never will be not now. And the strange thing is, when people are trapped in their egoic, mind-made identity, all they are interested in is past and future. In other words, they're interested in everything except what is real.

And they miss this almost continuously. And so the present moment, at best, becomes a stepping stone that enables me to get to the next moment. And very often, I'm trying to get away from this now.

I resist it, I don't like it. I'm on my way to somewhere much more important. It's the next moment where I'm going to find myself.

So we come to the, there's a little, an opening now. At first it seems very small. The opening is out of the conditioned mind.

Freedom from thousands of years of conditioning through accessing the power that lies hidden in the present moment. The transformation of consciousness that is happening is simply, one could say, finding a new relationship towards now. A new relationship with now.

And a new... Eine neue innere Einstellung. Zum jetzt.

It is somewhere. Somewhere. I mentioned the need of the mind-made self for problems and enemies.

And one could say the greatest enemy of the mind-made self is the now. People don't realize that they have made the now into an enemy. And the transformation of consciousness is not something that could happen to you at some point in the future.

The transformation of consciousness is simply aligning yourself internally with this moment. And you can only do that now. Is it possible to live in such a way so that you welcome this moment, the only moment there ever is.

It's always this moment. There's only one ever. It's this one.

You welcome this now, no matter what form this now takes. Now the little me in the head says, No. I don't even like this now.

I want to get away from it. It's not completing me. It's actually stopping me.

It's an obstacle to where I want to get to. An obstacle to the story of me. That's what the now is.

This now, the little me says, is actually sabotaging my life, my story. That's why I need to get to the next moment. And that is a structural dysfunction to live in such a way that the now is continuously resisted.

The possibility now arises to bring a yes to this moment. Because it is. Because it always is as it is.

And you can scream and shout and complain, but it still is as it is. Now the little self says, yes, but I want to improve the world. I want to make the world a better place.

But this moment is dreadful. I don't want to accept this dreadful thing. And so you run away.

Run away from this. What happens? What happens?

It's enormous to recognize that the form that this moment takes, the form that it takes, of course, changes continuously. There's the field of now, and there's a form that appears in it. And then it disappears.

But really, it remains as the field of now. It disappears, the mind projects past to accommodate what's just happened. But really, everything is in this place of now.

It comes into the now. So there's only one moment, one now. It never leaves you.

Not many moments. Many forms that this moment can take. And what form this moment takes, whatever happens, is not a separate event.

There are no separate events. We know from ancient teachings and from modern physics that everything is interconnected. There are no separate entities or events.

And that means what appears in the now, what happens in the now, is an expression of the totality. And that means it could not be otherwise. The entire cosmos has brought this about.

So that is the inevitability of the form that this moment takes. When you recognize the inevitability of is, then you see the madness of resisting that. And what the resistance does, it strengthens the me entity.

It strengthens the illusion. And that's why the little me loves to make the now into its enemy. When you see that, the possibility of living in a different way arises.

And internally, you align yourself with now. And that means you allow this moment to be as it is. The Buddha used the word suchness, the suchness of things.

And the little me says, no, nothing is ever going to change. You will get stuck in this dreadful now for the rest of your life. And it doesn't realize that it's been stuck in its own mind patterns all your life.

When you allow this moment to be, you say yes to it. Yes. That yes is the end of thousands and thousands of years of collective conditioning.

The no to now, the reaction, the reactive no to this moment, to the form that this moment takes, strengthens the psychological form of me. And with a yes, no matter what form this takes, you bring a yes to it. And a strange thing happens.

There's suddenly, one could say, a space around what happens. And also inner space arises, a sense of spaciousness. And that is the arising of the unconditioned consciousness.

And there is vast intelligence in that unconditioned consciousness. The conditioned consciousness is the human mind. Which is a small aspect of that vast one intelligence.

So, something happens. It may be a challenge that comes into your life. Life does that.

It happens in the field of now. And it is not resisted, but simply given attention. You look at it.

And it arises, and you simply allow a flow of attention. You look. And this is an enormous change, the ability to simply be there with what is, in that state of alert attention.

And in that state of alert attention, enormous intelligence operates. And if action is needed, action will happen. And it will come not out of resistance, but out of the intelligence that is that state of alert awareness.

It often happens also that suddenly an external factor may come in to do what is required in that situation. A synchronistic event, for example. You are connected now with the one intelligence which is not confined to your brain.

So you can meet life in that state of welcoming whatever happens. Even if on the surface it looks bad. It could not be otherwise.

You cannot argue with is, so you might as well welcome it. But are there not everywhere dreadful situations in life, injustices, violence, people doing dreadful things to other people? Are you asking me not to do anything about it?

See what happens if you are there as the space of unconditioned intelligence. Go into a situation as not a little entity that is fighting and unhappy and angry and wants to create a better world out of its anger. And what see, the true transformed world can only arise out of the transformed state of consciousness.

So this is the only thing for us here to realize as we sit here, the possibility of meeting whatever happens in now in a state of yes. Yes. And that suddenly the portal is open and the unconditioned intelligence moves through you and begins to operate in your life.

You are now being lived by life. And then you can walk around, you can look at something and allow it to be so completely that the compulsion to label it mentally isn't there anymore. So you are not trapped anymore in the labels, concepts, thoughts.

This is the awakening out of the dream of thought. Not that thought does not happen anymore, but it is recognized as thought. You see it for what it is.

The seeing is the unconditioned consciousness. We can point to it here through words, but the true teaching is to sense the space out of which the words come. Some of you have studied Zen.

What is Zen all about? This. An uncompromising refusal to leave now, except for practical matters.

Tomorrow I will meet at such and such a time. Okay. Back now.

There was a Zen teacher who when asked what is the meaning of Zen, some teachers would hit you or some teachers give nonsensical explanations, but there was one teacher who became famous because all he would ever do was raise his finger when he was asked, Can you explain Zen to us, please? Yes. Oh, now the last secret.

The secret of now is to sense the now directly. Not as what happens in it, but as the underlying field. And then you realize that the now isn't really separate from who you are.

Because you are that field of aware presence. And some people have used different words to describe it. It is simply beingness, presence, I am, I am, but no longer this or that.

And that's God's self-definition in the Bible somewhere. They ask, Who are you? What's your name?

God says, I am as I am. I am that I am. So that, this is the essence of being.

So your identity is no longer the little story, but that field. So your spiritual practice is simply to bring a yes to this, to the now. And many times the old no will come back, the wave of resistance to what is.

What do you do then? You notice it and say, oh, there's a no. As a space of alert, aware presence.

And you still remember your roles and your past. After this, it's just a continuous stepping out when you get drawn back into the concepts, this conceptual self. And you notice it, you become unhappy, suffering.

And you become unhappy, you've lost the now. Oh, where's the now? My past, my future.

And then suddenly your attention goes, phew. Oh. And there isn't actually a problem here, is there?

And then you lose yourself again and it sucks up your attention, that thing here. So it's a continuous back and that, oh. And so increasingly you walk on this narrow, this edge of now.

Beautiful.

Eckhart Tolle - Waking Up to the Reality of Ones True Nature

[Speaker 1] (1:58 - 1:44:03)

If you've been to a talk or retreat before, you know that I often point out at this stage that you should check within to see if you are waiting for something to happen, waiting for the talk to start. What does that mean, waiting? It means there's a little bit of inner strain, a slight, very tiny inner stress that pulls you away from here and now.

Expressed facially, it could be like, and when you notice that, then you know something about your relationship with the present moment. You lost it. The end of the relationship.

Now, did he or she leave you, or did you leave him or her? He or she doesn't leave you, you left. The waiting is so subtle and so all-pervasive as one's normal state of consciousness that most people don't even know that they're in an almost continuous state of waiting.

That's how normal it is. Once you detect it in yourself, it's a slight tension, strain, stress. Sometimes there's a little bit of irritation mixed in, a thought mixed in.

Come on, let's get on with it. We only have a couple of hours this morning, come on. But if you notice it in yourself as a mental energy field, and even some emotion may go with it.

Irritation is an emotion. Thoughts go with it occasionally. The moment you notice it, something has arisen that is not part of that deeply conditioned mind pattern.

The seeing of it is not part of it. The seeing of it, and that's the seeing of any pattern in yourself, is not part of the pattern. And the seeing, the recognizing of it, requires you to be present, aware at this moment, awake.

So when you see a pattern in yourself, mental, emotional, conditioned, of course. Now the waiting is a collective pattern, almost everybody has that. There may be other patterns in you that you detect that are to do with your personal life.

It doesn't matter what it is, it could be the simplest thing. When you see a man with a beard and dark hair, you feel anxious, and then you realize that maybe he looks like your father, and you didn't have a good relationship with him. Any pattern, collective or personal, when you detect it, there's something more at that moment than that which you see.

There is the seeing of it. Before, the pattern absorbed your consciousness completely. You wear it, you become it.

You are the waiting, anxious, somewhat irritated person. There's no space around the irritation, around the stress of that moment. There's no space around it, you are in it.

And then suddenly you see it. And one could say it is a stepping back, perhaps the deeper meaning of retreat. Because you are retreating not only from the world that you usually move in, you have to retreat also from the world in your head.

You step back. And something arises that is not conditioned, and that is pure, simple, pure, miraculous consciousness, awareness, presence, whatever you want to call it. And that is the part in you that is not conditioned.

Everything else is conditioned. The seeing, that is an energy field, I'm using seeing metaphorically, it's not necessarily with your eyes. The noticing, the seeing, you may feel it, but there is the presence in which it is felt, which means suddenly there is space around that.

And so it could be anything that you notice in yourself. It could be compulsive behavior, this or that, compulsive reaction. Almost everything is compulsive.

Well, everything is compulsive when you are not there as the witnessing presence. Your entire movement of thought is compulsive. You can't stop, or you think you can't stop.

And the mind loves to tell you that you cannot stop, and make a problem out of that, which leads to further thinking. Why can't I stop my mind? What's wrong with me?

I've been doing meditation for years. And I still can't do it. There's no point in going on, is there?

And then you believe in every thought. There's no point in going on. I might as well chuck it all in.

And then suddenly you step back and you watch those thoughts. So this is the arising of something new in you. New in the sense that you hadn't noticed that dimension in yourself before.

It was there all along, waiting underneath all the conditioned mind movements. But you didn't know it was there. And suddenly it arises.

It kind of, at this time in the evolution of the planet and of humanity, that is pushing through from underneath all the conditioned collective stuff that people carry and identify with as themselves. Something else is pushing forward from deeper, a deeper dimension within you. It's almost like the eggshell needing to break.

Something wants to come out of there. And so there comes a time when the shell, which is really the shell of that egoic sense of self that consists of identification with thought, needs to break. There is an evolutionary impulse in the universe towards consciousness.

And that has been playing itself out on the planet for millions of years. Consciousness expressing itself in ever-changing forms. And through humans, consciousness now wants to come to a flowering that hasn't happened before, never on a large scale, only to a few isolated individuals.

And what humans did to them, well, either they ignored them completely, or they killed them, or they made them into gods to be worshipped. And those were only the few individuals in whom this came through almost prematurely, but they were necessary precursors of what was to come, a deeper change. Now, I'm not telling you, of course, to wait for some change to happen on the planet.

You know, there are many, many, many times in the history, groups of people have waited for the end or some drastic change. We are not waiting. I'm just pointing out that this gathering here is already part of this transformation, this flowering of consciousness.

And anybody who in a so-called future moment, which doesn't exist, listens to this, it will be in the now, nobody could ever listen to this anywhere else except in the now, is also part of that transformation of consciousness, because as you listen, something new arises. There is more here than the words. There is that which the words point to, which is here as an alive presence in you, an inner arising.

There's more here than the words. If there were only the words, it wouldn't be that much. So consciousness then wants to flower through the human form.

Whether it fully will do that on a large scale, we don't know yet. Although it is happening here, there's also the dysfunction of the old form, which is no longer working, similar to a caterpillar that comes to the end of its lifespan as a caterpillar. And the closer it comes to the end of its lifespan as a caterpillar, the more difficult it gets to continue to...

Suddenly the crawling doesn't work anymore. Things don't work anymore. The caterpillar existence becomes dysfunctional.

It was fine before, because something new is destined to emerge out of this thing that is bound by gravity, can't even lift itself up one inch. And now the evolutionary transformation, when it happens, is not a progressive thing of getting better and better at doing something in a certain way, but a complete leap to another dimension. So in the case of the caterpillar, it doesn't mean that he gets better at crawling, faster and faster.

No, that is left behind completely, and something emerges that is a different being. Suddenly something comes out of it, and it has the most beautiful wings, and it flies off, has almost no weight at all. It has completely transcended the gravity of the planet.

And in the case of humans, what does that mean? Humans have been immersed in thinking for thousands and thousands and hundreds of thousands of years. The arising of thought was a necessary stage in the evolution.

Of course, it had wonderful sides too, to be able to think and speak, which is connected with thinking, words, form words and concepts. And yet gradually, humans lost through that, became totally entangled in it, and they lost their connectedness with something deeper than thought. They perhaps once had it, a deep connection with life, not life of form, the formless one life that is the essence of who you are, the one formless life.

But that connection humans had in the way that everything natural still has that, but they didn't even know it. It was so natural, they couldn't imagine anything else. They had that deep connectedness in which there's no fear of death, because there's a deep knowing that there is no death, only the form dissolving.

The leaf, all the millions or billions of leaves that we see around us now are all dying. And there's such beauty in their death even. And they are not afraid of death, they just die beautifully.

So in humans, thought gradually captured their consciousness, so that their whole sense of self became entangled in thought. And then gradually thought itself became more dysfunctional. It created a dysfunctional world.

From the beginning of recorded history, if you read history and are alert, if you had just come here from another planet and you are reading human history for the first time, you can see that a large part of the human suffering, that is history, is inflicted on humans by other humans. All the wars and murder and cruelties, continuous warfare, except brief interludes, because they got exhausted for a while. And then the most dysfunctional century, the 20th.

A hundred million dead, killed by other humans. And this is a continuation, the 21st century. So on that level, the old continues.

The caterpillar is still trying to have its way. And it's getting more and more difficult. Similarly, we could compare it to the flowering of plants, this incredible beauty that has arisen on the planet through flowers.

Consciousness expressing itself through this ethereal form of flowers that humans have always recognized as very special. And all flowers have had a significance. Well, perhaps the first thing in humanity that was not utilitarian, that you couldn't really eat or do anything with it.

And yet they valued that beyond anything that they could do with it. Because deep down, in a very, very deep, distantly, they recognized perhaps beauty there for the first time, when the first human discovered beauty. Ah!

But flowers came much later than plants. There were 100 million or 200 million years of plants before the first flower ever opened. I'm told that was about 230 million years ago, the first flower opened on the planet.

But many millions of years before that, plants already covered the planet. Now plants, certain plants flowered, others chose not to flower. And perhaps it will be the same with humanity.

Perhaps only part of humanity will go through this inner shift and the other part will say, no, we're okay as we are. But it only requires part of humanity to go through this flowering for the entire energy field of the planet to be transformed. So what humans then are not doing is to continue perfecting the old way, the caterpillar trying to crawl faster and faster.

If we use this metaphor for humans, then that would mean humans develop the thinking mind more and more. This is what, of course, they've been trying to do. Let's analyze this, more and more analysis, more and more getting facts and thinking.

Okay, how can we solve the problems that we've got, seem to have a proliferation of problems on the planet. They seem to get more and more, I don't know. Let's get together and think and see how we can solve this and analyze this problem, cut it into bits and pieces.

This is what they do at universities. They cut the subject matters into tinier and tinier pieces. 100 or 200 years ago, it was more satisfying still to be engaged in intellectual endeavors because you had a wide field.

Everybody at university had a huge amount of knowledge. Even the scientists had great knowledge. They knew Latin and Greek and had knowledge of classical culture and everything.

And nowadays, they have knowledge of a tiny segment of their speciality. They can't afford to study anything else. So it's not all that interesting anymore.

You can write a PhD on the leaves of the tree, the leaf of the oak tree. It's this wonderful phenomenon, of course, the leaf, but to see it in isolation. So everything, the mind cuts it up and it doesn't solve anything.

Any solution that it comes up with creates more problems. Okay, now we'll invent a medicine to combat the side effects of this medicine. And then another one to combat the side effects.

So humanity has really come to the end of the road as far as one particular line of growth or development is concerned. And now the shift needs to happen and is happening to something entirely different, which means thinking will become no longer primary but secondary. You can still think beautifully, but you're no longer trapped in thought.

Something arises that is deeper than thought, and that is the butterfly. It's like something suddenly emerging that's so different from what was there before. And some of you have already experienced that in yourself, that shift.

From there was once this anxious, depressed, whatever, angry, stressful little me. Something else has come and there's been an opening. And a spaciousness that wasn't there before, or was there, but had been obscured continuously.

That is the new. And it's from there that you see the old in you, which of course still has its momentum. It has its momentum both on the external level, when you see the news and read the newspapers, then you can see how strong the momentum of the dysfunctional consciousness in humanity still is.

And you can see it in yourself occasionally, that the old reactivity, the old reactions, or the waiting for the next thing, the denial of what is, in various ways of running away from the present moment, all these old movements also still periodically come as wave movements. And sometimes even the seeing is lost. Even in those in whom the new is already arising, sometimes they get lost totally in the old, deeply conditioned, collective, personal mind movement.

And wake up a few hours later, a few days later, you might even be lost a few weeks. I've heard of people who got lost for a whole year, and then they couldn't stand the suffering anymore, and finally, through the suffering, they got woken up again. It's like being in a nightmare, when it gets so bad that you can't stand it anymore, suddenly you go...

and realize that you're in a bed, a warm bed. And this is a very significant term, waking up. And of course it has been used for thousands of years in spiritual teachings.

Awaken. Because everybody knows what awakens means on one level, because everybody wakes up every morning out of sleep. And you know what that is.

So there's dream, sleep, and dream. And then they go... So it's used as a kind of metaphor to describe something that is similar to waking up from sleep.

But of course it's not that, because in spiritual terms, ordinary human consciousness is a kind of sleep also. To be identified completely with one's conditioned thinking and emotion, that movement, to be totally identified with that is a kind of dream. Conditioned.

And so most humans are still in it, but many, many more than ever before are now waking up out of that. But to see in yourself, to verify it in yourself that it is a kind of dream to be in that. Because, and it creates a certain reality that corresponds to your conditioning.

You interpret through the veil of this dream, through the old interpretations and reactions, you interpret the events and people and situations around you. So everything, it gets incorporated into the dream world. So you see nothing then as it is, because you impose your dream on it.

Human beings that come into your life, situations that you are in, you don't see it as it is. You only see your story about it. And so, and then a moment comes when you wake up and you see the possibility of relating, of being and relating without the otherwise compulsive mental interpretations that you have.

Sometimes when we speak of allowing this moment to be as it is, which is the essential spiritual practice, people think what we are talking about is allowing their interpretation of this moment. They cannot distinguish between this moment and the way in which they interpret this moment, how they personalize it. So you could be sitting on a park bench and you may have heard this teaching that says allow this moment to be as it is.

And then you think, okay, I'm a former CEO of that company who lost his position due to evil people around him and then soon later was left by his wife. His children don't like him. So this man is saying, okay, this moment, what I need to accept is that my life is in ruins.

It's come to nothing. Here I sit penniless on this bench, 30 years of hard work, nothing to show for it. It's all gone.

So what I need to accept now is that my life is a complete mess and totally in ruins. That's a story. So the man is confusing a story with this moment and he is imposing a story on this moment.

That's one story. There are many other possible stories. The reality is always much more simple than the story.

The story is this bench, this energy field sitting here, sensing the aliveness in the inner body, the trees, the birds, the clouds, the air, the sound of the leaves in the wind, the aliveness of it all, vibrant, without needing to tell yourself anything, you sense that, you see it. This moment is the simplicity of sitting here on the park bench and watching the aliveness all around. What do you need to interpret?

You accept this moment as it is and then you put your hand in your pocket and you pull out two dollars. That's what I have here, two dollars. All right.

You accept that. What else can you do? That's what is.

So the whole story of ruined and all come to nothing and we're never going to make it anymore, all that mind movement is not really part, is not part of the simplicity of now. So don't confuse when we speak of accept what is don't confuse a story with the simplicity of what is. What is, is just this here, sense perceptions, feeling the inner body and most importantly, something that's usually ignored, to be aware of, it's very hard to use words here, to be aware and as I speak, there's the possibility that this is now seen, experienced by you here.

As you sit here, what is the reality of this moment? You let go of the stories in your head about who you are or what your life is. That's your life situation, not your life.

That's past. So what's, and it's all a story. It's the story of me in the head that you tell yourself.

I'm not talking, if it's memories are fine, but to identify with memories, then you personalize, it becomes a me. Your memories become a self. What's the reality of this moment?

Here, sitting here, there are sense perceptions, auditory, the humming sound and the voice, visual sense perceptions of the room, the person sitting up here, other people in the room, the ceiling, the lights, sunlight coming in, flowers up here, and you can feel perhaps your inner body also, the aliveness that is there in your inner energy field. And underlying all that, even deeper than anything that you experience or notice at this moment, is the alert attention, the field of alert attention in which this seeing, this hearing, this sensing is happening. One could also call it a field of stillness.

There's a field, an alert stillness in which your sense perceptions happen. That alert stillness is always there. Otherwise, there would be nothing for anything to be.

There needs to be consciousness in which the experience or the thought or the perception happens. So that alert underlying field is consciousness itself. And it is a revolutionary thing for a human to become aware of that, but it is also very, very subtle.

It is not something that you can grasp. The mind will try to make it into some new object, and the danger, of course, is there when we talk about it. We make it into an object of consciousness because we put it into words.

We make a thought out of it, out of something that is far beyond thought. So the mind thinks there is something here to grasp and hang on to or to achieve or to hold, but there isn't. It is all-pervasive, the only real power in the universe, and at the same time, it is so subtle that most humans miss it entirely.

They don't know that dimension. They only know that which arises in consciousness. They know it, but they identify with it.

They react to it. What arises in your field of consciousness are sense perceptions, experiences, thoughts and emotions. Sense perceptions, experiences, things happen, situations, which is also really sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions.

And so they are identified with the objects that arise in consciousness, completely identified, never knowing that deeper level that is the very condition for the arising of anything comes out of that. And one could describe that as stillness. The word limits it somewhat, but it's a pointer.

So one could say there is in you the dimension of stillness. Has never not been there. Is not something that you need to acquire or achieve, that you could achieve in the future, in time.

If you're looking to the future to achieve that dimension, enlightenment, whatever you want to call it, if you look to the future to achieve that dimension, that very looking to the future prevents you from seeing that it's already the very essence of your being now. So many humans are looking to the future to look for fulfillment or enlightenment or liberation in whatever way, through a million dollars or through spiritual enlightenment. They look to the future for that.

And the moment you move away and look to the future for it as if it were something that you could get, from someone or through some experience, you've gone away from it. Mentally, you've gone into the old conditioned mind movement which is looking to the next thing. This is why I spoke yesterday of the vertical dimension that we are going into here.

So the dimension of stillness, let's for a moment use that pointer, and let's never get attached too much to one single pointer because then you make it into some kind of belief. And the concept satisfies you for a moment. And then you could even say, I believe in stillness.

You don't believe in stillness? You're wrong. And then somebody else says, No, no, it's presence, it's not stillness.

There is in you that already, the stillness underneath all the mental noise and the emotional fluctuations, there is that realm of the unconditioned pure awareness, pure consciousness. And that is, on the one hand, you could call it, it is the non-personal dimension of you. It is where you transcend the personal sense of self.

And then you might say, Ah, no, I don't want to lose myself. Ah, but what you hadn't realized is, you think that yourself is the story of yourself. But that is no more than thoughts.

If you look very deeply and closely into what you mean when you say, I don't want to lose myself. I can feel there is something precious here that I do not want to lose. And you think, that sense of something precious that I am, I cannot imagine that I am going to die.

The world, me dead, and the world without me, can't be. So there is something, one feels there is something precious, and people, the fear of death comes, because people believe this is going to be lost. That sense of precious, if you look closely at what that really is, you see that it is something that has become mixed up with the story that you tell yourself about who you are.

About the name, the psychological form of me, all the things associated with that, the story of me, the beliefs. And something has become mixed up with that, and that is the sense of I, a deeper sense of beingness, that got mixed up with the story. And when you touch, even touch the realm of stillness in yourself, that is the deepest fulfillment that could be, and you realize who you truly are, is that, that is the essence of your sense of I, I, I, I am.

It has nothing to do with the story, it just got confused with the story. Sometimes people discover that whose story is destroyed by life. Life does something to you, that you cannot, the story becomes totally unbearable, everything collapses around you, so you cannot uphold the story anymore of me, as somebody who has done this or has done that, or has achieved that, it has all left you.

Maybe the body has become ill, is collapsing, things around you are collapsing, there is nothing left that you can claim anything about, make any claim about, possession, this or that, it is all gone. I don't know who I am anymore. Some people experience that realization in prison, when they are stripped of everything.

Everything has left them, the story has collapsed, I don't understand anything. Some people experience it when there is a usual, a sudden great disaster in their life. Suddenly, all their explanations don't work anymore, the way they had explained, they had all figured it all out, how the universe works, and my place in the universe, and the importance of my life, my work, what I have achieved and done.

And suddenly, your whole career suddenly crumbles, maybe something crumbles around you, and with it, that. And in the last moments of this physical form, suddenly all that leaves you, your story collapses at the same time as the world around you collapses, you might be on a sinking ship, or building collapsing, and at that moment, there is a corresponding inner collapse of the mental edifice of the story of me. And what is left, when that collapses, is what was always there, you touch the stillness, and you touch the deepest sense of being of I am.

That has nothing to do with your physical form or your psychological form of me. Nothing to do with form. And there is a moment of peace and stillness.

And many people who have touched death and survived miraculously, many tell the story of suddenly encountering a realm of great serenity and peace. All fear leaves them. And then they come back, and many of them have never feared death again, because they have already faced death.

And so death is when the structures crumble, not only around you, but the inner structures. One way is through disaster, and another way is through, the more gentle way, is through sitting here. And you have chosen that one.

Other people choose the disaster, and that works very well too. And even if there was only a moment before death comes and that is realized, that is the flowering. Your life has flowered.

Consciousness has flowered through this form and realized itself through this form. For the first time, well, not the very first, but on this planet, it's still a very rare phenomenon for this to happen. Consciousness, one could say, no, it is only a little, almost a parable, that consciousness itself is dreaming the dream of form and enjoying the dream.

The entire universe is. Look at the planet of the billions of life forms. Any form, whatever you could imagine, exists or has existed at some point as a life form.

Look at the oceans, how many incredible life forms live in the oceans alone. Every form that the wildest imagination could come up with, it will be somewhere in the ocean. The most, wow, this comes out of somebody's dream, maybe they're on acid.

So am I saying that the universe is on acid? Well, something like that. Because there is obviously some wild creation going on, some incredible dream of most gigantic proportions, and that's only in one ocean on one planet.

And then on land, millions of insects, different forms of different plants, and then on the level that you cannot see, the microorganisms, it's just unbelievable. And that's only one tiny planet of trillions, trillions, the vastness of the universe, and everywhere there is the game of form. What a gigantic dream.

But built into that dream, because what is in each human is a microcosmic version of the entire universe, so the awakening of humans is also the awakening of the universe, because you cannot separate the human from the entire universe. They need each other. They are totally one.

There would not even be a universe without the perceiving consciousness. The one consciousness that comes through humans creates the universe as perceived by humans. Other forms perceive a different universe.

It's all the same, and yet it's different. The one consciousness dreaming innumerable dreams. Impossible to understand.

But what we see when we look at humans, they are immersed in a kind of dream also, when you're totally in, totally identified with your reactions, and you play out the drama of your life in relationships, at work, and you go, oh, oh, oh. And you get elated. Oh, it's great, I made it.

And a few months later, you go down, you lost it again. Oh, it's a stage. All the world's a stage.

Shakespeare saw that. And all men and women are merely players. And this is the stuff that dreams are made on.

So humans can wake up out of that dreamlike existence that they are otherwise immersed in, where there is no sense of who they are apart from the script that they act out, the inner script. Complete identification. And then there's the possibility of awakening, becoming aware of that which underlies the script, without which there would be no script, there would be nothing.

There's a vast realm of still, aware presence from where you can see the dream world without being immersed in it. The body is still in it, but there is a seeing. You can see your own drama.

You can see yourself playing out your own script. And gradually, the awakening is, ah, something arises that is not part of the play of form, but that can see the play of form. And if that can arise in you, it means it is a universal movement.

So through you, the universe not only wants to experience this gigantic dream, there's something else built into the dream, and that is the need of the universe to awaken out of the dream. It loves that even more than the dream. And that is, so what we cannot even begin to conceive of the magnitude of what looks only like some people in a room, sitting, listening, speaking, that this is part of a much larger movement that's connected to even the most distant galaxy is part of something that is happening in the universe.

It is an event created by the one life that is the universe. So you think on a personal level, it's good to sit here because your life becomes lighter, free. So you feel a relief on a personal level, suffering, less and less suffering, clarity arising, stillness arising, a sense of connectedness, of beingness, a deeper sense of I, I.

But that is all a huge event of cosmic proportions. So the awakening is the awakening of the totality through this form. That is the purpose of your life, to be that.

So you align yourself with the larger purpose. The secondary purpose is whatever you do in your life, and you can bring the opening into anything that you do, almost anything. If you can't, you leave it.

Some things have to be left, and other things are fine. It happens wherever you are. So this is what we temporarily call stillness in you, becoming aware that that dimension is already there, coming to the end of identification with thinking, and realizing that you are more fully yourself when you do not think.

Without trying not to think, there are many here who already experience the state of being free of thinking without even knowing it. You may be walking and looking at a tree and seeing the magnificence of that spectacle of the dying leaves and all their beauty, and you are perceiving that in and through stillness. And perhaps a minute later you might say something to a person next to you and say, isn't that wonderful?

And you may not realize that for a minute or ten seconds or five seconds you have looked at that, and there was a deep sense of response, of oneness even with it, but no interpretation. And then you notice something strange. Whenever you look at something for the first time, if you are very alert you will notice that, when you glance at something for the first time, whatever it is, your head shifts, your vision, your field of vision shifts, it goes, shhhh, and it is, here there is a lot of nature around here, it may be a tree, a flower, the sky, or it may be something man-made, whatever it is, but nature particularly is helpful in this practice at first.

You notice the first moment of looking at something, there is always a space of no thought. It may be one second. It may be two seconds.

Now most human beings are not aware of that, and with some human beings the space of no thought is so brief that they can't capture it, because immediately thought comes in after half a second. But there was half a second. There is always a space before thought can come in, there is a looking, a seeing, and with you that space will now become larger, and in many of you it is already quite spacious.

In other words, the spaciousness around your sense perceptions. So notice that it is already there, but as you become aware of it, the spaciousness grows around your sense perceptions. So, and now comes, this is a magnificent thing, it's a great mystery that in past ages people had to spend 25 years in a monastery to be told this.

The master would say, OK, you work with me for 20 years, and then ask me again that question. But now things are speeding up, we haven't got that much time, in a good sense, on the planet. We are running out of time, and that's wonderful.

It's shrinking. So when you see something, there is a sense perception, can you be aware both of what arises in your sense perception, what you are looking at, or it may be listening, and can you be aware of the awareness, which is the stillness, in which that sense perception happens. And that stillness, that awareness is, one could say, the space around it.

So there is a spacious field, and there is a sense perception. And you are not interpreting what you see for a while, there is no need. There is a deep knowing, but there is no interpretation.

There is not conceptual knowing, not that you have lost your ability to have concepts, but when you need them, they will be there. Words, concepts, thoughts. But you are no longer compulsively trapped in concepts.

You are exiting, exiting a conceptualized reality. Oh, that is the awakening. You are stepping out of inhabiting a totally conceptualized universe, which is mental conditioning.

Everything is called something, interpreted, labeled, named, and so a great freedom arises of perceiving through the unconditioned consciousness. And this is, you are here to experience that, and to see that it is already, that movement is already happening in you, that freeing yourself from compulsive conceptualization is already happening. And it is happening when you look at a tree or a flower or another human being, and it enters your field of vision, and in that moment there is pure perception and no labeling it in any way.

Just a field of stillness. And it may be that it is only there for a few seconds, but see if you can capture that space, and that is not perhaps a very good way of saying it, because you cannot capture stillness. It is, see if you can be attentive, and see if you can notice that, and that noticing is vital, because as you notice the stillness in which your perception happens, the space or the stillness expands.

So as you perceive things, you are now inhabiting two dimensions. One is the dimension of form, which is all around you, continuously fluctuating, and they may be outer forms or they may be inner forms, as emotions, thoughts. And the other dimension is the dimension of the formless, consciousness, pure consciousness, pure awareness.

The other is the dimension of the object consciousness, things. So you inhabit the dimension of the manifested without being lost in it, because you also dwell in the unmanifested. You dwell in the realm of stillness.

And even if at first the spaces of stillness don't last for very long, it's good enough. Three seconds of looking at a flower with no thought is good enough. And as you become aware of, there's not only the flower, I'm naming it now, but the awareness is not the naming, you become aware of the flower, and you become aware of the field of awareness or the stillness.

And this looks like a dualistic thing, but it isn't. It only becomes dualistic when we speak about it. When I speak, when I speak about becoming aware of awareness, it looks like two things.

Aware of awareness. But that's only because we're using language, which has a subject and an object in a sentence. What is really happening is self-awareness.

You're becoming aware. Awareness is becoming aware of itself. So that is the dimension.

And it's hard to talk about that. And in a way, the author of the Tao Te Ching is right when he says at the beginning of this book of wisdom, the Tao Te Ching, if you can speak about it, that's not it. The words have to be seen as for what they are, just pointers.

So this is a beautiful practice here. Walk around wherever you are. Sit, stand, lie, walk.

Be aware of yourself as the aware presence, as the stillness in which everything is seen and heard. And so you become like a little child. It's not for nothing that Jesus said, you must become as little children if you want to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Now what he is pointing to, and he's not saying exactly that, it's always just an approximation. It does not mean you return to that state because there is only that quality that a little child has in whom the conceptual reality has not yet developed. And when that little child in whom the accumulation of words and concepts in the mind has not happened yet, that little child looks at the universe, and you sometimes can see it when you see a one-year-old, one and a half, before language takes possession of their minds, the way they look is thoughtless awareness.

And then they smile at you, there's the pure joy of being. And you can see that which shines through is magnificent. And then gradually the veil descends because the child is programmed to ask, the mind of the child is programmed to ask, Daddy, what's that?

And then Daddy says, that's a tree. And then the mind says, tree, tree. Next time the child sees a tree, that open, complete openness is no longer quite as open because then the child looks at the tree, and then the mind says, oh, tree!

And two years, three years later, the mind is already possessed with concepts. So when Jesus says that, it's pointing as little children, you walk around in that state of openness, of non-labeling, the state of original innocence, which replaces the dysfunction, the collective dysfunction of the human mind that we could call original sin. If we go beyond the habitual interpretations of sin, there's no doubt that there's a dysfunction in humanity.

Look at human history. That's why they talk of original sin. Sin means missing the target.

The original Greek word translated means missing the target. That's what sin means in the original. And in other words, you miss the point of your whole existence.

And if you miss the point of your whole existence, you suffer. And that eventually works too. It wakes you up eventually.

So it seems insignificant at first to the human mind to say you can look at something and notice whenever you first look at something that there's a moment of spacious presence before the mind comes in and calls it something. And if that can be sustained, not through effort, not through wanting, not through some kind of act of willpower, but if

that can be sustained simply by noticing that space of aware presence when it arises. And then even as a human being comes into your field of vision, walks in through the door, appears in front of you, you look and there's a moment of non-labeling.

Let's say somebody you have never met before comes and you look and there's not a single thought in your head for perhaps five seconds. But if you notice that, that in the first moment there's a field of awareness in which the perception happens before the labeling comes in, you may find that it expands and you could still be in the state of just looking a minute later. And you can even talk.

And every time a sentence has come to an end, you re-enter the state of spacious awareness. A word has been uttered and you're back in space. And then your words have a different quality too because now they come out of that dimension.

They have an aliveness. They will touch the other human being. What you say has the essence of that freshness of being, not the old stuff that otherwise is your mind.

A minute later after meeting a person, you tell them the old story of me. So what do you do for a living? Well, blah, blah, blah.

You can talk about that also and then step back knowing that's not who you are. So who are you? You are the stillness.

That's where your true sense of I am comes from, of beingness. So this is the opportunity as you sit here to be in that state. You don't really need to think as you sit here.

I certainly don't think as I speak. The words are heard. As they come out of the mouth, I hear them.

As you do. So there's nobody teaching anybody. Do I know more than you?

No, of course not. Probably less than most of you. What I know is the realm of stillness.

And that's not anybody's personal achievement because everybody has that as their essence. So what I know is your essence. That's why it's nice to sit with me because otherwise why would anybody come?

What you enjoy most is to be with yourself. But in the true sense, not the mind-made self, the deepest self. Now ultimately you don't have to go anywhere.

This is just a temporary stage in the evolution of humanity where you have to travel somewhere to be with yourself. Now some of you have traveled to India and perhaps you already know you don't have to go to India. And so Omega is a little closer.

And the next stage is you don't have to go to Omega. Sorry. Oh.

You may go for the enjoyment. I sometimes enjoy listening to spiritual teachers who may be using different words. And yet the truth is there.

And it's a wonderful, deep joy in hearing it in a slightly different form. When you meet a human being and don't label them, or if that is not yet possible, at least not for more than a few seconds, and then compulsive labels come into your mind, what you can do, however, is to recognize the labels that come into your mind as just that, without believing in them completely. Because the mind is the compulsion to interpret everybody and everything.

It does that to other human beings. You form judgments. You meet them and you look at them.

And the more you're identified with your mind, the quicker you are in your judgments of the other human being. You know them exactly. It might even be true occasionally.

You may have seen something that's actually there, but what you have seen and thought that this person is is some conditioning in the other person, not who that person is. Or you have completely imposed your own condition, perception on that person. But you can recognize any thought you have about a human being as just a thought and a perspective and one of many possible thoughts and not the ultimate truth.

So you recognize the relativity of your thinking. The relativity of your thinking. There's one spiritual teaching that works entirely with that.

It's a particular... Byron Katie has this teaching that whatever thought comes into your head about another person, about yourself, or about your situation, you look at the thought and you ask yourself, Can I really know that this is so? Can I really know that this is true?

And if you really look at the thought and you say, I can't really know that this is true, this thought that I have about this person or this situation. So it's a stepping, a continuous letting go of identification with thought. And then gradually the thought, the compulsive thoughts arise less and less.

And as the compulsive thoughts arise less and less, more space is there. That's why we are here, for the arising of space, stillness. And in many of you, it's already happening as you sit there.

But there are some, I can see or sense, a few, not many, fields of restless energy here and there. Or others go... You may want to try feeling your hands as you sit here.

Because you are restless, because your entire attention is still lodged in the head, in the mind. And the mind must feel either restless or anxious or totally bored sitting here. So if you cannot get out of that, the body really is the...

If you can, simply begin by feeling the inner energy field in your hands and that there is, yes, there is an aliveness there. You can feel that there is a hand, not externally, but internally. If you closed your eyes and somebody asked you, is your left hand still there?

For a moment, you would have to internally, so to speak, look for it. And then you would say, you would feel something. Yeah.

And then the question is, how do you know that it's still there? Because it's not touching anything, you're not moving it. And then, of course, you will know, because I can feel it.

I can feel this energy. That's how I know that the left hand is still there. Not a memory, that it was there when I last looked.

And then your answer comes from the memory. Yeah, it's still there. I saw it a minute ago.

And again, these things to the mind seem insignificant, but they are of tremendous significance to begin to inhabit the body, which takes you out of inhabiting the mind exclusively. If you can feel your left hand or your right hand, you can also feel other parts of the body. You have to just start somewhere that becomes the entry point into the body.

I'm speaking particularly to those, to all of you, but to those who are either bored out of their minds. Well, if you were bored out of your mind, you would be okay. But those who are still bored in their minds or are feeling restless and are thereby missing the essence of this gathering, get into your body.

Get in there. Feel the legs, the feet, the hands, the arms. So if you can feel one hand, you can feel the other hand simultaneously.

You feel them both at the same time. The feeling of hand. Feet.

You can feel both feet also as you feel your hands. Subtle at first. Some people feel almost like a tingling sensation.

Some people feel a warmth. And then can you feel the trunk of your body, the belly? Sometimes to feel the belly, the belly is very helpful to be in there.

Taking one deep breath or two or three deep breaths and following the breath with your attention and feel the belly or the abdomen. It's a more polite word. Feel the abdomen rising as you breathe in, into the belly.

And for a moment, there's a cessation. The belly is full and then breathe out. So breathing a few times into the deep, take the belly breath, which means you have to follow.

It's not just a practice, an external practice. The essence here is that you follow the breath with your attention and then you move into the belly. So the attention leaves the head and moves into the body.

So you breathe into the belly. And there you could say, this is the center of the body, around here, solar plexus also, but belly is a beautiful center. And once you've breathed in a few times into the belly, you can actually feel the energy field of the belly here and you rest there.

And from there radiates out energy into the rest of the body. Hara, the center, as the Japanese call it. So here, and you may notice then, when you look at not only the images of the Chinese fat Buddha with a huge belly, who laughs all the time because he has no problems left, toothless old man with a huge belly, whatever you say to him, come with your problems, he will laugh at you.

But you may also notice that the Indian Buddhas and other Southeast Asian Buddhas, most of them have a very slight protrusion in the belly region. So there's the belly, there's a little bit of slide, because they rest here. Their center of gravity is not in the head, as it is with modern humans, Western especially, but the whole world has become Western.

So the center of gravity is not in the head. The center of gravity is in the center of your physically perceived body, but it goes beyond body. So you rest there.

And so to sense that field of aliveness is beautiful. It takes you out of the head. Your attention moves down here.

You unite with the all-pervasive intelligence that is beyond the mind that inhabits your body, that is only an expression of the one intelligence. It's the intelligence that lives in your body as the life energy that regulates thousands of complicated functions, complicated from the point of view of the human mind, that regulates, coordinates thousands of functions in the body simultaneously. Everything is just right.

If one thing was slightly maladjusted, the body would die immediately. You would collapse. Temperature, heart rate, lung circulation, innumerable things that you could spend the next 5,000 years analyzing how the human body works, and you still wouldn't get to the end of it.

And that's only the outer body. So there's an intelligence at work that is vast. So if you can feel your body, that is an entry point into that vastness.

And the deeper you go, if you do it for yourself, you can do it with your eyes closed at first so that you become familiar with inhabiting the body and realize as you go deeper that it's not really about the body. It's about sensing that vast spaciousness that is here. Vast spaciousness.

So you enter the spaciousness through the body. And then everything comes to life. Once your body comes to life, and then you look around and open your eyes without losing the inner sense of body, then you feel everything is more alive suddenly.

It participates in that because you are not deadening it anymore with mental abstractions, concepts, labels. It has always been alive. You couldn't see it anymore, couldn't feel it anymore, sense it anymore.

So I recommend that each one of you spend some time going into nature and being perhaps with... choose something like a tree or a flower or a patch of ground or a landscape, maybe the lake, the little lake we have here, whatever, or a rock with moss growing on the rock. There are some trails here, beautiful moss growing over ancient rocks.

And just be there. Be with it. And as you look, feel the energy field of the inner body at the same time.

That makes it much easier to look without mental interference, to have a space of stillness as you look. So you are present within and without, and you look from there. The inner body becomes a root, that which roots you in the present moment, anchors you in the present moment, and takes you out of mind.

And if then mind starts working again, anything, if you are doing anything creative in your life, becomes still first. Before the act of creation, there needs to be stillness. Nothing creative can come out of the accumulations of the mind.

The mind can be an instrument to give something form, but the inspiration, the creative impulse, comes from a deeper level. It comes from the stillness, the presence. So go into the body and feel that.

You don't need to think anymore. And then you look, and then at some point a thought comes, or a creative movement comes. It may be dance, whatever.

It may be a word that you speak, words that come out of your mouth, but they come out of the stillness. So getting in touch with that is a simple and beautiful way of entering the realm of no thought. And then thought can operate beautifully and is not going to create problems as it usually does, because most of your life problems are created by thought.

Life only has challenges. The only place where a challenge can come is in the now. Apart from a challenge that comes in the now, there is no problem except in the head.

The power to face challenges is always there in the now. But you cannot face problems because they have no reality. Always use as the criterion to tell you whether your problems are real, or ask, what's the problem at this moment?

What can I do about it now? Nothing. I'm lying in bed.

It's four in the morning. Then go into the body. Okay.

Ah, it feels good to be alive. And I thought I had problems. At nine o'clock in the morning when you enter the office, you open the door and there sits this man who you were thinking about all night, who is creating problems for you.

And his mouth opens. Words come out of his mouth. And you bring an alert, aware presence to it.

And you look and listen. And then words come out of your mouth. They won't be reactive anymore.

There will be a response, not an old reaction. And the words will be true. They will be just right for that moment.

And they're not rehearsed. Or no words come. You may look at him and walk out.

Nobody can predict. Right action. Buddhism sometimes talks of right action, right speech, right this, right that.

I've forgotten the list. I can't remember things. But those things, they come out of right presence.

You have to be present. Otherwise you cannot manufacture or try to bring about right words, right speech, right actions. Okay, I'm trying very hard here to say the right thing.

I'm trying hard to do the right thing. It's not working. You can't try to do the right thing because the right thing comes out of a particular state of consciousness.

Spontaneity, intuition, realization comes out of stillness. So in this shift, thinking loses its capacity to make you unhappy. Thoughts for a while still arise, but they're not that overpowering anymore.

You're not totally in them anymore. And then space arises. The ability to not think arises when there is nothing much to think about, when life would be far more joyful if we are not interpreting this moment.

And if you live in alignment with this moment, a lot of the time, you're better off not interpreting this moment. Let it be. It is.

And out of that state, necessary action comes. On doesn't. If it's not necessary, it doesn't.

So the evolutionary and revolutionary shift in human consciousness is to enter that dimension where compulsive thinking comes to an end. Compulsive thinking comes to an end to transcend thought and realize that you are more fully yourself and more intelligent when you are not thinking. And when thought then comes in, should it be needed, it will be more effective, more powerful, more creative.

So you are here to be able to learn to enter that realm of great power, the realm of pure awareness. And it's not just the words that are pointing to it here. As you said, it arises because that realm itself is here in the energy field of this gathering.

And it is very helpful, even if your mind is saying, OK, I'm not really getting this. Of course it's not really getting it. The mind cannot get the essence of it.

So the most helpful thing about this gathering is the energy field of stillness or presence that works, comes from within you, but is also here in this field. That's the essence. And that's what works most powerfully, that transforms you.

The words are additional helps, additional pointers, and also to keep you entertained while you sit there in the energy field. So practice, practice again is the wrong word because it implies some kind of effort almost, but it is effortless, but pure seeing, pure listening, become aware. Whenever you look at something, at first there is a space before thinking happens.

As you become aware of the space, you may find that it expands. What that means in relationship to other humans, we will look at, if you can relate to other human beings, what it does to human relationships. I suggest just for a little while you stay here when this body has moved away.

Just stay until you feel the impulse to get up. Just stay for a little while in this energy field, in the stillness, and see that the body on this chair here is not really needed. That's enough what's there.

Eckhart Tolle - how to touch the tiger

[Speaker 1] (0:03 - 9:43)

This is a perennial question. Always new though, because it's... Many people ask that question again and again from Joe, Joey, Joe.

Can you help me better defend myself against the pain bodies of people with whom I'm close, like my son and wife? When their pain bodies are activated for whatever reason, my pain body explodes forth. It is almost like they enjoy playing or feeding on one another.

What suggestions do you have for this situation? Well, very simple. You need to be there when it happens.

If you're not there when it happens, there's nothing you can do and I can't help you. Yeah, but how... Okay, I'm asking the next question now.

But how can I be there when it happens? I suggest that you bring presence into your everyday life in ordinary situations so that you grow in presence power, a way of speaking. You grow in presence power.

You are present when you look at a flower, you're present when you look at another human being, you're present while you drink your tea, you're present while you walk across the room rather than wanting to get to the door, you're present with every step. It's a beautiful practice. You're present while you're waiting for the elevator, you're present while you're in the elevator.

Feel the inner body, be there fully. You grow in presence power. Invite presence into your life when you're not being challenged because when you're being challenged and you haven't invited presence into your life in non-challenging times, you're not going to sustain presence when you're being challenged.

Unless perhaps it's a life and death challenge in which case it could still happen. But normal challenges. If you're not present in non-challenging situations, then how are you going to sustain presence when you're facing a pain body?

Either somebody else's or yours. Usually they go together. So when I say be there when it happens is what that means.

Be conscious of what is happening at that moment. Realize that it is the pain body. Be there as the awareness rather than as a reaction.

Be there when, if you should still react even then, can you be there as the awareness behind your reaction and sense, feel that, feel anger arising that wants to feed the other person's pain body. Can you feel it at the moment of it happening? Can you feel it when the other person's pain body, can you see how the other person's pain body is controlling his or her mind, speaking through his or her mind, saying all the right things that are designed to make you react so that you can feed their pain body.

Can you be aware as the presence there while this is happening? It's a beautiful practice. One of the great spiritual practices is awareness while the pain body is active, whether it's somebody else's or yours or both together.

If you're very aware in the presence of somebody else's pain body, your pain body won't arise, or you may just feel the beginnings of it. Now, awareness doesn't push anything down. Awareness is like light.

The light shines on it and the pain body comes up and then hits the light of consciousness from where you can sense it. And the pain body doesn't like to live in the light of consciousness. It withdraws quickly when it encounters the light of consciousness.

It's like certain animals, they like the darkness. If you shine a spotlight on a rat, it'll run away. It prefers the dark corner.

So if you shine the light of consciousness on the pain body, it can't survive in it for very long. It will withdraw again. So by that I mean you consciously sense it as an energy field in yourself or in the other person.

And you're there as presence. It doesn't mean that now you're going to immediately dissolve the other person's pain body. That may not happen, or it may happen.

In exceptional cases, it can happen. But don't expect it to happen. Don't expect this practice to dissolve somebody else's pain body.

At least you're not contributing to the growth of this other person's pain body. And then you'll see what happens. The pain body will make one attempt, and another attempt, and another attempt to draw you into a reaction.

At some point, the best response may be to walk away for a while and hope that the pain body will exhaust itself. Because when you walk away and the other person has nobody else, the other person's pain body has nobody else to get a reaction from. It will go into the person's mind and it will get then its food from negative thinking.

Pain bodies love negative thinking. It feeds on negative thinking. And then you come back after an hour, and it might have subsided.

The important thing is to make it into a spiritual practice. Be alert. You might, if you live, this questioner has son and wife, it seems to be, the pain body mainly comes through his son and his wife.

So here, you might even know that certain situations are likely to bring it up, so you can be already very alert. Or if the pain body comes regularly, every week or so, you can say, oh, a week has passed. It's very soon it'll happen again.

So you can be very alert. Like, you go, it'll want some kind of trigger. The slightest thing that you can say could be misinterpreted so that the pain body can use it.

So you have to be very alert and non-reactive and just be there as, again, be there as the aware presence. The slightest emotion, the pain body will try to get hold of that and then make it into some negative emotional feeling. This is a little bit like, let's say, you're encountering a wild and dangerous dog in the street or you're walking somewhere and you get this dog that comes towards you and you know, you can immediately know that the dog is dangerous and the dog is looking for some kind of emotion in you, fear, for example.

If you can be absolutely present, it is unlikely, although I'm not guaranteeing anything, it is unlikely that the dog will attack you because it is seeking some to link into some kind of fear, emotional fear presence or aggression or fear, and then it'll go in. If you can remain absolutely present, it may come close, and of course, it's a great challenge. No thought in your head is part of that.

Absolute, clear, totally clear mind. Krishnamurti has a story that it happened to him once with a tiger, and he said the tiger came so close to him, a wild tiger in India, that he touched the tiger for a moment, and of course, he was totally, his mind was totally clear. The slightest thought, and he might not have survived to tell the tale, he was absolutely present.

And then you can touch the tiger, although I'm not recommending that you try it out. I'm not recommending it. It's only an example of what happened to one person.

As they say in some films, these stunts are performed by professionals. Don't try them out.

Eckhart Tolle -Talk Titled The Deepest Truth in Human Existence

[Speaker 2] (0:04 - 1:38)

Kathé, Kathé Pará, Parásá Orishá Kathé, Kathé I would like to explore with you this afternoon the deepest truth of human existence.

[Speaker 1] (1:47 - 1:23:08)

When I say that, that may sound a little bit abstract. Interesting, but abstract, human existence. And it may sound a little bit philosophical.

But this is not a lecture on philosophy. Nor is it a lecture at all. The best way to look upon it is as a meditation.

Although somebody is speaking, look upon it as a meditation. So when I say the deepest truth of human existence, it sounds a little bit removed from your everyday concerns. So let's put it in another way.

We are here to explore the deepest truth of who you are. Because you are human existence. We are here to explore the deepest truth within yourself.

Knowing yourself at the deepest level. A level so deep that knowing yourself and knowing God become one and the same. There are two levels to this talk, if it can be called that.

One is the words and one is the gaps between the words. A certain stillness. I just point this out because it is helpful, as you listen, to be aware not only of the words, but of an underlying field of stillness.

Out of which the words come. Nothing personal. There's a field of stillness that is both within and without.

Gaps between the words. A silent space. In between and underlying the words.

And simply to be aware also of that dimension. Then listening to these words is more than absorbing information. Because there isn't that much information here.

It's not an information based talk. Then it becomes a meditation to just sit here and listen. And the deeper teaching, if it can even be called teaching, is not in and through the words.

The deeper teaching lies in the dimension of stillness. Because the moment you acknowledge that underlying dimension, you have accessed a realm within yourself that is deeper than the stream of mind. With which most people are identified as themselves.

Simply as we sit here to acknowledge, to notice, to listen to an underlying stillness. That which acknowledges that in you. That which is able to listen to that dimension.

Listen not to something. Listen to nothing. To nothing.

Just the act of listening. That in you which is able to acknowledge that dimension, to be attentive to that dimension, is a realm of stillness underneath the stream of mental noise. In other words, the moment you pay attention to that dimension of silence, there is a stillness in you.

Because through thought, you cannot pay attention to silence because thought is noise. So already, although through words we are going to progressively explore the deepest truth of human existence. Even as you sit here and follow the words that progressively explore the deepest truth of human existence.

That deepest truth of human existence is already emerging in you as you sit here and listen. Even now, simply by paying attention to silence through the inner stillness. That is the only way you can notice the stillness in you notices that.

And you have gone beyond the continuous stream of mental noise that for most people is who they think they are. So the answer to the initial question that I asked, I said, let's explore the deepest truth of human existence. The deepest truth of who you are.

The answer of that is never really in the future. Not even within the framework of this talk is the answer of who you are beyond the conditioned mind. Never is that answer in the future.

It's always now. So our question, what does that mean? The deepest truth of who you are.

Knowing yourself. Doesn't everybody know themselves already? And most people would say, yes, I know my name and all those things that are associated with my name.

Things that cling to that initial form identity that my parents have given me when they taught me what my name is. Such and such, whatever it may be. First, what's your name?

The little child is asked. And he's very proud to be able to say his or her name. And the parents say, very good.

That's the way human existence goes. And nobody realizes that already through the initial first label, mental label, first identification with a thought. A sequence of sounds.

The first limitation, illusory limitation on who you truly are beyond mental concepts. The first limitation has already arisen. You have already entered a prison of conceptualization.

It is the beginning of it. But we need to go that way. Humans have to move through that.

It would be futile to tell a child, you have no name. Don't identify yourself with a name. That the child has to go through the stage.

Every human being has to go through the stage where they begin to accumulate experiences, knowledge, labels, words, concepts, all kinds of things. Cultural conditioning, personal conditioning through their environment. And these things then cling around the name.

And after a few years, gradually, a sense of self develops. A me. Even in a small child, it begins to develop.

When the child says, my toy is bigger than yours. It feels good to the child to strengthen its sense of self through feeling, I have more than you. I know more than you.

Or my father is stronger than yours. You can add a bit more to that sense of self. And again, that is a normal process.

And so gradually, the accumulations continue. And you become an adult. And then you have a certain sense of self based on the conditioning of your mind.

That is the mind that never stops. That is the mind that is a continuous stream of thought processes. And the thought processes are strongly connected with the conditioning of your mind.

So the stream of thinking, and this doesn't depend on culture. It doesn't depend whether you live on India, in India or in the West. It is the same in every human being.

The stream of thinking goes on incessantly. And a lot of that is to do with me. And my concerns.

And my problems. And what is going to happen to me. There is a story of me, which is my past.

Things have happened to me. Things that I have accumulated. The content of my mind is a kind of story that people like to dwell on.

Talk to themselves about their story. Have a monologue or a dialogue in the head. And so a sense of self develops that is mind based.

And that again happens to everybody. A sense of self develops that is content based. Content and form based.

A psychological form of me. And for most people, that is who they are. So if you ask them, who are you?

They will tell you a little story. They could keep it brief. They could give you a brief summary of me.

Or they can make it very long. They can go on for hours. Because my story is so interesting and dramatic.

Have you got enough time to listen to it? Let me tell you what my story is. And what I have suffered.

What I have seen. What I have, my triumphs and my victories and my defeats. What people have done to me.

And all the bad things that I have done. I'll tell you about all of this. And so this is why psychoanalysts make a good living.

Because there you pay them to listen to you and to the story. And if you want to be thorough in psychoanalysis, you have to go three times a week for a few years. And so you tell your story.

And as you tell the story of me, more and more layers of complexity become revealed about me. And it's so interesting. And so after you have completed your course of psychoanalysis, if ever, then the psychoanalysts might tell you, we have come to the end.

By the way, that's very rare. You will tell you, we have come to the end of our analysis. We have analyzed everything about you.

And I will give you the file. It's big. Here it is.

You can take it home. This is you. And if then somebody asks you, do you know yourself?

You say, oh yes. It's all here. The content of my mind has been analyzed.

And here it is in this file. Or it might be a computer disk these days. And so I can tell you all about it.

And of course, when they say, I know myself, what they really mean is, I know a lot about myself. I know many things about myself. A lot of information.

Many facts. And they forget who the I is that knows. Because all that knowledge is knowledge about.

It's form knowledge. You know a lot about your psychological form identity. Not that there's anything wrong with it.

Each person moves within a form identity, has a form identity, which is not to be rejected, but to be honored. Part of your form identity is the function that you have in this world. The social function.

Your profession. Whatever you do. Your activity.

Your relationship to other people as a mother, as a father, as the boss. Many other things come into it. Your cultural background.

Your nationality. The nation that you feel you are part of is part of that conditioning. It is not to be discarded, but also to be honored.

You honor the forms that are the content of your mind. You identify with as me. The only thing is if you only know yourself as those forms, because every form identity consists of various roles that people play within that form.

And that usually is the limit of people's self-knowledge. Plus, if they've done psychoanalysis, they know about their childhood and all those things that happened then. So, is there more to who you are than the form identity, which has two levels.

We've been speaking about the psychological form of me, and of course then there is the physical form of the body. So, people identify with the two. There's my physical body, me, and there's a psychological story.

And that is the story of me. And that includes all the conditioning of the reactive patterns. All those things are in there.

The content of the mind is the psychological form of me. So, we have the two levels of identification. And sometimes the body can be a very strong identification in certain people.

It becomes part also of the psychological form identity. If, for example, your body is very beautiful or your body is very strong, that enhances your psychological form identity. It gives you a feeling that you are stronger, more beautiful than others.

And the sense of self becomes enhanced through that. And that can last for quite a while and it works quite well until you reach, the body begins to grow old. And then the beauty fades.

And if that was the main part of your form identity, great suffering starts. When the beauty fades that you thought that was me. So, the form identity, both physical and even more strongly psychological form, has certain characteristics.

And one of the characteristics of form identity is that it never feels complete. It never feels except for brief moments which turn out to be delusory. Never feels really at ease or at peace.

It never feels that you are freely and fully yourself. Yet. Yet is added by the mind because it's a little escape which says, okay, yes, there is this recurring almost permanently underlying sense of lack, of insufficiency and of incompleteness.

And many people who are not conscious enough don't feel it directly. It becomes translated into continuous wanting and needing this or that to fill that hole that they feel. To fill that sense of lack and insufficiency with something.

To make myself complete in this form identity. And so, there is an enormous need in human beings to add more to me, to make me complete. And that is the search, that is the enormous momentum behind human wanting and needing.

The Buddha speaks of desire and again, that's a little bit abstract. At his time, it was a powerful word perhaps. But desire really is wanting, needing.

And then, you look for things to add to the accumulated content of mental identifications to complete my sense of self. So, you look to and it's strange, it's a little bit like a little grasp at anything to add to me, whatever it can. And a very common one, of course, is material possessions that I identify with.

I have more than you. This enhances my sense of self. I identify with my house.

I identify with my car. In a very subtle way, I feel it's an extension of me. The car has become a mind object and that mind object is used to strengthen, to enhance a deficient sense of self.

And for a little while, it works. You feel bigger as you step into your BMW. You have expanded.

Your sense of self has grown. And you are more powerful than all those little puny little cars around you. And for a little while, that works.

You feel almost you have arrived. And then, before long, it wears off. And then you sit in that car and it's not that fulfilling anymore.

It's just a car. It gets you from A to B. Oh, that wasn't quite it.

And then you look to the next thing. And the next thing could be a relationship to complete me. Because the last one didn't work.

It didn't complete me. Something went wrong. So you go out and look for it there.

The ideal one I'm going to meet one day. I'm looking for the ideal partner that is going to complete my sense of self. And then it happens at times that you find him or her.

That means it's called falling in love. And it says, OK, I found you. You are going to complete me.

You are going to make me happy. Which you sometimes read in the lonely hearts columns looking for someone to make me happy. What they mean is to make my sense of self complete.

To fill that lack that I feel. And so you might get married and for a while the illusion is there, just that it was there with the BMW, that now I have arrived. This is when you fall in love.

You have this euphoria of completeness. Oh. Oh.

Finally the story of me has completed itself. I have arrived. I made it.

And then comes the honeymoon. And then comes ordinary existence. And all the things that arise in ordinary existence.

And sooner or later this ideal partner fails to live up to what she had promised when he signed the wedding document that is to complete you. To make you happy. It's not working anymore.

That feeling disappears. And then it becomes, oh, I made a dreadful mistake. It wasn't the right one.

He wasn't right. Or you begin to look elsewhere. But in the meantime, you've been looking every day for hundreds of little things to add to me.

To enhance your sense of self. All kinds of little things. Whatever.

One could make a list of hundreds of things. How that egoic self, mind made entity looks for little things to add to me. Experiences can add.

Anything. Drugs maybe to have an experience with that. Maybe food even.

Food. I can add that. It's a psychological need.

The body has a limited need for food. But the psychological me has a great need for food. Because even through that, it can make itself feel a little bit more complete.

A box of chocolate works for an hour or two. And you can see the impulse behind it when people reach into the bag of chips or the chocolate and there's no... There's more.

It's not the body really that wants. It's the mind made self that seeks some completion through that... And when the bag of chips is empty it looks for the next thing.

So in many little and big things, there is this enormous need to add to me. And everywhere to make myself complete. Because it's never...

That completeness never lasts. And so people believe that their sense of not having arrived, of not quite having made it yet, of not being truly and fully yourself, people believe that this is their personal problem. They believe that others exist who have made it.

Because you see the movies and you see the magazines that show you these glamorous, famous people who apparently and surely they must have made it. They look so happy in their glamorous surroundings. And the culture tells you that that is the way to go.

You can make it. Just try harder to have more possessions or more status. That's a big intangible but enormous thing to add to oneself.

Other people's view of me is an enormous piece, bigger even, can be bigger than the greatest mansion. That need for others to give me their approval, their high opinion. And so there's the need for status in society.

For others to tell me that I am great and good enough. And that's an enormous, these are enormous chunks of identification that you can add to the deficient sense of self. And for a little while, it also works.

And then if you've met any of the famous people that you see in the magazines and films, whatever they, sports, movies, famous this, famous that, people who are told by the surrounding culture and the world that they are special, that they have made it and they are great role symbols in society. And if you meet them, you will see that underneath the glamorous facade, there is the same sense of deficiency of it didn't complete them. The whole world telling them that they are great and deep down they feel this is a big lie.

Also there are famous people who have actually through that have seen through the delusion of that the meaninglessness of this world, which to a large extent is mad because it's the human egoic mind telling you that you are important. And some people striving a lifetime to add that to their sense of self to the world, please tell me that I matter. My sense of self depends on it, please tell me that I am important.

And then of course only a few are told that. The others are left in limbo and are unhappy there and those that are told they are important, they are unhappy there. Not complete.

And it happens occasionally that a few of those people who made it rich and famous they begin to go deeper because they have everything and they can't possibly think of any more to add to me because what can you add when you have everything, could buy anything go anywhere and everybody thinks you are God. And still feel and so some of those actually see through the delusion and then penetrate to deeper levels of their being. But for many of us there is always the hope that through this or that addition to me added content for the mind, the mental identification that through that I can complete myself and my life is going to work and finally feel that I have arrived I'm home

I'm fully myself and what people don't realise is it is not their personal problem the fact that they feel that they haven't arrived that they haven't made it it is built into the very structure of the mind made sense of self that deficiency and sense of lack is inseparable from those mind structures from that identity so it is nothing to do with what you could possibly add nothing that you add could fulfill you is the truth and that is for spiritual seekers this is a very subtle point because that mind set which is collectively conditioned nobody's personal problem that has an enormous need for more for more of whatever it may be more that mind set is quite deep seated it implies of course that you have an enormous need for future because you can, it's only through future and you're looking into future where you can get the future the mind made self tells you will enable you to get that and this is why very few human beings are actually where they are rooted in the presence of now they are reaching out in that drive for more they are reaching continuously, they are being pulled out of now, which is all there ever is, which is life itself, nothing else ever exists except now but they are pulled out of this into a mental projection in a psychological future where they are going to complete themselves because they will reach that more there that's the momentum and that's how most people live in that continuous, almost desperate search for being ultimately yourself, finding yourself through more through future finding myself through future everybody is doing it through looking where you can add more, where is the more I need more and then you become frustrated with the more gross levels of more and then you move up into the subtle levels of more where you seek to add perhaps spiritual experiences and a spiritual seeker needs to be very careful and look whether within him or herself the need for more still operates and then the spiritual search becomes a need to add more to me as spiritual knowledge, spiritual knowledge is valuable and beautiful as a pointer but it can become mental content that I identify with as me spiritual structures and spiritual knowledge is wonderful, this country is the cradle for that it has got the most beautiful and profound maps or signposts towards who you truly are to point you to that and if used rightly it works beautifully and powerfully but if used by a mind that is seeking more to add to me then the very scripture can become a hindrance because you accumulate maps and signposts they are beautiful and you carry great knowledge and in a very subtle way a spiritual ego could also come in it's very more subtle than the BMW ego, it's the ego coming back through the back door and there's a very subtle sense of I am now more than all those poor little worms who have not yet seen the light I have studied those things, I have studied with masters, I have been to monasteries or in the west it's workshops I have done all those and there's so much I have there's a very subtle sense of more but never enough because you feel well I haven't quite arrived yet but I am already more than all those all those mere more, it's a very subtle thing and you have to be very vigilant to see it in yourself that still that deep seated collective mental conditioning the need for more flows even into the spiritual search the spiritual seeking seeking to become fully myself and again there's a great psychological need for future because I seek to complete myself in future so that the same mindset can operate in that realm also so it's good to know that because once you know it and you know that the the sense of insufficiency or lack is intrinsically linked with that mindset, you can't get out of it no matter what you do no matter how much you add it's never enough, even spiritual knowledge, if it's only an adding of experiences or knowledge it's never quite enough yet but as the search goes on the great need for more of me until you see how it operates in yourself until you see that there's a continuous movement away from what is now until you see the need for this mind made sense of self and this is really lies at the root of that continuous conflict in the world collectively and personally the madness of human history why is that? why is human history so insane?

80% of it look at the 20th century incredible how can humans do this? there must be enormous dysfunction at the core of the human mind and this is it because a great need of this mind made sense of self is actually in order to continue to feel its sense of self it needs to create opposition with others situations and people because only by fighting against by having issues with can it continue to feel its mentally derived sense of self you need the sense of separation of me against you there's a need for conflict and problems built into the mind made sense of self it never says that openly it says I'm looking for peace joy and happiness but then what it says and does is the opposite in many cases so you can see the need for conflict in personal relationships in organizations, nations between nations and nations, religions and even within religions any human structure sooner or later they will be in conflict there's these relationships every few days most relationships you seem to be forced to act out that kind of conditioned script where you are in conflict with each other and problems the little self says the egoic self says I want to be free of problems but problems are part of its sense of identity it's looking for the next one and we all know people who you say who would they be without their problems it's easier to see it in others all that is the structure of the self that needs its enemies to continue to feel it's a very favorite way of enhancing your sense of self through enemies is to argue and feel the enormous momentum behind being right in an argument making the other person wrong, if you can make the other person wrong, you can strengthen your sense of self of course you don't know that you have really only strengthened the illusion but for a moment it feels good, not really but the ego says it feels good, the body knows that it doesn't feel good at all but the ego says I've shown him that I'm right and for the moment you've added that big rightness to the sense of self and it grows and then after a little while it wears off and then you need somebody else to make wrong and you might even be looking it's of course unconscious and then you start discussing a spiritual matter and you say, you don't know what you're talking about let me tell you or you say something and somebody doubts your point of view now what, well your point of view is a mental position a thought this is how it is, and somebody else says that's not how it is at all but you have a you have a mental sense of self you have identified with the thought, identified means your sense of self is in that thought it's a me your self is in the thought one could say, I sometimes use the expression you have reincarnated into the thought form for a moment reincarnated means your self is in it it's one with your sense of self so when somebody says no you're completely wrong it is it is an attack on your very life this is illusion because your identity is in the thought and so there's an enormous amount of emotional the defensiveness that comes or the aggression that comes when you defend your mental position in very unconscious people it can easily degenerate into violence and then violence in many cases, that is the root of violence making the other wrong even a nation, collectively the same mindset operates making the other nation wrong ok, let's prove that they are wrong we'll attack them and then we are right and the more enemies we have the more we feel our sense of self so it operates on a personal or collective level that delusion that through fighting and opposition you can strengthen the self the me and so it's always looking out it's not really, the egoic self isn't really looking for peace it says that it cannot show you openly that it's looking for trouble if it weren't human history would not be the way it is the world situation wouldn't be the way it is, the madness of it and I always say, if you doubt it read 20th century or any other century, but the 20th century is the most mad or watch TV tonight if you doubt the madness what is this? and so it is built in this need for enemies for problems and conflict, everybody carries that in here and is forced to act it out to strengthen the illusion of me and it always works for a little while so all these things operate the adding and the needing opposition needing an enemy those two work very strongly so you are always looking for the next thing and so what is human humankind to do if humankind is trapped in this collective conditioning of the mind are we ever going to find the sanity are we ever going to find who we are beyond that delusion and it's there is nothing wrong with a form identity but if your sense of self is completely in it it becomes dysfunctional form identity is an aspect of who you are the form aspect function, social function all those things I mentioned beautiful but if your self is in it if you derive your sense of self from that and have nothing deeper than that it's always a cause of problems and suffering it's beautiful being a mother but if you only know yourself as that role you will be clinging to that form if you don't know yourself beyond form there is always a dysfunction that comes in so how do you know yourself beyond form this is the question that's been asked forever since the spiritual search started because it is a spiritual question it is the ultimate spiritual question who am I am I more than this and of course you could add answers on the mind level by adding beliefs they are a little bit comforting how do I know that I am more how do I know that how do I step out of this continuous stream of thinking a lot of it is to do with self that's why it never stops it's so compulsive because I need to keep myself going it's almost constant but it's always overlooked and that is the mind made egoic self it's main enemy it has many it needs them it's main enemy that it continuously fights ignores opposes, resists is actually the present moment the now it never wants the now there is always an unease with the now there is always more sometimes more than unease because I am looking, I am on my way to the future that is going to fulfill me this is the now is a stepping stone it enables me to get to the mental projection of future where I am going to complete myself so please don't hold me up now I have no time for now I have something much more important on my mind and that is myself as this future projection where I am going to make it that could also be a spiritual thing it could be a spiritual mental image of a future stage to be achieved as a strong mental projection and you are just trying to get away from this because you need to get there full liberation attainment realization can have an enormous pull towards future and you don't realize you are trapped in the same mindset that the BMW person is trapped in it has become a pull towards future and trying to make it and so I have met many spiritual seekers who have become unhappy after 30 years of search, 40 years of search 50 years of search when am I going to arrive to really have you ever looked at now have you ever looked at the only thing that never leaves you the only thing that is ever real the only thing where anything can ever happen be said, thought experienced it's got to be now life is always this moment but the mind made ego itself is striving towards the next one for its completion it's looking for itself there it doesn't know that it is already here if you could only acknowledge fully and deeply this here and this now if you could go deeply into this now you would find that yourself beyond a mental story is already totally complete and only on the level of form could you add things and it's beautiful never to find yourself you can learn new things it's beautiful, explore new countries beautiful, more of this even have more possessions but you can't find yourself through that if you try to look for yourself through more even spiritual experiences they are nice too but if you are looking for yourself it never works so adding more is beautiful except you can't find yourself through more more works on the phenomenal level and when you realize that you give up you recognize first of all the egoic need to make the now into an enemy and to run away from it to make it into a means to an end, to resist it internally, to criticize it to project yourself away from it I'm not interested in this because this is a limitation on who I am who I want to be I'm on my way to the future everybody in the big cities of the world they are all almost out of breath and if you stopped anyone of them they would give you a reason why they are out of breath because I need to get there but the common denominator is they are all trying to get to the future and the whole life is spent like that and the spiritual aspirant metaphorically speaking, maybe he is not running around but there could be the same inner urge for future inside so the breathlessness would become a metaphor when am I going to be myself have you looked deeply into now the only thing that never leaves you all there ever is your entire life here in this space of now don't talk to me about now, I don't want this, this is a limitation, I don't want the place where I live this is not what I want I don't want to have these, the place where I live, the place where I work, all these are limitations of my life I want to limitless I want to find myself as that which is beyond limitation, that's why I'm trying to get away from them now but has it worked, how many years have we been trying to get away from it 55 60 and have you gotten away from the limitations of now, not yet but I have some more time left and you see the fallacy of that and then you suddenly, you pay a little bit more attention to now first you see the pull away from it and you notice that and then your attention moves into just this, now just this often is not sometimes it's beautiful but more often than not ok it's not that interesting I mean, why should I linger here and at other times, it's not only not interesting, it's actually this is not where I want to be this not, this now, because this now is a limitation on my life I'm trying to get out of this ok, but you can't so you look more deeply and then something opens up within you you pay attention to this moment and then comes the realization all you ever have is now and the form that appears in the now they believe that there are many different nows every day and every hour one moment after another moment but of course it is always the one eternal, timeless one moment only the form in which it appears changes continuously now the very form in which it appears this is the reason why many people don't want the now because it's not satisfying enough, it doesn't add enough to me it might even threaten my sense of self, the form that this moment takes, and in any case it's not fulfilling enough, it might even be a limitation on me, I want expansion, and here I am in this little prison cell in certain extreme cases, where the now is seen as very, very limiting, or your body your physical body may be ill can't move very well anymore so that becomes very, the now the form that this now takes can in some cases be extremely limiting and you are asking me a person might say to not to try and get away from it yes, because that didn't work, why not try something else why not try to live in alignment, inner alignment with the form that this now takes, in other words to embrace the now internally no matter in what form it comes to say yes to now which after all is life it is inseparable from now, life is always now, never not now and so you say yes to life by saying yes to this moment and whatever form this moment takes you say how can I argue with it it already is it is it is the isness of this moment of course I can change it, I can take action now, if I'm stuck in a I'm locked in a building I've lost the key this is the now of course then I can get up and shout out of the window and say can somebody please open the door but if nobody hears, maybe somebody will come, but at this moment this is this now now you can internally argue with it and resist it or you can say that is the isness of this moment, that is the suchness of now, the form it takes and you see the futility and even madness of arguing with is because whatever is, is already the case so you the shift in consciousness happens the moment you say yes to what is because the entire structure of the egoic mind made self lives on resistance and opposition and on making the now into an enemy it lives through that, that keeps it going so the beauty of this is we can step out of thousands of years of collective conditioning not through needing more time to step out of it and this message cannot yet be heard by everybody there are still many people on the planet before they are ready to listen to this they need more time but since you are sitting here I assume that something in you hears the message that to find yourself and we will look more deeply now what does it mean now to find yourself you don't need future for everything else it's helpful on the practical realm it works quite well now when you say yes to whatever form this moment takes what happens here comes the form that this now takes alright I welcome this because it is the form that this now takes usually something in you which is the egoic structures would have resisted it as limiting not enough not what completes me and through resisting this form in a situation, an event a person, a human being it can only appear in the field of now through resisting it any form that appears you strengthen your own form identity there is a contraction in your form identity when you resist a form that appears in the now there is a and that contraction is the strengthening of the illusory self and so it likes that it has a strong momentum because it survives in and through that resistance when you relinquish the resistance because you have seen through the futility and madness of living in that way and you embrace the now there is the form that the now takes and you bring a yes to that and suddenly what I say now is only a little metaphor or pointer there is a sense of space around what is happening in the now there is a larger spaciousness inner perhaps even outer a space around the form of now which could be a human being a situation something has gone wrong which happens a lot the mind would call it wrong because it's against what should be happening this shouldn't be happening now but here it is yeah but it should but here it is oh ok you become aligned with that isness and that is suddenly you oh there is a spaciousness around the form of now it happens within a field of yes, peace around it you can't it is not something that you can easily capture in words or thoughts because it is formless through that act of what ultimately we could call surrender entering the surrendered state of consciousness surrender to God that's a little bit abstract who knows what God wants how do I surrender to God surrender to whatever form this now takes because the totality has brought this about it is intrinsically linked with the totality of the cosmos everything is totally interconnected so the form that this now takes could not be otherwise the whole universe has brought this about as form and there is a little knee in the head that has an argument with it and strengthens itself through that argument that is suffering that is the cause of human suffering that is not knowing yourself beyond this little form so suddenly there is a depth of spaciousness that is there when you surrender to what is completely an uncompromising yes that is surrender to God and in that the egoic structures that live on resistance and on denial of now subside and there is a depth to your being suddenly and a peace that is there no matter what form this now takes because quite often as we pointed out it is a limitation it appears as a limitation on your life not on the head but it's here so the limitation now people sometimes spend a whole lifetime running away externally and internally from limitations and I'm not saying don't change a situation if change is possible but if you would find whatever situation you get into you encounter new limitations and you are going to find that yes you can improve your life situation but even if you improve it some other limitations will appear I gave the example in the talk yesterday an unemployed actress working as a waitress being in resistance to that or being in surrender to that seeming limitation through being in the surrendered state in my little story that I gave to explain that in the surrendered state she honored the now each customer in the restaurant instead of saying here I am I'm a brilliant actress and what has life given me a waitressing job and then the now you can't honor because the now is so limiting and unpleasant you would be fighting it internally continuously and every customer would make him or her feel that you don't like this now and you are part of it and then if she enters the state of alright this not a mental concept I might as well accept that I'm a waitress that is a further conceptualized sense of self strengthening that of course you are not a waitress it's a temporary function you are nothing permanently it's all a temporary function so don't derive an identity an unpleasant not enough identity from saying I'm a waitress this is what life has given me simply accept not that you are a waitress, it's a delusion accept this moment and there you are, there is a customer and you say can I help you you are honoring and saying yes to now with that comes in a totally different energy into the interaction and the customer senses that he or she is being honored you honor the now and any form that comes into the now that goes with it without saying if you honor the now whatever form this takes is honored and so and I gave a little humorous example that after serving many people in that way she meets a director who gives her a card and call me up, my name is Steven Spielberg and the shift came in three years later she is a famous actress, world famous and is her life now free of limitation, no she can't walk alone in the street anymore everybody wants something totally restricted her freedom of movement what does she do there to see that before long some form of limitation will recur in your life in the now and you surrender to that you can change the situation but knowing the limitless is not to be encountered in the world of form because form means limitation so you say yes to the now even if it is a form of limitation seemingly you surrender to that and suddenly around to the seeming limitation there is spaciousness at certain depths what really is arising here, although we need to be careful with words all forms thought forms physical forms are conditioned it's the conditioning conditioned consciousness consciousness appearing as a form consciousness appearing as a thought form consciousness appearing in many many forms but there is the appearance arises out of a vast realm of the unconditioned consciousness before it takes form and that is within every human being that dimension is there one could say underneath the conditioned which is all thought forms and emotional forms is the depths of the unconditioned which could be can be felt cannot be known as such as you know an object in consciousness people look for god or themselves believing that at some point in the future of course they are going to find god or themselves as an object in consciousness as a knowledge in a subject object relationship as if they could know it in the way that you can know a tree but you can't because the unconditioned is not an object it is the ground out of which all mind objects objects in consciousness arise into which they subside so you can never know yourself in the normal sense of the word but you can be that and that is felt one could say it is a realm of stillness underneath the mental noise and every word will reduce it, it is far more than that every word is no more than a little pointer a realm of aware presence that is beyond thought thought can happen come out of it but in itself it is consciousness one could say without thought unconditioned oh that is the deepest meaning of now because the strange thing about now is that it never leaves you and it doesn't change the field of now because it is the essence of now is the unconditioned consciousness the field in which all phenomena happen and this and now the beauty here is to know that one could say you know the now beyond the form it takes but you don't know it in a subject object relationship you know this field of now when you surrender to the form you know that which is beyond form surrender to the form the limitation and then there is that emerges that is beyond form and beyond limitation as yourself and this is goes against how everybody lives in this world they do not surrender to the limitation of this form, they think they want to get away from it surrender to the form of now takes you into the depths of the now itself which you then know as the essence of your being but not don't know anything about it, a direct unitive knowing as yourself I would go so far as to say that you are the now totally one with it it never leaves you you can't leave yourself the essence the unconditioned dimension of who you are and when you know that you can allow the conditioned and the form to be and it's beautiful the form as which you appear because you don't need it anymore to derive a sense of self from it then the forms are beautiful also you honor them really for the first time when you know yourself to be beyond the form you honor all the forms completely also so to surrender to the limitation the seeming limitation this is the essential truth the ultimate truth of all religions is the surrendered state of consciousness there is even one religion that's called surrender, Islam but it is the essence of all religion in Christianity that essence is contained in the image of the cross Jesus on the cross is all of humanity the cross is the ultimate symbol of extreme limitation couldn't be more limited than to be nailed to a cross it's a torture instrument so in a way for a while humans experience the world which is the world of form almost as a torture it's so heavy and then that can take up time until suddenly they can hear the message of surrender and then at that moment as symbolized by that image of Jesus surrender happens on the cross total surrender to extreme limitation and the seemingly unacceptable not my will but thy will be done thy will is the will of the one and then my and thy merge in the act of surrender there is no longer my that opposes thy, when my and thy merge there is total surrender, your will is one with the totality and at that moment the cross becomes a symbol for the divine the very limitation turns into the symbol for God or the divine so it's not by resisting or running away from but by that deep act of surrender that the divine is realized and that amazingly does not take time surrender can only be now it may take time to dwell in the surrendered state as your permanent state you fall back into resistance because the momentum of the collective conditioning is so strong and then you re-enter surrender but the moment of surrender is always now because you surrender to the now and in the now so it can only be now so that one decisive act or spiritual practice is the one that doesn't take time and that's the beauty of it it really means you don't need future to find yourself and you need to add nothing to you to find yourself nothing then you can play with the realm of phenomena and add things it's beautiful it's a play but you no longer need it for yourself that's the essence of spiritual realization all the teachings point to it that is to see that what grace to see that the very thing that looked so heavy which is the world of form the very thing that seemed to be limiting me on all sides that very thing is the doorway into the formless and into who I am beyond form and you see that ultimately they are one they are one form is emptiness emptiness is form

[Speaker 2] (1:23:09 - 1:23:10)

they are one

[Speaker 1] (1:23:11 - 1:23:28)

and that is the message of eternal salvation the most sublime message for humankind nothing else is needed but that

[Speaker 2] (1:23:37 - 1:23:38)

thank you

[Speaker 3] (1:24:00 - 1:24:12)

music music music

[Speaker 2] (1:24:19 - 1:24:20)

music

[Speaker 3] (1:24:20 - 1:24:21)

music music music music music music music

Eckhart Tolle Binaural Audio Music for Meditation Superposition

[Speaker 1] (0:32 - 2:05:37)

If any question comes into your mind right now, please realize that it is irrelevant. And please realize that it is an attempt of your mind to obstruct your practice of presence. Occasionally, I may say something just to point you back to it, because there is always a possibility that you may drift off into thinking.

It's also quite helpful, as you are aware of being conscious, to be aware at the same time that you are breathing, to feel the breaths going in and out, and at the same time, be the consciousness, the presence. Thoughts are not important right now, even if they pretend to be. Don't be concerned if an occasional ripple of thought floats around the surface of your consciousness.

Not a problem. So when you go into a meditation like this, it can become very deep, so that this consciousness left, pure consciousness, and then as you open your eyes again, listen, look around, begin to perceive externals again, it's still in the background. At this moment, you're aware of where you are.

You're aware of the room. You're aware that you're breathing. In addition to that, sense perceptions, perhaps some feelings, a few thoughts floating through your head, or maybe no thought, maybe just a clear sky inside you with just little puffy clouds here and there, little thoughts, and then disappear again.

So perhaps you're the clear sky, and the clear sky is the awareness. So the essence of our meditation is to be aware right now, whether or not your eyes are closed or open, it doesn't matter. Whether you are aware, that you are aware.

Whether you are conscious, that you are conscious. Can you sense your own consciousness? It's kind of subject and object merging within you, because usually when you're aware of something, the subject is aware of the object.

But when you're aware of awareness, the subject is no longer aware of an object because there's just awareness. You're aware that you are aware. Object and subject merge into one, self-awareness, presence.

That's the sky, the clear sky. Occasional thoughts may come, not a problem. And you can be aware with every cell of the body, an alertness that pervades the entire body.

It's not the body anymore. It's just the space. You are that presence.

There's nothing to know about it beyond that. You can't know it. You can only be it.

And as you no longer identify with the mind, the thoughts, the presence can shine through the mind, can even use your mind and inspire your mind. Another word we can use is stillness. That's the stillness within you, vibrantly alive stillness.

And of course, you don't necessarily need to sit still to be in stillness. You can move, as you know, and be in stillness. That's the beauty of it.

You can do things and be in stillness. Can interact with another human being, can even speak to them and be in stillness as I'm speaking to you now. But I'm in stillness.

The words are just floating around the stillness. And you can bring stillness to nature and nature will love you for it. And you can share stillness with a tree.

See if you can be as still as the tree. That's something. Or if the sky is clear at night, you look at the sky.

There are stars, but there's the vastness of space, which is also stillness. There's not a single sound in space. Only in science fiction movies, but there's no sound in outer space.

The deepest stillness. And even a flower, it's surrounded by stillness too. The flower exists in that still field.

So if you need a little bit of help to find the inner stillness, go to a tree, look at the sky, the night sky, or the sky at sunset as it gradually darkens. Very still and spacious. Or you can touch the earth.

It's also very still. So many things can teach you stillness and help you. And the quickest way to stillness in any situation, no matter where you are, whether on top of a mountain or Times Square or Piccadilly Circus, in the midst of traffic, is to welcome the present moment.

Just that little thing, no matter what form it takes, whatever arises in the present moment, you welcome it, or at least you allow it to be non-resistance. Immediately, you can sense in the background of your being that field of stillness or peace. So that simple thing, allowing this moment to be as it is, connects you with the transcendent in you.

Couldn't be any easier than that. All you have to do is remember that this is possible and then do it. It's a good thing to start and end this by looking around wherever you happen to be before you close your eyes.

So you just become comfortable wherever you are and look around very casual way. And you're beginning to step out of thought. You're just looking around.

Then you close your eyes. And what helps is to take a few breaths into the abdomen so that, because that can put you in touch easily with the entire energy field of the inner body. As you breathe in, the abdomen expands a little.

Then you hold it at the end of the in-breath for two or three seconds. Feel the energy expanding then throughout the body. And then you breathe out.

And in again. And you follow the breath with your attention. This is an ancient breath awareness practice.

You can't be thinking at the same time and follow the breath with your attention. That's why it's such a good practice. And you become aware of your body, the inner body, the aliveness.

When you feel that the awareness of the inner body, the aliveness of the inner body and the inner body become a single thing, a single whole thing. So you merge with the sense of aliveness and stillness. Instead of observing it, you feel that you are it.

It is awake. Remnants of visual image of the body, but it's not necessary anymore. You just focus on that sense of pervasive presence.

Not other than you, that is essentially you. That is the essence of who you are. That is the I before it becomes something.

The question, the answer is not to be found in thought or in words. The answer is this. The presence that you sense, you sense yourself as the presence.

That's the answer to who am I. For success is sense of enjoyment. Counter state is deep sense of beingness of I.

It cannot be improved upon. Nothing needs to be added to it. It doesn't get any better than this to use a common expression.

This moment, being conscious of being, listening to event on the surface of things as with the source of all life from which the consciousness emanates, the consciousness that you are. That's the very, that realization is the very fulfillment of your life in this moment. What is there to add to it?

Plead. There's no, there's still nothing that you need to become. There's nothing missing.

Everything's missing on the human level, the human dimension, but not on the being level. There's nothing missing. Anything.

That's the fullness of life that Jesus talked about or the emptiness that Buddha talks about. Spaciousness is a better word for it. Then as you open your eyes to feel the stillness or the spaciousness within, as you look around the room, and that is how you realize the possibility of being present within and without.

In a moment of spaciousness, no thinking is required in this moment. Wouldn't add anything to it. Be aware of yourself and what's around you.

The consciousness that you are makes this possible. You cannot yet in your daily life step from thinking into awareness, freedom from thinking for a moment. Then you just use one of the portals in our body, breath awareness, attention to sensory perception.

For a while, you can just step out of thinking when it's not needed or reduce thinking to just a trickle and presence arises when you sense it with your entire energy field. This power grows in you. The power itself doesn't grow, but its manifestation in you grows.

Presence, power grows in you. At first, it seems nothing remarkable. As you notice, it frees you from a lot of turmoil, mind generated and it deepens you because it is the deeper mind, the deep eye that emerges, the deep self, the deeper mind.

Don't wait for emergency situations to become present. Don't wait for life to knock you, give you a jolt, a shock. Choose it in ordinary moments.

Then it grows in you. Life does something to you to intensify the presence instead of taking you out of presence into reactivity. You respond, but don't react.

Reaction is on the conditioned mind. Responding is out of presence. So when you realize that what's important is already here and not in the next moment, what really matters, that means you already have shifted to a different state of consciousness.

Very simple, just that realization, but it's so deeply ingrained, the illusion, the belief, the unconscious assumption, the next moment matters more than this one. The body inherits that mind pattern and that makes life very frustrating. You all know that.

Life consists only ever of this moment. So we are here to go deeper into this moment and not wait for something more significant. So we become comfortable with being here now.

Get rid of the illusion that there is something important missing. There's something not quite right that hasn't arrived yet, something deep-seated illusion. There's something not right.

Earthly things believes that something's going to be right when this or that happens or I attain this or that. And the spiritual seeker believes it's going to be right when I become enlightened. In both cases, it's future.

Seriously overlooking something vital that is very easy to overlook because thought is so seductive and hypnotic, light, visual, presence that is essentially who you are and has nothing to do with your past or future. This moment, here, this, and almost, let's say, to ignore the truth of it, that means that's it. Just a sense of goodness and rightness of being here, that means that dimension that has no form is already the next step, one could say, in the evolution of human consciousness is stepping out of self-talk, which is the conditioned mind, and realizing there is much more to who I am than this conditioned content of my mind.

And that is the beginning of awakening. It's not those words, not that you need to believe that there is much more to who I am than the self-talk in my head, because that is still self-talk in the head. I believe there's more to who I am, and you better believe it, too.

And suddenly you go, ah, and your attention is suddenly in the present moment. The self-talk is never in the present moment. And suddenly your attention is in the present moment, and you go, hmm, and the whole person right now is not there anymore when you go.

You're not a person at that moment anymore. You are an aware presence. So that shift in consciousness can happen very easily, whether it stays with you for a few seconds or a few minutes or an hour or a day or longer.

It doesn't matter that much. The important thing is that it arises. It arises, and suddenly the unhappy self-talk entity is disappearing, and what has taken its place?

Just a sense of presence. And that sense of presence is first of all aware of sense perceptions. So you look more consciously, you listen more consciously, because there's so much to look at and so much to listen to.

And it's not only looking and listening, it's also feeling the breeze on your skin, the air. Do you feel the warmth of the air? And there might be a scent in the air, and you become conscious of that.

But feeling the air, the movement of air on your skin requires a considerable degree of awareness. A person who is immersed in the self-talk in the head, they cannot feel the breeze touching their skin. They can't feel that, it's a very subtle thing.

And to feel subtle things, you need to have that aware presence, that alert, aware presence. You cannot be immersed in the self-talk to really honor and appreciate deeply the present moment, which is life. We could say honor, appreciate deeply life, because present moment and life are synonymous.

There is no life away from the present moment. If you cannot appreciate the present moment means you are away from life. Instead of life, you have a substitute in your head, just abstractions in the form of thoughts.

So to notice the breeze on your skin, you need to be quite alert and basically still inside, and then you can go. We feel a certain aliveness pervading the body. It's very simple, but some attention has to go there.

Otherwise you can't feel anything, which means you have to take some attention away from the thinking. If you're fully in thought, you can't feel your body at all. You don't feel alive anymore, just abstractions.

So the beautiful thing is, it's not only that your body loves being acknowledged and getting your attention. It's a very healing thing to do. And most importantly, it slows down your thinking considerably if it doesn't stop it completely, because if you have your attention here, you can't have it there.

And this would be the embodied state. It's quite nice. What you're feeling is not ultimately the physical body.

It's already halfway beyond the physical body. Qi, life energy. And I call that halfway between form and formlessness.

It's a bridge. Qi is a bridge between the formless dimension and form. So it's wonderful to sense that.

You can do it anywhere when there's enough room. You don't need to focus on externals 100%. Have some attention in the body.

Boredom disappears, for example, when you have attention in the body, you're not bored. You actually enjoy feeling alive and that it can serve as an anchor for staying present. And that can be one way of looking around at the world without unnecessary mental labeling.

There's clarity of perception and looking at the situations that arise in that clarity of perception. And from that clarity of perception, you know what you need to do or what needs doing in that situation. It's a higher intelligence that you contact via the body, a higher intelligence than the quiet knowledge of the human mind.

And then you know what to do. So you have an insight or a spontaneous doing or if there's nothing to do, being is enough. You can enjoy just being.

Sleepless nights are a wonderful opportunity for going into the body. Oh, I can't sleep. Why don't you do something useful, go into the body?

And then you lie there and feel the aliveness. And before you know it, you've gone to sleep perhaps. And then you wake up in the morning.

Perhaps you still feel a lingering sensation there in the body. And if you don't, as you wake up, put your attention into the body first before you start thinking about the day or just a couple of minutes, three minutes, two minutes. It's a good start of the day.

To feel alive can't be a bad start of the day. I'll tell you what a bad start of the day is is listening to the news. It's a grounding, but not a heavy grounding.

It's rooted in being. Am I spacious to even ask the question can immediately bring about that opening of a moment of cessation of thinking. Because to check within, your attention goes, am I spacious?

Well, it's almost inevitable that after asking the question, you are spacious. Because after the question mark, there is an inquiry, non-conceptual, there is a looking, there is a field of attention that arises and you go, am I spacious? Yes.

Now probably before you asked the question, you were not. So you remembered to ask the question because something was going on. You were upset about this or that or stressed or anxious.

Or many of the so-called normal states. And so then suddenly you are spacious. It's so easy, a little space opens up.

And then you remember no matter how important the things of the world or your world pretend to be, nothing is more important than being spacious. Another version of this question refers to relationships, whether it's an intimate relationship or whether it is just a short or superficial relating. Is there space in this relationship?

Is there space in the relationship between yourself and your partner or family member or whoever it may be, a friend? So again, all related. Without the space, it gets taken over by stuff.

Without the space, your life gets taken over by stuff. Welcome to our meditation. We start with the surface of now, which is whatever we perceive at this moment.

Whatever you perceive, whatever I perceive, really it's the I. So you perceive this person talking. You hear the voice.

There's the totality of the room. There's the ever-present noises. The ceiling and the walls, all part of the totality of your visual perception.

So there's a totality of sensory perception. That's the, I actually call it the surface of the now, or you can call it the outside of now. And then you're also aware of yourself breathing and you may be aware of the energy inside the body.

So we are gradually moving from the outside to the inside. And if you allow the outside to be as it is, although there's nothing special here in this room, it is quite nice. It has its own beauty.

Sounds are quite nice if you allow them. Imagine it's the OM sound. And now comes the really important part.

You're aware of yourself as the perceiver of all these things. You're not aware of yourself right now, but you're aware of the personal self, because at this moment, let's use this word, I hope that you are not thinking about your personal history right now or the problems you've had in the future, in the past or might have in the future. So when I say you're aware of yourself, it's not you're aware of yourself in the usual way, because when you usually say you're aware of yourself, you're aware of the story of yourself, you and your life, you and your position in the world, you and other people and so on.

No, more simple now in our meditation, you're aware of yourself not as a person with a history, but a deeper level of self. And I begin by calling it the perceiver of whatever it is that arises in your perception, auditory, visual, feeling, sensing. So, but who is it that is perceiving this?

Not the person, because the person is a story. The story is not perceiving this. So for a moment, let's not call it anything, but be aware of the simple fact that you are perceiving this, but you don't know what that is, that I that is perceiving, but there's no doubt that that is there.

And even if what you're perceiving is a dream, perhaps it is, it certainly has a lot in common with a dream because a dream evaporates very quickly, it doesn't last. Many philosophers have discussed whether human existence is a dream. We don't need to go there.

We can say it might be, but even if it is, it's all not real, as some people say. There is something in which the dream appears. The dream is being experienced.

One could say there's a light in which the forms appear and you are that. And there's no doubt that if it's a dream, it's happening. If it's all unreal, at least that unreality is happening in that light of awareness, because without that awareness, there would be no sense perception.

There would be no room. There would be no voice or somebody listening to the voice. So that's the one thing that cannot be doubted.

Everything else you can doubt whether it's actually real. And that awareness is formless. It doesn't have a history because your entire history appears in it when you remember it in that awareness.

And when things happened that once happened, they happened in the present moment, in the light of awareness. And you can only remember it as the awareness now. So I'm now asking you, although you continue to be aware of sense perceptions, to simply acknowledge the fact that you are aware.

And even that is not perhaps putting it rightly to acknowledge the fact that there is awareness. In other words, you are aware that you are aware. You are conscious of being conscious.

It sounds a little strange, but it's an amazing thing. It also sounds, if there were a duality here, I am conscious of being conscious. The subject, I, but that only appears in language.

In fact, when you are conscious of being conscious, and that's a, it's a, it's a strange thing. Just, and you can't, you can't say much about it. It just has no form and no shape.

It's totally elusive and yet all pervasive. Can you feel the fact that you are conscious, or rather that you are consciousness? And that's an, to, to sense yourself as that and still be able to perceive all this.

And you have long since left compulsive labeling behind when you are aware of yourself as consciousness and then perceive as consciousness, labeling things mentally doesn't come in anymore. There's just consciousness and forms arising and subsiding in consciousness. Arising, some forms stay for a while.

This room stays as long as you sit here. This room arises in consciousness and then you leave and it subsides. But the voice, the words arise in consciousness and subside.

Arise, subside. We could call consciousness the, the eternal gap behind everything, the gap in between everything, the space behind everything, whatever you want to call it. These are just pointers.

And there is a, an intense frequency that arises in you when you become aware of consciousness. It makes the personal self fade out. It burns up the karmic accumulations in you.

Old stuff from the past, pain body, old mind patterns. And your entire being is vibrating at a higher frequency. That's the only way I can put it.

The words may not be absolutely right, but that's how I sense it in you. And that is inherently joyful and energizing to sense this essence in yourself. We are learning here not to have it as a very short-lived glimpse, but to be able to stay there.

And every moment you stay in that, the old gets burned up in you and you connect with intelligence, not the IQ intelligence that you measure in IQ tests. That's a very limited form of intelligence, creative intelligence I talk about. This does not mean that you or I this moment will come up with the solution to the problem that Einstein couldn't solve, the unified field theory or whatever it was.

Nor does it mean that suddenly I can paint a masterpiece or compose an exquisite piece of music because these are not vehicles that have been prepared in this body, by this body. But this intelligence can flow into something. If there is a vehicle in your life, it can flow into that, transform it, and make it absolutely creative.

And even that is no more than a bonus. For some people, it may be enough to walk around the planet for the rest of their life in this form as peaceful, intensely alive beings that are astonished at the beauty of all things and bring that vibration of peace that comes with the awareness of pure consciousness. Whoever they meet, it's a little whiff of that.

And for some humans, that's enough and they fulfill their purpose here. Others may create some more elaborate forms, but empowered by not the ego, but by the greater intelligence it creates, it can flow into the human mind and body and create through the human form. Let's come back to the simple secret.

Be conscious that you are conscious. Feel the awareness as your essence. And you will notice it's very still.

The awareness is still. I compare it sometimes to space. I call it inner space or space consciousness.

It has no extension. It is vast, but not like the outer space that you see. You don't see it, but that is there when you look at the sky at night.

The vastness of space is only a reflection in the external of who you are in the essence of your being. And that's the awe-inspiring thing when you look at the starry sky at night, the absolutely awe-inspiring thing that if you are really looking will really shut up your mind immediately because it's so astonishing. That was my first meditation when I was in my teens.

I had no idea it was meditation. Lying on the deck of our, we lived on the top floor. There was a little terrace.

It was in the south of Spain where there were beautiful skies at night, totally clear. There was no thought. I had no idea that was going on then.

I just, it was deeply enjoyable. The awe-inspiring thing is not the countless, countless suns that you see, which are stars, but the vastness of it, the nothingness that makes it all possible. The vastness of space, unimaginable infinity, and there too that can put you in touch with the vastness within you.

Just looking at that. And space, again, is very similar. The outer space is very similar to inner space because both of them don't really exist because as I mentioned earlier, existence means to stand out, but space is, you can't say, oh, here's space.

All you can ever be aware of is things in space. And again, in yourself, you can't say, here is the essence of who I am. You cannot be aware of it as an object.

All objects are things, forms that arise in the space. Why can't you be aware of space? Because you are it.

You cannot separate from it and look at it as an object. It is the formless I, the I am that I am. The most profound statement in the entire Bible, which is, of course, a mixed bag of all kinds of writings, but there are some deep insights.

You know how to find them. When God is asked, what's your name? God says, I am that I am.

That's my name, it's the I am. That's immediately there's space in you when you become conscious of being conscious. That is space.

In any situation you find yourself in, a quick access to inner space, spaciousness, essence, is to become conscious that you are conscious. That's presence. Then, yes, you are still a person.

You can function as a person, but you are not trapped in the person. That's the hybrid I talked about. You function as the person.

We are not trapped in the person. And now for a little while, we just see if we can stay there in that consciousness of consciousness. It can be a helpful thing to be in unusual surroundings because it's easier to be more present in unusual surroundings.

That's the advantage of traveling. And that's why, as I've written somewhere, many people feel more alive when they travel. And when they are at home, their surroundings are so familiar that they lose presence completely.

They don't see things anymore. They go from where they live to their office or wherever it is, gone, done it so many times, they don't see it anymore. And you would be surprised even at home, your usual surroundings.

You might have a painting on your walls and haven't looked at it in the past three years. Might be very beautiful. Or your garden or the plants in there.

So this is the familiarity can lead to a kind of semi-sleep-like state. And when you're traveling, you go, oh. And the good thing is you might not even have a name for all the new things you see.

At home, you know what everything is called. But here you see things, you might see a weird animal. The mind stops because you can't name it.

And that's a wonderful thing. Or you see trees that you haven't seen before and you go, oh. Or you might say to your friend, look at that.

And you might notice in the moment of looking at that, you're not naming it in your mind because you don't know what it's called. So there's a moment, a few seconds of just being present. Be the presence rather than the naming person.

So it helps to be wide awake to your sense perceptions because that is one way of coming into the present moment. Which is why we are here, because there is more to the present moment than we realize most of the time. There's more to it.

It's the access point to the deeper dimension within yourself. So as a general theme, underlying theme, I recommend, surprisingly, that you practice being in the present moment. Although you've been taken out of your usual surroundings, you have carried with you something else.

And of course, that's your mind that travels with you wherever you go. That is perhaps the meaning of the book that somebody wrote. I believe the title is, wherever you go, there you are.

So wherever you go, you carry your mind and the conditioning of your mind with you. So that is the challenge here, to transcend the conditioning of your mind. The habitual way of interpreting the habitual way of reacting to things, habitual mind patterns.

If a mind pattern in you is that you frequently and very quickly become discontent with where you are, if that's a pattern in you, then that pattern will arise here also. If your mind pattern is one that loves complaining and finding fault with things, then it's very likely that very quickly this mind pattern will appear here also. So you get surprising things, things that your expectations are not met in various ways.

And that is a challenge to the mind, to the conditioned mind, because the conditioned mind wants its expectations met. And if they're not met, it gets uneasy, restless, irritated, angry, starts talking about what's wrong, either silently in your mind or to others. And if others can agree with you, then it's even better.

Or you can go on the internet and then you can get 1000 people agreeing with you. I'm not saying if there's something really wrong, you shouldn't do something to rectify it. So if something is leaking in your room, you say, no, I'm not going to say anything because I'm not supposed to complain.

No, of course. Say there's something there that needs to be rectified. That's not a complaint, it's just information.

Complaint means there is an emotion behind it. And the emotion says, this should not be happening. Then it becomes a complaint or it's your fault.

Then it becomes a complaint. If it's simply presenting information, it's not a complaint. It's just a fact.

And then the question is, can anything be done about it? If yes, good. What they say, there's nothing we can do.

Do you go on insisting that this is very bad and create suffering for yourself? Or do you simply accept this is what is? So it's bringing your inner self into alignment with the present moment.

A very powerful spiritual practice. Why is it so powerful? Especially when the situation is challenging and you still say it and you mean it.

Because everything that sustains the person, the exclusively personal sense of self, in that act of complete surrender to what is, the personal sense of self gives way to a deeper transcendent sense of self, which the Buddhists call no self. A deeper consciousness suddenly shines through. So really, it's a kind of denying your form identity.

Doesn't mean you don't have it anymore, but you are no longer trapped exclusively in your form identity. The form identity is strengthened and the more you can be in opposition to what is, the stronger your form identity, me, the person, the me. The more you are in opposition to what is, the stronger the me becomes, your form identity.

And if you can have enemies, lots of enemies, it loves that gets even stronger. They're all against me or us, if it's a collective ego. Collective ego loves its enemies, can't actually survive without them.

Every collective even needs the others. We're not us, this is us and that's the others. So that's the wonderful thing that the person, the exclusively personal sense of self becomes weakened, subsides, and something else emerges when you're no longer habitually oppose what is, something emerges that is deeper than the personal sense of self.

The transcendent dimension, presence, whatever we want to call it. Some people call it your higher self, or you could call it your deeper self. Words, doesn't matter.

But something emerges that is from beyond the person. And that is a place of great power and aliveness and possibility. That is where you are connected with a vastness and with everybody else too.

So it's when you feel, when that transcendent dimension arises, you feel a greater sense of connectedness, no longer the separation with, not only with nature, but also with other humans. You no longer feel the otherness of the other. It's just yourself in another disguise that's really becomes your experience.

Whoever you meet is yourself in another disguise. Isn't that a wonderful way of being with other humans that essentially you can sense not only your connectedness, but you can also sense your inherent oneness with others. So that is why this presence practice, honoring the present moment, welcoming the is-ness.

That's why that's such a powerful practice. And for many, the beginning of spiritual awakening is to realize that there is this stream of continuous commentary in their minds. And that is the thing.

Oh, that's interesting. That's a thought, of course. But before the thought, that's interesting.

There's the recognition. It's the voice in the head. And the recognition is not the voice in the head, although you might say it after the recognition.

But in the moment of recognizing there's a voice in the head, that's not a thought. The recognition of thought is not a thought. The recognition of thought comes through awareness or presence.

And awareness or presence is the higher consciousness, the arising new consciousness. Wow. So that's, that is really the meaning of spiritual awakening.

By the way, in this first half of our gathering, I will be talking more about it. In the second half, we will do more experiential. But even while I talk about it here, I would hope that if it works for you, there's already also an experiential realization of what it is I'm talking about.

So there's the voice. There's a voice in the head. And people say things like, I think.

They don't think. Because thinking is not a voluntary action for them. So it's a delusion to even say, I think.

You don't think. You are being thought by thought. You are created by thought.

There's that energy field. It's amazing. So the master said, how can I teach you Zen unless you first empty your cup?

Now that's a huge demand. If I'm full of clutter, mental clutter, how am I going to empty my cup? I would be immediately enlightened if I could empty my cup.

But the teaching points to something. It points to, there's the word empty. And that's interesting.

That is an important word in Buddhism. And I don't think it's a good translation. Who first came up with it?

I don't know. In the 19th century, the Europeans started to translate ancient texts from Sanskrit. And one person came up with a translation, probably of the Sanskrit terms, sunyata, and translated it as emptiness.

That doesn't sound so nice. It sounds like something missing or something like that. So I have an alternative translation for the Buddhist term emptiness.

So that empty is an important word. So remember, the Zen master said, how can I teach you Zen unless you first empty your cup? Emptiness, my alternative translation for that is spaciousness.

Spaciousness is a dimension of consciousness in you. And that is what we could call the spiritual dimension of consciousness, the deeper or the higher consciousness, just words, doesn't matter. And that is, in every human, it's there.

Many don't know that it's there because the clutter is so dense that they have no realization of the underlying spaciousness. And that is why I say in millions of humans, that is still a dormant faculty, so to speak. So the most important realization in your life, much more important than what you have achieved on the level of the world, whether your life in worldly terms is regarded as a huge success or additional failure, or for most of you, probably something in between, that's normal.

Sometimes you fail, sometimes you succeed, and then you move from gaining, losing, high, low, up and down. That's the identity for most. So the clutter of your mind is there, but there are moments in your life when you become aware of something spacious underneath it, but you may not call it like, call it that, you may not call it anything.

It may arise, for example, in many humans who may never have heard of anything spiritual. They're still, they're out there. They don't know that the little bit of that is in them, but they don't know it.

Little glances come occasionally into their lives of that dimension. It's not enough to actually say that the spiritual dimension has awakened in them, but little flashes come up now and then into their lives, and that is enough. Those little flashes from that dimension come into their lives, and that is enough to keep many people sane.

And those flashes can come when they're, you might think when you go out into nature and you see something extraordinarily beautiful like a sunset, for a moment you go, ah, all the vastness of the ocean or the sky or the elements, the wind, the storm, and for a moment you go, ah, and it's a moment of intense aliveness as you feel. And then you may remember that moment a little later and say, that was such a beautiful moment. Why was it?

Yes, maybe what you perceived was beautiful, but you felt something in that moment. You felt a heightened sense of aliveness and a deep peace and connectedness with being, so to speak. Why?

Because that moment of sense perception of something vast or beautiful freed you for a moment from the incessant stream of thinking. So the incessant stream of thinking, let's say you see this vast, this incredible sunset or whatever, and for a moment you give it your complete attention, and for a moment you're not thinking about yourself, your problems, your problematic life history, or your even more problematic future, and actually you're not thinking about anything. For a moment the stream of thinking subsides and it goes, and that is without knowing it, you have a little flash that's come up from that dimension, and then the next moment it may come up a few days later again when you look into the eyes of a baby, one year old, maybe just in the street or in a cafe, and the baby looks at you, and the baby is one year old, and the eyes are like babies, and you know instinctively that the baby is not thinking about you, because thinking hasn't started yet.

The words have not accumulated yet, the thoughts haven't started yet, and yet there's a consciousness there. You can see very clearly there's an intense consciousness that's looking through those eyes at you without judging you in any way, and in that moment for just a few seconds you feel so good. Why do you feel so good?

Because at that moment the baby liberated you from your stream of thinking, and again a little bit of spaciousness opened up inside you, and so for those few seconds when you look into the eyes of the baby, you were not thinking, and the baby wasn't thinking, so through the baby you are able to be in that dimension, and it felt so good. Spontaneously they can arise. They're not recognized by people as ultimately spiritual, but they are, and so many people, there are millions of people who experience those things briefly, but that's enough to give you a sense still of life is worth living, and then there are others who are so burdened by their minds they cannot even communicate with a baby.

They cannot even perceive the beauty of nature anymore because their mind is so noisy that they never, there's a total veil, so they don't look at the baby like, they look at the baby, oh that's a nice baby, they don't really see the baby, immediately it's labeled.

Eckhart Tolle Old Recording Source Of All Trust

[Speaker 1] (0:14 - 1:01:54)

We're not waiting for the session to start. One way to define what we mean by presence, which is a state of consciousness, is to say that you're not waiting for the next thing. And it's so normal to always wait for the next thing.

That's why many people are very rarely really present in the now. It's so habitual and normal to wait for the next thing that they don't know they're doing it. They're always waiting for the next thing.

And as soon as they go into the now, they go to sleep. But to stay awake in the now, without needing to fill it up with anything, or waiting for the next thing, because waiting for the next thing is filling up the now with stuff, which is thoughts. The next thing is a thought.

The next thing never comes, as you know. It's only always this, whatever is here now. The next thing doesn't come ever, not as the next thing.

And then to get to feel your way into the presence of now, to feel what does it to become aware of the now itself, which is a very strange thing. How do you do that? What do you mean, become aware of the now itself?

Usually people think when they're present, they are aware of what's going on. That is true. You're aware of whatever you perceive in the present moment, or whatever is happening internally in the present moment.

So that's already a step forward, if you can just be with that and acknowledge it and be there. But there's more to the now than what fills up the space of now. There's something deeper there, and that's the space itself, the space, the eternal, timeless now.

And then things appear in it and disappear. You can call it the space, you can call it the light of now, whatever word works best. So to be present is not only to be aware of what's going on within and without, that also, yes.

But even more importantly, it is to be aware of the now itself as the essence without which nothing else could even be. And right now, as I talk about it, perhaps you are able to realize within yourself what it is that I'm talking about, so that the words actually work in you, not to be accumulated and remember what I said, but let them work now, so that they can function as pointers in you. So the words are now pointing towards something deeper than what appears in the now, and that's the now itself.

It has no form, but it's that sense of timeless presence that's always there. And the strange thing is, it's inseparable from who you are in your essence. It's the I before it becomes something, the beingness, the being, and you feel that in the background, a presence.

Sometimes I call it, can you feel your own presence? Of course, it's not your own because nothing is your own. We just put it like that, just as a temporary pointer.

Can you feel the presence of you right now? Not as a memory of your past or your personal history. You don't need any memory to feel the presence of you, and you cannot define it in any way.

In some ways it feels as if you didn't know who you are anymore, and yet there is undoubtedly a presence. It defies all description, and that is enormously liberating to realize that within yourself. Sometimes I describe it as stillness, whatever pointer works.

It's a stillness. It's an enlarged stillness that frees you from the person. What that means is you realize there's something more real to who you are than all the things that you think you are, which are accumulations from the past.

That's the person. They make up the person, the conditioning of the mind, the sum total of all the experiences, some of which are remembered, some are in the unconscious, and they might be remembered at certain times. Many other things you think about all the time, what you're telling yourself, who you are, et cetera, ideas about who you are, and the sense of I that's based on the story of me, or something deeper.

So you realize that is there, but it's a very fleeting phenomenon. The personal I is very insubstantial, but there's something much more foundational to who you are, but you can't define it. It has nothing to do with your history, or your name, or your age, or your physical appearance, or your status in the world.

And to be able to sense that is essentially liberating. It liberates you from the delusion that all you are is the person with the physical body and the psychological form. And what's especially liberating is you no longer look to your physical body and the psychological entity for your sense of identity, of who you are.

So the person is still there, but you don't need it anymore to give you your real sense of self, because you have something much deeper. That is your sense of self, which the Buddha called no self, and the Indian teachings called this the Atman, the self, just using different pointers. The Buddha called it the no self because it has no form.

Sometimes he calls it emptiness. You can't make it into a mind object. And it's so liberating because the person is always insufficient.

So if your sense of self is confined to the person, you can't be satisfied for very long. Very briefly, you get moments. But you basically exist in a state of dissatisfaction.

In some people, very pronounced. In others, it's just in the background. Something is still missing in my life.

Something is still not right. And then you try other relationships, and you try other places to live, and you try other activities. And sooner or later, and usually sooner, you come again to the place.

This isn't right either. And then you ask, what am I really meant to do? Where am I really meant to be?

Because it's not here. It's never here, ultimately, because you're not at home deep enough in the now. So you can never feel, this is never it.

So, but there's no external solution to that. There's only an inner solution to that. You come home to the now, and you have to drop down beyond the mental emotional accumulations that you confuse with who you are.

And you sense, as I sometimes say, the ripple on the surface of the Pacific Ocean stops thinking of itself as a ripple, and senses its own depths. And suddenly, the ripple feels at one with the depths of the ocean, but also feels at one with every other ripple that it sees on the surface of the ocean, because it senses its connectedness with the totality, with the one, and therefore recognizes every other ripple as also being an expression of that. And then, for the first time, it can become comfortable with other ripples, really at ease.

The ripples, of course, in our analogy, are people. And what I'm really talking about, I was just looking, coming here, and this question somebody asked that is connected with what we are talking about, and that's the question about trust. Very, something very foundational.

This person asks, a long time ago, I was hurt really bad. It was traumatic. Ever since then, it wasn't really possible for me to trust anybody again.

I still have fears and panic when there are situations of being close together, and I take medication. Can you give me advice so that I'm able to trust again? So, that sense of connectedness with being, that's what it is, to drop down into being, that's where real trust arises.

Trust cannot arise, you can't look at another person and say, give me your trust, can I trust you? People are unpredictable, and people are display varying levels or degrees of consciousness, even on a single day, or in one afternoon. You can catch a person in the same afternoon, relatively present, and then the same person gets challenged by something, one little phone call, somebody, and immediately the person goes into complete mind identification and reactivity, and then the same person who you try to trust says something to you that comes out of his or her particular state of consciousness at that moment, and then the person who hasn't found the true source of all trust, who thinks that you can actually trust a person without sensing the connectedness with being, which is the source of all trust, then that person says, will then focus on the other person's moment of unconsciousness and whatever comes out of his or her mouth as words or actions, and say, you see, I knew we couldn't be trusted. And the unfortunate thing then happens, that thought lingers in the mind, he or she can't be trusted, in whatever form it might be expressed in slightly different words, and that thought lingers in the mind and stays in the background, and then whenever you meet that person again, that thought is there and whispers in your inner ear, he or she can't be trusted, be careful.

And because you believe in that underlying thought, you can't find it hard even to acknowledge the times when this other person is conscious and present, and you say, yeah, but not really, they look conscious now, but they're not really. In other words, you then look at the other person through your screen of mental accumulations, thoughts, and you no longer see what's there, but you see what your mind is projecting there, and you have drawn conclusions. It is true that that which gave rise to that particular thought, yes, of course, that person was unconscious, and perhaps in the moment of unconsciousness, that person said something to you that was untrue, that was a lie perhaps, or that was a distortion of something, or that was insensitive towards you, or whatever it was, yes, of course that happened.

A person can only manifest according, whatever they say or do manifest, it reflects their particular state of consciousness at that moment. But to make a permanent thing out of that and transform that in your mind into a self that you manufacture mentally for that other person, that's the delusion. And then your mind has fixed the other person, has a fixed image of that person, and it is quite possible that for the rest of your life, you're trapped in that, and I'm saying you are trapped, because when you trap another person in a fixed image, you yourself are trapped in that.

Somebody said the same thing 2000 years ago in slightly different words, something about judging. So we need to know how the mind works, how the egoic mind works. If we don't, then it'll deceive us, and it'll, we don't know what's happening then, we identify it with the mechanical patterns of the mind.

So every human being that you know, every human being you meet, they are not permanent fixtures, they are not, they are not, they are expressions of varying degrees of consciousness, depending what situation arises. They are not predictable, or if you know them, if you know their patterns, yes, their patterns are predictable, but you cannot say this person is always to be trusted. You never know, the moment may come, maybe after 15 years of knowing the person, something happens, and suddenly, oh, maybe I can't trust him or her.

So trust doesn't come from a person, it comes from that feeling of connectedness, the sense of connectedness within you. Then you can allow other humans to do what they do, to manifest whatever they manifest out of their particular state of consciousness at that moment, and not equate it with who they are, and manufacture an identity for them, a self, that, and then it's because that's a thought, or a group of associated thoughts in your mind. It's a dreadful imitation, but it happens all the time.

So when you know that, you can continue to meet other human beings in the state of openness, even people you've known for a while. Don't expect them to be conscious continuously, or to express in different language, don't expect them to always do and say the right thing, to be consistent in their behavior, most are not, and in many cases, one single human being is different entities. And it's only when you, sometimes when you know a person superficially, you know one particular level or manifestation of that person, the public persona, or whatever it is, and it's only when you spend more time with them, you live with them, you work with them, that other people will come out of the same human being.

And almost everybody who ever married somebody, at some point, woke up and said, this is not the person I married, something went wrong here. And then if you believe what your mind says, it will already come up with weird judgments like, he or she deceived me into believing he was playing a role, and just to get me, and whatever your mind is telling you, some absurd story, interpretation of this other person now, and then you get stuck in that, and that's the beginning of the decline of the... So of course you can't trust human beings, there isn't even a single human being there, unless that person is totally present, there isn't a single human being.

Every human being is many different human beings. So of course you can't trust them. But if you're in this state of connectedness with being, so you drop down to a deeper level within yourself, and there you have, there is a sense of power and something that goes far beyond anything in the world of form, is peace, a powerful sense of peace and aliveness.

And when you're connected from that, and you can allow other human beings to display their varying degrees of consciousness, to be their different selves in different situations, with compassion, without needing them, needing them to be consistent in their behavior, they won't. So if you need them to be consistent, then there's a discrepancy between reality and your expectations, which is an unpleasant place to be. Imagine the entire life, or going through life with an almost continuous discrepancy between your expectations, how things and people and situations and places should be, and how they are.

It's very frustrating. And you can notice that people who are very deeply trapped in those patterns very frequently use the little word should. Both apply to others and even to themselves.

Should have, should, should not, should not have. That's... He shouldn't have said that.

He should have thanked me. So that is a vital thing. Now, some people have an upbringing where that is relatively stable, where the family, maybe you're born into a loving family, you get support in early life.

Then it's perhaps easier to trust other humans than if you're born into a family that gives you no support and no love. And you have to just almost fight for survival, if not physical survival, psychological survival every day of your life. That's quite a, and this is perhaps the questioner case here.

Well, the questioner mentions one particular instance. So it can be one instance when a human being does something to you and makes you lose trust. Or in some cases, it can be many years of, of finding that life cannot be trusted because in your early years, your surrounding, the people that you are with don't support you, don't give you love.

And then of course there is, then you may be unable to trust other humans, not on the conventional level where people who have experienced relatively stable family background find it easier to trust other humans. But those people still are not necessarily motivated to go to the deepest place. It's, it's when life has deprived you of certain things, like the natural ability to trust others.

Then at first you are in a place of a deficient place, a deprived place, and you could be deprived in, in, in different ways by life. Even some people in early on in life lose one of their parents when they're still a child, or their parents abandon them, or one of the father or mother leaves, or whatever. It is very unstable.

Now one would usually interpret that as a huge handicap resulting in perhaps an injured sense of self for the rest of their lives. And this sometimes does happen, but it's also a great opportunity because those people who have experienced loss early in life, or even a little later in life, or have experienced very unstable family situation, those people's motivation to go deeper is quite strong. They just have to realize that that is a possibility.

So when everything is fine, you have a pleasant upbringing, then okay, then you can, you relate well to people, you can relatively trust them, you don't overemphasize when they do something wrong, you can still have some trust. You can forgive and forget as the expression goes. So that's, that's fine.

So it makes life for more pleasant experience. But also the motivation to go to a really deeper place where, where trust arises that has nothing to do with anything external is not as strong. So it is often people who have experienced disruption early in life, or lack of security.

Those people often are drawn at some point in their lives to a spiritual dimension.

Because the motivation is much stronger because they experience life. It's the life experience can often be painful, more painful than the relatively adjusted person.

But the relatively adjusted person also is relatively superficial until something happens to them because life usually arranges for some things to collapse in your life sooner or later. Even for the relatively adjusted person, they might lose their job on Wall Street. And suddenly, or whatever, the wife leaves him, the husband leaves, the children do something, something insane, the stock market collapses.

I could hundreds of possible scenarios of things, things in ways in which things can go wrong, and do. But so it's a, it's a curse and a blessing to have experienced a very difficult first part of your life. It's a curse because it can sometimes condemn you to a difficult life experience because those patterns are still operating in you.

But it's also, there's also the possibility that your motivation to go deeper is much stronger than a relatively adjusted person. I know that was the case with me. I wasn't that well adjusted.

So if you have that basic distrust, first you need to be aware of how, what your mind is doing to other people. That you need to be aware that every human is many people, unless they are really very conscious, and then you can just get perhaps remnants of personalities, but not, they don't get overtaken anymore by different personalities. That's already a great thing to know and to realize.

Every human has that. Not, as I said, not at, when you first meet them, when you start being, spending time with them. And before I continue, just a little anecdote.

There was a time when I lived in England, in the country. I had a cottage. There were two bedrooms, three bedrooms upstairs.

And because my income was low, I had to rent out two bedrooms. And so I had a succession of people renting over a period of three years or so. And probably about, it was a place where people would spend, come for a period of time and then move on.

I had probably 10 or 11 people. And out of those eight, out of 10, sooner or later developed, when I got to know them, lived in the same house with them, relatively small place, be displayed, there were areas in their behavior that were quite dysfunctional, almost called insane. And I don't just mean quirks of their personality, different ways of doing, no, some more than that.

Patterns that led to complete distortion of reality in certain areas of their lives. And that wasn't just one person, it was eight out of 10. And only one person didn't fit into any of these.

Two people stayed relatively, displayed a higher degree of presence. There were certain variations also in them, but they didn't get taken over by personalities, temporary personas, sub-personalities, they're sometimes called, whatever you want to call them. They didn't get taken over completely, leading to almost total distortion of reality.

I had one person, however, that she came, stayed for two or three months and was quite peaceful. And a friend told me that she had told him living at Eckhart's place is like living in a float tank. Float.

And the moment she moved out, I heard secondhand accounts, she was involved in huge drama, including physical violence with men and other women. And she was known for always generating huge drama in her life, except when she stayed with me. I didn't know that, otherwise I probably wouldn't have invited her in.

So somehow in the energy field of presence, she was able to to drop into or rise into presence. But the moment she left, the old patterns came back. Now that was an unusual case.

Mostly you find humans are not one single being. This is the point of the story. Once you know that, you can no longer perhaps misinterpret when humans shift and then do display behavior that is not conscious.

So, and instead of then creating a thought in your mind and allowing this thought to survive and even proliferate in your mind and start complaining and so on, you can recognize that every human does that, has that to a greater or lesser degree. Okay, then let's step forward to that realization. And then you can allow them because you probably are the same.

There are different people in you. There's a more conscious you and there's a more unconscious you. And then the more unconscious you has many different facets to it, different sub, different ways of being unconscious.

And then you can see, okay, now we know that we can't trust people, except in the sense as Byron Katie said, I trust everybody, said I trust everybody to do what they do. So you have to, you can't trust them to display consistently conscious behavior. That would be absurd.

So you go to a deeper place and see what the real trust is not, doesn't come from people. The real trust is finding that place of depths within yourself that does not. And once you're there, then you can relate to humans from there.

And you no longer say, I demand that you are conscious all the time. And if you're not, I'll hold it against you and then I'll never talk to you again. So it all comes back to that place of dropping down into where the mind activity subsides.

And instead of always being trapped in your thoughts and relating to the world and to people through your thoughts, plus the emotions that accompany the thoughts, you go to that deeper place of just feel your own presence. Let's put it like that for a moment, feel the presence that you are, the beingness of you, the most, that deep level of I amness, the presence, the only thing that cannot be doubted, that it is absolutely real, that exists, that is the isness of you. And if that is in the background of your life, then you can allow others to do what they do.

The likelihood is when you meet others from that deeper place, their behavior will become a little more conscious. The very unconscious sub-personalities may manifest themselves less. Because when you erroneously mistake a person's unconsciousness, unconscious sub-personality or whatever you want to call it, when you erroneously mistake that for who they are and mentally focus on that, you also bring it out more in them every time you meet them, because those are the expectations.

And quite often, unless humans are really present, they oblige and they give you what you expect them. If you expect dishonesty, you're more likely to find dishonesty in humans. When you expect violence, you're more likely to find it.

So trust, really another word for it in spiritual terminology, is faith. Because what is faith? Faith is not belief.

Belief means you have a story and you say, this story, I believe this story to be true. And of course, you have no idea whether it is true. But you say, if you knew it was true, then you wouldn't say believe anymore.

You can't say, I believe in this table. You don't need to. It's here.

So belief would be belief in some abstract story or whatever it is. It could be an ideology, something your mind tells you. But faith is very different.

In some languages, belief and faith, unfortunately, are the same word. Faith is trust. Faith is a sense of deep connectedness with being.

From that deep place of connectedness, you can also manifest things. But let's not talk about that right now. That is the conscious connection with source, the source of life, which is within you.

But, and it's so easy. It's, you just become still and direct your attention to what? You direct your attention to nothing in particular.

You're just aware of attention and that's it. So if the attention is looking for your true self, it doesn't realize that it is your true self because it's consciousness. You are consciousness.

And knowing that, that's trust suddenly, because you're no longer dependent on the continuously shifting things out here for your sense of the beingness of who you are. Because not only humans are continuously shifting, but even things around you, they come and go. Situations continuously come and go, change.

Impermanence, as the Buddha called it, fleeting. And so as long as you look to externals for any sense of security, including humans, can I trust him? Can I trust her?

That's very precarious. And usually when I would say, no, don't trust him or her, trust yourself. But then you're no longer in a state of distrust.

No, trust then arises, but not from, from him or her. It's such essential teaching, but not many people seem to realize it yet. Now at that deeper level, really many things that are different concepts on the external level, they really all, they merge into one.

So when we speak of trust or when we speak of presence, beingness, perhaps to put it more accurately, we'd say the connectedness with beingness is presence. And out of the presence flows trust. And out of the presence also flows, and that's also inseparable from trust, flows what you could call goodwill or benevolence towards other humans and other life forms.

Because when your mind is telling you something about another human and fixes, constructs an identity for that human by selecting the unconscious, one of the unconscious aspects of that human, by selecting that, then manufacturing a mental identity for that human, and then for the rest of your life, continue to relate to that human through that mind form, then you can, there is no, the goodwill cannot flow.

You can, there cannot be an outflow of goodwill anymore. It's blocked by the mind pattern. But if you no longer trap the other human and yourself in the mind pattern, then there is an openness for the outflow, let's put it like that, the outflow of benevolence towards the other person, the other human being.

And while you could call it love, but it's not the conventional, better maybe to call it loving kindness. And that is a wonderful thing to experience in relation, it makes human contact much more pleasant if you can feel an outflow of goodwill, even towards a human that you might not meet very briefly, and even there, sense that for a moment when you're not, there's no thought, there's just a presence, and you're looking at another human, and you feel an energetic, one could say also an energetic connection for a moment, and it's an outflow of goodwill, no matter who, what their function is at that particular moment in your life, there's always then an added dimension, otherwise you reduce other human beings to whatever their function have, whatever function they have in relation to you, the man who is selling you something, is he only the man who is selling you something? Is that, are you reducing this person to the function that he or she performs at that moment in relation to you, or is there a deeper dimension so that there is a human being that you recognize?

And the way I, as you may, I don't know if you have heard me say that before, the way what I, how I interpret human being is, you might have, might notice that there are two words in the English language, in a way at first I felt it's a pity that English doesn't have one word for human being, it only has man, and that's supposed to include women, so when you, often when you read, when people say men, it's supposed to include women too, but it doesn't, but it still means men, so some languages like German, they have a word that is, applies to man and woman, mensch, so that would be, mensch is man or woman, but English language you need to have two words, you have to say human being, at first I felt, well that's a pity, but then upon looking more closely at human being, I realized, oh, that's actually quite wonderful because there's a deep truth there, you have the human and you have the being come together, the human is a form, it's the physical vehicle and it's the psychological form, including all the imperfections and all the accumulations and the conditioning, the person, basically the person who you think you are, the person who other people think you are, the person that you've been told you are, and the person you believe to be, the person, ideas in your mind about who you are, that's the person and that's the human. Now most people only know the human, they think they are the human, they don't realize that they are also the being, but you have to know both really to be awakened in this dimension, you need to be awakened to the being dimension in you, so that you can be in the balance between form, physical, mental, emotional, psychological form, the form who you are, the person, and the transcendent dimension, the essence of who you are, which is the being, and your identity to awaken spiritually means that your identity shifts from the human to the being, and when your identity has shifted from the human to the being, the human becomes a more pleasant human, and it's more comfortable for yourself to be this particular human in that life, this particular lifetime, and it's more comfortable for others to be with you as that particular human, and that's because you also know the being, the transcendent dimension, so that is, there have been cases of humans who, extreme cases of spiritual realization, humans who completely wanted to give up their humanness and disappear in being, this has happened in the past in early Christianity, people who withdrew into the desert, solitary meditators, the desert fathers, they were called in early Christianity, in India for thousands of years, there have been humans who wanted nothing to do anymore with the world of form, and withdrew completely into being. I myself have been tempted a few times to go that way, but since I'm not living in India, nobody's going to come and feed me when I sit there, and I don't want to be put away into some institution, and you don't want that either for yourself, so I would suggest the balance between the person, which includes all the doings of the person, and the being, and it's only then when there's a balance between the human and the being that you become a true human being, before that you're not, you're on your way, but you haven't become fully human yet, because you can only become fully human when you realize the being also, and so there are still millions on the planet who most certainly are not yet fully human, and that is why they create so much suffering for themselves and others, so the majority still of the population on the planet is a work in progress, haven't quite arrived yet. God, as I saw the other day, the bumper sticker that I saw on the car said, be patient, God isn't finished with me yet. Evolution continues, the human continues to evolve, and in a strange way, the discovery of being, or the realization of the being dimension in you, means that the person, that dimension of the human becomes far less dense, it's almost like it half recedes, disappears, and then the being shines through.

Without the being, the human is very dense, dense karmic accumulations, so what is your purpose in life is to become fully human, but when we use the word to become, that seems to imply it's a long road ahead, but it's not really. In fact, you only become, there's lots of paradox in spiritual language, you only become fully human when you realize that apart from becoming, there's also being, you're no longer trapped in continuously becoming, becoming, becoming, that's the human, trying to become more of this, more of that, so you realize there's the being also, and you're not continuously trapped in becoming, then you become a true human being.

So to know this, that humans are not fully human yet, this is wonderful, because then you can allow other humans to be on their journey, and compassion can be there when you realize they are not fully human yet, but without coming from a place of superiority that thinks, I'm fully human, but they are not, so that sense of superiority is usually a sign that you're not there, because as you become a full human being, you're no longer identified, that's the mark of the full human being, you're not identified anymore with the form, the form, you are able to use it and be it to some extent, but you don't derive your identity from it, so superiority can only, superiority or inferiority can only come in as long as you're identified with the form of you, mental, psychological, physical, but once your identification is with being, there's no longer any comparison, because immediately you realize that is the being that you share with every other being, it is the one being that appears as many, so how could you feel superior to another, although you may recognize that they are not fully human, yet it means they haven't realized their beingness, they are already in a way, they are already, but they don't know it, and so they are trapped in the world of delusion, so you continuously get feedback from other human beings as to your level of consciousness, and that's good, if you lived alone, you wouldn't know, you could easily think you are fully, you have arrived and you're completely enlightened, because you can meditate for so many hours every day, well, I feel that this session is complete now, it was, every time the one truth expresses itself in slightly different ways, I'm always surprised how it happens, and it's wonderful to see.

Eckhart Tolle On Rhonda Byrne The Secret book PowerOfAttractionVsThePowerOfNow--

[Speaker 2] (0:08 - 0:31)

My question to you is, in the book, The Secret, it's based on the Law of Attraction, where you attract everything into your life, whereas your book, The Power of Now, is being in the moment and letting the universe guide your life. So I just want to know your thoughts on that, on the difference. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (0:48 - 17:33)

Well, as we can see, if we look around, the universe, or life, creates life forms everywhere, wherever we look. So the universe loves to create form, it seems. It can also create form through the human form.

Humans can create as they do, and humans are not separate from the totality of the universe, so there isn't human creation and the universe creating. It's all one. It's the totality.

We are the universe. You are the universe. So when you create, or when I create something externally, whatever it is, any structure that you build, from a simple thing, building something, or using your mind, your thoughts, to help in the act of creation, to create something on the mental level, before it becomes physical form, that's a way in which the universe can create through the human form.

One could almost say indirectly, or secondary creation. You may have heard the expression, we become co-creators with God. Your question is really, is it up to us to initiate the act of creation, or should we simply rest in presence and then see what happens?

The foundation, of course, for creation is resting in presence. That's the very foundation, because resting in presence, that is touching the source of, true source of creativity, and the true source of fulfillment or satisfaction, which is not form, but the formless life itself. It is essentially fulfilling to sense the timeless presence that we could call I am, to sense that directly in yourself, not as an object in your awareness, but as yourself.

So it's a self-realization of consciousness. Not a subject-object realization. And that is essentially happiness, if you want to use that word, aliveness, fulfillment, and that is essentially your identity, your true identity, which has no form.

That's why the Buddhists say there is no self. Self in the sense of anything that you consider yourself that has form, psychological or physical form, is not who you are. The essential self, which the Buddhists deny and just call emptiness, or which in India is called the Atman, that is the formless, and that's the very basis.

If you create before having consciously realized the source of creation, then you belong to all those billions of humans who create out of the state of identification with form, which we could call the ego state. But that's also the universe. If the universe did not want to experience itself as the egoic entity also, then it would not be, the ego would not exist.

So it seems the universe loves that dream, which becomes a nightmare sooner or later, of the egoic consciousness. So whenever you create because you believe that the object of your creation is going to make you happy or fulfilled, then you create out of the egoic consciousness, and it's stressful and frustrating and never really fulfilling. But that's the dream of the ignorance of who you are, and perhaps the universe needs to dream that dream and then wake up out of that dream into a conscious realization of itself, and that also is happening through the human form.

So the humans can create out of the ignorance identification with form, in which case also they create a lot of havoc. Of course, they create a lot of conflict, because the more deeply you're identified with form, the more you come into conflict with other forms that are also deeply identified with their form. That it's not just the individual forms, it's also the collective forms of tribes, religions, religions within religions.

You see what's when you listen to the news, you can see one Islamic sect is killing another one, and this evening, even within the same religion, they hate each other. And this has happened. And that is complete identification with form.

It has happened in Christianity. In Christianity, at the moment, they may not be killing each other. They did not enough of that in the Middle Ages, but many still hate each other, and whoever does not agree with your little group, of course, is the anti-Christ.

That's a nice word you can pre-impose on others. Buddhists haven't come up with that yet. I have never heard of the anti-Buddha, Buddha.

Laughter So, and that's within the totality, that's fine too, because that's the dream of identification with form. And how do I know that? Because I've been in that dream, and I've come out of that dream of identification with form, and what is true for the individual is true for the totality.

So it's a collective dream. It's also an awakening that happens when the suffering and the madness becomes so pronounced that it forces you to open your eyes. And then you look and say, What am I doing?

What are we doing? What have I done? What have we done?

So this happens when the suffering becomes very acute, as happened, for example, on a very large scale in the 20th century, when after the First World War, when for the first time the tools of technology and science were used in warfare. There had been warfare for thousands of years before, but now it became magnified through the tools of science and technology, bombs, gas, poisonous substances, artillery, tanks, submarines, machine guns, and suddenly they created havoc that they'd never seen before on such a huge scale, millions and millions of dead, and nobody actually remembered how did it all start. What was the beginning of the First World War?

They just drifted into it totally blindly, identified with their little tribe, their little nation. That's one way of creating, and whenever you have not touched the source of life within yourself, touched it, realized it, lived from it, then you create and add to the karmic burden on the planet, because whatever you create has negativity attached to it, and karma creates further resistance. It provokes resistance, creates more resistance, and so contributes to the continuation of the dream.

So, to put it very simply, when you think something is going to make you happy, if you create this or that, that's not going to happen. That's the ignorance. If you're looking for fulfillment through something that you imagine you're going to create, it's not going to fulfill you.

It can't. You have to come from that state of fulfillment already. Then a different kind of creation can happen.

You could, of course, just sit for the rest of your life somewhere and hope that somebody will put some food into your mouth. If you go to India and you truly emanate peace, then that will happen. They will put food into your mouth.

If you do it in a Western country, it probably won't happen, but they'll put you away, and then they'll put food in your mouth. That's the thing. Laughter Most people find that even if they rest in presence, at some point the impulse to act will be there.

It could be action on a small scale, very small scale. It could be action on a larger scale. It may not immediately be action.

It may be an inspiration or an idea or a vision that suddenly rises into your mind, and then you contemplate that, and it feels empowered. And it is not something that says you need to achieve that in order to become happy or fulfilled. The energy that goes with it is so empowering that it is the same as if you had already achieved it.

That's the act of creation has that energy that flows with it. It is as powerful as the actual achievement in itself, if not more so, because the actual achievement is already the end of the creative process. The moment you have completed the creative act, you're already at the end of it.

And what now? So the empowerment is in the doing, not the arriving. That's the egoic delusion, is that the empowerment is in the arriving, but the empowerment is in the doing, in the act of creation.

It's not just the empowerment. It's also the joy and aliveness that comes with it. So you don't need the, as it's called in the Bhagavad Gita, the fruit of the action.

You're not looking or are more focused on the fruit of the action, as it's called in the Bhagavad Gita, which means the outcome, the desired outcome. Your attention is not mainly in the desired outcome. Your attention is on the doing itself.

Although, yes, you have a vision of what it is that wants to come into being, but your attention is fully in the doing and the enjoyment and the empowerment of doing. It can be very intense, the act of creation. The energy that flows into it can be very intense, so intense that it might even look to an outsider as if you were stressed, but you're not.

But there can be that intensity of creation. So when something comes through or you, in whatever form, and that's beautiful, then you are the universe, the creative, the one intelligence, the one creative intelligence is creating through the human form, and that's beautiful. So it's this deep enjoyment in the act of creation.

It's the, the motivation is not egoic anymore. The motivation is not a sense of lack or fulfillment or unfulfillment, but enjoyment. So in that sense, this, the secret, I don't remember if the secret talks about that, the book, that the foundation is the present moment as oneness with that.

And then creation is fine when you no longer believe that certain things that you add to your life or create are going to make you happy or fulfilled. And so that's the difference. So the question then, do I need to make plans?

I can't answer that as such. You may be one of the few who will rest in being for the rest of their lives in this bodily form and just sit somewhere or walk around, and that's fine too, but it's less likely. There are very few.

It happens, maybe in India, it happens more than in the West, just as well, because the environment there is more receptive to that kind of thing. As for example, Ramana Maharshi, some of you may know, the famous wonderful spiritual teacher who passed away in the early 50s, he just sat, when he was a young boy, he left his home. He had a realization of being, of awakening, and he sat next to a temple away from his hometown.

He left his family. Nobody knew where he was, and he just, there was no movement into action, just being, no speaking, didn't want to eat, just bliss of total oneness with the source. But after a few years, he started to put food in his mouth, and then he started to speak.

So a little bit of doing happened even to him, but no planning. So in his case, he didn't say, okay, I'm going to set up an ashram. That happened by itself.

The ashram organically grew. So it can happen to some people who are just either totally present, and then something happens around you. In most cases, some kind of doing will be involved.

It could be a spontaneous unfolding of what is happening already. Let's say you're playing an instrument, and you love it so much that you just, you enjoy playing it, and then gradually music comes to you. You compose something or spontaneously play, and suddenly, without any vision of what you want to achieve, things can grow.

This can happen, it has happened to people, just the intense enjoyment of the doing leading to organic growth into form. The Beatles loved making their music, and I don't think they had necessarily a vision that we are going to be the greatest ever, but it happened out of the deep enjoyment and the intensity of that act of creation.

[Speaker 2] (17:33 - 17:34)

Thank you.

Eckhart Tolle Retreat May the Mind Be Servant of Awareness 11hour44min part1

[Speaker 4] (0:00 - 0:00)

Welcome.

[Speaker 1] (0:15 - 1:28:14)

Those of you who've been here or on other retreats before won't be waiting for the retreat to begin. It's begun already. You may detect in yourself as you sit there, occasionally, an urge to get to the next moment.

It's quite normal. It's the normal state of consciousness. And that normal state of consciousness and that urge to get to the next moment are continuously being frustrated here.

If you don't have the urge to get to the next moment and you're not falling asleep either, that's important. That means a different state of consciousness is already arising from within you. Falling asleep is another possibility and it may happen to some of you.

It happens even to monks in Buddhist monasteries, occasionally. But to detect in yourself that urge, that need for the next moment, that's really all that is necessary, to notice that, oh, and that already is also, that is the arising of a deeper consciousness. From where that urge can be observed.

So it's not necessary to create a dilemma on top of the urge to get to the next moment and say, I should not have this urge to get to the next moment, but I do. And you have another personal dilemma and you can think about that for the next few days. And add it to the problems that you have.

As if you didn't have enough problems out in the world, you can create some more here. And it's the human mind, it likes to do that, because then it has something to do. So simply to see it is enough.

The seeing frees you from being trapped in the conditioned mind, the conditioning of the human mind, which is not a personal matter. It looks like me and my problems, but it's the conditioning of the human mind. It comes as a personal sense of self, an exclusively personal sense of self.

Me and my problems. Me and my need for the next moment. And what is arising here, as you observe the conditioned mind, is the arising of what we could call unconditioned consciousness.

Which is simply to be aware without labeling what is. Very important throughout these days here is the silence. The words are secondary.

The words are not here to give some alternative philosophy or explanation of the universe, but simply to point to something that is beyond words and beyond thinking. Accessing a dimension of consciousness that is deeper than thinking. You could also call it higher or deeper, depends what perspective you use to look at it.

A dimension of consciousness that is deeper or higher than thinking. And that, in many of you, is already arising. And that I sometimes call the new state of consciousness.

It's not really new. Maybe new to you. I've seen a secondhand shop that was called new to you.

It's also relatively new on the planet. Yes, Buddha talked about it, other teachers pointed to it, but it's still relatively new on the planet. It's not new in the truest sense because it's timeless, so it can't be new.

But if you start looking into words and analyzing each word that I say, that will lead you astray. It is another temptation of the mind to take a word or a statement and say, yeah, but that's not quite right. Of course not.

No word is quite right. So if you expect words to be totally right, then you get drawn into another dilemma, which is disagreeing with something, not realizing that it's only a tiny perspective. It's only a little pointer.

It's not it. It only points. All the words only point beyond themselves.

To what? To the new state of consciousness, which isn't new at all. And that is the state in which you're no longer trapped, totally trapped in the stream of thinking and the emotions that go with that stream of thinking.

What arises is already arising in many of you is that state of simple, pure, aware presence. And we are here to deepen that, for this to enable to deepen. Or in some of you, perhaps for the first time, to have a glimpse of that.

It doesn't matter in some of you, it's a deepening of what's already happening. Or for some of you who are sitting here at this moment and wondering, what is he talking about? If you sit here for long enough, you may suddenly get a glimpse of what it is that the words point to.

And then the next moment, the mind will come in and try to understand the glimpse. And immediately, the glimpse will have become a problem. Zen has been trying to teach that also, of course, for a few hundred years.

And not many got it, because they tried to understand it through thought. And so this is why I'm saying the words are secondary. Throughout these days, if you can be aware, not just of the words, but the silent spaces between the words, which is not something that the thinking mind would be interested in, because in the silent spaces between the words, there is nothing much to think about.

Not only the silent spaces, the undercurrent of silence or stillness that is there when the words are spoken. That is our practice, part of the practice here, as you sit here, so that you are not here to listen to a talk, that's only peripheral, on the surface. But you are here to enter that different state of consciousness, or allow it to arise, is perhaps a better way of putting it, allowing it to arise.

And as you sit here, this happens simply by being attentive to the silent spaces. And all that means is notice them. It's not that difficult.

And to the thinking mind, that is not very significant. Okay, so what comes next? Okay, you've talked about the silent spaces, now what's next?

Each time you notice silence, there's a little space of stillness inside you. We don't need to measure it in terms of seconds or minutes, three seconds, who knows, three minutes, three hours, it doesn't really matter, time isn't involved here. What is more important than how long that space is there inside you, we could say is, what matters is whether it's there at this moment, or how often it comes, the arising of that inner spacious stillness.

And all that is needed as you sit here is to notice silent spaces. The noticing is the arising of stillness inside you. Which is consciousness without thought, just conscious, unconditioned, true intelligence.

The most important event in your life, if we can even call it that, all words are limited, the most important event in your life is that, the arising of that state of consciousness. And the strange thing is, that most important event doesn't come with a lot of noise, fire, there it is, it's coming, drums, trumpets, the mind says, where is it? What's happened?

Nothing has happened. Enlightenment, a concept, if you're here to achieve it, you probably won't, because you're already making the next moment into a desirable goal that is more important than this. And as that dimension emerges, more and more you find that thinking no longer dominates your life, still happens, of course, but doesn't draw you in totally.

One could say that a space develops between you and your thought processes. A space develops between you and the flux of emotions that go with thinking. And again, those words are limited.

It's not really a space between you and the words, that's another little perspective on it, it is the realization that you are that space in which your thinking happens. In which your emotions happen. And that's all that's required this week, is that, to know yourself as that space.

The arising of inner spaciousness, which I sometimes call space consciousness. That sounds like science fiction. Outer space, inner space.

Space consciousness as opposed to object consciousness. And that is amazing, because if you consider that on the planet, even though the shift is happening, the majority of human beings are totally trapped, totally absorbed by object consciousness. Objects, things.

Object consciousness, of course, is thinking. The arising of an object in the space of your consciousness, a thought, which draws you in completely. So people's lives are consumed by, absorbed by objects, the objects of their thoughts, the thought processes.

But on an external level, it manifests as a continuous preoccupation with things that need to be dealt with. And material things, events, you know how life is when you, your normal existence, the world making demands on you, this is matters, this is important, and then the next thing is important, and then you have five things that are all important. And this is what consumes people's lives.

But it goes down to being consumed by, totally absorbed by the objects that arise. Because really, it's not the external world, it's really an inner phenomenon. Philosophers argue whether there's actually anything out there.

Because all we know is the inner world, where sense perceptions get translated into nerve impulses that reach the brain, then the impulses become decoded, and some kind of image emerges of what the external world is like. What is the relationship between that image and the actual external world? Is there an external world at all?

Is it all a dream that's happening in consciousness? Leave that. You were waiting for an answer.

So, your attention being totally absorbed by thoughts, because it comes down to thoughts, even the things that seem to matter so much in your life are not really the things that matter, they are thought forms. Each thing becomes a thought form, a mental image, and that absorbs your attention. Even if you might be concerned about your shares on the stock market these days, or maybe you've given up already.

And so, you're not really concerned about the stocks, it's the thought form of stock that absorbs your attention. There may be no stock market there at all, it may be a figment of your imagination. It could be the collective dream of Wall Street.

But whether it is or not, we don't need to take a position here and say, yes, it's real, and then half the audience will say, it's real, Wall Street exists, and the other half says, no, it does not exist. Whether or not it exists out there, what really one cannot argue with, that what absorbs your attention is not the shares, it's thought forms that have many associations that are to do with me, and my future, and my security, and my old age, and what's going to happen to me. So it's the thought form absorbs your attention.

So all the things that absorb your attention, expressed so nicely by Thoreau, Henry Thoreau, who said, our life is frittered away by detail. Simplify, simplify. And really what he was talking about is the continuous, the world of things that we inhabit, which really is the world of thought.

And our life is frittered away by that, totally absorbed by that. Details. Another beautiful quote about details.

Einstein said, I want to know the mind of God, the rest is details. It's true, the rest is details. And so this is why we are here.

The mind of God is consciousness. Know that. Everything else that comes out of the one consciousness that you are is details.

Of course that will go on, that's fine. So here, realizing, most of humanity's state of consciousness is dominated by objects. The objects of the senses, the objects of conceptual thought, object consciousness.

So much so that they have made themselves into an object in their consciousness, a me. A problematic object, consisting of a conglomeration, a coming together of many objects in consciousness, a little bundle of memories, conditionings, reactive patterns, and it's called me. A person.

And that absorbs my attention completely, because I'm such a problem to me. And everybody's sense of me is problematical and it's a dilemma. Whose life is not a dilemma?

And there is a need to solve that dilemma of me. And that's a, there's a myth of Sisyphus, I believe. It's somebody who has to roll up a big boulder up a mountain.

And he pushes it up the mountain and when he gets to the top it rolls down again. It's a, to solve that self-created dilemma of the self is an impossible task. Although a few times you might think, now I've solved it.

When the stocks suddenly go up. Or you've fallen in love. So to be absorbed by that, and now the possibility is there for humanity, for the first time on a larger scale, to access a deeper level of consciousness.

Not object consciousness, space consciousness. Unconditioned intelligence. Which already some artists, anybody who is creative, has a little bit of access to that in their field of creativity.

Where they become attentive, alert, almost listening. And then the creative impulse comes, the insight comes, the realization comes. Or the activity happens suddenly out of that space.

Intelligence is at work. And you then find yourself doing or saying something that you didn't know before. It just happens.

So a few people have access to it in their little area of creativity. But this is different. This is the arising of that state of consciousness as a shift, not just in one little area of your life.

But something that arises and transforms your whole life. From this limited sense of problematic little me, to something deeper. So that your attention is not totally absorbed anymore by object consciousness and the exclusively personal sense of self.

Which is the dreadful present. So there are two movements here. The arising of that, and the movement of the old.

And the conditioned consciousness, the entity, the mind made entity, the me, is still there. It has momentum. It's a conditioned mind form.

And the fact that you are here on a retreat doesn't necessarily mean that it doesn't come here also. You didn't leave it at home. It's here.

And at times it may not be here. Very powerfully at times the new consciousness arises. And then suddenly you get totally drawn back into the old conditioned object consciousness.

Some thoughts absorb your attention totally. And the thoughts might be saying, What are you doing here? It's pointless.

You left all these problems at home. You should be dealing with that. You should be at home.

You should be somewhere else. For example, many other things it could say. The self, the mind made self.

But here the opportunity is there to notice it. So that your attention is not totally drawn into it. There is an observing presence.

As the old conditioned patterns come up, because they will. This is a few days here is enough to experience all that. Don't expect to experience only bliss.

Perhaps you will. You will experience probably the entire range. Not only externally.

You probably experience all kinds of weather during these days here. We also experience all kinds of inner weather while we are here. And so noticing that, the conditioned self with its patterns, wanting to draw your attention in again totally, and occasionally perhaps succeeding.

You can recognize it. And an important characteristic of that self is it doesn't like this moment. There is something not right with it.

Either it's something completely wrong with it, or I need to get to some more significant moment. So you notice that. And also it likes to complain.

Fault finding. With whatever it may be. Something in your room.

Something in the food. Something in people around you. The weather.

Well, today it's more difficult. Complaining. The self loves that.

That sense of personal self, the mind itself, likes to complain. Internally or out aloud if somebody listens to you. And if you find somebody who agrees, you can strengthen each other.

And this sounds relatively harmless, but this lies at the root of human madness, which in its harmless manifestation is somebody at a retreat complaining about something. That's the most harmless manifestation of that. And then you go, how is that related to the madness in the world?

How is that related to the Middle East? How is that? Well, let's see.

There's a little me complaining. What does that mean? Why is it complaining?

It's complaining because whatever it complains about is irrelevant. It means, me, I am right. That which I am complaining about is somehow wrong.

That's the essence of complaining. And I'm not talking about genuine complaint, which isn't a complaint at all. It's a fact and says, please, this is no good, what I just bought.

I want to exchange it. That's not complaining. That's stating a fact or saying, this soup is cold.

Please give me a hot soup. That's perfectly fine. That's not complaining.

It's stating a fact. In certain things you need to say something. It happens.

So this is not what we are talking about, but the inner whining and complaining and the pointless complaining that is designed to put yourself, the self, the mind-made self, in a position of rightness. And someone else, which could be a person or a situation or a place, put someone else in a position of wrongness. And the mind-made sense of self, always looking out, looking to enhance its always deficient sense of self, for a moment feels stronger when it has complained about something or someone or a place, whatever it may be.

Because your sense of self gets strength in the fictitious self that consists of object consciousness. If you can have a mental position of being right, of course it implies, unfortunately, somebody else has to be wrong. Something or someone has, for you to be right, something or someone has to be wrong, otherwise it doesn't work.

So, for a moment, if you are very alert and attentive, you can sense a strengthening of me in your complaint. And that's unconscious, usually. And so that's a movement that the egoic sense of self uses a lot to strengthen itself.

It has other strategies, too. Many other strategies. But this is one of the core strategies of this artificial, fictitious self, ultimately, to strengthen itself.

So, unfortunately, it needs, therefore, some kind of enemy, because when you're complaining about something, it's the beginning of having an enemy out there, which is the other person. It may not yet be recognizable as an enemy, but it's the beginning of that mind movement of me right, being wrong. And so you have the same thing, then, in more extreme manifestations, as a collective, a group of people, which could be a nation or religion, a tribe, being totally identified with their position and their sense of self depending on their position of rightness, their total identification with their mental positions, which says, this is how it is.

And their need, therefore, whoever diverges from that mental position, whoever does not agree with your story, becomes the enemy. And you need the enemy because your sense of self would not sustain itself without it, without feeling that we are absolutely right. So you cannot see anymore that all thought is relative.

No thought or no mental position can contain the entire truth. You don't see that anymore. You get totally absorbed by one thought, a few thought forms, which are then invested with self, a sense of self, personal or collective, the same principle is at work.

And so you can no longer, this was in the New York Times a few weeks ago, an Israeli writer talking about the Middle East conflict, which is absolute madness, but no, it's human madness, just an extreme manifestation of what's been there throughout human history. And what he saw there, he saw very clearly why there's no peace there. It seems no possibility of peace almost gone.

People's inability to accommodate, he called it, people's inability to accommodate a competing narrative. And so what does he mean by that? A narrative is the story that you're telling yourself, our position, that's how it is, that's our interpretation, and not to recognize an interpretation as an interpretation.

And this is total identification with mind forms. And then there are other mind forms, competing mind forms, that's the enemy. And so that's the need to be right, to assert your rightness, can be so strong as you don't need to kill the enemy to assert your rightness.

So could that be the same phenomenon as somebody on a retreat complaining internally about something? And related to that, the reactivity of the self, related to complaining, another characteristic of the self that is mind made, that is thought forms, identification with thought forms, is its need to react to something. It cannot be for very long without reactivity.

And this keeps you can also observe here, as you sit here or during the retreat, the sudden coming up of, and there can be a lot of momentum behind that. You could observe it perhaps in a conversation that you're having over lunch. Observe, so one of the, our practices here is to observe reactions that come.

Not to say they shouldn't be there, but to observe them. Not to make them into a personal problem and say I should be beyond those things by now. No, just observe.

Just bring a gentle acceptance because you cannot observe fully without acceptance. To observe any phenomenon fully in your life, you need to accept it. You can't observe it completely if you haven't accepted it.

So to bring a gentle acceptance to whatever arises here, during these days here, whatever arises inside yourself, even if it's a complainer. The complainer of course is the opposite of acceptance. Activity is the opposite of acceptance.

So now, but now we are saying something strange, that you can bring a gentle acceptance into what is in essence the opposite of acceptance. Almost a contradiction. But that is the arising of space consciousness.

In Buddhism they call it sometimes the witness, or the witnessing awareness. And so our practice then is internally to allow what arises as thinking, as reaction, as complaining, as an emotion, to be there as it is. So the primordial practice of our retreat is to bring quite simply acceptance to each moment.

Now each moment is not really the right term. To bring gentle acceptance to this moment. Because each moment seems to imply that there are many moments during this retreat.

But that's not the case. There are only many moments as thought forms that remember or project. But in reality your entire retreat consists of this moment.

It always is this moment. It always is the simplicity of this moment. Your retreat is not going to be many moments.

These are thought forms that say oh it's going to be a long retreat or whatever it says. But if you look at the reality of it it's this retreat for the rest of your life by the way is never more than this moment. It can't be.

That is the essence of our retreat is this moment. And when we meet this afternoon and this afternoon is only a thought form when we meet this afternoon of course we'll check in we'll check again and find out if it still is this moment. It probably will be.

And that is some it's such a fundamental truth of such importance that but to the mind it says well it tries to argue with it or say well I don't know if I agree with that. Let me think about that first. And this afternoon I'll show you that you are wrong and I'm right.

That is also liberating that realization that all your life because now really we're talking about this retreat but it is your whole life that your whole life is never more than this moment. Even when you remember the past it can only happen within the space of now. You can only remember it now or the you project the future it's a thought future cannot be more than a thought form because it cannot arrive as future.

Can't be here. Being and now are one. Life and now are one.

You and now are one. You in your essence who you are beyond thought forms the unconditioned essence you and now are one. And it's an amazing realization to suddenly see how simple life can be when you are no longer drawn continuously when your attention is no longer absorbed continuously by object consciousness which relies on past and future and you realize this is all there ever is.

It's always the space of this moment. Whatever form it comes into this space of this moment it's always this moment. Your life is always this moment.

This retreat consists only of this moment ever. And that's all really all that matters here. So we could say that these days here are a setting protected in some ways where we could call it let's call it a greenhouse where in a greenhouse plants grow protected from bad weather.

Well you may not be protected from bad weather here but this is a somewhat protected environment a retreat setting and you can practice living in a state of alignment with what is now and realize the power that is concealed in the present moment and how simple and joyfully life can unfold when you live in inner alignment with what is now. And that yes to what is is the primordial practice and you bring it to external situations here things it is and in that acceptance you find a goodness a goodness you cannot find that lies concealed often behind the the surface appearance of things concealed behind the surface appearance of things lies a deeper benevolence one could almost say a goodness and that is experienced as what one might call inner peace no matter what the external situation is there is the realm of inner peace and inner peace is the realization that at the core of things there is an essential goodness even though the surface appearance of things may be good or bad at any in any situation the surface appearance of things may be destruction it happens the surface appearance of things may be death at this moment death is happening in nature all around it's the time of year when things die all the leaves falling off the surface is that bad? no in nature you can look at death and see how beautiful it is now in the human realm usually we call death bad and react we bring gentle acceptance to what is the mind might say yes but this obviously is bad yes but with the allowing the isness of this moment comes the realization of goodness even though on the surface it may not appear so even in the face of death that realization of goodness can be there because death is the ending of a form the leaves are forms of life the human body is a form the ending of a form is death and so the realization comes of that which is beyond form that realization can only come to you when you allow the form that this moment takes to be as it is I'm not saying you become passive you're no longer capable of action no it's an inner accepting of this is what is then action intelligent action if it's necessary arises out of that it's the basic the ground the basic realization is the isness and then action is no longer reactive when you do not allow the isness of this moment action is reaction it is not intelligent it is conditioned it is perhaps intelligent in a relative or limited sense but not in a true sense it is not intelligent it is conditioned action it is reaction and that is the meaning of eastern term karma because karma translated means action karma is reaction action reaction which is a continuous cycle that keeps you trapped in the same conditioned existence you reenact continuously so it's only through first of all realizing this is all there is this moment is life itself this moment is as it is because the totality has brought it about whatever event is happening at this moment is connected to the totality of the cosmos nothing is separate there are no separate events and even the physicists these days will agree with that they have seen the interconnectedness of all things buddhists have seen it also even 2500 years ago they saw it and so it is as it is you allow it to be you see the inevitability of is you can't really argue with is is and then that becomes the basis that inner alignment becomes the basis for action if action should be needed very often action is not needed and a simple allowing is enough for a greater intelligence to come into play and you could sit there and things develop in the right way so to allow the form that this moment takes to be as it is instead of reacting to the form that this moment takes allowing this form to be takes you to what we could call the formless consciousness unconditioned not the object consciousness the reaction is the object consciousness so this is a strange almost a paradox people want to reach the whatever they call it ultimate reality the transcendent and usually they regard the forms that surround them in their daily existence as an obstacle to reaching the transcendent or reaching who I truly could be or who I somehow sense I could be the essence of who I am or could be somehow it seems that the universe is conspiring and my daily life and my existence seems to be conspiring to not to hold me back from that I'm surrounded by so many limiting and limited circumstances in my life that there seems to be some kind of conspiracy that wants to prevent me from fully being myself does that feel familiar?

why I want to break out of this this limiting life situation that I'm in and for some people it's their circumstances their living circumstances it's for some people it's their work situation for some people it's their physical body which is beginning to be limited can't move that fast anymore what is this?

I want to break out of this where to know myself fully as that which is beyond form and yet all the forms that are in my life are limiting me impinging upon me from all sides and when I free myself of one limiting form for a little moment and then then the next thing comes in and that's in the nature of object consciousness one thing after another and so that's and so people then live in continuous reactivity to now to a limited extent yes you can improve the forms around you to a limited extent this is true you could be living in a very unpleasant little noisy place dirty hole and then through incredible effort and energy ten years later five years later you finally made it and you live in a mansion this is nice and of course you will have created a different life circumstances you're in a different life situation now and then after a little while of feeling you've made it the new life situation will manifest as other limitations you will find other limitations on you through your perhaps you created a business empire that's why you could afford the mansion and then lots of things there impinge upon you the stock market becomes important a few people I've spoken to told me that they experienced recently they said the dark night of the soul I said what happened they said the stock market well don't know perhaps perhaps and so in your new situation you find other limitations that's and then you try to get free them so there comes a point when you realize yes to a limited extent it's good to you can play in the world of form but without expecting self realization or self enhancement through finally achieving a certain configuration of forms in my life that is absolutely perfect and right it can be for a little while and then you encounter again the other side that every form has inbuilt limitations once you know that the play of form is beautiful you can participate in it but to know yourself beyond form you cannot the world of form cannot help you and here comes the paradox that I pointed to earlier the paradox is allowing the form that this moment takes to be as it is but internally let's say you are living in an unpleasant place it's cold it's wet or damp or noisy or cramped or and there you are sitting on a chair it is the form that this moment takes and you realize the limitations of that form and yet you allow this moment to be as it is which does some people confuse that with accepting a story they are telling themselves in their head concerning this moment and that is a mistake that some people make I've noticed that when we speak of allowing this moment to be they confuse that with creating some interpretation of this moment which is a story and saying well I might as well accept that this is how it is an example of that would be let's say the stock market has crashed and your wife has left you synchronistic event and then the story comes in in your mind which says okay you've worked for nothing for 25 years all that you've built up is all the energy 80% of it you lost and your marriage has failed you failed at that also you failed at your business and you failed at your marriage there's no point in even carrying on now because at your age what can you do who would want you haven't got enough time to build up another business empire the story goes on in your head it's an interpretation of this moment I failed it's been pointless my life has come to nothing this is a simple story most stories are more complicated than that and that story is then this is not allowing this moment to this the story is not this moment the story is the story in your head so it's mind forms object consciousness so what is this moment what is the form of this moment the form of this moment is not the story about this moment it is the simple appearance of this moment which is chair walls window cold noisy neighbors unpleasant smell but even unpleasant is the beginning of a story so just see just this this is the moment this is now and you're sitting perhaps you still have a chair you're sitting on a chair and that's a strange thing when you just see what happens if I allow this moment without the story and then wow strange suddenly you have by allowing the form suddenly there's a peace that arises from a deeper place and you look around at the forms and it is that spacious presence that is there then when the forms are no longer obscuring that but you can only get to that when you allow the forms that which appeared to prevent you from finding yourself is actually becomes actually the doorway the forms that appeared to be the obstacle become the doorway if you allow the forms not the story the simple form of this moment to be some people have found that without any spiritual teaching simply by experiencing the limitations of their physical form some illness came some disability came to them and at first they had a long story about it their whole life it was their life story became very unhappy their story based identity became very unhappy story the me became very unhappy a lot of resistance to what's happening to why to me why did this happen to me and then after a while the pain just became too much and almost accidentally or by the grace of the divine which is the one consciousness there was a moment of simply staying with the simplicity of this moment pain and not even perhaps call it pain anymore weakness disability just allowing not bringing a no to it but simply a yes this is how it is right now and some people who don't know how much longer they have to live by the way nobody knows but some people in a to some people it's become clear that they don't know maybe because somebody told them you don't know we don't know how much longer you have and so some people can suddenly are reduced by circumstances you are reduced to this moment only this is what life has done to me is the last story the last the last line of your story is this is the sign of an ending story and the last sign of the story that's coming to an end is for example this is look this is what life has done to me all I'm left with is this moment I don't even have a future anymore it's life life is taken away even that from me me and so you didn't realize that you just wrote the last line of your story you don't have a future anymore so where is the story going nowhere you're reduced to this and some people through illness are reduced to just this moment and then oh and suddenly they wake up out of the story of me and absorption in the story and then they they look at you a light shining through their eyes the story has come to an end they may not have an explanation for what happened but just their life has become so simple so easy and if you ask them what happened to you you were unhappy yesterday and now and this isn't it's I don't know they may not be able to say anything about it so I've met a few people it's wonderful it's so beautiful to meet people without spiritual teaching or teacher it happened to them the illness became their teacher that's what's left is this which means what happened the story collapsed in the absence of future there wasn't much to keep it going anymore the story of me collapsed it doesn't mean that this person no longer remembers their past but they have no self-investment in their memories anymore so who are they they are the aliveness of this moment they are the presence the spaciousness of this moment they are consciousness itself looking through these eyes unproblematic and so that is beautiful when a story comes to an end not your memories self-investment in memories not even your reactive patterns they have a momentum they may go on for a while but even there self-investment and self-identification with the reactive patterns comes as simply the reaction is seen for what it is there is a spaciousness around it because you not only allow what is externally you allow what is internally emotions reactions thoughts come and go that's the form that this moment takes so demanding here to have a certain experience of enlightenment will stop you of course from having it because nothing is needed beyond the form that this moment takes it's that simple nothing is needed beyond the form that this moment takes not in essence to know yourself nothing is needed beyond this form as far as your form reality is concerned which is secondary things may be needed but not at this moment otherwise you wouldn't be sitting here so this is a gentle coming to an end of the story the story based identity and the patterns associated with it our practice then is simply gentle acceptance of the moment the form of it and then you go beyond form to a deeper goodness we will spend of course time also inside part of the retreat some of you may not want to speak at all during this retreat that's fine your mind of course will still be there the internal dialogue may still be there for those who don't want to speak there may be a few tables in the dining hall for those who don't want to engage in conversation i will announce certain periods during our retreat when we are going to keep noble silence not throughout the whole retreat some people say why can't we be silent throughout the whole retreat well you could it's good to not to learn to bring that spaciousness into interactions we may be addressing that also to bring the spaciousness into interactions with people questions also if there are any questions left in a couple of days you have a question wait a day or two if it's still there please ask unless it's something that you need to ask immediately concerning this retreat i'll be very happy to address questions during this week later on not yet today but answers may come also who knows you may find that quite a few questions subside as you go into the retreat the totality the totality of the situation here is the teaching the totality not just the words the silent spaces walking between here and your room not making this moment into a means to an end not making this step into a means to an end to the next step or getting there but just being with what is we'll also be talking about nature making that part of the teaching especially at this time of year when nature seems to be breathing up breathing out it's the out-breath of nature the fall it's called fall in American English I used to call it autumn but fall is more immediate because it's falling it's nature is breathing out out the cycle has come to an end death in a way and there's beauty hidden there spring is different manifestation everything is moving into new forms are manifesting thousands thousands of new forms manifesting and now the manifestations many of the manifestations of nature are coming to an end the forms go so it's the in-breath is spring of nature the out-breath is now and the out-breath is beautiful for going beyond form because it's when forms dissolve I will ring these bells the opening of our retreat a little bit late but it's fortunately it's still now one or two people sitting here maybe feeling unhappy for some reason if that is the case allow it let me be unhappy then it's not that bad that's a strange thing to do allow the unhappiness to be there okay unhappy unhappy you could look upon yourself as an actor and it happens to be that your part the part assigned to you at this moment is to play the part of an unhappy person play your part through this little allowing suddenly there's a little bit of space around your unhappiness just a little at first and then you allow more and then you notice considerable space around your unhappiness here's the unhappiness which is really it's the self the not of the self and there's space around it

[Speaker 7] (1:28:21 - 1:28:24)

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[Speaker 1] (1:28:44 - 2:21:54)

bell an ancient device is the call to attention presence awakening out of identification with mind forms out of thought a person was studying with a Zen master and it was time to leave and go home and so he came to the master and said can you write something something in my book something that I can then remember remind myself of some something important about Zen it's already a sign of course that he didn't get it and so he gave him the book and the Zen master wrote something in it and he looked and he saw he had written attention in Japanese presumably just one little symbol probably shorter than our language just is that all he said surely can you say a little bit more please and he gave it back to the master and the master wrote something else and he looked and he said attention attention and he said oh come on surely there's more than that to Zen and he gave it back please just a little bit more and he got the book back attention attention attention what is this attention and he said well it's interesting but anyway what does attention mean anyway he asked the master what does it mean and the master said attention means attention with Zen stories you never know whether that's the end or not but that is the end now you notice this is an interesting story you can notice two things the mind's need for more say a bit more and then the need for further explanation what does attention mean he wants more explanation of what it and so that is why he doesn't get it because he's seeking the answer in the realm of thought still that's why he's asking really saying give me a little bit more to think about so that I can understand what Zen is through thought and of course the essence of Zen is knowing the dimension of consciousness that is beyond thought not that that is something that you can achieve or attain another obstacle is that belief but that dimension is already there that's the strength of the strange paradox in you so to speak ultimately within and without are one that dimension of consciousness is already there it is to a large extent obscured by thought by constant preoccupation with thought but without it thought couldn't even be there it is one could say the medium in which all thought forms are floating and it is there in between two thoughts that may be very brief in many people these gaps it is there in the first moment of perception it may be there when you wake up in the morning and the machinery of thinking hasn't started up yet the first moment of opening your eyes at that moment there is certain things already that are being perceived but there is also that beautiful field of still attention in which the perception takes place that is sensed as a kind of background peace the foreground is that which arises in the first instance sense perceptions then thoughts perhaps arise in it thoughts are rising here at this moment present but they haven't taken over so even though thoughts are happening that dimension that is beyond thought is as present or more present here than the thoughts and it is possible to live in such a way that you are conscious continually of this background field even when thoughts happen it does not depend on whether thoughts are there or not that frees you from excessive identification with and attachment to the forms of this life whether they be external forms that come into your life things people situations circumstances or thought forms it frees you attachment excessive identification with the thought forms and the emotional forms also there's the flux the continuous flux of phenomenal existence within and without ultimately it's all within the entire world one could say it takes place within you and it's all happening against this background one could compare it perhaps to water that's everywhere and all these things swimming in it and then the fish says where's the water I've been looking for it all my life and the water makes up the very essence of the fish it's not just around the fish though the fish too is mostly water just a little analogy this is something very obvious subtle yes but so natural could be potentially for a human being to live in connectedness with that dimension and not to sense that not to know that not knowing in a subject object relationship but to know it as the essence of I no longer I am that not to because that refers to some kind of form or name or identification just the essence of I am not to know that is really to be deprived of the most important thing of all which is a no thing the only thing that absolutely matters in one's life is to know that everything else may matter also but only relatively whether you are healthy or ill matters but only relatively whether you are in prison or in a beautiful home matters but only relatively if the prisoner in prison knows that dimension within then he is much better off than you are in the mansion and if the person in hospital bed knows that perhaps even sensing the approach of death and it may have come because there is the impending undoing of the physical form which for some people is one way of encountering that dimension it's a little bit late but it's fine and from there your whole life your whole past suddenly makes sense because it brought you to the flowering to that point the old past which otherwise perhaps is a some meaningless accumulation of events and in some people's lives even seemingly meaningless absurd events or a series of what looks like mistakes a series of things that shouldn't have happened to me were not really meant to happen but they happened people are trying to make sense of their life on the relative level but you can't whatever edifice you build up mentally something will come and you will no longer be able to make sense of it collectively it can happen when a collective disaster happens such as last year in September not far from here and suddenly people cannot make sense anymore the explanations fail let them fail it's good when the minds attempt to explain to form some philosophy on which I can base my life fails it looks like bad news to the mind but it's good and here it's also failing as we are sitting here I'm taking away from you well not really you are voluntarily letting go of identification with all that I am my name and my story and my thoughts and my emotions me so this sitting here is so easy if you are fully here and that's all that's needed for that dimension to emerge from within you and it's so subtle where is it it's there the moment even if you say where is it and instead of thinking where it is you so to speak listen to find it where is it listen really is an analogy for attention where is it and your attention is there as if you were listening that's it pure field of attention that's why Jesus used some of these parables of somebody waiting for somebody to arrive waiting not in the usual sense of waiting of impatience when is it going to happen but of alertness when is he or she going to come that kind of waiting it's the same state you might notice that is there when you look at something in the state of a tree a flower in the state of attention so no matter what happens in your life there are always two dimensions one could say in your life now most humans are lost in one dimension completely that's the dimension of the manifested world the world of form the world of phenomena the world of time of thought they're totally they don't know anything else and then there's the world the dimension not the world the dimension of the unmanifested the one life prior to form the one consciousness that underlies the all life no matter whether it's life on this planet or somewhere else on the in this galaxy or one other another galaxy of those billions of galaxies the one life prior to form the one consciousness one could almost say that which was there before the universe happened continues to be there even now scientists ask and puzzle over the question what was there before the big bang big bang is the they say is when it all started out of one point or out of nothingness came a whole universe and what was there before then and what was there before time started the mind stops so scientists maybe haven't quite realized that they come up these days physicists come up with koans zen questions that have no logical answer all you can do is the mind it comes to a stop and when the mind comes to a stop that's the answer that's the that is the stillness of the unmanifested and compared to the mind forms it is so subtle that at first you say well um uh and it's the most powerful the only the only power there is the only the essence of all life forms is that and it is that it's only when you know that within yourself as the deepest I am in its deepest sense a simple sense of presence or I am-ness that's left when you forget your name and when you forget your story what's left is the that which always was the essence of your story the one thing that gave you your sense of I so precious and that got mixed up with form with the story of me so your your sense of identity then you think it's in the story of me but really it it is hiding beyond the story it just gets mixed up with the forms the memories the thought forms because so the innermost essence of who you are even the story of you is true that innermost sense that there is something so precious here that and then because it gets mixed up with form people have this fear that they could lose that through death but that's the one thing that is not lost the essence it is consciousness itself so that's what's left when the form goes and some people need to experience death to find it death means a form dissolves and leaves another formless that's why death is sacred now the opening may not be there for very long it gets covered up quickly and that's why even there are sacred places where great humans who early flowerings of human consciousness as I call them who broke through to that dimension and the place where they died is considered sacred but any place where death happens is sacred because a form dissolved and the form that moment of death the formless shines through that opening and of course there is such a thing as psychological death which is when the identification with the psychological me disappears dissolves sometimes through intense suffering caused by identification with the psychological me it's a beautiful paradox nothing that happens is not right it may look mad but even within the madness the universe is unfolding as it should so the essence of your identity I am that's what's left when all identifications have gone presence beingness I have difficulty with names remembering names because they don't seem that important the being underneath the name that's a different matter that's why I got the name wrong this wonderful artist who does these flower arrangements here his name is Anthony and whenever I meet him there's no I don't meet a name there's simply a meeting on the level of essence on the level of consciousness that's why I didn't remember the name and so the world is then recognized as relatively important but it loses its overriding importance seriousness and heaviness and it's I feel there's so much compassion when I see people how they how important things are to them how what importance they give not only to physical things how much importance they give to situations and what happens or doesn't happen or a circumstance or how much power they place there in the world of form and it always they expect something from it that only the formless can give they expect to find themselves somewhere in there they expect happiness through the world of form it can give you happiness briefly and then it takes it away so you become dependent on what happens or doesn't happen and sometimes it's the littlest the tiniest things that make people unhappy and they I asked why are you unhappy well this this has just happened this what does it matter so it's the the impossible expectation that people place on the world it says fulfill me make me happy the world means places people situations circumstances circumstances doesn't matter all that means the world so they make these they have these expectations and demands and no place no person no situation no circumstance can meet those demands for long and this is why life is experienced by most humans as very frustrating almost designed by some some devious god to frustrate you and many people experience their life as it's designed to frustrate me continuously I've tried so hard and always something happens to frustrate me of course there is an impossible demand beyond being placed upon the phenomenal universe and that demand is not only make me happy because true happiness in the deepest sense is simply knowing yourself who you are beyond the forms true and lasting joy and happiness but they are looking for happiness through some imagined configuration of forms when my life when those forms in my life those circumstances people places are in the right configuration then it will be fine and it could even happen that for a brief moment they are in the right configuration you just moved to a beautiful new home you just fell in love and the stock market has just gone up and you are told the doctor says you are the most healthy you have the most healthy body I have ever seen everything is just right and then probably you would claim the ego would claim some merit or achievement it would say I did that and because the world of form all the forms look solid this is the illusion when you walk around especially in a city the solid structures man-made the solidity of every form looks so solid and that's an illusion we don't realize that the world of form is very much like vapor or mist physicists know that too they know there is nothing solid here even the most solid building can collapse in a moment the most the grandest edifice whether it be an office building or a temple can collapse at any moment sometimes they do so the apparent or solidity of form is an illusion to anybody who hasn't been to India I recommend at least going there once to experience that the physical universe the solidity of the physical universe is an illusion in India it's much easier to know that because things are not that solid in the physical realm things could go wrong at any moment and it's beautiful and that's maybe the reason why India has produced the greatest sages from the very first spiritual awakening of humanity happened there perhaps because the physical realm is less solid or the illusion is less the illusion of solidity is less there than here so because of the illusion of solidity that's you believe that there can be something permanent in the phenomenal realm but very quickly here too things shift change leave you or make you unhappy today it makes you happy tomorrow it makes you unhappy that beautiful position that you got the husband or wife makes you happy then makes you unhappy anybody who has been through more than one marriage and even those who are still in one marriage know that the person who makes you happy is also the person who makes you unhappy so the demands that people place upon the manifested world are impossible make me happy and when that the only way when that demand is dropped and sometimes this dropping this letting go of that demand can happen when the world has totally frustrated you totally so much has gone wrong so to speak which means not really wrong but against the expectations against what I wanted and needed that you let go of any further expectations not in a negative sense because if you let go of any further expectations in a negative sense that means then you are saying who cares I don't want to know anymore I'm done with the world you're not there's still a lot of attachment but a true letting go perhaps you even smile or laugh it's all crumbled once again and no further expectations are being placed upon the manifested and suddenly you sense this enormous peace what is that everything has gone wrong and yet there's this deep sense of rightness so that can happen in cases where people become totally frustrated it can also happen in a spirit of spiritual teaching to see when you are ready to see that readiness is there because the frustrations have already been there you wouldn't have come otherwise that's already been there and then suddenly you see the demands and part of the demands very essential part of this demand that is placed upon the phenomenal world is the demand that the future should make you happy because that is very the next moment the need for the next moment and it is a great act of letting go when the psychological need for the next moment is relinquished that's always an essential part of coming to an end of placing expectations because every expectation that you place upon the world to some extent implies future and so it's a wonderful thing that demands that are made upon places people or situations or circumstances are not there and then you are comfortable with places as they are because no matter what place you go to it could be ideal in your imagination when you actually get there something will be there that is not ideal any whatever place you go to and person and circumstance and that's the thing that frustrates you and that demand is not made anymore it could be a simple thing even demands you place upon people understand me he doesn't understand me my parents don't understand me my children don't understand me so is that so bad they understand what they can understand their stage of evolution they understand just enough for them to understand they are okay with not understanding you don't realize that nothing is added to you by having somebody understand you except a psychological thought form that you then say oh it's confirmation that I exist he's confirmed that I exist what is that existence that needs confirmation that you exist or confirmation of the world some people think they need fame fame is totally overrated there's nothing in it that's why some famous actors are interested in this teaching they realized how empty that thing is called fame if fame fulfilled them would they come to this teaching what for they're fulfilled by fame by recognition everybody recognizes how beautiful or great they are so isn't that fulfilling no you think it's fulfilling when you don't have it and when you have it it's fulfilling for a little moment and then it's no longer fulfilling and you see it's another way of finding this dimension one way is being totally frustrated and getting nothing another way is getting everything and being totally frustrated and some famous actors go to drugs they don't they try to deaden the frustration that they feel which ultimately is a form of pain they try to deaden it that way famous people many have been very unhappy committed suicide but some others see that so it doesn't really matter whether it's through achieving everything or achieving nothing you find the opposite for most of you it's kind of a mixture you've perhaps experienced success to some extent and failure to some extent and you've experienced success turning into its opposite so that is the realization that everything in this phenomenal world is fleeting the Buddha came up with that realization impermanent every thing that you encounter he said there are three characteristics of human existence everything is fleeting there's no self in it if you're seeking a self in any situation there's an enhanced sense of self this is why people make these demands make me happy make me feel fully who I am make me know myself fully because happiness is knowing yourself in the deepest level so when you say make me happy you're saying to the world help me to find myself enhance my deficient sense of self this feeling of not enough yet yet this feeling of lack not being fully myself yet please help me get there this person maybe if they understand me they'll add something to me maybe if the world recognizes my worth I can add that to me and that will do it some achievement and nothing works so it's a self-seeking this demand that is placed upon the world is ultimately a self-seeking in the world through the things of the world the forms the phenomenal and that's why it's frustrating there's no self in any of these things that the Buddha said anatta is the word in Pali uses the characteristic of all conditions is anatta no self and another characteristic there's three characteristics there's one is no self and that was a long time ago one of the first flowers of humans humanity saw that no self impermanence anicca and dukkha is that sounds negative at first but this is exactly what we've been talking about it means the third characteristic suffering it makes you suffer what that means dukkha suffering suffering is one translation another translation is misery another translation is unsatisfactoriness and there are other translations some are quite funny but they all point to that basic element that you find no matter what condition you encounter externally in this life you'll find that somewhere that's why it's so frustrating dukkha anicca anatta the three characteristics when you do not know who you are he didn't add that he just said that but then he pointed the way beyond also now when you know who you are and that's a strange way of putting it all that it means is knowing the realm that is beyond form beyond thought the stillness that is here now what the buddhist sometimes call emptiness which is fullness also but does not contain forms fullness and emptiness prior to forms it is that which Jesus points to when he says I want you to have life in its fullness sometimes translated as abundant life that's what his teaching also is pointing to obviously he's not talking about proliferation of things that was not part of the teaching because that is mistaken when you are only aware of things and not aware of awareness because that's what it is when you are only aware of things not aware of awareness self aware I am when you are not self aware then when somebody speaks of the fullness of life or abundant life all you can think of is more things and this is why the western civilization that kind of lost its way from the source but that's fine too it's all part of how it should be getting lost is good too that's why western civilization came up with shopping malls because all they can think of the fullness abundant life must be more and more things so let's create more and more shopping malls and fill them up with more and more things and this must be the kingdom of heaven that Jesus pointed to but all the people who are running around shopping malls feeling frustrated somehow they are perhaps beginning to see that that is not the fullness of life hmm you can by the way there's nothing wrong with shopping malls you can enjoy walking through shopping malls when you don't need them anymore but when many humans don't need them anymore then I don't know what will happen to them I sometimes enjoy for not too long walking through shopping malls and just looking at the world of form so many forms and then it's enough so that's why the fullness of life is not more of things but it does not refer to that dimension it refers to the dimension of depth that fullness that is there already within you for which you don't need future the fullness that is already the essence of your being now how could you need future to get there so these three characteristics that the

Buddha pointed to impermanence no self and misery that is true as long as you don't know the dimension of depth you don't know who you are beyond identification you don't know the I am before it becomes a story before it becomes a thought then yes then life is suffering and every situation if you go into you will find it there somewhere but when you know the unmanifested the I am then the expectations that are being placed upon the world people places situations circumstances are not there and the strange thing is that then when the expectation is not placed upon them people places circumstances and situations are quite pleasant you can actually quite enjoy them you enjoy places without the demand that they should be in a particular way you can ultimately it comes down to you can enjoy the neediness it's a beautiful play of form the neediness isn't there and it's only then that you can truly enjoy so it's not this teaching and the true spiritual teaching any true spiritual teaching is only one is not a rejection of that dimension of the world but it becomes accepted it becomes you embrace that in the vastness of who you are that world of form is playing itself out continuously fluctuating forms you can enjoy it and even amazing thing is you love it but you love not the form I love the flower I love

[Speaker 6] (2:21:54 - 2:21:55)

you without

[Speaker 1] (2:21:55 - 2:50:50)

knowing your story or your name because what I love is the formless essence that I can sense only because I know it in myself I can sense it in you and sensing it in you sensing what is my essence in you is the realization that we are ultimately not separate and that also applies to any living thing and even all things are living but let's talk about nature it applies to the flower it applies to the tree the cat the dog I sense myself in them you could say God sometimes there is a term a Christian term which is beautiful loving the creator in the creature loving the creature is loving the form that really isn't loving it's attachment my form seeking to enhance itself through adding your form to my form and completing me somehow that's the illusion but loving the formless in the form is recognition of oneness and that is love and so that is how even what you experience as the world of form undergoes a change when you know the formless within yourself what you experience as the external universe takes on greater harmony your world your life takes on a more harmonious flow you are still for a while on this mad planet well the only mad thing about the planet is at the moment humanity but the planet is beautiful and humans are beautiful too it's just a temporary mental illness because they have come to the end of an evolutionary cycle and it's turned into some well the end of a cycle becomes dysfunctional because the new cycle is a deepening is happening the end of this evolutionary cycle yes looks like madness things are not working things are breaking down things are great that's supposed to happen and the madness increases as the mind identified state of consciousness based entirely upon thinking where humans derive their identity from thinking that is coming to an end and so that's beautiful and you don't even need to believe that most of the things I say here don't require belief because you can you know for yourself that is true if you don't believe if you believe that it's not happening that's fine too the only question is here is it happening here the shift and it is so yes you're still on this planet you witness dysfunction you can also still feel to some extent the pain of this planet sometimes you can still feel it it's no longer it's not personal matter anymore you may still encounter pain body collective pain body manifesting in you it's not your personal problem anymore it is recognized as human pain it is accepted for what it is gently compassionately you have compassion with your own emotional pain which isn't your own at all just looks like it it's human pain you have compassion with that you accept that also and so you realize that acceptance of all the openings into that dimension perhaps the most beautiful the one that works immediately without the need for any kind of time is acceptance that takes you to knowing the unmanifested within yourself acceptance of the manifested if it's pain that's what it is the spacious ness of the unmanifested is there as soon as you accept something fully and then it changes then this is why I'm saying when you live in connectedness with that state even the external changes yes it's still mad but things around you places and people around you unfold more harmoniously and it spreads your consciousness spreads out and affects the world around you which becomes a more harmonious place a place where love is there you see love suddenly because it comes from within you and then you see it reflected coming towards you from others and that's a little miracle when you don't need the world of things the phenomenal to be in a certain way suddenly it turns into a more harmonious place when the need is gone for it to fulfill you it becomes quite a pleasant place and even that which is not pleasant at first sight in this world you will be taken into situations sometimes that are manifestation of the dysfunctional mind identified consciousness and which perhaps contain a great amount of human pain pain body and your presence in those situations will be a decisive factor in bringing about a shift it could be your presence at work your presence in your family your presence wherever humans come together to meet even your presence where there's heavy conflict it may be some of you may be taken to a part of the world where the manifestation of human unconsciousness is particularly extreme and your consciousness there you cannot imagine how important one realized point of consciousness is in any situation one point of consciousness who is not who is no longer totally identified with forms and is no longer reactive to forms but comes from the gentleness the compassion the love that is there when you are there as the formless presence I am and there you sit or stand while conflict may be going on around you and you just watch you look upon it in the state of attention no strain in it relaxed alert attention whether it be a conflict situation that is there happening next to you or whether it be a conflict situation a challenge that affects you directly there is the ability to look I am using the word look here in a wider sense we already encountered looking how important it can be to look in the state of attention at a flower a tree or anything here I am using looking in a wider sense which is embracing it with your attention which is a field of stillness and there that is the current of awareness so to speak that flows through you onto the situation which may be involve a person or several people so there is that intelligence comes into play in that situation the unmanifested intelligence not reactive not analytical not trying to work out what can I do to change this situation or even trying to work out what can I do to help these people a greater help comes when you enter that consciousness and then suddenly perhaps words come or suddenly action arises not perhaps even from within you it may come from somebody out there you are the bringer of space so to speak space consciousness the spaciousness of presence so it is an enormous thing to realize what power there lies in pure attention pure looking beyond just visual looking even a blind person can look in that sense which is simply placing awareness embracing it one could say with awareness which implies allowing it to be as it is at this moment because it already is and that becomes the basis then for change so that's the most powerful thing in yourself is to discover that still power that never fights anything or anybody but embraces everything and everybody and yet is also the most powerful agent of change also transforms the outer so it becomes a more benign place less hell it approaches heaven a little bit more certain polarities will remain in the outer realm they keep the outer going hot cold high low but they are benign polarities they are to be enjoyed as the multiplicity of the phenomenal universe to be enjoyed the multiple forms so life can appear in so many forms so this is so simple and this is perhaps why it's remained a secret for so long take this consciousness anywhere and you immediately become a healer and again I'm using the word in a wider sense that whatever enters that field of spacious presence becomes transformed and if it is not ready to be transformed will remove itself it's not ready yet and that's fine too people will come to you now as this is arising from within you more strongly many of you will find and many of you are already finding that people come to you and they don't know why and they ask a question you might meet people seemingly accidentally maybe in an elevator or anywhere and something that you say or they ask there's something there they are seeking something from you something within them can sense something that there is something there they don't know what it is so people will be drawn to you and there's the temptation there's the possibility that your mind will re-enter the stage and say I've got to do something might say I've got to help this person how can I help this person that's a natural temptation to come when people come for help to try to figure out how to help and a far more effective help is available when you become comfortable with that state the simple state of presence in which it seems that you don't know anything there's simply a being there simply a listening an open field of attention the person may be speaking and there's an open field of attention that is a very fine energy vibration that is intelligence out of that intelligence whatever is needed comes through words realizations action insights sudden insights or simply sometimes the arising of peace in the other person and so that is the greatest transformative agent it's the frequency of awareness and so the mind then takes secondary place it steps back and it becomes the servant so to speak thought still operates sometimes when a realization comes it may need to be expressed in words so it becomes a thought and that thought becomes the words that's beautiful then the mind works beautifully it doesn't take over it may try again because it's been running the show for so long but then it subsides you have to because many of you live in have one foot in the new consciousness one foot in the old it can still happen that mind takes over it happens even to great spiritual teachers it can happen that mind comes back in identification with me as special comes back if for years if for ten years everybody tells me I'm special because they confuse the essence with the form if for ten years people tell me that I am special then maybe if I don't meet especially if I live in an ashram never meet anybody else who doesn't tell me I'm special eventually I am special I must be everybody's telling me enlightenment is nobody's possession or attainment it is simply there in the absence of the density of a mind identified sense of self in the absence of that density the condition the state of enlightenment is there it's always been there even before the sun just shines through now and the sun could become obscured again because it's nobody's possession nobody says I am in possession of the state of enlightenment now who are you?

it's in the absence of you that it's there the absence of the mind made you so the mind may come in and want to run the show again and then at some point you will notice it this may this state of consciousness it's important to when you talk to people even in situations that involve no that are not problematic casual conversation even there the mind can easily take over and you lose the spaciousness in any human interaction the decisive factor only real important question in any human interaction is is there space or is there complete or is the entire interaction dominated by object consciousness which means is the entire interaction dominated by the activity of thought and you can see how you get drawn into that it's the mind the mind stream taking over no space left it's full it's like living cramped in a room cramped full with things and then comes the next thing and then the next because when you're in a mind stream one thing leads to the next one thought leads to the next and there's no end and some people many people even when they are alone it happens to them and then they get exhausted after a while because it burns up so much energy that and then they look for somebody else to talk to and in any interaction so you can observe is there space or has space been lost now space can never really be lost but there's complete unawareness of space which means there's no awareness of awareness there's only awareness of things there's only awareness of thoughts but awareness has become the thought identification with thought awareness has been born into thought forms consciousness has taken birth and is taking birth continuously as thought forms a continuous stream like you know when some some life forms give birth in rapid some fishes that come out of when I was a child I had an aquarium and I could sometimes see a fish giving birth the fish would just come out of the mother fish this is the universe giving birth to form and this happens on the level of thought the consciousness the one consciousness giving birth to form is born into form one after another rebirth rebirth rebirth and you are in each rebirth there is me complete identification with the form the thought form that is rebirth that is you're condemned to be reborn it's not some abstract buddhist theory rebirth rebirth is a concrete thing happening at this moment into the next thought form and the next and the end of rebirth is not some abstract buddhist notion that says you need another two hundred incarnations approximately to come to the end of rebirth the end of rebirth is the possibility for that is here now not to be reborn into the next thought and then suddenly space is there a little bit of space around the thought watch people interacting or even better watch yourself interacting and see are you there as a thought form perhaps wedded to an emotion that goes with it particularly if you're trying to be right or reacting to something the person said or reacting to a place or situation and so how much space is there in you any? even that question can be helpful because that question is a little pointer the question of course is still a thought but it's pointing beyond itself how much space is there is there any space in me at this moment and when you ask that question you come to the end of thought because to know whether there's any space in you which is the space of awareness which is the space of no thought that very question is there any space in me at this moment that question in order to answer it you need to listen, watch and be alert and attentive to find out whether there's any space in you and that is the space that's why the question can take you there to answer it the space needs to be there is there any space in me this is a similar question to the question we asked yesterday is it still now now these are beautiful questions because to answer them you can't think to answer them there's no answer in thought if there's an answer in thought it's a mistake it's wrong if you give that answer to a Zen master he'll hit you so that's a beautiful little thing and in any interaction if you simply remember that question and then you will notice stopping for a moment because you have to find out and so you can learn to interact noticing the mind stream you will notice it more often when you're being dragged along in a mind stream and then you're out spaciousness is there and it's good if you can when you speak to people one can be aware that you've said what you had to say the statement has come to an end and then you can step back into spaciousness from there that's a beautiful thing to do you've said you've given your opinion what do you think of such and such

[Speaker 7] (2:50:51 - 2:50:51)

well

[Speaker 1] (2:50:51 - 2:50:56)

what do you think of political situation

[Speaker 7] (2:50:56 - 2:50:56)

well

[Speaker 1] (2:50:57 - 3:19:02)

I think it's like this like that I think he's right I think he's wrong I think he's great I think he's mad there's the mental position and you've said it and then you step back into spaciousness okay you've said what you had to say you can still have mental positions your sense of self is in the space not in the mental position and then if he says I disagree with you totally he's not mad he's doing the right thing there's that's another viewpoint you can still defend yours you can say I still think you're wrong because this and this and this without the self defending itself and then you're already creating an enemy there the person who's disagreeing with you becomes your enemy because he's attacking your sense of self that is madness it's very normal and it's mad so you can play around with mental positions you don't need to give them up you may have favorite positions I'm a republican I'm a democrat why not?

or whatever it's fine and your position maybe is more right than somebody else's who knows it may well be history will show that either he's mad or he's doing the right thing so not to become trapped in in mind forms because you are part of the madness even if you say that he's mad and you get mad because somebody else disagrees with your viewpoint you're part of the madness anybody in whom space consciousness is not arising is really part of the problem and then you see certain things of course from space consciousness insights are there you can see quite deeply into things and there's compassion in the seeing even if you see somebody's doing a mad thing there's compassion in there in that and again compassion is not weak compassion is an aspect of the unconditioned it arises out of that I suggest between now and the next afternoon meeting we keep noble silence perhaps even beyond we'll see between now and this afternoon a space of silence in which you are alone with your mind and be compassionate with your mind accept it be aware of all the many little things as you walk walking around and aware of the field in which this is arising which is you this is what we've been waiting for you often hear of the term renunciation in spiritual contexts and the question arises what do I need to renounce do we need to renounce the world and traditionally in all spiritual traditions renunciation in one way or another has been practiced renunciation of food reducing it to a minimum renunciation of sexuality renunciation of possessions personal relationships in most of these cases what the most fundamental renunciation has been forgotten and that is why in most of these cases renunciation hasn't quite worked and that's the most fundamental renunciation once that's been renounced the rest doesn't matter and that's to renounce time and more specifically future because all those who have renounced other things use their renunciation as a means towards an end a future state to be achieved an enhanced version of myself hoping that through different ways of renouncing I can get to that to renounce the future is really the only true renunciation and that is to renounce the next moment what does that mean? to recognize this moment as the central core of your life this moment not to make it inferior to a projected future moment in your mind simply by giving full attention to this moment and always realize the how fundamental this is you automatically renounce investment in future seeking something in or through future that's a continuous beautiful practice at first then it's a way of being of living always a continuous return until you dwell in the now you can still deal with future as part of your practical life making appointments plans for timetable when it's needed without losing yourself in mental projections I could plan where I'm traveling next year now I have to so look at the calendar it's still the present moment if I project myself mentally to the next event in a year's time then either some desire or fear will arise some desire that that event is finally going to make it make me I'm finally through it going to achieve an enhanced me or fear arises if we meet again next year and I project myself to that I might be fearful say will I have anything more to say when we meet again what am I going to say to them then what I've said it all and then they'll be dissatisfied they will go go home and so the practice is simply to return to the simplicity of now and always stepping out of mind and the conceptualized story and identity that wants all your attention that includes simple things when you're traveling home from here which you're not at this moment not projecting yourself into the situation that you're going to encounter at home but be there in the car or the plane this moment don't miss this can be very beautiful too when you when your attention is there the simplicity of this moment you deal with it your problematic situation whose situation is not problematic when you get to it and the problematic situation is not that problematic when you deal with it whatever challenge there may be in this moment when you get there then you look look look attention what is it that this moment requires then action comes or no action Zen has even been defined once by a master as doing one thing at a time another beautiful the famous story of Zen when the disciple comes to the master and says a disciple of somebody some other master no how does it go no the disciple goes to the master and says they met somebody else another master they said who can walk on water so they asked him what can you do that or can you do things like that or what can you do and then of course the master comes up with a famous Zen and it's now become a famous Zen saying when I'm hungry I eat when I'm tired I sleep and one other related Zen saying is when you stand just stand when you sit just sit and above all don't wobble don't move it's an amazing thing to do something completely just this honoring this truly honoring it is honoring life this whatever this whatever form this may take and it's a we'll come to questions in a minute I'll stop in a minute questions if there are any left so it's a stepping out of the conceptualized universe in the head with its past and future into this stepping out of that abstraction making yourself into a mental abstraction making your life into a mental abstraction and carrying what ultimately is a burden a great burden of mental abstraction never that never feels it has completed itself it always feels something important is missing in this abstraction of me but what is it how can I find that missing piece in that abstract abstract version of me you don't know when you're identified with it you don't know it's an abstract version of me you think it's me it is me how can I find that which completes me and then you look and this is the search everybody search on a material level or whatever level search for me through something or other and on that level completion is never reached it always feels incomplete the me the conceptual me sometimes you think it's complete now and then something falls out of it again a big chunk that held it all together falls out life does that and again it feels incomplete not to be absorbed in that abstraction that conceptualized self and the only way to leave it is to enter now that breaks the continuity between past and future the continuity if it's not broken the future will be very similar to the past slightly different forms but basically the same old thing even the future of mankind would not change technology yes changes superficial changes but basically the same warfare conflict I don't unless a shift happens here so the razor's edge of now that's where you walk and then you feel the pull of past and future which is a mental pull which is the pull of thought because past and future you can only encounter through thought not as an actuality ever so you feel the pull of past and future which is the pull of thought wanting all your attention again conceptualized self that lives in and through past and future you feel and sometimes you wobble or more than that you get lost in it again and then you notice it return to the now this becomes then a new way to live to walk on this razor's edge the whole world becomes transformed through that and even the complexity of your life situation loses its harshness becomes softer loses its overriding importance that's the sense that this matters so much to me how this event turns out whether i get this or not anything it matters so much the heaviness and seriousness of things so serious if there's nothing else that entire identity is in that then it becomes life is such a serious business and with the now comes the space and with that comes a lightness and a point then comes when nothing is ever that serious even death is never is no longer that serious and it's only then that you can truly care for the things of this world including other human beings that quality that we call care can only be there when there is presence is awareness now awareness it is inseparable from care whatever your attention shines upon always that that attention that is awareness that current of awareness contains that element of care loving care one could say that flows to whatever attention moves to it it might be a human being it might be a situation and that is care it is not care care has another meaning in the English language the cares of the world there's a care can be a heaviness too but this is loving care love care even for the world of objects when you relate because when you speak of relationships and think exclusively of relationships as relationships to other human being but equally important as relationships to nature very important for human humanity how humanity relates to nature if humanity does not find a right relationship to nature it's the end of humanity so to find a right relationship to nature and even a right relationship to the world of things to have a relationship to an object that you pick up and if there's an attention there there's a certain care if there's no attention all objects in your life are means to an end nature becomes a means to an end and you just begin to destroy it you don't see it you don't know what you're doing then because all you see is a means to an end what can this do for me how much is this forest worth what can we do with it its future using it and then you don't see the forest as it is which is a sacred space because you're not in touch with that dimension within yourself the space within how can you see the sacred space in the forest all you see is a commodity through the mind it becomes you are trapped in object consciousness so you bring that to the forest and all you see in the forest is the object in the forest three trunks you measure them and then you know how much it's worth so truly the destruction of nature that humans are engaged in truly the words of Jesus apply forgive them for they know not what they do they truly don't know what they do the space isn't there to know it and that's why that transformation of consciousness where you realize the essence of consciousness and the essence of yourself to be space why that is so vital otherwise no change true change is possible I'll start with one or two questions that people have given me on a piece of paper and then we'll go on and ask questions here if there should be any whether there'll be answers I don't know maybe and I love Ramana Maharshi the Indian teacher who very often would not give answers to questions so person came asked a question perhaps had prepared it for a long time and this is a very important question and asked the question and he just sat there it's like the question falling into a void and sometimes the the ego of the questioner didn't like that and felt offended is my question not important enough to merit an answer but at other times it happened that space arose in the questioner sitting in that spaciousness that came through him and then the question disappeared in it or spontaneous answer arose in the questioner's mind out of the space

[Speaker 7] (3:19:02 - 3:19:03)

and

[Speaker 1] (3:19:04 - 3:40:07)

usually I didn't know it was that simple I have been diagnosed with a so-called incurable though not fatal virus how can I improve my health without using the modalities as a means to an end thank you this may be an important question for a few quite a few of you disease fatal or non-fatal those are just perhaps concepts or beliefs attached to conditions it's very easy for a so-called disease to immediately become another concept in the mind especially a so-called serious disease can very easily become a concept in your mind and becomes incorporated into your sense of who you are you are someone this is happens very easily you can also if you have observed humans you may have observed that some humans for some humans who have had a disease for a long time their disease becomes almost the central part of their sense of self I know once overheard a conversation in a bus a woman talking to her friend there was pride in her voice when she talked about the important doctor who was going to perform the operation for the third time on her the next day or the day after there was that sense in that egoic sense of self that is always looking for more to enhance itself it can easily happen that it uses a condition such as an illness in order to gain more attention in order to gain a deeper sense of self because this sense of self is always deficient so then I am a such and such sufferer and when I speak of surrender which means acceptance of what is I'm not speaking of acceptance of an illness or acceptance of yourself as someone who has an illness that would be strengthening the mind made sense of self and strengthening the concept of illness acceptance applies only to this moment not to some situation in your life only this and whatever may manifest at this moment as an illness could be part disability or discomfort or weakness and this condition of this moment is as it is at this moment and that is what you bring acceptance to what you and with that space arises when there is acute pain that is not easy acute pain seems to fill up the entire space of your being but what else can you do except allow it to be there because it is there and it has happened in quite a few cases that pain burned up the conceptualized structures of your mind pain burned up the ego became a fire in which the egoic sense of self became consumed and for a few people this is what happens there may also be disability in movement or you may have an illness that you simply know you are ill but there may not even be any particularly serious symptoms you just know that there is that whatever it is the question is important not to make it into a means to an end which is the practice of accepting the isness of now in whatever form not in order to achieve something in order to get better but then it's not complete acceptance but surrender to this let the illness force you into the present moment that is a beautiful thing then the illness becomes the teacher it forces you into and particularly if it is a fatal illness so called it may not be and of course in a wider sense each one of us has a fatal illness of course it's called mortality an extremely dangerous virus and it's just a question of time before it hits and even knowing the fact of the mortality of your physical could be of the same purpose if you could remember it every day as they did in medieval times some people they had a skull on their desk to remind them of mortality so whenever you sit there you look at that but an illness or in Buddhist countries they Buddhist monks in certain Buddhist countries regularly visit the morgue so they are let in and then they sit where the dead bodies are and they sit there for a few hours that forces you into the now that's an amazing thing don't try to do it here they'll think there's something very wrong with you the illness allow whatever the condition is to force you into the now the illness becomes unhappiness the illness becomes an unhappy self when you leave the now then it really then it becomes a me who is ill who has an illness who is an ill person and particularly if you've been told by the doctor that you only have a limited amount of time to live whatever he may have said one year six months this is perhaps the worst thing that in the normal state of consciousness that could happen to anybody you go to the doctor and you say I'm sorry maybe six to twelve months he's basically telling you that there's no future for you you have no more future if this doesn't force you into the now well and it's happened I've met people who are in that condition and it's an enormous accelerated transformation has been happening inside them they are on an accelerated course of realization because ultimately none of us has that much time left it doesn't it seems it may seem still you might think oh well thirty years I haven't probably twenty years forty years maybe I even have fifty years left it seems a long time but time is a strange thing it's very fleeting and before you know it you're faced with very little left was that it?

I've been waiting for it to start and now it's come to an end being forced into now by some condition an illness can do that if used rightly and the amazing thing is that healing is much more likely to happen in that state of surrender to now acceptance because there is an energy field there that is very healing that is space so there was a well known doctor who wrote a big book on healing and the modalities of healing and he came to the conclusion by in research and talking to people that in most cases where healing happened it happened when there was acceptance and miraculous healings have happened but this is not why you accept and this is why the question is important if you're hoping for healing you're not yet totally here because in a deeper sense when there is complete alignment with the suchness of this moment you're healed already in the deepest sense so it could be an illness that forces you into the now it could be some other unpleasant condition such as being in a prison cell that forces you into the now any condition that in the normal state of consciousness would lead to a very miserable sense of self any such condition can force you into that it could even be somebody close to you going through extreme suffering such as illness or somebody very close to you being in prison being condemned for a crime being some form of madness somebody very close to you and perhaps that person very close to you is not yet capable of surrender and is in extreme suffering and then you could easily you could be drawn into suffering yourself and again here again you can allow such a situation of suffering in your immediate vicinity so to speak that is happening to somebody who is very close to you and he or she cannot yet see the possibility of acceptance so you do it for them and that also often produces miracles but that's a byproduct you surrender for them if they cannot surrender whether it be your child or grown up child who is involved in some madness whether it be your parent or your partner somebody close to you having a serious illness why can't they they can't they are not perhaps ready yet you surrender give them space let that force you into the now because if you leave the now you suffer the moment you leave the now it becomes very painful it becomes conceptual painful conceptual reality I spoke to a couple last year whose son has been condemned for a serious crime that is great suffering he may not yet be able to surrender but you can surrender for him my friend Satyam Nadin who was in prison for a few years reports reports after having spent quite a long period in the worst prison in the United States probably overcrowded overheated violent you never even knew whether you would reach the next day because people even got killed in there very miserable life situation especially after having had wealth and luxuries and there you are in hell and he was miserable his whole life had collapsed his child taken away the threat of being put away in an orphanage he didn't know whether it would happen or not his possessions taken away and there he is in hell in Florida a little window no air conditioning ghetto blasters playing loud heavy metal day and night this takes you to the limit the limit of suffering this is one way and suddenly a point came when there was a letting go of resistance because resistance was futile you can resist the pain becomes unbearable the pain that is resistance that is a non-acceptance and finally this is as it is it just is just this and what collapsed were the conceptual structures of the self just this and suddenly there was peace in the midst of hell in the midst of all that uncertainty what's going to happen to me and what is happening to me it happened just like that by being taken to the limit so what is called can sometimes be called a limit situation if you should encounter a limit situation if you're not yet totally in present moment awareness now then that will just give you the final push life knows what you need and if you should not need that you'll probably get it you may not need it anymore because we're doing it here it's only those you need it who get it life is not absurd it only looks like that on the surface let's see if there are any other questions but before we do I just mention certain questions are more helpful than others and those are questions concerning yourself perhaps someone close to you your situation less helpful questions are questions that are mental or abstract such as what was the Buddha's incarnation on the planet Mars or I need to know this or questions such as your teaching does not conform to the standards of Advaita Vedanta school of philosophy and the discrepancies are as follows you say there is a doer but Advaita says there is no doer I need to know

[Speaker 2] (3:40:15 - 3:40:42)

I work as a career counselor I have difficulty reconciling the need to meet one's inner purpose and the need to motivate people to meet their outer purpose using their unique talents their skills so for me there is maybe a conflict or the reconciling is difficult for me to grasp yes

[Speaker 1] (3:40:45 - 3:40:55)

uniting the inner purpose with the outer purpose do you feel that has happened in your life the inner and outer

[Speaker 2] (3:40:55 - 3:41:00)

up to now I've been more concerned with the outer purpose

[Speaker 1] (3:41:03 - 3:41:11)

but I presume you are bringing consciousness presence awareness when you work with people when you counsel them

[Speaker 2] (3:41:11 - 3:41:23)

I really care about them reaching harmony with who they are and what they do

[Speaker 1] (3:41:23 - 3:51:22)

yes thank you let's see what answer emerges whatever you do in life it's not so much a question of what you do but what let's see to put it in the most simple terms it's not so much a question of what you do but how you do what you do so to guide people into finding out what it is that they need to do not putting the focus in your case because you guide them you counsel them not putting the focus on the what what is it that I can do for this person what is it that this person is supposed to do what am I supposed to say really not to put the focus on what kind of help am I supposed to give this person but to put the primary focus on your own state of consciousness as you sit with another human being so not to question the what but to make sure that the primary condition is met and that is in the presence of another person you are in the state of presence out of that state and this is why this is important having come to our retreat here because that's the only teaching here to embody the state of presence when you are sitting with another person is primary anything else that comes is secondary and anything else that comes any advice realizations insights or any knowing or knowledge that comes will come out of that state what to say how to help or enabling that person to find the answers for him or herself which is even better than answers coming from you enabling that person to go within and find what it is that would be right for them that is your task there and to be able to fulfill that task I cannot tell you it would be futile for me to tell you what to say to this person because that to be alive and truly an expression of the one intelligence needs to come out of the space of that moment what it is and if you bring that space and you have been learning it here very often you will notice a shift and a spaciousness arising in the person that you are sitting with so that is primary then out of that the realization the insight may come what it is that they need to do what is right for them it may come from you too it may come as a guiding question that you suddenly find yourself asking so you explore but it is not you don't you no longer have the structure of meeting these people will become less and less important to you so you may if you have a list of things that you ask you may use them less or spontaneous questions may arise from within you that are not on your list of questions that you usually ask that person because they are right for that moment so it is beautiful to help a person find what is right for them to do but more important than that is to help a person find their more essential being and your presence is part of that so bring that go into and this applies not just to you there are many people here who are working with other humans doing some kind of counseling this may be a little frightening at first but the most powerful help you can give is to dwell to allow yourself to dwell in the state of not knowing while you sit with someone and then allow the more vital knowing to come out of that either through you or the other person or even as some external factor and this is not easy it's a shift it's like jumping off a cliff you get to the edge and because you go into the region of not knowing anymore there's an instinctive withdrawing from that anybody who has gone into speaking to a group of people with prepared scripts knows how frightening it would be if you suddenly lost your script and what are you going to say and it's happened sometimes to people who know of one case a man who was supposed to give a talk and he was in a hurry in his hotel room and he got a folder and when he opened it up and he arrived it was something total it wasn't his speech at all and there were all these people waiting and he had to say I'm sorry I haven't got my script here and so there was a moment of panic and he was and suddenly he gave the best speech he had ever given subsequently he didn't use scripts anymore so not to have another word is an agenda even as it's me and this is because you're in a helping profession it's not easy to step out of the mental concept of me I have to help this person somehow I have to be of help to do something to help this person see how powerful it is to go into that state of not knowing and be comfortable with that with not knowing that is just amazing just sitting there first you listen the other person is speaking then some questions may come so allow it to arise out of that then you will be doing more than career counseling then career counseling will be the excuse for your spiritual work and that by the way applies to any job you do as you bring consciousness to it whatever external activity you may become be engaged in is no longer the overriding concern the overriding concern is the state of consciousness that you bring to it that the activity becomes secondary and is a kind of it's dressed up in that form it's only the form so there's the form of your activity and there's the essence of your activity and so it could happen that the form is not very conducive to embodying essence that's rare you might be working in a noisy discotheque and you there may be an easier way to embody presence but if you can't get out of it maybe they've shut you in there it was the case in the prison then you do it there you may be working in some slaughtering animals probably you would remove yourself but in most cases the external form is secondary when the transformation of consciousness happened as it is happening in you now the form may remain the external form of your activity or it may change if it remains this added dimension will flow into it and it will become secondary if the form has been unsatisfying if you thought I'm only a waiter I'm only this or I'm only that then suddenly presence will flow into what you do and you're no longer only that it's only an excuse and very often change then comes by itself it's beautiful

[Speaker 4] (3:51:31 - 3:53:06)

you spoke earlier about living without relying on thought and gave us a couple of examples remaining seated until we find ourselves standing up and then we would know it was time to stand up or being in an oppressive organization and without going through a decision making process awakening one morning and realizing this is it I wonder about the place of planning a course of activities designed to produce some set of forms in the future particularly when they require coordinating the activities of many people making a movie for example I think I understand the seductiveness of thinking that making that movie will in some way enhance the self my career has been helping organizations to create visions and goals and plans to bring certain configurations of form into being and you mentioned well okay in the course of daily events you need to plan appointments and such but if our future is to live without reliance on thought how do we coordinate activities designed to move into the future without relying on thought or am I leading people in the wrong direction thank you thank you

[Speaker 1] (3:53:11 - 3:58:39)

using thought but not relying on thought that is the way one can live using thought for certain activities many activities thought will come in at some point even here the words would not come out of this mouth if they were not thought then becoming speech so even here thought plays a role as a function that which is being spoken comes out of presence so thought is linked to that dimension so for example you mentioned film making and that kind of thing involves people who coordinate that kind of thing it involves hundreds of people things that need to be dealt with spoken to coordinated and you might think you need a lot of thought for that for many of these things if you watch any master let's even a master filmmaker you may find that as they are engaged fully engaged in their work a large part of that what they do is a spontaneous arising a director for example a good director who watches is in that he may not be in the rest of his life or her life but in that field of his activity if he is a master or she is a master that director is in that state of alertness when engaged in giving instructions telling people what to do how does he know what is right the master doesn't know it thought plays a tiny part in that the master knows what is right and then gives it then it becomes words speech and then he will say it it arises anybody who has achieved mastery in any field if you observe how they work you will see that a large part of their work does not come from thought and all the creative element is not thought the rest may involve thought so those things that do involve that is maybe an aspect that is non creative perhaps when the director gets home to his office there is some paperwork to deal with he may need to dictate a letter but even there where does it is amazing when you live in that inner state of alignment it is not that thought doesn't operate anymore you use it even that isn't right you don't use it I don't use thought there is no planning you might have noticed here and each time I come here yesterday for example as I was coming here I thought it's questions today that's good because I have nothing more to say and then words came and there were no questions it's not so much that thought doesn't operate anymore but thought becomes the servant of something deeper you don't lose yourself in that because if you lose yourself in that let's say in film making for example then you become a director who people fear who perhaps a lot of the time is angry and because things are not going the way they should and or a director who is trying to figure out what the best way is to how to what can I do now that's the difference between a master and somebody who is just doing his or her job and so it's a new way to live get to it's more sensing and feeling how that works rather than trying to understand what function thought is going to have planning isn't part that everybody needs to do and there's no reason why you should lose yourself in thought or future by doing any planning you simply give attention to this to the calendar the drawing board the computer screen what it is what is it that this requires

[Speaker 4] (3:58:40 - 3:58:57)

when I stood up I think I was ready to argue in favor of that we need to rely on the thought form of our schedules at least and I've realized as you were speaking that one of the things that I may be able to do with the people the organizations with whom I work is to help them have a different relationship to those schedules

[Speaker 1] (3:58:57 - 4:04:54)

that's right yes the schedules are mind forms that's right it's a it's just a wonderful way you cannot learn it the other way around it's always strange when people come and observe those who have mastery in their area and then try to observe the externals what they do and then try to make it into a system so you approach it from that end and that is not quite it although sometimes if you go through the right movements that can also get you there for example I'm nobody knows this but I sense that this is true this is what I sense you're all familiar with Tai Chi things like that Qi Gong Tai Chi for example which is slow movement beautiful practice to do it well you need to be present with every movement no movement is a means to an end you're not trying to get to this place because you're at this place and you're moving completely at each place no not one second is a means to an end otherwise you're not good at it and how did that happen how did anybody ever come up with that I'm sure it happened because someone who lived in that state spontaneously began to move and perform a very slow dance as a joyful expression external expression of that state and then somebody came and said what's he doing and then people gathered around him it feels so good to just watch this and after a little while somebody clever came with a piece of paper and said now he's lifting his left arm now the right leg is going up and then he began to teach it wasn't quite but fortunately in the case of tai chi because that movement forces you back into that state so to some extent it can still work then they did it to psychotherapists there were three effective psychotherapists who were so good like everybody all the patients were cured or whatever they wanted to call it and finally somebody came and said how do they work let's observe how they work now their eyes go up this way now they are in the same body posture as the patient and if they asked the therapist they didn't know they were doing it it just happened because there was so much alignment with the person that sometimes when the patient sat like this the therapist would go like but it was spontaneous spontaneous becoming one and then it became a system it loses something of course but even that can be helpful it's no longer it doesn't arise out of the core of being but even that can be helpful but let's really go to the core and see where the core of mastery lies and that you can live not just in the performance of your professional activities but live in that state when you're going about relatively insignificant doing relatively so called insignificant things in your life traveling from here to there not doing anything in particular interaction with other humans be there so it's a beautiful challenge to bring that presence into whatever situation you're in and then see that yes thought is still there and yet it has lost its overriding its primary position a deeper intelligence is informing thought and then it operates and then you don't one characteristic of any action that's being performed is that you're not reducing it to something inferior to where you want to get and that is what the Bhagavad Gita calls but really it is when whatever you do is not a means to an end but your attention is fully in the doing that is karma yoga consecrated action you could call it not inferior to some thought of future achievement and then that's thank you and that's mastery okay yes do we have another microphone okay so we can shift one side then that side and then that side

[Speaker 2] (4:04:57 - 4:04:58)

my turn okay

[Speaker 3] (4:05:00 - 4:06:53)

hello my question is about children um my son who's 13 is here with me this week because an exception was made to allow him to come and uh we went through a lot of suffering and um I was listening to your tapes in the car and one day my son said don't take that out mom I need that that pain body thing makes sense to me and that was his beginning of a journey into embracing this work and he's watched a lot of videos he's been to some support groups um where he's the only kid and he's now helping me run a presence group and so far he's the only kid but I would love to know what your thoughts are I guess your knowing is about how we can bring this and offer it to children um because I see in him what a beautiful um really special group for children um maybe some of the teenage kids whose parents have come to the adult presence group and I've talked with a number of other people here at meals and in the informal gatherings about groups and I noticed some other people had an interest but I haven't yet met anyone who's led a group for kids particularly except to use it in you know they're working with kids in whatever way they work with kids if they do whether it's athletics or teaching

[Speaker 1] (4:06:53 - 4:15:09)

good thank you well perhaps this gathering is the beginning of a few groups like that starting and maybe you have planted the seed for that here but I do know that more and more people who work with children are bringing this into their work school teachers people who work with younger children some psychotherapists who work with children are bringing it in a few people are working on books written for children to embody their teaching and quite a few children I hear from people are exposed to the tapes a lot of the time and some of them have gone through a shift because the tapes whatever the teaching is so simple that of course children can understand it sometimes better than adults and I've had reports of children who've gone through an enormous shift simply have been exposed to that whenever they are driving their mother is driving they have to listen to this tape I know of one mother who her child she had to listen to it all the time and then for the first time she got a video and so her child said oh mum is that power of now the movie so it is the answer to your question is already in this room it doesn't need to come it's already in a few people in this room the answer to your question is already in you it will emerge what it is that you need to do perhaps even one child of course but comes into contact with other children and a child who already experiences that transformation will affect other children naturally whether or not in your case there's going to be a more formal structure where you meet with children or children meet your son meets with children the answer doesn't come from me but will come from you and it'll come as an insight into what it is and this is a beautiful thing when what is right will come as an answer from within you some people are writing books I've already seen one or two books that seem to embody some aspect of the teachings such as pain body a book I saw that was written in French and somebody sent me the Italian translation of it was a book of drawings that shows a little child getting home and experiencing a pain body attack it's not called pain body it's all pictorial the pain body is seen as a monster in his belly and then that monster comes out of his mouth and he's shouting and screaming and going to his room and there's this big monster energy looks menacing but yet also benign at the same time filling his whole room and going berserk in his room throwing everything and finally the monster subsides so it's a child reads that and recognizes something in him or herself that is there as a pictorial symbol and by recognizing it finding a space between that and the other space is already there through seeing it out there so many of you especially those who work with children or who have children you're already doing it if there's teachers some teachers already when they tell me what the beautiful things that happen in the classrooms as they bring that in and how children respond and ask relevant questions how children become there's one child who has been forced to listen to the tape through her mother who's become her teacher who's been saying the most amazing wise things and that dimension in many children is not yet as hidden obscured by mind stuff as it is in some adults so they respond more quickly so it is enough that you embody that and that is spreading to your children to your child and from there it will spread further go within and see if there is any more that you can do not you as a limited personal self but how that can come through you through whatever means writing organizing this or that but don't make it into a mental thing that thinks I need to do something ask the question and this is the beauty of true answers ask the question and then become still is there more is there anything else I can do let the question the question becomes like a pebble that you drop into a still lake the question then disappears in the stillness and then don't pursue that anymore just become still few days later ask the question again whether there is more to do become still and suddenly you know what to do and this is again it's arriving at decisions that are no longer decisions no longer relying also on some external answer this is really I'm not answering your question in concrete terms because the answer the true answer of what it is right for you to do will come from within you and it will unfold from there but don't forget it's unfolding already so it's simply a further unfolding of what's happening and when it's so grateful for what's happened and is happening already when you see it you cannot not be grateful for what the change that is already happening has already happened and out of that state of gratefulness it grows more that's the beauty of it

[Speaker 3] (4:15:11 - 4:15:14)

thank you thank you

[Speaker 1] (4:15:14 - 4:15:18)

I don't know whose town it is now

[Speaker 2] (4:15:20 - 4:15:21)

I've been

[Speaker 7] (4:15:21 - 4:15:22)

waiting for many many months

[Speaker 2] (4:15:22 - 4:16:21)

to get here and ask something about it actually my original question has changed since I've been here but it still relates to the same thing which is this pain body which reminds me of the suffering that Gurdjieff talked about what happened that was a change is I've got a band sort of around my chest it seems that when there's any kind of release there's massive anger grief fear stuff like that that's held in place by some sort of strange band I've been to doctors this year they said there's nothing wrong with me my lungs are fine one of them said he thought it was emotional anyway yesterday as I was trying to climb up the hill that black dog that had been in here yesterday I couldn't breathe it was like I will never make it up and it was raining and I thought what am I going to do the black dog passed me he looked at me I looked at him and the second I noticed him I was surprised to see him there was no problem

[Speaker 7] (4:16:23 - 4:16:26)

laughter applause

[Speaker 2] (4:16:29 - 4:16:50)

and then I realized there was no problem so the problem came back laughter and actually my question at this point is if I physically try to push through this with exercise do you think I can maybe make some headway so that I can breathe again or laughter

[Speaker 1] (4:16:55 - 4:36:06)

do the exercise only if you truly enjoy it but not as a means to an end if you truly enjoy the exercise it's beautiful and it may do something but the enjoyment is that which makes it effective not an exercise because you think you should be doing it for some reason if without the enjoyment why do the exercise then that there is something this is mainly at now because there is presence in you this is on a feeling level semi-physical as far as I can see what you feel is physical emotional somehow where these two meet it could be an emotion it could be purely physical but you feel it very much here it's no longer so much associated with that there's a danger that the mind will make it and you've given really the the key already yourself the danger is the mind will make it into a problem of mine and try to solve it as a problem and then it becomes a dilemma I need to get rid of this and it could take years or it may never happen if that is the case so it is here this is the when the dog was teaching you the dog taught because that's how dogs live to be completely with what is so for that for a moment you were completely with the suchness of that including that and that was a freeing it was liberating to see that there is no problem don't give it the heaviness that the mind will endow it with and make it into something that needs to be solved say yes to it it is appearing here at this moment make friends with it whatever comes into the space of now make friends with it because it is that is the most powerful healer because it is obviously an energy field there so it is life it has a particular form that form may have something to do with certain mind forms from your past so it has a the form is temporary life is eternal it has a particular vibrational frequency which is part of its form and that is something to do with certain thought forms partly personal but ultimately all collective from the human collective mind that created it and there's not really it's not a personal fault of yours at all that became created it's a temporary form and it's alive and it is as it is at this moment so the key to transformation to make friends with this moment what form it takes doesn't matter say yes to it allow it be with it oh that was the dog's teaching I'm just translating it into words and that that was the same dog we were coming in the golf cart that was running after us and I had a brief encounter with him too we looked at each other briefly it was beautiful beautiful moment and I knew that he knew we may have to carry on with questions if you can remember those of you who are waiting to ask if you can remember to come up this afternoon as the first people who come up it is now the clock the hands of this clock are pointing to the number twelve let's enjoy this beautiful day and this beautiful moment we may have more questions this afternoon in a little while not all questions perhaps can be asked or answered but you may have noticed from some of the questions that were asked earlier that very often concealed in the question the answer is already there the questioner really has already found the answer and just wants confirmation that that's right so often the answer is already hiding in the question you know it already you may not believe that you know it somehow i found a piece of paper in my pocket contains a question so we can start with that i'm just starting to follow the shambhala tibetan buddhist path do you think this is the right path it seems to have a lot of form but i'm drawn to the essential practice of kindness and enlightened society are all buddhist paths helpful daily practice in the formal sense if so how should i choose the tradition i will practice thank you well you've already chosen this one or it has chosen you for the time being the question of form is an interesting one in these very old traditions the form maybe quite heavy there's a lot of form that's what the questioner says forms of practice things to study perhaps so the form what about it if you practice one of those traditions at least with buddhism the formless essence usually still shines through in many cases but yes the form is heavy and the form could be a help or a hindrance three years ago we had a retreat in a buddhist place i arrived a day early and some of the people staying there buddhist practitioners were talking amongst themselves and i was listening and one person said he had that day just completed one thousand prostrations where the head goes to the floor he had a backache but he felt good about it as he carried on talking i realized that in his case the form had become a hindrance because his belief was that he was accumulating some kind of merit improving his karma spiritual body building and this is a good example of the form becoming a hindrance he was getting bigger through the practice he felt superior to somebody else who hadn't managed those prostrations that I had to give up you could do those thousand prostrations also in a different way because prostration is a beautiful thing it is an act of surrender a symbolic almost one could say act of surrender so there could be that surrender there could be the letting go in each prostration instead of the accumulating through each prostration so there's the question then is not so much the form but how the form is used if you surrender maybe you don't need a thousand there's the story of a Sufi master Sufis are also very unconventional people sometimes Sufis to Islam is like Zen to Buddhism original Zen is breaking traditions and so the Sufi master everybody was prostrating themselves at the time of prayer and the Sufi master was just standing or sitting there and everybody was shocked and they asked him why don't you prostrate yourself he said I prostrated myself a long time ago and I never got up when you're in touch with the essence with the space within then the form you may use it you may not use it with these old traditions a lot depends often on who is the teacher whether the teacher is identified with the form mainly or whether the teacher has gone beyond form the teacher who only knows form can only teach you form the ability to know is there in you now to recognize whether this is just form or whether the essence is shining through in any formal practice that applies to other things too to other kinds of form you could go into a book shop spiritual book shop and pick up a book and open it read a few lines and you will know whether those words were written from presence space the deepest that that unconditioned consciousness or whether the words come from an intelligent knowledgeable mind able to rearrange accumulated information in a very readable format in that case the book may still convey useful information it will lack the power to transform which only those books have that came from that place and so as you develop that inner ability to recognize the essence you can save a lot of money by not having to buy books uselessly just save twenty dollars it's sometimes people find it strange they read a book that seems to don't quite have that ability to tell whether a book is spiritually empowered that's really what it is and so some books are so very intelligently written and the person who wrote them understands very well certain things between traditions and practices people with wonderful intellectual understanding and sometimes I've been told people when they finally go to a talk by that author that impressed them they are not impressed anymore because there's so much mind or even a prepared script so also when you go to a tradition go to the listen to the teacher who is teaching within that tradition listen from that deeper place and you'll know whether it's right for you or not well let's have some more questions if those people who were already standing before we finished could start please don't be disappointed if you don't get to ask your question it's not that important important but not that important maybe we could start on that side and then we go on to the middle and then to that side I was told that's the best thing to do at the

[Speaker 5] (4:36:18 - 4:37:08)

beginning of the book you wrote of the unfolding of the divine purpose of the universe and then near the end I did read the middle as soon as I found out I just wanted to find out who'd done it and then I went back to the middle near the end especially in the writing about possible mass destruction you wrote about universal laws and then this morning you used the phrase life knows what you need so what I wondered is what do these words mean in the moment to moment living and this tiptoes in the direction of course of determinism and free will so I'd be interested in your comment

[Speaker 1] (4:37:08 - 4:37:12)

oh yes could you just repeat the last statement which I didn't

[Speaker 5] (4:37:12 - 4:37:20)

hear for me these three questions tiptoe in the direction of the discussion of determinism and free will

[Speaker 1] (4:37:20 - 4:52:39)

oh yes yes yes thank you thank you determinism and free will of course are both concepts and they are both true and untrue they are simply different perspectives and different ways at looking at reality the mind doesn't like that it says this cannot be either one or the other must be true they are simply two different viewpoints it's a bit similar to is it a wave movement or is it a particle it depends how you look at it so on a practical level on a mental level the mind would like to know whether everything is predetermined or whether there is free choice on a practical level there is this moment the form that this moment takes and that and that applies both within and without this moment the form it takes may be a thought the form that this moment takes may be an emotion an external event may be the form that this moment takes may be an emotion the form that this takes an emotion the form moment takes may be an emotion that this moment takes may be an emotion that you can choose and you are meant to feel that that is part of the the way in which the universe is organized the sense that you are able to make a choice at this moment you can say I'm going to lift my right hand I can choose either to lift it or not lift it and I'm choosing to lift it you can say this is a clear demonstration that I have choice and yet where did that initial thought come from why did suddenly the words or the thoughts appear in my mind that I can lift my right hand where did that come from so you need to see whatever it is that arises at this moment always couldn't be otherwise and that includes your ability to choose in reality when you think you are choosing and it's good that you feel that you are choosing that is how the universe operates on the deepest level there is no you who is choosing anything because you are not separate from the totality there is only the appearance of separation because you have this temporary physical form but you are continuously connected to everything else you are continuously connected to the sun to the earth to the air everything is flowing in and out of you on a subatomic level and it's mostly floating space what appears to be a solid person connected to everything else the very heat in your body is the sun and all kinds of influences coming together in one there is one temporary focal point where all these things meet temporarily the totality meets in this focal point and that focal point of consciousness for a little while thinks that's me a person so it's just it's a focal point in the vastness of the whole there's a little flash of light where many things come together in this beautiful and then it transforms itself again into something else but for a while it is a person from one perspective and that person is meant to be a person at that moment and meant to be deluded otherwise that person wouldn't be deluded it is that also is part of the totality and it is good for that person to believe I have choice in reality the totality is acting through me even when I say I'm going to raise my right arm who is deciding it's everything maybe the sun is part of that decision that is the heat in my body and intelligence too and maybe the sun is deciding is taking part in that decision that this arm is going to go up and innumerable other factors and perhaps as this arm is going up synchronistically and simultaneously in other parts of the universe other things are going up and on other dimensions who knows so of course there is no no separate entity with a separate will ultimately and yet there is humans operate in such a way and the sense that I can choose is part of this form the very sense is form identity that I can choose and that is fine this is why I say the most important and the only true choice is you can choose presence that's the fundamental choice but who is choosing that moment of realization I can choose to be present right now is the emergence of presence here through this opening and when as presence emerges at this moment I this so called entity believes it's choosing something and that's good it's even helpful to see that yes I can choose if presence were not arising you couldn't say that you can only say it because it's already arising so there comes the appearance of choice and that is good you see of course you can see beyond it and can see that ultimately it is not up to me because nothing ultimately is up to me because I'm not a separate entity I'm just a temporary expression of the one I am the totality so where does that leave us it leaves us with choosing presence the one true choice which ultimately is not a choice but it's a good it's a perspective to say it's a choice you can see and then as presence operates in your life it begins to inform your actions it inspires your thoughts it comes as even as an energy emanation then you realize more and more this isn't me it's not there's something greater than me which is yet is me I in its deepest sense is doing it and it's happening the happening and me doing become one as presence takes over your life and then the question doesn't really arise anymore is there free will or not the happening and the doing merge into one and so things unfold spontaneously words come spontaneously without a prior intention they just come who is giving these talks me the person the form that walks in here with the limited human mind with its limited little accumulated knowledge most of which it has forgotten no the it simply happens it's a phenomenon that simply happens consciousness you can say the totality is speaking through the form the form hasn't got that much to do with it it's the job of the form and especially the form identity the me to make room for that to get out of the way or one could say to be transparent enough so that that can shine through and then you realise I'm not doing it Jesus used the expression I'm not speaking the father is doing it the father pointed to the same thing totality the one consciousness I'm not doing anything he always emphasised I'm not doing anything I'm not speaking it's not me and so it's it's beautiful when that comes into your life and you realise that you are being lived by that greater consciousness instead of struggling to make a living struggling to survive even to survive psychologically as an entity to survive in your sense of self that's the real struggle to survive not financial the struggle to survive as a self entity of me against all the other selves that are impinging upon me want something from me or want to take something away from me want to diminish me and I want to be more as that self so as presence arises then it gets easier you can actually take a backseat one could almost say you as the formal you the temporary form that consciousness has taken becomes an open opening and so that's it's a beautiful way to live and so your what is determined and your choice become one there's no longer a split of my free will and what is determined by the totality they merge into one they are one and how does that happen get to practical inner alignment with this moment then you're aligned with the totality inner alignment with the totality may not look significant or may not look that great and yet there comes a yes that's all that's required that's the essence of this teaching then you become powerful but not as a separate entity intelligent whether you're educated or not no longer matters that much so that's the question on determinism and free will

[Speaker 5] (4:52:40 - 4:52:41)

thank you

[Speaker 1] (4:52:41 - 4:52:42)

thank you

[Speaker 3] (4:52:55 - 4:53:21)

this is somewhat related to that last question there's a great emphasis in the new age movement to create the life that you love to get your heart's desire and techniques such as creative visualization and affirmation are taught and taught and taught and I'm wondering how if at all these methods and this type of thinking is working with the new consciousness okay

[Speaker 1] (4:53:21 - 4:56:31)

thank you thank you yes thought of course is quite powerful it creates a reality seemingly external reality out there and so humans have discovered and that's a wonderful thing that the habitual thought patterns their conditioned thought patterns and what they experience as their reality or their life are related thought patterns that includes also of course the more deep seated reactive patterns and it includes the emotional conditioning that can't be separated so humans have discovered and it's a great discovery that the inner and outer are connected and many people here discovered at some point perhaps that their thought processes were they discovered many negative denying things in their thought processes my thought processes were extremely negative for many years i didn't know it because i was those thought processes completely immersed in them at some point the realization can come that you are thinking certain thoughts and you suddenly see the thoughts the patterns especially old thoughts that you think frequently you suddenly realize that these thoughts are happening inside you that already is the emergence of something that is beyond thought if only from in the background then you can change thoughts once you can have observed that you are having certain thoughts you can change thoughts and many of you have done that and as your thoughts change very often reality changes also thoughts about yourself thoughts about others who i am so you can improve to some extent your world how you relate to yourself this is the stage of affirmations when you wherever you walk around in your home you there is an affirmation sticking somewhere

[Speaker 7] (4:56:35 - 4:56:36)

you

[Speaker 1] (4:56:41 - 5:11:32)

are a beautiful radiant being the bathroom and it's good to some extent it works it improves that conceptual sense of self it feels better little bit better much better sometimes and then you find you can even create certain situations improve them and when you finally get there you often find that once you have achieved your desired place or state or possession or position for a little while it's great and then it's that's not quite it either and even within it certain contradictions emerge it has a good side and a downside to it and so you find that you're beginning to encounter the limitations of rearranging your thought processes I met some people who got extremely good at rearranging their reality they got exactly what they wanted and then exactly what they wanted and made them happy and then made them unhappy and then they had to get out of it and so the emphasis in this teaching is not on that but it's on going deeper where there's no conceptual reality at all where you no longer have a relationship with yourself because a relationship with yourself is a relationship with a concept of me and that's a strange thing that even it is even possible to have a relationship with oneself talk to the black dog about ask him or her whether he has a relationship with himself he won't know what you're talking about that's the beauty of animals they are themselves completely themselves no role no problematic relationship and no need for affirmations they they don't carry the burden of a conceptual self so you break through that what emerges is a state of we go beyond the state of thinking but many of you have been have already been through also that state of re-arranging thinking and it's been good that was already the even the fact that you were able to see your thought processes means already what is the essence of this was already arising in the background so it was already the arising of this but you didn't quite see it clearly yet it was just in the background and so you were able to see what your mind was doing to some extent so what happens when people do their affirmations visualizations in order to create their external reality in many cases who is doing the practice is still the mind made self wanting through some improved situation to enhance itself to feel better about itself to feel more recognized to feel more prosperous more of something or other more more more of me so then that was the motivation so if you look closely often the motivation for doing these things is that you want to get reached there and once you get there because you are not yet fully able to enter the now that place or that attainment does not quite live up to its expectations now is there a role is there a function for that kind of thing created by your own reality in this new consciousness that emerges it is possible that you wake up one morning and you have a vision of what it is that wants to be done and that vision is joyful and it feels as if it were happening already it's not there's not the feeling that I need to get to that place to achieve greater self fulfillment I had a vision early on of a book I saw it in a dream that had my name on it and then many years passed before it became reality visions came can come in this is what I have to do this is what I have to do oh yes and that may imply who knows that this is what I have to do where does it come from it's a realization of what presence wants to do through you that's all very often it doesn't come in quite that way it comes in a way that an external thing comes seemingly an external thing comes into your life that asks you to do something and more often than not it is a response to something that arises within the totality in your life an external thing a person a situation an event comes into your life you respond out of that you respond to whatever it is so the need for visualizing is greatly reduced it may come in almost as a vision of something that is in the process of unfolding is not yet manifested but you already see it that can happen but not so much as a goal that I need to achieve or go towards you realize in that vision if it comes it may not come it is not an essential aspect of it that on some level that is already here but mostly and this is the way I live it is simply responding to something that comes to you and then that becomes then the play of inner and outer and the strange thing is it is in that state of consciousness those things that are needed for the unfolding not for your self achievement but that which is part of the unfolding of consciousness comes into your life sometimes from within there is a realization of this is what I have to do that can happen this is what I have to do beyond decision making doubt doesn't come in when it is that clear this is what I have to do and you don't know how you arrived at that realization how do you know that this is what I have to do I know I just know and you may not know why I woke up one morning in England when I was living there knowing I have to move to the west coast of North America didn't know why but it was so strong there was no arguing with it so I got ready to move and I moved and arrived still not knowing why people said you're mad well they'd said it before you're going into the completely unknown what's there for you nothing why are you going there I have to go I have to go after a few weeks sitting around on the west coast the book started to happen I looked at my old notes I had writing had happened before in England but very different writing happened then different energy field to it a stream of energy and then I had to leave the west coast went back to England writing stopped little while few months later went back to the west coast then only at that point did I realize why I had to move for some reason it couldn't have happened in England the energy field there didn't pull the book out of here so it's obeying the impulse and going with it when it's beyond question that this is how it is to be so sometimes it comes from within that happens more often there is the outer coming in as you dwell in that state that which is needed comes as an external thing which to which you then respond and then who knows where that leads it's the trust that is the beautiful thing that comes with living in that way so it would be relatively rare that you have a vision of some concrete cause of action it's possible I know of one or two people who had that who had woke up one morning with a vision of something that was already there consciousness can use all kinds of ways and means and channels so it's not a question of what I want for myself as a separate entity but how I can be an openness for what the universe wants so there comes a point when positive thinking is it's been a stage on your journey a good one and then you step beyond that also and even the affirmations eventually they may come down take them off the wall little pointers because you may fluctuate from being drawn back into the little me and it is sometimes may be helpful to have little pointers here and there to point you back they may be thoughts they may for a little while still be an affirmation here and there from wherever of course in miracles whatever it may be a little affirmation a little sign a little sign post that occasionally as you enter the bedroom in a state of and suddenly you see the affirmation it could help wake you up okay is there any other question

[Speaker 6] (5:11:35 - 5:11:55)

well first of all I wasn't sure if this afternoon after your comments this morning if I was going to be speaking to you or to the black dog I wasn't sure whether to ask my question or wag my tail since it's you I'll ask the question maybe wag my tail later

[Speaker 7] (5:11:56 - 5:11:56)

my

[Speaker 6] (5:11:58 - 5:12:32)

understanding of how we nourish the pain body through negative thoughts or so called negative thoughts anger bitterness resentment hatred of one kind or another for things that are in our life or that we don't want in some way or another what I want to know is if we also nourish the pain body through thoughts of longing or desire for that which we want to bring into our life

[Speaker 1] (5:12:32 - 5:19:40)

oh thank you good question thank you this is true there are such thoughts that express longing or desire for whatever it may be that I believe would fulfill me they don't look on the surface like negative thoughts they might look quite nice but if you look on the other side of that thought for example say I want to be rich or wealthy that longing for freedom because there's a belief that this will give me freedom I mean to be wealthy in itself is nothing but what I believe would that that would give me is it would give me freedom and it would give me make me more give me more other people's recognition I can do anything go anywhere by anything totally free and other people will regard me highly so that enhance myself so when the statement is made wealthy I like that or whatever it may be I want the ideal partner I want the I that place what is implied with these longing thoughts I am even the thought even if you say I am wealthy which is a an affirmation that would work better than I want to be wealthy a thought any thought has a polarity to it and so there's also underlying this there is the statement that I am poor because if you were truly wealthy would you be saying I'm wealthy you know you're wealthy whoever I don't know who is wealthy these days Donald Trump maybe he's wealthy again if he is in his penthouse in New York he does probably does not have an affirmation on the mirror that says I am wealthy he doesn't need it he knows so every thought really anything I want to attain this or that is already a statement that you lack it and that yes there is pain in that in that wanting in any kind of wanting there is some pain and often considerable pain because wanting implies lacking wanting is the desire desire what in ancient traditions in spiritual terms they call desire the Buddha talked about it desire is the one thing to get rid of so but what is desire a better word is wanting desire sounds a little bit too abstract wanting gives you a clearer sense of what it is and the power that very often is behind that I want which can lead to action but action that always has that the neediness and the negative polarity that is behind wanting that flows into any action that is that I want it and so many people are involved in long years of daydreaming or this kind of longing that you describe there is pain in that also and it is a subtle way not such an obvious way in which emotional pain is also being created through your thought processes as you state correctly not directly but indirectly and that is moderate food for the pain body it's because there is that not enough me a sense of dissatisfaction and there are emotions that go with that neediness certain sometimes half expressed thoughts as me having been treated unfairly and wanting and needing this to complete me so watch you can as more presence arises you can watch what happens in your mind and the thought processes are there and see how the pain body can be very clever in trying to get if it's deprived of food here it will try to get its food through something else pain bodies are looking out and they are the media feeds pain bodies a lot of the films feed the pain bodies that's why they are made and the pain bodies when you become very conscious so the pain body cannot use your thought processes anymore and you don't feed it other things what people consume when they watch a lot of the TV things you see or films violence that the pain body loves this film will make you feel really bad that's what basically it says when you read the advertisement for the film it will make you feel very bad indeed you will witness the most horrible things on that screen and then people run and go pay their money and if all else fails the pain body may create certain pains in your body physical pain

[Speaker 7] (5:19:42 - 5:19:43)

and

[Speaker 1] (5:19:43 - 5:29:40)

because it can no longer use your mind so suddenly you get sharp pains here or there and you don't know why what is this and it can happen people have told me this when you place your attention on it it can shift to another part of the body because pain bodies don't like to be looked at and so the pain body then hopes that you will react to the pain and the pain could create emotion again it could create thought processes again of unhappiness and then great it's feeding again so this is a good question there are subtle ways in which the pain body can feed even on thoughts that on the surface do not immediately appear to be negative but have that negative dimension built into them a painful me needing and wanting something that's not as powerful food for the pain body as an anger attack but that works too so alertness required alert to watch another way in which pain bodies try to get at you can be through somebody else around you because pain bodies are connected once I had a beautiful session when I was still seeing people privately with somebody who came with an extremely heavy pain body and was sitting there and who was sitting there wasn't there was a pain body sitting there emanating that frequency that pain bodies emanate that a sensitive person can feel even after they've left the room a sensitive person comes into the room and says what's happening here it leaves that behind but we had such a beautiful session that in that session presence arose in that person even while the pain body was still there there was a sudden recognition of pain body as the pain body and in that the pain body withdrew subsided or lost some of its energy field wow there was the clear seeing that that was not him and there was a beautiful session he left almost in a state of astonishment because all his life that was him that was his most essential characteristic everybody knew him as that kind of person everybody knew him as the pain body that was him and that was he left I sat there for a while I felt hungry I went out around the corner to an Indian restaurant I sat at a table and at a table in front of me there was sitting the heaviest pain body I've ever seen and he was shouting and fuming he wasn't going to pay for his food he was in a wheelchair a wheelchair can be for some people has been the greatest transformation to be not to be able to move freely anymore has taken some people into presence has forced some people I've met some people in wheelchairs who became free through their teacher their disability they became free and then he stormed off in his wheelchair out of the restaurant and two minutes later he came back in and he had an electric thing the waitress tried to push him out again there was a huge drama and he pushed his electric wheelchair into forward and he pinned the wheelchair did you do all that it's interesting that the pain body came the moment after the pain body seemed to have suffered almost such a defeat to be exposed as the pain body and then it came back again in another form and said I'm still here it's very interesting how that works in the end I simply sat there as an observing presence in that restaurant in the end a huge policeman came in quite old perhaps nearing he had seen it all and there came the thing that comes when people he in his own way there was presence in him at least in when he exercised his duties he must have been reasonable 40 years or something and he came in he just looked at him he looked at the manager I said has he paid his bill he mentioned no it's okay I don't want it and he just the policeman just a few words quiet words came out of his mouth and the mouth the man became very quiet and left the policeman said goodbye he won't come back beautiful to see in some people in whom presence may not yet operate in the totality of their lives he had achieved mastery and presence in his function as a policeman wonderful to see but the example I gave to see that sometimes pain bodies can come externally to challenge you again through some external form by the way be very careful when you feel pain body is active in you then you actually draw to yourself other pain bodies they will then directly attack you directly go for you because they recognize an active pain body you could go into a shop a store buy something and suddenly the storekeeper attacks you with says what did I do you came as a pain body and his pain body recognized you so the likelihood of an accident happening or getting into some kind of drama is greater when you walk around the city with an active pain body let alone not to mention your place of work where some people at work in some corporations some people have pain bodies that are almost permanently active and very rarely dormant happens beautiful practice pain body practice beautiful teacher and teaching that also becomes an opening becomes a doorway so thank you for that question that was one subtle aspect of pain body nobody had asked that before and it's true perhaps one or two more questions I don't know do we go back to that side now there's some kind of structure here for me

[Speaker 2] (5:29:49 - 5:30:25)

if you want to make this one brief so they can you can answer theirs that's fine I think you touched on this earlier when you talked about that fish tank where the guppies were coming out the little fish were being rebirthed and it brought me back to this question I've had for a while if all thoughts and emotions end with the dissolution of the body then what part of our individualized consciousness goes on afterward and where does it go before it comes back as one of those little guppies in God's fish tank

[Speaker 1] (5:30:32 - 5:47:20)

you may have heard the Zen story the disciple comes to the master and says master what happens to us after death the master says how should I know this is not the end the disciple says well you are the master aren't you the master says maybe but I'm not the dead one the question let's see if this question can be answered without leaving the now what part of our individuality survives if anything that survives whatever survives here after this rebirth after this is the essence that's I'm exaggerating a little because I'm sure a few other things also survive the retreat but what we are going to is what is it that causes you to feel and to know that you are how what is that I am what is the strange thing the one that was the philosopher Descartes who wanted to find out is there anything that I can know without any doubt whatsoever is there anything because he came after the middle ages when people had all kinds of weird ideas and superstitions and weird beliefs it was also an age of spirituality but it was also an age of strange mind structures and then he came and said what is there anything I can know and he thought and thought and thought and finally realized that he was always thinking and then he came up with that idea that I think therefore I am of course that was not true because he hadn't gone deep enough he hadn't realized that the sense of beingness of being you that's innermost sense of identity goes far beyond thinking it has in fact nothing to do with thinking except that it gets mixed up with thinking that at this very moment the question if I ask you who are you or you ask yourself who am I this is a spiritual practice who and then listen within to the you listen for that deepest sense of I of beingness not your memories you could forget them all or your name a deepest just a sense of your own beingness it's hiding underneath all the mind structures it is not it has no form to it and that is who you are that is the I am that is why Jesus said before Abraham was I am there's no past in it I am I am that's the formless being everything else is form you could have a hallucination you could have a dream people often ask is that real or is it not real any whatever phenomenon arises some people even ask they say the world doesn't seem that real to me anymore is it real or is it not real or you have a vision nobody else sees it so they call it a hallucination and you say is that real whatever it is any dream any vision any sense perception there must be something real in it the essence must otherwise it would not be for anything to be it must have an essence of realness nothing can be without an essence of realness the form may be very temporary so even a hallucination requires consciousness in which the hallucination happens the consciousness is the essence it's a temporary form it comes and goes consciousness is that essence of who you are unconditioned that remains here when the when you realize the forms to be insubstantial that is your innermost nature the mind then says yeah but what about me that means the feeling of identity has again been bound up with mind structures what about that me that those are temporary formations I don't want to give any really to utter anything here that goes beyond what can be immediately known because that is all you need what can be immediately known what you can know for yourself and this is the essence of all knowing is that how wonderful to realize that I am not that little limited entity that I thought I was that is recognized as a temporary formation in that wonderful play of forms almost one could say a seed a potential flower for the flowering of consciousness if consciousness flowers when consciousness knows itself realizes itself the universe is becoming self aware now there is no end to the questions that the mind can now ask no end the mind can now ask why why isn't the universe self aware already why can't they start off with can't it start off with self awareness then we don't have to go through all this how long is it all going to take what's the purpose of it all how will it end and what then after that it is the mind what I have said is the absolute limit I rarely go that far where I say the universe is in the process of becoming self aware which is also not the absolute truth it would be absurd to expect to understand the vastness through a few sounds coming out of somebody's mouth how many sounds are there not many and how many letters are there in the alphabet not that many a few symbols and then you put them together in different order you rearrange the symbols or the sounds in different orders okay let's try this one or let's try this and now this is the explanation of the universe of course Woody Allen put it even better you can't even find your way around Chinatown it's the limits of understanding and not even attempting to understand through conceptual thought what forever eludes conceptual thought which is tiny tiny but in the in going within and as space consciousness arises there is somehow a deep knowing in that which cannot be put into words for example there is a deep knowing that life is eternal that life has no opposite that I am eternal and even that is almost going too far even to make that statement because there is no concepts there are no concepts or thoughts in that knowing it is a place of simple nowhere it comes stopped and so it's important understanding on an intellectual conceptual level is not an important part of the evolution of consciousness the course in miracles puts it very similarly it says I don't know if it's a literal quote but it's very close it may be almost insulting to you when you are told that your understanding is not a powerful contribution to the truth and one of the things you relinquish in that great act of surrender of letting go is the desire to understand and that's a you can still try to understand how to get from here to there on that level okay but the desire to understand the great scheme of things there comes a point then and the point is now where you see I don't know and that comes into your everyday life also as an end of the need to continuously interpret the universe around you you don't need to interpret every event and every person habitually the mind does that why not let it be as it is that person that event and respond to it if needed out of that space of space of letting it be the need to figure it out let's have one more question and if there may be other questions arising in the collective mind of this room all questions every question is relatively important but no question is absolutely important if you haven't if you don't get the essence by now no further question will get you there so let's have another question

[Speaker 2] (5:47:27 - 5:48:10)

thank you last year a very dear friend of mine who had a tremendous intellect and was full of much compassion committed suicide that is why I'm here today so in one sense it was a tremendous gift to me and my husband on the other hand it's been very painful now I believe in chapter 7 as you discuss portals into the unmanifested you alluded to death as possibly a portal is that true with suicide as well

[Speaker 1] (5:48:12 - 8:59:49)

thank you thank you I may have mentioned before that the egoic sense of self has built by the grace of the divine has built into itself a self-destruct mechanism so the suffering that the egoic self creates for itself is also that which usually over time erodes and sometimes suddenly destroys it the suffering that it creates is also the agent that erodes the egoic self beautiful and so in the case of suicide the only personal experience I have of suicide is having come very close to it to the just the edge so I know the state the inner state that leads to suicide which is simultaneously where the seemingly opposite functions of the egoic self meet and those opposite functions are creating suffering and needing to triumph in my separate sense of selfhood so on the one hand suicide is the ultimate triumph of the ego in its battle against the universe and it says I will show you this ultimate way of being right is that on the one hand I know that retrospectively from my inner state when I looked back on it that took me to the edge of suicide and you look deep into it it is the ego on the one hand wanting to triumph and prove myself right in the last act of it's like somebody you know people who are in disagreement with a group and they get up shout something and before anybody else can say something they walk out and this is a relatively mild way of the ego triumphing this is my absolute position of rightness and before anybody can say anything you leave to question whether you're right or not so it is an act almost of the last act of self-assertion is that but at the same time it is also the ego destroying itself at the same time so the two seemingly contradictory movements or functions of the ego in an act of suicide come together it is both one could say at that moment the ego triumphs and then and then comes an opening for a moment the portal then opens the possibility of death whenever death happens there is the possibility of going through that portal whether or not the egoic entity destroyed itself totally or whether it can happen that the ego becomes that huge chunks fall out of the ego through the suffering created remnants may remain this I know from observing psychological kinds of deaths that people die because you can learn about death by learning about psychological death when disasters happen to people sometimes the disaster which in most cases is self-created by ego that the disaster can sometimes dissolve the entire ego structure or the disaster can greatly diminish the ego structure so what then survives after if disaster happens in your life you die a kind of death through it but it leaves behind a more compassionate being ego big chunks have fallen or been removed from the ego structure it's no longer that solid after a great disaster but the ego as a structure may survive and could reassemble itself as you recover from the disaster and sometimes it's enough for one little remnant to remain one little identification one egoic resentment towards someone one self image of me especially in some area of my life one little thing can be enough for the entire egoic structure to come back after a few years it builds it up again the disaster recedes into the background but it left an opening even the slightest bit left is very much like the robot in terminator 2 or whatever it was where this thing from the future comes here and it's built of liquid metal looks like a human and you can destroy it as many times as you like if there's only a drop left of that liquid metal it quickly reassembles itself ego is a little bit like that so we can what we know from what happens to the ego when through self created suffering it experiences disaster and then becomes greatly diminished through that or sometimes destroyed the same thing will happen when the ego commits this final act of triumph that is a great disaster it could have the effect of destroying the ego or it is possible that the ego still survives in some form and then whatever it does this energy field that survives that was a person once this energetic formation nothing is ever lost every human being in this room because every human being is connected to the totality of humanity and whether you believe in reincarnation or not doesn't matter every human being whatever any human has experienced you have already experienced because you are only the outcome of the whole past humanity you carry all that within you whether you believe in personal reincarnation or not we'll put that aside you carry within you the past of humanity every human you have experienced it all ultimately humanity is one organism one being not appearing as millions of entities but it is one evolving organism we place excessive importance on the temporary individual expressions of that one organism that one organism is the essence of your being you are that one organism and one day perhaps there will only be one left when humanity has completed its evolution completely that will be one again one divine being male and female in one the end of duality and so you being one with the totality being an expression of the one you have experienced suicide many times you have committed murder and you have been murdered many times and all the other things that humanity has been through we have all been through it many times and so it is all part of the evolving consciousness through the human form nothing is ever lost every life is a contribution to that we cannot fully understand how every life contributes there is an essence in every life that is a nectar and that is left that is the contribution the distillation of what seems like an individual life there is a learning process and some of that learning is through human pain a lot of it in the evolutionary journey of humanity is through human pain and then learning happens also in other ways as is the case now so trust that nothing is ever lost ultimately no one is ever lost it is humanity experiencing human pain this is on a deepest level on an again let's shift to an individual level that what seems like an entity whose life has not worked out that is the surface appearance of things if you look beyond the surface appearance of things there is no such thing as a life not working out every life is part of the learning process and contributes to the learning process of the totality so we need to go beyond that and see some humans temporary forms make their contribution in the form of the pain that they suffer and perhaps they awaken at that moment of death out of the pain we cannot know when that portal opened up the body dissolved the psychological structure the portal opened up the strength the most unlikely humans are ready for the transformation of consciousness and we cannot say that this human being may not have been ready consciousness works in mysterious ways I'm sometimes here surprised that who is ready for this people you would say no what they have done look who they are look at their life look what they've done to others or to themselves they are obviously not ready and yet they may be ready everything that happens seemingly senseless events like that suicide seemingly senseless collective disasters like last year in New York all those events within the totality have a beautiful place every death and every suffering is part of the totality that is evolving nothing is lost when a form dissolves and so from our limited perspective yes certain things look bad from a higher perspective it's fine how do we know what the humans who died in the two towers how many of those in the last seconds of their life broke through identifications that otherwise would have taken a long time to get through when death comes so suddenly and so unexpectedly that shock how many people awakened into a realization in the last moments of to their essential reality as often has been reported by people who face death accepted death and they report that incredible certainty that there is no death that certainty that knowing that deep peace that is suddenly there as death approaches and those who have gone into death and come back report in most cases that all fear left them because fear is only the fear of the form and many of those who did come back from a near death experience had for the rest of their lives enormous trust because they knew nothing was going to be lost nothing was going to be lost nothing is ever lost when a form dissolves that's all that it is and the dissolving of form has its own beauty even when it looks tragic on the surface the dissolving of form has its own beauty and the most tragic event is also a sacred event and that includes suicide it includes any tragic event there is a greater harmony that governs the whole the totality but when you are in the midst of it you can't see that you're like tearing a little fragment out of a huge painting and then you look at that fragment and say what's this all about it doesn't make sense because you cannot see how one life fits into the totality of all life it's impossible but the fact is that it does so with that comes a surrender that perhaps can come to you now to see surrender now for your friend even now your act of surrender now will have an influence on that event that now seems to be in the past the surrender now affects even what looks like past because ultimately there's no past any act of surrender even changes past so your job is to surrender to the pain that was there the pain that you still feel and go into that allow it to be allow it to be allow what is to be allow what was to be and that is your contribution to that what looks like a tragic event thank you let's go into stillness I suggest we spend the rest of the day in noble silence except perhaps for this body sitting on a chair this afternoon words may come some of you may be watching a film tonight and there's no reason why you cannot be silent as you watch the film fierce I believe it is tonight fierce grace about the life of Ramdas a good film and so if you can extend the silence into sleep until sleep happens tonight for those of you who have come with a partner or friend it would be good occasionally also to walk alone out here in nature in silence and awareness that's why it's called noble silence there's silence and noble silence silence means you're not speaking noble silence means you're not speaking and aware the expression I believe originally comes from Buddha the Buddha or Buddhism about many subjects it is said when asked the Buddha kept noble silence which means he didn't give you an answer that reminds me that probably tomorrow morning we'll have a question and answer session questions perhaps answers this morning I believe there was a CD played of meditation music and if you still have it if we could listen as a musical illustration of this morning's what we were talking about this morning this morning's talk I'd like you to just listen for two or three minutes to a little piece and what to listen to mainly predominantly is not the sounds or the tones not the foreground but the background the background of space the background of stillness and with music like that even the act of listening to that because it is the act of listening to an absence the absence of sound listening to stillness brings about inner stillness it's only with that that you can acknowledge the dimension of silence external silence only with the inner dimension of stillness which is consciousness without thought that's what stillness is consciousness without thought only from that dimension can you be aware of silence what seems like external silence that's why that I mentioned perhaps briefly on our first day whenever that was perhaps yesterday the how listening to silence out in nature or in a room can also be an opening into that dimension because you cannot listen acknowledge silence notice silence without the dimension of stillness thinking cannot even notice silence it's a little mystery and it's a miracle the simple act of noticing that dimension puts you into that dimension otherwise you can't notice that so listening to this music we are aware of the background more than what happens one could say the canvas on which the sound is painted and as you do that that pure awareness that consciousness without thought arises so if we have that cd if we could listen to track track two of this morning's meditation cd but the background is more important than what happens the only way the dimension of the sacred can come into this world is through the awareness of the background which is awareness of awareness space inner space we said this morning in any interaction ask yourself whether there is space in the interaction the very question makes it possible for space to open up this is really no different from asking whether there is love in the interaction because out of that love arises the awareness of that is love I don't use that word too often because it's been misused a lot so to see this is the essence of our retreat the essence of any spiritual teaching to see this to realize this truth that is so simple is one thing no thing that's what that realization they call Satori in Zen when you for the first time see and another thing is to live it in your daily life the ability to live it could be called enlightenment and again it's not that helpful a concept because it sounds like an achievement somebody's achievement and one could almost say that the essence of enlightenment is the opposite of somebody's achievement enlightenment and perhaps some of you may have come here expecting to gain something it's not a gain of anything since it's already here it would be closer to the truth to say that enlightenment is a loss of something of that which covers it up so it cannot be an achievement so the question is then how to live it in one's daily life where the challenges pile up one after the other living in this world mad to some extent faced with the challenges of everyday life which are primarily in oneself they seem to appear as external factors but your real challenge is the conditioned mind the momentum of it and your real challenge is not to lose awareness when that starts up not to lose awareness when the pain body becomes active and associates itself with the thinking mind old emotion old human emotion old human pain linking in with the activity of thought personalizing the pain the pain body says don't talk about me I can't stand it so there's thousands of years of conditioning collective mental conditioning plus your personal conditioning from this lifetime which is bad enough in itself and the personal pain from this lifetime which would be quite enough and so what to be aware of in your daily life is of course the movement of thought and the flux of emotions aware means know that it's there so that there's a space around it one could say a space between you which is a space between you and the thought the space between you and the emotion but ultimately you are the space so then the emotion happens within the space that you are knowing yourself as space not as that which happens in that space this is why this music is helpful knowing yourself as the underlying field not that which takes birth and then dies in the field comes and goes so it means not getting not believing in every label that the mind comes up with that's why it's so important to begin to live in such a way that your life is not the aliveness of life is not obscured continuously by labels and concepts that's why it's so important to go for a walk here and perceive clearly aware in the space of awareness without needing the labels why it's so important to sometimes do small things little movements that conventional little activities and bring presence to them a space they happen within the spaciousness of no thought just aware presence even as simple a thing as putting an object from here to there while it travels from here to there there's a space of pure awareness so it's a beautiful gesture it becomes beautiful through that before it wasn't beautiful it was a means to an end I need to put this here it doesn't have that quality to it that comes only with awareness walking across your room consciously from the door to the bed free from thought for that little interval it's just beautiful so this is the beginning of not getting completely drawn into labels and believing that when you have a label you know what it is living in that state of openness which is true intelligence which has the appearance that you don't know and yet all knowing arises out of it all true knowing so here we have this is the beginning little labels not to believe in the ultimate reality of the labels and then of course there's more the human mind there are huge patterns of ways in which you interpret the universe inherited from your personal past inherited from the collective past your cultural past the collective past of mankind of humankind ways of interpretation which are based mainly on separative egoic consciousness the little me interprets the world in certain ways and no longer totally believe in one's interpretation of situations events or people and beware of premature conclusions which the mind quickly reaches about things and people that's how it is so beware of all interpretations of people or events and recognize them when they come because they come recognize them as interpretations as a perspective perhaps a possible perspective never the entire truth and very often a complete fantasy so it's always a standing back from thought into the spaciousness being the spaciousness there's the interpretation and there you stand back a little bit there are many stories in Zen to illustrate how interpretations can mislead you I will tell you a little one it was for a long time the custom in monasteries when visitors arrived in the evening to ask for lodging sometimes other monks or other visitors in order to gain the right to spend the night in the monastery they'd have to challenge somebody who lives in the monastery to an argument and win the argument but it was a Zen argument so it was never conducted with many words and if they won they could spend the night if they lost they would have to move on so there was one monastery where the abbot was a monk and his younger brother who was not yet very enlightened also lived there as a monk the younger brother only had one eye he had lost his eye early in childhood so one evening the younger brother came to the abbot and said a visitor has just arrived and I happen to be standing at the gates and he challenged me to an argument a discussion what do I do he had never done it and the abbot his elder brother knew that that was a risky thing so he said but he had been challenged so he said ok conduct the argument in silence ok he went off ten minutes later the visitor comes and knocks at the door of the abbot and says I'd like to pay my respects to you and take my leave because your brother is so clever and enlightened he completely defeated me in the argument and the abbot said how so what happened he said well it started our discussion started said the visitor with me raising one finger to signify buddha the enlightened one then your brother raised two fingers to signify buddha the enlightened one is not complete without the dharma of the buddha's teaching then I raised three fingers to indicate that the third element is also needed which is the sangha the brotherhood of monks without which it's not complete so here they went and then the visitor said your brother suddenly shook his fist in my face to signify that all arises from the one act of enlightenment the one realisation and so he completely defeated me I'll move on to another monastery and seek lodging there goodbye and a few minutes later the younger brother comes in and says to the abbot where is this fellow I'm going to beat him up he completely insulted me and the abbot says tell me what happened he said well we started he raised one finger to say to make fun of my own one eye then I decided to raise two fingers to compliment him on the fact that he had two eyes and then he dared to raise three fingers to show that even between us we only had three eyes and so I was going to punch him in the face but he ran away different realities different worlds and so beautiful example this of course was the conditioning of the brother and probably how did he get as a child he was mocked many times so there was already expecting something like that to happen and immediately a neutral event was interpreted so basically and this happens to many people still in this world they inhabit a fantasy world of conditioning from the past and looking at events that are happening in the present through that conditioning and interpreting events through that conditioning and in many cases it's complete fantasy but the strange thing is when you continuously interpret the world in certain ways it tends to reflect back to you that interpretation so one could say that what is called karma usually it's regarded as things that happen to you in your life good things bad things good karma good karma bad karma but really how your life unfolds is perhaps 10% of what happens to you and 90% of the reactions to what happens to you and the continuous reactions create their own reality the reality confirms back to you that your interpretation is correct that's how it works so if you interpret human beings as being basically dishonest and out to get you or get something from you that becomes your selective perception of reality that's the way in which you interpret events and then after a while because perception is selective you will get confirmation because you will only meet those people that will conform to your expectations the others you're not even interested in and you might even bring out in people who are not totally conscious yet that which you expect from them or that which you fear from them you pull it out of them if they're not fully conscious so to be aware very much of the way in which one interprets reality that's why this I like this Byron Katie a spiritual teacher has this question that you ask yourself whenever you have thoughts arising about a person a situation an event and you have your interpretation of it do I really know that this is true can I really know that this is true and then you look deeply and say I don't really know if this interpretation is true I don't really know it maybe it looks true to me but I don't really know it and so you're beginning to take a step back from thought any thought so that you can begin to dwell in the region of no thought and have your home your dwelling place there not in the interpretations of the mind have your dwelling place in that field in that pure intelligence and out of there yes you respond to situations and events but you don't react react is comes out of the old conditioning so people carry inside them the past they look upon the present through the eyes of the past and so what then happens is that that provides the continuity between past and future you make sure that the future is going to be the same as the past and this is how most people live and this is the essence of karma is that there is a continuity between the unconscious past in you and the events that unfold you are creating it through your interpretations and total identification with the thought structures which then create that reality nations do it to each other collective bodies entities interpret it in their way cannot see any other perspective except that there is no other perspective this is the truth as the I mentioned the writer that I read in New York Times competing narrative the unwillingness or the inability to accommodate a competing narrative to see that hmm and to hold that in awareness so to see inside oneself the structure of thought and the movement of old emotion that goes with it and step back from it so that there is some space and that applies particularly of course when the movement of thought becomes connected to the old emotion and they become a vicious circle the old pain body the old emotion personal emotions from your past collective pain from humanity as a whole with which even every baby comes into this world most babies already cry when they why do they already cry there's already pain there some babies cry more than others some babies have a heavier pain body than others it doesn't mean those who don't have a heavy pain body are closer to liberation maybe the other way around who knows but that is there and that pain body is an aspect of the mind made self and it is that which makes it hard to step beyond it if it were only thought structures it wouldn't be that hard but it is thought structures combined with a force of old human pain so when the pain body that lives in every human not always active sometimes dormant for periods of time when it needs to replenish itself which it can only do by absorbing energy frequency that corresponds to its own vibrational frequency which is the frequency of pain in whatever form whatever it is this explains it better than concepts concepts create a distance okay anger or heaviness of depression can't can't take any more can't take any more of this when the pain body needs to replenish itself it can only do that by creating energy energy of that vibrates at the same frequency which is pain and so it will move into your mind the emotion rises up into the mind thinking and then suddenly your thinking reflects the emotion it you think along the lines of the emotion so if the predominant energy field of the emotion is anger you think angry thoughts about of course it will be about something here the situation somebody next to you the situation you are in right now it seems to be caused the thoughts that you are thinking with great energy seem to be caused by something around you but of course that which is around you very often is a relatively insignificant event or thing that somebody did or said but the emotion the thoughts and the emotions of extremely powerful incredible force to them out of proportion to the event which was really only the triggering event not the causal event but the mind made self believes it to be the causal event you caused this you did that to me and not surprisingly a very very common characteristic of the self linked with pain body is to see itself as a victim of some personal situation very common almost every pain body has it the interpretation of reality as doing something to me because in miracles puts it beautifully it says beware of the temptation of seeing yourself unfairly treated and that is almost in everyone that is an aspect of pain body and the self mind made self when it links in with pain body something there is doing something even the criminals in prison more almost all of them consider themselves to be victims in some ways one could say they are it's a perspective you can take any perspective so let's see when the pain body needs to feed there is a readiness for it to come it cannot yet come unless it can find some trigger the trigger could be just one thought that goes through your head that's the slightest trigger it can use one a little negative thought a little negative reaction then the pain body can use that and link into that and that would lead to a stream of thinking along the lines of the pain body so just a little even driving in the traffic an upset about another driver oh this when the pain body is ready to come up it will use that moment and that will lead to a train of thought movement that is increasingly painful and the pain body loves it it feeds on every painful thought because the pain body is feeding on the movement of thought and then that is the movement of unconsciousness is there a possibility at that point to wake up yes now there is if there is enough presence in you there is the possibility of knowing what is happening as it happens if you can catch it at an early stage it's even easier just as it arises catch it to see to feel the emotion directly before it becomes a thought if you can do that it cannot begin to use your thought processes if your awareness is there and that requires alertness that requires that if the alertness is there you can watch the emotion wanting to become a thought and you continue simply to watch it on the level of the emotion semi-physical entity beautiful it's no longer a personal matter it's simply the movement of emotion in you and when you watch it it is implied that you accept it because it's here it's part of your acceptance practice which is the most powerful way to go beyond is to accept what's there there it is if you don't catch it at a very early stage you may have to catch it already when it thought is already moving and then you may notice a strong disinclination if that's the word to want to get out of it there may still be a presence in the background a witnessing presence how strong it is then that will determine whether or not you can still rise above it step out of it see it for what it is ah pain body and feel it oh and then it's not replenishing itself through your thinking of course as you I'm sure many of you know it can it also likes to replenish itself through other people to provoke a reaction to challenge somebody else please give me some emotional reaction react you did that to me I didn't you did it to me so it feeds on the other persons it wants to awaken the other person's pain body pain bodies love other pain bodies so partners feed on each other's pain body it's an essential ingredient of most relationships the drama that is a necessary part of relationships periodic drama and after a while the energy the pain body has replenished itself and it subsides and then the same cycle starts again and so to bring consciousness into that requires alertness vigilance you cannot suppress it it would only get stronger for temporarily you could I'm not going to let this pain body get the better of me I'm just going to sit here not a and acknowledging what the mind may call negative emotions is also dangerous the minds might be saying you may have an image if you're still deriving your sense of self from thought you may have an image in your mind of who you are a spiritual person maybe someone who has already gone beyond these things or if you are a Christian and want to follow the teaching of Jesus without having gone to the bottom of it just the externals then you may have an image of yourself as a good Christian or good Christian there's certain things that a good Christian does not feel to be a good and so there may be a clash between the emotion that you feel and your self image and then you deny that it's there I'm not angry at all how dare you even suggest that I'm angry I can go so far as to somebody shouting I am not angry so to watch that because people believe that the emotions that they experience are some personal dilemma that they are not yet advanced enough so that's why they are still there or not good enough people to have those emotions I'm not good enough if I have those emotions it's the belief that emotions are a personal matter deriving your sense of self partly from emotions and partly from thought that's the mind made self consists of those elements and so there is nothing personal neither in emotion nor in thought it's just human thought no different from other human thought another human next to you has very similar thought structures and emotions anger anger is anger in the other person it's very similar to your anger basically the same the stories around it may be slightly different the explanations of why I'm angry may be slightly different from person to person slightly different script in the head but so what people derive their identity from the sense of person personal selfhood is ultimately not personal at all it is human emotion and human thinking and that makes it a little easier when you realize that your emotions are not personal matter they are human emotions to do with the fact that you are a human temporarily a human here on this planet have inherited certain things that are connected with the past of this planet and those things are there that's all so you can by watching an emotion you begin to depersonalize the emotion not denying but depersonalizing it so it is not a personal problem of yours anymore the fact that you get anger attacks once a week or whatever the pain body whatever form the pain body may take then you can actually see that as the fiery emotion of that it's easier to accept it too when it's you realize it as not self as not you it's easier to accept that yes there are still human emotions in you oh how dreadful so with that begins a depersonalization of pain body the pain body wants to pretend to be a person and wants to take me very seriously it wants to be linked to the story of me it gives energy to the story which then becomes a very unhappy story when the pain body is there so and even to see that the story also of me which consists of thought and reactive patterns thoughts reactive patterns memories mental images are thought forms that's concepts thought forms and images that happen in the field of consciousness and again you would be surprised how similar the basic structure of human thought is from person to person when you get to the bottom of it in yourself you know every other mind even from other cultures or in other cultures of course the story may be different but the basic elements are the same of totally identifying with one mental position if you're a woman and you travel to certain countries and forget to change your clothes and you arrive at the airport wearing a skirt and short sleeved blouse then certain people in those countries will immediately interpret you as immoral has no shame is immoral and that is their perspective when they come here you might have some other interpretation about them and they cannot yet step beyond it and see it as one as an interpretation as a perspective they are still completely wedded to that mind form that mind structure and anybody who challenges it challenges their very identity that's the essence of unconsciousness so it's not so your self is not in thought and emotion it is in the space in which the thoughts and emotions happen the one who can allow the thoughts and emotions to be there which is the space which is the I am presence the deepest I am-ness I am is usually followed by some concept or word this or that or a name just a thought form the most frequently used word in the language may be I and usually it refers to the mind made me and its emotions which is the story and when people tell you about I they tell you about their story but the deeper meaning of I I is both the greatest illusion that the word that contains the greatest illusion and the word that contains the deepest truth in language the deepest essence usually when I is used it is the illusion the illusory entity but potentially I is the deepest statement of who you are I am pure aware presence of beingness and you can only know that when thought comes to an end what is left let's say you don't even remember your name anymore or the stories from your past at this moment can't remember my name or the stories from my past what is left is there anything essential that you have lost no in the absence of the memory of your story or your name the deepest sense of beingness is still there which before got mixed up in the stories that you were telling yourself and others this is the amazing thing that that remains and it remains in its essence and that is so precious and so beautiful and that's you I it is the divine in you I it is formless and that's why in the the most profound statement in the bible is God's self definition who are you and God says I am that I am the essence of I am is that and sometimes it comes to the mind who through some apparent accident accidentally lose everything that they thought they were life takes it away from them strips you of all the things that you've been hanging on to and then you're left with this bear I am a deep sense of beingness aliveness of presence everything has been removed from you that works too or here it works in many different ways this in some places they may not come to teachings like this somebody may lose become a refugee lose their homes loss does it sometimes so this is emerging now on a larger scale for the first time on the planet thousands of years ago that realization came to one human being the first flowering of human consciousness the first realization who I am beyond form and it is quite possible that that person was a person whose existence on this planet goes back into the legendary past we know even less about him than we know about Jesus or Buddha and there's the legend in India of Krishna and Krishna may well have been the first human to have realized that dimension within and over time now the amazing thing is that some humans recognized something in in him they recognized something of themselves in him but didn't fully know that that was what was happening they recognized something of themselves a purer version an undiluted version of themselves an unobscured version of themselves and over time they associated the formless consciousness that was emerging with the form of the person and so the person became a kind of God in people's eyes in people's thoughts but of course that realization is the emergence of the formless it is not of a person of a form it does not belong to any form it comes when the form becomes somehow transparent is no longer obscured by the density of mental and emotional structures and so that was perhaps the first flowering and then came others here and there and gradually the possibility of this happening this realization could not come on this planet until now for the simple reason that the need for it was not there yet they were preparations one could say almost for the shift in consciousness the early flowerings prototypes exactly the same happened as I mentioned before when flowers first appeared on the planet millions of years of plant life without flowers and one day one plant developed a flower which is one could say another dimension of plant life thousands of years later another flower thousand years later two flowers until finally suddenly a profusion of flowers all over the planet our human evolutionary stage the way humans where we are now is coming to an end the cycle of thought not that thought will not operate anymore but humans are going beyond having to rely predominantly on thought they're going beyond needing to derive their identity from thought and this is a momentous event why is it happening now? for the simple reason that it has to happen now because the old consciousness is becoming increasingly dysfunctional which is normal at the end of an evolutionary cycle things don't work anymore and so even that is fine even the madness that we witness on the planet now and witnessed in past centuries even the madness is good is ultimately part of what is meant to be ultimately and part of it is also recognizing madness as madness recognizing dysfunction as dysfunction is equally important so let this this is an event that goes far beyond this room because on the surface of things not much is happening here a person speaking some people are listening and yet it is part already of the transformation of human consciousness on the planet not significant enough it is not what fit into the news usually although it can happen it's happened but it's rare it's not to a large extent not yet a newsworthy event although once this teaching was on the national news in Canada but it's rare and they only gave it two and a half minutes but it's a beginning so don't believe entirely don't believe that what you hear or see on television is the entire truth and is the complete news of what's happening on this planet there's a lot happening that is not being mentioned on the news and what is not being mentioned on the news is more significant than that which is mentioned beware of being drawn into reactivity when you watch events happening in the world either into fear or into anger or into despair could happen when you watch the news on television be there as a witnessing presence compassionate that comes naturally with a witnessing presence be there alert just as you watch the tree or the flower you can watch the news or just as you sit with a person who is in pain and talking to you you can watch the news in that way let it happen within a field of peace who is going to bring peace to this world if not you and if enough people watch the news within a field of peace even the news will change it's all happening in consciousness the collective dream of humanity is changing the collective nightmare is changing we are waking up out of the collective nightmare to some extent you could say that all of phenomenal existence is a kind of dream but it becomes a more beautiful dream be careful with the seductive quality of television how it draws you out of the body if you watch for long your attention how it puts you into a semi-hypnotic state how a particular world view is being continuously played out although a few times occasionally something else is coming in these days not often yet if you have to watch it's very helpful to be in the body to feel the inner energy field of body so that you have an anchor that keeps you present and you watch from there something else that pulls your attention out is computer screens staring at it for long periods again it helps to connect with the inner body and at times look away and feel the inner body maybe have a flower next to your computer or a plant something natural if you find it still difficult to perceive without thought which is what I'm here talking about connect with the inner body even if it's only one part of the body and feel the aliveness within that part and then look then you can it is easier to perceive without thought at the same time even at this moment you can look see this room and at the same time feel the aliveness within that's a beautiful way of getting to know what it means to perceive without thought simply in awareness television for many people is almost liberating and it is a little it's a drug it liberates them from their own mind because when you watch television for long periods you're not thinking your own thoughts sometimes you are but a lot of the time when you watch you're simply linking into the collective mind you are forced to think their thoughts so it's not that you become free of mind you become free of the personal aspect your mind your problems but then what you watch is somebody else's problems well that's a little liberation at least it's not your problems very important as this shift happens there are already children coming into this world who are more ready for the shift in consciousness than you and I ever were when we came into this world I wasn't ready a lot of suffering had to happen before the readiness but many children already coming into this world now and they are coming of course still into this culture which is ignorant of such matters no longer totally ignorant because this is becoming almost mainstream now so it is spreading but the structures of society the school system and so on still to a large extent ignorant the structures are heavy they're in place even if some of the teachers become enlightened they still have to work within the structures of the unenlightened consciousness that is not easy and that applies to many institutions it applies to hospitals where some of the nurses bring in wonderful openness and healing power and love and space if it weren't for them the whole place would already be worse than a mental home it's already getting close to it so it's there are humans within the old institutions and this applies to quite a few of you perhaps there are human beings who are already going through this transformation but they are still working within the old structures and only you can know for yourself by becoming still whether to continue working from within those structures and perhaps bring about a transformation of the structures from within simply by being who you are your consciousness by being conscious within the unconscious structures or it may be that you might find that those structures are so rigid that you see little possibility and then you will know what to do you may remove yourself not through decision making but through waking up one morning and saying that's it it could happen or you may transform them from within in some cases that may be possible there's no general truth here only you can know what the truth is in your particular case they are the economic structures they are the corporations we've heard a lot about them recently the big corporations how they operate are they all evil all the big managers are they evil no they are egoic entities like everybody else just a little bigger because of their position educational social structures all those political so some may collapse and some may become transformed from within nobody can predict how it is going to happen do not leave prematurely just see you will know what is right and if you have to leave life will look after you and this is the truth if you have to starve and you won't if you have to starve you will starve beautifully and then other children who are some of them have to be in those old structures and they may not function very well within them so if you come into contact either as a parent or in some other way with children the greatest gift you can give is the gift of space they are just waiting for it they will recognize it very easily they are waiting for you to give the gift of space and then you give it to each other before you know it they may be teaching you it's all one anyway so the greatest gift is the gift of space and even those children who are still burdened so it seems with the old consciousness strongly identified with the old consciousness the gift of space they also long for deep within and in families the absence of space is the worst aspect of family life in our civilization the one thing that matters isn't there and all the entire family is run by the thinking mind object consciousness one damn thing after another never they don't have meals together anymore they just and even if they had meals together there might not be space you know what Thanksgiving dinners are like in families so it's to provide that in your family especially if they are children be there as space not be consumed by object consciousness not be consumed by things that need to be done that pretend to be important nothing is more important than this and so this begins with a little thing like the ability to listen to their child no matter what the child is talking about just listen the pure the act of pure listening is the greatest thing the act of pure listening is pure awareness pure listening is the most beautiful thing you can share with another human being even if they are talking coming from the noisy mind it is being received within the spaciousness of pure listening the most powerful thing anybody who can listen becomes an effective healer anybody who can listen from that space as that space if you then put up a little sign and say psychotherapist and your only qualification is that you can listen you would do very well by word of mouth you might not get insurance though and all effective psychotherapists know that they become only effective when they enter that state some of them do after many years of practice simply they get bored with anything else with applying their their particular thought system to the patient patient applying their beliefs as their grid of interpretation labels and then after ten or twenty years they get tired of the labels and then they just sit there and listen and then they find amazing things that sometimes come out of their mouth and at other times amazing things come out of the person's mouth who is sitting with you it's all part of not relying anymore on accumulated knowledge it's still there for little things yes it's good but not relying on that so let's live this now starting right now starting as you move away from this room walking towards your room one step at a time observing the movement of thought that may be there and perhaps the spaciousness being there as you watch nature around you if you watch the film tonight it's about a deepening brought about through some pain that happens through suffering Ram Dass suffered a stroke and experienced an enormous deepening through that so grace the meaning of the title fierce grace is that grace sometimes comes in that form it takes something away from you for example your ability to move about and then grace comes in a different form like this a moment of silence all practice for the rest of this week and this sentence already contains a paradox all practice for the rest of this week is to stay with just this moment and that is the paradox that on the surface of things time seems to be very real within the depths of yourself time ceases to be real so you always have when one speaks of the timeless dimension of consciousness you are using language which is derived from the world of time paradox comes in the practice then is to just stay with this little moment just this one and it's always this one when you're walking out there stripping one step at a time being in the state of yes to this moment that is really all now the yes to so called beautiful sunny warm weather may be a little easier than the yes to cold wet windy weather and you can extend that as almost a metaphor to the rest of your life the strange thing is however that the yes to the cold wet and windy weather takes you even deeper than the yes to the good weather and the deepest is the yes to death that takes you deepest and death is any kind of death physical or psychological or some loss of something that was important to the me something dies part of your identity dies and then the yes takes you very deep the yes to what is so the space opens up immediately with the yes to what is the space that is beyond mind objects thought the thought the mind the mind made self wants this to be even more difficult it would prefer to have an outline of what I am supposed to do for the next 10 years that finally will get me to a space consciousness it would be very happy if I gave you a folder describing the steps to take because it's very happy with being given additional time future it lives on that and so it is not happy when it hears how simple the transformation of consciousness can be it's not happy that it doesn't require time you mean I'm already enough can't be not me I'm not I'm not ready I have a long way to go surely there's so much that I don't know yet and I still have to learn I've only read a hundred spiritual books there are so many experiences I haven't had yet the fireworks that they talk about well that may be a nice experience but it doesn't last that long and then you are a little me again saying you can be a little me with the added thought form that once fireworks happened to me and then you can live on the dilemma of how to get the fireworks back so the need for more that is built into the structure of the human mind is also here of course but of course realization of who you are is not a more and that includes more knowing knowledge or more understanding which is not necessary that's almost insulting to the mind you mean there is nothing for me to do says the mind if I may quote the philosopher Woody Allen who said I'm always astounded by people who want to understand the universe when it's hard enough to find your way around Chinatown hmm a sneeze can sometimes be satori so the yes to just this just this moment space opens up within spaciousness and miraculously you become truly intelligent I believe it was Krishnamurti who used the expression the awakening of intelligence and that's what it is there's more to intelligence than the mind can conceive the mind being only a tiny aspect of the one intelligence the human mind fine beautiful too except when you seek the totality in it when you seek yourself in it when it becomes all there is you get trapped in a tiny aspect of the totality and that's a little delusion when you're no longer trapped in it the human mind is beautiful too so the practice here is not going beyond what is now with the yes comes space with the space comes and I'm use that word reluctantly with the space comes love not the clinging and wanting love of the egoic self a deeper love the state of love that's inseparable from your essential beingness you love what is and in loving what is the universe actually becomes transformed the universe is not separate from what appears in your consciousness all the forms that appear in your consciousness make up the universe and when there's love that which appears in your consciousness becomes transformed that is the universe and that only works if you do not differentiate between good and bad in your love those teachings have been there for a while somebody else said it in different words two thousand years ago it only works if you don't differentiate between good and bad how do you not differentiate between good and bad the mind the thinking mind operates on the principle of good and bad it discriminates we could call it because that is its essential essential characteristic the discriminating mind the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil the discriminating mind becoming trapped in the discriminating mind and this is why it's so essential to bring the yes to what is an unconditional yes because it is the mind the thinking mind cannot love what is it might love what it judges as desirable and it will reject try to get away from or hate that which it judges as undesirable not helpful judged as no good that's what the thinking mind does it's job to judge so you cannot change the thinking mind in that sense and say I don't want to judge anymore they have tried it because humans heard 2000 years ago judge not your neighbor love thy neighbor as thyself and then they tried not to judge never never saw that the prerequisite for not judging is to step out of the mind it's only from the dimension of space consciousness that there can be the state of no judgment the moment a thought comes in you have judged something thought can be equated with judgment and there's nothing wrong with that that's what thought does and on it's own level it has a certain helpful function if you don't get lost in it so love arises the moment there is space we could almost equate those two space love is space and it's the only way in which the world can become transformed it transforms the world from within because the world is an inner phenomenon an enormous intelligence begins to operate with a yes when space arises so that's the destiny of humanity is to be every what appears to be the individual human being to be an opening for space one could almost say that all the history of humanity up till now was the pre-history of humanity we're not quite human yet I don't know if there will be any history after this but there may be but it won't be very important as history so you look upon whatever you look upon with love and you love your neighbor as yourself your neighbor is whoever comes into your field of consciousness of course and this is essential practice now when facing another human being I mentioned it briefly yesterday is there space just a little bit of space a little space of no thought as you as your attention is there on another human being a space of the openness of no thought not length doesn't matter the space just open the mind comes in and again the stepping back from mind ideally it's there whenever you listen to anybody then it may be that when you begin to speak you might lose it initially because it's a new way of living and so it's easy for the mind to draw you back into the stream of thinking and if you then remember to step back from thought once you have uttered what you have to say you step back again into space and you listen and after a while you can even sense spaciousness in the background as you speak another way of saying it you can sense yourself your essential beingness in the background as you speak the I am this is probably what a very early spiritual teacher as far as the western world is concerned a contemporary spiritual teacher early 20th century Gurdjieff who spoke of self-remembering remember yourself in any situation it's probably what he meant was that he didn't mean remember the story of yourself remember the essence and it's not even remembering it isn't quite perhaps the most the best way of putting it knowing it being it remembering could lead you to believe that it is some kind of something you think about okay I must think about myself so that's and don't be you will be challenged in two ways by the human mind in this because the human mind senses that it loses its control predominance and that's the challenge comes from within and it comes from other human minds which come disguised as human beings most human beings they carry a disguise of mind or the other way around the mind disguises itself as a human being the being is there but where and that is the skill the art of penetrating beyond mind in others of not getting caught up in that density when you are facing another human being not getting caught up in the density that frequency that vibrational frequency that is the human mind because otherwise you get caught up in it and you become reactive which means it stimulates your own mind and that's the normal human interaction you can only penetrate beyond that if you have gone beyond it within yourself it's only then that you can go beyond that in others but with the yes applies here also the yes to what is when what is is a human being right in front of you that is the form that this moment takes and that may be the most difficult yes of all compared to which the yes to bad weather is easy you could be in the Canadian Arctic and that yes would be easy compared to the yes that is needed sometimes quite often when you meet a human mind and here we have really I don't remember who said it perhaps it was Ram Dass who said relationships are the sadhana the spiritual practice for the west the main spiritual practice for the west is in and through relationships encountering other humans that's the challenge the greatest challenge that challenge has different levels to it the more you are linked with these humans for some reason through family ties one could say the more past you share with another human being the harder it may be practice this at first when you encounter relatively uncomplicated encounters with humans seemingly superficial interactions and it's amazing how people reduce all those interactions and of those there are many throughout the day how they reduce them to a means to an end when you have superficial interactions ordering a meal in a restaurant paying for your food buying a newspaper meeting someone in an elevator talking to the cleaner coming in whatever it may be many kinds of brief seemingly interactions that only seem to be a means to an end because in the mind-identified state the present moment is always a means to an end so in the mind-identified state whoever appears in this moment is also a means to an end it's a dreadful reduction and impoverishment of human existence to live in such a way that most of your encounters with other humans both superficial encounters and even other encounters longer other kinds of relationships are really in the mind-identified state a means to some end because you're never fully present in the now in that state you always want something else out of this now the now is a stepping stone to where I want to get so now all those meetings whenever you meet anybody it's a wonderful opportunity for the arising of space in that meeting which is love also and all that it requires is to look at this human being and to listen if they're saying something in the spacious awareness which has no thought in it just that alertness this is why we're here the whole reason why we're here is to know that state of consciousness to look the same way you look at a flower or tree and perhaps at the same time if there is an interaction it's taking place the waiter comes you look up from the menu two seconds one second and then you say what you have to say and then he or she asks the question and you look and then you say what you have to say there's a little bit of space there is part of the interaction where you are not playing a role in that interaction when there is space when there is no space it's almost inevitable that you will slip into some kind of role in a restaurant and this is unconscious in a restaurant you play the role of the customer and there's a subtle difference then in the way in which you speak to that other human being and the waiter or waitress may be trapped in their own role playing the role as waiter waitress and you can sometimes see it when they come sometimes some of them play their role well they get a good tip others don't play it very well either they play their role reluctantly and then there are other roles that humans play and you observe yourself whenever the mind is there there'll be some kind of role that you play even to yourself alone in your room you play the role of perhaps you're the victim and you're thinking about your victimhood and and I'm not saying stop playing roles that would be a big demand but what is possible is to be there when you do play roles to know that there's a role to notice it you notice it for example if you behave and speak differently to that famous person that you meet and the waiter or the person who comes to do the cleaning are there slight or considerable differences in the ways in which you speak to them or interact with them perhaps they are which means you're playing roles which means you're the basis for your interaction is a conceptualized sense of self and you're imposing another conceptualized self on the other person and two conceptualized selves then play their respective roles the famous person may be playing their own role unless they are so famous that they've seen the emptiness of it and they've gone beyond it and you might still persist in imposing a conceptual identity people do it with spiritual teachers believing when they meet a spiritual teacher they're meeting somebody important they're not they're not meeting anybody except themselves they might get nervous when they see a spiritual teacher are you nervous when you're meeting yourself? strange but because they have a conceptual identity of somebody important and then you have another conceptual identity of somebody who is not very important and you may have a conceptual identity of yourself as important or not important or you might not even quite know whether you're important or not important sometimes the world tells you this and sometimes the world tells you that this includes all opinions you have of yourself and that's an interesting thing that's more concepts opinions that you have of yourself are ultimately all parts of roles concepts not real whatsoever is it possible to live without having an opinion about yourself do you lose something important when you no longer have an opinion about who you are in this life you just are at any moment when you live in the now that goes automatically it falls away with the awareness that is there the opinions that you have become unimportant the whole conceptual structure falls away in the immediacy of present moment awareness the entire conceptual structures fall away so you are no longer imposing those structures on yourself or on others no opinions can I live without having opinions about myself am I losing something important your opinions may be predominantly good or predominantly bad and there is a reluctance in both cases of letting go because there is an attachment I won't know who I am anymore at least I know that I am a wretched miserable being and so it is so the liberating thing is that that becomes unimportant the more there is that spaciousness in your life the more those things fall away the conceptual structures about yourself are not important they are not who you are and then you don't inflict them on others that's the beauty of it when they fall away within yourself that conceptualized self you don't inflict the conceptualized self on others which is it sounds shocking we could say it is the first act of violence the very root of violence is to because it's deadening the humanity the essential beingness the essential aliveness of the other human being which ultimately is no other and you will only do that if you have deadened it in yourself first and that is the dilemma of humanity in its present evolutionary stage amazing so to see in some ways we are this is why it's so wonderful to watch an animal because an animal too has no opinion about itself it is that's why the dog is so joyful and why the cat purrs if the dog had an opinion about him or herself that unconditional love wouldn't be there anymore because the dog would then also inflict an opinion on you and it might not be good and so the dog would be thinking oh here he comes again so you are meeting another human being in that space of no thought brief perhaps it's fine and there you there is a true coming together a true meeting beyond concepts beyond roles or opinions and if you should slip into roles it may now be easier to notice it when it happens to notice the subtle changes in your behavior and speech when you relate to different kinds of people according to the concepts you hold in your mind about those people and how you compare your own self concept with their self that self concept is he or she more important than me and that will determine the role you play does he know more than me is he whatever it is and then a little wanting comes in you want something from he who you think is more than you comparison is a continuous thing that the egoic mind structure uses continuous comparison of me with others I can only evaluate me by comparing me to others how do I rate here and that determines the conceptual structure of me and then you try to improve it with all kinds of strange things name dropping hoping that if you are talking to someone you drop a name hoping that in that association with that name which is a concept belief this is a famous person and you know him that your own self concept something is added to it that will give greater worth to yourself this is why the names are dropped in the hope that in the eyes of that other person so you are hoping that this person you are talking to will give you more recognition through dropping the name of somebody else who is famous or has some other high status so it's a hope to gain a stronger self and name dropping is only a small example of the strategies used by the ego to enhance itself it's always looking out for something and so you may observe that even some spiritually advanced people occasionally can catch themselves name dropping when I talk to my friend so and so Ram Das called me the other day so and this is it is whenever you notice something like that it's not really a personal thing either this is how the egoic human mind operates and the noticing it and that's the amazing thing when you notice it there are still many humans in this world who are trapped in these patterns and don't know it they are totally those patterns noticing it is actually the arising of space consciousness from where you can see what the mind is doing and so whenever you notice a pattern a role that you are playing some conceptual game that's a wonderful thing it's not that now this is the mind from the brief insight that you have there the realization of what is going on inside you that could immediately be used by the mind again and then formulate a judgment about yourself which could be oh you see you are still deficient in spirituality you see you can't you're doing it again all that silly you're still playing silly games that everybody else is playing you're no good for example or other things are possible too but if you stay with the noticing that means it's only from the unconditioned dimension of consciousness that you can see the conditioned from within the conditioned after you've seen it you might judge it that's the conditioned again it's only so whatever you see in yourself even the worst so called traits of humanity because all of humanity is within each human being it may not be manifested but all of humanity is within each human and you might discover evil thoughts I think those thoughts I there is no I beyond those thoughts there is the deepest that the deepest I am is not thinking those thoughts those thoughts are clouds they are human thoughts floating around and often people believe all their thoughts are come from them there is only really one human mind there's a collective human mind and it's almost like clouds can float into your mind from other minds and you think certain thoughts and you think it's me all it is it's a collective human mind operating so you can discover all strange things in yourself and the temptation is there to judge yourself as not yet worthy or might never be worthy or you should definitely not be having these thoughts and so you are making them into a problem a personal problem the thoughts are personalized and they become problematic and you give them more power because the making them problematic is further thought activity is further self self activity the mind made self it loves whatever dilemma you can find it loves it and the more complex the dilemma of yourself the better surely I need twenty years of psychoanalysis to get through all this to get to the bottom of it all well if you examined the mind bit by bit yes it would take a long time where did this thought come from oh so whatever you notice in yourself is beautiful because the noticing the seeing is already liberation from being completely identified with whatever thoughts or emotions are happening inside you and so you can just stay with the seeing and seeing it is human the human mind that's all it is and you just watch oh that means you are more interested in seeing being the witness than getting into the thought or reacting to the thought which creates further thought it draws you in and the amazing thing is when you see patterns especially repeatedly they tend to drop away after a while by themselves don't have to do anything patterns that are no longer invested with sense of self but are recognized as patterns they drop away it's only through complete self identification with patterns that they go on and on and on and so the recognition comes with stepping back so now let's go back to the interactions there is a human being the question is even in the briefest of interactions it is your life is made up of these things your life is made up of what relatively insignificant moments the moments that the mind tells you are significant are relatively few and it might be waiting for one it might have been waiting for a long time I'm waiting for a significant moment in my life then I came to a retreat I thought that might do it there's a watch they have the advertising slogan I don't remember what watch so maybe it's not a good slogan it's a there's the watch and somebody is looking at it and is saying significant moment significant moments so I suppose whenever you look at that watch that moment becomes significant presumably it's an expensive watch and so your conceptual self becomes significant when you remember that you're wearing it a lot of the consumer industry works like that to enhance your sense of self through an image a fiction yeah of course but they don't know it's a fiction it's their self so life consists unless you have an expensive watch of insignificant and one of the things that people are waiting for because in the normal state of consciousness you're always waiting for something and really you're waiting for something significant to happen and not that often does it happen and it doesn't last very long the wedding comes and goes and then daily existence is there breakfast every morning so and then you're meeting all these people these insignificant people in your daily interactions hoping to meet somebody significant and not realizing that you are missing the whole thing you're missing your whole life in the waiting game in the conceptual waiting game you're missing your whole life and every encounter with another human being is potentially a beautiful meeting with yourself is potentially the most significant event there could be even the briefest encounter when there is a recognition of the other as yourself which is there in the space perhaps brief space of no thought which of course implies no concepts no roles no mental positions there is the end of the illusion of separateness the illusion of separation which has been there for so long and so you meet the ticket collector a casual person you meet on the plane or whatever brief encounters in the day and each time there is the possibility of being there as space not as a little me and its role so that's and that is a beautiful practice which then becomes extended to those people with whom you share more past and the past that you share is of course an accumulation of concepts in your mind about them otherwise there would be no past that you share there may also be certain emotions that are linked to the concepts about concerning those people so you carry a little mental emotional form formation one could almost say entity because thought forms are entities emotional fields are entities they have a life span they are born they die and so you have a for each person with whom you share past you have inside yourself a little mental emotional formation and that is the conceptual image that you hold in your mind for that person when you only know you are completely identified with mind then to you that conceptual emotional image that you hold that is based on past is that person you are completely trapped in that conceptual emotional formation so this is you have constructed it unconsciously not that you have done it it's been done it's done automatically a little entity a little mental formation that when you are totally identified with that to you is that other person is your wife your ex-wife your ex-lover your lover your father your mother your aunt or whoever else it may be with whom you or the person you've worked with for a long time your boss whoever it may be you have that you carry that and that wants to remain in place what tends to happen is then all your interactions with that human being happening through the filter of that conceptual mental entity that you have because you're not seeing who is there you have there will be things in that human being that you cannot see because they're not part of the image that you hold and certainly you cannot see the deeper reality of that human being which is beyond any concepts any story part of the concepts is the concepts form a little story too that's part of that formation so when you're totally identified with that then that is the agent through which you interact with that person you're really interacting with your mental image another thing that tends to happen is all you see from that person then after a while is what corresponds and will strengthen that image that you already hold of that person other things you may not even see because they are not perception is selective so they will be that is how your interactions with other humans become very limited and become totally mind dominated and that is how do you step out of that that prison which first you have constructed for yourself you put yourself into a prison because you have formed the same kind of image for who you are the me the little me as I call it the little me with it's story it's memories it's patterns it's reactive patterns and then the little me forms little other me's around it and that's that's the the prison cell that people inhabit you may not become immediately free of all that but freedom is here as you step out of conceptual thinking that's the beginning of that losing it's overriding hold upon you all those conceptual structures and of course there is a reluctance the conceptual structures these little formations almost entities isn't it amazing that you have a you have a little a little human a little being in there that is called my ex-wife and she lives in here my ex-husband whatever or my wife or my husband after many years of marriage it is not uncommon for partners married couple not they hardly see each other anymore they just have the image of the other there is nobody there just in the distant background there is a body sitting and there is the image body image the old you may have noticed it happens sometimes that when as people become more conscious many of the old conceptual patterns behavior patterns fall away this I am sure has happened to many of you already through the arising of the unconditioned consciousness many of the old patterns become less empowered they just lose their force and then you might meet somebody you have known for a long time family whoever they don't see they to them if they are totally identified with their image they won't even see what you have changed they just continue they want to project the old image they are refusing to let go of that and you might want to say hello I am here they may also resent that somehow they can feel that there is now a clash between who you are and their image and they might become angry because the image doesn't fit anymore what have you done I don't like the way you are now I don't like you are too conscious so with those this is a beautiful challenge those humans with whom you share a lot of past to bring in that openness in your interactions the cause in miracles speaks of relating to another human being without past easier said than done you might say in this moment that human appears in front of you and you are giving that human being an full attention the same attention that you give to the tree or the flower that human being may be going through their conditioned behavior and yet you are simply giving the most powerful thing there is simply giving being attentive listening and looking listening looking to be able to do that there needs to be a yes you have to allow that human being to be here at this moment you might as well because they are here at this moment they are right in front of you I noticed a little to illustrate this a little anecdote I once knew a woman not in a personal not in an intimate relationship an acquaintance who was regarded by most people as one of the most obnoxious people around what here comes trouble would be when she comes you would know she would be accusing you of something wanting something wanting you to get involved in her problems complaining constantly so those were her patterns and I noticed once I was living in a small town where that she also lived two or three times I noticed there was basically only one high street as they call it where the shops are main street in the town I was walking the high street and more than once I noticed myself as I saw her coming the other way was crossing over to the other side but then once or twice or more than that it happened that as I was approaching a corner she was coming around the corner too late and then I noticed a very strange thing the moment she stood in front of me there was space and love the person that I wanted to avoid if I could but when I couldn't avoid her anymore there she was and there was spaciousness and love and next time I would avoid her again but when she couldn't be avoided it was beautiful and a few times in our interactions she felt something something fell away from her and she walked away as if some weight had been lifted there was actually love there it was penetrating and it was beyond those mind structures simply spaciousness was there just a strange a strange thing I somebody noticed once that I crossed to the other side and then asked why are you doing it well it just happened there there was no decision making involved it's like it's very much like avoiding a thunderstorm or downpour of rain if you can if you let's say if you walk this way around and you you this perhaps is similar it's a kind of but if you get caught in the rain and if you say yes it's beautiful so there may be human beings in your life that you would not perhaps choose to interact with and you don't have to unless life puts you in a position where you do have to and then at that moment the totality has determined that this is the ideal situation for you and for that person otherwise that person wouldn't be there so you do not need to seek out those people whom you can't stand but it may be that for some reason this person keeps coming up in your life and the universe is not insane the human mind in its present form perhaps is insane but the universe there is an underlying intelligence at work and that underlying intelligence knows what it is doing things are connected at a deeper level all humans are connected sometimes it comes to the surface as a synchronistic event as a coincidence and you see how is that possible and what you see is only a tiny flash that is coming to the surface of things to show you the interconnectedness of all things on a deeper level so whatever is at this moment is part of the totality and could not be otherwise it is because it could not be otherwise and to so to see the inevitability of is which might mean this human being that I would rather not be with it is challenging or difficult for some reason he or she is in my life and that is your teacher then if there is a human who is there that human must be my teacher what is he or she teaching me what is this unconscious person going to teach me it's teaching you this giving attention listening looking allowing to be this moment as it is and thus going beyond conceptual structures in your interaction and you may well be ready for this even to practice some of you may have a long standing issue perhaps with a parent or somebody very close to you a long history of judgment of resentment carrying that inside and the other person carrying that inside and it may well be that before you do it in the actual presence of that person to be there fully in that spaciousness you might the image may arise in your mind of that human being and you give attention and allow that image to be there in the spaciousness that you are and perhaps you begin then to penetrate to go deeper than the conceptual entity in your head forgiveness is really that ultimately forgiveness is letting go of conceptual identity for yourself and others give them space give them space which is yourself recognize the feelings that you have and the thoughts that you have as formations as formations that live a formation that lives inside you the recognition of it means there is now through the seeing of it as a formation there is space around it that means that is forgiveness that is freeing and because all things are interconnected it is not uncommon for people who do that on an inner level for suddenly to happen that that person suddenly experiences something similar to what you experience some letting go not always the case you don't need it you don't need the other person to go through that also that's a bonus might happen but it has happened and people have reported it as miracles in some cases it's happened that the moment that shift happened when they saw the limitations of the conceptual identity they were holding and space arose which is love around it you don't love that conceptual you don't love the conditioning that entity that you might want to cross the road to go to the other side of the road for you love the being because the being is space and you are space that essential beingness and it's not uncommon for humans who've done on an inner level that shift happened and five minutes later the phone rang and it was that person I've heard similar stories more than once the phone rang and after years of no contact that person rang how is that possible?

because of the interconnectedness of all things so Jesus already pointed to the fact how important in your spiritual life what he called your enemies are how important love your enemies now they understood that in a very limited sense and tried to do it through the structure of thought ok, I've got to try and love him ok ok I just can't I hate him or you hear that and you just but you exclude two or three people from that I love of course him or her don't even mention so that's a beautiful challenge bringing that into those relationships long standing that have passed that spiritual practice so those people who keep cropping up in your life you can't get rid of use them as teachers or presence you're supposed to be with them otherwise they wouldn't be there in some cases it's family members grown up children parents doing mad things you wouldn't associate with them you wouldn't want to be with them in the same room in some cases this is how people feel if he weren't my father my mother we would have nothing in common except for the fact that he or she is my father or mother some people feel that or daughter or son or some other close relation and they're there for a reason you may have more in common than you realize yes you certainly have more in common than you realize this is beautiful the rain the truth being spoken and realized here the possibility of going within could there be a better moment than this moment if you start thinking yes if you don't think no then you realize the goodness of this moment the depths of it the incredible goodness but if you start thinking you will think about a beach in Hawaii perhaps or some other place it's always some other place could there be a better moment can lead you into thinking let me think yes there could be or the question could there be a better moment can take you deeply into this moment and the beauty and sacredness of this moment something that thought cannot capture and so awareness it is known through awareness it's inseparable from awareness so there's always that dimension of the sacred that now is always sacred and that is amazing no matter what form it takes and of course naturally as you become free of the conceptual heaviness you look and listen more attention arises to sense perceptions the sacredness isn't perhaps in the sound of this rain it's underneath it the mind says there is no mystery here water molecules are dripping and when they hit the ground they produce a sound that's the illusion of knowledge you still don't really know what it is the sacredness of course is the space that is inseparable from you in which this happens the world that is arising in you at this moment the phenomenal it's arising in that space the background the noise foreground but it's almost these natural phenomena like rain it's almost as if that space were still coming through even the phenomenon somebody once put it beautifully and said god made everything out of nothing but the nothingness still shines through still and so the nothingness the no thingness the one life beyond form shining through this rain too make the rest of today a time of stillness of going within and also being present without and with just this this moment stay with it it is unlikely that anything significant according to the mind will happen today but go more deeply into the seemingly insignificant and realize how significant that truly is there's not even a tv here so definitely nothing significant will happen we'll address any questions that have survived in your mind tomorrow in the now laughter the only teaching this week has been learning to look and listen in the state of openness

Eckhart Tolle Retreat May the Mind Be Servant of Awareness 11hour44min part2

[Speaker 1] (0:16 - 2:43:34)

not to get entangled in further concepts. There's always the temptation of making a spiritual teaching into a new conceptual structure. Demanding also of a spiritual teaching to answer all questions, to provide a framework through which you can look at the world, which is not the state of looking and listening, the state of openness.

Demanding the security that is provided by a conceptual framework. And that demand is embedded in the human mind, which works in that way. And that way, you can notice it perhaps in yourself by feeling the pull or the push within your mind.

And there may even be some emotions that go with that, because it's all aspects of the mind made self. Noticing the pull or the push in your mind that manifests as a need or more on the conceptual level, a way for the mind to function. And that can be very strong.

And made them into conceptual structures. And the essence of all true spiritual teachings, of course, is to take you out of that trap, to realize who you are beyond the stream of words, thoughts, concepts in the mind. And then the mind comes in and makes a conceptual structure out of the original simple signpost that points the way out of that.

And then come in more and more demands. You demand that how interpreting through that conceptual framework. Philosophy develops.

There's nothing wrong with philosophy. It's a beautiful play. It doesn't take you to freedom.

So wherever humans meet and wherever spiritual teaching happens, arises, the teacher and the taught are one. Wherever spiritual teaching arises, there also arises confusion because the mind will come in and will somehow try to make the mind into concepts in its search for greater security. I need to know this.

And so, of course, there are 100, 200 vital questions that the mind could ask. Some of them, I have them on paper. Others are in the head, some of the heads.

Vital questions, they look, they are important, yes, on their own level. This needs to be addressed, yes. But it is the need for the mind to build something up.

If it is vital, you will know the answer from within. Observe in oneself, observing in oneself, this need to have the universe, reality, arranged so that you can know where things are, how they fit in. That's the need of the mind-made self.

When you step beyond that, you step into the unknown, also the unknowable, into the state of not knowing, which is deeper even than not knowing. There is a knowing in it, not through concepts. This is why we are here.

So the reason for being here in that sense is limited to that, limited to the bare essential. The rest, as Einstein put it, is details. Any further questions?

Of course, the details are very interesting, but no further answers or further questions would enable you to go more deeply now into what's already here. They would only take you more into a conceptualization. If the answer is vital, the question is vital, the answer will be there from within you.

But we are learning to go through life in that state of pure, aware, looking and listening in which the need for immediate interpretation, an immediate need to immediately fit it into, how does it fit into my belief system that is relinquished? It's only there, when that is relinquished, that true intelligence can emerge, and that is an intelligence that's not even recognized by the human mind as intelligence. It goes beyond it.

The mind still functions within that vastness, and yet it's far beyond what the mind could comprehend. We could also say that nothing that has been said here is the truth, because the truth cannot be said. And with most statements, if you look deeply, the opposite is also true, except perhaps, this is true for all thought, except perhaps for thought that denies itself.

This is traditionally the way of Buddhism, teaching through what the truth is not, showing you who you are not, what the truth is not. No positive assertions are made. And one could say this is an extremely wise way of teaching that leaves you with nothing on a conceptual level, potentially, however, the mind is so clever that it has used even Buddhism.

It's taken a few hundred years, and made it also into a big conceptual structure. The original teaching of the Buddha took everything away. It gave you nothing.

That's why the Western scholars who only approached it through the discriminating mind called Buddhism nihilistic, life denying, because it didn't give them concepts to believe in. It took away concepts, left you with the empty space. Can you say something about God, they asked the Buddha.

And the answer was, did you hear the question, they said. So perhaps the only way for thought to be not subject to the polarities or to the opposites, which are also true, is for thought to deny itself, which means that this last statement that I just made is the closest to the truth you can ever get, that it is true for thought, and thought denies itself, then there's some truth there. On a conceptual level, you may disagree or agree with certain words.

It's not that important. But beware of the mind's fascination when it has found something to disagree with. The mind is when they have a beautiful carpet, a huge carpet, huge pattern, beautiful.

And there's a little thing there that shouldn't be there. And you cannot help but continuously look at that. And that in your mind then begins to assume it becomes a thought form that obliterates the carpet, the rest of the carpet, nothing personal in that.

That's what the human mind does. So it sometimes happens during a talk, a statement is made that somebody disagrees with or positively knows that that's not quite true. That's not easy to find, not difficult to find such a thing, a statement that you don't disagree with or you find fault with.

And then you don't hear the rest of the talk anymore because the thought form that objects, takes possession of your mind becomes. And then you might be seething, waiting two hours for the end of the talk, and finally, something that was said to the first five minutes, easy to miss the rest. That's how the mind works.

It's, if this were an academic setting, that would perhaps be very important because that, it works exclusively on that level. But this only, the mind ultimately is only here as a means, the words are here as signposts, not much more than that. And as such, they're not that great either.

It is a wonderful thing. We're not speaking here of content because there's the fascination with the content of your mind. We are speaking here of observing, there's the possibility of observing the structure that is at work underneath whatever the content of your thoughts is.

There's the structure of the mind. It's a wonderful thing to observe in oneself the workings of the mind. When you look underneath the content of mind and then you discover things that I just mentioned, how one thing, it can become fascinated with one thing that assumes importance and obliterates everything else.

You can observe its reactive nature when there is something that you object to that clashes with what you know to be true and you may be right, but observing what that does to you, the fact that you are right is not enough to observe what that rightness, how that operates in your mind, how it obliterates everything else, can easily do that, wants to do that because that's a way of the mind of remaining in control. It's beautiful and wonderful to notice that in oneself. It doesn't mean that there's something wrong with you.

When you notice it, there's something right. So this is part of this teaching, of course, is to see the mind and its workings, to look at it, to notice it, and say, ah, yes, there it is. That's what it does.

That's fine. So this gathering has never been about content. It's not about that, of adding, about adding some content or some information to your mind.

I have no information. And if some information has cropped in here and there, maybe it was even wrong. I really, there is no information.

What is there to say on the level of information here? And so it's not about any kind of content of mind, although it looks like it on the surface. Some outside observer peering through the window might think that all week you've been learning new things because this is an institute.

But that's not really the case. You haven't really been learning anything. I sometimes, I might use that word.

I say we are learning to look and listen, but that's really letting go of that which prevents you from looking and listening. It's an unlearning, perhaps. It's certainly not an adding to here.

That would be dreadful if you went away with your feeling that now you knew more. Watch your mind, as they sometimes say in Buddhism. Be there as the witness.

Don't get too fascinated by the content of the mind, but watch the structure of the mind, what it does, how it does it. The mind wants you, which is thought, wants you to become fascinated by the content of thought. They have a beautiful way in some Buddhist monasteries that I visited, when a monk gets angry with another monk, or nun, for things.

Somebody's talking too much, and in the monastery, when conventionally, you would say, why don't you shut up? But in the monastery, you can't say that because you are practicing loving kindness. So all you can say then, instead of shut up, is watch your mind.

And then the other person goes, that could be an awakening. It could also lead to immediate reaction. And then the words before he knows it, the words come out, why don't you watch yours?

Yes. You can observe how fast and how efficiently the mind may itself goes into, when its sense of self has even been slightly diminished by some comment, something somebody said, or did, or insinuated, or might have insinuated, or said openly, or criticized, or judged you, or situation somehow diminished you, how quickly and efficiently the human mind may itself goes into the repair mode, when its structure, the structure of the self has seemingly been diminished by some comment or judgment, criticism, how immediate the reaction is, and that is the defense mechanism that immediately comes into play, that is designed to repair the injured, sense of self, which is all the structure of thought, the conceptual entity, of course, it's very vulnerable.

So any kind of criticism and so on, leads to, when you're not alert, there is an immediate reaction, which is designed to repair the structure of self, and if possible, as part of that repair job, to diminish the self in the one who just attacked yours. Often, that's what the entire repair consists of, in you diminished me, now I'm going to diminish you, in your sense of self, and that could go on for a long time. Some relationships work on that level of, in companies, corporations, institutions, and so a wonderful thing of those things that you observe within yourself is defensiveness, defensiveness, which is an essential aspect of the mind made self, how it jumps in immediately, cannot tolerate any kind of diminishment, because it's, although nothing really has been taken from who you truly are, but in your conceptual self structure, you have suffered a loss when somebody calls you an idiot, to give a simple, often it's more complex than that, or not as direct, perhaps, but to take a simple example, when somebody either calls you an idiot, or which is the same thing, calls you wrong, you're wrong, that's an, it's an enormous insult to the mind made self to be wrong, and unless there's this, you are there beyond mind, there's an immediate and automatic defense mechanism that comes into play that will defend your position. Whether or not you're wrong doesn't matter anymore, because you're defending your sense of self, and often it's done by saying, no, you are wrong.

You're trying to pull something from him or her, he or she tries to pull something from you, demolish the self. Observing defensiveness in oneself, how automatic it is, and then when you see it, you may no longer be totally dominated by it, and then you can be open to being wrong, and say, me wrong? And you look and see it might be true.

You may be right, or yes, you are right, I got that wrong. I often get things wrong. The more you speak, the more likely that is.

No ultimate truth, even in spiritual discourse, as we know, is possible, so even a simple thing, like saying, I don't know, is very hard for some mind made selves. They must know the answer, because even to the mind made self, even to say, I don't know, is a little diminishment. When my younger brother was 17 years old, and his ego was growing, as it does at that age, I noticed he could never say, I don't know.

Whatever question you asked him about anything, he had to know the answer. Sometimes a complete fabrication that he invented on the spot. And then I suggested that he should try out what it feels like to say, I don't know.

And I said, next time, I'll remind you. And when something came up, and I could see he didn't know, and he was about to explain something that he didn't know about, I said, remember, try it, just try. Say it.

And finally, very reluctantly, he said, okay, I don't know. And I looked at him, and I said, and you haven't died? No, I'm still here.

And as presence arises, emerges from within you, you may even find now, as that awareness is there, that the automatic, unconscious defense mechanism, the self-repair mechanism, may at times no longer operate. And somebody criticizes or says you're wrong, or either designed to diminish your sense of self or could be interpreted as diminishing myself, and there's no automatic reaction anymore. There's simply what one could call allowing the seeming diminishment of oneself, not resisting it.

Of course, you're not being diminished at all. You're diminished in your illusion of self. This is why even that in itself is a spiritual practice.

Not defending yourself, the conceptual self-structure, and allowing what appeared to be a diminishment of yourself, but of course was only a diminishment of the structure of the mind-made self, and that is allowed to be without resistance. This is only possible in the simultaneous arising of presence of space consciousness, because already you sense the deeper levels of your being as space. From there, you can allow the diminishment of the conceptual self to happen, and it's actually a beautiful thing not to resist that.

That somehow was also part of Jesus' teaching, being of course misinterpreted and misunderstood, and that's a wonderful thing when that begins to operate in your life. Then you can actually welcome what is, after all, only a diminishment of the illusion of self, because life, in many different ways, going beyond purely personal situations, life does that to you anyway in many ways. You're going towards that anyway, no matter how you try to build up the self.

In the end, life, one way or another, will demolish it. And that simply happens because you gradually go towards the dissolution of the form and the greatest achievement then also comes to an end. So life, and you go through life and things will happen.

Life will do that to you. Even an illness is such a thing, really. I'm not in control anymore.

The mind will try to somehow fit that in also, and sometimes it manages to fit the illness and enhance my sense of self even through the illness. So clever, the mind-made self, you can do even that. But potentially, the illness can be something that seems to diminish you.

You're not that powerful anymore when you lie in bed. And I've observed in some humans who have a strong egoic self that when they are ill, even a slight illness, a flu, they become more pleasant. They have some insights that they don't have in their normal state.

The ego gets a little weaker. They just, energy isn't there. And they say things they wouldn't have said, and then the health comes back and they're in control again.

The diminishment of self has also in different spiritual traditions been a spiritual path to be practiced as an active thing rather than a passive thing, but that becomes dangerous. If you are actively attempting to diminish yourself, that's dangerous. I don't know how often that has worked in the history of spiritual evolution.

In a few cases, it may have worked, but I don't recommend that because there is behind that somebody who wants to achieve something through my diminishment, and there's a hidden, very easily, a hidden ego that wants to enhance itself through becoming humble, through becoming the lowest of all. Surely I am the lower than you. Surely nobody's as humble as me is implied.

In some cases, in very exceptional cases, perhaps it may have worked. St. Francis perhaps practiced that, but before that, probably some big diminishment happened to him anyway. He was in a war in a very, he suffered greatly and something happened to him there.

He always said, I'm the most miserable of all creatures. Why does God speak through you? They asked him, why does God manifest these wonderful things through you?

They asked St. Francis, because he said, because I'm the most miserable and the lowest of all, and God likes that. He talks in very simple, talked in very simple language. It's, in him, it seemed to have been without ego.

It was genuine. And so there's the, what these, the great teachers leave behind, but it's also your, really the opening is also happening with you. Those are only precursors.

They leave behind, even after their death, an opening, a space. I saw that very clearly this year. We were in India visiting the burial place or the Samadhi, whatever they called it, of Ramana Maharshi.

They were, I don't know if it's, it's just where people walk around every day. They walk around it, hopefully not to gain merit, but to be surrendered in every step. And it's, I was sitting there watching, and it seemed that they were walking around a hole, an emptiness, an open space, being drawn to it.

Three weeks later, we were in Italy, visiting the tomb of St. Francis in Assisi. And the same scene, there was that tomb, and people, continuous stream of people coming in and walking around it. And again, I sensed they're walking around, not a person, not the memory of a person or the remnants of a person, but an emptiness.

They're walking around that, drawn to it, because within them, that same space, which is one, is also emerging and recognizes itself there. So that, of course, to be the space, rather than the object in space, is not what we have learned here. We have unlearned, and we are still unlearning to be the object, to see ourselves as the object in consciousness, the mind object, the mental me.

And we are seeing who we are beyond that as the object, as the space, not the object in space. That's the greatest realization. And that knowing and that seeing can be there every moment, in every sense perception, that happens within the field of spacious stillness.

In every human interaction, that spacious stillness can be there in the background as the essence of your being, as intelligence, so that the foreground of your life, which includes thoughts, which includes whatever arises in your field of perception, includes situations, events, people, the foreground in your life is no longer absolutely important and deadly serious. There is no longer, it loses its heaviness. It is balanced by the other dimension of life, the unmanifested.

And so you go through life having one foot in the unmanifested and one foot in the manifested, a bridge between form and formless. That's your function. And you thought you were a person and you turn out to be a bridge.

And please don't make that into some new concept. The mind then will say, I don't agree with you, this concept of bridge. It's not quite right because you're right also.

Or we are all wrong, comes to the same thing. Space consciousness, to use that term again, just a little pointer. It also, it spreads.

This is a beauty. Each one of you is also a seed for that, the seeds of space consciousness going out, seeds that have already sprouted, even better. Seeds that have already sprouted and you go out into this world somehow, if not yet fully, but somehow embodying that dimension.

Somehow within yourself, you have gone beyond and you are beyond the personal dimension, the exclusively personal sense of self. Even though the personal may at times still manifest, reassert itself from time to time, and yet that deeper dimension of consciousness has already emerged. That cannot be reversed.

It can be obscured temporarily, but that process cannot be reversed. It's happened. It has emerged and it will continue to emerge.

And if it becomes obscured for long, it will push through one way or another. It's even pushing through in humans who are not drawn to any spiritual teaching. It may require some external event to crack the shell of ego.

And it's pushing through. Gently, just like a plant. A plant doesn't, a plant, they say, some plants can go through cement, through concrete.

A plant has enormous power, but it is so gentle. It's just very, very gentle. There's no, it's just enormous power, but extreme gentleness also.

So what comes, forms of leading, and one of the forms is our retreat. There's the external form of our retreat, which is coming to an end, dying, because every, the end of every form is a little death. Even saying goodbye to somebody is a little death.

Each time, little death. That's why in many languages you need to affirm that you're going to see them again. Au revoir, auf Wiedersehen, see you again.

See you, see you. So this is a little death too, as the form comes to an end. Now, that's the form, of course, it's fleeting.

It wasn't that long ago that it started, and we said, this is the now. And then we said that at some later point, we will check in just to see if it's still the now. And now the form has come to an end, and we can check in again.

Still the same space, it's still now. And the essence of our retreat is the timeless dimension, of course, of consciousness, is inseparable from who you are. That cannot end, the timeless cannot end, the essence you carry within.

So, nothing of true value is ever lost when a form dies. And in a little while, this chair may be empty. That's beautiful, because you can then see more clearly where these words came from.

It's a beautiful thing for those years as humans who follow a teacher. It's always a beautiful event, challenging when the teacher dies, which could mean either the body dissolves or the teacher goes away, which some Eastern teachers used to do. They would always run away.

Some still do it. And then you have to say, where has he gone? Oh, he's supposed to be, so, oh, let's go and find him.

Until finally the body dissolves, and then you're, where is he now? Where is she now? Left us.

And finally you're thrown back upon yourself, what all the years he or she has been pointing to, the truth is not here, it's there in you, it's in you, this is just an opening. Yeah, but you. There's such peace coming from you, such beauty coming from you.

How do you know that? Where do you feel that? How do you know it?

Well, here. So where is it? So walk through this world as much as possible.

Without the heavy conceptual self-structure, and that starts the moment you walk out of here. Don't immediately reassume the burden of your life situation in your mind. It may want to reassert itself.

You walk out of here, okay, the retreat is gone, where am I going now? Back to my problems, back to my home situation, back to that, and then while you're traveling home, you're already there dwelling on that. What I have to do, left undone, whenever left.

All the things, okay, and then the facial expression will undergo a change. You're back in reality. And by the time you open your front door, you're already stressed.

Could happen. Or you could just travel home beautifully as a field of awareness at this moment, whether you're driving or sitting on a plane or bus or hitchhiking. Whatever it is, this moment is your life.

And there's the external of it, and that's beautiful too today. Every day if you go deeper, deep enough, so you don't miss the beauty that's external, and you don't miss the beauty, the essence of beauty within, without which you would never recognize any external beauty, the essence of beauty, which is the essence of consciousness, through which beauty is recognized as a reflection. Where is the beauty?

Again, the question, where is that beauty that you see there? Where do you know it? Where is it known?

Where is it recognized? Here. Here.

So there's the essence. A love, a loving interaction, perhaps even someone you met here, some of the people you met here beyond mind, as you look into their eyes, you sense there's that beingness, and there's love. Where is the love?

Where do you recognize the essence of that other person? In here. It is all within the unconditioned consciousness contains that.

It is the essence, not the form. Whatever you see in form is the skimmed milk, and you are the cream. Of course, they are related somehow.

Due to the limitations of form, this form cannot meet and hug each form that's in this room, but that is not really necessary. The hug has already happened throughout the week, and the love, which is only the recognition of yourself, the recognition of not two, one, always just that. We'll have a moment of stillness.

I suggest you stay for just a little while with the empty chair here. Thank you, thank you. Oh yes, we were going to check if it's still now.

I think it is. That's a strange thing to, of course, the way we did it just now, it's a little bit funny, but just to, one could almost say you could, this is not quite right, of course, it's because it's language, but I'll say it. One could almost say you could sense the now, be aware of it, not as something, not as a thing, but as a presence, an aliveness, not something.

And so we've already fallen into an era of creating a subject and an object when we say you can become aware of the now. And that's what happens when one speaks, because that implies now there's two things here. There's you and that which you become aware of.

But the truth is, what we call the now is awareness itself that knows itself, but doesn't divide itself into two. And of course, it cannot be separate from who you are. You are that awareness.

That's the secret that frees you once you know it. Now, knowing it, this is not a knowing that is conceptual, because then you would have a belief, I am awareness could become a concept. But to know directly, here, now.

So our practice is meeting the now fully. We spoke of the possibility of allowing what is to be. And that means not imposing interpretations on it.

So let's use the, where we are, the setting here, the beauty that surrounds us. Let's make it into part of our awareness practice during these days. And see if we can meet nature without imposing labels or mental labels or interpretations on it.

That means we're working, that's a working, not a good word, but one of these days that word is going to disappear from the language, but not yet. Working with our sense perceptions. This is a very important, a very helpful way of stepping out of the stream of thinking.

A little, I've recently started to call it exits. The present of your mind, the present self, the conditioned mind that most people identify with as themselves, as me, that present self has hidden little exits, easy to overlook. It's not really locked, they're open.

And one such exit is quite simply sense perception. That to perceive something fully, visual, auditory, takes you out of conditioned thinking. And I'm, anybody who perceives beauty or beauty is, no matter how briefly, able to step out of mind and perceive without interpretations or labeling, if only for one second.

But more than that, if you're very alert, now most people don't know this, because all they know is their, whatever they perceive is immediately interpreted through the conditioned thought processes. It's compared to something else, you find some personal relationship to it, it reminds you of that, or you simply put a label on it and then you think you know what it is. And you inhabit a flat universe that lacks depth because the lent labels obscure to you the depth that there is, and the aliveness and the sacredness that there is in every living thing.

And living thing includes what the mind calls dead things. Living things includes everything because everything is alive. Even the stone, if you looked into the stone, you could see that there's an intense aliveness there.

Physicists have done it in their way. They know that the stone is an alive energy field.

And matter itself is alive.

It looks to us as impenetrable, solid, and dead, but it's not. So no matter whether we would conventionally call it living thing, realize whatever you perceive is alive. But let's speak specifically here about nature, plant life, and animal life.

Of course, mineral is also very beautiful. So usually, you perceive through the screen of conceptualization. And that is a deep-seated habit that we inherit, a collective mental habit.

And perhaps until recently, there was not much chance of getting out of it. But now, the possibility is there of stepping out of that deep-seated collective conditioning and see that it is possible to meet perceptions in the field of simple awareness. In many of you, if you are alert, you can observe an interesting phenomenon.

When you first perceive something, it could be a visual perception. It could be an auditory perception. Suddenly, you hear a bird singing.

Or visually, you turn this way, and suddenly, you see a tree in the most amazing colors. And if you're alert, you can catch that first moment of perception, auditory, visual. Something new arises in the field of perception.

And there's a little space always when something new enters your field of perception in which the labeling has not started yet. That is the moment, really the moment of true perception. And that moment is a moment of inner stillness where thought processes don't operate.

There's a gap. And then, thought processes usually come in. And that gap is missed by most people.

And to the mind, it is not significant because to the mind, all that is significant is thoughts. If you can't think any thoughts about something, it is insignificant to the thinking mind. And so there probably, not probably, I'm certain that there are many people in this room, not only who, in the first moment of perception, almost everybody does that, the first moment of perception, there is the freedom from labeling, but it's not recognized.

But there are many of you here who already find in their everyday life there are moments of more prolonged non-labeling of perceptions. And that is quite amazing. That is incredible shift in consciousness from the labeling mind to the free, unconditioned spaciousness in which that arises.

And I suggest here as a practice to be alert, especially to that first moment. And if you recognize that there's a moment when you first perceive something, a leaf, a stone, a tree, or the totality of field, a grove of trees, and if you bring awareness to that, then that awareness itself will be there for longer. If you are aware of that space of awareness that is there the moment you first perceive something, and then the sense perception happens within a field of stillness.

That is, you bring the stillness into the sense, it's perceived against the background of stillness. And then perhaps at some point the labeling mind may come in, if only to say, oh, you see, there's the stillness. It's possible.

So that is a practice, especially these days that you're here. Interact with nature in that way. Then, of course, everything becomes, really comes to life, becomes alive.

However, there's something in you that doesn't want to do that, because there's the fear that you might be losing something important. And that fear is the fear of the mind, which says, I won't know anymore. The mind says, I won't even know what this is.

The strange thing is, all the mind knows is one particular kind of knowing that is through conceptualization, through labeling. There is a deeper knowing in which you know without the limitations of concepts. But that knowing is, to the mind, looks like not knowing anything anymore.

And really, that is the state in which a greater intelligence operates, perceives through you. But to the mind, it's like you've lost something. It's because you haven't lost anything.

The labels, you know them when you need them. They are still there. You can get them out of the filing cabinet, or whatever analogy we can use in computer language.

I don't know that. Retrieve it from the data banks. Oh, that's what it is.

You retrieve it. When it's needed, the label is there. A lot of the time, it's not only not needed.

It limits you tremendously to be trapped in a world of labels. A conceptualized universe, when you only know concepts, labels, thoughts, you inhabit a conceptualized universe. Everything is immediately made into concepts.

Some people are so good at it. Unfortunately, in our culture, the better you are at it, the more intelligent they think you are, if you can manipulate concepts. And so that's, you can get your PhDs in that way.

I can, there's nothing wrong with PhDs if you're not trapped there. And that conceptualized existence, it's not only something you do to nature. You do it to people and to yourself.

You conceptualize your own life into a series of thought forms and call it me. And then you do it to others. Conceptualize who people are.

And some people are very good at that, too. The moment they meet somebody, they just look at you just to find out what makes you tick. And then after two or three minutes, they have it.

They've got it. Now, sometimes that thing of just working out what this person is all about, some people are actually very good at it. But all they can ever find out is the conditioned mind of that person.

And on that level, they may even be right. On the level of the egoic conditioned mind, what they say might be, I'm sometimes surprised when people come to me and say, what did you think of this person? And I say, I don't know.

And then they say, well, let me tell you about him. This is how he is, that's what he really wants. He's doing this in order to manipulate you and to do this and that and that.

Oh, maybe they're right. But another thing that they do is then they get, they don't see that as being the level of conditioning. And from then on, whenever they relate to that person, they relate through the screen of their interpretation, which of course, no matter who you are dealing with, it is extremely narrow and limited.

It is not the reality of that human being. It may be an aspect of the conditioning that is operating there, pretending to be somebody, but it's not, it cannot touch the reality of that human being. Every human being carries all possibilities within, including Buddhahood, Christhood, every saint.

And it has happened that the greatest criminal turned into a saint. When the conditioned entity broke down, through intense suffering, it can happen. Fortunately, not to you because you're here.

If you were not here, it would happen through intense suffering. That is the grace that is there through suffering. It erodes eventually, suffering is created, you could say, by this mind-made entity to a large extent.

People create their own suffering. Humanity creates its own suffering. And yet, there is built into the egoic madness, the element of grace, and that is the very suffering that is created by that limited experience.

And that exclusively personalized sense of self destroys in the end that sense of self, that limited sense. It erodes it. And so sometimes you find in people who have suffered a lot physically or in other ways, they become very simple, a childlike state, not childish, childlike.

That is the state of great openness, clarity. That is the state of being free of mind, where a deeper intelligence operates. And it happened to them through suffering.

And to some of you, suffering brought you here. And the rest happens here. So that gets eroded during this.

And every week, it gets eroded in a more pleasant way here. Although some of you may be in suffering as you sit here. Can't stand any more of this.

And you project yourself away from here, seeing yourself in the car driving home. And if you do jump in the car and drive home in the middle of the retreat, then just before you get home, you will think that you have failed miserably. You've left the retreat and now it's all gone.

It's always the other. The other, where you are not, is always where you should be, of course. So what we called this morning, and it seemed a very, first, a very passive thing when this morning we said, when you allow what is to be the isness of this moment, then something reveals itself to you that is beyond the form that this moment takes.

And the form may appear limiting. The formless life consciousness is known through not reacting to the forms that appear. Where do they appear?

In the field of now. If you react to the forms in the field of now, your own form, psychological form of me, gets strengthened. That's why the me likes reacting, because it strengthens that I.

And you can observe it in other people or in yourself. When you react against something, perhaps wanting to be right or, you can see how, on one level, satisfying it is. And why is it satisfying?

In reality, of course, it's painful. It is a form of pain. The body knows that, because the energy, it cannot flow anymore.

The energy field of the body stagnates. The body knows it's painful, but the egoic entity thinks it's great, because you've enhanced your sense of self. The enemy is there, and it feels great.

And some people even say it feels great after shouting at somebody and say, oh, that feels better. And so, observe that you allow it, and that takes you beyond form. Your sense of self is no longer in form.

It is deeper than any form. So, the easiest practice, and that's why we start here, is as you meet nature, nature exists beyond mind. Nature is pre-mind, one could say.

It exists in a much greater state of oneness with a source than humans. Humans have gone out of that much further. Nature is more deeply connected to the source, animals, plants.

So, to enter the state of what is ultimately a state of no thought, I wasn't going to say it so soon in the retreat, not to frighten anybody, the state of no thought, it is helpful to meet any natural phenomenon, a plant, an animal, that lives in that state of no thought. They also are expressions of consciousness, but they don't inhabit a conceptualized universe. The dog does not have a self-concept, or a problematic sense of self.

A cat doesn't, or anything that lives, the bird, the bird simply hasn't separated itself and says, that's me. It doesn't derive its sense of identity from conceptualization in the mind. It hasn't created that split.

It just is an expression of the one in form, limited through its form, yes, but a beautiful expression of that. And so, it is often, a great meditation, if you can watch a tree, a flower, or a dog, or a wild, or a bird. It does not stimulate thought, because it operates beyond thought.

Conscious, yes, but not through conceptualization. Now, we are not returning to that state. This is not where we are going, because that would be a falling back.

It would free you from a lot of suffering, yes. And some people seek to return. They can't stand their mind anymore.

They cannot stand the painful sense of self, that burden that I have to live with, me. Living with me every day is dreadful. I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy to live.

I'm just giving an example of the. So many people perceive life as a burden, a great burden. And every morning you wake up and you find yourself.

Now, you may think what you find is the problems in your life, but it really is the heaviness of the sense of self that looks out there for some kind of liberation or freedom and is not getting it. All you ever encounter is some other limitation and little brief moments of apparent freedom, which turn out to be illusions. So, that is the self that has a heaviness to it.

And an animal doesn't carry that burden. It is limited through its form, yes. But it lives in alignment, in greater alignment than humans.

And so, its existence is not problematic. And it dies with great ease compared to humans. And in some cases, human beings are kept sane by their animal.

That's why some people, they have a dog or a cat, and it's the one thing that keeps them, it's their anchor to a dimension beyond conceptualization and mind. They have this anchor there. They've also, animals that humans keep fulfill an incredible function, an anchor of sanity.

And you can see with some animals how unhappy the master is, the owner of the animal, and how carefree the dog is. Even after having lived for five years with this person, the dog is still joyful, greeting every moment with joy. And so, I saw a little sticker recently to put on the fridge, which said, God, please let me be who my dog thinks I am.

Now, of course, the truth is that the dog doesn't think. That's why he's in joy. And that's why the dog relates to you.

He doesn't relate to the conceptualized you. He relates to the you beyond, that's hiding behind the conceptualized me with its problems. Amazing.

In everyone, of course, that dimension is there, the unconditioned, pure consciousness. And it's wanting to emerge. That's one way of putting it.

It wants to emerge. It wants to flower through humans. And that's why we are here.

So, although you may have tried to escape from the prison of your conditioned mind by going into drugs or seeking some kind of escape, moving, wanting to get out of the mind, drinking sometimes helps a little bit, not for long, but you take, you're being, you're then taken into unconsciousness. You're moving out of your mind. Yes, it feels liberating, yes, but you're moving towards sleep.

And sometimes it's nice when you get very tired, you can't think about your problems anymore. And then there's a moment before you reach sleep when you feel quite good. And then you go to sleep.

But we are not leaving mind by going that way. We are stepping beyond mind. And with that comes an alertness.

Freedom from thinking, yes, but at the same time, there's wakefulness and alertness, not moving towards unconsciousness. But nature is very helpful because it teaches you to live in no mind. So in the way you meet, there's a deeper empathy with nature when you don't impose on it the screen of conceptualization.

There's a very deep meeting that takes place when you perceive nature in that way. And this is an ideal place surrounded by all this beauty of perceiving in that way. And it is a significant event, cosmic, going far beyond the personal when you perceive nature in the state of not labeling, in the state of still awareness.

Nature itself finds its fulfillment at that moment through you because you are not separate. And within the oneness, nature sees itself through you. It loves that, its own sacredness.

The tree, the flower become aware of themselves. This sounds a little mystical, but that's how it is. So the essence here, we begin with nature because nature is so helpful.

Just be aware for a little while of when you first see something. Bring some alertness into your, when you walk around here, sit. Be there as a field of alert presence and see that it is quite possible to step out of the habitual labeling mind for how long doesn't matter really.

More important, often you step out of the labeling mind. Then the rest looks after itself. Once that movement has started, and this is miraculous, the current of awareness that has begun to come through what before was a heavy layer of conditioned mind stuff, once this current of awareness has begun to move through you, it has an intelligence of its own.

It is pure intelligence. And that then operates, it's become free, and you don't have to be concerned very much. It flowers by itself.

So sense perception is extremely important here. It is one way in which you can leave the prison of the conditioned mind. And then you may notice when you perceive in such a way, there's the form that you perceive, whatever it may be, and one could say there's a stillness in which the perception happens.

That's the field of awareness. At first, this is not something you can know as an object because it's the very essence of all knowing. You cannot know that as an object of knowledge.

You can only be it, you are it. And even here, sitting here, you can sit here and think about your story or the next moment or the last moment where you're going to be. Or you can be here as a field of aware presence.

And the goodness that we spoke of that you find when you allow this moment to be as it is, because this is allowing this moment to be as it is, not imposing an interpretation. And if an interpretation comes, recognize it as a mind, an interpretation. Not totally believe in it, not totally be absorbed by it, just see it.

Yeah, there's the conditioned mind which comes up with its, whatever it says. And then you go back to the perception itself. So the goodness that is hiding underneath, no matter what form this moment takes, that is an aspect of that unconscious, sometimes very obscurely sense that there is something in them that is greater.

There is a goodness that they cannot quite access. It doesn't seem to operate when they operate in their everyday life. It may break through occasionally, accidentally almost, sometimes in moments of great danger.

When they're threatened by death, it could break through when the conditioned mind subsides because it can't cope anymore with the urgency of this moment. So almost everybody senses that in some obscure way, they know that there is something in them that is greater than what they manifest as their everyday existence. That may be pitiful.

What they manifest in their everyday life may not be great. There may be a lot of wanting and needing and me against you on a small level, whether it's on a little level or whether it's you become the CEO. CEO is becoming a dirty word these days.

But there's no difference on C. It's just on a bigger scale, a bigger egoic scale. That's all.

That's why it's more noticeable. The greed of the ego, the greed, the need for more. There's a fly buzzing around my head looking for something.

So that then, what many people obscurely sense within emerges is an aspect of the unconditioned love of joy, aliveness, compassion. It dwells there in that dimension. So then that also begins to operate through you in your interactions with the world, the unconditioned.

So this is why it's what at first sight seems so insignificant when I say go to nature. Look at the tree and be completely there in the looking. Allow the perception to arise in a field of stillness.

At first seems, well, okay. Okay, I've done that now. What do I do now?

Next thing. To the mind it seems insignificant and yet nothing is of greater significance than that. And because it's through that the unconditioned emerges and then those qualities that are an inseparable part of that dimension flow out into this world.

You begin interacting with nature because nature helps you. The next level up then is interacting with human beings that you know superficially, people you've just met, people that you come into contact with casually and people perhaps on the retreat that you meet and we'll be addressing that in more detail also to bring that non-labeling awareness into your interactions with other human beings. Then an enormous change happens on the planet when more humans interact in the way in which you don't impose conceptualization on other humans.

So we'll be addressing that more. Nature is easier. Humans are more difficult.

So you begin with nature and nature will continue to be extremely helpful in this. And that in itself is of the benefit of, is incredible, the way in which that deepens your life, the way in which you interact with nature, the depths that is there when you allow the mystery that is every living being to be there. Yes, you still know the label if you should need it but the mystery that is there that is covered up by the label that says three, the depths that is there, it's just inconceivable.

And the aliveness that is there that some people have glimpsed when they took acid that perhaps was their first time they glimpsed something that's beyond conceptualized mind and the teapot suddenly became intensely alive. It wasn't a teapot anymore. But then you've come back again.

That is not the way. So this is much better than acid. But for some people it's been a little glimpse of stepping out of the prison of conceptualized thought into an intense aliveness.

So the mystery that is there, what, how absurd to think that you know when the moment you have put a label onto something. And children become conditioned at an early age in that way when they learn language. And the human mind wants that in the child because the human mind says, what's that?

And then the father or mother says, that's a tree. And then the child repeats, tree, tree. And the illusion that the child then now knows what it is has already started.

Next time, the next day, the child sees a tree. Before the child was looking, that was pre-mind. And that you find in very young children when you see them, mind hasn't started yet and yet consciousness is already there of their surroundings.

And they look, they are all little Buddhas. And then they look at you. And that also some humans are drawn to little children as they are drawn to animals because they feel they are not being judged.

They know that the dog or the little child, the pre-mind child is not imposing a label on them. They find freedom there. So they are drawn whenever they see a little child, they go there, oh.

Oh, yes, it's beautiful. And then a moment comes in the child's life when the conceptualizing mind wants to start. And the questions start, what is that?

It's demanding labels. So one day the child is looking at the tree in openness and wonder. That is still the state of oneness.

And the next day it has learned the word tree. And then it looks at the tree and there's still a moment, the gap is still there that I mentioned. And then it remembers the label tree.

Oh, tree, tree, tree, yeah, that's right, that's what it is. And now let's go on to the next thing. For many humans from that moment onwards, they don't really look at the tree anymore because they think they know what it is.

And this is just one tiny example of then thousands of concepts. And then being imprisoned in that. And then having concepts about me.

That's who you are. So going beyond all that is liberation. The ancient word that's been used for thousands of years, free, free from what?

Free from the conditioned mind. So nature, that in itself is an enormous shift when you can go into nature and interact in that way. And yes, you look upon everything.

That is love. Anything that is not labeled as you perceive it is looked upon with love. Not the love that the mind talks about that says, come here, I lead you.

I love you because I need you. I won't let you go. You're mine.

Or I love this flower so much that I'm going to take it home with me. It's not that kind of love. Very wisely in the Spanish language, the expression I love you is the same as the expression I want you because that is the usual way in which what is called love by the mind.

But the true love emerges whenever there's the absence of conceptualization, of labeling. And that is why the dog loves you continuously. And that is why the little child can look, no matter who the child looks upon, there is that openness.

It doesn't judge a person as ugly. The openness is there. The label isn't there yet.

So nature is an access point. It is an opening for that. But also including inanimate nature.

Let's call it inanimate nature. There's the beautiful realm of minerals. Wonderful.

The earth itself, the stones, the aliveness that is there. And even man-made, human-made things have an aliveness, especially if there's still some closeness to nature, like things made of wood, natural materials. But even synthetic things, yes, they too are alive, a little bit more removed from the human body.

From the source, perhaps. But yes, also a temporary expression of consciousness. So you can sit in your room, perhaps, let's say, the room where you're staying here, or the room, let's say, with here, and just briefly sit and be there, look around, and perceive your surroundings without needing to label.

Innocent perception, you could call it. Not wanting anything from something. Not comparing, just letting it be.

Don't go on for too long because from that state of having gone beyond mind, as this is something new for most humans, it is possible to go from that state of having gone beyond mind to a state of alertness, and suddenly you fall below mind into sleep. Until that becomes a more habitual state in you that can happen. So that's fine too.

Beautifully expressed, there was a film about golf playing, The Legend of Bagger Vance, where somebody's learning to play, or relearning to play golf, and his teacher is showing him how to be present, how to step out of mind. In one line, the teacher says, he's now learning how to stop thinking without falling asleep, because only then can he play well. And every sportsman who does well knows that, that that state is the state of freedom from thinking, of absolute alertness, clarity, relaxed alertness and clarity.

And so a few people, we mentioned artists earlier, some sportsmen have access to that in their field of activity. And here it is emerging as your normal state of consciousness. It's becoming your normal state of consciousness.

Thought is still there, yes. Will continue to be there for quite a while, quite a while. As long as you are here in the body, thought will also still be here.

And yet, there's a freedom. Thought moves, it is no longer problematic, it is no longer invested with self. You're not seeking yourself in thought forms anymore.

That's the liberation. And thought is recognized as thought. You don't, you're not totally trapped in every thought that comes.

So all that is the shift in consciousness that this gathering is part of. Transitional period is when thought loses its capacity to make you unhappy, but it still operates. But you don't believe totally in the judgments of your mind anymore about yourself, about your life, what it tells you about your life, how you have failed or been treated unfairly by life, whatever the story may be.

It's the old conditioned thought forms. And your sense of self does not reside there anymore. So use the access, the exit, the little exit door that is nature.

Bring that alertness to your perceptions. And if thoughts come occasionally, let them come and go without fighting it. There's no point in fighting thought.

That's more thought. Allow the thoughts to come. It might even be a nice thought.

You look at a flower in the spaciousness of presence and then the thought comes, isn't that beautiful? It's nice. And then the thought subsides and there's more spacious presence.

And then some other thought comes. It's fine. And as you sit here, listen to these words as if they were coming from within you, because they are.

They're not somebody else's words. The truth is coming through. Consciousness speaks, that's all.

It doesn't matter through which form it speaks. Consciousness speaks, is pointing the way back to itself. So here too, you just simply sit here being present.

Alert, awake. That is the essence of all meditation. But it's no longer a separate activity.

It's now. Every moment. Once I had a group, we were addressing just this and somebody put her hand up and said, when do we start meditating?

This is the meditation. And you are learning. Once the momentum of mind has taken you over again, and that will happen.

It's been there for so long, it has a momentum still. The mind will come back. It could come back even as you're sitting here, in which case you will no longer be here.

You could be gone. And you notice it. You're not seeing anymore.

You're not perceiving anymore what's around you, only just enough not to bump into things. But when you can watch a person whose attention is totally drawn into thinking, there's very little outflow through eyes. There's an absence in the eyes.

I can demonstrate it, perhaps. Ah! Ah!

Ah! Ah! Nobody there.

Not here. Ah! So your consciousness is being absorbed by thought processes.

It all goes in here. And then, not long after that, but if that happens to you, and it probably will at some point, and then you can then, suddenly you become aware that once this has started, it won't be very long before some form of suffering will appear. And then those thought processes will go more dense.

And then the emotions you will feel that accompany those thoughts. And then you might go to your partner and you say, you know, I've been thinking. More often than not, whenever anybody comes to you and says, you know, I've been thinking, you know, here comes trouble.

And so that may happen to you. And then you will notice some form of suffering arising and some form of suffering arises. And that's a little signal that says, you must have lost the now.

Where's the now? Now? And that entity, one could call it, that is now there, it's a temporary little, because everything is life form.

Every thought is a life form. And a conglomeration of thoughts pretending to be a personal me is a temporary, one could say, life form, a temporary formation. And that temporary formation wants to continue in existence as that formation.

Like every life form wants to remain as that life form. It resists metamorphosis. And I'm sure if we could know the inner life of a caterpillar, the caterpillar too would resist its metamorphosis into a butterfly until the last moment.

No, I'm not becoming a butterfly. There is a certain inertia in every form. The form, you can see it in children or sometimes adults.

You're tired, but you don't want to go to bed because there's an inertia in the state of being awake. You want to remain, you're not really awake anymore. And then when you're in bed, you don't want to get out of bed.

There's an inertia in that state. With children, you have it very often. There's an inertia in every form.

So the thought forms want to remain as those thought forms. So there is a, and that is the, they want, they will resist anything that would bring about a shift in consciousness. So there is something in you, and it's fine, that doesn't want to be free.

And that's a strange realization. There is something in me that does not want to be free. And that, you might think, is that a personal fault of mine?

No, there's nothing personal in that. That pretends to be a personal entity or personal matter. That in me wants to be taken seriously and be somebody, me.

But it is not a personal matter at all. It is a universal mind pattern. That principle of inertia is in you.

And it will find many reasons and excuses why you cannot be present now and why this moment is not important at all. Because I have far more important things to think about. It can give you many convincing arguments why it's not going to work for you.

You might as well forget it. It's all nonsense anyway. I mean, you've got all that nonsense about change in consciousness.

This is real, your problems are real. The falling shares are real. Your financial situation, that's real.

And so it'll come up, it'll tell you what is real, what matters. Because it doesn't want to go. And it comes up with things that you need to think about now.

At night especially. Very important. There's nothing you can do, you're lying there, but.

And so what conventionally is called worry, what it simply means, uncontrolled negative thought processes that are projecting themselves into future, if that's what worry is. I'm sure it's not the dictionary definition, but totally identified with mind movement, creating situations and problems that are not here now. What could happen, might happen, probably will happen.

And so at night those things can start up very strongly. And so the possibility of you noticing that so that the other dimension can come in is greater now, especially after having endured or enjoyed our retreat here. Even if you think, and you probably will think because the thinker doesn't know what's going on here, even if you think that nothing is happening here, sitting here is quite enough for something to shift inside you.

And the thinker, even if the thinker says, no, it's not happening, nothing is going on. So to recognize the mind, to recognize the momentum behind it and the inertia that is there, it doesn't want to stop worrying. The worrying entity, the thinker, do you think the thinker wants to stop thinking?

Or do you think the worrier wants to stop worrying? Its whole existence is worrying. Well, conventionally you all know this because we all know people who you ask, who would they be if they couldn't worry about something?

But that is a pattern more strongly developed in others, in some than in others, that is in everyone. So the thinker does not want the end of thinking. The worrier, which is the thinker intensified, doesn't want the end of worrying.

The worry has a momentum too. Particularly if the pattern of worry gets connected to the latent pain, emotional pain, that humans carry in here. And that's what the thinker likes to do.

The thinking entity, the self, to keep itself going, it links into the, what I sometimes call pain body, which is the accumulation of pain from the past that humans carry, the residue goes back a long way. It's collective to a large extent, collective human pain inherited through thousands of years of madness, hundreds of thousands of years of suffering inflicted by humans on themselves and on each other. And your personal life too.

Every child suffers coming into this world through the unconsciousness around them. And so you carry that inside, and the worrier and the thinker and the mind made self, when they don't, when it's to gain more momentum, will link into that energy field of emotion, the old emotion of pain. And that will energize those mind movements.

And that is what keeps the self entity going again and again very strongly. The old pain that gives energy to thought processes. And you think you're worrying about certain things in your life, but really you're acting out 100,000 years of human pain that are here.

Then the mind finds some kind of explanation. It's made into something personal, me. So to bring presence into that, we'll be addressing in more detail the pain body also, but just here to see that when it happens.

And once this movement has started, something is operating in you, an energy field, almost one could say a temporary entity that does not want an end to the pain. It does not want an end to the worry. It wants to carry on worrying.

You can find that out for yourself if at that moment somebody pointed out to you the possibility of stepping out of that, which is there. The possibility of recognizing that pattern and stepping out of it. If you're totally identified with a pattern, you will deny that possibility because you are not speaking.

The pattern is speaking. The conditioned entity is speaking. And you will say, this is absolute nonsense.

Whatever arguments it comes up with, it will say there's no such thing as present moment. I'm not interested in, leave me alone with that nonsense of present moment. This is what matters.

And this is how it is. That's what's going to happen. So to compensate, one could almost say, for the enormous momentum of that, what we could call the movement of unconsciousness in humanity, which is not a personal problem, not anybody's personal problem, but that undeniably very still, very powerful movement of unconsciousness that is in humanity.

Even after this retreat, you may not be totally free of that. May. And so what is needed, and yes, it is happening, the arising of that which is beyond that needs to be more powerful than that.

Not that it is fighting anything. It's not fighting that. In its vastness, it contains that and then dissolves it.

But the arising of presence needs to be intense. Otherwise, you will be totally drawn in again and again into the old movement of unconsciousness. Now, can, the question is, can you make that happen?

Can you make the arising of the unconditioned presence, can you make it more intense, or is it something that just happens by itself? And the answer is not clear-cut. It is yes and no.

Can you make it happen? Yes and no. From one perspective, yes.

You can, as I sometimes call it, you can take up the sword of presence that says, only this is real. Only this moment is real. And what is the problem at this moment?

That cuts through the problem-making conditioned mind which needs past and future to continue to manufacture its problematic sense of self. To cut through, to access in yourself presence that cuts through all that and says, okay, stepping out of mind by choice into the aliveness and freedom of this moment. You can do that, one could say.

You can do what the Zen master described as the essence of Zen when he raised, he would only ever do one thing when he asked, what is the essence of Zen? This, intense presence. He never said that.

Alertness, presence, be here fully. And that is something you can do. You can choose presence.

Now nothing that I say or anybody says is totally true. And even that statement is not totally true. Reality is far deeper than could ever be contained in any one statement.

You can choose presence because presence is already arising in you and through you. And that can give you the feeling that yes, I can choose presence and that's good. I wouldn't say that to anybody because it would not be true for them.

If not enough presence is arising, you can't choose presence. So let's, why not, instead of trying to somehow resolve the paradox of the seemingly contradictory statements, why not allow the seemingly contradictory statements to be there because they point beyond themselves to a greater truth? The mind says, no, let's work this out, yes or no?

And it would even fight. If it has chosen the yes, it'll fight against the no. And that is a wonderful thing because, and we can do that now, this is an example of allowing mental positions to be there and allowing different mental positions to coexist also without believing that one position encapsulates the entire truth.

Now the mind will tell you, will you not, will I not become totally be paralyzed because I won't know what to do anymore? If I do not subscribe to one way of looking at things, what was going to be the motivating factor? And the motivating factor will no longer be thought.

The intelligence of the unconditioned consciousness will motivate you, things will happen, it will move through you and action will happen when it's needed, but not through adopting and defending a mental position because defending my mental position, whatever it may be, implies you're fighting other mental positions. And an extreme manifestation of that is the terrorist, for example, or whatever else. It's totally being trapped in a conceptualized sense of us or self and totally making a conceptualized identity for others so that they are not alive anymore.

Other humans are mental concepts as such. It is totally fine to kill them because they are no more than, they are dead mental concepts. Whatever label you have put onto them, you have already killed them with your labels.

Whether or not you then kill them physically doesn't really, almost doesn't matter anymore. You've done it already, almost. So being trapped in conceptualization, the movement of unconsciousness is still in you, yes.

The choice is there now. For the choice to be there, you need to recognize that you have been trapped in mind, that you are trapped in mind. And a good sign is suffering in your life, any kind of suffering.

You've lost the now. Re-enter the now. One way is sense perceptions.

Sense to truly, in the way that we described, truly perceive with acute awareness.

Another one is allowing this moment to be as it is. It's a little exit too.

And a beautiful one is the inner body, feeling the aliveness in your inner energy field. That takes attention away from thinking. That's another exit out of the prison of mind.

That may be particularly helpful when the worry pattern starts. If that's the pattern, worry is a form of fear. At night, for example.

All that's needed is notice that it's happening to you. That requires already a minimum of awareness. If you don't have that, you have no choice.

Because you are totally the worrier. Worry, W-O, and the other one too. You're totally the worrier, and then you have no choice.

So the fact that there is choice means there's at least a minimum of awareness. Even in the midst of unconsciousness, being taken over by the momentum of the mind, there's still the minimum of awareness that knows that you're being taken over by the mind. And at that moment, choice becomes in.

But that is not up to you. It's by the grace of the divine that that minimum of awareness is there in you. And there, the choice is there.

And again, it's only a perspective to step out. And the worrier will tell you, no, I can't, no point. That's another thought.

Should you totally believe in that thought? No, there's a thought that says you can't possibly get out of it, and you really need to think about this. And then you do it anyway.

It is very, that mind is very clever with arguments and trying to convince you why not. And then you do it anyway. You can't possibly, you can't feel the inner body now.

What's the point in even trying to feel the inner body with what's going on in here? There's no point in even trying. And then you do it anyway.

And then you sense there's an aliveness in your hands and your feet. And the rest of the body. Who says you can't feel your body?

That was just a thought. And then attention moves there. And it is quite possible, within a minute or two, you can shift from a boring entity to feeling intensely alive and present in your entire energy field.

And that means the inner body becomes an anchor for staying present. It's your anchor. And then you will notice the pull of the mind of wanting your attention back.

And it'll then come up with some other thought. Just before you go in, just think about this. And then it pulls your attention half out again.

And for a moment, you're back in that. And then you notice it again and you're back in the body. And then you have to walk on the razor's edge of now for the rest of lying awake that night.

Because if you leave the now, you suffer. And another thought comes. You leave the now.

And then you're back. That is beautiful practice. Most of you probably drive cars.

Another wonderful field of practice to drive your car in presence. You're less likely to have an accident also. Mostly when you drive your car, you're thinking about something else.

It's on automatic. You're not thinking about the driving, and nor should you be, because you wouldn't be driving very well if you were thinking about. So it's automatic.

Something else is driving. But why not just be still while you drive and perceive everything? Very aware of the movement.

Very alert. It's amazing how many people personalize the act of driving. So it's regarded as normal.

They personalize going from A to B behind the wheel of a car. It becomes a personal struggle. With other drivers, they get angry.

They shout. It's simply the movement of traffic. No different from the weather or any other movement, life movement.

But they personalize it because the me strengthened itself through having, where's my enemy? The enemy is right there. I always say, beware of driving pain bodies.

What does a driving pain body want without knowing it? The driving pain body wants something to go wrong. To have more pain.

And sooner or later it will. All that he or she needs is another driving pain body in the vicinity. So our practice here for nature, your own room, walking from A to B, not making that movement into a means to an end, needing to get there.

Just be there at every step. The next step is not going to be more important than this one. The arriving is not going to be more important than this moment.

Be there within every step. Walk along around the campus here as a field of aware, alert, alive presence without carrying the burden of your story and think about it as you walk. Or I say, I wonder what's going on in the world.

What's in the news? Not good. It wasn't good last week.

It's not good this week. And when you get home and you listen to the news again, it'll still be the same. The news are very selective.

The collective mind says this is important and this is important and this is important. That's the news. It overlooks a lot.

There's a wonderful person living here on campus, a great artist. He arranges all these flower arrangements that we see in different places with leaves and most incredible awareness has gone into that. I believe his name is Jonathan, if I remember rightly from last year.

Just the most amazing example of beauty that is created whenever something is being performed in the state of presence and the love that flows into the doing naturally, any doing that arises out of presence. And he can take any objects, a few dead leaves or dying leaves, a little bit of moss and a little bit of that and puts it together and it's a creation of great beauty. That is also very helpful to look upon anything that was created out of that state of consciousness, can reflect that state back to you, can give you a reflection of that state that's the essence of art probably, to give you a reflection of the state out of which it came, which shines through the form.

Every great work of art is more than what you see. It can't really define it through concepts. It's always more and something shines through that is not the form and that is the state of consciousness out of which it came.

And when you look upon it rightly, which means in the state of aware presence, it can strengthen and deepen that state in you. That is the beauty of art. And probably even relatively unconscious human beings, deep down, they can sense something when they look at a work of art and they may treasure it.

It's very deep, they feel something. They somehow, they don't always recognize it. There's probably been great art that's never been recognized.

And in the case of some great artists, they were never recognized in their lifetime. I don't know who, perhaps it was Van Gogh, who never sold a single painting in his lifetime. Nobody wanted to, not interested.

Nobody was really looking. So something shines through. So, and even anything made, a craftsman makes, can also happen, doesn't have to be a great painting.

Anything that a craftsman has spent a long time being present with, not a means to an end, giving attention, the flow of attention, which is awareness, which is presence, goes into that and then the object embodies that. It embodies quality in its deepest sense. And it's always, there's always an aspect of sacredness to that, always.

But whether or not you make something, only a few of you will be making something with your hands or in whatever way, it doesn't, presence manifests in so many different ways. It can also manifest entirely outside the world of form with just you sitting there, listening to someone, not even saying anything, just being there as spacious presence. One more thing here, little movements, perform little movements and be present with that.

Just little, whatever you might be doing naturally when you put on your shoes or your feet move into your sandals, or you tie your shoelaces. Usually you would be thinking about the next thing, but why not just be there? And there's a stillness around the action in which the action happens.

Walking down a few steps or wherever it may be, chup, chup, chup, chup, chup, chup, chup, chup, chup, chup, or any habitual action. Don't make it too long at first. You might get lost in thought.

If you say, I'm going to perform making this cup of tea in presence, it might be too much because you have to fill the kettle, you have to wait for it to boil, and by then you might be off somewhere. Why not just while you stir the cup of tea, chup, chup, chup, something that would be totally unnoticed, not noticeable to you in the normal state of consciousness, just small actions, little bit of honey in the tea if you take honey, chup. And there was a space of no thought, just that.

Anything that's short that you do often. Lighting a, no, you don't have candles here, you're not supposed to have candles. Pouring a liquid, water or juice, little spaces in your life, and then more and more spaces, and then some spaces come naturally by themselves.

And sooner or later you might find a big space. It's just a matter of time. It all implies getting out of living in that conceptualized me in the head.

Eckhart Tolle Retreat Talk Titled Awakening out of thought

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 3:07:28)

Welcome, I should say welcome in many languages, so many nationalities here. So some of you have come a long way, traveled a long distance, to be with yourself. And sometimes that's how it works.

To be with yourself, I don't mean the self that is such a burden to carry. You may be carrying that also, but that's not why you've come here. But something deeper than the story or the conceptual self in the head that needs and wants something.

Of course that's also come with you here, the self that needs or wants something. And it may be expecting to get it here, to add something to itself. But that's not how it works.

So I sometimes use the expression portals, openings into yourself, a new state of consciousness, one could say, unconditioned. And portals are here all the time. One could consider our entire retreat as a portal into that state of consciousness that we may call presence.

So the retreat is not here to add anything to you. One could almost say it's here to remove something. Not even that.

To show something that's already there. And the teaching, to use that word, it's not really any teaching, the totality of this weekend, long weekend, is the teaching. The words are not that important.

While we sit here in this beautiful space, you may be a little tightly packed in the back, maybe tomorrow we can move forward a little bit more. But while we sit in this beautiful space, always remember, and I will keep reminding you, so that you don't get attached only to the words, to pay attention to this. This is one important portal that is here.

To pay attention to the silent space that is here. It's here in this room, so while we sit here, there's always the dimension of silence or silent space. And all that's required of you, for it to become a portal, is to pay attention to it.

It does not mean that you cannot pay attention to the words. You listen, the words are there, they go in. But as you listen, you also listen to the silence.

And the mind, the thinking mind, might say, this doesn't make sense, because listening to the silence, there's nothing to listen to. All that's required is simply to acknowledge, to pay attention, to notice the silence. To the thinking mind, that is not a significant event.

It is a non-event. It is a non-happening. It is completely uninteresting, has no fascination whatsoever, and adds nothing to who you are.

That's why the mind-made self, the heavy self that you carry with you, is not interested in it, and can't even do that. In other words, you cannot listen to silence through thought. The moment you notice the silent space, the stream of thinking ceases, and you haven't lost consciousness.

That's why we are here. That is one portal that is opening up. There's only one thing here to learn, and it's not even learning, because learning would imply that you need to absorb something new.

There's only one thing here to discover. And in many of you, probably most of you, that has already emerged, which I sometimes call the unconditioned consciousness, the state of presence, or more recently I've been calling it space consciousness, as opposed to object consciousness. Most humans in this world know only object consciousness, and are identified with object consciousness, react.

Object consciousness is anything that takes on form. Thought is a form, a thought form, an object in consciousness. Every sense perception is an object in consciousness.

Object consciousness, the words that you hear, are object consciousness forms. The silent space has no form, can't grasp it. Space consciousness, that dimension of depth or stillness that is already in you, and in many, I know that, that has already emerged, although it may get obscured from time to time.

Total absorption in object consciousness, thought, reactions, me, and you yourself become an object to yourself, a mind made me with its story. You have made yourself into an object in consciousness, an uneasy entity. And that uneasy entity is also here.

The reason why you are here is that something else has emerged, which one could call a new consciousness on this planet, because it's been so rare until, even now it's still rare, but until recently, it's been so rare for that dimension to be realized in a human being. And suddenly now, many people are beginning to realize it. It's still rare, relatively speaking, relative to the population on the planet.

But in more humans, it is emerging already. And you may not even know that this is why you've come here. But the self, the object consciousness me, has also traveled here.

And it may have its own agenda here. It wants something, because it is never enough, never complete, never fulfilled for except short intervals between two wantings, or two fears, and two not enoughs. So that, that self, that what is traditionally called the self, in Buddhism, that is called the self, has come with you.

And of course, wherever you go, it would travel with you also. And it won't leave you alone for too long. And it's back, I'm still here.

And that is that part in you that, after a little while here, maybe tomorrow afternoon, will already begin to feel restless, because not enough is being added to it here. And it will start thinking, how much longer have I got here? I have to stay another two days.

And then it'll project itself to the third day, when you're going to leave. Because that is then becomes the next significant event. Whereas this retreat to that self is a non-event.

So it will project itself away, because it always wants to be in the next moment, not in this one, that is a characteristic of object consciousness of the self. So it won't be happy with this for long. So that, it's good to know that that also is there in you.

And it does other things. It's not happy with what is for very long. And it likes to complain and react.

And I don't mean complain in saying, you're stepping on my foot, please remove your foot from my foot. That's a simple statement. You can do something to alleviate this, please do it.

That's not a complaint. I mean, the mind pattern of inner and sometimes outer complaining, which is to do with a deep-seated pattern in the mind-made self, that is the reactive. And although these are beautiful surroundings, some of them perhaps hard to find a more beautiful spot on the planet.

Yes. And yet the self will easily find things to be unhappy about, because we live in the world of forms. It's in the nature of the world of form that it is not totally satisfying.

Things go wrong in it. And the self loves that fact, because then it can complain. And here there are many people in a relatively small space, plenty of opportunity to complain about other people.

Maybe in the head only, or whatever conditions are not quite right. And in complaining, which is a deep-seated pattern, reacting, complaining of the deep-seated pattern of the mind-made self, the conditioned entity, in complaining and reacting, it momentarily strengthens its sense of self. Because when you complain, you are right, and somebody else is wrong.

And so it's unconscious, it is an unconscious attempt to strengthen one's sense of me, of self, which is never quite enough. So you need to strengthen it somehow, so you can't, here there may not be much else left for it, than to feel unhappy about something and focus on that. Could happen.

The pain body may come in and add to it. We're having a full moon on Saturday, which sometimes triggers pain bodies. So just to know that there are, there's a dimension in you of depth, which has brought you here, and there's the dimension, the shallowness of a mind-made me, that cooperated enough for you to be here.

Okay, I'll go along with that. In quite a few people, it didn't allow them to come here. At every retreat, there are people who at the last minute, or a day before, or maybe something, should I go?

There's no, what's the point? And after much agonizing, they cancel. So something in them prevented them.

This is quite normal. Maybe they'll come to the next one, or they get other teachings, or teachers, maybe taught situations. Everybody gets what they need.

So sometimes it interferes enough, but with you, at least it cooperated, to allow you, and some of you hardly made it here, because even a few days ago, you weren't quite sure whether you would actually go. So to observe, I may be talking a little bit more about it tomorrow, so that you recognize it clearly when it's there, because that's really all that's required, for it to recognize the conditioned entity that until recently was your entire identity. And it's really enough to recognize it.

And of course, there is something deeper in you that's arising and opening up, and that has brought you here. Throughout, we are using the portals that are available to us here, and one is silence. Not only in this room, but also out in nature, which is the other teacher here.

There are quite a few teachers this weekend. The beautiful nature that you're going to walk in, move in, is not only all the beautiful things that you see, thousands of life forms. That's beautiful.

There's also a vast sense of space, of spaciousness, and a silence that underlies it all. If you can listen to it first thing in the morning, you will hear the birds. Beautiful sounds.

They are objects in consciousness, perceptions. Beautiful. And then notice, just as you do it here, the silence or the stillness out of which the sounds come.

And suddenly the sounds have greater depth to them. That depth is your own depth, ultimately. It's the depth of the universe.

And you can then listen to that beautiful sound. Just the joy of life celebrating its own existence through these little forms. You can listen to that.

If simultaneously you are aware of space, you can listen to those sounds without any interference by thought. And that is the arising of the new consciousness in which a vast intelligence operates, far greater than thought. And you haven't lost thought.

When you need it, it's there. So we use the portals that are here naturally, and through silent space here, no matter what you listen to in nature, no matter what you see, there's also a vast spaciousness, a harmonious whole that holds it all together, all these thousands of beautiful life forms. You can be aware of that also.

So the more you are aware of silence and space, the more that inner spaciousness, that inner stillness, they open up. And that is the depths of who you are beyond a little mind-made entity. That also has its own level of existence.

It will continue, yes. But you are no longer captivated by it and thinking that that's all there is to you, this uneasy, fearful, needy entity. And then we are using here, well, other portals, of course.

The main one, you could say, and I'm sure you are familiar with that already, is now. Every portal takes you into now. To be internally aligned with what is.

That's a wonderful portal. Whatever is, is as it is now. Allowing this moment to be.

And this is our practice this weekend. Internally to be aligned with this, to actually pay more attention to now than past and future. You're not going to lose them if during this weekend you don't pay that much attention to past and future, or they will want to reassert themselves.

Return attention to now. Welcome now. Whatever happens in now.

Some things, the little me might react. And then you notice. And you realize it's important, whatever is, you can't really argue with, because it already is.

Action then arises out of the indebted state, not out of the resistant state. That's intelligent action. If action should be needed.

So, whatever happens at this moment, and nothing can happen anywhere else except this moment. Nothing ever happened that wasn't this moment. Nothing will ever happen that's not now.

Whatever happens can only happen now and is, one could say, although the little me doesn't like that, whatever happens is connected with the totality of all life. The totality of the universe. Buddhists knew that 2,600 years ago already.

The interconnectedness of all things. Modern physicists know that. There are no separate events.

There only seem to be separate events. There's no such thing as a separate event or separate entity. Everything is connected, interconnected to the totality, the web of the entire cosmos.

Therefore, whatever happens is inevitable. Otherwise it would not be. It's connected to the fabric of the whole.

So, the is-ness of this moment could not be otherwise. And the mind says, oh yes, it could. If he hadn't done that, this wouldn't have happened.

But he did that. If I had acted differently, it wouldn't have happened. So it could be otherwise.

The mind argues in that way. But the fact of the matter is, it isn't otherwise. I can raise my arm.

Now it's raised. And the mind said, yeah, but you didn't have to do that. You could have not raised it.

But now it's here. Perhaps another universe has already branched off from this moment where I did not raise my arm. This is what physicists speculate about, that every moment different universes come out of infinite possibilities.

If we carry on talking about this, this will take us into philosophy. The fact remains, this moment is as it is. And then it changes.

And again, it is as it is. It may change through you, because you accepted the is-ness, which led to intelligent action. Because it's only now that the portal is open into true intelligence when you're not the reactive little entity that can't accept the is-ness and needs the future, which is no more than a thought form, isn't it?

Nobody has ever encountered the future except as a thought. Nobody has met it, ever. It only exists as a thought form.

The past too only exists as a thought form. They seem so real. Time, past and future seem so real.

And you can say, yeah, they must be real because I'm getting old. I'm burning up in time. And I'm shriveling just like a fruit, a fresh fruit.

And then it shrivels. And then it's gone. Everything is being burned up in time.

That's true on one level, it looks so real. And then if you look, yes, but time, past, future, never here. Nobody has ever met them except as a thought.

So it seems to do things to things, and yet if you look more closely, it doesn't even exist. No conclusions. Because then it becomes philosophy.

There's nothing wrong with philosophy, but not here. Just to see, even to see a paradox, to see the paradox of time and the timeless. So on this retreat we use the portals of silent space here and in nature.

We use nature itself, we may talk about that. Tomorrow, which doesn't exist except as a thought form. We use the portal of now, which simply means our practice this weekend is to become friendly with now.

It doesn't sound important enough. I want ultimate realization. Well, just become friendly with now.

I want to attain the ultimate. Just become friendly with now. Yes, but what about the ultimate?

I want to add it to me. And finally I'll be complete when I attain the ultimate in the future. So the entire retreat then can be considered as a portal, potential portal into that unconditioned consciousness, space consciousness, just words, pointers.

It also helps, and here is another portal, to feel the inner body as you sit here, a certain aliveness in your energy field. Simply to sense that the body is alive, anchors you in now. And that I recommend when you go to bed here, because here you don't have television to stimulate your mind or other things, radio.

And if you're not staying here in the retreat place, and you happen to have a television in your room, I would recommend that you don't switch it on this weekend. Or the radio. Are you going to miss something terribly important?

Probably not. When you listen to the news on Monday, it will be the same. Twenty years ago it was the same.

Anywhere in the 20th century similar things happened and worse. So when you go to bed, lie there on your back, feel the energy field of the body. Just notice it.

It's not a big deal or complicated matter. Simply start somewhere in the body, hands, feet, oh, there's the hand. And then attention is there.

And then attention is in the general overall feeling of inner body. That anchors you quite simply in now. Thoughts will slow down, may even stop if your attention is fully in the body.

So instead of being immersed in some kind of thought stream, which is going to be about tomorrow, or your return trip home, or the problems that are waiting for you when you get home, and it will be saying you should have stayed home, you have too many things to deal with, you shouldn't have come. There's usual things that happen in mental noise. Then you step out of that into the aliveness of now.

And you use the inner body as a portal. And should you wake up in the middle of the night and the mind wants to start up again, me, my story, my problems, and then you notice, oh, let's go into the body. The mind will be saying, no, you can't, there's no point, not now, you can't feel your body now, there's too much to think about, too restless.

And then you feel the body. You don't necessarily have to believe what the head tells you. Not now.

It says, not now, think, think. Every thought says, I matter, give me attention. It doesn't say that openly, but it wants, because it's a little energetic entity, and it wants more energy for itself.

So it wants to be taken very seriously. It says, I matter, give me more attention. And then usually it gets it, it just pulls, okay, this matters.

And then it leads to more proliferation of thought streams coming out of that one. And it's probably problematic. And you're lying there in a nice bed.

There is no problem except as thought forms. If there were a true problem, it would be right in front of your eyes and you have to take action. A challenge, it would be a challenge that exists a lot in life.

But problem and accumulation of thought forms concerning future, sometimes past, has no actual existence except as a thought form. So it says, I matter, give me your attention. Off you go into a stream of thinking.

Can't sleep, just so much on my mind. And it burns up life energy. And then you wake up, and there's the heaviness of me, can't face another day of this.

So notice the tendency for mind to want to draw in all your attention. Sometimes coupled with certain emotions, let's say me, then the emotion energizes the thought. And that becomes a person's sense of self.

No space around it, just that, trapped in the form of me. And then you suddenly notice, emotional turbulence and mental noise. The noticing is the arising of something that is not conditioned, just to see it.

And with the seeing comes the possibility of stepping out. And then say, okay, I can actually feel my hand. Feel your hand, says thought, think about your problems.

So you sense, and you lie there, and you don't even want to go back to sleep, because it's so beautiful to be anchored in your inner energy field. And now, why go back to sleep? Enjoy your sleeplessness.

Oh, it's great. For a while I went a little mad. I loved that state so much, of not being able to sleep, that I would drink two or three cups of strong coffee before going to bed, just so that I could enjoy that incredible sense of aliveness in the body.

Not through the coffee, the aliveness was there anyway, but I wanted to stay awake as long as possible. No need for that. That reminds me, I would recommend that you don't, although we are in Italy, I'm sorry, that you don't indulge in alcohol this weekend.

You can indulge after, because when presence is fully there, it doesn't matter anymore. But the arising presence can easily become obscured through a couple of drinks, and then you go back into... So this is simply a recommendation.

We are also going to spend some of this weekend in silence. Again, a recommendation. There's no thought police or speech police.

So I may recommend certain periods during the weekend when we are simply in silence, at least external silence. So it's good to notice, and just a few days here are enough to encounter many different states in yourself. Loving it here, oh, this is great, and two hours later, hating it.

Just notice. Something in you, as I said, wants to be here. Something else doesn't really want to be here.

It went along and might regret it now. And just notice that. This room is open during the day, so you could come in any time also, just if you want to sit, just sit, be still, listen to silence.

Going out into nature, I recommend that even if you've come with a friend, every day to spend some time alone in nature also. Just walking, sitting, looking, listening. We'll talk more about that.

One recommendation then, we've been talking about thought, is not to take any thought that arises this weekend too seriously. Remember, the thought says, I am serious, I matter. But it's not that serious.

In this evolutionary leap that humanity is now taking, of which you, the form, is an important part. You are that evolutionary leap of human consciousness. In that leap, we go beyond thought.

We've gone through the whole huge evolutionary cycle of being totally identified with thought. And now it's time to go beyond, because if we linger any longer in this state of consciousness, which has become dysfunctional, because it is the end of a cycle, if we linger any longer, humanity will not survive as a species. It will destroy itself and the planet.

The madness will simply increase, as it's been doing throughout the 20th century. So we are stepping out of thought. Thought can still be used beautifully, creatively, but no longer have our self in it.

We are also going to spend certain periods of time, or rather no time, in stillness together. If there is a lot of interference through thought, simply use a portal, listen to silence. Feel the inner body, or whatever.

Or simply say, okay, there's mental noise, that's how it is, what can I do? There it is. All right.

And the arising of that new consciousness, one aspect of it, one way of looking at it, very limited way, everything, every perspective is limited. One aspect of that is, one can say, it is the arising of stillness from within. Alive.

Vibrantly alive, but still. And out of that, sometimes dynamic action can flow. It is not a passive state.

Our little opening ceremony, I almost forgot. Awakening. The bell signifies awakening.

Awakening out of thought. Thank you. I will see you in the now, at 10 o'clock, as you walk back to your room, and throughout this weekend, walk on the, what I call, the razor's edge of now.

One step at a time. It's miraculous. Take off your clothes.

Who cares about the story of me? You can go back to it. This is where something new can come in.

Only through that opening. Sense perception. Look at sense perceptions as a portal, as we sit here.

Usually the primary sense is sight. Unless you lose it, then it becomes hearing. But as we sit here in this space, probably the primary sense perception is hearing.

When you walk out into the beauty, it will shift to seeing, and hearing will become secondary. So let's start, since we are sitting here in this space. It's hearing, because there isn't that much to see, except this body sitting on a chair.

Not very interesting. So there are words being spoken, so that's hearing. There are little sounds around us.

A few little sounds produced by the people in this room. Moving. Occasional sounds.

And a few sounds coming in from the outside. And you'll be aware of that also. Birds.

Some human-made sounds from the outside. And I said just now, you'll be aware of that also. There's the sense perception.

How does that become possible? What you perceive is fleeting. It's a form.

A sound. Most sounds don't last very long. When you look at something, then you get the impression you may be looking at something lasting.

A tree. Or a person. That seems to last longer.

But sounds come and go. And I said yesterday, to listen to the silence in between and underneath the sound, that's one way of putting it. But what does that mean?

What is that? That is, at first it looks dualistic. I am listening to the silence.

But since you can't really listen to silence, there's nothing there, then you realise silence as an inner state. The state of listening is the silent state. The state of listening to silence is the stillness within.

It's not really two. So the listening to the silence is the doorway into the non-dualistic state of consciousness. Everything else is dualistic.

There's a subject and an object. And that's what yesterday I called object consciousness, which fills most people's lives. And so awareness arises.

It's strange that I can't really talk about this, but I'm talking. Awareness arises. And it is recognised as the primary ground in which all perceptions happen.

And that is the deeper meaning, the true meaning of stillness. It is knowing the awareness in which the sense perception happens. Not knowing it as I know it.

It's only through language that it becomes an object, because language functions like that. One could, to get a little closer to the truth, I know the ground of being, the awareness as myself. I as the sound perceptions.

Who is listening? Who is listening to the sounds? I, the stillness.

And so we could call this awareness of awareness. And the same happens when you go out and you look at something, visual perception happens. Now, in every human being, in most humans, the moment they hear something or they look at something, there is a mental commentary.

Thought objects arise. The me, the mind made object based, mental content based me, interprets and comments on what's going on. That's usually what happens.

According to its conditioning, it labels, interprets, there's mental noise, there's a sense perception and immediately it's made into concepts. You might be walking around beautiful nature and commenting mentally on very normal. And it's also normal to have some personal relationship to what you're seeing.

The me comes in. It compares that with something that I saw in that other place last year. It's not quite as nice as that forest that I saw then, but it's nice.

But I was in that forest last year, that was really something. It's normal. Or even more, this plant, I wonder if I can, this little sapling, maybe I could take that home.

I could put it in my garden. There's a relationship, a personal thing that comes in through which things are being seen. Comparative.

And if you're walking with someone, this inner noise very often becomes outer noise. And then there's a comment, oh look at that, what's that called, I can't remember the name of that tree. Look at that beautiful flower.

There's nothing wrong with saying things like that, but for most people, all their attention is immediately in commentaries. And when in the, Jesus teaching, there's one little, I just take this fragment from the New Testament, which simply says, look at the flowers. Look at the flowers.

Now there's a greater depth to it than people realize. When he said, look, he meant look. Now that is a different looking.

And that looking happens not through the conditioned mind, with its accumulation of content, but a looking that happens within an unconditioned field of spaciousness. That is through looking. Now the strange thing is, although most people wouldn't even know what I'm talking about, everybody has that already within themselves.

They don't know it. For example, it happens each time you look at something that just arises in your field of vision. A flower, a tree, a little beetle, a rock, a stone.

And there's a moment when you first, your vision focuses on this new sense object. And there's a little gap before the first mental commentary comes in. For most people, the gap is too small for them to even be conscious of it.

It's tiny. And then something is being said in the head, out loud. But there was a moment of true spaciousness within which first you explored visually the object in consciousness.

There was a moment of spaciousness in which the true looking happened. And it could be a second, two seconds. If something comes into your field of vision that is an unusual object that cannot immediately be interpreted, categorized, or compared to something else, then it may be that the gap of not labeling may be a little longer.

And that is called astonishment. And that would happen, and it's a beautiful state, the state of astonishment. That might happen if a UFO suddenly appeared and you can't quite...

or if it's half dark and some kind of animal is coming but you can't quite figure out what it is. And there's a moment of... So then the gap may be a little bit longer.

But then the mind will quickly try some interpretations. That could be... no, it looks like...

And then there's also, if something arises in your field of perception that is a huge challenge, perhaps even a threat to your survival as a physical entity, then it's possible, suddenly, as the tiger jumps from the tree and then leaps towards you, that would be a moment of complete spaciousness. Thought cannot operate because it can't cope with that situation. There's nothing in your past that you can refer to that would enable you to deal with that situation.

You can look back, when was the last time a tiger attacked me? Or what have I read in handbooks about tigers? I can't remember.

And even if you had read handbooks of what to do in case of a tiger attack, as you read in... I live in Canada, sometimes in guidebooks you read what to do when you meet a bear. And they even have signs as you enter the forest, bear encounters, how to behave, what to do.

But when it happens, you won't remember. And so, and this is, it sometimes happens that an emergency situation accidentally produces that state of consciousness that is arising here, that is actually the next evolutionary level for mankind, humankind, and suddenly there is complete presence, alertness, stillness, and no commentary. And action may arise, if it's possible or necessary, suddenly you go into action, run away maybe, or do something that isn't right for that moment, maybe you just stand there and look.

And I've read accounts of people who were face to face with a tiger or some other animal and they just stood and looked in such presence in which there was not even fear. I don't fear the anticipation of seeing myself being eaten up by the animal. It's fear is always the next moment.

What's going to happen to me next? But in complete presence, there's no movement away from this. It's just this.

And then, that's the state of connectedness with the one intelligence, the one unconditioned intelligence of the universe, which then operates in that situation through you or by itself, through some other factor. So that's, accidentally it can arise, and here, on our retreat, we are inviting that state. Which otherwise happens accidentally.

Or you read, sometimes you might receive something, stunning news, somebody has just died. The same thing can happen. So simply to notice here, when you first look upon something in nature or even sitting in your room, there's a moment of clear perception before the mind comes in.

If you notice that moment, it tends to get longer, so there's more space in you in which the perception happens. That is a depth that suddenly is there. You become deep, that which you perceive suddenly has an aliveness and a depth to it, that otherwise it doesn't have.

Nature, for most people, because they immediately label everything, is quite flat.

Beautiful, but flat. It's like walking surrounded by walls or screens, because the label becomes the screen or the wall, the depth isn't there.

The unbelievable delusion of thinking that when you have formulated a sound about something, then you know what it is. Oak tree. Now I know what it is.

You've produced a few sounds, or if you don't speak them, it's a thought form in the head. That is an oak tree. It's an absurd assertion and delusion.

And now you go no further, because the label has become the screen between you and it. It's become flat and quite lifeless, because now you start thinking about oak trees and another oak tree or somewhere else. And the more you know about oak trees, the more labels you have, screens.

It doesn't mean to completely forget what it is. Sometimes to communicate, you may need the labels. Somebody may ask, what is that?

What are you looking at? Or a little child may ask, as they do when the mind starts to accumulate knowledge, so called, when the mind starts to grow and starts to accumulate concepts, there comes a stage in the child's life when they continuously ask, what's that? What's that?

And most parents feed them the concepts, the labels. That's an oak tree. Okay, let's go on to the next thing.

And immediately, from now on, they will, or let's just say tree, from now on, the moment they see a tree, they say, tree. So already at that early age, not that it could be, accumulation of concepts needs to happen, but a parent who is aware could create some more space and not just say, that's an oak, that's a tree. But to invite the child to look more, look, touch, see that, look at that, look there, can you feel that?

Up there, how the leaves move, can you listen to the sound of the leaves? And then the child begins to, oh, and then it might even have forgotten that it asked, what's that? And after you've invited the child to look, and you can only do it if you yourself have gone beyond being imprisoned by labels, then you can say, and that's called a tree.

We call it tree. Then the illusion isn't there that that sound is what it is, that thought form is what it is. It remains alive.

It has a depth, an aliveness, and in some way it remains a mystery, unfathomable mystery that has no end. And you're comfortable with that, because that is what depth is. The entire universe is deep, because you are so deep.

So, it's becoming free, as this is why we are here, of being imprisoned by mental labels, not only about nature, whatever it is. It goes hand in hand that we also become free of labels about ourselves, labels I have accumulated about me, and walk around as an accumulation, a bundle of labels of me, certain conditioned mental contents, patterns, experiences, a name around it, and then that's, don't know yourself beyond that, and everything you look upon is looked through the screen of those labels, towards the self, the mind-made self, and then everything gets interpreted through that. And there's some personal relationship of the self towards everything, even nature. And that is why so many people, when they walk out into the beauty of nature, they have this slight feeling of uneasiness, and they can't wait after a while, saying, I need to get back to the city, or back to my usual surroundings.

There's a sense of not quite, of being an alien entity in here, a sense of not quite belonging here. And it's so quiet here. So we are paying attention here, and this is so significant, paying attention to sense perceptions, and allowing the sense perceptions to be there without the labels.

And if labels come, as you listen, or watch, recognize them as mental labels, so that you don't totally believe in it, totally drawn into it. So thought is recognized as thought when it comes. And it's not that important here.

Remember, the theme for our weekend here is, thoughts are not that important. And before, perhaps until recently, your entire life was absorbed by thought. It was all about that, and emotions that go with those thoughts, and give added fuel to those thoughts.

And the primary thought form was the me, the self. So the liberation of stepping out of that here, not even waiting for disaster, because of intense suffering, because eventually that will push you out, and life will do it. Eventually, it could take a while.

And then a human being reaches a point, the evolution of consciousness, when the readiness is there for this to happen without further suffering. So either that state is consciously chosen now, the state of awareness, aware presence, or life will push you into it. It won't drag you, pull you, kicking and screaming until the last moment.

No. Consciously chosen, you can choose that state now. This is not ultimately true, because you're not separate from the totality.

It's a perspective. Every statement is only a perspective. It is a helpful perspective to say, you can choose to step out of identification with thought.

You can choose, when you walk between here and the dining hall, you can choose when you walk between here and your room, to be there, present in every step. And you're walking in a field of stillness and alertness, instead of being a walking story, a walking conceptualized self. And that is a hundred times as heavy on the planet, if you could hear, if you had the psychic ears to hear how a conceptualized self walks on the planet, it would sound like a dinosaur steps.

You know, in the films about dinosaurs, how everything vibrates when they walk. And once they step somewhere, nothing grows for a long time. And of course, this is true for human beings.

When you visit, this is where humans have been, nothing grows anymore. So, you don't need to be destructive, quite destructive species in that mad state, quite destructive on the planet. Not as destructive as in Star Trek, there's a species called Bok.

Wherever they go, there's nothing left. But humans can get quite close to that. So, but every human, the heaviness of a personalized self on this planet, the heaviness in your own life that comes when you don't know yourself beyond a conceptualized sense of self, of me, which is accumulation of thought forms.

Past and future are of overriding importance in that sense of self. Because the past gives you your identity, the future promises your completion or fulfillment. That's why you need it desperately.

That's the illusion of self. And it's heavy. Collectively, humanity in that state is heavy on the planet.

And personally, in your personal life, ultimately there is no personal life. In your personal life, there is also a heaviness of your problems that are such an essential intrinsic part of one's sense of self. Me and my problems remove problems from the conceptualized sense of self and not very much remains.

And the strange thing is, just as future and past are thought forms only, have no reality, at least I haven't met anybody who has seen them or touched them or experienced them, past or future, they only touched and felt and experienced the now, ever. Just the same, the thought form of problem only exists as a thought form which is essential to the conceptualized sense of self. I'm carrying around these problems.

And some problems are long lived. I've carried them for years. And I'm still working.

Every night I wake up and I think about it. I haven't found the solution yet. But maybe I will if I wake up often enough in the middle of the night and think about my problems.

Perhaps a solution will come. And of course the thoughts are the same thoughts that I thought last year and five years ago. It's the same circular thoughts.

And to the body your problems are real. The body reacts as if you were in the midst of a very dangerous situation which is created in the head. And of course you're lying in your bed.

And so again to step out of that and a good question to ask is always to see whether the problem is actually real or not. What's the problem at this moment, here, now? What problem do I have now?

Now. Not tomorrow. Now.

And then there's no problem left. A challenge may be left, but it doesn't turn into thought structures that go round and round and build up a sense of self around this challenge. If it's a true challenge, you face it and then action arises.

So we're stepping out of all that here. And psychically, one could say, we are losing weight quickly here. The heaviness goes up.

So as you walk between here and the dining hall, as you walk between here and your room, you can choose to walk along the razor's edge of now. One step at a time. And some of the places where you walk here are quite noisy, this gravel.

Now it's helpful because then there's the sound. It's not a means to an end. When you get to the dining hall, okay, or to your room, it's just not more important.

The future moment, the next moment isn't more important than this one. That's the delusion of the mind. Deep-seated delusion that the next moment is more important than this one.

So this is always a means to an end. All that is part of being trapped in thought and needing the thought-form future to fulfill the insufficient thought-form of me. And we can practice here living in the new way of not making the now into a means to an end.

This is enough. One step is enough. It's not going to get any better with the next step.

This is as good as it gets. And the more you are present with this step, the more there is a depth to it. It's more than the step.

There's a spaciousness to it. It's not just the step that you are taking right now. There's a depth to it.

It's not just the tree that you are looking at right now. That's beautiful, yes, but there is a depth to that tree. That is the inner depth, but ultimately inner and outer are one.

It is the depth of the universe. That's suddenly there. And so the step, of course, is also an object in consciousness.

The tree is an object in consciousness. Who knows what that is beyond the object that arises in consciousness? Who knows what that tree is?

Because all we know about the tree is certain impulses that are transmitted to the brain, to the mind, through the nerves, electrical impulses. And then it reaches the brain and then a mental image forms. Who knows what that is beyond that?

It's a mystery. Is there even anything there? Would there be a tree if nobody saw it, perceived it?

You know the famous question, if a tree falls in the forest, does it make a sound if nobody is there? Does it make a sound or does it make no sound? Then you have to imagine nobody there.

And so you imagine, I am not there to listen to it. And of course you can, one could talk about that. This is sometimes called a Zen question, but it's not really a Zen question this one.

Because one could say with certainty that Zen questions have no real answer. They are there to stop the mind. This can stop the mind a little bit, but you can see, no, there is no sound.

Of course there is no sound if there is no ear. There is no sound. For a sound to be there it requires an ear.

And more than an ear, it requires an awareness. The ear produces the sense perception and that requires an awareness. So there is a depth suddenly to everything, and that is the depth of what I called last night, and these are just temporary pointers, nothing to cling to, what I called last night, space consciousness and object consciousness.

Object consciousness and the depths of that. But really, ultimately, that is awareness itself, consciousness itself, before it becomes something. And the moment you name it, as I have just done, it becomes limited again.

Because it's faster than anything that one could name or encapsulate in some kind of thought. It can only be known directly, not in a subject-object relationship. Ultimately, known can only be known as yourself.

The depths of yourself, not the self that consists of accumulated mental content, not the I am this, that and the other, the story, but the I am in its essence, that which remains beyond all forms. The only thing that you can know without any doubt whatsoever, because everything else may be a delusion, and in a way it is, because everything is so fleeting in the world of form. But this one thing that beyond any doubt is real, and that is the ground, the depths of I.

If it's all illusion, the illusion must be happening somewhere, it is known somewhere, it arises somewhere. Even in every illusion there must be something in it that's real, otherwise it wouldn't be. So even if our entire sense-perceived life, phenomenal life, the life of form is an illusion or a dream, and yes, it is very much like a dream, because it all passes and then it might could have been a dream.

When you get home after this weekend, your first day, you wake up at home again, and first, did I dream that retreat in Italy, or was I there? For a moment there may be a doubt, because they are quite similar. It's gone.

Now the difference is, you can then get your photos and say, ah, it actually happened. But then if you lived for long enough, the photos would fade, and then you can't see anymore, where was that? It's fading, it's a fading photo.

It looks like a photo of a dream, blurred out, the blurred edges around things, it's gone. Nobody remembers anymore. Maybe your grandchild says, my grandfather once went to a retreat in Italy, and then that's the last thing anybody ever heard of it.

It's gone. Did it ever happen? Nobody remembers it.

Did it ever happen? And so the history is full of events that nobody remembers. A tiny fraction of human history got written down, you see it in stone, but most of it, nobody remembers.

It's gone, and it was perhaps very dramatic. And then it evaporated. And if not, did it ever happen?

Maybe, maybe not. It's strange, there is a dream-like quality to all of our lives, and yet, there's something in each dream that must be real, because otherwise the dream couldn't happen. There's nobody to dream it.

So there is an innermost essence to each dream, which is the substance. And those are the forms. And so there came this philosopher, Descartes, who wanted to find out, what is the one thing that I can know with absolute certainty?

And then he started thinking, and he spent several years thinking about what he could know with absolute certainty and beyond any doubt, because he had just come after hundreds of years of humanity being totally trapped in belief structures, and saying things, taking things for absolute reality that could be total fantasy. He said, maybe this is all total... Theologians were talking about angels, how many angels could dance on a needle or something like that, and he thought, maybe this is all fantasy.

What is it that we can know with absolute certainty? And he thought and thought and thought for years, and suddenly he realized, I'm always thinking. That must be it.

So he didn't quite go far enough. He got trapped in thought, and because he couldn't stop thinking, he finally came up with the famous statement, I think, therefore I am. And of course, that's the expression of an illusion, to equate being with thinking, to equate an identity of who you are with a movement of thought.

Not that he created the illusion, he just saw the illusion that was already there, that all humans were already trapped in. But the approach that he adopted was a good one, to ask, is there anything that I can know beyond any doubt, because this world looks so ephemeral, so fleeting, and so you have to go deeper. There's a kind of inner listening.

What is it that remains? When the form dissolves, you wake up in the morning after the retreat, and before even thought operates, after you wake up, maybe you open your eyes, there's already the essence there. A spacious, aware presence, which has not yet identified with this thought, or that thought, or that memory.

It just is a field of spacious, alive presence that is there also now. In fact, it's exactly the same when you wake up at home in the morning, it's exactly the same as now, just I am. Beyond even the words I am, a sense of I am-ness.

And that, some people realize that, when life knocked down all the things that I am had identified with, I am had become mixed up with forms in the mind, a story. And so, you think that I am my story, I am my history. That sense of I am-ness gets mixed with thought forms, and you cannot distinguish it anymore from thought forms.

And so, that's the delusion that I am this or I am that. And sometimes it happens that life knocks these thought forms out of you, through great suffering, or great loss. You don't know who you are anymore, because all the things that you thought you were, you lost them.

Position, possessions, beliefs even, you don't know what you believe anymore. There are some people who doubt their beliefs when they lose something. There are people who go to church every Sunday, and suddenly, sometimes in old age, the partner, the husband or the wife dies, and they suddenly say, I don't, this doesn't seem to be working, that's not supposed to happen.

They doubt their belief, because it doesn't work anymore, the partner died. But you had a contract with God, and that's not supposed to happen. Nobody told me that these days.

Thought, belief forms get shattered too, through some disaster. And beliefs, mental positions, the self, the mind made self loves these things, this is my position. And then life knocks them down.

They become difficult when things around you get knocked down, suddenly you can't explain the universe anymore. My explanations suddenly don't fit the universe anymore. And I had it arranged so neatly.

And when people asked me, I knew exactly my viewpoint and my opinions, I could tell them exactly how things were, and suddenly, I don't know anymore. Sometimes when some collective disaster happens, like September 11th, and that's only one collective disaster that's happened everywhere on the planet, suddenly, couldn't explain things anymore. And even the people in churches found it difficult to find something to say about it.

What can you say? Because people ask these strange questions, how can God allow this? If God was a separate entity controlling everything, not knowing God is the essence.

So, these things, either through disaster or through a more gentle opening, which is the case here, these thought structures give way to something deeper, a deeper dimension within yourself that emerges. So we are inviting this in here. We are, please, come.

And the easiest way, of course, when you open the portals, this is the evolutionary impulse of the universe. It will happen, even if you say, no, no, it will happen. Or you can open the door, the inner door.

And a very easy opening of the inner door is just, as you know, this is why I call it the portal, the yes to now. Oh, that's the opening. So that's really all that's needed is that opening.

The mind-made self can't do that. If you were only here as that mind-made egoic entity that is based on thought, you wouldn't even know what these words mean. You wouldn't recognize the truth of what yes to now is.

You would be frightened of that and run away. But you already know the truth of it, because the opening is already happening in you. And now, here's the midwife, that's all, so that the birth process happens more quickly, before humanity destroys itself completely.

If that happened, it would be okay, too. On a cosmic level, it doesn't matter. Consciousness flowers anywhere, through any form.

Many life forms didn't make it on the planet. But it would be beautiful if consciousness flowered through the human form. So that's why we are here, so we are inviting that.

So it's the death of the old, the death of the me, but it's a gentle, beautiful death. Maybe it's gentle now, maybe life has already knocked you on the head a few times, and that's why you're here. And now this is simply completing your death as the mind-made entity.

And so you choose presence here. And you choose the portals that are here, the sense perception, presence in every step. And then the deep-seated mental habits of labeling subside.

The possibility arises of allowing a sense perception, not just for a moment, which everybody has, the first moment they look upon something, there's the gap, there's the true looking. But here the possibility arises to be with something, especially nature, without needing to call it anything. Clear perception, spacious perception.

So one could say you sense that who you are is a deep space, and the entire world happens in that deep space. Spaciousness, stillness, and that is also a peace that is deep. Choose also when you are out in nature, choose for a little while to sit somewhere, or stand somewhere, and look upon something, whether it be a plant or a stone, or a little patch of ground, let's say one square meter.

And even on one square meter, so many life forms, so many shapes and forms. So it's so alive, even that little square patch of ground. And you simply stay with that, there's moss growing there, a little beetle running there, tiny, every little stone is different.

And you're not labeling it in any way, you're just allowing the sense perception to be there, and you stay with it for a while as a spacious presence in which that sense perception arises. And then you see even this seemingly totally insignificant patch of ground is almost, one could say, an entire universe, is so alive, has such depth to it, which is not different from your own depth, because you and it, in that non-labeling perception, you and it are no longer two, because it arises within the spaciousness of yourself. So that is unitive knowing, not separative knowing through little labels.

So, and that's, I recommend this, this weekend, to occasionally go somewhere, just choose a little field, a little area, whatever it may be, and just give it attention, let it be there, and watch. Without getting totally lost in the watching, you watch and you know yourself as the spaciousness. So this is perceiving through stillness, unconditioned perception.

Occasionally it's happened that great artists looked upon a seemingly insignificant object in that way, because there are some great artists who painted landscapes that were nothing special, nobody would have looked at them twice, just an ordinary field and an ordinary tree, nothing, and they, but they must have stood there and looked, and there was suddenly a depth, and then they went to a canvas, and some of that depth's perception, some of that spacious perception that they had, also got somehow onto the canvas, the fragrance of that state of space perception, somehow got onto, and so we call it a great work of art. If you see only the forms when you look at that work of art, it's not, nothing special there, and then you see some other works of art that are totally spectacular, there's a huge stack with horns there, and a huge mountain, dramatic looking, and somehow, and a huge river flowing, but somehow it doesn't have that depth to it.

There may even, as van Gogh looked at a straw chair, a wooden old rickety chair in his room, and he must have looked, looked, and so a depth and spaciousness arose, it's not just the chair, then he painted that chair, which probably he paid the equivalent of one euro for, because it was so old, one euro for the chair, ten million dollars for the painting of a chair. And that's, because there's some of that, then most of the artists, the moment they can only do that for brief moments, in the rest of their lives, the space perception isn't there. They are just as mad as everybody else, sometimes even more mad.

And so we learn this perception, which goes far beyond perception, and you don't need to become an artist, maybe you will, but it's not necessary. And so we begin, it is, nature is helpful in that, and later, when we may address that, this afternoon or tomorrow, in the now, of course, that same perception can flow into doing, when you begin to do things, because that's where people lose themselves, even people who can already be present in nature, they still lose themselves when the world impinges upon them and says, this matters, and they lose themselves in the doing, and the spaciousness is lost, and they're trying to do good, but the essence of good isn't there anymore. They think this is what matters, the doing is what matters, but it's always secondary.

And then, bring that into human interaction, the spaciousness, that's the great art. And that's only then the world changes. For the time being, right, let's stay with nature, and then we'll bring it into human interactions.

Nature exists in a state of thoughtlessness, no mind. So it can teach you the state of no mind. The fact that nature is pre-mind, and humans are going beyond mind, doesn't matter.

You both meet in the state of oneness, the connectedness. Humans lost it for a long time. They got lost in time.

They got lost in thought. That was the human condition for a long time. And maybe even that was an illusion, maybe it wasn't, it was just a long dream.

Maybe it was a short dream that seemed very long. So, I recommend that until this afternoon, we spend this day in silence. And so, give attention to the little things that you do today.

We mentioned walking. There's the walking. And there's the field of awareness in which the walking happens.

There's the picking up of a glass of water. It's moving towards the mouth in its journey. And then there's the drinking.

And then it moves back. In the normal state of consciousness, the picking up of the glass of water and moving it to the mouth is a means to an end. Because the end is wanting the water in here.

So it's... What's next? What's next?

Because what's next is always a question of the mind-made self. What can I add to me next? I've just added some water.

Because even that, of course the body needs a certain amount of food and water. But there's a strong psychological element to that created by the mind-made self and its need to add more. And that becomes the problem of eating more than you need.

Which is a very common thing for many people. And it's just one aspect of needing more. But it doesn't really matter on what level you add more to complete me.

Could be chocolate comes next. And then that movement is also a means to an end. And always...

After it's happened, what is the next thing? And the next thing may be a book. A spiritual book even.

If it's truly spiritual, it may not be that satisfying because it doesn't give you much. But if it gives you information or interesting theories, then it works. And then after a while it doesn't work anymore, you need more of something else.

But you've just absorbed some new belief perhaps through that or some new opinion. And so here, in a relatively simple environment, there isn't that much that you can add. Well...

So let's see if we can be with the little movements that occur here. And see if certain things we can perform in a state of simple presence. Even picking up a glass of water.

And during that space, while the water travels, and this to the mind seems insignificant, it says, is that going to solve my problems, drinking a glass of water? And the amazing thing is, yes, it will solve your problems, because all your problems were structurally created by the structure of your mind. We're going beyond that.

The problems are structural in every case. So yes, it will, but... The space in which the water moves could be a space of simple presence in which this movement is not a means to an end, it's just fine as it is, and there's no thinking while this happens.

And that is truly an evolutionary leap. While the water is being picked up, there's simply a sense of spacious presence in which this movement happens. And while you drink the water also, it tastes much more alive than when I needed to get it down as quickly as possible.

And then it travels back. And that was that physical movement of coming and going, there was no thought, just spacious presence. That is an evolutionary change.

If movement happens within the space of simple awareness, not a means to an end, just that. And simple things, because here you only do simple things, maybe at home you do important things, I don't know. But in this retreat, there's nothing important, not what the mind calls my business or whatever is important.

You haven't got your business here, well you could carry it in your head and think about my importance, but it's not really, whatever you do here, the movements are not important in themselves, and that's why it's such an opportunity. And then you might walk a few steps that go up five steps, and again, during that movement, there's no thought, there's just a step, spacious presence, nothing much from the point of view of mind. And so that movement in space, that external movement, happens within a deeper spaciousness of simple thoughtless awareness.

The arising of thoughtless awareness, not just while you sit in meditation, but in life. And it could arise if we are spending this, after this, from between now and our next meeting in silence, you'll be eating, nothing to talk about. Of course you could talk to yourself in the head while you eat, or you could be there with a simple movement of, and you look simple.

So it happens within the spaciousness. And then you may carry, you carry the plates back to the kitchen. And don't just, it's enough even sometimes to put one plate, pick up the plate, put it from here to there.

Without the interference of thought. It's not a great thing, and yet it is incredible. A totally different energy field that comes into that.

There's also a care that flows into that kind of doing. Even just picking up the water, even just walking up the five steps, or cleaning something in your room, or removing your shoes. There's suddenly what one could call almost quality of doing, when it is done, not as a means to an end.

Not with a view to some future moment, but it is done in presence. No thought, because thought will reduce it to a means to an end. Or it will bring in something old.

Some people think they are present when they are saying mentally, I am now walking up five steps. One, two, three, four, five. Of course you are creating mental accumulations.

There's a past already, you remember the one, two, three. No, this is unnecessary. You are just walking, you don't need to tell yourself that you are walking up the steps.

This is thought. Simply paying attention to the movement. Enough.

So that's all the little things, and often you will miss it. You will walk up the steps, and then you say, how did I get up here? You might miss it, you may eat something, and then you look at the empty plate of your dessert, and say, did I eat that?

So it happened in that you were somewhere else already. Okay, you won't be there every time. The old conditioning of course still operates also.

The two shifting in and out of that state of freedom. That's why we are here. If you go for walks, you can feel the sound that your steps make.

A generalized field of attention. Alertness, openness. And then remember, occasionally stop, stay with one little area or tree or plant.

Give it attention. The arising of the unconditioned consciousness. Space.

Inner space. Outer space. And during this retreat, you can observe thought streams, emotional streams, coming and going.

And it becomes so obvious, the impersonal nature of thinking and of emotions. Energy streams. Sometimes when I listen to a distant conversation, to humans speaking, really, it's thought speaking.

Energy form of thought, thought streams. Sometimes enormous momentum behind it in a simple conversation. An enormous momentum behind that.

Often energized by emotion. And as the presence arises, you can watch and sense those energy streams. First, perhaps you see them in someone else and you realize thought is speaking.

It reminds me of what one existentialist philosopher said. We don't speak. Language speaks us.

We can extend it because language really is thought. We don't think. Thought thinks us.

Emotions also, as you are here. It's long enough, these few days, for different emotional streams to come up. Including sadness, perhaps.

Including anger or discontent. Whatever it is. And to see that also is ultimately impersonal.

Your anger is very much like anybody else's anger. The story, which are the thought forms that are attached to anger, may differ from person to person. One person might say, I am angry because...

And the other says, well, I'm angry because... And then comes the story. Angry.

Anger. If you could feel somebody else's anger, it feels basically the same as your anger. No matter what the mental story that attaches itself to it is.

Or sadness. Fear. In itself, fine.

Not problematic at all. Thought streams, emotional streams. Only when a self is lodged in there, when the I am, who you are in your essence, which is consciousness itself, awareness itself, becomes mixed up with that, then there's a me in every emotion and in every thought.

That's the entity, the egoic entity. A little analogy. You could think of a cinema projection.

A film is being projected. The figures on the screen are acting out the drama of the film, according to what's in the script. And in this analogy, let's say these figures have an actual existence, and they know themselves only as the forms that appear in this film on the screen.

And in the middle, somebody could begin to suddenly realize their essence as light. Because every film is only modifications of light. The projector is a powerful source of light.

The light is obscured by the film in various ways. So if an actor in a film could wake up and realize his or her true nature, he would realize, I am light, not who I thought I was. And everything else in this film is also that.

Another analogy, you could have an actor on stage who's been acting out his or her role for so long that he or she has become that role. And every day, forced to act out the same role, the same words come out, the same reactions come, and he or she no longer knows themselves as who they are beyond the script or the role or the conditioning. And that's very much like a normal human being.

Every day, the things that come out of their mouth or that go around in their heads are the conditioned thinking. The entity, the mind-created entity engaged in thought. Thought has created the entity.

Identification with thought as me. And the emotions and the reactions, predictable. You know how predictable people are.

People you've known for a long time. Unless something comes in that is not the conditioned, then suddenly something new has come in. But if you meet your relatives at Christmas, then you'll see, you can predict what they're going to say, how they're going to react.

The same conversation will happen this year as last year and before and before and before. So to wake up out of that. And it doesn't mean you immediately become free because the conditioning has a momentum behind it.

The thought streams have a momentum. And although here you may be able to step out in nature, you may be able to step out and know what it means to be free of the compulsion to think. And suddenly enter that state of clear awareness.

Just presence, stillness. Wow. But then it doesn't mean the momentum is now gone.

Thought has subsided for a while. Now, the moment you begin to interact with another human being, it has a chance to come back in. Conversation starts and before you know it, you express your opinions and there's a self in it.

And then you are dragged along by thought. And when you listen often to two people talking and if there's no presence, no spaciousness around the thoughts that are being expressed. There are thoughts here too, otherwise the words wouldn't come out of the mouth.

But there is a spaciousness around the thoughts. There's also a depth or sense of space out of which the thoughts come. Now, you recognize that as you sit here.

You recognize that the thoughts are not all that matters here, not even the main thing here, but the space out of which they come. That means it's also in you, the depths, the space of no thought, or as I call it sometimes space consciousness, is also in you and it deepens as you sit here. All you need to do is sit here and it deepens.

And it recognizes itself. In recognizing itself, it deepens. And yet within it, thought operates.

It doesn't mean you can't think anymore. Thinking can still happen without that compulsive, addictive quality to it. When there is a me in every thought, mental positions identified with the position of me.

And then with that comes sometimes, almost if you are very sensitive, you can sense almost a kind of violence, even when people are discussing something. There's already that underneath. Don't you question my position.

So when you go back, the challenge is human interaction. And the tendency is to get drawn back completely into identification with thought and emotional patterns. And you can see when people talk, how the stream of speech of thought goes on and on.

Sometimes they sit, there's no gap between their thoughts. Between the speech. They are being dragged along.

You can't get, sometimes, you can't get a word in. There's no gap even for you to say something. A person is very much identified with that.

So when you interact here, you will be speaking, we may talk again after this, but it's good to have a balance here between not speaking and speaking because we can learn a lot through interacting. Because the challenge will come back anyway when you leave here. You could spend the entire weekend in silence.

And then you have to move back into the world and interact. So great alertness is required when you interact with other humans, human beings. And when you begin to speak, before we address that, it's you're listening.

Somebody is speaking, you are listening. The first important thing to remember is not to listen in the usual way, but listen in the state that we are in here, when we sit here.

Attention.

Bare attention. A complete openness so that the words simply are being received without a commenting response inside you. No preparing the next statement.

No immediately taking another position, reacting to the other person's position, mental position. And you immediately, internally, have another thought come up that conflicts with that person's position. And you're just waiting for him or her to stop.

And then you, with great energy, you put forward your position. And you can, you may watch the tendency for that to want to come up and allow it, just watch it, and then go back into the state of attentive listening. The greatest thing, if you, only that, to be able to listen to another human being in the state of openness would transform every relationship.

In that listening, this is the secret, and perhaps while you listen to these words, that is relatively easy, yes, you're paying attention to the words, but while you listen, you're aware of the space of awareness through which the listening happens. The field, which I sometimes call the now, in which everything happens, because that's what it is. It never leaves you.

So you could say you're aware of that now and that which happens in the now, which is that voice, those words. It helps, people find it helpful sometimes to be anchored in the inner body while they listen. So you listen almost with every cell of the body, one could say.

You're here, attention is in here. There's a great spaciousness. If you go deep enough into the body, first you may encounter certain energy movements, and then you go deeper, there's simply spaciousness in there.

So that also is a doorway into spaciousness. Basically, the body is empty. Ask a physicist, and they will tell you 99% of the body is empty space.

More than 99%. And what the rest is, they don't quite know. So what looks so solid, isn't solid at all.

The distances between the atom's molecules is so vast, and even within the atom, there's mostly empty space. It's all completely empty. So you go into the emptiness and listen from there.

And that is, you can now listen without the compulsive reactivity coming in. And occasionally you may notice the reactivity wanting to adopt a position, wanting to, and you notice it as a movement within the spaciousness. And it comes and it subsides.

And so that is the spacious listening. And if anybody works with people, in the capacity of whatever it may be, body worker, counselor, therapist, the key lies always in that state of attentive, open field of awareness that comes through you, but is far beyond the person. The person is the identification with the mental, emotional stream.

Then you become an opening for that current of awareness, spaciousness, space consciousness to come through. And even therapists who have received training in very mind-dominated therapies, after a few years of practice, they get tired of categorizing and analyzing and applying their particular intellectual framework. And after 10 years of practice, they one day, they begin to just sit there and listen.

And suddenly, their practice becomes 100 times more effective. There is the field of presence suddenly. They can still occasionally use things that they've learned, but more and more, they will be speaking.

When speaking happens, because it happens out of that stillness, it's spontaneous. It's right. It's what is needed for that moment comes out of that unprepared and sometimes it comes through the other person because the field is there.

That state of consciousness, also, of course, other people know it. Some great sportsmen know that they sometimes call it the zone, entering the zone, which is the transformed consciousness through which it happens. The Tao is playing tennis, which is another word for that unconditioned intelligence.

And I'm sure that's why people like to watch two people hitting a ball for hours on end, which in itself can't be that interesting. But somehow, they get there's something else at work. It's more than two people hitting a ball.

It's the play of total at-oneness with the totality. So what the Chinese call the Tao is actually playing tennis. There's no thought.

If the tennis player were thinking, it wouldn't be very good. They would lose the game. The interference of thought means gone.

You would lose within five minutes. How could thought think, I wonder where the next ball is coming from? Or imagine the most powerful computer created by thought trying to work out where the next ball is coming from.

You could put all the computers together and they would self-destruct because it's too complicated. Can't couldn't do it. What the computer would have to totally different way of knowing it breaks everything down.

The mind, it has its place for certain things. But the mind breaks everything down into little bits and pieces and further bits and pieces. And the more you develop your mind at universities, the more advanced you become at a university, the more tiny your little piece becomes.

And the pieces have become so tiny that when you start trying to work out what you're going to do a PhD on, you have to ask the professor is there a tiny piece left for me? And the professor says yes, here is a tiny piece but you can cut it up two more times. And then you do it and then there's maybe three or four other people in the world who understand what you've written because you're now a specialist.

And so if for most humans that's all they know. That is called intelligence. And it's a tiny aspect of what real intelligence is.

It's not separate. Yes, it's a small expression of intelligence, but imagine losing yourself in the cutting up and in the analysis and leading your own life through the thought process of thought. How inadequate.

So imagine the computer working out even the simplest things. The bird flying from one branch to another which is totally intuitive. There's no decision making involved.

It just looks. From a human point of view it might look as if the bird were waiting or trying to figure out when is the right moment to jump off this branch. But it's not like that.

The bird is simply the jumping off hasn't happened yet. It's not figuring out anything and then jumps off and in that harmonious flight lands on the other branch. Now imagine a computer or you might need to figure out the trajectory beforehand.

What is the speed? What is the wind resistance? What is the ratio between this and that?

Gravity has to be taken into account too. What is the weight of the feathers? It becomes a complex mathematical problem.

Just getting from one branch to another. It would. And so how does the bird work that all out?

It's without mathematics. Because it's not, it's using thought. It's not using the analytical intelligence of thought.

Another intelligence is at work that does not need to break life or information into little bits and pieces and make a lot of noise about it. It simply happens. And it's this flower.

Again, humans could get together and say let's create an incredibly beautiful flower. And how are we going to do it? So committee meetings start.

Discussions. It needs to shape. Okay, let's consult the computer about how it's...

Yes, they could never create. And it's come out of stillness. Not a single thought has gone into the creation of the flower.

Just... So that in nature that still, that operates, that unproblematic, a different intelligence, not recognized by the human mind even as intelligence. Everyone has that potential within.

But unfortunately, everybody is conditioned by our culture into only accepting the analytical as intelligent. So one could talk of, if you talk of in physical terms, right brain, left brain, there's perhaps a correspondence. But it goes deeper.

So to see that an intelligence that is far greater than anything you could work out through the mind, which has its place for certain things, is there. And why not bring that into your normal everyday life? It operates It operates through stillness, not through noise.

It doesn't need to break things down. So when you listen to another person and you are there in a helping capacity, thought movement in the state of attentive listening, and thought is not trying to figure out how can I help this person? I need to think of something.

Or make some reference to something I have learned. Case history number 223 was similar to this one. And then you go to the book and look at case history 223.

Yes, there's certain similarities and there's another case history there. What you can do like that is very limited. And now comes the possibility of just just allowing the aware spaciousness to be there.

And then through that through healing, through transformation, real insights suddenly they happen. Change happens. And you're not trying to change anything or anybody.

There is no trying in that. And what is implied here that of course is the total yes to the suchness of now. Even when you sit with another person because when you sit with another person the suchness of now comes in the form of that person.

And there's no judgment of any kind as simple yes this is the suchness of this moment. No thinking this person should be different, should this, should that. This moment is as it is.

There was a therapist some years ago in the United States who realized the power that lies in what he called unconditional acceptance of the person that before they called the person the patient but he didn't use the word patient anymore which implies many things but acceptance and that transformation happens not through categorizing analyzing labeling calling him or her pathological or finding some kind of label for the disease another label but simply unconditional acceptance.

Now they try to teach that sometimes to their people. It's sometimes the basis is not taught which is the basis for unconditional acceptance is the ability to step out of thought and rest in the state of no thought. If you're trying to practice unconditional acceptance through thought then you get into trouble again.

This is like Christians who try to love their neighbor as themselves without having gone beyond the judgments of thought. Every thought is a judgment. So they try to do it and since the teaching of consciousness exists has only come down to us in fragments they couldn't quite see that what he's talking about is the transformed state of consciousness in which you take no thought for the moral future.

And then it happens naturally that you love your neighbor as yourself because in that knowing that comes out of that state that is a unitive knowing very similar to what we talked about this morning when you look at a tree you look at nature you know that tree no longer through the labels of the mind but on a deeper level and you can know the other person in the same way without knowing anything necessarily about their story. It can be a deep knowing that goes beyond the story in the other person although mostly if you're a therapist what you will hear is the story and that's fine.

You listen to that but you listen beyond there is a field of presence and that awakens presence in the other person which is also even in the most mad person and mad means totally identified with thought not the slightest gap that's already madness and so you listen and suddenly there is an intelligence at work which operates out of the totality of that situation not necessarily through you and that applies to any situation in life to which you bring or which you meet in that state of consciousness in which you totally face the is-ness of now and there is language is never quite right but I'll say it anyway there is a current of awareness that flows and that's that then deals with the situation whether you're sitting with a person or whether it is a very difficult situation in your life not the mind created problem making which in many cases has no reality whatsoever but let us say it's a true challenge and so you bring to that you face that completely in the state of attention and in that facing it doesn't matter for how long thought comes to an end for maybe not for long there's a space a spaciousness of no thought and that is the power that lies dormant in most in all human beings the power is in all human beings but it is still dormant in most human beings one could say so this the simple ability to give attention to a situation one could say look in a wider sense we talked about you can see how it's all connected how important it is to be able to look at a tree in that state and that is relatively easy because a tree is not very challenging a tree even helps you along the tree says let me teach you stillness that's where I live my home is called stillness and the tree would love to teach you stillness so the tree is helpful you can go to the tree now that's beautiful and then comes challenges humans so with people you become still good then you start the other way around that's okay that is more rare it happens usually that people they even then say I want to leave the world I want to live alone I can't face all that much madness anymore but the beautiful thing is it's through the challenges that presence deepens through the challenges of being with people and the situations that they create so to be able to look first at nature then to be able to look at a person at a situation just looking in a wider sense now giving attention and there is one common denominator here and that is there is a space in which the movement of thought has come to an end it can thought can then operate again out of that space which is much more empowered thought not the repetitive self-serving thinking that most people are trapped in just as these words come out of the state of no thought so the words have a certain aliveness which even I sense and I speak continuously about the same things almost every day now one would have thought finally you must get tired of saying the same it's never literally the same but it always points to the same and sometimes it's almost literally the same you must get tired of saying the same things and the strange thing is it's each time it seems new and alive because it comes out of presence and so you could when you identified with the structures of thought only everything becomes jaded and old in your life and the older you get the more stale the world becomes to you through your perception so everything you know the expression being there done that and so you go through the world and nothing can it's like almost the world gradually turning black and white and more and more lifeless there's actually nothing happening to the world it's because you're looking at the world through the old mind structures and the accumulated content in your head that is the filter through which you look at people even at nature and then it gets there's a line is it in Hamlet how weary stale and unprofitable are the uses of this world or something like that that's weary stale and unprofitable it's the heaviness of one's own mind structures and as presence arises you see that everything is new it has no real past nature and is fresh and new and every time you see it it's fresh and new you don't look at it through the filter of conditioned thought there's a beautiful book I would recommend it's by Krishnamurti it's one of maybe the only book or one of very two or three books that he actually wrote by hand and it's called Krishnamurti's Notebook in which he records not only his states of consciousness every day but every day every little chapter he wrote a little chapter every day for about a year and a half and he always every chapter contains a description of nature as he saw it on that day the trees the leaves the sky and each time it's fresh as if he had never seen it before the description still contains the freshness of that it's new every time because it is not looked upon through the filter of conditioned thought and that this state is arising now in many human beings this is the liberation liberation from time the liberation from thought the liberation from self it's mind made it's little self heavy but little so when you interact here you can bring just as you listen here in that attentive listening listen to the other person even if they're talking nonsense ultimately it's all nonsense even if they're talking nonsense you listen and so there are the words and there is the the field of awareness through which the listening happens and as you listen you're aware of the field through which the listening happens as yourself so one could say you're there as the I am presence the deepest that is usually confused with thought I am I am this and that and that and you are that but the deepest that's what's left when you step out of identification with form that's what's left what Descartes the philosopher couldn't get to because he never could step beyond thought so he thought I think therefore I am is the ultimate truth one could almost go so far as to say if he had said I don't think therefore I am would have been truer I don't think therefore I know who I am you can have all kinds of variations but they would get closer to the truth and from that simple presence you listen and then at some point you may find words may come simple you may say something you may not you may just listen a different quality a different energy field is there now from what usually would be there which is mind interaction there is a depth and then you can bring it into situations where humans meet which are usually full of conflict because whenever two humans meet potentially it's a holy encounter as the course of miracles puts it potentially there is the presence of God I am the I am is there but usually wherever two humans meet that's the beginning that's a two is a crowd and before long and then if three or four get together you don't need to wait long before you have egoic conflict before you have mental positions that they identify with as me and then you have two who agree on one mental position and the other two agree on a different mental position so any human situation that you go into you will find the conflict go to big companies awful unless there are a few companies where there's a little bit of the enlightened consciousness coming in but most companies are dominated totally by the mind structures of the self which says it's totally dominated by right and wrong and power and more more it just it doesn't know what for it just wants more to grow see Enron corporation nothing it's not that these people were evil they just the ego itself was there magnified through that organization and the ego wants more because it doesn't feel fulfilled yet and that gets translated into a corporation which feels I'm not big enough yet we need more profit more what for we don't know but more more more until finally it self-destructs or you can see it in nations they want to conquer other nations Germany was possessed by in the last century by that egoic mind pattern which said we need more land what for don't know just more and we need more enemies what for because then we feel more strongly who we are it gives it strengthens our sense of self so and finally if we end up having enemies north south east and west then we will really know who we are because we define our form identity through the other forms that are alien to us and so we get strengthened in our collective form identity and for a while that feels good both on a personal level and a collective level during that time in Germany almost nobody committed suicide so it was a strengthening of the illusory self but of course you get drawn into great madness and suffering is inflicted on other human beings and ultimately also on yourself and finally the whole thing self destructs

[Speaker 4] (3:07:30 - 3:07:32)

oh the

[Speaker 1] (3:07:32 - 3:07:56)

illusion you cannot sustain illusion for that long it self destructs oh okay there comes a microphone okay

[Speaker 2] (3:07:58 - 3:08:31)

when I am interacting with people and I'm trying to practice being present but for some reason there's a pattern of behavior whatever in that person that really annoys me I really don't know I try to keep it to myself into it's my problem it's not the person's problem but it's really annoying so I don't know is there a moment that I can express my annoyance without falling into egotistical patterns

[Speaker 1] (3:08:31 - 3:08:35)

okay so this is that at work or private

[Speaker 2] (3:08:36 - 3:08:38)

any situation could be

[Speaker 1] (3:08:38 - 3:08:40)

any situation yes

[Speaker 2] (3:08:41 - 3:08:43)

with a taxi driver or yes

[Speaker 1] (3:08:43 - 4:03:18)

even here taxi driver or anybody restaurant waiter whatever yes colleague at work yes so that's a reactive pattern which has an energy to it that you can actually feel inside you and really all that's needed is to feel the energy that's behind that which is an emotional energy coupled with usually a thought which comes first sometimes the emotional reaction comes first or the thought may come first that you should be doing something different that thought is there whether it's expressed or not you should not behave the way you behave you should know better you should or you should not that the should is there and so be aware of the thought and be aware of the feeling the emotion that comes be aware of how it feels the awareness may only come at first after you've shouted something and you may still feel the lingering of the emotion or thought movement after the event with a little bit less power and then suddenly you're aware of it and it seems that you had no choice it just happened and so as presence arises you will notice in the middle of a reaction the awareness is suddenly there and while you are shouting you idiot you should know better do you even have a driving license or whatever and in the middle of it you notice it as a conditioned pattern and before you know it you will feel it before it happens the reaction as an energy movement or as a thought movement in you you may be driving many people feel annoyed when they drive because they take it all personally they take other drivers other cars personally if there came a strong wind and pushed them aside they wouldn't get angry they might have some fear but because they realize that the wind is non personal but with humans you think they should know better or they shouldn't do this they shouldn't behave like that but they do so you you watch the reactions and if there is enough presence in you you will find the reaction will come and move through you as a wave movement and you are no longer compelled to act it out and you also as presence arises you see the ultimate futility of the reaction at most it is self serving it serves to strengthen your thought based sense of self whenever you get annoyed at somebody that pattern is there because what is implied here is that you are right surely and the other person that you are annoyed about or the situation probably created by other people that you are annoyed about is wrong surely that's why you are totally justified in being annoyed because you are right and you are always right that is the when you are totally identified with thought you are always right in your own belief when a gap comes then you can sometimes see afterwards that maybe you were not right maybe that was just a position that you identified with and you can see the other person's position as also or equally right but that only comes as awareness comes in and we all know people I am sure you are not one of them we all know people who are always absolutely right that they are right and nobody else can be right I am sure everybody knows people like that who are so identified with their mental position that nobody is ever right unless until they say it and so those are people who are very much identified with a conditioned self the self loves being right it loves somebody else to be wrong because for a little moment it feels stronger so when you get annoyed that feels good on some strange level because you feel you are more strongly yourself now this is usually unconscious but if you make it conscious you can actually see it that it is actually in the service of strengthening my sense of self because the sense of self that is derived from mind is never quite strong enough it always seeks more to strengthen itself and very often the more means more right than somebody else then this can be added and some people are have that as their main way of strengthening their self they may not have good looks or great wealth or fame VIPs or great knowledge because these are all ways in which people try to add something to themselves and some people may have none of that but they can feel the whole world they are all idiots they are all totally wrong look at them what they do everybody is doing it look look at and there are people who complain all day long about other people in the world what they are doing occasionally they may even get a little bit of truth because there is a lot of madness but they derive their sense of self from that in the absence of other things but there are others who have plenty of other things and still also use this mind pattern to strengthen themselves it is one of the ways in which the self seeks to add more to itself and everybody has it to a greater or lesser degree the need to be right the need therefore for somebody else to be wrong so now that you can see that and now that your sense of self since you are here is less and less dependent on thought forms the need to be annoyed with others which means to make them wrong will also lessen because you no longer need to strengthen that ultimately illusory sense of self and so gradually comes then a freedom from that mind pattern and then suddenly you may find that that very mind pattern the same person who made annoyed you so many times suddenly the same situation happens again and you just go oh it's gone the reaction may be gone traffic driving there are people who are looking for someone to be annoyed with even while they drive and before they you know it and everybody in this room who drives a car probably has experienced being shouted at by another driver well I have and the driver shouts you idiot get your license or whoever gave you a license or something worse and now this is what then happens if you are inside you sense what that feels like when somebody does that even if you know that that person you obviously is very stupid you might say and yet you feel injured you feel a little bit less in your sense of self that is the mind based image of me if somebody calls you you idiot a little bit it removes something from you that feels I'm a great person and suddenly your sense of self is a little bit diminished this can also happen through any criticism or anything you are not and again usually the unconscious repair mechanism immediately jumps into action and in a simple traffic situation you repair your sense of self simply by shouting back something worse and you suddenly feel repaired and that process is unconscious usually people just do it it's it's and this to jump in and repair an injured sense of self the little me is always waiting for to do the repair job in any situation to justify something to become defensive if somebody says you didn't do that yes I did maybe you very well know that you didn't but in that criticism the mind made self feels diminished and whether it's true or not doesn't matter to the mind made self it's not interested in truth it's interested in preserving it's sense of self the same can happen in a discussion on argument you put forward your mental position with great conviction and the other person very simply tells you you're completely wrong your facts are all wrong and shows you this is how it is and suddenly the unconscious and automatic repair mechanism jumps into action and you say no these figures are wrong I know they're wrong and you you fabricate something simply to preserve your sense of self you say this is how it is he said that you quote something from somebody who never said that just because when you when you need to preserve your sense of self and it's a question of life or death when you have no other identity it's a question of life or death whether you are right or wrong so the truth becomes unimportant whether I survive in my sense of self that's what matters and again it's an unconscious movement and it's all part of the mad world that humans create when they don't know who they are beyond mental content beyond thought forms of me so they struggle and struggle to preserve their sense of self and strengthen it another mad way of strengthening it is to diminish somebody else's sense of self through some comment through saying something and in its madness the egoic sense of self feels stronger when it can diminish somebody else so you can you criticize somebody or and suddenly you feel you have grown because that person has shrunk and it's all in the realm of illusion a similar thing is envy and a certain structure of somebody has something and because the mind made self equates having with identity because the object that you possess has a corresponding thought form to it the thought form is what really matters not the object because out of the thought form I derive my sense of self so here I let's say I buy a certain type of car on the most simple level and my thought the thought form of my car is there mine now this word mine in the mind made sense of self is an extremely important word mine it's used all the time and all kinds of claims are made through using the word mine the child already starts when he says my toy it has identified not the toy isn't important but the toy becomes a thought form invested with self so I am in the thought form of that thing this is the beginning of the illusion unfortunately children have to go through that it seems at least so far they have had to so you can't tell a child you must not use the word mine because it will take you into illusion so it starts with that and in that the child feels it has grown a little because it the child has added the toy as a thought form to its sense of self and then the child suffers tremendously when somebody destroys the toy or takes it away because then the thought form has no basis anymore there and begins to crumble again it loses some of its little sense of self it's not fully developed at all the little that's there in the content of the mind crumbles and it's very painful and that same pattern when this child becomes an adult he or she has added many minds already my this my knowledge my opinions my maybe my good looks if they have good looks my whatever and so there's somebody you buy a new car which is the equivalent of the toy of the child exactly the same the thought form mine associated with that mine new whatever and in that you have expanded a little because your car is bigger than many other people's cars therefore you must be bigger the thought form is very attractive of my car big me big bigger than bigger than most people because of course you have to compare yourself so you look around how many bigger cars are there than mine mine and you feel while you're sitting in it you feel a sense of expansion self has grown grown and then your colleague drives into the parking lot with a one that's twice as expensive as yours and this is called then envy because you think you have shrunk again and you don't want him to feel good about this car and then you say have by any chance have you read the latest quality ratings for Mercedes cars are not what they used to be it's fallen to 12th place you may have paid too much for your car and then you feel you have removed this thought form from him the self in the egoic madness you believe that by diminishing his sense of self which you have just done of course because he will say no I haven't read the quality ratings and so you feel you have grown because one person has shrunk and in the comparative evaluation of me you have grown again and this is how envy often works envy means I feel less because you have more and then I'm going to try to take that away from you so that you can't derive a self from that anymore or if you might say even friends do that you might say you meet your friend and she bought a new dress and you feel suddenly yours is not as good this diminished and without knowing it without thinking of it just something comes out of your mouth and says oh this would look great on your sister and so these are the games that this entity plays and it goes into other forms of madness worse than this the need to be right can take on many forms but it's amazing when you see it it's so obvious what it's trying to do it's also so obvious it doesn't really work it never never for long and then you have to look to the next thing and the defensiveness that comes with it the needing amazing this is humans have been trapped in that state of consciousness for such a long time and so deeper and deeper identified with thought forms until finally that human state becomes very dysfunctional and there's nothing wrong with that being dysfunctional it is as it is and right now it's dysfunctional it has to be otherwise it wouldn't be it's an evolutionary cycle that humans have gone through which started when they ate the apple because that is the arising of thought as it says clearly they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil suddenly they were able to think and judge and evaluate good bad like dislike separate the beginning of separation a little separation from the totality and separating the world up into segments and compartments until finally from the first apple and finally you get the PhD about the tiniest of segments and Shakespeare said nothing is either good or bad but thinking makes it so in one of his plays nothing is either good or bad but thinking makes it so he saw that it always is as it is but thinking makes good and bad and there we have the story of the apple they ate of the tree of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and immediately what then developed was a self consciousness a sense of self and what is also told in the story of that is they suddenly felt uncomfortable with themselves oh no clothes it was a bit fast and they felt ashamed they had the beginning of a self image arose a me uneasy and that was only the beginning that was the loss of Eden which I'm told the translation of which means the place of joy and so then after a while things came in like work work unheard of before they started thinking life wouldn't be divided into these things of leisure and work absurd but then work started a new word came into work condemned to work whatever beautiful way they it's put in the story of Genesis effort comes in sweating by the sweat of your I can't remember what it says so it was the beginning of effort and so gradually gradually thought it became an incredible thing very empowering on the one hand the arising of thought amazing humans became the dominant species very quickly through thought and could all do all kinds of things through thought it couldn't an evolutionary cycle and gradually they lost their natural state of connectedness with the one with the source of all life which they had as their natural state didn't even know it and gradually all their sense of self was derived from thought movement and that's where in this evolutionary cycle things became more and more dysfunctional more and more suffering more and more violence more and more humans killed by other humans worse and worse and then gradually in its final stages that state of consciousness becomes a threat to the planet itself that state of consciousness because it's in its final stage it's so dysfunctional and this is why now humans change or they die out as a species because the state of consciousness that they are in is too dysfunctional for humanity to survive if nothing changes and that's why it has to change or we die so or one or the other as a species which isn't such it's sad but millions of planets billions of planets galaxies billions of galaxies each galaxy billions can't express it how many life forms how many forms consciousness takes how many forms it can flower through any form if the planet then ever recovers consciousness might flower through birds or some totally new life form so but but we are here which is a good sign perhaps humanity is going to make it and perhaps you are part of this transformation that is happening in human consciousness happening now not going to happen let's not make it into some future event projecting again a thought form of future something is going to happen to free me no it can only happen now how by inner alignment with is you can the doorway into freedom is in the now the doorway into freedom is not in the future it cannot come in the future because there is no such thing otherwise you create a new idealized version of a perfect self me enhanced version of me improved just as they say with advertising greatly improved better than ever me me and not realize that you need to again you would be looking to some adding and not realizing that the essence is already there in you nothing needs to be added you can play with adding learning something new adding new friends even adding a new car not anymore in the service of self you might just enjoy sitting in this comfortable car it's not fulfilling when it's there to feed yourself after a little while the car becomes unfulfilling when it's designed to feed your sense of self and then you might switch to a bicycle there are people on bicycles who have a stronger sense of self than people in BMWs that's possible too it's not necessarily the people in the BMWs usually yes but not always that they because a person in a bicycle can have the self image of me the one who has gone beyond attachment to all these material things and that becomes a thought form just as strong as a thought form of me big BMW the thought form of me is the one who is superior to all these un-evolved humans in their big cars and so you can be on your bicycle and go I am so much more evolved than you is the assumption even the thought might not even arise literally in that way but it's implied so thought forms the self is very cunning it may have rejected the BMW maybe it had all the money and you gave it away but still a new thought form came of me grown in stature it will grasp at anything to strengthen its sense of self if at any way you can be more of something because the comparative element is very strong in the egoic sense of self there must be more of something more right more more wealthy more strong more spiritual more if all that fails more miserable than you nobody has been treated more unfairly by life than me a new thought form develops that's what life did to me that's what they did to me human beings did that to me and a strong thought form can develop around failure which is another story in the head me the one who has failed it's all been in vain all for nothing all the struggling I failed miserably I failed in my relationship I failed in my business I failed my exams and so a very unhappy thought form of me the miserable one can be just as strong as a thought form of me the one who is better than most others both can be equally strong thought forms and both are comparative and both operate on the principle of more more me more than whatever more is doesn't really matter as long as more and you find the strangest things that which goes even so far as to say I am more ill than you I knew somebody who would say whenever you said I have a headache he would say you have a headache I have had a headache for weeks now and so what he's really saying is you little worm you talk to me about pain tell me about pain I know more about pain than you and this is wherever you look you see those structures at work in humans of course when you look you see it's quite mad but it's normal all the human drama is made out of that stuff what humans what they preoccupy themselves with what occupies their mind their thoughts is that drama that comes out of those mind structures of the self and it's all they talk about it and think about it and finally it's reduced to smoke they drop dead and the drama dissolves and again we must go to Shakespeare with his beautiful words full of sound and fury signifying nothing human existence full of sound and fury signifying nothing so this is the dilemma of human existence in its present evolutionary stage that is coming to an end undoubtedly ah amazing and there's a nice line out of one Star Trek movie when they travel back to the 20th century in some time warp and they walk through the city San Francisco wherever it is in the 20th century coming from the 24th century and they say they see the paranoia of people everybody looking at them suspiciously and they say it's a miracle they ever made it out of the 20th century it's very liberating for us here to recognize human dysfunction and human madness and see it for what it is one might think that it's depressing to see it but it's liberating because when you recognize dysfunction human dysfunction when you see it the seeing is the arising of that which is beyond the madness when you see madness even in yourself you are no longer completely mad because the seeing is there the conscious the awareness is there that sees the seeing does not need to adopt some kind of position towards it and say dreadful or feel guilty about being mad madness is not a personal matter it's not your personal problem if there are still elements of madness in your life and it may well be it's not a personal problem it's simply the human condition in its present evolutionary stage is still operating in you that's all and so you sometimes get annoyed with people or shout at them not a personal matter at all this is just and you are already seeing it so the freedom is already beginning now of seeing that mind movement the conditioned mind movement I saw this film recently Beautiful Mind which is about the actual life of a person who later received the Nobel Prize for something he was an academic at university totally immersed in his thoughts a genius on some level of thought and one small area of thought but he became insane he had hallucinations he saw people that weren't there he had discussions with people that were not there and he got totally drawn into that became totally dysfunctional was taken to a mental home the viewer of the film does not know that these are hallucinations until he himself begins to recognize that these are hallucinations it's quite well done and then comes the moment of freedom when he realizes the madness of it he realizes these things are not real and yet they are still there that's the arising of sanity which is not the immediate end of madness the hallucinations continue but he actually talks to the people that appear in front of him and says I'm not going to talk to you again he knows that it's a hallucination and he says I'll leave you now I won't interact with you before he reacted now awareness has come in and there's the space of presence and to the end of his life apparently he still would occasionally see these hallucinations but no longer reacting as if they were real simply allowed them watched them allowed them to be and so gradually something must have emerged in him that was from a deeper place than the conditioned mind that comes out in the film it could have come out a little bit more but it comes out anyway so the end of madness is seeing madness and not adopting some position and say oh there's something wrong with me I am mad deriving a sense of self from what is the human condition and feel guilty about it or inadequate or not good enough nothing to do with you you are the arising presence you are the witnessing consciousness not the forms the conditioned forms in your mind or in your emotional field it's not who you are so then it's not a personal problem anymore oh that's a relief and so evolution is happening by itself and these words are part of the evolution that is happening by itself the words also happen by themselves they're not planned beforehand they just happen they are created by the collective energy field of this group there's nothing personal in this and they happen to come out of this form because it's hollow enough hollow enough open enough for it to come through this form that's all that could come through any other hollow form wherever there's an opening consciousness will move through it does not evaluate people and say you are worthy i'm going to move through you it moves where there's an opening it doesn't matter whether the before there was a human being who was a criminal and suddenly an opening happens there suddenly complete surrender happens there and the opening is there and then consciousness moves and maybe in the person who thought he or she was worthy because he'd been practicing meditation for 30 years it doesn't come through because the opening isn't there because there's a continuing self image of me the spiritual one me better then and there may be a criminal in prison who is driven into total surrender to what is by unbearable suffering self created so nobody is worthy or not worthy because some people feel and these are two aspects of self image some people feel they are more worthy than others and other people feel surely I'm not worthy yet for enlightenment or liberation surely I have to struggle a bit more so that I can really be worthy which is again an image of me the worthy one so wonderful to see madness and as we happened here it's also liberating in itself you can laugh at the human condition you could also cry of course it's quite if you let's adjust the other polarity you it is a tragedy and a comedy at the same time cry at the end of your life if you think that's all there is to humanity you would never stop crying but because something new is arising now you can laugh and there's already freedom in that so the rest of this day feel free to laugh or to cry or both and if you choose to remain silent maybe we can set aside a few tables dinner tables for those who don't want to speak and then other tables for those who want to engage in speech and perhaps also in listening or in putting forward their point of view a moment of stillness is there still a little bit of waiting inside you if there is you can notice it it's the mind it's the movement of thought it's enough to notice it because thought waits for the next thought the next event the next object in consciousness and when you notice it notice is a little word it doesn't seem to mean very much to notice something but there's very significant whether you are waiting completely identified with the movement of waiting or whether you notice suddenly there's waiting in you that's the mind and the noticing is presence the seeing so you can see the movement a slight very perhaps very slight here impatience very slight ok get on with it I once gave a talk in one of the busiest cities in the world Hong Kong and somebody who later came to almost every talk he came to the first talk ever in between two business appointments I think and there was a silent space before the talk as there usually is and later he described to me his mind movements while he was waiting for the talk to start for god's sake get on with it we are busy people here we haven't got what are you waiting for what are you trying to do what's this and he almost got up and left and when finally I started to speak now here there may be just a remnant of that mind movement which isn't personal a tiny a habit a mental habit and you discover even here perhaps particularly here many mental habits habit patterns that still operate even here including perhaps certain patterns to do with the ego that we talked about that was so funny yesterday and you may catch yourself while talking to somebody after lunch and you may suddenly detect a little statement coming out of your mouth whose purpose was to impress the other person which means to enhance improve the view that the other person has of you and then the ego can use that thought form somebody else's view of me becomes similar to an object not everything is to do with the ego is material objects intangible things are equally important somebody's opinion of me and then this person suddenly oh if you know so much or whatever it may be and then the ego seeks to add it to itself in its illusion it feels bigger when you've just managed to impress somebody with your knowledge or even more absurd things somebody you know this famous person your friend you just it just slips into a conversation and through association with that thought form this is also an attempt to add more to the self to the sense of self feels a little bit bigger and that's usually called ego but it really is only ego when you don't know what you're doing when you're completely in that movement it's ego the moment you know it it's not really ego it's a mind pattern and they still those mind patterns have a certain momentum still so ego really definition of ego is unconscious identification with mind but when the mind and its content and its patterns are seen are noticed it's not really ego anymore you've already stepped out of ego but what is still operating is patterns they have a momentum you may not become free that quickly of those mind patterns and emotional patterns that go with that freedom is not in eliminating all of that but in no longer mistaking all of that for yourself that's freedom patterns still operate the human form has certain limitations on all levels certain patterns may operate until the very end there have even been liberated teachers who continued smoking every day and people said how can you do this you're supposed to

[Speaker 4] (4:03:18 - 4:03:18)

be

[Speaker 1] (4:03:18 - 5:00:02)

liberated it's just a habit so there is a looseness or rather a spaciousness that in which some of these patterns still operate a few may suddenly disappear a few may be persistent and they operate for a while and so this the spaciousness that is there when a space consciousness arises in that those things are being seen oh accept it because whatever is whether on the outer level or the inner level whatever is is as it is right now you have to what can you do it is other things change very quickly when presence or space consciousness is there suddenly that pattern is dissolved and other patterns stick around for longer okay it doesn't become a problem you don't become a problem to yourself anymore you don't you're not a cause of trouble to yourself and then it spreads to others if you are a problem to yourself it's almost certain that you will be a problem to other people because problem making spreads a very deep seated pattern also we may have touched on that briefly is the need to talk about other people in a slightly superior way sometimes called gossip and in certain circles when people get together eighty percent or more of their conversation is about some absent person and it's usually what he or she did or said or didn't do just imagine what he said to me he said and then I said it's a very deep seated thing in a very subtle sense every time you talk about somebody else in that way it's the illusory self gets strengthened because it puts itself by implication not doesn't say so openly in a superior position I am more than better than is implied because you are the judge of this person's behavior and it is judged as inadequate or whatever somehow inadequate at least not up to your standards and so that's a subtle satisfying way for the self to feel bigger to add more because the need for more we talked about it I am more and also right comes in again to be right the other in some way is made wrong and so you have this group of people and then that person comes and then they stop talking of course and then other person leaves and then they talk about that person it happens in relatively unconscious circles but some of that most people carry inside and this may linger for a while and then you notice it sometimes the noticing comes after it's just happened and then the noticing may come in the middle of a pattern and then the noticing may come when the impulse to say something comes and then it's just noticed the energy behind it and then the freedom comes in there it's possible for the impulse to come as an energy form and pass through you without becoming a thought or word so it passes through and and then after a while it may not even come anymore so some quite a few things dissolve through the awareness the spacious awareness other things may stick around for quite some time and none of them is personal it's patterns in consciousness one could say ultimately there's absolutely nothing personal in your life there's only the essential I am I am underneath all the patterns and that is the most personal or the only personal thing but really it goes far beyond the person the thing that Descartes looked for but he got stuck in the level of thought that which is beyond any doubt at any moment right now this whole gathering may be a dream who knows you can't be sure that it's not a dream and I mentioned when you wake up at home next week there may be a doubt in your mind was that a dream only for a moment but even within even if this is a dream somebody must be dreaming it there must be a a conscious space a consciousness in which that dream happens and that is real in any dream or in any illusion at the core of it there must be something real otherwise it wouldn't be it could not be known there's nobody there to know it so there's the knower at the deepest level and that is a sense of I am-ness all the other patterns are temporary forms external forms inner forms content all this is content the external content of this moment this room this place the voice whatever inner content may be operating inside you as patterns in consciousness thought movements emotional movements one thing that remains one way in which we can put it is to say what remains is it's always now it can only happen in now the deeper meaning of that is now is the unchanging space in which it happens and now is not separate from who you are in your essence that's why now could never leave you and no matter what happens to you on the level of form or on the level of content because it's possible that your life may dramatically change within a year all the external situations of your life could change dramatically totally you may be rich now and you may suddenly be penniless or the other way around everything changes or there could even be deeper changes even the inner on the level of conditioning things could change and there are people in this room who have already experienced in this lifetime what seems like different incarnations they've gone through so many changes they've been so many different people already they've been a stockbroker they've been a hippie they've been a successful businessman they've been a sadhu in India they've done it all squeezed into one lifetime different incarnations it seems completely different roles but in each role if that person had looked deeply within there would always have remained an essence that is nothing changed the deepest sense of I am-ness doesn't matter whether you're a sadhu in India or a stockbroker in New York there are people who are stockbrokers and then become sadhus and they're looking for something that is available to them both as a stockbroker or as a sadhu the innermost sense of being or knowing beyond form beyond roles beyond content of consciousness which is simply the space of consciousness which is the essence of now so on the deepest level the sense of I am is always there and it doesn't depend on this or that so it's not you don't need to change the outer form although this may happen to know yourself you could know yourself sitting at your desk in New York there have been people going to India and become sadhus and after a few years became frustrated still not found myself they adopted a new role in a very subtle way the ego came back in and a new mental form arose as me the holy man the spiritual one identification with form comes back it creeps in amazing and to go beyond that all that's needed is go deeply into the isness of this no change is required for you to know yourself at the deepest level no time is required no change is required what is now is always enough you have to align yourself with that isness and then there is a depth to it before it's no it's not fulfilling this now isn't fulfilling i want a different fulfilling now not this unfulfilling now that's the pattern so they know they never go into the depths they remain shallow look to the future a thought form and the strange thing is the form of now the forms change now in a couple of days the now will be filled with other forms it won't be this scenery it will be some other scenery but the form that this moment takes the only moment there is is never that fulfilling it quickly turns into unfulfilling an obstacle almost to where i want to go normal that's normal existence the now is an obstacle to where i want to go to that state of being fully myself free fully me not yet i'm not yet that so most people run away from the now because they see it as an obstacle as not enough as limiting the form of it so they never got to the essence of now because they don't go deep enough into the form of now they don't accept the form of now they run away from this so they never reach the essence of now and it's after you've run away from now for a few years you may be ready and you may realize no matter what form there is in my life what form appears in the now it's not that satisfying for very long the form changes or it loses its satisfactoriness and then you stay with what is and the rejection of the form that this moment takes drops away you realize what i call the inevitability of whatever happens because it's connected to the totality nothing is separate even raising my right arm like this you could say there's something inevitable to it or the mind we looked at that the mind could question it and say you didn't have to raise your right arm but it happened it could not have been otherwise if it happened the entire universe has brought this about and this movement may be connected to countless other movements in the universe because ultimately space and time have no absolute reality so just one movement on this plane could be connected to millions of other movements on other planes and almost certainly is so because of that deep connectedness nothing that is could be otherwise because it is connected to the whole it is one with the whole the human mind because it cuts things up we looked at that takes a segment out of the web of the totality and calls it a separate event itself it makes the human mind itself into a segment and calls it this is a separate me and to this separate me these separate events happen to me and the me is a reactive me it doesn't like what's happening and so you realize there is no separate event there is just the form that this now takes is inevitable has to be the way it is because the entire universe has created this moment and then you can let go of the absurd belief that it should be otherwise you don't argue with is that is the transition that's all that happens no longer you realize yes yes you can't argue with what is then that you could call surrender the deepest meaning is you enter the surrendered state of consciousness surrendered means aligned with what is no more only what is now not surrendered to a story resigned to a story in the head if you've just lost ten million dollars you've lost your big house you've lost your car and all the mind forms that go with this have crumbled the story of me that was so great has collapsed and there you are sitting standing at a bus stop waiting for the bus now to some people surrender they think means to say okay I might as well accept that my life has failed that I'm nobody now I might as well accept that twenty years of hard work was in vain I have to accept it that my marriage also has collapsed I've failed at that so I might as well accept that my children have rejected me okay I have to accept that that's that's being becoming more deeply involved in a story and strengthening the story of me and saying this is how it is I have to resign myself to the fact that this story of mine is so sad this is all on the level of telling yourself a story and deriving your sense of self from the telling of that story and that sense of self here will be a sad one but the egoic pattern will cling to anything it will happily adjust itself to a sad sense of self from a victorious sense of self and change its story and then tell other people about how all the life collapsed and then you can get an identity from that it's nothing to do with surrender you might call that resignation so resignation is not what we are talking about surrender only concerns this moment because the rest is thought forms anything that is not now is a thought form that's well you might say but didn't it happen yes but you have to remember it now and it's a thought form so all you surrender means to align yourself with this moment only so in the case of the stock broker who lost it all who is now standing at the bus stop the surrender in his case is here I am standing and it's not so much telling himself anything just aligning himself with that moment that he begins to look around there's a tree and there's a spaciousness in which the tree is being perceived as we've been living that here the spaciousness and the sky is there it was there when he had ten million dollars in the bank it's still there and there's a bird alive has no story and the body is breathing the air is fresh or not fresh but breathing happens cars are going past some you get it might be wet who knows you got splashed now if you were in the story getting splashed would add to the sad story this is what my life has come to and then there's simply water it is as it is what can you do it must be part of the totality of the universe for me to get splashed otherwise it wouldn't happen so you learn how incredible it can be when you live in alignment with what is with this and you suddenly feel an aliveness inside you the body is still alive the cells of the body are alive and there's a this moment isn't really that bad unless I begin to judge it in some way through a mind form it is and then the bus comes in and you sit on it and you watch the landscape go past beautiful I spent many years traveling on buses and watching the landscapes go past and if there had been a mind with a story it would say you're now in your forties you still haven't got a car you have no pension plan you have no insurance nobody thinks anything of you I actually heard that story from my family but it was very satisfying to sit on a bus so it's we can step out of the story which is the conceptualized sense of self into the immediacy and the aliveness of now and that's the only thing that requires alignment that's the only thing that's real is this moment and the amazing thing is that change happens much more quickly when it's the form of this moment is not resisted first you go beyond the form because the form let's continue in this particular example the form now looks very limiting because this person before might have had more freedom on one level and now because of no money he's limited to waiting for a bus and suddenly a deep sense of space is around the form of now a peace is around it a spaciousness is around it a deeper sense of presence is there while the form happens and that comes when the form is not resisted then you go beyond the form and that means no matter what happens there is a depth to that there's a space in which this happens and you are the space you could say the entire room here is happening in the space that you are that is consciousness this could if it suddenly went dark here the content would suddenly have disappeared you couldn't see anything anymore the content of this room would have disappeared the content in the space and all that's left is spaciousness stillness presence these are only words just that the innermost sense of being being space so one could say that nothing ever happens outside of you everything that happens in your field of consciousness happens within the space that you are so in the deeper sense you never actually go anywhere now remains always as the space the forms change in that space and it looks as if you were going somewhere but all it means is the scenery changing the same space is always there doesn't change so all that's needed for freedom is to align yourself with this moment not the story that you step out of the story you don't get stuck in the story of me you don't repeat the story to yourself in your head which is what people do because it strengthens their sense of self which is thought based here you go beyond the thought based sense of self to somewhere deeper and then the most amazing things happen often to change the situation all that you have needed to open the portal so that intelligence could operate in your life and the portal is opened through alignment to now then the intelligence the one intelligence can suddenly operate in your life and you suddenly encounter a helpful something helpful comes into the space of now because now isn't resisted now becomes friendly you've become friendly with now first then now becomes friendly with you and so you get on the bus to continue with the failed stock broker and suddenly you meet an old friend there says oh I haven't seen you in 10 years who has some suggestion to make oh I have a house I need somebody to look after my house on a beautiful lake in the north of Italy and you say okay I have nowhere to live I'll go there the strange thing is helpful factors come in very quickly when the resistance to life which is the resistance to now is let go and that's amazing not that you will ever encounter some external situation that is totally and forever fulfilling and never limiting that cannot happen the only thing that is unlimited and continuously forever timelessly fulfilling is the space of now which is the essence of who you are but that which happens in the space of now is not forever eternally limitless and fulfilling it's in the nature of forms that arise in the space of now to embody some kind of limitation in your life and that begins with the physical form of your body no matter how strong and developed and beautiful or whatever your physical body is at some point you encounter the limitations that come with having a physical body for a long time if you have a wonderful body you have a thought form a corresponding thought form as me great body and that is satisfying for a while it says to the story of me you can add that as important content that's me and then if that doesn't move the thought form of great body persists and gradually you reach the age of 70 80 90 and then there comes the conflict between the thought form and the actual body which shows its limitations more and more and in that conflict it's possible that there's a denial for a long time that no I'm still strong and finally when you're walking up 10 flights of stairs at age 80 and somebody a 20 year old woman rushes up past you and suddenly you feel totally inadequate and it can come as a shock the thought forms suddenly crumbles and so it's amazing what people cling to in their search for self it could also be somebody who is extremely good looking then it becomes a thought form of me and you get a lot of feedback from other people the other who want you and every form that arises in the space of now sooner or later the form will be a limitation on your life somehow even if you lived here you might think if I had a house here and enough money don't have to work anymore I could just live here completely at peace in these beautiful surroundings and I would be totally okay I would invite my friends and have good meals meditations that would be and if that actually happened you would encounter even here the limitations of the forms for a while it's satisfying and then you sit here and suddenly restlessness comes in boredom not enough oh hmm it's always the same view and after a year you may catch yourself not looking anymore it's there and maybe this wasn't the right place it's not that fulfilling here I must have chosen the wrong place I have to start looking again or it may come in some other way if you go to a pacific island beautiful climate everything wonderful as friends of mine went to Bali and paradise surrounded by paradise and they were cooking their first meal in open air and then they saw a rat looking through the window that wasn't supposed to happen and so you can't so you have one limitation as I've just I've told the story before somebody who is unknown works as a waitress wants to be an actress can't get a job has an unhappy story very limiting you get paid whatever ten dollars an hour can't even go anywhere limiting three years later she's famous everybody knows her big house big car in the papers but she's trapped in her house she can't go out anymore because riots happen whenever she comes people go there she is it's always some new limitation that comes in and they say that wasn't supposed to happen it's in the nature of the world of business run away for the rest of your life you can improve your life situation that's good you can play with it it's good to make a million dollars it's probably better to have one dollar in the bank but to believe that will will free you or fulfill you or make you complete in some way, doesn't happen. That can be found whether you have $1 or 10 million in the bank.

The rest is a game with form, which you cannot even not play because you're here as a form. So you play the game with form, you get, you do things, but no longer seeking something in the world of form that it cannot give you, which ultimately means yourself. That deepest satisfaction, that deepest fulfillment, seeking that in the world of content, because that's what form is, content in consciousness is what form is, seeking that there is continuous frustration, disappointment, and then you can use expressions like that he let me down, she let me down, which means disappointed me, lets you, strange expression, that situation lets me down.

Every situation, every person that you look to for self-fulfillment is going to let you down. And that's the complaint of the mind, that people let you down, and situations let you down. And fame, even fame wasn't supposed to be like that.

So content has to be seen for what it is as ultimately limiting and limited, and that's good. And to express that in general language, not in specific language that we use here, where we speak of the content of consciousness or object consciousness and space consciousness. Space consciousness is fulfillment by itself.

It needs nothing. It is already fully what it is. Object consciousness is limited.

Now, to use a different language, we could say, when you realize that, you no longer demand that something or someone in this world, a situation, a place, a person, should make you happy, because they won't. It's not in the nature of a situation, a place or a person to make you happy, fulfilled, complete you, because that's really what making you happy means. When people say, I'm looking for the man or woman to make me happy, what they mean is an innermost sense of being fully yourself now through adding this man or woman to your life.

Then he or she makes you happy. For a while, it works, and then it doesn't work.

Everybody who falls in love realizes that illusion that this person is going to complete me doesn't last very long.

If there are two people living together and they say, well, we are happy, what you're saying doesn't apply to us. That means in their relationship, whether they know it or not, something has already emerged that is beyond object consciousness. In other words, the space in their relationship is already there.

Space consciousness is already there in their relationship, and the relationship happens. You're no longer looking to the relationship as such to make you happy, but the context, one could say, in which the relationship happens is fulfilling, and the context is space or spaciousness. That simply means in concrete terms to be with your partner and sit, be, lie with him or her in that state of presence, a state of no thought, just spacious presence.

It can begin with listening, listening to your partner in this giving him or her space to be, not immediately imposing thought forms. So then a relationship can work, but it's not the relationship then that is making you fulfilled or happy. It's because you dwell in the deeper dimension of space consciousness, and that is why the relationship is fulfilling and a place is fulfilling.

Suddenly, no matter where you go, it's actually okay. Because that, so we could say, if you still don't know what these words are pointing to, you become familiar with the space of now, which is deeper than what happens in it. You know what that is, the space of now, as spacious awareness, just that.

Then the world is suddenly quite all right, even very nice. And the fact that things come and go is actually welcomed. You don't need to cling to one or not want that one.

Forms are still limiting, but inside you're free of those limitations. And this realization has happened to people who became totally limited by some physical form, either people whose body became ill, who couldn't move by themselves anymore, who encountered extreme forms of limitation, people who were in prison, sitting in his little cell all day long, people who were in very dangerous life situation where they didn't know whether they would survive another day. Situations that usually would be called extremely unsatisfying, extremely, the extreme forms of limitation.

And some of those people, through an intelligence that was greater than their mind, let go completely of resistance to the seemingly unacceptable limitation in their lives. And they just, it became so painful to resist continuously, and everybody would say, isn't it normal to feel unhappy when you're in a prison cell? Yes, of course, it's normal.

Isn't it normal to feel miserable when the body can't move anymore? Of course, it's normal. It's normal to feel that this situation is unacceptable and to suffer is normal.

But it is also possible to go beyond normal and some people have done it and they have spoken about it. And what they described, those probably were the first spiritual teachers to whom life did something that usually would be called dreadful. And the suffering that came became so unbearable that something snapped inside and the resisting entity that said, this is the most, that hated themselves and life and everything, suddenly snapped because the burden of suffering couldn't, was becoming unbearable.

And suddenly something snapped and suddenly the prisoner or the person in the wheelchair sits there and says, what's happening? And suddenly an influx of so much peace and aliveness and nothing has changed. And then they sit there and look at the walls.

It's the peace that suddenly overcomes them and they don't know how it happened. And of course, maybe at some point they understand it happened because the now, which seemed so unacceptable, was no longer resisted. And so that entity, the self, the mind-made self that lives on resistance to now dissolves and suddenly space consciousness, unconditioned consciousness emerges.

And when that emerges in your life, it is, there's always an important aspect of that is a great sense of peace, no matter what is happening around you. So it's people who are brought to it are not brought to it because suddenly, usually because suddenly things get so much better in their lives and finally they get so much better and better and better and finally they become enlightened. Usually it's the other way.

They get worse and worse and they lose and become more limited and more limited and until finally something snaps and there it is. So it's through loss and limitation in the absence of a spiritual teaching that you become free internally through loss and limitation, but only potentially. Not every human being can walk through that doorway that opens when there is loss and limitation in your life.

Most humans would still look the other way and look to more future. Don't look at the loss, don't look at the limitation, try to get away from this. So then you're sitting in prison and then for 10 years you're working out plans to escape.

And you try this and you try that or you predict when I get out, I'm going to do that. And then you live totally there. I'm finally going to make it when I get out.

So there's potentially through loss and limitation which are called the worst things that could happen to a person are actually because life is ultimately not cruel, but benevolent. Through loss and limitation, the doorway potentially is there. In other words, it opens.

Whether you walk through, we don't know. And so that is, everybody has a spiritual teacher, even people who have never looked at a spiritual book or even heard of any spiritual teaching. And that is encountering loss and limitation in your life.

And then when that happens, potentially the doors open. Through loss, it opens because loss on whatever level, loss of possessions, loss of status, loss of opinion that other people have of you, whatever kind of loss, the thought forms that are associated with those contents, opinions of other people, of me, possessions that are mine, achievements that are mine and they are lost. The thought forms that had been created that gave you a sense of self also crumble when the external object is lost.

The inner object, the thought form crumbles and that is suffering. It's called suffering because the thought form had self in it. It was me in it.

And me is dying when there's great loss. Me is dying. But potentially now where the form has just collapsed, the thought form, there is a little open space before there was a form, an object covering up the open space.

Now it's dissolved and an open space happens inside you when you don't run away from it and don't deny it and resist it. Through that open space comes unconditioned, what I now sometimes call space consciousness. And when it comes through, it's great peace suddenly.

Something is gone. I should be feeling dreadfully unhappy, but suddenly comes through the opening, comes emptiness as they call it in Buddhism. Before there was something, now there's nothing.

It's through the hole comes what Buddhists call emptiness, which is also fullness, but nobody can, not one designation is right. Space consciousness, presence, simple I am-ness because I am that and that and that has collapsed. I thought I was that, but that's gone.

And then I thought I was that. I thought I was a successful stockbroker, that's collapsed. I thought I was a husband, that's collapsed.

I thought I was a good father, but my children left me, that's collapsed. One thing after another collapsed and leaves nothing but holes. And that's great because the formless, when a form dissolves, the formless is there.

So I am that is gone. I'm not that anymore. And sometimes all that's left is I am, but there's nothing that anymore that all objects have gone.

And I'm left with bare, naked, I am. So life can do that to you. It removes things from you until you are left with the nakedness of all you know is a sense of beingness or presence, but that is deep and beautiful.

Before that got mixed up with being a stockbroker and being a father and being a husband and being some other role. Those have collapsed. And so what's left is just being itself.

I amness itself. Wow. That is called realization, liberation.

On the mind level, you may not be able to say anything about it. And when people ask you, who are you? You might say, I don't know.

I don't know anymore. I thought for a long time, I knew who I was, but now I don't know anymore. And yet on some deep level, there is some kind of knowing, but I can't put it into words.

So those people became the first spiritual teachers who later had realized and could talk a little bit about what happened. They looked back and maybe they realized that surrender happened, complete surrender happened. The loss was not resisted.

The limitation was not resisted, and it became an opening. And then they talked about it and say, this could also happen to you. You're so unhappy.

It doesn't have to be like that. I was even more unhappy than you, and it came to an end. And so that was the beginning of a spiritual teaching.

And then they even created so-called monasteries, places where the others came. And in some cases, what they tried to do was to recreate the conditions that otherwise would happen to you naturally through life, that might have happened to them through life. So what they did was people come into the monastery and they say, okay, now, as you come in here, you lose your identity here.

First thing, you shave your head because hair has to do with external appearance, which is a thought form of me. Then you leave behind your clothes because that's another thought form, showing your status and all male and female, whatever. You leave behind your clothes.

Then you leave behind your name because that also is a thought form. So you get a new name, a spiritual name. Uh.

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. Dangerous, but. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

And they give you clothes that everybody wears the same clothes. So you cannot differentiate yourself from others. You can't compare yourself and say, mine is a bit nicer than yours, although they try to do that, right?

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. And so, and then they create conditions that are not satisfying. Not very much food.

You have to, no possessions. Nothing that really that you can call mine. And then you, many situations are created there that normally you would call unacceptable.

You have to get up at four in the morning and then you sit in meditation in a cold room. In Zen, they might even open the windows in the winter. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

And you sit facing the wall. Facing the wall, empty stomach, Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. A cold room.

You can imagine how much suffering arises if there is still a story and mind activity around this situation. Why did I ever come here? This is, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

This is madness. What am I doing here? And more mind activity, more.

Suffering is almost, they create the situation that would bring up a lot of resistance. And so you can watch the resistance. And it's possible if it works, it can take a long time.

If it works, and then they have other things in Zen. You meet the master. He asks you questions sometimes that have no logical answer.

Famous Zen questions. And you spend time, what's the answer to this? I have to.

And all designed to finally drive you to a point where the mind stops. It stops.

[Speaker 4] (5:00:03 - 5:00:09)

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

[Speaker 1] (5:00:09 - 5:48:14)

And suddenly there's this influx of peace and aliveness, even while you're sitting facing the wall. The stomach is still empty. The body is still cold.

And yet nobody is left to resist this moment. And so there's suddenly this influx of spacious presence of aliveness. And then the Zen master comes and asks you some nonsensical question and says, give me the answer now.

And suddenly a spontaneous answer comes out of your mouth. It may be nonsensical too, but the Zen master is only listening to what level the answer is coming from. And it comes from the deepest level spontaneously.

And the Zen master says, good. Or says nothing, walks away. Because the answer came from there, from the deepest place.

And it has, it's not what you say, it's where the answer comes from. So because whatever comes from directly out of the unconditioned consciousness has power, newness, and freshness to it. It doesn't matter what you say as an answer.

So that's because the Zen master could tell one person who says the same answer as the other person to one person, he says, you're wrong and hits you. And the other person, he says, good. So when you go into traditional, these monasteries that are the first monastery that arose were often designed really to recreate what otherwise happens through life naturally, what life does to you.

So things are taken away from you. They're not, not more things are given you, things are taken away. It's not that you encounter less limitations, you encounter more limitations through going into the monastery.

So the opposite of that would be the mind, the little self saying, if I could only find that ideal retreat place in California, where we get up to a beautiful breakfast, aesthetically, enormous amounts of fresh fruit and everything is totally healthy and full of life and aliveness, and there are flowers, there are birds. And the first thing after breakfast, you get body work done for two hours. And then you go into the pool.

And then you sit on a quiet terrace overlooking the ocean for one hour. And when it's time, then they have prepared your lunch. And you might think, well, now surely the situations must be ideal for me to reach enlightenment.

And you'll find this isn't working either. And after two months there, boredom sets in and discontent comes in and what am I doing here? And you go to sleep, you feel tired after getting up.

And it's sunny again, every day it's sunny. So the mind has certain ideas about how it's going to happen to me. Usually not correct ideas, because the mind thinks in terms of adding, something needs to be added for me, for it to happen.

Nothing needs to be added, it's here now. And you can know it now through no more adding being necessary at all, nothing needs to be added, nothing needs to be changed. And if you cannot realize presence now, at this moment, in other words, it's not going to get any better than this.

How could it? This is it, this is it. If you can't realize it now, then you will realize it through some, not adding, you'll realize it through some loss.

Okay, you can't lose. I mean, eventually you will realize, but this is the most gentle way. And if life hadn't already, probably, if you had not already come into contact in your life with limitation and with loss, probably you wouldn't even be here.

So that's already, the process has already started. It's only for quite a few of you, it's only by the grace of already having gone through major loss or having experienced major limitation in your life that you're here. And you may not know it, but the emergence of that which is unconditioned, the I am, is already happening.

It happened, perhaps, at that moment of great loss that you experienced, and you didn't know it. Something crumbled. Something also still resisted it, perhaps.

There was a reciprocal movement of resistance and something that you couldn't resist. So really, we're talking about death coming into your life in one form or another because loss means some form of death. And death is usually called bad by the mind, the worst thing that could happen.

Any kind of loss is a kind of death. If you derived your sense of self, from thought forms, because the thought forms crumble when there is loss, which is the me, crumbles. And the good thing is, you can't go through life without experiencing that.

It will come to everybody. So the potential, the doorway opens up even if you never come into contact with spiritual teaching, but it gets much easier through the grace of a spiritual teaching, the essence of which tells you, you don't need more time to be free, and you don't need more suffering. You don't.

If you see that clearly, you don't. Because this is your voluntarily embracing the end of the conceptualized sense of self in the head, the end of deriving your identity from mental content. And you are here, nobody forced you to come here.

So this is already happening in you. You are dying already. And perhaps the first part of that death was involuntary.

Life did something to you, removed something from you, or made you encounter extreme limitation. That part was involuntary, but that initiated the process, the emergence. And that brought you here.

And this part of the process, it gets much more pleasant because this is a voluntary embracing of the end of the conceptualized me in the head with its story. And that's a beautiful death that we are dying here. And ultimately, nothing real dies, only certain forms.

You don't even lose your memory. It's not a requirement. Memory remains.

You have a past, but you don't derive your identity from the story of me. The identity flows continuously out of the fullness of now, the aliveness of now, the power of now. That is your essence.

And now, what is now, except this, the space in which everything happens, the alive space in which everything happens. So freedom is here. The door is open, wide open, and you're walking through certain patterns, certain configurations in consciousness may remain, but the space is there around it.

The pain body may remain for a while, pain that humans carry in here from the past, from the human past and your personal past. First, there's the pain from your personal past in childhood. Then there's the pain from human past, going back a long time of human madness, so much madness on the planet, so much suffering.

Every human carries pain, which is human pain. We know, most of you know about the pain body. And you carry that.

It lives in here, a little forms, emotional energy forms, painful energy, residues of past pain, emotional, trapped aliveness, not flowing. Old emotion that comes, pain that you suffer in your childhood is added to the pain that you already come into the world with. That is human pain.

This is the pain body. And so, more pain clings to it. It seeks pain.

It's a little entity, an emotional entity, dormant sometimes, active at other times. Active, it becomes when it needs more food. And then suddenly, a little trigger in your life, creates an enormous influx of pain.

The pain body is looking for more pain to feed on. And it moves into your mind. And then it gets hold of your thoughts.

And all your thoughts become painful thoughts, because the emotional energy of the pain body flows into your thoughts. It uses the structures of the egoic self, its thought structures, and makes them very unhappy. An already not-so-happy story then becomes dreadfully unhappy, because it's energized by past emotional human pain.

And it becomes a self. The illusion is there that this is my pain, me, my painful story, my drama. You're totally in it, and you're forced to think whatever the pain body's energy dictates.

Angry thoughts, if the predominant energy of the pain body is anger. Sad thoughts, fearful thoughts, what's going to happen to me? And then you imagine what's going to happen to you, and it's all bad.

And the emotion loves that. It feeds on thought, because thought is energy. Everything is energy.

Every thought you think is an energy form. The emotional entity renews itself through your negative thinking. It loves that.

And when it's active, it's feeding on your mind. And you are identified with it so much that you don't know it. All you know is that you are miserably unhappy, and there's a heaviness to your life.

And whatever you look, once the pain body's in your mind, whatever you look upon and interpret, you will look through the screen of the conditioning, which is human pain. So you can imagine, I'm sure you know, how distorted your view of the world becomes, your view of other people, your view of your partner, your view of your life situation, your view of anything becomes, how distorted it becomes when you look at it through the veil of your pain. Everything becomes very negative and dreadful.

And so the pain body is having a good time adding to its energy field through your thinking. And this is the addiction to pain that humans carry. It's because of the pain body.

There is something in you that loves the drama and the heaviness of emotional pain. It's not you who you are beyond form. It's the pain body with which you identify as yourself.

But it's not enough. If you live with other people or partner, the pain body will feed on your partner. First, the pain body has to make your partner unhappy.

It can do that easily by pushing the right buttons. And then you get a feedback of pain from your partner. Drama in the relationship happens.

And at that moment, you want more of it because you are the pain body at that moment. More drama, please. And you will do everything to keep the drama going, but you are the pain body at that moment.

And it's feeding on the other person's pain. The other person's pain body probably has also awakened now and it's feeding on the reactions. So most relationships have to go through their drama again and again, periodically.

This is how relationships work, feeding their pain body. Then after a while, the pain body withdraws, has had enough, and you feel better, lighter for a while, the relationship is okay again. And you don't realize that you are condemned to repeating the same pattern again as soon as the pain body needs more pain.

That is the addiction that humans carry to pain, which is usually totally unconscious. And even people who've been engaged in spiritual work for many years, sometimes many of them get totally overtaken by the pain body when it comes because it sometimes has enormous energy behind it. So all that really you need to do is to see it for what it is, to watch it, recognize it as turbulence, as heaviness.

So watch the energy of it, feel it. And what can you do? Yeah, allow it to be, it is as it is at this moment.

But that is the key, is to see it. That means something is arising in you that is not part of that. You see that turbulence in you or the fear, the heaviness, and not even label it anymore, simply feel the energy.

It is energy movement. It becomes depersonalized when you see it. It's no longer a self or me, it's human pain.

Even pain you can drop. It's energy moving. Maybe it's not very pleasant, it's heavy, but it's energy and you, it is as it is.

You recognize it as the pain body, you allow it to be and just watch it as it moves there. That means you've broken the vicious circle. It cannot then move into your mind and feed on your thinking.

It cannot then use other people. If you watch it directly, it cannot pretend to be you. That's the work.

So pain body can be a great awakener because every time it comes, it can deepen your presence. You have to be very alert to catch it when it comes. If you're not alert, before you know it, it's already using your mind.

It's already taken possession of that. Even at that point, it is possible to become conscious of it but a bit more difficult when it's already using your mind and you are involved in a stream of negative thinking. To wake up at that moment is possible, but more difficult.

Catch it when it first comes, but that requires alertness. And so it helps to, I sometimes say, feel the inner body. To have some attention in here is very helpful because that's where it starts.

It's, it lives in the cells of your body and then you can feel it. And you watch it, it doesn't turn into an unhappy me. It is simply an energy movement in you.

It doesn't turn into a story anymore, a self. And that really is liberation. You don't have to wait until there's no remnant of human pain left in you to become liberated.

Really liberation means not to identify with the pain anymore as myself. That's the illusion. That's not, that's the opposite of liberation, it's bondage.

But the fact that you live on this planet means that you very likely will carry a certain amount of pain in you as a human being on this planet at this time. And that's fine. That drives you in, very often it just becomes an important motivating factor for wanting freedom, for wanting to be free, especially in people whose pain body is very dense, very heavy.

They can't stand it anymore. The heaviness of self, of themselves, because they equate it with self, can't stand it anymore. Just as I couldn't stand, I couldn't live with myself because myself, a large part of what I thought I myself was, was painful self.

It was because my pain body was very dense and heavy until I couldn't live with it anymore. But I didn't know it was the pain body. All I knew was I can't live with myself anymore.

So I was driven through suffering to the point of surrender where suddenly the sense of self disidentified from thought forms. It came about through a thought. It was the trigger.

The thought was, I can't live with myself. And the question that came after the thought was, if I cannot live with myself, what does that mean? Am I one or two?

Who am I? Who is the self? There must be two here.

That was a strange question. I couldn't answer the question, but to see that there were two there, I and the self that I couldn't live with brought about a separation between the thought forms of self, including the emotional energy field of pain body and the sense of identity of I am, which usually gets mixed up with thought forms. A separation happened.

And all that was left was I am, but no longer the self. And that was the peace that suddenly I found when I woke up in the morning. Because when there's only I am, there's deep peace in that I am.

All the things that I thought I was were gone. The structure of the self collapsed. It's rare that it collapses all at once.

For most of you, the demolishing process takes place gradually. Some buildings collapse all at once, but most buildings get demolished. You knock off something here, life does that.

A chunk goes there and another chunk goes there. And then finally, voluntarily you come here and that does the rest. So pain body is something that may still be there for a while.

But you can be free now simply by recognizing it as the pain body and by recognizing it, not making it into some personal self, the me. Then it renews itself every time when you believe this is me, my story, my unhappy story and you're totally immersed in your unhappiness with all the thought movements that go with it. There are certain collective aspects also to pain body.

There's a male pain body that has certain male elements, female pain body, the pain suffered by women over thousands of years. So there is a female aspect, there's a female collective pain body. I pointed out in the book through menstruation that often awakens just before.

The female pain body tends to awaken at that time. So that's very helpful to know because then you can be alert when you know it's about to happen, bring in the alertness and wait, actually can watch for it. The time is coming and you can actually say, okay, I'm going to see what the first sign of it is and what it feels like.

And then suddenly something comes, an emotion or physical feeling and it wants to become a thought very quickly and you catch it in its attempt to become a thought. Oh, and then you just watch it on the physical level, the vibration. The pain body then waits for, when you are there present with it, almost looking for it, it cannot fully come up then because you're watching.

It doesn't like to be looked at. Then it goes back. And then when you're looking somewhere else again, less conscious, after a few drinks or after watching television, you lose some consciousness and then the pain body will come in or you're tired after a heavy day's work and you lose alertness.

And if the pain body wants to come up then to feed, it will use that opportunity when you're not so conscious and quickly creep into your thoughts. And before you know it, your thoughts are completely aligned with the pain. So interesting to work with the pain body.

A time comes when pain body will, and this is the case with most of you, when it comes, instead of pulling you into unconsciousness as it usually does, when a certain level of consciousness has been reached and most of you have reached that, then when the pain body comes, you just become more alert. And from that place of alert presence, you can accept it. And the acceptance brings about the change, the transmutation.

It can't feed anymore on your mind. The entire pain body, at the root of it lies non-acceptance. So the only way beyond pain body is to bring acceptance to it because it is.

It is part of the isness of now. And suddenly you may sense a little bit of space around the pain that you feel, a little bit. Here's the turbulence of the pain.

And there's a little bit, I'm talking about something one can't really put into words. There's a little bit of space around it. There's the anger, let's say it's anger.

Anger, and it wants to become thought, but you watch it only on the level of the turbulence. And the watching and the accepting brings about a sense of spaciousness around it. And so the turbulence is moving still within the spaciousness, that's liberation.

And then the spaciousness deepens or you know it. Suddenly you notice how much spaciousness there actually is. And the pain body is no longer that huge.

Before it looked like some huge monster. And suddenly it's a little turbulence in vast spaciousness. Is that all?

Yeah. And that was so dreadful, yes. That made my life so miserable for so many years, yes.

And of course there are maybe other collective aspects to pain body. Some people's personal pain body may also have their share of the pain body of your country because certain countries have pain bodies too, some more than others. Countries where there have been a lot of pain and turbulence in history have a heavier collective pain body.

So every person in that country, part of their pain body is the country's pain body. You carry that too. So in some countries, it's heavier than others.

The old European countries have a heavier pain body. The further east you go in Europe, the heavier it gets. Usually the collective of that.

But every country, there's so much past in these European countries, there's also a lot of pain body. And some more than others. The little countries, a little bit less.

The new world also has a pain body, not quite as deeply seated as the new, as the old. But in America, you have in the collective pain body, what was done to the native people, what was done to black people in North America. Those two great forms of suffering that were inflicted there have become part of the collective pain body of that countries, which means everybody has some of that inside.

But collective or not, it's the same. It's your responsibility to see it in yourself, to recognize it in yourself for what it is, to accept it as it is, to bring presence to it, which is all one. And so allow it to be, and then change happens.

The pain body is one deep no. If it could speak its essence, it would be continuously saying no, no, no. Because humans have lived in that state for thousands of years, the egoic no to life.

And more no can't free you of no. If you say, no, I don't want this pain body, more no, more pain. So you bring a gentle yes into the no.

It is as it is, that's the yes. That's the yes to now, yes. Compassion arises, compassion with human pain.

No matter whether it's in yourself or you see it in somebody else, compassion arises when you depersonalize the pain body. And don't mistake it for a person, neither in yourself nor in somebody else. If you mistake it for who you are in yourself, it becomes the unhappy story of me.

It energizes the already unhappy story of me and makes it miserably unhappy. Then it becomes a person. If you do it to somebody else, then you mistake the human pain.

That person that is in front of you may be at that time possessed by the pain body. It may be in his or her mind. And what pain bodies want from you is some reaction.

They will challenge you and somehow they will try, the pain body would say, it doesn't say it openly, but it would say, I'm unhappy and I want you to be as unhappy as I am.

And that's the challenge when you meet another pain body near you. He wants you to draw you into that.

And so compassion, first, you don't mistake it for who that person is. You realize this is human pain. It's a human condition.

Nobody there really, there's no self there. That's an illusion. And then there's no need to react.

You can actually allow it to be not only in yourself, you can also allow it to be in the other person. And that's compassion too. Gentle, realizing the human condition.

There it is. Nobody can be blamed for that. You can't blame yourself.

If pain body comes back in yourself, you could, the mind will try to do that. It will say, you see, you still have it after all these years. You might as well give up all that spiritual nonsense.

You see, you still have the same pain that you've had for years and you're not going to be free. You're deluding yourself. The pain body is speaking.

Go get drunk, do something. It can sound very convincing. Once it's using your mind, it can have very convincing arguments that how real, and this whole idea of pain body is just so much nonsense.

I mean, it's always, and you know how real this is. It's not the pain body, it's me. That's what the pain body says.

So it has all kinds of convincing arguments that will then, once it uses your mind, your thoughts will reflect what the pain body, they will be controlled by the pain body. You will think through the pain body. And so some human beings only experience the pain body once a month or so, and others more frequently, once a week, once every two days.

How long it stays to feed depends on how much presence there is in you. If presence is there, it passes through fairly quickly and it can't feed very much. If there's no presence, it can get lodged and stuck in your mind for several days.

And finally, it'll have enough and withdraw for a while. And some people walk around with a pain body that is active 90% of the time. That's more rare, but exist, they exist.

We probably all know one or two people who are almost continuously trapped in pain, emotional pain, old pain. And whatever they say to you, whatever they interpret is through the filter of their pain. So they inhabit, of course, a very unhappy universe.

So that's part of our transformation is to become free of pain body. To become free is not a future state to be achieved. It is recognizing it now, accepting it for what it is now, bring a yes to that now, that is becoming free.

So you can only become free now. Free is not to mistake it any longer for who you are. You are the space.

You are not the object in space. And when pain body is there, that happens to be the object in your consciousness. But you are the much vaster consciousness in which it arises.

And you know yourself, you know that you are the much vaster consciousness because we don't want that to become some kind of belief in your head. I want you to believe that you are consciousness. How do I know that I'm right?

You know it by bringing a yes to it, an acceptance, a yes to now. Through that, you know that there is a deeper dimension in you, so to speak. It's no separation ultimately between inner and outer.

It's just a way of speaking. There is a deeper dimension in you that is beyond that pain, beyond anything that has a form, beyond content, and you know it through yes to now. That's the portal.

Anything that you accept takes you to that realization. It doesn't matter what it is. So anything takes you to peace if you accept it.

But whatever happens, you bring the yes to it, you welcome it, that condition takes you into deeper peace no matter what. That's the miracle of transformation. And here we are learning to accept the now even if it doesn't contain great disaster, even if it doesn't contain the pain body at this moment, we just accept whatever form the now takes, whatever form it takes is fine, could not be otherwise.

Welcome, that could be the mantra. Welcome, or yes, even shorter, the most powerful mantra, yes, that's all you need. Let's go into stillness.

If any questions arise, we may look at them this afternoon about pain body or whatever it may be. If nobody's waiting anymore, then I can start. There's a dynamic quality to that stillness.

Even when nothing is happening, it's awake. And then when things start happening, action may be necessary and yet the spaciousness is not lost even in the midst of action, having to deal with things and people. That's our challenge, to bring the spaciousness that we find here, glimpse here, find it, realize it into the world when we meet people.

And also when we sit still, not to fall from the state that is above thought, so to speak, to the state that is below thought, it can happen. You sit there and then suddenly a tiredness comes. And then you suddenly, before you know it, you're also in a state of relative peace, but you're moving towards sleep.

And you may have met people in this world who have so little thought intelligence. As you know, thought is only a small aspect of intelligence, but there are people who have so little thought going on in their heads, they would be called maybe retarded. There's so little thought that they seem to exist in a state of continuous peace.

They may even laugh all the time. And perhaps they are compared to most humans. And they look at you and just laugh and they know they're not thinking anything.

Similar to a little baby. And very similar to a liberated person who is no longer judging you, forming mental images. He also laughs in a very similar way.

And so it can happen that some people, many people are longing to be free of the torture of their own minds. And that's why many people are reaching for some drug. And some of the drugs free you for a little while from the continuous torture of your own mind.

Even just drink a couple of stiff drinks, whiskey. And then suddenly you feel a little bit more, there's a more harmonious, there's the jagged, frantic mind just quiets down a little for a while. It can also happen that drink can awaken your pain body.

That's another matter. Especially in males, it can happen. But, and so there are other drugs that have a similar effect.

And people don't know why they feel so much better. They feel so much better because thinking subsides, is less active. And they don't know that they in most cases, moving towards the sleep state, the unconscious, they are falling below thought.

But that can be liberating. If the thought is torture, as it is for many people, their own minds, to even to fall below thought, at least you have a little bit of relief there with your daily whiskey. Or whatever drug it may be.

For that reason, I once tried LSD because people were telling me, oh, it's like meditation. It's like presence. And so I tried it once so that I can answer questions about it.

And what seemed to happen was an enormous heightening of sense perceptions. Now we talked about sense perceptions this weekend. How there is a portal there also when you look at something.

And there's presence, spaciousness, non-labeling. Perception then happens within that field of stillness. And for there needs to be alertness for that presence.

When you take that drug, what happened? I found the sensory perception became heightened. It's like turning up the volume on all senses.

So visual senses, everything, the colors are vitally alive. Every visual perception jumps at you almost. Auditory perceptions, as if somebody had literally turned the volume up.

And now you can hear even the slightest sound and it sounds loud. But smell becomes very acute. You could even smell a glass of water.

Touch becomes acute. It's almost too much even to touch the texture. And so what happens, you're being pushed into presence.

You can't move much away from now because the now is jumping at you from all through all the senses. So it can be liberating. I can see why sometimes people say it was a great thing to take that.

They had a glimpse suddenly into what it means not to live continuously in the future. They were actually being forced into the now. You can't get away if everything shouts at you, every sense, you're in the now.

So it can be a little glimpse for people of how wonderful it is not to be continuously away from now. And you haven't got much time for thinking when everything shouts at you, every sense is so acute. You haven't got time to think about it because you're simply perceiving.

Well, at least that's how I experienced it. But it was, it seemed the usual state, I prefer it. It's much more, it's more gentle and it's actually more awake.

It's more, you don't need, we could achieve the same effect if we went into a discotheque and this is perhaps why people are drawn to places like that where the music is almost deafening. It's amazing that they can come out of that after three hours undamaged. And of course that also, that shouts.

[Speaker 3] (5:48:14 - 5:48:34)

This morning you talked about the pain body and how it goes into your mind and creates thought. And I always assume that negative emotions were triggered by thoughts. So I'm not quite sure how it works now.

[Speaker 1] (5:48:34 - 5:53:00)

Okay, okay, thank you. The pain body originally developed in humans because of the arising of a mind-made sense of self which becomes suffering. So the egoic state that we have been talking about creates an enormous amount of suffering on this planet and humans create that suffering out of that state which is a state of great lack of fear, of unfulfillment which they need to, they look to fill that sense of lack through greed, through reinforcing their sense of self at the expense of other humans to use other humans to enhance their self, to accumulate possessions so that they have more to identify with and take them away from others.

To adopt a position of rightness, we are right, our belief, our positions. And then you fight a war with others who have a different mental position in order to make them wrong. And so over thousands and thousands of years, more and more suffering is created out of this mental delusion ultimately of not knowing who you are.

In that sense, you're right that that comes, it's created by self-serving thoughts. Thoughts that are imbued with self. So that's the, that structure, structurally is never aligned with what is and that in itself is a state of suffering.

So the origin of the pain body lies in identifying with thought. And now what happens is that this accumulated energy of pain body becomes, works as a vicious circle where it energizes those thought structures that created it in the first place and feeds on them again. And that's called a vicious circle.

So the origin of it is in losing, for humanity lost itself in thought. And so it became suffering was the normal lot for most humans, still is. And that accumulated suffering became the pain body, which now energizes the thought structures that created it in the first place and still feeds on them.

So it's still thought is feeding the pain body. Thought created it in the first place. Now thought is maintaining it and feeding it.

And the pain body in turn energizes those thought structures and amplifies them. And that's called, therefore we call it a vicious circle where one feeds and energizes the other. And this is what, when you don't know that that's happening, you're trapped in that vicious circle, which one could say in Eastern terms, that's the wheel, an aspect of the wheel of karma.

Karma renews itself, action, reaction, which is pain body needs the reaction. Pain body is an aspect of karma. Karma meaning simply unconscious patterns, mental, emotional patterns that you identify with as yourself and those patterns renew themselves.

They create situations and reaction. You could never really come to the end of karma unless the power of the present moment is accessed. Otherwise you have a continuity of time.

Past becomes the future. The present is continuously obscured. The future becomes a continuation of the past.

So you're right, thought creates it, created it in the first place, but now there is a reciprocal movement, a vicious circle in human beings.

[Speaker 3] (5:53:11 - 5:53:48)

Okay, so this relates to something that happened before I came on the retreat. The day before, I was in a phone conversation with someone and I got very angry with them. I put down the phone.

And so there was a reaction, some pain and reaction to pain. And I'm still not clear about whether the other person actually could hurt me for real. Felt like he hurt me.

And I'm not sure now whether it's possible.

[Speaker 1] (5:53:49 - 5:53:54)

Okay, so the person said something to you?

[Speaker 3] (5:53:56 - 5:54:13)

Well, how it was, was that while I was listening, I had half of my consciousness in the body and half listening to the words and was coming this very strong feeling of pain. And then before I know it, I shouted at him on the phone.

[Speaker 1] (5:54:13 - 5:59:11)

Yes, okay. So this is something like that is the pain body reacting because the reaction very often is much stronger than the trigger. The trigger may just be a few words, but the pain is far greater often that you feel when the pain body comes up than would be warranted by the words that you hear.

The words must have touched the pain bodies. Some pain bodies are awakened by certain words that remind the person of some form of pain, perhaps in a childhood, for example, children who were abandoned by their parents. Even the slightest hint, this is only one of many possible examples.

And this has to do with your personal pain body, but the personal and the collective become mixed. So if a child was abandoned by their parents, the slightest hint when you're talking to somebody, a friend or a partner, the slightest hint of abandonment, even a person saying, I can't come, we can't meet tonight, I have a headache or I could trigger it when this pain body that accumulated so much pain when that abandonment happened, and it can serve as a trigger for enormous pain. And all the person said, I don't think I can make it tonight.

And it was far more than that. So that became the trigger and particularly happens when the pain body hasn't taken in much food for a while. So it's ready, actually ready to awaken.

And then the right trigger comes and then that influx of pain comes in. So it's gone now, the event is gone. But of course, all you can ever do with a pain body is to be there while it happens, to watch it, to feel the pain so that it doesn't use your mind.

In a little closer relationship, you may be able to say to the person, what you just said triggered enormous pain in me. It's strange, but I can feel it right now. If that person is open to it, you may not be able to say it in certain relationships that are more superficial.

But with some people, it is wonderful if you live with someone and you have an agreement that whenever you feel pain body, the other person seems to trigger it, that you immediately say what you just said brought up, I suddenly feel an enormous amount of pain. Then it's fine, then you can both say, oh, and you can bring acceptance to it. It doesn't become thought forms.

In this case, it's possible that after you put the phone down, the pain continued because it linked in with your thinking. Yes, so that is a few moments and it was gone because there's already an enormous amount of presence in you. If it hadn't been for that, it would have stayed for much longer, perhaps a few hours, even a day or two.

So it's watching it. And of course, nobody can really hurt you. What they can hurt is the mind form or they can touch the pain that still lives in you.

In that sense, they could hurt, but all they do is activate that which is already there. Ultimately, people do it to themselves. They hurt themselves.

So it is wonderful and many of you will be finding that pain body attacks become much more short-lived now because of the arising presence. Pain bodies don't stick around for that long anymore and hang in there for days as sometimes happens if presence is not yet there, feeding for days and days. So pain body is still feeding a little bit, but isn't getting that much food anymore.

Yeah. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (5:59:11 - 5:59:13)

I was reading pain.

[Speaker 4] (5:59:13 - 5:59:13)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (5:59:14 - 5:59:23)

It was very strong and then suddenly I saw the wind caressing the grass.

[Speaker 1] (5:59:23 - 5:59:26)

The wind caressing the grass. Yes. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (5:59:27 - 5:59:32)

And the grass was green, so green.

[Speaker 4] (5:59:35 - 5:59:37)

And the pain was gone.

[Speaker 2] (5:59:39 - 5:59:45)

I even like a little poison. Yes. Because it was really strong.

[Speaker 1] (5:59:46 - 6:11:58)

That the open, that seeing of the grass was also thoughtless awareness. It was the arising, not it was the grass is beautiful, but there was more. There was the arising of spacious presence, space consciousness.

And suddenly the little personal self dissolved because there's such vast power there that used the insignificance of that personal event was so clear that it dissolved without any doing on your part. Nature can, any reference to nature can be very helpful just to look at nature and sometimes amazing to see when the pain body is occupying your body. Sometimes if it's strong, it is all over.

It can be in some places, in some cases, it's only in the stomach or solar plexus area as a throbbing or a heaviness here. In other cases, the pain body can occupy your entire body and actually feel, it feels like glue. And then if you sit next to a tree and maybe some grass or some flowers, and you see how free the tree is compared to this and you see the little area of pain is just here.

The pain is here. There's no, there's a blade of grass here and there's no pain there. And there's a flower here.

It exists in that beautiful state of just is. And so you can sometimes see in nature all around you, sanity. And the attention suddenly moves from the thoughts that were feeding the pain body from being trapped in thought, moves out of the prison of thought and becomes presence.

And then you can truly see nature suddenly. So you will encounter strange things, changes in the ways in which your pain bodies manifest now because of the arising presence. And very often you may find the pain body arises in its beginning stage and immediately you feel it.

You recognize it. You look at it, oh, and you feel that energy. And it stays for a little while and it's gone.

It couldn't feed. This is not, don't mistake this for suppressing it. There's no willpower involved.

There's no effort involved. You're not holding it down. You're not saying, I will not feel this pain body.

I am beyond it. I am the spiritual warrior, which you are, but not as a mind form. You are the spiritual warrior and the spiritual warrior has a sword, which I call the sword of presence.

And that's with that sword, you cut through time. Time is the continuity between past and future. And with a sword of presence, you cut through and suddenly it opens and there's the gap of now.

But that cutting through time is also the cutting through thought, the stream of thought. It's the same thing. When you cut through time, you cut through the stream of thought with that sword of now, of presence.

And you even cut through suffering. In the intensity of now, suffering can't survive. Some pain can survive for a little while, not long either.

Suffering cannot survive. Suffering is an unhappy me, with a story that cannot survive in now. So yes, you are a spiritual warrior, but don't develop the concept of me, I am the spiritual warrior.

I am more of a warrior than you or whatever. At any moment, the mind can come in with some new self-concept. It's looking, because now that it's losing its self-concepts, it's looking for the next one that is maybe a new one that it can get hold of.

And that is often the dilemma for people on the spiritual path. And suddenly you end up with a new self-image that was maybe stronger than the one that just went away. And you've gone all the way to the Buddhist monastery.

And before you know it, you become a very important person because you're now a Buddhist monk. It could happen, doesn't have to happen. Sometimes it works beautifully.

I've met some Buddhist monks who were like little children, free. And the younger monks sometimes are very dignified. They still carry, they have just adopted a new self-concept.

Now in the West, being a Buddhist monk isn't that rewarding for your sense of self because if you go to a big city with your robes, little children will shout Hare Krishna at you. But if you go to some Eastern countries, then you get a bit more feedback, respect. And some Buddhist monks I know travel first class on Thai airways because they're given the seats.

And so there's potential here for feeling an enhanced sense of self through being a Buddhist monk. Only potential, it doesn't have to happen. The whole structure is designed to remove it.

And sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. The mind is cunning. It's waiting for something else to get hold of.

Teacher, the microphone, if you have a question in the back row, two people in the back. In the meantime, I'll say something. Teachers, people who become spiritual teachers, now the first thing to realize, if you believe that being a teacher is an identity, then you're trapped again.

It's nobody's identity to be a spiritual teacher. It's a temporary function. I am a teacher because the words come out of my mouth.

They come out of my mouth because there's an empty space. So they come. That makes me into a teacher.

Not in my identity, but the temporary function. The moment I walk out of here, what teacher is there? There's no teacher left.

It's just a person walking. The teaching is over. While it happens, I may be a teacher.

It's a function, not an identity. And so the challenge of every spiritual teacher, and some of you are already teachers in your own capacity, and many others of you are becoming spiritual teachers. How could you not?

You could not not teach as this new state of consciousness arises in you. You have to teach, not always in the same way, not necessarily this directly, but in one way or another, you will teach. And you may even teach directly.

And then the challenge is, again, even at that stage, the mind can come in and claim some new identity, especially if you get projections of other people. They project something onto you because they've sensed the power that comes through you. And they may equate that power with the form of the teacher.

But the form is only the hole in the flute. That's, the hole has also a form, it's round. Now this form is not round, it's a different shape, but it's the same.

And so if you equate the power that comes through with the form through which it comes, then you will project an image onto the teacher of specialness. And that's quite normal for the mind to do, to believe that this form is special, must be more special than me, for example, or I will also want to become as special as this one. And if a teacher is bombarded by projections of specialness for years, it's possible that he or she could succumb to the bombardment of specialness.

And one day it could interfere with the teaching and suddenly the teacher might say, I am the one. No greater teacher has ever been or will ever be than I. It becomes, a distortion comes in.

Yes, of course, there is only one teacher ever, which comes through many forms. And then some form of specialness can creep in. It happens more easily to teachers who live only surrounded by devotees, disciples or followers, who don't do their own shopping anymore, who are totally sheltered and protected and don't meet anybody else anymore, except all these people who think this being is the one and then they themselves don't realize that the same power that is in you, that even prevents you from realizing it in yourself.

It's a great temptation for the teacher and it's stopping you from realizing that which you're projecting outward. This is not to say that you cannot use the power that comes through the form of the teacher as a temporary help to draw out that which is also in you. So to be able to use the help that is there in the temporary form of the teacher, this is good, but not to confuse the power and the form.

Some teachers free their students by dying. And at last, the form has dissolved and then some of their followers then suddenly realize, oh, I am the same. Okay, the microphone has reached.

[Speaker 2] (6:12:01 - 6:12:41)

Hi, I'm having more and more problem with planning, making planning and then having to follow up the things I plan. And to make an example, to come here was very difficult. I was happy where I was, very far, and in the last week I got very miserable and confused.

Why should I go so far? And on to India afterwards and the whole thing. And I got confused, for example, in that instance, what was, what is it to be, to surrender to the now?

And also, what is it that, beyond what I think is right or wrong, what is it that make me move finally? Okay, thank you.

[Speaker 1] (6:12:53 - 6:41:17)

When you are identified with a self, a mind-made self, a very common state is doubt. You're in doubt as to what to do. And some people remain in that state of doubt for a long time.

Sometimes it's doubt with one reference to just one particular situation. Where should I live? Should I go to this retreat or should I stay home?

And then you could sit and start to think about it. And it's agonizing sometimes to finally arrive at a decision. And even in the last moment, when you pick up the phone and says, yes, I'm going, the last doubt creeps in and is, do I really want to go?

And this is particularly, I mentioned this perhaps on the first day of the retreat, and every retreat, particularly retreats, and some people don't turn up and you don't know they're gone. And sometimes the organizer says they called up and they really wanted to come and then suddenly they're just gone or they cancel at the last moment. Sometimes it's a true emergency and they cannot make it.

But in other cases, here in this situation, something in you feels drawn here. That is the emerging presence. And something else in you doesn't want to be here.

And even during this time here, you may feel the two, something feels wonderful being here and there's an opening and something else, perhaps a mental commentary is saying, what are you doing here? Or has doubts whether you even should have come. He says, is this really working?

What's he talking about? Some kind of commentary. And you may shift between the two.

At every retreat, quite a few people are prevented from coming because of arising doubt. And that is the mind really not allowing you to come to the retreat. And it uses doubt as a means of confusing you.

And this is with that particular, in this particular situation. Now, what is the mode in other situations, normal situations, you have to make decisions. Should I go there or not?

What is the motivation for doing in the normal dysfunctional state? And the motivation for doing is some kind of need that through that situation, I can add something to me or some kind of fear. The doing comes out of the two movements of desire or fear.

They are the motivating factors in the normal state of consciousness. And they may also cancel each other out. You may want to go to meet, go to a dinner party, and you feel desire.

Maybe I will meet the one person who's going to make me happy there. So there's the desire movement. And then you're getting ready.

You're getting dressed. And then comes in the fear movement. Maybe I won't meet him or her.

And maybe I'll have to, these people will ask me questions that I can't answer. Maybe they know more than me. Maybe I'll feel inadequate there.

Maybe fear, and you can sometimes remain immobile through because fear and desire cancel each other out. In other cases, at some point, one predominates and then you're moved into you do it or you don't do it. You do it out of fear or you don't do it out of fear or you do it out of desire or you don't go there.

Desire can be very, very strong. Desire is often mistaken for willpower. You could have, for example, a great desire for food, which is psychological.

The body's need for food is limited. The mind's need for food is only one aspect of the mind's need for more. And if it's not more in some other area, it will take in more food.

As long as it's more, it's a taking in of more. It's a psychological need, which is a very strong desire. And then some people go on a diet and they say, okay, and that's considered willpower.

They have the willpower to say no to the food and then they lose weight. But that's just a stronger desire. The stronger desire is to look attractive, to attract someone.

And that desire cancels out the desire for food. So there's a continuous movement and fluctuation of desire and fear, and you move between the two. Desire implies future, more in future.

So the doing is governed by needing to arrive at some point in the future or fearing that point in the future because the future is promising and threatening at the same time. It promises fulfillment. Perhaps I can complete myself, my story, my sense of self, can be finally myself through more future, or the future is a threat because it might kill you.

In one sense, it does because eventually you die. So the little self needs the future and fears the future, but future is the dominant force that governs your actions. Now, is it possible as the alignment with now arises, how do we live?

If we don't, if we no longer have the psychological need for future, how are we going to be motivated to take action? And that is an interesting question. What replaces desire as a motivating factor or fear as a motivating factor?

Because some people work extremely hard out of the fear of being insignificant, out of the fear of being nobody, they become millionaires. And for 30 years, all their energy came out of fear of not being good enough. And finally they build up an empire, big corporation is there.

They've made thousands of people unhappy, including themselves, but they've created money. Yes, and a lot of unhappiness. So at first, I didn't have a teacher.

The shift happened to me suddenly and it left me in a state of, one could say, an external observer would have said a state of confusion because suddenly I had no motivation anymore to do anything because the future had become unnecessary. The psychological future had become unnecessary. The present was so deeply fulfilling that I said, why do anything?

This is so beautiful. So I sat around for two years. Miraculously, I survived.

And gradually, doing happened by itself. I found myself getting up, seeing someone, person coming to see me. Some doing arose that didn't have the future as a goal.

It arose out of the joy of doing what you're doing at this moment, not out of the psychological need of future. Of course, in everybody's life, some planning is necessary. Everybody had to plan to come here.

I had to put it in my diary a year before. It already said, retreat in Italy. So that was, of course, future came in, but that kind of future is very easy.

That you cannot avoid. It's called practical future. It's called clock time.

You cannot avoid that living here. You can live in a monastery and they also, they wake up at a particular time. Tomorrow morning, you are going to make breakfast, they say.

Okay, that's time. You can't get away from practical time when you live in this world. And so even I wear a watch.

Sometimes I hide it because so many people say to me, oh, I just, you wear a watch? Why is that? It doesn't make sense.

But it's helpful if you don't wear a watch, that's fine too, but it helps me to get here on time. Otherwise, I might turn up an hour late and I just drift in and say, well, there's no time. And some gurus do that in India.

They don't wear a watch. And there's one guru who could turn up at any time and often during the night he doesn't sleep. He could suddenly turn up for satsang at three in the morning.

And so the followers wait around. Nothing, no time has been specified. There's no structure.

He could turn up at any moment. That's fine too. But this would not be possible there.

This meeting would be difficult in that way. That's fine. Those structures work in that context.

And here there are other structures where time is used. Time that is used for practical planning is simply totally unproblematic. You pick up a phone and say, book a flight for next week, whatever it is.

But then the other time, the psychological time, the mental projection into some future moment, that is where the heaviness of future comes in. That's where time becomes a burden. That's where time becomes a desperate need for future.

So how do you live when the shift happens? Well, psychological time becomes unimportant. Practical time you can still use.

Now, when psychological time becomes unimportant, which is the great inner need for the next moment isn't there anymore, then action that arises out of you is no longer a means to an end. There may be an end, but the doing is always of greater importance than the arriving. You could write, find yourself writing a book.

Don't write a book too soon, just wait a little. But you could find yourself writing, suddenly the writing happens. And that can be a powerful movement.

In my case, it was a pen and notepad. In most people these days, it would be the computer. That can be a very powerful movement and very energizing.

When power flows into writing, an intense field of aliveness suddenly arises. That is deeply fulfilling in itself. Of course, the writing, you might say, I'm writing a book.

It may become a book at some future moment, some future time, it may be a book. But now the writing is, I'm giving my full attention to that. If the writing is a means to an end because I want to publish a book, I also want to be a successful writer.

I want to, that is a mind image, future, thought of future, where you see yourself as having achieved enhanced recognition through publishing a book. Then the writing is a means of getting you there. And you might put a lot of energy into it, but that energy comes out of, I must get there.

And you could even write a very clever book or book that contains a lot of thought, new thought structures, but not a truly alive book. The truly alive book that contains power comes out of the state of being aligned with now. And so the motivating factor for doing is no longer the pull towards future.

The motivating factor is the joy, aliveness, and fullness that is there in the doing. And that's, joy is an important part of that, power also. So that is the, that replaces desire and fear, which are future pulls for doing.

And any doing that comes out of that joy is also a doing, the doing that comes is no longer what it is that you need to do or that wants to be done through you, is not arrived at anymore through mental decision-making, which involves a lot of doubt. When you start thinking, should I write a book or should I not write a book? On the one hand, if I write a book, I might lose three years of my life, already an absurd thought, because you're already projecting that you're not going to enjoy yourself.

You might spend three years of your life and you're projecting future. I might lose three years where I could earn money and instead I'm going to write that book which might not even get published. On the other hand, if I don't risk that, I'll get stuck with my job.

So that requires a lot of thinking and you wake up in the middle of the night, on the one hand, on the other hand, but then what should I do? And then you can talk about it, think about it, and years could pass before you have decided whether to write a book or not. Not uncommon.

This is just one example. Now, in the state of alignment, what it is that needs doing, or one could say that wants to be done through you, what it is emerges, one could almost say ready-made as a realization, this is what I have to do. It's spontaneous, the doing arises.

In some cases, it might mean leaving somewhere. We talked about that. You might be in your office and suddenly you get up and walk out.

No decision-making involved. Or the book, you might one day, you get a notepad and a pen and, oh, and after one page, you might know this is going to be a book because you can sense the power that's in there, but you didn't sit down and try to decide, am I going to write a book or not? Suddenly, the writing happens through you.

And so spontaneity, also intuitive realizations, come out of the state of alignment with now. So that replaces the old way of doing, which is very problematic. And you know how problematic it can be, this yes, no, but, if, what if, and thought and thought and thought.

Okay, there's another question. Oh, one more question in the back and then the microphone will travel to you. Excuse me, but what happens if...

Yes. No, that's an interesting thought. This really isn't working.

Now, if you recognize that as a thought, then you don't need to believe in that thought completely, because the mind will throw up all kinds of thoughts of a similar nature that are telling you that it's pointless, it's not working. Or now, say yes to now, it says, no, not now. I will practice again tomorrow.

The mind says, this is not the right moment. I have too much on my mind now. It just won't work.

The mind has these thoughts and they will come up in you. If you don't recognize them as thoughts, then you're identified with the thought and then you act on it. And each time the thought will say, give up, let, don't even, don't.

You have too much, too many problems to deal with. You just can't get into all that stuff about portals and all that, just think about your problems. That's more important.

And when a thought like that comes, you see the thought. And then you say, oh, there goes another one of those thoughts, or you simply, you watch that. And that's already presence arising.

The moment you even notice a thought as a thought, the simple fact of noticing that here's a thought, there's already the dimension that is beyond thought, presence, arising, because it's through presence that you can notice the thought. So the very thought that is noticed, the thought that says, I can't remember what that thought, that there's no point, you might as well give up, or whatever the thought says, there's no point in all this. And as this thought is noticed, the seeing of it as a thought is the arising presence.

In other words, as you see that thought, there is a space around the thought and that is the witnessing presence. And then once you recognize that, the thoughts in themselves are no longer a problem because you're no longer completely identified, or one could say, you don't believe in every thought as if it were some truth. It is the mind attempting to stay in control.

It's only an energy movement, it has a momentum. And then comes the next thought that might say, whatever, I can't be present now. There's just too much going, so many disturbing things going on around me.

Can't be present now, how could you be? It's impossible to be present here, not in this place. And then you watch that thought and you're present.

Yes, how would that look in practice? For example, what you're using the portal of? Well, you're walking down the door, you're seeing things, you can see them.

Yes. And you're thinking, I must stop thinking. I'm obsessed about stop thinking, stop thinking, and the stop thinking becomes the thinking.

Yes, yes, yes, that's a good point. Now, you may notice, I would never say stop thinking, because that would be like saying, don't think of a green elephant or pink, pink elephant. There is the possibility that the state of thoughtless awareness may arise here through one of the portals.

So if you are looking at something, you may be looking at a tree, and then it's possible that thoughts arise that either have nothing to do with what you're looking at, or thoughts arise that are commenting on what you are looking at, or thoughts arise that are saying, I'm looking at this tree, and I'm still thinking, but I shouldn't be thinking. It doesn't matter what kind of thought arises, even the thought that says, you see, you're still thinking, and you should be not thinking. No matter what the thought says, it's enough to recognize thought as thought, because that also is a portal.

And now at this moment, your mind is saying that this is not possible, which is another thought. So that thought loses its power to draw you in completely, to draw all your attention in completely. So here goes another thought.

You could say that, which is a thought also, but that can free you from taking the thoughts so seriously or regarding them as obstacles, because when you regard thought as an obstacle that you need to overcome, you energize the thoughts. What happens when you use a portal like the inner body? Can you feel the aliveness in your body?

No. Can you feel the aliveness in your right hand? No, no.

If you closed your eyes, close your eyes, hold your right hand like this without opening your hand, without opening your eyes, without moving your hand, without touching anything, you're not looking, you're not touching anything, you're not moving your hand. Can you know whether your right hand is still there or not? How can you know whether it's still there directly?

Not as a memory. Okay. And I haven't yet met anybody who cannot feel a little bit of energy where there is a right hand.

And you also, there's some energy there. It may not be much, yes. That is entering the inner body.

And if you just hold attention there for a while, at least it's not in the head, it's there. Some thoughts may still happen, dance on the surface, but you've taken attention away from thoughts and it's there now. If you can feel one hand, you can feel other parts of the body.

You can feel the other hand. It's that you've entered the body. Once you've entered it, other parts you will also feel.

It comes by itself. So that may be certain portals work better for certain people. That's why there are more than one portal.

They all take you to the same place. And that's why I recommend different portals so that you can find the one that works best for you. It may well be that the one that you said you couldn't feel could well be the best portal for you.

And so if you can feel that, that's all that's needed. Thought loses its importance when you inhabit the inner body and it becomes an anchor for presence. So I would say the one that you haven't tried is the best one for you.

And eventually all the portals take you to the same place. If you end up in the same place, one portal goes that way, one goes that way, goes that way, they all end up there. So which one you use doesn't matter.

The one that works best for you. And for some it's sense perception, for some it's listening to silence, for some it's the inner body, for some it's to say, I allow this moment to be as it is. They all become portals that take you to the same place.

So it works. And thoughts may still come in occasionally, which might say, I can't be in the body now, there's too much going on. And then you just see the thought and you feel your right hand.

Oh, we may need to, we have clock time here. Okay.

[Speaker 4] (6:41:19 - 6:42:06)

I'm sorry. Okay, I guess I'm looking for perhaps a humorous picture or a hint. Many of my, much of my time is just passing by without being present.

And you said before, when presence arrives from the formless, that it's nothing that we do. So it's some kind of need from there or grace or whatever. On the other hand, I found being in intense situations, being faced with difficulties or duty, it works quite often.

But then there are many times when I'm just busy with little things or dealing with people, I'm just unconscious. Is it just something I have to wait for then or just have to be patient? There's nothing I can do, so to speak.

[Speaker 1] (6:42:07 - 7:28:02)

That is the challenge that everybody faces. That as presence arises, the arising presence will be challenged by the human mind. Both from within you, we could call that your mind.

Ultimately, the human mind is the human mind. But let's just call it your mind. It will be challenged by your mind.

In cooperation with your pain body, the arising presence will also be challenged by other human minds, people around you, situations around you, because these structures, the human-made structures of our world, social, economic, political, work structures, they are all made by the unenlightened human mind, the egoic mind. So work situations, the way you think, the way people do things, all those pre-existing structures are created by the madness, ultimately. So you are moving in external structures created by the human mind, and you are meeting in those mind structures with other human minds.

For example, if you're a teacher, many schools these days are quite mad places. And to be a teacher is extremely stressful. Even hospitals, if you're a nurse or a doctor, again, hospitals, many hospitals are quite mad places.

Potentially, they could be great places of healing or regeneration, but there are people running around. And it's a miracle that healing still happens, and it happens sometimes despite the mind. Some of it comes through the nurses that still bring some presence without knowing it, or perhaps nurses have been coming here too, and doctors.

So they bring something to balance the madness that is there. So almost any situation that you move into, you will still encounter the agitated human mind coming at you, if not from within you, from without. And so that's the great challenge, whether you teach at a school or work in a hospital or work in a corporation or work for social services, helping people, and everybody's unhappy, and everybody's complaining, and you go to committee meetings, and there's continuous arguments and position-taking and disagreement, all those things that make up the egoic mind.

And your challenge is to bring presence to that situation. But the human mind will want to draw you in, and its pull can be quite strong. "'Come and join us in our madness,' it says."

And the pull is there. And the pain body can be very active too in those situations. And the pain body is saying, "'Come, be as unhappy as we are.'" And so this is how presence deepens. It's through the challenges of living in this world that presence deepens. And then one day you find yourself being in the same conflict situation and simply being there as a spacious presence, not a reactive entity. And you watch what people are saying.

You look, watch. And not thinking they should be more sane, they should behave differently, they shouldn't be so unconscious and selfish and greedy and power-hungry. What you're looking at is simply the human condition.

Compassion comes, but really there's spacious presence, but it needs to be intense. And then nothing else is needed but to hold the non-reactive space of presence, which of course doesn't involve effort. There's an intensity to it.

There is even a fierceness to it. You cannot explain through words the qualities of presence. In one sense, one can say it has no qualities because it has all qualities, but there is a fierceness to presence, particularly in challenging situations.

Remember the sword, what I call the sword of presence, the fierceness that you can see when you look at old paintings of Zen masters. There is a look that is almost frightening in its fierceness with bulging eyes. They are challenging, very challenging to encounter.

There. That's the fierce aspect of presence. Underneath it, there's a softness, a gentleness.

And sometimes the fierceness is necessary, or it is just an intensity of, the fierceness is not fighting anything, it's just there. And that, any situation that you bring that into, hang on to your body if necessary, the inner body while you're there, and to be deeply, really rooted here. And then you watch.

And that is enough to change the situation. Not that you even want to change the situation, then you're making, creating some future again. The presence that arises is not a means towards changing the situation.

You give up the desire or the need to change the situation. Because that also is a need for something to be different from the way it is. It's a psychological need for future.

So in any situation that is full of conflict, full of unhappiness, full of problems, even also healing situations where a person comes to you for advice or healing, not believing that you need to change the situation. You need to improve the situation. And then you make presence into a means to an end, and it's not presence anymore.

You're trying to achieve something through being present. Presence is enough in itself. And whatever is needed to change the situation comes out of presence without prior intention that says, this is what I'm going to do in this situation.

And you find yourself, the doing happens. And sometimes no doing happens, and something changes in the energy field around you. Something changes around the conference table.

Something changes in the family where they're having dinner in the kitchen at the table, and everybody is shouting, and suddenly the mother or the father holds presence, and the shift comes. Presence. Invariably, things change when you no longer demand, because that is an important part of the arising presence, you no longer demand that this situation should be different because it isn't.

It is as it is. And only through the recognition of is as is does presence arise. And that is the miracle.

When the need for it to be different goes, then it changes. Because presence always means yes. And that yes will have to very often be a yes to whatever stage humans are at in their present evolution, which is called extreme dysfunction.

But it's not that you're saying, I say yes to extreme dysfunction. No, that's a mental stuff again. There's simply a yes to what is.

You're not condemning any of these people that are participating in the drama and thinking they should know better. They should be enlightened. They shouldn't be so unconscious.

They shouldn't be like that, and like that, and like that. They are as they are, and there's nothing personal to it. It is simply a manifestation of human consciousness or unconsciousness.

So let's simply be there as the space in which it happens. Then healing happens, transformation happens. Sometimes words come out of your mouth.

You contribute something to the situation, but the words that come have a different energy quality to them than before. They have a power. You may not say anything.

Somebody else may suddenly wake up and say something that is for the first time something deep and true that is not designed to create more conflict. And so that's when you realize for the first time the most agitated people very often become, wake up when you are there as spacious presence. And this happened to me at first.

I was astonished when it happened several times when agitated people came to me and said, you must do something about this. This needs to be done. Look at these papers.

This is a dreadful problem. This is fear. Yes, just presence.

And with one person, she dropped, suddenly dropped all her papers and said, this isn't important, is it? And then she said, there's only love, isn't there? Yes.

Nothing was needed. No doing was necessary. Just that.

Beautiful. Well, the clock says 6.20. It's now, of course. Several people have given me watches that have, wherever the numbers are, it says now, now, now.

So, and they're always accurate. Let's enter stillness. It seems that time moves on.

Every experience. First, it's only a thought form, retreat in Italy. For some people, it never became a reality.

It remained a thought form. They never turned up. And they're still thinking, should I have gone?

And some are beating themselves up. I didn't go. I missed it again.

I should have got this. I had booked and then I canceled. How stupid.

How stupid. So it remained a thought form, future. For others, those who are here, the thought form seemed to get closer.

Future thought, thought form is future is a thought form. And then it seemed to get closer. It didn't get closer, it's just a perspective.

And then suddenly, it opens up. It's the now. It actually is, it's here.

And then. And then it's a thought form again. A memory, supported perhaps by some photos, or even moving images on the screen.

See a video, who knows, but it's gone. And so it seems the express train of time never really stops. And you see the landscape, it's coming.

So that's every experience fleeting. And you may find the same when you reach the end of this lifetime. A collection of experiences that went by quickly and then your entire life, was that it?

Maybe it was a dream. The dream-like quality, we talked about it, of something that has moved into past. So time, we seem to be trapped in it.

And now time is dragging us along. We can't stay here. Time is dragging us away from here.

No, I want to stay here. But that whole idea of time is only thought, both future and past. And although the experience of this gathering is fleeting and comes to an end, and seems like whenever any experience comes to an end, it's a little death, a little bit dying.

You die many times whenever something ends. It's not without reason that in many languages, the word for goodbye includes the affirmation that we are going to meet again to make that death a little easier. Because there seems to be something missing when you say goodbye.

And not many people leave it like that, although in English, that word itself doesn't have the notion that it's. Usually in English, you then add, see you, see you soon, see you next year, see you at the next retreat. Other languages, you don't have to add that because au revoir, auf wiedersehen, and so on, they already have that idea built in, see you again, which means goodbye.

So it makes the death a little easier. And there's the promise of future, another event in the future, a rebirth. We can have a similar experience again.

But this is not what I'm promising you here. I'm not saying, don't worry, we're going to have another retreat. We may, but when that comes, it'll be the same as this, a thought form, it's here and it's gone.

And then there we are again. And then, so the experience comes to an end, but as an experience, this wasn't a great thing anyway. As an experience, it could have been much more exciting with all kinds of very exciting things happening.

Well, maybe Paul, one or two of you, something exciting did happen, I won't inquire. But probably for most, as an experience, there wasn't that much in it, that much, not that much happening, just beautiful, but not that much happening in it. And that wasn't the purpose of this gathering to fill it up with some kind of content.

Some content is inevitable, the words are content, the sense perceptions are content, but as content goes, you've probably had more exciting experiences where there was more content. So on the level of content, this was okay. And that is the experience, the content of it, the form that it takes ends.

But the real reason for us meeting here was to point to something else, to that which is beyond content. Both content, the external content of your life, which we could call the life situation, and beyond the inner content of your life, thought forms, emotional forms, the stream of thinking, the emotional fluctuations, including the pain body, to see that which is before content and after content arise, after it comes and goes. It's born and dies.

This experience was born and then it dies. Now it's dying. That's beautiful too.

So the entire gathering was pointing to another dimension that is even beyond an experience as such, because experience implies that it comes and goes. It has a beginning and an end. And it exists in time, beginning, end.

And then you see that anything to do with content, external or internal, has a certain lifespan. It's fleeting. Everything.

And because it's so fleeting, it has a dreamlike quality. I mean, there's something in Shakespeare somewhere, we are the stuff dreams are made of, or something like that, a dreamlike quality to one's life, because of the fleetingness of everything. And so we see that which already, of course, the Buddha pointed to as one of the characteristics of existence is impermanence.

And to see that in a strange way is already a kind of liberation. Even just to recognize how impermanent all experiences are, how can you recognize it? If everything were of the same color in this world, yellow or green, every object, whatever you look upon, then obviously that color wouldn't exist because you have nothing to differentiate it from.

If everything were yellow, there would be no yellow. You wouldn't recognize yellow because everything is yellow. If everything were impermanent, one could say perhaps, even the recognition of impermanence would not be possible.

To see it means that there is something that is beyond the fleetingness of all phenomena. And when you see how fleeting it is, that seeing arises out of the unconditioned, timeless consciousness, presence, space consciousness. From there, you see the world of form.

It is not judged. You take no perspective, position, standpoint, reaction. It's simply seen.

The moment it becomes a judgment and say, isn't it sad? We live in this dreadful place where everything is turning to ashes. It's already turning to ashes.

Even at this moment, every object, every body, we just don't see it right there. But if we saw a speeded up version of this room, 2000 years compressed into one minute, everything would be turning to ashes. And that would be an amazing spiritual realization if you could see here, let's imagine film is speeding up, let's say 4,000 years, which is very little on a planetary or cosmic scale, 4,000 years here, nobody's interfering with what's happening, compressed into one minute, and then you see it on a film.

And then you would see, first of all, the bodies sitting here. They would shrink, get old and wrinkled and suddenly dissolve. The flesh melts, bones remain for a little while and they also crumble.

And then the wood would go. And even metal would get rusty and then dissolve. And then after that minute, just maybe a little bit of dust and then a gust of wind comes and it's all gone in one minute.

And you're watching. That watching in which no judgment arises, a simple seeing is the witnessing presence. Is the space in which all phenomena come and go.

And that is the essential nature of yourself. When you, it looks from an external viewpoint as if you were dragged away from here by time. You can't get out of time, so this comes to an end, you have to leave.

But really when you go here, all that happens is the space of now, which is the space of aware presence, which is the space consciousness. All that happens is that some other forms, some other experiences come into, appear in the space of now, your field of awareness. For example, a train appears.

The body moves. Then it sits on the train and goes. And it goes.

Landscape. And then maybe an airport appears. And then the vision of the inside of an airplane appears.

And then another airport appears. Space. And there remains, things appear and disappear in the field of awareness.

That's all. Now it has, one thinks of that as I am going there and then I'm going there. Ultimately, on a deeper level, you're not going anywhere.

You're not going anywhere. The scenery changes. The hologram changes.

The holodeck, for Star Trek enthusiasts. It's like forms appear for a moment. And then if even at any moment you could close your eyes and then the visual dimension disappears except the memory traces.

You could sit on an airplane, close your eyes. Then a huge amount of content disappears unless it's replaced immediately by thought. You close your eyes and then there's just a dark space.

And then there's auditory perceptions left. If they also disappeared, there would be some touch, but let's say that goes too. Then simply there's a deep, vast space.

There's something there and yet nothing there. You, in your essence, would be there, the I am-ness. And so it's that to see that the changing phenomena, they happen within an unchanging space.

And most humans are totally unaware of the unchanging space which I sometimes call, because then people can, it's a useful perspective, which I sometimes call the space of now. People are unaware of the space of now. All they know is the content of now, what happens.

Because the content changes all the time, people believe that every day consists of many nows, many moments, every hour seems to consist of many moments. If you look more deeply, you realize there are no many moments. Your life consists of the one unchanging now moment.

It is never not the now, this. So it's an illusion to think that my life consists of many moments, because I'm mistaking the form that the now takes for the essence, the space of now. That's why it seems that there are many moments in one's life, whereas there's only one moment.

That also brings out the delusion of time, ultimately delusion, which is connected with the workings of your thought processes. And there it has its place, but you don't need a lot of philosophical ability, first of all, to see, perhaps even a 10-year-old, maybe a 10-year-old could see it more clearly than an adult who is trying to figure out what this means. There's nothing much to figure out except to see that it's always now, this is self-evident, that nothing ever happens, nothing ever is experienced, felt, even thought.

You can think about the future, but you have to be thinking it now. You cannot do anything, you can't, life and now, you and now are inseparable, it always is this. Then the form of now, of course, changes.

Here we have this form, this room, a body sitting here, words coming out of the mouth, ears perceiving the words, the space of this room, the bodies filling this room. The space of this room, when you become aware of that, that already takes you beyond identification with content. But yet the content is this, and in a few hours, it may be something totally different.

The space of now will have different content to it, as I just described, comes, goes. So usually all that people know and are aware of and are identified with is the content of now. And as such, it never lasts very long.

Like this experience, the content is this, the external form of our retreat coming to an end. The content is about to disappear from the field of now, all the forms. Then there may be left mental content, memories of this event, they could linger for longer, but it's no longer the actual reality.

But even those things, you can only think in the field of now, those thoughts come up in the field of now. It is possible that while you're sitting on an aeroplane, the field, the space of now may be filled primarily with memories of this event, rather than the sense perceptions of that moment. So sense perceptions and thoughts and emotions fill up the space of now.

And most people, that's people's lives. That's what people see as my life. It's the content of my life.

And there's something not that satisfying about it because of the short-lived nature of all those content things. And I called that at the beginning of our retreat, I used the expression object consciousness for that, to be only conscious of content, not conscious of space in which it happens. In other words, to be only conscious of the content of now, but not of the now, which is the space.

Space consciousness arises when there is a sudden awareness of this, the underlying field, which defies, which cannot be really put into words because every word is content again. So we are using words and thoughts to point to something that cannot possibly be understood through words or thoughts. So one could say it's an impossibility for us to understand what these words point to.

And the reason why we are here is not to understand that, don't even try. The words, the purpose of the words is simply to point there. So I can say there is that which happens and there's that which enables it to happen, the space.

Sometimes described as stillness, but no word is totally adequate. And I suggest to you, I've been suggesting this, to know for yourself this such, so intangible thing that people spend a lifetime in a Zen monastery trying to get it and often don't. But now it's getting easier.

That, I suggested that little portals appear in your life through which that dimension can be realized. One is silence because it's the absence of content. To acknowledge the absence of content, that which corresponds to that inside you can acknowledge that nothing else.

Silence, no content. So you listen to it, you notice it. And suddenly the noticing is the arising of no content in your mind until a thought comes in that says, oh, it's very silent.

That may come in after three seconds. That's okay. It may come in after two seconds.

It's okay. But there were two seconds of no content. The first moment of listening to the silence, which is listening to nothing.

And that is not significant from the point of view of content, but it is deeply significant because something is arising, a dimension of consciousness that is unconditioned, that in which there is nothing is born or dies because there's no form in it. The formless, unconditioned dimension that is the essence of who you are. And that in such a seemingly insignificant thing as noticing silence, if only for a few seconds, two or three seconds, that is arising.

It's then immediately perhaps covered up again by content because a thought comes in that says, why can't you listen to it for longer? And then perhaps again, the attention goes and there's a listening again. And during that moment of listening, there's a little space in which there's not a single thought because you cannot listen to silence through thought.

Thought is mental noise. Thought knows nothing of silence. It is unaware of silence.

To even have an awareness of silence as a dimension, even though there may be a few noises as an underlying dimension, which is always there somewhere, the dimension of silence is there, here very much so, to even be aware that silence exists requires you to be without thought for an instant. And in many cases, it is only an opening. And that is the same opening that I suggested to you when you first look at something, sense perception, it comes into your field of vision.

It arises in the space of now. When you first look at something, in that first perception, there is a spaciousness in which you have not had time yet to formulate a thought about it, to call it something, to label it. So when I turn my head and look at this for the first second or two, there is simply the looking.

It's actually longer than a second or two. And if you could truly see that, you'd be amazed. You'd be amazed.

Truly see means stay with the spaciousness in which the labels don't arise, that comes. Don't demand that as I should be seeing it without. It's enough to notice that in the first moment the perception arises in a field of stillness.

That's all. That field of stillness most people are totally unaware of as a deeper dimension within themselves. Words are limited.

It's within and without. Let's call it within. As a deeper dimension within themselves, unaware of that.

So unaware of space consciousness. And so the liberation is the liberation from the world of form, the world of content. And seeking yourself there somewhere in some content, mental form of me, it's the same.

So just capturing, noticing the moment of stillness that is there. When you first look, it doesn't have to be nature. It could be anything.

Nature has a lot of stillness already in there. Some man-made things have a nervousness built into them. But nevertheless, in the first moment there's always the clear perception.

And when you notice it, it is possible that it may be there for longer, the space. If not, it doesn't matter. Yes, please.

No, no.

[Speaker 2] (7:28:08 - 7:28:35)

The more I try to bring the space into my life, I've noticed that I face a lot of fear. I perceive layers of my personality and I can get a small distance and I get closer and closer and there is this huge fear. And I wish if you could talk about this fear.

I feel that I want something wonderful to happen to me, but for this to happen, I cannot be there.

[Speaker 4] (7:28:35 - 7:28:36)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (7:28:36 - 7:28:39)

And there is the fear of death or whatever.

[Speaker 1] (7:28:39 - 8:15:05)

Yes, thank you. That's an important point. And you are not the only one who feels that.

And the fear is the fear of the mind-made entity, the self. Because in that, it seems to disappear. And it's, no, it doesn't want to disappear.

And so what do you do with the fear? All you can do is also notice it as a feeling, a movement. Nothing is needed beyond noticing it in the same way that you notice a sense perception and look on it, feel it.

Otherwise, the fear becomes a reaction and you withdraw and run back into identification with thinking, the familiar place. It feels so familiar. So then the fear pushes you.

When you touch the space consciousness, sometimes it happens that fear arises. And then you touch it again. And if you don't know that this is a very natural reaction, then the fear, you identify with the fear.

You become the fearful entity that then withdraws again into the normal state of the. So to notice the fear is there brings about a freedom so that the fear is not totally possessing you. You're not totally identified with the movement of fear.

You can see the fear in your energy field and don't have to do anything. You allow that. And then you can look again at something when the same thing that brought the fear, there is a gentleness.

When you allow the fear, there's a gentleness around it because so you're using the other portal now with the fear, which is allowing it to be. Then the fear itself is turned into a portal. First, it seems to prevent you from getting there.

But if you then apply the portal of allowing it what is to be, it is, then the fear itself becomes a portal again. So first there was the portal of perception, clear perception, which brought about fear or listening to the silence, which brought about fear. Then you notice the fear and allow it.

The allowing is best expressed in the gesture that I would describe as this, where you almost, you hold it in a spaciousness, which is also one could say that gesture and that particular portal very much connected with a female principle of embracing. That's why that's, you see sometimes with Mary statues, the arms like that, but that is the female principle. There's enormous power in that holding, embracing, receptivity, and there's a gentleness there.

So when you allow something, including fear, there is that an inner holding it within this larger spaciousness. And it might even help for a little while to actually hold your arms like that. And then, because you can almost feel the space around it, and then whatever it is that you allow to be, will turn into the portal.

The worst things will turn into a portal, but the worse they get, the deeper the yes would have to be. And the deeper the allowing. And so see how everything that looks like an obstacle in your life, an obstacle to enlightenment, an obstacle to whatever, can easily be turned into an opening, simply through non-resistance.

And then every situation, even if it looks from a conventional mental viewpoint, even if it looks dreadful, very bad indeed, if you allow that which looks dreadful and very bad indeed, the strange thing is that every situation, it's not just on the inner level that the shift happens, that the portal opens. The situation itself is turned from good to bad. It's the transmutation of good to bad.

It's not, there's a famous story. Unfortunately, I don't remember the details of it. There are different versions.

When a poor farmer, a horse comes to him, a wild horse, and all the people in the village come to him and say, aren't you lucky? You're so lucky that this horse, you have a horse now. And the farmer says, well, maybe, maybe so.

And then the next day, the horse, I think, leaves him again, and they all come, oh, you've lost the horse, you're so unlucky. First you had it, just maybe, maybe. And then the horse comes back the next day with five other horses, and they come back and says, maybe.

Then the farmer's son rides on the wild horse, and then he's thrown off and breaks his leg, and the villagers come and say, oh, poor man. You know, he cannot help you with the harvest. And the farmer says, perhaps, maybe.

The next day, the army comes to seek conscripts for the next war, and the son can't go with them, and they all get killed, of course. So the villagers come and say, aren't you lucky? You've kept your son because he has a broken leg.

Okay, every event, he doesn't resist anything, and every seemingly bad event turns into good again. There are quite a few people in this room who have experienced bad events that they would never have chosen if somebody said, do you want this to happen to you? You would just say, no, but it happened.

And at some point, surrender happened, if not complete, substantial surrender happened. And then you see that which you never wanted was actually the best possible thing to happen for you. And it's a strange realization that whatever happens to you, when you align yourself with it, will turn out to be the best possible thing for you.

The universe is not mad. Only you are mad. It's nothing personal.

And of course, your madness is part of the universe too. It's a little game. So to see that whatever happens through the yes, turns around.

It's not only that you become free internally, and a dimension opens up that is beyond the form that this moment takes. Even on the level of form, a shift happens and it turns around. And that's an amazing thing to realize.

The similar story, which I have told a few times, the Zen master who was accused by a 17-year-old girl who was pregnant of being the father in a town in Japan. And the parents came to him and said, she has just told us she's going to have a, she's given birth to this baby and she has just confessed to us that you are the father. When she came to see you nine months ago, it happened.

She had a session with you and you... And all over the town, they gossip started and they all said how dreadful he could have done such a thing. But when they came to him, the parents and told him about it, all he said was, is that so, in Japanese?

I don't know what the Japanese... It may be something like, ah, so, or something like that. So the parents come and say, here, you have, we don't want this baby, it's your baby, you look after it.

First they say, you are the father and he didn't deny it. He said, oh. And then they said, here, you have the baby, you look after it, we don't want it.

Is that so? Ah, so. And then they left and he started looking after the baby, feeding it, buying food.

Nobody came to see him anymore because he had lost his reputation. But because he didn't live through a conceptualized sense of self, all that mattered to him was what this moment required. This moment, there was this baby.

So he was feeding the baby. Without the conceptualized sense of self, the drama was in all the other people. They talked about it for months and months.

The drama was not in him. There was only this moment and he cared for the baby. A year later, the girl confessed that the master wasn't the father, but the boy next door.

So the parents came running to the Zen master and said, she's just told us that you are not the father. And he said, ah, so. And so, we are terribly sorry we made a mistake.

And can we have the baby back now, please? We want the baby now. Is that so?

Okay, here it is. That situation, which is potentially a dreadful thing for the Zen master, it turned into good, only good. The baby was brought up the first year of his or her life by a Zen master.

That's a good start in life. And this is the story symbolizes the state of non, it's an extreme version of non-resistance to what is. It wouldn't have to be literally like that.

You could say, you could have said, no, I'm not the father. But if you believe that I'm the father, what can I do? Could say that also.

This is an extreme form of being aligned totally with now, never resisting. And the good that comes out of a seemingly bad event through alignment, inner alignment with it. So it describes the state of not resisting the isness of now.

Jesus has an even more extreme example. And again, it's a symbol. Turning the other cheek means simply complete non-reaction.

It's not necessarily, you don't have to take it literally. It's inner non-reaction, inner non-reaction. Because usually somebody hitting you on the cheek would immediately produce a strong reaction.

Non-reaction. So he's not giving any prescription for external conduct. It's pointing to an inner state of being aligned.

Non-reaction. So that's, and all evil turns into good through that. The situation turns around.

You have to try it out in your life. But one could say that is only a byproduct of something deeper. The fact that the external situation also turns around is a byproduct of something deeper.

At the deepest level, what matters is the inner, the arising of that depth, that space. That spaciousness within yourself, to know that through non-resistance. And then there's the event, there's, and yet the allowing, the space that comes when you allow.

And so you become free of depending on content of your life. As a byproduct of that, a little irony of the universe, when internally you become free of the content of your life needing to be in one particular way to satisfy you, you become free of that need for your life situation to be in a particular way to satisfy you, which most people have that great need. You become free of that because knowing the depths of space consciousness is the most satisfying of all.

That is the only satisfying state. So then the need for content to be in a particular way isn't there. And the irony of the universe is such that when you don't need for the content of your life to be in a particular way, it turns into, the tendency is for content to turn into good, not without limitations ever, but it becomes harmonious because you're aligned with the totality.

So a harmonious flow comes into your life, which often means it also improves the content as a byproduct, precisely at the point when you don't need it anymore as a desperate inner need. So people have demands, they demand that the world should make them happy. It doesn't.

It's not in the nature of the world to make you happy. You can try for a while. One could say the world is here to make you conscious, not to make you happy.

And then when you're conscious, happiness is there or something deeper than happiness is there, a joy that has a depth to it that is deeper than happiness, happy, unhappy, happy, unhappy, something deeper is there. So not to see the ultimate non-satisfactory nature of content, when you see that, it gets better because you don't need it anymore. So it's strange.

And many people realize in their own lives when they let go of a demand that this or that should be in a particular way or should happen, the moment you completely let go of this inner should, it happens. So only, Jesus said, only be concerned with the kingdom of heaven, which means kingdom of heaven is a strange description he uses to describe the transformed state of consciousness. He has other descriptions for it, the pearl of great price and all kinds of parables pointing to it.

He's talking of only be concerned with finding the essence of who you are, then everything else comes. And he, I believe he said, all the things that you thought you needed will be added unto you because you no longer need them. And of course, those things, they won't stay around forever either, nothing does.

They still have certain limitations, which are the limitations inherent in every form. But it's nice when certain things come for a while. Nice.

And then perhaps goes again, something else comes, forms arise, are born, die. And you are beyond that. So you leave here, change of content, same space, and on the deepest level, it's true to say that you never really go anywhere.

And so phenomenal existence with the world of form, the world of phenomena continues in your life, in the space, the space that you are, different configurations, forms, your life situation, make up your life situation. You may have certain problems in your life, your life situation. The more you access the space of now, the more quickly problematic situations become resolved.

Not by lying awake for hours on end and thinking about them. They don't become resolved. In fact, they don't become resolved through thought.

Thought may be a final form that your realization takes of what the answer is sometimes. But problems do not become resolved through thought. They were actually created by thought in the first place.

So it's only by going beyond thought that the problem suddenly disappears. It may not even become resolved. It disappears from your field of vision.

It may reveal itself to be only a mind form. People carry problems around, many people, that have no existence whatsoever except as a thought form. For example, fear of certain things that may happen to me.

He may leave me, she may leave me. What if this could happen? And this can develop as if it were an actual situation.

And you look more deeply, you see, we pointed at this briefly already. When you look more deeply, you see that the entire existence of the level of human problems are only thought forms. Not reality.

Only a challenge can be there in the reality of now. What are the problems in people's lives? Physical, relationship, financial, finding a life purpose, profession, work problems, and ultimately, all of them, thought forms.

Relationship problem. Let's talk about our relationship problems. Maybe we can work it out.

Yes, up to a limited point, a little bit of talking may be helpful, like pain bodies. But unless presence arises in the relationship, you can't work it out. It's only the arising of space consciousness of presence in the relationship that it can deepen and it can go beyond problems and the need for problems.

And as you know, that begins with listening to your partner when he or she speaks. The art of true listening. Listening in the field of aware presence, open.

Not exclusively focusing on the content when you listen. The words, because then your vision becomes immediately content-based thought. You listen to the words and then your face goes, what do you mean by that?

And immediately the reactive thought forms come up. No, that's completely untrue, I never said that. Why do you always accuse me of that?

Yes, you always do. No, it's not true, I don't always do. There's no listening, there's just true mind forms.

So not exclusively focusing on the form because in true listening, you are there as space. You're not there as form. You can only truly listen if you are there as space, the space in which these words appear and you allow them to appear.

It's again, of course, connected with allowing what is to be completely. So you listen to another person, you are the space in which these words happen. And as you listen, you listen not as a reactive entity, but as receptive space.

And that is the arising of presence, unconditioned consciousness in the relationship. And the words, if words come, are very different. If finally you do say something, those words are very different from words that arise out of the reactivity of the mind.

So to be able to be with each other beyond the movement of thought and not try to solve the so-called problems of the relationship, only on the level of thought. The same applies with not just partner relationships, relationships with children. Space, give the child space.

Be there as space, as spacious presence for the child. But if you're totally identified with a thought form which is father, mother, and you're totally identified with a role which is a thought form, a conditioned thought form, then you interact with a child only through the role of mother or father. And how this role identity thinks a father or mother should behave to be a good father or mother.

And the way they should behave is to tell them what's best for you because I must be, I'm a good father, I'm responsible for you. Do this, don't do that. No, you must do this.

Have you done that? Trying to be good and you get totally identified in the role and then the mother or the father, the father becomes excessively only father. The mother is only mother.

And for the rest of their lives, they can't get out of the role. Then the mother becomes stifling. If you only know yourself as mother without any spaciousness beyond the role, to be a mother without spaciousness is stifling for the child.

It's narrow. When the child is 30 and you are 60, you will still be in the role of mother and you won't even see that the child is an adult and you'll be calling them up and telling them what's best for them because you are trapped in the role and in a thought form, a conditioned thought form. And so, yes, you are also a mother, you are also a father, but that's a tiny aspect.

That's the form aspect. And any role that you totally slip into and identify with, which is a conditioned thought form, limits you and limits other people. So whatever role you play in life, you will have to play some roles.

That's because on the level of form, we have roles. But to be trapped in a role is to be trapped in thought, in a conditioned thought form. And then you yourself are imprisoned and the role will further imprison other people because it will only interact with other people as roles also because if you are trapped in the role of mother, for example, you will push the child into the role of child and keep the child imprisoned in the role of child until they are 50 and you die and you still imprison them in the role of child as you imprison yourself in the role of mother.

Not that you cannot honor the form of being a mother, but all your profession, you can become a... I've seen people at universities so identified with their role of professor after 30 years, they're totally that. And they speak like a book.

And I sometimes, you can only watch and sometimes wonder, is there anything beyond the role left there? There's such identification with roles. And a few people are able to play their role and yet something that is not conditioned remains as the essence of spaciousness.

And then always remains there's a simplicity that remains, there is a gentleness that remains. You play the role, whatever your profession is, whatever your function in society is, you can honor it, but let it be there in the spaciousness of presence. And then you can be with a child, not exclusively as your role, but you can be there in the child's life as spacious presence and the child comes into that space.

And then you don't talk to the child out of that, like a mother talks to a child, a mother who knows better, of course, a child who always doesn't quite know what's best. No, from spacious presence, all is equal. And you actually speak to the child, words that come out of that are words that are being spoken to an equal and you can listen to the child and be amazed how much wisdom can come off the child's mouth if you can only listen.

Wisdom that if you were exclusively identified with the role, you wouldn't even hear because you are convinced that the child doesn't know and you know because it's the role of mother to know. And so all relationships never confuse the role with the depths of who that being is and that depth is unconditioned. So the same in business, in many business interactions, people meet as their function, as their role.

It's a prison and it's liberating and people who are not trapped exclusively in the role tend to be much more successful than people who are totally trapped in their role. Everybody loves them. So little human interactions, going to a restaurant, there is a human being playing the role of waiter or waitress and temporarily while you're sitting there, you are playing the role of customer and people slip into these roles the moment they sit at a restaurant table and the waiter imposes the role on you and you impose the role of waiter on him or her.

It's an absurd limitation of yourself and the other person. So can you be there when the waiter comes or the waitress comes? A moment of spacious presence as the waiter or waitress comes into your field of vision and you look and then you honor the role that you are.

You don't have to behave in a weird way. Then you say, I'd like the soup followed by this and that. And the waiter also, the waiter tends to see you as your function there, as your role and then traps you in that.

If a waiter or waitress can be there for the customer also as spacious presence, that is so liberating. As a by-product of that, they would get three times or four times the tips they would otherwise get. That's a little by-product because it is so liberating to be in the presence of presence, the space.

Anybody who comes to you offering space, oh, people may not know why they feel so good. And so it's, everybody's, it's so important not to get trapped in the thought form of roles. Honor them, but be larger than that so that the little role is there, but the unconditioned is known.

And that is actually what true intelligence operates, not through the little role with the conditioned thinking that goes with that role. So in all human interactions, bringing, you are the bringer of space consciousness. It comes naturally with complete yes to what is this moment.

There is, you go beyond the form of this moment. This is how we started off today, saying, knowing the difference between form and formless, between the form as which you appear here and the formless reality that you are. The difference between the form as which I appear here and the formless reality that I am.

I mentioned yesterday, if I saw myself as a spiritual teacher, would be a delusion. It's a temporary form identity. In other words, not really an identity, but simply a function.

And then I walk out and there's no, what teacher? There's a being walking between the trees. What, there's no teacher left.

Why carry that, I am a spiritual teacher. And then with that would come other illusions. There would come the illusion that people come from different parts of the world to see me.

And that would be the source for ego. It would be ego fuel on the one hand, the self would feel bigger. They have all come to see me.

But on the other hand, there would be hidden fear. I hope I can live up to their expectations of me. I hope, oh my God, all these people have come.

I don't, I'm not ready. I don't know what to say. So you're drawn between feeling bigger and feeling threatened.

And this happens to everybody who is trapped in a form identity. And of course, nobody comes to see me. What for, they come for space, which is themselves.

That's so they come because there happens to be an empty space here. And then they recognize themselves in that. And so the empty space within them, the unconditioned consciousness arises.

That's why they come, not to see a person. So knowing the difference between the form that arises in the now and the depths or the space of now. And in this life, there are the two dimensions.

The dimensions of form, which, in which there seems to be time and the dimension of the formless. And most humans are lost in form in this world. You don't need to learn more about form.

You can, the world is full of learning about form. Universities are full of form knowledge, but essence, the world is hungry to know that which is beyond form, because that's the liberation from being trapped in form, physical forms, but more importantly, trapped in thought forms, conceptualized identities of me, which link into certain physical things, make thought forms out of them. And then you carry that role, that conceptualized identity around with you.

And it's never at ease for long, always incomplete, uneasy, fearful, needing more. I need more followers. I want people to follow me.

Just come and follow me. I need more. Enron Corporation, we need more capital, more money, more.

In an absurd attempt of the ego to complete itself. So this is the madness of the level of form when you only know that. When you know that which is beyond form, the world of form is quite okay.

Okay. Actually, quite nice. Beautiful.

There's a dance that goes on. The dance of form, of phenomenal, which you experience as you walk away from here. This place of now is filled with other forms and the dance continues.

So the essence of our retreat is not something that is now going to recede into the past. The form of this retreat as an experience is about to move into past and become a thought form as all forms do, future, present, and it's gone. The essence doesn't move.

This gathering was not about experiencing certain interesting events on the level of form, even though one or two of you may have done that. The essence of this is to see that which is deeper than content. Sense perception and thought and emotion.

Spaciousness, stillness, aware presence. Thank you for making this retreat possible. There would be no teaching without you.

The ancient saying says, the teacher and the taught together produce the teaching. It's a single process. Ultimately, it comes out of you.

Ultimately, you just recognized what you already knew, of course. Teaching comes out of you. Thank you.

Thank you to Marina for organizing this and Christina and Kim and helpers. Many people have helped to make this happen. Enjoy what comes into the field of now and you are not what happens.

You're the space in which it happens. As long as you know that, there's no problem. There can't be.

Eckhart Tolle Retreat Talk Titled Living Deeper Level of Consciousness

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 4:21:34)

This is called a lecture, but it's not really a lecture. It's more a little bit like a meditation. Let's see if we can be here as completely as possible in this moment to be fully here, to inhabit this moment fully that is not a normal human state.

The normal human state is to be elsewhere with your attention, future, and as you get older and there's little future left, then you tend to live in the past, but always escaping from now. And to be here more fully, actually it helps to be in the body, to inhabit the now. One aspect of fully inhabiting the now is to fully inhabit the body.

And that simply means as you sit here and to have some of your attention in the inner energy field of body, there is a certain aliveness throughout the body. Very subtle at first. Maybe you can only feel it in your hands to start with.

But they're alive and somehow you can feel, sense that they are alive. That seems very insignificant to the thinking mind because the thinking mind has more important problems to think about. Of course, the problems it thinks about are to do with the future and perhaps the past.

So to be in the body seems insignificant to the thinking mind. And it quickly loses interest in being in the body because the thinking mind always says, okay, okay, you've told us to be in the body, now what's the next thing you're going to tell us? Because the tendency for the thinking mind is always to be with the next thing, not this.

It runs away from this to the next. Hence the enormous psychological need within everybody for the next moment. Where is it?

So as you sit here, feel that connectedness so that you're rooted within. Some attention is here throughout the body or if you can only feel one or two parts, that's good enough. Have some attention there and then there's quite enough attention left to listen in a state of alert presence.

So the body is, I sometimes call it a portal into that state of consciousness that we could call presence of the way forward state. One could also say that the body can act as an anchor for staying present. And then it's, you can simply be here with your attention fully in this moment without even the compulsion, which is so normal, to somehow label and interpret this moment.

You can allow this moment to be as it is. It's a very rare state for human beings. To be so at one with this moment, not against it, not reducing it to a means to an end, not resisting it internally or projecting yourself continuously away from it internally.

And so as you sit here, not even looking for the next thing that the speaker is going to say, it can, there's such fullness to being alive if your attention is here fully. There already is a depth and fullness to life that you miss when you continuously live in past and future. So we are here to experience, and many of you already live that way, if only perhaps part of the time, you're present.

We are here to experience what that means to be fully present and look at the implications of living in such a way. The strange thing that you might notice as you connect with the inner body and allow that state of alert presence to arise in which you perceive without the compulsive need to label mentally that which you are perceiving. And yet you know, this is very strange, you know what it is that you are perceiving, but you no longer know it through the old labels of the mind.

So there is a deeper knowing in you, far deeper than the knowing that is associated with mental conditioning, mental labels, mental noise, concepts, words, sounds. So as you connect with the inner body and allow that alert presence to arise, then you notice the incessant mental noise that is so normal slows down, perhaps even comes to a stop. There's a gap in which you are not thinking and you're fully conscious.

And you know that, you know no longer through the conditioned and acquired mental labels, there is a knowing that happens in the stillness. That is an important aspect of that state of being awake. And suddenly there is a depth to whatever you look upon, a depth and aliveness that wasn't there when you immediately, compulsively, automatically and unconsciously labeled everything and the mind immediately commenting on somehow fitting it into something, some categories, some mental judgments.

And so you simply allow this moment to be. And what arises, one could call that the timeless state of consciousness where you are no longer obsessed with past and future, where you have access to an intelligence that is greater than the conditioned intelligence that is thought, thought activity. And it's an amazing thing.

Most humans don't know that yet, that there is vast intelligence beyond thought, that thought is only a tiny manifestation, a tiny aspect of vastness of intelligence that one could almost say fills the entire space of the universe, that the universe is an alive, intelligent organism. And there is one intelligence that manifests itself as millions of life forms. There are many manifestations of that one intelligence, and one of them is the human mind.

Interesting, but only tiny. And humans equate intelligence with the ability to conceptualize, to store up information, to analyze, which means cut it into pieces. This is what they do at universities increasingly these days.

You become specialist, and the more advanced you become, the more little your pieces are that you examine at university because the mind is going into further and further differentiation and cutting up. And if any of you do PhDs or have PhDs or working on PhDs or have abandoned your PhDs as I did, you know how tiny the area is that you would spend three years or whatever it is working on. So intelligence is to, in our civilization, is the ability to cut information into little pieces and examine it, categorize it, compare it to other bits of information.

And yet, if you look at those humans who were creative in whom something new, totally new insights arose or artistic creations or sudden revolutionary scientific insights, they all report that they came from a realm that was not thought. Thought had also something to do with it. It had to give it form.

But the realization, the creative impulse, many people were asked, well, how do you create? Some didn't even know how they created. They couldn't talk about it.

But then it turned out that in all cases, the creative impulse is preceded by the ability to enter the state of alert presence that is stillness in which thought comes to a halt or becomes relatively insignificant. And there is an alertness that suddenly arises. And that is the influx of the unconditioned consciousness.

Enormous intelligence can then operate, move through you. So every artist, before the creative impulse happens, enters that state, whether they know it or not, it just happens. One could say it is almost a state of listening, such alertness as if you were listening, but there's no strain in it, no tension, just relaxed alertness.

And then the insight comes or action might come out of that state of none. And this is always a state of complete alignment with now. The normal human state is out of alignment with now almost all the time.

In other words, the present moment is reduced at best to a means to an end, because I need to get to the next moment, which is a mental protection. So there's always, one could say, almost a reaching out, a strain of needing to get there. So in the meantime, you have reduced the now, which is all there ever is, to a means to an end.

And unconsciously you believe that the future is more important than now, which means you're out of alignment with now. Or in many cases, there's strong inner resistance or denial of now. You don't want this now to be the way it is, a very normal state.

And so that means there's inner denial or resistance. Again, it is a state of not being aligned with now. And that is a very fundamental dysfunction in human consciousness, to be out of alignment with ultimately what that means, you're out of alignment with life.

And that, what is life? The one life that manifests as many billions of life forms, but there is the one unmanifested life. And you're out of alignment with that.

And you walk on this planet where everything else is in alignment. This is a strange thing. If you look at nature and animals, they exist in that state of the oneness with the totality, and they are in the now.

As Jesus pointed out already, 2000 years ago, he said, look at the flowers. How do they live? And how do you live?

And he said, really, look, the difference between the way in which these flowers exist in a state of alignment with now, I'm paraphrasing the New Testament, in alignment with now, and how observe how you live out of alignment and observe how beautiful, harmonious, and peaceful the flower is. And you can watch an animal. Of course, every life form has certain limitations that are according to the form of that.

But compared to many humans, animals exist in a state of great integrity and peace, one with themselves. Not trying to be something or trying to get somewhere. So this to understand that humans have lived in that time-bound state of consciousness ever since recorded history and beyond.

And how did it all start? And why did that happen? And how is it that human consciousness has become so dysfunctional?

And if you look at human history and different centuries, you can see it almost, it looks as if it were becoming, in the 19th century, everybody believed in progress. It's getting better and better all the time, they said. They also believed that science had already almost solved all problems that we could possibly ask.

And then the 20th century came. And then they realized how little they knew. And they realized how dysfunctional the collective human mind is, the destructiveness that was unleashed upon humanity by humans on other humans on a vast scale through the madness of political movements and ideologies and unbelievable suffering caused by humans to other humans.

If you look at that, and if that is not dysfunctional, what is? And it's been, this has been the worst century of all the 20th in terms of suffering and people killed. And this is a very young century we are in now, a very young millennium.

And already, when you watch TV, it's a continuation of the 20th century. And if nothing changes in human consciousness, we'll have another 20th century, except it'll get worse because science and technology continuously increase the effects of human madness, the tools created by, through intelligence. Yes, it requires great intelligence to manufacture these things.

And very often, intelligence in the service of madness. So there is that basic dysfunction in the human mind. And it is so deep, it's becoming so obvious now that very unlikely that human, the planet would even survive another hundred years of this same dysfunction.

How could, it's become so destructive. Why is it, how did it all start? And is there a way beyond that?

I am saying there is a way beyond, a new state of consciousness is already arising, but this must not be made into some new belief. It's seeing that a new state of consciousness is already arising within you, while the old state of consciousness, perhaps or probably also is still operating within you. So the old state of consciousness, to call it, this is the dysfunctional state is continuing.

This is what you hear when you watch the news on television. It reports about human madness. But at the same time, the new is arising.

We can only hope that it is arising in sufficiently large numbers of people and quickly enough before the old consciousness self-destructs. So we need also to look at the essence of the dysfunction because if it is a dysfunction in the human mind, it must operate in each human being and it must, should be possible to locate it in oneself rather than saying the evil is all out there. It's not evil.

It's simply a form of unconsciousness. And what is that unconsciousness? At some point in the evolution of humanity, there was the beginning of thought, an incredible evolutionary leap.

The ability to conceptualize, to think, to formulate mental symbols arose. This is probably what the book of Genesis refers to when it speaks of the first humans who ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Well, suddenly the mind was able to differentiate this, this, good, bad.

The knowledge of good and evil, the knowledge of good and bad. A few hundred years ago, Shakespeare wrote in one of his plays, nothing is either good or bad, but thinking makes it so. The arising of thought was an enormous thing.

And we cannot say that it was bad. It happened because it had to happen. Whatever happens has to happen.

There is nothing that happens that is not brought about by the totality everything is a web of interconnectedness. So whatever happens cannot be otherwise. This is what humans, most humans don't know because they are against what happens.

This now, this shouldn't be, but it is. Thought arose and very quickly humans became the dominant species because of the enormous power of thought. And over a long period of time, thought began to operate more and more.

And then gradually, human sense of identity of self, of who I am became bound up with the movement of thought. An image developed in the mind of me. Humans began to have a relationship with themselves.

Nothing on the planet before ever had a relationship with itself, nor to this day. The tree doesn't have a relationship with itself. The cat doesn't have a relationship with itself.

It is itself. And since the cat doesn't have a relationship with itself, its life is, compared to human life, not without challenges, but unproblematic. It doesn't carry the heaviness of a problematic sense of self derived from continuous thought activity.

And so a cat doesn't need therapy because it hasn't split itself into two, me and myself. Because now life is becoming very complex. So humans began to walk around with a self image, a self concept.

It took a long time to develop. Whereas before, life had been so unproblematic and easy. Human life was one of many ways in which the totality expressed itself, as it still does in nature.

And then that was, one could call that the original innocence in humans. The original innocence that is still there in nature. This is why it's so beautiful to go into nature.

It's why it's so beautiful to even watch an animal, even if it kills another animal, it's still innocent. And so humans lost the original innocence that is there when you are yourself. And then a phantom self arose that walked with them wherever they went.

And its main location is in the head, one could say. Me. And so life became increasingly problematic because they lost that rootedness in being that a tree has, a flower has, an animal has.

Without knowing it, it has it. Without knowing it, it knows itself to be one with the one. So it doesn't live in that neurotic state of continuous anxiety and tension.

Just an amazing event on this planet, this arising of self, a mind-made self. And so gradually that sense of being rooted in being, being one with the one life, I don't want to use words like God, they've been misused for too long. Being rooted in being one with that.

And then gradually they lost that. They became disconnected or still were connected but didn't know it anymore. So it's as if they were disconnected from life.

So they became little entities that felt separate from the totality. They had taken themselves out of the web. Then they say me.

They say I. And when they say I, they refer to a conceptualized sense of self in the head. They refer to their name, which is only a thought form.

A thought or a sequence of sounds. John Smith. I.

Who are you? John Smith. That sounds convincing.

But is nothing means completely meaningless. It means nothing. So you have the illusion that already you know who you are.

So and then John Smith is going to tell you if you ask further, well, who are you? Beyond that, he says, well, I am a father of two and an accountant and a graduate of that university. And he may have some longer story to tell.

Divorced twice and this. And so he will give you a little story, which is the story of the self. And there are other aspects to that self which are not always on the surface.

They are certain reactive patterns in the self. There are ways in which that self interprets the universe because it's been conditioned by its culture and its environment in certain ways. It is the content of the mind.

It is the emotions that accompany those mind movements. So two together, the content, the conditioned content of the mind, because everybody gets conditioned by their surrounding culture, the world, personal level, collective world, the country you live in, the culture you're living, the time you live in. The language is itself a strong form of conditioning, your first language, the way it is spoken, what it contains.

It's already a world view. One could say it's already embodied in the language. So at an early age, all that happens.

And gradually as the child, the first, after the child utters his or her name, when she is asked, what is your name? John Smith. Then that is the easily, now other things will cling to that first concept of self, in memories, experiences, knowledge, things that the sense of self gathers around itself to make itself more complete.

And for the rest of his life, John Smith is going to look for things to absorb into his sense of self, to add to his sense of self because his sense of self is not sufficient yet, has not completed itself yet. He doesn't feel that he's really fully himself yet. There is a sense, an underlying sense of lack, of not enough, of insufficiency, of I need some more, something more.

This isn't it. And this is built into the restructure of this mind-made sense of self. It's discontent, lack, fear.

It's always there somewhere. Because ultimately, it is only a mental formation, a conceptualized me in the head. And as such, it can never feel complete.

So it's condemned to seeking to add more to me in whatever form. Hence, the need, the enormous psychological need for future because it's through future that I can find the more that will complete me, that will make myself complete. And that's a deep-seated collective mind pattern associated with the self, the sense of self that is conceptualized.

Of course, the moment you live in and through a conceptualized sense of self, this is the fate of all humans. They have to go through that. The moment that arises, your entire reality, the world with which you interact becomes a conceptualized reality.

In other words, you see it through the filter of the conditioning of the conceptualized me, the sense of self. So whatever you look upon, interact with, is immediately, according to its conditioning, the conditioned self, interpreted, judged, labeled, according to the conditioning. So that is what humans have in common.

No matter what nation, what culture they belong to, although in the more advanced countries, the dysfunction is also more advanced, that's all. But they all have the same dysfunction. The way in which things are being labeled varies enormously.

If you were from a different culture, Arabic culture, and you walked around Stockholm, you would label things in a different way. The things that you call good and bad would be different. And when you go there, what you call good and bad there would be different from what the locals call good and bad.

Very different. But of course, each person is so identified with the mind-made self and its mental positions and labels, it's almost impossible to step out of identification. Identification means deriving your sense of self from the mental positions, and see that other mental positions are just different mental positions.

To see that one's own conditioning and mental position is no more than that, and does not contain the truth, it is an aspect, at best, an aspect of the truth, an aspect of the totality. In other words, all thought, all mental positions are fragments, fragmentary, relatively true, perhaps. They cannot contain the totality.

So humans don't know this. There's total identification with mind movement, with a mind-created self. And so, then there are the others, which have their form of conditioning are totally identified with that.

And they need each other to enhance their always insufficient sense of self. So this is why humans love to have enemies and make enemies, especially groups, but even individuals do it, unconsciously, of course. The groups that have their group identity, which is a conceptualized story which they're telling themselves, including patterns of reaction and behavior and thinking, these groups have a strong need to have other groups that are their enemies, because through fighting and being in opposition to others, they strengthen their illusory sense of self.

So the boundary around me, the more enemies I have, the stronger this boundary, which is mind-created around me, becomes. And the stronger the sense of separateness, which is the boundary, the stronger the illusion of self, of me, whether that self is a predominantly personal sense of self, or whether that self is a predominantly collective sense of self, which is our tribe, our religion, our nation, our group, doesn't matter. It's the same principle as at work.

It is a conceptualized identity. And the conceptualized identity is looking, is looking for problems and conflict, because it needs that to, so that this mental structure can define itself. Me, not me.

Me ends here, and there's the rest of the world. And some of the rest of the world I can actually use to make me a little bit bigger, so I'm reaching out to looking for things, new things to add to the content of my mind, to identify with, to make the self more complete. So everybody's looking out for self-completion to add more to me, because I end here.

And then other things in the world, the not-me world, are threatening, because there are many things out in this world that might take away things from me. So I'm, the world is also a dangerous place and a promising place at the same time. I fear the world, and I desire, I want amazing state of consciousness.

So whether on a collective or the personal, there's this great need to complete me through adding more content, mental, because even if you want to acquire more possessions in order to feel a little bit more secure in who you are, in order to feel a little bit bigger, because now you have a big car and a big house, and so your sense of self can expand into the car. The car, not really the car, but the thought form of car. The car itself is quite meaningless, because it's metal, and in a few years it'll be reduced to rust.

So it's not the car, but it is the thought form of car, if it's a big one, the thought form of car that the self, you identify with the thought form. So that is then added to the collection of thought forms that is me, and for a little while, the me feels just grown. I'm getting somewhere, because I've added that to me.

And then it won't be long before the thought form no longer really fulfills its purpose of completing me, and again, it's not quite enough, this car. And then comes maybe the house, and again, for a while it feels, the house, it's not the house, it's not the fact that you own the house. The whole idea of ownership is a fiction.

It's to do with a fictitious sense of self. What does it mean, I own this? You're telling yourself a story in your head about this house, and that story says, it is me.

I own this house, it is mine. It means nothing. If you were insane, and you said, I own half the city of Stockholm, and if you were insane, you could go around to the city telling this to people, and say, okay, you better go for treatment.

You're insane because nobody agrees with you. If you say, I own this huge building, and nobody agrees with you, then you're insane. If you say, I own this building, and everybody else agrees with you, and they sign a paper to confirm that they agree with you, then you own it.

In either case, it's a story. The only difference is, it's a story that nobody agrees with, in which case you're insane, or it's a story with which everybody agrees, then you're wealthy. But it's a story.

It's part of this, so ownership is part of the story of me. And of course, it loves that, it loves to own, and then, that's, of course, you can, no matter how much you add on that level of thought forms, the thought form of ownership, it's not ever really be enough. So then you have to go on to other things, to add more, to complete me, other people's opinion of me.

This is a little bit less tangible than heavy material things. So that becomes an important thought form if other people think that you are great, you are very important, and then the conceptualized self is always looking out for, to get that recognition. Please, thank you.

You are so great, ah, thank you. Or it might say, oh no, I'm not really great, but it thinks, oh, it feels so good. And then perhaps the entire, you might even, some people amass great wealth on that level, the wealth of thought forms that you are very important, you might become important in the eyes of the world.

And so, then the self certainly feels expanded. They might even build, they don't do that so much anymore these days, a big monument of me before you die. And then that thought forms, surely I must have made it now.

But no, you wake up in the middle of the night with a state of fear. It's not it, and you might even at that point look through the delusion and see what the world has built up around you is a fiction. What the newspapers are saying about you and the glossy pictures about you in case you are, let's say, a famous actor or actress.

And then you suddenly see, this is just a big, all this like a, there's nothing real here. They're talking about some illusory entity. They've created this illusory entity which has nothing to do with me.

And so at that point, perhaps you step beyond when so much has been added to you and you haven't arrived at that sense of having made it. And then at that point, you might begin to go beyond that. And this is usually the point where the spiritual life begins for people.

It's the realization that I cannot complete me on that level. I've tried. And okay, so everybody in a way has tried and failed on that level before the spiritual dimension opens up or before the spiritual search begins.

You must have failed somehow. Of course, everybody fails, except they delude themselves that it can still work out. But on the level of story, on the level of the conceptualized self, it cannot work out because it is in the very structure of that mind-made sense of self that it lives predominantly in a state of discontent and not enough and conflict and problems.

It is part of the structure, not the content. The form that this takes, discontent, not enough, problems, conflict, varies from person to person, from culture to culture. So that's the content.

But it is not the causal factor. It's the structure of a mind-made self which is condemned to continuous, to not making it. And only in movies do they make it.

In novels, but even novels, only in the bad ones, the bad ones have a happy ending and they lived happily ever after. That doesn't happen because the stories after the wedding continues. After the honeymoon, it goes on.

And then the person who was meant to complete you, make you happy, fulfill me, complete me for the rest of my life, fails to live up to that expectation. He or she isn't doing it. You're supposed to completely make me complete, happy.

Fulfill. In many ads you read, looking for man or woman to make me happy. Who could live up to that?

So really, you're looking to the world to complete you which is really the world then becomes translated into thought forms. But it cannot do that. So that's an amazing realization.

The moment you realize that, the spiritual life opens up, but what then happens, you walk into the spiritual, the world of spirituality and not knowing that you're still carrying the same mind structures into your spiritual seeking. At first it looks great. There's some wonderful, new, interesting ideas and you change your view of things.

In some cases, you suddenly believe in God. But not for everybody these days is spiritually equated with belief in God. Of course, spiritual is much vaster.

Or you might believe in certain new things, reincarnation. You suddenly find out about your past lives. And those things are usually called beginning your spiritual life.

And in a way it is. But what happens most of the time is that deeply conditioned mind structure of a self that is needing to complete itself, that goes then into, moves into spiritual seeking. And if you look, very often you find that deep down, I am still looking for that which completes me.

And I'm still looking to the future because it's not here now. So I'm looking to the future for that which will complete me. In other words, I'm looking for myself in the future.

Again, which is the essence of the mind-made self, which always is looking for an improved, bigger, greater version of itself in the future. So you might look for enlightenment. And to add that, surely then this is, then I will complete myself.

Of course, it's true. There is a, the purpose of your life would complete itself if that transformation of consciousness that is sometimes called awakening or enlightenment happens in you, yes. But you're looking for that as a future attainment.

And so the conceptualized me is still seeking an improved version of itself. So this is a collective conditioning that may still operate in the spiritual seeker. And it's good to see that because inevitably, after some time of seeking, for the ultimate, frustration sets in.

So many workshops. So many books, retreats, and meditation techniques. Why is it that I still haven't arrived?

And the self-talk then continues. Shouldn't I be now have arrived? Maybe that whole thing is a complete illusion.

What then? And some people then arrive at that. They, after 20 years, say, oh, this is all nonsense.

I've tried it all, and I can, let me tell you, it doesn't work. Just go back to your normal life and watch TV, drink beer. I'm not saying it, they would say that to you.

So you get disillusionment with some, and some continue to look, and some find something, maybe an experience, but an experience comes and goes, and then you remember this great experience you had. I want that back. I had it once.

And then you can base the rest, an identity around that, of somebody who had this great experience once. You can tell others about it. And after a while of being, after a while, you get entrenched in that image of somebody who had a great experience.

You don't want any other experience because that sense of self can become so entrenched. You don't know it. That's what you now want.

You don't want to go beyond because it feels you're so identified with it. You're so identified with that thought form. It has a momentum to it.

And so you get stuck in that. You might write a book about it. So that's a strange thing that the spiritual seeker, when you become a spiritual seeker, you do not immediately become free of the conditioning of your mind.

And it continues to operate. And so this, we need to see and recognize, oh yeah, because ultimately it means that there's a belief, the unconscious or conscious belief that through future, you will find yourself. Which is true on the level of everyday existence that through future, you can attain things on the level of your personal everyday existence where you, through future, you can save enough money to buy a house.

Through future, you can learn to become good at playing this instrument. Through future, you can acquire new knowledge, learn a language, become a physicist, get a degree at university. For all these things, future, of course, is needed.

But this is not what we are talking about. This is using future. We needed future to meet here because it was prearranged.

We said at a certain date, at a certain time, we are going to meet here. We need future. So you can add things to yourself on the level of doing, on the level of acquiring knowledge through future.

And that in itself is not, never a problem. You do it or you don't do it, or you add things to yourself and then you lose them again. You become the greatest mathematician or physicist after years of study, which is fine.

If your sense, if it's not a story in the head, if your sense of self isn't in it, it is simply a very enjoyable activity. If your sense, if the activities in the service of self, of seeking an enhanced version of self, then it becomes heavy. It becomes problematic.

It becomes conflict-ridden. So we're, nothing wrong with learning new things, even making money, but looking for yourself through that doesn't seem to work. So looking to the future for myself, even the spiritual seeker does that.

A greater me. The story finally reaches its climax and its happy ending. So there is a projection of a future state to be achieved, which is a mind form, me, the one who is enlightened.

And the same operates. How do we get out of, if that is an illusion, and if you cannot find yourself there, where are you? Who are you?

How do you step out of that illusion? You have to step out of time because all the thought forms, the conceptualized sense of self operates through past and future. The past gives you your identity, your insufficient identity, your insufficient sense of self, sometimes great sense of self.

If something has just been added, then it looks, I've made it, and then again becomes insufficient. So the past gives you your insufficient sense of self. The future promises completion of the insufficient sense of self.

The future promises you yourself. What is continuously missed when you live in and through a conceptualized sense of self is now because the conceptualized sense of self can't do much with now. It's not interested in now.

It's only interested in past, which gives it its identity, and it's interested in future, which is going to complete it. In the meantime, the now is regarded, more often than not, most of the time, as an obstacle to my self-completion. Isn't that amazing?

The now, the only thing there ever is, the only place where life ever can be, is regarded as an obstacle to finding myself, ultimately. This is why I need to make the now into a means to an end. I'm just trying to get, don't, I'm trying to get there.

There was a man practicing Buddhist metta meditation. I love this house. Love spreads out to the entire universe.

I love this person. I love this body. I love this house.

I love this city. I love this country. And the little, his little daughter comes in and opens the door and he shouts, oh, for God's sake, can't you leave me?

Can't you leave me alone? Can't you see I'm doing my metta meditation? He's trying to get somewhere.

He's trying to become a good meditator. He's trying to become a totally loving being. This is serious business.

So the amazing thing then, in that humans have made, the delusion, the dysfunction is to believe that now is an obstacle to finding myself. Of course, yes, it does appear to be quite often because the now seems to limit you quite often. What happens in this field of now very often is some kind of limitation.

Here I am sitting on this bus, but I'm meant, my destiny must be much greater than sitting on this bus. And I'm still sitting on this bus, and I know I'm meant for much greater things. Or in this little room, or wherever you are.

Here I am in this job. This can't be it. This is all wrong.

It doesn't fit into the story of, the now seems to conflict with the story of me, the way it should unfold. There's something wrong here. I need to get away from this now as quickly as possible.

Okay. And there comes the future, the projection of future, and a conceptualized self in the future. And so you leave the now, and you can see when people leave the now, they lose a liveness, a veil descends, and they're gone.

And most people on our planet are gone a lot of the time because they don't even see you. They see their thoughts. At best, they see you through their thoughts.

And you know that their thoughts are labeling you, and they're labeling you according to their conditioning. And they're trying to find out if you can complete, make them feel bigger, complete their sense of self, or whether you are a threat to their sense of self. They have to work this out quickly.

Every time you meet somebody, you have to figure out, can I use him or her to add to me, or is he or she threatening me? Of course, when you look at it, you can see it. It is a form of, yes, madness, but it's normal.

So normal these days equates with mad. That's how it is. That's how the mind operates.

So the amazing thing is to see, on the one hand, time seems to be such a strange thing and seems to be all pervasive and everywhere. Time, you can't get out of it. It's like sitting on an express train, and it pulls you along.

You can't get out of time. It never stops. Whatever any experience is fleeting, it comes, and it's gone.

Even us sitting here, very soon, it'll be past. Before you came here, it was future. This is very strange.

Before you came here, this gathering was in the future. Perhaps you thought about it. It had no reality except as a thought form.

Then it actually, here it is, the immediacy of it. And then, before you know it, it's gone because the express train never stops, and it's past, you remember it. But the memory, again, is only a thought form, and the only place where you can remember the past is now.

And the only place where you can project the future before you came here, that was now, because nothing can happen or be that is not now. So we have the strange paradox that, on the one hand, time seems to govern everything. Very strange thing, time.

I visited some people at Christmas that I hadn't seen in many, many years, and when I first saw them, for a second or two, it looked as if they had some dreadful illness. But then I realized, my God, time that did that to you. A shock, because all I could remember of these people was the photos taken 25 years ago.

Very cruel, time must be. So I don't know who, there was a poet, I believe, who compared time to a fire that consumes us all, and we are in the middle of it. Not a bad analogy, because what fire leaves behind is ashes, and of course, very soon, all of us will be that.

The physical forms will have been consumed by time. Another analogy has been given of time devours you. So it's, on the one hand, you have this paradox, it seems so real, and it does that.

It seems to do that to you, but on the other hand, past, because time means past and future, it means that movement from, on the other hand, it doesn't really exist. Where is it? It's always, life is always now.

It's always now, never not now. So where is time? It seems so real.

Of course, it's in the human mind, as the memory of past, the projection of future, and then, how can it do this to our bodies? If time is not ultimately real, then maybe the body isn't ultimately real. And I will leave it at that, because this is not philosophy.

Let's put this aside. Simply to see that how vital now is, and if now, if you regard it as an obstacle to where you want to get with your conceptualized sense of self, you miss the most vital, the only real thing there is, which is now. So many people have the feeling that one day soon, their life is going to start, not quite started yet.

Stepping out of the conceptualized sense of self, which depends for its survival on past and future, on continuously dwelling in past and future mentally, that keeps the mind-made self going. The self that the Buddha perhaps was the first, I don't know who recognized 2,600 years ago, the central recognition, realization of the Buddha was that the self is an illusion. That was the central core of the teaching.

Wow, and that was, that long ago, he recognized that when human madness wasn't even quite as mad yet as it is now, it was already mad, but not yet not this mad. And he saw it then. And he saw that as long as you're trapped in that illusion, you're going to suffer.

The illusion and the suffering go together. So not knowing who you are beyond the mind-made sense of self is very frustrating. You never may quite make it.

And even the spiritual seeker is seeking through future. If a spiritual seeker could stop being a seeker and simply acknowledge, honor, and say yes to now as the primordial spiritual practice, one must align oneself internally with the isness, the suchness of this moment. The only place where life ever unfolds is in the space of now.

So the simple bringing a yes to what is internally instead of no. No matter what form this moment takes because that changes continuously. Now you're here, very soon you'll be elsewhere.

So the form of now shifts again. But the strange thing is wherever you go, it's now. Any time you look at your watch, you may say it's such and such a time, but it's even more true that it's now.

Whenever you look at your watch, it must be now. This is even more true than whatever time it is or date it is. So a strange thing happens when you cooperate with the isness of now internally, welcome it, no matter what form it takes.

The form that the now takes creates the delusion that there are many different moments in your life in every day, in every hour, because the form changes so quickly, so often. But it's not true that there are many different moments. There's always this one now moment.

The form changes. The space of now remains now. Here we come to the essence.

I said the space of now, when your attention moves into now, there's the form it takes. Here it's this room, the voice, the lights, space. Your attention, you acknowledge this.

And suddenly you become aware of, words can only point to this. I could say you become aware of the now directly as a field that underlies whatever happens or a space that is always around whatever happens, a vast space that is the space of now. In it, things come and go.

So you can actually sense the underlying field in which everything happens. That means you've become still but alert. Because you cannot sense that unless you are still and alert.

And then you can suddenly know the now beyond that which is happening in it, which may be good or bad, changes. That is the depth. And now you are aligning yourself with the power that lies hidden in the now.

Which is one with the one power there is. And really it means you're aligning yourself with yourself. There's a depth that arises through the simple act of allowing this now to be.

Through that simple act, you go beyond the form that this now takes, which may look as if it limited you. And suddenly there's a depth within yourself. Before there was only a reactive little me.

Yeah, I don't like this, I want to get away from this now. And suddenly, through the yes to what is, there is this deep space which is so much deeper than anything that is happening in it. This is only a little pointer.

So you're becoming aware of the space of now through allowing the form of now. If you only react to the form of now, you remain trapped in a form identity which is the thought form of me, which is reactive. It strengthens itself through reactivity.

So as you continue to react to the form of now, you strengthen the self. If you allow the form that this now takes, then who you are beyond the self, the conditioned, arises as a deep stillness, aliveness, intelligence beyond noise, silent intelligence. So this cannot, who you are beyond form, obviously you cannot encapsulate that in a concept.

You are then, in Buddhist terminology, free of self, the illusion of self. Or you can use other terminology, Indian teachings. You have found the self as yourself, not the little mind made self, the one self, the essence of your being.

The Buddhist teaching is less likely to become a concept because it denies what you are not. And what or who you are emerges by itself. So there's, and that arises through the allowing.

And another, what goes with that realization is the mind is not very important in this. Thought doesn't get you there. The realization comes when thought makes room for presence.

And people ask, well, I can't, how do I stop my mind? It won't stop. A very quick way is simply to become friends with now.

Because a lot of that compulsive mind activity, most of it is to do with how you try to figure out how you can get away from now and create something better. Not that you cannot create anything better externally, but not through self, not as to find yourself. Playing with the phenomenal world is fine.

Self-seeking in that is frustrating. So the simple, for the spiritual seeker, the practice is simply not to seek in the future anymore. Bring the seeking into now.

And you might ask, how can I seek in the now? Doesn't seeking imply future? Where is it, where, where am I?

Seeking, doesn't it mean you're looking somewhere else? Well, there's an intensity to seeking. And that intensity can move into now.

You bring that intensity so it's not seeking for something, but bring that intensity that is behind the seeking into now, which is the, face the now with that intensity, that alertness. And whatever appears in it, you meet the now, so to speak. Ultimately, this is all language, it's never quite right.

But ultimately, you are the now, but don't tell anybody. You face the now fully, completely. What happens?

Now, more often than, a challenge comes into the space of now, as a difficult person or difficult situation, there it is, a turbulent moment of a person with a pain body attack coming at you, saying, you did that, or why don't you, you should have. And usually, you would go into the self would play out its conditioning, and it would react in the normal, predictable, old way of defense mechanisms come up, you shout back, or you hit him, if you're very unconscious. The normal, the thing that you can observe in people's lives, in personal interactions, after you know a person for a while, you can predict how they're going to react.

In relationships, that is being played out in most relationships, almost word by word, once a week, once every two weeks, action, reaction, pressing a button, defense mechanism, shouting, blaming, justifying, you, no, not you, me, you, you did that, and so on. It's all easily predicted, once you know a person, you can say anything, and you know how they're going to react. And so, because every reaction implies they are fighting this moment, they are fighting the form that this moment takes.

And if you happen to be in the space of this moment, they are fighting you. If it's a traffic light, they are fighting that moment, the situation, it shouldn't be happening. And there's a dialogue that goes with it in the head.

And so you realize the fundamental fact that whatever happens cannot be otherwise, because it's one with the totality, everything is totally connected. If it happens, it not only cannot, it cannot be otherwise, it is the right thing for this moment. So you get, you're taking responsibility for your life.

People think it's about getting the right pension plan and life insurance and save enough money and do everything. That's all peripheral, you can do or not do that. But the true meaning of taking responsibility for your life is to take responsibility for the one place where life is, which is now.

Not a conceptualized version of my life, which is a story. That's secondary, what you do or don't do there. You won't do the right thing anyway for the story.

But if you're now taking responsibility for life is then taking responsibility for this moment. What does that mean? One could say new age teachings may tell you this is happening because you manifested it.

There's some truth in that. I'm not saying that it's too extreme. Some people in this room might disagree with it.

I avoid saying things that anybody can disagree with. So I'm not telling you that you manifested it or that it has some truth in it. But to simply see that the inevitability of is, it already is.

This moment is as it is already. And it is one with the totality. And the little me says, this isn't what I wanted.

And it even gets angry if a new age teacher tells you you manifested it. He says, I resent that statement. How dare you say that?

I know very well that I didn't manifest this dreadful situation. So, no, you may be right. But the fact remains, this moment is as it is.

Is it possible to argue with that? No, it is as it is. To recognize is and align yourself with what is.

Yes. Say yes to this. And you'll be amazed if you meet what is in that state of yes, you meet it, whatever form this moment takes, the isness of this moment, you'll meet it in, there's a field of intelligence, of a current of aware presence with which you meet this situation and now.

All that is necessary is to give full attention to the challenge of this moment. It's so, very often it is challenging. That's what life is all about.

The world isn't here to make you happy, but to make you conscious. So you meet the challenge of now with a yes and then there's a flow of aware presence with which you look at this challenge, this moment, this situation. And in that, the conditioned mind is not operating because there is awareness there, aware presence.

Not the old thought forms are not operating. The old thought forms need to deny what is, need to try and get away from it. And the intelligence of the old thought forms is very limited.

It's no intelligence at all really, or very limited intelligence. So an enormous intelligence comes into play when you meet the now. The portal is open, you're not resisting it.

And through the non-resistance, this, what one could say, a current of awareness, which is intelligence itself, meets the form of now. And then if action is possible or necessary, action happens. If action is unnecessary or impossible, no action happens.

There's simply, the complete acceptance remains, no action is possible at this moment, that's it. You might be in prison. You tried cutting through the bars, it didn't work.

You tried other ways of breaking out, it didn't work. So you say, okay, at this moment, no action seems possible. And there you sit on a chair or on the floor, walls, ceiling, floor, stomach not full, body feeling cold.

This moment is as it is. And suddenly, a peace arises. And the mind cannot understand it.

Why can't I be peaceful in this dreadful place? But it's, where does it come from? It comes from because you aligned yourself with now, completely.

And then, if action is possible, it will arise. Perhaps suddenly somebody opens the door, and you're able to run out, unlikely, but possible. Or they let you free.

I received, sometimes I receive letters from prison, people who enter that they say, my life has changed totally, but I'm still in the same place. And I'm teaching others, they write, there are little groups in prison of people who are entering that state of presence, and they're using their situation as a teacher. The now, this is because the now teaches you to enter the surrendered state of consciousness, which is a state of alignment.

And one person wrote to me two years ago from prison, and said, I have to do another nine years here, and it's fine. And two years later, he was out. He wasn't even up for parole for another five years.

I don't know how it happened. The strange thing is, when you meet the now, in a state of alignment, which is the surrendered state of consciousness, intelligence comes into operation that is far greater than what you could plan through the conscious mind. Sometimes it comes as spontaneous action through you, and people have found it occasionally, accidentally, in very dangerous situations.

It sometimes happens that the conditioned mind makes room for a greater intelligence and suddenly takes over, and you do just the one right thing, and you didn't know how you did it, and there was no decision-making involved. It just happened. And then the old mind comes back, and then the reporters come and say, how could you have done such a wonderful thing?

You're a hero. And they say, I don't know. It just happened.

I did it. Don't know how or why. And so an intelligence comes into play because you are aligned with the totality that can also act upon that situation externally.

Suddenly, something comes in to resolve that situation. And so this comes in the form of coincidences, synchronistic events. The more you're aligned with now, the more you will find in your life happening coincidences, synchronistic events that suddenly come in, and you didn't know, wow, this is incredible.

How could this have? I didn't do it. It just happened.

And at other times, it may come through you as a realization which becomes a thought. This is where thought can be very helpful. When you are aligned with the greater intelligence, then thought can sometimes come in and give form to a realization.

Oh, and then suddenly you speak it. You say it. Or it may come as spontaneous action with no thought.

This is the simple way of everything. After that shift has happened of aligning yourself with now, you are being lived, not... And that is the, you no longer feel that I have to make a living and somehow get my life right.

All you need to get right and take responsibility for is this moment. So how do you, let's recapitulate. How do you take responsibility for this moment?

You take responsibility for this moment by getting it right. How do you get it right? What does that mean?

By recognizing the rightness of it already. You recognize it is already right, even if the mind says this is dreadful and there are many situations that you may go into in this world that the mind would call dreadful. And yet what you cannot argue with is that this is as it is.

So people have this realization in the seemingly most unacceptable situation where you would say, how can you expect this person to practice what you are saying in that situation? That situation is totally unacceptable and people have done it whose body could no longer function, couldn't move any limbs anymore. They entered that state and it happened.

People in prison camps have reported, some of them entered that state of complete alignment and the shift happened, enormous peace. And in many cases, the seemingly dreadful situations, a healing factor or a redemptive factor comes in, particularly in situations that the mind would have judged as dreadful or totally unacceptable. Of those situations, there may be many in this world because this world is a manifestation of the human mind, the world that we have created.

So it's not surprising that when you move about this world, you encounter many dreadful situations because the human mind is very dysfunctional, of course. So the healing and redemptive factor comes in through recognizing nevertheless that this moment cannot be otherwise because it already is. And that becomes the basis for change.

And instead of the little me fighting and saying, I'm going to show the world that I can do, show God I can do a much better job than he can, he should have resigned long ago. Or you project some image that this authority figure has failed completely. God, how can God allow this if he, all concepts, just this.

So that is the primordial practice. That's also the end of being a spiritual seeker. Oh, what a pity.

You could have a nice romantic image in your head about the spiritual seeker who hasn't quite arrived yet, but one day will arrive. Or the miserable seeker who's desperately seeking and very unhappy. All kinds of stories you can tell yourself in your head about me, my life, my...

So it's the shift of attention from being in thought to being in now. That is the awakening. The awakening is the awakening out of identification with thought, with mind forms, with a stream of mental noise.

You awaken out of that into presence, into now. So it's like it's the awakening from a dream. Very much, this is why for a long time in spiritual teachings, Eastern and also Western, the term awakening is used because it's very much like waking up out of a dream.

And even Jesus used many parables that are to do with staying awake, awake, wakeful, the state of wakefulness. The strange thing is that Jesus' teachings exist, we only really have it in fragments. There are fragments of a very deep teaching, greatly misunderstood, but it has great depth if you see it.

Now, if humanity were not ready for this shift in consciousness, these words would be meaningless to say you can, accept this moment as if you had chosen it. Remember, I'm not saying you chose it, but you can accept it as if you had chosen it because you recognize the inevitability of is. That must be sanity.

And so, many humans are now ready for this shift. And this gathering is part of that transformation. It's not so much that the transformation is going to happen on the planet, all I know that it is happening here and now.

It looks like a person speaking and some people listening on the surface level, but there's a greater depth to it. It is a collective event. This event, this is part of the transformation of human consciousness.

And it's much more significant than it looks on the surface, because on the surface, only a few people in a room listening to a speaker. Probably won't be on Swedish news tonight, not yet. So if you were not ready, it would all be meaningless.

I would be talking to an empty room and saying, surrender to this moment, become aligned with now, and there's nobody there. That would mean humans are not ready yet. They can't hear it.

If you can hear it, it means you're ready, because some people ask me, well, isn't it only after you've become liberated, then you can accept the now? So they say, aren't you telling us something that only after liberation we can practice? It's a good point.

But the truth is that you are already in the middle of the liberation. That's why you can hear it. This is, and even if you cannot yet dwell in that state continuously, it is emerging through this form.

How else could you have sat here for so long without running out of the room or falling asleep? So that's the good news, with all the bad news that we hear when we listen to the media. And there's no need even for you to believe in anything, that it's happening, it's living it.

And even if you live it five minutes a day, five minutes of alignment with now. Wow. That's more than some humans do in a lifetime.

So let's honor this beautiful, deep, good now. It always is good deep down. Surface, good, bad, good, bad.

Deep down, there is an inherent goodness to now. So there's no need to believe in that. You can easily see, find that for yourself.

Thank you. As you know, this gathering is part of the transformation of consciousness that is happening. The essence of that transformation, one could put it this way, is that thinking becomes secondary in your life.

It is no longer running your life, dominating your life. You are no longer run by thought. For a long time, thinking has been primary.

So we are here not to add to thought, but to enter that realm that is beyond thought and to dwell in that dimension that is free of thought. And from there, be able to use thought. Unproblematically, and even in a very powerful way, because thought has certain power.

But before you can have full access to that power, almost paradoxically, one could say, you need to have gone beyond thought. So we are here to allow that dimension in yourself in which you are fully conscious and yet no conceptualization, mental labeling is taking place. That is the essence of being fully awake.

We are allowing that to arise here in during these three hours, strange, three hours time, to enter that state of consciousness that ultimately is beyond time because thought is bound up with time. All time is in the mind. Thought and time go together.

There's nothing wrong with it. In this dimension here, you need that. But not getting lost in it, finding that deeper dimension in yourself.

And the strange thing is, there isn't all that much that you need to understand about that state that is free of thought because needing to understand more about that state is thought attempting to grasp that which by its very essence is beyond thought. And so thought might say, I don't quite fully understand yet what you mean by free of thought. Can you define a little bit further?

Now, the essence of our being together here one could say is, although I want to avoid two esoteric sounding words, it is a kind of, with reservations, I use that word, it is a kind of transmission of a state of consciousness, not coming from a person because that state of consciousness is beyond person and all personal selfhood is thought-based. So that state transmits itself only, of course, if there is a readiness. Otherwise, it would not reach you.

The veil of thought would be too dense and the transmission of that state that is free of thought would not reach that dimension in yourself that is also free of thought because of the density or one could say the noise of the veil of thinking. And then you would sit here and think he isn't really saying very much. It's not enough.

To fill me, to add more to me. So to be attentive to the transmission and it doesn't go one way, something in you responds to presence because that is the presence in you. Presence is the word I sometimes use to describe the state of consciousness that is free of thought.

And that comes forward here. So what that simply means in simple terms, what is all that is needed here for you is to not believe that the essence of this intensive is in the words. One could say the essence of this intensive is in the space in between the words.

One could even say the essence of this intensive is in the stillness that arises here in this room and within yourself. Stillness being one way of one perspective on that state is, yes, it is a state of stillness. Cessation of mental noise.

That is the awakened state. That is where the conditioned does not operate. It is the arising of the unconditioned.

There is something else in you that does not want to be here. There's a momentum to the conditioned self and to thought itself that feels uncomfortable with this because it is threatening the primacy, the dominance of thought. And that may rise up as a wave in yourself of thinking that takes you away from here completely.

It can also rise up as a restlessness. And when that happens, all that's needed is to be aware of that. Don't expect anything.

Don't expect the state that is free of thought to be there as your predominant state. It's arising and it tends to arise briefly then become obscured again by thought. Then it arises again.

Obscured again. So it's a shifting back and forth for quite a while. But as this happens, already a change is taking place in what one could call the way in which thought operates in you.

One could say your relationship with thought is changing already because even as thought arises, you can recognize thought as thought and not totally believe in every thought that arises. Totally be identified with the perspective that is implied in a thought. Every thought is some kind of judgment, some kind of labeling.

It implies a perspective. No thought contains all perspectives and it's conditioned. So you're no longer totally in the stream of thinking, but you can be there and see that stream very often.

Maybe there is in the background an awareness. And then the same thought that before made you unhappy periodically, a thought about me and my life situation, a thought about me and there's something to do with me, some judgment, the same thought arises. Perhaps it says, you see, you have failed again.

You see, there's no point in all of this. You can't do it. This is just one of many possible thoughts.

Or the thought may arise, if only they would let me do things, because I'm so much better than everybody else. And you don't completely believe in that because you also notice when these thoughts arise and you completely believe in these thoughts, you can notice what that feels like, the emotion that accompanies the thought that you are not good enough or not worthy, or that you are so good, if only others could see it and you can watch the emotion that arises when you completely believe in a thought. And more often than not, it's some form of pain that arises when you totally believe in each arising thought.

So one day, your life may look very dark and bleak because a certain stream of thinking arises that habitually comes up. It may be connected to pain body, which we will look at. So one day, your entire life looks totally bleak and all your thought processes are negative.

And if you completely believe in each thought that arises, then that will feel dreadful. So, you know the two masks they have in theaters, comedy, one day, good thoughts, and then tragedy, mouth goes down, drama, bad thoughts, and totally in that. And one could say behind that, there actually can be a presence that watches both kinds of thought without totally believing.

You see it for what it is, conditioned thinking. And then quite quickly, thought loses its power to make you unhappy. Why?

Because if you look at arising unhappiness, how closely it is linked to certain thought processes in your head, not really to the situation, but to the way in which you interpret the situation through thought. And the way in which you interpret the situation through thought, of course, is to do with the conditioning of your mind. And so, this is a wonderful, thought is no longer, can no longer make you unhappy.

You see the relativity of thought, and you see how repetitive many of the thoughts are that go through your mind. How often they have done exactly the same, made you unhappy. The same thoughts in some people for years, year after year after year, the same thought patterns arise periodically, sometimes every day.

And they totally believe in it. They don't know that, for example, this thought may be there because that is, my mother told me that when I was four, five, six, seven, 10 years old, she would say certain things, just one of the ways in which certain thought patterns become conditioned thinking. And so, you might have noticed, parents who are not very intelligent tell their children that they are stupid.

They cannot see that children don't have the same maturity as adults. They say, you're stupid, you're stupid. After a few years, of course, you get conditioned into believing that there's something not quite right with you, and basically you are stupid.

You are stupid. And it's not always on the surface, but it comes up periodically in some way or another. This is only one of many possible ways in which society tells you who you are, and this goes conditioned thinking.

The world tells you who you are. School environment, social environment. Or you could rebel against that.

Which is also conditioned. You don't conform to anything anymore. You do the opposite of what your parents expect you to do.

And that can make you unhappy, too. And you're not free. You are forced to go into another form of conditioning.

So to be there as the witness of the conditioning that is taking place continuously, the conditioned thinking, thought processes. And then they don't make you unhappy anymore. They are recognized as conditioned thinking.

The old record, it used to be called record. Now it's the old CD, with better sound quality, but basically still the same. It's playing again.

There it is. And that's an amazing thing. If thought loses its power to make you unhappy, then you realize your unhappiness, how closely it is linked with being identified with the mind, the thinking mind, the stream of thinking.

It's not in the situation. I mentioned last night, Shakespeare. Nothing is either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.

And most people react to a situation in their lives, anything that arises in the now. They react out of the conditioned thought patterns. And they confuse totally.

They mix up the situation and their reaction to the situation, which is conditioned thinking. So they might say something like, something absolutely dreadful has happened to me today. It's just this awful thing came, and this awful person came, and he was so rude, and you're telling a story, you're mixing up the simple event and your own interpretation and reaction to the event.

They become a single phenomenon. You can't see that here is, all events are neutral in the now. The way in which I react, or the way in which I interpret the event is the conditioning of my mind.

And in very unconscious people, the two get totally confused. So the event and their reaction become one single phenomenon. And you say something awful has happened.

The awful is my reaction. The event is as it is, always. This is just a simple example.

So to see how the conditioning colors everything, what an amazing thing to become free of that, to see how little freedom otherwise there is in a human being. If that unconditioned dimension does not arise, you live as if somebody had placed a script in your mind, and now you're identified with a script in your mind and for the rest of your life, forced to act out the script in your mind, like an actor on stage who has completely forgotten that he's acting out a script. So identified with a role that he or she doesn't know who he or she is anymore.

Beyond the role. So that's the conceptualized self with its conditioning that we pointed to yesterday. That is the essence of not knowing who you are.

And that's why, and then you're trying to fill yourself up by adding more. It doesn't work. So this is freedom arises now, the possibility of freedom arises here and now as we allow that dimension to arise that is unconditioned.

And then honor, yes, you still honor the forms of your life, the roles that you play in relation to society. You play certain roles. They come to an end eventually.

You play the role of mother, you honor that. If you're totally identified with your sense of self and you are only a mother, and those kinds of mothers can be too much. And you can never let go of your role of mother.

And then your children become adults and you want to continue to protect them. But of course, there's an English word, smothering, which is to stifle. Then that's what you do.

You cannot free, you're so identified with the role, you cannot allow it to come to an end. And so we all know mothers, this is just one example, who cannot relinquish, let go of their role. So when you are 30 and 40 and 50, your mother still totally acts out that role towards you.

You're a little child. You don't know what's best for you. I know what's best for you because you're only a little child.

I'm your mother. I know. And they have wonderful intentions.

They don't, so this is only one tiny example of being trapped in a role and being identified with certain thought forms with their respective reactive patterns. And there's so much suffering created by humans for each other because they cannot, they cannot recognize that they are trapped in a role. And then the adult child whom the mother does not want to grow up remains a child in the eyes of the mother, reacts against it, feels stifled, feels angry, doesn't realize that the mother is only trapped in a role, and then mistakes the role that the mother is trapped in for who she is.

And then they hate each other. And so, and then the possibility arises to honor the role that you play temporarily as mother, that usually that comes to an end when the child reaches adulthood and throughout the child's life, you realize that mother is a temporary function which is honored and is a way of relating. But not exclusively, there is another dimension where whatever role you play and honor, while you play and honor that role, there is another dimension in you that also flows into which is beyond the role.

And that would, for example, if you are a mother, you would relate to your child, not exclusively through the role model, but another, an unconditioned intelligence would come in that relates to the child, not as a child, because even child is a temporary role. You're not reducing yourself or the other person to a role because inside a child, there is great intelligence already. So although you treat that on the one level, you are the mother relating to the child, on a deeper level, you are consciousness relating to consciousness.

And you honor that in the other person that is beyond the temporary role. And people will love you for that because you free them by recognizing that dimension in them that is beyond the roles that they are playing and that they perhaps themselves are completely trapped in. But they feel when you recognize a dimension in them that is beyond the role, you free them a little bit and they feel freer in your presence.

So what that means is presence is arising in you. And so you might meet a person, a bank manager. You're meeting your bank manager to discuss a loan, an important business loan.

And so you're going there. And if you cannot look beyond the temporary role that you are playing and the temporary role that he is playing, and perhaps he is completely identified with his role, he is totally a bank manager. Perhaps even when he gets home, he can't let go of being a bank manager, it happens.

Or maybe at home, he adopts some other role. Let's say he is totally trapped in his role as bank manager and his whole identity is in that. And yet you come there and now, how can you do that?

How can you not be trapped in role playing with him? This is very simple. It doesn't require a complex mechanism or technique.

The simplicity of stepping out of roles in yourself and others, not keeping others trapped in a role, because you would be a little apprehensive in your role. He is the dominant role in this interaction and you are the one who needs a loan. And simply, and this is key, simply by bringing into that interaction a space of stillness, alert stillness.

As you sit there and listen to him explain the figures, the numbers. As you sit there, you sit there not as a role anymore because the moment you allow that alert stillness that is presence, that is the state, that is the space between thoughts, you allow that to rise and perhaps you need to sense your inner body as an anchor so that you can be there in stillness. And you listen and alertness is there as you sit with this bank manager, just one example of thousands possibly, all the same.

You sit there in that state of alert presence, allowing this moment to be as it is, completely not needing to prepare the next statement, but simply be there as a field of conscious presence. You've stepped out of your role. You can go back into the role and just play it a little bit and then ask a question.

Well, what are the terms of this loan? How many years do I have to pay it back? Okay, and then you can enter the role a little bit so that you function in this world so that he doesn't think you're not going to give him a little piece of paper that says, I'm in total silence, I'm practicing, so I cannot answer your questions.

Because if you do that, without realizing it, you will have created another role, a very spiritual one, hoping that this will impress him. It probably won't. But, so it's not that anybody really notices that much of that shift.

You remain normal, so to speak. You can function normally. You don't have to become abnormal in your behavior.

Sometimes, as this arises, the ego can come back. Ego means conceptualized sense of self. It can come back at any stage and claim some new story of me as the great spiritual one, for example.

I was in a casual conversation with somebody and I simply asked an innocent question, where were you born? And he said, I was never born. And he looked very superior and made me feel, how could you have asked such a stupid question?

Of course he was never born. And so it's not necessary to stand out with anything. The strange thing is, as you step, you can enter a role and then almost one could say you have one foot out of your role in being, in stillness, and one foot in your role.

And it's a strange thing that happens. Everything works so much better. Even the roles, the interactions that you play with the roles, so much better.

An enormous enhancement of human interaction. Why? Because you are no longer trapped in a narrow self concept.

And when you are trapped in a narrow sense of me, all you ever, the only way you can relate is through wanting something from somebody or fearing something from somebody. So that would be the case with a bank manager. You would sit there and you would manifest both characteristics of the egoic state.

You want something from him, of course, and you fear him also. He might not give it to you. And that emanates, of course, the egoic state with its wanting and fearing emanates.

The wanting emanates, I need something from you, and the fear emanates. And that creates more ego in the other person, more deeply entrenched in his role because you strengthen his role by wanting something from him and fearing him. So you trap him even more in his role because you want something from him and you fear him.

That's part of his role, how he relates to others. They all want something from him and they all fear him. So you keep him, his role gets strengthened because you're trapped in your role.

So his role loves that because now he feels he really knows who he is because you're confirming to him that the essence of his identity is this bank manager. So both are being trapped. You trap yourself, you trap him.

And this is one example of hundreds, continuously it happens in daily life. Your function, your different roles, getting trapped in the conditioning. I said to somebody, are you a teacher, school teacher?

And she said, how did you know that I'm a school teacher? Everything in her was a school teacher. It was after 20 years, 25 years.

And so not to be with her and then to allow, bring in the space of stillness into the interaction. You free yourself and you free the other person. And an intelligence begins to operate in that situation that could not operate before when you were trapped in conditioned mind structures.

So that's, it is as simple as that. It does not require complicated steps before you can get there. Or some weird techniques.

Simply sit there in alert stillness, be there. And you step out of every role, not losing your capacity to honor that role and function as that role. So that is the beginning of the new state of consciousness.

That is unconditioned. And that is something that is very new in most humans. That it's possible to bring stillness into every interaction.

Not that you lose the capacity to speak. You might speak less, not in any way that anybody would notice necessarily, but you may speak less. But what you speak will have greater power because it comes out of the intelligence of the unconditioned.

And gradually the old CDs losing their momentum. They are running down. The more you allow the unconditioned to arise, the more the old thought forms are running down because they are not replenished.

So this is how any situation you use, no matter where you are, bring some stillness into that. If a little gap, especially human, the human situations. Now, I would recommend to practice not only in human situations, but use nature as a teacher for the state that is free of thinking, stillness.

And when you go into nature, use that and allow stillness to arise as you perceive anything natural, particularly natural, because man-made things tend to be made through thought. Except those man-made things that express the highest quality, great works of art, or sometimes works that embody enormous quality. Why do they, and people can sense.

It doesn't require a lot of sensitivity to sense that certain things have quality and others don't. Quality means somehow the doing, whoever made this, did not make the present moment into a means to an end. Full attention was flowing into the doing.

The doing was not with a profit motive or producing as many pieces as possible within one hour. But there was the quality of attention, of giving full attention, which means stillness. Because whenever you give full attention to anything, there is a field of stillness that arises.

Thought is not attention anymore. Your consciousness level goes down into thought. And then it can suddenly go up again into attention, which implies still presence.

And some people enter that state while they make something, are great artists, and that what they make somehow still contains that energy field of that state of consciousness out of which that work of art came. That is the difference between art and just non-art. Nobody really can say, what is it that makes this into a work of art, and then this is not really art.

It didn't come out of presence. So whatever you do then, whether you make something or whether it is simply a perception, whether it is simply a moment of perception, the only way I can describe that is to say it is of high quality, quality, which implies this moment is not made into a means to an end. It is honored fully.

So the arising of this new consciousness, the arising of stillness is so closely connected with what we talked about yesterday, which is not making this moment into a means to an end. Let's go back to the bank manager. You're meeting the bank manager.

If you want something from him, you're reducing him to a means to an end because you're reducing this moment to a means to an end. I need to get this loan. Now the obstacle that then appears in your past that you feel you need to overcome is what appears in the now is this form of the bank manager.

Now he may be an obstacle to where you want to be. The mental projection, I need that. You're not honoring this moment fully.

It's a means to an end. And most human beings live like that continuously, which means no true intelligence ever arises in their life. No true power ever arises in their life, even if they might be intelligent on a small level, intellectual, good at manipulating words and become a great professor of this or that.

But if you look at their lives, it's not an expression of intelligence. So see how freeing this is, bring stillness. So use nature whenever your visual perceptions, you look at a tree, a flower, the sky, water, auditory perceptions of nature, birds, the wind and the trees.

Perceive it through stillness. Labels are unimportant when you're out in nature. A depth arises that was never there before.

Be with a tree and then a thought may come after five seconds, 10 seconds, and then you watch the arising of this thought, which may be about the tree or maybe about something totally different. Maybe about the stock market. Then you watch the thought arise and subside and you stay with a tree and again, a space of stillness arises in which the perception happens.

You will be amazed how much nature can teach you because nature lives in the state of oneness. Oneness with itself, with the totality. And most of nature is very still.

So nature can teach you the state of no mind, as it's sometimes called in certain teachings from the East, no mind. Nature is a master at no mind because there's no mind in this flower. Yes, it's an expression of consciousness manifesting as this beautiful form.

Are you reducing this to a label? Can you truly stay with the mystery of this and allow the perception to arise in a field of stillness in which thought may still come here and there, it no longer matters very much. The thought comes in, goes away, the field of stillness remains.

And then something one could almost say communicates itself to you from the flower. But the main thing is what you're being taught is to exist in the state of no mind. But you have not the fundamental difference between you and the flower or between you and the cat is that you have been through the stage of thought as the human species has.

You go beyond, you're rising above thought. So one could say the whole of nature is pre-thought. Humans now transcend thought.

They rise above thought into no mind. But you meet again in the state of no mind, but there is a depth of knowing in you that is not there in the flower. The flower exists in the beautiful state of holiness, wholeness, holiness.

But as you transcend thought, there is a depth to that same state in you that is not yet in the flower, but you bring it to the flower. The flower exists in that state naturally, always has done. Humans have lost it and now are regaining that state of primordial connectedness with the one.

And whenever you lose something and then regain it, you know it at a deeper level than before you had lost it. So you can bring, it's not only that nature teaches you, one could almost say that nature is also waiting for you, for that state of consciousness to arise through you in which nature, because ultimately you are not separate from this flower, you are deeply connected. And ultimately nature recognizes itself through you, through your state of consciousness.

It recognizes its own sacredness and beauty through your recognition. And nature loves you for that. That is your interaction with nature.

So nature becomes a teacher of the state of no mind. But the greatest teaching is to sit in that field here, allow it to arise here. Use one of the doorways into that state.

And now one could say I've pointed to three. One is you sit here connected with the inner energy field of your body. If you are not, you become restless.

You rise up into the mind and you're no longer really here nor do you want to be here. As a thought-based entity, you don't want to be here. So if that is the case, observe that you're up here trying to get to the next moment.

A restlessness arises, impatience. You're thinking about who you're going to see tonight, phone calls that you have to make. And tomorrow morning, the problems you're facing, the normal human state is back.

Go into body. Once you recognize that, it's fine. It's not a personal matter at all.

Discontent, restlessness, not wanting to be here is the normal human state. All that you're expressing is a normal human state of consciousness. But the only difference is that most people don't know that this is what's happening to them because it's normal.

But you can see it. You can see the impatience, the restlessness, the not wanting to be here, the wanting to be in some future moment, tonight, tomorrow. But when you get there, tonight or tomorrow, where do you want to be in the next one?

That's, so to watch the madness, it's arising in you and it's not personal. Madness is not personal, it's normal. It's human, normal human consciousness.

I always want to be in the next moment. And watch that and then, okay, there it is. When you see, the moment you see it, something else is already arising.

That which sees your state of consciousness, to recognize your state of consciousness.

Already the seeing frees you. You're no longer totally it.

See, so any movement in yourself, it may be semi-physical at this very moment. Anxiety, restlessness, or any emotion that runs through you that's maybe connected to a memory or to some kind of anticipation of what is going to happen. A life situation that you're thinking about and you're experiencing emotions that go with those thoughts.

You see that. You see that you've been trapped almost all your life in that stream of thought. And if nothing happens, this is how you will die.

To the end of your life, discontent, restless, looking for the next moment. That is the human condition. So it's seeing it, mm, okay, all right.

And feeling it. And not saying, I should not be feeling this. I really should be beyond the human condition by now.

Doesn't work. There's the human condition. There's you feel what you feel at this moment.

Certain thought streams are going through your head. What can you do except to see it? And it is part of the is-ness of this moment.

What can you do? It is as it is. You bring acceptance to the agitation perhaps that you feel.

Okay, so something else arises the moment you accept this moment. Inner or outer level, doesn't matter. Presence arises.

Everyone here has a life situation, as I sometimes describe it. A past and a future, perhaps. There's no certainty about that.

But probably, you have a future. Certainly, you have a past. Usually, your entire attention is absorbed by that.

This creates a conceptualized self. And this is what walks with you wherever you go. Now, is that here, sitting here?

Are you sitting here with the burden of your life situation, remembering the problems that you had yesterday and what somebody did or didn't do or situation, anticipating the problems of tomorrow, having the story we talked about yesterday, the story of me, how is it going to unfold? It's very problematic. Take, this is the life situation, not being able to get out of this into now, the only place where a new factor can come in, the only place where true intelligence can actually change your life situation and not make it into a continuous repetition of the past.

That's all the future. If there's no, if the unconditioned does not arise, your future is a continuation of past on the surface, big changes may happen. You might go to a different country, meet a different partner, different financial situation, but certain patterns will be there, repeat themselves.

Unless you find the space of freedom. So it's, again, life situation and roles, they are all connected. You play certain roles as part of your life situation.

Learn to step out, even while you honor the situation, never be totally in it. Is that possible? Yes, it's possible for you now.

To have, you have the choice. Choice? Who has a choice?

You. Who am I? Consciousness.

There's nothing but consciousness. Consciousness is choosing presence. Consciousness is choosing to step out of identification with roles and forms and thoughts.

It's a cosmic transformation. It looks like something changing on the human level, but it's only a tiny aspect of that. The arising, the change in planetary consciousness.

So all I have to teach here, and it's not really teaching, there's only one thing, and it's a, from one perspective, it's a tiny shift to step out of the stream of thinking, to accept this now, to use a portal that can take you into the dimension of no thought, a tiny shift, and yet a very radical transformation too. That's all. There's nothing else here that you need to be shown, and you can only be shown this because it's arising in you already.

Stepping out of that stream, allowing the alertness to arise. The alertness that the Zen master pointed to when he was asked to explain the meaning of Zen, and he became quite famous as a master because he never gave any explanations, nor did he hit people. All he ever did when asked to explain the meaning of Zen was to raise his finger, and he would look at you in the state of absolute presence.

No thought, just pure conscious awareness. That's the essence of Zen or any other teaching, that state of consciousness. Not to exist in that for the rest of your life, but that's the essence of your being, and the rest is a little out of form, including roles that you play with.

But not lost in your life situation, lost in the story of me, thinking it matters so much what happens to me, because you only know yourself as the form, as the story, as the situation. Then it matters so much. But when you know yourself being beyond the form of your life, there's an essence knowing, then what happens or doesn't happen to you is relatively important, but not absolutely important.

Relatively, yes. Do I have $10 in the bank or $10 million? There's a relative difference.

It will make some difference to your life situation, whether you have $10 in the bank or

$10 million. It is relatively important. It is not absolutely important.

If you have 10 million now, two years from now, you may have 10 left, or you have 10 now, maybe you will have 10 million. Gain and loss in everybody's life. If you think it matters absolutely, it becomes part of your sense of self, and when you lose it, as you will, you suffer, you lose yourself.

So Jesus said there's only one thing that matters. You're worried about many things, he said to someone who was trying to get things done. You're worried and concerned about many things, he said to a woman called Martha, but only one thing matters absolutely.

Then everything else in your life is relative. It's honored, but you have some distance from it, a space around it. Nothing stays with you for that long.

You have a space around whatever happens. That is the space of stillness. That is the space of peace.

That is the space that comes as you enter that beautiful state that is the surrendered state of consciousness, allowing this moment to be. Space consciousness, one could say, arises. Everything else is object consciousness.

Thoughts, mind forms, emotions, sense perceptions, objects in your consciousness arise. In the unenlightened state, you identify with the objects in your consciousness, thoughts, and every object says, I matter, can give me your attention. Every thought says that.

Believe in me, I matter, I'm really important. Because a thought is a little, it's an energy form. It's a little being, temporary being.

It has a little existence as an energy field, and the entity wants to grow. It says, look at me, I'm very important. Objects in consciousness arise, and humans tend to identify with certain objects that arise and think, that's me, me, me, and none of it is you, because it's not going to last.

A possession is an object in consciousness. The BMW is an object in consciousness. The big house is an object in consciousness, or the belief that I have failed, I'm unemployed, and poor is another object in consciousness, another mind image.

And they arise continuously, knowing yourself not to be an object in consciousness, but simply you know yourself as consciousness. The objects are relatively important. Positions that you attain, they come, they go.

Worldly recognition comes, goes, or never comes. Money comes, goes. Whatever you do, move, place here to there, movement, people in your life come, go.

Situations, conditions, states of health come, go. Objects, sense perceptions arise. Objects in consciousness.

And knowing yourself as the underlying stillness. That is the essence of your being. That is this place of freedom from conditioning.

That's all you can learn here in these three hours to access in yourself that dimension. Not through a technique, some technique may work, but techniques tend to give you time to get there. Or you, as the practitioner of a technique, give it time.

Even if the technique is designed to take time away from you, you, the practitioner, may need to become, to achieve something through the technique, another mind object. There are beautiful, simple techniques like watching your breath. When you watch your breath, you have to be very present and you cannot think while you watch your breath.

Breath moves in and out of the body. And if you truly feel the breath moving in and out of the body, you cannot think. The moment you think, you've lost awareness of the breath.

And then you're not present anymore. And then from watching the breath, you can easily sense there's the breath and there's the watcher, the field of awareness. I am that.

I am that. I am that is the fundamental identity beyond form, the essential I am-ness that is pointed to in the Old Testament when God talks of him, her, itself as I am that I am. I am no longer this or that.

I am prior to, before the arising of an object in consciousness as this or that. Those are the forms, temporary forms, temporary roles. So the presence is the realization of the essence of your identity, which in the unenlightened state gets mixed up with mental forms and stories and roles.

So there is an essence in your story and in your role that is the truth, but it gets totally mixed up with the form. Because everybody feels there is something incredibly precious to my being, and that is me. I don't want to lose that.

Everybody feels there's something very valuable and precious in here that gets totally mixed up with the story that people are telling yourself about who they are, and then to realize that that is the I am presence that has nothing to do, ultimately, with your life situation. It can be realized at any point in your life situation. You may be in prison or live in a palace.

You may sit on a bicycle or ride in a Rolls Royce. At any stage or state in your life situation, can that be realized? In good weather or in bad weather, it can be realized.

But by the way, it's more likely to be realized in bad weather, and of course, that comes soon enough in everybody's life. It's more likely to be realized through loss because an object is removed from your consciousness. A form is removed from your consciousness that you had identified with as yourself.

What is left when you lose someone close to you dies? You lose your possessions. You lose your status in society.

You lose the role that you have been playing. All of us will experience or have already experienced that you cannot go through life without experiencing, sooner or later, fundamental loss, also gain. But what you gain, you lose again.

And loss has been, for quite a few people, the awakener. Why? Why not, when something good happens and you get added something, why didn't you awaken then?

Because loss means an object dissolves in your consciousness that you had identified with as me, a thought form. It could be as simple as you arriving at the place where you parked your expensive new car and it's gone, relatively insignificant event. But for some people, if your sense of self is in that, it's very painful.

There's an empty space where there was your car. And then, if you don't start screaming and shouting and trying to, and you stay with that for a moment, you stay with that moment because you have learned to face the now as it is. And what you face in that moment of loss is an empty space.

And if that empty space is faced, the thought form that was linked to that outer form, car, me, big, better than, stronger than, more powerful than, that thought form has nothing to link itself into anymore. There's only an empty space. And at that moment, the thought form also dissolves when you face totally the space that is there when you lose something.

And that means there is a little hole in this stream of mental images and mental noise through loss. And when that hole appears, the opening, what comes through that opening is unconditioned consciousness. If we used slightly religious language, we could say it's whenever some kind of death happens, because it is always a form of death.

If a form dissolves, the dissolving of a form is death. So even your disappearing big car is a little death. And whenever death is faced totally, there is an opening.

The form is gone, there's just a hole there. And you face this moment as it is. Then what comes through that hole, one could say the formless one life is shining through that.

That. One could even say God comes through because every form obscures God. Let's just take it as a poetic statement.

Every form obscures God. Whenever a form disappears, that which is beyond form, the one life that manifests as form, but is beyond form, suddenly shines through, the formless, the divine, the light from God, doesn't matter what you call it, the unconditioned consciousness. And it shines through.

The moment it's there, it's so much peace in that, such aliveness in that, and yes, sacredness, joy also. And that is the essence of who you are. Traditionally, most human beings have found it through loss, through death.

Then teachings came, and the teaching points to the possibility of letting go your identification with those forms, so that the opening that otherwise is only caused by some disaster in your life, some form of death in your life, some great loss in your life, the opening that otherwise can only occur in the face of that, when you are ready to hear the truth that is contained in a spiritual teaching, it happens without the need for further disaster in your life. The opening is here now, as you enter the state of yes to now, allow the stillness to arise instead of fighting against it.

The little me entity has been fighting against stillness all its life. No, no, don't stop, don't listen. Fighting against the now all its life.

We talked about it yesterday, of making the now into an enemy, and all your life trying to resist it and get away from it. So the opening arises without the need for further disaster. But probably only because you've had enough disaster already.

In other words, you have experienced loss, otherwise you wouldn't be here. So there's already, the hole has already appeared, maybe more than one in the fabric of your existence. And that is good.

But here we choose death and then realize nothing important really dies. Because we choose, or as the expression goes in the holy book, die before you die. Sometimes translated as find death before death finds you.

And this is what's happening here. And once that's happened, you don't need disaster anymore. Unless you do, then you'll get it.

Disaster means something big is taken away from you. Death in one form or another comes into your life. And then there's the potential in every death, in every loss, there's a potential for realization.

The opening is there if you face it. If you run away from it, the potential is lost again. So there are many people in this world who have experienced great loss, but no inner change has happened.

Which means the potential, the opening immediately got obscured again. The moment was never faced. So the ultimate, the true death is simply the facing, the complete facing of this moment.

And more attention to this than to your life situation. This is amazing. This now is more important than your life situation with its problematic story.

It always is more important and is the only place where true change can happen, even in your life situation. So stepping out of that heavy conceptualized me past, future, into this. Your attention moves out of the forms into this.

You give enough attention, of course, to make little plans to do this and that, no problem there. You deal with everything that needs to be dealt with, but mainly you deal with what you can and must deal with at this moment. You honor this completely.

That means your attention, your consciousness is moving out of being trapped in the mind forms and becoming alert stillness out of the prison of mind forms. And suddenly there is the alert stillness in which you are free of the burden of the problematic life situation and the conceptualized sense of self. And the amazing realization comes there is no problem here in this now.

There cannot be. No problem can survive in the space of now. All problem making is connected with identification with thought processes and a self derived from thought processes.

Is it real? Is any problem real in your life? You can only find it.

Is it real at this moment? Is it a challenge at this moment? Is action possible at this moment?

You face this completely. If no action is possible, there's simply a yes. With that arises space.

What I sometimes call space consciousness, which isn't consciousness of something. It's consciousness. Amazing, amazingly simple.

And amazingly profound. What is perhaps the most profound statement in the Bible is be still and know that I am God. That contains all the words which are ultimately all synonymous.

Be, be, being, still, know, knowing. There is deep knowing in that stillness. Great intelligence and be still.

Be still, know that I am God the one. This statement contains the essence of all religions, of all teachings. And each word contains the power.

And each word is synonymous with each other word. Being, stillness, knowing, the I am, and God, they're all one. And so that, in a way, is the greatest mantra, if you can call it that.

And that was in the Bible, that is uttered by God, that statement, what does that mean? That statement is uttered by consciousness itself. The I am.

It's amazing that it should have found its way there because a lot of it is only relatively true. The great sage Ramana Maharshi, whom some of you may have heard about, who lived in India, passed away in around 1950. He taught mostly through stillness.

In other words, people would ask him a question and he would just look at you. In the state, of course, of stillness. Not thinking, what a silly fool you are to ask such a question, no.

He would just look in the field of stillness. And that was the teaching. But occasionally, out of that, words also came.

Once he was asked, how can we know, one person asked him, whether we are making progress on the spiritual path because we might be deluding ourselves. And he said, that's very simple. The degree of absence of thoughts is the criterion for progress on the spiritual path.

Oh, the degree, that means the extent to which thoughts no longer occur, which means the extent of inner stillness is the degree of progress on the spiritual path. Oh. And one or two minds in this room may be saying right now, oh my God, then I haven't made any progress because my mind is so noisy.

And then you watch that thought and allow it to be. And there's the arising of stillness around the thought. It's so simple.

And then stillness is there as an undercurrent in your life, even while you're in the shop. How much is that? Okay, I'll take it, money, thank you.

And again, it's to do with not being totally drawn into the function of that moment, the role of that moment. Customer, shopkeeper, who wants something from each other, who make the other person into a means to an end. And so there's a little gap as you hand over your money with a little field of aware, still presence.

Three seconds, four seconds, don't need to just, you hand over. You're waiting for change. Then you get a few seconds.

It seems insignificant from the point of view of mind, but you have freed yourself and the other person from the delusion of being the temporary form, the temporary role that we are playing. And you continue in your role as customer, but it's only like something you've put on. You're not it.

Any situation, you are the bringer of space, stillness into that situation. And then words come, action happens too. And even while the words are being spoken, there can be stillness.

If you should lose yourself in the words, which is very easy to do, the moment you open your mouth, mind draws in your attention and you get drawn into identification with the quickly arising thought forms. So it's very easy to completely lose yourself in that again. And then only afterwards you suddenly notice you got totally lost again in that.

And then you say, oh, okay, I lost the now. And then you re-enter the now, it is. How do you re-enter the now?

Presence simply arises. Or you could feel the sense the inner body becomes an anchor, look at this moment and say, oh, that's it is how it is. Say yes to that, that's the beginning of stillness.

Or bring complete attention to sense perceptions, especially in nature and alertness. And that alertness is still. So as you look at that tree, you're aware of two things.

The tree, the form, that, and the stillness in which the perception happens, which is the awareness in which it happens, which is consciousness, which is the I am. I'm ringing this bell. As I ring this bell, the sound arises in the field of now, in the field of awareness.

And as you listen, you can be aware not only of the sound, although to be aware of the sound, especially as it dies down, you need to be alert to follow the sound with your attention. It requires a certain alertness, especially as the sound begins to disappear. When it's disappeared, what remains is an empty space of awareness.

The disappearing sound is a form of death because it comes to an end. And that is always when the form meets the formless. It's a beautiful moment of sacredness.

So listen again and be aware not only of the sound, but also, one could say, of yourself as the field of presence in which the sound happens. Still, very still, there is an incredible joy and aliveness in knowing yourself as consciousness itself, whether something is happening or not happening or what is happening in that field that you are, doesn't really matter anymore that much. And if it doesn't matter that much anymore, it improves greatly what's happening.

This is why Ramana Maharshi, the teacher I mentioned just now, he said, your true nature is happiness. I wouldn't use that word. I would say your true nature is joy.

It is there when you know yourself as the underlying awareness, not as something in the awareness, as awareness. And that awareness knows itself. It is, one could say, it is awareness of awareness.

It senses itself. It knows itself. I am.

I am. I am life before it becomes something. And I am everywhere.

Of course you are. You don't need to be. I am in the flower, manifesting as the flower, the same presence, the same consciousness manifesting as that.

So you recognize yourself, this essence of I am, when you look at a tree or plant or flower. Oh, it's me. You don't tell yourself that.

You sense that. And another human being, you look into the eyes of the bank manager. And the same I am presence is there underneath the role of bank manager.

And you look at him and recognize yourself. And in that moment of recognition, you love him. Truly.

Because whatever you recognize as yourself, you love as yourself. And then the words come true that they tried to practice but couldn't. Love thy neighbor as thyself because thy neighbor is thyself.

Recognize thy neighbor as thyself. Then of course you love him or her. So in that self-recognition is the love for all life forms as yourself.

And then you can say with the teacher, some of you know J. Krishnamurti who taught for 50 years or so. In one of his talks, he suddenly stopped and said, do you want to know what my secret is?

And everybody said, yes, please. We've been waiting for that for 40 years. And he said, okay.

Here it is. I don't mind what happens. Oh, I don't mind what happens.

That was his secret. Now perhaps, I don't know how many of his listeners understood that, but now perhaps we can see what it is that he meant. What happens is a form that arises, comes and goes.

When you know yourself as the stillness, as the I am presence, what happens is allowed to happen. That's why life gets so much better. All the things that you thought you needed will be added unto you.

A statement from the teaching of Jesus, which simply means, the things that you needed, I need that. It tends to happen that life brings them to you when you no longer need them. And then at some point, of course, life takes it away again.

That's okay. We'll take a little break. Perhaps 15 minutes of clock time.

Welcome. I should say welcome in many languages. So many nationalities here.

So some of you have come a long way, traveled a long distance to be with yourself. And sometimes that's how it works. To be with yourself, I don't mean the self that is such a burden to carry.

You may be carrying that also, but that's not why you've come here. but something deeper than the story or the conceptual self in the head that needs and wants something. Of course, that's also come with you here.

The self that needs or wants something. And it may be expecting to get it here, to add something to itself, but that's not how it works. So I sometimes use the expression portals, openings into yourself, a new state of consciousness, one could say, unconditioned.

And portals are here all the time. And one could consider our entire retreat as a portal into that state of consciousness that we may call presence. So the retreat is not here to add anything to you.

One could almost say it's here to remove something. Yeah, but not even that. To show something that's already there.

And the teaching, to use that word, it's not really any teaching. The totality of this weekend, long weekend is the teaching. The words are not that important.

While we sit here in this beautiful space, you may be a little tightly packed in the back. Maybe tomorrow we can move forward a little bit more. But while we sit in this beautiful space, always remember, and I will keep reminding you so that you don't get attached only to the words, to pay attention to this.

This is one important portal that is here. To pay attention to the silent space that is here. It's here in this room.

So while we sit here, there's always a dimension of silence or silent space. And all that's required of you for it to become a portal is to pay attention to it. It does not mean that you cannot pay attention to the words.

You listen, the words are there, they go in. But as you listen, you also listen to the silence. And the mind, the thinking mind might say, this doesn't make sense because listening to the silence, there's nothing to listen to.

All that's required is simply to acknowledge, to pay attention, to notice the silence. To the thinking mind, that is not a significant event. It is a non-event.

It is a non-happening. It is completely uninteresting, has no fascination whatsoever, and adds nothing to who you are. That's why the mind-made self, the heavy self that you carry with you is not interested in it and can't even do that.

In other words, you cannot listen to silence through thought. The moment you notice the silent space, the stream of thinking ceases and you haven't lost consciousness. That's why we are here.

That is one portal that is opening up. There's only one thing here to learn, and it's not even learning, because learning would imply that you need to absorb something new. There's only one thing here to discover.

And in many of you, probably most of you, that has already emerged, which I sometimes call the unconditioned consciousness, the state of presence, or more recently, I've been calling it space consciousness, as opposed to object consciousness. Most humans in this world know only object consciousness and are identified with object consciousness react. Object consciousness is anything that takes on form.

Thought is a form, a thought form, an object in consciousness. Every sense perception is an object in consciousness. Object consciousness, the words that you hear are object consciousness forms.

The silent space has no form, can't grasp it. Space consciousness, that dimension of depth or stillness that is already in you. And in many, I know that that has already emerged, although it may get obscured from time to time again by total absorption in object consciousness, thought, reactions, me, and you yourself become an object to yourself, a mind made me with its story.

You have made yourself into an object in consciousness, an uneasy entity. And that uneasy entity is also here. The reason why you are here is that something else has emerged, which one could call a new consciousness on this planet because it's been so rare until even now, it's still rare, but until recently, it's been so rare for that dimension to be realized in a human being.

And suddenly now, many people are beginning to realize it. It's still rare, relatively speaking, relative to the population on the planet, but in more humans, it is emerging already. And you may not even know that this is why you've come here.

But the self, the object consciousness, me, has also traveled here, and it may have its own agenda here. It wants something because it is never enough, never complete, never fulfilled for except short intervals between two wantings or two fears and two not enoughs. So that self, what is traditionally called the self in Buddhism, that is called the self has come with you.

And of course, wherever you go, it will travel with you also. And it won't leave you alone for too long. And it's back, I'm still here.

And that is that part in you that after a little while here, maybe tomorrow afternoon, will already begin to feel restless because not enough is being added to it here. And it will start thinking, how much longer have I got here? I have to stay another two days.

And then it'll project itself to the third day when you're going to leave, because that is then becomes the next significant event. Whereas this retreat to that self is a non-event. So it will project itself away because it always wants to be in the next moment, not in this one that is a characteristic of object consciousness of the self.

So it won't be happy with this for long. So that it's good to know that that also is there in you and it does other things. It's not happy with what is for very long.

And it likes to complain and react. And I don't mean complain in saying, you're stepping on my foot, please remove your foot from my foot. That's a simple statement.

You can do something to alleviate this, please do it. That's not a complaint. I mean, the mind pattern of inner and sometimes outer complaining, which is to do with a deep seated pattern in the mind made self that is the reactive.

And although these are beautiful surroundings, some of it's perhaps hard to find a more beautiful spot on the planet, yes. And yet the self will easily find things to be unhappy about because we live in the world of forms. It's in the nature of the world of form that it is not totally satisfying.

Things go wrong in it. And the self loves that fact because then it can complain. And here there are many people in a relatively small space, plenty of opportunity to complain about other people, maybe in the head only or whatever conditions are not quite right.

And in complaining, which is a deep seated pattern, reacting, complaining of the deep seated pattern of the mind made self, the conditioned entity, in complaining and reacting, it momentarily strengthens its sense of self because when you complain, you are right and somebody else is wrong. And so it's unconscious. It is an unconscious attempt to strengthen one's sense of me, of self, which is never quite enough.

So you need to strengthen it somehow. So you cut here, there may not be much else left for it than to feel unhappy about something and then focus on that. Could happen.

The pain body may come in and add to it. We're having a full moon on Saturday, which sometimes triggers pain bodies. So just to know that there's a dimension in you of depth, which has brought you here.

And there's the dimension, the shallowness of a mind made me that cooperated enough for you to be here. Okay, I'll go along with that. In quite a few people, it didn't allow them to come here.

At every retreat, there are people who at the last minute or a day before or a week or something, am I, should I go? There's no, what's the point? And after much agonizing, they cancel.

So something in them prevented them. This is quite normal. Maybe they'll come to the next one or they get other teachings or teachers, maybe talk just situations.

Everybody gets what they need. So sometimes it interferes enough, but with you, at least it cooperated to allow you. And some of you hardly made it here because even a few days ago, you weren't quite sure whether you would actually go.

So to observe, I may be talking a little bit more about it tomorrow so that you recognize it clearly when it's there, because that's really all that's required for it to recognize the conditioned entity that until recently was your entire identity. And it's really enough to recognize it. Oh, there it is.

And of course, there is something deeper in you that's arising and opening up. And that has brought you here. Throughout, we are using the portals that are available to us here.

And one is silence, not only in this room, but also out in nature, which is the other teacher here. There are quite a few teachers this weekend. The beautiful nature that you're going to walk in, move in.

It's not only that all the beautiful things that you see, thousands of life forms, that's beautiful. There's also a vast sense of space or spaciousness and a silence that underlies it all. If you can listen to it first thing in the morning, you will hear the birds.

Beautiful sounds. They are objects in consciousness, perceptions, beautiful. And then notice, just as you do it here, the silence or the stillness out of which the sounds come.

And suddenly the sounds have greater depth to them. That depth is your own depth, ultimately. It's the depths of the universe.

And you can then listen to that beautiful sound, just the joy of life celebrating its own existence through these little forms. You can listen to that. And if simultaneously you are aware of space, you can listen to those sounds without any interference by thought.

And that is the arising of the new consciousness in which a vast intelligence operates, far greater than thought. And you haven't lost thought when you need it, it's there. So we use the portals that are here naturally and through a silent space here, no matter what you listen to in nature, no matter what you see, there's also a vast spaciousness, a harmonious whole that holds it all together, all these thousands of beautiful life forms.

You can be aware of that also. So the more you are aware of silence and space, the more that inner spaciousness, that inner stillness, they open up. And that is the depths of who you are beyond a little mind-made entity that also has its own level of existence.

It will continue, yes, but you are no longer captivated by it and thinking that that's all there is to you, this uneasy, fearful, needy entity. And then we are using here, well, other portals, of course, the main one you could say, and I'm sure you are familiar with that already, is now, every portal takes you into now, to be internally aligned with what is. That's a wonderful portal.

Whatever is, is as it is now. Allowing this moment to be, and this is our practice this weekend. Internally, to be aligned with this, to actually pay more attention to now than past and future.

You're not going to lose them. If during this weekend, you don't pay that much attention to past and future, or they will want to reassert themselves, return attention to now. Welcome now.

Whatever happens in now, some things, the little me might react, and then you notice, oh. And you realize it's important. Whatever is, you can't really argue with, because it already is.

Action then arises out of the surrendered state, not out of the resistant state. That's intelligent action, if action should be needed. So, whatever happens at this moment, and nothing can happen anywhere else except this moment.

Nothing ever happened that wasn't this moment. Nothing will ever happen that's not now. So whatever happens can only happen now, and is, one could say, although the little me doesn't like that, whatever happens is connected with the totality of all life, the totality of the universe.

Buddhists knew that 2,600 years ago already, the interconnectedness of all things. Modern physicists know that, that there are no separate events. There only seem to be separate events.

There's no such thing as a separate event or a separate entity. Everything is connected, interconnected to the totality, the web of the entire cosmos. Therefore, whatever happens is inevitable.

Otherwise, it would not be. It's connected to the fabric of the whole. So the is-ness of this moment could not be otherwise.

And the mind says, oh yes, it could. If he hadn't done that, this wouldn't have happened, but he did that. If I had acted differently, it wouldn't have happened, so it could be otherwise.

That's what the mind argues in that way, but the fact of the matter is it isn't otherwise. I can raise my arm, now it's raised, and the mind said, yeah, but you didn't have to do that. You could have not raised it, but now it's here.

Perhaps another universe has already branched off from this moment where I did not raise my arm. This is what physicists speculate about, that every moment, different universes come out of infinite possibilities. If we carry on talking about this, this will take us into philosophy.

The fact remains, this moment is as it is. It is. And then it changes, and again, it is as it is.

It may change through you because you accepted the is-ness which led to intelligent action because it's only now that the portal is open into true intelligence when you're not the reactive little entity that can't accept the is-ness and needs a future which is no more than a thought form, isn't it? Nobody has ever encountered the future except as a thought. Nobody has met it ever.

It only exists as a thought form. The past too only exists as a thought form. They seem so real.

Time, past and future seem so real. And you can say, yeah, they must be real because I'm getting old. I'm burning up in time, and I'm shriveling just like a fruit, a fresh fruit, and then it shrivels.

And then it's gone. Everything is being burned up in time. That's true on one level, it looks so real.

And then if you look, yes, but time, past, future, never here, never. Nobody's ever met them except as a thought. So it seems to do things to things.

And yet, if you look more closely, it doesn't even exist. No conclusions. Because then it becomes philosophy.

There's nothing wrong with philosophy, but not here. Just to see, even to see a paradox, to see the paradox of time and the timeless. So on this retreat, we use the portals of silent space here and in nature.

We use nature itself. We may talk about that tomorrow, which doesn't exist except as a thought form. We use the portal of now, which simply means our practice this weekend is to become friendly with now.

It doesn't sound important enough. I want ultimate realization. Well, just become friendly with now.

I want to attain the ultimate, just become friendly with now. Yes, but what about the ultimate? I want to add it to me.

And finally I'll be complete when I attain the ultimate in the future. So the entire retreat then can be considered as a portal, potential portal into that unconditioned consciousness, space consciousness, just words, pointers. It also helps, and here is another portal, to feel the inner body as you sit here, a certain aliveness in your energy field, simply to sense that the body is alive, a little bit anchors you in now.

And that I recommend when you go to bed here, because here you don't have television to stimulate your mind or other things, radio. And if you're not staying here in the retreat place and you happen to have a television in your room, I would recommend that you don't switch it on this weekend or the radio. Are you going to miss something terribly important?

Probably not. When you listen to the news on Monday, it'll be the same. 20 years ago, it was the same.

Anyway, in the 20th century, similar things happened worse. So when you go to bed, lie there on your back, feel the energy field of the body, just notice it. It's not a big deal or complicated matter.

Simply start somewhere in the body, hands, feet. Oh, there's the hand. And then attention is there.

And then attention is in the general overall feeling of inner body that anchors you quite simply in now. Thoughts will slow down, may even stop if your attention is fully in the body. So instead of being immersed in some kind of thought stream, which is going to be about tomorrow or your return trip home, or the problems that are waiting for you when you get home, and it'll be saying, you should have stayed home, you have too many things to deal with, you shouldn't have come.

Those usual things that happen in mental noise. Then you start out of that into the aliveness of now, and you use the inner body as a portal. And it should wake up in the middle of the night, and the mind wants to start up again.

Me, my story, my problems. And then you notice, oh, let's go into the body. The mind will be saying, no, you can't.

There's no point. You can't, not now, you can't feel your body now. There's too much to think about, too restless.

Yes. And then you feel the body. Don't necessarily have to believe what the head tells you.

Not now, it says, not now, think, think. Every thought says, I matter, give me attention. It doesn't say that openly, but it wants, because it's a little energetic entity, and it wants more energy for itself.

So it wants to be taken very seriously. It says, I matter, give me more attention. And then you, usually it gets it.

It just pulls, okay, this matters. And then it leads to more proliferation of thought streams coming out of that one. And it's probably problematic.

And you're lying there in a nice bed, there is no problem except as thought forms. If there were a true problem, it would be right in front of your eyes and you have to take action. Challenge, it would be a challenge that exists a lot in life.

But problem and accumulation of thought forms concerning future, sometimes past, has no actual existence except as a thought form. So it says, I matter, give me your attention. Off you go into a stream of thinking.

Can't sleep, just so much on my mind. And it burns up life energy. And then you wake up.

And there's the heaviness of me. I really can't face another day of this. So notice the tendency for mind to want to draw in all your attention.

Sometimes coupled with certain emotions, let's say me, then the emotion energizes the thought. And that becomes a person's sense of self. No space around it, just that, trapped in the form of me.

And then you suddenly notice, oh, the emotional turbulence and mental noise. They think, oh, okay. The noticing is the arising of something that is not conditioned, just to see it.

And with the seeing comes the possibility of stepping out. And then say, okay, I can actually feel my hand. Feel your hand, says thought.

Think about your problems. So you sense and you lie there. And you don't even want to go back to sleep because it's so beautiful to be anchored in your inner energy field.

And now, why go back to sleep? Enjoy your sleeplessness. Oh, it's great.

For a while, I went a little mad. I loved that state so much of not being able to sleep that I would drink two or three cups of strong coffee before going to bed, just so that I could enjoy that incredible sense of aliveness in the body. Not through the coffee.

The aliveness was there anyway, but I wanted to stay awake as long as possible. No need for that. And that reminds me, I would recommend that you don't, although we are in Italy, I'm sorry, that you don't indulge in alcohol this weekend.

You can indulge after. Because when presence is fully there, it doesn't matter anymore. But the arising presence can easily become obscured through a couple of drinks.

And then you go back into, hmm. So this is simply a recommendation. We are also going to spend some of this weekend in silence.

Again, a recommendation. There's no thought police or speech police. So I may recommend certain periods during the weekend when we are simply in silence, at least external silence.

Thank you. So it's good to notice, and just a few days here are enough to encounter many different states in yourself. Loving it here, oh, this is a great cruise.

And two hours later, hating it. Just notice. Notice something in you, as I said, wants to be here.

Something else doesn't really want to be here. It went along and might regret it now. And just notice that.

This room is open during the day. So you could come in any time also. Just if you want to sit, just sit.

Be still, listen to silence. Going out into nature, even, I recommend that even if you've come with a friend, every day to spend some time alone in nature also. So just walking, sitting, looking, listening.

We will talk more about that. So one recommendation then, we've been talking about thought is not to take any thought that arises this weekend. Too seriously.

Remember the thought says, I am serious, I matter. But it's not that serious. In this evolutionary leap that humanity is now taking, of which you, the form, is an important part.

You are that evolutionary leap of human consciousness. In that leap, we go beyond thought. We're leaving, we've gone through the whole huge evolutionary cycle of being totally identified with thought.

And now it's time to go beyond, because if we linger any longer in this state of consciousness, which has become dysfunctional, because it is the end of a cycle. If we linger any longer, humanity will not survive as a species. It will destroy itself and the planet.

The madness will simply increase as it's been doing throughout the 20th century. So we are stepping out of thought. Thought can still be used beautifully, creatively, but no longer have our self in it.

We are also going to spend certain periods of time, or rather no time, in stillness together. If there is a lot of interference through thought, simply use a portal, listen to silence. Feel the inner body, whatever.

Or simply say, okay, there's mental noise, that's how it is, what can I do? There it is, all right. The arising of that new consciousness, one aspect of it, one way of looking at it, very limited way, everything, every perspective is limited.

One aspect of that is, one can say, it is the arising of stillness from within, alive, vibrantly alive, but still. And out of that, sometimes dynamic action can flow. It is not a passive state.

Our little opening ceremony, I almost forgot, awakening, the bell signifies awakening out of thought. Thank you. I will see you in the now at 10 o'clock, as you walk back to your room and throughout this weekend, and walk on the, what I call the razor's edge of now, one step at a time.

It's miraculous, that now, miraculous. Take off clothes, just that. Who cares about the story of me?

You can go back to it. This is where something new can come in, only through that opening.

Eckhart Tolle Retreat Talk Titled Living the Liberated life

[Speaker 2] (0:14 - 0:26)

Sounds True and Namaste Publishing present Living the Liberated Life and Dealing with the Pain Body with the author of The Power of Now, Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (0:42 - 53:43)

It seems almost paradoxical we are going to spend some time together tonight in order to explore a dimension of consciousness that is beyond time. We are spending time together to move more deeply into the present moment and to experience a dimension of consciousness that opens up when your attention is completely present in this moment. And there are two levels of teaching, if you call it that, it's not really teaching, there are the words and there are the silent spaces in between the words.

Usually people don't pay attention to the silent spaces between words and in this, our civilisation there actually aren't many silent spaces anymore. In your head there may be an almost continuous dialogue unless you are beginning to encounter within yourself the dimension of stillness. What happens when you pay attention to a gap between sentences or between words, the silent space, immediately there is some stillness inside you because it's only through the stillness that you can listen to the silence, to become aware of the silence, of the gaps.

Now what does stillness mean, that's just a word, we could use other words, I sometimes use the word presence to describe this state of consciousness that is now emerging collectively on this planet, although at the moment only relatively few people are able to access it, but there is a state of consciousness that is emerging on the planet that is very different from the consciousness that has been dominant throughout human history and compared to that new state of consciousness that is emerging, a state that has been pointed to by many teachers in the past but has always been misinterpreted, the original purity of all those teachings has been misinterpreted by the human mind and completely misunderstood. So what does it mean, stillness, the human mind says stillness isn't interesting enough, it's a state of consciousness that is free of thought and yet you're fully alert, fully awake, fully present.

It doesn't mean you will never think again, thought will come in again, but you will always be rooted in that state as you learn to live in that state and this state emerges more fully and us sitting here together this evening, what's really happening beyond the personal level is that this state of consciousness here is emerging. On a personal level it might look as if I were telling you useful things, how to live free of problems, free of suffering, free of conflict, but it goes far beyond the personal level and the main, the essence of what I speak about and point to, you cannot actually understand through the mind because the essence is precisely beyond the mind. By mind I mean thought activity, mental noise.

Most humans are trapped in that continuous mental noise and identify with the mental noise as themselves, as me, and there's a continuous monologue or dialogue going on in the head and that grows, already young children start to develop it and gradually you identify with the mental noise and image arises as this is, that's me and you're completely trapped in this continuous stream of incessant thinking and that is, your sense of self, of me, gets identified with that, so my problems, my suffering, what about me, what's going to happen to me, it's a mental image of a sense of self that is never really at ease, never feels really at home, is always trying to get somewhere but never quite gets there. Many times it thinks it's got there but then realizes, oh no, I'm not there.

It tries to get to some state, some relief, some state of happiness or fulfillment, completion, perfection, in whatever way, no matter, the bank robber is trying to get there in some way but he's robbing a bank in order to get the money because he believes that the money will eventually enable him to feel a more intense aliveness, a more deeply rooted sense of self, of identity and that's of course an illusion but even the spiritual person who is practicing certain techniques for years is trying to get somewhere, a state of perfection, a future, this mind made sense of self is always reaching out to the future because it believes there's salvation there somewhere for me, at some point in the future I'm going to make it. Whether the making it is becoming wealthy or the making it is becoming a spiritual master or enlightened, basically it's the same mind structure still at work.

So to be condemned to an almost continuous state of unease, something is never quite right. I need to get somewhere. This moment is never quite right or very, very rarely, only when a desire has just been fulfilled there's a moment of relief and then immediately something else arises.

That's something to observe in oneself, that state of unease with what is, with the present moment. That's part of the old consciousness, it's embedded in the very structure of the human mind. So no matter what you do, you can't get rid of it on the level of mind.

And then gradually all this mental noise becomes self-serving. It simply is there to reinforce itself, it goes around in vicious circles. And all we're doing here is allowing a deeper dimension of consciousness to emerge because it wants to emerge.

Otherwise there wouldn't be much chance. You can't make it happen. But you can allow it to happen.

The very fulfillment of your existence as a human being on this planet is the flowering of consciousness. Stepping out of the conditioned self, the conditioned mind, all the mental noise is conditioned by the past. Stepping out of conditioned sense of self, my history, my story, me, equating your sense of identity with your story, your history, all that's the conditioned.

And it is possible to step out of that. And what's, what is there beyond the conditioned little me, the little sense of self derived from the past, and that needs the future for its fulfillment, and at the same time feels threatened by the future, because the future is going to kill it. So it's a double-edged sword that continues running towards the future, away from this moment, seeking fulfillment.

At some future moment I'm going to get there, but at the same time feel deep down the future is also going to kill me. So humans live between these two, fear and desire movements. And for most people, all their motivations, all their actions arise either out of fear or desire.

They're all connected with future. And that also is embedded in the very structure of the human mind. It's interesting to observe it in oneself, even to observe that you are not at ease in this moment, even to observe that just 10 seconds ago you were thinking about your dinner tonight, or the problem that you're going to have to face tomorrow, even to observe that is already the beginning of another consciousness emerging.

If you can observe what the mind is doing, that is not part of the mind. You're not judging it, you're simply watching that. That is the stillness emerging in you.

That is the dimension of consciousness that is deeper than the mind, vaster, of infinite potential. It contains infinite vast potential. And once you access that, you will find it amazing that humans have lived for thousands of years trapped in a sense of self that was so limited to see themselves as a little person with a little history and a little future, and to be trapped in that sense of self.

It's such an illusion, and it's so, it's a prison. So just to watch, even at this moment, is, am I at ease, or is there some part of me that wants to be somewhere else? Do I want to be in the future, or am I trying to get away from this moment?

It's always, that is the essence of the old state of consciousness, and when you observe it, that's the beginning of a new consciousness. I sometimes, it's sometimes called the witnessing consciousness. You observe what the mind is doing, so you're not totally trapped in it, and that is only the beginning.

That is only the beginning, and then it emerges more deeply, more fully, as the state of stillness, which you may get glimpses of even here, and perhaps at this moment, when the mind is not moving anymore. You're alert, completely present, completely open to the aliveness of this moment, and most humans are completely, totally unaware of that, that the fact that there is an infinite source potential for aliveness concealed in what looks like so insignificant to the mind, and that's this moment. It's like the atom.

The tiniest of things contains vast energy, once it opens up. So the very life energy, energy that sustains the whole universe, you can have access to it through the little doorway that opens up when your attention moves into this moment, and it always means you become very alert, very present. That's stillness.

Stillness, alertness, presence, they're all one. So stillness, don't misinterpret stillness as meaning you're going off to sleep, or the kind of stillness you have when after a few drinks you might drift off a bit in life, you can't remember your problems, so you feel a little bit better. But even drink can sometimes mean, people sometimes drink to get rid for a little while of the torture of their mind telling them what their problems are, the problematic sense of self, the me.

So they drink and for a moment they don't remember their problems, but of course there's a price to pay because you go, there's a lowering of consciousness, so you go lower towards the vegetable realm. And what we are doing, we are not moving in that direction here. It's fine for vegetable, plant life has unbelievable beauty and aliveness to it, and in many ways it's more enlightened than humans, because it doesn't inhabit a world of problems.

This flower has no problems, and even by the time it comes to die, it's not a problem, it just dies. And yet there is an aliveness there, and it's also an expression of consciousness, a beautiful expression of the divine consciousness, just as you are. So we are moving beyond thinking to a more awake state, a more alert state, a more present state, compared to which the thinking state is a dream-like state.

To be immersed in thinking, this mental dialogue, you're only peripherally aware of your surroundings, because you might be walking in the woods in the most beautiful surroundings, but you're thinking about your problems, my problems, what about me? You're not there. If then something happened that would give you a little shock, you would suddenly, for a moment, enter a state that is present and alert.

If you were suddenly confronted with a bear, you would come out of your thinking state, out of your problems, and there would be the bear. And that's not a problem, it's a situation that requires probably some action. Either you move away, or you make a noise, or whatever.

But the difference between that state is so, and this is a state that can happen to some humans accidentally in certain situations. You're driving, and suddenly, something goes wrong, and you know an accident is imminent in two or three seconds. And you've been driving for two hours, immersed in your world of problems, stress, this, that, to deal with whatever.

And suddenly, all that drops away. This is an example when the state of consciousness that I'm pointing to emerges accidentally, and many people have reported they knew an accident was inevitable within two or three seconds, or five seconds. And they suddenly found themselves in an inner state of extreme calm and serenity, and they were totally there, totally alert.

All fear had left, and later they survived to tell about it. Said, this was amazing, how could this be, because it's such a dangerous situation. And I felt so serene suddenly.

There are many reports, and many similar examples. So this state of consciousness can sometimes emerge briefly, usually accidentally. Some people seek it out through dangerous activities.

It's the only way they can be free of the burden of their mind, the burden of the personality, of the me, the burden of this problematic me that they think that's their reality. Because when they're climbing up the wall of the mountain, they can't think about that. They have to be present, totally alert in the now.

But when they come down, they get back in their car, they re-enter the world of problems. So they can't be in the state, they think they need to be engaged in that activity to be in that state, but that is not the case. You can choose that state now.

If you're sitting here, what I'm saying now might not yet apply to all humanity. But if you're sitting here, there's enough consciousness in you to choose a state that is free of the problem-making mind. And you realize when you enter the now, that there is no problem ever in this moment.

There may be a situation that you need to deal with, that is never a problem. Anything that comes into the now, you may need to take action, do this or that, and you do it. It arises out of that state of consciousness, of presence.

But dwelling mentally on situations, investing the situations with the sense of me, self, and going around in circles, lying in bed at night, sleepless. And wherever you go, you can't stop this machine, the noise machine in the head, because you don't remember where the button, the off switch is. That is torture.

The most wonderful realization is that in the state of consciousness that I call presence, there are no problems. Perhaps challenges, but they never turn into problems. If you cannot take action, everybody in this room has certain, is involved in a certain life situation.

Some better than others. Some life situations are relatively good and comfortable. Other life situations may be problematic.

There may be shortage of money, there may be health problems, there may be relationship problems, work, and many kinds of completely fictitious problems created by the mind. What if this happens, or that happens, or I lose this, or I don't get that, or he leaves me, or she leaves me. So another level of problems is total fiction.

It comes about through the incessant mental noise. It's a very radical reversal of the normal way to live. Take your attention, whenever you think you can't stand your problems anymore and it's getting too much, and you wake up in the morning and say, oh, not another day.

No human is meant to live like that, waking up in the morning and saying, I can't face another day. And nor in nature that doesn't happen. The flower too, when the sun rises, the flower opens up, because it responds to the sun, and no flower has ever said, I can't face another day.

No animal has ever said, I can't face another day, except perhaps animals that are suffering deeply because of what humans have done to them. But no animal in the wild would... an animal wakes up, and a plant, a flower wakes up, and immediately is in a state of aliveness.

And you can see it. Jesus talked about it when he often would say, look at the flowers. And when he said, look at the flowers, he meant it.

He wants you to really look and see the incredible beauty and aliveness. And if you look deeply enough, you will see that they are actually celebrating life. And this is how life is meant to be.

Humans are meant to celebrate life too, in a completely different way. They also are an expression of the divine consciousness. Now we impose our world view also on nature.

So whatever world view you have, gets projected. So humans these days say, the whole of nature is a struggle for survival, because that's their own life, that's their own mind. If you were free of that mindset that says everything is a struggle for survival, you would actually see that most of the time, nature is celebrating life.

And the moments of struggle are very short. Animals mostly live in a state of ease. When they get hungry, they might kill.

That's a very brief moment compared to most of their existence. So to carry this burden of problems, which is the mind, which gets heavier as people grow older, often the burden increases. Past gets heavier and heavier inside.

You carry a heavier and heavier burden of past. But even young people carry a heavy burden of future. And gradually, you can no longer feel life.

You can no longer feel the aliveness that is in the very depths of your being, because of the mental noise. It covers up an incredible deep sense of vitality and aliveness that is life itself. But it's covered up by mental noise.

Jesus talked about it. He said, I want you to have life and more abundant life. I want you to have more abundant life.

He didn't mean more abundant consumer goods. He didn't mean more shopping malls. He was not talking about the things in life.

He was talking about life itself, the aliveness of life itself. And if the only place where you can be in touch with that is through the stillness, underneath the mental noise, the vibrantly alive stillness, presence, underneath the mental noise. There you get, because the stillness is also a feeling of intense aliveness.

That's the place where you are connected with something much vaster than the little me. When you touch that incredible sense of aliveness, the only place in time where you can do that is now. When you touch that, a vastness of life is there.

And as you have access to that more and more, you begin to, that begins to be in your life, not just as a glimpse, but for longer periods you dwell in the state of connectedness, as I sometimes call it, connectedness with being. Where life feels good. It feels good to be alive.

This is the most simple terms I could, even a child would understand that. It feels good to be alive. But in that goodness that is life itself, out of the goodness that is life itself, things emerge.

Out of the vibrantly alive stillness that is in your very being, things emerge out of that. Thoughts may come suddenly out of it, but they will be creative, new thoughts, not the old gramophone records that you've been thinking about for 10 or 20 years. Insights, realizations come out of that, because that's the source of all creativity.

So you're touching life itself, not the manifest it was, life before it becomes something in its original form, or rather no form, the formless life that you are. That is your essence. To be connected with that is to become free of the world, of attachment to the things of the world, of grasping and clinging and needing.

And there's an incredible sense of, you suddenly know how precious you are as that life. No matter whether on the external level you are an important person or a non-important person, that's the world telling you you are important, or the world telling you you haven't made it. That has nothing to do with finding that place within yourself where you become free of that, and you no longer believe what the world is telling you, because after all, the world is insane.

And if you believe it, you believe what an insane world is telling you. If you doubt that the world is insane, pick up a history book, or switch on the news. It may not be 100% insane, but let's say 90%.

So you're allowing an insane world to tell you either that you are important and believe that, and a few years later the same world will tell you that you are no longer important. You've lost your position and somebody else is chairman of the board now. And you thought that was your identity.

And you might even have to return your American Express Platinum card. And that is painful. If your sense of identity was in that, something that is funny, really, to that person would be very painful.

My God, I'm nobody again. And I thought I was somebody. How can I survive without the Platinum card?

And then somebody else believes it when they tell you, you are no good because you haven't made it in the world. Oh, I failed. Life has treated me unfairly.

I've missed out on life. I never had a chance. Or I had a chance, but I didn't use it.

So the world telling you, the insane world now telling you, you are not important or you are nobody. Look who is regarded as important in the world. Actors, singers, whatever, politicians.

And most of them are miserably unhappy with the facade of happiness. And those are the idols of the world. So your sense of self is no longer derived from that.

And that's a wonderful liberation. What the world is telling you becomes completely irrelevant. Because your aliveness has such depth to it, you know that nobody could take that away from you.

And indeed, nobody's confirmation that your life is incredibly valuable. And self-esteem, you no longer need to tell you that you are good enough when you are in touch with the very goodness of life itself. Until then it may be helpful to have little affirmations telling you that you are good enough.

Then you move beyond when you are in touch with the very goodness of life in yourself. Then you no longer need mental concepts of who you are. And this is what Jesus meant when he said, I have overcome the world.

Not that he had any worldly power. So that is, that depth of aliveness is here in you at this moment. But you need to be open to that.

And a very helpful point of entry, and many of you are living it already, is to feel the aliveness that is in every cell of your body at this very moment. Every cell is vibrant with life throughout your being. And to feel that, to be connected with that.

You don't have to, and you'll notice when your attention moves into the body, the inner energy field of the body, I sometimes call it the inner body, but you could also call it the joy body because there is deep joy in that aliveness. When your attention is there, the noise suddenly subsides in the head because the attention has moved from the head into your being. And you are then rooted in the now.

You are rooted in your being. And it's almost as if your whole body were coming to life suddenly. That's what Jesus meant when he said, your whole body will be filled with light.

That is the light of consciousness. And then there's still plenty of consciousness left to perceive the world as you sit there and feel the aliveness in your being. You're rooted in the now.

You're rooted through that, that's the opening, that's the doorway. You're rooted in being. Everything is an expression of the divine consciousness, one form or another form.

Every organ and cell, DNA and so on, has vast intelligence that the human mind could never understand. Even in a thousand years we'll still be exploring how the body works. It's so easy to be connected with an intelligence that is greater than the mind.

Simply feel the aliveness of the inner body and you will soon come to a place of, feel there's joy there. The joy of life itself. And it doesn't depend on what's in your life as the circumstances, because circumstances come and go.

They may be negative at the moment, they may be positive at the moment. They rarely remain the same. If they're positive now, they may get negative next year.

There are constant fluctuations out there, but there is a place that is free of that. And people in prison who have written to me are practicing that, and living that, and finding an intense joy and aliveness despite the dreadful conditions of their external circumstances. So those external circumstances, I call that your life situation.

Good, bad, indifferent, it changes. You lose things, you gain things. Life situations continuously fluctuate.

And even the greatest success story eventually will move into old age, loss of beauty, or loss of wealth, or loss of the ability to move. On the external level, nothing lasts. The Buddha discovered that.

Everything is impermanent on the external level. And yet there is a place where you're free of those things. Those things can no longer influence, affect your state of being.

So you become free of the world. And it doesn't matter, if you're homeless now, you might think, okay, first I need to find a home, and then I will practice going within and going deeply into the now. Because there's a fear, which is the mind's conditioning, if I go deeply into the now now, I will be stuck in this now that I don't like that I'm in now.

That's a very subtle thing, a very subtle resistance. I don't like my life circumstances, the mind says, so I'm not going to go into the now, because I don't want to be in the now. I want to get to the future, and once I get to the future, then I'll go into the now.

Perhaps the American Express Platinum card will take me into the now. And of course, the miracle is, you do it now. No matter what the circumstances of your life are, there's no excuse for not doing it.

And the quickest way out of undesirable circumstances, homeless, even prison, penniless, or even physical condition, the quickest way out of that is to enter the present moment and connect with the vast aliveness that is there. Just waiting for you to touch it, and then that vast aliveness, you're not just practicing that when you're sitting still in your room, it's not just a meditation practice, it's a way of being. So you begin to dwell in that state of connectedness, and you will notice how suddenly there's more creativity in your life.

There are more insights, realizations of what is the right thing to do. You will wake up and suddenly know, oh, this is what I have to do. Because they arise out of that state, life itself begins to live through you and move through you.

The little person struggling to make a living or to be a success or to make it is not really needed anymore, the struggling little me. So life itself begins to move through you, and it does it much better than you could ever do. Because ultimately you are alive.

By you I mean the fictitious little me in the head. And then very quickly, life situations actually improve, because you bring to every moment that deep sense of aliveness, of being there, and you can honor this moment fully. That means immediately a sense of deep care flows into what you do, all your interactions.

When you're completely there, you give your complete attention to whatever task is at hand. And even if you were in a job that the mind tells you is boring and you want to get out of, the quickest way out of that, and you might have been stuck in it for years, thinking I need to get out of it, is to bring a different state of consciousness to it. Giving care even to the tedious things that you have to do and bring that to it.

That means the resistance to the now suddenly goes. And the resistance to the now is an essential aspect of the conditioned human mind. It is always fighting this moment in one way or another.

No, I don't want to be here. I need to be somewhere else. And that's when the resistance to the now goes, then life can move freely through you.

Then problems disappear. And of course nothing is made into a problem. Challenges still come, but you respond to them in the now.

Out of that sense of presence and aliveness you see, what can I do about this situation now? And you become still. And then action arises out of that state.

No longer the agonizing, oh me and my problems. And you never again will wake up in the morning and say, I can't face another day. It's a dreadful condition, but many humans are in that.

You will then wake up and you will open your eyes and the mind is not going to start immediately and tell you what your problems are, so immediately the burden descends on you of, oh I can't face it anymore. You wake up and immediately connect with the aliveness that is in every cell of the body and hold that state. It feels good to be alive and the mind hasn't, why does it feel good to be alive?

Because the mind hasn't started up yet and reminded you of your problems. Because underneath that it always feels good. Life is always vitally alive and beautiful.

And so life becomes a celebration continuously, not a needing to get to some future moment to become happy or become somebody or to make it. And the miracle is that everything flows with greater ease then. And you are even likely to be more successful as if it mattered.

Because whatever you do in that state is done with care and even love. You honour the now. You honour life itself.

You open your arms to life itself. That is love. That is a deep sense of care that you give to whatever arises in the now.

Yes, how can life not be cooperative if that is your state of being? And how can life be cooperative if you continuously say, no I don't want to be here. I want to be somewhere else.

Or even I want to be somebody else. So it's like being closed, resisting the now, denying the now, running away from the now. Anything but this, the mind says.

And then the shift happens. You honour life, then life can help you. It's been trying to help for years.

You just can't get through. The sun tries to shine. It doesn't mean you are big and powerful so you can keep out even life.

You are not separate from life. If you keep the shutters closed in a room, the sun just won't come in. It would love to come in, but if you keep the shutters closed, the sun doesn't really mind, but it would love to come in.

So that is the state of non-resistance to the present moment. And the most miraculous transformation of consciousness as you enter that state is there. And there is always, as we started off by pointing to the stillness, when you do not resist what is, the incessant mental noise slows down, subsides, huge gaps arise in the mind stream.

Because almost all the mental noise is continuous resistance. So you open yourself up to just this moment. That is the ultimate spiritual practice.

And nothing could be more simple, and yet it seems so difficult because of the conditioning of the mind.

[Speaker 2] (53:55 - 54:02)

This concludes Session 1. Our program continues with Session 2.

[Speaker 1] (54:47 - 1:52:38)

Session 2 with Eckhart Tolle Fear and trust can't go together. Trust is simply the absence of fear. So you cannot make yourself trust or even affirmations won't do it.

You can even repeat affirmations and put them on your bathroom mirror. I trust in life. I trust that life is supporting me.

But eventually you have to go even beyond the affirmation. And the trust arises naturally where you actually don't need any more affirmations because you're there, the reality of it is there. Affirmations are maybe a transitional stage when you haven't quite arrived at the reality of it.

Then you say, I'm wealthy. But when you have 50 million in the bank, you can take off the affirmation from your bathroom mirror. It's obvious you know you're wealthy.

You don't need to say it anymore. Bill Gates doesn't have the affirmation on his bathroom mirror. And that's only external wealth.

This is not going to save him. Even with that he cannot buy peace. But just giving that example to see when you have, when the reality is obvious and it's there, then you don't need the signpost anymore because every affirmation is a kind of signpost that points you in the right direction.

But there comes a point when the signpost isn't needed anymore because you have arrived. So that the trust, trust, when you feel you go into the inner body and then there's the first very subtle and then you feel increasingly more intensely the power, the aliveness, the stillness. And yet the incredible energy behind that.

And then you know that is actually, that is most, on the most fundamental level, that's, I am that. I am that. I am not the little me in the head.

And that is going to, that lives and acts through you. That power is there. And when you know yourself as that, that's trust.

Then you suddenly, trust is your natural state. No longer something you need to figure out how to get there. Trust is your natural state so that even the concept trust disappears because it's so natural you don't even have a word for it anymore.

Many concepts disappear when the reality to which the concept points arrives. The very mental concept of it is not really necessary anymore. I rarely talk about love, although I did this morning, but I don't talk about it too often.

It arises naturally out of the state of presence. And you don't even, you don't need to keep the concept in your head and tell yourself that I'm loving, a loving being. It's not needed anymore.

I sometimes surprised when people tell me things and I say, oh, people sometimes, because I'm kind of present and people say, oh, you're so patient. Oh, I'm so patient? I didn't know I'm patient.

I hadn't thought about it as patient. It never occurred to me that I'm patient. I didn't have this concept at all because patient still means that you're trying hard to be here.

There's some kind of effort involved in being patient. But when true patience is there, you don't even know you're patient. You're just present.

Patient still means you're half way, you're half there and half not there. You're practicing to be patient. Okay, I'll be patient for another half hour, but then I will have had enough.

So it's wonderful when all these concepts are not really needed anymore. But there is a stage when they may be helpful. There is a stage when the affirmation on the bathroom mirror is okay.

But there also comes a time when you go beyond that. You wouldn't want to be staring at a signpost. If you want to get to Rome, you wouldn't be staring at a signpost for years that says Rome, that way.

And then there are the collectors of signposts. They have a whole bunch stored up and then compare them. This compares to that one and this tradition and he said that and he said that.

And if you become a collector of signposts, then it's hard to let go because you have a precious collection. In a way, all teachings are signposts and you don't need to even identify with any particular form of teaching. There can be certain traps on the spiritual path to identify with one particular form in which a teaching comes.

And then he says, okay, I'm a Buddhist. And the other says, no, I'm a Sufi. And the other says, well, I'm a Zen Buddhist and you are Theravada.

Zen is actually superior. Again, images come in and they can be obstacles when you identify. Ego on the spiritual path can creep in at any stage.

So to look out, now ego means a new image has formed again in your mind of who you are. Ego is a very subtle thing you can observe in yourself. Comparison.

Ego likes to compare itself. Comparison is an ego device. So ego compares itself to others in a subtle way.

And whenever ego is a feeling of inferiority or superiority arises, as against others, both the feeling of, okay, I may not be as good as that person or as knowledgeable or as spiritual as that person, that's ego. Or feeling I'm more spiritual than that person, I've been practicing for longer, or my tradition is better than that person's, then that's the superior ego coming in. Even to have an image of yourself as spiritual, the ego goes into that.

Trying to live according to an image in your head, trying to be spiritual, to see yourself as spiritual, that's another ego trap. And then you become more unconscious in a way. Ego means unconsciousness has returned, and despite your meditation practice, then you find there are lots of things that if you have an image of yourself as spiritual, then there are lots of things you can't, you have to deny that arise inside you, and that would be, if you looked at them openly, they would be telling you, oh no, you're not that spiritual.

You have to push them aside. Anger, whatever comes up, if it no longer fits your self-image, you push it aside, and then it goes building up momentum like a boiling kettle, a boiling pot if I put the lid on, and the steam is building up, and then suddenly you get an outburst or a wave of depression. In Christianity, often they have tried to live according to what it's like to be a good Christian, trying hard, and anything that doesn't fit the self-image of me as a good Christian has to be pushed aside, and then you can't push it aside forever.

At some point, the unconscious will again emerge and overwhelm you as rage, as anxiety, as depression, a mood, a dark mood suddenly coming in. And so presence is to live free of self-images, because that's mind. It's conditioning.

Free of needing some image to tell you who you are. You don't really need that. And this is why I said you learn from animals, although animals have no self-image.

They are themselves. They act naturally, spontaneously, or rather, life acts through them. They have, of course, their limitations of their particular form, and yet they are more deeply connected to the source than humans in their normal state.

So, that's again, that's why it's so helpful to learn to watch an animal. It doesn't live through a self-image. It is itself.

It's a natural, the natural state. And what we are returning to is the natural, that's in India, as I sometimes use that expression, the natural state that humans lost a long time ago. So, that's wonderful.

You're returning to that. So, simply observe when some new self-image has formed, or some old self-image has returned, look so often, be aware of comparison, comparison as an ego device. In a subtle way, you're feeling better than, or not as good as.

There's the ego. Better than, not as good as. Another sign that you're living through a self-image is defensiveness.

Defensiveness arises when somebody questions your beliefs, questions a statement that you've made, doubts this or that that you associate with your self-image. So, observe defensiveness coming in. And it's always, you're always defending an image, because who you truly are doesn't need any defense.

It's so powerful, cannot be attacked, cannot be, it's totally beyond anything that could be injured or attacked in any way. It doesn't need any defenses. So, observing when it happens, when you observe it, you're no longer trapped in that unconscious movement.

When you observe that an image has arisen in your mind, and you've become identified with that, at that moment, oh, that's the, again, the unconditioned has come in. You're suddenly aware of it. When you're observing that you've become defensive about a position you have taken, may even be something spiritual, my mental position, you've identified with a position, which means an image has formed in your mind of me, and that needs to be defended.

Therefore, the Course in Miracles says, it has some wonderful statements, Whenever you become defensive about anything, know that you have identified yourself with an illusion. Whenever you become defensive about anything, know that you have identified yourself with an illusion. But the knowing is not part of the illusion, that's the beauty of it.

The moment you know that you have identified yourself with an illusion, the knowing is not the illusion. You have recognized the illusion, and in that knowing, you are free of the illusion. So, the more illusions like that you discover in yourself, the better.

Because every time you discover a mind pattern, an old mind pattern acting itself out, a self-image, defensiveness, grasping, clinging, the moment you become aware of patterns, the awareness or the knowing is not part of that. That's why it's so wonderful, the more you discover that's unconscious in you, the better. It doesn't mean that you have failed.

Discovering it is, this is how it works. To recognize it. To recognize illusion as illusion is not illusion.

You have recognized. The recognition is not part of the conditioned mind. The recognition is the unconditioned.

It sees, it just sees. So, this is the wonderful thing that means you can afford the luxury of allowing whatever arises inside you to arise. You don't have to deny anything when we do this work, if you want to call it work.

You don't need to deny anything, which you need to if you live through a self-image. Anything that doesn't fit the self-image is denied. But in this work, whatever arises, you allow it.

Emotional patterns, mind patterns arise, and there comes the recognition as they arise. When I say allow whatever arises to arise, you might ask, well, doesn't everybody live in that way? No, they don't.

The allowing implies that there is an awareness. And the awareness is not part of the conditioned. When I say allow, it implies there is a presence that observes the pattern as it unfolds, either in your head or externally as a behavior pattern when you're talking to someone.

So, just watch. The more you see, the more consciousness grows. The more unconscious patterns you discover in yourself, the more consciousness is growing.

So, it doesn't arise anymore to say, oh, I shouldn't be feeling this, I shouldn't have that thought, I shouldn't. This doesn't arise anymore. The deep, the allowing of inner states, it's a wonderfully liberating practice.

And then you know that there's no inner state that is actually you, no inner, no conditioned state is who you really are. That's why you're free to allow them. Otherwise, if anger comes, and you identify with it, oh, I shouldn't be that, I've been on the spiritual path for so many years and I'm still getting all this anger.

I shouldn't. Then you want to repress it or deny it or say, no, I'm not angry, I'm just... I'm never angry.

Don't accuse me of being angry. You are angry. The typical ego interactions.

Me unconscious, you are the one who is unconscious. And observe how mechanical defensiveness is. The mechanical nature, the condition, it arises almost like clockwork, almost automatically.

Somebody pushes a button and the reaction comes. And when people know you, after a while, if they want a reaction, they just push the button. It's like a robot.

A few months ago, I was walking in Stanley Park in Vancouver by the pond. Just an example of... I'm always watching around me because one can learn so much by simply watching people.

No, I don't mean... Animals, of course, are deeper learning, but you can learn about dysfunction by watching people. There was a man, an old elderly man, feeding the ducks with breadcrumbs.

And then two youngsters, teenagers on bicycles, 16 year old, came up. And they were wearing a badge, some voluntary workers, ecological voluntary working brigade or something. And they talked to the man who was feeding the ducks and said, Oh, do you know that feeding the ducks is actually bad for them?

Feeding them breadcrumbs because it fills up their stomach and doesn't give them enough nourishment. And he was feeding ducks. And then he said, Yeah, yeah, I know.

And he continued to feed the ducks. And then they said a bit more. And then the defensiveness came up.

He actually admitted that he knew it was bad for them, but somehow perhaps it gave him pleasure. Maybe it's the only interaction he has in life to feed the ducks. So the pleasure he derives from feeding the ducks was greater than knowing that it's actually harmful for them.

And then he said, Okay, I'm not stupid. Nobody's going to tell me what to do. I'm not stupid.

So ego reaction came like clockwork. And he started talking angrily and defending himself. It didn't make much sense because you can't defend behavior that you've just recognized as wrong.

But the ego doesn't care. It was an automatic defense mechanism. And he talked for several minutes, getting more and more angry, defending.

Now, what was he defending? A mental position, a mental image, his ego. And finally the youngsters who perhaps were present, seemed quite present or well trained at least, they said, Thank you for listening to us.

Bye bye. And then the man walked on. And I walked on and 50 yards further on I could see him.

He was again feeding the ducks. Now let's just see if presence had been there in him at that moment. Let's replay the same scenario.

He's feeding the ducks. The youngsters come, say, Do you know it's harmful? Perhaps the first statement was actually true.

He said, Yes, I know. And then he would say, I know you're absolutely right. But it just gives me so much pleasure.

I can't help it. I just feel that I need to feed the ducks. But you're right.

I'll stop now. Or I'll just give them the rest of what I have. But I know you're absolutely right.

But it's just that I love the ducks so much and it gives me so much pleasure to feed them. Now that is his true power would be arising where the ego would have said, No, you become annihilated. This is weakness.

Defend yourself. But if he had honestly expressed that, not needing to defend an image, then a true power would have arisen in him. His true power would have come forth into the ego that looks like becoming vulnerable.

Like becoming vulnerable. But it's not its true strength. And the whole interaction, the quality would have changed with it.

There might have been a true communication between two human beings, the youngsters and the old man. There might even have been love. It could have been a wonderful encounter.

But the ego didn't allow that. It needed to defend itself. People get more and more trapped in that.

And this is just a tiny example. Now imagine somebody living his whole life in that way. And most people are.

Not so much perhaps. Perhaps everybody in this room recognizes a little bit of that. Sometimes more than a little bit in their own lives.

But most people in this room are not totally, nobody in this room is totally trapped in those ego patterns. Everybody who sits here, there's some already areas of freedom where you go beyond ego opening up. Otherwise you wouldn't be here.

The ego wouldn't have allowed you to come here. Or if you had come anyway, it would have become too painful. You would have gone home by now.

Now the interesting thing, when presence, the dimension comes in and you observe defensiveness, then, oh God, there it is. And then sometimes through the simple fact of observation, you go beyond it because that's the power that is where you don't need the defensiveness anymore. And then there's the shift suddenly.

And always the mind will tell you, dangerous, defend yourself, protect yourself. So you learn by observing other human beings and then observing yourself, of course. The spiritual teaching or teacher, if it is true, says, okay, do you realize that you don't need to suffer anymore?

Are you fed up enough with suffering? Or would you like to hang on to suffering? Anybody who has come here today has already suffered enough.

Otherwise you wouldn't be here. So in a way, your suffering has been wonderful because it's taken you to this point. I know that I wouldn't be sitting here without having had dreadful suffering and pain.

So it's taken you here. And now the message that comes is, further suffering is not necessary if you voluntarily step into the new state of consciousness. You choose the kingdom of heaven.

Life doesn't have to drag you into it, kick you into the kingdom of heaven. It's painful. It did that to me.

But now my job is to tell people that you don't have to wait for that to happen to you. Choose the new state and you are able to do that. I wouldn't tell this to anybody, but not anybody comes here.

If you come here, your level of consciousness, the new consciousness is sufficiently emerged already for you to understand what I mean when I say you can choose to live in the state that is free of suffering. You can choose the state in which suffering is not possible anymore. Unhappiness does not arise.

Not a state in which you close yourself and you become, OK, nothing can touch me anymore. Protective shell, nothing to do with that, because if you have a protective shell around you, that means that all the beautiful and good things can't touch you anymore either. That's not what it is.

It's a state of complete openness, a state of such intense presence that unhappiness has nowhere to cling to anymore. Because unhappiness can only cling to a mentally made sense of self, a little me, past, which moves continuously in past and future and continuously ignores the now. So the realization that in the now there are no problems and there is no unhappiness.

And the unhappy me that lives through past and future dissolves as you become present. That's the teaching. That's the very same message that the Buddha gave 2,600 years ago and a few people got it.

And then misinterpretation started because the mind started getting in there and saying, OK, let's work this out. What does it really mean? How can we categorize it?

How can we make a system out of that? So a heavy superstructure of mind stuff arose on top of the beautiful teaching. So this always happens.

The mind tries to get in there and so the heaviness of religion arises on top of the purity and simplicity of the original teaching. And this is the simplicity of the original teaching. We are going back to that.

Freedom from pain. Freedom from pain is possible now. Now first that means you understand how pain arises.

It arises by not being present to this moment, by running away, by fighting, by denying, by running away internally from what is. So that's how pain arises. Always.

When you accept what is, the new state of consciousness immediately is present. So you can't separate acceptance of what is from the new state of thoughtless awareness. The moment you fully accept what is, the new state of thoughtless awareness is present.

The whole mind stuff is resisting what is. Its very existence, the very ground for its existence is the continuous state of resistance to what is. So resistance to what is and the old consciousness go together.

So our practice is to not resist what is and thereby access the power of life. And yet that may not immediately free you of all pain and suffering because humans have been in that state for many thousands of years and there is an energy field of pain that every human being inherits simply by the very fact that you are born into the human condition, into the unenlightened painful human condition, in ultimately mad human condition up to this point. You are born into that so every human being has a share of human pain that comes even from very...

As you are born into this world you are already born with a burden of pain. So this is a very important part of our practice and realization. This is not a facile thing of saying, OK, from now on we can all be happy.

It goes deeper than that and we are not running away also, we are not running away from the fact that in you there lives an energy field of residue of past human pain. On a personal level pain from childhood that leaves residues, energetic residues, different things, painful things that happened to you in childhood and of course far beyond that in time. But let's just talk from the level of your present existence in this form.

Pain that is carried over from your childhood and beyond and leaves, doesn't go away completely, it leaves residues of pain and energy fields, everything is energy. Then those energy fields get together because they feel, they vibrate at the same frequency. So emotional pain gathers into one mass of pain, contracted energy that isn't flowing freely, an energy that I call the pain body that humans carry inside, an energy field of pain.

And if you don't recognize that, no matter how much spiritual practice you do and even what we are doing here, if you do not see, if you do not recognize how the pain body operates, it will trick you every time and you will lose consciousness through it. So I want to address it now. So first we realize there is an energy field of pain in me that may manifest either as turbulence, anger, heaviness like depression, tightness, fear, whatever way it manifests, it's not pleasant, it's painful, it's past pain, residues, but very much alive still.

You carry it inside. But you're not always conscious of it and I talk about it briefly in one chapter of the book so we go into it a little bit more deeply now and now there's the added energy of presence that we take into the pain body. The pain body is sometimes dormant and sometimes active.

It becomes active when you suddenly feel it very strongly, when it needs to feed on further experience of pain. As it always has to do regularly, like it's a little entity almost, it needs feeding temporarily on the experience of further pain. And you will know that this has happened when a relatively insignificant trigger produces an incredible outburst reaction of pain.

A minor thing goes wrong or somebody says something or your partner does something or says something and there's suddenly a deep or even a thought comes in and suddenly it serves as a trigger for an immense arising of deep emotional pain. At that moment, the pain body, this energy field, has come up out of its dormant state. It is ready to feed on more pain.

It produces first two ways in which it... I haven't quite put it that clearly in the book. I'll explain it in the next book.

There are two ways in which it feeds on the further... because that's all it can feed on. The pain body consists of that energy of pain it needs.

Please, where can I get more pain? It feeds on your thoughts when it's ready to rise up. It will control your thinking.

It rises into the mind. And the mind, which is your thought activity, becomes aligned with the pain body. Every thought you think is destructive and painful.

And the pain body loves it. It gobbles up the energy of every thought that you think, every destructive and deeply negative thought. It eats it up, so to speak.

And it's having a good time. It's feeding. And at that moment, one way of putting it is one could say that that is the addictive quality of human pain.

Addictive because it loves its pain. When the pain body has taken you over and has succeeded in pretending that that's who you are, all your thinking is completely aligned with it. And it's feeding on it.

At that very moment, the least thing you want, the last thing you want, is to be free of pain. At that moment, pain is what you want because at that moment you are the pain body. And anybody who tells you that if I came into your life at that moment and gave you this message that a life free from pain is possible, you would hit me over the head.

Because the pain body would be there and I would be talking to the pain body and the pain body would be talking back at me. So the pain body needs to come in periodically and you all have experienced it with partners, finding the ideal partner and after a few weeks realizing that there's another side to them that periodically they become a little monster. And then thinking, oh, I must have made a dreadful mistake.

You haven't. Everybody has a pain body, including yourself. But it's a bit more difficult to see the little monster coming up in yourself.

Now, the pain body will use your thinking. It will feed on your negative and destructive thoughts. It can go on.

Now, how long the feeding time lasts of a particular pain body varies greatly from person to person. It could be a brief one, a pain body that feeds very quickly, could be an hour or two. Some pain bodies have a feeding time of several weeks, even months.

That's extreme. And in very extreme cases, there are some pain bodies that have virtually no dormant stage. They are continuously feeding and active.

But that's more rare. Much also happens. You sometimes meet people who are, and you look into their eyes and you can see the pain body is looking at you through their eyes and they are waiting for an excuse to have more...

They want you to give them a painful reaction. They want you to be angry with them. They want you to attack them.

That's people who are totally possessed by the pain body. So, level one, the pain body feeds on your thinking. Level two, the pain body feeds on the feedback of emotional pain from other people.

So, it will not only use your thinking, it might even predominantly use somebody else's reactions. In relationships, when the pain body is ready to arise and feed, it will provoke a reaction in your partner or the partner does it to you, pushes the right buttons because it wants pain. The pain body loves the drama.

This is why drama is an essential part of most relationships. The pain body needs feeding and you could be saying, suddenly it comes in. At the slightest trigger, there it is.

So, it feeds on the other person's reaction and that's where drama arises in the relationship. And it will give me more pain. Peace.

And the mind is aligned with it. So, the mind will find wonderful ways of rationalizing and it will add to it through heated discussions or shouting matches. And then the other person's pain body awakens and the two feed on each other until feeding time is over.

And the two pain bodies subside. They go to sleep, digesting food and then the relationship for a while is harmonious again. And then the cycle starts again.

So, pain body feeding on thinking, pain body feeding on other people's reactions. Now, I mentioned the unhappy me, a mind pattern that people are identified with, an unhappy sense of self. This mind pattern, when the pain body is active, becomes amplified.

It's energy, the energy of the unhappy me when the pain body moves into that mind pattern that already has been telling you your life isn't good enough and so on and you may not make it and life has passed me by and so on. Now the pain body moves into that mind pattern and its energy gets amplified ten times, twenty times, fifty times, a hundred times. In other words, the unhappy me, when the pain body arises and flows into that mind structure, the emotion flows into the mind structure, the unhappy sense of me becomes dreadfully unhappy and loves its unhappiness because that's what it consists of.

Now, all that it is, it is not a foreign body that lives in you. There's nothing that is not life energy. Even the pain body is life energy except that it isn't flowing freely.

It's got stuck somewhere. And when energy gets stuck and cannot flow freely, pain arises like a river. If a river cannot flow, water accumulates and pressure accumulates.

But it's really beautiful life energy. The water is still beautiful but there's pressure accumulating inside. That's what the pain body is.

Now, as we bring presence, this consciousness into the pain body, it can no longer fool you into completely identifying with it. The presence, as the pain arises, from now on, and many of you are already practicing that, pain arises, the pain body comes up and at that moment you will recognize it as the pain body. That's the beginning of freedom from it.

The recognition, when it comes, slight trigger, provocation, even a thought, deep pain arises in whatever form. In some people it's a very active pain, active, aggressive pain. In other persons it's a passive form of pain, poor little me, victim pain.

Doesn't matter which pain bodies have different qualities in different people. It may be turbulence or heaviness or tightness or constriction. It doesn't matter what it is.

As it arises, you will know there is a witnessing presence. And you watch, oops, there's the pain body, and you feel the energy field of it in your body. Often you can feel it in the solar plexus or stomach area, sometimes in the belly, as a dreadful sense of, oh, heaviness, or some people perceive it as a big hole, some gaping hole inside.

Or it may be intense anger. But whatever it is, you watch it. This is why sitting here is so helpful, because the witnessing presence, which is part of this new state of consciousness, gets so much strength simply by sitting in this energy field.

So the watcher will be there, watching the pain. So the pain cannot use your mind anymore. It cannot feed on your thinking because you are watching it directly.

It cannot creep into your mind and then become an unhappy me. So all that's left of the pain is an energy field of turbulence or heaviness, but the pain has not become an unhappy me, an unhappy sense of self, of who you are. That's the beginning of the end of the pain.

But our practice is allowing what is to be, and that also applies as long as the pain body is there in you, allowing the pain that is there in you also to be. That is a very powerful practice. So I'm not saying we are not fighting the pain.

We are not even trying to get rid of it. You bring the consciousness, which is a very compassionate state, of allowing what is its very powerful state. It implies you are present as the one who is able to allow.

You are the one who is able to allow the pain to be. You know you're not creating this pain at this moment because you practice accepting what is. So it's not pain that you are creating.

It's old pain. You bring the acceptance to the old pain. This wonderful state, this powerful practice, does not just concern what happens to you externally, allowing this moment to be as it is.

It includes the arising of pain in the pain body. You watch it, feel it, allow it. So you bring presence into it.

You meet the presence meets the pain body. Here's the pain body and there comes the silent space of presence. And you hold the state of presence as the turbulence happens.

Then the pain body is not replenishing itself. You've cut the link between the pain body and your thought processes. It's not feeding on your thinking anymore.

You're watching it. Now the best time to catch it and watch it is as it first arises in you. When you first notice it arising to immediately become very alert with every cell of your body and feel it.

There it is. And stay alert, stay present, continue to watch. This is the beginning of the transmutation of pain.

The more you watch, the less it can feed. It loses its energy charge every time you stay present as the watcher of it. It's not gaining new energy.

In fact, it's losing energy as the pain body but the very energy that was trapped in there as the pain body becomes part of the aliveness of who you are. Many people's life energy is to a large extent trapped in their pain body. They have little access to their aliveness because the pain absorbs so much of their aliveness and it's all trapped in there in a big unhappy me.

And nothing is flowing. There's no flow whatsoever. There's only a huge contraction.

Many human beings are one big contraction. That's amazing. The egoic state is one big contraction.

Nothing flows. And as the energy becomes freed that's in the pain body, there's an incredible increase in aliveness and vitality. And of course, pain goes.

It will not go the very first time you do it. You will have to do it many times. Many times it will try to arise again and it will arise.

Many times you will lose it. You will lose yourself in it again. That's alright.

It's all part of this. There will be times when it will take you over again. And afterwards you remember, oh, there it was and I missed it completely.

You might have gone through three hours of drama with your partner and afterwards you say, oh, that was the pain body. I missed it completely. That's alright.

Next time maybe you'll catch it and know that it's there. The good thing is that the pain body becomes actually your ally in your presence practice because without it very few people would have enough motivation to enter the new state of consciousness. Every time the pain body comes, until you know this fact, the pain body will trick you every time and you will lose consciousness every time.

But now that you know this, whenever it comes, it becomes incorporated into your practice of presence. So the more often it comes, the better it is. You're lucky if you have a strong pain body.

You're lucky. It's good for your practice. It can become a great teacher.

That is the most, actually the most powerful part of your practice is to work with the pain body and see how quickly the transmutation happens when it no longer is an unhappy me. It's simply pain. Not pleasant, but you can allow it and there's an incredible intensification of presence every time you bring it to the pain body.

Now those of you who have very dense or heavy pain bodies will need more intense presence. Most people that I know who have gone to become almost free of pain, not yet many who are completely free, but they will be, are people who have had very dense pain bodies because their motivation is stronger to be free.

[Speaker 2] (1:53:26 - 1:53:35)

...and Namaste Publishing present Living the Liberated Life and Dealing with the Pain Body. Session 3 with Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (1:53:51 - 2:09:15)

In Eastern terms we are talking about karma. Karma really, ultimately, is all the conditioning from the past including the past pain that you mistakenly believe is who you are. Karma is to be identified with all past conditioning and to be condemned to relive and act out continuously your past conditioning.

So pain body is an important aspect of karma. So what we are addressing here is going beyond the unconsciousness that is karma. What we are talking about here is actually the dissolving of karma.

There would be no end to karma otherwise because it renews itself. That is why it is often likened to a wheel. It renews itself continuously.

This is an end to pain, an end to suffering. Use your relationships in your practice and realize that no matter who you choose as your partner, they will have a pain body. Don't look for the ideal partner without a pain body.

And that is good. Use the relationship because it is so much easier to become aware of your own pain body in a relationship than if you live alone. Great opportunity for practice.

If both of you understand how it works, you could have an agreement that you will help each other when the pain body arises in the other person so that the other can stay very, very present instead of going into reactivity. Stay very, very present. And if the partner gets taken over by the pain body, stay so present that you allow it without reacting and thinking that that's who that person is.

Allowing it. If your partner doesn't want to cooperate, you just do it for yourself. It only takes one person, ultimately, to be free.

It's great if he or she does. For many women, pain body arises as the approaching menstrual cycle comes. I mentioned it briefly in the book.

Because there is so much collective female pain. One aspect of pain body is collective human pain. Now, collective may be the pain of a nation that you belong to.

Certain nations have more of a heaviness to them than other nations. The new world has relatively less heaviness to it than the old world. Because the old world, Europe, Asia to some extent, there is so much past there.

The heaviness of past and the heaviness of past pain is very much apparent. Certain countries, you just get off the plane and if you are sensitive, you feel the energy field of the collective pain body. Eastern Europe, in many countries, you can feel it the moment you step.

Germany, I feel it the moment I step off the plane. Russia. And every individual who lives part of their pain body is the collective pain body.

Pain body is never a personal problem of yours. It's a human condition. It's your share in the human condition.

Not a personal problem. There are no personal problems. Every pain that you have in your life is your share of the human condition manifesting in a particular form.

One aspect of the collective pain body is the nation, the national. United States has some pain body but less karma. There's less karma here than European states and certainly some European states.

And even such a thing as a relatively short-lived like Vietnam War or something adds a bit to the collective pain body, the experience. 50,000 men killed in some distant country and Secretary of State at that time in his autobiography now says, well, in retrospect, it was probably a mistake. Human madness.

Just one more manifestation of human madness. But if you and some of you were actually, I know, had to go there and suffer pain there and that's fine. You work with that now.

Now there's also female collective pain body. Just as there's a male collective pain body, the female collective pain body that every woman partakes in has to do with dreadful pain suffered particularly through women being treated as slaves and as worthless property for thousands of years. Not always.

There was a time before that when women had their rightful place. But for thousands of years in most countries, women became victims of the patriarchal mind-dominated state of consciousness. So that becomes particularly pronounced when the menstrual cycle starts.

The very thing that is the femininity in you on the biological level is very painful. It awakens the female pain body just as it happens. And this is in the old traditional teachings in Buddhism they say, no, women can never make it.

They can't become enlightened because every time they go through their cycle they lose consciousness. So they say, OK, we'll have to exclude women. And they did.

And so it's become more and more lifeless by doing that. And it's become more and more mind-dominated. The very fact is that the opposite is true.

If women can use that knowing that that is the time particularly when the pain body arises and become present at that time it will be through that that women become very quickly now free of their pain body by bringing presence into especially when the pain body arises at the approaching menstrual cycle bring presence into that and become very alert watch the pain arising watch it, allow it to be be compassionate towards it which is what the allowing is be compassionate, the compassionate one who allows the pain to be and who is able to hold it to hold the turbulence the state of presence is always a gentle embracing of what is it's bringing a gentleness to it which is a very powerful gentleness bringing the gentleness to it and embracing what is and holding it in that embrace and you stay present as you hold your pain the pain and watch the turbulence of it hold it the more you hold it the stronger very quickly your sense of presence grows much much stronger as you hold the pain and the pain will slowly lessen but it no longer matters because your acceptance of the pain is so total you are not making that moment into a means to an end because I want to get to the end of my pain your acceptance of pain is complete and that's where your spiritual power lies in fully accepting it but of course now it hasn't become you, it hasn't become an unhappy me you are fully there you are fully present with it you fully accept that there is a pain body vibrating in you and you may have to hold that pain for quite a while when the cycle comes it can go on for a few days and bring presence to it you may occasionally lose it and then remember again and be present with it again by losing it I mean it may succeed in moving into your mind and control your thinking again and then suddenly you remember and you hold it, holding it so that pain becomes an incredible teacher and every time it happens you bring the presence to it that's why women are going there is always more women coming to consciousness groups than men women will move forward more quickly now than men I've seen that, I'm seeing it all the time and part of the reason is that they will be able to work with their pain bodies which up to now has looked has been a great obstacle now becomes a great help as you bring the presence to it men still are less in touch with their bodies women of course are also in the mind but men are even more deeply entrenched in their mind structures so there is a difference they of course also have pain bodies but the predominant thing for men is identification with their head the predominant thing for women is identification with pain body so these are just the focal points wonderful practice and I'd love to know those of you who have already been practicing after reading the book how you're doing and what obstacles there are where it is becoming difficult or any questions that arise out of that but it is so this practice is so easy and so wonderful and so powerful that it's amazing that it's taken humans so long to get to this point but transformation can be very quick now very quick so make your pain body into your ally your pain body is not your enemy when you make it into an enemy that's the old mind thing starting over and making even the pain body into a problem how can I get rid of it forget about getting rid of it just watch it that does it, just watch and then at first the pain seems overwhelming and the more you bring your presence to it the more you realize how powerful your presence actually is and that the pain ultimately just ripples on the surface of the vastness of who you are all human pain ultimately is surface ripples or little waves pretending to be very big waves and when you realize the vastness of your being then very quickly you realize ultimately it's just a little bit of pain but it blew itself up to gigantic proportions that's the practice of liberation it doesn't take long people ask me sometimes well how long do we have to do that for that can vary from person to person depending on the density of the pain body and other factors it doesn't really matter the practice itself is beautiful but I have seen people with extremely heavy pain bodies reducing the energy charge of their pain body by about 80-90% in two years of practicing this now that's people with incredibly dense pain bodies so that is possible it is not that you need a lifetime of practice to become or even as some traditional you will make it, you will need some teachers may tell you ok you need 5 more lifetimes or you will make it in your next lifetime or in 20 years time I will give you liberation after you have given me all your money let's ask a question if one arises is the microphone going there while the microphone travels there we are present not waiting for anything to happen

[Speaker 3] (2:09:23 - 2:09:51)

hello I am wondering how you handle when two people's pain bodies collide for example my wife who I love very deeply there is my raging pain body and there is my pain in the ass body which sometimes rages back and I am wondering how one handles that

[Speaker 1] (2:09:51 - 2:21:31)

yes now use the relationship as an essential part of your practice the pain body is not there continuously as you know it arises at times and it will start arising in one person either you or your partner be there as it arises in yourself watch the beginning of it the beginning of pain that implies I wouldn't be telling this if you did not have the necessary degree of presence to be there as the witness but you have now if only after sitting here for 3 hours there is enough presence for you to be there as the witness of the pain as it arises if you catch it at an early stage it is easier to stay present and it won't take you over if it arises so quickly and that happens in certain pain bodies whose energy field predominantly is anger anger has a fiery quality to it and an angry pain body as opposed to a heavy depressed pain body an angry pain body you have virtually no time to watch it arising because it arises like an explosion and is there fully fledged in one second so if it is an angry pain body it is very hard to watch it arising because it arises explosively if it is a different pain body a heavy one, fearful one it is easier to watch it arising and trying to get into your mind so being there as it starts the partner can be very helpful because you may already at an early stage become identified with it and start to argue and of course the arguing will already be energized by the pain that lies behind the mental rationalizations and arguments and your partner may still be present and become intensely present and watch as your pain body arises your partner watches the arising if you can't watch the arising of your own pain body which sometimes you may not be able to yet your partner can do it for you almost that's how wonderful the relationship can work your partner becomes the witness if you lose the witness your partner becomes the witness that can be a very powerful practice so what then happens if I am with a partner I can see the pain body arising and already creeping into her mind wanting me to react and enter the state of intense presence which is also a state of great openness and you feel immediately every cell of your body vibrates with life and you hold that state of complete openness and presence and you watch the arising of the partner's pain body going through the mind now it will try every trick to pull you into unconscious reaction to the pain body pain bodies have extreme cleverness your partner will try every trick it will push buttons that have worked in the past every time in making you unconscious say just the right thing that he or she knows is going to make you unconscious and give an emotional reaction and you stay present do it for them if they lose themselves in the pain body you hold the presence and watch how the pain body tries every trick to pull you into unconsciousness and that presence it emanates as an energy field around you so if you are with someone if you stay intensely present there is an emanation of presence around you it's very hard for a pain body to remain active for long in the energy field of presence even if it comes from another person now it may be that the pain body will remove itself the person will run out of the room or jump in the car and drive off or there will be a sudden and this can happen and it's miraculous in the middle of being taken over by the pain body there is an awakening and there is a sudden aware presence that suddenly is able to watch the intense pain taking place it could even happen in the middle of a shouting you are shouting at your partner and at that moment the presence arises and what that feels like is like you are an actor on stage acting out a script a very powerful script forgotten that you are acting out a script and suddenly there is a remembering that this is just acting out an acting out of a conditioned pattern and there is suddenly a watching presence there that's amazing so you help each other if the other person loses him or herself you stay present presence never means that you withdraw or protect yourself and you need to be this is why being here is helpful to become familiar with the state of presence some people mistake it for a state of aloofness when let's say you are being attacked by your partner's pain body and then you go into withdrawal it looks like this that's not presence and then even the little me can say I am beyond such I am not touched by the pain body I am beyond such unconsciousness so presence is open complete it's the allowing you allow your partner to be where he or she is it's a deep allowing vast power comes with that and again you are embracing whether you embrace your own pain or you embrace your partner's pain and you can remain in a state of love and you realize there is a movement of pain and you don't need to point it out through words that probably wouldn't work anyway at that point but also be careful that the pain bodies are very cunning it is possible that your pain body may be arising and projecting something at that moment and saying to your partner there is your pain body all kinds of things can happen but if you are present that will be fine I know of some couples who give themselves a secret signal when the other notices the pain body arising in the partner and for some that works a little hand signal but it can be sometimes it doesn't work at all when the pain body has it the pain body is already there and is being told something and of course the reactive force can be very strong one signal that definitely doesn't work that somebody suggested to me so it is helpful sometimes after you've had an interaction governed by the pain body to talk about it and see where it started where it came in first how it used the mind how it used arguments and mental positions of me being right and you being wrong how it moved into those mind structures and talk about it afterwards it is a good practice to retrospectively bring presence into an event when you got completely taken over by it so after consciousness has returned you kissed and made up and had a nice meal or whatever else you have afterwards and then talk about it that was the pain body did it start in you or in me let's trace it back to the beginning that was the beginning moment when you didn't phone me to let me know you were going to be late or you didn't put the garbage out it can start with very insignificant things so retrospectively to bring presence into the whole growth of it and then next time see if you can be present as it happens wonderful practice and whenever you lose it afterwards see where you lost it not in some kind of oh I have failed to strengthen the little me that isn't good enough no just looking at it objectively see that's where it started that's where the whole pain movement started that's good practice too so talk to your partner so you can help each other in it it makes it easier if you help each other because it's always one partner when it comes into one person the other will still be for a little while conscious so that's a great advantage next time I come let me know how it's going the mic is coming

[Speaker 5] (2:21:31 - 2:21:47)

I wanted to ask you about consciousness in children and if we can prevent them from having the pain body

[Speaker 1] (2:21:47 - 2:29:23)

oh that's a good question asking about consciousness in children and if we can prevent children from having or developing a pain body now many children absorb pain body at an early age from their parents pain body that adds greatly to some pain is already present in every human being even as they come into this world that adds greatly to the personal pain body you absorb the pain it happened my pain body grew very quickly in the first 6-7 years of my life because my parents pain bodies were both there with great intensity many homes are like that children absorb their parents pain body now of course you are asking the question for the people in this room there is consciousness moving in the most helpful thing you can do with children is to bring consciousness into your own pain body or if you live with a partner both of you do it so that you don't emanate and act out continuously pain body and then they absorb it but even those children or parents are not getting lost in their pain body they will still have a certain amount of pain and many children even 3 or 4 year olds you can often observe how an angel within a few seconds can be transformed into a screaming monster the transformation is so amazing we take it for granted that is normal this beautiful being light shining out of his or her eyes not much mind started yet the egoic me is not very strong yet so there is still a lot of being flowing through their eyes and suddenly they go into dreadful contraction and throw themselves on the floor and start screaming that's the pain body and it's relatively short lived with children because their mind isn't developed enough for the pain body to hang on in their mind for a long period of time so it goes through quickly and leaves them it subsides again quickly now the greatest thing you can do for children is to point out to them that there is something happening after an event like that a screaming fate or other children may do other things extreme withdrawal to say what happened when this energy do you remember yesterday when you had the screaming fate what happened there, who was that I see by talking, by pointing out that there was an energy movement in the child and perhaps giving it a name you can help the child to stay present and watch it as it arises you can't do it in the middle of it you'll have to do it afterwards you can't talk to a screaming monster but when the angel is back you talk to the angel and say who was that monster not to induce any guilt or anything like that but in an interested way isn't that funny, where does that come from has it got a name and then next time it happens just as it arises oh there, so and so is back you can say it even while it's happening although of course that won't wake them up at that point but a little bit of awareness will be there at that point and after it has subsided you say again oh there it was again, wasn't that funny and if you can catch the arising of the pain body in the child just as it first starts you can say oh it's coming on, can you feel it that means very quickly the witnessing presence in the child will grow and they can actually watch the movement of the pain body in themselves and that is wonderful that's something that every parent everybody who sits here can do easily so you are not trying to get rid of it it's almost like it's a phenomenon that you and the child together contemplate say wow and you have to admit openly if your own pain body has taken you over you can say do you know what that was the same thing happened in me what happened this morning you talk to the child that was mine and a point may come when the child may tell you oh there's your pain body that is a truly functional home when that happens and children can do that and they would love to be there as the watcher it's like a game, it's fun here's something to surrender to now even with something before we ask the next question even with something like that this is a minor irritation unless your pain body is ready to awaken in which fact it could be a big irritation unfortunately it's stopped now anything like that you can practice even with little irritations practice, see if you can be in complete acceptance of that what was up to this point irritating just completely allowing it allowing it totally so you work with it, whatever it is you work with it, allowing it totally and see what happens anything that you allow totally takes you into peace into the state of great peace it's amazing anything that you allow completely so the work with children is wonderful

[Speaker 4] (2:29:26 - 2:29:44)

all of us have pain bodies as you point out and most of us go to a job and I'm wondering if you can recommend ways in which we can use what we do at work

[Speaker 1] (2:29:45 - 2:40:14)

now at work usually you go into an environment that is dominated by little me's and egos and big ego structures, unconsciousness at work many big organizations are still run there are maybe a few exceptions but many organizations are still run by that consciousness, that state of consciousness so a great help is not to expect others to be conscious not to expect consciousness where there isn't consciousness you will be very often, as you do this practice for yourself you will very easily observe unconsciousness and pain bodies arising in other people at work, being acted out through their mind and it will happen continuously in some companies more than in others and it's the same practice because it's basically a relationship, it's bringing presence into relationships when pain body arises in somebody else don't go into the reactivity that would be the little me fighting somebody's pain body which can easily trigger your own pain body and you get a big argument the practice is relinquishing the reactivity of the little me so you allow unconsciousness in the other person doesn't mean you give in every time it's getting hold of the state of presence and bringing presence into your work to the conference table, to the committee meeting and as you sit there little egos having their battles all around the table you watch and perhaps for a moment you remember this moment and that brings back the state of presence and then you sit there in the state of you feel intensely connected with the body and you watch everybody's contribution without mental judgment you bring presence to the conference table to the committee meeting not the reactivity of the me where you watch and then you may find yourself making a contribution and saying something out of the state of presence and it will bring a different quality to the whole interaction there's one person there who brings in a different consciousness and then see what happens so instead of, there's nothing you can do to change others as such and most of the world still lives in unconsciousness that's how it is, don't expect it to be otherwise so it's allowing it's in the allowing people their unconsciousness this by the way also implies to your relationships with other people like long standing relationships with parents which to many people or grown up children and parents for many people that's a very problematic area because there's so much past in there there's often so much unconsciousness and dysfunction in families the most beautiful thing happens let's say it's your parents when you can allow your parents completely to be who they are you give up, which is really the little me you give up the desire to be understood by them the little me says you need to understand me they won't but you will feel a weight being taken off your shoulders there's a relinquishing of the need to be understood by your parents oh that's a relief, they don't need to understand me and then there's a letting go as this all comes with presence there's a letting go of wanting them to be different wanting them to behave differently accusing them of having done this or that or having failed to do this or that there was nobody there to have failed there was just unconsciousness in motion nothing personal in it they did what they could do according to their level of consciousness really there was nobody there to ever have done anything or not done anything it was unconsciousness playing itself out that's why Jesus said forgive them for they know not what they do when you realize they didn't know any better there wasn't enough consciousness if Jesus had lived now he would have said forgive them for they are completely unconscious that's what it means it's just unconsciousness playing itself out and then even that drops away the feeling that they should have done something differently and the more presence arises in you the more you realize nobody ever did anything to you the presence, it's only the little the identity of the little me feels hurt or injured when the dimension of presence arises presence always remained totally pristine totally pure totally fresh fresh and knew nothing ever happened to it the reality of who you are nothing ever happened to that no matter what pain was inflicted on you in your childhood as presence emerges you realize there's a dimension in you that was never touched and then forgiveness happens automatically you don't have to try to forgive as long as you try to forgive it's not really working or I should be forgiving because I'm spiritual you cannot really make yourself forgiveness happens naturally as presence arises and you feel the vastness of who you truly are beyond the little me forgiveness is just there you don't even have a word for it anymore so it's really towards all relationships whether at work or with parents between parents and children the most powerful tool is to allow everyone to be who they are which is an aspect of allowing this moment to be as it is on the canvas of this moment very often people will appear in it very often this moment will come to you as a person it may come to you as a person's pain body coming out of this at you the practice is allow it to be that's where power flows through the mind says no you can't allow it to be you should be doing something about it the most powerful transformation happens through allowing to be so when I say allow the present moment to be very often that means allow this person to be allow the unconsciousness to be there it's fine and then you will notice relationships with your parents improves dramatically when you give up the desire to be understood you don't need that anymore you realize there was nobody there who ever did anything to you or failed to do anything so you can see miraculous transformations in situations through allowing that's where the vast power comes through whether it's at work you can try it out what's coming up soon?

Thanksgiving wonderful place to practice when all the family gets together for some people it's agony having to go through that now this time see if you can bring in complete acceptance of what is, everybody around the table happens to be part of this moment then allow this moment including the turkey dinner and whatever it is people acting out their conditioned behavior you can predict what they are going to say next because they said the same thing 10 years ago allow it to be and then your next practice will be Christmas they get together again that's always a good and the ultimate test is parents you may, Ram Dass said his famous statement if you think you're so enlightened go and spend a week with your parents

[Speaker 6] (2:40:24 - 2:40:33)

can you say a little bit about the intense pain of losing somebody through death, somebody who you're really close to or the pain of a marriage dissolution

[Speaker 1] (2:40:33 - 2:48:02)

yes, thank you now the pain of great loss either loss of a loved one through death or loss of a relationship which is also a close relationship is also a kind of death there may be some situations where surrendering to what is seems impossible some situations are intrinsically so painful that you just no matter, you may have been successfully practicing surrendering to what is but suddenly something happens and you just can't and intense pain arises and this is the second level of surrender the first level of surrender is surrendering to what is that's the most perfect surrender but this may not always be possible yet the second level of surrender is to surrender to what you feel so if pain arises because you couldn't surrender on level 1 to what is, it just wasn't possible if pain arises you surrender to the pain you accept the pain and that is a strange thing at first everything inside you says no, this is dreadful, I don't want the pain the pain may flow into your mind but if you surrender to the pain that can be a wonderful opening the pain of loss, deep loss feel it and accept the pain the pain that you feel so completely that almost as if there is not a person there anymore who is suffering the pain there is only the pain and there is a complete acceptance of that at first it seems unnatural to do that but as you continue to accept it and be with the pain instead of running away from it after a while something happens and the pain turns around and there is suddenly a vast peace underneath the pain which is not a denial of the pain it is only by going into the pain and allowing it you touch it suddenly whenever there is loss, whether a big loss or a little loss it is an opportunity the fabric of your existence suddenly a hole appears in it something vital is gone that is an emptiness great loss leaves a feeling of great emptiness and that great emptiness at first is deep pain because there is a reaction the emptiness is painful the reactive me reacts now if you allow the emptiness to be that is there where there was that being is gone there is a hole the winds of grace blow through that hole that is left when there is great loss there is an incredible opportunity there if you only allow it in the absence, whenever there is an absence of something that had been greatly valued it leaves a nothingness the nothingness is at first very painful as you surrender into the nothingness there is a fullness that is hiding underneath behind there and some people have done that they have lost everything all at once there have been reports of people losing their position their family and their homes all at once it is almost as if the fabric of your existence has only holes in it now and at first there was an influx of incredible unbearable pain and then there was complete surrender and suddenly there was what Jesus calls the peace that passes all understanding coming out of what was intense pain through surrender and so that when somebody dies close to you surrender to the pain surrender to the feeling of the pain and see how it becomes transformed and what happens after that there is such an intense depth of peace and aliveness, if it could speak of course it doesn't speak if it could speak it would say all is well, there is no death if it could speak that's what it feels like but you don't even need the words and it will happen to everybody some great loss will come into everybody's life somebody close to you will die another great loss will come your own death at some point will come approaching and you can see and perhaps everybody in this room by then will have already gone beyond identification with the little person and the little me and already has access to a dimension that is beyond death the reality of who you are that is beyond death I don't want to give you any belief that's why I don't want to talk about it too much we are here to experience to be the timeless consciousness the timeless state of consciousness that is beyond birth and death that is your reality and everybody else's reality it is often through pain that you have access to it and here it's an easier way but if pain is happening in your life at this time and coinciding with being here that is wonderful life has given you this at this time the two come together and that's beautiful so anything you cannot accept externally and pain arises or something whatever arises as a feeling accept, surrender to what you feel surrender to what is if you can't, surrender to what you feel about that

[Speaker 2] (2:48:17 - 2:49:16)

this concludes living the liberated life and dealing with the pain body with Eckhart Tolle music by Steven McNamara for further information on lectures and workshops with Eckhart Tolle you may visit his website at www.eckharttolle.com you may also visit Namaste Publishing at www.namastepublishing.com to order additional copies of this program or to receive a free catalog of over 400 transformational audio and videotapes please call Sounds True 800-333-9185 or write the Sounds True catalog P.O. Box 8010 Boulder, Colorado 80306 you may also visit us at www.soundstrue.com thank you for listening

Eckhart Tolle Retreat Titled Allowing Presence to Arise

[Speaker 2] (0:08 - 0:22)

Two experiences I've had in the last few days are sleepiness and almost hypnotic visual sense and I was just wondering if you could comment on that.

[Speaker 1] (0:22 - 0:25)

What do you mean by hypnotic visual sense?

[Speaker 2] (0:26 - 0:39)

Just the quality of the light in the room changes and the depth perception and the closest thing that I'm familiar with to it is an almost hypnotic meditative state.

[Speaker 1] (0:39 - 15:04)

Yes, thank you. The arising presence sometimes can affect the ways in which you perceive things you might see because there's greater aliveness in your sense perceptions, they may change for a while. Some people report almost something as if they had taken acid, almost certain visual changes.

Those just accompany the inner transformation, the presence, but the sleepiness is one of the ways in which the ego protects itself against presence. And that is not uncommon for suddenly to feel a wave of sleepiness or people start yawning several times and they slept, perhaps slept well the previous night and they sit in a meeting and suddenly they go, hmm, hmm, hmm. The ego is saying, I don't want to listen to this, I'm going somewhere else.

That's one way in which also the pain body, they're intrinsically connected, doesn't like listening to this. The pain body is a little entity there. It doesn't like listening to this, it feels, oh, they're talking about me.

And even worse, they're looking at me. It doesn't want the light of consciousness on it because it needs the darkness of unconsciousness to thrive. So it doesn't, and when it does that, then it has certain strategies, certain ways and means of obscuring presence, of taking you away.

One is the sleepiness that can overcome you. Another one is, that's more rare but it has happened, pain body suddenly rises up very strongly, very quickly before it can be observed and takes over the mind. And suddenly, before there was a peaceful looking person sitting, suddenly there's an angry entity because the pain body is getting very angry.

In one meeting we had, there was intense sense of presence throughout the room. I was talking in the way I talk and suddenly from the back of the room somebody said, when are we going to start meditating? Of course the pain body didn't really want to meditate, it just wanted to get away from presence and say, okay, let's meditate, that's better, that's not threatened, let's go through some technique, at least that's not threatening.

But it probably didn't even want that, it just wanted to be unhappy about something and interrupt, just don't be here. And then I suggested that person should go out for a while, sometimes it works if you go out for a while, after a few minutes come back. And that person I saw went out, came back after a few minutes and then went back out again.

I haven't seen her since. But even in her, the presence must have arisen so the process has started. It's being obscured.

The process will continue one way or another. That's the beauty of it. And I've had, when I used to see individual people, I have encountered one or two very interesting pain bodies.

And quite often witnessed a transformation of somebody sitting there and suddenly looking into the eyes of the pain body. And the pain body demanding an emotional reaction. And trying all it can because that's what it needs.

And it demands an emotion, an emotional reaction from you. And then gets frustrated when it doesn't get it. There's simply a presence.

And then the frustration becomes too much. This particular pain body I'm just thinking of then ran out of the room, down the stairs. And I thought, I might never see this person again.

And ten minutes later he came back and said, I'm okay now. And after that session, because sometimes when I write things down after I see people or I see things that I didn't know before. I then had the expression, a pain body attack.

And then of course there's also such a thing as a mind attack. Very often they go together. So another way for the pain body to obscure presence or to take you away from sitting in that energy field, the collective field that we have here.

Feeling threatened by it. But not being able in many cases to come up because the presence is too intense. It doesn't want to come up into the light of presence.

Only a very few pain bodies have enough courage or strength to come up. So it doesn't come up, it wasn't to come up into the light of presence. So it cannot manifest as emotion.

When it cannot manifest as emotion, it can manifest as a physical symptom, as a physical pain. So some people have told me that as they sit here, suddenly there's a sharp pain here or some other symptom there. I can't sit anymore.

And then when they put some attention on it, some have told me, suddenly it shifts to another part of the body. It doesn't want to be looked at. So it can turn into...

Another way the pain body can exact revenge is by arising after this beautiful field of presence. Sitting in this beautiful field of presence and more and more presence arising in you. The pain body temporarily, so to speak, goes into a corner and says, Okay, I'll wait in this little corner.

And then when you go away, either a few hours later or a few days later, suddenly the pain body comes out of the little corner, the dark corner, and manifests very strongly. Almost to compensate for presence. I'm still strong enough to obscure presence, and I'll show you how strong I am.

Quite a few people have told me of pain body attacks after a gathering, one or two days after. At last I'm drinking some of this water. It's fascinating to watch.

So those are the main symptoms of pain body obscuring, attempting to obscure presence. Another one is suddenly a memory comes of a painful event. And there's emotion associated with that memory.

And immediately the mind starts working on it or with it. And you're off in some event that happened ten years ago. And that was dreadful.

And you wouldn't be in such a state if that hadn't happened. You wouldn't need to sit here if that hadn't happened. And so it takes you off into dwelling on painful memory.

And you're reliving the emotion. And you're not here anymore. Once you know it may happen, it's fine.

You watch it, even if it obscures presence temporarily. Then suddenly presence is back. And then you watch the pain body in motion.

Allowing remains the key. Not fighting anything, any manifestation of it. Not fighting if it's a physical pain, not fighting that, allowing that.

Even if it's tiredness, it's okay. You allow that. Restlessness, that's another one.

And you can't sit still anymore. Sometimes when people sit, I can see one person's leg suddenly starts going. They sit like this and go.

Then I know they're not here, not in the body. But there is an emotion going and it's restless. It doesn't really want to be here.

Or they go like that. And again, it's something to watch. Even very, very common things are minor manifestations of that.

For example, tapping you. Like going like this on the surface somewhere on your knee. It often is a beginning pain body.

They say, okay, I'm still patient. But not much longer. Interesting when with greater presence, there comes also greater observing what the body is doing.

The body may be reflecting pain body in one way or another. Or you feel a sudden great tightness somewhere or contraction holding in. You sometimes find it even with meditators.

They're very good at sitting still for five hours. But it's like putting a lid on a boiling kettle. Leave me alone, I'm meditating.

I'm not to be disturbed. Or even better. In Buddhism they have a meta meditation.

Meditation on loving kindness. Which is beautiful, but you spread loving kindness. It starts from yourself and then out into the universe.

And then a little daughter comes in. Leave me alone, can't you see I'm doing my meta meditation? And there's the spaciousness again.

It's always there. Even when words are being used. There it is underneath the words.

Okay, the mic is coming here to the front row.

[Speaker 4] (15:06 - 15:50)

Thank you. In various scriptures, Christ included, there's a reference to the devil and hell. And I guess even in the Hindus, there's quite a bit of the same stuff going on.

And I was reading your biography, not your biography, the interview last night that John had. And he had mentioned that when you read scriptures, when you come from the sense of presence in reading them, you get a feeling what was true and what was interpreted by someone else. And just your feeling on, because so much has been said on sin and hell.

It sounds like the pain body sounds like Satan. Yes, yes. So it just gives you a feeling on that.

[Speaker 1] (15:50 - 26:42)

Thank you. You'll be amazed if you reread the New Testament, the four Gospels, how often Jesus is reported to be driving out demons. It's almost as if every other person he meets has a demon inside.

On every page, almost, he travels to another village and he drives out more demons out of people. And so at first I didn't know that demonic possession was that common. What they were talking about is simply the pain bodies, different concepts, different words.

It is true that certain heavy pain bodies attract certain entities, disembodied fields, energy fields, because everything is energy field. The physical body is an energy field. Even a thought is an energy field.

So all kinds of energy fields. And a very heavy pain body can attract an energy field that corresponds to its frequency. Similar pain.

Just a field of pain. There's nothing spooky about it. It attaches itself to the pain body and that makes it even bigger.

But any kind of pain body, one could say, is a form of possession. And again, it's not spooky. It's just there's something there.

And Jesus was simply bringing intense presence in which pain bodies found it very hard to survive. So that's all driving out pain. We have a different word for it now.

Hell. Well, that's what the ego creates for itself. Many people already live in hell in this lifetime, self-created hell.

Human history is to a large extent self-created hell. The history of the 20th century, a lot of it could come out of Dante's Inferno. And that was very recent.

It's human-created. Ego-created. Identification with form.

Collective forms. Individual forms. Needing enemies.

Needing the separation. The conflict. Thriving on war.

On conflict. Deriving an enhanced identity through having enemies. Us.

We. Them. So those egoic structures create hell, whether it's hell here or hell in some disembodied form.

And any identification with form takes you into illusion and ultimately into hell and what one could call evil. It's identification with form. So you go away from the source into form identity.

And then there's the clash with other forms or the wanting to eliminate other forms, the form wanting to be bigger, more stronger in its sense of self. So really it all comes back to ego. Ego creates its own hell until it self-destructs.

That's the good thing. Ultimately, the hell it creates self-destructs. One creation on a collective level, on a collective scale, to see the self-destruction of ego, just to see how it plays itself out.

When you saw the rise of national socialism in Germany, the Second World War, on a collective level, a huge collective ego developed like an illness, very heavy, and then there's the collective heavy pain body cooperating with the heavy ego structures. As you know, countries have their own pain bodies. Some countries have much heavier collective pain bodies than others, countries where there has been a lot of strife and pain.

And so those countries have a heaviness that anybody who is sensitive can notice the moment you step off the plane. Russia, for example, also very heavy. Germany is very heavy.

So that heavy collective pain body awoke and the egoic structures developed of the collective ego, us, creating hell for themselves and others, finally succeeding in making everybody, North, South, East, and West, into an enemy. You remember I talked about the ego's need for enemies in one form or another. For personal ego, the enemy may be a situation I'm in.

I don't like this. This moment I don't like. When the next one comes, I don't like this one either.

So the need for enemies, and there you can think of a whole country in the grip of pain body and collective ego, needing to make every other country surrounding it into an enemy. And in that feeling, an enormously enhanced sense of self, total fiction, but enormously strong. Us against them.

We are right and they are all wrong. And then creating hell. And such hell that finally there comes an auto-destruction and the whole country went up in flames and almost nothing left of the cities.

Everything crumbles. The ego, that particular aspect of collective ego, self-destructed. So that's the, in that madness, there's fortunately something, a little time bomb concealed.

And that also works on a personal level. People who build up very strong egos associated with strong pain bodies, eventually create havoc in their own lives. And this self-destructs.

So it's wonderful, ultimately. So there's hell, and then there's the end of hell. We're coming to the end of hell.

It's been hell to a large extent for quite a long time. Temptation? Yes.

Yes, temptation is the ego not yet totally gone. The ego is still there and says, you can be very special. I'm paraphrasing the temptation that Jesus had into modern, the language that I use.

The ego saying, you can be very special. You can be the most special of all people. That is the great temptation of a spiritual teacher.

The ego coming back. It's already disappeared. Maybe a tiny bit left.

Can't even see it anymore. And suddenly, that specialness, that sense of me, I'm special, because there's such a presence and everybody's telling me I'm special, so I must be special. A return of form identity, a return of a me, a return of an image of who I am, a self image.

That is the temptation. Also beautifully expressed, I don't know whether in Buddhism there's any scripture like that or whether the director of that film just did it. There was a film called Little Buddha and it shows the life story of the Buddha, according to the legend.

And just before the enlightenment happens under the tree, first there come all these armies, they're symbols for attacks, ego attacks, arrows. And then they're all gone because he doesn't react. He doesn't react to the attacks by these vast armies, which are symbolic.

And he just allows. And then he sits and there's a moment of stillness. And then he looks into a pool of water that happens to be next to him.

And he sees reflected in it his own image, his own face. And as he looks, suddenly an arm reaches out of the pool, tries to pull him in. And he frees himself and then the image disappears.

And that, of course, is the symbol of that reflection, the reflective sense of me is the last attempt of the ego to regain power. Because ego is a self-image of me. And that was still there even at the last moment.

Me. And then it dissolved. So these are the temptations.

And so spiritual teachers have that also. The return, I would call it the return of specialness. And I've seen it a few times.

It's definitely there. The moment a statement comes that I am the one, but not you. Or at least you're not going to make it in this lifetime.

Okay, the mic is coming.

[Speaker 2] (26:50 - 27:23)

Thank you for being here. One of the most amazing experiences I've had of presence was watching wild animals in a game reserve. They were cheetahs and we happened to be very close to them.

They just had an incredible sense of presence which I'd never experienced before until I came here. There doesn't seem to be any ego, there didn't seem to be any pain body around at all.

[Speaker 3] (27:24 - 27:25)

I'd like to hear your views on that, please.

[Speaker 1] (27:26 - 35:34)

Thank you, thank you very much. And that's indeed true. I already talked about, mainly with reference to the vegetation, when I talked about nature today or yesterday, that nature becomes a teacher or teaching.

It becomes extremely helpful in entering that state of clarity that is presence. Now, animals, of course, an important aspect of that. They also live in alignment with now.

They have not yet fallen away from the source as much as humans have. They are closer to the source than humans still. In that sense, one could say that everything in nature is still closer to God than humans.

That's one way of putting it. But humans have gone out from the source a long way and they are lost, homeless, wandering about. Everything in nature is still at home in the now.

I used that expression this morning, to be at home in the now. Everything in nature is completely in that restful state of rootedness in being. It's rooted in being, in itself.

It is itself. It has integrity, which is an abstract word, but translated, really means one with itself. The split hasn't come in that is originated through self-reflective consciousness, an image forming of here I am.

That's me. That image formation that is fueled by thought, created by thought, fueled by thought, perpetuated by thought. And that with animals is not there yet.

They are pre-mind. Consciousness, yes, a beautiful expression of consciousness. So, simply to watch an animal can be a wonderful way of entering the state of thoughtless awareness.

Because by watching without labeling, without interpreting, not watching through accumulated knowledge that you may have about that animal, but watching, true watching, like true listening, is from a place of not knowing. True watching is not as, okay, that's what's calling it this, that, or that. It's in that state of awareness, clarity, you watch.

And there the cat, whatever it is, moves, stops, looks, moves on, stops, stops, lies down, eyes are closed, but it still knows what's going on. And the slightest movement and it goes. And just many artists have painted resting cats, that even the form is so perfect, how they curl up, or lie, however they lie, sometimes completely aligned with the form on which they lie.

Birds, just that spontaneous, that oneness. Watching, the secret lies in watching without interpreting in any way, or even wanting a reaction from the animal, which is what the mind wants. Unless the animal comes, you can invite the cat, or it is a cat, to come, but just be there.

If it wants to come, it'll come. If you know cats, you know that whatever you want them to do, they want to. So it can just be there.

And they may come, may not come, it doesn't matter. Any animal, particularly wild animals, even there's a wonderful dog living here, that's a teaching also, just watching a dog. The goodness that is in a dog, the unconditional acceptance, the readiness to be in joy any moment.

At the slightest excuse, the tail goes. Aliveness, joy, yes, life is good. Even dogs who live with people who are burdened by pain bodies and egoic, problem making minds, still, most of them, still manage to be sane.

It's amazing that the dogs remain sane, living in that environment. They live with a person who's, oh, it's so dreadful. And the dog is still, even that person looks at his dog and he goes, alive, life is good now.

So it's just beautiful. Any animal, watching it without labeling, without wanting anything from it. It's a beautiful meditation and presence arises with ease because mind, there's no mind there.

Now if you watch a human, not so easy to sustain presence because in most humans, there's a lot of mind. You're watching a busy mind. So you experience presence when you are watching that and then again here.

And once presence is established, then it doesn't matter anymore. You could watch an old truck and be present. Not really so elegant.

No. I will come to the written questions probably tomorrow. Everybody will receive an answer.

One or two people wanted to be anonymous and they will also receive an answer.

[Speaker 4] (35:41 - 36:25)

Oh, yeah. This question might be dumb, but I need to ask you. I have been in therapy many times and most of the therapists suggest you to get your self-esteem, to look at yourself in the mirror in the morning, look at yourself, kiss yourself, tell to yourself how beautiful and wonderful you are.

So, what do you think about mirrors? How should I approach it now that I cannot kiss myself any longer? Do you watch yourself in the mirror?

What do you think? What do you see?

[Speaker 1] (36:27 - 59:19)

Thank you. Good question. Of course, many egos are trapped in predominantly negative stories of me, that how dreadful I am and I'm no good and I can't.

And then there comes a point when you are just aware of that particular kind of conditioning. There is an arising presence when you become aware of how heavily negative your mind is conditioned. There is some presence.

And then, from there, there is a little bit of freedom where you could say, okay, I can let go of those thoughts and replace them with better thoughts, more positive thoughts. To some extent, that works. It still moves within the realm of image, so you have a better, a more comfortable egoic image after a while.

When you have had enough little notices on your bathroom mirrors to remind you that you are fine and you are good enough and so on, then after a while you live with an egoic sense of self that is a little bit easier to live with. But every egoic sense of self is trapped in the polarities of good and bad. You cannot have, as long as you live from a sense of self, continuous positivity, continuous celebration, happiness.

I'm happy all the time, continuously happy. I'm always happy, happy, happy. And that doesn't work.

If you repeat it to yourself a thousand times a day, I am happy, for a while you'd feel, oh, it feels good. But every statement you make has an unmanifested opposite. Unless unhappiness exists, you can't be happy.

Or if you make the statement, I'm wealthy, rich beyond measure, and you say it many times, it's possible that some money, maybe a lot will come, unless you sit, don't move out of your armchair, but if it's combined with action, it's possible that money, because these things, thought is powerful, it attracts, it may work. But there's also the opposite. If you make the statement, I am rich and wealthy, in the unmanifested, the unspoken statement, you're making a statement for poverty, because the two polarities, they need each other.

Unless there are poor people, you cannot be wealthy. For you to be rich requires a lot of people not to be rich, obviously. Otherwise the egoic sense of self is me, I'm rich, doesn't work.

Or if you are going to make it in the world, I am going to get there and I will make it, I'll make it. You can only make it if 10,000 other people don't make it. Otherwise making it has no meaning anymore.

So everything has an unmanifested opposite and in some way you will also have to experience the opposite. You cannot experience only on the level of mind, which is the level of manifestation, of phenomenal existence, you cannot only have one polarity. So if you affirm happiness and try to be happy every day, at some point you will be overtaken by unhappiness.

And if you affirm wealth and great wealth, at some point the stock market will crash and you experience the other extreme. So for a while it works, it's beautiful to experience that it works and then you go beyond the opposite to a place where it's no longer to do with happiness and unhappiness, but there's something that is beyond happiness and a deep sense of an abiding sense of peace. And it doesn't matter anymore whether on the surface there's a little wave of happiness or unhappiness.

There's a deep abiding, that's the goodness, I call that the goodness that has no opposite because it doesn't emanate from, it is not in the phenomenal realm. In the realm of phenomena you have the polarities. So not to be, for a while it's a person's path is to experience that yes, I can create certain things in this phenomenal world.

Even after you've gone beyond that you can continue to play with the phenomenal world because after all it is a play. If you want to make money, make some money, play with that. But it's not important to you anymore because your sense of self isn't in that.

You simply enjoy the play of form, not seeking a stronger sense of self, a me in that form. Then you can do anything. If you want a Rolls Royce, you have one, it'll make no difference and if you then lose it you'll be on a bicycle just as happy.

It's a play of form. The self isn't there that says I need that form and then is unhappy when it loses it. You lose your sense of self.

So you've moved through the stage of bathroom mirror. Laughter That's good. I'm glad you asked that question because it's many people have, would have similar question.

Thank you. Let's be still for a while. We talked about the importance of listening.

We talked about listening to nature, how important it is and you have been listening and you are listening and the deeper significance of that state of listening, that state of open attention and this surroundings here are ideal for listening. To make them even more ideal, I would suggest that this afternoon after your lunch is complete, finished, we spend the rest of the afternoon in silence. Except perhaps during the session here if there's anything to say during the session, that's fine.

Of course you don't have to do it, just a suggestion. And then listen even more. There's nothing else to do but listening to nature, the sounds of nature, more importantly, the underlying field of stillness, which ultimately is the awareness itself.

We also talked about and we practiced listening to silence. What that means is it is the arising of awareness. When we say listen to silence, an almost meaningless statement to the mind because the mind is noise, the mind is content, the mind is form, every thought is form.

We are moving beyond form to the formless, therefore it becomes meaningless to the mind. Whatever is beyond form doesn't make much sense or the mind may try to make the formless into some other form and then you create a mental idol, God, an entity as if God were an entity, a finite entity. So the significance of listening to the silence, listening all this afternoon, you'll be able to do and right now also, and then a wonderful opportunity, listening to your mind, if it's still there, not making a problem out of thought.

When you listen to the mind, it doesn't have the heaviness that it has when you identify with mind streams. All that's left when you listen to the mind is mental noise. You listen to the noise and underneath the noise there is the attention, the field of attention.

So one could say when you listen, you become aware of the listener which is the awareness, the I am, the one that's beyond this or that, beyond time. And then knowing at first hand what the power of now actually means, because that is the now. The now is the awareness, the field of awareness, of consciousness.

It's emptiness and fullness at once. And in the state of listening, the me entity, the mind mate, just isn't there. It may be dormant, it may not be completely dissolved, it may reassert itself the moment the listening is lost, the little me is back.

But when there's the listening, that's the state of being awake. Then you fall back into a kind of dream world which is to be identified with thought. And while these words happen, it's just on the surface.

These words are just on the surface, floating on the surface. What matters here is the state of listening, the state of attention, of thoughtless awareness. Whatever fills that field, whatever arises in that field, doesn't matter that much.

It's all fine. Today in the field of awareness there's a palm tree. Next week in the field of awareness arises the Empire State Building.

And it all, again, exists in the spaciousness, that spacious field. Or an old reaction arises in you, a no to what is, a complainer in the head, a waiting for the next moment, and then you listen to that, you're aware of that. So even that then just exists in the greater field of awareness, the spaciousness.

Let's sit here now and listen to a little piece that I brought that is designed for listening, a Japanese flute. The secret in listening to this is that the stillness out of which the sounds arise continuously is much more important than the sounds themselves. And the gaps in between the sounds are more important than the sounds.

The canvas, one could say, on which the sounds are painted is what matters. And so you are invited to listen to the canvas. Allow whatever is painted and what changes continuously to be there.

It's beautiful too. But continuously being aware of the underlying field of stillness. So this is a piece that was composed 700 years ago and has been used in Zen.

Listen. It requires alertness. According to the clock, it lasts for 15 minutes.

But that doesn't really mean anything. It takes you continuously into the timeless now. Feel as you listen.

Listen with the entire field of the body, not just with the ears. Your body is attentive and that's an important part of the state of listening. The attentiveness is throughout the body.

Every cell is, one could say, and I'm only, don't use it so much as a literal statement, a little pointer, only a little pointer. Every cell is in a state of alive alertness. The whole body is.

So you're listening with the entire body. If you can do it with this music, which is very helpful, you will also be able to do it when you listen to another person. That means you become the greatest therapist in the world, even if you have no label.

You bring that emanation of presence and transformation happens in that total acceptance of what is. So the entire body is alert and alive with presence in a state of listening attention.

[Speaker 3] (59:19 - 59:19)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:04:42 - 4:16:22)

¶¶ ¶¶ ¶¶ ¶¶ ¶¶ ¶¶ You will notice that music has no continuity in time. You couldn't, there's no tune to it that you could memorize. There's no past and future to it, no continuity from past into future.

You cannot remember the last moment and you don't know what's going to come next. It exists only in the now. The continuity in time is broken.

That's why we can, this is truly spiritual. It means no time to it. Nobody, after leaving here, is going to whistle that tune.

¶¶ Also when we, perhaps in a day or two, we may listen to another little piece. You may already have been doing that. Attention.

There's a very subtle point where the sound subsides into soundlessness, where the sound ends. The sound very softly ends and then dissolves into the silence. And that's a very, very subtle point.

It requires great alertness to see it. And one could say that's where the manifested merges back into the unmanifested. The sound is the manifested.

So listening, you can, this little practice can show you that it is possible to be rooted in the unmanifested, even while paying attention to the manifested world. Now, when you listen to a piece like that, the manifestation is reduced to just the sounds of the flute. So it's easy to see how that merges back and how it arises out of that stillness of the unmanifested.

And then in everyday life, you have not just one manifestation, which is the sound. You have hundreds and thousands of manifestations that arise within and without. And it's so easy to get lost in them, to lose yourself, to seek yourself in those things, whether they be thoughts that manifest, emotions that manifest, external events that manifest, and each one telling you, I matter.

Give me your full attention. Listen, I'm here. I am.

Wants to pull yourself into it. So then you, by seeking yourself in the manifested, in thought, what about me? By seeking yourself in the manifested or in external events that this matters so much and your whole attention flows out.

You can see when people discuss something, what are we going to do? It matters because they're lost in the manifested and no longer realize that it only matters in relative terms. In absolute terms, it doesn't.

But they have lost the absolute. We cannot lose it, but they don't know it. And it is as if you had lost it.

So when you seek yourself in any object, in any content, which is the normal state that everybody's doing, you seek yourself in what arises as object or in consciousness, a content in the head or content of your life situation. All these are objects that arise in the vastness of the, out of the vastness of the unmanifested. And then, that's, you could say, that is the world.

So there's self-seeking in manifestation. Where am I? I have to work something out in my head.

I need to know who I am. And then images form and concepts and you have to dwell on these in thought. All meaning you are lost in, you're seeking yourself in the manifested world of objects, external objects, mind objects.

And by seeking yourself in those, you lose yourself because there is no self in those things. The deep, that is the deep truth of the Buddha. The, what he called in Pali language, anatta, no self.

He said, wherever you go, whatever you do, there's no self in any of those things. You see, all conditions are anatta, no self. That's the sublime truth.

And to see, sometimes when people study Buddhism, it becomes more content in the head. But they talk about anatta, I believe in no self, more content in the head. To actually, to see the simplicity and the sublime truth of that, that you cannot find yourself in any manifested form, any content, be it external or thought content, which includes beliefs and so on.

By seeking yourself there, you lose yourself there continuously. That's the frustration of normal existence. So here, we listen to that piece and we see the world of the manifested, if you listen with attention, becomes reduced to simple sounds that arise and subside.

But that really is, everything else is like that. It's just for a little while, it's all the manifest is the simple sounds and the sound of the wind arises and subsides. And underneath, so to speak, no word is exactly correct.

And in between, there's the soundlessness, bare, pure consciousness, unconditioned, hasn't been born into a form yet, hasn't become content, prior to thought, there's that. And that is also, if you look closely, there is something in your life, although most of you have gone through tremendous changes in this lifetime, almost as if you have had, well, not everyone perhaps, but some of you, as if you had had already several incarnations in this lifetime. And yet, and perhaps the story has changed in the head of who you thought you were, and so has gone through certain transformations.

It may even be dissolving, hopefully, as you sit here for a whole week, the story begins to dissolve. And so you've gone through many changes, almost incarnations, but something remained underneath the story, an essential sense of beingness or presence, an I am, a sense of I am-ness underneath the story that is not this or that, just a sense of beingness. And that is what people are afraid of losing when they ask me, am I going to lose my individuality?

Am I going to lose this one thing that's so precious to me? I don't want to lose that. I'd rather not be here and rather suffer than lose that, than lose myself.

But the essence of individuality is that sense of I am-ness, which is beyond time, that is simply presence. No matter what happens on the surface of your life, the changing conditions, the changing content of your life, external and internal, if you look very deeply underneath it, there is I remains. And even if 10 years ago, perhaps you were a beggar and now you're a millionaire, underneath the changing content of your life, there is an I am-ness, a presence.

The essence of your being remains. Or the other way around, you were a millionaire 10 years ago and now you're a beggar. Underneath the changing story, there's an essential sense of self, but that is not the self that is mind-made.

It looks more like, this is why some traditions call it the absence of self, and it's perhaps closer to the truth than to say the self, but both are correct. They're different perspectives on the same. It's the absence of a manufactured sense of self, an artificial mind-made sense, an illusory temporary sense of, this is me, image-made.

It is beyond form, a sense of self not to do with form whatsoever. And really when people ask, I don't want to lose my individuality, what they don't want to lose is their essential being. And that's the only thing that's real that they can't lose.

Everything else you lose, but nothing really is lost. A temporary form dissolves. And this is why some people, even without ever having gone to any spiritual teaching, found that when suddenly all the forms in their lives collapsed, people who underwent disaster suddenly, dreadful disaster, everything collapsed, everything lost, all forms dissolved.

The whole me entity collapsed and suddenly a deep sense of presence or beingness, aliveness, peace. They have found their roots in the unmanifested, formless one life, what Jesus calls eternal life, which means timeless. Timeless doesn't mean it goes on and on.

It would be boring. Timeless. The timeless one life before it's born into something.

So when you identify with form, the deeper meaning of reincarnation is that every moment you identify with a new form, be it thought form, emotional form, external, I have acquired a new belief. Now the story of me and the entity, now I know who I am. Or for a while, an external form, a new relationship, I have acquired the person who is going to make me happy.

If anybody is listening to this tape at home, there's nothing wrong with the tape. So you are born into a new incarnation every time you identify with some new form. And it could just be a strain of thought and you're in it completely.

You reincarnate into that. Suddenly there's an angry thought stream. A new incarnation.

It's me. The anger asserts my identity as a self. This is why the self loves that.

Now I know who I am. And then that goes. And then you have to look for a new identity.

Okay, I'll buy a BMW. And for a little while, then you reincarnate. The ego incorporates it into its image of me for a little while.

Until after a few weeks, while you drive along, certain dissatisfaction arises again. That wasn't really it. Maybe I should try another make of car.

This is just a tiny example of that continuous seeking new sense of self, an added sense of self, a strengthened sense of self through some new identification with some new form. And all this happens. You are condemned to live like that for the rest of your life unless you know your roots in the unmanifested, formless one life.

Which is not a denial of the world of form. It's only now for the first time when you are rooted in the formless one life, which means you have access to the stillness within. Not only have access, you realize that is the essence of your being.

Then, instead of then going around and saying, I'm done with all form. I don't want to know anymore. I refuse to look at beauty and all those things because it's all temporary forms and they're all going to dissolve.

It's all dust. Some people have gone to that extreme in the search for the unmanifested. They have rejected the manifested, thinking that they will get there more quickly if they reject the manifested completely.

So, ascetic practices, extreme forms of asceticism, denial of all sensory pleasures. And so you become not interested. Whatever arises out there, you don't want to know.

Even beautiful flowers, not looking. It's dust. It will be dust again soon.

Of course, there's some truth in that. It will all be dust again soon. And yet, every form is an expression also of that manifested.

The sacredness and the holiness of the realm of the unmanifested also inhabits each form. Even the world of form is sacred. So, I don't suggest, I don't recommend that you deny the world of form.

But the more deeply you accept the world of form, whatever form arises now, the easier it is to find and to dwell in the unmanifested. So there. And then go and enjoy phenomenal existence and the beauty of it and the sacredness of it.

Even play with it, if you want to. Or leave it alone and let it happen. You might live very simply because you don't need elaborate forms anymore to strengthen your sense of self.

You might live in the greatest of simplicity and enjoy the beauty of the simple things around you. Or you might want to enjoy wealth and acquire a Rolls Royce or mansion. Simply, you enjoy the play of form.

Not to find yourself in it. Then those things are very unsatisfying. Very unsatisfying.

They're satisfying for a little moment. When there's no self-seeking in anything you do, the world of form is beautiful and you can play with form. And in your actions, the actions that arise when you're rooted in the unmanifested, you no longer create suffering through what you do.

You no longer create suffering through what you think. You can see how much suffering you create for yourself through thinking. How thinking creates unhappiness about who you are, me, what's going to happen, what has happened, what might happen, what if, what should, demand, shouldn't be, and so on.

And so, in your thoughts, even thoughts are no longer problematic when there's no self-seeking there. And then, what flows into your actions is not the neediness of seeking yourself through that and then hanging onto this or wanting to be rid of that. There's a freedom in relation to things and people around you.

You allow everything to be and when it leaves you, as it will, everything will leave you, because forms are impermanent, they come and go, then there's an acceptance because you already know that forms dissolve eventually. In one way or another, they dissolve. They leave you or they dissolve.

And that's fine. Death, even death is welcomed. And death is very beautiful because death is a form dissolves into the formless.

And the moment of death, not any kind of death, you will see the beauty of that and the sacredness of any loss in your life. This seems almost perverse, paradoxical, the total opposite of what the egoic sense of self believes, the sacredness of losing a form in whatever it may be. Because at that moment, and this is, do you remember the music we listened to where the sound, there's a little blurred edge to the sound where the sound merges into silence.

The sound goes into soundlessness. This is a death. Each time the sound dies, there's a very sacred moment because a form dissolves and in that moment, the formless shines through the hole left behind, so to speak, by the disappearing, the dissolving form.

Intuitively, deep down, perhaps every human knows that because every human have an instinctive respect for death. So in many European countries, the older traditional countries, when you see a dead body or funeral, everybody takes off their hat. They might have disliked that person intensely and yet when that person has just died, they become quite serious and go, they don't know why, they just do it.

Because they know the form has dissolved and that is why loss of any kind is so beautiful. Even a little loss like losing some money. If you can just, a moment of stillness, look at the emptiness left behind by the form instead of turning away from it and there's the unmanifested.

And originally, those humans who found that realm, originally they were no spiritual teachers. They were certain humans who experienced deep loss and somehow said yes to the emptiness left behind or they were so stunned by that loss that the old reactive mechanism wasn't operating and there was just a, ah! And even the mind couldn't continue anymore because it was stunned by the loss.

The whole machinery of mind came to a stop and suddenly they found such intense peace and aliveness arising. And the mind couldn't understand it. It said, what's that?

It doesn't make sense. Here there's death, I've lost all that and there's such deep peace. It's as if one can almost say every form hides God.

And this is why death reveals it again, reveals him, her, it. And so we welcome loss when it comes. And many of you have only begun to awaken through some loss.

So many of you have already, perhaps not fully understood how it works, but have already experienced significant loss one way or another. And that was the beginning of the awakening. Whereas before the loss, all the forms around you were intact for a while.

That was fine. But now the furniture was intact all around you and then something happened and suddenly a big gaping hole appeared in the wall. Beautiful.

So that is the sacredness of death, which is what loss is. And that's the sacredness of this moment also, because you're entering death here freely. You find death before it finds you, as it says in one of the ancient scriptures, you find death before it finds you.

What is dissolving here is not yet the physical form, that'll come a little bit later, but more importantly, the psychological form of me. And identification, it consists of identifications. So the greatest fear of the ego is loss.

The greatest fear of the ego is death. And the realm of the formless one life is what Buddhists sometimes call Amaravati, the deathless realm. Buddhists always express everything in negative terms.

They don't say what it is. They say what it is not. What it is reveals itself.

You don't need to say it, the Buddha said. So everything in Buddhism is negative. The deathless realm, the realm where there's no death.

Jesus used that the same in positive terms, eternal life. All this was already 2,600 years ago. If you had listened to the Buddha, he would have said the same things, and he did.

Slightly different words, different language. No self in any form. Anatta, every form is impermanent.

Anicca, impermanence of every form. No self in it, anatta. And identification with any form is dukkha, suffering.

That's it. Simple. No object is it.

No content is it. Or as it says in one of the ancient Upanishads, not that, I don't remember every word of it literally, but just, not that which the eye sees, but that whereby the eye can see. Know that alone to be Brahman, the eternal, and not what people here adore.

Not that which the ear hears, but that whereby the ear can hear. Know that to be Brahman, the eternal, and not what people here adore. Not that which the mind thinks, but that whereby the mind can think.

Know that alone to be the eternal, and not what people here adore. That is the ultimate truth. And let's remember to keep noble silence after lunch for the rest of the afternoon and to listen, just listen.

Thank you. Boom. When you look at something or someone without thought in stillness, who is looking?

Not the person anymore. Without thought, there isn't a person. Who is looking through those eyes?

It doesn't have to be looking. It could be anything. Listening, touching.

Who is looking? Can we have a label for it? Labels are dangerous.

I'll use one anyway. Consciousness is looking at its creation. God creates the world, it says, in the beginning of the Bible, and then he, she, it saw that it was good.

And that's what it's like when you look without thought. You're really looking at yourself in different forms. That I am-ness that I talked about this morning, that essential deepest sense of beingness that never leaves you, that is inseparable from now, that is the now, we call the now in its depth, is being itself, your essential self, your essential identity beyond form.

And then you can see the same I am-ness looking through the eyes of a bird, or you can see it in a flower. And you can even see it in so-called inanimate objects, because even a so-called inanimate object has beingness to it, it is. So it has beingness.

And any physicists would know that it is a field of vibrant energy. So what we perceive as an inanimate object isn't really inanimate. And even that, that has beingness.

And you recognize the beingness because there's stillness here, looking through the stillness. And this looking isn't necessary to recognize beingness. Beingness is beyond sense perceptions, but it can flow into that.

And then that sense of separation, me and the rest of the world, goes. Really, you are that bird. You are that tree.

And that human being, the self-recognition of being. The I am-ness. No matter how obscured it may be.

And in most humans, it's obscured by illusion, identification with form. And yet, in the stillness, you look, you see through the illusion in that other form and recognize yourself. And you could even look at a distant galaxy through a telescope.

And if you look through a telescope at the closest galaxy to ours, I don't know if those of you who are not familiar with astronomy may not be aware that a galaxy is an entire universe consisting of billions of suns, probably each with their planetary systems. Billions. Many much bigger than our sun.

And you look at that through a telescope and all you see is a little smudge of luminosity. But you know that you're looking at a whole universe. And even that, a sense of the essence of that is not separate from who you are.

You can only know that in the absence of interpretation. And what I'm now translating into language, you don't know through language. It's a deep knowing, a sensing, direct knowing.

And with that comes, that's love. When you know it as yourself, then everything you look upon or hear or feel was love. The recognition of oneness.

That's what love is. So basically what happens is what God is reported to have done just after creating the world happens when you look upon the universe in stillness. I did a good job there.

What we call evil or bad things is an ego perspective. On the one hand, it's an egoic view, an egoic interpretation of the form dissolving. It's death is perceived as bad because there's identification with form.

It's dreadful. When you only know yourself as form, death is dreadful. So that is regarded as dreadful.

So when forms die, that's regarded. Another aspect of bad or evil is suffering inflicted on yourself or other forms again due to the ignorance of being that separate form. The illusion of form creates the suffering.

So ultimately, the whole of suffering is part of that egoic illusion. But through it, humans awaken. And this is our silent afternoon, well, more or less, unless you forgot about it.

And those who wish to continue into the night are free to do so. Noble silence. And those who wish to remain in silence and continue simply in the state of listening to whatever arises, not even looking for stillness.

Looking for stillness isn't stillness. Simply allowing this moment to be and listen to what arises in the now. And watch thoughts, emotions, reactions.

So those who wish to remain until nighttime or until they go to bed can do so. And if anybody approaches you and you wish to remain in silence, you just go. And then they know that you're in silence.

And perhaps we could have one or two tables in the dining hall. We put a little notice on silent table. And then we put another notice on some other tables, noisy tables.

That makes sense. Do we need some air in here? Perhaps.

I'll address some of the written questions this afternoon. And I've received other letters that I hope to respond to with various things that may not require an answer here. So I hope to get back to everybody the next day or two.

This isn't a question really, just a reminder of something. Dear Eckhart, I have a request that is for Judaism to be mentioned in the next edition of the Power of Now. As you may know, Hilder, a Jewish philosopher, has said, if not now, when?

It's not only a then question. I appreciate your attention to this. Thank you very much.

Thank you very much. I wasn't aware that he had said that. And of course, it's a wonderful statement.

And it reminds me of what Ramana Maharshi called the essence of all religion contained in a statement in the Old Testament, which is, be still and know that I am God. Somebody read that or taught that to Ramana Maharshi, or I don't think he had read the Bible, and he immediately said, that's the essence of all religion, of all spirituality. Be still and know that I am God.

And that's in the Old Testament. A beautiful mantra followed, once it's been uttered, it's followed by that to which it points, the stillness. So once it's been uttered, allow it to take you into the stillness to which it's a pointer.

And that knowing of who you are and the essence of your being is beyond words. Another question, yes. Your marvelous book does not give any credits to J.

Krishnamurti, although at least to this reader, evidence of his influence seems to me quite clear. Could you please comment on this? Is there possibly an accidental editorial commission omission?

You give credit to David Bohm, Kay's frequent collaborator, and acknowledge Renny Frumkin in your acknowledgements. As you may have read in the introduction to the book or in an interview, when my ego, the egoic self-image and its storyline self-destructed, I had no idea what had happened. There was no understanding, there was simply peace.

So the subsequent years were spent in trying to understand the peace that passes all understanding. When I saw those lines in my endeavor to understand, although it wasn't terribly important, it would be nice to understand what this is all about. I'm at peace.

Yesterday I was in dreadful, and for many years in dreadful despair and conflict and anxiety and fear. And where does this, what is this? It's very strange.

I'd like to know. So at some point I read Jesus's words, the peace that passes all understanding and realized that he didn't understand it either. Otherwise he would have said, because it's beyond what the mind can grasp.

Nevertheless, I continued visiting some teachers, asking questions, reading. And some of the teachings or teachers I found spoke to me immediately and very deeply. There was an immediate recognition there, as if I was hearing myself and saying, oh yes, that's what it is.

And so one of them was Krishnamurti, another was Ramana Maharshi. And I remember having glanced at a book by Krishnamurti before it happened. Before it happened, my search was not spiritual, at least not consciously spiritual.

I was looking for some intellectual answer, philosophy and so on. And I had picked up a book by Krishnamurti and read a few pages, and after a while put it down and said, I don't know what he's talking about. It's like sand running through my fingers.

I read and, whoosh. And then afterwards I read again after this had happened and immediately I knew what he was talking about and the power of the teaching. So there was a strong recognition there, just as with Ramana Maharshi.

Not so much that I, they put new ideas into my head. It's rather seeing the essence, understanding the essence of all spirituality immediately. And Krishnamurti teaches in the negative tradition mainly like Justice Buddhism does.

He doesn't inspire with lovely statements. He always, he just points to what the truth is not. And in accordance with those negative traditions, just like Buddhism, once you have seen illusion clearly, then the truth stands revealed by itself.

So a negative teaching like Buddhism or Krishnamurti never puts the truth into words. 90% of Krishnamurti is like that, but occasionally he does say something positive. This is positive and negative and it's not in the everyday context.

And there were other teachings that were meaningful. Buddhism, a deep love for the teaching of the Buddha, Christ's teaching and the Christian mystics and always immediate recognition. And I love the truth, no matter in what form it comes and recognizing it shining through sometimes even heavy forms, culturally conditioned forms and yet the truth shines through.

I had originally written a chapter on various teachings and the essence contained in them, but it wasn't included in the book and it was decided to keep the book to a large extent free of too many references to other teachings because all the teachings are in there anyway and it speaks for itself. At some point, perhaps that chapter will be published somewhere else. In the meantime, and I believe in John Parker's book that is available here, I speak about Krishnamurti also in the interview.

I don't feel so much that there has been an influence by Krishnamurti as a continuation of a teaching stream, not just Krishnamurti, and I believe I talk about it in John Parker's book, that there's two streams of Ramana Maharshi which is a heart-centered stream and of Krishnamurti, which is a teaching based on recognizing the false kind of together into one. So a new stream comes, two streams come together into one. David Bohm, by the way, I didn't mention the person who wrote the introduction to my book mentioned him in the introduction.

The person you mentioned, Reni Frumkin, whom I met after she moved away from Los Angeles where she had a Krishnamurti center. Much later, I met her in a bookshop in Sausalito called the Bearded Giraffe. And then I stayed in her house in Sausalito for several months and wrote part of the book there.

That's why her name is mentioned in the introduction. And this brings me to another question that somebody asks. What other books do you recommend that are clear like yours and are a transmission?

Well, many spiritual books are written through... Many spiritual books have a screen of culture, a screen of cultural or accumulated over the years, cultural accumulations, concepts, images, beliefs. So when you read Christianity, you have to see the truth beyond the screen of the culture out of which the teaching came.

There are very few teachings that do not have the screen which sometimes obscures the truth which may be there shining, but unless you know it already deeply within yourself, you may not be able to see the truth shining through because the screen may be too heavy. The cultural screen, the screen of conditioning. So there are some wonderful works in the Christian tradition.

There are some wonderful works in the Hindu tradition and the Buddhist tradition. Relatively few that do not have the screen of a culture that has accumulated over a long period of time. Even Jesus had to use the terminology of Judaism out of which he came.

Nobody would have understood a word if he had used other words. So to communicate, he had to use that language. And so that applies to many.

So when I speak of books, then you need to take into account there are very few books that do not have the screen. The question is whether when you pick up that book, you will be able to see the truth shining through the words rather than getting caught up in the words which then becomes like a net and you're caught in this net of words. And the mind may even like it.

The mind says, oh great, I have new beliefs now. You haven't gone beyond the words. You remain on the level of words which are beliefs.

That's how religions develop without the depth of true spiritual realization. So the amazing, I'm very amazed that my book is sometimes is read by people who have studied a lifetime of spirituality and are extremely knowledgeable and they relate to it and see the truth. And others who haven't picked up a spiritual book in their lives the first time they pick up and it is meaningful to them.

How that is possible, I don't know. It just happened. And it's wonderful.

Krishnamurti of course also is free of cultural, to a large extent free of, he does not use an existing tradition to speak through. There's a very powerful book come out of India which has almost very little because it's a good translation, has very little cultural baggage because those certain concepts that are used are translated quite well in I Am That by Nisargadatta and I Am That. It's a book you don't read for information.

You just pick it up, read a couple of pages and you have enough for a few days or just half a page. It simply, it points continuously to the truth without, it's the most unadulterated book perhaps there is of spirituality. Then there are other books that have a little bit of screen and yet the truth shines through.

So if you're not adverse to this Christian tradition, some people have, they don't like it because of certain past happenings. If the Christian is not too much of a barrier to you or rather if you feel even drawn to that, then a person who uses, a teacher who uses Christian terminology but in a deeper sense than conventional church Christianity is Joel Goldsmith. And any of his books speak the truth, shining through the language of Christianity and of the Bible of the Old and New Testament.

Joel Goldsmith, any book. And then if you feel more drawn towards the Eastern or Hindu tradition, then of course Ramana Maharshi speaks very clearly with a minimum of cultural baggage, just enough he uses to be understood by his surrounding culture. But the truth shines through very clearly.

Krishnamurti, again, if you're only, if you haven't yet gone beyond mind, it's easy to get caught up in mind when you read Krishnamurti. He continuously points beyond. Once you've gone beyond mind, you can read and it goes more deeply and then it will be powerful and meaningful.

Most books by Krishnamurti were originally the spoken word and were then edited to become books. But my favorite book by Krishnamurti was actually written, a beautiful work called Krishnamurti's Notebook. And again, you can read just a page or two and it's a meditation.

For a long time, I still love it. The Course in Miracles, I used it for a while in teaching and again, there you have the medium of the Christian language looks quite old-fashioned to many people. It looks quite heavy, the terminology, the screen of words and yet it points to the truth continuously.

The Course in Miracles, again, only if you have no inner aversion to Christian language and the old-fashioned patriarchal language with masculine pronouns. If you have any other favorite books yourself that you believe other people might use, leave a note for me here and I'll look at it. It would be nice to know what books have been meaningful and powerful for you.

And of course, not to forget the source texts of the great traditions. The Tao Te Ching, the ancient Chinese work. The Bhagavad Gita, the Indian scripture.

The Upanishads from India. The New Testament and the Old Testament. Old Testament is a mixture of deep insights and cultural stuff.

So you have to see where the truth is. New Testament also, to some extent, is a mixture of spiritual truth and some cultural stuff mixed in with it. So you have to see where the pearls are and where the pebbles are.

But those are the eternal, particularly the Tao Te Ching. You read it again and again, but getting a good translation may not be easy. I've been feeling, I've felt drawn a few times to translating the Tao Te Ching.

Now this might seem strange because I don't know any Chinese. All I know is where it came from. And often when I read it, I know that's not quite it.

That's not really what he said. And at other times I say, oh yes, that's true. So we'll see.

Some Buddhist works, perhaps on Zen. There are some good books on Zen. Don't recall the titles at the moment.

A few weeks ago, I was standing on a mountain in China. And there was, carved in stone, there was some Chinese writing about this size, a Chinese symbol writing. And I asked my host, what does that mean?

And he said, oh, that means Buddha. And I said, oh, it's nice. It survived the Maoist upheavals, perhaps because it's on top of a mountain.

And then I remembered that I had asked him about various Chinese signs before. And many of the symbols, they're originally pictorial symbols. Long, long, long time ago, they were little pictures.

And then became more and more abstract. I had asked him about some others, and I had remembered then I had asked him about a sign, and he said, that's love. And then I asked, yeah, but it seems to be two symbols put together here.

And he said, that's right. The symbol on the left means female. The symbol on the right means heart.

And the two together means love. And the symbol for female originally was a pictorial with a woman with her legs crossed. You can still see that, crossed legs.

And so I remember that, and I said, but here too, there seem to be two. It seems to, the Buddha symbol also seems to consist of two. And he said, that's right.

The first one, which is a very simple symbol, goes like that. That means man, or human. And the next one means no.

And so there's the truth. I don't need to explain, because I've been talking about it for several days. Is it wrong to videotape you?

Whenever people have asked me if they can tape something, I've said yes. For a long time, the talks were not being taped on audio. And people just wanted to capture.

It's not really a need, but I honor that desire to want to capture that. So they brought little tape recorders and videos, and they asked me sometimes, and I said, yes, go ahead. And then after a while, my publisher noticed that there were all kinds of copies of copies of copies floating around and sometimes barely audible.

And she said, we need to do this properly because the form needs to honor the essence. The essence is of great value. So let's keep the form as good as we can so that the form honors the essence.

And that's also why the book was published in a nice edition hardback. It could have been published originally more cheaply. So that the form honors the essence.

My publisher said, don't you agree that the form should honor the essence? And I said, well, yes, that's absolutely true. I agree with that.

But I still can't promise you, I said, that when people ask me if they can record, that no will come out of my mouth. Yes. And then she said, well, that's all right.

Kim will say no for you. So poor Kim has to say no. But I honor your desire to capture it.

And I promise that soon there will be videos available with proper lighting and so on. And the audio tapes are now available. It's being recorded.

But I honor very much your desire to capture this. But it's already in you anyway. The essence is transmitted.

Even if you forgot every word of what's being said here during these days, even if you forgot every word, nothing would be lost. The essence would be there. And I wouldn't be surprised if you went home and somebody asked you, what did he talk about?

Well, he must have said a lot after all these days. What aspects of ourselves allows or invites the mind to be silent? Is it the soul?

What aspects of ourselves allow or invites the mind to be silent? What is it that draws us to silence? To stillness.

Well, stillness draws you to stillness. Stillness emerges. What is stillness?

The unmanifested, unconditioned consciousness. Ultimately, if you like the Istik language, God. Presence emerges.

Presence is stillness. As it emerges in its initial stages, sometimes a seeking begins, a dissatisfaction with the conditioned egoic entity, with your life. Presence cannot yet emerge.

And sometimes, we talked about this yesterday, presence builds up, builds up, and cannot yet emerge unobstructedly. And so it needs to create an opening. This is why in many of you, that's already happened.

If it hasn't happened, it may not need to happen anymore because you're here. But quite a few of you are here because something happened that cracked open the shell of egos.

The consciousness wanted to emerge, was being obstructed, and then it seemed perhaps it might have been something from within.

Furniture, the content, this is all that's me, my life. And suddenly, so what aspect of ourselves? I don't use the word soul, but essence, the essence of your being draws you to itself.

One could say it is a pull back to the source, the homeward journey. After going outward into differentiation, mind is differentiation, analysis, breaking the world up into little bits and pieces, greater and greater fragmentation and differentiation, a sign of this being the complexity of the world that we inhabit. I mean, I can't figure things out.

Very complex. So gone out from the source more and more until finally there's complete identification with form. The formless one source is not known anymore.

That is the state of poverty, of spiritual deprivation. That's the state described in the New Testament in Jesus' parables of the lost, the prodigal son, the lost son, who goes out from his father's house, demands his inheritance from his father, and then travels to a distant country, away, away, away, and spends all his wealth and becomes destitute and a beggar. Doesn't even know who he is anymore.

Just a beggar. And then comes a call. I don't know if that's actually in the New Testament, but this is an older parable, actually, that has existed in the Middle East for a long time.

And it says that a call comes from the father, which really means the source. You could say the mother, doesn't matter. A call comes, a reminder, and in the story, the father sends a messenger.

And the messenger says, don't you remember who you are, to this beggar sitting there? And no. And then, so perhaps the messenger in the story could be seen as a spiritual teacher or some spiritual teaching coming through in some other form.

And then there's the dawning of, oh. And this is when you listen to the truth and there's a readiness for being. There is a sudden recognition of, oh, yes.

Nobody needs to convince you. It's very different from mind stuff that says, you better believe me. You immediately see there's a pause.

The mind stops. There's a deep recognition that comes from a deeper level than mind. And it always says, oh, yes, that's true.

I know that. And nothing could be told you that is of true significance that you don't know. So it's whatever I've said so far, you have already known.

It is always a recognition of the truth because the truth is already known because you are one with the truth in your essence already. And that's the beauty of listening to a teaching that comes from the true place. And it's not only the words.

When the words are being spoken because they emanate from that true place of being, of oneness, the words are received and they carry the energy of that state of being or oneness. So there's more to the words than the informational value that they contain when there's spiritual discourse that comes from the true source. But normally with language, language is there to convey information.

But with spiritual discourse, it comes from a true place. The informational level is there, but it's not the most vital one. The most vital level is the energy frequency that each word carries, which is the energy frequency of the source of being.

Presence speaks, not a person. It comes out of that place. So it's new and fresh.

Even if it's been said many times before, it's new and fresh each time. It comes from that place. It carries the energy of that place.

And so the words are being received. Usually the words are being received by the mind. The mind then decodes the meaning from the sound, so retranslates it into meaning.

But with spiritual discourse, something additional happens. It goes into the mind. The mind decodes.

And then it goes on. The energy travels deeper than mind into the essence of the unconditioned consciousness itself. It's now beyond words.

It's simply being speaking to being. And there it's recognized. And this is where the power of a spiritual teaching lies.

And the same thing can happen when you read a book. And this seems strange that this is possible. You read a book that comes from that place, that was written from that place, not just through accumulated mind knowledge.

And immediately you know there is a power there and an inner recognition that isn't there when you read a book that only comes from analysis or accumulated knowledge. So that is the transformative power of spiritual discourse because that's the place it comes from. And that's the place it reaches in you.

It can happen sometimes that a spiritual teaching or discourse cannot get past the mind that is attempting to decode the sound of the words. So it gets stuck in the net of mind. The words are being spoken, goes into your ears, into the brain, into the mind.

The mind starts working on them, decoding the sounds. The meaning is there. But it's working so hard that the energy charge that is more important than the words cannot get past the screen of mind.

In that case, you would be sitting there, you could listen to the most powerful teaching and all you hear is the informational level of the words because your mind is of such density or is so hyperactive that it doesn't allow the more powerful frequency of being to go through it. So it gets caught in the net or the screen of mind. And then listening to a spiritual discourse becomes a very unsatisfying thing after a while.

The mind says, well, is that all? What else? What does it really mean?

So then it wouldn't be working. And occasionally that happens. For most of you or all of you here, if you're still here, who knows, one or two may have departed already.

And that might have been the case if it didn't get past the screen of mind. Why sit here and listen? I mean, you can read more interesting books than that on the level of information.

So that is, and then also once you, this has been activated in you, also you can save yourself a lot of time and money because there are many books that you don't need to read anymore. And you know, most of you probably are at that stage now. You can go into a bookshop, pick up a book, open it, read half a page or a page or less, maybe just a line.

And you'll know whether it has the dimension of being to it, that whether the power resides there. Somehow it got into the page. I don't understand how it happens.

And then you feel, yes, this comes from the source. Or you see, that's the mind speaking. It may still be interesting, even helpful.

It has its place, but the power, true power is lacking. The transformative power is lacking. It could give you interesting ideas, but the transformative power would not be there.

So that's good. You don't have to accumulate a vast amount of books now. You just go into a bookshop and sense, open a book, read.

And then you know whether you want to buy it or not, read it. It's beautiful how that works. It's wonderful.

And again, the same happens when you go to a talk. You might have, when I, after this transformation, I visited quite a few teachers. And quite often I went, it was announced, so-and-so is coming to speak.

And I would go and listen. A monk from here or there, Christian, Buddhist, whatever. Or a famous author from this and that, spirituality.

And often immediately after two minutes, one minute, you know, another mind. This is just the mind speaking. Interesting perhaps, but essence.

Where is the essence? Where is the being? And occasionally, yes, it's there.

And they might not even have spoken English very well. A monk coming from some distant country, only speaking broken English, and yet the essence is there. How do we set goals, work for social change, and stay in the present?

A brief answer would be not to look for salvation in the future. To do what you have to do. Let's deal with one aspect first.

Set goals for your life, perhaps. Now, when you're not present, when presence is not already here, many of the goals that you set will be egoic goals. And egoic goals promise you some kind of salvation in the future.

I need to achieve this or that in order to be someone, in order to know who I am, or so that others know who I am, or I get recognition or a sense of security through the position that I want to achieve, or whatever. The ego always compares itself to someone else, to others. So I want to rise up so that I can feel good about myself when I compare myself with others.

Self-esteem comes in here, pursued as a goal, so that I can feel better about myself. When you're in egoic endeavors, it's always an attempt to be better in some way than somebody else, or to make it. You can only make it as a goal to enhance your sense of self if others don't make it.

Because if everybody makes it, I talked about that yesterday, your ego has no food in it. If everybody were rich, let's say your egoic goal is to be rich. Let's say that you live in a country where every person is a millionaire.

Then being rich could no longer satisfy yourself, your sense of self. You would have to look for something else. So it would no longer really be a desirable egoic goal.

So the most vital thing, as far as this question is concerned, is the basis for all goals is your present state of consciousness. Some people are still trapped in distant goals that they had in the past, and they're still trying to achieve that. I know somebody who occasionally came to see me She's a wonderful teacher.

She is with children. She performs miracles with children. She goes and teaches at the most difficult schools.

And I've told her to write a book about how, through her work, children become transformed, children who have been hurt very much from very difficult backgrounds. But in her late teens, she had this idea that, I want to be famous, and I want to be a famous actress. And then in her early twenties, she went to some acting school, but then couldn't get a job as an actress, and so she became a teacher.

And a very wonderful teacher. And that's obviously where the mission, her life's purpose lies. It's there.

But what survived in her head was the image of me as a famous actress. So there was great unhappiness, because this isn't what I imagined for my life. I'm just a schoolteacher, the mind said.

I'm just a schoolteacher. That's all. I'll be insignificant.

What is all this? What are these beliefs? And then she phoned up an advertising agency, trying to do commercials, so get into the movies that way, while she was already doing wonderful teaching work.

And then she called me up and said, I've got an interview, they've selected me on the short list for an advertising spot for jeans. So she was getting close to achieving her goals. They were total illusion.

In her essential being, because she was going through transformation, otherwise she wouldn't have been coming to see me. She was already far beyond those goals that came from her unconscious past. But the mind pattern still operated.

And two days later she called me up and said, I didn't get it. I was in great pain. And finally we had a session, and there was a little bit of a breakthrough.

She saw the absurdity of that. So you can see how many goals, may even be goals from your unconscious past that are still operating in your head, that are telling you of what you need to achieve. So the basis for all goals, first of all, let's get the foundation right.

The foundation is this moment. Let's get this moment right. If this moment isn't right, no matter what goals you pursue, nothing will satisfy you.

What does it mean to get this moment right? It means to recognize the rightness of this moment. Not to do anything to get this moment right, but to recognize what is, is already right.

In other words, to become aligned with what is, instead of trying to run away to some distant goal in the future that's going to save me. So you begin, that is the foundation. Are you at home in the now?

That's the question. If you're not at home, you're not going to get home in the future, because that's not where it is. So no matter how many goals you pursue or how much you run towards the future, you won't get to home.

If you're not home, don't realize you're home already. So it's through the simple act of surrendering to what is, yes to now, completely aligned with the suchness, to use Buddha's expression, completely aligned with the suchness of now. Presence, present, not running away, completely here.

Rooted in being. And then see what happens. Something may come into your mind, arises from a deeper level, and then takes the form of an insight or an idea of what it is that you need to do.

This is what I need to do. And then action comes. But you don't do it to achieve some improved sense of self, because the sense of self is already, you've gone beyond the mind-made self in the vibrant aliveness of presence.

That's your identity. Then what operates is presence itself, no longer a little entity trying to make it. The intelligence that runs the universe then moves through.

It may move into your mind, and then the mind suddenly has a new insight. Hmm. And then action comes out of that insight and you do something.

You pick up the phone, whatever action is needed. Or maybe nothing comes, and that's fine too. I don't know what to do with my life, but it's fine as it is.

It's fine now. My life for quite a few years was very, very static. First I lived in London after the transformation.

I lived in Cambridge. I lived in London. And then I moved away from the big city and lived in the country, a very secluded existence.

Occasionally somebody would come to see me, and that went on. I had a little garden. I had occasionally a group, seven, eight, nine, 10 people once a week.

And it went, a year passed, another year, another year, another year. And sometimes the mind said, isn't there something more significant for you to do? I didn't know yet.

It was fine. I couldn't even say that I waited. It was just how it was.

And suddenly one morning, I woke up, and I knew I have to move to the west coast of North America. Why? And then I called somebody and said, I'm moving to the west coast.

What for? I don't know. But the certainty was complete.

There was no doubt. And I knew immediately I was going to do it. Just the doing that required a little bit of time to get rid of everything.

Explain to a few more people. I had to invent some excuse for my mother, who already thought I was mad anyway. And then I didn't know.

I had one superficial acquaintance in California and one acquaintance in Vancouver, both on the west coast. First thing that occurred to me when the realization of west coast came, California. I don't know why.

And this person I knew in Vancouver said, come visit me first in Vancouver and then you can go to California from there. So I booked a flight to Vancouver, arrived, quite liked it. I liked the energy field.

Stayed for more than a few days. I stayed for a few weeks, not knowing why I was there. Still sitting around, walking around.

Then went, took a bus to California. Stayed in an expensive hotel for one night, in a cheap hotel for more nights. And then I sat in a cheap hotel.

What am I doing here? The acquaintance I had, I visited her. She had a meditation group there and she said, somebody has arrived from England who needs somewhere to stay.

And the man said, he can stay at my place. I have a spare room. So I moved in there, still not knowing what I was doing.

And after a while, the mind came in a few times and said, why are you here? What are you doing? And one day, the impulse came to buy a notebook.

And then I got out of my suitcase some pile of papers that I had taken with me of little notes and writings accumulated over the years after I'd had my little groups. I'd often written things down that I had said. And I picked up a pen and a question came, which was similar to one of the questions that somebody had actually asked.

And then an answer came. And I knew after one page of writing that I was writing a book. Before all the writing over those years, I didn't know I wasn't writing a book.

I was just making notes. There wasn't the energy stream there. But suddenly, there was an enormous energy stream.

And I knew it's a book. And in the writing, the energy stream built up. And every day, I got up earlier and earlier to write.

Okay, so it was good. My days were full now. The energy stream was there.

It felt good. Then my visa ran out. I had to go back to England.

I arrived back in England, again with the writings I'd already done, sat at a desk, picked up the pen. Nothing happened. The next day, sat again, picked up the pen.

Nothing happened. And after the third or fourth day, I realized why I had to leave England, although I love England and have a deep affinity with the country. And yet, the book, the energy field there wasn't right for the book to be born.

The energy field on the West Coast was needed. I didn't know that. And then I went back to the West Coast, again Vancouver, California, Vancouver.

And no matter whether I was in Vancouver or California, the writing immediately flowed again. So when I went back after England, and it started again, then I knew beyond doubt why I had to come out. So I obeyed the impulse without knowing why.

So I had a goal, but it wasn't a very distant goal. I knew one step, and I obeyed the impulse, the realization, to take that one step. But I didn't know what would follow that one step.

I didn't demand that I should know what would follow that one step. What if I run out of money? Where am I going to stay?

What's the point? What innumerable questions the mind could have asked, because the mind wants certainty. The mind wants to control the future.

It hates uncertainty. It hates not knowing what's going on. So there comes that continuous surrender.

And with the surrender comes trust, which you cannot manufacture, not even through affirmations. No matter how many affirmations you use, you cannot manufacture trust. I'm looking at you when I talk.

You cannot manufacture. Trust comes through surrender to now, because surrender to now is the end of fear, because fear is the ego's impossible desire to control the future in some way. And it cannot.

It knows that it can't, and so there's great fear, because this future is so uncertain. Anything could happen. So what is trust other than absence of fear?

Trust. When there's no fear, there's trust. It can't be generated.

So that's all you ever need to know is the next step, and it's when you are present, you listen to what comes. And it comes. It's very different.

Sometimes people get confused when suddenly a little idea comes into their head, and then they believe, okay, I'm meant to do that. And the next day, the opposite idea comes into their head, and then there's suddenly great turmoil. Oh, maybe that wasn't right at all.

Maybe that's right. Maybe I should go there. Then you know it's just mind stuff.

When there is certainty beyond doubt, it comes from a deeper place. When there's conflicting thoughts going on, you're in confusion, that's mind stuff. And the way out of mind stuff is be here now.

Be here now. Just this. Be in the body.

Alert. Present. Recognize the rightness of this moment.

That's how you get this moment right. This is such a big question. I'll have to answer it immediately.

But not until we've had some stillness. Okay, now let's see what the question was. Yes.

Have you thought about what you want to do in the future? Best wishes? No.

Well, something like that. No. Well, I knew what places I'm going to visit in the next few months, but that's all.

So what's on my calendar that I know? But that's all I know about the future. It seems to just unfold.

But there are events that are planned ahead, a year in ahead and more. But that only scribbles on the calendar, so it's not really future. Everybody survived, I assume, the adventure tours.

A couple of people fell in the water, I hear, but survived. And everybody survived some mind attacks or pain body attacks or other forms of turbulence which happened or are still happening. That's what somebody was saying the other day, a week-long retreat is long enough for these things to arise.

And that's good. Also long enough for these things to subside, perhaps, or to be simply allowed in the spaciousness. You may remember we, on the first day, I believe, we talked about bringing spaciousness to whatever happens here.

So that means to bring a stillness even to drama, if drama should happen. There's the drama and there's the wind and there's space around it. By wind here, I meant there's the vastness and then there's the little human dramas happen in it.

When peace lasts for too long, the mind comes up and says, it's time for a bit more drama. Otherwise you'll forget who you are. You're beginning to dissolve without the drama.

Sometimes the drama is in that rest, simply played inside your mind with yourself, sitting alone in your tent. Should I have come here or shouldn't I, was it? Or what's going to happen next week?

Or something happened, somebody around you said something or did something. Old pain body stuff coming up. Pain body saying, I can't wait any longer now.

I'm coming up anyway. And maybe yesterday there were no sessions, perhaps a better opportunity for the pain body to come up. And then either you identified with it, became it, fueled it with thinking.

That's all right too. Or you brought a stillness or witnessing presence to it and simply allowed it to be there without it turning into me, a me, a self. So there's something faster than any content in your life.

The sea of consciousness, stillness. And interesting, you may have been able to observe it in yourself or others. There are quite a few people living relatively closely together here.

It's a temporary community. And that, of course, brings up reactions. And then you notice that not everybody around you is enlightened.

And that's a surprise. They all looked so spiritual when they arrived until you met them before breakfast, for example. Now the question is, is it possible to allow the reactions that happen around you, to allow them to be, or does that reaction produce a counter-reaction in you which says, whatever the reaction may be, you should be more conscious, you shouldn't be behaving like that, you should know better, you should be enlightened, in other words.

So when you react to something in someone, it's the, very often, the me wanting to gain strength through it, to defend itself. Maybe it felt hurt in some way, or diminished by something somebody said or did. And then the reaction comes.

Then the me needs to build itself up again. A typical thing is to observe it in discussions with people when you're talking and opinions are put forward. Mental positions, in other words.

And so there's one, you get entrenched in a mental position, which is what an opinion is, when your sense of self is invested in the opinion, which is mostly the case. So you're entrenched in a mental position and then you're sitting at a dinner table and somebody across is entrenched in another mental position, the opposite of yours. You express yours, and then he or she expresses their mental position.

And maybe in, and suddenly your mental position becomes shaky, which is your sense of self. Somebody dares questioning my mental position, but really me, it's an attack on me because I've identified with my mental position. That's already the mechanics of unconsciousness.

And then I need to defend myself. And then an emotion comes up with that. Let me tell you why you are wrong.

Really, at that moment, you've lost all interest in what's right or wrong. Unconsciously, your main interest is to repair or strengthen yourself, your sense of self, because it was identified with a mental position which has been questioned or in some way diminished. And that's one of the most deeply rooted forms of unconsciousness, the repair job on one's sense of self very quickly.

And it gets damaged very easily. Many situations are intrinsically, all situations are intrinsically simple because intrinsically there's only whatever is happening at this moment. But self comes in and then a simple situation becomes drama.

So you can watch when your sense of self feels diminished in some way. It's the artificially made sense of self, the mentally derived sense of self. Then either you can go into the unconscious repair job, which is the reaction to reestablish my sense of self, or, and this sounds the opposite of what the mind, the egoic mind will tell you is the right thing to do, and what's something that sounds almost perverse, but this is where you find true power, is not to go ahead with the repair job, to allow through some situation, just as an experiment, to allow the diminishment of that sense of me or self instead of building it up again through the reaction.

And it's the most simplest of situations it happens. An example, a few examples just to show what I'm talking about from recent days. Steve told me when he arrived here, he was taken to a room.

He unpacked his things and sat in meditation, and then the man who had taken him there came back and said, I'm sorry, Senor, I've taken you to the wrong room. You have to move to a tent. Potentially, it's a situation, it seems it's totally insignificant, but if that potentially is already a diminishment of me, you mean I have just unpacked and you are taking me?

Fortunately, Steve didn't do it. He allowed it to be. And said, okay, pack things again.

Very simple. It takes five minutes. Okay, where's the tent?

Go to the tent. But it could have been a little drama, your first drama. You just arrived at Pura Vida, and you already had, potentially, you could have had your first drama.

And not because of anything in the situation, but it was bound up with a sense of me, which is, how dare you do this to me? This is my place now. I've been here for five minutes.

And they're all intrinsically simple. And if you can, let me give you another fun example. And I'm giving simple examples because it operates on all levels.

On the most simple levels, the me gets damaged and does its repair job. Or on bigger levels. We may come to that.

And one of my talks, not here, somewhere else, I was told afterwards, there was one seat left in the front row, and a woman was walking towards that seat. And she was two steps away from the seat. And suddenly, from behind, a jacket came flying across.

And it landed on the seat. And a voice from behind triumphantly exclaimed, That seat is taken. And of course, a relatively simple situation.

Funny, perhaps. But again, potential for human drama. Potential for a fight over a chair.

And it could have taken a long... It could have taken quite a time to enact the drama. What do you mean, taken?

I was close. It's my chair. No, it's not.

My jacket is there. But you didn't put it there personally. It doesn't matter.

But it's not really about the chair. It's about a sense of self that feels diminished because I'm walking to it. I feel less now that I can't sit in there.

I am diminished in my sense of self in a small way. And that's how the reaction arises. And the reaction very often is out of proportion to the actual significance of the situation or the event.

Similar case in traffic. Somebody shouts at you and tells you, you're stupid, you should... where did you get your license?

And immediately, if somebody says, you are stupid or whatever they say, a repair job is immediately needed because it injures the sense of me. Perhaps you know, if you were very alert, you would know that simply this person is a driving pain body. And every minute he shouts at somebody, you are stupid.

So there's nothing personal in it. But there is an immediate instinctive reaction and the repair job that unconsciously has to be done on the me is to shout something back because that's the repair job. Because then, no, I'm stupid, you are the whatever.

And then he has to do a further repair job and that can even lead to physical violence as often reported in the papers when people drive. We are connected to the totality. So it's, this is a very deeply rooted, people have been doing spiritual work for 20 and 30 years, don't catch that in themselves when it happens.

So the secret, and it sounds almost anti-natural, unnatural, to allow, and you start to do it in simple situations. What feels like I'm less now because of this little event or big event, I feel less, I feel diminished in my sense of self. And instead of immediately building up a sense of self again through reactivity in one form or another to allow the diminishment.

That's another way of saying it's, there's a spaciousness instead of further content fighting that content. It could be a simple thing. You've put forward an opinion, somebody else put forward their opinion, you feel, oh, they may even be right.

And to then, to watch that mechanism of wanting to, the impulse to counter argue and simply watch that impulse. It doesn't have to become words. So in other words, bring the spaciousness to it.

And then perhaps the words might come, I don't know, maybe, because that may be the truth at that moment. Perhaps you feel a little bit uncertain about the opinion that you just expressed with such conviction. And then somebody presents a very convincing counter argument.

But whatever it may be, all that opinions is one area where this happens. Or it could be all kinds of events taking place where the me needs to reassert itself. And that's particularly useful in living with people because those situations arise frequently.

And we are here precisely to go beyond that limited sense of me that needs defense mechanisms, that needs to be on the defensive and really is on the defensive all the time. That's why A Course in Miracles beautifully puts it, whenever you become defensive about anything, it says, know that you have identified yourself with an illusion. And the illusion is the illusory sense of self.

Because your true being doesn't need a defense mechanism. So at first it looks like weakness when you don't do the repair job. When you allow the diminishment of your sense of self.

Perhaps watch the impulse to repair it and let it pass. That takes you beyond that sense of self. And there's enormous strength underneath that.

But to that sense of self, you have adopted the narrow position of weakness. This is the same truth that in symbolic language, Jesus talked about when he says, turn the other cheek. It's not a literal statement.

It's the state of non-reactivity. So before you live in that state of non-reactivity, which is you've gone beyond the me needing its defense mechanisms and continuous repair jobs. For a while, perhaps you observe the deep seated impulse to repair your sense of self and let it pass.

And you haven't died. I have a half brother who is 20 years younger than me. And so when he grew up, although we weren't living in the same place, I would see him often or occasionally.

And I could see the ego growing when he was 15, 16. And I observed something, an ego characteristic, particularly strongly in him, which was the inability ever to admit that he didn't know something, which is also to bound up with a growing sense of me, that me, I know. We've been talking about knowing and not knowing.

Again, the need, the me needs to, I know. It's dreadful for the sense of me to say, I don't know. Of course, that's where we are going.

And so I observed whenever anybody asked something, he couldn't say, and if he knew nothing about it, he would invent the most absurd explanation just to give an answer to say, I know. And one day I suggested to him, I said, do you want to try a little experiment? When somebody asks you something and you're not really sure, try saying, I don't know, and see what happens.

And he looked at me and, what's he talking about? And I said, I'll remind you when it happens. I'll raise my finger.

And the situation came a day later and he was just about going into some fantasy explanation about something. And he said, okay, I don't know. And I waited a moment and then said, you're still alive?

You haven't died? Because to the ego, it's a little death to say, I don't know. Another beautiful illustration of that non-reactivity, a story I've told a few times, some of you may know it.

The Zen master who had quite a high reputation in Japan, lived in a town. One day was accused by a 16 year old girl who gave birth to a baby of being the father of her baby. She told her parents when they asked her, who is the father?

And finally she said, it's the Zen master next door. So the parents ran to the Zen master shouting and saying, she just told us that what you did, you are the father. And they told everybody in the town and they brought him the baby and said, we don't want this baby, it's yours.

You look after the baby. So when they first, they came to him and told him, you are the father, she just told us. And all he said, he listened and all he said was, is that so?

Yes, and here's the baby, you look after the baby. Oh, is that so? He lost his reputation.

They all, because he didn't defend himself and there was, you know what gossip is in the town. He did it, if he weren't the father, he wouldn't have accepted the baby. That's obvious, isn't it?

The people said, yeah, of course, he must be the father. So he must be a fraud all along and we've been going to him for years. Stories, stories, talk, talk.

And in the meantime, he looked after the baby. Every day he would feed the baby and nobody came to him for teaching anymore. It didn't matter because his sense of self wasn't in any external content.

It was not bound up with content, his position, his mental image of who he was or other people mental images of who he was. His sense of self was derived from the power of this moment, the aliveness, the simplicity of there is no problem. He has a beautiful little baby and I'm feeding a beautiful little baby.

Where's the problem? And so for a year, he had no more disciples but a little baby. And after a year, the mother grew a bit, became more mature and saw what she had done and she confessed to her parents that he was not the father, but the boy next door.

And so the parents came running to the Zen master again and said, oh, we're just terribly sorry. She just confessed to us that you are not the father. So we now realize that you're not the father and she said, oh, is that so?

Yes, can you forgive us? Can you forgive us? He didn't even know what they were talking about.

Forgive? What for? If there's something to forgive must mean there was a big resentment beforehand but there hadn't been any so there was nothing to forgive.

And so both when they accused him and when they took back that and realized the words used is that so, those words point to the spaciousness in which everything is allowed to happen. Rather than being caught in the event and the content, he was, he is the spaciousness. So the words is that so are just symbolic.

They point to the sowness, the isness, the suchness, which is accepted, which is when it is accepted, then you are the spaciousness rather than getting caught up in what happens in it. And then the parents said, okay, now can we have our baby back? Okay.

And he said, yes, here it is. And that baby had a good start in life. And again, there was no clinging to it.

Oh no, this is my baby. What do you mean have it back? I've been looking after this baby for one year.

I've had all the difficult times and now you want the baby? Okay. You can see the, in the, I have had all the difficult, I have done, I have been feeding it, I've been cleaning, I have been, and now you, I.

So that's good to witness in oneself. And when you, you will be amazed what strength there is when you relinquish the impulse to repair your sense of self. Even in small situations, in a little way, you become nobody through that.

You become as nothing. Now, sometimes life does something to demolish the sense of self in a bigger way. Even, let's say, and even a relatively minor illness begins to demolish once the sense of self importance of me.

The most self important little me becomes reduced to a little worm just by two days of acute diarrhea. And you have to crawl to the toilet every 20 minutes. And so something, it's hard to sustain illness, to sustain a me in a situation like that.

And that's only a minor thing. So for quite a few people, illness is a great teacher, potentially may not always be accepted as a teacher. There's the potential for the demolishing of one's sense of self importance of me.

What comes then is a humility, which simply means egolessness. Because there are certain illnesses which are prolonged, in which it's hard for the sense of self importance to survive an acute condition like that. Sometimes it does, in quite a few cases it does.

And the very potential for this situation to become a teaching or a teacher is transformed into its opposite. It can enhance the sense of me also when it is resisted continuously and you become bitter and angry about what life has done to you. Then that condition, which is potentially liberating becomes the opposite and you form an even more encapsulated and deeply entrenched me than before because you become bitter and angry about how miserable you and your life are.

And you become angry at the whole world and God or whatever. So the two are possible. Potentially it's the teacher or it could become the opposite and be turned into an even stronger sense of self, a predominantly miserable, very unhappy, deeply unhappy me.

With every illness, whatever kind, the potential is there for eroding the sense of self. And I have met some people who have grown through, grown rather, diminished rather than grown, grown in consciousness through an illness that became their main teacher. And sometimes I watch people without even talking to them and I see what already, the transformation that they have already undergone.

I saw last year somebody, I was sitting in a cafe somebody came, wanted to come through the door in a wheelchair and somebody opened the door and the man came, a relatively young man in a wheelchair, perhaps AIDS or whatever condition. And I looked into his eyes and they were bright and luminous. There was no unhappy me.

And that's all I needed to see, to know that it had worked. The future didn't really matter anymore. Is he going to survive?

He's made it already. The flowering of consciousness has already happened. Sometimes then healing of the physical also happens.

At other times it may not happen. Miracles do happen very often when that opening occurs, but they're not expected. They may happen.

It no longer matters. You don't need the miracle, but when you don't need it, it often happens. But it no longer matters.

Similar situation. How a severe illness can demolish the self, the sense of self. When I was at university, I had lunch always in the same hall and there would always be a man sitting at a table next by and they would wheel him in in a wheelchair.

He was always accompanied by four or five people and they wheeled him in and I observed him a few times and he had a very severe physical condition with gradual paralysis of all parts of the body except the mind. And he already even had no control over his head and his head was always slumped down. And he had to be fed by one of the people surrounding him and half the food would always fall out of his mouth so another person had to hold a serviette.

And everybody knew him. And when I first arrived, I asked, who is he? And they said, he's a professor of physics.

And then he wasn't that well known outside the circles of that university. So I observed him very often and thought how can this amazing life inflicting such almost unbearable illness on a person? It's so dreadful.

And he couldn't speak anymore. He could only produce croaking sounds which one person was able to interpret. Nobody else could.

And one day I opened, I was coming into the building and he was just coming in in his wheelchair and I opened the door for him and I looked into his eyes and he looked into mine and also there I saw the absence of suffering when I looked into his eyes and I was amazed. I said, he's not suffering. There was simply clarity.

Clear. And then I realized that he had surrendered. Perhaps not 100%, but there was already deep surrender.

And so I would see him every day and then for many years, I finally abandoned academic world completely. And he stayed. And many years later, he had become world famous.

And many years later, I saw his picture on the cover of Time or Newsweek magazine and it said, Master of the Universe. So his thinking became very creative. He did a lot of thinking, but he had, there was an absence of a sense of self.

So the thinking that he did was not self-seeking thinking. It was simply, there was lots of insights because there was surrender. So it was inspired.

So they now regard him as the world's greatest physicist. So you can, and at that time when I was inquiring about his condition, they said that was 20 years ago or so. He's been given two years to live.

So miracles do happen. Later, many years later, I also came across a little biography of his in which was quoted something from an interview he gave. Stephen Hawkins, his name.

He gave an interview and I remember the line he told when he talked about his life. He said, could anybody wish for more? So that's how, when it's anything that's accepted deeply, anything, any condition, and especially if it seems at first sight unacceptable, the more unacceptable and it's accepted, the deeper it takes you.

And what could be more unacceptable than that? So it is amazing, isn't it, that there's a connection between that to be inflicted by life with a dreadful illness, that there's a connection between that and the chair and the person throwing the jacket on a chair and saying, that's mine, that's taken, it's not yours. There are two ways.

There's one seemingly tiniest insignificant way and the other a huge one that life has of demolishing the sense of self. Or again, do you remember driving in the traffic? There's a similar mechanism at work.

So our job then is simply to allow the diminishment of me when it happens in its most insignificant forms, to allow it. If you cannot allow it directly, to observe the impulse not to allow it and let it pass through and then allow. Failing that, you can wake up after the event and see how you just completed your repair job and you triumphantly left the room before the other person could question further and you were right.

You left the room at the moment of establishing your rightness and said, okay, and you slammed the door and then suddenly you say, oh, there it was. The repair job is complete. So it may happen that that impulse is observed after the event and that's fine.

That is often the case that with unconscious patterns that the waking up happens after they've occurred because the impulse was still too powerful to wake up in the middle of it. You became it. And after it subsided, the waking up happens.

Oh, yeah, I did it again. That's all right. At least now you've woken up and you can see it.

There it was. Be watchful there that not a further layer of problem making comes in and then condemn yourself for having done it again. And that also strengthens your sense of me.

You see, again, I have failed. And if you have failed, that can also become a me. I have failed again.

You see, I can't do it. You can't do it. So with any unconscious mechanism, as more consciousness arises, often you will wake up after it's happened and look back on it.

And that's fine. And then you wake up just after it happened. First you wake up maybe 10 minutes or an hour after it happened.

And then you wake up, it's just happened and you say, oh, I did it again. All right. At least you are awake now.

It's enough. All you ever need is to be awake now. There's no need to be awake a minute ago.

And you may wake up in the middle of it. That's possible too. You just, the argument, the heated argument or the self-defense, words are pouring out of your mouth in a stream of mind.

And suddenly there's a witnessing presence. The true witnessing presence, of course, doesn't have a face. But if it had a face, there would be a slight smile on it.

If there's not a slight smile on it, it's already become mind again. That's all that the Buddha image symbolizes is that state of consciousness. And that's why this is the hint of a smile usually on the Buddha's face.

So you wake up in the middle of it. But it may be too late to stop it. The words continue to come out of your mouth because it's pre-programmed.

Nothing you can do about it. Let them come. But now you're no longer completely in them, this witnessing.

So they will lose, finally they exhaust themselves and they go, zoom, zoom, zoom. That's good. And then the next stage, you can actually observe the impulse before it becomes verbalized and translated into action, external action of some kind, whether it's through words or hitting somebody over the head in this case of more acute unconsciousness.

So you observe the impulse. So it's allowed to be and by observing it, you can feel it flushing through. And it's gone.

It passes through when it's observed. And then you are suddenly in no man's land where you're not defending yourself. You're not, you don't need it anymore.

And that's a new dimension. Wow. And it's characterized by a feeling of spaciousness and peace and aliveness.

And that's there because you have allowed the diminishment of me. Without resisting it. So you've gone beyond that limited self.

And the vast power of being, of consciousness, of presence, is there. It's a moment of self-realization, one could say. When the little me has been diminished and it's been accepted, not repaired, and then there's a moment of true realization.

It feels good. And in its extreme form, the image of Jesus on the cross points to that because it's simply an archetype for humanity, for every human's evolutionary path, ultimately. When you look at it at first, you say, how strange.

Why would anybody want to have that as a holy image? If you looked at it from one point of view, it looks absurd or perverse that there's this man being tortured on the cross and people pray to it. There is, however, a truth embedded in that which at the time people were not ready, they would not have been able to understand it, to listen to it in such a pure, unadulterated form in which the truth is being transmitted here.

So it was encapsulated into a mythical image which is really that state of total diminishment of self, a state that seemingly is a state of complete helplessness from the point of view of me, a state of complete, total surrender and becoming nobody, being, so that's the, it's contained, there's a wisdom contained in that image. It's the death of me, the death of the self, of becoming nobody. Who could be more insignificant than this human nailed on a cross becoming reduced to that?

And then symbolically, the cross also points to the transcendence and to incredible power. Now, that symbol may not work for you anymore. It doesn't, you don't need it as such because, but you know the truth directly, but it's a beautiful symbol and it's really, it's about every human, every human's evolutionary path.

You are that. So, it has also worked in some way for certain people who were living in that cultural environment. to simply say, I don't, I suffer with Christ, to say I suffer, it's not, I submit to this because I'm crucified together with Christ.

Anything that takes you to surrender works, it doesn't matter. And, you can also observe and interact living at close quarters with people. You may be able to observe the need for self-assertion simply through words coming out of your mouth and the energy field with which the words come out of your mouth.

Without the spaciousness, you're completely in the mind stream when you're discussing, it may not even be a discussion, it's just, without, without the underlying stillness or spaciousness, just completely in the stream of mind. You remember we talked about the standing back after a sentence, after you've uttered, made a statement, to come to an end of the mind stream, step back into stillness for a few seconds so that you don't get caught in the stream of mind. And sometimes you may catch yourself, it's like the river, yes, many of you were on the fast flowing river yesterday, stream, and once you're in it, how do you get out?

You're in this, the current is pulling you along and the mind is even more, the current is even stronger than the strongest river current and you're in it and suddenly you watch, wow, you watch mind, that's enough, you just watch, that means the spaciousness is coming in through the watching. This is such wonderful work, or work isn't the right word, of course, and that no man's land that you go into, when the diminishment of self is allowed, that's presence, that's the I am that is underneath, I am this, I am that, I am this, I am that, a deeper sense of I am-ness. But you can't grasp it, it's not, you can't hold it, it's not an object in consciousness, everything else is an object in consciousness, little me, that's the one thing that is no thing, the one thing that is not an object in consciousness, but consciousness itself, the one thing or no thing that matters.

Let's listen to a little song, if Kim has it. Yes. Try track three, if I remember correctly.

Okay.

[Speaker 2] (4:17:38 - 4:21:01)

In the heart of everything that I see Behind the eyes Beyond the skies Reflecting me It's not a call Yet before a horror phenomenon begins Oh, I never end I never really end Many differences Separate us on the surface yet But I cannot find A boundary In a conscious head When you ask me Where does awareness begin and does it end I have to say Always been Within the body Without the body I'm subject to Changing moods States of health Points of view Without means Before the deeds and the monuments of man Oh, I never end Many differences Separate us on the surface yet But I cannot find A boundary In a conscious head When you ask me Where does awareness begin and does it end I have to say Always been It's not a call Yet before a horror phenomenon begins Oh, I never end Never really Oh, I never end

[Speaker 1] (4:24:00 - 6:55:28)

We talked about this morning not to resist when one's sense of self feels diminished by some event or what somebody says to observe that feeling of becoming less perhaps observe the reaction against that feeling of now being less and it could be a simple thing as simple a thing as somebody shouting at you in the traffic saying you're stupid it's the simplest of situations but the same mechanics operate on all levels not to resist that feeling of now being less if that's not possible to observe the reaction against that it might arise so quickly that there's nothing you can do about it just observe that and then the reaction is designed to reinstall that lost self a small aspect of self that's been taken out grown smaller, diminished what I called earlier the repair job now something to add to this the egoic reaction against a diminished sense of self in some people it is not an outward reaction there are people who seemingly are timid and they don't react on the surface out of fear so it sometimes looks as if they had reached that stage where they don't need to react to build up that diminished sense of self whereas in fact the reaction is turned inward and there is an even tighter egoic contraction connected with fear the little me gets even bigger although it looks very small and meek if out of fear I do not react I feel diminished in my sense of self but because of fear there's no reaction and fear is the contraction it is a more something tightens within and what looks like or perhaps on the surface somebody who has transcended sense of self may not be the case but has a very strong egoic image of a fearful little me just as strong an ego as the big one just turned inward question may arise whether it's possible to go from that contracted egoic little me self whether a transition is possible immediately from there to allowing it may be possible if sufficient presence arises for that egoic self contraction fearful self contraction to be recognized by being recognized anything that you see and accept fully will change but to see and accept it fully that's the quickest way that virtually requires no time alternatively you can have a transitional period in which you express and openly do the repair jobs by shouting back or whatever it may be and observe that and then transcend that but any sufficient presence anything that is even the fearful self contraction it can be watched so there's never what I've been describing this morning there's no fear if fear is present that's of course not it that's still ego and the wonderful thing is how rapidly you transcend fear through you're driving a big bully in a truck shout something at you and I'm choosing the simplest of situations it operates on all levels all that's happening there's sounds coming out of his mouth there's sounds coming out of his mouth that's alright and then perhaps if the sounds are decoded by the mind then the mind says oh he's talking about me and what that means he's talking about me is the mental image of me he's like taking a hammer and chipping away at the mental image of me as the intelligent and clever one and he's calling me stupid so it's that inner alertness this is why it's so helpful to be sitting here because here the alertness rises the level of alertness of presence rises and that will help you when this alertness is both within and without and next time somebody shouts just and he might think you're deaf or something and he'll shout even louder that means more sounds coming out of his mouth I assume you're not forgetting to walk around in a state of listening attention around all this beauty that alert openness and to be aware of what arises the beauty that arises in it and aware of the alert openness itself underneath so to speak awareness being aware of itself that is the field of peace I've said it before just remind us if you are only aware of what arises and that is one level of being present is to be present completely then you might feel sorry in a few days time when the beauty all that beauty isn't there anymore and you just have buildings or freeways and there might be a sense of loss but not if you discover the essence of all existence as the underlying field of awareness itself which is just as beautiful and peaceful and still in the middle of a freeway in LA or wherever the same beauty unmanifested is there and here this beauty manifested and then even the freeway has its beauty let's look at some questions thank you so much for all your letters wonderful to read them here is a short big one is there free will do we have free will first there is the illusion of free will that everybody is in they are acting out their conditioning egoic conditioning pain body all the deep seated human conditioning including all the reactive patterns we've been talking about including the one we talked about this morning the defensiveness of one's sense of self all the goals associated with the ego need to be more fully itself to be bigger to be more secure to be somebody to become somebody to combat the egoic sense of self to combat its deep seated insecurity and fear and so that all those seemingly leads to many actions and decisions arising and they all think that's me acting that is what I want pursue this pursue that or afraid of this afraid of that going into relationships acting out deep seated egoic patterns in relationships and then one ends another one starts the same patterns being reenacted again pain bodies and obviously they all think I choose I choose the partner I choose and there is no choice there is only mechanicalness like a script one has memorized and forgotten that it's a script and you're forced to act it out and it's a human script there's not even anything personal in it it's a script of the conditioned human consciousness the conditioned human mind and obviously there's no free will there there's only the illusion of free will and then all that in all that suffering grows suffering there's more and more suffering generated by the illusion of free will and the actions arising out of the illusion of the egoic me and then suffering reaches a certain intensity and then there's a beginning of an awakening of what goes on inside me all the conditioning some presence arises through the suffering the beginning of an awakening and the first signs of a witness a witnessing consciousness appears being aware of your thought patterns being aware of pain body rather than being it knowing it watching it and so one could say this is the beginning of freedom coming in and then presence grows and all the conditioned me entity begins to dissolve transmuted not really dying nothing really dies the form of the me dissolves all the energy the life energy trapped in egoic forms and in the pain body becomes transmuted all transmuted into greater presence and then action is possible that is not conditioned it arises out of the unconditioned creativity is possible something new can come into being which before was not possible because you are condemned now something new can come into being that is not conditioned by past a new creation a new thought form can come in love, aliveness, joy arise and you emanate that action can take place that is not to do with your past and now is that free will free will ultimately presupposes that there is such a thing as an autonomous completely independent entity there but what operates there is no autonomous completely independent entity there you are connected with the totality you are simply an expression of the totality of consciousness expressing itself temporarily in that form so you are not really autonomous when you take away the illusion of autonomy then even there one could say it is the realm of freedom but it is not the freedom of the entity it is the freedom of the totality the totality is acting through you you are aligned with a vaster and deeper movement of consciousness in whatever decisions or realizations or causes of actions or whatever speech arises out of that comes out of the totality of being of consciousness so the only free will is the free will of consciousness itself as long as you have a form the form does not have free will neither in the state of unconsciousness nor in the state of realignment with the totality because now the totality moves through you compared to the previous state it is a state of freedom yes and a state of newness but even there to say there is free will would not be quite right because there is only the one acting through you so what is the ultimate answer yes and no let's surround every question and every answer with space spaciousness in other words always stepping back into stillness after hearing of your difficulty of finding a restaurant that was not noisy I decided to eat at a table that observed silence during mealtime eating took on a new dimension I actually tasted my food and used the physical sensation as a means of coming into the now much like any other sense like listening can do that's the first part I'll come to the second in a minute of course that's true any activity can become a vehicle for presence to flow into and eating is interesting at when you observe people eating quite a few people become quite unconscious when they start to eat because it's a primordial activity a very our ancestors eating started a long time ago and it's kind you revert back to a kind of primeval activity and I can often observe people even people who at other times are relatively conscious the moment they put something in their mouth their level of consciousness goes to a relatively low level and then when that's finished it rises again it's interesting to observe you can first see it in others and then with more alertness perhaps occasionally in yourself so particularly something like that that is often tends to be unconscious can be a good vehicle for presence so the very activity that usually would pull you into unconsciousness can then allow presence to flow into and that would be the same with becoming aware of your breathing which is usually unconscious which is a beautiful vehicle for presence to couple your alertness with the in and outgoing breath so the alertness follows the breath a very ancient meditation the alertness follows the breath so there is the basically you're reducing the manifested world to just the breath and bring attention to that and it subsides and it contains in microcosmic form the whole universe is there because it's the outflow and the in going breath and the outgoing breath the in going is birth maturation maturity and then finally it subsides and becomes the outgoing it's a form every time you breathe out it's a form of letting go it's a form of death it's the cycle comes to it's conclusion of life and there's a beautiful point at the end of each out breath that is very still when you haven't started breathing in yet so there's a great beauty in simply bringing presence to your breath and presence arises through that so bring it to your eating breathing is there of course all the time you're taking in food continuously on that level and it's a half way between voluntary and involuntary functions you couldn't stop your breathing completely you can hold it a little bit breathing eating also you probably you could stop but it's half involuntary similar all kinds of tantric practices to do with bringing presence into sexuality which otherwise would pull you because it's again like eating maybe even earlier even more primordial than eating is the pull towards sexuality and which usually means unconsciousness it's something takes over and you bringing presence into that beautiful meditation to what? to be alert bring the alertness to it so that it's no longer a desire movement reaching it's end needing to get to the final orgasm conclusion so to even it's starting a similar thing to have a sexual feeling arises and simply to watch it it's beautiful in itself it doesn't have to become a desire movement that means you bring presence into it so there isn't the so on all levels everything can become a vehicle but particularly those things that usually would be a pull into unconsciousness pain body also so food don't need to become the first one you become when you bring presence into eating there's a self consciousness sometimes around it there's an image of okay I'm eating now I'm chewing it's not presence yet it's the mind telling you what you're doing but you're maybe some presence is coming in a second but now the mind is telling you okay I'm chewing three four five six seven eight beginning perhaps of presence arising and then suddenly the mind becomes still and the eating is happening and now eating is usually a means to an end that's why it's so unconscious and it becomes that every thing you put into your mouth is sufficient an end in itself eating is no longer than a means to an end sex is no longer a means to an end it is an end and now is not reduced to that perhaps we could add another silent table tonight some more people maybe wanting I've also one request of being having total silence to last two dinners well let's see how it goes put perhaps one or two more silent tables and then those who had silent tables can practice the beautiful allowing the noise to be there and still have the silence second part of this I thought that it would be wonderful if there would be a restaurant where silence was honored by all patrons it would be an opportunity to not only eat in peace but for the mind to be peaceful as well and even temporarily transcended what do you think of this idea do you have any suggestions on a practical level might you know of anyone who would want to make a financial investment in such a venture why not could be very successful particularly in a big city in New York somewhere downtown it's a silent restaurant so leave your name with Kim and then they can put you in touch if anybody wants to make an investment further advice piece of advice is to get a good chef too but the two together could work oh yes and present waiters and waitresses it give you full attention be wonderful hint of a rainbow over there and There's a question here, which is quite helpful, useful. Many people will have a similar question.

Before the question, just some comments on your work. I find the content of your work reminding me of the work of the following men, Paul Brunton, Vernon Howard, Leonard Jacobson. I've read some Paul Brunton, Leonard Jacobson.

I haven't read Vernon Howard. I've read some Vernon Howard. Vernon Howard is, I like very much, very helpful.

There's a nice little book to add if you have a list of books. I don't know if it's still in print. I saw it some years ago.

Treasury of Positive Answers by Vernon Howard. Just little series of questions and answers. It contains the essence.

I've heard from devotees of the person usually that it is important to spend as much time in the physical presence of a teacher as possible. This would put people who are more limited in their physical or financial abilities at a spiritual disadvantage, it seems. Paul Brunton said, what is important is to be in the physical presence of the teacher at least once, and then it doesn't matter that much.

I could, assuming space, it doesn't matter that much, period. I could, assuming space is available, be at all your extended workshops or retreats, but would be wondering if it were necessary or if it were even being wasteful. But I would still want to be there if it's helpful.

Should one seek, should I seek to be with my spiritual teacher at every reasonable chance, or is there a point of diminishing returns? Good point. Where it is only marginally important or might even be counterproductive in that it serves to strengthen the earnest seeker identity.

In some ways, the question already contains its own answer. It's true that it can happen, that the seeker, me, the seeker, can become an identity, a nice, comfortable identity the ego likes, and it can, there's an accumulation of spiritual knowledge, perhaps acquired over the years, and I value that and I can discuss all discussions about it and look for new teachers, perhaps, or continue to see my teacher. I did mention the other day that once presence has began to arise, the process is not reversible.

In that sense, I don't know if it was Paul Brunton, whether he said it, yes, I believe, you only need to be with a teacher once because if the openness is there, then something happens at that one meeting if the openness is there. However, if you can be with a teacher more frequently, that would be helpful. Nowadays, we have the advantage of having tapes also, which has almost been the presence of the teacher.

We have books and videos. Well, I don't have videos yet, but there may be some soon. All these are energy fields.

Even a book that comes from source, that has arisen out of the state of presence, contains the energy field of the source. So all you need to open that and you're in the presence of the teacher, which is ultimately yourself. In the presence of presence, you open the book and presence arises.

You switch on a tape and you might have listened to the tape 10 times already. It's not the point. You just listen and presence arises.

So you have all those things and then occasionally you visit, you spend time with the teacher. Up to a point, it's very helpful. And then there comes a time when the teacher isn't needed anymore.

And that's beautiful too. And it requires wisdom to know when that point has been reached. It's good then to have some intervals in between seeing the teacher again.

And you might feel, okay, presence is already arising continuously. And you may already be becoming a teacher where as presence arises, you cannot not teach presence. So there is not the exclusive form of the teacher there, the exclusive embodiment of presence in that particular form.

Presence arises and already presence emanates, even though it might become obscured in you temporarily. You're already what Causing Miracles calls a teacher of God. The moment that arises, so the form, the physical form is not the exclusive domain of presence, but you may get a boost of presence when you go back to the teacher.

It's helpful. It strengthens. Presence from within is pulled.

Even more presence is pulled out of you, so to speak. It's not literal. Just...

And so to be watchful that an identity doesn't develop out of your teacher or your relationship with a teacher. And a point may come when you realize, or maybe the teacher will even tell you, I don't need to go anymore. Occasionally people have told me that and it's wonderful.

If it's an illusion, it's wonderful too. They'll know it soon enough. I don't need to see you anymore.

Somebody came, what was it? All the way from England to Vancouver and he came to me during the first session and said, I'm going home now. I don't need to see you anymore.

And she says, this is wonderful. I haven't heard from him, so it's good. So the most wonderful thing for a teacher is when they tell him or her, I don't need you anymore.

This is, it's working. And until that happens, use that wonderful opportunity to be with the teacher. In whatever form, the book, the tapes, even I was, some people have a photo of this form.

And at first I said, when they asked me for a photo, why do you want a photo of me? Doesn't make what for? And they said, because I just need to look for your photo and I feel presence arising.

Okay, if it works in that way, I reluctantly agreed. Then you can have a photo, as long as you know this is not the photo of a physical person. That would be an attachment to an outer form.

But if by looking at the photo, you enter the state of presence and you put the photo aside, presence is back. Then it works. So the photo would simply be the photo of a state of consciousness, so to speak.

And even one would say, how can it be that a photo is a piece of paper? Well, even a piece of paper is a field of vibrating energy on an atomic sense, up atomic level. It's an energy field, even a piece of paper.

So even a photo can be helpful as long as it doesn't become a form identity. That is, there's the form of an attachment to the form. Takes you beyond form.

And some beautiful, one or two beautiful photos of Ramana Maharshi work very well in that way. Also, so you can have photos of different teachers. So you don't have, because presence doesn't matter through what form it arises.

And perhaps somebody captures you in a moment of great presence, and then you can put your own photo there too. Why not? Yes.

And there's a photo, some photos of Nisargadatta, slightly not as well known as Krishnamurti or Ramana Maharshi of, again, embodying the intensity of presence. He looks like a Zen master with a fierceness. So if you respond to that, then you look into his eyes, and it puts you in a state of fierce alertness.

And, or Ramana Maharshi is the gentle aspect of presence. Love, gentleness, and yet also intensity. I also have one or two photos of Krishnamurti that is beautiful in their expression of presence.

So all these things are just forms that presence can flow through. It's not just the exclusive form of the teacher. And then everything teaches presence.

Nature teaches presence. So it's everywhere. See when, you will know when you no longer need to see the teacher in person.

You might still enjoy occasionally coming and just enjoy the field of presence. You don't need it anymore. You enjoy it.

It's beautiful. My first part of this letter is a personal request. So I'll get back to you on that.

I notice how many programmed phrases and words are in my vocabulary that don't fit anymore. How I want to express that don't fit anymore, how I want to express myself. Still, they come out of my mouth at times.

10 years ago, I eradicated must, should, and try from my vocabulary by observing the words as I spoke them. Is this possible with so many thousands of mismatching words and phrases, or can you give me some other ways to do this? Of course, it's a sign of presence arising when you become aware of mind patterns and let them come out as words out of your mouth.

And once they are out, you suddenly, immediately as you speak them, you see how limited they are. And they're actually expressing a state of consciousness that you have already gone beyond. Because language arose out of a particular state of consciousness.

So many language structures reflect the egoic state because that's how language and ego developed at the same time, self-reflective consciousness. And so often you become conscious that you say something and say it's not quite right, or it's not right at all, or that's, and words never seem to quite get there to the truth. To some extent, certain expressions will disappear from your vocabulary, that is true, like the shoulds, those mind, because as the mind patterns are recognized, then they dissolve, and then eventually also the expressions associated with the mind patterns no longer come out of your mouth.

Should, as pointed out here, because I should, you should, they should, must, and so on. All patterns to do with complaining in the head. So certain changes do take place in your speech.

And yet language is never totally adequate. Language has its limitations, it's old. Some wisdom is in there too, if you look to a certain origin of certain words, but the whole structure of language is ego-based.

That's why I often say, don't take anything I say too literally, because then you get caught up in the form. All language, especially in spiritual discourse, is only a pointer to the truth, it's not the truth. No statement contains the truth, it points.

The truth is beyond conceptualization and sounds that come out of your mouth. How could sounds that I make express the truth? They're only approximations, they're only pointers.

And religions come out of confusion of mistaking the form, the words, for the truth and attaching yourself to the words. Then instead of being pointers, the words pointing beyond themselves to the truth, the words become a wall, a barrier. That's how it is.

And there comes a belief system and ego identification with the belief system, not realized, it's mistaking form and essence. And then the form, the words obscure the truth. And that can happen even in religious, very often happens in religion, that the very words that originally were designed to point to the truth, to take you to the truth, to point the way, now have become an obstacle to the truth.

This is the case even with a simple thing, when they read a text of great power in a church and they have read it for hundreds of years and they read it, it takes away all their power. All that's left is the words. Look at the flowers of the field, how beautiful they are.

They spin not, they do not, they strive not to make, whatever it is. Whereas he didn't speak like that. There was vitality and aliveness.

It's one of the most powerful statements to look at the flowers. They lived totally in the now, they have no problem. They're not concerned with tomorrow and look how beautiful they are, how beautiful expressions of consciousness they are.

So words can become obstacles. Now, but more importantly even is that all words, not have expectations that you will never, you will always encounter the limitations of words, even if certain expressions in certain words become eliminated from your vocabulary, you're still, words will remain limited. And when words are being spoken, not even to try to capture the truth, be aware of the greater, the vaster field that is free of words, out of which the words come, into which the words return.

There we come back to the spacious field of presence, the stillness around the words. And even as you speak, you sense the underlying stillness. Then the words are no longer that important.

If human interaction and human relationships are confined to words, the exchange of words, which is the case in most relationships, the exchange of words, which is mind, the relationship is impoverished and soon you'll be in trouble and soon you'll find conflict. So always to be aware of the underlying field, stepping back, mindstreams are words uttered inside the head, always coming to the end quickly of a mindstream or if you speak to someone, back into no word so that you don't get caught up in the words. And everybody, the whole civilization is overwhelmed with words.

All relationships are words, words. It's essential in any close relationship, particularly to share silent space, not as necessarily as a formalized ritual, not naturally, organically, to be silent together, not to continuously need to interact on the level of words or mind. And if the dimension of stillness is lost in a relationship, there'll be trouble, conflict.

If the stillness is there, it can contain anything. Two related questions about antidepressants. Please talk about antidepressants.

I take half of the smallest dose of FXO, an antidepressant. I have done without because I have a belief it will keep me from awakening. However, I have greater clarity and seem to hold presence more consistently when I continue with this small amount.

A related question asks, do you think the huge increased consumption of antidepressants in recent years points to the ego's effort to suppress emerging consciousness? Of course, antidepressants are there because the pain gets too much, the pain of living, somehow an escape from the pain, dull the pain in some way. And eventually you have to face the pain and then realize that it's not as big as it seemed.

You've been running away from a monster. And if you really look at the monster, it's not such a big monster anymore. Facing it through presence, allowing that pain, whatever you want to call it, existential pain, the fear associated with it, the heaviness, allowing it to be there.

It may come in waves and then you watch the arising and subsiding of a wave of pain in whatever form. Antidepressants make it harder to be present. If you're on this very small dose, a time will come when you won't need that anymore and it may be very soon.

Some, it is often the pain body that manifests, as I described, the energy field of pain body, some energy field, some pain bodies have the energy field of heaviness, great heaviness to them. And they arise periodically. I had that.

My pain body was predominantly heavy, a weight I couldn't live with, a dull pain, continuous in the background. I might still be on antidepressants if I had taken antidepressants at the time. Somehow I must have allowed the pain to be there without knowing anything about allowing.

With presence growing and accelerating in you, face the pain that arises with that intense presence. And acceptance. And any state that arises, accept and watch it so that it doesn't turn into a self, an unhappy self.

If you accept and watch, any state arises is just that state now. That field, that energy field, that particular manifestation, that particular content arises. No self in it anymore.

The perpetuation of inner states is through them becoming a self, a me. Then they go on and on. You feed them.

You feed them. And you take time away, just what is now. So that whatever the emotional state is, the feeling state doesn't use your mind because if it uses your mind, you're back in time and you will be in past and future, which are both heavy.

And immediately the me arises out of that. So for that, you need the intensity of presence. Take a picture of an Isagadatta and look at that to get the quality of intensity.

Or the picture of a Zen, a painting of a Zen master, but better a photo of a master. And then see the uncompromising quality of presence. But it allows.

Uncompromising doesn't mean it doesn't allow. Uncompromisingly, it allows. It's uncompromising and allowing.

And anything that's faced will undergo change. We know that from dreams. We've all had dreams, running away from some monster or you're being pursued by some presence, some monster.

And when you finally face it in a dream, it's not that horrible. And often this is the myth. It becomes transformed actually into a benign figure, an ancient myth.

The famous, the dragon turns into something else or the frog turns into something, a prince. But you have to kiss the frog. Look.

Of course, you have to reduce very slowly if you are on entity presence, then careful and very alert and very carefully do it. Check within yourself, see if there's any waiting for the next question or this or that. Or whether there's such intensity of aliveness throughout your entire being that this moment is good enough as it is and more than good enough.

Is there a flight into thought as you sit there, which means into time, which means away from this, away from now, away from the aliveness, the intensity of this moment and the peace of this moment. What is the role of vision in creating a new world? Does vision arise out of presence?

Vision meaning you see something before it has manifested externally. The good thing is that you don't have to create a new world. It creates itself through presence.

So you don't have to do it. There is no, in that sense, it's truer to say there is no free will. You are no more than an opening and the totality, the one consciousness expresses itself through you.

Is that the relief? You don't have to create a new world, but it'll create itself perhaps through you. And through presence, you may suddenly see what's needed.

Insight and realization comes, it's not egoic. There's no struggling and no effort in it. You will always know when there's effort, then there's no alignment with presence.

There's some ego involvement there. I need to get somewhere. I need to create a better world.

And so there'll be struggle. Effort means needing to get to the future. That's effort.

It doesn't mean that there may not be intense energy behind what you do, but it's not the energy of effort. Effort means you're being pulled towards future. But when something, when action arises out of presence, there may be great intensity and passion, you could say, but not the passion that needs you to reach the future.

The doing itself, it's the doing that arises is sufficient unto itself and there's joy, aliveness, and passion in the doing. It doesn't need the goal. Of course, in time, there's time in the phenomenal world, the doing will result in certain forms arising, new forms arise externally.

You don't need any of those for your salvation. You're not looking to the future for salvation. That means there's no effort anymore, but perhaps great intensity and great passion and great aliveness.

That's how the new world creates itself. So you may pursue a goal, but the arriving is not all that important. Not a goal that is going to free you, not a goal that is going to enhance your sense of self or your sense of importance.

Not in that sense. A good sign is when anything that arises out of presence, it means this moment is not a means to an end. The doing is fulfilled and fulfilling in itself, every moment.

You're no longer reducing the now to a means to an end, which is the old consciousness. And then very often you create, because you have a vision of heaven, and in pursuing your vision of heaven, you're creating hell. That's often happened.

There have been many visions of heaven and utopia. And in pursuing that, we need to get there, there. This is the ideal image.

Once we get there, we'll be fine. We'll be free. We will be whatever we will be.

In the meantime, we need to adopt certain means towards getting there. Okay. We need to eliminate all those who don't believe in this goal to start with.

The madness continues. And this works on the smallest levels to observe any kind of doing in your life, movement from here to there, walking from here to there. Is it a means to an end, or is there a sense of completeness in the doing?

And you will notice the qualitative difference is tremendous between any action that's a means to a future end and an action that is not a means, but there's a sense of completeness to it. And yet there may be great energy there. We talked about eating.

Why many people lose consciousness when they eat is it's a means to an end. I need to get this food in through the body. There's no quality, no presence.

Even making a cup of tea or a cup of coffee, is that a means to an end? The tiniest things using them to see if you can be present with what is. It's never, the illusion in the old consciousness is the next moment is more important than this one.

Always, always the next moment is more important than this one. It does not mean that you have to slow down a lot, presence arising. We talked about that film I saw where those beings, everything they do is very slow.

And sometimes when presence arises, at first people try to do everything very carefully. And then there's a little bit of self-consciousness still there. Okay, I'm trying to be present.

And then you see, that's not quite it either. They're simple, reaching for glass. The glass is traveling to your mouth.

It looks like just a normal, just a normal action. And yet it's not a means to an end. And then a sense of presence pervades the entire energy field around you.

So any action that becomes a vehicle for presence, it's a vehicle for presence. And I think that's the beauty of the tea ceremony. As you know, they developed the tea ceremony in Japan originally so that basically means every movement is sufficient unto itself.

You're not moving towards the end result. You're just with what is. And that is the beauty.

It is possible that later it becomes a ritual and no longer works, there's certain deadness after a while that comes into a ritual and they may be performing the ritual, every movement is correct, but the presence is no longer there, that is possible too. But you will know that anybody with the slightest presence can tell the difference between somebody performing something like the tea ceremony or Tai Chi that requires intense presence. And you will know, I haven't learned Tai Chi, but I can watch Tai Chi and I know whether they're simply going through the movements and it may look fine on the surface, but the field of presence isn't there.

And somebody else going through the same movements and they see it emanates presence. And so that's the beauty of Tai Chi is that no movement is a means, you're not, when the arm moves from here, they're probably masters of Tai Chi here, so what am I talking about? But all I know is presence.

The hand moves from here to here and usually in your mind, you're already there. So the intervening movement or time period is a means to an end because the movement will have completed itself when it reaches there. So you're already mentally there and the hand is lagging behind.

So there's no presence, there's the projection of future that you're trying to get to. And then there's the possibility of moving in a way that at any stage of the movement, there's no movement into the future, there's continuous, you're not trying to get anywhere, just, and there's, that's the quality of presence flowing into it. And you could perform the same movement outwardly correctly, but you would have a mental projection there and the master would be able to tell or anybody, even if they know nothing about Tai Chi, would be able to tell that it doesn't, the emanation of presence isn't there.

But I, my feeling is that, I don't know anything about it, but my feeling is that presence, Tai Chi originated as spontaneous movement, presence expressing itself through a human being, in spontaneous, very slow kind of dance. And no movement was planned before. Nothing is, there's no, it moves with total nowness.

And simply one way in which presence can express itself, it can flow into. And so there was this, perhaps it was an old woman or an old man, or who knows, a young woman or a young man, suddenly moving and the few people around them saw, this is beautiful. What's he doing?

What's she doing? It was totally spontaneous. And then they said, this is so beautiful, we need to learn this.

And then gradually they started to see, okay, now he's lifting his right leg and then he holds it up for five seconds and then it goes down. So you can, you learn it by watching the spontaneity. Of course, now it becomes something learned, but even that can take you into presence.

It's not how it arose originally, my feeling is. And they, so they observed and then it became a technique, so to speak. But even the technique can work.

Although originally it came the other way around. Presence came and then it resulted in the movement. Now you perform the movement and the movement results in presence, if it works as it's meant to.

So we don't need to create a new world, that's good. Don't need to worry about that. Maybe I'll have one more question.

Thank you for choosing to share, choosing it in quotation marks. Thank you, it's good. Thank you for choosing to share your realization.

As the hole in the flute, is it ever possible for the true spiritual teacher to avoid encapsulation and institutionalization by the adoring and well-meaning devotees who may be inclined to mistake the teacher's form for the musician itself? Very good. To avoid encapsulation and institutionalization.

Well, I don't know. Institutionalization is not anything that I can see happening here. There's very little structure, which has its drawbacks also, that emails don't get answered for several months or more.

But there's no institution. Things would work more efficiently if there were some institution, but that in itself can become heavy and self-serving. Encapsulation, the numbers of people increase, then the teacher is faced with the limitations of form.

Every teacher will be faced with the limitations of form as the numbers increase, and that can't be helped. I can't answer my phone calls anymore. I would be spending 20 hours a day on the telephone.

So to some extent, there is an encapsulation already happening. It doesn't affect the power of the teaching. It just means to have personal contact with a teacher is more rare, but for the teaching to work, it's not even necessary to have contact on a personal level.

The teaching works, that's the main question. Is it working? Is presence emanating?

That's what the teacher is there for. And you will always discover that certain things in the form that are not perfect, that leave something to be desired, that could be otherwise because there are many ways of doing things. Why doesn't he do it that way?

He could be doing this or that. A greater danger for teachers is something else, and that is to believe that they are special. That's a greater danger for teachers because many people cannot quite see that it's the whole, that's which comes, it's the hole in the flute.

The teacher is the hole in the flute, as it said in that beautiful poem. I quote it, the teacher is not even the flute, just the hole in the flute. So it's mistaking the form of the teacher for the presence that comes through the hole.

And then there may be projections of specialness. This person is very special, but the person is not special. It's through the absence of the person that the whole is there.

If there were not an absence of the person, there wouldn't be the whole. And so therefore, the person isn't special, it's the absence of the person that's special. But many teachers are bombarded with projections of specialness, that the form is special, and after a few years, they come to believe it.

This can more likely happen to teachers who live only surrounded by disciples or devotees in an ashram who don't move any longer in the ordinary world. And so all they ever meet is disciples of, which can be beautiful too, but it's almost, who could withstand this continuous bombardment of specialness? I still do my own shopping at Safeway and other, well, preferably other stores, but occasionally Safeway.

So the greatest danger, institutionalization, of course, is a danger because sometimes institutions become so heavy that they no longer serve as vehicles. But the greatest danger for any teacher is specialness, which is always some form of ego returning. Send me a letter when you see it happening to warn me.

I love hugging people, and anybody who wants hugs, I hope that we will be able to have a hugging session tomorrow. I used to hug people continuously, but with increasing numbers, like the last talk in Vancouver, we had something like 700 people. It was physically impossible after a four-hour session to spend two or three hours hugging everybody.

So these are the limitations of form. I love seeing everybody, being with everybody individually, it's wonderful. But then the teaching is growing, which is also wonderful.

But so then one limits the other in form. Thank you for the flute. I'll start practicing.

It's got holes. That's me. That's you.

Bells are easier to play than flutes. Start with the bell of attention. See, the bell calls you back into the now, if you had left it.

In imagination only, of course, you can't leave it. Make sure you're in the body so that you don't wait for anything. So you feel the alertness pervading your entire energy field and its presence.

The turbulence has passed. The external turbulence that we had during the night and part of the day, that was beautiful too, except for those people whose tent collapsed. And you survived that.

Other turbulences perhaps have passed also. Pain bodies, mental turbulence, mind attacks, discontent, not wanting to be here. Confusion, doubt, trying to figure something out.

Confusion is trying to figure something out. And the moment you stop trying to figure it out, there's no more confusion. Some years ago, I gave little seminars called Freedom from Time.

And a man came, I may have mentioned the story, who thought that it was about time management. And he wanted to organize his time better. He was a doctor.

He was a doctor, but he got something completely different. And during the break, he came up to me and said how amazed he was. He hadn't come for this.

He had never heard of anything like this. And amazingly, he was open. And he was glad that it wasn't about time management.

In the same way, perhaps you came here because you thought it was a seminar or workshop or retreat about personal growth. Whereas in fact, it's about personal shrinkage. Yes.

So we've been through this weight loss program. And everybody has lost some weight. Some people have lost quite a bit of weight.

Of course, not physical, I'm not concerned with. The weight of the person, the weight of the me, the heaviness of me and my problems, my fears, my desires, my story, my future, my past, me, me. And something else has emerged or is emerging and will continue to emerge.

And that is I. I amness, a deeper sense of presence or beingness. And your identity now is derived from that.

That is who you are, as the song puts it, who you really are, nothing in past or future. That remains as a framework of your external existence, of course. But no more than that, the scaffolding, the framework, that's how you have a certain situation, a certain life situation.

No longer deriving one's sense of self from one's life situation, from one's story. That's losing weight. What remains is the silent part of the teaching, alive stillness, awareness, just this.

And that's the end of all effort and trying. Not the end of action or activity, but the end of effortful action. That brings me to one of the questions that have been asked.

Everywhere I go, I see parts of nature I could not see before, because my eyes can only see one part at a time. But I know there's an oneness and that it is not really divided in different pieces. Is this the same for the past, the now and the future?

And do I divide them because of my poor view, mind into different parts? And if everything already exists, what difference does it make whatever I do? I'm grateful to be here with you.

Thank you. Now, you may have noticed what this is about, not about doing or not doing what we are to do. But access the level of being.

Once you have accessed the level of being or presence, such complex questions don't arise anymore. Because you could spend a long time trying to work out whether anything you do is going to make any difference. It's almost like a koan in Zen, the questions that cannot be answered through discursive thought or thought.

So you torture your mind for days or weeks. And this could be one. If all is one, which is true, the division between past, present and future is a mind-made one, that there is no such thing.

In fact, both past and future are part of now, which is true. Because only the power of now gives them aliveness, past and future. So it's an artificial division.

There's only now that includes the past and the future. And then the mind says, well, then everything already has happened and exists and it's totally timeless. And then nothing I do would make any difference.

Or perhaps it would. And after a long time of thinking, the mind would come to a stop. And then suddenly you find yourself doing something.

Doing arises out of being, out of the state of being. You're no longer questioning whether it makes any difference because you're simply a channel for action that arises. So the beauty about the state of presence is that many very difficult questions don't arise anymore.

Where do I fit into the universe? What is my place in the universe? What is my life purpose?

Even that doesn't arise anymore because the moment presence is accessed, your life purpose is revealed. Not necessarily in form yet, but your life purpose is accessing the level of being, is to become the flowering of consciousness. Whatever form that then takes is secondary or whatever action you take is secondary.

We are not concerned here with what to do, but about being, how to be, rather than what to do. The doing then flows out of the being. Your life purpose is the flowering of consciousness.

It's so to speak, the shell of ego breaks or dissolves depending on your circumstances. In some cases, the shell breaks. It's an almost violent act.

In some cases, it breaks violently from within. In other cases, it breaks violently, so to speak, from without, something cracks the shell of ego. Or in other cases, there is a dissolving of the shell of ego with not so much violence in it.

And that is usually the beauty of a spiritual teaching. Those who don't have access to a spiritual teaching, I didn't, it was all around, but I didn't even know it was there. Well, not all around, perhaps, but it was there.

Those who have no access, usually it is a more violent breaking of the shell. And even some who have access to spiritual teaching, and yet there's a deep-seated egoic sense of self that is not going to give way, even after 20 years of meditation practice. There too, it's possible that something violent will happen to break the shell of me.

And then, I'm using a kind of metaphor, but this is how it is. And then something emerges that has always been there. Out of suffering grows presence, like a flower growing out of the mud.

I believe perhaps the lotus flowers grow in the mud. Really, perhaps they do, I don't know, but some flowers do, they do, yes. And perhaps this is why it's used as a symbol in Buddhism, the lotus flower growing out of the mud.

That's, for everyone here, it's a dissolving, it's not violent, but the crack may already have been administered to the shell, but from now on, it opens more gently. It just may need a little bit of encouragement, a little bit of nourishment, and for that, you have access to books, certain books that contain spiritual power, you have access to tapes, and other things, and teachers, until you don't need them anymore. Everything passes quickly.

We have been here for several days. This is the last day. It is always amazing how fleeting phenomenal existence is.

Not long ago, you walked in here for the first time, and it's gone in a few days. You find yourself in totally different surroundings. Everything fleeting in the phenomenal realm.

If there were not something that is not fleeting, that is not subject to time, you wouldn't even know that everything is fleeting. It's only because there is an essence in you that is not subject to that, that you can know it. The very knowing that everything is fleeting is that which is not fleeting, and that's the essence of your being.

That's the beauty. That is why many years ago, I read it, the sonnets of Shakespeare, most of them are about how quickly beauty and youth fade away. That's all they talk about.

And there is a spiritual quality to them. They don't talk about anything as such spiritual, but every poem is written from the place of the knower that knows that everything is fleeting. So there's a deep sense of peace pervading these poems, which is underneath the words, and the reader doesn't know why, because when you look at the words, they seem to say that, well, you should be crying because youth fades like a rose fades in a couple of days, youth fades just almost as quickly, the beauty.

Everything is consumed by time, so it seems. Isn't that something we should be crying about? And yet, when you read these poems, there's a deep sense of peace because they put you into the position of the knower, or the knowing, which is the timeless presence, the timeless consciousness that watches the phenomenal realm subject to time, nothing lasts.

It grows, it fades, it's gone. So there's something deeply peaceful about the observation of the passing, ephemeral, impermanent nature of all existence. It's not depressing or sad, that's the strange thing.

When you know, because then simply the watching of impermanence, the knowing, the watching of a cycle of growth and decay is beautiful because there you are the knower, the knowing, that which is not subject to birth and death, not content, every content comes and goes. So here, our meetings, our gatherings here, there's the external content. Every day you walked through the beautiful surroundings.

You sat here, there's the room, the view, the voice, the other people you meet here, certain experiences you may have had here in meeting, all that's wonderful, it all passes. In a few years, you may have photo album to look at. That was the retreat in Costa Rica, that was nice.

That his name was so-and-so, and that such-and-such. And it's gone, not much left of that. Even next week, not much left, some memory traces.

On that level, it's a sad story because you have to get back into your ordinary existence. Here you are taken out of that, and although in some ways you sometimes wished you were back in your ordinary existence, especially those people who had to line up for the bathroom, but... Yet there's always something spiritual about traveling because you leave the old structures behind and then you have new stuff, but even that is passing.

Now, it's to allow the passing to happen of all phenomenal existence. Otherwise, you compose country music or something like that, which is all about, it's nice. It says, I'm so sad she left me, it's all gone.

We had such a good thing together. And now it's all gone. That's the level of, you're not the watcher.

You're identified with the phenomenal realm completely and the story of the phenomenal realm. So you are the storyteller. And as the storyteller of the phenomenal realm, every story really has a very sad ending.

A temporary, it may have a temporary happy pseudo ending, but when you really get to the end, they all die. Whatever story you tell in the end, they were buried and they died. So on the level of story, life is not satisfying even if temporarily the story has the appearance of satisfaction.

Isn't it great here? Sometimes experience can temporarily be very fulfilling. I'm having a great time.

I'm having fun. We're all having fun. Let's really get into the experience and there's nothing wrong with that.

And then it passes quickly or it goes on and on and it's no longer fun. The same thing goes on and on, but it's not fun anymore. So you have to look for something else.

When I was learning English a long time ago, somebody said to me, have fun. What's that? And they couldn't explain.

Funny, I understood already, but fun is not funny. Some languages don't have fun. Now there's the pursuit of fun.

I'm not saying this wrong, but then you find you will continuously go through the cycles of, oh yeah, and then dissatisfaction. Where's the next cycle of fun? And then in the pursuit of fun, the dissatisfaction then grows after several years of fun seeking, the dissatisfaction grows more and more because really it means I'm seeking satisfaction through experiences and events and things that happen, the phenomenal realm.

I'm seeking some satisfaction through this, connected with the ego that seeks to feel bigger through it. So really all this is the seeking after experiences or wanting to accumulate experiences. And for a while it works, and you have a bigger and bigger bag of experiences.

And after a while that becomes meaningless because everyone recedes into the past and then the mind tries to hold on or make it incorporated into who I am somehow, but it never really holds together. So on that level, country music level, storytelling, it's fine. It's so I have the blues or whatever it is.

And that's because that's the essence of country. And it's nice because that is when you're attached to the experience phenomenal realm, you always end up with the blues. So, and then you can be the, instead of being the storyteller, you are the knower and you watch the arising and the subsiding of a form, a phenomenal form, an experience, and there's a beauty in that.

The beauty is not that because everything passes in itself, that's not a beauty. The beauty is that you are the knower and there lies the peace that is there when you become fully aware of the impermanent nature of the phenomenal realm. When you know it fully, there's the deepest peace in that knowing.

And you no longer demand then that the phenomenal realm should satisfy you because it never will. And you no longer demand that the phenomenal realm should give you your sense of self. You can try for years and years and lifetimes.

It's frustrating because the phenomenal realm doesn't work on that level. So not demanding satisfaction through events, situations, places, people. I demand that you satisfy me.

I demand that this place should satisfy me or this experience should. It should because I paid money for it or whatever. So it should.

And no place will. No place ultimately can. A temporary good feeling, yes.

And then, oh, there was something not right about it. There was something missing. And the same with persons.

Temporarily it seems, yes, he or she is going to make me happy for the rest of my life. Doesn't work. He won't, she won't.

No matter how many contracts you sign. No place, no situation, no circumstances, no person can satisfy you. So the demand, human existence is so frustrating because a person demands something from the phenomenal realm that it cannot deliver.

Please satisfy me. Tell me who I am. Because everything is gone, gone.

And then some people, you live with a collection of memories in your back of me and my story. And to talk about it as much as possible to keep it going. And so when you look at life on that level only, it's a sad story, very sad.

It's depressing. What a miserable existence, because you are condemned to decay, to die. No matter what effort you make, in the end, it will all come to nothing.

And some philosophers have seen that and they've constructed a wild view out of that and said, it's all completely pointless. And as I believe I even quoted it in the book, some passages in the Old Testament. That I've seen everything that is done under the sun and behold, all is a striving after, all is vanity and a striving after wind.

Vanity there I believe means empty, pointless, meaningless. And then instead of being the storyteller and involved completely identified with the story, you become the knower and you watch and you realize how fleeting everything is, every experience ever. And you continue to watch the arising and subsiding.

As they say in Buddhism, whatever arises passes away and you become the knower of that. Whole solar systems, galaxies, everything comes into being. The galaxies live a little longer than humans, a few billion years longer, and then they dissolve.

And there's that knowing, is consciousness itself, the knower, the watcher. And when you continue to watch, deep peace arises in the face of the fleeting nature of the phenomenal realm and you no longer demand that the phenomenal realm should satisfy you. No, the satisfaction is that peace, that knows, that watches, that allows the fleeting nature of the world to be there.

And that is the, that's the state of peace, complete inner peace, your home. It is also, I've just given you a different perspective on what before I called the now, because that's inseparable. The now is the one thing that is not subject to birth and death.

And it's you, it's the knower or the knowing. Nothing could be more satisfying than being that. That is satisfaction itself.

And then you continue to be involved in experiences. You meet people, you do things, you even have fun perhaps, but you no longer demand that a situation or person or place should satisfy you. It's allowed in its passing and imperfect nature, it's allowed to be.

And the miracle is that then every situation, every event, every person satisfies you because the demand isn't there anymore. He, the situation, the person, the place is allowed to be as it is. And it's fine, it's more than fine as it is.

You also don't demand any law that it should last because it doesn't. You see, nothing lasts and that also becomes beautiful. So the essence of our being together here lies not in this as an experience to add to your store of experiences.

Then you will feel nostalgic in a few weeks and say, that was nice, but now it's gone. Or the mind projects more future and say, okay, let's book another one. I'm not saying you shouldn't book another one.

But the essence is not the experience of this. The essence is the timeless presence underneath the experience. And that's what you go away with from here.

So you can't lose that. And then you watch the next scenery around you in a couple of days, everything has changed around you. And you watch that, that it's all changed.

And you know that also is going to change. And you begin to enjoy that everything is fleeting even. It's beautiful.

So you may still have fun, but you're not seeking fun anymore. Having fun really means it's nice to enjoy an experience for what it is, knowing it'll pass, but it's beautiful. So you no longer depend on place also, neither circumstances nor place, because otherwise you will say this place is more desirable than the one I'm going to go back to.

And then you already feel the future as impending, almost an impending threat, or you're kind of doomed. You can't get away. You have to move into the future, to this place that's not as good as this one.

And because you're still demanding that a place should fulfill you. It can't, if you came to live here, it wouldn't fulfill you. There would be certain things.

Maybe I should move back to New York. So all this is, whatever I talk about is really always the same, but just a different perspective on it. It's all one.

It's all that transformation of consciousness. That's all it is. That's all I ever talk about.

But sometimes you look at it from here, sometimes from here or here or there. And occasionally it looks as if you were talking about something different, whatever you want to call it. You know it beyond label now, the one central point.

In some Buddhist countries, the Buddhist monks take the extreme measure of periodically visiting graveyards or watching decaying, going to the morgue where corpses are. And they sit there and watch. That's an extreme form of this practice.

You don't need to do that. To some extent, if you visit certain countries where people, old people, sick people, dying people are not hidden from view as they are in the West, you get a much more direct and obvious sense of the fleeting nature of all existence. But living in the Western world where the dying and the old, they're all shut away in buildings.

The illusion can be sustained longer that all is well out there in the phenomenal realm. All is well, but only if you know that which is beyond the phenomenal realm. If you go to some countries, you see that decay all around you, dying people, old people.

That's closer to the truth than the way it looks in the West. So there's always, when a phenomenon subsides, you're coming to the death of an experience. So here we have the impending death of your Pura Vida experience.

It's moving towards its end, death, and it's beautiful. So the rest of today, you watch how this day comes to an end. And you are the watcher.

The sun sets, and you're not so much getting into the story, you just, you watch how it... And tomorrow morning, you watch some new form arising. You may find yourself moving into a plane, and then you sit there, it takes off, and you watch.

With that alertness, that allows this moment to be, and then to pass. But always, it's always, the essence of it remains as the field, the knower, or the knowing, the awareness, whatever label works for you. And then even experiences and places that before were judged as undesirable, you can move into and enjoy.

Often they change if you enjoy them. And you don't live in past and future anymore. You don't need it, not as mental projections.

For practical matters, it's fine, past and future are fine, but not as mental projections of me. Jesus talked about the same things in slightly different words. The whole phenomenal realm he described as where moth and rust consume, and thieves break in and steal.

In other words, the whole world that is subject to decay and impermanence, where moth and rust consume, the form dissolves. Moth, what they do is they eat clothing. Well, I don't know if they still do with synthetic fibers, but they used to.

And rust, of course, dissolves the hardest of substances, metal. So again, the form, it dissolves form. Moth and rust consume.

The form becomes consumed. He just uses that as an image. And where thieves break in and steal, the loss of whatever kind, like somebody, life, a person, a situation, takes something away from you.

That's the whole phenomenal realm. And if that's where your heart is, I believe he said, then you'll be unhappy, frustrated, miserable, looking for fun, having fun for brief moments, and then being miserable again. And so he said, be only concerned with one thing, the kingdom of heaven, which is now here.

Or sometimes he called it eternal life, eternal life here. Not the life of form. He also calls it abundant life.

Again, it's a reference to the fullness of life that is beyond form. If you could be, if you ever do, or you have done already, sit with a dying person. And death is not a dreadful disaster.

Sometimes people, very often people react to death as if they had never heard that it existed. It's not, somebody, it's not possible. He died.

Nobody ever told me that people die. There's so much repression of the fact of impermanence of form, that when death actually happens in a person's life, it can be a dreadful shock. And so a lot of, in our civilization, death is just as the present moment is continuously denied.

Death is also denied. Don't talk about it. Don't mention, never mentioned the possibility of death.

And there are couples, old couples living together. They've never talked about death. Just, oh no.

And the most beautiful thing would be before your own death comes, which is beautiful, to sit with a dying person and allow the form to pass away and bring that space, that spaciousness, that allowing, and the deep knowing that comes with that, you bring that to that situation. And if you, this should ever, you should ever be in that situation, and many of you will. You may remember this moment, but also not as a memory.

It will certainly be there as in its full aliveness. You are the knower of the passing nature of all form. And as the body begins to dissolve, that which is beyond form shines through, so to speak, is known as the knowing that is deeper than any form.

So the most sacred thing really is death. When a form dissolves and leaves a hole, just as the hole in the flute, the form was just the illusion that you're not a hole. And then the form goes, and it leaves a hole, and the formless shines through.

So that's why it's sacred. God is present more than when a form is dissolving at that point of transition, God is present. The one life shines through that hole left by the form.

But the beauty here is that we discover, even while we are still in this form, we discover our essential nature as the hole, the opening, and not the solid form. So I may have mentioned already instinctively, deep down, perhaps all humans know that there is something sacred when death happens. But just as they deny death, they deny the sacred in our civilization.

When was the last time that you heard something sacred on television talking about, well, maybe an evangelist shouting, but not the sacred. So in many ancient, in many traditional cultures, when somebody, there's suddenly somebody dies, and they all, they take off their hat, they make the sign of the cross, and they talk in hushed tones, he's dying, he's dying. Why?

Because they feel, maybe yesterday they hated this person, but now he's gone. And there's some knowing that, they don't know why they do that, that when a form dissolves, there's the sacredness which is life, which emanates from the formless one life is present. So, and that applies not just to the body dissolving.

I'm talking about this now, because being the last day, something, this also is a form, a structure, a temporary structure, it's coming to an end, and it's beautiful. All ends are so beautiful, because every end is a little death, and every death is the one eternal life shining through the dissolving form. So we've already embraced death here fully in all its various manifestations.

So the actual death should really not hold any fear for you anymore. When it comes, it'll just be the flowering. The flowering is happening to you already, because you're dying as you sit here, and then a deepening.

One of the beautiful things about last days of retreat is we exchange sacred hugs here. Only those who want it, it's not necessary. And as we hug, there's a moment of no thought, just silent presence.

Not to anymore, because only thought creates the duality. So we'll exchange hugs for a while, and then I'll hug some more people and be hugged by more people in our last session later on. I had to stop hugging people when the groups became so big, the talks with 500, 600, 700 people.

And it's so wonderful to hug everyone, but it became too much after the talks, four hours of talk and then three hours to four hours of hugging. But here it's still possible. Perhaps we could play the sacred Sanskrit, that beautiful song that Patrick Barnard sings in Sanskrit.

Song of the Universal Light. So I have to stand up for this.

[Speaker 2] (6:55:36 - 6:56:55)

I have to stand up for this.

[Speaker 1] (6:56:55 - 7:29:21)

This afternoon, I came to answer lots of questions, but it never happened. Maybe I answered one, if that. But what was said was more important than any answer could have been.

And as it always is, it was right for that moment. So I already sense, as perhaps you do, there's a completeness, completion already about our gathering. And how long we'll be here tonight, I don't know.

Last time I said somewhere, I guess this will be a short meeting, 10 or 15 minutes. And last time I said that, it lasted two and a half hours. I do know there are more questions than can be answered within this time span.

That doesn't matter so much. You may find one of your unanswered questions may suddenly appear in another book. By then, the question probably will have dissolved for you and you won't be interested anymore.

As you know, the essence about us being together is not answering questions, although that happens too. It's not to satisfy the mind, although to a limited extent it happens. To a large extent, the mind remains unsatisfied, of course, here.

Occasionally it gets little bits and pieces. But it's, as I mentioned at the beginning, to the mind, thinking, accumulation of knowledge, to the mind, this is not a satisfying event. And that's fine.

What a beautiful moment. All the people who've been coming here are coming up for hugs and some more people who will be coming up for hugs later, I'm sure. When you come up for hugs, there's no, I don't have any thought in my head about you.

There's only a kind of knowing. If the knowing were translated into words, but it becomes, of course, inadequate if it's translated into words, but I'm going to translate it anyway. The knowing is, each time I look at you into a person's eyes, ah, there I am.

But that knowing doesn't come as words. So there you are, thinly disguised as somebody else. God in disguise.

Everybody here is thinly disguised. Some forms, some human forms are more heavily disguised, but they're all the same, no matter how heavy the disguise. We may have another turbulent night externally, and it's another opportunity of being the still presence that watches the turbulence.

It'll pass, like everything else, but it's beautiful. I may look at a few questions right now that may not require a lengthy explanation, although you never know. I understand that I don't have free will when my ego is in charge, nor when totality is expressing itself through me.

When I notice that I'm operating egoically, do I then have a choice to continue to let my ego dictate or to choose being in the present instead? I think I have free will in that moment. That's a good observation.

I often put it in that way. I say you can choose to be present. So from one perspective or one level, it appears that at that moment, you have a choice.

You can choose presence rather than mental noise. You can choose to step out of the mental noise, and that is a helpful perspective on it. Ultimately, even that's not entirely true.

Because if presence were not arising at that moment, you wouldn't have a choice. The very fact that you have a choice means there's enough presence. And that comes.

Presence chooses you rather than you choosing presence, one could say. It's still something much vaster than the seemingly autonomous entity. What seems like an autonomous entity is connected to something much vaster.

And something out of the vastness rises at that moment. And from the perspective of the entity, it looks as if at that moment, the entity had a choice. And it's a helpful perspective.

It's quite helpful to see it as I have a choice now. That's how it appears. This is more helpful than to say, there's nothing you can do.

Go and watch TV with a can of beer because there's nothing you can do anyway. And eventually you will get unhappy enough and something will happen. But this was very helpful, this question, the observation of at that moment, because at that moment, something comes in that is not conditioned.

The unconditioned arises. That is the vastness itself far greater than what looks like the entity, but the entity is not separate from that. It is an expression.

So that then expresses itself. And at first, it looks as it becomes like a choice. That's its first sign.

It appears as if you had a choice at that moment. That's good, good enough. You could ask many questions related to that.

Did you have a choice in coming here? Yes, no. There's something much faster at work that is arising through these forms.

The question about being in the body, having attention in the inner energy field of the body, which is an ancient Buddhist technique practiced, there's a meditation called Vipassana, whereby you put attention into the body systematically. And it's a meditation technique. Some claim that it was originally taught by the Buddha.

And that's, of course, you're present. As soon as you enter the body with your attention, you're present. But the question is, why do you prefer to teach a technique-less, to teach in a technique-less style?

As techniques go, Vipassana is wonderful. It's a wonderful meditation. For some reason, I don't teach techniques.

It seems that the power of the teaching or the power of presence is so strong as to not need the intermediary of a technique. That is perhaps the reason. So it's a direct pointing.

Just as Zen originally arose, totally no technique. And it was defined originally, Zen is direct pointing to the essence. Usually translated as heart, but direct pointing to the essence.

There's always the last step. Eventually, the technique is transcended, no matter how wonderful the technique is. And a technique, the drawback with usually a technique is that it gives you time to become good at it, to get better at it.

And steps, many stages or steps, many techniques have that. So that's the drawback. Even if the technique is designed to take you into the timeless, it might give you time to get there.

Many paradoxes appear when we talk about timeless and time. But that's how it is. A technique doesn't seem to happen here.

There's simply the power of presence. If privately you find a technique helpful, that's fine. Vipassana, whatever.

Some people practice the course in miracles. 365 lessons, one lesson per day. All designed to take you to the realization that there's no time.

That there's only the holy instant, as it's called in the book, only now. And if you could do one lesson, or even half a lesson fully and totally, you would be there. Even lesson one.

Of course, then you wouldn't need the lesson anymore. And the remaining 364 lessons. Being pure consciousness is so natural and simple, a state, at least I can see that.

Yet, since it is so very abstract too, how can you keep people from straining, mood-making, dividing the mind, creating expectations and beliefs, et cetera, while practicing the simple methods or portals that you offer? This first very important statement in the question, being pure consciousness is so natural and simple a state. It is natural and simple, a state of great simplicity, sometimes called in India, the natural state, your natural state.

And then the question says, yet it is so very abstract. No, it's not abstract. It's simple.

What's abstract is what follows. Dividing the mind, creating expectations, beliefs, mind streams, all that is a waste of abstraction. All of thought is abstraction.

Nevertheless, the question is valid. How do you keep people from straining? Well, I don't try to do that.

So the question is perhaps how do I keep myself from, and even that I wouldn't try to do. Simply watch, when we've been pointing to this, watch the movement of thought as it arises without being it, without being completely identified with it, be present. Do you have a choice?

We come back to the other question. Do you have a choice? Yes and no.

I would say yes, it's more helpful. I wouldn't say this to everybody because many people in this world, there's not yet, presence has not yet emerged to the point where one could say that they have a choice. And to many humans, it still applies what Jesus said.

They know not what they do. They know not what simply means something is operating through them and it's mechanical. They don't, they know not what they do.

They are not conscious. They don't know, forgive them, he said, of course. Somebody points out the psychotherapist that for people who suffer from certain biological illnesses it can be dangerous to go off antidepressants.

So great care needs to be exercised. Thank you, that may be important to mention. Some presence can arise also even when there's medication.

So whatever your situation is now, here you are, presence is arising no matter what. So here we are just alert, still allowing presence to arise and presence is here. And I seem to be saying this at the end of each retreat now and that is you're not really going anywhere from here.

It just appears that you are. You never really go anywhere. The core, the field of now remains.

And around it, the scenery changes. There's the vastness of being and around it the pictures change continuously. So all you have to do is enjoy the scenery and enjoy the changes, the changing scenery.

So all this we already talked about that you can actually enjoy the fact that everything passes. There's a beauty in the coming and going of form. But only if you are the knower of the field that's underneath forms.

Then there's a beauty. There's a beauty in your own body getting old and you can enjoy that. There's a beauty even in loss of whatever kind.

You can enjoy that. So maybe the final message is that you don't have to do anything. In a way, the opposite of doing is what's required, allowing.

The new state of consciousness wants to arise. Presence wants to arise. It's allowing that vaster movement to express itself through you.

So there isn't anything really you have to do. How do you allow that new consciousness, that vaster movement to express itself through you? How can you be that hole in the flute?

What do you have to do to be a hole? Well, Jesus used a strange expression. He says, deny thyself.

People don't understand this. It's being misinterpreted. In other words, be selfless.

Be free of the illusion of the separate little me. Then you realize your essential nature is that hole, your no thingness. And then you're just an instrument of God, you could say.

Just it's expressive. God expresses itself through that hole. God, he, she, it plays.

So beautiful to be nobody, and yet everything. I'll ring the bell three times, reminding you of alertness, of the wakefulness. You want to read a poem?

Okay, after the bells. Would you like to read your poem? The microphone is coming.

Yes?

[Speaker 3] (7:29:33 - 7:31:02)

Actually, this isn't, the poem I'll read now wasn't the one I was originally intending to read. I just wrote this one now, after the meeting. I was up in the brand of the dining hall.

It was so beautiful looking at the valley and the twinkling lights. I called it Pura Vida

Twilight. Below us the valley in twinkling light.

Above us the heavens preparing for night. And here on the sun deck enveloped in peace, soft candle lights play in the tropical breeze. The rainbows have vanished, the wind's gone to sleep.

There's a hush in the air now, a whisper as deep as the shadow of evening that lies on the hills. And rich as a heart's breath that love has made still. This week was a week out of time, and it seems not quite right that it ends like a vanishing dream.

A hundred hearts beating as one, one last time. Then it's back to the cities, pollution and crime. But this hush, but this hush in the heavens has a message for this, for hearts that are open in silence and bliss.

I'm afraid that's when you came in, and the message is each one of us.

[Speaker 1] (7:31:02 - 7:31:04)

It's perfect as it is.

[Speaker 3] (7:31:05 - 7:31:08)

Good, thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (7:31:12 - 7:32:29)

I trusted that it would be perfect, and it was. It could have been horrible, but it was perfect. Thank you.

Thank you. Yeah, could we listen to the sacred song again? So we'll just sit for a little while and listen to the beginning of the sacred song.

Patrick Bernard is chanting, singing in Sanskrit. And then at some point I'll get up and like to hug more people. Particularly those with whom I haven't exchanged sacred hugs yet.

Eckhart Tolle Stillness is the heart of happiness

[Speaker 1] (0:02 - 1:21:22)

Welcome, some of you have only just arrived here, perhaps from the busy city and a busy life. And perhaps we can just make sure, you can make sure that you are completely here, present, attentive not only to the words, which are not all that important, but also to the stillness in the room. Attentive to the stillness in the room means just to notice that there is stillness here, apart from the words.

If all you're interested in here is the words, then this evening would work for you only on a conceptual level. And you have so much of that already in this civilization, information, facts, to the thinking mind, stillness is uninteresting, but you love it. And you may have to be able to just step out of the thinking mind for a moment in order to realize that you love the stillness.

And that that stillness is more than this word implies. Every word that we use to describe that, which is beyond words, reduces the reality of that. And yet we have to use words, but we don't have to be confined to using words.

And that's why it's so important, as you sit here, to be aware at the same time as you listen to the words, that there's also always the field of silence here in the room. Yes. Is that true?

Is there silence? Yes. You have to check for yourself.

Don't believe me that there's silence in the mind. Yeah, okay, there's silence. So what's next, says the thinking mind.

Because the interesting thing is, you cannot even notice that there is silence when you're immersed in a stream of thinking. Or to put it in a more extreme but true way, thought cannot even be aware of silence. Cannot notice it, because thought is inner noise.

And through inner noise, you cannot notice silence. And so, as most people are identified with a continuous stream of inner noise, they are never aware that in them, there's a deeper dimension within, underneath the continuous flux of thinking and the emotions that go with it, that in each human being, there's a much deeper dimension of consciousness. And we could use different pointers to say what it is.

One pointer is to say it is the realm of stillness, not dead, vibrantly alive stillness. And since this is a conference about the heart of happiness, that is the heart of happiness that every human carries inside. And it is also peace, inner peace.

It is only out of that dimension that external peace can finally emerge in the world, only if a sufficiently large number of humans get in touch with that dimension within them. If that does not happen on the planet soon, it's a good sign, the fact that we are sitting here, that it is happening. If it does not happen soon on a larger scale, I know it is happening.

It's just a question of whether it's happening fast enough to stop the madness, self-destructive madness that the collective human mind to a large extent has become. So we are not self-indulgent here. It's not a selfish endeavor.

It is vital, not only on a personal level for yourself to become free of unhappiness, and it's only in the deeper dimension of yourself that you can become free of unhappiness. It's also vital for the planet, for humanity. Silence is still there in the room.

What happens when you notice it? It's very subtle. There's a moment in which stillness arises in you.

It is alert, an alert, aware presence. Let's try it out. Check for yourself if the silence is still there.

Yes, for that moment, you are not thinking. It may only have been a second or two. It may have been longer.

The moment you checked for yourself whether the silence in the room was still there, something arose in you that was consciousness, freed from thought. And that's the dimension that a few humans have access to who are very creative, only in their little field of creativity, not usually yet in the rest of their lives. That is the reason also that anybody who achieves mastery in any field has access to, usually only within the realm of that little field in which they have mastery.

The moment they stop throwing the ball or whatever they have chief mastery in, they go back usually into the same relative madness of normal human consciousness or unconsciousness. So allowing that which is already in you to emerge, that dimension, because it is already in everyone. And if you can be conscious throughout this evening of both dimensions as you listen, then you're listening in a state of stillness.

You hear the words, but there is that in you that receives the words, understands the word without needing to analyze or memorize or compare to something else that you already know, simply let them be there. So that in you is deeper than the person, the personal personalized sense of self, me, me and my story. It is deeper than your life circumstances that you have to think about.

You have to remember them to remember that you have many problems. When you do not remember and so revive them through thought, if you do not remember that you have many problems, and perhaps you might've thought you were the only one here in this room, you may be surprised that I don't believe there's anybody here who does not have to some extent, a problematic life situation. That is normal.

Now, most people's attention, consciousness, conscious attention is continuously absorbed by their problematic life situation. That's what they, that occupies them. The moment they wake up, open your eyes in the morning.

For a moment, there is a clear space of stillness. You see the sky, you hear a bird. It feels good to be alive.

You may even feel the energy field in your inner body, the aliveness that is inside the body, the indwelling energy field. And this lasts maybe a minute. Then the memory comes, ah, my problems.

And then you remember what's going to happen today. And a heaviness descends upon you. It's like a cloud, a clear sky, and within one minute, enormous clouds come rolling in.

And then for the rest of the day, that is what absorbs your attention. Your face then loses that ease, that lightness, and is usually then tense, and the eyes become a little bit lifeless because you're only peripherally aware of your surroundings any longer because all your attention is in what you have to think about. What's the next thing I have to do?

Okay, oh, there's so much. Put so much on my mind today. Next, next.

So when you look at people, that's how they go through life. What are they looking for? The next thing to tackle, the next thing that's going to come.

They're not aware of what is here now. They're projecting to the next thing, and they are either hoping that the next thing will make their life a little bit better or fearing that the next thing will make their life a little bit or much worse because the future is uncertain. It gives you hope, and it gives you fear.

And between these two, normal human existence fluctuates, is torn. So you lose that. You lose something that for a moment you had.

No, did you lose it, or did it just get covered up? You cannot lose it. That's the good news.

Even if you've been immersed in mental turmoil for the past 30 years, you haven't lost it because it is indestructible. It is as indestructible as the silence in this room. That is one analogy we could use.

And it is as indestructible, to use another analogy, as the space in this room. No matter what we do here, we can make the most awful amount of noise. In the end, we will have to stop, and the silence will be back as if nothing had ever happened.

We can create the most incredible amount of chaos in this room, scream and shout and so on. Eventually, it will come to an end, and it will not have affected the space at all. It may have left, yes, it may have left an energy field of heaviness, but that also will dissipate.

That cannot affect the space. So there is something in you, one could say, that is the equivalent of, to use analogies in the external world, that is the equivalent of silence, or one could say the equivalent of space, a dimension of consciousness in you, in each human being. If you don't find that, if you're unaware of that, then it is as if it didn't exist for you.

It then is as if you were a beggar, sitting by the side of the road, here in, here out, getting a few cents from passersby, not knowing, I gave that analogy at the beginning of the Power of Now, that you've been sitting on a box filled with gold, because you never looked, or you can change a more modern analogy, not knowing that you have a secret bank account in Switzerland with $100 million in it. You don't know it, and you don't know the number, and if somebody tells you, you say, I don't believe you. There is something in you that is very different, and yet not ultimately separate from, ordinary, everyday consciousness.

Now, ordinary, everyday human consciousness is becoming more and more dysfunctional. If you want to find out if that is true, read a book on modern history. I always recommend the 20th century, if you want to learn about the dysfunction of the human mind, and if you read it as if you had never seen it before, you say, how is this possible?

How can they create hell on this planet that is potentially, and to some extent, still is a paradise, a jewel floating in space? How is it that humans can have killed 100 million other humans within 100 years? 100, more than 100 million, 10 million alone in the First World War, that was only the beginning.

And that's the dysfunction on the collective level. You can go back in history, it's the same dysfunction, but you don't see it as clearly, and perhaps it's getting worse. There are certain indications that it is getting worse.

It is certainly becoming magnified through science and technology, which intrinsically is neither good nor bad, but more often than not, science and technology are used in the service of the human dysfunction. It requires great intelligence to build, to split the atom, and great stupidity and insanity to build stockpiles and stockpiles of nuclear weapons. It requires great intelligence to figure out how to build chemical and biological weapons, and great stupidity to make them, and so on.

You have always the dual nature of the human mind, intelligent, and at the same time, incredibly stupid. And that's the collective level. And then in people's personal lives, you see so much dysfunction in the form of conflict, unhappiness, in many cases, deep unhappiness, which, underneath the surface very often in the Western world, there is a relatively polished surface to life.

People have learned to smile, but there's no inner smile. All the sick, the dying, the mad, the old people, most of them are shut away. Let's not look at that aspect of human existence.

Are we stepping out of that dysfunction now? Is a shift in consciousness possible for humanity? Yes, that's what the great teachers have always said.

That's what they pointed to. Jesus, the Buddha, the Hindu teachings, the teachings of liberation, the teachings of enlightenment, the teachings of salvation, of awakening. Thousands of years ago, the great ones already saw the dysfunction, when it wasn't even as clear yet as it is now, as obvious as staring you in the face every night you switch on the TV.

And yet they saw it already. And they saw also that there is a way beyond, a shift is possible, but they were misunderstood. Most humans were not ready yet for that.

They were misinterpreted. But they all point to the same thing. Buddha calls it freedom from suffering.

Jesus calls it salvation or the kingdom of heaven that is within, not over there, not in some other time, some other place, but here and now. Hindu teachings call it liberation, enlightenment. Yes, they were the early pioneers, the precursors.

It did not happen on a large scale because it wasn't necessary yet for it to happen on a large scale. The planet could survive very well even with the human dysfunction. But now things have changed.

A shift in consciousness has become a necessity. That's why we are here. It goes far beyond the personal and yet it also affects you on a personal level.

It frees you from the dysfunction of the human mind. Contacting that dimension within yourself. That's why we are here.

On the level of the dysfunction, yes, you can temporarily rearrange things in your life, but no ultimate transformation is there to be found. The wonderful news is that dimension in you has never gone away. And it is now emerging, pushing forward from within many, many human beings.

It wants to emerge. And that is already happening to many of you. So what does that mean?

There is something in you that is the equivalent of space. If you look out at night into the sky, I don't know if it's clear tonight. I think it is.

You will see, once your eyes get used to the darkness, thousands of suns, the stars, most of which are suns. You can see the, you look into the vastness of space, which is awe-inspiring. The infinite space that is there of which you only see a tiny, tiny fraction.

Infinite vastness. Billions of suns, not only that, billions of worlds of galaxies, each galaxy containing billions of suns. Unimaginable vastness.

And if you look there, if you want to find out about the nature of the world and become like a little child without a lot of complicated conceptualization, then you look and you see, well, there are two things that I can see. I can see things and I can see space. There are two dimensions, things and things in space, space in which these things exist.

So the world consists of things and space. Now, what is that inside you? Things inside you is whatever thoughts occur inside you.

The stream of thinking is objects that arise in your consciousness. Emotions are also energy fields that arise temporary for energetic formations that arise in your inner space. Other things that arise, sense perceptions, light, hearing, gets translated into images.

So there are objects that occupy your consciousness, objects, and most people, most people's lives are confined to that, the objects in their field of consciousness. All the thoughts that go through their head day in, day out, that's what they identified with. That's me.

Their sense of self is in every thought. Hmm, oh, so worried about what's going to happen. I really don't know.

I mean, what if he does that? But on the other hand, that shouldn't have happened. Some writers are good.

They write that in some modern literature. You have the stream of thinking on paper and you can see how mad it is. And pointless.

Thinking can be very beautiful when it's actually applied to a useful purpose, powerful, wonderful. But 90% or more of one's thought processes are repetitive, old records. Not even CDs, they're older.

Old, scratchy records that have been playing in many cases from generation to generation the same patterns I inherited from parents to their children. There are people here who are immersed in the same kinds of thoughts, maybe in a different language from their ancestors, but the same thoughts and behavior patterns that are created by those thoughts that their ancestors had 200 years ago in France, in Italy, in England, wherever, in Africa, wherever they lived. So we are stuck with that conditioned mind one thing after another comes up.

And now when we say identified, people are, they have their sense of self lodged in the stream of thinking and the emotions that go with the thinking. Oh, anger flows, they're totally in it or the sadness or so dreadful. Oh, my life, what's it all come to?

They tell themselves stories in the head and the story in the head becomes the identity. The story is partly involuntary because you've been given that by your surroundings, your parents, your upbringing, they told you stories about who you are. So partly you believe that and you add your own part of the story to that.

And so after a while you live with an identity that is the story of me. And that's what you think about, that is your life situation. And it is problematic.

That identity, that sense of self is always a problematic one. It's in its very nature to be problematic. It is also in its very nature to feel insecure and insubstantial.

It is also in its nature almost always to feel not enough. If you look deeply, what that means is, and most human beings have that, what that means is I am not enough yet. I haven't quite arrived at the completion of my sense of self.

And so the worst thing that could happen to you is for somebody to tell you that you do not have a future anymore. For example, a doctor, that happens. And that is dreadful for the identity that is derived from mind structures.

The mind made story-based sense of self because almost every story-based sense of self feels I need more time to be fully and completely myself. And they believe that if I can add certain things to my sense of self, then eventually I will reach a point where I feel I will feel complete, fully me, fully myself. So with that comes the incredible psychological need for more in people's lives.

Now, I'm not saying that it is not a wonderful thing to acquire a new object that is beautiful and that you can look at and handle or use. Yes, beautiful. That it is not a wonderful thing to explore life, to take some trips, to explore other countries, to have experiences, to meet people, to have relationships.

They're all wonderful things. It is part of living in this world of form, phenomenal reality. And so you're meant to explore and to play with the world of form, to exploit.

But that's not how most humans live. They don't play with it. They don't have a playful curiosity about the world of form.

They have an obsession with the world of form, an extreme attachment to the world of form because they are seeking themselves in the world of form. They are looking for more of me. So where it's a nice thing, if you buy a nice car, why not?

But maybe are you looking for yourself in that? Are you seeking to add the mind object car, not just car, my car, to the accumulation of mind objects that's already there in you to add to, which for a while, not for very long, makes yourself, seems to complete your identity. I have added a big car, a big mind object to the accumulation of objects that I have already.

That's me, my knowledge, my status in society, what people have told me, am I important or not important? Sometimes I think I'm important and sometimes I'm not, not quite sure. My reputation, maybe I have something on my wall, diplomas, maybe I don't.

Maybe I have other mind objects that don't look very good, but I'm hanging on to them anyway. I've been a victim of certain people or groups of people or one person who did that to me, and that can become a mind object that occupies an important part of your sense of self in the absence of something better that works very well too. Me, the victim, oh yes, it's all what the people have done to me, it's dreadful.

And I'm not saying that they didn't do things to you, but is that good to be used to give you a sense of self? What kind of a sense of self is that? It is an object in consciousness that you have put there and that you revive every day by thinking about it.

And whoever is ready to listen to it, you tell them about it, either about how bad things are for you, which are also thoughts. And some people have that as their sense of identity mainly and others will tell others at parties how great things are, what they've just bought, the important things they've just done, me. What do you do for a living?

Well, and then the story comes. A story-based identity, this is the realm of object consciousness. This is the realm of thought.

And this is what gives people their sense of self. And it is not substantial. There's always the feeling I am not complete and there's a looking out then for more.

Now in this civilization, the Western world, one dimension where that operates very strongly is the obsessive accumulation of objects, external objects to identify with, because I think it's an unconscious compulsion to acquire more things because there's some feeling of not enough yet. Okay, let's go to the shopping mall. Ah, ah, that, and I'll have two of those and three of that.

And then you come home with the bags and then you take it out. And for a while you can add that to the, oh, that's my new dress, my new shoes, my new suit, my new whatever it is. And then you hang it.

Sometimes you don't even wear it. And then that's, it's a temporary satisfaction. And then, okay, what else can I fill myself up with?

How else can I complete my always deficient sense of self? Okay, let's see. I need to meet somebody interesting.

You go out looking for, or now I need to master something. There's nothing wrong with that. I need to learn something so that I feel important and I can show them that I'm good at something.

You master something and then you can, you're better than others at it after a while. You can compare yourself to others. I'm better than, or I know more than.

Knowledge can add that, big mind objects. Or they have an image in their mind of their external appearance, which becomes a big mind object. If it happens to be good, then people will use that readily and have an image of me as better looking than most.

And so you can carry that around or in the realm of a mind made sense of self, my appearance. And now if you're not good looking, then you have to look for something else. Knowledge, that was for a few years the case with me.

I wasn't good looking, but for a few years I was reading books and studying and absorbing information. And after a while that I felt knowledgeable. And then in the academic world, you show off then with your, you see how much you know, but there's always a sense of unease because invariably you run into somebody who knows more than you.

So you walk into a room and there's unease and then you make a casual remark to show how profound your knowledge is. And then somebody else says, you're completely wrong. This theory was proven to be a fallacy three years ago.

Now, what happens when somebody does that to you and you had identified with a mind object, you said it, but it was in the service, your sense of identity was in there. It was invested with a sense of self and somebody now denies that this is untrue. Three years ago, they proved without any doubt, somebody is removing something from your sense of self.

That's why people have such enormous reactions when they are trying to be right. And how dreadful it is, how it feels like dying when somebody shows you that you are wrong, the enormous emotional violence that comes with that. And even academics sometimes start, even physical violence I have experienced there.

Why? In the service of being right. Why do they need to be right?

Because their sense of self is invested in a mental position. They don't know who they are beyond that. That's, on a collective level, people fight wars about being right.

Our religion, we are right, you are wrong. Identifying with mental positions as us, our position. We need you to be wrong because if you were not there being wrong, we would no longer know who we are.

We only define our identity through that which opposes the other. We need the other. This is built into the mind-made sense of self, the need for enemies, the need for conflict, because otherwise, the mind-made sense of self will become fluid without its boundaries.

It would lose its boundaries that it needs around the me. Now, the me can either be a predominantly personal sense of self, or it can be, as it is in some cultures, and for some people, a predominantly collective sense of self. Now, the personal sense of self of me is already mad and dysfunctional, but even more mad and dysfunctional is the collective sense of us.

That has created so much havoc and suffering on the planet. Us against them. And so they are fighting in the service of an identity.

And they need their enemies. They need the other. How does it work on a personal level?

On a personal level, when you don't know yourself beyond mind, you need to be in conflict with something or someone to uphold your sense of self. You need your problems. You need your enemies.

Whether the enemy is a person or a situation. Prolonged peace would be threatening to that sense of self. And this is, collectively, you can see it while they talk about peace, but there is no peace.

They talk about the peace process, the road to peace, the roadmap to peace. Where are they not going? There's no peace.

They're just words about peace because they are not ready yet for peace. They don't want the... So humans live in conflict in their own lives.

The egoic sense of self needs enemies. Situations, people, and so on, to be in conflict with. And all that is unconscious.

What is the greatest enemy of the egoic sense of self? The arch enemy of the egoic sense of self? The present moment.

That's why, for most people... Now, this is... That's why, for most people, the present moment is felt to be an obstacle to overcome.

They live as if the present moment were an obstacle almost continuously that they need to overcome. Now, since the present moment is all there ever is, since there is nothing ever that is not the present moment, never has been, and never will be, you can see how dysfunctional it is when you make life, which is inseparable from the present moment, into your enemy. And so there is a continuously denial of now.

If people live, we can see in people's faces how they deny the now because they're looking to the next now, not this one, the only one there is. The next one is a mind object no more because the future only exists as a mental formation. Nobody's ever met it.

Nobody's ever experienced the future. It is a thought form. Past and future are thought forms.

Yes, in this realm, they seem to exist. They seem to be very real. They even seem to consume your body.

If you get older and older, eventually your body shrinks like an apple that's a few weeks old. And then finally it goes. Yes, and yet there's a strange paradox.

Life is always this moment. Your entire life unfolds in that space of now, that space of now. Now here we have the portal into the transformed consciousness, the space of now.

What most people believe is that their lives consist of thousands and thousands of moments, even every day, so many different moments, another moment and another moment because they believe that the form that this moment takes is the present moment. But it isn't. It's only the form that appears in the space of now.

It's always now. It's always the same now. No matter what form comes, the space of now is always the same.

It's always this moment. No matter what happens to you, one thing is certain. No matter what will ever happen to you, one thing is certain.

It will happen in the now. Now this sounds almost weird to the mind. Yeah, well, of course.

The mind doesn't know what to do with it. It almost stops the mind. Ah, so that must be true then.

It must be good. There's only this moment ever. All that people are aware of is the form that this moment takes.

They are not aware of the space of this moment. All they are aware of is the forms in their consciousness. They are not aware of the space that enables all the mental forms to be there.

And what they do is their egoic identity, the story-based sense of self says, this moment is not enough, not good enough. It's not fulfilling me. I need more.

Because of the need and the search for more, there's a desperate focus on future. Future is okay for making little practical plans, but there's a desperate psychonautical need for future because the sense of identity believes that only the future will give you the more that you need to be fully yourself. And people who have acquired more and more realize at some point that they still don't feel fulfilled.

No matter how many mental objects they accumulate, external objects that become mental objects, no matter how much they accumulate, always there's this feeling, not enough yet. And so you find many wealthy people desperately searching for more experiences that they want to buy. Let's try this new drug, or more and more relationships, or more and more journeys, travel here and there, try this, nothing is ultimately fulfilling, only a little bit of, and then finally they may realize it's not to be found on that level.

It's not to be found on that. I cannot find myself there. I cannot find myself through adding more to who I think I am.

I can play with form, it's beautiful, explore this, learn a new language, but if I'm using it to find myself, it will never satisfy me, it won't do the job. And what people are desperately longing for is to have a deep feeling of rootedness, of identity, of being truly who you are, of being a sense of deep, deep safety, security, and aliveness. That's what they ultimately want, to feel your being as a continuous state.

And nothing in the world of objects, thought objects, can do that for you. Nothing, no matter how much more you add, can do that for you. In other words, no future, no matter how much more future you have, can do that for you to help you find who you truly are.

The only access point to that is now, because you already are fully yourself on the deepest level. Only on the level of form could you add more. It does not complete who you are.

And people learn that lesson sometimes who have accumulated much on the level of form and lose everything. They suddenly lose every one of the accumulated forms, relationships, possessions, status, jobs, reputation, money, all forms that I identified with as me, there's a moment of dreadful fear and panic, and then it has sometimes happened to some of them that suddenly there was enormous peace and clarity. For the first time in their life, they experienced the sense of inner space.

And they experienced it because the accumulation of objects in their mind crumbled. That is the grace that is hiding behind death and any kind of deep loss. Because there's always a potential when some objects leave you, that that which you are underneath the level of objects can then emerge.

But it can also emerge when your attention moves into the present moment and you realize first that this is all there ever is. And secondly, you realize the insanity of denying, resisting, running away from the present moment, whatever form it takes. Which is what the ego, the egoic self tends to do.

Once you see the insanity of not welcoming the present moment, you're able to say, let's see what happens if I say yes to the form that this moment takes. It changes always. But this moment, the form that it takes, whatever happens right now, the form that it takes right now, am I able to align myself internally with the form that this moment takes because I realize that what is already is.

And it is absurd to argue with the isness of this moment because you cannot change what is. Then you can take action. Once you have aligned yourself with the isness and say, yes, that's how it is.

I'm stuck in the mud here up to my neck. That's what is. Or you can resist that moment.

If you resist that moment, you will react. You will start thrashing out and you will sink deeper into the mud. And if you align yourself with now, suddenly a power comes into your life that comes from the space consciousness that is underneath the conditioned human mind.

Action arises suddenly that is just right to deal with whatever challenge you're facing at this moment. So a power and an intelligence far greater than the reactive human mind comes into your life when you align your life with now, which is the form that this moment takes instead of habitually running away from it, denying it. Then the focal point of your life becomes always this moment.

On the periphery of your life, of course, there is past and future. You know at five o'clock, I have to be at such and such a place. But this is not occupying your consciousness totally.

What is occupying your conscious attention is what you need to face at this moment. And if you're traveling from A to your appointment, five o'clock appointment somewhere else, where are you as you are traveling towards the five o'clock appointment? Where are you between four and five while you travel?

Mentally rehearsing what you're going to say, thinking the problems that might arise at five o'clock when you meet that person, fantasizing about what will happen when you meet them, or being somewhere else, you're missing your life. Now, very often, the form that this moment takes does not look very interesting superficially to the mind. I'm sitting on a plane going somewhere.

I've got another four hours before we arrive. So you're thinking, usually your attention would be absorbed by your life situation. All the problems, things that have happened, that are going to happen, might happen, should have happened but didn't, stories.

You're missing the enormous power that is there concealed underneath the stream of thinking in you. What could it be like if you were in touch with the present moment at that time? You would be sitting there.

Occasionally, you would look out of the window. You could see the shimmering light, the clouds, down below, perhaps mountains, the enormous clarity of the sky. There would be a sense of wonder because there isn't a thought.

I've seen this so many times already. I'm not looking out of the window anymore. I've seen it so many times.

No, you haven't. This is, it's fresh and new. You're denying life by saying, okay, that's an old, I've been on a plane, it's 500 times.

It's nothing new. It's just, look. Can you feel that you are still alive?

Can you feel the enormous aliveness that dwells in your body, in every cell, that's vibrant with life? Feel that as you sit there. See, look, watch the people.

Can you be aware as you sit there, as sense perceptions happen, can you be aware of the now as the inner field of aware presence in which all those beautiful sense perceptions happen? Can you be aware of that field of spacious, vibrantly alive stillness in which you're seeing, hearing, feeling? That's who you are.

Life itself, not some heavy little person with a problematic life situation that exists, yes, on its own little level, but more vitally, who are you underneath that absurd life situation? Everybody's life situation is complicated, but also absurd. In a few years, as I say in the Stillness Speaks, it will be the dash between your date of birth and your date of death on your gravestone.

That will be what's left of your life situation and all the problems. So yes, you give it its due. Of course, you deal with things, the things of this world, but if they absorb your life, they suck the life out of you, the world of objects, the world of things, of mind objects and of physical objects, the world says, this matters, this is absolutely important.

Nothing is absolutely important. It's absolutely important that you know who you are. Then the rest will flow more easily, more powerfully.

So get to, so you're sitting on this plane or you're sitting right here, of course, it's the same. You're sitting right here. Are you sitting here with a heavy little me, identified with every thought that goes through the head?

I don't understand what he's talking about. And I don't want to understand what he's talking about. Don't listen to this.

It could be dangerous. It could be dangerous. Okay, think about your problems, the things that are really important or that you have to tackle when you get back home.

Yeah, I really, I shouldn't have come here because all the stuff that I haven't, that I left behind or, oh, oh, oh. Do you carry that around as who you are? Or is there something far greater, far deeper?

So do you derive your sense of self from object consciousness or from the vast spaciousness, the vast field of spacious awareness that makes it all possible for even an object, for even a thought to be there? The unconditioned dimension of consciousness that is in you waiting to be discovered. Yourself, ultimately, it is finding something that you've been looking for in the wrong places all your life.

You've been looking for it through more. And you don't need more. You can then play with more, yes, playful, but you don't need more of anything to find yourself.

Some people find themselves in the last 10 seconds of their lives before the accident kills them. Wow, no fear left, nothing left, just an enormous sense of alive peace and serenity. And a few of them survive.

And then they said, I don't know what happened. I could see the accident was coming, but suddenly all fear left me and it became, there was an incredible sense of peace and aliveness. And I knew all is well.

I knew there was nothing to fear anymore suddenly. On that level of your being, fear disappears because fear is to do with identifying with form, the form of me, not realizing that is not, that is who you appear as that form temporarily, yes. But you are life underneath the temporary appearance of a person.

More fundamentally, you are life itself in one of its manifold expressions and a beautiful expression, as beautiful, if not more beautiful, than the incredibly beautiful flowers and whatever else, whatever other form life takes. And the human is an incredible form. It's a form that hasn't flowered yet, but is about to flower because when a human realizes their true nature, who they are underneath the forms they had identified with as themselves, that is awakening, that is freedom, freedom from a personalized limited sense of self.

And then your life on a personal level continues. Your life situation continues, but miraculously something from that dimension flows into also the life of the formal life that you still lead. And because you are connected at that level with the totality of life.

So when you connect with that within yourself, the intelligence of the universe becomes helpful. The one intelligence, the one consciousness that underlies the entire world of manifestation, the billions of forms that, as it's called in the Tao Te Ching, the ancient Chinese book of wisdom, it's called the 10,000 things to describe the world of form. Of course, it's not 10,000 things.

It's not even 10 billion things. It's more than that. That's the world of, and that world of form unfolds much more harmoniously, playfully, and is fulfilling because you're not looking for something in the world of form that it cannot give you.

You're no longer demanding that any situation, any possession, any place, or any person, or any condition should fulfill you or make you happy. Please make me happy. Big house, make me happy.

Holiday, make me happy. Husband, wife, make me happy. Read the Lonely Hearts columns, looking for man or woman to make me happy.

What a dreadful, nobody could live up to that. Nothing in the world of form can live up to that. Because the happiness is already there.

You just haven't a true happiness which is deeper. I would not even perhaps use the word because happiness is usually used for superficial things. Oh, I'm so happy I've got this new thing here.

I'm so happy I found, I'm in love. I'm getting married tomorrow. And so the thing that makes you happy today, the very same thing very often makes you unhappy tomorrow.

Think of your ex-wife or husband. When I do not resist the form that this moment takes, and I welcome it because I realize that I cannot argue with the isness of this moment. It is, it is, what can you do?

There it is. And so I allow this moment to be as it is internally. By doing that, this act of welcoming, of saying yes, of allowing, puts you in touch with the dimension of inner space.

And you sometimes perceive it as if there were suddenly space around the event that before you would have reacted against. You say, well, there it is. The thing is broken down.

That's what is. Okay, we can take action now. But right in the meantime, this is what is.

Before you would have reacted and you said, they should have done something about it. How can they allow this to happen? This shouldn't happen.

I mean, I paid money for this and now it's breaking, it's broken down. I'm going to sue you. Sue them.

They can see that reactivity comes from a place of complaining and the egoic sense of self loves that. It complains about something that is. I'm not saying do something about it.

That's not complaining. The inner complaining about something that is is part of the resistance to what is. Identify in yourself the complainer.

And that is a very important part of the reactivity of the egoic sense of self. What is it complaining about? The present moment.

What's happening right now shouldn't be happening, but it is. Now, the complaining is so satisfying to the false sense of self because it strengthens it. When you can complain about something, you're saying I'm right and the situation is wrong.

Such, the weather is really miserable today. It's just awful. I'm right, the weather is wrong.

On all levels, any complaining puts you in an imagined position of superiority to the event or to something that's madness, but normal. By the way, normal equals very often, more often than not, mad. Read human history if you doubt it.

So to complain strengthens the false sense of self to allow it. It strengthens so if you complain and react, your own form identity, the me, gets strengthened. The story gets strengthened.

The complaint is incorporated in the story and then you pick up the phone and say, you can't imagine what happened just to me. I'll tell you about it. Oh no, and then you get some feedback.

Oh, you're right, you really should be unhappy about this. So it strengthens the illusion of who you are, but it feels satisfying to the illusion, the illusory me for a moment feels great. I'm really getting into this.

Now, when you allow what is, it doesn't strengthen your form. It puts you in touch with that which has no form in you. It makes you aware of space, inner space.

So here's an event, the thing is broken down and instead of saying, oh, well, there it is. Okay. Suddenly, the same event has a totally different quality to it in your experience.

That means you suddenly experience life completely differently. The same event happens and you say, well, there it is. And suddenly, now I'm speaking metaphorically, it is as if there was suddenly some space around the event.

It no longer occupies your attention totally. There's a spaciousness around the event when you allow it. The allowing is very spacious and that spaciousness is consciousness itself, stillness, inner stillness.

And from there, you can look at a challenging situation in that alert stillness. You're looking and there's a moment of just no thought, simply aware attention, which is your deeper, non-conceptual, unconditioned intelligence comes into action. And you look and then action arises.

Or a thought comes out of that, from where all creativity comes, that level, a thought comes and you suddenly know what you have to do about it. Oh, that's, and you do it. Or an action comes immediately, you do the right thing.

So there's enormous power in facing the present moment, no matter what form it takes, completely and fully, allowing it, facing it, looking, listening, seeing. And there's always more, far more than you need to deal with the situation. The power is there the moment you need it.

But if you project yourself into imaginary problems, how can you deal with that? It can only wear you down. And you get drawn into more and more illusory identity.

So the shift in consciousness happens with a simple act of aligning yourself with what is now, with the present moment. And making that your spiritual practice, the ultimate spiritual practice. And while you're here, see how you are relating to the present moment.

What is your relationship with the present moment? You're denying it, resisting it, or welcoming it. Since it's life itself, you might as well welcome it.

It is more skillful, more intelligent, more wise to welcome what is, and then experience how quickly, if the present moment is challenging, how quickly help comes from within you, but also sometimes from without, as a helpful event, as a sudden thing that happens. How could that suddenly, just the right thing? Because this is the alignment with the totality.

At this deeper level, you are one with one consciousness. You are that. Yes, it's, life can be easy.

That we're not, it doesn't mean challenges will not come anymore. Challenges come. But you can become more alert through every challenge rather than becoming more unconscious through every challenge.

Oh, and you watch. But don't wait for challenges. Use that power that is there every moment, even the beautiful moments.

Here you are in nature. You can see trees, flowers, leaves. Yes, they are dying, but in their deaths, they are beautiful.

Nature, incredible beauty everywhere. Do you truly see it? And when you see it, what happens when you look at a tree and the leaves are dark red or yellow and red?

Are you able to look in complete awareness, complete presence? Be so present that you don't need to interpret what you're seeing. Just look, oh.

Are you able to allow that moment to be as it is without needing to add anything to it?

Just that. Right?

And can you then be aware of the sense perception, which is beautiful, but something that is even more beautiful and deeper? And that's yourself. Who are you?

The awareness, the conscious awareness through which that sense perception happens. And that you cannot grasp. It cannot become an object in your consciousness because it is formless consciousness, not a mind object.

So stillness arises from within more and more as you go through life. And there's enormous power and intelligence in that stillness. It's primordial intelligence.

The human mind is secondary intelligence, very limited, but good for certain things. No good for many other things. For relationships, it's not very good to relate with other humans.

But if you can bring stillness into your relationships, even superficial ones, you can just look. Allow that moment in which that human being appears in front of you to be there fully. Welcome that moment when it takes the form of another human being.

Oh. And there's, again, you're looking, and there's stillness as you look, just looking, alert, attention. Then the compulsive labeling arises less and less in your life.

And if it should still arise, the mind saying something about someone, you recognize it as, yeah, just a thought, not really the truth, because every thought is only one of many possible perspectives about any situation. There's no ultimate truth there, but it's a thought. So you don't have to believe in every thought that comes into your head.

You recognize it as a thought, and it comes and goes, and then the sense of separation between you and the other human being, and also the sense of separation between you and nature that arises because you inhabit a conceptualized reality in the head, labels, judging, interpreting, judging, thinking about, yeah, I wonder what he does, what, I wonder how I can use him. Me. That conceptualized identity, conceptualized reality, and conceptualized identity operate less and less.

That is the shift in consciousness from inhabiting a reality that is made up of thought and concepts to actually touching a deeper reality in yourself. And so when you do that, when the barriers are not there, there's love in the true sense of the word, because whatever you look upon without the conceptual barriers in openness, Jesus said, we must become like little children if you want to enter the kingdom of heaven. What does he mean?

We have to go back to complete ignorance? No, all he means is he just gives you that as an image to see how does a little child look at the world, a one-year-old who hasn't learned concepts yet. Complete openness, you can sense the consciousness that flows through, is still, and then comes conceptualization.

Dad, what's that called? The first concept and another word on top of that and another word, and then a little later, the human mistakes the concept for the reality. That's a tree.

Oh, now I know what it is. You don't know what it is at all. You only had to put a label to the mystery.

On top of the mystery, you stick a label, tree. It's the depths is already obscure to you of what is there and the aliveness of what's there. And then you do it to yourself.

John Smith from such and such a state, college, family background, religion, a few beliefs, mix them all together in a pot. That's me. Find the stillness that's already there, just waiting.

Perceive the world through that as much as possible. Use this place here where there's nature. It's easier to do it when there's natural things, not man-made.

Walk around in wonder. But when you perceive a tree, you don't regress to the stage of a child. There's a deep knowing.

You have gone beyond concepts. The child hasn't arrived at concepts yet. Very great difference.

You have then transcended the conditioned human mind. Alertness is vital. That's an essential part of that.

The alertness, being awake to the wonder of life, which is outside and even greater wonder inside you. Because inside you, you are consciousness itself. Temporarily as this physical form and psychological form, but underneath it, you are that which is the essence of every life form.

And then you look upon every life form in a sense of recognition. You see that essence of who you are in every form of life. That is called also compassion.

That is also called love. They're ultimately the same thing. Loving care flows then into your interactions and your actions.

You're stepping out of thousands of years of collective human conditioning, a dreadful burden. The good news is we do not need thousands of years to step out of it. Cause and Miracle says, it has taken time to misguide you so completely, but it takes no time at all to be who you are.

Thank you.

Eckhart Tolle Talk Retreat Dimension Of Stillness in Human Relationships

[Speaker 1] (1:33 - 1:29:59)

Welcome, I'm inviting you to be here fully, to inhabit this moment completely, to make yourself at home in this moment, the now, or whatever is, the now, and it's so normal not to be at home in the now, but to look for your home somewhere else. And that deeply conditioned mind pattern, collective, if it is operating in you at this moment, you will already feel restless or impatient and a little voice in the head saying, come on, get on with it. This need to get on with it is the need to move away from now to future, looking for your home, for yourself.

A little hint that may make it easier to be here fully is to feel a certain connectedness with the inner energy field of the body as you sit here. Simply to, it's not complicated, simply to sense that the body is alive, to sense an underlying, this underlying field of aliveness. So some of your attention is there.

It's subtle, but in a very subtle way, yes. Of course the body is alive, every cell is alive. Every cell is intelligent, more intelligent than the human mind.

So just to sense that, so to inhabit the now, one aspect of being fully present, a very rare state so far on this planet. One aspect of that is to also to inhabit the body, to be in it, to have some attention in it. So you're rooted, not totally in the head, not totally in your stream of thoughts, but with some attention in that aliveness that is here.

And then it's easier to sit here and listen to a speaker who is not saying very much, who is giving nothing to believe in or even arousing your emotions. Then it's easier to be here with yourself. So we are here to experience the possibility of living in a different state of consciousness from the normal state, which is not to be here.

To be identified with the stream of thought, which is always about past and future. And as you sit here, sensing, even as you listen, that yes, there is an aliveness throughout my body. And you feel that, and there's enough attention left to listen.

So you're entering a state of alert presence. And in that state you're aware of the words, and in themselves the words so far have not been very important. Because they point to something, that's all.

In themselves they are nothing. So you can be here and allow a state of alert presence to arise, in which you are able to allow this moment, the now, to be. So I'm inviting you to enter that state of consciousness together.

Which from the point of view of the thinking mind, and from the point of view of that sense of self, that is derived from continuous activity, the conceptualized me in the head, with its story, its name, its accumulation of experiences. From the point of view of that mind made self, this state of consciousness is not significant. It cannot be recognized by thought as significant.

Thought is interested in the next thing, not this. Thought is saying, okay, you've been talking about the now for ten minutes now, what's next? I want to move on to the next thing.

I've come here to be filled up, to be given something, to add something to the content of my mind, that I can take home. And it's not coming. Because nothing needs to be added to you.

And to see that, ultimately, to be yourself fully, nothing needs to be added. That's an amazing revelation. Because everybody's looking to add something to me, to improve me through adding, to make me more complete, the self.

I want to be bigger, more important, more spiritual, more wealthy, more secure, powerful. And if you can't have that, it'll be happy to say, I'm miserable and I want to be even more miserable. A mind made sense of self, a story, happy, unhappy, more unhappy than happy.

And from the point of view of that, this state of consciousness that we are allowing to arise is not significant. Presence, how does that solve my problems? How does that add more to me?

And yet it solves all your problems. So as we sit here, to continue to feel that inner connectedness with the body, and occasionally detect a little voice in the head that's complaining, not enough. I'm not being fed.

Give me something to grasp. And of course, usually this is what happens in this building, an institution of learning or education, where you're being fed information. And you're being told many things, taught many things, except what really matters.

So even if you notice restlessness arising, notice it, watch that, allow that also to be. Allow this moment to be. You might as well, because this moment is always as it is.

There is a suchness to now, the only place there ever is, or that maybe not everybody in this room may know that there's only now. You can remember the past, but only the now. And what you remember once was the now, otherwise it couldn't have happened.

There would be nothing to remember. So it's the power, the light of now that gives life to the past, and the future, a mental projection. Some project it now, one day this is going to happen, tomorrow.

When it comes, it's not the future anymore, it's the now. And you can only project a future now. You can only think of a future now.

When it comes, it comes as the now. So this is an important realization, because we are moving into the now, and it's good to see how vital that is, because it is life itself. And humans live as if the now were totally not only insignificant, they live trying to get away from it, always, except for rare moments and, ah, I have arrived.

But you never arrive for very long, and then you realize you haven't arrived. I've made it. Oh no, I haven't made it.

So, present moment awareness is why we are here. Not to acquire new ideas. To allow that state that one could call awareness, now awareness, which is a new state of consciousness for human beings, allow that to arise.

And something in you loves it and responds to it. And something else in you would rather be somewhere else, and is saying, this isn't getting me anywhere. And one or two or more of you may leave, because you're not being given content for the mind.

And so you can go from here maybe to a lecture at a higher place of learning, and you will get all that. Lecture on Buddhist philosophy. So much to learn, and yet the essence is so amazingly simple.

So as we sit here, we settle into now. And if something within doesn't feel settled in the now, you notice that. Maybe a little knot in the chest, a little heaviness here, you notice that.

Allow that. An openness, you bring an openness to now, instead of arguing with now or trying to run away from it. So present moment awareness arises, which is a state of great intelligence.

All creativity comes out of that. That state is known by anyone who has achieved mastery in any field. In that field of mastery, he or she is able to access that state of consciousness, where you are no longer dependent on the accumulated knowledge, although that may come into play, you are not dependent on the accumulated knowledge of the mind, where newness can come in.

A new creation, a new insight, realization, fresh, new, alive. That cannot be created by the human mind. The human mind can be a tool in giving that form, but it cannot be derived from the human mind, which is a kind of a computer.

It stores information, it analyzes information, it distinguishes between this and that. As that it works quite well. But creative comes from a deeper place of where the one intelligence that expresses itself in form as the universe, where that resides in each human being, that one intelligence that is far greater than the conditioned little intelligence of the mind.

It encompasses it, but it's far greater. And that is accessible to every human being as that state of consciousness, of presence. And anybody who has achieved mastery in any field is familiar with that state, even if they don't know it.

They may not be able to talk about it, but they sit and an alertness arises. They're not trying to get away from this moment, oh I need to get there. There's total attention to the field of now.

And then the creative impulse comes, or the creative insight happens. And then perhaps at that stage the mind gives it expressions, perhaps through words, or some movement happens, the artist, or even to the scientist, the problem he's been thinking about for hundreds of hours, suddenly he or she enters the state of aware presence in which thought, mind activity subsides. But you don't lose consciousness at all.

There's full awakened consciousness, unconditioned, it has nothing to do with your past. It can arise at any point in your life. Sometimes it arises accidentally, when people are faced with death, or a very dangerous situation that the mind could not cope with, and then the mind steps aside.

And that intelligence takes over while that critical situation lasts. And then people admire you and say, you did such a great thing, and you realize you didn't do anything, it happened. I didn't do anything, I just did it, I don't know.

You are a hero. Well, no, I didn't do anything. So that human beings here and there have tasted that, but it has never arisen on the planet as a new state of consciousness, not collectively, it's happened to a few individuals here and there, and in many cases only in the isolated field of their activity, those who created great things.

And then, as a way of habitual state of consciousness for a few so-called masters who dwell in that new state, but it is the destiny of all humans to become masters, to be masters, to embody that transformed consciousness. That's why we're here. So that needs to be seen, how important it is for you to allow that state to arise.

And it wants to arise. The intelligence wants to move through this form and flower through this form. Humanity on the whole has not yet flowered.

A few flowers here and there, Buddha, Jesus, many of them misunderstood, and a few that we don't know about. And a few partial flowers, great artists, for example. Partial flowers because they were not yet able to live in that state, but they had access to it in their field of endeavor.

And now, because we're arriving at a very critical stage on this planet, this state needs to arise in humans as the next evolutionary step for mankind. We can't get out of our problems on the same level of consciousness that created the problems, neither on a personal level nor on a collective level. Accumulating more information, more facts, memorize more facts, is that going to solve humanity's problems?

Analysis? It's still the same state of consciousness in which you identified with a mind-made image that is never fulfilled for long, and it needs more. It needs its enemies because it defines its sense of me through others, and it feels stronger in its illusory sense of self.

Me, my story, my name, my history. Humans don't know themselves beyond that, and that covers up that which is unconditioned in each human being, the unconditioned consciousness, because they're totally identified with the conditioned, derive their sense of self from that. And so why we are here is to allow that unconditioned to arise, and this gathering here is part of the transformation of human consciousness.

I'm not giving you some new idea that says it's all going to change at some future point. It's changing already. Otherwise you wouldn't be here if that change were not operating through you, you wouldn't be here.

Except one or two who got dragged here against their will. You must come to this and listen. I don't want to listen to this.

But sometimes even those who got dragged to a gathering suddenly listen. Oh, they recognize something as if they had known it. But this does not, let's not mislead ourselves and make this into a new interesting idea to believe in.

And that idea would be, consciousness is changing. I believe that now. It's not enough.

You've only strengthened your sense of self by identifying with a new belief, and perhaps feeling a little bit more important now, because it's changing through me. And you will know that this is the case when somebody that you meet after this gathering, maybe your partner, your parents or a friend, and you say something about it and they say, no, that's not happiness, it's just nonsense. And you get defensive.

Oh, what are you defending? Yourself. A mental position.

It's become a mental position. And mental positions need to be defended when you identify with a mental position. You derive your sense of self from that mental position.

You need to defend yourself. I'm right. No, you're wrong.

With a lot of emotional violence sometimes. So we're not making it into some new mind stuff. It's easy to happen.

This is how religions arise. At the core of it, there is a deep truth. And then the mind comes in and makes it into something to believe in, and to argue with, and make others wrong, and make yourself right.

Oh, great. Killing others to show that you are right. In that delusion, to make somebody else wrong can be a war on a collective level.

Religious war. Nationalistic war. What on a personal level is the making someone wrong, the need to be right?

Identifying with thought. Completely. That is coming to an end.

And what arises is a state of consciousness that one cannot really talk about because all the words are created by the mind. It's a miracle that one talks about it. The words, however, are not it.

They are only pointers. And if you're trying to understand what I'm pointing to, you won't. It can only be known directly.

How? Allow this moment to be as it is. Align yourself with now.

This is how we started, and this is the central core of our gathering, is to align yourself internally with now. It does not mean that you now become lethargic and no action will ever happen again. The opposite is true.

It is a state that is both deeply at rest and, if needed, dynamic. That state of alignment with now will respond immediately to whatever challenge presents itself in your life at this moment. Action will arise out of that state, out of that intelligence that is in that state.

Far more effective action than action that comes out of the state of denial of now and needs to arrive at some future point to make myself bigger, to get somewhere, to achieve anger, restlessness, not enough. I have to make it. So to become familiar with that incredible state of unconditioned presence, which is the state that...

Nothing else is the whole teaching in Zen, and some of you have read books about Zen or even practiced Zen, and it's usually regarded as very enigmatic teaching. You can't quite figure out what they're talking about. People spend years studying, trying to figure out what are they actually saying?

And there's some deep, some obscure sense that there's something important here, but I continue to miss it. And there are even monks in Zen monasteries who miss it. And it's so simple, it's all embodied, it's all expressed in the beautiful gesture of the Zen master, who would only ever give one answer to the question, what is Zen?

And his answer was wordless. It was this. And more people got it through this Zen master than other Zen masters who gave verbal explanations or would hit you with a stick, that's another method.

And if they didn't get it when he did that, and he looked very fierce, the way Zen masters look, it shocks you into awakening. But those who didn't get it, they said, did you hear my question? It didn't work.

To become familiar, and I haven't very often gone into it as I'm doing this evening, you must be ready for it, otherwise it wouldn't be happening, what arises in humans, in you, now, is something amazing. It is both simple and profound and amazing and an amazing evolutionary leap. And what is that?

It is the state of, and now not loss of consciousness, instead an enormous intensification of consciousness, compared to which the state of thought is a dreamlike state, as particularly the state of being identified with thought continuously, with that stream of mental noise, which is still the normal state, is a dreamlike state compared to the state of being free of thought. Not that thought will never again arise, but you become familiar with that state in which there is a simple, clear space of alert presence. And the mind is not labelling what is.

The allowing is so deep that it is not necessary to interpret this moment. A greater intelligence than the little conditioned intelligence that is labelling or interpreting this moment now comes into operation. But from the point of view of the mind, the labelling intelligence, the analytical information-gathering mind, from the point of view of that, the state of no thought looks as if you didn't know anything anymore, and it's frightened of that state.

And the amazing thing is, in many of you, because that state, it is an evolutionary universal impulse, that state wants to arise through humans now, and in many of you it is already arising at all kinds of moments, but it's often not recognised for what it is, because the mind cannot recognise it, it can't do anything, there's nothing there for the mind. The mind is object consciousness, it is consciousness with content. You are conscious, the mind is always identified with some content, thought forms, some form.

And when you walk through the city, you can see how the mind is either commenting on what you see, even that is rare, because most of the time the mind is totally elsewhere, and you just have just enough awareness not to bump into people, you're just peripherally aware of your surroundings, just enough, but otherwise you're thinking about something much more important than this moment. And of course it's some form of next moment, so much more important, what you need to get there as quickly as possible, that's normal. And it's so easy to overlook that this state is already arising in you, but it's immediately obscured again by mental noise.

So one thing that you can do is to watch the arising of the state that is free of thought, it is a state of simple, clear, alert presence. It is alert, but relaxed at the same time. And that is the essence of who you are, is that field of aware presence.

That can only be now, it is inseparable from now. That is actually the essence of now, of what now means. There is a now that is associated with objects that arise in the now, that's mind, thoughts, sense perceptions, people, situations, events, they arise, objects in consciousness arise.

Most humans only know themselves as an object in consciousness, they only know themselves as a story that they are telling themselves, my past. Who are you? The name, which is a sequence of sounds, not much more.

I am John Smith. Oh, okay, now I know. And then there is a role that is in consciousness that you identify with.

Society has given you maybe two or three roles. So you ask, who are you? You get the name as an answer, then you get I'm a mother of three, I'm an accountant, I'm a divorcee, I'm unemployed, I'm a professor of such and such, or whatever it may be, or I'm somebody who has been treated unfairly by life all his life, let me tell you about it.

And so, that's all people know. Mind objects, they derive their sense of identity from mind objects, thoughts, an accumulation of certain thoughts and images in the mind, and it becomes a me. Now, the reason why people cannot stop thinking, it seems that they can't, but they can as the new consciousness is arising, but it's compulsive still to a large extent.

Thought is compulsive. Everybody, almost everybody, the stream of thinking, they don't, I must think, think, think, think, think, all day long, you must think about something, even when there's nothing to think about, you must think, think. And psychologists examine that, even psychologists who are not aware of that there's a new consciousness arising, or if you told them that they would say, come to me for treatment, but even psychologists, they have examined the nature of thought and what kinds of thoughts go through people's heads, and they've come to the conclusion in several studies that ninety-eight percent of, or ninety-nine percent of thought activity is totally repetitive. The same thoughts go through your head again and again.

But the mind is telling you this is terribly important. I need to take responsibility for my life, these are big problems that I'm thinking about. And you have no time for presence, your problems are too important for that.

And you can see the absence when you look into people's eyes sometimes, you can see there's nobody there. They are not here, they are in some, it's they're not really looking, the look is inwards, all their consciousness is absorbed by thought, and that's where their attention is. It can't go out, it goes back in.

There's no emanation, there's no energy coming out of them, it's like a thick veil has descended. And when you look, you can clearly see that they are somewhere totally different, a mind projection. Future probably, unless they're so old that there's little future left, in which case they live in the past.

And the strange thing is, you're fooling yourself that your thinking serves a useful purpose, that it's actually there to figure out how to solve your problems. But it's actually creating far more problems than solving. The amazing thing is, useless thinking is the place where problems are being created.

There is no problem here, now. Now I can hear one or two minds saying, surely the world is full of problems and dreadful things are happening at this very moment, are you telling me that that's all an illusion? No.

Of course dreadful things are happening at this moment, and that's because it is an externalization of the normal human state of consciousness, which is very dysfunctional now, especially in its final stage. That's very dysfunctional. So enormous problems, yes, but are we solving them?

The peace process, another peace process, and more bombs, and more peace process, and more bombs. It's only from a different state of consciousness that these things can be solved. Now let's look at your own life, which seems that your identity is partly, consists of problems.

The sense of who you feel you are, an essential ingredient in that sense of me, my life situation, my past, my possible future, if there is one, because you can never be sure, my past, my future, that I hope there is a future because I need to complete my story and make it work. It's not really working yet. Not yet.

But any day now, this is actually going to work. That's a strange thing that it doesn't really work in anybody, not for very long, and then again it's, oh, because the story cannot give you a satisfying sense of self. It is only content in the head.

So it's never satisfying for long, you never complete yourself in it, and even if the world thinks you have, when you look into these people who seem to have made it, and even scientists, you realize that even they often think, no, I haven't really solved the ultimate problem yet. Even Einstein, who was a deeply, very much in touch with his inner being, more than most other scientists, hadn't arrived at, hadn't worked out the entire secret of the universe, whatever it was, the unified field theory, or whatever it was called, he couldn't work that out. But to the world, he was the greatest of scientists, and he was, because he had access to that.

And yet, on the level of his story, it didn't seem to have worked out either, because he couldn't figure out the ultimate secret of the universe. So the story cannot work structurally. In the very structure of that sense of self is contained the element of unsatisfactoriness, of not working, not satisfying you, not completing you.

So it's great to see that, oh, that means your life situation is no longer all-absorbing. It does not absorb your entire attention any more. It's a desperate search to make it, to arrive, to attain, and that goes.

And then you realize there's something far more vital than your life situation. Not that you don't honour it as your situation unfolds in time. You have a role in relation to society, temporary roles, you honour that, without seeking yourself in it, you play the role of mother for a while.

Without being totally identified with the role, then you become a stifling mother. But if you can play, you can honour your role beautifully, without being absorbed in it and deriving your sense of identity from it and thinking that's who I am, because the role comes to an end. The chairman of the big corporation retires, and then he sits there, and the phone doesn't ring any more, and nobody tells him who he is any more.

And he had never inquired more deeply before. It's sometimes a little late when you reach old age, and you have never inquired more deeply into who you are beyond objects in consciousness. So here arises that which in ancient traditions is sometimes called the self, not the little self, the Atman, the one universal intelligence that is the essence of your identity.

It arises as simple, thoughtless awareness. One could say stillness, that's only a small aspect of it. It is an inner field of stillness, and yet it is so alert.

And when you find for the first time there are moments when you can look upon something, perhaps some in nature, perhaps it is a tree, a flower, you perceive it, and it is not being labelled by the mind. That is the arising of thoughtless awareness. There is a knowing in that, but it is very different from what the thinking mind calls knowing.

And you haven't lost the labels. If a label should be needed, it's there. But it's no longer absorbing all your attention, the conceptualised world of labels.

So, so far humans have lived not only in a conceptualised sense of self in the head, but the moment you live in a conceptualised sense of self in the head, you inhabit a conceptualised reality. In other words, whatever you come into contact with is immediately made into mental concepts, it is immediately judged, interpreted and labelled according to the conditioning of the conceptualised mind, and the self that is in here, the me. So people go through life, every situation they immediately interpret it, judge it, classify it, comment on it internally, often complain about it, dislike it, say so.

And this is called intelligence. And at school, the children who are very quick to label things, they are called the good pupils. The best pupils are the ones who can immediately come up with an answer and can retain information and spit it out quickly.

The best student in class, the hand goes up always, immediately, I have the answer. And then you have others who are slower, and the teacher asks the question, and those are the children in whom this new consciousness often is already arising. And there is not an immediate label there, because the question is actually quite deep, and so it falls into that depth, and the pupil or the student just looks.

And then the teacher says, okay, you don't know, obviously. And it's often, even Einstein was not very good at school, there was too much depth, he couldn't immediately produce good results in exams. So that's the amazing thing, which to the mind looks not important, how is that going to solve my problems?

You look at a flower, you look at a tree, you look at the sky, or anything, and the perception arises in a field of alert stillness. It doesn't matter how long, it's a timeless moment, the now. And maybe after three seconds of clock time, the mind may come in and say, this is a beautiful flower.

But for three seconds, four seconds, five seconds, maybe much more, the sense perception happened within a field of still and alert presence. And maybe even the mind may come in after that and say, oh, I just perceived the flower in complete stillness, which is mental noise, of course. But it is after that, the mind may come in different ways and claim and say something, or it may be very uneasy, the mind may suddenly come up with a huge amount of noise because it's frightened of that state of stillness, because it thinks it's out of control now.

I am not controlling the universe anymore. If I don't interpret and judge every moment, how do I figure out what this thing is all about, this moment? And the amazing thing is, more often than not, you don't need to figure out what this is all about, you just need to look.

In the same way that the artist looks at a canvas in the state of that intense presence, you look at a situation, and not attempting to figure it out. That is habitual, of course. So the ability arises, at first you see it when you're in little perceptions, and it's not being labeled.

There's a spaciousness suddenly that is there. And what that means is, the world around you that before was a conceptualized reality, because you imposed mental labels on everything immediately, which deadened the world around you, people don't realize how dead the universe that they inhabit has become through immediate and compulsive mental labeling. All you relate to then is the labels.

You mistake the labels for what's there. On a simple level, you mistake, if that's a lily, I'm not sure, the label lily, you think you know what it is. What is this?

Oh, it's a lily. Hmm. That's the end of it.

But there is such, the mystery that is there, the incredible beauty and depth that is there, is gone completely because you've labeled it. But if you allow the perception to arise in the field of stillness, it suddenly comes to life. It has a depth to it, and a beauty, and even a sacredness, which before, you're completely unaware of.

And the entire universe you realize is an alive organism that humans have deadened. Well, to themselves, as far as they are concerned, the world is a dead place. So when you begin to allow perceptions to arise without compulsive labeling, the world comes alive again.

There's a depth to everything and a mystery. You don't fall into the delusion that when you have a little sound about something, then you know what it is. Lily.

Or even worse with human beings, when you have a little set of judgments about a human being, then you think you know who that human being is. And the depth, aliveness, and sacredness that is there in every human being is gone totally. It's not there for you.

All you know is that, oh, he is a such and such, she is a such and such, and this is what she did and said, and this is how she always is. And if you've gone, all you know is you've said a little bit about the conditioning of that person and a lot about your own conditioning. That's all.

It was partly a projection of your own conditioning and partly perhaps a seeing of the conditioning of that person, if you're lucky. And so you reduce human beings to absurd caricatures by imposing a set of labels and think that's... People even do it to their partners.

They don't see the partner anymore, just the opinion now, the labels that they have, that's how she is. And that's... Human relations are so problematic, conflict-ridden, because there are no human relations.

There are conditioned mind entities relating to each other, but the being of the human being is obscured by the labeling. The being isn't there, just minds interacting. So at first you walk...

Nature can be a great help as you enter that state of aware presence. You walk through nature or you sit somewhere and simply watch for a while. Now this is very much like a one-year-old baby would watch the world, a baby that hasn't accumulated the labels yet in the mind.

There's a small stage when the baby's aware of surroundings, but has not yet accumulated the necessary labels to interpret the surroundings. So it hasn't even started to ask, what's this, what's this, what's this yet, because that's the mind. It simply looks.

And some babies, you can see it very clearly, there's enormous consciousness light shining through their eyes. Enormous love and joy looking through their eyes at you. And you know they're not saying anything in their heads about you.

They have no opinion about you. There's true communication, true communion as they look. And some humans can sense that, so they feel drawn to that baby and they don't want to leave.

They might make funny noises or something, but the baby doesn't really need that. But they feel drawn to the baby because there's almost a self-recognition there. And that is the destiny of humans, to re-enter that state.

But when they re-enter that state, it will have an added knowing to it, because they have moved through the stage of mind and thought. Humanity as a whole has moved through that evolutionary cycle that is identification with thought. A long, long, long cycle for humanity.

And it's been tough. It's been tough on humans, particularly in the later stages. In the later stages of any evolutionary cycle, that cycle, that state that is in that cycle displays increasing dysfunction.

So it's been tough for humans and even more tough for the planet. As humans are moving into greater and greater dysfunction because the cycle of identification with thought is coming to an end and a thought-based self is coming to an end, the planet is suffering greatly from human madness, because we really need to call it now madness. Nothing wrong, it's not saying that it shouldn't be happening.

It is right for humans to be mad at this moment. But we need to see it also as madness that is also right. The caterpillar becomes a butterfly.

In the final stage of the caterpillar's life, the caterpillar becomes dysfunctional as a caterpillar. It doesn't work anymore. Humans now have become dysfunctional on the planet.

It's not working anymore. We are destroying ourselves and the planet. Yes, this is the end of the evolutionary cycle.

That's why it's mad. Not that it shouldn't be happening. This is within the totality.

It could not be otherwise. But part of this is to see that it is mad, not condemning it as bad and shouldn't be happening, but to see it. And the seeing is already the beginning of liberation.

Because that which sees the conditioned and its dysfunction is the arising of the unconditioned consciousness. And so increasingly there's the ability to witness your own mind. And then there's the ability to dwell in the gaps.

One thought comes to an end, no other thought has started. There's a gap of still presence. And in that gap there's great intelligence at work.

This could be a very passive state, you're sitting on a park bench, simply looking in amazement at the beauty of all these forms all around you. And then it exists as a dynamic state which arises whenever you are confronted with a challenge. And life tends to do that.

It doesn't leave you alone for too long. And up comes another challenge, some situation. And instead of being drawn back into the old reaction, the conditioned reaction, the old resistance pattern, instead of that you meet the challenge through alert presence, stillness, allow it to be.

And there's a flow, one could say, a current of awareness flows through this form into the situation that is the challenge. And this is an amazing thing, the arising of this ability to simply look, to simply give attention. So what then flows through you, one could say, all words are limited, so take that into consideration, they're only approximations.

One could say what flows through you is, or what arises, a field of attention. And that is the expression of unconditioned intelligence. And any situation that you face fully in that way, because the old reaction never faces a situation fully, it denies it, runs away from it, it never faces this moment fully, which is the only place where a challenge can arise.

And in that way it is faced immediately and intelligent action, if action should be needed, arises. Or no action may arise and the intelligence that you are now aligned with, the one intelligence, acts upon the situation from some external point. In other words, here's the challenge, attention flows, you allow the prerequisite for the current of awareness to flow into a situation, the prerequisite for that is that you allow this moment to be, because you have given up arguing with what is.

You have seen that is already is. Whatever is, is. Not that it cannot be changed, but at this moment it is as it is.

Not only that, it also could not be otherwise. If it is, it couldn't be otherwise. Because the tiniest we separate events and say this is a separate event, this is a separate situation, nothing is separate, every event happens within the totality of the entire cosmos, it is a web of interconnectedness with which every seemingly separate event is connected.

Whatever happens is totally connected with everything else. So how could it not, it couldn't be otherwise for that reason. So it is madness to argue internally with the suchness of now.

And that is, of course, to argue internally with the suchness of now is the normal human state of dysfunction. And they think this is how they are going to change the world. But the opposite is true.

This is how the world remains the same in its dysfunction. So the shift now is, you see the futility of arguing with the suchness of now, no matter what form it takes. And then you allow the suchness of now to be as it is, which is not a state of passivity, but dynamic.

You allow it. Now, certain situations, it is enough to allow the situation. Other situations require action, intelligent action.

And the one intelligence that is greater than the human mind, the unconditioned, operates. And it may operate as an external event that suddenly changes the situation, a coincidence, a factor that comes in that meets the needs of this moment just right. And perhaps you did nothing.

In some cases you just sit there and watch. In some cases no immediate action is possible. There are situations, the challenge is there, but there's not yet anything I can do.

So it's simply allowed and you continue the outflow of awareness that simply is there. And then when action becomes possible or necessary, it happens either through you or through an external factor or the situation changes by itself. And this is amazing realization that in this way, problems do not arise anymore in your life.

Because problems is to mentally dwell on challenges that either are not even here, that might arise, or challenges that at this time you cannot do anything about. And then you play around with thought in circles, round and round and round about these situations. And that's a problem.

Now you have a problem. And in its madness, the mind-based self likes that. It doesn't say that openly, but it can increase its sense of self, you can enhance, it can enhance its sense of self because now it has serious problems.

So I must be important. This is the underlying assumption. And I like, therefore I like to think about how important my problems are.

And so you get totally absorbed by your life situation, by the story in the head, and this is the state that I described as the state of absence. You're gone. Dream world in the head.

Thinking you're taking responsibility for your life by worrying and lying awake at night thinking about what the future holds for you, and what the future might do to you, or what the future might withhold from you. And it's a, so that's, oh my God, this is how humans live. This is the normal way to live.

And of course, by the way, normal these days means insane. And so the root of dysfunction is in oneself. Where else could you really find it?

And the transformation of the world is in yourself. Out of that transformed consciousness comes a transformed world. Because we know one good thing that has come out of physics, apart from the atom bomb and chemical warfare, or whatever they do, hydrogen bomb, a good thing that has come out of it is they have seen the interconnectedness between the observing consciousness and that which is being observed.

A change in perspective changes what you're observing. And that was an amazing realization that came out of modern physics that has enormous repercussions. And you can see how the world, what we experience as the world in reality, now I'm talking about especially the so-called man-made world, human-made world.

What we really experience, what you experience when you switch on your TV, or in your interact, the world, whatever you experience as the world is basically your state of consciousness. So, and it's collective, it's not a personal, nobody to blame for anything. It's a collective human condition.

We have created this world. It is not entirely mad. There are redeeming features to it.

If it were entirely mad, it would already have self-destructed. It got very close in the latter, in the last century, it already got very close several times to self-destruction in its madness. And it is still close.

We are not free yet from the possibility of self-destruction, although the new state is arising. The only question is, is it arising fast enough? Is it arising on a wide enough scale to compensate for the increasing madness of the old egoic consciousness and what it's doing to the planet and to human beings, to themselves, what they are doing to themselves?

The fact that we are here is a good sign. This is the arising of the new. I don't make any predictions, because I don't know whether humanity is going to make it.

Ultimately, of course, it doesn't matter. The universe is infinitely abundant in the life forms that it manifests. The one intelligence manifesting as so many life forms.

And many life forms, after a while, the one consciousness says, okay, that's enough. I'm withdrawing from there. And it's gone.

And then it flows into something else, and maybe it flowers through this form. I know that it wants to flower through the human form. And there's no predicting what the world will look like once human consciousness has flowered collectively.

There's no point in even speculating, be it enough to say that you wouldn't even recognize the planet. It would look like some strange, perhaps heavenly realm. And if you went there with an ego, you would feel very uncomfortable.

Oh, I need to get back to the old earth. So that, it is a great challenge and a great adventure and a great opportunity in life at this time. Not that you are separate from the consciousness, you are an expression of the one consciousness.

The question is, is that one consciousness now going to move through you? Is the cosmic evolutionary impulse finding a sufficiently clear space here, so that it can move in and move through, and then emanate through this form. Some people will create wonderful things.

Others will simply emanate the state of joy, peace, aliveness, and love, and walk through the world, emanating that state, and be a blessing to whoever they meet. That's quite enough, isn't it? And others may create great things.

Others will say, I don't need to create anything. It's simply to embody that state. That's the flowering, as I mentioned before somewhere, maybe in the book, I can't remember.

The planet, there was plant life on the planet for millions of years, they say, before there ever was a flower. After millions of years of plant life, I'm told, one day the first flower must have opened. And when a plant becomes a flower, it's an analogy, as I'm using it here, for a new level of, a new dimension of being, of consciousness.

But what is happening to humans is much vaster than even that. But it's a beautiful analogy. And then it took thousands of years before another flower came, probably, and then two or three.

And then suddenly a profusion of flowers all over the planet, and this is very similar. We've had early flowers in humanity. The great teachers of humanity, one can look upon them as early flowerings of human consciousness.

The possibilities that are inherent in the human form for the first time express themselves fully through those great teachers, sages, only some of whom we know about. Some were relatively unknown. So there were rare flowers here and there.

And then a time comes when we are ready for the flowering on a much larger scale. And it cannot not be now, otherwise it's the end. So it must be now.

This is the time. It goes far beyond anything personal in your life. On a personal level, it's very pleasant because it frees you from inhabiting an absurdly complex world of problem-making.

That's great. So on a personal level, it takes the weight of you, the weight of the self, the mind-made self, that already the Buddha, the early flower that he was, recognized a profound insight too early, probably for much too early for his time, to see the illusion of self that was the primordial insight of the Buddha. My God, he saw that.

And so that's where it flowered. As one Buddhist monk who was asked to explain the meaning of Buddhism simply said, the meaning of Buddhism is this, no self, no problem. Finished.

Oh, yes, but I'd like to learn some philosophy. Can you teach me? I have plenty of time.

Please give me time, says the self. I want to complete myself in time. So the burden of self, of that delusion, you don't walk around with that heaviness anymore, because you become a heaviness on the planet, and whatever you walk on you crush.

A heavy self walking, millions of heavy selves walking on the planet, crushing life. And they don't even know it. Life?

What's life? It's just a little something, says the mind. This is timber.

It's worth six million dollars, I would say, so okay, we can cut that in no time. And it's gone. The forest that was there for a hundred thousand years, a field of sacredness, but the mind can't see it because the mind labelled it.

And that's nobody's fault. It's the human dysfunction. So the heaviness of self, the heaviness of self leaves you.

Free of that delusion, that entity that was so hard to live with, the me, that I had such a problematic relationship with. And now, there's simply, where there was a heavy me, there's a field of aware presence. Walking, sitting, moving, being.

It doesn't make problems anymore for itself, for other humans, for the planet. It doesn't create suffering anymore for itself, for other humans, for the planet. So this is why, since ancient times, they've used the word liberation to talk about this shift in consciousness, because all the ancient teachings, they point to it, and they sometimes call it liberation.

From what? Even in the New Testament, they use that expression. Free.

Jesus talks about, you will be free. You will know the truth. The truth will make you free.

Free, they said, we're already free. We are nobody's slaves. And Jesus said, no, you're not.

And he used the language that he used at the time. He said, you are the slaves of sin. Now, what's sin?

If he were talking nowadays, he would have said, you're totally conditioned entities and you're completely unconscious. You're the slaves of your conditioning. That's all.

It's the dysfunction that is sin. No more. It's nobody's fault.

It's collective dysfunction, that's all. It's not the way in which it's usually interpreted, but there's a truth in it, a deep truth. And just as there's original sin, there's original innocence, which is the sanity in you, which is the unconditioned consciousness in you, that's far vaster than the little original sin.

Far vaster. The little original sin is a little illusion. It only appears big when you're totally trapped in it.

So this is the liberation already happening. And as you walk away from here, you will have lost some weight. Not physical weight, that doesn't matter, but the weight of me, self, the problem making me.

If this were not already happening here, you would not have been able to sit here for an hour and a half, according to clock time. It would have become unbearable. Or you had to exert such willpower that you made yourself sit here.

But that's unlikely. So the greatest adventure that any human being can be involved in, you are involved. And some people are still asking about their life purpose.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:32 - 1:31:33)

Welcome.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:46 - 4:40:35)

I'm inviting you to be here fully, to inhabit this moment completely, to make yourself at home in this moment. The now, or whatever is. The now.

And it's so normal not to be at home in the now, but to look for your home somewhere else. And that deeply conditioned mind pattern, collective, if it is operating in you at this moment, you will already feel restless or impatient. And a little voice in the head saying, come on, get on with it.

This need to get on with it is the need to move away from now into the future. Looking for your home, for yourself. A little hint that may make it easier to be here fully is to feel a certain connectedness with the inner energy field of the body as you sit here.

Simply to, it's not complicated, simply to sense that the body is alive. To sense an underlying, this underlying field of aliveness. So some of your attention is there.

It's subtle, just, but in a very subtle way. Yes. Of course the body is alive.

Every cell is alive. Every cell is intelligent. More intelligent than the human mind.

So just to sense that, so to inhabit the now, one aspect of being fully present, a very rare state so far on this planet. One aspect of that is to also to inhabit the body, to be in it, to have some attention in it. So you're rooted, not totally in the head, not totally in your stream of thoughts, but with some attention in that aliveness that is here.

And then it's easier to sit here and listen to a speaker who is not saying very much, who is giving nothing to believe in, or even arousing your emotions. Then it's easier to be here with yourself. So we are here to experience the possibility of living in a different state of consciousness from the normal state, which is not to be here.

To be identified with a stream of thought, which is always about past and future. And as you sit here, sensing, even as you listen, that yes, there is an aliveness throughout my body. And you feel that, and there's enough attention left to listen.

So you're entering a state of alert presence. And in that state, you're aware of the words. And in themselves, the words so far have not been very important.

Because they point to something, that's all. In themselves, they are nothing. So you can be here and allow a state of alert presence to arise, in which you are able to allow this moment, the now, to be.

So I'm inviting you to enter that state of consciousness together. Which, from the point of view of the thinking mind, and from the point of view of that sense of self that is derived from continuous thought activity, the conceptualized me in the head, with its story, its name, its accumulation of experiences. From the point of view of that mind-made self, this state of consciousness is not significant.

It cannot be recognized by thought as significant. Thought is interested in the next thing, not this. Thought is saying, okay, you've been talking about the now for 10 minutes now.

What's next? I want to move on to the next thing. I've come here to be filled up, to be given something, to add something to the content of my mind.

That I can take home, and it's not coming. Because nothing needs to be added to you. And to see that, ultimately, to be yourself fully, nothing needs to be added.

That's an amazing revelation. Because everybody's looking to add something to me, to improve me through adding, to make me more complete, the self. I want to be bigger, more important, more spiritual, more wealthy, more secure, powerful.

And if you can't have that, it'll be happy to say, I'm miserable, and I want to be even more miserable. A mind made sense of self, a story, happy, unhappy, more unhappy than happy. And from the point of view of that, this state of consciousness that we are allowing to arise is not significant.

Presence, how does that solve my problems? How does that add more to me? And yet, it solves all your problems.

So as we sit here, to continue to feel that inner connectedness with the body, and occasionally detect a little voice in the head that's complaining, uh, uh, uh, not enough. I'm not being fed. Give me something to grasp.

And of course, usually this is what happens in this building, an institution of learning or education, where you're being fed information. And you're being told many things, taught many things except what really matters. So even if you notice restlessness arising, notice it, watch that, allow that also to be, allow this moment to be.

You might as well because this moment is always as it is. There is a suchness to now, the only place there ever is. Or if that may be, not everybody in this room may know that there's only now.

You can remember the past, but only in the now. And what you remember once was the now, otherwise it couldn't have happened. There would be nothing to remember.

So it's the power, the light of now that gives life to the past and the future, a mental projection. Some project it now. One day this is going to happen tomorrow.

When it comes, it's not the future anymore. It's the now. And you can only project a future now.

You can only think of a future now. When it comes, it comes as the now. So this is an important realization because we are moving into the now, and it's good to see how vital that is because it is life itself.

And humans live as if the now were totally, not only insignificant, they live trying to get away from it. Always, except for rare moments. Ah, I have arrived.

But you never arrive for very long. And then you realize you haven't arrived. I've made it.

Oh no, I haven't made it. So present moment awareness is why we are here. Not to acquire new ideas.

To allow that state that one could call awareness, now awareness, which is a new state of consciousness for human beings. Allow that to arise. And something in you loves it and responds to it.

And something else in you would rather be somewhere else and is saying, this isn't getting me anywhere. And one or two or more of you may leave. Because you're not being given content for the mind.

And so you can go from here maybe to a lecture at a higher place of learning, and you will get all that. Lecture on Buddhist philosophy. So much to learn.

And yet the essence is so amazingly simple. So as we sit here, we settle into now. And if something within doesn't feel settled in the now, you notice that.

Maybe a little knot in the chest, a little heaviness here, you notice that. Allow that. An openness, you bring an openness to now.

Instead of arguing with now or trying to run away from it. So present moment awareness arises, which is a state of great intelligence. All creativity comes out of that.

That state is known by anyone who has achieved mastery in any field. In that field of mastery, he or she is able to access that state of consciousness. Where you are no longer dependent on the accumulated knowledge, although that may come into play, you're not dependent on the accumulated knowledge of the mind where newness can come in.

A new creation, a new insight, realization, fresh, new, alive. That cannot be created by the human mind. The human mind can be a tool in giving that form, but it cannot be derived from the human mind, which is a kind of a computer.

It stores information, it analyzes information, it distinguishes between this and this and that. As that, it works quite well. But creative comes from a deeper place of where the one intelligence that expresses itself in form as the universe, where that resides in each human being, that one intelligence that is far greater than the conditioned little intelligence of the mind.

It encompasses it, but it's far greater. And that is accessible to every human being as that state of consciousness, of presence. And anybody who has achieved mastery in any field is familiar with that state, even if they don't know it.

They may not be able to talk about it, but they sit, and an alertness arises. They're not trying to get away from this moment, oh, I need to get there. No, there's total attention to the field of now.

And then the creative impulse comes, or the creative insight happens. And then perhaps at that stage, the mind gives it expressions, perhaps through words, or some movement happens for the artist, or even to the scientist. The problem he's been thinking about for hundreds of hours, suddenly he or she enters the state of aware presence in which thought, mind activity subsides.

But you don't lose consciousness at all. There's full awakened consciousness. Unconditioned, it has nothing to do with your past.

It can arise at any point in your life. Sometimes it arises accidentally, when people are faced with death, or a very dangerous situation that the mind could not cope with. And then the mind steps aside.

And that intelligence takes over while that critical situation lasts. And then people admire you and say, you did such a great thing. And you realize you didn't do anything.

It happened. I didn't do anything. I just did it.

I don't know. You are a hero. Well, no, I didn't do anything.

So that human beings here and there have tasted that. But it has never arisen on the planet as a new state of consciousness, not collectively. It's happened to a few individuals here and there.

And in many cases, only in the isolated field of their activity, those who created great things. And then as a way of habitual state of consciousness for a few so-called masters who dwell in that new state. But it is the destiny of all humans to become masters, to be masters, to embody that transformed consciousness.

That's why we're here. So that needs to be seen, how important it is for you to allow that state to arise. And it wants to arise.

The intelligence wants to move through this form and flower through this form. Humanity on the whole has not yet flowered. A few flowers here and there, Buddha, Jesus, many of them misunderstood, and a few that we don't know about.

And a few partial flowers, great artists, for example. Partial flowers because they were not yet able to live in that state, but they had access to it in their field of endeavor. And now because we're arriving at a very critical stage on this planet, this state needs to arise in humans as the next evolutionary step for mankind.

We can't get out of our problems on the same level of consciousness that created the problems, neither on a personal level nor on a collective level. Accumulating more information, more facts, memorize more facts, is that going to solve humanity's problems? Analysis.

It's still the same state of consciousness in which you're identified with a mind-made image that is never fulfilled for long, and it needs more. It needs its enemies because it defines its sense of me through others. And it feels stronger in its illusory sense of self.

Me, my story, my name, my history. Humans don't know themselves beyond that. And that covers up that which is unconditioned in each human being, the unconditioned consciousness, because they're totally identified with the unconditioned, derive their sense of self from that.

And so why we are here is to allow that unconditioned to arise, and this gathering here is part of the transformation of human consciousness. I'm not giving you some new idea that says it's all going to change at some future point. It's changing already.

Otherwise you wouldn't be here if you were not, if that change were not operating through you, you wouldn't be here. Except one or two who got dragged here against their will. You must come to this and listen.

I don't want to listen to this. But sometimes even those who got dragged to a gathering suddenly listen. Oh, they recognize something as if they had known it.

But this does not, let's not mislead ourselves and make this into a new interesting idea to believe in. And that idea would be consciousness is changing. I believe that now.

It's not enough. You've only strengthened your sense of self by identifying with a new belief and perhaps feeling a little bit more important now, because it's changing through me. And you will know that this is the case when somebody that you meet after this gathering, maybe your partner, your parents or a friend, and you'd say something about it and they say, no, that's not happiness, it's just nonsense.

And you get defensive. Oh, what are you defending? Yourself.

A mental position. It's become a mental position. And mental positions need to be defended.

When you identify with a mental position, you derive your sense of self from that mental position. You need to defend yourself. I'm right.

No, you're wrong. With a lot of emotional violence sometimes. So we're not making it into some new mind stuff.

It's easy to happen. This is how religions arise. At the core of it, there is a deep truth.

And then the mind comes in and makes it into something to believe in and to argue with and make others wrong and make yourself right. Oh, great. Killing others to show that you are right.

In that delusion, to make somebody else wrong can be a war on a collective level, religious war, nationalistic war. What on a personal level is the need to be right? Identifying with thought.

Completely. That is coming to an end. And what arises is a state of consciousness that one cannot really talk about because all the words are created by the mind.

It's a miracle that one talks about it. The words, however, are not it. They are only pointers.

And if you're trying to understand what I'm pointing to, you won't. And it can only be known directly. How?

Allow this moment to be as it is. Align yourself with now. This is how we started.

And this is the central core of our gathering, is to align yourself internally with now. It does not mean that you now become lethargic and no action will ever happen again. The opposite is true.

It is a state that is both deeply at rest and, if needed, dynamic. That state of alignment with now will respond immediately to whatever challenge presents itself in your life at this moment. Action will arise out of that state, out of that intelligence that is in that state.

Far more effective action than action that comes out of the state of denial of now and needs to arrive at some future point to make myself bigger, to get somewhere, to achieve anger, restlessness, not enough. I have to make it. So to become familiar with that incredible state of unconditioned presence, which is the state that nothing else is, the whole teachings in Zen, and some of you have read books about Zen or even practiced Zen, and it's usually regarded as very enigmatic teaching.

You can't quite figure out what they're talking about. People spend years studying, trying to figure out what are they actually saying? And there's some deep, some obscure sense that there's something important here, but I continue to miss it.

And there are even monks in Zen monasteries who miss it. And it's so simple, it's all embodied, it's all expressed in the beautiful gesture of the Zen master who would only ever give one answer to the question, what is Zen? And that answer was wordless, it was this.

And more people got it through this Zen master than other Zen masters who gave verbal explanations or would hit you with a stick, that's another method. And if they didn't get it when he did that, and he looked very fierce, the way Zen masters look, it shocks you into awakening. But those who didn't get it, they said, did you hear my question?

It didn't work. And to become familiar, and I haven't very often gone into it as I'm doing this evening, you must be ready for it, otherwise it wouldn't be happening, what arises in humans, in you, now, is something amazing. It is both simple and profound and amazing and an amazing evolutionary leap.

And what is that? It is the state of, and now please don't be frightened, it is the state of no thought. Without loss of consciousness, instead, an enormous intensification of consciousness compared to which the state of thought is a dreamlike state, as particularly the state of being identified with thought continuously, with that stream of mental noise, which is still the normal state, is a dreamlike state compared to the state of being free of thought.

Not that thought will never again arise, but you become familiar with that state in which there is a simple, clear space of alert presence. And the mind is not labeling what is. The allowing is so deep that it is not necessary to interpret this moment.

A greater intelligence than the little conditioned intelligence that is labeling or interpreting this moment now comes into operation. But from the point of view of the mind, the labeling intelligence, the analytical information-gathering mind, from the point of view of that, the state of no thought looks as if you didn't know anything anymore, and it's frightened of that state. And the amazing thing is, in many of you, because that state, it is an evolutionary, universal impulse, that state wants to arise through humans now, and in many of you it is already arising at all kinds of moments, but it's often not recognized for what it is, because the mind cannot recognize it, it can't do anything, there's nothing there for the mind.

The mind is object consciousness, it is consciousness with content, you're conscious, the mind is always identified with some content, thought forms, some form. And when you walk through the city, you can see how the mind is either commenting on what you see, even that is rare, because most of the time the mind is totally elsewhere, and you just have just enough awareness not to bump into people, you're just peripherally aware of your surroundings, just enough, but otherwise you're thinking about something much more important than this moment. And of course it's some form of next moment, so much more important, but you need to get there as quickly as possible.

That's normal. And it's so easy to overlook that this state is already arising in you, but it's immediately obscured again by mental noise. So one thing that you can do is to watch the arising of the state that is free of thought, it is a state of simple, clear, alert presence.

It is alert but relaxed at the same time. And that is the essence of who you are, is that field of aware presence. That can only be now, that is inseparable from now, that is actually the essence of now, of what now means.

There is a now that is associated with objects that arise in the now, that's mind, thoughts, sense perceptions, people, situations, events, they arise, objects in consciousness arise. Most humans only know themselves as an object in consciousness, they only know themselves as a story that they are telling themselves. My past, who are you?

The name, which is a sequence of sounds, not much more. I am John Smith. Oh, okay, now I know.

And then there is a role that is in consciousness that you identify with, society has given you maybe two or three roles. So you ask, who are you? You get the name as an answer, then you get, I'm a mother of three, I'm an accountant, I'm a divorcee, I'm unemployed, I'm a professor of such and such, or whatever it may be, or I'm somebody who's been treated unfairly by life, all is life, let me tell you about it.

And so that's all people know. Mind objects, they derive their sense of identity from mind objects, thoughts, an accumulation of certain thoughts and images in the mind, and it becomes a me. Now, the reason why people cannot stop thinking, it seems that they can't, but they can as the new consciousness is arising, but it's compulsive still to a large extent.

Thought is compulsive. Everybody, almost everybody, the stream of thinking, they don't, I must think, think, think, think, think all day long, you must think about something, even when there's nothing to think about, you must think, think. And psychologists examine that, even psychologists who are not aware of that there's a new consciousness arising, or if you told them that, they would say, come to me for treatment.

But even psychologists, they have examined the nature of thought and what kinds of thoughts go through people's heads, and they've come to the conclusion in several studies that 98% of, or 99% of thought activity is totally repetitive. The same thoughts go through your head again and again. But the mind is telling you this is terribly important.

I need to take responsibility for my life, these are big problems that I'm thinking about. And you have no time for presence, the problems are too important for that. And you can see the absence when you look into people's eyes sometimes, you can see there's nobody there.

They are not here, they are in some, it's the, they're not really looking, the look is inwards, it's all their consciousness is absorbed by thought, and that's where their attention is. It can't go out, it goes back in. And there's no emanation, there's no energy coming out of them, it's like a thick veil has descended.

And when you look, you can clearly see that they are somewhere totally different, a mind projection, future probably, unless they're so old there's little future left, in which case they'll live in the past. And the strange thing is, you're fooling yourself that your thinking serves a useful purpose, that it's actually there to figure out how to solve your problems. But it's actually creating far more problems than solving.

The amazing thing is, useless thinking is the place where problems are being created. There is no problem here, now. Now I can hear one or two minds saying, surely the world is full of problems and dreadful things are happening at this very moment, are you telling me that that's all an illusion?

No, of course dreadful things are happening at this moment. And that's because it is an externalization of the normal human state of consciousness, which is very dysfunctional now, especially in its final stage. That is very dysfunctional.

So enormous problems, yes, but are we solving them? The peace process, another peace process, and more bombs, and more peace process, and more bombs. It's only from a different state of consciousness that these things can be solved.

Now let's look at your own life, which seems that your identity is partly consists of problems, the sense of who you feel you are, an essential ingredient in that sense of me, my life situation, my past, my possible future, if there is one, because you can never be sure, my past, my future, that I hope there is a future because I need to complete my story and make it work. It's not really working yet, not yet, but any day now this is actually going to work. That's a strange thing that it doesn't really work in anybody, not for very long, and then again it's, oh, because the story cannot give you a satisfying sense of self.

It is only content in the head, so it's never satisfying for long, you never complete yourself in it, and even if the world thinks you have, when you look into these people who seem to have made it, and even scientists, you realize that even they often think, no, I haven't really solved the ultimate problem yet. Even Einstein, who was a deeply, very much in touch with his inner being, more than most other scientists, it hadn't arrived at the, hadn't worked out the entire secret of the universe, whatever it was, the unified field theory, or whatever it was called, he couldn't work that out, but the world, to the world he was the greatest of scientists, and he was, because he had access to that, and yet, on the level of his story, it didn't have seemed to work out either, because he couldn't figure out the ultimate secret of the universe. So the story, in its, cannot work structurally. In the very structure of that sense of self is contained the element of unsatisfactoriness, of not working, not satisfying you, not completing you.

So it's great to see that, oh, that means your life situation is no longer all absorbing, it does not absorb your entire attention anymore, it's a desperate search to make it, to arrive, to attain, and that goes, and then you realize there's something far more vital than your life situation, not that you don't honor it, as your situation unfolds in time, you have a role in relation to society, temporary roles, you honor that without seeking yourself in it, you play the role of mother for a while, without being totally identified with the role, then you become a stifling mother. But if you can play, you can honor your role beautifully without being absorbed in it, and deriving your sense of identity from it, and thinking that's who I am, because the role comes to an end. The chairman of the big corporation retires, and then he sits there, and the phone doesn't ring anymore, and nobody tells him who he is anymore, and he had never inquired more deeply before, it's sometimes a little late when you reach old age, and you have never inquired more deeply into who you are beyond objects in consciousness.

So here arises that which in ancient traditions is sometimes called the self, not the little self, the Atman, the one universal intelligence that is the essence of your identity. It arises as simple, thoughtless awareness. One could say stillness, that's only a small aspect of it.

It is an inner field of stillness, and yet it is so alert. And when you find for the first time, there are moments when you can look upon something, perhaps some in nature, perhaps it is a tree, a flower, you perceive it, and it is not being labeled by the mind. That is the arising of thoughtless awareness.

There is a knowing in that, but it is very different from what the thinking mind calls knowing, and you haven't lost the labels. If a label should be needed, it's there, but it's no longer absorbing all your attention, the conceptualized world of labels. So, so far humans have lived not only in a conceptualized sense of self in the head, but the moment you live in a conceptualized sense of self in the head, you inhabit a conceptualized reality.

In other words, whatever you come into contact with is immediately made into mental concepts, it is immediately judged, interpreted, and labeled according to the conditioning of the conceptualized mind, and the self that is in here, the me. So people go through life, every situation, they immediately interpret it, judge it, classify it, comment on it internally, often complain about it, dislike it. And this is called intelligence.

And at school, the children who are very quick to label things, they are called the good pupils. The best pupils are the ones who can immediately come up with an answer and can retain information and spit it out quickly. Best student in class, the hand goes up always immediately.

I have the answer. And then you have others who are slower, and the teacher asks the question, and those are the children in whom this new consciousness often is already arising. And there is not an immediate label there, because the question is actually quite deep, and so it falls into the depths.

And the pupil or the student just looks. And then the teacher says, okay, you don't know, obviously. And it's often, even Einstein was not very good at school.

There was too much depth. He couldn't immediately produce good results in exams. So that's the amazing thing, which to the mind looks not important.

How is that going to solve my problems? You look at a flower, you look at a tree, you look at the sky or anything, and the perception arises in a field of alert stillness. It doesn't matter how long, it's a timeless moment now.

And maybe after three seconds of clock time, the mind may come in and say, this is a beautiful flower. But for three seconds, four seconds, five seconds, maybe much more. So, the sense perception happened within a field of still and alert presence.

And maybe even the mind may come in after that and say, oh, I just perceived the flower in complete stillness. Which is mental noise, of course. But it is after that, the mind may come in different ways and claim and say something, or it may be very uneasy.

The mind may suddenly come up with a huge amount of noise because it's frightened of that state of stillness, because it thinks it's out of control now. I am not controlling the universe anymore. If I don't interpret and judge every moment, how do I figure out what this thing is all about, this moment?

And the amazing thing is, more often than not, you don't need to figure out what this is all about. You just need to look in the same way that the artist looks at a canvas in the state of that intense presence. You look at a situation and not attempting to figure it out.

That is habitual, of course. So the ability arises, at first you see it when you're in little perceptions and it's not being labeled. There's a spaciousness suddenly that is there.

And what that means is the world around you that before was a conceptualized reality, because you imposed mental labels on everything immediately, which deadened the world around you. People don't realize how dead the universe that they inhabit has become through immediate and compulsive mental labeling. All you relate to then is the labels.

You mistake the labels for what's there. On a simple level, you mistake, if that's a lily, I'm not sure, the label lily, you think you know what it is. What is this?

Oh, it's a lily. That's the end of it. But there is such, the mystery that is there, the incredible beauty and depth that is there, is gone completely because you've labeled it.

But if you allow the perception to arise in the field of stillness, it suddenly comes to life. It has a depth to it and a beauty and even a sacredness, which before, completely unaware of. And the entire universe, you realize, is an alive organism that humans have deadened, well, to themselves.

As far as they are concerned, the world is a dead place. So when you begin to allow perceptions to arise without compulsive labeling, the world comes alive again. There's a depth to everything and a mystery.

You don't fall into the delusion that when you have a little sound about something, then you know what it is. Lily. Or even worse with human beings.

When you have a little set of judgments about a human being, then you think you know who that human being is. And the depth, aliveness, and sacredness that is there in every human being, it's gone totally. It's not there for you.

All you know is that, oh, he is a such and such, she is a such and such, and this is what she did and said, and this is how she always is, and a few gone. All you know is you've said a little bit about the conditioning of that person and a lot about your own conditioning. That's all.

It was partly a projection of your own conditioning and partly, perhaps, a seeing of the conditioning of that person, if you're lucky. And so you reduce human beings to absurd caricatures by imposing a set of labels and think that people even do it to their partners. They don't see the partner anymore, just the opinion, now the labels that they have, that's how she is.

And that's human relations are so problematic, conflict-ridden, because there are no human relations. There are conditioned mind entities relating to each other, but the being of the human being is obscured by the labeling. The being isn't there, just minds interacting.

So at first you walk, nature can be a great help as you enter that state of aware presence. You walk through nature or you sit somewhere and simply watch for a while. Now this is very much like a one-year-old baby would watch the world, the baby that hasn't accumulated the labels yet in the mind.

There's a small stage when the baby is aware of surroundings, but has not yet accumulated the necessary labels to interpret the surroundings. So it hasn't even started to ask, what's this, what's this, what's this yet? Because that's the mind.

It simply looks. And some babies, you can see it very clearly, there's enormous consciousness light shining through their eyes, enormous love and joy looking through their eyes at you. And you know they're not saying anything in their heads about you.

They have no opinion about you. There's true communication, true communion as they look. And some humans can sense that, so they feel drawn to that baby and they don't want to leave.

They might make funny noises or something, but the baby doesn't really need that. But they feel drawn to the baby because there's almost a self-recognition there. And that is the destiny of humans, to re-enter that state.

But when they re-enter that state, it will have an added knowing to it because they have moved through the stage of mind and thought. Humanity as a whole has moved through that evolutionary cycle that is identification with thought. A long, long, long cycle for humanity.

And it's been tough. It's been tough on humans, as particularly in the later stages when, in the later stages of any evolutionary cycle, it is that cycle, that state that is in that cycle displays increasing dysfunction. So it's been tough for humans and even more tough for the planet as humans are moving into greater and greater dysfunction because the cycle of identification with thought is coming to an end and a thought-based self is coming to an end.

The planet is suffering greatly from human madness because we really need to call it now madness. Nothing wrong, it's not saying that shouldn't be happening. It is right for humans to be mad at this moment.

But we need to see it also as madness that is also right. The caterpillar becomes a butterfly. In the final stage of the caterpillar's life, the caterpillar becomes dysfunctional as a caterpillar.

It doesn't work anymore. Humans now have become dysfunctional on the planet. It's not working anymore.

We are destroying ourselves and the planet. Yes, this is the end of the evolutionary cycle. That's why it's mad.

Not that it shouldn't be happening. This is within the totality. It could not be otherwise.

But part of this is to see that it is mad, not condemning it as bad and shouldn't be happening, but to see it. And the seeing is already the beginning of liberation. Because that which sees the conditioned and its dysfunction is the arising of the unconditioned consciousness.

And so increasingly there's the ability to witness your own mind. And then there's the ability to dwell in the gaps. One thought comes to an end, no other thought has started.

There's a gap of still presence. And in that gap, there's great intelligence at work. This could be a very passive state, you're sitting on a park bench, simply looking in amazement at the beauty of all these forms all around you.

And then it exists as a dynamic state, which arises whenever you are confronted with a challenge. And life tends to do that. It doesn't leave you alone for too long.

And up comes another challenge, some situation. And instead of being drawn back into the old reaction, the conditioned reaction, the old resistance pattern, instead of that, you meet the challenge through alert presence, stillness, allow it to be. And there is a flow, one could say, a current of awareness flows through this form into the situation that is the challenge.

And this is an amazing thing, the arising of this ability to simply look, to simply give attention. So what then flows through you, one could say, all words are limited, so take that into consideration. They're all approximations.

One could say, what flows through you is, or what arises, a field of attention. And that is the expression of unconditioned intelligence. And any situation that you face fully in that way, because the old reaction never faces the situation fully.

It denies it, runs away from it. It never faces this moment fully, which is the only place where a challenge can arise. And in that way, it is faced immediately, and intelligent action, if action should be needed, arises.

Or no action may arise, and the intelligence that you are now aligned with, the one intelligence, acts upon the situation from some external point. In other words, here's the challenge, attention flows, you allow the prerequisite for the current of awareness to flow into a situation. The prerequisite for that is that you allow this moment to be, because you have given up arguing with what is.

You have seen that is already is. Whatever is, is. Not that it cannot be changed, but at this moment, it is as it is.

Not only that, it also could not be otherwise. If it is, it couldn't be otherwise. Because the tiniest we separate events and say this is a separate event, this is a separate situation, nothing is separate.

Every event happens within the totality of the entire cosmos. It is a web of interconnectedness with which every seemingly separate event is connected. Whatever happens is totally connected with everything else.

So how could it not, it couldn't be otherwise for that reason. So it is madness to argue internally with the suchness of now. And that is, of course, to argue internally with the suchness of now is the normal human state of dysfunction.

And they think this is how they are going to change the world. The opposite is true. This is how the world remains the same in its dysfunction.

So the shift now is you see the futility of arguing with the suchness of now, no matter what form it takes. And then you allow the suchness of now to be as it is, which is not a state of passivity, but dynamic. You allow it.

Now, certain situations, it is enough to allow the situation. Other situations require action, intelligent action. And the one intelligence that is greater than the human mind, the unconditioned, operates.

And it may operate as an external event that suddenly changes the situation, a coincidence, a factor that comes in that meets the needs of this moment just right. And perhaps you did nothing. In some cases, you just sit there and watch.

In some cases, no immediate action is possible. There are situations, the challenge is there, but there's not yet anything I can do. So it's simply allowed and you continue.

The outflow of awareness simply is there. And then when action becomes possible or necessary, it happens either through you or through an external factor, or the situation changes by itself. And this is amazing realization that in this way, problems do not arise anymore in your life.

Because problems is to mentally dwell on challenges that either are not even here, that might arise, or challenges that at this time you cannot do anything about. And then you play around with thought in circles, round and round and round about these situations. And that's a problem.

Now you have a problem. And now, in its madness, the mind-based self likes that. It doesn't say that openly, but it can increase its sense of self, you can enhance, it can enhance its sense of self, because now it has serious problems.

So I must be important. This is the underlying assumption. And I like, therefore, I like to think about how important my problems are.

And so you get totally absorbed by your life situation, by the story in the head. And this is the state that I described as the state of absence. You're gone.

Dream world in the head. Thinking you're taking responsibility for your life by worrying and lying awake at night, thinking about what the future holds for you, and what the future might do to you, or what the future might withhold from you. And it's, so that's, oh my God, this is how humans live.

This is the normal, the normal way to live. And of course, by the way, normal these days means insane. And so the root of dysfunction is in oneself.

Where else could you really find it? And the transformation of the world is in yourself. Out of that transformed consciousness comes a transformed world.

Because we know one good thing that has come out of physics, apart from the atom bomb and the chemical warfare, or whatever they do, hydrogen bomb, and a good thing that has come out of it is they have seen the interconnectedness between the observing consciousness and that which is being observed. A change in perspective changes what you're observing. And that was an amazing realization that came out of modern physics that has enormous repercussions.

And you can see how the world, what we experience as the world, in reality, now I'm talking about especially the so-called man-made world, human-made world. And what we really experience, what you experience when you switch on your TV or in your interact, the world, whatever you experience as the world, is basically your state of consciousness. So, and it's collective, it's not a personal, nobody to blame for anything.

It's a collective human condition. We have created this world. It is not entirely mad.

There are redeeming features to it. If it were entirely mad, it would already have self-destructed. It got very close in the latter, in the last century, it already got very close several times to self-destruction in its madness.

And it is still close. We are not free yet from the possibility of self-destruction, although the new state is arising. The only question is, is it arising fast enough?

Is it arising on a wide enough scale to compensate for the increasing madness of the old egoic consciousness and what it's doing to the planet and to human beings, to themselves, what they are doing to themselves? The fact that we are here is a good sign. This is the arising of the new.

So, I don't make any predictions because I don't know whether humanity is going to make it. Ultimately, of course, it doesn't matter. The universe is infinitely abundant in the life forms that it manifests.

The one intelligence manifesting has so many life forms. And many life forms, after a while, the one consciousness says, okay, that's enough. I'm withdrawing from there.

And it's gone. And then it flows into something else. And maybe it flowers through this form.

I know that it wants to flower through the human form. And there's no predicting what the world will look like once human consciousness has flowered collectively. There's no point in even speculating, be it enough to say that you wouldn't even recognize the planet.

It would look like some strange, perhaps heavenly realm. And if you went there with an ego, you would feel very uncomfortable. Oh, I need to get back to the old earth.

So that it is a great challenge and a great adventure and a great opportunity life at this time. Not that you are separate from the consciousness. You are an expression of the one consciousness.

The question is, is that one consciousness now going to move through you? Is the cosmic evolutionary impulse finding a sufficiently clear space here so that it can move in and move through and then emanate through this form? Some people will create wonderful things.

Others will simply emanate the state of joy, peace, aliveness, and love and walk through the world emanating that state and be a blessing to whoever they meet. That's quite enough, isn't it? And others may create great things.

Others will say, I don't need to create anything. It's simply to embody that state. That's the flowering, as I mentioned before, somewhere, maybe in the book, I can't remember.

The planet, there was plant life on the planet for millions of years, they say, before there ever was a flower. After millions of years of plant life, I'm told, one day the first flower must have opened. And when a plant becomes a flower, it's an analogy, as I'm using it here, for a new level of, a new dimension of being, of consciousness.

But what is happening to humans is much vaster than even that. But it's a beautiful analogy. And then it took thousands of years before another flower came, probably, and then two or three.

And then suddenly a profusion of flowers all over the planet. And this is very similar. We've had early flowers in humanity.

The great teachers of humanity, one can look upon them as early flowerings of human consciousness. The possibilities that are inherent in the human form for the first time express themselves fully through those great teachers, sages, only some of whom we know about. Some were relatively unknown.

So there were rare flowers here and there. And then a time comes when we are ready for the flowering on a much larger scale. And it cannot not be now, otherwise it's the end.

So it must be now. This is the time. It goes far beyond anything personal in your life.

On a personal level, it's very pleasant because it frees you from inhabiting an absurdly complex world of problem-making. That's great. So on a personal level, it takes the weight off you, the weight of the self, the mind-made self that already the Buddha, the early flower that he was, recognized.

A profound insight too early, probably for much too early for his time, to see the illusion of self that was the primordial insight of the Buddha. My God, he saw that. And so that's where it flowered.

As one Buddhist monk who was asked to explain the meaning of Buddhism simply said, the meaning of Buddhism is this, no self, no problem. Finished. Oh, yes, but I'd like to learn some philosophy.

Can you teach me? I have plenty of time. Please give me time, says the self.

I want to complete myself in time. So the burden of self, of that delusion, you don't walk around with that heaviness anymore, because that's a heavy, you'll become a heaviness on the planet. And whatever you walk on, you crush.

A heavy self walking, millions of heavy selves walking on the planet, crushing life. And they don't even know it. Life?

What's life? It's just a little something, says the mind. This is timber, it's worth six million dollars, I would say.

Okay, we can cut that in no time. And it's gone. A forest that was there for 100,000 years, where a field of sacredness, but the mind can't see it because the mind labeled it.

And that's nobody's fault. It's the human dysfunction. So the heaviness of self, the heaviness of self leaves you.

Oh, free of that delusion, that entity that was so hard to live with, the me that I had such a problematic relationship with. And now, there's simply, where there was a heavy me, there's a field of aware presence, walking, sitting, moving, being. It doesn't make problems anymore for itself, for other humans, for the planet.

It doesn't create suffering anymore for itself, for other humans, for the planet. Oh, and so this is why, since ancient times, they've used the word liberation to talk about this shift in consciousness, because all the ancient teachings, they point to it, and they sometimes call it liberation. From what?

Even in the New Testament, they use that expression. Free. Jesus talks about, you will be free.

You will know the truth. The truth will make you free. Free, they said, we're already free.

We are nobody's slaves. And Jesus said, no, you're not. And he used the language that he used at the time.

He said, you are the slaves of sin. Now, what's sin? If he were talking nowadays, he would have said, you're totally conditioned entities, and you're completely unconscious.

You're the slaves of your conditioning. That's all. It's the dysfunction that is sin.

No more. It's nobody's fault. It's the original sin, which is the collective dysfunction.

That's all. It's not the way in which it's usually interpreted, but there's a truth in it, a deep truth. And just as there's original sin, there's original innocence, which is the sanity in you, which is the unconditioned consciousness in you, that's far vaster than the little original sin, far vaster.

The little original sin is a little illusion. It only appears big when you are totally trapped in it. So this is the liberation already happening.

And as you walk away from here, you will have lost some weight. Not physical weight. That doesn't matter.

But the weight of me. Myself. The problem making me.

If this were not already happening here, you would not have been able to sit here for an hour and a half, according to clock time. It would have become unbearable. Or you had to exert such willpower that you made yourself sit here, but that's unlikely.

So the greatest adventure that any human being can be involved in, you are involved. And some people are still asking about their life purpose. That is your life purpose.

To embody this transformation. That's your primary life purpose. Nothing else matters.

Your secondary life purpose then is what form your external life takes as you embody this transformation. But you don't really need to do a lot of thinking about that. Because that looks after itself.

Thank you. Being here without expectancy, without a need for future, the psychological need. Is it possible to be here completely, where your field of attention is not being, right now, filled up with anything?

Unless there's a lot of mental noise in your head as you sit here, in which case the stream of thought is filling up that space of now. And it's a strange thing to become aware of the space of now without needing to fill it up with something. But if it's already filled up with mental noise, then you can at least see that and accept that.

And in that seeing and in that accepting, there is a space even around the mental noise. And there's some spaciousness there even with a noisy mind. So the little secret is, when you become aligned with this moment, now, no matter what's going on, there is space.

In that acceptance of what is, you go beyond what is. In the non-acceptance of what is, you remain stuck with what is. Although you could remove yourself to some other place, and the same stuckness condition would arise very quickly.

Stuck again. So one could say, although all words are limited, there's object consciousness. That's the normal state for most human beings.

They're identified with objects in their consciousness. Thought streams, emotions, sense perceptions. Some they like, some they dislike.

And then there is space consciousness. This is just a temporary perspective on it. And most humans don't know that yet.

Some stumble upon this accidentally almost, and are astonished. Space consciousness, what is that? It's, first of all, space consciousness arises at this very moment, as you sit here and pay attention to the words, that's object consciousness, words arise in your consciousness as temporary forms.

Same as your own thoughts, not much difference. But you also pay attention, and this is unusual for many people, to the silent spaces between the words. Paying attention simply means, one could say, to listen, to the silence that isn't part of this talk, if it's a talk.

They're just words, it's not really a talk. And that's a strange thing, at first it seems pointless, or the mind says, listen to the silent spaces. Well, that's not very interesting.

No, of course it's not interesting. Only object consciousness is interesting, because every object is so fascinating. Oh, look at that.

And every object you have some relationship with, react to. But what relationship could you have with space? And it certainly isn't interesting as such.

Interesting means it's feeding the need of the mind to add more content, more objects. Because the mind wants always more, it's the egoic mind, the self, mind made self. And space consciousness is nothing that you could add, because there seems to be nothing there.

So you pay attention to the silent spaces between words, sentences, and not only that, but also you simply pay attention, or one could say, listen, acknowledge that there is, that one could say there are two dimensions to this talk, the words, and the field, the space, the silence. Usually in a talk, people come to listen to the words, to take in new information, more of something. And here you're being invited, yes, to listen to the words, but it's being pointed out that there is a deeper dimension that mostly people would be unconscious of unless it's pointed out or they find it accidentally.

There is an underlying field, how the words couldn't even exist without the space, the stillness. Certain kinds of music can do the same. Music where stillness is an important element, and usually even there, people are not directly conscious of it, they only sense it is so deep and beautiful and sacred, and they still believe it's in the sounds.

But what really is the depth of that music lies in the ground out of which the sounds come. And the sounds point to that, and that's called very deeply spiritual kinds of music, because as you listen, something shifts inside you. Particularly if you bring conscious attention to the underlying ground, that shift happens to you the moment you pay attention to the field of stillness.

That moment is the arising of that field of stillness in you. Because with thought, you cannot listen to silence. With thought, the thinking mind, you can only listen to words or notes, sounds, but not silence.

The moment you tune into silence, silence or stillness arises in you. The moment you begin to listen to it, a dimension arises in you that we could call space consciousness, unconditioned consciousness, as it arises as a field of alert presence. And the objects are still there in consciousness, the sounds of the music, or in this case, the words.

But just as in those types of music, the sounds point beyond themselves, just as these words are not saying, listen to me, this is important. The words are not important, because they point beyond themselves. So the words have no self-importance.

They are quite unimportant, because we are here not for that. You have enough of object consciousness, the whole world is immersed in it. You have enough information, bombarded by information.

Do you need more? No. And a similar thing in certain types of painting, Eastern paintings, you have a landscape with a little tree down here, a rock, and a bird maybe flying just at the top of the painting across, and 85% of the painting is empty space.

And so from a mind perspective, this is not a significant painting, because there isn't very much there. Is that all? Couldn't he have done a little bit more to fill this canvas or the paper?

And that type of painting doesn't say, look at me, how great I am. Look at how, even the artist doesn't say, look what I can do. The artist denies him or herself, and the painting denies itself as something, because it's all pointing to something deeper than form.

And so a strange thing happens when you acknowledge that dimension in your life, and if you don't know that dimension, you don't know the most important thing there is, being itself, the ground itself, the essence of who you are. You go through your whole life immersed and identified with, and having a problematic relationship with object consciousness. And every object that arises in consciousness matters so much, and it has something to do with you.

You need it or you want to push it away. So, in other words, all you know is the world, all you know is this dimension of stuff, material stuff, mind stuff. All you know is that, and you go around battling with the stuff of this world, and you get tired after a while.

More stuff, there's only more stuff coming, all that you can gain here is more stuff, or lose the stuff that you've accumulated as the content of your mind, and then suffer, because it's painful to die as that illusion. So notice as you sit here, if there is a restlessness in you at this moment, maybe you're not even hearing what I'm saying, it could be that restless, that is, you're immersed in object consciousness thoughts, and it's frustrating, because nothing is being given to add to that. And then you can notice that, oh, oh, there's it, there it is.

And you acknowledge that. And suddenly you become conscious of the silent spaces. You listen to the silent spaces.

And for that, to be able to do that, a certain alertness is required. And a strange thing happens, as you listen to silence, and it may never be there for long, thought ceases, comes to a stop, because you cannot listen to silence with thought. You don't have to stop your mind, just listen to silence.

That's it. And the moment thought resumes, you're no longer listening to the silence. And it is good to live in that way, the two dimensions, the essence dimension, space consciousness, the dimension, one could say, of the absolute, and the dimension of the relative, in which you move in this world, as a physical body.

Interact with all these different forms, and then there is a balance in your life. For most people, all they have is the world, the stuff. And they are lost in it, they are lost in it, and trying to find themselves in and through it, for which they need future.

So our gathering here isn't really a lecture, a talk, it's something else. We don't even have a name for it. But in India, where they've been at it for longer, there's the expression satsang, which perhaps could be translated as, in the company of being, to be with being, because this is being.

Existence is form. Being is prior to form. Being is the essence of who you are.

In the company, really it means, traditionally satsang means being in the company of the teacher. But the deeper meaning is being with yourself, not the mind made self. With the deeper essence of who you are.

So we, this, I sometimes call this a portal into that state of consciousness that is the state of presence, of awareness, pure thoughtless awareness. The state of awake, being awake. Thought arises again, yes, but as you dwell in that ground of no thought, thought loses its capacity to make you unhappy.

You're no longer totally identified with every thought. You recognize the relativity of thought. You recognize that no thought contains the entire truth.

You recognize that whatever thought you think is a tiny fragment. And in many cases, more often than not, the opposite thought is equally true. It's just a different perspective.

And many other perspectives are possible, and thought can then be contained. The polarities of thought, you're no longer identified with one polarity. If they could know this in certain, in many parts of the world where there is violent conflict, each part is identified with one perspective, one viewpoint.

There's no, this is the truth. We have the truth. Only our perspective is true.

To see the relativity of thought, and whatever thought you have about yourself, it's not it. And so you can have a relationship with thought that is a little bit loose, and you stand back and say, okay, here goes another thought that's telling me that you can't make it, you're not good enough, whatever it says. Or you're, if only the world would recognize how great you are.

Whatever thought, and it's recognized as thought. You don't totally believe in every thought anymore, because it's conditioned. Other thoughts arise as you inhabit, as you dwell, are rooted in being.

Increasingly, thoughts arise that are very different from the conditioned mind activity. Those are thoughts of greater power. Those are also thoughts that can create, manifest, the famous, in new age, many people are interested in manifesting through thought.

And of course, everybody's doing it already. Everybody's manifesting whatever their world is through thought. Mostly it's unconscious.

But there's no point in dwelling on the possibilities that are inherent in thought, as far as external manifestation is concerned, unless you have gone through the shift in consciousness, so that you are not trying to manifest as a dissatisfied, little, egoic entity. And through your manifestation, trying to complete yourself or make yourself happy through this or that, that won't work. So it is primary to allow the shift in consciousness to happen, so that you recognize yourself as not what you thought you were, as the illusion of me and my story which needs to complete itself, and then desperately tries to manifest something, perhaps succeeds.

Of course, it works quite often, and then for a little while it's great, and then that doesn't fulfill its purpose either. Later, as this arises, you don't need to be concerned anymore with how to manifest, because you become then a powerful manifester, if that's a word. But it flows from the depths of your being.

That which is manifesting your reality then is not the little, egoic entity, but the one intelligence which is flowering through you, and that suddenly thoughts come that you couldn't even have thought before as an egoic entity. And then manifestation happens through you, and it's beautiful. So thought is powerful, and whatever you manifest in thought, through thought externally, will pertain to the world of external forms which come and go.

Nothing lasts forever. That remains. And that's fine.

So here we are not focusing on how to manifest, but on something more vital. How to be yourself first. Finding the portals into the unconditioned state of consciousness, then that operates.

And here is one portal, and that portal is listening to the space, the silence. And then being aware of that which comes up the objects at the same time. As God is defined in one of the Upanishads, as it's not that which you see, but that which makes all seeing possible.

It's not that which you hear, it's that all hearing possible. It's not what you think, it's that which makes all thought possible. So this stillness, we could say, that is here as external silence, which is inner stillness, is the greatest mystery.

Enormous depths in that. And Buddhists, so that you cannot make it into another mind object, call it emptiness. And that's very clever.

If you call it fullness, which is equally true, then it's easier for the mind to say there is something there. It becomes a mind object. I believe in fullness, but it's much harder to say, I believe in emptiness, because that means you believe in nothing.

So this is a portal, and it's an important one which you can use to access that state of consciousness. It's a simple fact. And outer silence helps initially with that practice, because there is something you can actually listen to the silence.

Out in nature, there will be a few sounds, but underlying the beautiful sounds that you hear in nature, there will be this vast realm of stillness in which these sounds appear. And it is that which gives people that, even if they are not conscious of it directly, they sense a depth, a beauty beyond the forms which are beautiful, but a depth to nature and a sacredness that they can't define. What is it that makes this so sacred and beautiful?

Yes, the forms, each flower, but there's even more, there's something that is beyond the forms that gives it its sacredness. And yes, it is the underlying field. And so when you walk in nature, also you can be in both worlds, so to speak, or rather in the world and in being.

As you listen, you walk around listening to the sounds and to the underlying stillness. Alertness is required for that. No tension, just a relaxed alertness.

It arises spontaneously as you listen, and there's a depth, and so already you are walking through nature in the state of thoughtless presence, awareness. Wow! And then suddenly a thought comes in, it's no longer a problem, it's just a thought, it comes in and another, and space is in between.

And as you walk in that state, you're no longer, your history becomes unimportant, your past and future, even your name and the story of me recedes. And instead what arises is the field of unconditioned consciousness. And nature is helpful because nature does not stimulate thought.

A city where everything is human-made is more likely to stimulate mind activity because the city is created by the human mind. It's the externalised mind. The noise of the city is the externalised mental noise.

And never have humans lived in a more noisy civilisation. Maybe one day this civilisation will be called the noisy civilisation. And of course the poisonous civilisation also, it creates an enormous amount of noise.

It's an externalisation of the increasing mental noise. So they create a very noisy world, and they're looking for new means of making more noise. And they have to fill up every space with noise.

I don't know how it is here, but in North America, finding a restaurant without loud music is almost impossible these days. You have to look very hard and you open the door, put in your head and it goes, and walk out again. And noise is of course, something is happening, objects arising.

Right. So nature does not stimulate thought. Of course it doesn't mean that thought doesn't arise.

Most humans, when they go into nature, are full of thought. And peripherally they see for a little while, oh that's a beautiful flower, and then the mind goes about their problems, and then they look again. There's a moment of recognition of beauty.

If they could catch that moment, there's a looking, but the navel hasn't come up yet. There's a fragment, there's a little space when they look at this flower. At first you glance at the tree or the sky.

And in many humans, that gap is for one second, two seconds. Or if you deepen, three seconds, four seconds. And if you deepen even more, ten, twenty.

And then already you are walking or standing in awe of, and then perhaps a thought may come. Beautiful. But many humans only have that as a gap of one second, two seconds, and immediately thought comes.

And that is the veil that descends between that. It's a conceptualized veil. Now, everything in nature exists in the state of no thought.

Intelligence manifests through all these forms. All these forms are the manifestation of this one intelligence. And they are beautiful, but it is prior to thought.

There was no committee meeting that said, let's work out how we can create a beautiful flower. Let's think, a think tank. Let's, okay, let's draw our plans.

Let's put data into the computer. And then after a thousand hours of thinking, you still couldn't create a rose. And but the rose didn't come out of thought.

It came out of stillness. The tree came out of stillness, grows in stillness. Timeless also.

And the entire universe is very, very still. No sound in outer space. Only in science fiction movies.

Just to give the impression that something is happening, because nobody could stand watching that silence. But there's no sound. A whole galaxy could explode, which would take millions of years.

It wouldn't make a single sound. And a whole galaxies are born out of complete stillness. And there is an intelligence at work in that stillness.

The one intelligence. Even the human mind has come out of it, it has a little experiment in noise. It's fine.

And the monkeys also, a few experiments with noise. Monkeys are very noisy. Very much like the human mind.

That's why Buddhists call the mind the monkey mind. And so to use as a portal, silence and listening to silence in nature or at home, anywhere, right here. The silence here, the stillness, is the true teacher, one could say, because it is the arising of space consciousness, of the unconditioned consciousness.

So this is a powerful portal. And as you listen to that, then you realize it's not really caused by the external silence. It can arise anywhere, no matter whether in your external surroundings, there is a silent space or not.

Because there are situations in this noisy world, many places and situations, there's hardly ever a silent space. You're bombarded by noise and noise making, even in the office or at your workplace. In the family, always things going on.

Many families, we go there, there's two or three TVs on, children screaming, parents saying, get this done, do this, we're in a hurry. And now a beautiful thing, when you notice that the arising of stillness can happen by itself, the listening to silence is really the arising of inner stillness. And for that you don't really need, it's beautiful if you have the stillness outside and you use that as a portal.

But once you become familiar, so to speak, with that state, it can be there no matter where you are, as the simple arising of thoughtless awareness. And this brings us to another portal, very powerful one. It takes you into the same place, and that is a portal of acceptance of what is.

Takes you also into space consciousness. And this is interesting. Acceptance of what is, we spoke about it already, because it is, there's nothing you can do with is.

You can argue with it, but it's futile. Is is as it is at this moment. What can you do?

And so you accept. Or you don't accept. And if you don't accept, contraction arises.

The self gets strengthened, the illusion of the me in that non-acceptance, the boundary around me gets strengthened, so the sense of identity, the artificial, illusory sense of identity gets strengthened through the non-acceptance. This shouldn't be. And the noise-making of the mind becomes stronger when you deny what is.

Because if you watch the noise-making, the compulsive thought activity, a lot is to do with projecting yourself into a future moment. In other words, trying to get away from this one, to a more fulfilling one, a more complete, powerful, pleasurable one. So the acceptance of what is, externally, then there's a stillness, a peace, and a stillness arises, no matter what the external condition is, if it is accepted internally, welcomed, the is-ness of it.

But if you can't do it, contraction arises. But if you are aware of that, the emotion that arises through non-acceptance, anger, sadness, you watch that, what do you do with that? It is as it is.

Then you accept that. And every time you accept on level one, you accept what is externally. So you do not create inner resistance.

You do not strengthen the illusory self through that. And a spaciousness arises around what is. If you miss that opportunity, resistance is there.

But suddenly you recognize that resistance is there, and you recognize the emotion that is arising in this situation, and instead of saying, oh, you see, you have failed again, you see, acceptance is totally pointless, you give up even trying to accept, you can't, you see, you're failing at this just as you failed at that. No. If you see it, it's enough.

There's the turbulence of the emotion. What do you do with that? It already is.

You allow it to be. And that suddenly, again, there is a space around the anger or the irritation, the tightness, through the yes. Let's say an irritating noise happens and you feel the irritation, you don't catch it quickly enough to say, well, there were children who were noisy before.

Irritation could arise and you don't catch it quickly enough, you've forgotten that this is the school and this is what children do. And so the mind says, it shouldn't be noisy here, we've come for spiritual talk. And so if you don't catch it soon enough, the irritation is there within a moment and it's accompanied by certain thoughts.

The thoughts are critical of this moment. And then suddenly you catch that and you say, hmm, you sense the irritation, you see the thought that goes with it, and then you say, well, there it is, there's the turbulence, let it be. What can you do?

You can't argue with it, it shouldn't be here, you have another problem on top of the irritation, you create the problem that you shouldn't be irritated with all the spiritual work you've done, you shouldn't be, by now you should be beyond this by now. But there it is. And so, oh, irritation.

And you simply, there's a flow of attention, you give it some attention, gentle flow of attention. And it is. And suddenly there's a space around the irritation.

It's still there, but it's being contained within a greater spaciousness. So in other words, you are now in touch with space consciousness. You know yourself ultimately as not that which arises, but that which contains all that arises.

And you know yourself as that simply through accepting whatever arises, instead of battling with it. So the doorway, the portal into self-realisation is not some kind of needing to become something that you're not yet, and beating yourself up when you're not living up to certain ideas in your head that perhaps have been put there by teachings or reading books of how beings should behave, and I'm not there yet. That's not the enlightened being.

Nothing in form is beyond the polarities as this form, including enlightened entities, beings, they will express somewhere certain polarities in their life. They might like chocolate cake or whatever, or go to Starbucks and drink coffee, as I do sometimes. And then people say, you drink coffee?

You shouldn't be drinking coffee. Well, it's only two or three times a week. Well, you shouldn't be drinking coffee.

You should be beyond that. And then you can internalise that as a voice in your head. I haven't made it yet.

The state of perfection has not been reached yet. You can struggle for a long time with that. And then you see, that's not the way.

There's a much quicker way. And that quick way has no problems in it, and doesn't make yourself into a problem, or anybody else into a problem, or any situation into a problem that is to be overcome. The mind itself likes that, because then it can struggle and be in opposition to something, even itself.

It likes to be in conflict with itself. And so, the doorway into the state of perfection is acceptance of the is-ness, whether it be external, or if you miss it there, your second chance is interval. It is.

Then you are no longer completely caught up in what is, in a reactive relationship to what is. You become deeper, you already are, but then you know that you are deeper than what is. And you know yourself as the spaciousness around what is.

And the irritation no longer matters that much. It's a human energy formation, nothing personal in it. The personal nature goes out of emotions, saying, me, there's a me in every emotion, a self in every emotion otherwise.

It's my problem, this emotion is mine, it's part of my story. And then you realize it's a human emotion, your fear is not much different from any other person's fear, or anger, or sadness, or irritation. It is an energy turbulence or a heaviness.

So as you allow it, the self, the delusion of self goes out of it. It's only through non-allowing that you strengthen the self nature of every feeling, every emotion, and thought, every thought. There's a self in it.

But then as you step back from the workings of the conditioned mind, you realize it's the human mind. And even that, it's not personal. The self that was in every thought is recognized as the Buddha did, as an illusion, an illusory entity.

And that arises now is self-realization. And it arises through seeing what you are not. Thoughts, emotions, events, sense perceptions, in other words, objects in consciousness.

There's no self there. The Buddhist doctrine, the Buddhist teaching of anatta, no self, of course. So who am I then?

I'm space, stillness, the ground, thoughtless, aware presence. In the absence of a spiritual teaching, all you have as a teacher is life, and the challenges of life, and what that is going to do to you sooner or later, it will take away objects that you have accumulated in your mind, in consciousness, and identified with as self. Loss.

Loss of possessions, loss of recognition, loss of people close to you, loss of physical abilities as you grow old. Or if you're lucky, before you grow old, you encounter some kind of disaster in your life, and you lose a lot all at once. Maybe your job, maybe your health at the same time, and your possessions, or someone close to you.

And it goes within a short space of time, it's all gone. Objects have like dissolved in front of your eyes that were me, part of me. And that is traditionally, and before there were ever any spiritual teachers or teachings, a few human beings realised who they were through sudden and great loss.

When objects that they had identified with in consciousness, content, was removed from them. The opposite of what the self, the mind-made self wanted and thought would get me to enlightenment, the opposite, because the mind-made self thinks in enlightenment, thinks of enlightenment in terms of more. Surely enlightenment is the greatest thing.

So it thinks of it in terms of something that I can add to myself as the attainment. And then suddenly life does something to you, and the opposite happens, not more, but less. Life takes things away.

Instead of giving you enlightenment, it takes away the little that you had, or the lot that you had, and so empty spaces appear where before there was something. And it's being torn out of you by life. Sometimes violent events can happen.

Life tears something from you, accidents, illness, whatever disaster. That's a powerful teacher. And so as it tears something from you, the opposite of what the self had been, because it had been planning a good outcome to its story.

I was planning a happy ending for my story, and now this has happened. It's destroyed everything, the whole script. I don't think I can put it back together again, or I have to rewrite the whole thing.

And so suddenly empty spaces appear where before there was something, now there is nothing. Before there was recognition of you as someone important, the world thought a lot of you, then you lose your position or your reputation through some scandal, maybe you did something silly, and now everybody thinks you're nothing, they don't even talk about you anymore. So that's an empty space.

A content, a mental image is gone, it's not fat anymore, it can't sustain itself. And then you lose your house, and then your wife leaves you, and then somebody very close to you dies, and then the stock market crashes. And before you know it, there's mostly empty spaces where before there was something, quite a lot.

And now two things are possible, an even more fearful and angry and bitter and resentful self-contraction of the egoic entity that now quickly rewrites the story and gets identified with that, and then the story says, I'm the most miserable of all beings, I have failed at everything, life has treated me unfairly, and that becomes a new story, which is what you're telling yourself in the head or telling to others. Before it looked like a great story, but now it's quickly rewritten, so that you can identify with a new conceptualised sense of self, and that is a very bitter and resentful one, and exists in a continuous state of contraction.

But at least you know who you are. Instead of allowing the empty spaces, you quickly fill them up with new concepts. Now this is of course an unhappy story, but it is far better to the self than no story at all that you can tell yourself and others.

So it's all been in vain, 30 years of work, all for nothing, they've all let me down, it's pointless, and then you have a lot to say about it. And you have a new sense of self arising out of that, and then you die. But there's a potential, on the other hand, that you don't run away from the empty spaces, and you may be so stunned by the empty spaces appearing suddenly, where before there was something, now there is nothing, that you just sit there, stunned, and look, and somehow you say, what can I do?

It's all gone. And you may suddenly laugh, and not realise, perhaps you don't have a word for it, that you have suddenly and spontaneously entered the surrendered state of consciousness. And the space, all these empty spaces where before there was something, through these holes in your life, space consciousness emerges.

There was the BMW, now there's a hole, and through it comes, there was the big house, now there's nothing there, and it comes through there. There was the wife that was there, beautiful, attractive, you could show her off to everybody, and so feel bigger, and now she left you for another man, betrayed you, let you down, or whatever the story says, and now there's nothing, she's gone, and what comes through is space, unconditioned, and suddenly you say, what's going on? I should be unhappy, and I feel so peaceful.

And you walk around in that state of amazement. You sit on a park bench, and no story is happening in your head anymore. Life is enough without a story.

Going through life without a story, except some memories, is fine, without the heaviness of a conceptualised identity. And you can notice, the conceptualised identity at times wants to reassert itself, and then you simply step into now, use a portal into now, because the conceptualised identity functions only through thought, and thought functions only through past and future. So there may be some of you here who have already experienced what I just talked about, life taking things away from you, and so that, the arising of that which is unconditioned is through the openings that is already happening.

And if that hadn't happened to you, you wouldn't be here. You would be happy watching TV now. You would be happy in your unhappiness of being asleep, and identified with the story of me, which seems to still be, it's still working, still hoping it's going to work out, and suddenly.

So grace comes in many ways into your life, not only in ways that are usually easily recognised as grace, grace comes in ways that you would never call grace until you realise what it is. There was a film made about the life of Ram Dass, a spiritual teacher who suffered a stroke, and the title of that film is Fierce Grace. Fierce is...

and so sometimes it happens that grace comes into your life in strange ways, that only afterwards you recognise as grace, such as loss, great loss. And loss is grace. Death is grace.

Because every loss is a form of death, loss of something that you had identified with as content of the mind, of me. That is a death, and that is grace. And that is, the mind calls it awful, dreadful, shouldn't be happening, but it happens all the time.

Now, a spiritual teaching, when you realise how this transformation operates, then the spiritual teaching comes into your life and you are suddenly opened. And then grace operates in that way, much more gentle. Grace is here, but it's more gentle than the fierce grace.

It's both grace. Maybe you already had the fierce. Maybe you'll get the fierce as the last thing you need to enter the surrendered state.

Maybe you don't need it anymore, because as we sit here, that which other people lose through loss, we voluntarily lose here because we recognise that ultimately it's an illusion. And that is also grace. And so, as it has been said in a holy book, die before you die.

That's how it's translated. Sometimes translated also as, find death before death finds you, because death will find you. Forms dissolve.

And now, here, you are finding death before it finds you, and realise only forms dissolve, and there's that which is beyond birth and death. Perhaps not even that, because that's already a mental formulation. It may be enough to realise the peace that is here now, as you no longer oppose this moment.

And that peace is beyond words, that spaciousness is beyond words and concepts. But it frees you from fear. It frees you from the illusory self.

And some humans have then said, I now know that there is no death. Well, that's one way of putting it. But no belief is required here.

So bring that yes to now, no matter what the now contains. It could not be otherwise. It's one with the totality, the form of this now.

Opposing it is madness. And then change happens out of that. This is good to know that no matter what happens to you, nothing can really stop you any more, because it's all as it should be.

Whatever condition rises, is as it is. And the yes to it will take you into that deep peace that comes with the realising the spaciousness around phenomena. You can give attention to the sound, listen to the sound, and listen particularly to the point where the sound begins to dissolve, and what's left is just the field of attention, the presence, the awareness.

In some teachings it's called the I am that is listening. So we have an object in consciousness, the sound, and consciousness as the ground that remains. And you can be aware both as you listen to the sound of the sound, and strangely enough, you can be aware of the awareness that is listening, the listening presence at the same time.

And we could call that awareness of awareness, not awareness of something in awareness, awareness of awareness, self-aware. This is an enormous shift in consciousness. I am that.

I am that. That is the one presence, the one fundamental identity of all things is the I am presence, the one consciousness. And so we have the beautiful phrase in the Bible somewhere when God defines him, her, itself as, I am that I am.

I am that. So that's the end of believing that I am this, or I am that, because every this and that is the beginning of a story, is the beginning of identification with some kind of form. In other words, it's the beginning of the dream, the dream of form, the dream of me being that form.

And so you realize the essence of I am is never I am this or that, because this or that is always form and it's a story that starts with a form. But simply, the eternal I am presence, eternal means timeless. There's no time in that consciousness, because it's not object consciousness.

Time operates in the world of objects. There can be no world of objects without time. Time has no existence as such.

It's created by the mind in order to create a world of forms. You could not even imagine a world of form without time. So time is in the structure of the human mind to create a universe, to project that, and that's fine on its own level.

But if who you are gets caught up in that world of relativity and polarity, then that is the state of ignorance. Knowing God, I don't use that word very often, is knowing I am as the essence. It's so simple.

And that is the one thing that everybody knows that there's something so precious in me, and I don't want to lose that. The essence of one's identity that gets mixed up with a story, that gets mixed up with form, is presence, is awareness, is the I am. After we have taken a little break, because the physical bodies need things like breaks, we will look at something that is a great obstacle for many people to the arising presence and that is the human pain body and how the pain body also can become, one could say, a portal instead of being an obstacle.

Pain body, as you know, is the accumulated past in every human being. Racial past, personal past, and there's a lot of heaviness in there. Another profound statement in the Bible that I quoted earlier, be still and know that I am God.

Be still and know. Be still means dwell in that state of no thought that is stillness. And know, so in that state of no thought, in that stillness, there is a deep knowing that I am God.

I am is one with the one. So in that little pointer, we have each word basically means the same. It's about being, be, stillness, knowing, the knowing that is beyond mind, beyond concepts, I am God, not as a new form identity.

So we are coming to know the meaning of consciousness without thought. To be awake means to be in the state of consciousness without thought. Not to be identified with thought is to be awake.

Portal into that state, we have seen listening to silence, acceptance of now as a portal into that state. And of course, the inner body is also a portal into that state, sensing the aliveness that is throughout your body. Now at first it may appear that that is an object that arises in your awareness, and at first that may be the case, because you feel certain energy movements.

As you go deeper, you realize there's vast spaciousness in here. And you realize the spaciousness that is in here, that is alive, that's spacious, is one with who you are. So although at first it may appear that when we speak of body awareness, as if the body were an object that arises in your consciousness, as you go deeper in, you realize the space of consciousness that is the essence of what appears temporarily as a physical body.

So the body also can become a doorway, a portal into space consciousness. And then that aliveness, that spacious aliveness, as you go through this portal, is suddenly everywhere. It's not confined anymore to the space of this body.

But the entry point is into attention moving into body. And so as we sit here, we can have a generalized sense of aware presence, or awareness is throughout the body. We're sensing the aliveness that is in every cell.

Very subtle at first, it's not just in the background. It's also a beautiful anchor for presence. You may at times want to close your eyes and go very deep into that inner body, so that you then lose the mental image of the form of the body.

And then they're no longer different parts of the body, but just a one generalized sense of spacious presence. And that is beautiful. It quickly takes you out of the story in the head into the power of now.

And this portal of the inner body is of course a way of contacting, of not just contacting, but realizing the intelligence that is there in that spaciousness of the body. That intelligence that is already greater than the human mind. Intelligence that operates temporarily as a physical body.

Enormous, from the point of view of mind, enormously complex. It operates noiselessly, beautifully, with no thinking involved. Intelligence.

So it has been said in a holy book somewhere, God is closer to you than hands and feet. Or it's been said in the Koran, God is closer to you than your jugular vein, which is up here somewhere, one of the main veins in the body. Closer to you than hands and feet.

What's closer than hands and feet? So that means God must be very close to me. And so if God, he, she, it, is closer than hands and feet, it must be even deeper than that, than hands and feet are out here.

So it's inside that. And for thousands of years, humans have looked for God through thought, mental abstraction. And for a long time thought, it's out there somewhere.

And then one early astronomer who looked, used one of the first people to use a telescope, said, I've looked everywhere and I haven't seen God anywhere. Well, good, that's the beginning of the end of an illusion. So this is a portal that is always there, because the body, wherever you go, the body goes with you.

Shifting attention from noise-making in the head, and then you notice it, because it brings about, very quickly, makes you suffer one way or another. And then you notice it. And the moment you notice that basically you've lost the now and so you suffer, that noticing is the arising of presence.

But that can be obscured immediately after you notice it by the mind again, which then judges the noticing and says, you see, you can't do it. And it says, oh, I can't be present now, not now, I have no time for the now. Tomorrow I'll look at the now again.

But first I have to sort all these things out which are more important than now. So often you will find a thought telling you, you can't be in the body now, it's just too much on my mind. And then you recognise that as a thought, without believing in it.

It's a thought, because thought has a momentum and it wants to keep going. And it will bring up other thoughts to justify that you should be giving your complete attention to thought. Every thought could be considered a little entity, a form, a life form with a short lifespan, but it's there and the entity wants to proliferate and grow and remain in its form.

So the mind can be considered an entity too in itself, an energy field, an energy form, and it wants to stay in control. It doesn't want to make room. So it will bring up thoughts that tell you, no, you can't do it now, this is too much, I've just...

And then you recognise the thought, and then you say, there's a thought that I can't do it, and then you move your attention into the body.

[Speaker 2] (4:40:37 - 4:40:37)

Oh.

[Speaker 1] (4:40:40 - 5:40:11)

And you might feel the pull of thought wanting your attention back up in the head. And you just, there's no struggle, you can't struggle with the mind, you can just gently hold attention in the body. If only, even the hands is enough as an anchor, because then some of your attention moves into the body.

And even sensing the aliveness that is in your hands, when the mind is extremely restless, and maybe you cannot feel immediately any other part of the body, just that is the beginning of the doorway, the portal, you're touching it as you go into hands, and then simply holding the feeling of hand, sensing that, so some of your attention is here, and the mind is slightly less active, it hasn't got all your attention anymore.

Now the mind will pretend, every thought pretends that it is, it matters, and you must believe me. Every thought wants to matter, to be important, and you have to believe it, thought about yourself, your relationship with your partner, thought about your partner, thought about, and you're in it every, and so to realise that at any time your attention from the stream of thought into presence, and a good doorway is the body, one of the portals. And simply holding attention in your hands helps.

And then attention gradually moves more into the body because you sense this is so alive. You may come across people in your daily life, maybe parents, friends, relatives, who are not yet ready to listen to the teaching of presence or acceptance of now, but many people are ready for such simple truths of sensing the body. And you can tell your father or grandfather or grandmother or uncle who is tortured by his mind, can't get out, has been telling the same stories for the past thirty years, and you can tell him, can you feel your hands?

What? And then the very just point out there is a possibility that you can feel an aliveness in the body. Just try it.

No, I can't feel a thing, I mean, leave me alone with that. You just try. No, I can't feel anything.

You can explain that the body contains intelligence. Most people can see that if you say that they couldn't control the functions of the body with their mind, so there must be some other intelligence at work. And then say, close your eyes, hold your right or left hand like this.

Is there any way you can find out whether your right hand is still there or not without opening your eyes, without touching anything? Can you know whether this hand is still there or not, you can ask. And if they do it, after a little while they say, well yes, I can feel it.

It's still there. So, there it is. So that question can take their attention, because if you only say move your attention into the body, they may not be able to do it if they have lived their whole life in the head.

But that little question, is there any way you can find out, how can you know whether your right hand is still there if you close your eyes and don't touch anything, and don't move it, and suddenly they feel it. Oh, yes. So this could be the beginning of something for somebody who is not yet ready for anything else, at least they can begin to move some, and then feel the benefit of that.

Okay, the portal is opening up, that portal is beginning to open. That's good. And then, for yourself, to have some attention in here, so that the mind doesn't create stories again.

While you go, while you travel on a bus, dwell in the energy field of body, and watch the landscape go past you, the cityscape go past you, and simultaneously have attention in the inner energy field of body. And there is the state that we pointed to earlier, in which you are able to perceive without needing to label it, because you have an anchor now for staying present. So you are not at the mercy of the conditioned mind, which labels things compulsively.

So this is the anchor, and so you can then perceive with that freshness, newness, and aliveness that is there when you are not interpreting or labelling that which you are perceiving. So you sense the body, at this very moment you can sense a little bit the subtleness, the energy field, the energy in the inner body, and hear the words, and be aware of the totality of the room, without needing to label, because your attention is not exclusively in thought anymore, it's moved out of mind. And so to use that anchor, also in nature it may be helpful, sit somewhere on the beach, on a stone, on a bench, enter the body, and then look, and then listen.

Oh, it's so easy now to listen without the interference of thought, and to be in that alertness. So whenever you feel overwhelmed by mind, a quick way is shifting attention into the inner body. And don't believe the thought that tells you you can't do it, at least not now.

One could say you have the choice now to be present. That's an enormous choice. You have the choice to be identified with mind.

It doesn't look like a choice, because the mind pulls you in. So you have the choice to step out of that, and be present. You only have that choice, ultimately, because the totality with which you are intrinsically connected is moving through you.

Presence is arising through you, but from the point of view of this entity, from that perspective, and everything I say, every language, every thought is only a perspective, from that perspective one could say that you have a choice now to be present. Ultimately the only reason why you have a choice is that the evolutionary impulse of the universe is moving through you. From the limited perspective of an entity, it seems that you have a choice, and it's a good perspective.

I have a choice now, I can choose presence. How is it that you can choose presence? Because it's happening.

Ultimately it's not you choosing. So this is a deeper perspective. You don't have a choice, presence is emerging.

But as a temporary limited perspective, it's helpful to say, I have a choice. That's part of the emerging presence, is to see that you have a choice, and later you can let go of that perspective. Because some of you have read certain teachings that say you have no choice, there's nothing you can do, go home.

It either happens or it doesn't happen. That's one kind of teaching, and that's one perspective, it has an element of truth also, but it's not the entire truth. No statement or perspective has the entire truth.

Another teaching says, unless you want liberation or enlightenment with the same urgency that a drowning person wants air, you won't get it. So which one am I going to believe? And they both seem reputable teachers, so is one of them wrong and the other one is right, or are they just different perspectives, and how can they ever be reconciled?

Where does the urgency come from with which I want liberation? It's all the one moving through you, but you can adopt different perspectives. Wanting liberation is good.

Wanting liberation in the future won't get you there. So if you shift the wanting liberation from future, a mudja, into now, wanting liberation now, then it works. And if you want liberation now, you realise there's nothing you can do beyond what already is.

Okay, let's see. If that impulse of wanting freedom, which usually seeks future, wanting implies you want something through future, if you see the fallacy of that, but don't go to the other polarity and say, okay, I've had it, I'm going home and watch every soap opera that there is and I'm going to drink beer, because there's nothing I can do anyway. No, the wanting that moves into future, can you move that wanting into now, that urgency, that seeking?

How can you seek in the now without future? There can be an intensity with which you face what is. So the seeking becomes an intensity of presence, and you meet the now with that intensity of alert presence.

Before that intensity became a mind movement of seeking, but now that intensity becomes the presence, and here's the now, and you embrace that in the field of presence, and uncompromising yes to what is. Now you've brought, and then the saying, the teacher that said there's nothing you can do was also right, because this is what is. Let's stop it here.

It's hard to reconcile seemingly opposite perspectives, but this was a little attempt to reconcile that there's nothing you can do, it's true, there's something you can do is also true, neither contains the entire truth, and it's happening now. So it's good whenever you are waiting somewhere, I mention that in the book, because it's amazing how much time people spend waiting for things in daily life. You're waiting on the phone, you're waiting on the computer, you're waiting at the bank, you're waiting at the post office, at the bus stop, at the traffic light, so much waiting, and most people are restless and uneasy and needing to get to the future, and then there's the waiting for some bigger event to happen in your life, making it one day they will recognise me, and that could be a long wait. So you have all these short waits, and then you have the long waits.

Let's just talk about the short waits, how when you're waiting you can bring, connect with the inner body, at any moment when there's nothing else you can do, you might as well sense the aliveness that is here now, use that portal, no matter where, traffic light, telephone, post office, hold the line please, they say, and ten minutes later you're still there, and you could be in here. It doesn't really, it's only the mind that tells you, oh you're wasting time, you have to sit somewhere, so you might as well sit here, and you have to hold your hand in some position, you might as well hold the phone. It doesn't really matter.

Wherever you go, you'll be sitting or standing somewhere and moving in some way. Is the next moment going to be so much greater than this one? At the airport, flight is delayed by three hours.

Oh my, no, not again. Well, does it matter whether you sit on this chair there or whether you sit on the plane, or when you arrive home you sit in another chair? There isn't that much more in phenomenal universe, it's what you can do with this body is limited.

And then at times when you think, this is great, presence is arising, freedom is here, suddenly you get overtaken by this incredible heaviness, turbulence, a little trigger did it, and you're totally back in mind and heavy emotions that go with it, and the energy field that you are shifts so that some people hardly recognize you, so great is the shift. Pain body, the accumulation of past emotional pain, human pain, going back a million years, personal pain, to add to the pain that's already there in every human being for the simple reason that you are a human being on this planet living in the collective human unconsciousness that has created so much suffering already for itself. So you carry some of that suffering as an emotional field of pain with you, and then in your childhood you absorb more of it through the suffering of the child from parents, so there's this emotional field, an entity, temporary being that lives in you, that is the pain body, contracted life energy, can't flow anymore, an aspect of the egoic entity, the me, and sometimes it's not there, you can't feel it, it's there, but it's dormant, it can't remain dormant for too long because it needs to feed, it needs more pain to feed on, that's what it recognizes, that kind of emotional pain, it loves that, it doesn't know anything else. So I'm offering you a perspective on something that is very real, not ultimately real, but relatively real in you, and to say that it is like an entity that has its own little intelligence is quite close to the truth, not the absolute truth. It is not an enemy, there's nothing ultimately that's an enemy and that is not you, it is life energy, and the only reason why it's painful is it's stagnant, under pressure, turbulent or heavy, and through the egoic delusions, the me with its constant dissatisfaction and lack and future projections and not enough, that's been over many thousands of years, it's come into being in humans, and then added to through the enormous suffering that humans have inflicted on other humans that increased it, and the torture, the rapes, killings, warfare almost continues in human history.

So humans have been through a lot. If humanity were one single being, you would say he or she has been through a lot. He's been through madness, well, hardly, just beginning to come out of it, and inflicted so much pain, suffered so much, and that's in every human being.

Sometimes the pain body is dormant, you can hardly feel it, not feel it at all, and when it needs to feed again, a little trigger, which could be just a thought in your head that you totally believe in, about yourself, about your relationship, about your position in the world, one little thought arises, you don't recognize it as a little thought, and you believe in it completely, and the pain body is ready to awaken, it will link into that thought, and suddenly it will come to life, it will awaken, and through that thought that's linked into, move into your mind, or it will use a reaction, a little thing goes wrong in your life, they keep you waiting for too long on the phone, or whatever it is, but the pain body was ready to awaken, and suddenly you get an enormous influx of turbulence, anger, or deep sadness, whatever the energy field of your pain body, the predominant energy field is, and then the pain body has awakened, and it will be feeding on your thought processes to start with, and they will reflect the energy field of the pain body, because the pain body can only feed on painful thoughts, and at that moment then you are totally identified, your sense of self, of me, the story of me, is totally identified with that movement of pain, totally identified with the thoughts that are being created by the pain body, and are feeding the pain body, a vicious circle. The old pain in you creates those thoughts, they're all total misinterpretations, they have perhaps a limited truth to them, but they are totally, a total distortion of the truth which is far beyond that, but every thought is totally believed in, and the emotion that comes with the thoughts is the pain body, and it's feeding on the thoughts and getting bigger, the more you think about yourself, or your life situation, the more it feeds, and you sit there in that heaviness or turbulence, and then you're waiting for somebody close to you to come and feed the pain body externally, to give you a reaction of pain, so that you can feed on your partner's or somebody else's reaction, pushing the buttons, and you get the feedback of emotional pain. Drama, I love it, give me more drama, this is, the heaviness of it, it could be the drama of anger, or it could be the drama of great heaviness, and the pain body is feeding, and it works, it uses your environment, at work it might do it, it's looking for pain. So beware when there are walking pain bodies around, and at any given time in the population, the people who are walking around the streets or driving cars, probably one can say 10% of those people are in the middle of pain body attack at any given time.

And they are dangerous, because they want something bad to happen. They don't know it, they don't say, they don't say I want something bad to happen, but they're looking for trouble. And we all meet people like that in that state, they are looking for something bad to happen.

And they are looking at you, challenging you to give them some bad feedback, or the driver is looking for the accident. Many of accidents that happen in traffic are caused by driving pain bodies. They are looking for the next bad thing, and the obvious next bad thing when you're driving is an accident.

Particularly good when two driving pain bodies meet. Then the likelihood is very high that the accident will happen, and then they can create even more pain. There's a recent phenomenon in, I don't know if it's the same here, called road rage, where after the accident, it's not enough for the pain bodies to have caused the accident and feel bad about it, after the accident they jump out of their cars and beat each other up to feel even worse, even kill, some have killed others.

So violence becomes possible in very unconscious people, and there are still many around, when they are in the middle of a pain body attack. There are certain situations where the pain body is more likely to arise because there's very little consciousness in you at those times, getting drunk, for example. Males particularly are prone to becoming violent, more in certain cultures than in others, when they drink.

After a few drinks, they're looking for, and they find something. I mentioned in the book for women, menstruation is a time when the collective female pain body tends to come up, because there is a strong collective aspect to each person's pain body. There's a collective male pain body, there's a collective female pain body, and women have suffered tremendously as women for thousands of years.

The cultures have been patriarchal, and women have been subservient to men and used in many cultures almost like slaves. So there is a strong female pain body that arose through the suffering of women that tends to arise at the time of menstruation and just before, and a woman can observe it at that time and bring more, suddenly, how do you get beyond pain body, that vicious circle? Simply know that it is there.

Bring presence to it, bring, sense it, feel it, there it is, look at it, aware, give it some attention, and what else can you do except to say, there it is? But when you watch it as it arises in you, it cannot use your mind and become an even more unhappy story, more unhappy than even it is unhappy enough without the pain body, the story of me. But when the pain body comes, the story of me becomes dreadful, an awful drama or tragedy, a very self-destructive story, so the pain body doesn't feed anymore on your thinking when you are able to bring attention to it, recognize it, and allow it to be the heaviness or the turbulence, so that it doesn't turn into the illusory self.

And that is the primary challenge of all those who are now going through this transformation of consciousness. Their primary challenge is not to lose themselves again in the pain body each time it comes, because it has enormous momentum. Wow!

Enormous momentum is contained in that, and alertness is required so that you can recognize it when it comes, especially if you can recognize it in its early stages, just as it begins to come up as a reaction, as a thought, and you feel the heaviness descending or the turbulence coming up, hmm, there it is. Or you may recognize it next time, even in the middle of it, it can happen, as presence is arising, when you are having, re-enacting the weekly drama with your partner, to suddenly, in the middle of it, wake up, and you suddenly realize we are acting it out again, and to sense the turbulence of it, wow, this feels very agitated, very turbulent, wow, there's the pain body, interesting. What do you do with it?

You can't get rid of it just like that. It is, there it is, there's the human pain body. You allow it to be.

It's a strange thing to allow the pain body to be, and then the pain body is not a self anymore, it doesn't become a self, an unhappy self. All that's left of it is turbulence, or heaviness, or tightness, fear, anger, sadness, depression, whatever form, hmm, maybe there's one out there. So you will find pain body in yourself, and you will see it more easily in others, and it's the challenge, it's your challenge to recognize it, really all that's needed is to recognize it.

Don't have to do anything beyond that, but to see it for what it is, just the seeing. The seeing implies that you just let it be, you can't see it without letting it be. There it is.

All that's ultimately needed is to see it and say, there it is, and then continue to watch that. Then it cannot feed anymore on your thoughts. It doesn't become a self.

All that's left is, it's almost a physical thing now. It's emotional, but it has a very strong physical component. It changes the chemistry of your body.

If you could examine the inner chemistry of your body, you would see the changes in the body chemistry that happen every time pain body arises in you, color of the stomach lining changes to red, innumerable changes in circulation, how the organs function, you could examine all that, so it has a very strong physical component. It is almost reduced to a physical symptom when you watch it, emotional, half emotional, half physical. But the main thing is, it's no longer an entity, a me.

You don't mistake it anymore, and then it's not, the energy then gradually becomes transmuted. It becomes freed from its stuckness, it couldn't flow anymore, but by allowing it, it begins to flow again, the energy that was contained in here. And it's very often people with heavy pain bodies have the greatest motivation to become free, because they just can't stand it anymore.

Again and again, I was such a person, who had such a heavy pain body, that one night, when it came up very strongly again, I couldn't live with myself anymore. Now myself was the pain body. And the mind made story, energized by the pain body, heavy, intolerable, I can't live with myself.

I didn't know at the time that that wasn't myself, but the sentence arose in my mind, I cannot live with myself any longer. I can't live with myself any longer, it's just too much. And then there was a stepping back from that thought, and I looked at the structure of the thought, I cannot live with myself.

Am I one or two? This sentence seems to imply that I'm two, I and the self that I cannot live with. Who is the self and who am I?

This could be a question that a Zen master might ask you, who is the self and who are you? It's a koan, but it could be. This koan arose spontaneously, it didn't have an answer, koans don't have real answers, not on the mind level, they just stop your mind.

And at that strange moment, I, and this is the whole essence of the teaching now, what happened that night, I didn't understand it at all until years later, I separated itself from the self, including the pain body. I, the sense of presence, consciousness, had become mixed with form, thought forms and emotional forms, the bundle of me. And suddenly, because it became so painful, I withdrew from identification with thoughts and emotions and remained in the state of the simple I am presence.

And I am is never unhappy, only the self is unhappy. I am is free, always. So it came out and then the self was no longer being sustained by identification with it, and it collapsed.

And what was left was, I am. And the next morning, I am said, how can I be so peaceful? What happened?

Something happened, but I don't know what. Just peace, wherever I go, there's peace. In the middle of the noisy traffic in the city, that's peaceful, everything is so peaceful, what happened?

No idea. I didn't know until years later that the self and the pain body had self-destructed. And this is relatively rare, I realized later.

For most humans, the process is a little bit more gradual. It's a gradual disidentification from the story, the mind-made self and the energy field of pain body. You're stepping out, you're drawn back in, step out, get drawn back in.

And gradually, presence arises more and more. But that was just amazing to see how the story of me evaporated. And then I didn't realize either that the peace was there, because there wasn't all that much thinking anymore.

Because without the story of me, there isn't that much to think about. And suddenly everything was so alive, which of course it always is. It was no longer obscured by the veil of conceptualization and labeling.

Aliveness. Everywhere. Peace.

And so that's, then this is the universal process of recognition. The pain that is old pain is human pain. Nothing personal.

Not an identity. Just pain. So all that's required is to see it when it arises, instead of being it.

That is the illusion. Because then it's, I am that pain. I am that story that's associated with that pain.

I am very heavy. I am very unhappy. And so there's the simple seeing.

Then I am doesn't get mixed up with that. So that is our task, is to be there as the witness of the pain body, one could say, and let it be. And at first you won't sense a lot of space around it, because pain body at first occupies everything.

They can be so heavy that they seem to, they occupy your entire being and they seem to, that heaviness seems to color all your sense perceptions and all your thoughts and the entire world seems to be heavy with it. And so you allow it to be and at first there's just a little bit of space around it suddenly. And then suddenly there's a bit more space around it.

And the more you allow it to be, the greater the spaciousness around it. And then it seems, the pain body seems to shrink. It does shrink, but also it shrinks because you have a different perspective on it.

And then the space is so much vaster than that. This is the process of transformation. So also not making an identity out of the pain body for other human beings.

Because as you go through life, very often you encounter humans that are in the grip of pain body. And you will probably recognize it more easily now. If you know people well, you can see the shift that comes over them as the pain body takes them over, immediately, as the entire energy field changes.

And this has been a shock for many people who got married. These days it happens less, but in the past, many people got married without ever living together at first. So they would get married and then start living together.

And so after getting married, you would certainly meet your partner's pain body. It can be a dreadful shock because, of course, you didn't know what it was. You just thought, this was the person I married, the beautiful angel, or Mr. Right, and suddenly turns into this monster. Is he now showing his real face? Is that her real self that she's been hiding from me? And so it can easily be misinterpreted, and it's spoiled many honeymoons, because it hasn't been recognized as the pain body.

You thought, oh, I made a dreadful mistake marrying that person. Of course, the truth is, whoever you marry will have a pain body unless they're already free, and there are not yet many that are free. Freedom is secondary from pain body.

The question is whether they are totally identified with it or not. As presence comes through you into the relationship, that will affect the other person also. If you can talk about the pain body when you're not being possessed by it in times of consciousness, talk about your last pain body attack and the drama that came out of it.

When was it? Oh yes, the day before yesterday. Where did it start?

How did it start? What triggered it? What did you first feel?

What did I first feel? And then what? And then we started shouting at each other, and then we were totally in it.

Isn't that interesting? And three hours later we finally came out of it. Three days later, who knows?

And so you can sometimes, I very rarely say think about the past, but in this instance, it occasionally can be helpful just to briefly relive a past pain body episode, and as you relive it, bring presence into it and watch what happened. If you watch what happened, it'll be easier to watch what happens when it happens again. Then you can watch it then, as you watched it.

It's a little bit easier, much easier in fact, to watch a past pain body attack, because you have a distance, it's only a memory, but even then it can happen as you start to remember it, it's happening again. So if you bring your attention back with your partner and say let's look at the last pain body drama that we went through, and if you're not alert, it can happen that reliving it can activate it again, and before long you're shouting at each other again, no it didn't start in me, it started in you. You were the first to say, no it didn't.

And then perhaps in the middle of that you suddenly wake up. When you wake up, it's the most beautiful thing that could happen, is to wake up in the middle of a pain body attack and suddenly laugh or smile. That's the beginning of liberation, then it's really happening.

And there are couples now who are, to whom this is happening. If you don't yet wake up in the middle of it, you wake up just afterwards, oh there it was again. If your partner doesn't want to hear about pain body, then what can you do?

If you say let's talk about pain body and he says, I don't want to hear about pain body.

You do your own thing, I do my thing. And so all you can do is stay present when his or her pain body comes up.

And it wants you to be unhappy too, that's what pain bodies do. And it will do everything it can to make you unhappy and finally get a reaction. So you have to be really present and then if one partner stays conscious, it cannot not affect the other.

Or in frustration, the other is going to leave you. The frustration is that the pain body is not being fed enough living with you. And so the pain body says, okay, I'm going to look for somewhere else for pain because this is not feeding me.

It also happens that people feel strongly attracted to each other because their pain bodies are mutually compatible. And sometimes this is the basis of certain relationships. It's unconscious, of course.

So they are acting out what they have to act out and it works perfectly. And that strong, compelling pull towards another person that is sometimes called falling in love, that enormous pull towards another person is sometimes, or has a strong element quite often, also of a pain body that recognises a compatible pain body. And pain body can get mixed up with sexuality also, of only feeling sexually excited with somebody who is going to cause you some pain.

It doesn't have to be physical necessarily, but some kind of drama involved, that pain in the drama that can give you a stimulus. And again, if that's the case, just watching it is helpful, it's enough. If that is, and this happens more often than humans realise, and some humans are condemned to repeating the same cycle unconsciously.

They say, this time I want a husband who is kind and helpful and gentle and compassionate, not that jerk that I had last time. And then you think you find the one and you start living together and suddenly the same jerk comes out again. And you thought he was gentle and compassionate, but you got attracted to his pain body.

And it comes out, and suddenly, the same thing again. That was the attraction. That is described, there was some years ago, there was a very popular book, it didn't mention pain body as such, but it mentioned from the perspective of women, women who love too much, was the title, how unconsciously, through being forced to act out certain conditioned patterns, continuously choose the wrong man.

It happens to men also of course. So this is very interesting to watch in oneself, in one's relationship. Pain bodies with children, children have pain bodies also.

Children also suffer from pain body attacks. Most children do. If you are a parent, you will then recognise when a child is suddenly totally taken over by his or her pain body.

Whatever the child does, withdraws completely, has a screaming fit, throws him or herself on the floor, throws things, is transformed in one moment from an angel into a monster. And many parents have witnessed that in their children, say, what is going on here? They don't realise it happens to them also.

Maybe a little bit more disguised, it's the human pain body in the child. And so a parent can simply point out to the child afterwards, not in the middle, except later on, but at first not in the middle of it, afterwards, what was that? What did it feel like?

Wasn't that strange? When did you first feel it? Does it have a name?

Temporary name or only temporary? Oh, it's called the green monster. Okay.

And so occasionally it comes and gets hold of you. Yeah. Okay.

Two days later, the pain body, you can watch, oh, is the green monster coming? There it is. And then of course the pain body will already be in the child and the pain body will always deny itself and it will say, no, I'm not the green monster.

Your partner will do the same. If you say to your partner, is that your pain body? He or she will throw something at you and deny it.

The pain body will never admit that it's the pain body. Oh yes, I am the pain body. So this is the work of, you help children.

If they teach at school that pain bodies happen, that people have pain bodies and that you can actually watch it, that would be an enormous thing to tell, even a five-year-old will understand it because it's so simple, it's so obvious. There it is. And then presence can arise.

That's it. So the pain body seems an obstacle, but it's the greatest incentive for becoming free. And it's almost as if the energy that is contained in there then becomes the fuel for consciousness, becomes the fuel for presence, becomes transmuted and is transmuted into presence.

And so it often is that people with very heavy pain bodies quickly go beyond, disidentify from. People with moderate pain bodies, they can live with themselves. They have found an arrangement of living with themselves.

Periodically, yes, they get unhappy, but it's okay, I can manage. But if you're very heavy, you get so fed up with yourself that you will want to be free. In Eastern terms, one could say pain body is karma because it's the accumulated, it's an aspect of karma, it's the accumulated past in you, the conditioned past in you, which you identify as yourself.

That is karma. To identify with a conditioned past in me as myself is acting out karma. And the acting out of karma is the renewing of karma.

Action, reaction, that's the meaning of karma. Action, reaction, it's the vicious circle. You're being forced to act out your conditioning.

And a large part of your conditioning is the human collective conditioning. So that's the action of karma. In karma you can't really get to the end of karma through time.

You can't really say, okay, if I wait long enough, finally I will come to the end of karma. No, because it renews itself. The end of karma is not through time, but through accessing the power of now.

Then you come to the end of action, reaction. So it's only in the now that karma dissolves, through accessing the power that is inherent here in this presence. Wonderful.

Many of you would not be here if it weren't for your pain bodies. Already you've created so much trouble and suffering for yourself that you had to wake up, just as I did. So you're waking up.

When we have these gatherings, time passes very quickly. It's strange. And so it's happened again.

It's only been one moment that's why it passed so quickly. There may be some questions in your minds, but the clock tells us that we need to stop now. What about these questions?

Is there any question that is truly critical, that you need to know the answer to? There can be no presence unless you know the answer to this question. And you cannot surrender to what is unless you know the answer.

No, there isn't. We don't need any questions.

Eckhart Tolle Talk Retreat Sowing Seeds of Consciousness in Pondicherry Chennai Rishikesh Mumbai INDIA

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 8:30:22)

To this gathering, I'm very happy to be here. This is the first talk in India, the place where it all started, the birthplace of spirituality, one could say, where thousands of years ago consciousness, for the first time, began to flower through the human form in a few isolated individuals here and there, early flowers. And those early flowers of human consciousness left behind maps or signposts pointing the way to the transformation of human consciousness.

And in time, in other places too, consciousness flowered here and there. And so signposts came into being, maps, signposts, in the form of scriptures, some of them very beautiful, to help us find the way back. Because even then, thousands of years ago, humanity was already lost.

And then over the centuries, there were many people who became interpreters of signposts. They studied the signposts, collected the signposts, compared the signposts, and some of them are very beautiful. And sometimes neglected, or even forgot, that every teaching, every spiritual teaching, points beyond itself.

It's never in the words. The words only point. But there was a tendency of getting attached to words, and deriving an enhanced sense of identity from attachment to certain words.

So I'm saying this because also tonight, words are spoken. One could say a new signpost, pointing to the same place. Not to get attached to the words, but always look beyond the words.

The words are not it. The essence of all spiritual teachings is very simple. They all point to the possibility of the transformation of human consciousness.

They also point out, before they speak of that, that there is a dysfunction in human consciousness. Lost. Humans are lost because of that dysfunction.

And they call that dysfunction by different names. Different teachings, different traditions, call that dysfunction by different names. It may be called delusion, or illusion.

It may be called suffering, which according to the Buddha is an intrinsic part of the human condition. It could be called sin in the Christian teachings. Original sin.

Again, it's been sometimes misinterpreted. They all point to the same thing. Something is not functional.

And of course if you look at human history, one place you can look to find out whether this is true, and you read human history, you will see how insane most of that is. Read 20th century history, and what humans have done to other humans. Untold suffering inflicted by humans on other humans.

So the worst century of all has been the 20th century in those terms. And we are carrying on now. So if you look at human history, then you have to come to the conclusion there's some very strong streak of insanity running through it.

Or another way to find out about it is to switch on television. And another way to find out about it is to observe your own mind. And there's nothing personal in that.

Your own mind is the human mind. And when you begin to become aware of the human mind, you realize, first of all, the simple fact that it rarely stops. There's a continuous stream of thinking.

And for most people, that is the reality that they inhabit. Their reality is thought-based. In other words, they are identified completely with that continuous stream of thinking.

And the emotion that go with that stream of thinking. And of course, the entire stream of thinking that never stops. The compulsion to think, which is in every human being.

One could almost say the addiction to thinking is in everyone. And it's considered normal. Nobody even questions it.

So humans are trapped in mental noise. And the emotions that accompany mental noise. What does it mean when we say they are trapped in?

It means they derive their sense of self from mind movements, from that continuous stream of thinking. Their sense of identity, their sense of self is completely in there, in the stream of thought. And that begins at a very early age.

To mistake the stream of thinking for who you are. So ultimately, bondage ultimately is bondage to thought. To be totally identified with thought movements.

And you don't know yourself beyond that. So your entire sense of self is derived from mind. And so, the first thing a child learns is his or her name.

This is the beginning of mistaking thought for who you are. And immediately, your sense of identity narrows tremendously the moment you learn your name. And then you repeat the name.

Then the name becomes the receptacle for further accumulations, things that the mind accumulates, content. And from then onwards, the mind is seeking to enhance its content, its accumulations in the form of experiences, knowledge, whatever it can add to its store of content. And out of that, a sense of identity grows.

A story-based me. Me and my story. And so, that me, thought-based me, based on past, lives in a state of dissatisfaction and unease.

It cannot be free of that for very long. Because that mind-based sense of identity, that mind-based sense of self, is by its very nature dissatisfied and uneasy. And you can test it in your own life, if you look at your sense of self, that it does not yet, except in those who have gone beyond mind identification, your sense of self does not feel complete.

There is a strange sense of not quite having made it yet. Not having reached all you could reach. Not having made it.

And you look around, and you might look at some other people and say, surely they made it, but I haven't made it yet. My sense of self is not yet complete. That sense of incompleteness is built into every mind-based sense of self.

People mistake it for their personal problem. The story of me, that limited sense of identity, my past, my experiences, is never satisfied at ease for long. Briefly, you may believe that now my sense of self has completed itself.

I finally arrived. A sense of elation comes over you. You found the ideal partner, or a very good job.

Something good has just happened. You have received a lot of money. Surely now I'm free.

Surely now I know who I am. And before long, that proves to be a little soap bubble. The wedding still is part of the delusion that now your sense of self is complete.

And most films that you watch, they end there. Because only if the director cuts there, can the delusion be upheld that on the level of story, you can reach some kind of completion or fulfillment. So there is an enormous urge in everyone to add more to the content of one's mind, to seek for further content to add in order to enhance me, my sense of self, through knowledge, through relationships, through experiences, through accumulation of wealth, status, other people's opinions, also as content that you can add to yourself.

And so this entity, the mind-based me, the egoic entity, is continuously looking out for more. Because there is this deep-seated feeling of not enough. It's not enough.

I'm not yet myself. And there is the belief, unconscious, semi-conscious, that I can become fully myself by adding more to me, to myself, in whatever form. So that compulsion for more can even be operating as you sit here.

Because you want to, the human mind wants to say, what is it that I can take home from here? What new facts, or new beliefs, it loves beliefs, can add some new belief and can identify with that. And that for a little while enhances my sense of self.

The conversion phenomenon. They're all extremely enthusiastic once they convert to something. And then after a year or two that wears off, and then they need more.

That wasn't it either. So even here the need for more could be operating. What is it that he can give me, that I can take home?

In some, there you can go to seminars where people even give you folders. You can take them home with you. All the information that you can have accumulated during the seminar.

Oh, it feels good for a while. Now I have all the answers here. And then you realize after a while, oh that wasn't, that wasn't all the answers.

So to observe that compulsion for more, which is there because of the state of dissatisfaction or non-completion that is inherent in the mind-identified human condition. And that means of course, because the story of me is not all that satisfying, except for brief delusory moments, the story of me is not all that satisfying. It hasn't quite worked the way it was supposed to.

And people don't realize that that non-satisfaction of a story-based identity is built into the structure of the human mind and has nothing to do with their particular story. It is not in the nature of that sense of identity to be able to give you fulfillment or completion. So people believe there must be something not right because I haven't arrived.

You cannot complete yourself, find yourself, be yourself on the level of story or through adding more to the story of me. And that's an enormous pull in human beings for more expresses itself as the psychological need, very deep seated for future, the psychological need for the next moment. And that is deeply embedded in the human mind that pull towards future.

Because it's only through future that you can, the future the mind believes can give you the more. Future can complete you. Through future you can finally be fully yourself.

All you need is, says the mind, the mind based me, all you need is just a little bit more future. And surely then I can make it finally. And then a little bit more.

And so there comes the trying to make your life work and there's nothing wrong with obviously adding things to you. It's part of phenomenal existence that there are experiences, you go and explore the world, you learn a new skill, a new language and whatever it is, all these things you can add to you. But through that finding yourself never works.

Through that arriving at that sense of deep rootedness, saying I'm home, I have arrived home. That continuous deep peace that comes with that ultimately, that sense of intense aliveness that Jesus described as abundant life or the fullness of life. That's what he pointed to.

And that on the level of story cannot be obtained through more of this or more of that. In other words, it cannot be obtained through future. And this is particularly interesting when we come to spiritual seekers.

Spiritual seekers are those who have seen the fallacy and the futility of finding themselves through wealth, through status, through worldly achievement, through relationships. Perhaps they have tried it and seen that the dissatisfaction that is there, if you are looking for yourself through that, if you're looking for a more complete sense of self through that, but the spiritual seeker then shifts the search for self. But not enough.

The spiritual seeker is still seeking to add something to him or herself through more future. The spiritual seeker implies that he or she is seeking in future, through future. And after 10, 20, 30 years of being a spiritual seeker, you're still a seeker.

And you might be say, okay, that's okay. A few more lifetimes of seeking perhaps. So condemned to a continuous state of non-fulfillment, living in and through a false sense of self, a story-based sense of self that not only has built into it the element of dissatisfaction and unease, more than that, the story-based sense of self seeks out conflict and problems to enhance itself, to create a stronger sense of self through having enemies somewhere.

And that is unconscious. It is an unconscious movement. The need for enemies in the form of people, situations, places, the need for conflict is an intrinsic part of the mind-based, thought-based sense of self.

Because it strengthens its selfhood through opposition, through fighting, through being against something, having an enemy. Hence, an enormously powerful need for humans to be right, even in simple things like an argument in your relationship. The need for the other person to be wrong, to identify again with mind, with a mental position.

You adopt a perspective or a position and your sense of self flows into what is no more than a thought movement. But your sense of self moves into that thought and thought becomes self. And so somebody disagrees with you or challenges your position, your mental position, and it is regarded unconsciously as an attack on your very self-identity, on me.

And so there's an enormous emotional defense mechanism, an attack mechanism that comes into play because you now need that other person to be wrong. And if you can, the other person can be wrong for a moment, your sense of self, which is always shaky, the mind-based, becomes strengthened. And so you've won an argument or you have shouted and then you've you ran out of the room so that the counter argument cannot reach you anymore.

And so you have triumphed. The self for a moment has triumphed. The need to be right collectively you see as warfare between nations.

Collectively they identify with a position, a mental, a rigid identity. The self, because the self is not only personal selfhood, a strong part of the self, can be collective, me or us, nation, tribe, religion. So part of that sense of mind-based, mental position-based sense of self, sometimes a very large part, sometimes a smaller part, is collective, a collective us against them.

And any collective us that then gives, is part of every individual sense of identity, nationalism, religion, whatever it may be, that you can see how they need their enemies and that is enormously satisfying to their sense, their false sense of self. It strengthens temporarily the delusion of me or us. And so nation may go at war, go to war, and it's very, people sometimes are elated in that.

And the stronger the mind identification, the greater the need for enemies because then you draw a line. This is me, there's a strengthened and enhanced sense of separateness. And that is the illusion of being that separate entity, me, and that your enemy is absolutely needed to, so that your sense of self can perpetuate itself.

So you can see examples in last century, Germany went to war with almost the entire world. So it's just one example of delusion and needing more and more enemies and their sense of collective sense of self became enormously enhanced. Every human being felt more themselves for a few years.

Suicides almost disappeared completely at that time. It was a strengthening of the illusion and for a while it always works and then it collapses because it always reveals itself as an illusion in the end. So the mind-based sense of self has a strong need for enemies, not only the collective mind-based sense of self, also the personal mind-based sense of self, the need in relationships for drama, the need for problems.

We all know people who love to talk about their problems, some more than others, but the tendency is in everyone. Please listen to my problems, they are important and if you listen you will confirm to me that yes, I have important problems, so I am important. It's unconscious of course.

The more important my problems, the more important I feel and I can think about it day and night in that continuous stream of thinking that never stops with its heaviness, me and my problems. How am I ever going to solve them? And you don't want to solve them.

That would be the end of the false sense of self. It strives on problems. It loves it.

You can see it collectively how the speakers on, the news readers on TV, they strive on problems collectively. It's very rare that they talk about something that is not problematic as news. Every news is problematic.

So here we have on a personal level the need for enemies expresses itself most strongly in making the one thing that could free you, the one thing that potentially is liberating, of making that also into an enemy in the egoic delusion. What is that one thing that is potentially liberating, the one that is the only real thing in your whole life? It's the present moment and the mind-based sense of self denies it continuously, runs away with it continuously, resists it continuously, argues with it continuously.

The now, which is life itself, all there is ever in your life, now, and this little entity is fighting against it or trying to get away from it to some future moment where I'm going to complete myself. I'm looking for the fullness of life there and I'm going to get there. And then you miss here and you miss now and you miss the fullness of life that is already here by paying no attention to it whatsoever.

Your attention is there, always looking there. And even many spiritual seekers do that. They are seeking to achieve a future state, a state, a projected state of whatever it is called, liberation, enlightenment, seeking to arrive at a mental projection of you as more complete, more perfect than now.

Note the word more, an essential part. And so they are moving, and every spiritual practice, there are beautiful spiritual practices, there are beautiful meditations. The good ones are so simple.

The powerful meditation practices are designed to take you into now totally. The only problem with them is not so much the meditation technique, although some techniques give you too much time to become good at it, but the meditator is, the practitioner is the problem, because the practitioner, no matter how beautiful the spiritual practice may be, is trying to get somewhere and become more through it, even become good at it. So not yet good enough.

The person who is trying to enhance his or her sense of self through relationships, money, or status also feeds the same, not yet enough. I'm not yet myself. And the one, the essence of all teachings is that you are already yourself fully and completely now.

Now, how do you know this to be true? How can you know this to be true? Not mentally, not by believing.

I believe that I'm already fully myself. Well, that's a comforting belief, but it doesn't free you. It's one more belief, which for a little while feels good, because you've added something.

I believe in now. Okay, comforting, but are you there? So how do we, if all the ancient teachings and teachers, and more recent teachings and teachers, and now of course the teaching is accelerating because humanity is coming to a point of where its survival is at stake, the madness on the planet, the dysfunction of the human mind has become magnified through the means of science and technology more and more.

And so for the first time, very recently, humanity was able to completely destroy itself and the planet, and that possibility is still there very strongly. In fact, if no change happens in human consciousness this century, it will be the last. The planet cannot endure another hundred years of madness, the same as the 20th, but worse, which inevitably it would be.

Worse not only collectively, worse for every individual as more misery, more anger, confusion, madness, in every individual, as many children these days live out already totally disconnected, totally identified with thinking, looking just for the next stimulus. So this, the beauty of being alive now is that you're living in a time of crisis on the planet, and for the first time those rare flowers, and what they showed us, the early teachers, the early masters, for the first time, because there's no longer a choice, this transformation of consciousness is now open for great numbers of people for the first time, whereas before, very rare flowers appeared here and there.

The species needs to evolve to that new state of consciousness or it will die, and this is why it's happening. So the question arises, how? How, if that's, yes, the transformed state of consciousness in which I no longer inflict suffering on myself and other human beings, in which I no longer inhabit a world of problems and conflict, in which I emanate love, compassion, and aliveness, and in which I move as a blessing on this planet rather than as a curse on this planet, this new state of consciousness, yes, I want it.

How do I get there? The mind says, because you're obviously not there, so how do you get there? So the mind is asking, it wants to know, tell me how to get from here to there.

It still believes that that state of consciousness is there. The amazing thing is, underneath the mental noise, that state of consciousness is already there. A vast pool of stillness, of unconditioned consciousness, the mind is the conditioned, is already there, just waiting to emerge.

So how? The question arises, okay, if I cannot get there in the future, then what does that mean? It means to use the portal of the present moment.

And walk through that. How? It's quite simply, you realize that there is nothing else but now, ever.

Your life is always now. You also realize that until this moment you have lived in a way that denied the now, running away from now, always looking to the next moment. It's going more important than this.

The now was a means to an end, that's the normal human state of consciousness. And you realize that, and then a little shift happens, and that shift can only happen now, and that shift is, internally, you're no longer arguing with now. You surrender your arguments with the present moment, a complete alignment with the is-ness, or the suchness, as the Buddha used that expression, of now.

No inner resistance to now, but a welcoming of now, because you realize that now is life itself, and therefore you welcome life itself. And it is now. That is aligning yourself with life.

When you are not aligned with now internally, you are out of alignment with life, and that is the dysfunction. That keeps the egoic self going continuously. The conditioning of the human mind has been building up for thousands and thousands of years, the egoic entity, but the amazing thing is you don't need thousands of years for it to dissolve.

It is no longer operating when your attention moves into the present moment. And what that means, we're exploring that right now, what that means, your attention moves into the present moment, and then you find a very simple fact, which explains why people believe that their life, or even one day, consists of many moments, which is not the case. They believe that because there's a continuous fluctuation of the form that this moment takes, the form that this moment takes changes continuously.

This is because, this is why people believe that there are many moments, because they mistake the form that this moment takes for the depths of this moment of now. And all they relate to and identify with is the form that the now takes. This is what they react against.

So this is very, so, and more often than not, the form that this moment takes in your field of consciousness, it appears as a situation, it appears as a place, it appears as a person. That's the form this moment takes. Very often, the form that this moment takes is some form of limitation on your life.

And that's why people don't like the now. Because every time something, a new form arises in the now, it seems to be more often than not, just another limitation. And so there is this deep longing, and this is the self, the seeking for who you are beyond the limited.

Knowing yourself as the unlimited. And it seems that the present moment is your heart's enemy, because all it gives you, or most of the time, is some more limitation through the person that you don't want to be having to confront, a situation you don't want to have to confront, but it's here. And even if suddenly your life becomes changed dramatically through winning 10 million dollars in the lottery, of course there's the delusion for a moment that now the unlimited has arrived.

And then there's other limitations would come very quickly, perhaps even created by your wealth. You would very quickly find new limitations entering now. So this is why, since there is this deep-seated search to know yourself as unlimited, this is why it seems so nonsensical, especially to the egoic me, it seems nonsensical to accept the present moment.

It's this, are you telling me that I should accept that limitation on my life and then be stuck with it forever? This doesn't make sense. And so people live in that continuous denial, trying to get to a future point where you've added enough to be free and unlimited.

And so the circle continues. Now, the only way to break the circle is to say yes internally to the form that this moment takes. And yes, it will probably be more often than not some form of limitation seemingly.

But you cannot go beyond limitation by running away from limitation or denying it or mentally projecting yourself to a moment where you're free. And an amazing miracle happens when internally you say yes totally to the form that this moment takes. Even if it is a limitation or appears to be a limitation on you, internally it is not resisted.

In other words, you allow this moment to be as it is completely. This does not mean that now you are passive, you're condemned to sitting for the rest of your life like the Buddha and not move anymore. The Buddha was moving continuously.

We know only because of this Buddha Rupa, we think that he sat all the time. He traveled and he talked and he taught. You're not condemned to inactivity.

It doesn't mean you cannot change a situation. It doesn't mean you cannot take action. It simply means the basis for action is the state of acceptance and surrender and yes to now.

The basis for action is not denial of life, a little egoic entity trying to strengthen itself which becomes a motivating factor for action or to protect itself. The two motivating factors for action in the egoic state are desire, the need for more, or fear, protect myself because I might lose the little that I have. So these two motivate people and in normal existence there are no other motivating factors except desire and fear.

They motivate what people do and say and speak and think. All the compulsive thought movements, if you look into them, governed by desire and fear. And this is the trap and this is, humans are trapped in that and that's their little me and they don't know the essence of their being as unlimited.

They don't know who they are beyond the little person with its little past and little future and then gone. So we move into the state of total, unconditional, even I would say radical acceptance of now. No argument with it internally because it is futile to argue with is.

It is. What is, is. How can you, it is already.

It's, what argument could there be? This moment is as it is. And so you recognize that is, is already.

So you welcome that is-ness completely. And this is, looks bad to the little me because what you welcome in many cases is actually welcoming some form of limitation. So how does that free you if you welcome the now and it is a limitation on your life?

It limits you. So what, what, what happens when you completely allow this moment to be as it is, completely aligned with it? And there's a limitation.

Maybe even an extreme limitation. Maybe even a prison cell around you. Maybe even the body no longer able to move very much.

Extreme forms of limitation perhaps. And there is an uncompromising, for many of you it'll be little meditations and occasionally big ones, whatever the now, whatever form the now takes. An uncompromising and radical yes.

Aligned. Now, what I say now one cannot really speak of. I'm simply using words to point internally you will sense what the words point to.

When you completely accept this moment because that's all there is, it's life itself, there is suddenly a sense of space or spaciousness around whatever happens in the now. Even around the limitation, an inner sense of space. And there's the form of this moment.

Something is just broken down. You've just lost something. Somebody has just left you.

There it's gone. And there's a yes. The allowing brings about a recognition of a vast spaciousness around whatever happens in the now.

And that is the depth of now. And what is that? It is the unconditioned itself, formless, unconditioned consciousness.

And it is the arising of stillness that comes with acceptance of what is. The compulsion to think perpetuates, the compulsion to think perpetuates the conditions that are being resisted through that compulsive thinking. So this is an amazing shift that can only happen now from being out of alignment to suddenly being empowered by life.

The one consciousness, the one intelligence can suddenly move through you, can suddenly express itself fully through you. It's not being blocked anymore. You're aligned with the power of life or consciousness itself.

And that becomes the power that acts and speaks through you. That is the flowering of human consciousness. When the conditioned gives way to the unconditioned.

Not that it totally disappears. You still exist as this form for a little while. But you know yourself as the formless one life through surrender to now, through that primordial spiritual practice that has no future in it.

The primordial spiritual practice with absolutely no future, it's alignment with now. The master, there's only one difference between the master, the spiritual master and you. The spiritual master has absolutely no argument with now.

Whatever happens is met in total yes. And that is the power of the master. Through that he or she is a master.

Not through more knowledge. The great masters had less knowledge than almost anybody of you. They didn't need accumulated knowledge.

You can have it or not have it. It's not vital. It's part of the phenomenal world that you play with.

So this is the primordial practice of surrender to what is. And their vast spaciousness opens up through that. And that field of spaciousness is the now.

Beyond that which happens in it, it's the depth of now. And what is that? What does that mean?

It's the unconditioned consciousness itself. The essence of all life. The essence of you.

The essence of all life. Knowing yourself as that is the flowering and from then on no suffering is created within you. No suffering is created for other human beings through you.

You simply emanate compassion, love, aliveness. The personal has given way to that which is beyond the person. And you still operate on the personal when needed.

Your name is still perhaps in the phone book. Not disappeared for a little while. Your name is in the phone book and one day your name disappears from the phone book.

Oh, he's gone. Quickly. And so this is vital for humans to enter that state of consciousness now.

It wants to emerge. If it didn't want to emerge, that state, there would be nothing we could do. Sometimes people ask, is there anything we can do?

Yes and no. To totally say yes to now, one could say it's almost a non-doing. Everything else is doing.

And now you need to be aware of one thing and that is the planet having suffered from human unconsciousness, having suffered from dysfunction of the collective human mind for thousands of years. There's an accumulation on the planet of one could almost say pain or heavy negativity, an energy field of that, that humans have created over thousands of years. A field of pain in the collective of the planet.

That is often something that will emerge inside you as what I call the human pain body. That is past pain that lives in you from your personal life, childhood, from parents, what they did or didn't do. Humans carry inside their share of human pain, emotional pain, which is no more than contracted life energy through egoic delusion.

So this is something that you need to recognize because otherwise that can obscure your practice of uncompromising yes to what is and will many times obscure the arising consciousness if you cannot recognize it. The pain body that humans carry as their share of human pain, residues left of pain that you have suffered and pain that the whole of humanity has suffered, that I call that field of pain the pain body that lives in humans. And it may be certain pain bodies are predominantly angry.

They have the vibration of anger. Other pain bodies have the vibration of great fear. Other pain bodies have the vibration of heaviness, sadness, depression.

That is whatever the predominant vibration of the pain body is in your case, it is human pain. That you will have to face periodically because the human pain body has two stages, dormant and active. When it's dormant, you might feel not so bad.

There's still the egoic searching for future and being uneasy in the present moment and looking for the next moment and it's never quite enough. That's still there but you can live with that. But then the pain body becomes active.

Periodically it needs to become active because it needs to take in more food. It needs more pain. It needs the experience of further pain and you can see it in your life very often when a little trigger in the form of a thought, somebody saying something or a little thing going wrong brings up suddenly an enormous amount of emotional pain.

And that emotional pain or anger, heaviness, it moves into the mind and without knowing it, it controls your thinking. And your thinking then reflects the energy of the pain body. Angry thoughts, depressed thoughts, fearful thoughts, every thought feeds the pain body because thought is an energy form.

The pain body loves it. It loves to run your mind. So when people, when your pain body is active and it may last for a few hours, it may last for a few days, the active period, the incessant mental noise that people are trapped in, that is bad enough even when the pain body is not amplifying it, the incessant mental noise that humans are trapped in becomes of unbearable heaviness or unbearable fear.

And it's hard, almost can't live with that anymore. And that moves, it moves into the mind and it feeds on your thinking. It loves it.

In other words, you are identified with the pain body and then it will feed on other people. The pain body, when it possesses you, will try other people to give you pain. You will then provoke some drama in your relationship so that you can get the feedback of pain from your wife or husband.

Or somebody in the family or somebody close to you. It wants, one could call the pain body the addiction to pain in human beings. And so when that is operating, you don't know what you are doing.

You're simply at the mercy of an unconscious movement of needing to express human pain. The pain flows into the mind and amplifies the story of me, which then becomes very unhappy, extremely unhappy, a very unhappy story, a very unhappy self. It makes the sense of self very heavy.

But in egoic delusion, even that the ego likes, because the painful ego is a very strong ego, and it's looking for somebody else to make unhappy. It wants to make someone unhappy and usually succeeds. And so once it has taken on enough food from somebody close to you as feedback of emotional pain or your mind, it subsides and you feel a little bit better.

And then a few days later, a couple of weeks later, it comes up again. And so here the uncompromising yes will very often apply not so much to what arises externally in your life in this now, but also what arises internally in this now. And sometimes what arises internally will be a pain movement.

And a certain degree of alertness is needed so that the deeply conditioned, very old pain movement does not overpower you and use your thoughts again. And you become it. And you're forced to act it out until it leaves you for a little while.

It's still there, but it goes, becomes dormant to digest its food, so to speak. So alertness is needed so that you can watch the arising of the pain body as it happens directly. So it cannot use your mind, feed on your thinking.

You watch it and what do you do with it? It is. You allow it to be.

You allow the form that this moment takes to be. And you may not succeed each time with the pain body because it can come so quickly that only afterwards you suddenly wake up. It's, oh, that was the pain body.

But as presence arises in you, which is that unconditioned consciousness, it will be easier to stay present when the movement of pain seeks to overpower you and control you. And so you bring that alert presence to it that comes with unconditionally accepting what is and knowing yourself, not looking for yourself in anything that arises in this now.

You are not the pain body.

It is human pain. It seeks to become a self, to strengthen the illusion of self, a me. When you observe it, the pain body is not a self anymore.

It's simply human pain. It's not using your mind and becomes the illusion of self. So that is the transition to the new state of consciousness that is happening now.

The vital thing here is that alert presence that comes with a yes. Yes. Alert presence and acceptance and presence are one.

That is the arising of the unconditioned consciousness. And you realize you are not that which arises in this now. That's the form it takes.

You don't seek yourself in that form anymore. You allow it. It's fine because you live in the world of form.

Of course there needs to be some form in the now, but there's no self-seeking through allowing the form. And you know yourself to be not that which happens, but the space in which it happens. The stillness in which it happens.

The field of now in which everything happens. You know yourself as that and that is the end of self-seeking in future or in some form that you could add. You can suddenly see the delusion of self-seeking through adding some form to me.

This is so simple that essential teaching, allowing this moment to be is a very gentle thing, but it's also a very radical thing to do. And from now on, as you go away from here, at any given time, often you will realize whether you are in a state of no internally or whether you are in a state of yes internally. And you recognize more and more when the no is still there.

It has a momentum. It's another no in whatever form. And so if you catch yourself in another no to what is, what can you do?

You allow it. You bring the yes into the no, no matter what happens. Bring yes into it.

Always the yes. That is the most empowered human state it is. And every sage that ever lived, every spiritual teacher, every spiritual master lived in that state that we could call the surrendered state of consciousness.

Not a state of weakness, but a state of great power. Not only to the little egoic entity, the surrendered state of consciousness sounds like weakness. The surrendered state of consciousness totally.

And then you emanate love, peace, compassion, aliveness, and enormous creativity comes through you. It will express itself in some form. No more suffering is created out of that state.

In the surrendered state, nothing that you do in this now is a means to some end that is regarded as more important. Nothing, the now is never reduced anymore to a means to an end, which is part of the normal mad state, where the now is always a means to an end. The now is honored totally.

It is not reduced to a means to an end. That is the surrendered state. That means whatever you do in the now has a beauty and an aliveness to it, because it is honored so completely.

I'm not, you've read certain ancient scriptures, they speak of that also. It is the end of karma. Surrendered action is the end of karma.

Non-surrendered action keeps you trapped in karma. That's very simple. Surrender is the end of that.

Now, I've had enough pain. Years, a million years of pain, isn't that enough? When, how much time?

Okay, I think I'm going to surrender. I need another 20 years and maybe 10 lifetimes. So much suffering on the planet, so much suffering in your individual life.

When, if not now, now enter the surrendered state of consciousness. And there, nothing to do with resignation is misunderstood. Oh, well, I can't do anything anyway, so I might as well accept here where I am stuck here.

No, that's not it. It's, yes, I welcome this. I welcome it totally.

And enormous power is released for action also, if needed. Not the useless action that the ego gets involved in. If action is required, action arises.

Unpremeditated, it simply happens. Presence through the yes. The arising of presence.

The new state of consciousness. The surrendered state of consciousness. I'm saying new because for the first time, there is the possibility for many, many people simultaneously on this planet to enter that state.

Nothing else can save the planet. And so, enough pain, enough suffering. If you're really fed up with suffering, then you say, all right, from now on I will create no more suffering by entering a state of non-surrender.

The only root of, the only cause for suffering is the state of non-surrender. I will create no more suffering for myself and others. It goes together.

Now the pain body may still occasionally come. That's only pain, not suffering. It's human pain.

Suffering requires a mind-based entity that identifies with the pain as me and has a story around it and a sense of self around it. That's suffering. Without that false sense of self, there's no suffering.

A movement of pain is still possible. It's not that bad, just pain. Let it be there.

And all the pain does, it erodes delusion as you allow it to be, burns it up, and then the pain is gone too, through surrender. Miracles of transformation happen, even healing through surrender. That is the message.

And in the past, it has been given a few times in different forms. This is a different form of the message and a signpost. There's an enormous acceleration now of the emerging energy of presence.

No more time. No more time. Enter that state now.

And that's the end of the need, the need for psychological future, to arrive somewhere and be someone. And then you play with the world of form and it's beautiful. The strange thing is, when the world of form is no longer controlling you, there's no self-seeking in it anymore, it improves in a strange way.

When you don't need it to improve anymore for your sense of self, it suddenly improves. And before you desperately needed this to happen and that to happen, and you needed to add this, and when that self-seeking isn't there anymore, suddenly the entire universe, the way in which you relate to it and you experience reality, the world, becomes benign, benevolent. There's suddenly a benevolence in the world.

As you interact with the world and people, the universe is suddenly showing a friendly face. Not that limitations will entirely disappear as long as you're here as form. Some limitations will be there, but they are not important anymore.

You don't need to run away from them. Each time a limitation comes, you walk right through it, through surrender. Beautifully expressed in the image of Jesus on the cross.

The ultimate symbol for limitation, to be tied to a cross, can't even move anymore. Nothing, totally limited, and at that moment, total surrender happened. Not my will, but thy will be done, the will of the totality, the one.

And then the cross became transformed in its nature because it has a dual symbolism. One is, it's the torture instrument or the symbol of limitation, and the other side of the dual symbolism of the cross, it symbolizes transcendence, and it symbolizes the divine. And the two are one.

Limitation and knowing yourself as unlimited are one. And it's only by non-surrender internally to the limitation that you recognize the oneness of how the unlimited is concealed, is hidden within the limited, and very often is hidden in the worst form of limitation. Something that you would say, no human could live with that dreadful affliction.

And some of those humans suddenly, without any spiritual teaching, or ever opened a book perhaps on any spiritual, suddenly within that most unacceptable, seemingly unacceptable limitation, they surrendered. And it opened up, and they entered the state of deep peace and aliveness, and freedom from the form, knowing yourself as the vastness, spaciousness that is there. So it's, remember that any limitation is a cross, and walk through it, not away from it.

And it's the opening, through welcoming whatever is, welcoming. The greatest power is released then. That's the message.

It's too simple to make philosophy out of that. It's very practical. It requires no belief.

You can keep beliefs, there must be a few things still kept in your mind, so you keep whatever is there, it's fine. Knowledge, beliefs, I believe this. No, I disagree with you.

Okay, that's fine. No longer a self in it. Now let's honor this moment, the only one there ever is.

When you go away from here, it's still now, now, now. Only the form changes. Are you friendly with it?

Or in disagreement? Friendly. That's, and this is how the planet and the world will become transformed, not because you need the world to be transformed to be yourself.

So as you've been sitting here, something has been dying inside you, the illusion, the person, the heaviness of that. And what or who is walking out of this room, simply a field of conscious presence. Perceptions happen, they're not resisted.

A field of conscious presence, a field of stillness, even if noise, there's a lot of noise out there, suddenly you walk out and you're bombarded by noise, and you continue to walk as a field of presence. Watching. And so, seeds of the transformed consciousness walking out of here.

Any spiritual practice, nothing needs to be abandoned. Let it take you more deeply into this. It's the journey without distance.

The journey without time into the timeless state of consciousness, the surrendered state. That's the journey you're on, the vertical dimension. The horizontal will look after itself.

And may you be blessed on this journey into yourself, into the now. Thank you. Please have a look inside to see if you are in a state of waiting or presence.

Waiting for the first words to be spoken or whatever the next moment brings. Or being here so completely that that inner compulsive movement away from this comes to an end. And if you can detect within yourself that compulsive movement to the next moment, the reaching out, to grasp something in the next moment, to complete me, to enhance me, to add to me a thought, an experience, a new belief, an experience, whatever it may be, the compulsive movement to add something to me.

And that is the state of waiting for the next moment. And that is associated intrinsically with thought. The movement of thought that moves away from this and reaches out into a projected future moment to grasp something there.

And so there's identification with thought. Identification with thought. That is the normal human state of consciousness.

To be trapped in a continuous stream of thinking that moves forward, that pulls you out of now. The only place that has any reality, the only place where life can be, the only place where anything can be is now. The space of now.

So much so that being and now must be synonymous because there can be no life unless it is now. But humans, and this is almost the mind says, okay, what else are you going to tell me? I knew that already.

That's not a big thing. I've read it in many books. What I'm looking for is some new ideas, some new thoughts to add to me.

I didn't come here to hear that there's only now. And of course, many teachings pointed to that, not perhaps in such an immediate and direct way. Jesus talked about the importance of living in the present.

Buddhist, probably the most important Buddhist practices, meditative practices are to bring you totally into this moment with your attention, totally full state of presence. Observe your breathing. You have to be totally present, not look to the next breath.

But I'm not introducing some new meditation technique either. In fact, there's nothing much here on the level of thought that you can take home with you, that you can add to you. That's not what it is about.

So on the level of thought, that compulsive movement that seeks to add to me, it is frustrating to be sitting here for an hour and a half, maybe, and not being given food for thought. And the words that are being spoken perhaps say, well, yes, that's the Buddha said that, and Jesus said that. What's then?

Give me something new. This is not what our gathering is about, to add something to your store of knowledge, ideas, beliefs, or to create some experience. So it doesn't work sitting here, does not work on the level of content.

This gathering is not about adding content to you, to your mind. It adds nothing. So it's not about improving thought, refining thought.

It is about becoming acquainted, experiencing, and that's everybody's limited, it's not experience, knowing for yourself a state of consciousness that is beyond thought, a state of consciousness of great aliveness and alertness. And you are suddenly free of the compulsive stream of thinking, but you're awake, you're alert, you're present, and in that state, you are very intelligent. Intelligent, not the narrow view of intelligence that the mind has, the ability to solve IQ tests, a very narrow view of the ability to store up information and regurgitate it in exams, a very limited view of intelligence, tiny bit, but true intelligence is vaster than that.

And why is it that you become intelligent, truly, as you enter that state of, and it's very, I don't want to frighten you, but I have to say it, the state that is free of thought. Not that you lose your ability to think when needed, you are no longer trapped in the movement of thought. What does that mean, trapped in the movement of thought?

It means to derive your sense of self, of me, from that continuous mental noise that consists of monologues, dialogues, and stories that you tell yourself and others, rehearsing something for the next moment. Continuous, enormous amount of noise that most people are completely trapped in, identified with as a me. And the me is never full enough, never complete enough.

That self, that me, has not reached its perfection, its point of fullness, has not arrived home. I'm not myself yet, all I need is add a bit more. On all levels, people, whether it's on the level of ideas, beliefs, material possessions, status, experiences, relationships, identification with even some spiritual practice, anything I can add to that to feel I'm now growing.

It's a looking for an enhanced version of me by adding further content to the mental accumulations. That's how, this is the normal way to live. So everybody is looking for an enhanced version of themselves, an improved, a fuller, bigger me, through material possessions, and then perhaps you go beyond that, then through interesting experiences, and then perhaps you move beyond that, and then through spiritual identification with this or that spiritual belief.

And that's quite comforting for a while too, but never satisfies for that long, or there always comes a moment of dissatisfaction, usually very quickly, where the me again feels that sense of lack and incompleteness. That wasn't quite it either. Well, I've added a bit to me, but that wasn't it either.

It's never quite it, that experience, that relationship, that marriage, that possession, that status symbol, spiritual or material. I'm still looking for myself. Of course, the good thing is I have future, and I can reach out there because that surely contains my salvation.

It's out there somewhere because I need the future to add more to me. So that's how the future comes in, and the most dreadful thing that anybody could tell you that would scare you to death, and you have no more future. And it happens to some people.

They are told that, whether it's true or not, who knows? Miracles happen also. They are told there's no more future.

That's an enormous, potentially an enormous thing has just opened up for you if you were told that you have no more future. But most of you are not that lucky. You still believe that through enough future, you can complete the me, and being fully, completely rooted to be totally yourself, that sense of having arrived, having being home.

So that's the striving, the compulsion to strive to add to me, normal human state of consciousness. The whole civilization, even Eastern civilization, Western, of course, is reaching out for more. And many are reaching out with an enormous, an enormous emotional pull for more, as if possessed.

If you go to big cities, New York, London, how they were running to get somewhere. Every day they are running to get somewhere. Then they get to the office, and they are under great stress to get this done and that.

And why? If you stop them, if you could stop them, you can't, because they'll say, don't stop me now. Not, I can't talk to you now.

But if you stop them, they would all, if you go to get to the bottom of it, they are running towards the future. All of them, no matter what form that future takes, that compulsion. Am I saying that make no plans anymore?

No, I'm talking about an inner compulsion, a psychological compulsion that desperately needs a future. And that's created that peculiar civilization that we live in, where everybody, almost everybody is under great stress trying to make it. But that mind pattern already existed thousands of years ago, it's just becoming more accentuated, more pronounced now.

The mind is becoming more and more noisy, and people are more and more trapped in that noise as me, never enough. Not only never enough, needing to sustain that sense of separate selfhood, if that is a word, needing to sustain that sense of separate me by being in an antagonistic position to what's not me's, other me's. To be, in other words, at odds with something or someone, to be opposing something or someone, enhances the mind made me.

And that explains in part why the normal human consciousness is so dysfunctional, why it creates so much suffering on the planet. 20th century, madness, complete madness. What is it?

There must be, where is that dysfunction? It must be somewhere in the human mind to create such a world, to create so much suffering, both collectively and on a personal level. So what is that?

What is that sense of self that is derived from mind movements? What, why does it have the need to be surrounded, one could almost say, by enemies? Because it enhances the sense of separate identity.

I define myself, the mind made self, through my problems, through my conflicts, through the people that I argue with, through situations that I react against. The little me, the mind made me, is extremely reactive. It reacts to situations, people, places.

This shouldn't, they shouldn't, you shouldn't, I shouldn't. Never aligned with now, basically against now. Collectively, you see how when you, people are trapped in that delusory identity, one could say they don't know who they are.

They're trying to strengthen the fictitious sense of self collectively, then they create an us, a big, very big me, is us, the group, the nation, the tribe, the religion. And that, the mechanical unconscious movement, once you're identified, so the individual derives his or her sense of self from the group to a large extent, then the group will display the dysfunction that is built into that mindset and will start looking for some enemy unconsciously. Religions need their enemies.

Political parties need their enemies. Companies, institutions, always. Nations define their identity if they have strong collective identification, such as was the case, for example, Germany, Japan, 20th century, strong collective egoic identifications with our nation.

And it, the stronger it got, the more people felt that now they knew who they are because they have enemies all around. We have enemies north, south, east, and west, and they now define our selfhood. Now we know who we are.

For a moment, there's an elation because the illusory sense of self, in this case collective, has become strengthened. And that for a moment you feel good, you feel much bigger. But inevitably, when you are trapped in illusion, disaster follows.

Suffering follows. You cannot be trapped in illusion without suffering following very soon. So to observe collectively and individually how that conditioned mind operates, and in people's personal lives, the need for enemies that is built into this, the me doesn't really want peace, love, joy.

It says, that's what I'm looking for. But then when you observe, you see, it couldn't tolerate peace for very long because its separate sense of me would dissolve in a state of prolonged peace. That's why there's very rarely been prolonged peace on the planet.

And you individual humans also cannot be at peace. You look at relationships. How long can you go without conflict in a relationship?

A few days. Unless you have gone beyond that already, beyond identification with mind, beyond deriving a sense of self from mind movement and the emotion that go that reflect those mind movements. And so on a personal level, what you make into an enemy to sustain the delusory sense of self, one could say, is the now, the present moment.

And this is the amazing realization how rarely in that state of consciousness one is aligned at ease, at peace, totally at home in now, aligned with now, open to now, welcoming now. Very rare to welcome the now because most little me's are trying to get somewhere else because they need to add something to me. They're trying to get to the future.

The now is a stepping stone to the future. Even spiritual practitioners very often are trapped in that mindset where they have a strong psychological need for the future because this is obviously enlightenment, liberation, freedom is to be attained there. So you look at liberation, freedom or enlightenment in terms, almost in terms of content, adding more to me as the ultimate achievement and needing the future to find yourself, to be yourself fully and completely.

And this is the fallacy, future, one could say, you need future for everything, surely to learn a new skill, to learn a new language, to explore new countries, to acquire this or that, to meet a new husband or wife at some point, he or she is waiting for you. For all that you need future. It works.

But the only thing that truly matters, that ultimately matters, is the one thing that you don't need future for, and that is to be yourself fully and completely. That state is already there, simply obscured by mental noise. It's an amazing realization that through future you cannot become liberated.

The portal, the opening into yourself, into God, into reality is only now. The one place that you never looked in the mind-identified state, the one place that was inferior to a mental projection of a future state. So spiritual practitioners can fall into the trap of projecting a future state to be achieved.

So you give yourself future. That's very satisfying to the self. It would be more satisfying to that sense of self here if I said, I can give you steps of how to become liberated, free, enlightened.

There are 10 steps, and it will take 10 years. Oh great, he's given us time, and that feels satisfying. Now I know where I'm going.

Now the strange thing is, now you say, well, what are you saying that I am already enlightened when I know that I'm not? When everything in my life is telling me, or lots of things in my life are telling me that I haven't made it yet, and what are you putting some new belief into my mind that says, just be happy, smile, you're already enlightened, just believe that you're already enlightened, and you are enlightened. More thought, more belief, and for a while that can be satisfying.

You can go around saying, great, I'm enlightened. I realize it now. I'm converted now to the church of enlightenment.

This is the truth. This is it. Until a little bit later, life shows you very clearly that you were deluded, and more suffering comes in.

I shouldn't have believed that man. Why did I ever go to that talk? So let's not be very careful so that what I'm saying does not become some facile new belief that you add to yourself.

It goes deeper than that. To realize the truth of this, you need to realize what the now means. You need to realize the depth of now.

So the real purpose of this gathering is to enable you, if only to glimpse, perhaps more, the depth and truth of what it really means when we say now, what the now really is, not as intellectual understanding, but as a deeper, immediate realization of what now means. That's the purpose of this gathering. So it's not in the realm of ideas or beliefs.

It's to know now directly. What is that? The only thing there ever is, which nobody could argue with.

Nobody could really argue with the fact that your life has never not been now, not possible, nor could your life ever in the future not be now, neither in past. There was no nothing ever happened in the past. And don't think about this.

Just listen. If you start thinking about it, you will get into a little mental knot and say, well, okay, but doesn't make much sense. But well, no, I disagree with you.

There is a past. Okay. Don't think.

Just surely nothing ever happened in the past. Of course not. It happened in the now.

Where else nothing can happen that is not now. Nothing will ever happen in the future. It cannot.

Of course, for anything to be, to happen, it must be now. So reality, life is inseparable from now. You can remember the past.

You can store up memory traces of a past now, and then you remember it. But now, only the light of now gives life to your memory. Of course, it's the light of now that illuminates that.

And there is only this, the only thing that never left you, no matter how many transformations you have already gone through in your life. And there are some people in this world who have already, they feel as if they had already had three or four incarnations because their life has changed so drastically already several times. And this is more frequent these days.

In the past, in village societies, people just stay in one place, one incarnation, and then it comes to an end. But many people these days, their life has already had great ups and downs. And yet, it was always now.

That's almost nonsensical to say it, almost superfluous to say it, easy to ignore. That's it. That's all there is.

It's this, this, this, the suchness of this moment. Now, why are people running away from it? They need an enemy.

The mind-made self makes the now into an enemy. That's the arch enemy of the egoic self. It has many other enemies, but it really, it has made the now into an enemy.

That's how people live. They are not at one with what is, they are against it. They deny it, they reduce it to a mere stepping stone because the next moment surely is more important.

That's where I need to get to. Okay, I'm just stepping over this one. I'm on my way to the future.

And you carry on continuously. And sometimes it's only some disaster that pushes you into now. A moment when your life is threatened, when the conditioned mind couldn't cope anymore with the situation, something, a greater intelligence has to take over.

And in those cases, some people accidentally experience what it means to be totally present and to act out of that state of consciousness. No longer as a little me trying to achieve this or that, but being totally aligned with the totality of consciousness. So the action is the one, the totality moving through you.

And it's, sometimes people do the amazing things in that situation of great danger. Right action, unpremeditated, happens and it works. And then when danger is over, sometimes then they fall back into the normal consciousness.

What was that? What was that power that moved through me? And then other people come and say, how could you?

You did such a great thing. You are a hero. It's just me, hero?

I didn't do anything. It just happened. So there are people who accidentally get a glimpse of that and never forget it.

But it becomes, in many cases, becomes a memory. Sometimes they feel bad that they haven't got it now. So they have to remember it.

What have people said just before they had an accident? They were driving in a car and they knew that the accident, the collision was now unavoidable. The other car was coming towards you, maybe four seconds left, maybe five seconds left.

They survived. And some of them later talked about it and said, something very strange happened when I saw the inevitability of the accident. Suddenly all fear left me and I had this great sense of serenity and peace.

And I wasn't concerned at all about dying. It looked as if I was going to die, but there was this great peace. And if that peace could have spoken, they would have said, all is well.

There is no death. And so they experienced something at that moment when seemingly all future was removed from them. Total now-ness, total presence emerged as a new state of consciousness, far more intelligent, far more effective than the normal mind-identified conditioned state.

Conditioned, of course, by the past. So in that state, you are your past. You are a walking past.

And you can only really repeat the past. Newness can only come in, in this space, if there's an openness to now. And so you, maybe one or two of you, have experienced that.

But here we don't need to wait for some, our life to be threatened, to enter that state that the beauty of the spiritual teaching is. Well, ultimately, the beauty of spiritual teaching is, it's telling you, it's here now. You don't need time anymore.

You don't need time anymore. What do you mean, I don't need time anymore? Attention moves into the field of now.

An alertness arises, an alertness that is of such intensity that it is incompatible with thinking. A greater non-conditioned intelligence arises, out of which thought can come, but it is infinitely faster than thought. And you know it the moment your attention moves from past and future, which means the stream of thinking.

Your attention steps out of the stream of thought into the intense and sacred aliveness of this moment, which is far deeper than what is happening at this moment. And people confuse the now with what is happening in the now. And of course, that changes continuously.

Every form that arises in the now is fleeting. Nothing stays around for very long. Continuously it changes.

And the forms come and go and evaporate. That's why they leave you. So there's a continuous flux of impermanent forms that appear in the field of now, in the field of consciousness.

And people are so identified with that movement of appearing forms, which includes thoughts. On the most primordial level, it is thought. The continuous stream of arising and subsiding thoughts, people are so fascinated by that.

And the mind objects, sense perceptions, the world of form, in other words, inner forms, thought forms, emotional forms, outer forms that come and go in the field of now. And people are so fascinated by the arising and subsiding forms that they are completely lost in them, because they are looking for themselves in those forms and just think, I need to add a few more forms, hang on to those, get rid of those. So you are in a reactive relationship to the forms that arise in your life, because the little self rejects or wants to pull towards itself these forms.

It either wants to grasp them or it fears them. So that movement in the delusional state, which is the normal state, that movement of desire and fear, which is connected with the forms that you either want or don't want, that governs almost everybody's behavior. All actions, speech and thought movement are governed by desire and fear.

That is the deluded state and it's normal. That's ultimately dysfunctional and it's normal. And since we are coming to the end on evolutionary level, to that, we're coming to the end of that level of human evolution, the dysfunction has become particularly pronounced because we are reaching an end of this evolutionary cycle of being identified with form and seeking for yourself in the arising forms, thoughts and outer forms.

And then you have a personalized and reactive relationship to the forms that arise in the now. And of course you're acting out conditioning from the past. It's the me, the conditioned entity, me, mind made.

It reacts, it likes, it dislikes. And so that's all that people know about the now. They know the forms that appear in the now.

So they say, oh, every hour consists of hundreds of moments. Nobody knows how long one moment is because it's not an exact measurement. But everybody believes that their day consists of many, many moments because every moment something else happens.

Every moment a new thought or an emotion or something externally appears in your life. So they think, okay, another moment. No, it's not another moment.

It's the same one now. The form has changed that the now appears as. The form that arises in the now has changed.

The now remained always. And so how do you know this to be true, truly, so that it is vital, transformative knowledge to know this to be true? How do you get there?

And that's so simple that people have been missing it for thousands of years. And they had to make the sublime simplicity of spiritual teachings, the truth of such sublime simplicity, they had to make it into mind stuff. Belief systems and speculations to fuel the mind-made sense of self and identify with something.

But the simplicity is simply this. Not to internally offer resistance to the form that this moment takes. The conditioned mind, of course, says, yeah, but this is not what I want.

This isn't the form that I wanted. That's why I'm trying to get somewhere else. Surely you're not telling me that this place where I am and this job that I have and this inner state that I'm in, that's it?

That can't be it. Well, no, that's not it. It's the form that this moment takes.

What can you do? It is already. This moment is as it is.

It cannot not be as it is. And that is a strange realization. The mind, it doesn't make sense to the mind.

Yeah, okay, well, the totality has brought about the form that this, because everything is totally interconnected on atomic level, subatomic level. It's all totally one web. And that has brought about the appearance in your field of consciousness of this now.

How could it be otherwise? It is as it is. And so you realize the futility and ultimate madness of resisting internally the isness of this moment.

Now the mind says, yeah, but I don't want it. At least I don't want it to last for very long. Or the mind says, yeah, but this is a limitation on my life.

I'm not going to accept this limitation on my life. My body maybe is not well. Maybe where I live is not the greatest place.

It's such a small room, I can hardly move. And you're telling me I should accept this limitation Well, all that is required is to accept this moment. Not an idea in your head that says, okay, here I am in prison.

I've got another 10 years to do. I might as well resign myself to the fact that I'm in here for 10 years. Nothing to do with the present moment.

Or I might as well resign myself to the fact that I'm ill and I'm probably not going to recover. So what can I, nothing to do with the present moment. That's, those are mind movements.

They concern your life situation. We're not talking about your life situation, which are the circumstances of your life that unfold in time. Yes, but we are talking about life, not the outer form of life.

Life itself, the life that you are beyond form, the one life, the one consciousness, the one to know that, not by seeking, because knowing the one is knowing yourself as unlimited and free. No longer being trapped in a personalized little sense of identity. Never at ease and rarely at ease and needing more of this and more of that.

In conflict with this and that continuously. Knowing yourself truly, not through some mental concept, knowing yourself as that which is unlimited, the essence of your being. Now, you've been seeking the unlimited by trying to escape internally from the limited, which is more often than not, it's the now, the form that the now takes.

Here I am sitting on this bus full with a hundred people, especially buses here are very full. So you're squished. Oh, you're telling me I should accept.

Yes, this is the form that this now takes. It is as it is. You see the futility of resisting it.

You're not projecting a future moment when you're going to be free, because then there will be some other limitation appearing in the now. It is in the nature of the world of form to give you some limitation. The very fact that you have a body is a limitation.

And then life, you move through life and you meet one after another. And then you meet your ideal partner. And a year later, the ideal partner is another limitation on your life.

And then you say, okay, that wasn't it. He wasn't it. She wasn't it.

Or you become very unhappy for the rest of your life. I made a mistake. So it's not by escaping internally from the limitations into a future realm, where you are hoping to find yourself or the essence of yourself.

You never get there. So the amazing thing is, take the now, just this segment that is now, not some mind movement like a life situation, an illness, financial lack, health. These are life situations.

Out of that, there's only this moment. At this moment, say I have 10 rupees in my pocket. And then you look at your bank balance, and it shows zero.

And here you sit. There's the coins. And there you sit on a bench.

And you're breathing and looking around. It is as it is. This moment is as it is.

And suddenly, you drop resistance and you actually, something arises because there was that yes to now was so deep. And I spent some time on park benches, so I know what I'm talking about. But the yes to now was so deep that that seeming, that apparent limitation, that was totally, only this moment was totally accepted.

And suddenly, something arises. I have to be careful with words now because I don't want to put any ideas in your head. With that complete acceptance of now, whatever limitation it may be, you can't argue with is, is.

That's what happened to those people who saw the car coming. The accident seemed inevitable. They no longer argued.

That happened to people who were in a dangerous situation and did the right thing totally, not out of a state of inner resistance, but out of a state of total alignment, an intense aliveness, and a deep peace that comes with the yes to now. A sense of, and I use that word carefully because the word is only a pointer, a sense of spaciousness around events, a sense of spaciousness around emotions even, a sense of spaciousness that is there. Here comes the form of this now.

And you meet it with a total and uncompromising yes. And suddenly, you go, internally you go beyond the limitation of the form, not because you ran away from the limitation, you walked through the limitation. You are no longer in a reactive relationship to that apparent limitation.

It no longer strengthens your sense of self or of me. And then you take action out of that delusion, which produces further delusion and more of the same. That state of no matter what form this takes the now, I welcome it.

That open, alert presence with which you welcome what is, takes you beyond the form of this moment to the unconditioned, or rather it doesn't take you, you realize yourself as the unconditioned consciousness in which this form appears. And that is a sense of, one could say, stillness or peace around what happens. Or one could say, whatever happens then, happens within a field of stillness or peace.

That you cannot grasp conceptually, there is an underlying peace, stillness, in which everything happens. And not that it condemns you to a state of passivity, at times that state is dynamic because action can arise out of it. But it is non-reactive action.

Non-reactive, not a little me trying to strengthen itself. And it's absolutely right for this moment. This is what they try to teach in schools like Zen and others.

Simply this utter and complete yes to what is. Utter and complete presence. Not looking for the limit, the unlimited through future, but by totally accepting, one could say, although some of you may not like that word, surrendering totally to the form that this now takes internally.

That is the surrendered state of consciousness. And that is the most powerful of the, really the only truly effective, powerful state of consciousness. It is the state of being aligned with the one intelligence, beyond the conditioned temporary expression of that intelligence that is the human mind.

Nothing wrong with it. Human mind is beautiful, it's fine. It's only when you are looking for yourself in it, it traps you in a little form identity.

So not that you no longer have a form identity. Of course you have a, there's still the bodily form. You have your name and you have a life situation that goes on, but something much more vital has come in.

The liberating power of now. And now you begin to realize what the depth of now is. It's not what happens in the now.

That's not the now. That's the form it takes. The now is the field in which it happens.

The field of consciousness, one could say, but be careful with words because then the mind can attach itself to a word. The field of consciousness, unconditioned, pure intelligence, whatever you want to call it, in which the entire phenomenal universe unfolds, which appears as form. Millions and millions of forms being born out of that, returning into it.

The miracle of phenomenal existence. Wow. And you're no longer threatened then by the world of form, nor does the world of form, which is the world, hold that great promise that it once did.

That at some point, through the acquisition of some form, you can complete yourself. That's the promise of the world of form, which is not going to be delivered. So you can then, you come to be at ease with the world of form, no longer demanding that some form, a person, a situation, a condition should complete you or make you happy.

Please make me happy. You say to a place, to a situation, to a person, and they never comply for a little while. Yeah, that's the place.

And then something happens to spoil it because it's form and it's limited. So enormous freedom comes then that the demand that you make upon the world to complete you, and that's what makes living so frustrating. Because there's the demand that the world should give you something and it never gives it to you.

Although occasionally you get the delusion that now it's given it to you, that makes it even more frustrating. So as you drop that demand, an enormous sense of relief comes because you're no longer looking for yourself in the forms that come and go. That's the beautiful play of form of the phenomenal universe.

And for the first time, you can actually participate freely in that without self-seeking and forms, without needing to have certain forms to complete you. It's beautiful. You play with the world of form and allow it, allow the forms to come and go.

And as a byproduct of such a living in such a way and living out of such a state of consciousness, as a byproduct of that, you may notice that your life, even in the world of form, unfolds with greater ease because you're no longer standing in a reactive relationship to the world of form. And the universe then appears to you as a more benign, more benevolent place suddenly. Oh, how nice.

Not that forms are no longer limited. You will still experience the limitations of each forms, but somehow that doesn't matter anymore. In fact, it's almost one could say, you welcome the limitations of the forms.

That also is beautiful. And that means you welcome death. Death means a form leaves you.

Death means a form dissolves. And there is great beauty and sacredness in a form that is at the transitional point between being a form and being the formless. As a form dissolves, death in other words, whenever a form dissolves in this space of now, something shines through the opening.

It leaves a kind of emptiness, one could say. It's gone. And through that little hole, and it could be a person close to you who died.

It could be loss of some great possession that was important to you and suddenly it's gone. And what shines through when a form disappears from the now suddenly, which is death, the now itself, which is the essence of who you are, which is the unconditioned consciousness, which is the formless one life. That is why death is sacred.

Because whenever death occurs, the end of a form, the formless one life shines through that opening. And then you truly, deeply can know and sense what the depth of now is and means. And you realise that it is none other but yourself.

The now is yourself, not the little mind made self, the one self. And when this is liberation, simply is knowing the field of now to be yourself. It's an amazing thing to realise that you are the now.

That's why it never left you. No matter where you went. And that's, you're suddenly liberated from time, past and future, which you can still use to catch a bus.

It works. To meet someone, it works. But not much beyond that.

You are freed from past and future. You are freed from compulsive thinking, obsessive thinking, the incessant stream of thinking, identification with that. And you are freed from suffering.

How could you suffer when you're totally aligned with now? Whatever arises is as it is.

Emotions, okay.

It is. And it is. A stream moving through, all right, there it is.

What can you do? It is. You welcome that.

Suddenly there's a space around that too. And you are that. It's the now.

So you then go through life as this deepens in you. You go through life not no longer compulsively reacting to the forms, but knowing yourself as that which underlies all forms. In other words, you go through life with the awareness of the field of now, which is awareness itself.

Self-awareness. In other words, and again, just little pointers, you become aware. Just another little same thing.

You become aware of awareness as the underlying field. This sounds dualistic, as if there were a subject and an object, but that's only because of language. You become self-aware, and that's limited too because of language.

You know yourself as the awareness, not as that which happens in the awareness. Self-aware. And that is then the undercurrent in your life that is infinitely vaster and deeper than anything that happens in your life.

So what happens, you can actually now, for the first time, enjoy what happens without feeling either threatened by it or feeling that you need to grasp at this or that and demand that something or someone should make you happy. So really, the only reason why we are here is to know at first hand that state of consciousness and it's already in you. It's not, it cannot be achieved.

It's already the essence of who you are. So it's only through entering the surrendered state that who you truly are beyond form emerges. Emerges.

And the moment it emerges, you will notice the compulsion to think disappears. Thought begins to slow down. Before it went, because you needed to go on and on because yourself was, I have to keep myself alive.

I think, therefore I am. So I have to keep thinking. And as you enter the surrendered state aligned with now, the compulsion goes because you realize that why there was compulsive thinking was because desperately you try to work yourself, work your way out of the now through that compulsive thinking.

Let's see how I get out of here. And so the stillness that is the essence of your being and stillness, all that it means is unconditioned consciousness, thoughtless awareness is already there. It's already fully there.

Not to be perfected or achieved. It can't even be an achievement. Not to be obtained.

It's nobody's achievement. That's a pity. Can't add it to me.

Nothing to add. And those people who found it accidentally and there have been throughout history and perhaps the first spiritual teachers, the first who became liberated, they didn't become liberated through monasteries or schools. They became liberated because life took away from them all the content that they had identified with as me.

They lost everything. Even their beliefs, everything collapsed, deaths all around, unbearable. It became so unbearable, the suffering, that something snapped and they entered the surrendered state.

And suddenly the formless one life was there as a sense of deep peace and aliveness. And they looked around, the world around them had collapsed. Even perhaps in their mind, they couldn't explain things anymore, thought structures.

In the face of death, especially if death comes at you in multiple forms, in the face of death, it doesn't make sense anymore. And even that collapses, your beliefs collapse. There's nothing left.

And there you are, and suddenly surrender to that. All that is contained in the symbolism, of course, of the cross, which is the symbol of the extreme form of limitation. Jesus nailed to the cross symbolizes limitation in its extreme form.

And then something happened, surrender happened. Not my will, but thy will be done. The will of the totality, the one, not my, not me.

Surrender happened. And the cross then becomes transformed into a symbol of the divine. The dual symbolism of the cross is, it's a torture instrument, extreme symbol of limitation, and it's a symbol of the divine in one.

So there's enormous wisdom in that, contained in that, that it is not away from the limitations of form that you find yourself, that you know yourself as the formless, but by walking through, surrendering to and walking through the limitations, then the very limitation becomes an opening. And that's why otherwise living in this world would be, some malevolent God would be having a good time laughing at human suffering. Why?

But that's not how it is. It's everybody encountering limitation and many humans in extreme forms. And there's only one lesson, walk through it, not away from it, right, through welcoming.

The form that this moment takes, that's transformation, that's the transformed consciousness. And that is a spiritual practice that requires no time, no future, you can only do it now. You can't get good at it, you can only do it now or not do it now, and suffer.

That's a learning in itself. And those who are here have all, and who haven't walked out yet, have all reached a point where they realize the possibility of living free of suffering. But suffering was wonderful, of course, because it brought you to this point where you can hear this, so be great, you probably needed it, you need suffering.

People ask me, do we need suffering or not? Sometimes they say, you're not very clear. Sometimes you seem to say it's a great thing and then you say, you don't need it.

And the truth can only be expressed in paradox. And the paradox is you need suffering until you realize that you don't need suffering. And you need time until you realize that you don't need time, it's all right.

The universe allows, if you need more time, which implies that you need more suffering, fine, all right. So this is the, one could say, how is it that such vital truth is not taught at schools? Why is it that very few people seem to know this?

Is there some conspiracy at work? They're trying to cover up the truth. Don't talk about it.

Liberation must not be mentioned unless it's a belief system, then you can talk about it. Well, the egoic sense of self doesn't like it, of course. So one could almost say there's a conspiracy.

It's the egoic conspiracy that says, let's not talk about liberation. We can make a church out of it or a belief system, that's okay, but not the actual thing. This is the message.

If you're ready, many of you are ready, and many more humans on this planet are entering the state of readiness, then from now on, the unconditioned state will be there every moment, the surrendered state. And at other moments, you will notice you're not surrendered in the now, some contraction, some inner no, and suddenly you notice it. What do you do then?

Well, the mind, what the mind wants to do then, it will say, you see, no point. You can't do it, it doesn't work. No, just observe the no, say, all right, here goes another contraction, another no.

That's how it is. It's the form that this moment takes. I can feel my whole body contracting as I sit here.

What's that? What's that music? It shouldn't be there.

People shouldn't sing while other people talk. And then you notice it. Oh, another contraction.

And then suddenly the very form that you had reacted against is actually quite beautiful. Oh, and the now is always sacred, nothing else is. When you enter the now, you enter also the realm of the sacred.

But God is only here now. And that I'm not going to define further. I don't need to.

It's an amazing realization when you see that the sacredness is there as you enter now. Oh. No matter what form it takes.

Thank you. Thank you for honoring us with your presence. And to all of you for coming here this afternoon.

The prayer that we offer before the talk is a moment of silence. I would like to explore a moment of silence that is a very important moment in our lives. that is a moment of silence that is a moment of silence with you this afternoon, the deepest truth of human existence.

When I say that, that may sound a little bit abstract, interesting, but abstract, human existence. And it may sound a little bit philosophical, but this is not a lecture on philosophy, nor is it a lecture at all. The best way to look upon it is as a meditation.

Although somebody is speaking, look upon it as a meditation. So when I say the deepest truth of human existence, it sounds a little bit removed from your everyday concerns. So let's put it in another way.

We are here to explore the deepest truth of who you are, because you are human existence. We are here to explore the deepest truth within yourself, knowing yourself at the deepest level. So a level so deep that knowing yourself and knowing God become one and the same.

There are two levels to this talk, if it can be called that. One is the words and one is the gaps between the words, a certain stillness. I've just pointed this out because it is helpful as you listen to be aware not only of the words but of an underlying field of stillness out of which the words come, nothing personal.

There's a field of stillness that is both within and without gaps between the words, a silent space in between and underlying the words. And simply to be aware also of that dimension. Then listening to these words is more than absorbing information, because there isn't that much information here.

It's not an information-based talk. Then it becomes a meditation to just sit here and listen. And the deeper teaching, if it can even be called teaching, is not in and through the words.

The deeper teaching lies in the dimension of stillness. Because the moment you acknowledge that underlying dimension, then you have accessed a realm within yourself that is deeper than the stream of mind, with which most people are identified as themselves. Simply as we sit here to acknowledge to notice, to listen to an underlying stillness.

That which acknowledges that in you, that which is able to listen to that dimension, listen not to something, listen to nothing, to nothing, just the act of listening. That in you which is able to acknowledge that dimension, to be attentive to that dimension, is a realm of stillness underneath the stream of mental noise. In other words, the moment you pay attention to that dimension of silence, there is a stillness.

In you, because through thought, you cannot pay attention to silence because thought is noise. So already, although through words we are going to progressively explore the deepest truth of human existence, even as you sit here and follow the words that progressively explore the deepest truth of human existence, that deepest truth of human existence is already emerging in you as you sit here and listen, even now, simply by paying attention to silence through the inner stillness. That is the only way you can notice.

The stillness in you notices that. And you have gone beyond the continuous stream of mental noise that for most people is who they think they are. So the answer to the initial question that I asked, I said, let's explore the deepest truth of human existence, the deepest truth of who you are.

The answer of that is never really in the future, not even within the framework of this talk is the answer of who you are beyond the conditioned mind. Never is that answer in the future. It's always now.

So our question, what does that mean? The deepest truth of who you are, knowing yourself. Doesn't everybody know themselves already?

And most people would say, yes, I know my name and all those things that are associated with my name, things that cling to that initial form identity that my parents have given me when they taught me what my name is, such and such, whatever it may be. First, what's your name, the little child is asked, and is very proud to be able to say his or her name. And the parents say, very good.

That's the way human existence goes. And nobody realizes that already through the initial first label, mental label, first identification with a thought, a sequence of sounds, the first limitation, an illusory limitation on who you truly are beyond mental concepts. The first limitation has already arisen.

You have already entered a prison of conceptualization. It is the beginning of it. But we need to go that way.

Humans have to move through that. It would be futile to tell a child, you have no name. Don't identify yourself with a name.

That the child has to go through the stage. Every human being has to go through the stage where they begin to accumulate experiences, knowledge, labels, words, concepts, all kinds of things, cultural conditioning, personal conditioning through their environment. And these things then cling around the name.

And after a few years, gradually a sense of self develops, a me. Even in a small child, it begins to develop when the child says, my toy is bigger than yours. It feels good to the child to strengthen its sense of self through feeling I have more than you.

I know more than you, or my father is stronger than yours. You can add a bit more to that sense of self. And again, that is a normal process.

And so gradually the accumulations continue and you become an adult. And then you have a certain sense of self based on the conditioning of your mind. That is the mind that never stops.

That is the mind that is a continuous stream of thought processes. And the thought processes are strongly connected with the conditioning of your mind. So the stream of thinking, and this doesn't depend on culture.

It doesn't depend whether you live on India, in India or in the West. It is the same in every human being. The stream of thinking goes on incessantly.

And a lot of that is to do with me and my concerns and my problems and what's going to happen to me. There's a story of me, which is my past. Things have happened to me, things that I have accumulated, the content of my mind is a kind of story that people like to dwell on, talk to themselves about their story, have a monologue or a dialogue in the head.

And so a sense of self develops that is mind based. And that's again happens to everybody. A sense of self develops that is content based, content and form based, a psychological form of me.

And for most people, that is who they are. So if you ask them, who are you, they will tell you a little story. It could be, they could keep it brief, they could give you a brief summary of me, or they can make it very long.

They can go on for hours because my story is so interesting and dramatic. Have you got enough time to listen to it? Let me tell you what my story is and what I have suffered, what I have seen, what I have, my triumphs and my victories and my defeats, what people have done to me and all the bad things that I have done.

I'll tell you about all of this. And so this is why psychoanalysts make a good living because there you pay them to listen to you and to the story. And if you want to be thorough in psychoanalysis, you have to go three times a week for a few years.

And so you tell your story. And as you tell the story of me, more and more layers of complexity become revealed about me. And it's so interesting.

And so after you have completed your course of psychoanalysis, if ever, if ever, then the psychoanalysts might tell you we have come to the end. By the way, that's very rare. He will tell you we have come to the end of our analysis.

We have analyzed everything about you and I will give you the file. It's big. Here it is.

You can take it home. This is you. This is you.

And if then somebody asks you, do you know yourself? You say, oh yes, it's all here. The content of my mind has been analyzed and here it is in this file or it might be a computer disc these days.

And so I can tell you all about it. And of course, when they say I know myself, what they really mean is I know a lot about myself. I know many things about myself, a lot of information, many facts.

And they forget who the I is that knows because all that knowledge is knowledge about. It's form knowledge. You know a lot about your psychological form identity.

Not that there's anything wrong with it. Each person moves within a form identity, has a form identity, which is not to be rejected, but to be honored. Part of your form identity is the function that you have in this world, the social function, your profession, whatever you do, your activity, your relationship to other people as a mother, as a father, as the boss.

Many other things come into it, your cultural background, your nationality, the nation that you feel you are part of is part of that conditioning. It is not to be discarded, but also to be honored. You honor the forms that are part of you.

The content of your mind, you identify with as me. The only thing is, if you only know yourself as those forms, because every form identity exists, consists of various roles that people play within that form. And that usually is the limit of people's self-knowledge.

Plus, if they've done psychoanalysis, they know about their childhood and all those things that happened then. So is there more to who you are than the form identity, which has two levels. We've been speaking about the psychological form of me.

And of course, then there is the physical form of the body. So people identify with the two. There's my physical body, me, and there's a psychological story.

And that is the story of me. And that includes all the conditioning or the reactive patterns, all those things are in there. The content of the mind is the psychological form of me.

So we have the two levels of identification. And sometimes the body can be a very strong identification in certain people. It becomes part also of the psychological form identity.

If, for example, your body is very beautiful or your body is very strong, that enhances your psychological form identity. It gives you a feeling that you are stronger, more beautiful than others. And the sense of self becomes enhanced through that.

And that can last for quite a while. And it works quite well until you reach, the body begins to grow old. And then the beauty fades.

And if that was the main part of your form identity, great suffering starts when the beauty fades that you thought that was me. So the form identity, both physical and even more strongly psychological form, has certain characteristics. And one of the characteristic of form identity is that it never feels complete.

It never feels, except for brief moments, which turned out to be delusory, never feels really at ease or at peace. It never feels that you are freely and fully yourself yet. Yet is added by the mind because that's a little escape, which says, okay, yes, there is this recurring, almost permanently underlying sense of lack of insufficiency and of incompleteness.

And many people who are not conscious enough, don't feel it directly. It becomes translated into continuous wanting and needing this or that to fill that hole that they feel, to fill that sense of lack and insufficiency with something to make myself complete in this form identity. And so there is an enormous need in human beings to add more to me, to make me complete.

And that is the search, that is the enormous momentum behind human wanting and needing. The Buddha speaks of desire. And again, that's a little bit abstract.

At his time, it was a powerful word perhaps, but desire really is wanting, needing. And then you look for things to add to the accumulated content of mental identifications to complete my sense of self. So you look to, and it's strange, it's a little bit like a, it'll grasp at anything to add to me, whatever it can.

And a very common one, of course, is material possessions that I identify with. I have more than you. This enhances my sense of self.

I identify with my house, I identify with my car in a very subtle way. I feel it's an extension of me. The car has become a mind object.

And that mind object is used to strengthen, to enhance a deficient sense of self. And for a little while, it works. You feel bigger as you step into your BMW.

You have expanded. Your sense of self has grown. And you are more powerful than all those little puny little cars around you.

And for a little while, that works. You feel almost you have arrived. And then before long, it wears off.

And then you sit in that car and it's not that fulfilling anymore. It's just a car. It gets you from A to B.

That wasn't quite it. And then you look to the next thing. And the next thing could be a relationship to complete me.

Because the last one didn't work. It didn't complete me. Something went wrong.

So you go out and look for it there. The ideal one, I'm going to meet one day. I'm looking for the ideal partner that is going to complete my sense of self.

And then it happens at times that you find him or her. That means it's called falling in love. And it says, okay, I found you.

You are going to complete me. You are going to make me happy, which you sometimes read in the lonely hearts columns, looking for someone to make me happy. What they mean is to make my sense of self complete, to fill that lack that I feel.

And so you might get married. And for a while, the illusion is there, just as it was there with the BMW, that now I have arrived. This is when you fall in love.

You have this euphoria of completeness. It's just... Finally, the story of me has completed itself.

I have arrived. I made it. And then comes the honeymoon.

And then comes ordinary existence and all the things that arise in ordinary existence. And sooner or later, this ideal partner fails to live up to what she had promised when he signed the wedding document that is to complete you, to make you happy. It's not working anymore.

That feeling disappears. And then it becomes, oh, I made a dreadful mistake. It wasn't the right one.

He wasn't right. Or you begin to look elsewhere. But in the meantime, you've been looking every day for hundreds of little things to add to me to enhance your sense of self.

All kinds of little things to whatever. I could make a list of hundreds of things, how that egoic self and mind-made entity looks for little things to add to me. Experiences can add.

Anything, drugs maybe to have an experience with that. Maybe that food, even food. I can add that.

It's a psychological need. The body has a limited need for food, but the psychological me has a great need for food because even through that, it can make itself feel a little bit more complete. A box of chocolate works for an hour or two.

And you can see the impulse behind it when people reach into the bag of chips or the chocolate, and there's no, there's more. It's not the body really that wants, it's the mind-made self that seeks some completion through that. And when the bag of chips is empty, it looks for the next thing.

So in many little and big things, there is this enormous need to add to me and in everywhere to make myself complete because it's never, that completeness never lasts. And so people believe that their sense of not having arrived, of not quite having made it yet, of not being truly and fully yourself, people believe that this is their personal problem. They believe that others exist who have made it because you see the movies and you see the magazines that show you these glamorous, famous people who apparently, surely they must have made it.

They look so happy in their glamorous surroundings. And the culture tells you that that is the way to go. You can make it, just try harder to have more possessions or more status, that's a big intangible but enormous thing to add to oneself.

Other people's view of me is an enormous piece, bigger even, can be bigger than the greatest mansion, that need for others to give me their approval, their high opinion. And so there's the need for status in society, for others to tell me that I am great and good enough. And that's an enormous, these are enormous chunks that are identifications that you can add to the deficient sense of self.

And for a little while, it also works. And then if you've met any of the famous people that you see in the magazines and films, whatever they, sports, movies, famous this, famous that, people who are told by the surrounding culture and the world that they are special, that they have made it and they are great role symbols in society, and if you meet them, you will see that underneath the glamorous facade, there is the same sense of deficiency. It didn't complete them. The whole world telling them that they are great and deep down, they feel this is a big lie.

Also, there are famous people who have actually, through that, have seen through the delusion of that, the meaninglessness of this world, which to a large extent is mad because it's the human egoic mind, telling you that you are important. And some people striving a lifetime to add that to their sense of self, to the world, please tell me that I matter. My sense of self depends on it.

Please tell me that I am important. And then, of course, only a few are told that. The others are left in limbo and are unhappy there.

And those that are told that they are important, they are unhappy there, not complete. And it happens occasionally that a few of those people who made it rich and famous, they begin to go deeper because they have everything and they can't possibly think of any more to add to me because what can you add when you have everything, could buy anything, go anywhere, and everybody thinks you are God and still feel. And so some of those actually see through the delusion and then penetrate to deeper levels of their being.

But for many of us, there is always the hope that through this or that addition to me, added content for the mind, the mental identifications, that through that, I can complete myself and my life is going to work and finally feel that I have arrived. I'm home. I'm fully myself.

And what people don't realize is it is not their personal problem, the fact that they feel that they haven't arrived, that they haven't made it. It is built into the very structure of the mind-made sense of self. That deficiency and sense of lack is inseparable from those mind structures, from that identity.

So it is nothing to do with what you could possibly add. Nothing that you add could fulfill you, is the truth. And that is, for spiritual seekers, this is a very subtle point because that mindset, which is collectively conditioned, nobody's personal problem, that has an enormous need for more, for more of whatever it may be, more.

That mindset is quite deep-seated. It implies, of course, that you have an enormous need for future because you can, it's only through future, and you're looking into future, where you can get the future, the mind-made self tells you, will enable you to get that. And this is why very few human beings are actually where they are, rooted in the presence of now.

They are reaching out in that drive for more. They are reaching continuously. They are being pulled out of now, which is all there ever is, which is life itself.

Nothing else ever exists except now. But they are pulled out of this into a mental projection, a psychological future where they are going to complete themselves because they will reach that more there. That's the momentum, and that's how most people live.

In that continuous, almost desperate search for being ultimately yourself, finding yourself through more, through future, finding myself through future. Everybody's doing it through looking where you can add more. Where is the more?

I need more. And then you become frustrated with the more gross levels of more. And then you move up into the subtle levels of more, where you seek to add, perhaps, spiritual experiences.

And a spiritual seeker needs to be very careful and look whether within him or herself, the need for more still operates. And then the spiritual search becomes a need to add more to me as spiritual knowledge. Spiritual knowledge is valuable and beautiful as a pointer, but it can become mental content that I identify with as me.

Spiritual scriptures and spiritual knowledge is wonderful. This country is the cradle for that. It has got the most beautiful and profound maps or signposts towards who you truly are to point you to that.

And if used rightly, it works beautifully and powerfully. But if used by a mind that is seeking more to add to me, then the very scripture can become a hindrance because you accumulate maps and signposts. They are beautiful and you carry great knowledge.

And in a very subtle way, a spiritual ego could also come in. It's very more subtle than the BMW ego. It's the ego coming back through the back door.

And there's a very subtle sense of, I am now more than all those poor little worms who have not yet seen the light. I have studied those things. I have studied with masters.

I've been to monasteries or in the West, it's workshops. I have done all those and there's so much. I have, there's a very subtle sense of more, but never enough because you haven't, you feel, well, I haven't quite arrived yet, but I'm already more than all those.

All those mere more, it's a very, very subtle thing. And you have to be very vigilant to see it in yourself. That still, that deep seated collective mental conditioning, the need for more flows even into the spiritual search, the spiritual seeking, seeking to become fully myself.

And again, there's a great psychological need for future because I seek to complete myself in future so that the same mindset can operate in that realm also. So it's good to know that because once you know it and you know that the sense of insufficiency or lack is intrinsically linked with that mindset, you can't get out of it, no matter what you do, no matter how much you add, it's never enough. Even spiritual knowledge, if it's only an adding of experiences or knowledge, it's never quite enough yet.

But the search goes on, the great need for more. More of me until you see how it operates in yourself, until you see that there's a continuous movement away from what is now, until you see the need for this mind made sense of self. And this is really lies at the root of that continuous conflict in the world collectively and personally, the madness of human history.

Why is that? Why is human history so insane? 80% of it, look at the 20th century, incredible.

How can humans do this? There must be an enormous dysfunction at the core of the human mind. And this is it because a great need of this mind made sense of self is actually in order to continue to feel its sense of self, it needs to create opposition with others, situations and people, because only by fighting against, by having issues with, can it continue to feel its mentally derived sense of self.

You need the sense of separation of me against you. There's a need for conflict and problems built into the mind made sense of self. It never says that openly.

It says, I'm looking for peace, joy and happiness. But then what it says and does is the opposite in many cases. So you can see the need for conflict in personal relationships, in organizations, nations between nations and nations religions, and even within religions, any human structure, sooner or later, they will be in conflict.

There's these relationships every few days, most relationships, you seem to be forced to act out that kind of conditioned script where you are in conflict with each other. And problems, the little self says, the egoic self says, I want to be free of problems. But problems are part of its sense of identity.

It's looking for the next one. And we all know people who you say, who would they be without their problems? It's easier to see it in others.

All that is the structure of the self that needs its enemies to continue to feel. It's a very favorite way of enhancing your sense of self through enemies is to argue and feel the enormous momentum behind being right in an argument, making the other person wrong. If you can make the other person wrong, you can strengthen your sense of self.

Of course, you don't know that you have really only strengthened the illusion, but for a moment, it feels good. Not really, but the ego says it feels good. The body knows that it doesn't feel good at all.

But the ego says, I've shown him that I'm right. And for the moment, you have added that big rightness to the sense of self and it grows. And then after a little while, it wears off.

And then you need somebody else to make wrong. And you might even be looking. It's of course unconscious.

And then you start discussing a spiritual matter and you say, you don't know what you're talking about. Let me tell you. Or you say something and somebody doubts your point of view.

Now what, well, your point of view is a mental position, a thought. This is how it is. And somebody else says, that's not how it is at all.

But you have a mental sense of self. You have identified with the thought. Identified means your sense of self is in that thought.

It's a me. Your self is in the thought. One could say, I sometimes use the expression, you have reincarnated into the thought form for a moment.

Reincarnated means your self is in it. It's one with your sense of self. So when somebody says, no, you're completely wrong.

It is an attack on your very life. This is illusion. Because your identity is in the thought.

And so there's an enormous amount of emotional, the defensiveness that comes, or the aggression that comes when you defend your mental position. In very unconscious people, it can easily degenerate into violence. And then violence, in many cases, that is the root of violence.

Making the other wrong. Even a nation, collectively the same mindset operates, making the other nation wrong. Okay, let's prove that they are wrong.

We'll attack them. And then we are right. And the more enemies we have, the more we feel our sense of self.

So it operates whether on a personal or collective level, that delusion that through fighting and opposition, you can strengthen the self, the me. And so it's always looking out. It's not really, the egoic self isn't really looking for peace.

It says that. It cannot show you openly that it's looking for trouble. If it weren't, human history would not be the way it is.

The world situation would not be the way it is. The madness of it. And I always say, if you doubt it, read 20th century or any other century, but the 20th century is the most mad.

Or watch TV tonight. If you doubt the madness, what is this? And so it is built in this need for enemies, for problems and conflict.

Everybody carries that in here and is forced to act it out, to strengthen the illusion of me. And it always works for a little while. So all these things operate, the adding and the needing opposition, needing an enemy works.

Those two work very strongly. So you're always looking for the next thing. And so what is humankind to do if humankind is trapped in this collective conditioning of the mind?

Are we ever going to find the sanity? Are we ever going to find who we are beyond that delusion? And there's nothing wrong with a form identity, but if your sense of self is completely in it, it becomes dysfunctional.

Form identity is an aspect of who you are, the form aspect. Function, social function, all those things I mentioned, beautiful. But if your self is in it, if you derive your sense of self from that and have nothing deeper than that, it's always a cause of problems and suffering.

It's beautiful being a mother, but if you only know yourself as that role, you will be clinging, and you will be clinging to that form. If you don't know yourself beyond form, there's always a dysfunction that comes in. So how do you know yourself beyond form?

This is the question that's been asked ever since the spiritual search started because it is a spiritual question. It is the ultimate spiritual question. Who am I?

Am I more than this? And of course, you could add answers on the mind level by adding beliefs. They're a little bit comforting.

How do I know that I am more? How do I know that? How do I step out of this continuous stream of thinking?

A lot of it is to do with self. That's why it never stops. It's so compulsive because I need to keep myself going.

There's mind streams after mind streams, many concerned with future and the next moment. How do I step out of thousands and thousands of years of collective conditioning? Now, if you look at the characteristic of the mind-made self, one of them is the need for enemies.

And that you can now see there's one form of enemy to the mind-made self that is almost constant, but it's always overlooked. And that is the mind-made egoic self, what its main enemy, it has many, it needs them, but its main enemy that it continuously fights and ignores, opposes, resists, is actually the present moment, the now. It doesn't want this.

It never wants the now. There's always an unease with the now. There's always more, sometimes more than unease because I'm looking, I'm on my way to the future that is going to fulfill me.

This is, the now is a stepping stone. It enables me to get to the mental projection of future where I'm going to complete myself. So please don't hold me up now, I have no time for now.

I have something much more important on my mind and that is myself as this future projection where I'm going to make it. That could also be a spiritual thing. It could be a spiritual mental image of a future stage to be achieved as a strong mental projection.

And you're just trying to get away from this because you need to get there. Full liberation, attainment, realization can have an enormous pull towards future. And you don't realize you are trapped in the same mindset that the BMW person is trapped in.

It's become a pull towards future and trying to make it. And so I've met many spiritual seekers who've become unhappy after 30 years of search, 40 years of search, 50 years of search. When am I going to arrive to really, have you ever looked at now?

Have you ever looked at the only thing that never leaves you? The only thing that is ever real, the only thing where anything can ever happen, be said, thought, experienced, it's got to be now. Life is always this moment, but the mind made egoic self is striving towards the next one for its completion.

It's looking for itself there. It doesn't know that it is already here. Here, if you could only acknowledge fully and deeply this here and this now, if you could go deeply into this now, you would find that yourself beyond a mental story is already totally complete.

And only on the level of form could you add things, and that's beautiful, never to find yourself. You can learn new things, that's beautiful. Explore new countries, beautiful.

More of this, even have more possessions, but you can't find yourself through that. If you try to look for yourself through more, even spiritual experiences, they are nice too. But if you're looking for yourself, that never works.

So adding more is beautiful, except you can't find yourself through more. More works on the phenomenal level. And when you realize that, you give up.

You recognize, first of all, the egoic need to make the now into an enemy and to run away from it, to make it into a means to an end, to resist it internally, to criticize it, to project yourself away from it. I'm not interested in this because this is a limitation on who I am, who I want to be. I'm on my way to the future.

Everybody in the big cities of the world, they are all almost out of breath. And if you stopped any one of them, they would give you a reason why they are out of breath, and be like, I need to get there. But the common denominator is they're all trying to get to the future.

And the whole life is spent like that. And the spiritual aspirant, metaphorically speaking, maybe he's not running around, but there could be this same inner urge for future inside, so the breathlessness would become a metaphor. When am I going to be myself?

Have you looked deeply into now, the only thing that never leaves you, all there ever is, your entire life, here, in this space of now? Don't talk to me about now. I don't want this.

This is a limitation. I don't want the place where I live. You mean, this is not what I want.

I don't want to have these, the place where I live, the place where I work, all these are limitations on my life. I want to limitless. I want to find myself as that which is beyond limitation.

That's why I'm trying to get away from the now. But has it worked? How many years have we been trying to get away from it?

Well, 55, 60. And have you gotten away from the limitations of now? Not yet, but I have some more time left.

And you see the fallacy of that. And then you suddenly, you pay a little bit more attention to now. First, you see the pull away from it, and you notice that.

And then your attention moves into just this. Now, just this often is not, sometimes it's beautiful, but more often than not, okay, it's not that interesting. I mean, why should I linger here?

And at other times, it's not only not interesting, it's actually, this is not where I want to be. This not, this now, because this now is a limitation on my life. I'm trying to get out of this.

Okay, but you can't. So you look more deeply, and then something opens up within you. So you pay attention to this moment.

And then comes the realization, all you ever have is now, the one thing that is permanent in your life. Now, to the mind, it hardly makes sense to say that. What does that mean, it's always now?

The mind is, no, it's not always now. There's so many different moments in my life. They're all different.

It's not the case. The form that this now takes changes continuously. Forms appear in this field of now.

And because people know only the form that appears in the now, they believe that there are many different nows every day and every hour, one moment after another moment at another. But of course, it is always the one eternal, timeless one moment. Only the form in which it appears changes continuously.

Now, the very form in which it appears, this is the reason why many people don't want the now, because it's not satisfying enough. It doesn't add enough to me. It might even threaten my sense of self, the form that this moment takes.

And in any case, it's not fulfilling enough. It might even be a limitation on me. I want expansion.

And here I am in this little prison cell in certain extreme cases, where the now is seen as very, very limiting. Or your body, your physical body may be ill, can't move very well anymore. So that becomes very, the now, the form that this now takes can, in some cases, be extremely limiting.

And you are asking me, a person might say, not to try and get away from it? Yes, because that didn't work. Why not try something else?

Why not try to live in alignment, inner alignment with the form that this now takes? In other words, to embrace the now internally, no matter in what form it comes. To say yes to now, which after all is life.

It is inseparable from now. Life is always now, never not now. And so you say yes to life by saying yes to this moment.

And whatever form this moment takes, you say, how can I argue with it? It already is. It is, it is the is-ness of this moment.

Of course, I can change it. I can take action now. If I'm stuck in a, I'm locked in a building, I've lost the key.

This is the now. Of course, then I can get up and shout out of the window and say, can somebody please open the door? But if nobody hears, maybe somebody will come.

But at this moment, this is this now. Now you can internally argue with it and resist it, or you can say, that is the is-ness of this moment. That is the suchness of now, the form it takes.

And you see the futility and even madness of arguing with is, because whatever is, is already the case. So you, the shift in consciousness happens the moment you say yes to what is, because the entire structure of the egoic mind-made self lives on resistance and opposition and on making the now into an enemy. It lives through that.

That keeps it going. So the beauty of is, is we can step out of thousands of years of collective conditioning, not through needing more time to step out of it. And this message cannot yet be heard by everybody.

There are still many people on the planet, before they are ready to listen to this, they need more time. But since you are sitting here, I assume that something in you hears the message that to find yourself, and we will look more deeply now, see what does it mean now? To find yourself, you don't need future.

For everything else, it's helpful on the practical realm. It works quite well. Now, when you say yes to whatever form this moment takes, what happens?

Here comes the form of that this now takes. You say, all right, I welcome this, because it is. The form that this now takes, usually something in you, which is the egoic structures would have resisted it as limiting, not enough, it's not what completes me.

And through resisting this form in a situation, an event, a person, a human being, it can only appear in the field of now. Through resisting it, any form that appears, you strengthen your own form identity. There's a contraction in your form identity when you resist a form that appears in the now.

And that contraction is the strengthening of the illusory self. And so it likes that, it has strong momentum, because it survives in and through that resistance. When you relinquish the resistance, because you've seen through the futility and madness of living in that way, and you embrace the now, there's the form that the now takes, and you bring a yes to that.

And suddenly, what I say now is only a little metaphor or a pointer, there is a sense of space around what is happening in the now. There's a larger spaciousness, inner, perhaps even outer, a space around the form of now, which could be a human being, a situation, something has gone wrong, which happens a lot. The mind would call it wrong, because it's against what should be happening.

This shouldn't be happening now, but here it is. Yeah, but it shouldn't, but here it is. Oh, okay, you become aligned with that isness, and that is suddenly, whew, oh.

There's a spaciousness around the form of now. It happens within a field of, yes, peace around it. You can't, it is not something that you can easily capture in words or thoughts, because it is formless.

Through that act of what ultimately we could call surrender, entering the surrendered state of consciousness, surrender to God, that's a little bit abstract. Who knows what God wants? How do I surrender to God?

And surrender to whatever form this now takes, because the totality has brought this about. It is intrinsically linked with the totality of the cosmos. Everything is totally interconnected.

So the form that this now takes could not be otherwise. The whole universe has brought this about as form, and there's a little me in the head that has an argument with it, and strengthens itself through that argument. That is suffering.

That is the cause of human suffering. That is not knowing yourself beyond this little form. So suddenly there is a depth of spaciousness that is there when you surrender to what is completely.

An uncompromising, yes, that is surrender to God. And in that, the egoic structures that live on resistance and on denial of now subside. And there's a depth to your being suddenly, and a peace that is there no matter what form this now takes, because quite often, as we pointed out, it is a limitation.

It appears as a limitation on your life. Not on the head, but it's here. So the limitation, now people sometimes spend a whole lifetime running away externally and internally from limitations.

And I'm not saying don't change a situation if change is possible. But if you find whatever situation you get into, you encounter new limitations, and you are going to find that. Yes, you can improve your life situation, but even if you improve it, some other limitations will appear.

I gave the example in the talk yesterday, an unemployed actress working as a waitress, being in resistance to that, or being in surrender to that seeming limitation through being in the surrendered state, in my little story that I gave. To explain that, in the surrendered state, she honored the now, each customer in the restaurant, instead of saying, here I am, I'm a brilliant actress, and what has life given me? A waitressing job.

And then the now you can't honor, because the now is so limiting and unpleasant, you would be fighting it internally, continuously, and every customer would, you would make him or her feel that, that you don't like this now. And you are part of it. And then if she enters the state of, all right, this, not a mental concept, I might as well accept that I'm a waitress.

That is a further conceptualized sense of self, strengthening that. Of course, you're not a waitress, it's a temporary function. You're nothing permanently, and it's all a temporary function.

So don't derive an identity, an unpleasant, not enough identity from saying, I'm a waitress. This is what life has given me. Simply accept, not that you are a waitress, it's a delusion, accept this moment.

And there you are, there's a customer, and you say, can I help you? You're honoring and saying yes to now. With that comes in a totally different energy into the interaction.

And the customer senses that he or she is being honored. You honor the now, and any form that comes into the now, that goes with it, without saying, if you honor the now, whatever form this takes is honored. And so, and I gave a little humorous example that after serving many people in that way, she meets a director who gives her a card and call me up, my name is Steven Spielberg.

And the shift came in, three years later, she's a famous actress, world famous, and is her life now free of limitation? No, she can't walk alone in the street anymore. Everybody wants something.

Totally restricted her freedom of movement. What does she do there? To see that before long, some form of limitation will recur in your life in the now.

And you surrender to that. You can change a situation, but knowing the limitless is not to be encountered in the world of form, because form means limitation. So you say yes to the now, even if it is a form of limitation, seemingly.

You surrender to that, yes. And suddenly, around to the seeming limitation, there is spaciousness. At certain depths.

What really is arising here, although we need to be careful with words, all forms, thought forms, physical forms are conditioned. It's the conditioning. Conditioned consciousness, consciousness appearing as a form, consciousness appearing as a thought form, consciousness appearing in many, many forms.

But there is, the appearance arises out of a vast realm of the unconditioned consciousness before it takes form. And that is within every human being, that dimension is there, one could say, underneath the conditioned, which is all thought forms and emotional forms. There's the depths of the unconditioned, which could be, can be felt, cannot be known as such as you know an object in consciousness.

People look for God or themselves, believing that at some point in the future, of course, they are going to find God or themselves as an object in consciousness, as a knowledge in a subject object relationship, as if they could know it in the way that you can know a tree or, but you can't because the unconditioned is not an object. It is the ground out of which all mind objects, objects in consciousness arise into which they subside. So you can never know yourself in the normal sense of the word, but you can be that.

And that is felt, one could say, it is a realm of stillness underneath the mental noise. And every word will reduce it. It is far more than that.

Every word is no more than a little pointer, a realm of aware presence that is beyond thought. Thought can happen, come out of it, but in itself, it is consciousness, one could say, without thought, unconditioned. Oh, that is the deepest meaning of now because the strange thing about now is that it never leaves you and it doesn't change the field of now because it is, the essence of now is, it is the unconditioned consciousness, the field in which all phenomena happen.

And this, and now, the beauty here is to know that, one could say, you know the now beyond the form it takes, but you don't know it in a subject-object relationship. You know this field of now. When you surrender to the form, you know that which is beyond form.

Surrender to the form, the limitation, and then that emerges that is beyond form and beyond limitation as yourself. And this goes against how everybody lives in this world. They do not surrender to the limitation of this form.

They think they want to get away from it. Surrender to the form of now takes you into the depths of the now itself which you then know as the essence of your being, but don't know anything about it, a direct, unitive knowing as yourself. I would go so far as to say that you are the now.

Totally one with it. It never leaves you. You can't leave yourself.

The essence, the unconditioned dimension of who you are. And when you know that, you can allow the conditioned and the form to be, and it's beautiful, the form as which you appear because you don't need it anymore to derive a sense of self from it. Then the forms are beautiful also.

You honor them really for the first time when you know yourself to be beyond the form, you honor all the forms completely also. So to surrender to the limitation, the seeming limitation, this is the essential truth. The ultimate truth of all religions is the surrendered state of consciousness.

There's even one religion that's called surrender, Islam, but it is the essence of all religion in Christianity. That essence is contained in the image of the cross. Jesus on the cross is all of humanity.

The cross is the ultimate symbol of extreme limitation. Couldn't be more limited than to be nailed to a cross. It's a torture instrument.

So in a way, for a while, humans experienced the world, which is a world of form, almost as a torture. It's so heavy. And then that can take a time until suddenly they can hear the message of surrender.

And then at that moment, as symbolized by that image of Jesus, surrender happens on the cross, total surrender to extreme limitation and the seemingly unacceptable, not my will, but thy will be done. Thy will is the will of the one. And then my and thy merge in the act of surrender.

There's no longer my that opposes thy. When my and thy merge, there is total surrender. Your will is one with the totality.

And at that moment, the cross becomes a symbol for the divine. The very limitation turns into the symbol for God or the divine. So it's not by resisting or running away from, but by that deep act of surrender that the divine is realized.

And that, amazingly, does not take time. Surrender can only be now. It may take time to dwell in the surrendered state as your permanent state.

You fall back into resistance because the momentum of the collective conditioning is so strong. And then you reenter surrender. But the moment of surrender is always now because you surrender to the now and in the now.

So it can only be now. So that one decisive act or spiritual practice is the one that doesn't take time. And that's the beauty of it.

It really means you don't need future to find yourself and you need to add nothing to you to find yourself. Nothing. Then you can play with the realm of phenomena and add things.

It's beautiful. It's a play. But you no longer need it for yourself.

That's the essence of spiritual realization. All the teachings point to it. And that is to see that, what grace to see that the very thing that looked so heavy, which is the world of form, the very thing that seemed to be limiting me on all sides, that very thing is the doorway into the formless and into who I am beyond form.

And you see that ultimately they are one. Form is emptiness. Emptiness is form.

They are one. And that is the message of eternal salvation, the most sublime message for humankind. Nothing else is needed.

But that. Thank you. We were welcomed in all those places that we visited in India, very warmly with great openness.

It's now my turn to welcome you here to this gathering, not lecture, not workshop, just a gathering. Not that long ago, it would have been inconceivable, absurd even, for a Western form person to give a spiritual talk in India. What could he possibly teach us?

He would have said. We've been at it for so long. The cradle of human spirituality is here.

There are many sublime scriptures, sages, but the truth always finds new channels. And the truth is now emerging on this planet as never before. And one could consider it an advantage that this speaker has little knowledge of ancient scriptures.

So the truth needs to seek new channels to express itself through. And sometimes new channels can have a power and an immediacy that the old maps or signposts, beautiful and profound as they are, not always have because they've been there for so long. And then suddenly you see the truth again, you hear it, and you recognize it again in perhaps the scriptures that you have been reading or reciting for so long.

And it has renewed power also. So what is this truth? And that truth is the only subject matter of this gathering.

I'm not talking about many things. Only one thing, today and tomorrow. All the words point to that one thing, and it's not even a thing, but language is limited.

All the words point to the possibility of the transformation of human consciousness. And if that's a little abstract, all the words point to the possibility of that transformation within yourself, not in the distant future, but here and now. And so that is also the essence of all scriptures.

The possibility of human transformation, a completely different state of consciousness from the one that has dominated human history up to this point. The most profound question, the only vital question to ask yourself, of course, is the question, who am I? And that's the question, the primordial question of all spiritual endeavor has been that question.

Am I more than what I appear to be? More than this temporary physical form? More than my past, which is not very much, my future, which is not very much either, and the story of me that is the conditioning of my mind?

Is there more, or is that it? And a few beings who discovered who they were beyond the form, the physical form and the psychological form of me, they pointed the way towards that realization. But in most cases, it became belief.

You believed that you were more than that, and that's a little bit comforting, but ultimately not liberating. How can I know who I am beyond the psychological form of me, the content of my mind that I identify with, and the physical temporary vehicle? How can I know that beyond doubt?

And this is what this gathering is about, knowing yourself at the deepest level. There are two levels here of teaching, if you can call it that, it's not teaching because I'm not adding anything to your mind. There are two levels to our being together here, the words and the energy field out of which the words arise.

One could say the words, they all point us to that, nothing else, not meant to be explanations so that you understand the universe more completely. That wouldn't free you. And whatever thought you could add to your mind would only be one further fragment, a further perspective, never the complete truth.

All thought is a fragment and a perspective. So not to get attached to anything that you hear and believe that it in itself contains the truth, it is only a signpost or a perspective, it's never it. So don't expect too much from the words.

The mind expects too much and says, please define further, you haven't quite defined yet. And you go into further and further differentiation, which is very satisfying to the mind, but I won't give you that. We will keep it very simple.

It is helpful as you sit here to allow the words to be there, but pay some attention to the gaps between the words, brief silences, an undercurrent out of which the words come. Just acknowledge that, not through thought, but through the simple act of being attentive to that. And what is that?

One could say being attentive to nothing, the nothing that underlies the things, the words. Pay attention to that. In other words, that requires you to be in a certain state of alertness, relaxed alertness as you sit here.

Because only if there's this relaxed alertness can you be attentive to the underlying stillness. And you may notice if you are attentive to that, it's only through the stillness in yourself that you can become aware of that underlying field. And here we're already getting to the essence before I've explained anything.

The essence of this gathering is here every minute. I'm not building up to the climax, the final explanation that you're going to receive at the end tomorrow evening. It's already, the essence is contained here every moment.

So, as you sit here, see if you can pay attention to that and observe what happens within yourself as you pay as much attention to the words as the gaps. The moment you pay attention to a gap, there's a gap in your own thought stream because it's only that that can be aware of the stillness. And there already is arising that in you that is not conditioned.

It's the possibility is there every moment for that to arise. We are going to see here the absurdity of looking to the future for an answer to that question, who am I? So, what this is about is that state of consciousness in which you know yourself to be the unconditioned, pure consciousness, not anything that forms the content of your mind.

And to sit here is a little bit frustrating for the thinking mind because our gathering is not thought-based and is not meant to add to the accumulated content of your mind. There's enough there already in everyone. More than enough knowledge, more than enough noise.

Now, you may have noticed a characteristic of human beings, and that is that they live with a continuous stream of thoughts that move through their minds. Very rarely in normal existence do you encounter a gap in that continuous stream of thinking. And that is the only species humans have that characteristic.

Flowers don't have that problem because it becomes a problem for most people. Animals don't. So when you look at the world of nature, there's often a very surprising contrast between the insanity to a large extent of the human condition and the sanity that is there in an animal or in a tree, the rootedness in being, being completely itself.

Every animal is still rooted in that. Very few humans are themselves. They are an image of themselves, mind-created, associated with a continuous stream of thinking, the accumulated content of the mind that humans identify with, which means derive their sense of self from their thought processes.

So the beginning of not knowing who you are is when you think you start to learn who you are. You're being taught your name, certain sequence of sounds the child is taught, and their parents say, that's you, you are. Oh, first identification comes with a thought, which is the name, as me.

And now to that primordial thought, but other, many other thoughts will cling to that me that ultimately is just a thought. It then collects experiences that stick to it. Knowledge, viewpoints, opinions, all kinds of personal and collective conditioning, your surrounding culture, other thoughts come in there, other forms of mental conditioning.

And finally, institutions do it to you. They add to it very strongly. And then you emerge triumphantly, having graduated from university, thinking you know who you are.

And then society gives you a particular function. And that becomes you, again, a mind image no more. And that becomes your sense of self.

Whether it's a work, family, relationship, mother, father, brother, this, that, you play a role. The surrounding culture tells you who you are. You accept it or you react against it, which is another form of conditioning.

And so what you have then is basically a mental story that is who you think you are. Me and my story, me and my past. And you need to, the compulsion to think, which is in every human being, which is so normal that nobody even questions it, derives from the fact that you derive your sense of self from thought.

So to stop thinking would be threatening to that sense of self that is derived from thought. That me, the little me, as I sometimes call it. My story, the script in my mind that has been put in there.

And this is the limit of self-knowledge for most people. And even that they don't know much about. It just operates through them.

They are forced to act out their conditioning. They go through their lifetime simply acting out the conditioning of their minds. And that is what all the great teachers recognized as a fiction.

That is what the Buddha simply called the self. Not the self, there's another self that is the unconditioned. But in Buddhist terminology, that is the false self that the Buddha recognized as an illusory entity.

So here we have a sense of identity that is derived from the accumulated content of my mind, me. Now, what kind of a sense of self is that? Is it satisfying?

Is it at ease? Very rarely. Is it happy, in a state of joy?

Very rarely. There are brief interludes in that sense of self when you feel, you know, things are going fine. They never last for very long.

Problems arise continuously. Conflict situations arise continuously. In other words, that sense of self is not satisfying, not fulfilling, underlying that sense of identity there is a great sense of insufficiency, of lack, of not enough, of not being fully myself yet, of not having arrived yet.

Unease, something missing, something vital missing, and many people are not conscious of that directly, it only expresses itself through them as a continuous compulsion to seek self-completion through adding more content to me in order to make myself complete. So there is the search, the compulsive search in that state of consciousness for more in order to find that fulfillment, that sense of being fully, truly myself. The strange fact then is that that sense of self that is mind-based in no human being feels complete, feels fulfilled for long.

All you can get is brief moments of the illusion of fulfillment, the illusion of having arrived when you've just added something to your sense of self, just, you've just added it. A good example of that is you win a lot of money suddenly, you add all that, surely with 10 million dollars, I'm free now, surely. And for a little while, you feel complete.

And then very soon you realize that didn't complete me either. The same problems that I had in my life now become magnified in a bigger mansion rather than in a little house. I experience the same problems again, the same relationships.

And then you add a possession. For a moment, you drive a big car and your sense of self has expanded into the car. And you feel, oh, it's fulfilling.

Other people admire the car, which means you, they admire you, because the self has flown into that. You might try a big house, so the sense of self gets even bigger, flows into that, me. Surely now I have arrived with a mansion.

And sooner or later, the same sense of lack or dissatisfaction comes in again. And there you sit in the big house. It wasn't quite, maybe it's not big enough.

Others have similar big houses. I need to see if I, or maybe it's something, relationship. I could add that there must be a man or woman here on this planet that is destined to complete me.

And so you start looking for the one or whoever who is going to complete, to fulfill that longing, the ache for being fully yourself. So everybody, you're engaged in looking for yourself through this, that attempting to add more content to the mind, because it's the mental image that does it. It's not the car.

The car is there, but it's the mental image that you have of me and my car. The house is there, but it's the mental image of me and my house. And so you meet someone, you fall in love.

And again, a brief moment of feeling, yes, that's it. I'm free. And a few weeks, months, maybe a year.

Unlikely, but later. The first doubt creeps in, was that the right person? Is he or she going to complete?

It doesn't seem to be working that well anymore. You signed a contract. Why don't you do what you're supposed to do?

Make me feel complete. And no human being can do that. No situation can do that.

Nothing can do that. So the search continues. The compulsion to reach out.

Now, where do you reach when you need to add more to me in the search for finding yourself? You're reaching out to the future continuously, because it's only the little me says, yes, you're not enough yet, haven't arrived yet, but you have future, enough. You have enough future left to make it.

So the overriding concern of that sense of self is now with future. On all levels, the next moment, if you are trapped in that illusory sense of self, which still almost everybody is, the next moment is always regarded as more important. And this one.

So there is a continuous, and this is so normal, nobody even notices it, is that reaching out, must get there, the next, should just, that continuous pull of that mental projection that is future. The whole civilization is built on that. Everybody is rushing towards future in the big cities of the world.

Seeking myself ultimately. Completion, knowing myself fully, through this, that, or that. And then you realize the dissatisfaction.

You're not arriving. And then you become a spiritual seeker. And you begin to seek for completion of your sense of self through adding something in a more subtle realm of spirituality and experience.

You begin to project a state, to be achieved. And this is the danger when you come and listen to talks like this one. Because the speaker might say, speak of the possibility of the transformation of human consciousness, a state that is liberated from conditioning.

And then the little mind, the me, the mind-based self comes in and says, this is what I've been looking for all my life. This is good. Now, just tell me how to get there.

Tell me what steps I need to take to get there. In other words, the little me is asking to be given more future to complete itself. So the same mindset still operates in many spiritual seekers.

They don't realize that they are still under the compulsion to move into the future and grasping at a mental projection that is there. So you need to watch that in yourself, that continuous movement towards the next moment. The psychological need for future to complete me.

This is how the egoic self attempts to arrive to make it so that the story of me becomes complete. So you're looking for that and you're making even spiritual search into an attempt to add something to me. And after 20 years or 30 years, you become frustrated there too and say, I've been engaged in spiritual seeking and still haven't arrived.

Again, many times, perhaps an experience came and it was good and then it was just another experience. And then you're ready to listen. To listen to this message.

Everybody needs time, paradoxically, to listen to this message. And the message is, you do not need time to know yourself, to be free, to enter the transformed state of consciousness. How does that work?

Is that another belief? You can then go home and say, I believe what he said, I'm enlightened already. I don't need time.

And for a little while, that illusion, you can hold that illusion and sooner or later, probably sooner, life will show you that no, suffering arises again. How do we realize this truth directly here and now? You need to look at the main characteristic of the egoic self, how it avoids this truth continuously.

And the main characteristic of that mind-made sense of self is that it lives in a state of continuous denial and resistance of the present moment, of now. Because it is under the delusion that only through future can it fulfill itself and get the more that it needs to add to itself. So it's not interested in this moment ever because this moment is not offering the more.

This moment, in fact, more often than not is a limitation. It's not giving you the more that you think you need for self-completion. So you look to the future and you attempt to get away from this moment because it is regarded as an obstacle to your self-completion.

And this is unconscious, but if you look, you can see how most of the time that mind conditioning is operating, that the present moment is regarded as an obstacle that I need to get beyond. It works on all levels, the smallest level, even when you're just busy doing something. The present moment is always an obstacle because you want to be doing, get ready, get to the end of that doing.

It's on all levels, on all scales. So an essential aspect of that false sense of self is it has a hostile relationship with now. Now, since the now is all there is, which that egoic self doesn't know, it's a conceptualized sense of identity that only lives through past and future.

It ignores the vital fact that all there ever is in your life is now. Your life is never not now. Everything now is inseparable from life or from being.

It never was not now. It will never not be now. And to the mind-made self, the now is an enemy.

It makes life, the only place where life can be, it makes that into something that internally it resists, denies, reduces to a means, to an end, and runs away from continuously. If that is not the essence of dysfunction, what is? And so, of course, when you look at human history, you can see if humans produced this madness that is human history, there must be a deep fundamental dysfunction in the human mind.

There must be a deep current of madness to produce the madness that is human history. And so, all teachings have seen the truth that deep dysfunction of the human mind and called it suffering, Buddha, wherever you go, you find suffering because you're carrying the structure of suffering in your mind. It is the essence of suffering to deny the now, to live not in alignment with all there is, which is now, is the essence of suffering.

You could call it illusion, you can call it sin, you can call it unconsciousness. They've all pointed to that as a fundamental dysfunction and they also all pointed to the way beyond it. Now, the way beyond it, to which all teachings and teachers point, has been incorporated by the dysfunctional mind in order to add to the content and make it into belief structures that I can identify with and make myself feel bigger through the identification.

Instead of using these beautiful signposts, you've identified with the signposts, started to believe in the signposts or worship the signposts or collected signposts, comparative study of signposts. All you need is one. How does this pose, this says Rome and that says Rome.

How does the, hmm, well, and then you have egoic identification with our belief structure and yours because the further madness of the egoic sense of self, it loves to be in conflict with something or someone because conflict defines its limited sense of self, it strengthens the sense of me, which is always looking to enhance itself and protect itself because it's so insubstantial, that illusion. So the illusion not only lives in a state of hostility towards now, it lives in a state of needing conflict in order to make itself feel stronger. If I have an enemy in the form of a situation or a person, I feel more strongly who I am.

And this is, the main enemy of that sense of self is the now. So you can see built into the structure of the human mind is that which it is always trying to run away from, the sense of lack, of not enough, of conflict. It needs that to keep itself going.

So it may be personal or it may be collective. This is how, if you derive your sense from a collective egoic identification such as nation or religion, you can see how they need their enemies to define more strongly who they are through the enemy gives you a stronger sense of us or me. So the little egoic me says, I'm looking for peace, I'm looking for liberation, I'm looking for happiness.

But in reality, it doesn't want that. It couldn't tolerate peace for very long. It's looking for the problem.

It's looking for conflict to enhance itself. It's looking to be right, which requires somebody else to be wrong. It's looking to diminish some other being out there because in its delusion, it feels that if I can diminish that person, I'm all myself.

And so that self that you walk around with is that conceptualized self in the head with emotions that accompany it. That is the essence of limitation of not knowing who you are. How do we step out of so many thousands of years of conditioning?

How do we become free? Now we've said the possibility of the transformation of consciousness is here now. How can that be true?

If every human being carries all that conditioning within. Now the good news is this transformation of human consciousness goes beyond the personal, goes beyond, it is, one could say, a planetary or cosmic event. And it wants to happen.

For the first time, it wants to happen urgently. Because if the old conditioned mind, egoic mind, lives on this planet, controls, dominates this planet for another 100 years, it would be the end of the planet and the human race. All we would see is a increasing acceleration of madness and dysfunction and increasing destruction of the planet and of the environment.

Increasing madness and conflict with ever greater powers of destruction through science and technology, which to a large extent simply amplify the dysfunction that is already there. So for the first time on this planet, that transformed state of consciousness wants to emerge through humans, through the human form. The flowering of human consciousness wants to happen now.

In the past, a few flowers appeared here and there, rare flowers, the Buddha, Jesus, ancient sages of India, here and there. Never on any large scale. Now for the first time, that possibility is there because there's no way out anymore.

We are running out of time, and that's the good news. The fact that the planet and humanity is running out of time. The one thing that the egoic mind wants and needs, the worst thing that could happen to it, to any egoic entity, would you tell them, you have no more time, and it happens to some people when they go to the doctor.

Only half a year, and surely that is not enough to complete myself, this is awful. Only half a year left, some people are told that. And it is dreadful news to the egoic self to be told you have no more time.

And here on the planet now, it is a fact that we are running out of time, and that is not bad news, but good news. Because that transformed state of consciousness does not happen through time or through future. There is now the possibility, because it is already emerging in and through human beings, millions potentially are now able to undergo that transformation of consciousness.

And only one little thing is required for that to happen, and you can't, future is of no use for that. There's one little thing that is required for that to happen within you now. And that little thing is to welcome the now instead of resisting it internally, running away from it, or reducing to a means to an end, to actually make the now the central focus of your life and internally align yourself with it, which is the end of the entire mind-made, fiction-based, story-based, conditioned sense of self, because it can only keep itself going through resistance, through making the now into an enemy, reducing it to a means to an end.

The transformation of consciousness happens the moment you enter into a friendly relationship with the present moment. And that is, again, many egoic entities say, no, this is not what I want to do. This is not good advice.

I have no desire to enter into a friendly relationship with this moment because I don't like it. More often than not, more often than not, this isn't what you want to be happening. Much more often than not, this moment is not what you want.

And you can see in your own life, it's hard to put a percentage to it, how often the moment is not what you wanted, and you say, well, I never wanted this. And this is the egoic self therefore says, okay, I need to get out of here fast, out of this now that limits me so much, that gives me all this that I never asked for. Get me out of here.

And so running towards the future again in the hope that the next moment is going to be better. But when it comes, oh, it's this now again. This isn't what I want.

You run away again internally. And this is such a, every human who is trapped in that madness. But so the little egoic entity is saying, this is not good advice.

You're telling me to become friendly with this place that I don't want to be in. And so when I do that, I will be stuck in this moment that I don't want to be in forever. Of course, that is a delusion.

If you run away internally from now, you get stuck in the unsatisfying now forever. Forever. No matter where you go, you will find some form of limitation very soon.

Some form of dissatisfaction again. And then, oh no, that wasn't it. I'm going to look for a better moment.

Maybe then I can accept and say yes and become friendly. I wait until the story of me has improved. Better conditions, better relationship, better surroundings.

When I make it and when the story of me has completed itself, then I will become friendly with the now. However, the story of me never completes itself. And the time of becoming friendly with now never arrives when you're waiting for that.

Oh, so are we then saying that the very place, the very limitation that appears in front of you in this moment, that you should become friendly with that and not do anything about it or not try to change the situation? No. You do what you have to do.

If you fall into the water, you don't say, okay, this is where I am. I will make no attempt to get out. I accept this now.

Acceptance doesn't mean that action doesn't happen anymore. Action happens, but it doesn't arise out of dissatisfaction anymore. It arises out of a different state of consciousness and very effective action happens when you don't resist the now.

And immediately action arises, but no longer through the conditioned entity of me, no longer conditioned action, but action spontaneous that arises out of the unconditioned intelligence out of which the whole universe has come that expresses itself, manifests as this universe in form. That can then act through you. Very effective action.

But before that can happen, you need to open the portal and you open this portal into now simply by allowing this moment to be as it is. Which the egoic entity cannot do. At that moment, a vastness opens up within yourself through the yes to what is.

And you realize the futility even madness of arguing with is. How can you argue with something that already is? This moment, the suchness of it is as it is.

It always is as it is. So why not align yourself with that suchness instead of resisting it? Yes, but it's limiting me.

I'm in a prison cell, for example. My body isn't doing well. I find it hard to move.

I have so many limitations on my life. And how can I? Of course, not all of you, most of you are not in prison cells, although there may be some who are listening to tapes as they are, who are in prison cells.

But you will have other limitations in your life. There's no human being that does not. To have a body, to be this form is already limitation.

Every form is limited. Every form is limitation. So what we are speaking of when we say to accept internally, completely, the suchness of this moment.

When we speak of that, what we are saying is to accept the form that appears in this moment, the condition of this moment, the person that's in front of you at this moment, the place you find yourself in at this moment, just this moment. Not a conceptual identity that you accept, not to say, okay, here I am working as, in this boring job in a factory for 12 hours a day, I might as well accept, I have to accept it, that I am a poorly paid worker. No, no, that's a condition.

It's a conceptual identity in the head. It's an egoic story. The story that I am such and such is a conceptualized sense of self, the very stuff out of which the egoic entity is made.

All you accept is this moment, not some situation, some storyline in the head. That could be called resignation, which has nothing to do with what we are talking about. Resignation is, I might as well accept that I am poor and I live in this dreadful place.

That's my lot in this life. Okay, no, no, you're just strengthening your mind-made sense of self. It doesn't mind whether it's positive or negative.

If you can have a sense of self that tells you, I'm so miserable, in fact, more miserable than most humans, that works quite well too, to give you an illusory identity, a conceptualized me. We're not talking of this at all, resignation or anything like that. No, acceptance of this moment.

So the same person that said, okay, I might as well accept that I'm in this prison for the next 20 years and there's nothing. No, just here, I'm sitting on this chair, breathing. There are walls, there's a wall there, a wall there, a wall there, and another one there with a little window.

And there's the floor. And there's a little mat on which I sleep. And there's a bucket of water.

And there's a certain feeling of emptiness in my stomach. And this breathing is happening. This is this moment.

This is how it is at this moment. And I say yes to this moment as it is. It is any form that this moment takes.

And more often than not, it is some form of limitation, perceived as some form of limitation on your life because it's form, that you accept the very limitation. I'm not saying you can't take action. We've seen already, action can arise, but in the meantime, it is as it is.

Even while I take action, I've fallen into the water, but I'm in it now. Then action happens and I'm totally in that. No inner resistance.

Enormous power suddenly flows in that couldn't flow in when you were trapped in an egoic little entity. There's no, you've tied yourself into a knot. In the totality of existence, which could be a beautiful part of that, there's this little egoic knot in the fabric of existence.

And the little knot says, me, me. And what is happening here? We untie the knot.

That's all. So you single out this moment. Give it attention.

Look at it. Looking literally, but metaphorically in a wider sense, give this moment in whichever form it appears complete attention without needing to label it because any labeling, which is mentally called attention, calling it this or that, is associated with the story of me. The story of me seeks to somehow find a label for this situation that either it goes well with the story or it doesn't fit into the story.

But in either case, it will label it as great, good, I'll have that. Or in many cases, no, this is not what I wanted, but it's called this, it's called that, it's interpreted, it's labeled. And it's not faced.

You face this moment in whatever form it appears completely by giving it full attention. Looking at it, just looking, not analyzing, not interpreting, not labeling, not making some further storyline out of it or try to figure out how this fits into the story of me. You simply give it your full attention.

Oh, oh, you can only do that if you have said yes to it, that the portal is now open, that yes to the form that this moment takes opens the portal, so to speak. And suddenly, what comes through this portal is unconditioned intelligence itself. And through that, you look, not necessarily through the eyes, you give attention to the form of this moment.

That attention is not thought. Thought may come at some later stage when suddenly a realization arises of what you have to do, and you do it. And often, realizations come, but first, there is the ability to give your complete attention to this now, to this, the form that this now takes.

And that is an enormous thing. That attention that you give has nothing to do with the story of me. It has nothing to do with whether this story of me, my life situation, my life circumstances, regardless of where you are in your life situation, there may be, you may be in an up or in a down because they fluctuate, gain and loss.

You may be in a palace, you may be in prison. You may be sitting in a Mercedes, or you may be sitting on a crowded bus. Regardless, there's nothing to do with this ability to give attention, which a prerequisite for that is to welcome this moment, the form it takes, even if it is a limitation.

And then you realize that the now, that there is more to the now than you could ever have suspected. And you may begin to realize the form that this moment takes changes continuously. But the form that this moment takes, the now, is not the now.

The now is deeper than the form that this moment takes. It is the form as which it appears. Most people don't know that.

They think that each day and each hour consists of many moments. But that's not true because there's only the now. It's always now.

But they think there are many nows because the appearance, the form that it takes changes continuously. So your present now is you're sitting here listening to these words. Then the now, when you're at home, the now will be you're sitting in a different environment, different form, different humans.

But it's still now. It's always now. So by surrendering to the form of now, you go beyond form.

This is the opposite of the way in which the conditioned egoic entity lives. Continuous opposition to now. So you surrender, yes, surrender, to the very limitation that appears in this now.

Surrender simply means you don't offer inner resistance to it. Yes, it is as it is, no arguing with that. If you resist the form that this moment takes internally, through the resistance, you strengthen your own form identity, the psychological form of now.

Me. Every time you resist or deny or run away from now, there's a contraction. And most people live continuously in that state of unease and inner contraction because they are fighting.

They are against it, this now. This, isn't it? So, and that strengthens the illusory sense of self, which is your form identity, the mental psychological form of me.

So you react to a form, a situation, a place, a person, whatever appears in the now. Something goes wrong, it tends to happen a lot, so to speak, what's wrong, the mind says, wrong, wrong. It's not wrong, it is as it is.

And now, through non-resisting this form, that which is beyond form within yourself arises through the simple act of, yes, of surrender, of unconditional acceptance and giving it what flows then through this portal that has just opened up is a field, a current of aware presence. And that current of aware presence looks, is the attention that flows out, is the unconditioned intelligence. And this is the, any situation that you look at in this way and face completely will be immediately dealt with by the unconditioned intelligence.

And it happens that the going mind has struggled against for a lifetime, or a hundred lifetimes, and it didn't change. And suddenly, as the unconditioned intelligence operates, immediately the situation changes. And that change comes about sometimes through spontaneous action that then happens through you, right, totally right action for that moment.

Or it comes through a sudden realization that comes, takes then the form of thought, but it came out of that state, and then it comes in the form of a thought of, oh, this is what I have to do. Or it comes as an external factor coming from you don't know where that suddenly does something to that situation. Because you're now connected with the totality, the one consciousness.

You're no longer a little knot. So it cannot flow very well through a knot. The current of life cannot very easily flow through a knot.

It's trying to, oh, I have to get through. So, of course, there's a little bit of intelligence coming through the human mind, but it's hard work and it's effort because there's an egoic knot there and life is a struggle and you have to somehow make it. And then you untie the knot.

So it's the transformation. The essence of it is of such simplicity that the egoic mind, the story-based entity of me, says, this can't be it. I don't want to listen to this.

Let's think about your problems, how to solve them. It doesn't want to listen to this. If I gave it a complicated series of exercises and practices that in 10 years' time you can become good at and in 20 years' time will take you beyond your conditioning, then the little egoic entity would be very happy and go home from here and say, no, I've really got something.

He even handed out a folder and it lists the 20 steps I need to take, which would take me 20 years, but it's worth it. I can finally complete myself. Great, I've got more time.

But unfortunately, it's not getting there here. To see the simplicity of ending and entering what we could call the surrendered state of consciousness, unconditional, unconditional acceptance of whatever form this moment, the now, takes, then it no longer matters what form it takes. That will change quickly anyway, but you don't need it to change anymore.

So we asked the question initially, the only true question, who am I beyond that conditioned entity that I think of as myself that only consists of accumulated thoughts that I identify with as me? Who am I beyond that accumulation of thoughts? And now, the thought-based entity would like to have an answer that it can add to the accumulated content and take home.

Oh, he told us, he told me who I am. So you can add that, okay, now I've got the one big chunk of content that I've been waiting for and can add that to my mind. But of course, it doesn't work like that because who you are beyond thought, beyond mind, cannot be found in the realm of content.

And it is precisely here, as we surrender to the suchness of this moment, that that which is beyond form, because all thought is also form, that which is beyond form, that which is the essence of who you are, arises as, one could say, but be careful with any word that I give you, only a little pointer, a current of aware presence, which is very still, completely still, and totally alert and conscious.

And now you can look that it is that which then looks, works, flows through this form. Yes, it is a stillness and far more than that Yes, it is alive, vibrantly alive, and very still. It is, as it is sometimes called in teachings that have arisen in this country, they have sometimes called it the self.

Not to be confused, here be words, not to be confused with the false self that the Buddha recognized as an illusion, that is the story-based, mind-based entity, but the deeper, the one self. And it is there where you are one with the one. And it is there where you are one with the source, one with it, the source of all life.

And yes, there is deep peace, but vibrantly alive peace in the record. Of that oneness, and you have always already been it. You have always already been saved.

One could say it has happened already. You just didn't know it. And there was a dream-like state of delusion.

There is nothing that needs to happen to you because it's happened already. And how could you look for that in the future, which doesn't even exist? Looking for yourself in some mental abstraction.

So in that deeper sense, of course, you may have heard certain teachers say, you're already enlightened, you're already free. It's true. It's true.

But not as a belief. Don't make it into mental content, then it's another illusion. So the surrendered state is that state of consciousness that is now arising.

Maybe not all at once. Yes, it can only arise now. The saying yes is the saying yes to now.

But the momentum that is there, that comes from ages and ages of human collective conditioning, the wake-up call, a cell phone, waking up is what this is, of course. It is the awakening in which you realize that you have been immersed in a dream-like state, which is the state of self-identification with the stream of thinking and the emotions that accompany it. Your self was in that.

In every little thought, there's a sense of me, me, me. In other words, continuous rounds of incarnations. Incarnation, I'm using that in a slightly different sense from the conventional sense.

Whenever you identify with any content, thought, you reincarnate into that thought because your sense of self is now in it. So you reincarnate. That means finding your sense of seeking, your sense of self in a form.

And each time you seek your sense of self in a form, you reincarnate into that form. So people ask me, do you believe in reincarnation? Is there such a thing as reincarnation?

And I say, yes, every minute. Every minute you reincarnate. It is definitely a fact.

And that continuous compulsion to reincarnate into identification with form is the essence of delusion, is the essence of that dreamlike, trance-like state that is normal human consciousness or unconsciousness. It's identification with that. And so, and suddenly you hear the wake up call and the portal opens into now.

And now the now is not resisted, interpreted, labeled. It is as it is. The whole compulsion that is behind thought comes to an end with that act of surrender.

Compulsive thinking is connected with resistance, resisting what is that keeps it going. And then thinking is not a problem anymore because your self isn't in it. Your sense of thought still arise occasionally.

And they're recognized as thoughts, mind movement, wave movements. Within that spaciousness that is presence, that is the current of awareness that flows through you, the wonderful, spacious peace and stillness. And within that occasionally waves, wave movements, ripples come, thoughts, emotions.

Fine, not problematic anymore because you don't reincarnate into them anymore. You now know who you are, not as a new label. You know yourself as the awareness, the spaciousness, the stillness.

Of course, you are never not it. No matter how mad a human being looks on the surface, how mad, and mad means, the more you are totally identified with that, the more mad you become. And no matter how mad a human being looks, underneath all that noise and turmoil is always the spaciousness.

And it can sometimes be touched when that flows through you, through the acceptance of what is, that current, sometimes, and quite often, that pierces through layers of mind, and mental conditioning in the other human being, and awakens that stillness and spaciousness. It calls it forth. To some extent, this happens in this gathering, which is more than the words.

It is, one could say, an energy phenomenon. You know? So that spaciousness has this power to awaken it in others, and that is an act of suddenly, and at first you think you're seeing something in this other person, and you don't know what it is.

It feels good to be in the presence of that person, but it's nothing to do with the form of that person. It's because you recognize your own essence there. But that is already the awakening of it, because it's only because it's awakened from underneath layers of conditioning that this recognition can be there.

So you always come to a teacher, not to meet the teacher. Who would want to meet another, what for? You come to a teacher to meet yourself.

Just a reflection of the unconditioned state that you are a teacher just happens to be, have become transparent through complete surrender. The self, the entity has become transparent, and this is happening to you also. This is just one way of putting it.

You become open, transparent to that, and you become an opening. And so suddenly, you know who you are and who you always have been. And you couldn't even call it anything.

I'm attempting to put some words there to use as pointers, but they're all inadequate. Now, this is important to realize. From the point of view of the interpreting, accumulating, labeling mind, from that perspective, as you enter this state of pure aware presence, which is to a large extent free of thought.

Thoughts can drift in and out, but they become insubstantial. And that state of such complete presence through which you look, it is attention itself. To the mind, which only knows labels and judgments, that is a state of ignorance.

It misinterprets that. It doesn't recognize it and says, but I don't know anything anymore. It says, I don't even know who I am anymore.

But it is not a state of ignorance only from the ignorant viewpoint of the limited conditioned mind is that a state of ignorance. It is, in fact, a state of true intelligence. But the limited mind doesn't know that.

This is important to point out because otherwise the mind may trick you by throwing up certain thoughts and saying, don't go there, you become stupid. We can't, you won't know what's going on anymore if you don't interpret it and call it something and categorize it and see where it fits into this or that, the story of me. If you don't figure out what this is, you won't, you'll be lost.

The opposite, of course, is true. You've been lost for lifetimes. So, but be careful with the little thoughts that come up, the mind throws up and suddenly you believe in a thought again that comes up through the mind.

Oh, and the thought might be saying, oh no, don't go there. Here you've worked so hard at judging and interpreting and you've worked hard at it for 50 years. Now to give all that up, don't do that.

I've invested so much. And then you recognize it as a thought. And increasingly, as the aware presence arises, there is the ability in you to recognize thought as thought without getting drawn into each thought and each thought.

And completely believing and thinking that some thought can actually give you the truth. And then you get lost into a little perspective, which every thought is, one tiny perspective on something. And you believe that this tiny little perspective is the truth.

And then you identify with this tiny little perspective and say, this is my, this is how it is. Let me tell you how it is. And then you give your judgments and interpretations.

So you're completely lost, totally reincarnated into a tiny viewpoint of a mental position, not realizing the truth is so vast. You could express the opposite mental position, which would also be true. And then another one, which would also be true.

And the truth is only if you contain, able to contain all mental positions without saying there's the truth. It's not in any one. And even spiritual discourse, there is not one statement that you can make that contains the entire truth.

It's just a perspective on it. And then you have to look at the abilities there then to hold in that vastness, all possible perspectives, allow them to be. And you can say, this is one that's quite nice, this perspective.

And then you look, oh, that one is also true. All thought is just a fragment, it's form, it's limited. So you don't get lost in thought anymore.

So it's no longer a problem, then thought is quite nice. It's no longer a troublemaker. But the thought that you identify with is troublemaking.

You know some people when they, you meet them in the morning at breakfast table, and when they come to you and say, well, you know, I've been thinking. You know there's going to be trouble. It's some problem that they dwelled on during the night.

I've been thinking, oh. So if we make it here, in another day called tomorrow, perhaps we will, we will meet again in this field that is the eternal now. And in the meantime, there will be ample practice, opportunity for you to practice alignment with what is.

For many Western travelers who come to India, that is, some of them learn a deep lesson here, especially in India, if you're not aligned with what is, you'll be very unhappy. It's true anywhere, but especially true here. And maybe that is the simple reason why this country has produced more liberated beings than any other.

Thank you. No session, no talk is complete without the wake up call of cell phones. Have a look inside yourself and see if you're waiting for me to speak.

Perhaps even some impatience arising. Irritation. Or your mind is taking you to some completely different place and time.

Tonight, later, tomorrow. We saw last night that in the normal human state of consciousness or unconsciousness, there is a very deep, deep seated need, psychological need for the next moment, for future that's always there. Everybody is waiting for something.

It's the next moment or some point in the future. That is an intrinsic part of the normal human consciousness, which is identification with the stream of thinking, which is inhabiting a conceptualized reality, a conceptualized sense of self in the head, consisting of thought movement, a conceptualized sense of self, story-based, mind-based, past-based. And that conceptualized sense of self inhabits a conceptual reality because everything is then being perceived through the conditioning of that accumulated, the accumulated conditioning of the mind.

Whatever you perceive is perceived through that and is conceptualized through the compulsive, automatic, mechanical labeling of every experience and sense perception that happens every moment. And through the automatic mechanical labeling process, a veil appears between you and that which is being perceived, between you and the other human being. It becomes deadened through the continuous mental label-making, continuous judgments.

And it's mechanical, it's automatic. Very few people on the planet are even aware of it as yet. Something else is arising powerfully, but as yet, very few human beings are even aware of this mechanical process because they are totally identified with that mechanical, compulsive, automatic process.

And that is the essence of unconsciousness. You are lost in a world of content and your sense of self is in there. Then everything you perceive is perceived through that sense of self that is mental, mentalized, conceptualized.

And then whatever happens to you, every experience, every encounter, every perception, every place that you go to is seen through that filter of that ultimately fictitious, false me, sense of self, that adopts a personalized position, a reactive position towards whatever happens. And it interprets it according to that deep-seated conditioning. And so life becomes very problematic because nothing is seen clearly.

Nothing is simple. Everything is complex, conflict-ridden, and problematic through the labeling process. And that is the self, the mind-made self.

That is the egoic entity, the me, the little me. And as we saw yesterday, never at ease, except very brief moments, for a little while, never sensing a sense of completeness, a true deep aliveness, rootedness, free of fear. Fear is an inevitable companion of that state of unconsciousness.

And so you're always waiting for completion in the next moment to add something to me. We saw that yesterday. The need, the compulsive need to add more content to me.

So we are stepping out of that. This is why we are here tonight, not to add more to all those identifications, to all that content, but to allow a different state of consciousness to arise that is unconditioned. To step out of a conceptualized sense of self, out of the story of me, to see an infinitely deeper and vaster sense of who you are, that is already there underneath all the mind movements, underneath the story of me with my past and suffering, underneath the grievances that the ego loves so much, underneath the reactivity that the egoic entity thrives on, just looking for the next thing or the next problem. The complaints that it loves.

Complaining makes up a large part of many people's mind movement. If you look into it clearly, how much of that incessant stream of thinking is actually complaining, some form of complaint in your head about this person, this situation, this place, and that movement of carrying grievances, the need to be reactive, adopt a reactive relationship to everything that happens, the complaining, the pattern of continuous complaining and looking for the next thing because it strengthens that never enough sense of me.

And people don't realize it's through complaining mentally or verbally. And I'm not saying complaining to tell somebody, please don't step on my foot. Remove your foot from my foot.

You're not complaining. You're telling somebody to do something about it. That's not complaint.

To say we are using it in another sense here, to tell somebody, please, the soup is cold. I ordered a hot soup. Take it back, please.

It's not a complaint. This is telling somebody to do something about this situation. So we're not talking about you becoming a doormat and let everything happen.

We're talking about a mental, useless, pointless, futile, conditioned movement that thrives on complaining. He shouldn't, they shouldn't, why don't they? This dreadful, if you could see the percentage of your mind activity that is some form of complaint, you would be amazed and there's nothing personal in it.

It is not your personal problem. It's not that, oh, I'm not good enough. I'm always complaining.

It's nothing to do with you. It's the collective human mind. It is a collective mind pattern that the egoic mind-based entity loves because the sense of self through any kind of complaint, and a lot of that happens in people's minds.

They're complaining. They may even be complaining about themselves. Not good enough.

You see, you failed again. You see, you always, mad, mad. And people are so immersed in that, they think all the problems that they are complaining about have an actual reality out there.

And don't realize that every situation is very simple if you don't add all that to it. It is simple. So to watch that need to complain so that it is there so that the egoic entity can feel a little bit stronger.

Why does it feel a little bit stronger in that mind movement? Because whenever you complain about something or someone or a place, you adopt a position of rightness. Me, right.

You, wrong. Because that which you are complaining about is obviously wrong. The complainer, the me, the mind-based entity is obviously right.

That is the essence of every complaint, that I am right and the situation or the place or the person or the condition that I am internally complaining about obviously is wrong. So some people move through life complaining about the world, the God. They have an issue with God.

He should know better. Why does he allow that? If I were running the universe, I would do a better job.

If the universe or the earth or the planet, the world, the question arises, if the world were a reflection of your inner state, what kind of a world would it be? So to watch these deep-seated mind movements and even here it may arise, the mind looking for one thing to complain about so that you don't have to listen to the rest. And then the mind can focus on that one thing, I disagree with that statement.

And for the next hour, you have a mind movement around that disagreement and you're hoping that there'll be an opportunity for you to get up and say, I disagree very strongly with you because it's wrong. What you said is wrong. That's very satisfying.

Like, ah. No, this is easy to do here because in spiritual teaching, spiritual teaching, the purpose of it is not to present a philosophy, a consistent view of the universe, a system of thought with an inner consistency that you can then adopt. One more thing I can identify with and say now this mental edifice, all those explanations, this is now what I believe in.

But a spiritual teaching is not like that. The purpose of the words is not to help you understand the universe. The purpose of the words is simply to point to the state of liberation.

So the words may point to bondage so that the awareness arises of the mental prison that you inhabit. Now that awareness is the arising of freedom. The simple fact of seeing the bondage of identification with the mental noise, continuous mind movement and its reactions and its grievances and its complaints, to see that in oneself is already the arising of something that is beyond that which you see.

The seeing which is the aware presence and this is why we're here is unconditioned. It simply sees. It sees the false.

It sees illusion. This is why as this arises here and all the words are only designed to be pointers to the liberated state of consciousness. But if that liberated state of consciousness were not already arising in you, this is the only reason why you've come here.

Well, except for one or two who got dragged here by somebody else and didn't really want to come. But it's unlikely that they will stay unless suddenly something opens up within them. That's possible too.

But for most of you, you came here by your own free will probably. Yes, it is possible that one or two came for the wrong reasons. Perhaps thinking that this was a lecture on philosophy of playing around with thoughts, finding some new interesting thoughts.

And then perhaps after half an hour or an hour, it won't be satisfying here to sit here anymore and then you would go. And that's fine. You need a little bit more time.

The universe is very patient. This time goes on and on. There's a lot of it.

It doesn't matter. But most of you, if you are able to sit here, it's quite a long evening. The physical body may occasionally move a little bit and it's very hard here.

And yet, if you are able to sit here during all this time, this means already a state of consciousness that is unconditioned is arising. And that is what I am addressing here. This is what is being touched, pulled.

All words are limited. One could say almost it is being pulled out of you. And the first step in this process is the recognition of that which is false, which is identification with all the conditioned thought movements as a me, a self, a story-based entity with a little past and a little future.

A past that didn't go quite the way it should have gone. Oh, and you thought that was your personal problem. It's everybody's.

It didn't go quite, it didn't quite work out the way it was meant to. It wasn't the one I married. It was, I must have made a mistake.

It wasn't, he wasn't the prince that I married. I thought I married. He turned out to be a human.

No story-based me has a totally satisfying story. And many story-based identities are actually unhappy ones, very unhappy ones that tell themselves internally almost continuously their unhappy story in order to revive it. What he did to me and the world did to me and my parents did to me.

Unfairly treated, what God did allowed to happen to me. And so some of these identities are very unhappy ones and the egoic entity loves that also because at least you think you know who you are by repeating the story to yourself mentally. It gives you the illusion that you have an identity and you have an identity of sorts.

It's a storyline, an unhappy one. And you can carry the grievances and the complaints associated with the unhappy story of me. And they keep the sense of self going until you finally are on your deathbed.

And maybe your last breath may still be a complaint. Why did life do that to me? That was my incarnation, my life.

It should never have happened. It was one big mistake. And it's amazing how many people carry a very unhappy identity based on their past.

Hoping vaguely that somehow the future is going to free them and somehow make this unhappy story turn around into a happy one. But how could it? Because your sense of self is now totally wedded to the unhappy story.

Your sense of self lies in the unhappy story. How could it ever turn around? You don't even want it to turn around because your sense of self is the unhappy one.

You feel comfortable with that. Of course it's unconscious. If you made it conscious and looked at it and see that you are actually, you love your unhappy story.

And every story has elements of that. Some stories are very unhappy, but every story has strong elements of that. And then you can see how much there is a refusal to let go of that, mind movements, all those mind movements.

And on the surface, those mind movements might say, maybe my life will get better. You might visit clairvoyance to find out if the story of me is going to improve in the next few years. Is there going to be a change?

And the clairvoyant says, yes, I can see a change coming next year. There is somebody coming into your life. And he or she is going to make you happy.

Everything will turn around. But you carry the unhappy me. And even if that wonderful being should come into your life, you will interact and react through your unhappy story.

And you will make that relationship, you will incorporate that into your unhappy story. And so then you try another clairvoyant, because... So it is amazing the presence that people have constructed for themselves that they inhabit and even are addicted to the pain of that.

Because it's better than not knowing who you are. At least you have an unhappy sense of self better than no sense of self. So every story has strong elements of that.

And to see that even if your story is not totally unhappy, maybe it's half, half. But to see it didn't go the way it was meant to go. But of course you still have future.

It can all work out. It won't, of course. Dissatisfaction, unease, problems, fear, anxiety, they're all built into very structure of that mindset.

It's within the structure of the mindset when you identify with mind movements, when you derive your sense of self from a story. You can never get there on that level of complete your sense of self, find yourself fully, the fullness of life. So, and we are here to see it.

And already you may see it is, you might say, you might think, well, it must be, isn't it very depressing? You are telling us a very depressing story of how our lives are. No, you may detect in yourself a certain recognition it's quite nice to listen to this and you recognize something there and you see it and the seeing is already freeing.

And all the words that arise here, and this is the case with every true spiritual teaching are not to explain the universe and are not even going to be consistent. A philosophical system may be consistent, otherwise it's deficient, but a spiritual teaching, be very suspicious of a spiritual teaching that is totally consistent internally where everything makes absolute sense. It is likely that you are mistaking a philosophical system for a spiritual teaching.

Spiritual teaching in its very nature contains contradictions because the truth of who you are and it only points to that, it points to the false, you begin to see the false, and then it points to that which is beyond the false. But seeing the false is already that movement of the real, who you are beyond that conditioning, to see that is already the arising of that. So the spiritual teaching points to that which really is very hard to talk about and no single thought could capture, encapsulate the truth of who you are and the truth of spiritual liberation.

And it is very tempting for the mind to get hold of one statement and say, this is the truth, and the other statement is not true. But in spiritual teaching, you may hear two contradictory statements and they're both true. For example, last night I said, nothing needs to happen.

Freedom is already here. Underneath the movement of the conditioned mind, there is already in you the vast spaciousness, stillness and depths of the unconditioned. So there's nothing that needs to happen as such and yet in the course of this evening, I may point out certain things that look as if you could do something about it.

For example, I might say, enter the state of surrender to what is this moment. So you want me to do something. What I thought you said, it's not an happening.

There's nothing you need to do. Well, maybe surrender is not a doing at all. It's an allowing.

But it looks, when one speaks of it, as if it were as if you could do something. Many statements, the timeless, we are entering the timeless state of consciousness. It arises because the conditioned state is totally linked to time.

It operates, this conditioned entity, the mind made self operates entirely through past and future. It knows only past and future and the future is a repetition of the past. The redemptive power of now is totally obscured.

The only place of freedom is obscured by that mind movement that is only interested in past and future. But that basically means it is only interested in repeating the past and that is what usually happens. So we are here to step out of that.

All the words only point to the state that is timeless, the state of consciousness that is timeless and we are entering that together. At the moment, I've mostly been speaking of the bad news, but that is important. The bad news, the illusory entity and the suffering that is created by that, we need to see that fully.

That is already the beginning of liberation, but it looks on the surface as if I were talking only about bad news. And if you don't listen from the depths of your being, if you only listen through the story entity, I'm not addressing the story-based entity, but there may be one or two of you here who listen to these words only through the mind-made story-based entity and it will feel insulted by these words. How dare you suggest that my grievances and my complaints are not justified and real?

How dare you say that I have no right to do that? To complain, to suggest it's an illusion. My problems are so, my complaints are so real and I have a right.

This is the entity. And so one or two of you go through this reaction. Who is reacting?

When I point to illusion within yourself and there is a reaction, who is it that is reacting? The illusion. It doesn't like to hear that.

It's a great insult to suggest that perhaps the unhappiness that you carry as part of your sense of self could perhaps be an illusion, an illusory identity that you cling to. But many of you are still sitting here. One or two are going to walk out.

Maybe three or four or five or six, small percentage. That means those words are not reaching the deeper level of your being, are not being received by that. They only hit the conditioned and the conditioned doesn't like what it's hearing because I'm threatening its very survival.

So let's get out of here. And perhaps even shout something as the last triumph of the conditioned entity. It's happened once or twice in meetings.

Absolute nonsense. And the door slams. So the words, perhaps something within you, if you're still here, recognizes, recognizes the truth.

And it actually feels good to see the false as false. You're already no longer totally identified with those mind movements through that seeing. So the pointing to the false and the pointing to the real, which are both part of this teaching, may very well use contradict, seemingly contradictory perspectives.

The timeless state of consciousness. We are entering the unconditioned or timeless state of consciousness is emerging here so that you don't derive your sense of self anymore from the conditioned mind movements, but from that which is beyond time, the still, alert, vibrantly alive presence vast, intelligent, that is there underneath all that. But we have another contradiction here because as we are entering the timeless state of consciousness and we are spending three hours on this time.

And yes, there's a little paradox here, but it's fine. You could say, well, why don't we only need one moment? And we travel deeper into that state, which is another paradox, because to say deeper implies time.

But let's, instead of resolving the paradox, just leave it because it's not an explanation. They're simply pointers. So to see the false in oneself, to observe those mind movements, to recognize that your story, your identity, your sense of self is not the only one that didn't quite work out.

This, you can, sometimes people are under that illusion that other people's stories have worked. None of them works for long. Meet famous people, rich people, go beyond the glossy surface that you see in magazines, talk to them, meet them and see enormous sense of dissatisfaction, black fear, not enough.

So they need more, even more. You could become a great leader, a leader of this country. And then you might think, oh, I finally made it.

My life has now become free of limitation. I'm all powerful. And two years later, you find yourself in prison, if you're lucky, and you have another limitation.

So there's the movement of thought. There's identification with the movement of thought. And there's the arising of the awareness of those thought movements.

And then as the awareness arises, you see a very, we've already pointed to grievances, we've pointed to complaints, we've pointed to repeating the story in your head to reinforce it, we've pointed to perhaps, or maybe we didn't, it's also to repeat your story to other people to reinforce it. Please confirm to me that my problems and my story are real. Listen, and you, oh, yes.

You truly have been treated unfairly by life. You are right that you're feeling sorry for yourself. You're fully sorry for myself, that self feels bigger in that too.

So we've seen many of those very predominant movements associated with living in and through a false sense of self. And now there's one more fundamental one that we need to address. I pointed to it last night, that it needs to obscure the now because it can only function through past and future.

So as we saw last night, if you live through that false sense of self, your relationship with now, which is all there ever is, which means with life, life itself, life and now are inseparable, your relationship with now is predominantly a hostile one, a resisting one, one that denies the now, tries to get away from it, resists it internally, complains about it mentally, or makes it into a stepping stone to the next moment, which the little me in the head says is a more important one because there, it's going to be a little bit better when I arrive there. So the relationship that you have with now, which is the relationship with life, is then one that is problematic of conflict, basically. You are in conflict with now.

You deny now, you resist now, you complain about now, you protect yourself away from now, and now is life. And so you're condemned to living in this abstract reality, never knowing the depths of now, the depths of life, the fullness of life that can only be here in the space of now. The only place where life is, is now.

So you can see the mind movement that seeks to deny that, a very fundamental one. In seeing it, freedom arises. And seeing it is the arising of presence, a state in which the now is not resisted.

And that is the beginning of the collapse of the conditioned egoic entity and the story-based identity. The now is not resisted anymore. You are able, as presence arises, to welcome this moment as it is.

We saw that yesterday as the primordial spiritual practice that requires no time to align yourself with now, to make it your friend, unconditionally say yes, because you see the madness and the futility of saying no to the is-ness of now. To deny is, is to deny the universe, because the form that this now takes could never be otherwise. Because whatever form arises at this moment is totally interconnected with the whole.

It's only through our limited perspective that we think there is an isolated event here that shouldn't have happened. But that seemingly isolated event is simply, there's a web of interconnectedness with the totality of this seeming isolated event. There isn't even an event.

So whatever appears in the now is as it is and could not be otherwise, which doesn't mean that action cannot arise through you to respond to the need or the challenge of now. But the now, the is-ness of now is as it is, the totality has brought it about. So to be not aligned with that is to, you tie yourself into a little knot in the fabric of existence and that little knot says no.

And it claims a separate identity for itself. Me, and here's the rest of this threatening and dreadful universe that seems to conspire against me and put obstacles in my path continuously. But I am going to make it.

Just, I'll show them. And now, here we come now to the essence and then we go even deeper. We saw last night that more often than not, the form that this now takes as an event, a seeming event, a person, a situation, a place, a challenge is only the form of now.

It is not the now. The now is eternal, timeless, spacious, pure consciousness, and it is you. Nothing that takes form is you.

The essence of unconsciousness, the essence of bondage, the essence of suffering is to mistake who you are for some form, thought movements, identification with this and that. But ultimately, it all goes down to identification with thought and emotions that arise together with thought, which are energy forms. And you have to seek yourself in it and seek completion through adding more forms to the content of your mind.

What else can I identify with to make my story better? Or if you're deeply trapped in an unhappy story identity, unconsciously, you're saying, what else can I identify with to add to my bad story? In other words, you're looking for the next bad thing because only a bad thing will fit into a bad storyline.

A good thing doesn't fit into my story anymore if I'm identified with a bad mind-based identity and story. I'm looking for the next bad thing. I don't know that, of course.

I'm saying, I'm looking for happiness. And then you seek exactly the thing that gives you more unhappiness. So form, so it's a search through some added form to find a bit more of myself.

And that is the essence of delusion and bondage and suffering. Because suffering is, whenever you're identified with form, suffering arises because every form is limited. And the limitation of that form, and it's short-lived.

So the two factors that every form is limited, every thought, every physical form, everything in form is limited and, as the Buddha put it, impermanent. In other words, fleeting. And as the Buddha also put it, unsatisfactory.

Beautiful, he saw it, he saw it so clearly. And what did people do? Constructed a huge edifice of philosophy, Buddhist philosophy, the simplicity.

So identification with form is, in the Pali language, I very rarely quote strange foreign words, but it's so beautiful in the Pali language. The essence of human existence in the deluded state is dukkha, anicca, and anatta, suffering, impermanence, not self. You're seeking a self where you cannot find a self.

In form, suffering, it's impermanent, it's not self. Whatever condition you encounter, try to identify with, it brings you suffering, it's not self, it's fleeting. And so you move looking.

It is not only the essence of suffering, this identification with form, it is also the essence of what we could call evil, people doing dreadful things to other human beings or to other life forms on the planet or to the planet itself. And it's identification with form, how does that work? What happened two days ago, not far from here, people burned a train, 58 people were killed, burned to death traveling on a train.

How does that connect with what we are talking about? These people, they belong to two different religions. And each group of people derives their sense of self of me or us, which is a mind-based sense of self from a conceptualized accumulation of certain beliefs that they identify with as me or us.

There are mind movements, belief systems, this gives us our sense of who we are. It's a conceptualized collective identity. And the others have a different conceptualized set.

So they need their enemies to strengthen this very tenuous sense of identity that's never feel strong enough. So they love having enemies to feel more strongly who they are through being able to fight someone else. Strengthens to be able to in a position of rightness because both factions believe that they are right.

They are totally identified with one mental position. Their sense of self is in this form of that mental position. A total inability to see another position and not recognize it is only a position, a mental position, there's no self in it.

But there's the delusion of this, the identity is in it. And so it's easy to kill somebody because you have desensitized yourself to the aliveness of another human being by labeling it. You put a few mental concepts on another human being or group of human beings, whatever that concept may be, you could say, unbeliever.

That label can be enough to justify killing a person. Unbeliever, unbeliever is no longer human being, it's conceptualized. You inhabit a conceptualized universe and as a concept, you can no longer sense what you are doing or you can say American, you no longer, you can say, or the others say Muslim or this or that.

Communists, capitalists, this, that, these are labels you put them on and they've deadened the universe, conceptualized it and then any act of violence is possible because there's only a concept there. This is the essence of prejudice also. In addition, the enormous amount of pain that humans carry inside flows into that delusion and this accounts for the collective human pain.

We may address that this evening also. That accounts for violence, warfare. So this is thousands, thousands, thousands of years of conditioning humanity.

Not knowing who they are, seeking a form identity which is never enough and always reveals itself to be not it, not me. So identification with form, deriving your sense of self from form which means basically mind forms is delusion. Deriving your sense of self from mind movement is delusion.

Now those mind movements and the entity that is based on mind identification continuously reacts. It's part of its complaining. It reacts to the form that this moment takes as not enough, not fulfilling me.

This moment is not fulfilling me. Maybe the next one will. This moment is actually limiting me.

I'm trying to get away from it. The form that arises in this moment is resisted because it's never enough for me. It even is trying to obstruct me.

It limits me and this is how people go through life. Seeking a better now in the future. Seeking a completion of themselves in the future, ignoring this because this seems, looks like an obstacle to completely myself and that is the core of the delusion.

The thing that looks like the greatest obstacle to finding myself is the only doorway into the liberated state. The very thing that people try to deny and get away from and we're complaining about and resisting is actually the doorway into the unconditioned, God, self, the deepest self. How can that be?

How can that be that this seemingly, perhaps in the best of cases, uninteresting now, this now that is an obstacle to where I want to get to, this now that limits me so much because more often than not, it is the case. How could it be that this is the doorway? It looks like a wall.

It looks as if I had to run away from that. And so the secret of human existence is, and for some peculiar reason, it's to a large extent still a secret. Almost nobody talks about it.

Liberation and where to find it. Conspiracy of don't mention it. Liberation, look for it somewhere else.

That's okay, but not where it can be found. How can it be that this seemingly very often unsatisfying present moment now, the form of it, how can that be the doorway and how does it work? The egoic entity loves resisting the form that this now takes because it's never enough.

It doesn't fit into its story and the resisting itself strengthens it. In other words, you resist to a form that arises in the now and strengthen your own mental form of me. You disagree with now, you have an issue with now, you're hostile towards now, so it puts you in a position of rightness and the now in a position of wrongness.

So you have strengthened your mind-created sense of self. That's why it's so satisfying to deny the now. And you can see how mad it is.

When you recognize it, the possibility of freedom comes in. When you recognize that deep-seated, non-personal, collective human mind pattern, when you see it in yourself, in others, there's suddenly the arising of freedom and the unconscious movement collapses because anything that is unconscious when it comes to the light of consciousness and is seen, there's an awareness now of that movement, the compulsive nature of it. When it rises into awareness, or awareness looks at it, so to speak, the unconscious movement loses its power and begins to dissolve.

Unconsciousness, all those automatic processes require your unconsciousness. The complainer, all the things we've been talking about, it's only when you're totally identified with it and you're trapped, when you see it, you're no longer trapped. And now you see this.

And now the possibility comes of reversing and it happens by itself. It's not that you have to do it. A reversal happens so that instead of resisting the now and having a hostile relationship with it, you open yourself to now and welcome it, no matter what form it takes, even if it is a form of limitation, which often it is, even if it looks not very satisfying.

And suddenly, when you not resist the form that appears in this now, that which is beyond form arises within yourself. The form identity is not strengthened anymore through resistance. That which is beyond form within you, the unconditioned consciousness, the light of the divine, whatever point arises in the moment of relinquishing resistance to a form.

How does it arise? Anything that you accept completely, internally, unconditionally, embrace it, no matter what that condition is, takes you into deep peace, vitally alive peace. And you can try it out.

The next thing that irritates you, that you complain about, but suddenly you're aware of that automatic movement and you say, okay, I'll welcome it instead. I've been complaining about the now for 48 years, 50 years. I'm now ready to welcome this, even this.

And all internal resistance drops and you're simply that form of this moment, the condition. And you will notice enormous peace arising, a stillness arises that is not of the mind. And for the first time, that unconditioned intelligence can move through you as a channel which before was obstructed by continuous resistance.

And now the ability arises because you've opened the door, which is the act of surrender to what is, the suchness of this moment. You open the door. That which seemed a limitation is not internally resisted.

And so suddenly the unconditioned intelligence moves through you and is able to simply be, there's a flow of a current of awareness that flows through you, so to speak, and moves into that situation that looked like a limitation, a problematic situation, because most situations are problematic when you are trapped in a reactive mode. And you can simply, suddenly, and it's not you anymore, not the little conditioned entity, but a deeper intelligence can look at the form of this moment, allow it to be totally, and that is the movement of the true intelligence that suddenly flows into that situation. There's no mental labeling or judging anymore.

The allowing, you allow it to be so the mind relinquishes its need to label. The egoic entity that lives in and through labeling subsides at that moment. It may come back, but at this moment it subsides and you allow this, the allowing is the key.

Allowing this moment that opens the portal, then vast intelligence flows through and looks at whatever form this moment takes. But that look is not so much a concentrated beam. It's a vast spaciousness that penetrates that situation and surrounds that situation, a spacious field.

You can sense surrounding the little limitation and that spaciousness around that situation that before the little entity contracted and complained about it and suddenly you allow and you become vast as you sense a space around that seemingly limited situation. And that is the, one could say, I don't use that expression usually, but occasionally new pointers come. Space consciousness arises, not, most humans, all they are ever aware of is objects that arise in their consciousness.

They're aware never of another dimension. All they are aware of is thoughts and not aware of, identified with. They are in a position of, they want to attract or have aversion to objects that arise in their consciousness.

Sense objects, perceptions, so they know nothing else beyond the arising objects, thoughts, emotions, sense perceptions. And now it is all form. And as you allow this moment to be as it is internally, no matter what form it takes, a vast peace and spaciousness opens up.

And for the first time, you know the meaning and not through the labeling mind, know directly what the meaning of the space and the meaning is of consciousness. Because before, you only knew consciousness in its various disguises, appearing as form. But you never knew consciousness itself.

You were looking for yourself in some form of consciousness, thought movements, emotions, experiences. Where am I? Well, how can I have more forms?

And now for the first time, through the act of allowing the form of consciousness of this moment to be as it is internally, that which is beyond form, which is consciousness itself, is known. But it is not known in the same way that you can know an object in consciousness. There you have a subject-object relationship.

I know this flower. Well, I think I do because I have a label for it. And I repeat this label in my mind, and then I think I know what this is.

That's mind knowledge, subject-object knowledge. And so it's not true knowledge. It has its place in this phenomenal world.

But it's useful for certain things, this knowledge which is labeled knowledge, concept knowledge. But there is a deeper knowing. But the essence of that knowing is to know consciousness directly, not as I know it, but knowing it as I am it.

A knowing that is not dualistic, a knowing that is being, knowing yourself as that. Conscious, let me put it in another way. You become conscious of the fact that you are conscious of consciousness itself.

And now when I say that in words, that limits it and distorts it because it immediately creates again a dualistic relationship. Knowing that, the limitation of words, I'll say it again, this is not the truth because the words are limited. But they are a pointer.

They can work as a pointer, not as an explanation. You are conscious of consciousness as an underlying field of presence which is also peace, which is also stillness, which is also vast intelligence, which is also deep aliveness and joy. Very subtle, not what the mind knows as joy, which is some short-lived pleasure.

It is, of course, being itself before it becomes something. Consciousness itself before it becomes a form. Life itself before it becomes a form of life.

So you know yourself as life, not some form that life takes, the one unconditioned, unmanifested life that out of which the entire universe comes, which, of course, is God. If

God means anything at its deepest level, that is God, of course. And again, people have been looking for God as a mind object, as if God could appear as an object in consciousness.

Whereas God is the essence of all that appears. Not, it is in, it inhabits it as its essence. Yes.

So you know yourself as that vast spaciousness with the simple act of allowing this moment to be as it is. And that is suddenly, oh. It's the very limitation has become a doorway into the divine.

The very thing that looked like almost the devil putting obstacles in my path becomes an opening. So the form becomes no longer an obstacle to God, but a doorway into God if resistance is relinquished. And of course, that fundamental truth of human existence is expressed and contained beautifully in the Christian image of the cross, which most Christians don't understand in its depths.

They have a superficial interpretation of it. But in its depths, you have Christ on the cross, nailed to the cross, an image of total limitation, the absolute of limitation to be nailed to a cross. And the cross, of course, is the form that limits.

And it is a form that this moment takes. And suddenly, and this is contained in the words of Jesus on the cross, not my will, but thy will be done. Jesus aligns his will with the will of the one.

In other words, resistance to what is is relinquished totally. And now, that dreadful thing, the cross, the torture instrument, the ultimate in limitation becomes a symbol for the divine. Because the cross is both.

It is the symbol of limitation, and it has a dual nature. Symbol of torture, of limitation, and a symbol of the divine. So there is an image here, and you don't need to be a Christian to see it.

In fact, if you are a Christian, you probably don't see it. There is an image here of great depths and enormous wisdom. It tells you that the secret is contained in that image of human life and the possibility of human life.

Because you are the one on the cross. Each human being is that, is Christ on the cross. Facing the limitations, sometimes not away from it.

And then the form and the formless are actually recognized as one. God and the world are also seen as one. God is hiding in each form, in each limitation.

Expressed beautifully in the Buddhist, famous Buddhist sutra, which says, form is emptiness, emptiness is form. Of course, in Buddhist terms, emptiness is the unconditioned, the vastness. Form is emptiness, emptiness is form.

Expressed also, I'm now told to just point to one or two things. What I'm now putting in relatively neutral language as an immediate possibility that, of course, the beautiful ancient scriptures, they point to it. My favorite Upanishad, I can't even remember what it's called, starts with these lines.

Not that which the eye sees, but that whereby the eye can see. Know that alone to be Brahman, the eternal, not what people here adore. Not that which the ear hears, but that whereby the ear can hear.

Know that alone to be Brahman, the eternal, and not what people here adore. Not that which the mind thinks, but that whereby the mind can think. Know that alone to be Brahman, the eternal, and not what people here adore.

What people here adore is an object in consciousness. What the eye sees, sense perception. What the ear hears, what the mind thinks, a thought.

But it's the consciousness that makes all seeing possible, all sense perception possible, the one consciousness that makes all full. They don't know that. Why don't they know it?

Because they are trapped in identification with form. They react continuously to the forms that arise. And now the way out is so simple.

It is so simple, and that's the reason why so few people got it. They tried, they surrendered to state of consciousness. It's here, you don't need time to surrender to the now.

But if you do need time, which means also you need more suffering, it's there for you because the universe will allow you more time and more suffering. I'm not quite ready yet to surrender. A little bit more time, please.

Okay, please, as much as you like. Infinite, vast stretches of time and suffering. Or you see it, and this is an insult also to some spiritual seekers who are strongly identified with the thought movement that you need time for liberation.

And perhaps you've already invested 30 years in that. Great, it got you to this moment. And suddenly you hear, yes, but it doesn't agree with the teaching that I believe in that says you need many lifetimes.

Perhaps this is true, I'm not denying that you may need lifetimes or plenty of time, but you need it until you realize that you don't need time anymore. You needed time to get to that point of realization. And for many of you, that realization is now.

You needed time to hear it, otherwise you would have heard it a long time ago. So you hear it, and even if it's not yet operating in your life, you have heard it. And perhaps you need just a little bit more suffering for you to finally say, ah, I say yes to what is.

Unconditionally embrace this, the form of this moment, the limitation of this moment. Or you've had enough, you've had enough suffering. Humanity as a whole has had so much suffering.

All, of course, produced through the egoic condition. If you are trapped in a false sense of self, you are going to create suffering for yourself and others. And so humanity has been suffering, so much suffering.

Look at human history. You can, you weep when you go beyond the words that you read, when you see what humans did to other humans throughout history. What for?

Well, it is the dysfunction of the egoic condition. And so humans have suffered so much that there is a readiness now in many human beings to embrace this truth. And many human beings are coming to the end of suffering, which means to the end of time.

Psychological time is no longer important. Clock time still works okay. Tomorrow at eight o'clock, I'm going to see you, whatever.

That works. But when I say coming to the end of time is the end of the psychological need for future. So as you enter the surrendered state, the present moment, the now becomes primary in your life, what you give attention to, what you honor.

That becomes the primary focus of your life now. On the periphery of your life, yes, there is still past. You remember what you did last year, 10 years ago.

There is still a future in the realm of practicality. You can still embark on new projects, learn new things, even make money perhaps, but not because you're seeking your self-fulfillment through that, simply because it happens through you and it'll be an expression of the unconditioned consciousness. It is not a passive state, the state of surrender.

This could be a misperception. The state of surrender has a very dynamic quality to it also and this is very important. The action that arises out of the state of surrender is enormously empowered.

It is intelligent action. It is not action that seeks some future result for completion. It arises out of a state of joyous aliveness and that is infinitely more effective than action in which is still normal in you and in human life.

Most of human action arises out of dissatisfaction, out of fear and out of desire, all to do with the egoic condition. And that can look powerful on the surface. You could create a huge business empire out of the state of great dissatisfaction, not feeling enough, not feeling that others give you enough recognition.

Your sense of self needs that and so you're out of that dissatisfaction, even anger with the world. I'm going to show them. I can make it.

I can get there. And then 30, 40 years later, you've built up a huge empire corporation. And you'll be very unhappy and the body will be very unhappy.

And the thousands of people that are working in it are unhappy. Perhaps they're all making money, but they're stressed, diseased through stress, continuous infighting and intrigue and until finally you die in the state of dissatisfaction. And the seemingly solid structures that are created by those egoic entities, which is most of the world, are not that solid either.

Many of them are going to crumble as the old consciousness gives way to the new consciousness, the free, the liberated consciousness on this planet, the transformation of human consciousness on this planet, which is now a necessity, not a luxury anymore for humanity to survive, the planet to survive. God doesn't mind whether the human form survives or not. Wherever there's non-resistance, wherever there's transparency, the divine moves through.

It doesn't ask, are you worthy? Are you good enough? Have you accumulated enough credits?

It sometimes moves to the seemingly most unworthy forms because that unworthy form had created so much suffering for itself that something self-destructed and surrender happened and then it can move, the divine can move through the criminal. It may not move through the monk after 50 years of meditation because the monk may be, it may do, but it may not. The monk may have an image of himself as pure.

The last mind image of me as pure is the one last obstacle, me. So you are in the midst of, this event is part of, goes far beyond the personal. It is part of the transformation of human consciousness on the planet.

It will go unreported in the news tonight. It happened once that they did report it on the news, but mostly not yet because there are more important news the mind says, the budget and the violence, much more important. It's just what matters.

I hope I'm not offending anybody who is interested in the budget. If there's no self in it, it's fine. Anything is fine.

The world of phenomenal forms becomes a beautiful place to be enjoyed as the play of form when you no longer resist the forms or are looking for yourself in them. Then it's quite pleasant to see how the forms come into your life, situations, places, gain and loss, people, recognition, non-recognition, victory, defeat, how this continuous flux of forms moves in and out of the space of now. Quite beautiful, even beautiful to see the fleeting nature of all the forms that come.

Whew, nothing lasts for that long. Even solid structures could go before you know it. It's dissolved.

In India, to see the insubstantial nature of the material world is easier. In the West, the delusion that the mind created man-made, egoically mind created world, the illusion that those structures are solid and lasting is greater because they look more solid. And so you people there might say, well, my life is totally, I've got all my shares there and I've got my house there and this is the corporation where I work and this is the big car and everything is looked after, my pension scheme and my investments with Enron Corporation.

And it's all so solid and suddenly, before you know it, it crumbles. It falls. Where has it gone?

So, the doorway is now through the form of now, acceptance of that, and the end of time as a psychological need, future especially as a psychological need, past also as a psychological need to continuously refer to it to enhance and strengthen your sense of self. Don't need that. So there's past you can let go with much greater ease.

Remember what you need to remember, but no self-seeking. Future, psychological need for it goes. So one could say the end of psychological time.

This is part of the transformation of consciousness. The primary focus of your life is now, not a story in your head, not a conceptual sense of self. Now, as you allow this moment to be, the ability arises in and through you to relinquish the otherwise compulsive and automatic labeling and interpreting process of the human mind.

That is an unbelievable liberation. And many of you already finding that this is coming into their lives, and some of you from now on will find that as you move through the world, you find that as you allow the form of this moment to be, which is a beautiful, gentle embrace, whereas before there was a resisting little spiky entity, now there's a gentle compassion comes with that. Let's leave that aside for a moment.

There is no compassion unless you allow what is to be. With that also great compassion arises. But for the time being, let us address a different aspect of that state of consciousness.

It is the ability to move through life free or to a large extent, free of the compulsion to interpret and label everything and comment mentally on what you are seeing, which is a conceptualized reality. Through allowing, you can, let's take, as you sit here, you can sit here where you are and allow this moment to be so completely that the compulsion to call it anything isn't there. So what does that mean?

It means you perceive, see, hear, feel perhaps a little bit, sense perhaps your body as you sit here, but it is not, it does not become words in your head. So there's the ability to perceive through stillness in a state of great alertness, but still alertness. And for the first time then, you perceive the world no longer through the conditioning of the mind, but through the unconditioned consciousness.

And suddenly, that which you perceive, it could be here, perceiving this form, perceiving the sounds, and you just allow it to be. There's no additional mind movement. So the perception happens within a field of spaciousness, of stillness, of peace, and everything is suddenly seen as so much more alive than it had been when you deadened it through the compulsive labeling process.

To become free of that is an essential part, of course, of this transformation of consciousness. And it is so beautiful to be able, let's say, sitting on a bus, or, well, if you're lucky, you're sitting, you may be standing, or hanging, or riding on the roof. It doesn't matter.

Just an example. You're on a bus, human beings all around you. It's moving other human forms, streets, houses, and you're simply looking.

No entity is saying, this is awful, whatever, or whatever it is saying, I wish I were home. He looks dreadful, I wish he wasn't standing next to me. Continuous.

You simply allow it, and it is as it is, and there's a peace around the sense perception. What a change. There's also a depth to that which you are perceiving.

It's alive, and it is as it is. And you could sit somewhere, on a bench, in a park, and you watch, and to the mind, it looks an insignificant event. The mind even says, sitting there, this isn't solving my problems.

The mind will try to come in and remind you of what your problems are, sometimes. The old movement tries to come back in, and you see that, and you come back to the freedom of being free of the conditioned. Now, you may sometimes, especially as this state begins to arise in you, it may be short-lived at first, before mind comes in again, or as you sit there, in that state, certain thoughts may drift in and out, and they are recognized as thoughts, perhaps labels again, but you are no longer totally in it.

You allow it to be. You recognize it as just thought. It's no longer a problem.

And then there's a space again between the next thought, between that thought and the next thought. And so we are talking about this right now in the context of a neutral, non-problematic situation. You're in a park, or you're sitting at home in your familiar room, and you're sitting in a chair, and you simply look around in the state of clear, innocent, non-labeling perception.

And then something else happens. You suddenly realize two dimensions. One is the objects that are appearing in your consciousness, the sense objects, perception.

And then you sense still, but awake, highly awake, the field of aware presence in which those sense perceptions appear. You're aware of that and that which appears. In other words, you're aware, conscious of awareness, conscious of consciousness, and that which appears in consciousness.

Knowing that none of that which appears in consciousness is the essence of who you are, but consciousness itself is who you are. But in every form, that essence is also concealed, so the other statement, the seemingly contradictory statement that everything you see is you is also true. This is how it works, holds that they are both true.

None of that which appears in consciousness is you, and everything is you. But the essence of you, of I, is the field. Of aware presence.

And you are free. You know yourself as that. Then the world is not threatening anymore, the world of form.

Nor is it that attractive anymore. It's just as beautiful as it is. But it doesn't threaten your sense of self, nor does it promise to enhance your sense of self anymore.

And now you can actually, you can relax with the world, because you don't feel threatened by it or enhanced by it, because you are beyond it. And this is why, funny story to illustrate this, the spiritual teacher, J. Krishnamurti, who taught for many, many, many years, once in the middle of a talk, he stopped talking and said, do you want to know what my secret is?

And everybody listened up. Some people had already gone to sleep because they'd been coming to see him for 30 years. Yes, that's what we've been waiting for.

What is your secret? Okay, I will tell you what my secret is. And he said, I don't mind what happens.

Yes, and that was his secret. But now you can see, I don't know how many people got it when he said that. And he didn't explain, as far as I know, further.

But in the context of this, you can see the depth of what that means. I don't mind what happens, because what happens is a form that arises in consciousness. And when you know yourself as consciousness, it doesn't matter that much.

And the strange thing is, you might think, okay, then your attitude then towards the world will be one of not caring anymore. It sometimes happens that people who, in whom this transformed state arises, suddenly they go through a period when they don't pay attention to any of these forms anymore. They lose interest in the world of form entirely.

They get so drawn, so identified with the formless, with being, that existence becomes uninteresting. Because being is unmanifested life. Existence is form, because the very word means, ex means out, systems, it stands out as a form.

This happened to me also, total lack of interest for several years in anything in this world. And then a balance establishes itself. This doesn't need to happen to you.

It tends to happen to people who, without any teaching, stumble upon this truth within themselves, seemingly, accidentally, nothing is accidental, but seemingly, accidentally, they stumble upon this, and suddenly, the unconditioned is there fully, all at once, and then sometimes the world kind of becomes totally peripheral, until finally you learn to live in the world of form again. With most of you, a different process happens. It is a more gradual realization.

Not that surrender takes time, but to dwell in the state of surrender as a continuous state can take time. Not the surrender itself, because you can only surrender to now. But what happens is that the resistance movement, which is conditioned collectively, will reassert itself in waves.

And so you fall back into the state of egoic identification with mind, and back in the state of resistance and denial of now, and then suddenly you see it, and then you reenter. So it's a gradual entering of that, so that until it becomes the place where you dwell that state. So you don't need to lose yourself in it, because it is gradual.

You can learn to incorporate it into your life, not that you have to do it. It happens by itself. And the misperception could arise that then don't you become careless towards the world, the things in this world?

And strangely, the opposite is true. Once the balance is there, everything that you look upon is actually great care flows into that, to which you give attention, which that attention is the unconditioned. And in that movement of the unconditioned, that looks upon the conditioned, whether it looks upon a thought or an emotion, or a sense object, external, there is a gentleness, a care, and compassion, and love with which you perceive things and allow things.

That's the beauty of it. You don't misuse the world of form in the service of self. You don't misuse the form that this moment takes in the service of some mentally projected future moment.

If you make this moment into a means to an end, you're using it in the service of a false sense of self that seeks to complete itself through future. And whatever comes into the now is self-serving. And often it's a human being, and you meet a human being, and somehow you're just using that human being because you are using the present moment as a means to an end.

So anything that appears in the now becomes a means to an end. If the now is a means to an end, to arrive at some future, which is the egoic state. So in the egoic state, love is not possible because in the egoic state, you always want something from the other person, or you fear something from the other person.

And what you want from the other person is sometimes called love. I want you to complete me. And I want you to sign this contract.

Don't you dare leave me. So, love, compassion, gentleness, those qualities that are really not so much human, but divine, because human, in the way I use the word, I'm sorry if I offend anybody, human means mad, in the old sense. It's been mad for a long time.

But there are divine qualities that flow through a human being, but not when the conditioned mind operates. So at first, now, we become free of the movement of the conditioned in simple situations that you're just allowed to be. Not particularly challenging situations.

Simply sitting somewhere in a restaurant in a cafe, drinking a cup of tea, and an alert presence arises, and you simply watch, see, in a field of stillness. That is the arising. And then, the challenges come.

Because as you know, you can't go through life for very long, perhaps not even a single day, without some challenge appearing, some situation that doesn't seem to go the way it should have gone, something going wrong, some kind of loss. And particularly in India, one can experience things don't go the way you expect them to go. This is a great lesson for many people who come here.

It's easier to learn surrender here. I said that last night. And this could be the reason why the great sages, far greater numbers than any other country, liberated beings lived here, produced by India so that it seeded the entire world became through the enormous wisdom that arose here, the insight into the human condition.

It's a miracle. So the challenges come, and then the temptation is for the old reactive pattern to flow back in. So you get drawn back the moment you're faced with the slightest challenge.

Before you sat on this park bench, beautiful, occasional thoughts that you're perceiving in the field of stillness. And then the first challenge comes, and then either that unconditioned stillness presence deepens, or you get drawn into the old reactive pattern and the unconditioned becomes obscured again through identification with the conditioned. The little me is back reacting, fighting, complaining, shouting, whatever it does, it does its thing, the reactive pattern.

Once a certain level of presence, which is another word I use to describe the unconditioned consciousness that arises, once a certain degree of presence has been reached, what happens is that a challenge simply intensifies presence instead of the old reactive pattern coming back. So a challenge comes and it is faced completely without resistance in a field of intense alertness. That is the movement of incredible intelligence that goes into that situation that is challenging.

It is not mentally analyzed. At some point, mind movement may come in, but it could be more likely to be an inspired thought of what is needed, unless what is needed comes as spontaneous action, which also happens in that state. The challenge is faced completely in a state of alert attention.

And there's the movement of the unconditioned intelligence, which the Chinese call the Tao, is suddenly operating through this form. So what is now dealing with the challenge is not the limited conditioned mind with its conditioning, what is dealing with this situation is the one universal intelligence. And you will be amazed how quickly situations resolve themselves through the simple act of giving full and complete non-interpreting, non-judgmental attention, clear space.

Of course, that is only possible if the portal that is the act of surrender is open, if you have accepted unconditionally whatever this challenge is, this form of this moment. And so, that is how greater intelligence comes in and resolves it through action that then arises through you or another spontaneous event that seems to come from elsewhere, because intelligence is everywhere, the one intelligence, and it will operate beautifully. So that's the creative human beings, those few human beings who are very creative in artists, musicians, composers, painters, sculptors, some of the creative scientists or any creative endeavor, those human beings have the ability in the limited field of their endeavor to enter that state of total looking, clear, unconditioned attention.

And then, a movement happens and the creative act begins and they know that they are not doing it as the form, it moves through them. And when you look at some of the great creations, the redeeming feature of humanity, it has enormous madness there, but also some very great things. The greatest, of course, is the teachers of truth.

They are the sublime achievement of humanity is to see beyond delusion. But then, come also those that created incredible depths and beauty through some form and use music or even through words. But there's an essence there that is beyond mind and you say, how could a human being create such a sublime work?

And the answer is, it's the little human being didn't create it. It was, there was an opening into universal intelligence. And so, those creative humans in their limited field enter that state and it happens.

And in most cases, those humans, when they move back into ordinary life, away from their creative field, are possessed again by the normal human unconsciousness. And so, it's mostly with those people only in that moment, that act of creation in their particular field are able to enter that state. Einstein was able to enter that state and this is where the great insights came that no mind could have worked out.

There's a leap here, that sudden insight that is not the result of thought activity. It is the result of cessation of thought activity. And then, suddenly the insight came.

So, that is, but here we are going, we are not attempting to become great artists, although it may happen. This arises in humanity now as a continuous state of being. So, your whole life becomes a work of art, even if you create nothing externally.

So, the challenges are extremely important that come, which is, again, the limitations that appears in this moment. And not to turn away from it, to walk through it, face it fully, say yes to it, and then see what happens. So, there is one more seeming apparent obstacle that many human beings encounter as the new state, even as the new state of consciousness arises.

And that obstacle is due to the fact that, collectively, humanity has created vast suffering for itself on this planet. And there is, within the energy field of the planet, there is a residue of pain, human, the collective, in the collective consciousness of humanity, or unconsciousness of humanity, there is an enormous amount of human pain. And every human being has a share of accumulated human pain that they carry inside.

Almost something, it's an energy field, residue of pain from the human body. From your personal life, in this lifetime, children, very few children don't suffer great pain. After all, you live in a relatively mad world.

But more than that, human pain accumulated over thousands of years that is passed on in many ways, even genetically. And so, if you're not aware of that, it can happen easily that you are overwhelmed, taken over, periodically, by the movement of human pain in you. And it can easily obscure the arising presence, the unconditioned, when the pain comes.

I call that the pain body that human beings carry inside. And that pain body needs to be seen for what it is. It can only continue to operate in you if you remain unconscious of it and mistake it for who you are.

This pain body, and many of you know this already, I spoke of it in the book, many of you are already working with your pain body, bringing presence to it, but we need to point out that this pain body which we look upon as if it were an almost independent entity that lives in you, and again, don't take this to be the absolute truth. It is a pointer, a helpful, very helpful perspective. It's quite close to the truth, but not the truth.

So let's be aware of the limitations of any perspective, and yet we use that perspective because it's helpful. So we say that it is like an entity that lives in you. It is a residue, an emotional field, which is energy that has become stuck, cannot flow freely, constricted, tight.

It lives in humans, although most humans, it is in most human beings, it is not continuously active. It is sporadically active. The pain body has a dormant period when all you have to face in life is your mind and the mad egoic mind structures, which is problematic enough.

But then, periodically, the pain body awakens out of its dormant state because being almost an independent entity, it needs to take in some food, renew itself. It needs further experience of pain. And it usually happens when, you can notice it, when a relatively minor, often, not always, but very often, a relatively minor situation, event, even thought, can suddenly bring about an enormous influx of emotional pain, be it anxiety, fear, extreme fear, be it extreme anger, often totally out of proportion to the triggering event.

You suddenly, whoa, or the fear, or deep sadness and heaviness. The makeup of pain body differs from person to person. Some are predominantly angry.

Some are predominantly heavy with deep sadness. Others are predominantly fearful and anxious. And many others are a combination of these.

And so, suddenly, there's an enormous movement of emotion and painful emotion. And the first thing that the pain body does when it awakens, it is seeking food. It seeks food in two places.

One is in your mind, and it will attempt to use your thought processes. So the emotion is so strong that it overpowers your thought processes. And every thought process then reflects the painful emotion that you feel.

So you begin to think thoughts that reflect the pain that you feel in here. And with every thought, you feed the pain body. That means, at that moment, you are identified with the pain body.

And this is an important aspect of the egoic sense of self. This is what makes the egoic sense of self. So far, we've only spoken of the egoic sense of self as mind movements.

But now we see there is an additional factor to the egoic sense of self, which makes it even more mad and even heavier than it already is as simply mind movements, conditioned that you identify with. So we have an influx of human pain that flows into those mind movements that are egoic and are bad enough, even without the pain body, problematic enough. And yet now, as the pain body moves into, it amplifies enormously the egoic mind movements.

What that means is, when the story of me, which is what most people derive their identity from, becomes amplified by the pain body, the story becomes huge drama, heavy drama, angry drama, fearful drama of enormous proportions. And the mind is working overtime. It's active anyway all the time, but now it's doubly, 10 times, 50 times more active thinking all those thoughts, angry, depressed, fearful, fearful, what's happening to me?

Angry, oh, what I'm going to do? I'm going to kill him, I'm going to, what, you know, I don't need to. And every thought feeds the pain body.

And you love it because at that moment you have become the pain body. That is the addiction to pain that every human being carries inside. Pain bodies love pain.

And when you're identified with that movement, identified means your sense of self is in it during and while it's active, at that moment, you, because you have become the pain body, you love the pain. And you will do everything to keep it going. But your mind is only one level on which one of where the pain body feeds, it feeds on other people.

So it will attempt to provoke or make other people equally unhappy. The pain body is very, very unhappy. And when it becomes through mind movement and identification with it, it becomes a self, the delusory self amplified now by thousands of years of human pain that are genetically and in other ways passed on.

And the delusion is that, that is me, my problem, my pain, my story. You don't realize that we, my identity. So, and then this unhappy identity seeks to make others equally unhappy to feed on their unhappiness, their emotional reaction of unhappiness.

In other words, it's looking for drama and for trouble from someone. And usually gets it, it succeeds in drawing, in awakening the other person's pain body. This is particularly prevalent in partnerships, husband, wife.

It can be seen in the periodic need to act out their drama. And it repeats itself. You might have noticed every week, every few days, you go through the motions.

In many cases, it's almost exactly the same as last week's. And in other many cases, it is the same as 20 years ago. It's amazing.

As if they were forced to act something out like somebody has put something in there, a script programmed you and you're forced. Same again. But every time it actually works because through that, the pain body renews itself.

And after a while, a few hours, maybe a whole day, in some cases, two days, or in more chronic pain bodies, longer periods of time. And then it'll go to sleep for a while. And the relationship is a bit more harmonious again.

And sooner or later, it's back. And it looks for an opportunity, especially as more consciousness arises in you, presence. It looks for moments when you are less conscious.

It will attempt to come in then. When it's ready to awaken, it is clever, it is cunning. It's lying in wait.

It's looking for the best moment in which to suddenly jump in and rise up into your mind before you know it. And immediately, you start. And suddenly, 10 minutes later, you might realize you're feeding the pain body with extremely negative thought processes.

When did it start? Oh my gosh, been in that for 10, 15 minutes, half an hour. It may be even too late by then.

You're so identified that if somebody pointed out to you that you are possessed by the pain body, you would say, you would shout something. Don't give me that nonsense about pain body. This is very real.

The pain body, sometimes, if the pain body is active and you have to step outside, you're going shopping, you're going to your workplace, but you have, the pain body is active. Of course, it's not being expressed at that moment, but you're walking there, you're a walking pain body. And you're then at far greater risk of being attacked verbally, even physically there's a greater risk, but more likely verbally by some other walking pain body.

So you go into a shop to buy a loaf of bread and suddenly the shopkeeper is extremely rude and there's an enormous amount of negativity flowing. What did I do? Because his pain body recognized yours.

And many pain bodies these days are sitting behind wheels. And so there are people, they are driving pain bodies. And often accidents happen in that way.

All that is required for a very high likelihood of an accident is two driving pain bodies getting close to each other. Because the pain body wants the drama. The pain body wants the pain.

The pain body wants the accident because the accident will give it more pain. That is totally unconscious, of course, but it's a bit frightening to realize that there are many drivers out there who are looking for the accident through the pain body. Totally unconscious, of course.

So it's amazing that I have met people, spiritual seekers, who already the state of presence arises in them beautifully, but they have not been aware of the movement of pain body. And each time they lose it completely, totally identified with the pain movement. And then wake up again, okay, it's time to meditate again.

And when the pain body is ready to awaken, it could happen in the middle of a meditation. And then it'll wait for the slightest provocation. A little, the door opening.

Leave me alone, can't you see I'm doing my meta meditation? For God's sake, get out of here. So there is a cycle here of human pain becoming a self, the delusion of self.

And through becoming a self, identification with it, it renews itself. So the simple, how do you get out of it? So simple, see it for what it is, when it arises as the movement of human pain.

Almost physical, halfway between emotion and you can almost feel it has a physical aspect to it. Fear, for example, my pain body, which was extremely dense, was composed predominantly of fear energy. So I would wake up in the middle of the night, shivering with fear and mind movements to accompany that.

And all the dreadful things that are going to happen to me. See the movement of pain for what it is, human pain. Watch it as it arises.

So as it arises, and it may arise quickly, particularly if it's anger, that is a predominant energy field, it can be as quick as an explosion. Not easy to watch it, if it goes, vroom. You have to be there as it goes, vroom.

So what, and then it's there. So what do you do with it? Say, go away.

No. It is the form that this moment takes, human pain. This moment then takes the form of that pain, fear, anger, heaviness, depression.

And what do you do with the now? You allow it to be. And you, allowing implies that there is an awareness because the awareness and the allowing are really one.

You allow it to be. So you see it and you allow the movement of pain, then it cannot use your mind because you're watching it directly. If, when it cannot use your mind, it cannot renew itself.

So it will simply be the expression of old pain, but it's not, you're not adding to it by unconsciously identifying with it and making it into a self. And so that is the beginning of a gradual transmutation of the pain. Gradually, the trapped energy that was there becomes freed.

And it is strange fact that in those human beings, very often, who have the densest pain bodies, the heaviest pain bodies, liberation can happen very quickly because the suffering becomes almost unbearable. And so you recognize what you then do is, this was the case with me. I could not live with myself any longer.

That night, when the pain reached a climax, I just, this thought came into, I talk about it briefly in the book, I cannot live with myself any longer. And that thought became a koan in Zen. Koan, as many of you know, is a kind of riddle that has no logical answer that you could work out.

So the koan that spontaneously arose was that sentence, that phrase, I cannot live with myself. And suddenly, I saw self and the pain of self. And I said, I, there are two here.

I and the self that I cannot live with. What's that self? It's painful self.

It's a story. It's a painful story. That's what I can't live with.

Who am I? Who is I? I, at its deepest level, is the unconditioned consciousness, the one, I.

The superficial I, in the way the word I is normally used in everyday usage, and it's probably the most frequently used word in the language, because, of course, everybody is the center of the universe. I usually refers to I and my story, my story self. My painful self, my pain-body-story-self.

This is when people say I, they refer to the illusory identity of self. That was the self that I could not live with. I was identified with self.

And suddenly, I separated from self. There was a consciousness moved out of identification with a form of self, and the psychological form of self collapsed, all at once, and what was left was I. It had moved out of identification with a form, the psychological form, and that moving out, in this case, was so complete that the form of self popped like a soap bubble.

And what was left was what had always been there, but had become intertwined with a form, I. I had always been the essence even of the story, but it became mixed up with form. So it moved out of form because the pain of form identification became unbearable.

And every one of you is close to that point or has already reached that point. That's why you're here. Some of you, yes, need a little bit more time.

That's okay. So, and that is the miracle of transformation is when that happens. And fortunately, the pain that is created by that delusion is also that which makes you realize who you are beyond the form.

One could almost say that self-created pain drives you out finally of the form. That's one way of putting it. And then by the grace of God, the divine, the one, a spiritual teaching or teacher comes in and points to the fact that you don't need further pain.

You've come to the end to awaken out of identification with form, you don't need more pain. The one, the pain that you have had, and really I'm talking not so much to you as an individual person, I could say that to humanity because you are humanity. The pain that you have had has been enough.

And that was already 2,600 years ago. That was already the message of the Buddha because he summarized the entire teaching which is sublime, of sublime simplicity and power. Summarized it as, I show you suffering at the end of suffering.

And this is exactly what we have been engaged in here this evening. I showed you suffering at the end of suffering. The same teaching, the same teacher.

There's only one spiritual teaching and there's only one spiritual teacher. And that one teaching, one teacher comes in many forms. But it's only one.

And here that appears again with an added, one could almost say urgency or intensity to it because at the time of the Buddha, human madness had not yet developed to the point where it threatened survival of the very planet. It's taken 2,600 years since then for the human mind to become that powerful and increase through science, through technology, increase, amplify the madness that was already there. And not that there's anything wrong with that.

Ultimately, that also is part of what has to be and had to be. And put beautifully, expressed beautifully by the Buddhist saying, if there were no delusion, there would be no enlightenment. So all is as it is and it is right.

Everything from the highest or deepest perspective, even though I have been speaking of human madness, even that is a fragmentary perspective. Nothing, I pointed out before, nothing that thought can think or words can speak is the entire truth. So even to say that humans are mad, there's dysfunction on the planet, yes, it's true, but it's not the entire truth.

There is a larger picture within which that also is as it should be, totally right. So this is the message of the Buddha salvation, liberation from that prison. But it's been beautiful.

It worked, the madness worked, the suffering worked. It is all right. From the highest perspective, there's nothing that is amiss.

So you all go away from here, greatly diminished in your sense of self story. This has not been a personal growth seminar, the opposite. That which is true is emerging.

If it were not, you wouldn't be sitting here anymore. And now that presence, the unconditioned, transmits itself fortunately. Your practice is, of course, the practice of surrender to now.

Now, the old movements of resistance will come back periodically, and you then recognize them. You will not get lost for too long in the old egoic, reactive, resistant movements. Occasionally you get back in and then, oh, there it was again.

And it's never a personal problem. Thought processes, yes, you may get drawn back into identification with mind streams. And you become absent in dream world.

And then you awaken again out of it. And then you realize, oh, I was in a dream world of mind identification again for the past three hours. That's all right, you're awake now, that's all that matters.

It's not a personal problem. The whole movement of thought is not a personal matter, just as the pain body is not a personal matter. The pain, it is human pain, and mind movement is the human mind.

It's nobody's personal problem. So, the old comes, the new, and slowly the new arises. And that, one could say, takes some time.

But the one decisive act of surrender never takes time, because it can only be now. That is the message, ever the same, since the first human being realized the truth. But more intense now, more urgent.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Eckhart Tolle Talk Titled Everlasting Happiness

[Speaker 1] (0:12 - 1:14:38)

The pursuit of happiness, that's usually regarded as something desirable and positive. But that may be a dangerous thing, the pursuit of happiness. You may be missing something in that pursuit.

That's already here. Pursuit implies, of course, that you are seeking it. Why is it?

It implies that you are looking for a state, a desirable state, that lies somewhere in the future. And that becomes a pattern built into the very structure of the human mind. The seeking pattern.

The mindset, the collective mindset, that is always looking to the next thing, the next moment, in the hope that happiness will be found there, or that I will find a more complete version of myself there. That's a very normal thing to be doing. The bank robber does that, because he's not interested in the money, but what promise the money holds, he may believe that it will liberate him, provide freedom, freedom of movement, enhance his sense of self, happiness.

And it could be there in the spiritual seeker too, who is looking for the answer. Some state that one has read about, enlightenment perhaps, that will finally provide lasting happiness. So both the bank robber, to take one extreme, on the evolutionary scale, and the spiritual seeker, are still manifesting the human seeking mode.

And that is so normal for most human beings to be in the seeking mode, that to many it hasn't even occurred that they are in the seeking mode, or that a different state of consciousness is possible. And wherever you watch, television, the media, films, almost everybody you watch is in that seeking mode. The news reader, they are not at ease with the present moment, because the present moment is regarded as insufficient.

Underlying that is the belief that I am not yet enough. That's a very deep seated thing. I am not yet enough, and so I am not happy.

I can only be happy if I have finally arrived at that sense of completion within myself, where I feel I am now fully myself. Surely nothing else will bring me lasting happiness than finding myself fully, being myself fully. So the bank robber seeks that through the money.

And all throughout civilization people are seeking this, that, or the other, ultimately in a search for a more complete version of themselves, an enhanced sense of who I am, because that sense of who I am in most humans is deficient. You can notice that, that it is deficient, if you only even imagine that somebody tells you you haven't got much longer to live, would be the most dreadful shock, because you would feel, but I haven't arrived yet, but I'm not complete yet. Surely I need more time.

The most precious thing, the one thing that I need to complete myself, find myself, find that deep lasting happiness and peace, to find that, the one thing I need is more time. And so you are then trapped in a state of consciousness that we could call time bound, where whatever you do is governed by the notion of time. And unless you are very old, it will usually be future that is of the greatest importance to you, the time ahead of you.

As you get older, the time behind you, as the time ahead of you shrinks, the time behind you, there seems to be more of that, more past, and then in older people the past assumes a greater importance, they remember it. They are looking for themselves through memory of me and my past, what happened to me, and think about it and talk about it. That is quite normal, because future has shrunk.

But some old people, they don't seem to have realized yet that there may not be that much future left, so they are still looking to enhance themselves through more. This little word more is so vital if we want to discover the inner pattern, the inner pattern that is perhaps one of the most pronounced characteristics of that state of consciousness that I believe is now coming to an end on the planet, the state in which you are identified, which means you derive your sense of self, your sense of identity, from a mentally constructed image, a conceptualized me. Memories, conditioned patterns, experiences, all kinds of identifications, which become thoughts, make up a bundle of thoughts and emotions that accompany those thoughts, and that mentally created bundle becomes a sense of self, a me, and it is that mind made me, a story, my story, my history, it is that that most humans derive your sense of self from.

I am my story. And that sense of self is always seeking. It is a characteristic of that sense of self that it is in the seeking mode and it exists in a state of not enough.

And that's an amazing realization that most humans, although many are now moving beyond that state of consciousness, but on the planet most humans are still trapped in that state of consciousness where their sense of identity feels incomplete. I am not fully myself. So the belief then, to a large extent unconscious, is if I could only be more, then I finally will arrive at self-completion.

Myself will be complete. So the need for more becomes overriding in one's daily existence. More to add to who I think I am, to me.

What does that mean? To a child where this is already starting, this mind movement, the formation of a mind made sense of self, to a child, it begins when a child claims possession of something. And every young child does that.

And this child will scream if you take away the toy. In very deep pain already. Nothing much, and it's not probably even taken away.

Somebody just picked it up to look at it. And it's enough for the child to scream, It's mine! And that scream remains in most humans.

It may not be when they reach adulthood, the scream may not be, you can't hear it anymore, but it's often inside. And this is only where it begins. This is one thing where the child already feels, I have been diminished in my sense of self.

Because that toy has been taken away. What has happened? The simple thing that has happened is, the toy, of course, became a thought form.

It's not the toy out there, it's the thought form of my toy. And the little word my is essential here. Because then I have invested the thought form of toy with a sense of self.

And that's a collective, we are all collectively conditioned to do that. So this is just the early beginning of a huge development of mind movements, where the I seeks to add more thought forms, that it can invest with a sense of self. So it is looking out for more of me.

So to a child then, that's one thing. And then the child identifies with whatever it can incorporate into its sense of self. So this is the growing egoic entity.

And it seems that needs to happen to every human being. We cannot tell a child, No, this is not your toy, there is no such thing as possession. Let go of that thought.

It doesn't work. You have to allow the child compassionately to go through that. It's the beginning of delusion, we could say, yes.

And then it goes on and then you can see how the child begins to suffer. Through identifying more and more with that self. And fearing that something that I regard as me will be removed from me.

And then the child grows and the toy becomes the car, mine. And other possessions may come, this is one level. Then other levels of identifications come, what other people think of me.

Other people's opinion of me can become more valuable than a possession. It's only just a thought form, but I can hang on to that. And it can then cling to the bundle of thought forms and reactive patterns that go with it.

And emotions that accompany it, this me. Oh, they think I'm great. So many people think they will find themselves through enhanced recognition by others.

Maybe when others will recognize how great I am, then I will have found myself. So the striving for self being fully myself can take the form of that needing the recognition. And this could take you to the end of your life, especially if you don't get it.

Or striving to have wealth, it could take you to the end of your life, especially if you don't get it. If you get it, then you discover the strange thing, that it doesn't complete you. I still feel I'm not enough.

That wasn't it. I've got all the things that I thought would complete me, and then comes the critical stage. The suffering that is there whenever you have not really found yourself, the suffering that is built into the very structure of that mind made identity, because suffering is that sense of lack, that sense of not enough, that sense of fear, that underlies that state of consciousness.

And so you've made it in the eyes of the world, and yet it doesn't seem to have worked. If you haven't made it, you can be stuck in the illusion for longer, until the very end, and then create an identity, your story then changes into somebody who hasn't made it. And then the story will seek explanations why the world is so unfair, has treated you so badly, that it prevented you from being fully yourself.

They did something to me. Whether you identify them individually, or whether they are the collective, or whether they are a political party, or whatever, they... And that is another thought form that will then supply you with a sense of self, and that's quite satisfying too, temporarily.

At least now you think you know who you are. You are the one who has been treated unfairly by life. Okay.

So you are trapped, one way or another, in a conceptualized sense of self, a me, and it's not enough. And if you make it, everybody tells you you should be happy now, and you feel that pain, that sense of lack, and some start drinking then, or take drugs, just to dull the pain that they feel. There are famous people, we all have read about them, who were very unhappy, very deeply unhappy.

The illusion has been removed from them that the future will complete them, because surely they have everything already. How can the future complete me? I can't think of anything else.

And when you arrive there, you can go into despair and drugs, and so just to dull the pain, or you suddenly see the fiction of the self, that the entire culture is immersed in, and tells you this is how it is. And you suddenly see this is not, and then you might become interested in going beyond that. Going beyond a conceptualized me in the head.

And you realize that happiness on that level cannot be found. The illusion of happiness, yes, many times you will think, there it is, I have it now. I'm complete.

I'm getting married tomorrow. All my shares have gone up by 100%. I'm complete.

Or I've become a master at this or that, playing the violin, the computer, the greatest computer wizard in the world. I have abilities that nobody else has. I can throw a ball better than anybody else.

And so they pay me millions just to throw this ball once a week. And everybody thinks I'm the greatest. I'm the great example to everybody.

They construct an identity for me out of the ability to throw this ball. And I buy into that for a while. I actually believe that I am the greatest ball thrower.

And it's myself. And then after a while that wears off because it's a fiction. It's a conceptualized entity in the head.

And the fact that it is in millions of other heads doesn't change the fact that it's a delusion. A fiction. So the pursuit of happiness is undertaken by the conceptualized entity, the me.

It is seeking more of me. Amazing. That is one level of consciousness.

That is the level of consciousness that has dominated the planet for as long as humans can remember. Since recorded history and far beyond that. And it is a dangerously dysfunctional state in many ways.

Because that neediness expresses itself in many ways that create enormous amount of suffering. To others around you and to yourself. The need for more is the need for having an enhanced sense of self.

And that is not only personal, it's collective too. When that same mindset becomes a collective mindset, the me becomes an us. That's even more mad than the personal.

And it creates dreadful suffering. It has done so throughout history. The need of nations and religions and tribes to enhance their sense of identity through, strangely enough, being in conflict with others.

They are actually seeking conflict. You can see it whether you look at this on a personal level or whether you look at it on the level of the collective. There seems to be the need to be in conflict with something or someone.

If there were not this need, why would human history look the way it is? Look at the 20th century. Hell.

Created on a planet that potentially is a paradise. Humans create their own hell. And they do it collectively and they do it on a personal level.

There are many humans, not just in places where there is a shortage of food. They create hell in many different ways, even in so-called prosperous countries. If you look into the individual human being, many of them carry their own heaviness, their own hell inside.

Their relationships at work. And they might look happy on the surface. So much suffering.

So much suffering on the planet. Human created suffering. So the entity, the conceptualized me, is condemned to seeking more.

It's condemned not to be happy, not to be at ease. The structure of that mind-made self does not allow it. So unhappiness is actually built into the structure of the egoic mindset.

It is not ultimately to do with the content of your life, the reasons why I am unhappy. They are interchangeable. So there is the need for more to enhance me.

The me that is never complete. The story of me that hasn't quite worked the way it was supposed to work. Up till now.

There are not many humans who feel that the story has gone very well indeed. The story of me. And if there are some, all you have to do is wait a little.

And then the incompleteness returns. The sense of incompleteness. And people believe this is their personal problem.

Everybody else seems to be okay except me. This is built into the very structure of that conceptualized identity. It's need for more.

It's need for conflict in order to enhance its separate sense of existence. This is the me and this is the other. Now I need to get a strong sense of me if I can be in conflict with something or someone.

It enhances my sense of self. Or if I can take something away from another, in my delusion I believe that that will also enhance my sense of self. That could be just a thought form that I am trying to take away from somebody through making a remark that diminishes the sense of self of another person.

I question anything that that person identifies with as not good. Your car is no good. This dress would look good on your sister.

Little remarks. They are unconsciously designed to diminish another person's sense of self. They don't know what they are doing.

And they believe if they can diminish somebody else's sense of self, they have enhanced their own sense of self a little bit. All that it means is the illusion of me has grown a little. So all you have enhanced is the illusion.

But to the illusion it feels great for a little while. And so it can become extremely greedy.

The need for more is incessant.

We see that the same egoic entity becomes collective in a corporation. We've read about these things recently. And we were surprised to see how greedy these big corporations are.

Their whole reason for being seems to be to accumulate more. Perhaps in some cases the people at the top didn't even forgot what they manufactured. And it didn't matter anymore what, except we need more, more.

So there is the need for more to enhance me. The me that is never complete. The story of me that hasn't quite worked the way it was supposed to work up till now.

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It's need for conflict in order to enhance its separate sense of existence. This is the me and this is the other. Now I need to get a strong sense of me if I can be in conflict with something or someone.

It enhances my sense of self. Or if I can take something away from another, in my delusion I believe that that will also enhance my sense of self. And that could be just a thought form that I'm trying to take away from somebody through making a remark that diminishes the sense of self of another person.

By saying, I question anything that that person identifies with as not good. Your car is no good. This dress would look good on your sister.

Little remarks. All these, they are unconsciously designed to diminish another person's sense of self. They don't know what they are doing.

And they believe if they can diminish somebody else's sense of self, they have enhanced their own sense of self a little bit. All that it means is the illusion of me has grown a little. So all you have enhanced is the illusion.

But to the illusion it feels great for a little while. And so it can become extremely greedy. The need for more is incessant.

We see that the same egoic entity becomes collective in a corporation. We've read about these things recently. And we were surprised to see how greedy these big corporations

are.

Their whole reason for being seems to be to accumulate more. Perhaps in some cases the people at the top didn't even forgot what they manufactured. And it didn't matter anymore what, except we need more, more.

So a greedy entity is simply a magnification of that mind pattern. So let's not fall into the trap of saying there are a few, all these directors, they are evil. No, they are just in a position to be more greedy than others.

And so the same mind pattern operates on all levels. It becomes the terrorist. What does he do?

How can somebody kill hundreds or thousands of people, even himself or herself? What is going on in here? And people are at a loss to understand what are they doing?

Well, it's very simple. They live in and through a conceptualized entity which to a large extent is in their case collective. It's a collective me based on their conditioning, their religion, their upbringing, their belief systems, their story, the collective story of us.

And they don't know it's a story the way they interpret reality. It is the truth to them. They are totally identified with those thoughts that make up the self.

Complete identification with thinking. Self-identification with thinking. So you have a collective conceptualized entity and us.

And that entity has its own version of reality which isn't recognized as a version of reality. It is reality to that entity. And that entity then, you've already deadened yourself to the deeper aliveness that is there underneath all those mind movements.

Underneath the conceptualized me. The deeper consciousness that is not conditioned. The dimension that is in every human being underneath the conceptualized sense of self that is conditioned form, thought forms.

Underneath that, this is the redemptive factor in human existence. Underneath that is a dimension of consciousness that we could describe as unconditioned, vast. But they don't know that.

The terrorist certainly doesn't know it. And as yet, most humans don't know it, but more and more are waking up to it now. The terrorist is so deeply identified, and that's only an extreme manifestation of the same that's everywhere.

So deeply identified with the conceptualized that the entire identity is derived from those mind movements. He's already dead to the deeper aliveness within him or her. And then when you live through a conceptualized sense of self, you manufacture a conceptualized identity for everybody else.

You impose mental labels on other people and groups of people. You call them something. A word, a set of words.

And to you that is the reality of those human beings. There are mental labels. There are thought forms that you impose on another.

You can do it to an individual or to a group. And once you have deadened yourself, you are no longer relating to another human being. You don't even see them anymore as human beings.

You are totally trapped in mind. Totally trapped in thought. And thought is an abstraction.

You impose an abstraction on the sacredness and aliveness of another human being. And that is what you relate to. And then you've basically already killed them.

Their aliveness is not there anymore. You don't know it. The next step can easily be physical violence.

And you will not know what you are doing. You are operating in the realm of mental abstraction. And you are reducing the world to that.

And you are making... You love your enemies, not in the sense of Jesus. You love your enemies.

You love having enemies in that mindset. The terrorist loves having enemies. He doesn't love his enemies, but he loves having enemies.

Because they enhance his sense of self. The us. So all these remove America.

And in many countries, collective identity would suddenly dissolve. Who are we now? Without those on whom we can project something.

The enemy is gone. Within America, because the same structure operates in everyone, when Russia ceased to be the enemy, one could sense a little bit of sense of loss in certain circles. What are we doing now?

We've lost our main enemy. They even made a humorous film about that. Where the president of the United States gets together.

He's seeking re-election. And he gets together with an advisor and says, We need an enemy. Come on.

And since it's a humorous film, they come up with Canada as the enemy. The most unlikely enemy. They manufacture it and it works.

So the need for an enemy to enhance one's sense of self is very great in the collective. It happens in Germany, National Socialism. The same egoic entity which became collective.

It's a very dangerous entity on all levels. And they ended up with the whole world became their enemy. Great.

Now we know who we are. Who are you? Well, Germans.

That's who we are. A concept in the head. A conceptual entity.

It's a dangerous thing. Very dangerous thing. And on a personal level, it operates in the same way.

And that's been going on for so long. How does it operate on a personal? Who is your enemy?

It doesn't have to be a person. Or a group of people. The enemy can be a place.

A situation. Wherever you are. Something you complain about in your head.

And you might have noticed that that entity loves complaining too. Reacting against something and complaining about it. Because in every complaint, it strengthens itself a little.

Because if I complain about a place or situation or another person, I've put myself in the mental position of rightness. I am right. But the complaint, the assumption underneath the complaint is that I'm right.

And what I'm complaining about is wrong. Obviously. That's the underlying assumption behind every complaint.

I'm not talking here about complaint that in order to change a situation, you go and call somebody up and say, you delivered the wrong thing. I ordered a TV and you delivered a washing machine. These are perfectly fine.

Or you tell the waiter, I ordered a salad, not the soup. On that level, complaint is fine. It's purely functional.

But that is very little. But the other complaining that goes on is the self-talk in the head. Which sometimes also becomes verbal, of course.

Where you complain and you can't do anything about it, nor are you even trying to do anything about it. You just want to be right. And that's an unconscious need to feel a slightly stronger sense of self.

So every complaint is an attempt to be a little bit more of me. And then it wears off after a few minutes and you need something else to complain about. And you can see people, how sometimes they look for the one thing that's not right in a situation.

They look for this little stain in this beautiful carpet and then their focus is on the stain. But this really bothers me. Why didn't they do anything about that stain?

But that stain is 2% of the carpet. Yeah, but they shouldn't have. Why don't they...

Drop the complaining and that already diminishes your sense of self. I don't know who I am anymore. And then come the problems, my problems, that I need to think about day and night.

Problematic situations, they've been going on for years. Complex, very complex. And you can wake up in the middle of the night and suddenly you get this overwhelming mind stream of your complex problems.

And they've been going on for years. But it's vital that you think about it now. Oh, think.

And underlying all that thinking is what's going to happen to me. So that sense of identity loves its problems, loves its enemies, loves conflict, but it never tells you that openly. It needs to remain unconscious, because if you make it conscious, you even start to laugh.

And that's very liberating. If you laugh at patterns that you discover within yourself and you see them, that's even sitting here is liberating when you suddenly see conditioned mind patterns. There's nothing personal in it, just human conditioned mind patterns.

And you see them. Seeing is the beginning of being free of them. Seeing means you're no longer totally identified with the pattern.

The main enemy really, it all boils down to the main enemy of the mind made self, the one thing that it doesn't like, it wants to get away from, it's not happy with, and often complains about, just really, it's this moment. It doesn't like it. Or it ignores it completely because the next moment is so much more important.

This is why I have to think and think about what's going to happen. This, just this moment at the most, it's a stepping stone that gets me to the next one that's more important than this, that's for sure. And what is the next moment?

It's future. And where is the future? Has anybody ever encountered it?

No. I've been waiting for it a long time. But all I could ever find was this moment.

But one day it's going to come. Just a little bit longer. And so you see what seems so overriding, so overwhelmingly real, time.

Past and future. Seems to dominate everything. You can't get out of time.

It just drags you along until finally you collapse and die. It seems so overwhelmingly real, this time thing, and yet nobody has ever encountered it. All you can ever experience, find, is this moment.

So if you go more deeply, you actually discover that time and thought are so intrinsically related as to be virtually one. And you discover all that future is, ultimately, is a thought form in the head, in the human mind. It's not here now.

Is the future here? Only this. Only now.

And then we can check again in five minutes' time. You can see the paradox. Five minutes later, it's still now.

Now, if we try to work this out intellectually, it won't take us anywhere. We might write a PhD about it. Whether time is real or not.

But all we need to see at first hand, that your life is always now. Of course it is. It's always this, just this.

The rest is thought forms. Now, because people are so trapped in thought forms with their sense of self, that they give that greater importance than this. And that's a delusion.

And so they are cut off from the deeper levels of their being, that can only be encountered when the movement away from this comes to an end. In other words, your attention, instead of being absorbed by thinking, moves into the immediacy of now. That is the meaning of waking up.

Of spiritual awakening. What do you awaken from? What do you awaken out of?

You awaken out of thought. Self-identification with thought. Into now.

And then the mind comes back and says, And now what? You may notice when your attention moves into now, a certain alertness comes with that. You may become more aware of your sense perceptions.

And you may also notice, when you are present in this moment, the compulsion to label all your sense perceptions and experiences drops away. And you are able to look at something, or more importantly someone, a human, but let's just stay with non-human for a while. You are able to look upon something, or listen to something, or touch something, without compulsively, immediately, mentally putting a label on it, calling it something, or arriving at some conclusion about it, or comparing it to something.

You can be with something like a tree or a flower, and simply look, without labeling. That is a new state of consciousness arising, where you are moving out of the trap, the prison of compulsive conceptualized thinking. And above all, where your sense of identity or your sense of self shifts from being the thinker or the thought, to being the awareness that is prior to thought.

That's an amazing thing to happen to a human being. It begins with such a simple thing as being able to look at something, or touch it, and it's being perceived within a field of spaciousness, or we could say stillness. Have you become unconscious?

No. There is consciousness, but not the labels, not thinking. There are many of you, because I know this is happening on the planet to more and more people now, there are many of you who already experience that in your daily life from time to time.

And you may not even notice that this is what's happening, that you are simply able to be with something, without calling it anything. And you may perceive that only as a peace in the background. There is a certain sense of peace in the background, and through that you are perceiving the world.

You can then walk through the city, or drive through the city mostly, here, without being there as a conceptualized entity and perceiving the world through the conditioned mind structures. So you are there behind the wheel of your car, a driving story of me. And whatever you perceive, only just enough to not be involved in an accident, but you're thinking about important things.

My life situation, which involves past and future, the future matters so much, I'm on my way, where to? The future. And you continuously miss this, this.

So the arising of spaciousness inside yourself is really what it is. And until you find some space within yourself, which even that is not quite right, because that space is the essence of who you are, without that space you can look for happiness for a hundred lifetimes. Where is it?

Because you're only looking to objects in your consciousness, believing that when I've accumulated enough objects in my consciousness, I'll be full and complete. Object in consciousness means thoughts. Object in consciousness means whatever happens to you becomes an object in consciousness.

You don't experience the world out there. Whatever you experience as the world, happens inside you. Who knows whether there's anything out there at all?

Everything that the speaker hears on the chair, where is that happening to you? The words, where are they? They are inside you.

They are arising in consciousness. So humans are looking for themselves through what I call sometimes object consciousness. They are obsessed with the world of objects, the world of things.

Not just material things around them, that of course they're also obsessed with. Situations, events, the next thing and another thing, and the world of things impinges upon you continuously, saying, this matters, everything matters. Oh, what's the next thing I need to deal with?

And you can never catch up, so many things. And your life becomes a burden of things, and then they're the things inside really. Every thought is an object that arises in consciousness.

And there's this stream of thinking, one thought after another. This is what Thoreau referred to when he said, our life is frittered away by details. Simplify, simplify.

Details are the worlds of things, objects in consciousness. So you get like a room full of furniture and you can't move in it anymore. And you think you need more.

No sense of spaciousness within. And potentially, the dimension of space consciousness as opposed to object consciousness, which is thought, is in everyone. Underneath the movement of thought, there's the vast spaciousness, which is already fully developed, fully complete in every human being.

And the essence of who you are is that not anything that arises in object consciousness, but you are the very spaciousness that is beyond objects, things. So really, all that is required is to discover in oneself that dimension of consciousness and thus realizing the fullness of being and of yourself that is already here. That's the end of seeking.

Not the end of doing, but the end of self-seeking through doing. Then doing becomes quite nice. It's a play.

You participate in the game of the universe. You cannot not do, so you might as well participate. You do.

It's a dance. But self-seeking goes out of the doing because you've already found yourself, not as a conceptual entity, as the depth, the still, spacious field within yourself. The future cannot help you to get there.

It can only prevent you from finding it. And what is the quickest way to realizing the truth of this? Is there a shortcut?

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And what is the quickest way to realizing the truth of this? Is there a shortcut? Is there something that does not give me time?

Because time is the illusion. If I think I need time to find that inner space, I'm deluded again. So how can I know this without making it into a future state that I want to achieve?

Which is another concept. How? And this is so simple.

That's the secret of the universe, as far as humans are concerned in their present evolutionary stage. The secret lies in simply no longer internally resisting, denying, or running away from what is at this moment. It's whatever is at this moment.

To find an inner alignment with the form that this moment takes. And the conceptualized egoic entity can't do that. But you can do that.

When you see the truth of it, there's the possibility of living in a state of yes to what is, an inner yes. The conceptualized egoic entity lives in the state of no to what is. And that is the greatest transformation happens when there's a shift in you internally from denying the present moment, because it's not yet enough, it's not really what I wanted, this shouldn't be happening, I want something else, I definitely don't want this, I want the next moment.

It's going to be much more complete. But you always have only this. And then the strange thing happens, at first sight it seems that the form that this moment takes, because that's all it is, there are not many moments in your life, there's only this moment ever.

But the form that this moment takes changes continuously, different forms come into that space of now, which is that inner space. Forms appear in the space of now, in your life. A situation, a person, an event, a place.

And very often, the form that this moment takes seems to be a limitation, it seems to limit me. I want to be limitless, I want to know myself as limitless. Many people feel that the form that this moment takes, how could I accept that, because this form limits me so much.

And this could be where you live, it could be relationships, it could be your physical body. You cannot not encounter limitations in the world of form. You can change, you can have slightly more pleasant limitations.

You could be sitting in a tiny little room and saying, I'm so limited here, I want to expand, I want to live in a mansion. And you might succeed. Ten years later, five years later, you live in a mansion, you seem to have expanded.

And then you sit in your mansion. What now? For a while it feels great, you have expanded because you have identified with the thought form of mansion, you have expanded.

But sooner or later, the mansion will limit you in other ways. Your new life situation will suddenly show you there are other limitations. You may become famous and suddenly discover that great limitations come with fame.

You are free of the limitations that came with poverty, and now you encounter other limitations that come with that. So, it's yes, you can play around with different forms in your life and experiment and expand into other forms, not expecting to find the limitless in the world of form and realizing in one way or another the form that this moment takes will be some form of limitation, that it is in the nature of form to be limited. And that's a deep realization.

And then the running away from the form that this moment takes, the reactive relationship to the form that this moment takes isn't there anymore. When you see the truth of this and are able to say yes to the form that this moment takes instead of resisting the form that this moment takes internally, which keeps you trapped in your own mental form. So, what does that mean?

It means, quite simply, you become friendly with what is. It doesn't mean now you are condemned to non-action. Out of that state of yes, intelligent action arises when it's needed, not when it's not needed.

You embrace what is, even if it seems very limited or limiting, because it already is. You can't remove is out of existence. You become internally aligned with that.

So when you say yes to what is, space arises, so to speak, around what is. This is a way of speaking, but that's all we can do here. A sense of space or spaciousness arises around the form that this moment takes.

And that liberates you from the limitations of form. And you cannot find the spaciousness by always running away from the forms that arise. But being with them, surrendering to the form that this moment takes is the key.

The inner surrender, whatever is, is part of the totality, the web of interconnectedness that is the universe. This event is part of that. There is a certain inevitability to the form that this moment takes.

Yes, then perhaps action arises and it changes. You're actually amazed how quickly the form that this moment changes when you don't resist it anymore internally. Because a greater intelligence comes into play now.

And miraculous things can happen even on the level of form. But they didn't happen when you lived in non-alignment with is. They only happen when you live in alignment with is.

And to some people that means yes to the most dreadful limitation. And that is why traditionally people who reached that realization found the most dreadful limitation in their life and surrendered to that. The archetype of that is Jesus on the cross.

This is the human archetype. This is true for each human being. The most unacceptable form of limitation that a human, and you don't need to be a Christian to believe this or to see the truth of it.

In fact if you're a Christian you may not see it. Because they tend to have a narrow interpretation of something that is very deep. So you have somebody on the, a human being in a situation that is a manifestation of the most extreme limitation.

Totally. And symbolically the words that came out of his mouth were at first, Why hast thou abandoned me, God? The last no.

The next words that came were Not my will but thy will be done. Which means thy will is the will of the one. Not to make it into a mental concept.

The will of the one is whatever is now. Not my will but thy will be done. A complete yes.

And at that moment the cross which is the symbol of the ultimate limitation becomes the symbol of the divine. It's the dual symbolism of the cross. It's a torture instrument.

And it's a symbol of the divine. And that is whatever may be happening in your life and be the greatest limitation in your life, it is not only the limitation, it's also the opening. When it's not internally resisted, the opening into space.

Because space comes with a yes to what is. You are no longer bound to what is. You are no longer bound to the form.

You know yourself as the formless, one life, one consciousness. That's the true happiness that lasts. The heart of happiness, the core of happiness, not the superficial happiness that goes hu hu hu hu hu and the next moment hu hu hu hu.

That's... So nothing needs to change for this to happen in your life, this transition. Whatever is, is the best that is for you at this moment.

You work with that. Say yes to that. Don't believe the mind when it says OK, I'll say yes when I get this out of the way.

And enormous power moves into your life. The very intelligence of the universe manifests through this form which then becomes an opening. And it's the end of suffering.

The end of the suffering entity. You may still get a toothache from time to time, but that is how it is too. Surrender to that also.

Surrender. That's all. No time is required for the shift in consciousness.

You can only do it now. Yes to now. And find yourself through that.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:47 - 1:14:47)

Thank you.

Eckhart Tolle Talk Titled Give This Moment a Chance

[Speaker 1] (0:02 - 46:06)

Welcome to our gathering this afternoon. This is always the part that I like best, the silent beginning. I'm sure you know a statement, perhaps one of the most powerful statements in the Bible.

It's to be found, I believe, in the Old Testament. And it says, be still and know that I am God. And we presume that is God speaking.

Be still and know that I am God. This afternoon, let's explore what that means. Not just through the mind, not just through thinking.

Because, after all, thinking is not still. So we can exploit from the perspective of thought, but we cannot find it through thought. Thought is always some form of inner noise.

The noise can point to the stillness, as it does when these words are spoken. Be still and know that I am God. But that's only the pointer, that's not the stillness.

It's the signpost, it's not that to which it points. And yet signposts are helpful. We might be lost without a few signposts.

But not mistaking the signposts for the truth. So we will explore what that means to be still. From the point of view of the mind, yes.

But also from a deeper level of actually knowing that dimension of consciousness, because that's what it is, to know that dimension of consciousness directly in yourself. Now that word stillness is a very beautiful pointer. Be still and know that I am God.

But this implies that perhaps there is more to stillness than we had realised. Because to the mind, the continuous stream of thinking, stillness cannot hold enough interest for very long. And after a minute or two, the thinking mind might say, okay, I've understood stillness now, yes, it's important, and now let's move on to the next thing.

Because the thinking mind, the stream of thought, is always very interested in the next thing. It's always looking over there. It tends to miss this, because it's looking for something else.

It quickly loses interest in this. And it certainly would quickly lose interest in stillness, because it doesn't sound that exciting. Stillness, okay.

There must be more than stillness to God. And so the mind moves again into more, which is also what the mind is very interested in, the next thing, because it's interested in the next thing, because there's more that I can absorb into myself, grasping the next stimulating idea to hang on to or incorporate into your store of knowledge. And then the mind, the mind made sense of self, hopes that by adding more and more, it will eventually become complete and find itself fully, find that fulfillment, become completely yourself.

Who believes that you're already as complete as you could be? And certainly on the level of form, you're not. There's always more that you could do and learn and explore, and there's nothing wrong with that.

But being on a deeper level, the more essential level of who you are, perhaps that search for more is misleading you, believing that you can find yourself through adding more and you miss what's already here. Be still and know that I'm God. So still and know.

Now that is interesting because that implies there is within that realm of stillness a knowing. Usually we associate knowing or knowledge with thinking and thought activity and having labels for things, putting labels onto things, knowing through concepts, through mental labels. And this is what in our civilization we call intelligence, that ability, the ability to use your mind in that way.

Then if you can do that well, if you have many concepts, a complex structure of mental concepts and many labels, then you are an intelligent person as defined by our civilization. And those people who cannot handle that well, perhaps are not quick enough with attaching labels to things and analyzing and they are called non-intelligent, people who are no good at solving IQ tests, then you have a low IQ. My IQ is very low.

The mind just doesn't work in that way. But fortunately I'm lucky because I know there's more to intelligence than that and there is another way of knowing that is not knowing through labels and concepts, but knowing directly. Knowing through stillness.

Every great artist creates out of that stillness. Even the great scientific discoveries, the breakthroughs come when the searching comes to an end through mind and a stillness arises. And out of that suddenly the one creative, the one thought that makes all the difference, the insight, the realization, suddenly comes out of that.

For an artist the creative flow comes out of that state. There's the canvas or whatever the artist uses and then he or she sits and enters that state of stillness. Then the creative flow happens and then perhaps even words may be spoken or written but they arise from there, out of that deeper level.

Many people have reported a shift in consciousness from being trapped in the mental noise like almost everybody else to entering a state of great peace, serenity and aliveness which is that state of stillness. And many people have reported finding that when they thought they were going to die any moment in a situation of great danger. And I'm sure you've all read accounts of people who reported that in the last few moments an inner shift happened, fear dissolved completely and suddenly they said, I felt this great serenity and peace in which I knew something beyond words and beyond concept.

I knew something that is very hard to put into words. Some people said, I knew that all is well and there's nothing to fear. Through that stillness, through that peace, there was a knowing and that knowing is the knowing of essence, not the knowledge of things.

All we know in our civilization is we explore forms, things through the mind which is thought forms. We cultivate that knowing, that knowledge and accumulate more and more. At universities there are places where knowledge is accumulated and more and more, there's a huge increase in scientific journals.

Even the specialists become more and more specialized in tiny areas of knowledge which you dissect more and more into tinier and tinier bits of knowledge. So the mind moves into that outward movement, scientific inquiry, and there's fine, there's nothing wrong with that, that's the outward movement of the mind. But we've gone that way for a long time.

When we've gone that way for so long that for most people, the deeper dimension within themselves, they don't even know it exists. All they know, all they know is the continuous stream of thinking in their heads with which they're completely identified. Every thought matters and they're drawn, dragged along by that never-ending stream of mental noise.

One thought leading to the next and the next and the next. Just as you can observe in people who talk a lot, they do that verbally, what happens within everybody in the head anyway. But when you observe a person who cannot stop speaking, then you can learn something about the human mind.

And when you see how there's not the tiniest gap in that stream, one thing leads to another and another and another, and it's all one stream, and you've been trying to get up and get out of that situation, get away from that person, and there wasn't even a gap long enough to say, I need to go now. And sometimes after half an hour, you finally, that person is catching his or her breath, and then you can get that in and say, okay, it's actually quite late now, I need to go. But that is the human mind.

And within almost everybody, and it's so normal, nobody questions that the inner, the noise in the head never stops. Well, nobody finds that strange. And yet it's the only species on the planet that lives within that continuous noise.

If you observe an animal, you observe that an animal is, a lot of the time, even although some animals make noises, but a lot of the time the animal is actually quite still and watches, just there, moves, rests completely, never trying to get somewhere, trying to rest, just resting, or trying to be something that it is not. It is what every animal is itself completely, because it doesn't live through mental noise. What is created through continuous identification with mental noise is a mentalized, mental conceptualized sense of self.

Then your whole identity is arrived from whatever stream of thoughts are going through your head. The thoughts are telling you and repeating to you the story of me, me. And it is problematic always.

It cannot not be problematic. There is the belief of the mind made self that it can arrive at a point, at some point in the future, when my life ceases to be problematic. But that's an illusion, because problematic is built into the very structure of that sense of self that is based on mental noise.

If it weren't problematic, the noise would cease. It's the problems that keep the noise going. And so it's the problems that keep the sense of self going.

It needs its problems. It doesn't know that. It says, no, I'm looking for an end to my problems, my suffering, and my dilemmas, and my conflicts.

I'm looking to get out of it. But the structure doesn't want that. The self needs conflict, problems.

The mind made noise-based sense of me never at ease with what is, this moment. It doesn't actually like this now. It's on its way somewhere more important.

Where it perceives an end to its problems. And that movement away from now is what creates the problems. The very search for an end perpetuates the problem making.

And amazingly, humans have gotten themselves into a very strange knot. Mental knot tied into some, and can't get out. That explains when you look at human history, why it looks so mad.

What is going, what are they doing? Read the 20th century history. What is going on here?

Are they insane? They must be. And it's always easy to say, no, they are insane, but we are not.

But of course, a truer perspective to look at humanity from a deeper perspective, then you can say humanity, you can look at it as one organism. And within that one organism of humanity, of which every human being is a cell, in that organism of humanity, now when you look at what humanity is doing to itself, then you can see that this one organism lives in a condition of disease. It's attacking itself.

Continuously. Not only on a large scale, through the collective conflict that we have seen and still continue to see in the world between nations and religions, tribes, but also the conflict between individuals, the continuous conflict in companies, in businesses where people work, and the continuous conflict within each individual, as if there were two or three or four of you. Mind made two voices.

One arguing with the other. One accusing you of something, but it's all in the head. And that's what happens when you get trapped in a conceptualized, noise-based sense of self, when you are completely identified with a stream of thinking.

So what arises is an egoic entity. Egoic means completely identified with a conditioned mind. Believing it to be yourself.

So you have this little egoic me, looking to somehow make itself more secure, enhance its sense of self, somehow, through something or other. And it's looking out for the next thing that it can add. But it's also looking out in fear for the next thing that might take something away from me, the accumulated mental content of me and my identifications, with this and that, with possessions, with status, with knowledge, with external appearance, with perhaps even spiritual attainment, me.

So we can see that the human condition, how do we get out of this dilemma of being trapped in that? All teachings, ancient, present, all true spiritual teachings point to the possibility of living in a different state from the usual state. All spiritual teachings recognize the usual state as dysfunctional.

Suffering, the Buddha calls it. Sin, Jesus calls it. Illusion, the Hindu teachings call it.

And then you have more recent fringe beliefs that point to the similar thing. It's just another perspective. There are fringe beliefs that say extraterrestrials experimented on humanity and something went wrong, or something like that, which is possible.

So they all point, I'm not saying you should believe in this perspective or in that perspective, but simply to see that they all point, they've all recognized a basic dysfunction in humans, and then they all also recognize that there is a way beyond that. Until recently, until very recently, not many human beings were able to live that liberated way of existing in this world. Most humans, the teachings of the ancient masters were made into, to a large extent, were made into mind stuff.

Mental identified. They repeated certain words and began to identify with those words of the teachings, not realizing that those words were only signposts. Be still and know that I am God.

You could even, there you could, this is a statement that's not easy to make into a mental belief structure, but the mind could manage even that. And you could build a whole system of belief around stillness. I believe in stillness.

We believe in stillness. What do you believe? You better believe the same, because we are right.

And that's where the egoic sense of self again, you identify with thought forms, and then you get your sense of identity from being right about something on your personal level or collective level. Either me, I am right, or we, the collective egos are even more mad than the individual egos. And if you look at the evils perpetrated, the suffering inflicted by humans and other humans, the greatest amount of suffering has always been inflicted by, not by the criminals.

The criminals contribute to a tiny fraction of human suffering. No, respectable people who became part of a collective egoic identity, a religious group, a political group, a political movement, an ideology, mental, and derived their sense of self from that. And to keep it going, they needed to have their enemies.

And the enemies are those who don't believe what we believe, because that's the truth. And then you can, having an enemy then strengthens that sense of identity. So they love their enemies, not in the sense of Jesus.

They love them, because they need their enemies. They love to have enemies, rather. Because through having enemies you define your sense of self collectively, but individuals do it also.

The enemies of the individual egoic self is their problems, and they're in their family. The situations that they are in, but they're antagonistic towards whatever situation they're here in now is never enough. In fact, they don't like it, trying to get away from it.

The now is made into the archenemy of the ego. Never embracing the is-ness of this moment, which is after all there ever is, never fully embracing it, saying yes to this moment because that's all you ever have. You might as well say yes to it.

No, the ego doesn't. It loves to make the now into an enemy, and thereby strengthens its problematic sense of me. So to see that those things are built into the structure of an identity that is built on mental noise.

If you can never get out of your mental noise, then that's how you are going to live. So we believe in stillness, and then you look for those who don't believe because they will make your identity stronger, and then you start even killing them because you can call them the unbelievers. You attach a mental label to a person or group of people.

The label immediately obscures to you the reality of who they are because all you're relating to is the moment you attach a mental label to a person, mental noise, thought, and you completely believe in that label that you attach to that person. You call that person something, this, that, or the other, or that group of people. And then you've deadened already, this is the first act of violence against another human being, is to attach a mental label and completely identify with that mental label even though it may show you that mental label may contain a perspective of the truth, a tiny perspective, but not the totality, a tiny fraction, but you believe that to be the totality.

And so you've committed the first act of violence. Any further violence now is easier because the aliveness of that human being has already been covered up by that mental label that you've put on. It could be racial, it could be religious, it could be political, it could be anything.

So some of the militant Muslims, they call all those who don't agree with their beliefs the unbelievers, and Christians used to do the same until very recently, a few hundred years ago. They would kill you if you didn't believe exactly what they believed. And so I read an interview with the militant Muslims and they said, of course we'll kill, they're unbelievers, we'll kill them, we'll have to kill them, they're unbelievers.

The label obscures to you what you no longer know what you're doing. It deadens everything through the abstraction because every thought is an abstraction, every thought is a concept and it deadens the sense of aliveness. You can then inflict any horror on the world and you don't know it anymore because you no longer sense its aliveness and you no longer sense your own aliveness because you've done the same to yourself.

You have then identified with an ideology, derived your sense of self from certain streams of thoughts in your head. And so that's who you are. Always uneasy, always needing conflict, needing problems.

Me, with my little past that I identify with, my personal past or the past of our group, our collective, whatever it is. And then living in that sense of non-fulfillment which it always is, the deep lack, something like, and then looking to the future to complete itself. And it will do anything in the now to get to that point of completion in the future.

It will kill in the now for a better world. That was, communism was a beautiful experiment. One day perhaps true communism will arrive on the planet.

But that was an experiment made by people who were not, were totally identified still with their minds. Equality for everybody, no more possessions, personal possessions, wonderful ideas. We need to create that world.

We envisage that better world. And what do they do? China, Russia, in their own countries, almost as many as 10 million people had to be killed to arrive at that point of creating a better world.

So this is what happens on a large scale if you make the now into a means to an end that you need to arrive at in order to complete yourself, collectively or individually. Now you can see how mad it is when you look at the collective manifestation of this. But in people's personal lives, they do the same.

They kill the aliveness of this moment, the aliveness of life, the depths of aliveness that is here now. They don't really kill it, but it's totally obscured. And then they're looking for it in a mental abstraction called future and they're going to that.

So everybody lives in that way. Now when you see an extreme manifestation of it in the form of an ideological or political movement that kills people in the now in order to arrive at a better world, then you see so obvious how mad it is. And it's not so easy sometimes to see in one's own lives how you continuously kill the aliveness of this moment or rather obscure it through living identified with mental noise all the time and looking for an enhanced version of yourself, mind made, in the future.

Where am I? Oh, it's there, I'm there, I need to arrive there. Because that contains that which will fulfill me, that relationship, that job, that possession, that status, or that spiritual attainment.

And that's the, we need to point out the transformation of human consciousness away from the madness to sanity that all the ancient teachings have pointed to. They've seen the dysfunction, as we saw, and then they said, yes, but a way beyond is possible. A different state is possible.

A different state, a transformed state of consciousness is possible for humans. Buddha calls it the end of suffering. The normal state is suffering.

Jesus calls it salvation or the kingdom of heaven. In Hinduist teachings it's called liberation although Jesus also uses that term, freedom. And so they all point to that.

But there's a danger in that pointing because the mind made self immediately creates a new image of a perfect version of myself called enlightened or liberated, the spiritual attainment, spiritually perfect, which I need to arrive at. So the same movement, mental movement that seeks to enhance itself through adding more, more future, more knowledge, more spiritual experience is still operating even in those people who have left behind more rudimentary identifications such as possessions. Perhaps you've been through that.

You accumulated possessions. Then perhaps you lost them again. Then you accumulated some more and you could see it did not fulfill you.

Even the big car only fulfilled you for a little while and then it was just another car. And the relationship didn't really fulfill you. You thought it did for a while.

So humans have been seeking that fulfillment in situations, through situations, through places, through people and never found it. But the mind, the search of the mind made self continues. It says, OK, I haven't found it yet, but I will find it.

I will find, complete myself. Because that strange sense in everybody, I haven't arrived yet. It's not, there is something that I have not, I'm not fully myself yet.

And so the search continues and you become a spiritual seeker. And so you, a spiritual seeker seeks more spiritual knowledge perhaps, more spiritual experiences and perhaps the ultimate experience of liberation, in the future of course. And so you miss something that is already here, the fullness of life that is already the essence of your being.

And that is inseparable from this moment. If you miss this moment, you miss everything because there is never anything else. But the mind made self says, this moment is just not interesting enough.

Let's move on to the next one. And it looks sometimes from just, if you look at the external form of this moment, it may not look that great. You're stuck in a car, traffic going from here to there.

What's so great about this moment? And then you're sitting in an office answering the phone. What's so great about this moment?

But you need to give this moment a chance. If you immediately move on to a mental projection of next moment, you never give this moment a chance. So that's what we'll do here.

Many of you are already engaged in that deepening process, which is what it is, where you give this moment a chance. You allow this moment to be as it is, because it already is. And you no longer demand that this moment, which is the form life takes right now, which has come out of the totality of the universe, the totality of the universe has appeared here and now in the form of this moment.

And so you can be antagonistic towards that totality of the universe and say, no, that's not what I wanted. It doesn't fit into the story of me. I didn't want this situation.

I never asked for it. It's not in the script in my head, how my life should have developed. This partner shouldn't be here, my wife.

That was the wrong choice. It all went wrong at some point. And my job wasn't the one that it was supposed to be.

It wasn't in the script. Something went wrong here. My children were supposed to turn out and achieve all the things that I couldn't achieve, and they didn't.

They did the opposite. They became hippies or whatever they did. It all went wrong somewhere, that whole script of my life.

But you still believe in it somehow, so you think through more future, you can put it right. I don't want to say everything is bad, but to see that on the level of storyline and mental arranging your life in a certain way, and seeking to complete your identity through something that is mind-made, a conceptualized, a better conceptualized sense of self, a better self, a more complete self, a more secure self, you never get there. Because that is the one thing that future cannot give you.

Everything else, future is great. You need it. You need future to learn a language.

You need future to make money. You need future, if you're looking for a partner, you have to spend some time looking. You need future to explore a new country.

You have to plan and then you go there. You need time, future, fine. The only thing that you don't need future for is finding yourself, who you are at the deepest level.

Who you are on the level of form, that of course there you can add things, learn new skills, it's fine. But if you're seeking an enhanced sense of self through that new skill, it will take you again into frustration and suffering. Because nothing out there can give you that fulfilled sense of self except the momentary illusion of a fulfilled sense of self, an enhanced sense of self.

And you have all been through that. You have experienced the momentary illusion of an enhanced and fulfilled sense of self, perhaps at the moment of your wedding. Wedding is a very happy moment.

And you say, my life is finally working. And then many of you experienced a kind of letdown after a while. Some moved into the opposite of a wedding, which is divorce.

And that's painful. And others thought, well maybe I made a mistake here in my choice of partner. But well, should I get out now or should I?

But then what do I do then? Maybe I'll, so you compromise with that. And you see how, and then the illusion comes many other times that now myself is fully grown.

Even you might graduate from college and you suddenly feel I made it. You don't realize that the problems are only starting now. And so to see on, if you're looking for completion on that level of time, conceptualized self through time, can't get there.

And then the miracle is you don't need time for the one essential realization in your life. The one thing that truly matters, you don't need more time. In fact, you don't need more of anything to make yourself complete.

To realize that that completeness of who you are, which has nothing to do with the mental story of me, my little past and my little future, at the end of which is the gravestone, all that problematic story, in the end, it bursts like a soap bubble.

[Speaker 2] (46:07 - 46:07)

Pop!

[Speaker 1] (46:09 - 1:52:42)

Oh, what was all that about? In the words of Shakespeare, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. And you missed the one thing that matters absolutely.

Finding yourself, finding the essence of your being beyond the form which is temporary. So we've seen how the delusion operates and how that delusion continuously creates suffering in your life. Always you have to go back to the unhappiness resurfaces again and again.

Even when you sort out something here, suddenly something goes wrong there. Everybody who has lived long enough knows that life doesn't leave you alone for that long. Some people live in such a way that they almost feel that life has become their enemy.

Or God, if they say, God has become my enemy, why does God do that to me again? Just another thing and another. As a friend of mine said, when she came to an end of her partnership after a few years and said goodbye to him on the train, he was leaving on a train, and after he left she shouted out aloud, God, this time you have gone too far.

And often you get to that point. Why does God or life put so many obstacles in my path? I know where I want to get to, but always something happens to spoil it.

Even the great house, I got it, and something happened to spoil it. That's in the nature of life, phenomenal existence, that things never stay around for very long, and they're not that fulfilling if you're looking for fulfillment. They're quite nice when you don't look for self-fulfillment through the things of this world.

They are very pleasant and they come and go. But when you're looking for self-fulfillment through the things of this world, through situations, through people, through conditions, through attainments, then that's very frustrating because no place and no person and no situation is going to make you happy for long. And when you see that, the first truly spiritual thing happens, and that is you give up the demand that the world should make you happy.

You give up the demand that a person, a place, a situation, a condition, or a possession should make you happy. Oh, well, that's a burden that's lifted off my shoulders. That demand, make me happy, make me fulfilled, complete, complete me, if you don't demand that anymore from the world.

Oh, okay. So here, I no longer demand that self-fulfillment. It all comes down to self, self with a false sense of self that the Buddha pointed to as the one great illusion, the self.

Jesus pointed to when he said, deny thyself. All the ancient Hindu teachings point to the illusory nature of people's sense of identity, personalized sense of identity, and nothing beyond that. Just a little uneasy me as the center of the universe seeking to get bigger somehow through their demands.

But the world never obliges. That's the, so, okay, how do we get out of this dilemma? There is a, I sometimes use the expression portals.

How do we get into that new state of consciousness that all the teachings, the ancient teachings point to, but not many people got it. They made it into belief structures. The signposts were made into belief structures.

Then they enhanced their sense of self through identifying with collective belief structures. So the ego grew. This is why religions have also created as much suffering as political ideologies because they became only belief structures, although at the essence of all the great religions there shines the truth.

Somewhere there is the pearl of, the truth is there, but you have to look through many layers of dense mental belief structures to see the essence that lies there at the core of the great religions. It's there and it's beautiful. And of course it's, but the essence really is in you because that's what the essence of the great religions point to.

It points to the essence of your very being and the possibility of knowing that, but what the mind has done, it has said, okay, it's possible. Salvation is possible. The end of suffering is possible.

Enlightenment is possible. All I need is more future before I can add that to myself. And that's the spiritual seeker that is then born.

The spiritual seeker says, I just need a bit more time to add that to myself. And that's the last delusion. And that is a quite a radical realization that you cannot find yourself through time, through more future, or through more of anything.

And the portal, the one portal that takes you out of being trapped in the world of mental noise, which always lives through past and future, sustains itself through past and future, the portal is this moment. The whole mind movement, the whole conceptualized sense of self, or the false self, the fictitious sense of me, is seen as an illusion when you go through the portal of now. And how do you go through this portal, the spiritual portal of now?

Now means now, this now, there's only this now. It takes different forms, but your life has always been, always will be now. Nothing ever happens in your life.

Nothing is ever experienced, felt, that is not now. It is, life is now. So you acknowledge the now, and then the little thing that you do as your spiritual practice, most spiritual practices have an element of future to them, because you need to arrive at a state of perfection, mentally projected state of perfection.

And that's the drawback with many spiritual practices. Some spiritual practices are fine, they're actually designed to remove future, but then there's still the practitioner who's going to add more future, because he wants to get somewhere through the practice. So, the one spiritual practice that has no time to it, and that you cannot really become good at through time, is to allow this moment to be as it is, instead of internally resisting it, through the mental judgment, complaining, so that you know how often the mind is complaining, and the emotional contraction of, I don't want, where's the next moment, show me the next one.

Denying this always, never embracing this. The only place where life can ever be, and you never embrace life, and you're always running towards a pseudo-life which is a mental abstraction in the head, a thought form called future, a future me, an enhanced version of me. It's like the cars, you think each model gets better, but in the end they run out of, and now the cars look the same as the old ones.

So here we have the most powerful spiritual practice, is to embrace this moment, no matter what form it takes, it can take many forms, some look good, some don't look good, but they all have something in common, they are the suchness of this moment, and the mind-made egoic entity can only survive through non-acceptance of now, at the basis for this contracted, uneasy, problem-making sense of self, basis for that sense of self, is a denial of now, which ultimately is a denial of life, because life and now are one, which ultimately is a denial of God.

So the little egoic mental entity is at war with the universe, with God, me against the world, me against God, that's not conscious, but it's the unconscious underlying attitude of the ego. So what happens now, something opens up in you as you align yourself with life, by aligning yourself with now, no matter what form this now takes, there is an acceptance of this, because it is. Oh, you allow this moment to be as it is.

Now the mind says, don't do that, nothing will ever change again. And the mind says, you will be stuck in this now for the rest of your life. And it's the very now that you don't want to be in.

The mind says, if I say yes, I will be stuck in this relationship that I don't want to be in, I'll be stuck in my job that I don't want to be in, I'll be stuck in the place where I live, I don't want to be, I'll be stuck in my body, which is not well enough, I don't want to be in that state of health that is not good enough, my financial circumstances, whatever it may be, I'll be stuck with my state of dissatisfaction with who I am, and I'll be stuck with this little incomplete self that hasn't made it.

This is what the mind will tell you. The strange thing is, when you allow this moment to be, you align yourself with the incredible aliveness and intelligence that operates in this now, that cannot operate anywhere else. The one intelligence, the one consciousness that underlies all forms of life, the one life, the one intelligence of which every form of life is only a temporary expression which comes and then evaporates.

A temporary expression of that one that is the essence of your being, that is you prior to form. The one consciousness, that's the place where you and God merge. So that is what you align yourself with when you say yes to what is.

Now a strange thing happens. It's a miracle. We started with this beautiful statement about stillness.

Now stillness can be made into another problem by the mind and the mind-made self because when the mind-made self hears about stillness, it says, okay, I would like to get there, but obviously I'm not there. So I have a new problem. I'm trying to reach the state of I just can't get there.

This is awful. I know it must exist. They talk about it.

I can't get there for more than a little moment and then it's gone. You see? And then the little voice in the head, you see, you can't do it.

It's no good. You might as well give up. You've been doing all that spiritual stuff for so long and you see, you can't do it.

You still can't be still. So when the mind hears the message, the signpost pointing to the truth, it'll make a problem out of it. So many spiritual seekers have added a big problem to themselves because they are spiritual seekers, desperately seeking.

So, stillness? How do I get from the state of mental noise to the stillness without making it into future, a state to be achieved and thus creating another problem? And the miracle is when you allow this moment to be as it is, not only do you align yourself with that great intelligence that operates in stillness.

Intelligence is so much vaster than the little mind, the noisy mind, which is a small expression of the one intelligence that runs the entire universe, most of which functions in complete stillness. So that stillness is primordial intelligence itself. And that is already within you.

The wonderful thing is that stillness is not something that you need to achieve or add to yourself because it's there under the mental noise. It's already there as the essence of your being. So you cannot possibly need time to get it because the pool of stillness, I'm using a kind of image here, which is the place where you and God meet, merge, is already there, simply covered up by mental noise.

But most of the mental noise, the compulsion to think and be identified with thinking is to do with seeking an enhanced sense of self through future. That's why, and to keep the story of me going by thinking and talking about me and my story and my problems, that creates the compulsion, the compulsive thinker. When you allow this moment to be, a stillness arises.

You suddenly, it's there. It was the denial of now that obscured to you the dimension of stillness, which is the dimension of true intelligence, but also the dimension out of which love and joy arise. And that was obscured by the mental noise.

Now, here is a now. Something happens in it, in this field of now, let's say, well, let's take this instead of thinking of a possible now, let's take this now. If you say yes to it, completely, it has a certain form.

What you say yes to, first of all, is the form that this now takes. Even if it looks boring, uninteresting, not stimulating enough, okay, I say yes anyway. Here I am, sitting here.

The mind says, you shouldn't have come here, you have so many problems to solve. This isn't solving your problems, is it? And so you're just here.

Okay. I allow this moment to be, whatever form it takes. It happens to take this form.

Alright. The stillness suddenly, and what I'm talking about now, one cannot really talk about. It goes beyond words.

But since I'm sitting up here, I'll use words anyway. Just know that the words are only approximations to the truth. They only point a little bit.

Any moment, any form that this moment takes, as you know, there's only one moment ever. It's the one moment, your life is always now. The form it takes changes.

But you accept whatever form it takes, because it is the suchness of this moment. This acceptance, this allowing, suddenly makes you aware of a, and this is only an approximation, a spaciousness around the form of this moment. The allowing creates a sense of, you become aware of a sense of space, spaciousness around the form of this moment.

And that is a stillness. It's always there. But the stillness cannot be grasped.

You can't say, okay, here's the stillness and I've got it now. The stillness is the essence of your very being. The unconditioned, pure awareness, pure consciousness, out of which all forms come, into which all forms dissolve.

So the yes to what is, in a very subtle way, no matter what happens, if you accept it fully, there's a stillness or a spaciousness around it suddenly. And you sense that within and without. This allowing, a sense of space.

And there you have the same event, somebody shouting at you, the car breaking down, and you simply say, oh, well, that's the form this moment takes. That's what is.

Something goes wrong, so to speak.

Life always does that, as you know. In the now, it can only go wrong in the now. Something breaks down, you lose something, and it is.

Oh, okay. That's the is-ness of this moment. I might as well say yes to it, because it already is.

What can I do? You cannot fight what is. You can take a step then to remedy something, but in the meantime, it is.

This is a very subtle... At first, you may not immediately sense that spaciousness as stillness, but it is stillness arising. And the more you live in the yes, the more you will sense an undercurrent of peace, which is another way of speaking of the stillness.

You sense an undercurrent of alive, vibrantly alive peace, or spaciousness in your life, no matter what happens. That undercurrent is there, because what happens is allowed to happen. And through allowing, you become deeper than the mind-made self, which cannot allow, which is a form identity, a psychological form of me.

And the psychological form of me perpetuates itself through reactivity to other forms of life that arise in the now. The psychological form of me exists in a personalized, reactive relationship to life. A personalized, reactive relationship to forms that arise, people, situations, places.

It reacts, and in most cases, it's in disagreement with this form, this situation, this person. It tries to get away from it. And so it strengthens through its reactivity, it strengthens itself.

The form identity needs to react, be in a reactive relationship to other forms, people, situations, places. That's how it keeps itself going. The reactive relationship comes to an end when you allow this moment to be, then the psychological form of me also ceases to operate.

And who you are, suddenly, beyond that form which still exists, because you have a past, and undeniably you have a certain past, but your self is no longer, your sense of identity isn't derived from it. You realize, that's the story, that's what happened to me. Through the allowing, a deepening happens.

Through the non-allowing of what is, you remain shallow and identified with the mental psychological form of me. A very shallow human being, just living up here on the surface, always no depth. There is a depth, but you don't know it.

Always reactive. And that's how people live. Always reaching out for this or fearing that.

And the world is a, they're looking to the world and the future for ultimate fulfillment, and fear it because it might take something away. So, grasping here, fearing there, shallow. Allowing deepens you.

The yes brings about a deepening where you, something opens up through the yes to what is. Isn't that too simple? This can't be right.

Spiritual attainment is supposed to be difficult. It's supposed to take time. Arduous.

Well, this is the narrow gate that leads to life. Just this. The now is quite narrow.

The narrow gate that leads to life, or as Jesus puts it, abundant life. In other translations, called the fullness of life. Jesus talks about that.

I want you to have the fullness of life. I want you to have abundant life. He's not talking about the forms that life can take.

He's not predicting the arrival of consumer goods and shopping malls. Because if he had been predicting shopping malls, we would now have arrived at the kingdom of heaven. So when he talks about abundant life, it's not the abundance of forms, it's the depths and the intensity of aliveness.

It's not the formal, the forms that life can take. And seeking yourself through a proliferation of forms, that's why there's such fascination for shopping. This is one of the many ways in which the self, the egoic self, attempts to add something to itself.

To make itself a little bit bigger. Not that there's anything wrong with shopping, but the compulsion to add is often there. We don't really need that many things, but we need an enhanced identity.

That's why there's the grasping. Abundance of life, the fullness of life, that is already here, that you do not need future for. And through the yes to what is, that suddenly reveals itself as a deep sense of aliveness and peace that's already here.

So the yes deepens you, the non-reaction. Now, again, be careful. The mind will create a new thing that says I must not be reactive anymore.

Many times reactivity will still come in. What do you do with it when it comes? You just, the reaction comes and then you detect it.

That's enough. You detect it. And what do you do once you detect it?

Do you say, go away, I don't want to react. Oh, I'm reacting again. That's another reaction on top of the reaction.

The moment you detect a reaction, oh, there it is, another reaction. What do you do with it? You allow it to be.

Then the reaction exists within the spaciousness of allowing. Then you are no longer in the reaction and you realize you are not that which reacts. You are the spacious, the space around the reaction.

You are not that which happens. You are the space in which it happens. That's how deep you are.

That's how vast you are. And never again are you going to look for yourself in something that happens. But by allowing what happens to be, realize the depth within your very being.

And that is the alignment with, and I use that word with great care, the alignment with God through this yes. Another way of putting that, of course, is surrender, spiritual surrender. Not surrender in the negative sense of I just don't care anymore.

Okay, do what you like, I don't care anymore. God, do what you like. Okay, don't care.

That's not surrender because something in you is still strongly resisting. You're just pretending not to care. I don't care anymore.

That person is in strong resistance. That's not it. Surrender is the yes to now.

Surrender to God is the yes to now. And surrender is alignment. It doesn't mean you become weak in surrender.

You become weak in non-surrender. The one power that operates throughout the universe is there, can flow through you fully in the state of surrender. The only power there is, you can find in the state of surrender.

The alignment with the one so that you become a beautiful, temporary but beautiful expression of that one consciousness through the human form. And then everything changes when you're connected with that. Even the form that your life takes that before was so dreadfully important to get it right, suddenly a greater ease comes into the way in which your external life unfolds.

Oh, it's quite nice. Not that nothing will ever leave you. Things come, things go.

There's gain, there's loss. That's how phenomenal existence operates. That's part of the dance of forms in your life.

And that's accepted. And you can then enjoy the dance of form because you don't need any particular form to add to who you are, to add to the self, the sense of self. So I'm pointing to what in some traditions is called no self, the state of being the spaciousness, being the stillness through allowing.

In Buddhism, it would be called the state of no self. And that's a way of putting it. That's why one Buddhist master when asked to define the essence of Buddhism simply said, that's very simple, the essence of Buddhism, no self, no problem, Buddhism.

Oh, is that it? Yeah, okay. And other traditions call it the self, finding the self.

In India, it's called the self, the Atman, the God within you. It doesn't matter what word you use. They all point to the same.

Be that which allows. Then you are like God because God is like space. Everything is allowed to be.

Forms come and go. The egoic entity says, death is the worst thing that can happen in this life. Because what is death?

Death is the end of a form. A form of life dissolves. But the egoic entity is a form identity so it fears the end of any form.

It fears death. It doesn't know itself beyond form. So death is the most dreadful thing for the mind-made sense of self and you can see why our civilization almost completely denies death.

Don't mention it. Don't talk about it. Just pretend that all is well.

Nobody is going to die. Nobody can ever see a dead body. It would be hard if you demanded to see a dead body.

They would put you in prison or say, what's wrong with you? In other cultures it's still, you see dead bodies everywhere and you get a much truer vision of human existence because there are dead bodies everywhere except that we hide them. So continuously death is there as forms dissolving and that in itself has incredible beauty and sacredness to it.

A form dissolves when you can truly accept that moment can only happen this moment, death. You can truly accept any kind of death that happens now. It could be as simple as the loss of a possession that you had identified with so there is a little death inside you.

Or it could be the death, the actual death of somebody close to you and you sit with that person totally allowing this moment. No denying. Not even saying you are dying.

Just, who knows? They may not at that moment. Just allowing this moment totally and then there is that suddenly the peace and depth that you are surrounded by that is within and without.

And if that person also allows that moment of death to be then at that moment of death you can see shining through the form an incredible aliveness. If you have sat with a dying person occasionally it can happen. If that dying person surrenders totally to that moment and flowering happens and something shines through that is not of this form and is like a light, a last.

And so death is very sacred to the egoic mind it's dreadful, dreadful and yet it's beautiful. Whenever a form dissolves God shines through that opening. That's why many people have realized who they are have realized God not because things were added unto them not because things were they got more of something but they realized it through loss through death of something in their lives.

Great loss which is a form of death or they realized it through feeling I have very little future left death is approaching wonderful opportunities any kind of death so there are many accounts of people realizing the depths of their being not through wonderful things being given to them oh now I've got it all but through things being taken away life tears something away from you and there's a hole suddenly where before there was something you've lost your possessions and your wife whatever, suddenly it's gone it leaves a hole that the ego fears dreadfully because it's a hole in the ego itself and if you bring surrender to it enormous stillness comes suddenly through that opening and that's a miracle and you can't explain that what is this? Peace you can't understand it the peace that passes all understanding the essence of who you are and here the beauty about true spiritual teaching is that you can have access to that be that without having to face death or huge disaster in your life just as you sit here you've had enough death already you've had enough loss already in your life otherwise you wouldn't be here that's why you've realized there is something beyond that many of you have already recognized the truth that is being spoken here you already are in the process of that deepening of going beyond mind made images so as you sit here without needing some great disaster or suffering that dimension is opening up and you hear it and as you hear it you recognize the truth of it and it becomes the living truth in you not a mentalized the living realization in you and you have suffered to reach that point where you can sense the depth of this message within your being recognize the truth of it within your being means you've suffered enough you've suffered enough to recognize the truth now that's enough you don't need more suffering now me, me my problems, my suffering you don't need that anymore you might still get physical pain occasionally that's pain not suffering suffering is a story of me poor me angry me so the primordial spiritual practice yes allowing the now to be acknowledging the now no matter what form it takes and as you go through life many times you will detect that you're in a state of not allowing and then oh, there goes another no to this moment ok and this ok that's how it is again, there's the spaciousness even there alright here goes another contraction don't want to be here alright let there be another contraction oh, and then something happens to the contraction that's the strange thing when you bring the yes into the no it does something to the no you can't fail in this practice that's the beauty about this spiritual practice no matter what you do you cannot fail in other spiritual practices you can fail miserably part of the aliveness of this moment is the aliveness that you can feel in your body as you sit here very subtle at first in your hands, your feet, your legs every cell is alive and that comes naturally when you say yes to now you naturally begin to sense not only the aliveness within what appears to be a physical body but also an aliveness all around you which before got deadened by continuous mental labels the flowers, the nature, the sky, the sea everything alive everything sacred the now is always sacred but you have to be there to know that the only place of sacredness is now and now is always sacred even when it looks dreadful even the moment of death is sacred perhaps the most sacred our physical bodies have certain needs some bodies may want to go to the washroom we will meet again here in 15 minutes in the now thank you awakening is a spiritual word been used for a long time since the Buddha awakening is of course to awaken out of the mental noise into now and then you can fall back to sleep and you go back into mental noise and then you hear a bell or something happens oh there is actually nothing wrong and I was walking around with this burden of problems to see, to test the reality of any problem that you think you have the reality test is where that problem is at this moment and the reality test is what problem do you have at this moment since this moment is all there ever is that surely is the one test to show whether the problem is mind created or whether it is an actual if it's this moment, it's a challenge that needs to be faced at this moment and then it's real and then what do you do with the challenge that needs to be faced at this moment you face it in this moment oh, ok action is required and you face it with a yes and then the action that is required arises out of the yes whereas before the action would have come out of the no a very different kind of action and a qualitatively very different kind of action the no action is motivated by fear discontent anger and so it's very limited and it will express the conditioning of your mind and the egoic me entity the yes action comes out of the state of alignment with this moment in which you face this moment completely and you look at the situation and you just look and there's an alertness when you face this moment completely an alertness arises that is intelligence and it is possible that at that moment of facing it completely in the state of alertness there may be little or no thought in your head in that alertness there's a pure looking at that situation in that field of alertness and then that is the power of now operating, you're not denying the now, you're facing the now completely, that alertness is that greater intelligence that is beyond the mind manifesting itself through you and then you find yourself taking action or a realization suddenly comes from what it is that you need to do and then it happens, you do and it will be appropriate just right for that moment and that situation the amazing thing is when you face each moment there's always enough power, enough resources to deal with that moment no matter what the situation is what you can never deal with what you never have enough resources to deal with is if you project mentally into future and create problems through mental projections of what might happen or might go wrong you can't deal with situations like that and usually it's one on top of the other it has no reality so bring the test of now to the problem all these problems that I have my life situation is so complex, so full of problems and that's how you move through life with that heaviness that's the unawakened state and then something happens and you suddenly you awaken again out of identification with thinking out of time out of past and future into the fullness of now not only the fullness, also the simplicity of now the aliveness of now that you didn't know before when the now is covered up by thought you cannot sense the aliveness that is now the intelligence that is in the very field of now as the one intelligence the presence that is now your presence and the presence of God not as two, but as one this is what life can be like this is the arising the state in which humanity is destined to live this is the transitional period of the species moving from one state of consciousness that now has reached its end and therefore become very dysfunctional to a new state of consciousness and our gathering here is the transition from one state of consciousness of humanity to another state of consciousness almost a new species evolving a species that lives in a very different way, creates a very different world from what we know as the world now from what is the world now because that world that we inhabit now has been created by the egoic mind that state of consciousness so this is, you are in the midst of the greatest adventure that is possible and that is to be there one could almost say at the birth of a new species and that species is being born from within you and that species no longer creates suffering for itself and others no longer you don't make yourself suffer anymore and when you don't create pain for yourself anymore you don't create pain for others the message is not entirely new, ancient teachings already pointed to it they were the earliest flowerings of human consciousness not until now has the planet been ready for this collective flowering there are certain questions that may arise in your mind that I cannot answer are all human beings going to go through this now or how long will it take it's not necessary for us to know the answers to these questions our responsibility is to embody that transformation here and now and on a personal level it looks suddenly as if your life were becoming so much easier, so much less heaviness to your life so much greater harmony also in your interactions with other people and you hold the whole way in which you experience life becoming very much more peaceful so that's how it looks on the personal but what is really happening is the arising of a new consciousness so to speak, through you and so when you live in alignment, suddenly life becomes helpful because you are now connected with the one, the totality so it can move through and you will find things happening that seem to be just right coincidences helpful coincidences chance events things coming into your life without effort without effort does not mean that you are no longer going to put out energy in fact when you are aligned with now the energy flow that moves through you becomes increased enormously the energy that was before absorbed by useless thinking absorbs an enormous amount of energy to be continuously engaged in problem making and it burns up energy continuously and gradually that compulsive thinking slows down you don't have to make that happen it is part of the natural process as you live more and more in alignment with now, the compulsion to think continuously becomes less and less and thought still operates however without the compulsive element and of course thought is needed for certain things and then it can operate beautifully as a helpful tool in alignment with the greater consciousness not self-serving little me thoughts little problematic me thoughts problem continuous future projections no thought that is aligned with that but you will also find that there will be periods when the mind is not thinking in many of you those periods are already occurring when you are just there perhaps even as you sit here you can experience what it means to be conscious fully conscious without thought wow and of course the next moment the mind comes in and says, I am not thinking and some of you may find it as you walk in nature somewhere there is suddenly this simple looking listening, perceiving all that aliveness and beauty around you but the perception no longer happens filtered through the labeling of the mind but in a field of clarity and stillness perception through stillness this is all intimately connected with of course allowing this moment to be that's what happens as you allow this moment to be fully everything, the way in which you perceive the world changes one could say there is no longer a me perceiving there is no longer a self perceiving there is simply perceiving within the field of consciousness which is what you are and you see the beauty all around you and you see that every form that you see is an expression of the one formless consciousness stillness and that one formless consciousness, that stillness is looking ultimately, and this is the deepest mystical truth is looking ultimately at its own creation and sees that it is good

[Speaker 2] (1:52:45 - 1:52:46)

oh

[Speaker 1] (1:52:47 - 2:10:08)

I did that I created that, but you don't have to say that there is a way of knowing things that is unitive knowing, not through mental concepts and labels, through the simple perceiving within the field of stillness and the moment is totally fresh and new, and so the strange paradox is you know what you are looking at without labelling it but from the point of view of the labelling mind you no longer know anything it's a deeper knowing not through mental noise mental noise can still operate when you need it, you could be looking at a tree and there is a depth of perception and there is an enormous sensing the aliveness of that miracle that the mind labels tree and a deep sense of oneness with that, which is there whenever you are not labelling already where do I start and where does the tree start one could almost say that the entire world that you perceive is perceived as being within yourself nothing outside you nothing is outside everything is within that field of consciousness that you are beautiful way of being in the world and again, it all comes back to the simple portal of allowing this moment to be that's through that that happens and then what flows into your perceptions and interactions when this happens is a sense of non-separateness, of oneness that nothing is really other than you it is an aspect of that one essence and that recognition is love the true meaning of love is to recognize the other as yourself and that's what everybody is looking for one could say whatever humans do is a search for that and yet it's so easy it's already here now occasionally you may find dark clouds coming over you in your life even as you already live this in this new way saying yes to this moment allowing what is to be that means you are no longer creating pain because the creation of pain, of suffering is to be not aligned with this, whatever this is that is the origin of human suffering the no and that creates this entity, the mind made me that is always in opposition so the end of suffering, of creating pain for yourself, emotional pain ultimately also physical pain but physical pain has its certain momentum still in the human species you are no longer creating pain for yourself by being aligned with this, however there may still be some pain operating in you that is left over from the past humanity has created so much pain and suffering for itself and for the planet over thousands of years that it has left behind residue an energy field of negativity and pain on the planet it's like the equivalent on the physical level is the pollution of the planet that is the physical expression of that there is a vast energy field on the planet of negativity of suffering, of pain of anger, bitterness residues of collective human pain that lives on the planet and it is within every human being also past pain an accumulation of past pain from your childhood on a personal level and from genetically passed on collective human pain residues of pain emotional pain that live in each human being which I've called the pain body pain body that lives in you that sometimes you don't notice and at other times it's very much on the surface and it takes you over completely it has a dormant period and an active period when it's dormant you hardly know it's there and then you still have the mad egoic mind but you can live with that if you've lived with it for so long and then at times that mad egoic mind is energized by emotional pain of enormous intensity the slightest trigger when the pain body is ready to wake up out of its dormant state is enough and there's an enormous reaction and you move into enormous fear or anger or deep sadness whatever the pain body's energy field is and the pain body is an entity almost a separate entity one could say that lives in you a little parasitic entity consisting of past emotion a heaviness in there or a turbulence and it does not like to be looked at directly it's ultimately not separate from who you are I'm using this as a useful perspective and getting you a little bit closer to the truth of how it operates it needs periodically to feed on more pain and this explains in human beings what one could call the addiction to pain and drama in their lives the need periodically to experience drama and pain and you can see it in relationships that how often you need to go through that acting out of drama of great emotional pain which means pain body is needing to feed on further experience of pain, that is the frequency at which it vibrates and so it will feed on your mind on your thinking when it's active, when you don't know what's happening, it rises up into your mind and will use your control your thinking totally then all your thought processes are aligned with the energy field of that emotional pain in other words very painful thoughts destructive thoughts and the pain body loves that it gobbles up every painful thought and adds to its energy field that's called the addiction to pain addiction because at that moment you don't want to let go because you're now possessed by it completely identified with it is another way of putting it possessed sounds a bit old archaic when I re-read the Old Testament I was amazed on almost every page they talk about Jesus was driving out demons out of people and I said, there must have been at his time the world must have been full of people possessed by demons they must have been everywhere but of course that's only it's one way of looking at it pain bodies cannot stand intense conscious presence the light of consciousness they like to be in the dark, they can only use feed on you if they remain if you remain unconscious of their existence so you identify with it each time they come up to feed on your thinking and to feed on people around you, if there are people around you provoking a reaction so that the drama can happen and then they can feed on the other people's reaction your partner so many partnerships marriages, whatever two people living together they the purpose of many relationships is to feed their pain bodies periodically and some humans are actually attracted to each other because their pain bodies are compatible sometimes it's called falling in love and some people attract the same kind of pain bodies into their lives again and again and after the third or fourth marriage why every time I think this time he or she is completely different and it's happened again now the first truth of course is you are not likely to find yet anybody who is free of pain body but it is possible that you attract a particular type of pain body into your life or a particularly heavy one, depending of course on your own pain body how do we get out of this cycle of pain body taking you over and renewing itself every time how do we get out of that simply by watching it as it happens when it comes up it doesn't like to be watched it happens occasionally when I talk about pain body to a group of people at gatherings it happens occasionally that people suddenly run out of the room and that is usually means the pain body happens to be active at that moment and it cannot stand being looked at directly I can't listen to this anymore it doesn't like to be looked at now all the pain body is is trapped emotion when I say it is like an entity it is no more than saying that every thought you think is a temporary entity, it is a form a life form, it has a life span it is a form and then it dissolves again as that form so there is nothing spooky about saying there is this entity that lives in you ultimately it is not separate from you, there is nothing separate from you, it is simply contracted stuck emotion it cannot flow anymore, it cannot move anymore, so there is pressure behind it just as there would be behind water or any energy field that cannot move anymore so there is enormous pressure behind it at times it becomes it becomes fear is an element in almost every pain body, some pain bodies are mostly consist of fear and others have a strong element of anger or extreme heaviness that was my pain body so I know it well and then of course when it uses your mind then your mind is telling you how dreadful your life is and it can only get worse and how unfair it's all been life has treated you so unfairly and whenever something bad happened to me, even when I was a child I already had that pain body I remember the thought went through my head, of course bad things always happen to you it's bound to happen to me it's bad so it will happen to me only bad things happen to me a walking pain body so some pain bodies only come up occasionally maybe once a month if you are very lucky others experience every few days a pain body episode so the frequency at which pain bodies need to feed on the further experience of pain varies from person to person also the length of time during which pain bodies feed varies from person to person it could be an hour or two it could be several days and you can see in your relationships how that works, how you feed each other's pain bodies how long the episodes of drama last and then they subside pain bodies have a collective aspect as you may know certain people who live in certain countries tend to have a heavier pain body part of that is collective in addition to their personal pain body certain countries where there's been a lot of violence they have heavier collective pain bodies and when you visit those countries you can sense it the moment you step off the plane there's a heaviness in the air a very depressed place and everybody you look at is unsmiling what do you want? and so these countries however there's enormous longing both in individuals and countries where there's heavy pain bodies there's enormous longing for freedom sometimes greater than those where the pain body is less dense so how do we get beyond?

simply by bringing attention to it as it comes up and allow it of course to be it is, pain comes up there it is the fear is suddenly there very intensely and to sense it there it is ok or the anger goes through you like fire and you watch actually watch that movement of fire through your body and you might still be screaming and you but you watch that and you say oh stream of anger ok and even there there's suddenly a little bit of spaciousness around it because you allow it to be but when you allow it to be it's not using your thinking anymore so it's not feeding on your thoughts you're watching it directly your attention is on it

[Speaker 2] (2:10:08 - 2:10:09)

hmm

[Speaker 1] (2:10:10 - 2:26:01)

oh and this is how gradually the energy that was trapped in there becomes freed and you feel more and more alive and the strange thing that happens that energy actually becomes alertness, consciousness it seems the light of your consciousness on it transforms that into more consciousness so I've seen many times people with very dense pain bodies certainly in relatively short space of time became free and enormously conscious and present or their pain body became light transformed into that that's the miracle of that alchemical process we are all I know I wouldn't be here without, if it hadn't been for my pain body that I couldn't live with anymore I can't live with I didn't of course know it was the pain body at the time all I knew was I cannot live with myself anymore my pain body was myself and the story of me in the head energized by this incredibly painful emotion that was me and suddenly I can't live with myself oh self, who is self, who am I this is quite rare but sometimes in the case of people with very heavy pain bodies it can happen that you can become free in an instant that happened to me, for most people it takes, it's a more gradual process of gradually becoming free so it it doesn't really matter you can enjoy the adventure, pain body becomes your teacher because it teaches you to be present with it in the now that pain can be like act like this bell as an awakener oops, I lost the now whenever you feel pain or suffering in your life a good sign is I lost the now suffering means I lost the now pain to be more accurate here, pain means pain can still happen even if you are totally present in the now and that's the old pain and you allow it to be and that is the transmutation of it that happens I cannot tell you how long you are going to live with your pain body, nor does it matter it's in use it in your practice of allowing of presence oh ok it's nothing personal in it human pain, that's all it's the human race that's created there's no me in it anger is human anger why should it be your anger there's nothing personal any anger is like any other anger it's fire sadness is sadness fear is fear it's not personal, it's human that makes it easier so that the pain body no longer flows into your mind and energizes this fiction of me that becomes very unhappy very heavy and unhappy little me and of course you make many others unhappy because that's what the pain bodies want I want more pain and very unconscious pain bodies create violence inflict violence in the search for more pain so your responsibility is simply not to create new pain by being aligned with now and then dissolve the pain that is still there and you don't really need to do anything, simply bring presence to it, allow it and that's the spaciousness around it and there comes the pain body and often you will find as you bring more presence to it pain body attacks, as I sometimes call them happen much more quickly they pass through anger that before would have lingered for 2 or 3 days can pass through in 10 minutes 5 minutes even 1 minute or just a flash and it's gone you're getting then close to the beginning of the end of the pain body it's good to know that humans carry that, otherwise you can be taken over if you don't recognize it you get totally immersed in it again and all your thinking is aligned with it you sometimes meet people whose pain body is almost permanently active maybe each one of you knows 1 or 2 people like that I know some of you might now think oh it's my wife or it's my husband and it may be true but you chose them somehow and then those are people who are just looking for the next excuse to be angry or to be sad or to be in drama and when you look into their eyes you can see the emotion of the pain body looking through the eyes wanting some reaction and the slightest wrong anything you say would probably be wrong and they'll get in there in the presence of another pain body it's a wonderful practice to stay to allow that not easy at first it seems because the pain body wants you to react it wants a reaction it knows your weakest points so to stay in non-reaction seems strange almost impossible at first but after a while you notice wow and there it tries this button and it pushes that button but non-reaction doesn't mean you cut yourself off nothing touches me anymore you're not present you're not allowing it's a state of openness and it's a state of compassion in which you don't mistake the pain body for who that person is if you make an identity out of a person's pain body then you react and you for yourself also realizing that's not who you are so it's a manifestation of human unconsciousness the pain body and all what it inflicts on yourself and on other humans is the manifestation of human unconsciousness humanity at it's present stage of evolution but fortunately we are moving out of that nothing personal in it human pain and then forgiveness happens naturally because you realize the non-personal nature of unconsciousness including your parents or whoever it is that did something to you or failed to do something to you out of not knowing or you yourself before you were when you were still completely identified with your conditioning you might have done things in the past that you would certainly not do now and you think how could I have done that that was so stupid that was so unconscious and there's a tendency for the egoic mind which wants always looking out for an identity to add even that to it's sense of identity and say I did that I did that that was me that's called guilt and the ego loves to hang on to that sense of something very wrong that I did and continuously play with that thought it gives you an enormous sense of self the bad self bad selves are very heavy selves guilty sense of self is a very heavy sense of self but the self doesn't mind what kind of self it is as long as it's a big self a guilty self will work just as well as a great victorious self a miserable self works very well too surely nobody is as miserable as I am that works it's an enormous sense of self so always the self wants to strengthen itself and it will use anything guilt, it loves guilt so guilt means you make an identity for yourself a sense of self out of human unconsciousness it doesn't mean nobody is responsible in the sense they are responsible because they suffer their action makes them suffer in that sense they are responsible the suffering eventually gets them to the point of waking up and only then can you really be responsible when there is presence until that happens the waking up out of the conditioned mind into now then you can be responsible before that you are a conditioned entity you are an expression of human unconsciousness all this is contained in the words of Jesus forgive them for they know not what they do in other words don't make an identity out of what they are doing for them this is forgiving not making a self out of it either for others or for yourself so we are moving beyond that massive unconsciousness but humans had to move through it it seems so we are caterpillars about to become butterflies and this is why our existence as caterpillars has become so uncomfortable enough enough suffering enough self created pain I've had enough I'm not going to make myself suffer anymore no more this is it are you fed up enough with suffering?

I believe you are otherwise you wouldn't have come here and certainly you would no longer be here you wouldn't have been sitting here for 3 hours listening to this if you still had a very strong investment in suffering and a suffering sense of self this would be unbearable to sit here and listen to this because it's talking about the end of you as a suffering self so if you were totally identified with a suffering self you would either stand up and shout something obscene and run out of the room or you would perhaps totally fall unconscious as you sit there and say must not listen to this so the beauty of it is there is nothing much for you to do because allowing this moment to be isn't really a doing and then whatever needs doing happens through you so what I'm saying there is nothing for you to do it's not that the egoic entity says please give me a program give me steps, give me this there is a time for this too but this is a more direct a very direct way there is nothing for you to do or to achieve a future state don't try to achieve a future state you won't this is enough the depth of this moment the depth of your being no wonder Jesus talked so often about give no thought to tomorrow don't be worried and anxious about tomorrow tomorrow will be anxious for itself or something whatever way translated look at the flowers they make no effort they are not anxious and look how beautiful they are how they live how unproblematic how an unproblematic expression of that one in form if they can live like that you can live like that Jesus pointed to nature and see how that is still aligned with the totality with one, with God a temporary limited to its form yes, a temporary expression of the one beautiful unproblematic peaceful still have you noticed the stillness in and around a flower or a tree and it grows in stillness so Jesus said when he was teaching

[Speaker 2] (2:26:01 - 2:26:03)

look, look, look

[Speaker 1] (2:26:03 - 2:31:27)

this is the way to live not that we are going to go back to the flower stage or the vegetable stage vegetables are fine for vegetables we are moving beyond the stage of thought nature still lives below thought we have moved through thought it's been a necessary cycle for humanity and then we are moving out of that and then we are one again the oneness that we seem to have lost never really lost because you can't fall out of oneness you can't fall out but you don't know it anymore the flower in a very obscure sense or the animal has that connectedness with the source so it doesn't have the fear of death, the psychological fear that humans have it can have immediate fear but not psychological fear and now humans find it again in this new state of consciousness with enormous knowing added to that almost one could say waking up knowing yourself as the one consciousness as your essence that's your identity the stillness and so it's a journey into that no effort is required for that energy, yes it's an enormous energy movement so enjoy that adventure that transformation through you and see how it also affects the outer forms of your life so you're only concerned with that get this moment right then the future will look after itself because it's only an extension of this just this how do you get it right? realize the rightness of it it is already right because whatever appears in this now is part of the totality so it must have its place somehow, even if you cannot understand why this should happen here and now to you it is if you had a fragment of a painting you wouldn't be able to understand it, where does it fit into the totality, you would have to see the total picture to see that it fits in somewhere so to accept this moment there's no need to understand why before you can accept it some people go to past life do past life regression trying to figure out how this makes sense within the totality it can be comforting if somebody tells you well, you are in this situation now because that happened in the past and now you are connected that's fine, it can finally take you to, get you to a point of surrendering to what is but you can do that just like this you don't need to try to figure out you could understand it anyway the vastness of it be aligned with it and then the intelligence expresses itself and enjoy the adventure be still and know that I am God

Eckhart Tolle Talk Titled Lasting Happiness

[Speaker 1] (0:12 - 1:14:38)

The pursuit of happiness, that's usually regarded as something desirable and positive. But that may be a dangerous thing, the pursuit of happiness. You may be missing something in that pursuit.

That's already here. Pursuit implies, of course, that you are seeking it. Why is it?

It implies that you are looking for a state, a desirable state, that lies somewhere in the future. And that becomes a pattern built into the very structure of the human mind. The seeking pattern.

The mindset, the collective mindset, that is always looking to the next thing, the next moment, in the hope that happiness will be found there, or that I will find a more complete version of myself there. That's a very normal thing to be doing. The bank robber does that, because he's not interested in the money, but what promise the money holds, he may believe that it will liberate him, provide freedom, freedom of movement, enhance his sense of self, happiness.

And it could be there in the spiritual seeker too, who is looking for the answer. Some state that one has read about, enlightenment perhaps, that will finally provide lasting happiness. So both the bank robber, to take one extreme, on the evolutionary scale, and the spiritual seeker, are still manifesting the human seeking mode.

And that is so normal for most human beings to be in the seeking mode, that to many it hasn't even occurred that they are in the seeking mode, or that a different state of consciousness is possible. And wherever you watch, television, the media, films, almost everybody you watch is in that seeking mode. The news reader, they are not at ease with the present moment, because the present moment is regarded as insufficient.

Underlying that is the belief that I am not yet enough. That's a very deep seated thing. I am not yet enough, and so I am not happy.

I can only be happy if I have finally arrived at that sense of completion within myself, where I feel I am now fully myself. Surely nothing else will bring me lasting happiness than finding myself fully, being myself fully. So the bank robber seeks that through the money.

And all throughout civilization people are seeking this, that, or the other, ultimately in a search for a more complete version of themselves, an enhanced sense of who I am, because that sense of who I am in most humans is deficient. You can notice that, that it is deficient, if you only even imagine that somebody tells you you haven't got much longer to live, would be the most dreadful shock, because you would feel, but I haven't arrived yet, but I'm not complete yet. Surely I need more time.

The most precious thing, the one thing that I need to complete myself, find myself, find that deep lasting happiness and peace, to find that, the one thing I need is more time. And so you are then trapped in a state of consciousness that we could call time bound, where whatever you do is governed by the notion of time. And unless you are very old, it will usually be future that is of the greatest importance to you, the time ahead of you.

As you get older, the time behind you, as the time ahead of you shrinks, the time behind you, there seems to be more of that, more past, and then in older people the past assumes a greater importance, they remember it. They are looking for themselves through memory of me and my past, what happened to me, and think about it and talk about it. That is quite normal, because future has shrunk.

But some old people, they don't seem to have realized yet that there may not be that much future left, so they are still looking to enhance themselves through more. This little word more is so vital if we want to discover the inner pattern, the inner pattern that is perhaps one of the most pronounced characteristics of that state of consciousness that I believe is now coming to an end on the planet, the state in which you are identified, which means you derive your sense of self, your sense of identity, from a mentally constructed image, a conceptualized me. Memories, conditioned patterns, experiences, all kinds of identifications, which become thoughts, make up a bundle of thoughts and emotions that accompany those thoughts, and that mentally created bundle becomes a sense of self, a me, and it is that mind made me, a story, my story, my history, it is that that most humans derive your sense of self from.

I am my story. And that sense of self is always seeking. It is a characteristic of that sense of self that it is in the seeking mode and it exists in a state of not enough.

And that's an amazing realization that most humans, although many are now moving beyond that state of consciousness, but on the planet most humans are still trapped in that state of consciousness where their sense of identity feels incomplete. I am not fully myself. So the belief then, to a large extent unconscious, is if I could only be more, then I finally will arrive at self-completion.

Myself will be complete. So the need for more becomes overriding in one's daily existence. More to add to who I think I am, to me.

What does that mean? To a child where this is already starting, this mind movement, the formation of a mind made sense of self, to a child, it begins when a child claims possession of something. And every young child does that.

And this child will scream if you take away the toy. In very deep pain already. Nothing much, and it's not probably even taken away.

Somebody just picked it up to look at it. And it's enough for the child to scream, It's mine! And that scream remains in most humans.

It may not be when they reach adulthood, the scream may not be, you can't hear it anymore, but it's often inside. And this is only where it begins. This is one thing where the child already feels, I have been diminished in my sense of self.

Because that toy has been taken away. What has happened? The simple thing that has happened is, the toy, of course, became a thought form.

It's not the toy out there, it's the thought form of my toy. And the little word my is essential here. Because then I have invested the thought form of toy with a sense of self.

And that's a collective, we are all collectively conditioned to do that. So this is just the early beginning of a huge development of mind movements, where the I seeks to add more thought forms, that it can invest with a sense of self. So it is looking out for more of me.

So to a child then, that's one thing. And then the child identifies with whatever it can incorporate into its sense of self. So this is the growing egoic entity.

And it seems that needs to happen to every human being. We cannot tell a child, No, this is not your toy, there is no such thing as possession. Let go of that thought.

It doesn't work. You have to allow the child compassionately to go through that. It's the beginning of delusion, we could say, yes.

And then it goes on and then you can see how the child begins to suffer. Through identifying more and more with that self. And fearing that something that I regard as me will be removed from me.

And then the child grows and the toy becomes the car, mine. And other possessions may come, this is one level. Then other levels of identifications come, what other people think of me.

Other people's opinion of me can become more valuable than a possession. It's only just a thought form, but I can hang on to that. And it can then cling to the bundle of thought forms and reactive patterns that go with it.

And emotions that accompany it, this me. Oh, they think I'm great. So many people think they will find themselves through enhanced recognition by others.

Maybe when others will recognize how great I am, then I will have found myself. So the striving for self being fully myself can take the form of that needing the recognition. And this could take you to the end of your life, especially if you don't get it.

Or striving to have wealth, it could take you to the end of your life, especially if you don't get it. If you get it, then you discover the strange thing, that it doesn't complete you. I still feel I'm not enough.

That wasn't it. I've got all the things that I thought would complete me, and then comes the critical stage. The suffering that is there whenever you have not really found yourself, the suffering that is built into the very structure of that mind made identity, because suffering is that sense of lack, that sense of not enough, that sense of fear, that underlies that state of consciousness.

And so you've made it in the eyes of the world, and yet it doesn't seem to have worked. If you haven't made it, you can be stuck in the illusion for longer, until the very end, and then create an identity, your story then changes into somebody who hasn't made it. And then the story will seek explanations why the world is so unfair, has treated you so badly, that it prevented you from being fully yourself.

They did something to me. Whether you identify them individually, or whether they are the collective, or whether they are a political party, or whatever, they... And that is another thought form that will then supply you with a sense of self, and that's quite satisfying too, temporarily.

At least now you think you know who you are. You are the one who has been treated unfairly by life. Okay.

So you are trapped, one way or another, in a conceptualized sense of self, a me, and it's not enough. And if you make it, everybody tells you you should be happy now, and you feel that pain, that sense of lack, and some start drinking then, or take drugs, just to dull the pain that they feel. There are famous people, we all have read about them, who were very unhappy, very deeply unhappy.

The illusion has been removed from them that the future will complete them, because surely they have everything already. How can the future complete me? I can't think of anything else.

And when you arrive there, you can go into despair and drugs, and so just to dull the pain, or you suddenly see the fiction of the self, that the entire culture is immersed in, and tells you this is how it is. And you suddenly see this is not, and then you might become interested in going beyond that. Going beyond a conceptualized me in the head.

And you realize that happiness on that level cannot be found. The illusion of happiness, yes, many times you will think, there it is, I have it now. I'm complete.

I'm getting married tomorrow. All my shares have gone up by 100%. I'm complete.

Or I've become a master at this or that, playing the violin, the computer, the greatest computer wizard in the world. I have abilities that nobody else has. I can throw a ball better than anybody else.

And so they pay me millions just to throw this ball once a week. And everybody thinks I'm the greatest. I'm the great example to everybody.

They construct an identity for me out of the ability to throw this ball. And I buy into that for a while. I actually believe that I am the greatest ball thrower.

And it's myself. And then after a while that wears off because it's a fiction. It's a conceptualized entity in the head.

And the fact that it is in millions of other heads doesn't change the fact that it's a delusion. A fiction. So the pursuit of happiness is undertaken by the conceptualized entity, the me.

It is seeking more of me. Amazing. That is one level of consciousness.

That is the level of consciousness that has dominated the planet for as long as humans can remember. Since recorded history and far beyond that. And it is a dangerously dysfunctional state in many ways.

Because that neediness expresses itself in many ways that create enormous amount of suffering. To others around you and to yourself. The need for more is the need for having an enhanced sense of self.

And that is not only personal, it's collective too. When that same mindset becomes a collective mindset, the me becomes an us. That's even more mad than the personal.

And it creates dreadful suffering. It has done so throughout history. The need of nations and religions and tribes to enhance their sense of identity through, strangely enough, being in conflict with others.

They are actually seeking conflict. You can see it whether you look at this on a personal level or whether you look at it on the level of the collective. There seems to be the need to be in conflict with something or someone.

If there were not this need, why would human history look the way it is? Look at the 20th century. Hell.

Created on a planet that potentially is a paradise. Humans create their own hell. And they do it collectively and they do it on a personal level.

There are many humans, not just in places where there is a shortage of food. They create hell in many different ways, even in so-called prosperous countries. If you look into the individual human being, many of them carry their own heaviness, their own hell inside.

Their relationships at work. And they might look happy on the surface. So much suffering.

So much suffering on the planet. Human created suffering. So the entity, the conceptualized me, is condemned to seeking more.

It's condemned not to be happy, not to be at ease. The structure of that mind-made self does not allow it. So unhappiness is actually built into the structure of the egoic mindset.

It is not ultimately to do with the content of your life, the reasons why I am unhappy. They are interchangeable. So there is the need for more to enhance me.

The me that is never complete. The story of me that hasn't quite worked the way it was supposed to work. Up till now.

There are not many humans who feel that the story has gone very well indeed. The story of me. And if there are some, all you have to do is wait a little.

And then the incompleteness returns. The sense of incompleteness. And people believe this is their personal problem.

Everybody else seems to be okay except me. This is built into the very structure of that conceptualized identity. It's need for more.

It's need for conflict in order to enhance its separate sense of existence. This is the me and this is the other. Now I need to get a strong sense of me if I can be in conflict with something or someone.

It enhances my sense of self. Or if I can take something away from another, in my delusion I believe that that will also enhance my sense of self. That could be just a thought form that I am trying to take away from somebody through making a remark that diminishes the sense of self of another person.

I question anything that that person identifies with as not good. Your car is no good. This dress would look good on your sister.

Little remarks. They are unconsciously designed to diminish another person's sense of self. They don't know what they are doing.

And they believe if they can diminish somebody else's sense of self, they have enhanced their own sense of self a little bit. All that it means is the illusion of me has grown a little. So all you have enhanced is the illusion.

But to the illusion it feels great for a little while. And so it can become extremely greedy.

The need for more is incessant.

We see that the same egoic entity becomes collective in a corporation. We've read about these things recently. And we were surprised to see how greedy these big corporations are.

Their whole reason for being seems to be to accumulate more. Perhaps in some cases the people at the top didn't even forgot what they manufactured. And it didn't matter anymore what, except we need more, more.

So there is the need for more to enhance me. The me that is never complete. The story of me that hasn't quite worked the way it was supposed to work up till now.

There are not many humans who feel that the story has gone very well indeed. The story of me. And if there are some, all you have to do is wait a little.

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By saying, I question anything that that person identifies with as not good. Your car is no good. This dress would look good on your sister.

Little remarks. All these, they are unconsciously designed to diminish another person's sense of self. They don't know what they are doing.

And they believe if they can diminish somebody else's sense of self, they have enhanced their own sense of self a little bit. All that it means is the illusion of me has grown a little. So all you have enhanced is the illusion.

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So a greedy entity is simply a magnification of that mind pattern. So let's not fall into the trap of saying there are a few, all these directors, they are evil. No, they are just in a position to be more greedy than others.

And so the same mind pattern operates on all levels. It becomes the terrorist. What does he do?

How can somebody kill hundreds or thousands of people, even himself or herself? What is going on in here? And people are at a loss to understand what are they doing?

Well, it's very simple. They live in and through a conceptualized entity which to a large extent is in their case collective. It's a collective me based on their conditioning, their religion, their upbringing, their belief systems, their story, the collective story of us.

And they don't know it's a story the way they interpret reality. It is the truth to them. They are totally identified with those thoughts that make up the self.

Complete identification with thinking. Self-identification with thinking. So you have a collective conceptualized entity and us.

And that entity has its own version of reality which isn't recognized as a version of reality. It is reality to that entity. And that entity then, you've already deadened yourself to the deeper aliveness that is there underneath all those mind movements.

Underneath the conceptualized me. The deeper consciousness that is not conditioned. The dimension that is in every human being underneath the conceptualized sense of self that is conditioned form, thought forms.

Underneath that, this is the redemptive factor in human existence. Underneath that is a dimension of consciousness that we could describe as unconditioned, vast. But they don't know that.

The terrorist certainly doesn't know it. And as yet, most humans don't know it, but more and more are waking up to it now. The terrorist is so deeply identified, and that's only an extreme manifestation of the same that's everywhere.

So deeply identified with the conceptualized that the entire identity is derived from those mind movements. He's already dead to the deeper aliveness within him or her. And then when you live through a conceptualized sense of self, you manufacture a conceptualized identity for everybody else.

You impose mental labels on other people and groups of people. You call them something. A word, a set of words.

And to you that is the reality of those human beings. There are mental labels. There are thought forms that you impose on another.

You can do it to an individual or to a group. And once you have deadened yourself, you are no longer relating to another human being. You don't even see them anymore as human beings.

You are totally trapped in mind. Totally trapped in thought. And thought is an abstraction.

You impose an abstraction on the sacredness and aliveness of another human being. And that is what you relate to. And then you've basically already killed them.

Their aliveness is not there anymore. You don't know it. The next step can easily be physical violence.

And you will not know what you are doing. You are operating in the realm of mental abstraction. And you are reducing the world to that.

And you are making... You love your enemies, not in the sense of Jesus. You love your enemies.

You love having enemies in that mindset. The terrorist loves having enemies. He doesn't love his enemies, but he loves having enemies.

Because they enhance his sense of self. The us. So all these remove America.

And in many countries, collective identity would suddenly dissolve. Who are we now? Without those on whom we can project something.

The enemy is gone. Within America, because the same structure operates in everyone, when Russia ceased to be the enemy, one could sense a little bit of sense of loss in certain circles. What are we doing now?

We've lost our main enemy. They even made a humorous film about that. Where the president of the United States gets together.

He's seeking re-election. And he gets together with an advisor and says, We need an enemy. Come on.

And since it's a humorous film, they come up with Canada as the enemy. The most unlikely enemy. They manufacture it and it works.

So the need for an enemy to enhance one's sense of self is very great in the collective. It happens in Germany, National Socialism. The same egoic entity which became collective.

It's a very dangerous entity on all levels. And they ended up with the whole world became their enemy. Great.

Now we know who we are. Who are you? Well, Germans.

That's who we are. A concept in the head. A conceptual entity.

It's a dangerous thing. Very dangerous thing. And on a personal level, it operates in the same way.

And that's been going on for so long. How does it operate on a personal? Who is your enemy?

It doesn't have to be a person. Or a group of people. The enemy can be a place.

A situation. Wherever you are. Something you complain about in your head.

And you might have noticed that that entity loves complaining too. Reacting against something and complaining about it. Because in every complaint, it strengthens itself a little.

Because if I complain about a place or situation or another person, I've put myself in the mental position of rightness. I am right. But the complaint, the assumption underneath the complaint is that I'm right.

And what I'm complaining about is wrong. Obviously. That's the underlying assumption behind every complaint.

I'm not talking here about complaint that in order to change a situation, you go and call somebody up and say, you delivered the wrong thing. I ordered a TV and you delivered a washing machine. These are perfectly fine.

Or you tell the waiter, I ordered a salad, not the soup. On that level, complaint is fine. It's purely functional.

But that is very little. But the other complaining that goes on is the self-talk in the head. Which sometimes also becomes verbal, of course.

Where you complain and you can't do anything about it, nor are you even trying to do anything about it. You just want to be right. And that's an unconscious need to feel a slightly stronger sense of self.

So every complaint is an attempt to be a little bit more of me. And then it wears off after a few minutes and you need something else to complain about. And you can see people, how sometimes they look for the one thing that's not right in a situation.

They look for this little stain in this beautiful carpet and then their focus is on the stain. But this really bothers me. Why didn't they do anything about that stain?

But that stain is 2% of the carpet. Yeah, but they shouldn't have. Why don't they...

Drop the complaining and that already diminishes your sense of self. I don't know who I am anymore. And then come the problems, my problems, that I need to think about day and night.

Problematic situations, they've been going on for years. Complex, very complex. And you can wake up in the middle of the night and suddenly you get this overwhelming mind stream of your complex problems.

And they've been going on for years. But it's vital that you think about it now. Oh, think.

And underlying all that thinking is what's going to happen to me. So that sense of identity loves its problems, loves its enemies, loves conflict, but it never tells you that openly. It needs to remain unconscious, because if you make it conscious, you even start to laugh.

And that's very liberating. If you laugh at patterns that you discover within yourself and you see them, that's even sitting here is liberating when you suddenly see conditioned mind patterns. There's nothing personal in it, just human conditioned mind patterns.

And you see them. Seeing is the beginning of being free of them. Seeing means you're no longer totally identified with the pattern.

The main enemy really, it all boils down to the main enemy of the mind made self, the one thing that it doesn't like, it wants to get away from, it's not happy with, and often complains about, just really, it's this moment. It doesn't like it. Or it ignores it completely because the next moment is so much more important.

This is why I have to think and think about what's going to happen. This, just this moment at the most, it's a stepping stone that gets me to the next one that's more important than this, that's for sure. And what is the next moment?

It's future. And where is the future? Has anybody ever encountered it?

No. I've been waiting for it a long time. But all I could ever find was this moment.

But one day it's going to come. Just a little bit longer. And so you see what seems so overriding, so overwhelmingly real, time.

Past and future. Seems to dominate everything. You can't get out of time.

It just drags you along until finally you collapse and die. It seems so overwhelmingly real, this time thing, and yet nobody has ever encountered it. All you can ever experience, find, is this moment.

So if you go more deeply, you actually discover that time and thought are so intrinsically related as to be virtually one. And you discover all that future is, ultimately, is a thought form in the head, in the human mind. It's not here now.

Is the future here? Only this. Only now.

And then we can check again in five minutes' time. You can see the paradox. Five minutes later, it's still now.

Now, if we try to work this out intellectually, it won't take us anywhere. We might write a PhD about it. Whether time is real or not.

But all we need to see at first hand, that your life is always now. Of course it is. It's always this, just this.

The rest is thought forms. Now, because people are so trapped in thought forms with their sense of self, that they give that greater importance than this. And that's a delusion.

And so they are cut off from the deeper levels of their being, that can only be encountered when the movement away from this comes to an end. In other words, your attention, instead of being absorbed by thinking, moves into the immediacy of now. That is the meaning of waking up.

Of spiritual awakening. What do you awaken from? What do you awaken out of?

You awaken out of thought. Self-identification with thought. Into now.

And then the mind comes back and says, And now what? You may notice when your attention moves into now, a certain alertness comes with that. You may become more aware of your sense perceptions.

And you may also notice, when you are present in this moment, the compulsion to label all your sense perceptions and experiences drops away. And you are able to look at something, or more importantly someone, a human, but let's just stay with non-human for a while. You are able to look upon something, or listen to something, or touch something, without compulsively, immediately, mentally putting a label on it, calling it something, or arriving at some conclusion about it, or comparing it to something.

You can be with something like a tree or a flower, and simply look, without labeling. That is a new state of consciousness arising, where you are moving out of the trap, the prison of compulsive conceptualized thinking. And above all, where your sense of identity or your sense of self shifts from being the thinker or the thought, to being the awareness that is prior to thought.

That's an amazing thing to happen to a human being. It begins with such a simple thing as being able to look at something, or touch it, and it's being perceived within a field of spaciousness, or we could say stillness. Have you become unconscious?

No. There is consciousness, but not the labels, not thinking. There are many of you, because I know this is happening on the planet to more and more people now, there are many of you who already experience that in your daily life from time to time.

And you may not even notice that this is what's happening, that you are simply able to be with something, without calling it anything. And you may perceive that only as a peace in the background. There is a certain sense of peace in the background, and through that you are perceiving the world.

You can then walk through the city, or drive through the city mostly, here, without being there as a conceptualized entity and perceiving the world through the conditioned mind structures. So you are there behind the wheel of your car, a driving story of me. And whatever you perceive, only just enough to not be involved in an accident, but you're thinking about important things.

My life situation, which involves past and future, the future matters so much, I'm on my way, where to? The future. And you continuously miss this, this.

So the arising of spaciousness inside yourself is really what it is. And until you find some space within yourself, which even that is not quite right, because that space is the essence of who you are, without that space you can look for happiness for a hundred lifetimes. Where is it?

Because you're only looking to objects in your consciousness, believing that when I've accumulated enough objects in my consciousness, I'll be full and complete. Object in consciousness means thoughts. Object in consciousness means whatever happens to you becomes an object in consciousness.

You don't experience the world out there. Whatever you experience as the world, happens inside you. Who knows whether there's anything out there at all?

Everything that the speaker hears on the chair, where is that happening to you? The words, where are they? They are inside you.

They are arising in consciousness. So humans are looking for themselves through what I call sometimes object consciousness. They are obsessed with the world of objects, the world of things.

Not just material things around them, that of course they're also obsessed with. Situations, events, the next thing and another thing, and the world of things impinges upon you continuously, saying, this matters, everything matters. Oh, what's the next thing I need to deal with?

And you can never catch up, so many things. And your life becomes a burden of things, and then they're the things inside really. Every thought is an object that arises in consciousness.

And there's this stream of thinking, one thought after another. This is what Thoreau referred to when he said, our life is frittered away by details. Simplify, simplify.

Details are the worlds of things, objects in consciousness. So you get like a room full of furniture and you can't move in it anymore. And you think you need more.

No sense of spaciousness within. And potentially, the dimension of space consciousness as opposed to object consciousness, which is thought, is in everyone. Underneath the movement of thought, there's the vast spaciousness, which is already fully developed, fully complete in every human being.

And the essence of who you are is that not anything that arises in object consciousness, but you are the very spaciousness that is beyond objects, things. So really, all that is required is to discover in oneself that dimension of consciousness and thus realizing the fullness of being and of yourself that is already here. That's the end of seeking.

Not the end of doing, but the end of self-seeking through doing. Then doing becomes quite nice. It's a play.

You participate in the game of the universe. You cannot not do, so you might as well participate. You do.

It's a dance. But self-seeking goes out of the doing because you've already found yourself, not as a conceptual entity, as the depth, the still, spacious field within yourself. The future cannot help you to get there.

It can only prevent you from finding it. And what is the quickest way to realizing the truth of this? Is there a shortcut?

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And what is the quickest way to realizing the truth of this? Is there a shortcut? Is there something that does not give me time?

Because time is the illusion. If I think I need time to find that inner space, I'm deluded again. So how can I know this without making it into a future state that I want to achieve?

Which is another concept. How? And this is so simple.

That's the secret of the universe, as far as humans are concerned in their present evolutionary stage. The secret lies in simply no longer internally resisting, denying, or running away from what is at this moment. It's whatever is at this moment.

To find an inner alignment with the form that this moment takes. And the conceptualized egoic entity can't do that. But you can do that.

When you see the truth of it, there's the possibility of living in a state of yes to what is, an inner yes. The conceptualized egoic entity lives in the state of no to what is. And that is the greatest transformation happens when there's a shift in you internally from denying the present moment, because it's not yet enough, it's not really what I wanted, this shouldn't be happening, I want something else, I definitely don't want this, I want the next moment.

It's going to be much more complete. But you always have only this. And then the strange thing happens, at first sight it seems that the form that this moment takes, because that's all it is, there are not many moments in your life, there's only this moment ever.

But the form that this moment takes changes continuously, different forms come into that space of now, which is that inner space. Forms appear in the space of now, in your life. A situation, a person, an event, a place.

And very often, the form that this moment takes seems to be a limitation, it seems to limit me. I want to be limitless, I want to know myself as limitless. Many people feel that the form that this moment takes, how could I accept that, because this form limits me so much.

And this could be where you live, it could be relationships, it could be your physical body. You cannot not encounter limitations in the world of form. You can change, you can have slightly more pleasant limitations.

You could be sitting in a tiny little room and saying, I'm so limited here, I want to expand, I want to live in a mansion. And you might succeed. Ten years later, five years later, you live in a mansion, you seem to have expanded.

And then you sit in your mansion. What now? For a while it feels great, you have expanded because you have identified with the thought form of mansion, you have expanded.

But sooner or later, the mansion will limit you in other ways. Your new life situation will suddenly show you there are other limitations. You may become famous and suddenly discover that great limitations come with fame.

You are free of the limitations that came with poverty, and now you encounter other limitations that come with that. So, it's yes, you can play around with different forms in your life and experiment and expand into other forms, not expecting to find the limitless in the world of form and realizing in one way or another the form that this moment takes will be some form of limitation, that it is in the nature of form to be limited. And that's a deep realization.

And then the running away from the form that this moment takes, the reactive relationship to the form that this moment takes isn't there anymore. When you see the truth of this and are able to say yes to the form that this moment takes instead of resisting the form that this moment takes internally, which keeps you trapped in your own mental form. So, what does that mean?

It means, quite simply, you become friendly with what is. It doesn't mean now you are condemned to non-action. Out of that state of yes, intelligent action arises when it's needed, not when it's not needed.

You embrace what is, even if it seems very limited or limiting, because it already is. You can't remove is out of existence. You become internally aligned with that.

So when you say yes to what is, space arises, so to speak, around what is. This is a way of speaking, but that's all we can do here. A sense of space or spaciousness arises around the form that this moment takes.

And that liberates you from the limitations of form. And you cannot find the spaciousness by always running away from the forms that arise. But being with them, surrendering to the form that this moment takes is the key.

The inner surrender, whatever is, is part of the totality, the web of interconnectedness that is the universe. This event is part of that. There is a certain inevitability to the form that this moment takes.

Yes, then perhaps action arises and it changes. You're actually amazed how quickly the form that this moment changes when you don't resist it anymore internally. Because a greater intelligence comes into play now.

And miraculous things can happen even on the level of form. But they didn't happen when you lived in non-alignment with is. They only happen when you live in alignment with is.

And to some people that means yes to the most dreadful limitation. And that is why traditionally people who reached that realization found the most dreadful limitation in their life and surrendered to that. The archetype of that is Jesus on the cross.

This is the human archetype. This is true for each human being. The most unacceptable form of limitation that a human, and you don't need to be a Christian to believe this or to see the truth of it.

In fact if you're a Christian you may not see it. Because they tend to have a narrow interpretation of something that is very deep. So you have somebody on the, a human being in a situation that is a manifestation of the most extreme limitation.

Totally. And symbolically the words that came out of his mouth were at first, Why hast thou abandoned me, God? The last no.

The next words that came were Not my will but thy will be done. Which means thy will is the will of the one. Not to make it into a mental concept.

The will of the one is whatever is now. Not my will but thy will be done. A complete yes.

And at that moment the cross which is the symbol of the ultimate limitation becomes the symbol of the divine. It's the dual symbolism of the cross. It's a torture instrument.

And it's a symbol of the divine. And that is whatever may be happening in your life and be the greatest limitation in your life, it is not only the limitation, it's also the opening. When it's not internally resisted, the opening into space.

Because space comes with a yes to what is. You are no longer bound to what is. You are no longer bound to the form.

You know yourself as the formless, one life, one consciousness. That's the true happiness that lasts. The heart of happiness, the core of happiness, not the superficial happiness that goes hu hu hu hu hu and the next moment hu hu hu hu.

That's... So nothing needs to change for this to happen in your life, this transition. Whatever is, is the best that is for you at this moment.

You work with that. Say yes to that. Don't believe the mind when it says OK, I'll say yes when I get this out of the way.

And enormous power moves into your life. The very intelligence of the universe manifests through this form which then becomes an opening. And it's the end of suffering.

The end of the suffering entity. You may still get a toothache from time to time, but that is how it is too. Surrender to that also.

Surrender. That's all. No time is required for the shift in consciousness.

You can only do it now. Yes to now. And find yourself through that.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:47 - 1:14:47)

Thank you.

Eckhart Tolle Talk Titled Living a Life of Inner Peace

[Speaker 2] (0:00 - 2:13)

I'm the program director at the Learning Annex here in San Francisco. Welcome. I'm so happy to have you all here tonight for Eckhart Tolle.

At the Learning... Actually, before we begin, I just want to remind everybody, could you please turn off your pagers and cell phones? And to let you know as well, tonight's event is being audio and videotaped, and that's what the blue order forms are.

If you'd like to fill them out, you can put them in the lobby at the registration table. There's boxes for those, and that's to receive a copy. At the Learning Annex, we run over 150 events and seminars every month.

And if you take a look at our catalogs, you will see a variety of classes that we do offer. Tonight, we're discounting those classes $10 if you register. You can do that out in the lobby area where we're selling Eckhart Tolle CDs, books, products, tapes, a whole bunch of things.

Some of our upcoming speakers include Robert Kiyosaki. He is the best-selling author of the book Rich Dad, Poor Dad. In June, we also have Julia Cameron.

She will be here. She is the best-selling author of The Artist's Way, The Vein of Gold, among other books. We also have the great psychic Sylvia Brown coming, as well as James Vaughan Prague in June.

If you watch Larry King, I'm sure you've seen both of them on the show. But tonight, you're here to see Eckhart Tolle. I don't think that I need to tell you that he is the best-selling author of the inspirational The Power of Now.

I cannot tell you the number of people as well who have approached me personally and talked about how much this book changed their life. I know it changed mine. And now, ladies and gentlemen, it is my privilege and my pleasure to introduce to you Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (2:36 - 2:17:33)

Welcome. It seems we are spending this evening here together, except for those of you who have more urgent business to attend to and have to leave early. That's okay, too.

This evening won't be comfortable for you unless you become comfortable with the present moment, because that's all you're getting. And if you don't become comfortable with the present moment, then you may feel the strong urge to leave before it's over. In search for some other moment, more stimulating, more interesting, some other moment that offers you more than this moment.

And that's a very normal thing to feel that inside. The pull towards the next moment is deep-seated in every human being, in the human mind. It is part of the collective conditioning of the human mind.

And most people live like that all the time, being pulled internally away from this, that movement that pulls you towards the next moment, which I call the psychological need for the next moment. Where is it? And wherever you go, in businesses, institutions, families, you can observe that stress, it translates, it becomes stress, of course, and many other things, the inability to be at home in the now, all there ever is, life itself.

The inability to be at home with all there is, ever, this moment. It's so strange. All other beings on the planet have no problem with it.

Trees, flowers, they love being totally present. The animal. Except a few animals that have lived for too long with humans.

Certain dogs can get very impatient. When are we going to go for a walk? Waiting, waiting.

If they were out in nature, they wouldn't have to wait to go for a walk, but because they live with humans, they have to wait. But on the whole, you can, even dogs that have lived close, very close to humans for thousands of years, there's still an enormous ability in, despite all that, despite certain human traits that sometimes affect dogs, an enormous ability they have preserved to be in the now, to be in a mode of receptivity and openness to celebrate life, aliveness, this moment. And if you have a dog or watch a dog, it is a pleasure to simply watch the openness, the readiness of an animal, like a dog, to celebrate life.

The slightest excuse is good enough. And the owner of the dog, burdened with problems, and what's going to happen next? Not here, somewhere else.

In thought, in the mind, trapped in mind structures, which are future projections. And all that's needed, you only need to look at a dog, some dogs, and they already wag their tails. Just a look is enough, and they respond, alive.

So humans have lost that, and that's only a small part of what they lost. They lost the ability, one could almost say, to be. So lost in doing, so lost in past and future and time, so lost in thought, because that's all that past and future are, mind structures.

They are nowhere else except as thought forms. Past and future are thought forms. Nobody has ever touched the past, except in the present moment, as a memory, a thought form, but only in the now.

Nobody has ever met the future, you can't, because there is no such thing. And humans live as if it were more important than this. Of course, it's a form of madness, but it is so normal that nobody questions it.

That's how everybody lives. You watch TV, they're all doing it. It's so normal.

So you get lost. There are many aspects of being lost, lost in thought. Really, that's what it comes down to, because past and future are thought forms.

So we are here this evening not to add more information to our store of knowledge, because everybody here has more than enough knowledge. It's not that. No more knowledge or information needs to be added to you.

If I tell you that the present moment is all there is, that's not really new information. But you might say, oh, that's a strange thing. Yeah, that's right.

But then you know that you always knew that, so it can't be new information. Of course you knew that the present moment is all there is. You must know that.

So we are here not to add more to our mind, to our thoughts, but to access within ourselves a deeper dimension of consciousness, one could say, a deeper level, a deeper dimension of consciousness that exists in every human being, no matter how lost they are in thought and time and past and future and doing the next thing and the next thing. And you never get there. When is it all going to end?

When am I going to arrive to make it? Just this little bit more. And you never get there.

Because you're so identified with the movement of thought that you're never here, present, to life. So we are here to access a dimension of consciousness that one could say is in every human being, even if they appear mad and confused and in turmoil inside, in every human being there exists a deeper dimension, deeper than thought, a dimension of consciousness deeper than thought, that occasionally comes, breaks through the density of thought. In most humans it occasionally breaks through that deeper level.

And those are moments when that breaks through when you suddenly feel intensely alive. You feel an inner peace and aliveness. The mind might say, I feel so happy, but it's deeper than that.

And that you might then remember as a wonderful moment. And then it gets covered up again by the movement of mental noise that most people are completely identified with. Nothing wrong with thinking, of course, but if that's all there is to your life, the movement of thought, the incessant mental noise, which psychologists, even psychologists who are not interested in necessarily, some are, but interested in spiritual things, have discovered that most of human thought activity, 98% of it or so, is completely repetitive.

The same old thoughts. And you are forced to think them again and again and again. And they become you.

You are those thoughts. That means to be identified with those old thoughts. And those thoughts are the filter through which you perceive reality.

And through those old conditioned thoughts, you judge and interpret the world around you, other people, events, what happens. But it's all the old conditioning, the old thoughts, reactive patterns, which are part of that. So that your entire sense of self, of me, is bound up with the activity of thinking, plus the emotions that accompany those conditioned thoughts.

Conditioned from childhood on and through cultural surroundings. Your childhood conditioned, even genetically conditioned by the whole history of humanity. Mentally conditioned.

People carry that conditioning around. And identify with that as me. The strange, and this is why life is so unsatisfying for most people, because what they derive their sense of self from, their sense of who I am, is thoughts, plus some emotions that accompany those thoughts.

And that's not very much. And it's all conditioned by your past. But they think that is the self, what Buddha called the self.

And said, this is ultimately an illusion, but people live in that their whole life. That sense of self that is based on thought, includes even emotions. Not that there's anything wrong with thought or emotions, but when they become a self, an identity, a me, that's where delusion starts.

And that's where life becomes very problematic. Because that me that is created by thought, that sense of self, is never, never feels complete. Never feels at ease for very long.

Always needs a bit more to add to me, because I'm not yet enough myself. This is the feeling that almost everybody has. If they look within, there's the feeling I'm not yet fully me.

And on one level, that is true, because there are probably many things that you could still add to your life, and there's nothing wrong with that. You can still learn to play the piano. You can learn other skills.

You can learn a language. You can add new experiences. You can travel to countries, new countries, learn all kinds of things to add to me.

But if you're looking for a deeper sense of self, a more complete sense of me, an improved me, through that, then you won't find it, not for long. And always the sense of not quite enough yet will reassert itself. So there is built into the mind-made sense of identity a continuous sense of insufficiency and lack and not enough.

And this implies the need for more to add to me, in order to be more fully me. And for that, the me needs future. That's why it's so interested in the next moment, because it's through the next moment, it's through future, that it can get the more that it desperately needs to add to itself.

And so humans are condemned to live in such a way, a sense of self that is never enough, that feels uneasy and needs more, compares itself to others and says, they have more, I also want more. Continuous comparison. Does he have more than me?

Has he gotten physically stronger than me? Has he got more possessions than me? Has he got more knowledge than me?

Is he more spiritual than me? Or am I more spiritual than he? Or do I have more?

Do I know more than knowing more, having more, being more? Am I more important or is he more important than me? So that continuous unease when you meet people.

And the need to be superior and the fear of you might be inferior. It's a hard way to live. And so that's the little me, as I sometimes call it, but it feels pretty big, it feels heavy, to carry the burden of the me.

And it needs to strengthen its sense of self through having more, through disagreement, through being right, through reactivity. Everybody here knows someone, acquaintance, friends, who love to have certain enemies, to react against something, to disagree with something or someone. They're looking out for the next thing they can disagree with.

And the moment you disagree, you say, you are wrong. Sometimes these talks, fortunately, I say very little that anybody can disagree with. But nevertheless, some people still manage.

And then there's one little thing, and they, one little statement, and their mind gets in there and says, and then they don't hear the rest of the talk. One hour is gone, but after the hour, a very emotional entity puts up a hand and says, an hour ago you said that, and I completely disagree with you. You're wrong.

And there's an enormous amount of emotion behind that. And it's very satisfying to the mind-made me to be in a position of right-wrong, to be right, to prove someone wrong. And it's enormous what it does in relationships, partners, what they do to each other, in this need to be right, to assert their selfhood through being right.

That means every time you are right, you imagine that your sense of self has grown, and that's what it feels like. You have just triumphed in this argument with someone, and you have blown yourself up. If you really looked inside, you would feel that the body doesn't actually feel very good at all, that there's a blockage in the energy flow in the body, that it feels stuck, there's a tightness.

And yet, to the little egoic entity, it feels good to have blown itself up for a moment, and have triumphed. And then, in a little while, you shrink again, which doesn't last very long, and then you have to look for the next thing to react against. Somewhere is my next enemy.

It could be just a situation that you don't like to be in. You have something to complain about this, perhaps only in the mind. It's enough, it keeps you going.

To complain about this dreadful traffic jam that you are sitting in again. And so, even that is satisfying. It strengthens, even that strengthens the egoic sense of self, because you have made a situation wrong, and yourself right.

The traffic jam is obviously wrong. But, luckily enough, that gives you the opportunity to be right. So, one could almost say that you are morally superior to the traffic jam.

And that's only one little situation. Now, imagine one's whole life consisting of these mind movements, of such situations. Where your sense of self depends on being in some kind of antagonistic relationship towards people, situations, and events in your life.

And that's one single human being. And then millions of whole nations live like that. And then, that same unconscious mind pattern is a collective one, too.

Then you can have an entire nation looking for their enemies. Because only through that, or religions. You can have an entire religion looking for those who don't believe.

Because their sense of self becomes stronger through saying they are wrong, we are right. So the need for enemies is built into that mind structure that we are talking about. And this is on a personal level.

And the need to be in conflict is part of that. And that's strange, because on the surface, the little self says, I want love and peace. It says that on the surface.

But then, when you see how it lives each moment, that you see that in the moment, it doesn't want love. It wants to complain about the traffic jam. It wants to prove that it's right, I'm right.

And you're completely wrong. It wants to show that this is absolutely wrong. This shouldn't be, shouldn't, should, but it is.

But it shouldn't. You are morally superior to reality. You.

You. You. And that's, that strengthens one's sense of self enormously.

And so people go, some have it more strongly than others. Everybody can detect those movements within themselves, but there are some people who are totally possessed by them. And there are some others who are beginning to step out of that collective conditioning.

And this is the people in this room, and many, many others on this planet, still a minority, who are stepping out of deeply conditioned mind movements. Stepping out of an entire sense of identity that is ultimately illusory. And that has created so much suffering on the planet, so much conflict, so much non-peace, because that little or heavy, depending how you look at it, entity that one carries within, so to speak, is threatened by peace.

It doesn't want peace, not for a little moment. I'll give you a little moment of peace, and then can't stand this anymore, because your sense of self, that boundary between me and the rest of the universe, or us, even worse. There's only one thing worse than the egoic me, and that's the egoic us.

If you think criminals are those who inflict suffering on humanity, that's a tiny, tiny, tiny amount of suffering that criminals inflict on other human beings. Most of, 98% of the suffering that humans inflict on other humans are inflicted by very respectable people, citizens. Look at the 20th century, the warfare.

Even concentration camps were built by respectable citizens. And all the unbelievable amount of suffering that was inflicted by humans on other humans in the 20th century alone, and now this is just a continuation, the world situation is just another chapter in that. Isn't there something mad there?

Of course there's something mad. Is there another way? Yes.

What do I have to do? First of all, see the conditioning of that egoic self. Just recognize it, see it.

See it in the history of humanity, see it in the people around you, and see it in yourself, without any blame, because otherwise, what, the ego would love that. They're all dreadful, these egos, they're all around me. And so there are actually humans who say, I hate humans.

The French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre said it beautifully. His saying is usually translated into English as, hell is other people. Literally what he said, the literal translation from French is even better, it's, hell is the others.

And that is a very strong egoic sense of me and the rest of the universe, us and the others. And that must not be lost, that conditioned mind pattern wants to have that rigid separation between me and the others, us and them, that must stay in place. And in order for it to stay in place, that sense of separation between me and the universe, yes, in order for that internal barrier, that internal sense of separation to stay in place, I need to maintain regularly conflict.

I need my enemies, because if I go without conflict and enemies for too long, this boundary begins to dissolve between me and others. Peace that lasts for too long becomes threatening to that egoic sense of self. Who am I?

It feels so peaceful, something wrong here. I don't know who I am anymore. And so, on an individual level, that is often experienced as the need for unhappiness even.

That people carry that, that continues to be in conflict with situations and people and events is unhappiness. To be in a traffic jam and can be in a complaint, mental complaint about it is unhappiness. To be anywhere and complain about what is, except when you're talking to somebody who can do something about it, please give me fresh food.

You say in a restaurant, this food is off. That's not complaining that I'm talking about. Then the waiter can hopefully do something about it.

Say, this is not right. I asked for a room with a bath and this room has not even running water. So you go talk to somebody who can do something, but if there's nobody who can do anything about it, why complain?

Because the ego loves it. Why complain in the head or talk to yourself about it, talk to other people about it, feel the emotions that go with it. And that's how it's so normal to live like that, to be at odds with, with what?

Reality. I'm against it. What do you think of reality?

I'm completely against it. Of course, reality is ultimately only ever the present moment, but that's enough for the ego because, and here we come to the crunch of it, people started pointing to it at the very beginning already. The ego has an intense dislike of the present moment.

It would rather make it into an enemy or at least try to get away from it, which is also a kind of making it into an enemy. So you have to be very alert within yourself to catch yourself being trapped in that mind movement where you are in conflict with the present moment. And the ego loves it.

But when you see it, this is the beginning of freedom, when you notice in yourself that you are making the only thing there is ever in your life. You're making that into an enemy, this now. You find something in it to argue with, to react against, to disagree with, and even talk about it to yourself or to others.

And then you can see, and then there comes the movement towards future and say, I want something better than this. This shouldn't be. This moment should not be happening.

Of course, there are many dreadful things that happen on this planet continuously, even at this very moment, because of the inner state of humanity. The dreadful things that happen have their cause not in external situations. It looks like that only.

The cause of the suffering that humans inflict on each other and themselves is within, of course. It's within each human being carries that unconscious conditioning inside. And one could almost say they are forced to act it out.

And that's what gives people their sense of personal self. It's totally conditioned. So you have to be very alert in yourself to catch yourself being in an antagonistic relationship with the present moment.

Not saying yes to it, but meeting this moment with an inner no. And imagine living like that for 30, 40, 50, 60 years. Sometimes covered up with a little smile.

But you're just looking for the next thing to react to. And what that does even to your body, what that does to the otherwise harmonious energy flow that nature intended for the body, because what it leads to is a continuous physical contraction. So if you can catch yourself in that inner no to what we could call, and this is a wonderful expression, it goes back to the Buddha really, the is-ness of this moment.

Buddha had the term such-ness. The is-ness of what is now. And how mad it is to fight it internally.

You're fighting against life. And the mind now says, yes, but there may be something happening that's totally wrong. Things happen continuously that the mind could call wrong.

Now this is very important. Now we're coming to the core of the transition from the old conditioned state to what we could call the new consciousness that is already there even at this moment when you observe and recognize your own mind patterns. That recognition, that realization, the observing presence in you is not part of the old conditioning.

And this is why it can feel so liberating even to be sitting here and to be hearing something that one would otherwise say, well, that sounds like bad news. But even in one sense it is, but when you see a deeply conditioned pattern in yourself, you have already stepped out because the seeing is the emerging of something new, a deeper consciousness that sees, that witnesses an old conditioned movement in yourself. So when you sit there, and just to take a simple example, the traffic jam, as is in most people's experience, there are many worse situations, of course, but the traffic jam can be pretty bad for the ego itself too, to see the moment you are complaining internally, to watch that mind movement and then say, oh, I'm fighting what is.

And you can see also the very same moment you see the futility of being internally not aligned with now, out of alignment internally with now. And now the mind will say, yes, but nothing is ever going to change if I accept everything. This is a silly doctrine.

I heard a mind somewhere saying that. And I'm not going to listen to this for one more minute. The mind will try to tell you that you will become ineffective when you internally become aligned with what is.

You will become, the mind says, totally passive, nothing, you're never going to do anything again, because if this moment is fine, what are you going to do? And the worst thing the mind will tell you is that you are never going to get out of this moment if you accept it. This dreadful moment, you will be stuck in it forever.

One of my favorite films is Groundhog Day. Where one man is stuck in the same day, forced to relive it again and again. And he's one of the most unaccepting people you can imagine.

But gradually, having to repeat the same suffering again, the same day, he wakes up into the same day again and again. Gradually, he just can't resist anymore. He commits suicide, he wakes up again the same day.

And finally, he goes with it. He lets go of inner resistance and he goes with it. And suddenly, he does good things on that day.

Suddenly, he helps people. Suddenly, he becomes a powerful good, because internally he's aligned with what is. And he transforms his entire, the world around him, the town where he's stuck, which he hated so much.

As he begins to accept, he transforms the town. And suddenly, he's out of it. But he doesn't get out until he says yes to it completely.

And this is a universal lesson. It's very deep. True transformation change cannot come into your life unless it's the basis, the absolute foundation for true transformation.

True transformation can only be a transformation of consciousness inside you. Otherwise, it cannot be true. You can achieve all kinds of things.

You can, through thought power even, yes. Through thought power, you could create almost whatever you wanted. You can use affirmations, you can use imagery, you can use, as long as you're not totally unrealistic, you could achieve almost anything.

Well, there are limitations, of course, too. If I probably, if I wanted to become a great pianist, even at my age, it would still be possible. Or everybody would say, the experts would say, no, you can't.

Yes, it would be possible. Would it make me happy? No.

Would it make to a deeper sense of me, of self? No. Because there will always be others who are better.

And even if I'm the greatest, the time will come when I'm not the greatest anymore, and then my sense of self will suffer. So becoming great at playing the piano makes me happy and fulfilled for a while, and then the same thing does the opposite. So you can achieve things through applied thought.

This is not what our meeting is about, so I'm only going to talk about it for three minutes. If you think and feel that you already have it, and also apply yourself in practical matters, do you actually take action towards it also? It's not enough to shut yourself in a room and think you're going to win the marathon in the next Olympic Games, and never take any external action.

Or do something that is totally out beyond the limitations of your physical vehicle. I could not become heavyweight champion in boxing. No matter how much visualization I do.

And even if I succeeded, of course it wouldn't make me happy. They are not happy. But yes, you can achieve many things, but it will not be true transformation, and it will not fulfill you.

This does not mean don't do it. Do it. Because it's a play.

You play with it. You can play with things in the world of form. Different.

You want a big house? Go and get it. And then you sit in the big house.

And then after a little satisfaction, for a little while, especially if you invite people whose houses are not as big. So that gives some food to ego for a while. But that wears off too, unless you have continuous cocktail parties.

And then you have to compete with others whose houses are even bigger. That's another problem. But after a while, then you sit in the, you made it.

You got the big house, and then you sit there. And then the fulfillment of self that you derive from it begins to wear off. And then the mind comes.

And the beautiful view, you may not even look at it anymore because you've seen it so many times. Oh, well. Yeah, there it is.

And now what? And you wake up in the middle of the night feeling fear. Where does that come from?

I might lose the house. If the stock market crashes completely, I may have to sell it. And then you sit in the big house, and it's not fulfilling anymore.

And then the mind might say, it's not big enough. That's why. So you try and get a bigger one.

Or it says, yes, but the car is not, doesn't go with it. You need a better car. Or the wife doesn't really fit anymore with the house.

I now need a trophy wife to go with the house. And then you can imagine what kind of relationship that's going to be. That is entirely ego based.

You want her to add to you her youth or beauty as an image to be admired with her by others. And she wants something else from you, whatever it may be. Probably the house.

So you play with things on the world of form. It's beautiful. There's nothing wrong with big houses.

They're nice, very nice. You can sit in them, move about, but not such a great deal, really. So once you have played with things, you realize it's not, whatever you can bring about in your life is not such a great deal, even becoming famous.

For many people, I want to come out of obscurity. There's a strange expression. He's living in obscurity.

What does that mean? One magazine said, Suddenly Eckhart Tolle emerged from complete obscurity. I didn't know I lived in obscurity.

But it was in the magazine, so it must have been true. And then I've had a little taste of being famous after living in complete obscurity. But it's not a big deal.

What I love is that so many people are experiencing transformation of consciousness, and that is not, nothing to do with the entity that sits here. It's because simply there's an openness, an opening, so some writing happens through it, some words come through it. That's all.

It's an opening into the unconditioned. And then something new emerges, something fresh, something that can transform the world. But on the external level, being famous is completely meaningless.

People recognize you. It's not even that great anymore if you sit in restaurants and they say, What's he eating? You drink coffee?

You've wrote a spiritual book. You shouldn't be drinking. Oh, sorry.

Now I go to Starbucks with a baseball cap on. So that's, once you, the things seem great when you don't have them, because then the mind can say, This is going to fulfill you. And then you have to and then you get it.

Is that it? Or you could become even so famous that you can't even step outside anymore. What a nightmare.

But the mind before said, I want to no longer live in obscurity. So you play around with things, get things. You're not going to find yourself in anything that you can achieve, and this doesn't mean you shouldn't play with it, with the world of form.

But if you're looking for yourself in the fame, in the recognition, in the possession, in the relationship, in the experience, even in the knowledge, I can become more and more knowledgeable than I know more than anybody else. That was my identity for a while when I was at university. I didn't have much money.

I didn't have good looks. I didn't have a strong physical body. What was left?

Knowledge. The ego can build itself up through that, and then after a few years I had read enough books, I knew more than most people. I don't anymore.

I've forgotten most things, but at that time, and that felt good to the ego. I could tell them, oh no, you've got the facts completely wrong. But a continuous feeling of unease because there were others, the older professors, they knew much more.

Unease. What do they think of me? Do they think I know enough?

So that's the self-seeking. If you're looking for yourself in the things of this world, in all that, you're never going to find it. So all the things of this world that you can achieve and add to yourself are beautiful.

Play with them. They will come and go. Nothing will stay around for that long.

You can have a house but at some point, it'll go or you go first. Whatever you achieve, after a while, it's not an achievement. You can become president of the United States and then that'll be over after a few years and then you sit there.

That was it. So it's overrated enormously through the mass culture, the external, what achievement or possessions or attainment or recognition can do for you is, that's an illusion that is being perpetrated continuously through the media. It can't do anything for you if you're looking for yourself.

If you play with it, it's beautiful. The world will form. A million dollar comes, a million dollar goes.

Stock market goes up, stock market goes down. One day you sit in a mansion, a little later you sit in a one bedroom apartment. Another chair, less soft.

Walls are a little closer. The view, not quite as good but it feels good to be alive. There's nothing wrong with this moment.

There's an aliveness. There's the sky. There's a little plant.

And I'm alive. You sense that aliveness that you are underneath the movement of thought. I have been looking for that.

What I call aliveness here is very deep. It is also inner peace. There's also a joy in it, a subtle, alive joy which in normal existence people have little glimpses of.

They can get glimpses when the movement of needing the next thing for a moment subsides. And they think why they feel so good for a moment is because they got that thing. That's not true.

Why they feel so good is because the movement of needing the next moment desperately to fulfill me for a little while isn't there. You just bought the BMW and it stands there and you're looking at it and say it's mine. And for a moment you don't need anything anymore because you've got it and you feel good.

You think you feel good because of the BMW. It's nothing to do with that. Where is the goodness in that piece of metal?

No, it's in here. I feel it in here. Yes, but I feel it because this is mine.

No, for a moment the movement of wanting the next thing subsided. I need, I need, I must have. Where is?

Ah, ah. And it doesn't last very long because there's an illusion attached to it. The illusion is it's there.

And then comes the wanting again. So you have glimpses of it and sometimes whenever a sense of well-being is there that means you become at ease with what is. Now.

You feel intensely alive. The movement of thought is not as hyperactive anymore. It's thought begins to slow down as you become present to the now.

And you may sense an aliveness running through your entire energy field. Every cell is alive with life. Aliveness.

So the sense of beingness, aliveness, ultimately what that is, is who you are beyond the mind-made story of who you are. That is never enough. My history, which is what I derive my sense of self from, of course it's not enough.

All kinds of things went wrong along the way in my history. My history, yes, also. My personal history is a succession of mistakes.

And yet not mistakes because we are here. It's brought us here. It's brought me here.

It's brought you here. So nothing was a mistake. But from a purely mental perspective, you could say, why did I do that?

That was a mistake. That didn't work out. And that relationship didn't work out.

And then I failed there. And then I succeeded there. But it made me unhappy.

That's the history of me. But the mind says, yes, all I need is a little bit more of the story to completion. It will get me to completion.

It never happens. The ultimate illusion of completion of the story of me is the wedding. The typical thing you see in films.

Da, da, da, da. And that's the end of the film. They don't show you what happens after that.

So to step out of that, you are not your story. Oh, thank God for that. And no matter what happened in your history, it has taken you to this moment.

It has taken you here all the mistakes. Without the mistakes, you probably wouldn't be sitting here. You would be watching TV.

You must have suffered enough to have come here. And it's great. If I hadn't suffered, I wouldn't be sitting here.

If I hadn't had a nightmare for years living a nightmare, all the things I described were extremely pronounced in me. The dreadful way to live of every moment is bad. But it worked.

It produced enough suffering to suddenly trigger an awakening. And this is why we are here. And sitting here may look on the surface like people listening to a person speaking, but there is something deeper happening.

There is a deeper recognition happening in yourself. First, a recognition of what ultimately is not you, what you thought was you, what gave you your sense of self, is ultimately only mental content, a collection of memories and reactive patterns and thoughts. And that's not that much.

And to realize that that is not who I am. But if you now look very closely, throughout your life, all the different things that happened, and there are many people in this room who have gone through such drastic changes that one could almost say that you have already lived more than one incarnation in one lifetime. In the past, it was more normal to have one single incarnation.

You stayed in the same place and you did the same thing and then you died. That still happens in certain places, but it is more common now for people to go through tremendous changes. And if you look, you might even find that 20, 30 years ago, who you were then seemed very different from who you are now.

And yet, because things have changed, the story has changed. It may not be the greatest story. It still has insufficiency built into it.

It still has lack built into it. But the story has changed. It's not the same story anymore.

And yet, if you look very deeply into the deepest sense of who you are, of I am, where does that feeling of I come from? That sense of something so precious in here, and that's called I. And then saying, I don't want to lose that because there's something so precious here, it's unimaginable that the world could ever be without I.

And that sense of I am, of beingness, of presence, that is at the core of yourself, gets mixed up with memories and with mind movements and with the story. But if you, one could almost say, if you distill from the story of your life the sense of I that remains, even when your life was totally different 20 or 30 years ago, like a different incarnation, even there at bottom, there was still an I, I am. Not the I of the story, but a deeper sense of I am-ness.

That was to you, and this is you, and that was, doesn't change. At the deepest level, the sense of who you are, regardless of what happens in the externals of your life, that changes. Even if you, if tomorrow, if you're, let's say you're a multimillionaire and tomorrow you lose it all, and the day after tomorrow you are penniless, the sense of I, the story would have changed, but the I-ness, I am-ness underneath it would not have changed, or the other way around.

If you win a million dollars tomorrow and today you have nothing, you might sit in a bigger house, have a slightly more pleasant story to tell yourself, and a fictitious sense of self that would have expanded into a bigger house, I have expanded into this mansion, me. For a little while, it feels good, then it goes. But deeper than that is something that never leaves you, which is almost impossible to put into words because it goes beyond anything that language can really speak of.

And language here can only point, can only point to it. You need to sense that, use the pointer, that's the words, and find that deeper sense of I am underneath the story that remained the same. Now the mind says, what is that?

I'll give you another pointer. What other thing is there, so to speak, it's not a thing, what other thing is there that never changed in your life, apart from that deepest sense of I am-ness? What other thing is there that was always the same, that was always there?

The present moment. It was always now. No matter what happened in your life, it was always now.

Even that's a paradox to even say it. It was now. It doesn't even make sense.

But it was always now. Isn't that so there? And so we come to something very mysterious, that these actually are one.

And what we call the now, the present moment, is actually much deeper, something that contains a very deep mystery that you can never fully understand. We can only get a glimpse of what that means. This now is actually much deeper than we realized, because we thought that the present moment is what happens.

But what happens, happens in the field of now. It isn't the now. What happens changes continuously.

Things come and go and come and go. You leave here totally new experiences after you leave here. And so this is why people think one moment succeeds another moment and another moment and another moment.

That's not true. If you look more deeply, it's always one moment, this one. It's always this moment.

What changes is the form that this moment takes. That changes continuously. But because of the continuously changing forms that this moment takes, people believe there are thousands of moments every day.

Whereas, of course, everybody can verify in their own experience that there is only one moment ever. This moment. Your life was never and will never not be now.

And you will never not be yourself. So with the now, through the now we have access So with the now, through the now we have access to a deeper dimension in yourself that is one with the now. And the deepest statement I can make is something that you cannot fully understand through thinking about it.

But you can sense the truth of it. And that is, you are the now. And that is so perplexing, it actually stops the mind.

And that's a good thing. You can't think about this, because you wouldn't get anywhere. But there is a knowing that is possible for you through this pointer.

You are the now. This is, that's amazing. And then the mind, after a little while, the mind stops, and then it never stops for long.

And then the mind says, yeah, but what does that, does that actually mean anything? Now the mind would like, please, a little bit more explanation. Just a little bit more, please.

Why not? What is this now that never leaves you, that is one with the deepest sense of beingness, of I am? That Jesus pointed to when he said, before Abraham was, I am.

I am. That God pointed to, God is your deepest self, when God said, so to speak, I am that I am. That is God's self-definition.

And it is your self-definition, because at the deepest level of being, of I am, of now, you are one with the one. And what is the one? I will give you one other pointer, but we need to be very careful with pointers that point to a reality within yourself that cannot be understood through thinking.

And yet we are using thought to point to it, no more. So one needs to be careful so that a pointer does not become transformed into some new belief without the realization. So what is this I am, this now, that which never leaves you, that which always and eternally is, we could say, it's the essence of all life, before life becomes a form of life.

All forms come out of one life. There's life, and what you see around you are forms of life, the one life, the one consciousness, the primal, primordial intelligence, that permeates the entire universe, your body, everything, the one intelligence, the one consciousness is that. And it cannot be known through thinking about it.

Of course not. You cannot understand it as such. You can get little glimpses of, oh.

But the knowing of it comes from a deeper place. Now what do you have to do to know this for yourself? Just, you already know it.

It is not new knowledge. It is the most fundamental knowing, the basis of all knowing is that. And it is who you are.

And it is there when the continuous dream of thinking for a moment subsides. And what is left, you don't remember, in other words, you don't remember your story for a moment, your problems, the next thing that you have to do tomorrow or tonight, and all this stuff associated with your life situation, which isn't now at all. Your life situation is complicated and problematic, I know that, because every life situation is.

But that complexity cannot be now. Now is always very simple. Just this.

There is nothing complex about this moment. Can't be. Because it is only this.

It can be challenging, yes, something I need to deal with right now, and it happens, action happens, yes. But complicated, it can't be complicated. The now is too simple.

There is just, well, there are so many things, I don't know what to do first. Well, you have to do one thing. You can't do more than one thing now.

Do this. So if you step out of thought, you step out of past and future into now, and this is the access point, the access point into the new state of consciousness, which isn't new at all. It's just a way of speaking.

It's new to you. It's new to humanity, largely, although the great teachers already pointed to it, but it never was realized on any large scale. Amazing that there is this dimension in you that is accessible only through the portal of the present moment, because it is inseparable.

This moment is inseparable from being itself, from who you are at the deepest level. So all that is required is for you to realize that this portal is always there. It's called the now.

And you will feel you're being pulled away from it continuously through the movement of thought. And then you suffer again. Some form of your life will become problematic again.

And then you remember, okay, what's the problem at this moment? With that question, it's kind of a useful question, comes an alertness. What is alertness?

It is consciousness without thought. It happens to some people in a moment of danger. They're suddenly confronted with danger.

Thought cannot cope with it anymore. It has no experience of the situation. Thought, sometimes in dangerous situations, when your life is threatened, thought suddenly collapses, and you go...

And fear also goes. People have reported after their lives were threatened by some imminent accident, for example, or they were hanging on a cliff wall. What is there to think about?

You can't think. And no right action is going to come out of thought at that critical emergency situation. All you can...

Thought subsides. It gets out of the way. And an intense alertness and aliveness takes over.

Stillness. It is a stillness too, but there's an intensity to that stillness. And out of that, which is the unconditioned intelligence in you, that is the, one could call the I am-ness that is now emerged.

It's the unconditioned consciousness itself. Out of that, right action happens, and it's not premeditated. There's no decision-making involved.

It is spontaneous. And then the old... When the emergency is over, the old thought-dominated state of consciousness comes back.

Oh. And then the next thing is, you begin to remember your problems again. But then you remember also, for that moment you were actually, you lived in a state of blissful clarity.

And some people have that when they, an illness comes that may be life-threatening. Life-threatening is an expression that's ultimately a delusion because life has no opposite. People think life and death doesn't exist.

Birth and death, yes. Life has no opposite. An illness comes and you may only have a few more weeks or months to live.

That can also wake you up out of identification with the story, because the story becomes so burdensome and unhappy that you cannot live with the story of me anymore because I haven't got enough time to find myself in the story anymore. And it pushes you out of identification with that mind movement. And suddenly it's, I have seen people who may not have much longer to live, that applies to all of us because it doesn't really make much difference, a year, 20 years, 50 years.

It's over quickly. The ego says, oh, I've still got time. I've time to find myself.

No, you haven't. Because you can't find yourself in time. Either you find yourself in the now or you don't find yourself.

So it ultimately does not matter how much more time you have. Oh, that's a relief. Because the mind says, time is a critical factor to my existence.

I'm not going to make it without more time. So be stepping, when something you're confronted with death, that can also do it. Or in, let's take more everyday situations, the greatest sportsmen know that there is a state of absolute presence when they are exercising, whatever sport they do, there is the zone, as they sometimes call it, and they enter the zone and everything happens by itself.

Something else takes over and right action, there's no thinking involved anymore, not a single thought, but right action flows out of a deeper level of consciousness. It plays. It takes over.

And I believe that is probably the reason why people love watching some sports. Some sports are watched because of ego identification with their team. That's one of the many ways in which the ego gets a little high or low, whatever it may be.

We won. Who is we? Well, my team.

What did you do? Well, I just sat there. But...

So I don't mean people watching sports to get some little ego boost, but people watching sports because it is very satisfying to watch an action that is being performed out of the state of presence, of no thought, of absolute alertness. And it is beautiful to watch. And that may be why people love watching tennis for hours.

All they are really watching is two people hitting a ball. And when I saw it first, I said, why is it that people love to watch that for hours? They are always hitting a ball.

And then I started watching, and I could sense at times that the tennis players were in that state of the flow was there. And sometimes when you watch that, you get a little bit of that, you get a taste of that when you see it in someone else. That's perhaps why people love watching that.

So there is that state that some artists also have, out of which they create. They don't create by thinking, OK, what clever thing can I paint here now? What about putting a little structure?

Well, some artists do, but it won't be very great. I can do a little dot. Should I put the dot here or the dot there?

Great art doesn't happen in that way. Great art happens when you become present. No past, no future.

Not even thinking about, what am I going to do? So just an alertness arises. Now, there is only this moment.

All creation comes out of that space of now, that space of unconditioned consciousness to which the portal is now. So the artist sits in front of the canvas, or whatever the medium may be, and looks, if visual is involved, the artist looks. And in that looking, there is an intense alertness.

In that looking, there is no thinking. Even the writer, the creative impulse out of which the words come, is that state of simple looking or listening. In writers, one could compare it more to a listening.

An alertness. A simple, alert presence. And out of that state, which is ultimately a state of no thought, comes the movement, a creative movement.

The hand moves. Or, the mind begins to move. If I'm a writer, and suddenly, words are beginning to form.

And that's a strange transition from a deep knowing of what you want to write. It's already there at a pre-verbal state. It has not taken form completely.

It comes out of the formless. It's a birth of form. It comes out of that, and then it becomes finally, and then it becomes a word.

And you write it. I do this movement, because I'm one of the few writers left who have used a pen. Most people, it finally goes into...

But it's the beauty of that. And so there are certain people that are called creative or great. Even...

You'll probably laugh, but I saw Michael Jackson on TV the other day. And even if you say he's strange and weird, that's what people say, there's one strange thing that happens. The moment he goes into the music mode, something takes over.

Wow, what is that? And he actually said you can't think. You cannot think.

It doesn't come from thinking. You can't learn it. You can learn the externals, yes, but not the essence.

So the moment he switches into the music mode, an energy takes over, and it's beautiful. And the moment he stops, an ordinary, strange human being, well, everybody is strange. Some are more strange than others.

So the question is, is it possible not to just have access to that in a little area of one's life, but to bring that into one's life? Yes, this is what all the ancient teachings have pointed to. It is possible to live in that state in which you are no longer the instrument of the conditioned, a puppet of your conditioning.

Something emerges from within you that is deeper than the form, the conditioned mind form that you thought was you. And that emerges. The more we become aligned with the present moment, and it requires simply, very often, to remember that the present moment is all you ever have, and then direct your attention to it.

How? Simply by becoming aware of your sense perceptions. There's an enormous looking and listening sound like relatively insignificant words, but what we call here looking and listening, there's enormous power in the ability to look and the ability to listen.

But it must be true looking and true listening, which is the alert presence of just, and it's still just that. And then, if action is required, it comes. You may be listening to another human being.

The most beautiful thing you can do is to listen to another human being who is speaking. And in true listening, there's an alert presence, a field of aware presence, a field of consciousness. And that unites you with the other person.

That is a unifying field. It is beyond thought. So what we are pointing to here, everybody here knows what I mean.

Everybody here has already had glimpses of that and perhaps not even realized the importance of it. To realize that perhaps the incredible importance of looking, you may find yourself looking at a tree and not commenting on it mentally inside. Not saying anything about it.

A simple aware looking. So there's the tree and there is the presence through which the perception happens. And usually you would be identified with that which you are perceiving.

You would go into, it becomes translated into thought, interpreted, judged, compared to this or that. This tree would look good in my garden. It's called such and such.

My Aunt Mary had a similar tree. I wonder when it's going to flower. How old is it?

You're not really looking. That may have its place for certain things, but if you really want to know the tree, you have to look. And everyone here, it is so simple, has that ability to be alert, to look and to listen without having to be pushed by life into an emergency situation where you have no choice anymore.

You just have to be present because you're hanging by a thread on a cliff wall. Okay, are you going to do it now? Okay.

It sounds to the mind, it doesn't sound important. The most incredible transformation happens if you're able to even perform a little movement without the interference of thinking. And in many of you, this is already happening.

And you feel this as peace. While you do it, there is a peace in the doing. This is really what it is.

So you lift up a glass or you pour yourself a drink, hopefully not whiskey, or there's nothing wrong with that, but usually as presence emerges, it can easily become obscured again through becoming intoxicated. While you pour the water, there's simply an alert field of presence in which the action happens. To the mind, that is not important because the mind says, well, come on, I've got other problems in my life than pouring a glass of water in a state of alert presence.

And yet that is the way out of all the ultimately mind-created problems in your life when this is the emergence of an intelligence that is not conditioned. This is what all the whole teaching of Zen points to. To be utterly and completely here, now, in this moment.

And to look and to listen. That is the Zen master. One master of Zen just said, when asked, what is Zen, said, doing one thing at a time.

One thing at a time. And then the questioner said, okay, anything else? And then what?

After you've done the one thing, what do you do then? Another definition of Zen, which Zen is simply already, I don't really know how alive Zen still is these days, but it was a beautiful emergence when Zen came into being of what is possible, the transformation of human consciousness that is possible. It came through that vehicle that we call Zen.

It came through Jesus in other forms. What was the Zen master's definition when asked about what is Zen, what is the essence of Zen? Can please explain it to us?

And this master became famous because all he ever did was he would raise his finger and look at you. Please explain to me the meaning of Zen. And some got it.

Then the mind, once you have access to that dimension, the mind becomes a beautiful tool, no longer a problem, because you are the presence. You are the aware, conscious presence in which your sense perceptions happen, in which the things that happen to you in your life happen. Things come, things go.

It's always now, always a deep sense of beingness, of presence in which things happen. So you know yourself as ultimately consciousness, which is formless, timeless, eternal. One could say it is the light of God, the light of the source, but the light is not separate from the source, just as the sunlight is not separate from the sun, ultimately.

It is an extension of the sun. One could almost say we still live within the field of the sun. In the same way, we could say consciousness is formless and timeless.

Then, out of it, forms come, are born. And the first form that is born will be a thought, and then it subsides again, and consciousness remains, and a sense perception happens. Now, if you can sense that, while you go about your life, interact with people, perceive things, have experiences, play with things, you can not lose yourself in the world of form, which is thought, which is emotion, which is the entire sense-perceived world around you, which has such pull.

Give me your attention. The world says, this matters, this matters, that matters. Give me all your attention.

And it pulls you in, and every thought pulls you in, because ultimately, the world, the human world, is the world of thought. Every thought pulls you in, and says, think about this, this matters, it's so important. What am I going to do tomorrow?

This is going, what am I going to do? Nothing. It's not here now, but that's how thought operates.

And it pulls you in. It's easy to lose oneself in the world, which is ultimately the world of things, the world of form. Not only things on a conventional level of things, and that's enough, how many people's lives, especially in the highly developed countries, how many people's lives are almost completely consumed by things?

One thing after another to worry about. It's so complex. Every person has this.

So many things in my life that I need to give attention. I'm not saying, don't do it anymore, but don't lose yourself in the world of things. Easy.

Things on one level is possessions. Things on another level is situations and circumstances in your life. Things on another level is all the thoughts that go through your mind.

Are they also things? Yes, they are form. Forms that consciousness takes.

And it's very easy to lose yourself completely in that, become totally identified with that. And this is how people live. It's a dreadful way to live.

One damn thing after another. For many people, that is how they experience their life. Why can't life leave me alone?

One damn thing after another was Churchill's definition of history. And of course he was right. It's both human history is one damn thing after another and every individual life is one damn thing after another.

It doesn't have to be like that. But it's these things, the world of form that is, has an enormous pull. A gravity, one could almost say, a gravitational pull.

And so you get easy, just start thinking about, if you have investments, you can notice it when you start thinking about the stock market, how it pulls you in. And you can, and how it pulled you in when it all, it lost so much not long ago. How that, if you had, if you were unlucky enough to have things there.

But wherever your things are, they'll pull you in. Now if you can deal with things without losing yourself in things and remaining aware of what? Remaining aware, one way of putting it is to say, remaining aware of the space of the present moment in which all things happen.

And that is immediately, when your attention moves into now, there's a little bit of stillness. And it feels good. And you realize, the now is actually not bad at all.

I just thought it was dreadful. My life was dreadful. But when I wake up into this moment of my life, it's not actually that dreadful.

Oh. Another way of putting it is, if while you perceive, deal with things, interact with people, you can be aware of yourself perceiving, interacting, dealing with things. What does that mean?

Being aware of yourself, it does not mean being aware of yourself as the walking story. It does not mean thinking about me and my problems. As you sit here and listen to this voice, and this is the key, can you be aware of yourself as the aware presence through which the voice is being perceived?

That means you are not losing yourself in that which you are perceiving. Because otherwise, if you're sitting there and lose touch with yourself as the aware presence, you will put all your attention onto the speaker and the voice. And you will expect something from the speaker.

And in this case, it's the speaker. It could be anything. Any experience, any perception.

But then you will expect something from the speaker in this situation that the speaker cannot give you. You would expect to be given to find yourself in something the speaker says. To find yourself in some new information or to project onto the speaker something that the speaker cannot possibly be.

You could say, you are the messiah. You have lost yourself and you have made the speaker into a special object that you seek to derive some kind of self-fulfillment from. Because then you won't stop there.

If you say you are the messiah, the next step would be that you are one of the followers. One of the chosen. And that's great.

More ego food. And restarting all over again. A new religion.

3,000 years later. Same place. So, here again, if you have been sitting here not knowing yourself as that, not sensing the aware presence, that is your entire being is part of that aware presence.

Then, it would have been boring to sit here. What is the speaker? The speaker will, at first, he might be a little bit entertaining.

But after a little while, then the speaker will become no longer, if he isn't the messiah, then he is no longer interesting to me. He hasn't given me what I was looking for. And then you go into another experience wherever, which also will not give you what you were looking for.

Although a few experiences will have the appearance as if they were giving you what you were looking for, yourself, ultimately. And then you will always be disappointed because after a little while, say, oh, that was an illusion. I fell for it.

He deceived me. He let me down. This is how it happens when sects and other organizations come into being.

They make one person special. He can give it to me. And then after a while, it doesn't work.

And he said, he let me down. You can come here, sit here for this evening, and go away and say, well, the speaker let me down. He didn't give me myself.

You wouldn't say that because it's an unconscious movement of looking for oneself. I thought he would give us six techniques of that and eight steps to this and 14, 14 this and 16 that. But we didn't get any of this.

And we walked out empty handed. And that's because you were looking for something that nothing and nobody can give you. But if you could sit here as knowing yourself as the aware presence in which this experience happens, sensing the field of now, which is the same, sensing the field in which this perception happens.

One early 20th century teacher called it self-remembering, which can easily be misunderstood. And people might think they have to think about themselves. It's not that.

It's deeper than that. So then you realize that the speaker never had anything to give you, nor did you need anything of what really matters, which is yourself, of the essence of your being. And then to walk away here empty handed will be a beautiful thing.

Very empty. So much so that there is one religion that used that word emptiness to describe the ultimate that a human being can realize. And then the scholars come, Buddhism, for those of you who don't know, uses that word emptiness as the ultimate.

Buddha used it. And the scholars come and start thinking about what that could possibly mean. And then they come up with strange things, theories, like the academics who study Buddhism, not anymore perhaps because Buddhism is more alive in the West now, but when it first came in the 19th century, the scholars came and studied.

Buddha said emptiness. And then this professor of theology wrote, Buddhism is a nihilistic, life-denying belief system, atheistic belief structure. Every word is wrong, but that's how it was.

All he was, he just used another pointer. He said emptiness, it's not a very inspiring term, of course, emptiness. Hmm, what do I do with that?

Unless you realize it, it's meaningless. What is emptiness? What is this knowing yourself as the space, that's a good word, space in which everything happens.

You are that space. And so we have, one could say, the world of thought and the world of things that become translated into thoughts, which we could call object consciousness, the consciousness of objects, where consciousness becomes objects. For most people, that's all there is.

That's what their life consists of, things, stuck full with things, object consciousness, with one thing after another. Okay, what do we have to do now? What's the next thing to do?

And the mind never stops, except when they go to fall to sleep. In the last moments when you drop off, you have a little bit of peace because you're falling towards unconsciousness. But it's better than being tortured by your mind and you go, oh, oh.

And you might sit there after being tortured by your mind all day long. You get home, you pour yourself a whiskey and you drink it. And then gradually, you're moving towards unconsciousness.

And then for the first time in that day, you experience a little bit of peace that comes when the mind slows down and stops. But you are falling, one could say, below thought. But it's better than perhaps being tortured.

But this is not where we are going. We are not going to the level of animals or vegetables. It's beautiful for an animal to be an animal.

It's perfect. In many ways, more perfect than any human. Trees, vegetables, beautiful expressions of consciousness in their own way.

It is the destiny of humans to go beyond thought, not to fall back below thought. And many things that you take that give you a little relief from your mind tend to be things that take you towards unconsciousness, towards sleep. But there's no need to go there.

Here we are going beyond. And we are finding a stillness and a peace without loss of consciousness. In fact, a deeper consciousness.

Otherwise, nobody, almost nobody would want to give up being human. If you just said, if I asked you, if you could have inner peace, because that is one aspect of what we are talking about, knowing that is finding the dimension of inner peace, which is the dimension of the formless consciousness within yourself. Inner peace at any price?

No. Would you rather be an unhappy human or a happy cow? Not that many cows these days are happy because cows are being treated abominably by humans.

Abominably by humans. That is, if I had to be a cow, I would live in India or in Switzerland. But very few humans would say, I would rather be a happy cow without any problems than an unhappy human.

You don't want to give up being human. So inner peace, not at the cost of loss of consciousness. Cow is a beautiful being, closer to the source than humans, just as everything in nature is.

It hasn't removed, it hasn't gone out that far yet, not as far as humans from the source of all life. More deeply, more intimately connected with the source of all life. Every animal, every tree, every flower, and they are all expressions of the one consciousness and they are all closer to God if God is the one, the source, than any human, except those humans who are finding their way back.

But finding their way back is not going back to the level of it's going beyond. So when true inner peace is there, there is a deep knowing that comes with it, an awareness, a presence. We had, as humanity as a whole, had to move through thought, being lost in thought.

They had to go through that, otherwise it wouldn't have happened. There's nothing that happens that is not meant to happen because the totality has brought this about. This applies to everything.

It applies to every event. Humanity had to go through the suffering, self-inflicted to a large extent. The suffering of humanity, the greater part of it, is completely self-inflicted.

Humans are doing it to themselves, to each other. And we had to go through that and it was to do with losing yourself in thought. It all started with, in mythology, myth tells us, and there's deep truth in it, that two human beings ate of the tree, the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Good, bad. I like this, I don't like that. That's right, that thinking starts.

They ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And at first it was a beautiful thing. You become powerful, they became powerful through that, and more and more, they lost themselves in it also, in thought.

They lost their deep connection with the source, with themselves, with the divine. Paradise was lost. And paradise can be regained.

Now that we have, humanity has arrived at a very critical stage in its development, because mind, the human mind, human thinking has proliferated enormously through science, through technology, and all the things that science and technology creates. Not that in itself it is bad or good, but it is an extension of thought. And if thought is not rooted in the deeper levels of pure consciousness, of awareness, of presence, thought becomes mad.

Thought becomes self-serving. Ego. Human life becomes dominated by ego, personal and collective.

And so, that's the way humanity went. What seems certain now is, if there's no transformation of consciousness in humanity, mankind or humankind probably will not make it as a species, and some other species will replace it. And consciousness can take any form, it doesn't mind.

It loves playing with forms. It says, OK, humans, let's drop that. We tried that.

And nothing is lost. There's only one life. Billions of forms of life, all come and go.

And yet, the possibility is here of the flowering of human consciousness, of a new, one could say, words are always limited, a new level in human evolution, where life on this planet is not made into a hell, because potentially, it is a paradise. The planet is a paradise. The planet is pure, pristine, a jewel of just unbelievable.

And the same, what have humans done to it, especially the past hundred years? Because of the proliferation of, magnification of thoughts through science. Poisons everywhere, eradication of nature, madness.

But it is a beautiful, divine being, the planet. And this is just an external expression of what each human being has done within. They are, in their essence, pure, beautiful, alive.

And that remains, that level of pure consciousness remains in every human. The inner peace is there in every human, covered up by toxic substances, toxic thinking, ego-dominated thinking, self-seeking through thought, me, me, them, must have more, more, more, more. Enemy, where is the enemy?

We are moving out of that. The quickest way to this realization, and it's so quick that it doesn't require any time, is what we've already pointed to here, to many times tonight, an inner alignment with life. Life is now.

Not to make this moment into an enemy, to say yes to it, to welcome it, to allow it to be, that's really enough. And if you're still questioning the wisdom, and still saying, why should I do that? Whatever happens at any moment, which is only the one moment, whatever happens in your life, appears to be a separate event.

This happens, and then that happens. But if you look, physicists who have studied, who have looked beyond the surface appearance of things, found that the entire universe is interconnected. The actual, what seems like a separation between different things, does not ultimately exist.

It is a web of interconnectedness. The entire cosmos is one. Everything is connected to everything else.

Buddhists have always spoken of this, for 2,600 years, of the interconnectedness of all things. And so, if something happens at this moment, it cannot not be. It is inevitable.

Anything that is, has an inevitability to it. Because the entire cosmos has brought this event about. So, to not be aligned with it internally, is to cut yourself off from the flow of intelligence that expresses itself as the universe.

And to be aligned with what is, is to be also in alignment with the one intelligence. Which then flows through you and will affect what you do. It will do through you.

You are not separate from it. That's when life gets so much easier. I don't have to struggle with all that.

I don't. Not the little I. Through the simple act of surrender, which is ultimately what we are talking about.

There's great beauty and power in that. Only the little me says, don't surrender. Surrender.

Just to this moment. Become aligned with that. And see there is a beauty in everything.

Even in death. Because death happens. The end of a form.

A form dissolves. You become aligned with that. That is the spiritual practice.

That is the essence of all teachings. If you really look deep enough. To live in alignment with life.

And your, whatever form this moment takes, even if it seems to be a limitation on you. Which is often the case. I don't want to be here in this place.

I want to be somewhere else. I don't want to be stuck here. I want to be somewhere else.

I don't want to. Very often this moment can be perceived as a limitation. And of course in some ways it is.

The body may become limited. Maybe the body may get old. You can't move anymore the way you did.

Your very body can become a limitation. There are certain things that are as they are. And enormous change happens when you accept them as they are.

It's not defeat. It's not accept. I am ill.

Just this moment. Not the idea of I am this or I am that. Only this moment you need to accept.

Oh, just this. And then there is a beauty in whatever happens. And with that comes a gratefulness for what is.

It can be a gratefulness for the tiniest things that otherwise you would have overlooked. A gratefulness for the table that you touch. Its being.

A little flower. A glass of water. Not that you have to think I am grateful.

It's a natural way in which you interact with the world. You are grateful for what is. The beingness.

Without self-seeking. Seeking yourself in it. And then your life improves dramatically.

The moment that gratefulness comes for whatever is, you are already abundant. You already have abundant life. The expression that Jesus used.

I want you to have life. And I want you to have it abundantly. Jesus said abundant life.

He said the depth of life. The depth of aliveness. He was not talking about more things.

Not that kind of abundance. He did not say I promise you consumer goods and shopping malls. Because when we speak of abundance, we think more things.

No, deeper. So the abundance, even if you only have one object or two objects in your life, you give them attention. You look, you touch.

And when you give attention, don't use them as a means to an end or some kind of self-story around it and say, look at me, I'm such and such an age and all I can afford is this little table. Or the opposite. Look how big my table is.

Not that kind of attention. No, pure simply to give something an attention without self, just attention, acknowledge its being. Look at it, touch it, pick it up, see it.

Immediately when you give something attention, a gratefulness comes with that, an aliveness. That's abundance. And then, because it's the depth of abundance, that is abundant life.

Ultimately you're getting in touch with that which is beyond form in you. And then the forms in your life are little addings on, icing on the cake. Not necessary, but quite nice when they come.

And not that bad when they go. That's the play of form, the dance of form. And that dance as you leave here continues.

You step out of here and the dance of your life and the forms of your life continues. Why not participate in it? It's not deadly serious when you don't need this to be in a certain way anymore.

Just play with the things of your life and give attention to this, just what is. And there is a depth in what is that's deeper than the form. And that really gives the form its beauty, its aliveness.

The depth is in you. Yes to what is connects you with that depth. It seems so simple.

How can that be? The inner yes to what is connects you with that depth in you. That is where you and the one life, the one consciousness that we could call God are one.

No separation. Formless form. You are the bridge.

Your home is the formless. But for a little while you move between the form and the formless. But you need to come to an acceptance of the forms in the now.

Even if they appear limiting, accept first and then see what happens. Then they change.

Accept first, no matter how limiting it seems.

The ultimate limitation is the cross, the crucifixion. The cross, how can one accept being crucified to a cross? Can't accept that.

But this being that is you ultimately, each one of you, accepted the most extreme form of limitation. Torture instrument, the cross, the torture instrument, said, not my will, but thy will be done. Thy will, whose will?

The one. The will of the one that brought this event about. And the torture instrument suddenly became a symbol for the divine.

And you don't need to be a Christian to understand that. Most Christians have a limited understanding of what that means. The torture instrument suddenly becomes an opening and becomes a symbol for the divine.

They are one. The greatest limitation, when totally accepted, becomes the opening. So if there's still suffering in your life, and if there's acute suffering in your life, the greatest limitation can become the opening.

But it may be that you don't need that much suffering anymore. You've had enough. There's nothing you need to remember.

Let's be still a moment, and simply allow this moment to be. Be.

[Speaker 3] (2:18:09 - 2:18:11)

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Eckhart Tolle Talk Titled Short Meditations Breath Awareness

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 21:44)

Breath Awareness Meditation. Recommended length, 10 to 15 minutes. Before you start your meditation, become physically comfortable.

Sit on an upright chair. You may wish to sit cross-legged on a cushion on the floor in the traditional meditation posture. Sit comfortably with your spine erect and close your eyes.

Begin to turn your attention inward and become aware of your breath. Don't try to change the length of the breath. Just be aware of the breath as it is now.

As you become aware of the breath, it tends to change naturally and become deeper. Feel the breath moving in and out of the body. Feel the abdomen rise on the inhale and fall on the exhale.

If thoughts arise, just notice them and return attention to your breath. If you become lost in thoughts, the moment that you realize you have been lost in thoughts, you are no longer lost. Simply let the thoughts go and return to your awareness of the breath.

Continue meditating for another 10 to 15 minutes. When you finish, open your eyes. Remain seated for another couple of minutes or so before rising to your feet.

Drinking Meditation. Preferably use a non-alcoholic drink for this meditation. As you reach for a glass of water or juice, a cup of tea or coffee, be aware of your hand and arm reaching out towards the cup or glass.

As your hand and fingers touch the cup or glass, notice how it feels. Hot, warm, cold, cool, or smooth? Notice the sensation as you pick up the glass or cup from the table and hold it.

Feel its weight. Can you feel the muscles being used in your fingers, hand, and arm? You may even notice how the mouth begins salivating before the drink touches the lips.

How does the drink feel as it makes contact with the lips? Hot, warm, cold, cool, smooth, or textured? Before you swallow, notice the liquid inside your mouth.

Taste the taste. Feel the liquid going down your throat and into the stomach. Then continue to drink, and as you do so, bring awareness to all the movements and sensations associated with the act of drinking.

Enjoy the present moment, and enjoy your drink. Inner Body Meditation. Sit on an upright chair or cross-legged on a cushion on the floor.

Close your eyes. Become aware of your breathing. Feel the air moving in and out of the body.

Become aware of any physical sensations you may feel, such as tension, tightness, or pain. We may call this the outer layer of sensations. Notice the sensations and continue to feel them.

Relax the body, especially the areas where you feel any tension or tightness. If you feel pain, whether it is physical or emotional, notice the sensation. Allow yourself to feel whatever it is you are feeling.

As you continue to watch and feel, you may notice the mind wanting to label the sensations as tightness, tension, pain, anger, or whatever the emotion may be. The mind may want to revive a memory or tell a story about the emotion. However, don't be interested in the memories and stories.

Just be aware of the feeling. Without the memory and story, it is only sensation. Continue to be aware and feel the breath, an outer layer of sensations.

Now see if you can turn your attention even deeper to the sensations of the inner body. If you cannot feel the inner body, start with feeling your hands. Hold your hands in front of you with palms facing up.

Make sure the hands are not touching or resting on anything. However, you may wish to rest your elbows on your knees or a pillow. Make sure your eyes are closed.

Ask yourself, how do I know that I have hands? Feel your attention move into your hands. You might feel a slight tingling, warmth, numbness, or aliveness.

This is the beginning of feeling the inner body. Feeling this life force is your connection to stillness. Now let your attention move into different parts of the body.

Your arms, your shoulders. Now feel your hands, arms, and shoulders together. Now bring your attention down to your feet, your legs, your hips.

Don't worry if you cannot feel a certain part of the body. Just be aware of whatever parts you can feel. Now feel your torso, your neck, and head.

Now see if you can feel your entire body as a single energy field. This is who you are at a level deeper than the physical. Keep your attention on feeling the entire inner body for five minutes or so, and enjoy your meditation.

Object Awareness Meditation. Sit on an upright chair or cross-legged on a cushion on the floor. Close your eyes.

Become aware of your breathing. Feel the air moving in and out of the body. Now bring your awareness to any external sounds, whatever they may be, traffic, voices, birds, etc.

Don't label or interpret them. Notice any thoughts or images that may be arising in the mind. Again, don't label or interpret them.

Now open your eyes. Be aware of the objects you can see around and in front of you. Just allow the forms of this moment to be as they are, without labeling, judging, or interpreting.

Now see if you can become aware of your inner space. In which the forms of this moment arise. The form of your breath, external sounds, images, and other such objects.

By becoming aware of the space, you have become aware of awareness itself. This is who you are at the deepest level. Hold that awareness for as long as it feels comfortable.

Rising Meditation. There is so much that we miss in the present moment, because we are consumed the moment we awake from sleep by our thoughts, fears, and desires for the day ahead. Try this simple little exercise of observing, feeling, and using your sense perceptions before getting out of bed in the morning.

You may be amazed how it changes your day. Before getting out of bed in the morning, continue to lie in bed for a few minutes. Feel your breath.

Feel the sensations in the body. Feel the bedsheets against your skin. Are the sheets soft, warm?

Feel how the body sinks into the mattress. Keep aware of the breath. Listen to the external sounds.

The clock ticking, traffic, children, etc. Then, when you're ready to get out of bed, feel the body shifting to a sitting position. Feel your pelvic bones dropping into the mattress.

Feel the spine erect. Feel the sheets leaving your body. As you are sitting up in bed, look at the objects around the room.

Notice any light coming through the window. And as you place your feet on the floor, feel the roughness or smoothness of the flooring material beneath your feet. As you get up and walk towards the bathroom, be fully aware of every step.

Walking Meditation Traditional walking meditation is to sit for a few minutes, at a very slow pace. However, this meditation should be done at whatever pace the situation calls for. Whether you are walking your dog, walking to your car, walking while shopping, or even running to catch a plane or jogging.

As you are walking, become aware of your breath. Then bring attention down to your feet. Feel your feet step onto the ground.

Can you feel the heel touch the ground first, followed by the midsection of the foot? Finally, feeling the ball of the foot as it pushes off to take the next step. Become aware of the rest of your body.

Is there any tightness, tension, pain? Are you relaxed? Can you feel your inner body, the aliveness inside?

Are you noticing any sounds, traffic, voices, and birds? Can you feel the breeze or wind on your face and skin? Does it feel soft or harsh?

Feel the temperature in the air, the warmth, the heat, or the cold on your skin. Be aware of the things around you. Trees, buildings, people, cars, bicycles.

Notice any smells. Scents from flowers, tree blossoms, or foods from restaurants. Exhaust from the food.

Exhaust from the cars that pass by. If you become lost in thoughts, the moment you notice it, just return your attention to the movement of your body, your breathing, and the various sense perceptions. You may have walked this area a thousand times, but never truly notice what is there because you have not been fully present.

Now, your walk becomes an opportunity to awaken into the present moment.

Eckhart Tolle Talk Titled Simplicity of Enlightenment

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 1:37:21)

I've been waiting for this wake-up call, there it is. Thank you. To be awake, and that's the reason why we're here, the awakening, simply means not to leave this moment.

And of course you can't leave it, but internally you can move away from it. It becomes obscured by mental noise, by reactivity. And I'm not here to teach you anything new, because that's all in the news, all the new things you can hear about and read about every day.

This is not a lecture as such, not an information-based seminar. Nothing much is added to your mind, the content of your mind. What for?

There's so much there already. The essence of our evening together, it does not lie in the words. One could say it lies in the spaces between the words or underneath the words.

And that's a statement that the mind cannot do very much with. What's he talking about? And that's precisely the point, because this, our evening together, is not directed towards your mind.

Thought, adding to thought, adding to knowledge, adding to who you are, becoming more through adding something, feeling that now I am more after leaving here, having added something. You feel you have grown, but you won't. So that tendency within oneself of wanting more, looking for the next thing, wanting to add to, grasp for this, and wanting always, of course, the next moment.

What's he going to say next? That's an enormous momentum in the collective unconscious that pulls you towards more and towards, and of course more implies future, because you're looking for something to add to, because there is some sense of not enough yet. I am not enough yet.

I'm not fully grown yet. I'm still evolving. I haven't reached the flowering yet that is possible.

And everybody feels that inside in some way, that the flowering hasn't happened yet, or in some of you perhaps it's already happening and you know it. So there's the looking for more, and there's the looking, therefore, towards future, because the future is going to supply you with more. And that's a deep-seated mind condition, mindset, mind pattern.

And people move into spiritual life in the same way, because they've been seeking to add more to who they are internally. This is the self-image of who I am. My story, I want to make it more complete, more important, bigger, more significant.

The sense of self based on me and my past and my story needs to expand. So what that leads to is self-seeking in and through future. I'm looking for myself, or a bigger or better improved version of myself, through future.

Because the whole world operates every year, the car makers bring out an improved version of it. And the computers every year, three years after you buy a computer, you have to sell it, or nobody would even buy it anymore. It's always, it's an improved version comes out.

And so, where's the improved version of me? And of course, it is true that on a certain level that operates and that functions quite well, because in this world of form, there are certain things that you need to learn and explore and add to yourself. You learn how to cook, you learn how to use the computer, how to speak a foreign language.

You learn some kind of profession. And so it all takes time. You need future, you need time to do these things.

But there is a deeper seeking there that is not just knowing that, of course, I need time to acquire a certain amount of knowledge or expertise in this or that. But there is a deeper seeking behind those endeavors, and that's seeking for a greater sense of me, identity, self, an enhanced sense of self, and through adding something. And that's the only area where adding to doesn't actually work.

And some of you know this already. The only area where nothing can be added is your most essential identity, who you are. Knowing yourself, self-realization.

This is what this place is about. Self-realization, the mind sometimes thinks, okay, I've acquired knowledge, I have a degree or two, I have acquired social status in the world, I have acquired a certain amount of material wealth, and now I'm going to acquire self-realization. To top it all.

And so you move into that in the same mindset as the rest of human endeavors. And that's quite normal. So this is when you turn from a material seeker or a relationship seeker or whatever kind of seeker into a spiritual seeker.

So there is the seeking mindset still operating. And what are you seeking for in the seeking mindset? Ultimately, what is everybody looking for?

Not whether they are seeking through material things or social status or possessions. They are seeking for a greater sense of me, bigger, expanded. Fuller, a fuller sense of aliveness, of rootedness.

That's ultimately the goal of all seeking. Now, in those who are not spiritual seekers, they don't know that. They think, no, I'm seeking wealth, I'm seeking recognition.

But if you look deep down, why? What's that wealth for? What's that recognition for?

Well, to be more fully myself. And myself is an image in the head, a mind image. That's me and me.

That's me and my story. The sense of identity that is derived from this mind image is to do with me, my story, my past. Who are you?

When somebody asks that, the first answer, of course, is your name. That's only, of course, sounds coming out of your mouth, a certain combination of sounds coming out of your mouth. And that's the first delusion when a child, those are the first sounds.

Some of the first sounds that children learn are the sounds of, who are you? What's your name? And they utter the name.

The sounds come out of their mouth, and there's the first self-concept or self-image. And the first reduction of who you are to a finite little entity. This comes, I am John Smith.

And then come, then is added to that John Smith, which is only a potential, a receptacle, a huge receptacle waiting for things to be added to make it more full and more complete. Experiences, knowledge. Many kinds of things are added.

That's me, my relationships, my knowledge, my this. Parents tell you who you are. That's put into this basket that your name is your name.

And so gradually content builds up in the mind, mind content, and that becomes a sense of identity, a sense of self. And that sense of self is characterized by incompleteness always. And so because it's characterized by incompleteness, the sense of self that is based, that is story-based, an identity that is past-based, story-based, to think this is who I am, I am my story.

And I can show you my photo album that proves that this is my story. And I'll tell you the things that I've been telling, that I'm telling myself continuously in the head. And I will tell you my story also.

And then you can tell me yours. And then we can mutually confirm to each other our identity. And if you're wealthy, you can have towels and napkins imprinted with your initials.

Then you know even more who you are. And every visitor who comes will be impressed by how big you are, because now you have your towels with your initials on. Wow.

So there is then this momentary illusion that, okay, I'm now actually becoming somebody. But not for long. After a little while, the towels with initials on are not that satisfying anymore.

And so after that brief moment of, I've made it, then there's again, oh, I need more to add. It wasn't enough. It wasn't enough.

So there is this, the insufficiency at the root of one's normal sense of identity. Now people don't realize that that is a collective characteristic of one's normal sense of identity. They believe their sense of insufficiency is a personal problem of theirs.

And they believe that there are other people in the world who do not suffer from that sense of insufficiency, who have actually made it. Because when I read the magazines and watch films, they are telling me that there are people who have made it. And the ads also, when certain people who use certain products, they look so joyful and happy, they must have made it.

So the culture, the surrounding culture continuously tells you, you can make it, all you need is a little bit more. And then your sense of self, of who you are, will become complete. And then you can relax.

You will have arrived home. You're at home then, oh, wow, I've made it. My story has worked out.

And wouldn't that be wonderful, would it? It is in the nature of a story-based sense of self not to work out. And again, the tendency is for this to become a personal problem of mine.

My story is not working out. And then the fact that your story is not working out, becomes part of your sense of, it adds to your sense of identity. Because I am the one whose life is not working.

And that can be, it's an enormous adding to your sense of identity. And so, and if that could become a certain, you become miserable with that thought, that I am the one whose life is not working out. But that thought has a great power behind it because your sense of self grows.

It's a negative sense of self, but the sense of self that is mind-based doesn't mind whether it's positive or negative. All it wants is to grow. And if you can grow in your misery, it doesn't mind.

So if, and there we see that the unhappiness is also built into that sense of self. That is inseparable from the sense of lack and insufficiency and not enough. And that is unhappiness.

So the ordinary, normal sense of self is inseparable from unhappiness. Unhappiness is built into that mind pattern. And again, we make unhappiness into a personal problem.

It becomes an unhappy little me. And sometimes the unhappiness becomes so great that it's an unhappy, a big unhappy me. So then you have added that misery to yourself.

That's good enough. It works. At least now I know who I am.

And don't you dare take away my sense of who I am. Don't you dare take away my unhappiness because I have reason to be unhappy and let me tell you about it. And you can see when they tell you about it how it strengthens their sense of self.

Me. So it works perfectly on that level. You're looking for an identity and now you've got an identity.

So it's amazing to see how everybody is trapped in such an illusory sense of self which in some spiritual traditions is simply called the self. In Buddhism, it's called the self. Not the self that is beyond the story.

Not the self that has nothing to do with your past or your future. But the little me. The self.

And the illusion of the self. To see it, not in some abstract concept that you read about in a book with some foreign words and trying to grasp some abstract concept of the illusory nature of the self. Well, I wonder if that's...

Can't quite understand what they're talking about. And it's so simple to see it in oneself how that operates, where your sense of self comes from, your sense of identity. And to see how it desperately needs to add more to itself.

Good or bad. Doesn't matter. And it could add more by sitting here.

And some of you may be in a state of a little bit moderate physical discomfort as you sit here because it's quite warm. May not be very soft. And what you're sitting on, they are tightly squeezed together relatively.

And there could be a little me complaining in the head. Something in the head is complaining about this moment. And the amazing thing is that that also adds to the false sense of self.

The complainer in the head is an essential aspect of the false sense of self. Because if you can complain in the head about something that is here, this moment, at that moment, your sense of self becomes strengthened because you are suddenly antagonistic towards something or someone, a situation or a person or an arising condition. You are antagonistic towards it.

There is a tightening. An enhanced sense of separateness between who you are and your surroundings or the condition, the situation or the person at this moment. So your sense of separateness through complaining becomes strengthened.

There's a contraction that happens. And if you're extremely conscious of your body, you can notice a slight, every time you complain about something in the head, which is so normal, there's a slight contraction that goes with it. And an important part of complaining is you are right and somebody else is wrong.

You are right and another person or maybe it may be a situation that this situation is wrong. And I am complaining about I am right. And that gives an enormously strengthens that sense of self, the me.

And everybody's sense of self has that tendency in it, some much more pronounced than others. We have all met people who go through life almost continuously complaining. But it is a collective mindset.

The complainer in the head. I'm not talking about accepting everything and never speaking up again. I'm talking about a more subtle complainer.

I'm not talking about going to a restaurant and eating the cold soup if it's meant to be hot and not saying this soup is cold, but I ordered hot soup. There's nothing wrong with that. Or to say, I just got my car, you pick up your car from the workshop and they haven't repaired it.

They just charged you for it. So you go back and say, it hasn't been repaired, obviously, because it's the same thing happened again. There's nothing wrong with that.

So I'm not talking about, okay, from now on, never speak up again, no complaints. That is not even complaining if it is a simple statement of fact, this is how it is. But there too, you could be seeking an enhanced sense of self by making the other person wrong and making yourself right.

And then you come with that attitude back to that car repairman. They are put there by universal intelligence to challenge you, of course. So you go back and then you, there's a reactivity behind it and you are right.

And so you grow, your sense of self grows. And after you shouted at him, you walk back and then say, oh, that was good, that felt really good. It didn't really feel good, but the egoic sense of self can't tell between good and bad.

It often, it's what's good, what's bad, it calls good. Your body knows that it wasn't good because it suffered in this attack of anger. The circulation, the flow of life energy through the body, everything could obstruct it and an enormous tightening in every cell.

The body said, what's going on here? Something dreadful is happening. So to see, all that is self-seeking, seeking a stronger sense of self.

So you could be sitting here and complain in your head of a situation, it's too hot here.

Why did they, why are there too many people they shouldn't have, they shouldn't be. So how do we get, this is a collective mindset, a self-seeking mindset.

How do we go beyond that? And it's been there for so many thousands of years. Everybody trapped in it.

Everybody trapped in an illusory sense of self that continuously seeks to enhance itself, no matter through what, through being right. Yeah, great. Through being miserable, great.

An essential characteristic of that sense of self is antagonism, to be at odds with what is. The essential, if you look to the very root of that sense of self, what is it that lies at the root of that sense of self? And you could say to get to the very, the most simple, the most fundamental root of the illusion, it doesn't like what is.

It's running away always from the suchness of this moment. It does not honor this moment. Because it's seeking more in the future.

So the future is so much more important because that's where the more is that is going to make myself complete. So I'm not going to honor this moment because I don't even want to be here. It's not, I am not enough now.

And the simple, so simple to step out of that illusory, illusory sense of self that ultimately is suffering, is suffering, makes others suffer, makes yourself suffer. The simplicity of awakening out of that illusory sense of self is so incredible that the mind can't get it. And it is not to fight the present moment internally, not to stand in opposition internally to the suchness of this moment.

And that can start with a little thing like sitting here. Some moderate physical discomfort may arise. Normal tendency is the mind will step in at that moment and complain.

Then you can recognize that tendency the reactivity through which the self strengthens itself and you can drop it. Or we could say when you recognize it and you can recognize that it serves no purpose except to strengthen a sense of self, you can drop it and you can say it is. This moment is as it is.

Now this sounds, it's not. The mind says, what are you saying? That's not enough to awaken.

But it is. The word this evening, the mantra that is the teaching of this evening goes like this. It is to align yourself with what is now.

An openness to what is. Not a reactive little me complaining, trying to get to the future to complete myself. Honor the isness of this moment.

At that moment, when the moment you honor the isness, half a million years of collective mind conditioning cease to operate. The moment you honor the isness of now, you are no longer a conditioned entity. An unconditioned state of consciousness arises.

And that is a state of spacious openness. A spaciousness arises. Now there may not be spaciousness where you are sitting around you, but if you can allow this moment, including a certain amount perhaps of physical discomfort, if you can allow it to be, okay, there's the discomfort.

I'm a little hot and not so comfortable. Body aches here or too tight. But it is.

And instead of complaining and reacting, you allow this moment to be. I allow this moment to be as it is. I say yes to it.

The egoic sense of self at that moment collapses, doesn't operate anymore. When you become aligned with what is, that is the simplicity of awakening, the simplicity of enlightenment. Completely welcome the suchness of this moment.

When you do that, there's the condition of this moment that changes continuously. In the one eternal moment, the appearance of that eternal moment in the world of form changes continuously, of course. Now this moment manifests in form as the speaker, the words, and perhaps a certain amount of physical discomfort as you sit there.

And it is allowed the condition, let's just say it is a little bit of discomfort. The condition that arises at this moment instead of being resisted and thereby strengthen me is allowed. And the strange thing that happens then is suddenly there is the condition that arises and around it there's this, and I'm using a word that is not an explanation, it's only a little pointer.

Around the condition, and the condition could be an internal condition, it could be an external physical condition, it could be a life situation, something happened, whatever condition it arises can only arise in the now. And now it's not resisted because it is. You're aligned with the isness of life, the one moment, there's only ever now.

If you're not aligned with that, you're not aligned with life because life can only appear now, can only manifest now. Life is not, there's no life other than now anywhere. Life and now are inseparable.

So if you're not aligned with now, there's a little me that in his delusion says, I'm against life. I'm against the universe. Me against the universe.

That is the madness of the egoic sense of self. So the moment you allow whatever condition arises at this moment to be internally, there is a spaciousness around, an inner sense of space or spaciousness within which that condition happens. Now to get what I'm pointing towards, you cannot analyze it mentally because that spaciousness is the very thing that is beyond the noisy mind.

There is no spaciousness in the noisy mind. But there is spaciousness, a vastness in, around and underneath the noisy mind. The noisy mind is like a ripple, little ripples in a vast sea.

So there is that vastness, you thought you were that ripple trying to get to become a bigger ripple and maybe eventually a wave. Knowing yourself, not as, not looking for yourself anymore in any condition that arises, internally as thought, externally as an event or a person or a relationship, not looking for some confirmation that I am someone by reacting against a condition. That's all part of the egoic madness.

Instead, it is allowed to be. You allow it to be. You allow life to be.

Not a little me that it demands this should be different. It's allowed to, you allow life to be. Where is life?

Here, now, nowhere else. So you allow life to be, you become aligned with the one life that underlies all forms of life. The one formless, one consciousness before it is born into form temporarily.

Suddenly there is a spaciousness around the arising condition. A sense of inner space around it that comes with the allowing. And that happens, it could be a turbulence, a turbulent condition.

It could, let's say anger arises, a turbulent condition. And so there it is. You allow it to be.

Suddenly, there's a space around the anger. The anger is still there, but it is allowed. Or something goes wrong, as the mind would call it, in your life.

Every day, something, little things go wrong all the time. It's in the nature of things to go wrong. Of course, there's nothing wrong, but the mind calls it that.

And reacts against it, because it strengthens itself by even calling it wrong. It's already strengthened itself, because if that is wrong, I must be right. So I'm bigger.

So something goes wrong, so to speak, and it's simply, it is, the mantra arises, it is, and it's allowed. Not a little me fighting. Now the little me says, please don't do that.

You will become powerless, if you're no longer fighting. And that's the opposite of the truth. You are powerless, because you're fighting what is.

That is the state of powerlessness. But to the egoic sense of self, it looks like, okay, I'm going to make it. So true power is the power of the one intelligence, the one life.

And really, you are an expression, a manifestation in form, a temporary manifestation of that in form. Just as a flower is. The only difference between you and the flower is that the flower has no problems.

The flower has no relationship with itself. Humans have a relationship with themselves. Me, that's a big problem.

And they go through their whole lives carrying the problem of me trying to make it work. This problematic sense of me, I have to make it work somehow. It's not in the nature of it to work.

It's not even meant to work. It's simply there to awaken you. It takes you into suffering and frustration, and out of that, you begin to awaken.

And then, in a way, you could say, as a new consciousness arises from within you that is no longer opposed to what is, an unconditioned sense of simple presence. Presence. Alert, open, presence or beingness.

So you awaken out of thought and being trapped in thought, a thought-based sense of self, mental image of me and my story, which is all thought. Not that you deny the form that you are temporarily. That is honoured also.

That is your temporary form. There's a name, there's a little past, and there's a little future that this form has. And this form interacts with other forms.

Nothing wrong with that. There's nothing even wrong with your story, your past. There's only something wrong when you're looking for yourself in it, for that essential sense of self, you're looking for it in the story of me, which is ultimately mental noise, and I'm looking for it to complete itself in the future.

So you're looking for yourself in time where you can never be, because there's no ultimate reality to time. It's inseparable from the human mind. So when you're looking for an identity in and through time, which is the past and the future, where hopefully you will complete yourself, that is the root of suffering and illusion, and that's why life is so problematic.

Because you're looking for yourself where you aren't. And the only place where you are, you're not looking, which is now. And so, okay, so the mind says, okay, where am I in the now?

You become friendly with the now. And that's an amazing thing. And of course, that may not yet happen all the time.

The old condition of being hostile, antagonistic, an enemy of the now will occasionally reassert itself. And as this new state of consciousness arises, the unconditioned consciousness arises, for the first time perhaps on a larger scale on the planet, you will move back and forth. You will move back and again.

Suddenly the now will be your enemy again. And then you recognize that and you move out and suddenly the shift happens, and the very same situation is suddenly not resisted anymore, but welcomed. And once you see that suddenly enormous amount of intelligence is freed that before could not operate, you were not intelligent in a true sense, no matter how developed the mind was, that was only a tiny aspect of what true intelligence is.

The human mind is a tiny aspect of the vastness of intelligence that expresses itself as the whole universe in form, the flower, the stars, the galaxies, the blade of grass, the animals, the human forms. Or underlying it, one vast intelligence expressing itself in the world of form, playing this beautiful game of form and playing the game of pretending that it doesn't know itself anymore. That's human form.

And suddenly there's an awakening and you remember who you are. You are, who could you be other than the one thing that never leaves you. What's the one thing that never leaves you?

No matter what happens in your life, no matter what happened, no matter what will happen in your life, what is it that's always there, you can be sure of that, it'll be now. It's always now. It's always now.

Nothing can be that's not now. That's the one thing that remains constant. Everything unfolds now.

So what is that now? The error that most people make when they talk about the present moment or the now, they think this is one of many, many moments, one moment after another moment at another moment. No.

If you look at it deeply, you will see there are not many moments in your life. It's always this field of now. Now what appears in it changes.

As when you leave here, the now appears in a different form. The field of now, something else arises in now and then it leaves. If you only know that which arises and stand in a reactive relationship to what arises in the now, that is the basis for a personal sense of me, then that is delusion.

All you know is the arising form and you're trying somehow to look for yourself in the form that arises in the now, external or internal as a thought or a belief or reaction. A form arises externally, in the now, you react against it and you strengthen your own psychological form, the me, by reacting against another form. This is the nature of karma.

Action, reaction, action, reaction. And there's no end to it unless you step out and suddenly karma comes to an end through allowing what is to be. This moment, which is the only one, what happens changes continuously, but that doesn't mean that there are many moments.

There's only the field of now in which everything is. And that field of now is very still, a vast stillness. No matter how much noise humans make, the stillness is still there.

And eventually the noise comes to an end and the stillness remains untouched. So as, and the amazing thing is when you say yes to what is, if you are alert at that moment, you will notice a sense of stillness or peace arising from deep within. No matter what the external situation is.

And in fact, if it was a big situation that normally would have led to a great reaction, and instead of the reaction, you utter a big, yes, it is. Yes, my house has gone up in flames. It is as it is.

And I say yes to this moment, not just verbally. With every cell of my being, I embrace the isness of this moment. And suddenly the one intelligence can move through you unimpededly whereas before it was obstructed by a little knotted little me.

And all you had was a limited aspect of that vast intelligence that is the human mind, which has nothing wrong. It's a beautiful aspect of the one intelligence. There's only something wrong with it when you're looking for yourself in it.

So suddenly you're open and with a yes always comes a deep sense of peace and stillness from deep within. It comes with a yes. And you can even in the little situations where before you would have reacted, you utter that yes with every cell of your body.

You could even use your arms so that it becomes a whole body thing, not just going through the motions in your head and say, okay, I need to say yes to this moment. Okay, yes, yes. Well, you see it hasn't changed yet.

Yes, yes, nothing is happening. The yes is not a means to an end. In the old state of consciousness, the only validity the present moment has is it's a means to an end because it gets you to the next moment.

That's how people live. I'm on my way to the next moment. Where are you going?

I'm on my way. Where? The future, the next moment.

Okay, so this moment is the stone. That's the only reason why it's there. It helps me to get to the next one because the next one is the one that's going to fulfill me and complete me.

That's the old state of consciousness. In the normal, as this new state that I call presence arises, the now is not a means to an end anymore. The now is honored for what it is, life itself.

There is nothing else. Nothing else except this. Now, we come to something very subtle here and very important.

As you begin to say yes, you realize it's not to do with what happens. What happens is there. It's fine.

It's the space in which it happens. You're no longer looking for yourself in what happens in your life. Of course, things happen.

That's not going to change. But you're not looking for yourself anymore in anything that happens, an enhanced sense of me. So from the point of view of that limited self, it becomes fearful at that moment.

It says, oh, oh, no, no. Who am I? I don't know who I am anymore.

That's good. You are not what happens. You are the space in which it happens.

And that is not something to believe in. That is something to know for yourself. And you know it for yourself when you say yes to what is.

When you allow whatever arises to be, then you become who you already essentially are, the space around what happens. That is your formless identity, your essence, your formless essence. So one could say that the essence of who you are is the now.

You are the now. That is the essence of who you are. Everything, the whole world arises in that.

And in that, you are one with universal essence. That is freedom. Suddenly, then you know who you are.

That is self-realization. Self-realization doesn't mean suddenly you have a wonderful set of ideas in your head about who you are and the story is now totally complete and every piece of the jigsaw puzzle is now in place. No, because that's all the world of form.

No form lasts. Essentially, you cannot really know yourself in the sense that the mind knows something. You cannot become an object to yourself, an object of knowledge.

That's the essence of the old consciousness where you become an object to yourself through mind and so you begin to have a problematic relationship with yourself. Some people have a very difficult relationship with themselves. Some people live with a self that they would have left long ago if it were another person.

Some people live with a sense of self that is dreadful, unbearable, but what do they do? They're stuck with it. And that is you have made, this is all the essence of the egoic consciousness.

You've become content of mind. You're seeking yourself in mental content. You've become a mind object to yourself and then you have a problematic relationship with yourself unlike a flower, unlike a cat.

The cat doesn't have a relationship with itself. It is itself. It moves.

It looks. It lies down. It doesn't try to relax.

It's aligned with the totality. It's an expression, a beautiful expression of the totality. Limited, yes, limited through its form, but nevertheless an unproblematic expression of the totality just as the flower is.

No problem. Those forms that don't inhabit a world of problems, they are an expression of the one in form and a beautiful expression. And they die beautifully.

When they die, the form dissolves. They're not even afraid of death because death is not a concept in their mind. And so this form is surrendered.

Wonderful. This is why nature is such a teaching. Everything in nature is still one, not only one with itself, but one with the totality.

It's everything in nature is close to God, to the one, closer than humans. Well, not perhaps truly, but humans in their delusion have removed themselves from the totality or think they have, not really because you can't remove yourself from the totality, but you can live in a delusion, trapped in a nightmare. Nothing really happened, but you're trapped in a nightmare.

And while you're trapped in a nightmare, you don't know that nothing really happened. You think it's all very real. So you make, to have a relationship with yourself, a problematic relationship with me, and so become an object to yourself.

And self-realization is not that now you have a greatly improved object to relate to. No, you cannot ultimately know yourself because whatever you can know is an object in consciousness. All you can know is what you are not, ultimately.

After 30 years of psychotherapy or psychoanalysis, you will know many things about yourself, lots of things. You will have great self-knowledge. And you might even say, I have completed my course of psychoanalysis four times a week for 25 years, and now I know myself.

My psychiatrist has given me the file, the folder, a huge amount. It is all in here. Now I know myself.

I know myself. And the only thing you have forgotten is who is the I that makes that statement. The one, the knower.

You know many things, but do you know the knower? Can you know the knower? No, because the moment you know the knower, you've made it into an object of knowledge and it's not the knower.

You can only be the knower. You can only be the presence, the one that you already are, the one consciousness. You are that.

And in that state of presence, of simple beingness, of complete and utter yes to what is, the busy, noisy mind also subsides because all the reason why the mind was so busy and so noisy because it was fighting what is, that lies at the basis for the compulsive mind activity that never stops because it's thinking about me and my problems and I've got to work this out. I've got to work my life out. There's nothing to work out.

So suddenly, you simply, you are. That state is so simple of such simplicity and it is a state in which great intelligence operates but it operates noiselessly. There is stillness increasingly that arises in you as you allow this moment to be.

And then, what arises is the state of presence. In which the compulsive noise-making of the mind doesn't operate anymore. And a greater intelligence is there but it is not understood by the mind.

The mind says, no, if I surrender to what is, if I allow this moment to be, if I not even interpret anymore what's happening because in this new state of consciousness that is arising on the planet that all the ancient teachings and teachers pointed to but very few people got it, in that new state, mind activity is substantially reduced. Occasionally, it's still useful but a lot of the time, the mental noise is not needed and intelligence operates without the mental noise. You just look and action happens.

Or nothing happens and there's simply the state of, beautiful state of allowing this moment to be. There was no noise that went into making this flower. It grew out of the stillness and the beauty came out of the vastness of the stillness, the great one intelligence.

And if you travel into outer space, the amazing thing you would find there is there's no noise. Everything, even a whole galaxy is born in complete stillness. There's no noise in outer space.

The whole universe is and the whole galaxy could explode and it is totally still. Of course, it takes about 10 million years to explode and everything. The essence of intelligence is stillness and occasionally, it manifests in a different form as the human mind, as noise or monkeys that live in the jungle.

That's fine too. So to know that you do not become stupid when stillness arises in you, you do not become stupid when you no longer compulsively judge and interpret this moment continuously. I need to call it something, this or a person that comes into your life, immediately judge, interpret, label.

That's what the noisy mind does and that's how the me personalizes every event through its mental noise because it stands in a reactive relationship to this event and so it fears that it might become weakened through this so it reacts to strengthen itself. So it's continuously working out strategies, how to be mad ultimately and reflect it, madness reflected in human history as 90% of it is completely mad. Any history book will show you that 90% of human history is utter madness and so where does that come from?

There must be a collective insanity and of course there is. The Buddha called it suffering, Jesus calls it sin, in Hinduism it's called illusion. So obviously yes, and we are awakening out of that and the wonderful thing you will see as you allow this moment to be is that you don't need to interpret.

You can, a greater intelligence operates when you just allow it to be there and there's a stillness around it instead of mental noise. Something arises, a person comes, okay, practice it. Let's say somebody comes to you wanting to tell you their sad story.

Listen to me, how dreadful it all is, let me tell you about the story. So the person comes to you and instead of immediately labeling, maybe with good intentions trying, okay, what can I say next to make this person feel better? No, instead you allow this moment to be so completely that all that there is is a spacious sense of presence as this person is talking to you, a spacious sense of presence.

This is how you, you're not saying you shouldn't be trapped in your story, why don't you get out? You should be awake by now. And you don't say, don't tell me your story, I've got far worse things than you.

You should listen to mine. Yes, I knew somebody who, even when somebody said, I have a headache, he would say, you have a headache? I've had a headache for weeks.

Instead, you, there's a spacious sense of presence, you just, there's simply the act of listening, attentive listening. No labeling, no interpreting, just is, that is the arising of true intelligence. And then you find, out of that spacious presence, which is still, but alert and alive, sometimes words come out of it and the mind operates, but it operates out of that.

And suddenly you find yourself saying something and it'll be just right for that moment. Or you may find, because you're holding that sense of spacious presence, the other person suddenly stops talking. And when I first began to see people for whatever it is, they don't have a name for it, they would come and a woman came with her, she was burdened with an enormous sense of self and she came to me with her dreadful story.

You must listen to me, please do something, do. And there was simply, and suddenly she stopped speaking. And that was the first time I realized how powerful presence is, the spaciousness of presence.

She stopped speaking after 20 minutes and looked around as if he had just woken up.

And she looked at all the papers that she had written about attorneys and lawyers. And she said, this isn't important at all, is it?

So she woke up at that moment because there was one, the spaciousness of presence was there. And a complete acceptance also was there of that being, no matter of that moment which expressed itself as that being. And that is the power that then operates.

That is the greater intelligence that can then express itself through you, but it will also express itself, suddenly it seems to express itself also through other forms. When you are in spacious presence, suddenly things happen because you're connected with the one intelligence and suddenly, even externally, answers come, the right thing happens. But you don't need those things anymore to complete your sense of self.

So they are simply given to you when you don't need them anymore. That's exactly what Jesus said. The kingdom of heaven.

Seek only the kingdom of heaven. What he really meant, find only the kingdom of heaven. They just got it wrong when they wrote it down.

Find only the kingdom of heaven and all those things that you think you need or that you thought you needed when you were trapped in an illusory sense of self based on a story that was never enough, that's what he really said, when you no longer need that for your identity, then all those things that you thought you needed to make your story complete will be added unto you. And that'll be nice, no more. You will enjoy them.

Fine, it's beautiful. That won't last either because nothing in the world of form lasts. So eventually that leaves you also.

That's fine too. That's in the nature of the world of form. It comes and goes.

But it's an amazing thing when you enter a new state of consciousness. The new state of consciousness arises in you. You step out of the story of me.

The story then continues. It doesn't collapse as such. The external circumstances of your life, they actually get better.

But that's not why you do it. That's not why you say yes to what is so that it's going to get better. That's not a real yes.

So there's nothing new here. So the same teaching, if it can even be called that, it's not a teaching because you already know it. It's simply expressing itself again with great intensity.

Not that I'm speaking to myself. You are listening to yourself. That's all.

The one consciousness speaks. This happens to be of one form and there's another form.

The one consciousness speaks and listens to itself.

So that is the simplicity of the transformation of human consciousness, which is what this is about. It's about the transformation of human consciousness that is not going to happen in the future. The transformation of human consciousness that essentially can only happen now because its very nature is nowness.

Its very nature is isness, suchness. So it's not something to look forward to. Not when I speak of awakening or transformation of consciousness, the mind can get hold of that and say, tell me how to get there and tell me how long it will take and then I will get there.

Because the mind loves future, it loves time because that's this mind-based sense of self. It asks for more time. It resents sitting here and being told that, no, I'm not giving you any more time.

It won't help you. You can see the mind asks, how do I get to this transformed state of consciousness from where I am now? And this is very important.

You cannot get there. There is no state to be achieved. And this is almost, it seems to destroy many teachings but essentially they all express the same thing.

But a very powerful pointer to the truth is to realize that enlightenment or liberation is not a state to be achieved. It is a complete acceptance of what is. That is the state of the master.

Completely aligned with is. Not expecting that this form should reach some kind of perfection. Perfection does not lie in form.

Every form is limited through its form. So not a future state but simply a state of deep and complete yes to what is including all the imperfections of the world of form including your own form, yes. Then you become who you already are which is the spaciousness beyond form which is the formless one life, one intelligence.

You are that space. The yes is the portal. The yes is the doorway into the space that you are.

The formless life that you are beyond form. And so isn't this wonderful news that you don't need to achieve a state because that creates a new mind object and a new future. That the awakening is now and it lies in the yes to is, is, is.

Not expecting a perfection of form. This form or that form or that life should suddenly, nothing should ever change again. Everything is so neatly arranged in my story.

Every piece of furniture is in its place and everything is secure and gets great. That form is not like that. And so this is an incredible thing.

Ultimately even if you use techniques and that's fine, there's nothing wrong with techniques. The essence of every technique is to take you into the state of now and into the state of surrender to what is. And it is possible to enter that state now without the need for more time.

And you can be awake this moment when you're in a state of yes to it and you can be asleep again the next moment which is just the same moment but you're asleep when the no returns and you close and you're fighting what is again. Awake, asleep, stories, noise in the head completely trapped in mental noise, not here, somewhere else, dream world, trying to work something out, my life, it's called my life. And you can see the absence as opposed to presence when you look sometimes in the mirror in people's eyes and especially those people who are now moving in and out of that state of presence and then when they move out of the state of presence there's a veil that descends on their eyes because the light is no longer shining through their eyes.

The light of consciousness becomes veiled through mental noise and there's an absence. When you look at them you can see they're not here and some people live that life almost continuously, they're never here because they're trying to be in the next moment and their whole families, millions of families who live like that, millions of children are born into environment that continually denies and ignores and rejects the present moment because they're all trying to come on, let's get on with it and that's the whole environment in the family, the restlessness, have you done this? Not a moment of spacious presence of acknowledging the being of that person in this spaciousness of now and so many illnesses have arisen in youngsters because it's not only the new consciousness that is arising simultaneously the madness of the old consciousness increases too. So truly one could say in these times things are both getting worse and better because the madness of the old consciousness is still operating and it's becoming more and more mad.

If you think the 20th century was mad, wait. That mindset can only get more mad but the new is arising at the same time but the madness is there in many youngsters diseases have arisen that didn't even know before. Hyperactivity, can't sit still anymore because they live in an environment in which there is no spaciousness, no presence all there is is mental noise and continuously reaching out to the next moment and the future.

So many youngsters cannot sit still anymore they have to move. Where's the next thing, the next stimulus? No TV screen for half an hour and they go mad and that's attention deficit disorder all these kinds of things that didn't even exist 30 years ago can't focus on one thing for more than a moment.

All expressions of that madness in youngsters and a lot of anger also and violence all expressions because that's the environment in which they live is mad. And mad is still normal up to now because everybody's there, it's normal. I always say normal means mad.

So we are moving beyond normal please don't be normal anymore. That's the worst thing, normal. This is the only moment there is.

Now it happens to manifest as people in a room and a voice speaking but it is the only moment. So you might as well be friendly with it since it's the only one. And when you move away from here the same moment appears in a different form it's still the underlying field of now and then suddenly you're on the road and it's the same, you sense underneath what happens a spaciousness or a peace and that's there through the yes to is.

At first you can't get hold of it and say what is this you can't understand it it is the famous peace that passes all understanding it's there, it's good enough that it's there so there's that underlying sense of presence becomes, this is where you dwell this is essentially who you are but let's just use dualistic language and say you dwell in that underlying sense of presence still spacious presence things happen, they come and go through allowing what happens you become who you already are the space in which it happens it's so simple through allowing what happens more and more you realise who you are no longer as a mind object this is the end of having a relationship with yourself and you've gone through that stage humans have gone through that stage half a million years or whatever of having relationships with themselves and then you move back into being yourself being that just like the flower but with added great depth and knowingness wow, I don't need to interpret continuously what a relief I can allow this moment to be without needing to have some personal relationship with whatever happens and think it needs to how does it fit into my story this moment doesn't fit into my story it shouldn't be happening I can't make it fit into the story of who I am what a dreadful way to live and then somehow trying to make it fit interpret it in terms of me, my story that goes and so you're no longer the little personal me and there's nothing else to me than me you are the one consciousness expressing itself through this form and when you look at something a flower, a tree and you simply allow it to be you will see you don't need to label it call it this or that interpret it it is consciousness itself is looking through your eyes when you look in that way at the world consciousness itself perceives the world of form wow and you see enormous depths and beauty when you don't put labels on things what an absurd thing to say flower and then think you know what it is sounds have come out of your mouth and then you think okay now I know what it is you don't know anything when sounds it's just sounds that you make that represent an abstraction of that reality a mental abstraction of that reality so the mystery you're not trying to solve the mystery on the mind level you allow that to be and you see there's a depth and beingness in this beautiful form that we call flower that goes beyond the form that we see so when you can be with something natural go into nature with a tree with a flower or flowing water be with it watch look it in the state of attentive openness presence stillness in which it appears that you don't know anything more about it but that's only from the point of view of the mind that's why from the word emptiness that is used in buddhism is looking at it from the point of view of the mind and from the point of view of the mind it looks like a state of great emptiness and that sounds a bit fearful oh I don't want to become empty but it is also a complete and utter fullness of being but not as the mind knows it to the mind you don't know anything anymore when you become still and present and yet there's a deep knowing there you know this flower as you've never known it before a depth of relatedness a depth of communion when you know it in that way and ultimately you know it in that state you know it as yourself you know this flower as yourself which means you know its essence is one with your essence it is the one expressing itself in form billions of forms but it is the one and that which is looking through your eyes is the one looking at its own beauty in form and knowing that it is good so you can instead of looking at as a person with a personal relationship you look at the world as consciousness so this is the unconditioned state of consciousness emerging through you where once there was a little me trying to make it that gives way now to a much vaster consciousness the unconditioned and then even in the realm of the little me and its story things actually fall into place beautifully when you no longer need it for your identity wonderful just how is it possible that humans haven't known this how is it possible that they don't talk about it on TV every evening that newspapers don't write about it the one thing that matters to most of humanity even now is still not known but miracles are happening it is amazing that it is emerging now here and there in the most unexpected places you suddenly see it emerge for years I have been saying to people our gathering tonight is not going to be on television on the news tonight because it's not newsworthy I've been saying this for years and believed it to be true and it was true until a few weeks ago when Canadian television came to a talk that I gave in Canada and it was on the national news this is unbelievable it's a miracle so something is happening in you primarily it's the only place where it can happen in and through you not in the future though only now so it is the state of surrender to now surrender to life the mantra for tonight it is you can use it at any time you can use it especially when something arises and there's a reactivity there's a no that arises no trying to get to the next moment not this one where's the next one when the no arises you recognize the no there goes another no what do you do then?

say yes to it how can you say yes to a no? yes you can because what you observe is a mind pattern arising perhaps also together goes with it a contraction of the physical emotional contraction and suddenly you see that and says there's another no all right it is as it is there's another no you've taken the yes into the no and the yes dissolves the no you don't have to do anything but you cannot deny the no when you notice a no and then have a say I shouldn't be saying I'm stuck in it again you see I can't do it that would mean you're in reactivity again so whatever arises internally or externally there's the yes yes the best practice is people the greatest challenge is other people to bring the yes because they tend to come into the now and make it difficult if it weren't for people the now would be okay and that's why I recommend go into nature and be there completely be there in that state of non-labeling of attentive openness and look look through presence through stillness at nature and then move into the world of other people and then that becomes a deeper practice it'll have to be greater presence alertness a bigger yes in the face of difficult people and eventually you can visit your parents when you can be there in the state of yes then you're there in the meantime if you go to your parents you have many opportunities of observing the no that's good enough you observe the no and say okay there it is here goes another no and with that also comes a strange thing called gratefulness gratefulness is an appreciation of what is at this moment and in that honoring of this moment an essential aspect of that honoring is the gratefulness for what is and you will be amazed a point comes when you can also even be grateful for something that before you would have disliked you're grateful for the is-ness of this moment and then you're so aligned with what is that whatever is, is good even if it appears as good bad good bad on the surface because all that good bad is that bad means a form is beginning to dissolve death in one way or another and that's called bad and good means something new is born and oh great for a little while you move beyond the polarities of good and bad and there is a deeper eternal goodness that is beyond the polarities of good and bad that are in the world of form and there's a gratefulness then yes there's a gratefulness for what is there's gratefulness for what arises but before you wouldn't have even seen the beauty that is in this moment even if you look at the floor or the pattern the texture you can pick up a pick up anything a glass a bottle and look and there's a gratefulness when there's a complete honoring of what is but there's a deeper gratefulness for the beingness that underlies it all the one life that underlies all forms of life the one life that you are the essence of who you are and there's ah and that gratefulness is love and that gratefulness is joy they're really all one

[Speaker 2] (1:38:11 - 1:38:12)

thank you

Eckhart Tolle Talk Titled Timeless Freedom

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 2:45:02)

Have a look inside yourself and see if you're waiting for me to speak. Perhaps even some impatience arising, irritation, or your mind is taking you to some completely different place and time, tonight, later, tomorrow. We saw last night that in the normal human state of consciousness or unconsciousness, there is a very deep, deep-seated need, psychological need for the next moment, for future, that's always there.

Everybody is waiting for something. It's the next moment or some point in the future. That is an intrinsic part of the normal human consciousness, which is identification with the stream of thinking, which is inhabiting a conceptualized reality, a conceptualized sense of self in the head, consisting of thought movement, a conceptualized sense of self, story-based, mind-based, past-based, and that conceptualized sense of self inhabits a conceptual reality, because everything is then being perceived through the conditioning of that accumulated, the accumulated conditioning of the mind. Whatever you perceive is perceived through that and is conceptualized through the compulsive, automatic, mechanical labeling of every experience and sense perception that happens every moment.

And through the automatic mechanical labeling process, a veil appears between you and that which is being perceived, between you and the other human being. It becomes deadened through the continuous mental label-making, continuous judgments, and it's mechanical, it's automatic. Very few people on the planet are even aware of it, as yet something else is arising powerfully, but as yet, very few human beings are even aware of this mechanical process, because they are totally identified with that mechanical, compulsive, automatic process.

And that is the essence of unconsciousness. You are lost in a world of content and your sense of self is in there, and then everything you perceive is perceived through that sense of self that is mental, mentalized, conceptualized. And then whatever happens to you, every experience, every encounter, every perception, every place that you go to is seen through that filter of that ultimately fictitious, false me, sense of self that adopts a personalized position, a reactive position towards whatever happens, and it interprets it according to that deep-seated conditioning.

And so life becomes very problematic because nothing is seen clearly. Nothing is simple. Everything is complex, conflict-ridden, and problematic through the labeling process.

And that is the self, the mind-made self. That is the egoic entity. The me, the little me, and as we saw yesterday, never at ease, except very brief moments, a little while, never sensing a sense of completeness, a true, deep aliveness, rootedness, free of fear, fear is an inevitable companion of that state of unconsciousness.

And so you're always waiting for completion in the next moment to add something to me. We saw that yesterday. The need, the compulsive need to add more content to me, so we are stepping out of that.

This is why we are here tonight, not to add more to all those identifications, to all that content, but to allow a different state of consciousness to arise that is unconditioned, to step out of a conceptualized sense of self, out of the story of me, to see an infinitely deeper and vaster sense of who you are that is already there underneath all the mind movements, underneath the story of me with my past and suffering, underneath the grievances that the ego loves so much, underneath the reactivity that the egoic entity thrives on, just looking for the next thing or the next problem, the complaints that it loves. Complaining makes up a large part of many people's mind movement.

If you look into it clearly, how much of that incessant stream of thinking is actually complaining, some form of complaint in your head about this person, this situation, this place, and that movement of carrying grievances, the need to be reactive, adopt a reactive relationship to everything that happens, the complaining, the pattern of continuous complaining and looking for the next thing, because it strengthens that never enough sense of me, and people don't realize it through complaining mentally or verbally. And I'm not saying complaining to tell somebody, please don't step on my foot. Remove your foot from my foot.

You're not complaining. You're telling somebody to do something about it. That's not complaint.

To say, we are using it in another sense here to tell somebody, please, this is, the soup is cold. I ordered a hot soup. Take it back, please.

It's not a complaint. It's just telling somebody to do something about this situation. So we're not talking about you becoming a doormat and let everything happen.

We're talking about a mental, useless, pointless, futile, conditioned movement that thrives on complaining. He shouldn't, they shouldn't. Why don't they?

This dreadful, if you see the percentage of your mind activity that is some form of complaint, you would be amazed. And there's nothing personal in it. It is not your personal problem.

It's not that, oh, I'm not good enough. I'm always complaining. It's nothing to do with you.

It's the collective human mind. It is a collective mind pattern that the egoic mind-based entity loves because the sense of self through any kind of complaint, and a lot of that happens in people's minds. They're complaining.

They may even be complaining about themselves. Not good enough. You see, you've failed again.

You see, you always, mad, mad. And people are so immersed in that, they think all the problems that they are complaining about have an actual reality out there. And don't realize that every situation is very simple if you don't add all that to it.

It is simple. So to watch that need to complain so that it is there, so that the egoic entity can feel a little bit stronger. Why does it feel a little bit stronger in that mind movement?

Because whenever you complain about something or someone or a place, you adopt a position of brightness. Me, right. You, wrong.

Because that which you are complaining about is obviously wrong. The complainer, the me, the mind-based entity is obviously right. That is the essence of every complaint, that I am right and the situation or the place or the person or the condition that I am internally complaining about obviously is wrong.

So some people move through life complaining about the world, the God. They have an issue with God. He should know better.

Why does he allow that? If I were running the universe, I would do a better job. Therefore, if the universe or the earth or the planet, the world, the question arises, if the world were a reflection of your inner state, what kind of a world would it be?

So to watch these deep-seated mind movements and even here, it may arise. The mind looking for one thing to complain about so that you don't have to listen to the rest. And then the mind can focus on that one thing, I disagree with that statement.

And for the next hour, you have a mind movement around that disagreement. And you're hoping that there'll be an opportunity for you to get up and say, I disagree very strongly with you because it's wrong, what you said is wrong. That's very satisfying.

Now, this is easy to do here because in spiritual teaching, spiritual teaching, the purpose of it is not to present a philosophy, a consistent view of the universe, a system of thought with an inner consistency that is then, you can then adopt one more thing I can identify with and say, now this mental edifice, all those explanations, this is now what I believe in. But a spiritual teaching is not like that. The purpose of the words is not to help you understand the universe.

The purpose of the words is simply to point to the state of liberation. So the words may point to bondage so that the awareness arises of the mental prison that you inhabit. Now, that awareness is the arising of freedom.

The simple fact of seeing the bondage of identification with the mental noise, continuous mind movement and its reactions and its grievances and its complaints. To see that in oneself is already the arising of something that is beyond that which you see. The seeing, which is the aware presence, and this is why we're here, is unconditioned.

It simply sees. It sees the false. It sees illusion.

This is why as this arises here and all the words are only designed to be pointers to the liberated state of consciousness. But if that liberated state of consciousness were not already arising in you, this is the only reason why you've come here. Well, except for one or two who got dragged here by somebody else and didn't really want to come.

But it's unlikely that they will stay unless suddenly something opens up within them. That's possible too. But for most of you, you came here by your own free will, probably.

Yes, it is possible that one or two came for the wrong reasons. Perhaps thinking that this was a lecture on philosophy of playing around with thoughts. Finding some new, interesting thoughts.

And then perhaps after half an hour or an hour, it won't be satisfying here to sit here anymore and then you would go. And that's fine. You need a little bit more time.

The universe is very patient. Time goes on and on. There's a lot of it.

It doesn't matter. But most of you, if you are able to sit here, and it's quite a long evening, the physical body may occasionally move a little bit and sway hard here. And yet, if you are able to sit here during all this time, this means already a state of consciousness that is unconditioned is arising and that is what I am addressing here.

This is what is being touched, pulled. All words are limited. One could say almost it is being pulled out of you.

And the first step in this process is the recognition of that which is false, which is identification with all the conditioned thought movements as a me, a self, a story-based entity with a little past and a little future. A past that didn't go quite the way it should have gone. Oh, and you thought that was your personal problem.

It's everybody's. It didn't go quite the way, it didn't quite work out the way it was meant to. It wasn't the one I married.

It was, I must have made a mistake. It wasn't, he wasn't the prince that I married. I thought I married.

He turned out to be a human. No story-based me has a totally satisfying story. And many story-based identities are actually unhappy ones, very unhappy ones that tell themselves internally, almost continuously, their unhappy story in order to revive it.

What he did to me and the world did to me and my parents did to me, unfairly treated. What God did allowed to happen to me. So some of these identities are very unhappy ones and the egoic entity loves that also because at least you think you know who you are by repeating the story to yourself mentally.

It gives you the illusion that you have an identity and you have an identity of sorts. It's a storyline, an unhappy one. And you can carry the grievances and the complaints associated with the unhappy story of me and they keep the sense of self going until you finally are on your deathbed.

And maybe your last breath may still be a complaint. Why did life do that to me? That was my incarnation, my life.

It should never have happened. It was one big mistake. And it's amazing how many people carry a very unhappy identity based on their past.

Hoping vaguely that somehow the future is going to free them and somehow make this unhappy story turn around into a happy one. But how could it? Because your sense of self is now totally wedded to the unhappy story.

Your sense of self lies in the unhappy story. How could it ever turn around? You would not even want it to turn around because your sense of self is the unhappy one.

You feel comfortable with that. Of course it's unconscious. If you made it conscious and looked at it and see that you are actually, you love your unhappy story.

And every story has elements of that. Some stories are very unhappy, but every story has strong elements of that. And then you can see how much there is a refusal to let go of that mind movements or those mind movements.

And on the surface, those mind movements might say, maybe my life will get better. You might visit clairvoyance to find out if the story of me is going to improve in the next few years. Is there going to be a change?

And the clairvoyance says, yes, I can see a change coming next year. There is somebody coming into your life and he or she is going to make you happy. Everything will turn around, but you carry the unhappy me.

And even if that wonderful being should come into your life, you will interact and react through your unhappy story. And you will make that relationship, you will incorporate that into your unhappy story. And so then you try another clairvoyant, because.

So it is amazing, the presence that people have constructed for themselves, that they inhabit and even are addicted to the pain of that. Because it's better than not knowing who you are. At least you have an unhappy sense of self, better than no sense of self.

So every story has strong elements of that. And to see that even if your story is not totally unhappy, maybe it's half, half, but to see it didn't go the way it was meant to go. But of course you still have future.

It can all work out. It won't, of course. Dissatisfaction, unease, problems, fear, anxiety, they're all built into very structure of that mindset.

It's within the structure of the mindset when you identify with mind movements, when you derive your sense of self from a story, you can never get there on that level of complete your sense of self, find yourself fully, the fullness of life. So, and we are here to see it. And already you may see it is, you might say, you might think, well, it must be, isn't it very depressing?

You are telling us a very depressing story of how our lives are. No, you may detect in yourself a certain recognition. It's quite nice to listen to this and you recognize something there and you see it and the seeing is already freeing.

And all the words that arise here, and this is the case with every true spiritual teaching, are not to explain the universe and are not even going to be consistent. A philosophical system may be consistent, otherwise it's deficient. But a spiritual teaching, be very suspicious of a spiritual teaching that is totally consistent internally, where everything makes absolute sense.

It is likely that you are mistaking a philosophical system for a spiritual teaching. Spiritual teaching, by its very nature, contains contradictions because the truth of who you are, and it only points to that, it points to the false, you begin to see the false, and then it points to that which is beyond the false. But seeing the false is already that movement of the real, who you are beyond that conditioning, to see that is already the arising of that.

So the spiritual teaching points to that which really is very hard to talk about. And no single thought could capture, encapsulate the truth of who you are and the truth of spiritual liberation. And it is very tempting for the mind to get hold of one statement and say this is the truth, and the other statement is not true.

But in spiritual teaching, you may hear two contradictory statements and they're both true. For example, last night I said, nothing needs to happen, freedom is already here. Underneath the movement of the conditioned mind, there is already in you the vast spaciousness, stillness and depth of the unconditioned.

So there's nothing that needs to happen as such, and yet, in the course of this evening, I may point out certain things that look as if you could do something about it. For example, I might say, enter the state of surrender to what is this moment. So you want me to do something.

What I thought you said, it's not an happening, there's nothing you need to do. Well, maybe surrender is not a doing at all. It's an allowing.

But it looks, when one speaks of it, as if it were as if you could do something. Many statements, the timeless, we are entering the timeless state of consciousness. It arises because the conditioned state is totally linked to time.

It operates, this conditioned entity, the mind-made self, operates entirely through past and future. It knows only past and future. And the future is a repetition of the past.

The redemptive power of now is totally obscured. The only place of freedom is obscured by that mind movement that is only interested in past and future. But that basically means it is only interested in repeating the past, and that is what usually happens.

So we are here to step out of that. All the words only point to the state that is timeless, the state of consciousness that is timeless, and we are entering that together. At the moment, I've mostly been speaking of the bad news, but that is important.

The bad news, the illusory entity, and the suffering that is created by that, we need to see that fully. That is already the beginning of liberation, but it looks on the surface as if I were talking only about bad news. And if you don't, if you don't listen from the depths of your being, if you only listen through the story entity, I'm not addressing the story-based entity, but there may be one or two of you here who will listen to these words only through the mind-made story-based entity, and it will feel insulted by these words.

How dare you suggest that my grievances and my complaints are not justified and real? How dare you say that I have no right to complain, to suggest it's an illusion? My problems are so, my complaints are so real, and I have a right.

This is the entity. And so one or two of you go through this reaction. Who is reacting?

When I point to illusion within yourself and there is a reaction, who is it that is reacting? The illusion. It doesn't like to hear that it feels.

It's a great insult to suggest that perhaps the unhappiness that you carry as part of your sense of self could perhaps be an illusion, an illusory identity that you cling to. But many of you are still sitting here. One or two are going to walk out.

Maybe three or four, five or six, small percentage. That means those words are not reaching the deeper level of your being, are not being received by that. They only hit the conditioned, and the conditioned doesn't like what it's hearing because I'm threatening its very survival.

Let's get out of here. And perhaps even shout something as the last triumph of the conditioned entity. It's happened once or twice in meetings.

Absolute nonsense. And the door slams. So the words, something within you, if you're still here, recognizes the truth.

And it actually feels good to see the false as false. You're already no longer totally identified with those mind movements through that seeing. So the pointing to the false and the pointing to the real, which are both part of this teaching, may very well use seemingly contradictory perspectives.

The timeless state of consciousness, we are entering the unconditioned or timeless state of consciousness is emerging here so that you don't derive your sense of self anymore from the conditioned mind movements, but from that which is beyond time. The still, alert, vibrantly alive presence. Vast, intelligent that is there underneath all that.

But we have another contradiction here because as we are entering the timeless state of consciousness and we are spending three hours on this time, yes, there's a little paradox here, but it's fine. You could say, well, why don't we only need one moment? And we travel deeper into that state, which is another paradox, because to say deeper implies time.

But let's, instead of resolving the paradox, just leave it because it's not an explanation. They are simply pointers. So to see the false in oneself, to observe those mind movements, to recognize that your story, your identity, your sense of self is not the only one that didn't quite work out.

This you can, sometimes people are under that illusion that other people's stories have worked. None of them works for long. Meet famous people, rich people, go beyond the glossy surface that you see in magazines, talk to them, meet them, and see enormous sense of dissatisfaction, lack, fear, not enough.

So they need more, even more. You could become a great leader, leader of this country. And then you might think, oh, I finally made it.

My life has now become free of limitation. I'm all powerful. And two years later, you find yourself in prison, if you're lucky, and you have another limitation.

So there's the movement of thought. There's identification with the movement of thought. And there's the arising of the awareness of those thought movements.

And then as the awareness arises, you see a very, we've already pointed to grievances, we've pointed to complaints, we've pointed to repeating the story in your head to reinforce it. We've pointed to perhaps, or maybe we didn't, also to repeat your story to other people to reinforce it. Please confirm to me that my problems and my story are real.

Listen, and you, oh, yes, you truly have been treated unfairly by life. You are right that you're feeling sorry for yourself. You're fully sorry for myself.

That self feels bigger than that too. So we've seen many of those very predominant movements associated with living in and through a false sense of self. And now there's one more fundamental one that we need to address.

I pointed to it last night, that it needs to obscure the now because it can only function through past and future. So as we saw last night, if you live through that false sense of self, your relationship with now, which is all there ever is, which means with life, life itself, life and now are inseparable, your relationship with now is predominantly a hostile one, a resisting one, one that denies the now, tries to get away from it, resists it internally, complains about it mentally, or makes it into a stepping stone to the next moment, which the little me in the head says is a more important one because there, it's going to be a little bit better when I arrive there. So the relationship that you have with now, which is the relationship with life, is then one that is problematic of conflict, basically.

You are in conflict with now. You deny now, you resist now, you complain about now, you protect yourself away from now, and now is life. And so you're condemned to living in this abstract reality, never knowing the depths of now, the depths of life, the fullness of life that can only be here in the space of now.

The only place where life is, is now. So you can see the mind movement that seeks to deny that, a very fundamental one. In seeing it, freedom arises.

And seeing it is the arising of presence, a state in which the now is not resisted. And that is the beginning of the collapse of the conditioned egoic entity and the story-based identity. The now is not resisted anymore.

You are able, as presence arises, to welcome this moment as it is. We saw that yesterday as the primordial spiritual practice that requires no time to align yourself with now, to make it your friend, unconditionally say yes, because you see the madness and the futility of saying no to the is-ness of now. To deny is, is to deny the universe.

The form that this now takes could never be otherwise, because whatever form arises, at this moment, is totally interconnected with the whole. It's only through our limited perspective that we think there is an isolated event here that shouldn't have happened. But that seemingly isolated event is simply, there's a web of interconnectedness with the totality of this seeming isolated event.

There isn't even an event. So whatever appears in the now is as it is, it could not be otherwise, which doesn't mean that action cannot arise through you to respond to the need or the challenge of now. But the now, the is-ness of now is as it is, the totality has brought it about.

So to be not aligned with that is to, you tie yourself into a little knot in the fabric of existence, and that little knot says no, and it claims a separate identity for itself. Me, and here's the rest of this threatening and dreadful universe that seems to conspire against me and put obstacles in my path continuously, but I am going to make it. Just, I'll show them.

And now, here we come now to the essence, and then we go even deeper. We saw last night that more often than not, the form that this now takes as an event, a seeming event, a person, a situation, a place, a challenge, is only the form of now. It is not the now.

The now is eternal, timeless, spacious, pure consciousness, and it is you. Nothing that takes form is you. The essence of unconsciousness, the essence of bondage, the essence of suffering, is to mistake who you are for some form.

Thought movements, identification with this and that, but ultimately, it all goes down to identification with thought and emotions that arise together with thought, which are energy forms, and you have to seek yourself in it and seek completion through adding more forms to the content of your mind. What else can I identify with to make my story better? Or if you're deeply trapped in an unhappy story identity, unconsciously, you're saying, what else can I identify with to add to my bad story?

In other words, you're looking for the next bad thing because only a bad thing will fit into a bad storyline. A good thing doesn't fit into my story anymore if I'm identified with a bad mind-based identity and story. I'm looking for the next bad thing.

I don't know that, of course. I'm saying, I'm looking for happiness, and then you seek exactly the thing that gives you more unhappiness. So form, so it's a search through some added form to find a bit more of myself, and that is the essence of delusion and bondage and suffering.

Because suffering is, whenever you're identified with form, suffering arises because every form is limited. And the limitation of that form, and it's short-lived. So the two factors that every form is limited, every thought, every physical form, everything in form is limited, and as the Buddha put it, impermanent.

In other words, fleeting. And as the Buddha also put it, unsatisfactory. Beautiful, he saw it, he saw it so clearly.

And what did people do? Constructed a huge edifice of philosophy, Buddhist philosophy. The simplicity he saw identification with form is, in the Pali language, I very rarely quote strange foreign words, but it's so beautiful in the Pali language, the essence of human existence in the deluded state is dukkha, anicca, and anatta, suffering, impermanence, not self.

You're seeking a self where you cannot find a self in form. Suffering, it's impermanent, it's not self. Whatever condition you encounter, try to identify with, it brings you suffering.

It's not self, it's fleeting. And so you move looking. It is not only the essence of suffering, this identification with form, it is also the essence of what we could call evil.

People doing dreadful things to other human beings, or to other life forms on the planet, or to the planet itself. And it's identification with form, how does that work? What happened two days ago, not far from here, people burned a train, 58 people were killed, burned to death traveling on a train.

How does that connect with what we are talking about? These people, they belong to two different religions. And each group of people derives their sense of self, of me or us, which is a mind-based sense of self, from a conceptualized accumulation of certain beliefs that they identify with as me or us.

There are mind movements, belief systems, this gives us our sense of who we are. It's a conceptualized collective identity. And the others have a different conceptualized set.

So they need their enemies to strengthen this very tenuous sense of identity that's never feel strong enough. So they love having enemies to feel more strongly who they are, being able to fight someone else strengthens to be able to in a position of rightness because both factions believe that they are right. They are totally identified with one mental position.

Their sense of self is in this form of that mental position, a total inability to see another position and not recognize it is only a position, a mental position, there's no self in it. But there's the delusion of this, their identity is in it. And so it's easy to kill somebody because you have desensitized yourself to the aliveness of another human being by labeling it.

You put a few mental concepts on another human being or group of human beings, whatever that concept may be, you could say, unbeliever. That label can be enough to justify killing a person. Unbeliever, unbeliever is no longer human being, it's conceptualized, you inhabit a conceptualized universe.

And as a concept, you can no longer sense what you are doing or you can say American, you no longer, you can say, or the other say Muslim or this or that, communist, capitalist, this, that, these are labels, you put them on and they've deadened the universe, conceptualized it and then any act of violence is possible because there's only a concept there, this is the essence of prejudice also. In addition, the enormous amount of pain that humans carry inside flows into that delusion and this accounts for the collective human pain, we may address that this evening also, that accounts for violence, warfare. So this is thousands, thousands, thousands of years of conditioning humanity.

Not knowing who they are, seeking a form identity, which is never enough and always reveals itself to be not it, not me. So identification with form, deriving your sense of self from form, which means basically mind forms is delusion, deriving your sense of self from mind movement is delusion. Now, those mind movements and the entity that is based on mind identification continuously reacts, it's part of its complaining, it reacts to the form that this moment takes as not enough, not fulfilling me.

This moment is not fulfilling me, maybe the next one will, this moment is actually limiting me, I'm trying to get away from it. The form that arises in this moment is resisted because it's never enough for me. It even is trying to obstruct me, it limits me and this is how people go through life, seeking a better now in the future, seeking a completion of themselves in the future, ignoring this because this seems, looks like an obstacle to complete being completely myself and that is the core of the delusion.

The thing that looks like the greatest obstacle to finding myself is the only doorway into the liberated state. The very thing that people try to deny and get away from and we're complaining about and resisting is actually the doorway into the unconditioned, God, self, the deepest self. How can that be?

How can that be that this seemingly perhaps in the best of cases, uninteresting now, this now that is an obstacle to where I want to get to, this now that limits me so much because more often than not, it is the case, how could it be that this is the doorway, it looks like a wall? It looks as if I had to run away from that and so the secret of human existence is, and it's for some peculiar reason, it's to a large extent still a secret. Almost nobody talks about it, liberation and where to find it.

It's a conspiracy of don't mention it, liberation, look for it somewhere else, that's okay, but not where it can be found. How can it be that this seemingly very often unsatisfying present moment now, the form of it, how can that be the doorway and how does it work? The egoic entity loves resisting the form that this now takes because it's never enough, it doesn't fit into its story and the resisting itself strengthens it.

In other words, you resist to a form that arises in the now and strengthen your own mental form of me. You disagree with now, you have an issue with now, you're hostile towards now, so it puts you in a position of rightness and the now in a position of wrongness, so you have strengthened your mind-created sense of self, that's why it's so satisfying to deny the now and you can see how mad it is. When you recognize it, the possibility of freedom comes in.

When you recognize that deep-seated, non-personal, collective human mind pattern, when you see it in yourself, in others, there's suddenly the arising of freedom and the unconscious movement collapses because anything that is unconscious, when it comes to the light of consciousness and is seen, there's an awareness now of that movement, the compulsive nature of it. When it rises into awareness, or awareness looks at it, so to speak, the unconscious movement loses its power and begins to dissolve. Unconsciousness, all those automatic processes require your unconsciousness.

The complainer, all the things we've been talking about, it's only when you're totally identified with it and you're trapped, when you see it, you're no longer trapped. Now you see this and now the possibility comes of reversing and it happens by itself. It's not that you have to do it.

A reversal happens so that instead of resisting the now and having a hostile relationship with it, you open yourself to now and welcome it, no matter what form it takes, even if it is a form of limitation, which often it is, even if it looks not very satisfying. And suddenly, when you not resist the form that appears in this now, that which is beyond form arises within yourself. The form identity is not strengthened anymore through resistance.

That which is beyond form within you, the unconditioned consciousness, the light of the divine, whatever pointer, arises in the moment of relinquishing resistance to a form. How does it arise? Anything that you accept completely, internally, unconditionally, embrace it, no matter what that condition is, takes you into deep peace, vitally alive peace.

And you can try it out. The next thing that irritates you, that you complain about, suddenly you're aware of that automatic movement and say, okay, I'll welcome it instead. I've been complaining about the now for 48 years, 50 years.

I'm now ready to welcome this, even this. And all internal resistance drops. And you're simply that form of this moment, the condition.

And you will notice enormous peace arising. A stillness arises that is not of the mind. And for the first time, that unconditioned intelligence can move through you as a channel, which before was obstructed by continuous resistance.

And now the ability arises because you've opened the door, which is the act of surrender to what is, the suchness of this moment. You open the door. That which seemed a limitation is not internally resisted.

And so suddenly the unconditioned intelligence moves through you and is able to simply be, there's a flow of a current of awareness that flows through you, so to speak, and moves into that situation that looked like a limitation, a problematic situation, because most situations are problematic when you are trapped in a reactive mode. And you can simply, suddenly, and it's not you anymore, not that little conditioned entity, but a deeper intelligence can look at the form of this moment, allow it to be totally. And that is the movement of the true intelligence that suddenly flows into that situation.

There's no mental labeling or judging anymore. The allowing, you allow it to be, so the mind relinquishes its need to label. The egoic entity that lives in and through labeling subsides at that moment.

It may come back, but at this moment, it subsides and you allow this. The allowing is the key. Allowing this moment that opens the portal, then vast intelligence flows through and looks at whatever form this moment takes.

But that look is not so much a concentrated beam. It's a vast spaciousness that penetrates that situation and surrounds that situation, a spacious field. You can sense surrounding the little limitation and that spaciousness around that situation that before the little entity contracted and complained about it, and suddenly you allow and you become vast as you sense a space around that seemingly limited situation.

And that is the, one could say, I don't use that expression usually, but occasionally a new point has come. Space consciousness arises. Not, most humans, all they are ever aware of is objects that arise in their consciousness.

They are aware never of another dimension. All they are aware of is thoughts and not aware of, identified with. They are in a position of, they want to attract or have aversion to objects that arise in their consciousness.

Sense objects, perceptions. They know nothing else beyond the arising objects, thoughts, emotions, sense perceptions. And now, in its own form and as you allow this moment to be as it is internally.

An object in consciousness, there you have a subject-object relationship. I know this flower. Well, I think I do, because I have a label for it.

And I repeat this label in my mind. It's not true knowledge. It has its place in this phenomenal world.

It's useful for certain things. This knowledge, which is labeled knowledge, concept knowledge, but there is a deeper knowing. But the essence of that knowing is to know consciousness directly, not as I know it, but knowing it as I am it.

A knowing that is not dualistic. A knowing that is being, knowing yourself as that. Conscious, let me put it in another way.

You become conscious of consciousness itself. And now when I say that in words, that limits it and distorts it, because immediately creates again a dualistic relationship. Knowing that, the limitation of words, I'll say it again, this is not the truth, because the words are limited.

But they are a pointer. They can work as a pointer, not as an explanation. You are conscious of consciousness as an underlying field of presence, which is also peace, which is also stillness, which is also vast intelligence, which is also deep aliveness, aliveness and joy, very subtle, not what the mind knows as joy, which is some short-lived pleasure.

It is, of course, being itself before it becomes something, consciousness itself before it becomes a form, life itself before it becomes a form of life. So you know yourself as life, not some form that life takes, the one unconditioned, unmanifested life, that out of which the entire universe comes, which of course is God, if God means anything at its deepest level, that is God, of course. And again, people have been looking for God as a mind object, as if God could appear as an object in consciousness, whereas God is the essence of all that appears.

It inhabits it as its essence, yes. So you know yourself as that vast spaciousness with a simple act of allowing this moment to be as it is. And that suddenly, the very limitation has become a doorway into the divine.

The very thing that looked like almost the devil putting obstacles in my path becomes an opening. So the form becomes a doorway no longer an obstacle to God, but a doorway into God if resistance is relinquished. And of course, that fundamental truth of human existence is expressed and contained beautifully in the Christian image of the cross, which most Christians don't understand in its depths.

They have a superficial interpretation of it. But in its depths, you have Christ on the cross, nailed to the cross, an image of total limitation, the absolute of limitation to be nailed to a cross. And the cross, of course, is the form that limits.

And it is a form that this moment takes. And suddenly, and this is contained in the words of Jesus on the cross, not my will, but thy will be done. And then Jesus aligns his will with the will of the one, in other words, resistance to what is, is relinquished totally.

And now that dreadful thing, the cross, the torture instrument, the ultimate in limitation becomes a symbol for the divine. Because the cross is both. It is the symbol of limitation, and it has a dual nature.

Symbol of torture, of limitation, and a symbol of the divine. So there is an image here, and you don't need to be a Christian to see it. In fact, if you are a Christian, you probably don't see it.

There is an image here of great depth and enormous wisdom. It tells you that the secret is contained in that image of human life and the possibility of human life. Because you are the one on the cross.

Each human being is that, is Christ on the cross. Facing the limitations, sometimes dreadful, as dreadful as there. And the possibility is there of that reversal where the very limitation becomes the doorway into the divine.

So the form is not really an obstacle to the formless or to God, because otherwise it looks as if the whole world around you were conspiring not to stop you from finding yourself or from finding God or from realizing yourself as limitless, as the unlimited and the unconditioned and free. And it looks, how can I possibly, surrounded by all those limitations, how could I ever find that? Through the limitation, not away from it.

And then the form and the formless are actually recognized as one. God and the world are also seen as one. God is hiding in each form, in each limitation.

Expressed beautifully in the famous Buddhist sutra, which says, form is emptiness, emptiness is form. Of course, in Buddhist terms, emptiness is the unconditioned, the vastness. Form is emptiness, emptiness is form.

Expressed also, I'm now told to just point to one or two things. What I'm now putting in relatively neutral language as an immediate possibility that, of course, the beautiful ancient scriptures, they point to it. My favorite Upanishad, I can't even remember what it's called, starts with these lines, not that which the eye sees, but that whereby the eye can see.

Know that alone to be Brahman, the eternal, not what people here adore. Not that which the ear hears, but that whereby the ear can hear. Know that alone to be Brahman, the eternal, and not what people here adore.

Not that which the mind thinks, but that whereby the mind can think. Know that alone to be Brahman, the eternal, and not what people here adore. What people here adore is an object in consciousness.

What the eye sees, sense perception. What the ear hears. What the mind thinks, a thought.

But it's the consciousness that makes all seeing possible, all sense perception possible, the one consciousness that makes all thought possible. They don't know that. Why don't they know it?

Because they are trapped in identification with form. They react continuously to the forms that arise. And now the way out is so simple.

It is so simple. And that's the reason why so few people got it. They tried to surrender to state of consciousness.

It's here. You don't need time to surrender to the now. But if you do need time, which means also you need more suffering, it's there for you because the universe will allow you more time and more suffering.

I'm not quite ready yet to surrender. A little bit more time, please. Okay, please, as much as you like.

Infinite, vast stretches of time and suffering. Or you see it, and this is an insult also to some spiritual seekers who are strongly identified with the thought movement that you need time for liberation. And perhaps you've already invested 30 years in that.

Great, it got you to this moment. And suddenly you hear, yes, but it doesn't agree with the teaching that I believe in that says you need many lifetimes. Perhaps this is true.

I'm not denying that you may need lifetimes or plenty of time, but you need it until you realize that you don't need time anymore. You needed time to get to that point of realization. And for many of you, that realization is now.

You needed time to hear it. Otherwise you would have heard it a long time ago. So you hear it.

And even if it's not yet operating in your life, you have heard it. And perhaps you need just a little bit more suffering for you to finally say, ah, I say yes to what is, unconditionally embrace this, the form of this moment, the limitation of this moment. Or you've had enough, you've had enough suffering.

Humanity as a whole has had so much suffering. All, of course, produced through the egoic condition. If you are trapped in a false sense of self, you are going to create suffering for yourself and others.

And so humanity has been suffering, so much suffering. Look at human history. You can, you weep when you go beyond the words that you read, when you see what humans did to other humans throughout history.

What for? Well, it is the dysfunction of the egoic condition. And so, humans have suffered so much that there is a readiness now in many human beings to embrace this truth.

And many human beings are coming to the end of suffering, which means to the end of time. Psychological time is no longer important. Clock time still works okay.

Tomorrow at eight o'clock, I'm going to see you, whatever. That works. But when I say coming to the end of time, it's the end of the psychological need for future.

So as you enter the surrendered state, the present moment, the now becomes primary in your life. What you give attention to, what you honor, that becomes the primary focus of your life now. On the periphery of your life, yes, there is still past.

You remember what you did last year, 10 years ago. There is still a future in the realm of practicality. You can still embark on new projects, learn new things, even make money perhaps.

But not because you're seeking your self-fulfillment through that, simply because it happens through you and it'll be an expression of the unconditioned consciousness. It is not a passive state, the state of surrender. This could be a misperception.

The state of surrender has a very dynamic quality to it also and this is very important. The action that arises out of the state of surrender is enormously empowered. It is intelligent action.

It is not action that seeks some future result for completion. It arises out of a state of joyous aliveness and that is infinitely more effective than action and which is still normal in human life. Most of human action arises out of dissatisfaction, out of fear and out of desire, all to do with the egoic condition.

And that can look powerful on the surface. You could create a huge business empire out of the state of great dissatisfaction, not feeling enough, not feeling that others give you enough recognition. Your sense of self needs that and so you're out of that dissatisfaction, even anger with the world, I'm going to show them, I can make it, I can get there.

And then 30, 40 years later, you have built up a huge empire corporation and you'll be very unhappy and the body will be very unhappy and the thousands of people that are working in it are unhappy. Perhaps they're all making money, but they're stressed, diseased through stress, continuous in-fighting and intrigue and until finally you die in the state of dissatisfaction and the seemingly solid structures that are created by those egoic entities, which is most of the world, are not that solid either. Many of them are going to crumble as the old consciousness gives way to the new consciousness, the free, the liberated consciousness on this planet, the transformation of human consciousness on this planet, which is now a necessity, not a luxury anymore for humanity to survive, the planet to survive.

God doesn't mind whether the human form survives or not, wherever there's non-resistance, wherever there's transparency, the divine moves through. It doesn't ask, are you worthy? Are you good enough?

Have you accumulated enough credits? It sometimes moves to the seemingly most unworthy forms because that unworthy form had created so much suffering for itself that something self-destructed and surrender happened and then it can move, the divine can move through the criminal. It may not move through the monk after 50 years of meditation because the monk may be, it may do, but it may not.

The monk may have an image of himself as pure. The last mind image of me as pure is the one last obstacle. Me.

Me. So you are in the midst of this event is part of, goes far beyond the personal. It is part of the transformation of human consciousness on the planet.

It will go unreported in the news tonight. It happened once that they did report it on the news, but mostly not yet because there are more important news than mind says. The budget and the violence, much more important.

This is what matters. I hope I'm not offending anybody who is interested in the budget. If there's no self in it, it's fine.

Anything is fine. The world of phenomenal forms becomes a beautiful place to be enjoyed as the play of form when you no longer resist the forms or are looking for yourself in them. Then it's quite pleasant to see how the forms come into your life, situations, places, gain and loss, people, recognition, non-recognition, victory, defeat, how this continuous flux of forms moves in and out of the space of now.

Quite beautiful, even beautiful to see the fleeting nature of all the forms that come. Nothing lasts for that long. Even solid structures could go before you know it.

It's dissolved. In India, to see the insubstantial nature of the material world is easier. In the West, the delusion that the mind created man-made, egoically mind created world, the illusion that those structures are solid and lasting is greater because they look more solid.

And so you people there might say, well, my life is totally, I've got all my shares there and I've got my house there and this is the corporation where I work and this is the big car and everything is looked after, my pension scheme and my investments with Enron Corporation. And it's all so solid and suddenly, before you know it, it crumbles. Where has it gone?

So the doorway is now through the form of now. Acceptance of that, the end of time as a psychological need, future especially as a psychological need, past also as a psychological need to continuously refer to it to enhance and strengthen your sense of self. Don't need that.

So there's past you can let go with much greater ease. Remember what you need to remember, but no self-seeking. Future psychological need for it goes.

So one could say the end of psychological need is psychological time. This is part of the transformation of consciousness. The primary focus of your life is now, not a story in your head, not a conceptual sense of self.

Now, as you allow this moment to be the ability arises in and through you to relinquish the otherwise compulsive and automatic labeling and interpreting process of the human mind. And that is an unbelievable liberation and many of you already finding that this is coming into their lives and some of you from now on will find that as you move through the world, you find that as you allow the form of this moment to be, which is a beautiful, gentle embrace whereas before there was a resisting little spiky entity. Now there's a gentle compassion comes with that.

Let's leave that aside for a moment. There is no compassion unless you allow what is to be with that also great compassion arises. But for the time being, let us address a different aspect of that state of consciousness.

It is the ability to move through life free or to a large extent free of the compulsion to interpret and label everything and comment mentally on what you are seeing, which is a conceptualized reality. Through allowing you can, let's take as you sit here, you can sit here where you are and allow this moment to be so completely that the compulsion to call it anything isn't there. So what does that mean?

It means you perceive, see, hear, feel perhaps a little bit, sense perhaps your body as you sit here, but it is not, it does not become words in your head. So there's the ability to perceive through stillness in a state of great alertness, but still alertness. And for the first time then you perceive the world no longer through the conditioning of the mind but through the unconditioned consciousness.

And suddenly that which you perceive, it could be here perceiving this form, perceiving the sounds and you just allow it to be, there's no additional mind movement. So the perception happens within a field of spaciousness, of stillness, of peace, and everything is suddenly seen as so much more alive than it had been when you deadened it through the compulsive labeling process. To become free of that is an essential part, of course, of this transformation of consciousness.

And it is so beautiful to be able, let's say, sitting on a bus or, well, if you're lucky, you're sitting, you may be standing or hanging or riding on the roof. It doesn't matter. Just an example, you're on a bus, human beings all around you, it's moving, other human forms, streets, houses, and you're simply looking, no entity saying, this is awful, whatever, or whatever it is saying, I wish I were home, he looks dreadful, I wish he wasn't standing next to me, continuous.

You simply allow it and it is as it is. And there's a peace around the sense perception. What a change.

There's also a depth to that which you are perceiving. It's alive and it is as it is. And you could sit somewhere on a bench in a park and you watch and to the mind, it looks at insignificant event.

The mind even says, sitting there, because this isn't solving my problems. The mind will try to come in and remind you of what your problems are. Sometimes the old movement tries to come back in and you see that.

And you come back to the freedom of being free of the conditioned. Now you may sometimes, especially as this state begins to arise in you, it may be short lived at first before mind comes in again, or as you sit there in that state, certain thoughts may drift in and out. And they are recognized as thoughts, perhaps labels again, but you are no longer totally in it.

You allow it to be. You recognize it as just thought. It's no longer a problem.

And then there's a space again between the next thought, between that thought and the next thought. And so we are talking about this right now in the context of a neutral, non-problematic situation. You're in a park or you're sitting at home in your familiar room and you're sitting in a chair and you simply look around in the state of clear, innocent, non-labeling perception.

And then something else happens. You suddenly realize two dimensions. One is the objects that are appearing in your consciousness, the sense objects, perception.

And then you sense the field of aware presence, still but awake, highly awake, the field of aware presence in which those sense perceptions appear. You're aware of that and that which appears. In other words, you're aware, conscious of awareness, conscious of consciousness, and that which appears in consciousness.

Knowing that none of that which appears in consciousness is the essence of who you are, but consciousness itself is who you are. But in every form, that essence is also concealed. So the other statement, the seemingly contradictory statement that everything you see is you is also true.

This is how it works, holds that they are both true. None of that which appears in consciousness is you and everything is you. But the essence of you, of I, is the field of aware presence.

And you are free. You know yourself as that. Then the world is not threatening anymore, the world of form.

Nor is it that attractive anymore. It's just as beautiful as it is. But it doesn't threaten your sense of self, nor does it promise to enhance your sense of self anymore.

And now you can actually, you can relax with the world because you don't feel threatened by it or enhanced by it because you are beyond it. And this is why, funny story to illustrate this, the spiritual teacher, J. Krishnamurti, who taught for many, many, many years, once in the middle of a talk, he stopped talking and said, do you want to know what my secret is?

And everybody listened up. Some people had already gone to sleep because they'd been coming to see him for 30 years. Yes, that's what we've been waiting for.

What is your secret? Okay, I will tell you what my secret is. And he said, I don't mind what happens.

Yes, and that was his secret. But now you can see, I don't know how many people got it when he said that. He didn't explain, as far as I know, further.

But in the context of this, you can see the depth of what that means. I don't mind what happens, because what happens is a form that arises in consciousness. And when you know yourself as consciousness, it doesn't matter that much.

And the strange thing is, you might think, okay, then your attitude then towards the world will be one of not caring anymore. It sometimes happens that people who, in whom this transformed state arises, suddenly they go through a period when they don't pay attention to any of these forms anymore. They lose interest in the world of form entirely.

They get so drawn, so identified with the formless, with being, that existence becomes uninteresting, because being is unmanifested life. Existence is form, because the very word means, X means out, existence, it stands out as a form. This happened to me also, total lack of interest for several years in anything in this world.

And then a balance establishes itself. This doesn't need to happen to you. It tends to happen to people who, without any teaching, stumble upon this truth within themselves, seemingly, accidentally, nothing is accidental, but seemingly, accidentally, they stumble upon this and suddenly the unconditioned is there fully all at once.

And then sometimes the world kind of becomes totally peripheral until finally you learn to live in the world of form again. With most of you, a different process happens. It is a more gradual realization, not that surrender takes time, but to dwell in the state of surrender as a continuous state can take time, not the surrender itself, because you can only surrender to now.

But what happens is that the resistance movement, which is conditioned collectively, will reassert itself in waves. And so you fall back into the state of egoic identification with mind, back in the state of resistance and denial of now, and then suddenly you see it and then you reenter. So it's a gradual entering of that as so that until it becomes, you're the place where you dwell that state.

So you don't need to lose yourself in it because it is gradual. You can learn to incorporate it into your life, not that you have to do it, it happens by itself. And the misperception could arise that then don't you become careless towards the world, the things in this world?

And strangely, the opposite is true. Once you, the balance is there, everything that you look upon is actually great care flows into that to which you give attention, which that attention is the unconditioned. And in that movement of the unconditioned, that looks upon the conditioned, whether it looks upon a thought or an emotion or a sense object external, there is a gentleness, a care and compassion and love with which you perceive things and allow things.

That's the beauty of it. You don't misuse the world of form in the service of self. You don't misuse the form that this moment takes in the service of some mentally projected future moment.

If you make this moment into a means to an end, you're using it in the service of a false sense of self that seeks to complete itself through future. And whatever comes into the now is self-serving. And often it's a human being and you meet a human being and somehow you're just using that human being because you are using the present moment as a means to an end.

So anything that appears in the now becomes a means to an end. If the now is a means to an end to arrive at some future, which is the egoic state. So in the egoic state, love is not possible because in the egoic state, you always want something from the other person or you fear something from the other person.

And what you want from the other person is sometimes called love. I want you to complete me. And I want you to sign this contract.

Don't you dare leave me. So love, compassion, gentleness, those qualities that are really not so much human, but divine, because human, in the way I use the word, I'm sorry if I offend anybody, human means mad in the old sense. It's been mad for a long time, but there are divine qualities that flow through a human being, but not when the conditioned mind operates.

So at first now, we become free of the movement of the conditioned in simple situations that you just allow to be, not particularly challenging situations, simply sitting somewhere in a restaurant, in a cafe, drinking a cup of tea, and an alert presence arises and you simply watch, see, in a field of stillness. That is the arising. And then the challenges come, because as you know, you can't go through life for very long, perhaps not even a single day without some challenge appearing, some situation that doesn't seem to go the way it should have gone, something going wrong, some kind of loss.

And particularly in India, one can experience things don't go the way you expect them to go. This is a great lesson for many people who come here. It's easier to learn surrender here.

Yeah. I said that last night. And this could be the reason why the great sages, far greater numbers than any other country, liberated beings lived here, produced by India so that it seeded the entire world, became through the enormous wisdom that arose here, the insight into the human condition.

It's a miracle. So the challenges come, and then the temptation is for the old reactive pattern to flow back in. So you get drawn back.

The moment you're faced with the slightest challenge before you sat on this park bench, beautiful, occasional thoughts, but you're perceiving in the field of stillness. And then the first challenge comes, and then either that unconditioned stillness presence deepens, or you get drawn into the old reactive pattern and the unconditioned becomes obscured again through identification with the conditioned. The little me is back reacting, fighting, complaining, shouting, whatever it does, it does its thing, the reactive pattern.

Once a certain level of presence, which is another word I use to describe the unconditioned consciousness that arises, once a certain degree of presence has been reached, what happens is that a challenge simply intensifies presence instead of the old reactive pattern coming back. So a challenge comes and it is faced completely without resistance in a field of intense alertness. That is the movement of incredible intelligence that goes into that situation that is challenging.

It is not mentally analyzed. At some point, mind movement may come in, but it could be more likely to be an inspired thought of what is needed, unless what is needed comes as spontaneous action, which also happens in that state. The challenge is faced completely in a state of alert attention.

And there's the movement of the unconditioned intelligence, which the Chinese call the Tao, is suddenly operating through this form. So what is now dealing with the challenge is not the limited conditioned mind with its conditioning. What is dealing with this situation is the one universal intelligence.

And you will be amazed how quickly situations resolve themselves through the simple act of giving full and complete non-interpreting, non-judgmental attention, clear space. Of course, that is only possible if the portal, that is the act of surrender, is open. If you have accepted unconditionally whatever this challenge is, this form of this moment.

And so that is how greater intelligence comes in and resolves it through action that then arises through you, or another spontaneous event that seems to come from elsewhere, because intelligence is everywhere, the one intelligence, and it will operate beautifully. So that's the creative human beings, those few human beings who are very creative, in artists, musicians, composers, painters, sculptors, some of the creative scientists or any creative endeavor, those human beings have the ability in the limited field of their endeavor to enter that state of total looking, clear, unconditioned attention. And then a movement happens and the creative act begins and they know that they are not doing it as the form, it moves through them.

And when you look at some of the great creations, the redeeming feature of humanity, it has enormous madness there, but also some very great things. The greatest, of course, is the teachers of truth. They are the sublime achievement of humanity is to see beyond delusion.

But then come also those that created incredible depths and beauty through some form and use music or through even through words, but there's an essence there that is beyond mind. And you say, how could a human being create such a sublime work? And the answer is, the little human being didn't create it.

It was, there was an opening into universal intelligence. And so those creative humans in their limited field enter that state and it happens. And in most cases, those humans, when they move into back into ordinary life, away from their creative field are possessed again by the normal human unconsciousness.

And so it's mostly with those people, only in that moment, that act of creation in their particular field are able to enter that state. Einstein was able to enter that state. And this is where the great insights came that no mind could have worked out.

There's a leap here, that sudden insight that is not the result of thought activity. It is the result of cessation of thought activity. And then suddenly the insight came.

So that is, but here we are going, we are not attempting to become great artists, although it may happen. This arises in humanity now as a continuous state of being. So your whole life becomes a work of art, even if you create nothing externally.

So the challenges are extremely important that come, which is, again, the limitations that appears in this moment, and not to turn away from it, to walk through it, face it fully, say yes to it, and then see what happens. So that's, there is one more seeming apparent obstacle that many human beings encounter as the new state, even as the new state of consciousness arises. And that obstacle is due to the fact that collectively humanity has created vast suffering for itself on this planet.

And there is, within the energy field of the planet, there is a residue of pain, human, the collective, in the collective consciousness of humanity or unconsciousness of humanity, there is an enormous amount of human pain. And every human being has a share of accumulated human pain that they carry inside. Almost something, it's an energy field residue of pain from your personal life in this lifetime, children, very few children don't suffer great pain.

After all, you live in a relatively mad world. But more than that, human pain accumulated over thousands of years that is passed on in many ways, even genetically. And so if you're not aware of that, it can happen easily that you are overwhelmed, taken over periodically by the movement of human pain in you.

And it can easily obscure the arising presence, the unconditioned when the pain comes. Oh, I call that the pain body that human beings carry inside. And that pain body needs to be seen for what it is.

It can only continue to operate in you if you remain unconscious of it and mistake it for who you are. This pain body, and many of you know this already, I spoke of it in the book. Many of you already working with your pain body, bringing presence to it.

But we need to point out that this pain body which we look upon as if it were an almost independent entity that lives in you. And again, don't take this to be the absolute truth. It is a pointer, a helpful, very helpful perspective.

It's quite close to the truth, but not the truth. So let's be aware of the limitations of any perspective. And yet we use that perspective because it's helpful.

So we say that it is like an entity that lives in you. It is a residue, an emotional field, which is energy that has become stuck, cannot flow freely, constricted, tight. It lives in humans, although most humans, it is in most human beings, it is not continuously active.

It is sporadically active. The pain body has a dormant period when all you have to face in life is your mind and the mad egoic mind structures, which is problematic enough. But then periodically the pain body awakens out of its dormant state, because being almost an independent entity, it needs to take in some food, renew itself.

It needs further experience of pain. And it usually happens when you can notice it when a relatively minor, often, not always, but very often a relatively minor situation, event, even thought can suddenly bring about an enormous influx of emotional pain, be it anxiety, fear, extreme fear, be it extreme anger, often totally out of proportion to the triggering event. You suddenly, or the fear or deep sadness and heaviness.

The makeup of pain body differs from person to person. Some are predominantly angry, some are predominantly heavy with deep sadness. Others are predominantly fearful and anxious and many others are a combination of these.

And so suddenly there's an enormous movement of emotion and painful emotion. And the first thing that the pain body does when it awakens, it is seeking food. It seeks food in two places.

One is in your mind and it will attempt to use your thought processes. So the emotion is so strong that it overpowers your thought processes. And every thought process then reflects the painful emotion that you feel.

So you begin to think thoughts that reflect the pain that you feel in here. And with every thought, you feed the pain body. That means at that moment, you are identified with the pain body.

And this is an important aspect of the egoic sense of self. This is what makes the egoic sense of self, so far we've only spoken of the egoic sense of self as mind movements. But now we see there is an additional factor to the egoic sense of self, which makes it even more mad and even heavier than it already is as simply mind movements conditioned that you identify with.

So we have an influx of human pain that flows into those mind movements that are egoic and are bad enough even without the pain body, problematic enough. And yet now as the pain body moves into, it amplifies enormously the egoic mind movements. What that means is when the story of me, which is what most people derive their identity from, becomes amplified by the pain body, the story becomes huge drama, heavy drama, angry drama, fearful drama, enormous proportions.

And the mind is working overtime. It's active anyway all the time, but now it's doubly, 10 times, 50 times more active thinking all those thoughts, angry, depressed, fearful, fearful, what's happening to me? Angry, oh, what I'm going to do?

I'm going to kill him, I'm going to, what, you know, I don't need to. And every thought feeds the pain body and you love it because at that moment you have become the pain body. That is the addiction to pain that every human being carries inside.

Pain bodies love pain. And when you're identified with that movement, identified means your sense of selfiness is in it during, while it's active, at that moment, you, because you have become the pain body, you love the pain and you will do everything to keep it going. But your mind is only one level on which one of where the pain body feeds.

It feeds on other people. So it will attempt to provoke or make other people equally unhappy. The pain body is very, very unhappy.

And when it becomes through mind movement and identification with it, it becomes a self, the delusory self, amplified now by thousands of years of human pain that are genetically and in other ways passed on. And the delusion is that that is me, my problem, my pain, my story. You don't realize that my identity.

So, and then this unhappy identity seeks to make others equally unhappy to feed on their unhappiness, their emotional reaction of unhappiness. In other words, it's looking for drama and for trouble from someone. And usually gets it, succeeds in drawing, in awakening the other person's pain body.

This is particularly prevalent in partnerships, husband, wife. It can be seen in the periodic need to act out their drama. And it's repeats itself.

You might have noticed every week, every few days, you go through the motions. In many cases, it's almost exactly the same as last week's. And in other many cases, it is the same as 20 years ago.

It's amazing. As if they were forced to act something out, like somebody has put something in there, a script programmed you and you're forced, same again. But every time it actually works because through that, the pain body renews itself.

And after a while, a few hours, maybe a whole day, in some cases, two days, or in more chronic pain bodies, longer periods of time, and then it'll go to sleep for a while. And the relationship is a bit more harmonious again. And sooner or later, it's back.

And it looks for an opportunity, especially as more consciousness arises in you, presence. It looks for moments when you are less conscious. It will attempt to come in then.

When it's ready to awaken, it is clever, it is cunning, it's lying in wait, it's looking for the best moment in which to suddenly jump in and rise up into your mind before you know it. And immediately, you start, and suddenly, 10 minutes later, you might realize you're feeding the pain body with extremely negative thought processes. When did it start?

Oh my God, I've been in that for 10, 15 minutes, half an hour. It may be even too late by then. You're so identified that if somebody pointed out to you that you are possessed by the pain body, you would say, you would shout something.

Don't give me that nonsense about pain body. This is very real. The pain body, sometimes, if the pain body is active and you have to step outside, you're going shopping, you're going to your workplace, but the pain body is active.

Of course, it's not being expressed at that moment, but you're walking there, you're a walking pain body, and you're then at far greater risk of being attacked verbally. Even physically, there's a greater risk, but more likely, verbally, by some other walking pain body. So you go into a shop to buy a loaf of bread, and suddenly, the shopkeeper is extremely rude, and there's an enormous amount of negativity flowing.

What did I do? But because his pain body recognized yours, and says, oh, and many pain bodies, these days, are sitting behind wheels. And so there are people, they are driving pain bodies.

And often accidents happen in that way. All that is required for a very high likelihood of an accident is two driving pain bodies getting close to each other. Because the pain body wants the drama.

The pain body wants the pain. The pain body wants the accident, because the accident will give it more pain. That is totally unconscious, of course, but it's a bit frightening to realize that there are many drivers out there who are looking for the accident through the pain body, totally unconscious, of course.

So it's amazing that I have met people, spiritual seekers, who already, the state of presence arises in them beautifully, but they have not been aware of the movement of pain body. And each time they lose it completely, totally identified with the pain movement, and then wake up again. Okay, it's time to meditate again.

And when the pain body is ready to awaken, it could happen in the middle of a meditation. And then it'll wait for the slightest provocation. A little, the door opening.

Leave me alone, can't you see I'm doing my meta meditation? For God's sake, get out of here. So there is a cycle here.

Of human pain becoming a self, the delusion of self. And through becoming a self, identification with it, it renews itself. So the simple, how do you get out of it?

So simple, see it for what it is, when it arises. As the movement of human pain. Almost physical, halfway between emotion, and you can almost feel it has a physical aspect to it.

Fear, for example, my pain body, which was extremely dense, was composed predominantly of fear energy. So I would wake up in the middle of the night, shivering with fear. And mind movements to accompany that.

All the dreadful things that are going to happen to me. See the movement of pain for what it is, human pain. Watch it as it arises.

So as it arises, and it may arise quickly, particularly if it's anger, that is the predominant energy field, it can be as quick as an explosion. Not easy to watch it, if it goes, vroom. You have to be there as it goes, vroom.

So what, and then it's there. So what do you do with it? Say, go away.

No. It is the form that this moment takes, human pain. This moment then takes the form of that painful fear, anger, heaviness, depression.

And what do you do with it now? You allow it to be. And you, allowing implies that there is an awareness because the awareness and the allowing are really one.

You allow it to be. So you see it and you allow the movement of pain, then it cannot use your mind because you're watching it directly. If, when it cannot use your mind, it cannot renew itself.

So it will simply be the expression of old pain, but it's not, you're not adding to it by unconsciously identifying with it and making it into a self. And so that is the beginning of a gradual transmutation of the pain. Gradually, the trapped energy that was there becomes freed.

And it is strange fact that in those human beings, very often who have the densest pain bodies, the heaviest pain bodies, liberation can happen very quickly because the suffering becomes almost unbearable. And so you recognize what you then do is, this was the case with me. I could not live with myself any longer.

That night when the pain reached a climax, I just, this thought came into, I've talked about it briefly in the book, I cannot live with myself any longer. And that thought became a koan in Zen. Koan, as many of you know, is a kind of riddle that has no logical answer that you could work out.

So the koan that spontaneously arose was that sentence, that phrase, I cannot live with myself. And suddenly I saw self and the pain of self. I said, I, there are two here, I and the self that I cannot live with.

What's that self? It's painful self. It's a story.

It's a painful story. That's what I can't live with. Who am I?

Who is I? I, at its deepest level, is the unconditioned consciousness, the one, I. The superficial I, in the way the word I is normally used in everyday usage, and it's probably the most frequently used word in the language, because, of course, everybody is the center of the universe.

I usually refers to I and my story, my story self. My painful self, my pain body story self. This is when people say I, they refer to the illusory identity of self.

That was the self that I could not live with. I was identified with self. And suddenly I separated from self.

There was a consciousness moved out of identification with a form of self, and the psychological form of self collapsed all at once. And what was left was I. It had moved out of identification with a form, the psychological form.

And that moving out, in this case, was so complete that the form of self popped like a soap bubble. And what was left was what had always been there, but had become intertwined with a form, I. I had always been the essence even of the story, but it became mixed up with form.

So it moved out of form, because the pain of form identification became unbearable. And every one of you is close to that point or has already reached that point. That's why you're here.

Some of you, yes, need a little bit more time. That's okay. So, and that is the miracle of transformation is when that happens.

Fortunately, the pain that is created by that delusion is also that which makes you realize who you are beyond the form. One could almost say that self-created pain drives you out finally of the form. That's one way of putting it.

And then by the grace of God, the divine, the one, a spiritual teaching or teacher comes in and points to the fact that you don't need further pain. Pain, you've come to the end. To awaken out of identification with form, you don't need more pain.

The one, the pain that you have had, and really I'm talking not so much to you as an individual person. I could say that to humanity, because you are humanity. The pain that you have had has been enough.

And that was already 2,600 years ago. That was already the message of the Buddha because he summarized the entire teaching, which is sublime, of sublime simplicity and power. Summarized it as, I show you suffering at the end of suffering.

And this is exactly what we have been engaged in here this evening. I showed you suffering at the end of suffering. The same teaching, the same teacher, there's only one spiritual teaching, and there's only one spiritual teacher.

And that one teaching, one teacher comes in many forms, but it's only one. And here that appears again with an added, one could almost say, urgency or intensity to it. Because at the time of the Buddha, human madness had not yet developed to the point where it threatened survival of the very planet.

It's taken 2,600 years since then for the human mind to become that powerful and increase through science, through technology, increase, amplify the madness that was already there. And not that there's anything wrong with that. Ultimately, that also is part of what has to be and had to be put beautifully, expressed beautifully by the Buddhist saying, if there were no delusion, there would be no enlightenment.

So all is as it is as it is. And it is right. Everything from the highest or deepest perspective, even though I have been speaking of human madness, even that is a fragmentary perspective.

Nothing, I pointed out before, nothing that thought can think or words can speak is the entire truth. It is. So even to say that humans are mad, there's dysfunction on the planet, yes, it's true, but it's not the entire truth.

There is a larger picture within which that also is as it should be, totally right. So this is the message of salvation. Salvation, liberation from that prison.

But it's been beautiful. It worked. The madness worked.

The suffering worked. It is all right from the highest perspective. There's nothing that is amiss.

So you all go away from here, greatly diminished in your sense of self story. This has not been a personal growth seminar. The opposite.

That which is true is emerging. If it were not, you wouldn't be sitting here anymore. And now that presence, the unconditioned transmits itself fortunately.

Your practice is of course, the practice of surrender to now. The old movements of resistance will come back periodically. And you then recognize them.

You will not get lost for too long in the old egoic, reactive, resistant movements. Occasionally you get back in and then, oh, there it was again. And it's never a personal problem.

Thought processes, yes, you may get drawn back into identification with mind streams. And you become absent in dream world. And then you awaken again out of it.

And that's good. And then you realize, oh, I was in a dream world of mind identification again for the past three hours. That's all right.

You're awake now. That's all that matters. It's not a personal problem.

The whole movement of thought is not a personal matter. Just as the pain body is not a personal matter. The pain that it is human pain and mind movement is the human mind.

It's nobody's personal problem. So the old comes, the new, and slowly the new arises. And that one could say takes some time, but the one decisive act of surrender never takes time because it can only be now.

That is the message. Ever the same since the first human being realized the truth, but more intense now, more urgent.

[Speaker 2] (2:45:28 - 2:45:29)

Thank you.

Eckhart Tolle Talk Titled Voluntary and Involuntary Portals into Presence

[Speaker 1] (0:44 - 2:14:39)

Is it possible to be here so completely, you're no longer waiting for the next moment, that you don't have a psychological need for the next moment. One could say that the psychological need for the next moment, which is so much part of the normal human state of consciousness that we looked at last night, is an essential part of that sense of self that we looked at last night, that is ultimately very limited and a mind made sense of self. And that sense of self, we saw that last night, has a deep need for future to complete itself.

And it never arrives there at that state of completion as long as it's looking to the future. So tonight, there may be a little bit more information coming, but the essence of this evening is to go more deeply into the new state of consciousness that is emerging, to go more deeply into it. That's why we're here.

The level of information may be useful and helpful because every word, information is a little pointer towards it no more. Information in itself would never get you there because then you would simply be looking at different pointers to, let's say, you want to get to Rome, and then you're looking at a signpost, which points that way. And one signpost is designed in a particular way and another signpost just looks different, but they all point to the same place.

But if you are only here as a mind, as a mind-made entity, only looking for the next thing that the speaker is going to say, then you would be missing something more essential. So the pointers are useful, but don't become a collector of signposts. Perhaps some of you have been collecting signposts for a long time.

And perhaps even that could have become part of, of course, a signpost in the sense that we use that term here, is to do with the accumulated content of your mind. And you may have a wonderful collection of signposts of different additions, a lot of knowledge, and it's even possible that your sense of who you are has gradually also become identified with that accumulated spiritual knowledge that you have. That's how it works, the sense of identity.

And so there's a reluctance to let go because ultimately when you move beyond, you have to, you leave the signpost behind. And there can be a reluctance to leave the signposts behind because there's this, the need of the mind is to have more of that, more, add more stuff, content, signposts, collect more, to be, to become more. So we look at the psychological need that is so deep seated for the next moment.

What's next? Okay, there's only the now. We know that now.

What's the next bit of information? This happens when you're just here as an, only as the mind. Tell me more.

Now, in the normal human state of consciousness, you're condemned to spend most of your life waiting because the psychological need for the next moment is a state of waiting. You're, when you have a need for the next moment, you're waiting for the next moment. The waiting can be passive.

When are things going to get better? When am I going to find the one person or situation or whatever that's going to fulfill me, make me complete? When I'm just, when are they going to discover me?

When is that person going to come who sees that I'm the greatest potentially? I'm, it's got to be coming. That's the passive waiting.

And then there's a more active waiting that is an actual compulsion. I need to, that's not waiting in the conventional sense because you're actually trying to push towards future. It's also a kind of waiting in the sense that you don't want what you have, which is this moment, and you want what you haven't got, which is the next moment.

That one could say is what waiting is about. You don't want what is, you want what will be. And it's not arriving yet.

And so in that gap between what is and what the mental projection of future is what will be, there is waiting. And in the passive waiting state, it's a state of maybe impatience or, and the active waiting state is that you're running towards the future, internally or even physically. And if you're running towards future internally only, then of course that is a stressful stress.

The stress is created and stress is the big thing in our civilization. Everybody almost is stressed or they're completely bored. So it's, you can see those people who have got the good jobs and are making money and got the cars, they are stressed.

And then there are the others. They may be on welfare or whatever. Life is passing them by and they're bored.

Nothing's happening. And so stress is so normal. What is stress is the mental projection of a future moment that I need to get to.

And the fact that I'm not there yet. There's this, so you're being pulled towards future and that is stress. The mental projection, you throw it there and I'm running towards it, whatever form it may be.

Projection means it's, I believe from Latin, you throw it, project. So you mentally project a future moment you want to get to and then you're running. And if you're only running physically, that's not so bad.

At least energy's moving. But in most cases, it's an internal running and that burns up enormous amounts of life energy. The stress that is internally when you're sitting in your car and you're running only internally because the car isn't moving.

That's enormous, the body suffers enormously in that state. And energy is being, because it's a state of contraction of highly diminished flow of life energy, there's such contraction in every cell of the body when there is stress. So that, and after a few years, then it's more likely that things will go wrong in the body because life is no longer flowing, that is one thing.

The life, the stream of aliveness is no longer flowing freely because of the contraction, almost continuous contraction. And people don't know that that's what they're doing. It's so normal.

And enormous amount of life energy is being burned up in that, and stress is often associated with hyperactive mind, frantic mental noise, because you're projecting yourself mentally and emotionally into the future. And there's always a possibility you might never get to that projected point. What if I don't get there?

At least you won't get there in time. And so millions of humans living in that mindset create the civilization that is a stressful civilization, whereas a very noisy civilization, a very nervous civilization, a civilization where not that many people are happy. Unhappiness is more or less normal.

And for some people, it is so habitual, the state of unease, of dissatisfaction, of living only through anticipation, always anticipating what's going to, but basically it is a dissatisfaction with what is, fear and desire, both strongly connected with needing the future and fearing the future at the same time. And that's the normal human state. And for many people, it is so habitual, that state.

If you ask them, are you unhappy? Because it is not a state of happiness. It is an unhappy state.

But when unhappiness becomes habitual, you don't even know anything else. Perhaps from childhood, from school onwards, that was the normal state of denial of the fullness of life that potentially is here now, that the fullness of life that you are underneath the mental images, underneath the mental noise, the fullness of life that is the essence of your being, they don't know that. So if you ask them, are you okay?

Are you happy? I'm fine, I'm okay. When I was starting many years ago, when I was starting to see people who would come for spiritual teaching or whatever, it wasn't called that then.

I didn't know what it was. And sometimes I made the mistake of asking people, how do you feel inside? And often, yeah, fine.

They've been out of touch with inside for years and unhappiness with their normal state. And so that's fine. So then after a while, I realized that I stopped asking them.

So to see how that operates and that creates the civilization, and it seems to anybody who lives as part of a civilization, that that's how things are because they couldn't be otherwise. That's how they are. And yet they can be otherwise.

A different state of consciousness is possible, not in the future though, only now. And that's why we are here, to allow that state to emerge. In that, the emergence of that state, the understanding about it mentally plays a secondary role.

What you can understand about that state is relatively limited because it is a state, the state that we call the state of presence, is not a state that you can dissect mentally or to get there through increasing your understanding of what that state means. You can only go that far. And we've almost reached the limit already.

We talked last night and even last night, we talked more about recognizing the normal state of consciousness and the dysfunction of the normal state of consciousness. That was a greater part of what we talked about last night. And the relatively small part of what we talked about was understanding what the state of presence means.

You can understand up to a point, these are the pointers that point you to the state of presence. And then further pointers would no longer be a help. They would become a hindrance.

When you've read a certain number of spiritual books, this can be helpful, pointers are helpful. Then there comes a point when further spiritual books don't add any more. If you've read, the essence is not that complicated.

And you've seen the essence in many forms expressed already. Okay, that's it, those are the pointers, you've got enough. Understanding the normal mind-identified state is helpful, not so much understanding to see it, to see how it operates.

And that's what we mainly did just last night, to see how the mind-identified state operates, to become aware of how it functions. And by seeing it, already entering dis-identification. Because the seeing of the conditioning of the mind and how the conditioning of the mind operates, the seeing, when you see it, the seeing is not part of the conditioning.

There's already a new factor that has emerged. When you see your own mind, there's a witnessing presence. For example, you may suddenly see that you've been trapped in mental noise for the past three hours, completely identified with trying to get to some future, trying to anticipate something in the future, you're completely in it.

And suddenly you see there's an enormous stream of mental noise going through your head. And you see it's all connected with needing the next moment, at the same time fearing the next moment. Torn between these two, needing the next moment and fearing the next moment, that's the egoic dilemma.

And this has been pointed to traditionally in spiritual traditions as desire and fear. The two motivating factors in human beings, as long as they live exclusively through the egoic state. Whatever you do is motivated either through desire, which means you need something in the future, and I need that, get there.

I'm not there yet, but I'll get there. And then there's the fear, oh no, I might not get it. Or something may go very wrong and I may even die in the future.

Something may leave me that I already have added to who I think I am, an identification, and something may leave me, it may abandon me, I may lose it in the future. And there comes the fear of, I may become diminished in the future. I want to become enlarged in my sense of self, through future, this is the egoic need for future, the desire for future.

But I fear that I may become, this could happen perhaps, I may lose something that is essentially part of who I think I am, and then I will die. How do I get out of that? Well, if that question arose, that will already be the beginning of the spiritual dimension.

How, even to see the possibility that you can get out of that dilemma, out of that state. For those who are totally identified with the state, the question, how do I get out of that state, doesn't even arise, because they're completely, they embody that, they are that mind-identified state. But so even to ask the question, how do I get beyond this, that's already, this means there's already an opening.

And in each one of you, of course, there's already more than that, there's a huge opening. You would not be able to endure three hours here if that opening were not there. I can guarantee that this meeting, this gathering, would either be threatening to your sense of self in the head, or so boring that you couldn't stand it anymore.

So there is already an enormous opening into the state of presence. It is, I'm amazed how many humans are now open to it. Truly amazed.

I began this evening with asking a question, is it possible to be here so completely in this moment, in this now, the one now, the only now that there is, that the psychological need for future is no longer operating? Now, to be here so completely, the mind may ask, how do I get to that state? And the mind may want a technique.

Can't you give me some technique so that I can get to that state? Well, of course there are techniques. The danger and the drawback with any technique is that you're trying to get somewhere with the technique.

In a very subtle way, future comes back into the technique because you're trying to become good at practicing the technique, become a good meditator. That takes a while. And so in a very subtle way, often the need for future can come back into your practicing technique to be present, but the need for future in a subtle way flows back into the technique and into your practice.

So I don't really have techniques to give you as such. I do have something that I call portals into the state of presence. And a portal is simply an opening.

You can't get good at walking through a portal. There isn't enough there. You either walk through the portal or you don't.

And so I want to look at some of these portals. Now, each portal takes you there. It doesn't matter which one you walk through, but in a sense one can say whichever portal you walk through somehow includes also the other portals.

You will see that more clearly. So what is the portal that we can walk through that takes you into presence? Or even that is perhaps a little bit misleading.

Words are so misleading. One could say perhaps more accurately that presence is already here. Presence is already within you underneath the mental noise.

So it's not so much how to get you to the state of presence, but how to realize that the state of presence is already here, both within and without. So nothing needs to be added to who you are. That's the beauty of it.

Nothing needs to be added to who you are already. And that's very strange to the egoic mind. You mean me, this little me with this unsatisfying story and I haven't quite made it yet and my life is so much, it's not right with my life situation.

How could it be true that nothing needs to be added? I'm not talking about the level of the person there. You can add things.

I mean, I'm going to add things to that level. I still haven't mastered the computer, how to use it. One of the last people.

So at some point, I will add that to my store of knowledge or whatever it is, expertise. Then I may be able to do word processing or use the internet. I tried once or twice, but it didn't work.

But I may try again, that's fine. Or some new activity, maybe one day I'll learn to ski or something, which I haven't done yet. It may never happen, but why not add a few things, but not in the sense of that I need this to fulfill myself.

Maybe a nice thing to do, enjoyable. And if I'm no good at it, that's all right too. I may fail, it doesn't matter.

It's playful, that's fine. So on a deeper level, as far as the who you truly are, the amazing fact is that nothing needs to be added. And this is not something to believe in.

See if that's all you realize this evening fully, not just with a head as a belief, but realize it as a liberating thing that affects the entire being, the realization that presence, the state of presence is already within you, simply covered up by mental noise and covered up by the egoic mind-created entity that says, no, this cannot be true. I'm not enough yet, I need more. This and that for my identity.

And that's not true. You don't need more for your identity. You need more for other things too.

Yeah, not for who you are, the essence of your being. So the portals into the state of presence. One powerful portal is to inhabit the body.

To sense, to feel the energy field in your inner body, the life, the aliveness that undoubtedly is there because the body is alive. Most humans are unaware of that because their whole attention is trapped in thought and mental noise continuously. So their whole attention is there.

They are only, they look at their body as if it were some alien object and they look down from above their body. So that's why people say, I have a body. And a much truer statement would be, although this goes against conventional spirituality, and I'll explain, a much truer statement would be, I am a body.

Then you don't have a split of a me that says I possess this thing that I call body. I have it. And it's problematic like everything else that I have.

And I'm not satisfied with it, like I'm not satisfied with anything else either. So I'm not satisfied with the body that I have. Not many people are.

And those that are satisfied with the body that they have, they form an egoic identity around it, that's how satisfied they are. And so your sense of self becomes identified with your strong or beautiful body better than most other people's. And that works for a while.

It works for 20, 30 years, 40 years, 50. And then one day you look in the mirror and say, the basis for my identity is dissolving. What do I do now?

Extreme unhappiness can arise when my sense of self was based on my appearance or my physical strength or beauty. Fortunately, that wasn't the case with me ever, but I had other identifications. My egoic entity was based on accumulated mind knowledge.

I know more than you. I may not be more beautiful than you, but I know more. And that's of course much more important.

All this, the rest of it, all this superficiality of appearance, I'm not interested in that. The ego manages always in some way to be special, better than, and those egos that have neither knowledge, nor beauty or physical strength, or know the right people, or enough money in the bank, or social recognition, got any of that. And well, then an image forms of poor little me who hasn't got any of these things.

And then some justification may come for why things have gone wrong in my life. And you tell yourself your sad story and tell it to others too. And that becomes just as strong an identity.

The miserable little me, or the angry and miserable little me, what the world has done to me. And I'm going to get even, perhaps, whatever it... You can't escape.

The ego will form its identifications and it'll use whatever is most convenient and most obvious in your life. So the body, the I have a body, the in the head, the entity says, I have a body. So there's already a split.

The truer statement is, I am a body. Well, isn't that, aren't you now identifying with your physical form, which of course is not going to last for that long. And if you say, I am a body, this statement only becomes true if you inhabit the body.

It is not true as far as the external appearance of your body is concerned, but the animating presence, the intelligence that lives in the body. We spoke last night of the one intelligence that expresses itself through billions of forms is born into form, temporary forms. And how it must enjoy that, because otherwise the universe wouldn't exist in its billions of life forms.

And on the planet alone, millions or billions of different life forms. So the universe or the one intelligence obviously enjoys the play of multiple forms. So it expresses itself as the flower, beautifully, unproblematically.

It expresses itself as the physical human body. And of course there's enormous intelligence that operates throughout the body. You can't see it, but it is the organizing principle in the body that controls, regulates thousands of functions simultaneously.

The human mind wouldn't be able to do that. Couldn't keep the body alive for two seconds. It's far too complex.

How could you would have to be aware of a thousand things or more at the same time. And every cell embodies intelligence. The DNA is just a physical representation of intelligence itself.

So the body is the external physical body is simply the outer expression of a field of intelligence, of consciousness, expressing itself temporarily as what we perceive as the physical body. That's the one intelligence that is not separate from the human mind. The mind is a small part of that, just a tiny expression of that.

So by inhabiting the body or sensing, and this to the mind, what I'm saying now, the mind says, this is too simple. This can't work. This isn't complicated enough to be able to sense the field of aliveness, the life that the very life that is the body that is a portal into the state of presence.

And you are then present with your entire energy field. One could almost say every cell is present. And there is an increased aliveness as soon as you inhabit the body, which means your attention is not exclusively on the outer world and your sense perceptions.

Your attention is not exclusively in thought. Some of your attention dwells in the body, the inner energy field of the body to sense that a global sense of aliveness of body, to sense that it is an amazing thing. You connect by doing this, you connect with an intelligence that is far greater than the human mind.

You connect with it. And it's not even to say connect is not totally right because ultimately you are that more than you are the mental noise. So, and this then becomes an anchor, the inner body.

And that doesn't change. It does depend on whether the body is 20 years old and it's the same aliveness that you can feel when you're 85 or 90. That doesn't grow old.

Only the external vehicle grows old. So, and it is essential to inhabit the body and any of the other portals, which we will look at, they will also take you into a sense of aliveness of the inner body. They will, that will always happen.

So, this portal is so near, so close to you, closer than hands and feet. As the saying goes, I don't know if it's in the Bible or somebody else said it, God is closer to you than hands and feet. And if you start to look at that, what could be closer than hands and feet?

They are pretty close. Inside your hands and feet is even closer. So you, and it is not a sacrilege to say the nearest that God is to you is in your body.

And everybody has been looking, projecting, where does God exist? The very, the very life that you are, and then God becomes a mental image that when you're only a mind-based entity, it becomes an image that you identify with and say a belief or a belief system. And inevitably, sooner or later, you'll be in conflict with others who have a slightly different belief system.

So as you sit here, feel the inner body. How I hear one or two minds, what do you mean? I'm not moving my hand and I'm not touching anything.

My eyes are closed. Simply ask yourself, is there any way I can know whether my right hand is still there or not? Is that without looking and without moving my hand, is there any way I can know whether it still exists?

That question will draw your attention away from mental noise and conceptualization because the mind will say, well, no, I don't know if I have a right hand or not. The question is meaningless anyway. What's the point?

I've got far more important problems to think about than this. Does that solve my problems? Okay, that's what the mind does.

And I know one or two minds have been saying that. So you simply ask yourself the question, how can I know whether my right hand is still there? Is there any way I can know?

That question draws your attention away from mental noise and your attention moves into the hand and suddenly you can feel it. Not very strong perhaps, but there's a certain field of aliveness there. And once you inhabit your hand, then you know what it means to inhabit the body.

Then you can inhabit the other hand, the left hand. And that doesn't seem enough either for them. Well, okay, where do we go from here?

And, but it is enormously important and you don't need a particular, go through some technique or movement. They can be helpful to get you into the body, but being in the body is not to be confined to performing particular movements. They are helpful.

But being in the body as your normal state, left hand and right hand, and now comes a strange thing. You can do it with your eyes closed or open. Feel both hands at the same time and feel them so completely that there's the feeling of hand, not so much anymore a mental image of two hands, just a feeling of hand.

And even that hand disappears. There's just a sense of aliveness. Subtle, quite beautiful.

It is alive, isn't that amazing? And then you learn to hold attention there effortlessly. And you can see how thought stream immediately slows down because there isn't enough consciousness now in the head to make thoughts out of, because your consciousness is moving into the body.

And then you can feel your feet at the same time. Isn't that amazing? At the same time as you feel your hands, you feel the inner aliveness in your feet.

And then gradually, if you can now feel hands and feet together, this is how gradually you bring together the feeling of inner body into one single feeling of aliveness. You feel their legs and arms. And the rest of the body then becomes part of that, a sense of aliveness throughout the body.

So it becomes a single field of energy that you sense. Now, if your eyes are closed for a little while, it may still seem as if you were observing that feeling of inner body, but then allow yourself to merge with that feeling of inner body so you are the feeling of inner body. It's no longer a head observing the inner body.

You are present as much in your feet as you are in your head. So the sense of gravity of who you are is all over. It's no longer in the head.

It's everywhere equally. Now, it is possible with some people that they feel a particular area more strongly than others, than other areas. So after a while, you may feel that more.

It doesn't matter. The essential thing is to be able simply to walk through that portal step. The moment you enter the body, you've stepped out of identification with mental noise.

And now, if your eyes are closed, if they are not closed, close them just for a moment and hold attention in the body. There's no effort involved. You're not trying to get anywhere.

There's no trying, just being rooted within, inhabiting the body and holding. It's a life that increases the aliveness enormously of throughout your body. And then the amazing thing comes, you open your eyes and you begin to perceive again visually and you're still feeling the inner body even as you perceive what's around you.

So you look around and of course you hear my voice or you see the flowers, you see the totality of the room. And you continue to feel, not perhaps as strongly as when your eyes were closed, you're still present within. And you can then perceive without interference or very limited interference by the conditioning of your mind.

Suddenly there's a clarity in your sense perceptions because they are no longer distorted by the conditioning of your mind, by your mental noise, by all the labels that the mind throws up continuously. So by sensing that global feeling of body, you're anchored in the now and you're free of thousands of years of mental conditioning. You've simply stepped out.

And you perceive, oh, without past, everything is fresh and new and alive. And there is, and that is part of this sense of inner body, there is an alertness to it, an alert sense of presence. A high degree of wakefulness.

And you can then, you can feel the qualitative difference between that alertness that pervades your entire being. It is an aliveness, an alertness in which there's no tension. You can see the qualitative difference between that state and the state of being immersed in thought and continuous past and future and looking for yourself there.

Bring that, that is simple. Stepping out of mental noise. The only thing that can hold you back is believing the mind when it tells you, no, you must not step, you need to think about this now.

It's four o'clock in the morning and you need to think about this now. It matters. I want your attention, the thought says.

And so holding attention, being present within and without at the same time. And then this, you contemplate, let's, we'll continue to be in the body. Now, let's, I will, another portal, but they're all connected.

So we are not leaving the body when we now look at another portal. Now, remember, before I say this, all this we are doing is regarded by the mind as insignificant or a hindrance to what I really want or as boring, or it is, no, I've done that, I've done meditation for 20 years, give me something new. It's, so to see that the mind will not regard this as important, the mental noise, because your problems are important.

Not that, that's what it says. Okay, knowing that is fine. Then when the mind pretends that your problems are more important than this, you recognize that, oh, yes, that's what the mind does.

That's okay. Because this is too simple to be interesting to the mind. It loves complexity.

Let me, give me something that I need to work out, meant I can think about. It needs, so I'm pointing that out because otherwise, if you don't know that, the mind can draw your attention back completely. Another room, and not separate from this one.

Usually, when you use your listening faculty, you listen to noise. You listen to this, you listen to that. Listen to the silence.

Acknowledge the dimension of silence. Now there happens to be some silence here. It may not be total, but there is an enormous amount of silence in this room.

That is, so to speak, the background to the sound, the sounds that arise. They arise always out of the silence. Now, how do we acknowledge silence?

Simply by noticing it. To acknowledge means to notice. Now, the interesting thing happens when you suddenly notice that there is silence, your alertness rises.

Because without alertness, you cannot notice silence. You can notice sound with relatively little alertness because it's all, it imposes itself. So what a sound is, you don't need alertness for that unless it's a very faint sound or a sound that is becoming faint and ends in silence.

Then you need an increasing alertness. So to simply, we can use, I'm using different pointers because some will be more helpful to others. You notice the dimension of silence.

Simply, you notice that it's there. That means you pay attention to it. That is, that means you listen to the silence and to the mind that's meaningless because the mind says, well, there's nothing to listen to.

And that's precisely the point. What happens inside you when you notice silence? The moment you notice silence, and it's silence as an undercurrent, a background is there in the most unlikely places, but you wouldn't usually notice it.

You notice the moment it is, the noticing of silence, which to the mind is insignificant because there's nothing going on in it. It looks for something. It doesn't look for nothing.

And silence seems to be nothing, no thing. So the mind would never look for silence. The mind is noise.

So it resonates with noise, external noise. It likes that. That's the reason, by the way, why our civilization is the noisiest ever on the planet.

And then the civilization produces an enormous amount of noise through machines and artificially generated noise. Because it's the most mind-identified civilization. So the moment you notice silence, you can only notice it through the increased alertness.

And that increased alertness is an inner stillness. When you notice silence, and you may only notice it for one second, at that moment, the mind is still. It's only with the stillness that you can notice, be aware of, outer silence.

You cannot be aware of outer silence with thought. Thought may come in after you've noticed it. But the moment of noticing, now, there's no thought there.

Perhaps two seconds later it says, oh, it's so silent here. Or the mind says, yes, I noticed it. And then the mind says, okay, we've done that.

Now, what's the next thing? So let's see. This is a portal.

Only through the state of presence can you notice silence. And now I will ring this bell and you will notice two things. The sound, the sound gradually subsides and just follow the sound with your attention until it subsides.

And you will notice to follow the sound when it becomes weaker, a greater alertness is required than at the beginning of the sound. What's left after the sound subsides is simply a field of alertness, which is stillness. And now as you listen to the sound, be aware not just of the sound, but of the alertness itself in which the sound happens, the awareness through and in which the sound happens.

And now to deepen it, listen to the sound with your whole body, so to speak, with every cell of the body. So the field of alertness is your entire energy field. That is the field of alertness.

So you listen and you're aware of the field of alertness and that which arises in it, which is the sound in this case. And what remains is simply the field of alertness, of alert presence. And the same can happen when you perceive visually.

You look, you see sense objects in your field, your visual field. And usually that's all that people see, the forms. And they draw their attention in completely.

Whatever is in your visual field, also there's the underlying field of alertness in which the visual perception arises. And that's inseparable from the feeling of the aliveness of the inner body, is the global alertness. So in all, imagine living, don't imagine, living like that so that there is now a dimension there that you were not aware of before, because otherwise all that there is, is the forms of life.

That's all that, the world in other words, to use traditional spiritual language, all that people are aware of is the things of the world, the objects that arise in your consciousness. What they are not aware of is consciousness that makes all the world possible, the essence of their being, that field, the field of now, whatever you want to call it, whatever pointer, the spaciousness that is around things that permeates, pervades everything and is around everything, a sense of spacious presence, the formless life that is prior to the world of form, of birth and death, and yet the forms exist within it. So you're aware of the essence and that is the awareness itself.

And there's a beautiful Upanishad, the ancient scripture of India written thousands of years ago, I'm not good at memorizing things, I'll just see if I can get the essence of it, that points to exactly that. It says, not that which the eye sees, but that whereby the eye can see. Know that alone to be the eternal and not what people here adore.

Not that which the ear hears, but that whereby the ear can hear. Know that alone to be the eternal and not what people here adore. Not that which the mind thinks, but that whereby the mind can think.

Know that alone to be the eternal and not what people here adore. Points to that what people here adore is the forms, the objects of consciousness. It could be they adore beliefs, they adore external things.

Even God becomes an object of consciousness, a belief, a mental idol, and that's not it. So this is the essence of spiritual realization. And it's so simple.

The portal of silence, the portal of the inner body, all the same. The portal of this moment. Of course, they're all really one, but this moment is the most powerful portal, and embracing it.

You walk through it by, yes, the word yes takes you through the portal of this moment. Yes to this moment. And immediately you can sense an increased aliveness in the body.

So you can see they're all connected. With a yes to this moment, you are out of the prison of the mind, which lives in and through denial of the moment. It lives through no to the moment.

So this is the portal of yes to now. And immediately, if the yes is full and uncompromising and the now is embraced fully, there's a sudden influx of aliveness. And you sense suddenly your entire body.

And there's suddenly an inner stillness. You can see how all the portals are really the same. So you awaken into the now.

And that's the portal of now. And with all the portals, there's an immediate, enormous increase in alertness. It's like a dimmer switch.

It was at the lowest, and then you turn it up. And there's not only an increased sense of inner aliveness the moment you walk through the portal of now, and you walk through it, you have to utter the magic word, yes. Otherwise, they won't let you through.

There's a big hound guarding the portal. And without the yes, you just can't walk through it. And so there's not only an increased, enormous increase in alertness, which affects the entire body, but alertness in every cell.

And aliveness, there's also, it's not just on the inner plane that there is an increase in aliveness. The moment you walk through the portal of now, there's an increase in aliveness around you that you were unaware of. Not that there's an increase in aliveness around you.

It was always there, but not to you, because all your attention was in the mental noise. So the very aliveness of the universe to you wasn't there. And suddenly, so when I say suddenly there is an aliveness, it doesn't mean that it wasn't there before, but this aliveness is new to you.

And that means when you walk through the portal of now, and we are walking through together now, I'm not just talking about it, this is now, suddenly, your sense perceptions, you are amazed how heightened they become and how what you look at, let's talk about the visual sense, how alive everything suddenly is. Even nature, of course, has an enormous presence suddenly. But before you said, oh, aren't these flowers pretty?

No depth to it whatsoever. Yeah, beautiful, look at these colors. Just mental noise.

And suddenly, you truly see the beingness or presence of what we call flower, and that's an absurd reduction of the reality of this miracle. To even say that you know what this is and call it flower and think that now you know what it is, it's absurd. It's just a word, but you don't know anything when you utter, or you know the name of every flower, that means you have more labels about it.

On some levels, the labels may be helpful, but not to truly know what this is. The miracle that this is and the enormous presence or beingness that it emanates, it's alive. So by walking through now your sense perceptions, just as through the increased alertness, your sense perceptions become enormously more acute.

And it's not just that the colors and the shapes have an aliveness, it goes beyond sense perception. You sense the aliveness of everything. You certainly sense it as far as natural things are concerned, the world of nature, but you even sense it in so-called inanimate objects, even those emanate an aliveness, not as much, of course, as nature.

Nature could almost be regarded as a portal in itself. Perhaps we don't see that. So suddenly you inhabit a universe that is alive, whereas before, when you were trapped in mental noise, the universe was basically dead, threatening, yes, perhaps, or certainly, but there was no aliveness to it.

You couldn't sense the aliveness of anything around you. So it's always, every portal is an awakening. And that is the increase in alertness with the entire being.

And every portal takes you into now, of course. So, and then once you become familiar with this state of presence, you notice the qualitative difference between that state and the normal human state, so normal until now, up to now. And more and more, you will realize that your home is the state of presence.

And in the state of presence, you're already home. You're at home in the now. The now is your home.

You can't fall out of that. You don't need to look for yourself anymore. Now, the strange thing is, and this is important for you spiritual seekers, those of you who are still seekers, many of you are no longer seekers now.

That's wonderful, of course. Those who are spiritual seekers, you may still be trying to understand more about who you are, because you may have heard about the term self-realization, and you may have heard that there are certain masters who are self-realized, and they must know a lot. Not necessarily.

Most of the self-realized masters knew much less than you on the level of mind knowledge, on the level of data, on the level of information. They probably knew relatively little. Yes, but they must know themselves.

They must have that self-knowledge, and I'm looking for the self-knowledge. Well, we, last night, we already, I gave you the little story of the person who had psychoanalysis for 20 years, and then a huge pile of self-knowledge accumulated, which the psychoanalyst handed to this person, and said, now, this is yourself. You know yourself now.

This is the knowledge of content. This is the knowledge of what makes up the content of your mind, and that is not what we mean by self-knowledge in a spiritual sense, of course. So, in the state of presence, where is the self-knowledge?

And the amazing realization comes, you cannot know yourself, because whatever you know is an object of knowledge, an object of consciousness, but you cannot make yourself into an object. You can only be yourself. You can only be the very field of knowing, through which knowing happens, all-knowing.

You can be the I, the I that says, I want to know myself, the I that claims, I know everything about myself. That's the I that you cannot make into an object of knowledge. You are that I.

You are the knowing. You are the one consciousness through which everything is known. And that cannot know itself, it is itself.

There is nothing to know beyond that, and yet all-knowing arises out of that. It is intelligence itself. All-knowing arises, but it cannot know itself, nor does it need to.

It cannot make itself into an object of knowledge, of consciousness. So you cannot become an object to yourself. That was the very reason how the egoic identity arose, because mentally you made yourself into an object.

That's me. We talked about it last night. You then begin to have a relationship with yourself, and that's the beginning of trouble and problems, because the relationship with yourself is problematic.

And the moment you have a problematic relationship with yourself, because you have created a mental image of me, all your relationships become problematic, because once you have created an image of me, you create an image for everybody else, and you project an image onto people. This is what spiritually is called judging, judgment, what Jesus called judge not. You're only judging yourself if you judge another.

That's what he said, more or less, which means you become more trapped in your own labels the moment you impose a label on somebody else. Judgment is label. So the amazing thing is that the state of presence looks, from the point of view of the mind, as if you didn't know very much anymore, or you don't know anything anymore.

It's not the case. You're connected with intelligence itself, not connected. You are that, and wisdom and insight and realization, they all arise out of that state.

But it looks to the mind like a state of nothingness. That's why in some spiritual traditions, it is called emptiness. Buddhism speaks of emptiness, and this is true from the point of view of the mind.

It looks as if, well, don't know anything anymore. You become actually, the last obstacle that arises here for you is you become uncomfortable with the state of non-interpreting and non-labeling. I don't know what's going on anymore.

And then you become comfortable with not knowing. And one good area where you can experience that is another person comes into your field of consciousness and sits there and is in trouble, needs something, needs healing, needs advice, needs whatever guidance comes to you, and you enter the portal, become present. You're fully in your body, and you listen in stillness.

The words arise, and you become comfortable with not knowing the answer to this person's problem. If you become comfortable with the state of not knowing the answer, a far deeper answer will come than you could ever have figured out through your knowledge or through the mind. And you cannot know in what form that deeper answer will come.

It may be words that suddenly come that you speak, and they are inspired. They have an energy charge to them. It may be that words come out of that person's mouth that suddenly are not repetitious of the little me telling its story because that person entered that field of presence that you, so to speak, provided.

You held the field of presence. So to become comfortable with not knowing, which is the state of presence looked at from the point of view of the mind, and then see how a deeper intelligence operates. The moment you no longer think, I should know the answer.

How can I help this person? What can I say next? I've got to say something helpful now.

And this is only one example of how powerful the state of not knowing is in which everything is known. So the portal of the inner body, the portal of silence, listening to the silence, the portal of this moment, and the key, the yes that takes you through. One could also say the portal of nature.

Anything in nature teaches stillness, teaches being completely one with itself. Not a flower doesn't have a relationship with itself. A flower is itself.

A cat doesn't have a relationship with itself. The cat is itself. That's why Jesus often talked about flowers and said, look, they are teaching you something very important, something very vital, but it requires you to look.

He, Jesus said, look at the flowers, look at the lilies. Look. He didn't say think about them, just look.

And that looking is the true looking in that state of alertness and stillness. So nature too can become a portal. And the amazing thing is whenever you become present, to now, this is now, step out of mental noise, there's always a sacredness about this moment.

There is a field of sacred presence. It's always there. And you can most easily sense that perhaps through nature, that there is more to nature than what appears.

What appears may be beautiful, it is beautiful, but there's something deeper in this flower and around this flower. There's more than what you see with your eyes and certainly more than what you could know through mental labels. And that is, there is a sacredness to everything that you perceive when you're present.

In other words, the moment you enter the now with your attention, you realize that it is sacred. In other words, you realize that life is sacred and of course life is now. And I'm not going to define what sacred is because no matter how much I define, the mind won't understand it anyway.

And you know it already because you are sacred. Otherwise you wouldn't see sacredness. The essence of your being is sacred.

Thank you. We'll move our bodies for a little while and according to the clock, we'll be back in 15 minutes. Yeah, thank you.

You may have left the body while you were talking to somebody and so, and this may happen quite often. You may find yourself getting drawn back into a mind completely, especially when you start talking to someone. Mindstream takes over.

Your complete identification with the mindstream and then you notice it. The moment you notice it, you're no longer completely identified with mindstream. When you don't notice it, you are the mindstream.

You are the thought. You are the words that are coming out of your mouth, the argument or whatever it is, the viewpoint. You are the viewpoint.

You are the belief. You are the mental position and the momentum that's behind that, you are the very momentum of the mind when you don't know it. The moment you know it, you've already stepped out and at that moment, presence is arising and witnessing presence and then you can use a portal, so to speak, feel this, start with one part of the body since they take you.

As long as you realize that you want to be, you want to step out of mind. When you, this is what it looks like at this. I want to be free of mind.

I know I have a choice. I can be identified with mind or I can be present. My choice is to be present.

This is what it appears to be. Ultimately, that's of course not your choice. If presence were not arising, you couldn't say that that's your choice.

Presence arises. It wants to arise. You are presence.

There's not really a separate me that chooses presence but that's what it looks like on the surface and that's okay. We talked about the portals. Now those are all voluntary portals.

There's also involuntary portals but at first, the involuntary portals don't look like portals at all. They look like the opposite of portals. A portal is an opening.

The opposite of portal would be the closing. Any kind of loss is potentially a portal. Any kind of loss in your life is an involuntary portal.

Any kind of death in your life is an involuntary portal opening up but usually not recognized as a portal. It's taken to be a closing. It's resisted.

Those in the absence of a spiritual teaching or teacher it's through an involuntary portal usually that the transformation of consciousness occurs. It's through some death or loss in one form or another in your life. Some form of diminishment of your sense of self.

Painful as long as it's resisted. A big loss or several losses all at once. Somebody dies.

Somebody leaves you. Something you had identified with leaves you. You lose it.

And when you see the absence of a form that was essential to you, that you had identified with, suddenly a form is removed from your life that you had identified with and it could even be just a mental belief and suddenly you don't believe in your own belief anymore. You suddenly doubt. It happens sometimes people who are devout Christians or whatever, that goes very well and suddenly something happens.

Somebody dies close to them and they lose their whole belief suddenly. I've seen that happen as if they had a contract with God and say, nothing bad is going to happen to me because we have a contract. We have a bargain.

And death is not going to happen around me. And then it happens. So a belief structure can crumble.

That's a loss of form, thought forms. A person can leave you, either dies or leaves you. And any death or loss is actually, you can just see it's so clear that it is a portal because it is an absence.

Before there was something there, a human being or something. $10 million, doesn't matter, something. And suddenly that something is no longer there.

It's been removed. And that something was part of the content of your mind. You had identified with it as part of your sense of self.

So a big chunk has been torn out of your sense of self through deep loss or death. And so it's the sudden absence of something, of a form. And you can see that, of course, it's a doorway.

It's an opening. It's an opening into nothingness, it seems. There's suddenly a hole.

It's a hole that appears in your life. The fabric of your existence suddenly has a hole in it. Or several holes all at once.

This has happened, for example, in war situations. It's happened to people. They lose their home.

They lose their loved ones. They lose all their possessions. They lose everything.

And suddenly the whole fabric of the existence consists only of holes. This is potential for the most dreadful suffering, for hell. And sometimes it just turned into hell.

It is also potential for presence to arise, for suddenly resistance to become relinquished. And at that moment, this dreadful closing, your whole life seemed to be collapsing around you. And suddenly you just cannot resist anymore because the pain is too much of fighting what is.

The pain of no is too much of the inner no to what is. And on some level, you recognize that, perhaps not conceptually. And then something within suddenly gives way and the no dissolves.

And there's a yes, not so much in words. There's the inner opening. You're no longer resisting this hole.

And then it becomes a portal. And so in the absence of a spiritual teacher or teaching, you depend on involuntary portals. And of course, sooner or later they will appear.

And for many of you, that was already your main teacher, that you wouldn't even be here if you had not experienced that diminishment of your sense of self through death or loss. You wouldn't be here. So, and now it's easier to voluntarily walk through a portal because it's also a form of death.

The present moment is a form of death. What dies is me and my story. What dies is who you thought you are.

What dies is a sense of self based on me and my past and my story. And that's a joyful death. And so those people who didn't have a spiritual teacher or teaching, at first they depended on an involuntary portal and it came.

And at some point they gave up resistance. The suffering was getting too much. So what does that mean?

Suddenly something opens up, a form dissolves. This is what death is. A form of life dissolves.

What is left when a form of life dissolves? Formless nothingness. From the point of view of the mind, you're left with nothing, no thing.

The formless one life, the one consciousness prior to birth and death, to the arising of form is suddenly there because there's the opening. So there is a sacredness, which addressed sacredness before through entering the now. There's a great sacredness to death, any kind of death, because the formless one life is present.

As soon as a form dissolves, God shines through the emptiness that's left, the formless one life. But you have to say yes to the absence of that form. Then it becomes a portal.

And so there have been people who have experienced deep loss, unbearable loss, and suffered tremendously. And at some point, the yes arose. And suddenly there was that great peace that they couldn't explain, that passes all understanding.

Despite, it looked like the peace is there almost despite of what's happening. And yet there is a connection, not a direct causal connection. It's the death as a portal.

And then death is no longer fearful. Once you have surrendered to one form of death in your life, death is actually quite beautiful and sacred. So say yes to death.

Not necessarily the big death. Death comes also in little, very little ways. Any diminishment of your sense of self is a little death.

Any loss, even minor loss, is a little death. And instead of resisting it, all right, a diminishment of your sense of self comes with such an insignificant thing as somebody insulting you. If somebody insults you, your mind made sense of self feels less.

It's a diminishment. Therefore it is, even an insult, is a form of death to the egoic sense of self. Now, usually there's the compulsion to immediately compensate for the diminishment by, in the case of an insult, shouting back something at the person who insulted you.

So you insult that person in turn. And so to the egoic sense of self, that works because you have just repaired it. You have recreated a balance, something you've been diminished in your sense of self through the insult, and immediately, automatically, unconsciously, you threw back an insult at that person.

And so on the level of egoic identity, that actually works. You feel a little bit better because you have restored your sense of self. That's how it works.

So you have, the diminishment has immediately been repaired or restored. It's the compulsion to react. Now, as a little experiment, provided there's enough presence in you at that moment, when somebody insults you, you can try, what happens if I do not compensate for that?

Just as a kind of semi-scientific experiment, what happens if I do not repair my diminished sense of self and simply let it be, let the diminished sense of self be? You could practice with it when you're driving and somebody shouts, you idiot, where did you get your license or something? And you'd look back and you sense your inner body.

Now, this is an amazing difference. If you, at that moment, you're in your inner body, it doesn't matter because your sense of identity is no longer in the image, the mental image of who you are in the head, which if it were totally in there, that would be, somebody calling you an idiot, would be a diminishment. But if your sense of self is within this energy field that no matter what sounds are coming out of this person's mouth, doesn't really matter.

And there is a diminishment only on the level of the mind. And you accept that, it's a little experiment. It's not, I don't recommend it to people who are very timid because, and it's not to be confused with a fearful way of not reacting out of fear.

Some people habitually don't react because they have a fear of confrontation and they don't want to, so to those people, I don't recommend this practice. There are other practices for you, but a normal sense of self, except because if you're a little, if you've never spoken up for yourself, then really that has become your egoic sense of self and you would have to go the other way as an experiment. But any diminishment, accept it and see that nothing actually has been diminished.

And when you completely accept a diminishment of your sense of self, suddenly what looks like a moment of weakness, there's great strength suddenly underneath. You haven't died, you haven't disappeared. And there's enormous strength there and peace.

And this you could also practice in an argument. You're trying to be right with your partner perhaps. And suddenly, perhaps, oh, right, okay, but maybe I'm not right.

Maybe you're right, I think you're right. Instead of defending a mental position, if you can practice it when you can see that your partner is actually right and see how the compulsion is to deny that, not because you're fighting for the truth, you don't want the truth, you want to survive in your sense of self. So you will distort the truth no matter how strongly you distort the truth, you'll do anything to survive in your sense of self.

And this is what happens when partners argue. And instead, drop the, okay, you're right.

I did do that, or I failed to do that, and I usually fail to do that, or I always do that.

You're completely right. You're right. That's an enormous, suddenly there's enormous strength from the point of view of ego looks weakness.

It's also a little form of death and not to resist that. And this is the whole meaning of Jesus is when he says, has this strange story of turning the other cheek. He simply say, experiment with non-reactivity without automatically defending your sense of self and see the enormous strength that is there when you no longer take the mind made sense of self for who you are.

So that's, I remember when my, I have a younger half brother and he was, his ego grew, he was 16. And I noticed, I didn't live with him, but sometimes would visit him or he would visit me. And I noticed his growing ego and manifested as an inability to ever say, I don't know.

He just couldn't get himself to say, I don't know, because to the ego, and this is not just, it's an egoic trait, even to say, I don't know, feels I'm becoming weaker, I must know. So he couldn't say, I don't know, and I observed it. And sometimes when somebody asked him something or asked him a question, he would come up with the most absurd explanation, just to cover up the fact that he didn't know.

And then I suggested to him, next time, if you don't know something, try to say, I don't know, and see what happens. Just try as an experiment. What happens if you say, I don't know?

And then the time came and I asked him something and he was just about to come up with a fictitious answer, a complete fantasy. I raised my finger to remember, and he stopped for a moment and then said, I don't know. And that felt, he couldn't almost, couldn't get himself to utter these words.

And I said, Auroch, and you're still alive. You haven't died. He looked at me strangely.

The amazing thing is, yes, you haven't died. You don't need to be right. Occasionally you may be right.

So that's the diminishment and that life does that to you. So the compulsion to defend yourself, which is your sense of self, the defensiveness that every ego carries as its shield, the defensiveness then doesn't operate anymore. You don't need the defensiveness anymore because you're too strong for that.

In the Course in Miracles, which is a book that was channeled many years ago, has a nice sentence that says, whenever you become defensive about anything, know that you have identified yourself with an illusion. That is the illusion, of course, of the self. So that's, and you cannot not observe these patterns that arise in you that are the egoic self patterns.

Defensiveness arises and suddenly there's a witnessing presence. So you become free simply through observing very often the patterns of the self, of the mind, trying to survive, trying to make it. So you don't need to be totally free of mind from now on and you have failed if you are not.

It's enough to know it, to see it, to be there as the witness. And then you're there as the witness also of, and this is something that, as many of you know, the generic, one could almost say, the generic emotion that human beings carry, the residue of past human suffering, the generic field of pain, emotional pain, that every human already comes into this world with, created by thousands and thousands of years of living through mind-made sense of self, which has created enormous suffering on the planet, humans inflicting enormous suffering on themselves and on each other for thousands and thousands of years, as long as the ego has been there. So, and that suffering becomes, I'm sure if we could examine the DNA in more detail, we would find that every DNA has also a programming in it that is emotional pain that's simply been inherited.

And this is something that humans, that it is this generation, this presence arises in you can become free of. But nobody, very few human beings are already free of that. Most humans still carry the pain body as an inherited field of emotional pain inside.

Even those who are very conscious already, even if you're no longer resisting what is, you are aligned with the present moment, you're no longer uttering the mantra of the ego, which is no, you live in the yes and in alignment with what is, and yet occasionally you will still experience an influx of emotional pain, sometimes caused by relatively minor things, bringing up enormous amount of either anger or fear or sadness, whatever form your pain body takes. And that's, can easily obscure the arising presence if you don't recognize it.

If you don't recognize it and if you personalize it, then it becomes, the emotional pain that you carry, which is sometimes dormant, sometimes active, when it becomes active, flows into your sense of self, the mind made sense of self. The emotion energizes your mind made sense of me and it's unhappy story. And an unhappy story energized by the pain body becomes extremely unhappy because your human pain is flowing into me and my story.

You don't recognize that it is human pain, you think it's me, the happiness of me and my life and my story is unbearable. And so, and the pain body loves it. The pain body could be also described as the innate tendency, a human addiction to pain because the pain body is a field of emotional pain, which simply means energy, life energy that is not flowing freely, it's tight and stuck, constricted, painful.

I describe it almost as an entity that lives in you, an emotional entity, nothing wrong with that. Everything is an entity, when you think a thought, the thought is also an energy form and an entity for while it lasts. So that is the pain body that humans carry and when it feeds periodically, when it needs more pain, it will move into your mind and control your thinking if you don't recognize it as the pain body when it comes up, often as a reaction to something relatively minor.

When it's ready to come up and feed, its dormant state has come to an end and the pain body enters the active state, which is feeding time. Then what arises is it goes into your thoughts and feeds on your thinking. Your thinking is aligned with the feeling, the very painful feeling that you feel.

So you're feeding the pain body and the pain body loves it and you love your pain because at that moment you've become the pain body temporarily, your sense of self is one with the pain, and it's your painful story, energized by the emotion and you don't know what's going on, you just know it's dreadful and it's feeding also on, it's feeding on your mind and it will attempt to feed on other people around, especially your partner. When it needs the feedback of further pain, push the right buttons, give me pain, please. So after it's in relationships, you can see it in the almost compulsive, acting out periodically of drama, something in both partners needs that, they love it.

Well, the pain body loves it. So this is an addiction one could almost say to pain, the pain body renews itself, then it becomes dormant again for a little while and you can be more present again. So pain body will obscure presence unless you can recognize it for what it is and continue to watch it so that you cut the connection between the emotional field of human pain and your thought processes.

So the pain body is observed directly in your body. This is why another reason why it's so important to enter the body with your attention, to inhabit the body. It is also important for this reason that then you can much more easily be the witnessing presence when the pain body arises and allow it to be because what else can you do?

It is. There is the yes to what is. If what is is pain inside you, anger, fear, sadness, whatever form it takes, this is the isness of this moment and you say, yes, there's the pain and you allow it to be.

By allowing it to be and just watching it almost as a physical thing, you've cut the link between the pain body and your thought processes. The pain body is no longer using your mind and feeding on your thinking. It still has a momentum, of course, but that momentum is no longer added to by your thoughts.

So this is how gradually the energy charge of the pain body becomes weaker. Simply by bringing witnessing presence to it and acceptance and watching that turbulence or watching that heaviness or watching that tightness that you feel. And so that's how gradually the pain becomes transmuted.

The more you bring the presence to it, the more it actually feeds presence. It's like a fire. The energy that was trapped in there, when you bring presence to it, feeds more presence.

And then after a while, you notice every time the pain body comes up, you become very alert. Not that it might still be there for a while, but there's great alertness as it's there. And you watch.

The alertness is actually being fed by it. So the pain body becomes, you could say your teacher. It teaches you, it pushes you into presence, whereas before it pulled you into unconsciousness, identification with it.

And then you observe other pain bodies. Some people don't have the cycle of dormant pain body and active pain bodies. Some people have a pain body that is continuously active.

Some cases just underneath the surface and waiting for an excuse. Or when your pain body is active and you encounter somebody with a pain body that's just underneath the surface waiting, you will get some attack from that person because the pain body recognizes another pain body. It senses the animation in you.

If your pain body is active, you come into contact with a person whose pain body is simply just waiting to be fed. And pain bodies recognize each other very, because other pain bodies recognize themselves and it works. So that's, it's an amazing thing to watch pain body.

You can watch it in other people. You can watch it in your partner and you can watch, you can see the sudden influx of pain body, how the energy field within a few seconds or minutes can become totally transformed of that person. And suddenly they embody the pain and the pain body looks through their eyes at you and it wants trouble.

And any excuse will do. Whatever you say, you cannot utter more than three sentences and you will have said something wrong. And then the pain body will get in there.

And that's wonderful as part of your spiritual practice. What you, when you sense the pain body in yourself becoming active, sometimes triggered by a thought only, sometimes triggered by a little event around you or what somebody else has said, and you watch it and feel other parts of the body that have not been affected by the pain. For hands, sometimes arms, they are still alive.

Your feet, not many pain bodies move into the feet. Your feet are still there. So you have a sense of aliveness around the pain body.

And that becomes part of the spaciousness that I mentioned earlier, that you sense around events, around whatever happens. Whatever happens, happens within the field of spaciousness. And to sense the inner body, pain body tends to be here, solar plexus, stomach, sometimes belly, chest, around here.

And around it, you sense there's still an aliveness. And that kind of holds, that becomes the beginning of the sense of spaciousness around the pain. It's not easy initially with that strong pain to still have a sense of spaciousness around it.

But that is the, comes with the allowing. It is. So no longer, through the, no longer personalizing it.

It's no longer me, the unhappy me. It is not even unhappiness anymore. It's simply pain.

And not even pain. It's simply heaviness, turbulence, tightness. That's what it is.

So this is the beginning of the end of human pain. And what you do in yourself has enormous effect on even on people that you don't come into contact with because whatever happens within one human being affects many others. And there's a, there are collective pain bodies.

There's huge pain bodies still in the collective human psyche. And everybody's personal pain body, the personal aspect that the pain you suffered as a child that added to the pain that was already there when you came into this life form, the pain that your parents had, your parents' pain body, all that is added, of course, to the pain body. And that becomes a personal aspect of pain body.

And then there's an enormous collective aspect. It's, in some places you can sense it even when you enter a city or a country, some certain locations, certain, where people come together or live together, certain have a stronger pain body than others. And sometimes you can sense it all around you, the heaviness of human pain.

Some countries have a heavy collective pain body and every inhabitant, some of their pain body will be part of the collective pain body. So you feel that and you can see how pain body is used by people who want to make money through the media, through films, and you will see that probably 80% of films that they make are designed to feed people's pain body. That's why they're so successful because there's so many pain bodies longing for more pain.

So they go, they pay money to watch pain, humans inflicting pain on others. They pay money to watch that. Who, why do they, who, what in them is it that wants to see that?

There must be something that loves pain, otherwise they wouldn't possibly pay money to watch that. And of course there is something that loves pain in humans. It feeds on that.

And it's not that the people who make these films are evil. What Jesus said, his final words apply here, forgive them for they know not what they do. At least I don't think they do.

They know not what they do. They simply know this is what makes money. So we have a whole industry, large part of which is designed to feed the human pain body.

[Speaker 2] (2:14:40 - 2:14:41)

It's mad.

[Speaker 1] (2:14:47 - 2:34:33)

Once you see it, you can see how mad it is. And they can talk endlessly politicians about we must no longer have all this violence on TV. As long as the pain bodies demand it, it'll be there.

They will no longer make violent films when people stop paying money, when pain bodies have diminished in their energy charge and humans are no longer identified with it. Nobody would want to see these things obviously without the addiction to pain, without the need for further pain. But so this is the beautiful practice of living with your pain body, of allowing it to be there, of bringing witnessing presence to it and a sense of spaciousness around it.

It's okay, it's not that bad. And it's not me, it's human pain. Not my problem, it's not my personal problem, that would be heavy.

If I make human pain, thousands of years of it into my personal problem, oh, that's heavy. So you dissolve human pain in yourself. The only place where you can really dissolve it.

Most of the violence that is being inflicted on humans by other humans is actually pain body violence. That's how it works. So let's welcome even that because it is.

It is. Not resist it, not fight it. It won't go away like that.

Welcome it because the welcoming is a very gentle energy field. Whenever you say yes, there's a gentleness and the pain body is the opposite of yes. The very core of pain body is a big no to life.

It's the emotional part of the egoic state of no to what is, the contraction. So how to become free of the no is to bring the yes into the no. So even that is welcomed in yourself.

And then you often will find it in others, the pain body arising in others. And it requires great presence, not to be drawn into reactivity when a pain body demands to be fed by you. And pain bodies are very clever, very cunning.

They know how they can get you to feed them by reactivity. And it requires great presence not to be drawn into feeding somebody else's pain body. And presence does not mean that you shut yourself off, that you build a wall around yourself and encapsulate yourself and say, your pain body can no longer touch me.

That means you've cut yourself off from that human being. I am beyond pain body now. No, that's not, presence is an openness and the alertness, great intensity of presence, which is alertness, is required to stay present when you're being challenged by somebody's pain body.

If you recognize it, again, it's easier. If you recognize it for what it is, it is easier to say, right, there's the pain body speaking. And then you, if you can be in your body, and here again, how vitally important this is, when you're being challenged by somebody's pain body, if you can be intensely present within the inner body, there's no tension in that, just intense aliveness, every cell present, alert, alive, and there you are.

And that alertness that is throughout your entire being, that's how to face somebody else's pain body. And the alertness never opposes, it is open, and yet it is a frequency that is so much higher than pain body, it's just the pain body cannot touch it. If there's nothing there for the pain body to get into or to be fed by, so that's beautiful practice.

And that, of course, means you're in the state of non-reactivity, pain bodies demand reactivity. If I hit you, will you be kind enough to hit me? Please, you're not suppressing a reaction, it's not that.

If there's not enough presence, you will react. And then you can watch that, so nothing is lost. Watch your reaction, oh, you're already in the middle of shouting something back, and then you watch that.

Oh, I'm feeding his pain body, okay. Then you know, so you're no longer completely trapped in that. And sometimes pain body has, they have their momentum, and even if you know it, it's still playing out its momentum, and you're just the witness in the background.

Well, that's good enough, and gradually, the witness intensifies. And one could almost say that then even the pain body becomes a portal into presence. It looks as if the pain body were a monster standing in front of the portal at first, and yet when it's no longer resisted, when you bring witnessing presence to it, the monster that seems to be standing, blocking the portal, becomes a portal in itself.

And this is why many people with very heavy pain bodies have become free, because they couldn't stand it anymore. I was such a person with an unbearably heavy pain body. And when I said the words that night, which I mentioned briefly in the introduction to the book, I cannot live with myself any longer, the self that I couldn't live with was enormously energized by my pain body.

My pain body was an essential part of that self that I could not live with any longer. And that then, for some reason, dissolved, popped all at once, and what was left was I. Not the self that I couldn't live with anymore.

The I was left. Presence. The story collapsed.

And this is happening to each one of you, not perhaps all at once, that's relatively rare. It sometimes happens by grace, but it is happening increasingly, you become free of identification with the self, that mind-made self, because you don't want that anymore. What remains is I, a sense of simple beingness, I am-ness, a field of alive, spacious presence, alertness, I'm using all these words because each word is a pointer to the same thing, or rather, no thing.

You are the field of alertness, of aliveness. I am, I am presence. And presence is, I usually avoid these words, but presence is divine presence.

Presence is the presence of God in this world. That's what the true nature of presence is. And presence comes through this form.

The presence of God comes through this form. That's the beauty of it. Remember the portals, inner body, silence, the now, really all one, nature, and the involuntary portals, loss, death, diminishment, involuntary portals, and then even the pain body becoming a portal because it pushes you into presence.

It's an adventure. What could be greater than to be part of the transformation of human consciousness? What else could be the purpose of your life?

What could you possibly think of as the purpose of your life, except for the transformation of human consciousness to happen through you, the only true purpose? You're aligned with the purpose of the universe then, the one purpose, the greater purpose, which is consciousness. Consciousness wants to flower.

It's already flowering here in this form, and it wants to flower through humans. Before flowers appeared on the planet, there were millions of years of plant life without flowers. Isn't that amazing?

And one day, the first flower opened. Consciousness manifested suddenly in a new form, the flowering of plant life, and now consciousness manifesting in the flowering of human consciousness. And the rest, what you do on the level of your story doesn't really matter.

What you do doesn't matter, but the energy that flows into it, that matters. How you do it matters. State of consciousness in which you are while you do what you do is what matters, and that transforms what you do.

Or if what you do is not compatible with the arising consciousness, you will be removed from what you do, and there will be something totally new, and that'll happen. Or you will remove yourself. One morning, you wake up and say, I'm removing myself from here.

It could happen. Or life will take you and put you somewhere else. Or you stay where you are.

That's possible, too, and what you are becomes transformed because now what you do is only an excuse, really. The external activity becomes an excuse for something deeper. You just go through the motions, and you do it with care and love, but the love that flows in, the joy, the aliveness, the presence that flows into what you do is the real reason for doing it, and these human beings that you encounter as part of your activity, they're not really encountering them because they want to buy something from you or whatever they do.

That's only the surface. That's only the excuse for your meeting as a transmission, because the good thing is that presence spreads. It transmits itself.

You don't have to do it. It transmits itself. So each one of you becomes a field of presence, not less and less of a person with its heaviness and its problems.

Of course, you have a past, and that's fine, and a little bit of future, that's fine, but something far greater is moving through you, and so instead of walking out of here as a person, you're simply a field of alive, aware presence. That's the S. That's who you are, and you don't have to tell this to anybody in words.

Just be it. That's the teaching. Occasionally, words will come too.

When the moment is right, you will say to somebody, can you feel your inner body? And they will say, what are you talking about? I want you to listen to my problems, and you say, can you feel your hand?

Does it feel alive? And say, oh, yeah, just feel. Oh, yeah, and so gradually, little perhaps with practical things, show them something.

Oh, that's new. So that's the, enjoy the adventure. Don't demand that you should already be perfect, because you are already perfect underneath the story, but I'm saying don't demand that you should be continuously present and then criticize yourself when you're not.

That's the mind again. You should be, by now, you really should. And when that happens, observe it as mental noise.

There is no future state that you need to achieve. When I speak of the transformation of human consciousness, the mind can misinterpret it and say, okay, I need to achieve a state that I'm not in yet. That's, again, that's the error.

You do not need to achieve a state that you're not in yet. Be fully with this moment and immediately your spiritual master, mistress, master, I don't know what they're called. Be completely aligned with this moment, totally, yes.

That's it. Beyond that is nothing that you need to achieve. The spiritual master is totally surrendered to what is, completely one with that.

That's all. Doesn't demand that I should be perfect by now. On the level of form, you will never be perfect.

There'll be little, you have your little idiosyncrasies and this and that. Not to demand I should be totally, totally pure, totally this, totally that. Every form has many limitations.

Those are the limitations of form. That's fine. That's in the nature of form to have many limitations.

It is. That's how it is. So the perfection that is already in you emerges, so to speak, when you give up the search for perfection on a level where you can't find it ever.

What a relief. It's been wonderful to be with you, what really ultimately means with myself. Thank you.

Eckhart Tolle Video Art of Presence 6h29m

[Speaker 3] (0:20 - 0:42)

Sunrise, another new morning we celebrate. We are the new man.

[Speaker 2] (0:48 - 1:10)

Sunrise, over the mountain, spreading your light over the land.

[Speaker 1] (1:32 - 57:43)

I trust that nobody is in a hurry to start. Welcome to our retreat, your retreat, from the world, especially the world in your head. Taking a step back.

Retreat. You've come here, not alone. You've probably come with your mind.

The mind has come with you. But be thankful, because the mind allowed you to come here. Some people didn't make it.

A few always cancel at the last minute. I wonder if we should go now. I don't feel like going.

What's the point of another retreat? Whatever the mind can say. And then you completely believe in whatever thought the mind throws up.

Yeah, no, I'm not going. Maybe I should. And with some of you, it was touch and go whether you would make it or not.

I'm sure it happens. And yet, there was a stronger impulse in you to come than the resistance to coming here, which you may have felt also. Or which you may feel, even though this is not a long retreat, even though it's only three days, that you may feel this resistance even while you're here.

You may already have felt it. The mind, the thinking mind, the stream of conditioned thinking, the egoic entity that arises out of that, may be looking for an opportunity to get you away from here. From time to time, it may come up.

It may focus on something that is not absolutely perfect in your environment, in whatever situation you're in here, because there's no such thing as a perfect situation, unless you live in complete surrender to what is, in which case every situation is perfect. But from the point of view of the mind, of course you can always find something that isn't right, that you could complain about. And the mind says, this situation is not as it should be.

This shouldn't be, that shouldn't be. Yes, but it is. So you work with the limitations that are here, even here, at a retreat center, certain limitations, different ones from the ones you find at home.

Less privacy perhaps, you can complain about that. Not warm enough, this or that. The person you're sharing the room with is not according to the expectations of the mind.

Not spiritual enough. Or even worse, more spiritual than me. Oh, he must have been at it for a long time.

So, in any situation, you don't have to wait long before some kind of flaw in the external situation will come up, what looks like a flaw. Which means there's a clash between the expectations and demands of the mind and the simple suchness of this moment. And some egos love to be personally offended when these things happen.

So, how can, to me, a person of something, they should, why don't they? He should, she should, she shouldn't, they shouldn't. The weather should be warmer by now.

So, you observe the talking entity in the head as you're here, which occasionally may try to talk you out of being here, either by physically removing you from here and you run away, or by taking you away from here by absorbing all your attention into a mind stream. And physically you're then still here, and mentally you're somewhere totally different, past, future, or dreamland. And you can see then that presence, there's no presence, there is an absence.

Now, of course, this retreat is not called The Art of Absence, but The Art of Presence. But absence may, does not require art. Absence happens easy enough.

So you may detect, occasionally, yourself becoming absent, which simply means your attention is no longer here, it's being drawn into a stream of thinking. And usually can tell easily by looking at a person whether they are present or absent. Of course, there are degrees of absence.

You can be totally absent, which means you don't hear a single word. Or you can be absent in the sense that you are commenting on what you hear, which means you're not really fully absorbing. You are more interested in your own standpoint, opinion, or mental position, than in what is being said.

And often, you believe your standpoint is, of course, the right one. There's identification with a mental position. And that's a form of absence also.

It's not total absence, but you're not really fully here. That may happen, for example, to people who are very knowledgeable about spiritual matters, have read lots of books, which can become a hindrance to if you carry them in here. So if you feel the impulse to leave here, that's, of course, another way the mind may succeed in getting you away from here.

If you can, don't just run off at the first thought that comes into your head with an accompanying emotion of disgust or whatever. Back home to my privacy, my own bed. Why did I leave that?

I could be more peaceful there than can I be here. And the moment you get home, you say, I should never have left. I failed.

And the torture continues. But in all of you, something is arising that is a relatively new thing, at least the fact that it's arising on a wider scale now is a relatively new thing on the planet, and that is a state of consciousness that we could call presence. And to deepen that, that's why we're here, to deepen the ability to be fully present with what is.

The ability to respond to life, which is now, always now, out of that state of presence, not out of conditioned mind stuff, conditioning of the mind. Sometimes I use strange expressions like you grow in presence. Presence grows in you.

Presence arises more fully. Excuse me, says a mind somewhere, you haven't defined presence yet. I don't understand what you mean.

In the course of the retreat, you may get a few definitions, a few pointers, never enough to satisfy the mind, of course, especially as regards presence, because through thought, you cannot possibly grasp what presence is, because thought is always grasping at concepts. And then, ah, I've got it now. I've defined it, that is.

I've given it form. But presence is vast. It has no form.

Thought, each thought is a thought form. It's born and then it goes, or it sticks around for a while, or it takes over for a while. Thoughts, every thought is a little entity, a little being, a little temporary energetic entity.

So I'm not right now defining presence, because it is unnecessary. As you said here, presence deepens, because presence is, to a large extent, the unspoken dimension of this gathering. If you're here thinking that the words that are being spoken are the central point of our retreat, that would be an error.

It's not the case. The words are secondary. What else is there?

And you may notice, the mind is always waiting for the next word, or it's busy thinking about the last one. Is it possible to be here without thinking about the last word, and without waiting for the next one, and without going to sleep? Because that's one way of not thinking about the last and not waiting for the next.

But that's not the way here. You can do that at home. You can fall below thinking at home, easily.

A couple of drinks, TV. You're drifting towards unconsciousness, gradually. And you may feel a little better than the torture of your mind.

There, too, there is some relief from the daily torture of the mind, yes? But that's not the way we're going. It's not the way back to the animal realm, the nature realm, the mineral realm.

You can go all the way back. And it's wonderful for the animal realm in itself. It has a perfection that the human realm does not have.

Even the mineral has a perfection that the human does not have, because humans are transitional beings. They are neither one nor the other. So we are not here in an attempt to fall below thinking, but to rise above thinking, so to speak.

We are not becoming less awake, less alert, less alive, but more alert, more awake, more intensely alive. So here you have the level of thinking that's been the human dimension for thousands and thousands of years. Below it, you have the dimension of no thought, instinctive no thought, natural no thought.

And above it, you have the dimension of presence. You have transcended thought. How?

By not thinking about the last word and not waiting for the next one and not even trying to work out what I've just said. Not making presence into some new thought form. Can one live like that in a state of relaxed alertness, which is presence, not the state of alertness that comes from mind and ego, which is not real alertness, which is really a state of fearful tension.

No. It's open, not closed, completely open. And you're able to look, to hear, to feel, to touch, sense perceptions against a background of stillness, which is another aspect of presence, alert stillness.

Sense perceptions happen here, and when you're not thinking about the last moment or looking to the next one, and after you've heard a sentence, a string of words, there's simply spacious stillness, just as in the speaker, this form sitting on a chair, there's stillness between the words. I don't know what the next word is going to be, or could I know? And there's no need to know.

You may have noticed already, we don't have an agenda here, a big folder, which tells you what we're going to do this weekend. We're going to get through these 20 points. In other words, there seems to be a lack of structure.

And that is true, there is a lack of mind-made structure. And yet, a different kind of structure is growing organically out of the present moment, and it knows where it's going. So you may have realized already how important the stillness is in this room, the external stillness, which we could call silence.

And there's a lot of it, despite the words, and the inner stillness, which simply means, what does that mean, inner stillness? It means, and this is the secret, consciousness, conscious, without thought, a state of great intelligence. Not that thought is not going to operate ever again, but that becomes your home, the foundation, what you're rooted in, is that dimension of inner stillness that is there in the background.

It is the background to everything that happens. And that's already in you, of course. But most humans are so identified with what happens in the foreground of their existence, sense perceptions, events, experiences, thoughts, emotions, everyone drawing attention, everything that happens externally draws you, the world does that.

This matters. And you believe that it matters absolutely. And then the next thing matters even more.

And then the phone call comes along, this is really serious. And mostly every thought likes to matter. Take me seriously, says every thought.

Think, think. And even psychologists who are not interested in presence or anything like that, have examined the human mind and realized that 99% of our thinking is totally repetitive. And yet it's serious.

So that's being lost. When only the foreground, whatever happens in your life, in the foreground of your life includes thoughts and emotions and external things, when that absorbs all your attention continuously, one thing after another, or as one of my favorite quotes says, Churchill said, one damn thing after another. He was talking about world history, but he could have been talking about the human mind.

It's the same. It's only reflects, the outer reflects the inner. One damn thing after another.

One damn thought after another. And of course, nobody can argue with the fact that this is true because if you read world history, you can see that it is one dreadful thing after another. And if you look at your own mind, when you're lost in it, it's not a pleasant place.

Occasionally pleasant thoughts can happen and then quickly they turn around and always have another face. Like, dislike. Honeymoon, divorce.

So being lost is a normal state. Lost out there, lost in here. There's only that dimension then to your life.

We could call it, what happens. I'm only interested in what happens and complaining about what's not happening, what should be happening. Of course, not happening in the right way ever.

And yet, there is in you a dimension that frees you from total identification with the world, which includes the mind. And when you become conscious of that dimension, that's presence. When I say conscious of that dimension, language creates a duality that isn't there.

That's what language does. Because you become conscious of that dimension as yourself, as the essence of who you are. So that's not two, but one.

And this begins simply by acknowledging, as we said here, the dimension of silence, which is inner stillness. Simply to notice that there is, apart from the words, there is silence. In other words, the words are the foreground, the silence is the background.

And when you notice that there is silence in between and underneath the words, that moment of noticing is the arising of presence in you. The moment you notice silence, you become still inside. It's only because you became still inside that you can even notice that there is silence apart from the words.

The strange thing is, thought cannot even notice that there is silence, because thought is noise. So if I ask you the question, can you find out if there is silence in this room apart from the words? If you want to truly answer that question, you have to go, yes.

But while you went, you were not thinking. There was an alert presence. Then, of course, when you said yes, that was thought again.

That's all right. So whenever you notice, and not only as we sit here, because you may already have noticed, and if you have, that's a clear sign that presence is arising in you. You may already have noticed that there is quite a lot of silence around here, even if you step outside.

Especially if you've come from a city, you may notice that strongly, that there is, or in your room, oh, it's very silent here. And if you did notice that, that means how could you have noticed it if you'd not, for that moment at least, that's enough. There was no thought.

If there had been thought, continuous stream of thinking, which is still the destiny of many humans, their fate, you would not even have known it, or without knowing it, you would have felt uncomfortable, very uncomfortable. And you would have jumped to the TV set, if you have one in your room. By the way, I recommend strongly that you don't use it.

You would have jumped to the TV set and put it on. Ah, some noise. And you didn't even know why you felt uncomfortable.

But if you noticed it, who noticed it? Not you, the mind-made entity, the egoic entity. No.

No. Something deeper in you, the presence, the stillness in you, noticed it. Otherwise you would not have noticed it.

Someone was visiting Thailand. He told me he was visiting monasteries and he climbed up this hill a long, long way from any city. On the hill he saw a beautiful monastery.

He climbed up this hill. He arrived at the top of the hill, entered the monastery. Silence, absolute silence.

Monks walking around. He said, this is paradise. I'm going to stay here.

And suddenly, cheap loudspeakers started coming on that were hidden in the trees with the Thai version of kind of pop songs. He said, this cannot be. And he ran to a monk and said, what is happening?

He said, we're expecting a group of lay devotees from Bangkok and they become very uncomfortable when it's totally silent here. So to make them feel better, we put on that music. So my friend, the pilgrim, went on.

It wasn't paradise. It never is external if you look for it externally. So the people from Bangkok complained.

Don't like it here. There was so much mental noise. It became uncomfortable.

So one of the things here during our retreat, essential, absolutely, is to notice the silence, not only while we come together here. Also, when you walk from one building to another, when you're in your room or going for a walk in nature, notice the background of silence because in nature you have some, yes, beautiful, gentle sounds and you hear those, you pay attention to that. But you also pay attention to the underlying silence.

Then that dimension arises in you. And you can walk there as a field, a walking field of stillness, a large stillness, and no longer walking there, carrying the heaviness of your mind, the noise factory, and the heaviness of your personal history that you need to think about while you're walking in nature, your problematic life situation, the dilemma of your existence. There's no life situation that is not problematic, and if it's not problematic right now, why not wait a little and it'll turn problematic again?

Because whenever you're only identified with that level, that dimension, everything is problematic, and if it's not now, it'll become problematic. I gave the example of the honeymoon. The honeymoon is not problematic, and a little later it turns into problematic.

The great job that you've just got with a big paycheck is not problematic, and a year later you become sick with stress, or there's so much infighting that it becomes hell, or in many ways in which situations can turn around and become problematic again, and that's the one damn thing after another. And that's the truth of Buddha, who said wherever you go, whatever you do, whoever you meet, whatever situation you go into, whatever place, whatever, anything, it's dukkha, suffering. If it's not suffering now, just wait.

And of course he talked about being lost in the world. So one, our practice here, to notice the silence, and noticing is enough. Then thoughts come back, and then again there's more alertness.

You will notice as you'll hear a continuous shift probably between thoughts arising and presence. And if it's 90% thoughts and 10% presence, that's great already, because we're in an evolutionary shift. So the new is arising in you.

But as presence arises, the ability to witness thoughts so that thoughts don't overpower you completely grows. Before, in the absence of presence, every thought has you completely in its grip, and the emotion usually comes with it that goes with that thought. And then as presence arises, comes the ability to notice your thoughts in the same way that you notice a noise, an external noise.

And then you may notice, oh, there's a lot of noise up here. The noticing comes always from presence, from the stillness. So when you notice that your mind is noisy, wow, it's noisy.

How do you know that? Because you have some access to that dimension that is unconditioned, the consciousness that is unconditioned, which is presence. See, we have another little point.

The unconditioned consciousness that is presence. And from there you can see, oh, what your mind is doing. And the mind then is no longer a serious business.

You can even start to smile at what it does. It's mechanical. After a while, you look through the main strategies of the mind, how it tries to get your attention and so on.

There you are again. There it is. And it's no longer your personal.

The mind becomes depersonalized. Before, the mind was me. The mind and the accumulated memories that make up my personal history was me.

And I walked around with the burden of me, with my unfulfilled history. Unfulfilled and unfulfilling. Not enough.

And whatever strange thoughts were associated with that, life passed me by. Unfair, it treated me unfairly. I missed it.

Whatever thoughts you have about your personal history. Something went wrong in 19-something, 1984. It shouldn't have happened.

That's why I cannot be happy now. Or you carry an identity based on an unpleasant experience that somebody did to you. You survived, and that's wonderful.

Yes, it was dreadful, because as long as humanity is unconscious, totally identified with mind, they do many dreadful things. So you cannot come onto this planet without experiencing dreadful things. Some are more dreadful than others.

And you suffer. There's no child that doesn't suffer. And yet, to build an identity on the basis of past pain is a dreadful limitation.

To have a painful story, that is the story of me, and needing to think about that, because you cannot think about it, gradually you might even forget. And need to talk about it, continuously, and then see yourself as this or that, you have a labor fight. No matter how tragic it was at the time, and some awful things are happening at this very moment in certain parts of the planet, no matter what it is, the fact is, you survived.

And yet the mind used it, because it's always looking for a stronger sense of self. It's looking for an identity. It's looking for a stronger me.

And it can use something like that, something very bad that happened to me, or the other way around. Something very bad that I did to someone. So that's guilt.

You identify with something that you once did, and you wouldn't do it now, but there you didn't know any better. That's why it happened. Unconsciousness.

So if you identify with unconsciousness, either that came through you, or what other unconscious humans did to you, there you create a heavy, painful sense of self, a story. But everybody has their story, even if there's not one big traumatic event in their lives, they have their own story, their personal story, their identity. And how liberating it is to see that it is no more than things that happened, that ultimately that is not who you are.

You are not the accumulation of those memories or emotions. That's there, yes. So as presence arises, you recognize that was never who you are.

Your personal history has its place, undoubtedly. It happened. You may have old photos to prove it.

It really happened. And the photos at some point begin to fade. Even I, I haven't yet reached old age, but even I have photos from my childhood that are already beginning to fade.

They're going yellow. The story is dissolving. Wouldn't it be strange if photos faded more quickly than the human body?

And after 10 years, you open your photo album and there's nothing left. Wow, that feels good. And yet there is a dimension in every human that was never really touched by what happened.

The eternal, timeless state of consciousness that is presence. Who you are underneath the form that your life takes. Your life situation, as I sometimes call it.

The dilemma of your life situation. You mean other people also have a dilemma? I'm not the only one.

Surely no life situation can be more problematic than mine. No story is that fulfilling. If you look behind, even those who in the eyes of the world have made it, success, fame, wealth.

If you look behind the facade, you see there's unhappiness. Sometimes greater than with other people because they still think they can make it. They have made it and it hasn't freed them.

So here we are. The dimension of form as this retreat center, this gathering, the people, including also your mind, the thoughts that come, the emotions also, comes and goes. No form lasts that long.

Before you know it, this retreat is over. First you look forward to it and then it's there. But since the world of form is governed by time, which is ultimately an illusion, just as form is ultimately an illusion, life is like an express train.

It never stops. You're on it and so one event goes past. There's the retreat.

Here it is. It's over already. It's Sunday and it's time to go home.

And that's what form, if we could see, truly see reality, external reality, so-called, we would be shocked, deeply shocked. By truly see, I mean the way we perceive it is as if the world around us were solid. The buildings, the structures, economic companies, corporations, political, even the people have their job and their pension scheme and everything is in place and it's a very solid reality.

And it's sometimes, another example of solid reality is that death is a taboo, even now in Western culture, because it would show you that human bodies are not solid. They dissolve continuously around you. But you mustn't look at death.

It's forbidden to see dead bodies. No, just death. And when it comes to people, they react as if they never knew that such a thing existed.

He died. And nobody told them it was some abstract strokes in the head, distant, everybody does. Okay, everybody does.

But they live as if that were not the case at all. It's sometimes helpful to travel to India where they don't have a taboo and you see dead people openly. And it's the same here.

They're dying everywhere, but they're shut away. Don't look. Pretend that nothing is happening.

Another way why India is so wonderful to go to and it's spiritually beautiful experience is that the world of form is less predictable there. Here you have timetables and the trains run and everything. You can plan your trip.

And there it's, what's going on? Nothing goes as planned and it's miraculously, in the end it works. As one Indian man said to me, we live by grace.

He was talking to an Israeli person and the Israeli person, they asked, what do you live by? I can't remember who asked the first question. The Indian man asked the Israeli man, what do you live by?

And the Israeli man said, we live by guts. And then he asked the Indian man, he said, oh, well, we live by grace. And there you see that the structures of the external world are not that stable after all.

And of course it's the same here. It's an illusion. The stability is an illusion.

And sometimes a structure that looks so permanent crumbles. Whether it's the communist system or whether it's a building. Or you lose your job or your corporation suddenly.

The multi-billion dollar corporation collapses. With your pension plan and everything. Now if you, what we see is a kind of frozen view.

Frozen view of the external world. If you saw a more realistic perspective, a speeded, I would suggest, a speeded up version on film. You sometimes see it how a flower opens.

They speed up the film. And you see the flower coming out of the soil. Opening.

Withering. And disappearing. And if you could see in that way the human existence.

Baby. And then running around for a few years. And then growing wrinkles come like a fruit or flower that goes old.

[Speaker 2] (57:46 - 57:46)

Gone.

[Speaker 1] (57:54 - 1:09:41)

And then just a little bit longer it would take before so-called physical, heavy physical objects would also dissolve and become dust. This room, if you saw it speeded up, first the bodies would go. And then you have to just wait a few more seconds.

And then gradually you see cracks appearing. Things start falling down from the ceiling. And then the ceiling collapses.

And then there's only dust left and then the wind comes. So you would see everything is already in the process of dissolving. Continuous birth and death.

And humans are stuck in there somewhere. This is reality here. Now when you watch, when you see that fact in the sublime teaching of the Buddha called impermanence, you're astonished when you see it.

And you allow it to be. It is liberating to see that. To the egoic entity it's a dreadful thing.

Don't be so negative. Don't talk about these things. And yet if you allow that and you see how forms come and go, how the entire universe is that play of forms and everything dissolves as that form, something in you feels good.

It feels very peaceful to see that. How is it even possible to see it? To witness that?

I talk about that briefly in Stillness Speaks, the book. If the entire world were blue, you would not see the color blue. You need something that's not blue so that you can recognize blue.

If everything were impermanent, you wouldn't even know it. How can you know impermanence? Because there's something in you that is not impermanent.

But it has nothing to do with your form. The form is impermanent. And that's the beauty of death.

It frees that which was trapped in the form. And that is the beauty of watching and allowing the impermanent nature of the world to be, even to witness death, puts you in touch with the deathless, formless, one life, one consciousness that you are. So I, perhaps one of these days, I hope this just came to me, the film project, it could be one of the most spiritual films ever made, that shows how quickly things dissolve.

It might take a few years to film it. The human body, the animal body, flowers more quickly. And conceivably, one could do it artistically, so that you see even the entire planet is born and dies.

The sun is born and dies. Although it looks eternal compared to human existence. Presence is the only thing in you that is not a thing.

Presence is the formless. In Buddhism, the closest Buddhism gets to using a positive term, it never really uses positive, original teaching, I don't think ever used a positive term, so that you can't form a new concept in your head. The deathless realm, the deathless is a term sometimes used.

The mind wants a more accurate definition, and says, are you talking about God here? Because the mind wants it, ah, God, ah, there it is. It wants to hold it, hold it as a concept.

It's too vast, you cannot hold it. And then it attaches the word my to God, my God, or even worse, the word our, not yours. So our practice here, if you can even call it that, it's life, living, life is doing it, is presence.

Presence begins with being attentive to silence, both here and outside, that dimension. Tonight in your room, it doesn't matter how long you can be aware of it, you're aware of it, you lose it, you look at the TV screen and say, I wonder what's going on, and then you're back again, present, and then you look at something else, that's fine. In art.

And our practice, of course, is to work with the present moment as much as possible. You can go back to your normal existence, when you go home, you can just pass my dilemma, just stay with, simplify your life while you're here, and pay more attention to whatever this moment presents than past and future. Just this, there's always just this, just this.

To be able to do that, alertness is required. Without the alertness, you cannot have just this, you'll be past, future. Past, future is the sleep, dreamlike state of being identified with thought.

And then there's, oh, oh, you wake up. So you wake up twice, you wake up in the morning, and many times during the day, you wake up out of the stream of thinking. And the ability arises more and more to perceive without the interference of thought.

Thought is there when you need it, don't need to be concerned about that. When you need it, it'll still be there. In fact, it'll be much more powerful when it's truly needed for whatever purpose it is.

When you're not overpowered by thought, you can use thought for certain purposes. And inspired thinking will happen more and more, because inspired, any new thought, a new form, ah, a new insight, a new realization, can only come if you access the state of no thought. Out of that spacious stillness comes the new ah.

Oh. So, life is always this moment. It's never not this moment.

And so that, instead of having that as an abstract truth, yeah, I know that life is always now, and so what's next? So when it's an abstract truth, you say, okay, I've done that. There's only the now.

Okay, exam question one. Is there only the now? Or is there, there's only the now.

Okay. So not as an abstract, as a living truth or realization. Wow.

This is actually the fullness of it. This is life. This moment is the fullness of life.

No matter what form it takes, because the fullness is the fullness that is there when who you are is no longer obscured by thought forms. The little limited me. So our practice is, as I sometimes put it, becoming friendly with what is.

Whatever form this moment takes.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:43 - 1:09:44)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:45 - 1:21:50)

Okay. What does that do inside you? It frees you from the form that this moment takes.

If you react to the form that this moment takes, another form is created in you as a thought or an emotion that strengthens your being lost in form. And that's why the ego likes to react, because the ego is the form me. If you do not react, respond is a different matter to whatever is needed in this moment.

But your habitual state becomes allowing whatever form this moment takes to be. Then if action is needed, it comes out of that state of intelligence, which is allowing the now to be, allowing life to be, becoming one with life. One with life, which is now, can only be now.

One with life. Then life lives through you. And life is intelligent.

So when you do not resist the form that this moment takes, but you allow whatever form this moment takes, as the temperature in your room or the stain on the carpet, or even forms that before you would have complained about. It is, you can't dispute the fact that it is right now. It is.

You can, if it needs to be changed, it can be changed, you talk to someone. But even then there's an inner allowing of right now it is. Maybe I can talk to somebody and we can change it, repair the heater, if there's no heat.

But right now, that's it. Okay. And the most powerful spiritual practice is that allowing, in the allowing, you do not strengthen your own form anymore.

That's why the ego doesn't like that. And what arises is the timeless and formless essence of who you are. That's why surrender is so powerful.

Surrender to life. Where is life? Here, now.

To the ego that looks like weakness, and yet that is true power, intelligence, aliveness, and more. In many ways you can speak of it. So that is perhaps the two levels of practice, silence, noticing that, and noticing what happens and be one with it rather than against it, no matter what.

This is a relatively simple setting, but also there will be challenges. Things will come into the now that you could complain about, you could argue about, be offended about, feel it's a limitation, but it is. It is.

There is no future state to be achieved. If you come here hoping that by Sunday morning you will have achieved a particular state, you may be disappointed because you cannot achieve something that is already the essence of who you are and that you can only discover in the present moment. A few more practical things.

This retreat center has a few temptations that other retreat centers may not have. One is the TV set. Leave it alone if you can.

It stimulates the mind. Once you are truly, in many of you, presence is a delicate flower arising. A delicate flower needs a little bit of careful treatment.

Once presence is fully arisen, you are rooted in presence, you dwell in presence. It doesn't make that much difference anymore. You can watch TV if you want to, not that you would want to watch a lot.

And the same applies to alcoholic drink that is available here. And I would recommend that you don't indulge this weekend. Once presence is firmly established, then it doesn't matter anymore, not that you would want to drink large quantities.

Alcohol can easily... The good feeling that you get after a couple of glasses is to do that you are beginning to go below the thinking level. And suddenly you feel a bit more alive.

And the little egoic entity doesn't have that grip on you anymore. It gets a little bit more loose, so you are a bit more free. So it gives you a sense of liberation, pseudo-liberation.

And then comes another one, and another, and gradually you move more and more towards unconsciousness. And so this is why I don't recommend it here. That's all.

Another thing that I don't recommend, you may have seen, there's a big chessboard out there somewhere with huge chess pieces. And I would recommend, there's nothing wrong with chess, it's an incredible game, but it does stimulate the mind. There may be great chess masters who are still, while they play, I don't know.

But when I play it, it stimulates my mind. I don't know it very well. Okay, this one is going to jump there.

And then you have to think three, draw a head. For those who want it, there is a meditation and a class that incorporates movement by Kim this tomorrow morning and in the evening. So you can structure your own retreat in some ways, if you want that as part of it.

Some of you may want to remain silent. There's a room, dining room, for those who do not want to speak and for those who don't find a place in the dining room where they do speak. And so they have to be silent, whether they want to or not.

We may also move into some silence, perhaps spend a whole day in silence and just gradually reduce the amount of words that come out of our mouth. More important, of course, is what goes on in the noise machine in the head. You may have noticed this retreat doesn't move from beginning to more advanced, to more advanced.

The whole essence is there every moment. The rest of the retreat is not based on more. I've already told you everything.

The rest of your retreat is deepening. It's not the horizontal dimension. It's the vertical dimension.

Just sit for just a little while. When this body has gone, there's an empty chair here. Empty chairs are very beautiful.

So stay with the empty chair and yourself for just a little while.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:03 - 1:24:50)

♪ Mountain spreading your light ♪ ♪ Over the land, sun ♪ I trust that everybody's here, not just the body, the entire being.

[Speaker 1] (1:25:02 - 1:39:48)

Many of you have heard the Zen, famous Zen saying, chopping wood, carrying water. Zen is beautiful like that. It doesn't explain things.

They say that's the Zen life, chopping wood, carrying water. It's not surprising that many people study Zen for 20 years and still can't figure out what it is. Now, nowadays in the Western world, there are not that many people left who chop wood and carry water.

If you want heat or want to cook something, you turn on the switch. And for water, you turn on the tap. But for hundreds of years, that was one of the main activities.

They would repeat themselves every day, especially in a Zen monastery or anywhere in the world. But it was to describe the life of the Zen monk or nun, ordinary activity, and discovering the extraordinary in the ordinariness of life by bringing awareness or presence to the ordinary, by being aware of another dimension to the ordinary. And this is something we can embrace this weekend particularly, because in many ways, this retreat is ordinary.

We're not jumping up and down or screaming in ecstasy. Well, it could happen. Nor are we taking a little pill called ecstasy, unless you do.

But you don't need it here. On a similar vein, somebody recently wrote a book called After the Ecstasy, the Laundry. I don't think he was referring to the pill, but to the state of ecstasy that can sometimes come in spiritual.

Ah, yes. And then you look around, and there's the laundry. You have to put it...

Now, you may not wash it by hand anymore. You put it in the washing machine. So that takes the place of chopping wood and carrying water.

And of course, there's another way of chopping wood and carrying water or putting things in the washing machine. I'm fed up with chopping wood and... I can't stand chopping wood and carrying water anymore.

It's the same every day. And is this going to go on for years, for the rest of my life? Do I have to chop wood, carry water, do my laundry for the rest of my life?

I've been doing it for years already. I can't stand it anymore. And then you still chop wood and carry water, but it doesn't feel good, and you'd rather be doing something else.

You're not there. You're trying to get elsewhere. Your relationship to the present moment is one of almost hostility.

And you carry, in a simple activity, you carry a lot of time. Past, because you're complaining you've been doing it for so often, for so long. And future, because you carry projection.

Will I have to do this for the rest of my life? And so that interferes with what could be a moment of great fullness and depth, because you're carrying time into this, and you're carrying a self into it, a complaining self, a me, that separates itself from the now, is not one with it. So the draining then of chopping wood and carrying water is not to carry past or future into this moment.

And even if you've chopped wood and carried water for 25 years, it's never happened before if you don't carry the memory of 25 years of chopping wood into this moment. This moment is totally fresh and new. And it's alive.

And there's a depth to it that you hadn't seen before, of aliveness in the ordinariness. And this, of course, is another Zen saying, which this little saying is to explain the meaning of Zen again, and it's very short. What is Zen?

They asked the master. Doing one thing at a time. That can't be all, yeah?

But there's great depth and power if you're able to do one thing truly, one thing at a time. First of all, it implies there's no past and future in the action. It also implies that the action is not a means to an end.

In the normal state of consciousness, you chop wood in order to light the fire with the wood. So in ordinary consciousness, mentally, you're already on the desired outcome. The present moment of chopping wood is your stepping stone that enables you to get where you want to get, which is light the fire to cook the food.

And of course, once you have lit the fire and you're cooking the food, you're not there either because you're already eating it mentally. You're already waiting for the moment when you can finally eat it. And so on.

You're never there. Always the next step ahead. Always the moment is a means, is reduced in value, reduced in aliveness to a means to an end.

And the end is always a concept in the head. So you get, your whole life becomes reduced through becoming imprisoned in a conceptualized reality because that's all that future is, a mental concept, a word, a thought. Future has no reality.

Nobody has ever seen it, touched it, smelled it. Nobody's ever been there. And nobody can ever be there.

When it comes, it's always the now. So, in the service of a mental concept called future, you reduce what could be the fullness of life to a mere stepping stone. You reduce its value, its aliveness to that because you're interested in the next moment.

So you're chopping wood and carrying water, but really you're not there doing it. You would rather get this out of the way in order to arrive at the next moment. That's the normal way to live.

And that is not doing one thing at a time because you're already, mentally, elsewhere the other thing, or many, a sequence of things that you will have to do later, even worse. You're doing one thing and in your mind, you already have not only where you want to get with this one thing because that will have to lead to that and that and that. You have piled up in your mind the things that you have to do today and each one clamoring for importance.

Your attention is absorbed by that and the minimum of it flows into what you do. And that's called stress. Stress.

Stress means one thing pulls this way and the other pulls... You can have stress in metal when there's a pull, one pull this way and the other pulls that way. And that happens inside people continuously.

The future pulls you away and it hurts. It hurts the body. If the body could speak, it would say, what the hell are you doing?

What are you doing to me? Are you insane? And sometimes the last resort of the body is the body says, I have to make this guy ill because he will never stop.

And finally, your only chance of recovery is to become ill. And so chopping wood carrying water points to the possibility of not neither bringing past and future into this present moment and also not making whatever you're doing right now into a means to an end where the end result that you want to achieve becomes more important than what you're doing now and realize there is no future. There's always only the now.

And to reduce that to a means to an end is insane ultimately, is already a form of insanity. And when millions of people live like that, what kind of a civilization do they create? And the whole civilization is based on that dysfunction.

So millions of people are running around hyperactive. Stress increases every year in society. Everybody talks about it.

They even feel guilty if they are not stressed. Maybe I'm not doing enough. Stress increases every year and everybody's running around.

There's never enough time. Not enough time to do it all in. A piling up of future things.

And the children are conditioned at an early age to live in the same mad way as their parents. Come on, let's get on with it. And if you stop anybody and ask them what's the whole purpose of your running around like mad?

Well, nobody really knows. Or they would tell you, well, explain the situation. Where are they running to internally or externally?

Well, I have to achieve this.

[Speaker 2] (1:39:48 - 1:39:49)

There's a deadline.

[Speaker 1] (1:39:49 - 1:46:41)

I've got deadlines to meet. I can't even talk to you. Don't stop me now.

There's this norm. The world is full of deadlines these days. I sometimes have to write little things here and there.

But you only have two days. You have to do it in two days. Often I don't.

Either they wait or it doesn't get done. Kim is nodding her head. I'm not allowing this world to drive me insane because the world will do it.

Because the world is the externalized human mind. So here can be used this situation this weekend for our practice of discovering the depths that is concealed in the ordinary moment. Seemingly ordinary moment.

It can be used this weekend and see if we can in whatever we do and what we do is not it's bound to be simple here because there isn't much that you can do that is to the mind really important. Your business or whatever it is. Hopefully you've switched off your cell phones so they can't get at you.

The world can't get at you. And in the little things that we do here see if we can bring so much attention to it there's no strain in it that we don't reduce it to a means to an end whatever we do. And that's a reversal of ordinary consciousness.

And that begins for example with when you walk from here to another building or when you go for a walk in nature. You walk from here to your room or you walk from here to the door or even in your room where you walk to the door and to the bathroom and so on. There's a step.

Walking implies a sequence of steps. And usually when people walk even in that little seemingly simplicity mentally they're where they want to get. So there's already the projection.

So you're being pulled away by future. And you're always running after the next thing where the mind has projected itself. And there's another way to simply be at the step you're taking at this moment.

Now at first it's a strange way to become aware of yourself walking. You don't have to call it a meditation. Although there is such a thing as walking meditation.

They do it even more slowly. You can do that but do just ordinary walking. It may well be yes that you walk more slowly than you would normally do a bit more.

Because normally you're okay. So you're just simply awareness in each step. And it's always one.

You can only take one step at a time. Ever. So even to say each step is not right because there is not each step.

There's only the one you're taking at this moment. Ever. In life.

And to become aware of that one step. That something happens then. And we could call that quality.

And that's very hard to define. That word came to me many, many years ago. I saw a

Buddhist monk who lived in presence and he was walking up and down and I said oh I can see there's so much quality in his walking.

Ordinary consciousness is concerned with quantity. And the entire civilization is concerned with quantity. More.

Need more. Quality is rare. Because the next moment is what matters.

You've got conveyor belts churning out things. And quality implies full attention. And then there is there's also peace that comes with each step.

Yes, as you practice walking in that way you may find yourself walking a little bit more slowly than you would normally do. It's normal. And then you realize it does not really depend on speed.

Once you are able to bring presence into the step that you're the one step you're taking at this moment the speed doesn't matter. It doesn't matter when the steps it's always one step. And if you have to run which may occasionally happen you may have to catch a train and you're late and you have to run then you see you feel the enormous energy of that moment as a joyful movement without the pull of I need to catch that train.

No, I'm just running. It's beautiful and there's high energy or you can let's stay with walking for a while before you do something else.

[Speaker 2] (1:46:42 - 1:46:42)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:47:02 - 2:32:26)

And that's you will be amazed how peaceful it is to be aware of the step that you take at this moment. And then you walk also in nature out there. And then you learn to have some awareness there and some awareness in other sense perceptions.

The walking can keep you present with each step and you look around. And there you have another teacher this weekend. And which is called nature.

Because nature is present in the now. One with life, everything in nature is one with life. And so you bring awareness to nature as you walk.

You walk around. Now nature that surrounds us here is of a particular kind. Some forms of nature are overwhelming, huge gigantic mountains, raging streams or the seashore with gigantic waves and a storm coming in.

Sometimes nature can be so overpowering and overwhelming that it sweeps away your thinking, you can't think anymore. It's so gigantic that it sweeps away your thoughts.

And it forces you some, especially if you, there's some danger involved, you're at a precipice and it's stormy and the gigantic mountains there and clouds coming this way and the mind stops.

And there's an enormous sense of aliveness suddenly. So occasionally it can happen that nature forces you into presence. But here nature is of a different kind.

The other kind of nature that I just described is almost like taking LSD, which I tried once. Because there the sense perceptions become amplified. It's as if everything sounds, visual sense, touch, smell, as if they were all shouting at you, overwhelming.

You get bombarded by heightened sense perception so much that for some people it's the first time, their first experience of not thinking because you're so bombarded with sense perceptions, you can't think anymore. It can be an opening, you're not growing in consciousness, but it can be a glimpse of something what, how alive the world can be. And so people go and they look at a teapot and say, wow.

Or any ordinary object, even a bare wall, it's almost pulsating with life. And the mind stops. And you feel, what I lived in, in some kind of prison all my life, the world is alive.

And then gradually it wears down. What was all that? For some people that becomes an incentive to, for some people that has been the beginning of their quest, there is more than my mind.

There's greater depth to reality than my mind. And so you have nature that can sometimes stop your mind because it's so overwhelming, but here this is not the case. And here this brings us back to chopping wood and carrying water.

Nature here is beautiful, but relatively ordinary. It's the trees of medium height. It's not like a forest in Canada where you go, oh my God.

When you reach the seashore, it's not the open ocean. So the waves are not that huge. They're just little waves.

So it's not a place where there are extremes. Maybe the Buddha would have liked it here. So you bring, and this is an opportunity for bringing presence to the ordinariness, the beauty, but also the seeming ordinariness of nature.

And then look for what you would normally have overlooked, what the wind does to the blades of grass when you knock the quivering, what it does to the leaves, it plays with the branches and the leaves. They make a slight sound. Now to notice that, you need alertness.

To notice a gigantic chunk of ice falling from a glacier in the Swiss Alps, you don't need very much presence. There's an explosive sound and it comes tumbling towards you. But for that subtleness, greater alertness is required.

Otherwise you'll miss it. And so there's such alertness that you're not interpreting what you see. You're not saying the wind is playing with the grass.

No, it's just what is. And there's a depth and a beauty there and a stillness in it that you can't explain, nor do you need to. And then you look at a patch of ground right in front of you, grass, and perhaps two or three kinds of flowers.

Some are yellow, some are white, some are red. They take a few hours before they open completely after sunrise, because at night they go. When the sun comes, it takes two or three hours before they're completely open.

And you watch that, also some movement there. And you discover things that you haven't seen before, that there's enormous life, even in one square meter. And you bring awareness, presence to that.

And then you walk and you see a grove of trees or whatever it is, and you perceive the totality of that landscape as a total field. In which intense aliveness is happening. So to bringing that to nature, then what nature is teaching you is the state of no mind, no thought.

Although nature is pre-mind, it hasn't arrived at mind. You are post-mind, but you meet in the state of no mind. It has similarities.

Nature is one with itself and with the totality. Every animal is one with itself. It doesn't separate itself out of the totality.

It's just me. Maybe there may be a few exceptional, mad dogs that lived for too long with humans. And go to the, are taken to the hairdresser.

And when they walk around, you can see there's the beginnings of an ego there. And ego of course means having a self image. Me, like a phantom self walking next to me.

And then you're aware of others, how they react to me. And that becomes incorporated into me. I want others to think well of me, to admire me, to feel that I'm better than they are, if possible.

With a continuous fear that I may be less than they. But nature, when it's left alone, is free of that. And even most pets are still free of it miraculously.

Or they've lived with humans for so long, miraculously. They are still sane. And they are what keeps many humans sane.

If they didn't have their pet, it's their only access to being. Because anything else, their mind is in charge. They meet other humans, their mind is in charge.

For the rest of their life, they're burdened by themselves. And for some humans, their only area of freedom is when the pet comes and they go, they don't have to, they're not playing a game with their pets, they're just themselves. Because they know that the pet accepts them.

The dog does not criticize you, the dog accepts you. Accepts the most insane master. I had a little saying, God, please make me into the person my dog thinks I am.

And of course, the dog doesn't think, it just, if it thought, would be the beginning of a problem. So nature, everything in nature, the flower, which Jesus, I'm sure, said many, many times, he said, look at the flowers. They're not concerned about tomorrow.

They're not making effort. They're not stressed, they're not worried. They live in the now, unfold in the now.

And life supports them beautifully. And why do you live the way you live? You're mad.

Learn from the flowers how to live. And he said, look, although in the Bible, it says, consider the lilies. I'm sure what he said was, look.

And then something transmits itself, and that is the state of being aligned at one with life. The integrity that is there in nature, in an animal and in a plant, and even in a mineral. Although mineral seems more distant from humans.

But humans have all that within themselves still. The integrity, integrity, that word means being one with one. Being rooted in being.

Not existing as a separate, fearful entity that feels disconnected from the universe, and that the egoic surface, that's me, and there's the rest of the universe. And of course, then the universe is a fearful place because it's so much bigger than me, although I'm trying to get bigger. So nature teaches to be.

Now, when you be, when you enter being, it has an added dimension of intensity and depth, because you've been through thought for thousands of years. You've gone through the level, the consciousness level, what we call thought. You then go beyond thought and you touch being again, but this time you know it.

Before you lost being, you never really lost it, but it became obscured. Before you lost being, to be at one with being was like every animal and every plant. It's natural, there's nothing else.

So you didn't really know that you were in paradise, because it was the only, there was nothing else. The state of oneness was natural, and then it got obscured or lost, you could call it. And then suddenly you come to the end of this evolutionary cycle and you touch being again.

And this time, you know it, the depths of it. Consciously, you enter being. And yet, nature can teach you being.

Not that you become the same as a vegetable. There's nothing wrong with vegetables, but it's not the destiny of humans to become vegetable again. Vegetable is beautiful, more closer to the source than an ordinary human.

Has no problem with dying and no problem with living. The only unhappiness on the planet is the human mind. Yes, the human mind causes suffering to other life forms, pain, that is right.

But the human mind is the only source of unhappiness on the planet. Nature exists in the state of unity. And so nature teaches us, not through any concept, simply by placing awareness on anything natural, you become still.

Animal, plant, clouds, floods, flowing water, or still water, or the sea, whatever it is, even a rock, a stone, a pebble. But you have to give it a chance to teach you stillness by allowing it to be without interfering with its being through conceptualization. By looking or listening completely.

And also the separation between you and it, which was created by excessive thinking, disappears. And there's a sense of connectedness or oneness with whatever you perceive. So that's what nature teaches you.

And then you meet and you add something to nature when you become conscious of it. Something completes itself because you become aware of enormous beauty and aliveness and sacredness that is there even in a blade of grass. And so through you, because ultimately you are not separate from anything, everything is connected to everything else, through you, nature becomes aware of its own sacredness and beauty.

So when you look at a tree and really look, you add something to the being of the tree and that's awareness of itself. And that's the function that humans have on the planet as they become conscious. Through humans, nature becomes conscious of itself.

It's been waiting for you. And finally, the first humans, fully developed humans arrive and they're only just arriving. One could almost say humans have been in embryonic state for a long time.

And the birth is really of true humanity does not happen until there's the arising of presence. There are still a few humans left on the planet who are not yet lost in mind and ego. Just a few, in a few very distant cultures that have not been destroyed by so-called civilization.

But their destiny also, I believe, is to go, will have to travel the same way as you through the thinking mind. So it's the destiny of all humans to lose it and then regain it. Now you are lucky because you all belong to those who lost it and me too.

So I had to lose it, lose myself to find myself and know myself for the first time. We spoke of walking, petals falling. We spoke of walking, we spoke of being with what looks like unremarkable nature and yet is very remarkable.

Let it teach you. And related to that is, as our practice this weekend, other simple activities that you do here that usually would be a means to an end. That you would, washing your hands, lifting a glass of water to your mouth and putting it back.

There can be quality, beauty and consciousness in that. That means that it's not a means to an end. And during that space, while the glass traveled from the table to your mouth, it's a space of no thought, just clear awareness.

So the background to that action is stillness, alert stillness. So that action happens against that background of alert stillness. Just as the perception of the tree or the little flower happens when you truly look against a background of alert stillness.

That means there is a peace in the background to what happens in your life, to what you see and what you do. Now we start with very simple things that are not challenging, that are actually helpful. Nature and little actions.

Then we come to things that are more challenging. Let's see that, but first we'll stay with that non-challenging things in life. Simple actions, not making them to a means to an end.

Lifting something, putting something from here to there, wiping the top of the table against a background of stillness. That means peace flows into what you do. So you have to see putting on your shoes, tying the shoelaces, if you have shoelaces.

And again, being fully there, not a means to an end. The moment of having your shoes finally on your feet is not more important than the moment of putting your shoes on. That's the delusion, that the next moment is more important.

It's no difference whether I have my shoes on or off. It doesn't improve my life to have the shoes on. Another thing is eating.

Eating is a primordial activity that even very early life forms engage in. Even life forms that have relatively undeveloped organs of perception, they're eating already. And sometimes it's the only thing they are interested in.

And so many human beings become completely unconscious when they start eating. Even you can have, I've seen intellectuals at universities, professors, talking the most complex concepts and then they start eating and they go. And then they finish and then, okay, now let's get back to the problem of existentialist analysis of the human body.

Immanuel Kant's theory of the critique of pure reason. So to bring consciousness into that primordial activity and sometimes to just be conscious of chewing food and swallowing food. And again, not wanting to arrive at the end because that's another needing.

Some people have a so-called problem with eating. It's not really a problem, but they eat more than they need to eat. And that's usually the, it's the egoic mind needing more.

And that can translate itself into taking in more food. It could be other things, often it's other things. So just, if you have a problem with eating, so-called problems, many humans have that these days.

It's helpful to, when the impulse to eat comes in between meals, to simply notice it. Now, at what stage you catch the impulse, and it's not only eating, this would apply to any so-called addiction. Smoking.

At some point, the impulse comes and it's an unconscious movement. I need to take something in. It's with smoke, smoking, or drink.

And the impulse comes to, they said, there's a lack here. I need. And you can have to observe it on an energetic level inside yourself.

Don't detach yourself by some thought. Feel, really feel the grasping of it, the neediness of it. I need.

And now, how soon you catch that impulse, no matter what it is, depends how alert you are at the moment, at that moment, how present you are, because the impulse very quickly can pull you into unconsciousness. And some people wake up after they've taken the big sandwich out of the fridge and eaten it. And then they realize they've just been eating a big sandwich.

And while they were eating the big sandwich, the mind was somewhere completely different. And then as you become more present, you can catch yourself the moment your hand is in the fridge. And then you feel the grasping, the impulse.

And then you stop for a moment and observe that. You don't stop and think, oh, I shouldn't be eating another sandwich. No, that doesn't work.

You simply observe the feeling behind it, the lack, the sense of needing to be filled that is behind it. And that needing to be filled is not a physical thing. It may appear as a physical thing, but it is a psychological thing and it's created by the ego, which is always in a state of not enough.

And others may be running after other things. And for some people, it becomes food. It may be other things for them also.

They need more of something to fill that which feels unfulfilled. So I need to, more. And then you have the hand in the fridge.

And then for a moment, you can stop and feel it. Observe what is behind that impulse. Oh, isn't that interesting?

And you spend a minute or two just being present with that. And after that, you may still eat it or you may not. Sometimes it's gone.

The desire is gone because you've become conscious. At other times, maybe it's still there and you still can't stop yourself. But you have brought presence to it.

And each time you bring presence to something that before was unconscious, presence grows. Even if on an external level, you might say, I did not succeed. I did have to, and the cigarette comes the same.

If you need to smoke, comes for a moment, you observe the wanting behind it and what the wanting behind it feels like. And how it's almost something that lives in you that wants you to grasp at this now. There's a gap and you bring presence to that.

And then whether you smoke or not, or eat or don't, really is secondary. The success is really determined by whether you can be the witness of your inner state at that moment. That's all.

What you then do externally is always secondary. Like you cannot not change if you bring presence to whatever is there. So you don't need to work on the external level as achieving particular kind of behavior.

It's enough to observe what is here now. And so for some people, that is the beginning of their spiritual path. The beginning of their spiritual path can be an addiction.

Food, drink, drug, and then creating suffering in their lives because the body becomes ill. And then forces them into awareness. So any such thing in your life is also helpful.

It's not a hindrance anymore. And it's included in what is now. What can you do?

That's what you feel at this moment. It is. It's included in your bringing a yes to this moment.

An enormous longing for another drink. Drink. That's what is.

And you watch. And there's suddenly a dimension, another dimension to it. The watcher.

The presence. The formless consciousness. And there's the form.

That impulse. That desire. That thought.

That emotion. And the space around it. That's who you are.

So the more you accept that it's there, the more the space around it grows. So to speak. Spaciousness comes into your life.

So our three practices. It's more than that. We'll just give it a little structure.

Our three practices. The walking. There's a teacher whose name I can never pronounce.

Thich Nhat Hanh or something like that. But it's this beautiful saying, the miraculous thing, something like that. The miraculous thing is to take one peaceful step.

Peace in every step. That's true. That is not what we imagine miracles are.

This is the miraculous thing of bringing peace into this step that I'm taking at this moment. There's never anything else. So that's what we work with.

Nature and simple actions, including eating, handling things, getting dressed, undress. Not a means to an end. An end in itself.

The next moment is not more significant than this one. This one is the only one there is. And so you become a field of presence, which is peace.

And that flows into what you do. And that does something to how you do it, to your actions, the way you walk, the way you put something from here to there. Something flows into the doing that is a different energy from the energy that flows into it when you reduce it to a means to an end.

The doing becomes more intelligent. This is the real meaning of right action that I have in Buddhism. Right action is not something that you need to or can practice, but something that you flows out of being present with what is.

If you're not present, you can, you can try to have right action for the rest of your life, for another 50 years. I'm trying right action, just as Christians say, I'm trying to love my neighbor. It's hard, very hard.

Just have to try. Right action or loving your neighbor as yourself comes out of the state of presence. Naturally flows out of that.

And the state of presence is to be with what is. Don't make it into a means to an end, surrender to now. Surrendered state of consciousness, one with life.

And as I may have mentioned yesterday, the little question that you may sometimes, want to ask yourself, the question doesn't point to the ultimate truth, but it's an intermediate stage. What is my relationship to the present moment? Ultimately you're one with it, but what is my relationship to the present moment?

You can even, if you like things like that, you can put it on your, as a little question sticker on your bathroom mirror, and the bedroom, so that when you wake up, and your fridge, the TV set, right on top of it, on the screen. And so when you go towards this, and then of course you may notice, because you just wanted to switch on the hypnotic machine, what is my relationship to the present moment? I want to get away from it.

I want to get away from myself. And again, what I described, the impulse that comes when there's some kind of so-called addiction. TV can be very addictive.

And again, there comes the impulse that you can observe in yourself, that needing to watch more. Both the impulse to go there and switch it on the moment you arrive home. And you can observe the resistance to switching it off once it's on.

You can observe the mind's desire for more expressing itself as when you say, okay, it's time to go to bed. And then you'd pick up the remote, and instead of pressing the off button, you'd say, okay, let's just try the other, that channel. And then that draws you in for a few minutes.

And then it goes to the off again, okay, let's try just that one. And then another, and just flick through. It's a need, the mind wants more stimulus.

And you can observe that. You can observe when you go to a waiting room at the doctor or the dentist, and you pick up a magazine, the hungerness, the hunger behind looking through the pages. And you can observe it in others more easily than in yourself when they flick the pages.

They are consuming the magazine. The mind is consuming the magazine hungrily. They stay with each page for a few seconds.

Occasionally there's a little thing that catches their attention for a minute. And it's very helpful if you can observe that in yourself. It's all to do with the mind's grasping for more.

That this moment isn't full enough, I need to put something, some more into me. I saw a few newspapers around here. Maybe better to leave them alone.

But observe the desire to go there and open it. Or if you're lucky, it's in Danish and some of, many of you don't know Danish, so that's okay. I observed a man, not here.

He was picking up a newspaper, really enormous interest and beginning to read it. And suddenly he threw it away in disgust. And I said, what's wrong?

He said, it's yesterday's paper, I just saw the date on it.

[Speaker 2] (2:32:43 - 2:32:44)

Completely worthless.

[Speaker 1] (2:32:57 - 2:34:12)

So modern humans have become consumers of all kinds of things. The mind, they don't only consume on every level, they consume the news, they consume entertainment. The big one, entertainment.

A word that was even unknown not long ago, entertainment. And I said, what's wrong with you? He said, I don't know.

A gigantic industry. Films, occasionally you get the truth shining through. Some of it's rare, but it can happen.

But a lot of the time, it's pain body entertainment. This is so bad, I love it, that's the pain body. This film will make you feel really bad.

And then they all come to watch it. To feed their pain bodies through watching dreadful things. Films made by pain bodies for pain bodies.

[Speaker 2] (2:36:49 - 2:40:22)

Thank you. ♪♪♪ ♪ Sunrise, another new morning, we celebrate.

[Speaker 3] (2:40:22 - 2:40:30)

We are the new man

[Speaker 2] (2:40:35 - 2:40:58)

Sunrise over the mountain Spreading your light Over the land

[Speaker 1] (2:41:02 - 2:52:46)

I trust that nobody is in a hurry to start Welcome to our retreat Your retreat From the world Especially the world in your head Taking a step back Retreat You've come here Not alone You've probably come with your mind The mind has come with you But be thankful because the mind allowed you to come here Some people didn't make it A few always cancel at the last minute I wonder if I should go now I don't feel like going What's the point of another retreat? Whatever the mind can say And then you completely believe in whatever thought the mind throws up Yeah, no I'm not going Maybe I should And with some of you it was touch and go whether you would make it or not I'm sure it happens And yet there was a stronger impulse in you to come Than the resistance to coming here Which you may have felt also Or which you may feel even though this is not a long retreat Even though it's only three days That you may feel this resistance even while you're here You may already have felt it The mind, the thinking mind, the stream of conditioned thinking The egoic entity that arises out of that May be looking for an opportunity to get you away from here From time to time it may come up It may focus on something that is not absolutely perfect in your environment In whatever situation you're in here Because there's no such thing as a perfect situation Unless you live in complete surrender to what is In which case every situation is perfect But from the point of view of the mind Of course you can always find something that isn't right That you could complain about And the mind says this situation is not as it should be This shouldn't be, that shouldn't be Yes, but it is So you work with the limitations that are here, even here At a retreat centre, certain limitations Different ones from the ones you find at home Less privacy perhaps, you can complain about that Not warm enough, this or that The person you're sharing the room with Is not according to the expectations of the mind And not spiritual enough Or even worse, more spiritual than me Oh he must have been at it for a long time So in any situation You don't have to wait long Before some kind of flaw in the external situation will come up What looks like a flaw Which means there's a clash between The expectations and demands of the mind And the simple suchness of this moment And some egos love to be personally offended When these things happen So how can, to me, a person of something They should, why don't they?

He should, she should She shouldn't, they shouldn't The weather should be warmer by now So you observe the talking entity in the head As you're here Which occasionally may try to talk you out of being here Either by physically removing you from here And you run away Or by taking you away from here By absorbing all your attention into a mind stream And physically you're then still here And mentally you're somewhere totally different Past, future or dreamland And you can see then that Presence, there's no presence, there is an absence Now of course this retreat is not called the art of absence But the art of presence But absence may, does not require art Absence happens easy enough So you may detect occasionally yourself becoming absent Which simply means your attention is no longer here It's being drawn into a stream of thinking And usually can tell easily by looking at a person Whether they are present or absent Of course there are degrees of absence You can be totally absent, which means you don't hear a single word Or you can be absent in the sense that You are commenting on what you hear Which means you're not really fully absorbing You are more interested in your own standpoint Opinion or mental position Than in what is being said And often you believe your standpoint is of course the right one There's identification with a mental position And that's a form of absence also It's not total absence but you're not really fully here That may happen for example to people who've been Who are very knowledgeable about spiritual matters Have read lots of books Which can become a hindrance to If you carry them in here So if you feel the impulse to leave here That's of course another way the mind May succeed in getting you away from here If you can, don't just run off at the first thought That comes into your head with an accompanying emotion Of disgust or Back home to my privacy, my own bed Why did I leave that? I could be more peaceful there than can I be here And the moment you get home you say I should never have left

[Speaker 2] (2:52:48 - 2:52:49)

I failed

[Speaker 1] (2:52:59 - 3:46:06)

And the torture continues But in all of you Something is arising That is a relatively new thing At least the fact that it's arising on a wider scale now Is a relatively new thing on the planet And that is a state of consciousness That we could call presence And to deepen that That's why we're here To deepen the ability to be fully present With what is The ability to respond to life Which is now, always now Out of that state of presence Not out of conditioned mind stuff Conditioning of the mind Sometimes I use strange expressions like You grow in presence Presence grows in you Presence arises more fully Excuse me, says a mind somewhere You haven't defined presence yet I don't understand what you mean In the course of the retreat You may get a few definitions, a few pointers Never enough to satisfy the mind, of course Especially as regards presence Because through thought You cannot possibly grasp what presence is Because thought is always grasping at concepts And then, ah, I've got it now I've defined it, that is I've given it form But presence is vast It has no form Thought, each thought is a thought form It's born and then it goes Or it sticks around for a while Or it takes over for a while Thoughts, every thought is a little entity A little being, temporary energetic entity So I'm not right now defining presence Because it is unnecessary As you sit here, presence deepens Because presence is, to a large extent The unspoken dimension of this gathering If you're here thinking that the words that are being spoken Are the central point of our retreat That would be an error It's not the case The words are secondary What else is there? And you may notice The mind is always waiting for the next word Or it's busy thinking about the last one Is it possible to be here Without thinking about the last word And without waiting for the next one And without going to sleep Because that's one way of not thinking about the last And not waiting for the next But that's not the way here You can do that at home You can fall below thinking at home, easily A couple of drinks, TV You're drifting towards unconsciousness, gradually And you may feel a little better than the torture of your mind There too there is some relief From the daily torture of the mind, yes But that's not the way we're going It's not the way back To the animal realm, the nature realm, the mineral realm You can go all the way back And it's wonderful for the animal realm in itself It has a perfection that the human realm does not have Even the mineral has a perfection that the human does not have Because humans are transitional beings They are neither one nor the other So we are not here In an attempt to fall below thinking But to rise above thinking, so to speak We are not becoming less awake Less alert, less alive But more alert, more awake, more intensely alive So here you have the level of thinking It's been the human dimension for thousands and thousands of years Below it you have the dimension of no thought Instinctive no thought, natural no thought

And above it you have the dimension of presence You have transcended thought How? By not thinking about the last word And not waiting for the next one And not even trying to work out what I've just said Not making presence into some new thought form Can one live like that In a state of relaxed alertness Which is presence Not the state of alertness that comes from mind and ego Which is not real alertness Which is really a state of fearful tension No It's open, not closed Completely open And you're able to look To hear To feel, to touch Sense perceptions Against a background of stillness Which is another aspect of presence Alert stillness Sense perceptions happen here And when you're not thinking about the last moment Or looking to the next one Then after you've heard a sentence, a string of words There's simply spacious stillness Just as in the speaker This form sitting on a chair There's stillness between the words I don't know what the next word is going to be How could I know? And there's no need to know You may have noticed already We don't have an agenda here A big folder Which tells you what we're going to do this weekend We're going to get through these 20 points In other words There seems to be a lack of structure And that is true There is a lack of mind-made structure And yet A different kind of structure Is growing organically out of the present moment And it knows where it's going So you may have realized already How important the stillness is In this room The external stillness Which we could call silence And there's a lot of it Despite the words And the inner stillness Which simply means What does that mean, inner stillness? It means, and this is the secret Consciousness Without thought A state of great intelligence Not that thought is not going to operate ever again But that becomes your home The foundation What you're rooted in Is that dimension of inner stillness That is there in the background It is the background to everything that happens And that's already in you, of course But most humans are so identified with what happens In the foreground of their existence Sense perceptions, events, experiences, thoughts, emotions Everyone drawing attention Everything that happens externally draws you The world does that This matters And you believe that it matters absolutely And then the next thing matters even more And then the phone call comes along This is really serious And mostly every thought likes to matter Take me seriously, says every thought Think, think And even psychologists who are not interested in presence Or anything like that Have examined the human mind And realized that 99% of our thinking is totally repetitive And yet, it's serious So that's being lost When only the foreground Whatever happens in your life And the foreground of your life Includes thoughts and emotions And external things When that absorbs all your attention continuously One thing after another Or as one of my favorite quotes says Churchill said One damn thing after another He was talking about world history But he could have been talking about the human mind It's the same It only reflects The outer reflects the inner One damn thing after another One damn thought after another And of course Nobody can argue with the fact that this is true Because if you read world history You can see that it is one dreadful thing after another And if you look at your own mind When you're lost in it It's not a pleasant place Occasionally pleasant thoughts can happen And then quickly they turn around And almost have another face Like, dislike Honeymoon Divorce

So being lost Is a normal state Lost out there Lost in here There's only that dimension then to your life We could call it What happens I'm only interested in what happens And complaining about what's not happening but should be happening Of course not happening in the right way ever And yet There is in you a dimension That frees you From total identification With the world which includes the mind And when you become conscious of that dimension That's presence When I say conscious of that dimension Language creates a duality that isn't there That's what language does Because you become conscious of that dimension As yourself As the essence of who you are So that's not two but one And this begins simply by acknowledging As we said here The dimension of silence Which is inner stillness Simply to notice that there is Apart from the words There is silence In other words, the words Are the foreground The silence is the background And when you notice That there is silence in between and underneath the words That moment of noticing is the arising of presence in you The moment you notice silence You become still inside It's only because you became still inside That you can even notice that there is silence apart from the words The strange thing is Thought cannot even notice that there is silence Because thought is noise So if I ask you the question Can you find out if there is silence in this room apart from the words If you want to truly answer that question You have to go Yes But while you went You were not thinking There was an alert presence Then, of course, when you said yes That was thought again That's alright So whenever you notice And not only as we sit here Because you may already have noticed And if you have, that's a clear sign that Presence is arising in you You may already have noticed That there is quite a lot of silence around here Even if you step outside Especially if you've come from a city You may notice that strongly That there is, or in your room Oh, it's very silent here And if you did notice that It means how could you have noticed it If you'd not, for that moment at least That's enough There was no thought If there had been thought Continuous stream of thinking Which is still the destiny of many humans Their fate You would not even have known it Or without knowing it You would have felt uncomfortable Very uncomfortable And you would have done to the TV set If you have one in your room By the way I recommend strongly that you don't use it You would have done to the TV set And put it on Some noise And you didn't even know Why you felt uncomfortable But if you noticed it Who noticed it?

Not you The mind made entity The egoic entity No Something deeper in you The Presence, the stillness in you Noticed it Otherwise you would not have noticed it Someone was visiting Thailand He told me He was visiting monasteries And he climbed up this hill A long, long way from any city On the hill He saw a beautiful monastery He climbed up this hill He arrived at the top of the hill Entered the monastery Silence, absolute silence Monks walking around He said This is paradise I'm going to stay here And suddenly Cheap loudspeakers Started coming on That were hidden in the trees Was the Thai version of Kind of pop songs This cannot be And he ran to a monk And said, what is happening? He said We're expecting a group of lay devotees From Bangkok And they become very uncomfortable When it's totally silent here So to make them feel better We put on that music So my friend, the pilgrim Went on It wasn't paradise It never is External If you're looking for it externally So the people from Bangkok Complained Don't like it here There was so much mental noise It became uncomfortable So one of the things here During our retreat Essential, absolutely Is to notice The silence, not only While we come together Here Also When you walk from one building to another When you're in your room Or going for a walk In nature Notice The background of silence Because in nature You have some, yes, beautiful Gentle sounds And you hear those You pay attention to that But you also pay attention To the underlying silence Then that dimension arises in you And you can walk there as a field A walking field of stillness Alert stillness And no longer Walking there Carrying The heaviness Of your mind The noise factory And the heaviness of Your personal history That you need to think about while you're walking in nature Your problematic life situation The dilemma of your existence There's no life situation That is not problematic And if it's not problematic right now Wait a little and it'll turn problematic again Because whenever you're only identified With that level, that dimension Everything is problematic And if it's not now It'll become problematic I gave the example of the honeymoon The honeymoon is not problematic And a little later it turns into problematic The great job that you've just got With a big paycheck Is not problematic And a year later You become sick with stress Or there's so much infighting That it becomes hell Or in many ways In which situations can turn around And become problematic again And that's the one damn thing after another And that's the truth of Buddha Who said Wherever you go Whatever you do Whoever you meet, whatever situation You go into, whatever place Whatever, anything It's dukkha, suffering If it's not suffering now Just wait And of course He talked about being lost in the world So one Our practice here To notice The silence And noticing is enough Then thoughts Come back And then again There's more alertness So you'll notice as you're here A continuous shift probably Between Thoughts arising And Presence And if it's only If it's 90% thoughts and 10% presence That's great already Because we're in an evolutionary shift So the new is arising In you And But as Presence arises The ability To witness thoughts So that thoughts don't overpower you Completely Grows Before In the absence of presence Every thought Has you completely in its grip And The emotion usually comes with it That goes with that thought And then As presence arises Comes the ability to Notice your thoughts In the same way that you notice A noise, an external noise And then you may notice There's a lot of noise up here The noticing Comes always from Presence, from the stillness So when you notice That your mind is noisy Wow, it's noisy How do you know that? Because you have some access To that dimension that is Unconditioned The consciousness that is unconditioned Which is presence The unconditioned consciousness That is presence And from there you can see Oh What your mind is doing And the mind then is no longer a serious business You can even start to smile At what it does It's mechanical After a while you look through The main strategies of the mind How it tries to get your attention And so on There you are again, there it is And it's no longer Your personal The mind becomes depersonalized Before the mind Was me The mind and the accumulated Memories that make up My personal history Was me And I walked around with the burden of me With my unfulfilled History Unfulfilled and unfulfilling Not enough And whatever strange Thoughts were associated With that Life passed me by Unfair It treated me unfairly I missed it Whatever thoughts you have about your personal history Something went wrong In nineteen something Nineteen eighty four It shouldn't have happened That's why I cannot be happy now Or you carry an identity Based on an unpleasant experience That somebody did to you You survived And that's wonderful Yes it was dreadful Because as long as humanity Is unconscious, totally identified with mind They do many dreadful things So you cannot come Onto this planet Yet without experiencing dreadful things Some are more dreadful than others And you suffer There is no child That doesn't suffer And yet To build an identity On the basis of Past pain Is a dreadful limitation To have a painful story That is the story of me And needing to think about that Because you cannot think about it Gradually you might even forget And need to talk about it Continuously And then see yourself as This or that You have a label for it No matter how tragic it was At the time And some awful things Are happening At this very moment In certain parts of the planet No matter what it is The fact is You survived And yet The mind Used it Because it's always looking for A stronger sense of self It's looking for an identity It's looking for a stronger me And it can use Something like that Something very bad that happened to me Or the other way around Something very bad that I did To someone So that's guilt You identify with Something that you once did And you wouldn't do it now But there you didn't know any better That's why it happened Unconsciousness So if you identify With unconsciousness Either that came through you Or what other unconscious humans Did to you There you create A heavy painful sense of self A story But everybody has their story Even if there's not one Big traumatic event in their lives They have their own story Their personal story Their identity And how liberating it is To see that it is no more Than things that happened That ultimately That is not Who you are You are not the accumulation Of those memories or emotions That's there Yes So as presence arises You recognize That was never Who you are Your personal history Has its place Undoubtedly It happened You may have old photos To prove it It really happened And the photos At some point begin to fade Even I I haven't yet reached Old age But even I have photos From my childhood That are already beginning to fade They're going yellow The story is dissolving Wouldn't it be strange If photos faded more quickly Than the human body And after ten years You open your photo album And there's nothing left Wow Wow That feels good And yet there is a dimension In every human That was never really touched By what happened The eternal Timeless State of consciousness That is presence Who you are Underneath The form that your life takes Your life situation As I sometimes call it The dilemma Of your life situation You mean other people Also have a dilemma I'm not the only one Surely No life situation Can be more problematic than mine No story is that fulfilling If you look behind Even those Who in the eyes of the world Have made it Success, fame, wealth If you look behind The facade You see There's unhappiness Sometimes greater than With other people Because they still think They can make it They have made it And it hasn't freed them So here we are The dimension of Form As this retreat center This gathering The people Including also Your mind The thoughts that come The emotions also Comes and goes No form lasts that long Before you know it This retreat is over First you look forward to it And then it's there But since The world of form Is governed by time Which is ultimately illusion Just as form is ultimately illusion Life is like an express train It never stops, you're on it And so one event goes past There's the retreat, here it is It's over already, it's Sunday And it's time to go home And that's what form If we could see, truly see Reality External reality So called We would be shocked Deeply shocked By truly see I mean The way we perceive it Is as if The world around us Were solid Buildings The structures Economic companies Corporations, political Even the people Have their job And their pension scheme And everything is in place And it's very solid reality And it sometimes Another example of solid reality Is that death is a taboo Even now in western culture Because It would show you That human bodies Are not solid They dissolve continuously Around you But you mustn't look at death It's forbidden to see dead bodies No, just death And when it comes to people They react as if They never knew that such a thing existed He died And nobody told them It was some abstract Strokes in the head Everybody does, ok Everybody does But they live as if That were not the case at all It's sometimes helpful to travel To India where they don't have a taboo And you see dead people openly And it's the same here They are dying everywhere But they are shut away Don't look Pretend that nothing is happening Another way why India Is so wonderful to go to And it's spiritually Beautiful experience Is That the world of form Is less predictable there Here you have timetables And the trains run And everything, you can plan your trip And there It's what's going on Nothing goes as planned And it's miraculously In the end it works As one Indian man said to me We live by grace He was talking to an Israeli person And the Israeli person They asked What do you live by? Asked the Israeli I can't remember who asked the first question The Indian man asked the Israeli man What do you live by? And the Israeli man said We live by guts And then he asked the Indian man He said, oh, well We live by grace And there you see That the structures of the external world Are not that stable after all And of course it's the same here It's an illusion, stability is an illusion And sometimes a structure That looks so permanent Crumbles Whether it's the communist system Or whether it's a building Or you lose your job Or your corporation suddenly The multi-billion dollar corporation Collapses With your pension plan Everything Now if you What we see is a kind of frozen view Frozen view Of the external world If you saw a more realistic Perspective A speeded, I would suggest A speeded up version On film You sometimes see it how a flower opens They speed up the film And you see the flower coming out of the soil Opening Withering And disappearing And if you could see In that way A human existence Baby And then running around for a few years And then growing wrinkles come Like a fruit or a flower That goes old Gone And then just a little bit longer It would take before So-called physical, heavy physical objects Would also dissolve and become dust This room If you saw it speeded up First the bodies would go And then you have to just wait a few more seconds And then gradually you see Cracks appearing Things start falling down from the ceiling And then the ceiling collapses And then there's only dust left And then the wind comes So you would see Everything is already In the process of dissolving Continuous birth and death And humans are stuck in there Somewhere This is reality here Now when you watch When you see that fact In the sublime teaching Of the Buddha Called impermanence You're astonished When you see it And you allow it to be It is liberating To see that To the egoic entity It's a dreadful thing Don't be so negative Don't talk about these things And yet if you allow that And you see how Forms come and go How the entire universe is that Play of forms And everything dissolves As that form Something in you feels good It feels very peaceful to see that How is it even possible to see it To witness that I talk about that briefly In Stillness Speaks The book If the entire world were blue You would not see the color blue You need something that's not blue So that you can recognize blue If everything were impermanent You wouldn't even know it How can you know impermanence Because there's something in you That is not impermanent But it has nothing to do with your form The form is impermanent And that's the beauty of death It frees that Which was trapped in the form And that is the beauty of watching And allowing the impermanent Nature of the world to be Even to witness death Puts you in touch With the deathless Formless One life One consciousness that you are So I Perhaps one of these days This just came to me The film project It could be one of the most spiritual films ever made That shows how quickly things dissolve It might take a few years to film it The human body The animal body Flowers more quickly And conceivably One could do it artistically So that you see even The entire planet is born and dies The sun is born and dies Although it looks eternal Compared to human existence Presence is the only thing in you That is not a thing Presence is the formless In Buddhism The closest Buddhism gets to Using a positive term It never really uses positive Original teaching I don't think ever used a positive term So that you can't form a new concept in your head The deathless realm The deathless Is a term sometimes used The mind wants a more accurate definition And says Are you talking about God here? Because the mind wants it Ah God! There it is It wants to hold it Hold it as a concept It's too vast You cannot hold it And then it attaches the word My to God My God Or even worse The word our Not yours So our Practice here If you can even call it that It's life Living life is doing it So Presence Begins with being attentive To silence Both here and outside That dimension Tonight in your room Doesn't matter how long You can be aware of it You're aware of it You lose it You look at the TV screen and wonder what's going on And then you're back again And then you look at something else That's fine In art And our practice of course Is to Work with the present Moment As much as possible You can go back to your normal existence When you go home Past My dilemma Just stay with Simplify your life While you're here And Pay more attention to Whatever this moment presents Than past and future Just this There's always just this Just this To be able to do that A loudness is required Without the alertness You cannot have just this You'll be past Future Past future is the Sleep, dreamlike state of Being identified with thought And then there's

[Speaker 2] (3:46:12 - 3:46:13)

Oh

[Speaker 1] (3:46:13 - 3:47:29)

You wake up So you wake up twice You wake up in the morning And many times During the day You wake up out of The stream of thinking And the ability Arises more and more To perceive Without the interference Of thought Thought is there when you need it Don't need to be concerned about that When you need it, it'll still be there In fact it'll be Much more powerful When it's truly needed For whatever purpose it is When you're not overpowered By thought, you can use thought For certain purposes And Inspired thinking Will happen more and more Because inspired any new thought A new form A new insight A new realization Can only come If you access The state of no thought Out of that spacious Stillness comes the new

[Speaker 2] (3:47:29 - 3:47:30)

Ah

[Speaker 1] (3:47:35 - 3:49:29)

So Life Is always This moment Is Never not this moment And so that, instead of having that As an abstract truth Yeah, I know that life is always now And so what's next? So when it's an abstract truth You say, okay, I've done that There's only the now Exam question one Is there only the now? Or is there There's only the now, okay So not as an abstract As a living truth or realization Wow This is actually The fullness of it This is life This moment is the fullness of life No matter what form it takes Because the fullness Is the fullness that is there When Who you are is no longer obscured By thought forms The little limited Me Me So our practice Is As I sometimes put it Becoming friendly With What is Whatever form This moment takes

[Speaker 2] (3:49:31 - 3:49:32)

Okay

[Speaker 1] (3:49:33 - 4:01:38)

Okay What does that do inside you? It frees you From the form that this moment takes If you react to the form That this moment takes Another form is created in you As a thought or an emotion That strengthens Your being lost in form And that's why the ego likes to react Because the ego is the form me If you do not react Respond is a different matter To whatever is needed in this moment But your habitual state Becomes allowing Whatever form this moment takes To be Then if action is needed It comes out of that state of intelligence Which is allowing The now to be Allowing life to be Becoming one with life One with life Which is now Can only be now One with life Then life Lives through you And life is intelligent So when you Do not resist The form that this moment takes But you allow Whatever form this moment takes As The temperature in your room Or the stain on the carpet Or even forms that before You would have complained about It is You can't dispute the fact that it is Right now So it is If it needs to be changed It can be changed You talk to someone But even then there is an inner allowing Of right now it is Maybe I can talk to somebody And we can Change it, repair the heater If there is no heat But right now that is it Okay In the most Powerful spiritual practice Is that allowing In the allowing You do not Strengthen your own form anymore That is why The ego does not like that And what arises Is The timeless and formless Essence Of who you are That is why surrender is so Powerful Surrender to life Where is life? Here, now To the ego that looks like Weakness And yet That is true Power, intelligence Aliveness And more In many ways you can Speak of it So that is perhaps Two levels of practice Silence Noticing that And noticing what happens And be one with it But rather than against it No matter what This is a relatively simple setting But also there will be Challenges Things will come into the now That you could Complain about, you could Argue about, be offended about Feel it is a limitation But it is There is no future state To be achieved If you come here Hoping that by Sunday morning You will have achieved A particular state You may be disappointed Because you cannot Achieve something that is already The essence of who you are And that you can only discover In the present moment And A few more Practical things This retreat center Has a few temptations That other retreat centers May not have One is the TV set Leave it alone If you can It stimulates The mind And Once you are truly In many of you Presence is a delicate flower Arising A delicate flower needs A little bit of Careful treatment Once presence is Fully Arisen You are rooted in presence You dwell in presence It doesn't make that much difference anymore You can watch TV if you want to Not that you would want to watch a lot And the same applies to Alcoholic drink That is available here And I would recommend That you don't Indulge this weekend Once presence is firmly established Then it doesn't matter anymore Not that you would want to drink large quantities Then But Alcohol can easily The good feeling that you get After a couple of glasses Is to do that you are beginning to Go below the thinking level And suddenly you feel A bit more alive And the little egoic entity Doesn't have that grip on you anymore It gets a little bit more loose A bit more free So it gives you A sense of liberation Pseudo liberation And then comes another one And another And gradually you move more and more Towards unconsciousness And so this is why I don't recommend it here That's all Another thing that I don't recommend You may have seen There is a big chess board Out there somewhere With huge chess pieces And I would recommend There is nothing wrong with chess It's an incredible game But it does stimulate the mind There may be great chess masters Who are still while they play I don't know But when I play it It stimulates my mind I don't know it very well This one is going to jump there Then you have to think three Draw a head For those who want it There is a meditation And a class that incorporates Movement by Kim This tomorrow morning And in the evening So you can structure Your own retreat In some ways If you want that As part of it Some of you may want to Remain silent There is a room Dining room For those Who do not want to speak And for those Who don't find a place In the dining room Where they do speak So they have to be silent Whether they want to or not We may also move into some silence Perhaps spend a whole day in silence And perhaps Gradually Reduce the amount of Words that come out of our mouth More important Of course is What goes on in the noise machine In the head You may have noticed This retreat doesn't move From beginning To more advanced To more advanced The whole essence is there Every moment The rest of the retreat Is not based on more I've already told you everything The rest of your retreat is Deepening It's not the horizontal Dimension It's the vertical dimension Just sit for Just a little while When this body has gone There is an empty Chair here Empty chairs are very beautiful So stay with the empty chair And yourself Just a little while

[Speaker 3] (4:03:19 - 4:03:38)

Sunrise Another new morning We celebrate We are The new man

[Speaker 2] (4:03:44 - 4:04:11)

Sunrise Sunrise Over the mountain Spreading your light Over the land Sunrise

[Speaker 1] (4:04:56 - 4:53:33)

So since yesterday morning And before you've been Chopping wood and carrying water One way or another Being total With whatever you are doing At any moment Or rather in the one moment Expressed also in another Zen saying That a master once Answered when His disciple said They talked to him of another master Who could walk on water He can walk on water, what can you do?

And he gave the famous reply When I'm hungry I eat When I'm tired I sleep Doesn't everybody do that? What he means is He does nothing else At that moment He has no stuff Around eating When he eats And no stuff around sleeping When he goes to bed No resistance No demands This moment Is just as it is There's no self That moves into the action Whatever he's doing No expectation This moment is enough Not expectation always implies You're hoping that some future Moment will be fuller Through this moment Through doing something at this moment But if you haven't found the fullness Of this moment You can't find the fullness No matter what the next moment contains Because the next moment is this moment Always When it comes So carrying the burden of self Into what you do Greatly reduces Your sense of aliveness Greatly reduces Your intelligence Intelligence Not IQ intelligence True, deeper intelligence And makes life heavy Because yourself The sense of me With its Unfulfilled expectations Of this or that Or its complaints About what's not happening now Or whatever it may be That's the heaviness That then flows into what you do Because every self Is heavy There's then No lightness You could even have stuff around sitting here At this moment Not totally wanting to be here Complaining about this or that Carrying Some memory from the past Into here Or a very common thing Would rather be somewhere else So you're not Total

Not truly, fully here Because there's self The burden of self, which is mind stuff It's a self, a conceptual self And it's in its very nature That it cannot be fulfilled In the present moment It looks always to the next moment Its state is Unfulfillment And that's not Personal And the strange thing is The sense of being unfulfilled Makes up a large part Of what people conceive of as themselves Their personal sense of self And all it is It's a mind pattern Collective human mind pattern And it's mistaken For me My dilemma My sense of not enough And perhaps it was The Buddha 2600 years ago Who was the first human I don't know Who realized The illusion of self Who realized The truth of no self In any form Any thought Any emotion Any external form or internal form He realized the truth Of anatta There's no self in it And if you're looking for self There's dukkha, suffering So there's only suffering If you're looking for self In thought or self In an emotion If thought is endowed With a sense of self And every emotion is endowed With a sense of self Is not recognized As just a human emotion Passing through Thoughts passing through Or external situations Where I'm looking for myself Through something or other Through some external possession Through fame Through recognition Whatever it may be Through my father or my mother Understanding me So you cannot find yourself Anywhere And all the Buddhists Have the strange expression No self As the essence Sometimes even called And it's frightening to the ego Emptiness All it means is stillness A still mind Or rather no mind Emptiness And yet, what is there when the mind is still?

There's something there But you cannot define it Because it has no form Something, not even a thing Any word you use is wrong Because every word derives From the world of things Remember to be here In touch with your inner energy field Otherwise you'll become restless And start thinking When you become restless You've moved You've lost touch With a deeper sense Of being And moved into the head And then unconscious body movements Can sometimes happen Emotions are also restless then But you're not usually Conscious of it I can sometimes tell when people are not fully here Their legs or feet start shaking Their eyes go drifting They're looking for somewhere else Some other place They've moved into the head In the meantime the legs go And it's quite normal Many people spend a lot of time sitting Like that If an animal did it We'd have to take it to the vet Because Imagine your dog doing that It would be obvious there's something wrong with the dog But with humans It's normal And when you notice it Then another dimension has come in There's an awareness suddenly That your leg is shaking Or the restlessness And suddenly you notice it You notice certain involuntary movements Or whatever it is And that's very significant Noticing Because Awareness is there, presence is there It's only then you can see What's going on inside you When there's no presence You don't know what's going on inside you Because you're so identified with what's going on You are what is going on You don't know what's going on You're acting it out You're an actor Who has forgotten That he or she is acting out a script You're totally in it And it's all conditioned And then People's behavior becomes predictable You can tell from people Relatives and so on That you've known for a long time That most of people's behavior Is predictable You can even predict what they're going to answer When you say something What their reaction is going to be Predictable reaction But whatever you can observe in yourself Means you're conscious enough To observe something in yourself That's all that's needed You don't really need to change Anything as such Because then you have another dilemma And that dilemma Is part of many people's sense of self And that is There's something wrong with me And many people have that There's something wrong with me And there's something I need to Repair Whatever it is Now you could either say There are two statements we can make here And just two different perspectives on it And they're both right in their own way There's nothing wrong with you And there's something wrong with everybody As long as there's no presence Of course there's dysfunction But the moment you notice that There's nothing wrong Awareness is all that's needed Presence is all that's needed For example When you become conscious of your legs shaking Soon after it'll stop shaking Because it was only shaking Because you were unconscious of it It would be rare for a human To consciously shake their legs And say okay I'll just carry on shaking this leg They don't do it And then after a while it dies down Because your attention was there It's flown into there And then it slows down Another one is to notice that you are Unfriendly towards the present moment Does that mean there's something wrong with you? No, it's something supremely right with you Because you are conscious You are aware that you are unfriendly With the present moment That's all that's needed If there's something wrong with you Truly wrong, you don't even know it So those humans with whom there is something wrong They have no idea They think there's absolutely nothing wrong Those who are the most extreme manifestations Of human unconsciousness Those human beings who go around With bombs or machine guns Or throw whatever they throw They don't think there's anything wrong with them Nothing wrong with me There's everything wrong with them There So when you notice something Hostility towards the present moment In whatever form There's nothing wrong The presence is there The very purpose of your life on earth Is fulfilling itself at that moment The arising of consciousness So what could possibly be wrong?

And yet the egoic identity The egoic self insists In many cases There is something wrong with me And it can sometimes obscure The awareness when you observe Something in yourself Such as hostility towards What is The present moment At that moment the mind can come in again And obscure The awareness that was there For a moment And formulate Some kind of judgment It is a new thought And that judgment For example would say You see You're not good enough You can't do it You've been to the retreat Plus Fifty workshops Before that And you see you still can't do it There is Something wrong with you You see you're no good Look they're all present You're the only one who can't do it You might as well give up So when you observe something in yourself The mind may Then come in Obscure the presence That was there for a moment And make a thought out of it That has to do something with yourself To add something to your sense of self And so the heaviness of self Can increase even there Because when you become aware You become aware Of so many Ways in which you Create Heaviness in your life In which you resist The present moment In which you add stuff To the chopping of the wood And the carrying of the water And a mental commentary While you carry the water Oh this is awful How much longer Feels much heavier than yesterday Why do I have to do this Why don't they carry the water Stuff around All kinds of mind stuff Am I getting weaker All kinds of Whatever it is I shouldn't be carrying water I've been doing it for 10 years It's other people's turn now Nobody acknowledges me That I'm carrying this water So they don't even thank me Hard work Carrying that water Is hard work But 80% of the energy That is expanded on carrying the water Is actually mind stuff The heaviness That the mind produces Otherwise it would just be that It might be a heavy bucket But it's not really, it's just easy So it's wonderful It's wonderful to realize There's nothing wrong with you And the more things you discover In yourself That had been unconscious The more you are fulfilling Your destiny On the planet Which is You become a manifestation Of consciousness arising You go beyond the merely personal The delusion Of a form identification The heavy thing for many people Is the pain body Which is the reason why many people think There's something very wrong with them Because periodically They suffer an influx Of heavy emotion Painful emotion Negative emotion Fear Deep sadness Or very dark mood Anger All kinds of forms Of upset And even those In whom consciousness Is already arising Presence is already arising They still find themselves In many cases At the mercy of The temporary The periodic arising Of their pain body Which is past pain Remnants of past pain That are still alive And have accumulated Inside you As a little entity Personal Plus collective Part of it is the collective Pain body It could be the collective pain body Of your family That's part of your personal pain body Or the collective pain body Of the part of the world you live in Could be Some are heavier than others And certainly it will be also Partly the Suffering of humanity The collective pain body of humanity And everybody Has his or her share of that And that is a little Energy form in you And that's Obviously that's what it is Because everything, every form Is an energy form Every thought is an energy form The table is an energy form Just looks solid, it isn't That was an amazing Realization from physics It's 99% Empty space But it looks solid Same as the body 99.999% Empty space So the pain body Is energy An energy form One could say Almost like a little entity Made up of emotion An emotional entity I saw in a film recently A character That got closest to What the human pain body looks like And it's in the film Lord of the Rings A little Being I can't remember the name Gollum But yet Sometimes if you look, it's very well done Sometimes when you look into his eyes You see There's a being hiding in there There's Even there, there's a sweet being Hiding in there somewhere And just the same The pain body Is energy, life energy Trapped That's all Created by the ego By thousands of years Of living Through an illusory sense of self And creating A reality on the basis Of that illusion Living in a world of enemies Because that's the ego's world Creating enemies Wherever you go Not being able to live without them Making the whole world Appear hostile towards you Having to fear every little thing Of course That creates a lot of pain And even though presence may be arising In you, and in all of you It is You may still find yourself Being taken over by That thing when it Wakes up from Its dormant stage Might be dormant for a week or two

Or three, or four And then At some point it wants to experience More pain It wakes up And then it tries to Find out what's going on in your life right now It looks for An opening Where it can go in Into your mind And so that could be A slight upset with something While you're driving And traffic A driver cuts across And there's a slight And at that moment the pain body Uses that as an opening And flows into that little upset And then before you know it The little upset has developed Into a stream of negative thinking About the world, and in general And yourself, and other people And the stupidity of them all And before you know it The little thing has grown And it's starting to use something A huge field of heavy Negative energy Oh, that's the pain body It used that little It was waiting for it And of course pain bodies Help each other So, the driver who cut Across you was probably possessed By his pain body, so I'm going to show him The phenomenon that's called Road rage Where two drivers Stop their cars and start Attacking each other Physically Means when two active Pain bodies happen to meet on the road That can happen Not only two active pain bodies But two active pain bodies in two humans In whom Not the slightest trace of presence Has yet arisen They are totally Identified With that And they can't help it They're driven to it So the pain body becomes Part of the self It Amplifies the already Heavy And dysfunctional self Even without The influx of the heavy Past emotion that is in the pain body So even in the best Of times there's a heaviness to the self To that sense of self Of me But that becomes amplified Through the old emotion of the Pain body, it uses the structures The mind structures of the egoic self And flows Into them and then they become It's like putting higher voltage Into the Into the heaviness of the ego And the dysfunction of it You plug it into And so They have all the egoic structures Plus an enormous amount of Emotion raw Needing desperately To experience some more Drama or pain Wanting more pain And so One way of looking at that is That is in human beings The addiction To emotional pain That's the pain body And if you ever discover that In yourself At that moment you're loving it Indulging in Negative thinking for example Which is one way in which the pain body Renews itself Feeding on your thinking Your thought, every thought feeds it And the emotion Fuels the negative thinking The thinking feeds the emotion The emotion fuels the thinking The thinking feeds the emotion Vicious circle Can go on and it's great Don't want to get up Then at that moment You don't want to get out of your pain So if the pain body may be feeding on Your thinking, may be feeding on Other people's reactions And at that moment you don't want anything else You want that Because you are the pain body at that moment There is an addiction To emotional pain So if you get drawn into A stream of negative thinking About life, about other people About yourself, about whatever it may be Or one person Which could be yourself Or your partner Or your father Or some politician Not mentioning any names And whenever you The image of that person Comes into your head There is an enormous influx of pain But again We could easily misinterpret The pain body as being Personal And as unconsciousness Being a personal shortcoming Of someone But all that If it's a politician Or your partner or whatever But all that is there is the expression Of human unconsciousness And the pain body Wonderfully expressed In the words of Jesus They know not what they do Forgive them For they know not what they do Or in the modern translation That hasn't been published yet They are completely unconscious And when that is the case They create suffering And when you react as if There were a person there Who knows what he is doing You also become unconscious The reaction Can make you unconscious The reaction can take you over And then your own pain body Suddenly is there And the pain body contributes To the fact that many people Believe there is something wrong with them And there isn't It's the human pain body And the heavier it is in you Because people have Varying degrees of density In their pain body The more likely it is That it will drive you Into consciousness Because the pain gets too much I can't live like that anymore And then suddenly You notice it when it arises The first sign of it That you may be able to catch A little event triggering An enormous reaction And you notice That emotional movement Inside you You are present What then happens We don't know The pain body may still arise Depending on your degree Of presence A strange thing happens When the pain body comes up It uses an opportunity We mentioned the car Could be your partner Who makes a remark Or a comment That the pain body can use As an opportunity to arise What did you mean When you said that Were you accusing me Why are you accusing me I wasn't accusing you Yes you were accusing And to observe it then As it arises Whether you can do that Depends on your degree Of presence And it is quite possible That you can detect it For most people It works like this They become conscious Just after it has happened A pain body episode has happened A pain body came up A drama developed Perhaps with your partner Or at work Or some other member of your family Or even with a stranger Drama developed There was perhaps a lot of shouting And fighting And then pain body Fed itself On the emotional pain And then subsided And went back to its dormant state And then some consciousness Comes back What was that What was all that about Sometimes partners can do it After the drama They can both say What was all that about And then you think How did it start We can't even remember What the whole thing was about In some cases They can't even remember How it all started It was about nothing In many cases Much ado about nothing Shakespeare's play And then they become conscious There was our pain body Or there was my pain body That was it, okay Well, let's see if next time We can catch it a little bit sooner And then usually it arises in one person Before it triggers the reaction In the other So it can sometimes happen That one partner remains conscious And observes the arising Of the pain body in the other And then perhaps Can either point it out Or If that's too dangerous Can Can simply Be intensely present in the body And simply be there As an aware presence A non-reacting presence But that is Requires great intensity Of presence Because the pain body is clever, very clever It knows the weak points Where you're most likely to react Or if you think it's all too much for you You can quietly walk out of the room But who knows What happens after that Of course, as you know It's easier to see it in others Than in yourself And if you're genuinely present And say There's your pain body, it's starting The other person may Pick up at that moment And say, yeah, you're right Or the pain body May already have taken possession Of their thoughts And so the person can no longer see it And a pain body Then will never admit That he or she is the pain body, of course If you ask Are you the pain body? They would not admit to it But they would probably Tell you that you are the pain body Or throw something at you Or deny the whole thing All that nonsense About pain body So pain body is A great challenge It is not personal It does not mean There's something wrong with you Usually as presence arises The gap Between the ending Of the pain body episode And the arising of conscious presence When you recognize what has happened Gets shorter and shorter At first you might need an hour or two After an episode Or even a day And then you look back at what happened yesterday Oh, that was... And then that shortens And then you may be able To be present When it has not fully arisen yet In its very early stages Of an emotional reaction Trying to move into your mind And you may be able to catch it there And watch it Or you may be able to catch it As it begins to subside The episode is coming to an end And gradually You're getting tired of the drama It's exhausting, of course And in that moment The pain body is still partly there You catch it and say Oh, I can still feel it There it is It also happens very frequently That the pain body When it needs to feed on more pain Comes up And you are there Very present, very alert And you see it So it meets presence The light of presence And usually It may stick around For a little while to see If it can get through there somewhere Presence, by the way, is not holding it down Presence never exerts Any effort on anything It never resists anything Presence never holds The pain body down in any way That is a dangerous thing One could do that through willpower I have no negative emotion Because I'm spiritually advanced I'm just not seeing them I'm just not They don't exist And of course then they'll come out In very strange ways So you cannot Hold the pain body down You can for a short while And then it'll come up in strangest ways And you do the weirdest things Including physical violence Or you inflict Cruelty on people And don't even know it Or you make your body Very ill The pain body has no other outlet It can become very destructive An unexpressed emotion Churning around you for years So presence Never pushes it down It's simply a light The light into which it comes The light of presence The light of awareness The light of consciousness The pain body comes into the light The strange thing is It doesn't like the light So it'll either try to obscure the light So it can continue to pretend to be you It can take you over And become you for a while And live through you The emotion wants to live again Through you Another form of reincarnation The emotion wants to live again Through you It wants to relive what it already knows What it makes up its energy field And so It cannot do that When there's presence When you are there When you are actually there As the consciousness that watches Then it can't do it So it may for a while It'll try There you can see It comes up, the little entity And there's a light shining on it And then it may try again Coming up And you still watch it And then It tends to shrink back Into a little dark corner It waits for a better opportunity It's It's fine This is how consciousness works It doesn't mean You're now totally free of pain But at that moment It's gone down You're too conscious, can't come In the evening perhaps It'll find a better opportunity When you lose consciousness Through watching A certain politician on TV Or your partner comes home late From work Where have you been? Some upset happens One drink too many And there's his chance Or her chance In certain It's more in males There are quite a few I don't know the percentage of the population The It is Frequently happens that in Certain males the pain body Comes up particularly when they Drink too much And so they lose Their level of consciousness That they normally have which may not be That high even at the best of times But When they get drunk It goes down considerably And so often violence is Associated with being drunk From Perhaps 10% of men They become Physically violent when They become unconscious through Alcohol Alcohol And they do dreadful things And then when they're sober again How could I have done such a thing? I don't know What came over me And some have that cycle With their partner Physically abusive And so of course When they're a little bit more conscious They always promise This was the last time It won't happen again Now That's not the pain body speaking That's them speaking when there's a little bit more consciousness And of course It will happen again Unless presence truly Comes into their lives So in some cases You may have to physically remove yourself From a destructive pain body If change otherwise is not happening Or would take too long You would not survive Two more years With that person perhaps In that case you cannot stay around It would be too dangerous That person will then go His or her own way And evolve In their own time So pain body meets Presence shrinks back Then waits for a better opportunity But as presence Arises there's even The possibility that you could Detect An active pain body In you even in the midst of it Even in the midst Of it it is possible to wake up And suddenly realize what's happening You are acting out Old emotional pain And at that moment there happens A dissociation between That entire Emotional field and yourself It's like stepping out of a Of a role Out of an energy field You were in it and suddenly You step out of that phantom self You step out And there you see it, it's still there Active Still in you Still doing what it does Maybe still you're waving your arms about Or whatever it is At that moment there may still be words coming out of your mouth

[Speaker 2] (4:53:34 - 4:53:35)

You, you

[Speaker 1] (4:53:35 - 5:24:32)

And at that moment You see it Wow And then it cannot last For long, very much longer At least not right there It doesn't mean it's gone forever But then it'll quickly shrink Again back Because it cannot Consciousness and pain body cannot Coexist for long And every time you bring presence to it The pain body cannot Renew itself So it can only Play out its old energy When you The more you can be Present with it, the less can it Use you to renew itself And so it What happens then to the pain body The energy Becomes freed that was trapped In there and many people Have carried so much Pain that they can't do much else in their lives They haven't, that absorbs So much of their aliveness That they have little Left to live their life The emotional pain And this is in the case of dense pain bodies The emotional pain is so much That it consumes them It's like a Parasite, it consumes them All their aliveness And as you bring consciousness To it That trapped energy becomes Freed, it was trapped at a low Frequency The If you could hear it Something like that You wouldn't want to listen to a radio station For too long like that And so that becomes Freed, but it is life energy It is aliveness ultimately And There's an increasing Sense of aliveness That you feel because the energy Leaves its trap In the pain body Very much you could compare To I sometimes compare To a piece of Heavy wood that's being burned So A coal, the coal Is transmuted into fire The flame of consciousness First it was a heavy substance Dark And heavy substance And suddenly the dark and heavy substance Burns And becomes a Flame, it becomes a Transmutation into pure energy Beautiful So that's, and that is the Beauty of it, why ultimately Whatever Is Is fine As it is, or even the human pain Body has a function And that is that it provides Fuel for consciousness The pain It makes ultimately It becomes your spiritual Teacher One of your spiritual teachers And for some people Their main spiritual teacher I would say for me It was my main spiritual teacher Because I couldn't live With him any longer So I couldn't live with myself any longer And a large part of myself When that realization came To me as a thought I cannot live with myself Any longer A large part of who I felt Myself to be Consisted of Emotional pain And that just became unbearable And that's why I'm here now So the The mechanism there Of ultimately What is ego induced pain Pain induced through Unconscious living Through ego Pain body Egoic living creates pain Suffering It even needs the continuation of pain Because the ego and the pain body They both need conflict They both need further pain The ego needs it to define itself Through the other The enemy, the not me It needs the boundary around itself It needs to Create opposition In order to feel itself It needs somebody To disagree with me For example so that I can feel That I'm right He's wrong And in being right The illusion of who I am grows a little bit I need that If everybody agrees with me And everybody I would begin to lose My Artificial sense of self My mind made sense of self So religions Often the collective identity That is in certain religions Largely consists of The unbelievers Those who are not us Give us our identity We define ourselves Through those Unbelievers They give us our sense of who we are Now if suddenly they all became believers We would be at a loss Who are we now? They are all in possession of the truth now So we lose our identity as the possessors Of the truth If everybody is in possession of the truth Who are we?

If we are at peace with everybody And we don't have enemies Who are we? If we don't define ourselves through our enemies Not only collectively Also personally People define themselves through their Problematic life situation All the problems in their life situation Make up My life Me and my life So that artificial Artificially induced Sense of self Disappears Pain body Pain is not who you are It's simply An energy That lives in you for a while And then becomes transmuted Become friendly With your pain body May not yet be thankful for it I'm thankful now But at that time I wasn't thankful Become friendly with your pain body This is the most powerful Transformative tool So to speak Because very often What manifests In the present moment Is the pain body in you So if you are not making The now into An enemy If you become friendly with the now That will mean at times You have to become friendly with the pain body Because you are experiencing that emotion now It's part of what is now And that is Becoming friendly with it Simply accept that it's there There it is I can feel it That implies of course That you know it's there Which in turn implies of course That there's enough presence for you to see it You cannot become Friendly with the pain body If you don't see it And the pain body's nature Is not being friendly In itself So when you are The pain body you cannot become friendly With the present moment That's not what the pain body does So you see how it connects It's based on presence If there's presence in you Then you can accept it Then you can be friendly with it If there's not enough presence You can't be friendly with the pain body Because then you are the pain body And the pain body is not friendly But once you are able to detect it And that's all that's required To know it's there Then you can bring acceptance to it And say, there you are, there it is Whatever Or simply just watch, feel it Wow Feel the raw emotion of it Feel even the need to Wanting somebody else To draw in Wanting someone else to draw in And make him or her part of that emotion Feel what it feels like Directly, what does it feel like In you as an energy field Amazing, so you're watching it That's all that's needed So you cannot really Watch it internally If you don't fully accept it And you cannot fully accept it If you are not there As the witness, as the watcher of it And that's all that's needed So pain body Nothing wrong with you Human Humanity In it's present evolutionary stage You can't escape that The present evolutionary stage Of humanity Has pain body Nothing personal Not a problem Not your personal dilemma And by the way There's nothing personal in presence either The whole idea of person Ultimately goes out of the window As you probably know The word person comes from Latin It's based on the mask That actors used to wear In the early forms of theater Persona The mask The image of me So presence isn't personal either And yet it's I am It's the essence of being Of your being You and being are one The essence of what Obscurely shines Through The egoic story of me You feel there's a Somewhere in there There is an I am in there somewhere But the I am gets mixed up With thought forms and memories And patterns in the mind It gets mixed up With a story There is something precious In the story But it's not the story It's the consciousness in the story Even in a dream People say a dream is unreal Yes it's unreal but If there were not something real in there The dream couldn't even be For a dream to exist There must be something there That enables the dream The forms that make up the dream to exist What is it that enables the dream To exist? Consciousness It appears in consciousness What is it that enables the story of me To exist?

What is the essence Of who I am Somewhere hidden in that story I'm looking for myself in the different forms Of the story And yet Each form Of the story Concealed as the essence Of that form Is I am A sense of presence or beingness That I'm hiding everywhere But hiding So well disguised That I can't even Recognize myself So it's a Walking around Everyone is God In heavy disguise So you can say I'm God in disguise And the other person says Oh I hardly recognized you Or you could say You certainly did fool me And I fooled myself And I fooled myself For a long time So everybody Feels there's something Precious to who I am And that is true But it's not really in the forms Of my story or in the form Of anything But hidden in the form And the essence of each form Of each thought that I have Of each emotion that I have The essence that Enables it to be Is always the same Is always the one Is the divine one self So That solves the dilemma The philosophical dilemma Of whether the world Is unreal or not So if anybody Was planning to ask that question This afternoon You can drop it The world is obviously as Real as a dream That you have It has a certain reality, yes And yet just like a dream The forms that make up The world Change continuously They don't stay around for that long This continuous flux Things come and go Very quickly Every experience Everything is fleeting It's like a dream And then it's gone Some people even don't know Occasionally they'd say Did I dream that or did that happen?

Because it's gone It was a fleeting experience And it's dissolved As that experience What was that all about? Always one The Chinese emperor who woke up From a dream And became very worried Because he dreamt that he was A butterfly And then he suddenly Thought Maybe I'm a butterfly Dreaming that I'm an emperor And it comes to the same thing The story Of yourself Is being dreamt by consciousness You could say How could it be otherwise? And why is it happening?

Because consciousness wants to dream that dream It's enjoying it on some level But consciousness also wants to wake up Now Otherwise we wouldn't be here This is not to provide The ultimate philosophical explanation Of the universe Because it would be impossible To do that through words or through thoughts But it's a slight hint Of what it's all about It can only give a distant Approximation Of what it's all about Never try to figure out Through the mind What it's all about It's very heavy There's a knowing that comes When the need to figure out The universe Is relinquished And you're happy With being alert And still And not knowing the answer If you become comfortable With not knowing Then there is Enormous wisdom And knowing in there How much of that You could ever put into words Who knows Maybe not very much How much of that Will ever find expression Who knows Maybe only a tiny fraction And that's okay So it's knowing Finding who you are Not as a character In the story of me Not as a character In the dream But as the dreamer You're not a character In your own story But that's what the ego believes You are of course the protagonist The main character The one character that really matters All the others have supporting roles In the story of the ego Supporting cast And then The rest of humanity And then the protagonist, me And the me consists Of a bundle of thought forms Memories And then it dissolves Sometimes it dissolves Before the body dies When it becomes too painful To continue to be me Sometimes it dissolves When a very serious illness comes Or a very serious disability comes And the image of me Cannot hold itself up anymore And then you realize You are not The character You are the dreamer of the character The creator of the character The consciousness behind it all I've made it all up And it was never deadly serious It's only deadly serious It may be relatively serious But it's not deadly serious Because it's only deadly serious If the forms that consciousness takes In the dream are all you know Then every form is heavy And deadly And death is always around the corner And it's frightening But knowing yourself As the consciousness That changes The nature of the dream also It doesn't mean that the dream Will immediately evaporate The dream Actually becomes A more pleasant dream When you know When you're not totally lost in it You can continue to Move in this world of form Even your personal life continues The story of me Of course continues You carry on doing certain things You've been doing That continues And yet there is A deeper dimension present now You no longer totally believe In the absolute Reality of these forms You know they all come and go quickly You're not looking for yourself In the dream anymore That's the relief So you let the dream unfold It's fine But you're not looking for A stronger me Or a more complete me As that character in the dream That's the dream Can't really do that for you And so it may well be And here we come to another Cosmological viewpoint Only A tentative Not to be taken as some Absolute statement The universe Ancient teachings and more modern Findings Both point to the possibility That the universe may be Expanding at some point Like a heartbeat They say there was a big bang Maybe, maybe not Maybe it's happening every moment And the universe Came out of one point of nothingness Nobody can actually Explain that And suddenly Manifestation Happened And then it expanded And diversified And we May be still part of that And then at some point Things come together again Multiplicity Rising out of oneness And yet The beauty is the oneness is never Lost.

The point That was there before the Universe ever came Into being Is still present in every being The timeless moment The timeless Fullness of life Unmanifested life That never really Disappeared At some point The journey home begins For the entire universe Back to oneness The journey home And what else Is this gathering than the journey home So this may reflect Something On a very small scale But it's all connected That's happening on a very large scale At the beginning Of the journey home to oneness Because you discover The underlying Essence and oneness of all life And of yourself And we couldn't do that If that were not part of a larger Movement within the cosmos And we are simply An expression of that Awakening Out of the dream of multiplicity Perhaps the dream had to be dreamt So that God can know Him, her, itself as God Only after Losing itself in form And then waking up And it's so beautiful That waking up That is built into the dream The need to wake up And that's why the dream Is meant to become unpleasant After a while because the unpleasantness Of the dream, the dream turning Unpleasant is the built-in Alarm clock In the dream Preordained built-in alarm clock That's the unpleasantness And after that has Rung, another character Appears in a dream Called the spiritual teacher And the spiritual teacher says As the character in the dream Don't you realize This is a dream And that you can Wake up even while you're still Dreaming this dream, you can wake up And know who you are even in the dream And continue to play that Character without totally Believing in it anymore Without losing yourself in the character This temporary form And then you see how much more pleasant The dream is And that may also You may know that all the very ancient Myths in so many cultures Have the story Of the golden age The very distant beginning Of things when There was When beings lived In harmony, in total harmony India has that story Of the yugas, the original beginning Of thing was when Things perhaps were still closer to Oneness and the more you get away From the oneness into Diversification The more difficult things become The harder it gets Because every form Believes itself to be separate And then there's the Promised return The return To the state of oneness So Things start with the golden age So called And then they deteriorate continuously But in the process of Deterioration there's also a lot of learning Of forms We learn of all the things that make up The universe And then comes the return And as you Go back to the source, back home Things The dream improves again But this time With consciousness With knowing So we Paradise regained One ancient literary work Is entitled Paradise regained And that is the purpose Paradise regained Is not quite the same As the original paradise It's conscious The original was Natural Natural oneness And then conscious Oneness So this gathering here is Part of A huge thing It's not an isolated phenomenon It's not even Relegated to just this planet It must be connected With everything else in the cosmos Otherwise it wouldn't Be able to exist here as a gathering We wouldn't be sitting here Talking about this And realizing this If you can become still Whatever you truly need to know You'll know Out of that stillness The answer Suddenly comes The answer to every vital question Is already in you Not the answer to non-vital questions I recommend That between now And dinner time We keep Noble silence As the Buddha called it Noble silence Is to be present Noble silence Between now and We don't know of course what happens to the voice in your head We'll see

[Speaker 2] (5:28:28 - 5:28:33)

Sunrise Another new morning

[Speaker 3] (5:28:37 - 5:28:47)

We celebrate We are The new man

[Speaker 2] (5:28:53 - 5:29:20)

Sunrise Over the mountain Spreading your light Over the land Sunrise

[Speaker 1] (5:30:04 - 5:37:21)

We're still here Make sure you're not Half gone already Are you going back into reality Or unreality Be careful that your life Isn't reduced To becoming To being No more than a bridge Between past and future Always coming from there And going there And being pulled along the stream of time As often as possible Break the continuity Of past and future The stream of time Access the timeless dimension In you By singling out This moment Mostly If you stop anybody anywhere Go to a big city And you ask them What are you doing They'll tell you the story Of where they've just come from And where they're going To complete that movement I've just come from this important meeting I'm now on my way to the airport And catch a plane To go to an even more important meeting On which my whole future depends That's usually what you get Or whatever other answer it may be I'm going to spend another boring day in the office To keep myself and my family alive Or you can ask somebody Sitting on a bench And he says my whole life has gone to pieces And there's no point in carrying on That's why I'm just sitting here There too A story absorbs your life And if you could single out this moment It doesn't reduce your effectiveness In this world But brings in A sense of And a higher intelligence Yes, you're on your way From that meeting To the other even more important meeting But what about now This moment The car stopped At a traffic light The window is slightly open The bird is sitting on the branch of a tree And you hear the sound of the bird And the sunlight Feel yourself breathing And the aliveness inside you The presence that you are And the reality of now Always exists Outside of the story that you carry Which is no more than the sequence of thoughts In your head Yes, that is there also Of course it's one dimension of life But if that's all Then your life is greatly reduced To an ultimately Unreal world of concepts It's very much like An inferior Work of fiction That exists only For its structural tension But no deeper content in it You know works That are very interesting to read You know what's going to happen next But once you've read that book And you know what happens in the end You would never go back to it It would be completely pointless Because you now know what happens You know the end It exists without any depths Only you're reading it with a structural tension It's pulling you along You want to know what's happening next If anybody told you before you got to the end of the book What happens in the end Would have destroyed the whole thing for you And that is Just a work of Many works are just fiction To keep your mind busy And to give you a reflection of your own life What's next Want to know the outcome And then if somebody tells you They all die except for this character No, don't tell me that You've spoiled it all Because beyond that There's nothing on the page except the tension Towards the next moment But the character lacks depth Everything, every description Lacks depth So there's no point in reading it again If you read a true work of literature There may be some structural tension Also there's a one dimension in it But every page Has a richness to it And you could dwell On one descriptive passage Of a character or whatever For a long time You can go back to it, read it many times The outcome is Not that important There's the depth every moment And that means It's a work of literature That nobody knows exactly where the borderline is And in some works you say There's some depth there Is it just fiction or literature Or is it cheap fiction Or is it great literature, the extremes And so Your life Is it cheap fiction

[Speaker 2] (5:37:21 - 5:37:25)

Ha ha ha Ha ha ha

[Speaker 1] (5:37:25 - 5:37:31)

Ha ha If you're only interested in the next thing It becomes cheap fiction

[Speaker 2] (5:37:31 - 5:37:33)

Ha ha ha Ha ha

[Speaker 1] (5:37:37 - 5:57:41)

Lacking any depth Ha ha And unfortunately Many lives, people's lives Have become that What's the next thing And in the end Of course you die Ha ha ha Ha ha It all resolves itself Eventually All the problems finally get resolved They have to Because everybody who's involved in the fiction Is going to die, including yourself Oh, it all works somehow Ha ha ha Ha ha But that is the The reduction Of one's life You live on the surface Just the surface of things So that's another Question you can ask yourself What is the story At this moment of me You see the story And then you go beyond the story Underneath the story Now the story is a sequence of Thoughts It's always the next, the next, the next Now thoughts Thoughts are quite far removed Further removed from being Than the immediacy Of, for example, sense perception Sense perceptions In themselves, of course Are also fleeting Are forms that arise In your consciousness And there are some Spiritual schools that despise Sense perceptions Even beauty, so you don't look It's all impermanent It's all really unreal Don't look Nor is beauty just be Totally within You could do that But there is a beauty in sense perceptions But the beauty That you see If you are present Isn't really the form In the form, even the beauty Of the flower Beauty is always something That you Is deeper than the form In whatever you look at It's not just The external form And you can only see beauty If you see it Through that in you That is deeper than the form Which means The form is thought So when you're Only thinking, immediately thinking About what you see You don't really see beauty You attach labels to something There's no response, you cannot And that's why Many people go through Their lives are devoid of True beauty, they're not present enough To see it They may superficially glance As they're walking through a park Oh, pretty flowers A momentary, they haven't really looked They just have a distant memory Maybe once as a child They looked at a flower and realized it was beautiful Oh, the nice pretty flowers Okay, what's the next thing I have to think about I'm going there It's so important To get there, to get this done Oh, that's nice It's a fraction And even in that fraction, they're not really seeing it Or hearing it, or feeling it They're the senses Certain senses Are very much neglected Of course, for modern For contemporary humans The predominant senses Are seeing and hearing And the other senses Are touching Tasting, smelling While tasting Or even tasting Not many people are truly aware of the food The taste of the food Smelling You can smell The freshness of the air You have to be present Touching Touch something And feel the touch of a fruit Of any object In your hand Another human being And be simply present With the touch You're closer to being Through sense perception Than you could be Through thinking That's why The first step towards being Is to go from the Abstraction of thought To the immediacy Of perception And then from there It's only A little step To realizing The depth that is there That makes The whole perception possible The depth of presence Of being As of I am Of ultimately yourself As the one Who is perceiving You feel yourself As the field In which The perception occurs So to Become conscious of sense perceptions Including The neglected ones Smelling Smelling the air If you observe a dog Which I've been doing More often recently You realize They inhabit Quite a different reality It seems that 70% Of their reality Consists of smells It's the first thing They go to The first to find out About things and people Whoever is there The first thing they go to Is they smell it out And then probably The next one is hearing And the third one Maybe seeing And many animals are like that So they perceive the world differently The predominant perception Is smell And there is a richness there That we could never even conceive of Of smells Of different smells Humans can't Maybe if we had it once we can't retrieve that We could be happy enough If we can smell the freshness in the air The moisture of the After the rain shower Like yesterday The moisture that rises from the ground It smells You smell the earth The aliveness of it So As much as possible Step back Out of the story Which is there anyway It is unfolding Between past and future Unfolds the story of me Between past and future There is the movement of time That eventually Consumes you as that form Does something to you Like some dreadful disease The flux of time Eventually You shrink And get old And you wither And it looks as if everybody were In the grip of some disease What is the name of the disease? What are you suffering from?

Time It's been diagnosed as fatal It's only a question of time When it's going to end Or as one man wrote to me The other day He worked out mathematically He had this image Of somebody Jumping off an Inconceivably high cliff And then falling And the fall takes 80 years Or 85, it's the average age Before he or she Hits bottom And he works out how many Kilometers he falls In 80 years I don't remember the figure But as far as The form is concerned That includes your story It's destined to hit The ground eventually And all problems Are suddenly solved But there's more To who you are Fortunately If that were all And everybody Deep down knows that that is not all Otherwise they would all be jumping out Of the windows already What's the point?

And even to Be aware of How fleeting all that is On the level of form Even to observe that And to acknowledge that And to see that Wow, this is Amazing That is already A spiritual thing to do The simple awareness Of mortality The awareness of impermanence The awareness of the fleetingness Of all forms There's already a spiritual dimension Present, so you can watch a film I saw a film recently Whose main subject Matter seemed to be Death, it was about three Women, different ages Living, on a novelist On a temporary woman Who is reading a novel, I can't remember the details But it was basically About impermanence and death And some people say This film is depressing No, if you truly See it, it's already spiritual Anything that Puts you there as a witness Of the impermanence of things And some films Can do that, or some works of literature Do that You become the witness Of things The short-lived Nature of human senses And when you are there As the witness of that Without even Ever having to say or think about Anything else The spiritual has already Arisen in you Because it's the awareness That is formless The formless in you Is the aware presence That is aware of the short-lived Nature of all forms That's why the Contemplation of death Ultimately is already A spiritual thing When you allow it To be Of course, on one level Something in you says And when You imagine yourself That you're in free fall You don't know And you don't know how many Kilometers Thousands of kilometers You're away from the bottom Nobody knows And yet when you Contemplate that It's almost liberating To see it's all Relatively insignificant Because it's all Destined to dissolve quite soon And then the entire World Becomes Only relatively Important It loses its heaviness Because it's all Smoke It's all like clouds Temporary formations And clouds are very temporary If you watch a cloud It has one shape, one moment And then a different shape and then it's gone So as much as possible Step out of The conceptual world Past, future, forms All that which is destined To dissolve soon anyway Go into the immediacy Of sense perception Yes, whatever you are Hearing, touching, smelling Seeing, whatever Of course That also is short-lived And yet The awareness, the presence That enables you To perceive Is the formless within the form That you perceive The attention, the alertness So in every sense perception There's hiding something That is deeper than the perception We mentioned That even in a dream that looks unreal There must be Something real, otherwise How could the dream be? There must be something there And of course Yes, it's the consciousness In which the dream happens And The question, is the world real or unreal Should not be asked on an intellectual level That will just lead to A lot of philosophy With no final answer Or beliefs Your own life What is real about my life Ultimately Is there anything real about my life Or what do I know for sure Descartes, the philosopher He asked that question What is it that I can know for sure He never stopped thinking And so He thought it's thinking That I'm always thinking But if he had gone a step deeper He would have realized The sense of Beingness Or presence that is deeper than thinking The question that you are Is beyond doubt You can doubt anything But you cannot doubt that you are Because you're not It's life itself I don't know what I am The form may be short-lived But the fact that there is something here That knows that the form Is short-lived There's no doubt that that is Has reality There is something in you that is There's no doubt about that I am, that I know What I am, I don't know Because that is the What is to do with form I appear as a body For a while And then Perhaps I appear as a flower I appear as whatever form Perhaps the I am is in every form What I am Is the one I am That thing that is beyond doubt That my own Being, the beingness That is here Of course it is It's the life that I am Is beyond doubt And could that be the same life And the same being and the same I am That is in every form of life The formless Essence of all life And so if you can be Aware that You are aware, aware That you are Then that's enough Aware of being, of presence Presence being self-aware Through you You are it And then what you are is the temporary roles That you Disguises that you go into I'm a successful businessman For a while Until you hit the ground Or the stock market Collapses Then the psychological Entity hits bottom before the physical

Entity hits the bottom I'm a failed Writer, whatever I'm a failed, another concept In the head I'm somebody who's Missed out on life Life passed me by Where is life?

Here, now It passed me by It's long since gone Didn't give me what I needed So stepping out Of the story The structural Aspect of your form life Life in form As much as possible Then You access something That is deeper Than past and future Than the form, than that which dies Yourself And the world, the temptation Of the world is It pretends that That's all that matters Matter is all that matters

[Speaker 3] (5:57:43 - 5:57:44)

This spot

[Speaker 1] (5:57:53 - 6:21:55)

So it's a continuous For a while, waking up Out of being totally Identified with the structural Aspect of your life The story of me Where it's coming from and where it's going And giving an ultimate importance To that relative importance Yes, you do what you can Now, can only do it now Can only do at this moment What I can do at this moment Can't go beyond that Past and future lose their heaviness And the new Comes in Something That is fresh and new The new is always present You remain fresh and new Like a day That's just like today This morning That beautiful song That morning has broken Like the first morning No past Blackbird has spoken Like the first Absolute presence And if you carry past Into that perception It becomes Obscured It even disappears And the morning is no longer fresh And you are no longer fresh and alive And the longer you live Identified with form and with your story The more burdensome it gets And the world Becomes, feels stale And old and weary Expressed in a character I believe in Shakespeare Maybe it's Hamlet who is considering Killing himself How weary Stale and unprofitable Seem to me all the uses Of this world Weary, stale Like bread that has become stale Weary, stale And unprofitable, meaning pointless Useless That's how it becomes You don't want to end up there And part of that is Not reducing The magnificence As the song Said last night Not reducing the Magnificence of this moment The depth and the aliveness Of this moment, that's all you ever have To a means To an end Which is the story Make it just into A stepping stone so that I can reach The next Chapter, the next paragraph In the cheap Fiction Of my story Of me Absurd So that simple thing Bring the alertness Wake up Become aware of sense perceptions And That which underlies Every sense perception Yourself The perceiver, the perceiving Consciousness, the attention In which there's no Tension And sensing The inner body The aliveness that is there And becoming alert To this Moment It's no longer a means to an end It has a depth To it That is sufficient Unto itself And you to know that You don't need to sit still You may be sitting still But it's not necessary to sit still You can be involved in movement And be fully present In the movement of your life Fast movement Slow movement Be fully present In the movement Enjoy the energy Movement of this

And be there also As the witness of it And yet you're doing what you have to do No You're not in a hurry This is why you can do something fast If you have to You may be doing less things If you're no longer living in the Mad hyper activity Of the human mind Perhaps there are fewer things That you need to do really fast But occasionally It is called for, you may have to move fast And you're totally present In the movement Enjoying that without needing To arrive at the next moment This moment is good enough I'm running to catch the train It's good, it feels good And then you miss it At least you enjoyed yourself That's why I have in Zen Another famous saying Hurry slowly Hurry is maybe Fast on the external Slow means the stillness remains Inside even though you're fast On the external So if you have to You can be very fast You look at martial arts If they have to be fast They are very fast Without losing The rootedness in being So it doesn't Pull you out of being And then when you Sit quietly in your room The dynamic aspect Of being remains The stillness is also dynamic in you Which means you don't go to sleep When you sit quietly in your room The stillness remains Vibrantly alive So there is In the stillness there is a vibrancy And in the External activity There is also a stillness So you have the Two polarities Or as I sometimes call it Buddha And Clint Eastwood Character And The present moment All that would be enough Not remembering It's not a means to an end Give it fullest attention And enjoy it Enjoy the doing You can't enjoy the doing If the next moment is more important than this Enjoy whatever it is That is required of you At this moment The aliveness of it The external Is allowed Deeply because it is And then you go deeper than the form So even if on the external it looks unpleasant I'm wet and cold and it's windy And I want to get home Okay and then you bring A yes to it As we talked yesterday You become a duck or a wet poodle Or whatever it is And the wet poodle Is not complaining He's just wet And then he shakes It's cold and wet There's no judging entity there It is as it is Says the dog If he could speak Some of you found the morning meditations Very helpful The movement Being present In every movement You can live like that And just to try A slow movement And be present Is a beautiful thing to do Because it's not a means to an end This arm When this arm is here It's not trying to get there It's just here And just here Here Not I'm trying to get there Here Beautiful So you can do that either by practicing Tai Chi Or Kim's Movement practice Called Kim Fu Chi Which a few years ago I saw her Performing spontaneously for the first time At a retreat What is happening It's simply Presence Expressing itself As joyful movement And there was a slow kind of dance And I saw her doing it And I said Where does that come from It came out of presence The joyful expression of presence And in that moment I thought maybe what I'm witnessing Is the early origin of Tai Chi Perhaps that's how it started With Someone Allowing him or herself To express spontaneously The state of presence In movement Some people believe that Tai Chi Originated when people Observed the movement of animals And tried to imitate that But I believe It was a spontaneous Expression of presence Although of course if you watch Animals you see a certain similarity Between that Being present in every movement And for example The movement of a cat A cat walking Amazing To watch that That is Tai Chi too They are not in a hurry Just Present They just watch and when they watch They just watch They're not thinking about what's going on there They know what's going on Without having to conceptualize it And then movement continues And suddenly there's An energy build up And they jump You could never think that a thing Could jump that high It's almost magic And then they're still again You could spend hours watching So if you Practice movement It's a beautiful way of Learning to be Not to make this moment Into a means to an end Just a simple movement Because in the Ordinary consciousness Every movement Through it you want to get somewhere That's more important So just It could be spontaneous It could be a sequence that you follow But the important thing is This is This presence at every step And if you're disabled And can't move very well It would be enough to move your hands Dance with your hands And you can make some activity Into a movement That is present A dance Wiping a table Cleaning your shoes Doing this or that Putting on a shirt And whenever that happens You are Interrupting There's a gap In the continuity Between past and future in your life There is a gap In your life In the story of me Of presence A gap of presence And the more gaps of presence you have The more alive you are Does the story suffer?

Can you no longer continue writing That fiction of me? No, you can But it will become literature Your life From pure Cheap fiction Soap opera That's of course Why people love watching on TV The so called soap operas Because it's a reflection Of their own life Oh, that's good They all live like that And then your life Assumes a depth It becomes And the outcome Doesn't matter anymore It's just like the true work of literature It's peripheral The outcome is on the periphery Of your life Am I going to make it or not?

Well, you may make it for a while And then you hit bottom So on the level Of form This is dissolving About to dissolve Of the gathering That was a beautiful form here An energy field Created by many humans Being present An energy field Of stillness And the form Of the surroundings The nature here The stillness that surrounds this place You don't need to feel sorry That you are leaving it Because that's only The external form Of our gathering The essence of our gathering Is not separate From who you are Without that It wouldn't be much It wouldn't be much So there's nothing really That you leave behind That is of any consequence Because the essence Is alive in you The essence of this gathering It's not separate From who you are So when you're sitting on the bus Travelling towards The next thing In the story of me The next thing Becomes a little less important As you Feel the aliveness Of the present moment Even as you're sitting on the bus Then the moment of arriving at the station Is not that important This is the same as the gathering The same as It still feels the same Because it's still now And then you arrive at the station And then you check inside Is it still now? You have to You never know It might be in the next moment Is this still the same now? Yeah, it is Of course the form has changed But it's the same now And then wherever you go You have to check occasionally Is it still now?

Yeah, it is Because the mind May try to convince you That it's not now So you remain alive Not only remain alive You deepen The being There's Depth to who you are

Regardless Of the form of your story Because if everybody is a Let's say a walking fictional Work of fiction Similar The life story of each person Is different One could write a book about each of you You could write your own book As it unfolds Every day a new chapter Wait for the next installment That suddenly Has far greater depth to it And just as in great literature What happens to you Or what does not happen to you As the story unfolds Is secondary The now becomes primary The depth of now And then the external form of your life Of course At times You add things to your life Things come to you It seems to go very well And then something happens And it becomes a period of Loss or of reduction Of letting go That's all part of Living It can't go up and up And up doesn't make sense Nothing in the world Is a continuous getting better On the level of form You can't get better and better As a form, better and better And then you hit bottom Present, yes, that's better To be present Now So it gets As the qualitative The improvement of your life Is to do with the quality Of the moment Not quantitative How much success you have Or how it unfolds Or what the drama is of your life Or the problematic things That haven't resolved themselves yet And you don't know in the next few weeks Or months of your life These problematic things Your divorce proceedings Whatever people get involved in As part of the soap opera The divorce proceedings are happening I don't know how is it all going to end Am I going to survive Yes, you will survive Probably the divorce proceedings Or your bankruptcy Proceedings Or the acquisition of A new Mansion somewhere It's all Form Ultimately not fulfilling And ultimately Not even threatening There's always the Aliveness of this Death is guaranteed To the form Oh that's okay, that's a relief So And also The essence of the so called teacher Which is just a form Is yours It's one With who you are The truth that has been spoken Is your truth You recognized it as the truth As if you were Listening to yourself Because On a deeper level You were listening to yourself The voice arose In the field of consciousness As you listened to it I listened to it That's all There was no Preplanning, now I'm going to teach Them that, there's nothing to teach them There's a oneness In the process There's nobody to teach anything Consciousness Speaks And you were still enough To listen That's all So this is not the end of anything Really Just changing forms In the field of consciousness

[Speaker 2] (6:24:16 - 6:24:17)

Thank you

[Speaker 3] (6:25:11 - 6:25:24)

Sunrise Over the mountain Spreading your light

[Speaker 2] (6:25:24 - 6:25:44)

Over the land Sunrise Another new morning

[Speaker 3] (6:25:44 - 6:25:56)

We celebrate We are The new man

[Speaker 2] (6:26:02 - 6:26:32)

Sunrise Sunrise Over the mountain Spreading your light Over the land Sunrise

[Speaker 3] (6:26:33 - 6:26:53)

Another new morning We celebrate We are The new man Sunrise

[Speaker 2] (6:26:56 - 6:27:03)

Sunrise Over the mountain

[Speaker 3] (6:27:06 - 6:27:09)

Spreading your light

[Speaker 2] (6:27:12 - 6:27:29)

Over the land Sunrise Another new morning

[Speaker 3] (6:27:32 - 6:27:34)

We celebrate

[Speaker 2] (6:27:35 - 6:27:42)

We are The new man

Eckhart Tolle in Learning Annex San Francisco Living life of inner peace

[Speaker 2] (0:00 - 2:13)

I'm the program director at the Learning Annex here in San Francisco. Welcome. I'm so happy to have you all here tonight for Eckhart Tolle.

At the Learning... Actually, before we begin, I just want to remind everybody, could you please turn off your pagers and cell phones? And to let you know as well, tonight's event is being audio and videotaped, and that's what the blue order forms are.

If you'd like to fill them out, you can put them in the lobby at the registration table. There's boxes for those, and that's to receive a copy. At the Learning Annex, we run over 150 events and seminars every month.

And if you take a look at our catalogs, you will see a variety of classes that we do offer. Tonight, we're discounting those classes $10 if you register. You can do that out in the lobby area where we're selling Eckhart Tolle CDs, books, products, tapes, a whole bunch of things.

Some of our upcoming speakers include Robert Kiyosaki. He is the best-selling author of the book Rich Dad, Poor Dad. In June, we also have Julia Cameron.

She will be here. She is the best-selling author of The Artist's Way, The Vein of Gold, among other books. We also have the great psychic Sylvia Brown coming, as well as James Vaughan Prague in June.

If you watch Larry King, I'm sure you've seen both of them on the show. But tonight, you're here to see Eckhart Tolle. I don't think that I need to tell you that he is the best-selling author of the inspirational The Power of Now.

I cannot tell you the number of people as well who have approached me personally and talked about how much this book changed their life. I know it changed mine. And now, ladies and gentlemen, it is my privilege and my pleasure to introduce to you Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (2:36 - 2:17:33)

Welcome. It seems we are spending this evening here together, except for those of you who have more urgent business to attend to and have to leave early. That's okay, too.

This evening won't be comfortable for you unless you become comfortable with the present moment, because that's all you're getting. And if you don't become comfortable with the present moment, then you may feel the strong urge to leave before it's over. In search for some other moment, more stimulating, more interesting, some other moment that offers you more than this moment.

And that's a very normal thing to feel that inside. The pull towards the next moment is deep-seated in every human being, in the human mind. It is part of the collective conditioning of the human mind.

And most people live like that all the time, being pulled internally away from this, that movement that pulls you towards the next moment, which I call the psychological need for the next moment. Where is it? And wherever you go, in businesses, institutions, families, you can observe that stress, it translates, it becomes stress, of course, and many other things, the inability to be at home in the now, all there ever is, life itself.

The inability to be at home with all there is, ever, this moment. It's so strange. All other beings on the planet have no problem with it.

Trees, flowers, they love being totally present. The animal. Except a few animals that have lived for too long with humans.

Certain dogs can get very impatient. When are we going to go for a walk? Waiting, waiting.

If they were out in nature, they wouldn't have to wait to go for a walk, but because they live with humans, they have to wait. But on the whole, you can, even dogs that have lived close, very close to humans for thousands of years, there's still an enormous ability in, despite all that, despite certain human traits that sometimes affect dogs, an enormous ability they have preserved to be in the now, to be in a mode of receptivity and openness to celebrate life, aliveness, this moment. And if you have a dog or watch a dog, it is a pleasure to simply watch the openness, the readiness of an animal, like a dog, to celebrate life.

The slightest excuse is good enough. And the owner of the dog, burdened with problems, and what's going to happen next? Not here, somewhere else.

In thought, in the mind, trapped in mind structures, which are future projections. And all that's needed, you only need to look at a dog, some dogs, and they already wag their tails. Just a look is enough, and they respond, alive.

So humans have lost that, and that's only a small part of what they lost. They lost the ability, one could almost say, to be. So lost in doing, so lost in past and future and time, so lost in thought, because that's all that past and future are, mind structures.

They are nowhere else except as thought forms. Past and future are thought forms. Nobody has ever touched the past, except in the present moment, as a memory, a thought form, but only in the now.

Nobody has ever met the future, you can't, because there is no such thing. And humans live as if it were more important than this. Of course, it's a form of madness, but it is so normal that nobody questions it.

That's how everybody lives. You watch TV, they're all doing it. It's so normal.

So you get lost. There are many aspects of being lost, lost in thought. Really, that's what it comes down to, because past and future are thought forms.

So we are here this evening not to add more information to our store of knowledge, because everybody here has more than enough knowledge. It's not that. No more knowledge or information needs to be added to you.

If I tell you that the present moment is all there is, that's not really new information. But you might say, oh, that's a strange thing. Yeah, that's right.

But then you know that you always knew that, so it can't be new information. Of course you knew that the present moment is all there is. You must know that.

So we are here not to add more to our mind, to our thoughts, but to access within ourselves a deeper dimension of consciousness, one could say, a deeper level, a deeper dimension of consciousness that exists in every human being, no matter how lost they are in thought and time and past and future and doing the next thing and the next thing. And you never get there. When is it all going to end?

When am I going to arrive to make it? Just this little bit more. And you never get there.

Because you're so identified with the movement of thought that you're never here, present, to life. So we are here to access a dimension of consciousness that one could say is in every human being, even if they appear mad and confused and in turmoil inside, in every human being there exists a deeper dimension, deeper than thought, a dimension of consciousness deeper than thought, that occasionally comes, breaks through the density of thought. In most humans it occasionally breaks through that deeper level.

And those are moments when that breaks through when you suddenly feel intensely alive. You feel an inner peace and aliveness. The mind might say, I feel so happy, but it's deeper than that.

And that you might then remember as a wonderful moment. And then it gets covered up again by the movement of mental noise that most people are completely identified with. Nothing wrong with thinking, of course, but if that's all there is to your life, the movement of thought, the incessant mental noise, which psychologists, even psychologists who are not interested in necessarily, some are, but interested in spiritual things, have discovered that most of human thought activity, 98% of it or so, is completely repetitive.

The same old thoughts. And you are forced to think them again and again and again. And they become you.

You are those thoughts. That means to be identified with those old thoughts. And those thoughts are the filter through which you perceive reality.

And through those old conditioned thoughts, you judge and interpret the world around you, other people, events, what happens. But it's all the old conditioning, the old thoughts, reactive patterns, which are part of that. So that your entire sense of self, of me, is bound up with the activity of thinking, plus the emotions that accompany those conditioned thoughts.

Conditioned from childhood on and through cultural surroundings. Your childhood conditioned, even genetically conditioned by the whole history of humanity. Mentally conditioned.

People carry that conditioning around. And identify with that as me. The strange, and this is why life is so unsatisfying for most people, because what they derive their sense of self from, their sense of who I am, is thoughts, plus some emotions that accompany those thoughts.

And that's not very much. And it's all conditioned by your past. But they think that is the self, what Buddha called the self.

And said, this is ultimately an illusion, but people live in that their whole life. That sense of self that is based on thought, includes even emotions. Not that there's anything wrong with thought or emotions, but when they become a self, an identity, a me, that's where delusion starts.

And that's where life becomes very problematic. Because that me that is created by thought, that sense of self, is never, never feels complete. Never feels at ease for very long.

Always needs a bit more to add to me, because I'm not yet enough myself. This is the feeling that almost everybody has. If they look within, there's the feeling I'm not yet fully me.

And on one level, that is true, because there are probably many things that you could still add to your life, and there's nothing wrong with that. You can still learn to play the piano. You can learn other skills.

You can learn a language. You can add new experiences. You can travel to countries, new countries, learn all kinds of things to add to me.

But if you're looking for a deeper sense of self, a more complete sense of me, an improved me, through that, then you won't find it, not for long. And always the sense of not quite enough yet will reassert itself. So there is built into the mind-made sense of identity a continuous sense of insufficiency and lack and not enough.

And this implies the need for more to add to me, in order to be more fully me. And for that, the me needs future. That's why it's so interested in the next moment, because it's through the next moment, it's through future, that it can get the more that it desperately needs to add to itself.

And so humans are condemned to live in such a way, a sense of self that is never enough, that feels uneasy and needs more, compares itself to others and says, they have more, I also want more. Continuous comparison. Does he have more than me?

Has he gotten physically stronger than me? Has he got more possessions than me? Has he got more knowledge than me?

Is he more spiritual than me? Or am I more spiritual than he? Or do I have more?

Do I know more than knowing more, having more, being more? Am I more important or is he more important than me? So that continuous unease when you meet people.

And the need to be superior and the fear of you might be inferior. It's a hard way to live. And so that's the little me, as I sometimes call it, but it feels pretty big, it feels heavy, to carry the burden of the me.

And it needs to strengthen its sense of self through having more, through disagreement, through being right, through reactivity. Everybody here knows someone, acquaintance, friends, who love to have certain enemies, to react against something, to disagree with something or someone. They're looking out for the next thing they can disagree with.

And the moment you disagree, you say, you are wrong. Sometimes these talks, fortunately, I say very little that anybody can disagree with. But nevertheless, some people still manage.

And then there's one little thing, and they, one little statement, and their mind gets in there and says, and then they don't hear the rest of the talk. One hour is gone, but after the hour, a very emotional entity puts up a hand and says, an hour ago you said that, and I completely disagree with you. You're wrong.

And there's an enormous amount of emotion behind that. And it's very satisfying to the mind-made me to be in a position of right-wrong, to be right, to prove someone wrong. And it's enormous what it does in relationships, partners, what they do to each other, in this need to be right, to assert their selfhood through being right.

That means every time you are right, you imagine that your sense of self has grown, and that's what it feels like. You have just triumphed in this argument with someone, and you have blown yourself up. If you really looked inside, you would feel that the body doesn't actually feel very good at all, that there's a blockage in the energy flow in the body, that it feels stuck, there's a tightness.

And yet, to the little egoic entity, it feels good to have blown itself up for a moment, and have triumphed. And then, in a little while, you shrink again, which doesn't last very long, and then you have to look for the next thing to react against. Somewhere is my next enemy.

It could be just a situation that you don't like to be in. You have something to complain about this, perhaps only in the mind. It's enough, it keeps you going.

To complain about this dreadful traffic jam that you are sitting in again. And so, even that is satisfying. It strengthens, even that strengthens the egoic sense of self, because you have made a situation wrong, and yourself right.

The traffic jam is obviously wrong. But, luckily enough, that gives you the opportunity to be right. So, one could almost say that you are morally superior to the traffic jam.

And that's only one little situation. Now, imagine one's whole life consisting of these mind movements, of such situations. Where your sense of self depends on being in some kind of antagonistic relationship towards people, situations, and events in your life.

And that's one single human being. And then millions of whole nations live like that. And then, that same unconscious mind pattern is a collective one, too.

Then you can have an entire nation looking for their enemies. Because only through that, or religions. You can have an entire religion looking for those who don't believe.

Because their sense of self becomes stronger through saying they are wrong, we are right. So the need for enemies is built into that mind structure that we are talking about. And this is on a personal level.

And the need to be in conflict is part of that. And that's strange, because on the surface, the little self says, I want love and peace. It says that on the surface.

But then, when you see how it lives each moment, that you see that in the moment, it doesn't want love. It wants to complain about the traffic jam. It wants to prove that it's right, I'm right.

And you're completely wrong. It wants to show that this is absolutely wrong. This shouldn't be, shouldn't, should, but it is.

But it shouldn't. You are morally superior to reality. You.

You. You. And that's, that strengthens one's sense of self enormously.

And so people go, some have it more strongly than others. Everybody can detect those movements within themselves, but there are some people who are totally possessed by them. And there are some others who are beginning to step out of that collective conditioning.

And this is the people in this room, and many, many others on this planet, still a minority, who are stepping out of deeply conditioned mind movements. Stepping out of an entire sense of identity that is ultimately illusory. And that has created so much suffering on the planet, so much conflict, so much non-peace, because that little or heavy, depending how you look at it, entity that one carries within, so to speak, is threatened by peace.

It doesn't want peace, not for a little moment. I'll give you a little moment of peace, and then can't stand this anymore, because your sense of self, that boundary between me and the rest of the universe, or us, even worse. There's only one thing worse than the egoic me, and that's the egoic us.

If you think criminals are those who inflict suffering on humanity, that's a tiny, tiny, tiny amount of suffering that criminals inflict on other human beings. Most of, 98% of the suffering that humans inflict on other humans are inflicted by very respectable people, citizens. Look at the 20th century, the warfare.

Even concentration camps were built by respectable citizens. And all the unbelievable amount of suffering that was inflicted by humans on other humans in the 20th century alone, and now this is just a continuation, the world situation is just another chapter in that. Isn't there something mad there?

Of course there's something mad. Is there another way? Yes.

What do I have to do? First of all, see the conditioning of that egoic self. Just recognize it, see it.

See it in the history of humanity, see it in the people around you, and see it in yourself, without any blame, because otherwise, what, the ego would love that. They're all dreadful, these egos, they're all around me. And so there are actually humans who say, I hate humans.

The French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre said it beautifully. His saying is usually translated into English as, hell is other people. Literally what he said, the literal translation from French is even better, it's, hell is the others.

And that is a very strong egoic sense of me and the rest of the universe, us and the others. And that must not be lost, that conditioned mind pattern wants to have that rigid separation between me and the others, us and them, that must stay in place. And in order for it to stay in place, that sense of separation between me and the universe, yes, in order for that internal barrier, that internal sense of separation to stay in place, I need to maintain regularly conflict.

I need my enemies, because if I go without conflict and enemies for too long, this boundary begins to dissolve between me and others. Peace that lasts for too long becomes threatening to that egoic sense of self. Who am I?

It feels so peaceful, something wrong here. I don't know who I am anymore. And so, on an individual level, that is often experienced as the need for unhappiness even.

That people carry that, that continues to be in conflict with situations and people and events is unhappiness. To be in a traffic jam and can be in a complaint, mental complaint about it is unhappiness. To be anywhere and complain about what is, except when you're talking to somebody who can do something about it, please give me fresh food.

You say in a restaurant, this food is off. That's not complaining that I'm talking about. Then the waiter can hopefully do something about it.

Say, this is not right. I asked for a room with a bath and this room has not even running water. So you go talk to somebody who can do something, but if there's nobody who can do anything about it, why complain?

Because the ego loves it. Why complain in the head or talk to yourself about it, talk to other people about it, feel the emotions that go with it. And that's how it's so normal to live like that, to be at odds with, with what?

Reality. I'm against it. What do you think of reality?

I'm completely against it. Of course, reality is ultimately only ever the present moment, but that's enough for the ego because, and here we come to the crunch of it, people started pointing to it at the very beginning already. The ego has an intense dislike of the present moment.

It would rather make it into an enemy or at least try to get away from it, which is also a kind of making it into an enemy. So you have to be very alert within yourself to catch yourself being trapped in that mind movement where you are in conflict with the present moment. And the ego loves it.

But when you see it, this is the beginning of freedom, when you notice in yourself that you are making the only thing there is ever in your life. You're making that into an enemy, this now. You find something in it to argue with, to react against, to disagree with, and even talk about it to yourself or to others.

And then you can see, and then there comes the movement towards future and say, I want something better than this. This shouldn't be. This moment should not be happening.

Of course, there are many dreadful things that happen on this planet continuously, even at this very moment, because of the inner state of humanity. The dreadful things that happen have their cause not in external situations. It looks like that only.

The cause of the suffering that humans inflict on each other and themselves is within, of course. It's within each human being carries that unconscious conditioning inside. And one could almost say they are forced to act it out.

And that's what gives people their sense of personal self. It's totally conditioned. So you have to be very alert in yourself to catch yourself being in an antagonistic relationship with the present moment.

Not saying yes to it, but meeting this moment with an inner no. And imagine living like that for 30, 40, 50, 60 years. Sometimes covered up with a little smile.

But you're just looking for the next thing to react to. And what that does even to your body, what that does to the otherwise harmonious energy flow that nature intended for the body, because what it leads to is a continuous physical contraction. So if you can catch yourself in that inner no to what we could call, and this is a wonderful expression, it goes back to the Buddha really, the is-ness of this moment.

Buddha had the term such-ness. The is-ness of what is now. And how mad it is to fight it internally.

You're fighting against life. And the mind now says, yes, but there may be something happening that's totally wrong. Things happen continuously that the mind could call wrong.

Now this is very important. Now we're coming to the core of the transition from the old conditioned state to what we could call the new consciousness that is already there even at this moment when you observe and recognize your own mind patterns. That recognition, that realization, the observing presence in you is not part of the old conditioning.

And this is why it can feel so liberating even to be sitting here and to be hearing something that one would otherwise say, well, that sounds like bad news. But even in one sense it is, but when you see a deeply conditioned pattern in yourself, you have already stepped out because the seeing is the emerging of something new, a deeper consciousness that sees, that witnesses an old conditioned movement in yourself. So when you sit there, and just to take a simple example, the traffic jam, as is in most people's experience, there are many worse situations, of course, but the traffic jam can be pretty bad for the ego itself too, to see the moment you are complaining internally, to watch that mind movement and then say, oh, I'm fighting what is.

And you can see also the very same moment you see the futility of being internally not aligned with now, out of alignment internally with now. And now the mind will say, yes, but nothing is ever going to change if I accept everything. This is a silly doctrine.

I heard a mind somewhere saying that. And I'm not going to listen to this for one more minute. The mind will try to tell you that you will become ineffective when you internally become aligned with what is.

You will become, the mind says, totally passive, nothing, you're never going to do anything again, because if this moment is fine, what are you going to do? And the worst thing the mind will tell you is that you are never going to get out of this moment if you accept it. This dreadful moment, you will be stuck in it forever.

One of my favorite films is Groundhog Day. Where one man is stuck in the same day, forced to relive it again and again. And he's one of the most unaccepting people you can imagine.

But gradually, having to repeat the same suffering again, the same day, he wakes up into the same day again and again. Gradually, he just can't resist anymore. He commits suicide, he wakes up again the same day.

And finally, he goes with it. He lets go of inner resistance and he goes with it. And suddenly, he does good things on that day.

Suddenly, he helps people. Suddenly, he becomes a powerful good, because internally he's aligned with what is. And he transforms his entire, the world around him, the town where he's stuck, which he hated so much.

As he begins to accept, he transforms the town. And suddenly, he's out of it. But he doesn't get out until he says yes to it completely.

And this is a universal lesson. It's very deep. True transformation change cannot come into your life unless it's the basis, the absolute foundation for true transformation.

True transformation can only be a transformation of consciousness inside you. Otherwise, it cannot be true. You can achieve all kinds of things.

You can, through thought power even, yes. Through thought power, you could create almost whatever you wanted. You can use affirmations, you can use imagery, you can use, as long as you're not totally unrealistic, you could achieve almost anything.

Well, there are limitations, of course, too. If I probably, if I wanted to become a great pianist, even at my age, it would still be possible. Or everybody would say, the experts would say, no, you can't.

Yes, it would be possible. Would it make me happy? No.

Would it make to a deeper sense of me, of self? No. Because there will always be others who are better.

And even if I'm the greatest, the time will come when I'm not the greatest anymore, and then my sense of self will suffer. So becoming great at playing the piano makes me happy and fulfilled for a while, and then the same thing does the opposite. So you can achieve things through applied thought.

This is not what our meeting is about, so I'm only going to talk about it for three minutes. If you think and feel that you already have it, and also apply yourself in practical matters, do you actually take action towards it also? It's not enough to shut yourself in a room and think you're going to win the marathon in the next Olympic Games, and never take any external action.

Or do something that is totally out beyond the limitations of your physical vehicle. I could not become heavyweight champion in boxing. No matter how much visualization I do.

And even if I succeeded, of course it wouldn't make me happy. They are not happy. But yes, you can achieve many things, but it will not be true transformation, and it will not fulfill you.

This does not mean don't do it. Do it. Because it's a play.

You play with it. You can play with things in the world of form. Different.

You want a big house? Go and get it. And then you sit in the big house.

And then after a little satisfaction, for a little while, especially if you invite people whose houses are not as big. So that gives some food to ego for a while. But that wears off too, unless you have continuous cocktail parties.

And then you have to compete with others whose houses are even bigger. That's another problem. But after a while, then you sit in the, you made it.

You got the big house, and then you sit there. And then the fulfillment of self that you derive from it begins to wear off. And then the mind comes.

And the beautiful view, you may not even look at it anymore because you've seen it so many times. Oh, well. Yeah, there it is.

And now what? And you wake up in the middle of the night feeling fear. Where does that come from?

I might lose the house. If the stock market crashes completely, I may have to sell it. And then you sit in the big house, and it's not fulfilling anymore.

And then the mind might say, it's not big enough. That's why. So you try and get a bigger one.

Or it says, yes, but the car is not, doesn't go with it. You need a better car. Or the wife doesn't really fit anymore with the house.

I now need a trophy wife to go with the house. And then you can imagine what kind of relationship that's going to be. That is entirely ego based.

You want her to add to you her youth or beauty as an image to be admired with her by others. And she wants something else from you, whatever it may be. Probably the house.

So you play with things on the world of form. It's beautiful. There's nothing wrong with big houses.

They're nice, very nice. You can sit in them, move about, but not such a great deal, really. So once you have played with things, you realize it's not, whatever you can bring about in your life is not such a great deal, even becoming famous.

For many people, I want to come out of obscurity. There's a strange expression. He's living in obscurity.

What does that mean? One magazine said, Suddenly Eckhart Tolle emerged from complete obscurity. I didn't know I lived in obscurity.

But it was in the magazine, so it must have been true. And then I've had a little taste of being famous after living in complete obscurity. But it's not a big deal.

What I love is that so many people are experiencing transformation of consciousness, and that is not, nothing to do with the entity that sits here. It's because simply there's an openness, an opening, so some writing happens through it, some words come through it. That's all.

It's an opening into the unconditioned. And then something new emerges, something fresh, something that can transform the world. But on the external level, being famous is completely meaningless.

People recognize you. It's not even that great anymore if you sit in restaurants and they say, What's he eating? You drink coffee?

You've wrote a spiritual book. You shouldn't be drinking. Oh, sorry.

Now I go to Starbucks with a baseball cap on. So that's, once you, the things seem great when you don't have them, because then the mind can say, This is going to fulfill you. And then you have to and then you get it.

Is that it? Or you could become even so famous that you can't even step outside anymore. What a nightmare.

But the mind before said, I want to no longer live in obscurity. So you play around with things, get things. You're not going to find yourself in anything that you can achieve, and this doesn't mean you shouldn't play with it, with the world of form.

But if you're looking for yourself in the fame, in the recognition, in the possession, in the relationship, in the experience, even in the knowledge, I can become more and more knowledgeable than I know more than anybody else. That was my identity for a while when I was at university. I didn't have much money.

I didn't have good looks. I didn't have a strong physical body. What was left?

Knowledge. The ego can build itself up through that, and then after a few years I had read enough books, I knew more than most people. I don't anymore.

I've forgotten most things, but at that time, and that felt good to the ego. I could tell them, oh no, you've got the facts completely wrong. But a continuous feeling of unease because there were others, the older professors, they knew much more.

Unease. What do they think of me? Do they think I know enough?

So that's the self-seeking. If you're looking for yourself in the things of this world, in all that, you're never going to find it. So all the things of this world that you can achieve and add to yourself are beautiful.

Play with them. They will come and go. Nothing will stay around for that long.

You can have a house but at some point, it'll go or you go first. Whatever you achieve, after a while, it's not an achievement. You can become president of the United States and then that'll be over after a few years and then you sit there.

That was it. So it's overrated enormously through the mass culture, the external, what achievement or possessions or attainment or recognition can do for you is, that's an illusion that is being perpetrated continuously through the media. It can't do anything for you if you're looking for yourself.

If you play with it, it's beautiful. The world will form. A million dollar comes, a million dollar goes.

Stock market goes up, stock market goes down. One day you sit in a mansion, a little later you sit in a one bedroom apartment. Another chair, less soft.

Walls are a little closer. The view, not quite as good but it feels good to be alive. There's nothing wrong with this moment.

There's an aliveness. There's the sky. There's a little plant.

And I'm alive. You sense that aliveness that you are underneath the movement of thought. I have been looking for that.

What I call aliveness here is very deep. It is also inner peace. There's also a joy in it, a subtle, alive joy which in normal existence people have little glimpses of.

They can get glimpses when the movement of needing the next thing for a moment subsides. And they think why they feel so good for a moment is because they got that thing. That's not true.

Why they feel so good is because the movement of needing the next moment desperately to fulfill me for a little while isn't there. You just bought the BMW and it stands there and you're looking at it and say it's mine. And for a moment you don't need anything anymore because you've got it and you feel good.

You think you feel good because of the BMW. It's nothing to do with that. Where is the goodness in that piece of metal?

No, it's in here. I feel it in here. Yes, but I feel it because this is mine.

No, for a moment the movement of wanting the next thing subsided. I need, I need, I must have. Where is?

Ah, ah. And it doesn't last very long because there's an illusion attached to it. The illusion is it's there.

And then comes the wanting again. So you have glimpses of it and sometimes whenever a sense of well-being is there that means you become at ease with what is. Now.

You feel intensely alive. The movement of thought is not as hyperactive anymore. It's thought begins to slow down as you become present to the now.

And you may sense an aliveness running through your entire energy field. Every cell is alive with life. Aliveness.

So the sense of beingness, aliveness, ultimately what that is, is who you are beyond the mind-made story of who you are. That is never enough. My history, which is what I derive my sense of self from, of course it's not enough.

All kinds of things went wrong along the way in my history. My history, yes, also. My personal history is a succession of mistakes.

And yet not mistakes because we are here. It's brought us here. It's brought me here.

It's brought you here. So nothing was a mistake. But from a purely mental perspective, you could say, why did I do that?

That was a mistake. That didn't work out. And that relationship didn't work out.

And then I failed there. And then I succeeded there. But it made me unhappy.

That's the history of me. But the mind says, yes, all I need is a little bit more of the story to completion. It will get me to completion.

It never happens. The ultimate illusion of completion of the story of me is the wedding. The typical thing you see in films.

Da, da, da, da. And that's the end of the film. They don't show you what happens after that.

So to step out of that, you are not your story. Oh, thank God for that. And no matter what happened in your history, it has taken you to this moment.

It has taken you here all the mistakes. Without the mistakes, you probably wouldn't be sitting here. You would be watching TV.

You must have suffered enough to have come here. And it's great. If I hadn't suffered, I wouldn't be sitting here.

If I hadn't had a nightmare for years living a nightmare, all the things I described were extremely pronounced in me. The dreadful way to live of every moment is bad. But it worked.

It produced enough suffering to suddenly trigger an awakening. And this is why we are here. And sitting here may look on the surface like people listening to a person speaking, but there is something deeper happening.

There is a deeper recognition happening in yourself. First, a recognition of what ultimately is not you, what you thought was you, what gave you your sense of self, is ultimately only mental content, a collection of memories and reactive patterns and thoughts. And that's not that much.

And to realize that that is not who I am. But if you now look very closely, throughout your life, all the different things that happened, and there are many people in this room who have gone through such drastic changes that one could almost say that you have already lived more than one incarnation in one lifetime. In the past, it was more normal to have one single incarnation.

You stayed in the same place and you did the same thing and then you died. That still happens in certain places, but it is more common now for people to go through tremendous changes. And if you look, you might even find that 20, 30 years ago, who you were then seemed very different from who you are now.

And yet, because things have changed, the story has changed. It may not be the greatest story. It still has insufficiency built into it.

It still has lack built into it. But the story has changed. It's not the same story anymore.

And yet, if you look very deeply into the deepest sense of who you are, of I am, where does that feeling of I come from? That sense of something so precious in here, and that's called I. And then saying, I don't want to lose that because there's something so precious here, it's unimaginable that the world could ever be without I.

And that sense of I am, of beingness, of presence, that is at the core of yourself, gets mixed up with memories and with mind movements and with the story. But if you, one could almost say, if you distill from the story of your life the sense of I that remains, even when your life was totally different 20 or 30 years ago, like a different incarnation, even there at bottom, there was still an I, I am. Not the I of the story, but a deeper sense of I am-ness.

That was to you, and this is you, and that was, doesn't change. At the deepest level, the sense of who you are, regardless of what happens in the externals of your life, that changes. Even if you, if tomorrow, if you're, let's say you're a multimillionaire and tomorrow you lose it all, and the day after tomorrow you are penniless, the sense of I, the story would have changed, but the I-ness, I am-ness underneath it would not have changed, or the other way around.

If you win a million dollars tomorrow and today you have nothing, you might sit in a bigger house, have a slightly more pleasant story to tell yourself, and a fictitious sense of self that would have expanded into a bigger house, I have expanded into this mansion, me. For a little while, it feels good, then it goes. But deeper than that is something that never leaves you, which is almost impossible to put into words because it goes beyond anything that language can really speak of.

And language here can only point, can only point to it. You need to sense that, use the pointer, that's the words, and find that deeper sense of I am underneath the story that remained the same. Now the mind says, what is that?

I'll give you another pointer. What other thing is there, so to speak, it's not a thing, what other thing is there that never changed in your life, apart from that deepest sense of I am-ness? What other thing is there that was always the same, that was always there?

The present moment. It was always now. No matter what happened in your life, it was always now.

Even that's a paradox to even say it. It was now. It doesn't even make sense.

But it was always now. Isn't that so there? And so we come to something very mysterious, that these actually are one.

And what we call the now, the present moment, is actually much deeper, something that contains a very deep mystery that you can never fully understand. We can only get a glimpse of what that means. This now is actually much deeper than we realized, because we thought that the present moment is what happens.

But what happens, happens in the field of now. It isn't the now. What happens changes continuously.

Things come and go and come and go. You leave here totally new experiences after you leave here. And so this is why people think one moment succeeds another moment and another moment and another moment.

That's not true. If you look more deeply, it's always one moment, this one. It's always this moment.

What changes is the form that this moment takes. That changes continuously. But because of the continuously changing forms that this moment takes, people believe there are thousands of moments every day.

Whereas, of course, everybody can verify in their own experience that there is only one moment ever. This moment. Your life was never and will never not be now.

And you will never not be yourself. So with the now, through the now we have access So with the now, through the now we have access to a deeper dimension in yourself that is one with the now. And the deepest statement I can make is something that you cannot fully understand through thinking about it.

But you can sense the truth of it. And that is, you are the now. And that is so perplexing, it actually stops the mind.

And that's a good thing. You can't think about this, because you wouldn't get anywhere. But there is a knowing that is possible for you through this pointer.

You are the now. This is, that's amazing. And then the mind, after a little while, the mind stops, and then it never stops for long.

And then the mind says, yeah, but what does that, does that actually mean anything? Now the mind would like, please, a little bit more explanation. Just a little bit more, please.

Why not? What is this now that never leaves you, that is one with the deepest sense of beingness, of I am? That Jesus pointed to when he said, before Abraham was, I am.

I am. That God pointed to, God is your deepest self, when God said, so to speak, I am that I am. That is God's self-definition.

And it is your self-definition, because at the deepest level of being, of I am, of now, you are one with the one. And what is the one? I will give you one other pointer, but we need to be very careful with pointers that point to a reality within yourself that cannot be understood through thinking.

And yet we are using thought to point to it, no more. So one needs to be careful so that a pointer does not become transformed into some new belief without the realization. So what is this I am, this now, that which never leaves you, that which always and eternally is, we could say, it's the essence of all life, before life becomes a form of life.

All forms come out of one life. There's life, and what you see around you are forms of life, the one life, the one consciousness, the primal, primordial intelligence, that permeates the entire universe, your body, everything, the one intelligence, the one consciousness is that. And it cannot be known through thinking about it.

Of course not. You cannot understand it as such. You can get little glimpses of, oh.

But the knowing of it comes from a deeper place. Now what do you have to do to know this for yourself? Just, you already know it.

It is not new knowledge. It is the most fundamental knowing, the basis of all knowing is that. And it is who you are.

And it is there when the continuous dream of thinking for a moment subsides. And what is left, you don't remember, in other words, you don't remember your story for a moment, your problems, the next thing that you have to do tomorrow or tonight, and all this stuff associated with your life situation, which isn't now at all. Your life situation is complicated and problematic, I know that, because every life situation is.

But that complexity cannot be now. Now is always very simple. Just this.

There is nothing complex about this moment. Can't be. Because it is only this.

It can be challenging, yes, something I need to deal with right now, and it happens, action happens, yes. But complicated, it can't be complicated. The now is too simple.

There is just, well, there are so many things, I don't know what to do first. Well, you have to do one thing. You can't do more than one thing now.

Do this. So if you step out of thought, you step out of past and future into now, and this is the access point, the access point into the new state of consciousness, which isn't new at all. It's just a way of speaking.

It's new to you. It's new to humanity, largely, although the great teachers already pointed to it, but it never was realized on any large scale. Amazing that there is this dimension in you that is accessible only through the portal of the present moment, because it is inseparable.

This moment is inseparable from being itself, from who you are at the deepest level. So all that is required is for you to realize that this portal is always there. It's called the now.

And you will feel you're being pulled away from it continuously through the movement of thought. And then you suffer again. Some form of your life will become problematic again.

And then you remember, okay, what's the problem at this moment? With that question, it's kind of a useful question, comes an alertness. What is alertness?

It is consciousness without thought. It happens to some people in a moment of danger. They're suddenly confronted with danger.

Thought cannot cope with it anymore. It has no experience of the situation. Thought, sometimes in dangerous situations, when your life is threatened, thought suddenly collapses, and you go...

And fear also goes. People have reported after their lives were threatened by some imminent accident, for example, or they were hanging on a cliff wall. What is there to think about?

You can't think. And no right action is going to come out of thought at that critical emergency situation. All you can...

Thought subsides. It gets out of the way. And an intense alertness and aliveness takes over.

Stillness. It is a stillness too, but there's an intensity to that stillness. And out of that, which is the unconditioned intelligence in you, that is the, one could call the I am-ness that is now emerged.

It's the unconditioned consciousness itself. Out of that, right action happens, and it's not premeditated. There's no decision-making involved.

It is spontaneous. And then the old... When the emergency is over, the old thought-dominated state of consciousness comes back.

Oh. And then the next thing is, you begin to remember your problems again. But then you remember also, for that moment you were actually, you lived in a state of blissful clarity.

And some people have that when they, an illness comes that may be life-threatening. Life-threatening is an expression that's ultimately a delusion because life has no opposite. People think life and death doesn't exist.

Birth and death, yes. Life has no opposite. An illness comes and you may only have a few more weeks or months to live.

That can also wake you up out of identification with the story, because the story becomes so burdensome and unhappy that you cannot live with the story of me anymore because I haven't got enough time to find myself in the story anymore. And it pushes you out of identification with that mind movement. And suddenly it's, I have seen people who may not have much longer to live, that applies to all of us because it doesn't really make much difference, a year, 20 years, 50 years.

It's over quickly. The ego says, oh, I've still got time. I've time to find myself.

No, you haven't. Because you can't find yourself in time. Either you find yourself in the now or you don't find yourself.

So it ultimately does not matter how much more time you have. Oh, that's a relief. Because the mind says, time is a critical factor to my existence.

I'm not going to make it without more time. So be stepping, when something you're confronted with death, that can also do it. Or in, let's take more everyday situations, the greatest sportsmen know that there is a state of absolute presence when they are exercising, whatever sport they do, there is the zone, as they sometimes call it, and they enter the zone and everything happens by itself.

Something else takes over and right action, there's no thinking involved anymore, not a single thought, but right action flows out of a deeper level of consciousness. It plays. It takes over.

And I believe that is probably the reason why people love watching some sports. Some sports are watched because of ego identification with their team. That's one of the many ways in which the ego gets a little high or low, whatever it may be.

We won. Who is we? Well, my team.

What did you do? Well, I just sat there. But...

So I don't mean people watching sports to get some little ego boost, but people watching sports because it is very satisfying to watch an action that is being performed out of the state of presence, of no thought, of absolute alertness. And it is beautiful to watch. And that may be why people love watching tennis for hours.

All they are really watching is two people hitting a ball. And when I saw it first, I said, why is it that people love to watch that for hours? They are always hitting a ball.

And then I started watching, and I could sense at times that the tennis players were in that state of the flow was there. And sometimes when you watch that, you get a little bit of that, you get a taste of that when you see it in someone else. That's perhaps why people love watching that.

So there is that state that some artists also have, out of which they create. They don't create by thinking, OK, what clever thing can I paint here now? What about putting a little structure?

Well, some artists do, but it won't be very great. I can do a little dot. Should I put the dot here or the dot there?

Great art doesn't happen in that way. Great art happens when you become present. No past, no future.

Not even thinking about, what am I going to do? So just an alertness arises. Now, there is only this moment.

All creation comes out of that space of now, that space of unconditioned consciousness to which the portal is now. So the artist sits in front of the canvas, or whatever the medium may be, and looks, if visual is involved, the artist looks. And in that looking, there is an intense alertness.

In that looking, there is no thinking. Even the writer, the creative impulse out of which the words come, is that state of simple looking or listening. In writers, one could compare it more to a listening.

An alertness. A simple, alert presence. And out of that state, which is ultimately a state of no thought, comes the movement, a creative movement.

The hand moves. Or, the mind begins to move. If I'm a writer, and suddenly, words are beginning to form.

And that's a strange transition from a deep knowing of what you want to write. It's already there at a pre-verbal state. It has not taken form completely.

It comes out of the formless. It's a birth of form. It comes out of that, and then it becomes finally, and then it becomes a word.

And you write it. I do this movement, because I'm one of the few writers left who have used a pen. Most people, it finally goes into...

But it's the beauty of that. And so there are certain people that are called creative or great. Even...

You'll probably laugh, but I saw Michael Jackson on TV the other day. And even if you say he's strange and weird, that's what people say, there's one strange thing that happens. The moment he goes into the music mode, something takes over.

Wow, what is that? And he actually said you can't think. You cannot think.

It doesn't come from thinking. You can't learn it. You can learn the externals, yes, but not the essence.

So the moment he switches into the music mode, an energy takes over, and it's beautiful. And the moment he stops, an ordinary, strange human being, well, everybody is strange. Some are more strange than others.

So the question is, is it possible not to just have access to that in a little area of one's life, but to bring that into one's life? Yes, this is what all the ancient teachings have pointed to. It is possible to live in that state in which you are no longer the instrument of the conditioned, a puppet of your conditioning.

Something emerges from within you that is deeper than the form, the conditioned mind form that you thought was you. And that emerges. The more we become aligned with the present moment, and it requires simply, very often, to remember that the present moment is all you ever have, and then direct your attention to it.

How? Simply by becoming aware of your sense perceptions. There's an enormous looking and listening sound like relatively insignificant words, but what we call here looking and listening, there's enormous power in the ability to look and the ability to listen.

But it must be true looking and true listening, which is the alert presence of just, and it's still just that. And then, if action is required, it comes. You may be listening to another human being.

The most beautiful thing you can do is to listen to another human being who is speaking. And in true listening, there's an alert presence, a field of aware presence, a field of consciousness. And that unites you with the other person.

That is a unifying field. It is beyond thought. So what we are pointing to here, everybody here knows what I mean.

Everybody here has already had glimpses of that and perhaps not even realized the importance of it. To realize that perhaps the incredible importance of looking, you may find yourself looking at a tree and not commenting on it mentally inside. Not saying anything about it.

A simple aware looking. So there's the tree and there is the presence through which the perception happens. And usually you would be identified with that which you are perceiving.

You would go into, it becomes translated into thought, interpreted, judged, compared to this or that. This tree would look good in my garden. It's called such and such.

My Aunt Mary had a similar tree. I wonder when it's going to flower. How old is it?

You're not really looking. That may have its place for certain things, but if you really want to know the tree, you have to look. And everyone here, it is so simple, has that ability to be alert, to look and to listen without having to be pushed by life into an emergency situation where you have no choice anymore.

You just have to be present because you're hanging by a thread on a cliff wall. Okay, are you going to do it now? Okay.

It sounds to the mind, it doesn't sound important. The most incredible transformation happens if you're able to even perform a little movement without the interference of thinking. And in many of you, this is already happening.

And you feel this as peace. While you do it, there is a peace in the doing. This is really what it is.

So you lift up a glass or you pour yourself a drink, hopefully not whiskey, or there's nothing wrong with that, but usually as presence emerges, it can easily become obscured again through becoming intoxicated. While you pour the water, there's simply an alert field of presence in which the action happens. To the mind, that is not important because the mind says, well, come on, I've got other problems in my life than pouring a glass of water in a state of alert presence.

And yet that is the way out of all the ultimately mind-created problems in your life when this is the emergence of an intelligence that is not conditioned. This is what all the whole teaching of Zen points to. To be utterly and completely here, now, in this moment.

And to look and to listen. That is the Zen master. One master of Zen just said, when asked, what is Zen, said, doing one thing at a time.

One thing at a time. And then the questioner said, okay, anything else? And then what?

After you've done the one thing, what do you do then? Another definition of Zen, which Zen is simply already, I don't really know how alive Zen still is these days, but it was a beautiful emergence when Zen came into being of what is possible, the transformation of human consciousness that is possible. It came through that vehicle that we call Zen.

It came through Jesus in other forms. What was the Zen master's definition when asked about what is Zen, what is the essence of Zen? Can please explain it to us?

And this master became famous because all he ever did was he would raise his finger and look at you. Please explain to me the meaning of Zen. And some got it.

Then the mind, once you have access to that dimension, the mind becomes a beautiful tool, no longer a problem, because you are the presence. You are the aware, conscious presence in which your sense perceptions happen, in which the things that happen to you in your life happen. Things come, things go.

It's always now, always a deep sense of beingness, of presence in which things happen. So you know yourself as ultimately consciousness, which is formless, timeless, eternal. One could say it is the light of God, the light of the source, but the light is not separate from the source, just as the sunlight is not separate from the sun, ultimately.

It is an extension of the sun. One could almost say we still live within the field of the sun. In the same way, we could say consciousness is formless and timeless.

Then, out of it, forms come, are born. And the first form that is born will be a thought, and then it subsides again, and consciousness remains, and a sense perception happens. Now, if you can sense that, while you go about your life, interact with people, perceive things, have experiences, play with things, you can not lose yourself in the world of form, which is thought, which is emotion, which is the entire sense-perceived world around you, which has such pull.

Give me your attention. The world says, this matters, this matters, that matters. Give me all your attention.

And it pulls you in, and every thought pulls you in, because ultimately, the world, the human world, is the world of thought. Every thought pulls you in, and says, think about this, this matters, it's so important. What am I going to do tomorrow?

This is going, what am I going to do? Nothing. It's not here now, but that's how thought operates.

And it pulls you in. It's easy to lose oneself in the world, which is ultimately the world of things, the world of form. Not only things on a conventional level of things, and that's enough, how many people's lives, especially in the highly developed countries, how many people's lives are almost completely consumed by things?

One thing after another to worry about. It's so complex. Every person has this.

So many things in my life that I need to give attention. I'm not saying, don't do it anymore, but don't lose yourself in the world of things. Easy.

Things on one level is possessions. Things on another level is situations and circumstances in your life. Things on another level is all the thoughts that go through your mind.

Are they also things? Yes, they are form. Forms that consciousness takes.

And it's very easy to lose yourself completely in that, become totally identified with that. And this is how people live. It's a dreadful way to live.

One damn thing after another. For many people, that is how they experience their life. Why can't life leave me alone?

One damn thing after another was Churchill's definition of history. And of course he was right. It's both human history is one damn thing after another and every individual life is one damn thing after another.

It doesn't have to be like that. But it's these things, the world of form that is, has an enormous pull. A gravity, one could almost say, a gravitational pull.

And so you get easy, just start thinking about, if you have investments, you can notice it when you start thinking about the stock market, how it pulls you in. And you can, and how it pulled you in when it all, it lost so much not long ago. How that, if you had, if you were unlucky enough to have things there.

But wherever your things are, they'll pull you in. Now if you can deal with things without losing yourself in things and remaining aware of what? Remaining aware, one way of putting it is to say, remaining aware of the space of the present moment in which all things happen.

And that is immediately, when your attention moves into now, there's a little bit of stillness. And it feels good. And you realize, the now is actually not bad at all.

I just thought it was dreadful. My life was dreadful. But when I wake up into this moment of my life, it's not actually that dreadful.

Oh. Another way of putting it is, if while you perceive, deal with things, interact with people, you can be aware of yourself perceiving, interacting, dealing with things. What does that mean?

Being aware of yourself, it does not mean being aware of yourself as the walking story. It does not mean thinking about me and my problems. As you sit here and listen to this voice, and this is the key, can you be aware of yourself as the aware presence through which the voice is being perceived?

That means you are not losing yourself in that which you are perceiving. Because otherwise, if you're sitting there and lose touch with yourself as the aware presence, you will put all your attention onto the speaker and the voice. And you will expect something from the speaker.

And in this case, it's the speaker. It could be anything. Any experience, any perception.

But then you will expect something from the speaker in this situation that the speaker cannot give you. You would expect to be given to find yourself in something the speaker says. To find yourself in some new information or to project onto the speaker something that the speaker cannot possibly be.

You could say, you are the messiah. You have lost yourself and you have made the speaker into a special object that you seek to derive some kind of self-fulfillment from. Because then you won't stop there.

If you say you are the messiah, the next step would be that you are one of the followers. One of the chosen. And that's great.

More ego food. And restarting all over again. A new religion.

3,000 years later. Same place. So, here again, if you have been sitting here not knowing yourself as that, not sensing the aware presence, that is your entire being is part of that aware presence.

Then, it would have been boring to sit here. What is the speaker? The speaker will, at first, he might be a little bit entertaining.

But after a little while, then the speaker will become no longer, if he isn't the messiah, then he is no longer interesting to me. He hasn't given me what I was looking for. And then you go into another experience wherever, which also will not give you what you were looking for.

Although a few experiences will have the appearance as if they were giving you what you were looking for, yourself, ultimately. And then you will always be disappointed because after a little while, say, oh, that was an illusion. I fell for it.

He deceived me. He let me down. This is how it happens when sects and other organizations come into being.

They make one person special. He can give it to me. And then after a while, it doesn't work.

And he said, he let me down. You can come here, sit here for this evening, and go away and say, well, the speaker let me down. He didn't give me myself.

You wouldn't say that because it's an unconscious movement of looking for oneself. I thought he would give us six techniques of that and eight steps to this and 14, 14 this and 16 that. But we didn't get any of this.

And we walked out empty handed. And that's because you were looking for something that nothing and nobody can give you. But if you could sit here as knowing yourself as the aware presence in which this experience happens, sensing the field of now, which is the same, sensing the field in which this perception happens.

One early 20th century teacher called it self-remembering, which can easily be misunderstood. And people might think they have to think about themselves. It's not that.

It's deeper than that. So then you realize that the speaker never had anything to give you, nor did you need anything of what really matters, which is yourself, of the essence of your being. And then to walk away here empty handed will be a beautiful thing.

Very empty. So much so that there is one religion that used that word emptiness to describe the ultimate that a human being can realize. And then the scholars come, Buddhism, for those of you who don't know, uses that word emptiness as the ultimate.

Buddha used it. And the scholars come and start thinking about what that could possibly mean. And then they come up with strange things, theories, like the academics who study Buddhism, not anymore perhaps because Buddhism is more alive in the West now, but when it first came in the 19th century, the scholars came and studied.

Buddha said emptiness. And then this professor of theology wrote, Buddhism is a nihilistic, life-denying belief system, atheistic belief structure. Every word is wrong, but that's how it was.

All he was, he just used another pointer. He said emptiness, it's not a very inspiring term, of course, emptiness. Hmm, what do I do with that?

Unless you realize it, it's meaningless. What is emptiness? What is this knowing yourself as the space, that's a good word, space in which everything happens.

You are that space. And so we have, one could say, the world of thought and the world of things that become translated into thoughts, which we could call object consciousness, the consciousness of objects, where consciousness becomes objects. For most people, that's all there is.

That's what their life consists of, things, stuck full with things, object consciousness, with one thing after another. Okay, what do we have to do now? What's the next thing to do?

And the mind never stops, except when they go to fall to sleep. In the last moments when you drop off, you have a little bit of peace because you're falling towards unconsciousness. But it's better than being tortured by your mind and you go, oh, oh.

And you might sit there after being tortured by your mind all day long. You get home, you pour yourself a whiskey and you drink it. And then gradually, you're moving towards unconsciousness.

And then for the first time in that day, you experience a little bit of peace that comes when the mind slows down and stops. But you are falling, one could say, below thought. But it's better than perhaps being tortured.

But this is not where we are going. We are not going to the level of animals or vegetables. It's beautiful for an animal to be an animal.

It's perfect. In many ways, more perfect than any human. Trees, vegetables, beautiful expressions of consciousness in their own way.

It is the destiny of humans to go beyond thought, not to fall back below thought. And many things that you take that give you a little relief from your mind tend to be things that take you towards unconsciousness, towards sleep. But there's no need to go there.

Here we are going beyond. And we are finding a stillness and a peace without loss of consciousness. In fact, a deeper consciousness.

Otherwise, nobody, almost nobody would want to give up being human. If you just said, if I asked you, if you could have inner peace, because that is one aspect of what we are talking about, knowing that is finding the dimension of inner peace, which is the dimension of the formless consciousness within yourself. Inner peace at any price?

No. Would you rather be an unhappy human or a happy cow? Not that many cows these days are happy because cows are being treated abominably by humans.

Abominably by humans. That is, if I had to be a cow, I would live in India or in Switzerland. But very few humans would say, I would rather be a happy cow without any problems than an unhappy human.

You don't want to give up being human. So inner peace, not at the cost of loss of consciousness. Cow is a beautiful being, closer to the source than humans, just as everything in nature is.

It hasn't removed, it hasn't gone out that far yet, not as far as humans from the source of all life. More deeply, more intimately connected with the source of all life. Every animal, every tree, every flower, and they are all expressions of the one consciousness and they are all closer to God if God is the one, the source, than any human, except those humans who are finding their way back.

But finding their way back is not going back to the level of it's going beyond. So when true inner peace is there, there is a deep knowing that comes with it, an awareness, a presence. We had, as humanity as a whole, had to move through thought, being lost in thought.

They had to go through that, otherwise it wouldn't have happened. There's nothing that happens that is not meant to happen because the totality has brought this about. This applies to everything.

It applies to every event. Humanity had to go through the suffering, self-inflicted to a large extent. The suffering of humanity, the greater part of it, is completely self-inflicted.

Humans are doing it to themselves, to each other. And we had to go through that and it was to do with losing yourself in thought. It all started with, in mythology, myth tells us, and there's deep truth in it, that two human beings ate of the tree, the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Good, bad. I like this, I don't like that. That's right, that thinking starts.

They ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And at first it was a beautiful thing. You become powerful, they became powerful through that, and more and more, they lost themselves in it also, in thought.

They lost their deep connection with the source, with themselves, with the divine. Paradise was lost. And paradise can be regained.

Now that we have, humanity has arrived at a very critical stage in its development, because mind, the human mind, human thinking has proliferated enormously through science, through technology, and all the things that science and technology creates. Not that in itself it is bad or good, but it is an extension of thought. And if thought is not rooted in the deeper levels of pure consciousness, of awareness, of presence, thought becomes mad.

Thought becomes self-serving. Ego. Human life becomes dominated by ego, personal and collective.

And so, that's the way humanity went. What seems certain now is, if there's no transformation of consciousness in humanity, mankind or humankind probably will not make it as a species, and some other species will replace it. And consciousness can take any form, it doesn't mind.

It loves playing with forms. It says, OK, humans, let's drop that. We tried that.

And nothing is lost. There's only one life. Billions of forms of life, all come and go.

And yet, the possibility is here of the flowering of human consciousness, of a new, one could say, words are always limited, a new level in human evolution, where life on this planet is not made into a hell, because potentially, it is a paradise. The planet is a paradise. The planet is pure, pristine, a jewel of just unbelievable.

And the same, what have humans done to it, especially the past hundred years? Because of the proliferation of, magnification of thoughts through science. Poisons everywhere, eradication of nature, madness.

But it is a beautiful, divine being, the planet. And this is just an external expression of what each human being has done within. They are, in their essence, pure, beautiful, alive.

And that remains, that level of pure consciousness remains in every human. The inner peace is there in every human, covered up by toxic substances, toxic thinking, ego-dominated thinking, self-seeking through thought, me, me, them, must have more, more, more, more. Enemy, where is the enemy?

We are moving out of that. The quickest way to this realization, and it's so quick that it doesn't require any time, is what we've already pointed to here, to many times tonight, an inner alignment with life. Life is now.

Not to make this moment into an enemy, to say yes to it, to welcome it, to allow it to be, that's really enough. And if you're still questioning the wisdom, and still saying, why should I do that? Whatever happens at any moment, which is only the one moment, whatever happens in your life, appears to be a separate event.

This happens, and then that happens. But if you look, physicists who have studied, who have looked beyond the surface appearance of things, found that the entire universe is interconnected. The actual, what seems like a separation between different things, does not ultimately exist.

It is a web of interconnectedness. The entire cosmos is one. Everything is connected to everything else.

Buddhists have always spoken of this, for 2,600 years, of the interconnectedness of all things. And so, if something happens at this moment, it cannot not be. It is inevitable.

Anything that is, has an inevitability to it. Because the entire cosmos has brought this event about. So, to not be aligned with it internally, is to cut yourself off from the flow of intelligence that expresses itself as the universe.

And to be aligned with what is, is to be also in alignment with the one intelligence. Which then flows through you and will affect what you do. It will do through you.

You are not separate from it. That's when life gets so much easier. I don't have to struggle with all that.

I don't. Not the little I. Through the simple act of surrender, which is ultimately what we are talking about.

There's great beauty and power in that. Only the little me says, don't surrender. Surrender.

Just to this moment. Become aligned with that. And see there is a beauty in everything.

Even in death. Because death happens. The end of a form.

A form dissolves. You become aligned with that. That is the spiritual practice.

That is the essence of all teachings. If you really look deep enough. To live in alignment with life.

And your, whatever form this moment takes, even if it seems to be a limitation on you. Which is often the case. I don't want to be here in this place.

I want to be somewhere else. I don't want to be stuck here. I want to be somewhere else.

I don't want to. Very often this moment can be perceived as a limitation. And of course in some ways it is.

The body may become limited. Maybe the body may get old. You can't move anymore the way you did.

Your very body can become a limitation. There are certain things that are as they are. And enormous change happens when you accept them as they are.

It's not defeat. It's not accept. I am ill.

Just this moment. Not the idea of I am this or I am that. Only this moment you need to accept.

Oh, just this. And then there is a beauty in whatever happens. And with that comes a gratefulness for what is.

It can be a gratefulness for the tiniest things that otherwise you would have overlooked. A gratefulness for the table that you touch. Its being.

A little flower. A glass of water. Not that you have to think I am grateful.

It's a natural way in which you interact with the world. You are grateful for what is. The beingness.

Without self-seeking. Seeking yourself in it. And then your life improves dramatically.

The moment that gratefulness comes for whatever is, you are already abundant. You already have abundant life. The expression that Jesus used.

I want you to have life. And I want you to have it abundantly. Jesus said abundant life.

He said the depth of life. The depth of aliveness. He was not talking about more things.

Not that kind of abundance. He did not say I promise you consumer goods and shopping malls. Because when we speak of abundance, we think more things.

No, deeper. So the abundance, even if you only have one object or two objects in your life, you give them attention. You look, you touch.

And when you give attention, don't use them as a means to an end or some kind of self-story around it and say, look at me, I'm such and such an age and all I can afford is this little table. Or the opposite. Look how big my table is.

Not that kind of attention. No, pure simply to give something an attention without self, just attention, acknowledge its being. Look at it, touch it, pick it up, see it.

Immediately when you give something attention, a gratefulness comes with that, an aliveness. That's abundance. And then, because it's the depth of abundance, that is abundant life.

Ultimately you're getting in touch with that which is beyond form in you. And then the forms in your life are little addings on, icing on the cake. Not necessary, but quite nice when they come.

And not that bad when they go. That's the play of form, the dance of form. And that dance as you leave here continues.

You step out of here and the dance of your life and the forms of your life continues. Why not participate in it? It's not deadly serious when you don't need this to be in a certain way anymore.

Just play with the things of your life and give attention to this, just what is. And there is a depth in what is that's deeper than the form. And that really gives the form its beauty, its aliveness.

The depth is in you. Yes to what is connects you with that depth. It seems so simple.

How can that be? The inner yes to what is connects you with that depth in you. That is where you and the one life, the one consciousness that we could call God are one.

No separation. Formless form. You are the bridge.

Your home is the formless. But for a little while you move between the form and the formless. But you need to come to an acceptance of the forms in the now.

Even if they appear limiting, accept first and then see what happens. Then they change.

Accept first, no matter how limiting it seems.

The ultimate limitation is the cross, the crucifixion. The cross, how can one accept being crucified to a cross? Can't accept that.

But this being that is you ultimately, each one of you, accepted the most extreme form of limitation. Torture instrument, the cross, the torture instrument, said, not my will, but thy will be done. Thy will, whose will?

The one. The will of the one that brought this event about. And the torture instrument suddenly became a symbol for the divine.

And you don't need to be a Christian to understand that. Most Christians have a limited understanding of what that means. The torture instrument suddenly becomes an opening and becomes a symbol for the divine.

They are one. The greatest limitation, when totally accepted, becomes the opening. So if there's still suffering in your life, and if there's acute suffering in your life, the greatest limitation can become the opening.

But it may be that you don't need that much suffering anymore. You've had enough. There's nothing you need to remember.

Let's be still a moment, and simply allow this moment to be. Be.

[Speaker 3] (2:18:09 - 2:18:11)

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Eckhart Tolle on The SpiritualityOf St Francis Assisi-TheExperienceOfLucidLiving-AMeditationWithEckhartTolle--

[Speaker 1] (0:48 - 23:35)

Welcome. I'm on my little summer retreat. It's quite hot and I'm glad we were able to make it.

Join us. Despite the fact that I believe right now there's a very important event happening on the planet which involves 24 men chasing one ball. So, if you're here despite that, I'm very happy.

And if you are tuning in from Brazil and you've been experiencing some unhappiness also connected with these 24 men, or perhaps a different set of 24 men, then you may want to look more deeply into the cause of that. And if it hadn't been Brazil it would be some other country. The mechanism is the same.

It all goes back to not realizing who you are and identifying with something else. Using an image in the mind, personal or collective, and endowing that personal or collective image with a sense of self. And if that happens, if something happens to that mentally created image, personally or collectively, you feel injured, hurt, or diminished in your sense of self.

And you become unhappy. So, that's a very normal thing. Most humans, except for those who already are in touch with that dimension within that lies beyond this superficial realm of delusion, most humans then have a number of things that they derive their sense of self from.

Partly collective, partly personal. Collective could mean your nation, your tribal identity, which relates to sport teams, and so on. Religion.

My religion, our religion. Or a particular church, or movement within one religion as opposed to another church that's different. Nationalism in some places is still strong, not as insane as it perhaps as it was in the 20th century in many places.

And many other collective identification from my club, my town, my this, my that, or our. And then personal possessions, status, recognition from others, or lack of it. Knowledge, personal appearance, external appearance, and so on.

All things the mind identifies with. Very precarious, because basically they're all mental fabrications, stories. There's nothing wrong with mental fabrications and stories, you can enjoy those as long as you know that's what they are.

But if you take them to be ultimate reality, then very quickly you begin to suffer. We continue to live surrounded by these stories. Enjoy them, you can watch the game.

You can even be happy if your team wins and the other team loses, but it doesn't go that deep anymore. So if your team loses, yes, there's a surface dissatisfaction which you observe. Or if your team wins, there's a surface elation, you go, oh, yeah, but it doesn't go that deep.

Because on a deeper level, you know that that has nothing to do with who you are. It's a game, it's a story, a play, a dreamlike formation. Now mostly in a dream, you don't know that you're dreaming.

Occasionally it happens that you have a lucid dream and you suddenly in the middle of a dream realize that you're dreaming and then there's a fundamental shift in the way in which you experience the dream. The same in daily life. Most people are so identified with mental formations, things, events and so on, which all become mental formations, that the lucidity factor is missing.

So they are in the dream of daily existence, but so identified with it, they don't know it is a kind of dream. So they try to derive a satisfying sense of self from it, which is impossible. Now the equivalent of having a lucid dream or realizing in the middle of the dream that you're dreaming is, of course, to become aware in your daily life.

Suddenly there is an awareness, which is not a thought. The awareness, sorry, from the dimension of awareness, you can recognize that the thought is just a thought. And you realize who you are essentially is that deeper presence, the lucidity that enables you not only to have sense perceptions, but also enables you to have thoughts.

That is lucid living. So you have, you can have lucid dreaming, but more important, it's much more important to experience lucid living. And that is the beginning of the end of misidentification with who you are.

And what then happens is that there can still be minor manifestations of happiness and unhappiness. But it doesn't go that deep anymore. Now some people might say, okay, I'm okay with unhappiness not going that deep, but they might feel uneasy with happiness not going that deep anymore.

What I mean, of course, is the what is conventionally called happiness is a temporary surface phenomenon. But there is a deeper happiness, if we even still want to use that term. Usually I don't.

There is a deeper sense of presence of rootedness, of vast spaciousness of aliveness. That is sometimes called joy. But you can call it inner peace.

You can call it a deep sense of contentment in the background. And this is why we're here. To be reminded that that dimension is there within you, waiting to be discovered, or waiting to reveal itself to you.

Or if you already live in connectedness with that, to deepen it. That's why we're here. So the question then, of course, is, do I know who I am, beyond my physical body, or beyond my external appearance, beyond my place in society, beyond whatever country I happen to belong to, because I happen to be born there, beyond my religion, which, again, in most cases, is my religion, because I happen to be born in a particular place, beyond my social function, status in society, or beyond my possessions.

And all those things I mentioned are really, they may have an external existence, but you experience them as images in your mind. And of course, you are the presence behind those images, and even within those images. So right now, there's a chance for you to stop thinking, not through any kind of effort, not through any willpower, act of will, not through suppression of thinking, but simply because you realize that right now, thinking is not really necessary.

You don't need to figure out what I'm talking about, by thinking about it. You understand the words, so of course, there is some mental activity. But the words are not understood on the level of mental concepts.

They are understood by you at a deeper level, where the truth that these words point to, is immediately recognized as your own presence. So the only presence, when words point towards presence, only the presence in you can recognize the meaning. And you might not be able to explain it to anybody.

It's just the simple fact that you are conscious right now, which is beyond doubt. Everything else may be a kind of dream. But there must be a consciousness for the dream to appear.

It appears in the light of consciousness. I am that I speak for you, and for myself. I am that I am.

I am conscious presence. I am consciousness. Formless.

Timeless. And I know myself as the formless, timeless consciousness. But that knowing can only arise between two thoughts, or in the absence, temporary absence, cessation of thought, like now.

Between this moment, because on the external there is time, and on the deeper there is no time. Between this moment, now, and this moment, now, there is no thought. It's a very amazing thing.

So let's try it again. I say now twice, and in between the two nows, see if you can just be there as the presence. Now.

Now. Well, that wasn't that difficult. Now a little longer.

Now. Now. Now.

You can either close your eyes, or you can look into my eyes. It may be helpful to look into my eyes because I'm not thinking. And that can connect you with the state of not thinking.

And do it again. Now.

[Speaker 2] (23:54 - 23:54)

Now.

[Speaker 1] (24:02 - 43:20)

There's nothing more important in your life, and I'm totally 100% confident and certain that that's the absolute truth. There's nothing more important in your life, no matter who you are, than accessing that dimension, which is not only the dimension of your true identity, but also the place where true intelligence arises, and creativity, and peace, and loving kindness towards all beings, because that is the formless realm of life itself, of consciousness itself, that then recognizes itself in all other forms. So it's vitally important.

And last but not least, you no longer get very unhappy when your team loses. So, another way you can, if you want to practice with inner spaciousness, aware presence, you can also go like this, and for a moment, this, the hands, I'm holding my hands like this, this space between the two hands represents the space between the two hands. This represents the space of presence.

So you go holding the space of presence. This is the external equivalent of something inner. So you can think that past is here, future is here, thinking is here and here, which is past and future, and in between you there's the space.

So you can sometimes do it when you're alone, just go like, just for 10 seconds, 20 seconds, and just be present, no thinking. This is the space of no thought, but alertness. Many moments of no thought during your daily life, and then if you invite them, they will happen more often.

Until, at some point, the sense of presence is never lost even while you're thinking. They're still in the background. A certain sense of beingness or space that is recognized as more important than whatever is happening in your life.

Whatever you need to deal with at that moment, whatever is going on, is something more real. And that also gives you a true perspective on the ups and downs of daily existence. It's almost as if you had a detached view of things.

So that term detachment is something that's associated with the state of presence. It enables you to not to be attached to things, which ultimately means mind stuff, not to be attached. Attached means seeking your identity, your sense of self in those things.

Detached means realizing they are not your self, they are anatta, as it's called in the Buddhist Pali scriptures, not self. They are another Buddhist term, anicca, which means impermanent, they don't last, they come and go. If you don't realize that, if you don't realize who you are, then you suffer.

And then gradually the ability arises to do things and to observe things and to listen to somebody or listen to the sounds of nature or listen to any sound without any interpretation in the mind. Without naming it, without immediately liking or disliking it, without wanting to attract a certain condition to yourself or feel wanting to reject a certain condition. So that's the ability to perceive without naming.

You can look around the room or out of the window and it's an amazing thing if you can be just the presence behind the sense perception. You have gone beyond being merely a person. You have transcended all conditioning, thousands of years of conditioning, including, of course, all your family conditioning, cultural conditioning and so on.

So being the presence, functioning as a person, but being the presence. And when that happens, then the person is a much more pleasant person than the person who is disconnected from the being dimension, doesn't know it. It's always there, but it's not recognized.

That person who is disconnected from presence, who exists only as a person, not as being, that person is a troublemaker. They don't know that. They think they are doing what they need to do.

But they are creating, when I say troublemaker, I, of course, mean unknowingly they create suffering for themselves and others. And they get upset very easily. Any little thing that goes wrong immediately, they get upset.

They are totally at the mercy of conditions, things that happen around them, what people say or do to them or about them, or what people fail to do or should have done. It's all very upsetting, isn't it? And then there comes the righteous indignation and the blaming and the accusing of others or groups of others and the labeling.

And that's all the madness that in a more extreme form becomes violence. Why? They don't know who they are.

They think they are only this person. And they are totally in the grip of the person, which is their conditioning. And the person is, to use an Eastern term, a karmic entity, a conditioned formation.

Often when I observe people, I can feel the heaviness that they carry of their personal sense of self, completely in the grip of their conditioning. And it's a huge burden to walk through life totally in the grip of your conditioning. No spaciousness whatsoever.

Always concerned, thinking about this and that and waiting to react to the next thing and looking out where the next little bit of satisfaction can come from or where the next enemy may appear. Some people who perhaps haven't had prior contact with anything spiritual may reach a point where they get tired of being themselves. It can often be misperceived as being tired of life.

But really, they are tired of who they are. They can somehow sense the repetitiveness of all the stuff that goes on in their lives. And so, that can be a good point to reach.

You are ready to go beyond. And that is not the time when you jump off the Golden Gate Bridge. That's the time you jump out of your conditioned sense of self.

Oh, what a liberation that is. Freedom. Freedom from the person.

Once presence has manifested in your life as the first initial glimpses, you can choose presence more often. That becomes your responsibility. At a deeper level, presence is choosing you, but that's not to go there right now.

It's a helpful perception to feel that you can choose to be present right now. You've chosen to be here with us, with me, and you're choosing to be present at this very moment. So, enjoy the game of life by being lucid within it.

Thank you.

Eckhart Tolle video FreedomFromTime-sd

[Speaker 2] (0:20 - 0:34)

Sunrise, another new morning we celebrate.

[Speaker 3] (0:35 - 0:42)

We are the new man.

[Speaker 2] (0:49 - 2:00)

Sunrise, over the mountain, spreading your light over the land. We are still here.

[Speaker 1] (2:21 - 53:50)

Make sure you are not half gone already. Are you going back into reality or unreality? Be careful that your life isn't reduced to becoming, to being no more than a bridge between past and future.

Always coming from there and going there and being pulled along the stream of time. As often as possible, break the continuity of past and future, the stream of time. Access the timeless dimension in you by singling out this moment.

Mostly, if you stop anybody anywhere, go to a big city and you ask them, what are you doing? They'll tell you the story of where they've just come from and where they are going to complete that movement. I've just come from this important meeting and now on my way to the airport and catch a plane to go to an even more important meeting.

On which my whole future depends. That's usually what you get or whatever other answer it may be. I'm going to spend another boring day in the office to keep myself and my family alive.

Or you can ask somebody sitting on a bench and he says, my whole life has gone to pieces. And there's no point in carrying on, that's why I'm just sitting here. There too, the story absorbs your life.

And if you could single out this moment, it doesn't reduce your effectiveness in this world. But brings in aliveness and a higher intelligence. Yes, you're on your way from that meeting to the other even more important meeting.

But what about now, this moment? The car stopped at a traffic light. Window is slightly open.

The bird is sitting on the branch of a tree. And you hear the sound of the bird and the sunlight. Feel yourself breathing and the aliveness inside you, the presence that you are.

And the reality of now always exists outside of the story that you carry, which is no more than the sequence of thoughts in your head. Yes, that is there also. Of course, it's one dimension of life.

But if that's all, then your life is greatly reduced to an ultimately unreal world of concepts. It's very much like an inferior work of fiction that exists only for its structural tension, but no deeper content in it. You know works that are very interesting to read, you know what's going to happen next.

But once you've read that book and you know what happens in the end, you would never go back to it, it would be completely pointless. Because you now know what happens, you know the end. It exists without any depths, only you're reading it with a structural tension, it's pulling you along, you want to know what's happening next.

If anybody told you before you got to the end of the book what happens in the end, it would have destroyed the whole thing for you. And that is just a work of, many works are just fiction to keep your mind busy and to give you a reflection of your own life. What's next?

What's next? Want to know the outcome? And then if somebody tells you they all die except for this character, no don't tell me that, you've spoiled it all.

Because beyond that there's nothing on the page except the tension towards the next moment. But the character lacks depth, everything, every description lacks depth, so there's no point in reading it again. If you read a true work of literature, there may be some structural tension also there, sometimes one dimension in it, but every page has a richness to it, and you could dwell on one descriptive passage of a character or whatever for a long time, you can go back to it, read it many times, the outcome is not that important.

There's the depth every moment, and that means it's a work of literature, that nobody knows exactly where the borderline is, and in some works you say, well there's some depth there, you know, is it just fiction or literature? Was it cheap fiction or is it great literature, the extremes? And so your life, is it cheap fiction?

If you're only interested in the next thing, it becomes cheap fiction. Lacking any depth, and unfortunately, many lives, people's lives, have become that. What's the next thing?

And in the end, of course, you die. It all resolves itself, eventually. All the problems finally get resolved, they have to, because everybody who's involved in the fiction is going to die, including yourself.

Oh, it all works somehow. But that is the reduction of one's life. You live on the surface, it's just the surface of things.

So that's another question you can ask yourself. What is the story at this moment of me? You see the story, and then you go beyond the story, underneath the story.

Now the story is a sequence of thoughts. It's always the next, the next, the next. Now thoughts are quite far removed, further removed from being, than the immediacy of, for example, sense perception.

Sense perceptions in themselves, of course, are also fleeting, are forms that arise in your consciousness. And there are some spiritual schools that despise sense perceptions, even beauty. They say, don't look, it's all impermanent, it's all really unreal.

It's all, don't look, no beauty, just be totally within. You could do that. But there is a beauty in sense perceptions, but the beauty that you see, if you are present, isn't really the form in the form, even the beauty of the flower.

Beauty is always something that you, is deeper than the form, in whatever you look at. It's not just the external form. And you can only see beauty, if you see it through that in you, that is deeper than the form, which means, the form is thought.

So when you're only thinking, immediately thinking about what you see, you don't really see beauty. You attach labels to something, there's no response, you cannot. And that's why many people go through, their lives are devoid of true beauty, they're not present enough to see it.

They may superficially glance as they're walking through a park, oh, pretty flowers. A momentary, they haven't really looked, they just have a distant memory, maybe once as a child they looked at a flower and realized it was beautiful. Oh, the nice pretty flowers.

Okay, what's the next thing I have to think about? I'm going there, it's so important to get there, to get this done. Oh, that's nice.

It's a fraction, and even in that fraction, they're not really seeing it or hearing it or feeling it, the other senses, certain senses are very much neglected, of course, for modern, for contemporary humans. The predominant senses are seeing and hearing, and the other senses are touching, tasting, smelling. While tasting, or even tasting, not many people are truly aware of the food, the taste of the food.

Smelling, you can smell the freshness of the air, you have to be present. Touching, touch something and feel the touch of a fruit, of any object in your hand, another human being, and be simply present with the touch. You're closer to being through sense perception than you could be through thinking.

That's why the first step towards being is to go from the abstraction of thought to the immediacy of perception. And then from there, it's only a little step to realizing the depth that is there that makes the whole perception possible. The depths of presence, of beingness, of I am, of ultimately yourself as the one who is perceiving.

You feel yourself as the field in which the perception occurs. So to become conscious of sense perceptions, including the neglected ones, smelling, smelling the air. If you observe a dog, which I've been doing more often recently, you realize they inhabit quite a different reality.

It seems that 70% of their reality consists of smells. It's the first thing they go to, the first to find out about things and people, whoever is there, whatever is there, the first thing they go to is they smell it out. And then probably the next one is hearing.

And the third one may be seeing. And many animals are like that. So they perceive the world differently.

The predominant perception is smell. And there is a richness there that we could never even conceive of, of smells, of different smells. Humans can't, maybe we had it once, we can't retrieve that.

We can't be happy enough if we can smell the freshness in the air, the moisture of the, after a rain shower like yesterday, the moisture that rises from the ground. It smells, you smell the earth, the aliveness of it. So as much as possible, step back out of the story, which is there anyway, it is unfolding between past and future, and then unfolds the story of me.

Between past and future, there's the movement of time that eventually consumes you as that form, does something to you like some dreadful disease, the flux of time. Eventually you shrink and get old, and you wither and it looks as if everybody were in the grip of some disease. What is the name of the disease?

What are you suffering from? Time. It's been diagnosed as fatal.

It's only a question of time when it's going to end. Oh, as one man wrote to me the other day, he worked out mathematically, he had this image of somebody jumping off an inconceivably high cliff and then falling. And the fall takes 80 years or 85, it's the average age, before he or she hits bottom.

And he works out how many kilometers he falls in 80 years. I don't remember the figure. But as far as the form is concerned, which includes your story, it's destined to hit the ground eventually.

And all problems are suddenly solved. But there's more to who you are, fortunately. If that were all, and everybody deep down knows that that is not all, otherwise they would all be jumping out of the windows already.

What's the point? And even to be aware of how fleeting all that is on the level of form, even to observe that and to acknowledge that and to see that, wow, this is amazing, that is already a spiritual thing to do. The simple awareness of mortality, the awareness of impermanence, the awareness of the fleetingness of all forms, there's already a spiritual dimension present.

So you can watch a film, I saw a film recently, whose main subject matter seemed to be death. It was about three women, different ages, living, one a novelist, one a contemporary woman who is reading a novel, I can't remember the details. But it was basically about impermanence and death.

And some people say this film is depressing. No, if you truly see it, it's already spiritual. Anything that puts you there as a witness of the impermanence of things, and some films can do that, or some works of literature do that, you become the witness of things, the short-lived nature of human sins.

And when you are there as the witness of that, without even ever having to say or think about anything else, the spiritual has already arisen in you. Because it's the awareness that is formless. The formless in you is the aware presence that is aware of the short-lived nature of all forms.

That's why the contemplation of death ultimately is already a spiritual thing, when you allow it to be. Of course, on one level, something in you says, oh, ooh, and when you imagine yourself that you're in free fall, and you don't know how many kilometers, thousands of kilometers you're away from the bottom, nobody knows. Ooh.

And yet, when you contemplate that, it's almost liberating to see. It's all relatively insignificant because it's all destined to dissolve quite soon. And then the entire world becomes only relatively important.

It loses its heaviness because it's all smoke. It's all like clouds. Temporary formations.

And clouds are very temporary. If you watch a cloud, it has one shape, one moment, and then a different shape, and then it's gone. So as much as possible, step out of the conceptual world, past, future, forms, all that which is destined to dissolve soon anyway.

Go into the immediacy of sense perception. Yes, whatever you are hearing, touching, smelling, seeing, whatever, of course, that also is short-lived. And yet, the awareness, the presence that enables you to perceive is the formless within the form that you perceive, the attention, the alertness.

So in every sense perception, there's hiding something that is deeper than the perception. We mentioned that even in a dream that looks unreal, there must be something real. Otherwise, how could the dream be?

There must be something there. And of course, yes, it's the consciousness in which the dream happens. And the question, is the world real or unreal, should not be asked on an intellectual level.

That will just lead to a lot of philosophy with no final answer or beliefs. Your own life, what is real about my life ultimately? Is there anything real about my life?

Or what do I know for sure? Descartes, the philosopher, he asked that question. What is it that I can know for sure?

He never stopped thinking. And so he thought it's thinking, that I'm always thinking. But if he had gone a step deeper, he would have realized the sense of beingness or presence that is deeper than thinking.

The question that you are is beyond doubt. You can doubt anything. But you cannot doubt that you are.

Because it's life itself. I can't doubt, I don't know what I am. The form may be short-lived.

But the fact that there is something here that knows that the form is short-lived, there's no doubt that that has reality. There is something in you that is. There's no doubt about that.

I am, that I know. What I am, I don't know. Because that is what is to do with form.

I appear as a body for a while, and then perhaps I appear as a flower, I appear as whatever form. Perhaps the I am is in every form. What I am is the one I am.

That thing that is beyond doubt, my own being, the beingness that is here, of course it is. It's the life that I am is beyond doubt. And couldn't that be the same life and the same being and the same I am that is in every form of life?

I am the formless essence of all life. And so if you can be aware that you are aware, aware that you are, then that's enough. Aware of being, of presence, presence being self-aware through you.

You are it. And then what you are is the temporary roles that you, disguises that you go into. I'm a successful businessman for a while until you hit the ground, or the stock market collapses.

Then the psychological entity hits bottom before the physical entity hits the bottom. I'm a failed writer, whatever. I'm a failed another concept in the head.

I'm somebody who's missed out on life. Life passed me by. Where is life?

Here, now. It passed me by. It's long since gone.

And it didn't give me what I needed. So stepping out of the story, the structural aspect of your form life, life in form, as much as possible. Then you access something that is deeper than past and future, than the form, than that which dies yourself.

And the world, the temptation of the world is, it pretends that that's all that matters. Matter is all that matters. This is important.

Thought. So it's a continuous, for a while, waking up out of being totally identified with a structural aspect of your life. The story of me, where it's coming from and where it's going.

And giving an ultimate importance to that. Relative importance. Yes, you do what you can now.

Can only do it now. Can only do at this moment what I can do at this moment. Can't go beyond that.

Past and future lose their heaviness. And the new comes in. Something that is fresh and new is always present.

You remain fresh and new, like a day that's just like today, this morning. That beautiful song that, morning has broken like the first morning. No past.

Blackbird has spoken like the first bird. No past. Absolute presence.

And if you carry past into that perception, it becomes obscured. It even disappears. And the morning is no longer fresh and you are no longer fresh and alive.

And the longer you live, identified with form and with your story, the more burdensome it gets. And the world becomes, feels stale and old and weary. Expressed in a character, I believe, in Shakespeare.

Maybe it's Hamlet, who is considering killing himself. How weary, stale and unprofitable seem to me all the uses of this world. Weary, stale, like bread that has become stale.

Weary, stale and unprofitable, meaning pointless, useless. That's how it becomes. You don't want to end up there.

And part of that is, not reducing the magnificence as the song said last night, not reducing the magnificence of this moment, the depth and the aliveness of this moment, that's all you ever have, to a means to an end, which is the story. Make it just into a stepping stone so that I can reach the next chapter, the next paragraph, in the cheap fiction of my story, of me. Oh, I'm sad.

So that simple thing, bring the alertness, wake up, become aware of sense perceptions, and that which underlies every sense perception. Yourself, the perceiver, the perceiving consciousness, the attention, in which there's no tension, attention, and just sensing the inner body, the aliveness that is there, and becoming alert to this moment. It's no longer a means to an end.

It has a depth to it that is sufficient unto itself. And you to know that, you don't need to sit still. You may be sitting still, but it's not necessary to sit still.

You can be involved in movement and be fully present in the movement of your life. Fast movement, slow movement, be fully present in the movement. And enjoy the energy movement of this and be there also as the witness of it.

And yet you are doing what you have to do. No, you're not in a hurry. This is why you can do something fast if you have to.

You may be doing less things if you're no longer living in the mad hyperactivity of the human mind. Perhaps there are fewer things that you need to do really fast, but occasionally it is called for. You may have to move fast, and you're totally present in the movement, enjoying that without needing to arrive at the next moment.

This moment is good enough. I'm running to catch the train. It's good.

It feels good. And then you miss it. At least you enjoyed yourself.

That's why you have in Zen another famous saying, hurry slowly. Hurry is maybe fast on the external. Slow means the stillness remains inside even though you're fast on the external.

So if you have to, you can be very fast. You look at martial arts. If they have to be fast, they are very fast.

Without losing the rootedness in being. So it doesn't pull you out of being. And then when you sit quietly in your room, the dynamic aspect of being remains.

The stillness is also dynamic in you, which means you don't go to sleep when you sit quietly in your room. The stillness remains vibrantly alive. So there's in the stillness, there is a vibrancy.

And in the external activity, there's also a stillness. So you have the two polarities, or as I sometimes call it, Buddha and Clint Eastwood character. The present moment, all that would be enough.

Not remembering, it's not a means to an end. Give it fullest attention, and enjoy it. Enjoy the doing.

You can't enjoy the doing if the next moment is more important than this. Enjoy whatever it is that is required of you at this moment. The aliveness of it.

The external is allowed deeply, because it is, and then you go deeper than the form. So even if on the external it looks unpleasant, I'm wet and cold and it's windy and I want to get home. Okay, and then you bring a yes to it.

As we talked yesterday, you become a duck or wet poodle or whatever it is. And the wet poodle is not complaining. He's just wet, and then he shakes.

It's cold and wet. There's no judging entity there. It is as it is, says the dog, if he could speak.

Some of you found the morning meditations very helpful. The movement, being present in every movement. You can live like that.

And just to try a slow movement and be present is a beautiful thing to do. Just because it's not a means to an end. This arm, when this arm is here, it's not trying to get there.

It's just here and it's just here and just here and just here and just here and just here, here, here, here. Not I'm trying to get there. Here, beautiful.

So you can do that either by practicing Tai Chi or Kim's movement practice called Kim Fu Chi, which a few years ago I saw her performing spontaneously for the first time at a retreat. What is happening? It's simply presence expressing itself as joyful movement.

And there was a slow kind of dance and I saw her doing it and I said, where does that come from? It came out of presence, the joyful expression of presence. And in that moment I thought maybe what I'm witnessing is the early origin of Tai Chi.

Perhaps that's how it started with someone allowing him or herself to express spontaneously the state of presence in movement. Some people believe that Tai Chi originated when people observed the movement of animals and tried to imitate that. But I believe it was a spontaneous expression of presence.

Although, of course, if you watch animals you see a certain similarity between that being present in every movement and, for example, the movements of a cat, a cat walking. Amazing to watch that. That's Tai Chi too.

They're not in a hurry, just present. They just watch and when they watch, they just watch. They're not thinking about what's going on there.

They know what's going on and the movement continues. And suddenly there's an energy built up and they jump. You could never think that a thing could jump that high.

It's almost magic. And then they're still again. You could spend hours watching.

So if you practice movement, it's a beautiful way of learning to be not to make this moment into a means to an end. Just a simple movement. Because in the ordinary consciousness every movement, through it you want to get somewhere.

That's more important. So just, it could be spontaneous, it could be a sequence that you follow, but the important thing is this is, this presence at every step. And if you're disabled and can't move very well, it would be enough to move your hands.

Dance with your hands. And you can make some activity into a movement that is present. A dance, wiping a table, cleaning your shoes, doing this or that, putting on a shirt.

And whenever that happens, you are interrupting the gap in the continuity between past and future in your life. There is a gap in your life in the story of me, of presence, a gap of presence. And the more gaps of presence you have, the more alive you are.

Does the story suffer? Can you no longer continue writing that fiction of me? No, you can.

But it will become literature. Your life from pure cheap fiction, soap opera, that's of course why people love watching, on TV, the so-called soap operas, because it's a reflection of their own life. Oh, that's good, they all live like that.

And then your life assumes a depth. And the outcome doesn't matter anymore. It's just like the true work of literature.

It's peripheral. The outcome is on the periphery. Of your life.

Am I going to make it or not? Well, you may make it for a while, and then you hit bottom. So on the level of form, this is dissolving, about to dissolve.

The gathering, that was a beautiful form here, an energy field created by many humans being present. An energy field of stillness. And the form of the surroundings, the nature here, the stillness that surrounds this place.

You don't need to feel sorry that you are leaving it, because that's only the external form of our gathering. The essence of our gathering is not separate from who you are. Without that, it wouldn't be much.

It wouldn't be much. So there's nothing really that you leave behind that is of any consequence, because the essence is alive in you. The essence of this gathering, which is not separate from who you are.

So when you're sitting on the bus traveling towards the next thing in the story of me, the next thing becomes a little less important. As you feel the aliveness of the present moment, even as you're sitting on the bus. Then the moment of arriving at the station is not that important.

This is the same as the gathering, the same as, still feels the same, because it's still now. And then you arrive at the station, and then you check inside, is it still now? You have to...

You never know, it might be in the next moment. Is this still the same now? Yeah, it is.

The form has changed, but it's the same now. And then wherever you go, you have to check occasionally, is it still now? Yeah, it is.

Because the mind may try to convince you that it's not now. So you remain alive. Not only remain alive, you deepen.

The being is depth to who you are. Regardless of the form of your story, because if everybody's a, let's say a walking fictional, work of fiction, similar, the life story of each person is different. One could write a book about each of you.

You could write your own book. As it unfolds, every day a new chapter. Wait for the next installment.

That suddenly has far greater depth to it, and just as in great literature, what happens to you or what does not happen to you as the story unfolds is secondary. The now becomes primary, the depth of now. And then the external form of your life, of course, at times you add things to your life, things come to you, it seems to go very well, and then something happens and there comes a period of loss or of reduction, and you go, that's all part of living.

It can't go up and up and up. It doesn't make sense. Nothing in the world is a continuous getting better on the level of form.

You can't get better and better as a form, better and better, and then you hit bottom. Present, yes, that's better, to be present now. There's the qualitative, the improvement of your life is to do with the quality of the moment, not quantitative, how much success you have or how it unfolds or what the drama is of your life or the problematic things that haven't resolved themselves yet and you don't know in the next few weeks or months of your life these problematic things, your divorce proceedings are happening, I don't know, how is it all going to end? Am I going to survive?

Yes, you will survive probably the divorce proceedings or your bankruptcy proceedings or the acquisition of a new mansion somewhere. It's all form, ultimately not fulfilling and ultimately not even threatening. There's always the aliveness of this.

Death is guaranteed to the form. Oh, that's okay, that's a relief. And also the essence of the so-called teacher which is just a form is yours.

It's one with who you are. The truth that has been spoken is your truth. Because you recognized it as the truth as if you were listening to yourself because on a deeper level you were listening to yourself.

The voice arose in the field of consciousness. As you listen to it, I listen to it. That's all.

There was no pre-planning, now I'm going to teach them that. There's nothing to teach them there's a oneness in the process. There's nobody to teach anything.

Consciousness speaks and you are still enough to listen. That's all. So this is not the end of anything really, just changing forms in the field of consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (53:57 - 59:37)

Thank you. We celebrate We are the new man Sunrise over the mountain Spreading your light over the land Sunrise another new morning We celebrate We celebrate We are We are the new man Sunrise Sunrise over the mountain Spreading your light over the land Sunrise another new morning We celebrate We are the new man

Eckhart Tolle video The Extraordinary In The Ordinary-sd

[Speaker 3] (0:19 - 1:09)

Sunrise, another new morning we celebrate. We are the new man. Sunrise, over the mountain, spreading your light over the land.

[Speaker 1] (1:33 - 37:29)

I trust that everybody is here, not just the body, the entire being. Many of you have heard the Zen, famous Zen saying, chopping wood, carrying water. Zen is beautiful like that, it doesn't explain things.

They say that's the Zen life, chopping wood, carrying water. It's not surprising that many people study Zen for 20 years and still can't figure out what it is. Now, nowadays, in the western world, there are not that many people left who chop wood and carry water.

If you want heat, or want to cook something, you turn on the switch. And for water, you turn on the tap. But for hundreds of years, that was one of the main activities.

They would repeat themselves every day, especially in the Zen monastery, or anywhere in the world. But to describe the life of a Zen monk, or nun, ordinary activity. And discovering the extraordinary in the ordinariness of life.

By bringing awareness, or presence, to the ordinary. By being aware of another dimension to the ordinary. And this is something we can embrace this weekend, particularly.

Because in many ways, this retreat is ordinary. We're not jumping up and down, or screaming in ecstasy. Or it could happen.

Nor are we taking a little pill called ecstasy. Unless you do. But you don't need it here.

On a similar vein, somebody recently wrote a book called, After the Ecstasy, the Laundry. I don't think he was referring to the pill. But to the state of ecstasy that can sometimes come in spiritual.

Ah, yes. And then you look around, and there's the laundry. Now you may not wash it by hand anymore, you put it in the washing machine.

So that takes the place of chopping wood and carrying water. And of course there's another way of chopping wood and carrying water, or putting things in the washing machine. I'm fed up with chopping wood.

I can't stand chopping wood and carrying water anymore. It's the same every day. And is this going to go on for years, for the rest of my life?

Do I have to chop wood, carry water, do my laundry for the rest of my life? I've been doing it for years already, I can't stand it anymore. And then you still chop wood and carry water, but it doesn't feel good.

And you'd rather be doing something else. You're not there, you're trying to get elsewhere. Your relationship to the present moment is one of almost hostility.

And you carry, in a simple activity, you carry a lot of time. Past, because you're complaining you've been doing it for so often, for so long. And future, because you carry the question, will I have to do this for the rest of my life?

And so, that interferes with what could be a moment of great fullness and depth, because you're carrying time into this. And you're carrying a self into it, a complaining self, a me, that separates itself from the now, is not one with it. So that meaning then of chopping wood and carrying water, is not to carry past or future into this moment.

And even if you've chopped wood and carried water for 25 years, it's never happened before. If you don't carry the memory of 25 years of chopping wood into this moment, this moment is totally fresh and new, and it's alive. And there's a depth to it that you hadn't seen before, of aliveness in the ordinariness.

And this, of course, is another Zen saying, which this little saying is to explain the meaning of Zen again, and it's very short. What is Zen? They ask the Master, doing one thing at a time.

That can't be all, yeah? But there's great depth and power, if you're able to do one thing truly, one thing at a time. First of all, it implies there's no past and future in the action.

It also implies that the action is not a means to an end. In the normal state of consciousness, you chop wood in order to light the fire with the wood. So in ordinary consciousness, mentally, you're already on the desired outcome.

The present moment of chopping wood is your stepping stone that enables you to get where you want to get, which is light the fire to cook the food. And of course, once you have lit the fire to cook the food, you're not there either, because you're already eating it mentally. You're already waiting for the moment when you can finally eat it.

And so on. You're never there, always the next step ahead. Always the moment is a means, is reduced in value, reduced in aliveness to a means to an end.

And the end is always a concept in the head. So you get, your whole life becomes reduced through becoming imprisoned in a conceptualized reality. Because that's all that future is, a mental concept, a word, a thought.

Future has no reality, nobody has ever seen it, touched it, smelled it. Nobody has ever been there. And nobody can ever be there.

When it comes, it's always the now. So in the service of a mental concept called future, you reduce what could be the fullness of life to a mere stepping stone. You reduce its value, its aliveness to that, because you're interested in the next moment.

So you're chopping wood and carrying water, but really you're not there doing it. You would rather get this out of the way, in order to arrive at the next moment. That's the normal way to live.

And that is not doing one thing at a time, because you're already mentally elsewhere, the other thing. Or many, a sequence of things that you will have to do later, even worse. You're doing one thing, and in your mind, you already have not only what, where you want to get with this one thing, because that will have to lead to that, and that, and that, and the whole, you have piled up in your mind, the things that you have to do today, and each one clamoring for importance, so your attention is absorbed by that, and the minimum of it flows into what you do.

And that's called stress. Stress. Stress means, one thing pulls this way, the other pulls, you can have stress in metal, there's a pull, one pulls this way, and the other pulls that way.

And that happens inside people continuously. The future pulls you away, and it hurts. It hurts the body.

If the body could speak, it would say, what the hell are you doing? What are you doing to me? Are you insane?

And sometimes the last resort of the body, the body says, I have to make this guy ill, because he will never stop. And finally, your only chance of recovery is to become ill. And so, Chopping Wood, Carrying Water, points to the possibility of not, neither bringing past and future into this present moment, and also not making whatever you're doing right now, into a means to an end, where the end result that you want to achieve becomes more important than what you're doing now.

And realize, there is no future, there's always only the now. And to reduce that to a means to an end is insane, ultimately. It's already a form of insanity.

And when millions of people live like that, what kind of a civilization do they create? And the whole civilization is based on that dysfunction. So millions of people are running around, hyperactive, stress increases every year in society, everybody talks about it, they even feel guilty if they're not stressed.

Maybe I'm not doing enough. Stress increases every year, and everybody's running around, there's never enough time, not enough time to do it all, there's no time, a piling up of future things. And the children are conditioned at an early age to live in the same mad way as their parents.

Come on, let's get on with it. And if you stop anybody and ask them what's the whole purpose of your running around like mad, well, nobody really knows. Or they will tell you, well, explain the situation, where are they running to, internally or externally running?

Well, I have to achieve this, there's a deadline, I've got deadlines to meet, I mean, I can't even talk to you, don't stop me now. There's this norm, the world is full of deadlines these days. I sometimes have to write little things here and there, and there's always, but you only have two days, you have to do it in two days.

Often I don't. Either they wait or it doesn't get done. Kim is nodding her head.

I'm not allowing this world to drive me insane, because the world will do it, because the world is the externalized human mind. So here can be used, this situation, this weekend, for our practice, of discovering the depth, that is concealed, in the ordinary moment, seemingly ordinary moment. It can be used, this weekend, and see if we can, in whatever we do, and what we do is not, it's bound to be simple here, because there isn't much that you can do that is to the mind, really important, your business, or whatever it is.

Hopefully you've switched off your cell phones, so they can't get at you. The world can't get at you. And in the little things that we do here, see if we can bring, so much attention to it, and there's no strain in it, that we don't reduce it to a means to an end, whatever we do.

And that's a reversal of ordinary consciousness. And that begins, for example, with when you walk, from here, to another building. Or when you go for a walk, in nature.

You walk from here to your room, or you walk from here to the door, or even in your room, where you walk to the door, into the bathroom, and so on. There's a step. Walking implies a sequence of steps.

And usually when people walk, even in that little, seemingly simple activity, mentally, they're where they want to get. It's a projection. So you're being pulled away by future.

And you're always running after the next thing, where the mind has projected itself. And there's another way, to simply be at the step you're taking at this moment. Now, at first, it's a strange way to become aware of yourself walking.

You don't have to call it a meditation, although there is such a thing as walking meditation. They do it even more slowly. You can do that, but just ordinary walking, it may well be, yes, that you walk more slowly than you would normally do, a bit more.

Because normally you're, okay. So you just simply, awareness in each step. And it's always one.

You can only take one step at a time, ever. So even to say each step is not right, because there is not each step, there's only the one you're taking at this moment, ever, in life. And to become aware of that one step, that something happens then, and we could call that quality.

And that's very hard to define. That word came to me many, many years ago. I saw a Buddhist monk who lived in presence, and he was walking up and down, and he said, oh, I can see there's so much quality in his walking.

There's, ordinary consciousness is concerned with quantity. And the entire civilization is concerned with quantity. More, need more.

Quality is rare. Because the next moment is what matters. You have got conveyor belts churning out things.

And quality implies full attention. And then there is, also, peace that comes with each step. Yes, as you practice walking in that way, you may find yourself walking a little bit more slowly than you would normally do.

It's normal. And then you realize it does not really depend on speed. Once you are able to bring presence into the step that you, the one step you're taking at this moment, the speed doesn't matter.

It doesn't matter when the steps, it's always one step. And if you have to run, which may occasionally happen, you may have to catch a train, and you're late, and you have to run, then you see, you feel the enormous energy of that moment as a joyful movement without the pull of, I need to catch that train. No, I'm just running.

And there's high energy, or you can, well, let's stay with walking for a while, before you do something else. And that's, you will be amazed how peaceful it is to be aware of the step that you take at this moment. And then you walk also in nature, out there.

And then you learn to have some awareness there, and some awareness in other sense perceptions. The walking can keep you present at each step. And you look around, and there you have another teacher this weekend, which is called nature.

Because nature is present in the now, one with life. Everything in nature is one with life. And so, you bring awareness to nature as you walk around.

Now, nature that surrounds us here is of a particular kind. Some forms of nature are overwhelming, huge, gigantic mountains, raging streams, or the seashore with gigantic waves and a storm coming in. Sometimes nature can be so overpowering, overwhelming, that it sweeps away your thinking.

You can't think anymore. It's so gigantic that it sweeps away your thoughts. And it forces you somewhere, especially if you, there's some danger involved.

You're at a precipice, and it's stormy, and clouds coming this way, and the mind stops. Wow! And there's an enormous sense of aliveness suddenly.

So occasionally it can happen that nature forces you into presence. But here nature is of a different kind. The other kind of nature that I just described is almost like taking LSD, which I tried once, because there the sense perceptions become amplified.

It's as if everything, sounds, visual sense, touch, smell, as if they were all shouting at you, overwhelming. You get bombarded by heightened sense perception so much that for some people it's the first time, of not thinking, because you're so bombarded with sense perceptions you can't think anymore. It can be an opening, you're not growing in consciousness, but it can be a glimpse of something, how alive the world can be.

And so people go and they look at a teapot and say, wow! Or any ordinary object, even a bare wall, it's almost pulsating with life. And the mind stops.

And you feel, I lived in some kind of prison all my life and the world is alive. And then gradually it wears down. What was all that?

For some people that becomes an incentive. For some people that has been the beginning of their quest. There is more than my mind.

There is greater depth to reality than my mind. And so you have nature that can sometimes stop your mind because it's so overwhelming, but here this is not the case and here this brings us back to chopping wood and carrying water. Nature here is beautiful but relatively ordinary.

It's the trees of medium height. It's not like a forest in Canada where you go, oh my God! When you reach the seashore it's not the open ocean so the waves are not that huge.

They're just little waves. So it's not a place where there are extremes. Maybe the Buddha would have liked it here.

So you bring this is an opportunity for bringing presence to the ordinariness, beauty but also the seeming ordinariness of nature. And then look for what you would normally have overlooked. What the wind does to the blades of grass.

When you look what it does to the leaves it plays with the branches and the leaves make a slight sound. Now to notice that you need alertness. To notice a gigantic chunk of ice falling from a glacier in the Swiss Alps you don't need very much presence.

There's an explosive sound and it comes tumbling towards you. But for that subtleness greater alertness is required. Otherwise you'll miss it.

And so there's such alertness that you're not interpreting what you see. You're not saying the wind is playing with the grass. No.

It's just what is. And there's a depth and a beauty there and a stillness in it that you can't explain nor do you need to. And then you look at a patch of ground right in front of you grass and perhaps two or three kinds of flowers.

Some are yellow, some are white, some are red. They take a few hours before they open completely after sunrise because at night they go. When the sun comes it takes two or three hours before they're completely open.

And you watch that also some movement there and you discover things that you haven't seen before that there's enormous life even in one square metre. And you bring awareness, presence to that. And then you walk and you see a grove of trees or whatever it is and you perceive the totality of that landscape as a total field in which intense aliveness is happening.

So to bringing that to nature then what nature is teaching you is the state of no mind, no thought. Although nature is pre-mind it hasn't arrived at mind. You are post-mind but you meet in the state of no mind.

It has similarities. Nature is one with itself and with the totality. Every animal is one with itself.

It doesn't separate itself out of the totality. It says, me. Maybe there may be a few exceptional mad dogs that lived for too long with humans and taken to the hairdresser and when they walk around you can see there's beginnings of an ego there.

And ego, of course, means having a self-image. Me. Like a phantom self walking next to me.

And then you're aware of others how they react to me and that becomes incorporated into me. I want others to think well of me, to admire me, to feel that I'm better than they are if possible with a continuous fear that I may be less than they. But nature when it's left alone is free of that and even most pets are still free of it miraculously or they've lived with humans for so long miraculously they're still sane.

And they are what keeps many humans sane. If they didn't have their pet it's their only access to being because anything else their mind is in charge. They meet other humans their mind is in charge.

For the rest of their life they're burdened by themselves and for some humans their only area of freedom is when the pet comes and they go they don't have to they're not playing a game with their pets they're just themselves because they know that the pet accepts them the dog does not criticize you the dog accepts you accepts the most insane master. I have a little saying God please make me into the person my dog thinks I am. And of course the dog doesn't think if it thought it would be the beginning of a problem but it doesn't So nature everything in nature the flower which Jesus I'm sure said many many times he said look at the flowers they're not concerned about tomorrow they're not making effort they're not stressed they're not worried they live in the now unfold in the now and life supports them beautifully and why do you live the way you live you're mad learn from the flowers how to live and he said look although in the bible it says consider the lilies I'm sure what he said was

[Speaker 4] (37:29 - 37:30)

look

[Speaker 1] (37:34 - 1:03:29)

and then something transmits itself and that is the state of being aligned with the and one with life the integrity that is there in nature in an animal and in a plant and even in a mineral although mineral seems more distant from humans but humans have all that within themselves still the integrity integrity that word means being one with one being rooted in being not existing as a separate fearful entity that feels disconnected from the universe and that the egoic surface that's me and there's the rest of the universe and of course then the universe is a fearful place because it's so much bigger than me although I'm trying to get bigger so nature teaches to be now when you be when you enter being it has an added dimension of intensity and depth because you've been through thought for thousands of years you've gone through the level the consciousness level we call thought you then go beyond thought and you touch being again but this time you know it before you lost being you never really lost it but it became obscured before you lost being to be at one with being was like every animal and every plant it's natural there's nothing else so you didn't really know that you were in paradise because it was the only there was nothing else the state of oneness was natural and then it got obscured or lost you could call it and then suddenly you come to the end of this evolutionary cycle and you touch being again and this time you know it the depth of it consciously you enter being and yet nature can teach you being not that you become the same as a vegetable there's nothing wrong with vegetables but it's not the destiny of humans to become vegetable again the vegetable is beautiful more closer to the source than an ordinary human has no problem with dying and no problem with living the only unhappiness on the planet is the human mind yes the human mind causes suffering to other life forms pain that is right but the human mind is the only source of unhappiness on the planet nature exists in the source as a state of unity and so nature teaches us not through any concept simply by placing awareness on anything natural you become still animal plant clouds flowing water or still water or sea whatever it is even a rock a stone a pebble but you have to give it a chance to teach you stillness by allowing it to be without interfering with its being through conceptualization by looking or listening completely and also the separation between you and it which was created by excessive thinking disappears and there is a sense of connectedness or oneness with whatever you perceive so that's what nature teaches you and and then you meet and you add something to nature when you become conscious of it something completes itself because you become aware of enormous beauty and aliveness and sacredness that is there even in a blade of grass and so through you because there is an ultimately you are not separate from anything everything is connected to everything else through you nature becomes aware of its own sacredness and beauty so when you look at a tree and really look you add something to the being of the tree and that's awareness of itself and that's the function that humans have on the planet as they become conscious through humans nature becomes conscious of itself it's been waiting for you and finally the first humans fully developed humans arrive and they are only just arriving one could almost say humans have been in embryonic state for a long time and the birth is really of true humanity does not happen until there is the arising of presence there are still a few humans left on the planet who are not yet lost in mind and ego and just a few in a few very distant cultures that have not been destroyed by so called civilization but their destiny also I believe is to go will have to travel the same way as you through the thinking mind so it's the destiny of all humans to lose it and then to regain it now you are lucky because you all belong to those who lost it and me too I had to lose it lose myself to find myself and know myself for the first time we spoke of walking petals falling we spoke of walking we spoke of being with what looks like unremarkable nature and yet is very remarkable let it teach you and related to that is as our practice this weekend other simple activities that you do here that usually would be a means to an end that you would washing your hands lifting a glass of water to your mouth and putting it back there can be quality beauty and consciousness in that that means that is not a means to an end and during that space while the glass traveled from the table to your mouth it's a space of no thought just clear awareness so the background to that action is stillness alert stillness so that action happens against that background of alert stillness just as the perception of the tree or the little flower happens when you truly look against the background of alert stillness that means there is a peace in the background to what happens in your life to what you see and what you do now we start with very simple things that are not challenging that are actually helpful nature and little actions then we come to things that are more challenging let's see that but first we'll stay with non-challenging things in life simple actions not making them to a means to an end lifting something putting something from here to there wiping the top of the table against a background of stillness that means peace flows into what you do so you have to see putting on your shoes tying the shoelaces if you have shoelaces and again being fully there not a means to an end the moment of having your shoes finally on your feet is not more important than the moment of putting your shoes on well just that's the delusion that the next moment is more important it's no difference whether I have my shoes on or off it doesn't improve my life to have the shoes on another thing is eating eating is a primordial activity that even very early life forms engage in even life forms that can't that have relatively undeveloped organs of perception they are eating already and sometimes it's the only thing they are interested in and so many human beings become completely unconscious when they start eating even you can have I've seen intellectuals at universities professors talking the most complex concepts and then they start eating and then they finish and then okay now let's get back to the problem of existentialist analysis of Immanuel Kant theory of the critique of pure reason so to bring consciousness into that primordial activity and sometimes to just be conscious of chewing food and swallowing food and again not wanting to arrive at the end because that's another needing some people have a so called problem with eating it's not really a problem but they eat more than they need to eat and that's usually the it's the egoic mind needing more and that can translate itself into taking in more food it could be other things often it's other things so just if you have a problem with eating so called problems many humans have that these days it's helpful to when the impulse to eat comes in between meals to simply notice it now at what stage you catch the impulse and it's not only eating it this would apply to any so called addiction smoking at some point the impulse comes and it's an unconscious movement I need to take something in it's with smoke smoking or drink and the impulse comes to there's a there's a lack here I need and you have to observe it on an energetic level inside yourself don't detach yourself by some thought really feel the grasping of it the neediness of it I need and now how soon you catch that impulse no matter what it is depends how alert you are at the moment at that moment how present you are because the impulse very quickly can pull you into unconsciousness and some people wake up after they've taken the big sandwich out of the fridge and eaten it and then they realise they've just been eating a big sandwich and while they were eating the big sandwich the mind was somewhere completely different and then as you become more present you can catch yourself the moment your hand is in the fridge and then you feel the grasping the impulse and then you stop for a moment and observe that you don't stop and think oh I shouldn't be eating another sandwich no it doesn't work you simply observe the feeling behind it the lack the sense of needing to be filled that is behind it and that needing to be filled is not a physical thing it may appear as a physical thing but it is a psychological thing and it's created by the ego which is always in a state of not enough and others may be running after other things and for some people it becomes food it may be other things for them also they need more of something to fill that which feels unfulfilled so I need to more and then you have the hand in the fridge and then for a moment you can stop and feel it observe what what is behind that impulse oh isn't that interesting and you spend a minute or two being present with that and after that you may still eat it or you may not sometimes it's gone the desire is gone because you become conscious at other times maybe it's still there and you still can't stop yourself but you have brought presence to it and each time you bring presence to something that before was unconscious presence grows even if on an external level you might say I did not succeed I did have to and the cigarette comes the same if you need to smoke comes for a moment you observe the wanting behind it and what the wanting behind it feels like and how it's almost something that lives in you that wants you to grasp at this now and you there's a gap and you bring presence to that and then whether you smoke or not or eat or don't really is secondary the success is really determined by whether you can be the witness of your inner state at that moment that's all what you then do externally is always secondary you cannot not change if you bring presence to whatever is there so you don't need to work on the external level as achieving particular kind of behaviour it's enough to observe what is here now and so for some people that is the beginning of their spiritual path the beginning of their spiritual path can be an addiction food drink drug and then creating suffering in their lives because it gets the body becomes ill and then forces them into awareness so any such thing in your life is also helpful it's not a hindrance anymore and it's included in what is now what can you do that's what you feel at this moment it is it's included in your bringing a yes to this moment an enormous longing for another drink drink that's what is a new watch and then there's suddenly a dimension another dimension to it a watcher a presence a formless consciousness and there's the form that impulse that desire that thought that emotion and the space around it that's who you are so the more you accept that it's there the more the space around it grows so to speak spaciousness comes into your life so our three practices it's more than that we'll just give it a little structure our three practices the walking there's a teacher whose name I can never pronounce Thich Nhat Hanh or something like that who has this beautiful saying the miraculous thing something like that the miraculous thing is to take one peaceful step peace in every step that's truly that is the not what we imagine miracles are this is the miraculous thing of bringing peace into this step that I'm taking at this moment there's never anything else so that's what we work with nature and simple actions including eating handling things getting dressed undress not a means to an end an end in itself the next moment is not more significant than this one this one is the only one there is and so you become a field of presence which is peace and that flows into what you do and that does something to how you do it to your actions the way you walk the way you put something from here to there something flows into the doing that is a different energy from the energy that flows into it when you reduce it to a means to an end the doing becomes more intelligent this is the real meaning of right action that we have in Buddhism right action is not something that you need to or can practice but something that flows out of being present with what is if you're not present you can try to have right action for the rest of your life for another 50 years I'm trying right action just as Christians say I'm trying to love my neighbour it's hard

[Speaker 4] (1:03:29 - 1:03:30)

very hard

[Speaker 1] (1:03:31 - 1:05:20)

just have to try right action or loving your neighbour as yourself comes out of the state of presence naturally flows out of that and the state of presence is to be with what is don't make it into a means to an end surrender to now surrendered state of consciousness one with life and as I may have mentioned yesterday the little question that you may sometimes want to ask yourself the question doesn't point to the ultimate truth but it's an intermediate stage what is my relationship to the present moment ultimately you're one with it what is my relationship to the present moment you can even if you like things like that you can put it on as a little question sticker on your bathroom mirror and the bedroom so that when you wake up and your fridge the TV set right on top on the screen and so when when you go towards

[Speaker 4] (1:05:20 - 1:05:26)

and then of course

[Speaker 1] (1:05:26 - 1:11:04)

you may notice because you just wanted to switch on the hypnotic machine what is my relationship to the present moment I want to get away from it away from myself and again what I described the impulse that comes when there's some kind of so called addiction TV can be very addictive and again there comes the impulse that you can observe in yourself that needing to watch more both the impulse to go there and switch it on the moment you arrive home and the and you can observe the resistance to switching it off once it's on you can observe the mind's desire for more expressing itself as when you say ok it's time to go to bed and then you pick up the remote and instead of pressing the off button you say ok let's just try the other that channel and then that draws you in for a few minutes and then it goes to the off again ok let's try just that one and then another and just flick through the mind wants more stimulus and you can observe that you can observe when you go to a waiting room at the doctor or the dentist and you pick up a magazine the hungriness the hunger behind looking through the pages and you can observe it in others more easily than in yourself when they flick the pages they are consuming the magazine the mind is consuming the magazine hungrily they stay with each page for a few seconds occasionally there's a little thing that catches their attention for a minute and it's very helpful if you can observe that in yourself it's all to do with the mind grasping for more that this moment isn't full enough I need to put something some more into me I saw a few newspapers around here maybe better to leave them alone but observe the desire to go there and open it or if you're lucky it's in Danish and some of many of you don't know Danish so that's okay I observed a man not here he was picking up a newspaper really enormous interest and beginning to read it and suddenly he threw it away in disgust and I said what's wrong? he said it's yesterday's paper I just saw the date on it completely worthless so modern humans have become consumers of all kinds of things the mind they don't only they consume on every level they consume the news they consume entertainment the big one entertainment oh god a word that was even unknown not long ago entertainment a gigantic industry films occasionally you get the truth shining through it's rare but it can happen but a lot of the time it's pain body entertainment this is so bad I love it that's the pain body this film will make you feel really bad and then they all come to watch it to feed their pain bodies through watching dreadful things films made by pain bodies for pain bodies

[Speaker 4] (1:11:05 - 1:11:08)

we love you

[Speaker 2] (1:13:36 - 1:16:03)

thank you God Bless.

Eckhart Tolle visits Unity Church Unity Village

[Speaker 2] (0:10 - 0:19)

It is our great, great honor at Unity FM and here at Unity to welcome our special guest today, Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (0:20 - 0:20)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (0:21 - 0:21)

Welcome.

[Speaker 1] (0:21 - 0:22)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (0:26 - 1:20)

Well, our, one of our co-founders, Myrtle Fillmore, this has been her vision and Charles's vision that, and to have you here is such an honor. One of the things that she wrote, there's a letter that she wrote, is the most, the oldest handwritten letter that Myrtle has been found by Myrtle Fillmore and in it, this is from 1891, and I brought this quote because it speaks so much to what you talk about in both of your books. She says, my dear, you ask why you do not enter into the understanding you so desire.

I will tell you, you are already in it, but you think you have some great thing to do to get there. The kingdom of God is within you. All you need to do is be still and know.

[Speaker 1] (1:21 - 1:22)

Yes, that's right.

[Speaker 2] (1:23 - 1:26)

So that would be, what would you, would you like to add to that or?

[Speaker 1] (1:29 - 11:06)

Well, the human mind has been conditioned over thousands of years to seek fulfillment elsewhere in space and time, and especially in time. So the human mind has been conditioned to look to the future or the next moment. Future sounds a little abstract.

If we say the next moment, then we can actually feel what that means. It always looks to the next moment or most of the time for fulfillment, completion. And in this way, the human mind, the conditioning of the human mind denies life because the only place where life takes place, the only place where life happens is in the present moment now.

And outside the now, there is no life. And even past and future don't actually exist outside human thought forms. Now, this may sound a little bit difficult at first to believe because past and future seem so real.

But all you have to, this is not a philosophical exercise. It's easier than that. All you have to ask yourself is whether you've ever experienced past or future.

And then if you look closely, you realize all you ever experienced was now. And when it happened, it was now because it's only in the space of now where anything can happen. And when the future comes, it can only come as the now.

So past and future are thought forms. They may be necessary on a practical level here. We can make appointments and get together here at this particular time.

But when it goes beyond practical, then they actually represent a great limitation when they take over our lives. Then time, past and future, I call time, time then takes over our consciousness. And so this is the time-bound state of consciousness that most people are possessed by.

And it is an essential aspect of the egoic consciousness. The ego lives in and through time, ego being the false mind-made sense of self. And so it comes as a surprise to people when they realize, well, it's actually true.

My life is always now, and it's never not now, and never will be not now, never has been. And that is not just an idea that you add to your mind, the fact that life is always now. This is almost like a little powerful pointer.

It's always now. And really that almost stops your mind. If you really get that, to experience the truth of that statement, you have to step beyond the mind.

Because by continuing to think analytically, is it actually true that there's only the now, let me think, it's a pointer that takes you, once you truly experience the reality of that, actually takes you into the now, and then there's an opening inside, there's a space that opens up inside, and you say, this is it. And what is this? You can't quite at first define what this is, but all you know for the time being is this is life.

Life itself is experienced now. And so, for most people, now is what happens in the now. And that's why people believe that there are many different moments.

Every hour consists of many different moments, every day consists of many moments. But if you look more closely, of course there are not many moments, there's only ever this moment. And the reason why people believe there are many moments is because they confuse the now with what happens in the now.

What happens, of course, changes continuously. The now itself, however, is something that is, the moment we define it through words, of course, we limit it. And yet, knowing that words are not quite it, or words can only point to it, we can continue to talk for a little bit about the now.

So the now, then, is the space in which everything happens, or the light in which everything appears. And the light in which things appear and disappear, they come, this is how everything continues to change in life, the impermanence of that the Buddha speaks of. Everything continuously changes, it comes into the light of now, but the essence of every experience is the light of consciousness, which is the space of now.

So the secret of now is that it is the formless foundation of all manifested life, it is the unmanifested formless dimension in which the manifested appears. And in essence, you are that light. And knowing that yourself as that is not done through thinking, it is not a thought that you add to your mind and say, okay, I'm light, okay, now I know it.

You can only know yourself as the light if thought stops, even if only for this moment. And you sense that underneath all the things that happen, sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions, feelings, there remains the substratum, which is the space of consciousness itself, which we could also call the stillness. Every word only shows you a tiny aspect of it, it's not it.

It's stillness and it's vaster than stillness. It's consciousness, but even that limits it because it's only a word. So finding that space in yourself, and this is what the quote is about, you can only find that space in yourself now because essentially it is the now.

So who you are at the deepest level is inseparable from the now. And so that's the deepest meaning of now. And it's a realization, just one glimpse is enough to change your life.

It doesn't mean that the time-bound consciousness won't take you over again, it will probably happen, but you've had the glimpse, that is the initiation of the awakening process. And anybody who can see the truth of this must already have had the glimpse, or in the moment of words like these being spoken, some people at that moment have the glimpse and wake up. And so you realize the essence of yourself has nothing to do with the form of yourself, the body, whatever thoughts go through your mind, whatever emotions you have, that's fine, that's a level of form.

I call it the human part, but we are human beings. Human is form, being is formless. Most humans know only the human part and identify totally with the human part, which is the physical form, the thoughts forms, the emotional forms.

You identify with external forms, possessions, achievements, this, that, and that becomes a, but really external forms are also thought forms, they get translated into mental images. So you're really always identified with mental images, even your my car, you're not really identified with my car, but with the mental image of my car. So that is the world of form, that's the human, and if that's all you know, then you're lost in the world, because this world is the world of form.

And most people still live like that, lost in the world, which implies lost in their minds. That's where the world starts, and the world being the world of form, and underneath it all is a timeless dimension, the spiritual dimension, the sacred dimension, and that's the essence of who you are, and that is the deepest meaning of now.

[Speaker 2] (11:07 - 11:11)

And we access that through the stillness, through the silence?

[Speaker 1] (11:11 - 11:47)

Yes. You could say the stillness, the silence is it, but you cannot of course ever objectify it, you can't say there it is. That's why Jesus said, the kingdom of heaven does not come with signs to be perceived.

Because if it's a sign, you say, oh, there it is, the kingdom of heaven, there it's coming. It doesn't. First of course it cannot come because it's already here, and it can't be there because it's the essence of here.

It's here.

[Speaker 2] (11:47 - 12:02)

Well, to experience that, do we have to, when I think of going in the silence, I think of this quiet, meditative state. Is it possible to experience that as we are doing in our life?

[Speaker 1] (12:02 - 16:32)

Yes. And this is the part of the art of living in this world, of conscious living in this world, so that you are able to balance in your life the two dimensions, form and formlessness, world and spirit. So that you provide, you are a bridge, so to speak.

You as this human being are the bridge between the being and the human in the world, form and formlessness. And across this bridge flows something into this world from the other, from the timeless sacred dimension that is not to be found, it is not to be found somewhere in space or time. God, you could say.

God is not found in space or time. God is not hiding somewhere in outer space, we know that by now. Even conventional Christianity is beginning to realize that God is not out there somewhere, although, well anyway, let's not do that.

So we are here bridging the two worlds and through you, as you live consciously, the dimension of the sacred or the divine or the timeless flows through you, through your words, if you are conscious and present, through your actions, not necessarily big significant actions. Every action is significant, even lifting a cup, consciousness can flow into that, presence can flow into that, into power when you interact with other humans and you are not preparing mentally what you are going to say, you are not judging them in any way, you are the space for them. That means, at that moment, something through you as this form, something from the formless, the sacred dimension of God flows into this world of form.

And in a strange way, it gradually transforms the world of form, the world of form loses its density and heaviness. And this, what I'm describing is actually the deepest meaning of love, because when this flows into what you say, do, into your interactions, that space is essentially what love is, not the egoic understanding of love, which says, I need you, don't you ever dare leave me. But the love that recognizes that whatever you see out there in the world of form is a manifestation or an appearance in disguise, disguised as that particular temporary form of who you are in your essence, on the formless.

So there's always a self-recognition when that dimension is open and flows through you into this world. When I say you, at this moment, I mean the form of you, which is ultimately not who you are, it's just an appearance. And that's our mission then, is to bring that dimension of consciousness into this world.

And that is what the universe wants. And if we bring this dimension of consciousness into what we do and say, especially into interactions, we are fulfilling not only our purpose as humans, we are fulfilling the purpose of the universe, because the universe is moving continuously towards the greater and greater expression of consciousness. And gradually, I don't want to go too much into this, but my feeling is that gradually matter is becoming, through this, matter gradually becomes spirit and loses its density.

[Speaker 2] (16:33 - 16:46)

Well, would you like to lead us into that stillness? I know we would all be very honored to experience that, and it is our tradition in Unity to begin with, with prayer and stillness and meditation.

[Speaker 1] (16:47 - 27:21)

Well, we can, but the strange thing also happens when these words are spoken. You can actually experience in the background, you're hearing the words, you understand the words without needing to analyze them. And in the background of your perceptions, there is already the space.

So even as we speak, in order to find the space, it is not necessary, it can be helpful time to time to go into stillness, wonderful thing to do, but it is not confined to moments of stillness. The question is whether you are able to be aware in the background of your life, that means of course now, whether you can be aware of this thing that cannot be defined, we could call it, can you be aware of the consciousness that you are, can you be aware of the awareness that you are, not the awareness of something, the awareness of awareness, can you sense the presence that you are, yes, and again, it's not as Jesus said, you can't say, oh yeah, I've got it now, or you can't say, okay, I have achieved presence and then claim, because you can only have it now, you can't say, now I have it, I'm an achiever of presence, or even if you say, I'm enlightened, it's dangerous to say that, because you're following another form identity, you give yourself another form identity and imply that I'm going to be present forever, but there's only now, so the only question is, are you able to sense this background to all experience right now, and still be able to deal with things, perceive things, even take action, so that there's always a stillness in the background, even while you talk to people, what do we need to do now, this is, one can lose oneself so easily when you begin to use your mind, touch, stop, words flow, they come out of you, they come out of the other person, and there's an enormous momentum behind the human mind, thousands of years of unconsciousness, and so the human mind is used to drawing your entire consciousness and using it, making thoughts, more and more thoughts, so for many people still, all their consciousness is thought, form takes the form of thought, they are not aware that underneath thought there is the vastness of unconditioned consciousness, out of which the thoughts, thoughts are not separate from consciousness, they are a form that consciousness takes, and then the question is whether consciousness identifies completely with the form and loses its self-consciousness, or whether the forms can arise and you are still conscious of the background, of the space of awareness, and as you say, it can be helpful at first to find it in moments of, and you say, okay, I'm going to be still now, still, and perhaps many of you perhaps already practicing that, this is an advanced spiritual group, so I'll tell you what it is, it's to be able to simply say, there's nothing to think about now, so why should I think, there's no need to think, to voluntarily say, I will surrender right now, I'll surrender thought, relinquish thought, and what's left? Now, two things are possible now, you can either fall below thought, or you rise above thought, that is an alertness, relaxed alertness, still alertness, you rise above thought, and you can then, this could be a spiritual practice, you can practice perceiving things through stillness, without naming, without labeling, whether you use auditory perception, or visual perception, or tactile, doesn't matter, the predominant sense for most people is the visual, so you look around, you see everything, you even somehow know what it is you're looking, but you're not defining it, and limiting it by calling it something, that means the mystery of life is still there, you have not reduced the mystery, and the incredible beauty of this, by calling it something, and then believing if you attach a name to it, you know what it is, there's always, this is a great illusion, if you call it, if you have, I don't know what that plant is, but if I knew it, if you call it something, ficus, yes, and then most people believe now they know what it is, nothing has happened, you've just attached a sound to it, and it's not even a real ficus, so, but even, even inanimate objects, even inanimate objects are intensely alive, everything is mysterious, and the mystery is there surrounding you, the universe, and the delusion is that by naming it, that suddenly you know what it is, so here the spiritual practice is to refrain from naming and labeling mentally, and that's the beauty, you practice at first in easy environments, out in nature is helpful, easier than being in a city, because in a city everything is man-made and can stimulate thought, especially if you see writing everywhere, advertising, and that stimulates thought, it's very hard to look at something written, and then not, let it become a thought, you'd have to turn it around, upside down, and then perhaps it works, but even then the mind will try to figure out what's it saying, so out in nature, anything natural, just looking, listening, and this is being there fully, no matter where it is, you're absolutely present then, you're above thought, in the state of alert presence, and everything becomes alive, you suddenly realize that when you were immersed in thinking, and always labeling everything mentally, the universe was no longer alive to you, you couldn't sense the aliveness of the universe anymore, and unfortunately millions still live like that, they inhabit a universe that has become deadened by mental abstractions, continuous thinking, because every thought is some form of abstraction, it's not it, and so the practice then is to bring that alert presence into perceptions, and look around, even do it in your room too, when you sit in your bedroom or your living room, sit there for a while and just look around, just to practice, can I perceive without this compulsion to label everything, and that's a beautiful thing to do, as perceptions become innocent, this is why Jesus said, unless you become like little children, you cannot enter the kingdom of God, he means that those are little children whose minds have not yet started to conceptualize everything and judge everything, and yet it's not quite the same as a little child, because you have already transcended thought, the little child is still at a pre-thought level, and you have gone through it, so there's an added depth or dimension to that state, but it has certain similarities with the state of the innocent perception of a child, and imagine if you can bring that into human interactions, so that whoever you meet, any human being you meet, you don't label them, you just are there as the space for that perception.

And so another way of putting this is that you are here as the aware space, rather than as a person, so the aware space, the being part of the human becomes more important than the human, the human is still honored to the level of form, yes you have a name, you have a personal history, but you no longer derive your identity from your personal history, which after all is only a story you tell yourself in your head, and certain emotions that still go with that story, that's your personal history, your personal history consists of thought, and your photo albums, and your photo albums are not going to survive for that long either, so two generations later they end up in some antique store, and then somebody looks at them, and all they see is some old, some human form, I wonder who that was.

[Speaker 2] (27:23 - 28:01)

We're talking today with Eckhart Tolle, and information, more information is online at www.eckharttolle.com, we thank you for being with us for this very special edition of The Leading Edge. So Eckhart, what would the role then be of having the multitudes gather in prayer, or having multiple people gather in the silence?

[Speaker 1] (28:03 - 30:28)

There's an energy field that arises when a group of people, even just two, come together and enter the state of presence, and that affects not only, not only does it strengthen the presence in each member of the group, it helps, it's not presence, it's not your possession by the way, it's not, one might sometimes say your presence or my presence, that's only a way of speaking, ultimately there isn't your presence or my presence, there's only presence, you could say it's the divine presence, or the presence of God in this world, so, and that can, it can be very helpful to come together in a group with the purpose of being present, so you're present together. The difficulty often arises when the period of stillness comes to an end, and the group starts to speak again.

The moment you start to speak, then the challenge is not to lose that sense of stillness or presence, even while you start to think and speak again. And that can be quite a challenge, because the momentum of the mind can be so overpowering, especially when you start discussing something. So after sitting together in presence, somebody says, okay now, let's discuss the meaning of presence.

Well, I think it, no, no, you're wrong, and before you know it, two minutes later, you're completely in some mind stream, identified with some mind stream, off you go, and suddenly you're fighting with somebody who is identified with a slightly different mind stream. And so the presence is gone, oh, where has it gone? It's become obscured.

You were not alert enough to remain, the alertness was lost. Alertness is consciousness without thought. Presence ultimately is just bare, pure consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (30:29 - 30:52)

So this morning we were all gathered here in the Silent Unity Chapel, and Reverend Dorothy Pearson led us into the silence in a very powerful way. And I had this experience, and I'm wondering if you've ever had this experience, where in the silence, there is such a feeling of being connected, and feeling the presence of source, that for me, I get very emotional.

[Speaker 1] (30:52 - 31:01)

Yes, it touches all levels. You can feel it physically even, you can feel it on the emotional level, it reverberates on all levels.

[Speaker 2] (31:01 - 31:06)

So is that an emotional release? What is that emotion that we feel?

[Speaker 1] (31:06 - 31:37)

Well, it's almost, I would say, it's an expression of love. That's how I experience that. When love arises, because this is how love arises, sometimes it touches the emotion, and you cry.

It doesn't mean you're sad. You have very, there's great joy in that. So the joy can be so overpowering that it touches the emotional level also.

It is very beautiful.

[Speaker 2] (31:37 - 32:09)

We have many questions that people, through our online community, the Unity FM online community, and those that are here with us, that many, many questions people have for you. This one is from Shirley Bowman, and she's a member of our online community, and she says that in your book, you say that there is nothing you can do to prepare yourself for attaining enlightenment, and we've talked about that. So what about prayer and meditation, and what Unity calls the silence, that are those processes that is the intention for those to lead us to enlightenment?

[Speaker 1] (32:09 - 32:10)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (32:10 - 32:11)

How does that connect?

[Speaker 1] (32:11 - 32:44)

Yes. In fact, what I say in the book is that there's nothing you can do to bring about awakening. Awakening is the first separation of consciousness from thinking.

And so somebody who is able to go into stillness and practice stillness has already gone through that. So that person has already begun to awaken. But if we're doing it in order to...

That means you haven't found the stillness yet. You're trying to find the stillness, but you can't find it.

[Speaker 2] (32:45 - 32:47)

More silence, more silence.

[Speaker 1] (32:47 - 33:44)

Yes, it would be very frustrating, because you would continue to come here, and then... I just can't get there. And then you would have to, after a while, you would stay home, and you can't do it anymore.

And then you have to wait for grace, in some form that the grace will then come, perhaps not by you going to a group, it might come in a different form. Maybe you suddenly slip, you're walking on a wet road, and suddenly you fall, and whatever, you break your arm, or you don't, and suddenly your mind stops. The shock is so great that for a few seconds you're there in presence.

Oh, that's it! That would be the beginning of the awakening. And then you'll be able to come to a group, and you had a glimpse.

[Speaker 2] (33:44 - 33:46)

Can we do it without suffering?

[Speaker 1] (33:46 - 33:47)

Yes!

[Speaker 2] (33:47 - 33:51)

Can we do it without the dark night of the soul? Those of us happy people, can we get there eventually?

[Speaker 1] (33:52 - 35:21)

Yes. Most people here, probably to a greater or lesser extent, have already gone through that phase of suffering. And for many of us, it's only because of the suffering that we've gone through we are here now.

If we hadn't had it, we would still be completely identified with the egoic self, the little me, and pursuing its little aims, and ambitions, and problem-making, and so on. So most of us have gone through that stage, and the more you're able to invite presence into your life, the less you need suffering to force you into presence, or to break the egoic shell. Because with some people, the density of the ego is just enormous, and they need some kind of shock.

There was a spiritual teacher in India who called people with, I don't know if some of you know Indian terminology, something you can add the suffix g to a name as a form of respect. So if somebody's called Krishna, you can call them Krishnaji, which is a form of respect. So he called people with big egos, Ego-G's.

[Speaker 2] (35:24 - 35:26)

It's a sign of respect. Respect the ego.

[Speaker 1] (35:28 - 35:29)

Accept the ego.

[Speaker 2] (35:29 - 36:30)

Accept the ego. Yes. Here on Unity Campus, of course, the grounds are spectacular, and I was walking yesterday, of course, greeting a new earth, and there is a garden not far from where we're staying here.

It's the Lowell Fillmore Garden, and there is a plaque and a poem is on it that is written by Lowell, and as I read it, I thought, this is a new earth. So I brought it to share, just to hear your comments on this. He writes, when for a purpose I had prayed and prayed and prayed until my words seemed worn and bare with arduous use, and all my fervor and persistence brought no hope, I paused to give my weary brain a rest, and ceased my anxious cry.

In that still moment, after self had tried and failed, there came a glorious vision of God's power, and lo, my prayer was answered in that hour.

[Speaker 3] (36:31 - 36:34)

Very good. Very good. Right here on campus.

Wonderful.

[Speaker 2] (36:34 - 36:35)

Like, that's a new earth.

[Speaker 3] (36:36 - 36:36)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (36:37 - 36:45)

And is that what you're trying, because we've all had those fervent prayers. We pray and pray and pray and pray, and that doesn't lead us to where we want to go. Why?

[Speaker 1] (36:46 - 39:04)

Well, for many people, prayer is still part of the old conditioning of your consciousness, which basically means you're looking to some future for fulfillment. Please let this happen, then I'll be happy. Please give me that, then I'll be happy.

Please don't let that happen, and then I'll be happy. So the old mind structure which seeks, which believes it needs the future for fulfillment is still operating, even when people think they're being spiritual. And so they don't realize that the very same structure that worldly people are possessed by, they say, I can only get that bigger house or better job, or only people could recognize that I'm the greatest, then I'll be happy.

Or if I see my picture on People magazine, then I'll be happy. And it's the same mind structure, or the same mind structure even with spiritual people, where this prayer is where the old conditioning still operates. It could also operate in people who are seeking enlightenment.

Now that seems something more advanced than asking in prayer for to be given something so that you can be happy, not realizing that the only place where you can be fulfilled and happy is now, you just have to go deeper into it. Let's see. So if you are spiritual, then you might think, okay, I need to be here of enlightenment, and or liberation, whatever it's called, salvation.

And, okay, I need to attain that I need to become enlightened, you read books about it, and so on. And you can become very knowledgeable. And what is actually stopping you from realizing enlightenment or awakening, whatever is the belief that it's going to come at some future moment.

It's only when when future is surrendered, that it opens up. So it's only when you let go of that old mind structure that says I need time.

[Speaker 2] (39:05 - 39:15)

So for example, let's say someone is scheduled for surgery. So they might want to go into a state about a future upcoming surgery, what would be the best way?

[Speaker 1] (39:16 - 48:13)

The most powerful way is to be absolutely not leave this moment to refuse to budge from just now, so that time virtually collapses. And then there's such intensity behind that state. And that can be there also, if you believe that the body may go soon, may dissolve soon, not much time left.

So there's no point in looking for something in time. If you know that the body might go in two weeks time, two months time, then there's not no point in looking towards time for some fulfillment. So then it can happen that even unspiritual people who've spent their whole lives in worldly pursuits are suddenly driven, otherwise they become extremely miserable and unhappy, the depths of depression of course.

But even then it has happened, can happen, that even unspiritual people are driven out of time into the now. And suddenly the sacred, the spiritual dimension opens up in them and they go. And you know, you can sense the transformation.

Light shines through the decaying form. And it's an amazing thing. I've met a few people who, as they were going towards the dissolution of the body, entered that state of absolute intense presence, which is not a forced state.

It's not a state, I need to be present. It's very relaxed intensity. And that's also where the spiritual master lives, so to speak, has his or her home, which is in the present moment, always aligned with now.

No matter what appears in the now, you say yes to the appearance of the now. If the appearance of now is a difficult person, an ego-G, then that's what is now. You don't say you should behave differently.

No. Of course, action is always possible. You can remove yourself from the ego-G and look the other way or leave the room.

But if you can't, you're stuck in an elevator with the ego-G, then you have to say, there you are. You are this now. The form that this now takes.

So the primordial spiritual practice is, whether you do it shortly before death, hopefully you do it sooner. Hence the ancient dictum, die before you die. This is the collapse of time.

Time then only has a practical purpose, but it's no longer important in your life. You're not looking for time to find yourself. But you can only find yourself now because you are the presence.

And so there's an uncompromising yes to whatever form this moment takes. And even if it seems difficult, and even if it seems limiting, because the world of form is always limiting in one way or another, you cannot find the limitless in the world of form. Even if you achieve everything that you wanted to achieve, wealth, great fame, everybody loves me, everybody admires me.

Then you would find, even there you would find your new life situation would have new limitations. You cannot find the limitless. Oprah can't go for walks in the street or go shopping.

She can't go out by herself. She would get mobbed. So that's a big limitation.

What great joy there is in just walking around, looking around, can't do it anymore. Big limitation. So if she had thought that fame would make her happy, she would now become unhappy again.

So whatever you achieve in the world of form, sooner or later you will hit upon, it doesn't mean you cannot do things to go beyond certain limitations in your life. Scarcity, well, there may be a period in your life when you do things to go beyond scarcity. Or healing your body.

There may be things you can do to heal your body. These are all wonderful things. But no matter what you do on the level of form, you will always hit upon some limitation.

So when you've encountered the limitation, it appears in the now. Okay, this is what is. You don't judge it.

You don't run away from it. And sometimes for some people, the limitation is drastic. The body may become incapacitated.

It might not heal. Some people may experience healing, but not everybody experiences healing. Or some limitation where everything that you've worked on for 25 years, 30 years of your life collapses around you.

You pick up your phone and say, how are my shares? The stockbroker says, it's all gone. The stock market has collapsed.

And your house has collapsed. Your wife has left you. No, this is what is.

And if you bring an acceptance to the limitations that arise in the now, the very limitations become an opening into the space because the surrender and the acceptance of something that is seen as inevitable in the form of this present moment is always inevitable because everything is as it is. At this moment, it is as it is. You can't argue with that.

You can take action. Yes. But right now, is means is.

It's already is. And not to recognize the is-ness and become one with the is-ness means to be out of alignment with life. So if you recognize, all you have to accept is the is-ness of this moment.

It doesn't mean you can't take action. But right now, this is what is. And then action arises out of a state of acceptance and enormous empowerment flows into it, not out of state of negativity.

But the important thing is, when you accept the form, no matter what limitation it seems to be completely, the so-called limitation becomes an opening into the inner space because through the acceptance of the outer limitation, the inner space of the formless opens up. This is how sometimes people have suffered enormously, were driven into awakening and enlightenment through their suffering. They were driven to a point where they just couldn't struggle, couldn't have any more resistance to the suffering because they realized at some point, the suffering arises not because of what's going on, but my resistance to what's going on.

And so, surrender happens. With surrender, the inner space opens up, the stillness, underneath all that. And then, the very limitation becomes an open door.

I believe that's the meaning of Jesus, the crucified Jesus on the cross, because the meaning of the cross is that it's an expression of the most extreme limitation that a human being can encounter, the most extreme suffering, totally helpless. So the cross is a torture instrument, but for some reason, the cross is also a symbol for the divine. And at first, this might seem very strange, especially if we come from outer space, and you're not used to it, you see it for the first time.

How is it that the humans have made the torture instrument into a symbol for the divine? And that is because behind the suffering that is totally accepted, not my will but thy will be done, not the will of the little me, there's an acceptance. And through the acceptance, the very thing that was the torture instrument becomes the divine.

It opens up. And that's the transmutation of suffering.

[Speaker 2] (48:13 - 48:35)

Yes. We've had many of our questions relate to prayer, and this one in particular connects to what you're talking about, because it's asking, this is from our audience today, what is prayer to those who are attempting to live in the now? So what is, and who are we praying to, and is it a monologue?

If we're living in the now, what is prayer?

[Speaker 1] (48:37 - 50:08)

Prayer, of course, is many different things according to where you are at in your consciousness. And as long as a person is still not, has not yet realized his or her oneness with the divine, then you're at a stage where the divine is approached on the level of duality. And for those people, prayer can be helpful up to a point until they need to let go of it.

So if you still see God as outside of you somewhere, then you're addressing God or asking for something. But increasingly, as you realize your essential oneness with the source, then your prayer would change, and perhaps would become more simple. And so perhaps would just be little pointers that you use sometimes to remind yourself of the oneness.

Some lessons in A Course in Miracles, for example, have nice pointers like, let me remember who I am. Let me be still. These can be little pointers that take you into the reality of the realization of oneness.

[Speaker 2] (50:08 - 50:10)

Right. In unity, we talk about affirmative prayer.

[Speaker 1] (50:11 - 50:12)

Affirmative prayer. That's right.

[Speaker 2] (50:12 - 50:13)

The knowing.

[Speaker 1] (50:13 - 50:32)

Yes. Yes. And that can be helpful.

So personally, I don't use the dualistic prayer, but occasionally affirmations come into my head as just spontaneous thoughts. And that's beautiful.

[Speaker 2] (50:32 - 50:51)

Well, David from our online community says that you suggest that we are not our thoughts. The Fillmore's have been quoted as saying that every thought is a prayer. He says, well, both statements resonate with me since I struggle with reconciling them.

Are we separate from even our intentional, positive, prayerful thoughts?

[Speaker 1] (50:52 - 53:27)

Now, thought, of course, for most people in the old consciousness, thought is a manifestation of the old conditioning of your mind. It comes from the past. And all the thought structures are repetitive, to a large extent, negative.

They feed the ego, which needs, of course, the negativity, which needs to have problems, which needs to have enemies. So the continuous thought activity that most people are immersed in, involuntary and compulsive, they don't even know they're immersed in thought activity, because they're so identified with thought activity that is who they are or think they are. So for those people, thought is totally repetitive.

And it tends to recreate also experiences, because thought is creative. So you are identified with certain conditioned thinking. So no matter what you do, you create a similar reality, because you're still totally identified with the same thought structures.

So people, for example, they think, okay, I need to get out of this relationship. And then they have another relationship and get married to another person. Finally, and after a little while, you see, you've recreated the same thing.

And some people get married three, four, five times. And they recreate always the same thing. And some people even recreate very abusive partners sometimes.

And they think, okay, finally, marriage number three, I finally found this person is not abusive. And after a few months, he or she turns out to be abusive. The same thoughts that you're immersed in tend to create the same reality.

And so the awakening is the realization that there is conditioned thinking, the voice in the head, continuously going through your mind, interpreting your experiences, according to your past. So whatever you experience, there's a filter of your thinking. And you don't really experience the world, only in a very remote and indirect way, you really only then ever experience your thinking, the structure of your thoughts.

You only ever really experience the past in you. It's a dreadful state to be in.

[Speaker 2] (53:28 - 53:30)

For most of us, yes.

[Speaker 1] (53:30 - 53:53)

And it's called normal, normal human consciousness. And this is why for many humans, unless they begin to awaken spiritually, no real change ever happens. And even if you win in the lottery, it's not real change.

It just means you have the same drama and the same unhappiness in a luxury environment.

[Speaker 2] (53:56 - 53:58)

Until we can recreate that old reality.

[Speaker 1] (53:58 - 54:03)

Yes, until you lose the luxury environment because your old thoughts are to do with scarcity.

[Speaker 2] (54:04 - 54:19)

And that is one of the fundamental, one of our basic unity teachings is that our thoughts do create, that thoughts held in mind produce after their kind. And so part of the spiritual discipline that we talk about is how do we become conscious in guiding our thoughts?

[Speaker 1] (54:20 - 58:14)

And this, of course, is why so little change happens in the world so far, because the old thoughts are recreating the old reality. If you look at human history, 20th century history, dreadful. And the warfare that goes on, these are old thoughts.

But some change is coming in, it's true. So this is the fundamental shift that begins to happen when you are aware that there is old conditioned thinking that is continuously coloring your experiences, that is continuously interpreting your relationships, misinterpreting your relationships, imposing your own past on your present relationships. And so it's recreating the same madness again and again.

So whatever you, all your interpretations are erroneous because they are colored by the past in you. And this is why the course in miracles, for example, starts with little exercises, which, for example, tells you to look around the room and say, I see only the past in this mug. I see only the past in this table.

I see only the past in this carpet. Seems strange at first, but it's attempting to make you aware that this is what operates in you so that you can become free. And then it has another lesson, which says nothing I see in this room means anything.

This is one of the very early lessons in the course. Nothing I see in this room means anything. Why is that a lesson?

Because it's attempting to remove the meaning that you impose on the world through your old conditioning. So this is all the old thoughts that recreates the old reality. And then at some point, awakening begins to happen.

You begin to be aware of your thoughts. It means you're not free yet, but a little bit of freedom has come in. And then you can, sometimes you can already become aware of the most obvious, repetitive, negative, life-denying thoughts that you have been going around in your head for years and years and years.

And suddenly, once you bring the awareness to it, the thoughts lose their intensity. And at some point you can choose to, you can recognize this as an old thought and say, oh, that's another old thought. And you can let go of it.

You can replace it with another thought. Or you can simply be present, even better. Just bring presence, where before there was a thought that said, oh, he's a jerk.

I know this kind of person. I've met so many of them. So immediately you relate to this person through this judgment.

And he may not be. On a deeper level, he isn't, but but even on a surface level, he may not be. It may just be your interpretation.

And then you recognize the thought. And then you can say, well, I honor the divinity in this human being. And that improves your relationships.

And it goes even deeper if you can be simply present and not know judgment at all. Just be the aware presence and listen to this person or look at this person and bring that into the relationship. Then you become free of karma.

Karma is all the old conditioning you carry around inside you that you are unconscious of, with which the past is recreated again and again. And karma can only dissolve through the arising of presence. That's the miracle of human transformation.

[Speaker 2] (58:15 - 59:43)

We're talking with Eckhart Tolle, the best-selling author of A New Earth Awakening to Your Life's Purpose, online at www.eckharttolle.com. We thank you for joining us for this special edition of The Leading Edge. I'm Mindy Odlen, and we'll be back with more in just a moment.

Welcome back to The Leading Edge. I am Mindy Odlen, and this is a very special presentation of The Leading Edge. Our guest today, best-selling author Eckhart Tolle.

We've been talking about prayer, about presence, and I know many people from our audience today. We are here at the Silent Unity Chapel at Unity Village. They've been asking questions.

We have many people from our Unity FM online community asking questions, and this is one that I just really jumped out to me because it's one that I want to know the answer to, too. This is from our audience today. It says that they were watching an interview with, or listening to an interview with Barbara Walters on NPR this morning, and she says that she always asks people, what's the biggest misconception that people have about you?

I would love to know. What is the, I guess it'd be Barbara Walters here for a moment. What is the biggest misconception that people have about you?

[Speaker 1] (59:43 - 1:05:49)

Well, there are probably different kinds of, depending where people are coming from, but I believe one is that they see me as special or enlightened. So there's a form identity that's created and projected that is the opposite of, almost the opposite of the reality, because the reality of who you are is by relinquishing all, any kind of conceptual identity and any sense that you as this form is special, that you are more special than somebody else. Enlightenment, that somebody is enlightened, is itself a contradiction.

Enlightenment means that the sense of self, of I, the erroneous, the false mind-made I, has become transparent or given way to the light of consciousness that shines through.

The light of consciousness is nobody's achievement or possession. So even to say, I have achieved enlightenment is a big error.

It means you haven't? Nobody achieves enlightenment. It's only when the self that claims enlightenment gets out of the way or becomes at least transparent enough so that it doesn't cause problems anymore, then that which is beyond the form shines through and that is the power.

It's not my power. The misconception is that this is my power. And of course it's happened sometimes even to people who have touched that and have that power flow through them.

At some point their mind came back and identified with it and they've got another conceptual identity as me as very special. And then the power becomes obscured again. It's like the clouds are coming back and obscure the sun.

And the clouds are of course the stream of thinking and then you have another new conceptual identity. And it's more likely to happen to spiritual teachers who are surrounded only by disciples or followers and so they project certain things onto the teachers and continuously bombarded with projections. You are the greatest.

And then after a few years something, some remnant of egoic consciousness gets triggered and he begins to believe he or she that this is true. So it's continuously going back into the being nobody in particular. For example being a spiritual teacher is not an identity as I see it.

People believe this is my identity but it's only an identity. It's only a function while the so-called teaching happens. Even the teaching doesn't come from this form.

It's a process. If there was nobody here I would have nothing to say. The words come out because there's a space here that pulls out the words.

I don't come here with some cumulative knowledge and this is what I'm going to say. Nobody here. Nothing.

It is complete just a space. I don't know anything. So and then when I go away from here the function is relinquished.

The important thing is then not to carry the conceptual identity of me being a spiritual teacher because then I would still be a spiritual teacher when I'm walking around the supermarket and I would feel special. So always coming back to I am just the, I am the space for this. I am, so it's no thing, no body in particular.

And that's the main, so the misconception is the projection of specialness. That's how it is. And so when people, sometimes people when they come to talk they feel an enormous arising inside of aliveness and presence and they might think it comes from here but it can only come from within them.

Perhaps something that's here can pull it out but it must be in you if you can sense it. Whatever you feel is there and the other person must also be in you. For example, stillness.

In order to be aware, for example, there's silence in this room. For a moment you have to be silent inside. It's only the silence that can be aware of the silence of the stillness which can be aware of the silence outside.

If you have no stillness you don't even know that there's silence because there's mental noise. So the, yes, the strange thing is the specialness in the, that's the specialness as opposed to others who are not special. That's the delusion.

I do feel special but I know that everybody is equally special. So there's a sense of there's something very, this life that I am is precious and it's everybody's identity.

[Speaker 2] (1:05:51 - 1:07:13)

You mentioned yourself, you know, the role of spiritual teacher and I noticed in today's Daily Word, the Daily Word has this uncanny ability to provide the perfect word on a perfect day. And so here we are with Eckhart Tolle, the author of A New Earth, Awakening to Your Life's Purpose and the Daily Word today is purpose. And it says, I love what I do and I do it with purpose as I reflect upon my talents and interests, which is what you're talking about, that you are a spiritual teacher, that is a role you play.

The activities that bring me joy and fulfillment, I realize that these are the things that give shape to my purpose in life and each one is a gift from God meant to be developed and shared. Each new day I welcome the opportunity to put my spiritual gifts into practice, to grow them and expand the blessing that they are. I confidently share my talents with the people around me with commitment and enthusiasm.

When I love what I do and I do it with purpose, I am a blessing to the world. I am a unique and divine expression of spirit. My life is filled with purpose and meaning as I develop and share my spiritual gifts with others.

So could you talk about what is a spiritual gift? Because it does seem like there are those of us who are spiritual teachers. There are those of us who are healers.

There are those of us who nurture in different ways. How does that tie into what you were saying?

[Speaker 1] (1:07:14 - 1:07:48)

Well, as I say in the book, I see there's your inner purpose and your outer purpose. Outer purpose varies from person to person. It's to do with your activity, your outer function in this world.

Inner purpose is primary. It's a foundation for a satisfying and fruitful outer purpose. So inner purpose is the same for everybody.

Inner purpose, and of course the subtitle to the book is Awakening to Your Inner Purpose. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:07:49 - 1:07:52)

Awakening to Your Life's Purpose. You said this, right?

[Speaker 1] (1:07:55 - 1:07:59)

The subtitle actually was the idea of the editor.

[Speaker 3] (1:07:59 - 1:07:59)

Oh, really?

[Speaker 1] (1:08:02 - 1:08:23)

He called and said, I've had a great idea. And he said, Awakening to Your Life's Purpose. That's it.

That's good. Awakening to Your Life's Purpose already contains the answer. Because your life's purpose, that your inner purpose, your primordial primary purpose is awakening.

[Speaker 2] (1:08:23 - 1:08:30)

Yes. One of the things that Reverend Paul Hasselbeck always says at the end of his program is to go out and be the best Christ you can be.

[Speaker 1] (1:08:30 - 1:08:32)

Yes. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:08:32 - 1:08:33)

Our primary purpose.

[Speaker 1] (1:08:33 - 1:13:11)

Yes. The primary purpose is to be here as the awakened consciousness, present, conscious, and let that energy off, which is spiritual energy, which is a very fine vibration. Ultimately, all energy is one, but the spiritual is the finest vibration, to let that flow into this world through whatever you do.

And what you do is secondary. Primary is always how you do what you do. So it doesn't necessarily mean that you need to find something great, some great enterprise, creating some great structure in this world.

Some people will do that. But the primary thing is what energy flows into every little thing you do. And even if you're engaged in some great enterprise, even if your name is Oprah, for example, every great thing consists of a hundred little steps that you take every moment.

Even for Oprah, at some point she steps onto the stage, one step, two, three, walks to a chair, sits in a chair, looks at the person, a question comes, spontaneously a lot, enormous ability she has to tune into the other person, and then the right question comes, funny comments come spontaneously, all these things that developed in her over 30 years of practice. And so that's one example. And many people look for some significant life purpose, but the first question is, have you made every little action that you take significant?

There's no point in looking for some great abstract significant thing. What's the great purpose of my life? And you neglect to pay attention to what is at hand, whatever you are doing now in search for something significant and believing that this moment is not significant, but you're just looking for the significant thing.

And then of course you're not going to find it because you're neglecting the very foundation for all significance, which is this moment. So are you getting this moment right? Is this whatever you're doing at this moment done with presence, with attention?

Are you honoring this moment? And if you're honoring this moment, even if you don't know exactly where you want to go, if you honor this moment and see this moment as primary, then it's much more likely that if you are, if it is your destiny to create something out there in this world, it will come much more quickly. Even if you're doing something at this moment that you perhaps wouldn't want to do for the rest of your life, maybe you've got a job that doesn't pay well and just repetitive, and yet this is what is now.

You can be, if you're in a negative state there at this moment doing that, it's much less likely that you will be finding your true life purpose. So always come to make the present moment your friend. That's the foundation.

If you're friendly with the present moment, then you're friendly with life. Then life comes and will offer you whatever is most appropriate for you, which may have all kinds of things, working with people, working with plants, working with animals, working with structures, working with art, working with writing, whatever it is, in whatever form. And you may use perhaps already what you are doing, but as you bring presence into it, it becomes empowered and deeper.

Let's say you're a hairdresser and you are quite good, but then suddenly you realize how important the present moment is, and you pay attention to every moment, the person who is there, the hair, the doing, the words come, which means what you do will become not only very good, that you're a very good hairdresser, it means another dimension will come into what you do when people come to you.

[Speaker 2] (1:13:12 - 1:13:25)

Do you ever get tired of being so aware? I mean, when I think about every step, you know, being present with every step, with every snip of the scissors, it sounds like it'd be kind of exhausting.

[Speaker 1] (1:13:27 - 1:14:33)

There's not perhaps an equal intensity in all throughout your day. It's when you're engaged. You just zone out.

Well, you get, of course, one gets tired sometimes, and there's a point at which, although you endeavor to live above thought, always a moment comes late at night, or sometimes for me in the afternoon when it's time to take a nap, a moment comes around five o'clock, when my level of consciousness falls below thought, and there's a little nap, and then wake up again, and then it's fine, and then I go about things.

So, sometimes, at the moment, I don't have television, so that doesn't work. Sometimes we watch films, we rent DVDs.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:33 - 1:14:47)

Well, that was the next question. Someone said, you are such an enlightened soul. I'm very grateful for your awareness, your wisdom, and your willingness to share your insights with the world.

Just out of curiosity, what do you do for fun? Do you have any hobbies?

[Speaker 1] (1:14:51 - 1:15:35)

Well, it doesn't sound very interesting. I like walking out in nature every day. I go for a walk in the forest every day when I'm at home with a dog.

That's fun. My hobby for a long time was photography, and at the moment, I'm trying to switch from... I'm always late with technology.

At the moment, I'm trying to switch from the old-fashioned film photography, which I know very well, to digital, which I don't know anything about. But I have a little digital camera now. I'm trying to take photos and master that.

[Speaker 2] (1:15:36 - 1:15:37)

Capturing moments.

[Speaker 1] (1:15:37 - 1:15:37)

What?

[Speaker 2] (1:15:38 - 1:15:39)

You're capturing moments.

[Speaker 1] (1:15:39 - 1:16:33)

Yes. What I capture most, what I do with the camera when I use it, I walk around nature with the camera, and I look. There's no thought involved.

And I look at some whatever. There's little, relatively insignificant things usually. Leaves, trees, flowers, blades of grass, stones, whatever, or clouds.

And at some point, there's something that particularly conveys the sense of divine presence that's there, the sacredness of nature. And then I walk around a bit more, looking, and then there's something else. So it's not so much to capture something for the past.

It's to capture the sacredness. I'm not a master photographer. It's just a joyful thing to do, that's all.

[Speaker 2] (1:16:34 - 1:16:41)

Do you email us some pictures? We'll put them up on the website. One with a digital camera, I'll help you.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:44 - 1:16:49)

There are a few pictures in a little booklet that comes with a DVD of my Fintan retreat.

[Speaker 2] (1:16:49 - 1:16:50)

Oh, very nice.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:50 - 1:16:53)

And that has some photos that I took of nature.

[Speaker 2] (1:16:53 - 1:17:32)

Lovely. Lovely. Well, speaking of pictures, one thing that many of our listeners are talking about, and there's many books coming out on the topic of treasure maps, the idea of taking pictures of things that we want to manifest and putting them up in front of us.

This question is from one of our listeners on our online community, who says, My husband and I happen to be starting a treasure map. When we first started reading your book, I found it really difficult to continue the treasure map, sort of announcing to the universe all the things that I hope to see manifest in my life, and at the same time, stay in the present moment. Do you think the idea of treasure mapping is inconsistent with being in the now moment?

[Speaker 1] (1:17:32 - 1:24:19)

I don't think it is, because the only time when you can practice it is in the now. So, but the question is whether you are, whether you have found the foundation for the, for all power in the present moment, or whether you are still looking to the future for some kind of self-fulfillment, for some, for the future to finally give you the sense that you have arrived, that you are somebody, that you are being recognized, that finally you can feel at some point when you have the house and the car, and this and that, that finally you can feel abundant when that comes, because right now you are not feeling abundant. Why are you not feeling abundant?

Because you are denying the now. So, you have to first find the foundation for abundance. Abundance has very little to do with the number of things in your life.

Abundance is the state of being. Abundance arises out of life itself, the being of life, which life is being, the I am. Being and I am is the same thing, it just sounds like different words, because I am is the first person singular of the infinitive to be, for those who have missed grammar at school.

The infinitive is to be, the first person singular is I am, so it's the same word. So, when we talk about being, how do you experience being? You can only experience being as the I am.

And the I am is the foundation for all abundance. It's the realization of the fullness of being in yourself, which has nothing to do with the number of objects in your life. So, you find the fullness of being, Jesus pointed to it when he said, I want you to have life and I want you to have the fullness of life.

In some Bibles, it's translated as abundant life. I want you to have abundant life, he said. Now, if you look deeply, you will see very soon that he is not talking about many possessions.

He is talking about the sense of the fullness of being in yourself. Not shopping malls, not that he wasn't prophesying the arrival of shopping malls. But finding that present moment, the deep, deeply satisfying sense of beingness that comes when you enter the present moment fully and become friendly with now.

Go deeply into now. That's the vertical dimension of life, the now, which to most people doesn't exist. They only know the horizontal, past, future, things.

Where am I? Where can I find myself? I need to attain this.

And then they might say, I want to make a treasure map. And then finally, I can attain that. And so often, of course, people are not successful quite often with their treasure maps because there is the erroneous belief that they need to achieve something that's over there in the future, that they need to get that in order to feel the fulfillment and the fulfilled sense of self.

And even if they do get what they want, it will still not lead them to the fulfillment. Even if they do get the house and the car, they may sometimes do, even if they do get it, but they haven't found the fullness of life that can only be found in the now, then for a little while, they are elated, I made it, I made it. And then they sit there in the big house and say, OK, what now?

Where do I go from here? OK, what do I need? I need to invite lots of people so that they can reaffirm to me that I'm somebody, that my house is bigger than theirs.

And so you do that for a while, and then that doesn't work either. And so you come to an emptiness when it often has happened with people who have achieved materially what they wanted to achieve, and yet they still feel empty. And sometimes it's at that point, either they become even more miserable, or they begin taking drugs just to don't feel the pain anymore of the unfulfilled life.

And you can't fool yourself anymore when you have achieved materially almost everything, and you're still unhappy, where can you go from there? You can't fool yourself that even more houses would make you finally happy, or some try even that. So the foundation is the present moment and the fullness of life now.

And so when you feel the fullness, and then you look at a treasure map, you are now, the approach is very different. You are playing, there's a playfulness in the world of form. You're playing because you are in this world of form, and part of being in this world of form is to interact with the forms of life.

And why not try this out? See if I can manifest, not to find some fulfillment, but as a joyful, playful game with form. And then you look at your treasure map, and you feel, whatever it is you are looking at, the house, you feel totally fulfilled already in that moment.

And obtaining the house couldn't possibly lead you to greater fulfillment. This happened to me, I drew spontaneously a picture, a circle on a sheet of paper before I ever wrote a book, and that said, book. It came to me one day spontaneously with colors.

I drew the circle, book, and then I wrote, this was not so much me wanting to write a book as something in me expressing what it wanted, the consciousness. And I wrote, translated into many languages, changing the lives of hundreds of thousands of people.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:20 - 1:24:20)

Millions.

[Speaker 1] (1:24:20 - 1:30:10)

Millions, I didn't know that. And so it all came to pass, I had completely forgotten about this sheet of paper, and a few years ago I unpacked things that had been forwarded from England, a trunk, and I looked through it and I saw this old paper. And there was The Power of Now, and I looked in amazement, it had all come to pass.

But I didn't want, this was so much a reality, this sheet of paper, that I already felt the fullness of and the power of The Power of Now. I felt it already there. I didn't feel any greater or better when the book was out.

It was the same, the same feeling. The, so if you can feel the power, the unmanifested power, and then you can look at certain forms and play with forms. What flows into the manifestation is the unmanifested power, then expresses itself in many ways.

One of the ways in which the unmanifested power, the one power, the one life, can express itself and wants to express itself, because it is a universe that creates form continuously on so many levels, billions of life forms. So on that level, the universe wants to experience form. So you are part of that.

You can take part in that game, universe is, this is the game of creating forms and enjoying forms. And so you can do that if the foundation is the present moment. And that is, and then you are not dependent on your creation.

And you realize, of course, whatever you create at some point, it will leave you again, or you leave it. And that's fine. So you're not dependent on the outer form to give you a sense of fulfillment.

Only then can you be a successful, be successful at truly manifesting. When it's, so that's the finding the power first within yourself. There is, in this world, there are two movements.

One is the outgoing movement of the universe, which is the creation of form, greater and greater differentiation. The universe, they say, they may be right on some level, not on the deepest level. It started from a zero point of oneness.

The astronomers say it's, there was a big bang and the zero point, and nobody can say what was there before then. Before then, they say there was nothing. Very strange.

So there was, out of the no thingness, came the thingness of the world. The multitude of things. What the ancient Chinese texts call the 10,000 things.

They didn't realize at that time it's billions of things. And so there's the outward movement of the universe, the creation of form, and the wanting to experience the form. But there is another movement in the universe, which is the return to the source.

The two movements are there. The forms go out, but there's also, and every human being has the two movements inside him or her. One is the outward movement into creation, and one is the return movement home to the source, to the oneness, which in essence is the spiritual dimension.

The spiritual dimension is the return movement of the universe, and the universe also wants that. It wants to know itself in its essence. It not only wants to create forms and lose itself in the forms, that's part of the game.

It also wants to find itself after having lost itself. It wants to find itself and know itself deeply for the first time. And this actually is happening through the human form and probably through other forms in the universe, the same movement, because as above, so below.

So you are an expression of this universal cosmic twofold movement, the outer and the return home, the outgoing and the return home. And you are in between these two. So don't lose yourself in the outgoing.

That's a great danger, and this has happened to a large part of humanity. They lost themselves in the outgoing cycle. But ultimately, even that the universe wanted, because nothing happens that the universe doesn't want.

So you lose yourself in the outgoing until finally, the outgoing becomes so problematic and so differentiated. And then the return starts back to the source. And then you can actually live balancing the two connected to the source.

And this, I believe, is the new earth, a new reality that's being created in this dimension. And humans can create that, which is create form without losing their connectedness with the essence of being, with God. And then that could lead to a kind of dimension that would be absolute bliss, also temporary, nothing last.

But this would be a beautiful dimension on the planet humans live who create things, but don't lose their connectedness with being. So then you could say that it's conscious creation rather than unconscious creation.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:11 - 1:30:49)

Yes. Well, our guest today is Eckhart Tolle. Eckhart, thank you so much for being with us this hour on The Leading Edge.

I'm Mindy Odlin. If you feel nourished and uplifted by this program or any of our programs on Unity FM, we invite you to make a contribution and help us continue to be this voice, to bring this voice of truth and awakening to the planet, to the planet Earth. And we thank you, Eckhart, for being here.

More information is available online at www.EckhartTolle.com. Thank you for tuning in. Thank you for being a part of The Leading Edge and for being a part of the voice of an awakening world.

God bless.

[Speaker 1] (1:30:49 - 1:30:49)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:50 - 1:31:07)

Thank you. Thank you.

Gautam Sachdeva - Nikhil Kripalani 2013 video - Spending No Time With Eckhart Tolle - Part 1 to 3 | Gautam Sachdeva [SV72bm0LbFg]

[Speaker 2] (0:08 - 0:14)

Gautam, could you share any stories about your meetings with Eckhart Tolle, any incidents that stood out?

[Speaker 1] (0:15 - 6:34)

Yeah, there were two incidents... actually, there were quite a few, but he's quite a funny man... So, one I remember, we were visiting him in Glastonbury, I think this was in 2004, a group of us went, and I had looked up the internet, Google and all that stuff, to see what's there to see in Glastonbury, and I found one man who was very knowledgeable, he would show us around, he was doing a day tour, so I fixed everything up, and we'd see this, that, and the high point of the tour was the Glastonbury Tor, which is this hill, very sacred hill, so he would take us up that hill, and explain to us the significance, the theories, etc. Glastonbury is a very special place, so all this was finalized. Now what happened was, the evening before we had dinner with Eckhart in Glastonbury, so he said, what are you guys doing tomorrow morning?

So I told him, I said, you know Eckhart, we fixed this whole thing up, this guy is really amazing, and I think you should come along, you know, because it will be really entertaining. He said, I have spent many years, I mean many years or a couple of years, but a lot of time in Glastonbury. So he said, would you like me as your tour guide?

So I said, you gotta be kidding, I mean, you know, we'd love it. He said, but there'll be one difference. So I said, what?

He said, I won't say a word. You know, so, I mean, naturally, I had to apologize profusely to the tour guide we set up, and I couldn't tell him the reason why, because he wouldn't understand it. But anyway, that was shelved.

And so the next day, we all went up with Eckhart. It was, I think, a 45-minute climb up the top, in complete silence. And I tell you, it was the best.

It was true justice being done to that walk up the Glastonbury tour. Words would have been superfluous, you know. And I really liked my time with Eckhart, because my own nature was of being quiet.

Even Ramesh would keep telling me, you know, you're a quiet boy. Even when I was 40 years old, no, when I was 39, he would still say, you're a quiet boy. That's my nature.

And Ramesh, who was also quiet, was really something I resonated with, and I found that in Eckhart as well. Very quiet. So that walk up the tour in those 45 minutes with a group of us was just immensely gratifying, because we really soaked in the whole scenery, the space, and truly, you know, what are dates, and years, and numbers, and this happened 300 years ago, that happened 750 years ago...

It's really... you lose out the essence of the present moment, which is His teaching. And I had a similar experience with Him when we went in Tiruvannamalai, up the hill of Arunachala.

So Eckhart was there with a small group of us, and it was a walk up in silence. The simplest thing, you know, there's no need for talking, and at such sacred places, that's the greatest gift, is the gift of silence. So even if it...

actually I remember, because Eckhart, from what I recall, loved walking. Whether it was these two hills, whether we took a walk in Findhorn, when he was giving a talk in Findhorn, the riverbed had dried up, and a few of us went for a walk on the riverbed. We didn't speak, you see.

So that's probably why I cherish those memories. But Ramesh, on the other hand, loved to talk, and it was such fun. You know, he couldn't sit still.

His nature was like, okay, what's happening, and you know... I remember with Ramesh once, I'm sitting in his living room, we are having soup, and we are sitting, and he's on his rocking chair like this, and he's looking at the room, and he says, what a wonderful room! And I'm like, I told myself, is this guy joking, because he lives here, you know.

But so spontaneous. It is a wonderful room, and for that to come out, he was so in the moment, you know. So it was incredible, because of course, I mean, Ramesh was Ramesh, but coming back to Eckhart, I even remember one incident at Vancouver, when we had dinner, and red wine was served.

This was in the early days, when I didn't know Eckhart much at all, and he had his glass of wine, and he took a sip, like we all take the first sip very gently, and taste the wine, and put it down, and then the man went around serving wine to everyone else, and he then came back to us, put some more wine, and went. And then I saw Eckhart picking up the glass again, and going through the same gentle and slow ritual, and I thought that, you know, this is not his first sip, because I just saw like 10 minutes back, or 5 minutes back, you know. So I looked at him, I said, Eckhart, just to clarify, the kind of, the way you approached this sip of wine is incredible to see, but I think I saw it before, is it a deja vu or what, you know.

And he said, No, it is my second sip, but it is as if it's my first, and then he burst out laughing, and it was so true. So what I like is when you can see the Teaching being lived, whoever it is, you see, when anyone is living their Teaching, that is a sign of authenticity, then you know it's no longer a theory. So with Eckhart, what stays with me most is the times when there was not much speaking at all.

[Speaker 2] (6:35 - 7:04)

Could you share your first funny meeting with Eckhart, where it was set up for you, and you had nothing to ask him really?

[Speaker 1] (7:06 - 19:02)

Yeah, that is really... it was the year 1999, I was on holiday in Hong Kong, and my sister said, you know, there's this author, and she was in love, she is in love with Eckhart, and at that time, he was not known. So they had organized these small interviews, one-to-one sessions with Eckhart, and she booked me in for a session, and I was aghast, because I had my shopping to do, and Hong Kong was all about dining and having fun, so I protested, you know, I told my sister, I'm on holiday, and she said, No, no, you must.

So I said, Okay. So I met Eckhart, and we just sat in the same room, it was beautiful, it was all quiet. And he said, What would you like to talk about?

So I said, you know, Eckhart, I'm on holiday, and I really haven't got a list of anything, and I'm sure I have a long list if I came up with one, but you know, I really don't know. So he said, Okay. So we spoke about the most mundane stuff, you know, which was such fun.

We spoke about... I had an observation that everyone wore black in the daytime in Hong Kong. And he said, Yes, and look at the proliferation of banks all around, you just see banks everywhere, you know, money, and banking, and all that.

So we just... it was incredible, because it was the most mundane conversation that could take place. But one thing which stayed with me, because I remember that simply because when my sister asked me, How was your time with Eckhart?

I said, It was good fun, you know, I quite enjoyed it. But I must say one thing, this man, whatever rubbish I spoke about, about these kind of things, you know, we just chatted all in the air. But he gave me attention as if mantras were coming out of my mouth.

I said that stayed with me, you know. And I met Eckhart, I think a few months before I met Ramesh, a couple of months before. I really had no reference to the teachings or the subject at all, that was not my background.

But that really stayed with me. The way he was fully there, you know, completely, totally there, was something which was quite zap, because I said, I mean, you know, if someone can be so gracious, and so attentive, when such mundane talk is taking place, it's beautiful. So it kind of endured me to him, and I had not read The Power of Now at that time, and I was not...

that was really not my path, but I just enjoyed this. So I'm grateful that I've had the opportunity to share such times with such people. It's been very enthralling, you know, it's fun.

I think this was when Eckhart and me were in Pondicherry. We were having dinner one evening, and what had happened is, the day I met Eckhart, when I flew from Mumbai to Chennai, and then went to Pondicherry, I had lost my grandmother the same morning. She was ailing, and we knew she was on her way out, and she passed away in the morning, and we did all the funeral and everything, and we moved on.

So my conversation with Eckhart at the dinner table, which I remember very clearly, is a question I asked him, this was going way back now, 12 years... I told Eckhart, I said, I have noticed whenever someone who I love dies, in which case, here was my grandmother who had passed away, about a year before that, my dog had passed away, I had a dog for 17 years. My question was, whenever someone passes away, I sense a vacuum.

The vacuum is external in the sense that the person who was there is no more, like for example, my dog was in a particular spot, I would see him every day coming back from work, and he is not there, so that's a physical vacuum. And then is the vacuum inside. You feel that loss.

So I asked Eckhart, I said, I felt this when my grandmother passed away, when my dog passed away, when anyone passes away, that vacuum is sensed. What would happen if everyone I loved passed away at the same time? This was my question.

And he looked at me, and he smiled. He said, that's a wonderful question... it was quite strange, actually...

and he said, the answer is astonishingly simple. He said, that's what Enlightenment is. After 12 years, the understanding is there of what he meant.

My understanding is, what he was pointing to, was the fact that when you do not derive your sense of Self from anyone, anything, then one is enlightened. Because the Ego derives its sense of Self from objects, it could be animate or inanimate objects, people, objects, expensive objects around, or things we treasure, or even thoughts. We derive our sense of Self from these things.

When we no longer derive our sense of Self, that is what Enlightenment is. I think it's quite clear. And again, Eckhart gave such a beautiful pointer to this, that it was something which was...

you can't argue with it, it's so clear to me, it's so clearly seen, that this is the core. The core is the Ego's constant deriving its sense of Self from the other. Ramesh's Guru's Guru, Siddharameshwar Maharaj, had said, when you are at that state where nothing affects you, if someone you love passes away, it is the same as if you heard the news of someone else's friend passing away in some village, that is the true state.

This is what he meant. Of course, according to my understanding, this is what it is. This is what it means to die before you die.

We read so many teachers say, die before you die. Eckhart says, die before you die. It means die to this deriving the sense of Self from the external.

When that is history, then you are left with what is... conscious presence, that is all there is. So there is no object as such separate from yourself, because there is what is, which is the conscious presence of what is.

And objects themselves, and appearance in that consciousness as nothing apart from Me, so to speak, that is the total What Is. So then what would happen if an object appeared or disappeared? All objects come and go, that is one's life experience.

Your cherished relationships come and go, objects disintegrate, deteriorate, isn't that everyone's life experience? Everything comes and goes. Now this reminds me of another Maharaj story, it's just come to mind.

Again, Mularpatan, Maharaj's translator, whom I would keep needling for giving me stories on Maharaj, I said, do you remember anything else? Something really impactful, which Maharaj said, He said, yeah, he said, once this man who was of some professor in Vedanta came to Maharaj's Satsang, very proud, sat there, looked at everyone first, everyone acknowledged him, and then he posed a question to Maharaj. He said, Maharajji, I have a question, and looked around.

So Maharaj looked at him and said, Yes. He said, What would happen if Shiva and Vishnu came and stood in front of you right now? And then again, looked around, and Maharaj looked at him and said, I would tell them to get out.

And actually, I don't think Maharaj said, get out, he used some expletives, which really upset this man. He said, How dare you say this about Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu, and was very angry, and looked at everyone, and what is this going on, and he left. After he left, Maharaj told his audience, his Satsang, he said, obviously, whatever comes is going to go, even if it's Shiva or Vishnu who come and stand in front of me, they are going to go.

Whatever comes, goes. I am only interested in the Eternal. The man missed the point.

So everything is transient. Everything that is witnessed in this movie of life comes and goes. As we clock more years, we go deeper into that, knowing that things move.

But what is constant is the awareness in which it comes and goes. So coming back to Eckhart, I think in that one-line answer, it was a beautiful gift, it gave so much clarity, at least to me. That's what it was.

So I won't forget that one dinner conversation easily. It's so nice to have such conversations, because normally at dinners and social gatherings, one is talking about which movies have you seen, and how's the weather here, where have you travelled, and then on the other end, you have this conversation, which is a refreshing change. So I really cherish these memories with Eckhart.

It's been a while, but it's really stayed.

[Speaker 2] (19:18 - 19:24)

Gautam, could you share any stories about your meetings with Eckhart Tolle, any incidents that stood out?

[Speaker 1] (19:26 - 25:44)

Yeah, there were two incidents, actually there were quite a few, but he's quite a funny man. So one I remember, we were visiting him in Glastonbury, I think this was in 2004. A group of us went, and I had looked up the internet, Google and all that stuff, to see what's there to see in Glastonbury.

And I found one man who was very knowledgeable, he would show us around, he was doing a day tour. So I fixed everything up, and we'd see this, that, and the high point of the tour was the Glastonbury Tor, which is this hill, very sacred hill. So he would take us up that hill, and explain to us the significance, the theories, etc.

Glastonbury is a very special place. So all this was finalized. Now what happened was, the evening before, we had dinner with Eckhart in Glastonbury.

So he said, what are you guys doing tomorrow morning? So I told him, I said, you know Eckhart, we fixed this whole thing up, this guy is really amazing. And I think you should come along, you know, because it will be really entertaining.

He said, I have spent many years, I mean many years or couple of years, but a lot of time in Glastonbury. So he said, would you like me as your tour guide? So I said, you gotta be kidding, I mean, you know, we'd love it.

He said, but there'll be one difference. So I said, what? He said, I won't say a word.

You know, so, I mean, naturally, I had to apologize profusely to the tour guide we set up, and I couldn't tell him the reason why, because he wouldn't understand it. But anyway, that was shelved. And so the next day, we all went up with Eckhart.

It was, I think, a 45-minute climb up the top, in complete silence. And I tell you, it was the best. It was true justice being done to that walk up the Glastonbury top.

Words would have been superfluous, you know. And I really liked my time with Eckhart because my own nature was of being quiet. Even Ramesh would keep telling me, you know, you're a quiet boy.

Even when I was 40 years old, no, when I was 39, he would still say, you're a quiet boy. That's my nature. And Eckhart, who was also quiet, was really something I resonated with, and I found that in Eckhart as well.

Very quiet. So that walk up the top in those 45 minutes with a group of us was just immensely gratifying, because we really soaked in the whole scenery, the space, and truly, you know, what are dates, and years, and numbers, and this happened 300 years ago, that happened 750 years ago... It's really, you lose out the essence of the present moment, which is his teaching.

And I had a similar experience with him when we went in Tiruvannamalai, up the hill of Arunachala. So Eckhart was there with a small group of us, and it was a walk up in silence. I mean, the simplest thing, you know, there's no need for talking, and at such sacred places, that's the greatest gift, is a gift of silence.

So even if it... actually I remember, because Eckhart, from what I recall, loved walking. Whether it was these two hills, whether we took a walk in Findhorn, when he was giving a talk in Findhorn, the riverbed had dried up, and a few of us went for a walk on the riverbed.

We didn't speak, you see. So that's probably why I cherish those memories. But Ramesh, on the other hand, loved to talk, and it was such fun.

You know, he couldn't sit still. His nature was like, okay, what's happening, and you know, I remember with Ramesh once, I'm sitting in his living room, we are having soup, and we are sitting, and he's on his rocking chair like this, and he's looking at the room, and he says, what a wonderful room. And I'm like, I told myself, is this guy joking, because he lives here, you know.

But so spontaneous. It is a wonderful room, and for that to come out, he was so in the moment, you know. So it was incredible, because of course, I mean, Ramesh was Ramesh, but coming back to Eckhart, I even remember one incident at Vancouver, when we had dinner, and red wine was served.

This was in the early days, when I didn't know Eckhart much at all, and he had his glass of wine, and he took a sip, like we all take the first sip very gently, and taste the wine, and put it down, and then the man went around serving wine to everyone else, and he then came back to us, put some more wine, and went... And then I saw Eckhart picking up the glass again, and going through the same gentle and slow ritual, and I thought that, you know, this is not his first sip, because I just saw like 10 minutes back, or 5 minutes back, you know, so I looked at him, I said, Eckhart, just to clarify, the kind of, the way you approached this sip of wine is incredible to see, but I think I saw it before, is it a deja vu or what, you know. And he said, no, it is my second sip, but it is as if it's my first, and then he burst out laughing, you know, and it was so true.

So what I like is when you can see the Teaching being lived, whoever it is, you see, when anyone is living their Teaching, that is a sign of authenticity, then you know it's no longer a theory. So with Eckhart, I mean, what stays with me most is the times when there was not much speaking at all.

[Speaker 2] (25:45 - 26:15)

Would you share your first funny meeting with Eckhart, where it was set up for you, and you had nothing to ask him really?

[Speaker 1] (26:17 - 38:12)

Yeah, that is really... it was the year 1999, I was on holiday in Hong Kong, and my sister said, you know, there's this author, and she was in love, she is in love with Eckhart, and at that time, he was not known. So they had organized these small interviews, one-to-one sessions with Eckhart, and she booked me in for a session, and I was aghast, because I had my shopping to do, and Hong Kong was all about dining and having fun, so I protested, you know, I told my sister, I am on holiday, and she said, no, no, you must.

So I said, okay. So I met Eckhart, and we just sat in the same room, it was beautiful, it was all quiet, and he said, what would you like to talk about? So I said, you know, Eckhart, I am on holiday, and I really haven't got a list of anything, and I am sure I have a long list, if I came up with one, but, you know, I really don't know.

So he said, okay. So we spoke about the most mundane stuff, you know, which was such fun. We spoke about...

I had an observation that everyone wore black in the daytime in Hong Kong, and he said, yes, and look at the proliferation of banks all around, you just see banks everywhere, you know, money, and banking, and all that. So we just... it was incredible, because it was the most mundane conversation that could take place.

But one thing which stayed with me, because I remember that simply because when my sister asked me, how was your time with Eckhart, I said, it was good fun, you know, I quite enjoyed it, but I must say one thing, this man, whatever rubbish I spoke about, about these kind of things, you know, we just chatted all in the air, but he gave me attention as if mantras were coming out of my mouth. I said, that stayed with me, you know. And I met Eckhart, I think a few months before I met Ramesh, a couple of months before.

I really had no reference to the teachings or the subject at all, that was not my background, but that really stayed with me. The way he was fully there, you know, completely, totally there, was something which was quite zap, because I said, you know, if someone can be so gracious, and so attentive, when such mundane talk is taking place, it's beautiful. So it kind of endured me to him, and I had not read The Power of Now at that time, and that was really not my path, but I just enjoyed this.

So I'm grateful that I've had the opportunity to share such times with such people. It's been very enthralling, you know, it's fun. I think this was when Eckhart and me were in Pondicherry, we were having dinner one evening, and what had happened is, the day I met Eckhart, when I flew from Mumbai to Chennai, and then went to Pondicherry, I had lost my grandmother the same morning.

She was ailing, and we knew she was on her way out, and she passed away in the morning, and we did all the funeral and everything, and we moved on. So my conversation with Eckhart at the dinner table, which I remember very clearly, is a question I asked him, this was going way back now, 12 years... I told Eckhart, I said, I have noticed whenever someone who I love dies, in which case, here was my grandmother who had passed away, about a year before that, my dog had passed away, I had a dog for 17 years.

My question was, whenever someone passes away, I sense a vacuum. The vacuum is external in the sense that the person who was there is no more, like for example, my dog was in a particular spot, I would see him every day coming back from work, and he is not there, so that's a physical vacuum. And then is the vacuum inside.

You feel that loss. So I asked Eckhart, I said, I felt this when my grandmother passed away, when my dog passed away, when anyone passes away, that vacuum is sensed. What would happen if everyone I loved passed away at the same time?

This was my question. And he looked at me, and he smiled. He said, that's a wonderful question...

it was quite strange, actually... and he said, the answer is astonishingly simple. He said, that's what Enlightenment is.

After 12 years, the understanding is there of what he meant. My understanding is, what he was pointing to, was the fact that when you do not derive your sense of Self from anyone, anything, then one is Enlightened. Because the Ego derives its sense of Self from objects, it could be animate or inanimate objects, people, objects, expensive objects around, or things we treasure, or even thoughts.

We derive our sense of Self from these things. When we no longer derive our sense of

Self, that is what Enlightenment is. I think it's quite clear.

And again, Eckhart gave such a beautiful pointer to this, that it was something which was... you can't argue with it, it's so clear to me, it's so clearly seen, that this is the core. The core is the Ego's constant deriving its sense of Self from the other.

Ramesh's Guru's Guru, Siddharameshwar Maharaj, had said, when you are at that state where nothing affects you, if someone you love passes away, it is the same as if you heard the news of someone else's friend passing away in some village, that is the true state. This is what he meant. Of course, according to my understanding, this is what it is.

This is what it means to die before you die. We read so many teachers say, die before you die. Eckhart says, die before you die.

It means die to this deriving the sense of Self from the external. When that is history, then you are left with what-is, conscious presence. That is all there is.

So there is no object as such separate from yourself, because there is what-is, which is the conscious presence of what-is. And objects themselves, and appearance in that consciousness, as nothing apart from Me, so to speak, that is the total what-is. So then what would happen if an object appeared or disappeared?

All objects come and go, that is one's life experience. Your cherished relationships come and go, objects disintegrate, deteriorate, isn't that everyone's life experience? Everything comes and goes.

Now this reminds me of another Maharaj story, it's just come to mind. Again, Muller Patan, Maharaj's translator, whom I would keep needling for giving me stories on Maharaj, I said, Do you remember anything else? Something really impactful which Maharaj said.

He said, Yeah. Once this man who was of some professor in Vedanta came to Maharaj's Satsang, very proud, sat there, looked at everyone first, everyone acknowledged him, and then he posed a question to Maharaj. He said, Maharajji, I have a question, and he looked around...

So Maharaj looked at him and said, Yes. He said, What would happen if Shiva and Vishnu came and stood in front of you right now? And then again, he looked around, and Maharaj looked at him and said, I would tell them to get out.

And actually, I don't think Maharaj said get out, he used some expletives, which really upset this man. He said, How dare you say this about Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu? And he was very angry, and looked at everyone, and said, What is this going on?

And he left. After he left, Maharaj told his audience, his Satsang, he said, Obviously, whatever comes is going to go. Even if it's Shiva or Vishnu who come and stand in front of me, they are going to go.

Whatever comes, goes. I am only interested in the Eternal. The man missed the point.

So everything is transient. Everything that is witnessed in this movie of life comes and goes. As we clock more years, we go deeper into that, knowing that things move.

But what is constant is the awareness in which it comes and goes. So coming back to Eckhart, I think, in that one-line answer, it was a beautiful gift. It gave so much clarity, at least to me.

That's what it was. So I won't forget that one dinner conversation easily. It's so nice to have such conversations, because normally at dinners and social gatherings, one is talking about which movies have you seen, and how's the weather here, where have you travelled, and then on the other end, you have this conversation, which is a refreshing change.

So I really cherish these memories with Eckhart. It's been a while, but it's really stayed.

Kim Eng - Inner Body Meditation (2) [3y20tCbE]

[Speaker 1] (0:11 - 33:43)

To begin, find your comfortable seating place, or if you're lying down, you're welcome to lie down. But when you, if you're lying down, if you choose to lie down, please stay awake through this. So if you're feeling tired, I'd suggest that you don't lie down.

Just sit up, and let's sit up nice and sort of straight as we possibly can in a chair. Having our feet flat on the floor, or if you're sitting cross-legged, that's okay too. Just find your comfortable edge where you can close your eyes, take a deep breath, maybe exhale with a sigh, and just let your entire day go.

And one more time, deep breath in, and exhale, let it go and relax. As you're seated, there's an awareness, the awareness that you are seated, the awareness with your feet on the floor, or if you're in another position, the awareness of just feeling the ground beneath you. And then there's the awareness of your breath.

Don't try to change the breath, but just be aware of your breathing in this moment, and just allow the awareness to take your breathing deeper. If thoughts arise, just notice them, and just let them float away, and bring your attention back to your breath. And scan your body from head to toe, toe to head, just relaxing every inch of your body, your brows, forehead, your cheeks, your jaw, your shoulders, your arms, your legs, your feet, your toes.

Just become aware of the body. Notice any tension or tightness, and then consciously choose to relax. If you're experiencing any tension or pain, just notice it, drop the label, tension, drop the label, pain, and simply feel.

When you drop all labels, all it is is sensations. Again, if thoughts arise, just let them go. Return your awareness to breathing, to the sensations in your body.

Or perhaps you even hear some sounds, just notice them. Let's bring our awareness to the inner body, that feeling of aliveness within. If you don't know what that feels like, don't worry about it.

See if we can just feel it in our hands. So it might be best if you allow your hands to come up away from your body, so not resting on anything, and just hold your hands up in a relaxed position. With your eyes closed, you can ask yourself, how do I know I even have hands?

And simply feel. So let go of the label hands and just feel. What does it feel like?

Is there some tingling? Does it feel numb? As soon as you label it, just let the labels go and continue feeling.

You can keep your hands where they are, or you can rest them back down onto your lap, but keep feeling your hands. And let's bring our attention to your arms. How do you know you even have arms?

What do your arms feel like? Your elbows, your forearms, your biceps, your shoulders, breathing and feeling your arms. And if you can't feel your arms, don't worry about it.

Just go back to your hands. The hands are the easiest to feel. Now feel your hands and your arms together.

Now feel your shoulder blades, feel your chest, feel your belly, feel a spine, your entire back, feel your belly button. How do you know you even have a belly button? How do you know you have a back, a chest, a belly, a spine?

So feeling your entire torso and the lower lumbar up to your shoulders, feeling the arms and feeling the hands together. And bring your attention to your hips, to your buttocks, to your hip flexors. How do you know you have a buttocks?

How do you know you have hips? And if you can't feel them, don't worry about it. Just go back to an area you can feel.

When you're ready, connect your hips, your buttocks, your back, your front body, your shoulders, your arms and your hands together. Let's bring your attention to the legs. How do you know you even have legs?

How do you know you have thighs and knees and shins and calves? What do your knees feel like? What do your thighs feel like?

And if you're ready, let's connect your hands, your arms, your back, your front body, your hips, your buttocks and your legs. And become aware of your feet, your ankles, your heels, your arches, the tops of your feet, your toes. Feeling each toe.

How do you know you even have feet? When we drop the label, all there is, is just sensation. The sensation of the inner body.

And let's feel the body from the shoulders down. Connecting your hands with your arms, your arms with the shoulders, your shoulders with your back, with the front, with your hips, with your buttocks, your legs and your feet and your toes. And bring your attention to your neck, to your head.

Your ears, your cheeks, your lips, your nose, your eyes, your eyebrows, the top of your head, the sides, the back. How do you know you even have a head and a neck? Relaxing your face.

Relaxing your entire body and just feel. And remember, if you can't feel it, just go back to an area of the body that you can feel. Let's connect your neck and your head with the rest of your body and feel your entire body.

Noticing and feeling the inner body is one energy field. So there's this awareness, let's call it the outer forms, the form of breathing, the form of sensations in your body, such as tension, tightness or pain, thought forms, forms of emotions, sounds. And even the form of your inner body.

It's the purest life form, but it's still a form. And there's awareness of these forms. And staying connected to your inner body, allow your awareness to take you deeper into yourself.

In other words, allow awareness to become aware of itself. The dimension of stillness, formlessness, and emptiness, that there's a potential for fullness. And going into this formless dimension, this stillness is that peace that passes all understanding.

The peace before any form arises. And we awaken to that stillness, to that formless dimension that we can also call your soul level, your soul self, unencumbered by any thoughts, any identities, anything. And that practice of staying connected to that inner body, to your soul self, it's the practice to be able to bring that into your everyday life, to find a way to have this in your everyday life, a life that is a constant pulling at you, constant demands.

And it is essential if we are to be our true selves, to be at one with life, to be at peace in this world, is to find that inner peace within. And you can still stay connected to this inner body, and that practice is to stay connected. And you can gently, just slowly open your eyes, taking in the world of form, which is another dimension, kind of added it and pulling at you to come out, to come out.

But the spiritual awakening is to actually go back in. It's almost like the reverse, to go back in, to go in, and to find that balance between inner and outer living.

On Racism, Ego, and Awareness | Eckhart Tolle [UGNT3d7G]

[Speaker 1] (0:32 - 58:04)

A good starting point is perhaps the famous statement by Martin Luther King, who said that he was looking forward to the day when people would be judged not by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character. And we take that as a starting point. We need to ask ourselves, what is the content of a person's character?

What does that mean? He's pointing to that in each human being that is actually invisible to the senses. The most important part of every human being is invisible to the senses.

That begins with simple things like the thoughts that go through your mind, the emotions that you feel. Those things are already the invisible part of who you are. You might be able to see certain ways in which the invisible manifests externally.

It can manifest through words, through facial expressions, it manifests through actions. But a very important realization is that what Martin Luther King calls the character is the invisible dimension of who the human being is. And perhaps the most important realization for any human being, which is a spiritual realization, is the realization that they are essentially invisible.

What you see on the surface is a relatively superficial phenomenon. You see the physical body. So if you are able to sense, this is perhaps a good starting point, sense within yourself that invisible being that you are, which ultimately is a consciousness and the various ways in which the consciousness takes on form as thoughts and emotion.

But essentially you are the consciousness and the consciousness is invisible. You can open up the brain and examine every cell of the human brain and you will still not find, open up my brain, you won't find me. You will not find that who that human being is.

You will not find the character of that human being. So he refers to the inner being. You can only get a glimpse of that inner being that you are beyond even the conditioned entity that is, yes, also the conditioned entity, which is the ego is invisible, but beyond the conditioned entity, there is the unconditioned being or consciousness that you are.

And the starting point as a very foundation for what I'm going to talk about is it might even be a glimpse to sense within yourself that invisible presence, even beyond thoughts and emotions or the thoughts and emotions are a manifestation of that. Also they are formations of the consciousness takes on form as an emotion or as a thought, but before it takes on form, it is the unconditioned consciousness. You are essentially that.

So let's, if you can even just get a glimpse of what it is that I'm talking about and sense this essential, this essence within yourself, this presence, this aware presence, then you step beyond ego within yourself. And it's only then that you can look at another human being and look beyond the external appearance of that human being and sense also their innermost essence. Now, most humans are not able yet to do that.

Anybody who has not yet awakened spiritually or even had a glimpse of spiritual awakening, that human being will have certain mind forms, certain thoughts in their mind with which they judge other human beings. They are not able to truly relate to other human beings because they are, one could almost say possessed by their conditioned mind, by the thoughts that go through their mind. So you cannot meet another human being, you're meeting the judgments that your mind has formed about the other human being.

So there is a complete sense of separation and that is how the ego works. The ego is a mind made sense of self. And this mind made sense of self that consists of identifications with externals, with your body, with possessions, with abilities, with knowledge, with things that have happened to you, things that you have achieved, failures also, all these things become part of the human ego.

And you are not able to sense anything deeper within yourself than the ego of who you are, which is the conditioned entity, the conditioned self. Then every human you meet is immediately labeled in some way. You attach certain labels to human beings and you need to realize that the ego in humans, in order to assert its sense of identity, is always looking for some kind of superiority.

So the ego is comparative. When you meet another human being, the egoic sense of self will feel it's seeking superiority and it fears inferiority. So when you meet another, there's an unconscious attempt by the ego to feel superior to another human being, but the other human being, you're not actually meeting the other human being, you're meeting a mental veil.

Now, in the case of race, your mind may have been conditioned by the surrounding culture to have certain thoughts about another race, especially in the case where the other race is a minority. So if there's a majority, that is what in a Western world, it's the white race in the majority, then the most obvious thing for the egoic sense of self is to judge another human who is different, whose external appearance is different, whose skin color is different, to seek that out in an attempt to assert their superiority. And it's an egoic fallacy, but it's a very common thing to happen that you would lose the ability to actually connect with, to actually see truly that human being, because all you see is the judgments and the labels that your mind has formed, partly due to the conditioning of the culture and ultimately the conditioning of the egoic mind.

So when Martin Luther King talks about a character that's already, you're not able to meet this human being, because this human being for you, as an ego, is completely obscured by the mind form that is the veil, the mental conditioning. You are judging this human being as the ego is judging this human being as inferior in an attempt to assert its superiority. And one of the most obvious things when there is minorities in a culture is to latch onto that for the ego, which might not have much else to identify with.

Perhaps you haven't achieved anything. You don't possess much that is more than others. You might be actually of very low intelligence in conventional terms, but then you can seek out the one thing that would make the ego feel superior.

And then you go on, you see there's another race and I'm superior to that race. It's satisfying to the ego. And there are people in whom a substantial part of their sense of identity is built around their race and the superiority of their race.

And that is the definition of racist, is someone whose sense of identity is predominantly based on race as opposed to another. And it's perceived as superior in the search, the egoic search to assert its superiority in order to feel a stronger sense of self. So it's a complete inability.

You meet a human of another race, but you're not really meeting that other human. All you're meeting is your own mental conditioning as a veil. And there's complete sense of separation.

And this is how the ego operates. The ego actually likes to emphasize that sense of separation. It likes to emphasize the otherness of other humans.

And the other is usually, but when the ego emphasizes the otherness of others, the other must be inferior so that it works, so that the ego can feel strengthened in its sense of identity. It's of course a fictitious sense of identity. So when Martin Luther King talks about character, of course, first he's talking about the unseen part that when you react to the color of a person's skin through the veil of your conditioning, you cannot see the invisible human being that is behind the external appearance.

You're completely disconnected from the human being. And character, of course, in the first instance means who that person is on a psychological level. The person might be a wonderful, enlightened human being, or a human being that has certain forms of conditioning, which may be good or bad.

Character is all the various things in which the human being becomes conditioned. And you can't even see that because you've already formulated a mental image, a conceptual sense of self for the other. And character, of course, is deeper than that.

I would, beyond character, I would define character as the way in which a human being has been conditioned to function in this world, the mental, emotional conditioning. Beyond character, in every human being, there's a deeper essence. And that deeper essence, of course, is totally invisible to you.

You cannot sense the humanity of the other beyond their conditioning, because you have already dehumanized the other by imposing a conceptual identity on the other. And enormous amount of suffering is inflicted by humans on others, because they have dehumanized the other, they have completely conceptualized the other. And then you attach labels to the other person.

Once you've done that, if you're very unconscious, you can even inflict violence, because you've already dehumanized the other. So, it's an inability to go beyond the way in which your mind has been conditioned to even have a glimpse of the other, of the human being that you're meeting. It's a veil you move.

And now, imagine that, well, you don't need to imagine, it's the case if a majority of humans in a particular culture, if a significant percentage of humans are trapped in that egoic dysfunction, then this will become translated into externals, it will become translated into institutions, all the structures that humans create, economic structures, social structures, political structures, those will become contaminated by the basic egoic dysfunction in humans.

And this to some extent has happened in the Western world and in the United States. It's very important to see that the root of racism is in the human mind. And the root of racism, ultimately, yes, you can differentiate between the unconsciousness that is in humans, that is the egoic sense of self, and the effects of that unconsciousness in the external world.

So, that state of unconsciousness creates certain structures in the external world. And you can, to some extent, undo the injustices and discriminatory practices and so on in the external world. We should, to some extent, attempt to undo as much as possible those structures which are the effect of an underlying dysfunction in the collective mind.

So, it's important to realize, yes, we can and should do as much as possible to undo the effects of that unconsciousness in the world. But realize that the ultimate liberation from racism is in the human mind. So, my work concerns primarily what I consider to be the foundation for everything else, which is the human consciousness.

No human individual being and no human society can ultimately act beyond their level of consciousness. You cannot expect an unconscious person, but you should be more conscious. He or she cannot.

He or she is trapped in the unconscious patterns. And so, while it is very important to be active in this world in order to undo as much as possible the effects of human unconsciousness, I still, I consider it of primary importance to realize that the ultimate, what we could call transcendence of the ego, is inseparable from the awakening of human consciousness so that people are able to go beyond the egoic sense of self so that they do not perpetuate those patterns.

Because even if you one, if you undo one of the institutions or whatever it is that the unconscious patterns have created, they will create something else. So, it is obvious that in this world, there are some glaring injustices. For example, in America, even to me as an outsider, it is obvious that the glaring injustices of the incarceration of hundreds of thousands of humans, in many cases, black men were incarcerated for non-violent offenses, often simply for the possession of dried leaves of a plant that they carried in their pockets.

It makes them feel good when they ingest it. And they've been in prison for years, their whole lives destroyed, incarcerated. I believe 45% or almost half are in prison for drug offenses and trapped in there for years, terribly misguided, deeply misguided policies.

So, that of course, anybody to become active, that is something that many, many people should be aware of and whatever steps they take, they should undo that particular effect of human unconsciousness. And then there are many others. I rarely tell people, I almost never tell people what to do, because that's not my function, because all doing arises out of a certain state of consciousness.

So, my main focus is always the state of consciousness out of which any activity or doing arises. My main focus is, I call that the causal realm, the realm of cause. Everything else is the realm of effect.

Now, we need to emphasize the realm of effect. We cannot say, I'm not going to do anything about the external things, because I'm only concerned with awakening, spiritual awakening. There's nothing we can do until humans have awakened spiritually.

That is not quite true. There are many things you can do without having fully awakened. You don't need to wait for some kind of awakening in order for the world to change.

So, for example, we have our foundation, Eckhart Tolle Foundation. I got together with the members of the board. We talked about what action can be taken now.

We can't wait until everybody's enlightened to take some action now. So, we selected some organizations that do great work with black people in the United States to help them on various levels. And so, we've donated a quarter million dollars to those foundations in order to alleviate the effects of human, as I call it, the effects of human unconsciousness.

So, action is taken. And we are here to interact with the world, to take action, to bring about a better world. But we need to be careful that the action does not become, so to speak, hijacked by the ego in ourselves.

So, as we take action to remedy certain situations, to change certain structures, that's very important. We're actually acting against unconsciousness. We're acting against the effects of human unconsciousness.

And yes, action is necessary, but we need to have some awareness while we act. We don't need to be fully enlightened. But in order not to see our actions reflect the unconsciousness that we are fighting, we need to be aware.

We need to have some degree of awareness in our actions. There's a famous saying by Nietzsche. He said, if you're fighting monsters, beware that you do not become a monster, that you do not turn into a monster.

So, whenever you fight human unconsciousness, you need to stay aware. You need to have some awareness. Because then, without the awareness, if you address the unconsciousness in other human beings, it's very easy for this to draw you into unconsciousness yourself.

I've been saying for years, not with reference to this particular topic, racism, but more generally, I've been saying for years, you cannot fight the ego. You cannot fight the ego in yourself, and you cannot fight the ego in others. As I said, you can, to some extent, alleviate the negative effects of what the ego has created, but you cannot fight the ego itself, neither in yourself nor in others.

If you fight the ego in yourself, you create an enormous amount of inattention, and you create a split within yourself. You don't have an inner enemy that you're fighting against that would keep you trapped in a terrible state of dysfunction. So, anybody who takes action in order to change things in the externals, needs to have some awareness, so that they do not, you can take effective action without increasing the divisiveness and antagonism in this world.

So, that is very important. You always need to see what is your contribution, even on a simple level of interacting many people on social media, what is your contribution to the discourse that people are engaged in? Are you attacking other human beings and call them evil?

Or are you actually addressing something and pointing certain things out, disseminate information, so that you can help people to become more aware and to awaken? So, in any action that you take, stay aware, so that your action does not become contaminated with ego. Because if otherwise, that which you are fighting, you will amplify.

Many things when we fight things, the fight against drugs, we haven't addressed the root cause of taking drugs. We've said we need to fight, we're talking about the war against drugs, the fight against drugs. Now, where has that led us, the fight?

Has it been successful? Not at all. If anything, it's made things worse.

So, it requires a certain amount of wisdom to be an effective agent for change in this world. And that wisdom can only arise in you, if you have a little bit of access within yourself to the unconditioned being, the unconditioned consciousness. These are very,

very huge challenge for humans to stay conscious at this time.

That is your challenge to take action, but stay conscious while you take action. It's vitally important. Then the action actually much more empowered.

So, it's very easy when you fight unconsciousness, as I said, unconsciousness in other humans to be drawn into unconsciousness yourself. Very subtle thing. Nietzsche added when he said, be careful when you fight monsters, monsters means, as I interpret it, egoic dysfunction, human unconsciousness, which creates all kinds of dreadful evils in this world.

If you fight that and you're not careful, he said, be careful, it doesn't mean necessarily, if you're not aware, that's my addition, you yourself become unconscious. And he added, if you gaze for long enough into the abyss, you will find that the abyss gazes back into you. So, this is the abyss of human unconsciousness.

It's for example, to take an example of policing in the United States, it's a big subject, it has in time. And obviously, changes are necessary in the way policing is done. There's a lot of brutality, especially directed towards black people.

Not every policeman, of course, but some, and those are the ones that stand out. And the entire system needs to be changed, needs to be looked at. It's understandable to feel anger when you look at what's been happening there.

It's totally understandable to feel that. And there's nothing wrong with that, it is a normal human reaction. But when there's lack of awareness, the danger is that the anger takes possession of you, then you lose consciousness.

When anger takes complete possession of you, it leads you to do things that are not ultimately not helpful. It's completely understandable to feel the anger. But there's a huge difference between feeling the anger and being aware of it and accept it, that is a normal human reaction.

Or not to be aware of the anger so that the force of the anger takes complete possession of you, that means awareness disappears, and you then become the anger. That means the anger has become incorporated into your egoic sense of self. And so, and then the ego, once this has happened, so ego is always when you identify with something, complete identification with something becomes part of your ego, egoic sense of self, identify, you derive your identity from.

So, in the absence of awareness, it's very easy for this to happen that the anger which is a natural thing that many humans feel when they contemplate what's happening. But in the absence of awareness, the anger can easily possess you, take you over and completely control your thinking. In other words, as I said, it becomes incorporated into your ego, it becomes part of your ego, and the actions that you then take are no longer ultimately not helpful.

In Eastern terms, you create more karma for yourself and others. Karma is action and reaction, action and reaction. So, anger, the energy of anger can actually be transmuted and transformed when awareness is there.

The energy of anger can actually, instead of taking possession of you and becoming you, the energy of anger can be transmuted and it can become conscious action that you take. It's a transmutation of anger into conscious action. The energy of it becomes transmuted when awareness is there.

The anger is accepted, it's allowed to be there, but it does not take possession of you. You remain aware that there is anger. Then there's a possibility for the anger to be transformed into action.

But then it will be action that does not amplify the human unconsciousness in this world. Very different kind of action. So, if you take action that amplifies human unconsciousness, there's just no end.

Then the abyss is gazing back into you and draws you in. So, this, I hope, can be helpful. It requires a certain vigilance in you.

There's no need to say, I shouldn't be angry. Of course, you should be angry. Be angry, but don't be possessed by the anger.

Know that the anger is arising. Know when in the face of injustice, you feel it and that's fine. You allow it to be there and you can feel the energy of it, but awareness remains.

And then it can actually empower action. The energy becomes transformed. That can be, I highly recommend that, so that I cannot emphasize enough to be careful so that you are not taken over by something like that.

Because if you are, you strengthen not only that which you are fighting against, you amplify the unconsciousness out there, you also strengthen your own unconsciousness. You're really trapped. So, it's a very, very subtle difference.

The key remains is awareness, awareness, awareness, presence. What's going on inside me right now? What's to be aware of that?

And the picture is not entirely negative when I look at the United States. There's a lot still that needs to happen, but quite a lot. I'm an external observer, but it does seem to me I have spent time in the United States.

Since Martin Luther King, since the 60s, we have already come a long way, not to even to mention the time period before that, needs to acknowledge there is also, there is a lot of goodwill in the country. There's a lot of goodwill and a willingness to change that is certainly there. So, that is the positive aspect.

The awareness of race that we have now would have been unthinkable in the 50s, just completely impossible. So, there is a gradual growth of awareness and a gradual transformation happening, but it needs to continue. It seems to be continuing.

The one obstacle I need to mention again, be careful that you're not being taken over by certain forms of reactivity like anger and lose yourself in that. That's the, then what is now a great possibility for increasing awareness that we have now. We can go either way now.

The awareness that had arisen is great. There's possibility of further awakening, gradually also collective awakening of consciousness. But if we don't, if we are not careful, it could lead to a regressive movement.

What was so promising at first to see that happening can lead to a regressive movement if we are not careful. But even if it were the case, ultimately every regression, when it results in a further step forward, eventually human consciousness evolves, not in a straight upward line, but in cycles, regressive cycles and step forward, step back, forward, back. It's a great, huge subject, but ultimately comes down to a very simple foundation.

It is stay conscious. And so that you are a force for good in this world and continue to realize that your state of consciousness is the primordial reality. Everything comes out of that.

There was a 19th or 18th century French philosopher who said, every nation has the government it deserves. Interesting saying. So what that means, the way I see it, is whatever nation has the government, it's not only the government, all the institutions and so on that are created by this particular nation, it has the government it deserves, which means there's a collective consciousness produces the external structures.

So if the collective consciousness is deeply trapped in egoic, collective ego, it creates structures that reflect the ego, the collective ego. And if there's some awakening in the collective, then the tractors will become transformed. Either they dissolve because they people realize they don't function anymore, or they, whatever happens to them, people take action in order to say, we don't want that anymore.

But there's a deep truth in saying that every nation has a government you have to think, oh, what do we have? And it's not just the government, it's other institutions too. So this again, what I said at the beginning, no human being can manifest beyond their level of consciousness, whatever action they manifest is a reflection of their level of consciousness that applies to the collective also.

So there is a change in the collective here. So let's, I feel there's a good chance that it will lead to a change in the externals, because more and more humans are awakening. I sometimes get the wrong impression, because most people that I'm in contact with are awakening.

So sometimes when I turn on the, well, not look at the news, and I say, oh, no, this is so many are not awakening yet. I'm sometimes shocked. All the people I'm in contact with all seem to be awakening.

Slightly distorted view, but I do know that more and more people are in the process of awakening. Now, the important thing is it's not to confuse the dysfunction that many humans still manifest, egoic dysfunction, to recognize it as egoic dysfunction, but not to confuse that with who these human beings ultimately are. Because if you confuse that, that which the dysfunction, which is just, these humans are manifestation of a particular stage in the evolution of consciousness on the planet.

And they are not yet at a very advanced stage in the evolution of consciousness on the planet. So what they manifest is the egoic part, the egoic phase of the evolution of consciousness on the planet. These are patterns that operate in these humans.

The danger is, and the fallacy is to take that to be the ultimate identity of these humans and not recognize that these humans are in the grip of unconsciousness or of egoic dysfunction. That's important because, and that's all expressed, for example, in Jesus on the cross, the final words, forgive them for they know not what they do. If they had, if he had spoken in the present age, he probably would have said, forgive them for they are completely unconscious.

Now forgive them means, the way I interpret it, do not confuse their unconsciousness with who they actually are in the essence of their being. Because if you confuse that, you create enemies. And this means the moment you do that, you get trapped in egoic unconsciousness yourself.

So the forgiveness is to look beyond, to recognize it for what it is. It's like, one could almost say they are ill. It's a mental illness.

There's a huge amount of mental illness still in human beings, in the collective. And yes, okay, if a mentally ill person comes running towards you to kill you, you might have to do something. Obviously you would take action in those extreme cases, yes.

But the important thing is not to confuse the unconscious patterns that operate in those humans, not to construct an identity for them out of that. That is also, by the way, you can also do it for yourself because sometimes people come and say, I've often heard people say, I've done something very bad in the past. When I was young, I did this or that.

And I feel I just have this terrible burden of guilt in myself and I can't get rid of it. And again, my answer is, at that time, these patterns operated in you. You were less, you were not conscious at that time.

Now you can see that what you did was bad. But if you had seen it then, you wouldn't have done it, but you were unconscious then. So sometimes you have to forgive yourself when you did something.

Sometimes it's parents, they say how I brought up my children was, I can see now why I was so unconscious when I had my children, what have I done? But again, not to make that into your identity and say that I am this bad person. No, there was unconsciousness in me that operated because I cannot, I'm never separate from the totality of humanity.

And humanity is an evolving organism. Humanity is slowly going through an awakening process. It takes time.

It's accelerating now because in the past it took just small transformations could take a thousand years. But now there is an acceleration of awakening, but it's still, we're at a problematic stage. The awakening process is happening.

So just remember not to transform other people's unconsciousness into an identity. And that really is a deeper meaning of forgiveness because then you recognize that's not ultimately who they are. There have been people in prison, some people did the most dreadful, committed the most dreadful crimes.

And I've seen cases of people in prison who completely went through a complete spiritual awakening, having had this past of very, very dreadful crimes. And there was a complete awakening suddenly, where they, their sense of identity completely shifted and came from a much deeper place. And they recognized their past self was like somebody else.

And they awakened somebody else that wasn't, that was me. Can't even, it wasn't, it was certain patterns operating using me. One could, you could look at the ego almost as a, as an entity, yes, an entity that inhabits you.

And it doesn't want to go away. It wants to strengthen itself. It can use anything to strengthen you.

And racism is a great, oh yeah, I'll be a racist. That's to feel stronger in my fictitious sense of self. So again, important thing, transcendence refers to the egoic unconsciousness and the awakening.

It does not mean that you cannot take action, but be careful so that you stay conscious while you act, which means not be taken over by some dark, reactive mode that then operates through you. And then you, that you notice, you can notice this when you see a particular thing, the enemies, you need to attack these enemies, the enemies. Jesus said, love your enemies.

That might be going a bit too far for many people, but there's a, there's a deeper meaning behind that. If you see that in isolation, it's hard to say, well, Christians have tried to do that, but not too successfully over 2000 years, but some perhaps managed, but ultimately cause loving your enemies means have no enemies, because if you love your enemy, who is your enemy? But that was, that cannot, that statement, love your enemies can cannot be looked at in isolation.

It was related to discovering the deeper dimension of who you are, which is the kingdom of heaven within you. And when you do that, then you can see every, every human being in their essential, not see, but sense every human being in their essential identity. And then you, you don't have enemies anymore, but you can still see, yes, he or she, or they are in the grip of egoic unconsciousness.

They are crazy, ultimately. For a long time, I've been saying, I often say normal means crazy. If, and if you look at human history, this, you can verify that just read the history of the 20th century and what humans have done to other humans, the millions upon millions killed, not only in warfare, but also in, in killed by their own governments, Holocaust, mass exterminations, Russia, China, Europe.

The most dreadful, this is obviously, and these are normal human perpetrated by so-called normal human beings, not, not criminals or something. Criminals have done relatively little compared to what normal humans in the grip of unconsciousness are capable of doing is nothing compared to what so-called criminals are doing. This is why I often say normal equals, equals insane, but we are awakening.

So there is light at the end of the tunnel. Of course, the light is within you. So the, in the meantime, it's the question of race or the, the problem of race is connected with our, it's an aspect of our awakening, something that we need to overcome.

And it's also something that we're at a crossroads now, as I mentioned earlier, we could go one way towards increasing awareness and increasing transcendence of ego and the undoing of the external structures that reflect racism. Or if the other way would be if the, it could increase the divisions in society and divisiveness. So in other words, unconsciousness could take over again, and that would lead to a regressive period in human evolution.

And there have been already many regressive periods. This is not impossible that this might happen, although there's a good chance it will not happen. I can't predict the future, but even if it were to happen, if we went to a regressive period, even leading to internal conflict, even civil war is not impossible.

If we are not, if we are drawn into unconsciousness, all kinds of even war between nations is still possible. I'm a long-term optimist, as far as human evolution is concerned. I believe even if we did have to go through a regressive period, eventually that also will become part of human awakening.

And ultimately the moment will come and race will become completely unimportant. And that is, we're moving towards that. Some people may still love their race and that's fine because race is to do with your form.

I call it your form identity, your form identity, as opposed to your essence identity. You have the two dimensions. Your form identity is the physical body and your form identity is also the makeup of your mind, mental, emotional field, the conditioning of your mental, emotional field.

This is the person that you are. The person that you are is your body and the conditioned mind. That's your form identity.

And your form identity is not to be totally dismissed. You say, you don't need to say, I'm not my body. I don't want to have anything to do with my body or this all illusion.

That's not quite it. It has its place. Your form identity has its place.

So while your body, let's say, has a particular color, you might even say, I like it. I like that color. It's fine.

But you don't derive your sense of identity from it. It's just something that you honor. You can also honor your cultural traditions, whatever it may be.

If you're African-American, you might honor your ancestors, the suffering of your ancestors, the cultural traditions of your ancestors. And so the suffering of your ancestors have led you to this point of awakening. So do not, do not often say, don't waste your suffering in this life, but also don't waste the suffering of your ancestors.

So it's suffering ultimately brings about awakening of human consciousness for a long time. Suffering is your spiritual teacher for a long time. And a lot of suffering inflicted by humans on other humans, a lot of suffering.

And don't waste the suffering. Use it. Honor that.

You can honor your ancestors and still realize that's part of your form identity. Then there's a timeless being. There's a timeless self, the unconditioned consciousness that is the essence of who you are.

And that's your, ultimately you derive your sense of being, your sense of beingness, your sense of who you are from that dimension. That Buddha called it sunyata, which is translated as emptiness. It just means formless, spacious consciousness.

Emptiness is a traditional term in Buddhism, but it really means formless, spacious consciousness. In Christian terms, Jesus said the kingdom of heaven that is within you, heaven is the vast expanse of the sky. The kingdom is the dimension.

So the kingdom of heaven is a dimension of vast spaciousness. So he's pointing, he's using that analogy to point to an inner reality. Same as the Buddha.

The Buddha said spacious consciousness, which is sunyata, emptiness. Jesus said the kingdom of heaven that is within you, which what is the kingdom of heaven? It's an analogy for an inner dimension of consciousness.

Heaven is pure consciousness, spacious awareness. Like now, this moment, you don't need to think, you don't need to affirm your form identity, but you can sense that within yourself there is an essence that is, we could call presence, we could call awareness, we could call the realization of being, we could call the primordial I am, the I am. And that presence or beingness is an alive, it's alive.

It can't be defined or explained. It has no age, no gender, no color, none of that. But become aware of yourself as an underlying quiet presence.

Your historical self becomes unimportant, but something that's left there is more vital and more essential.

[Speaker 2] (58:05 - 58:18)

This underlying quiet, alert, calm presence, we could call it stillness too, inner stillness.

[Speaker 1] (58:30 - 59:51)

And that you might also notice that your thinking subsides and you don't have to affirm through thinking who you are anymore. And that spacious awareness can be there even in everyday life to little spaces between thoughts, moments of just aware presence, while you listen to somebody, looking at the sky, looking at a tree, a flower, breathing, moments of spacious awareness. And then you use your mind again, and then you're aware again.

And after a while, the awareness remains even while you're using your mind.

[Speaker 2] (1:00:06 - 1:00:35)

So liberating. Thank you so much for your presence, which is also my presence. There's only one presence.

Q and A with Eckhart Tolle TV Part 1

[Speaker 1] (0:22 - 14:19)

We are just becoming comfortable with the present moment, an unusual state of consciousness for still the majority of the population on the planet. Becoming comfortable with the present moment. Sounds very simple and is very simple.

But to the complicated and complicating mind, it's the most difficult thing. Because the mind immediately asks, how do I do that? It equates becoming comfortable with the present moment with some kind of doing.

Not realizing that becoming comfortable with the present moment concerns being, which is prior to any doing and more vitally important. And you can't really reach being, not reach, become aware of being by any kind of doing. It's prior to any doing, the very foundation.

Well, that's a relief. We don't need to do anything. We can just be.

Now to the mind, that's almost meaningless. Or it will immediately ask, what do you mean just be? If I just be, I'll never do anything again.

Of course, that's not the case. Becoming comfortable with the present moment is becoming comfortable with who you are right now. The essence of who you are, not some thought structure that tells you who you are, but something more vital.

The aliveness of who you are, that which underlies any thought structure or any thought movement, that is already there. We can use different pointers to point to that, but it has to be a realization in you now, not a conceptual thing, not based on conceptual understanding, a deeper realization of your own, your very presence here that is prior to thoughts that arise out of that. So we need to be very careful with words.

I say, can you sense the presence that you are, one could say, as a little pointer. And the answer to that then requires no thinking. You can't say, oh, let me think whether I can sense the presence that I am.

Let me think about that. No, can't. Of course, you can't through thinking.

No. It's only for a moment, thinking must come to a stop. There's a cessation in the stream of thinking.

For example, now. In that cessation of the stream of thinking, don't worry, you're going to think again after that. You're not going to abdicate all that your critical abilities and all the accumulated knowledge, it's all going to still be there.

Okay, so that's okay then, you don't have to worry about it. But in that moment of cessation of thinking, what is left, like now, I do this because by moving my hands in this way, I'm opening up that space, so to speak, symbolically, or maybe even energetically, who knows. Opening up that space where there's a moment of cessation of thinking and just being, presence, awareness, without content.

And you are still yourself, you have not lost your identity, although you don't remember in that moment, you don't remember your past, or not even your phone number, not even your name or your address. You don't remember it in that moment, and you don't need to to know who you are. You don't need to remember what happened to you when you were a little child, or what happened to you in your last marriage to tell you who you are.

So there's an essence of identity here that is not based on past or anything that happened to you in the past, any story in your mind, because the memory, your past consists of stories in the mind, and perhaps some emotional reactions to the stories in the mind. And yet that's not the, where does the sense of the preciousness of who you are, that the thing that nobody wants to lose, there's a deep, some kind of deep realization that there's something precious that I am, and that's, people think, I'm going to lose that, I'm going to lose my life. But of course, you can't lose your life because you are life.

It's only because the mind has created a duality between life and me that you think you can lose your life. Here's me, and I have a life. No, because without life, who is there?

There can't be anybody without life. You are life. It's a mind-created duality that creates a lot of fear and misperception.

I am life. So can you sense the life that you are prior to anything that can form, any thought movement prior to that, to the life? I am, that's the mystical I am.

Beingness, presence, awareness, consciousness, these are just pointers to it. And it's joyful to know yourself as that, rather than the problematic personality that, of course, we also all still carry around with us. Everybody carries around a problematic personality and life situation.

But that is not the essence of who you are. If that obscures the essence of who you are, then you're lost in the world, in your mind, which is the world, because you only know the world through the mind. It's quite liberating.

You're not that which you carry around with you in your mind, or even in your emotional field. Prior to that, there's something more vital. I am, presence, the light of consciousness itself, which is ultimately divine, although I try to avoid too much of that terminology, but it is.

So here we are, here to realize that, right now. So simple, we don't need to do anything to be who we are. I need, let's put it in the first person, I don't need to do anything to be who I am.

So there is already a fullness there, and you don't need to even be deserving to be who you are, or do this or that. There is already the fullness of being there, here, there. And the rest is the play of form, playing around with creating forms, moving about the world, enjoying it.

So fearfully, quite a few people have been asking whether the world is coming to an end in a couple of years or so, 2012. Now, I have a little message for the future. The future, which doesn't exist, except as the present moment.

So here's the message, it's for the person who is watching us here, a recording of this in the year 2013. And that person who is watching this in the present moment, of course, it's not the future at all, because there is no future, ever, as an experience, you can't experience the future. So here's, hello, 2013, you already know that the world didn't end, right?

Okay. Or perhaps all the recordings are going to dissolve in the year 2012. I don't often make predictions for the future for the simple reason that in ultimate terms, there is no future.

Only in conventional terms, there is a level. So we can all, just to exemplify what I've just said, in ultimate terms, there is no future, in conventional terms, there is a future, you can verify that for yourself. In conventional terms, we are here for a certain period of time, and then we are going to walk out of here and take a break, have a cup of tea.

So that's going to happen. It looks like the future, that's conventional reality. In ultimate terms, you will never experience what I just described as the future.

The only way you can experience what I just described, spending some time here and then walking out of here and taking a cup of tea, you can only experience that in the present moment, never as the future. There is no such thing as experiencing the future. It's never, it's never, future is never here.

It's only ever in the mind. So that's just so that there's no, we don't need to philosophize about that because it's so immediately obvious that there is, in ultimate terms, no future. Because otherwise, you could actually say, oh, here it is.

This applies to the past too, but let's not go there now.

[Speaker 11] (14:20 - 14:21)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (14:25 - 15:04)

So nevertheless, I'll make a prediction now. Conventional reality prediction about the end of the world. Everybody who is on this planet alive now, billions of people, everybody, is going to be wiped out within the next 80 or 90 years.

[Speaker 11] (15:08 - 15:09)

Everybody.

[Speaker 1] (15:12 - 1:06:08)

It's a dreadful thing. Complete extermination of all humans who are on this planet now within a few years, ultimately. Let's be generous and say, okay, 90.

Well, then maybe a few little children make it to 100 years from now, but that's it. Hmm. Oh, well, the mind says, yes, but there will be others who are born.

Tomorrow's people will be born and they will still be around a day later. Well, that's true, but again, talking in conventional terms, that doesn't help you, does it? It's just a comforting thought in your head.

There'll be others after me. Okay, big deal, but you'll be gone and everybody else wiped off the planet, gone through some dreadful disease. And it's called death.

And associated with it, old age, sickness, accidents. Wow. So that's the end of the world, as far as you are concerned.

It's not that dreadful, is it? I saw a science fiction film some years ago, but it might have been Star Trek. I'm not sure what it was.

There was a time traveler and the time traveler arrived from the so-called future, arrived in present day somewhere on the planet. In order to witness it, they found out, they met him and they realized he came from the future. And then he was explaining reluctantly, he gave them the reason why he had arrived from the future and he had arrived to witness some kind of disaster that was going to happen in a couple of days or so that would kill millions of people.

And he was there just as an interested observer, because there were historical records in the future about this disaster that killed millions of people. And they said, well, maybe we can prevent it. They talked, said to him, we have to do something.

And he said, no, there's no way you can prevent it. He said, and they asked him, don't you want to do something about it? He said, no, because you're all dead already.

To him, because he came from another time period, so to speak, everybody who was here had already died a long time ago. He was visiting the past. Why am I telling that story?

Because the life of form is so short-lived, fleeting, ephemeral, and whatever other words I can find in the dictionary, the life of form is so impermanent that it might be a good idea to think of yourself as dead already. I'm basically, there's so little left that I'm basically, that's already, it's already over. Is that a negative thing?

Well, perhaps to the mind. But basically, I'm giving you that not as a literal thing, something to believe in. I'm not believe that you're dead already, no, it's just a suggestion of an inner an attitude to life, which it's a relinquishment of attachment to the forms of life, including the physical form of the body and whatever other forms you experience around you as your life.

When you feel yourself that I'm basically, it's so short, this life, I'm basically, it doesn't really matter that much what happens here. You detach from the forms and there comes a liberation when you're dead already. For example, one way of being dead already is not to judge what happens, because if you're dead already, you don't need to judge what happens.

And that's a great liberation. You're here, okay, I'm dead already, it doesn't matter. You don't judge what happens, and with not judging what happens, something in you dies.

What is it that dies? The one that judges. The personality part of you that lives through reaction and judgment, that wants to keep itself alive, that wants to continuously assert itself as me, I'm still here alive.

And the more you react against something, the more you feel yourself as your form identity, psychological form, even physical form. Sometimes when people are very reactive, you can see how they emphasize even their physical presence in an argument or whatever. Or when they get angry, this is where the old TV series, The Incredible Hulk, is based on that.

You get angry, your form gets inflated. And some people would love that. This is why they love watching The Incredible Hulk.

They're even now still replaying it on TV. This person, when he gets angry, he gets huge. And he can, very powerful.

Oh, everybody wants that. So there's an egoic need to emphasize your form identity, physical form, but more importantly, psychological, the psychological form of me. So when you can be reactive about complaining about this or that, looking for something, a critical thing, disagreeing and identifying with your mental positions, then you strengthen the psychological form of the me.

That basically means you're definitely not dead. You want to emphasize that you are here as the form. And the more you emphasize your form, in ancient Chinese Taoist philosophy, I think they have the image of the mountain and the image of the valley.

Now, most people want to be mountains. And that is, you emphasize your form identity. And the more you emphasize your form identity, your psychological form identity, the me, the more you lose touch with your essence identity, that which is beyond form, that which is formless, that which we could call the valley, the depths of who you are, beyond the personality, the little personality.

Even the big personalities, the VIP personalities are really all little me's, just inflating, being inflated for a little while until they are wiped off the planet sometime between now and 90 years time. All with a little pinprick, they all get deflated by death. Choo, choo, choo.

What I'm saying is threatening to the form identity, but it's comforting and something else within you, ah, it actually feels liberating. It's the liberation from form identity. And that's a wonderful thing.

And so, when I say you're already dead, or you can go through life as if you were already dead, all that means is you can be here as a deeper presence than just the defined presence of the personality and the mind, the egoic self. There can be a depth to who you are. So, that which dies is the form, because only a form can dissolve.

The form dies. Death is the form dissolving. So, this is here to be experienced as an actual experience.

What does it, can you experiment with that in daily life and go through somebody, go through life as someone who is already dead? And this is just a way of putting it. Non-judgment of the present moment, that's all, just the present moment, just let it be, let it be as it is, because it is already.

Then you don't emphasize, if you don't react against it, you don't emphasize the me, you become the valley, deep. So, through relinquishment of reactivity, you become what you already are, which is deep, but you didn't know it. Depth arises, and that depth is more than just depth, it's just a word.

There's intelligence there, there's aliveness there, there's wisdom. Out of that depth, life arises. Forms can arise out of that depth.

You become a different entity when you access the dimension of depth in you. Now, the entire world still, whatever you watch on TV, you very hardly ever hear of that. Maybe very late at night, at two o'clock, they might put something on, or probably not.

When that gets activated, you become a different entity, you embody a different, completely different energy here. You become connected with something that is deeper than, it's your own depth, and it goes beyond what is yours. You connect with the very depth of life itself.

And, of course, that is a life that is eternal. It's not the forms of life, because you no longer need to emphasize the form of me. Then you can begin to sense that which is beyond form in you, and it is peaceful, it is powerful.

Then that gives you, that substitutes, I may talk some other time about, often people ask about self-esteem, and I may talk about that some other time. But that becomes what, in conventional reality, is called self-esteem, which is, in conventional reality, self-esteem means you compare yourself to others mentally, and you're not that bad. There are many who are worse than you.

That's the basis for self-esteem, is you have to compare yourself. I'm actually quite good at that and better than most, so that gives you yourself. Nothing wrong with that, it's conventional reality.

I'm not saying, and I certainly wouldn't tell a child who suddenly was able to do something and is proud of doing that, say, don't do that. No, that's all fine. But at some point, we graduate, and we go beyond that conventional reality where we no longer need to derive our sense of value or worthiness from the fact that we, in some areas, are better than others, or others are worse off than we are, or we have achieved more than others, because that always comes in.

On that level, to have self-esteem, you need to compare yourself, and you need others who are less than you. That's fine. It's a temporary thing.

Eventually, humans are meant to go beyond that and to arrive at a place of value or worthiness that is infinitely deeper than anything that self-esteem, in conventional terms, could give you. But it is not based on comparison. It is not based on being better than somebody else and others being worse than you.

It comes out of a non-conceptual place. It is the preciousness and the power of life itself, of which you, as this physical body, are only just a temporary expression, a temporary manifestation. But that which underlies the temporary manifestation is eternal.

It is the one. It is life itself. The one becomes the many, or seems to become the many, in this reality.

Without but remaining at the core of each being as the one. You are that. You can then sense how precious you are.

Instead of self-esteem, I don't know whether I would still call it self-esteem. We probably need a different word for this now. Whatever.

I said precious, so why not say preciousness at the core? There was a movie recently about precious. I haven't seen it yet.

It's about this young girl who does not look attractive, but what I believe the movie is about is the covering that although the external side may not be attractive, there is a preciousness in her. Maybe her name is precious, but really what it points to, I believe, is the preciousness in all that is hiding in each form. So to sense that, then you don't, once you sense that, you don't need to compare yourself to others to get some sense of uplift or, in some cases, feel downtrodden because you definitely have less money than those people and definitely are not as good as this and then those experts or definitely, whatever, not as glamorous as the people in Magazine and you don't also do not need, as some people live through, fictitious stories in their mind of how great they are. To combat an underlying feeling of insufficiency, they have to say, I'm the unrecognized genius.

I'm so great I've never created anything because I'm beyond all that. I'm far greater than any genius who ever lived. You could do that as a story to combat an underlying feeling of not being good enough and then you will attack everybody else.

Whatever it is, all that is based on mind movement and even if it has a basis in reality, maybe you are the greatest musician in the world or whatever, all you are, but if you are truly a creative being, then it is more likely that you will have humility about it because you realize you didn't create it, not you as the person created it, it was given to you. You became an instrument for that. It arose out of the depths of your being and then took form and you know full well that you cannot say, I did that, because the moment you said, I did that, it would lead to a blockage because you emphasize the former identity.

You can only then continue to be creative by being in touch with that, not emphasizing the former. In some artists and other creative people, there is a fight between former identity trying to take credit and then the creative impulse or the creative moment in which that is relinquished and then the creation comes through. Some creative people are schizophrenic almost between the egoic identity wanting to take credit and then again the other, the power coming through them and some people get destroyed by the conflict between the two.

It doesn't have to be like that. Some creative people remain humble. A great example is Albert Einstein who just was the most simple person, humble person.

He didn't identify with what he created. He didn't think, even think of himself as so great. He said it's absurd what people think of me.

It has no basis in reality and he said things, I'm just slower than others so I take more time dwelling on these questions and he was able to go into stillness, go for long walks, not a stressed-out researcher. Okay, we have to meet these deadlines now. No, he was, he had a boring job in the patent office and so because he had a boring job, he had no deadlines, he was able just to, and then in his spare time he went for walks and then it came.

Oh, it came to him. So the end of the world then is something really not that bad. It's something that can happen within you.

Let the end of the world be inside you, then you don't need to fear the end of the world out there. And if one more people live as if they were dead already, which means not living through ego anymore, not living through attachment to form anymore, then actually, paradoxically, the world is going to improve because it'll reflect your state of consciousness. Now you may know that there've always been movements, millennial movements or whatever they're called, that predicted the end of the world and whenever there's something on television about predictions about the end of the world, many people watch it or books that are published continuously about the end of the world.

People, for some reason, people love that. There's fear but there's more than fear. There's something draws them to the end of the world.

They want to know more. Oh, when is it going to happen? There is, why is that?

You can perhaps even observe it in yourself sometimes when you see on TV at 10 o'clock they're going to talk about the end of the world that had been predicted for a long time. Okay, let's watch that. Why?

What is it? There is something inside humans that actually longs for that. There's another side that fears it.

But there's one side that loves to hear about it once. When is it coming? Because there is a promise there almost that the forms, what is the forms that seem to be so limiting in your life, all the problems from the end of the world, there's no more IRS.

That's one thing that happens, part of the end. Wow. Wall Street, gone.

Stock market, gone. Everything, all that, your mortgage, no longer relevant. Your battles in your office, dissolve.

All the problems with your wife or husband, dissolve. All the problematic things in the world of form, dissolve. All that which people regard as a limitation on them because in everybody's life, everybody has a life situation, has certain circumstances surrounding them that are perceived as limiting.

You can in some areas of your life temporarily open up certain perceived limitations so that your life expands. But even if your life expands in this or that area, that expansion also, if you go then, if you flow into that expansion, you will come up suddenly against a new set of limitations that are part of that expansion. If you become wealthy, then okay, that brings expansion into your life and then it brings concern and worry about your investments, especially if they are in certain derivatives.

The long and the short and all that, whatever. Then the concern comes in, there's a limitation. Oh my God.

Or you become famous and then that restricts your anonymity. You can't move freely anymore. People look at you all the time.

I didn't want that. I wanted expansion. Well, you got expansion and that expansion gave you a new limitation.

Or you make so much money, you can satisfy any desire almost immediately, any physical sensory pleasure. You can go anywhere. Okay, I want to get away from here.

Okay, let's get on your own little jet or big jet and you go off the next day, free again, another place, another island. And then you sit there and a few more days, you see there are also certain things that are not quite right. It's a little bit too hot and the air conditioning isn't working.

Probably the mosquitoes are biting. Okay, we need to get somewhere else. Everywhere you go, eventually you find, even on the beach, after a few weeks or months, you find that paradise on the beach becomes a limitation because it's not interesting enough anymore.

You become dumb. You become a beach bum and you thought it was freedom. Every day, the eye in the sun, I made it.

And then after a few weeks, you kind of know it's a limitation again. So you cannot escape limitations in the world of form. I'm not saying you shouldn't make an effort to expand your life.

That's part of the play of form. It's beautiful. But do not believe that you can achieve realization of who you are or freedom through that sense of the rootedness in being, true peace, alive peace, not the dead peace.

You can't get there through the world of form. So where limitations can only be transcended internally, ultimately. You can play around with otherwise.

It's beautiful to play around, but internally, transcendence is possible. And some people had to encounter the most severe limitations on their lives through physical disability, complete loss, had to encounter whatever in whatever area, severe limitations on their lives, prison cell, to realize that there is a freedom within where limitations can be transcended through non-judgment of the present moment, non-reaction. Reaction is unconscious response, yes.

Reaction is against. Through bringing that openness, the yes to what is, the internal yes, not necessarily a verbal yes, but as in the inner attitude of being one with the present moment, that opens up in you that which is beyond form and there you transcend limitations and there's freedom. And that's what being dead means.

Dead to the world. It's not a negative thing at all. You are much more alive when you're dead.

Much more alive. And you are much more powerful when you are a valley than when you are a mountain. The mountain aspect of you, by mountain we mean the form identity, of course you have that for a while anyway.

You don't have to worry about that. Yes, you're still, you have a form. Okay.

Be the valley while you are walking around as if you were a mountain. And that's peace. That's inner peace.

You walk around this world, which is not peaceful, as an energy field of peace. Not the peace that has abdicated consciousness and said, okay, I'm going to go back into semi-consciousness, desensitize myself, and go back into the vegetative realm and be peaceful in that way. There could be an escape also from the world of form.

I'm at peace now. Peace. That's the state you can also encounter just before you go to sleep in that last few moments.

Something pulls you, something very sweet that we call tiredness. Something very tiredness is something, we think we know what it is because we have a name for it and it's so common, but there's something very, what is that? And you say, I'm tired.

It means there's a pull. You're being pulled from within. That pull gets stronger and stronger.

And that pull can get so strong that you'd rather give up your life than resist it. People who get lost in the wilderness, they will lie down in the snow knowing that they're never going to wake up again, but the pull becomes so strong. Now, in conventional terms, we say they are so tired they have to go to sleep.

But what is tiredness? It becomes so sweet wanting to go there. You can tonight have a look, have a feel to stay conscious and feel the pull, how sweet it is to go into sleep.

Just as you enter sleep, feel the sweetness of sleep. And there are no problems there. Now, am I saying that's where we are going?

No, but it's one way you're going below thought to the one. Our destiny is to go beyond thought and then reach the one consciously. Reach it, realizing that you are it, but consciously.

So the sweetness of being is there when you go into sleep. It's so beautiful. After a long day, you lie in bed and go, ah, no more problems.

You're going below thinking into that beautiful sweetness of being. And here the evolutionary impulse of the universe is to encounter that consciously, to be one with that consciously, which is the dead state. Because when you go into dreamless sleep, you're virtually dead.

You don't exist as a person anymore. Temporarily you unite with the source, and then you come out again. But it is our destiny to consciously unite with the source.

Don't ask me why. I know that it is. It's our destiny to consciously unite with the source of who we are.

And you can only do that if you go around as if you were already dead. Because dead means it's the formless. No more.

Death is just a dissolution of forms, but death ultimately is already life. So that's why we have the old saying, the ancient saying, die before you die. Die before you die.

Or we could, in some traditions, say, find death before death finds you. Because death will find you. And if you find death before death finds you, for example, in Christian terms, Jesus' teaching, you find what he called eternal life.

Now, eternal, of course, means not it goes on and on. It means timeless. If eternal meant it goes on and on, it would become very boring.

It would become a limitation. In heaven, you would be, after a while, you say, I don't want to be in heaven anymore. Maybe there's more going on in hell.

There was a song somebody played to me some years ago by a music band. I don't remember the name. But the title of the song was, heaven, the place where nothing ever happens.

So find death before death finds you. Beautiful. Eternal life, of course, the teaching of Jesus has been misunderstood.

First of all, they interpret it as being something that you're going to find it in the future, where after you die, you find eternal life. And then eternal was interpreted as everlasting. There are even some translations of the Bible where it's called everlasting.

But that's not right. Eternal means timeless. So I would substitute, then I would neither call it everlasting nor would I call it eternal anymore.

I would just call it timeless. Timeless. The timeless life that you are.

That's hiding in death. And so as we realize that, more and more humans realize that dimension that is a new evolutionary level that humanity reaches, consciously uniting with that, that means you save the world. The world becomes saved, the world out there.

And it's an added bonus. Oh, that's good. And if it were to collapse, ultimately, there is no death.

Only the forms dissolve. That is the deepest, that's not conventional reality, of course. In conventional reality, death is everywhere.

So we've had the bad news, which is the everybody's going to be wiped out of the planet. Okay. Which ultimately is not the bad news at all.

It's a good news if you realize that how so fleeting it is that why attach yourself to form as if that were all there is. The little problems of my life obscuring the divinity of who you are, the depths of who you are. All the little stuff of your life, allowing it to completely obscure who you are, how vast you are as an expression of the whole, as an expression of the timeless life of consciousness itself, how vast you are.

And you're allowing little marital troubles and stock market concerns to obscure that. Ultimately, you're allowing the mind, because that's what it is. The stock market isn't the problem.

Your thoughts about the stock market are the problem. And the identification of millions of people with their minds have actually created the stock market, but that's another matter. So now it's not that the problem is never out there.

The problem is always your thoughts about it. Out there, you may have a situation that may require action. That's fine.

You look at it, become still for a moment, and you act. Action arises out of intelligent action, out of the stillness, that little space of no thought, a large stillness. You look, okay, and then action, if possible.

If no action is possible, you look and you act. That's what it is. That's power.

You're in touch with power. Not your power, the power. So we do not need to fear the end of the world, nor do we need to long for the end of the world out there.

Get to the end of the world in you. The end of the world is the end of reliance and identification with the mind, because the mind is the world. You don't even know whether there is a world out there, because you can only experience it through your mind.

The mind is the world. Attachment to the world really is attachment to your mind, to your thoughts. And so that is the transition from one state of consciousness to a higher state of consciousness, the relinquishment of that attachment to every thought that arises.

Is there a world out there, or is it just our mind? Maybe it comes to the same thing. Waking up means stepping out of identification with thought.

And that means death. So simple. That's death.

When you don't believe in thoughts anymore, suddenly a spaciousness arises, an awareness arises, which from the point of view of thought is called death. Thought calls it death. Amazing.

Or this we could call the good news. This is one, sometimes the gospels in the New Testament are called the good news. And of course, basically that's what it is.

The basic message was already there, became distorted and obscured and misinterpreted. That's all very well, but it's there. All the ancient teachings point to it.

And now it comes in a new form, because the expression of it is form. That which it points to is formless. And that out of which the expression of it arises is the formless also.

So what is happening here is happening because the universe wants it to happen, life wants this to happen, this awakening. Awakening out of the dream of form, ultimately. Consciousness is awakening.

It's a huge, vast thing. I do not fully understand it, nobody can, but you can be a conscious expression of that movement. And it frees your life from problems.

Oh, that's a little bonus. Oh, and it gives you inner peace. Oh, that's another bonus.

It makes you a loving being. Oh, that's a bonus. You no longer contribute to spreading unhappiness in the world.

Oh, that's good. And you actually, you change the world by being an expression of that shift in consciousness, by allowing it to happen through you. You change the world, because you are all that.

And a few more are not doing it, but realizing it, and the world changes. Now, whether in the meantime, whether the world as we know it now has to collapse substantially first before the new change can manifest and express itself also through new forms remains to be seen. It perhaps depends on how quickly the new consciousness arises in humans.

And if forms need to collapse that were created by the old consciousness, from Soviet communism to Wall Street, just to take two extremes, but basically the same things, the political system, the economic system, social, the institutions and so on, are they going to survive? Some may survive, many probably will not. Is that something to be feared?

No. It's enormous change coming in internally and externally. They go together.

So let's dive just right now. We've been dying already. A little space of just awareness.

I'm pushing aside thought. A bit more. And then you have a space here.

No thought. And then after a while you can just bring it into daily life. Be there as space rather than as a form.

While you look at a tree, while you look at another human being, while you listen to another human being, be there as awareness, not as a person. While you sit in your car at the traffic light, be there as spacious consciousness, alert, alive, present, no past in you, no future in you, just aliveness, power. And miraculous things then happen.

Suddenly you have a creative idea. Or you encounter another human and there's a loving exchange for just a few seconds. But it all comes out of the space.

Making space internally, continuously until it becomes your natural way to live. Space. Initially you might even want to do this when you're at home.

Don't do it out in public in case they take you away. Hold the space like this. Here's the space.

Thoughts separate. Past goes, no past, no future, just this. It's a symbolic gesture and then you don't need it anymore.

And you'll be amazed how many occasions there are when you can be in that state when before you thought, no, I need to work everything out mentally. I need to judge, define, and interpret everything and everybody. What does he really want?

What's his intention? No, you just look. And there's far more intelligence there than any kind of thought movement.

And if the person is a as the mind might have judged him, it simply means you're not going to engage in a business interaction with him, but you still love him. And he says, can you invest in my whatever short derivative, abacus one, two, three, four, whatever it's called. You will say, no, thanks.

It's fine. I won't. And you love him because you feel that underneath all his mind stuff, there is a beautiful being also.

There is being. There's consciousness.

[Speaker 10] (1:08:49 - 1:09:10)

My husband and I have been married 16 years and he's not at all interested in spiritual things. And I feel that my attitude about that is affecting my progress and driving a wedge between us.

[Speaker 3] (1:09:20 - 1:10:04)

Yes, you've answered your own question. It does affect your progress and does drive a wedge. So you have a desire and an idea of that your husband should perhaps enjoy the same things as you do.

So regardless, I don't know your husband, but regardless of whether he is spiritual or not, because somebody could be so-called spiritual and have never seeked in their life. He's spiritual, but has not seeked.

[Speaker 11] (1:10:05 - 1:10:05)

Yeah.

[Speaker 3] (1:10:07 - 1:10:29)

We all are spiritual. That is our being. That's our beingness.

That's who we are first most. So your idea, what is your idea and your desire that your husband shall, what, communicate in the same sort of words as you?

[Speaker 10] (1:10:30 - 1:10:59)

That he would like to listen to Eckhart and read the same books and talk about it. And he has no desire to do that. He did listen to Eckhart, a clip on YouTube, The Enormous Power of Yes.

He said, yeah. But he doesn't talk about it. He's not at all interested in talking about God.

He said, if there's a God, great. If there's not, great. I have no interest.

[Speaker 3] (1:11:00 - 1:11:24)

Okay. Let me just turn it to him for just a second here. And what is it that you see in him?

What makes you see in him that he is spiritual? Without having to talk about it. What is it that you see in him that is spiritual?

What is it that he may show or do, or even something that he says or communes with that is spiritual?

[Speaker 10] (1:11:26 - 1:11:33)

Well, a couple of things. One is he's very supportive of me, no matter what I want to do is fine.

[Speaker 3] (1:11:34 - 1:16:25)

He has no criticisms. So he accepts you, accepts you as you are, but you don't accept him as he is. I struggle with that.

Yeah. Yeah. Which is one of the hindrances to your progress.

Yeah. So it's not about him. Yeah.

It's about you and your path, and you're shedding your ideas and desires and begin to then live with the essence of who he is, accepting, allowing him to be as he is. But most importantly, before you can even probably do that, you then need to accept and allow yourself to be who you are. Be the space.

Many people have asked us, asked me, I don't know why they don't dare to ask Eckhart things like this, but they ask me, you know, they go, wow, you must have a wonderful, great relationship with Eckhart. You guys must talk about spiritual things all the time. And I'm like, no, actually, we hardly ever talk about it.

What is there really to talk about being spiritual? That's talk, form. The most important thing is to be the stillness, be the space, and then see what emerges.

It's not that we don't talk about it, but we're not talking about it all the time. When it's necessary, when it comes up, it's there. When it's time to make dinner, it's there.

When it's time to talk about other things, it's there. The relationship that we have with the form of this moment includes your relationship with stillness as primary importance, the primary relationship. So then our loving partners, our husbands, the wives, it's just a secondary sort of factor.

The true marriage is the marriage within, to the God within, to stillness. That's the true union. And when you have come into union with yourself, then you see the union that is just right there in front of you, husband, wife, child, animal, stranger, their essence.

So take a look at all the desires that you have, the expectations, the ideas of what you think may be the perfect relationship, and see that the only relationship you're having is with an idea in your head, instead of the being that's right there in front of you. Thank you. So love is now.

This very moment, what is coming through? What are we expressing? What's going on within?

Whatever is going on within you now is what you are manifesting externally.

[Speaker 1] (1:17:01 - 2:43:55)

Something, perhaps the most precious thing in your life is inner peace. Because no matter what you get in this world, without that, it's not really worth that much. So in any moment or situation, if you can remember that, then you realize that the situation is secondary.

Yes, of course, you have to deal with it if it requires action. But there's always something else that's more fundamental, more vital. Because even if you achieve what you wanted, but through this, the action, you lose inner peace, it's not that helpful anymore, whatever it was that you achieved.

What is it worth? Inner peace goes away, is obscured through mental judgments, concepts that you completely believe in. So it's not something you need to find, it's already in you, that's the amazing thing.

Even in the most seemingly insane person, there is inside, there is the core of inner peace, stillness, aliveness. I can only use pointers, and as I use the pointers, hopefully you go within and see if at this moment, you can realize the reality of what the words point to, otherwise they are only words. Something in you loves that inner peace.

And then there's the ego in everybody, unless it's dissolved already, that wants something else. It's more important, it says. Or it says, you won't find inner peace until you get this or that.

And there's always a postponement. If you listen to the egoic mind, it says, yes, I want peace, but before I can get there, I need this and this and this. Unless this and this and this I get, I can't really fully go into that.

It's just not, can't do it now, not now. First, Jesus talked about that when he said, you get, people get an invitation to a wedding, it's a parable. People get an invitation to a wedding, and they all have another excuse.

One says, well, first I need to deal with some real estate that I have, and when I get that out of the way, I'll come. Somebody else says, first I need to do that, first I need to, there's always, the excuses always start with, first I need to, and one even says, first I need to bury my father. If, and even there, Jesus says, let the dead bury the dead.

Quite a radical statement. What he's saying that, if you haven't found that dimension within yourself, you are as if dead. It doesn't mean it's not there in you, potentially it's still there, but in the meantime, you are as if you were dead.

You're not dead, it's like saying, let's say, to use a deficient comparison, the, let's say you have a billion dollars in a Swiss bank account, but you don't know it, so you are poor, you are as if completely poor, because you have no idea. So you behave like a poor man, you do, and you ask for, please give me a penny, not knowing that there is a vast treasure, and of course, a billion dollars is absurd, nothing compared to that. And the analogy is deficient, but that's okay, all analogies are.

So let me first, let me first, well first I need to think about this, so that it doesn't work. First comes that, and everything else then begins to flow with greater ease. And again, Jesus says, what you thought you needed for your happiness, once you realize that the kingdom of heaven is what you want, it's your first choice, then everything else will be added.

Whatever you thought you needed for your fulfillment and peace, will be added, you don't need it anymore. But you need to choose peace first, which implies you surrender to the present moment, and you step out of the judgments of your mind. In other words, you die, because the false self lives on non-surrender and judgment.

And denial of the present moment, it can't tolerate the present moment. That's why it says first I need to look somewhere else and do something else. So yes, I forgot to mention that you need to die, because that's what it is, but what dies is not, is false anyway.

But as long as the false is mistaken for the real, it's a little bit as if, ooh. And only really if you have, if you're fed up with the suffering that the usual state of consciousness, the egoic state has created for you, then you begin to be ready to say, okay, fed enough. I'm fed up with that suffering.

To the ego, suffering often looks like a positive thing. It's a perverted way of looking at things. Oh, I'm so anxious.

At least I feel alive. I must be alive because I'm anxious. I have enemies, so I must be important.

I have huge problems. I must be an important person with such huge problems, because without my problems, who would I be? These are implied thought movements.

They're not conscious, because the moment you make them conscious, you see their absurdity. I'd like to talk today about something people have been periodically asking me. What do you think about this book?

So I thought I'll bring it along and tell you what I think about it. But not only that, we'll see, because there's no point in talking about something. One has to go deeper into it to know it, knowledge about and true knowing the difference in that.

So people have been asking, what do you think about A Course in Miracles? Well, here it is. It's heavy.

Paper is very thin, like the Bible. And it's about as long as the Bible. Some of you know it well or have gone through it.

Or are still going through it. Some of you have heard of it. Some of you have tried to get into it but didn't like it.

Some of you have never heard of it, perhaps. So it's been around for a few years. Came out in 76.

And it is a self-study course for inner transformation. I'm telling you this just very briefly. You are supposed to study it by yourself.

Some people go to groups too. It's divided into three parts. It's a long text.

The lessons, one per day for one year, 365. And the workbook for teachers, which is relatively short at the end. It's an incredible phenomenon.

It's a book that was channeled. And just the same as with other spiritual writings, only a small percentage of channeled works are actually quite deep. Just as small as anywhere else.

Sometimes people are immediately impressed when something is channeled. In other words, some spirit or presence talks through you. And some people, the moment they say, this is channeled, they say, ah.

Of course, you always have to remember that famous saying, just because they are dead doesn't mean they are smart. So it can be at first very impressive if the person suddenly goes, this is so-and-so speaking. Good afternoon, entities.

And then you can't question anymore. So a small, very small percentage of channeled works go deep. And I believe A Course in Miracles does.

But it certainly is not for everybody. And certainly I'm not telling you, oh, you now have to do the Course. No, you may.

We'll see. But it is not for everybody. Not everybody needs it.

If presence is already transforming your life, then that's where the Course in Miracles wants to get you, basically. So it's already there for you. If presence is already transforming your life, your relationships, the way in which you experience reality, it's already doing that, increasing inner peace, increasing freedom from externals and reactivity towards other people and external conditions.

If you are already experiencing that, then you don't really need it. You may still enjoy reading it, but you don't need it. If you've been following this teaching, and of course something in you has drawn you here, that which is real has recognized the truth and says, ah, yes.

So it gets, and as you are here, something within you responds. So that's wonderful. But if that is lost the moment you start dealing with people and situations, and if that has happened continuously in your life, it's happened to a few people, that there's presence when they are quiet, not disturbed.

It's beautiful. They can access stillness. So that's already a huge breakthrough, huge breakthrough.

You can access stillness when you're not being challenged by anything and your mind subsides for a while, because ultimately you are really only challenged by your mind. It looks like the situation, but it's your mind interpreting the situation that challenges you and takes you out into disturbance. So if you already can access that in moments when you can become still, and beautiful, that's enormous breakthrough.

But it may be that, despite that, you very quickly lose it in this moment you relate to other human beings. And you go into the usual thing, as if you had never heard of any spiritual teaching. And only you can know that, or you can ask the people who know you, if you don't know it, what do you think of me?

Old friends, family members, well, you might not get an objective opinion there. Then I would say try to apply the lessons of the Course in Miracles, because it uses relationships as spiritual practice. That's one of the main focal points of the Course in Miracles, is using the relationships with other humans.

The most difficult challenge in your life, in this lifetime, is other humans' relationship with other humans. There's no doubt that that is the greatest challenge. But it's also, there's no doubt that it is there that the new consciousness needs to come in and change the way in which you relate, so that a different energy, you put out a different energy.

You do not contribute to the madness of the world. So you put out a different energy in relationships. You dissolve conflict.

You are the bringer of peace. And you realize that's your main priority in life. In the terminology of the Course in Miracles, you become a teacher of God.

Teacher doesn't mean necessarily that you explain something. No, you live it. And by living it, you teach it.

So then that might be a helpful thing to apply the lessons every day, one, because the lessons are meant to be applied in everyday situations in relationships. I'll give you later one or two examples or three of the lessons and what they can do. Applying the teaching in everyday life.

And that is a reflection. If you want to know where you're at in your spiritual growth, which is not a good term, well, spiritual growth is probably fine. Personal shrinkage, spiritual growth.

So if you want to know where you're at in your personal shrinkage and the corresponding spiritual growth, St. Paul, was it St. Paul? He talked about that. He says, I must diminish and Christ in me must grow.

So something the light shines, begins to shine through. So the criterion, so sometimes not easy to know where are you at in your spiritual growth and personal shrinkage is to look at all the people that you relate with and both people you know intimately and people, other people. Let's give you a reflection.

And the absence or lack of conflict, your ability to dissolve conflict as it approaches you in the form, inevitably not of cats and dogs, they are okay. Even a barking dog, that's not a big challenge. But a human, a barking human, and as that comes towards you, how your ability not to react in the terms of the cause of miracles, one would say to forgive, to look through the error in the other, to look through the ego and it's there everywhere, to look and forgive.

Not to equate somebody's egoic behavior with who they are, that's forgiveness. In the terms of causing miracles, you say if it's not love that comes to you from another human, it's a call for healing and help. So it reinterprets how you would usually interpret when somebody is offensive or whatever.

You reinterpret that, to change it, it causes miracles to change your perceptions. You reinterpret it and you realize that this mind, let's say obnoxious person, it really is a call for healing and help because that person is out of touch with the reality of who he or she is. Doesn't know the oneness of all life.

So that's a helpful thing and then there are many other lessons to apply to situations with other humans in daily life, especially your ability to heal situations. One stumbling block for many and for some the stumbling block will be so huge that they cannot do a course in miracles, even those who might need it, but there are many, many other ways you can apply presence. The terminology it uses is limited, but that's form.

Anything in form has its limitations. So the course in miracles has certain limitations and they regard the terminology, which is old fashioned Christian terminology. That's one.

Some for some people that's fine. They actually love because the terms that had become perhaps to some extent lifeless or meaningless to them, suddenly they see that there is a deeper meaning to all those terms like Holy Spirit or atonement, which should be pronounced at-one-ment and so on. So for some people, that's a nice thing.

They can see that what they perhaps were brought up as when they were a child, there's a deeper dimension to those terms. For others, they say, I can't stand it. I can't stand that fact that God is a he and God is the father.

What about the mother? That's the limitation of the course in miracles. It's the terminology.

If you can look beyond it and see what it points to is there's nothing to do with male or female. But the terminology has that limitation. If you can look beyond it, fine.

It's no longer a barrier. If you continuously feel an inner every time that says father, God, or he, female pronoun is never used once in the whole course. There's no she.

But that doesn't mean that it excludes women. It just includes. So it's only you can find out for yourself whether that is a barrier for you.

And if it's too much of a barrier, if you cannot look beyond it, forget it. It's fine. Even course in miracles wouldn't say that you have to study a course in miracles.

It says, no, this is just one of many forms that the universal curriculum takes. The universal curriculum is where we are all going. But there are many forms of the universal curriculum.

And there is not one form of the universal curriculum that is the right one. There are many, many. And you will be drawn to whatever universal curriculum corresponds to your inner state and what most draws you.

And that's something you do with form. Of course, you want to go through form to reach the formless in yourself. But there are certain forms to which the form that you are drawn more than to others.

And those can more easily take you beyond form. If you try to force yourself into a form of teaching that does not resonate with your inner, then that becomes a great hindrance. Perhaps you were born into a certain form of the universal curriculum which may not correspond to what would be most helpful for you.

And then it would be good to find another. So the universal curriculum, every teaching is a form of that universal curriculum. But the essence of the universal curriculum is to reach the formless within yourself, which is where you and God merge, where you and the source of all life merge, where the little me realizes its true reality, where the little ripple realizes that it is the ocean, but continues to be a ripple for a little while.

But if the ripple, and this is a example taken from the course in the text, if the ripple and the ocean thinks of itself as separate, imagine that, the ripple on the ocean, the world becomes very threatening because the vastness, I'm just, who am I on this little short-lived thing on this vastness and all the other ripples are my enemies, what do they want? And the waves. And if the ripple could realize by going within, I am the ocean.

Temporarily appearing as a ripple. Oh, that's great. Of course, I'm not going to last that long as a ripple, but I'm eternal as the ocean.

What a liberation. Another analogy apart from the ripple, gives the analogy of the ray of sunlight. And if the little ray forgets that it is actually part of the sun, because the light that comes to you from the sun is actually, it's an extension of the sun.

But if the ray forgets that it is an extension of the sun and says, it's little me, doesn't know where it comes from, it doesn't know its source, it just looks around at other rays and says, who are you? I don't like the way you look. But if the ray could find its source, then you can enjoy all the other rays because they're all the same source.

And then you can look at another ray through the source. So you go in and then instead of looking at the other from out here, you look at the other from the point of view of the source and you realize the oneness. So you go, you don't look like that, that's two, me and you.

You go there, where we are both come from the same source and you look from there and say, oh, we look like two, but we're actually one. That's the, that's the realization of oneness, the greatest liberation there is. And really that's, again, what any, any spiritual teaching is designed to do for you is to take you to that realization of oneness, which has nothing to do with thinking.

Thinking creates duality. You have to go beyond thinking to realize oneness. Cause and Miracles is a teaching of oneness as are all, but it does that in a very strange way.

Because it, the most people who study it, they come from a belief in duality. And so the Cause and Miracles uses the language of duality to gradually take you to oneness. It doesn't immediately use the language of oneness.

So it talks about God the Father is with you. Of course, ultimately God the Father and you are one. And God the Father is also God the Mother.

So, but it takes you by the hand to take you where you are and then gradually take you into the realization of oneness, which is where the words don't, are not important anymore. And when you get to the third part of the workbook with the lessons, it says, words are beginning to be less and less important from now on. And the lessons get shorter and shorter.

And it says, the words are only the beginning. What comes after the words, the state you enter after the words is what matters. So it takes you gradually into oneness.

But it can be at first confusing because the language is the language of duality, which you still hear in most churches. There are, there is another, there are some other Christian teachings that express duality more directly, like Joel Goldsmith, for example. He is a Christian version of what in India is called Advaita, non-duality, which is the deepest truth of Hinduism beyond all mythology.

Advaita means oneness or non, not two, non-duality. Joel Goldsmith is a Christian version of that. And ultimately, Causing Miracles is also a Christian version of that.

But Causing Miracles does not express oneness as directly. It just takes you there. Now, you might think this was channeled, that probably was channeled to some monk in a remote mountain monastery in the cell or nun.

And the strangest thing about it is that it was written in New York City. And it was not written by a priest or nun or monk. It was written by a woman who was a medical, a professor of medical psychology at Columbia University.

And she said of herself, perhaps the most unlikely person spirit could have chosen. In her opinion, she was. She didn't understand the cause very well.

And certainly, as she herself said, she couldn't live it. She was just the medium through which it came. And at one point, she asked the voice that she heard.

It started one day, shortly after her colleague at the university, they were constantly fighting. He, she and her colleague and all the other people, it is quite normal in most institutions, constantly bickering and fighting and complaining about each other and intrigues and fighting for position and so on. And her colleague, another professor of medical psychology said to her one day, there must be another way.

And a little bit later, something started inside her and she realized perhaps this is the answer. First, she had visions, strange visions. In one, she saw herself, it was a kind of dream.

She saw an ancient chest and she went in a cave and she opened this ancient chest and out of it, she took an old parchment and she started to unroll because the parchment has rolls left and right. She started to unroll it to see what, and she saw writing on the left, but she couldn't quite decipher it and writing on the right more and more. And the central panel was blank and then she heard the voice that later started to dictate the cause to her.

And the voice said, if you read what's on the left, you will know the past. If you read what is on the right, you will know the future. And then she looked again at the central panel and there just had two words that said, God is.

And then she rolled it back to where just the central panel was visible. And she said, I'm not interested in the past or future. This is all I want.

This is what I want. God is. And the voice said, congratulations, you've made it this time.

This is all I want. Just this. That was what the choice was, present moment, I don't want to know past and future.

And she had a few more visions and then one day she heard a voice coming inside her which said, this is a course in miracles. Please take notes. And it started with a summary of the whole course and she was writing and said, I'm going insane.

I'm going insane. She was an atheist. I'm going mad.

But she had to, compulsion was strong, she had to write. And then it came the summary before the whole course started, the summary of the whole course, which by the way, if you understand it, that's it, you can go home. Nothing real can be threatened.

Nothing unreal exists herein lies the peace of God. Of course she didn't understand it, but we do. Do we?

Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God.

A few more things came through and the next morning she went to her office at Columbia University and talked to her colleague Bill and said, I'm going mad. I'm going insane. This is what's happened to me.

And he said, okay, calm down. Let's see what you've written and then we'll decide if you're mad or not. And she showed it to him and said, this doesn't look mad.

I would do a bit more and that's how it started. And then every morning she would bring it into her office. Almost every day the dictation came.

She would go into her office, lock the door. He would come in, they would lock the door because of course they couldn't tell anybody else. And they went through it and it took seven years.

And sometimes when she got interrupted in the middle of a sentence and a day or two or three days later she picked up the pen again, the voice would just complete the sentence immediately. So it's just quite a phenomenon. I love it.

I actually realized yesterday when I picked it up because it came to me that I had read somebody else had asked what do you think about it? So it came to me that I wanted to talk about it today. I hadn't actually opened it for several years.

And it was lovely to open it again. And many, many years ago for when I lived in England still for a while I used the course shortly after I discovered it I used it as a medium through which to teach. And so I would have little groups and workshops and sometimes spent a whole day on just one lesson.

Read a lesson and talk about it. And some people, even people who didn't like the Course in Miracles, they came and said, now we understand it. So it did help to have some to express it in somewhat different words.

I'd like to give you just a taste of and as we do that see if we can get to the very essence of it as we are here because what's the point otherwise? Can we get to the very essence of the Course in Miracles here not in 365 days from now but here? Okay, let's see.

Let's start with lesson one and if we can do lesson one completely you will have done the entire course. Any lesson, if you can do it completely it doesn't say that here but I'm telling you if you can do it completely which means live it that's the entire Course in Miracles. You don't need to pick it up again.

And lesson one is a little weird. Well, some of the others are too. By the way, there is the writing is various in power and intensity to some extent but there are many very powerful and beautiful passages of great spiritual power and beauty in the text.

Some extraordinary passages. Lesson one. Every lesson has a title.

The title of this lesson is always just one sentence. Nothing I see in this room means anything. And then what you're supposed to do is look slowly around you, practice applying this idea very specifically to whatever you see.

This table doesn't mean anything. This glass doesn't mean anything. This chair, this carpet doesn't mean anything.

This hand doesn't mean anything. This foot doesn't mean anything. This flower doesn't mean anything.

Then look further away. It says apply to a wider range. That door doesn't mean anything.

That light doesn't mean anything. Apply to a wider range. Apply to anything you see.

Says before, don't try to understand what this is all about. Well, I'll tell you what this is all about but I'm sure you know it. Do it no more than, this is the beginning, no more than twice a day, preferably morning and evening.

Not more than a minute or so. This is for beginners. Not more than a minute or so.

A comfortable sense of leisure is essential as you do it. Use it indiscriminately. Don't exclude anything specific.

So what is the purpose in that? The purpose, this doesn't mean anything. The purpose is to wipe the blackboard clean on which the blackboard that's full of scribbles, interpretations, projections, opinions, judgments, thoughts, imagine a blackboard full of scribbles.

So you take this lesson and some of the subsequent lessons, you take a sponge or whatever you do and you begin to wipe. It's a voluntary relinquishing of all mental judgments and concepts. All the meaning, lesson two, gives you a little bit further.

It says, I've given everything I see in this room all the meaning that it has for me. Wiping the blackboard clean. It's also an act of humility because the ego says, I know.

And you're beginning to admit that you don't know and so that something deeper in you can come forth that had been obscured by the one who thought he or she knew. Lesson three says, I do not understand anything I see in this room or wherever you are. So you're letting go of interpretations.

In the next lesson, you do it with your own thoughts. These thoughts do not mean anything. They are like the things I see in this room.

So you're letting go of investment in identification with thoughts. So beautiful early lessons and really, if you can do lesson one completely, so what did I mean by that? Let's try and do it completely.

Nothing I see in this room means anything. Now, if you do that completely, what happens inside you? Your mind has nothing else, nothing more to do.

You stop thinking. Doesn't mean anything, so that's it. There's nothing else to think about.

So if you could do it completely, it would lead to the cessation of thinking and what remains of you if the thinker subsides or dies? What remains of you if the movement of thought subsides? The essence of who you are, the formless.

You could say the Christ or the Buddha nature, whatever terms people have used to describe it, that's what remains. The unconditioned consciousness, the timeless, the eternal, no past, no future. So that if you do this lesson and live it, you're no longer imposing interpretations and everything, there's a clarity of perception as you look at things and humans and a refusal to think, an act of surrender and you become innocent like a little child.

But there's an enormous energy there. In the terms, of course, in miracles, it would mean the power of God in you. Also, of course, you're totally present.

The moment that happens, you're totally present. The Course in Miracles calls it, it is the practice of the power of God in you. This is the practice of the power of God in you.

The present moment, the Course in Miracles calls the holy instant. It has some wonderful passages about the power of the holy instant or the present moment. They are like, they are meditations.

I'll read some very short passages and let's treat it as a deep meditation. Oh, by the way, did you know that the ego wants you dead, but not itself? Oh, did you know that when the Course in Miracles uses the word brother, it includes sister, which really, brother means every other human.

Okay, so we have to look beyond that limitation. Let's do that. So it says, if you believe there is a space between you and your brother, you are insane.

Wow. I'm not going to say anything about that. I'll let you not work it out, but feel the truth of it, because mentally you'll go insane if you start trying to work that out.

Feel the truth of it. Fear is not of the present, but only of the past and future, which do not exist. There is no fear in the present when each instant stands clear and separated from the past without its shadow reaching out into the future.

Each instant is a clean, untarnished birth in which the Son of God, that's you, emerges from the past into the present. This lesson takes no time, for what is time without a past and future? It has taken time to misguide you so completely, but it takes no time at all to be who you are.

Begin to practice, sorry, take this very instant now and think of it as all there is of time. Take this very instant now and think of it as all there is of time. There's nothing, there's only this instant, nothing else, which is the truth.

There's only this instant. Nothing can reach you here out of the past, and it is here that you're completely absolved, completely free and holy without condemnation. From this holy instant where in holiness was born again, you will go forth in time without fear and with no sense of change, no sense of change with time.

You go back, you go into time, but there is a continuous realization of the timeless within yourself, the dimension of formless consciousness itself. In this redeeming instant lies heaven. Start now to practice your little part in separating out the holy instant.

You will receive very specific instructions as you go along. Now, the next sentence is important. I quote it occasionally.

To learn to separate out this single second and to experience it as timeless is to begin to experience yourself as not separate. To learn to separate out this single instant and experience it as timeless is to begin to experience yourself as not separate. So through that intense presence, the delusion of separation also subsides.

And you can then from there look at a different way another human and sense the oneness beyond bodies. And that comes out of the presence. And that's the sword of, as I call it sometimes, the sword of presence cutting through time.

It is only your weakness that will depart from you in this practice, for it is the practice of the power of God in you. All you lose in this practice is your weakness. It is the practice of the power of God in you.

Use it but for one instant and you will never deny it again. God knows you now. He remembers nothing, having always known you exactly as he knows you now.

This still uses the language of duality, but it gradually takes you into the realization that you and God are one. The holy instant refers to the moment and reflects his knowing by bringing all perception out of the past, thus removing the frame of reference you have built by which to judge your brothers. Once this is gone, the Holy Spirit substitutes his frame of reference for it.

The veil that has been drawn across reality is lifted. Nothing has changed, yet the awareness of changelessness comes swiftly as the veil of time is pushed aside. The veil of time is pushed aside.

This is the primordial spiritual practice, no matter where you go, at the core of any spiritual system is this. Whether you go to Buddhist meditation or wherever, this is the primordial spiritual practice. And to hold that, to hold that intense awareness of now, or awareness of awareness, consciousness of being conscious of consciousness, whatever you want to call it, it transforms everything.

So beautiful meditations in here. You can see how it all comes together. I'm focusing here on this particular aspect, the power of which really is the center of the whole course.

Now, just to give you a taste of two lessons, they kind of go together, 33 and 34. You can use it as a little sample if you want to use it for the rest of the day, today, just as a little sample. The title of the lesson is, there's another way of looking at the world.

Today's idea is an attempt to recognize that you can shift your perception of the world in both its outer and inner aspects. Full five minutes should be devoted in the morning and evening applications. The shorter exercise periods should be as frequent as possible.

Specific applications of today's idea should also be made immediately when any situation arises which tempts you to become disturbed. For these applications say, there is another way of looking at this. Any situation where there's even the slightest disturbance or irritation, you use that there is another way of looking at this.

That's all, just that. Remember to apply today's idea the instant you're aware of distress. It may be necessary to take a minute or so to sit quietly and repeat the idea to yourself several times.

Closing your eyes will probably help in this form of application. There is another way of looking at the world. The next lesson on the next day is, I could see peace instead of this.

I could see peace instead of this. Search your mind for fear thoughts, anxiety provoking situations, offending personalities or events or anything else about which you're harboring unloving thoughts. Note them all casually repeating the idea for today slowly as you watch them arise in your mind and let each one go to be replaced by the next.

The shorter applications are to be frequent and made whenever you feel your peace of mind is threatened in any way. If a specific form of temptation arises in your awareness, the exercise should take this form. I could see peace in this situation instead of what I now see in it.

If there's depression, anxiety or worry, use the idea in its original form. I could see peace instead of this. It's a reinterpretation of how you would habitually interpret events and the world.

I could see peace instead of this. So hopefully you'll get one or two disturbances today because otherwise there's nothing to practice with. Now it is possible, of course, that you're already at peace to such an extent that the disturbance does not arise anymore.

Well, that's even better. Then there's no need to practice. The world will always challenge you in the form of people, situations, and ultimately always comes down to your mind.

You're ultimately only challenged by your mind, disturbed by your mind. You're not disturbed by the situation. You're not disturbed by the situation.

You're disturbed by your mind. Really? Yes.

So that's an amazing realization, isn't it? It's so easy to forget because the conditioning is so deep-seated and there's nothing personal in that. It's not your fault if you forget.

If you say that's my fault, that's more illusion. The conditioning is so deep-seated of not realizing that ultimately it is your mind that creates your unhappiness, of anxiety, of fear. So it's not what your mind says it is.

It's your mind. So your mind says, look at there, look at that situation. And you say, no, I'm going to look at you.

No, no, don't look at me. Look at, he did it. Look, I didn't do anything like a little child.

That's what children do, isn't it? No, I didn't. He, my brother did it.

So there's the power of awareness in you and that we are here as we sit here, it grows. Your power of awareness, you just need to be here. It grows as you sit here, even though occasionally your mind will come in and say, I'd rather be somewhere else.

And then it subsides again. The presence grows as you sit here because that's the essence of our gathering, it's presence. In the meantime, a few words and concepts, some of which are helpful and some of which keep your mind from doing harm while you sit here.

But it is an energetic process as we sit here beyond what you listen to with your ears, that's secondary. There's an energetic process at work. It has nothing to do with concepts.

Towards the end of the course, it says, the use of words is almost over now. And that's after 365 days. There's almost a little paradox there because on the one hand, one could say, well, the course gives you time to reach the timeless in yourself.

And that is true, it is a paradox, but it is addressed in the text also. It gives you time on this level here to reach the timeless, but at any moment that realization can be there. So it doesn't say you're not going to get there until you reach the end of the course.

You can get there at the very beginning already, or rather realize that you're already there. It's a very radical thing. The Course in Miracles takes you to the edge, and after that, you jump off.

Now, we have been jumping off already. Takes you to the edge of the mind, trying to understand mentally, letting go of that also. Going into this beautiful state of not knowing, no longer needing to impose judgments on the world.

Going to the state of not knowing. That's where any spiritual teaching comes out of that, not accumulated knowledge. It comes out of that openness.

Any creative act comes out of not knowing. So you need to become comfortable with that state, which is also the state, of course, of not thinking or not looking to thought for some ultimate answer or fulfillment or identity. Really, what I teach is, and what you get to, what the Course aims to take you, is what is the core of all spiritual practice, is the end of compulsive thinking.

Thinking, you can still use it, use thinking if you need it, but it doesn't use you anymore. You are no longer the thinker. Your identity is no longer based in your thought activity.

That's the ego is gone then. I am not the thinker. Yes, thinking happens, but I am not the thinker.

I am the vastness out of which thinking happens and into which it subsides. So go to any other teaching who, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his span of life, I suppose, in one translation. Do not take thought for the moral, for the moral shall take thought for the things of itself.

That's the old translation in Jesus. Do not take thought for the moral. The moral shall take thought for the things of itself.

Only the present moment exists. If the person who was taking notes when Jesus was talking forgot to write down, only the present moment exists. Go to any teacher, Advaita in India.

Some of you are familiar with it. Some have never heard the word. The teaching of non-duality, the teachers of non-duality.

How can you reach the realization of non-duality? By not thinking. That's non-duality.

The moment you start thinking again, you're back in duality. So to realize non-duality, the oneness of all life and your oneness with all life and your oneness with life itself, because all life is all life forms, but life itself is the unmanifested one eternal life, God. To realize your oneness with that, there must be a cessation of birth, continuous birth of forms.

And then there is just the ground out of which the forms come. That's it. That is the realization of oneness.

And only then when you sense that in the depths of who you are, you can look upon the world with love. Until you can sense that, love is an illusion. You may try very hard to be loving.

Okay, I must be loving. I must be really patient with him. But of course you can't hold that for too long.

I've been loving now for two hours and you're still behaving like that. I just can't love anymore. So it's only when you sense that and you can look upon the world of form and realize they're all just temporary expressions of that one that I am.

That's a verbalization, but the knowing is beyond words. And that's peace. That's where you become the true teacher of God to use the terminology of the Course in Miracles, because only then can you teach peace.

And only then can that power flow through you into this world that the Course in Miracles describes as a kind of delusion. A kind of nightmarish dream. A little bit like the matrix.

And deep down, people know that there's something not quite right with what we perceive as the world and the dreadful things. There's been people, when they see this film, The Matrix, there's been some, of course it's not the real truth, there's not computers that are doing it, but machines that are doing it, but there's some underlying truth that we're all walking around in some dreamlike state. This is not it.

That dreamlike state. We need to wake up. And so people get drawn, they got drawn to that movie because there's some core truth there which says you're a dreamwalker and you need to wake up.

And it's wonderful when they saw the city scenes in the film and all these people walking around and then the protagonist is being told that they're all dreaming. Which is not quite true in the sense that it's shown in the film, but in a deeper sense, it is true. So the oneness, the realization of oneness comes with that Advaita, non-duality, which came out of, which is the deepest truth of Hinduism, where Hinduism transcends all the huge mythology that they have, which is interesting as long as you can't realize oneness keeps you busy and you get a few distant pointers to oneness through stories and images.

Nice, very nice. Yeah, but it's not quite, there's a more direct thing there. Advaita is Vedanta, the end of the Vedas.

It means that's going beyond that. It's also beyond concepts. Now, Advaita in Hinduism has become fashionable in the West lately.

Teachers are springing up every day of Advaita, like mushrooms. Now, some are great, but many can't stop thinking. And they're teaching Advaita from the point of view of the thinking mind.

And how to tell the difference, very easy. Go and listen to an Advaita teacher. And if you feel a little bit sick when you leave, then that's not it.

Sick in the stomach. Oh, I feel much worse now than before. They tell you things like, it's all an illusion.

Your problems, what's your problems? Ah, it's an illusion. And then they go back to their wife and say, where the hell is my dinner?

And if you challenge them on that, they say, oh, I don't know. They say, nothing to do with me. That's an illusion too.

Krishnamurti, the whole teaching of Krishnamurti, another beautiful expression of the universal curriculum, one particular form of the universal curriculum. What's he talking about? Can thinking get us to this realization?

Can thinking get us, let's investigate. Can it get us there? And an hour later, no, it can't.

Oh, okay. He practiced non-thinking frequently. Didn't practice, it came kind of naturally.

That's where the teaching came from. So if some of you, we're all in the terms of causing miracles. You are the teacher of God because you are practicing that.

If you become a spiritual teacher in a more formal way, not the Advaita one, well, unless you have that realization, not the mind, the mental teacher, but the true teacher, you may feel that you're never quite ready to teach. If you feel you're now ready to teach, that's probably not it. That's probably the ego.

But if you feel you're not ready to teach and yet something, the situation calls upon you to teach in one way or another, formal or semi-formal or informal, it could be simply somebody asking a question or there's a group of people, little group, whatever it may be. Or somebody says, oh, come and talk to us. Me?

Yes. I have nothing to say. Well, that's good.

Then come and become comfortable with not having anything to say because we don't have anything to say either, but feel uncomfortable with it. But if somebody can become comfortable with not knowing and sit in front of a group and not thinking that I should be speaking now or I should know, but just become comfortable with the state of not knowing, you may find that after a minute or two, you say something. Word suddenly comes.

It might be something very simple. Here we are in the present moment. What does it feel like to be in the present moment?

Let's find out what it feels like. I feel a slight disturbance because I'm sitting here talking to you. I don't, but it's just the same.

I'm constantly becoming present and then words come. The one who is teaching is always the one who is most empty. That's where the power comes through.

And of course, in the West, we are only gradually learning that there are spiritual teachers. Some spiritual teachers traditionally don't speak. They have a different way of teaching.

They teach by being present or still. And just looking at you. That's beautiful too.

Here we have a mixture of words and looking. And who is looking? When I look at you, who is looking, the person or something deeper?

If I'm not thinking when I look at you, then the person isn't looking. Consciousness is coming through. And what is it that you recognize?

Yourself. Something within your response. And you say, oh, it feels so good.

And consciousness recognizes itself. So you're becoming who you are. Yourself beyond the story and your history.

What a dreadful story. Mine is too. It becomes unimportant as far as your identity is concerned.

This is your identity. It has no form and you can't call it anything. You can't even call it man or woman.

Certainly has no age. Has no form. You can't say what it is.

You can't examine it. It's the I. It is I.

I without a past. I without a future. Isn't that amazing?

But that is what emerges as you let go of obsession with thinking. And then gradually you learn to not lose that or have it obscured even when you start to think again so that thinking is interspersed with spaces. And so that you even feel the space while you think and speak.

If you can feel the space that you are, the consciousness in the background while you speak, then your words have power and are fresh and new and creative. And then your relationships are loving and peace flows out from you. The challenge is not to be drawn so much into thinking that you're going totally out again.

So to hold that, to hold the awareness of awareness, so to speak, and then speak. Be aware of the danger of the, how the mind has enormous momentum. Especially if somebody asks you, what do you think of the Republicans or the Democrats or whatever it is?

And before you know it, you lost space completely. Well, I'll tell you what I think. Or whatever it is.

Your ex-husband, wife, opinions. What's your opinion? The Buddha talked about the thicket of opinions.

Don't get involved in that, he said. Drop your opinions, relinquish your opinions. Oh really, no, what the Zen master said beautifully, he didn't even say drop, you don't need to drop your opinions.

Stop cherishing your opinions. Just that. But of course, what are opinions?

Thoughts. A bundle of thoughts are your opinions. So when the Zen master says, stop cherishing your opinions, he's saying, stop cherishing your thoughts.

Stop cherishing your thinking. You can still have it, of course you still have it. But you don't cherish it, which means really, you don't attach a value to it that it doesn't have.

You don't look to it for your identity. You're not totally drawn into it, it exists there. But here you are, a much vaster presence, and here's your little opinion.

Rather than the opinion pretending to be you. And getting. So you can then play with opinions.

Okay, I think that's how it is, but you might think differently. And then you don't have to be disagreeable when you disagree. Because you only become disagreeable when you disagree if you're identified with your opinion, your thought.

If you're not identified, you don't become disagreeable. Why do you become disagreeable? Because you feel threatened in your sense of self.

Why do you feel threatened in your sense of self? Because you're identified with your thoughts. There's a self in your think, delusion of self in every thought.

Freedom from that. What freedom? Nothing real can be threatened.

Nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God.

[Speaker 4] (2:46:06 - 2:49:01)

Welcome, everybody. Welcome, everyone here with us in Maui, as well as people who are tuning in live to this broadcast. It's a special, historic moment.

The first time that Ram Dass and Eckhart Tolle have ever been on stage together. This is a whole lot of now. Be here now and the power of now.

Two books that each perhaps more than any other two books published, influenced hundreds of thousands and continue to influence hundreds of thousands of people and introduce them, tear a veil away to the present moment. And when we have now and now together, there's a type of multiplication, I think, our experience together here. I'd ask everybody to listen with the ear of your heart.

Sometimes Eckhart asks people to listen to the space between the words. That that's where the real impact often can be found, not just in the conceptual messaging, but in the space. And listening with the ear of our heart is a similar type of listening.

As many of you know, I'm sure most of you know, Ram Dass, as he puts it, was stroked by God in 1998. And so his speech can be quite slow on occasion. And I think if we listen with the ear of our heart, we'll be tuning in to what's most essential.

So to begin with, talking about the heart, I really want to start right off right here at the beginning to ask Eckhart and Ram Dass to speak some about love as another word for now. Is it another word for now? Is it the feeling dimension of the now?

I mean, Eckhart, you so often speak of stillness. It has a different flavor than love, at least in my experience. So love as the feeling dimension of the now.

[Speaker 1] (2:49:32 - 2:59:56)

I use the word sparingly. There are certain misconceptions around love because there are so many different types of love. It's sometimes hard to get away from the idea that love is some kind of wanting.

I love this. And in the Spanish language, the usual expression for I love you means I want you. And that's very true in romantic love.

You want the other person. And as I don't remember who said it, in true love, you want the other person's good. In romantic love, you want the other person.

And so other languages have different words for love to distinguish between the emotional wanting and something deeper, agape, meta, and so on. And the Dalai Lama says, my religion is kindness. He uses that word, kindness.

So these words point to something, point to something within you, an essence from where you perceive and interact with the outside world in a very different way from the usual mental, mentalized, conceptualized perception of reality around you, including other human beings. The usual way to relate for people who have not awakened to that deeper level that I often call essence or your essence identity, the usual way is to relate to other human beings through mental concepts or judgments. They become the veil that comes in between you and your perception of reality.

And awakening is to become free of the compulsive, the compulsion to judge continuously, to interpret continuously, to label and name continuously what's around you and whoever you are with. And when that compulsion to label everything mentally, the conceptualized reality, when that subsides, and that subsides when presence arises, then you sense something in whatever you perceive that is a kind of recognition, whether it's a human being or whether it's any other being, natural, a tree or an animal, you recognize something in the other that before when you were naming and labeling, you couldn't. When you are naming and labeling, the other was always the other. And nature also was conceptualized, especially human beings become conceptualized in that the other.

In the egoic state, the ego actually emphasizes the otherness of others. By continuously criticizing, judging, have opinions and mistaking every viewpoint for the truth. Every thought that comes in, that's how he is, that's how she is.

And so there can be no love there, although that egoic entity sometimes talks about love or it says, you need to love your neighbor as yourself, it says. I'm trying very hard. And that phrase, of course, comes from Jesus who said, love your neighbor as yourself, which really means recognize your neighbor, the other as yourself.

And that recognition, that sensing when you look at another human being in the spaciousness of just this, that's the, sometimes call it the formless dimension. What you're looking at is form. What you're looking at is the physical body and also what you are perceiving is the mental form, the psychological form of that person.

If you go beyond form, what you perceive in the other, you sense through your own presence, the presence of the other, that which cannot be seen. It's the essence of everything. If you have a, we have a little dog that's at the moment we think, oh, hope he'll survive, she'll survive, she has a heart disease.

When this dog dies, hopefully not for a while, all you're left with is the fur and the, what's behind the fur, the bones and the intestines and so on. The essence is no longer there. The essence of that being is no longer there.

But when you look at the live dog, you can sense an essence of beingness, the beingness in the other. Sometimes it's easier with animals than with humans because what you have with humans is a lot of mental identifications. So you sense the beingness because you sense your own beingness.

And that's the heart sometimes. I don't use that very often, but you could call that perceiving from the heart. You use the word more often.

Perceiving from the heart is to perceive from the beingness. And then you sense the beingness of the other. And that recognition is the recognition of oneness.

And that's love. Love is sensing that you share the consciousness. Because what you love in the other ultimately is the consciousness.

You don't love, it's nice to touch the fur of the dog or to touch another human being, to touch the skin. But ultimately, what you love in the other is something that you cannot perceive, that is beyond the senses. You cannot mentalize.

So to perceive through that space of love is to be free of the compulsion to mentalize and conceptualize. And that in practical terms, it looks like this. I'm looking at Ram Dass without conceptualization.

If I conceptualize, I have some image. I say, oh, here's the famous guru. He wrote that book.

Or I have to, whatever concepts I have, can I look at him without any concepts? And there's just, there's suddenly a meeting in stillness. Because that's really what it is.

When you look at something without naming it, you look through the stillness. And I'm inviting, I know he's already in stillness, and I'm inviting everybody here at this very moment to perceive and look the totality of this room, the environment, whatever is around us, not through any naming, but through simple, the alert space of stillness. Be the space of stillness, just this.

And then you perceive lovingly. Then there is no other anymore. The other only appears the moment you conceptualize.

And so that's how stillness and love are related, very closely. And the now, of course, is all part of it. It's all, the stillness is the essence of now.

And so love arises. That's the, that's our destiny is to live in that way as a normal, our normal state of consciousness. And then, of course, the world will become transformed if enough humans live in that space to, we'll come back to that.

Because basically, we're always talking about the one, we're always pointing to the one essential truth, which is the truth of who you are.

[Speaker 2] (3:00:00 - 3:05:55)

I would like to speak that love is not part of the emotions, rather that love is, is soul talk, soul talk. Because I, the, I, let's see here. We are each souls, and then we are one.

These are two different levels of, of consciousness. When the individual soul meets another individual soul, there is a recognition that, that is, it is a soul. And the ego is rooted in, in negative, negative stuff.

And the soul is rooted in love. So that when you were in your ego, you were anxious, and you're, you're separate from everybody else. When the soul, the soul is separate from another soul, but, but they have, they have a recognition of the shared, shared consciousness.

When you have your, when you are perceiving from your soul, you will, other people look like souls. Like, for example, if you go into a store, there are different people playing different roles. There's the customer and the, the clerk.

But I go into that store, and I see these are souls, and they have, they, they're playing, they're playing these roles only on this, on this incarnation. And they've only chosen to, these roles because of their unique karma. Is that a word that's, yeah, I guess so.

[Speaker 4] (3:06:11 - 3:06:42)

Question about this, which is, not only do you use the word love sparingly in your teachings, but you don't use the word soul very much either. I often hear you talk about how our conceptual thinking keeps us separate from this field of oneness and being. But the idea of an individual soul, I'm curious if you could comment how that fits for you.

[Speaker 1] (3:06:43 - 3:14:39)

I never decided not to use the word soul, it just didn't come up. I never decided not to use the word soul, it just didn't come up. In the same way, I don't use God very often.

Soul to me means, as Ram Dass just said, you walk into a store, or anywhere, any place, you see all these different human beings, different forms. And it's, it's lovely to see the multiplicity of life forms around you, without needing to believe that the essential reality of every human being you see, or come into contact with, is the form that you see, or the role that they play. That's only a temporary thing, but you can still enjoy the multiplicity of life forms, and even enjoy, you see the roles that people play, but you can only enjoy it really, if there is a recognition of something deeper in the other.

And if you have that recognition of something deeper in the other, and you can only do it through recognizing who you are beyond your role, and beyond your form, which is consciousness, the light of consciousness, the formless, consciousness has taken on a temporary form. And so the universe produces billions, trillions, infinite life forms, even on this planet alone, even in the human form alone. Every human being, different in some way, it's amazing.

But if you only see the differences, then you're trapped on that level. You need to be able to sense your essential reality of consciousness to be able to enjoy the play of forms. Because otherwise, the play of forms not only keeps you trapped, you pursue some kind of, you're seeking some kind of thing through forms, fulfillment through other forms, other humans, that's the ego again, other humans wanting to fulfill you.

And now for my next song. That's the role that comes with this. So as we sit here, these are just temporary forms.

This form will be gone soon. This form will be gone soon. And sooner or later, all these forms will have dissolved like soap bubbles.

And all that remains is the one that expressed itself through the many. And if you know yourself as the one, which happens when the mind, the stream of thinking stops. And there's just an aware presence, a spacious, aware, formless presence.

That's who you are beyond the form. And from there, you can enjoy the play of forms. If you're not there, the play of forms is threatening.

Or you seek continuously to fulfill yourself through grasping at forms. The play of forms is never satisfying unless you have touched within yourself the root of all satisfaction, which is beingness itself, consciousness itself. The Buddha already taught us that the unsatisfactory nature of things, it's all, he says, wherever you go, you will find dukkha, suffering.

No matter what situation you go into, there's always a crack in everything. And of course, in the words of, was it Leonard Cohen? There is a crack, a crack in everything.

That's how the light gets in. So our meeting here, the things going wrong are actually beautiful because that's how this, for example, not being able to talk for a while, an opportunity for stillness. So it's welcoming whatever arises and then being touched with that which doesn't change.

Consciousness itself, to feel, to sense at this very moment, to sense that still, alert presence in you. So is that an individual presence or is it an impersonal presence? I think you can't really distinguish between that.

The sense of I that is the formless consciousness is at the basis of everybody's sense of identity except that it gets mixed up with stories in the mind. But if you really go very deep, where does this sense of I really come from? Not the I my story or the I want and I need and I must have and so on, but the deeper sense of I-ness, the I am.

I am the way, said Jesus. I think they left out one word. I am is the way.

So just sense and then the distinction between personal and impersonal doesn't really arise anymore. It is the essence of anybody's sense of identity beyond form is consciousness. And that's the universal soul expressing itself as an individual.

Now, is that the answer? I'm never interested, I never asked myself, am I going to survive as this personal self? No, I don't have the sense that the person, but the essence of who I am is timeless.

I know that. I don't really need to know the details of what the essence of who I am. What's the essence of who I am, the timeless going to do in the future?

[Speaker 4] (3:14:44 - 3:14:56)

I mean, it seems to me that you blend in the individual soul and the collective oneness that for you that mushes in quite naturally. You don't find the need to make that distinction.

[Speaker 1] (3:14:57 - 3:15:56)

No, because a lot of it is just words, Buddhism, Hinduism, you have in Hinduism, Atman, the God within is Atman. The Buddhists say, no, there is no Atman, it's just emptiness. They're talking about the same thing because the Atman is formless.

So emptiness is in some ways more helpful because you can't believe in it. The moment you say that there is an Atman, you can start believing in something, you have another mental concept. So the Buddha was very good at making it very hard for people to believe in what he said, very hard because you can't say, we believe in emptiness.

Well, maybe they do it in the Buddhist monasteries, but it wasn't meant to be said like that. It wasn't meant to be realized. And then the moment you realize this, of course, it's Atman and emptiness is the same.

[Speaker 2] (3:15:56 - 3:25:21)

The, from this soul, from individual souls, and as we agree that we, we see in each other the Atman, the, the, the, the, I've thought of, thought, well, it's not a thought, it's the soul is awareness. And since my guru said to love everybody, I said the soul was loving awareness. And when he said to me, love everybody, I, first of all, the politicians, I, boy, I mean, I love them.

I mean, I mean, certain ones I could bear, but I can't, I said, Maharaji, I can't do it. I can't do it. I can't love everybody.

And that was my ego, because ego judging, judging, judging, judging. Soul doesn't judge. But now I live in the soul and I can love the walls and the ceiling and all of you and me and the wheelchair and, and Eckhart and everybody.

You too. And I just, I, I thought I was, I was psychotic because, because as I love the wall, it gets closer. And the love becomes melding to me and to the wall and the trees and the ocean.

Because I think that we, we, we are one, but we will only feel that when we, when we love everything. Love everything. And when I was, I was up here, my ego, I was judging and judging and, and judging myself.

And love that person, but love that person, and love that person. But the soul, you, you like the ocean of love. You're floating in the ocean of love.

And that makes you love everything, including that wall. I had a, a humorous experience. I told an audience that I loved everything.

And I said, I love this rug. And it was a, it was a restaurant. And the, the rug was spotted.

And it would, I could live that, love that. And a friend of mine, Mickey Lamley was coming, came up, had been in the audience. And he said, look, I, I, I love the trees that GoGam painted, but I can't love that rug.

I said, judging, judging, judging. And so, so he sent me for my 80th birthday, a piece of rug. And with a spot in the middle.

And he said, maybe you'd like to substitute this for your guru on the wall. I, I wouldn't have, I, I, he didn't see that I could do that. And he was losing, he was losing by his judging mind.

Because I was moving towards oneness. With love.

[Speaker 1] (3:25:30 - 3:32:06)

That's interesting, you should mention the walls and what looks like inanimate objects. I also find often I, I pick up an object, it could be maybe just a bar of soap or a pen. And there is an appreciation of its, that its existence, just a moment of appreciating.

The mind could explain it and say, well, that's because ultimately everything emanates from the one, assumes a form, and then changes again. So ultimately, whatever you see or perceive is an emanation of the one. And if you see, if you recognize the one in yourself, you can recognize it in any form.

And one wouldn't usually call that love. But in a deeper sense, it is, it is a love, it is an appreciation of whatever is around you. And again, it's to do with the world of form, to live in that balance between relating in the world of form and being rooted in the formless, which traditionally perhaps would be called spirit, whatever.

So in this, this dance, and in yourself, you can sense, and this is, I'll just describe a brief moment when we were driving here today. There's always, of course, there's this temporary body sitting in the car. And there's the mind, there's a name attached to it, and a personal identity.

So you're always, there's two of you here, so to speak. Don't take it all too literally, it's just using pointers only. There's two of you here, the form, this is Eckhart, the spiritual teacher, concept, who is going to meet another spiritual teacher, another concept, and they're going to have a dialogue.

And there was very little of that. In the back, in the periphery of consciousness, I knew that that was also true. But the essential truth was, here's a space of consciousness moving and perceiving.

So at any moment, you can be either more on the side of form, or you can be more on the side of the formless. And the most satisfying way to live is to be more in the dimension of the formless. So as I was traveling in the car, I was really not there as a person, but simply as a space of consciousness.

There was no thought, when there's no thought, that's what happens, just that. And then, if a person were traveling to an important event, how can a person not be anxious? The thinking would arise, how is it going to work out?

What's he going to say? What am I going to do? Are they going to like us?

All kinds of stuff will happen. And really, the essence of it all is to be able to be, and I know the people here, and the people who are tuning in from elsewhere, are able to recognize the truth of what I'm saying. And that is, more and more humans are now able to enter that state where they don't need to think, think.

The compulsion to think goes, and thinking is replaced by presence, stillness, a lot beautiful space of stillness. So if you can be, at any moment, be that, and you still know, of course, you're still a person for a while, and there's no need when somebody asks you, how old are you, or what is your name? You don't need to say, I am nameless and timeless.

You can still go with the conventions and say, well, that's my age, and that's my name. You're quite a normal, you use the conventions of form, you still can operate in the world of form, but you're rooted somewhere else in the spacious consciousness. For a while, when the transition happened to me, I was so much in the space that for a while, I couldn't operate on the level of form very well.

And then after a few years, the balance came back. That's, so really the essence, I think you will agree, I'm sure, is freedom from thought to access that dimension in yourself. Ramana Maharshi said, the true criterion, whether you are making progress on the spiritual path, that's why somebody asked him that question, how can I measure my progress on the spiritual path?

And Ramana Maharshi said, the degree of absence of thinking is the measure of progress on your spiritual path. It's easy, now you know.

[Speaker 4] (3:32:15 - 3:33:05)

You mentioned earlier the word karma, and I wanted to ask you something about that. I think that many people would say that the sudden awakening, Eckhart, that you had was some kind of fabulous good karma, extraordinary karmic grace itself. Ram Dass, your experience meeting your guru, Neem Karoli Baba, and the kind of heart awakening that happened, very good karma, extraordinary karma.

And then your stroke, being stroked, somebody might say, well, that doesn't look like such good karma to me. In fact, that looks kind of like yucky karma. And I'm curious what you feel about that, both of you, this idea of the good and bad karma of our lives.

[Speaker 2] (3:33:08 - 3:41:33)

Well, this is this question of grace and karma. And my meeting my guru, he knew that was going to happen. And because my knowing that, my knowing that and seeing his mind, knowing his awareness, it would make me think of grace.

I was graced to have this meeting. And I would think this, his grace to me. But I think it was my awareness of his awareness that led me to that conclusion.

Because if he had awareness of my life through my entire life, I mean, my mother died of a spleen. Illness. And my guru said, she was big in the stomach.

And big, big in the stomach. And, and, and this is, this is all in Hindi. And he, and then, and he said, and then, and then it was the spleen.

He, he, and the word spleen he gave in English. It was my mother's dying was being used to help me, help me. That was, that was a Siddhi, a power he had.

And that's what led me to, led me to say it was grace. In fact, I could, I just live in grace. Because like I was a psychologist.

A psychologist, I wouldn't, I wouldn't read the Bhagavad Gita. I'd be, that funny book. And then I, I, down the hall from me in my office was Tim Leary.

And, and so, and so I took mushrooms. And that opened me up to meet Maharaji. And to meet the Bhagavad Gita.

I look at all these stages. And I had, and my guru knew that. And that's, that's grace.

That's grace.

[Speaker 1] (3:41:58 - 3:52:26)

I don't see grace as happening as the result necessarily of good karma. Grace can erupt at any stage. It can erupt into bad karma.

It can erupt into good karma. It's somehow through another dimension, something comes in. In my case, I would say it came because of bad karma.

Without all the suffering, having a childhood that was unhappy. Parents continuously fighting and no harmony in the environment. Lack of, often lack of money.

And then they got divorced. And it was great shame for me when I was 10. Not many parents were divorced at that time.

So I had to hide that fact. And countless things came in. My dad, I loved him on one level.

And on another level, I hated him. I had a dream because he was like a powder pack that could erupt at any powder, like an unexploded bomb. They could erupt at any moment.

So I lived my whole childhood with an unexploded, well, often the unexploded bomb exploded. So that's not good karma. And so the young adult became unhappy.

It had absorbed unhappiness from the environment and so on. And so all that's not good karma. But because of that bad karma, the suffering became unbearable.

And then a surrender happened when the suffering became unbearable. And there was the eruption suddenly of grace. Now the question may arise.

I may not be able to answer it, but I'll ask it. The fact that surrender happened in the midst of the suffering is that must be grace. That's probably right.

So who knows? Surrender happened. And with surrender, grace could suddenly flow in fully.

Grace is the essence of who you are coming through the form so that in grace, then you're not the density of the form lessens. And as it lessens, grace is able to flow through. The density of the form lessens through surrender or acceptance of the simple thing.

For example, let's say acceptance of the present moment as it is, as a spiritual practice. If you make that your spiritual practice, you may not succeed all the time. That's fine.

Have compassion with yourself. And if you don't succeed in accepting what is, then accept that at this moment, I can't accept what is. So you have another level of acceptance behind the non-acceptance.

I can accept that anger arises in me at this moment. That's what is. If I deny it, oh, I should be accepting.

Why can't I accept the present moment? Or even better, the mind talk, you have two people. Why can't you?

You see, you can't do it. You failed again. That's the self-talk of the ego.

Instead, be compassionate. So when you cannot accept, then recognize that and allow the emotion to be there. You still have some space then.

And so there's still grace because grace is space really. Oh, the words are quite similar actually, grace and space. Grace is when the space comes into the inner, the spaciousness of the unconditioned divine consciousness comes into your life.

So the quickest way of inviting grace into your life is, as I sometimes put it, become friendly with the is-ness of this moment, no matter what form it takes, because it already is anyway. So why not say yes? Because it is, doesn't mean you can't take action, but at the moment it is.

So in other words, you go with what, it's an expression, you go with the flow of life and the flow is always here and now. You never go against it. But so this is what is always the starting point is the is-ness of this moment.

So that's the, then if with that acceptance, the gate is open for grace to come in. If you complain about the difficulties or the unsatisfactory nature of the present moment, the door is closed. Or let's say the shutters are closed, the sunlight can't come in.

It doesn't mean you're more powerful than the sun. The sun isn't concerned about your shutters. But so when you deny this, you are somehow against the present moment or you treat it only as a means to an end because there is a more important place I want to get to.

Grace can't operate in your life or you only get a trickle just to keep you going, just an occasional trickle occasionally when you go, oh, look at that sunset. And for a moment, the complaining entity subsides. And there's a moment where grace can come in and you can live on that for three weeks, one sunset.

But of course, that's only a trickle. And so to go from form to formlessness is done by accepting whatever form arises in the present moment, whatever form this moment takes. Immediately, so well, that's what is.

With the acceptance of form, the formless opens up in you. And the ultimate truth of that is in the image of the crucifixion, which I see as goes beyond religion or anything. Some people dislike it.

They say, oh, I don't like the image of this man on the cross. It's all to do with suffering and it's unhealthy and so on. But there is a deep meaning there that for a long time perhaps could not be expressed in an abstract way.

And that meaning is, here you have the image of complete suffering of a human. He's nailed to the cross, which is a torture instrument. And this human is able to surrender and accept not my will, but thy will be done.

And then suddenly the torture instrument becomes a symbol of the divine. Isn't that strange? The torture instrument has become a symbol of the divine.

So through acceptance, whatever looks like an obstacle or even a dreadful thing becomes transformed. Every situation that's accepted deeply, and if it's a very big thing like a crucifixion, there needs to be very deep acceptance. And immediately there's a transformation.

So the grace is hiding also in that which looks dreadful. The dreadful sufferings that we see all around us, they are there, but it's hiding. And you can only see the truth of this in yourself.

I'm not saying anybody should believe in that. You have to find out for yourself that grace is hiding in what the seemingly dreadful things even in little things that go wrong, but even more so in big things that go wrong, so to speak. And ultimately you see it's not wrong.

It didn't go wrong that what it looks like in the moment when you judge it. So that's the inviting grace into your life through bringing this deep yes to the present moment. Then your evolution accelerates.

And the more you do that, the less you need the disasters because you cooperate with the flowering of consciousness. Consciousness wants to flower into this dimension, in this dimension. So it's welcoming really what is.

[Speaker 2] (3:52:26 - 3:52:32)

Yeah, that was my stroke. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (3:52:32 - 3:52:33)

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (3:52:35 - 3:56:21)

That I was in the hospital and I looked at all the doctors, nurses, my family, my friends were all, you have a stroke. And I felt by their minds rubbing off, I was feeling some terrible thing has happened. And there was a picture on the wall of Maharaji and he was, this is, this stroke is grace.

And I, there are three fellows here. They're my medical team. And I wouldn't have met them.

I wouldn't have met them. And we share philosophy and medical things. But I had the stroke.

So that was a grace. And then I had wrote, I had, before my stroke, I had a book, How Can I Help? It's called How Can I Help?

And I was feeling, I was helping. And after the stroke, I wrote a book, How Can You Help Me? I wouldn't have, I wouldn't have thought it possible.

That I would, I was so dependent and find in myself. And I learned a lot about dependency. And that was, and that was positive, positive.

[Speaker 1] (3:56:23 - 3:57:56)

Many of you have probably seen the film made of Ram Dass's life called Fierce Grace. I love that title. Because when something major like that happens, it really is fierce.

And when surrender happens there, it takes you very deep. So it's when fierce grace comes into your life, then that potential is there for going very deep. And that fierce grace burns up the illusory self.

It's the fire in which the ego gets burned up. It can also be a place where the ego gets strengthened through saying, oh, dreadful, dreadful. It's all what happened to me.

Life, how can life do that to me? How can God do that to me? Why did that happen to me?

That blocks it, what is potentially a huge opening into burning up of, one could say, thousands of years of accumulations are burned up in that fire. So that's perhaps good to know for anybody who is at this moment facing a major, very major challenge in life.

[Speaker 4] (3:58:02 - 3:58:19)

In just a couple of moments, we're going to open up to your questions and questions from our online audience as well. But before we do, there's a couple of people here, so we're just going to have to wait.

[Speaker 1] (3:58:24 - 3:58:32)

He's saying that the questions are nameless. People didn't write down their names, which is just as well. It's fine.

[Speaker 4] (3:58:33 - 3:59:21)

Before we go to these, I just had one last question that I wanted to ask you both. Ram Dass, you've mentioned a couple of times your relationship with Maharaji and how important he's been in your life. And I know that people actually look to the two of you, some people look to the two of you as a kind of guru figure for them, believe it or not.

I've seen the photos in people's homes. And I'm curious, if somebody does look to you in that way, how do you think they could benefit the most from that relationship?

[Speaker 1] (3:59:31 - 4:05:20)

Shall I go? Oprah said to me, you're not a guru, are you? I said, no, of course not.

I don't see myself, of course, as a guru. I do know some people look at a photo at first I was shocked when somebody told me they had their photo on their, my photo on their desk. And I thought, what for?

But I then remembered, I saw a photo of, I still have it, Ramana Maharshi. There's a particular one photo of Ramana Maharshi that has incredible light coming through. His eyes.

And I remember years ago, looking at that photo and feeling, sensing that deep stillness and peace and aliveness. But I also knew that that was not the form I was looking at, that was in me. I could sense that and I could see the reflection of that peace and aliveness in the photo also.

So it was a self-recognition. It acted a little bit like a mirror and it was a self-recognition.

But what this mirror shows is not the, it doesn't mirror the outer form to you.

It mirrors the inner essence. Whenever you look at somebody, if the photo was taken of an awake being or even a person who at that moment is free of thought and in a state of just awareness and something comes through the eyes that points to that. It is recognized by something in you when you look at, it's nothing to do with the person whatsoever.

And so what you sense is your own essential reality, reflected back to you by somebody who is free of all the stuff that usually covers it up. There's a line in the Course in Miracles, which is supposed to be Jesus talking, but of course it just means an expression of the awakened consciousness. So Christ, let's say Christ, Jesus is the person, Christ is the formless.

So it says in that line says, in the first person, I, meaning I, Christ or Jesus, I have nothing that you do not have except that I have nothing else. And so I'm now quite happy with people looking at my photo or looking at me as long as they don't think they're looking at a person. The person is there on the surface.

It's not important. You could say it's the window frame. What you see, what you put with your senses is the window frame.

But the thing that happens, the important thing is the light that comes through the window. And the moment you recognize it, it's in you because it's you that you recognize it. Ah, that's how the reflection works.

You can also, I recommend looking at, occasionally you can look it's into somebody else's eyes. And the similar thing can happen if you both are able to enter the state of aware presence while you look into each other's eyes, there's cessation of thinking. What's left when thinking ceases?

Just awareness, pure, unconditioned consciousness. And you look at the other and suddenly there is no other. There is a merging of in the feeling of awareness.

It's a beautiful practice where you transcend the personal in yourself and in the other. And that's a beautiful way of connecting. And so you see yourself in the other, there's the merging.

That's a similar, it's a lovely spiritual practice if you don't overdo it. It's just from time to time. And then you do the same in any situation.

When you look at a human being, you're not conceptualizing that human being and you're looking at yourself, the essential, not looking, but sensing the consciousness in the other through being consciousness yourself. And so it's all works the same way. So how do you feel about people looking at your photo?

[Speaker 2] (4:05:23 - 4:06:07)

I say to them, if you met a real one, you'd know. You are the real one. Yes, so are you.

And so is everybody here. Ramana Maharshi, that picture, oh boy, yum, yum, yum.

[Speaker 1] (4:06:12 - 4:06:32)

That's the, I read that the, when that picture was taken of Ramana Maharshi, the photographer asked, no, Ramana Maharshi said to the photographer, is there enough light? And the photographer said to him, you are the light. And it worked.

[Speaker 4] (4:06:42 - 4:07:00)

We have a question here from the audience that I think is really important as a part of our conversation, which is how can you love violence, crime, and starvation? To name a few examples, I'd add in microphone noise. How can you love these things?

[Speaker 1] (4:07:02 - 4:10:43)

I'll start. You don't love what people do, you love who they are in their essence. And what often what they do is deluded.

It's based on delusion because they don't know who they are. So unconsciousness operates through those humans. You don't love what they do, but you look, whenever you meet a human being, even if it's the human being is a criminal or has perpetrated acts of violence, there is in them somewhere something that is pure, that is the essence of who they are.

And that's when you look and if the human being is heavily burdened by egoic delusion or a heavy pain body, you need to be more intensely present with that human being. And it can happen that this also applies to a human being who is mentally unbalanced. It is sometimes possible if you're absolutely present, you draw out, not through an act of will, but just because it happens, you draw out of that human being something that is beyond the delusion, the essence of who they are.

It may only be temporary, but it's there. So you don't, you love the individual human and how can you love a disturbing noise? Love is not necessarily an active thing.

Love often is in the allowing. It's the gesture of the Virgin Mary, for example. There's a feminine quality there, which is the embrace everything.

So you can embrace the loud noise, although you might get a little, a shock maybe there. That doesn't mean you resisted the noise. There's the shock and immediately after the shock, there is the allowing.

You can practice that when you bump into something. I sometimes recommend that as another spiritual practice because sometimes you bump into something with your elbow or your foot and there's a sharp pain. And usually there's the pain and immediately after the pain, you shout something.

It may be a four letter word. Usually it's four letters. And it's quite a lovely practice if you bump into something and the pain is there, but immediate acceptance and no comment or commentary or further reaction except the physical reaction.

It's just quite lovely. Oh, nothing else. So the sharp noise, you don't say, oh, I love this sharp noise.

No, it's embraced in the, I allow you to be here. That's the love really rather than I love you. No, but I allow you to be here at this moment in the way you are and the you can be a person or a situation.

I allow you to be as you are in this moment. That's love rather than feeling I love you.

[Speaker 4] (4:10:44 - 4:10:56)

This is a follow-up question here for you, Eckhart, which is, are there any instances where you are unable to accept what is anything that makes you impatient, judgmental or angry?

[Speaker 1] (4:10:57 - 4:12:58)

There are moments of anger that can happen. Usually don't last very long. There's still an awareness in the background that accepts the anger when it happens.

So one is not totally in the grip of the anger, but a space around it or sadness can arise. I sometimes cry when I see something sad or somebody dying. For example, we were walking in Italy last year, visiting a small town and the church bells were ringing.

The people with me were walking on and I was just standing at the square in front of the church and they were carrying out a coffin and some of the relatives were standing around and I wept. I don't know who died. I have no idea of that person because to me that moment was it embodied the death of every human being that ever lived and ever will live.

It embodied the impermanence of the human condition and I cried, but not it wasn't a crying of despair. There was a beauty. There was a peacefulness underneath the crying, but I did cry.

I didn't say that there should be no deaths or death is a travesty. No, there was an acceptance, but nevertheless, it's just actually a beautiful experience, but the deep sadness there was, but underneath it, there was a knowing of there is something that doesn't die that's there. So that's how an emotional can still exist within the spaciousness.

[Speaker 4] (4:13:00 - 4:13:04)

Anything to say about loving what seems unlovable?

[Speaker 2] (4:13:07 - 4:13:08)

Something what?

[Speaker 4] (4:13:08 - 4:13:13)

Any more to say about loving what seems at first unlovable?

[Speaker 2] (4:13:16 - 4:15:20)

I love it all. I mean, even that, even that and even that and you've got to be, you bring it towards you, towards you and we all had a chance to love a dictator this year and he was a form that was causing suffering to many people. Does that make him unlovable?

I think that each form, each form is a form of God.

[Speaker 1] (4:15:38 - 4:15:44)

Sometimes in heavy disguise, heavy disguise sometimes.

[Speaker 4] (4:15:54 - 4:16:09)

There's another question here, wondering how Eckhart and Ram Dass perceive psychedelics and or sacred plant medicine, Ram Dass at this point in your life as a vehicle to explore consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (4:16:23 - 4:16:26)

The expert first.

[Speaker 2] (4:16:40 - 4:24:31)

It's great. It's great. The mushroom trip that I took and I left the group and a quiet room and I was on a couch and I saw there was somebody else in the room but the room was dark.

It's just I felt somebody else and I looked over there the corner of the room and each of my roles, my cello playing and my, they were kitsch, rolls, rolls, rolls and I, my, the Richard that my parents gave me and I said, oh, this, this drug, drug, I might, I might have amnesia or at least I have my body and I looked down and there was the couch and there was no body on it and, and I was, my eyes were open. And I, I, I, I wanted to call help but then who wanted to call help? So all my roles are there.

My body was gone. Somebody, something, some, some and I, I rolled in the snow some hills. I rolled and rolled and I, I was at Tim's house and my father and mother's house only two blocks away.

The snowstorm was up to my knees and I walked over to their, and their, their walk, they were old and I was young and I, I shovel from the garage. I thought, I, I really, it's, it's, it's, my heart told me that I shovel there, walk, walk and I shoveled and I was really out there and then I looked up at the window and they were both, they were having peeved looks. I couldn't and there, and, but that was, I was, they were, they were, up until then, I, always other people's eyes whether I was being reasonable but they were, they were, they were peeved and I was, I danced a jig around the, around the shovel and I waved at them, smiling.

That was the first time I'd ever stand up to, to external, external whatever that was.

[Speaker 1] (4:24:32 - 4:24:33)

Authority.

[Speaker 2] (4:24:33 - 4:25:22)

Yeah, and then I found out that they were peeved. It was, it was 4.30 in the morning and I was happy with my, I was going to shovel their walk but they, they, all they live in little boxes. One doesn't shovel the walk, no, nobody shovels the walk at that hour.

[Speaker 4] (4:25:29 - 4:26:07)

Is there any more, Ram Dass, you want to say about psychoactive plants and what you consider their, oh, I mean just a sort of summary of your, well, it took me from psychology to Maharaji.

[Speaker 2] (4:26:09 - 4:26:17)

That's pretty good. That's pretty good.

[Speaker 1] (4:26:20 - 4:26:25)

Yes, yes, that says it. That's pretty good. So it must have been powerful.

[Speaker 2] (4:26:26 - 4:28:03)

Yes, yes. Look, I never tell anybody to do it on their own or to do it by my say-so. All I say is what happened to me and I, boy, I, ah, yum, yum, yum, yum, yum.

And I'm being, I'm being facetious but people don't, don't realize these are very, very powerful plants and they should not be used, well, they shouldn't, should or shouldn't, I don't, they've been used, they should be, I shouldn't be, they should, God should be your co-pilot.

[Speaker 4] (4:28:04 - 4:28:06)

Very good, thank you.

[Speaker 2] (4:28:07 - 4:28:07)

Yeah.

[Speaker 4] (4:28:08 - 4:28:12)

And Descartes? I think our questioner really wanted your perception.

[Speaker 1] (4:28:20 - 4:33:12)

Of course, I can only go on the basis of my own experience, which is very limited. I'll tell you very briefly what it is. And one quite recent, quite a recent experience, it's amazing that it took me so long to try a pot, but we were in Amsterdam last year and somebody got me high quality pot to smoke and I thought, well, I might as well try it.

Because people often ask me questions about it. It's like, is it like meditation or is it useful? So I smoked and what I said when it took effect was it's like a maple syrup for the brain.

It felt like the mind is kind of, and I can see it can be a wonderful thing for somebody whose mind is very active and it finally slows down for once. Now, since my mind is not that active, it wasn't, I didn't feel it as great or even wanted to do it again, but it was interesting, and I can see how it could be helpful to some people who are burdened by a dreadful mind that never stops, not as a permanent measure, but perhaps to open a door and then go on and actually meditate and practice presence and so on. And similarly, acid, I don't know when it was, 15 years ago, I was already doing counseling and doing little workshops and often people said, what is it, was acid helpful?

I said, I don't know, I haven't tried it. And finally, somebody got me some and I took it and again, very limited experience. My experience was simply that the sense perceptions became extremely heightened.

So like everything was shouting at me, the colors, the smells, the physical sensory touch, everything was like turning up the volume on everything. And it's so much so I can, I could see, I didn't lose any awareness. So the awareness was there observing what was happening, it was interesting.

And I immediately realized that for some people, it also stops their mind because when you perceive so in such intensity, you have no time to comment on what you're perceiving. So you're just bombarded by sense perceptions. So the mind will shut up for a while and you just go, wow.

And this is the tip experience some people have with looking at a teapot and finding incredible depth and aliveness there, which I already have without it. I can look at a teapot and feel its aliveness. Maybe not, it's not shouting at me, but there's a subtle, there's a subtle thing there it has a presence.

So I don't need things to shout at me. But I can see how for somebody who is totally immersed in mental noise, it can be again an opening. That's really all it is.

There's also a sacred dimension, of course, to other substances like mushrooms and so on, which I have not experienced. That goes back thousands of years that practice as part of, not as a recreation, but as part of a sacred journey within that cultural context. And I think that's probably extremely valid.

And it may have to wait for another lifetime before I try that.

[Speaker 4] (4:33:17 - 4:33:39)

We have a question here from someone in the online audience who says, when someone has dementia or Alzheimer's, their being seems to disappear. As I spend time with my 93-year-old mom, I start to question what it is you're pointing to. Can you speak to this?

[Speaker 1] (4:33:47 - 4:36:37)

There's sometimes an intermediate stage in Alzheimer's when people don't remember their problems. I had a friend whose mother had Alzheimer's and in that intermediate stage, she, for the first time in her life, she became happy because during that intermediate stage, she couldn't remember her problems. She was beginning to forget who she was.

So that was something that also happens, of course, when you become more present, but that's very different. When you become more present, you rise above thinking. And when you develop this loss of memory or even when you take certain things like alcohol, then you begin to fall below thinking, which can be quite pleasant if thinking is a torture for you, which for many people it is because they torture themselves through their mind.

If you fall below thinking, then you go, ah. But there's no growth in awareness. You're moving towards sleep.

So in the intermediate stage of Alzheimer's, there are some people, it seems, who experience that freedom from the mind, but then you go more into it and you... I see the mind or the brain as something through which the non-local consciousness that pervades the entire universe assumes a particular form. So the brain or the mind is an instrument for consciousness to move through into this dimension and a focal point for consciousness.

And when the brain decays, which seems to be the case with Alzheimer, the brain can no longer fulfill the function of being the focal point for consciousness and consciousness then withdraws from there. And that gives the appearance that the being that was there is gradually disappearing. And it is.

It's a slow death. You die before the physical vehicle dies. So the consciousness can no longer move through the brain, the mind, and so it goes back.

And what is left with is then just the beginning of death of the form. So the mind form dies before the physical vehicle dies. That's how I see it.

The consciousness is still there, but it's no longer in this dimension.

[Speaker 4] (4:36:42 - 4:36:56)

Ram Dass, you said something interesting when we were talking previously. You said that the stroke affected your body, but not who you are. And I wonder if you could comment on that.

[Speaker 2] (4:37:08 - 4:39:29)

This is a vehicle in this plane of consciousness. I'm using it. I am using it.

I am not identified with it. So it's either, so I've said the body had the stroke. I didn't have a stroke.

And when I go into the present moment, which is not time and space, it's infinite. That's who I am. That's who I am.

And I don't think I'm ego either. They're all ego and body. They are part of this incarnation.

But I am not part of this incarnation because I'm just visiting this incarnation.

[Speaker 4] (4:39:31 - 4:40:11)

And then I just wanted to end with one final question to make a full circle from where we started. We started talking about love, not as an emotion, but as an experience of the present moment, as an aspect of the present moment. And to end, I'm wondering if you were each only able to give us one pointer to how we could tune to this love in the now.

What would that pointer be?

[Speaker 1] (4:40:38 - 4:44:17)

I'm sure you all know it already. Two days ago, we visited Ram Dass. And when I left, I saw the license plate on his car, on the license plate.

It had, there was a normal license number, but above and below it said, I'd rather be here now. As a, of course, the usual thing is I'd rather be fishing. I'd rather be golfing.

So I'd rather be here now. Be here now is really the key because embracing the present, acknowledging the present, realizing that there is only ever this, is really all that's needed to be the presence rather than to be the mind-made entity. So I sometimes put it like this.

It just didn't occur to me when I was writing the power of now, it came later. You are the now. You are the now in essence.

On the surface, now is what happens. In the depths of now, the now is the space in which it happens. So that which happens is the world of form coming and going and coming and going.

And the space in which it happens is the unconditioned, formless, timeless, unborn, the uncreated, the unmanifested, pure consciousness itself, the one or the light of the one. You could say that perhaps it's just, it's the light of the one. And so be the now, be the space for what happens rather than continuously reacting to what happens and being hypnotized by the world of form.

So it's the de-hypnosis. The world of form includes the thinking. Every thought is a thought form, very hypnotic.

Every thought says, look at me, look at me, follow me here. No, follow me. And then you go on for hours.

You follow the thought which leads to another thought and it draws you in, it draws gravity, gravitational pull. And then you become a person who lives like that, completely absent, only in here. Even when they meet somebody, they go, they don't see you, only their thoughts about you.

So that's stepping out of all that into presence. Be the now, be the space for what is.

[Speaker 2] (4:44:29 - 4:45:41)

It's hard to top that. When you meet somebody and they say, who are you? You give him a name or your role or something like that.

But when you are alone and you say, who am I? There is, there is, there is awareness and love. And you can, I am, I am loving awareness.

I am loving awareness. I am loving awareness. I am loving awareness.

[Speaker 4] (4:45:51 - 4:45:54)

Many thanks, everybody. Many thanks to F.R. Columbus.

[Speaker 11] (4:46:19 - 4:46:23)

I don't know how you'd label this question. Is this on?

[Speaker 5] (4:46:25 - 4:47:09)

I've met some people or had conversations with people who are going through what might be called a crisis of awakening. And it seems like they have, the identification with self is mostly fallen away. And they're in a kind of terror.

And they feel like they're going insane. And I kind of, I mean, I'm not there myself, but I've had those times when it's like giving up all control over everything feels kind of scary. And I just wondered if you could speak to that.

[Speaker 1] (4:47:10 - 7:52:55)

Okay, thank you. Yes, I've also encountered people like that. The mind feels suddenly scared.

The ego is still there to some extent. And it becomes a little panicky. I'm not in control anymore.

But there is a place so one can lose oneself in that. But I would advise a person like that to look for a place that is not confused inside, a place that is not scared. Many people say they're confused or scared.

But really the way out of it is really always a fuller acknowledgement of the present moment. Because the rest of it, all that confusion and feeling scared is you're not in the present moment, you're in your mind again. And your mind is saying, oh, my life is falling apart.

I have to start worrying again because otherwise it's all going to fall apart. So once you realize that you've moved out, the realization needs to be there of that, okay, I'm lost in the mind again. Okay, you're not lost because you know that you're lost.

The moment you realize it's happening, for a while you may not realize it's happening. You're so identified with your panicky thoughts that you're completely in them. You don't even know what is happening to you.

And then time may pass while you're completely in your thoughts. Oh, I think I'm going mad. I just don't know.

I can't figure things out anymore. I don't, they're not, I can't work things out. I don't know.

The mind says you should have opinion about everybody and I don't anymore. You shouldn't have an opinion about every situation you're in and your life. I don't know what to think about my life anymore.

That's dreadful. That's the mind. And of course the opposite is true.

If you don't know what to think about your life anymore, then you're beginning to wake up and realize there's no such thing as your life. There's only life. Your life is a mental construct.

It's a story, the story of me. So it's always the moment you realize it's happening or if you're trying to help somebody, bring your attention to the present moment. This is the exit point out of confusion.

You can't be confused when your attention moves into the present moment because the present moment is always simple. There's always a simplicity about it. The complexity is in the mind structures, the unobserved mind of the ego.

So simply take your attention into the present moment and then confusion suddenly dissolves because the mind says, I need to work something out. I need to understand something. No, you don't.

All you need to respond to this moment. Either this moment may require action or it may not require action. Just be there for this moment.

And then it becomes simple. You cannot do more than one thing at a time. For example, in this moment, no matter how much you have to do, you can only do one thing.

Well, you can do two things, but it gets hard. Basically, you have to do one thing at a time and give it your attention or do nothing and bring attention to sense perceptions. Look around and get a sense of what this moment feels, what it is, what does it mean, this moment.

First of all, it means what you see and perceive because that's this moment. And that's already a revelation because you might have been so trapped in your mind that you were completely unaware of your surroundings. And you didn't realize there was a beautiful tree there and there are clouds there.

You didn't realize that there's a sound of the wind outside. You didn't realize that you are breathing in the air. You didn't realize that all those things around you are vitally alive.

You didn't realize it because you were stuck in your head. Thinking about your problems. And so the beginning of the present moment is that, oh, and then you can go a little deeper.

Then you can experience the present moment as the energy field in your body, as the aliveness in your body. And then you can go even deeper and experience the present moment as the awareness of all this, rather than the present moment isn't the flower as such. The flower appears in the present moment, but essentially what the present moment is, it's the consciousness in which you see the flower.

Otherwise there would be no flower. Remove the consciousness. I don't know what's left.

No flower. You all know the famous saying, the tree in the forest, if a tree falls in the forest and there's nobody there to hear it, does it make a noise? And of course it doesn't because noise implies not only a sensory organ, it also applies a consciousness that's perceiving through the sensory organ that brings about what we call noise.

And without that, there's no noise. And you can even follow that up and ask other similar questions. But what I'm pointing to is the present moment in essence is not the things.

The things appear in the space of the present moment. It's always present moment. You can't get out of that.

Your life is always one with now. Your life and now are one. If you doubt that, then let me know one day when you can say, my life is not now.

Or maybe you remember when it wasn't now. Not possible. Life and now is synonymous.

Life is now, now is life. But the mind says, yeah, but what does that mean? Isn't that just words?

No, it's more than words. The words are pointing to a realization. And that is, whatever appears has to appear in the present moment, but in itself is not the present moment.

It is a form that appears in the space of now. Everybody in this room or wherever the body is is a form that appears in the space of now. Whatever happens, whatever thought comes, whatever emotion is felt is a form that appears in the space of now.

And that now is consciousness, timeless. Ever present. You are that.

I am that. So that's really what the present moment is. So ultimately it's yourself, it's consciousness, and you are consciousness.

So bringing attention to the now takes people out of confusion. The now begins with sense perceptions. So encourage people or do it to yourself if you find you become lost in your mind, come into your senses first.

Touch something, whatever, any surface, feel it. Then look. Already confusion subsides because your attention gets away from thinking into the sense, the act of perception.

Then listen. Even less and less confusion. What is there to confused about right here?

Nothing. Breathing. Then breathing.

And breathing takes attention into the inner body. Alive, it's alive. Where's the confusion?

It's gone. You stopped giving attention to your thoughts, the confusion is gone. And then you go even deeper into just the spaciousness of stillness.

No confusion in there. And then it's fine. Every time that happens, use that process of reorientation of focus of your consciousness into now.

So this is the advice you can give and you do it with people when they come to you in a state of confusion. Say, okay, sit there. Okay.

Look around. Look, touch something. Look at this.

Listen to the rain. Listen to the wind. Listen to the birds.

Listen to the car. Be there as the presence for it. Confusion can end very quickly that way.

Present moment is the exit point out of confusion is the point of exit out of your mind. It's always there. You just have to acknowledge it.

So, and when it happens again, same process, no more confusion. It's a shift for people. You get drawn back into the old consciousness and step out again.

That's why we call the awakening process. For most people, it is a, we are transitional. Most of the people who are going through this, we're transitional beings from, it's a very significant and incredible thing from one way of being, one state of consciousness that's been there for thousands and thousands of years to a different state of consciousness.

And so we live, many people live in two worlds, in two states, still shifting. And gradually, awareness takes over from continuous thinking. And then it's so different.

It's like, I sometimes call it as you, as I say, at the end of the new earth, a new species is emerging on the planet. One could almost say that. We used to look the same, but your inner state is so different from the normal insane state that it's like a completely new species.

And yet it's already arising in you. It's not something that you need to arrive at some future point. I want to become a new species.

It's already arising. Christina says she lives either in Austria or in Australia, AU. I crave the experience of God's love.

And although I practice being in the now at every realization, I still have not known the experience of the beloved. What more can I do? Well, she hasn't found God's love yet.

God's love because she doesn't realize that her love is God's love. She may not have realized that when she appreciates beauty, wherever it may be, and ultimately there's beauty everywhere, even in the most insignificant things, like the texture in the wood on the floor, even the artificial light, all that is beauty. When you appreciate beauty, it's a form of love.

When you feel gratitude for what is, it's a form of love. And that love, where does it come from? Where does it arise?

In you. In you, when you don't create artificial expectations through mental concepts, such as where is God's love? When you don't create these artificial concepts and expectations, then you realize that the moment you relinquish the concepts in relating to the world and other humans and nature, then there is a certain, an outflow from you of acknowledgement, an outflow of appreciation for every life form and that can only be there when you're not imposing concepts on things and life forms.

There's an open space. In that open space, there's a flow, a love flow of energy. It's reciprocal.

There's a flow of energy towards this flower and there's a reflection back from the flower. Even more so with human beings, when you look into the eyes of another human being and you are not thinking, just be an empty space, then there's love. You're not creating the conceptual barrier between yourself and the other.

Without the conceptual barrier, there's a realization of oneness, a direct realization, not because you have to convince yourself well, we are all one and I have to try and love this person whom I really don't like at all. It doesn't work. But then there's a true realization.

The oneness is there naturally when you no longer impose the divisive concepts, the judgments, but allow what is to be. Then there is an outflow of love. Look into the eyes of another human being and don't think who that is, who you are.

If the other can meet you, the same, it's wonderful thing to meet and you have the flow of consciousness between you and you really, there's a knowing then of oneness that doesn't need any explanations in the mind. And with it comes that, we could call it the feeling of oneness, which is love. What is love then is simply the realization on an experiential level of oneness.

That's love. And what does that mean? It means you recognize that your essence is there also in the other, your essence, you see it reflected in the other.

That's love. Love is not, I need you. That's the ego's version of love.

I need you. So love is already fullness. It's already the fullness of being.

You can only block it if you have some concept in your head that you're looking for God's love. He's not showing me any love. Why isn't he showing me any love?

I need God's love. Are you hearing me, God? And of course it's reflected back to you.

When you emanate that, it's reflected back to you from others who may think you're a wonderful person, but that's not really how it works. It's not that you become a wonderful person. It's you become a non-person and the light of the divine light shines through you.

Why does it shine through you? Because you've become transparent. The person has lost its density.

So you don't, it doesn't improve you as a person. It erodes you as a person. I must become worthy of God's love.

All these things don't really work. So some people say God is love. I would put it a little differently because love really implies a certain duality.

The beloved, the lover, and the beloved, love. But of course in God, there's no duality. There's only oneness.

So what does it mean when we say God is love? Well, I would put it this way. God is the recognition of oneness in the world of duality, which means love is a way for God to come into this world and recognize him, her, itself.

Because this world is the world of duality. And then comes the recognition of oneness. And that's God.

The birth of God into this world is love. And it's up to you to be the opening for that. But to be the opening for that, the person needs to substantially dissolve.

Just enough to still go around this world and pretend that you are a person. And that's where we're going evolutionary on evolutionary level into this transmutation, transformation. I'm always amused when I see things about people speculating about advanced species, extraterrestrials and aliens.

They think the highest manifestations of human civilization will be with more and more sophisticated technology. That's all they can ever think of. That the aliens who are so highly developed must have a technology that is so far beyond ours.

They've never considered, or it seems very few, considered the possibility they may have no technology whatsoever because they don't need it. And they're not picking up our radio signals because they don't have any receivers and they're not interested. So the transmutation is into something, into a different species.

We're not just improving who we are now and getting better at what we have now, which is all extremely limited. And I'm certain that this technology will come to an end too and something else will happen that is far more powerful. And in a way, this is already part of it.

The art, of course, is to be still even while you talk. How is that possible? That seems a paradox.

One could say it's having, sensing an inner spaciousness even while words are being formulated by your mind and coming out of your mouth. Not losing touch with that dimension of spaciousness or stillness inside. Otherwise, you're either, or you live in, you're either still as long as no noise, literal noise or metaphorical noise challenges you.

Or you get lost in thinking and doing and then you have to, oh, have to become, I have to meditate now. And then it's, but fine, at least you have that when you meditate. But the art of living is bringing the two together.

One could say space and form or formlessness and form. Form are thoughts and doing in the world of form. And the formless dimension is being or consciousness itself, the light of consciousness, spaciousness.

And one, another word we can use to describe it or point to it, that dimension of spaciousness in the background of your life that frees you from exclusive identification with a little me, the person, just personal sense of self, nothing else. Dreadful condition. Like a narrow prison.

So that, that frees you from being imprisoned in form, psychological form. And that's why sometimes it's called liberation or even salvation. And we could also call it, of course, transcendence.

The transcendent dimension to your life. That's the very essence of what is sometimes called spirituality. Nothing to do with belief systems or some or certain thoughts.

No thought in itself is spiritual because it's form. The spiritual dimension is the formless, but there's no ultimate separation between form and formlessness because even form is in essence spacious. It just appears to be form, but let's leave that aside.

We don't want to make it complicated. And so you're not dependent on external silence to be still. That would be hard.

I need silence so that I can be still. You can be still no matter what happens out there. I have often, I often talk about that.

Of course, it's non-reactive state of consciousness. Transcendent dimension. To sense it right now, I gave a talk a year or two ago in LA about the transcendent dimension in entertainment, particularly movies.

And the possibilities of bringing in that dimension through what in many cases is no more than a perpetuation of the normal unconsciousness in movies and so on. In many cases, it simply perpetuates the ignorant state of consciousness. Ignorant, not meaning lack of knowledge.

You can be totally ignorant even with a huge amount of knowledge. Ignorant means who you are beyond the form is totally unknown to you. You're completely trapped in form.

In other words, you don't know who you are. The person doesn't know who he or she is. And the collective is equally lost, of course, because it consists of millions of people who don't know who they are.

And then, of course, the nation does dreadful things because it's all based on delusional systems. So the possibilities, because everybody consumes entertainment, so-called movies and so on. There are great possibilities there for bringing in the transcendent dimension into people's consciousness, even humans who are not really open yet for that.

And yet deep down, every human longs for it. So I'd like to talk by a popular demand a little bit today about the transcendent dimension in movies. And instead of complaining how dreadful most films are, I could spend one or two hours talking about that.

I'd like to focus on what I already see is emerging in still a small number of minority of movies, various ways in which the transcendent dimension is already emerging. And that is not only helpful to you, perhaps, from the point of view of perhaps thinking, oh, I have to watch that movie, but also to become more clear of the various ways in which the transcendent dimension can be recognized in your daily life, because it all goes together, because really the movie is about human life, reflection of human life. So there are different ways in which the transcendent dimension can enter your life and continuously does, but it needs to be recognized.

So on a superficial level, I'm just going to recommend a few movies to you now. And that's why I have a piece of paper so that I remember what I want to recommend to you. And I choose movies that are readily available, mass market, most of them, not just a few movies that are hidden.

I'm sure I invite everybody to write in with their suggestions of when they have discovered the transcendent dimension in a movie or a piece of entertainment, popular entertainment. Please let us know. Tell us how and why you see the transcendent dimension emerging in that particular work of visual art.

And then tell us what it is so that we can watch it together. And it may be helpful to everybody to see how, look for it, look for the transcendent dimension when you see him. I always do that.

Is it there or not? In most cases, of course it isn't. But you can still find it in yourself while you watch the movie and you feel the witnessing presence and all these movements appear and they're being witnessed by the conscious presence that I am.

And that's the transcendent dimension. It's not actually in the movie, but it's here. But I don't really need to see the movie to, I can just as more helpfully watch the movement of leaves on a tree than watch nonsense being enacted on the screen or a bird sitting on a branch or the clouds moving across the sky.

A few months ago, I saw, and here we start with a movie that everybody a while ago talked about. Avatar, the most successful movie in commercial terms ever. So millions of people saw it.

Transcendent dimension, is it there? Yes, I see it in two ways in which it manifests there. One is a sense that nature, the world around you, the totality of reality is, it's not spoken, but there's an underlying sense that nature is pervaded by a field of intelligence.

Intelligence is not confined to the head, the human head, but you are surrounded by a field of intelligence. In other words, everything is an aspect of consciousness. Everything participates in the one greater consciousness.

And so some humans don't know that anymore and others are in tune with that. And of course, in that movie, it's the Western humans who don't know that anymore and the alien species who are still in touch with that. So although the movie has a lot of noise to it, I'd love to have seen a little bit more.

Stillness in it. Nevertheless, it brings into the consciousness of a mass audience the sense of sacredness of nature. Even to people who are not really quite ready for that yet, perhaps, but it's there.

They may not be able to formulate it, that this is what they see there, but it brings in that the empathy with all living forms and tuning in with your attention to the field of aliveness around you, rather than the egoic sense of self pronouncing the world around you, the world of nature, as dead and becoming angry at any suggestion that there may be a greater intelligence than your little intelligence in your head. So it has transformational value, and that is the transcendent dimension is there. And the other way in which it is there in this particular film, and that's a very important one also, is that in a movie, one usually identifies with characters.

So you project yourself into a character, if it works, and then you kind of live through that particular character. And in this movie, the, you are most likely to identify, it invites you to identify not with your own species, but to identify with an alien species. And that is transcendent, that brings in the transcendent dimension because it invites you away from egoic consciousness, the collective ego, identification with the collective form of us, to identifying with something that is beyond form, that finds expression through the other species, more that which is beyond form, finds expression through the other species more than through your own species in that movie.

So it invites you to self-transcendence without talking about it, by simply watching that there is to a small, greater or lesser degree, for some to a very small degree, but you can experience a little bit of self-transcendence. That is, I'm talking about the collective self. There's a personal self, and then there's the collective for us.

You transcend that, and that's an amazing evolutionary leap. And it's perhaps relatively recent. I've been reminded a little bit of some films I saw a long time ago.

They're quite old, I believe go back to the 60s or 70s. For the first time, that was in the Planet of the Apes, where also you are invited to identify more with the other species than with the human. Now, there may be some viewers of those films who are just not able to do that yet.

There are probably some viewers of Avatar who identify with that military guy. That's okay. And then, of course, the end is not good if you identify with that military guy.

It's not a happy ending. So this is wonderful because the self-transcendence is an essential aspect of spiritual dimension. It is through self-transcendence that the spiritual dimension comes into existence.

And there are more and more people now who do not automatically identify with their country. They recognize that their country is doing awful things, insane. And they're not saying, well, there used to be a saying, I think in England, I don't know, it might originate in the 19th century or early 20th century.

Right or wrong, my country. That, of course, is the egoic state of consciousness. No matter what dreadful things my country does, it's my country.

We have evolved, we are evolving despite what you see on the news every night. We are evolving slowly. In Germany, in the 30s and 40s, it required a very high degree of consciousness not to identify with the collective unconsciousness of the nation.

And a few people by conscious choice said, I'm not going to be part of this. And they left, but that was very few. It needed enormous awareness because the pull of the collective was so strong.

The pull of the collective in the United States was still very strong in the 50s and then considerably weakened in the 60s when millions stepped out of identification with the collective. Through an act of, an act of the collective that was recognized as ultimately insane, the whole involvement in Vietnam and so on, people began to disidentify from the collective ego, the form. So that is happening more and more.

Regression is always possible. We experienced some of that in the States. Evolution doesn't go like this.

It goes in spirals. Some films have at their core a truth that everybody deep down knows. And that I believe explains the great success of some movies which on the surface may not be that great, but there's a core truth that is there.

For example, in the Matrix movie, especially the original one, the core truth is life is a dream. You're all walking around like dreamwalkers. And there is a response to that in humans, although it's not quite as the film describes.

The dream has not been created for us by the machines, but the dream, of course, is being created for us by the conditioned mind, the totally conditioned human mind. And so the movie invites you to look at the people walking around the big city. And then somebody comments, they're sitting in a car and they're watching people.

They're actually all sleepwalking. They're dreaming. Of course, that's a recurrent motive in many in the older works of literature also.

In poetry, the dreamlike nature of human existence. But dream implies that it's possible to wake up. And of course, that's the possibility also in that particular film.

It's about waking up out of the dream. Regardless of the particulars of that movie, which are not the way it is, that's fiction. But the deeper truth underlying the particulars of that movie is you are asleep, you're dreaming, but you can wake up.

And that is a truth that deep down everybody knows. And I believe that explains the success of that movie because the rest of it is just... There are certain films that point to or show you the dysfunction of normal human existence.

They don't seem to have in themselves when you say, is there a transcendent dimension in this film? Is there a spiritual dimension in this film? And you might say at first, no, I don't see it.

But I do see that there is a transcendent dimension but there's an indirect way in which the spiritual or transcendent dimension can come into a movie or into your life. And that is through the recognition of what is false in you. For example, the recognition of what your own mind is doing to you on a daily basis.

How your own mind is making you unhappy. That is becoming aware of dysfunction. And in movies, there are movies that can make you aware of a collective dysfunction in humanity.

For example, that show you the reality of warfare rather than an idolized version of it. They show you what war is really like. And you see the madness of it.

They are not saying it's mad. A movie doesn't need to, then it wouldn't be a good movie. It would be preaching.

It just shows you. And then you, therefore it becomes a creative act. The realization comes to you instead of somebody telling you something.

By watching, you realize something. And so that's a much more genuine thing than somebody telling you that war is mad. It's not necessary.

All you need to do is when you truly are presented with madness, whether it is your own mind and you see what your own mind has been doing to you for the past 20 years. And not other people and circumstances. No, it was your own mind.

Circumstances were always as they were and always are as they are. All this, the suffering, 90% of it, probably 100% generated by your mind. So, and the realization then of dysfunction is in itself part of awakening.

So this is why I say those films that show you dysfunction, whether it's personal dysfunction of how insane humans are in their personal lives or collective dysfunction, how insane humans can be in the collective, they are, there is a spiritual dimension there. Not directly, it's not directly in the movie because all the movie shows you is madness. But it enables you to recognize madness as madness rather than madness as normal life.

And that is the spiritual act. So that's why there was a movie called, in this, it's an old movie, but if you haven't seen it, I highly recommend it, King of Hearts, it goes back to the 60s, wait in the 66 or so. It's about an English soldier in the First World War, a very childlike man who just loves birds and loves simple things.

And he's sent into some town in France during the First World War that has been abandoned by its inhabitants. The only people left behind are the people in the lunatic asylum, the mental home. So he connects with those people and then he brings them into the empty town and they dress up and they play their games and act things out and it's beautiful.

And then the normal people come back in, the two armies, soldiers come back in. Finally, they confront each other. There's a row of soldiers belonging to the Germans and they're the English or the French on the other side and they all lift their guns and they all start, they all shoot each other.

And then the both rows, they all collapse. And they're, this is what the, it's a, it is tragic and humorous. Humor, another important part of that.

This is a very subtle thing. Is it possible to still have humor when you watch that? And on, in this film, it's, this film succeeds in showing you the madness and at the same time inviting you not to disidentify from it, to recognize it as madness and even smile at it and say, oh, this is too absurd.

But it's not saying anything, it's just showing. And it ends, of course, the end is wonderful when the normal, the armies come back in. The so-called mad people are taken back to their mental home and then this soldier then stands there and he has to decide now, is he going to go back to his army unit?

And his final decision is he's going to the mental home. The implication, of course, being there's more sanity there than in the outside world. And that is a great work of art.

And a very powerful message. There have been a few films about war that were equally powerful. There was a, there's a famous book written by a German writer.

The book is called All Quiet on the Western Front. He fought in the First World War. He was a soldier in the First World War and then he wrote a book about it.

And the book became very well known and then was made into a movie in Germany and then he became, he had to leave the country because all the people who were not able to disidentify from the collective called him a traitor, the author. And then again, that movie and the book by the way, many of the things I say here which could also apply to literature when you read literature. So the self-transcendence and so on can also appear there.

But we're talking here about movies. Anti-war films do not make pronouncements against war. They show you the reality of war, that's all.

And that's enough. And again, that is indirectly spirit, those are indirectly spiritual movies. The recognition of madness is the first act of awakening out of the madness because the moment you recognize the madness whether it's in you or in the other or in the collective, the moment you recognize it, a new dimension of consciousness has arisen, awareness.

And that is part of the awakening. On a personal level, the dysfunction, there are quite a few movies that show dysfunction on a personal level, many. Now most of them never get beyond that.

It's the dysfunction, the conflict is somehow resolved but there's no growth or realization. There's one movie that I like, it's called Changing Lanes. And it's about two people who have a slight car accident on the freeway.

Not just a slight accident, they're changing lanes and they bump into each other. And they talk to each other briefly but that relatively insignificant event through unconscious reactivity gets amplified over the successive days into extreme madness between these two drivers in the totally, it gets bigger and bigger and bigger. They try to kill each other and it's all started from relatively little and it shows the nature of reactivity and what it does without talking about it.

It's just occasionally in the movie, you see if you look carefully in the background, while they're being insane in the foreground, sometimes you see little hints at transcendence. For example, they're insane in the foreground doing what they do. And in the background, you see two Buddhist monk walking across the screen.

And in another film, you see in the background the Christian cross on the wall while they're doing totally insane just because all these are ways of transcendence that have possibilities. And in the end, they are able to go beyond their madness. And that is, so it's worth seeing.

It's not a film that became very famous. It's changing lanes, which of course has two meanings. It's the meaning of what originally caused the accident.

But changing lanes also means changing the normal, the lane is where the unconscious movement of your thinking and your life, changing that to consciousness. Now, you might have noticed that every movie that you see, if you got down to the very basis of it, is about some form of conflict. Because if you went to see a movie of, say, two people, they are happy together.

They get up in the morning, say, I love you. I love you too. What are we going to do this weekend?

Let's go to the country. Okay. Oh, wonderful.

Going for a hike. Everything is fine. Great job.

Nothing. And after 15, 20 minutes, you would say, I want my money back. There's nothing happening.

But if after 15 minutes, they're still happy, they're driving along, and suddenly there's a hitchhiker, a girl who has just been attacked. Can you help me? Ah, something is happening.

And of course it is. Then the protagonists are being confronted with challenges and problems. Their normal existence is disrupted.

And unless their normal existence is disrupted, change doesn't happen. So in good movies, you see that the disruption of normal life, which is initially, usually, by those who experience it, interpreted as negative, the disruption of normal life is ultimately that which brings about a shift in consciousness. In not good movies, all you experience is conflict, but there's absolutely, it's never transcended on an inner level, the conflict.

It might be resolved on an outer level. Finally, the criminal gets put away into jail. So you feel a little bit, ah, at least he got what he deserved.

But there's nothing, there's no change. But if the conflict that arises, disruption of normal life, results in a deepening, then it does not just happen to the characters on the screen. The viewer partakes, if only to a small degree, of the shift in consciousness that is happening to the characters on the screen by the act of identification.

That is the power of entertainment that it invites you to identify the suspension of disbelief. Most of you know that term because it comes from theater originally, I believe. It applies to films also.

Disbelief means everybody knows that these things are not actually happening. That's disbelief. But by watching, it draws you in to such an extent that you voluntarily suspend, you let go of knowing that this is not actually happening.

It is as if it were happening for you, especially if you identify with the character. And if the character that you're identified with goes through a transformation, then that can bring about you're not quite the same, not totally the same person after watching than you were before. There's been a small degree of participation in the shift that happened to the character.

And that's a great possibility in movies to bring that to humanity. And I'd like to just give you a few examples of films that I'm very fond of where that happens. But I have to look at my list for that.

Of course, one of my favorite films ever that most of you have probably seen is Groundhog Day. With Bill Murray. And for those who haven't seen it, I'll summarize in one minute what it is about.

It's a man who is very much trapped in a negative mindset. Everything is just complaints about everything and he hates everybody and whoever he is, he just dislikes it. Cynical and he's a weather man of a TV station.

He talks about he's a weather forecaster and he travels to a town to report on this Groundhog Day in wintertime. A town, of course, he hates that town. They have to stay there with his assistant for one night in a little hotel.

And then he finds himself trapped in that day. He wakes up every morning and it's still the same day in the same town. And every time his alarm clock, his alarm bell rings in the morning, it starts with the same song on the radio.

I can't remember what it is. It's Cher singing something, the early Cher. I love you, babe or something.

And so he gets more and more... Everything happens is the same in the day. He meets the same people.

He can't get out of that day. He's trapped in time. He's trapped in that day and he is forced to re-experience.

It varies according to what he does, but the basic situation is the same day again and again. He tries all sorts of things. He can't get out of it.

And in the end, he gets so desperate, he even tries suicide. He drives off a cliff and then goes unconscious and suddenly wakes up and it's about seven o'clock in the morning again. So you can't get out until finally a shift happens inside him and he begins to surrender and accept the day and every moment of that day as it is.

And then he begins, because he accepts, he has begun, suddenly has empathy with other humans and suddenly he's helpful to other humans. And so the way in which he experiences this day changes suddenly because his inner attitude towards it changes. And every day, although it's still the same day, it becomes more and more beautiful.

And in the end, he says to his assistant and finally they even begin to love each other because he's become open. He says to his assistant, it's so lovely here, let's stay here. And the next day he finally is allowed to go and it's the next day.

So it's not until he surrenders that he experiences the beauty of that day and then he's released. Suicide is no solution. You have to come back.

If you're still in resistance and commit suicide, you come back again. It's a lovely movie. The essential message is very profound.

So I've seen that about five times. Also, I found some spiritual elements in The Last Samurai with Tom Cruise. Now, these are movies that have an archetypal element to them.

There are quite a few transformational movies and the archetypal part of those movies is that at first the protagonist is experiencing what in mythical language could be called the descent to the underworld or the night journey. In other words, chaos and total despair. So the protagonist has to descend into despair and chaos and from there he experiences a rebirth.

And in a way that happens to the character in The Last Samurai. He's totally, he becomes an alcoholic. He's totally disenchanted with life.

Nothing has any value anymore for him. And then accidentally he's captured by the last remaining samurai warriors of Japan and he lives with them in a village. And in that village for the first time he's confronted also with stillness and their simple way of doing things.

And at first everything inside him is screaming and he doesn't know any Japanese but he does know because he's an alcoholic the first few days he constantly screams, sake, sake. He needs another drink but he's not getting it. And finally he comes out, he's being transformed by the stillness that they represent that community of samurai's and becomes part of them.

So it shows the transformation through stillness. Also a movie that has the courage of bringing in some stillness. It's very rare but it's there.

Which is of course very, very much signifies the transcendent dimension in you when you see it in a movie and you can tune into that. It's wonderful for those few that have some stillness, have the courage to have stillness. There was some, The Horse Whisperer, many years ago, the movie, it's like maybe 20 years old now, where the movie has the courage to show you long moments of stillness.

For example, when he's confronting the horse that's been traumatized in a huge field. The horse is at the other end of the field and the horse whisperer sits there, doesn't, just stays with the horse for a long time and you see the wind blowing across the field and then he goes a little bit closer to the horse and the horse comes a little closer and finally through the stillness, and of course the viewer participates in the stillness, finally the horse and the human come together and that's in itself also transformational to encounter stillness in a movie.

But let's come back for a moment to transformation through despair and so on. Another lovely film is Painted Veil. Some of these films, by the way, are based on very good books, but I'm, here we are talking about, of course, just the films.

The Painted Veil, of course, is based on a novel by Somerset Maugham and it's about a woman who is, who marries a man just for money and convenience, a woman who is very superficial, incapable of true love, betrays him early on in marriage and he, to punish her, takes her, he's a doctor, he takes her to a part of China where there's cholera and into hell basically for her and by being confronted with that deep suffering, she gradually undergoes a deepening in the movie. And she becomes capable of love through that. So in other words, the suffering erodes her egoic self and brings, shows you that there is, in what was before, seemed a very superficial person.

No person is truly superficial. They're just superficial when you, on the outer appearance.

If every human has that depth potentially, and in some humans, suffering is needed or the descent into the underworld or the night journey, it's needed to break the shell of the ego and suddenly there's depth and suddenly the capacity for love and compassion and empathy with other humans arises.

And so by watching that again, the viewer, to some extent, participates in that shift in consciousness. Another movie that I loved, not that well known perhaps, it's called The Game, and maybe 20, 25 years old, with Michael Douglas. And that is the role that Michael Douglas plays so well, he's played it a few times, of a person who is totally in their ego, big, wealthy, egoic self, controlling, totally incapable of any true human interaction.

So he's that wealthy character in the movie with a dreadful ego, huge ego. And his brother, who is dysfunctional in his view, hasn't succeeded in life, he gives him a little, for his birthday, a little ticket or something. This ticket gives you free access or something to participation in this game, that some organization has created a game which you can participate, but you just have to agree to it.

And he finally says, okay, I'll do it. And then this organization that creates the game for whoever chooses to participate and then create situations in your life to disrupt your existence. And these are gradually, in the movie, you can see how his totally secure but lifeless existence gradually gets more and more disrupted by things that happen.

Somebody he meets, things, strange events suddenly happen, and suddenly he doesn't know if it's a game anymore. It seems to be real. And then in the end, he believes he's lost all his money.

He's destitute somewhere in a village in Mexico, just totally lost everything. Anyway, I won't tell you the end, but except that there's, in the end, it doesn't say that he's become spiritually awakened, but in the end, there's a little hint in the last minute that he's actually now become human. So the ego was so massive, it had to be destroyed through extreme anguish, suffering, and dreadful loss of everything.

So it shows the mechanism, and sometimes suspension of disbelief is hard occasionally in that movie, in some situations, but nevertheless, it works. So that's called the game. Of course, the game is what we are all engaged in, the game of life.

Complaining about the challenges of life and the conflict that doesn't leave us alone in life, but wanting our money back if we go to a movie and there's no conflict happening. So there we enjoy it, but we complain when we get it in our own lives. Of course, that's the very essence.

That is what pushes you into awakening, and the transcendent is the challenges of life. And even when you awaken, life continues to present you with challenges, and that's the beauty of it. So instead of saying, there's an absurd belief in many humans that life should be free of challenges, it should leave me alone.

Why can't life leave me alone? I want to, it doesn't. If it's not one thing, it's something else.

And that's good. That keeps you, once the awakening process has started in you, then challenges tend to bring about a deepening. You can also experience regression temporarily.

A challenge can come in and your ego can come back. The old reactive patterns can come back, and there you're trapped again, but not for too long. You'll get out again.

So the challenges become actually easier to manage when the awakening process has begun. They no longer turn into suffering. When the awakening process has not begun, the life challenges are turned into suffering, and that's the misery of ordinary existence.

One damn thing after another. God, I can't stand it anymore. I'm going to kill myself.

Well, before you kill yourself, why don't you try surrender? You have nothing to lose. And if surrender doesn't work, you can kill yourself.

A great movie, again, about transformation of somebody who is totally trapped in a miserable, conditioned sense of self. A movie, unfortunately, the title is not very inspiring. The movie's protagonist is Clint Eastwood, and the producer is Clint Eastwood, and probably the script writer is Clint Eastwood.

It's called Gran Torino. Gran Torino is a car. Well, anyway, the protagonist has this old car that he's very fond of called Gran Torino.

That's the title of the movie. But the protagonist is a former military man. He's now in his 70s, and very bitter and angry with everything and everybody.

And next door to him, Asian immigrants have moved in, what are these savages, what are they doing there? And leave me alone. But gradually, there's a teenage girl with these Asian immigrants who comes to him and talks to him occasionally, and he begins to open up a little bit to this teenage girl, and begins to experience a little bit of human affection, although he denies it to himself.

And he even goes over there to partake in their meal, and he still looks at everybody suspiciously. And he actually, when his son comes and wants to take him to old people's homes, I'm not going anywhere. And then, as he opens up a little through interaction with this teenage girl, and then the teenage girl gets attacked, raped, and attacked, and is buried by some gang.

And he has, or before, has protected her already from that gang occasionally, because he's a military man, so these people, these thugs, they actually respect him, because when he goes there, his presence is very threatening, and of course, he has a gun in his hand. He doesn't say, make my day, but that's the attitude behind it. And he realizes also, he has to go to a doctor, that he's ill, he has some lung cancer or something.

And so, how are these, what can we, everybody expects that he's going to shoot these thugs now to revenge what they did to this girl, that he started to feel affection for. But finally, the last part of the film is he achieves self-transcendence. He goes to where these thugs live, pretends to have a gun, but of course, he's unarmed, and puts his hand under his jacket, and they shoot him, and then realize he's totally unarmed, and of course, there are lots of witnesses around, and they all get arrested.

So he has given his life in order to take these thugs away, to get them off the street. He offered his life as a final act of letting go of self. He offered it to her, and symbolically, he lies, when they shoot him, he lies on the ground like Jesus on the cross.

He just lies dead. So this is the beautiful thing to see the gradual, the shift in him from total negativity and egoic self to transcendence of self. It's a lovely movie, if you haven't seen it yet.

Mentioned briefly, A Beautiful Mind, movie that is based on a real person and real events, a scientist who has delusions. He sees people that are not there. They talk to him, but he doesn't know that they are very real to him.

He doesn't know that he's insane, and nor does the viewer until the first half of the film. Even the viewer participates in his insanity. That's a very clever thing to do in that film.

The viewer is part of his insanity because the viewer believes exactly what he believes, that all these people that talk to him and he talks to are real. And only somewhere in the middle of the film, it dawns on him and the viewer that these are delusions. So he suddenly becomes aware of what his own mind has created.

And so the awareness has arisen in him. And as the awareness has arisen in him, he is no longer at the mercy of his own mind. His own mind in this movie is externalized in the form of people that come to him and talk to him.

But in everybody, of course, you have your own mind that talks to you. Every normal person has that. And you have thought patterns that come again and again and talk to you.

So everybody really has that form of madness. This is not in the movie. I'm just adding a little bit.

But it's implied in the film. Everybody suffers, basically, from the madness that he experiences as an external event, external events. Everybody experiences the same madness in themselves as inner events.

Everybody has, they have persistent thought patterns, bundles of thought and reactive patterns that continuously say this or say that or want you to do this, want you to talk to you. They talk. And of course, in the unconscious state, you are identified with what your mind is saying.

That corresponds in the film to believing in the absolute reality of these people who talk to him. And then this realization comes that is not ultimately real. That's not who I am.

Awareness arises. And once in this film, it's shown beautifully, once he knows that these people are not real, come to him, once or twice, he has to actually, when somebody comes to him, by the way, he gets the Nobel Prize for mathematics or economics, whatever it is, that's based on it. He actually, a true person lived.

When somebody in the film, somebody comes and finally tells him that you've been awarded the Nobel Prize, and he looks suspiciously because he doesn't know whether this person is real or it's an apparition that's just come to him. So he has to call a friend and say, is this person really here? Yes.

And the awareness that arises in him of what his mind has created, does not result immediately in a cessation of all these things that come to him. They still come, they still try to get him drawn in, but what he practices is not giving them attention. When they talk to him, he doesn't act on it.

He says, okay, I'm not interested. I'm not listening, not interested. So you don't, and again, that has an equivalent in what you can do in yourself.

And that is, you can recognize persistent thoughts that have a pull and not get involved. And they say, you must think about this. Okay, I'm not interested in this anymore.

Just take your attention to the present moment, just this. I'm not following you where you want to take me. And you don't need to, it's not a, it's simply, it's a gentle withdrawing of attention from where the thoughts want to take you rather than through some kind of almost violent act trying to keep out the thoughts that doesn't work to want to go away.

It's not, it's not resistance. It's simply choosing where you want to place your attention. I'm not going to follow you.

And so gradually then, for example, there's a girl that he always sees that's not real. And then for quite a while, he sees that girl always sitting in a corner somewhere, but she's almost given up talking to him. She's just occasionally, she's still there watching.

And finally, most of the time, he's then free. So that's the gradual shift. So that is, to me, it not only shows you the story of insanity and going beyond, it applies really to everybody because everybody in the unawakened state is suffering from that same insanity.

A beautiful mind. The mind doesn't really become beautiful unless awareness arises. Because until then, it's not very beautiful.

Some films are lovely because they show you a character who has virtually no ego. And that is when you can, when you can watch a human being who is, who acts free of ego, it is liberating in itself to see a human being who is not burdened with the unconsciousness that we call ego. In normal life, I think I would say that the Dalai Lama is a good example.

His main teaching, as I see it, is not his words. His main teaching is his being. His teaching is just sitting there and looking at the audience and looking at you.

And then somebody asks a question and when I spent a little bit of time with him last year, I was surprised how often when people ask him a question, and sometimes the questions are very complex, almost like, how would you solve the problems of the world? Not quite like that, but almost like that. And often he just sits there and says, I don't know.

I don't know. And sometimes, of course, after a while, he does say something that is quite relevant and is helpful. But it starts with, there's also teaching in there, it starts with not knowing.

Not knowing is a very powerful place in you. And I recommend it. Go there.

You don't need to continuously interpret everything and everybody and every situation and every human being. What do you think of this person? I don't know.

He's a human being. Why do you need an opinion? Why do you need to immediately fix the other human, give them some structure?

This is how he or she is. You've created a prison not just for that other human being, but also for yourself. So a beautiful state of not knowing, but the ego really can't survive in the state of not knowing.

The ego needs to say, I know. Or if the ego is in the state of not knowing, it feels profoundly uncomfortable and then tries to compensate with some kind of delusion. So the Dalai Lama, just to watch him is so lovely to see somebody who is free of the burden of an egoic self.

That's the main teaching. And so occasionally in movies, now whether that happens accidentally in some cases or whether there's actually a relatively enlightened script writer or director who creates that, I don't know. But there are movies that are not one or two that have no pretension of being spiritual in any way whatsoever.

And yet I discovered a protagonist suddenly and saying, well, he has no ego. So I'd like to recommend just a couple. One is, maybe it's a 25 year old movie or it's part of the, if I remember correctly, Indiana Jones series of adventure movies.

And this one is called The Jewel of the Nile. And apart from Indiana Jones, the protagonist in the movie is a Sufi holy man. And usually done in a very lighthearted way, but usually in movies, when you see a holy man, you have how the mind would project what a holy man looks like.

It would be kind of... But this holy man is a young man who is childlike and innocent and is full of humor and very light and doesn't take himself too seriously and has a wonderful quality of innocence to him. And later it turns out in the movie whose title is The Jewel of the Nile and the protagonist at first believe that what they're looking for is this incredible jewel.

And at some point in the movie, they realize the Jewel of the Nile is not a jewel at all. It's the title of this holy man. He is the Jewel of the Nile.

And there is an imposter who wants to take his place and wants to kill the Jewel of the Nile. And the imposter represents the egoic self to an enormous degree. And he almost succeeds, but of course he doesn't.

So in the end, the true Jewel of the Nile comes and is recognized by everybody in this big theater where there's... And the true Jewel of the Nile, suddenly there's a fire suddenly breaks out. But this innocent Jewel of the Nile, he just walks through the flames.

But there's nobody who claims credit I can walk through the flames. He just walks through the flames and then he's there and then he starts dancing. Just a lovely teaching there of an egoless being.

So how that got into Indiana Jones movie, I don't know, but it's there. Another film I saw where I said, well, this character has no ego is the, it's called The World's Fastest Indian. It's about an old man who has a, from New Zealand, played by Anthony Hopkins.

And he travels to the States to participate in some race with his motorbike. It's the Indian, Indian is refers to the motorbike that he has an old bike. So it's about his journey from New Zealand to the States and the people he meets and how he interacts.

And in every interaction, he displays no ego. He's immediate. He's just a presence there, no reaction.

Everybody's immediately accepted. Just wonderful to watch. Again, I don't know whether this is accidental creation.

There's some higher consciousness that sometimes guides a script writer into creating a character that is free of ego or whether the script writer consciously knows that he's creating a character that's free of ego. I don't know, but it doesn't really matter. It's a teaching to watch a character free of ego.

It doesn't happen very often. The same, of course, in daily life. You don't often meet people that are free of ego, but awakening humans are no longer totally dominated by ego.

So the transcendent dimension is in you. There are, of course, movies that show people who are at a pre-egoic stage. And that in itself, it can be beautiful, too.

That's not your destiny to go there. But it is beautiful to see how anybody who is free of ego is so tuned into the totality of life that he or she in their daily life are supported by events that happen to them because they are tuned into the totality. And the totality, not only are they helpful to other humans and situations, but also life is helpful to them.

In the absence of ego, you are a blessing to the world. And so we have that. There are particularly two films that show protagonists who are at a pre-egoic stage.

So pre-egoic means the mind-made self, the me, the image that you have of yourself and through which you live that consists of thought activity and reactive patterns has not yet arisen. These are very simple humans. They're at a somewhat childlike state.

And so in mythology, often described, it's a mythological figure too, often described as the fool. There's also in the tarot cards, there's a card of the fool. Now the fool is at a pre-egoic stage.

The ego has not yet developed in him. He's childlike. He or she is childlike.

But because there's an absence of ego, he is just an expression, an unobstructed expression of the totality of life that can act through him. And it cannot act through a more evolved human who has a big ego. So it is often the fool in mythology is the only one who can do certain important tasks that the intelligent people and the evolved people who have big egos cannot do.

They cannot be used as an instrument by the greater consciousness. You want to call the underlying intelligence of life. They cannot be used fully as an instrument as the fool can.

And of course, the fool is the pre-egoic state of consciousness. And then comes the enlightened or awakened state, which means you have gone through ego and have awakened out of ego. Then again, you are connected with the totality and the greater consciousness can use you again in a different way, different from the fool.

To an unenlightened outside observer, he might not even be able to tell the difference between you and the fool once you're awakened. There are certain similarities from an external viewpoint between the fool and the enlightened person. So they're sometimes mistaken.

Sometimes the fool is taken to be enlightened, and sometimes the enlightened is taken to be a fool. And a great example in a film of the fool being mistaken for somebody who is enlightened is the wonderful film with Peter Sellers, Being There. Being There is about this man who has been some rich person's butler for most of his life and never really left the house.

And finally, this rich person dies. And so he's left suddenly completely alone, cannot function in the world. Virtually, he's illiterate.

He's so childlike, he has no ego. And all he has is the clothes that his master used to wear. They fit him perfectly.

So he wears the expensive suits. And then some of the executors of the will come and say, well, you have to leave now. This house is going to be sold.

So he has a little suitcase, and he walks out into the street, doesn't know where to go, but dressed in this expensive business suit and encounters people just completely. And so what's life? How is life?

And suddenly, he gets hit by a car and not greatly injured, but just a little bit. And the car is a big limo driven by a chauffeur. And in that limo is this incredibly wealthy woman.

Charlene McLane is the actress. She invites him in, takes him to her house, he meets her husband. And because his utterances are so short, what he says, they are mistaken for deeply profound utterances.

He usually talks in terms of, because he's a gardener. He did a lot of gardening in his old place. So he says, I'm the gardener.

Oh, Mr. Gardener. And then the husband asks him about the economy, world economy. Well, in the springtime, when the buds open, all will be well, or something.

Oh, wow. And so, and then he meets the president of the United States, comes for a visit to this house. And he loves what he hears too.

And so on, towards the end, they're talking about that he might be the next president. And nobody realizes that he's a fool. They're taking to be highly evolved, enlightened, and have a great sense of humor.

But it's not a sense of humor. He just makes, they go into an elevator. And he's never experienced an elevator before in this house.

And so he says, oh, this is a very small room. And everyone goes, great. So the pre, and he is supported by life from the moment he has that accident, he's been taken care of.

And that's a bloodleth. And of course, we have a similar theme in Forrest Gump, who also exists at a pre-egoic stage. And he, again, is a beneficial influence.

He does, he helps many humans. He is a hero in the Vietnam War. He saves lots of people.

He claims no credit because he doesn't have an ego. He just says what he did. And then I did that.

But there's not, I did that. No. And then I did that.

So there's no identification with what he did. The egoic image has not arisen in him. So nobody is claiming credit for anything.

He is very, he is illiterate. He's, he's so unintelligent in conventional terms that he's almost unable to function. And yet, miraculously, he does great things.

And even the people he comes into that are close to him, who are tragic figures for most of the film, the person, his commanding officer, whom he saves in the Vietnam War, he loses both his legs. He's totally unhappy and miserable. The girl he loves, of course, the girl doesn't really want him because he knows, she knows that he's just too simple.

They cannot live together. She becomes very unhappy. She becomes a hippie, and drugs, and so on.

Tragic figures, who in the end all find redemption in the movie. They all find some degree of surrender, perhaps by being in close proximity to this non-egoic being, who again is so tuned in that life acts through him. It's wonderful to see that, of course, just as how a non-egoic entity functions.

But this is not, of course, where we can go. You cannot go back to the pre-egoic stage because we've all reached the egoic stage. There's no going back.

You're not going to become Forrest Gump. That's not what we are doing here. Ours is to transcend the egoic stage.

But to recognize the non-egoic stage is wonderful in its early form, pre-ego, because it has quite a few similarities with the post-egoic state that is arising in you. Something powerful that is in your life that you, of course, can experience easily all the time is the fact of the impermanence of all forms, that nothing lasts. If you've lived for long enough, you begin to notice that people in your circle of acquaintances and friends begin to die.

And so you become aware of impermanence, also the experience loss, and that the impermanence is a very powerful realization for humans when it is not resisted. When you can be with somebody who died or be with some great loss and accept it for what it is, any experience of impermanence can be an opening into the transcendent dimension in you. If it's resisted, it's suffering.

If it's not resisted, it is recognized as the inevitable fact of sense-perceived existence that nothing lasts for long. Nothing that you have lasts for that long. Everything is destined to dissolve, and that's fine.

If a film can show you to some degree the fact of impermanence, then that film can also be an access point into the transcendent dimension. One film that I like very much that has that is called The Notebook, and it's about a woman who is suffering from Alzheimer disease, and her husband, who is trying to come be with her although it's painful. She doesn't know anymore who he is, and he's reading to her from some story from a notebook.

The story is about a young couple who are meeting and falling in love, and then the film shows you it shifts between the old man and the woman with Alzheimer and the young couple who are in love. And later in the film, you realize they are the same people, and she wrote this notebook because she realized in the early stages of Alzheimer's she was going to lose her memory, and so she wrote down the things that he reads to her. You see the continuous shift between the two time periods.

You see them as young people, and you see them as old people close to death, and especially her, and that shift gives you a very strong sense of impermanence, and that is watching that, then is quite a spiritual experience to just to watch that the young people, the old people, they're the same. So the passing of time, something arises in you when you don't resist impermanence that is very still and very present. It's almost satisfying to watch what before was unpleasant to watch, the fact of impermanence.

Once you don't resist it, it's actually quite satisfying to see how life forms continuously dissolve. The forms are not here to last, and as you acknowledge the fleetingness of all forms, something in you that is not part of the fleetingness of all forms arises more strongly. And what is that?

You could say it's consciousness itself, the formless in you, because it's only from there that you can be aware of the fleetingness of all forms. So even in a blockbuster film like Titanic, there is a spiritual dimension because it shows you the decaying wreck of the ship, the bottom of the sea, several times in the movie, at the beginning, at the end, in the middle, there are flashbacks, you see the life on the boat, and then suddenly it shows you again the image of the decaying wreck of the ship, the bottom of the sea. And the shift back and forth gives you a strong sense of almost dreamlike quality of what's happening on the boat, and that's already all gone.

Of course, everybody knows even before you watch that what's going to happen, and nevertheless, the film will capture your attention. And so it has that dimension, also the woman, who is a young girl on the boat and a very old woman in the present time. The actress, by the way, I read just died a few weeks ago, who played the old woman.

Whenever you see in a film the shift between the same character as a young person and the same character as an old person, it's quite, it's a deepening. I often experience that, by the way, when I look at a human being, I often see, when I look at an old person, I see almost like a flashback the same person as a young boy or girl or young woman or man. And sometimes when I look at a young woman or man, I can also see that person already being old.

It's this, because it's only a few years in between this and that, just a few years. And after that, gone. One of the most spiritual, it's not a movie, it's not a film.

It's a commercial, the most spiritual commercial ever made. It's for beer. I can't remember what beer, it's some Scandinavian beer.

And it shows you, it lasts about 40 seconds. The commercial. And it begins with, it's a kind of, I don't know if it's a cartoon or, but it looks almost like a real being, human being.

And you see a baby coming out of the womb of a woman shooting out of the womb, a little baby. And it shoots up into the sky. And as it travels upward into the sky, it already begins to grow into a fully grown human as it goes within a few seconds, it goes up higher and higher.

And when it reaches the highest point, it's a man in his prime. And then it starts to go down. And as it starts to go down, it's kind of screaming.

And as it approaches the ground, it's already become old, an old man. And finally it goes plop into the ground, the grave. That's the end.

Suddenly the scream comes to an end. And it all took 30 seconds or 40 seconds, growing maturity, getting old. And then it tells you, of course, it's a commercial for beer.

So it says, life is short, drink. Now, I think without knowing it, they created a deeply spiritual commercial. Or perhaps they were guided by some higher force, the advertising people.

These friends of ours loved it so much, so they forwarded it on the computer, so we were able to watch it. Maybe we should put it on the website. And then, of course, there are films that bring in, in some degree, a sense of presence or witnessing presence.

There's one film, and this is a film, one of the few films that are actually not boring, although some people would say this film is boring. I've said it to me, but I don't see it as boring. A film that has virtually no conflict in it.

This film's called Lost in Translation. And you wouldn't really, at first, see it as what's spiritual about that. It's about an actor.

Again, we have Bill Murray, a little older now. He travels to Japan. He plays a famous actor, although he is a famous actor.

It's also his character. He travels to Japan to do a commercial in Japan for brandy. And he spends a few days there, and he's in the hotel, and he meets a young girl.

What's spiritual about it is that this young girl, she has no particular function in the film as such. She's there because her boyfriend has to do a photo shoot. She's in the same hotel as the old actor, and they spend time together more and more time.

And the girl is just a... She walks around the city just watching things. She's a witnessing presence in the movie, not an active presence.

She's just there, just walking around, looking at things, watching. She travels to Kyoto on a train for a few hours, watching pimples, Japanese life unfolding, watching. So this film has a character who represents a witnessing presence rather than a participant, not so much participating in or initiating some action, but just being a witnessing presence.

And I recommend that to any budding or non-budding film producers here to explore that a little bit more or script writers. Great potential there for bringing in the witnessing faculty into a film. We have it in some other films in one degree or greater or lesser degree.

We have it in American Beauty where the witnessing consciousness is represented by this young man who walks around with a movie camera. And just, he watches the world through, he films everything, his neighbors, whatever he was. He just, the highlight of the film is when he films a crumpled up piece of paper or plastic bag being tossed about in the wind.

And you see then what he films becomes the image on the screen. And you see in the background commentary says something beautiful about that. As he witnesses that, he sees incredible beauty even in that.

The beauty of every moment, just incredible. And at that moment, the viewer of the film experiences what he talks about. By watching this piece of paper or plastic being tossed about in the wind, it's a dance.

Something that everybody would overlook because usually in a film, what you're interested in is what happens. But here what happens is interrupted frequently. And what you are presented with simply is the fact of witnessing, of pure observation of life.

And if a movie can show you something that usually would be overlooked and see the beauty that is there in every moment and in everything, even the most insignificant things, certainly nobody would look for beauty in a piece of paper being tossed about in the wind. And yet there it is. And the moment you see it, you see it's a dance of form.

There too. And that awakens you to the beauty that is in every little thing in life. So that's a wonderful thing that a film can do.

It can point to that to make you more conscious of the aliveness and the depth that is in everything and especially in the things that usually you would overlook because there's something more important. So there's very strongly the transcendent dimension because although this film has, of course, and the action evolves, but it takes you out of the plot and suddenly presents you with something that has nothing to do with the plot at all. And yet it deepens, it gives a depth that wasn't there before.

And that is the transcendent dimension. And therefore, of course, that is what you need to do in your daily life and probably are already doing. Of course, you're always going somewhere to do something.

Whenever you're going somewhere, I'm going now there to do this, to meet that person, to do that. You're always on your way somewhere, but are you so involved in where you want to get to that you miss all the stuff on the way that is all around you? The beauty that is always all around you?

Or are you able to, even as you go about your daily business, are you able to acknowledge a moment of looking at the sky, there's clouds moving across the sky, being aware of the raindrops falling, especially later today, tonight, it's coming. The raindrops falling, there's a beauty there in everything. How light is reflected off of surface or in a glass of water, just aliveness and beauty, the aliveness of life all around you.

It's overlooked. 99% of that is completely overlooked because I have more important things to do. And what's important?

It's the future moment that I need to get to. That's more important. Not this, I'm getting, I'm on my way there.

I can't be here. I can't be where I am because I must be there. Normal human existence.

And of course, you never get there because there always remains there. There cannot become here because it is already here. The there is a mental creation.

So you're pursuing the mental creation of there which is the future moment, the future, which is a thought, nothing else. I need to get there. When you get there, of course, it's here again.

And again, you're not here. It's always the transcendent dimension then comes when you acknowledge the here. In addition, yes, of course, you deal with where you need to get to, but you more and more, you acknowledge the here and that deepens life.

That is the dimension of depths. And it's only then that aliveness comes in and you can appreciate the beauty of it all. Not necessarily the conventional beauty where you, the rare things, you would say, oh, that's really a beautiful flower.

Yes, it is. But it's as the, how the little tiny bubbles that are forming in this glass air bubbles are beautiful. They reflect the light like little diamonds.

How the light is reflected off the surface of this table, the air you're breathing, the light, everything is, has an aliveness to it. It can be, you can acknowledge it, the texture of something. And then when you go outside, the continuous arising, coming and going of life forms, it's a dance of life.

And that is not personal. It's not, so you transcend the merely personal when you acknowledge that dimension through presence. So presence is required to acknowledge the here fully.

So if a film can help you do that, then it has fulfilled a wonderful function. There's a Peaceful Warrior, a film that the critics didn't like, but don't always listen to the critics. I've seen some really bad films that were highly praised and vice versa.

Peaceful Warrior, which of course is based on the book. It's about a young man learning what it means to be present. And it's wonderful because it shows you there are no insignificant moments.

That's one of the important lines in that film. There are no insignificant moments. Every moment has a beauty and an intense aliveness to it.

And the teacher in the movie shows the young man what that means. And then the camera shows you the aliveness of what before was regarded as insignificant of every moment, intense aliveness of that. So again, it gives you an experience of presence.

But it only becomes meaningful if there's already some presence in you so you recognize it when you see it. If you are totally in your mind, then it's meaningless. If you're totally in your thinking, it's meaningless.

And of course, that's probably what the critics are. That's where they are. Well, not all, but some, most.

The Legend of Bagger Vance, another film I would recommend. It's about a man who is a golf professional. He has to go to war.

And when he comes back, he loses the ability to play golf. Then he meets this bagger that he's golfing. I think that's a term, golf term.

His assistant, a young black guy who really is a spiritual teacher. And he teaches him how to play golf again, but in a deeper sense, what it means to be present with playing. And that's the main part of the film is the second part when he learns what it is to be present.

And there's some wonderful shots of he going into absolute presence before he hits the ball. Absolute, no thought. One of the things his bagger assistant tells him, what you're learning is to be, ah, to stop thinking without falling asleep.

Stop thinking without falling asleep, which really is the essence of presence. And so as you watch that, when he has those moments, the viewer is invited to experience that state of consciousness. Stop thinking without going to sleep.

And he lifts up his club and goes, and he looks where he already sees the ball where it's going to be in the present. He looks and then he goes, wow. So I'd like to see that a bit more in films to bring in actual moments of presence where the character is experiencing presence and the viewer by viewing is entering the state of presence.

There was another film. This is a German film, goes back quite a few years. Wings of Desire, later remade in Hollywood as City of Angels.

And the original one is probably a little better. The second one has a lot of strong romantic element to it, which detracts a little bit from the witnessing presence. There are these angels walking around the city, watching what humans do and listening to their minds also.

And they are pure witnessing presences. In the original one, it's in Berlin. So these angels, nobody can see them.

They're just what they look like, just humans. And they walk around as pure presences, just watching. And they're amazed by human experiences and what they do.

And they're amazed by sensory perceptions that humans experience. And they're amazed at all the things that humans are no longer amazed by because it's familiar. But when you see the familiar through the eyes of pure presence, the familiar is no longer familiar.

And suddenly it's alive and new, and this presence arises. So there's great potential there for scriptwriters and directors of truly transformational films that embody presence. And take the viewer into presence.

It's exciting. It's wonderful. So I hope you enjoy some of these.

If you haven't seen them, you've had some, and perhaps you will have some ideas of your own for perhaps a script that wants to be written, an idea, or if you don't want to write a script, write in, let us know what your idea is. If you think you are not up to it, somebody else wants to do it. I've had a few ideas of my own, and some people want me to write a script for a movie in LA, but it hasn't happened yet.

Whether it'll happen, I don't know. I don't think I would be very good at writing an actual script, but I could perhaps work with somebody, and we'll see. These things happen in their own time, and it doesn't really matter through whom it comes.

Consciousness chooses the most appropriate channels, but the most appropriate channels are not always the most obvious channels. Sometimes what looks like a non-appropriate channel becomes the most appropriate channel, so maybe I will write a script. So let's always focus on what's good, the arising of the consciousness, rather than focus on the old consciousness that's still playing itself out to a large extent in the media and entertainment.

We know all that. So rather than complain about that, let's focus on where it is arising, because what you focus on then grows. You give it attention.

Be careful with the media, because the media gives a lot of attention to negativity, so I recommend that you consume it in small, very small doses, and when you do consume it, be the witnessing consciousness. Don't believe what they're saying. This is very bad, very bad.

The banks are collapsing, very bad. How do you know that's bad? Well, let's not go into that.

Thank you. Welcome to our live Easter meditation. You're here not because you want to awaken, but because you are awakening unless somebody dragged you here or wherever you are, wherever you're here is.

If our meditations are deeply enjoyable, then you are awakening. So this is all part of the awakening, the collective awakening process. It goes far beyond the personal.

In fact, that which is transcended in the awakening process is the personal dimension. Transcended does not mean it gets totally eliminated, but you go beyond it. It no longer dominates your consciousness, and in a manner of speaking, you die to the personal dimension, and for some of you or many of you, most of you, it's a gradual dying process, and for a few, it's a drastic and sudden death.

For most, as I said, it's a gradual dying of being centered in a personalized sense of identity. And that dying of the personal self of which our being together here is a part, that's the Good Friday message, the truth contained within that, that the death, as I see it, the death of Jesus happens on Friday, and the birth of Christ, the resurrection, the rebirth into a different dimension happens at Easter. And until the death of the personal sense of self is voluntarily embraced, it's painful.

But what's even more painful is to be trapped in that narrow sense of self. What is that narrow sense of self? Consciousness is identified with form.

Another way of putting it, consciousness is trapped in form, doesn't know it, dreamlike state. Whenever you get upset about trivial things, what he did or he said or she did or she said or your parents or your spouse or your ex-spouse or money matters and you get upset and reactive, that's a good indication that consciousness is trapped in form. And then form becomes all important, which is a delusion.

So you are trapped. Another way of putting it, you don't know who you are. Another way of putting it, you are nailed to the cross of matter.

You are nailed, you, consciousness, are nailed to the cross of form. And you suffer. Eventually, you surrender.

In other words, the reactive entity does not operate anymore and then you're free, the awakening to who you are beyond form. The words I'm speaking here are, of course, thought forms. But there is the unseen dimension to our being together here that has nothing to do with thought or sense perceptions, but is the awareness that is arising of consciousness itself, the formless dimension in you, one could say.

The words which are forms, thought forms, continuously point to that, that to which they point is, of course, beyond words, beyond form, is who you are essentially. And you recognize it as we sit together here, that there is something here that is not the words, not what you see, not the image of this person, the form, but something arises from within you that you cannot name, although I occasionally try to find a little word for it, inner space, stillness, awareness itself arises. That's where the personal is transcended.

Of course, this is helpful to be here together and enter that dimension or allow that dimension to arise in which the personal is transcended. The real challenge is in everyday life, which for many people seems to consist of nothing but the personal and all the personal concerns. And some of you who are able to be here or sometimes when you're not disturbed or you go out into nature or sit quietly in a room, you can become still, alert, present, transcend the personal.

And some of you, yes, you're able to, it's beautiful, the awakening is happening. And some of you are not yet, not able yet to sustain it. The moment a challenge comes from the world of the personal, the phone rings.

Are you able, when you answer the phone and talk to whoever, your accountant, be there as the person who deals with whatever needs to be dealt with, but also not lose awareness of spaciousness? That's the real, your purpose for being here, not just for being here, now on this planet here, is to master that art of being rooted in the impersonal and still dealing with the world of form, the world of matter, the world of thoughts. Ultimately, more effectively than before, because one of the great benefits of mastering this art of this dancing, the dance between form and formlessness, one of the most wonderful benefits is you lose your fear of form, the world, other people.

In other words, you lose fear. And fear is that which blocks love, which would naturally be there in the absence of fear. Fear ultimately is saying, form is all there is.

Now, a belief that there is something beyond form doesn't help you. A belief, I believe in God, I believe in the spiritual dimension, that doesn't help you, because a belief is still a thought form, so you still have fear. It needs to be an actual realization, not an understanding thing as, ah, now I understand.

No, it's not that kind of realization. A knowing, non-conceptual knowing, a living knowing of that in you that is formless, that is still, present, alert, spacious. You have to bring that into this world, into the world of madness, madness meaning the complete absence of transcendence.

Otherwise, the world makes you mad. And whenever you go back into the world, you become mad again, like everybody else. So you can bring sanity to the world, or you can allow the world to make you mad.

Draw you into its madness. Whenever you're fighting something or someone, the world is drawing you into its madness. Of course, somebody 2,000 years ago already said that, forgive your enemies, is basically the same thing, saying the same thing.

Don't fight anything or anybody. Fighting is an inner state of consciousness, a reactive state of consciousness. Any reactivity is a form of fighting.

So you have all the fights in the world that are not working because they are fights, the fight against terrorism, the fight against drugs, the fight against crime, the fight against poverty, the fight against illness. So these are not solutions, they add to the problems. The solutions, that's not really solutions, there is one solution to all the problems, which is, find the transcendent dimension in you.

And it's not a question of saying, okay, I found it now, what's next? By finding, it means to continuously live that knowing. It's not a once, okay, I found it now, I'm awakened.

It's a continuous knowing in the background of your life, non-conceptual awareness.

Stays with you, that's what it is. Shines through the personal.

And then through that, the light that shines through the person that was before was so heavy and dense, that is what transcendence means. The density of the person or the personality, once you know what it is, you can see it in others around you in daily life, you can see how they are trapped completely in their conditioned sense of self, which is the, that is the density of the personality, the person. Your challenge is, the question is, does that make you dense?

Do you react to their density and by doing so become just as dense and reactive as they are? Or are you able to be there as the bringer of transcendence? Other terminology, for example, A Course in Miracles uses other terminology, the bringer of salvation.

There's a statement in A Course in Miracles that says, I'm here for the salvation of the world, and that's what it means. You have to bring in the transcendence into this world. And it's not just, you don't, it's something that happens in the collective consciousness.

And quite often, as you bring that dimension into this world, it can awaken others to that, even sometimes a dense, very dense personality. Suddenly, let's go, suddenly the dense personality, let's go off his or her defenses, because you are not opposing it, reacting against it. And then something can happen.

A sudden awakening, recognition, just a glimpse perhaps. It's enough for the awakening process, which that person may have no idea that that's what it is, but just, but it is enough for the awakening process to begin, the spark. So really, if you know that in any life situation, your true purpose, no matter what situation you encounter in your life, your true purpose in that situation, your deeper purpose in that situation is not the dealing with the external factors of the situation.

Yes, you have to do that also. But your true purpose is to embody the transcendent or awakened state of consciousness, to bring awareness, in other words, to embody awareness. If you forget that, as I said before, you become mad again, like the world.

You have to remember, you're here to embody awareness. And that's the true purpose in any situation. And then you deal with the externals, and you deal with them differently, of course, not in a mad way.

And you don't generate more madness out in the world. If necessary, put little stickers everywhere in your home to remind you until you don't need them anymore. Put a little sticker on your cell phone, T for transcendence, so that you don't become unconscious on your cell phone.

Put it on your computer screen. Bathroom mirror in your car. So another lovely lesson in the Course in Miracles is called, let me remember what my purpose is.

Ah, yes. Of course, remembering is not enough. And then what follows on from remembering is living it.

Oh, yes, this is my purpose. Let me remember what my purpose is here. Your purpose is to dissolve the madness by embodying awareness.

Your purpose is not fighting the madness, reacting, complaining about it. That's not your purpose. So our Easter message is, of course, remembering our true purpose, and not just remembering and then forgetting, remembering and then living it.

And then perhaps you forget, and then remember and again live it. Live it. Embody it.

Embody it. So that means whoever you meet in daily life, whether it's a casual meeting, or you meet somebody, a colleague at work, whatever, whoever, it's a holy encounter, potentially, if you remember your purpose. Because you bring the spiritual dimension into the interaction.

Or rather, it shines through you. Of course, it ultimately is you. Words are always limited.

Are we able to control our minds while sleeping? Although I'm able to be present much of my waking hours, from the minute I fall asleep to the minute I wake up, my mind is chattering away. I assume the questioner is talking about his or her dream life.

From the minute I wake up to the minute I wake, I fall asleep to the minute I wake up, my mind is chattering away. Well, it won't be chattering away during dreamless sleep. Every yeoman, as you know, has periods of dreamless sleep, and there's no mind activity there where the mind connects with the Source.

But you don't know that. And then, I assume, then you mean that you have a very active dream life. There's not much you can do except go into sleep with as much presence as you can.

So in the last 15 minutes before sleep at least, don't engage in mind activity, television, no, listening to the radio, no, even reading a book, no. Go into the body directly, or use any other access point for presence, or just go into presence directly. And go into sleep from presence.

Don't confuse, this may not be the case with you, but it could be the case with some people, don't confuse suppressing thought with being present. It is, for some people, able to suppress thought, which requires an effort, and you become a little contracted when you do that. So in other words, some people can will themselves to stop thinking, but it's not real presence.

You can't really will yourself into presence. It's not will, there's no contraction that goes with it, and it's not really, not even an effort. So let me just demonstrate, because words sometimes are not sufficient.

If you will yourself to stop thinking, the body contracts a bit and you're holding something in, and you go like this, and you might even stop breathing for periods of time. So, and if you hold yourself tight and you stop breathing for periods of time, you may be able to stop thinking while you do that. Some people call that meditation, and some people have perfected it to such a degree that they can sit for one or two hours like that, and that holds thought at bay, and then the moment you let go, come out of your meditation, the mind is more active than before, because you were holding the lid on a boiling kettle.

You're holding the lid down. But real presence is simply a natural arising of awareness, in which there's no contraction in the body, and there's no willpower that is exerted, but presence is simply allowed to arise like this, and that's a state of openness. In that state, thoughts tend to quickly dissolve.

Very different from the state of closeness, the tight lid, to that. So, make sure that presence is not brought about by an act of will, willpower, exertion of willpower, because that's not, that's not presence. Presence is powerful, but soft, gentle, open.

Some people have an active dream life, other people less so. Of course, everybody dreams more or less. Some people remember their dreams, others never remember, they almost never remember.

The more attention you give to your dreams after you wake up, the more you tend to dream, and there may be something said for some time, there may be a period in a person's life where paying attention to your dreams can be helpful, such as it's practiced in Jungian therapy and so on. There may be periods in your life when paying attention to your dreams, you can learn certain things, there may be messages there, and the more attention you give to your dreams, the more the dream life responds. But I believe that that is, that is a period in a person's life, and then you move on, and then dream life becomes of less importance, or maybe still occasionally you might get a very insightful dream.

The important practice is presence in daily life, then eventually the rest will look after itself, and dreams tend to turn more peaceful also, and you might even lessen the amount of dreams that you have, not that that matters really anymore. Dreams are less needed to give you important insights when you are present, because in presence insights tend to come to you directly, so you tend to less need the intermediary of dream images less, because you're already connected with the source of all insights and wisdom. Funny thing is, if you go to a Jungian analyst, after a while you begin to have Jungian dreams, isn't that strange?

Not that that's not, that's not valid or valuable, that's how it works, because life responds to your, or consciousness responds to your expectations. Well, I trust that you can hear me, and also that nobody is waiting for something to happen. As you know, the normal state of consciousness is a waiting state, it's a waiting room.

Normal human existence is a waiting room for life to get better, occasionally it does, and then after a while you're back in the waiting room, and so life is missed, the aliveness of life is missed, because you're waiting for it, while it's happening. A sorry state, a little amusing too, well you can cry or laugh depending on your perspective on it. And so of course we have this, I think it may be a Zen saying that says, this is it, where's my life?

Or expressions like, I don't have a life, or you might tell somebody, get a life. One or two people may want to ask a question, unless the question is already gone, let's see what the first question is. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (7:52:57 - 7:53:14)

A friend of mine got shot and died a couple days ago, so it's been on my mind, what happens at the time of death, and where does the life force go, what is the transformation?

[Speaker 1] (7:53:18 - 8:20:28)

Thank you, thank you. Well, I haven't gone through physical death yet, as the Zen master who was asked about life after death said, I don't know, and they said, why don't you know, you're the master, and he said, yeah, but I'm not a dead master. But I've gone very deeply to what one could call death to identification with form, so in a way I have gone into that realm from where I can say and know that ultimately what we see as death is the dissolution of form, that the eternal in us, which I know that firsthand, cannot be touched by that.

So what exactly happens, I would say depends on whatever state of consciousness you were in, that must be a predominant state of consciousness in this lifetime. If in this lifetime you were continuously identified with form, your body, or the psychological form of me, that means consciousness, this expression of consciousness was still in a somewhat dreamlike state, which is identification with form, and you can easily extrapolate from that if the tendency of consciousness to identify with form was still there, which in other ways the awakening had not happened, this tendency will continue, there will be further identification with form, and the process will continue as the consciousness that is not yet fully awake will continue to identify with form again, and then gradually come to a place where awakening happens.

Or if there has already been a disidentification from form in this lifetime, then you can extrapolate from there that the compulsive urge to identify with form and to seek another form, or another cycle of form identification, this compulsion to seek further experiences through identifying with form, then would either be much weaker or be completely absent, in which case the consciousness that you are is no longer bound to this realm and will not seek to re-experience the realm of form.

But in either case, I can tell you that all is well. It does not really matter whether this person now needs further experiences of identification, in which case this will happen, or whether he's already free of this urge, in which case he will move on and live in a realm that we can't even conceive of from where we are here. I get a sense deep within in the forms of what that is, but we don't need to talk about it here.

All we know is nothing, this is the beginning of A Course in Miracles, which is the entire Course in Miracles summarized in two lines, nothing real can be threatened, nothing unreal exists, herein lies the peace of God. That which is real in him is beyond form. Anybody can know that when you see a dead body, you realize that this is no longer whom you knew, this is not the being that you knew, this is only a shell.

So nothing real can be threatened, nothing unreal ultimately exists. This is why sages from all traditions speak of this realm of form as ultimately illusory, ultimately, it depends what level you look at. The important thing is all is well, beyond the appearance on the level of form, which is the only level where death exists, it is the transition from one form into another form or from one form into formlessness.

That is what death is, no more than that, nothing real dies, nothing real dies, which is to say ultimately there is no such thing as death, there only seems to be. It's a transmutation of form, either form dissolves or seeks some other form, some other identification with form. That for you, of course, to go into stillness in the face of death, to go into stillness is important, to become still within yourself, especially when you are sitting with somebody who is going through the death process, or you are confronted with somebody who has just died next to you, to be with that, immediately close your eyes, go into the deep stillness where you realize who you are.

And once you realize who you are, which is formless consciousness, then you realize also that nothing real died, nothing real died, which is to say ultimately there is no death. It does not mean that you can't feel sad. You can allow yourself to feel tears and to feel sad, and at the same time realize that nothing real died.

That happened to me when my parents died two years ago within the space of six months, both of them, so to be confronted with the death of a loved one in a short period of time. Yes, there were tears, and there was sadness, and at the same time there was the realization that ultimately there is no death, and who they were in their essence has not been destroyed. Just as I know that I in my essence cannot be destroyed.

And so that comes from that. It comes from self-realization or self-knowledge, the realization that the other also is beyond death. So you can have the coexistence of, yes, on this level there is a place for sadness and mourning and tears.

If it happens, it comes in waves. You may have noticed usually if somebody close to you dies, the sadness comes in waves at you. Then you cry, and then it leaves you, and then comes another wave.

And even when the wave comes, there can be an undercurrent of peace. So you're not totally in that emotion. You're not totally consumed by it.

It exists there in your own spaciousness. And the spaciousness underneath the emotion is the peace. And it's only from that inner peace that you can realize the truth behind death.

From Leanne, most spiritual teachers talk about the process of enlightenment or awakening, explaining things as if we are moving towards a goal somewhere in the future. How do you bridge learning the process of living in the now without continuing to feed the idea of it being a goal somewhere in the future? So we talk about learning to live in the now, which implies time, which is not the now.

That's what the question is about, the process of awakening. And does this not lead to the idea that we are moving towards a goal in the future and thereby, of course, missing the now? That could be the case if it's misunderstood.

If the process of awakening or living in the now is misunderstood, then the mind will create an imagined future self that is fully at home in the now. So one day, the mind says, I will achieve the state of being fully in the now, and then I'll be awake. And of course, thereby ensuring that you will never reach it.

And this is a dilemma of many spiritual seekers who have been seeking for many, many years. Nobody present, of course, here. They've been seeking for many, many years and not realizing that their mind has created a state to be achieved in the future.

And I am aspiring towards that state. And that state is a perfected, more enlightened or awake form of me. And so, of course, you will never reach it because continuously you have the idea in your mind that there is a state to be reached.

And so you miss continuously the only place where the state can be reached, which is now. So that's the realization then that we need to let go of this idea that awakening is a future state to be achieved. But awakening can only happen in the present moment.

And there's no self that you're going to reach that is a perfected version of your present self. But whenever we talk about this, the timeless dimension of consciousness, of presence, with reference to this dimension, we are going to encounter some kind of paradox. It is true, of course, that it does take time to live in the, to learn to live in the now.

What that means is that continuously you're not in the now and you lose the now, which is access to the timeless dimension of consciousness. You lose access to it and you're back in your life situation, back in your mind, back in time where past and future are completely obliterate the present moment, a normal state, in other words, and you become a normal human being again, somewhat mad, which is normal. So the learning to live in the now, yes, there's a little bit of a paradox here because it takes time to be at home in the now and to live it continuously so that you don't lose the now anymore and go into the dream world of not now.

So that you bring in the timeless dimension into the dimension of time. And when the two come together, you will encounter, when you put it into words, you'll encounter some form of paradox. That's fine, that's fine.

The important thing is realizing that awakening is not about achieving some future state. The intensity needs to be directed not towards wanting to reach a future, because many spiritual seekers have great intensity, they work very hard, they might meditate four hours a day, and they're really determined to get there. And they don't, they never do, because their intensity flows into future, into their mind.

But the same intensity can be directed into the present moment. So that is bringing together two seemingly conflicting approaches to awakening. One says, there's nothing you can do, any effort will just take you away from it.

And the other approach says, you need to want awakening as a drowning man wants air, otherwise you won't get there. So you have the two, some teachers will tell you there's nothing you can do. It comes when it comes.

Just be here now. Enjoy yourself. The other says, oh, no, you have to really work really hard, like the drowning man.

And so you get these conflicting viewpoints. But you can put the two together. But the intensity of the drowning man who wants air or woman, the intensity of the drowning person who wants air can be directed into the now rather than into an some idea of future.

So you become intensely present now. That's that that means you don't need the future anymore. The intensity moves into the vertical dimension, rather than losing itself in the horizontal dimension.

So for spiritual seekers, for most spiritual seekers who haven't arrived yet, they may have intensity, or others have no intensity at all, and they fall asleep in front of the TV waiting for enlightenment to happen. So that doesn't work either. Some intensity is necessary, but not the intensity that moves into the future, but the intensity of presence.

And when a challenge comes into your life, two things can happen. Either the challenge pulls you into old unconscious reactive patterns, and you start complaining and resisting and fighting and dreadful things happening, or a challenge can awaken you. So for example, let's say your stockbroker sends a statement, or your mutual fund sends a statement, you open it and you see your investments have become reduced in value by 65%.

You can become unhappy and make up stories in your mind about how difficult your life has now become, and how difficult your life is going to be the next few years, and how futile it has been to work so hard and to try and save all that money as a security for the future, and it's all evaporating into nothingness and how dreadful it all is. And think about it and talk to others about it and feel the corresponding emotions arising in your body. In other words, the challenge has pulled you into unconsciousness, completely lost the now, completely lost the aliveness of now.

Or the challenge can awaken you. You see, oh, you see the figure on the page. Oh, that's what it is.

And you accept this moment as it is, without building stories around it, and become intensely present. So the intensity of, you need to have intensity when a challenge comes, or a challenging person, a very unconscious person trying to drag you into some kind of conflict. Very easy to succumb to that.

It happens in politics all the way, all the time. One unconscious terrorist pulls the whole administration into unconsciousness. We may talk about that.

So use a challenge to wake you up into that alertness that is so different from the normal state of reactive thinking. Absolutely alert in the now. Whenever the mind comes in and creates some form of unhappiness for yourself, because that's how unhappiness is created.

Unhappiness is not created from the situation. It's created from what your mind is telling you about the situation. So if you, you can observe that process in yourself.

It's not the situation. The situation is neutral. The mental commentary about your situation, life situation, whatever situation you encounter, the mental commentary is what produces the feeling of unhappiness.

The mind judges the situation as not good, not good enough, or is threatened by it, or imagines a future that's not going to be satisfactory, and so on. So the, it's not the situation, but the mental commentary that creates that unhappiness that is so normal for most people. And they don't realize it, because they confuse what their mind is saying about a situation with the actual situation.

It starts with the simplest thing, like saying it's a dreadful day today, because there are drops of water coming from the sky, and it's gray, the sky is gray, and so what a dreadful day. You've already confused the simplicity of what is with your judgment of what is. So you call the day dreadful.

And that's a, it's a tiny thing to do, but, and then of course it flows into almost everything. And so you, you cannot see that everything's, the simple is-ness of the present moment, always the moment is as it is, the rest you add to it. And to see that the moment always is as it is, there's great power in that, that you don't need to have some kind of reactive relationship with what is.

That's superfluous, it's dysfunctional. And that's, so this is what every master, every Zen master teaches, that simplicity of being with what is. People try to study Zen and they go to monasteries and can't figure it out even after 20 years.

Why? Because it's too simple. What is now is, that's Zen, be completely with what is and you're immediately a Zen master.

If you want to be a Zen master, it's a good profession, then just decide that I'm, I'll just be with what is every moment. You got it. You're there, you don't need time anymore.

No time is needed to be with what is. So here we have the paradox. Now, of course, in this dimension of time, it's very rare that somebody enters that state and never leaves it again.

So you might decide as you sit here, okay, I'm going to be a Zen master, from now on I'm going to be with what is, totally. And I'm not going to add superfluous mind stuff to what is. I'll be with what is and I'll respond to what is, out of presence, out of that alert presence, and it'll be wonderful.

No more problems for the rest of my life. Of course, it's true. And so you walk out of here or wherever you are, and then probably before you reach home, a minor challenge will present itself, if only in the form of, it's still raining.

It's been raining for days. Why am I living in this climate? You're beginning to lose it.

The master is no longer a master. Because once you start with that little thought, another one comes about my life. Maybe this thing about the present isn't really working.

And so you go, oh, I lost it. I thought I was going to be a Zen master. I have to think of something else.

And so you need time. You need time because you lost it and then you need time to get to learn to live in such a way because you continuously lose it. All patterns, mind patterns come up and take you over again.

Habitual mind patterns come up and pull you wherever they want to go. Now, if you had absolute intensity of presence, and it's possible, it is possible that someone who listens to this, perhaps you or you or you, you okay, are going to remain present with such intensity that the old patterns just cannot take you over anymore. Then all you can feel is the old patterns wanting to come in and saying, hi, here, come, come here.

Worry about this. You have to worry about this. And you say, no, I'll just be present with what is.

There's no problem now. I'm not going to worry. If I have to think about something practical, then I'll think in a focused way.

But I'm not going to be taken over by my mind. Okay, returning to presence. And then there will be another attempt, a little challenge happens in the traffic or wherever.

It is this driver is like a gust of wind. Why personalize a driver that does something to you? Well, you wouldn't personalize a gust of wind and complain about the gust of wind that pushes your car this way or that way.

It just is a natural phenomenon. And so simply you are with what is. If there's an unconscious driver, that's just, that's what is.

There's no inner self that is complaining about it. You remain present, you remain the master. If you had that intensity, then the mind would never take you over again.

And you would have your new career as a spiritual master. Or just be free of unhappiness, and that's enough. But you cannot not be a master and affect everybody around you if you live in that state.

Whether you want to or not, it may not be a formal spiritual teacher. You will, you always teach your state of consciousness. If you're unconscious, you teach unconsciousness.

And you will pull others into unconsciousness. It happens continuously. So I sometimes use this paradox.

You need time to awaken or to be enlightened or to be free. You need time until you realize that you don't need time. As long as you believe you need time, you need time.

And then a moment comes when you realize, I don't nearly need time to be who I am. I am who I am already. I am who I am.

The formless essence of who I am cannot change. So time is not needed. The full realization of that might take you time.

[Speaker 8] (8:20:44 - 8:22:11)

I've been doing what you suggest about bringing Presence into everyday life for about five weeks now. And I'm doing it more often and staying longer. And at one time, I noticed that when it came time to go back to work, it was like I had some difficulty getting back to work.

And I had the thought that, wow, what if I get stuck in stillness? How am I going to be able to do my job? And later I realized that it wasn't that I was going to get stuck and couldn't get back, but that I didn't want to leave.

I didn't want to go back there. So the thought came to me as I get more deeper into that place of stillness, is what I'd like to call it. How do you think without thinking?

If I leave my thinking mind behind and go into this place, which I'm recognizing as my home, and it's going to become more so, I'll be identified with that. How do I essentially think without thinking? Now, yesterday you brought up balance between the world of form and the formlessness.

Well, that's what I want a picture drawn of. How do I do that? Do I put stillness in the background while I do these things?

Okay. Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (8:22:18 - 8:35:08)

As this dimension arises, at first it tends to arise more when one is not engaged in activity so much, but actually sitting still or being still in nature, not being challenged by the world. So at first it arises more in moments when you're not being disturbed by the world. As one woman said to me on a retreat, he said, when I'm alone in my room, I can be very spiritual.

I'm so spiritual alone in my room. But the moment I go out into the world, I seem to lose it. And of course that's the challenge, but it's a good start.

At least you can be spiritual in your room, as she puts it. But that she meant present. And so there's a shift happening that enables you gradually to bring presence or stillness also into activities.

One good way of learning to do that is to do certain movements and so that stillness flows into physical movement. Kim will tell you more about that and practice with those who would like to do that. And this is very helpful.

Stillness does not require you to sit still. At first it may be helpful to sit still and then allow stillness to arise. But the next step is to get up, to move somewhere, move from here to the table and pick up a glass of water in presence without making any step into a means to an end.

Be fully there in every step. Or you get up to answer the phone. Another little mini meditation that I recommend to people is whenever the phone rings, don't rush to the phone.

Let it ring a couple of times before you get up or go towards the phone. Don't be the slave of the external demand of that object in consciousness. Let it ring and twice is fine.

Nobody's going to hang up just because it takes two more rings. If necessary you have to reprogram the answering machine so that it doesn't answer too soon. Let it ring a couple of times then go and answer it.

Then you're not reacting to the phone and many people when the phone rings there's already an uneasy feeling inside them because you never know what it's going to be. So let it ring twice, be there and then you can still carry the presence with you even as you answer the phone. Gradually something happens that every person who has achieved mastery in any area will tell you that mastery implies that there is relatively little thinking involved.

You develop the ability to look at a situation without breaking it down conceptually into bits and pieces and attempting to arrive at some kind of decision. There's a more powerful way of dealing with situations where you look and so when you look at a situation it may be an actual visual looking but there's a when I say look there's a wider implication. I mean directing your attention to something without breaking it down into this, this, this, this.

You take in the totality of the situation. This just means you're applying. It's very different from the normal way of dealing with things and so at first it may be a little awkward.

It's like a new way of walking, a new way of being in the world. At first you may only use it in relatively simple situations and then gradually you apply it to all situations. So something arises and you look and you immediately know what it is that is needed in that situation but this looking is unconditioned intelligence being applied to that space to hear what's happening in front of you.

That's how anybody, any great artist or great musician, he is completely present and not mentally analyzing anything or preparing it through the mind but completely present and then action happens. It comes out of the presence. There's a strange thing you can do just little things knowing without labeling it mentally.

You can, for example, it sounds a little silly almost, you can look at a clock or watch that especially if it doesn't have numbers on it and just find out if you can know what time it is without verbalizing in your mind what time it is. So when you look at it and then this is, you don't have to do it here but do it at home, just you look at it, you can know something without it becoming words in your mind. That's the strange thing that there's a knowing that is non-conceptual and that is a very powerful thing to apply that to any situation and if you go, for example, into a meeting of course you know the facts that you need to know, that's a different matter, but without preparing what you're going to say.

Don't prepare what you're going to say. Jesus already told us that when you're going to speak, don't prepare it. The Holy Spirit will move through you when you speak and he will speak from that.

I'm not quoting literally but more or less that's what he said. You don't need to know beforehand what you're going to say and if there's enormous power in that, if you ever experience the two situations having prepared your speech and speaking spontaneously, you see the enormous qualitative difference, the difference in power, provided that you are not paralyzed by fear when you speak and you don't have a script. If you can accept that primordial state of not knowing conceptually, if you can accept, become comfortable with not knowing in many, many situations.

Let's just take, you have to give a speech, become comfortable with not knowing as you stand or sit there, then begin to speak. It happened to somebody I once knew who went to give a talk and he left behind his lecture notes and then he arrived there and at first it was very awkward. He almost cancelled.

He said, I can't give it and then he first apologized to his audience and then he stumbled and after five minutes suddenly a flow started and it was the most powerful speech he had ever given. Another example of that is when I was at university, we had one professor who was loved by all students. He was the only one who would give his lectures without any notes.

The others had notes that were, in some cases, had used the same lecture notes for 25-30 years. You could see they were all old. They'd been reading these lectures year after year and there was this man who every lecture was, when he talked about literature, all he would have is he would have the book there that he was talking about, no notes.

He would just flick through and then look at a line there and then talked. Wow, every lecture was fresh and new. And then I graduated from that university that was in London and two years later I was in Cambridge doing research as for PhD, which I never finished, but that's another story, and he got invited as a guest lecturer and I was so happy.

I told everybody, there's this wonderful person who's coming and he's going to give a talk. So everybody came. So he came up and to my astonishment and disappointment, he came with notes.

He thought giving a lecture at Cambridge was such an important thing he just couldn't improvise and it was the weakest talk he'd ever given. So not trusting, not being able to trust in that deeper intelligence that can actually move through you. And so any sports person knows that if any thought interferes you're not in the zone.

You're in the zone when there's no mind activity. There's simply looking and action, looking and action. Whether it's hitting a ball, many sports kind of, you hit a ball of one kind or another or you throw a ball.

And I've often wondered why do people watch that? I can see why people play it, but why do people watch it? And the only answer I can have is perhaps they love seeing somebody who is in presence and they love to see that energy that's behind it that moves through them.

Although I'm sure it's much better to play yourself than to watch. So if you want to watch a film that's about that, it's called The Legend of Bagger Vance. It's about somebody who is very good at playing golf and then he loses it.

He goes to the war and when he comes back from the war he's lost the ability to play golf. And then he finds a teacher, he's really a spiritual teacher, who teaches him to play golf again. And really what he's teaching him is to be present, to be completely utterly present.

And that's beautifully conveyed in the film when the power finally, far greater power than when he was playing golf naturally, now his presence flows into, and one or two shots in the film are just beautiful, when he looks into the distance and his mind is totally still and then he goes and his mind remains totally still and then the ball falls and lands in the hole, whatever it's called. I don't know much about golf except I know that the ball has to go into the hole. To a limited extent, even when you're driving, oh that's a nice tune.

It's all part of our meditation. There's nothing that is not part of our meditation.

[Speaker 11] (8:35:10 - 8:35:11)

Nothing wrong.

[Speaker 1] (8:35:21 - 8:53:43)

To a limited extent, even when you're learning to drive, I remember when I learned to drive at a relatively late age, in my late, no, my early 30s I think I learned to drive. Yes, that's right, 31 or so, 30. They, so it takes a little longer and because you're analysing situations.

Situations. Okay, is this road, is there enough space for the car to get through? There's cars parked there and there's another car coming in opposite direction.

Should I stop or should I carry on? What do I do? I asked the instructor, what do I do?

He said, okay, just stop the car, stop the car. He got scared. And then hesitating, I'm putting foot on the brake, no, accelerator.

Should I go forward? He said, oh my God. And then the driving test came and he waited while I was taking the test and then the miracle happened.

I passed. And when I told him I passed, he said, you passed? And then I still couldn't drive really, but I passed.

And then gradually then no conceptual thinking happened. And this is a very limited area. You drive because you look and you know what you have to do.

You're not analysing the situation anymore, completely different way of driving. And this is probably the reason why even to this day, the most powerful computer in the world that ever been built cannot drive a car from one point of the city to another point in the city. No computer as yet is capable of that.

And if he were, you wouldn't trust him because there's so many unforeseeable situations that continuously arise. And the concept by breaking information down into bits and pieces, it just isn't powerful enough. There is a vaster intelligence that does not require the breakdown of reality into conceptual bits and pieces.

This is why I smiled when I saw the robot from the future in the film with Arnold Schwarzenegger, Terminator 2, for example, where you sometimes see the robot, how the robot perceives the world and the robot has a screen. And when the robot goes into a situation, on the screen, the situation is broken down into information like man approaching, wearing a machine gun, weight, level of threat, nine and a half, action to be taken. So it goes, and then finally he goes into action.

But it would be far too slow. Any human looking and acting is far more powerful than anybody whose actions are based on conceptual analysis that may have its place for certain things. But even the greatest scientists have known that the insights came not through further conceptual analysis.

They tried, they worked on problems conceptually, but finally there was a giving up on that level of looking and there was an opening up of spaciousness. They were not looking for the answer anymore. And then the realizations came.

Einstein had the greatest realizations that could not even be verified. He didn't know if it was true, but it came from a deep level and years later experiments were performed and astronomers verified that the things that came to him were actually the case. And here we have an example, Einstein, of a human being who is not excessively dominated by, he has a powerful intellect, but not totally dominated by the intellect, relatively free, almost completely free of ego.

A person who in his childhood was considered by some people at school to be mentally retarded because he was so slow. This is not what our society values. Our society values quick answers.

Who knows the answer? I know, I know. And Einstein was just sitting there because he went much deeper even then.

And he learned to speak at a relatively late age. And so some humans naturally have that ability more than others, but everybody can invite that into their lives and realize that there is another way of dealing with situations, with reality, with relationships. You move away from excessive conceptualization and thinking and then you are able to use non-conceptual intelligence.

It's not so much that you use it, it comes through you. Non-conceptual intelligence, that's creative intelligence, and that cannot be measured in IQ tests. So IQ tests can only measure how you handle conceptual intelligence, but they cannot measure your degree of alignment with non-conceptual intelligence.

It's a totally different thing. But this is where human creativity arises. You may, in some cases, it may then be expressed through concepts, but the insight didn't come through analysis.

And so what we are learning to do as presence arises is to analyze relatively little, to define conceptually, intellectually less and less situations and just be there as an alert presence in the situation rather than a conceptualizing mind. And that brings about an enormous improvement in relationships when the judgments that your mind habitually uses to deal with people are not there anymore. And you meet another human being through non-conceptual intelligence, through non-judgment, just be there as the space.

You look at another human being and there's just the present space in which you look. There's no, you don't call this human being anything. It's a beautiful thing of relating because you're relating to something deeper, coming from something deeper in yourself than the conceptual mind.

You're relating beyond the conceptual mind of the other person. The other person may still be judging you, that's okay, but you go, it's like linking into something deeper in the other human being. And stillness is part of that.

You're still, while you look at the other human being, you're still, you're present, you're listening, you're looking. And then you may be speaking, not preparing the next thing you're going to say. It comes, it's fresh and new every time.

And so everywhere, wherever you go, this is a wonderful practice. Some things like using the first stage of learning something new often implies learning a few things stage by stage. I cannot go, for example, I cannot walk up to a musical instrument and say, okay, I'm going to be totally present and then something, a wonderful piece of music is going to come out of me.

It's not going to happen. I can sit at the piano. If I haven't learned how to play the piano, it's not going to happen.

The first stage is often you learn a few things bit by bit, technique. Nobody can achieve mastery by improving the technique more and more and more. At some point, technique is transcended and then presence arises.

This applies to anything, dance. If I wanted to learn to dance, be a great dancer, I could do some spontaneous movements. It might look quite nice, but it would not.

I'd have to learn certain things first and then go on to the next dimension from there. The dimension of presence can then flow into that. If I wanted to be a great physicist, theoretical physicist, like Einstein or Stephen Hawking, I can't start scribbling mathematical symbols and solve the problem of the universe.

No, I would have to learn first. It would take a few years. Once I've mastered that, then the next dimension, if that doesn't come in, I will just be maybe a research scientist, but nothing new will come through.

As always, mastery implies the arising of presence. That means the conceptual, the analytical becomes secondary. It may still be used, but it becomes secondary.

Doing things without thinking. Basically, we're talking about transcending thought as reliance on thought. Presence is going beyond thought.

That's an amazing shift. It doesn't mean thought doesn't happen at all. Thought still happens within that vast space of presence, but something far more powerful takes over.

There are spiritual teachings. Many people have listened to, for example, teachers like Krishnamurti. He has spoken for many, many years.

People are just saying, what is the essence of that? What is he actually saying? Of course, it can be summarized in one sentence.

He never said it. Stop thinking. Don't fall below thought.

Rise above thought. That's where the teaching comes from. Any spiritual teaching comes from there.

But Krishnamurti was a teacher who taught through negative, like Buddhism, can the mind know the answer to this, he asked. Let's investigate how far the mind can go. And so, through showing you what the mind cannot do, that the truth actually then emerges in the same way that the Buddha taught.

He made no positive statements. He talked about the unmanifested, the uncreated, the unborn. He didn't say God.

And so, making that into an idol is much more difficult than somebody who has a positive teaching and talks about God. You can very easily make God into a mental idol, a mental construct, not realizing that you believe in a mind construct and that the reality is far deeper than that. The uncreated, you can't really, the unmanifested, the unborn, you can't really say, I believe in the unborn or the uncreated.

It's harder to do. Or Buddhism talks about the deathless realm rather than eternal life, as Jesus taught in positive terms. Buddhism says the deathless realm.

And again, it's much harder to make these things into belief structures in Buddhism. That was the great wisdom of the Buddha. He knew the tendency of the human mind of transforming concepts into idols and believing in them and then believing that that was it.

And so, he avoided that. And so, he never mentioned the word God. And that was probably an extremely wise thing to do.

And yet, centuries passed for about, I believe, 600 years or so after the death of the Buddha, there were no Buddha statues. But then people suddenly found, oh, we need a little reminder. And then they created Buddha statues.

Not that they are not wonderful. Every Buddha statue symbolizes, if you know what it is, it symbolizes a state of consciousness. It points to a state of consciousness.

It's not the statue of somebody who once lived. It stands for a state of consciousness. And so, as a reminder, it's fine.

You can use that. But gradually, in popular Buddhism, the Buddha became virtually a god, almost. They don't call him a god, but virtually.

And so, the human mind has a tendency of looking for some form, to create some form to believe in. And then, of course, you lose yourself in the form. And the very essence of the Buddhist teaching is the formless, the emptiness behind and within all forms.

Krishnamurti said he would sometimes go for a walk. He would go for a walk every day in wherever he was, in Ojai, or in Switzerland, or in England. And there would be virtually no thought while he was going for a walk for an hour or two hours.

His mind would be virtually untouched by any thought, just presence, just looking. He wrote a beautiful book. I believe it's called his Notebook, where he wrote down how he perceived nature during his walks.

And every walk is fresh and new. Every description for every day is fresh and new, because there was no past in his perceptions. A bell, form arising as a sound, and just space of consciousness is left.

Form subsides. What's left? Nothing except that.

Form arises, attention to the sound, no more sound, just attention. One more time. And as you listen, can you be aware of the presence in which the sound arises?

And now just tension left, just presence left.

[Speaker 6] (8:54:30 - 8:55:17)

My question is around the issue of psychiatric medications and awakening. We have talked about this issue on ETT Forum. It is an issue in my life situation and the life situation of many others on the Forum.

Some believe they need to go after medications to awaken, and others say without the medication, they would not have enough clarity to even begin to bring presence in their lives. My question is, can a person take psychiatric medication and still awaken? Will psychiatric medication hold a person back or slow down the awakening process?

[Speaker 1] (8:55:19 - 8:55:39)

Thank you. Thank you. May I ask a personal question?

Are you on medication?

[Speaker 2] (8:55:40 - 8:55:40)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (8:55:41 - 9:07:16)

But you're also here. That is already part of the answer. Because for you to be here, there must be some inner recognition of awareness.

And so despite whatever the medication is, or whatever their condition, your condition is, there is an arising of awareness. So it's easier for me to answer this question because you are standing there than an abstract question. You are living proof.

I'm not saying necessarily you don't experience periods when you are taken over by whatever patterns there are in the mind. But there is an opening into awareness, which is not the case with many people who are not on medication or who are considered normal. They are not standing here.

Many of them are not and wouldn't be. In them, there is no opening. So one cannot say categorically under this or that condition, awareness cannot arise, awakening cannot happen.

As a general rule, before anybody seeks help of that kind, I would advise to explore other possibilities. If you wish to gradually become free of medication, which in many cases can obscure the awareness that wants to arise, you would need to do it with a physician who is relatively conscious. There are some.

There are maybe twofold questions. One question is, with medication, is awareness able to come through? And of course, that depends what kind of medication, or over what period of time, and other factors.

But in some cases, I believe it is. In other cases, it's not. It can obscure the awareness.

The other question is, a certain mental, what is diagnosed as mental illness, can awareness arise there? And again, that depends on the nature of the illness. Sometimes in the West, shifts in consciousness are misinterpreted.

If they happen suddenly, they can be misinterpreted and misdiagnosed by a physician. And Western physicians, because they're conditioned by the Western system, have no idea of shifts in consciousness. It's not part of the medical model.

There are no shifts in consciousness in psychiatry. You can either, you are normal, but normal, of course, is insane, but they don't know that. Or you are illness, you're diseased, the mind is ill.

There are people who are put on medication, unfortunately, children sometimes, in increasing numbers, in whom there may simply be a change in consciousness happening. There are children who, for the most absurd reasons, are put on medication just to keep them quiet. And people like who in India, Ramana Maharshi, the Indian sage, who when he was 17, 16 or 17, suddenly did something that in the West would have been regarded as a sign of severe mental illness.

He left his home, he went to, took a train, and he sat down by a temple and stopped doing anything, didn't even put food in his mouth, just sat. And of course, in the West, they would have put him away. And in India, they respected it and allowed him to sit there and fed him, people came.

And after a few years, he started to speak again. And it turned out that he was awakened, he had awakened. But the shift was so sudden that he became dysfunctional for a while, from a normal viewpoint, became dysfunctional, couldn't operate anymore in the world.

So this can happen to people sometimes, and it's totally misinterpreted. So often, what is called medical psychiatric illness, not always can be a misdiagnosed shift in consciousness. At other times, there is actually a condition there with which it would be very difficult to live.

Many types of so-called schizophrenia, again, schizophrenia is a huge term which can be applied if you don't know what exactly is wrong, you call it schizophrenia, it's almost like that. The same way in the physical body, it's a viral infection, they don't really know, but this is a term that covers a lot of things, it's a viral infection. Oh, now I know what it is.

And then schizophrenia, now I know what it is. In many cases, it is true that in mental illness, the very cause of the illness can be total identification with certain mental movements, lack of awareness. I've had limited success when I worked with people one-on-one some years ago.

I had some people who had forms of schizophrenia who came to see me who were on medication, and by sitting with them and pointing to the possibility of awareness, they were able to become free and eventually also become free of the medication. For example, I remember one case, a woman came to see me who had severe auditory hallucinations, so-called voices. And again, we don't even know whether the entities actually are talking to her, it's possible, but it really comes to the same thing, whether it's thoughts in her head that take the form of a voice that she hears, the voice tells her to do something, it's very insistent, or several voices sometimes, very insistent, telling her to do this, do that, and enormous energy behind that voice.

And the way I approached it was to point out the possibility of not giving, not paying attention to the content of what the voice says, but simply to be aware that there is a voice speaking and that it is a voice in the head, it is a thought, I called it a thought, maybe it's something else, but it comes to the same thing. It's a thought, it's a voice, whatever it says, you say there's a voice, be the awareness for the voice, don't fight it, be the awareness so that the voice, you don't do what the voice says because you disregard the content. So if the voice says, you are God, say thank you, there's a voice again.

If the voice says you are the devil, thank you, there's the voice again. You are the awareness for the voice, disregard the content. Then gradually the voice lost its power because she disregarded the content of the voice, awareness grew.

So ultimately the healing in any case is awareness. So awareness can arise in the strangest circumstances and to people you would never have predicted could arise to, and that includes even people who have a so-called psychiatric disorder or who are on medication, it can happen. Nobody can categorically say that it cannot happen.

In some cases, those people are closer than normal people. As you know, there was a movement in psychiatry in the 60s and 70s where they, it was called anti-psychiatry, where it was recognized that often psychiatric conditions are really something else. So it's really, it is simple in your case that obviously despite the medication, you are here and something, a shift is happening inside you.

Nothing can stand against the power of awareness ultimately because the power of awareness is the power of the evolution of the universe itself. So nothing really that, it will, it seeks the slightest opening and it can come through that. So I would say that trust that as it's happening, it will continue to happen for you.

And there may be a point when with help, the medication won't be needed anymore as awareness grows, but you need somebody who is conscious to help you with that, a physician who is conscious to help you with that. It's wonderful to see that it is working.

[Speaker 6] (9:07:19 - 9:07:23)

It's helped that I've disidentified from it.

[Speaker 1] (9:07:23 - 9:07:23)

Yes.

[Speaker 6] (9:07:24 - 9:07:26)

And I'm able to be the witness.

[Speaker 1] (9:07:26 - 9:07:28)

Yes, that's the power.

[Speaker 6] (9:07:28 - 9:07:35)

It's been, my symptoms, less power over me. Yes. Knowing that I'm not that.

[Speaker 1] (9:07:38 - 9:08:07)

That's right. So that's the key, to be the witness, to be the awareness for whatever it is. It's wonderful.

So I'm very grateful. I'm glad you asked the question. And I'm sure there'll be many people who are in a similar position have the same question.

So yes, it is possible. It is possible. Thanks.

Thank you. Thanks.

[Speaker 7] (9:08:38 - 9:09:06)

Eckhart, my question is around surrender. I'm curious. Once the egoic shell has cracked open and the light of consciousness is peeking through, can the ego surrender itself to that light of consciousness or ultimately must it be surrendered?

[Speaker 1] (9:09:17 - 9:11:11)

The ego, I often talk of the ego as if it were an entity. It's not really an entity. It acts as if it were an entity.

It seems to be an entity that has taken possession of you. But ultimately what it is, it's only a particular way of your mind to function, an identification with the mind. So the ego itself is that dysfunctional way in which the mind works.

And when that comes to an end, the dysfunctional way cannot put an end to its own dysfunction. It can only dissolve when awareness arises. Awareness is not thought.

Awareness is consciousness prior to thought. And you'll realize that you are that, and whatever the mind produces and says are thoughts. But the thoughts are then no longer endowed with a sense of self.

And that's the end of the ego. When you no longer identify with every thought that comes, that's the end of the ego. So that's what happens.

So I don't know in the way you formulate the question, the ego cannot dissolve itself, but in the light of awareness, it dissolves.

[Speaker 7] (9:11:13 - 9:11:18)

Then what is that willingness to allow it to be seen?

[Speaker 1] (9:11:19 - 9:14:20)

That willingness is the evolutionary impulse of the universe which created the ego in the first place in order to transcend it now. It was an evolutionary step for mankind. The ego was an enormous step for mankind, a great thing.

And then it came or is coming now to the end of its lifespan. That particular evolutionary movement or manifestation that we call ego, it had a lifespan. It has outlived its usefulness now.

We have learned a lot through it, and now it needs to go. And that's always a critical stage. The transition from one state of consciousness to another is always critical.

There could be a falling back. There could be, we're at this transitional stage where the ego now needs to dissolve. The caterpillar has come to the end of its useful life as a caterpillar.

It's been fine. If the caterpillar was happy for a while, crawling up the tree and eating the leaves, now there are no leaves left on the tree. And it's time for the caterpillar to cease being a caterpillar and turn into something incredible.

That little slimy thing. Suddenly, it doesn't know what's happening to it. Caterpillar doesn't say, I must become a butterfly or I'm trying to become a butterfly.

But the caterpillar suddenly notices that crawling is becoming more and more difficult. And it's looking for leaves. It's eaten all the leaves of the tree so there's nothing else to eat anyway.

If it doesn't change now into a butterfly, it'll die. So that's what's happening to humans. The shift to a different evolutionary level or dimension.

This is us being here, that's all part of it. It's part of the shift. The butterfly is emerging right here.

The caterpillar is not totally gone yet. It's the transitional period. Thanks.

Even you can notice in every one of you, sometimes you're still a caterpillar and at other times, you're already a butterfly. Present, aware, non-reactive, aligned with the present moment.

[Speaker 5] (9:14:41 - 9:14:54)

Hi. Can your body movement practice help people with Asperger's syndrome become more in tune with their bodies and less in their minds?

[Speaker 3] (9:15:01 - 9:15:10)

I'm not too familiar with Asperger's syndrome. I know that it's some form of autism.

[Speaker 5] (9:15:11 - 9:16:09)

Correct, yes. I live with my daughter who's 20 who has it. And a lot of times, they get so pent up with sensory perceptions that are bombarding them right and left because their mind doesn't process like ours.

And they tend to be more physically aggressive, not in public, but at home. And that is how they express themselves sometimes. So how does she show her aggression physically?

Maybe by kicking things in or screaming a lot, just like a primal scream. Or crying incessantly because she can't put it in words. She can't get the feelings out.

And I've been bombarding her all day.

[Speaker 3] (9:16:11 - 9:16:35)

It's kind of like most of us. We can't get our feelings out. Exactly.

But a lot of us have developed a very skilled way of pushing it and holding it down. And she's expressing it. So she doesn't express it in public, but she expresses it at home.

Sometimes she'll express it in public.

[Speaker 5] (9:16:35 - 9:16:41)

She might say something to somebody that we wouldn't normally say to somebody in public.

[Speaker 3] (9:16:42 - 9:17:45)

Right. Kind of like the dog dragging its leg. Exactly.

Exactly. Yeah. I don't know whether the movement practice that I do will help because I haven't worked with anybody that has Asperger's.

But the practice that I do teach and that any qigong or yoga teacher would teach, well, maybe not any, but is practicing presence, is beginning to cultivate, develop those yin qualities. So that may help to get in touch with her body. And does she do any sort of form of exercise?

[Speaker 5] (9:17:45 - 9:18:04)

She'll walk once in a while. She walks, which helps a lot. Yeah.

But it's hard for her to go inside her body. But the thing that's helped so far is to just be present with her when she's feeling it.

[Speaker 3] (9:18:05 - 9:18:46)

But she can't do that very well herself yet. To be present and just feel it. My guess is she probably is feeling it.

She's just not able to communicate, perhaps, what it is she's feeling. And just maybe and articulate it, right? She just feels it.

And then like a child, then when she feels something, if she's feeling angry, she'll just get angry. Mm-hmm. They just word out things and just say things, as a child would.

Well, she might not say it, but she holds it in. She holds it in. It stays inside.

[Speaker 5] (9:18:47 - 9:18:47)

So maybe it's...

[Speaker 3] (9:18:49 - 9:19:14)

So from what I understand of Asperger's is really is then the therapy of some sort of behavioral therapy to be able to, I wouldn't say control, but somehow teach them ways that they can express themselves appropriately, right?

[Speaker 5] (9:19:14 - 9:19:16)

When they're younger, yeah.

[Speaker 3] (9:19:16 - 9:19:20)

When they're younger. And did she get this when she was younger?

[Speaker 5] (9:19:21 - 9:19:39)

She did. And they also did occupational therapy with touch, you know, hard sensory rubbing on the skin or something like that. But it's still pretty much...

It's just that frustration and the pent-up anger that explodes.

[Speaker 3] (9:19:40 - 9:19:48)

Can I ask you, are you able to accept her just as she is?

[Speaker 5] (9:19:48 - 9:20:18)

No, that's my biggest... I mean, I, in my mind, say I do. But I know that I still see her as a normal, quote, normal person because there's a part of her that's very normal and there's a part of her that's very Asperger's or autistic.

And I have a hard time seeing that and forgiving that and being okay with that.

[Speaker 3] (9:20:19 - 9:20:29)

I want her to be like me. So perhaps that's the real work. That's the real work.

It's me. Not about the therapy of having her corrected, but... Yes.

[Speaker 5] (9:20:29 - 9:20:42)

In fact, that's what I spent most of my time doing this weekend, was how can I, what can I do to allow her to be who she is?

[Speaker 3] (9:20:44 - 9:20:54)

Can you allow yourself to be who you are? Not very well, but I'm trying. I'm working on that.

Yeah, good.

[Speaker 5] (9:20:55 - 9:21:01)

Thank you. That's a big answer for me because it confirms kind of what's going on here.

[Speaker 3] (9:21:02 - 9:22:16)

Yeah, so maybe part of the thing that she's feeling too is that non-acceptance. Like, hey, I am who I am. Why can't you just love me for who I am?

Exactly, exactly. Thank you. You're on your way.

Thank you. Oh, if we can all just let go and be who we are. And then love those and allow those to be who they are.

And full blossoming will happen. Then we will express the infinite ways that consciousness wants to express itself through each individual form.

[Speaker 9] (9:22:41 - 9:23:47)

Start my question with a little background. My mother was diagnosed schizophrenic about 40 years ago. And she's been medicated ever since.

And she's stable most of the time right now. But I've always wanted her to take it a step further and see her happier. And I've always asked her to go see a therapist and find the next level.

And she's always refused until just recently she came to me and said she was ready to check out some options. And it just so happens that I found the power of now just a couple weeks before and had fallen in love and had actually witnessed it help someone else. So my question is, do you think that the teachings are something that can help people with a mental illness as severe as schizophrenia?

[Speaker 1] (9:23:47 - 9:31:40)

Oh, thank you. Thank you. Okay.

Well, as I'm sure you know, there's a wide range of symptoms that people suffering from schizophrenia can display. And the degree of severity varies a lot too, but I believe awareness practice or witness practice in many cases can be very powerful even with schizophrenia. So for example, schizophrenia in many ways is an intensification of the normal dysfunctional state of consciousness.

So the normal state of consciousness, the state of consciousness that most people are in, that we call normal, is also dysfunctional. For example, many schizophrenic people have a very strong, they have a voice that tells them things in their head. They may hear it even as if it were coming from the outside or they may have thoughts that seem to be autonomous, that thoughts that have a life of their own, that are very powerful.

Some may also, of course, see things that are not there. All these things, many other things can happen. And normal dysfunctional state, of course, is that you have a voice in your head.

Everybody has that. You're talking to yourself. It's an unusual self-talk.

It's a milder form of something that in a more acute form is recognized as actually insane. But everybody, to some extent, has a voice in the head, for example. So if a person who is suffering from hearing voices, either in the head or coming from the outside, first, it needs a minimum degree of presence.

The person needs to know that there is something not right with him or her. So a minimum degree of presence, whether it is enough to tell that person there's something not right, that I hear the voices, that's necessary. As we saw, for example, in the film, which some of you may have seen, A Beautiful Mind, where there's a person suffering from some form of schizophrenia and he sees things that are not there.

He sees people that are not there and they tell him things. And only in the middle of the film, he suddenly becomes aware that these things are not actually there. And the film is so well done because together with him, the viewer, suddenly becomes aware that these things were not real.

Before, the viewer was as deceived as the character in the film. It's all based on a real life story. So if it can be explained to a person that apart from the thoughts that this person may hear, think, experience, there is also the knower in them, the knower of the thoughts, the witness of the thoughts.

There is a faculty in them to realize a certain voice is speaking to them, that so if it can be pointed out that the sufferer from schizophrenia can become acquainted with this and recognize the fact that there is more in him or her than the voices. And what is more is the ability to listen, to see that there is a voice, to know that there is a voice. In other words, to witness the voice.

And I've had one or two people a long time ago when I used to see individual people who had mild forms of schizophrenia and it worked with them quite well. And what I asked them to do is to pay absolutely no attention to the content of their thoughts. So whether the thought said, this is God talking to you and you should be doing this, all you need to do is to realize there's a thought arising, be the witness.

And then another voice comes, I'm the devil and you're supposed to do, and all you need to do is to witness. Don't give any credence to the content of the mind, just see a thought is arising. Buddhists do that sometimes in basic Buddhist mindful practice before you can be absolutely present when the thought is arising.

A hateful thought arising. And instead of believing in thought, actually disregard the content and just recognize that thoughts are arising, voices are arising. You don't need to act on them because you can just be there as the witness.

And knowing that the voices can be very persistent and they may even for a little while become more persistent when they are not acknowledged. It's like a little child says, give me attention. And if you don't give attention, they start screaming.

But after a while, when you don't feed them with your attention, they subside. We also, by the way, saw that in the film when he recognized that he no longer gave attention to the delusions. He saw people that weren't there and he said, I'm not giving you attention.

And then for a while, they were sitting around in corners and then they disappeared. At first they were angry. So these are entities, really thoughts are actually, even normal thoughts are actually energy forms.

One can regard every thought as an energy formation, an entity. And you can see it with, even in normal, so-called normal people, I always say normal insane, in normal people, thoughts can sometimes be obsessive. They can take over your mind.

And these are normal people. For example, you can suddenly have a thought that a certain very strong belief, which is a thought form, can take over your mind. And then you convert to communism or you convert to some kind of belief structure.

And suddenly it takes hold and everything you see is interpreted through this one thought that has taken hold of your mind. It just grips you. There it is.

So you are in possession of a thought. You are actually possessed by this energy form. Usually thoughts come and go, but sometimes it happens that one or two thoughts grow into little monsters.

And we still call that normal. So there are people who are totally obsessed with certain belief structures. I mean, in medieval times, you had religious people, they were killing anybody who disagreed with them, basically kill them, kill them.

They disagree. That was called normal. Everybody accepted it.

All the people, the scholars, the people at the universities at the time, it was normal to kill people who disagreed with the doctrine. Just a tiny aspect of the doctrine. How many angels can fit into one room?

Ten? No, I say nine.

[Speaker 11] (9:31:41 - 9:31:45)

Okay, burn him.

[Speaker 1] (9:31:46 - 9:33:23)

They're almost like that. Or was Christ completely divine? Was he half divine or a quarter divine?

He's completely in possession of just thoughts. So the witness faculty is important. And content, you can show a person to completely disregard the content of their thoughts, just to say a thought is arising and it's just a thought.

And if it comes as an auditory thing, it means it's a thought spoken out aloud arising. That's all. So you acknowledge it's there, you remain as a witness, you don't react to it.

So that can be explained in acute forms of schizophrenia. I don't know. I have not had experience with that.

But I believe in many cases, the witness faculty is the solution. So whether you do that, I don't think there's any great danger in having a witness there if you do that, or the therapist might do it who is familiar with that. And I believe that change is possible if that is my suggestion then.

And of course, I have the same suggestion for all so-called normal people too.

[Speaker 11] (9:33:25 - 9:33:26)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (9:33:27 - 9:33:27)

Thank you.

[Speaker 7] (9:33:42 - 9:34:39)

How are you? Good. It's a pleasure to be here today.

It's my first time here. And I have to say, it almost feels a bit surreal to be in this room and you feel very connected to everyone. There's a lot of energy and you feel very connected to the source, if you will, to your own divinity.

But I'm a bit of a pragmatist. And so I say to myself, well, when I leave this room, reality sets in. And my reality, I guess to my question is, it's about unemployment.

It's about how do you, for those of us who are unemployed and seeking employment, stay connected to the source and to your own sense of divinity and still deal with the reality and the drama and the pain of trying to find a job?

[Speaker 1] (9:34:41 - 9:42:10)

Thank you. Thank you. It's challenging.

Challenges are good, potentially. They can either wake you up, awaken you, or they can pull you into more reactivity, unconsciousness, and suffering. Every challenge that comes into your life, there's always, suddenly you can go either this way or you can go that way.

Potentially, the challenge is very helpful. Challenge means, again, a word I sometimes use, limitation in one form or another comes into your life. I'm certainly grateful for the challenges that came into my life.

I wouldn't be sitting here. And many of you probably realize that without the challenges that you encountered in your life, you wouldn't be sitting here. You'd be watching television.

This is something I have a little bit of personal experience with also. Well, maybe even quite a lot of personal experience. Because for a large part of my adult life, I was actually not employed as such, large part.

And for a large part, lived on relatively little, for a few years, on quite a few years, even in my 30s. Below the poverty line, I read that in the paper once, when it mentioned, at that time, I read the paper, it mentioned the income, a single person, below that is below the poverty line. I realized, oh, I'm much below that.

But I didn't realize I was poor. I realized that there were things I couldn't afford to buy. I could buy tomato sauce, but I couldn't buy spaghetti sauce.

Tomato sauce is cheaper, much cheaper. And that stayed with me, even for many years. As recently as four years ago, I sometimes still find myself, find myself getting tomato sauce instead of spaghetti sauce.

It's much cheaper. So here's one piece of advice for the jobless. There are practical things that then you need to readjust and deal with.

There's some action you may need to take in order to adjust to the new situation. All that is in the practical realm. Then there's the mental realm.

And in the mental realm is where the suffering could arise, not in the practical realm. There's no suffering in using, in eating spaghetti with this thin tomato sauce. Just one little example, this stands for many things, rather than a nice, specially prepared sauce for pasta.

But if you think, suddenly thought arises, and I'm just using this example to play by to many things. The thought arises, this is what it has come to. Here I said, I have to eat this watery sauce that eating the cheapest food there is.

I've lost all that, that I thought I had achieved, I have failed, probably won't find another job because millions of people are now looking for jobs. It's pointless. I'll probably have to have the same again tomorrow.

Many other kinds of thoughts arise. That's where the suffering comes from. The suffering also comes from a diminished sense of self-worth.

Now, where is that? Of course, it's in your head. The diminished sense of self-worth is because I'm now useless, and so on.

Maybe I'm too old to, nobody will employ me anymore, or whatever. I'm not a, should have had a better education. I'm no good for anything anymore.

Nobody will bond. Whatever the thoughts are, a diminished sense of self-worth, and that is because your self-worth before was derived from your function in this world, which is a very normal thing, but it wasn't really derived from your function in this world. It was derived from what your mind told you about your function in this world.

And so you derived your sense of self-worth from certain thoughts in your head, and you got perhaps some feedback from others who also told you that you are useful. You were part of that, all that interaction that people have when they have a job. You have a boss.

The boss might tell you, you're doing well. You're getting a promotion. Okay.

And the clients love you, whatever. And then you lose it, all that. And you had built up your sense of self-worth from the thoughts and the thoughts of others.

And so the opportunity now is when there is a diminished sense of self-worth to go to a deeper place where a sense of self-worth comes from that has nothing to do with what you are doing in this world or with nothing to do with what anybody tells you about yourself. A sense of self-worth of value that in other words has nothing to do with the structure of thinking. So you can use the challenge to see that if you can find something in a deeper place in you where there's something of far greater value than anything that could be derived from thinking about yourself.

So when you lose your job, very often your self image can become damaged. And that's where the suffering comes from because that is the self image is made up out of thinking. And a damaged self image can either lead you into more suffering and it will just go on and on and to pull you deeper.

And you talk to others about how dreadful it is and perhaps they'll even say, yes, you're right and pulls you deeper and deeper. Or you step out of self-deriving your sense of who you are ultimately.

[Speaker 6] (9:42:14 - 9:42:45)

I understand how you can be in the moment and when it's a calm, peaceful moment, it's much easier to enter into a state of stillness. For somebody who's in a state of severe or prolonged psychic or physical pain, what is the process by which they learn to find some kind of stillness within that when it's so all-consuming what they desire is for it to pass more than anything else?

[Speaker 1] (9:42:45 - 9:45:16)

Yes, thank you. Sometimes people just know, they haven't heard of the possibility of acceptance of what is. They're still, the largest part of the population of our planet has not, is not even aware that such a possibility exists that you can accept a situation that usually would be called unacceptable.

And so a person really, either it happens spontaneously, there is a letting go of inner resistance because you cannot stand the pain anymore. And very often the large part of the pain is the resistance to whatever is the case. A large part of the pain is the psychological pain that says, this is dreadful.

The last few years of my mother, for example, she was occasionally I was able to bring her into stillness, but very quickly she was drawn out again by her mind. And 90% of her suffering, which was intense, the last two or three years of her life, 90% of her suffering was psychological. Yes, her body was no longer working normally.

She found it increasingly difficult to walk. Then she had to walk with the help of this device, a walker. And then her eyesight was beginning to fail.

So those, but she did not have physical pain, but she had physical discomfort and it became increasingly difficult to move from here to there by herself. That in itself would have been, yes, not pleasant, perhaps it would have been uncomfortable. The eyesight failing, yes, you can't see very clearly anymore, but that you can live with.

What you cannot live with is the enormous amount of psychological suffering that then she generated unconsciously for herself, which said, what if I go blind completely? And she spent hours and hours in terror at this thought of going blind completely.

Q and A with Eckhart Tolle TV Part 2

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 8:17)

...that then she generated unconsciously for herself, which said, what if I go blind completely? And she spent hours and hours in terror at this thought of going blind completely. What if I won't even be able to walk anymore?

And so she spent many more hours thinking, what if I'm going to spend my last few years in bed and I can't go to the bathroom by myself anymore? What if that happens to me, because that seems to be the way I'm going? Enormous amount of suffering.

And again, I tried again and again to say, this is not what is now, it's just this. What you're experiencing now is just this. For brief moments she got it, and she was free of the what-if extrapolation of what if this continues.

A further area of suffering was, since she had always been identified with her external appearance, what are people going to think of me? Now they see me walking with this walker. She must be dreadful for somebody to whom other people's opinion had always been very important.

So there was an enormous amount of psychological suffering there also. So every day was consumed in intense psychological suffering. So very often, a large part of the suffering is psychic, psychological, emotional suffering, generated unconsciously by the mind.

And then there is the actual physical suffering at times that is there in the form of pain, or in the form of extreme discomfort, or in the form of weakness. The message is there is a way of going beyond unnecessary suffering, which really is to say of going beyond all suffering, because suffering is, the way we use the term here, suffering is the superstructure on top of what is, the mind-created baggage. There is a way of being free of that.

But not everybody is ready to hear this. Those who hear this message, which is in essence a spiritual message, but not everybody is yet open to this spiritual message. There are some people who don't even need the spiritual message, to whom the realization of letting go comes spontaneously.

That happened to me. So it came because the suffering, the psychological suffering, became so intense there had to be a letting go, otherwise I would have had to kill myself. There had to be a letting go and some, the intelligence, the greater intelligence within, on some level must have realized, well it did that night, it realized that I was doing it unconsciously.

I can't live with myself, and who is the self that I can't live with? It's the unhappy superstructure that has been created. So to some people it happens by itself.

You sometimes see people in poor countries, people who certainly would never have attended a workshop, who would never have bought a spiritual book, and perhaps never come into contact with any spiritual teaching, perhaps beyond the traditional religion of their country, which in most cases is just a formal thing. And yet, sometimes you see people and there may even occasionally be a beggar, you see, who has gone through no suffering anymore. You can see a light shining through their eyes.

The body may be unwell, but they have gone into that inner acceptance of the is-ness of this moment, and then something else has come through. Not everybody is ready. Whoever is ready for it, it will happen for them.

Whether it comes spontaneously or with the help of some so-called spiritual teaching doesn't really matter. If you are ready for it, either it will happen to you spontaneously or it will happen to you with the help of a spiritual teaching and you will suddenly hear it and suddenly see the possibility of what the Buddha called the end of suffering. The whole teaching of the Buddha has that purpose, to bring about the end of suffering.

But neither at that time nor now is everybody ready to hear that. So there are millions of people still on the planet who have never heard anything of the end of suffering. And if they heard it, they still wouldn't hear it.

It still wouldn't sink in. So sometimes people pick up a spiritual book, whatever it may be, Power of Now or any other spiritual book, somebody has sent it to them, says, you must, you really need this book. Sometimes people tell me they send it to a friend, they send it to a relative, an uncle, their aging parent, or the other way, the aging parent sends it to their young daughter.

You must read this book, you need it. And so the recipient gets the book, opens it and says, what does that mean? It means nothing.

And then they, well, at best they put it on the shelf and it gathers dust or they may, they even get angry. They can even get, they get angry. Some people whose ego is so strongly entrenched and who don't want to let go of the suffering that's associated with ego, they get angry when they see this.

In the office, Eckhart Techings, one day apparently, I don't, I didn't see it, but a new earth arrived in a package and somebody had put it through a shredder and returned it to the office. So this person was not ready. You cannot force it on people and you cannot, like if the apple isn't ripe, then there isn't, it just won't happen.

So there needs to be some degree of readiness and then either it happens spontaneously or it happens with the help of a teaching and then it happens. So all the spiritual teaching does that it's, it saves time, which is not real, but it's on this level, you have to see levels, beautifully expressed in the Course in Miracles where it says delay does not matter in eternity, but it is tragic in time, different levels. So it just, it saves time and suffering, that's what spiritual teaching does, because in the absence of a spiritual teaching, you still have your suffering, that's the teaching and the teacher, everybody has that, that's the main teaching and the main teacher, even if you never come into contact with any spiritual teaching, then your spiritual teacher is your suffering and then eventually it will wake you up, eventually. It could take time. Of course the awakening itself does not take time, you can only wake up now.

One more quote from the Course in Miracles, I haven't quoted that in a long time. It has taken time to misguide you so completely, but it takes no time at all to be who you are.

[Speaker 10] (8:50 - 9:21)

Hi Eckhart, I'm Michelle, and my question has to do with making your ego your friend, which is really what A New Earth allowed me to do. It allowed me to see my ego not as an enemy, but as a protector, kind of like my big brother on the playground was protecting me against the bully that just pushed me down in the mud. So I learned to see it as a protector, and then understanding that, learned to make it my friend.

[Speaker 1] (9:22 - 9:36)

Can you give one example, just so that we have a clear view of what you mean, can you give one example of when, an occasion when the ego was your protector?

[Speaker 10] (9:42 - 11:23)

Probably the first thing that comes to mind would be in a family situation, where my stepfather was visiting and staying with me, and was commenting about something around my house, and saying that I should be fixing this or fixing that, and I got very defensive and noticed it right away, and kind of wanted to come back with, well, this is what I've done with my home, and I've done my best, and this is where it's at right now, and if you'd like to fix it, you can buck up the money, and I'd be happy to accept it. But it made me feel... I think it made me feel weak, and I noticed that, and I remember telling my mom about that, but it did, it made me feel weak, which really is where I think the ego comes from, as a place of feeling threatened and being hurt, and then of course, here comes the big brother, and the bully is my stepfather in this instance.

But what that then allowed me to do was to accept that part of myself, kind of talk it down, and then it allowed me to see that in my stepfather as well. And then to quote you from the book, you look through the ego to the sanity that is in every human being as his or her essence.

[Speaker 9] (11:23 - 11:23)

Yes.

[Speaker 10] (11:24 - 11:48)

So that's what the process of reading A New Earth helped me specifically with my ego, there was many other truths in there. My question then is, do you feel that that is a good way, seeing the ego not as an enemy, but as a friend and a protector, is a good way to accept it, to become aware of it, and then to gradually but lovingly dissolve it?

[Speaker 1] (11:49 - 32:48)

Interesting. Thank you, thank you. So when he said those things, let's just stay with that example you gave.

It's always easier to answer when one has a concrete example, and that stands for all kinds of situations, the basic mechanism is always the same when the ego operates. So there was, when he made those comments, things that you could do or should do in your house or were not good enough or haven't done yet, there was something in you that felt either put down or hurt or being told what to do and didn't like it, so it kind of fought back and said something back, which can easily lead, of course, to a reaction in the other, and then the other will defend himself or herself, so you have two egos fighting it out. Now that in you that felt diminished or hurt or put down was, of course, the ego. In a situation like that, I would not say that the ego actually is your friend here, because it creates a lot of conflict for yourself, even if you don't say anything, even if you just think certain thoughts or have certain emotional reactions, you still have conflict in yourself.

You don't want him to say these things, but he's saying these things. So can you be in that situation? I'll just present an alternative version that might work even better than the ego defending yourself.

So if you can be there not as an entity that feels diminished by what this person says, or if there is an entity, then know that there is an entity, something in you feels diminished, because you can know that. Can you go beyond that? That's the question.

Can you go beyond that reaction that is of this person when anybody tells you what to do? Similar example, somebody's driving, you have a co-pilot next to you, and the person says to you that you should be doing something that you're not doing. You need to slow down, or, why don't you do this?

Some people, co-pilots, they tell you what to do because they know better. Maybe they do. Either they do know better, or they think they know better.

In my case, when Kim sits next to me, usually she does know better. As she will confirm, whenever she says something to me, I say, thank you. You should slow do this or do that, you're in the wrong lane.

I say, thank you. And usually she's right. Occasionally she's not right.

But nine times out of ten, she's right. And so I say, thank you. And then, of course, the one time out of ten she's not right, can't be helped.

I got a ticket. She said, go into this lane, and a policeman came up and stopped me, and I got a ticket, $100. But that was only one time out of ten.

So even now I still say thank you, even after this, and usually it still works. But if I had an entity driving the car called the ego that says, nobody tells me what to do, or I will feel inferior if she tells me what to do, then this entity that says, nobody tells me what to do, or who do you think you are, or it would say things like, I've been driving for 20, I don't know how many, 30 years without an accident, I could say, which is true, but it's a miracle. And usually I say thank you, and it works very well.

She's usually right, and even if I knew that she's usually wrong, which is not the case, you might have a co-driver who just drives so differently that she always tells you what to do, what he or she would do, but you wouldn't do it. You can still say thanks for your advice, but I'd rather stay in this lane. Now back to your situation.

He comes to your home and says, you should be doing this and that. If you're there simply as a presence, rather than as a little entity that needs to defend itself, you listen to what he says and say, oh, well, that's what I would say. That's interesting.

Oh, this is what you, you should do that. Oh, okay, thanks, I'll consider that. Oh, and then you should, this is wrong, is it?

You say, well, I'll look into seeing, I'll think about that. Thanks for your opinion. I've completely changed it.

There's no longer him trying to control me. There's only him giving the opinion. And even if there is a bully hiding inside him, you're not seeing the bully.

You're simply saying, you don't need to defend yourself because the ego believes that's the strength in you, but that's a weakness. You're much stronger if you find that place within where you don't need the defense. And so if you deal with that situation there, then you're free of ego and you deal with it much more powerfully and you're free because you don't have to do what he says.

He doesn't live there, so that's fine, but you can give him his due. Perhaps he likes a little bit of acknowledgement. Perhaps he likes you to think that he knows a lot.

Egos love these things. So you tell him, thanks for your advice, I will consider it. And then if he comes back a few weeks later and says, you still haven't done it, you can say, well, I thought about it, but I decided not for this reason or that reason.

It didn't seem quite right, but thanks for your advice anyway. I did think about it. You can give him what he wants without giving anything away from who you are, and there's no conflict in the situation, neither inside you nor outside.

So usually the ego thinks it's helping you, but it's really not really helping. It's making the situation more complicated. The strength of the ego is your weakness.

And if the ego does not operate, it says, you need me, you need me for protection. No, you don't. You're much more powerful without that pattern of behavior.

So it's a question of trying it out so that when you meet big egos, egos come into your life. It's inevitable in this world that from time to time, or quite often, you will come into contact with big egos, walking egos. And so they may have all kinds of designs.

They want to tell you what to do. They want to control you. And if you react to the ego, that's your ego.

If you fight their ego, that's your ego. If you stand back, observe the behavior, and then be the presence, out of presence, you simply say what is right. And that's much better.

And sometimes you may even get good advice, which perhaps the ego wouldn't accept because it comes from somebody else. So it could well be that somebody does say something, but you are not hearing it because your ego says, nobody's telling me what to do. Or your co-driver tells you something that is very helpful, and you think, nobody's telling me how to drive, and a minute later you have an accident.

If you had listened, it wouldn't have happened. That's possible too. So you have to be open to the possibility that sometimes your ego misinterprets somebody else's intention because the ego sees ego everywhere.

So even an innocent comment made by somebody, if you have a strong ego, you may misinterpret it as if it were ego-motivated and will say something to defend you. The ego is always defending itself, but ultimately the ego is defending an illusion because the ego is an illusory entity, a mind-made sense of self. So the ego is true, it's very good at defending, but what it is defending is an illusion.

And the strength in you is not the ego, it's the weakness in you. It's reversed from one's usual way of looking at it or perspective. So you can try all kinds of situations so that gradually you become non-reactive because all reaction is of the ego.

The ego reacts the same. Certain energy comes towards you, the ego reacts against it. The Tao teaches, and any spiritual teaching, is not to oppose anything.

So coming back to your situation, this person says, you should be doing this, you should do that, you don't oppose it. You say, oh, isn't that interesting. Or the co-driver says, you should be in the other lane, you should go more slowly, you can go faster.

Oh, thank you. May even be right. So you never go that, you go, oh.

So that's the martial arts. Don't oppose the other's attack, by going, oh, oh. That's the western way, it's kind of, oh.

And the eastern way is, you step back in the same direction as the attack is coming, and there he falls. Or something else happens, we don't know. But you go with it, and then transform it.

There's no opposition. So that's a very wonderful spiritual practice, and it's absolutely necessary for everybody to bring in a different energy into human interactions. And if you have the impulse to defend yourself, you can notice it in yourself, and you can see, oh, there's the ego.

An egoic impulse, an old reaction. The moment you've recognized the ego, you're also free to choose something else, because you're not, strictly speaking, it's not even the ego anymore. Strictly speaking, ego only exists when you don't know it exists.

That's really the ego. When you know there is a certain behavior pattern happening in you, which could be called the ego, it's not really the ego anymore, because for the ego to operate in you needs your complete identification with it, your complete unconsciousness. So that's a very wonderful spiritual practice, and it's absolutely necessary for everybody to bring in a different energy into human interactions.

And if you have the impulse to defend yourself, you can notice it in yourself, and you can see, oh, there's the ego. An egoic impulse, an old reaction. The moment you've recognized the ego, you're also free to choose something else, because you're not, there's, strictly speaking, it's not even the ego anymore.

Strictly speaking, ego only exists when you don't know it exists. That's really the ego. When you know there is a certain behavior pattern happening in you, which could be called the ego, it's not really the ego anymore, because for the ego to operate in you needs your complete identification with it, your complete unconsciousness.

So you cannot, to take it a little bit further, even we could say then, you can never see the ego in you, because the moment you see it for what it is, it's not the ego anymore, it's only a behavior pattern. So people who are most trapped in ego, most strongly identified with ego, they have no idea about ego. They don't know it.

They are it. The moment you see the ego, it's not the ego anymore, strictly speaking, and then you are free to choose something different. Many things that the ego feels hurtful about don't actually hurt you, they hurt the ego.

Let's take another example, driving. Occasionally it may happen, well, it happens to me sometimes, you get insulted by other drivers, for some reason, I don't know why. They may be shouting something at you.

In some countries you experience it more than in others. In colder countries they are more reserved. In hot countries they shout more, they are more open, and the windows are open, so they will shout something at you.

And so the ego will feel something in you feels hurt. If somebody shouts, you idiot, something in you feels diminished. There is an automatic reaction that comes in for most people, which is ego defense mechanism, or I sometimes call it the instant repair mechanism.

And the instant repair mechanism calls you, and the ego needs you to shout something back. And it needs to be a little bit stronger than the original insult. By doing that, the ego has repaired the injury caused to its self-image.

The ego is an imaginary sense of self. And so it happens so quickly that most people don't know that this is the mechanism behind it. They just shout something back because they have the strong need to do so.

Why do they have the strong need to shout something back? It makes no difference whether you shout something and this person hears it. It makes no difference, and then he drives off.

What's the point? Well, there is a big point because you feel a little bit better after that, as the ego. At least you've done something to repair yourself.

But it's a self-repair thing. The ego does that. And once you know that, next time it happens, you can observe the impulse and then say, not do it, not by repressing it.

That's never good. If you have to repress it, better to shout it. Otherwise it might turn into a stomach pain or something.

But if you observe the impulse and then you can try out something different, and that is non-reaction. So the driver shouts something and then you look at him. That's a very disconcerting thing for the other person.

And then he might shout again because he thinks you're deaf. And still nothing. It's very strange.

And the traffic may be moving, so you may not be able to see what further effect it has on him. But the interesting thing is that you feel, at first something in you feels diminished. I write about this a little bit in The New Earth.

As a practice, I say, don't do it always. Occasionally. Do not repair your diminished sense of self when something happens, a certain situation happens.

Accept the diminishment. This is an ancient spiritual practice, by the way. And that's, for example, what Jesus was talking about with turning the other cheek.

Because being slapped on the face is not so much a physical thing, it's a psychological diminishment. And so when he said, turn the other cheek, he was pointing to something. And that is when one's...

Another thing would be not to reply when somebody is spreading false rumors about you. In some situations, you may have to state the truth. But in many others, it's pointless to say anything.

But the ego would do it automatically. But you don't have to do it. You can just let it be.

So not to automatically and unconsciously repair that diminished sense of self, which is there even if somebody calls you idiot, you end up with a slightly diminished sense of self. And so not to do anything is an amazing thing. At first it feels very strange, and you feel...

And then you feel there's a power underneath that was never touched by that. And suddenly you feel that deeper power that was not touched by whatever anybody said. And that's an amazing thing to find the power that is deeper than ego.

And sometimes you have to have yourself... One of the ways in which you can find it is through a temporary diminishment of your sense of self in some situation. So that's quite amazing.

It's something to experiment with. Some people feel diminished in their sense of self. People with a fairly strong ego, if they ever have to say, I don't know.

Some people just, whatever you ask them, they will never say, I don't know. They'll always have either some answer or even if they have to invent it or some kind of other thing that they say. But it's not, I don't know.

Because the ego feels, some egos feel diminished when they say, I don't know. And those people, I would recommend them to practice and say, I don't know, and see what they feel like and whether they feel diminished and what's underneath that. My brother was like that, my half-brother, who is 20 years younger than me, when he was 16, 17.

I noticed his ego was growing and he would never say, I don't know. No matter what question you asked him, even if he had no idea what the answer was, he would invent some fantastic thing and explanation. And I think once I said to him, why don't you try saying, don't know, and see what happens, what it feels like.

And then he did and he was still alive.

[Speaker 15] (32:49 - 32:56)

Laughter Perhaps more alive.

[Speaker 1] (32:59 - 33:18)

It's a strange thing, the ego is a very strange entity. So practice all kinds of human situations. Every day, I'm sure, you'll be able to practice one way or another.

[Speaker 7] (33:40 - 34:09)

Hi Kim. Earlier you said something about the journey is ours alone and yet we're all on it. And that was very meaningful to me.

I'm really, I'm a counselor, a marriage and family therapist and I'm very good at relating to people in a supportive role. And to be on my own journey seems to take some nerve for myself.

[Speaker 11] (34:09 - 34:09)

Some nerve.

[Speaker 7] (34:09 - 34:38)

Nerve or courage or for myself. And I'm, in recent years, really working with that balance. And I just wonder if you would comment more about that, about being on the journey ourselves.

There's sort of an assertiveness that you need to have about that, but to be kind and gentle with others as well. Do you have comments about that? I may.

[Speaker 5] (34:39 - 34:57)

Pardon? I may. Yeah.

So what happens for you? Can we just sort of talk about your own journey here? And you say it requires nerve for you.

So what happens for you when you're on this journey yourself?

[Speaker 7] (34:59 - 35:41)

Well, I'm having a very interesting experience here in this workshop, these four days. When I, it seems very important to me to connect to other people and I want to smile and make a connection with other people. I always enjoy that so much.

And it seems that the people here mostly are interested in where they are inside themselves. And so that doesn't happen very much. And it's in a very positive way.

And so it takes courage, I guess, for me to just stay with myself, if you will.

[Speaker 5] (35:42 - 35:47)

Even when you're by yourself? Do you find yourself kind of looking for things to do?

[Speaker 7] (35:48 - 36:03)

No, no. I love my alone time and I'm a pretty quiet person. I'm pretty good company for myself, if you will.

But I just so enjoy that connection and I think I'm in a crowd of people that I want to be connected with.

[Speaker 5] (36:03 - 36:39)

So I'm sort of looking for it, maybe more than they are. So that connection that you're looking for, is it really with other people or is it with yourself? Well, I mean, the spiritual journey that we're on is really with the self.

Yes. So this connection with other people, are you looking to connect so you can connect to be with yourself? I'm looking for that.

That's universal.

[Speaker 7] (36:40 - 36:45)

That's in me and them. And I think I can find it in them and I need to look within them.

[Speaker 5] (36:45 - 36:51)

So when it's not there, when it's not there, out there, that you're not able to connect out there because they are you, that's true, right?

[Speaker 7] (36:52 - 36:52)

Yes.

[Speaker 5] (36:52 - 36:56)

What happens for you when you don't find it, though, out there?

[Speaker 7] (36:57 - 37:03)

Sometimes I just kind of laugh and I realize I'm left with myself, but then I turn around and do it again.

[Speaker 5] (37:04 - 37:05)

That you turn around and do what again?

[Speaker 7] (37:05 - 37:06)

Do it again.

[Speaker 5] (37:06 - 37:06)

Just look.

[Speaker 7] (37:06 - 37:08)

Look. Keep looking outside.

[Speaker 5] (37:09 - 37:18)

It's like, what is it saying when you look outside and you keep looking around? You can voice that when you keep looking.

[Speaker 7] (37:20 - 37:41)

I think what my experience is right in there is that I want to connect with people to share joy so it increases in me in the way I know how to do that.

[Speaker 5] (37:41 - 37:42)

So it increases in you?

[Speaker 7] (37:42 - 37:50)

Yes. And the way I know how to do that is to be supportive to them. It's all mixed up.

[Speaker 5] (37:53 - 37:58)

So it's almost still continuing to play your role as a therapist?

[Speaker 7] (37:59 - 38:04)

Yes. It's like I know how to be that in relationships.

[Speaker 5] (38:04 - 38:09)

That would be difficult to connect on a spiritual level if you're playing the therapist.

[Speaker 7] (38:10 - 38:20)

Yes. It's just... I don't think I'm playing a therapist or I want to do that.

But you want to support them. I'm just...

[Speaker 5] (38:20 - 38:21)

When you don't even know if they need support.

[Speaker 7] (38:21 - 38:26)

I feel like that's my role with others is to be supportive rather than...

[Speaker 5] (38:26 - 38:58)

Right. So how can you connect when you're in a role? How can you deeply connect when you're playing a role?

I don't know. Because you can't. Yes.

There's no connection there. Because a role is your identification with a thought form. It's a role.

It's a concept. Yes. And there's no connection through concepts.

That's not the connection.

[Speaker 7] (38:58 - 39:04)

So to be naked in a way is where the courage comes in. Right.

[Speaker 5] (39:04 - 39:37)

To drop your role. Yes. To completely drop your role.

We are not our roles. You are not a therapist. Your role, your function in this life situation that you've created around you is a therapist.

Maybe a certain time of day. But once you leave that office, you're actually nobody. And can you live with that?

Yes. Can you deal with that? Thanks for putting it that way.

[Speaker 7] (39:40 - 39:44)

That's the challenge. That's so exciting.

[Speaker 5] (39:44 - 40:10)

It is. It's very exciting because then we get to really experience who we really are. We can just be.

How wonderful is that? And even when the next sort of stage, you can even call it a stage, when you are playing the role of therapist, when you're in your office and you have your client right there, even drop that role right there and see what comes through.

[Speaker 7] (40:14 - 40:40)

I've been doing that more since I've been listening and ETTV began. And it's wonderful to do that. It works better for me and the other person.

So I do want to say that. So I love that you said that directly, that that's the way to go. Yeah.

Thank you.

[Speaker 9] (40:59 - 42:04)

I was diagnosed with Crohn's in 2007, which opened me up to the spirituality. I was facing death and suffered quite a bit, actually. And then something happened.

I opened up and started looking for spiritual teachings. Now, where I'm at now is through feeling the energy moving through my body, there's energy that seems to be stuck in the solar plexus area quite often. Now, when I get acupuncture or something like that, sometimes I manage to move the energy through myself just by experiencing it.

But I was wondering if you could comment on moving energy through the body and anything like that, from the lower chakras into the higher chakras.

[Speaker 5] (42:15 - 48:59)

From my experience, when energy gets stuck, I can try to do things to move it, and it moves, but then it comes back, right? Gets stuck again. So there's usually...

You can say it's a reason that it's stuck. Maybe you don't know what it is. And it's not really...

To me, it's not really important to find out, just to be aware where it's stuck. And energy has its own time. When the chi flows, it also has its own time and when it's going to flow, just like in the kundalini awakening, the energy that moves up the spine, it's going to move in its own time, and it moves...

It doesn't all just go whoosh, and it's done. Oftentimes, it sits in different places. Perhaps that energy is unlocking different energies that's there or getting mixed up in that energy, or that you're not open in this moment for that energy to release.

Whatever that energy is, I don't want to name it anything or call it anything, but it's just energy. So we can... It's good that we do our things to...

Because it could be actually sometimes quite painful, I could imagine, because it was for me as well. It is sometimes. It still gets stuck in certain places, and all I can do is just sort of watch it.

I've watched, in a matter of years, an energy that has come from down here, moving up, getting stuck, moving up here, getting stuck, moving up here, getting stuck, and over a course of years, it could still... It's just like slowly moving up. So if we can just accept the fact that, okay, this is how it is, without any expectation that it should be different, and just...

You can say meditate with it. Something may just be revealed to you in that energy, because that energy can also hold some great teaching, some great wisdom. Something is there, because it's energy.

It may be something that you're holding on to of the past. It may be an emotional wound you don't know. It could be even something, even just...

What my experience, what I've also experienced, is that a teaching also comes from that energy. That energy teaches me something, and it's there. And how wonderful that even, you know, sometimes this energy can also, being stuck, especially if it's emotional wounds, the pain body, can also cause illnesses.

And it's through this illness that you actually came into the spiritual realm of things, right? Your spiritual teaching, you decided to go into it. The same thing with me.

I didn't have sort of a physical illness, but I was suffering from a lot of depression, and that's what moved me. I mean, it's... So it's the suffering, whether it's physical, whether it's mental, psychological, emotional, it moves us into awakening.

It's the crack. Otherwise, when we have, especially here in the West, this relatively comfortable life, it takes a lot to shake a comfortable life. And often what's left is the physical, the emotional, the psychological, the mental realm of things, the physical health.

Some people spiritually awaken on the physical realm because, you know, they don't have enough food to eat. I remember the first time going to India and seeing the poverty that was there and looking into the eyes of these people who what I called lived in such poverty, and they had this light shining through their eyes, and I'm like, my gosh, I want what they have. Because they had something inwardly that I didn't have, but I had everything, so-called relatively, outwardly that they didn't have.

It's like, what's happening here? What's going on? So life brings us to the search when we're ready, and it uses whatever means to get us there, to wake us up.

And for you, it's a physical illness. So this energy that's stirring around that's here in the solar plexus, which is often said the solar plexus holds our power, and you may hear other things, areas that hold certain, oh, this is your emotional center, this is this, this and that. I would suggest that you actually drop all those and discover it for yourself.

Find out what it is. It may have nothing to do with power. It may have nothing to do with whatever the books say.

It's your discovery of your own experience which gives you wisdom, and the foundation, the rock, the anchor to hold you to your awakening of your spiritual essence. You become unshakable through the outside if you can discover your answers within you and what it means for you. What is this energy?

What's this here? And it will keep on coming back until we actually look at it, accept it fully, without any expectation that it will ever go away.

[Speaker 9] (49:00 - 49:42)

Yeah, that seems to be the case, yeah. I seem to sit with it, and over the past three years, I've been building slowly, like being only able to sit with it for maybe even a split second to now, especially when I'm here, I seem to be able to sit with it for longer periods of time, and slowly, exactly what you're describing is happening. Each time something shifts around, there's like a deep epiphany that comes out of it where I couldn't even describe it in words, but then there's still the majority of it still there, and it's like, oh, more of this?

[Speaker 5] (49:42 - 52:10)

Yeah, I know. I know, I know. Thank you.

Yeah, you're welcome. This spiritual awakening, this journey that we're on, it really is, it's a shift in consciousness, yes, but it's also a shift within our own bodies. I mean, I often feel like as if knots, little knots are being untied within me, you know, and the energy in me is being shifted around to something that was sort of stagnant and solid, to something that flows, because life is movement.

I mean, it just moves. Energy is meant to move. It flows, so it flows within our body.

So just watch even your thoughts. If you hang on to a particular thought, in other words, identify with that thought, and I've witnessed this just watching it in meditation myself, identifying with the thought, and I was surprised to see how that energy, which is a thought form as energy, solidifies even in my body. It's like we become rigid.

The more that we believe in thoughts, your thought forms, there's this fluid of life is unable to flow, but when we empty ourselves of all these thought forms, then life can flow through, and it does flow through. It's like you experience pain in your body, and then when you're one with life, you've been in stillness, and it's like, my God, I don't have this pain anymore. Wow, I can move.

I couldn't move like this before, and then soon enough, you know, a thought comes, and you identify with it, and more thoughts come, and you identify with it, and soon that fluid movement all of a sudden becomes, oh, you wake up one more, and you're like, oh, geez, what happened? It's back. Stillness is the true healer.

It's healing on all levels. Thank you.

[Speaker 6] (52:29 - 52:49)

Good afternoon, Mr. Tolle. My name is Liz Bluestem, and I'm very grateful to be here today. I'm also very aware right now that I am so not in the present moment because I'm so nervous, so I think I need to take a breath and be still for a second, and this is the perfect group to do it with.

[Speaker 1] (52:49 - 52:51)

Feel the inner body.

[Speaker 6] (52:54 - 55:20)

Thank you. I was fortunate enough to read The Power of Now when it was first published, and it had a tremendous impact on me, and I have followed your spiritual teachings ever since. As I went through my daily life and my daily practice, the unimaginable happened.

My husband and I lost our son two years ago this August, and suddenly, I seemed to go from The Power of Now to the nightmare of The Power of Death. And as you talked about this morning, which I found so interesting, it's the first time I've heard you mention loss, one needs to recover and cry. And I absolutely believe that you have to go through the grieving process to heal your soul.

But here's the rub. I can't help but think about my son every day. Human nature.

But what that does is catapult me consistently into the past, because all I have left of him are my memories, which are in the past. And conversely, even though I know there is no future, I fantasize about what it might have been like for all of us had he lived. So my question is, can you help me understand and reconcile being in the present, creating space for consciousness, as it relates to profound grieving with the death of a loved one that has done nothing but propel me into the past and to a nonexistent fantasy future?

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (55:23 - 56:07)

If I may ask another question. When you think about your son, apart from the activity of thought, which may be memories of the past, or, as you say, fantasizing about what might have been future or fantasies, can you also feel your son somewhere within? Apart from the memories, can you somehow feel his essence in yourself?

[Speaker 6] (56:07 - 56:08)

Absolutely.

[Speaker 1] (56:10 - 1:01:38)

So, and that essence is not in the past, of course. It's in the now. And so what is required then is a greater focus on that than on giving attention to the thoughts.

Perhaps the thoughts have a limited usefulness when the memory comes. It also brings up the feeling of his essence. The memories of the past, the feeling of essence is now.

It's alive now. If you can then give that more attention than to the thoughts, directing more attention there, closing your eyes perhaps, directing more attention there than to the memories. The memories were fine, but now they've taken you there.

Or if fantasizing about future, possible things that could have happened, again, bring attention as a conscious choice. Take attention into the sense, that feeling of the essence of who he is, because the essence is. And then this enables you to connect with the formless essence that was actually the thing that you loved and still love in him, the indestructible.

And you can only find it through your own, so they come together really. When you feel him, you also feel yourself as part of that. And so as a conscious choice then, take more attention to that if you can.

If it's an occasion when it's not dangerous to close your eyes, then close your eyes and go in there and feel that and realize it's alive and it's now. Then gradually your son, you retrieve, you rescue your son from where he has been the past two years, in the past, and the alive essence you still feel within yourself. And that means gradually the memories will not disappear.

There will be memories, but the heaviness that's associated with the memories and the deep sadness gradually through that becomes transmuted into something else. And there will be then, the memories will still, there will still be a gentle sadness with the memories, but there's a rising realization of that which is beyond death in him. That's what you love.

You love and loved and still love. Now the mind says, the object of my love is gone and that's the dreadful thing. The mind says, so the love has no object, but the love, what you loved in him was never the form.

What you loved in him and still love is the formless essence of who he is. Now I don't want to go into any kind of belief that you need to have of survival, but I know, all I know is that there is an essence in every human being, I know it in myself, that is beyond death. I know that.

I don't want to go beyond and tell anybody that they should believe this or that about. I don't, never step beyond my experience. I know the deathless as the essence in myself and in all humans.

And you need to, you know that too, you just need to go there more deeply. And I also, anybody who has been touched by death, I also recommend, in addition, this sounds a little strange, to occasionally take a walk around the cemetery. I recommend it to anybody because you get a very distorted view of life if you never have the realization of how imminent death is for every human being, the so-called death of the form.

And then the personal, the excessively personal thing about death becomes, you see, how universal it is. And I find it extremely peaceful to walk around a cemetery and just, the mind goes totally still in just amazement of all these lives that have dissolved, the forms that have gone. That's why Buddhist monks in some traditions regularly go to the morgue and they meditate for a few hours at a time there, just with the dead bodies around them.

And so they go deep within to touch what in Buddhism is called the deathless. So that is the freedom from what you've been trapped in lies there within you. Just go there, go there, there.

Don't go into the mind excessively. It's a conscious choice. And then the transmutation happens.

[Speaker 12] (1:02:00 - 1:02:01)

Hello Eckhart.

[Speaker 16] (1:02:01 - 1:02:02)

Hello.

[Speaker 12] (1:02:02 - 1:02:58)

Yes, hi. I want to ask you to address the phenomena of, I mean, it's a personal experience of mine, having, where the mind basically assimilates all spiritual teachings and then goes into sort of an unconscious hell that it's worse than prior to spirituality. So it's almost like the mind's revolting against the degree of awakening in a sense.

And I can only sort of talk, I can only talk about this because I feel like I've come full circle. And so I'm sort of asking the question to maybe kind of help people that might be right in the center of that hell in a sense of mind.

[Speaker 1] (1:02:59 - 1:03:05)

How does that hell manifest for you or how did it? If you've gone beyond it already then tell me how it did manifest.

[Speaker 12] (1:03:05 - 1:03:36)

Well, it was almost like there was some, a thought came in that seemed to be more important than staying present. And then it just sort of took off. And then it felt like a sense of nauseousness around any spiritual teachings because I've been there, I've done that, and it didn't work.

[Speaker 1] (1:03:36 - 1:03:45)

Oh, okay. Yes, that sounds familiar. I've had other people experiencing similar things.

Yes, thanks.

[Speaker 11] (1:03:46 - 1:03:46)

Thanks.

[Speaker 1] (1:03:48 - 1:08:06)

This seems to happen particularly to people who were very much drawn into spiritual practice for a period, quite a long period of time. You gave all your whole life to be very drawn into that and somehow they still had this division between ordinary life and spiritual practice. And the point comes when you've had enough of spiritual practice, you've gone too much that way and you need to find a balance again.

So the rebellion or whatever could be ego but is not necessarily ego. The rebellion could be simply an attempt of the organism, of the intelligence to re-establish a balance and to eliminate the division between spiritual and non-spiritual so that you might then also lose interest in further spiritual practices or visiting more teachers because you don't need that anymore. What you need now is to live it in the simplicity of everyday life so that the depth of that dimension comes into everyday life.

As long as you think spiritual is something special, then it's not quite right. It's not quite that. It would be truer to say that in true spirituality you become not more special than other people but more ordinary than other people.

And so that's the beauty of it. So at first you think this is great, things are happening. And from there you come back to the ordinariness and then it flows into that and transforms the ordinariness nicely expressed in a book somebody wrote a while ago with the title After the Ecstasy, the Laundry.

So that means, of course, the laundry and the ecstasy has to go into the laundry and become no longer ecstasy but ordinary conscious presence and then flow. So this return to ordinariness is part of it, expressed in various parables and so on also in the East. I can't remember them now.

It's the shift from unconscious living to consciousness, believing that there's something separate from ordinary life and then the realization that it's all ordinary. Again, expressed in simple things like when the Zen master was asked some people came to him and said, Our master can walk on water. What can your master do?

They asked the disciples. The disciples went to their master and said, Master, this other master can walk on water. What can you do?

And of course then he said the famous Zen saying, When I'm tired, I sleep. When I'm hungry, I eat. Zen is just the greatest teaching about the ordinariness of the simplicity of the depths and the power of that.

Again, expressed in the chopping wood. What is the essence of Zen? Chopping wood and carrying water, which is what in the monastery you would do every day.

They didn't have running water. Carry water, chop wood, and be totally in that every movement. Nothing special.

Nothing special, ordinary. What's the secret of Zen, you ask him? I don't know.

Chopping wood, carrying water.

[Speaker 6] (1:08:34 - 1:09:11)

Is there any chance that there could be some kind of a school or a retreat center where perhaps you would have senior students who you've worked with so that these teachings can spread in a more form way? I need more structure, and I'm very grateful to you for the teachings, but I keep having an image in my mind of a place, and I don't know if it's something I can help you do. I'd be happy to help build something.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:11 - 1:09:12)

Thank you.

[Speaker 6] (1:09:13 - 1:09:17)

And I think a lot of other people would, I think, I don't know.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:17 - 1:12:15)

Yes. It's been, the possibility of that has been there somewhere in the background for a few years. I'm open to it.

I rarely go out and make things happen, and usually I respond to things that want to happen, and when I get a clear indication that that's what wants to happen, then I would probably go along with it. I need to, I'm always, I'm very careful with structure because an excess of form can be a hindrance rather than a help. A complete absence of form as far as the teaching is concerned is not even possible, of course, so you always need some form, but as often happens when an organization develops, the form proliferates, and after a few years, and especially after the teacher is no longer there in physical form, then usually you're left with the form and egoic identification with forms, so teachers such as Goldsmith, also he was very reluctant to have any kind of strong, strong developed form in his teaching.

They said, you must have a church, you must have this, you must have that. He didn't, all he did was, okay, he called, he had a little bit of an organization, and he called it the Infinite Way, but there was no church as such. It didn't become a church.

Krishnamurti had certain, he eventually had a school for children, but again, he was also very reluctant because he could see from his past how identification with form can keep the ego in place. It's a balance, a balancing act between allowing enough form to be the carrier of a teaching, because even a DVD is form, or even the Internet filming is form, allowing enough form to enable the teaching to get out as much as possible, and yet not put too much emphasis on form because it tends to take over. So knowing that, it is still a possibility that this may happen, maybe even soon.

I'm kind of tuning into the general energy field, and the answer will come from there. It will come out of the field.

[Speaker 6] (1:12:16 - 1:12:21)

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for your work.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 8] (1:12:39 - 1:12:52)

Hello, Eckhart. Hello. I'm Michaela.

Hi. Pleased to meet you, and it's a privilege and a beautiful experience to be here and to be able to ask you a question. Thank you.

Thank you for that.

[Speaker 1] (1:12:52 - 1:12:53)

Thank you.

[Speaker 8] (1:12:54 - 1:13:18)

My question is about faith, and I meant to ask you if you could explain faith in the way Jesus spoke about it when he said, if you had faith as small as a mustard seed, you could say to that mountain over there, move, and the mountain would move, because nothing is impossible for the one who has faith.

[Speaker 1] (1:13:18 - 1:24:10)

Yes. Thank you. Good question.

Sometimes faith is misinterpreted as if it meant that you believe in something, especially in languages where, such as German, where faith and belief are the same word. So, but even in English, sometimes people equate faith and belief. Belief really is, you believe in something that you hear or read about, and conventional Christianity asks you to believe in a story that you are told, and then says, if you believe in this story, then you are saved.

But that's not faith, and that doesn't move mountains, and you're not really saved. There was a couple, went to church, a wife and husband, and they came back from church where they heard exactly what you just said. The pastor was reading from the Bible, and the wife says to the husband, you know, outside our bedroom, we have this little hill or mount that blocks our view.

What I'm going to do tonight, I'm going to believe that it's going to disappear, because if Jesus says you can move mountains, then surely you can move this little hill. And the husband says, that's a good idea. Okay, so the next morning, the wife opens the curtains, and it's still there.

And she says to her husband, oh, you see, I knew it wasn't going to work. So that's not faith either. So just telling yourself, I believe this is going to happen.

Probably not, unless you're lucky. But faith, the true meaning of faith is power. And if you have faith, means if you access the power that lies beyond all phenomena, if you access the source of life, if you find access to that, then that means you have faith.

And faith is sensing in yourself the power of life itself, which is not of the person, which is deeper. The power of consciousness itself. Sensing that in yourself, and when you connect with that, you realize it's not so much that you connect with it, that is the essence of who you are.

So having faith, really, is being fully who you are in your essence. And of course, the way to that, this is our entire teaching here, is to go beyond the noisy mind, or whatever the mind produces into the dimension of alive stillness. And that's, you're touching the source.

If you touch the source, so the personality needs to surrender so that you can go deeper.

Otherwise the personality, which includes the thinking mind, or is primarily the thinking mind, stands as a closed door. With a heavy personality, you cannot go any deeper, you're stuck.

There's a closed door of the personality. So there's a, the Russian spiritual teacher, Gurdjieff, mentioned two aspects of a human being, which he called personality and essence. And he says some people, or most people in this world, have a strongly developed personality, but there's very little essence coming through.

So essence is who you are beyond the personality. And he said occasionally it happens that there's an enormous amount of essence in rare human beings and very little personality. So most people you meet in this world have a fairly highly developed personality, especially in the Western world, but the whole world is becoming Westernized, so even in the East now, you can meet people with big personalities.

But if the personality recedes, and this is happening to us, then something more vital and more essential can shine through, and that is essence. And that then, and that is our life purpose, the essence begins to flow into also your mind. Your mind becomes a servant of, we call it awareness or aware presence, and it begins to tell you what it wants.

But you may perceive it as something that I want, but it really, it's not the egoic I anymore. It comes through, and it comes with something, or with something that you suddenly find yourself doing or saying, or perhaps just intensely being. And so that is power moving through you, and that power is far greater than anything that you perceive in the world of form, and everything in the world of form is subject to it, so it can very easily change outer reality if that's what it wants, but not in a frivolous way, not like saying, oh, let's try this, not in a, that doesn't work, but in a non-frivolous way, it can, your inner state of connectedness then changes the way in which you interact with the world, and as that changes, the world changes. So there's no, the dividing line that there seems to be between you and the world isn't really there. There's a continuum between your state of consciousness and external reality.

External reality to a large extent reflects your inner state of consciousness, and really that you can move mountains, really what he's saying is that external reality is a reflection of the inner, and as humans are moving into that, I'm sure it is our destiny eventually to be able to completely change external reality if we wanted to, not as persons, but as co-creators of the one consciousness. They can then work through us and change things, so perhaps our destiny is then to become like, well, this is only meaningful for fans of Star Trek. There's a character in Star Trek Next Generation called Q, and this character can do anything.

It can remove an entire galaxy, or it can put you from here to send you to another galaxy, or get total control over externals, but it doesn't quite make sense in the Star

Trek because he also seems to have a big ego, so that doesn't really go together. So that power would never be used for egoic ends because then it becomes greatly weakened if it's used for egoic ends, so the flow becomes restricted. So that's the face that moves mountains.

That is what the Tao Te Ching is, the Te in the Tao Te Ching. The Te is power, and the Tao Te Ching shows you how to be in touch with that, also another version of it. So, and the power is inseparable from who you are in your essence, but ultimately it's saying God can move mountains.

God in you and through you can move mountains. It doesn't really mean you can move mountains. God through you can move mountains, but you have to find the God in you so that the God can move mountains through you.

If you haven't found the God in you, then it's not going to work.

[Speaker 12] (1:24:13 - 1:24:15)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:24:34 - 2:22:11)

Welcome. The subject for today seems to be creativity. Of course, you never know what comes out.

There's a particular dimension where creativity arises. It's a little bit like the wick burning the flame, and it goes into, its sustenance is the oil. It's in an oil lamp, and you are the flame.

All the analogies, by the way, are very deficient, but it's just a distant approximation to get you into a sense of what that place is. So you are the flame, and you feel your way into the very source, down the wick into where the oil is inside yourself. So that's the place, the source.

So if anything is new, creative, something, then it has a fragrance of the source. Let's forget now about the image. It's a temporary thing.

And somehow, humans, even humans who are still very much identified with their mind, many of them are touched by, when they see or hear or whatever, come into contact with something that came out of that deeper level, whether it's a work of art or a piece of music, or it could just be somebody talking, and the words come from that deeper level. It could just be somebody who has a good sense of humor, which even that is already a form of creativity. Spontaneous humor is to suddenly see something that one wouldn't normally see, a connection between two seemingly unconnected things, and suddenly you connect them, and everybody laughs.

Some people have that. And some people have one small area in which they can be creative, and that can be enough to provide you with fulfillment and an income for the rest of your life and to contribute that gift to others. So comedians like great stand-up comedians, for example, have that gift.

Although they come up with, not everything, of course, they say is spontaneous, but when they prepare their stuff, they have to be creative. I don't know if anybody here has tried being a stand-up comedian. It's difficult.

Many people try. It's hard to be funny, but some have it, and it's amazing, those few that have that gift. And there, too, the sense of humor is spontaneously something arises, and there it comes.

It's being in touch with that. Now, it's wonderful to be able to be in touch with that and feel the power that flows from there out into this world. Now, for that, of course, you need some kind of vehicle because the power needs to flow into some kind of form.

You can touch that place also within, and it may not flow into creativity because you have not developed a vehicle for it, maybe not yet. So the very same power that gives rise to creativity, of course, can also manifest itself in different ways that we would not call creativity. It could be a healing power that comes into effect the moment you enter into relationships with others, healing in a wider sense, not just physical healing.

So the very same place where creativity arises, if you don't have a vehicle for it, you may not suddenly become a great musician if you've never touched an instrument just because you touch that place within yourself. I'm not going to suddenly become just because I can touch that place and be connected with that place. It's not going to manifest as a great scientific discovery in my case because the vehicle is not prepared for that.

My mind is not prepared for that. It doesn't even work that way. So for me to expect to come up with a unified field theory that Einstein didn't come up with, tried after the theory of relativity, tried for the rest of his life to come up with that, I'm not going to come up with that.

It's very unlikely. The vehicle has not been prepared for that. I'm not going to be a great pianist because I don't know how to play the piano.

So no matter how deeply I go within, it's not going to flow into that. Or a great sportsman. No, it's not besides my age.

You need to prepare the vehicle for creativity. Now, I may come back to that in a little while again. This may be important.

But more important than that is the place, to be able to go within to that place of vibrantly alive stillness where creativity arises. And you can go in there, and if there's no vehicle, it will not express itself in any form of creativity, not any conventional form of creativity, but it may actually express itself in different ways. I just mentioned one, which is an outflow in all human interactions.

An outflow of, very hard to put a word to it, but you can sense it when you meet a person who is present in the interaction. There's a different energy frequency that operates. And that is healing, and that is not something that is so formless that it does not require a previously prepared vehicle.

You can just be, and you emanate being. And so that's fine. You already become, that is then your contribution can be that no matter where you are.

Let's say you have a relatively uninteresting job, but you come into contact with people, then that would flow into what you do, and it will imbue whatever you say to another or give to another, even if you have the simplest job, like you're at a toll booth on a bridge. Now, every few seconds a car stops, and you have to say, $2, please. Thank you.

There, too, is an opportunity for you. You could, and I've seen once somebody who had an extremely, an outflow of presence, as he said, $2 and gave you back your change and have a nice day. There was more than the words.

There was an actual presence there, and everybody who goes through is touched by that. So no matter where you are, you touch that place, and then the outflow happens, even without a vehicle, the natural outflow, or it could be channeled into a particular vehicle. So you may be an, could be even a scientist Creativity is relatively rare.

Most scientists work, researchers, they work analytically, but to have that creative insight, it always comes from a place that goes beyond intellectual analysis, but you need to prepare the vehicle, which is the mind, in a particular way. There were some researchers that, I read about this, they found that in order to be, no, they didn't actually touch the deepest level, but they found in order to become, achieve mastery at something, you need 10,000 hours of practice. They found this an average number, no matter what it is, whether it's sports or science or music, that 10,000 hours of practice, that prepares the vehicle.

Now that doesn't mean if you have 10,000 hours of practice, that then automatically creativity flows in. You may have, you may just be going through the motions again and again, but that is a possibility then. Once you are there, then the vehicle is prepared, and then it sometimes happens, and for many it happens almost without them realizing it.

Suddenly there's a breakthrough to a deeper level, and what they do is not just technically good, because after 10,000 hours of practice, you will probably be technically quite good at what you do, but that's not enough for mastery in any field. Then there's a possibility if there is the state of consciousness that is necessary for that, an opening into presence, then it's possible that the vehicle suddenly becomes empowered, and that empowerment flows into what you do, and suddenly there is mastery. So for example, this I read is in a book, I think it was called Outliers, so he didn't actually go to the deepest level of what creativity actually is.

He just looked at the surface, the 10,000 hours of practice. The Beatles, for example, said, they became very, their songs are still alive today, they have that quality of aliveness, and when they were playing in little bars in Liverpool, in Hamburg, in Hamburg they had a contract apparently that forced them to play for hours and hours every day in little dingy beer cellars and bars, and then in that way they accumulated 10,000 hours of practice. At that time they were not yet remarkable, and then the breakthrough came, and so he gave various examples of that kind.

Now when finally it happens that something you produce, something that, whether it is music or art, whatever it may be, the product has a quality to it that is recognized even by people who themselves are not creative, and that is the interesting thing. If you listen to music, for example, in restaurants, we were in a restaurant last night and there was loud background music, as is usual these days, and there was no, it was music that was played, there was nothing there that one could respond to, and most music disappears after, is popular for a few weeks and then disappears, nobody hears of it again. Very few pieces of music stay, and they are played a year later, five years later, 10 years later, 20 years later, and people still respond.

Same applies to many works of literature and so on. Vast numbers of books are published, vast numbers. I've spoken to a publisher who told me that most books are published, they stay in the bookshops for a few months, and then they disappear, nobody ever hears of them again.

It's 95% of books or more. And a few books remain, so there is something, and there is a reason why. Humans recognize that quality that contains, there is an unmistakable quality, quality perhaps is the vital word here, there is an unmistakable quality to something that arises out of that deepest place.

And this quality is also present in the formless way in which you emanate when you don't have a vehicle, you simply emanate awareness or presence that brings quality into every relationship. Now, quality, you need to get a sense of what quality is rather than trying to understand what quality is through the intellect. It's the quality of your presence.

It is the quality even of your actions. Quality means there is awareness that flows into what you do. Then there is quality in what you do.

One can only go so far to explain, you have to see what that is. When I give attention to another human being, there is suddenly quality in the relationship, the quality of aware attention. When you are simply relating through the conceptual mind, there is an absence of quality, a completely different frequency of energy between human beings.

So you have, if you touch the presence, then you embody that quality. And even if you have no vehicle, you are, you embody that quality. And that is something that people sometimes recognize in a spiritual teacher, the quality of his or her presence.

And this is what they respond to, and this is why they come, not because of, the content is always secondary of what the teacher says. But more important than whatever the teacher says is the quality of that consciousness. Now, the fact that you recognize that quality in another means that you also have it.

There are still many humans who would not be drawn to any spiritual teacher because they don't recognize what's there. They don't, they have no access to it. But many do.

But don't believe that that then is only in that other person. Why are you able to recognize presence in another to see, oh, because it's only the same frequency in you can recognize it in another. So, and that's a wonderful thing.

When you, when you are drawn to a spiritual teaching, it could be in the form of a book too, then you recognize that aliveness or quality that's there. Why do you recognize it? Because it's already alive in you.

Maybe not as fully yet, but it's already alive in you, that presence. And this is how art can, true art, for example, can have a spiritual function because it can awaken that when there's an unmistakable quality in the work of art also. Although the artist may not embody qualities in all areas of his or her life, the artist may only embody quality in the small area of his or her art.

And when they go away from the art, they may be as unconscious as everybody else, sometimes even more so. Not always, but they may be. And when they go back to their art, immediately a shift happens.

They go, and the power flows in. Now I'm saying, of course, that that power can be in your life, not just in one small area, but continuously, your life can be imbued with that quality which is there whenever you are not identified with form continuously, which is the thought forms, the human mind, identified with that. Because the quality is the manifestation of the formless, the formless consciousness itself flowing into this world of form through you.

It almost is a paradox because the mind would say, how can the formless flow into this world of form? But it does. And it flows into forms.

there's a kind of selection process at work and things usually, there are exceptions, but usually things that deserve to survive because they have that quality, they survive works of art. But some works of art may actually be ahead of their time, so they may be discovered after the artist has died and suddenly humans recognize the quality, but while the artist was alive, nobody saw it. There are many examples of that.

There are great artists who never sold a single painting in their lifetime, died totally poor, and they died, and then 20 years, 30 years, 50 years later, suddenly humans say, wow, okay, it's a little late for him, unfortunately, or her. So recognizing it means it's in you so that the quality then can be indirect as being contained in a piece of music or a work of art or even a piece of writing. It's an indirect quality, or it can be direct when you encounter a human being who embodies that state, then you have a direct encounter with quality.

If you recognize it, not that you are able to define it intellectually because you can't really do that, you recognize that there's something there, and that recognition implies already a heightened degree of alertness. Oh, it's a kind of listening, a listening almost, an alert attention. And that is, and that's how, the mistake that sometimes happens at that point is that the mind misinterprets that and says it comes exclusively from this person.

And so you become attached to a particular form, for example, a spiritual teacher, and you say that's, the mind might even say he or she is the only one on the planet who has it. And I am his or her follower. And all the others are wrong.

And it can even happen that a teacher who embodies quality the mind at some point can come back in, especially if the teacher is surrounded by followers who believe that he or she is the one, the only one. Of course he's the one, but not the only one. You're also the one.

And the mind then misinterprets it, and even the one who embodies that after a while believes that he or she is more special than others. And whenever you go to a teacher and you hear that he or she says there are many great teachers, but I am the greatest, then you know there's been some identification with form again. And usually that's the beginning of the gradually the power of the teaching decreases.

So it's important not to misinterpret that. You don't need to make somebody even to think of a great genius if it's a work of art to see these people must be superhuman. People who create these works of art don't possess the human mind.

They are superhuman or great scientists, the greatest superhuman beings. And sometimes they build a monument, tall monument. Of course that's also misinterpretation because it's not the person, the person is not the one responsible for the creation.

The creation happens because the person has become transparent to this, the power or the light of consciousness itself. So to say that he did it is not quite right. It happens through him or her.

It's not that he did it or she created that, no. He or she was able to be an opening for that. And that all, no matter what you do as presence arises and you begin to feel the power that is there in you, but it's not yours because nothing is yours.

Why is nothing yours? Because there isn't you and the power. You are not separate from it.

You are it. So you don't own it. It's the illusion of separateness goes.

So when, this is very important as we sit here and we sit here in order to feel that which I'm talking about right now. Beyond your mind, beyond the emotions, there is a field of aliveness and power. In you.

It's everywhere, but this is where you sense it first. It is in you. It has no form, but it can flow into a form.

But you need to know it in its formless aspect. And that means getting in touch with the vibrantly alive stillness within. That is knowing the power in its formless aspect.

And if it should flow into a form, which could be a simple thing like saying something inspiring or deeply meaningful to another human being who at that moment needs those words, that means the power has assumed a form, is flowing into this form. And then it becomes a manifested power. But it is important continuously to stay in touch with the formless aspect of that power.

And know it directly, not as something that you even acquire or achieve, but that is intrinsically one with who you are in your essence. So there is not the power and me. There is not a duality.

Even to say I am using this power, we can say that from the surface reality because we are using language, but it's not even ultimately true because really the power, there's more intelligence in it than in your mind. So rather than you using it, it uses you. And it wants to use you because it is part of the evolution of our planet.

It wants to awaken through these forms into this world. So the most wonderful thing then is for you to, in your daily life, to sense your way back into that vibrantly alive stillness that is the power in its formless aspect, which is now as we sit here. The only, it flows, it is here present.

It's easier, of course, to do in, it's not doing, but we are using words. It's easier to embrace that in a group with someone who holds the presence perhaps than it is for you to do it in the office or at home surrounded by noise. So that's what we are doing here.

The only way it manifests here is through the words. The rest is the formless in this energy field in you. So all the great teacher pointed to that.

Whether or not it flows into a defined form is really secondary. Or whether you just continue doing what you're doing and just simply the way you do it changes not what you do. Or it may happen that the power changes your life completely.

You'll have to see what it does. It frees you from that false sense of identity that is to do with whatever the mind is telling you about yourself and about others. Who am I?

I am this. The silent power. And I cannot be defined.

To know myself, I don't need to define myself through any concept. I can know myself directly by being awake to that power that's vibrantly alive, stillness within. So wonderful to know also to know others.

Truly you don't need to define them through words or concepts. To know them in their essence you don't need that. You know them through your own presence that penetrates the layers of mind and emotion in the other that usually are mistaken for who that human being is.

So you pierce through, this power in you pierces through so to speak, penetrates the barrier in others that is their mind and their emotional layers. And it awakens the same that's in the other and it is waiting to be awakened. In every human being, although in some the density is still so much that even if you sit in front of them and you can perhaps feel it, but there's no awakening yet because the layer, mental emotional layer is too dense that happens also.

But in many cases the awakening happens through you. So as your function then from now on and for many of you it's already been your function for a while is to awaken first of course to be in connectedness with that, one with that as much as possible in your life but then your function in this world is to awaken it in others. This happens automatically simply by embodying it which means that whatever you do in life, your job, whatever activity you do is actually of secondary importance.

What is of primary importance is how you do what you do not what you do. How you do implies what state of consciousness is behind the doing. That is the how.

And that is more vitally important than what you do. So you start by practicing by being that immediately not saying okay I have to wait for better circumstances in my life so that I can practice being present. Now this is a postponement, it could take a long time and you may never get there because life continues to be challenging.

So any challenge can be an excuse for okay I have no time for being present now which really means I have no time for the now because I'm too busy. If only I had more freedom to practice if only I had enough money to go to a spa where people could pamper my body and I could lie in rose petal covered water fragrant beautiful fragrances and then be massaged with the most exotic oils and surrounded by lovely music then I could really practice being present. But that's not necessarily the case it's more likely that you will fall asleep.

But if things go wrong in your life go wrong by the way is another word for challenge if things go wrong in your life no matter where that's the better opportunity for practicing presence much better. So the less conducive circumstances are actually better than the seemingly conducive circumstances. In other words to put it even more bluntly bad things are spiritually better for you than good things.

Once you know that they're not bad anymore because the bad things are only bad when you don't know that they're actually better for you than the good things and they're only bad because your mind calls them bad. Nothing is either good or bad but thinking makes it so said Shakespeare somewhere. Now you have to find that next time you feel that something bad is happening to you start with little things perhaps a delay at the airport because of volcanic ash how dreadful terrible to have to spend three days like at the airport I've been running out of money the airline didn't pay for any hotels and so on okay dreadful or other people in Europe they had to travel for two or three days to get to some airport that was still working quite an ordeal but some actually I read in the paper some actually said suddenly traveling had become interesting again. Now those people they let go of the definition bad and they went with that flow of the present moment and they actually saw it's actually an adventure and for the rest of their life they remember this adventure when the planes were not flying anymore and they had to travel over land in buses and trains and for hours and hours and days and it was suddenly and others probably were still very upset about all that. So bad if you then see what what is it?

People don't they cannot separate people still unconscious they cannot separate the event and their mental interpretation of the event as bad or whatever word they use to describe it. For them when you so that means you're unconscious the way in which you interpret mentally and emotionally the event that's around you or the circumstances you find yourself in they're completely one so you say for example a dreadful thing just happened to me. Okay you haven't separated the thing and the dreadful you've brought the mental definition and judgment together with the event and for you they were a single thing a dreadful thing.

No here's the thing and here's the dreadful so the dreadful is a thought the thing is as it is now once you have the thought dreadful that becomes completely mixed up with the thing then you have the emotional reaction to the thought so that becomes the additional layer of dreadful so you have two layers of dreadful one is your thought the other is the emotion the bodily reaction to the thought which is the emotion and then you mix them up you mix them up together with the event stir well and then they become one and so there are people for the rest of their lives they always find themselves in dreadful circumstances never realizing here is what is in this moment the circumstances, the event the situation that I find myself in and here is my mental judgment and my emotional reaction about that the separation never happens and because there is a mental pattern of reactivity because the mind mistakenly believes that if I complain enough finally things will get better not realizing even after 50 years of complaining that it doesn't work I think it could have started this pattern for quite a few people may start in childhood when children cry enough they get attention from their parents and this may be one reason why the pattern arises so if I just cry enough or throw a temper tantrum then I'll get attention or I might even get what I want I just need to be loud enough okay that becomes the pattern and so the mental pattern is if I just need to be unhappy enough then finally God will give me what I need laughter and even people who don't believe in God still have that pattern so there is a God still somewhere there is some big father mother figure who the unconscious belief is I just need to be unhappy and show that I'm miserable then something will change and unfortunately of course it doesn't or fortunately it doesn't but there are many people in this world who never realize it laughter so even shortly before death they are still complaining and still complaining the food is no good never realizing that here is what is which is neutral and here is my interpretation of what is which is the mind but once you can separate those you have freedom you can see oh this is just what is here I'm stranded at the airport or I'm stranded at the bus station or here I'm lying in my sleeping bag in a little corner somewhere this is just what is do I need to add unhappiness to it by defining it in a certain way and then just waiting for the emotional reaction that corresponds to my judgment this is bad says the mind and then the emotion comes and the emotion gives rise to further thinking this is really bad which gives rise to further emotion and no nothing is changing so you are in a dreadful situation in your mind so the freedom comes when you realize the situation is neutral I the unhappiness is what I add to it and you can then once you see the mechanism you can actually practice next time something goes wrong and life being as it is you don't have to wait for too long next time something goes wrong you can see there's what is and perhaps the reaction still happens because it's so habitual but immediately after it's happened you say oh there was the reaction here's actually the situation and then you begin to play around a little bit with okay now can I just allow this event or situation or circumstance to be and can I just observe the mental judgment as just a judgment or can I even perhaps let go of it even if you can observe the judgment as just a judgment you've already one step one foot out of it already you don't believe it that you're in the ultimate reality of your judgment and you're completely out when you're able to simply go I don't really need the judgment because it adds nothing to the situation except unhappiness nothing now of course the mentally constructed self thrives on it the egoic self which is based on identification with thinking and identification with emotion it thrives on unhappiness it gets stronger the more unhappy you are like the incredible Hulk but it doesn't have to be anger it could be something else you could be the dreadful victim of circumstance and other people but it strengthens there can even be a contraction in the entire physical energy field always these dreadful things always happen to me and then you can complain and everything is taken then personally as a personal insult bad traffic, bad drivers cutting me off me a bad driver who cuts you off is no more than a gust of wind it's an unconscious force of nature but the mind personalizes it it's doing something to me some people even do it with bad weather but less so than with unconscious people but it's basically the same thing so you need to be there as it happens and then you practice being free and when you do it for the first time you find yourself in circumstances that the mind would have labeled normally as bad and suddenly you say well this is as it is and suddenly there's nothing bad about it the bad was only a thought and so that means you're actually non-reactive and with that also comes power because the reactivity was blocking it when you're non-reactive the power suddenly you're actually present with what is and power flows through you, that's another way of being there being present being non-reactive to things events, circumstances non-reactive puts you in touch with the power and when you're in touch with the power it may manifest in one way or another many people have found in their own experience that as they began to live in that way they found that so called bad situations quickly changed for the better either because they could actually enjoy what before they called bad just go with it or because they went with it it quickly turned around and changed you're actually inviting helpful circumstances by going with what is rather than going against what is you actually invite the intelligence that underlies the entire creation of the universe you can actually you're inviting it to work for you to become helpful suddenly you find a helpful thing comes in because you were open, present and it cannot come in when you are reactive so that's a wonderful thing to this is a practice for which you do not need any prior condition because fortunately things go wrong all the time but once you realize that nothing goes wrong it's not really wrong it was just the mind not being able to be with what is so this is the practice then is every day in your life wait for the next thing to happen the next little challenge or big challenge and then use that no mental judgment or if it arises so quickly that you can't drop then you realize oh there's the judgment there's always separate here's what is and here's my interpretation of it do I do I want to put them together no they're not do I want to keep this interpretation does it add anything helpful to it no let go and suddenly you're truly then facing what is that's intelligence everything else is ultimately you can call it insanity you can call it stupidity because it means now this could be you might have two PhDs and still be completely stupid in your daily life nothing to do with how educated you are whatsoever the world is full of highly educated people who are trapped in these negative patterns not the slightest idea recently the case of a woman who killed several of her colleagues at university in Louisiana or Alabama a highly regarded academic again completely trapped in her mind and emotional field so much so that her mind and emotional field that said these people are so dreadful who didn't give me tenure these awful I'm going to get the gun completely not seeing here's my reaction here's what is so that's an extreme case so PhDs don't help so that is intelligence then true intelligence is bringing that into your life that's not the IQ test intelligence that's relatively insignificant this is true so do you want your life to be run by intelligence or you want to perpetuate human stupidity which is also suffering another word for stupidity is self-inflicted suffering unconscious suffering so you're using situations people reactions of people people trying to draw you into reaction pain bodies people's behavior they don't behave as they should they shouldn't do that he shouldn't do that they should why don't they why doesn't he all is unnecessary baggage unnecessary baggage can become very heavy in your mind you carry around arguing complaining telling stories to yourself to others why things are so bad how unfairly circumstances and other people treating you and the moment you let go of that pattern presence arises and then you can bring creativity into dealing with situations it happens automatically as you no longer are in resistance this intelligence what a true intelligence is the true creativity so you don't have to become an artist and paint the greatest picture much more important than that is human beings becoming sane I don't mind if there are actually no more pictures at all or any work of art if humans are becoming insane that would be the greatest work of art not that they're not going to paint pictures anymore but the most vital thing is sanity arising in human beings that's and then you become creative because the intelligence flows into your life and transforms your life first of all it removes unhappiness well that's enough already and you can removing unhappiness of course is a negative way of putting it when unhappiness is removed what remains is aliveness joy gratitude for what is alignment with the present moment as it is accepting other humans no matter what behavior they manifest that's where they're at right now that's how it is so then creativity then the main thing is that it flows into your life whatever else it flows into it doesn't matter whether you have some great music or great art or great writing or great sculptures or whatever other thing you do it's fine too but the main thing is this even the greatest artists didn't know that many of them were unhappy in many areas of their life and only in tune in the area when they were creating so the canvas then for your work of art is your everyday life

[Speaker 9] (2:22:40 - 2:23:15)

thank you more than a question I'm seeking a little guidance I have a deep intention to transcend and to dissolve the illusion of separation and I wonder I wonder how that is a tricky way that the ego is a tricky way that the identification itself is keeping me as not thinking that this moment is enough by seeking that does that make sense

[Speaker 1] (2:23:15 - 2:23:19)

yes can you say what is it you're seeking

[Speaker 9] (2:23:19 - 2:23:34)

transcendence yes I'm seeking to awakening experience a greater disidentification with the form and it seems that somehow in the seeking I'm not fully resting

[Speaker 1] (2:23:36 - 2:36:42)

it's good it's true that the great obstacle for especially the spiritual seeker is the fact that they're seeking for something now of course everybody is seeking in this world they're seeking some kind of relief greater aliveness even the egoically dominated people they want to feel more fully alive more fully who they are they want to be themselves more fully and so they seek it through this that or the other identification with this with that or the other ultimately always with some kind of thought they seek it there's a seeking and the seeking pattern even when people become disenchanted with the usual things that people seek their happiness through in this world you realize it can't be found there it's not in the it's not in what you possess it's not in what you achieve ultimately you can't find true and lasting peace, aliveness you don't find yourself ultimately there in things, in thought it can't give you that the deep sense of rootedness in being, of being at home within yourself and then you become a spiritual person, a spiritual person already knows, the spiritual person is no longer looking for a job on Wall Street perhaps I'm not saying that somebody in Wall Street cannot suddenly turn spiritual that's fine but people are seeking it's a mind structure and when you see that you can't find it there, you think okay, now what I really need is spiritual realization or whatever you call it awakening, I don't need, I know that the car is not going to do it the big house is not going to do it the great job is not going to do it the bonus at the end of the year is not going to do it because you might have tried it already or you have the maturity that tells you it doesn't work or you've seen others who are unhappy, who have all these things and are completely unhappy and then you say okay, what will work because you read spiritual books you listen to spiritual teachers there is such a thing as enlightenment or awakening and that's going to work this is where I find myself finally which of course is true but you carry with you the mind structure of seeking now the mind structure of seeking, you then take it from the worldly things into the spiritual and so you become a spiritual seeker seeking implies of course that there is something there that you seek which implies future because you're not seeking it, you know that you're not going to find realisation by seeking in space, you're not going to look around this room and say I'm seeking awakening in this room so it's not the seeking that looks in space, well some people think if I go to India I might find it they can try that you won't find it in any particular place, so the seeking isn't a seeking in space, it's a seeking in time, it's a seeking in future in other words seeking implies you need the future to be who you truly are that's the belief the spiritual seeker needs future he might try India but then finds, well I didn't find myself there either so you really, it's not a place but it's the seeking implies future the next moment, let's call it the next moment maybe I'll get it in the next moment but you can't because realisation is present moment realisation it has nothing to do with time or future, and who you are does not require time everything else requires time learning to play an instrument requires time, learning a language requires time, building a house requires time acquiring knowledge requires time making a cup of coffee requires time crossing the street requires time but knowing, being yourself knowing who you are does not time stops you from realising it future stops you from realising it so it's going into the present moment and finding a new attitude towards the present moment which is one of openness rather than of using it as a stepping stone to the next moment that's the fallacy that's also the spiritual seeker's fallacy, is to use this moment as a stepping stone to the next one so you devalue this moment because you're thinking you're going to get there in the next one but the next moment what is that, what existence does it have? it's a thought in your head because there's no otherwise it has no existence it never comes the next moment always remains as a thought in your head, it's never actuality it can't be, because actuality and the present moment are indivisible they are one so you're still relying on thought when you look to, when this moment is made reduced to devalued, reduced to a stepping stone, to the next which is going to promise fulfillment then you miss it, continuously because the next moment is a thought, no more it doesn't exist in conventional terms it does but in absolute terms it doesn't exist if it did, somebody would have seen it, or touched it I've never encountered the future it's never but the moment it comes, it's the present there's only this so don't be a seeker or let's say, if you have to seek, then seek to be open to this moment don't be say yes to whatever arises, whatever form it takes, any form that arises in your life at this moment say that's what is you don't impose judgments on it, it just it is what is already, it already is then you have arrived so you are and then then you realize that you are the space for it you are not what happens you are the space for it you are not the thought you are the space for the thought you are not the emotion, you are the space for the emotion you are the formless space of consciousness itself which is no time has no time to it and so that's the end of seeking you don't seek an experience some people have spiritual experiences but the experience comes and goes some people have great spiritual experiences like fireworks and it lasts and it lasts for a while and then, because it's a form, and then it dissolves or I had such a great experience three years ago five years ago I wish I could have that again I'm trying to have it again but it's not working it's not an experience it's the you have become aware of the the background to all experience the space for all experience the stillness behind all experience which is always there it's only covered up by mental noise thoughts become aware that that's who you are and then that's it you embody that you become an opening for that and that's all that's your the fulfillment of your life here is to be an opening for that and then perhaps your realisation deepens of that it's not an experience but it's the sense of spaciousness deepens and more and more the balance changes between perhaps at first you are a person 90% of the time and the little 10% of space so you're not a person who is totally identified anymore so you there's some space and that's fine it's already a big improvement in your life and then as gradually there's more space that comes through in between the thoughts in between the emotions and then you're 70% a person 30% space and perhaps eventually 50% person, 50% space and you're already a beautiful spiritual teacher and that's fine if 50% form 50% formless I'm quantifying something that cannot be quantified it's a little silly but balance the dance between form and formlessness in your life and as you grow old perhaps when you reach the age of 80 there's more and more formlessness or there may already be 90% formlessness and you might then decide to travel to India because only there will they fully appreciate it and you can sit under a tree and only occasionally you say a few words that's the 10% of the person still there but basically you are an opening for consciousness to come through as was a sage such as Ramana Maharshi in India just sit there and in India as you sit there for long enough in that state people will come and live next to you 1, 2, 3, 4, 10 20, 30 and then before you know it you sit in the middle of an ashram I must admit I feel tempted sometimes to do that laugh but there's still a lot to do in the west thank you do I have to give up wearing makeup in order to reach enlightenment

[Speaker 11] (2:36:43 - 2:36:44)

laugh

[Speaker 1] (2:36:55 - 2:40:29)

laugh as you may have noticed well people who are looking at this on their screen won't have noticed but people who are sitting here may have noticed that I'm wearing makeup laugh that's why I look so dead laugh they put it on apparently you have to do it otherwise you get shiny noses and faces and it doesn't work on camera but this question was really about some other kinds of makeup laugh the question may be concerned about being identified with externals external appearance the problem is not the makeup or the clothes that you wear but the question is where your sense of identity your sense of self comes from is it derived primarily from the way you look which would include makeup which would include the shape of your body which would include the clothes that you wear if that is the basis for your sense of identity then would I recommend that you wear old clothes remove your makeup or do something to the shape of your body no these things are just externals the identification is the problem so where do you derive your sense of who you are your sense of I your sense of body your sense of self where does that come from does it come from the way you look or does it come from a deeper place within yourself does it come from thoughts that things you tell yourself about yourself or does it come from a deeper place that is beyond thought what really matters is going to the deeper place where you realize that who you essentially are is not the form the external form nor even the psychological form of the me structure which consists of thoughts but the consciousness that is behind all that you are the awareness you are the stillness you are the presence and once you know that and then you can play around in the world of form and wear makeup or not wear makeup it makes no difference you can wear nice clothes or you can wear any kind of clothes it doesn't make any difference you may still want to wear nice clothes without being identified it's perfectly fine you won't be obsessed anymore there is a difference between enjoying and obsessing so it's not the externals that matter it matters where your sense of I comes from so if your sense of I comes from identification with form it will lead to more and more suffering because your external form is going to deteriorate oh you didn't know that

[Speaker 15] (2:40:29 - 2:40:30)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (2:40:31 - 2:42:52)

well it's maybe not taught at school but the external form gradually deteriorates and so no matter how much makeup you use it eventually can't be hidden anymore it deteriorates and that's fine but if you had not been identified with the form it wouldn't matter that much you can actually it's quite a pleasant thing even to watch how gradually you can hold a photo of yourself next to a mirror oh that was me 15 years ago, 20 years ago oh laughter and that's not frightening if your sense of who you are comes from a place of the formless consciousness that's very peaceful and you can even then allow the gradual decay really that's what it is of the form to happen it will still be very peaceful you become more peaceful and whether or not you continue with your makeup it becomes irrelevant perhaps it's a habit and you still like I still like to look nice she says and even although I'm 75 I still like to use my makeup I like to look nice perfectly fine if she is in touch with a deeper level that doesn't matter so where does your sense of self come from that is the question the makeup is not the problem or the clothes or the shape of your body from an anonymous questioner laughter I have read that as long as we are in a body we have a shadow is this true for you what is your shadow laughter let me think

[Speaker 15] (2:42:55 - 2:42:56)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (2:43:03 - 2:43:34)

what is your shadow the do you have a shadow ok the answer is part one of the answer is yes part two of the answer is if you ask anybody if they have a shadow and they say no then you know that they have a shadow and if they say yes they don't

[Speaker 15] (2:43:36 - 2:43:36)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (2:43:42 - 2:46:59)

because shadow which is just a way it's a Jungian term which I don't normally use but what it means is an area of unconsciousness that you are not aware of because if you are aware of it it's no longer unconscious it's not really a shadow so if it's an area of unconsciousness in your life and if it's truly a shadow or an area of unconsciousness then of course you won't know it you might know there's a certain behavior pattern but you will not recognize it as an area of unconsciousness you might say of course I get furious every time somebody mentions this or that because and you have some justification it's not recognized as an unconscious reactive pattern or you might be totally unconscious of it and say I'm never angry I'm never angry why do you accuse me of always being angry that's so it's right there but you don't know it you deny it so the shadow then anybody who says no they probably have one if they say yes then they have seen that there are still certain areas where there are certain behavior patterns still operating of course they are because as long as somebody has a body certain patterns operate certain behavior patterns idiosyncrasies ways of doing things so if you're aware that that's there then that's all that it is it's not a totally conscious thing it's not a shadow as such we can talk also in terms of ego you have if you're aware of certain patterns in you that originated from ego and they still operate to some extent although you live mostly in awareness sometimes there's a momentum behind certain behavior patterns like they're not being energized anymore but it's still there and so if you're aware of it it's not really the ego anymore ego implies unobserved mind ego implies you don't know it's the ego there's no awareness there's just the conditioned mind doing its thing, acting out the moment you bring awareness to it there's a light on it so if the light shines it's shining on the shadow it's not a shadow shadow means there's an absence of light and light means consciousness so ego is no longer ego when you know there's ego it's only truly speaking ego when you don't know it when there's unconsciousness

[Speaker 8] (2:47:13 - 2:48:24)

I've had a question running around in my mind for a few years now I was, from the time I was a little girl raised as a Catholic and I went full circle on that one completely to denying God and not believing in God and now I've thanks to a large extent in what you teach and share and Byron Katie teaches and shares I know that connectedness is there and the awareness and the stillness but quite some time ago I got the thought why do I pray? because if God is all knowing and omnipotent and everywhere and all loving and so on I don't think he, she, it needs me to say my girlfriend's dying of cancer can you help her?

I think that's not necessary but I enjoyed praying so I don't know I'd love to hear your thoughts on that and what would be appropriate to pray for do you believe in prayer? I know there's studies been done where it says, you know, it really makes a difference so yeah, that would be really wonderful to hear from you on that

[Speaker 1] (2:48:24 - 2:59:22)

Okay, thank you Perhaps you can upgrade your prayers from from petitionary prayers, please make this happen the petitionary prayers to what little just mental pointers towards peace, for example little mental pointers that use still use concepts, because every prayer is some kind of consists of words and concepts in other words, to use a concept to point to help you go beyond concepts you could say, for example an affirmation the one we talked about earlier, which really what Jesus said I am the light of the world is an affirmation and it's a concept it points to a deeper reality that is deeper far deeper than the words you can say please let me know if you still want some petition, please let me know that I am the light of the world duality is implied usually in the usual prayer it implies that there is God and he is me asking God the ultimate of course is that duality is ultimately an illusion because you are an expression of God you and God merge and the deepest prayers then are no longer prayers as such they are when you adopt a listening attitude rather than a saying words so if prayers gradually become from saying as long as you enjoy it that's fine but gradually get away from asking somebody to do something for you because that keeps you stuck in duality but if you can realize that this affirmations are if they are done rightly can be very beautiful substitutes for prayers I'm healed and whole and at peace and after that let there be a space and really the power is in that space in the space you experience that you are already whole the outward form might tell you something different I'm holy cause in miracles says I am holy for example that's again you are and so it's simply an affirmation of how this is how it is or if you healing for somebody else you are either with that person or that person comes into your mind you are thinking about that person and that person may be ill and then the most powerful healing I find is to be to hold the image of that person and then go deeper into yourself where the wholeness of life lies where nothing is needed nothing needs to be added and there you find the wholeness also of that person they are already healed at that deepest level beyond form they are already healed so you go from form and then into formlessness that is the healing that was practiced by Joel Goldsmith he has a little lovely book called The Art of Spiritual Healing and that is really to not to dwell at all on the condition that needs to be healed but to focus on the essential reality of that human being which is one with your essential reality and go into deep stillness where nothing is needed so he would often get phone calls sometimes in the middle of the night somebody desperately needs healing and they would say that's the name of the person and that's what he or she is suffering from and what he would then do is immediately put the phone down and go into absolutely no thought for a moment he heard the name of the person he heard what was wrong with the person and immediately let go of that and immediately just for two or three minutes went into no thought just absolute presence and in that there is absolute perfection in that realm of the formless and that is the essence of that person that needed healing so you take the form into the formless where the form is no longer no condition to be treated nothing is needed just go into that and that was his way of healing he was quite a powerful healer that is the ultimate form of healing and that really is the non-dual kind of prayer it's no longer going beyond prayer where you say please God heal you go to the very source itself that is inseparable from who you are and is inseparable from who that person is and so that's the listening if healing if prayer can gradually as I said become listening listening to God rather than talking to God what does listening mean?

listening means there is a field of bare pure attention and listening doesn't mean that you are waiting for some answer then you are not really listening in listening you are not waiting for anything, there is just a field of just pure attention and that is a much deeper prayer than any words that's the attitude of that's true prayer where prayer also becomes meditation you could say not even wanting an answer it's enough to be in the silence and sometimes an answer comes or this thing becomes resolved sometimes suddenly listen any trouble in this world any disturbance and they happen all the time people around you maybe even a disturbance in your mind go into just pure aware bare listening presence because presence and listening are very just listening is a way of speaking about presence you can say when you are present it is as if you were in a state of listening now listening usually is associated with the auditory sense perception but this listening goes beyond the auditory sense perception it's the state of consciousness that underlies the auditory sense perception everybody knows what that is like because when you are really listening for some faint sound what is the state of consciousness that underlies this listening to the faintest sounds it's a state of absolute relaxed alertness so when we say listening listening is a helpful thing because everybody knows what listening means but now I'm just pointing out that it's not the external sense perception that's the essence in listening the essence in listening is the underlying state of consciousness of alert absolute receptivity and alert presence this is why I believe that Jesus had his parables about the servant and the master staying awake because the master doesn't know when the master is going to come home so the servant needs to stay awake to know when the master is coming home otherwise he'll be asleep and I think what he really was talking about because many of the things have come down in a somewhat distorted way because it got transmitted verbally and verbally again and finally written down and in the process some things got turned around and missing I think he was talking about the attitude of that absolute he was talking about the state of consciousness, this servant waiting just to hear the master come home waiting in a totally different sense from the normal thing that we call waiting which is the mind saying when it is going to happen why isn't it happening yet, he uses waiting in a totally different sense so there are quite a few, many times Jesus talked about obviously about staying awake that's an important part, a very important part of his teaching, stay awake don't go to sleep stay present that's so any words you use in prayer, use them as pointers towards that you could say I'm listening

[Speaker 8] (2:59:27 - 3:00:33)

I quite often absolutely practice I believe what you're trying to share with us by noticing that I'm breathing and quite often at least recently on the in breath it's love and on the out breath it's joy it used to be pain and then I thought well I'm spreading pain but Thich Nhat Hanh kind of opened my eyes a little bit it's interesting you brought prayer to the talk about noticing that you're breathing, I think that's what I'm hearing you say he basically said if you're not enjoying it you're doing something wrong and that's really helped me because I try to do it all the time, if I'm having a conversation with someone, if I'm by myself if I'm doing the dishes and for the longest time it felt like work it's like oh I just want to be normal I don't want to be doing this all the time but I'm getting closer I believe to now reaching that stillness and it does feel good and so to connect that to it being prayer like, that's really helpful

[Speaker 1] (3:00:33 - 3:00:40)

yes and of course as he said joy is an important indicator of when you're there

[Speaker 8] (3:00:40 - 3:00:44)

so it's not like work and I have to do it because I should be awake

[Speaker 1] (3:00:44 - 3:01:43)

yes and the joy of course in the rest of your life also let it be there in your daily activities I talked to a man I had to call somebody about a car registration yesterday he works for the automobile association and I met him before and he has such aliveness when he deals with people just what do you need? let me help you and I said to him oh you're wonderful, you're emanating so much positive energy and he said oh I'm just having fun I'm having fun so there are people in everyday life who kind of, who live that and of course everybody who comes into contact with him gets a little bit of that I'm having fun

[Speaker 8] (3:01:45 - 3:01:47)

good message, thank you

[Speaker 14] (3:02:05 - 3:03:08)

my heart is pumping really hard, thank you Edgar you changed my life dramatically well, thank you thank you for being the vehicle of the higher power this is like very important it's not important it's just nothing's that important do you cry? because I cry a lot about just good things like when good things happen I cry when bad things happen I don't pay that much attention to them but I sometimes cry too and I mean I know it's okay but do you cry?

because I see you as an example when I deal with something I'm always thinking well what I could do and you don't have to answer that question but is it normal to cry? yes I do let's see let's see

[Speaker 1] (3:03:12 - 3:07:07)

well apart from a movie that I saw recently where I cried the other occasion was maybe a year ago or whenever it was the beauty in nature well that happened to me could be anywhere, it's happened quite a few times it does happen occasionally intense beauty and then I was driving along the approaching the Big Sur Coastal Highway along the Pacific Ocean in California and there was the sea the clouds, the mist the vegetation incredible beauty and presence, the aliveness in the energy field and as I was driving I was crying so beauty is very often that does trigger that it's a very happy crying a joyful crying and then I cried in a movie recently that happens occasionally it was about a dog um sometimes also I cried when I see human suffering could be somebody in the street could be even be something on television, occasionally it happens so the it's a I hadn't actually given it much thought until you asked me so it's quite lovely, I enjoy it crying some people cry when they sit here and it touches the emotional field, although our gathering is not at all emotional because that would be a very different gathering, it would go like wow, yeah let's all jump up and sing so we, this is not what happens here and yet sometimes as presence arises it can the emotions can also begin to vibrate with it and so some people sit here and cry and I know they're quite happy basically but they go something resonates the emotional emotional field is vibrating and perhaps a healing is taking place at that time, who knows so it's again acceptance there's another kind of crying of course that is more dysfunctional for example when you're telling yourself a sad story in your head about your life and you start crying so you believe in the story that you're telling yourself in your head and how dreadful your life has been and you it's been so awful it's just not fair life has treated me so badly it's just not fair wake up there's just this moment don't tell yourself a story and believe in it

[Speaker 14] (3:07:09 - 3:07:29)

so when do you cry? I cry when I watch a movie when I think about my nieces right now I'm not there with them when I think about my family I'm just so happy thank you you're welcome thank you

[Speaker 1] (3:07:46 - 3:40:51)

short question here do you experience the earth as Gaia an entity with her own consciousness yes of course just as the one consciousness animates this physical form the one consciousness animates also the earth as a living intelligent being not only the earth the sun also there's far more both to the earth and to the sun than we realize the sun is the life-giving principle in the manifested almost in the manifested sense-perceived world the sun is the closest we can get to what we could call the divine because it's a continuous outpouring of energy continuous giving millions and millions of years a vast outpouring of energy and we think it's just a physical process in our narrow interpretations we say it's a huge atomic reactor or whatever, but there's far more to the sun than that it's a living being of great intelligence and so is the earth so let's see what the earth is going to do with the little microbes that are crawling around its surface what would you do what does the body do if viruses or bacteria invade it to get rid of them it raises the temperature it gets a fever the earth could do any number of things the earth has barely noticed that humans are here because its time constant time is very different humans have been here for a very short time the earth is just beginning to notice that the humans have arrived here and are not doing much good now and then the intelligence that governs earth's life, which is no more than it's the one consciousness moving through that form of earth can do many things it could get rid of most humans without any violence the simple thing for example of reducing fertility in humans so that neither men or women or both and then within a hundred years humanity would shrink to very little if the earth wanted to do it it can do many things to get rid of humans if it needed to get rid of humans but we haven't reached that stage yet we would if there's no change in consciousness, eventually we will reach a stage where the earth will say okay, we'll have to get rid of this life form and there's no problem it can do that easily, but we have not yet reached that stage there's still the possibility of something very different happening which will not end in the elimination of humans but will be a flowering of consciousness the consciousness of the earth through the humans I know you say that whatever you feel the world is withholding from you in my case, true love you already have and you just need to let it out so I know you say that whatever you feel the world is withholding from you, you already have you already have it and you just need to let it out in this person's case it's true love do you have any more practical tips for doing this?

I wrote about that in the New Earth because there are many people who go around life saying or thinking that life is depriving them of something in some cases it may be yes, as the questioner says true love we'll have to see what that means or recognition people don't appreciate me or care nobody really cares about me or I'm deprived of say wealth I'm lacking the world is withholding from me abundance these are all beliefs that seem to find confirmation in external reality because the person who has these beliefs says well, it is a fact that life is withholding abundance from me because I have very little or it's a fact that life is withholding love from me, I haven't found anybody nobody loves me or it's a fact that life is not giving me any appreciation nobody appreciates me and so on so many people feel then there's something that's being withheld and I wrote that what you believe is being withheld you are in reality, you are withholding it from the world because what you think the world should be giving you to make you happy recognition care, love abundance whatever it may be is really something that is inseparable from the essence of who you are, it comes out of that and so you have to discover that it's already inside you what you think the world is not giving you it is already in you but you have to allow it to flow out into the world and then that very quality comes back to you love can you love that which is the isness of life love is connected with to appreciate to appreciate the being of any life form can you love on a daily basis do you love what is do you love when you look at the sky, do you appreciate the beauty that you see in the sky do you appreciate the flower, do you appreciate whatever it is that is around you the fact that you are breathing do you appreciate a simple object that usually one takes for granted its silent presence so are you giving out that appreciation of things which is a form of love and then you can notice there's an outflow of attention onto things rather than somebody says I'm not getting it you can sense energy moving out nobody cares about me, nobody calls me well do you care about, do you call them not because you call them because as a means to an end, no, because you are truly interested in them, you are truly wanting to know you're giving them attention how are you, not as an empty question truly being able to listen to somebody giving them attention, appreciation listen, which means an outflow of attention so if you care for people around you or strangers then you always get back what flows out life always reflects that back to you abundance how do you get in touch with, and again I say abundance is inseparable from your state of connectedness with being, that's where all abundance arises out of the one the unmanifested one life that's where abundance arises, the fullness of life Jesus calls it so can you appreciate the fullness of life and the abundance of life at every moment before life gives you things that in conventional terms would be called abundance abundance comes when you see the abundance of nature you walk past a flower shop and see the abundance of beauty and all these flowering plants you see you don't even need to have a plant or a flower even to appreciate what you see as the infinite abundance of life or you see the vegetables and the fruit in a store the abundance of that the abundance of the sun pouring out its abundance of energy continuously upon the planet, can you feel that on your skin, how the sun pours out its abundance for millions, millions, millions of years, no end to it and it's given the very warmth in your body is derived from sun energy because you eat plants and it's the energy that plants have accumulated from the sun and so you appreciate the incredible abundance of the sun, the abundance of rain that comes down from the sky the abundance of water no matter where you are you will find some abundance in one form or another and you don't need to own anything to appreciate abundance you must respond to it and recognize it so your attention moves there the abundance of life forms when you look around the street where all the people and the cars going by life is producing billions of different life forms everywhere, as humans as animals going to a forest or anywhere in nature and see the incredible abundance there but of course the essence of abundance is not multiplicity when you see it in the outer world, abundance is many things many beautiful things, all kinds of forms but the essence of abundance isn't in the forms, the forms are manifestation of abundance but if you appreciate the manifestation of abundance outside of you that puts you in touch with the source of abundance that is within you as the fullness of life before life becomes a form of life so by appreciating the manifestations of abundance around you you get in touch with the feeling of abundance, which is the aliveness that is behind and within every life form so the more you appreciate it, you can actually feel that, go to a little store where they sell fruit and vegetables and look at that for just a few seconds or half a minute and really see how alive everything is and how so many beautiful things there, the vegetables and the fruit and I'm not, you can do the same in a shopping mall with other things but let's keep it simple and and feel that the aliveness that's there, amazing and at that moment you feel it in yourself because you can only feel the aliveness that you see in the manifested you can only feel that through your own, which is basically residing in the unmanifested and you begin to feel alive, you respond to the world's aliveness and that's abundance beginning to arise the feeling of abundance so you acknowledge that abundance is already in your life you don't need to own anything to feel that it's all around you and that initiates the process of outflow of recognition of abundance and then you'll see that life brings things to you that confirm your innermost feeling of abundance and actually things tend to come to you they like to be acknowledged strange as it may sound they seek you and it's no longer that you then need the external abundance to feel abundant you feel abundant first external abundance follows it's no longer primary it cannot you just feel just as abundant as before so that's I for many years I lived in below the poverty line in official terms not in third world terms but in western official terms below the poverty line and yet I didn't feel poor I continued to feel the abundance of life and I was surprised when I read in the paper a person who has that much less than this amount of money per year is below the poverty line and I said oh I must be poor that's strange I knew I couldn't there are many things I couldn't buy but it didn't seem to matter and I had this love strange thing for let's talk about just this seemingly trivial thing my means of transportation and I still have that a love for it's almost as if it were life in my twenties my means of transportation was a bicycle throughout my twenties and so I felt some connection with that bicycle and a strange habit which I still have even now once I parked the bicycle somewhere chained it to a railing or whatever I would walk away and still occasionally stop for a moment and look back at it why?

give it I felt a connectedness and I loved just it's presence that's the bike and then when I was thirty somebody gave me an old car and I had that again and when I appreciate just it's being there and I felt a connectedness even a form of love one could say perhaps but feeling an appreciation for it and it's again I did whenever I parked the car I would just walk a few steps and look back at it for a few seconds and I still do the same now that I have a much better car I still do it what I did once with my bicycle there's still a it's a strange thing it's an inner it's a sense I have that with many things that things are actually have some life even so called inanimate things and so you feel there's a there's a fullness to life whether it's a car or bicycle didn't really matter and now this questioner talks about true love so he or she feels he I believe that what the world is withholding from him is true love which I presume means another human being in their life and again do you love other humans in your daily life are you able to look upon them not with what is conventionally called love that would be a little silly to you can't go around say to everybody I love you I love you you can try but it's not advisable most humans would not be comfortable with that and you don't even have to say in your mind I love you because you can't force yourself to love it's not like that but are you able to give them to appreciate their being when you look at them to give them space to be for example judgement and love obviously can't go together so if you compulsively go around judging other humans there can be no love to use a slightly different term the Buddhists have a term that's translated as loving kindness which is quite nice it's an outflow of loving kindness meta you have that loving kindness towards other humans but that implies a spaciousness while you relate to them, perceive them or interact with them the loving kindness towards another human can only arise if there's some inner spaciousness in you like here now and from there you look upon that human with appreciation and loving kindness and you can look through the ego in the other because the moment you judge another you get stuck in their ego and you strengthen your own ego looking through the ego or egoic behavior or whatever front the humans present to you some role they play and you immediately see there's the role, you see it without naming it you see the role and you don't react to it you look through that in stillness in stillness you look through their roles and there's something emerges that's underneath that's more real and sometimes the roles collapse or are relinquished temporarily by the other person and there's a true interaction but the important thing is do you give out love as you move through life and again it's really all when we talk about care love recognition appreciation abundance but it all, when you go deep into those things which seem to be different things when you name them if you go deep to their source you realize it's all they're all really one they're all manifestation of one underlying state so to speak and that is the unconditioned consciousness they all arise out of that so it's already, it's all already in you don't pursue, just a brief mention, true love if you pursue what the world tells you true love is in romantic terms and you're looking for that then of course you are setting yourself up for eventual disappointment because romantic love can be an initial thing many relationships are drawn together by believing the other person to be absolutely my the absolute fulfillment of my and completion of my life and it's never quite like that and even though for many relationships it begins as a romantic relationship, sexual, emotional after a while that subsides and it is then that you need to encounter the transcendent dimension in the relationship otherwise either it will end or it will continue in a somewhat lifeless fashion some kind of arrangement so the the transcendent dimension is the vital factor in the relationship even though it may be emotional sexual also and as the relationship progresses the transcendent becomes more and more vital and the transcendent of course means to be not just to be there as a form identity for the other but also as a non-formal alive conscious presence and recognize that essence in the other also your partner is more than who or what he or she appears to be don't get stuck in just the little personality of your partner because that keeps you stuck in your own little personality and that becomes very frustrating to live with a little personality with its limitations and so on but there is something in every human being whatever you see on the surface is less than the tip of the iceberg as you know with an iceberg you see only like 10% of it on the surface of the sea and 90% is under the water with human beings it's even less what you see on the surface of who they truly are in the depths of their being you can't even imagine and what you truly are in the depths of your being you can't even imagine you actually merge with the source of all life you're not separate from that God, sometimes God so it's a dreadful delusion to think that what you see in your partner on the surface is who they truly are but if you're trapped in that delusion then that keeps you trapped in your own delusion too but there is a depth there that is also in yourself that you won't see unless you begin to access the depths in yourself and to access the depths in yourself you need to find the deep place of stillness that's always there whereas conceptual thinking becomes unimportant subsides like now and then you sense there's something much more real than the little entity that you thought you were and then you look at your partner and you can sense also the depths that's there and occasionally in your partner it might be much easier than at other times because even if your partner is still predominantly mind possessed you may occasionally see glimpses in him or her where something shines through that's much deeper and more alive than the person that's usually there, moments beautiful and there's something more real but you don't need to wait for those rare moments in some cases rare if they're not yet going through the awakening process it's rare I caught it for example a few times in my mother who did not go through an awakening process unfortunately in this lifetime but I saw it a few times in her a breakthrough of an incredible being, deep being, lasting a few seconds absolute light shining through and clarity and then again the mind obscuring it and mental noise coming back like a huge cloud and then again that was gone so it goes from like from this to problems what's the next problem we can talk about, what's the next problem I can think about, oh yes oh my god and now there's this other thing, oh god think about that we need to talk about this so the depth that's there underneath all that space so the love is already there in you allow it to flow out as care appreciation loving kindness gratitude an important pointer it's gratitude always somehow comes in what we've just been talking about gratitude for what is for this for the aliveness of this rug here gratitude for the light gratitude for the flowers the water in this glass it's not corny the mind must say oh this is you have to go there to truly experience what that means and it's not a mental thing that's I must be grateful for this when we say gratitude it's not it's not the concept or the word gratitude and it does to say I feel grateful for this glass of water, it's not enough, you don't even need the words, you need to appreciate its aliveness and that ultimately you cannot explain it ultimately everything is a mystery explanations are only surface phenomena but everything is deeply mysterious we don't really know anything when we don't need to the only thing is not to get trapped in the surface explanations of things we can use them when we need them but not be imprisoned by the surface explanations of things because whenever you have a surface explanation the words come in nothing but because the water in this glass is nothing but and then you have whatever the chemical composition or whatever it is molecules whatever but it's more than that beyond the explanations and interpretations there's a mystery and so gratitude is to recognize all that and to appreciate it and there you have gratitude is an aspect of all the things that we've been talking about whether it's love outflow or abundance or care or appreciation gratitude is always somehow part of that but really it means just to appreciate what is, to appreciate it it's intrinsic value but not it's value as a separate thing it's value as a manifestation of the unmanifested one life

[Speaker 6] (3:41:15 - 3:41:34)

when I try to become present using one of the portals like following the breath I very quickly fall below the level of thought and I either fall asleep or I kind of fall into a dull calm that doesn't have any alertness do you have any suggestions?

[Speaker 1] (3:41:35 - 3:42:45)

thank you that is the case with many people when you step out of thought let's say here's the level of thinking and then you have a vastness below thinking so to speak and a vastness above thinking and when you step out you go into rise above thinking it can happen that suddenly you plunge back into thinking and then through thinking and end up below thinking so this is the case with even many buddhist monks who meditate many years ago I occasionally visited buddhist monasteries and I saw the monks who meditate early in the morning of course it's 5 o'clock in the morning so they sit very present and then after 15-20 minutes you can see some of them I probably wasn't meditating because I was watching them

[Speaker 15] (3:42:46 - 3:42:47)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (3:42:49 - 3:54:01)

and so some go laughter laughter they never actually fall but they have fallen below thinking it's good to your practice then should be not so much practicing when you are sitting still but to incorporate the practice of presence into activities rather than like this and that can be done in many ways you can make a conscious choice to use a certain activity and make them short at first if it's too long you won't keep it up probably but you begin with short activities and use the activity as a vehicle for presence so the activity becomes an excuse one could almost say for being present in the doing and that means the doing is not primarily any longer a means to an end it is an end in itself and so that could be a simple thing like walking across the room from here to the door and being just present with every step and it doesn't need to look funny like walking on eggs, not like that just a normal walk, perhaps a little slower than usual maybe or maybe not even that and simply each step you are present in each step and that means in that space you can use an activity and regard it as a temporal space in which you are not thinking you can go for a walk this is a you see a lamppost well not in L.A. because nobody walks but if you are somewhere else don't walk here, you get arrested but but if you walk unless you are jogging or you have a dog that's okay but if you are just walking and not jogging and you don't have a dog I did that with a friend in Santa Monica we walked around some blocks and a police car followed us at night you are walking and there is a lamppost some few yards away and between here and this lamppost you practice presence and that becomes a space of not thinking just alert presence and then you reach the lamppost and then you are free to think again or to look at the next lamppost and see another space of not thinking beautiful practice and before if you had gone for a walk it might have been a purely physical thing I want to exercise, I need to go for a walk that's good, that's helpful but your mind would have been somewhere else which is the case for most people who are either walking or jogging their mind is somewhere else and I often walk in the forest and occasionally meet people and very few are actually present where they are some actually carry things in their ears noise making machines as if the noise making machine in their head wasn't enough they carry a noise making electronic device that puts noises into their ears and so, or they are talking to a friend while they walk about their problems with occasional brief glimpses of oh that's a beautiful tree and then he said to me then any activity that you start with something very simple like wiping a table with a cloth which you have to do occasionally, like dusting and as you wipe the table you're wiping your mind beautiful thing, or I also recommend, I believe I said it somewhere in a book, waiting whenever you're waiting you're standing in line somewhere at a store, at the airport use that time rather than to indulge in useless thinking to be present you can use your breathing feeling the inner body or being acutely aware of sense perceptions without judgment just looking around while you wait at the supermarket not complaining just you look at the cashier doing her work or his work or the other customers looking around acutely aware of sense perceptions like a little child hasn't been here for very long so the little child looks like everything is new you don't have to nobody will notice you're just there in fact the most likely thing is I call that practicing being invisible I often practice that but less successfully these days unfortunately going into a public place in the state of presence, no thought no judgment of anything or anybody and then it is quite likely that nobody will look at you in other words you become semi-semi invisible you attract no attention whatsoever so I used in the earlier talk the example of being a valley as opposed to being a mountain so if you go into a place not as a mountain looking around, noticing people thinking about are they noticing me that's a mountain either or being afraid of feeling self-conscious you're still a mountain but you don't want to be seen but they're all looking at me you're still a mountain but either can you go into a public place being a valley which means no thought, just presence simple, alert, presence no judgments and then people don't people don't see you it's beautiful you become invisible now to the ego that's not necessarily pleasant because the ego wants some recognition at least recognize that I'm here and if you can't say something good about me say something bad at least somebody acknowledges my existence the ego wants to be acknowledged but that a very powerful extremely peaceful way of being there in a place is to be there as an invisible entity that reminds me of the time when I was with Kim in Miami Beach in a cafe and perhaps we must have been quite present there and of course surrounded by people with wonderful bodies and we sat and the waiter just did not see us and after a while I said let's just stay and see how for how long we are invisible and there was no end to it didn't see us now you might say well perhaps we look too puny in that place but surrounded by people with beautiful bodies but I believe it also has something to do with just being still so that is a beautiful practice, public places being still in public places if you want to practice with that and all kinds of activities that are short that you would do anyway cooking a meal may be a long thing if I say be present depends how long you are cooking the cooking time is if it's two hours then you might lose it but you could start with boiling an egg which takes maybe three minutes and see if you can be present as you put it in the pan fill it with water switch on and watch it as it comes to boil or anything to do with movement any movement even I often give this example probably because I have a glass of water next to me when I talk picking something up and putting it somewhere else or as I pick up this glass now this can be a presence practice and this is then when you couple it with movement you are not going to fall below thinking because if you fall below thinking the glass will drop out of your hand perhaps while the glass travels from the table to the mouse can you be present so that it's not a means to an end but just a movement and then the glass travels back to the table and while it travels back to the table can you be just alert, no thought so you use that movement to create a space of no thought just that so this is a space of no thought here this is the movement and then because it's so beautiful you do it again oh oh and then the thought comes and says I can do it

[Speaker 11] (3:54:32 - 3:54:44)

hello I was getting very nervous and I was thinking about what you said earlier that this is just like the moment and it's not very important that I ask you this question

[Speaker 1] (3:54:44 - 3:55:05)

another way is of course to just accept that you're nervous it's ok to be nervous it's another way of approaching it and then so you may find once you accept the state it changes I'm very nervous but I'm ok with it and before you know it you're not nervous anymore

[Speaker 11] (3:55:06 - 3:55:48)

ok I'm trying to get there so hi I'm Victoria and yesterday you had said we talked a little bit about the internet and you said that it magnifies the insanity of the human mind one of my jobs includes working with the internet and with social media in particular and what we do is we make games for mindfulness to promote mindfulness and I wanted to ask you what you thought that the potential was for games to promote healthy states of mind and to change behavior for the better

[Speaker 1] (3:55:49 - 3:55:50)

on the internet?

[Speaker 11] (3:55:51 - 3:55:58)

yeah this would be particularly maybe facebook games or internet games online games

[Speaker 1] (3:55:59 - 3:56:09)

and you used the word mindfulness just now which is another term for what we call presence

[Speaker 15] (3:56:09 - 3:56:10)

yes

[Speaker 1] (3:56:10 - 4:00:03)

it tends to be used in buddhism mindfulness but it has come into common usage from buddhism I don't use it for the simple reason that it seems to imply that your mind is full but of course I know what it is it's presence well if you can the internet itself like any other technology of course is neutral it can be used to amplify human madness and of course it is used for that also and it can be used also to promote and help people to become more present this is also really an internet event although this doesn't look like it right here but it is most people watching this will be sitting hello, will be sitting at home looking at their screen in the now not now now but now just now now so this is already use of the internet to the opposite of spreading the madness it's spreading sanity and consciousness and I'm sure there are many ways it can be used the potential is very great for it just as its potential for increasing the madness is very great it's potential for bringing about awakening and helping people who are ready to awaken to awaken has great potential I'm sure it does now you are asking somebody who is completely ignorant of how these things actually work so all these things what we are doing here all I do is I sit here with you and then somehow it reaches you through the wormhole how it works I don't know other people came up with that idea and I said okay let's try it and it seems to be working so I cannot give you any good ideas about how to do it but I can if you ever want to let me have some of your ideas I can give you feedback about you mentioned games that could be a wonderful thing games where you win if you stay present and lose if you lose that might be something wonderful but it has to engage of course it has to be interesting too so that the youngsters enjoy it and it can be very addictive of course the whole thing is addictive we don't want it to be addictive we want it to be liberating and yet enjoyable I can only give you an answer in those general terms so I'd love to see do you already have a few things like that up? can you very briefly describe one thing that you have up that helps people

[Speaker 11] (4:00:03 - 4:01:16)

yeah definitely we have one game called Health Seeker and it actually helps diabetes patients improve their lifestyles through gameplay so it's very small actions and small steps that they have to take in the game which then translates into their real world behaviors and we're finding that it's helping to modify behavior and the reason I said mindfulness was because we have been speaking with Buddhist monks in Vancouver who wanted to bring their message to a younger audience to the audience that's always completely connected and mobile and they want to reach those people and as a follow up we would love to speak to you about any messages that you might want us to help you help you craft for a younger audience especially when they are we feel they're in need of this information and it could really help

[Speaker 1] (4:01:16 - 4:01:49)

yes, that's a wonderful endeavor so I'd like to hear more and see what you have and give you feedback, I might even come up with an idea, somebody totally somebody totally computer literate might come up with an idea, sometimes sometimes it's not the experts that come up sometimes it's those people who are beginners who don't know come up with what's possible so the miracle could happen and what's your website?

[Speaker 11] (4:01:50 - 4:01:54)

we are ayogo.com a-y-o-g-o

[Speaker 1] (4:01:54 - 4:01:59)

a-y-o-g-o a-y-o-g-o dot com

[Speaker 15] (4:01:59 - 4:02:00)

yes

[Speaker 1] (4:02:00 - 4:02:10)

thank you I hope many more people will become engaged in that kind of work thank you

[Speaker 11] (4:02:10 - 4:02:12)

thank you I'm not nervous anymore

[Speaker 13] (4:02:32 - 4:03:20)

firstly, thank you Eckhart for being here and helping me be here I have experienced the beauty of being present and then quite surprisingly caught myself reacting unexpectedly with severe ego which just took me completely by surprise and that actually caused me to question whether or not I had any real consciousness at all, to begin with that would be my question, whether or not it's normal does the ego actually strengthen itself with more consciousness or is that just particular to my individual case

[Speaker 1] (4:03:23 - 4:03:31)

occasional anger extreme yes and that wasn't there before

[Speaker 13] (4:03:31 - 4:03:47)

oh it was definitely there before and it doesn't have to be extreme it's that constant sort of judging, sometimes it subsides but it approaches when least expected especially after a meditation perhaps

[Speaker 1] (4:04:06 - 4:04:54)

all those old patterns they don't go away immediately even as you become present they have their momentum especially patterns like that that may be associated with emotional residues that we call pain body they may act out for quite a while even as presence is already there they may still be acting out are you let's just ask you are you when the anger comes is it preceded by certain thoughts or does it come so suddenly that you don't even know where it came from or is there first some judgment about a situation or person and then the anger

[Speaker 13] (4:04:55 - 4:05:16)

typically yes and there is a certain theme around it expecting people to be aware or conscious of their own surroundings which include me sometimes I see it approach but the most disturbing ones are always when it just comes out of the blue

[Speaker 1] (4:05:19 - 4:05:23)

and immediately afterwards you're aware immediately afterwards

[Speaker 13] (4:05:25 - 4:05:27)

yes and sometimes during

[Speaker 1] (4:05:28 - 4:15:27)

during oh well that's a that's a because usually the sequence is that a person after anger or any unconscious reaction to do with emotional body or certain mind patterns awareness comes in later after after it's all after the energy of the pain body attack let's call it that after the energy of the pain body attack has subsided which can be a while for some people after a strong pain body attack the energy remains for quite a while and then gradually subsides it could be an hour, two hours, three hours a day before it finally and then you wake up and say what was all that and the time gap between the actual event and the awareness returning tends to get shorter as you become more present until immediately after it's happened even the energy is still there but no longer at its highest you're already beginning to be aware of what's happening and then the great step forward is when in the middle of it you become aware and you're at that right now sometimes in the middle of it there's already an awareness while it's still happening is that right with you? yes so the next step is and this is my prediction for you I don't make many predictions but because I know how it evolves the awareness is there just before just as the anger comes in before it externalizes itself and expresses itself when the impulse comes to be angry the awareness is there and at that moment then you will have a choice to express it or not to keep it down but to whatever you do with it or walk somewhere, go somewhere breathe or simply be there as the presence and let it pass through you, you then have a choice when it comes before it automatically and then the next step after that the impulse is not as strong as before and you notice it just comes in like and then immediately you're there as the presence and in the light of presence it goes it meets the light of presence and then it melts so if you're already aware in the middle now that is a great thing and you will notice very soon as I said you'll be aware just before it becomes externalized be patient with yourself apart from that of course it could also happen that as awareness grows some people think they're getting worse but they're simply becoming more conscious of what has already been there for many years so I'm often asked by people am I getting worse because there's so many things inside myself that I can detect that are dysfunctional still or reactive patterns of course no you're just more aware of them now that is also in many cases so you're becoming more aware of all that so you see it whereas before you were it there's a huge difference between seeing a pattern inside yourself and being the pattern being used by it merging with it acting it out totally so that's a wonderful thing if you can see it in addition to that it may also happen that as presence begins to flow into many areas of your life relationships and so on the ego perhaps joined with the pain body withdraws into one corner of your life but takes up very firm residence firmly takes up residence in one corner of your life and says I'm not going from here the rest of your life may be already great improvement on relationships flow, presence less conflict and so on inner peace but there's one area in one little corner where the ego and the pain body are so all the ego takes refuge in one corner which could be for example one person in your life towards whom you harbor strong grievance everything else is fine we forgive everybody it's and there's that one person and the moment you think of that person or the name is mentioned an enormous influx of unconsciousness takes hold of you it doesn't have to be a person it can also be an area it could be it could be a group of people that you've that the unconsciousness forgiveness has not happened and unconsciousness has taken refuge in that area it could be money whenever I'm okay with anything as long as nobody mentions money say whenever you'd have to deal with anything to do with your bank or your pension plan or your salary or your investments in Wall Street or the chairman of Goldman Sachs or whatever whenever you're on the phone then to do with anything with money you will notice then if you are one you're not but I'm just the immediately taken over by extreme unconsciousness and you start getting very unpleasant what do you mean the shares have gone down how can they go down and this was a person who the last three weeks was absolutely present and forgiving and lovely but suddenly somebody mentioned money and brings up old fear fear that has been there for a long time fear of survival and of course there so it could be any area not uncommon for a dark pocket to survive in you of unconsciousness somewhere in your life so and it may be so dark that you might not even know it you have to ask your friends or family money so there you need to be of course very alert in the moment you say okay now I have to deal with the money matter if that's just one example or you might still have to occasionally deal with that person where the unconsciousness is knows so okay then I have to ring my my Wall Street investment advisor okay absolute presence how are the shares doing they have gone down 20% in one day okay I hear what you're saying it is what it is there may be an improvement next week do you think so you don't well just have to live with it if there's no improvement I might sell a few next week and of course the investment person may be well next week may be too late well we'll see fresh present feel the inner energy in your body it's okay I'm still alive with great care it's like handling something that's hot so this is when you deal with an unconscious area that the last unconscious area in your life and if you should lose yourself then wake up this could be great if you could wake up in the middle of shouting on the phone let's have just oh dear that is and that doesn't mean you failed it means that's great you're there now yes so whenever you discover a dysfunctional unconscious pattern in yourself it doesn't mean you failed it means you're there so it's always a great thing to see it in yourself thank you

[Speaker 4] (4:15:37 - 4:16:57)

Eckhart you've now had the chance at Eckhart Tolle TV to answer over a hundred questions from different members of the Eckhart Tolle TV community and we still have more questions but what I'm really curious about today is to hear about you your experience most of the questions have been about our community members and their process of awakening but in your case awakening wasn't really a process it was a sudden and complete overhaul if you will rewiring restructuring of your being and as important as this event was a rare event actually in human life you've written about it in just a few paragraphs in The Power of Now but I've never heard you tell the story of your awakening and that's where I'd like to start if you will in as much detail as possible

[Speaker 1] (4:17:07 - 4:30:56)

well the background to it is several years of inner states of anxiety and depression in my twenties and even at university I got to university late because I didn't have any qualifications initially I left school at fourteen so later in England I got the qualifications to get into university I was already in my early twenties and I had a full time job at the same time and at that time gradually the depressions a lot of states of high anxiety also started I did very well at university in my degree course and I worked very hard I wasn't aware of that so much at the time but later on years later I met somebody who was a student at the same time in a different faculty but he observed me and he said oh you were always working you were working till midnight in the library and I couldn't believe it and then I realised oh yeah I must have been working very hard but the motivation was fear, anxiety of not doing well so it wasn't enjoyable I was motivated by anxiety and that came to a head after I graduated I did very well I was happy for two or three weeks and then the anxiety and depression came back even worse than before so that night came I was living in a little bed sitter as they call it in England in London I had finished my university course I didn't know what to do next and that night I woke up again in the night with a very active mind but at that moment of course I was my mind I didn't know that there was an active mind because I was the thought processes that kept me awake and were telling me how many reasons I had to be in a state of fear the uncertainty of future what am I going to live on am I going to make it and so on unhappiness with who I was as a person inadequacy and so on so there was this incessant mind activity that during that night again creating enormous amount of anxiety to the point of breathlessness and feeling completely cut off from the outside world meaning alien it seemed alien when I remember looking at objects in the room they seemed completely alien to me it's only later I years later I read a novel I don't remember much of it but a similar feeling was described there and I recognized it it was by Jean-Paul Sartre and the novel was called La Nausea existential anguish and so that was how I experienced it so intense unhappiness and fear and then the thought came as I was lying in bed that the burden of living was too much I didn't want to do it anymore I can't and so the thought arose I can't live with myself any longer I that thought repeated itself a few times and then the moment came when I became aware of that thought as a thought and the thought then said is that I can't live with myself what does that mean and there must be two of myself here because if I can't live with myself who am I and who is the self there was a sudden I was looking at that statement that my mind had created I can't live with myself and I saw the strangeness of it I had separated myself in two and so I saw who am I and who is the self and that question that was the last thought the last significant thought before the awakening experience this last significant thought posed a question and that question was who am I and who is that self that I can't live with is there one or two here am I one or two that was the last thought and the answer to that question did not come as a thought the answer to that question I didn't know at the time by the way that this is what was happening but I can explain it now I couldn't have explained it then the answer to that question came not as a thought but as an inner stepping back from thought an inner disidentification from thought and so I suddenly realized but not through analytical thinking that that self that I couldn't live with had no actual reality that was the unhappy self so it's illusory nature was recognized but not through thinking not through thinking this the self is really illusory no the illusory nature was recognized as a indirect recognition beyond thought I could see that it is nothing but without saying that mentally so am I one or two the last question led to a disidentification from the the me the unhappy me the whole sense of self that was burdened with unhappiness and fear and anxiety and inadequacy and so on so that self kind of dissolved because I must have withdrawn completely my identification with it so I stepped out of the mind created self and what remained was myself as consciousness but not as the unhappy me and so the unhappy me began to get shaky and then something happened to it it must have in its final stages I think there was again I felt almost disappearing into some black hole because it was a kind of death experience it was the death of the unhappy me and so the perception of that it wasn't so much visual as more like a feeling that I was disappearing into some hole and there was still some fear left there anxiety of what what's happening to me and then but I heard a voice again not as an audible voice but more as a realization don't resist or resist nothing I think it said and so I just let go and then a kind of void opened but not a visual one and I don't remember much else I must have gone to sleep soon after that so there was the am I one or two was the question that arose I can't live with myself that question brought about an inner separation between the mind created self and the consciousness that had identified with it that was fueling it so the consciousness that had created this dream like figure or self stepped out of it and so I realized yes I was two the self and I but only one was real and so the consciousness that I am was real and the unreal was no longer being sustained by my identification with it I'm explaining it now but I couldn't have explained it then it just happened it took several years I don't know how many maybe at least seven or eight years before I could have explained it in the way in which I'm explaining it now and the next morning I awoke at first I didn't even remember what happened in the night so my eyes opened and the first impression was of everything being fresh and new around me it was the old familiar room everything felt alive everything was amazing and even simple objects their very presence was lovely to look at the light coming through the curtains I knew it was alive and most important of all a deep sense of peace inside so I was looking at everything through the piece and I thought wow wonderful and I picked some things up and looked as if I'd been born into this world for the first time and of course I can give an additional explanation now which I couldn't have done then I wasn't bringing the past into my sense perceptions there was just the sense perception without the labeling of the sense perception there was just a peaceful background to it and that's I wasn't calling it anything it wasn't the old familiar objects in the room because the old familiar self wasn't there anymore there was only consciousness there a field of consciousness and that day I took a bus and went into downtown central London and the same in the middle of the traffic watching the people and then getting off the bus walking around the city this incredible sense of peace and I thought well this is amazing today I feel so peaceful but then the next day it was there still again the peace then I actually got a notebook and I wrote down something important has happened to me but I don't know what it is but I'm just going to write down these things because I might lose it again and forget about it forget what happened I haven't by the way haven't looked at that notebook in long long long time so I don't know exactly what I wrote there

[Speaker 4] (4:30:56 - 4:31:01)

but you still have it yes that might be curious I'll have a look

[Speaker 1] (4:31:01 - 4:31:02)

one of these days

[Speaker 4] (4:31:02 - 4:31:08)

now one thing you were lying down during the entire experience so when this separation

[Speaker 1] (4:31:09 - 4:31:16)

yes in bed yes and it was dark yes yeah

[Speaker 4] (4:31:17 - 4:31:52)

now sometimes people say that you can't describe awakening as a quote on quote experience and I notice even as you recount this there are aspects where it's hard to find the words because it wasn't being processed through that part of your mind so if it's not exactly an experience what's happening outside of you can't quite give a visual for it you can't quite say that you felt this or that that's very curious to me

[Speaker 1] (4:31:54 - 4:34:31)

it's not an experience as such because an experience is something that is added to you one could say when you experience something it's something new that is added to your life we call it a life experience but this is definitely not a life experience and it is the opposite of something being added to you it's the so in that sense it's the opposite of an experience because instead of something being added to you something is being removed from you so something that before was heavy and looked substantial is being something dissolves rather than something being added and it leaves behind something that again is not entirely new but had been obscured before so it's not an adding on to and that perhaps is even for spiritual seekers an important thing to consider because many people are looking for some spiritual experience as if it were something that can be added to them and that's not how it is in that sense one could say it's a negative experience so or you could say it's a loss rather than a gain but it's a beautiful loss but in the transitional moment of loss it can still be painful because it is a kind of death so you lose something but what you gain is not something that comes it just emerges what is had been there before always your essential reality but it's not added on hard to explain I can only point so the important thing is not to look for an experience that not to look for an adding on to me because everything else is like that one wants to have more of more experiences and that's the big minus experience not a plus experience

[Speaker 4] (4:34:34 - 4:35:22)

for many people in the process of awakening integrating their physical form with vast infinite states of being creates certain interesting experiences challenges sometimes people who touch big states of openness will then find their body shaking or that there's a sense of wow this is so much energy this physical form isn't used to that much energy running through the nervous system and here your experience so or your minus experience so complete seemingly such a huge restructuring what was that like for you physically

[Speaker 1] (4:35:22 - 4:37:09)

I don't remember anything any kind of painful physical experience accompanying it there was part of the sense of peace was a much heightened sense of aliveness in the inner energy field of the body so I felt my entire being felt more alive I hardly knew that because that was part of the total experience afterwards of not experience because it was lasting of that vibrantly alive sense of inner peace that was there all the time and part of that vibrantly alive sense of inner peace was the aliveness that I could feel throughout the entire body but that was very pleasant it wasn't an unpleasant thing so why it is that some people seem to experience even painful things as the energy increases it could be that the pain or the pressure is felt where there are still blockages in the body and it could be that with that what happened the surrender that night if you call it that may well have dissolved also all those blockages that would have been there otherwise but that's a I'm guessing I don't know the ultimate answer of why I didn't experience that.

[Speaker 4] (4:37:09 - 4:37:13)

Were you even aware of an inner body quote on quote before?

[Speaker 1] (4:37:13 - 4:37:33)

No no I was completely in the head so there was no I didn't feel alive except the turmoil in the head felt a bit alive but not a pleasant aliveness So what did that feeling inside your body feel like?

[Speaker 4] (4:37:33 - 4:37:36)

I wonder if you can describe it for me in even greater detail.

[Speaker 1] (4:37:37 - 4:38:51)

Well as you know later that became part of many years later became part of the teaching where I'm as you pointing out to people that they can actually what happened to me accidentally that one aspect of what has happened they can actually consciously direct their attention away from where it normally dwells in the movement of thought and direct attention so when you're asking me what it felt like or feels like and my answer is to direct you or whoever is listening to this direct them to the actual you can actually go there right now in yourself and relive what happened there to me accidentally by consciously choosing to direct attention into the inner energy field of the body. Usually I tell people start with one part of the body put attention into your hands and as we speak

[Speaker 4] (4:38:51 - 4:38:57)

Yeah, if you can describe the feelings to me, that's what I'm curious about for you, even right now, right here

[Speaker 1] (4:39:00 - 4:43:13)

A tingling would be going too far, although for some people, some people describe it as tingling, but it's on the way towards tingling inside a zzzzz if I could make a sound, it doesn't have a sound but if it were a sound it would go zzzzz it's a it's the it almost feels like a vibration it's not quite a vibration but it almost feels like a vibration so very hard to put into words because language is designed to reflect objects ultimately, whether physical objects or mental objects but language can't really find adequate words to talk about that which has no object to it as such, so all I can say is it's a bit like tingling, it's a little bit like a vibration it could even be as a warmth sometimes actually the temperature in the body sometimes increases for people as they become more aware of what I call now the inner body and once you can sense the energy inside your hands as that tingling or vibrating aliveness very subtle perhaps only that's fine, then it becomes easier to be aware that it's in other parts of the body too and so you, it's a very pleasant way of becoming rooted more deeply within the being that you are and also it's a very effective way of becoming anchored in the present moment whereas the mind is never really in the present moment, it's always elsewhere, so you take attention away from thought into that and then you rest in that and you can still speak and listen and you can even think, but you're not going to do more thinking when you fence the inner body, you're not going to do more thinking than you actually need to do it at that moment and it may well be that you don't need to do any thinking that moment maybe it's just, so that's the inner body is part of what I now call presence, the state of presence, so you are present with your whole body, so that kind of happened to me accidentally and you could say as I began to understand after years what had happened to me accidentally and as I began to work with people who came to me to ask questions and then I began speaking to them answers came then that which happened to me accidentally I became part of the teaching and I realized this is something that you don't have to actually wait for, for you to happen to you accidentally neither the inner body awareness nor the surrender to whatever is and the disidentification from thinking, all these things you can actually do, you can so I'm showing people a way but a lot of the teaching comes out of that spontaneous occurrence that happened to me so to speak and so what happened that night and gradually as I began to understand it help people with their problems it gradually over the years became more differentiated and became a spiritual teaching and that took years and years and it was an organic process. The foundation didn't change

[Speaker 4] (4:43:14 - 4:43:33)

Now just to clarify one thing, are you saying that in a state of presence when someone is present that the inner body will always be there in some wakeful slightly tingly or something like that way that there's always that physical correlate

[Speaker 1] (4:43:33 - 4:44:24)

an aliveness there the presence is an entire body state it almost seems that in presence even things around you are more present so it really affects everything that your body and the moment you look at things in presence you realize they are you become more alive it seems that the world around you becomes more alive or rather you it is not more alive but you recognize for the first time it's aliveness and you share you share the aliveness with the flower you recognize your own aliveness aliveness is one word I'm using I could use other words

[Speaker 4] (4:44:24 - 4:44:53)

When you started making sense if we can say that of your experience having a framework for it did the question ever occur to you why me? This kind of sudden very thorough awakening happens to so few people in any generation did you have the thought why me? Never

[Speaker 1] (4:44:54 - 4:46:56)

I never had that thought and I believe the reason for this is that I never perceived it as something that happened to me really when I talk about it because we are using language it sounds as if it was something that happened to me but that's language works like that otherwise I wouldn't be able to use language at all but if I look deeper I'll have to say I never had the feeling that that was something that happened to me and that is because the essence of that is the disappearance of the me the me becoming so the me the sense of personal or separate identity that's me that sense of the form identity as the me became so weakened in that that something was shining through then where the me was there was only a transparency there was still a form of course to some extent but no identification with it and without the identification with the form the form became semi-transparent and the entire thing that happened if we can even call it happened was that as the me became transparent the consciousness came through very strongly and it is not the me it's the consciousness which is formless and has nothing to do with the person so it only happened because the me almost disappeared that it could happen and for this reason it never occurred to me to ask why did it happen to me I don't know if that makes sense

[Speaker 4] (4:46:56 - 4:47:30)

it does make sense I guess the question though still remains for me this body mind form was somehow selected by the cosmos to undergo this minus experience for I would say in my words the benefit of other people how come it was chosen that particular body mind maybe that question didn't occur to you but here I'm asking it now if you were answering just looking at this from the outside what would you say

[Speaker 1] (4:47:30 - 4:48:10)

I don't know if it was chosen it would of course happen to any me that recognizes its own essential nothingness any me anywhere in the world that recognizes that essentially its sense of identity was to a large extent illusory and then the realization is there why did the realization come to this particular illusory identity I don't know I never actually asked myself that question it's a mystery

[Speaker 4] (4:48:12 - 4:49:13)

even though you might not have asked yourself that question in the past here in this moment if you take a look at it do you have any ideas about why perhaps Eckhart there's plenty of people who understand everything you said about the panic the anxiety there's a sense that there's a little me there's an awareness that there's two of me here but that's where the story ends for them then maybe they pray to have the kind of awakening you had you know lying on the ground face down praying crying whatever and nothing happens they wake up the same miserable wretch the next morning and you know perhaps keep reading books become a member of Eckhart Tolle TV or who knows what so there's something clearly unique in your particular story in anyone's story but rare in your story so for you it just goes into the mystery

[Speaker 1] (4:49:14 - 4:52:04)

yes perhaps the form was ready through previous lifetimes one way or another I've never investigated past lifetimes because I lost interest in past but it may well be that the form was prepared for that and that's the reason why it happened but that would I would be reluctant to say that that is actually the case because that would mean the only way you can really awaken is if you've had enough incarnations and so on the teaching is really pointing out that virtually anybody can awaken and not like as drastically as happened here but almost anybody can at least enter the awakening process there's a term in Buddhism which is I think it's called the stream enterer so anybody can enter the awakening process yes some degree of readiness is required but anybody who reads a book like The Power of Now or New Earth or any other spiritually powerful book that came was written from a deep place of realization anybody who reads that and is open to it and recognizes the essential truths in it anybody who is drawn to a spiritual teaching and goes there there is an openness there there are still millions of people who don't they wouldn't touch a spiritual book and if they opened it it would be totally meaningless so I'm not talking of all those people they obviously have to wait a little longer but others who are in whom there is an openness in the awakening process can begin they can enter the awakening process and that's all that's needed and

I don't see I just cannot see myself as a chosen one it's something inside me that says no to that but I may be wrong

[Speaker 4] (4:52:11 - 4:53:10)

So I had the opportunity to interview you once before Eckhart about 10 years ago and one of the things you reported to me then was that after this awakening you experienced an 80% reduction in mental activity and I'm curious in your life what it's like for you in terms of your relationship to thoughts meaning do you sometimes have hours go by where there literally are no thoughts or are there thoughts coming but they just float by and there's no attention is given to them so what's it actually like and I'm sure it's different obviously if you're in the middle of an airport doing something than if you're just relaxing at home but I'm curious to know more about the interior of your experience

[Speaker 1] (4:53:10 - 4:59:11)

Well there are long stretches of no thought and I can still function in that state for example you talk about airport I can perfectly check in or walk to go through security check and then on to whatever the lounge without any thought and this would not be uncommon that I would do something or go from where I get into the car and drive to the store to buy something and again virtually no thought is not uncommon and or it does occasionally little fragments may come up like little puffs of clouds and then they're gone so it's they can be or let's say I'm sitting at home not doing much and occasional thoughts can drift in and out of awareness like clouds like the sky is blue but little puffy clouds come from time to time and they go the thoughts have no I don't follow them and they don't even try anymore to get my attention as is the case with people who are still very strongly identified with thought every thought pulls you every thought pulls you where it wants you to go and thoughts don't really have that pull anymore they just when they appear there's a blue sky and the clouds appear and disappear appear and disappear and there could even occasionally be a stream of thoughts in certain situations or maybe not even connected to anything happening outside of me there can be times when there are certain streams of thoughts but again they are harmless they are not the thoughts that have this gravitational pull that just you have to follow them with your entire attention but it's a thought that yes from time to time there may even be more clouds than the blue sky but these clouds are no longer the heavy weather clouds that I had in the distant past and that other people perhaps recognize in their own lives they are more like innocent little puffy clouds with thoughts but no thought matters that much and then it disappears it's not amplified by following it up and identifying with it and then becomes a heavy thing that takes possession of you so it never feels as if any thought were taking possession of me so yes then to summarize I think if anybody entered my inner state they would be surprised how little thinking there actually is compared to probably what is still for most people normal almost continuous how relatively little there is yes there is some and that which there is doesn't have the heaviness anymore that it has when you're identified with the thoughts they have a gravitational pull and they develop into streams they proliferate and develop into streams and you lose yourself completely in it so that doesn't happen so not thinking is almost would say predominates unless there's something specific to think about but then occasionally yes clouds come and go and so on but there's always an awareness of the sky also it's and it doesn't really matter whether I'm out in nature walking in the forest looking around let's just describe let's just describe perhaps one minute of let me walking in the forest just walking looking the dog trees no thought just looking at the trees the plants the aliveness of it sensing the energy field and then a thought may come and says oh when I get home I need to I need to I need to do this or that I forgot to do that when I get home I still need to do that or I need to buy some I need to buy some bananas later okay and then it's gone and then some other thought comes of something maybe could be anything a person that tried to contact me the other day didn't and then it's gone again and back so puffs come go predominantly really awareness it's so much nicer than thinking

[Speaker 4] (4:59:13 - 4:59:31)

so just to be sure that I fully hear you correctly it never happens that one of these puffs there's a little hook that comes down that catches you by the neck or something like that and you know just a little hook that comes in like I forgot to do something

[Speaker 1] (4:59:31 - 4:59:57)

good question I have experienced in the past not for some time now occasionally some thought coming in and hook is a good word I experienced in the past sometimes and I can't remember when the last time was occasionally some thought coming in and wanting more of me than just appear and disappear

[Speaker 4] (4:59:57 - 4:59:58)

yes

[Speaker 1] (4:59:59 - 5:00:02)

I perceive it goes like this it pulls your sleeve

[Speaker 4] (5:00:03 - 5:00:03)

yeah

[Speaker 1] (5:00:07 - 5:00:22)

and so that's usually I notice it and then there's an intensification of presence there's a conscious choice at that moment to be more intensely present

[Speaker 4] (5:00:23 - 5:00:23)

interesting

[Speaker 1] (5:00:23 - 5:03:24)

the same thing happens when a challenge comes in everyday life something goes wrong whatever it may be and a challenge comes in and what otherwise would could easily develop into some kind of minor drama and again at that time usually it's not even so much a conscious choice it almost happens naturally that immediately there is an intensification of presence so that's something that I hadn't mentioned before there is the normal level of presence is the taking over of the normal level when a challenge comes in there is I call it sometimes the dimmer switch is turned up and there's more intense presence when the challenge comes because only more intense presence can burn the thoughts that want to arise there and so there's then and hard to describe what a heightening of presence is but if I could act it out please it's like normal presence is and more intense presence is and back to normal more intense the more intense presence is presence becomes a sharp sword so sometimes compared to that in intense presence which if you're surrounded by pandemonium could happen then that is required or if there's a very strong pull by some thought come this way I will lead you to a wonderful place it's called drama and unhappiness just follow me you will love it and then you have to go you can't fight that thing you can't say no go away you give it more power you just go you have to have that fierceness then the presence becomes fierce presence whereas before presence was gentle gentle presence

[Speaker 4] (5:03:26 - 5:03:49)

and have you noticed in your life what it is that happens in your life what kinds of thoughts might require you to turn up the volume on presence for example you know for some people it might be thoughts about money or thoughts about their intimate partner I'm just curious have you seen any pattern for you which ones are the tuggy thoughts

[Speaker 1] (5:03:50 - 5:03:51)

well

[Speaker 4] (5:03:52 - 5:03:55)

I know I'm getting personal here Eckhart but I can't help myself

[Speaker 1] (5:03:58 - 5:04:31)

the incomprehensible world of personal finance having to see my accountant tomorrow for example and not understanding all the paperwork and so on can sometimes lead us to an attempt of the mind to get in there and start thinking about it and then I realized back to presence that could be for example that kind of thing

[Speaker 4] (5:04:32 - 5:04:48)

and of course you teach so many different approaches to turning up presence what is it that you do when you turn up presence do you have a standard approach do you intensify the feeling of the inner body or what do you do

[Speaker 1] (5:04:49 - 5:05:17)

it's just it just happens I do it sometimes I do it or sometimes it just happens but I cannot say how this because there is no how I could say if it's if it doesn't if you don't know if you don't do it I could recommend to somebody to be more intensely present in their inner body

[Speaker 4] (5:05:17 - 5:05:18)

in my case

[Speaker 1] (5:05:19 - 5:07:02)

I'm not saying okay I need to be more intensely present in my inner body there is no it just happens without any intermediate step it just happens I can even do it here I can be present in the normal gentle way as I just demonstrated or I can be present more intensely which is the sharp sword and it requires no step really it just happens immediately let's see they are both quite pleasant they are very pleasant the normal presence and the intense presence and then you could have again let's say let's say I am participating in a conversation or whatever then there is the presence is in the background so I may be talking or contributing to the conversation and then the presence is there as a sense of still aliveness in the background which I sometimes call space, inner space to sense the inner space that's vital because otherwise you get your mind takes over so, but that doesn't does not happen anymore fortunately so degrees of degrees of presence

[Speaker 4] (5:07:05 - 5:08:01)

one of the things that I've discovered about you here now working on Eckhart Tolle TV with you and getting to know you better over the last couple of years is how sharp and precise your mind is I didn't know this I think in the beginning because so much of your teaching was about exploring the space in between thoughts that I didn't realize Eckhart is actually quite sharp and sophisticated for example when you tell a story or you teach on a book you're very exact you have the details right or you don't state them and I'm curious if you've found any relationship between the space in your mind and the exactitude and precision of your mind and what that relationship might be

[Speaker 1] (5:08:03 - 5:10:37)

well with the space, the sense of space this thought actually works better works more precisely, more simply and more has more power to it than compared perhaps to an engine a car engine a car engine that is but the owner let's say misuses the engine by sitting in the car a lot of the time the car is in neutral and he or she is just putting the foot on the gas just to hear the sound of the engine and it goes for hours he sits in the stationary car going not going anywhere at all just to get so used to it and then when he finally needs to go somewhere the engine isn't that efficient anymore because it's worn out so the same applies to the mind if there's continuous misuse of the mind, you can't even call it use because the mind has taken over and there is every hour of the day there's continuous stream of thinking, a lot of it useless repetitive and even negative and if then this person who is usually immersed in the stream of repetitive continuous thinking mental noise has to actually apply their mind and in order to analyze something or relate something or find a solution to a problem certain situations require thought then their mind isn't actually that effective anymore just like the engine that has been misused it loses its sharpness and its power so I'm using that analogy and I believe it is true my mind I believe works better now than it did when I was at university usually people say well you lose your mental powers as you grow older but I don't find that I think my mental powers in my twenties were less than they are now and I can also think more creatively now than I could then

[Speaker 4] (5:10:40 - 5:11:37)

okay Eckhart I think I have a pretty good sense of the or a sense of the inner landscape of your mind and now I'd like to see if we could talk some about emotions some teachers who emphasize dis-identification still value and want to welcome and feel the full range of emotional experience you could say a sort of tantric approach if you will you know bring on the rage bring on the desire bring on the sadness even there's no identification but these are different kinds of clouds that move through space and I'm wondering if it's like that for you or if it's not like that for you in terms of the range of emotions and the depth of emotional experience

[Speaker 1] (5:11:38 - 5:20:10)

it's not like that I had a feeling there's relatively little and what there is is very short lived it can come as a let's say anger on very rare occasions as a flash that goes through and then passes out again it's not thought doesn't get hold of it and starts amplifying it and prolonging it so it doesn't any emotion that arises sadness perhaps seeing some human suffering or other suffering any life suddenly sadness arising I can cry occasionally I cry when I see a movie it can happen and so the emotion is there I can also I call to cry when I see occasionally something a human being in suffering and so the emotion comes and then it passes again it lasts maybe a minute or two minutes or less and it's rare so there are doesn't happen that often any kind of emotion really this doesn't mean I'm dead inside if there were no presence and I didn't have any emotion then I would be dead inside so if you have no presence and no emotions that means you're not truly alive inside but if there is presence in you if there is awareness then that is the primary source of aliveness and compared to that emotion is only a turbulence within that primary aliveness so if you don't have access to the primary aliveness then you need the turbulence to give you some sense of aliveness and that's why people need many people need their drama their daily drama or weekly drama or the drama in relationships we are still alive it's still without the drama everything seems to die down so people love their drama they create it in their daily life unconsciously because at least it gives them some sense of aliveness as I get excited about my problems and talk about it at least I know I'm alive but I don't have that you don't actually need all those things when there's presence so within the field of presence occasional small turbulences happen they're rare that's how I experience it I don't want to pronounce judgment upon people who still say they are present but they love indulging in all kinds of emotions I haven't been inside them so I can't really tell what their state is like whether it's just a justification for loss of awareness or whether there is something that is actually they just love the emotion despite the fact that they are aware I would have to enter into these people to know how they experience that so I better not to pronounce any judgment upon them so I many days pass without any particular emotion arising at all it's much more common not to have any emotion by the way the to feel empathy with another human being to feel love or loving kindness for another human being I don't regard that as an emotion that emotion is the neediness of attachment to another human being but the outflow of loving kindness or love towards another human being is not a turbulence it's a deep thing that comes out of the recognition that the consciousness that I am is the essence of who you are also so what I love in you is consciousness loves itself what I love in my dog when I look at the dog all of the fur is nice and soft and it's lovely to touch the dog but when I look into the eyes of the dog there's something that I love in the dog that is more than the fur or the tissues or the blood and bones that is there if you look under the skin and under the fur it's just really a bag of organs and blood and bones and tissue that's not the same with a human being that's not what you love so what I love in the dog is the consciousness of the dog because I can see there is a consciousness looking within the limitations of the dog form there is the consciousness coming looking and I see myself in somewhat very different form and the same when you look at another human being there is the connection the inner connection that's not to me this is not an emotion at all it is much deeper than that and so that is there a lot of the time I actually I love so many things not just when I connect with humans I haven't spoken about that yet, it just came to me because it's so natural I don't usually I don't think about that I love inanimate objects I often I pick something up and hold it for a few seconds because I love it's presence, it could be the toothpaste tube it could be a book and I love it not because what's written in it but it's simple physical presence anything anything, it could be anything the table, the surface of the table so there's, the world is that is an aspect I would say of the sense of aliveness of the world that you inhabit and of not reducing everything around you to a means to an end, it's for I'm using this for this or that purpose and it needs to get me there but to appreciate it for what it is not for what it can do for you but simply for what it is so that that's the lovingness towards things, the appreciation of things but all that is not emotional, there's no emotion there and again the true love between humans is emotion between two humans can be part of what is the deeper foundation for the connection between two humans is awareness, presence that's the consciousness that connects you that in addition to having that as a foundation there can be emotions floating around the surface too but they are not the they are not the focal point they are not the main thing of what connects you so I don't want to create the impression in anybody that they should get rid of their emotions because that's not how it works

[Speaker 4] (5:20:10 - 5:20:36)

no but you don't seem to be a very big fan of emotions I would say from hearing how it works inside of you, meaning something like sadness, some people some maybe melancholy loving people might see sadness as something quite beautiful and interesting you know worth really spending some time but it sounds like for you it's more more like a cloud formation that's passing

[Speaker 1] (5:20:36 - 5:21:11)

yes I also I don't feel drawn to music that's emotional so and so it's not I'm not afraid of emotion, it's like being in it's the a place that is much deeper than than any emotion and more a permanent aliveness, not a temporary high or temporary low which is what emotions are

[Speaker 4] (5:21:11 - 5:21:38)

yeah I mean it sounds like what you're saying is without being explicitly judgmental it sounds like what you're saying though is that your sense is that people who indulge quote unquote take their emotions for a ride it's really a way that they can feel alive because their inner presence and sense of aliveness isn't active and awake enough so they have to this is the way they can feel alive

[Speaker 1] (5:21:38 - 5:21:56)

that's right, yes, yes and as far as they are concerned, I mean they're right because at least they remain connected to that substitute sense of aliveness but at least there's some aliveness there so rather than being dead have some drama, yes

[Speaker 4] (5:21:56 - 5:23:09)

okay now I have a slightly different question here Eckhart which is some people who have experienced some degree of wakefulness still seem to manifest quite a difficult time in certain areas of their life maybe it's in their business life or it's in their relationship life or it's with their physical health and the spiritual openness that they've touched doesn't seem to translate into these other aspects of their life and what I'm getting at here is I'm curious if you think that spiritual awakening in and of itself quote unquote solves all of our problems or if at the same time it's quite important for people to do their psychological work focus on their physical health concern themselves with nutrition or do these things just naturally happen they naturally happen, you don't have to worry about it

[Speaker 1] (5:23:09 - 5:30:53)

well a spiritual awakening does not immediately solve all your problems nor does it mean that your life from then on will be free of challenges so the challenges continue not that you would be likely to find yourself continuously in dysfunctional situations that are very unlikely when you are spiritually awake or even relatively conscious if not even fully awake it's unlikely that you would find yourself for long periods of time or most of the time in dysfunctional or unpleasant drama situations and so on, however challenges remain life will continue to give you challenges that's part of being here as a physical form so there will be no end to the whatever challenges of whatever kind will come from time to time and so it's not that spiritual awakening removes all those things all those challenges but it does improve your life immeasurably even on the outer level to a large extent but challenges will still come and whatever new situation you go into there will be some new challenge that arises there and that spiritual awakening doesn't mean that does not happen what happens to spiritual awakening is even as you are confronted with a challenge you are the challenge is seen within the context of the of a deeper transcendent dimension there is this there is a spaciousness in which the challenge is not seen as something some gigantic thing that completely occupies your attention it is here within the spaciousness of presence and there is the challenge you primarily dwell in the presence you don't dwell in the problem that's why the challenge doesn't become a problem it remains a challenge so you remain rooted in the transcendent dimension and from there you do what you can if there is anything you can do to deal with the challenge also what doesn't happen is you will never encounter situations in life that are totally satisfying you will never encounter physical locations that are totally satisfying you don't encounter living situations that are totally satisfying even relationships that are totally satisfying or activities that are totally satisfying all the time you never encounter that no matter where you go and what you do you will always find an element of unsatisfactoriness that's part of living in the world of form but every form is limited and so to believe that with spiritual realization the element of unsatisfactoriness will disappear from your external life experience is not the case, it remains but that is no longer a problem because it is all seen from the larger context of what I sometimes call the transcendent dimension in other words your happiness or your sense of satisfaction is never derived from the conditions of your life this is where people of course look for happiness and satisfaction before they awaken, when they are unawakened they look for the satisfactions in the conditions of their life for a little while they find it here and then for another little while they find it in some other condition but always they find the condition does not ultimately provide happiness and satisfaction and that eventually, that very fact eventually produces more and more suffering and the suffering eventually produces the awakening so it's all fine but the fact is conditions cannot give you happiness or satisfaction because there's always something that's not quite right and so the difference between an awakened and an unawakened or an unconscious human being and even a somewhat conscious human being is that the unconscious human continuously is looking for the right conditions as some kind of prerequisite for happiness the awakened human does no longer look for the perfect conditions in my life because his or her happiness or satisfaction or aliveness or joy or peace whatever you want to call it he doesn't, he or she does not need to derive it anymore from the conditions of their life it comes from the unconditioned consciousness the alive presence that you sense that you are, consciousness itself this is the ultimate satisfaction and this is the transcendent dimension of life, formless it has nothing to do with the conditions of your life so and then you can have a spacious relationship with the conditions of your life without clinging to conditions or becoming repelled by conditions you can have a spacious relationship with the conditions and allow them to be the way they are at this moment as they are in all their loveliness for a while and in all their defectiveness with something missing, something goes wrong within it so life becomes for the first time satisfying because you are not dependent on the conditions of your life for your satisfaction or happiness and that's the great liberation so it's a misperception in people to believe that once I awaken spiritually everything is going to be just absolutely great, everything around me is going to be absolutely great no, it's not in the nature of the world of form to be like that, it's a continuous flux, it's a continuous change, so it's not going to remain if it's absolutely great today it won't be tomorrow or next year so and you don't need it you don't need that what you need is to be in touch with that which transcends all conditions this I'm only putting what the Buddha already talked about very clearly also in his teachings

[Speaker 4] (5:30:53 - 5:31:23)

so in your own life have you not experienced after your awakening the need for something like seeing a therapist for psychological trouble about something or other or seeing a physical coach to help you with this or that or saying I still need these other inputs to work out things on the relative level that are still problematic or is it not like that?

[Speaker 1] (5:31:23 - 5:32:43)

No, I've never occurred to me that I needed to seek help for something on a psychological level I could have sought help for my body is not I mean it seems perfectly fine it's not a perfect body it's a bit crooked here and there but I'm okay with that and it doesn't cause me much trouble at all so far eventually probably will because things decay eventually so many people tell me you should see a physical therapist and maybe it would be helpful but somehow for some reason I don't like my energy field to be invaded by someone no matter how conscious that physical therapist may be and how wonderful work he or she does somehow I have a reluctance to get my energy field invaded by that but that's not necessarily saying there's great wisdom in that that's just a characteristic that's there in me

[Speaker 4] (5:32:45 - 5:33:47)

Okay Eckhart I just have one final question In talking about your Awakening minus experience there can be a sense that there's a gap between we people in the process of Awakening and Eckhart Tolle's dramatic experience and yet I asked you to do this I wanted to hear about this sort of like seeing a vision of something that's possible and the value in that but how individual do you think Awakening might be perhaps it will look very very different for someone who's listening watching going through the process of Awakening what do you think about that how much has to be there this is what it's like no matter who you are what time or place and how much is quite individual

[Speaker 1] (5:33:50 - 5:38:22)

probably the the Awakening what happens in the Awakening must be the same in every human being but the way in which that human being then interprets what happened or the way in which he or she talks about it or thinks about it or even how he or she interprets it could be very enormously if for example Awakening could happen to somebody who is still who is very much within the cultural context of a particular form of spirituality so if an Awakening happens to somebody who lives in an ashram in India it might be interpreted very differently or somebody who is a Christian and again that's why you can see some people talk about the birth of the birth of Christ in me and I suddenly they say I got this incredible sense of Christ entering me this could be one way of interpreting the Awakening process and they are not entirely wrong because if Christ means anything Christ is the transcendent human Jesus becomes the Christ the Christ has no past to it the Christ is the transcendental reality and even Saint Paul in the New Testament said something like I must I must diminish and Christ in me must grow so it looks then as if I talk about it and somebody like that talks about it they talk about something totally different but fundamentally they are not it's only when it reaches when that which takes place in the formless is then seen from the dimension of form it may look very different from person to person but the fundamental disidentification from mental forms that is the same because it's only then that the Christ consciousness or Buddha nature whatever you want to call it then suddenly is born in you another way of putting it and that's beautiful so that's one part of the answer the second part is what that person does with the awakened state how the awakened state works in that particular human being and when that human being then interacts in the world with others in situations that also varies enormously so not everybody who awakens becomes writes a book and becomes a formal spiritual teacher it could be very different, it could be that some creativity comes through you, it could be that you work with a group of people innumerable possibilities and again that varies from person to person and also a few personal characteristics also may remain they're not part of you don't have the ego anymore so you're not identified with them but certain traits that you had before you awakened may still be there after you awaken it even happened that in India one famous spiritual teacher he was a chain smoker before he awakened and he was still a chain smoker after he awakened so he died of course because he smoked too much but not that he minded very much so yes so there are variations on the surface but the core is the same I'm sure that what happens deep down in you is the same in anybody in the awakening process

[Speaker 4] (5:38:22 - 5:38:40)

and if our conversation has initiated a greater longing in people for a deeper level of awakening what would you say to our viewers in response to that

[Speaker 1] (5:38:40 - 5:40:21)

well the longing for awakening is already part of the awakening so if there's a longing for awakening then you're already the door is already there the door is already a little bit open because otherwise you would belong to those millions who not only have no longing but actually would intensely dislike even the concept of awakening or have never even heard of it it doesn't even enter their consciousness so if there's a longing for awakening then you're already touching it and it's already beginning to happen because the longing is there because you're recognizing that something in what we are saying here is true there's an immediate saying yes on some level you can sense that there is a truth in here about the human condition and about you and that in you which can sense that is that part that is already awake and that needs to grow in you but don't believe the mind might be telling you that you're not there at all yet and yet you're listening to this and you're going yes that means part of you is already awakening so don't believe your mind when the mind doesn't know that because it cannot recognize the thinking mind cannot recognize awakening it says I need to awaken it's happening already so if you recognize that then that would be a great help

[Speaker 4] (5:40:21 - 5:40:29)

wonderful thank you Eckhart thanks for giving us a window into your inner world thank you

[Speaker 1] (5:40:29 - 6:23:07)

thank you welcome to another live meditation and a special welcome to my facebook friends who I am told are tuning in from different parts of the world thank you for inviting me into your living room or wherever you are here it is just after one o'clock in the afternoon on the west coast and it will be probably a different time where you are maybe even a different day but we can be sure that wherever you are it's this now moment the present moment time and dates things like that are things we impose on reality in themselves they have no actual existence they are a kind of grid that we impose so that we can function in this world and that's fine so I'm saying is ultimately it's not on one level it is true to say that today is the 26th of June 5 past 1 here in the afternoon whatever the time is the year is 2011 on one level that's true on another level it's not the case at all because there's only just the presentness of this moment in the same way that there's no equator I remember we were visiting the country of Ecuador and there's a tourist attraction which is a line here's the equator and people come there and take photos of the equator which is a line they draw of course it's an imaginary line it just happens to be the equidistant between the north and south pole but there is no equator as such we impose that super impose that on reality so in ultimate terms there is no equator there is no clock time we can function within it without being trapped in it and without completely believing that that is absolute reality and many other things we impose on reality on ourselves on who we are our sense of identity a name a history personal history all kinds of fears and desires and many other things that make up your psychological sense of self it has some reality but it is not absolute reality so if you look closely at time and clock time you go more deeply into it you end up in the present moment where there is no time there is only ever this and here we are in our meditation today we are here to go deeper within ourselves so that we can discover that deeper level to who we are that is not relative but that is absolutely true everything else then is recognized as relative it has its place your personal history your past your future your life situation your health situation your financial situation your living situation your problems and concerns yes, that is all there but is your life reduced to only this is that all you know your life situation your personal circumstances are you aware of any other dimension in your life most people are not they are consumed by their life situation and they are completely identified with a sense of self that is derived from mind activity mind activity the stream of thinking whatever that voice in the head is telling you about who you are and all that is of course conditioned by the past and the most important question in anybody's life in your life is is is there more to who I am than meets the eye so to speak is there more to who I am than whatever my senses can perceive or know about myself, whatever thoughts are floating around in my mind is there a deeper level to who I am because if there is and I've never even inquired about that never even attempted to go to a deeper level within myself then I've missed a wonderful opportunity the deeper purpose of my life here I'm not asking you to believe anything I'm not asking you to believe that there is a transcendent dimension to who you are but I'm inviting you to have an open mind and be open to the possibility that's the starting point be open to the possibility that there may be a deeper level to who you are something deeper than the person which exists in time and is conditioned by time events that happened which are then the memories are accumulated both conscious and unconscious memories are accumulated and that accumulation of memories for most people is the basis of their sense of self and they are trapped in that the question then is is there a deeper dimension to myself or is there only the story of me in my mind is there anything beyond my personal concerns is there something perhaps that is more important than all the things that I think are extremely important in my life my problems my circumstances all those things is there something perhaps that's more important than that I'm not saying you neglect that level of reality but is there something deeper and all you need to say of course is I'm open to that possibility there may be or there may not that's all but if you say to start with I don't believe in anything deeper then of course you're already closed of course in that case you probably wouldn't even be here listening to this experience so in this meditation or in any true meditation and by the way this is not a conventional meditation we are not going through any kind of technique but direct experience in any meditation you're going you're endeavouring to contact that deeper space within you so what's our starting point then our starting point has to be always is the reality of this moment so if you want to go deeper you always have to start from the reality of this moment the simple reality of this moment so what is the reality of this moment for you now it is that sensory perception is happening you see this image of me you hear the voice you're perceiving that you see you're peripherally aware of your surroundings although you are more focused hopefully on looking at me and listening to the voice because right now this is where you're choosing to direct your attention but you're also aware peripherally of your surroundings of course that's still there you're perhaps aware of your body sitting wherever it is the chair sense perceptions and you're aware perhaps of certain feelings you may have in the body and thoughts going through your mind occasionally still come and go some thoughts may want to take over your attention completely and then you'll lose your focus on the words so that could happen to some of you that some thoughts come in and take your attention away from this and then all you need to do is bring your attention when you notice that bring your attention back to this moment recall that you're becoming present to this moment you're aware of whatever it is that is arising in the space of this moment and you accept it as it is because it already is so that's a good entry point into any whatever meditation you want to do the portal into the meditative state or the present presence consciousness is to allow the reality of this moment to be as it is why? because it already is this moment already is as it is so internally you don't demand that this moment should be different for example you don't say why don't you stop speaking we're supposed to be having a meditation here or you're saying I'm not experiencing my deeper self what are you talking about?

all we need to do to become present which is where meditation takes us become present with the simple fact of the isness of this moment that's what is now since ancient times philosophers and sages and some writers have discussed the possibility that what we experience as our life may be a kind of dream so whatever you're experiencing now in this moment of course you cannot know in absolute terms that this is not a dream and in some ways it has a dream like quality whatever you experience because it all passes very quickly, it evaporates like a dream whereas yesterday's dinner evaporated like a dream but even if it is a dream there must be something that enables this dream if it is a dream this dream like thing that is whatever content there is in the present moment, there must be something that enables this dream to be there there must be something that enables the reality of this moment to be there and to be known and of course you are that so at this moment I'm asking you to sense so to speak within yourself the simple fact that you are foundational so to speak to the reality of this moment whatever it is that makes up the form of this moment around you here in other words can you sense the simple fact that you exist exist may not be the right word, can you sense the simple fact of that you are your beingness, your presence through which all these things are being perceived in this moment even my voice can you sense this is something very immediate I'm asking you to direct your attention the focus of your attention away from sense perceptions although they remain there but not to put your attention there not even to put your attention on my voice or on the image on the screen yes that's still there you're still perceiving that but what I'm asking you is to put your attention on the very fact that you are conscious conscious one could say on the the attention itself so the consciousness that before was in thinking and sense perceptions now turns around and the consciousness that before was in all kinds of things including thoughts which are also things the consciousness turns within into itself and realizes that presence that inherent timeless presence that underlies whatever you're experiencing you already know I mentioned it in a new earth at Delphi in ancient Greece the temple of Apollo there was the inscription which is I believe still there know thyself what is less well known than that inscription is in that same temple there's also the inscription and that goes back two and a half thousand years ago now there's also the inscription you are what? you are what?

you are that's what it's inscribed in now when you read that or hear that either it makes sense to you or it doesn't make sense to you if it makes sense to you you go for a moment and you go ah because at that moment those two words direct your attention to attention itself or one could say direct your consciousness to the fact that you are conscious in other words you know yourself as that the consciousness formless, timeless you are not this or that but just the fact you become aware that you are and that's what the ancient sages pointed to already 2,500 years ago you are isn't that amazing that inscription in the temple saying you are you cannot understand the truth of that through the thinking mind as you cannot understand the truth of what I'm talking about through the thinking mind because the thinking mind the conceptual mind reads that you are what's that supposed to mean can't work that out you are, there must be something missing here but only by the truth of you are or rather the truth of I am because when you realize that truth of you are it becomes the truth of I am the truth of I am is not conceptual at all it's nothing to do with thinking it can only be realized outside of thinking so what I am pointing to in our meditation here is the possibility of becoming aware of that deeper level of who you are that has nothing to do with your history or your thoughts and when you realize that essentially you are that unconditioned consciousness that has no form when you realize that essentially you are the light of consciousness which Jesus calls the light of the world when you realize that you are that not just once and then you spend the rest of your life and say oh I had this great experience ten years ago I realized who I am but now I've forgotten no no it's good to have to hear see the possibility of living or existing simultaneously on two levels the level of the world where things need to be done and dealt with in time your life situation you have to deal with that you have to deal with this without being consumed by that it's a dreadful fate if you are consumed by the circumstances of your life awful but the pull is very strong but simultaneously having the continuing continuous awareness of that formless level of pure consciousness or beingness the bare I am-ness while you are dealing with the things of this world so that you are not lost in that continuously when I observe people how easily they lose themselves continuously in whatever arises to think about this and primarily they lose themselves in their mind in their thinking I have to think about that I have to deal with that of course you have to make your phone calls but are you losing yourself in the world which is the same as losing yourself in your mind because you experience the world in and as your mind and that is the state from which to use Christian terminology you need to be saved because you have that Christian term salvation saved from what?

saved from being lost in the world being lost in your mind and that's what salvation is about unfortunately most churches don't understand that anymore haven't understood it for a long time misunderstood what salvation is so salvation is the truth that will make you free another thing Jesus said the truth will make you free but before he said that he added a few more other words he said know the truth and the truth will make you free the truth is already the truth you need to know what is the truth the truth is who you are or what you are underneath form it's the truth of I am and then you exist in two dimensions simultaneously and then you are still in the world dealing with things even thinking about things and relating with other human beings but in the background of your life so to speak you have that level of we could call it the space of awareness of aware presence or we could say you sense your essential beingness your essential presence underneath all the things that are continuously happening and then you can lead a harmonious life then your life is quite fulfilling it can only be fulfilling if you no longer seek fulfillment in the things of this world the job the relationship the finances the achievement whatever people seek possessions whatever people seek fulfillment in is not, nothing none of these things is ultimately fulfilling as many of you know have already experienced so life is fulfilling when you are rooted rooted in the essential beingness of I am which is nothing to do with thinking which is just a space of awareness this and that forms the background of your life and then you deal with things without losing yourself in the things then you bring that state of consciousness that spacious one could say that spacious state of consciousness you bring that into your interactions with other people of great importance and it's only then that you will stop treating other people as possible sources of fulfillment or as a threat which is very normal in this world if you are not connected to that deeper dimension within yourself other people you look upon other people as a source of fulfillment in other words you want them to do something for you on some level or you look upon other people as perhaps a threat to your sense of who you are so you approach other people with fear and desire always, there is some desire or there is some fear awful and of course relationships they can't function very well in that state of consciousness so there is continuous conflict because the other person is also seeking from you either some desire or some threat that you represent so when you are no longer looking at the to other people for fulfillment or the things of this world for fulfillment then the things of this world and other people are actually quite pleasant but you can only do that when you derive fulfillment continuously from your essential beingness rather than from things or people so the fulfillment is to to sense let's just, words are very inadequate but let's just say to sense your essential aliveness at this moment at this moment whether you are in a palace or a prison cell to experience the reality of this, that's irrelevant where you are. It's also irrelevant whether you have failed totally in all your endeavors or you are a great success in the eyes of the world that's irrelevant to the realization of what I'm pointing to so isn't that a relief well it's more of a relief if you have failed in everything but if you've succeeded in everything you wouldn't even be looking at this listening to this.

You have to wait a few more years until things collapse around you because nothing in this world is all that stable and then life is fulfilling because the present moment which is, oh here we come back to that essential portal well what we call the present moment is essentially that sense of I am that sense of I am is the deeper meaning of the now it's the space of consciousness itself in which everything happens comes and goes, comes and goes comes and goes so fulfillment comes from knowing who you are from knowing yourself as the very presence that underlies what you experience externally and in your mind as the world so in ancient India the ancient sages call that the bliss of being conscious the bliss of being conscious or consciousness being sat is the word in Sanskrit sat chit ananda means knowing the bliss of being conscious, the deep fulfillment of knowing yourself as consciousness and primarily you are that and secondary you are whatever person you happen to be playing in your existence your present existence on this planet and who knows what role you are playing in your present existence, you may be playing a very tragic role or you may be playing in some comedy or in many cases a mixture of the two you that's the role you play your name your circumstances your life situation but who are you behind that beyond that do you know yourself as the underlying I am that's all so that's our meditation for today and I would encourage you to not just walk away from here and then immediately get drawn back into the things that you have to think about and deal with but while you are doing things remain conscious conscious of yourself in the background conscious of being conscious you sense this consciousness so when I I pick up something there's a spaciousness in the background and there's not just the action that's happening there's also another thing I can another word I can use is there's a peace in the background of your life and then the way in which you deal with things is peaceful if you're not connected with yourself the way in which you deal with things cannot be peaceful because you get upset very quickly and reactive very quickly and you contribute to the problems of the world even if you're talking about some great spiritual thing you're contributing if you don't deal with things and people peacefully are contributing to the problems of the world so you're not part of the solution but part of the problem so what a wonderful thing it is to see that the most natural way to live is to be connected with who you are and the unnatural way to live is to be disconnected the world is in such a mess because so many millions are living in that unnatural way of disconnection so this is why we're here before I say goodbye to you let's have a brief moment of simple stillness be well be present and don't forget that you are so our special guest is someone whose books have changed countless people's lives all over the world and his name is Neal Donald Walsh and he is here to join me here and now

[Speaker 15] (6:23:08 - 6:23:20)

I love it

[Speaker 1] (6:23:25 - 6:23:27)

thank you so much for coming

[Speaker 3] (6:23:27 - 6:23:32)

oh thanks for having me I'm totally in love with you

[Speaker 1] (6:23:38 - 6:24:45)

I'd like to of course I don't need to everybody is aware of his books and I also saw the movie Conversations with God if you haven't seen it it's based on a faithful history of your life at that period when you're beginning to write and it's wonderful to watch now in a little while I want to ask you what your message to the world is right now but before we do that I'd like to ask you a little bit about the creative process in you especially at the very beginning because not everybody or not many people may be aware that in the period before the first book came through you, Conversations with God, you were homeless, is that right?

[Speaker 3] (6:24:45 - 6:24:45)

yes

[Speaker 1] (6:24:45 - 6:25:34)

and you were living in a tent and that is shown in the movie and so it was a time period when all the structures around you that most people would consider necessary they would think I need security so that I can write I need and of course that's not the case it happened to you when there was complete insecurity and the structures around you had collapsed I would say there is a connection between this enormous creative impulse suddenly coming through you and the prior collapse of the external structures around you, how do you see that?

[Speaker 3] (6:25:35 - 6:31:24)

Well you know Eckhart, that's my experience as well in the following sense but let me back up let me just take one step back may I please, I didn't set out to write a book so I wasn't thinking in terms of you know having a creative moment or producing a book that didn't happen actually producing a book with foreknowledge that it would be a book or that it would ever be seen by anybody until what became book three so books what are popularly known as books one and two in the Conversations with God Cosmology were not written with any foreknowledge that anyone would ever see it without ever any intent that it would be published as a book it was a process of personal revelation personal connection and it was a very it was a process as well as, excuse me a personal expiation that is I was ridding myself of all the thoughts I had about how I thought life was because it began really the process of my Conversations with God began when I realized that nothing in my life was working the way I thought it was supposed to work my relationships with my significant other was falling apart and with all of my others my life work had come to a grinding halt I was doing nothing, I was on the street unemployed and I had a broken neck I should explain that why I was on the street was that I had a car accident in which I broke my neck and very few people really survive a broken neck or at least survive intact I'm very fortunate that I'm still alive I'm very fortunate that I'm not paralyzed frankly, but I was one of the very rare people who can actually have a broken neck and be more or less normal afterward, except that for about two years I couldn't do much I couldn't lift this I was not allowed to extend my harm so I couldn't do very very little because they were wanting me to be very careful with this skeletal structure of mine so I couldn't do nothing and I wound up on the street because the social welfare system fell out from beneath me so now, there I am finally sitting and I had too much pride by the way to ask people who love me for help, that was interesting I had a thought about it that I'm going to look bad how could I look any worse than I looked? but I hadn't I didn't want to call my father, he would have rushed to my aid but I didn't want him to know I thought well, I'll be out of this in just a few weeks, I can pull myself out of it well a few weeks turned into a few months and a few months turned into a year two weeks shy of one year that I was on the street asking people for dimes and dollars, could you give me a quarter? could you help?

and then I became so upset with myself and so I began to ask myself because I finally got a job and I finally got off the street but this is when the game got interesting, talk about, am I telling too much of this now? no, it's wonderful to hear it was when I got off the street, when I finally managed to find a little weekend job as a radio announcer that I earned a few dollars, enough dollars to get off the street, that I wound up back in the game back in the game of life, back in the drama, and that's when I realized the utter vacuousness of life, I thought is this really all there is? is this, am I back in it?

and for what? none of it made any sense to me I felt like I was on another planet I didn't understand, why do we bother? and so I woke up one night and I said to myself what does it take to make life work?

what is this life? what's going on here? what is really going on here?

and I asked the eternal questions that we all ask why am I here? and who am I? and how did I get to this place?

and to what? and I really begged God my perception of God I just begged for an answer as many of us have done and God was good to me she said do you really want answers to all of these questions or are you just venting? I said you know I really would I really would like answers if you've got them, give them to me because at this point I'm really searching and so this voice I heard a voice Eckhart over my right shoulder that began, it was as clear and as present, it was a faint voice it was not a physical voice it was not a voice inside my head it was a voice I heard audibly in the room right next to me such that I turned around to see who was in the room it's 4.15 in the morning I had gotten up in the middle of the night just pacing back and forth trying to and then I sat down and I was hearing things but I thought fair enough I'm going to write down there happened to be a yellow legal pad on the table in front of me and I picked it up

[Speaker 1] (6:31:24 - 6:31:33)

just to write down what I was hearing it's funny, I write everything on yellow legal pads laughter

[Speaker 3] (6:31:35 - 6:35:33)

laughter laughter laughter why am I not surprised by that? laughter so and I began to ask questions who am I? what does it take to make life work?

what is it that I don't understand? help me, just help me mind you I wasn't a young person at this time I was 50 years old and I thought gosh, a half century I've been here a half century and I don't understand what's going on very not okay so I was given, this information began flowing through me and I began writing and I began asking questions because what I was writing I want to say by the way that the voice very quickly moved into my head, it left this physical realm and became a part of my inner experience but I began hearing and I began writing everything that I was hearing and of course what I was hearing was bringing up other questions in me, how could that be? I didn't understand, I was always taught this I was always told that, how can that be? and I remember when I really got clear that I was talking to what I call my conceptualization of God because we were talking about the Ten Commandments and I said I began writing questions and getting answers and writing questions questioning what I was writing and at one point I asked I've tried so hard to live a good life I've obeyed the rules some of the rules laughter hardly none of the rules but the point is I tried I tried really and so I said to God and I was being very sincere I said I tried to follow the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule and the rest what does it take? and God said actually Neil there's no such thing as the Ten Commandments oh well that was just the bedrock of my entire life then what are there? and from then I knew that I had connected with some place of grander awareness that I call God just for a convenient short word but a place of grander awareness that I'm clear resides in all of us and that I want to say if I could dare say it, not only that resides in all of us but that is the identity of all of us that all of us are and I sat there and I thought my gosh I'm not just hearing from that I am that that's who I am and all the rest of this is I'm making it up I'm making it all up so I began to continue this dialogue and at one point this other part of me which I would now call it that that I call God said this will one day become a book and I'm just writing, journaling by the way this has gone on now for a couple of weeks every night at 4.15 in the morning I was awakened like someone was pulling me by the shirt front getting me back to this thing and so I was in my little one room cottage that I had managed to rent after getting a job finding a part time job and every morning at 4.15 in the morning I'm up, I'm up, I'm writing more and more and more and at one point the dialogue said this will one day become a book and you know my first thought of course is yeah right you and a hundred other people are going to send your middle of the night mental meanderings to a publisher who's going to say let's get this out at once laughter guy is talking to God

[Speaker 15] (6:35:34 - 6:35:35)

laughter

[Speaker 3] (6:35:38 - 6:38:23)

but in fact you know what I sent it to a publisher and I've been asked many times many times why did you send that off to a publisher if you didn't intend for it to be a book and I tell you I did it Eckhart so that I could prove something to myself because I thought really the truth is without being funny about it the odds of something like that being published were one in a gazillion and I thought you know it says this will be a book that was the only measurable outcome I had received in all the downloads I was receiving everything else was conceptual theoretical in nature but here was something that could be measured it would either be a book or it wouldn't be a book so I thought you know I'm going to test God laughter laughter so I sent it to a publisher just to see what would happen and let it go and within not too long a time I got a call from one of the publishers that I sent it to, I sent it to five I got rejection letters predictably from everybody except this last person sent me a rejection letter and it said no you know this book doesn't fit our titles list I sent it back to the publisher and I said would you at least read it because I know that it fits your titles list all you publisher books like this so I sent it back to the publisher and he took another look at it actually he looked at it for the first time his acquisitions editor had turned it down he looked at it and he said we're going to publish this and they did you know and the rest is as they say in the business publishing history you know the book actually was rushed to print it sold seven and a half million copies in 37 languages and it was on that crazy New York Times list for 137 weeks consecutively and suddenly there I am the guy who's supposed to be talking to God so you ask how the creative process works it wasn't for me a process where I sat down to see how could I create a series of best selling books for me it was an internal experience of my soul meeting my mind and blending with my essence to become one and then my mind giving itself permission to just shut the hell up and I mean that literally I mean shut the hell up and just get out of the way so that my soul could join my mind in a collaborative expression of who I really am and what is really true so that's how the process worked for me and I'm sure you're sorry you asked a two second question to get a 24 minute answer but that's how it happened

[Speaker 1] (6:38:23 - 6:39:01)

very helpful to hear for everybody and very inspiring to hear because of course the dimension that you describe as you said is in everyone and basically the human being is one with that dimension is that in essence just another question to you then in after that do you feel that dimension is still in you do you still access that when you write nowadays or how does that I don't write unless I can my writing

[Speaker 3] (6:39:02 - 6:43:59)

I mean I write a newsletter or a little piece of you know for the blog or things but I don't write that kind of material unless I can come from that place I don't try to get to that place I can I try real hard to how to put this the answer to your question is yes why am I using all these words the answer to your question is yes but what I want to say is I think it's possible I have learned that it's possible for me to deliberately access that place and I think that everyone can deliberately access that place of knownness, nothingness that place where thought recedes and wisdom emerges from the soul I use words that my conceptualizations allow me to understand so I go to that place of the soul and I just get very quiet and you know what happens to me sometimes when I'm writing my friends who are around me know this I'll be sitting there writing from that place and literally fall asleep at the keyboard I will literally be writing for maybe six or seven minutes and just I'll sleep for ten or twelve minutes and then I'll wake up and realize this just happened to me the other day again it happens all the time not because the effort is so great, not because I'm so exhausted but because I'm so completely out of my body, so completely out of my physicality so completely in another place that literally I just sit there and I'm out of there and then I kind of come back and I continue to but I think that, I don't suggest you do this while you're driving or at the dinner table but sometimes when you're alone it's possible to just let go of every idea you ever had and just go to that place and I do it with a request but you know what, I want to ask you a question, let me just finish that thought so they're not, well what does he mean by that I do it with a request and the request is, you know, dear God, if there's something that wants to come through me now that wants to emerge and present itself now I'm open, allow it to, and it doesn't have to, if it doesn't that's fine, then I just don't write this morning, I don't have a need to, they're just and then the impulse will come through literally an idea or a thought that will just come through and I'll find myself following that thought, almost like I'm being led by the nose, you know I don't have a thought about the thought, it's just whatever, and the thing I was saying to my dear wife when I finished my last book When Everything Changes, Change Everything I walked upstairs with it and I said I didn't have any idea when I started this, what it was going to say No idea at all No outline Sounds familiar No outline I know what chapter one will be about this and chapter two will be about that, it'll be a logical progression and no, I had no idea and then out came all of this stuff, the mechanics of the mind, the system of the soul that was astonishing me as I saw it I was just, wow, what is that?

and then, okay and then it would reveal itself and reveal itself and reveal itself so I have to I've had to turn back my last 20 or 30 royalty checks out of confessions that I didn't write it at all No, I didn't really I kept the money but I almost have to, you know, I almost have to do it with my hand you know, I can't, I have to take it like this so I can't look at the person directly because I didn't really but you know it's that way with all gifts in truth, the gifts of life it seems to us, come through us, not from us, and as do the joys, you know, whether it's a royalty check or a smile on a person's face, or a squeeze or a hug or whatever it is, it feels to me like all the joys of life come to us just as freely as the gifts come through us, if we just allow ourselves to get caught in the flow and get our self out of the way, get any thought out of the way that you think you're doing it, oh I'm reading, I'm a wonderful writer, watch this because whenever I, and I do have those thoughts, mind you, I want to confess I have those thoughts I'm a great writer, this is going to be a great book and it turns out to be crap and I gotta throw it away, so okay great, I got it, so but I wanted to ask a question

[Speaker 1] (6:44:02 - 6:44:18)

what the hell was the question? well very often questions dissolve laughter either they are answered or they dissolve I know what the question was, thank you

[Speaker 3] (6:44:19 - 6:47:50)

this bought me ten seconds I have long wanted to know once I got in touch with the, please forgive me I cry at my own stuff laughter I've wanted to know laughter what is the purpose if I'm not this body, by the way one of the first things I was told in conversations with God is you're not your body your body is something you have it's not something you are, now it's got to be old news but fifteen years ago that was brand new for me, okay I'm not my body then God said you're not your mind okay not my body, not my mind, then God said you're not even what you think of as your soul you're not even that, that's another idea you have, that you are your soul okay great I said then who am I God said isn't that an interesting question why don't you tell me and I said to God no no you know the answer and God said to me no no you know the answer and I said to God no I'm really coming to you to tell me and God says no no I'm really coming to you to tell me see what God said to me was the difficulty here Neil is that you are convinced that you and I are separate, that you're something other than me only when you're clear that you are nothing other than me will you understand that I don't have your answer you have your answer but you may be whatever you choose to be you may have whatever you choose to have you may do whatever you choose to do such is the wonder and the glory of life that you may create all of it as you wish and so I thought wow but why you know that was the question I asked if I'm none of all of this and all these things are happening to me and the exterior world and the events, the tragedies of life of life in general out there in my own life why why why must it be so hard why must it be so difficult what am I doing here and God said be me for me the answer that I got Eckhart was the answer to the eternal question why was you exist in your present form that I might know myself through you and through all of life and so I got that the opportunity for me was to let go of all my prior thoughts about who I am and why I'm here and actually make it up decide if I wanted truly to be my conceptualization of divinity what would that look like if I wanted to really be in this exact moment when I came up here to say hello to you if I was really being who I wanted to be expressing what I really am I'd go and I'd give that guy the greatest biggest smooch on the face he ever had and I thought dare I do that Neil Donald Walsh doesn't smooch Eckhart Tolle that's crazy because I had these concepts you know that you're not supposed to but I thought you know I got up to this guy and I felt his energy I felt your wonderful energy come out and I thought you know what I'm going to give you a smooch

[Speaker 1] (6:47:51 - 6:47:52)

I'm glad you did

[Speaker 3] (6:47:54 - 6:48:26)

because that was what was arising to use your words and so that really is the answer to the question why so that life might know itself as life itself through the process of life itself that you might demonstrate through the living of your life what life is and if you don't like what it is change it you're at liberty to change it and that was the greatest experience

[Speaker 1] (6:48:36 - 6:48:58)

thank you very inspiring to listen to you so even when you speak you're connected with that level that dimension within yourself it speaks through you and that's inspired speaking it's not prepared it just comes yeah except when it's not you know

[Speaker 3] (6:48:58 - 6:49:59)

across the breakfast table I try the greatest challenge of my life is to access that level of awareness in the day in the day of my life I find for some reason that if I'm talking to people or I want to say presenting or doing a television interview or whatever that somehow I'm able to step aside from my need for it to go well be right, look good somehow or another I just let go of that I'm not sure I know how but I just do I remember Matt Lauer on the Today Show asked me a stunning question we did a little interview with me you know and he asked me this question they always do this you know when you have 30 seconds left he said Neil we have about 30 seconds left but could you tell us if God had one thing that he could say to the world what would it be laughter

[Speaker 15] (6:50:02 - 6:50:05)

laughter laughter laughter

[Speaker 3] (6:50:08 - 6:50:33)

he said could you get it down to one paragraph I said actually Matt I can give it to you in five words he said really so he kind of turned to the camera you know a little bit of a a little bit of a smile on his face ladies and gentlemen from Neil Donald Walsh here's God's message to the world in five words laughter laughter you've got me all wrong

[Speaker 15] (6:50:35 - 6:50:40)

laughter laughter laughter laughter

[Speaker 3] (6:50:41 - 6:51:05)

laughter if that's true of course we have a lot to talk about a lot of fun to explore a lot to say why did I start why did I even tell you that somebody where was I going just before that no I asked the question why there's more than that wrong you're out

[Speaker 15] (6:51:05 - 6:51:06)

laughter

[Speaker 3] (6:51:08 - 6:52:40)

but anyway yeah thank you thank you day to day life my challenge is to somehow when I when I am I'm I'm disattached I'm more attached in private than I am in public I'm more attached over the breakfast table with my beloved to my idea how it should be and who I am and you know how could you have said that to me just now and do you understand you know all this than I am in public so I do have a question you were right after all you can stay I do have a question for you this is a terribly personal question and we can edit this out of the tape if you don't want it in the program but I want to know whether because I want to tell you and I'm not pumping sunshine into your ear this is the truth for me you have stood for me as as close as I have come to see on this planet as a living master who understands but who does more than understand because to be honest with you I think I understand but the difference I see between you and me to be honest and totally transparent is we both understand and we can both say it really well but he lives it

[Speaker 15] (6:52:41 - 6:52:43)

and I don't laughter

[Speaker 3] (6:52:45 - 6:54:26)

except when I do laughter what I notice is that I live at probably 20 who can give a number not enough of the time and when I'm with my beloved with my family in private I somehow get into all of my you know thoughts and I forget what I'm saying right here to you as if I didn't even say it to the point where my loved ones look at me sometimes and say you ought to read one of your own books laughter and it's well deserved it's well deserved so I've come to you for a personal counseling session laughter on television how do I take what I think that I am how do I take what I've experienced I'm going to not even say what I think I am because it's out of thought it's not from thought how do I take what I experience myself to be and wash the canvas of my life with it especially when it matters to me the most laughter in the end honestly I don't really care how it is with you I'll never see any of you again laughter that's the truth but that lady sitting over there my wife I see her every day every hour why can't I summon this then laughter applause

[Speaker 1] (6:54:26 - 6:55:05)

laughter applause first of all in certain situations the presence is there fully in you and comes through you such as here you know that in a so called teaching situation or writing situation the presence moves through you and then there's the rest of your life and it is sometimes there I would assume and sometimes not is that right or is it mostly not

[Speaker 3] (6:55:05 - 6:55:14)

I think it's more there now than it used to be but it's still the majority of time not and people who know me would tell you that they'd say you think this is a nice person you should work for

[Speaker 15] (6:55:15 - 6:55:15)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (6:55:19 - 6:57:34)

so all it means is your mind still takes over and either you relinquish it voluntarily in your daily life which requires the minimum of awareness that this is what's happening right now my mind has taken over but I believe that you do have that it comes in sometimes that you realize that your mind has taken over and in that moment you can relinquish that and invite presence into your life whenever any conflict situation arises or any kind of suffering arises irritation anger whatever it is then you it can be used as an alarm clock to tell you oh something is happening here I sometimes say it's an alarm clock that tells you I've lost the present moment I'm not present in the now so in other words you are trapped in your mind so you can use any conflict situation when you and the moment you notice it you can invite presence back into your life and so immediately the alertness comes back it's a voluntary death if you don't do it you'll need more suffering and then it'll happen but if you voluntarily relinquish because you know how it works you know how it works because you experience what you do in a situation like this there's that complete openness you are not identified with old mind your mind is simply a servant of the deeper awareness as you speak to us it's beautiful you're not here you're not protecting your ego which is a wonderful thing and because there is something much vaster here speaking through you than the limited ego that still arises in your daily life so as you sit here the ego is not is not operating otherwise you would have to hide the fact that you don't live it in your daily life but something much greater than the ego is speaking through you right

[Speaker 3] (6:57:34 - 6:57:38)

now you think he's gonna miss a chance to talk to Eckhart Tolle about this you're crazy

[Speaker 1] (6:57:43 - 6:58:53)

so all it alertness be more interested in your inner state in any given situation than what's happening in the outer situation what's happening inside me at this moment what is my inner state at this moment is always primary dealing with external situations whatever happens the outcome of this situation or that situation or this person agrees with me or does not agree with me all these are secondary things if you can shift your attention primarily to what's going on inside me right now not nothing is more important than your state of consciousness now it's not the external world is not never more important than your state of consciousness but one loses sense of that and you believe that some external situation is more important than your consciousness your state of consciousness it's not that's the illusion but the world is here to seduce us into believing that because it's very seductive every situation I think I've

[Speaker 3] (6:58:53 - 6:59:45)

discovered the reason why you know when you say things like the world is here to is very seductive it's here to seduce us the thinking mind and God bless it it does have some purposes in our lives the thinking mind says why would God if there is a God or you know why would life create a world that is very seductive and that is constantly seducing us moment by moment into thinking that we are our thoughts and to stop it and I what I got when I asked God that question and what I was reconnected with just a moment ago when you talked about the alarm clock was wouldn't it be interesting my theory is my viewpoint is that the world in fact creates these moments of seduction you know what we need to write a book together called moments of seduction laughter

[Speaker 1] (6:59:46 - 6:59:49)

you always come up with wonderful titles

[Speaker 3] (6:59:49 - 7:01:19)

laughter so I think that the world creates these moments of seduction precisely to provide us a contextual field within which we can experience ourselves at the next grandest level to express our understanding and our awareness of who we are in the next grandest version of the greatest idea we ever held about that and what I notice is that yes to be really honest with you the number of times that this is true for me in my personal life are less now than they were before and less than they were before that but they're also becoming increasingly intensive and more challenging anybody get that in your life that they're more challenging and more intensive even though they may be less because we're rising in consciousness and the world creates a contextual field that says you want to show us that next step of who you are watch this here comes a person walking down the hallway who's going to really challenge you if that's who you imagine yourself to be not to make it a bad day for us but in fact to make it a good day for us to give us the next opportunity for God to demonstrate who and what it really is in us through us and as us that's my thought about it thank you laughter because the alarm clock when you said that's an alarm clock that goes off that's what got me to remember it that's right of course it's just life waking life up to life itself and pulling us out of

[Speaker 1] (7:01:19 - 7:07:19)

the dream okay well consciousness has answered laughter so now I did what I came here to do laughter let's have a moment of stillness laughter a wonderful opportunity has just arisen I am told and that is to have a slightly longer moment of stillness because there's a computer glitch in the live streaming laughter so we can be thankful to the universe for giving us that laughter

[Speaker 2] (7:07:21 - 7:07:59)

it's not unusual that electronic things fail to work when large collections of higher energy are in one place it's not at all unusual for microphones to stop, for cameras not to work for computers to stop electromagnetic fields of these higher energies seem to wipe out these lower ones, I've had that experience I'll perhaps share it with you later so bring your energy down a little bit so we can get the computer working and we can get on with it

[Speaker 1] (7:08:39 - 7:11:09)

laughter can just be alert present be the presence rather than the person I'd like to perhaps we can start by talking about I'm getting a signal that I shouldn't be talking yet laughter let's just talk a bit about I first became aware of your teachings when I was living in London and a friend of mine gave me a book she worked in a bookstore the famous Watkins bookstore in London the oldest metaphysical bookstore in the world and she gave me a novel and the author was Wayne Dyer, it was in the 80's and it was a novel about a woman from outer space who came to the planet to give spiritual teachings right

[Speaker 2] (7:11:10 - 7:12:47)

her name was Icus it was actually my daughter was born that year and it was her name spelled backwards Sky E-Y-K-I-S and it was about someone who visited another world where it was exact duplicate of earth except that the people there were neurotic like we are here except they were neurotic there because there was a reason to be when this visitor first checked into the hotel he turned on the television set and someone gave the news and then they gave the weather and they gave the sports and then they gave the anxiety attack report the likelihood of anxiety attacking over the weekend it was coming in high, it was coming in fast over the mountains you want to get out your Xanax and your no pain and your tranquilizers because it's going to be heavy doses of anxiety because here on Uranus, which is the title of the place that they went anxiety really attacks and Icus comes to earth and she's looking at all these people saying they're having anxiety attacks but there's no anxiety and it doesn't attack the original title of that book was going to be called if you want to be happy get your head out of Uranus laughter

[Speaker 15] (7:12:47 - 7:12:49)

laughter laughter

[Speaker 2] (7:12:51 - 7:13:00)

but it turned out to be a little bit more serious laughter and we're actually making a movie of that it's the only fiction

[Speaker 1] (7:13:00 - 7:14:02)

thing I've ever undertaken reminds me a little bit of Aldous Huxley wrote a novel called Island which is about a fictitious island somebody gets shipwrecked on this island where he begins to realize the natives live consciously and in awareness and even the parrots in the trees have been trained to remind people to be conscious they say things like attention, attention meaning be present be there one could say be there as the witnessing presence of your mind so if you haven't read it yet you might enjoy that and is your book still available?

[Speaker 2] (7:14:02 - 7:14:52)

it is, it's still in print everything I've done is still in print it's amazing it's called Gifts from Icus but what you're saying reminds me of do you know who Mary Oliver is? she's a well known poet she wrote a poem I used to recite in my talks called Wild Geese and she was asked what's the secret to living an enlightened life and she said it just boils down to and it reminds me of what you just said pay attention be astonished and tell other people she said that's all you need for a successful life I think about paying attention is the key it is, it's a big part of what you do

[Speaker 1] (7:14:52 - 7:16:30)

and that's of course I've told that story quite a few times in the past but not for a few years so maybe I can say it it's about a Zen teacher who actually lived I don't know when, 100 years ago in Japan and his only teaching whenever he was asked to explain the meaning of Zen his only answer would be to raise his index finger and look at you that's the meaning of Zen what it points to of course is the state of alert presence the alert presence the whole teaching of course Zen is many people who are drawn to Zen try to understand it conceptually and they just don't get it I know there are Zen monks who just don't get it because there is nothing to understand conceptually it's entering the state of consciousness of presence so it's frustrating so Zen developed methods to frustrate the mind even more so that it finally gives up its attempt to understand or to know conceptually and that's really that is not just Zen that is really the essence even Cause and Miracle says your understanding is not a powerful contribution to the truth

[Speaker 2] (7:16:32 - 7:16:34)

so true

[Speaker 1] (7:16:35 - 7:16:49)

and the paradox is that out of that state of presence very often if there is really something you need to know it arises right someone sent me a t-shirt I gave to my son

[Speaker 2] (7:16:49 - 7:16:59)

it says don't just do something stand there and it was like a Zen master

[Speaker 1] (7:16:59 - 7:19:34)

and that brings us to an interesting topic and that is being and doing to reconcile within oneself the two dimensions because here as human beings we are called upon to take action and to create as the universe loves to create new forms billions, trillions of life forms we are part of this love of the universe to create form and then and I know that because I have observed myself and you know it because you know yourself the universe also wants to know its own essence through you the source, it wants the conscious realization of the source and in human beings that's expressed as the draw towards to be totally content with what is to be totally at peace in the present moment to long for that state of absolute beautiful, deep peace and I call that in a minute I'd like your input I call that the outgoing movement of the universe is wanting to create and the return movement of the universe is wanting to know itself and through the human as in its essence so the universe wants this too so perhaps everybody here can also feel that within yes you want to do things but you also want to be not to lose being while you do and not lose yourself in the doing get stressed getting the fruit of the action, Bhagavad Gita not to always look to the next thing to attain so that remain rooted in being and then act from there from that rootedness not out of egoic need to have but out of that inner fullness and I'm sure that you have a lot to contribute here too

[Speaker 2] (7:19:34 - 7:26:15)

I think of Moby Dick, one of my favorite novels the author speaks of in these words this great writing always intrigues me I memorized it when I was in high school he said as this appalling ocean surrounds the verdant land so in the soul of man lies one insular Tahiti full of peace and joy but encompassed by all of the horrors of the half-lived life the half-lived life and when you speak about being and doing I think one of the major problems I've got for for our world and for us is that we really aren't raised to believe in our extraordinariness about how extraordinarily, how divine we are that we're all not just pieces of God, but that we are all God, we are all part of God and that's something we carry around with us and this ordinary part of us, the part of us that is called the ego the part of us that believes that who we are is what we accumulate and what we accomplish and what other people think of us and the part of us that is separate from everyone else and the part of us that feels like we have to own things and so on and that we're born into this world where there's nothing to do you know, there's like a baby's inside a mother's womb what does she have to do? what does the baby have to do? in the Tao, the Tao says the Tao does nothing and it leaves nothing undone it's become my son's favorite mantra because I say, sense, come on do something, let's go and he'll say, I do nothing and I leave nothing undone so but this part of us we're sort of snatched out of that perfection and programmed into a life of accumulating and achieving and we start to believe that this is who we are and we never get to the part of us that is extraordinary because the ordinary part of us feels that we're having a successful life if we go through the motions, if we go through school, if we get good grades if we get into the right school if we meet the right person, if we fill out the forms if we pay our taxes, if we don't get arrested, if we follow the rules you know, this is like this is an ordinary life and I speak to an extraordinary life and I have so much respect for the work that you have done over the years but the extraordinary part of us still has ordinary in it you know, we still have to we still have to follow the rules most of them and we still have to fill out the forms and you know, I'm sure you pay your taxes right?

and so you can be an extraordinary being but you still have ordinariness in it but beyond ordinary is this is what we call the soul because we just don't know, have another name for it, you know in the Tao Te Ching the opening lines of the Tao say the Tao that can be named is not the Tao so you're stuck already, you can't even call it anything because it goes into two-ness now it is what it is and the name that you call it but the extraordinary part of who we all are is the soul it's that invisibleness that's formless that has no boundaries it has no beginnings, it's birthless, it's changeless it's deathless and this part of us doesn't care about winning it doesn't care about owning it doesn't care about happiness it doesn't care about being better than anyone else it just it just wants to expand it wants to grow it's miserable the soul is miserable when you contain it when you put a fence around it when you put a label on it when you tell it what it can be and what it can't be all of us have this extraordinariness called the soul which is infinite because if it wasn't infinite it would be finite and if it was finite you'd be able to find the end of it or the beginning of it so because it's not finite, it's infinite this means that it's what does infinity mean?

it's just always expanding there's no end to it this is the part that we need to address, I think within ourselves is this infinite part of us that doesn't need to fit in doesn't need to be right, doesn't need to be better than anybody else it just wants to expand and grow and not be told this is what you can do, this is what your limits are this is what's not possible for you I've always, I don't know about you but always, my entire life I've just been intrigued by extraordinary people by extraordinary events by people who can do things as soon as I see someone can levitate I want to know all about that how do you go about someone who can Carolyn Mace talks about defying gravity or Joel Goldsmith says that in the presence of the God realized the laws of the physical world do not apply can you make electronic equipment stop with your consciousness and so on those kinds of things those extraordinary accomplishments I just read a book that just blew me away, I don't know if you've read this called Unbroken by Laura Hillerbrand have any of you read that, Unbroken it's one of the great reads you'll ever read in your life and it's the story of a man who survived impossible things and he's now 94 years old and he was shot down during World War II and he cruised on a raft across the Pacific Ocean every word of it is true the extraordinariness of this being and what he accomplished and how he survived those things I just think that we need to address ourselves people like us who have a big audience to creating a world of extraordinary people who look beyond what they were programmed to become ordinary, filling out the forms and so on to where we can expand and really change the world this kind of thing can really truly impact the entire consciousness of this planet I really think it can happen

[Speaker 1] (7:26:15 - 7:30:20)

and the basis for that so in a way we are talking about creating and earlier you mentioned that part within everyone the essence that is timeless and infinite and that's the being and so conscious union with that can then lead to awakened as I call it awakened doing so if we go back for a moment to the being part as Wayne was speaking and as I am speaking pointing towards that dimension within you the question is whether at this very moment so that it's not a it's not another belief in your mind I mean it's comforting to believe I am an infinite being but that's a belief and then is there can you sense the reality of that as we sit here can we sense the reality of that within ourselves where you are no longer deriving your sense of identity or your sense of who you are from ideas in your head that's the start because in the normal consciousness which is unconsciousness who you feel you are which of course is the limited self the conditioned self the time bound self what the Buddha called the self the illusion what Jesus pointed to when he said deny thyself as one of the essential points of his teaching deny thyself be misinterpreted by the churches as if you had to say oh miserable me that's not it at all deny thyself is recognize the unreality of that self of that basing your sense of who you are on what ideas you hold in your head thoughts in other words that tell you about your story about who you are and getting never feeling really fulfilled it's always not quite sufficient so you need to defend this mental edifice of who you are and so on you need to add to it maybe then I'll be fully myself when I achieve that so at this moment can you sense that within you there is an unconditioned timeless consciousness which has nothing to do with thinking which is prior to all thinking which is you cannot make it into an object and say ah there it is because it's the eternal subject it's the I the one I it's spacious presence I'm just using different pointers because different pointers work for different people it's spacious presence it's a sense of deep aliveness that has nothing to do with your history whatsoever and nothing to do with your future whatsoever so if you can touch that within you that is the liberation from the false sense of self and it's once you can sense that it's actually it's exhilarating to feel that which transcends the limited self in you that presence that cannot be conceptualized that cannot be named the Tao that's why we're here to experience

[Speaker 2] (7:30:20 - 7:34:31)

that A great saint in India named Muktananda was asked the question what is real and he said that is real which never changes period so now you try to define yourself using that definition like the question Eckhart is addressing is who am I and the first thing that comes to mind is you know I'm this body but how many bodies have you been in since you incarnated just this time how many bodies have you shown up and you're in one this big you're in a little toddler body you're in one that stands like this like all my teenage daughters do and roll their eyes I was in a 20 year old body and I just saw a picture of it I just did a new public television special and I saw that picture floating across and when I was in that body when I was in that body I really believed it was real but it's been 50 years and I can't find it I don't I don't know where it is there's nothing in this body there's not one cell left over in this body that was in that body and that's true for every single person watching and every single person in this room so that who you are is that which keeps occupying new bodies on a regular basis in fact if Deepak were up here with us he would say that the body you came into watch this presentation with will be very different than the one that you will leave here with we can't see the changes going on in that place but we're in a world so if everything that is changing isn't real who we really are there's a higher self within each and every one of us or a highest self and a higher self to me is one of my teachings was that the creator puts a spark of himself into each and every creation so there's a spark of God in each and every one of us my experience, especially lately in my own life has been that that spark can grow from a spark to a fragment, to a segment to something bigger it can get as big as a soccer ball it can get bigger and bigger inside of you until you ultimately reach another conclusion that the same conclusion that Jesus came to when he was about to be stoned because he blasphemed he said why would you stone me and they said to him that we stone you because you are a man and you claim to be God and he said is it not written in your laws that I have said you are gods you are gods this comes right out of the mouth of Jesus and St. Paul writing in Philippians in his letters to the Philippians says having you the same mind as Christ Jesus who being in the form of God did not consider it robbery to be equal with God but we've taken this idea of this place that you're speaking of this perfect infinite presence this place of divine peace and interpreted the words I am God you are God to be the God that we've created in our own images this God who's angry this God who has the power to heal but restricts it to some and gives it to others this God that demands payment and fancy buildings and gold embroidered costumes and so on and created a God like that when in fact again out of the scriptures Jesus said when asked who is God he said God is love I don't know is there a better word for it than that

[Speaker 1] (7:34:31 - 7:39:07)

yes and of course the impermanence and the changing body or inhabiting different bodies the same applies to the psychological because the body is the physical form and then that's the starting point for most people's sense of identity that's I am this external appearance and so on the next place that people use to define their identity through of course is the psychological self image which is also changing which consists of the stream of thinking accompanied by certain emotions that continuously happen that also changes from year to year who you consider yourself to be the psychological self so we have the double delusory identifications one is with the physical vehicle and then there is the identification with the mental emotional vehicle also which is not who you are which also is part of the continuous flux of forms and to recognize that is already when you recognize that it's a kind of relief in a way if you really consider the fact of the impermanence of the physical form and the impermanence of the psychological form you say wow it's to the ego which really ego is the identification with that that gives you a sense of self that's the ego, so to the ego that's bad news, it says oh that's terrible everything is impermanent I don't want to hear that says the ego, that's dreadful, it's depressing, don't talk to me about death, depressing but there's something else in you that actually feels actually alive suddenly and exhilarated when you hear the fact of impermanence and suddenly something awakens in you that is not part of the impermanence that which does not change we could call it this or that, but it's never quite right I sometimes call it pure consciousness, the unconditioned consciousness the formless consciousness thought is consciousness having been born into a form the physical body is consciousness having been born into a temporary physical vehicle, so consciousness assumes form continuously and that's the deeper meaning of reincarnation one could say every time I get caught up in a thought that arises in my head, and by caught up I mean identified with the thought, the thought has me in its power, every time that happens I reincarnate into form into the thought form so you reincarnate into physical bodies but you also reincarnate into the mind continuously because you identify with the mind so to stop the cycle of reincarnation which is what the Buddhists are trying to do but they have a kind of traditional idea of it but the more immediate thing you can do is to don't believe in every thought that arises in your head so you don't get caught up in every thought that arises and you realize there is a dimension in you that is an aware presence from where you can look at a thought and see it come and go and you can see it's all this, it's negative it has a certain vibrational quality to it which may be high or low and so you can you touch the place where you are not the physical body, where you are not the thoughts and emotions although these are there where you are that spacious presence, the awareness for that, that's the eternal that's the eternal I, and that's the light of the world, that's Jesus again, you called it Jesus Jesus said two things, he said I am the light of the world, and then somewhere else he said you are the light of the world both

[Speaker 2] (7:39:08 - 7:46:56)

that word I am is very big in my consciousness in my awareness, I've just written a whole book that will be out in the spring on this whole idea of I am it's the only place in all the scriptures, in the Torah which is the first five books of the Old Testament in Exodus there's Moses out there floating on a basket in the Nile and he gets picked up by the Pharaoh's daughter and is raised as the grandson of the Pharaoh who had ordered all male children to be drowned and so on, and then he escapes after committing a murder when he was 17 or 18 years old and defending someone that was being persecuted one of the Israelites moves out to the Sinai and is out walking one day 40 years later after he married and children and he's a shepherd, and all of a sudden he encounters a burning bush and this is a bush that doesn't get consumed it just keeps burning, and a voice comes from the burning bush and says to Moses, calls out name, Moses, Moses now this is 1300 years before the birth of Christ that's 13 centuries that's 800 years before Lao Tzu so this is one of our most ancient texts and stories and it's the only place where God's name is given and God yells out Moses, and the first words that Moses says to God are here I am and then he starts telling Moses this weird story you're going to go out and you're going to free all of your people I'm going to send you to the promised land you're going to free them all and he said who am I who am I to do this, he said well I will be with you it says in Exodus, and finally but he said what is your name what am I going to say to these people and he said my name is I am that I am and that shall be my name for all future generations that is my name so the name I am is really the name of God and you have to ask yourself the question every time you use it you know in the book of Joel it says let the weak say I am strong how do you declare your I am because most of your I am's are associated with your ordinariness with your physical world with your mind that you're speaking about but when you begin to say you know I am well which I say to myself and I've had a diagnosis that tells me I'm not supposed to be able to say that but I know the greatest gift I've ever been given is the gift of my imagination, the gift of being able to place anything in there and put a do not disturb sign around it and super glue my intentions to that inner place and just you mentioned the words Jesus said I am the way I am the truth he also said I am the resurrection he didn't say I am the crucifixion we've placed so much emphasis on that in the world on the suffering and not enough I think on this being who is transcended and is that being of light but I ask every one of you watching every one of you in here to be very careful when you use the words I am because you say I am weak when Moses said what is your name God didn't say my name is I hope things work out or my name is I will be because to say I will be means I am not he said I am that I am meaning everything that exists I am that I am which means you and you can use the name I am and one of the things Eckhart you and I talked about in preparation for doing this is not only to look at it from sort of an academic philosophical point of view but how can we apply what our teachings really bring to the world because this world we're in right now I mean this it needs what we're speaking about here in a big way it needs an I am God in the sense of I am love as what we walk around with in our peace and in our quiet because this is the first time in the history of this country that a child born today's life expectancy is less than its parents it's never happened before and its expectancy for earning what it can earn is seriously diminished from what its parents were and we have you know we have a nation of addicts I mean not just to illegal drugs and so on but to just prescriptions you know people I mean in the year in the year 1970 there were 2 billion prescription tablets prescribed in America 2 billion individual tablets 1970 in 2007 one generation later that number is 113 billion in one generation I mean who doesn't have 4 or 5 or 6 prescription drugs that they're taking and I mean my daughter just lost her best friend's fiance to an overdose of these prescription drugs these painkillers that people are taking anti-psychotic drugs I mean we're loaded with them not only that but I mean our food supply has been contaminated I mean it's like people are we have 31% of young people obese what is going on I mean that's a lack of consciousness you know genetically modified organisms put into our foods and violence last year in the city of Chicago 242 students were shot to death in one city in one school system you know it's like just a few days ago in Nevada somebody walked in with a Uzi or an AK-47 and blew away 7 or 8 people in Carson City I want the people who are voting to end the sale of these massive weapons that are so capable of killing people to stand up and be counted I mean violence, contamination addiction we get enough people thinking that I am God and I am love and projecting it I mean one of the things I got from watching what you did with Oprah is the awareness that when we reach elevated levels of consciousness that you're speaking about when we are totally here now present that we don't just affect ourselves but we affect we literally affect those around us, right? Is that what you're teaching?

That was very impactful to me that it's important for me to pay attention and to be astonished not just because I'll feel better and I'll have a nice conversation like this but because the next person that I encounter will be impacted by that and the next and enough of us the number of people in here, the number of people watching I mean I think it's what we're called to do Eckhart, I think that's why we have a voice I really do

[Speaker 1] (7:46:57 - 7:48:08)

It's the people you come into contact with the your state of consciousness or your state of unconsciousness also gets, transmits itself so one negative person can create a chain reaction of negativity in many others and in the same way a conscious person can dissolve streams of negativity the buck stops here if you are conscious and non-reactive the stream stops it dissolves in the presence that you are and so not only do you affect those you come into contact with you affect the collective the underlying collective field of human consciousness so I feel sure that you affect countless others you never even meet because all human consciousness is connected the consciousness of every individual human at a deeper level is part of the collective consciousness of humanity and it's beyond people too

[Speaker 2] (7:48:08 - 7:50:07)

I was with Christiane Northrup do you know Dr. Northrup just in Pasadena we were giving a talk together and she was so excited just before she was going on to speak she said I just saw this incredible piece of research she said that when you have a garden and you plant vegetables in the garden for you to eat that whatever it is that you need in terms of what is missing in your life whether it's a vitamin deficiency or whether it's your immune system deficiency or if you've got cancer or whatever it is those plants that are nurtured by you will provide just for you what you need when you eat them not for the person next door I mean that's an amazing piece of research so it isn't just human consciousness I think it's like there's a symbiotic kind of thing and it's like there's some people like when you walk into a room you just know I mean I walked into a room once with Mother Teresa many years ago and it's like everything changed the room was in a different state Patanjali had these wonderful words he said when you're steadfast that means you never slip when you're steadfast in your abstention of thoughts of harm directed towards yourself and others that all living creatures will cease to feel fear in your presence I mean we can impact the whole the whole sphere the whole universe I think can be impacted if we just begin to recognize that we are God we are God T.S. Eliot had that wonderful note he said we shall not cease from exploration but at the end of all of our exploring will be to return to the place from which we originated and to know it for the first time I don't think you have to die for that, I think he was speaking about death but I don't think we are certainly I'm not and I don't think you are either

[Speaker 1] (7:50:07 - 7:55:30)

no, that's also the same truth is in the parable in that Jesus tells what's traditionally called the prodigal son which actually is a very ancient parable in different traditions it's used you all probably know it, the son is the son of a rich father and he goes out, he says to the father give me your inheritance and he travels to some distant land and squanders his inheritance he becomes a beggar in other versions of it he even forgets who he is he forgets that he is the son of that father so he sits there by the roadside begging and then the father sends messengers to him sends out messengers to the distant country and they find the son and they say, do you know who you are? and then he begins to remember and then he returns to the father's house and that's what I mentioned earlier the return movement and then when he returns it says the father loves him more deeply than before and to me that means this is the story of humanity humanity losing itself in externals losing connectedness with the source of all being with the one not absolutely losing it but total unawareness of it and so we become beggars and this is the condition of most humans who are not yet going through the spiritual awakening which in other words is not really your condition anymore but it's still the majority of people on the planet who are who have not who are not connected consciously with the source within themselves they are looking for scraps for fulfillment and scraps is anything anything from the house to the car to this or that give me a new partner anything to give me fulfillment to tell me who I am they are seeking it there and there that's the condition of the person who has lost awareness of the source and then the perhaps what the meaning of the messengers is in the parable is perhaps a spiritual teacher or a spiritual teaching that somehow you come into contact with or the messenger could be as I see it could also be just the suffering becomes so much that the pressure of it awakens you and then you begin to realize who you are and you return then that means you suddenly become aware again of that deep connectedness with being your essential oneness with being and the meaning of what the parable says is loved more deeply by the fathers, I interpret that as meaning that when you regain awareness of being which perhaps humans had a long long time ago in the distant past and this could be the reason for all the myths in many many cultures of the golden age, in many cultures on the planet you have different versions of the myths of there was once a golden age when people lived in happiness and that perhaps points to the our original connectedness with source then we lost it, this was our up to very recently and now returning to the home, the fathers home means to regain that awareness but at a deeper level because whereas before it was in your natural state you may know from your own life when you have lost something and then you come back to it you appreciate it much more deeply, this applies for example to our awareness of nature in the past we lived in natural connectedness with nature and respecting nature, it was so natural we didn't know we lived in natural connectedness with nature because nature was all there was then we lost it, we created a world that is almost hostile towards nature, it's one of the absurdities or dysfunctions of our condition and now there is an enormous awareness in many humans towards the sacredness of the natural world we really know it, we know it more deeply now than before so also when we go to the source return to the awareness of that there is an added dimension there that wasn't there when we lived thousands and thousands of years ago in natural connectedness now there is a conscious connectedness with source and that's the next level in human evolution

[Speaker 2] (7:55:30 - 8:04:39)

I think it is I don't think it's an accident that people like yourself and myself have an audience for that, that return to source, I mean I just did a public television special public television and it's basically the theme of it is, it's called wishes fulfilled but the theme of it is that God is in every single one of us and that they approved it really surprised me because they're always so careful about separating out and you can't say you are God and that you are divine and all of that because somebody might get upset about it and they just it just seems to be a new, but I'm thinking Eckhart as you were speaking when you were talking about the prodigal son that it's really, I don't know if it's your story but it is mine and I have gotten lost on several occasions in my life I spent a lot of years in an orphanage, I spent years struggling through addictions I've spent years dealing with separation and divorce and the pain of that and now leukemia and each one of these has been almost a way for me to to recognize that all spiritual advances are preceded by a fall of some kind or another. My friend Elizabeth Kubler-Ross passed away a few years ago used to say that if you shield the mountain from the windstorms you'll never see the beauty of the carvings and the storms of our life and the storms of my life, in particular this recent one, we had talked about this earlier about this leukemia has brought me to just it's brought me back to you're calling it Source, I'm calling it God it doesn't matter, we could call it Irene, it doesn't make any difference what we call it because the Tao that can be named is not the Tao anyway but what came into my life at this time in the last couple of years with this are just very significant people who have showed up in my life healing experience that I had with John of God down in Brazil that was done remotely from Brazil to Maui and I was told I had someone come here to Maui a physician her name was Dr. Raina Pescova she's an eye surgeon in California she wanted me to go down there because she heard I had leukemia, I couldn't go I didn't go and she made all kinds of extra special arrangements for me to have photos taken, all dressed in white, drinking certain kind of liquids and having herbs that I was taking and I had a healthy level of skepticism around this kind of thing as I'm sure many of you do as well but I urge you to like Telope said have a mind that's open to everything and attached to nothing, just open your mind up to this because from here, the night, it was the 21st of April this year, my mother's 95th birthday and I had surgery at 7 o'clock in the morning from Brazil to Maui, I don't know how this gets done and then a week later I stayed in bed for a whole week I could hardly even walk the day after the surgery I got up and Raina had called me, she said, now you've had surgery and I said, yeah she said, well you can't swim and you can't do yoga and you can't walk and you can't do these kind of things and I said I'm going for a walk and I got a hundred yards from my place and I collapsed and had to be helped back and I was in bed for a week and when they removed the sutures which are invisible sutures which don't exist even from that moment on, something happened to me that was so it just when Mary Oliver said be astonished and Rumi said sell your cleverness and purchase bewilderment I've been in a state of bewilderment since that time I had my 71st birthday just a few weeks after that and all I wanted to do was give things away I was filming in San Francisco at the St. Francis Hotel and I took a wad of $50 bills and $100 bills to all the homeless people that I could find, I would talk to them it was the most, and I was sobbing through this whole thing it was like I became a basket case of love and it's been half a year or more and everyone I encounter and everything I see, everything just looks different and it's like a return to an awareness that I mean, I am well, I am perfect health I don't go to doctors now I don't have my numbers checked I gave up yoga for a year after they told me I couldn't I couldn't do hot yoga and I believed them and my body started getting tired and I couldn't do it and then one morning I was just told you can go do yoga you don't have to avoid any of that you're perfectly well and then I met John of God in September up at Omega where we first met just a few months ago and I walked it was 1500 people a day walking past him and I was just put in there he had no idea who I was from anybody else they didn't tell me tell them how special I am you know neglected to tell that and he looked at me and he just smiled and in Portuguese he just said, you are well he said please sit here and observe my interventions for the next three days, which is what I did and it's just been it's just been love it's just been love, love, love I mean it's almost like God entered somehow they put a God consciousness in me that I thought I had because I'd been writing about it and the old ego I mean it's always it's always there I don't know if you know this I don't know if I'm going to mention this but I'm going to do it obviously you know there's a list out on the on the internet of the 100 most spiritually influential people alive have you seen this list?

yeah you have you and I are going to have to have a talk here so they have the 100 from the top to the bottom and this is where the ego and the spirit are so it's such an interesting thing because because you're listening right now to the third most spiritually influential person alive, that's me and that's my ego isn't that great, thank you and there's two people ahead of me on this list now my spirit says you're not any better than anybody else you're just connected to God like everyone else why would you even think that and then the ego just is tapping me on the shoulder and said I know you can take those two guys ahead of you down so so the number two spiritually influential person alive according to Watkins this list is the Dalai Lama and the number one spiritually I can't even say it, spiritually influential person alive is Eckhart Tolle but I don't know whether we should get together and go after the Dalai Lama and then maybe we could arm wrestle but it's that funny thing it's all the time, because I use it on my kids all the time you know I even said to my ex-wife in your wildest dreams could you ever imagine that you were married to the third most spiritually influential person alive she said they didn't call me and she said I don't know how to break it to you but you're not in my wildest dreams but I think that's interesting and I just found out about that list the day I found out about that list I got a call from Eckhart Tolle saying would you like to, we're going to come to Maui we'd like to do a conference together and I thought this is my chance I love you man

[Speaker 1] (8:04:42 - 8:06:19)

this is concepts like that that come floating into your mind I saw it also somebody sent me this list these concepts have to be when they come in they have to be dropped like hot potatoes because if you hang on to it that moment the spirit gets obscured if you think you are somebody who is somebody immediately that would be the denial of the reality of it so the art really and it's tricky because I've seen it happen to other spiritual teachers and some were able to drop the hot potato when people came with beliefs and projections about them and I've seen others who took it on board and became burdened by some self-concept that others were projecting onto them this is particularly more likely to happen if you live in an ashram and you're surrounded only by people who think you are the greatest then it's very easy to slip into that and start to believe in some concept of who you are which immediately obscures the power of spirit it's so true I'm sure you know who

[Speaker 2] (8:06:19 - 8:07:09)

Rabindranath Tagore, the great Indian poet who won the Nobel Prize back in the 1920s he talked about the ego he had this great observation poetically, he said I went out alone on my way to my tryst but who is this me in the dark I step aside to avoid his presence but I escape him not he makes the dust rise from the earth with his swagger he adds his loud voice to every word I utter he is my own little self my lord he knows no shame but I am ashamed to come to thy door in his company

[Speaker 1] (8:07:10 - 8:07:12)

beautiful that's Tagore

[Speaker 2] (8:07:12 - 8:07:15)

that's the ego that's for Tagore

[Speaker 1] (8:07:17 - 8:10:21)

and the I mentioned briefly yesterday with Ram Dass I'm sure you can recognize it perhaps in your own experience but it might be helpful for some of you when I let's say just take a moment of coming here in the car from where we are staying to here to have this dialogue at any moment you can be either more a form identity in which case you your mind functions through your history concepts of who you are that others have told you and you believe and you have created that mental self and at any moment you can be either more dwell more in this form identity of who you are my name, my history, my achievements or my failures, they all form identity or you can be an essence identity which is simply an aware presence where you don't need to remember anything or think anything, just be that field of awareness so the only way I can ever go to a talk an important gathering if I travel as spiritual teacher number one going to meet spiritual teacher number three it would be it would create immediate stress because I would be carrying a conceptual self a dreadful burden but if I can be free of a conceptual self and be simply a presence just an innocent aware presence and as I say it now perhaps each one of you can at this very moment find that within you, you can be either a person or you can be an aware presence and then at this moment and the aware presence is alive it's not bigger than, smaller than more important than but it's powerful but not more powerful than its power itself and there's no unease in it because it's not it competes with nothing and so the sometimes when I give let's say I give a talk or there's a gathering or retreat I'm a hundred percent kind of presence the person isn't really there and then in everyday life perhaps it's hard to quantify but I might be thirty percent person seventy percent consciousness it's a coming together of form and formlessness in daily life

[Speaker 2] (8:10:21 - 8:11:39)

but do you find when you're in that higher place where you're like a hundred percent often in a meditation or whatever but if you, even if you leave the meditation and you just like I was talking to you what happened with that surgery and so on and with this my body just changing and everything I look at and everyone that I look at is just so I'm just so astonished and so bewildered and basically just feeling so loved, do you find personally Eckhart that that your opportunity to serve literally strangers whatever, I mean people you almost like see opportunities to be God I mean how do you define I always use the poets because I do a lot of poetry myself, Hafiz said even after all this time, the sun never says to the earth you owe me just think what a love like that can do it lights up the whole world and I have found that people who are needing something that I have to give them keep showing up and it's such a joy to give away, to serve whether it's advice, whether it's money whether it's time, whether it's clothes, whatever it might be

[Speaker 1] (8:11:39 - 8:12:22)

does that happen for you? Yes, all the time I can see by the way in your eyes we met for the first time was it 10 years ago at Omega, very briefly and you were a lovely being then but now I can see perhaps the physical challenge that you are facing perhaps did that it eroded your ego and in your eyes there is this love and tenderness and I believe the grace that came through the illness that came into your life through that

[Speaker 2] (8:12:22 - 8:13:36)

I can't tell you how many sick people that I have been able to help that have just sort of shown up for me and when I just did this television special which will air all over the world for years and years and it feels like such even just to be here and to see these faces and to know that people are going to be touched by it we got a world full of cancer we got a world and it's almost all from fear and the Course says always there is only fear and love and everything that is fear cannot be love and everything that is love cannot be fear so you get your choice it seems to me we're talking about sending fear out of our lives and judgment you know in the I am discourses it says that if you can remove if you can remove judgment criticism and condemnation towards any of God's children I believe that means the planet as well then that's when you will be able to manifest for yourself the life that you desire as soon as you can rid yourself of those three things judgment, criticism

[Speaker 1] (8:13:38 - 8:15:14)

condemnation which are all thought forms so that's yes that in itself would be enough but of course the deeper implication of that is that you can remove yourself from identification with those thought forms and so you can be the awareness rather than the thought form otherwise I mustn't judge you can still be stuck in the mind I must love my neighbor as myself, no you have to step out of the thought form so that you can be present with your neighbor give your neighbor neighbor means anybody give your neighbor complete and full spacious attention and that's the love arises out of that so it's not traditionally Christians perhaps because they didn't understand the original message of Jesus deeply enough that you tried to be loving on the level of thought forms but you can't you have to step out of the thought forms that create the condemnation and the criticism and be the awareness underneath it and then you meet the other in that field of awareness and in that field of awareness you are joined with every human you feel the oneness because the separation is created by believing in every concept that every concept is a little barrier judgment condemnations are big ones

[Speaker 2] (8:15:14 - 8:15:42)

what do you say to I mean I get this a lot, I'm sure you do as well all the bad things that are happening to good people I mean the the accidents the illnesses the economy I mean all of the things that people are so filled with, with fear which to me is creating an awful lot of unnecessary illness in our society

[Speaker 1] (8:15:42 - 8:16:48)

yes, big challenges coming some challenges come on an individual level and sometimes in certain time periods there are large numbers of people who are facing similar challenges in a country or a group of countries and life is not even meant to be free of challenges the challenges have a purpose many of them of course are produced by the egoic consciousness but if you look at it from a highest perspective even the egoic consciousness that produces the suffering and the dysfunction on the planet in collectively and individual lives even that ultimately has its place in the transition to a higher state of consciousness because eventually the ego creates so much suffering and challenges that it self-destructs it awakens you because you can't stand the suffering anymore that's happened to me so much of the suffering though seems to be around this whole

[Speaker 2] (8:16:48 - 8:17:00)

thing about greed and money and the economy and you know the dysfunction that our world seems to be in at this time it seems to be almost like

[Speaker 1] (8:17:01 - 8:18:57)

it's a crisis moving towards a crisis point and again I believe that's connected with the awakening of consciousness because it's only when the crisis is reached that a new level can be attained I think that probably applies to every species even on lower levels of development for example I believe there are some biologists who say that also when they say that life started in the sea and at some point it moved onto land I don't think any fish would voluntarily jump onto land and start crawling, it's just too hard but if a fish lives if there's a huge area of water that suddenly shrinks over a long long long period of time suddenly the fish is forced to move out onto land and then at some other point an animal is forced to develop wings and fly because a crisis has been reached and then a leap happens to a different level of consciousness for humans it's consciousness and that's where we are now, where the egoic consciousness is becoming more and more dysfunctional compared to a caterpillar who is approaching the end of its lifespan as a caterpillar when the crawling gets more and more difficult before it was okay, the caterpillar was a caterpillar, but now it's reaching the end of its lifespan and says, oh I can't move anymore, this is terrible but yes, because you are destined to come to an end, you do metamorphose into the butterfly so again, the egoic consciousness creates more and more havoc on the planet

[Speaker 2] (8:18:59 - 8:22:46)

what about individually though? as you are saying that, I'm thinking about myself and what kinds of growth things that have taken place for me and how quickly, I think we can speed up this evolutionary thing especially within our own selves I mean, for me, I can go to very specific moments in my life as I look back at them now from this age that I am now, I can look back to an event that happened in 1974 when I was sent to my father's grave, my father had walked out on us, abandoned us put me in a series of foster homes and orphanages and so on up until I was 10 years of age I grew up with rage inside, anger, just bitterness and through a series of just unbelievably mystical impossible to explain circumstances, I ended up at my father's grave, I didn't even know he was dead and was sent there and in one afternoon the 27th of August in 1974 my whole life was transformed and all I did was stand there on his grave, I had gone there to his grave to do something else on his grave because I was just so filled and every night I would dream about I would be filled with rage and so on and when I got to his grave something came over me it was overwhelming, we've just done a film on this called My Greatest Teacher, Hay House is putting it out soon and I was told to go back and to forgive and I just sat on his grave and I sobbed and sobbed and I remember saying out loud and I knew that something very magical mysterious, mystical that I couldn't put my finger on was happening to me and I said to this man I had never seen in my life except for when I was just an infant from this moment on I send you love I forgive you, I let go you know Mark Twain said that when you forgive someone forgiveness he said is the fragrance that the violet sheds on the heel that has crushed it and if you can send fragrance out from that rage and from that anger and I walked away from that experience, I'll never forget it I went back to New York, I was teaching at a university, I rented a car went down to Florida and I wrote a book called Your Erroneous Owns in 14 days, by hand beginning to end and today it's got like 55 million copies in 47 languages around the world and my whole life when I just practiced forgiveness this thing with John of God with this leukemia when I first got it I thought I don't do cancer I help other people who have cancer and it's been life transforming and it happened it's like it's the process, maybe it's because I'm getting older or whatever, just speed it up and I went from much more ego to just pure love, just pure love to everyone and everything I encounter and my children will tell you, the people that are close to me in life will tell you that they say my father has changed he just loves everyone and everything and doesn't know how not to do that and that happened and I just wondered what's going to happen this afternoon it's like how fast I think we can if we shifted even Christianity, if we shifted it off of I am the crucifixion and all of the suffering all of the things that are wrong and all of the pain and all of the images of that to what Jesus really said I am, meaning God, the resurrection I am the resurrected being I don't know, I think we can all resurrect ourselves in a huge way

[Speaker 1] (8:22:46 - 8:23:46)

but the crucifixion actually points to the because crucifixion, resurrection arises out of the crucifixion so crucifixion is the seemingly dreadful thing that happens to a human being it was, in your case, being abandoned as a child, being put in foster homes, or the illness now, the seemingly dreadful thing that actually grace is hiding there the moment you come to a place of acceptance as you did with the forgiveness and as you did again with the illness then the grace that's the resurrection the crucifixion is the abandonment the crucifixion is the illness and the surrender and then the peace that comes and the connectedness with the source that comes then that's the grace that is hiding there in every moment when dreadful things seem to happen

[Speaker 2] (8:23:46 - 8:23:48)

yeah, that's what I wanted you to address thank you

[Speaker 4] (8:23:48 - 8:24:25)

and now we'll see how the audience contributes here our first question I'm curious how you make sense of the power of intention and positive thinking both of which have been very valuable to me with the idea of moving beyond the mind altogether

[Speaker 2] (8:24:32 - 8:28:07)

I've just encountered another being in my life I encourage you to look her up her name is Anita Mourjani M-O-O-R-J-A-N-I and you can google her and see a few interviews but she was wheeled into a hospital in Hong Kong in 2005 with end stage lymphoma she weighed 82 pounds I think she said all of her organs had shut down her husband and family were there and they were waiting for her last breath no one who has ever been at that stage of cancer has ever come back and survived and she encountered spirit God, consciousness the Tao and was told that she had the choice to go back into her body which she didn't want to do because she was in such a divine peaceful, she speaks about it so brilliantly she's written a book that will be out in March also, I wrote the foreword to it it's called Dying to be Me and she came into my life at the right perfect divine time and in response to that question one of the things that she said that she learned in there is that when she came back one of the things she wanted to do was within four days her tumors had shrunk by 70% she was told if she went back into her body it would be healed and then she saw it healed because there's no time she was able to see the future and the past all at once she said there's no such thing even as past lives when I asked her about that she said how can there be a past life when there's no time that it's just parallel lives she said that's the best I can do with it everything is parallel but what she came back with and what she teaches and she's such a divine I put her on my public television special I really want the world to get her message she said the thing that she came back with is that you don't have to be positive she said I was positive my whole life I was always trying to please people and be as positive as I possibly could she said you don't have it isn't about being positive, it isn't about being right it isn't about winning it isn't about being better than anybody else it's just about being yourself and treasuring your magnificence if you could just look in a mirror and realize who you are which is not what stares back at you at the mirror that's got form to it but who you are is infinite and divine and perfect and if you could just live from that place she said it will transcend all of the fears, all of the worries all of the illness and so on that we have on our planet you just have to be yourself who you are and that's what I spoke about when we came out here the difference between being ordinary and extraordinary extraordinary encompasses ordinary we're all following the rules in some way or another and filling out the forms but extraordinary means I treasure my magnificence who I am every moment that I have that's the power of intention which is something I wrote and the power of now which is something that you wrote it's just really about breaking it all down just treasuring your own perfect magnificence

[Speaker 1] (8:28:09 - 8:32:59)

yes so being extraordinary really is to be awake to be an awake being not moving in the dreamland of complete identification with thinking but to be aware to be present, that's the extraordinaryness is the awareness you are that awareness and then the thinking that arises out of that is a different kind of thinking it's not the thinking that you need to actually decide I'm going to think that kind of thought now I must try to be positive that's no longer necessary the thinking becomes more empowered that arises from awareness and in that awareness for example gives when I give a talk and you also of course many of you have also experienced it to some extent in certain situations the words come they are not premeditated they are not prepared I don't know as a person what the word the next word is going to be that comes out of here so the words which are verbalized thoughts the thoughts come out of the field of aware presence and so Jesus said that whenever you don't need to know what to say beforehand the Holy Spirit will tell you what to say, it moves through you and so then thought actually becomes more empowered too and then the one consciousness can also create through thoughts that come through you and can create things in this world that you could never even have thought of before things have come into my life I couldn't if I had been practicing positive thinking at some stage in my life I did do that also but I couldn't even have imagined things like that and so really to be to rest in source, sourceful awareness and then you will see that the dysfunctional nature of thinking that is there when you do not rest in the stillness of being then that removes it becomes removed and the thoughts that do then come are fresh, alive far fewer thoughts come because all that mental noise the burdensome continuous talking in your head continuous criticizing and judging and complaining that's still many people's normal state to have that in that field of awareness that if not all at once it dissolves and then fewer thoughts come but they are fresh, alive they make a difference in person's lives and so our primary task is again what Jesus perhaps we are talking about Martha and Mary Martha trying to get things busy, get doing things preparing the meals, come on help me do this, do that and Mary is sitting by listening to Jesus not just listening she's into and Martha says come help me, we've got things to do there's so much to do and Jesus says don't be concerned Mary has chosen the better part, only the one thing that matters and really he's talking about the foundation which is to be, being and then the doing will come look after itself you don't become inactive but that's the point of rest and that's the Tao again you do nothing and everything gets done you don't have a feeling I am doing it anymore when you're writing is it the same?

[Speaker 2] (8:33:00 - 8:33:05)

when you're writing, you write like I do you write by hand, don't you? I write by hand on a yellow notepad

[Speaker 1] (8:33:05 - 8:33:06)

I use white

[Speaker 2] (8:33:08 - 8:33:39)

but I'm only number three so I'm taking notes when you jot down yellow but isn't it the same way, as you were describing that about what you were speaking about I was thinking I just wrote a whole book without an outline I mean, I just sat down every day four hours or five hours a day I would just sit whether it came or didn't come it didn't make any difference, I was there and the writing was just it's all channeled

[Speaker 1] (8:33:40 - 8:34:05)

it's to be there the space is there you are there, you are the space for it to come through and on some days nothing comes and then you have to be just fine with that you still sit there and nothing comes it's fine, the next day nothing comes and suddenly it's an avalanche but you're saying

[Speaker 2] (8:34:05 - 8:34:14)

nothing comes but people will ask me is that called writer's block that's not writer's block that's just the joy

[Speaker 1] (8:34:14 - 8:34:28)

of being there and realizing that writing isn't what takes place today it's so joyful if you can't accept that nothing comes then it's writer's block yeah, right it's just so peaceful

[Speaker 2] (8:34:28 - 8:36:52)

that's a new way of writing for me as a matter of fact when I did the John of God story I decided to write the entire thing out and put it in the book and I sent it to my editor now she's been editing everything I've written that's 37 books since 1971 and she called me up and she said who wrote this I said what do you mean she said well there's like 17 or 18 pages here and it's not in your handwriting I said what do you mean it's not in my handwriting she said well the slant is different the shape of the letters is different the wording is different you didn't scratch anything out because I'm writing something and I don't like it I just scratch it out and write something up she said and I can't edit any of it and literally something had when I started telling the entities that came into my body and did this healing and sent this ease out and replaced it with love also were part of my writing it was just so so so sweet and magical and I framed one of the pages there because I've never written like that before I've never had my letters go this way and the shape of them and everything else it was like something just came in and took over and just allowed it to come forth that's what can happen Eckhart you're talking about this spiritual sort of inner kind of awakening with the formless and so on but it gets translated into so many changes that can take place in your life that business about paying attention and being astonished I'm just astonished at it all I did a yoga class before I came over here I'm just astonished that at 71 I can go into a 105 degree temperature room and do 90 minutes of yoga and walk out and feel great and sit down with Eckhart Tolle and talk to thousands of people all over the world all of it just blows me away every bit of it all of these faces, all of these nodding all of this love that's in here and even being with you it's so wonderful to have this closeness together God bless you man

[Speaker 4] (8:36:54 - 8:37:19)

a question from our online audience someone wrote in since you're both very popular and successful how do you remain humble and in touch with everyday people and situations and not let your ego take over it's very tempting this person imagines to get the best table at a restaurant the best of everything in the material world

[Speaker 1] (8:37:19 - 8:37:21)

etc so how do you stay humble

[Speaker 2] (8:37:23 - 8:37:25)

and I'll respond

[Speaker 1] (8:37:26 - 8:39:18)

well as Woody Allen said being a celebrity has its advantages it gets you a good table in restaurants the the answer really is what I not long ago 10 minutes ago I mentioned not to accept internally a conceptual sense of self that perhaps the world is telling you about who you are so I remain humble but not I said I drop it like a hot potato I don't want to carry around a conceptual identity because I have experienced in my life how much suffering comes into your life when you live from a conceptual identity in your head of who you are some idea in your head of who you are I know that that is the beginning of delusion and I'm not having it so it's an internal decision, it's a dropping it and on a practical level I still often go I still often do my own shopping I go to the supermarket, it's an ordinary life everything nothing extraordinary in daily existence so it's that's just how it happens and I know how it happens to you but now you're going to talk about that

[Speaker 2] (8:39:24 - 8:46:41)

you just get more comfortable with being alone because in the Course it says if you knew who walked beside you at all times on this path that you have chosen you could never experience fear or doubt again I guess you just get to a place where you know you're not alone and the things that everyone out there thinks that they would do because they would be rich and famous like Wayne Dyer or Eckhart Tolle when you get to that place you don't want it honestly you don't want it I give away almost everything that I get and I have children who are very willing to help me with that eight of them I own almost nothing I mean everything that comes I don't want gifts when people send them to me I just donate them I ask my children to not, please don't send me presents on Christmas and birthdays and all of that just think about someone else someplace who could use that more and give it to them I don't mean to say that because I'm so altruistic I just am not attached any longer to honestly I tell my kids and people that I love that I don't really feel even attached to this world anymore I really don't I see, I get a lot of adulation and adoration and it's wonderful but I don't take any of it seriously I don't want things it's just I prefer an evening, even when I'm on the road and I'm speaking and they have some kind of a gathering for me or a nice restaurant you rarely see me at a nice restaurant or any restaurant I prefer to be with people I love close to me or alone with God and to me an evening to meditate and to be silent and to read or to just I live right on this beach for a good part of the year on Kaanapali Beach here on Maui and I look right out, I'm so blessed I look out at this ocean I watch the whales, I swim everyday in the ocean I talk to the whales I hear them I swim with turtles out there, these great sea turtles, I have names for them I know the markings on them I spend a lot of time in just peaceful walking and meditating and doing yoga and making a difference and everything that comes into my life I just pass it along and I don't even want to talk about what I do for others because it's not about bragging or talking about how wonderful I am I do almost all of it anonymously but it's just I mean, you've spent a lot of time, I have too, over the years with Oprah Winfrey she has said it many times that people like us she came out of the deep south, poverty you didn't come out of wealth you struggled when you were a young man, a lot knew about hunger and so on as when these things come to me, I'm unattached to it and the most ironic thing about it is that the more I am that way and less inclined towards my ego and the stuff and who I am and more stuff just keeps coming it comes in bigger and bigger amounts and it allows me to do more and more and more Oprah has said the same thing to me I'm sure she's said it to you personally as well it's I get on an airplane and I sit down on a seat and I see a short woman with a bag trying to put it up above and I just sit there and thank God for the opportunity to stand up and put it in the overhead compartment for her now I don't know if that sounds strange to you but I feel like, and it happens to me almost every time that I'm on an airplane some little lady who just can't quite reach and I think oh this is so great, I get to reach up and I get to put her bag up there I just think all of the opportunities that come to you to serve are the joy that you get out of this place and I also remember that there's no luggage rack on a hearse alright there's nothing to take with us that who we are is just that which keeps occupying all of these bodies and because they keep changing they're not real and that's what Anita discovered, Anita Morjani in her near death experience she's totally cancer free today beyond miracles they sent her case all over the world to all the cancer no one has ever returned from that and she's back talking about the bliss, the perfect joy, the recognition that higher awareness which you talk about so beautifully in your last book on the new earth she said higher awareness is when you get to a place like when you're in your dreams Thoreau said that you're most enlightened when you are in your dreams awake when you're a waking dreamer because in your dream for one third of your life in your dream all you have to do is put your attention on what it is that you would like to have and it's there if you want a new Mercedes in your driveway you don't have to get up and go down all the trouble, get dressed drive the car, test it, find the money to pay for it, you don't have to do that you just put your attention on that and if you want your grandmother back who's been dead for 20 years, she's there Anita's father was there with her telling her it is not your time if you go past here you can't go back but you can still go back and you have something still to do to teach something so she put her awareness on her father and while she was in the coma for 30 hours she saw her brother get on an airplane in India to fly to Hong Kong to be with her for her last breath she could see him on the airplane, higher awareness I think we can do this when we're awake highest awareness is anything I place my attention on I become it, it becomes me it's not something that's distinct from me, it's not something that's separate from me all I have to do from a place of God realized love and you become it whatever you're placing your attention you do it for one third of your life and you can do it in the other two thirds I think as well that's my reaction thank you

[Speaker 4] (8:46:46 - 8:47:19)

this questioner asks I have contemplated what the meaning of life is and I can't find it there appears to be no real meaning or purpose to it other than to enjoy it as much as you can but at the end of it your life is as insignificant as an ant's life or a blade of grass and awakening does not happen for everyone so awakening to self-realization cannot be the meaning either could you both please comment

[Speaker 1] (8:47:19 - 8:49:34)

that reminds me a little bit of the old testament book of Ecclesiastes which starts vanity of vanities, all is vanity how that got into the bible I don't know, it's a beautiful piece of literature and it's obviously written by somebody who's very tired of life and has seen it all and can't find any real meaning in it because he's looking for meaning on the level of mental concepts and if you look for meaning on the level of mental concepts all you can find is transitional temporary things belief structures, belief systems even that can be satisfying for a while but sooner or later your belief system will clash with reality and will lead to suffering so to look for the real, the true meaning of life cannot be found at the beginning of our talk we mentioned Causing Miracles saying your understanding is not a powerful contribution to the truth and we also mentioned the, or maybe I didn't mention there's a Zen master little tiny Zen story to again illustrate this the disciple the Zen master asks the disciple in their usual seemingly fierce way do you understand Zen? and the disciple says no master, I don't and the master says neither do I it's not, so the main it's not you can't get Zen through conceptual understanding and you cannot find the meaning of life through conceptual understanding if you are able to relinquish your desire to understand conceptually and access that in you which is beyond concepts then you find the meaning of life but you may not be able to say what it is yeah

[Speaker 2] (8:49:41 - 8:53:22)

the question comes from what you said so beautifully that you evaluate you use your five senses to determine your reality and the greatest gift you've been given is the gift of your imagination and in your in your imagination there are absolutely no senses necessary it's why with leukemia I don't pay attention to what it says on any form or what any numbers show or anything like that I know that in my imagination I can place the words I am well I am perfect health and I can determine the validity of that and the veracity of that for myself on the basis of how I feel just on the basis of how I feel because if you if you look at life the way the question comes at us what is this meaning of life life meaning what happens from the moment of our conception to the moment of our death but life itself in that in that venue is nothing more than a sexually transmitted terminal disease that's that's what life is that's how we get here that's how we end but I love the poets and Emily Dickinson was one of my very favorites and she would in her lectures she would take a handful of dust and she would say this quiet dust was gentlemen and ladies and lads and girls was laughter and ability and sighing and frocks and curls this passive place a summer's nimble mansion where bloom and bees fulfilled their oriental circuit then ceased like these that's not life that's just dust life is that which keeps occupying that which continues to turn into dust and once you get it and once you know it and once you make conscious contact with it Melville said God's one and only voice is silence that's why meditation is such an important part of what both of us teach I've written a whole book about it so much of your book, The Power of Now is about quiet it's about meditation it's about understanding that it's the silence between the notes that makes the music it's the space between the bars that holds the tiger it's like, it's out of every word that you're hearing me speak right now comes out of the silence it comes out of the void like here it is, silent and now it comes out of the void I remember interviewing the Red Hot Chili Peppers one time for something on VH1 and one of the the drummer Francione, I think John Francione, something like that his father was a judge down there and he was a drug addict at one time he was off of it at that time and he said when you're writing music, he said the most important thing to remember is that all of it comes out of the silence and the silence is more important than the note because if it's just all note there's no music there's no music in that you have to have pauses and it's getting into the gap you mentioned the gap between your thoughts yes that's where life is

[Speaker 1] (8:53:22 - 8:54:52)

this is an illusion if Deepak were here he could talk about this, I can't, but even the atoms, they flash in and out of existence so there's always the nothingness and then form formlessness, form that's really so the balanced life is to embody the two form, the temporary form to recognize it as temporary but still even love it as a temporary expression of the timeless one so we don't need to despise it as some traditions do you despise the body Christianity did that, sometimes even Buddhism occasionally in some traditions do it but to appreciate the beautiful forms but you can only really appreciate it when you can sense that which is beyond form and then you recognize it in the other there's a beautiful Christian way of saying that is to love the they say to love the creator in the creature so the creator really is the one formless being what you love in the other is ultimately, in true love is ultimately always the formless

[Speaker 2] (8:54:53 - 8:55:39)

the spirit yes and even the words of Jesus again he said the flesh counts for nothing he was talking about his own flesh as well, the flesh counts for nothing, it's the spirit that gives life and when he said it is only through me that you will come to know the father, he wasn't speaking about the flesh he said it counts for nothing he was speaking about the I am that is in him and all of us and that is the me he speaks about yeah that's the, you know we want a nice short answer so we take an exam, what's the meaning of life, you know, and here's the answer, if I had to give the short answer, it's just to treasure your magnificence and live as a God realized being

[Speaker 4] (8:55:42 - 8:56:01)

we have just two more questions this question is directed to Wayne but I think it would be wonderful for you both to comment on it which is, Wayne, you talk about slaying the ego and destroying it, is that possible or is it even necessary can the ego be good too

[Speaker 2] (8:56:03 - 8:57:39)

I've just gone back and forth on this so much in my life and the problem with me is that I have everything I feel I've written about it's all out there, someone will say you said this there was a long period of time when I said the ego is not worth defending to me it's an acronym for edging God out, you know, so we just push God out of our lives and believe, I always say that when the baby is born after nine months of nothing for anybody to do it's all taken care of by God or the Tao or Spirit or Divine Mind and then nobody does anything this perfect being comes out and we look at it and say great work God we'll take over from here and in the process of taking over we teach like all of us were taught, we teach people to be ordinary who was ever raised to believe that they were God, someone once said that the reason Jesus turned out so well was because his mother really was convinced that he was the son of God laughter when you're a virgin out there having a baby you're really convinced laughter so it's this ego business is I don't think it's worth defending but I don't know how to get out of it the only time I'm ever out of it is when I'm in deep meditation and it's only for seconds I'll go, I'll feel that it's that it's gone and is it good?

[Speaker 1] (8:57:39 - 8:57:42)

everything is good I think you're out of it already really?

[Speaker 2] (8:57:44 - 8:58:11)

it's not I just feel more love and peaceful, I don't even feel more love I just feel like I am love I really feel that that's what I am that's that's not the ego talking no, no it's not but every once in a while I want to go after those people above me on that list laughter laughter where did that come from?

[Speaker 1] (8:58:12 - 8:58:23)

laughter well that's a good illustration of how quickly it can creep back laughter laughter very good

[Speaker 15] (8:58:23 - 8:58:24)

very good

[Speaker 1] (8:58:24 - 8:59:31)

laughter and when it does you have to be compassionate with yourself laughter there it is again when you recognize it it's not really 100% the ego when you know that some kind of behavior is egoically motivated and you recognize it yes, it is still egoically motivated behavior but there is an awareness also there in the background and that's for that's the transitional stage from moving, from totally being totally dominated by ego to becoming free of ego is to begin to recognize the ego in yourself strictly speaking the real ego operates in people who have no idea about ego they are it so the people who most need most need to learn about the ego are not here laughter laughter

[Speaker 2] (8:59:32 - 8:59:35)

but they are right where they belong they are right where they belong

[Speaker 1] (8:59:36 - 9:00:16)

so it's the real the real ego is you have no idea that you are totally identified with every reaction with every thought with every emotion you just become it that's the ego but when you know there is something in you when you know there is anger arising when you know that suddenly there is a stream of negative thinking there it is it's still it's an egoic trait but it's not really the ego anymore because you are there as the witnessing presence the observer become the observer

[Speaker 4] (9:00:18 - 9:00:33)

and then our final question should I establish goals for my life and if so what kind of goals would each of you place a high value on

[Speaker 2] (9:00:38 - 9:05:14)

I'm not much into goals and sitting next to the guy who wrote the power of now now and goals seem to be a bit of conflict again I wrote some text books back in the early 70's talking about the importance of goals and I can't have them all withdrawn but I think that you know I watch my kids and some of them are in college now and some of them are out and they are worrying about what they are going to major in and trying to set a goal I just I tell them just try to just enjoy every single moment and just let yourself be guided I think it's great great advice for parenting guide and then just step aside recognize that all of us have the anchor of the universe located within us that's what Lao Tzu said it's in every single one of us and let yourself be swept with it let yourself be taken by it rather than getting your individual ego in there saying this is what I'm going to do you know it's like Arthur Miller the great playwright he was asked a question in an interview with the New York Times he was 91 years old and they said to him are you working on another play and he said I don't know he said but I probably am and I understood exactly what he meant I mean I just finished writing a book that I put a year of my life into this wish is fulfilled and last night I called the president of Hay House my best friend Reed Tracy and I said there's an idea germinating inside of me that I think will ultimately become a book I don't know even quite I just know it's starting to excite me and I've often been called the father of motivation all over the world they've got this title they put next to me and I always say if I have to be the father of anything other than the eight children that I have I would choose to be the father of inspiration because I think it's the reverse of motivation.

Motivation is when you get a hold of an idea and you take it where you believe that you can take it with your goals and any obstacles that come along you're going to plow through them, you're going to make this thing happen and that's motivation you get a hold of an idea inspiration is an idea gets a hold of you and it takes you where you were intended to go even before you were ever conceived I can't imagine you as a little boy in Germany were thinking about being one of the most famous authors in the world and how it all comes about and what's going to come next for you like you said I don't even know what words are going to come out next it's for me it's just being completely immersed in the now and surrendering just like turning it over that's just what I do, I turn it over and the most amazing things happen when you turn it over that's when God comes into your life that's what Carl Jung called synchronicity you have almost like a collaboration with fate you're letting it all unfold in the midst of your writing, I don't know if it happens for you but you know there'll be something I'm not sure or whatever and all of a sudden I'll go to the mail or somebody will pick up the phone and it'll be right there and it's like after a while you start to almost count on it you start to realize that you don't have to do anything you can just let it come to you yes so I don't think you can be totally free of goals like I have to go to the bathroom so I'm going to have a goal to go to the toilet I don't think I can get totally out of that goal place but by and large in my life I just let it be I think the Beatles had it right when you find yourself in times of trouble Mother Mary comes to me speaking words of wisdom let it be let it be let it be let it be let it be there will come an answer let it be I don't know, that's my theme

[Speaker 1] (9:05:14 - 9:11:50)

thank you what a beautiful song that is simple and profound like you I don't have any goals except very short lived like having to go tomorrow I have to my goal is to tomorrow to come here to do this, to do that I think there is a time in people's lives when there is a place for goals but the important thing is the nature of the goal and if it arises out of inspiration as you call it or vision that comes to you of something that wants to be created through you it could be a book when the power of now came to me I felt this urge suddenly of writing I bought a yellow notepad and began writing the first line and at that moment I knew it's a book and I knew what it was about and it was very different from the kind of casual writing I had done before over the years sometimes after sitting with people having a session counseling sessions, doing meditation with small groups I would sometimes say things and then later I would write them down because this was new to me too but I said things that I didn't know before they came out so that was a more casual writing and then suddenly an energy stream came of a very different and more empowered kind of writing and from the very first moment I knew it's a book so in that sense one could say I suddenly had the vision of writing a book one could say I had a goal of producing a book but it wasn't something that came with a promise of delivering some kind of personal fulfillment to me in any way that I can become famous through that or I can make money through that or I can become powerful through that people are going to listen to me all these could have been motivations for writing a book but it was more like something, a realization of something that wants to come into being and then you help it along you go with it, you become a channel through which that that wants to come into being comes into being and it may use your mind it may use your thoughts so in that sense one could have a goal and the important thing is not to be vigilant so that the ego doesn't take over your goal because the ego, even though you may have a deep vision you may not be totally free of ego yet so at some point the ego can take over and a good sign that the ego has taken over is you become stressed while you are doing it or you become as the Bhagavad Gita beautifully teaches you become attached to the fruit of your action you are attached to the outcome, you need the outcome to be in a certain way and that's the unconscious state and that's where goal making really makes you unconscious so the expression used in the Bhagavad Gita is a spiritual practice to take action, including perhaps having goals, but never be attached to the outcomes in other words, you enjoy the doing in the now the now remains more important than where you want to get to if that shifts, if where you want to get to is more important than the now that's the delusion that arises and you lose yourself in your doing, that's the dreadful thing so in the enjoyment of the doing and with the enjoyment comes the power also that flows into it so that the doing isn't a means to an end, yes you have a goal but your attention is in the now and the enjoyment of the energy that flows into the doing and then it becomes empowered, and then the goal looks after itself, Jesus said the same thing, don't be concerned about the tomorrow will look after itself and the goal will look after itself, and again it comes back to being rooted in that deep place of beingness or awareness so that you don't need the outcome to give you some ultimate sense of fulfillment of who you are tell you who you are I want to become a famous author, that's why I'm writing this book, that's a recipe for dissatisfaction and I remember saying to people when I was writing the book and by the way, people said to me you're writing about the now think of something else, it's been done so many times it's old stuff, the now Ram Dass wrote about it a long time ago and several people said think of something else but I couldn't laughter and so it it came, the now wanted to be written about and I remember saying to people I don't really mind how many people buy the book and if nobody wants it, I'm fine with it, I don't know why I said what I said if nobody wants it then I'll just make a living selling tomatoes I really meant it, I wanted to sell I would sell tomatoes and be just simple living but the book wanted to be written but I'm not going to look to the book for some kind of ultimate fulfillment on a personal level

[Speaker 2] (9:11:50 - 9:13:50)

I think that's important as we close, that when you get to that place Patanjali said when you're inspired by some great purpose, some extraordinary project all of your thoughts break their bonds your mind transcends limitations, your consciousness expands in every direction and you find yourself in a new and a great and a wonderful world and then he said dormant forces, which is what you were speaking about things that you thought were dead dormant forces, faculties and talents come alive and you discover yourself to be a greater person by far than you ever dreamed yourself to be you discover yourself to be God and these dormant forces just follow after you and take care of it for you I think the best definition I ever heard of success I've used it for my whole life I did a whole PBS show out there in Concord, Massachusetts I laid down in this man's bed to just get his entity sat at his desk felt great identification with Henry David Thoreau who was put into jail for not paying his taxes to a government that was doing what they were doing to the Native Americans, a man of real conscience great definition he said if you advance confidently in the direction of your own dreams and endeavor to live the life which you have imagined you will meet with a success unexpected in common hours it will chase you that's how it works for me and it seems that's how it works for you too thank you thank you very much

[Speaker 1] (9:14:40 - 9:45:16)

let's make sure we are at home in the present moment and inhabiting the body so a little bit of your attention is in the body the inner energy field of the body and the rest of your attention is on sense perception and in that way you are anchored in the present moment the inner energy field provides the anchor for staying present if you can't feel anything in your body start with your hands direct your attention into your hands and see if you can feel a little bit of aliveness in there oh yes there it is and your feet, are they alive? oh yes you can feel almost a kind of tingling there's energy in there, there's life energy in there and so you can connect with the entire body as a global sense of aliveness as you sit here because wherever you are, you're here and now and the mind will not be excessively active when your attention is in the inner energy field you can be alert without unnecessary interference of thinking without having to wait for the next moment to provide some kind of improvement so the realization comes that this moment is actually good enough more than good enough because you're beginning to feel the goodness that is underneath the phenomenal appearance of the present moment, the forms you're getting in touch with the formless one of the things we are doing as part of our new venture which is a kind of experiment using the internet to reach many thousands of people occasionally I present a book to you that has been very meaningful to me for many years there are a number of books that I've carried around well sometimes I lost copies and then I bought another one because I moved around so much and we already in one of the previous sessions, we had one session on one of the greatest books ever written, the Tao Te Ching we had a session on that and I feel that we're going to have another session on that at some point not today though for today I've chosen a book and before I continue I need to tell you we're not studying something that's external to ourselves we're not here, it's not a university setting, we're not learning philosophy we're only using the subject matter of the book as an alternative pointer to the reality within ourselves so it's not anything, we're not studying anything outside ourselves that would be useless so this book, actually I never lost it with me for 25 or 30 years I bought it new but now the pages are turning yellow the edges which means I'm getting old when books that you bought new turn yellow around the edges you're getting old, or the quality of the paper is deteriorating Emerson Ralph Waldo Emerson essays which he became famous for what I'm going to do is just read very brief extracts from one or two of the essays and then we will comment on that.

As some of you may know, Emerson was born in Boston in 1803 died about 80 years later and most of his life he travelled around giving talks, a very unusual thing, he was kind of a 19th century spiritual teacher very unusual thing for the 19th century and some of these essays have enormous power so he must have gone very deep within to be able to write these things. An important thing, just a very brief look at his life as many people who are destined to go very deep within, he experienced a not very pleasant childhood and early life at a very early age and this is the case with many people who are forced, either destined to go deeper within or if not destined they are forced by life's circumstances to go deeper within and so in his case at the age of 8 his father died so becoming acquainted with mortality at a very early age a very painful thing then there were five children, his mother was relatively poor so they lived on very little the mother had to feed five boys then later in his early 20s he developed tuberculosis a potentially fatal illness but recovered from it then he got married and two years later his wife died so again it became very clear to him it must have become very clear to him how fragile, how impermanent fleeting the world of form is of bodies and forms so whether he already realized that on a conscious level but there must have been a very deep having to go deeper within and then he studied at Harvard to become a theologian to become a minister, he became a minister but was not happy with the constraints of the church and then left the church and started just giving talks and some of the talks became the essays so you can see retrospectively how loss is very often a concealed blessing you don't know it at the time at the time it just seems a dreadful thing to be happening to you but if you look deeper and especially if you are able to come to a state of acceptance then the moment you surrender to what is the other side of loss reveals itself to you there's grace hiding behind every loss that's good to know next time loss comes to you as it will of course because you can't go through life without experiencing loss people around you are going to leave you unless you leave them first bodies dissolve and the older you get the more clearly you see wow all these bodies are dissolving a very brief just a few sentences here on being and the sense of being finding that within yourself he says oh I must before I read this is mid 19th century English prose so at first it might be for some of you who are not used to reading that kind of thing Jane Austen or whatever that kind of thing may find it a little bit unusual at first for the sense of being which in calm hours rises we know not how in the soul is not diverse from things, from space from light, from time from man but one with them and proceeds obviously from the same source whence their life and being also proceeds we first share the life by which things exist and afterwards see them as appearances in nature and forget that we have shared their cause here is the fountain of action and the fountain of thought here are the lungs of that inspiration which gives man wisdom of that inspiration of man which cannot be denied without impiety and atheism we lie in the lap of immense intelligence which makes us organs of its activity and receive us of its truth when we discern justice when we discern truth we do nothing of ourselves but allow a passage to its beams the beams of that great intelligence like the sunlight so the sense of being which in calm hours rises we know not how in the soul is not diverse from things from space, from light from time, from man but one with them in calm hours means when you become still inside when the mind activity subsides then what arises is something that had been obscured by mental noise which is the sense of being and that really is the essence sometimes it's called the sense of I am without any addition to the I am, not I am this or I am that, the sense of beingness as you may remember from grammar lessons at school to be and I am is part of the same verb it's easy to forget when you say I am is the first person singular of to be so being and I am is the same so getting that sense of your innermost identity which has no form to it, no mental concept, no physical appearance it's deeper than that formless sense of being that is there clearly is revealed when the continuous flux of forms especially mind forms subsides, so that sense of being is always has always been there underneath the mental noise and when that is realized as the essence of who you are, in other words you are formless in essence, timeless the Buddhists call it empty and of course western scholars misinterpret that, they say it's a nihilistic relation or it's life denying, they don't realize that what Buddhists call emptiness is the formless essence of all life and timeless and that is something to be realized of course only in the, it's inextricably one with what we call the present moment we could say it is the present moment because it is the space in which everything arises all sense perception all thoughts, all emotion, where do they appear? They appear in that space of being, which you could also call unconditioned consciousness, timeless and that is the eternal in you and once that is known directly, not as an intellectual fact or belief but known directly and again not known as you know the flower, the table or the tree not known as a subject knows an object but knowing yourself as the eternal subject not making yourself into an object and that's the ego that's what happened to the human mind we made ourselves into objects and then you begin to have a relationship with yourself and then you start liking or disliking yourself and then you talk about that you have a life not realizing that you are alive and perhaps then only the dog or the cat can still remind you that they don't have a life they are life, they don't have a unhappy or happy story they are life that's why we talked about nature nature still lives in that state of connectedness and once you realize that you recognize that formless essence that you are wherever you look it is the underlying one the one life the one timeless life that you are and then wherever you look every tree, every animal, every blade of grass even the sun, the stars your dog or your cat, you recognize something there something that any life form is also an expression of that one so you recognize yourself in others which is the most beautiful thing when you recognize the essence of who you are in the flower and you recognize it not through any mental concept but through the absence of mental concepts it is only mental concepts that create the barrier between yourself and the flower when you start calling it something or another human being, the beauty of being with another human being without the interference, the screen of conceptualization just spacious presence no matter what the other human being is doing or saying it's you are there as spacious presence for whatever arises in this moment, that means you are connected with the one, you are that and recognize it there is nothing alien anymore there is ultimately no other anymore, and this is what he is talking about the sense of being which in calm hours rises when you become still now we know not how it rises within, is not diverse from things from space, from light, from time from man, but one with them and proceeds obviously from the same source when their life and being also proceeds, and then that is intelligence itself, not the intelligence that can be measured by IQ tests, but primordial, unconditioned intelligence is there when you discover that dimension in yourself here is the fountain of action, spontaneous action arises out of that presence and the fountain of thought, it can inspire the mind creative thought can only come when you become still, contact that dimension, realize that who you are in essence and then your mind starts to operate and it becomes inspired, it becomes an instrument rather than self-serving mind activity and then all the repetitive thinking gradually subsides and more creative thinking happens and in between the creative thinking there are wonderful spaces of not thinking the greatest thing that can happen to you and hopefully is happening to you is to discover within yourself spaces of not thinking you have not reverted back to the vegetable realm you have gone beyond thinking and from the point of view of the ego that's not a big thing how does that solve my problems not thinking the conceptual mind does not understand the significance of that I sometimes say that all I have achieved in life is I don't need to think unless I want to think that really is where everything comes from just becoming comfortable with the state of not knowing from the point of view of the mind going to a talk in my case sitting down and having the feeling I have absolutely nothing to say and becoming comfortable with not knowing, not just when you are going to give a talk, in any situation you don't need to work it out conceptually how am I going to deal with this person, how am I going to deal with this situation, be there bring the presence to it and let that intelligence come through you, it can then use your mind and you find yourself saying something original or you find yourself saying just the right thing that is helpful for that moment and that person or you find yourself taking spontaneous action suddenly the right thing, the right action arises, you suddenly realize what it is that you need to do you've been thinking about it for years and suddenly you let go of thinking space opened up and the realization is there so for a balanced life there needs to be the two dimensions in your life the dimension of form I call that human, the human dimension where you are a person with a history and you think and you have relatives and relationships and you have a life situation which is good or bad or changes from good to bad and bad to good and you are the being dimension of the human being, most humans don't know that yet there is the being dimension that is the formless so a truly fruitful life is the balance between the formless essence within yourself and the world of form most humans on this planet are lost in form totally identified with form, that's all they know totally identified with their mind, every thought form that comes into every thought which is a thought form that comes into their head, they are completely identified with it, they are in the grip of form and then they are surrounded by countless forms and each form in their life situation demands attention this matters, this matters, the phone rings I need to do this now, I need to do that completely absorbed by form and everything is serious, has a heaviness and a seriousness to it and the more you go on living like that the heavier and the more serious your life becomes it's it's a a loss of balance and then all you end up with this is the subject matter of many movies that you see is people who are totally trapped on that dimension only of form complete absence of transcendence in their life and sometimes these films are quite nice you see, what a pity that there is not the slightest glimpse of any transcendence they are trapped in their little life situations and so for life to be balanced there needs to be attention on consciousness you are conscious the underlying essence of life is formless consciousness oh and that means your sense of identity comes from there the true sense so you don't need the world of form anymore to give you your sense of self because as the Buddha said when you identify with, when you are looking for yourself in things I'm giving a very free translation of Buddha when you identify with the world of form and looking for yourself in forms in your thoughts in your possessions in your achievements in other people's opinion of who you are whatever form it is if you are looking for yourself or some kind of completion of your sense of self in form you are going to suffer that's the message of the Buddha because there is no self in these things you cannot find yourself now Buddhism says because there is no self Hinduism will tell you talks about the self but they are really talking about the same thing it's a formless self now whether you say no self or formless self doesn't make any difference these are just pointers you may prefer one pointer to the other I prefer this finger pointing to the moon and then another no this finger pointing to the moon is much nicer it doesn't matter the moon matters and so we lie in the lap of immense intelligence it is within and without we are pervaded by it it fills the entire space of the universe we lie in the lap of immense intelligence which makes us organs of its activity and receivers of its truth if we are open to it it's like having a house if you close the shutters no matter how bright the sunlight is it can't come in it doesn't mean the shutters are more powerful than the sunlight it just means shutters are closed and so if a human being is closed the vast intelligence cannot operate or can only operate as a trickle everybody has a trickle of it otherwise they wouldn't be alive so everybody has a little trickle of that coming into their lives but the full power of it in most people's lives is missing so they live not knowing what vast power is available to them or to put it more accurately what vast power they themselves are it's not available to you that creates a separation, it is in essence who you are now I'd like to read to you a little thing that came to Emerson when he was sitting in his study and outside there were roses growing outside his window and here again we come to the power of nature that we talked about the other day the power of nature to reconnect you with being and so he looked at the rose and then he saw this or realized this the context of this is that he's talking about people who are always quoting ancient texts only they are not open to the power of the divine coming through them, they are quoting from the bible they are quoting from other scriptures not realizing that the very power that spoke then is in them now also it's just a question of opening yourself to it and then he looked at the roses under his window the roses under my window make no reference to former roses or to better ones, they are for what they are they exist with God today, there is no time to them they are simply the rose it is perfect in every moment of its existence before a leaf bud has burst, its whole life acts in the full-blown flower there is no more, in the leafless root there is no less its nature is satisfied and it satisfies nature in all moments alike there is no time to it

Q and A with Eckhart Tolle TV Part 3

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 57:04)

In the flower there is no more, in the leafless root there is no less. Its nature is satisfied, and it satisfies nature in all moments alike. There is no time to it, but man postpones or remembers.

He does not live in the present, but with reverted eye laments the past, or heedless of the riches that surround him, stands on tiptoe to foresee the future. He cannot be happy and strong until he too lives with nature in the present above time. There you have the rose teaching Emerson how to live, and then he put it into words.

And this shows us that he actually, it was not just a superficial look at a rose as one would normally, oh, what a nice rose, there was a true, he truly gave attention to the rose and realized how absolutely present the rose is, how absolutely devoid of time it is, carrying no past and no future. And he recognized that, same as Jesus did when he said, look at the flowers of the field, look at the lilies. When he said that, he didn't just say, have a look at the lilies, he said, really look, give it your full attention, and then you will realize something there that human beings, there's a connectedness with being, they haven't gone out as far as humans, they have not left the source of all life, they have not become as differentiated as the humans have, so therefore what they can teach us, show us, is the connectedness with the source of all life. And that's what he saw when he looked at the rose. And then he realized that we can, when we reconnect with that, we don't just become, go back to the vegetative realm, which is beautiful for everything vegetative there, but not for us, it's not our destiny to go back to become a rose, or a tree, or a blade of grass, we transcend the thinking stage, we transcend the differentiation of the thinking stage and we then regain the oneness that was once lost, that ancient mythologies point to as the lost paradise. And when you regain something, as I often point out, you regain it at a deeper level with knowing consciousness.

And so the last sentence here is important, he saw here, of course, that usually man does not live in the present, but with reverted eyes, reverted eyes, he doesn't look at what's right here, he reverts his eyes and looks, laments the past, oh dear, regrets about what happened, guilt, regret, memories, things went wrong in my life situation, this happened, that happened, or heedless of the riches that surround him, stands on tiptoe to foresee the future, I need to get, I need to get there, where is it?

I need to get to the next moment, heedless of the riches that surround you that are part of the now. So the lesson then is to truly look so that something imparts itself to you from anything natural. So the anything natural reconnects you with, can reconnect you with being.

By the way, when he uses, he wrote in the 19th century, so there was still a tendency for there to use male pronouns, the same as the Bible and so on, so obviously when he says man, he means man and woman, and he tends to use the masculine pronoun, so you have to excuse that. Man is a stream whose source is hidden, always our being is descending into us from we know not whence. Most humans regard themselves as a surface phenomenon, you are here, no sense of deeper connectedness with life, you are here like as if somebody had put you here on this planet and there's me and there's the rest of the world, the rest of the universe, the lack of connectedness.

If you go deeper within and you do it by finding the dimension of stillness underneath thinking, then you connect with the source, the depth within yourself and there's vast depth. Man is a stream whose source is hidden and when, once it's open, so all you have to really do, if you can even call it doing, is open the door and even that is not a doing because really keeping the door closed through continuous thinking is the doing. So it's more like a stop doing and then it opens.

In that sense, some of those teachers are right saying you can't do anything because it's the doing that obscures the being. And so once that is open, then you gradually learn to do and be at the same time. You can act without losing connect.

At first you find it only in very still moments, perhaps in nature, and you go, ah, ah, and then gradually you see if you can stay connected when you're going shopping for food, supermarket, or traveling from here to there, carrying alertness, alert presence, rather than continuously thinking entity, always about the next moment or the last moment. This is the only, you may have noticed that I only ever talk about one thing. And this is it.

Now he uses in one of his essays the term the over-soul and by over-soul he means the unity of all things, the unity, the oneness of all things. All things are ultimately one. Not only that all things are connected to everything else, which physicists now tell us is actually the case, there's no division between this body and this table and this flower and those other bodies, there's no real division on the subatomic realm.

And so not only is everything connected with everything else, a web of interconnectedness, but also everything is connected to a common source. It has come out of the common source. It returns to the common source, which is formless and timeless, and the common source remains in every form as its innermost essence.

And so this common source, this unity he calls the over-soul. And he says, that unity, that over-soul within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other, that common heart of which all sincere conversation is the worship, to which all right action is submission, that overpowering reality which confutes our tricks and talents and constrains everyone to pass for what he is and to speak from his character, which means from his essence, and not from his tongue, and which evermore tends and aims to pass into our thought and hand and become wisdom and virtue and power and beauty. We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meantime, within man is the soul of the whole, the wise silence, the universal beauty to which every part and particle is equally related, the eternal one.

And this deep power in which we exist, and whose beatitude is all accessible to us, is not only self-sufficing and perfect in every hour, but the act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object are one. We see the world piece by piece as the sun, the moon, the animal, the tree, but the whole of which these are the shining parts is the soul, the oneness, oneness, seeing the oneness behind the multiplicity, seeing the oneness of all forms in every form. And what he calls the soul, we could also use the word the consciousness, the one unconditioned consciousness that pervades the entire universe, the one reality.

So when he says here the soul, if you want to use consciousness as a different pointer, that's fine. All goes to show that the soul in man is not an organ, but animates and exercises all the organs, is not a function, like the power of memory, of calculation, of comparison, but uses these as hands and feet, is not a faculty, but a light, is not the intellect or the will, but the master of the intellect and the will, is the vast background of our being in which they lie, an immensity not possessed and that cannot be possessed.

From within or from behind, a light shines through us upon things and makes us aware that we are nothing but the light is all, the background, the background space, consciousness looks through these eyes, speaks through this mouth, becomes form and yet remains untouched as a formless. So can you go through life dealing with the foreground of things that need doing, things that you need occasionally to think about and yet remain aware of the background to your life, the consciousness, the light of consciousness or the space in which everything appears. Another way of putting it, can you be aware that you are aware at this moment, can you sense the awareness underneath what you are perceiving with your senses at this moment without which there would be no perception, can you sense the awareness underneath any kind of emotion or feeling you might be having at this moment, can you sense the awareness out of which any thought that might arise in your mind at this moment comes and dissolves back into the presence that you are, that's the formless, that's the timeless and so that is the vast background of your being, an immensity not possessed and that cannot be possessed.

A man is the façade of a temple wherein all wisdom and all good abide. What you see is the façade of the temple, not only what you see as the physical form of this human being but also the psychological form of this human being is also the façade still of the temple, it is not in essence who that being is. What we commonly call man or woman, the eating, drinking, planting and counting man, eating, drinking, planting, counting, doing all kinds of things, what we commonly call man, the eating, drinking, planting, counting man does not as we know him represent himself but misrepresents himself.

Him we do not respect but the soul whose organ he is, would he let it appear through his action would make our knees bend. When it breathes through his intellect it is genius, when it breathes through his will it is virtue, when it flows through his affection it is love and the blindness of the intellect begins when it would be something of itself. The weakness of the will begins when the individual would be something of himself.

So the blindness of the intellect begins with the belief that you are something of yourself, that is the mind, the self-serving mind. The weakness of the will begins when the individual would be something of himself, that is the independent, autonomous, self-sufficient entity that has been put into this world from somewhere, not realizing you have come out of it and you are an intrinsic part of the totality and so there comes the sense of separateness, of alienation, with that comes the continuous neediness of the ego and with that comes the continuous underlying fear.

It is always there when you are not connected, there is fear no matter what you may have achieved in the world of form, the fear will not leave you until the sense of separateness leaves you, you reconnect. How wonderful to see that all spiritual teachings in essence are one. This is why I love to go back to some of the ancient books and they might use very different words, but once you recognize the truth in yourself, you see the truth wherever it comes, in whatever form it comes, and you say, yes, there it is, I recognize it.

And so this is sometimes being called the perennial philosophy, there is a thread that goes back thousands of years, the same truth being expressed in different words and different forms throughout the ages, in the past by very rare individuals here and there, but somehow it survived, whatever form they left behind, writing, it survived. Somehow there were always enough humans who had at least an inkling that there was something extremely precious and valuable there. So that's the perennial philosophy, I don't know who first used that word, there is a very wonderful book by Aldous Huxley of the same title, Perennial Philosophy.

So the truth is there and there is no arguing once you have it in yourself, you don't attach yourself to the form in which it's being expressed, that's what religions traditionally do, you get attached to the form, not realizing the form points to an underlying essence, which is one, all religions are one, and you don't even need a religion to see the essence, you are enough. If you have a religion, fine, you don't need it, but if you have it, it can take you, if you use it rightly, it can take you deeper. If you use it wrongly, you get more entangled in ego through your religion.

There is no bar or wall in the soul where man, the effect, ceases and God, the cause, begins. There is no separation between you and the source, it's a continuous, you could almost think of it, if you think of it visually, you are connected, if you are walking around a globe, and every being on the globe is connected to the center with a thread, it's a visual representation of it, you are connected. Now if the surface reality of where you are walking around is all you have, then you see the separation between you and the other human being, or other life form, you see the separateness.

When you are aware of the center within, then you see the unity. So, you are walking around this globe, there is one human being, here is another human being, disconnected because they are only aware of the surface. If you are aware of the depths within yourself, then suddenly you see that you are one with the other, you are connected at the center.

It's a visual, of course, somewhat incomplete representation. The sovereignty of this nature whereof we speak is made known by its independency of those limitations which circumscribe us on every hand. The soul circumscribes all things.

As I have said, it contradicts all experience. In like manner, it abolishes time and space. The influence of the senses has, in most men, overpowered the mind to that degree that the walls of time and space have come to look solid, real and insurmountable.

And to speak with levity of these limits is, in the world, a sign of insanity. Yet time and space are but inverse measures of the force of the soul. A man is capable of abolishing them both.

You could say, now when he uses inverse measures, you could say, I said that somewhere also, you could, the vastness of space that you see when you look out at night into the clear sky, and that was when I was a child, even before, no, about the same time when I had mentioned previously I would often go out into nature to reconnect with being when I was a child. And one other thing I did that helped me when I was a child, and that didn't happen until I went to live in Spain at the age of 13 and a half, where often the sky is clear, especially in the summer, and so we lived on the top floor with a, I would climb up onto the roof of the building at night and lie in a deck chair and just look at the vastness of the night sky. And I didn't realize at that time that my mind actually became still.

I was just in a state of awe, and I didn't realize at the time, I didn't even know anything about meditation, I didn't know I was in a state of meditative stillness, and there was a sense of awe and of feeling speechless. And what made me speechless was not the, well, it was wonderful to see all the thousands of points of light that we call stars or suns, but more than that, the vastness of the space itself. I already knew a little bit, I was interested in astronomy and I started reading and I knew a little bit about the vast distances involved there and the vastness of space, of what a idea is, and it was so inconceivable and totally beyond anything the mind could understand.

Even the greatest scientists cannot understand the limitless space. So I sometimes ask myself, well, what is beyond space? And if it's limitless, it's inconceivable.

There's a vastness there that is totally ungraspable and inconceivable. And that, I believe, what he's pointing at, Emerson, here, is what you see as the vastness of space is the externalized vastness of your own being, of being itself. You see it spread out there.

It contains all things. It's the externalized vastness of consciousness itself, and it appears to us as space. Now, space, of course, is nothing, really.

It just enables everything to be, but in itself it is no thing. It is nothing. So, and time equally, the vast stretches of time, inconceivable.

And does time have an end? Does time have a beginning? And here, too, what we perceive as endless vast time is the externalization of the timeless within.

And that gets stretched out when we go into the sense-perceived world. It gets stretched out like... It becomes skimmed milk.

The cream is within you, and then the universe is the skimmed milk. Diluted. So that also can put you in touch with yourself.

Just look into contemplation of space. It doesn't have... It could be the space of the night sky.

It could even be the space of an inner room. If you go into an ancient church or cathedral, it's particularly beautiful to have to be... If you become aware of...

But any room will do it. Become aware of, OK, what's the essence of this room? There's the floor, the ceiling, the walls, the chairs, the furniture in it, the people.

OK, but is there more to it? Yes, of course there's more to it. What really matters about this room is the space.

Without the space, there wouldn't be a room. And there's usually... People would not be aware of the space.

They would be aware only of what's in the space. The furniture, the walls, the people, whatever it is. And so if you can become aware not only of what's in the space and what circumscribes the space, but the space itself, the awareness of space creates in you the awareness of the formless within you.

Because only the moment you become aware of space around you, and I can't tell you how, you just have to do it, because there's nothing to grasp, there's nothing to be aware of. So the mind asks, how can I be aware of space if there's nothing there to be aware of? And that's precisely it.

What is left when you're aware of something where there's nothing? What's left is awareness itself. That's why being aware of space is such a powerful thing.

Because what you really become aware of then is awareness. Nothing, no content. And so it's a beautiful meditation.

Wherever you go, you can do it. There's even a line in the Tao Te Ching, which speaks of what I can't remember literally, that it says there's a bowl, and the essence of the vessel, or the bowl, is the emptiness inside the space. And so to make it a bowl, there's the two aspects, and these are the two aspects to every life form, form and formless.

Form, and the essence, the formless. And so if you can be aware that that applies to you also, just like the bowl, or like the room, in yourself also there is content, there's furniture inside you, thoughts. Some people have a lot of furniture inside.

The room is just crammed full with furniture, one thought after another. And so, but there must be some space there, because the furniture somehow has to get in there. So if space is there, you just have to know it's there.

There is space inside you already. You don't have to produce it, or achieve it somehow. Just realize it's already there, because otherwise nothing could be there in your mind.

The mind itself, in essence, is space, which is consciousness. So, most people are so seduced by the furniture, so seduced by all these fascinating bits of furniture, or furniture they complain about, they don't want, but it's there, and so that they're never aware of the space around the furniture. Inside themselves, what a limitation, which means all you're stuck with, is your life situation, your limited life situation, which consists of content, content, the content of your life.

And no matter what you do with the content of your life, it's never satisfying. On the level of content alone, you will always come to a point of frustration, because no matter how you rearrange the furniture, I'm using, of course, as you know, furniture as a metaphor for everything in your mind, no matter how you arrange the furniture, or even if you throw some bits out and take other bits in, you always find it's not quite it. You always very quickly come to a point of dissatisfaction, because the transcendent dimension is missing from your life.

And what is the transcendent dimension? The formless space. Not realize that that is the essence of who you actually are.

And so people go through life frustrated, complaining that the world isn't doing what it should be doing to make them happy, not realizing the world cannot make you happy. It's not in its power, because the world is the world of form. It can challenge you so that you go deeper and finally find the formless.

That's what it's there for, really. And, of course, the world is good at that. It always does

that.

And once you know that, then every challenge you can actually welcome. And every loss you can actually, even though you might weep, you can still welcome it, because you can see how precious loss also is. Because what is loss in whatever form?

Loss is some form has been removed from your life and has left behind an empty space. And that happens when somebody close to you dies. Suddenly there's an empty space.

And that is, from the point of view of form, is very painful. And, of course, you will cry, you will weep, because there is the reality of form, but there's also the deeper reality of the formless. And if you can be with both, then in the presence of death, although you may weep, there will be a deep peace that you sense, because the formless shines through the space that's left behind.

And that's the sacred, the divine, God, whatever you want to call it. It shines through. Wherever there's loss, there's grace.

The grace is something has opened up, and that is the essence of the form that passed away also. And that is the indestructible. That is the deathless, as it's in Buddhism.

The closest Buddhism ever gets to talking about God is the deathless realm, Amaravati, the deathless. That's how wonderful to see. And then balance comes into your life, the dance between form and formlessness, the dance between the world and spirit, if you want to call it that.

I don't use it very often. It's too many associations there. There you have it.

And then the beautiful thing is the world is no longer a frustrating place. When you realize that the world was actually meant to be frustrating, it's no longer frustrating, then you recognize whatever challenge comes, you say, oh, okay. Either you resist or you go deeper.

That's always a choice. There's a beautiful line in a book. I believe it's called The Road Less Traveled, and it has the best first sentence or first two sentences of any book.

That's why I never read the whole book. It says more or less this. Life is difficult, and when you know that and accept that, it's no longer difficult.

It's so simple. Once you know you don't expect something that the world cannot give you, happiness, fulfillment, peace, and once you realize you don't need the world to give you that because that emanates from the formless dimension within yourself, then, ironically, maybe the universe has a sense of humor or irony, then, ironically, the world and the things of the world are actually quite nice. They're quite satisfying, and you appreciate them.

It's not that you deny. I don't believe that those ancient practices that almost aggressively deny the reality of form are that helpful. I don't think you can find the formless within by fighting or aggressively denying the world of form.

The world of form is also an expression, it's all an expression of the one, and so the world then becomes a place where you can appreciate whatever form is around you, arises, no matter whether it's large or small. Mostly it's small because mostly your life consists of small things. There's a flower, there's the shopping to do, there's go from here to there, get into the car, take one step at a time.

It's all small, really, and you can appreciate the preciousness of all the things in your life, and it's suddenly what before was frustrating now is actually quite pleasant. Why has it become pleasant? You no longer demand from the world, which includes places you go to, which includes people you meet or have relationships with, which includes situations in your life that arise, which includes achievements, successes or failures, whatever.

You don't demand that they should give you what they can't, and you can let them be. You can honor them, but you're not again going to a situation or place and say, I demand that you fulfill me, or go into a relationship and say, I demand that you make me happy, or whatever condition you encounter, some success and expect ultimate fulfillment through it. No, briefly, yes, and then things happen.

So with this comes then the freedom, freedom from, you could call it, freedom from the world. It doesn't mean you disengage from the world, but your attachment to things lessens and then goes. Yes, there is appreciation, there is honoring the beauty of life, the beauty of even the smallest things, yes, but without the attachment, you don't need that anymore, and you can let go when it's time to let go.

This always comes. Wherever you go and whatever you do, at some point it's time to let go. As long as there's attachment, it's a painful thing.

When life says, okay, let go now, no, no, I can't, it's part of who I am, and that's painful, and then life may even tear it out of your hands. It's even more painful, but it could be so simple. You could say, there you go, and then some other form appears.

Oh, that's nice, and you know full well there's nothing that is yours ultimately. The whole thing that you can possess something is, of course, an illusion. For a little while, you look after it, and then you hand it on.

You look after it, pass it on. Let's see what freedom, and then you appreciate the beauty of all things, and you see beauty where before you didn't see beauty, also in the smallest things, and you don't have to take acid for that. But, of course, the truth is everything around you is intensely alive and beautiful.

It's only the judgmental mind that creates the screen, a barrier of conceptualization between yourself and the aliveness of the world, but the essential aliveness is within in the formless, so don't look for the aliveness in there. Nature can hint at it, it can connect you with your own aliveness. Yes, the essence of all life is within.

The action of the soul or consciousness is oftener in that which is felt and left unsaid than in that which is said in any conversation. It's not in the words, it's in the spaces. It broods over every society and they unconsciously seek for it in each other.

You unconsciously seek the formless in the other. We know better than we do. We do not yet possess ourselves and we know at the same time that we are much more.

I feel the same truth how often in my trivial conversation with my neighbors that somewhat higher in each of us overlooks this by-play and Jove nods to Jove from behind each of us. God nods to God from behind each of us. You engage in superficial conversation, but there's something in the background that far transcends anything in the world of form, which includes words and thoughts.

And if you can sense that in yourself, then you can also sense it in the other. And if you sense that in the other, all relationships become holy relationships, as the Course in Miracles would put it. Then you recognize the holy in every relationship, even if it's a brief one.

And there is something in you that knows and recognizes the truth. We know truth when we see it. Let skeptics and scoffers say what they choose.

Foolish people ask you when you have spoken what they do not wish to hear. How do you know it is truth and not an error of your own? We know truth when we see it, as opposed to opinion, as we know when we are awake that we are awake.

Do you know that you are awake? Yes, you must be. So this is direct realization.

So if you know that you are awake, that means what is it that you really know? You know that you are awake. You can subtract anything that appears in your consciousness at this moment, any form, and you could then be left with just the state of being awake.

And there is the formless. One more sentence. Under all this running sea of circumstance, whose waters ebb and flow with perfect balance, lies the aboriginal abyss of real being.

Circumstances, situations, world of form, comings, goings, underneath it all, the timeless, formless. Become familiar with the state of not needing to continuously interpret and judge what is happening to you or around you. You don't need that.

You actually become more intelligent when you don't continuously and compulsively interpret what's happening or what's in front of you, what you are perceiving. That's an old habit going back thousands and thousands of years. And the habit says, no, I have to interpret.

I become stupid if I don't. I won't know what's going on anymore if I can't judge this person that I'm meeting or I can have some kind of opinion or I like or dislike this situation, or this, I want this, I don't want this, this should be happening, that shouldn't. All the stuff that the mind produces continuously that detracts from the simplicity and power of the present moment that the mind puts out, the screen of conceptualization.

And so in living without the compulsive screen the screen of conceptualization is the great liberation. And so you invite into your life the spaces, spaces, the one space really, but spaces of not knowing, not needing to know, not just being present with what is, just giving attention to what is at this moment, which implies, of course, accepting the is-ness of whatever this moment brings, whatever form arises in this moment. Can you say yes to what arises in whatever form?

Because you should say yes because otherwise you suffer, because what is already is. So if you argue internally with what is, you really make the universe into an enemy. I don't want this, but that is right in front of you.

You say, okay, this is what is. You become the space for it. And that's a very quick way of accessing the space consciousness in you by simply bringing an acceptance into the present moment in whatever form it comes.

Where before there was an irritation, where before there was a complaint, where before there was an angry reaction, there's now saying, oh, okay, that's what is. You open your arms and say yes to now. The present moment is my friend.

I've had the enemy. The present moment has been my enemy for long enough. I'm now making friends with the present moment.

Why? Because that's all I have. There's nothing else ever.

Why not make friends with the present moment in whatever form it appears? Yes. And the little secret then, of course, the miracle is if you make friends with the present moment no matter in what form it appears, then the formless opens up within you because you become who you already were, space for it.

You are the space for that. That's all. So the primordial spiritual practice, or if you want a mantra, can I be the space for this?

You can ask yourself the question when situations arise that before you might have complained about, been irritated about, whatever the reaction would have been, can I be the space for this? And usually, or I would say always, you will find yes, I can be this. You just forgot that you can be the space for it.

You forgot that you are the space for whatever arises in your life because you are the now, you are the consciousness in which it arises. So you become who you already are. Can I be the space for this?

With that, it's the end of all irritation or angry reactions or complaining, inner no, don't want this, want something else. Yes, but this is what you have now. And it doesn't mean that you get stuck with what is.

The amazing thing is you move on much more quickly when you bring a yes to the present moment. Then life moves on. You've passed the test.

If you bring no to the present moment, it means you haven't passed. Okay, you get stuck. It's all expressed beautifully in the film Groundhog Day.

You can live in resistance. You can try whatever you will. As long as you are stuck in your negativity, you have to do the lesson again.

You wake up the same day. This protagonist wakes up in the same day every day until finally an inner shift happens and he begins to say yes to the present moment. And then suddenly all the unpleasantness of this day that he has to repeat again and again, all the unpleasantness of that day becomes actually quite pleasant.

He's beginning to help people because he says yes to situations. So he becomes a helpful, beneficial presence in that day and suddenly everybody loves him in that town. And finally he becomes so accepting whereas before he hated where he was and he hated his work.

Many people live like that, hating everything, complaining continuously, nothing and nobody is ever good enough. And then suddenly the shift happens and finally he's in the same place and he says to his girlfriend, oh, let's stay here, it's quite nice. And then suddenly he's free and he's no longer forced to repeat the same day.

Deep spiritual lesson in there. And that's how it is. So it's the egoic mind tells you if you accept what is, you'll be stuck.

This is not the case. Acceptance is the beginning for powerful action if action is required. And non-acceptance, the action that you take on the basis of non-acceptance is never powerful.

It always is tainted with negativity and you could say, I call it karmic action. It produces more unhappiness, more karma. So a very quick way then of accessing the space consciousness within, the formless, is not resisting the form that the present moment takes in your life internally.

Wow, huge shift. When you can try it in this evening, there may be little things happening on your way home. Wow, non-resistance.

Greatest power there is.

[Speaker 8] (58:51 - 59:45)

Hi. I wondered why you don't, or haven't done a commentary or maybe even a translation of the New Testament. I found the instances where you talk about things that Christ said in your books very enlightening and very different from anything that I had ever thought.

I mean, you put it in terms of increased consciousness and like the kingdom of God is within you and turn the other cheek has quite different meaning the way you explicate. So that's my question. Because the New Testament is so important for so many people and touches so many lives, it seems like if people really knew what it was about, what he was saying, it could have quite an impact.

[Speaker 1] (59:46 - 1:06:09)

Okay. So you want me to write a book? Another one?

I'm in your spare time. Thank you. It's funny you should say that.

It's been kind of in the background, for a few years in the background, the idea that perhaps one day there will be a book about that. If I write another book, I don't know if that will happen. I mean, I don't write it.

It kind of comes, but it may well be that. There's a lot of beautiful truth in there, which is, of course, obscured by misunderstanding and distortion and manipulation, many people. But there's an essence there that is very valuable.

And also there's a deepening that is needed if Christianity is to survive. A deepening is needed. And, of course, there have been many books that were written to demythologize Christianity or Jesus.

And yes, on the one hand, it needs demythologizing, but demythologizing can also have disastrous results when people impose their own limitations on what they read. And they don't see the ultimate value that's in it. So there are books about Jesus as a political revolutionary.

There are books about Jesus as a social reformer. There are books about Jesus as a man who has a simple message, just be good to each other. But, of course, this is true, but it goes much deeper.

So demythologizing, if I write another book or if it gets written through me, would be part of it, but the sacred will not be lost. That is the essence. Because even within a mythology, there's a sacred essence.

Within the story, which otherwise many people, until recently and even now, there are many who are at a state of consciousness where the actual truth needs to be embedded in a story. And then they can get a little bit through the story. But there are many these days, however, who don't need the stories anymore.

You can show them the truth. And that's perhaps what Jesus meant when he said all the things that I do and greater things you will also do. But the time has to be right.

So why didn't he do the greater things? Because he knew they were not ready for that. He had to teach through the stories.

And his entire life became part of a mythology and a myth which also has a powerful truth in it, hidden. That truth must be preserved, but it must be shown, extricated from the story, without even destroying the story so that the people who still need the story can have it. That's the balance that needs to be done very gently.

And then there's the deepening there. And then it can survive. If it has to, we don't know, another 2,000 years.

Nothing that is in form survives forever. It may well be that it becomes, it will transform completely into something else. Sometimes as part of our gatherings for Internet TV, E-T-TV we call it, E-T-TV, I've discussed some books.

Occasionally I discuss a book with a group. We've discussed the Tao Te Ching. We've discussed the Meditations by Marcus Aurelius.

We've discussed... Emerson. Emerson, thank you, yes.

And two of those books are very old. My Meditations is 2,000 years old. The Tao Te Ching is 2,500, 600 years old.

And they're still alive. So those things... But there's some good modern translations now, so that helps.

But this would mean, if it's... I hope it won't be necessary, but we are studying, we are reading the Tao Te Ching, which was written 2,600 years ago. That would mean, if it's still needed, in the year 4,000, 4,600, people could be reading The Power of Now.

I hope not. I hope it will be completely forgotten, because it will be so obvious that they don't need the book anymore, long before that. Maybe in a museum they'll still have it.

And they'll look at it, and people will say, look, they had to talk about these things because people had no idea about this. Somebody had to write a book about the most obvious things. That's how misguided they were.

But probably not even that, because they may not be interested in the past at all. Who knows? Who knows?

Well, thank you for your encouragement.

[Speaker 17] (1:06:33 - 1:06:33)

Okay.

[Speaker 5] (1:06:35 - 1:06:51)

Actually, my question is already being answered. That often happens. And I think one day we're all going to come here, and once we're all in presence, we won't have any questions for you.

[Speaker 1] (1:06:51 - 1:06:53)

That's true. That would be wonderful.

[Speaker 5] (1:06:53 - 1:06:56)

You're going to be out of business. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:06:58 - 1:07:00)

Yes. That would be wonderful.

[Speaker 5] (1:07:00 - 1:07:08)

Actually, my question was, could you elaborate on ego versus healthy self-esteem?

[Speaker 1] (1:07:09 - 1:17:13)

Ah, yes. Eventually, what we call healthy self-esteem, which is a wonderful thing, eventually that is not enough. And as a human being evolves, that healthy self-esteem is no longer satisfying as you grow older and is transcended.

And what takes its place is healthy, no hyphen self-esteem. The self-esteem, of course, means that you are reasonably satisfied with who you are as a person and the achievements of the person, what the person can do, or what the person knows, or what the person possesses. And you compare what the person can do, abilities, what the person knows, knowledge, or what the person has in terms of possessions.

You compare that with others, and you come out favorably. So either you can do more than somebody else or others, feel better about yourself. I can do this, but they can't.

I can, but you can't. Or you have more knowledge. Did you know that this and such and such is such and such a case?

You didn't know that? Well, let me tell you. That feels good.

These ignorant people, they don't know anything. Or you have more. How many bedrooms does your house have?

Four? Four? Well, we have 11.

Do you have an advanced degree? No? I have two PhDs.

And that's fine. It starts with a child already. It says, look what I can do.

I can jump further than you. And for the child, it's fine. There's no point in telling a child, don't do that.

Your ego is arising. No, the child has to go through that. And it is better to have healthy self-esteem, as you describe it, as it's usually described, than extremely low self-esteem.

I'm no good. Everybody's better than me. I have nothing.

Life has treated me unfairly. There's a self-image there also, as there is a self-image in healthy self-esteem. One, of course, is much nicer than the other.

It's more pleasant to live with healthy self-esteem than with a low self-esteem, or unhealthy self-esteem, one could call it. But they're both identification with some kind of form. And you compare the form of who I am with the form of others.

And you are better, at least in one area, you must be. And that's satisfying. But there's still, you're trapped in form, and you're depending on, for your sense of value or worthiness, you're depending on, ultimately, to put it bluntly, others who have less or know less or can do less than you.

And that's fine. Doesn't mean you shouldn't strive to do great things or to have things or to know things. But the question is, ultimately, is that a satisfying basis for your sense of who you are?

And in the long term, it is not. It is not satisfying. That is why people who are maybe very happy with what they possess, after a while, there's an emptiness that comes, not the spiritual emptiness, the sense of emptiness of what's it all about.

And even things you can do, a time may come when you can't do it anymore. Whatever it is that you do that's so great, playing an instrument, the great pianist, wonderful, why not be a great pianist? But if you derive your sense of who you are from that, then one day you find arthritis in your fingers.

And who are you now? Or the agility goes. It's not there anymore.

Oh, my God. Suffering comes. Or you invent the greatest new computer, some computer.

I don't know the expressions, but program or whatever it is. And everybody says this is the greatest ever. But three years later or two years, these things happen very quickly.

Somebody else comes and makes yours obsolete. And then you have no new ideas, and there you sit completely devastated because you got from somebody great, you've become nobody. But it was all illusion because you derived your sense of who you are from something in the world of form which is fleeting, not reliable, not solid, dreamlike.

And so the true self-esteem comes from not identifying with form. Now, whether we even want to call that self-esteem, I don't know. The true sense of worthiness and of power, true power, comes when you realize the formless in yourself, that dimension, and that all power comes from that.

But it goes far beyond the person that you are. And then you are rooted in the formless, so to speak, or you are it. And that there's enormous sense of worthiness in there, but it's not comparative.

It's not more than. You see the same worthiness in everyone, even if they don't know it for themselves yet. So there's power, but not more than.

There's just the power of life itself. And you know everybody is an expression of that, although they may not know it yet. Everybody.

So this is, you transcend conventional self-esteem. And it doesn't mean you lose your sense of worth. It shifts into something much deeper.

So every human really is, there may even be some children these days who don't need to go through the egoic state anymore. That is possible. But traditionally, and humans had to go, and some, many probably still have to go, through the stage where they identify with form, develop some self-esteem, do something that you feel good about.

You can do it. And then comes the time going beyond. Except perhaps, as I said, some advanced souls who may be coming into this world or already in this world as children who don't need, even need to identify with that anymore.

A question that comes from there also is, if a person has low self-esteem, in other words a mental image of not good enough, then does that person have to go through the stage of healthy self-esteem before they can transcend it altogether? I don't know. I haven't tried it enough with enough people.

It may well be that the unhealthy self-esteem, if it leads to a state of suffering, great suffering, you may be able to, with the help of a teacher, go from there to no self. Because the way from unhappiness or suffering to transcendence is easier than the way from superficial happiness to transcendence. Superficial happiness keeps you in the dream world for quite a while.

It's not that bad. I can't complain. It's not that bad.

It's going okay. I'm quite happy. Just got a promotion.

I'm so happy I just got my annual bonus from my Wall Street bank.

[Speaker 16] (1:17:15 - 1:17:17)

Great. I'm doing great.

[Speaker 1] (1:17:30 - 1:17:51)

So from there, the transcendence is not directly from Wall Street. Probably not. But if you go from Wall Street to prison, much easier.

[Speaker 5] (1:18:13 - 1:19:49)

About 30 years ago, I was in extreme pain and my body began to move in these automatic patterns, my full body. Intense urging filled with presence and it released my suffering. And the patterns were individualized and evolved.

And for a 20-year period, there were others that experienced these automatic movements and their suffering was released. But now, it's been 10 years and the movements are quiet. They're still.

Well, not exactly still. I'm not experiencing the urging into these movements. I'm not experiencing the same ecstasy and presence.

And so I feel lost. It isn't just the loss of the movements or evidence of manifestation of presence. It's the loss of the presence and the feeling of ecstasy.

So I wait. I'm not sure what I'm waiting for, but I am suffering and I don't know what to do.

[Speaker 2] (1:20:04 - 1:20:15)

Is suffering in the body or more psychological from your attachment to...? Not in the body. Not in the body. So it's more psychological.

[Speaker 5] (1:20:15 - 1:20:20)

Yes, it's the loss of presence as I knew it.

[Speaker 2] (1:20:21 - 1:21:25)

As you knew it. So you somehow identified with that form. So whenever you were in movement, in this spontaneous movement that would occur, that would bring about ecstasy for you, peace, presence, your attachment to the form, the way that presence came through you, is causing the suffering right now.

So in this moment, that spontaneous movement is gone and it's your non-acceptance to that which is bringing about the suffering. Presence, although it came through you for that length of time, 20 years, in form, presence has no form. So whether you're sitting or whether you're moving, there is presence.

[Speaker 5] (1:21:30 - 1:21:34)

I'm not feeling it as intensely.

[Speaker 2] (1:21:35 - 1:22:57)

Oh, so you want it to be the same as yesterday. Yes, actually. And it can never be the same as yesterday.

Perhaps there's another so-called plan for you, this emerging of consciousness. I too have had spontaneous movement. When I would sit in meditation, and I did this for years, sitting in meditation, still meditation, then suddenly I found myself moving, and it was so beautiful.

It was almost like this beautiful Tai Chi art form, and I'm just moving in bliss, and oh, like I can just really get into it and just roll, feel this. I love it. And then when it would stop, it'd be almost like a sitting meditation, how some of us will do practice sitting meditation 20 minutes a day.

We're in peace. We get up off our cushion and then lose consciousness totally throughout the day. So it's not about just moving in form.

It's connecting to this presence, this stillness. It's like life now saying to you, connect to me regardless of what form this moment is taking.

[Speaker 5] (1:23:00 - 1:23:34)

There was kind of a hidden comment in there in that when I had extreme pain, I had the movement, and now I don't have extreme pain, and I don't have the movement. When you had the movement, you had no extreme pain? Well, it would release the pain, and it would release the suffering, but what I'm saying now is my physical body is not in pain.

It's not in pain. And I thought that I needed pain to have the movement. You want the pain back?

[Speaker 16] (1:23:35 - 1:23:36)

Am I hearing that?

[Speaker 5] (1:23:36 - 1:23:49)

I didn't want the pain back, but when I had that level of pain, the movement just came so automatically, and now I don't have that level of pain, and the movement's not coming.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:50 - 1:23:57)

So the only problem is that the movements aren't coming? Or you want the pain back so you can get the movements coming?

[Speaker 5] (1:23:57 - 1:24:04)

That's been a temptation, but no, not actually. I long for the intensity.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:05 - 1:25:10)

Yeah, and that longing for the intensity is your obstacle. Yeah. Yeah.

You can never get something back from the past. Apparently. God has a much greater plan.

You want something back, so you're not accepting the present moment. Yeah. So you stay with the present moment.

Just space. What is right now?

[Speaker 5] (1:25:30 - 1:25:40)

Well, I'm calmer. I'm not sure what occurred, but I'm calmer.

[Speaker 2] (1:25:48 - 1:27:08)

By allowing this moment to be as it is, you release that contraction, the resistance to the present moment, to whatever it is that you feel. You don't even have to name it. In fact, naming it is just totally secondary.

It's just by giving yourself the space to be, no matter what form it takes, something shifts, an opening happens. So that very thought of wanting something back from yesterday kept you contracted from feeling presence now, and it can only be felt now. Do you do any form of movement?

That you go to yoga or tai chi, qigong, or whatever? Yes. And you access presence?

Yes. When you do that?

[Speaker 5] (1:27:10 - 1:27:24)

And then I compare. And so I've really done a great job at tormenting myself. Yeah.

It's that identification with thought, the mind coming in.

[Speaker 2] (1:27:24 - 1:28:01)

And that's the mind's job. It's not about getting rid of that either, because that's what the mind will do, is compare, will judge, will analyze, will conceptualize, interprets. And that's all happening on the periphery, on the outer layer, our cloaks, so to speak, the veil.

Our only job here is to go beneath the veil, allow the veil to be as it is, and you access that dimension that is presence, called presence, underneath the veil.

[Speaker 5] (1:28:02 - 1:28:15)

Well, I do feel something arising within me now, and I thank you. You're welcome.

[Speaker 2] (1:28:42 - 1:29:28)

We really are each other. Thank you for bringing that up. We are here to recognize ourselves in the other.

We are here to help the other access that dimension in themselves, of who they are. That's it.

[Speaker 17] (1:29:30 - 1:29:32)

I don't think it gets any better than that.

[Speaker 2] (1:29:48 - 1:33:34)

I couldn't explain it, and I don't think Eckhart could have explained it, but it was almost, it felt like for me, this magnetic pull, just to come together. So I followed that pull without thinking about it, and having to take it day by day. And I saw, as I mentioned when I started seeing the expectations I had, how the mind can want to try to pull away from that, somehow, let's call it an energetic pull, a pull that's beyond thought.

Because he didn't fit in with my image, but yet I couldn't deny this pull. So every time I sat still, there were many times in our relationship where I thought, I want out. It's not right for me.

These are the thoughts that was going on. It's just... Because I had these expectations that he wasn't fulfilling.

But yet every time I sat in meditation and I said, Do I want out now? And the answer was always no. What is it that I want now?

And that pull is still there. It hasn't gone away, it hasn't subsided. Will it go away?

I don't know. Will I be pulled somewhere else? I don't know.

But it doesn't matter because I'm not even going there. I just stay in this moment with this... The only word I can come up with is pull.

This pull just to stay here, be here. So it may not have that big romantic story behind it, but to me, that was. The romance is with this stillness and the form that came and arise, that's here, that I had the pull towards, is beautiful, is love.

And all the stuff on the human level, well, yeah, that needs to be worked out. And it does, it works itself out. And it's amazing how much it works itself up.

The more that you're rooted in stillness, it's like, oh, okay, because things begin to fall away. You know, the expectations fall away and other perhaps, you know, the ideas about what a relationship should be like fall away. And here you are, you're just here.

So that's how we came together. I followed. And you can call a pull an impulse, the energy.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:49 - 2:28:11)

Let's talk about meditation today and whatever else arises out of that. You never know beforehand. Meditation, as you may know, I don't teach meditation as such, not so much as a separate practice.

Presence practice, bringing presence into everyday life, is meditation. But there's also something to be said for having a structured practice every day. And it may not be right or absolutely necessary for everybody, but many people will find structured meditation every day helpful.

The thing is, I've come across many meditators who are extremely accomplished, have been practicing meditation, structured meditation for 20 or 30 years, and still they find that no matter what states of consciousness they achieve or enter into in their structured meditation, there's still a huge gap between their everyday life and their state of consciousness while they meditate. In other words, they tend to be almost as unconscious as a non-meditator in everyday life. So there's a gap that can arise in people who practice structured meditation between, this is my meditation, and then you get on with the rest of your life.

Meditation in the morning, in the evening, and then they move out of their meditation into the rest of their lives. To exemplify that, there's the example of the meditator, the man who is meditating on metta, a Buddhist meditation called loving-kindness, where you spread loving-kindness out from you. It goes something like, may I be well and happy, may I be well and happy, may I be well and happy, and as the words are used as pointers so that you emanate peace, you can feel yourself, and then you include the next circle, may everybody in this house be well and happy, may everybody in this city be well and happy.

Gradually you expand. May everybody in this state be well and happy, in this country, the entire planet. So it's quite a beautiful meditation.

Anyway, this man then was practicing the metta, loving-kindness meditation, and then the door opened and his daughter came running in, and so he opened it. I said, can't you see I'm doing my meditation? Get out of here.

Every day you disturb me while I'm doing it. I chose a gap between the practice and living. So if you are a meditator, or if you take up meditation, beware of that, and very important, meditation must not be confined to just one time period when you sit down, when you sit wherever you sit, on the floor, on a chair, on a cushion, and close your eyes.

Meditation needs to seep into everyday life, and this is what we call, of course, this is what we always address here, what the teaching is all about, that's the presence practice. And sometimes I recommend little, what I call mini-meditations, and this is really a presence practice that you can do wherever you are and in any situation. So I recommend, for example, every time you get into your car, when you close the door, not to immediately reach for the ignition, but to sit for at least about 30 seconds.

Don't do too much, not necessary. 30 seconds, and be present during those 30 seconds. You can choose either to have your attention on sense perceptions, visual, auditory, give it your complete attention, or you can have your attention on the fact that you are breathing, or you can have your attention on the feeling of the inner body as you sit there, the aliveness in the body.

30 seconds. Unless there's an emergency, you need to get to the hospital, your wife is pregnant, then don't do it. Or there's an extreme emergency.

Now, many people live their everyday life as if their entire life were an emergency. It's not the case. That's a deep-seated form of conditioning.

In other words, they live in continuous stress, and that's really treating everyday life as a continuous emergency. Imagine living like that. And don't imagine it.

Many people do. Living is amazing. So what does that mean?

A continuous emergency means there's a continuous, enormously powerful pull that pulls you out of yourself and out of the now into some kind of pursuit of future. That's the emergency, because the emergency means I need to get there. There are some real emergencies.

As I said, you may have to get to the hospital or you may have to... whatever it is. But mostly, it's not a real emergency.

It's a form of conditioning. The entire civilization is conditioned and conditions you in that way. It starts at school.

It starts the way people live at home and their family. There's always stress, always something to do. I don't personally have much experience anymore with visiting families like that because most people, if I visit people, they're already present, already living in presence.

So I don't have that much contact anymore with the normal dysfunctional families. But I know that many of them still exist, the majority. And I sometimes see it in films when you see very quite realistic films where you see a family interacting.

God, they're all insane. Let's do this. Have you done this?

Come on, let's do that. What's the next thing we have to do? This continuous stream of things arising in your mind, one mind object after another, content completely absorbed in the content of your mind, that's ultimately what it is.

And so never finding any kind of space in your life. And really that's what meditation is all about, finding that most precious of things, or no things, space. Without space, your life is, as I sometimes called Winston Churchill when he talked about human history, one damn thing after another.

And that's how many people experience their life. Just one, what's the next damn thing I have to do? And then you have a succession of damn things that you haven't done yet.

They're just waiting. And they're saying, give me attention, give me attention. And so you're torn.

It's a normal way to live these days. And even professions that used to be cushy and comfortable, like being a teacher, have become extremely stressful. And places that potentially could be and certainly should be places of healing, like hospitals, many of them are madhouses.

And sometimes the only grace that is still there is the nurses and a few doctors who are not completely lost, and they bring some presence into that situation. But very often the entire, everybody else is on the verge of a nervous breakdown continuously. There are even TV soap operas about life in a hospital.

It doesn't have to be like that. So this is a deep-seated form of conditioning and the absence, the lack of space. And really that is, another word for space, we could say being, the sense of being, the formless and timeless sense of being or aliveness, spaciousness.

If that's lacking in your life, really nothing much is going to help you, no matter what you achieve, because the most precious thing is not there. The beingness, the connectedness with being, one could put it like that. Some sense of inner spaciousness.

That's where peace emanates, inner peace can only emanate from there. There is no peace to be found in any of the objects, that objects of consciousness. Sometimes the object deceives you and says, if I can only obtain this object of my desire, then I will achieve inner peace.

Of course, then if you are lucky or unlucky enough to obtain it, then quickly you realize that it didn't do its job, it didn't do it for me. I thought fame would make me happy and complete it, and once fame comes, it comes to a few, to some it comes for a little while, famous for a day, or you may be famous for a couple of years, or you may be famous for the rest of your life, but I've met a few famous people and unless they have gone beyond identification with that, they are as unhappy or more unhappy than non-famous people. You very quickly see the downside of fame, big downsides, one of them being that newspapers invent stories about you.

That's not true. I never did that. I never said that.

Why are they writing this about me? Because they want to sell more papers. So you're being used by many people who are just too short.

So meditation then really is about, you could say, finding inner space, discovering inner space. I wouldn't say quite creating inner space because although I might have said it once or twice, it's not, words are always never quite right. You don't have to create inner space because inner space is your essential identity, the spaciousness of consciousness itself.

So in that sense, you don't need to create it, produce it, achieve it, and here we come already to the pitfall that many meditators succumb to or fall into, whatever, is that unconsciously they make their meditation into something to be achieved, a means to an end, and then you try to get better in your meditation practice. That sounds a good thing. Sounds like a good thing to do, to get better in my meditation practice, but what is being obscured by trying to get somewhere in your meditation, what's being obscured is the space that can only be accessed in the now.

So for many people it happens unconsciously that meditation, which could be a great thing, if it's not done rightly, it's just another way of attempting to get to some future achievement through your meditation. And of course you can achieve quite a few things. You can achieve a relatively still mind, but it won't be the real thing.

There'll be some kind of willpower behind it. It's not the discovery of inner space. You're holding, maybe you're holding the lid on the kettle.

You can sometimes look at a person, if you go to a place where there's people, group meditations, and you can sometimes see that in quite a few people there's a lot of strain and holding back while they meditate. Some people, sometimes in eastern places in Buddhist monasteries there are some Westerners and some Eastern people, and sometimes the Eastern monks are very impressed by the Westerners, some of the Westerners, because they can sit still. They have so much willpower.

They sit there. And of course they're showing everybody how great they are in their meditation. And of course that's not, you can see when there's a lot of wanting there, a lot of force behind it, and that's not it.

There's no discovery of inner space there. But potentially meditation could be used as a way of discovering space, inner space, finding it, connecting with it, and realizing that essentially you are it. Meditation then is usually connected, is always connected with your attention, directing attention is the beginning and essential part of every meditation is where is your attention.

Now for most people their attention is continuously absorbed by thought activity, very habitual. For many people that is so overpowering that they wouldn't even be interested in meditation. They may not even have heard of it.

It's not part of their reality. They are so absorbed in the continuously arising streams of thought that beyond that nothing exists for them and they are not looking for anything because apart from the continuously arising thoughts they don't know there's anything else. They are so identified with that that apart from the thoughts there is nobody there.

At least they don't know that there is a deeper dimension. It is obscured, completely obscured. So those people are then, we can say they are trapped in their ego because the meaning of ego is complete identification with the stream of thinking whereby the stream of thinking becomes invested with a sense of self.

And because you are identified with every thought that arises and that sense of self is the ego, the false self, normal human condition. So an orphanage is only when the living in that way creates more and more unhappiness that at some point the unhappiness or the stress either makes you ill or in itself is enough to create so much tension that something happens and that is the good side of suffering or unhappiness. At some point there's a slight awakening and there's a little crack in the egoic density, the shell of the ego.

And that's the wonderful thing about the ego is that it has built into itself a self-destruct mechanism. Sooner or later the ego, because of the unhappiness it generates, the stress and the suffering, sooner or later something cracks either directly or something in the body cracks in the physical and then that creates an opening. And then perhaps if something cracks then the person suddenly becomes interested in, ah, there may be more.

And then you might want to explore meditation or you're drawn to a spiritual teaching. And then you become aware for the first time of where your attention is. And then you become aware for the first time of the kinds of thoughts you think habitually.

It's not so much that you think the thoughts, it's the thoughts that inhabit your mind. You don't think them because they're just there, they arise. You don't think your thoughts, the thoughts, in the same way that you don't beat your heart.

And so some of your attention then, a little bit of your attention detaches from thinking and is there, and there's a little bit of a witness there that realizes what's going on in your mind. That's wonderful. And then the desire may come, well, okay, that wants to grow.

And then you might take up a meditation practice. And then you learn about your attention. Then you learn how enormously powerful the pull of your mind is that of continuously wanting more attention for thoughts.

And then you take up some meditation and the first thing you learn in meditation, in any meditation, is to direct your attention to some meditation object. So you learn to direct attention away from thinking onto some object. The object may be an external object, a flower.

It may be a candle flame. It could be anything. It could be a picture.

It could be directing your attention to a word that is repeated in your mind or a group of words, a so-called mantra. And then you repeat that in your mind. And instead of going into all kinds of thought activity, thought activity is reduced then to just a few words or one word.

And a mantra is a traditional Eastern thing and can be helpful for many people. You can create your own mantra too. You can say whatever.

God is. Even if you don't believe in God, you can say, God is. You can say, I am.

You can ask the question, Who am I? It's a wonderful meditation, very simple, favored by the Indian teacher Ramana Maharshi. He recommended it highly.

And if you don't want any kind of complicated meditation, I suggest you use that so your attention is directed to the words, Who am I? But you repeat every 20 seconds, 30 seconds, whatever feels comfortable in your mind, silently. So the focus of your attention is, rather than going into all kinds of thinking, is reduced to those words.

And the wonderful thing about this meditation, in a way one can say the more simple a meditation, the better. And this one is very simple. The wonderful thing about this meditation is you have your attention on the words.

But after you've said those words, those words are a question. Now usually a question demands an answer. And your mind might think that at some point some answer will come into your mind that will tell you who you are.

And it may even happen after you've done it for 10, 15, 20 minutes, suddenly your mind might say something. But whatever it says, that won't be quite it. Even if your mind says, well, your mind might say all kinds of things.

It might suddenly say you are a miserable wretch who has failed at everything you've done. Or your mind might suddenly say you are the greatest being that has ever come to this planet. You are here to redeem the world.

You are very special. It's happened to some, even to some people who've gone very deep. Suddenly this thought came.

And they completely believed in that thought. I am the greatest. And then they announced it to the world and started to write books.

And then not only they believed in that thought, some other people started to believe in that too. And then you have a cult. So that may come in.

Or you may have something much more subtle and perhaps closer to who you are. It might say you are timeless and unlimited consciousness itself. Well, that's better.

You can't really identify with that so much. And yet that's not quite it either because it's just another thought, just more concepts to believe in. A little bit better, I would say, than saying I am the greatest that has ever lived, but still a conceptual structure that then you believe in and identify with.

So you have to be careful with this meditation Who am I? Because no matter what your mind says in answer to the question will not be quite it. So why then ask the question Who am I?

Because what matters with this meditation is the silent space after the question. And the answer to who you are lies in the silent space after you have asked the question. And the only reason why you should then repeat the same question is to prevent all kinds of other thoughts from arising because the silent space may only have a limited lifespan from our external viewpoint.

It may be there for a few seconds and then some thought may come and say, Have I answered my e-mails today? And so to prevent that kind of thought from arising you just ask the question again. We need to know that because otherwise the mind, after you have practiced this meditation for a while, will become frustrated and say, Well, I've been doing this meditation that Eckhart talked about and that Ramana Maharshi recommended and I haven't gotten anywhere with it.

I still don't know who I am. I haven't had an answer. That's because you haven't paid attention to the space after the question.

So this is a wonderful meditation once you know what to be aware of and be careful not to fall into some kind of error or belief. Who am I? A beautiful, gentle question that directs your attention to that which cannot be named, that which cannot be understood through concepts, that which has no time to it.

It can very quickly put you in touch with yourself, so to speak. The mind then, mind activity subsides and there's just a beautiful space of beingness or presence. Who am I?

Ah, who am I? Space. And how often you need to ask the question as the space remains, then there's no need to repeat the question.

Be with the space for perhaps a minute. It's fine. And then just to make sure that perhaps the question you find is arising again.

Who am I? Wonderful meditation. You can also do it.

Sometimes people do it to each other. You can sit with your partner and look into his or her eyes and ask, Who are you? And don't, answers are not required, by the way.

Who are you? Who are you? Sometimes there are such things.

I've heard about it. I haven't experienced it. Meditation.

No, enlightenment intensives, I believe. I don't know if anybody has had that experience of a group. And as far as I know, I've been told people often spend hours asking this question.

And sometimes after two or three or four or five or six hours of being asked, Who are you? Apparently some people have a realization. Now whether if it's produced in such a way, whether it's a lasting realization, I don't know.

Somebody is shaking his head no, so that's the answer. So that's not needed. Don't overdo anything.

That's again a pitfall of, because people think if meditation is good, more of it must be even better and more of it must be better still. And then people become obsessed with meditation. And I've seen some people even going, becoming mentally very unbalanced after a while because they thought, Okay, I'm going to get there and I'm going to get there.

Where? You're there already. I will get there.

And then suddenly after doing eight, nine, ten hours of meditation every day for several weeks, they had to be taken away. So moderation, no need to overdo it. There's nowhere to get.

You think there's somewhere to get? No, there isn't. That's the very thing of meditation is that it opens up for you the depths of the present moment.

If you're going anywhere in your meditation, where you're going is more deeply into the now. That sounds very strange because when we talk about now, the timeless dimension, we're using words. All words originate in the world without the dimension of time.

So even to say, although I would say it's a true statement, but it's a paradoxical statement to say we are going more deeply into the now. More implies there's time. So there's always a paradox when you talk about the now using words and using words that originate in this dimension of time.

But that's how it is. So let's become comfortable with the paradox and say that meditation is about the deepening into the vertical dimension so that you are no longer lost in the horizontal dimension of life, past and future, one thought after another, one thing to do after another. And looking for yourself in the horizontal dimension where there is no, as the Buddha already said, there is no self there.

The self that you're looking for cannot be found. Anatta, I believe, in Pali. Anatta, no self, Buddha said, enormous insight 2,600 years ago, no matter where you go and what you do and what condition you enter into you will find it's not self.

And if you're looking for yourself where there is no self, you encounter dukkha, which means suffering. Wonderful. And suffering in whatever form, unhappiness, unsatisfactoriness, discontent, irritation, whatever, all forms of suffering.

So if you don't realize that there is no self in anything that you can identify with in the world of mind objects, whatever it is, possessions, relationships, places, people, situations, achievements, successes, failures, they're all no self. There's no self in them. They're just conditions that arise, come and go, come and go.

And that's the third part of the teaching of the Buddha. It's any mind object in any condition that arises is impermanent, impermanent. In the Pali language, anicca, I believe, fleeting.

So if you're looking for yourself in what is fleeting and what is impermanent, where there is no self, then you suffer. So the whole teaching is about, the Buddhist teaching, any spiritual teaching, is about the kingdom of heaven in the vertical dimension of now. So the meditation, if it works, takes you into the vertical dimension of now, and that is what this meditation does when you ask, Who am I?

Just what remains is there's no mind object, there's only this. Everything else falls away. Beautiful meditation.

Another meditation object, that is a very simple one. Again, the meditation object means that to which attention is directed is your breathing, and that's a very ancient meditation. Breathing is quite a nice meditation object because it does not have a clearly defined form.

It's a very subtle thing, and it's always there. It's always there. Mostly you're not aware of it, but you're always breathing, or breathing is always happening in your body, and so taking your attention to the fact that you are breathing is another very simple meditation that anybody can practice for ten minutes, fifteen minutes a day if you want to make it into a structured meditation, or you can take one conscious breath occasionally, which is already a mini meditation. What does that mean, one conscious breath?

It means you're aware of the air moving into your nose and into your body. Now there, people have developed various ways of being aware of that. The most basic form of this kind of breath awareness, which is designed for people who have an extremely noisy mind, and to ask them to be aware of their breath more than half a breath is too much to ask.

They can do half a breath, the in-breath, but by the time they breathe out, they're thinking about something else. So there are many people whose mind is so active, and perhaps even half a breath they can't do. And for those people, they have devised, well, they, I mean, these are some forms of meditation that are used in Buddhism, although they have nothing to do with Buddhism as such.

Anybody could use them. And there you start by counting your breaths. So if your mind is over, absolutely overactive, then you just go, as you breathe in, you count from one to nine, one, two, three, four, in your mind, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, a little pause, and as you breathe out, you count from nine to one, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one.

Now, of course, you're not free of thought there. You haven't found inner space yet, but this is for people who are burdened with an extremely noisy mind, and they should be doing that, they say, for perhaps a few months at least. And gradually you can reduce the number of counts, one to six, then you do one to three, and then if you're lucky, you can just do one or two, and that's called the counting.

It's part of a practice that is called in Buddhism I believe, Samatha, calm, to calm your mind. The next stage then, once you can do the counting, now many of you won't need that because your mind is not that active, otherwise you wouldn't be here listening to this. You would be off thinking about something else.

The next step, and this is perhaps for many of you might be helpful, is to follow, it's called the following, you follow the breast with your attention as it moves into the body. You can actually feel the air moving into the body, and then you follow it with your attention as it moves out of the body. That's quite a pleasant thing to do.

Let's just do it for a few breaths, with eyes closed, or eyes open. Eyes closed is probably easier. I'll keep my eyes open as I speak, but I'll also do it.

In breath, follow your attention, follow the breath, and out breath. In breath, and out breath. In breath, and out breath.

In breath, out breath. Quite pleasant. You have a meditation object that's very close to you, and that leads us even to a more subtle thing, that is to feel the air at the tip of your nose, where the air comes in.

It's a very subtle feeling. It's called the touching. So now you feel the air as it touches your nose on its way into the body.

Now to feel that, you need more acute attention. You can practice with that. So you will notice that the attention needs to be more acute so that you can catch that very subtle feeling where the air moves into the nostrils.

And then comes something that they don't even teach in all schools. The most important part in any meditation is to drop the meditation object. So once you can feel the subtleness of the air entering your nostrils, at that point, when you are good at it, drop it.

Finished. That's the end of the meditation because what remains then is attention itself, bare attention itself. And that's the space, consciousness itself.

So no matter what meditation object you use, one tends to get attached. If meditation, you become peaceful as you meditate. One tends to become attached to the meditation object.

And then that again is a pitfall in meditation because eventually every meditation object is to be relinquished so that what remains is the formless consciousness itself. That's the beauty of it. And that's the only reason why you have a meditation object.

The only thing is that many people find it hard to go directly from normal, mind-identified consciousness into the realization of consciousness itself. But that can be done. You can, as you sit here, often I invite you to realize that in yourself without necessarily going through a meditation.

So the opportunity is there at any moment to realize that in you that underlies all thought, that underlies all mind activity. So at any moment the possibility is there that you realize who you are beyond thought. And thought can subside suddenly.

It can happen spontaneously. And really the entire spiritual teaching is aimed at this simple realization of who you are underneath all the mind objects, underneath all the clutter of the mind, plus the emotions that go with the mind activity. So the ultimate, the aim of meditation is to find that clarity, that peace in that space.

But some people find it even without the meditation. Some people find it because life has become unbearably painful and suddenly they step out of that which created all the pain, identification with form. And then the closest in this teaching that we get to meditation is inner body.

And that's another beautiful thing. You can either... I usually recommend inner body awareness in everyday life, when you listen to somebody, when you're looking at something, especially nature, connect with the aliveness within and then look at the tree so that you're not putting abstraction onto the aliveness of that being that we call tree, that beautiful, mysterious...

Everything is mysterious. And the mind believes that once you have put a label on something, you know it. But you can see that it's a pseudo-knowing.

It's fine as a practical thing in everyday life. But to call a tree a tree or that's an oak tree or that's such and... There are many different kinds of oak trees.

So now, no, it's not just an oak tree. That is such and such an oak tree. Oh, okay.

Now I know what it is. Finished. I'm finished with that.

What's the next thing I can label? So you haven't actually connected with a tree. You haven't contacted the essential reality of that thing that the mind calls tree, the depth of it, the mystery of it, because you believe that once you call something by a name, then you know what it is.

It's not. It's just an attachment of a concept onto something that is profound. And you do it to yourself.

You attach concepts and labels to who you think you are. And then that becomes, then you miss the profundity of your very being. So then you're trapped again.

That's the horizontal dimension of thought. So we need to break through that, not believing in the thoughts that arise, especially thoughts that concern you or other people. Who am I?

Well, then you refer to your personal history or the way in which you interpret your life. Nothing to do, essentially, with who you are. Not believing in labels.

And so, feeling the inner body can be done as a structured meditation or can be practiced in everyday life as a way of anchoring yourself in the now, as a way of keeping the conceptualizing mind out of the way and relating more deeply to people and things, whatever it is you perceive, the life around you. The inner body, when it's done as a structured meditation, is quite an old meditation, been around for hundreds or perhaps thousands of years. The practitioners of this meditation believe that that was one of the meditations originally taught by the Buddha and they have some scriptures to prove it.

Of course, nobody knows what the Buddha actually said. Many of the scriptures were written much, much later. But that doesn't matter.

It is a powerful meditation. They call it vipassana and it's a very structured meditation where you gradually, your attention gradually goes from one part of the body to the other. You can do it as a, learn it as a practice if you want.

The way I recommend inner body is less structured or hardly structured. I might say, feel the aliveness in your hands as you sit here and then feel the aliveness in your feet at the same time. Feel the aliveness means direct your attention there, away from thinking.

Feel the aliveness throughout the body as you sit here and listen. And then if you want to make it into a structured or more real kind of so-called meditation, then you sit upright in a chair or on a floor, close your eyes and go deeply into that feeling of aliveness. That's quite beautiful too.

So that all your attention is in that intense sense of aliveness that pervades the entire body where it isn't really the body anymore. Well, you don't know what it is. It's just aliveness.

And there's no longer, when you go deeply into that aliveness, you can do it as I speak. If you close your eyes or even with your eyes open, close your eyes, go into that aliveness and even the sense of I am aware of the aliveness disappears because the consciousness and the aliveness become one. So this is a good meditation because the meditation object you merge with the meditation object.

There isn't you and the object. So when you go deeply into the inner body in your meditation with your eyes closed, you get a sense that you are that field. The inner body is the field of consciousness, the spaciousness.

You are that. It is aware of itself. You are aware of yourself.

No duality. When you go deeply into the body, there is no duality of the observer and the observed. The observer and the observed are one.

That's a wonderful realization. And then when you sense that strongly, then you open your eyes and stay connected with that sense and then look around the room or wherever you are and then you feel the depths and sense perceptions. Beautiful.

That's the way absolute balance between the outer world of form and the inner world of being. You're connected with being.

[Speaker 16] (2:28:13 - 2:28:14)

Wow.

[Speaker 1] (2:28:16 - 3:03:19)

So that's just a wonderful meditation practice. If you want to do it in a more formal way, do it once a day or so, twice a day. Sit somewhere quiet, erect, not lying in some...

because you would fall below thinking if you lie on a sofa or couch, want really relax and do your meditation. You will quickly fall below thinking. That's the only reason why people then attempt to sit erect.

And if you want to sit cross-legged on the floor and if it's... that can, on the one hand, can be a distraction. It can also be something that's part of your meditation.

If your legs start to hurt... These days it's painful for me to sit like that. My legs start to hurt after a few minutes.

But if that happens, that's fine. You can surrender to that and then there's a space around it. That too can become part of your practice.

I think Kim will have more to say about that. That too can become part of your practice. Pain arises while you sit.

Do you need to immediately do something about it or can you just say or say nothing, just be with it, which means there's a space around it. It's completely accepted for what it is and so that it just is. And that brings me to another aspect of meditation, any meditation that you do.

Discomfort may arise sometimes during meditation. Discomfort is something that everybody is familiar with. Some people spend their whole lives in discomfort, psychological discomfort.

And so if discomfort arises or irritation arises or impatience arises or any kind of mind condition arises and you can learn there to simply be with it, you accept the form that this moment takes in the form of pain in the knee. You accept the form of this moment. And that in itself can become a meditation.

And that is why in Zen, Zazen, school of Zen, they have a meditation that they call sitting. No structure whatsoever. All they tell you is sit and be with what is.

And you sit for hours and be with what is. That's the Zen meditation. And they put you in a room, you're facing the wall, and then they open the windows in the winter and the cold air comes in and you sit there shivering and you be with what is.

And then you observe your mind, what it comes up with. What am I doing here? What's the point of all this?

This is dreadful. I could be home in a warm bed. Oh my God, this is so stupid.

And then you be with the mind, the thoughts that arise in your mind. You see that, be with that. And you don't say to the thoughts, I mustn't have these thoughts.

No, whatever is, you be with what is. That's the Zen meditation that has no other structure or no structure except that sitting. That's why they don't even call it meditation.

They call it sitting. And so they ask you when you go to a monastery, how long have you been sitting? And you say, I'm not sitting, I'm standing.

What they mean is, how long have you been meditating? Oh, I've been sitting for 25 years. So hopefully they no longer need the Zen monastery.

And that's an interesting thing that's really where this is the way to live, to be with what is because what is already is. And to fight that is absurd. And so that's what you learn then in your Zen meditation, the most simple form of meditation, and some people would say the most difficult form of meditation, just sitting.

And again, you can use that even without a teacher. You can just sit. There's nothing much to learn beyond that, just sitting and being with what is.

The only thing you don't have, the helpful thing in some Zen monasteries, somebody to hit you with a stick from behind the moment he sees that you are drifting off somewhere. Whack! And then you have to say, Thank you.

So that meditation then, being with what is, has no specific meditation object except the condition that arises at this moment. That is, whatever condition arises at this moment, externally or internally, externally is the meditation object. An emotion, a thought, a feeling, a physical sensation, or externally, cold air, warm air, heat, cold, people making funny noises around you, disturbing noises, a lawn mower, drill, brrr, be with what is.

everything and again that's in this meditation whatever is is incorporated into the meditation so you can never say I can't meditate because this is happening well that's part of the meditation so whatever happens is incorporated into the meditation so there are no excuses left then I can't meditate because the children are screaming well that's your meditation object be the space for that and then you learn really that's a it's a preparation for living in that way that's the ultimate the real meditation is and that's the awakened state of consciousness whatever arises at this moment whatever condition arises at this moment is part of the business of life and is therefore accepted fully doesn't mean you become powerless it means you contact enormous power you become an expression of enormous power which is the power and intelligence of life itself which can then act through you and come into this world true intelligence so and that can only come if you no longer obstruct the power of the present moment it's always there now the fact that you can't obstruct the power of the present moment does not mean that you are more powerful than it it means it's just somebody who closes as I sometimes give the example of closing the shutters the Sun can't come in it doesn't mean the shutters are more powerful than the Sun so this is the most powerful way to live then that the Zen meditation can just show it to you you can you can practice there and then the vital thing is to live it in daily life and for that so a meditation can be very helpful especially very simple meditations you don't need the complicated ones well except as I said the counting if your mind is totally mad then you have to start with the counting you can't just be with what is because you won't don't even know what is when you sit down your mind will immediately go off into what isn't here it doesn't it could go off into thinking about my investments what's going to happen to them be with what is no no I have to think about the investment make to think about the falling property prices God's what's going to happen if I'm never going to sell my house and my my life insurance my whatever anything except what is I need to worry about it if I don't worry about it it'll all fall apart I need to be responsible and hold it together by worrying about it especially in the middle of the night and so Zen teaches you then the simplicity of the isness that's really the secret of Zen is that simple to be with what is and that's why the Zen master said well the story goes that some disciples said went to their Zen master and said the other master from that other monastery we were just told that he can walk across the river he walks on water what can you do they asked the master and of course the famous answer of the Zen master was what can I do when I'm hungry I eat when I'm tired I sleep that's the answer it means he's absolutely just totally present in whatever arises that's all that is needed no stuff around it just the simplicity of this moment just facing this moment as it is when you are completely aligned with this moment you're in continuous meditation you're in meditation now by simply being with what is that's the that's the successful Zen meditator is that and not only that if you live in that way for as long as you live in that way you are the spiritual master you don't to be a spiritual master you don't need to know anything people sometimes think you need to have a lot of knowledge to be able to be a spiritual teacher it's not true the all you need is to be completely aligned with the present moment and then whatever is needed in the moment will come through you and you will never go beyond your expressed real life experience and you don't need to so any answer that's needed either in your own life or for somebody else if you can just be with what is become present and still then that's primordial intelligence operating and is the spiritual teacher you never become a spiritual teacher and if you feel that okay I'm now ready to be a teacher no the best feeling is actually to feel that you are not ready to be a teacher and you don't know anything you have nothing to say and nothing to teach that's the start of every talk I give what else can I say I've been talking for so long what else is there to say it's completely empty nothing and that's what the teaching there is doesn't come from the the person or the person's accumulated knowledge it comes through the person so the person really is never ready to be a teacher and if the person is ready then that's a delusion you don't have to be ready you just have to be spacious enough spacious in other words get out of the way as it's can put it if you get out of the way it happens through you and you can you live in that way it's not just I'm just using the example of spiritual teaching anything that you do that is truly powerful you have to in the moment of doing at least or in the moment of creation you have to get out of the way and it comes through you and every creative person unless the ego has come back and and obscured that wonderful flow of aliveness unless the ego has come back and then claims some kind of merit and so the creator feels superior to other humans because I did that no you didn't it happened because you got out of the way and then the primordial intelligence and the power of life the power of now came through you that's how it happened and that's how any true creation happens it's interesting I have some questions here questions that if people have been asking for example about art and music relationship between the state of being present and creating art or music of course there is it is their presence in music somebody asks well it depends on who who is creating the music how is it coming from and there is a fundamental difference anybody can verify of it and anybody in deep down knows it for example music where does it where does it truly original music come from and I'm not just talking about classical music even relatively simple music some of it comes from his place of originality and power it is inspired it almost comes into this world ready-made as if it were it's already it's already there somewhere and then the person who writes this music or plays this music is just receiving it and any great act of creation is a receiving and so the this is how and sometimes to a human being a stream comes where they are connected with that and every piece of music they write is has this originality and power to it and strange enough humans recognize it when they hear it those are lots of music that survives if you listen to the radio you will find many kinds of continuous playing music now most things that you listen to they they may be popular for a few weeks or a few months sometimes a few days and then it disappears but there are some pieces that don't disappear you hear them again and if you switch on the radio in 10 years you still hear that piece if you switch on the radio in 50 years from now they're still playing it some and why there is a qualitative difference between that and ordinary stuff that the mind tries to create without the connectedness with where all creativity comes from and so it's contrived it may even be clever but it hasn't have that that quality so even simple music like the Beatles songs they came from somewhere deeper it's it's not some people say well you can't compare the Beatles to Beethoven's 9th symphony but you can they came from the same place it's just a bit of 9th symphony is obviously more complex but they both have this spark of originality to them that a human just cannot create it the human mind alone cannot do that and it can even happen that a person can spend a whole life making music and only one one night he or she connects with that ground where all creativity arises that was the case for example I read about it recently there was a woman in South Africa who went to court because her husband had composed a piece of music the only good thing that he was ever remembered for he composed a piece of music but because he was a black man at that time her husband had died at that time in South Africa black people had no rights so here he sold this piece of music for five dollars and he had been playing music all his life only one night he wrote this piece that came from a deeper everything else that he wrote disappeared this piece survived because it had that essential quality of aliveness and originality to it and so she finally got several million dollars from this one piece of music that he composed one night which is which at first became popular throughout Africa and then throughout the world it's called the lion sleeps tonight the lion sleeps tonight wonderful just there's something there you just you can't make that up so that's the I'd like to sing the whole thing I can't remember the words so no matter what you do in life whatever you do the that connectedness is vital and knowing that it's not up to me ultimately up to me is only to connect with the the depths of being within that's up to me and then whatever you do that the power will flow into it and if it's very limited what you do then sometimes you may let's say you have a job in a factory and there's just no scope for anything much to happen if if all you do is pick up a box from here open it and put put in three things close the box and hand it on and pick up another box then it doesn't the important thing is not to fall into negativity and say there's nothing and connect with the aliveness and if life sees that there's no outlet in your present circumstances for the power within you life will put you somewhere else the first thing that may happen is that you lose your job and then because you're connected with the power within you're not going to complain because you you're going to be like the the man that I mentioned the other day who whatever happened he shouted God is great so if you lose your job you say God is great great it must be the right thing and so often it might look negative because life needs to disrupt your present circumstances to make room for something else so if you connect with the power within and life when I say life I mean primordial the one intelligence that pervades the universe if if there is no outlet in your present circumstances for power the power that is within you then life will remove your present circumstances and create circumstances where there is an outlet but if you are already doing something and if that what you're doing already could become infinitely enhanced if you connect with that source of creativity within you then you will find that you stay where you are it's just an enormous expansion if you are playing in the street the guitar or whatever for a few pennies busking in the and you suddenly you connect with that and you even begin to play original things then something will happen and that thing will expand life may not take you away from your guitar it will empower the guitar and suddenly somebody walks past you and stops for a second saying come and see me so that's the wherever you are trust your responsibility is to embrace the power of the present moment within you to not resist the isness of whatever condition is now that obstructs the power so I'm really we've been talking about meditation but it always comes back to living how to live in this moment now that's what it's all about and becoming good at meditation is nothing the question is are you good at living do you live connected with the power or cut off from it the power of yourself ultimately the power of the universe so then what you learn in these in the Zen meditation is not to complain about anything in your life but to incorporate everything into the into your meditation and now your meditation is your life that's ultimately what it is it's not the little meditation period that can be a it can be a practice ground for life but ultimately what matters is life and life is now so if you're practicing incorporating whatever happens while you sit in meditation into the meditation nothing can happen that will that will obstruct your meditation because it's immediately and then nothing can happen in your life that will obstruct the power but not if you complain and resist what is the power comes when there is inner alignment with what is the isness of now no matter what form that takes that's where power comes into your life and that's in all the that's in all the teachings and so that's all that meditation to can teach you show you to do you don't need time it's a little absurd to say I need time to become good at accepting the present moment or to take a three-year course in accepting the present moment I'm learning to accept the present moment but I'm not there yet so there's nothing that you need to add to your life so that you can finally accept the present moment there are many delusions that the mind will bring up why why you why you can't do it now I can accept everything except where I live or accept whatever that my parents don't understand me or accept the remember that acceptance has nothing to do with some kind of story in your mind that's not acceptance this is often a delusion when people misunderstand when I speak of acceptance so some people say okay I need to accept that I have no money in the bank that I'm poor that I've ruined my life I need to accept that I live in a dreadful place or if you call it dreadful what where's the acceptance you've already judged it as bad you have already called your life I need to accept that I'm ruined that all my investments have collapsed and I'm completely ruined all these things are stories in your mind it would be absurd I need or I need to accept that I'm I'm ill of course you may be ill from the point of view of medical viewpoint that may be the case but that is not what you need to accept because this feeling I am ill is a mental construct all you need to accept is the reality of this moment and in this moment there is no illness but there may be pain there may be discomfort there may be disability there may be weakness in the body this is this is how this so-called illness manifests at this moment so all you need to accept is whatever manifests in this moment not some idea around it then you get into illusion so the person who is who has an illness you don't accept I need to accept that I have cancer that I have AIDS that I I need to accept whatever no that's the story acceptance only concerns this moment whatever it is that you feel or experience at this moment so you're not denying that you're ill nor you nor do you subscribe to that belief that you're ill you just leave that alone and you address only the conditions that arise at this moment in your life and that's what you accept and with that often if it is an illness then you accept only the symptom as it appears at this moment because it is already there at this moment there's pain there's a disability there's this there's that that's what is that becomes part of your meditation practice which is your life so your life because all you ever need to accept is that let's say you're in prison let's say your sentence is 25 years so you sit in that cell and I'm talking about that because often I get correspondence from people in prison so you if you then say okay I need to accept that I'm stuck in here for the next 25 years and that I've I've messed my whole life up completely I need to accept that no that's a story and that's time all you need to accept is at this moment you're sitting here there's a little window you're looking out of the window you're breathing you feel the aliveness of the inner body there's a little metal plate in front of you and you're eating a piece of bread and there's a glass of water and you're drinking that and there are the walls that you're seeing and these are the conditions of this moment and they are as they are you add nothing to them like dislike good that's the Zen master you're the master you add nothing to it and you the bare conditions of this moment are as they are that's what you accept and with that power comes and with that internally you become free of dependency on external conditions that's what incredible power comes into your life and it's often the case that miracles happen when you enter and live in that state of consciousness and even so you might have 25 years sentence in prison and you could find that unexpectedly something happens and you're free not and I don't necessarily mean an opportunity comes to escape it could come in a different way it's probably won't come in that way and if it doesn't you're still free in prison and I've had correspondence from people in prison said I found freedom here and to them the prison has become like a Buddhist like a Zen monastery whatever condition arises is part of the meditation and so that's the I'm saying that so that you don't it's easy to misunderstand the term acceptance acceptance is always the simplicity of this moment that is to be accepted not a story around this moment and then gradually you learn to live less and less with stories imposing stories on your life and traveling through life with the heaviness of stories of what who you are in relationship to the world not good enough or better than most but if you think you're better than most underneath is the fear that you're not good enough anyway that's why you have to think you're better than most all kinds of stuff that people live with and live through no just your life is now that's the life is always only always now and that is the focal point of your consciousness now and you're aligned with now and the moment you're aligned with now you become the space for now you were it already but you didn't know it now consciously you become the space for now and you're free and that's where power comes suddenly through you and only if enough humans begin to live in that way is the world going to truly change and then you have fulfilled the purpose of your life on earth aligned with the evolutionary purpose of the entire not just the planet the evolutionary purpose of the entire universe wants that it wants the flowering of that new consciousness to happen and that's why we're here it's not going to happen it's happening us being here is because it's happening we are not in expectation of utopia or something like that we are not in expectation that a new world is going to arise no we are here because the new world which is based on the new state of consciousness is arising there's no future expectation and we don't need the world to change to become free no becoming free comes first then the world changes it's so simple that's why the mind says oh this is hard

[Speaker 4] (3:05:12 - 3:05:56)

hi I have a question about conflict resolution can you suggest ways to maintain presence in a relationship when an issue arises over which you and the other person completely disagree yet a compromise must be found can you read that again slower okay can you suggest ways to maintain presence in a relationship when an issue arises over which you and the other person completely disagree and yet a compromise must be found that's everyone's marriage

[Speaker 2] (3:05:56 - 3:13:44)

isn't it yeah we like to hang on to those opinions and ideas and when we do it's very difficult to hear the other person it doesn't mean that we have to agree with them because you have your own but so long as you're identified with your own then you block the opportunity for expansion and mutual connection to resolve this can you drop your would you call it your idea or your opinion or your thought about it whatever the conflict is you have an opinion about it can you completely let that go and just hear the others first you heard yourself because you know you're pretty well probably sticking to it right can you kind of put that aside and just listen it doesn't mean that they're right and it doesn't mean that you're right either doesn't mean that they're wrong and it doesn't mean that you're wrong but can you actually hear their point of view if you're stuck on your own you won't hear it if you can get let go of your own you can hear it and then when you hear it maybe something will go oh I never thought of it that way before oh okay then you go back and you look at yours hmm well maybe I can let that one go because actually there's something in what he's saying here or maybe it's that okay a solution can come through because there's an opening so long as you're firmly planted in your view life cannot get through this but if you open and be the space for allowing life to come through then creativity something can arise we want conflict resolved right now don't we I mean actually you know men have this way of being able to walk away and give it no they do honestly I've watched this they have this way of walking away to give it space you know and women they're like a second where are you going honey like come back here like I want to talk about this now we've got to solve this now right now and then we get in a house where is he going like why is he leave right now we can solve this right now where did they get that from being able to walk away you know and where did we get that from that we got to solve this right now I mean that's not in all cases I'm generalizing here it could be the reverse too but you know there's kind of a higher degree of men walking out don't you think so okay Wow what a teacher that is he's walked out okay I'm left with this was I open did I let my viewpoint go because really if I was open then he wouldn't have probably walked out okay I'm left with myself okay let's see if I can enter this next one being open the next round and at the same time because you know know that women it's it's it's a feminine aspect what can you say it's it's part I mean we're just more emotional we feel our emotions and there's nothing wrong with that so don't start you know especially you men out there judge or even women this is what we do because we have also come into a more masculine world and our masculinity is starting to come out we judge ourselves for our emotions and here in the West let's put that down no no no can't feel that can't go there it's just part of our not only conditioning but it's part of who we are yes we're trying to break through conditioning there will be one time that we're not reactive to emotions but right now we have had and women had to suppress this so you better believe that when something is going to be pressed down soon enough it's going to erupt and maybe perhaps the challenge then for men would be can you allow this without walking out and just be the space for the eruption but of course if you're gonna go into your own pain body attack about it then it is best that you walk out because you don't want to get into a big conflict right so we need this expression because we are expressions of consciousness but right now because of the way we have agreed in our society that we have to be a certain way and let's not look at this let's keep this down so let's find this mutual understanding to come together in consciousness to express to find a way that we can move through life together in this has been the challenge not only in personal relationships although they come up there the most but in all relationships that arise in the moment whether it's the person at the checkout counter so even your point of view is not it can you let go of that just to be you the stillness to be the space in

[Speaker 1] (3:13:44 - 4:15:16)

which forms arise even conflict thank you as I often point out it's helpful as we sit here to be aware of the present moment and your presence here to feel your presence not your thought activity but a deeper presence without which thought couldn't even happen just to feel that which cannot be defined that dimension in you that has nothing to do with the personality but without which the personality could not exist nothing to do with emotions but without which emotions could not be nothing to do with thoughts or sense perceptions but without which thoughts and sense perceptions could not even be that is presence and that is inseparable from the depths of what we call the present moment so in the dimension of depth what we call the present moment which is far more than the surface of the present moment which is all this in the dimension of depth you and the present moment are one the realization to put that into words like that you and the now ultimately in the deepest sense are one that I had not verbalized that when I was writing the power of now so unfortunately it didn't get into the book so there's something throughout your life in the dimension of depth that never changes and you can call it can the space of now not what happens in the space but the deepest place of now you can call that who you are in your essence formless dimension spirit spiritual dimension and that that's the essence of spirituality is to feel that in the background of your being and then you become less dependent on externals and that's a great liberation not to be dependent for your sense of happiness or aliveness or fulfillment on external things because they come and go all the time so the they like me to have a topic that you can name for my talks here so let's call it freedom from externals and to introduce it I just like to read to you an extremely short true story takes about one minute which comes from the Sufi tradition the mystical branch of Islam a deeply peaceful form of Islam yes it exists so I would like to do one in one of our sessions soon spent a whole session on the Sufis they're wonderful so I will read this little extremely short true story to you which is all to do with freedom from externals the title of the story is the slave without a master wandering in a patchwork robe his face blackened by the Sun a certain dervish dervish are Sufi mendicants kind of wandering in a patchwork robe his face blackened by the Sun a certain dervish arrived at Kufa where he was seen by a merchant the merchant spoke to him and decided that he must be a lost slave and the merchant said because of your mild manner I will call you career which means good are you not a slave that I am said career the merchant said I will take you home and you can work for me until I find your master I would like that said career for I have been seeking my master for such a long time he worked for many years with this man who taught him to be a weaver hence his second name Nassau's so his name became if I pronounce it correctly career Nassau's good weaver after his long services feeling guilty of his exploitation the merchant said to him I do not know who you are but you are now free to go carry a Nassau's the great master of the way traveled onward to Mecca without regrets for he had discovered how to continue his development in spite of having no name and being treated like a slave he was a teacher of Shibli of Ibrahim covers and many more of the great teachers of the Sufis he died over a thousand years ago at the age of 120 this is a somewhat extreme example of somebody practicing being free of dependency on external conditions I believe that the Sufi who became later the Sufi master that he voluntarily said yes I am a slave he accepted that situation as the background to his practice now it says in the story he was able to continue his development is in a development despite having no name or just a name that somebody gave him and being a nobody and what is that inner development that the story refers to continued his inner development it is a dissolving of any kind of mental or conceptual sense of identity form identity so that that in you which is beyond form can emerge more fully and as that in you which is beyond form which is a deep sense of aliveness and peace that emerges from within as you let go of dependency on your thinking to tell you who you are other people who tell you who you are you let go of dependency on that complete freedom from externals so it sometimes happens that when external conditions become particularly unpleasant or difficult at first there's a inner resistance there's steep suffering and sometimes the point is reached when the resistance which is of course consists ultimately of mental judgments about your situation the resistance is relinquished you let go of calling your situation anything it just is as it is that's the beginning then of freedom from external conditions but we don't have to wait until we stand on the deck of the Titanic that's going down or a similar situation we don't have to wait for that it may happen but it may not happen and of course there's no guarantee that then there will be a complete acceptance it seems almost impossible in some situations to completely accept a situation let's start with more simple things and look at your own life and see in what areas of your life you are dependent for your happiness or well-being or sense of fulfillment on external conditions and how perhaps how easily a change in external conditions can trigger immediately a change in your inner state and to see for example that as you're standing in line somewhere for a little longer than you think you should be standing in line as you stand there already irritation arises been here for 10 minutes and the the irritation of course it's a thought I've been here for 10 minutes and it's too long and as soon as you have the thought this is too long they should do something whoever they are they should do something this is not right then the body responds with an emotion so the situation is it's wonderful to examine that because when you see it in yourself it's an it's already a beginning of an awakening there's no personal shortcoming in you because oh I did that I did that when we were standing in line this morning well that you did that is perfectly normal but that you realize that you did that that's beginning of awakening it's even deeper awakening if you could realize you are doing it in this moment of course it's a little easier to realize it afterwards because the energy behind the thought is not as strong so let's go back to that situation of course life consists of things like that little things in every day things arise and you get upset and it's normal but upset is only a small beginning of suffering irritation is a mild form of suffering and then comes anger and then comes all the complaining all the mind movements that go with that so stay with one simple thing because the mechanism of the simple thing is the same even in bigger things how you lose peace in their peace so easily I'm not nothing personal many of you are already beyond that I'm talking to those few and the others can just enjoy it's how easily inner peace is lost for little things for little things waiting for too long somebody not treating me the way they should be treating me being unpleasant rude a person in the traffic doing something that he should not be doing all kinds of little things or you break something or you lose a little thing and you don't realize that the most precious thing is your inner state in a peace by peace I don't mean a dead peace where you desensitize yourself and say I don't feel I feel okay but you don't feel alive anymore the true inner peace is a deep sense of aliveness to feel fulfilled and it's inseparable from from it's a kind of joy not necessarily the ecstatic joy you don't go through life Wow some people try it but you can't sustain that but a peaceful and alive energy field in the background that's inner peace that's the most precious thing in your life far more important than where you are or what's happening around you and it's given up because of mental habits you lose it so often so once you're aware of that then you can observe the mechanism how you lose that how quickly it can happen and when you're really alert you can see that what's the mechanism behind it and the mechanism behind it is of course the thought that arises that says something about this this shouldn't be happening it complains or whatever it does the thought but you don't know it's just a thought to you it is inseparable from the situation so if you don't know that the thought you have about a situation is inseparable from the situation that's unconsciousness because then you say it's a dreadful day because it's raining you have mixed up a judgment with the external condition it's a dreadful day not realizing that the dreadful is your mental judgment and today is as it is or you say standing in line here for so long is dreadful no you've mixed up two things a judgment and the situation but if you disentangle them and then you see here is what is and here's what my mind is saying about it and then suddenly you see that by believing totally in every judgment that arises you immediately lose your peace you become dependent on external conditions for your happiness so once you see that then you can actually no longer believe in the judgment or you can even relinquish it and that's when that comes when you realize your power to do that for the first time in situations where usually you would have complained or become irritated or angry and this and suddenly you find oh I'm not complaining anymore I'm not irritated or the thought comes in you say okay this is the thought and here's what is I just stay with what is because all the thought does is it adds suffering the situation might be physical discomfort but it's not suffering this is as it is that's an enormous liberation when you can be in a place that before your mind would have called I don't want to be here well but you are here and then you're just here without any judgment and suddenly it's okay that's the beginning of freedom from externals and that's liberation and that's continuous practice with all the little things that happen throughout your day you practice in that way so that gradually you go into situations without mental judgments and you still know what you need to do the mind says no I will never do anything anymore then you still know what you need to do and action you can take action but not based on condemnation and negative energy so to become free of externals is an essential part of course of spiritual awakening we're leaving aside the extreme situations we gets relatively rare of course that also is extremely useful to look at but let's just work with normal daily life people the most challenging thing in your spiritual awakening is other people because other people use most of people are identified with their mind and they can easily pull you into identification with your mind and the question is whether you are able to accept the other human as he or she is in this moment as you accept a place where you are as you accept a situation you're in without looking to your mind to tell you something about that situation is this something to be practiced tried out in your life continuously and more and more what arises then is a consciousness that is not conceptual an intelligence that is not conceptual that then begins to operate also it's not just passive it begins to operate in your life it takes the place of what was operating before which is the mind made thought-based sense of identity with its conditioning and reactivity which asks what's the next thing I can react to it's looking many human minds or egoic minds are looking for the next thing to react to they don't know it of course and the slightest thing you say or do you can they go you should know better you shouldn't be saying that so there's a the usual thing that runs your life the egoic self consisting of usual thought patterns gradually is replaced by a deeper intelligence that is not conceptual and non-judgmental and it comes up and it looks at the world without imposing judgments on it and at that moment whenever that happens you are free of dependency on external conditions because you're only dependent for your inner state you're only dependent on external conditions as long as you believe in your thoughts about the external conditions external conditions including places situations people so in some ancient traditions people in a very extreme way they saw the truth of this and they practiced they said okay I'm going to become a mendicant I'm going to give up dependency on anything and I will just go from place to place with nothing give up all dependency on external conditions as a spiritual practice this is not practical in the West almost impossible to do in the West the whole cultural background is not there for that we have to do it in some other way if you want to be a mendicant you can still do it in India besides of course many places are too cold in the West to be a homeless wanderer I experienced homelessness for a while and it was a beautiful experience it could have been terrible if my mind still had had some judgments about it but as already the mind had given up complaining and calling any situation bad or calling my life useless or having some kind of opinion about who I am without that opinion without all these mind structures this moment was simply as it is as it always is and that it is wonderful then to be able to appreciate the aliveness of this moment no matter what form it takes this is the practice now you still have to work with your mind and be vigilant so that you can be there when your mind brings up thoughts don't believe in the judgments of your mind don't rely on the judgments of your mind be the deeper consciousness the unconditioned consciousness behind the mind the challenges of life are very helpful without them you would go to sleep people complain and say I want my life to be more conducive to spiritual work I want to have more time to really do what well I want to do and really if that were the case for even if if all if the for people to create great things if those people who had perfect conditions in their lives to create then the aristocrats in past centuries would have been the great artists and writers and philosophers but the strange thing is it very few of them they had everything they didn't need to work they called all the others the working classes it's where the word comes from because there was another class it didn't work so there was that class they just lived on their land their possessions and that huge houses everywhere the chateaus in France the mansions in England and and so yes they were very cultured they read many things they had great paintings in their houses very few of them actually became great artists or philosophers or painters or writers or scientists a few but they should have been much higher proportion because they had ideal condition they didn't have to work for a living they but no but their life was not focused enough it was dissipated and often the great great creators were people who had to struggle very hard against all the odds and if there's a similar thing here in spirituality the word as far as spiritual awakening is concerned don't demand better conditions for spiritual awakening that's a very common thing and that's of course is a mind creation it's the mind loves that the mind also loves to complain about your situation and why it's not good enough for your spiritual awakening if it were different yes if I could allow if I had enough money to go to travel around like that woman did who wrote that book that has now become a movie if I had the money to do that I could explore and I could go and see the teachers and that would be it I could I could really do something for my body so that it doesn't have all the ailments anymore I could go to the greatest spas and resorts and have massages every day and be have hot stones on and rubbed in oils and rose petals and surely I would get enlightened very quickly and now if you tried it suddenly let's say you have enough money and then come back back after a few years and let me know how it's going and you will find no what seems the most conducive situation for spiritual awakening to the mind is not necessarily the most conducive situation for you for spiritual awakening it's just what the mind's opinion that unfortunately or fortunately that's not the reality of it and the strange thing is the reality of it is that the situation that you are in right now is the one that is right for you to work with for spiritual awakening this situation is right it was otherwise how do you know that because it is it is the totality has brought this about this moment and that's been given to you to work with so to speak to apply consciousness to in the same way that a sculptor who works with wood is giving a piece given a piece of wood this is the piece of wood for you to work with and for some people their life situation looks very easy there may be a few but often you're deluded when you look at the external situation of a human being say oh I wish I had a life like that which is the case when you read magazine certain magazines that tell you the glossy surface of famous people's and rich people's lives and you believe that what you see all you see is the glossy surface that's not their life at all in many cases if you could look deeper you would see that they are just as miserable as everybody else in many cases more miserable because they've got nothing else to project themselves into because they already have everything where do I go from here I have everything I'm still unhappy well try some other extreme sensation maybe that will do it I can buy any sensation take any substance maybe that will do it and I reach out here and there because I can afford it I can afford to reach out and look everywhere for experiences and then after a few years you sing I can't get no and so your your present situation has been given to you in the same way that as if you were a sculptor and the universe gives you a piece to work with and some pieces look almost impossible to work with what what can I make out of this but often the most beautiful things come out of things that initially look impossible to work with they require why they require more intense consciousness they require more alertness if you have difficult life situation that we could call it karma if you have a difficult life situation it requires more alert presence to transcend it to transform it to dissolve it to all the old patterns in your life if you have your life is relatively easy your chances of going beyond the personality are not that great as it becomes more difficult and you suffer because of your life situation of course your motivation is much stronger to go beyond that so with that comes the ability to just accept your situation as it is situation is one thing the situation has a continuity between past and future my life situation this is where it is been married five times or you can the mind can say all kinds of things there I failed four or five marriages failed at business ventures failed at this succeeded at that and then failed again that's the past however the mind interprets it there's no failing and succeeding it just what happened and then there's your possible future where you want to go and your relationships at the moment your work situation your financial situation your health situation that's all your life situation now you have to your life situation if you don't get out of your life situation then you'll remain stuck you need to cut through this continuity between past and future in your life situation that all the stuff that makes up what is your life cut through your life situation say and this is vital vital teaching to become free of externals because your life situation is all to do with externals the externals of my life right now it may be good right now it may be not so good this is the external situation of my life now before I carry on in my life so-called there's no such thing as my life is just a verbal thing my life for a large part of my adult life my life situation was messy it was people you would have thought just as silly but where am I going what am I doing what and so many things I started and let and then abandoned them and it was messy and the strange thing is you may something in you may resonate with that because many life situations are messy there isn't neatly bundled things that this and then I succeeded at that and then I succeeded at that and then you have your walls full of diplomas and wherever you succeeded but it's more it's in most cases it's it is messy with lots of unfinished businesses and very uncertain future where are you going what's going to happen I am I going to make it well you might make it for a little while until you don't make it everything comes to an end in this realm of form but there is a deeper realm which you need to access and which is cannot be found in your life situation it can only be found in the singularity of the present moment which I call life so you have to extract so to speak from your perhaps somewhat messy life situation extract the present moment as the cause and miracle says single out this instant out of that whole flow of past and future as your life situation so what's left I have a life situation everybody has with which it's problems no life situation is free of problems it's always thinks that every these people are all fine I'm the one with the problems it's not true there everybody has their problems they might just be hiding them very well so you have the life situation but it is vital that as much as possible you extract from that what is the absolute reality about my life situation and ask yourself that question and the answer is always this moment the only thing that's absolutely real about my life is this moment just I'm sitting here talking looking flowers breathing feeling perhaps some aliveness suddenly because I'm singling out this moment this is the absolute reality of your life always what you call your life situation is a relative reality it is much less real than this your future the next moment tomorrow is nothing compared to this and when tomorrow comes it only comes as this so to live as if tomorrow were more important than this is madness it's called normal living so your state of consciousness then needs to become more and more present moment centered you can still deal with the things in your life situation but you have access to something more vital and then in the midst even of dealing with things in your life situation of going from here to there to an important business meeting or to an interview or doing this and that or sitting there talking to people or or sitting there looking at the looking for a job because you lost your job looking at the internet or wherever you find jobs and in that moment get out of your life situations okay what is the reality of this moment is am I okay at this moment or not no if you can't get out of your life situation rarely rarely will you say that I'm okay because you're trapped in in that whole stratum of thought ultimately it's all thought your whole past is thought and some emotions connected with thought your future is thought emotions connected with those thoughts but has no reality apart from those thoughts because when your past happened it was the present moment when the future happens it will be the present moment which you if you don't acknowledge that you miss it always you miss the whole thing I've said this a times before but it it always seems new even to me it is so in so vitally important so this moment single out as the cause in miracle says out of that whole problematic life situation single out this moment what does that mean pay attention to this moment with that comes an alertness oh and then you will realize this moment is actually not so bad I thought my life was so dreadful but this moment just this is actually okay it might even be more than okay if you look more deeply it might feel good to be breathing even though you might have lost your job which is part of your life situation and yet you're breathing and yet there's a flower there and yet there's the sky and yet there's a liveness pervading your entire body that's the present moment and you suddenly can even be grateful for life you don't have to be grateful for your life situation how can you grateful for all the things that happen to me I can't be no you don't need to be gratitude is only required for this moment you acknowledge there is a goodness here that the mind doesn't know anything about and you cannot exit it through conceptual thinking that is becoming independent of external conditions because otherwise you look for that goodness which is deep within you you look for that goodness in external things and never find it not for long there is sometimes you think you found it but it's not it and you look for the goodness in some resolution of your life situation the happy ending of my search for fulfillment even if some happy ending comes what comes after that more problems the happy ending is often the wedding what comes after that it's better not to show it or the happy ending is I find the great job okay and then what what comes after that the problems that come with that great job and that's not to say that don't look for anything you still play in the world of form you still continue to look for a job you don't say no I feel so good now I'm not even going to look for a job anymore that can happen it happened to me for a while until the balance came back into my life between inner and outer and this is why I'm telling you you don't have to go there but if you do that's fine too if you feel so good say okay in my case miraculously I got sustained by the universe things came often at the last minute never more than knowing what that will live on for one more day but what about the day after tomorrow don't know and that worked I'm sure Jesus said these things more or less exactly the same that look how the flower lives he said it's not worried about tomorrow it's totally present in the now and yet life looks after it it's sustained by the one life the one intelligence that underlies everything the one consciousness it sustains it gives a look at the birds he says look at the flowers of the field he wanted you to get in touch with nature to feel that which sustains nature also sustains you but you don't need to you continue then to to do what you have to do without the stress and then everything flows with more ease and then you get a job interview and you go to their job interview feeling good because as you are traveling to the interview you're sitting on the bus it feels good to be here and you're looking at the tree and the birds and the sky and you feel the aliveness in your body and you feel the the presence within you the presence that you are and that's the present moment and it feels good and then you arrive not as a needy little me at the job interview but as somebody who is happy to be there and I'm sure people will like you for that because even if their mind is totally mad they might sense something in your presence yeah in other words you're much more likely to get the job if you are come from the place of I'm already fulfilled that and everything flows with much greater ease but the practice is single out this moment as much as possible and pay attention to it and then with that comes a little while after comes the gratitude which is the most powerful thing there is gratitude is inseparable from feeling the goodness of the present moment the moment you feel the goodness even in unlikely places because the goodness isn't ultimately out there you feel it deep within in in very hard places you have to go even deeper within to find it and there it is it doesn't really have a physical location but if I had to point to a physical location it's kind of all around here and that is liberation that's liberation not only liberation from external conditions liberation from your mind and then life unfolds with greater ease not free of problems things challenges continue to be thrown at you but they they bounce off or get transformed because you no longer complain about the challenges of life you no longer have a little me that says this shouldn't be happening why is this happening to me to me shouldn't be happening to me but it is and without the complaining entity the resisting entity immediately the situation is comes into the field of aware presence and then the challenge becomes transformed so don't expect freedom from challenges it's not going to happen you don't need it in fact all that happens to tell this is a deepening of that presence so the practice is singling out this moment and then that's the end of stress too I'll just explain to you when I occasionally I give talks I'll just explain briefly how I experience it giving a talk let's say the talk is at 8 o'clock in the evening I start getting ready at 6 and if there were a mental projection a mental thought movement said okay at 6 I'm giving a talk to 2,000 people what am I going to talk about what is it going to be powerful enough are they going to like me are they going to be receptive what what if the words don't come anymore they expect a lot I might be able to satisfy them this is an important event a very important talk so many people some people from the New York Times are coming oh my god and of course they're totally going to totally misinterpret everything oh my god that would be very stressful so how do I not I mean can I not be stressed before this important talk first is you let go of the idea that some important event is coming up and so you single out this moment which is I'm getting dressed and then I'm looking out of the window and then put on my shoes and then I sit there breathing and there's just this moment there's only ever this moment why should this important event has no reality yet except as a mind structure so I'm not going there there's just this then the phone rings as the car is here okay I go out elevator down one step at a time going to the car drives off look out of the window traffic people houses it's just this moment very simple nothing big just this moment then you go arrive at the place go into the green room sit there eat a banana just this moment stay with this moment it's so natural you don't even have to try anymore it's just that what is and then you said breathe somebody comes in I've been in one or two weird places where theaters where they have a certain structure and then they are the there's a loudspeaker in the green room and then it's ten at five to eight the voices the show starts in five minutes I didn't know it was going to be a show but I'm not going to believe that because there's only this moment and then on stage there's only this chair and there's this little man sitting on the chair breathing and looking and what is it that this moment requires it requires me to be still and look and after a while I realized that it words are required and then I start often by saying make sure you're completely here this is it it's this moment take your attention into this there's no big event it's simple and there isn't 2,000 people it's just one person there and I'm talking to one person and that's all there's no there's no some mental excitement around it just just stay with the simplicity of the present moment and that people wait for some grand important thing in their lives finally when is it going to when is what are these expressions when is my boat coming in or whatever the expressions are well it's if you're looking to it in the future it's not coming and if it comes you won't be happy stay with the simplicity of this moment and honor it then your life becomes deep don't expect some great thing stay with your life consists of little things even if you became some important public figure president of the United States even he if he is just can only do one thing at a time can only step into the car step out of the car go to his desk answer the phone talk to people look into the camera one thing at a time and then go to bed have breakfast and the same thing happens again so the instead of then instead of having your life centered on past and future and your life situation you make the center of your life the present moment and the rest also you give it attention as it's needed but on a practical level only you do what's needed to for the future you remember your past what you need to remember you remember it without looking to it for some kind of validation of who you are because that's not in the past the who you are is can only be found in the depths of yourself in this moment in the presence that the very presence that you can sense at this moment as you sit here you can't define it but you know there is a presence the rest may be a dream but underlying the dream there is a presence there is the light of consciousness you are that not what appears in the light it comes and goes it's fine so that's the the secret then is more and more this pay attention to this and then whatever you do also becomes empowered the power of the present moment flowing into what you do that's a practice and you gradually become free you become free of the the personality the person that before was this heaviness of the me you become free of the conditioned entity which still operates from time to time through you but there is something more vital that shines through the conditioned entity and occasionally I've seen it in people who were close to death there the conditioned entity subsided and there was just surrender and aliveness and light but you don't have to wait for death it's now access that now in your life so that is what our Sufi who later became the Sufi master what he learned when he became willingly accepted the position of slave what he learned was and then he started to learn how to weave for him then for years only this moment and he was weaving every day weaving and being just present with that no name nobody just a presence behind the weaving and then life said you can move on now and he moved on and through this training his personality had dissolved and his presence emerged and he was then recognized as a great teacher so he wasn't looking for ideal conditions well he was in a way but not what one would have thought as ideal conditions for awakening in one sense you can be grateful for your life situation is because it's taken you to this moment where you wake up all the stuff that's gone wrong in my life has taken me to this moment I'm talking for myself to all the stuff that's gone wrong has taken me to this moment where I realize the possibility of awakening where I realize how good to the present moment actually is in the depths so gratitude comes hi we're gonna do a

[Speaker 2] (4:15:16 - 4:50:01)

exercise called gathering the Chi the Chi being the universal life force within and without we can do this exercise in two ways either seated in a chair or standing if you're in your chair come to sit at the edge of your chair with your feet flat on the floor and your spine erect placing your hands onto your down to in your lower abdomen which is about three finger widths four finger widths below your navel you may wish to close your eyes and just come into your body for a moment feeling your breath noticing your body whether there's any tension tightness just go to those areas and relax your body relax your shoulders relax your jaw relax the hips your legs your feet your entire body allow whatever thoughts to rise and let them go staying unattached to thoughts allow whatever sounds around you to be as they are feel the sensations in your body feel your inner body the energy within and on your next inhale reaching with your right arm reach behind you begin to gather the Chi from the universe feeling the energy in your hands outside your body and exhaling it in to your Dantian into the belly inhale your left arm behind you gathering the Chi and exhaling it into the belly right side inhale and exhale keeping your attention focused inward inhale left side exhale into your belly one more time inhale and it's the whole universe you're gathering the energy so in your mind's eye your attention imagine the edge of the universe and just stop and feel for a moment with your hands on your Dantian relaxing the body lowering your hands and when you inhale gather the Chi from the heavens inhaling your arms up palms facing each other and exhaling bringing down the energy to the Dantian again inhale the energy from the heavens arms up palms facing each other and exhaling the Chi down through the crown of your head through your third eye through your throat your heart and down to the Dantian again inhale and exhale and stop and feel let's raise that Chi up to your heart bringing your hands together in prayer and then send it out through the whole universe your energy your love and watch come back to you tenfold bring it back to your belly again raise it up to your heart and send love throughout the whole world one more time raise the Chi up to your heart and send the love and energy to the whole universe and bring it back to your Dantian what you give out comes back to you tenfold so let's do that one more time all three movements putting together in one flow gathering the Chi from the universe right side inhale and exhale it into your Dantian the left side and bring it to the Dantian gather the Chi from heaven inhaling and exhaling it down to the crown your third eye the throat your heart and bring it down to your belly inhale the Chi up to your heart and send love throughout the whole universe and receive the love back into your belly again left side gather the Chi from the universe and the right side going at your own pace and inhaling the Chi from the heavens bringing it down to the crown keeping your awareness on this energy that's both inside you and outside bringing it into the belly and when you're ready to share love throughout the whole world and your energy bring it up to your heart and send it out and watch it come back to you as it always will and just stop for a moment and feel being present with this moment feeling your belly just feeling the energy relax the belly and when you're ready slowly open your eyes taking in the world of form continue feeling the energy in your body as you go about your everyday life the practice is keeping some attention inward and not becoming lost in the world of form.

Thank you for joining me in gathering the Chi. Thank you. Namaste.

So let's begin with a meditation and it's a meditation about asking a question something that you may have a question that you're wanting answered a concern that you have that you would like to receive an answer for and contemplating meditating on this question and be open to receive the answer and it may not come in this moment may not come today but the whole point is that you are asking yourself your deep inner self the self that knows and realizes all. So usually when we have this question that we ask it's like this little self of ours that wants to know right the mind wants to know and we know that the mind that has created a situation the true solution cannot be found in the mind but the answer can come through you or through life itself when we let go of what we can call the mind of thoughts and even our question so we'll take a moment so you can formulate which question what it is what concern what so-called problem you may have and take this time just to formulate that so get as comfortable as possible physically and you may wish to close your eyes and if you are sitting with your arms crossed let's just kind open them up so you can be this open space and channel to receive so you may wish to close your eyes and just take this moment to formulate the question and when you have that question say it to yourself again but say it like as if you're putting it out to the universe to heaven and once you've done that let it go let it completely go and come into this moment the only moment that really exists and you can do that by feeling your breath feeling the sensations in your body feeling the inner body listening to the external sounds if thoughts arise just notice let it go if your question comes back to you in your mind let it go the true answer cannot come if you are not the space even if different answers arise in the mind as thoughts just notice that

I could do this I could do that just notice them as thoughts the mind moves I am still be still being aware of all movement body mind sound let go of any expectations that you may have in receiving your answer in this moment for stillness knows no time when you received your answer that's the time breathing are you breathing feeling the breath feeling the inner body relaxing your body noticing everything and allowing everything to be as it is come into this moment with this breath there's the space sense into the space into the stillness letting go of any desire any wanting for the answer to appear the mind will grab at thoughts choose not to follow it the mind will become agitated sitting in stillness so you look at all the answers that come to you in your mind is only thought forms the true answer that comes will resonate throughout your entire being it may come as a thought form but it will bring you peace you will know it throughout your whole body that this is the realization that you need the answer you'll realize it to be the true answer to your question and it may come when you sit in meditation with it and it may come at some later moment the answer will come when you need it and sometimes we don't need it until we actually do but the mind will want it now you may need to have an answer by next week and the mind will say I need to know what it is now but you may not know it until the moment you walk through that door trust that it comes if you can be that open channel that crack and leave that space for a life to move through you speak through you answer through you then you are living and connected to stillness to truth itself so at any time you can open your eyes still staying connected and just being here in this moment because that's all there is I have done this meditation many many times and this is what I do when I need to know something no one answer to a question or concern that I have and I would sit there like you know you get really agitated when you just got to know you want to know is you just try to meditate and you're okay I'll meditate try to find the answer right and then it's like it's not enough I feel like you got to be doing something the mind feels like it's got to be doing something but if you can just sit there and allow even the mind to do its thing going through all the possible solutions the possible answers that you can get think that maybe this is the answer just watch this mind go by and it's it's a joke you begin to start laughing you go oh my god that's just a thought and there has been times and then when I see the illusion behind all these different thought forms that appear as some sort of answer to my question and I look at them and I can see that they are just simply a thought form suddenly it's like something burst and I receive an answer and there isn't how I know it to be an answer is that there is such a deep inner peace my whole body becomes alive and it resonates within my whole body and then I know that that's the answer now it has happened where I would receive the answer and then you know you kind of get up off your mat right or your chair and then you go about your day and then the mind will come in but what about this and what about that and start to confuse you again the mind will just start to confuse you again and you're going there oh yeah okay all right and then it's like wait a second whoa you're really cunning here aren't you mind because that's what the mind is so cunning it'll come through again and again and again but you see you what how you can tell is that it doesn't bring you peace it just brings you more confusion so go back to the peace go back to the stillness and find that peace the answer is there and it's so peaceful the true answer gives you peace brings peace brings an aliveness in you a calm an assurance and then our only job is then to stay true to that assurance because the mind will come in every which way all the time and somebody else may come and say oh but there's this then oh no you should do that but it's just stay stay there sit right here so good luck and it has happened as well that I don't receive the answer while I'm sitting it may come a day a week and sometimes even a month later because sometimes we can't tell life what to do and what to give us in the instant in the moment that we want like you know our little children taking a tepid I want it now I want it now when really it's as Jesus said do not worry but you shall eat what you shall wear what you shall say for in the moment that you need it it is given and this is the spiritual life living in the complete unknown because we never know what will happen the next moment and you only need something when you need it that's all the mind will want it before way before perhaps even but the spiritual life is now this moment right now do I need to know the answer now to something that I have to give an answer to next week so I don't need to know now do I so it's not here the answer is not here ok fine there's so many times that I have to live in this trust this faith you can say and I won't know an answer until the moment that I walk into the room say I'm going to appointment I need the answer I'm like oh my gosh I don't know this what am I going to say I don't know and I may not even know when I walk in the room but when I sit down and then suddenly the question is posed to me and then you just say it just like wow there it is that's it everything that you need to know is within you everything does that mean that an answer cannot come from outside you know it doesn't mean that at all because ultimately there is no in or out it's all one however if the answer does come what we call say there will still be that inner peace that peace will be there and that's the key the peace that resonates through your whole body and you rest in that

[Speaker 1] (4:50:19 - 5:12:08)

somebody asks have you ever experienced the dark night of the soul your teachings have been so helpful through this difficult period can you address this subject the dark night of the soul is a term from goes back a long time maybe goes back to the Spanish mystic st. John of the cross I'm not sure if it does but it goes back a long time it describes something well the questioner seems to imply that he is he or she is going through something like this at the moment the dark night of the which yes I have also experienced that's a term then used to describe a what one could call a collapse of a perceived meaning in life an eruption into your life of a deep sense of meaninglessness and the the inner state in some cases is very close to depression maybe some dark night of the soul often to do with what is conventionally called depression but it is basically a sense of emptiness or meaninglessness nothing makes sense anymore there's no purpose to anything and sometimes it's triggered by some external event some disasters perhaps on an external level external rather than within the death of someone close to you could trigger it especially premature death for example if your child dies or you had built up your life and given it meaning and the meaning that you had given your life this is what my life is about your activities your achievements where you're going what is considered important and the so the meaning that you had given your life for some reason collapses so as I said it can happen if something happens that you can't explain away anymore some disaster which seems to invalidate the meaning that your life had before and really was as what has collapsed then is the whole conceptual framework for your life the meaning that your mind had given it and so that results in a sense of darkness a dark place but people have gone into that you're in that dark place for a while and then you emerge out of that there is the possibility that you emerge out of that you can emerge out of that into a transformed state of consciousness where life has meaning again but it is no longer a conceptual meaning that you could necessarily explain it is often from the night of the soul not necessarily but quite often it's from there that people awaken out of their conceptual sense of reality which has collapsed they awaken into something deeper which is no longer based on concepts in your mind a deeper sense of purpose or connectedness with a greater life that is not dependent on explanations or anything conceptual any longer it's a kind of rebirth and the dark night of the soul is a kind of death that you die what dies in the dark night of the soul is the egoic sense of self and of course yes death is always painful but nothing has actually died there only an illusory identity now it is probably the case that some people who have gone through this transformation they have been through the dark night of the soul and they discovered that out of that a new self emerged that was a non-conceptual self but it a deeper being the awakened consciousness and they somehow looking back they realized that they had to go through that not everybody does of course have to go through that but some people do and they've even in some spiritual traditions they recreate they try to recreate the experience of the dark night of the soul in order to bring about a spiritual awakening and that was probably part of the so-called mystery schools of ancient Greece and Egypt which were designed they even survived into Roman times mystery schools and with rituals and so on not much we don't know much about it because they were kept secret not much was written about it and in one tradition you spend a prolonged period of time in darkness sometimes even in a coffin coffin like place in complete isolation and darkness that is an attempt I would say on the part of someone who has gone through the natural dark night of the soul to recreate the experience of it in the kind of artificial more artificial way of actually experience that the that utter darkness where things break down whether to what extent that works when it's not a natural experience but a created experience for how many people that worked and actually did bring about an awakening and a collapse of the mind made self I don't know how it whether it truly worked for many people but it must have worked to some extent because it's in the tradition went on for a very long time they are other in other forms of in mythological forms also they speak of similar things sometimes described as the the night journey in mythological tradition or also the descent to the underworld they all point to the same experience which is not ultimately negative it just seems negative when you are in it but it is part of a larger purpose it's part of the awakening not for everyone it doesn't have to be but often it is part of the awakening process the death of the old self the birth of the true self so once you know that if it should come or if you should even be in the middle of it now you can just the more you surrender the more quickly you go through it surrender means don't judge it anymore you accept whatever it is that's your experience at this moment but as I said not everybody has to go through that for many people the awakening process starts and begins without that sometimes even after the awakening process begins it might still happen you and then finally you will break through but that's fine allow life to do what it does you don't need to seek that and we don't need to recreate it in some artificial way so don't just shut yourself in a dark room for days on end it's unlikely to work it's unnecessary the first lesson in the course in miracles says nothing I see in this room means anything and you're supposed to look around the room and whatever you look at happen to be looking at you say this that doesn't mean anything that doesn't mean anything this table doesn't mean anything this hand doesn't mean anything what's the purpose of a lesson like that well that's a little bit like recreating the what can happen during the dark night of the soul which is the collapse of a mind made meaning conceptual meaning of life believing that you understand what's it all about so with the course in miracles in lesson one it's a voluntary relinquishment of the human mind made meaning that is projected and you go voluntarily into saying I don't know what this means this doesn't mean anything you wipe the board clean in the dark night of the soul it collapses and in some spiritual traditions then you can actually you're encouraged to relinquish your conceptual reality and so you're then meant to arrive at a place of conceptual one could say meaninglessness or one could say a state of ignorance where you don't things lose their the meaning that you had given them which was all condition and cultural and so on and you can then look upon the world without imposing a mind made framework of meaning and it looks of course as if you were no longer understanding anything and that's why it's so scary when it happens to you instead of you actually consciously embracing it it's very can be very scary and can bring about the night of the soul the dark night of the soul to go around the universe without any longer interpreting it compulsively as an innocent presence and you look upon events people and so on with a deep sense of aliveness you sense the aliveness that's there through your own sense of aliveness but you're not trying to fit your experience into a conceptual framework anymore this is what people usually do those who are conditioned which is most not not not awakened yet whatever they experience they try to fit into some frame their conceptual framework where it fits in people events and they're given a certain value on have no value in their framework many people for example who are interested in practical matters that when they when they meet a human being who does not offer the promise of helping in their endeavor of where they want wanting to go to they have no interest whatsoever in that human being because he or she does not fit into what I consider important so there's no interest in that human being whatsoever because I can't use you for my egoic purposes that is not the conscious thought but that's the underlying assumption so you don't fit into my framework of meaning I'm just just complete lack of interest in those humans who don't fit in and you can see then how limited that kind of life is egoically egoically conditioned meaning whatever does not fit in is excluded or is regarded even as an enemy because something might threaten my artificial meaning the mind created conceptual framework as would be the case of and let's say you are religious idea you are subscribed to some religious ideology and of course this anybody who questions that because and that is the conceptual framework that gives meaning to your life and from there you interpret everything as some people do whatever happens you have some kind of immediately some kind of explanation that is biblical or based on your some kind of other scripture and you immediately explain it this is right this is what it is let's see that's that that's that and somebody doesn't agree and then it could be oh yeah that's the the Antichrist or whatever and that's a very narrow world that people inhabit but it's a meaning it gives their life meaning no no that's a kind of pseudo meaning but it gives their life meaning but for true awakening to happen that needs to collapse so I invite you to relinquish that artificial projection of conceptual meaning and become the open awareness for life where you don't need to figure out in every moment where things or people fit into your framework of what's important or not important and so you move into the realm of freedom you give others freedom and you yourself become free you don't need to understand immediately every human being or what they are about so often I see people trying to interpret other people why they do what they do or what they really want what their real motivations are or whatever and a lot of the time it's a you're completely wrong but if you don't know that you take your judgments to be reality and then you act as if they were reality on the basis of that you then interact with that person and you have already assumed that your judgments were real and you create an entire delusion on the basis of erroneous judgments of others all that collapses it either collapses because you voluntarily go to a different place of openness of aware presence or it collapses for you when the time comes I would just like to thank

[Speaker 7] (5:12:08 - 5:12:56)

you for this morning's talk my mother died Friday died on Friday I was just thought it was so appropriate and the peace of mind that gave me with what you said this morning was fantastic but that wasn't my question the question I had was really related to with all the talks you give the retreats and and advice have you ever looked back and thought afterwards that man I wish it wouldn't have said that or boy goofed up there this this was a mistake thank you thank you well only the

[Speaker 1] (5:12:56 - 5:17:45)

Pope is infallible now that the teaching if we can even call it the teaching of course is not mainly based on information not primarily based on any kind of conveying of information or facts but on on its most fundamental level the teaching is awareness which is non-conceptual so that can't be wrong so on that on the most fundamental level nothing could possibly be wrong because it is it transcends all concepts that's the essence of the teaching the moment you move into concepts the possibility of error of course arises but the first of all the first level of concepts that are used are concepts that point back to that which is beyond concepts and beyond thought so the concepts that I use in the teachings are concepts that are whose purpose is to point back to that which is beyond so and that also they can't be much wrong about that except that it could be that I used a pointer that perhaps was not the most appropriate one for a certain person or group of people that could happen if we but used again errors doesn't really apply here it just it might not be the best possible point I maybe I wake up in the middle of the night to say oh I could have said that that's maybe possible but usually it doesn't arise next level up occasionally I let information slip in about to illustrate certain things I might talk about something historical or might talk about some fact about something I read in the paper or whatever just as little illustrative stories and of course that's where things occasionally get wrong even in the power of now I wrote for example that 100 million people had been killed in the 20th century alone by other humans and I later realized that was the figure was much too low apparently it's quite a bit higher it's could be a hundred and forty million nobody knows exactly it's dreadfully high and so I got that wrong and and sometimes in talks I might something may come in a historical fact or something and later somebody tells me you got that wrong in one talk I talked about depressed anti-deport taking depressants antidepressants and I wasn't perhaps careful enough to emphasize that you should do this extremely slowly with the help of a conscious physician and so on and there was one or two physician in the audience you get up got upset and this is all wrong it's all wrong that's usually what happens is that the answer to a question or even the general talk always there's a correspondence between the questioner and the answer or when there's a talk there's a correspondence between the energy field in the room and what comes out and that's not decision based there's no there's nothing in my mind that says oh in this energy field I'll better talk about that because I don't know before the words come out what's going to come out so that doesn't apply and so it can happen though that a person asks a question and an answer comes and I later realized that the answer was not the deepest answer that I could have given but I do know that the answer that comes out reflects the degree of openness in the questioner usually and so if the answer is not that deep then the question wasn't that deep that seems to be often the case occasionally some deep answer comes even when the question is not deep but perhaps there's an intuitive realization then that it is possible to break through the surface layer.

[Speaker 7] (5:17:45 - 5:17:46)

Not this question though.

[Speaker 1] (5:17:46 - 5:17:48)

No your question was deep enough. Thank you.

[Speaker 7] (5:17:53 - 5:17:59)

Well I do want to say this morning was was perfect you were right on thank you. Thank you Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (5:18:00 - 5:20:15)

So there's an ancient saying of course which you may have heard that just the teacher and the taught together produce the teaching so it's a two-way process it comes out of presence it doesn't really come out of a person it comes through the person who is empty enough spacious enough so that it can come through it's not off the person. So on the surface level then yes mistakes are quite possible on the most essential level no. I had a I knew a person many years ago I only knew her for about a year then she died she was a psychotherapist and she would sometimes come to see me I was still doing a private sessions then she would often come to see me once a week or so to ask questions and her questions were so wonderful like the deepest answers came with that person always and I said to her maybe we should record because your questions seem to be so draw out these wonderful answers and she agreed and then a little later she was too ill and she died and just before she in the months before she died she went through this shift where she didn't need to ask any more questions she went through complete presence shift surrender to what is and her body became virtually transparent and luminous and she was just there and then she didn't need to ask any more questions so it was too late for recording anything just the shift happened and the flowering happened and that was enough.

[Speaker 7] (5:20:17 - 5:20:17)

Well thank you.

[Speaker 8] (5:20:18 - 5:21:07)

Hi, with consciousness many understanding arises in you how can we say that there is only consciousness everywhere and consciousness disguising as form?

[Speaker 1] (5:21:08 - 5:24:18)

Yes. How can we make that statement that there is only consciousness? You can only make it from your own realization it's not a statement that from an external or scientific scientific viewpoint could be shown to be true science doesn't even know about consciousness and most science even denies the existence of consciousness so if you take the scientific approach you won't get anywhere you'll just be stuck there it is based on real your own realization and here most people who are here are drawn here because they already have at the very least glimpses of it and the glimpse that you have of the truth that there's only consciousness which comes from inner realization it may not be a full realization but a glimpse and it is the glimpse that draws you here and there may be one or two people who are drawn here out of curiosity they think it's an intellectual event but of course if you think it's an intellectual event then it's you're not going to be very happy sitting here now whether you got drawn here by intellectual curiosity or by something that you cannot quite define inside yourself that drew you here only you can know that but if you're still here perhaps that means there's more than just intellectual that there may be a strong element of intellectual curiosity but it may be because you have not haven't walked out yet what you will in a little while but everybody's going to walk out there still there's something in you and don't rely always on your mind to immediately know the answers that's your mind is fine for many things but not for that don't rely on your mind rely sense whether there's something in here that response to what is being said and to risk that response to the energy field here that you cannot conceptualize you need soil you need a little bit of humility for that from intellectual point of view to accept that there is something in you that you cannot at least right now you cannot conceptualize and understand analytically so if you feel that this is why you're still here there's some obscure knowing some some sensing that there's something there you perhaps you feel a little bit more alive as you sit here maybe not maybe you true effort of the will you endured the time here and felt that you were not getting getting the real answers that you wanted but it's possible to only you can know that no I understand that when you say

[Speaker 8] (5:24:18 - 5:24:32)

that there is consciousness only I understand that and I feel the consciousness good and my question was how can we say that there is only consciousness the field of consciousness is what

[Speaker 1] (5:24:32 - 5:25:45)

is ultimately existing I can everywhere yes it's sensing when you no longer conceptualize the world continuously there's a stillness that underlies your perceptions and when there's a stillness that underlies your perceptions you sense and that essence that is the stillness that is in you you sense that essence in everything it's a mystical statement you cannot understand it intellectually you sense it in the flower it's almost like a self-recognition I find my essence in the flower I even find it in the water I even find it in so-called inanimate objects they have beingness and a presence that I recognize and therefore I say whether I look at the Sun or the moon or the tree or the bird that I see myself I sense myself in that when I don't conceptualize

[Speaker 3] (5:25:45 - 5:26:21)

them thank you thank you my question is about confirming consciousness if if you look at the world a world of form as all illusory and impermanent and yet we can confirm that by

[Speaker 15] (5:26:21 - 5:26:27)

witnessing its constant change or its constant impermanence or the cycles that it goes through

[Speaker 3] (5:26:27 - 5:27:06)

and yet true reality is consciousness the background or the substratum of all of the true existence that is out there how do we confirm Leona asks how can I become less fearful and

[Speaker 1] (5:27:06 - 5:43:27)

reactive and stay present when I'm facing a serious surgery that will determine whether I recover or not so when there's something like that happens there is a critical situation approaching perhaps even mortality you can go either one way or the other you can go into increasing fear or you can go into intensified presence increasing fear means it the imminent event would cause the mind to think even more than it does usually fearful thoughts creating the emotions that correspond to those thoughts I may die and a spiral of unconsciousness but an event like that is a great opportunity for allowing it allowing that event to push you into intensified presence because what else can you do unless you want to suffer you go into thought if you want to be free of suffering an event of that kind has the potential of providing enormous motivation for not leaving the present moment because if you leave the present moment you start to suffer so it can be a wonderful thing and I've met quite a few people who have been able to practice that people who have contracted cancer or aids and other illnesses that are potentially lethal then of course we all have an illness that's lethal we are all already infected with mortality it's the body so really we should all be doing it and it's an emergency situation we're in allow it to push you into presence where you don't we are so absolutely here that no I'm not going anywhere from here I know there's an operation waiting for me let's say in a week's time or tomorrow but I'm not I'm not leaving this moment I'm just staying with my attention just focused just on this I can feel my energy field I'm present with what is I'm not leaving now just and you become very simple so what happens then is the scroll of your life let's say yet life you know the ancient scrolls here they didn't have books they had scrolls on the roll sometimes on two rolls so you have on the left your past on the right your future so you go with a scroll of your life usually what people are interested in about their lives is they they could have continuous reference to let's read what happened in the past so they're thinking about the past so you read the left-hand side of the scroll oh isn't it awful oh what he did never forget that she betrayed me just think let's see what else said oh no that too or or something great or wasn't that a good time well where is it all now it's all gone it's all gone and all you only look on the right-hand side that where there's scribblings which are very hard to decipher it's about the future so they're very almost illegible I wonder what that means does it mean I'm dying or is that and of course if you go fine I'm on the scroll you will meet your death somewhere it says dead so of course you don't want to go that far so you keep it a little bit less away from that and then you try to decipher the future which is very fearful because you just can't make out what exactly it says on there and so most people live like that their attention continues from being drawn between these two and they miss the central panel here which has no writing on it the writing is all there and so an event like this great opportunity because if you start continue reading the scroll you'll become nostalgic and so on about the past it was all the I'm going to lose it all my memories I'm my total or the future is even worse you roll it up down to central panel well no writing or maybe just maybe there's just the sunlight shining through the papyrus or whatever it's made of oh so that's when an event like that happens then it should provide enough motivation to roll it down to just that so that you refuse to go there and you refuse to go there with your attention you just hear and that very quickly burns up unconsciousness in you it burns up the entire structure of the ego which lives through constant reference to past and future it burns all the false self gets burned up in that quickly and if you stay in it then you will quickly notice the inner transformation that happens the first thing you notice that you become alive inside and you feel an energy coming through every cell of the body almost like light and there's no fear and so I've seen people becoming transformed in that way who some of them knew they were going to die well soon and even if it doesn't happen it may not happen when the doctor tells you you have one more month to live he may be wrong Stephen Hawking was told when I was at university he was there that was when whenever it was 30 years ago more he was told you have five more years now more than 30 years have passed he's still there but no matter whether eventually you die anyway so that doesn't really matter the question is whether you have realized who you are beyond the form of you and you can only do that by staying in the central panel I'm using this image inspired by a vision or a dream that the woman who took down so to speak cause in miracles that was dictated to her by an inner voice and she had some visions before the whole process happened and in one of her visions or dreams she found in an old box very ancient an ancient scroll and she took it out and she unrolled it and the voice was saying to her if you look on the left you will know the past if you look on the right you will know the future and in this vision or in this dream she rolled it up to just the central panel and said I'm not interested oh in the she went rolled up to the central panel and on the central panel it said God is and they said that's all I'm interested in she didn't want to know past and future and in that moment the voice said that was before the whole thing happened the process of dictation the voice said congratulations you made it this time God is that's all you need to know really and God is in everything and in everyone the light of consciousness consciousness assuming forms so should an event like that happen to you it's a wonderful opportunity for going you can also do it if there's a crisis situation of a different kind in your life big problems go okay you're still capable of action if action is necessary but you're not leaving this it's an incredibly wonderful some people often get letters from people in prison and some of them are they know they're going to be in either for the rest of their lives or another 20 years and they are practicing that and they have quite a few of them have found the end of suffering by doing refusing to leave the present moment your entire karma gets eroded through that intent it gets burned up in intense presence so what is why does it work so powerfully because in that intense presence you know yourself as the formless presence your entire identity shifts from form to formlessness and that so the beauty of it that's how it works and that's the then the end of death I believe that happened through it was triggered in the case of Don Miguel Ruiz the four agreements also it was triggered by a car accident he had when he fell asleep at the wheel of his car and then he woke up and as he woke up there was four or five seconds left before he hit a concrete wall so he go and then he saw his body from somewhere else so that was his first death was not complete death but virtual death but when you leave when you refuse to go to past and future with your attention unless that you need some reference point it's fine to go to the past to remember your phone number or something okay or the future because you need to tomorrow I need to do this that's fine make a note of it that's the future and then it's gone that's all the intensity of the Zen masters that's what it is it's nothing else they are simply refusing to leave the present moment that's that brings the intensity when you see ancient drawings of Zen masters in the good ones they all has a have this fierce look about them if the drawings are very good underneath the fierceness there's also a softness but on the outside they see not I'm not leaving this moment and that's their whole power is is that no absolutely Zen has no conceptualization about it whatsoever a little bit over the centuries did accumulate later but originally Zen was to do away with all conceptualizations it was a total renewal of Buddhism when Buddhism had already become heavily burdened with conceptualization and philosophy Zen arose to rediscover the core of Buddhism which had already been covered up and what is direct experience direct realization that is the aim with no reference to even to any scriptures originally they would burn this no just and of course over the centuries then gradually there were quite a few people who didn't quite achieve the realization and they added a bit more structure to it and even some writings so and the their practices which are very simple just always designed to bring you into them into the now to force you into the now they became some a little bit ritualistic but originally it's the most beautiful the most beautiful teaching teaching because it's it's basically contentless and this is why so few people get it even in Japan it doesn't mean you're any better off if you're Japanese even they just also Zen was also designed to break through all the conditioned ways of behavior which were quite pronounced in Japan especially very conditioned ways in which people behave break through all that all the conventions all that breakthrough and just that the most incredible wonderful teaching but Zen is here now it's here now this is Zen because Zen has no content and this doesn't have much content does it?

[Speaker 9] (5:43:51 - 5:44:45)

Hi Eckhart, I have a sibling who is struggling with paranoid thoughts and delusions and he doesn't think there's anything wrong so he doesn't want help he's kind of in a position where something's gonna happen to him soon it's gonna harm himself or harm someone else I'm sort of dealing with the world of form around him and a bunch of systems and I feel like I'm kind of missing him as a person and I want to know what I could do if there's anything I can do to help him.

[Speaker 1] (5:44:59 - 6:02:56)

Perhaps this answer also has two parts the I have a little bit of personal experience because I also had a close relative who suffered from what is usually called paranoia which is a I see it as just an an intensification of normal egoic state becomes much more intense so that you see that it's actually madness form of madness it begins in normal egoic status suspecting other people's motives what does he really want of me often projecting negative intentions onto other people when they aren't there at all looking suspiciously at strangers that you meet suspicious about why you are honest these are still considered quite normal and I could see that because this person for that I my relative I observed her for a few years when she was still considered normal but I already was aware of they have very strong ego always suspecting others of of not being honest and so on there was always that looking out but that was quite normal many people have that they're just distrustful of life and other people and then after a few years I was no longer living there but I real I came from it and realized by then she had gone further and had actually already been taken to a mental home and then come out again and then had very strong delusions total misinterpretations of life around her of other people seeing having huge long stories about plots against her and accusing people in the street of following her and all kinds of things very weird and then as I whenever I visited then I would be with her and whenever I saw her I could feel myself going into an intensified state of presence whenever I was with her and she was telling me about what was going on mostly fantasies and I could see the enormous amount of fear that was the basis of her state there was so much fear in her that she didn't know she couldn't she had her mind and this I believe is the basis of especially what is called paranoia which always sees a threat somewhere the her mind attempted to interpret the fear that she felt which comes from the state of disconnectedness from being the state of ego and the mind attempting to understand and explain this fear had to find some explanation for it so it created some external explanation because it needed to explain it this is by the way also how a dream many dreams happen in that way we believe often that the dream let's say we dreaming of some monster is trying to devour us and we're in panic we believe that the dream causes the panic but in many cases perhaps all cases the feeling causes the dream the feeling of intense fear goes into the mind and the mind attempts to create images that explain the already present feeling of fear and the at the minds in attempt to create the images that correspond to the feeling creates the dream and so that happens in a dream and that can also happen in paranoia and by the way that is also in so-called normal consciousness an element of that is present also in normal consciousness of attempting explanations for bad feelings instead of facing the feelings directly trying to find some explanation of why I feel this so something you can do it's not actually a doing is to just listen to him in intense presence so that there mustn't be a single thought in your head especially not a single emotion because if there's an emotion in you his his heavy emotional this heavy emotional entity will get in there immediately and grab onto the emotion and once more of that especially any reaction or deny what he is saying of course the moment you deny something you become part of it so that all that doesn't work nor do you need to agree to simply total openness and then I have I experienced several times while I was with her her state of mind changed and became totally peaceful and delusions subsided and as long as I was there absolutely present the delusions were gone the moment I left a few hours later they came back so whether you can if you spent I was there fairly rarely if you spend more time with him if you can bring intense presence into your interaction with him your relationship with him that may be a help because it could awaken that awareness in him if he can see that there is something that is if he can see that there's something that is delusional even in a moment of a glimpse of lucidity then perhaps the awareness can growly slowly grow in him there's no guarantee but it's something that is a beautiful thing to do if you want to call it doing it's good for you and it's good for him second part of the answer is you also have to and it's not easy but in some cases you need to allow other humans to go through their karmic suffering if this you do what you can and there's always a limit to what you can do and beyond that there needs to come an acceptance it's the same kind of acceptance that you would practice in your own if something were happening to you something difficult to bear what used to be called in medieval Christianity they called it the cross you have to bear your own everybody has their cross and in some people's crosses are very heavy so you can bring complete acceptance and this applies to not to you it applies to sometimes parents who can see that their teenage sons or daughters are doing dangerous and mad things they do all they can but there's a limit you can't put them into prison you can't lock the door so there's a limit to what you can do beyond that there needs to come to break an acceptance of humans have every human has his or her own learning process and they enormous differences in the way in which humans learn and grow so you also may have to do it with your parents if you are your parents may be deeply in the grip of ego they may be they may disapprove of who you are they may all again acceptance all have their own learning process it's particularly hard if you see somebody close to you you can see they are making dreadful mistakes but and you can see that they're going to suffer through that but it's also true that making mistakes is the one of the most important things that a human being can do in their growth without making mistakes nothing much would happen creating conflict something must go wrong in your life as you know without something going wrong there's no movie you can't watch a movie and nothing goes wrong who would want to see that so by my life I mean every movie you see it really the very if you go to the very down to the very basics of the movies means well there are these people and then something goes wrong otherwise nobody would pay money to watch something not going wrong and so it's life in its present evolutionary state is similar although we are moving out of that but many humans are still in that and it's the wrong is not wrong it's just we call it wrong and there comes a deepening through suffering and to learning so we don't know what his path is it but I would suggest that you when you ever you are with him you make it into very intense presence that's the most beautiful gift you can give him is the gift of your presence and the gift of your presence may draw forth his presence also but that's not the main thing it's just you you're just offering the gift from John in Oxford not in England but in the United States am I Michigan yeah with my mindfulness practice there seems to be an awareness of moods thoughts emotions body states etc in other words aware of the experience of samsara yet I long for the inner peace of Nirvana a state which I only understand intellectually how can I transform the intellectualizing into experience I know that the only moment is now I know that there's nothing to do yet even a taste of stillness seems to elude me me in quotation marks so perhaps the answer is in the question somewhere let's have a look I'm looking for the answer now with my mindfulness practice there seems to be an awareness of moods thoughts emotions body states etc in other words aware of the experience of samsara's the wheel of becoming whatever okay I think there's the answer there's an awareness of moods thoughts emotions body states and so on which means there's awareness now all you have to find the awareness that is aware of thoughts emotions body states moods and so on because you're saying yourself that the awareness is there and so you're still you're looking for something that's already there where is the actual experience you're just intellectualizing never know the experience is already there but you don't know it the awareness of moods means just become aware that there is an awareness with which you are aware of the moods and the body and the various states that's Nirvana so it's not it's not something that needs to be brought about from somewhere pulled out of the hat yeah you have it already so you've already answered your question there is an awareness you overlooked it because the seductive nature of the world of form it every form says give me attention so one continuously overlooks the attention itself because attention continuously flows into something into a thought or into an experience or into a perception it the awareness flows continuously into some form another way you can put it the awareness is continuously reborn into some new form it becomes a thought and experience a sense perception a situation again you're completely in it so the that's called reincarnation the you're reincarnating continuously into identification with one form after another and who are you who is the reincarnating entity well it's not an entity at all it's the formless consciousness and so because of the seductive nature of form you overlook the very life blood of all form which is the awareness the consciousness it's it's very subtle but it's all pervasive and so people spend their whole lives looking for Nirvana or enlightenment or liberation whatever they call it looking for it as if it were some kind of event or experience that they need to encounter thunder lightning whatever it may be it's not it's already it's already here you're just continuously overlooking the essence of life because of the compulsive nature of of reincarnation every minute reincarnation happens every minute so just a slight redirecting of attention instead of attention into form be aware that there is an awareness isn't there an awareness you said it yourself so how do you know that well you know that because you're aware of something now if that disappears what's left that's where death comes in if something disappears what's left awareness so take something throw it away first identify with it then throw it away and then you're left with awareness buy an expensive item like whatever that your ego can identify with it a big golden ring or whatever and wait for a year and show it around everybody so I can see you can afford that expensive jewelry and once you have completely identified with it take it off throw it into the river and then see what's left I have a question about children

[Speaker 11] (6:02:56 - 6:03:38)

I did a lot of spiritual work on myself before I had children and now I realize that I've transferred all of my fear of death and need for security onto my children and I don't know what to do about it I don't know what the best course of action is because I realized that it's part of taking care of them is to protect them but on the other hand kind of it goes against you know being present and being in presence and definitely brings on anxiety and wanting to control situations

[Speaker 1] (6:03:38 - 6:03:50)

and do you over protect or how does it manifest in actual daily life well my children are

[Speaker 11] (6:03:50 - 6:04:41)

unusual in that they had they both have special health problems so they involved both my husband and I a great deal in caring for their health at a time when it was really important but now we give them the same amount of attention even though for the most part they're okay you know so it's kind of like we got into that a pattern of putting all of our energy into them and it's continuing but I I'm not sure where to let go and where to hold on yes thank you thank you yes certain behaviors once

[Speaker 1] (6:04:41 - 6:18:24)

they are in place have a certain momentum and they kind of take you over almost especially then if it happens between two people or an even larger group behavior pattern becomes it can become an energy stream that God takes you over you can have it for example in when there are riots or whatever sometimes they go on for days because the people who participate in the riots nothing to do with you of course just a similar same phenomenon on a larger scale the phenomenon of people being in the grip of a certain behavior pattern which is an energy stream and so they are not doing it they are in the grip of it nobody's doing it so that can even happen here's a certain kind of behavior behavior becomes initiated and then refuses to go away similar phenomenon would be to when you are in a certain in a certain state you don't want to get out of that state children for example many children sets a simple very simple example and even adults even when they're tired they don't want to go to bed because somehow there's always something else because the the state of being awake wants to continue despite the tiredness but once you're in bed and asleep you don't want to get out of bed in the morning because then that momentum wants to continue or the child doesn't want to go into the bath or the shower because the it doesn't want to change its state from dryness to wetness once you're in the bath you don't want to get out because it's so nice so there's certain energies that want to sustain themselves and behavior patterns can be like that so the the essential thing then for you is to have spaces of awareness during the day from where you can be aware of whatever behavior you're manifesting at that moment so that you're not totally controlled by the old pattern and this is why it's so essential to have to bring to have your daily life your day interspersed with what I call spaces this is just another way of saying step out of your life situation which is in time past and future and mind and step into the into the present moment and become so a little space opens up inside that's the space of awareness from the awareness you can see the energy behind an old pattern of behavior that and this pattern either makes you think a certain thought or it immediately goes into action as it makes you do something and so you can sometimes then feel the arising behavior before it manifests as an action you can feel the impulse to go there and do this protective thing to the child or was quite unnecessary it's no longer no longer needed so you can feel the impulse arising and recognizing it as an old impulse but only from the space of awareness and then cancer you can you don't need to act on it you think oh there's the old impulse and on it it goes the impulse is there arises and then subsides or if thought comes in some compulsive thought about your child that also from that space of awareness that inner space of aware presence the stillness another word for it from this from the stillness you observe the thought that wants to push itself is pushing itself into your mind you have to think this now and say okay there it is and you allow it you don't fight it because whatever you fight you make stronger but so you are not in the grip of it anymore so most but more aware spaces vital with all children to to bring spatial consciousness as I sometimes call it or space consciousness nothing to do with science fiction to bring space consciousness into the relationship with your child for example it's essential not to always relate to your child from the point of view of doing do this don't do that now we need to do that now let's do that don't do that don't go there go there but to relate to your child or that that has its place of course but if that's all there is then it's it's a very one-dimensional relationship because what is missing is being what is missing is the child is to to to bring the spaciousness into the relationship where you can just be with a child and look at the child and listen to the child and be there as the aware presence for the child and so you're not you don't want the child to do this or that you're just there with a child and observing watching listening being giving attention that's a beautiful thing and that's beyond any pattern that's not a inherited pattern its presence presence is not an old pattern it's eternally new it's timeless so most parents don't know that yet they cannot bring the timeless dimension into the relationship with their child and so the relationship becomes full of conflict eventually even you have the best of intentions and yet then the child grows and then you suddenly the child is reactive and you don't know why and there's conflict the reason is that the most vital dimension is missing you've done all you could but doing wasn't enough doing is necessary but it's not enough being was neglected so being means to bring the aware spaces into the relationship we're doing doesn't matter so much when doing can still happen within it but that's vital and of course not only into the relationship with your child but also bring it into every relationship no relationship can thrive if there is no spaciousness in it and the spaciousness is there when you look at the other person and there's no thought in your head while you look because you're simply there as an aware presence then there's a true relationship beyond the forms the psychological form and the physical form if you can look at another person and just be there as the aware presence with no thought just an alert presence that's what I call that is space if you can't do it with another human being start by doing it with a flower but I know you can if you can't do it with another human being do it with a dog it might be a little bit easier to be the aware space with a dog because the dog is already free of thought so the dog does not stimulate thought in you as a human being would do who is the other person is probably thinking and you are so that transmits itself it's contagious every state transmits itself so you might be dragged into thinking also so to have that no thought in any relationship is vital it's vital for your children so that old patterns cease to operate and then the new can come in and you can then from that state of consciousness you can respond to the need of the child but it's no longer responding from a pattern that is no longer useful from the aware space you also know what is right for any given moment whether you need to allow the child to explore for example or whether you need to say come away from there because there's a 50 meter drop you might fall so there's always a balance between allowing the child to find out for him or herself and to protect the child and say no come here very subtle balance but it's much easier from awareness to know where the balance is and to do the right thing from there so your entire life then it's not just that so the question has wider implications not just to do with your child but the spaciousness needs to be there inside yourself wherever you go if you go into nature without spaciousness you're not you're hardly there because you're thinking while you're surrounded by beauty and aliveness you're thinking now you're either thinking about you and yourself and your problems and you're only aware of the forest or the or the seaside or the mountains or the clouds or the wind and the breeze and the noise beautiful noises of nature on the periphery of your awareness because you're thinking about your failed investments or a little bit better you might be thinking about what you're looking at oh I wonder what that's called what's that I can't remember what that's called I have to look it up you're not fully present either you're maybe a little bit more present than the person is totally away but not much more because you're still trapped in concepts in your mind can you be there simply a spacious awareness like a little child but deeper more intense be there can you be anywhere as spacious awareness rather than a person that's the new state of consciousness that's arising can I be here as spacious awareness with anybody of course as I said probably a little easier with a dog or a cat because you can meet the dog or the cat in the state of no thought the dog has no thought because it hasn't arrived at thought yet it's intelligent but it's not has no conceptual thinking the dog hasn't arrived at conceptual thinking it's below conceptual thinking and you have gone beyond conceptual thinking into the spaciousness and there you in this place in the immediate in no mind it's why it's so beautiful to relate to an animal and why so many people feel drawn to animals these days because it's the only time they can be free of their conceptual mind when they look at the patch the dog or the cat nothing to think about and you know the dog or cat is not thinking about you they're looking at you no thought it doesn't mean that you have regressed it means you for you you've gone beyond thinking stepped above thinking and then you can meet the entire dimension that is below thinking in a wonderful state of oneness the oneness that you sense with the all nature that's around you if you're in conceptual thinking you're separated you meet everything because when you're not thinking about the tree and the bird and the breeze and the insect and this there is no me and them there's a there's a single phenomenon the forms arising in consciousness and so you're like God that says and God saw what he she it had made and and recognize it as good the consciousness that out of which the whole universe came you represent that when you're in the state of no thought you represent the ground of being of all being and you walk around nature and you say if you had a thought it would say oh I did a good thing there and you see that even in the tension between opposites even that there's a deeper good beyond that yes occasionally one thing eats up another but there is a greater harmony that envelops the whole you cannot sense that harmony when you're trapped in conceptual thinking so next time you can tell me how it's going with your children it's a spiritual practice like everything else it becomes a spiritual practice

[Speaker 6] (6:18:34 - 6:19:13)

I understand there's probably only one answer to this question like so many that will be asked how can a movement that is so inwardly focused demonstrate political power in the same way that some corporate interests and evangelical interests have done so I think much to the detriment of our political process I didn't quite understand can you just repeat again how can a an inwardly focused movement inwardly focused movement demonstrate political power to beneficial

[Speaker 1] (6:19:13 - 6:19:25)

effect instead of this is a thank you this is a question for Marianne how did the Indians get

[Speaker 3] (6:19:25 - 6:23:05)

the British to leave what was Gandhi's movement of non-violence if not an inwardly focused movement Martin Luther King went to India he studied the principles of nonviolence and he brought those principles back for application in the civil rights movement struggle for civil rights in the United States during the 1960s please forgive me for my some level of ignorance about about Canada's history but most of our countries have had pretty much the same trajectories of places where there were levels of injustice that moved to justice if you looked at the abolitionist movement in the United States all the power when you were just talking about the corporate power the abolitionists didn't even have cell phones they had no computers they had no way of connecting the economic power behind slavery the institution of slavery in the United States in the southern states of the United States at that time was the equivalent of corporate power today but they had a better idea they had what was ultimately a more life-sustaining idea that's the power of that line that Martin Luther King used to quote the the arc of justice is law the moral arc of the universe is long but it bends towards justice because ultimately if you stand on something which is which is life sustaining freedom and liberty and and and and fairness for you for you for life for life in all its forms then you have what Martin Luther King called cosmic companionship this is what is the the symbol of the Christ child in front of the three kings they bowed to him when you are in the presence ultimately no amount of money no amount of corporate power no amount of governmental power none of those external powers which are false anyway will ultimately stand for all the reasons we were talking about earlier they they are powers of an illusionary world and when we recognize as Martin Luther King said there is a power in us more powerful than the presence of bullets in the presence that Eckert so eloquently describes as we is there is a collective field of presence which is what the Indian non-movement nonviolent movement was it was a collective field of presence led by Gandhi a collective field of presence led by Martin Luther King in the United States then ultimately all all powers of form will fall in the presence of light the course of miracles defines light as understanding and in the presence of light darkness cannot be we need to be and also the course in miracle says faith there is no such thing as a faithless person faith is an aspect of consciousness but we tend to have more faith in the power of the disaster than we have faith in the power of presence we have too much faith in corporate power we need to have more faith in the power of presence the power of love which is not saying that all corporate power is bad by the way but corporate dominance so I think sometimes political activists today are disturbed by an ignorance of history because if you want to see political miracles we've already had them from suffrage to the abolition of slavery and to to many examples yes it's not like it's

[Speaker 1] (6:23:05 - 6:31:41)

not like well it's never happened thank you thank you how can one teach children the rules that we follow in society such as manners and appropriate behavior and set limits and consequences while also allowing them to be create and express themselves yes that's a balancing act finding the balance between allowing them to do and be and setting boundaries which is also necessary so that they don't become a danger to themselves and others for example or so that they don't become a nuisance to others and traditionally of course boundaries that people set for children were far too rigid and narrow in past times nowadays people seem to have gone in many cases to the opposite extreme where children have no boundaries whatsoever and they are not happy with that they're just as unhappy with no boundaries as they are with excessive boundaries so it requires wisdom to know how much space you can give them allow them to unfold in and even behavior how much you need to protect them from possible danger and at the same time not go so far as to remove their desire to explore the world it requires wisdom I saw a school I go past every day when I take the dog for a walk they had before the beginning of the long vacation period they had a big notice board outside and it said goodbye so something see you in September or whenever it is and then it's underneath it said in big letters be safe and I thought well yes it's good but it's a little bit one-sided too if the emphasis on being is on being safe then I imagined a girl or boy coming back after the vacation and the teacher asked well what did you do and the boy or girl says oh well I was really safe never left my room I was just totally safe at a great time safety of course is good to pursue but not even that you can't pursue safety as the ultimate aim in life it's a question of balance risk is part of life too the important thing is when you boundaries and of course boundaries need to be consistent not to set boundaries as a reaction to something that they do and then the boundaries are contaminated with negative energy the boundaries need to be peaceful boundaries firm but peaceful not reactive boundaries and so the important thing of course is that the you are there as a consistently peaceful energy energy field for them in the background of their lives you are there as the the aware presence and this is similar to even with a dog you have to do that as when I had the conversation with Caesar Milan the dog whisperer he was explaining that what really matters is your state of consciousness with the dog and you need you need to be the still point the point that is rooted in stillness or presence and then the dog will respond to that and of course every living being will respond to that only you can know in any particular case where the balance lies between exploration or even risk somewhat risky behavior and the necessary precautions that you need to take whatever you do the underlying state of consciousness is that which transmits itself most it's not so much what you do with a child but who you are with a child boundaries need to be consistent so remember that and not as a reaction to something when you see the child indulging in dangerous behavior that that must be stopped it's important to stop it but not in reactive fear as I often observe parents do the children the child does something and that immediately the parent reacts and screams at them yes you never go there again do you hear me you must go there again do you hear me and the child is traumatized it's a it's a dreadful assault on the church was only fear of course on the part of the parent and so the reaction was motivated by fear but the parent doesn't realize how traumatizing such an energetic assault on a child actually is it leaves it's like a it can leave us permanent scar in a child to be screamed at in anger by a parent so that is when you need to when you stop behavior on the child that can that is potentially very dangerous it needs to be done in absolute presence and firmness not the not the fear reaction and then you don't create trauma in the child it's almost as bad as having an accident presence and then explain family you must not go there because that that and totally

[Speaker 9] (6:31:41 - 6:33:09)

different the more I choose to be present and the more I live my life like that the more I notice the people around me and I need to figure out a way to convey this message to them without preaching without handing the book out you know to everyone I know yes my dad happens to be great living in consciousness but he's really one of the only ones that I see on a regular basis which regular being every six months that I can sort of relate to yes and my friends are wonderful but they need to know what I know and I need an accurate way to convey the message have you tried anything yes and and sometimes I find myself getting exhausted because sometimes I feel like I'm going around and around so you try to explain I do and in their ways of explaining it but I'm just wondering from you if there's okay almost like a way to sum it up without sounding

[Speaker 1] (6:33:09 - 6:46:08)

preachy okay good question thank you well it's good that your dad is open to it so you have him I often hear of people who give copies of the book to relatives or friends and sometimes the relative or the friend says oh I'm eternally grateful to you because it changed my life and if you hadn't given it to me perhaps I would have suffered for another 10 or 15 years before I discovered it so I'm eternally grateful and then there are other friends or relatives who say what is this book that you gave me it made no sense at all and and so you can get the two responses sometimes if people are open and it's hard to predict who is going to be open sometimes the most unlikely people are open to this and vice versa sometimes people who think well this person has been going to church every Sunday and considers him or herself to be quite religious or spiritual he or she must be open to this and you may find it's completely rejected what you say or the book so it's hard to predict sometimes people tell me they are disappointed when a close relative or friend says why are you reading these things it's just completely meaningless to me and so there's a natural desire in you in in everybody who in whom the awakening the awakening process happens for other people to also receive that message the wisest thing is to first of all not necessarily convey attempt to convey this message in words unless a true question is being asked and that's an indication you can give the book that's fine and if they read it it's fine if they don't read it if it touches them if it doesn't they'll put it on a shelf and perhaps ten years later they pick it up and this also has happened some people have written to me it says I got your book years ago and I didn't make sense at the time and then something happened in my life and then just at the right moment I picked it up again and suddenly every page is deeply meaningful so I've had letters like that so it's fine giving the book is fine the book will either be received or it will not be received but talking to people about it can be difficult if I wouldn't even recommend it unless it arises out of a particular situation where the situation is telling you this may be the moment to mention something or the person may be asking a genuine question what is this all about or somebody may notice a change in you some other people by the way as you may know you could change into the most the world's most enlightened being and some close relatives may never see it that's another matter because because they have a memory in their mind of who you are and they no longer see you they see their preconception of who you are so they wouldn't notice any change but other people may notice it and so if they notice a change and if a true question is asked the the wonderful thing is when when spontaneously you begin to speak about it when that comes of power into what you say but it only happens if the other that you are speaking to is open and the words are being received then this initiates the magical process whereby a spiritual teaching arises so at that moment when it happens a true question is being asked not a superficial question or question that implies that the questioner is really doesn't believe in all that nonsense a true question is a question when the other really wants to know the answer a simple question it could be what you seem to have changed for example if the person does perceive that you have changed what happened wise or you and or something about a problem that they have that they some form of suffering in their lives and for some reason they begin to ask you for advice or start talking to you about it and then the moment comes where either a question is being asked that's a true question or out of the situation you realize this is perhaps this is the moment and you find yourself saying something and then the words are being received and then that's an magical process when suddenly you become at that moment you become a spiritual teacher for that person it means doesn't mean it becomes your ultimate identity it's not at that moment your function is to convey consciousness consciousness speaks through you and you will feel only when it's being received by the other does the power come through you if it's not being being received by the other you will make an effort to talk it becomes frustrated and you can't even find the right words anymore and then you are frustrated and the other person is frustrated and that's the end of it so it's waiting either for the open question the truly genuine question a live question or waiting for the the situation to tell you that this is and then it's spontaneously you find yourself saying something and with that you also there's deepening happens in you as you begin to teach another who is open and it may not necessarily even be a relative it could be a friend or it could be somebody you meet accidentally when you in a waiting room or wherever you are and then the power moves through you and deepening happens in you because as you teach you learn you teach you learn but it may well be that people around you the situation does not yet arise and no true question is being asked and then it's only frustrating to attempt to teach people who are not ready or in a situation that is not right yet in that case it would be better to keep as the Buddha put it to keep noble silence and instead of trying to explain something you simply live the teaching and for the time being that implies here you accept the other person as they are in that moment and you represent the presence there there is also such a thing as a wordless or silent teaching that happens whenever you are present in any situation and so that's the other way in which teaching can happen through you not necessarily through words because they may not be ready to hear the words but it can be there whenever you completely accept the other the way they are right now you don't demand that they should be more open you don't demand that they should understand you you don't demand that they shouldn't generate all these problems for themselves that they do and you can see this happens so you need to be in tune to see whether the situation is right for words either because of the right question is being asked or the situation is right or whether the situation is not right for you to say anything but you can still practice being present and that's also is a teaching and that is a teaching that does not does bypass this or goes through the ego in the other person presence seeps through the ego whereas if you use words it can easily create in a person who is not ready egoic resistance and then you get into a discussion and nothing good comes of that the other person just gets more entrenched in their point of view or their mental position so you need to be just patient the situation will tell you whether it is appropriate for you to actually speak words or whether just being being there as the presence is enough in that situation maybe the person can't take any more at that point and some people that you know may never be ready as long as you know them that's not everybody is ready yet and it is possible that some people as you go through the awakening process some people some friends may drift out of your life after a few years if nothing no change happens in them relatives may stay in your life for the simple fact that they are relatives so you still you go to Thanksgiving dinners and you meet them and you listen to them year after year perhaps telling the same stories I find that sometimes people one aspect of the teaching that is sometimes people who even are not people who are not ready ready for anything more may be open in some cases to hearing for example about inner body awareness and nothing else if you can if it's if the situation is it again here you have to just see if the situation is right not just go and say okay next time I'm going to see if I'm going to talk about inner body awareness but if the situation is right it arises naturally out of the situation you could teach your grandmother your grandfather or your father or mother already about having feeling the inner energy field of the body without any kind of esoteric words that they might object to or spiritual words that they may object to or their ego may object to just the possibility of being feeling the aliveness in the body if people who are very much burdened by a problem-making mind who have spent sleepless nights thinking about their problems then you could say something like well when I this happens to me also sometimes you can say and when I wake up in the night it's just one example and thinking about problems I realize it's completely pointless and what I do is I put attention into first into my hands then into feet and then feel the entire body and suddenly I'm not thinking about my problems anymore I'm just it feels good to be alive this is a very basic thing that even people who reject any even a hint of anything spiritual that's they might be able to accept that because it seems very body it's body so it must be real so it's a very gentle thing resist the temptation of wanting which is sometimes because one feels so that such a change comes to you that you want to tell it to everybody but not everybody wants to hear it yet wait for the right situation or the right question and then the teaching happens some people you just have to allow them their unhappiness for the time being they still want

[Speaker 5] (6:46:08 - 6:46:46)

it and that's compassion too hi my question is how do how do I maintain a sense of presence when I'm in the company of another person how do I bring presence into conversation yes thank you

[Speaker 1] (6:46:48 - 7:11:46)

not easy because the moment you start talking the two minds come together and so they strengthen each other and a flow starts of a stream of thought and so easy to a moment ago you were present and then somebody starts talking oh you know what this what no you know what he said what he did oh my he always does that and again the what applies here is the loss of space during the conversation both participants of the conversation have lost any sense of space there there's only the word the mind the verbalization the stream of thinking that becomes sounds and they are taken over by that it has its own momentum almost a little entity is and stream doesn't want to end it's host and and often it generates emotions in the body so that strengthens it gives amplifies it and if the mental stream triggers emotions which is often does when you talk especially talking about things about other people what they did fail to do did to you to others criticisms gossip all kinds of emotional the ego comes in because when you can criticize another it's nothing personal it's part of the mental stream when you criticize another the ego feels a little bit stronger you have grown a little bit because you by diminishing another in the delusional system of the ego you have enhanced your own self image a little bit because obviously this person is being correct so any kind of any criticism of another he such and such that all that is part of that energy stream and then emotions come amplify the thoughts loss of space now for you to regain space without saying I'm not talking anymore even carrying on how do you regain first one thing is necessary for you which is the realization that you've lost space without that I don't need to say anything to you because there's nothing you can do when you are so taken over by a stream of thoughts that you don't even know that you've been taken over by a stream of thought there's nothing you can do forgive them for they know not what they do the you're unconscious you are the stream of thought and as the stream of thought you don't want it to end because you don't want your own end every entity wants to remain in form as long as possible so when you are the stream of thought so identified with it nothing you can do but if there's a slightest realization that you lost it there's no space and this is much more likely to happen the more awareness arises in you that in the middle of being immersed in a stream of conversational stream in the middle of it you suddenly realize what's happening and that moment you have a choice but so what is your choice your choice is to bring some presence into this some space into the stream of thought but how do you do that first of all of course it's still it's coming at you not only from within your own mind it's coming at you from the other person too but there's the the awareness is there okay presence what do I do because that that realization that you've lost it if you don't do anything but may only last three seconds and then it's gone again so you have to use those two or three seconds where you realize the loss of space and then do something in that space where you have some freedom to act and so then you by a conscious choice you take your attention out of thinking but you have to anchor it somewhere else then otherwise it won't work so you anchor it somewhere else that is not in the stream of thinking and you choose either your breath or your inner body or some other sense perception around you that you become aware of but when you're actually talking to another person it's probably easiest to either use your breath or your inner body so while you're talking or you while the moments when you're not talking especially but even while you're talking you feel the put attention into the inner body you practice that beforehand when when conditions are easier so that you can do it once it's necessary go into the inner feel the light and feel your energy field is alive as you sit there and you'll notice you're not thinking anymore you can still listen the amazing thing is you can listen to another person without thinking easily beautifully so you're listening but part of your attention is on the inner energy field it's so you've taken attention away from your thoughts and some of your attention you don't require that much attention for listening enough to take it in but part of your attention is in the inner energy field as you can do now as you sit to listen to these words you will notice that you can be aware as you sit there of your inner energy field in the background so to speak to feel its aliveness throughout the body some parts you can feel more strongly perhaps it's for some people it's you can feel it more in the chest region or the extremities but it's you can feel it in the entire body that's great a global sense of aliveness in the background and it's ultimately formless it's already the the doorway into the formless it's not the physical body anymore so feel that while you sit there and listen and you've stepped out of the stream of thinking and then the quality of the interaction immediately changes the other person may not consciously notice what's happening and may carry on for a while it also doesn't mean that you cannot respond anymore but also how you respond and how the quality of your response changes too you're no longer contributing to the negative nature which is often the case in conversations so and and a certain amount of stillness then will also be part of the words that you speak some space even in between the words and again it's it's so subtle that the other person probably won't notice it consciously so that's the post problem hang on to the inner body the angle let it be the anchor and then you're becoming present you're present and if you lose it again when the other person says something challenging and then after a little while you remember up gone back into the inner back into the inner body that's a powerful anchor and then everything changes from there that's it's practice practice continuous practice and because when you're in touch with the inner body there is that is really spacious it's the its energy the beginning of the formless I call it halfway between form and formlessness what is Chi or life energy is the bridge between the formless and the world of form so to feel the Chi the inner liveness is you are moving towards the formless then that's beautiful already even halfway across the bridge it's beautiful and so that is on the phone do the same when you're on the phone with somebody listening to it on the phone you can also use because you are not looking at the other person you can also use sense perception as an anchor that's a sense perception awareness of sense perceptions acute awareness of sense perception is a powerful anchor for presence so when you're on the phone maybe you have a flower next to you or you look out of the window at the sky could be anything even an inanimate object can do it if you have something natural it's easier but even anything a shiny glass anything give it your be acutely aware of it while you listen so you have attention takes attention away from thinking so you can see the beauty of the sky while you while you're listening to your friend if it's a friend if it's somebody who is infusing you or complaining then it's even more important of course and and she requires it's a greater challenge the more unconscious your the other person is which means the more identified with a mental stream and the emotions and reactive the more of a challenge it is and I noticed that in the when I come across people who are extremely unconscious sometimes occasionally mentally unbalanced who are very totally identified with their minds I always I feel an automatic shift of an intensity of presence throughout the body almost not a decision-making process it comes just naturally and often the person then becomes more sane in that moment when you're intensely aware it's almost like and I've seen miraculous things in some people happening and that being acutely present and it's a very healing thing deeply healing for yourself and whatever is around you in that whatever the field and probably reaches out even touches others you don't even see acutely very present the more challenging the more present the same with situations circumstances some are challenging threatening gain that's the fuel that we talked about the fuel for consciousness the challenge becomes a fuel for consciousness the greater the challenge the more intense there's no there's no effort in it of course because presence is not effort but it is high energy so if you walk out of here and suddenly let's take an extreme case the whole city crumbles around you you would go and maybe then maybe you only have a few more seconds before your body also crumbles but it's doesn't matter anymore once you have the certain level of awareness is reached then the challenges will intensify awareness until that level of awareness is reached challenges will diminish the awareness and pull you back into unconscious reaction so there is a certain threshold when a person reaches that threshold any challenge that comes in will just strengthen awareness intensified but before that threshold when you're challenged by a situation or person you will go into an unconscious reaction and lose presence so challenge can make you lose presence or intensify presence and when you're in the middle of the threshold there you can even you have a choice in the moment of a challenge you know okay am I going to fall down or am I going to rise okay it will be much easier and presence is not something just that happens inside you it does affect what happens outside of you and non-reaction not meaning that you don't take the action that is necessary in a challenging situation but not inner reactivity against something in the absence of that very quickly situations change because the reaction against often intensifies that what's happening out there and makes it worse and very often it's the reaction is far worse in the event I'm often amazed what little things trigger enormous negative reaction in people tiny little things quite insignificant and yet no completely out of proportion to the triggering event now the non-reaction of course is not sometimes people mistake it and believe that a non-reaction is putting up some kind of barrier and sometimes people try to do it that way but that's not it say okay I'm not going to react to this person or this situation I'm not going to let it touch me nothing can touch me that's not dissolving it through presence presence is rather you're transparent to it rather than trying to hold it or fight it so let's say something coming towards you metaphorically speaking instead of doing you let it pass through you or at least you step aside gently the person come you or it goes right through okay and not feeding the situation that has arisen out of unconsciousness factors of unconsciousness not feeding it through reaction it's powerful a lot of ones karma what we call karma which is really the accumulation of unconsciousness reaction patterns of reaction emotional mental patterns people think karma is what what happens to you but to some extent it's true but mostly karma is your reaction to what happens your reaction to what happens now determines what happens next and so often situations that would for some people be relatively insignificant in others trigger an enormous reaction they trigger their karma and so they become unhappy in certain situations where other people would simply say oh well that's that's that it's gone and others are big extremely reactive I can sometimes see it when with me people get very angry with me sometimes the and usually it's about something that I didn't do or rather failed to do you didn't reply to my letters you I've written three times you didn't you still haven't replied I'm really feeling totally dishonored and whatever there comes a huge story of by I'm feeling disregarded not honored in my being and to alter the coming story that would make anybody feel guilty they don't realize that well first that I I have a backlog of several thousand letters and so it's taken personally it's a natural thing to do others might say I wrote to you but you didn't reply and that's fine I've actually found my own answer thank you so much nothing happened and somebody else feels totally diminished in their sense of self because I didn't reply and again that enormous I'm sorry if it's you so please take this as a reply when I've just written the power of now the it was recommended to me to send it to some famous people so that they could read it and say something good about it so I sent it to Deepak Chopra and Marianne Williamson and one or two others and I didn't hear from them and that was fine I don't have karma in that sense I didn't feel diminished in my sense of self because Deepak Chopra didn't reply just but I by sending it to say much I did wonder why didn't he reply of course now I know I didn't reply he gets thousands and thousands of things like that manuscripts and books every day they arrive can you please write something about my book well of course he didn't look at it much later when it wasn't needed anymore he saw it and he wrote something nice about it and much later I got a beautiful letter from Marianne Williamson who said I'm so sorry I never got around to writing I was meaning to write a forward to the path now but there was so much going on in my life I just couldn't get around and I didn't didn't notify you I'm so sorry about it lovely letter and I had already completely forgotten that I'd even asked her when I got that it was years later but it was lovely to get it so reaction taking things personally and reacting and putting and finding an enormous amount of suffering out of a small situation that in itself is quite insignificant but the suffering arises through one's reaction to the situation and that's karma and that determines how you perceive the next moment and so on the freedom from reaction is the freedom from karma that the and that is presence and that's the gradual fading out of karma of all the inherited all the old patterns that one carries inside at any time you have an issue with somebody you're putting some blame on somebody who did this or failed to do this and complaining about somebody that's always a form of ego and unconsciousness so if there's any this is where I suppose it's we're talking about forgiveness if there's anybody left in your life towards whom you bear some grudge or ill feelings you have to look there but they are red there are parts of your karma still operating and that's holding you back from full awakening any grudge this person did that remember Marcus Aurelius with that mouth

[Speaker 7] (7:11:46 - 7:13:27)

and those armpits I am a musical artist I played music most of my life and only more recently have moved into making a career out of it and what I notice as I'm pursuing a musical career is there's so many places that ego becomes a pull the thought of things like fame or even giving a performance and wanting people to think things like wow he's such a great performer the different ways ego shows up while the thing that's the pulls me to music is there's a deeper drive a drive to share something deep and profound and they the ego things seem to get in the way so I guess my question is how how do I pursue my music career or maybe an artistic career to make it more relevant for more people without being driven by the ego or less driven by the ego how does the ego manifest did

[Speaker 1] (7:13:27 - 7:13:34)

you say in your at how do you see it when you do the during the performance before or after or at

[Speaker 7] (7:13:34 - 7:13:50)

other times or sure I can be in a performance thinking I hope they like me or I hope they're liking what I'm I'm doing yeah okay or I want to get to this level of success with my music like

[Speaker 1] (7:13:50 - 7:14:08)

this person or that person do you play alone or with a group both and just before I answer what's the name of yours and the group so that we know when you become famous we know who to look

[Speaker 7] (7:14:10 - 7:14:17)

Elliot Samuel that's my name okay and the group has a name the Elliot Samuel band

[Speaker 1] (7:14:40 - 7:24:10)

with that kind of of course with when you perform that's the art whether you are most closely associated with the person rather than if you're an artist who is painting or an artist who's doing whatever with the creating something with their hands or then there's a little bit more of a gap between the person and the work but here you have the person and the work are very closely related you you sing you play so their ego can perhaps more easily arise for an artist who paints you can you can promote your art without necessarily promoting yourself although some artists have done both successfully I remembered you may remember maybe you don't Salvador Dali he he made himself into a work of art he played a role whether he became the role or whether there was he still knew that he was playing a role after so many years of playing a role I don't know but he had this straight huge mustache and it behaved in a very eccentric way as if he were as if he himself were as a realist painting and he became famous perhaps partly because he became such a he was a performance it's not only the work he created and there are even authors who made themselves into characters of their own creation Truman Capote for example he always was very much out there dressing in a particular way and so you become your brand name and people promoting themselves in that way it's neither good nor bad it just is whether whether it is ego or whether they know that they are simply performing I don't know only they can tell ego ultimately means you become the role without knowing it that it's really ego and it can happen that an artist or to promote him or herself initially just plays a role and then after 10 or 20 years of playing it he is the role then it's really ego so another thing as you if you have thoughts of acceptance or wanting to succeed or be liked and so on while you play that will take some energy away from your performance so because it will divert energy from the actual the doing and performing of it into thought thinking so you won't be giving a hundred percent to give a hundred percent you need to be so present that there's only just complete attention to that and the most successful performance are totally present while they perform when they stop performing many of them are no longer present but while they perform there is that absolute attention to just this moment they're not aware of anything or anybody so if you can be total in that doing that will add energy to what you do you don't and as far as promoting your work is concerned there are some successful musicians and singers who don't seem to do that and others do it they don't promote necessarily themselves they just do their art and they are successful in that Sarah McLachlan for example she just does what she does there's no particular character she creates who does that or perhaps I don't know Enya perhaps she just sings so and others feel the compulsion to to it comes with a performance if there's a team people want you they want to they want they want to perform and so you begin to perform nothing wrong with the performance the problem only starts when you the the character that you adopt if you if there is a character in your performance you dress up in a certain way if that takes takes you over after it can happen after a while that you get stuck with what initially was simply a creation to entertain people to make it more entertaining like it's like a theatrical performance and but then the character somehow gets into seeps deeper into you and then before you know it in private life you're still the character that the famous one so some some famous people have have succumbed to that and they became very unhappy because if you're stuck with a false role that you play then everything becomes false in your life the people you attract and so on that you attract then people you want only people who strengthen the role that you're playing they love those people and there's no true relationship and those people are drawn to that role and they want some reflected glory from that role so that that can reflect and enhance their role they look close to you the famous one and so on it becomes an all in egoic play but very false so if you have a performance and you create a kind of performing character some rock musicians do that they may be normal people in normal life and when they're on stage they look extremely wild and then when you see them in normal life they sit and and of course the then they notice that they're the all the fans they don't want the normal person they want the strange character and so when they see that then they begin to play that role even in their lives because people think you're boring you don't who is this is not we want we want this high-energy mad crazy guy that's what and then you play it in even in your daily life that's the danger starts if you can separate the role from who you are then it's fine it's just a play with form so don't become the role if you play one and during the performance the essential thing is absolute presence many performers are nervous before performance or they even think I can't do it it's not going to work they're not going to like me they may have a lot of mind activity that's a typical thing of stage fright which many people have what are they going can't do it today heart is beating and then they get on stage and for the as it starts the energy takes over and they become totally present and then it works that way and for some they even while they perform there's some as I mentioned some mind activity some hesitation are they liking it and so on that which takes energy away from the performance so it's a good practice spiritual practice we will look out for you and your band and see in a few years where you are and who you are thanks thank you good afternoon Eckhart

[Speaker 14] (7:24:10 - 7:25:14)

I enjoy brainstorming and sharing ideas though sometimes I reflect on my doing and wonder if being the space would be more beneficial and then my question is how do we balance being the space and playing creatively with the forms yes is that also to do with your work at work with my work with my it's been part of my work but I also take it into the other areas of my life the community things that I work in in the community friends

yes

[Speaker 1] (7:25:17 - 7:41:07)

well that's the dance the balance the dance between form and formlessness in your life that's a big challenge and that's the art of living to have the to the formless dimension of space or stillness if you could call it or aware presence in which there's little or no thinking going on a deeper sense of presence and thinking which is form thoughts forms creating physical forms creating speech creating things doing things interacting getting things done in this world the the focus of what we are about here is of course on accessing the dimension of space and the reason why that's the focus is because the world is unbalanced the world is completely lost in thinking and doing that activity of the mind no sense of formlessness spaciousness stillness sacredness whatever you want to call it the eternal the God the divine dimension because that's that is the world is out of balance the emphasis here is on accessing that dimension of depth but because the other people are doing that already they've got form is everywhere thinking is everywhere but of course it is true all the emphasis is on this a balance is you need to have a balance in your life and that's the ultimate challenge is to to have the two in balance you could also call it yin and yang yin being the still the receptive allowing acceptance of what is as expressed in the feminine gesture of all embracing stillness and the thinking and doing and creating new forms now if you lose touch with that dimension then your creations and your thinking become more and more insane and you so you go into hyperactivity of thinking and doing but all you're thinking and doing becomes just more and more mad so you create mad structures out there you create a mad civilization you create a mad state of mind because there's a loss of that time deeper dimension in you and this is where the world is right now I'm not saying people should go to the other extreme and refrain from doing no we need to find a balance a balance between action out there and allowing so you have to in yourself in daily life that's the only place to start it's nothing to do with out there have allow yourself to become still not only when you do a meditation in the morning or the evening but in between things in life and that once you develop that ability to go into stillness whenever you want to then that's it because then what even while you're discussing something with someone what are we going to do how are we going to do this you can bring it's not just for one hour you're going to doing or you can intersperse the doing with being so to speak so while you're thinking okay what is it that we can do if you really want to think creatively you have to become still for a moment and then see what comes up after that and that is accessing the deep the depths of your being that is the stillness that is the formless intelligence or consciousness and so you go there okay I don't know what to do here you become still and then see what else what comes after that it can sometimes it may only need to be five seconds ten seconds or while somebody is telling you what or how they see it you listen in the state of still alertness and then sometimes what your input suddenly is new and creative because you listened in still alertness and then the words suddenly come out of your mouth oh I didn't know that well it wasn't your creation it was it came from the source of all creativity so it's vital it's not only to support to save this world which otherwise is going to be or totally insane if if enough humans don't find that dimension within themselves so it's not just to help you on a personal level and make your life more pleasant and more creative and more beneficial but it's it is vital for the whole of humanity that enough humans find that dimension realize it and live it in everyday life so then you have the although here I emphasize the being you need the balance I just the reason why I emphasize the being in this teaching is because you have the other already well most of you have so there is the universe has two movements one one of course the outgoing movement creation of form the universe becomes more and more complex and differentiated goes from the the oneness of before the Big Bang the unmanifested oneness it goes into until there are billions upon billions of stars galaxies planetary systems worlds amazing diversity the universe once obviously wants that and every human has that inside the human also wants to create there is that outward movement but the universe has in a corresponding movement that is it also wants to return to the source which was never lost and you can find it and why do I know this because I know it in myself and everybody if you look within you can see you have the two movements but part of you wants to go out and create and another part wants to go home and be in some people one is much stronger than the other so you have Tony Robbins is the and you have a cartoli which is the so you have to dance in between but you may feel drawn something you're not all humans are right in the middle some humans are much more one way others are much more the other way but you need to have the some set don't disappear into being you just happen soon enough but what while you're still here as a body you don't need to go and say okay from now on only being feed me if you go to India you can do that they will feed you but if you do it here they'll put you away that's the challenge land for us here is that so in your next brainstorming session you can practice a lot stillness and then go back into okay what sorts what you have to contribute talk okay and then you while you listen still alert or then for a moment close your eyes or look at the sky and if you get stuck somewhere okay what's the problem here this this this okay I don't see any solution to this and you drop it don't continue to think about it that's pointless that you go around in circles drop it and stillness Einstein had a wonderful ability to always because become still and go for long walks and then he came home picked up his pen Oh theory of relativity where did that come from he did a lot of thinking but it happened to him when he was he had a boring job in a patent office in Switzerland and during this boring job all this creative work came to him and so there was no pressure to produce anything there was no academic pressure he didn't have an academic position at the time they didn't he applied for jobs they didn't want him and so and he did later described himself as just being more slow than others that's what his great achievement people say he said people think I'm a greatest genius but really it is I take longer to think about these things I'm slower when he was a child the people around him his parents and his nanny he thought he might be mentally deficient because he was so slow so he had this that means he had this deep connection still with being he did a lot of thinking too but without losing the connectedness with being and without becoming identified with his thinking he didn't develop an ego on the basis of his mental achievements it's a wonderful thing that's and that's creative the truly creative humans know that it's not a personal achievement the moment you think this is the personal achievement you block the source of creativity creativity is allowing it to come from the deeper level of consciousness itself consciousness you become a channel for that it's not you so the ego will try to come in perhaps at some point if some beautiful creation has happened through you or great brilliant ideas come to you well I thought of that but where really did it come from or if you write a book and the book is has power and is inspiring where really did that cover did you the person did you write that where does that power come from no it's not the person you can't create that many people try to imitate it but without having access to it but if you have access to the depths within yourself that's where the power comes through but you have to become still for a moment alert receptive and you it's helpful if you have a vehicle because otherwise the power if you don't have one it's fine too but if you want to create something have a vehicle into which the power can flow whether it's music or interesting ideas or creating some structure for the good of humanity or for people to feel more joyful you create this or that or to help or whatever or an enlightened business or whatever it is the you're not going to create great music by becoming present I'm not going to create classical masterpiece in music because I can become present I would have to have a vehicle practice for several years and then the vehicle is there and creativity can flow into it but it doesn't have to be the criterion for humans the significance of a human life is not what they produce the criterion for this the value and significance of a human life is their state of consciousness which they emanate and the state of consciousness that you emanate is really what matters that is your contribution to the totality of consciousness when I say your ultimately there is not your you are part of the totality so that's the contribution is your state of consciousness affects many many others even if you didn't come into contact with them so if you are a peaceful and alive human being you emanate that and in every encounter you emanate that and it spreads kindness comes as part of that as the ego subsides kindness comes and so it's a wonderful practice and see what brilliant ideas you come up

[Speaker 6] (7:41:07 - 7:43:07)

with or come through you I've read all your books and I listen to your recordings on a pretty much on a daily basis and I don't say that to build up an ego that doesn't exist it leads into my question what I find in trying to practice the power of now trying to be conscious without thought is a very heavy inner dialogue of all the principles and things that I've read like how should I do this what would Eckhart say and and and actually my thought process starts getting more active and I think I'm losing the presence by that thought process and then I think it a your latest book with the cartoons which I love which I think there's one with a little bird in the tree he's talking to the dog he's very upset and the dog says what's wrong and the bird says well you know I'm thinking about yesterday and this and that and I'm worried about what's going to happen in a week two weeks it's about the future what do I do what do I do and the dog just looks at him and says stop thinking so how do I you know it seems you try to stop thinking but and you read all this and you try to practice it but yet in any given situation I find that in order to get closer to practicing it or even practice it it's causing a lot of thoughts to happen so it's a different kind of thoughts or those thoughts that I should break that kind of

[Speaker 1] (7:43:07 - 7:56:23)

habit and if so how okay thank you thank you now the there's a lot of talk these days about not just talk actually it's happening addictions many people are addicted to all kinds of things substances but one of the greatest addictions or one of the greatest addiction never actually you never read about it in the papers because the people who are addicted to it don't know it it's the addiction to thinking it's actually addictive can't stop thinking it's like can't stop drinking can't stop smoking can't stop eating can't stop thinking thinking is the greater addiction than any of these and it's an addiction because it's first it's been a drug or it's just been around for so long and it's a pseudo sense of self so it's a great reluctance on the part of most people to let go of thinking because which is equated with the state of sleep to let go of thinking there isn't that much to understand in this teaching there's a little bit to understand about how the ego works but even that is just mainly a self-observation the main thing about it is presence presence and presence is a space of no thought but presence can also be there in the background even when thinking is happening you can still be not completely involved in the thinking thinking loses the ability to create havoc in your life and confuse you so your choice then is not to understand more or to bring some intellectual analysis to the practice but to practice the state of not thinking which can be arrived at by various ways as you probably know if you don't think about it just do it becoming more aware of the present moment and accepted as it is slows down the overactive mind is one thing because a lot of the overactivity of the mind is an attempt to get away from the isness the simplicity of the present moment so to become more aware of the present moment as a practice have perhaps little pointers in your office at home in your car let's say present moment or whatever or a symbol for it and there different entry points into the present moment present moment awareness means thinking subsides may not disappear completely but something else arises that is primary we call it presence or awareness buddhists call it mindfulness which i don't use because it implies your mind is full of things but it isn't of course it's just a mistranslation so to to be present first of all use the present moment to become but how do you become conscious of the present moment now when you get it after a while you can you can actually sense the presence of the present so to speak directly and that is but helpful things are sense perceptions take you out of thinking if you're not judging the sense perceptions labeling naming looking around anywhere wherever you are look around practice sense perceptions without this compulsive interference of naming what what you're perceiving or that's a beautiful flow i wonder what it's called i don't know what it's called or that helps i can be free of thinking if i know what it's called i can say oh that's such and such and then drop that and see what it means to perceive without the interference of concepts words at this moment for example you're looking at me now let's say between now and now were you thinking no okay and again between now and now were you thinking or present no thought and while i speak do you need to think to understand what i'm saying or can you just listen and understand it and this is what you're doing and so that's part of the teaching and the function of the spiritual teacher imparting information is secondary what i'm telling you now is secondary what is primary is the underlying state of consciousness which is presence that's the teaching but you can't talk about that it's underlying but the sign that it's working is that while you listen there's no thought there's just an alert presence and when the so-called teacher stops speaking for a moment the alert presence remains it does not need to be filled with anything like now what is there to think about nothing now if we do this for longer if we're at some point your mind will probably start up and think how much longer is he going to sit there and and when that happens you can allow your mind to say how much longer is he going to sit there and say nothing and then come back to presence and then some other thought will come what's this all about and then you can allow that thought to rise and then be present again which means you're not really your priority is no longer to follow the thought where it wants to take you because the thought has a magnetic pull it wants more of your consciousness it wants to grow because it's a little entity it wants to grow so it wants to your attention and in subtle ways it tries to get your attention says it might even use a bodily feeling says god i'm hungry suddenly why didn't i need to eat something and then you think of a red what restaurant i'm going to afterwards and so the presence is gone you are gone you are looking for a restaurant in your mind which means the thought used as some bodily thing to make thoughts out of it completely pointless because you can't find a restaurant because you're standing here but it can use all kinds of things to manufacture most to get your attention and if you're not careful if you don't know the mechanism it's not so much an intellectual understanding but a simple realization that this is what the mind does it tries to pull you in it's fine that's what it does once you know that you can allow thought to arise without following it where it wants you to go which is into another bigger thought and a bigger one so then you become like like my dog when it finds a scent and then suddenly even the dog when the dog is off leash usually she's fine she just runs around you but suddenly she picks up a scent and then she goes off completely unaware of surroundings or anything he just follows it and she could get lost she goes off to the horizon sometimes just disappears and that's when you follow a thought it goes like that you can wake up 20 minutes later and it started with sleeping a little bit hungry and thinking of a restaurant and it ends up with thinking about how unthreatful your life is so you don't you don't follow the thought you'd say on this there's a thought you don't actually say it you just you you recognize it as a thought that arises and then the difference is the thought arises in the space of your consciousness it no longer absorbs your whole consciousness then you're back to presence like now and that's the that's the practice so the spiritual teacher is primarily teaches presence the words are pointers to it the more important teaching comes through the the space out of which the words come this formless space of consciousness this is why it's good to sit here because because somehow we can then share here this beautiful spaciousness that the majority of humans on the planet still don't know about more and more people are beginning to realize this but still a minority most humans are still completely trapped in non-spacious content obsessed consciousness completely dominated by every thought that comes in content no space only content one thing after another what do i have to think about now dreadful state so the practice is presence and then thought gradually loses its power to take you over completely but choose presence sense perceptions become aware of sense perceptions listen wherever you are what what sounds don't judge them listen look touch even feel the the air on your skin that's that sense perception acute awareness of sense perceptions takes you out of thinking and makes you more alive makes you enjoy the aliveness of life much more whereas before you were trapped in a dead conceptual world in the head walking along a beautiful beach couldn't see anything couldn't feel anything not there and then suddenly but sense perception is not all there is they're beautiful as they are but what is it that underlies all the sense perception a field of alert stillness this is why the sense perceptions become so beautiful because they are there is a they arise in that field of alert stillness presence that's you and then you're awake not no thought so in nature every time your car stops at a traffic light look at the beautiful red light it's a it's another it's a form of life too it's light it's beautiful and that can stop your mind why not if it can stop your car why can't it stop your mind well that's a new practice and if it works if the red light at the traffic light stops your mind you might want to install some red lights at home everywhere

[Speaker 15] (7:57:03 - 7:57:56)

hello i come from a part of the united states that is um steeped in conventional christianity and um this is a problem for my 10 year old son because um all of his friends that he plays with in the neighborhood at school and in his sports everywhere um say things to him like he has been told he'll go to hell because he doesn't pray because we don't go to church things like that and i have tried to talk to you know explain to him well they have their beliefs and we have ours and um he said well mommy what are our beliefs and i have a very hard time because words concepts or ideas like consciousness are very hard for a 10 year old to absorb so i was just wondering if either of you have some ideas about how i might help him and understand you know why we don't

[Speaker 1] (7:57:56 - 7:58:56)

do those conventional things maybe you start because you had ought you brought up your girl also in with spirituality but not spirituality that is frozen into a rigid form as in some forms of christianity that can be defined defined in a few words this is what i this is what we believe and if you don't believe that you will go to hell but a true spirituality that is more diffused um that doesn't um also does not subscribe to the old idea of god as the controlling male figure and so how did you deal with you perhaps had a similar problem i don't know you lived in detroit for 10 years when but that um with your daughter

[Speaker 3] (7:58:58 - 8:01:29)

i don't know where the tree comes in on we have very strong beliefs we believe that god is love we believe whether you use the word god or not we believe it's not like to me the transformational wisdom is not just a diffuse you know la la thinking we have very strong beliefs and regardless what words you use it has to do with when eckhart because when eckhart talks about pure consciousness one word for what is there is love so for me it was we and i'm jewish so my daughter it wasn't she wasn't learning anything in in that wasn't easily seen it's the same that god is love we do believe honey we believe that there is something in our hearts called love and then i don't know if you call that god or not that has to do with how you what you're teaching is the basic spiritual teacher of a child which the mother is i believe and we believe that there is a love in our hearts and we believe that we are on this earth to love one another and we think that for me it was like i wrote a book for little ones called emma mommy talk to god that when we have a problem with other people with other kids at school they must not be happy so we pray for their happiness and we believe that that is the power that we love each other i mean you you speak from that place so my daughter was taught a distinct set of principles and that is that once again whether you call it god or not that there is love in the presence of which all things are made right that is what you were saying you know your your teachings are not they're they're diffuse but they're not there's not an incoherence there there is a coherent belief system and we i think we do disserve our children if we make it to like la di da there's no belief system here there's a strong belief system it's that in any given moment we seek to return to presence you know i used to always say to my daughter go back to your center honey go back to your center that's a strong belief and that if i can be in that place and no matter how people have acted towards us we're just going to send them love and any thought that comes up that's that we don't feel happy we're just going to give that over and then you say to god whatever your belief system is that's our belief system honey that's what we believe

[Speaker 1] (8:01:31 - 8:04:28)

that is a belief system that is uh deeper than what is conventionally for many people called belief because it's knowledge more than belief yes that's that's right it's for because for many of the old conventional christians it's basically an ideology they subscribe to it's exclusively in the head that just defines things very in very rigid patterns and this belief is is inseparable from an actual experience and experience is what matters yes because the belief that love is what matters you can't separate it from the actual experience of that at this moment that's part of the thing that becomes an experience so it's no longer it's not just an ideology in the head it's it's not an ideology at all it's it's inseparable from experiencing the reality of that concept at the same time rather than just having a dead concept that you believe in at the same time you experience as you speak voice it and to the child at the same time you encourage the child to experience what that means that you can you can love a flower you love an animal you love a human being you can have love for all living things and can you and you encourage the child to actually commune with just simply to not to get at an early age already full of conceptual beliefs that separate the child from experiencing life we've children are being fed with concepts these days at a very early age the head and even even a thing like when a child first learns to speak of course there is a stage when they always ask what's this called what's that called what's that and you have to of course tell the child the names of things but even there to to not not equate the naming with the reality of it so to continue to carry encourage the child to after you've named this is the an oak tree we call it an oak tree it's not an oak tree because to know the oak tree you have to still feel it and sense it and look at it and experience it and when you open yourself to it that's one manifestation of love you can you can encourage the child not to get deadened by concepts because this is what the world tries to do to children so they enhance they come to inhabit an exclusively conceptual reality ideologies in the head so this this this belief is yes you can have concepts but immediately there's a deeper reality behind the concept and you experience that and you show the child how

[Speaker 3] (8:04:28 - 8:06:19)

to feel that and believe it you know if i take this box and i drop it my knowledge of gravity tells me that it will fall to the floor it's not just that i believe in the power of gravity i know the law i believe it because i know it there are objective discernible laws of internal phenomenon or consciousness the same way that there are objective discernible laws of the external world there is the law of gravity the law of thermodynamics well there is the law of cause and effect or karma which means as the course would say every thought creates form on some level everything i put out there i will get back it is part of teaching my daughter how to navigate the world to explain that to her if you have love in your heart you have a miracle here if you're holding anger you won't that's knowledge teaching our children spiritual wisdom i believe is as important as teaching them to brush their teeth or wash their bodies or eat well but it's not as we all believe here necessarily within a you know theological religious construct of dogma or doctrine it's not about that real religion is of course america says real religion and psychotherapy are at their peak the same thing it's understanding consciousness my question is

[Speaker 8] (8:06:19 - 8:06:33)

how to differentiate between true guidance and wishful thinking yes and perhaps your question

[Speaker 1] (8:06:33 - 8:06:47)

means whether to believe in thoughts that come into your head do you have an example perhaps of

[Speaker 8] (8:06:47 - 8:07:21)

something happened recently uh yes we were selling our house after two years of it being on the market there was much stress we were trying to figure out where to move where we could afford to keep my horses with me and i searched the whole country and thought maybe portland oregon would be good it added up on paper and i thought okay and it felt really really good inside and i had friends up there so we went up there and it did not feel right when we went up there and i was so convinced that this was the right place to go and it was not so delusion or

[Speaker 1] (8:07:24 - 8:07:29)

so when you went there you feel realized this is not the place for me right when i was there

[Speaker 8] (8:07:29 - 8:07:42)

in the place i just went this is not the right place for us was it raining no it was actually 95 degrees we were there it was beautiful but it did not feel right

[Speaker 1] (8:07:44 - 8:15:06)

yes okay thanks so yeah well the mind can often create an image of something or somebody and believe it to be reality a more more um drastic example of this is somebody i know of course this probably happens to many people these days uh he was he likes to spend time on the little screen internet and he he was looking for women or to to relate to to have a love relationship with and he found one and they started writing to each other every day over several months well he was up north and she was in california so they didn't meet for a long time and the in him in his mind her image grew and grew and he almost felt he was beginning to fall in love with her of course he had never met her so obviously falling in love with he was the image he had created in his mind and he came to me a few times and i said you have got to meet her there's no point in even talking about it because he wanted to talk about his relationship he didn't have a relationship except with some thoughts in his mind and finally they met and that was the end of it so often thoughts create an image and we believe in that and whenever you can the if you can encounter the reality directly as in in the case story i just told as a person or in your case the place it often happens people have an image in their mind where they want to move to and they that really feels good well it feels good because they are mistaking this good image in their mind for reality so they are not relating to the reality the place but to the image i'm going to move to whatever tahiti that really feels good the palm trees and the sun and the warms and i'll be on the beach every day well you are probably on the beach and so but when you finally i don't not saying tahiti is not good but when you get there you you may it may not be right because it's only an it was an image in your mind that you created some people move to another country that has never been to one i knew of an english friend who had this wanted to move to canada and had this must have seen some photos or films about calgary but the mountains in the background and the skiing and all that and then they a couple actually they moved they gave up everything they sold their place in england moved to calgary and the first couple of months were okay and then winter arrived and the next year they went back to england they had created an image so whenever possible go to the reality directly if there is a reality there and in other cases when thoughts come you may not be able to to check because you may have a thought of what you need to do so yeah you can't check you either do it or you don't do it this is what i have to do uh it's observe the now i'm not talking now about creating an image in your mind but doing feel what kind of energy is behind that and whether it stays with you for a long time um i have to start i have to whatever it is breed uh dogs or whatever this is what i really want to do but the question is there you can have you lived have you been had a lot of contact with dogs or is it just an image some people say oh i want to become a concert pianist i want to become a writer this is really feels good i want to get become a writer okay have you have you read literature books yes i have five books in at home i uh because they just have an image of what they would want to do but the question is find out first whether this is something that truly corresponds to what you are good at what what beyond thinking you have to step beyond thinking to see whether this is some this is right for you rather than an image in your mind i want to be an actor well can you act that's the first question well not that that doesn't hinder some famous actors but but it helps if you can do i leave this relationship or should i stay in this relationship okay and some some people spend years staying in the relationship thinking should i leave should i stay if it's true it is it there's a whether to do something or not there's an underlying field of peace when it's right and it's not just a momentary thought it's a continuous even next week next month it's still there there's peace with it every causing miracle says every loving thought is true everything else is an appeal for healing and help so you reinterpret that but again it's not not easy don't believe in all your thoughts you need to be alert present the more alert you are the more present you are the more likely you are not to be deluded by thought but even if you are occasionally deluded by thought that's fine you go somewhere you've learned a lesson you've learned something at least now you know one place where you don't want to be now try out a few more but this time before falling in love with a thought or an image go there first and if that feels right then then next step is go so touch the reality beyond thought

[Speaker 10] (8:15:32 - 8:16:21)

i'm a little nervous so i'll just take a moment to breathe allow yourself to be nervous yeah thank you um the death issue has come up from my daughter and has done for some time and i've tried to explain as best i can and it doesn't seem to matter how i explain what i say it doesn't alleviate her concerns and fears and probably whenever will and i just wondered if you'd care to say a few words on how to explain the death process to a child how old is she is five

[Speaker 1] (8:16:23 - 8:16:32)

so as a child experienced a death somewhere in the family or close to her or is it

[Speaker 10] (8:16:32 - 8:16:55)

not not no she has not no but the she has asked questions about it yes and i think i think what i think what prompted it was when she realized that she could lose me and her father that's her deepest fear is once she realized that was a possibility that's what brought up all the yeah

[Speaker 1] (8:17:04 - 8:22:32)

perhaps by showing a death in nature you can show the child that the forms that she sees in nature especially if i don't know whether you live in a climate where the leaves fall from the trees and i live here yeah okay then you do the leaves fall from the trees they die in the autumn so there's death all around you in the autumn a large part of nature seems to die but of course it doesn't but there's the appearance if you had never seen it before you would think all these trees are dying they are not of course it's only a stage in their growth so to show that pick up a dead leaf or a dying leaf by the way a dying leaf is very beautiful very often it's it becomes more beautiful than the when it's fully alive as you know the colors some leaves turn into beautiful red or yellow so the dying process can be very beautiful as it can be for humans too that's an comes a little later the to show the the fact of death when you when you go into the forest the forest is part of the forest is dead matter becoming being in a process of metamorphosis the dead tree trunks the decaying matter that you see there's death all around you and yet out of that it comes new life continuously so the mind would say i wrote about that briefly somewhere in a book the mind would say oh this is bad look at all these things have died it doesn't see that the death and life are inseparable for life to continue there needs to be also death these are simple facts that you can show to a child and not explain conceptually but show by looking pick that up look at that look at this tree trunk it's been dying for or it's dead or it's still in the process of dying and already it's giving birth to new life especially in here around here we have forests where there's enormous amount of life you have phenomena like a new tree growing out of a dead seemingly dead trunk tree trunk they call it or a tree that's fallen and died and then out of the log a new tree grows if they call it a nurse log i believe and you have don't have that in all climates but here you do so there's show nature and show that life is not what you see on the surface of things that's the the form that life takes when life leaves quickly the thing that seemed to be alive it seemed to have a life of its own crumbles and disappears so the life is not death is not the end of life it's only the end of the form so you can explain this by showing the leaf the leaf of a tree one leaf is alive the other leaf is dead what's the difference there's there's something in that leaf that is formless and that is what gives life there's something in you that is formless you might even say can you feel that that can you feel the life in you and you might be surprised that children who are not yet burdened by excessive mental concepts may be able to feel that they are alive and that is that doesn't die but what eventually does die of course yes the body eventually does die but there's something beyond death so if possible not just as a belief to the explain it to the child but as a sensing can the child feel the inner the inner body the animating presence in the body you say though there's the life that's deeper than the body can you feel that so to teach the child not necessarily concepts but actually to teach through experiencing and looking and sensing and feeling so then to learn about death and to learn about life they're really one and so without conditioning the child's mind necessarily with two rigid belief systems you don't have to say there is this the soul goes on or something keep it very within the experiential realm and then let the child draw her own conclusions right

[Speaker 10] (8:22:32 - 8:23:38)

we i have read books to her we've read a child's book on reincarnation so she does have she does have an understanding of um being drawn back to this place that if you have unfinished business she does have a sense of that you may be drawn back so maybe that was my fault for getting too maybe too complicated with her in in in that sense and just because now she wants to specifically know how where do you go and how do you know so i then now i have to describe now i have to describe that place there's a there's a place a deep a deeper place in myself i don't know i don't i say to ultimately i don't know but there is a deeper place in me that i can connect to that i know that when you die it's not the end yes and so i've probably complicated matters by reading to her story on reincarnation yes there we are yes so you keep it

[Speaker 1] (8:23:38 - 8:24:07)

yeah experiential yes yes right thank you i had a dream once and in the dream

[Speaker 4] (8:24:07 - 8:26:58)

um i was asked to sit in the back seat of the car and not drive the car anymore they had a new driver and so i was curious and i sort of thought to myself well i'm a good driver you know okay though but it was sort of like a father asking you to get in the back seat so you didn't resist it too much you just decided to do what he said so i got in to the back seat of the car and i wondered who who they were going to get to drive and i looked up and i saw this huge breast this was a dream right who can't see at all and so there was the the non-seer and and the tenderness was basically driving my car and i woke up from this dream but but what it showed me was that what i loved was that the tenderness was directing my life that the being was directing the movement of my form i loved that but in that at times it feels very passive because in you're allowing things appearances to be what is without resisting the appearances and there's magic that happens too there's absolute magic that happens when you really allow the river to move your life but there's also times where i guess there's the pressure and the idea of creating my reality and being responsible and and to flower my dreams without using the will and so my question and i might be missing a piece or might be naive which is absolutely fine my question is that we have the human will and i you know there's an idea that that should be directing including with the source of life and i guess i'm looking for that balance really like a really living you know like the breast and not seeing in front of me and loving that but at times feeling um questioning just really honestly questioning if if if if i am actually serving that or if there's another piece of co-creating with that thank you it's the

[Speaker 1] (8:26:59 - 8:36:14)

by living aligned with the present moment you also align your will with with the universal will which you could call the will of god so that you don't have a separate will the separate will wants to enhance or strengthen one's sense of self one way or protect it protect it make it more secure make it bigger more special the separate will is concerned with the me the i the ego but there is a divine consciousness the one consciousness has there's an evolutionary impulse and so what we are doing here every moment is to align ourselves with that non-resistance is vital because as long as you're in resistance the present moment you will be trapped in the little egoic will and so the egoic will needs to subside let's surrender to the present moment surrender to what is means the egoic will of the little me that wanted something else when you align yourself with what is internally you don't resist it looks at first like a position almost of weakness and can be misinterpreted it often is by people as meaning that it prevents you from taking effective action but the acceptance of what is is totally compatible with responding to whatever the present moment requires whatever wants to be created manifested done at this moment to be aligned with that you need to first accept whatever form this moment takes and so all you accept is not some kind of this is how the situation is you single out this moment only this is why occasionally give examples to make it illustrations to give to make it clear for example when you are ill you don't go around and say okay i need to accept this illness i need to accept the fact that i'm ill you may have a name for the illness you mean you know i have to accept that i'm suffering from this no because that's a whole conceptual thing it's a story you don't need to accept any story all you need to accept is this moment as it is and there's never actually an illness in this moment as it is there's only a condition a physical condition there may be pain there may be weakness disability discomfort those things may be there and these are that's the only thing you accept that's this singling out just this moment is as it is now or some external situation the example i give somewhere else is you're stuck in the mud somewhere and so you're stuck in the mud and you don't say okay i'm in the mud i have to accept it and here i am i'm not taking not taking any action because you have to accept what is no this moment is already always as it is there's nothing you can do about that and that's what you accept then action that arises has a different energy to it and the will that flows into what you do then is no longer egoic when you have not accepted this moment the will goes against the universe almost which is what the ego always does it's it is negative it fights something that says it shouldn't be there there's negativity and so if you use negativity then you're you're trapped in ego so to have access to the more powerful will the little will of the me that fights what is condemns what is complains about what is denies what is and so on all the many ways of avoiding the present moment the little will has to subside for the more powerful will that is not you not as not the limited form of you to flow through you and deal with the situation and that powerful will is very different from the the willful will it is it creates it is not isolated from the totality it does not isolate itself from the totality it's one with the totality so when that operates another word for that universe is intelligence it's only that when you look at a situation completely accept the isness of this moment and then of course action may be required and and once this opening is there through acceptance the next step you take to get out of the mud or whatever it is will be much more powerful there's no struggle anymore there's just powerful right action uh there's a buddhist term right one of the many things the right action of course right action can only arise out of the right state of consciousness if there's no right state of consciousness you cannot cultivate right action so you have to get out of ego first before you can have right action so i believe probably the buddha was talking about that which flows from the awakened state of consciousness is right action and so the greatest strength is to surrender the little will and the simple tiny act of surrender of the little will is to say yes to the present moment it's it's not a big thing i have to let go of my will not just say yes to what is because it already is anyway why complain what about something that is it's insane but normal nothing personal normal means insane in this world so just to give up the egoic will really all you have to do is not complain about what is be aligned with the isness people situations whatever this it is already as it is it's the inevitability of is become friendly with is then you become more really you become intelligent for the first time even if you were the greatest intellectual before it's not true intelligence it's very limited intelligence you might have two phds or three and can still be totally dysfunctional in your in your life could be now this tiny you contact suddenly you're in touch with that it's for the simple act of surrender to the inevitability of the present moment another energy comes we could call that universal will you could call that intelligence and you could call that the creative solution to whatever the so-called problem is in this moment the situation is you could call that power coming in that is greater than the limited power of your mind or it may use your mind and suddenly you say the right thing if that's what the situation requires suddenly the words come where do the words come from you don't know what you're going to say next they come from a deeper level and sudden because that intelligence uses the mind then it flows into that so then you don't create you just allow that's how you create yes you but you you and the the universe or whatever the greater totality become one and as such it creates through you as this form that's a that's the beauty of it

[Speaker 4] (8:36:17 - 8:36:32)

so then thought doesn't matter well thought because if it's not you if you're not thought and you're not creating through the reality of thinking no but the the unmanifested when it

[Speaker 1] (8:36:32 - 8:53:19)

flows into this world it assumes form it create it can may create suddenly there are most thoughts that people have in the unawakened state are just almost all thoughts are repetitive old thoughts conditioned thinking conditioned by the past so all you can rely on then is what you have accumulated in the past and you will deal with things through conditioned thinking now when the simple act of surrender opens up your mind it can then be used as an instrument and then a thought may come in that is original and fresh and new because that's the birth of form the birth of form may first of all be the birth of a thought and then the thought creates a form out out there so the universe then if it uses you as a vehicle or channel through which to create and again we're using language which sounds as if you and that conscious the one consciousness were separate but it's just words but you're one it uses you can use your mind and become thought thought become words thought become physical things so that's the the way in which the mind can actually be a helpful tool alignment with the greater intelligence the one consciousness but it all starts with the present moment and what your relationship is with the present moment so to speak friend or enemy are you allowing it or are you fighting it resisting it then that's the also the end of ego the ego needs the resistance it survives through complaining it survives through denying wanting something else so work with present moment is the teacher the the possible always that work with that that's all you need really and so that's really then the end of the little will that isn't all that powerful anyway and whatever it creates creates more problems it seems so simple it is simple and yet because of the many thousands of years of habit patterns often people tell me it's so difficult to be in the present moment and allow it to be of course the opposite is true it's it's different life life becomes difficult if you don't but this is how it appears that it's difficult present moment acceptance the form the what you accept is the form of this moment no more then see what's what's needed you will you look you're not intelligent until that happens not truly intelligent the moment you accept there's a space and you look not necessarily through eyes but just directing attention and that's intelligence and that is still it's not you're not you're not thinking while you look your attention is there that's intelligence and then action may happen if it's necessary if the totality requires it and sometimes holding that space of simple presence in a difficult situation where perhaps at this moment there's nothing you can do that sometimes is the case holding this holding the space of simple presence often activates other factors that then come in seemingly from the outside to change the situation you have activated the intelligence of the totality so it's not necessarily coming through this form this is why sometimes people speak of synchronistic things happening suddenly a helpful factor comes in and how could suddenly the right person appears the right thing happens oh how was that how did that happen sometimes almost miraculous when you don't know that this is actually natural seems like a miracle at first because most humans are not used to that when when you hold presence very often the change may not happen through your action there are many situations as i just said where action at this moment is not possible perhaps you just have to for this moment except well right now this is how it is there's nothing i can do however i can continue to be present to what is and alert and still and accepting of the inevitability of this moment then the greater intelligence is activated and then see what happens very often you will find change happening in the situation through some factor that you could not have planned or foreseen this greater intelligence is not the conceptual intelligence that you can measure with things like iq tests it's non-conceptual intelligence conceptual intelligence is the ability to analyze to retain information analyze compare iq tests that's a tiny fragment of what intelligence is it's quite limited but there's a vastness of non-conceptual intelligence which every creative person although most creative humans are only creative in a small area of their lives whatever the area of their creativity is but that's a blessing already even if you can be but our destiny is to be to live in that way so that our whole life becomes a work of art not just while you're doing your if it's art your work of art but your whole life becomes that not just be confined to that state of consciousness when you do your whatever your creative work is but anybody who is truly creative and not just an ego trying to be creative so something and every creative thing has a has a spark to it an aliveness a quality a newness a freshness no matter where it is even if it's a mathematical formula like einstein's it has a beauty and an aliveness to it and everybody says wow how did he get that well it is true that he did a lot of thinking but he also did a lot of not thinking einstein was very good at simply being he was not identified with continuous thinking there wasn't continuous thinking he spent long periods of time in simple being going for long walks on nature rest and that's where he connected with non-conceptual intelligence in the stillness the enlarged stillness within everybody has that as their essence connect with that there's true intelligence now to what extent you're connected with that could not possibly be measured by any iq test in fact if you are not good at iq just you probably won't get any better even if you're connected with the universal intelligence i can say that because i'm i was never good at iq test and i'm not good at it now i could do only the very simple ones the mind just doesn't work that way now there are certain tests some people are beginning to come up with tests that may measure creativity it's a little bit better there's a little bit still very limited extremely limited but a little bit better than just the acute test for example i read about it in a book one test is they ask this is done at schools they ask write down all the things that one can do with a with a brick i read in one of these books that's popular these days write down all the things you can do with a brick well that requires a little bit and then when the answers you get show that some people are much more creative what to do with a brick than others so that matters just a tiny fragment even on that but at least it measures the beginning of creativity but ultimately you can't measure it impossible it's much too vast but you can see it by the result of either what is being created or the state of consciousness that this person emanates even if nothing is created it's fine your life does not necessarily depend on what you create being comes first with so access point to intelligence is the now just don't resist it and then there it is and the formula again i've had it before on various occasions if you this is almost like a little mathematical form it's not mathematics i couldn't do that but a formula if you accept the form of the present moment whatever appears even internally is part of it could be an emotion or some external situation place event person happening but except the form of the present moment by internal acceptance of the form of the present moment you open yourself up to the formless but if you resist the form of the present moment which means what happens what is if you resist the form you get more deeply trapped in in your own form identity the ego so if you resist form you get more trapped in form if you accept the form of the present no matter how limiting it may seem because very often the form of the present moment seems like a limitation on your life something is impinging on my freedom even in a traffic jam it seems to impinge and i want to get there but i can't get there that's the form of this and that's just a tiny insignificant example but probably in your experience happens often you're in a traffic jam so this is just one example of how the form of this moment seems to impinge on your freedom and impose a limitation on your life of course in much other in many other ways it can happen you can become the body could become ill maybe find it hard to move and then of course that's a more acute example of the form of the present moment impinging upon you and again if you accept even if it's dreadful because sometimes something happens that may be drastic if you can learn to accept and then when that happens something drastic happens but you already have been doing it with traffic jams and other things to say this is what is say yes to what is the form is accepted and the moment you say yes to what is a little bit at first it's only very subtle a little bit of spaciousness comes in what into your life from behind so to speak this is what is there's a sudden a little bit of space has opened up you're not just trapped in you're not just a resisting entity it you've you said it is space you allow it allowing means space you've given it space and then you realize that you are essentially formless space in other words peace inner peace at first just very gentle in the background in the midst of any situation when you accept it peace and that peace is powerful and it can become so powerful that it almost sometimes can happen that it obliterates almost everything and all you feel is it's the world becomes just insubstantial and every problem is becomes insubstantial it's just peace and and so the intensity may vary but peace is the formless in you so you by accepting the form the formless within you opens up this is this is how something seemingly bad a limitation becomes an opening for realization of who you truly are and so that's the by accepting the form you access the formless by resisting the form of the present moment you become more deeply trapped in your own form identity the resisting complaining entity so simple the entire thing is in the crucifixion the archetypal symbol the cross is the dreadful limitation on your life the cross is the ultimate bad thing and surrender surrender to the cross this perhaps this gesture is the gesture of surrender surrender on the cross means that the torture instrument becomes transformed into something sacred because it opens up the space the cross the torture instrument but at the same time it symbolizes the divine it's one if you don't understand it then the cross is a very weird thing you say how can they make a torture instrument into into something sacred but the reason of course is it it's about an inner transformation through surrender to what is and and then you see that the divine is hiding in every situation no matter how it appears on the surface which means grace is hiding in every seemingly bad thing that happens there is the there is something hiding underneath it

[Speaker 12] (8:53:48 - 8:54:54)

Mr. Tully I am so thankful for your teachings and your writings my question might more suitably or well be asked by a younger person but how does one balance awareness consciousness presence with expansion and desires and goals and aspirations even at my stage in this human experience I have aspirations and goals and desires and I look at the intention of those and still uh try to to to be aware of the intention but still within that I I find underpinnings and weavings of egoic aspects and so much of the expansion that we see seems to be so egoic yes thank you thank you

[Speaker 1] (8:55:01 - 9:08:33)

that is it's true that in most cases when people go about doing things the ego is involved and what they're looking for is a more complete sense of who they are they're looking for more of themselves in what they do so it's really self-seeking through what they are doing and in all these cases the the end result what they want to achieve is always when ego is involved is always more important than the doing itself because you expect the future in other words becomes of greater importance than the doing in the present moment and that is always the hallmark of egoic action but very often with certain people there can be a mixed action it can be egoic motivation partly and presence in part also so you can have a mixed bag of motivation so let's come back to that in a moment but first of all the important thing to realize is in non-egoic doing which and expansion which is possible and this is what is needed on the planet for not just people to no longer take action action is required non-egoic action is action that arises out of enjoyment so as when you enjoy the doing you are you know there's more attention in the doing than what you want to achieve through the doing so in other words you know where you are going but you also know that the journey is much more important than the arriving you also know that the step you're taking at this moment is much it's always the most important step there is this step this moment the ego doesn't know that because the ego always disregards this moment the ego makes this moment into an obstacle or it makes this moment into an enemy or at the best it makes this moment it reduces the moment to a means to an end but never acknowledges the fullness and the power of this moment that doesn't the ego can't do that so it's either the three things an enemy people people who are performing action with negativity continuously and there are many people in the business world or government or whatever there's a continuous negativity in what they do they get things done but whatever they do creates more negativity and suffering for themselves and others so they may be efficient on their on their level but they're only efficiently creating more unhappiness for themselves and others it's karmic action i call it sometimes it produces more karma and more of the same so it then you have making the treating the present moment as an obstacle there's just also the ego does and so many many people live like that there's they unconsciously always the present moment is they regard as something in whatever they do as something they need to go beyond so it's like this is the present moment and the ego always looks beyond okay i need to get get over this thing here i was need to get just get this moment out of the way so that i can get to the next one because the ego promises fulfillment in the next moment it doesn't come because when the next moment you reach the next moment it's the now again which again it's an obstacle so you can recognize the ego always whether or not the ego is active at any moment in your life in any action you undertake whether it's a business venture or you want to create this or that whether it's artistic creation anything uh is the the end with the the the end result you're considered more important than this or is there a complete attention to the doing in the present moment which means you enjoy the aliveness of the whatever activity it is you enjoy the doing in this moment more than where you want to get to which also means when an obstacle comes and true obstacle comes into not not the structural obstacle the mental obstacle that makes every moment into an obstacle when you encounter a true obstacle like say you want to build an enterprise or whatever and of course continuously obstacles will come in in the form of situations that go wrong or people who are not cooperative and so on if you if you react negatively against the obstacle then there's some form of ego because the obstacle is preventing you from where you want to get to if it's non-ego the obstacle is immediately recognized and accepted for what it is and you find a way of either circumventing it or transforming it into a positive force immediately you you come into alignment with the isness of this moment so when the situation goes wrong immediately say oh well how can we deal with this no negativity no fighting immediately if it's non-egoic immediately you accept the situation and then you go from there there's no complaining about what other people are doing how other people are not helping at all in this important thing how stupid other people are and whatever the ego does well it's always complaining about what people are not doing but should be doing or situations that shouldn't have been happening at all but all those things are signs of ego and the signs that there's no ego involved is when you as soon as something comes in it's immediately accepted for what it is and there's also okay either non-resistance you walk around it but let's say let's see how how else we can do it if this way doesn't work let's see if another way works no ego simply a gentle turning around so whether or not ego is involved you you know every moment by observing yourself to see what energy it is that flows into what you do and so ego is non-ego non-egoic creation or non-egoic doing always involves the enjoyment of whatever you're doing at the present moment and it enjoys even even when something seemingly goes wrong and immediately oh well let's see what we can do about that instead of complaint instead of fighting instead of making something into an enemy so there are a few people in this world who perhaps don't know why they naturally live in that not many but there are a few people who are successful in this world who naturally live in that way and but they are often immediately recognized as quite exceptional from what I've seen so far in because we don't know what the future will bring the so-called future Obama does I don't see any negative he deals with things quite consciously as they come not making anybody or anything into an enemy that's a huge change that has come and so it's a it's a wonderful thing to see how how conscious he actually deal consciously deepening now the question is are these structures around him and all the unconscious people that he deals has to deal with both in this country and other countries are they going to at some point pull him down into unconscious reactions we don't know we'll see but so far that's it's amazing to see somebody who is so so present in dealing with things that and I don't see any ego there not yet there may be remnants of ego but maybe his wife knows about it but but not in but not in public life so when it that's it's it's quite exceptional everybody knows that that's very exceptional because most other people live and act very differently so for you then self-observation needs to be there to see any the arising of any negativity means ego is there the arising of stress means ego is there because stress implies I need the future moment more than I want this one I want the next moment more than I want this moment and of course everybody lives like that everybody is under stress well most of the population in the western world are either under stress or they are completely bored out of their minds it's either one or the other so stress is insane because it denies life how does it deny life it denies life by denying this moment and that's a it's dreadful dysfunction and stress is normal in this world if you're not under stress they think you're not doing your job but you see how effectively somebody can do things without stress and without drama much more effectively much more effectively so self-observation look at your am I enjoying this moment am I how what is my reaction when something goes wrong am I creating stress or is there no stress there's much all these things are stress flows into what you do and creates more of the same and any negativity flows into what you do and creates more of the same and infects others with it so that's how all this unhappiness spreads an unhappy civilization civilization based on unhappiness and so whatever it is you your activity is be alert so that you know your inner state at any given time if you are aligned with the moment if you know where you're going but the doing right now is more important than the arriving even if you never arrive it doesn't matter in other words even if you don't succeed in whatever your business or enterprise or maybe it you you're still enjoying what you're doing and so there's no no failure involved at all if there's deep enjoyment in what you do how can you fail and if there's no enjoyment then you have to look to see where the motivation actually comes from and of course and and realize that you're in a dysfunctional state and that realization is the beginning of freedom so that's a wonderful thing to do for everybody to practice and that applies to big endeavors in your whatever you do in your life all little things too because even little things like getting from your home to your place of work how do you do that is there stress involved there or is there acceptance and enjoyment of every moment even sitting in the car in the traffic jam of course you can enjoy that habitually one doesn't people are conditioned not to to say this is dreadful it's not dreadful at all unless the mind tells you it's dreadful be in your body breathe look at the tree the sky the people walking every moment is alive with wonderful miracles of aliveness happening continuously all around you the ego doesn't know about that so that's if we meet again report back to us on how you're doing so so yeah for for the youth

[Speaker 12] (9:08:33 - 9:08:42)

is what we would like to see for them would you call it conscious expansion yes conscious expansion

[Speaker 1] (9:08:42 - 9:09:42)

or conscious creation so that what creates then is not not not anymore the the ego with its needs that is never satisfied anyway but something within you that is the in the unconditioned intelligence flowing into whatever you do in this world and then then it creates and so the motivation is then no longer desire that's the traditional egoic motivation the motivation is enjoyment and enjoyment is much more powerful thank you is there another question that has not dissolved

[Speaker 16] (9:09:42 - 9:09:55)

it only has partly dissolved

[Speaker 13] (9:09:57 - 9:11:08)

hello my question deals with parents with practice and presence i felt love for them after many years not feeling love and feeling guilty for that but i still have huge problems to meet them when i meet them like if they are in the same room even if i try to be aware of my breath and my inner body after a while i have huge pain body attacks and is that triggered by something they say or i can't i can't even say that sometimes it's the way i i managed to go through the meeting quite fine and my mother leaves the room and i break down and yeah i i don't know what it is german parents can be difficult yes

[Speaker 1] (9:11:11 - 9:20:29)

i know american parents too so on one level there's already an acceptance of them on a mental level the acceptance of who they are the acceptance of their limitations they behave the way they behave is the the pain body is still there inside you of course and the pain body reacts it may also be that the mental level the mental acceptance is not yet complete either to see that they act the way they act speak the way they speak not because of who they are but because of their past conditioning which is their mental emotional conditioning is speaking through them they can't help that if there's not enough presence everybody is in controlled by their mental emotional conditioning they can't help it they are afflicted by that disease which is identification with unconscious conditioning i'm not the only one who calls that disease even in the ancient teachings of zen they sometimes call it the disease of the mind and there are some zen teachers who have said they are here to cure that mental illness i've said that's what zen is about it's curing that mental illness so you need to on the mental level as you sit with them you need to know that continuously that what you are observing is not who they are you're observing a form of mental conditioning underneath that there is the being the it's and you may sometimes get a glimpse of it my mother was very much identified also with her mind and occasionally i looked into her eyes and suddenly there was a light shining through when she stopped talking for a little while in other words the mind catching a breath after talking for 10 minutes incessantly and then for a moment i could see oh there's their being the her being was shining through and i have one or two photos where her being shines through and then of course it gets obscured again and then you get the same get the the suspicions the complaints the accusations all the stuff associated with unconscious thinking so on the mental level you need to know that be present enough so that you don't forget that what you're observing is not who they are but you're observing the past in them the conditioning and then comes the the emotions that you feel because there's your past the past the living past in you from your childhood all the things they did or failed to do because they couldn't help it there wasn't enough presence to change it so that's something for you to find acceptance as you accept them you accept what you feel at that moment whether you can even label it we don't know is it sadness is it anger is it heaviness or mixture of all of that a feeling of wanting to run away a contraction whatever it is that's all there you don't need to even analyze it because you just need to feel the entire energy field of that and it doesn't feel pleasant and it's it's the past in you so there you're observing the past in them acting out and you experience the past in you and so what do you do with two pasts you have the past out there and the past in here only presence can dissolve the past so you need to access the power of presence in yourself and how do you do that a quick way in a situation like this is the acceptance of whatever arises inside or outside at this moment you accept this is what you feel this is what they do or say there's the acceptance of the inner and the outer you say because it is already happening why you have to accept or you suffer in a way if you don't accept you suffer more if you don't want to feel what you feel that's more suffering because you're resisting acceptance does something that I could describe as let's say here's the emotional field and it doesn't feel good and acceptance means just you say okay that's that is I can feel that I'm verbalizing acceptance doesn't even require after a little while you don't need words anymore you can just see what is be with it and at that moment a little bit of space opens up around that emotion a little bit of space that space comes from your acceptance the acceptance gives it space and that's already a little tiny bit of freedom you've given it a little bit of space inside yourself when you say yes this is what is and that's a beauty you've given both them space externally to be and you've given yourself space internally and then as you notice that actually that feels act feels already a little bit better than before because there's space around the emotion and then you go into it more deeply and you accept even more you continue to accept and that space grows a little bit around it and then you encounter the strange phenomenon of an emotion that is not pleasant existing in a spacious field so to speak that's around it and then you realize that who you are is you are that field and you can allow the emotion to be in that field and you can allow your parents to be there and say what they say and do what they do they are repeating the past space comes in so acceptance brings space and space is the transcendence of conditioning space is the transcendence of the past the transcendence transcendence of the personality and the person and it's freedom space that's the practice and so the best place to practice is with your parents there are many other places where you can practice but the ultimate mastery you will achieve when you can practice with your parents that's the graduation you graduate it's the phd in presence with don't jump into it too much don't if you say okay i'm going to spend a week with our parents now it's too much too much give yourself short time periods at first say i'm going to come for coffee and cake that's what they like to do at least my mother did i'll come for coffee and cake and i'll stay for an hour or you know if you can i don't know how that works practically but and then you practice you give yourself one hour to practice so that's a little you and you know it's only an hour i have to be present for an hour and it's your spiritual practice so the the as you know i've written the quote in a book ramdas said if you think you're so enlightened spend two weeks with your parents two weeks the ultimate test so happy practice

[Speaker 6] (9:21:01 - 9:21:53)

um my question is really about how to be in relationship to the polarization that's going on right now um i'm witnessing it happening you know especially within my country i'm from the united states and within my own family and then of course it's happening internationally uh and yeah i want to be the space for it but then as i'm you know just being here it seems like it just keeps getting worse and scarier and scarier on a lot you know when we talk about collapsing um so i just wanted to have some guidance on being in relationship to polarization and how to you know be of service or help you know those people that are in ideologies that are

[Speaker 1] (9:21:53 - 9:31:05)

getting more and more extreme well of course not to participate in it one can without knowing it slip into participation by by condemning those who seem to be the most unconscious side but of course all you do by condemning what seems to you the most unconscious side is you strengthen it and unwittingly you become part of the polarization you can state if you feel you can state your opinion we can have opinions without attacking somebody else just state that's that's how i see it so not your mind is where the you need to be vigilant it already is all taking place in your mind and that's where you you stay present or you lose presence your thoughts this massive collective energy mental energy movements they're a bit they're energy streams they're like huge clouds one could almost say of mental energy collective clouds generated by millions of people and it's very easy to get drawn into that and sometimes clouds of that kind can hover over a nation for several years and take possession of the individual person's mind leading sometimes to far more extreme polarizations than we are witnessing in the u.s at this time think for example of the spanish civil war about a million people spanish people killing each other within a family people even people being polarized in within one family killing each other between nationalists republicans communists or nationalists whatever they were called sometimes a mental cloud like that can take possession of almost everybody's mind and dominate the mind soviet communism or something like that when for many decades it was hovering over everybody's in the collective mental energy field there was these these very fixed ideas and views but many paranoid beliefs built into them the enemies and so on and of course the west reacted and to some extent something like that also rose not quite as strongly in the west but that was led to the cold so-called cold war paranoia paranoia is often a very big part of that but also those collective movements are really egoic they are collective representations of what is the ego on a personal level so what we are really seeing is vast manifestations of the ego in collective form and if if there's one thing that's more insane than the personal ego it's the tribal ego much more insane and once you join the tribal ego you become part of that it draws you to a much lower level of consciousness than you were originally so it can draw in nice people good people can suddenly get drawn into that and their level of consciousness goes and when that happens the good people are capable of perpetrating also acts of violence and or whatever forms of unconsciousness so they get drawn another of course big example of that national socialism germany 30s in the 30s 40s another huge egoic energy field possessing people's minds of course in a way generated by the by unconsciousness in individuals but becoming an entity almost that takes possession of everybody's mind so you need to see it for what it is it's not that there are these evil humans suddenly or however you see it and of course they say they say the other side is evil with paranoid beliefs and so on so it's not don't see it in personal terms you have to look through it to see the unconsciousness behind it it's a mental illness it's so it really is like an epidemic that from time to time takes possession of nations certain nations tends to happen more in bigger and more powerful nations it's a little less likely to happen in in denmark or holland besides they like to have a good time and smoke so they're more relaxed so don't uh it'll pass it will pass sooner or later this too will pass and it is a form of ego can see it there magnified ego collective ego have compassion with all those who are drawn into that they are suffering from a temporary diminishment of mental capacities and it's a it is a form of illness they will get better eventually it's your responsibility in the meantime not to get drawn into that energy field in any way recognize it for what it is then compassion arises compassion towards both sides especially of course compassion towards the side that you perceive as unconscious and paranoid and so on you can still point out the what you see as the errors of certain views that are being expressed if you feel compelled to do that but you don't participate in this silly game of blaming accusing calling the other this or that don't you don't participate in that and stay peaceful realize it'll pass remember this phrase this too will pass and just be there as the the witness it's been happy it's happened periodically over the centuries and until humanity awakens will continue to happen so compassion stillness acceptance recognition what it is and then and all you contribute then is a different energy peace a more peaceful energy you're not part of it don't become even part of the the one that fights the unconsciousness as it's you can't you can't fight unconsciousness so enjoy

[Speaker 2] (9:31:32 - 9:31:39)

i'd like to ask you at guard what kind of guidance you would offer to people to remember or be aware

[Speaker 4] (9:31:39 - 9:31:49)

that they are we are creative force in a creative universe perhaps relative to

[Speaker 5] (9:31:49 - 9:31:54)

what we wake up and see in our world today thank you

[Speaker 1] (9:32:20 - 9:45:15)

the awakening process has two aspects or two dimensions to it one is the finding the source within as yourself touching the stillness being the stillness the alert stillness then bringing that into your life more and more so that your daily life becomes interspersed with that stillness as your daily life becomes interspersed with the alert stillness the ego begins to fade and you embody a different energy field and a completely different as if something from another dimension were coming through you into this world at the moment we are only talking about this just about and then we'll get to the next stage so first of all is to bring rather than think what it is what kind of doing can happen that comes a little later first let's see the most essential thing is a foundation for all subsequent awakened doing as i sometimes call it the foundation for all subsequent awakened doing because the world is full of people who are doing but it's mostly unawakened doing not all but mostly and so the doing creates all kinds of karmic repercussions and basically comes out of unhappy states and creates more unhappy states in others and in the doer so our first task is to bring that dimension the other dimension almost one could say into this world in your daily life not yet even contemplating or thinking about any change or any doing just with normal life what you're doing normally in everyday life see if presence can flow into the smallest things into listening to another person into walking from here to there into performing tasks into dealing with things into just more and more presence implies acceptance always of whatever is in the now in a alignment with the form of the now as a spiritual practice and then more and more as the more you're aligned with the form of the now the more of this energy comes through and so this happened i'll give you just one example in myself the this form the it happened over several years that there wasn't any but any doing but this was different it was a different time and it there's an acceleration now and so on that's that's there was several years past and there was simply an the energy coming through more and more so to speak more becoming aligned with that new energy that was coming through before any doing happened and so it's vital for us to be grounded in the in the presence in your life but that doesn't necessarily take years anymore these days that's but grounding in presence is vital alignment with the present moment so that any doing it does not come out of dissatisfaction with the present moment there's no there's no awakened doing then no presence in it so the foundation then is continuous acceptance of the isness of now and then through that presence arises more and more you work with the present moment as your teacher so to speak any situation anything it is as it is always this moment is as it is and it's so you bring a yes to it and with that the presence comes so there isn't an entity that says i need to change the world because this isn't right you have to first come to an acceptance of the isness of things not the world situation just your limited reality now and then after a little while you will notice that there is another aspect to presence it's not just still there's also a dynamic aspect to presence and that's where awakened doing comes in and that may come first it comes into it changes the way in which you deal with other people people around you more presence no less and less ego lessening of conflict and then one day some insight comes suddenly there's something else that wants to be done that needs doing that i i you might perceive it as that something that i need to do and that comes out of presence and suddenly you know what it is that you need to do could what it is nobody can tell you it comes from within or it comes from without as some a new situation arising in your life and then awakened doing begins to happen and that is that doing is not the egoic doing where the whatever you do is a means to an end because the end result is always more important than the doing the doing is self-contained it is there's deep enjoyment in the doing there's not an excessive desire to achieve but you achieve actually more because there's so much joy in the doing that the end result looks after itself so a very different kind of doing arises that is not motivated by desire that's the normal way is says i need to achieve this even people who have think i need to create a better world if it's still that if it's an i need that because then i will feel fulfilled there's still the desire behind it but as presence moves through you it's not based on desire anymore it's based on enjoyment it's not based on wanting or needing anything because you're coming from fullness the action is not designed to fulfill you is not designed to add something to you the action is coming out of the fullness in which you already dwell so there's no neediness in it if obstacle arise as they will it anybody who takes a course of action especially if you do things that go against the conditioning of the world you may find obstacles you may also find enormous power helping you both obstacles will come in the form of uncooperative people occasionally or situations that don't go the way they're supposed to go enormous power will also flow into what you do and help you in many ways and bring just the right thing just at the right moment just the right person just at the right moment but when obstacles do arise again what we're talking about there's no they're not regarded as enemies the ego regards any obstacle to its course of action as an enemy either a person and then it gets upset and angry and starts fighting it but with the awakened doing an obstacle is accepted for what it is and you work with it never against it or you work around it or you take its energy and go with it and then turn it around it becomes incorporated into what you have to do remember this we talked about a zen meditation that has no structure to it the essential zazen meditation you're just sitting and anything that arises is embraced as part of your meditation in that similar way when awakened doing happens there's no enemy you don't see any more enemies in the form of unhelpful situations uncooperative people everything is embraced for what it is accepted for what it is and transformed by that and that's the awakened doing so you it's not so much that you are doing it you become a vehicle for the doing it happens through you and the power comes when it wants to come it's a uh for several years after the shift that happened to me there was no but there was occasional not much happened in the external and after that gradually people came to ask questions so there was some doings happening or some speaking happening like answers were suddenly coming and then that lasted for several years and i i knew somewhere there's more there's a power here but it's not reaching many people for some reason it wasn't happening yet and that was fine i was happy people to come once or twice a week people would come ask some questions doing a little workshop here a little workshop there and then big spaces was just sitting there it was fine and then at some point i was once in a church a country church in england tiny church built in the year 1100 in a small village in in somerset and in the church i was sitting completely empty in stillness and suddenly the words came out of me that said i don't know who i was talking to use me and i'd like acceleration please the words don't where they came from i don't know and so the the consciousness was listening it seems so at first nothing happened i went back home and then a few weeks later i woke up with knowing that i had to leave england although i loved it i had to move to the west coast of north america not knowing why and that was the beginning i moved to the west coast eventually the writing started there but that was the other acceleration happening i didn't know when i woke up a few weeks later with that thought that that was part of the acceleration that i had asked for and then it accelerated more and more first the power came the writing power then gradually and the book came out and then very quickly just went be careful with what you ask for and here's just i'm not doing any of this i don't have the sense that i'm i'm doing any of this i just go where people ask me to go and do ettv you think that's a good thing yes okay let's do it

Q and A with Eckhart Tolle TV Part 4

[Speaker 1] (0:01 - 6:04)

I don't have the sense that I'm doing any of this. I just go where people ask me to go and do E.T.T.V. You think that's a good thing? Yes.

Okay, let's do it. So who is doing it? Nobody who is speaking.

Am I speaking as a person? No. It's consciousness is speaking, using this mind to express what is most helpful for this moment.

And so be in the service of that. You are in the service of getting rid of the idea that you have to do anything as an entity, as a separate entity. Be open to what it is that wants to be done in this world.

Be open to that. And then conscious doing happens through you. And every individual, so-called individual, has a different function in this world.

Something that only you can do, you will do. Or you will join with others who have a similar path. And there are many, many different ways in which awakened doing can come into this world and is coming more and more into this world.

The essential thing is you don't have to do it. The more you get out of the way and you do it by bringing the presence into everyday life, then very quickly the answer of what it is that wants to be done comes through you. Or you may start doing something and not knowing what the power that is behind it already.

It might start with something very little. For example, like a musician who stands at a street corner playing a guitar. He doesn't know if he becomes present or she.

Suddenly incredible music comes through him. So often people do little things and then they become present and then what they're already doing expands and becomes empowered. And it changes the world.

So of course, what the world needs, it doesn't need more people who are into egoic doing, including people who think they can improve the world. The Tao Te Ching clearly states, you don't try to improve the world. That's not the way.

The way is for the power to come through you and then it happens. So the foundation is presence and then you become the vessel. You become the opening for it.

Become the opening for presence rather than being a limited egoic entity. Be here as an opening and that implies, of course, also that the personality becomes more and more transparent. It's still there.

There's some personality there that stays as long as the body is here, but it becomes transparent to the power that comes through. And so it's a wonderful adventure to be aligned with that. There's a lot that wants to come through at this time.

It doesn't choose between people. It doesn't say, you are special, I'm going to choose you. Wherever a person becomes transparent to it, it comes through.

It doesn't ask, who are you? What are your credentials? It doesn't ask, what is your personal history?

Are you worthy? Nothing, none of that. It is timeless presence.

It's not interested in your past history, whether you were the most virtuous person or non-virtuous at all, not interested in that. It's interested wherever the opening is, the light comes through. So you can't accumulate credits and become more worthy for it.

It doesn't work that way. Just be open to it and it comes. Nobody is special or everybody is special in that sense.

That sense of specialness goes away, that the ego thinks, I must, I'm looking for something to feel. No, you are so special that it's beyond specialness. You're not, that's an illusion.

Everybody feels that I want to make a difference in this world. Many people feel I'm not making enough of a difference in this world. Many people feel I could do more.

In some way that is true, but you need to get that I is not the superficial I, it's not the egoic I, the deeper I, the timeless I am, that is how the doing happens, not through the egoic I. So it's very simple really, it's not a complicated process at all, it's just bring presence in and then the movement happens. At some point you may find yourself also saying, let it happen now.

Here I am, use me, and then hold on. Please, yes.

[Speaker 18] (6:06 - 6:57)

Thank you very much. One of the aspects, and maybe you covered it, so I guess I'm asking again, but is the collective power of creativity. That was more than what I was, it was very helpful what you just said, thank you so much.

And I was wondering about the awareness as I approach the now of how whatever I'm doing or others are doing, I'm part of them, and it kind of brings me to an awe of the, the question was how does the collective part of it, how does the collective wake up to the preciousness, which you've spoken to a lot of, of how we're all sort of co-creating this universe and the power of that. And how to remember that more, which you gave, Bhavit, you just gave some advice on that.

[Speaker 1] (6:57 - 7:00)

Yes, the collective, other people.

[Speaker 18] (7:00 - 7:27)

Yes, this awareness that you have when you're, I've been having these things come up that whenever something comes through, I think it comes through me or something, how wonderful it is that someone else is right there. For instance when something's wonderful is coming out of all of us or you, how precious it is that I'm a piece of that, the all I. So it just was the, I think there's a lot of power in that to understand, but I was wondering if you had anything to add to that.

[Speaker 1] (7:27 - 9:39)

Yes, as the shift happens, is happening in you and then whoever, in whomever the shift is also happening, there's a strong sense of connectedness, but it's the awakening consciousness coming through many human beings at this time. And not everybody yet. I cannot tell you whether the collective consciousness is going to come through every human being.

There's a tipping point, the hundreds monkey syndrome, so that all of humanity will go through the shift is one possibility. Another possibility is that part of humanity will go through the shift and the other part of humanity will not go through the shift. There could be a separation of species.

One species evolved, the other doesn't. It doesn't matter. Don't worry about that.

So just trust that the shift is happening and whoever is going through the shift, you are in tune with all those people and whoever may be helpful for your purposes or may come to you or you come to them, there's a mutual attraction between awakening beings on the planet. So it is a movement, but it is all based on the shift in you. That's the essential.

There's no relying on the collective or expecting others to go through it. You, Cause and Miracle says how many people, it's a very enigmatic statement, how many people are needed to change the world and it says one. Because ultimately we are all one.

We are one. The I am is one. Ultimately there are not many of us.

There's only the primordial one.

[Speaker 12] (9:55 - 10:46)

Hi, Eckhart. My question is how do you stay present when the present that you're in is so painful and filled with suffering for somebody that you love so much and they're just suffering so much? I was in that situation and I didn't want to be in the present moment.

I wanted to run away. And the only thing that got me through the present moment was imagining the future when they were well again or in heaven so I wouldn't witness the suffering. I couldn't bear it.

It was unbearable. I didn't find any peace in it and I tried and it was extremely painful and hard to stay present.

[Speaker 1] (10:51 - 11:19)

The freedom from the suffering, of course, is not in the situation itself. You have to go deep enough within so the situation itself you cannot transform because it is a painful situation. I don't know what it is.

It may not be necessary for you to talk about it. I don't want to bring it back up in your mind unless you want to talk about it.

[Speaker 12] (11:20 - 11:21)

My sister.

[Speaker 1] (11:22 - 11:22)

Your sister?

[Speaker 12] (11:23 - 11:44)

Yes. She had cancer, breast cancer, a really bad kind and she got complications and infections and with the chemo and she was wonderful and happy and not showing and I saw her suffering so much.

[Speaker 1] (11:45 - 11:45)

Yes.

[Speaker 12] (11:45 - 12:27)

And sometimes she couldn't talk. It was so painful what she was going through and what they were doing to her, trying to save her life a couple of times. Yes.

I wanted to run away. I wouldn't because I had to be there for her but I was reading your books and trying to be present. I know that I couldn't change the situation.

I could be there for her. That's the only way I could help her but I couldn't take the pain away and the fright. She was frightened.

I couldn't take her fear away and I wanted to so I wanted to run or think about the future so I did not want to stay present.

[Speaker 1] (12:28 - 12:29)

Yes. Thank you.

[Speaker 12] (12:29 - 12:30)

It was hard to stay present.

[Speaker 1] (12:30 - 31:21)

Yes. Yes. Sometimes acceptance means acceptance of the unacceptable and this is an example where what is happening seems to be impossible to accept but it is happening and of course there are millions in the world who go through similar pain.

It doesn't make it any easier but it is a fact and many others go through other kinds of extreme suffering, people who go through it and people who are around them who want to help like yourself. You want to take away their suffering. You don't want them to suffer and you can't help.

So the important, the only way is really to find a place within you where you touch something that is deeper than anything that has formed, the very life within you. If you can close your eyes and find that, not necessarily now but in a painful situation, to sense, to go deep enough so that you sense the life that you are because the life that you are beyond form, the very consciousness that you are that pervades the entire body and goes far beyond is also the life that she is. So if you sit, the same applies to a dying person.

It's another thing that sometimes can be very painful especially if death seems to come too soon. Even if it's an old person who is dying, it can be painful but if it's a younger person who one would say is not meant to die but you sit with a dying person. This can take, for the dying person of course it's a different experience.

The dying person, if there's been any, even the slightest understanding of acceptance, surrender, stillness when they were in their lifetime, they will then be able to access that and go very deep. Sometimes it's more difficult for the person around them than for the person who is dying or who is very ill. You need to take your attention deeper.

Let's say you sit with your sister or a dying person or a very sick person and you sit there, the mind says I should say something, I should help but of course there's nothing you can do but you can be. You can go deeper into being and so really it's a becoming still. Let's say you just sit next to her bed or hold her hand, let go of the idea of doing.

When my mother was falling ill and her body was failing as she was getting older, she kept asking me, what do I do? And right now there's nothing to do. That was the old conditioning in her mind because that's the Western mind especially tells you you can do something to change the situation, you can do something to remedy the situation, you must be able to do something.

And of course in hospitals it's all to do with doing but there comes a point when further doing is not possible. But the Western mind doesn't understand that, it continues to want to do and sometimes it inflicts more pain because it wants to do something. Why does it want to do something when whatever you do can only be causing more pain because it doesn't know anything else?

The Western mind is not confined to the West but I call it the Western mind even the East is now adopting the Western mind. Be is not recognized in the West as anything that even exists or is valuable but you have to go into being and if you have done it before, before the situation became so difficult, that will be a help. If you've never heard of it, even then it might be possible.

But anybody who's here and of course we will all face either being with someone close to us who is dying and we will all face of course sooner or later the moment of our approaching death. And if by then, by the time you sit with someone close to you who dies or death comes approaching, if by then you haven't gone into being, haven't even touched it, it may be hard to go that deeply within then but if you've even touched it during your life, as you all have and many of you more than touched it, then there will be any kind of extreme suffering of that kind that either happening close to you or to you will bring about an enormous deepening.

It forces you to go deeper. You have to become deep in a situation like that. If you're not deep, you suffer enormously.

But even if you are deep, you still suffer. You suffer on the surface, you cry, you feel sadness and pain but underneath the suffering, you can suddenly sense a stillness, a vastness in yourself, so to speak. Underneath that, so you cry here, but there's an acceptance underneath that is ah, and you get in touch with that which is timeless and indestructible, which is, you could say it's consciousness itself, the very essence of all life.

You are that, it's in you. The very essence of all life is in you, as it is in the other person. And so that's where you go when you sit with a person who is in great suffering or dying or with yourself, if it's happening to you, you have to become deep.

If you are already deep, but you have to know that depth. And we are here, dying of course, this is why we are here, before death catches up with us. We are deepening as we sit here, going deeper to touch the eternal, to touch that which is beyond death, which the Buddhists call Amavavati, the deathless place, the place of no death.

That's the closest the Buddhists get to the word God. No death, don't mention God, because you might make it into a mental concept and start believing in it, it's a substitute. But no death gets you to the experience of no death, and the experience of no death is God.

Don't have to say God, cancer concept. Find that which is nothing to do with the form of you, neither the psychological form nor the physical form. And it's right there, underlying it all.

Here, that's why we are here. So we are dying here, so when death comes to us, it will be much easier. And after being here, I believe it will become easier for you also to come to an acceptance of the extremely impermanent nature of all forms, including yours and ours.

They can go at any time, and it can be very painful when they begin to dissolve. They may not dissolve for a while, but it's painful. All forms are so impermanent, physical forms, all other forms.

Bodies, that very fact of the impermanence became also one of the central tenets of Buddhism, which is the Buddha's teaching of impermanence. Anicca is the Pali word, and it's an amazing realization that the world isn't as solid as it looks. It's kind of dreamlike forms appear for a while and then dissolve.

Everything that we look at, all the structures, bodies, they're just, the solidity is an illusion that we seem to see in the world, and the permanent nature and the absolute reality of the individual personality is an illusion. But if you go deep enough within you, then you can sense into that very same depth in your sister. But as you do so, the mind is still.

You can't do it with the mind. You can't do it with thinking. You can do it in absolute stillness, alert stillness.

You embrace the alert stillness, and then you reach into your sister. You just look or touch, or not even that, just sit, and then you sense that same in your sister. That's called, sometimes it's called healing, but you are not doing anything as such.

You're not thinking, I must heal my sister, no. But there's a deep healing that happens then, and whether it results in physical healing, we don't know. But healing is an awakening of that in the other.

Then you're truly helping. You awaken that in the other, but you don't do it. You allow it to happen through you.

That's the beauty of it. So is there something that you can do? Well, I don't like to call it doing.

It's not a doing, but let's just use language in that way, and then I'd say, okay, let's call it doing. Yes, there's something you can do. You can go deeply into being.

That's what you can do, very deeply. Mind becomes still, and then you reach into the other. With that, the stillness reaches into the other.

You may still be crying, because that's the surface, and you reach in, and then you touch the peace, and then whatever happens, it will be fine. That's your meditation. And eventually, you have to do it with yourself.

Yes. Whether it's next year or in 50 years' time, at some point, death comes and says, are you ready? And you can say, well, I've been ready for a long time.

I actually died a long time ago, so that's fine. Thank you. How do you experience God?

What do you see when you see someone? Do you see more than their physicality? How I experience God, I've been talking about.

This is really the only thing I talk about. Now, in different words, what do you see when you see someone? Do you see more than their physicality?

No, I don't see more than their physicality. I see exactly what everybody else sees, but I feel or sense something that is deeper than their physicality, and that is hard to put into words. There's a sensing of there's more to you than what I see, not as a thought, but as a knowing, because I know there's more to this form than I can see or you can see here.

So the consciousness beyond the form looks through the form and senses. We don't have a word for it. I can say I sense or I feel.

It's not quite right. Maybe sense it is the closest. We'd have to create a new word for it.

I sense who you are or what you are beyond what I see or beyond what you are telling me or beyond what your mind is saying or your emotions are doing. So there's a connection with presence, the presence that is in you, the presence that you are, and I have that more strongly than what I see. So that kind of almost obliterates what I see.

What I see is the same as anybody sees, but that strong sense of consciousness, the alive presence that you are is almost stronger than what I see. So there's more of my attention is in that than in my perception of what I see. It's hard to put into words something that is so far beyond words.

But this is not something special to me. This is something whenever you look at a human being and for a moment be free of definitions or interpretations, then you neither of yourself nor the other, nor definitions, be there as just a spacious awareness, then you begin to sense an aliveness within you and the same aliveness in the other. And then whatever the human beings do isn't that important anymore.

You don't react to. They may be saying something silly or intelligent or whatever. It doesn't matter that much.

There's something deeper there. They may be deluded. They might want something from you.

It doesn't matter anymore. It's very beautiful because it's only from that place that you can really relate. It's not the personality, the mind level.

That's the way to go for humans, to recognize each other as essentially sharing the same life, the same consciousness, recognizing oneness on a sense level, not on an intellectual level, feeling oneness. And that's love in a deeper sense, not the ego love, but the true love. The love comes from there.

You recognize that there is ultimately no other. The more you think in terms of others, the more you're in ego. He's like that.

She's like that. She does that. He does that.

He's like that. Remember I wrote in the book the famous Jean-Paul Sartre philosopher said, hell is other people. In the French original, if you translate literally, he says hell is the others.

That's the ego's perception of other people. A strong ego would see other people like that. And of course it can become so strong that you end up with things like paranoia because every strong ego has already an element of paranoia in it even before it's recognized as pathological when it's still normal.

It has an element of paranoia in it and so any strong ego goes around the world in that way of, what does he want? What does she want? What do you want from me?

Oh, I know what he's thinking. Evil intentions and so on. Very critical of others.

They want something that's not very normal but already part of the insanity.

[Speaker 21] (31:37 - 32:34)

How are you? Good. It's a pleasure to be here today.

It's my first time here and I have to say it almost feels a bit surreal to be in this room and you feel very connected to everyone and there's a lot of energy and you feel very connected to the source if you will, to your own divinity. But I'm a bit of a pragmatist and so I say to myself, when I leave this room, reality sets in and my reality I guess to my question is, it's about unemployment. It's about how do you, for those of us who are unemployed and seeking employment, stay connected to the source and to your own sense of divinity and still deal with the reality and the drama and the pain of trying to find a job.

[Speaker 1] (32:35 - 40:05)

Thank you. Thank you. It's challenging.

Challenges are good, potentially. They can either wake you up, awaken you or they can pull you into more reactivity, unconsciousness and suffering. Every challenge that comes into your life, there's always, suddenly you can go either this way or you can go that way.

Potentially the challenge is very helpful. Challenge means, again a word I sometimes use, limitation in one form or another comes into your life. I'm certainly grateful for the challenges that came into my life.

I wouldn't be sitting here and many of you probably realize that without the challenges that you encountered in your life, you wouldn't be sitting here. You'd be watching television. This is something I have a little bit of personal experience with also.

Well, maybe even quite a lot of personal experience. Because for a large part of my adult life, I was actually not employed as such, large part. I was not employed and for a large part, lived on relatively little for a few years, quite a few years, even in my thirties.

Below the poverty line, I read that in the paper once when it mentioned, at that time I read the paper, it mentioned the income, a single person below that is below the poverty line. I realized, oh, I'm much below that. But I didn't realize I was poor.

I realized that there were things I couldn't afford to buy. I could buy tomato sauce, but I couldn't buy spaghetti sauce. Tomato sauce is cheaper, much cheaper.

And that stayed with me even for many years. As recently as four years ago, I sometimes still find myself getting tomato sauce instead of spaghetti sauce. It's much cheaper.

So here's one piece of advice for the jobless. There are practical things that then you need to readjust and deal with. There's some action you may need to take in order to adjust to the new situation.

All that is in the practical realm. Then there's the mental realm. And in the mental realm is where the suffering could arise, not in the practical realm.

There's no suffering in using, in eating spaghetti with this thin tomato sauce. Just one little example, this stands for many things, rather than a nice, specially prepared sauce for pasta. But if you think suddenly thought arises, and I'm just using this example to play by to many things, the thought arises, this is what it has come to.

Here I said, I have to eat this watery sauce with eating the cheapest food there is. Whatever, I've lost all that that I thought I had achieved, I have failed, probably won't find another job because billions of people are now looking for jobs. It's pointless.

I'll probably have to have the same again tomorrow. Many other kinds of thoughts arise. That's where the suffering comes from.

The suffering also comes from a diminished sense of self-worth. Now, where is that? Of course, it's in your head.

The diminished sense of self-worth is because I'm now useless, and so on. Maybe I'm too old, and nobody will employ me anymore, or whatever. I should have had a better education.

I'm no good for anything anymore. Nobody will bond. Whatever the thoughts are, a diminished sense of self-worth, and that is because your self-worth before was derived from your function in this world, which is a very normal thing, but it wasn't really derived from your function in this world.

It was derived from what your mind told you about your function in this world, and so you derived your sense of self-worth from certain thoughts in your head, and you got perhaps some feedback from others who also told you that you are useful. You were part of all that interaction that people have when they have a job. You have a boss.

The boss might tell you, you're doing well. You're getting a promotion. Okay, and the clients love you, whatever, and then you lose it, all that, and you had built up your sense of self-worth from the thoughts and the thoughts of others, and so the opportunity now is when there is a diminished sense of self-worth to go to a deeper place where a sense of self-worth comes from that has nothing to do with what you are doing in this world or with nothing to do with what anybody tells you about yourself. A sense of self-worth, of value, that in other words has nothing to do with the structure of thinking. So you can use the challenge to see that if you can find something in a deeper place in you where there's something of far greater value than anything that could be derived from thinking about yourself.

So when you lose your job, very often your self-image can become damaged, and that's where the suffering comes from because that is the self-image is made up out of thinking, and a damaged self-image can either lead you into more suffering, and it will just go on and on and pull you deeper, and you talk to others about how dreadful it is, and perhaps they'll even say, yes, you're right, and pulls you deeper and deeper. Or you step out of self-deriving your sense of who you are ultimately.

[Speaker 11] (40:13 - 41:51)

My question is on karma. I grew up in a Hindu family, and often karma is talked about as something that provides a balance in the world, but it can sometimes seem rigid, and it's a powerful influence over someone's life. And when I listen to you speak, I feel so much peace and so much hope, and you talk about presence and being as the keys to enjoying form and creating positive circumstances in your life or softening circumstances, and I wanted to know how karma fits into all of that, because there seems to be places in the world where there's not a lot of resources, where there's a lot of brutality.

For example, I met somebody at work, and she was a refugee from Afghanistan, and she was a young girl, and the interpreter had told me that her brother and her father were killed in front of her, and she had another brother taken. And then I later learned that a lot of times the Taliban doesn't take the young boys to fight. They take them, and they use them as sex slaves.

And when I hear about stories like this, I just wonder how I can stay aligned with love or trusting the universe when I'm not able to see through your eyes yet. And how do you hold both?

[Speaker 23] (41:53 - 41:53)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (41:54 - 1:01:04)

Thank you. Now, of course, everybody is born into a certain external environment and also is born with certain predispositions. They may be partly genetic.

They may be other things that a person is born with certain patterns. In other words, we don't need to examine where they come from but just to see the fact that the human being is first of all born into a certain environment which may be violent or it may be relatively peaceful, and the person is born with inner patterns. You inherit certain, even pain bodies, partly inherit it.

Some babies cry a lot. They have a relatively heavy pain body already in this world. It doesn't mean they're spiritually less advanced.

The opposite may be the case. There's no knowing. Other babies are relatively peaceful.

And so there's a whole set of conditioning that happens. You come into the environment with certain predispositions. Then the environment conditions you further.

And in all that, there's no choice involved. It's just influences. And so you find yourself in this world with certain unconscious patterns that have become the conditioning of who the person is, the unconscious conditioning.

So karma, as I see it, is the unconscious conditioning that runs your life. And that still applies to many humans and karma is partly collective. You've been born into it and partly personal.

They come together. So really, you can only understand karma not as an abstract subject external to yourself because then you get into belief systems and philosophy. We're not going that way.

You can only understand karma by observing yourself and by observing. And then you will know many other things. But you need to really, if you want to understand karma, you need to look at yourself.

And so I began to understand what karma is when there was something arose that was not part of karma at all. And really, here we come to the key. The arising of consciousness or presence or spiritual awakening is not part of karma.

It is another dimension that breaks into the karmic realm. So you do not become awakened by accumulating, as they sometimes say in the East, good karma. That's fine on this level.

You can make the walls or the furniture in your presence a little bit more comfortable. But there is something totally from beyond karma that can come into your life at any point within the wheel of karma and rebirth. Rebirth is, of course, part of karma.

The deeper meaning of rebirth is identification with form. We don't need to even believe in transmigration or whatever. You can look at rebirth in your own life every time you identify with a thought that arises, which is form, you are born into that thought because you identify.

Your sense of self is in it. That's karma. You are reborn.

Karma then is unconscious identification with these patterns that you have inherited, the conditioned. Complete identification of consciousness with the conditioned patterns. So consciousness is dreaming, one could say.

This is why we use the word awakening in many spiritual traditions. Consciousness is awakening. Consciousness is in a dreamlike state when you're identified with the unconscious patterns.

And then you are condemned to rebirth. In fact, many times every day, you are reborn into a reaction, an emotional, mental reaction. No presence at all, just rebirth into some form or you're reborn into thoughts that arise and you completely believe in every thought.

And then you act from those thoughts and emotions and the action creates further reactions and the actions confirm to you that you were right. If you have certain mind patterns about, for example, that other people are basically dishonest. Just one example of people.

People are so dishonest. They're all trying to get something from me. That tends to confirm itself in your life experience.

You can try it out or you may have experienced it before you became more conscious. That habitual thought patterns that you're identified with and that is karma creates in the external confirmation that it is correct. So if you think the world is full of evil people, you will meet many evil people.

In other words, unconscious people. And even people who are halfway between conscious and unconscious, when you come together with them, your belief will pull them into unconsciousness. And that's karma.

So karma is the complete absence of conscious presence and so it's automatic. It plays itself out. And time does not free you of karma.

That is a misperception that if you only spend enough time, eventually you can become free of karma. Karma renews itself and repeats itself. It's a wheel.

And so the only thing that can free you of karma is the arising of presence. And how is it that some person's presence I cannot tell you why. I only know that at any point in the wheel of karma, presence can come in.

It can happen to a criminal in prison, condemned to death. It can happen to somebody who has never heard of anything spiritual. It can happen to somebody who has been meditating for 30 years or not happen to the same person who has been meditating for 30 years.

So in your own life, I can see from what you're saying that presence has already, I can sense that, presence has already come into your life. And presence frees you from karma, not all at once. Karma has an enormous momentum, meaning the patterns in yourself, the thought patterns, the emotional patterns, the reactive patterns.

There's enormous momentum behind that. But as presence arises, gradually karma diminishes and the energy behind it diminishes. And gradually you experience a fading out of those patterns.

They become weaker. You're no longer completely in the grip of those patterns. So as presence arises, there's a gradual fading out of karma.

Not that it matters that much anymore because once you are present, you can, as the previous questioner said, when we were talking about certain thoughts still arising, certain negative thoughts, that's still part of the karma, the old patterns, the unconscious habit patterns. Inherited, they still arise, but it's no longer problematic and they no longer cause the suffering that they would have caused before because they are seen in the light of awareness. So the light of awareness arises and in the light of awareness, the patterns no longer dominate your life.

They no longer run your life. And if occasionally it happens that the patterns do take over, then after a little while, your presence returns and you say, ah, well, there it was again. Pain body is part of karma, which may be strong in some people, not so strong in others.

And so as presence arises, you are freed from karma. And then you have another completely different factor coming into your life. And so, for example, for a person to become free of collective karma, you need a considerable amount of presence for that to come in to remove, and it then will remove you in one way or another, either internally, you find yourself completely free, you might still live in a violent society, but internally you would be free.

There is a possibility you can have a holy man or woman living surrounded by violence. It's possible. It's rare, but possible.

Or very often it happens that life removes you out of there and you find yourself somewhere else. So let's say vast collective karma, for example, in the case of, let's say, you have the Taliban there, you have all kinds of unconscious movements, you had Soviet Communism, you had National Socialism in Germany, and for a person being born into that and not being drawn into that unconsciousness requires considerable presence. So not that many people, for example, in Germany, when Hitler came to power, not many people were able to remove themselves somewhere.

Some artists, some writers, they left, they could see what was happening and they were strong enough not to be identified with the collective when there had been a tradition of obedience to authority for hundreds of years, a tradition of following your leader, and so on. To take yourself out of that collective karma requires considerable presence, but some people had it. So it is our destiny then to go beyond karma by being the receptacles for presence.

All you can do to be helpful in this world and help others is those people that you come into contact with, you may, everybody who is awakening will find that sooner or later they become a kind of teacher to others. And what a spiritual teacher does, the teacher points out the possibility of awakening out of identification with unconscious patterns, which means the spiritual teacher teaches you to go beyond karma. And so that is your function and will become increasingly, you will find in your life, whether you become a formal teacher or an informal teacher, formal meaning that you say, okay, I'm giving a talk or somebody invites you and you give a talk, that becomes formal teaching.

For many years before this, I became a formal teacher. I mean, it's not my identity, it's just a functional thing. It would be terrible if I saw myself as a teacher.

It's not, any identity is an illusion. Any form identity is an illusion. But it's a functional thing.

I'm saying you become a, for several years, the teaching happened informally on park benches at first, then in people's living rooms, then in little groups. And so gradually it grows and some people will continue to teach informally. So people you come into contact with, some people are, more and more people are ready for spiritual awakening.

And some, which means spiritual awakening and stepping out of karma is the same thing. And so many people will be drawn to you. Anybody who is going through the awakening process is already a teacher.

And the more you teach, teaching means you find yourself listening from spaciousness when somebody speaks or asks a question or tells you about their problems. And then you may find yourself, an answer comes out of that stillness in which you listen. And that's the beginning of teaching.

You don't have the sense that, okay, I'm going to teach this person now. That's not, that's never it. You will find that teaching is spontaneous.

So you will help people to step out of identification with unconsciousness, which means going beyond karma because you're already, it's already happening in your life. And this applies to everybody who is awakening and going through the awakening process. The Course in Miracles has the expression, teacher of God.

Of course, God is a word I don't use very often, but you could say you do become a teacher. And as you teach, this really teaching means the consciousness is becoming aligned with your mind. And so your mind is able to tune into the deeper consciousness and can be used as an instrument.

And then the words come out of your mouth. Yes. Beautiful.

So that's, you become, that's what I call the teacher. But of course, there's ultimately only one teacher and that's consciousness. The awakened consciousness is the teacher.

And it can only teach those in whom there is a degree of readiness. Your teaching needs to be received. If there's only a density of mind, the teaching won't happen.

And of course, you won't, you will immediately, some of you perhaps haven't yet experienced it, very soon you will and you will be amazed when people are drawn to you, people who are ready, and you find yourself saying something that you didn't even know yourself. That's what happened to me a lot. People asked me questions and I gave answers.

Well, these questions never occurred to me and therefore the answers never occurred to me. It's only when the question was asked, the consciousness responded. And then the mind said, wow, I didn't know that.

And so as you teach, you learn, so to speak. Realizations come. Teaching and learning is the same process.

And the deepening happens as you teach. It's a wonderful thing. So you are here to help people go beyond karma.

And at first you may do it in people you come into contact with and it may expand. It may expand into perhaps you might write a book. Anybody here might write a book, but don't do it too soon.

So it's a very, rather than looking at karma as an abstract thing to understand, it's really something that you can only look at in yourself and understand within yourself and then see how it applies to your life and others. The important thing is, time does not free you of karma. The egoic mind says, I need more time to become free.

The only thing that you might need more time for, and not you or anybody here, but some people, that they might need for, the only thing that people may need more time for is they need time to realize that they don't need time. I still say, does it make sense? They say you need, perhaps somebody needs another 20 years of suffering before they finally realize that they don't need more time.

So they do need time. They need to suffer a bit more to realize the power of the timeless. And of course, the timeless is also the ending of karma.

That's why whenever you become present, there is a gradual erosion of karma. It may well be that some patterns still stay with you until the end of this form, and it's no longer a problem. There's already a presence within which these things, you don't mistake who you are anymore.

So that's the practice, and that's the purpose, the life purpose for you, for the rest of this incarnation. Thank you.

[Speaker 17] (1:01:26 - 1:02:58)

Hello. Right now I'm at an age where my parents are growing old, and my life partner's mother is dying, and I know a lot of people that are at that age, it's age appropriate where people are dying. And our society really doesn't create any openness or availability or understanding of it.

In fact, it's completely taboo. And if anything, I think our society does everything in its power to be able to somehow offset the inevitable. There are a lot of questions for me around this thing called death.

One that comes up for me is, how does one be with the process of death in such a way that it really can be celebrated and can be every opportunity? Because my experience is that birth and death are real openings that create huge amounts of energy coming through, and I've been present for it. But how does one really stay with that?

And there's so much interference going on in our society to being with that, both from the person that's going through the process of dying and those who are with them to support them as they go through that process.

[Speaker 1] (1:02:59 - 1:27:46)

Yes. Good question. Thanks.

Thank you. As you also mentioned, it's a great opportunity, death, approaching death, the awareness of death. It's a great opportunity because death is one way in which the formless dimension comes into this life.

It's precisely at the moment of the fading of the form that the formless comes into this life. But if that is not accepted, the fading of form is denied, then it's a missed opportunity. The opportunity is there for yourself because as people around you pass away, you increasingly become aware of your own mortality also.

The body will also dissolve. So, and many people still in our civilization, they deny death, don't want to think about it, don't want to give it any attention. There are only a few individuals, exceptional individuals, some spiritual, one or two spiritual teachers like Stephen Levine who worked a lot with death, Kubler-Ross who worked a lot with death, still exceptions rather than the norm.

But there's enormous potential there for spiritual flowering, even in people who up to the point of the beginning of the fading of the form were completely identified with the form. It's your last chance in this incarnation as your body begins to fade or you're becoming aware of its limited lifespan, your last chance to go beyond identification with form. And this is true whether it's to do with your body or somebody else's body who is close to you.

In the proximity of death, whether it's your own death or somebody else's death, there's always that grace hiding underneath the seemingly negative event. Because death in our civilization is seen as entirely negative and as if it shouldn't be happening. And because it's denied, people are so shocked when somebody dies as if it shouldn't, how could he die?

It's not possible. Because we don't live with the familiarity of death as some more ancient cultures still do. The familiarity of death isn't there.

Everything is hidden. The dead body is hidden. You don't see the reality of it.

In India, you can see the dead bodies being carried through the streets and being burned in public. And to the Westerner, it says, oh, that's just terrible. It's reality.

And so as the consciousness is changing, I feel that more and more death will become an important part of the evolutionary process, the process of the rising consciousness on our planet. And now that you mention it, it's just coming to me that I feel that I'd like to do some more work with people who are close to death or facing death one way or another, close to them or their own death. So first of all comes the, at any age, the form can dissolve.

Even if you're very young, you may encounter death close to you. So at any age, it's actually extremely helpful to become familiar with or comfortable with the impermanence of the physical form. And I recommend to everybody to occasionally visit the cemetery.

If it's a nice cemetery, well, that makes it more pleasant. Some cemeteries are like beautiful parks and you can walk around and feel extremely peaceful. But even if it's not nice, if it's just gravestones and no trees, spiritually, it is just as helpful to occasionally, maybe once a month or even just once or twice a year, walk around the cemetery and contemplate the fact of death.

I still do that quite often whenever I have a chance, not in big cities because usually cemeteries there are in the outskirts, somewhere it's hard to get to. In Europe, in the villages and so on, you have cemetery next to the church very often. And I love walking around there.

And my favorite thing is reading the names on the gravestones and to see, in a kind of astonishment, I'm still astonished by reading that and sometimes seeing if the gravestones are very old, the name is not there anymore either. It got eroded by the weather. I love the old graveyards in England, the English village churches, and there are the gravestones.

And often, you see lots of gravestones and only a few still have a legible name to them. But in the English climate, then it gets eroded after 80 or 100 years or at the most 150, 200 years. And some have been there, some stones have been there for hundreds of years.

And that's a little bit to me like the Buddhist monks going to the morgue to do their regular meditation period. It's a contemplation of death and the acceptance of the impermanent nature of the human form that opens up. If you accept it, don't intellectualize it.

Don't come to some kind of mental conclusion about it. Don't even say, well, they're all now in the astral realm or they're now in the heavenly realm and they're reincarnated again, so they're okay. Don't even go that far.

Just stay with the simple is-ness of the fact of the impermanence of the form, the human form, and accept that for what it is without going any further. Because if you go further, you get into comforting beliefs, that's very nice too. But what I'm pointing to, driving at, is something deeper than comforting beliefs.

Go something deeper. And so instead of going to some kind of conclusion, stay with the fact of the impermanence of the human form and accept it completely and contemplate this fact in the form of the gravestones or there may be a dead body if you are somewhere where you can see dead bodies. And with that, the contemplation of the impermanence, the death of the form, the impermanent form, when it's accepted, something very deep and peaceful opens up inside you.

And that is why I enjoy going to cemeteries. And why is that? It seems that it is because when you accept the impermanence of all forms, but before you accept it, you have to face it truly.

Face it and accept it. Then out of that comes an opening within which is that which is beyond form in you, comes forward, so to speak. And that which is not touched by death, the formless, comes forward as you completely accept the impermanence of all forms.

And this is where death, the complete acceptance of death and the awareness of death and of impermanence can put you in touch with the deathless, as it's sometimes called in Buddhism, the deathless dimension within. And that's why it is so deeply peaceful to contemplate death. And if death happens to somebody close to you, now if you go into an old cemetery, you're not going to weep because these people have been dead for a long, long time.

You don't know them, and there's probably nobody left who once knew them, so you don't. But if somebody close to you dies, then there's an added dimension. You may find there's deep sadness.

You may find tears are coming. The form also was precious, although what you loved in the form was the formless, and yet you weep because of the fading form. And there, too, you come to an acceptance, especially if you're already familiar with death, you already know that everything dies, then you can accept it more easily when it happens to somebody close to you.

There's still the deep sadness. There's still tears. And then you can have the two dimensions simultaneously, the tears and underneath it a deep peace.

So the outer you weeps. The inner, the most essential, is deeply at peace. It comes forward almost as if it were saying, there is no death.

That's where the peace comes from, but it's just peace. So when somebody close to you passes away, I have the two, I experienced it two years ago when my mother and father passed away within the same year. So each time there's tears came, but also a deep sense of peace underneath it.

And then the tears come in waves. The sadness isn't there continuously. It comes in waves.

But the peace is there always. And now what I occasionally do still, I never liked photo albums. In fact, I always said, why keep the past stuck in a heavy book?

But I'm now collecting some old photos of my mom and dad and I'm going to put them in a book. Somehow it feels good. It's honoring also the form.

You honor the form, but know that that's not ultimately who they are or who they were. And yet the form also, which includes all their life situations, places that you saw together and so on, things that they experienced, it's all connected with the world of form and you also honor the form. But being in touch with the formless within, you can honor the form.

And so the two come together and then there's a balance. And to be with somebody who is experiencing the approaching dissolution of form in themselves, somebody who is about to die or close to death, that's a very sacred thing. And again, words are not that important here.

It's the stillness in you that's the most important factor that complete acceptance comes. There's not much you can say about death really, but you may find that words will come out of the stillness if it's right for that person. Some words may come out of you or no words may come.

But it's a very sacred thing to be sitting with somebody who is dying. And the more still you are, the more you can sense the sacredness. I sometimes have seen with people who were getting close to death, one could almost visually, almost visually see the form becoming translucent.

And there was an energy or a light shining through the fading form. Some people can only sense it. It's hard to describe.

I don't see it visually as such, but it's almost visual. There's a brightness coming through. And that only happens to those people who come to a state of acceptance.

They may still have occasional fear coming in too, but those who are able to embrace an acceptance, then death has a wonderful function because it becomes the opening into the formless. So I've seen some just incredible transformations in some people, and that's a flowering of consciousness. If they have lived in alignment with what is in the rest of their lives, then it makes it much easier, of course.

When death comes, you're ready. And if you have already died as a conceptual entity, if you have already died to your ego, if the mind-made sense of self is no longer controlling you, is no longer pretending to be you, then basically you have already gone through death, the death of the ego. And then the other death is not terrifying anymore at all.

Death is the most terrifying thing to the ego. And since most people in our civilization are still walking egos, that's the reason why death is continuously hidden and denied because to the ego it's just the most dreadful thing, dreadful. Somebody even once said, I read it in a paper, death is an abomination, it's a travesty.

It's almost like people going out on a protest march with placards saying, no more deaths. End to death. Fight death.

And the way to overcome death, that's not the way to overcome death. So don't wait, as the wonderful saying goes, don't wait for death to find you because it will find you. Find death before death finds you.

And of course that's the beautiful death of the ego, which to some people happens when they experience at some point in their lives drastic loss. Death comes in many forms. It comes also in any great loss in your life, loss of possessions, loss of prestige or recognition, loss of the function in society, your social position, loss of your home, whatever it is, loss of your country.

And so there are people everywhere in the world who experience this. And some of them, that initiates in some of them the death of the ego, because it becomes so painful to the ego to be deprived of all the things that it had identified with, all the things that fed it, the identifications, my possessions, my job, my family. Some people lose their family all in one disaster.

So extremely painful things happen to some people. And some of them become very unhappy entities and for the rest of their lives they are bitter and complaining. And others, suddenly something in them opens up.

They can't stand the pain anymore, so they are driven to a place of acceptance of the end of form, the dissolution of form. And then suddenly in the midst of tragedy, something very peaceful arises within them. And they don't know why in most cases.

They are surprised, surprised to find that actually now that they have lost everything, they are more at peace than they were when they had everything. It doesn't make sense. And that's why Jesus talked about the peace that passes all understanding, because it doesn't make sense.

Not unless you understand the deep truth behind it, then it does make sense. But to people to whom it happens spontaneously, it doesn't make sense. And yet that's how it is.

It's a beautiful thing, this realization. So loss, death in any form can bring that about. And this is how many people shift into a different state of consciousness, suddenly become deep and peaceful.

And in some people, death of a loved one or some great loss in their lives brings about not necessarily a complete death of their ego, but it, as I sometimes put it, it cracks the ego. It kind of cracks it open. It gets hit so many times.

So cracks appear in the density of the ego. And then that person becomes a much deeper person. Suddenly they have more compassion.

They have more empathy with other human beings. They are more open. They are more humble.

So that the ego got injured, not perhaps gone completely, but cracks have appeared in it. So they are in the middle between ego loss and being dominated by the ego. So there's always then, when there's some degree of surrender to the fact of loss, there's always at least some deepening in the human being.

And what deepening means, of course, is less identification with form than before, less identification with the egoic form of me, less pride, more humility, more naturalness. They're more themselves. You can feel suddenly more comfortable with them, whereas before, nobody can feel comfortable with a big ego.

Just the ego is designed to make you uncomfortable. So this is wonderful things that you can experience through that. So whether or not you talk to people about the taboo subject of death, only you can know in the moment whether that is right, the right thing to do.

It's again the same as the question that you asked. It's only in the moment you know, and you will find then the words come. Words are not that important here because it transcends anything that can be said or understood through words.

So visits to the cemetery for anybody, don't wait for death to come. Just look for it and see, become familiar with it. It's not a morbid thing.

Our civilization will tell you, oh, this is morbid. You can't go to a, why would you go to a cemetery? It'll make you sad.

It won't, not if you go there and become still and present there. It won't make you sad. But there's a lot there.

What is needed in our civilization is actually places where there are like ashrams, places where people can come to die consciously, where they can spend perhaps the last year or two or three of their lives, and they could be sacred places of transformation. So far what we have today is that many people die in hospitals, and these are the most, they know nothing about death. Hospitals, death is denied.

You may feel very lucky you find a nurse or a doctor who is spiritually connected, and then that's the exception to the rule. But most hospital-esque structures don't know what to do about death. It doesn't fit into their scheme at all.

And so maybe some hospitals will also become semi-ashrams, and you could maybe even have a combination between ashram and hospital, or you could have just places where people who know they're going to die soon come and have spiritual guidance, and there's a field of power that they enter, and they then contribute to, because as the form dissolves, enormous spiritual power comes through the form. So this is something to be considered. And what I just said, I didn't know, hadn't really thought about it that much until the words came, so that is something for people who listen to this to consider.

Some people may feel called upon to create that, to bring that into being, and who knows, I may also be part of that kind of, that wonderful thing, what a transformation that will be, conscious dying. Thank you.

[Speaker 13] (1:28:06 - 1:29:57)

Hi Kim. Hi. My name is Liz, and I was with you at a workshop in Massachusetts in 2009 at the Kripalu Center, and at the time you shared that you were a single mother of a daughter for a lot of years, and that was my experience years ago.

So when I left the workshop, a memory came to me of something that happened many years ago for me, which was that there was an opening that was happening inside me, a vastness, and it went on for quite a while, and I felt myself more present than ever. And then one night, I had this experience of running into a wall of fear. I would even describe it as abject terror, just almost like a vortex of extreme darkness.

And the thought that came to me was, if you keep going, you will abandon your daughter. And so it didn't last that long, and it hasn't come back since, and I just kind of let it go. And I haven't had that level of fear, and I haven't had that level of presence since.

And so when I left, after seeing you, the question came to me, how has your coming into enlightenment changed the relationship with your daughter, and does your daughter in any way feel as though she has lost her mother?

[Speaker 2] (1:30:03 - 1:30:51)

Have you abandoned your daughter? No, I have not. It's interesting, because that very thought, you will abandon your daughter, you can think of it in one way, and you can think of it another way.

You can think of it as that sort of, oh, abandonment thing, and you can also think of it in terms of letting go. I remember when my daughter, I mean my daughter thought I was totally crazy when I first came into the sort of Eastern, more spiritual teachings. You know, because I kind of entered into this group where we did a lot of eye gazing, you know that.

[Speaker 23] (1:30:54 - 1:30:54)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:01 - 1:36:04)

It's like, who can hold it the longest? And she's like, oh my God, there they go again, sitting in the living room, and they're just like. She would imitate it and go, you know, you're like this.

So she thought I was nuts. But the spiritual teaching has really taught me a lot, because she actually, you know, we had a really tough growing up years, when her teens, when she was young, it was just like she was this little angel. And not that she was an angel when she was a teenager, but she became this rebellious angel, you know, like some of us were, including myself.

And she left home temporarily at the age of, I think she moved out and lived with some friends. I think she might have been 17 years old. And I went, oh my God.

Oh my God, I've lost her, she's left. Oh my God. And I sat, because I was already sort of deeply involved in meditation.

I sat in this, with this meditation, and suddenly I realized that she was never really mine. She came through me and lived with me for a while, did the best that I could, and I had to let her go. And in a way, it was like abandoning her.

But it was abandoning this tight grip of what I conceived that my relationship with my daughter should be, and how it should be. And when I saw that, it was such a relief. And there was such this overwhelming just relaxation came, and peace, and actually happiness, that she left.

It was actually a joyful moment, and I didn't, there was no longer minding it anymore. And we do, in a way, have to abandon our roles, and the roles that we put onto others, including our children. That's the space, and that's the freedom.

It was interesting, your question had come in earlier, so when it was actually posed to me in this list of questions, she was sitting right there. And your second part of the question, which was something like, does she feel that she has lost a mom? And I'm like, well, I don't know how she feels.

And I looked over at her, and I read her the question. She goes, oh, no, I feel like as if I've gained more of a mom, and much even more, I've gained a friend, and I've gained a spiritual teacher. I stopped looking at her as my daughter from that moment on, and I stopped looking at myself as a mother.

Yes, I have a role as a mother at times that have to be played, especially at a younger age. And when I put her out of the daughter role, she became more of like this to me, rather than I'm the mom, you're the daughter. I know better, you do.

I may have experienced more, so I couldn't have something to perhaps teach her or tell her. But it's no longer of this, but it's more like, hey, there's this. So our relationship changed a lot, thank goodness.

So yes, abandon this role. We do need to abandon the roles that we put on ourselves and onto others for she really is not your daughter, but the concept of a daughter, and all the ideas you have about what a daughter is, what your children are. And we have our ideas and our concepts about what a mother should be like and what a father should be like.

And really, we are none of those things, but we can relate to each other through stillness, and then the right answers follow. The right guidance follows. So enjoy this new stage, this new development.

[Speaker 22] (1:36:05 - 1:36:06)

Thank you.

[Speaker 15] (1:36:28 - 1:36:39)

Hello, Eckhart. My question was, you heard about the news, the earthquake in Haiti.

[Speaker 1] (1:36:39 - 1:36:40)

Earthquake in Haiti?

[Speaker 15] (1:36:40 - 1:37:13)

Yes. My question was, you heard the news and you watched the news, and you sit down, meditate, maybe you become still. Is this the end of this teaching?

Feeling the inner body is the end of this teaching? That is my question.

[Speaker 1] (1:37:14 - 1:40:55)

Thank you. In other words, is all you have to do, you're asking, be still, sit and be still? Now, what is the relationship, I believe you're asking, between this shift in consciousness and suffering that arises on the planet as it does?

How do they relate? The shift in consciousness that is happening here, right? How does that relate to the suffering?

That's a good question. Thank you. Let's see what the answer is.

Now, a little bit of the answer already came in the previous, in answer to the previous question, because we were talking about the suffering as an awakener, human suffering that arises, challenges. Suffering becomes, the challenge itself is not yet the suffering. It might be painful, but it's not suffering.

Suffering is psychological. It's when you bring the mind to it. All over the planet, there's still an enormous amount of suffering.

Humans suffer. There are many different forms of suffering. It may be a natural disaster.

Then we hear about it in the news. But there are many other forms of suffering that we don't hear about in the news that are just as prevalent, if not more so. Even simple things like people having car accidents here.

Huge numbers every year die or are maimed in car accidents. Enormous amount of suffering. Natural disasters, yes, there's suffering there, but it's relatively, if you look at the totality of human suffering, you can see that natural disasters are a relatively small part, and suffering that is inflicted by humans on other humans, a much greater part.

But they're all forms of suffering. And it could happen here. It's not only an abstract thing.

There's a Haiti earthquake somewhere on another part of the planet. We're in California. Who knows what happens in 10 minutes' time.

I'm not predicting anything. Or tomorrow or next year or in 10 years' time. Could happen here.

Then you are suddenly stuck in an earthquake. So enormous amounts of suffering and deaths and so on happen, premature deaths continuously on the planet. I often describe the suffering that is inflicted, the pain that is inflicted by humans on other humans as the most obvious form of insanity on our planet.

20th century history, 130 million or so, nobody knows the exact figure, killed. Many of them, young people, women, children, killed.

[Speaker 15] (1:40:59 - 1:41:09)

Then being present can be helpful when things are happening like that? Yes, we're coming to that. Yes, yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:41:11 - 1:52:42)

First of all, the important thing is you do not become part of the proliferation of suffering that humans create for themselves and others. So when you become present, you no longer act out the old egoic conditioning of the human mind, which is responsible for warfare and so on. You become a place of sanity in a sea of insanity.

But there are more and more islands of sanity arising in that sea of insanity that has been the collective consciousness of humanity for thousands of years. So this inner transformation is vital so that you do not simply perpetuate the same dysfunction. That is why we are here, so that we do not perpetuate the same dysfunction.

Then gradually sanity arises in human interactions, and you are not going to go out and kill people anymore. Not that you, we are not. You may feel called upon sometimes if suffering comes into your life and you can see that you can help others, you may feel out of presence.

Very often the impulse comes to do something about human suffering. Now most human suffering is to do with unconsciousness, so what we are trying to remedy is the consequences, the effects of unconsciousness when you help people in war-torn areas or people in places where there is total chaos. And even places in so-called wealthy countries don't underestimate the enormous amount of suffering in countries like here or wealthy Western Europe, countries that on the surface look polished.

Countries where on the surface look rational and polished. And very often if you look underneath the surface in humans, there is an enormous amount of suffering. We don't see the suffering of millions in old age, shut away in old people's homes.

We don't hear about that, whose lives feel completely, and because our civilization knows nothing about the potential of old age, so people arrive and feel useless, die. Nobody knows about how to die. People die in most dreadful in hospitals, just uselessly people trying to prolong their lives for a few more weeks or months.

All these things our civilization doesn't yet know about. So our main concern is to address the root cause of human suffering, which lies within, so that we do not generate suffering again and again. And the root cause of suffering is in yourself, in the individual.

And it's not a personal accusation because you inherit it collectively. It's the human mind, but it expresses itself in you. So the shift in consciousness is vital, so that we don't continue living in the same way and make others suffer and make ourselves suffer.

Everybody who makes other people suffer make themselves suffer too. They always go together. So address the root cause of human suffering, and then you can be helpful in two ways.

Your main help is that through you the new consciousness is brought into this world, because, as I mentioned before, it spreads to others. And also the way in which you interact with others is different. You don't use people anymore as a means to an end, because you don't use the present moment anymore as a means to an end.

All personal interactions change. Now the interactions between nations or different tribes and groups are really reflections of personal interactions. So if personal interactions are unconscious, then the interaction between nations will be equally, if not more, unconscious.

Because the more people come together, usually, groups are usually more unconscious than the individuals that make up that group. And this is how the most dreadful suffering is inflicted on our planet, by groups of people who are egoically identified with a certain group and then inflict suffering on the other group, which they as individuals wouldn't do. And if an individual did it, go out and kill a million people, immediately you would see this person is mentally ill.

But if a nation can do it, and it's regarded as normal behavior. Nations behave in a way that often, or groups, sometimes they are religious groups, they behave in a way that if an individual were manifesting that kind of behavior, immediately it would be apparent this person is dangerously ill mentally. And we wouldn't put him in a prison, we would put him in a mental home, perhaps to be cured.

But not that many people get cured in mental homes. So this unconsciousness then can only be brought to an end by a sufficient number of individuals going through a shift in consciousness. Then of course what's left is still, when humans no longer inflict suffering on other humans, perhaps there will still be some natural disasters occasionally, and then all we can do is, if we are not part of it, we can help.

For those who feel called upon to help, either through giving money or to going there, but be careful when you go there so that they don't put you in prison when you try to take away children and help them. You can go there and help, whatever it is, but it is the correspondence between external reality and inner also. So it is possible also that the incidence of natural disasters would lessen.

That sounds a little mystical, if there is a shift in human consciousness, because everything is connected. But as we are going through a transitional period, there may actually be an intensification of natural disasters, because this is a period of intense turmoil as something new is being born. And for something new to be born, some of the old needs to die.

So there is a push, it's pushing through. And that applies to the individual and to the collective. In many people's lives there is turmoil, enormous changes, and it's all part of that.

It's all part of the challenges that come into our lives that are necessary. So we welcome it, whatever arises. And if you are part of a natural disaster, either you are still alive or you are dead.

If you are still alive, then you practice presence. If they take away your leg, you practice presence. If you take away your arm, you practice presence.

Because what else can you do? Life leaves you no other possibility except dreadful suffering. And if you are already embracing presence, if you should encounter a drastic challenge like that, you would slip into it just easily.

Because you are already, even as you sit here embracing presence, if then you encounter a drastic challenge in your life through a natural disaster or personal disaster, you would very quickly go easily into absolute awakening. And you may not even need that anymore. Life only gives you what you need.

So you can trust that you get what you need and it can be used. If you die, if you die, now what is it that we believe? We look at individuals as if they were totally autonomous.

That which comes through you as what you call life is eternal. So, although we have to be aware of the two levels here. On one level, I often point out, this is insane.

What is happening, what humans are doing is insane. We have to see that on that level. From another level, even this insanity is part of the evolution of consciousness.

And the suffering that arises because of the insanity is part of the evolution of consciousness. It's like taking a being where things are and taking a bird's eye view of things from a higher level. But part of this is recognizing insanity as insanity is part of it also.

So it's not that we're saying, okay, it's all fine as it is. Everything is meant to be as it is because otherwise it wouldn't be. There's a little bit of truth in it, but it's not the complete truth.

We need to recognize also that the insanity that is here, because that is part of what is, the awakening, the recognition of insanity as insanity, that's vital. So awakening is happening. You're fine.

You're awakening too. You are awakening also. Otherwise you wouldn't be here.

[Speaker 15] (1:52:43 - 1:52:45)

But I feel the same.

[Speaker 1] (1:52:45 - 1:52:46)

What?

[Speaker 15] (1:52:46 - 1:52:51)

But I feel the same as before. I don't see any change in me.

[Speaker 1] (1:52:52 - 1:54:43)

It'll come. Don't worry. Sometimes the human mind, you can't interpret the change through the conceptual mind.

I've seen people who have said, nothing has changed in my life, but I can already detect a complete change in their energy field. I'm not talking about you right now because I didn't know you before. I could see a complete change in their energy, but their mind was still concerned about their daily problems, but there was already an opening, and the mind cannot remember a moment of stillness.

It doesn't even know about it. So the important thing for you is to find the stillness within. If it's only three seconds, that's good enough.

Three seconds. As you stand here, can you be still inside? Let go of thinking.

Look at me. You don't need to think. There's nothing to think about.

Look at me. No thought. Just that.

That. No, you're looking away. Look.

Don't need thought. Look. Thank you.

Thank you.

[Speaker 22] (1:55:01 - 1:55:02)

Hi, Eckhart.

[Speaker 15] (1:55:03 - 1:55:46)

Part of my questions were already answered from the previous questions, but my question is, in the New Earth, you give an example of Hakuin, the Zen master, and he's falsely accused of false accusations towards him, and he responds with, is that so? I was wondering if you could give me some other examples of how a conscious person might answer or respond to that situation and how the ego might respond to the same situation.

[Speaker 1] (1:55:46 - 2:05:24)

Well, the ego one is quite easy to imagine, isn't it? The story, of course, is a story that's been around for some time about the Zen master, just very briefly to remind everybody, the Zen master who has a reputation, high reputation, where he lives, in the town or city, and then suddenly he is accused by the daughter of a neighbor who is 16 or 17 or something like that, who has become pregnant, that he is the father of the baby, the unborn baby. And so the daughter of his neighbor tells that to her parents, and they get very angry and, of course, tell it to everybody, and they run to the Zen master and say, our daughter has just told us that you had sex with her and she is carrying your baby, dreadful.

And he listens and he says, is that so? Yes, you are the father, she told us, is that so? And so immediately, of course, he loses his reputation.

Nobody comes to him anymore. It doesn't bother him. He's completely self-contained, present.

He is presence. The baby is born. The parents come to him with the baby and said, here, you look after the baby, we don't want it, it's your baby.

Is that so? They give him the baby. He looks after the baby, feeds it.

A year later, nobody comes to see him anymore because he's lost his reputation. A year later, the daughter becomes a little bit more mature and confesses to her parents that the Zen master is not the father, but the boy who works in the butcher's shop next door. And the parents come to the Zen master and say, we're so sorry, we falsely accused you.

She just told us that you're not the father. Is that so? And he hands the baby back to them.

And the baby had a very good start in life, of course. And so the story is to show the absolute non-reactivity in very extreme form of non-reactivity, not impossible. And the power that is in that, the power for good, because that situation which potentially would be dreadful, dreadful disaster and drama for anybody else with even the slightest ego left, would be dreadful bloat and disaster that gets transformed into something good through non-reaction because all the good that comes out of it, the baby has one year with the Zen master, the first year of his life. And he's then going back.

And then people come back to him. Okay. So you can see how non-reactivity transforms a potentially dramatic disaster into good.

Your question is twofold. You ask, how would the ego have reacted? No, I don't need to say too much about that.

You can imagine how an ego would say, how dare you accuse me? The daughter is evil. She's an evil bitch.

She accused me of being an evil bitch. And the parents are just as bad. And then you talk to everybody about it.

You call them on the phone. You know what they're doing to me? They're trying to, and all kinds of things, talk to everybody about it, blow it up more and more, give interviews.

And of course, you're the victim. You become the victim. That's the main thing.

So your victim identity becomes stronger and stronger. And you're angry. And anger, of course, is designed unconsciously, as the Course in Miracles points out, anger is designed to make somebody feel guilty.

That's the energy behind anger. So you want to make everybody feel, of course, it doesn't really work. And so you have a huge drama.

So you can elaborate on that. You could write a play about that. You could have a movie about that.

The Zen, What Happened to the Zen Master, with an interesting title, Zen Baby or whatever. Now, you couldn't have a movie about this, what actually happened in this story, because nobody would watch it. There's no drama in it.

Nothing happens. He just sits there. So I don't think you could, even if you wrote a script, I think the producers in Hollywood would not finance it.

It could be very nice, a short film. It wouldn't be a long film. Now, of course, if you are present, that is not the only way.

The way he dealt with that situation is not the only possible way. There are many other possible ways of dealing with the situation and still be present. For example, he could have said, well, is that so?

I would like to have a DNA test, though. So it's a practical step. You can still take practical steps.

You're not condemned to complete inactivity just because you're present. In fact, if action is possible, you do it. You could even state clearly, that's not the case.

I'm not the baby, but you're not a victim. You could simply state the truth. This is how it is.

And the important thing is the unconsciousness of making yourself into a victim does not happen anymore. And you are not imposing projections onto others, deep judgments.

The little 17-year-old daughter who is not mature enough to tell the truth, you don't need to say that she's evil and manipulative or whatever the ego would come up with.

No, you just state it's not the case. It's fine. Whatever else comes out of presence, but there's always non-aggression, non-projection, non-judgment, because you see clearly that she did it because of her lack of consciousness.

So what judgment could you have? There's lack of consciousness. That lack of consciousness is not a judgment.

But if you make that into something evil in the other person, that's the judgment. So all kinds of ways of dealing with it and still remain present. The story gives us the most extreme way because then we can really learn.

It shows us what is possible. So what a wonderful story. And the two, one could have even tell two stories.

Tell one story of, this is an idea for somebody who likes to, who is a fiction writer here among you. You could have one story that tells a story from somebody who is dealing with something consciously, and then you have the same story where it develops into huge unconsciousness and drama. It'd be quite interesting.

So next time then, if something happens to us, see, bearing in mind, don't become a victim. Don't become a victim. Don't make others into perpetrators and call them bad or evil.

The two go together. So wonderful, these challenges, aren't they? Thank you.

[Speaker 8] (2:05:46 - 2:05:47)

Hello, Eckhart.

[Speaker 9] (2:05:49 - 2:06:10)

My question has two parts and you already answered part of it. I'd like to know how much of our life is in our control and do we really need to plan for the future? And I know, again, you did go over part of it.

Or just trust what is and have faith that everything happened as it's supposed to happen.

[Speaker 1] (2:06:10 - 2:06:25)

Okay, thank you. It's often that one answer covers several questions. There may even be the universal answer that covers all questions.

[Speaker 23] (2:06:26 - 2:06:27)

Would be nice.

[Speaker 1] (2:06:37 - 2:11:40)

In control, well, if you try to control the future of your life, that will be quite frustrating to control what's going to happen. But you can control, not so much control, but you can take responsibility for the present moment, your state of consciousness at this moment. You can pay attention to what your state of consciousness is at this moment.

And you may sometimes find that your state of consciousness at this moment is one of not complete identification with thinking or an emotional movement, but a certain identification with thought or form or a dysfunctional state of negativity, dwelling in negativity. But when you realize that, it's not totally dysfunctional. If you're really dysfunctional, it means you're totally identified, you don't know it.

In extreme form, the people who are really mad have no idea that they are mad. If you know that you're mad, you're not completely mad. If you know that you're identified with a negative state, it has arisen.

Let's say you're dwelling in thinking about what's going to, fearful thinking about what might happen to you or probably will happen to you or what you're going to lose or thinking about the past. And you realize that this is what's happening, then, of course, there's already some presence there. And then you can take responsibility and be the awareness rather than be the thought.

That's the identification with thought. And one could almost say identification with presence or awareness, which is who you really are. You are the awareness.

So taking responsibility for this moment, get this moment right, which means be one with the is-ness of this moment, then you're getting it right. So whatever is arising around you, it is as it is. So there's a non-resistance to the is-ness of this moment.

And whenever you live in the state of non-resistance, but oneness with the is-ness, even the is-ness inside, if an emotion is there, that's what is. But there's also an awareness. You have to accept what is internally or internally, otherwise you suffer.

So you accept what is, you become the space for what is. And that really, that is the only difference between an ordinary human and a spiritual master, is that the master is one with the is-ness of this moment. That's the Zen master, for example.

The simplicity of that is just completely at one with whatever is arising. And there's no knowledge in that. It's not needed.

But whatever is needed in that state of oneness comes out of that state of oneness. So if you take responsibility for the present moment, then the future, of course, looks after itself because it's no more than another present moment or the one eternal present moment. Future as such does not exist, as you well know, because you haven't encountered it ever, nor has anybody else.

There's no such thing as future except as a thought. Future is a thought. It can't be more than a thought, otherwise you would have experienced it somewhere.

It must have come at some point. But it can't because it's future. So there is no future except as a mind form.

So when you try to control the future, you are trapped in certain mind forms not knowing it. And, of course, it's impossible. You can't do that.

So you have no control over the future, but you can take responsibility for the present moment. That's the future. The future already looks after itself.

Just be, take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow will take thought for itself or something like that, whatever translation you look at. So that was one part. There was another part to your question.

[Speaker 9] (2:11:44 - 2:11:48)

Should we trust and have faith that everything happens as it's supposed to happen?

[Speaker 1] (2:11:49 - 2:22:45)

Okay. Well, the powerful faith is to trust that whatever is happening now is fine. You trust in the is-ness because the totality of the universe has brought about the form that this moment takes.

Everything that happens in the universe has innumerable causes. If you try to trace it back, you have to go back to the beginning of all creation. So whatever form this moment takes in your consciousness is there because the totality of the universe has brought about this particular form, which is not going to last.

But at this moment, it has taken this form. And you trust that that's what is, and you don't ask, why is this happening to me? What did I do to deserve that?

Why do bad things always happen to me? It's not fair. I wish I was somewhere else.

I wish I were somebody else. I wish I didn't have to live with these people. I wish I was doing a different job.

Or you can put a sticker on your car. I'd rather be fishing, golfing. I visited Ram Dass a few weeks ago in his home on Maui, and on his car, he has the sticker, I'd rather be here now.

But this I'd rather be is one of the many ways in which the mind denies the present moment and creates suffering out of that. And so all that is a lack of faith. One could use that.

I sometimes say, I probably wrote it somewhere, accept each moment as if you had chosen it. Well, each moment really means this moment because there's only ever this one moment. So let's say, accept this moment, which is the eternal now, accept this moment as if you had chosen it.

That's the state of alignment with the isness of life. I'm not asking people to, I'm not telling people, well, if this happened to you, you must have chosen it on some level. I'm not telling them that, although it's a new age teaching.

It's not perhaps entirely wrong, but I'm not saying that because I don't want to make them angry. And it's not entirely, it's not entirely correct. It's more helpful to say, accept it as if you had chosen it.

You don't need to convince yourself, okay, I've got this illness. I chose that. Why, why, why?

Or feel extremely guilty. I have failed. I failed deeply.

I must've done something really wrong. After 10 years of meditation, I'm still getting ill. Why?

In some teachings that are otherwise beautiful teachings, they emphasize so much the physical healing aspect that's a little bit unbalanced. And anybody who follows those teachings and then develops some kind of illness immediately feels guilty, which creates another big problem on top of your illness. I'm not good enough.

So we don't need that. All you need is accept this moment as if you had chosen it and then see how life develops for you, how life evolves, how life unfolds. If you just practice, then you have nothing to lose.

Just say for one day, half a day, okay, I'm just going to try this out. I'll accept whatever arises, whatever comes into my life, any person, any situation, any event, I'll immediately internally be aligned. I'm going to be aligned with it.

And as if I had chosen whatever happens, I'm going to practice that for the next three hours. Now, you may not even succeed for three hours. Well, you probably will, but some people may not.

And then see how you experience life when that is your state of consciousness, of acceptance. And you'll see an enormous improvement, not only in the way you feel, you will also see an improvement in the way in which things are reflected back to you by other people. You will see an improvement in how other people relate to you.

You will even see an improvement, this may not be as immediate, in the way in which events happen around you if you're in true alignment with what is. And that's a truly miraculous thing to experience. Now, but for that you may have to do a little bit more than two or three hours.

But even just to get your taste of it, start with one hour. Ten minutes! If there's a place that you dislike, let's say, well, I don't know what you dislike, like a noisy traffic city scene or supermarket or the shopping mall.

Well, some people love shopping malls, so don't use that. Whatever it is that you don't like being there, and then, okay, but let's see if I go there and say, I accept this moment as if I had chosen it, this noise, these people, these surroundings. Amazing thing.

Something you'll notice when you do that, the as-if practice, your thinking mind slows down and something opens up that's deeper than thinking, awareness. Because when you have nothing to argue about, there isn't that much to think about. When you're not in disagreement with the present moment, and your ego gets deflated because you have nothing to complain about.

If the ego has nothing to complain about, it goes, and of course it may react because it notices it's getting weaker, and then suddenly, before you know it, you'll go into, oh, I hate this. The ego can come back and grab you again, but that's fine, it's all part of the practice. So the most powerful thing, of course, is the oneness with the present moment.

Now, a secondary thing that's connected with that is when you do things, work of whatever kind, any action of whatever kind, is not to primarily perform the action as a means to an end, but see if you can be active as an end in itself. So it's not primarily, a simple example, you are walking or driving to the supermarket to do your shopping. The walking or driving is not less important than the arriving at the supermarket.

And the walking around the supermarket is not less important than finishing your shopping. And then arriving back home with your shopping, the journey back home, is not less important than, because that's the old consciousness, the unconsciousness, it's always the next moment is the one that's more important that I need to get to, but I just need to get this thing out of the way so that I can arrive there. So when you're driving to the supermarket, you need to get the driving out of the way.

When you're in the supermarket getting your food, you need to get that out of the way, because you want to already be home. And when you're driving home, you just need to be home already. And when you're home already, there'll be something else.

So there's always, you want to get this out of the way as quickly as possible, because it's just not fulfilling. Of course, the next thing is not going to be fulfilling either, because the entire mindset is the present moment is never fulfilling. It's never good enough.

The next one is always the better one. So that means the doing is not a means, not to treat the doing as a means to an end always, but as an end in itself. That's connected with the practice of alignment with the present moment.

So it can be, that's the active part of it. The passive part of it, the seemingly passive part of it is just to embrace the is-ness of whatever is arising in this moment. And then you, that's how you control your life.

To the ego, it looks as if you were, as if your life were completely out of control, but it's not.

[Speaker 9] (2:22:47 - 2:22:58)

You know, when you say at every moment, think about it as you have chosen that moment, I'm going to think about it when my teenage son is arguing with me next time. See if that helps me.

[Speaker 1] (2:22:58 - 2:23:00)

Yes, yes. Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 20] (2:23:20 - 2:23:48)

Hi, Eckhart. I wanted to ask you a question about my dog that we just had to put to sleep. And I know we're talking a lot about the human and dying and being already dead, but we just can't reconcile with taking her life, you know?

And I wonder if you could talk a little bit about that.

[Speaker 1] (2:23:55 - 2:23:57)

So you were present when the dog...

[Speaker 20] (2:23:57 - 2:24:00)

Yeah, when she took her very last breath and...

[Speaker 1] (2:24:00 - 2:24:04)

And how was your state of consciousness while you were with the dog?

[Speaker 20] (2:24:04 - 2:24:34)

Really present, but it just, her form just went so fast and she wouldn't have never died. I mean, her will was so strong. I mean, she was just tremendous, and we were being encouraged just to not let her keep suffering.

And I just, I mean, I think it's one thing to have your own life, but to take her life is just...

[Speaker 1] (2:24:35 - 2:41:34)

Yes. Well, you wanted to spare her this further suffering. That's the death, a body dissolving, a form dissolving.

It's painful, whether it's a human or an animal, because there's love there. Now, the love is, on the one hand, yes, there's a form. Of course, you love to touch the dog.

You love to hold the dog, to feel the dog's aliveness, the softness of it. But what you really love in the dog, you can't see. And I'm just, we're talking about dogs now, but we could talk about any life form, including humans, but let's talk about dog.

What is it when you look into the eyes of the dog and there is an inner response, an inner response, which is love? And this is why people, it's easier for many people to look into the eyes of a dog and feel love than it is to look into the eyes of a human and feel love. There are millions of people who find it easier to feel love looking into the eyes of a dog.

And that is because there's less in the way when they look at the dog, there's less that obstructs the dog's connectedness with the source, which is the one. In humans, there's the mind in the way. So many people find it harder to feel love when they look at a human being.

Perhaps they may have one or two with whom they do feel it, but many don't even have that. Why? Because in the other human, there is a screen of concepts and that activates your own screen of judgments and concepts.

And that prevents the flow and the realization of oneness from happening. The moment you look at a human, most humans are, we'll come back to dogs in a minute, but don't worry, most humans are trapped in mental noise, continuous judgments in the mind, stories, judgments. So if you could free yourself from that, it requires enormous presence for your own soul structures, not to become activated when you're looking into the eyes of a human being whose mind is very, very active.

So it requires great presence, and not many people have that yet. So they love, there are millions of people in this world whose only, the only being for whom they can feel love is their dog. That's, you could say, oh, that's tragic, isn't it?

Well, it's not tragic. At least they can feel love there. At least, of course, it would be wonderful if you could feel love for humans also.

A little bit more difficult, possible, and necessary ultimately. But we know now what the barriers are. Once we know why we can't feel the love for humans, then we can do something, which is relinquish our judgments.

But it remains for the time being that dogs provide an access for many humans into feeling the connectedness with being. That is why I call them sometimes guardians of being, dogs. Because when you look into the eyes of a dog, you feel that the dog's connectedness with the source.

In a way, then, you could say the dog, or any animal really, is closer to the source than humans, closer to God. Humans have gone further out into further differentiation and complexity. And there you have the dog, but there's enough consciousness in the dog to meet the human.

The dog's already quite close to the human consciousness without having suffered yet the influx of conceptualization. So that's the beauty of it. So what you love in the dog is not ultimately the external form.

You love in the dog that which has no form, their consciousness. And that can connect you with your own consciousness. The consciousness is indestructible.

The essence of the dog remains. Where exactly it goes, I don't know. But it may go into the universal dog essence that underlies the divine idea of dog.

Plato would have said something like that, or Socrates. It goes back to the source, the dog source. We know that the formless essence of life is indestructible.

And so you can sense, as you are with it, that although tears may be there, sadness may be there, you experience the dissolution of a life form. And the dissolution of a life form leaves, especially in the moment of death and a little bit after, leaves behind an open space in you. And that open space is the formless.

I sometimes describe it as, let's say, here's the texture or the tapestry of your life with all its ingredients, people that you know, where you live. Let's imagine your life as a tapestry, intricate. And one important aspect of the tapestry is the dog.

There it is. And there the tapestry shows you petting the dog and feeling love for the dog. And suddenly you're looking at this tapestry and suddenly the dog begins to dissolve in the tapestry.

What's happening to it? It's dissolving. There you were petting it and suddenly there's a little empty space in that tapestry.

That's very painful. The empty space that's left in the body, the form has dissolved. But what was the ultimate, what was it or what is it that gives life to this whole tapestry?

What is it that makes it alive? What is it, and that is, behind it there's a light and that shines through all the forms. In fact, it gets obstructed by the forms, but it still can shine through somehow.

And because the light shines through all the forms, it's alive. I'm continuing to use the analogy of tapestry. It feels it has an aliveness for the simple reason that the aliveness is given to all the forms by a light that shines through it, through the forms, gets somehow obstructed by the forms, but the obstruction of the forms creates a diversity.

So ultimately, every life form obstructs the universal light, but that gives it individuality, but some of the universal light still shines through. For a moment, let's use another analogy related to it, which is the cinema film in the cinema projector. When a film is put in the projector, I don't know whether they still do it, but there's a light behind the film and the film runs through the projector and that creates the images on the screen.

Now, all the reality that these images on the screen ultimately have is the light behind the film. Without the light behind the film, there would be nothing happening there. Now imagine a character in that...

We're taking this analogy a little bit further, almost too far, but let's do it. Let's imagine the characters in the film who are acting out their drama and conditioning. It may be a tragedy or a comedy or a mixture, but the characters are all acting out their script, talking.

Let's say one of the characters suddenly becomes aware that what is my reality? There's a moment of cessation. He or she is not acting out the script.

He stops for a moment and can suddenly feel that light shining through. Oh, I'm really that light. I'm not ultimately that character.

The light gives it... And so all the figures in the movie are ways of obscuring to a greater or lesser extent the light that comes through. But their lightness is the light.

Without the light, it's nothing. Okay, let's go back to the tapestry. There we have a form has dissolved.

Now, at first, if you concentrate on the lack of what was there that was so lovely, then you get stuck on that level where you equate the loveliness and the love with the form that has dissolved. But if you look more deeply, then you see that where that form was, there's actually now more light shining through, and that happens when you completely surrender to the fact of death, whether it's a human or a dog, any form of life. When you completely surrender to the fact of death, then you're not just sad because the form has dissolved, that may still be there, but you also sense a deepening in yourself because you sense that where the form was, the light now shines through more fully.

So the empty space that's left behind, this is why death is ultimately potentially always sacred. There are remnants of this in ancient cultures when people see a dead body. In our culture, of course, you don't because we hide them.

When they see a dead body, they make a sign of respect, even if they dislike the person that just died. But when the coffin comes past and it's open, there's the dead body, they show respect because there's some obscure recognition of the sacredness of death. Why is death considered sacred?

Because when the form dissolves, the formless can shine through more strongly, and then it can be transformative in you, but it requires surrender to the fact of death. And so it can be a transformative thing, which doesn't mean you're not sad anymore. You're still sad because the form has dissolved, but if you go into complete acceptance of the fact of death, which is going to happen to you, this form, to this form, and this, and this, and this, and this, and this, and this, and this, and this, and this, each form is going to pop sooner or later.

Some sooner, some later, and leave behind. If you saw that in a speeded-up version of life over the next 70 years, as we sit here, let's say we have a film camera that compresses. Let's see, we're not moving from here.

Another strange analogy. I'm trying to get you to see something. That's why I'm doing all this.

Just hang on. Now, if we had a camera here, let's say we're staying here, and instead of going about our lives, we just dream our lives over the next 70 years. Let's say the camera stays here for 70 years, and instead of going about our daily life, we just dream that we are going about our daily life, which is basically the same thing, by the way.

Because in the end, you die and say, okay, what was all that? So if you had that camera here, you would be amazed. Let's say it compresses 70 years into three minutes, or five minutes, and you would then see the film.

Then you would see bodies dissolving one after the other. One here, one there. All gone.

It happens to all life forms. So we need to see that and face that fact of death. To some, it comes sooner than later.

To some, it seems premature. Sometimes it seems it's too soon. The dog was not ready.

I'm sure the dog was ready, but you were not. You were not ready for the dog's death. For the animal, death is easier.

The animal can surrender into it, although there is a will to live, yes, but the animal can surrender. Surrender is the key. Death is universal.

It's all around you continuously. Everything is dying around you and being born. Dying and being born.

We don't seem to see that very clearly. You may have to travel to India to get a true view of the fact of death because they burn the bodies out in the open, and anybody can just sit there and meditate, and you would just go, wow, wow. First you'll cry, and then you'll cry a bit more, but then after a while you come to, because we're talking about the realization of something in you that's beyond death, and that is what you loved in the dog and still love, and that cannot go away.

So let it become this meditation for you and a transformative experience, and let the tears still flow if they flow. There's nothing wrong with that, but surrender to the fact of death and realize that only the form dies. That which gives life to the form is not subject to decay or death.

You can sense that in yourself, and then you can sense it in the dog, and then the death of the dog is not as heavy as it would be if you were only identified, if you equate the essence of the dog with the form of the dog. So what you love in the dog is the dog's consciousness, which ultimately is one with your consciousness. It's life itself, an expression, a beautiful expression, temporary, of course, of the one life, and then you honor that and are grateful for that.

You also are that.

[Speaker 20] (2:41:35 - 2:41:42)

So it's best to honor the process of taking her life as well? I mean, I think that's what bothers us the most.

[Speaker 1] (2:41:42 - 2:41:45)

That was a compassionate thing to do.

[Speaker 20] (2:41:46 - 2:41:47)

We feel so guilty.

[Speaker 1] (2:41:47 - 2:42:06)

Yes, but that's, again, that requires surrender and see that it came out of love for the dog, not any other reason, and it was therefore compassionate. Now, the mind will construct further thought processes out of that, but you don't need that.

[Speaker 23] (2:42:06 - 2:42:06)

Mm-hmm.

[Speaker 8] (2:42:24 - 2:44:35)

I kind of want to speak about earlier in the week. I was away for a period of time in the fall, and then I came back about a month ago, and I was in Asia in the bright sunshine and, you know, kind of open culture, a lot of sharing of just basic open-heartedness. I mean, I think others have had that experience, and coming back to Vancouver is kind of rainy and closed down and cold, and, you know, also coming back to North America in the middle of the crisis and the chaos and also the hope of Obama, like the kind of transition Bush-Obama, but in the middle of all the economy breaking down and stuff.

So what I was experiencing in my direct work environment was a lot of... it seemed to me what I was observing was a lot of criticism and fear, you know, anger at different things, entitled behaviour, that kind of thing that we do in North America very well, I think. But, you know, so I found myself initially, I was kind of observing it, and then I was, like, not wanting to get involved in it.

And then, of course, I gradually started getting really involved in it, and it kind of hit me by the beginning of the week. Like, I was in a state of protest against the environment and also against the feelings that were coming up in me related to the environment. So I was in, you know, a fair degree of emotional discomfort and stuff.

And when I sat with it and also played what I call Eckhart tapes from other retreats and stuff, which I find settle me down, you know, what I saw was this field of alienation both in myself and in the environment around me. So, you know, when I identified I was feeling, I was identifying the feeling of being alienated, I was feeling very alienated. And it was somewhat liberating to kind of feel that.

And then I could kind of see it, and then I was more at peace with it because I had a name for it or something like that. But I wonder if you could generally kind of talk about that. It's like a low-level sense of discomfort, of non-acceptance of what's going on around.

And it does really feel like one really feels kind of alienated from everything, including one's deeper sense of connection and stuff like that.

[Speaker 1] (2:44:35 - 2:44:36)

Yes. Thank you.

[Speaker 8] (2:44:36 - 2:44:37)

Thank you. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:44:39 - 2:54:36)

Well, what you're describing is most people's normal state of consciousness, that state of alienation. For most people it's so normal they don't even know it because they have nothing else to compare it with. But you had just returned.

Perhaps you were in a more liberated state while you were away in Asia. At that time you felt you were able to be more present there, perhaps. So you came back here, and then you linked into the collective state of consciousness in the Western Hemisphere.

So the state of latent discontent in the background and sometimes more acute unhappiness and dissatisfaction in the foreground is quite normal for almost everybody who is still unawakened and also still happens to people, even people who are going through the awakening process, often periodically fall back into that state for a while. So what to do? Well, acceptance is perhaps the key for you.

Acceptance of first a reorientation of your conscious attention to this moment because that's what is. And then acceptance of whatever is here at this moment in your life, whatever situation you encounter here. If you want to become free, don't listen to too many media things for a while so that you become more deeply rooted within first.

If you are not deeply rooted in beingness, in the unconditioned consciousness, in the inner stillness, if you are not rooted in there, then even just listening to the news on TV or radio will put you in an unbalanced state, immediately upset about this, and hundreds of things seem to be going wrong in the world. And then you react to people around you. All that because you're not at home in yourself.

So to feel at home in yourself in the present moment, in yourself, to be at ease with yourself, requires you to take your attention away from the thinking mind as a conscious choice. You choose to take your attention away from that because it's not really the external things that are pulling you out. It's your mind's reaction to the external things.

Take attention away. Breathe. Feel the inner body.

Look around. Accept the form that this moment takes, whatever, wherever you are. You might be on a bus.

It's raining outside. It looks gray. The mind would say it looks gray and miserable, but miserable is something supplied by the mind.

It's just gray. It's not gray and miserable. It's just gray, and the miserable is the mind's interpretation of the weather.

But the moment you believe in the thought that the weather is miserable and people around you are looking miserable, you experience certain emotions. This is the body's response to the mental judgments that you totally believe in, and then you feel miserable suddenly because the weather is miserable, the people around you are miserable, and life is miserable, and you get trapped in. You hypnotize yourself into that thought pattern, and you experience the corresponding emotions.

And once you are trapped in that, whatever situation you go into, and this is how it works, reflects back to you your state of consciousness. You find more miserable people. It's not easy, not difficult.

And you get into a more miserable situation, and the next day it's miserable again, the weather. These are the minds. So life is becoming complicated for you because your mind is creating a complexity and judgment, a level of judgments and interpretations that is pulling you out of yourself, and then believing in it, and then believing that you live in a world that is unpleasant.

But it's not really that. It's the mind's activity that's unpleasant, and you believe in it, and then you have the emotions that go with that. So taking your attention away from that, breathe, feel, be, look around, and then next time you're on the bus or in the car, wherever you are, and of course it's the same kind of weather again, around Northwest Pacific for quite a few months, it'll probably be the same, and you look around, suddenly it's no longer miserable.

It's just rain, moisture, the sky is gray, but light is filtering through. No need to judge it. And the person next to you, they might not be smiling, but that's fine.

And perhaps when you get off the bus, you smile at them. There's no judgment. It's fine.

You bring a different energy into this world. Rather than be the victim of this world, which ultimately is really your mind, rather than be the victim, something new comes into this world through you. And so you are the bringer of something new, and rather than reacting to all that, which really is being stuck in your mind, the simplicity of this moment, and then you gradually feel more rooted in being.

Just this. Life is not complicated. Why?

Because the present moment is never complicated. Well, I don't find any complication for yet now. And the present moment, of course, life is always the present moment, only that, only just this moment.

All I need to do is be, allow this moment to be, whatever a person comes into this moment, that's what is. The is-ness or the such-ness of this moment. Become one with that.

No need to judge or to say anything about it, just it is. Simple, very simple. Then you feel you're arriving at yourself.

One with yourself. That's your practice. It's maybe challenging, a little bit more challenging here.

Some people find it easier in India to be present, or to be spiritual. Sorry, spiritual. Other people actually can't do it in India.

In fact, they're longing to get back and say, it's easier at home. It just depends on your... But India can teach you surrender.

That's good. More than the West, because in the West you expect things to be how they should be. In India you quickly learn that they are not how you demand they should be.

The train is not there, or whatever. And things, you can't plan too much ahead because it's not going to be the way you plan it. Everybody who goes to India learns that, and people who are then able to surrender suddenly feel much better in India than they feel at home, even though the trains are not arriving on time, and so on.

But people who can't surrender, for them it's miserable to be there because they have no control anymore over their surroundings. This shouldn't be happening. That shouldn't be happening.

There should be hot water. I paid for it. Look, no hot water.

And then somebody comes, oh, just wait one hour and the hot water will be back, and then five hours later you're on again. It's still not here. You haven't surrendered yet.

And so it doesn't matter where you learn surrender. You can learn surrender in India, or you can learn surrender on the bus in Vancouver or in Seattle, or you can learn surrender in Detroit or in New York, or Piccadilly Circus in London, wherever you are. There's no reason why you can't be with what is in the now, just that.

Thanks.

[Speaker 5] (2:54:46 - 2:55:48)

Hi, Eckhart. Hi. I came from Austria with my grandmother.

Austria? Yes. Oh, wow.

And I have also a question for you. But before I question this question, I want to ask a question what arises at the moment. I feel that I have such a rock in my head which lies on emotions, thoughts, and the consciousness which wants to come out.

That is such a huge thing which will come out, but it can't because the rock is not right yet because I speak to it. But when I sit, then it's there. Oh.

And that's resentment.

[Speaker 1] (2:55:50 - 2:56:06)

Does everybody understand this? No. Let's see.

We need to understand exactly what your question is. Maybe you can say it briefly in

German and then I'll translate it.

[Speaker 5] (2:56:12 - 2:57:00)

It's still difficult to speak in German. It feels as if a big, heavy boulder or stone were lying on top of my thoughts and my emotions. Yes, and that is resentment or resistance.

And I have to suffer this because I don't want to awake. Now it speaks my ego. So you feel there's resentment and that's what it is?

[Speaker 1] (2:57:00 - 2:57:15)

Yes. Okay, there's a negativity, a negative emotion in you. Yes.

Okay. Okay. Okay.

Well, you know it's there. Do you feel it all the time or sometimes only?

[Speaker 5] (2:57:16 - 2:57:25)

No, all the time. All the time. In Vancouver, it's better than in Europe.

Ah. That's interesting.

[Speaker 1] (2:57:28 - 2:58:14)

Well, the ultimate solution to this is not, of course, moving somewhere else, although you could try that too. It could have something to do also with the collective pain body of where you live and you perhaps sense it very strongly. A very powerful way of dealing with it is through simple acceptance of that rather than creating some kind of resistance to it.

In other words, feel it. Can you feel it at this moment?

[Speaker 5] (2:58:16 - 2:59:04)

Yes, the pain in the head. That's the turn from emotion to physical pain. It's very...

So has it turned into physical pain? Yes. Before I can answer all my questions by myself, but then the ego was so clever that now it makes resistance and so I can't answer my questions anymore because when I would answer the question I would be enlightened, I think.

And it won't be enlightened. That's normal, but...

[Speaker 1] (2:59:09 - 3:00:20)

If it is the pain body, as I suspect, then it can turn into physical pain for some people when there's too much presence for it. There's too much presence for the pain body to move into your mind and control your thinking and create drama in your life. If there's too much presence, it can happen, but the only thing it can do is to suddenly you feel a pain somewhere in the body and there it is.

That's all it can do, but it cannot renew itself through that. It's an intermediate stage between being in possession of the pain body and being free of the pain body. It's an intermediate stage where sometimes the pain body manifests as physical pain, and that's a good sign because it's a sign that there's so much presence that it cannot use your mind anymore.

Yeah. So that's good. And when you feel the pain body, when you're back in...

[Speaker 5] (3:00:20 - 3:00:28)

Do you live in a city or in the country? In a city, but it's very small. Small city.

[Speaker 1] (3:00:29 - 3:00:59)

Yeah. So when you're back there and you feel it again, just practice being aware, alert. Don't react to it.

Every reaction strengthens the pain body, and even saying, I don't want this anymore strengthens the pain body. Allow it to be. Be the space for it, and you are much bigger than it.

Be the space for it.

[Speaker 5] (3:00:59 - 3:01:22)

Give it space. But now what was the other question? Yes, now the question which brought me here.

When I want to buy a new device, expensive device, such a notebook, and the way to the shop is full of stumbling blocks, is that a sign that I should not buy it?

[Speaker 1] (3:01:25 - 3:03:31)

I think many, especially new age people, have that problem. They often are not certain. They want to do something or start doing something, and suddenly something happens that seems to block what they want to do, and they say, well, that probably means that I shouldn't be doing it.

But, of course, it doesn't necessarily mean that. You have to be very alert, because if you give up the moment an obstacle comes in, then you will probably never do anything, because whatever course of action you undertake, you will find that there will occasionally, obstacles will occasionally arise. However, sometimes there's a series of obstacles, one after another, and you need a certain amount of wisdom to look and see whether this is an obstacle that can be overcome or whether this is a series of obstacles, and the message is, of the greater intelligence, that this is not the right course of action for you.

Nobody can tell you in any particular situation which one it is, but we can be certain that the first or the second obstacle is not necessarily the universe telling you that you should not, whatever it is. So you wanted to buy, this is just one example, of course. I bought it, finally.

And then, can you give, tell us what the obstacles were, just as a matter of interest?

[Speaker 5] (3:03:32 - 3:03:53)

What happened? Just eager things like the delivery time is long, and I stand here, it's not in front of me, and I have waited two weeks instead of one week to come in. Yes, and now you have with your present.

[Speaker 1] (3:03:56 - 3:15:23)

Now, of course, other obstacles can come through your own mind. You decide to do something, and then the mind says, should I really be doing this? And so it can, the mind can, of course, sabotage many endeavors easily by bringing up continuous doubt.

So this, of course, the situation is not terribly important, but it's just an example, because ultimately, on the larger scale, it doesn't matter whether you buy it or not. Ultimately, it doesn't really matter. But there may be other things that do matter, relatively speaking, whether you embark on that course of action or whether you decide not to.

But it requires some amount of, you need to tune into the situation and look at the obstacle and see whether, obstacles, by the way, should not be attacked directly, but many obstacles, by bringing a non-reactive attitude towards them, can be transformed, and suddenly they are no longer obstacles, or they can be bypassed, but not attacked. That is the, because if you attack an obstacle, now, obstacle can come in the form of a human being who seems to be in your way, either not physically necessarily, but seems to block what you want to do. Now, if you attack, I mean, not physically, but verbally or mentally, if you attack that human being, you actually strengthen obstacles by attacking them head-on.

You strengthen opposition. That applies to human beings who maybe become obstacles to where you want to go, or even situations. If you attack a situation, if you feel angry about it, if you feel, if you complain about it, you're really, you are attacking a situation that has arisen in the present moment.

So you are violent towards life. Any situation that you attack, mentally, verbally, whatever way, you're actually creating, you're strengthening the obstacle. And it's a Western way, the Western mind, which is becoming the universal mind, thinks in terms of, I need to eliminate obstacles.

And that includes things like antibiotics, which says you need to eliminate. On the one hand, it's been a great thing, but there's a huge downside to antibiotics. And in the long term, you cannot kill these.

They are also, they are vital for life. And if you kill them for long enough, they emerge in a new form, which you cannot kill anymore. That's what's happening with antibiotics.

So you strengthen the original enemy. So anything that you regard as an enemy, then there's unconsciousness there. You are strengthening the obstacle.

So you, and many people go through life encountering one situation after another. And if you look clearly how they approach the situations, they treat every situation more or less as an enemy. It's in my way, or people too.

They want to use people just for my purpose. And if they don't serve me, I'm getting angry. Of course, you have, these are all cases of great unconsciousness from simple things like a man asks a woman to go out for dinner.

She says no, and immediately becomes aggressive and says, you bitch, you. So he didn't get what he wanted and immediately becomes an enemy. Anything that doesn't give you what you want, you turn it into an enemy.

That's your attitude becomes that. That's a dreadful way to live, but millions of humans still live like that. So anything you attack head on, you will strengthen and you will become more deeply enmeshed in karma.

And even, this is why you read all these things, the fight against this, the fight against that, the war against drugs. The war against drugs, they've had it for a long time. There are more drugs now than ever.

But they're fighting the war against drugs. The war against poverty. You can generate wealth, but you can't fight poverty.

The war against terror. We must use terror to defeat the terrorists. Not the war against terror.

Nobody consciously said we are going to use terror to defeat terror. But if you see the actual consequences of the actions that were taken, it comes to the same thing in many cases, because so many innocent people were killed through unconscious action that it amounts to as if we almost as if we had said, we are going to do the same that you did to us. And you weren't even the same people, but that's another matter.

So it's fighting, fighting the aggression that's behind it, the egoic aggression, getting my way or our way. It doesn't work, but it takes a lot of suffering, it seems, for humans to realize that it doesn't work. So any obstacle that arises, never make it into an enemy.

Don't make anything or anybody, any human being or any situation or any place where you are, or mentally some kind of another group of people. Don't make anything into an enemy. At the moment we are talking about obstacles.

So obstacle is you just, and they arise continuously in any business endeavor. You want to have some kind of business you want to create, and so constantly things don't go the way you want them to go. People don't do what you want them to do.

That's in the nature of things. Constantly you try this and it doesn't work, it goes wrong. Successful business and entrepreneurs say that they have to try ten things, nine things fail, one thing works, but that's enough to provide them with a good living.

But they try nine things and they don't work. But the thing is not to, when things don't work, not to indulge in any kind of negativity. When people don't cooperate, don't make them into enemy by attacking or complaining about them, but immediately always adjusting to this is the situation, what can I do now?

But never attacking it. What can I do now? Perhaps it can be changed by perhaps a little thing can be turned around, or I can walk around it, or underneath it, or float above it, so to speak.

Always immediately adjusting to the form that this moment takes, never complaining about the form that this moment takes, a human being, a situation, whatever. Never complaining. I can see so much, humans waste so much energy in useless opposition.

And they complain, you know what it did? They were totally, she was dreadful, this person, the shop assistant was just dreadful. Just don't, just be with what is.

Go to someone else without complaining. Just always immediately adjusting to this situation. That's what is, and then see what's possible.

So obstacles, never attack them. Look at them, walk around them, allow them to transform. And occasionally it may happen that life is giving you a message.

Occasionally you try and try this and that, and it still doesn't work. But usually what happens is something, life is showing you an alternative. So perhaps let's say you wanted to become a great singer, and you go to auditions, and you try American Idol, and you get laughed off the stage, everybody laughs about you, and then you try again somewhere else, and they say, and finally you say, well, I will, but obstacles, I'll continue to try.

But suddenly you realize somebody else is singing a song that you wrote, and that actually sounds great. And so life is telling you, you're not a singer, you're a songwriter, for example. I'm just giving one example of life is showing you a possible alternative.

And that life does that when you pursue, although there are obstacles, you continue to persist without attacking, and then life usually shows you an alternative. Oh, this isn't really where I wanted to go, it's not where I'm going to go, I'm going to go there. Life is showing you, oh, come here, you're not really meant to go there, come here.

So it's an art, it's part of the art of living. So when life presents obstacles, the greatest learning for us is to learn how to approach the obstacles that life brings up. That's a wonderful learning in consciousness, so that we approach life consciously.

So I wish you all the best, and thanks for coming. Thank you.

[Speaker 10] (3:15:24 - 3:15:52)

My name is Alexei. I'm honored to be here, Eckhart. I came from Toronto.

Before that, I actually came from Kiev.

[Speaker 1] (3:15:53 - 3:15:53)

Kiev.

[Speaker 10] (3:15:53 - 3:17:11)

Yes, from the Soviet Union. For many years, I studied yoga from Kiev. I got the first book translated in Ukrainian on yoga, and it seemed like I liked it.

However, when I came here and I went to some ashrams, I saw some gurus. I got more and more disappointed and hurt in many ways. And about a year ago, a year and a half ago, I came to a place where I decided to leave yoga.

I have Jewish roots. I love Jesus Christ. I really want to leave yoga, and I also was exposed to your teachings, to CDs, and I really like them.

I've learned, not learned, it's a practice, but I practice not thinking, and it is really helpful. But however, when I decided very strongly to leave yoga, I felt at psychic levels that I'm being interfered with. And sometimes it is very threatening, even too much, and I wonder what should I do about it.

[Speaker 1] (3:17:12 - 3:17:17)

So can you say just the last thing you said when you stopped the practice?

[Speaker 10] (3:17:18 - 3:17:37)

Yeah, I stopped practicing yoga. I stopped meditation. I meditated for 20 years, and I stopped it.

I felt really good about it, but I felt that my thoughts are being invaded, that I'm being interfered with, and sometimes I cannot describe it here.

[Speaker 1] (3:17:38 - 3:46:16)

So you feel some external sources bringing thoughts? Yes, yes, yes. Okay.

That is, it's possible, the human mind is connected to the collective mind. Every individual mind is really part of the collective mind, and of course it's quite normal for things to flow in that really come from somewhere else. But it all comes down to being aware of thought and not identifying with thought, being there as the awareness.

And if you feel a strong energy stream, a very persistent thought there, then the awareness needs to be more alert, more intense, to dissolve that. But the awareness doesn't say, I want to dissolve that. It's enough for the awareness to be there, and in the awareness, thoughts dissolve.

But the awareness does not want anything. So awareness is simply there as a presence. But as in that presence, things begin to change and dissolve.

Awareness also implies acceptance. You accept that this is there right now. It doesn't matter where the thoughts come from.

They are thoughts. So the transcendence of thought is only through awareness, no matter whether they're your thoughts. Ultimately, no thoughts are your thoughts.

They're all part of the collective mind. So if anybody has obsessive thought patterns, it all really means that an energy field there has got stuck in there and refuses to go. And by not fighting it, it is much easier to remain aware.

If you make it into something that you want to get rid of, you create further energy for it. So you don't mind it. That replies any state that arises.

If it's a very powerful thing, you say, okay, it is there. I don't mind. It is there.

Don't make it into an enemy that you need to get rid of, but be there as intense presence. It's like, let's say, a monster comes into the room and you just go. If a wild animal came close to you, if you stayed absolutely present, it would be very unlikely to attack you.

I haven't tried it out. Well, I have tried. Occasionally, it's happened with dogs that seemed a little bit potentially dangerous.

But I have no experience with tigers or lions. And you remain absolutely just present. I have experienced with wild humans.

There was one person in my family, not immediate family, but secondary family, who was mentally unbalanced for several years. And whenever I visited her, I knew that the moment I stepped into the house, my presence, the dimmer switch of my presence, as I call it, went up, and I went. And then we hugged, and she was fine.

And then she started talking about her delusions. And any fall in presence, immediately she would accuse me of this or that. And she would build me into her delusion, illusory system of thought.

You are one of them, aren't you? No. But if you stayed present, and several times, the entire structure of her delusion collapsed, and she was totally there.

And the moment I went away, it came back. And the only time when she actually accused me of doing things which were called fantasy were when I was not there, when I called on the phone, said, I've been thinking about you. But as I was there in presence, she couldn't think about me because I wasn't thinking.

So the same thing you do with your own mind. It doesn't really matter where you confront the mind, the mind in someone else or your own mind. And you know that sometimes people have asked me, they hear voices.

This is a thing, and again, there are many explanations for that. All kinds of explanations. Are they produced by your own thoughts?

Are the voices actual little presence, little spirit presences, little demons that whisper into your ear? That's how some people experience that. And I'm not going into that.

I'm not giving any explanation, but I'm saying, treat the voice, if you hear a voice, treat it the same way as a thought, which means don't react to it and don't get engaged in it and don't believe in it. Just say, there's a voice. And when the voice says, I am God, there's a voice saying it's God.

And if the voice says, I'm the devil, you say, there's a voice saying, I'm the devil. So it's a voice. You don't get engaged with it.

You stay there as the presence. What I'm saying is just the verbalization of presence. Presence itself has no verbalization.

So you are dead. Oh, there's the voice again. And then you watch the voice.

And then you see that the voice subsides after a while. If you don't resist it, it doesn't get any energy from you. So you do that, whether you hear it as a voice, whether you do it with the thoughts in your head, don't resist.

Be the space for it. This is beautifully expressed in the film A Beautiful Mind, where the protagonist, it's based on a true event, the protagonist sees people that are not there, delusions. And he discusses with them.

So he talks to nobody. There's nobody there. But he sees these people.

They have a very clear presence. He doesn't know he's insane. To them, it's very real.

Then he realizes that he's insane at a later point. And at that point, he doesn't give them any attention anymore. He allows them to be there but doesn't interact.

Whatever they say is, I'm not interested. You can do the same thing with your thoughts. Whatever they say, I'm not interested.

It's just presence. Then you transcend. And even persistent thoughts subside.

Does being in the now or awareness alter the dream or movie that is being played? I understand that the dream or movie is not real. Now what?

Laughter That's quite a good question. I understand, okay, you can have some conceptual understanding if you see that all forms are fleeting. That is undoubtedly true.

And you say, God, Eckhart says it's like a dream. And if I look at it, it's actually true. It is a bit like a dream because yesterday is dissolved already, just like last night's dream is gone.

It's evaporated. And my people that I knew have dissolved. And what I did years ago, my vacation five years ago, we were in Europe.

Look, there are the photos. Where is that now? It's dissolved already.

It's just a figure standing in front of the Eiffel Tower. What is all that? It's gone already.

The fleetingness is just an amazing thing. And so conceptually you can understand it and say, okay, all of it is a bit like a movie. Now what?

Now that doesn't free you really from because the next moment something happens and you're totally part of it again. You're totally trapped in the movie and compulsively you're acting out your part, your script, your conditioned behavior patterns, your conditioned thinking, your conditioned reactions. So one moment intellectually you can say, yeah, it really is like a movie, and then the phone rings.

What? You're playing your part again. You're in the middle of it.

You've completely forgotten that it's a movie. It is only when nothing is happening, no phone is ringing, nobody is knocking on your door, and then you can sit again and say, yeah, it's all like a movie. So there needs to be a deeper realization that goes beyond the conceptual, and that is the opening up of what I sometimes call space consciousness in you when you truly contemplate the impermanence of all things, not just as an intellectual idea that you agree with, but to look at it without going beyond concepts and look, face the fact of impermanence directly.

For example, by looking at if somebody close to you dies, sitting with their body for quite a while, and then go through the emotions, then go perhaps beyond the emotions or go to see any dead body, although for that in the West you can't do it. In India you can. You can't just go somewhere and say, I would like to see a dead body.

You have to. They won't allow it. In India you just sit in certain street corners or in certain places, and you see they're carrying them past to the funeral pyre, and you can just sit there.

And the most powerful thing would be then to see a dead body being burned without any concepts, just face the fact directly. That opens up space consciousness. That opens up the depths in you where you begin to disidentify from form.

When you see a form dissolving in front of you and you don't conceptualize, you just face it. It is so amazing, and even me talking about it can to some extent help you to go through that as you imagine it. It's sometimes enough to imagine it, the form dissolving, being burned, the body that was so real a few hours ago.

It's now dissolving in flames. And that is such a, it's so incredible. If you had totally believed in the solidity of the physical universe, it's so incredible that you become speechless and thoughtless.

And in that, when the form dissolves and you face it completely, something opens up within you that we can call the formless, and that's deeply peaceful. Not happy. No.

Deeply peaceful. And it can even happen when there's sadness, deep sadness, and yet behind the sadness there's a deep peace. And this would be the case if somebody close to you dies and you see that happening to somebody.

You could not not weep if you see your father or your mother being burned. Now, here you won't, they won't allow you to see it, but if you could, you would weep. But there's a possibility that at the same time, because it is the universal condition of all humans and all forms, and it's your turn quite soon too, seeing all that, something in you would, although there are tears, and yet you see how short-lived it all is, and then something opens up in you which is spacious and has no form, and that's consciousness itself.

So consciousness can disidentify, the disidentification can happen when you deeply contemplate the fleetingness of a form, a human form. It can even be with an animal. Your dog dies.

It could happen also. Some people become very deeply, very close to an animal after living with an animal for many years, and suddenly it goes. So again, this is where loss comes in.

Any loss that can also do it, but of course the deepest loss is the loss of a human. And so when it's not resisted, then you see it, and you can't, any idea that you formulate will be running away from the simple and bare fact of impermanence. Any conceptualization, explanation will stop you from going deeper.

Even if you have the explanation and you say, well, they're not really dead, they're really moving on, and I just have to, okay, but if you don't explain anything, you go deeper beyond form. Rather than explaining to yourself that they exist in some other form, which of course then eventually will also go through transformation again and so on and so on. That's the power of contemplating transience, which is everywhere.

For me, it's always even a spiritual thing to look at old photos of people. Nobody knows who they were. And I always, whenever I see them in magazines or sometimes in antiquarian bookshops they have collections of, you see these old photos and they're just, they've all dissolved.

And I find that this is deeply peaceful. Old films made, let's say a film made in 1930, 1935, 40, and all these people that are running around the screen and getting excited about this and that, the actors are all gone, they've all dissolved. And if you see a crowd scene, people walking along the streets of New York or wherever, all the crowds, all long dissolved.

And the crowds that you see now, in a few years, gone. And those are incredible meditations when you face that. And so that's the power of facing the fact of what the Buddha called in the Pali language, anicca, impermanence.

All phenomena are impermanent, fleeting, anicca, Buddha said. Wow. And if you attach yourself and identify with any form, you will experience dukkha, suffering.

Also be translated as misery. Also can be translated as unsatisfactoriness. And so on, unhappiness.

Because, the Buddha said, there is no self in any form. That's the truth of anatta, no self. So if you're seeking a self in a form, if you identify with a form, with a body, even a thought form, or the psychological form of me, then you identify with impermanence, you're seeking a self where there's only impermanence.

And that self is the delusion. And he saw that 2,600 years ago, the truth of the impermanence of all things. But he saw it, I mean, people knew already, but just to see it and to look, he said, look.

So those three are, to me, the most essential parts of the Buddha's teaching. Dukkha, anicca, anatta. Dukkha is the fact of suffering, if you identify with, which means seek a self, in impermanent forms.

Not just in bodies, but also in thought forms, emotional forms, and the psychological form of me. So the entire Buddha's teaching is really a disidentification from form, in order to realize the formless that underlies all that. And of course the Buddha called that emptiness, which is not a very inspiring concept.

And he did that on purpose, because if he had given us an inspiring concept, we could start believing in it. And the belief in the concept would become a substitute for the realization. Emptiness.

Emptiness. Can't do that with emptiness. And emptiness can't have a name.

What's it called? Well, it's emptiness. Oh, Jesus used the word kingdom of heaven.

It's the same thing. It's a formless realm. Of course, that is, on the one hand, you feel, ah, kingdom of heaven.

Of course, much easier to misinterpret. It's more inspiring, of course, but much easier to misinterpret and very easy to make into something that is somewhere else, which they did for a long time, and many still do. So kingdom of heaven, you go to it.

Some people are good enough, you'll go to a kingdom. In many languages, actually, the word for heaven and the word for sky are the same. So in Spanish, cielo, in German, himmel, you go to the sky.

And so although Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven cannot be, it does not appear with signs to be observed. It is not here or there. You can't say there it is.

That's what Jesus said. Nevertheless, people say the sky, the kingdom of the sky. That's the, in many languages, that's what it is.

I believe I got sidetracked a little with impermanence, but really this is what it's all about. It is a movie. It is like a movie or a dream because it is impermanent.

And so when you know that as a deep fact, when you experience the impermanence by facing it directly, then you are not so unconscious anymore that you act out the script unconsciously, continuously for the rest of your life. The script means the conditioned patterns of your mind, the reactive patterns, the thought patterns, the emotional patterns. If there is an awareness, that becomes the most important factor and then you move back into the movie because you participate in your life situation and your life with an added factor.

You can imagine a little bit like an actor in a movie who suddenly realizes that he or she is not really the character that's being played out, but he still plays his role or her role, does his things, but the realization that he is not that will affect the role. So he's not going to stick to the script as before. The script will still be there, but changes will come into the script because the awareness brings an additional factor into it.

So whereas the script, for example, dictates that when this woman leaves him, he goes into dreadful despair and contemplates suicide, perhaps as this happens, that was the script, but suddenly in the movie, because the awareness is there, he just, instead of going to the roof and contemplating jumping off the building, he finds himself going to the beach and looking at the sea and breathing. Things change in the script suddenly. Spaciousness comes into the script where before there was...

And another thing that happens in the script, you may look at leaves moving in the wind, a little breeze coming through the tree, and if you see that in the film, isn't that amazing? Suddenly the camera goes from the script into suddenly another dimension is present in the film. Some films actually do that.

Those films where there is a spiritual dimension, I've seen films where suddenly the camera goes into and shows something that's not part of the action. It, in a way, almost takes you out of the action. It brings a depth to it.

Like the, as I mentioned before, there's a paper, piece of paper or a paper bag being tossed about in the wind in the American Beauty, that film. And you watch the amazing thing of, wow, nothing to do with the action. So a dimension comes into the script and then the movie begins to change because another dimension flows into it.

So that's the answer to now what? But so it's not enough to say, oh, well, it's all like a dream or a movie. That's not a realization.

That's only a concept in your head. For the realization, you need to deeply see the impermanence, which we just talked about, or really face it. Then something opens up within you.

And then saying that it's like a dream or a movie is not just a thought in your head. It's a realization. You're actually fully aware of the impermanent nature of all things.

And that changes the way in which you interact. A few more questions, perhaps. There are some here, many interesting questions.

Basically always the same answer. Variations. Okay, one question here.

It appears that most people will have to experience great loss in order to go through the shift in consciousness and become present. This implies that one cannot become present through effort or through reading books, going to seminars, or taking online courses. And so regarding great loss, if Humpty Dumpty fell off his wall and broke 90% of his egoic shell, would it be true that he would then be 90% conscious?

[Speaker 23] (3:46:20 - 3:46:21)

No.

[Speaker 1] (3:46:36 - 4:09:17)

Well, maybe. But great loss does not necessarily imply awakening or shifting. It's a potential opening when you experience loss of whatever kind.

And of course, everybody sooner or later experiences loss, different kinds of loss. Death, somebody close to you dies. You lose something.

It starts with a little thing like losing your car. Now, it's unlikely that losing your car is going to free you of the ego. It's more likely that it strengthens the ego.

You suffer. So the loss very often, loss of possessions, loss of position, loss of job, happens to many people these days, loss of your investments with Mr. Madoff and so on. So Mr. Madoff has probably caused quite a few people to awaken. And as many other people suffer a lot, or in some cases both, first you suffer and then you awaken. There's a potential when there's loss because loss means a form that was important to you. And that implies that this form, whether it was a form of a possession or a position or a human being or a thing, that form was important to you because somehow you had to incorporate it into your sense of self.

It supplied you as part of your sense of who you are. In LA, of course, many people have an important relationship with their car, the car being such an important part of life here. And so even that then, loss of your car could lead to intense suffering.

Probably not enough to break the shell of the ego, but you never know. There's a story of a young man, or I don't know if he was a young man. He was traveling with his belongings in a backpack.

And somewhere in Canada, I think it was, I think he was Indian, I don't remember the details, but he lost all his belongings in his backpack and he left them somewhere. His passport, his money, everything was in there. And when he got back, he had gone to the bathroom.

And when he got back, it was gone, nothing. And that, he must have been so ready that that loss, just his passport, it's upsetting, but it can be remedied. Money, maybe a credit card, other things, gone.

And he experienced an awakening and then he became a spiritual teacher. Now, if a relatively minor loss like that does that, that means there was a high degree of readiness already. And if there's a high degree of readiness, sometimes a minor loss can be the final trigger.

And loss then potentially is an opening and it can, a chunk falls out of the ego, which is painful. It gets torn out of the egoic shell or it gets cracked and then it opens up. And that's where there's a book by Elizabeth Lesser called Broken Open.

And it's about the potential that lies behind something seemingly negative. And of course, there's also a wonderful line by, I believe it's Leonard Cohen. There is a crack, a crack in everything.

That's how the light gets through. So the crack is potentially, everything develops a crack. Every egoic shell gets cracked eventually.

But the ego is also very good at immediately going into automatic repair mode. So when an ego gets cracked by loss, there's a reaction of the ego and it mobilizes all its energy to immediately repair the crack. One way it does that is by simply complaining and making yourself into a victim.

And with that, you seal the crack because you have created an even stronger form identity than the one that you lost. If some loss makes your ego react and then you regard yourself as a victim, unfairly treated, complaining about what people did, that life did to you, that victim identity is again identification with a thought form can be a stronger ego than the one that was lost, the form that was lost. So that's a simple example.

You lose your job and then it triggers intensely a complaining negative reaction in you. You become very bitter about life. This shouldn't have happened to me.

You've worked for so many years. I've worked my butt off for these people and now what do they do? They turn your back on me.

You can see what a strong ego that creates, an identity, a complaining and resisting identity, stronger than the one that was identified with a job. And that I call an unconscious repair mechanism of the ego. And when you sometimes, you listen to people's stories when they tell you what dreadful things happened to them, then very often, there's a stronger ego post loss than the pre loss ego.

So there's certainly no guarantee that a loss will free you of the ego. The opposite can be true because the ego's repair job may be more thorough than what it was before. So...

And so we've all met people who are angry about life and all the frustrations that they have suffered. Of course, everybody suffers some kind of setbacks and failures and so on, but they accumulate these things in their mind and form an identity around them. And blaming others, of course, or the universe or God.

If they believe in God, they blame God. And some people who don't believe in God blame God too. At least you have somebody to blame if maybe the only function God has for you is to have somebody to blame.

Or they say, how can there be a God? It's so silly. Look what happened to me.

God, I used to go to church every Sunday. Look what happened, what it did to me. There's no God.

What's this silliness? So you're really against God and it strengthens the ego enormously. And so any kind of loss would initially produce pain, but what happens then is whether the ego comes in and resists and repairs or whether the pain, at some point, maybe the pain is too much, it can't be repaired, and you come to a place of acceptance.

And the moment you come to a place of acceptance to the inevitability of what is, there is an opening. And that's the way you... And usually one way you can speak about this is to talk of a deepening of a human being becomes suddenly, there's a depth to somebody who has gone through suffering and not resisted it.

There's suddenly a depth to them that wasn't there before. There's also, you can also sense often a certain humility. They may not be totally free of ego.

In some areas of their lives, there may still be ego. But there's a certain humility that comes in, a greater ability to have empathy with others if you have suffered. Humility, which of course is absence of ego, just a more, less of a role-playing entity.

Many people are just roles, walking roles. And then that's through loss, some of that gets eroded and then something more genuine and alive is there. Not meaning that necessarily on some occasions the role-playing entity may return temporarily or even return for good and then you need some more loss.

But there's a potential in loss for a shift and the questioner also asked, well, what's the point then in reading books? For most people, it is a combination of experiencing some loss in their own lives and coming into contact with the spiritual teaching. And not infrequently, people experience loss and come into contact with the spiritual teaching at the same time or just very soon afterwards.

I've had quite several examples of that where just at the right moment, the book or the teaching came into their lives. I've also had accounts, people written to me, they said, somebody gave me a book six years ago and I opened it, it was meaningless and only two months ago, after this or that happened to me, I picked it up again and I couldn't believe it, suddenly I understood every word. And so that's a sign then that why could you suddenly understand every word?

Something within you opened up that just wasn't the conceptual mind, it wasn't the ego, it was the deeper consciousness and it recognized the truth. And then the two together can lead to... Once a crack is there and then you come into contact with the spiritual teaching, then the spiritual teaching can really be much more effective for you.

There are also humans these days, I've encountered quite a few younger people who it seems seem to be open and they haven't experienced loss. So maybe there's a new generation coming in now, some members of which do not need to go perhaps through the suffering that the older generation like myself have to go through. There are some 20-year-olds that can see the truth and begin to live it.

And I certainly didn't know the truth at 20 and I believe if I had read The Power of Now at 20 it would have been meaningless to me also, even at 28. And for some people loss is all they have and there's a total shift in consciousness but either there's a high degree of readiness or there's such drastic loss accompanied by enormous suffering so much so that they can't stand the suffering anymore and on some level they surrender resistance perhaps without even anybody telling them there's a possibility of doing that. Resistance simply falls away and suddenly they are there and say, wow, what happened?

I've lost everything and I feel deeply peaceful. Don't understand that. And perhaps much later when they read a spiritual book they understand why, how.

So when loss comes let's be grateful and see if we can just accept the is-ness of it's inevitable in the world of form at some point you will encounter disaster. Well, if only in the form of your own death. Sooner or later, it's not a disaster but from the point of view of the ego it is.

Me, dead? Can't be. How can the world without me?

Can't be. And this can sometimes even a person who starts thinking about if you imagine yourself dying can lead to fear and in one case that I know of and some of you may have read about it. The intense thought of death happened to this young Indian man who was lying on his bed.

He was 16 or so and suddenly he felt he was imagined or felt he was dying. Felt what's it like to die and die? And the experience was so intense that he went through a death experience just lying on his bed after which he was never the same again and he left his home, didn't tell anybody where he was going and only years later his family discovered that he was found near a temple miles and miles away and had become a holy man and later a great spiritual teacher, Ramana Maharshi, and it all started with a 16-year-old boy lying on his bed and thinking about death and feeling what's death like?

And of course then he experienced an intense aliveness but he went deep. Something must have such a high degree of readiness that the ego dissolved just through going through those motions of dying. That kind of death is also associated to the experience, to bring about the experience of death is also associated in some ancient initiation rites and so on.

There's a lot of wisdom in ancient cultures. There are, for example, initiation rites where you lie in a coffin. I believe even Freemasons have that although I don't know whether it actually works or how they do it.

I just remember I was giving a talk. We had rented a hall in the Freemasons Lodge in Vancouver many years ago, and before the talk I was looking for the bathroom and I opened some doors, and I opened one door. There was a dark room, and in the dark I could see there was a coffin and there was the figure of a man, but what you call a dummy or something, lying in the coffin.

Probably they use it for certain rites. I don't know what they use it for. But I do know that lying in the sarcophagus or spending time in the coffin in order to simulate a death experience, the simulation of death experience is part of many rites of initiation.

There is some wisdom in that because when you go through, even if it's simulated death, you go through a death, there is a disidentification from form. So even as you go through simulated death, if it works for you, if it's not just a ritual then everybody knows it's not the real thing, of course then it doesn't work anymore, even a simulated death can then result in disidentification from form. And so loss of whatever kind is always a potential blessing if it is not resisted internally.

Colin asks from Montreal, if there's no problem in the now, why is it said that there's an urgency for humanity to evolve? If the one consciousness is awakening spontaneously, is there really a choice involved? Thank you.

Now urgency, of course, is not to be equated with problems. There may be urgency for you to catch a plane or a train, doesn't have to be a problem. If you're running to catch a train, is that a problem?

No, you're running to catch a train. Problem arises not probably in that situation, but when you're thinking about that you might miss the train or what's going to happen if you do miss it, then the dimension of problem arises. There's nothing you can do that's not part of the totality, so when you choose to awaken, so to speak, the totality is awakening through you.

It's only a limited perspective to say I'm choosing to be present instead of being lost in my mind, I'm choosing to be present. I'm going to take my attention out of the mind and I'll be present. Who are you?

You are not separate from the totality of consciousness, and the consciousness in you is an expression of the totality of consciousness. So when you are choosing, the totality is moving through you. It's normally choosing as such.

It's a limited perspective to feel that I am choosing, but that's fine. There's something beautiful even about limited perspectives and even helpful in the same way that to say the sun rises every morning is ultimately not true. The sun doesn't rise at all, nor does it set.

It's always there. It's only when you're in a limited perspective, you're in a particular position on the planet from where occasionally the sun becomes obscured because the planet goes round and then you don't see the sun and that moment appears as if the sun were setting and you say, oh, it's a beautiful sunset. Nothing is happening.

It's not setting at all. Nor is it rising. It never sets or rises.

When you say sunset or sunrise, it implies a limited perspective. There's an observer in a place that gives the observer a limited perspective, and yet it's a beautiful thing, sunrise and sunset. There's nothing wrong with saying, what a wonderful sunrise.

It's pointless to say, no, you are deluded. There's no sunrise. It is beautiful.

It's just as beautiful for a human being to say, I'm choosing to be present. Ultimately, there's only the one consciousness, but it loves to choose to be present through you. There are other ways of putting it.

It's not a problem.

[Speaker 9] (4:09:17 - 4:10:18)

I have a question about ignorance. I find myself to become quite ignorant. I have compassion and love and come from that place, but I don't seem to respond to what's happening around me so much because I understand it's an illusion.

And every time I see it, I just feel it is an illusion and it's okay for what it is. But now listening to you, I'm thinking maybe I should go back and be more active and participate. I used to be that way, but now I'm more like, it is what it is.

[Speaker 1] (4:10:21 - 4:15:43)

Well, I'll say a few words. Well, in any situation, prior to any action, the main factor is your state of consciousness, and any action you take arises out of a state of consciousness. If you see something that maybe suffering is being inflicted on another human being, it would be a misunderstanding of what spirituality is to say, well, this is just another illusion.

On the other hand, if you take whatever you see out in the world to be an absolute reality and nothing else, then you get lost in trying to solve the problems of the world on the level of effect. So that is the danger of people who are activists or try to help and do things. There is a place for this one dimension that is the level of effect where you can take action and do things.

But at the same time, you need to be aware of the level of cause where the causal level of human suffering and unconsciousness, and the causal level of human suffering is in state of consciousness, and it starts with your own. Are you connected to the deeper level of who you are? That is what we always address here.

Are you connected with that? Or if you are connected with that, then what your mind calls illusion, then you truly know that this is not ultimate reality, and yet it has a relative reality. And you can take action and at the same time be connected with a deep inherent peace, an energy field of peace.

The action that you then take, spontaneous action, is imbued with that peace. And if you don't know who you are, then you're trying to solve the problems of the world exclusively on the level of form, and they cannot be solved on the level of form. The level of form is an addition, an added thing that comes.

Your state of consciousness is the primary factor in any action you take. Now, one needs to be careful with teachings that say it's all illusion. Not that it is not true, but like Advaita teachings or Causing Miracle teachings, all illusion.

On what level do you know that? Is that just a belief in your mind that tells you, oh, it's all illusion? That's not, you don't really know that.

It's actually not true as far as you are concerned. As Marianne said, you still get, when you visit your mother-in-law or whatever. You still get triggered by whoever, your mother or your mother-in-law or whoever it is.

And to say then, well, it's all illusion. Well, you don't, actually you don't seem to know that your mother-in-law is illusion, because you react as if she were absolutely real. So they don't really know it.

Whether you know that, truly know that it's illusion is determined by your state of consciousness. So when the deep peace is lacking, then you don't really know it in the depths of your being. You only know it intellectually.

And if you only know intellectually that it's all illusion, that's not the truth. Because you're fooling yourself, that it needs to be a living truth inside you. Then it becomes true for you.

So really it's only spiritual teachers who have reached that place, they say it, and they are absolutely right when they say it. And then somebody repeats it, who just hears those words, and then thinks that's the solution to the world. It's not, it's a lie when you just repeat it as far as you are concerned, because you haven't gone to that place where you truly know it.

So that is, your primary responsibility is going to that place where you know at the deepest level. And then you can be of benefit in this world, because then any action you take is connected to a deeper level. And there's more than just the action you take, there's an entire energy field behind it that is that that changes the world.

And so the difference then between head knowledge and living knowledge.

[Speaker 3] (4:15:45 - 4:18:59)

There are monasteries, both Western and Eastern, both in the Eastern religions as well as Western orientations, where people just live in silence, monks in silence. They are probably doing as much to keep this world from blowing up in a nuclear catastrophe as is anyone. So what someone is quote-unquote doing is on the outside, does not even say.

Because just as Eckhart was just saying, if someone is acting in the realm of form, but they're bringing the old consciousness, they're actually recreating the old no matter what they're doing. And similarly, people who are quote-unquote doing nothing, but they're praying all day for all living things, are doing plenty. Books like The Course in Miracles say the world is an illusion or I need do nothing.

As Eckhart was just saying, this is extremely important. When you hear these lines out of context, that is a profound misunderstanding of A Course in Miracles or any serious spiritual teaching, to think that the conversation stops there. Because The Course in Miracles says we are to do whatever we are sent out to do.

Now, I would never presume to know, you might be in a phase where a doing of nothingness was necessary for a part of your own purification of consciousness. And just as true as that might be that you were meant to be here today to hear talk about a quickening. If you're only acting on the world of form and not addressing causal issues, then you are only creating more of a problem.

But if, just as Eckhart already said all this, if you're only dealing on the realm of cause, you're not like those monks praying for the world. You're just using, it's all an illusion anyway, so I don't have to do anything as an excuse. You're also perpetuating the problem.

So it's both and. I want to tell you one quote from Martin Luther King Jr. He said, you have very little morally persuasive power with people who can feel your underlying contempt. So that's the spiritual activist's creed.

Dear God, I want to yell and scream at this person on television. I can't stand them. And you come to understand that your own self-righteousness, your own spiritual superiority, your own sense that you know and they don't know is the problem.

So first you pray, please help me get rid of my own craziness. The Course in Miracles says the primary work of the miracle worker is to accept the atonement for himself. Dear God, I really believe I'm better than they are, smarter than they are, and if only they were gone, the country would be fine.

Dear God, heal me. Right? But then the issue is when you're flat on that, you won't feel moved to just sit there.

You will, when and to the extent to which it is your assignment, do that which you are called to do if you are called to do it, but just as Eckhart was saying, you will do it from a different place.

[Speaker 9] (4:19:00 - 4:19:41)

So the answer is both and, isn't it? Everything seems to be always is one thing yet is another. It seems that...

Actually, it's really funny because you say something but the opposite is truth as well. So it kind of contradicts everything and life contradicts itself. Give us an example.

Yes, I can be out there active and fight and that would be great and it will be beneficial for the energy of this planet and mine. Yet if I don't and just sit in peace and love and just be still, it's the same.

[Speaker 3] (4:19:41 - 4:21:09)

No, if you go out there and you fight, you will only be temporarily managing an effect. It will only be an allopathic suppression of the symptoms. The issue is how much time did you spend in the presence that morning?

Did you meditate and prepare inwardly before you went? And then if you went, you might have gone to the rally, but you wouldn't be coming to fight. You would be coming to be the presence in the midst of this chaos.

You would come in a whole different way. And that is what the world needs now. These are illusions, but there's a part in The Course in Miracles where it talks about how you could take a spiritual teaching, you could take the power of now.

It's a book, it's a form, it's an illusion, but it's an illusion that leads beyond illusion. So The Course in Miracles talks about the highest level of thinking of which the ego is capable. It's still the ego's world, we're bodies, we're talking, but it's the highest level of thinking of ego which ultimately will lead us.

So I think it's both and. You pray, you meditate, then you show up if you feel moved to show up, but you will show up emanating something much more profound and causal than just, well, man, I'm angry, which means you're just part of the problem. You're as much a hawk as they are.

[Speaker 1] (4:21:11 - 4:24:23)

Or take an example, let's say, very often whenever humans come together in institutions and companies, they set the enormous amount of conflict that's generated. Let's say there's a committee meeting. There's conflict, I mean, not only where you might expect conflict in the big financial institutions.

There's the same amount of conflict when egos come together in hospital administrations, churches, church administration, and so on. So let's say you are there at a committee meeting where everybody is energized egoically, and in other words, it's quite insane, and your job is to embody, before you even think of what you are going to say or what you want, prior to all that, your job is to embody a different state of consciousness as you sit there. That comes first.

It doesn't, what you want to happen or your point of view, you can forget about it for the time being. First is, what is my state of consciousness? Are you there as another agitated egoic presence and saying things should be done the spiritual way?

I totally disagree with everybody. Or do you embody the presence? And then you sit there and you begin to listen to all the people discussing things without saying, oh, you're all so ignorant.

You should be, without the judgments of the mind, you simply watch, and you're there as a still, alert presence. And you watch. And then you may find at some point words may come out of your mouth and you say something.

It will be totally different energy from the energy that these people are putting out. But it's not that you are saying, no, I'm going to show you the right energy. No, it doesn't.

It comes out of presence. Words that come out of presence are not, they don't generate more confrontation and human unconsciousness. And it may well be that suddenly people listen.

But that's the result. You're not attached to the result. And you cannot predict what will come out of your mouth.

Maybe nothing will come out of your mouth and you will just be there. And perhaps the very fact that there's one human being who holds the presence might change what these people say or do in the room. It could happen.

It doesn't matter, but that your primary responsibility is embodying a different state of consciousness. Whether action comes out of that, words come out of that is secondary. So that really is, we've all had experiences of how dysfunctional all these places are where egos come together.

Where egos come together, it cannot not be dysfunctional.

[Speaker 3] (4:24:24 - 4:26:04)

Now, this is, you know, these inquiries are so endlessly fascinating because once you're on that level of pure consciousness or reality with a capital R, you are in the realm where there is no time or space. So when you are in that meeting of the hospital administration in Vancouver and you go into pure consciousness, which, by the way, cannot but affect the people in the room, in ways that you will never know, there could be a suicide bomber somewhere who says, I'm not going to do it. Literally.

There could be a soldier somewhere who says, I'm putting my gun down. So once we're in that realm of pure consciousness, we're in the one mind. That's the esoteric meaning of the line.

There is only one begotten son means we're all in. So it is not just as you were saying, which is, well, if where you find yourself is the hospital administration meeting, that's your assignment today. But it's also that place where spirituality intersects, spiritual practice intersecting global activism, because you actually are affecting the entire globe and contributing to that 51%.

But also affect you have no idea where this might be. We know that when the butterfly flaps its wings in this southern tip of the planet, that it affects the wind currents at the North Pole. We know that this is the same on the level of consciousness.

So you are working on the world if you're working on yourself deeply. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (4:26:07 - 4:26:26)

And you're very powerful. In that sense, you are very powerful. The power, the wonderful quote that you're the most famous quote from Marianne, which is usually attributed to Nelson Mandela.

But it's actually by Marianne, which is deep.

[Speaker 3] (4:26:26 - 4:26:43)

It's from it's from a return to love. Of course, it's of course, content. Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.

Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. And then I'm the only person I know who doesn't have the rest of it memorized.

[Speaker 1] (4:26:47 - 4:27:00)

It's lovely. Thank you. Now, I believe that did you say Marianne needs to go soon?

Yeah. So let's thank her for being here. A wonderful, valuable, incredible addition.

[Speaker 3] (4:27:00 - 4:27:01)

Thank you so much. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (4:27:01 - 4:27:02)

Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (4:27:02 - 4:27:03)

Thank you.

[Speaker 22] (4:27:04 - 4:27:08)

Thank you. Great honor. Great honor.

God bless you.

[Speaker 1] (4:27:24 - 5:01:16)

We have a few questions. I will read one, the first question from the paper, which was the question that most people seem to be interested in. And then we'll have some other popular questions, spoken questions from people that are here, some of you.

So, if in the end there's no separate person, why do we feel drawn towards an individual and personal expression of love? If we are all one consciousness, what of the personal love that we feel for individuals? What place does the individual love for one person take in this larger picture?

By the way, it's a little cold here, so we can do what the Tibetan meditators do, generate heat in the body by putting attention into the body. Now, love, true love, is transcendental. And without recognition of the formless within yourself, there can be no true love, transcendental love.

Because if you cannot recognize the formless in yourself, you cannot recognize yourself in the other. And the recognition of the other as yourself, in essence, not the form, is true love. So, as long as the conditioned mind operates and you are completely identified with it, there's no true love.

There may be substitutes, things that are called love but are not true love. For example, falling in love. Falling in love, perhaps most of us have experienced it.

Maybe one or two at this moment are in love, have fallen in love. And those who have experienced it have also experienced falling out of love. We need to remember to understand true love and other forms of so-called love that we are in the relative as form and in the absolute as formless consciousness.

The two dimensions that the human being embodies as a human and the being. The human being form, the being being formless and timeless consciousness itself. And it sometimes happens that the form is drawn to certain, has an affinity with other forms.

It could happen for a number of reasons. One being that this form has come out of another form called your mother. And so there is an affinity of this form with that other form.

So you have a love towards your mother that could be called personal. And your mother has a love towards you that could be called personal. Another aspect of affinity with another form is, of course, male-female.

Could also be male-male, female-female. But let's talk for a moment about male-female. You are drawn to another body, sexual, sometimes called love.

Especially if the sexual act is denied for long enough, it's more likely to develop into obsessive love. So much so that in cultures where you could not have sex until you were married, people were going to be falling in love could be a huge thing and lead to suicide. And if it was not reciprocated.

So naturally there is an affinity of the male-female. The incompleteness of this form, the primary incompleteness of this form, is of course that you are either a man or a woman. So the oneness has become the duality of male-female, which you even have with animals and even plants.

Male-female duality. So the pull towards the other is an attempt to find wholeness, completeness, fulfillment through the opposite polarity. In an attempt to find that wonderful, the oneness, to get back to the one that lies at the basis of the attraction.

And again it's to do with form. Because on the level of form you are not whole. You are one half of the whole.

One half of humanity is male, the other half of humanity is female, roughly. If you are female and you don't like male, or you are male and you are complaining about females and you dislike or complain about one half of humanity, the other half. So you have the attraction for the other.

Then there may be finding certain qualities in another human being that resonate with certain qualities in yourself, certain frequencies in yourself, emotional. Or if they don't resonate, it may be the opposite that you feel drawn to. So if you are a very peaceful person, maybe you feel drawn to a dramatic person.

Could happen. Or a dramatic person feels drawn to a person who is very peaceful. And again hoping for some completion there.

So you can have this affinity with another form, which would be called personal love. Now if personal love is all that there is, no matter whether it's on the level of sexuality or the emotional level between male-female or male-male, female-female or the emotional love between parents and children. Again, there is this strong link, the affinity, because this body has come out of another body.

It's the product of two bodies coming together. So naturally there is love towards your parents and the parents love towards their children. And yet, this is all fine, but if the vital question is, is that all there is?

If the personal affinity or pull towards another human being is all there is, then what's missing is the transcendental dimension of the formless, which is where true love arises. Is that part of the personal love or is the personal level all that there is? That determines whether that so-called love is going to turn into something painful eventually and frustrating or die, or whether there is a deepening.

So even though, for example, there may be an attraction that is initially sexual between two humans, if they start living together, this cannot endure for that long and be the fulfillment of the relationship. At some point, sexual-emotional needs to deepen and the transcendental dimension needs to somehow come, if only to some extent, needs to come in if the relationship is to deepen and true love is going to shine through the personal. So the important thing is, is the true love which generates, which emanates from the timeless, non-formal dimension of who you are, is that shining through the personal love that is to do with affinity of forms?

If it is not, there is complete identification with form and complete identification with form is ultimately ego. And so it may be it's a search for love, but you'll never really find it. Many times you may think that's it in relationships and you find, no, no, that wasn't it.

This was the person who was going to be the one. Or no. After living together for a little while, you realize, I may have made, that was a mistake.

I was completely deluded. Or the mind invents some other story and says, he or she completely deceived me. Not knowing that you deceived yourself.

He completely deceived me, misled me. He made me believe or she made me believe that she loved me and didn't love me at all. Was going to bring me happiness.

He promised me happiness. Didn't happen. And even in parent-children, which is very deep bond on the level of form, a very close bond.

And even if the transcendental dimension does not shine through, eventually, sooner or later, even the love between children and parents turns into something else. And this is why so many people have very problematic relationships with their parents. Because they have egos.

If there's only form, yes, you feel a strong pull. You go to them, you need something from them which they can't give you. And yet you go back again and again and all you get is the same old reactions.

And so a lot of unhappiness is there when there is a bond, an affinity between two human beings without the transcendental dimension shining through. Then no matter how close the bond is, it will be a form of suffering. So in any relationship, even though some relationships may start as purely form-based, such as in sexuality, it can happen that the other dimension comes in after a while, perhaps only after a lot of problems and perhaps you get close to a breakup, and then suddenly there is a deepening and you are able to bring in space.

The key word then is, is there space in this relationship? Inner space, a sense of spaciousness. Or is all there is thoughts and emotions?

Thoughts and emotions. Is that all there is? That's a dreadful prison to inhabit.

If you live with a person and all you have is thoughts and emotions, then, of course, occasionally you're okay just because you're tired of fighting. And then again comes continuous friction, disagreement, stuff, stuff. And even people who've been into alternative therapies, and so sometimes even after years they still say, so much stuff coming up in my relationship, so much stuff coming up.

Of course, there's no end to the stuff. Because new stuff is generated continuously. And so, yes, we need to acknowledge, yes, there are personal affinities, but in themselves never ultimately fulfilling, and more often than not, a source of suffering.

So love becomes a source of suffering, the so-called love, when the transcendental is missing. So how does the transcendent dimension come in? By being spacious with the other, which essentially means that you access in yourself the stillness while you look at the other, while you listen to the other, or if it's a close relationship, while you touch the other.

Just stillness, not mental noise, not emotional waves. Doesn't mean that there cannot be emotions or thoughts, but there is something else present in the relationship. That spaciousness.

And that applies not just to close personal relationships that are called love relationships. It applies also to more superficial relationships at work. Relationships that are short, when you just meet a person for a brief time because you've come back together on a plane or whatever.

It's a brief or your transaction, business transaction with somebody. There are many kinds of relationships that are not love relationships, and yet even there is there space. Any human relationship, the question is, is there space?

So I could use that as a little mantra in your... It's a thought, of course. It's a pointer.

It's a pointer beyond itself. Is there space in this relationship? Okay.

Essentially then, let's put it bluntly, space means it's a space when thought becomes unimportant, when any judgment of your mind and even an emotion becomes unimportant, when something deeper is there. Awareness, stillness, alert, alive, stillness, a space. It's amazing after you've...

I observe it often when people have lived together. The other is no longer acknowledged in daily life because there's so many things to... In most people, there's so much to do.

Then, let's say, the other wakes... You wake up in the morning and then... Is there a moment where you acknowledge the presence of the other?

It doesn't have to be long. Or the person comes home from work. Or it's immediately the mind...

Are you saying, did you remember to do that? Or you know what we have to do. They've just got up and you haven't even acknowledged the presence of the other.

You know what we have to do now. Consumed by thought. Or you say, you know what you said to me last night?

I've been thinking about it. I really resent that. You were fine last night before you started thinking about it, but now you've been thinking about it and I feel a lot of resentment now towards you.

Too much thinking. Too little presence. Yes, emotions will come up.

And then again, there is a possibility of being present with an emotion, so that the emotion does not have you in its grasp, but is simply there in the space of who you are. Yes, I can feel that wave of emotion. Perhaps it's anger.

Maybe something the person said or failed to say. Emotions, if you don't overdo it, anything you overdo is no longer helpful. So you can talk about an emotion.

I can feel this emotion at this moment. And then often it passes. If you do not fuel it with your thoughts, you just acknowledge it.

If you fuel the emotion with your thoughts, then there is a vicious circle. The emotion then generates more thoughts and the thoughts generate more emotion. It's actually the most wonderful thing if you can be there for the other as space rather than as a person because the person is a form.

Now, when I say that, you need to experience being here as space at this very moment. At this very moment, you can either be here as a person or you can be here also. Of course, the person is there anyway.

The body is not going to dissolve right now, so you're safe. The body is here and stays in this chair. That's fine.

Also, you have a past. It's not going to go away. You remember your name and what happened to you last year and 10 years ago.

You can even remember your ex-husband or your ex-wife. All that is still there. It's not going to be.

And yet, you don't have to carry that around with you, the ability to step out of the personal dimension into the dimension of the present moment of presence, which has nothing to do with your past, and be alert and present and see that your identity is not from your past story, but who you truly are is the alert presence that is inseparable from the present moment. Now, that's who you are. This, which has no name and no form, is simply...

You can't really call it anything, although we do because we have to use little pointers. You are that, the alert stillness. You are not a person.

That's only the form, because that thing is going to go quite soon. Whether it's next year or in 40 years' time, it'll be soon. And when death comes, it'll be today.

So, as much as possible, be here with another human, or here, as you said, here, as a presence. You are a presence here, or the presence, and only your secondary identity, the relative identity, you're a person with a past. Now, most people derive their identity from their past, which is their thoughts.

And if you can now derive your identity from consciousness itself, that means you have transcended the person. And if you can live your life in a way that the transcendent can shine through it, even through the personal realm into this world, then that is the fulfillment of your destiny. It's bringing that in, and that is loving, really.

Another word for it is to be here as a loving being. And you then love whatever you encounter, because there is a resonance, not just the affinity of the personal with another form, which is very selective, but now there is a resonance with all life, not just a selection of a few good-looking men or women, or my mom or dad, or whatever. An all-embracing sense of non-separateness with life, so that it sounds almost a little weird.

I sometimes find myself picking up an object and then simply appreciate its presence, its being. It could be anything. It could even be a toothpaste or a pen.

It doesn't have to be anything special. And it comes naturally to simply appreciate the beingness of each, not perhaps continuously, because you would become a little weird if you went around. Or people might think you've taken something.

But it is that when there's the spaciousness, there's love emanates. And what is love again? The recognition of your oneness with all life.

And life is everything, animate, inanimate. Ultimately, there are no inanimate things, because if you look deeply enough into so-called inanimate things, you find life, vibrant life. Every physicist can tell you that.

If you go deep enough into a stone, you find vibrant life. And it surrounds you. Now, you no longer know that you're surrounded by the wonder of forms because the transcendent dimension isn't there, so you cannot see that these are all part of who you are.

And so the love isn't there, which means that what is lacking is the sense of oneness. So the restoration of that, I'm saying restoration, assuming that at some point humans, before they developed, they perhaps lived in that state of oneness and then lost it. We're destined to lose it, and we are now destined to regain it at a deeper level.

Because when you've never lost it, you don't even know that you have it. You don't appreciate it. So we're talking about love, then, is not just between two human beings, or that's beautiful, and it's very different from what the ego tells you it is.

There's no neediness at all. It's an outflowing, you could say, rather than a wanting or needing. There's so much beauty around you, and not just where one conventionally would look for beauty in a flower.

Of course, it's there, supreme beauty, but even in places where habitually you would not be looking for beauty. There's a beautiful scene. Some films, I gave a talk a while ago about the transcendent dimension in movies, which occasionally is there, and it's wonderful.

I always look out for this when I see a movie or read a novel. Is there some presence of the transcendent dimension there or not? Or is every character in this movie completely trapped in their form identity and in their ego?

Which, of course, is the case in many movies, and perhaps people like to see them, because then they see, oh, they live just like me. But there was, for example, in the film American Beauty, which came some years ago, one of the characters walks around, this young man, for those who have seen American Beauty, walks around with a little film camera. And that, to me, whether the director meant this to be so or whether it's something that happened accidentally, I don't know.

But to me, that puts the viewer of the movie in the position of awareness, because he goes around passively recording everything. And so when you see that in the film, you become the aware witness, because the camera is the symbol for the witness. And then there's one scene when there's a, I think it's a plastic bag or paper bag being tossed about in the wind, and he films that.

And the commenter in the background says, how beautiful that is, just that movement. And that's a transcendent moment when the storyline of the film, which of course is problematic, because otherwise there would be no film, the storyline of the film suddenly, it's like it opens up. And somebody starts watching a piece of paper or paper bag being tossed about in the wind and says, how beautiful.

That is a breakthrough of the transcendent dimension. And it's wonderful when you see that in a movie. Your life is similar, you have your life situation, but is there an eruption of the transcendent there?

Otherwise, it gets more and more heavy, your life, without that, or stagnant, or angry, or irritated. And that's really, we're talking about love, because when you see beauty in everything, that appreciation of everything around you is a form of love, it is love. So I sometimes, all manifestations of life are really the play of life around you, which includes even the traffic.

The mind says, dreadful, this traffic. Well, it's a manifestation of the universe is playing around with, it's producing many, many manifestations of life. And if you are rooted in the transcendent, you can find beauty even in the headlights of cars, light, and the movement of people, just to watch with love, to see all the infinite manifestations of the human form.

So many billions of humans on the planet, they're all not, well, there are certain patterns that are very similar inside the mind, but they're all a bit different. No person is exactly, so this is what life produces, these forms. But you can appreciate the beauty of it only from the dimension of the formless in yourself.

Then the forms can be appreciated. Without that, without the space within, either the forms, well, you will want some of these forms that you see, or you will be fearful, whether the form comes in the form of a human being, or situation, or place, whatever. There cannot be true appreciation.

And even that's connected with gratitude, which is a word that is important, but people don't think, don't know what that is. Gratitude is simply an appreciation for what is, in whatever form, loving it. Not needing it, loving it.

[Speaker 19] (5:01:58 - 5:03:04)

It's a question about personal and romantic love. If one is in the surrendered state of consciousness, I've heard teachings from my own experience and from just reading. With romantic love, there can be, I need you, behavioral expectations.

And then there's like the selfless kind of love, where there are no behavioral expectations, and you still love the person. My question is, if you're in the surrendered state of consciousness, if you're completely surrendered to what is, do you still have that kind of selfless love for a specific person romantically? Or does that kind of dissolve, or is it just only the universal, which is wonderful, the universal love?

It's amazing. Wow, you know? But can you also have that specific kind of love for someone?

Okay, thank you.

[Speaker 1] (5:03:07 - 5:12:43)

So the question, you're basically asking, would you then love everybody equally, so there would not be one person singled out as special, as the Course in Miracles calls it, special relationship, which the Course in Miracles says, of course, it's of the ego, to single one out as special. Now, if you single one out as special, and what you see in the other is the form only, and you're attached to the form, which doesn't just mean the physical form, of course, that's an important part of it, because that is part of the sexuality and all that, which is part of the attraction, but it also includes the psychological form of the other, who you think that person is, their psychological makeup, how they behave and speak and act, that is also form, that's the psychological form, and there can be strong attachment to those aspects, both the physical come together with the psychological, which includes also emotions, there's an emotional link also there, and those coming, when they all come together, you fall in love, and aptly it's called fall, because it's a fall in consciousness, but, but, but that's okay, if that's what you experience, then that life wants you to experience that, it's part of your learning, that fall in consciousness, now it's not immediately, of course, experienced as a fall, it's experienced as a high, and only afterwards do you realize, oh, that was a fall, that was a fall, and afterwards can be after a year, it can be after three months, it can be after the honeymoon, it can be soon after you move in together, so, and then the suffering starts, what before was the love, now becomes the suffering, and then for a while it can happen that you fluctuate, for the next year or two or three, between still feeling the love and the suffering, and then usually it comes to an end after a while, or you compromise, and for some other reason stay together, so that's the, now if you are able to feel in the other, well, first of all in yourself, that which is beyond form, the essence, the stillness, the presence, whatever we want to call it, and by sensing it in yourself and being it, then you recognize it in another, and that recognition, that in the space of stillness is true love, which doesn't need the other, because the other only reflects to you who you are, but even there it can happen that the form of the other, because you are not just the formless, temporarily you are also the form, temporarily you are either a man or a woman, temporarily you have this body, and this form, this man or this woman, and this body and the emotional field may find a certain resonance with, on different levels, be it sexual, emotional, psychological levels, a certain resonance with the other form, and that resonance, that is what in the unenlightened romantic love makes up the entire relationship, but now when you are, when you know who you are in your essence, all those factors are still there, but they do not make up the entire relationship beyond the resonance between the sexual or emotional or physical resonance, there's a deeper level present, so you can go through the motions of romantic love with the transcendent level also present in yourself and recognizing it in the other, so romantic love may, after a while, of course, for the relationship to be truly deep, in any relationship, some transcendent element has to be there because it's not going to last otherwise, it doesn't mean necessarily that people need to be totally awake already, totally awake knowing who they are, but some element of the formless must be there eventually in the relationship for the relationship to survive and be a true relationship, otherwise all you have left in the relationship is your judgments about the other and physical attraction and just mind, emotional, and that's ultimately, it's not enough, it's not enough, the added element, the transcendent element needs to be there, and if the transcendent is there, you can be quite content even without the romantic relationship, you no longer say, I need that, when it's there, it's beautiful, but you don't need that, yeah, pull, so the mind, it is often in relationships, the mind prevents the deeper level, the transcendent level from arising in the relationship, so the mind destroys the relationship, identification with the story in the mind, which is about yourself and the other obscures love, it might even say love, well, it's no such thing as love, I read a lovely, in a novel last year by a British writer, it was Mac Ewan, he's a well-known contemporary writer, Ian Mac Ewan, and he wrote this book about, it's called On Chesil Beach, it's about two young people falling in love in England in the 50s, and these two young people, they feel the pull towards each other and they begin to fall in love, but sexually they are completely repressed and very fearful, it's in the 50s, so the revolution hasn't happened yet about sex, but they're both extremely fearful about sex, and then they get married and their first night, they stay in a bed and breakfast near Chesil Beach in the south of England and they're trying to have sex for the first time and it's a disaster, dreadful disaster, and she is so shocked, she runs out of the room to the beach, oh, they don't realize it's actually quite funny, I don't explain what disaster, you can probably imagine it, so she runs out and the next day, so they don't see each other that night, that's their honeymoon, their wedding night, and the next day he goes to the beach, Chesil Beach, and she sees she's walking on the beach, they start talking to each other, and both feel the pull is still there, but both their minds are bringing up stories why it's not possible, it's dreadful, they are projecting things onto the other, what she is, and so the pull is there, but they both create stories in their minds that cuts them off from the other, and they separate, and then they spend the rest of their lives doing other things, and the rest of their lives in the novel is compressed to five or six pages, and that shows how destructive the mind can be of true relationship, how the mind imposes interpretations on the other, that are total fictions, but there's so much, as Don Miguel Ruiz would say, there's so much faith in these fictions, that it's an impossibility for the human being to see what the mind is creating is a fictitious judgment that creates a barrier between yourself and the other. This writer is not spiritual at all, he just observed human nature, and he presented it, and that is the ultimate lesson is spiritual.

[Speaker 22] (5:12:43 - 5:12:46)

Thank you very much.

[Speaker 1] (5:13:24 - 5:21:14)

A written question. Heather from San Bernardino. I'm a physician that works in an urgent care.

Every day I begin with meditation, and within an hour on my job, I have dissolved into a mental medical construct. Each patient has a story that I listen to, and with each 15 minute appointment, I grow further and further away from a connection with spirit. Any insight?

One important word here perhaps is, yes, I begin with meditation, that's wonderful, you begin with stillness, and then what happens within an hour, that's lost, each patient comes for about 15 minutes, and each patient has a story that I listen to. With each 15 minute appointment, I grow further and further away from a connection with spirit. And perhaps the answer here lies in the way in which you listen to the patients.

If the attention is excessively on the words, or on the story that they're telling you, of course you listen to the words or the story, yes. But where is the main part of your attention? Is the main part of your attention on the story or the words?

Is the main part of your attention on what it is that the patient needs, that you have reference in your knowledge? What is the medication or the treatment that is most appropriate? Is this operating in your mind while you listen?

Because it seems that you are losing presence through the listening, and that seems to suggest that there isn't the right kind of listening yet happening in you, whereas listening itself can be the greatest meditation. And then you will not lose presence, presence will deepen. And we talked about that previously, so I'll mention it again.

The conscious listening, what is of primary importance when there is true conscious listening, is not the words that are being spoken. Yes, they are being heard, that's true. But that is not the main part of your attention.

The main part of your attention is also not reference to your own mind to see what it is that you can do in this situation, and some conscious, okay, what do I have to do? What's the best way to help this person? By the way, if anybody, you don't have to be a physician, anybody who listens to somebody who is telling you their problems, or listen to somebody who is close to death, you're sitting close to death, the mistake that many people make then is to think, okay, I have to say something helpful, what can I say that's helpful?

And then they're trying to say something helpful. You don't need to say anything helpful, you need to be there, your attention needs to be fully in the act of listening. Then you realize that the most healing thing, the most powerful thing in this human interaction is not the words that are being spoken, and it's not the thoughts that you are thinking, those things may still also happen.

But the most important part is the energy field of listening. The energy field of listening is the conscious attention, is the space of consciousness. And it is the moment you truly listen to someone that arises, and that elevates the human interaction into something much deeper, more profound than it would otherwise be.

It comes through you, and often it draws also the other person into a different state of consciousness. And if it doesn't, something within them will still respond. It changes the interaction, and you don't become depleted, because your attention is not on the story, the story is peripheral.

Yes, you listen to the words, but it is peripheral, and your thoughts are also peripheral. Yes, some thoughts, particularly if you are a physician, after you've listened for 10, 15 minutes, of course you will, some thoughts may arise, and then you'll know this is the treatment that is needed. We have a wonderful physician here in the room who works with cancer patients, and I know you're doing wonderful work, and I know that this is how you work with people, and so you're bringing great blessing to people.

Thank you. But this is exceptional still in our civilization. It's exceptional, but it will happen more and more.

The power of listening, the power of... So you will then see, instead of becoming depleted, you become empowered through the work that you do. Don't lose yourself in the words when you listen.

Don't lose yourself in the story. Don't lose yourself in excessive thinking about what it is you can do. The energy field of presence is the important thing in listening, the arising

presence.

It's an actual power. You can almost feel it that comes in through you, through this form. And that's the art of listening.

So listening is something sacred. It's a sacred thing, really, to truly listen, and it's the greatest gift you can give to another human being, ultimately there is no other, but let's put it that way. The greatest gift you can give is to truly bring that field of listening to another.

What gift could be greater than that? Giving them your fullest attention, not the concentrated attention, not that kind of attention that goes, now what are you really talking about? Now you're getting lost in the words.

What do you mean? You can still ask questions, yes, but it's not that kind of attention, it's this kind of attention that opens up, not the concentrated, not concentration. Open.

What in Zen is called, my Japanese is not very good, chikantaza or something like that, which means choiceless attention, just complete open, completely open attention.

[Speaker 7] (5:21:43 - 5:22:37)

Thank you. Hi, Eckhart. Years ago I picked up your book in a bookstore and I was sharing with someone, immediately I noticed a sense of stillness.

And it's been developing, sometimes it's bigger than me and I'm just this little tiny thing, and other times I'm like, I've never felt stillness in my life. What's been going on recently is that I'm discovering the emotional storms that bothered me don't bother me so much anymore. The pain body is not, I can see it when it happens, and sometimes if it's too fast, I see where it went.

But I'm discovering these new things, like egoic compulsions that I didn't have before. And I'm like, is this a good thing that I'm noticing these?

[Speaker 1] (5:22:39 - 5:22:41)

Can we have an example?

[Speaker 7] (5:22:42 - 5:23:25)

Usually in relation to other people. I'm in a relationship, I think that's where it started. I'm in a relationship and I feel the need to be right, the need to be heard.

I've been in relationships before, I never experienced that. Maybe I was lost in the pain, I don't know, but I didn't experience that. And now it's so strong when it happens, and it doesn't feel like mine, it doesn't feel like what the pain felt like.

And it takes me over, and then I don't feel good afterwards.

[Speaker 1] (5:23:27 - 5:23:34)

So it's in arguments and so on, being taken over by the energy, needing to be right?

[Speaker 7] (5:23:34 - 5:23:56)

I don't engage in it, but I feel it. Like I feel this thing rising in me, and I'm like, what's going on? I don't engage in it, but it's there.

So I've read that sometimes when you move along the path and new things come up, I'm like, is this something new? Did I have these all along?

[Speaker 1] (5:23:58 - 5:30:33)

Sometimes with awareness you become aware of things that before were unconscious, and then it looks as if you were becoming more egoic than before. But the reason is that the egoic patterns rise to consciousness, and they're suddenly seen. And so often I get people ask the question, say, it seems I'm becoming more egoic as awareness grows.

But usually the answer is no, you're beginning to see all the aspects of your ego that before you didn't even know were there. The essence of ego is you don't know. You identify so much with the reaction of the patterns that you become it.

So the people with the biggest egos have never even heard of ego. And if you said you have a huge ego, say, what do you mean, what ego? So if you know that you have an ego and occasionally you see it in action, that means it's already becoming conscious, not the ego, but the consciousness is rising.

And the ego is no more than a conditioned pattern in the mind, in the mental emotional field. And the conditioned pattern wants to take you over. It wants you to identify with it.

It wants to become you. It wants to become the self, the egoic self. It's like an entity.

There's lots of little energetic entities living in us. Every thought is an entity. Every emotion is an entity.

And so the ego is an energy field. Also, it doesn't want to go. But a relationship, a partner is a good opportunity for observing your ego, because if you lived alone, you could be under the delusion that you don't have an ego anymore.

If it's not being challenged, the partner brings it out. That's the good thing about it. And so don't bottle it in.

And if your partner is conscious enough, you can ask, you can explain that you would like to express to him or her that when the ego comes up or the pain body comes up, you can point it out to the other. When you said that, I suddenly, now I feel this reaction. And this is what I feel right now.

If you can point out to the other what you are feeling, and he or she can point it out to you what they are feeling, it's a huge step forward. If you can make it, rather than I'm trying to keep it down or simply acting it out blindly, find the middle way. Say, I feel really angry when you said that.

I suddenly felt very angry. Don't say you made me angry, because that's not true. I made myself angry, but your comment was the trigger through which I made myself angry.

So verbalize it. That brings it to the light of consciousness, whatever you feel. Have an agreement that you're going to be very open and just express what you feel.

Be very conscious of accusing and blaming and needing to be right, which one of the most deep-seated ego patterns is the unconscious need to be right. There have been, some of you may observe, huge arguments can develop over the tiniest thing, even just an abstract thing. No, this is how it is.

No, the moon is 300,000 kilometers from the earth. No, it's not. It's 3 million kilometers from the earth.

No, I'm right. How dare you? Why do you always want to know better?

Ego comes in, and immediately a huge argument, out of nothing, sometimes after 20 minutes, they say, how did this all start? So bring it up if your partner is conscious enough and talk about it, look at it. And at other times, you may find a reaction that comes, and when you see it, it may subside when there's enough presence.

You see it, it subsides. Spacious awareness is the main thing in the relationship. I call it really space in the relationship.

The ability to be present with the other, not always verbalizing it from time to time is good, but more important is to be spacious with the other. When you listen to the other, just listen. Really put into practice the saying, I'm listening, I hear what you're saying, I'm hearing.

It's not just as a verbal thing that one says, but truly put it into practice, truly hear what the other is saying. And then what the other is saying becomes secondary. Yes, you're listening to the words, but more important is the energy field that's behind the listening, which is presence.

So when you're listening to the other, the most important thing is the listening presence in you that comes through you, and that transforms the relationship at that moment. If both can have that, then they can have, when the other loses presence, the other one can be present for them. So they can help rather than energize, stimulating the other's unconsciousness, they can help them in presence.

Wonderful practice. Yes, it's challenging, but that's fine. So enjoy the challenge of relationship.

[Speaker 22] (5:30:51 - 5:30:54)

I have a question about effort.

[Speaker 7] (5:30:55 - 5:31:32)

I have had some experiences in my life that I would say I was truly awake, and I can't see how they ever related to anything I have ever tried to do to be awake. And then I have spent quite a bit of time actually trying to awaken, trying to be there, and sometimes it actually works for a short while, and then the thoughts come back in. But what I'd really like to find are those moments when I'm really awake, and I wondered if they have anything to do with effort.

[Speaker 1] (5:31:33 - 5:31:34)

Effort.

[Speaker 7] (5:31:34 - 5:31:36)

As opposed to grace.

[Speaker 1] (5:31:36 - 5:39:15)

Ah, yes, okay. If you approach it from saying, I'm trying to awaken, that in a way you have already created a problem because you're trying, you're trying to get somewhere called the awakened state. Making an effort also, in a way you've already created a problem.

Perhaps the quickest way one could say to the awakened state is to live in acceptance of the present moment as it is. Now, you can't try to do that. You either accept or you don't.

And accepting is not really an effort. The effort is not accepting. And the effort is habitual and normal and therefore not recognized as an effort.

Effort is how most people live continuously, one way or another. And so that when they try, when they come into spiritual practice, that habit stays with them. But there is no effort in accepting this moment as it is.

But if you are in resistance to this moment, that's an effort. But resistance is so habitual that it looks normal and as if it were no effort. One is not aware that it is an effort.

And the easy way looks difficult. This is what the ego has done, that what is difficult looks normal and easy almost, and what is in reality easy looks very difficult. So, am I able to accept this moment as it is?

You can ask this. Am I willing? Am I willing to accept this, this moment?

Yes. No effort. Then you've opened the door to grace.

It's your contribution. All you need to do is open the door and then grace comes when it will. That's all.

So to open the door, no effort is really needed. I'm willing to say yes to the present moment as it is. Then grace is, which is an influx of something that comes from a deeper place than the person, but is not separate from who you are, comes in through that open door.

If you live in resistance to what is, grace can't really come in. It would like to, but it can't. So your contribution is very simple and doesn't really require effort.

Just as the Course in Miracles puts it, a little willingness, just a little willingness. Am I willing to say yes to the now? That's the end of effort.

And of course you can approach it from a different perspective or a different angle. I can say, am I able to be still now? Can I become still by making an effort to be still?

Don't think so. You could create perhaps an artificial state of stillness by contracting your body and stop breathing, hoping that at the same time your mind will also stop. And you may have a little bit of success for a few seconds, and then the mind will be even more active than before.

I can't do it. You see, it doesn't work. So to become still, again, if you approach it as if it were something that you have to do or to bring about, then it creates effort and it doesn't work.

To become still, you need to simply go with your attention to the stillness. It's already there underneath the thinking. You're already still.

You may not know it, but you're already still. The vastness is already there underneath the mental noise. So you take some attention there.

There's no effort really in that. You're already still underneath the thinking. No effort.

Whenever it appears that you have to make an effort, that's not the right approach. So effort doesn't get you there. But sometimes when you can, when you access that presence, stillness, presence, presence, there's an intensity there that is not effort, but it could be misinterpreted as if it were an effort, an intensity of presence like now.

There's no effort because effort means you're not quite there yet. You are there. So to hold the stillness, there's an intensity sometimes that arises, and that's not effort.

It's just intensity of consciousness. You turn up the light. No effort.

So give up all effort and take the effortless way. Open the door. The easiest is probably the yes to now, and then the door is there, and then grace comes.

[Speaker 6] (5:39:38 - 5:40:06)

Is awakening a gradual process as I've often heard you describe it, or is there also some sort of sudden shift that occurs as you've described your own awakening that is spontaneous and not something that is a gradual process?

[Speaker 1] (5:40:08 - 5:40:11)

For you so far, how has it been?

[Speaker 6] (5:40:12 - 5:40:13)

Very gradual.

[Speaker 1] (5:40:16 - 5:54:58)

Well, that's good enough. A very drastic and sudden transformation is rare, usually only in the face of very extreme suffering, either that comes from within or suffering that comes from real-life situation. It could be a serious illness or complete loss of everything or whatever it may be or some other form of pain.

Then there's a possibility of a very radical, sudden shift, but for most people it is a gradual awakening, and a gradual going back and forth. The awakening isn't necessarily like that. Usually any progress just goes in spirals, one could say.

There may be a falling back into unconscious patterns, triggered by situations, then a coming out again into more presence. But on the whole, there's a gradual increase in presence that then flows into more and more areas of your life. And then there can sometimes be a sudden burst triggered by some kind of event, and usually it's something that would not normally be called pleasant, and that can bring about a sudden burst in awareness and a sudden reaching a new level.

For example, I've had people who've been practicing for some time and a slow growth of presence, but wonderful to see. And then suddenly there's a serious physical condition, and that brings about a very rapid intensification of awareness. In some people it brings about a reaction into deep fear, so they lose awareness.

But in many others I have observed an intensification of awareness, especially if the possibility of mortality comes in. And so suddenly there's an enormous influx. But that only came because they've already, for several years perhaps, been practicing living in awareness.

And then the slightest, if a big challenge comes in, then that will bring about a sudden, enormous intensification, and that may be the final breakthrough if there is such a thing. There's always, there's not really an end to it, to the deepening that's possible. So, but be happy with what's happening to you, and if anything else is needed, life will give it to you.

Pain is less needed as a spiritual teacher and as a device for breaking down the ego. Pain is not, is less, is needed less for those who voluntarily embrace the arising new consciousness or presence. But those who don't, they're like a shell is around them, and something within wants to grow, but can't.

It's pushing up against the shell, and that begins to be painful. Great pain in that. The ego shell is around them.

And in many people there is that longing inside, but the egoic patterns are very strong. And then what life tends to do is it knocks you with a, I don't have anything here, it breaks the shell through some kind of event, whatever it may be. For some people it's losing their job, could be trigger it, their job and their home.

Suddenly the wife leaves you. Could be something physical. Whatever it is, there's a shock, and that shock breaks you, or there's a crack that appears, and then the light can come through.

And so at first the crack, of course, is painful, and there's some suffering, and then suddenly, ah, intensification of aliveness. And those people I've met so many over the years, people who have had some kind of blow given, dealt to them by whatever you want to call it, life, the universe, fate, a blow, and retrospectively they said that was the best thing that could ever happen to me. And so many people have told me I wouldn't be here talking to you if that hadn't happened to me.

And I'm sure there are people here who could say the same. I know that I could say the same if without that intense suffering I wouldn't be here. So there's always grace hiding behind those seemingly negative events.

For many people in our present situation, economic situation, there are many people to whom things like that are happening. It's regarded as generally extremely negative, all the things that are happening. If you listen to the news, but all these challenges are potentially awakening experiences.

When everything is absolutely safe for you in life, the ego says, wouldn't that be great? I have a job and I've got job security because I have a contract that is permanent. It used to be like that, especially in Japan, where once you had a job in Japan, even to some extent in the West, you knew it was for the rest of your life and the company would look after you to your grave.

And you would identify with the company. Your whole sense of who you are was bound up with that. And all that is not, even in Japan, is not the case anymore.

So there's fear comes in because of the lack of security. The ego demands security. It says, wouldn't it be great if I had real security?

Then I could really, if I didn't have to worry about my job, I could really pursue awakening and presence. No, you would go to sleep. With 100% security, almost everybody, unless there's some other factor coming in, would go to sleep.

Nice income every month, and you know it's going to be there in 10, 20 years. Pension plan, life insurance, retirement home waiting for me in Florida. Everything mapped out is nothing can go wrong.

Life isn't like that anyway. So even if it were like that on the financial and professional level, of course you would still be faced with the insecurity of your physical vehicle. And you would still be faced with the insecurity of the people around you who knows what they do.

Your children, your wife, who knows what may happen there. Or the insecurity of even driving your car, who knows what could happen. So to live with the insecurity or uncertainty about what's going to happen to you and to actually embrace it is a wonderful thing.

If you can, rather than feel, ooh, I don't know what's going to happen to me, the uncertainty of it, surrender into that uncertainty or insecurity because it is life. Life actually flows more powerfully into your life when there is uncertainty. That's why people, often people experience inner transformation when they go on a huge journey where every moment is uncertain and every moment is hazardous too.

Who knows what's going to happen next? So journey is almost a metaphor for life, but the essence of every journey is that it's uncertain what's going to happen tomorrow, where you're going to be, what the next step is going to be. Except, of course, if you book a package tour where everything is totally, you will be picked up by the bus at 10.55 and be dropped off your hotel at 10.30 and your meal will be served at such and such a time and, okay, if you're lucky enough, then maybe something will go wrong and then you can suddenly experience life. And it's that where transformation becomes possible. But if you always deny uncertainty, I want certainty, then it's like closing the valve through which life comes in and the possibility of transformation. That's why traditionally the idea of pilgrimage in all cultures is an important one.

It's been lost in the West where you go on a long journey. Usually you have some kind of destination. In medieval times in Europe, you would go to Rome.

It would be extremely hazardous, I mean, traveling from Northern Europe to Rome. It would take months and months and who knows, traveling to some pilgrimage, Santiago de Compostela or whatever, you walk along the trail where the pilgrims go. Now, that was all very hazardous and the real purpose behind it was never the arriving, it was the uncertainty of the journey itself, which has a transformational effect.

People knew that perhaps intuitively and they would become transformed by their pilgrimage. Nowadays, a few people that still go on pilgrimage, they board a plane and the plane then lands at Lourdes or wherever they go and then they go to Lourdes and then they go back on their plane. I mean, that's not a pilgrimage, but life is to embrace the uncertainty of life, live with it and begin to love it, not knowing what's going to happen because their all creativity gets also stifled by excessive security.

Isn't that amazing? If you look at the lives of artists and great writers, most of them, they didn't have a secure, there may be a few exceptions, but most of them, they didn't have a secure income, a few had, but many had to struggle. They were continuously, survival was uncertain.

So that's where you come to life and awakening becomes possible. I knew a Buddhist monk years ago who he told me he was, his teacher in the monastery in Thailand, although he was a Westerner, his teacher at one point when his teacher thought he was ready, he said, okay, here's an air ticket, you get on a plane and you fly to Kolkata and in Kolkata, you're on your own, no money, they're not allowed even to touch money, no money, no contacts, nothing. You get your air ticket, he got his air ticket, traveled to Kolkata and stepped out of the plane and then he did it, surrendered, stood at a straight corner with his begging bowl.

Now he was lucky because he was a Westerner dressed as a Buddhist monk so people noticed him and he was also tall and very good looking. But going into a place like Kolkata, very chaotic and you're competing with a million beggars. So he stood and it worked, even he got invited to somebody's home, he got everything worked, but initially fear came because that was his practice, to go beyond fear, to embrace the uncertainty.

Beautiful. So what the world calls negative is not necessarily negative. Don't always believe when you listen to the media and all that, there's always another side to everything and the difficulties that are being experienced collectively these days are also, mean also that there's an opening for many people into awakening through that.

So, thank you.

[Speaker 16] (5:55:24 - 5:57:00)

Eckhart, my question has to do with, I've been interested in the awakening experience all my life, ever since a child, I think, and read and studied many teachers, spiritual teachers, yogis, and they all have methods for awakening or experiencing the presence. I've also read your books and other people who've had a spontaneous awakening and the word is always used, spontaneous, it just happened to them. And it struck me that it's kind of like these lucky people who have had spontaneous awakening were blindfolded and taken to a beautiful land and then the blindfold is taken off and I totally believe in this beautiful land, but I wonder, yourself and others, how can you tell us how to get there?

What would be the methodology that you would know to get there? And I don't mean this in a confrontative way, but because you just spontaneously got there, like the person who was blindfolded and taken there. So, the question really says, how can you tell us how to get to the now when you yourself say you just found yourself aware of it or there?

Since you really didn't have to do anything to get there, how can you tell us how to get there?

[Speaker 1] (5:57:01 - 6:06:47)

Thank you. Thank you. I understand your question, although I wouldn't say that I'm telling you how to get there, but I endeavor to show you that you are there already.

So, it's not how do I get to the now, but how do I realize that I'm already there and that's all there is ever. So, it's really, I don't know what parable or analogy to use. The image just now came into my mind of a dormitory where lots of people are asleep in a big room and they're asleep.

And one person there wakes up and then he sees the others are still asleep and then he starts perhaps making a noise and saying, it's time to get up. Time to wake up. And a few continue to sleep.

They don't hear. And a few in the room, they begin to kind of blink a little and then they go back and then they blink. Does it really matter how this person woke up?

One person who is awake can have an awakening effect on the others in the room if he shouts loud enough and that's an analogy, it's not literally, which means if the pointers that he uses, anybody who has the slightest readiness to awaken, everybody here is awakening, even some of you are predominantly awake already. Everybody here, otherwise you wouldn't be here, you wouldn't be drawn here if you hadn't heard that shout, so to speak, says, wake up. Some people have read a book and they said, wow, yeah, so that was the shout, I mean, wake up.

Or they heard some fragment of a teaching and ah, that shout. We don't need to understand but why if, I wouldn't say, let's say I woke up because of somebody's shout, then that's good enough for me to know that this person woke up and then he woke me up and he could only wake me up because I was already, the readiness to be awake was already there, so it does not invalidate the fact that he just woke up for some other reason. Maybe he had a dream in which the dream became such a nightmare that it pushed him out of the state of sleep.

I feel that's a bit what happened to me. Life became so unpleasant, so painful internally that the nightmare became unbearable, so that was the shout for me. Life was shouting, wake up by giving me that nightmare.

And so everybody gets something else, one way or another, but the main question is whether you can hear the shout and whether you are ready to open your eyes and then keep them open. So the fact that one person woke up in a different way from perhaps most others does not invalidate his or her function as an awakener. There are people who are already awakening, but their mind, of course, doesn't know that.

Their mind may still be searching and say, oh, I would love to awaken, but they're already in the awakening, fully in the awakening process, which the awakening process goes disidentified from the mind, present, here, no problem, and then fall back to sleep. It's a process. I call it a process because they fluctuate between mind identification and wakeful state.

So that's a gradual, and gradually the mind, the disidentified state, begins to predominate, and that's beautiful, but the mind might still say, oh, and why am I not awakening? It doesn't even know that you're awakening because it's not the thinking mind that awakens. It's consciousness withdrawing identification with the thinking mind, no longer totally consumed by the thinking mind.

Shh. Ah, one more written for the time being. Let's see.

Is consciousness aware of being in the now, or is such an awareness a separation from being fully present in the now? Well, maybe there's a misunderstanding. The deeper meaning, really, of now is, what is the now?

There isn't consciousness in the now. The now, the formless space, is consciousness. So consciousness isn't aware of the now, or anything like that, because they're one.

Consciousness is the now. The now is the space, the formless space in which the world of form appears. It arises and subsides.

So there's no problem here, except when you start thinking about it. Consciousness is the now. I am the now, which is space, formless.

Ultimately, I am not in the now. You are not in the now. You are the now.

That is the essence identity. The only thing that never changes, how do you know that? It's always now.

It's always now. Life is always now. It can't grow old.

It's always now. Now is consciousness, and consciousness is who you are. That's the equation.

So can you sense the now, right now, within, without, pervading everything, formless?

[Speaker 6] (6:07:27 - 6:07:43)

My question has dissolved somewhat, but I'll ask it anyway. Forgiveness. Is forgiveness just a requirement of our ego?

As we awaken, do we lose the need to forgive?

[Speaker 1] (6:07:45 - 6:20:09)

Thanks. Good question. Thank you.

Now, to forgive someone, of course, implies that there is something to forgive. If there's nothing to forgive, you won't even think or talk about forgiveness because there's nothing to forgive. So to forgive implies that there was something there that was non-forgiving, and that is dropped.

And so there was some kind of grudge, grievance, whatever it is, some issue with somebody, blaming, holding, longstanding grievance, whatever. It was there. It's then recognized.

You recognize that it is not healthy. If that's the only reason, good enough reason to drop it. It's not healthy.

It doesn't promote aliveness and well-being in yourself. Good enough reason to let go of that. It does nothing to right the balance.

If there's a karmic imbalance, somebody took something away from you or somebody did something to you, the grievance does nothing to redress the balance. You can allow the universe to redress the balance automatically, but you don't want to be stuck in that dysfunctional mind pattern. So you let go, and that means you forgive.

You say, I have forgiven that person. I'm no longer holding an emotional energy, a mental emotional energy field around that and derive a strange sense of satisfaction from that, which is what it is. It's not true satisfaction.

Satisfaction isn't ego satisfaction. It strengthens the ego. To have a grievance strengthens the ego enormously.

Some countries hold religions or groups within religions or tribes and nations have collective grievances for centuries, which make up an important part of their collective sense of identity, egoic identity. So yes, you're right when there's an acceptance of other people and what they do, which can only be there, of course, if you're really awake and present, because then you realize that whatever unconscious behavior other human beings manifest towards you or towards others is not ultimately who they are. It's not their true identity.

It's part of where we are. Humanity is in the evolution of consciousness. So they are manifesting consciousness in the state of torpor or sleep and they don't know what they're doing.

It looks as if they did. They are in the grip of certain energies and lack of presence. They are forced to act it out.

They're in the grip of very strong mind patterns and totally identified with their minds, which prevents them, many of them people who inflict suffering on others, it prevents being stuck so deeply in their mind patterns, which is all abstract, prevents them from having any empathy with other humans because they look through other humans through the density of their mental judgments and labels of who they are. They don't see you. They see their label of you.

It may be a personal label. It may be a collective label that they adopt and that's what they see. It's a mental abstraction, an inability to feel that you are an alive human being.

They can't even feel that they are an alive human being. They are a mental construct to themselves. They're so identified with whatever it is.

It may be an ideology, a belief system, or a set of grievances or judgments. It's trapped in conceptual mental thinking, which prevents you from sensing the aliveness of others and yourself. And then, of course, you do violent things to others because really they're all dead as far as you're concerned.

You've labeled people. You've killed them already by imposing a label on them. That's the first step in killing them.

And then the next step becomes much easier. You don't feel anything anymore. And once you realize that, then you see that they're suffering from a mental illness.

And so you would not want to equate somebody's mental illness with who that human being is. It's not who they are. The fact that they are mentally ill, by the way, does not mean that they will not suffer the consequences of their unconsciousness.

They will. That's how they generate their own suffering. They generate suffering for themselves and others.

But when you recognize that, then that which would need forgiveness doesn't even arise. Because all you forgive is the illusion that somebody's unconscious behavior was who they are, and then the reaction that comes with that. Yes, if you're so really awake, then forgiveness is no longer necessary because there's an acceptance and a recognition immediately of what it is in the other human that is perpetrating whatever they do, and it's not who they essentially are.

It is a manifestation of unconsciousness. Then there's nothing to forgive. You may still have to protect yourself to some extent or cross the road when you see a very unconscious being on one side of the road, it might be better to cross over to the other side.

But if contact is unavoidable, then all you can do is be there as presence. And sometimes it's possible, even in deeply unconscious humans, that you, by not reacting to their unconsciousness, that some consciousness is pulled out from underneath the unconscious patterns in that other human being. And suddenly you see, oh, there's still a human being there somewhere.

It may respond when you're present. There's no guarantee, but it may. And that's beautiful.

So, and then you treat the other not according to the behavior that they manifest towards you. You treat the other as if he or she were already conscious, that you honor their presence. And sometimes then the dysfunctional patterns thrives and lives on reaction of others, that it loves the dysfunctional pattern, wants the reaction and fight.

Now, if there is no reaction and you look through it, so to speak, then it sometimes happens that the dysfunctional pattern subsides. Maybe not for good, but in that moment, it subsides and something else shines through. And so you don't, when you're dealing with another human, always assume, so to speak, that there is something deeper there than the behavior that he or she manifests.

So it may just be a simple situation, an unfriendly person. You're asking somebody in a restaurant or wherever, you're asking for information. It's just an unfriendly person who regards you as a disturbance.

And so you're not a human being, you're a disturbance, even though their job may be to give information. I have seen some people who are behind information counters who treated everybody who came with a question as a disturbance that shouldn't be there. And again, that's a mind pattern, so there's no human being there, there's just an obnoxious disturbance.

And if you cannot react to that and treat them like a disturbance, which would be quite normal, which just strengthens their mind pattern because it confirms that you really are a disturbance, if you treat them as if they were conscious and awake humans with respect and friendliness and kindness, then something surprising may happen. You don't need that to happen. It's enough of a reward for you to treat the other with kindness, assuming that there is a deeper part that is more genuine and kind also.

And sometimes it comes out then, and sometimes it doesn't. It's fine. But that's a beautiful practice, not to be drawn to the same level of interaction as what you are getting from the other.

Because that means if an unfriendly or unkind person provokes in you unfriendliness and unkindness, that means you are being drawn to the level of that person. That means that person determines your state of consciousness. That means also you're not present enough.

And that's the beauty of meeting difficult people in this world, which, of course, happens all the time. And you can look at it as obnoxious. I don't want to deal with people anymore.

I'm just happier with my dog. It is true that dogs are much easier to live with than many humans. But for us, it's here to practice with humans.

And the challenge is that that's how you get stronger, through the practice. So every unfriendly and unkind human is an opportunity for you to practice non-reaction and inner freedom. So it's wonderful.

And if you're not successful in your practice, and five hours later you're still harboring negative thoughts about that awful person, then it's time to forgive. Laughter Thank you.

[Speaker 5] (6:20:27 - 6:20:54)

My question is about right and wrong, or good or bad. It's been my experience when I'm in a state of presence, with no thoughts, that things are just as they are. And good and bad, or right and wrong, only appears when I start thinking about it.

So does that mean that good or bad is an illusion created by the mind?

[Speaker 1] (6:20:56 - 6:26:26)

Thank you. Thank you. I'll say a few words, and maybe if Marianne wants to say a few words, just different perspectives on the same question, probably.

There's two types of knowledge, one could say. One is conceptual knowledge, and the other is the deeper knowing. And to refrain from judging situations, events, people, means not to get attached to, or identify with, or even harbor conceptual judgments about situations and people and places.

Because the fact is that every situation, every moment that appears, is as it is. You can't argue with that. The present moment always is as it is.

So usually judgment means there's a rejection of the is-ness of the present moment, instead of a simple giving it your attention. If you can give it your attention without judgment, and hold it in that embrace, be the space for what is, then there is a deeper knowing that tells you what is needed in that situation, and it can result in action, or it may result in simple acceptance, depending what it is. There's a deeper knowing that is non-conceptual, that is not judgmental.

Judgmental means you're separating yourself from the form that life takes at this moment, and you're arguing with it. And so you say, this is bad, or whatever form. Shakespeare, as you know, said, nothing is either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.

So not arguing with the simple is-ness of what is, because it already is. The universe has brought the form of this moment about. Deeper knowing replaces the conceptual judgments of the mind, where you don't need to label, label, mentally label a situation.

This needs to be practiced rather than understood. Again, it's not because it's not conceptual. So the practice is to be with what is as in the simple presence of who you are, and to give your attention to what is.

And it might be a challenge. It might be a situation that requires action. Does the action come from a prior rejection of what is?

It could be anger then arises. Anger can be sometimes powerful. It can get you to do things, but it's contaminated with that negativity.

There's a more powerful action arises out of that deep knowing of what is required, and it's not based on judgment anymore. There's just a looking, and then there's action. In other words, a non-conceptual intelligence can operate in you.

You can just access that. A Course in Miracles has its own terms for that. The non-conceptual intelligence is not a judgmental intelligence, because it's non-conceptual, and that is applied to situations and people.

And especially wonderful how it changes relationships with other humans when you're no longer judging them. Because the moment you judge another human, what is it that you're judging? You're judging whatever is the unreality of who they are, essentially not the conditioned entity as which this human appears.

And in many cases, then it's a total delusion. This is how he is. This is how she is.

You freeze that. You think the unconscious behavior, perhaps, that this human manifests. You make it into an identity.

It's nothing to do with who that human being is. It's an expression of the delusion of unconsciousness in the collective. When the moment you judge the unconscious behavior of a human being, you make it into his or her identity, and you get trapped.

The moment you do it, you're trapped yourself. A Course in Miracles talks about that also. The moment you judge, you put the other person in a conceptual prison, and you yourself are in a conceptual prison.

So accessing the deep unknowing that is non-conceptual, that is really what is meant by this. And it's a question of practicing in actual situations. And now let's see what your perspective on it is.

[Speaker 3] (6:26:26 - 6:30:12)

Well, it's extremely important when you were saying our first job is to go into emptiness. Our first job is to go into not knowing. What in Christianity is called be as a little child.

What in the I Ching is called the empty rice bowl, the beginner's mind of Zen Buddhism, the pure consciousness. That's the first step. And that way you are allowing spirit to guide your perception.

Now, you might be shown that all that's necessary for transformation to occur here is for this person to be totally accepted as they are. And it's the martial arts of consciousness, and you're simply called to be a non-judgment. But sometimes, as Eckhart said, action on your part is called for.

However, everything we do is infused with the level of consciousness with which we do it. So if you do feel that action is necessary, then if you do it from a place of judgment, it will carry a different energy, and as Gandhi said, the end is inherent in the means. If you are led to take action, then you will take it from a different place, and therefore it will ultimately have a different effect.

And that possibility that action is called for, which Eckhart did point out, is extremely important. Because otherwise, what, it's okay that the Jews were carted off in trains to Auschwitz? I don't think so.

The spiritual seeker would just say it is not right, not wrong, just spiritual ignorance as though that's the end of the story. One of the things I appreciated, I was reading about Franklin Roosevelt during World War II. He referred to the Nazis as unworthy men, which was profound.

It wasn't evildoers. It simply was something that had to be handled. And so I think that that is so extremely important, because The Course in Miracles does talk about the difference between wrong-minded and right-minded.

There is evil in the world. The fact that it arises from a place where somebody's perfection was simply turned from, spiritual ignorance, etc., we would agree on the cause, of course, because everyone really is the innocent light of God. But The Course in Miracles does talk about how someone can become temporarily inaccessible to the power of the Atonement.

I appreciated a story about a colleague of ours named Matthew Fox. I'm sure you know Matthew. There was an ashram in the United States where one of the spiritual teachers from another country had come, and it came to be known that he had had sex with all these women who were there, and very young women, and it was a profound abuse of power, to say the least.

And so Matthew was brought in to help the community deal, to cope with what had occurred. And someone said, Well, you know, he did the best he could about this teacher swami person. And Matthew said, No, he didn't.

And I thought that was so great. No, he didn't do the best he could. So there is the level on which it was where his consciousness was at the moment.

And non-judgment, yes. But I think that this is a place for the serious spiritual seeker to be very, very discerning. There's a difference between a judgment and a description.

The fact that I don't judge you doesn't mean that if you're a serial rapist, just go home and drink tea and you'll feel better. Because at that current place where you are in your life, you are a threat to others. And stopping you is not a negative act.

[Speaker 1] (6:30:13 - 6:31:07)

Yes, and to recognize deep unconsciousness like that in another, the recognition of that dysfunction of deep unconsciousness is not a judgment. It's a simple recognition. And the recognition does not transform, make this person's identity, even those seemingly evil people, there is a place inside them that is pure, that usually in cases of deep unconsciousness that can only be reached for themselves if they go through intense suffering that they create not only for others, but also for themselves.

And that eventually breaks down the layers of unconsciousness and ego.

[Speaker 3] (6:31:08 - 6:32:00)

An interesting topic that emerges from that has to do with the consciousness of our prison system. You know, sometimes prison could conceivably have atonement value, time spent. The issue is if the consciousness that we have is that you are in prison only to be punished because you are a bad person, what does this do?

It turns our prisons into schools of crime. People come out even more violent than they were before. But as we change our consciousness that the prison is a place of spiritual rehabilitation, then we will all get off the wheel of suffering.

It doesn't mean we won't ever send people to prison, but they would be sent from a different place within us. The experience for them would be very different and the consequences for us would be very different. Otherwise, it's just continuing the cycle of violence.

[Speaker 1] (6:32:01 - 6:32:03)

Yes. Thank you.

[Speaker 22] (6:32:04 - 6:32:05)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (6:32:16 - 6:49:55)

What signs do you see in the past year or so, either positive or negative, of the progress of the human race towards change and growth? Do you think we as a species are on the right track or have we gone even further astray? From Julie.

Are we on the right track or have we gone even further astray? If you look for evidence of the one, you will find it. If you look for evidence of the other, you will also find it.

So if you want to convince yourself or others that we are definitely not on the right track, you will find plenty of evidence that we are not on the right track. Just watch the news every evening. And if all the information that you have or the facts that you gather come from the media, then perhaps you won't find that many facts that we are on the right track.

But if you look elsewhere, you will find that indeed change is happening in many humans at this time. One is that we are here now. We are here at this very moment, in the now.

We are part of that transformation of consciousness. Why else should we be here? We have been led here because we are part of that universal movement of the transformation of human consciousness.

And even in the news, occasionally you have little glimpses that some change is happening. The transition in the United States, a more conscious president after eight years of unconsciousness, that is a good sign. I've seen some statements coming from Obama that are quite encouraging.

Some people have asked me, has he actually read The Power of Now or New Earth? I don't know. But if I hear things like, simple things, but surprising things coming from a politician, things like, you don't need to be disagreeable when you disagree with somebody.

A very simple truth, but coming from a politician, it's an incredible thing. It's almost a miracle. Because the implication is that you don't need to be identified with your mind.

Beyond that, whatever opinion you might hold, you don't need to be so identified with your mental positions that immediately you make somebody who holds a different mental position into an enemy. That's what he's really saying, but he's expressing it in very simple terms. And that's a new thing.

We haven't had that in a long time in politics. Or even you have occasionally a person like we had in the past in Russia, Gorbachev. Compared to the previous Soviet leaders, Gorbachev was a highly evolved Buddha.

Perhaps he was a Buddha, or is a Buddha. But even if we only compare him to the previous leaders, it's like day and night. Gorbachev, I remember he said when there was another one of many crises between the United States and Russia, and they asked him, what is your opinion of this crisis situation?

And he just said, this too will pass. So occasionally you see some consciousness coming even into politics. And so now there's a good chance that consciousness is flowing into that area.

There's no guarantee, because what Obama is moving into now is he's moving into the old, already existing, ego-created structures. Now the question is whether he's able to sustain that state of consciousness that he's in now that is not dominated by ego, but goes beyond egoic conflict. Whether after having moved into all the political, economic, military structures that have been created by the collective ego, are these structures, not only in his own country, but also he has relationships through the structures with other structures in other countries which are equally ego-dominated, whether he's able to sustain the state of relative awareness or presence within that, or whether he will be pulled into greater unconsciousness through moving into those egoic structures.

Or he's able to maintain it and transform to some extent the old structures from within. It would be a miraculous thing, but not beyond possibility. It is possible that he's able to do that, but the forces of unconsciousness around him will be quite strong.

There is, you may be familiar with the phrase, I think it's called the military-industrial complex, I believe that's the phrase. I always thought that phrase must have been coined by somebody like Chomsky or somebody in the 60s, but in fact I recently learned that actually it was President Eisenhower who used that term for the first time when he was leaving office. He was actually giving a warning because he could see that there was an energy formation there that had its own momentum.

It was very powerful, and of course he didn't say that, but it's an egoic energy formation.

It doesn't mean that the people in it are evil, it's just an energy formation created by the collective ego. And of course that is still there.

Obama is not going to disappear the moment Obama moves into the White House. So we have something coming together there, and it remains to be seen whether he's able to sustain consciousness or whether the structures will pull him into unconsciousness. So what we are doing here is not separate from that, because ultimately it is the collective consciousness that creates whatever government you have, whatever predominates in the collective consciousness is then reflected externally.

And so as we are here, part of the transformation of consciousness that will affect the totality of consciousness also. So every single individual is vital in this. And any individual who is part of this transformation of consciousness, as we are, otherwise we wouldn't be here, it goes beyond the personal.

We are part of the transformation of consciousness, and of course that affects the totality of consciousness. So if there is beyond that, if there is something that you personally can do on the practical level, wherever it might be in politics, if you are in politics or it might be at work, if you work for a corporation, it might be in some business that you have that is your own, anything that you can do and be more present with what you do and do it without the interference of the egoic consciousness, all that helps. So it's vital then that we bring this presence into whatever we do. It is vital also that we don't complain too much about people who are not present yet, because that's another way of being pulled into unconsciousness.

The moment you complain about an unconscious person, and of course when I use the term unconscious I don't mean that they are... When I use the term unconscious I mean that they are identified with the involuntary mind activity which runs according to its old patterns. So they are completely in that.

The old reactive patterns happen again and again and again. They are unconscious. What they say is dominated, is controlled by that.

That's unconscious. Not to be there as the aware presence behind your mind, but to be totally identified with the conditioned mind is unconsciousness. So that's what unconscious means.

So when you are confronted with an unconscious person, you can actually see that it's unconscious, but the important thing is not to complain about somebody else's unconsciousness. And to... That makes...

That complaint is already an unconscious reactive pattern in you, and you are equating a pattern that operates in another human being with who that human being is. So you've made it much more difficult for that human being by equating a pattern in that human being with who he or she is, you've made it more difficult for him or her to step out of it, and you yourself have become trapped again in a reactive pattern. So you see unconsciousness, spiritually speaking, still all around you, and that's fine.

You kind of look through it. You know it's there, but you look through. There on the surface you have whatever reactive patterns the person manifests.

And you look through, not necessarily visual. I'm using a visual image. You sense your way through that, and you can feel that that is not who that person is.

You don't have to tell this to yourself, but you can sense it. You can sense there is a human being underneath all that madness. In everybody, even some politicians, not mentioning any names, there is a human being underneath there somewhere.

Sometimes you have to look very deep, but it's there. So being pulled into unconsciousness can happen very easily. We were talking on a personal level and in politics.

A similar example, just one more example of the Second World War. We had, in the person of Hitler and the movement of National Socialism, extreme egoic unconsciousness taking over a whole country. And so, to some extent, the countries that were pulled into the Second World War also were pulled into not as great unconsciousness as the originating unconsciousness, but into some unconsciousness also, because they did things which we would say, how can you bomb a city that is filled with civilians, millions of civilians, knowing exactly there is no military value whatsoever.

We are complaining about terrorists and the so-called good people. Of course, the originating unconsciousness was even greater and even worse. But it pulled even the other powers into bombing cities, even with atom bombs and firebombs, where there were only women and children.

There were not even any men left, because they were all fighting somewhere. So sometimes the response then becomes equally unconscious. So evil, if you want to call it evil, breeds further evil, if you are not very careful, very present.

Or the response to terrorism, a few mad terrorists. We have a question here. Perhaps I'll read it.

That's our next, and then we can come to some spoken questions. Every question is interesting. This is from an anonymous questioner.

One of the most puzzling human behaviors for me is to witness an act of retribution. 9-11 happens, and rather than stopping and asking who perpetrated this act of violence and what healing needs to occur, our response is to ask who did this, so that we can inflict equal or greater pain and misery, thereby escalating the pain and generating cycles of violence that become even more difficult to stop, as we have witnessed in the Middle East. Can humanity stop acting from its most base response?

This touches on what we have just been talking about. Can humanity stop acting from its most base response, which is the unconscious response? The questioner mentions 9-11 happens, and rather than stopping and asking who perpetrated this act of violence and what healing needs to occur, our response is to ask who did this, so that we can inflict equal or greater pain and misery.

The only thing that's even more stupid than this, even more stupid than hitting back at the unconscious person, is to hit back at somebody who didn't even do it. Just because you have to hit back at somebody, anybody will do. So the question is, can humanity stop acting from its most base response?

Yes. The most vital question is always to bring it back to yourself, because it always starts with the individual. Can I, so humanity is replaced with the word I, can I stop acting from my most base response?

Which is the old reactive pattern. It might not even be aggression, it can be another reactive pattern. But it's an old reactive pattern and it's ego.

Can I, well, you have to see when the next challenge comes into your life, whether or not the answer is yes or no. So I can't answer that, only you can answer it, but to answer even that you have to see when the next challenge comes into your life, and then say, okay, can I stop acting from my most base response? It's a somewhat complicated question, but a simple question, or another simple question is, what am I doing?

What am I saying? What am I feeling? What am I doing?

[Speaker 6] (6:50:16 - 6:53:46)

I've known all the things that you've talked about in many of your books, well, there's two books, but the books I've read. I've experienced this presence through music, and it's a very profound sense of grace that I feel, when I know I'm being played. In a sense, I'm an instrument.

And in a way, what we call instruments are voices. So I've been very taken with this description and imagery I've had from what you've discussed about being near the void, because that's what it feels like. Something comes up.

I know there's something in there. We've been talking about dogs a lot. It's like a smell inside.

And it can become obsessive because it's such a beautiful presence, but I think of Stravinsky. He said, The Rite of Spring. He said, I did not write The Rite of Spring.

I transcribed it. Some artists get these things, and the clarity is there. What I experience is mostly an inference or something that needs to be embodied and brought forth.

And my experience is more of knowing what it isn't. I just play it. As it moves through me, I can sense that grace, especially when I don't feel my hands.

I don't feel anything. I just feel this presence, this music that's just as surprising to me as anyone else. And I'm really fortunate because I never took lessons and never got trained or anything, so my mind doesn't really get that involved.

Don't ask me to play Happy Birthday, though. I don't know how to do that. So I guess my question was about this connection to the creative and, in a sense, the artifacts that come.

I use the word inform. When I was thinking, does art and music inform the ego of presence? That was really what it was.

And so how does one be part of that manifestation but not get too involved to keep the distance so one doesn't become too obsessed with that process? So the balance of the two, that's what I'm looking for. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (6:53:56 - 7:03:52)

Well, of course, on the one hand, you have the creative process of music or art, and then you have the finished product, and then you have the piece of music that's being played and somebody listens to it. Or the work of art is there and somebody contemplates it. When you ask, can art or music inform the ego of presence, well, first of all, the ego doesn't know anything about presence.

So it can't do that. And there needs to be some opening in the ego in order to be receptive to the power that is latent in music or art that was created from that deep place. There's a lot of music and art that's not necessarily created from that deep place, but the ego is trying to be clever, and so it tries to come up with something clever, and then that's fine.

But let's talk about some piece of music or work of art that has come out of connectedness with the stillness or the presence. So some of that then, to some extent, the work of art or the piece of music still carries that energy field. So it can put the listener in touch, or the person who contemplates the work of art can put that person in touch with the deeper dimension within, as long as there's even a little bit of opening is required.

If there's only the density of the ego, then the transformational possibilities of art or music are not realized. So a little bit of opening is required in the viewer or the listener, and then it can be quite a wonderful thing to listen to music or to contemplate a work of art and be transported, if only for a moment, into that alert stillness out of which it originally came. That's a beautiful thing.

Another aspect of your question is, I believe, losing oneself, perhaps going too deep, almost losing yourself in the ground out of which creativity comes, in the creative process. There's always a balance that is needed so that you don't lose yourself in being. It could happen to an artist, it can happen to some people who awaken spiritually and they suddenly plunge so deeply into being that they lose all interest in doing.

That happened to some spiritual masters who spent several years in being without doing anything, for example, Ramana Maharshi in India, who had to be fed for several years because he wouldn't even pick up food. He was so deeply immersed in being he just sat there, and people recognized something extraordinary about him, which they wouldn't have done in the West. In the West, he would have been a medical problem.

They recognized something extraordinary and they put food in his mouth. But there was a loss of balance, certainly, he could no longer function in this world. This, of course, to such an extreme, this does not happen to you, you're still here.

And then gradually, after a few years, he gradually was beginning to function again in this world and then gradually was able to regain a balance between dealing with things out here and connectedness with being. In a slightly minor way it happened to me when I lost interest completely in doing and drifted around for two years. It wasn't a problem to me, it was only a problem to people who were watching me or who knew me.

So there was a loss of balance for a while, but then gradually the balance reestablished itself. I didn't have a teacher as such, so it had to be a natural process. So not to go so deep that you...

as long as there's the... you have to go within and then take... give form to that which was resting in the formless, be used by it so that through you it can come into this world of form.

Don't stay down there and lose yourself in it. Not necessary. So bringing...

Do you... What do you compose? Music?

Yes, yes. Well, that's a wonderful way of getting in touch with the stillness within any creative process. Anybody who is...

I don't, unfortunately. The world has not given me that gift of being able to either play music or have some kind of art to bring into this world, for a reason, because the world also needs direct spiritual teaching. And so I love some...

listening to certain kinds of music. For the viewer, it's important not to become dependent, however, on anything external to enter the state of presence. So whereas music can be a help, there too needs to be a balance.

If the only place you can become still is when you listen to certain kinds of music, then that's not quite it, because you're becoming dependent on something external to get in touch with that. So use it as a help, and this is the same as a spiritual teacher or spiritual teaching. It can be a great help to listen to a tape or to see a video or whatever.

A great help. But if you become totally dependent on that or on a group, also a group can be a great help. To sit with a group of people in an energy field of presence can be a great help, but not becoming dependent on the group either, not becoming dependent on one teacher, any external teacher.

And every good teacher will tell you when the time comes, enough is enough. The true teacher is within you, and what you see in me, that which you find so precious in me, must be in you, otherwise you wouldn't see it. So the good teacher will always direct you back into yourself, will not foster any kind of dependency.

So knowing what is a help, using it, any of the things that can be helpful, but not becoming dependent, eventually it is necessary for you to go there without any help, still being able to appreciate even teachers and teachings. I love listening to other spiritual teachers if they come from a deep place. I have great joy when I listen.

Wow, this is so wonderful. Or reading a spiritual book that comes from the deepest place, there's still great joy in that. It's nothing to do with needing.

It's enjoying a slightly different expression of the same deep truth. Just wonderful. And then also you can see it wherever it is, no matter in what form it's hiding.

You can see the truth shining through wherever it is hiding. It might be hiding in some ancient religion, hiding very deeply. And there you see it shining through.

There may be a lot of mythology around it, there may be a lot of cultural beliefs around it, and yet, deep down there, you can still see, oh, this is about, this is the truth, shining through all the mythology around it, and so on. So once it's in there, you see it everywhere, but primarily it is who you are. So I wish you well, and be thankful that you have this wonderful gift.

[Speaker 4] (7:04:13 - 7:06:06)

My original question seems quite obsolete. Good. And that I think is a wonderful thing to be able to share.

I will share my original question, and then hopefully maybe go beyond. The original question had to do with expectations. I asked about if it was reasonable to expect honesty and openness.

To what? To expect honesty and openness in a marriage relationship or in an intimate relationship, preventing the hurt of finding out things at a later date. And I was in Malibu with my husband and listened to Eckhart and submitted the question shortly after, and in the period of time between then and now, have come to some completely different realizations, and most of all realizing that I may have preferences, and that's where it ends, having preferences.

The expectations have hopefully subsided tremendously. What I'd like to evolve to, though, is the question about intimate relationships and the challenge of honoring our own personal stillness and each other's need for stillness, and at the same time meeting those practical needs to negotiate preferences each 24-7, if you could give some insight. I think it's a challenging experience.

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (7:06:07 - 7:06:35)

Life didn't promise marriage is going to be easy. Or relationships. Yeah.

So that's wonderful. First, can I ask you about just your own realization in coming to what you found that your whole issue that you were having about honesty and being found out, I think it was that you called it.

[Speaker 4] (7:06:35 - 7:07:02)

I made a realization maybe 8, 10 weeks ago that I really only have my own honesty and my own openness to focus on, and that by focusing on anything that's going on in my significant other, I'm really expending energy that's taken away from focusing on what I need to be focusing on.

[Speaker 2] (7:07:02 - 7:07:33)

Good. Okay, that's good. That's good.

And now it almost sounds like as if you're still intertwining it in this next question that you had about the intimacy and the amount of stillness that perhaps you need and what he needs and how to integrate that into your everyday life and into just the common things, as even this first question posing this, your expectations about honesty.

[Speaker 4] (7:07:34 - 7:07:45)

Yes, and I think maybe control is an issue, just continuously letting go of control and just allowing things to evolve.

[Speaker 2] (7:07:45 - 7:07:48)

What does your control look like in the relationship?

[Speaker 4] (7:07:48 - 7:08:23)

Well, I think much like the woman that just shared before me, there's probably a deeper fear of if we're not traveling in a similar path, if the path isn't parallel, if it gets too far away from one another, then what? And I'm kind of chuckling at myself because here we are, the two of us together, and I didn't even initiate being here this time, he did. So what am I questioning, you know?

I'm grateful it's all in place, and I need to get out of worrying and concerning myself about it and just allow the process.

[Speaker 2] (7:08:24 - 7:09:25)

So intimacy cannot happen if you have these expectations about what a relationship should look like and what it should be like and how he should be, how I should be, how we should be. There is no space then for intimacy because intimacy, you can say, requires that there is this space. So the space is here, and we come together in that space where there is no expectations because isn't that when you find, when there are no expectations on you, can you then be your true self?

Just be, in other words. Expectation even of yourself, let alone the expectation you have of your relationship and your partner. But you cannot be if you have any expectations.

Be still, be present.

[Speaker 4] (7:09:28 - 7:09:31)

Allow preferences to be shared as preferences.

[Speaker 2] (7:09:31 - 7:15:27)

Preferences, we all have preferences. But the demand that those preferences must be met or must be somehow manifested, which you can say then cuts off that intimacy. I have a lot of preferences.

I mean, I would like Eckhart to do the dishes more. I'd like to have him help me cook more and clean the house more. I mean, I really would.

Does it happen? Not really. Am I okay with that?

Yeah, I'm okay with that. Does it bug me sometimes? Yes, it bugs me sometimes.

I mean, these are all real things that happen in the emotional level and all the things of, you know, the mind that goes on. Does it have me love him less? No.

Do I not want to be with him because he won't pick up after himself? No. Sometimes, yes.

But on the whole, no. And it's just, it's okay. I mean, it's like putting things in perspective, you know.

What do you want more? Someone that you can actually live and have an intimate still relationship with, even though there's stuff going on in the mind that might happen and things, everyday life that may happen. You know, it's finding also the understanding.

I have observed that Eckhart is from a, I mean, he's like 62 years old, so he's from a generation where, as a man and as a young boy, he didn't have to do anything. I mean, really. He didn't have to cook.

He didn't have to clean. He just didn't have to do anything. And then he was a bachelor for most of his life.

So to try to get him to do anything now at this age, I mean, I'm so fortunate, lucky that I've got him to do what he's doing right now. So I'm grateful. But I've been in other relationships too, whereas, you know, men have done things.

So it's not about that. So I always, you know, would have to put myself when that would come up, I'd always say, okay, I've got to put this in perspective here now. Am I willing to leave this relationship because he won't help me enough?

And then I actually even started looking at how I even, my own wording of that and expectation of that. I realized, I said, wait a second here. I want someone, I want a partner to help me.

Like as if that was never his job and that it's my job and I need to help her. And this light bulb went on. I go, whoa, that's not the relationship I want either.

Is that what I have been projecting out and then thus receiving? I went, wow, no, he's a partner. He's a full grown up man that I don't need help.

But my, you can say wishes that my partner will take up his share. So when I realized that I let go of that concept of like thinking that I need help, that I'm somehow in charge of all the household things and I need help with this. No, I wanted a relationship where I could have someone meet me.

And when that changed, it also changed. Not that he meets me equally because I've got a different sort of conditioning, you can say. A disposition of, you know, I like things neat.

I like things, you know, the way that I like things. And he likes the way that he likes things, which it doesn't matter if things are all over the place. So, but he will do things in his own time.

He can watch me clean a house. Like when we're away and we're away for six months, it's amazing how dirty a house can get. You know, those who have this experience, it's like, whoa.

And finding a house cleaner on a small island is sometimes impossible. So, and plus we were undergoing renovations. And this is just recently.

It took me four days of cleaning. It was only on the third day that he decided he could help. But, you know, it was okay because I know I like the, if I want things done the way that I like, I'm responsible.

If I do want to ask him to start doing something earlier, then I'll ask. But I was actually okay. And it's actually, I did a little sort of test.

I wanted to find out how long it would also take him. But, you know, but when he did, I was so grateful. It was wonderful.

And we, everyone needs their space. Every space we go into, we have to find a place that is big enough that we can find our own corners.

[Speaker 4] (7:15:29 - 7:15:55)

It seems to me that part of this whole, of what you have addressed here is that he doesn't need me to help him on his spiritual path any more than I need him to help me know where my path is. And that can only interrupt intimacy rather than produce it. Yeah.

Thank you.

[Speaker 22] (7:15:56 - 7:15:57)

Yeah, exactly.

[Speaker 4] (7:15:57 - 7:16:11)

Because our spiritual journey is our own. And the more respectful we can be of one another's journeys, the more we open the possibility for greater intimacy.

[Speaker 2] (7:16:12 - 7:17:02)

Exactly. And we all have our own time where we need that space. And it's giving that space, the honor, to that person who needs that space at that moment.

And not that say, hey, no, we've got to be intimate now. And they're going, no, I need space now. And you've got to look then at your own insecurity about if you are going like this to your partner.

All that conditioning. You know, feed me. I need you.

Or we've got to go on this spiritual journey together. Because we are all on a spiritual journey together. But we do it all separately.

It can be an alone journey. And you'll even look at the word alone. It's all one.

[Speaker 4] (7:17:04 - 7:17:10)

And I am a Libra, always looking for balance. Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (7:17:15 - 7:18:26)

As we begin to awaken, it's so, I think it's just so vital. At least it has been in my experience. To be able to have and give yourself that space, that individual time alone that's required just to go totally inward.

Because when you're always with somebody, including your partner, it's more challenging to just go just completely inward. So it requires this, maybe a room. Or you going out if there's, you know, your circumstances of your living situation.

Or you're living in a studio apartment or something. Who knows, maybe you go and you close the door and have a long bath. Or sit on the toilet for a long time.

We need this time because the answers come from within. And the realization of stillness, of who you are ultimately, comes from within. And only from within can you know this.

[Speaker 1] (7:18:52 - 7:19:27)

Your own spiritual awakening came about spontaneously while you were in the midst of a depression. Now you teach people various approaches to awakening, such as paying attention to the inner body. But since your own awakening happened on its own accord, not because of techniques or approaches, what makes you think that what you are teaching will actually work for people since you did not use any of these approaches to awaken?

If awakening happens spontaneously, why meditate? Why pay attention to the inner body? Why invite awakening in any way?

[Speaker 23] (7:19:27 - 7:19:33)

Why indeed.

[Speaker 1] (7:19:47 - 7:47:03)

Now you may have noticed I have never said to anybody, you should listen to me or you should pay attention to the inner body or you should be conscious or whatever. For some people the awakening happens spontaneously, very quickly. For other people the awakening is a more gradual process.

And all the things I mentioned in the question, in paying attention to the inner body, meditate, any kind of spiritual work, is not separate from the awakening, but is part of the awakening. It is the awakening consciousness that makes you do these things. It is not something separate from the awakening process, but part of the awakening process.

If you come here more than once, you are awakening. Once could be a mistake. Or if you read an entire spiritual book that is truly empowered by spirit and you are enjoying it, you are awakening.

Now you could read a few pages and hate it, or you could read an entire book because you had to write a review about it and hate it. That is possible, so there are some exceptions to this, but you are not enjoying it. So we can't separate the awakening from what is happening to you right now.

You would not be drawn to this if the awakening were not happening. So in other words, you are awakening. And if you are awakening, then you may feel a pull towards that.

But the pull is not so much... the mind may misinterpret it. It may say, I need to become fully awake.

But you are awakening already. It is already happening. That is why you are here and why you are listening.

So we can't really separate that. Another similar question, it is almost the same question as this, is do we do something? These are very two extreme schools of teachings, spiritual teachings.

You have to work hard at it, otherwise you won't get it, says one. The other one says there is nothing you can do. But you are not going to work hard at it just because somebody tells you you need to work hard at it.

You work hard at it, if you even can call it that. Something wants to come through here, through this form. Something wants to come through you.

And so then you take up some spiritual practice. There is an inner urge to take up spiritual practice. That is the awakening.

It is happening. It wants to make room. And sometimes the awakening makes room drastically.

It just pushes everything out of the way, like a volcano. And at other times, and more frequently, the awakening is a more gradual eroding of the egoic layers that cover the splendor that is underneath, that which wants to come forth. It is a gradual erosion from within and from without.

Sometimes suffering helps too, a little bit. So it is undergoing the process of awakening. So you are awakening already.

It is not something that is going to happen. It does not mean that occasionally you cannot be asleep. I mean, spiritually speaking, you can still go back to sleep periodically.

Most people do. That is why it is called awakening process. It means there is a falling back, all patterns.

You don't go like that. You go like... And sometimes...

My sons drowned in the sea ten months ago. I did surrender, but when I felt the peace and calm coming over me, it felt wrong. It was not right to feel peace and calm with such a loss.

That's the natural way of being after death of a loved one. There is suffering at first, and then there is a deepening. And in that deepening, you go to a place where there is no death.

And the fact that I'm not talking to the questioner who is not here, the fact that you felt that means you went deep enough to the place where there is no death. But their mind, conditioned as your mind is, of course, by the society, the contemporary world you live in, which knows nothing about that dimension, your mind then tells you that there is something wrong about this. And your mind says, I should not be feeling peace.

It's not what one feels in a situation like this. But that's a conditioned thought by the culture that you live in. So instead, you can recognize when this happens, when that thought comes, and recognize it as a conditioned thought that is not true.

It doesn't mean that the waves of sadness don't come back from time to time. But in between the waves of sadness, you sense that peace. And as you sense that peace, you can sense the essence of your children also, the timeless essence.

So death is a very sacred thing, not just a dreadful thing. When you react to the loss of form, it's dreadful. When you go deep enough to the formless, the dreadful becomes, it's no longer dreadful, it's sacred.

You have, then you experience the two levels when somebody dies close to you. Yes, it's dreadful on the level of form. It's sacred on the deeper level.

And death can enable you to find that dimension in yourself. And you're helping countless other humans if you find that dimension in yourself, the sacred dimension of life. So death can help you find the sacred dimension of life, where life is indestructible.

Surrender can open that door for you, complete acceptance of that. So honor that sacred dimension and realize that what your mind is saying, that this isn't right, is just a form of conditioning. It's not the truth.

It is supremely right. Death is always a window into the formless as you accept it, surrender it, because the form is gone. Your mind becomes still when you surrender to death.

There's nothing, explanations are, it's not through explanations that you accept death. Yes, you could have explanations, mental explanations that say, well, he or she, they will move on, reincarnate or go to a place of rest. That can be comforting, but there's a deeper, you can go to a deeper place than that where you don't need even explanations.

A state of immediate realization of the sacredness of death, because what opens up when the form dissolves is life that is beyond form, and that's sacred, that's the only thing that is sacred. It's not a thing, that is the sacred dimension. You can get tiny glimpses of that, tiny glimpses of that when you lose something and you completely accept that it's gone.

It's just a tiny glimpse of death and can give you a tiny realization, maybe even more than tiny if you're ready. Do people start becoming nicer as you become more aware, or is it just that you no longer get consumed by the anger that arises when in the company of not so nice people? Well, I would say both.

When you become more aware, you're not reactive anymore towards people, you don't personalize things anymore, make everything personal, and are always looking out for some kind of hidden insult or look at what's his real intention behind what he's saying, what does he really want. You're just, there's an openness and a nonjudgmental attitude towards others that nonreactive relationships then generate already more consciousness in the other because two unconscious people strengthen each other's unconsciousness. So if somebody says or does something that may be unconscious and I don't react to it, it does not become amplified through my reaction.

If somebody says or does something unconscious and I react to it, condemn it, even if it's just in my mind, I actually amplify it and I myself become part of that unconsciousness through my judgment. If I can be nonreactive, I can allow other humans their behavior because that's their present stage of consciousness. They behave as they have to behave at this moment.

So I allow them to behave, to do what they do, I accept it, and then suddenly there is a different energy there. So I don't amplify that and those people then, I don't condemn them. I don't equate their unconscious behavior with who they are.

That's why it's so important not to judge others. It doesn't mean you kind of go through life saying, oh, they're all, everything is fine, that you don't see unconscious behavior. You see what they do, you know what they do, but you don't equate that with who they are.

You know it is an overlay on, it is human unconsciousness they're expressing that. It's not who they are in their essence. If you confuse the unconscious behavior with who they are in their essence, then that's called judgment.

If you see that somebody is doing something extremely unconscious, that's not judgment because you don't equate it with who that person is. And so you don't say, he is evil. That statement would be wrong of anybody because in essence nobody is evil, but they manifest extreme unconsciousness, which we can call in many cases evil.

So that's important then not to strengthen that and to get trapped in illusion because when we believe in our own judgments, it's not only we trap others in the judgments, we ourselves get trapped in the judgments. Also people become nicer, which is true what the questioner says. People become nicer when you are present and aware because they can feel the absence of judgment in you.

Even if they may not be able to tell you, but I can feel the absence of judgment, they only feel it as a certain goodwill flowing out from you towards them or an acceptance flowing out from you towards them. And humans can feel that. Even unconscious humans, they can feel that.

And everybody is grateful for that. Underneath all their madness they feel grateful because somehow in that acceptance, in that goodwill that kind of flows out through that space of acceptance, they feel a little bit more themselves than they usually are. And when a human feels a little bit more at ease in themselves when they come to you, they like you and they are very nice to you.

They don't know why. And their usual ego patterns, not all of them are operating anymore. Some may still come up, of course.

So the ego is less. The ego doesn't feel threatened. It feels, oh, there's no need to be that defensive here.

The ego feels it can kind of relax a little bit. It's still there in the background, like a dog. But it's not in its usual state, like the Rottweiler.

So it's just, okay, can relax a little now. And then they like you, so you become a nice person to them. That's perhaps all they know.

When they ask, oh, he's such a nice guy, they like to see him, like to go to him, and that's a nice, okay. So, yes, you do experience that. So partly simply because presence, acceptance is there and is recognized, and partly because there's the absence of reaction when somebody suddenly blames you, for example, says, you left that door open.

You shouldn't. And say, oh, I did? Yeah.

The usual ego thing, of course, is to say, no, I didn't. Whether you did or not, because it's regarded as the ego feels diminished when somebody blames you. You did that.

No, I didn't do that. You did. And it starts from there, and then escalates.

Why do you always blame me? Look what you did yesterday. That's called reaction, defensiveness.

And that's not there. So then it's just you're stating the facts. You left that door open again.

No, I didn't. And then there's no further arguing. Yes, you did.

Well, maybe, if that's what you believe. Or say, yes, you're right, I did that again. Sorry.

You don't feel diminished when you were wrong. The ego feels diminished. Just to admit that you've been wrong is a dreadful thing.

So the ego can't do that. It's like a little desk. To say that you've been wrong is a little...

And if somebody proves to you that you've been wrong, it's even worse. And then some people will start hitting you. That's how an ego can easily do.

If it's so obvious that you've been wrong and somebody proves it, then you start hitting them. That's the big argument. And if you knock him out, the ego still wins.

Yes, there is a general improvement in relationships, of course, with presence. Is proximity... This is Nancy from Florida.

Is proximity to someone who is in presence important or does listening to an awakened person on CD equally helpful? If the readiness is there, I would say listening on CD can be equally helpful for those who are ready. And even a book can be equally helpful for those who are ready.

For others, the added presence of an actual physical presence of a teacher might sometimes break certain egoic resistances. But that's more the case in a disciple-guru relationship. And so I'm not a guru as such, although some people would want me to be one.

A guru works closely together with disciples. And I did that for a little while, for a few years, and that was fine. But life has now called upon me to fulfill a different function.

And there is still a place for spiritual teachers who work with people more closely on a prolonged basis with disciples. Again, I could say a lot about that, the dangers involved and the possibilities involved in that. But I know that from correspondence I receive that many people's lives have changed from watching CDs or reading books.

Because when you recognize presence in another, that means there must be presence in you. So it's always in you. When you recognize there's this great spiritual being there, how do you recognize it?

Through the very same consciousness in you. Because if it wasn't in you, you wouldn't recognize this. This person would look totally ordinary to you and would say, I don't know what this fuss is all about.

So there were always many people who never... Without that opening, you can live with the Buddha for 10 years, 20 years, and say, he's just a completely ordinary person. And in a way he is.

I mean, he's more ordinary than ordinary without an ego, that's true. So when you recognize presence in another, at that moment there is the presence in you. Only presence can recognize presence.

So it's always in you. So whether you can recognize it when you see a CD, you say, wow, where does that wow come from? The power, the aliveness that the mind is telling me is in that person there.

No, it's in you. So it's better not to project it and make a person special, which the mind tends to do. Well, the person is special, but so are you.

You are equally special. There's nobody closer to God than you are, to use that word, except that they may not know it. They may not know it.

So when you recognize this, the wonderful thing is, turn your attention within and say, where is the realization that this is a wonderful spiritual being talking right now? How do I know that? Because you are a wonderful spiritual being, so to speak.

You're not a being, you are an expression of being, but the words are limiting.

[Speaker 11] (7:47:28 - 7:47:35)

Is the ego the source of our thoughts, or are our thoughts generated elsewhere and passed through the ego?

[Speaker 1] (7:47:36 - 7:55:12)

Oh, thank you. There is no ego apart from the thoughts. The thoughts, identification with thoughts is ego.

But the thoughts that go through your mind, of course, are linked to the collective mind of the culture you live in, humanity as a whole. So they are not your thoughts as such, but you pick them up from the collective, most of them. And so you identify with thinking, and the identification with thinking becomes ego, which means simply that you believe in every thought that arises, and you derive your sense of who you are from what your mind is telling you who you are.

Opinions, viewpoints, that's me. Some people talk to themselves, you know, you are, oh, you are so good. Why doesn't the world recognize you?

Or the mind says, you're no good. Same thing. You're no good at all.

You fail at everything, don't you? And then you believe in it. And then you suddenly have a low view of yourself.

Why do you have a low view? Because you believed in your thoughts. And why are you thinking those thoughts?

Probably you picked them up somewhere, maybe in childhood. Maybe your mom was so stressed out that you said you're no good. And so you pick up certain thoughts, and they get stuck in your head.

Those thoughts that you hear in childhood, they're little energy forms like entities, and they get stuck in your head and don't refuse to go. And the more you believe in it, the more deeply lodged they become in your mind. And so some people are stuck with very hostile entities.

I'm saying entity, not in some spooky way. But every thought is an energy form, and as such, we could call it an entity. And there are many people in this world who are stuck with hostile, life-denying, continuously critical and attacking entities that they carry in their head, and they believe that is who they are.

And they are continuously attacking themselves. And if they are not attacking themselves, they attack others around them. Let me tell you who you are.

Of course, what they're really saying is, let me tell you who I am. So they project the famous, you know the famous saying, we don't see things as they are. We see them as we are, which means you look at reality through the screen of your thinking and your judgment, which is conditioned by the past.

A dreadful prison to live in, it's like blinkers, worse than blinkers. It's like looking at reality through heavy veils. Ooh, it looks so dark here.

Is that a human being? So the identification with thinking, believing in your thoughts, having no space outside of the movement of thought. Again, here we come to the vital thing, lack of space inside.

That is the unconscious condition, spiritually, completely unconscious. And then you are burdened with a heavy ego. You are the ego, which is not an entity apart from thought.

It is thoughts that you have identified with. And the first moment of freedom comes when you realize that certain thoughts have been going through your head for years, perhaps. And that they are only thoughts.

And that you are not the thought. You are the awareness. In my case, I became aware that I had a thought, for example, that started in childhood, one of many negative thoughts I had.

Bad things always happen to me. Bad things always happen to me. That was when I saw people around me, okay, they have got all these nice things, and always there would be bad things happening.

And of course, your perception then becomes selective. When you have a thought like that, you notice much more, because in everybody's life, in daily life, things go wrong, you miss a bus, you get stuck in a traffic jam, or you lose some money. But yes, this is normal.

But if you have the thought, bad things always happen to me, you are extremely aware of those things, and they confirm to you that the thought is correct. And this is the selective perception of reality through the screen of thinking. So the reality will confirm to you, and not only that, that thought, or any thought of that kind, actually attracts bad things, negative things.

Or if you believe people are basically bad, and that's a deep-seated belief, and you don't realize it's only a thought in your head, or a belief, not only do you, would you single out where you observe unethical or bad behavior in others, you would, ah, there it is. Not only that, you actually are much more likely to encounter people who manifest that kind of behavior, because you attract it. And so, that's just incredible how people create their world through that.

So freedom comes from stepping out, encountering, first of all, a little bit of space inside your presence. And then from there you realize certain thoughts as repetitive and just a thought. Bad things always happen to me.

Oh, there it goes again. I just thought that before. So that's the, to become free of ego means becoming free of thought, identification with thought.

That's the end of the ego. It may reassert itself from time to time, but at least that's the awakening. What about your thoughts?

Habitual thoughts, do you...

[Speaker 8] (7:55:12 - 7:55:15)

Probably that I have to get everything right.

[Speaker 11] (7:55:16 - 7:55:20)

There's an intense, you know, figure it out and get it right. It rules me.

[Speaker 1] (7:55:21 - 7:55:22)

And if it's not right?

[Speaker 11] (7:55:24 - 7:55:32)

I escape. I just won't do it. I pretty much predict ahead of time, so I won't try a lot of times.

[Speaker 1] (7:55:33 - 8:21:30)

Ah, yes. Yes. Some people are afraid of not succeeding in whatever they do because they have a self, their self image, which is derived from thinking, would suffer.

If I fail at something, then I will, my self image will be injured and therefore I'm not even going to try. And again, that's to do with deriving your identity from thinking. And even the thought I have failed is a lie.

I am a failure is an even greater lie. You have not failed, you can simply reinterpret it, I have learned something here. This is not for me, for example.

So, but why believe the lies that your mind produces? So, as you know, people, many people live with a very hostile mind. That's, but those people are, the motivation, their motivation would probably be very great.

I would hope to get out of their minds. But first they need to realize that their problems are self-generated, mind-generated, not world-generated. Sometimes when I hear you talk about presence, it seems like you're describing a state in which there's no mental or emotional content, and yet I experience emotions in presence, perhaps sadness when something happens that is difficult for another person, or at the news of the death of someone I love, and I experience that emotion happening in present time.

Isn't this possible for, isn't it possible for emotional experiences to arise in presence? Yes, you can have presence while the emotions are happening or while, even while thoughts are happening. It means you're not totally lost in, totally identified with, totally drawn into the emotion or the thought.

There is in the background a space of awareness that in the foreground there may be anger, sadness, and you're not totally lost in it. There's a space for it that you still sense, and you are essentially not the emotion. You're the awareness behind the emotion.

You know that this emotion is there. The same thing can happen when the mind is active. You can talk, and the mind can completely take over, and you become lost in your mind in a stream, either a stream of thinking or a stream of speaking.

You can observe it. If you can't yet observe the mind stream in yourself, you can occasionally just quietly observe people talking to each other, and especially people who are having a discussion, because when you're having usually a discussion or disagreeing about something, there is not only the mind, there's also an emotion that goes with the mind stream. That's the disagreement.

Why is there an emotion when people are having a discussion and a disagree? Why is there an emotion that goes with their mental positions? Well, because they're identified with the mental position.

That identify means their sense of self has become one with the thought. The consciousness, the I, has identified with the form rather than realizing that it is formless in essence. It has lost that knowledge, so consciousness is in a dreamlike state, I could say.

Consciousness identifies with I, with the form, and so there is a self-identification with the mental position or thought, which means anybody who questions or doubts or contradicts this mental position or thought is unconsciously regarded by the self-identified thought structure which you have become. The ego is part of ego. Anybody who disagrees, contradicts, doubts, is unconsciously, not in so many words, but unconsciously regarded as an enemy because you are threatening.

It's a delusion, but there's an unconscious belief that the other person is threatening my very being because the person is threatening my mental position, which I have identified. So you can... It's a very deeply unconscious process, and it requires quite an alertness to see it in the moment that it happens in yourself.

But perhaps next time somebody comes to you and you're having a kind of disagreement about something and suddenly you can feel an influx. As you defend your position or contradict the other person or justify something, feel the emotion that flows into what you say. It will be some kind of either aggressive or defensive emotion that goes with it, either some fear or some aggression.

If you can be aware of that at that moment and realize what is happening, that you have identified with something in your mind, believing that that is you, believing your very existence is threatened by somebody contradicting you. It's unconscious. That's why people get aggressive and negative energy flows the moment somebody contradicts you.

It just means somebody has a different opinion. But the ego can't allow a different opinion because the ego feels its existence is threatened by a different opinion because ego's identification with thought and a mental position. This is, on a personal level, this can become an entire war between nations, a similar pattern.

So at first you can see it. Let's say you're observing two people having a discussion. And of course, let's say you are not involved.

Then it's easier for you to see that process at work and realize that usually both of them become drawn into a very negative confrontation simply because they hold different opinions. But for them it's more than an opinion. It's their very self that's threatened.

It's an illusion, but that's how it is perceived. So it's very fundamental and very basic to the huge amount of conflict that arises in human interactions. And it's basically so simple that it's just quite incomprehensible that people haven't realized by now that this is how it works.

And so, but the pattern is so deep-seated that even people who are engaged in spiritual work for years still get drawn into that when their mental position is threatened. No matter how much spirituality, there they are defending their very existence because the pattern is very deep. So alertness is required.

If you don't want to carry on in that way for the rest of your life and be part of that, madness ultimately, dysfunction ultimately, because it creates continuous conflict and negative feelings and so on and interferes with the true relationship with another human being. Be aware in yourself of this process when and as it happens. And for that, you have to wait until the moment comes when somebody contradicts you or says, no, you're not right, or I don't agree, or whatever they say.

And then you have to be alert. What is it that comes up when one wants to defeat the other or protect itself? So that is a very vital thing, but presence is required.

The pattern is deep, very deep-seated. Without the presence, each time, every time, it will take you over and you'll be lost. So alertness, I can't remember what the question was, but this is vital.

Ah, yes. Sometimes when I hear you talk about presence, it seems like you're describing a state in which there's no mental or emotional content, and yet I experience emotions in presence. So we've been talking now just about experiencing the absence of presence, and there's a mental-emotional stream that comes up.

You can do it to yourself also. You can have a discussion with yourself. You can doubt yourself.

You can have an argument with yourself. You can have one part of your mind accusing another part of your mind of being lazy, for example, or of being not good enough. And then you have to have a similar argument with one part of you.

Your mind splits itself in two and says, you should know better by now. You should do better. Why did you do this?

Well, I just couldn't help it. No presence. So, yes, there can be presence when there are thoughts and emotions, and it is vital that there should be presence in the background, which means just you're aware that certain emotions are coming through you, and you're not the emotion, but you're the awareness.

You're aware that certain thoughts are there. You're aware that you have an opinion. You're aware that you're voicing your opinion.

That's fine, but you are not in the opinion. Your sense of self isn't in the opinion. Your sense of self is the awareness.

And then you can express an opinion, and you can say, the universe is, in essence, consciousness. And then the other person says, that's a load of rubbish, or whatever they say. Mumbo-jumbo, you are talking mumbo-jumbo.

Show me the consciousness, or whatever the flat-footed materialist is saying to you. And then observe. See whether you actually know that you, the universe, which means you, ultimately comes down to you, this is where you experience the universe as yourself.

Do you know that the universe is consciousness, or do you just believe that the universe? At that moment, are you the consciousness, or are you the belief that you are consciousness? If you are the belief, then you are the thought, and then you'll be defending yourself.

So you'll be shouting back at the other person, that they are narrow-minded bigots. Or there is an awareness in the background, and then you say the universe is consciousness, and the other person says, that's a load of rubbish, then you say, well, I'm sure in your perception, the universe is not consciousness, and that's fine. Why should you believe that the universe, if that's not within your reality?

Fine, you are entitled to believing that the universe is a soup of chemicals. That's fine, that's your reality. I'm perfectly comfortable to allow you your reality of living in a soup of chemicals, or whatever, atoms floating around, whatever it is, or the gray matter of the brain producing the illusion of consciousness, whatever.

It's fine. No defensiveness anymore, and no negative feelings. This is why I liked the, when Obama said, you don't need to be disagreeable to disagree, you don't need to become disagreeable when you disagree.

The deeper implication is, you're not identified with your mental position. He couldn't say that, because nobody would understand what he's talking about. Well, only some people would understand.

There's awareness in the background, so presence or awareness is there. While things happen in the foreground. The foreground can be your thoughts.

The foreground can be your emotions. The foreground can be whatever is happening around you. And so the perceptions of whatever is happening outside, there's also, you're not perceiving through the screen of concepts or thoughts, you're perceiving through, you are the awareness, not the thoughts.

And even if a thought comes and says, that person looks weird, then you realize it's just a thought in your head, and when you're finally communicating with that person, you can still be the awareness and communicate as awareness, rather than communicate as if the thought, this person is weird, were the reality. You realize it's just a thought that came into the head, and you don't impose the thought on the person and then relate to that person as if it were true, and suddenly you're talking to this weird person. What are you going to, everything, it'll distort everything.

Or you want something, but the thought says, this person could be helpful to me, or whatever the ego says. That's a thought. Be there as the spacious presence.

Now the question is, yes, of course there can be presence while thoughts happen or emotions happen, including sadness or anger, but the questioner asks, it seems like you're describing a state in which there's no mental or emotional content. There's also the possibility of presence becoming so intensified at times that all thoughts and emotions become obliterated. This is very different from suppressing emotions or thoughts.

It's simply that the presence that arises becomes so intense that just thoughts or emotions don't arise, and usually it could happen in a limit situation, as existentialist philosophers call it, when you're in a life or death situation. It could happen that presence sometimes can become so intense, or it can become, for no reason at all it can happen, and you're simply sitting in your room, and suddenly there's no thought whatsoever, there's no emotion, there's just an intense aliveness. You haven't deadened yourself, because sometimes people believe if you have no emotion you're dead.

You haven't deadened yourself. There's an intense aliveness, a different kind of aliveness than the emotion, a vibrantly alive field of intense consciousness. So that can arise sometimes, and it's beautiful.

I sometimes spend periods of time without thought and without emotion, and it's beautiful. So nature, walking around nature, or with nothing particular to think about, why think? Or sitting in a cafe, drinking a cup of coffee, why think?

Just be the alert presence. So you have the presence can be there without thought and emotion at times that will happen, or presence can be there as a background to whatever emotions or thoughts are there. And presence can be lost completely, in which case all you have is thoughts and emotions, and you will believe that you are the thought and the emotion.

That's the unconscious state. So for us it's important to be there as the emotions happen, and I suggest you work particularly with people, talking to people, exchange of opinions and viewpoints, observing aggression, observing defensiveness, observing negativity flowing into, just because somebody has not the same opinion that you have. And then don't condemn yourself and say, oh, I shouldn't be feeling this.

No, just again observe that, just observe that suddenly you've become angry with this person. And instead of saying, oh dear, I failed miserably in my spiritual practice, no, just say, okay, I'm just noticing that. You're no longer in it, you're already out of it when you notice it.

So be compassionate with yourself, but the important thing is you're aware. So, we all know the famous joke about the person, when you tell the person, why are you so angry? The person says, I am not angry!

And that's of course a typical example of somebody who doesn't know, has absolutely no awareness, in the middle of anger denies that there's anger. Sometimes when I listen to your lecture and I am open and resting in spaciousness, it literally feels like my brain is being rewired in some way. I've also heard people begin to talk about something that is referred to as the neurophysiology of awakening, the idea that awakened consciousness is accompanied by certain changes in brain states and even the actual wiring of the brain.

What is your sense of this? Does awakening change the brain? Well, I'm sure it does.

I haven't looked inside it, but I remember Krishnamurti often mentioned, he had this strange expression, we need a mutation of the brain cells, he would say, a mutation of the brain cells. And he believed that this is what was happening when we change. And of course, although I have not looked inside anybody's brain, and I don't usually talk from the perspective of physiology, but of course every change that goes on inside you, even minor change, has an effect on the physiology of the body.

People realized, for example, a long time ago I believe in medicine there was a case, whenever it was 200 years ago, a man had a bullet hole in his stomach and he just couldn't heal. And that's how doctors found out for the first time about what the inside of the stomach looks like when it's working. And they found, for example, when he gets angry, the stomach lining gets very red.

Whenever he got angry. So whatever emotion you experience already affects the body. Whatever thought you have already has a certain effect on the body and changes the chemistry of the body and so on.

And of course any change in consciousness is also going to affect, I know that although I haven't looked inside the brain, but I know that any change in consciousness affects, think of a lemon. Think you're just drinking, you squeeze a lemon and you're drinking it right now. Okay, mouth is watering.

So a thought affects the physiology of even the simplest thought. Or any thought, any negative thought will have an effect on the body. Any emotion will have an effect on the body.

And of course a change in consciousness, of course it's going to rewire everything in the brain, I'm sure of that. Not that I usually address it from that point of view. So I'm sure Krishnamurti is right when he speaks of a mutation of the brain cells.

But what comes first, the chicken or the egg? Are we awakening because our brain cells are mutating or are our brain cells mutating because we are awakening? I don't know, I don't need to know.

Perhaps both are true, who knows. It may just be one perspective and another possible perspective. They happen simultaneously, so whether chicken or egg comes first, I don't know.

But I'm sure that it is happening, it cannot not happen. So the expression, the question I use is, I feel like my brain is being rewired. Of course that's applying a different, more simple technology, an analogy for what happens in the brain, like wires.

But yes, definitely it's not only in the brain. Many people also report noticing changes in the cells in the body becoming more alive, like an intensification in what they feel in every cell of the body, an intensification of the energy that's moving through the cells of the body. As you sit here, sometimes you can be alone and it happens.

As you put all your attention into the inner body, suddenly you feel it's alive. The ancient Taoists, they already knew that, so this is how they came up with things like Qigong and so on, to put attention into the body. Their idea was, not only because you feel more alive and can do more, but also they believed you can prolong your life in that way, but that doesn't really matter how long your body remains here.

What matters is whether consciousness is flowering through this form, which can happen right now.

[Speaker 14] (8:21:56 - 8:23:15)

My question is really, what do you make of me? I've been a seeker for 40 years, and my first Eckhart was Meister Eckhart, and I read him when I was a teenager, and so on and so forth. I run hot and cold, and it seems to me at this point, after all those years, that I'm not in control of this.

The suffering happens on its own, and that's a great teacher, as you say. And then your teachings and others. And so I've come to the point of just giving up, in the sense that when you give up, when you resign, with the sense not of bitterness, but with peace, then the natural state comes on its own, and you stay there.

But I don't know, I'm just who I am, and I don't know if this amounts to anything. So my question is, what do you make of such a person that doesn't know?

[Speaker 1] (8:23:16 - 8:23:27)

Okay, thank you. May I just ask you, before you... May I ask you, suffering arises in certain forms still?

[Speaker 14] (8:23:29 - 8:24:07)

In December, which was, well, I'll just say a few months ago, I underwent a huge spiritual opportunity because of some severe suffering in relation to loss. And I, of course, read your stuff millions of times, and I thought, well, this is a great opportunity. But it didn't quite, it worked some, but it didn't really quite work, because what I wanted was the loss to not be a loss.

And so that happened, and I'm not miserable, no. I mean, as a general rule, like you were describing your youth. No, I'm not like that.

[Speaker 1] (8:24:09 - 8:37:17)

So... Okay, thank you, thank you. Well, it seems to me there's a certain degree of acceptance in you already, and there's still also some non-acceptance still.

So the question is, well, is there anything I can do about that? Perhaps you're asking, and that's a very familiar question that is often asked, is there anything we can do to bring it about, the state of non-suffering, the state, the awakened state, the state of presence? Is there anything we can do about it to bring it about or to speed it up, or is it a question of simply recognizing there's nothing I can do about it?

So you have the two schools in which we have, so to speak, different teachers will tell you different things. The teachers, for example, of the Advaita tradition, non-duality, will usually tell you, why do you come here, why do you listen to me, there's nothing you can do, go home. And yet they could carry on talking to people for some reason.

And then there are others who will tell you, well, you really need to want to awaken, and unless your desire to awaken is as powerful as the drowning man's desire for air, you're not going to awaken. So you have one, some teachers telling you this, other teachers telling you that, and what am I telling you? I'm telling you that either one of them as a single position is not right and is incomplete.

You can actually bring the two together and realize there is something you can do, but you're not really doing it, but there's nothing that you can do that is not done by the totality of consciousness. You're not separate from the totality of consciousness. So continuously, whether you think you're doing it or whether you think you're not doing it, it makes no difference, the totality of consciousness is acting through you every moment.

But the totality of consciousness finds it helpful for you sometimes to believe that there is a lot you can do, because it's one way in which it comes through you. So this is why I sometimes say you can choose to be present. You can choose to take your attention out of drifting away into past and future continuously.

Okay, I'm choosing presence now. And then, of course, some people will come and ask, well, who is choosing? Do you have a choice?

Well, when you think you're choosing presence, then, of course, at that moment consciousness is moving through you. But consciousness finds it helpful, it seems to me, for you to believe that you can choose presence, that's how it comes through you. So the two are actually one.

It's neither one nor the other. And so any teaching that tells you there's absolutely nothing you can do is not quite complete. The other one that tells you, yes, it's all up to you, that's not quite right either.

You have to bring the two together. And so sometimes it is helpful to believe, just to realize, yes, I have a choice, knowing deep down, of course, you only have a choice because at that moment consciousness is there. And so you can be practicing presence, living in presence as much as possible is one way in which presence arises in you.

And so one thing you have absolutely... The first arising of presence always comes as a complete act of grace. And then seemingly it seems like you can do something about it.

But all that happens is that presence is intensifying. And the individual then thinks, oh, I can now choose to be present. Yeah, why can you choose to be present?

Because there's enough presence there in you. It's arising. And so why is it arising in me?

Of course, once you ask a why question, there's no end. Every answer to a why question leads to another why. You can try it out with anything.

And so often people ask why questions. Why do we have to have an ego? Why aren't we all awake already?

Why? And if you give one answer, I'm not saying you are asking those questions, but if you give one answer, of course there's immediately another question. And so you can experiment with that and you will find there's never an end to the why that the mind can ask.

So I think, was it in gestalt therapy where why are called dirty questions or something? So the mind is playing around. So for you, presence practice, surrender practice, present moment practice, making the present moment your friend, bringing a certain alertness to sense perceptions when you're going about your normal life.

Don't wait for suffering to arise and then see if you can be conscious there, but invite consciousness in. The fact that you can do it means it's happening. Otherwise you couldn't invite consciousness into this moment, into your life, this presence.

So you are not doing it, but sometimes it's good to feel that you are doing it and you can do it. And then acceptance comes more easily as one of the main practices then is inner alignment with whatever form this moment takes. That, I would say, then becomes for you the main spiritual practice.

And that is not, even that is not, sometimes people may regard it as a passive practice to say yes to the present moment, to allow this moment to be as it is for the simple reason that it already is, and the recognition that to say no to what is is a form of insanity. So if it already is, it is. You might as well be aligned with the is-ness of this moment internally.

Of course, that's quite obvious, otherwise you suffer. So inner alignment with this moment as it is as the primary spiritual practice. Now this is regarded sometimes as a passive practice because it seems to be, I have to surrender, surrender is sometimes used to describe it also, surrender to life, and so it sounds passive, you have to accept every moment, but it's not actually, it's not passive because it's passive and active at the same time.

To actually allow this moment to be as it is is also a very dynamic practice because it goes against thousands of years of conditioning, and not against by making thousands of years of conditioning into an opponent or into an enemy, but in the sense that the light of consciousness needs to be strong enough to burn away, to dissolve, to transmute thousands of years of conditioning, of egoic resistance to what is. So it requires presence, and presence is dynamic, as well as it's both yin and yang, presence is both the sword of presence and presence is also the allowing, both, it's not one or the other, and both, this doesn't quite make sense to the mind, that both are actually, can be, at the same time, presence is a sword and the vessel that allows, it's both, it's passive and active. Within the passivity, there's the activity, within the activity, there's the passive.

So that's really, that's the secret of in alignment with this moment, it's a very powerful practice, it's not just, if it's misunderstood, people think it's, you go like, it's not, it requires intense presence, and you, I haven't used that expression in a while, I used to speak of, it has come back to me, the sword of presence, which cuts through time, this is the dynamic aspect of bringing a yes to the present moment, just, that cuts through unhappiness, cuts through all kinds of story-making in the mind, it cuts through, it slices away past and future, so you imagine you have a big cheese, and you cut, and one part of the past falls off, ah, present moment. So the, and yet it's also the, what you see, sometimes the yin aspect, what you see in Kuan Yin and Mary statues, the allow everything, allow everything, this moment is everything, allow this moment to be as it is.

So, that and that, well, this is the feminine, and this is the masculine, and of course they go together, to be balanced, the balanced human being has, they're both active in you, they're both in you. One more time, I tell you, don't wait for some form of suffering to arise to give you an excuse for being present, be present and normal when there's nothing, no particular challenge. Also, so that in ordinary situations, just nature, as I, we talked about nature, be present there, don't, sometimes you can drift off, some people can get stuck in a certain, at a certain intermediate level, where there's, they're half in the mind and half in presence.

So, move beyond that. Many people do experience shifts still. Old consciousness, new consciousness, being drawn into the old, oh, dreadful, poor me, drama, completely immersed in the drama of life, and then come out of it again, oh, what was that all about?

How could I have been drawn into that again? And then it happens again. We are a transitional species at this time on the planet, and that's quite interesting, the, almost on a tightrope, walking on a tightrope, you can only go forward, it's harder to go backwards on a tightrope.

[Speaker 23] (8:37:23 - 8:37:23)

Thank you.

[Speaker 19] (8:37:41 - 8:38:01)

I think I understand, I definitely feel the interconnectedness of all of us, and the oneness.

What I'd love to hear your thoughts on are the unique aspects of our individual existence beyond the world of form and ego. In other words, is there a part of us, a soul or an energy that transcends death?

[Speaker 1] (8:38:03 - 8:45:17)

Well, there's the form, which is not just the physical form that you are, there's also the mental form, the psychological form that you are, and deeper than that, there's an energetic formation. Also, consciousness has taken form temporarily and appears as a human being, but what you see on the surface is only a surface appearance, and underneath it, there's the energy that animates the form and that temporarily takes on that particular form. Also, even that energy, as long as it's, that it's behind the body, is there and outlives the body for quite some time, and it's still form, but form is not separate from that which animates the form, ultimately.

It just appears to be. So in the same way that the wave movement of the sea is not separate from the sea, the ripple on the ocean is not separate from the ocean, but for a little while, it appears as something separate. So...

on the level of form here, you are a man or a woman, you are of a certain age, you have a certain psychological makeup according to your past and perhaps even past lifetimes, that all operates on the level of form. So you can honor the level of form for what it is without worshipping it or identifying with it and believing that this is who you truly are. But it doesn't mean that you totally reject it, because it is not separate from the one life, the one unmanifested, timeless life that appears in billions of life forms that continuously come and go, appear, disappear, appear, disappear.

Anybody would very quickly find it easy to be connected with the formless dimension if you could see a speeded-up version of life forms as they come and go, and bodies being born, growing up, reaching maturity, getting old, finally becoming decrepit and dissolving. If you could see these things in one room, if you could see within two minutes of the people sitting in this room popping out of existence, at least on the level of body, one after the other, dissolving as if they'd never been like soap bubbles, you would very quickly sense an underlying... First you would be amazed.

You'd go... Even with flowers, sometimes you see it in films. A flower comes out of the ground, and immediately withers, and it's gone.

If you could see that, you would easily connect with that which is beyond form, and that is the power of becoming aware of the fleetingness of all forms. The essential thing is to be connected with that, and then you can honor the form as which you appear for a while and be active on the level of form. It doesn't say, I'm the formless, so I'm never going to do anything again.

No, you can take up things, learn to do this, learn to do that. Not expecting ultimate fulfillment, because nothing is going to give you that on the outside, nothing that you can do or possess or knowledge. None of that can tell you who you essentially are, can give you ultimate fulfillment, and yet you can pursue these things, acquire knowledge, read some more books, enjoy it.

As long as you enjoy it, the level of form has its place. There's no need to say, I'm never going to read another book, because it's all illusion. Or you learn to play an instrument, you learn this, you learn that, you deal with artistic creation, whatever it is, dance, whatever, enjoy the level of form.

But you can only truly enjoy the level of form if you are rooted in the formless. If you don't have that point of stillness, that space of stillness in you while you pursue things, then things will become frustrating to you, and for a little while they might be great, they give you excitement or whatever, or some egoic fulfillment for a little while. Ego is never fulfilled for very long, as the song says, I can't get no satisfaction.

So if you pursue forms and you're not rooted in that essential reality within yourself, all forms will eventually become bitter. Even the most pleasant thing, even if you learn to play the piano, you become the greatest pianist, and one day you won't be the greatest pianist, or somebody is greater than you, or arthritis comes into your hands, or whatever. Or it's no longer fulfilling after a few years.

But whatever it is, all forms that you pursue, for the sake of the form alone, expecting something through your pursuit that it cannot give you, that always life is just one frustrating thing after another, and then people become disillusioned or cynical and don't believe in anything anymore. Well, of course, you've been pursuing all the delusions all your life. And some people lose all interest suddenly in anything because they've seen, but that's, perhaps it was, there was a man who wrote, I don't know how it got into the New Testament, one book of the New Testament.

Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. Written by somebody who's done it all and has seen how vain, now vanity in that sense is the old meaning of the word. It means useless, empty of meaning.

Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. I've done it all, he says. I can't quote it literally, but it's worth going back to.

It's a lovely piece of writing. It's nothing to do with vanity.

Q and A with Eckhart Tolle TV Part 5

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 3:32)

It is the old meaning of the word, it means useless, empty of meaning. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. I've done it all, he says, I can't quote it literally, but it's worth going back to.

It's a lovely piece of writing. It's nothing to do with God or anything. How it got into the New Testament, I don't know, but I'm glad it's there because it's a beautiful piece of writing.

It expresses a state of consciousness of somebody who has pursued things on the level of form and expresses his dissatisfaction, his deep dissatisfaction with things. And then all he comes up with, well, you just eat and drink and be merry. That's a superficial thing, it's not no true solution there.

It's an expression of a disillusioned state of consciousness, but it's a beautiful expression of it. And so it's a lovely work of art to read that, and it's a faithful reflection of a state of consciousness that is disconnected, that thought there was some answer on the level of form. When you know that there is no ultimate answer and otherwise no ultimate fulfillment, no ultimate self-realization, I want to find myself through this or that, then the world of form becomes actually quite a pleasant place when you do not have unreasonable expectations.

You honor it, you play with it, you participate to some extent or to a large extent. And yet one of the things, of course, that's expressed in many ancient scriptures such as the Bhagavad Gita, you are not attached to the results. Now the Bhagavad Gita tells you don't be attached to the results, but what comes prior to that is to be connected with the formless stillness, the alive stillness inside you.

It's very hard, if not impossible, not to be attached to the result if you are not rooted in the being. If you're not rooted in the being, you need the result of your doing. Do not be attached to a result really only works if you are connected, and then you can see you can enjoy action in the world of form without being attached to the outcome, and that's an enormous freedom.

And only then can you truly enjoy the doing. If you're attached to the outcome, you have a mental projection of where you want to get to, and that spoils to a large extent the joy in doing what you do, because you need to get there, you think. It's a future point that doesn't really exist.

And even if you get what you wanted, if you're disconnected, it's not going to make you happy. Even if the outcome that you wanted comes, you're still not happy, or the very outcome that before you thought would make you happy makes you unhappy. Hence the saying, there are two ways of being unhappy, not getting what you want and getting what you want.

[Speaker 5] (3:36 - 3:36)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (3:37 - 38:16)

Is there such a thing as free will? The person asking here says, Dear Eckhart, thank you deeply for everything. My question, if consciousness underlies all states, whether it be unconscious or awakened, is there such a thing as free will?

If you ask in such a way, perhaps the question seems somewhat abstract. Is there such a thing as free will? Of course, an old philosophical question.

To make it a little bit more direct, immediate, and experiential, you could reformulate the question somewhat and ask, Do I have free will? And then you can look at yourself and you can perhaps begin to find the answer to that question through self-observation, rather than believing that it needs to come from someone else. So if you go to self-observation, at first you might think, Well, yes, I seem to have free will because I can decide to do things, and then I do them.

I can, at this moment, I can either raise my right arm or not raise my right arm. It seems to be my free will, and I can now say, OK, I'm going to raise my arm. And if I don't look any deeper, then that will give me evidence that there is such a thing as free will.

Superficially seen. Or I can go and decide what to eat, where to eat, and so on and so on in my daily life. To do something, not to do something, and so on.

And then I wake up in the middle of the night and worry about my problems. Free will or no free will? Have I chosen to worry about my problems, or is it just happening to me?

You need to look at that. Self-observation. Or I decide to go to the supermarket to buy something.

Free will, yes. Then I stand in the checkout line, and it's taking a long time, and I get really irritated with the inefficient girl or boy at the cashier, at the cash desk. Free will or not free will?

Am I choosing? Am I saying, I'm now deciding to get really irritated with that girl? And then you start getting irritated.

Is that how it is? Or is it something that happens to you? You suddenly get taken over by irritation.

Does that look like free will? No. It looks like forces come up that you have no control over, or so it seems.

Same way the worry in the middle of the night. You don't wake up at three o'clock and say, OK, it's time to worry now. I'm choosing now to stay awake and worry for the next hour.

It's not like that. The thoughts come and persist and don't go away. It seems that you don't have free will there.

And then again you have to continue with your self-observation. You wake up in the morning. You feel fine.

You decide to have breakfast, free will. Go to work, drive to work. Some other driver cuts across.

It's a really aggressive driver. You almost get into an accident. You get angry.

And a mood of discontent comes over you. And when you get to the office, you're in that mood of discontent. Free will?

No, it just came. So initially then you might think that you have free will. And if you are really observant in your daily life, you can find that quite often things just seem to come up from within, take you over.

Thoughts, emotions, reactions, patterns of behavior. There may even be entire aspects of your egoic self that from time to time come up as they are triggered by certain situations. Some psychologists use the term sub-personalities.

So in some situations you may find that to a greater or lesser degree when you are practicing self-observation. You may find to a lesser or greater degree that there are sub-personalities in you that come up in certain situations when certain things happen. There may be a very angry person occasionally coming up or a little whining, little helpless little me, whatever, triggered by a certain...

So sub-personality is a certain response, a certain reaction that gets usually triggered as if you suddenly became transformed into a different person temporarily. For some people it's money. The moment money gets mentioned, a fearful entity suddenly arises that is fearful and perhaps aggressive.

Suddenly the person becomes completely transformed into something else. And we're all familiar, of course, with the pain body. When that comes up, do you choose it?

No, of course not. It just happens. And there it comes and then suddenly you are somebody else or your wife or your husband, you can see it in the other, how suddenly this person turns, the energy gets changed and a very different person emerges.

Always a shock. When you begin to live with a person, after a while, you realize that really you live with different people in some way. You not only live with that person that you initially met and you realize that that was only one aspect of their personality that they project outward.

And when you live with them, you see that there are other aspects to their personality that surface from time to time, including, of course, the pain body. And there's the moody self. You may end up not knowing who this person is going to be the next day.

What aspect of their personality is going to be there? So there are different selves, different facets of the egoic self. And we can't call that free will.

So humans are at the mercy of unconscious forces and movements, patterns. So as you practice self-observation, you become aware that, to a large extent, you don't seem to have free will. You get taken over by this and that.

And that's a very useful realization, because if you realize that, you're no longer 100% in the grip of the unconsciousness. So you may not have free will yet, but you're not totally in the grip of unconscious forces and movements because you're aware of them. They may still be acting out, but there is an awareness now.

That's why self-observation is so important, so that you don't fool yourself into believing, for example, that you're fully enlightened. Just wait how you... It feels next time you meet your mom and dad, visiting them, or your brother or your ex-husband or wife.

So what really needs to happen is the observing presence needs to grow. That is the only thing that can bring about a unified, deeper sense of I than the limited sense of I that usually pretends to be who you are, but is usually simply an identification with certain things that come up inside you. So that's the unconscious state.

And then every little entity that comes says, I, I worry. Well, who is that I that worries? I'm irritated.

It says, I am angry. And so on. So there's so many energy fields that come up that are old energy fields conditioned by the past that exist in you, and they all claim, whenever they come up, they claim to be you, I.

They say, I. Okay. No wonder people are confused.

And then even wanting, I want to be successful in this or that. Okay. But when the moment comes, do I want to put the energy into this that it requires?

Or do I want at this moment, is the I suddenly a lazy I that says, no, I'd rather watch television than practice playing the piano? Although another I says, I want to be the world's most famous pianist. And then the lazy I says, I want to watch TV tonight.

And so, so many I's, temporary I's, and none of them is the true I, who you are. In a way, an unconscious person who is in the grip of different forces, they don't know who they are. There's no unified I, no deeper I, only temporary I's.

And sometimes battling each other. So what is the way out? So as we've seen here, there's no free will there in that normal human existence.

There's no free will. But you are becoming aware that these forces or energy fields that claim to be I are active in you. And that is a decisive step forward.

That the awareness that is aware of those things is a different dimension of consciousness that comes up. And we could say, although we will have to look at that more closely in a minute, we could say that that is the place of freedom, where something comes up that is not a limited sense of I conditioned by the past, but a deeper sense of timeless, aware presence in you. And as that grows in you, at first it might mean you're becoming actually more aware of how many unconscious forces there still are in you.

So the first thing that sometimes happens, and people tell me that, they think as awareness rises in their life, the ability to be the witnessing presence, it seems to people sometimes that they're getting worse, they're becoming more unconscious. But of course that is not the case. They're simply beginning to realize how unconscious they are, or have been.

In other words, they're beginning to realize how little freedom they actually have. But with that realization comes the possibility of freedom. And then the moment comes when the awareness can override a conditioned reactive pattern.

And that is a decisive thing. For example, let's go back to examples we used earlier. You are in the checkout line in the supermarket.

Irritation arises. In other words, there's no choice here, there's no freedom. Irritation arises, and suddenly there's an awareness that irritation arises.

And that awareness is the unconditioned space of consciousness. And that awareness can actually say, Say, do I want this? Is that my choice to be irritated here?

Does it enhance my life experience to be experiencing irritation here? Does it enhance my enjoyment of life, my feeling of aliveness? Or does it detract from my feeling of aliveness and enjoyment of life?

Do I need this? Does it make any change to the situation? Those insights come from presence.

They are thoughts, but they are thoughts that come from the sanity in you, the true intelligence. So those questions then ask, Is that what I want? Does it actually help me in this situation?

Does it make any difference to the external situation? Or is that simply something that I can do without and I would perhaps choose not to experience? And so at that moment choice comes in, and you can actually allow this irritation to dissolve, because you see it's an unconscious pattern.

It does not enhance your aliveness. It does not contribute to your enjoyment of life. It detracts from it.

So it's a form of suffering. As long as you are trapped in that unconscious movement, you don't even know that you are suffering. You are suffering unconsciously.

And so choice comes in with awareness, and you can say, This is not how I choose to experience this moment. And then you say, I choose to experience this moment in alignment with the simple fact of how this moment is. I'm standing here.

What's wrong with standing here for a few more minutes? We're all right now. Nothing.

And so suddenly where before there was irritation, there is aliveness and peace. And the same thing at night, to use the example that we used earlier, where you wake up in the middle of the night, begin to worry, and suddenly awareness arises, and you say, Is that what I choose? Is that freedom?

No, I'm not choosing to worry. So do I? I'm choosing to just be present at this moment.

Worry adds nothing to the situation, solves nothing. It detracts from my enjoyment of life. It is a severe limitation on me.

It is suffering. Is that what I choose? No.

So freedom comes in. You can say, what I choose is simply to be present at this moment. Now what?

You might need a little bit of help there, because the pull of the unconsciousness can be very strong. But you realize that you can take your attention away from thinking. That's a choice.

Put your attention into the inner body. Put your attention into sense perceptions. Feel the aliveness of sense perceptions all around you.

Feel the aliveness in the inner body. You have chosen that, rather than useless mind movement that's usually called worry. And so on.

So gradually, the awareness can override the old conditioned reactions. And that is human. That is part of the process of human awakening.

And it is the most wonderful thing. That is what your life is all about, to gradually disidentify from compulsive patterns, to find the freedom of presence, of the unconditioned dimension in you. That's what your life is all about.

It's not ultimately about what it seems to be about, which is the varying, various different circumstances of your life. Whatever it is, your profession, your job, your relationships, all the external events and circumstances of your life. That's not ultimately what really matters.

Those are the things that are the forms in which your life unfolds. But underlying that, what matters is your state of consciousness that you bring to the life situations that you encounter. And that's where true growth, true liberation, and true freedom lie.

Not in changing, although, of course, you interact with life and with people and with situations. You not only experience situations, you also create situations. But whatever it is, you're creating out of your state of consciousness.

Your true evolution is not what you do out there. That's secondary. Your true evolution is to do with the arising of awareness in you as you go about your life.

And things happen to you, and you make things happen. There's the two movements. But very different, very vital it is, for example, what happens to you in life, people think that's so important, including the set of circumstances that they are born into already as children.

And then that continues. There are certain things that happen to you in life, your environment and so on, that is traditionally people call that karma. Good things happen to you, good karma.

Bad things happen to you, bad karma. That's the traditional view. But the real karma does not lie in what happens to you.

The real karma lies in your response to what happens to you. That's where you experience true karma. And your response to what happens to you in any given situation determines what happens next.

So it is by... If you change the old conditioned responses, or rather reactions, that's how you break karmic conditioning. So if you change the way in which you react to people and events and places, then subsequently you will find that those external things begin to change.

So that's your freedom to change your life, is to change the way in which you react to things. And you can only do that by being more aware, by bringing in awareness, or allowing awareness to arise. And now, of course, here comes...

I can hear the questioner, although he's not here, he or she is not here. I can hear this original questioner who asked about free will, asking, OK, but can you choose to be aware, or does that just come to you? To what extent are you free to choose awareness, or does that just come to you?

Is there freedom there? Can I... I would say this.

The initial arising of awareness in some way comes to you. It's an act of grace. When you first realize the possibility of being aware in you, it arises, a spark of awareness, a ray of awareness arises.

That you can't make happen. It appears. But once it's appeared, and you can actually...

Now you know what awareness is. After that, you can invite awareness in. You can actually choose awareness.

Once you know what it is, experientially, you can choose it again. And there, you, the limited, what's the seemingly limited self, you can choose it, can choose awareness. You can invite it in more and more into your life.

Now, it depends now how we look at it. From one perspective, the so-called individual human being can choose awareness. That's fine.

That's actually how you experience it. From a deeper or higher perspective, of course, you are never separate. You are not separate from the totality of life or the totality of consciousness.

There isn't you and life or you and consciousness. So you are an inseparable part of the totality. So from that deeper or higher perspective, you are not choosing awareness even then because there is ultimately no separate I.

There's only the universal one I, the one consciousness manifesting through you. From a lower perspective, it seems that you can choose, but you are ultimately, you are the one universal I, consciousness itself. And when you, the little so-called individual human, seems to choose, what's really happening, of course, is that awareness is arising here.

One could more truthfully say awareness is choosing to come through this form. The one consciousness is choosing to flower through this form. So free will or not, on the one hand, you've seen then in the normal unconscious human existence there's very little free will.

Then the possibility of something different comes in that we could call free will as awareness arises. But even that is only free will from a limited perspective. From a higher or deeper perspective, even that ultimately is not free will because free will would be the illusion that we have absolute separateness, that you are a separate entity, that the totality is not moving through you.

That's an illusory view of things. The totality is continuously moving through you. You are an essential part of that.

And since you are an essential part of the totality of life or consciousness, you cannot really ever truthfully say, on the deepest level, I have free will unless you equate the I with the universal I, which is ultimately the case. But then what you experience then is that the universal I, the intelligence, acts through you as you. And you become, as the poet Hafiz, whom I've quoted before, says, how you perceive it then is you are the hole in the flute that God moves through, plays through.

You are the hole in that flute and the God of consciousness plays through that hole. To bring it back to practical level, it is your task to find the freedom of presence, of the unconditioned consciousness, so that you become aligned with the unconditioned that wants to come, that dimension, the transcendent dimension that wants to come into this. And your task is to find that freedom, the freedom to be who you are, consciousness itself.

And then you can no longer really say, well, free will or not free will, looked at it from one point of view, you have no free will as to you because you don't even know what you're going to say next. I have no free will, really limited. I could say, I have no idea what's going to come out of my mouth next.

Is that free will? I don't know. It's a question of perspective and you don't need an answer, a definite answer anymore.

From one perspective, now there is free will. From another perspective, I am simply a hole in the flute. So the important thing then is just to find the presence in you so that you are no longer run by unconscious forces and movements that are ways in which conditioning has accumulated in you.

Get out of that and then experience the freedom of presence.

[Speaker 3] (38:39 - 39:38)

Thank you for taking my question. I'm with a man who is quite conscious today, although he wouldn't use those words, but in the past he's been quite irresponsible and done things that's gone against my sense of ethics and those actions have consequences on his life and thus our lives today. In that context, how do we regard the past?

More specifically, I find myself generally being present with him as he is today, as I am today. The time when I struggle is when I'm with other people, maybe my girlfriends or my family, who want me to tell his story and maybe justify his story. I find I don't have the words and I find feelings of anger or maybe even embarrassment come up.

[Speaker 2] (39:46 - 40:01)

So when you feel this anger and embarrassment come up, do you feel like you need to justify that?

[Speaker 3] (40:03 - 40:05)

Yes, another layer of justifying.

[Speaker 2] (40:06 - 40:34)

So your boyfriend is conscious now or more conscious than he used to be. And when he was unconscious and when you were unconscious, we kind of all do things that we kind of like, oh my goodness, I mean it's unconsciousness. Can you give an example?

Would you like to talk about it and say what it is?

[Speaker 3] (40:34 - 40:43)

Sure. Just to put it simply, he doesn't have a relationship with his children and he didn't financially support them.

[Speaker 2] (40:45 - 40:46)

Then or now?

[Speaker 3] (40:46 - 40:47)

Both.

[Speaker 2] (40:51 - 40:56)

And for you, what judgments come out of that for you?

[Speaker 3] (41:00 - 41:15)

Whether the actions came out of conscious actions or maybe sort of negligent actions. Either way, I can't understand how that evolves. I just can't sort of relate, so I sort of judge it.

[Speaker 2] (41:16 - 41:20)

You can't understand how somebody unconscious could act unconsciously?

[Speaker 3] (41:21 - 41:49)

I guess so. Although I feel that I do understand, but when the conversation comes, I find myself coming out of the present and asking questions for a detailed, so then what happened, and then this happened, and then that happened, trying to understand and, like I said, justify. But it doesn't lead anywhere for me to do that.

[Speaker 2] (41:51 - 42:14)

Sounds like you got the answer. You're right, it doesn't lead anywhere. I mean, how can you justify an act done unconsciously?

It's unconsciousness. And when you say it goes against your ethics, ethics meaning your sort of moral philosophy.

[Speaker 3] (42:15 - 42:34)

I realize that I've used the terms, it goes against my identification of myself as an ethical person, or it reflects on me as an ethical person, or maybe I wouldn't have done that. Right, so it reflects on your ego. Yeah, exactly.

Even today.

[Speaker 2] (42:34 - 46:08)

Exactly. And isn't this what we're trying to shed, is the ego? Not in him, not in what he does, but you're evolving spiritually to the consciousness of Christ, where Christ says, forgive them for they know not what they do.

So can you live those ethics? Can you live in the divine essence of who you are and manifest that in forgiveness, in non-judgment? So it's never about them.

It's always coming back to you and your evolution of consciousness. So you may have a certain way that you have your ethics deep inside, but really, when we are our true selves, we don't need definitions of what the ethics are because we just live ethically, period. But of course, you know, we always like to define it.

And when we define it, we like to then say, well, this is how we have to live when the world right now isn't there. And maybe even in your boyfriend at this moment, even though he's more conscious, whether that means he will begin to support his children or not, that remains to be seen. What level of consciousness is he at at this moment without judgment?

And any embarrassment, any shame, anything that you face in the light of the situation, that's coming from you. So maybe when you stop judging and when you stop the, this isn't ethical, this isn't that, he isn't this and he isn't that, not only of others, but in yourself, because there's somewhere in you that is judging you, that everything that you do, maybe you haven't forgiven the unconsciousness that you have been in the past. When that stops, then nothing and no one that says anything about whatever action you've taken can touch you.

You can go, oh, that's the level of consciousness that they're at at this moment. They need to judge. They need justification for unconsciousness.

It's always like bring it back to yourself.

[Speaker 3] (46:11 - 46:13)

Yeah. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (46:45 - 1:08:28)

I have to look down, dear, because I was told last time that my belly shows. It's like, it doesn't look flattering. I'm like, oh, I'm almost 50 years old.

When I had a child, what do you expect? So I'll just sort of adjust this, make myself look flattering. And we wonder why we've forgotten ourselves.

When I was told that, and I had thought about the British films and British TV and many of the actors, they have crooked teeth and just their bodies are all sorts of different shapes and they're famous. It seems like only here in the West we have to look this proper, be proper, hold in our tummies and we wonder after 20 years why we're constipated then. We don't have that room.

You know, kids, you know, children, their bellies are completely relaxed and rounded. You know, in an early age we start learning, suck that in, suck it in. Oh, my.

And I did that for a long time. And I started chagong and it's like, don't suck in your tummy, you've got to relax everything. Relax, relax.

It's like, okay, but I look three months pregnant. These are the, oftentimes, the cloaks that we wear. I mean, I see them as cloaks and we're told this from very young.

I mean, we put on our clothes. We were born here, we're naked. You know, we put on the first layer, you know, the undergarments, the second layer, we're topped in the third layer and then the makeup and then they hold the tummy in and, man, it's a wonderful life.

And we forget who we are. I, sometimes I'll say, if I have to come back into this lifetime, I'm coming back as a dog. Because my, our dog will drag his butt across the bum.

It's got an itchy bum, it just goes, shh. And, you know, we've just got to be prim and proper. I was recently in China and it was interesting to be there because they would sit there and they would pick their nose in a restaurant.

Or, you know, when I would go to India, you go to India and, you know, the whole world is a toilet. And it's, there's no shame in it, just like the dog dragging its rear across your carpet. There's no shame in putting down the pants and going to the bathroom or sitting there.

So, these are all the layers that we're uncovering. Not to say that we're going to end up picking our nose in public and all that or, you know, pulling down our pants. But just the mere fact that we begin to see the conditioned layers put upon us and layer by layer, just peeling them all away until we are again vulnerable, naked.

We are who we are, without name, without condition, without form. And that's our nature, truly. So, if we can fully understand that deep within, then something shifts in us, not only inwardly, because we recognize it deep within, but then perhaps our outer world can manifest differently.

We can then accept a different culture, one that picks her nose in public, without judgment. They're like, oh, what are they doing? You know, or we just allow our bellies to hang over our pants.

I mean, goodness, it's natural. And we forget this. Our natural, our nature.

If you've got an itch, we itch. If it's in a place where all of a sudden you go, oh dear, I don't want anyone to see me itch there. So you're like, let's see how I can do this most naturally.

But anyways, I think you understand what I'm saying. It's that we are just taking off all those cloaks, the roles that we play, everything. When we finally take those off, I mean, we still play them, it's fine, because we're in this world, we're in this form, but we're not identified with that.

For me, I want to be able to grow gracefully old. I mean, the beauty in that, to miss out in that. When I watched Eckhart's mother just age before she passed away and the fears that she had of growing old and what she looked like, and I'm like, wow, the suffering that I saw on her face as a result of aging, I just really hope that I can grow old gracefully.

I was standing at the sink not too long ago, washing dishes, and all of a sudden there was this yank pulled out of my head, and I'm like, it was Eckhart, what are you doing? He goes, well, I saw gray hair. And I'm like, okay, well, you know, I guess that's going to happen.

But before he did that, I had pulled out probably 10 before that, until I realized, you know what, I'm going to be bald if I just don't accept my hair turning gray. So that's the way it is. But we all do this, you know, and it's okay, but just recognizing that, okay, everything that is appearing external on the outside is not who I am ultimately.

So saying that, we'll go into a meditation, a guided meditation, and what is meditation? Simply awareness and beginning to recognize all those cloaks that we wear, the roles that we play, the conditioning of our minds. So, see, now that it's still morning time and maybe some of you are still sleepy, if you are feeling a little tired, you can always come right up and sit up at the edge of your chair.

So your sit bone's on the chair, so instead of just kind of being relaxed, just kind of sit upright. And your feet are uncrossed, with them firmly planted on the floor. And you can sit here with your hands either on your lap, face down, or face up, whatever feels comfortable for you.

So sitting up nice and tall, feeling your feet on the floor, the crown of your head lifted towards the heavens, you may wish to close your eyes, turning your attention inward and becoming aware of your breath. And now I'd like you to see if you can become aware of the inner body, whatever calls the inner body, that feeling of aliveness within. In Sanskrit, it's called prana.

In Chinese, it's called qi. It's your life force. And if you don't know what that inner body feels like, you could try just holding up your hands in front of you, palms facing up, so your hands are not touching your body, and bring your attention to your hands, feeling your hands, and ask yourself, how do I know I even have hands?

Dropping the label hands, I just simply feel the sensations that may be there. Perhaps a slight tingling, warmth, or even numbness. That's the inner body.

Now bring your attention to your arms. If you'd like, you can place your hands back down on your lap or continue holding them up and feel your arms. Now feel your arms and hands together.

And feel your shoulders, and then your entire arm, your shoulders, your arms, and your hands. And feel your front body, the belly, your chest. And now feel your belly, your chest, your shoulders, and your arms and hands together.

And don't worry whether you can feel any part of your body that you cannot feel. Don't worry about it. Just go back to an area that you can feel.

Perhaps you just stay with the hands. Now let's feel the back body, your entire spine, your shoulder blades, your lower back ribs, your upper back ribs. Now feel your back and front body, your shoulders, your arms, your hands together.

Now bring your attention to your hips, your buttocks, feeling the sensation. And then feel the sensations in your back, your front, your arms, your shoulders, your hands, your hips, your buttocks. And then bring your awareness to your feet, feeling your toes, your heels, your ankles, your arches, the tops of your feet.

Then feel your entire body from your head down. Then bring awareness to your head, to the face, to the top of the head, the back of your head, your chin, your neck. Now feel your entire body as one energy field.

This is your inner body. This is the life force that is flowing through you, as you. This is the feeling of aliveness.

Feel free to stay here, feeling the inner body as long as you'd like. And when you're ready, just gently opening the eyes, taking in the world of form. So this inner body, the chi, the prana, your life force, it's unseen, like the wind, but palpable.

You can feel it. And this life force, this inner body, is your access, your portal to stillness. So that's just one way that we can access stillness.

And if we practice to pay attention to this inner body, and the more that we can practice that and go about our day and we do things, as we're doing our things, our daily things, feeling this inner body, this is the opening, the gateway, into the present moment, into stillness. And it's like, voila, it's opened up. It's right there.

It's here. And yet the forms are here, manifested, consciousness. And then we can go about our day in what we can call a state of stillness, presence, and we move, we act, we play, whatever.

And this inner body, I mean, sometimes you can feel it, it's very strong, it's very palpable, and other times it's in the background just as stillness is sometimes in the foreground and other times it's in the background. But it's there. But we don't pay attention to it because most often we're continually looking out and not keeping some attention inward on stillness, the inner body, and just that sense of aliveness within.

So really, this is our spiritual practice. It's a continually going in, in, in, and not giving everything, all of our attention to the world of form.

[Speaker 4] (1:08:46 - 1:09:05)

Kim, you mentioned loving your pain body to death. When you say that, do you mean to accept it, that it is, forgive it for being, and in that way love it to death?

[Speaker 2] (1:09:07 - 1:29:25)

It's not love in the egoic sense. If you can equate space, God, consciousness, stillness as unconditional love, which it is because if there's this, if you're the space of consciousness, this holder, this frequency holder of God consciousness, it's unconditional love. So, in other words, what I'm saying is that when the pain body arises and if you can be alert, aware, and accept, so aware that this pain body has been activated, this awareness is the unconditional love.

This awareness, the unconditional love, then you say, we're loving our pain body to death. The awareness is loving the pain body to death. Because you can't, we can't define, if we try to define what love is, then we're getting into the mental realm and you, and love is not the mental realm.

You are love. Love is. Space is.

God is. How my movement started and how I was holding poses started is actually in sitting meditation. Next thing you know, I just stayed with the inner body, staying in stillness and I found myself moving.

Quite like in doing Qigong, people would say, look like Qigong, look like Tai Chi, and I was also holding poses. At first I thought because I come from a very physical background, I was a gymnast, I thought, you know, my body just wanted to go into, you know, getting into good stretching again, right? And I would hold these poses and I would finish and I'd have these hives all over my body and at first I thought, what is this?

I don't want this. Oh, goodness. But the next time I sat down in meditation again, again I started moving so I'd stayed with it.

So, when I realized that when Eckhart said that perhaps it's the pain body and it clicked for me, I went, oh yeah, okay. So it's not that I set out to, I didn't say to myself, okay, well I'm just going to go into these poses. It was always, I went into it when I was meditating.

So I found myself, it was an organic, natural process. It was nothing where I planned it and wanted it to happen. So I was just allowing being still and allowing whatever was happening.

But the moment that I, you know, I recognized that it was the energy of the pain body, there was, you can say, ah, okay. It was, the allowing was already there because I was doing it. But when I finished, I would, you know, be scratching a lot and it could last for a number of hours.

But what happened was that somehow when I recognized what it was, there was, when it was all, when I finished doing the movement or the poses, and even though it was itchy, it was almost like I didn't have to scratch it anymore. And I just allowed even the itching to be part of the process. And it, the hives quickly then, you know, went away until the next time I went into meditation.

But rather than scratching it and then, because almost I felt like the scratching it was almost, in a way, resisting it. Hi. Let's get ready for a approximately 10-minute guided breath meditation.

So here you are sitting at your computer screen and just come forward to the edge of your seat. So you're sitting right up onto your sit bones. Your feet are flat on the floor.

You can place your hands either face down or facing up on your lap. And then just gently close your eyes. Sitting up nice and tall with your eyes closed.

Bring your attention to your breath. Now at this moment we're not trying to change the breath, but just simply become aware of how you are being breathed at this moment. Perhaps there's some tightness.

Perhaps your breath is shallow. Just be aware. And then become aware of your body.

If there's any tightness, tension, bring your attention to those areas of tightness or tension. And consciously relax your body. So you're relaxing your jaw, your forehead, the shoulders, your entire body.

And then bring your attention back to your breath. And let's together deepen the breath. And as we're doing this, you're bringing calm, a calmness to your body, relaxing the body.

So we will inhale for a count of four and exhale for a count of four. So at this moment we're just going to even out our breath. And for those who are beginning, just beginning their practice in meditation, you may wish to count, actually count out your inhale and count out your exhale.

So I'll count with you for the first two or three breaths. And then you can count just on your own. And for those who have been practicing meditation for a while, it's just simply, consciously aware of your breath as you inhale and as you exhale.

Feeling the breath moving in and out of your body. Feeling the breath as you breathe in through the nose and exhale through the nose. So let's empty our breath, empty our lungs with an exhale.

Then inhale, two, three, four. Exhale, two, three, four. Inhale, two, three, four.

Exhale, two, three, four. And continue like this on your own. Notice where you're breathing when you inhale, where the breath is going in the body.

See if you can actually inhale through the belly. So when you inhale, your belly rises. And when you exhale, your belly falls inward.

If you become lost in thoughts, just gently guide your attention back to your breath. Now let's increase the inhale and the exhale to the count of six. You may notice as you deepen your breathing and you inhale, it goes into the belly, into your chest and rises to the shoulders.

And as you exhale, your shoulders fall, your chest falls, and then your belly falls. Now just see if you can just stop the counting and simply be aware and feel. Feel your belly rise as you inhale, the chest rise, the shoulders rise.

And feel your chest fall, your belly fall as you exhale. Feel the body relax as your breath evens out. Notice the space around your breath.

Notice the space in this moment. And when you're ready, you can slowly open your eyes, taking in the world of form, still keeping some attention on your breath. And as you go about your day, just practice keeping some attention inward on your breath.

And if you feel like you just want to keep sitting here meditating on your breath, feel free to do so. Thank you for joining me today. It's been a pleasure meditating with you.

Namaste. You can have a moment of silence, which is, I recommend that you bring space for that into your life, is to have that silence, just to sit silently, to return home within yourself. And love is space.

Find that space and let the love flow through. If you're full of thoughts and ideas and expectations and imagination of what your relationship should be like, there's no space, not only externally, between the other and yourself, but there's no space internally. I like to use this analogy, and I've often used it, of a bamboo flute.

And if you can imagine, use the image of the flute. And yes, so there's the form, just as we have a form. But the most important aspect of the flute is the whole.

It's the whole in the flute, in which then life's breath, when life wants to create music, it blows into this beautiful form. And without that whole, it couldn't create the music, so it creates beautiful music. But if we, so here we have the form, ourselves, our souls, our minds, every thought that we have, every idea, expectation, opinion, judgment, that we identify with.

And we say that every thought and idea, etc., is a being. And we begin to fill with every thought, every identification that we have, as this being, into the flute hole. And then life, which wants to create this beautiful music through us, we blow into the flute and we go, and there's absolutely no sound that comes out, no music that can be created through this, because the hole is filled with beings.

Well, this is where I say that most of us human beings are full of beings. And our spiritual journey is, our spiritual awakening, the process is, is to empty out the beings. All our identifications, so empty out the hole that you are, the emptiness that you are, because you're a nothingness.

Even physicists have proved we're 99% empty space. And it's only the idea that we hold so solidly and believe in, and then we defend, which creates conflict, not only internally, probably, but a conflict with others in our relationships, between different so-called cultures, because we're full of beings. So our job is to be empty, be the hole in the flute in which life's breath breathes through.

That's from, is it Rumi? No, not Rumi. Which?

Hafiz, of course. Yeah. Thank you.

[Speaker 5] (1:29:35 - 1:29:36)

Hi, Kim.

[Speaker 1] (1:29:37 - 1:29:59)

My question is on how to deal with parents, how to not get lost in the emotions when you deal with parents, and with the pain body and all that stuff.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:00 - 2:53:45)

Mm-hmm. Well, if you can stay present, then you are holding the space for their pain body to help dissolve it. That's only if you can stay present while they're going through their pain body.

Now, if you find that your pain body gets activated when their pain body is active, and if you can be present still and hold the space for your pain body and their pain body, great! You're dissolving in everybody's pain body. However, if you find yourself slipping into unconsciousness, so in other words, you've just totally identified with the pain body, but if you still have that little bit of conscious presence, remove yourself.

Because once you feel your own pain body being active, and we can all know this from experience, once the pain body gets active, you want to row! Okay, let's go for it, right? And this is what we do, right?

When we're totally unconscious, we are wanting to pick. It's like the feeding of the pain body. So, in other words, it's not just fed with your own thoughts, but it's fed with somebody else's thoughts too.

So this is what we do, then we just make it grow and grow and grow. When I had... I mean, I had a very huge pain body.

And when I first got together with Eckhart, I thought, well, this is going to be absolutely wonderful because when my pain body comes up, I've got somebody who is so present and he can be with me, right? Through it all. Well, it's fine.

If I remain a little bit present, he can stay with me. But if I went totally unconscious and I was right identified with my pain body, I would see him walk out the door. And I'm like, and then it would infuriate my pain body more.

It would be like, oh, how could he walk out on me? How dare he walk out on me? Don't you ever come back then?

You know, that sort of thing. And it just infuriated me. But you know, when he did this, after many, many times of doing it, it was the best thing for me because I learned that only I could dissolve my pain body.

Nobody else could do it for me. So, if there's enough presence to stay just present with it, then you'll watch it dissolve. And it could possibly happen.

But the moment that you start slipping into unconsciousness, I would say the best thing is we go through this gradual process. And don't let the ego come in because the ego will say, well, you know what? I'm more awake now, so I bet you I can probably stay here.

Well, that's probably a sure sign that you're not awake because when you are fully present, you won't even have those kind of thoughts. You'll just find yourself just there, holding the space, and, okay, just being still. Maybe some words might come out, and other times, maybe no words will come out and you're just holding the space.

I remember I was sitting in Starbucks one time having a tea, and it wasn't a full crowd. There were empty tables, but for some reason, I sat down in this one particular table, and there was a young girl who looked like maybe it was with her father. He was an older gentleman, and she was in a lot of pain.

You can just... As soon as I sat down, I went, oh, hmm. Okay, shall I move?

Because I could feel that. You know, you can feel that energy of that pain body. When somebody is so unhappy, you can feel that.

But I just was present, and I didn't find myself getting up to move to another table, so I was just present, and I could just feel that energy. So all I just did was just stay present, because don't forget, ultimately, we are all one. So this energy, there's no division.

So it's like the thread of consciousness is through this energy form, right? There's no boundaries in it, so you can feel other people's energy. So I was just present with it.

I don't know how long it took, 15, 20 minutes. I wasn't watching the time. All I was just doing is drinking my tea and feeling.

I wasn't judging her, naming anything. I was just feeling the energy. That's all.

And then suddenly, I felt the energy just burst. And the moment I felt it burst, she started laughing. She literally broke out in laughter.

And then her and it looked like her father were just having a good time, and they were laughing the whole time about whatever was going on for her. So it is possible to just stay present, not in a conceptual way, but just be there as the witnessing presence. And part of that witnessing presence, because we're human beings, is we have to feel it.

And this is what most of us have been so afraid of, especially here in the West, is feeling. Feeling whatever it is that we're feeling, especially emotions. And Ram Dass used to say, if you think you're enlightened, go live with your parents, or go visit your parents for about a week or two.

They are really ultimately the test. So anytime you want to practice presence, yeah, great, go be with your parents. It's a great practice.

So let's begin with what I like to call Bamboo Tree. In yoga, it's called Mountain Pose, Tadasana. In traditional Chinese, Qigong, it's called Tree Pose.

But I like to add the Bamboo Tree, because the Bamboo Tree, it's firm, yet flexible. But the most important thing is, is that it's hollow on the inside. And that's what we are.

We are actually space. 99% empty space. And it's only with the thoughts and the identification with thinking that we become contracted in the body, and therefore, in a way, feeling solid and tense.

So Bamboo Tree can be used standing, it could be done seated, anytime, standing in line at the supermarket. And all you're just doing is, you are just standing and emptying yourself. So, just you could stand with your feet a bit, hip-width apart.

The knees are unlocked. Not bent a lot, just unlocked. And the whole body is relaxed.

So the shoulders are relaxed, the arms are relaxed, the feet, the legs, everything is relaxed. And imagine your tailbone being drawn towards the earth. The crown of your head lifted towards the sky.

You may wish to close your eyes. And just feeling the breath, just allowing yourself to empty. If any thoughts arise, just notice them, let them go.

Return your awareness to the breath. Become the space. Become the awareness that you are.

So this Bamboo Tree is a good practice to do after any activity or before any activity. Even it's before you, when the phone rings, instead of running and rushing to the phone to answer it. Just stop, stand there for a few moments and just become alert, present and empty.

And then move into your activity, into whatever motion that is called for in the moment. And in practicing this, you'll begin to feel the inner body that Eckhart calls the inner body, the feeling of aliveness within, the chi, the prana, the life force that is always flowing within. But with the thoughts, the thinking mind, the attachment to the thoughts, the attachment to emotions that arise, we become rigid and contracted and the chi is not able to flow.

So with this, it's just an emptying out of everything. And you can even imagine any emotions or any negativity flowing right down in the body and out the soles of your feet and to the edge of the universe. Okay, and then just gently begin to shake the right arm.

And then you can begin to shake it even more. Just make sure that it's nice and loose, including the wrist, the elbow and the shoulder. And shake it.

So it's not a movement where there's effort. It's just like almost a shaking where you can just allow everything to loosen up. And now the right foot and the right leg, so the ankle, the knee and the hip.

Just allow everything to be loose. Don't worry if you fall off balance. And now the left arm.

Again, it's a constant scanning of the body to make sure everything is relaxed. So in any Tugong, everything is done in the body in a relaxed way because we're wanting to have the qi flow through the body and the qi to move. And then the left leg.

Scanning the leg, making sure from hip to the bottom of your feet, relaxed. And now the whole body. So as we shake, we just allow ourselves to fully be relaxed.

And it's a good idea if we can keep our feet on the floor, the heels can come up, the knees are bent. I wouldn't jump with locked knees, so you want to bend the legs. And you can shake as gently as you like or as hard as you like.

And then perhaps eventually you begin to feel the qi moving and the qi actually shaking you, your body moving you. So the neck is loose, the jaw is loose, everything is loose. And this shaking Tugong, it's actually one of my favorites because what this does, it not only unblocks any of the stagnant, contracted energy in the body, but it helps the qi to flow.

So the natural life force to start flowing through the body. You can make any sound you like, just to... Even have your tongue loose, everything is nice and loose.

So scan the body from head to toe, making sure that everything is loose. And shake a little harder. It's a good idea if you can do this exercise for at least 10 minutes.

If you're a beginner, do it for at least 10 minutes. Because if you're not used to feeling what the inner body feels like, what this qi, this life force, this living energy feels like, this is a good exercise because you'll see at the end when we stop. So shake a little harder.

A little bit more. Now, check out what's happening in the mind. Because if you have this thought of, oh, this is stupid, this is a really dumb exercise.

It's actually one of the natural exercises that kids even do it. Kids jump up and down, they shake. Animals, they'll shake.

You may even notice when you go pet a dog, and as you go pet the dog and when you release your hand from the dog, the dog will just shake. He's releasing that energy that has been passed. So, through from the human hand onto the animal.

And you know, it just sometimes will shake it off. And the human emotions that arise, if we're identified or we resist the emotion, then it gets lodged because it's energy. All thought, all emotions is an energy.

It can get just lodged with it somewhere in the body. So, just continue to shake a little harder. Allow just the neck to be loose, the shoulders, forehead.

Everything's loose. And still focusing on the breath. Keeping your attention in the body so you can feel.

Just really get into this shaking. Be in present, be in the moment. Not lost in thought.

Just fully feel the body. A little more, a little harder. And as one Chagong teacher, when I went to Chagong class, we used to start this every class, shaking.

Usually for about 10 minutes. But then, one day we were in a class, 15 minutes went by. It's an hour-long class.

20 minutes went by. 30, 40, then 15 minutes went by. And finally, we stopped the shaking.

So we only had 10 minutes to do other things. And then somebody after class said, Why did we shake for so long? And he said, Because I was waiting for the last one to surrender.

So, fully get into this. And you'll notice, after doing this, it could be done daily. Actually, I used to do this daily.

And it's a good practice to do daily, because it gets the chi flowing. But, I forget what I was going to say. Oh well, it's gone.

Ah, remembered. Okay. So, it's nice to start with this practice, this exercise for 10 minutes.

But as you get to just do it, you can even just do it for, if you're fully present while doing it, surrender as you do this. You can just do it even for one minute, and it would be amazing to feel the chi flow. So, let's shake a little harder.

Everyone shake just a bit more. You can even shake with your arms up. And if the chi starts flowing, and you start feeling it, and you find that the chi will want to move you, so you might want to shake in any way that you like, any way that the chi wants to move.

Keep feeling the body. Everything is relaxed. You may notice some blocked energy begin to loosen up, and you can sigh it out through the mouth, or whatever way that feels like the energy just needs to be released.

Imagine the negative chi, and the stagnant energy flowing out through the bottom of your feet to the edge of the universe. So, one last good shake. And then when you're ready, just stop and feel.

Perhaps you feel the tingling, a warmth, or a numbness. This is the inner body, the chi, the prana, the life force. The feeling of aliveness within.

The energy, which is your bridge, your access to stillness. And if you'd like, you could just, if you'd like to feel what that energy feels like outside the body, because even though the chi flows in, chi extends beyond the body. Holding your hands up in front, view palms facing in, and you just go in slowly, and gently in and out with your hands.

Your hands not touching, but feel what's between the hands. Perhaps you can feel this energy. Something there.

And this is life, the life force. The energy that's within you. Within me.

Within the trees and the animals. The one life that connects us all. And then when you're ready, let's just store that energy right into the belly, into the dantian, which is about three, four finger widths below the navel, and in towards the back spine.

Let's just say it's in the belly. And then when you're ready, just return to bamboo tree. Emptying yourself of the last moment, because the last moment's gone.

Only this moment exists. So just allowing the energy of the last moment to pass through. Dissolve.

Until, as always, there are new forms that arise. Till the next moment. The arising, which can only happen now.

Let's begin to just clear the energy field. Any leftover, stagnant chi that may be blocked in the body. And what I do is a clearing.

So you gather the chi into your arms and just comb out your energy field. Your fingers are pointing towards your body. And you're feeling what's between your fingertips and your body.

And you're combing out the energy. You're not touching the body. But you're just combing your energy field.

And in your mind's eye, focusing it out down, the energy right out through your feet. And inhale. Gathering the chi.

Exhale. Combing. Just staying present in the moment.

In this move. You don't want to go into the future. And that means even thinking about getting to the bottom of your feet.

But just staying conscious, alert, aware of this. So we did the front body three times. We'll do the side body three times.

And then the back body three times. So if there's any of the two exercises, these two, the shaking and the clearing, are probably the two major ones to just sort of clear the energy field. To clear the energy of any blockages.

And then the back body. And when you're finished, return to Bamboo Tree. And just notice how you feel.

The most important thing, the primary importance, is stillness. The form, the movement, is secondary. And as we begin to feel the inner body more, we also begin to sense stillness more.

Be able to sense the stillness of all this energy that's all around, that's within. And being connected and rooted to stillness, you begin to witness that this energy that is here, within, moves through you. It's a creative life energy, life force, that wants to create and move through you.

It wants to express its consciousness, expressing itself through you. And this energy is the purest life force, purest life energy. That just is.

And with this clear energy, then, being connected to stillness, you'll find whether it moves up and uses the mind through words, or through just a touch, and this energy is love. It's filled with peace. It's filled with stillness.

And this stillness is the true healer. So we can do these exercises, and there's many Qigong exercises that's used for healing. But you can still be in your mind and thinking a lot.

And you may or may not get better, but really the true healer is stillness. And when you're connected to consciousness, to your God-essence, we begin to realize that the form is not so important as the mind makes it out to be. So healing happens.

Not only can it happen on the physical level, but most important, it happens on the spiritual level. And when we're healed spiritually, it's like it won't matter even if we're healed physically. Because we realize that the physical body is not who we really are.

It's the gift, the expression of consciousness, and that our consciousness is who we really are. The consciousness that was never born and never dies. And being rooted in this consciousness, we allow the expression of consciousness to take its form in birth and in death.

Stillness is who we are, our true nature. And then the form of this moment, the form of this body, is beautiful. It too is who we are, but not in the fullest sense.

So the practice of the bamboo tree, being hollow, so that the form of the moment, whatever is in expression, and as all forms are impermanent, will dissolve. So it too, then, you can allow, by being the bamboo tree, to allow it to dissolve. Sometimes people ask me, how do I know that I'm in the right relationship?

I mean, sometimes I want to leave the relationship, or he's that way, she's that way, he does this, she does that, and it just doesn't seem to fit with how I am. And I guess I would say to that is that, who is asking all those questions? It's coming from the mind, because it's not fitting in with your ideas about what you think a relationship is like.

I had one person during an individual session say, my wife, my partner, I don't understand it, and it really just really gets to me, it ticks me off, but she walks out of the house without saying goodbye, or she gets up in the morning, she doesn't even say good morning to me. I went, wow, this is really interesting, because he had the idea that she ought to be doing this, saying goodbye, saying good morning, and yeah, it might be nice, it's pleasant, but I also understood the same thing, it's because in my family, we never said that either. We never said goodbye, we never said good morning, we would walk out of the house without saying anything, we'd just walk out, we'd get up, not say anything, and I thought, wow, because his idea was that, oh, she doesn't love me because I had said, I want her to say goodbye to me, I want her to say good morning, and yet she won't do it, and so he didn't know, actually, because he didn't know whether she loved him, and whether he could love somebody who didn't say, I mean, I'm sure there was more to it than this, but this was the example he was giving.

He didn't know, and it's like, and I did share with him about my family thing, and I thought, you know, maybe it has nothing to do with you. It could be just that this is how she is in terms of how she's been brought up, or whatever. Can you let go?

What is it in you that you are demanding her to be different? What is it in you that you just can't be the space in which allows this to happen? Oh, she's leaving, and you notice her.

Bye! I mean, Eckhart still does that to me. He'll go, you know, I'm about to do something or leave.

Actually, now I say goodbye, but, you know, before, it's like, all of a sudden he'll say goodbye, or he'll say, good morning, and I'm like, oh, yeah, yeah, good morning, but it's not because I don't love him. And it's not because I want to just, you know, I'm rude, or, you know, whatever idea you think of, or judgment that you have on it. It's because that was part of my conditioning.

Our family never did that. So, it is the investigation, and what better opportunity for spiritual awakening but in daily life. And it's in daily life, and especially in relationships, that you begin to see what is actually being reflected back, because what's being reflected back is really what's going on internally, inside the mind.

So, for those who are on the verge of wanting to walk out, just stop. And you can even ask yourself, as I did many times, what do I want right now? Do I want to leave right now?

No. Because only the mind I saw wanted to leave, wanted to get out, for whatever reason, you know. The thought that it wasn't good enough, or it wasn't what I wanted, or he didn't do what I wanted.

When you come back into stillness, right action always follows. So, from a place of stillness, you will know without a doubt, because you'll find yourself walking out. You'll just leave.

And it may be, you know, you don't know, you might leave that day, or you might sit down and just sort of talk and say, I want out, and who knows what will happen. But it's really beginning to also communicate that truth, what it is that you feel, what's going on inside you, from a place that is non-threatening to be able to communicate it, what's going on. And just to be in that stillness, and you'll know.

I learned through my relationship with Eckhart that any and all my ideas I had about what a relationship should be, what my relationship should look like, and how I wanted my relationship to be. It took a lot of looking and some years where I finally realized that I wasn't having a real relationship, I was just having a relationship with an idea in my head. I wasn't meeting the other and seeing the other, as we can say, as myself, or the essence of the other, the essence of Eckhart.

But I just had all my expectations and ideas, my imagination, and that's how my relationship, that's how I was relating. And you could only see that in the daily activities, in your daily life. You could know this, and I knew it on some level, that consciousness, that stillness, was not about thought, was not about your ideas.

And you could know this, and in a relationship, it's not about the idea of a relationship. But that's when the awareness, the inner work needs to be done. You have to take it beyond the intellectual and then actually then to discover it.

So the discovery becomes this inner, deep knowing that, okay, what I see, what I'm doing, is that I'm not relating with another human being as consciousness, as stillness, but as ego. So when I saw that, and it took many times seeing it, for example, we come from different cultures. Eckhart is from Germany.

Even though I'm born in Canada, I'm Chinese, so I had the cultural conditioning of Chinese. We bring to it our own conditioning. And plus, being a woman, him a man, the idea and all that sort of stuff, the era in which Eckhart was born, the generation in which I was born.

So I have certain expectations that I brought to the relationship. The first one I remember is very close to when Eckhart and I first got together in relationship. And I thought I had to do sort of all the cooking, you know, all the cleaning up afterwards, and that was my conditioning.

And he didn't have to do anything, and I didn't realize that his conditioning also is that, because he was brought up in Europe, Germany and in Spain, where he had his mother, his stepmother, who did everything. So it was easy for him just to, that was it. You just allow the woman to do it.

At least this was my perception, because he was not doing too much, right? So here I was, and then I was starting to get resentful, like, you know, here I am chopping the vegetables or whatever, or cleaning up, and I'm like, why doesn't he do anything? You know, he's got to do something.

You know, like, why do I have to ask? I shouldn't have to ask. And then suddenly I realized, oh my God, these are all my thoughts in my head, my expectations, instead of just telling him, you know, I don't want to do all the cooking.

You know? So I told him that, and he goes, oh, okay. Well, you don't have to cook.

We'll go out. I went, oh, okay. So we'll go out.

All right. I don't think at that time I didn't really say to him, well, just help me. You know, I just said, okay, yeah, okay, we'll go out.

Because I didn't really like cooking anyways, at least so I thought at that time. So we went out, and we went out a lot, and then plus we traveled, and we ate out again. So I was feeling more and more unhealthy.

And anyways, when we bought a house together over on the island and had this wonderful big kitchen, I found myself cooking and able to, I liked cooking. I enjoyed it. And I wanted to, we wanted to be at home.

So we came back to the same scenario again, right? We weren't going out to a restaurant sitting where I was cooking. But this time I was able to express, to say, you know, I would like some help.

And he would go, okay. But then, you know, several weeks and months would pass, and I'd have to still keep on asking, well, I need some help now. And then I can see it here, just this thought arise in the background, like, oh, my God, why is it that I always have to ask him?

It's just like a little kid where I have to, you know, always have to ask a little kid what to do. Why can't he just offer and help? I went, wow.

This is what I expect. I expect him to just help when his nature, his conditioning is that he just doesn't unless he's asked. So I had to resign and just say, okay, I just have to ask.

And it was me that was stirring up all the angst, all the anxiety in the thought that I wanted him different than what he is. So I don't mind now. I just say, okay, time to help.

And he'll go, okay. And he just, he'll help. So, I mean, those are just the superficial things in the relationship, the daily things, because many people ask me about what my relationship with Eckhart is like and how wonderful it must be.

And yes, on the level of silence, of stillness, it's absolutely wonderful. I feel like I'm right at home in stillness. We don't have to say a word and just sense the stillness.

But we have the daily life. And this is where most of us can get caught up in. Because you can meet somebody and you have that wonderful spiritual connection and you go, ah, this is wonderful.

This is great. And some people are conscious of that spiritual connections and other things that this is just, they don't know about the spiritual end of things, but they just sense something. They just love this person.

They want to be with this person, etc., until you live with them. And it is a working out. It is a giving space to allow them to have their conditioning, because we all have it.

But it's our own job to be aware of what our conditioning is, what our expectations are, and to hear the other, to, okay, what's their conditioning? It took several years before Eckhart would never really ask me for anything. For example, I learned this when we were in Germany one time, and Eckhart wasn't there.

He decided not to come for dinner and we went with a group of people to dinner. And one woman said, Is your water no good? And I said, Yes, it's fine.

And then my friend who sat next to me, who is also German, said, She's really asking you for a sip of water. And I went, She asked me if my water was good, but she didn't ask me for a sip. No, that's how we ask.

We don't ask directly. And I went, Oh, my gosh. Eckhart's been doing this to me for years.

I thought, You mean he was really asking for a sip of my water and I never knew it? So, and I went, Okay, I understand. So it is learning each other's own conditioning and seeing how we apply our own conditioning, our own idea of how our relationship or how communication should be when the other has, you know, some other conditioning going on, some other way of being in this world and relating how we relate.

And this happens all around the world. And this is where miscommunication comes in, conflict comes in, because we have all these different ideas. But it's to see and to learn what those ideas, what the expectations, what that conditioning, what that culture is, is to learn it and not demand that they change and be like yourself.

So when I went back to the hotel and I told Eckhart that, and he went, Yeah, yeah, that's right. And then when I, it's interesting because when I finally knew and understood what he wanted, he was then able to, because I was able to communicate, maybe we just didn't know what was going on. I don't know what he thought.

Maybe he thought I was totally selfish all this for many years or something. I don't know. But he was then able to now say, Can I have a sip of your water?

So it's giving each other that space just to be and watching, learning, listening to hear just exactly what it is that's being communicated. So it's beautiful that we have these two cultures German and Chinese, which are very two strong different cultures, and just finding out about it, exploring. However, the basis of our relationship, I think, would not have last.

I probably would have walked out a long time ago because I would have thought he was lazy if I didn't have this understanding and this primary importance of having God, consciousness, stillness, whatever you want to call it, in my life first, and having that be the holder, the container of what the form, in this case my form in relationship with Eckhart, is, that's the holder. And to realize that whatever form, and it's taken many years to realize that whatever form is going on is not as important as the background, the stillness in which the form emerges, arises. And that's the beauty.

And then when that stillness is there, then the things, the everyday life, there'll be ups and downs. It's not always great, and it's not always bad. Sometimes we've got to do things.

But it's coming back, always, just to the present moment, to go beyond the conditioning, knowing that it's there, maybe even having the awareness that yes, you have expectations, but then allowing the expectations to go, just let it go, and just see them as that, expectations, and just to live in that stillness, and move and breathe and communicate from that place, and just allowing the nature of the other person just to be. I get a kick out of every time, because we live on Salt Spring and we have this recycling thing going on, and we go to the recycling, and we have these containers of paper, plastic, etc., bottles. And so we have about six, seven containers.

We load up in the truck and we go. And Eckhart by nature is very, just kind of slow, he just sort of casually just sort of moves and does it. And I'm a little quicker, so we can go to the recycling, and here we're doing our jobs, and I realize, wow, I've done like five containers and he's done two.

And you know, it's like, okay, it's okay, it's fine, this is how he is. He just moves a little slower. I could create a story in my head about it, but I've accepted that, okay, he's with me and he's doing it, and it's enough.

And if I want him to do more in me less than if I want him to do it in half, I could easily just hop in the car and wait and let him do his half, I suppose. But it's just easier just to, for me, just to do it. It's there, it's okay.

So every relationship goes through just that working out of how everyday life is going to emerge. We have a unique circumstance, and I think we both really love it, and that is we have, we're fortunate enough to have three places. In Vancouver, we each have our own apartment that is right across from each other, so we have our own space, and then we live part-time together on the island.

And some people will think, wow, that's just so weird, and other people think, that's neat. I think for both of us, at least for me, I love it, I love having my own space. So you find a way to live together.

Now, not everybody is going to have, to be able to afford to have that amount of space, physical space, but it's a working out, it's finding the way, and we need to find that way, respect each other, be able to give that other person the space. I know, just on this awakening process, it requires a lot of space, at least it did for me, a lot of alone time, to search, to look, to be where you can say, even in meditation, although I wasn't quite always sitting there in formal meditation, but just being aware, being able to see the mind working and operating, and how the thoughts just arise, and what kind of those thoughts are, and not, as what Eckhart says, taking your thoughts so seriously, to be able to just, ah, okay, it's not so important. All my ideas, opinions, expectations, it's not important. And in order to have what we can call a successful relationship, we need to each come to that place to realize, not intellectually, but really internally, inner knowing that, yes, the form of this moment is secondary.

The primary importance is the space in which all communication, in which all love, presence, activity flows. And it's not so much a commitment to the other, but a commitment to your relationship with God, with stillness. And that's the true relationship, is stillness, is God-consciousness.

And when you're truly committed to that, then life flows, and shit happens. And it will always happen. True life is now.

It's not what happens. It's the space in which it happens, and that's love. Okay, so let's go into a guided meditation.

We don't have to be serious about it, but we'll go into this guided meditation. So let's have everyone come to their edge of the seat, just so they can kind of stay alert through this. With your feet flat on the floor, both feet on the floor, in a comfortable distance apart, or whatever's comfortable for you.

Your hands can be facing either down on your lap, face up. Let's just not cross them. Tall spine.

You may wish to close your eyes, and just simply become aware of your breathing. Just aware of it. There's no need to change it.

And follow your breath, and feel your breath moving in and out. In and out of your body. Notice where your breath begins, and where it ends.

Notice whether you're breathing shallow, or notice as you place your attention, your awareness on breathing, that perhaps it deepens, all on its own. Now bring your attention to your body, just scanning it from head to toe. Noticing whether there's any tension, tightness, contraction, pain.

Just notice. Relax your body. Relaxing the jaw, your forehead, the eyes, cheeks, your head, your shoulders.

Relax. Relaxing your entire body. Feel the weight of your body into the chair.

Feel your feet firmly planted into the ground. Notice these sensations in the body, without judgment, and without labeling. For example, if you feel pain, let go of the label pain, and just feel the sensation.

If you've become lost in thoughts, just notice and return your attention to your breath, to the sensations in your body, and now see if you can notice your energy body, that feeling of aliveness. It may feel like some tingling, some warmth, or even numbness. If you don't know what this energy feels like, you can just place your attention on your hands.

Just feeling your hands. You can even ask yourself, how do I know that I even have hands? Dropping the label hands, and simply just feel.

Then move your attention to your arms. Feeling your arms. What do your arms feel like?

Feeling your hands and arms together. Staying present and alert to this energy within. For without name and form, you are this vibrating, alive energy arising from source.

Begin to add other parts of the body to feel that. Your shoulders, your belly, your chest, your back, your buttocks, your thighs. If there's any area of the body that you cannot feel, just go back to the area that you can feel.

Feel your knees. What do your knees feel like? What do your calves and shins feel like?

Your feet and your toes, and your face, your head, your ears, your lips. Now feel your body as one energy field. There's this alive prana, chi, energy vibrating.

In this breath, breath of life, there is ever only this moment now. How do you know what is real? No thought is real.

They're fleeting. So what's real? Sense into it.

Sense into the space, the awareness in which you perceive this moment. Just letting go of time. Time is a concept, man-made in reality.

There is no time. Tap into that reality, timeless essence of this moment, of who you are. Just allow any movements to occur in the body.

It's the chi wanting to flow again. Forget where you are. Place, time, year, and simply be.

Still, observing, watching thoughts that go by, your breath, external sounds, sensations in the body, mind, movement. Be still and watch this all coming and going, changing. Breath changes, thoughts change, emotions change.

All we can call the world, the form. You're aware of this world, the form, and turn your attention to awareness itself. This is who you are.

No thing, pure awareness, aware of itself. How beautiful is that? Peace.

You found the peace that passes all understanding in that state of consciousness, of pure awareness. Staying connected to awareness, to the stillness within. If you feel ready, just gently open your eyes, taking in the world of form again.

Staying connected to yourself. And now we can play.

[Speaker 1] (2:54:13 - 2:54:17)

Do you meditate on a regular basis?

[Speaker 3] (2:54:18 - 2:54:27)

And if so, do you consider it necessary to meditate on a regular basis as a form of spiritual practice?

[Speaker 2] (2:54:31 - 2:56:42)

I do meditate on a regular basis. And when I remember, I'll meditate all day long. I do do a formal sitting meditation.

I just enjoy that. It's just a time where I'm just sitting. You can say that Eckhart does it too, because he likes to just sit and do nothing.

Although he doesn't sit there on his meditation cushion, I like to sit cross-legged and actually do a sort of meditation, so to speak. But ultimately that meditation has to come up, still be with you when you come up off your seat or off your cushion and take that into everyday life. So, awareness.

You're aware of the form of this moment and aware of the background, the stillness. So you come up off your cushion, off your chair, and you still are aware of both dimensions. And this is the practice.

And I think it is helpful. It's very, very helpful. It will be your...

It's like your cornerstone, your keystone to accessing that dimension in every single moment. Whether you're standing in line in the supermarket, you're just standing there. Go into standing meditation.

I call it bamboo, where you just empty yourself. Because the bamboo, you have the form, but you're empty. The special quality you can say is that emptiness, right?

It's like the valley, the yin. Just be there, standing. So it is very helpful.

[Speaker 1] (2:57:02 - 5:47:23)

Welcome to our live meditation. On the surface of things there are a few thousand people in different parts of the planet looking at their computer screens, yourself included. And there may be friends or relatives who have asked you, are going to ask you, what are you doing?

There's always more than what you see on the surface. A few thousand people looking at their computer screens, becoming still, alert, present. And it's all part of a transformation of collective consciousness that's happening on the planet.

So there's something occurring here that is far more profound than what it appears to be on the surface. And you and I are an essential part of that transformation of consciousness. And if you look more deeply, there isn't even you and I.

There's only the one essence that underlies all life, consciousness itself, manifesting through forms. Consciousness itself, however, is formless, the essence of who you are. Consciousness also manifests in time, through form, in time, because out here there's time.

It's shortly after one o'clock in the afternoon on the west coast here. And different times in different places, consciousness manifests gradually in time, manifests more and more in time, through form. But consciousness itself is timeless.

It is the life essence, universal intelligence, formless, timeless. It emerges through the form. It begins to shine through the form, through the mind, even through the physical form.

It shines through the form. It emerges through you, through I. And your mind may ask, tell me what to do now.

And of course, there's nothing to do, just to be aware that you are. Be aware of your presence, of the light of your consciousness. It's not your consciousness, it's just a way of speaking.

Be aware of the light of consciousness in you. The light in which these words are being perceived. And you may want to have a look inside yourself and see if you are still thinking as you look at me.

Are there thoughts going through your head? There's nothing wrong with that. I'm not saying there shouldn't be any thoughts going through your head.

Just find out, be aware if there are thoughts still going through your head as you look. Or do you find that there are actually spaces arising in yourself? An opening up of space where before there was the movement of the mind, a space of no thought, just presence.

That's the arising new consciousness, one could say. It's a new dimension arising. Spacious alertness.

That is the... as this opens up, this is why we're here, to enter that dimension, to access that dimension. The most vital thing in your life.

Everything else is secondary. Successes, failures, this or that happening, your past, your future, so-called past, so-called future, which can never be experienced outside of the present moment. The present moment is the consciousness.

The present moment is who you are and the present moment is the timeless dimension. So we are accessing that, discovering that inside. So the miracle then is the space opens up inside you and there's simple alert presence, spaciousness, no loss of consciousness, not going towards sleep, but heightened consciousness.

So you're touching the unconditioned, timeless dimension of consciousness itself. That eventually does things even to this form as you live in conscious connectedness with that dimension. It tends to also transform the outer realm of your so-called life because it brings in a new energy.

It empowers your life not in an egoic sense, I am all powerful now, in a very subtle, gentle way. A new power and intelligence flows into your life if you open yourself up to that new consciousness in your daily life as much as possible. Welcome it.

Look for it. How do you do that? How can you look for that?

Step one, are you thinking? Being aware that there's thinking happening inside you. Oh, that's an important step because when you're aware that your mind is active and perhaps uselessly active, which is a lot of the time, that's what the mind does, it just produces mental noise.

Useless thinking, often self-destructive thinking, often negative thinking. More frequently you will find thinking dwells on that which is problematic, that which involves conflict, that which involves fear and anxiety, than thinking about that which is pleasant or good or joyful. So, the awareness that there's a lot of useless thought happening right now, that's an important step.

Wow. With that awareness comes choice. I'm talking from the viewpoint of the so-called person.

From that viewpoint of the so-called person suddenly there comes the element of choice. What is that choice? The choice to say I will take my consciousness out of the structures of thinking where it is impresent.

Consciousness gets captured continuously and used by the movement of thought and mind. The choice is to say I will remove my conscious attention from thinking and become present. And those of you who are not familiar with this ask how do I do that?

And there comes what you could call step two. I don't usually use steps, but just temporarily just approach it in this way. Step two then is where do I put my attention if it's not in thinking?

Very simple thing, for example, you can do is ask yourself if you're breathing at this moment. Am I breathing? But don't answer it from memory.

Say of course I'm breathing because I'm still alive. If I weren't breathing I wouldn't be alive. That's logical thinking.

But that's not direct evidence that you're breathing. The direct evidence that you're breathing you can only find by placing attention on the act of breathing. And then you can truly answer the question am I breathing at this moment?

Am I still breathing? Okay, let me have a look. Your attention moves to the intake, the inflow and the outflow of breath.

You can feel the air moving into the body. You feel the air moving out of the body. You may feel it more as it enters the nose.

Some people feel it there most strongly or you may be able to follow with your attention, you follow the airflow into the body and out of the body. Wherever that is you know you can feel yourself breathing. So now you know that you're breathing and what does that do?

It takes your attention away from thinking. Conscious attention is consciousness. So your consciousness instead of being trapped in the movement of thought, you have to to know whether or not you're breathing you have to take your attention out of the movement of thought.

That's what's happening when you're finding out whether you're breathing and you've put it inside and you say, yes. Yes, there's breathing happening or I am breathing. And that is called, it's a very old way of entering the meditative state, already recommended by the Buddha.

And that's called traditionally breath awareness and it's called the meditation technique. But it's so simple and so natural to know that you're breathing it's not really a technique. I'm not that fond of techniques because they tend to come in between you and who you are in your essence because I'm using a technique.

So if you use techniques choose techniques that are simple, not complicated, if you even want to call them techniques. Breath awareness. So if you do it now, it's not a doing, it's a realizing of what's already there.

So in that sense it's not a doing. Breath awareness in that sense is not a doing. It's a an awareness arising right now.

And with that comes the spaciousness. You're touching the formless consciousness and breath is such an ideal meditation object so to speak because it is not an object. It is not clearly defined in form.

It is shapeless, formless breath. Just as consciousness itself is shapeless, formless. And that's why breath has often been traditionally been equated with spirit.

The formless dimension. Both in the Old Testament and why it's such a favorite meditation technique in Buddhism, for example. But it's essentially such a simple thing to know that I'm breathing.

And you're entering the present moment. Of course at the same time that's what the meditative state is. That's what presence is.

Presence is called presence because you then suddenly you fully inhabit the now. You come to life. And if you're attentive you may be able to be aware of more than just one breath.

You're just breathing. And if you're very alert behind that breathing you can sense something very alive. You can't define it.

There's a background there that's intensely alive. Some people may call it peace, deep inner peace. You may call it being.

You suddenly become aware that you are. Not that you are this or that or that. Not that you are 40 years old or you are this profession or you are that.

You're becoming aware of beingness of the aliveness within you of the I am first person singular of to be I am of your presence of your essence that which has nothing to do with your past nothing to do with your future and that is inherently enlivening, joyful. Awareness of your breath can also put you in touch with the awareness. Somehow they're connected.

Awareness of the inner body. The aliveness within the body that I've often spoken about written about. The awareness of the inner body.

The awareness that there is a field of aliveness permeating every cell of your body. Feel that aliveness that normally in our world a human being is not conscious of that because all their attention is in the movement of thinking in the head. Just to feel that sense of aliveness permeating your body.

Breath awareness can easily put you in touch with that and somehow they go together and that aliveness too is formless. The physical body has a form but that which underlies the form is formless. So as you sit here be aware of that inner aliveness and when I say be aware of that inner sense of aliveness that permeates every cell of the body it sounds as if there were a subject and an object.

I am aware of the aliveness but this is due to the structure of language. When you formulate a sentence you have a subject and an object. I am doing something.

But we have to go beyond that because that's not really how it is. It just appears to be as if I were aware of the aliveness permeating my inner energy field. But in reality the observer, so called the observer and the observed which is the aliveness are a single phenomenon.

A single thing. A single no-thing. They're really one.

So it really is a becoming self-aware of your entire being. Your entire being becomes self-aware. Not I am aware of this.

I am aware of myself. So it's not there's no subject and object except when you when we put it into language. Self-awareness reflects back on itself.

Observer and observed merge. And that's the state of traditionally called self-realization. Not something mystical ultimately or weird or something to be attained after another one hundred incarnations.

No. But as a natural way of being and living. A state of connectedness with the source.

With life itself. If you don't find that you'll run around the planet back and forth for a few more years and that's it. Never gone beyond the surface of things.

And all the things that you thought were important at the latest just when you're about to die you realize it wasn't important. Not essentially. And you will have missed the only thing that really is important.

And if a whole civilization misses it it quickly disappears. Even a civilization needs to be rooted to some extent in the eternal and timeless dimension. It means it requires a few people, what the percentage is I don't know, to be rooted there.

To keep the whole civilization anchored in being. That's of course what Jesus meant when he was sitting with two women, two sisters, Mary and Martha. Martha goes about worrying about this and that, getting this and that ready and Mary is just listening in a state of alert attention and Jesus says there's only one thing that really matters and she has chosen that thing.

It doesn't mean never to be active again but to see where the true priorities lie. Then action can flow from that state of connectedness with being rather than come from a state of disconnectedness and then it becomes quickly mad. Pointless.

So as you said here, either with your eyes closed or looking at the screen, can you be as much as possible free of mental noise and just be here as a spacious presence? Perhaps feel in the background the inner aliveness, the entire body alive within, no need to think, just as I'm not thinking. The words just come out of stillness.

There's no preparation and when there's no speaking, there's no thinking. So we can be together in that state of simple alert presence. That's the shift.

And then in daily life welcome that state of presence. Choose it because you have a choice now. Choose to take your attention out of useless thinking.

Thinking is fine when it's helpful for this or that. It's good. When thinking becomes negative, brings up problems that have no actual existence here and now, which actually means all problems because in the here and now no problem can survive.

There's only a situation, not a problem. That's when life becomes complicated and you start thinking how hard it all is. That means you've lost yourself, you've lost the present moment, you've lost the timeless dimension of consciousness, the I am.

And then, knowing that, you can choose to take your attention out of thinking because it's pointless, it's recognized as pointless and be simply here as an alert presence. And in any situation be there as an alert presence. As you're driving towards an interview or whatever you're doing, instead of projecting yourself mentally, be there as an alert presence.

Feel the entire energy field. And there comes power. And then if you sit with the other person who's interviewing you for a job or whatever, be there connected with the power within, which is the timeless consciousness.

And let your words come from there. Then the right thing will happen. Either you will get the job and it'll be the right thing or they will say, no, we don't want you because they don't want that empowered consciousness there.

They want an ego. Or somebody senses that there is that genuineness to who you are, that absence of role playing, that absence of fear, am I going to get this job or not? There's just the presence.

There's just a state of connectedness with the power of now. And then you may find that even while you're thinking and doing things, there's still an awareness in the background that isn't lost. So you never completely lose yourself in thinking when you discuss things with people.

Observe how people discuss. They are completely lost. Every thought drags them along.

Every reaction drags them along. Lost in thoughts, lost in reactions, lost in emotion that reflects the thoughts. And here, as the new state of consciousness arises, there's in the background a space of awareness while thinking happens in the foreground.

That's the stillness in the background, and you can sense it even while you discuss things. But now you discuss things without ego because ego is being lost in the forms, identification with forms, thought forms, emotional forms. And that's where all the collective madness of the planet comes from.

So you can participate in the game of life without ego. And that is the only way things on our planet can change. By enough humans entering that state of consciousness.

Awareness or presence in the background even as you speak. Even as you discuss and say, no, this is not my viewpoint. My viewpoint is this.

I know that your viewpoint is different. I'll just now give you my viewpoint. This is how I see things.

No ego. Not making others wrong. And learning to be.

Just be. Not going to sleep and be. Be awake.

But just be. From time to time just allow yourself to... There's no need to fill up every moment with doing.

No matter how busy you are. Leave some room for being. Occasionally just be.

It doesn't have to be long, just space. One minute of space. It's timeless really.

Just from the external viewpoint you call it one minute. And then gradually being isn't lost even while you do. That's why we're here.

Welcome to our live meditation. I'm told that we have quite a few people joining us today who are not normally with us. So welcome.

Welcome to everybody. If you watched my conversation with Oprah this morning, welcome back. Remember to turn off the ringer on your phones so that you don't get disturbed.

And let's just settle into the present moment which is not something perhaps that you would normally do because there's always something else that's more important or pretends to be more important. And then you forget that the only important, the only really important thing in your life is the present moment because there is nothing else ever. You have to really realize that fully today to see the implications of that and how one could almost say devastating it is to realize that there's only ever this moment.

But most people live as if other things, past and future, were more important than this moment. It's an unconscious pattern. So meditation is about becoming present and the word itself implies of course now, present moment.

So we sometimes speak of present moment awareness. I sometimes call it presence. And that is what meditation is all about.

Discovering that dimension of consciousness in yourself and usually meditation techniques are designed to get you there. But our meditation is a meditation that does not really have any particular techniques. I'm just inviting you to come into this present moment with your attention directly.

Just drop into the now. This is something you can only verify or realize for yourself that you can actually almost sense, one could say, the presence of the present moment. Although it has no shape or form.

So you can become conscious of the present moment itself. What does that mean? First of all you become more conscious of sensory perceptions.

And alertness arises that normally is not there when you are trapped in the continuous stream of thinking. And that alertness that is synonymous with presence or awareness is just not there. So the normal state of consciousness is to be trapped in this continuous stream of thinking, a lot of it quite useless and repetitive.

Thinking can be a powerful thing but most people's thinking 99% of it is repetitive, useless, often negative. It's mental noise. And when you are identified with that, when you are and there's that voice in your head that never stops speaking and you don't even know that you are not that voice, so you think you are the voice, you become the voice, that is a dreamlike state.

And you can observe people around you often who are in that dreamlike state, you can see it in their eyes, they're not here, all their attention is absorbed by their thinking, they're just a little bit left, just they know where they are going and not bump into furniture. But so you can see how many people are most of the time not really present because almost all their attention is absorbed by this continuous noise of thinking and so they go and when they look at you they don't really see you, at best they see you through the screen of thinking which is judgements that they may have about you, so there's never a clear perception of anything, everything is filtered through the thinking, through the judgements of the mind. And that's a traditionally in spirituality that's called being asleep and that's why the term that is used in various ancient spiritual traditions for enlightenment or whatever you want to call it is awakening, so there's an alertness that is suddenly there when you become conscious of the present moment. At first you might notice it as suddenly becoming more aware of your sense perceptions, listening, looking, seeing, hearing.

You might also find that alertness is there when something new suddenly arises in your field of vision, somebody comes into the, something appears or in your hearing a sudden noise and when a sudden noise appears and or suddenly somebody comes in or comes around the corner and you suddenly look or listen and there's an alertness behind the looking and listening and for those few seconds when that new thing arises and you give it your full attention for those few seconds, 3, 4, 5 maybe 2 there's not a thought in your head. Thought then comes in after a few seconds and it may for some people only be a couple of seconds and then immediately interprets what it is that's there. But there is always a moment when something new arises when there is clear perception and just an alertness in the background and that's an interesting moment because that is a natural way of presence arising in you but usually it's so short-lived that people miss it.

So, it's a good thing to discover that you actually already meditate for brief moments you are in the state that we call meditation and perhaps didn't even know it and sometimes there may be moments when you just sit somewhere and you suddenly become completely comfortable with that moment as it is and an inner peace arises and you feel there's nothing missing here and this can happen where before your mind said why am I still waiting here in this waiting room, I've been sitting here for an hour and why are they keeping me waiting and suddenly there may be a shift and you say I'm here this moment, I might as well be here fully and suddenly all that noise of thinking subsides and you realise actually there's nothing really missing in this moment I'm breathing breathing, looking listening, feeling alive and it's fine when the mind is not telling me that it's not fine and you'll be surprised how often the present moment is fine when you really check it out whereas the mind would habitually tell you that it's not fine it's not good enough something is missing something shouldn't be there but of course it is and when you argue with what is in your mind that's called unhappiness in whatever form it comes irritation impatience anger sadness so meditation is learning to align yourself internally with the present moment and become aware of the present moment, so first of all through sensory perceptions so I just said that sometimes those things arise naturally suddenly either something new comes into your field of vision or your hearing and an alertness is there for a few seconds or there may be a moment when you are relaxing into the present moment and I'm not talking about becoming tired because that's not where we are going we are not going towards sleep we are going towards a heightened sense of alertness which is what the meditative state is or let's do away with the term meditation altogether and just call it presence there's a heightened state of alertness very different from the lowered alertness that when you are moving towards sleep so that is not meditation and even when people talk about relaxation usually often it's associated in people's minds with kind of your you're gradually moving towards sleep, I'm so relaxed now or if you go to a hypnotist you might say and your eyes are becoming heavier and heavier we are not going that way that's nice, it gives you a little bit of relief from your mind but here we are exploring the possibility of a higher state of consciousness heightened alertness so I'm talking you into it as we sit here and as I speak you may find that shift already happening in you that as you sit here and now you're becoming aware of this moment as it is and no longer needing it to be different so if you thought you were here to meditate so that eventually you can reach a meditative state or some kind of peace that you don't have now let's forget about that and just be with this moment as it is and accept that this moment is as it is of course it always is as it is so you might as well accept it so you become comfortable with it aware of what you're looking at you see this man on the screen, you hear the voice talking there is the room or wherever you are, peripherally you're aware of that and it's fine this moment is as it is and what else is there apart from your sense perceptions what you see what you hear is there anything else well you may feel a sense of aliveness in your inner energy field the body, you may feel as you sit here just a distant sense of that yes there is this I can feel that the body is alive so some attention moves there an all pervasive sense of aliveness in your body, in your legs, your hands your arms it's a very subtle thing there is an aliveness there but usually your attention is absorbed by thinking so you're not aware of it but now you're becoming aware of it so there's a an aliveness in your hands some people notice it almost a tingling sensation it's perhaps in the hands that it can be felt most easily quite pleasant your arms if you can feel it in your hands you can feel it in your arms, you can feel it in your feet so attention moves away from thinking into direct perception not only of external reality but also direct perception of your inner sense of aliveness not much to think about it you don't need to think to feel that and that is all it all takes you into the present moment becomes an anchor for the present moment so as you sit here you can be aware of whatever it is that your senses inform you of and you can be aware of the inner energy field in the body so you're becoming still and it feels good undoubtedly and you're going to to a place that's deeper than the thinking mind but you're not going to sleep there is a stillness there stillness is another word for that sense of presence and to discover that there is actually a stillness in you, always can only be covered up but it can never be destroyed to discover that there is that sense of stillness in you and that it's there always it's just most of the time people are not aware of it at all that is the source of real happiness of real fulfillment it's nowhere else because you could achieve anything in the world but if you hadn't found the source of happiness in yourself nothing that you achieve would make you happy, not for long for short periods perhaps the honeymoon periods not necessarily the actual honeymoon but anything that you suddenly think, wow I made it, I've got it not for long if you haven't found that the source of true happiness which is a heightened sense of aliveness that has nothing to do with your personal history it is there no matter whether from the point of view of your personal history, your life can be considered a failure or success suddenly it becomes irrelevant there's a dimension in you where that so called failure or success doesn't really matter anymore and that dimension also frees you from that dependency that most people are trapped in that complete dependency on things and on what's happening or not happening in their so called life it's so liberating to realize that that's the real source of happiness is inseparable from that arising stillness that is presence and you can't really explain it the mind says what is it like?

Jesus tried to do that he talked about he gave lots of parables about the so called kingdom of God or kingdom of heaven lots of parables it's like this, it's like that it's like the pearl of great price that somebody finds it's it's the one thing that matters it's like a mustard seed that grows into a huge tree but seems at first completely insignificant so the the present moment is the doorway into presence we just talked about I drew your attention to what it is that makes up the so called present moment for you right now which is sense perceptions and and of course perhaps occasional thoughts may still come and feeling the aliveness of the inner body those are all things that you are aware of in the present moment but that which we just called stillness is deeper than that it's not really stillness inner stillness it's there it's not really something that you are aware of or it looks like that from a conventional viewpoint that stillness or that presence is awareness itself or consciousness so and that is that is you suddenly become aware that you are conscious at this moment there is a light of consciousness in you if there were not this light of consciousness not just in you, you are it without that you couldn't perceive anything you couldn't think or feel an emotion that is the very ground the very source of all life and here it is it has no shape or form it has no past or future it is just presence and when you become aware of it directly a more accurate way of putting it would be to say it becomes aware of itself but let's just leave it like language is dualistic so let's just put it like that when you become aware of it directly that's then you are aware of that dimension in you that traditionally has been called spiritual that is the spiritual dimension is that it's not a new belief because every belief is just a thought it's not an experience of suddenly seeing angels around you because angels come and go it's fine, it's lovely if you see angels but it is not essentially the spiritual dimension yet spiritual is the formless becoming aware of yourself as the consciousness in which the whole world arises would there be a world without your consciousness or without consciousness perhaps just atoms and molecules in space but not a world and even atoms and molecules are ultimately only expressions of that one consciousness everything is that one consciousness is expressing itself as form which is the world which is your thoughts and your emotions and your body and everything else stars galaxies blades of grass and then there is the possibility of sensing that underlying reality the stillness in yourself and that is an enormous liberation because that is your true identity who you really are beyond the person the person is fine it is there for a while but if you are trapped in a narrow personal sense of self without any transcendence because this is what it is we transcend it here that is what spiritual realization is if you are trapped in a personal sense of self then your whole life is concerned with little personal stuff and you will never be satisfied never and the only true source of satisfaction is finding that which transcends the person and that which transcends the person transcends all form because it is just the formless light of consciousness can you feel yourself can you sense yourself at this moment as that you don't need any content for that it has no you become aware of space one could say without content that luminous space that is consciousness and then content you can allow it to be there you can create new content in your life that's beautiful it's a play of creation you can participate in that without getting totally identified with what arises what you create or what comes to you or towards you so you can be to use a traditional term in the world but not of it there is always then that inner sense of freedom where you realize who you really are and that's not a thought I'm just giving it I'm just verbalizing a realization that is beyond thought you realize you sense that who you are essentially is that alert still conscious presence and everything else is stuff that happens which is fine it can be enjoyed without expecting too much from it the stuff that happens or doesn't happen around you you can enjoy it you can actually only truly enjoy it if you don't expect from it what it can't give you happiness fulfillment or feeling that now you're really yourself you finally made it it can't do that occasionally you get the delusion that that is happening but then you realize oh no that wasn't it so you have the truth your true sense of identity or sense of self can then shift it shifts from being in your thoughts and whatever your thoughts tell you about yourself and about your life me and my life I'm just not happy with my life there's so much missing in my life I want to and so much stuff that I need to get rid of or I need to get I'm just there's too much going on in my life I have to think about my life a bit more maybe if I think about it day and night eventually I'll come up with some solution to my life or I can move somewhere else another continent of course all the stuff goes with you and your head so your sense of your sense of who you are is no longer derived from ideas in your head about who you are the voice in your head is telling you about who you are or other people in other words their voices the voices in their head are telling you about who you are or the world telling you about who you are if you're famous you get your they write about you in newspapers or on the internet and it may be good and then suddenly it's maybe no longer be good you get up and down up and down but there is a another a deeper truer identity who you are it shifts then from the stuff in your mind telling you who you are me and my life to a sense of alive silent but powerful presence that's who you are it doesn't have a name it has no history it has no future and no past it has nothing to do with who you think you are if and this is available to you at any time it can be there even continuously in the background of your life in which case you are an awakened being which still you still do things normal things but with a greater sense of ease and a certain degree of detachment the detachment comes from also knowing yourself as the underlying consciousness there is always that little bit of stillness in the background even when you get involved in doing then there is a detachment you no longer not everything in your life is no longer this has to happen like this I want this to come like that why isn't this happening and there is a continuous reactivity and you go who wants to live like that and yet it's most people's normal existence the strange thing is you actually become much more creative even as far as doing things in this world is concerned because really we are here addressing being, there is the being going within and sensing the beingness of you and then there is the doing most people only know the doing or if they don't do then they are half asleep so half of humanity is trapped in the doing and the other half well not completely more and more awakening the other half is into a kind of haven't got enough energy to do anything oh well another day here we go so you don't want to go there either in that case might even be better to be lost in doing because at least there is a high intensity of energy there but you don't want to be lost in doing of course so you go into the beingness and if you can sense the being that's under the doing which is just another word for what we've just been pointing to experiencing then the doing is more inspired you get creative ideas you are more helpful to other human beings there is greater empathy with other humans and that all arises from the feeling yourself as the underlying consciousness because then you recognize every other human being is an expression of the same one consciousness it's a delusion to think that every human being has their consciousness they are expressions of the one consciousness temporary expressions of the one light the one consciousness nobody is an autonomous being they are all expressions, we are all expressions of the one which is God not the God as a man in the sky with a beard that's a childish representation so we are all expressions and when you can only know that by realizing the the presence the stillness in you the alert space and when you then start to think again the thinking tends to become more inspired not just a continuous stream of old stuff old stuff may still be there too but there is a newness and you may even do things that are more helpful to others to yourself, to others and you recognize every other human being as essentially yourself no matter what stuff it is that they carry around in their minds of course you could react to that and say, oh I don't like what he says, he's always like that, he always does that, she does that it's the stuff do you focus on the stuff or do you focus on the essence well whether you focus on the stuff or the essence in another human being depends on whether your attention is on the stuff in yourself or the essence so if all you know is me and my life then all you recognize in another is the stuff in them because you identify it with the stuff in yourself but as you sense the essence that underlies it all the alert stillness the stuff in others doesn't matter that much anymore, you can kind of look through it yeah it's there but there's also a being there a an expression of the one you could say a child of God if you want to use traditional language everyone now in some of course the stuff is so heavy that it might be very hard even if you are in that state of connectedness with being you might find it hard in some where there's enormous amounts of stuff there might be have murdered people or whatever but even there you can look through it and that's really what forgiveness means is to be able to look through the stuff in others and yourself to look through all the stuff in others to the essence and still sense the essence in the other but only because you can sense it in yourself that's the real forgiveness so that was our meditation for today which is really the essence of all spirituality which is really finding God within as the mystics of past ages and for it pointed to no matter where they came from or tradition they belong to so nothing missing right now in this moment until you start thinking and then your mind tells you oh oh there's something missing thanks for joining us today and this may be the end of our little session here it's not the end of the arising of presence on this planet it's the beginning of the arising of presence thank you welcome to another live meditation our meditation of course is an opportunity for you to experience yourself as awareness rather than as a person so what does it mean to experience yourself as a person one's normal state of consciousness it means to experience yourself through thinking the thinking process and what we call person are one and the same thing there's nothing wrong with the thinking process it only becomes problematic to some extent to a large extent dysfunctional when you mistake the thinking process for who you are essentially and when that happens you only experience yourself as a person in other words through thinking through ideas in your head about all kinds of things who you are who other people are thoughts about the past and the future and thoughts about what's going on now continuous interpretations talking to yourself if not out aloud then in the head the running commentary in the head which for most people takes up much more of their attention than the actual fact of living and responding to and being alive in the present moment in whatever arises thinking absorbs your attention it might be thinking about the present moment but it's no longer a direct experiencing of the present moment and the vitality and the aliveness and the power of the present moment are then obscured and so what is it then to experience yourself as awareness what does that mean rather than giving you definitions about awareness which is more thought let's experience what awareness is right here and now and that happens very simply here and now when you become interested in, so to speak when you a better way of putting it is when you pay attention to the silent spaces in between the words and then be alert and observe within yourself what it means what it feels like to pay attention to the silent spaces whether they are long relatively, let's say I stopped talking for 15 seconds but usually they are shorter a few seconds at a time usually they are overlooked because you as the person, the thinking entity which consists of course of thoughts, thinking entity the thinking entity can only relate to thoughts so when you listen to me speaking you as the person the thinking entity will only be interested in, OK, what's he going to say next and then you miss the space and so it's a redirecting of attention away from content the content which is thoughts thinking fills your mind the redirecting of attention so that you become aware of that space which at first seems to be nothing and yet when you become aware of the space you feel a stillness arising but again stillness almost seems to be nothing no thing it certainly is nothing in the sense that it is not a thing it has no form anything that has form the thought form which comes and goes arises and subsides that's all the old things the accumulation of proliferation accumulation of things in your mind that's the content but content cannot exist without a space in which it is allowed to exist and that is the dimension that we are pointing to here and that is what you become aware of when you pay attention to the gaps the silent spaces now we could say there's nothing there and yet if you are really alert you can sense that well, yes, there is nothing there and yet there's a presence which has no form a beingness not something that you could understand or even know in the same way that you can know a table, a thing or in the same way that you can know a theory, an opinion a collection of thoughts no, it's not you cannot understand or know that which is there in the gap when you pay attention to it and yet undoubtedly it is a presence it is who you are essentially and the person and all the thinking arises in that space and that space is always there even in between the thinking and thinking itself we could say is only words are inadequate here is only a wave movement in that space and it is deeply satisfying to know that there is in you that dimension in you again that's how perhaps it's experienced at first, but of course it is both within and without, and it feels very satisfying because knowing yourself as that presence that has nothing to do with the person so it transcends the person it frees you from being trapped in a very limited limited sense of self so another way of putting it I've said it before quite a few times you become aware that you are aware you can sense that awareness or that consciousness that underlies whatever happens in your life whatever you think or feel there must be a space of consciousness in which that is experienced felt perceived thought the thinking all that happens all that arises in the space that luminous space it has no name it has no history it has no past it has no future in other words, you ultimately have no name no history, no past in other words the timeless dimension another word for timeless of course is eternal that which never moves never changes and yet all movement arises out of it and it's only by consciously knowing yourself as that being that that's what it means you don't know it as an object subject and object this applies in the sense-perceived world you're aware of something you know the subject knows the object here, as awareness arises, you don't know awareness as a subject knowing an object because awareness is the eternal subject of all knowing subject and object merging to one and only that knowing that is non-conceptual nothing to do with thinking only that knowing is truly inner peace the peace that passes all understanding as Jesus called it, I believe it's in the New Testament the peace that passes all understanding in other words is not conceptual knowledge at all there's nothing there to under so to be rooted in that to be that consciously is true inner peace and of course inner peace is the end of fear of anxiety it is not a state of sleepiness this is not the inner peace that we are entering here now it's a heightened alertness the opposite of sleeping.

As you know when you go to sleep at night a lot of the time there's still mind activity going this becomes dreams and occasionally you dip into a much deeper state which is dreamless and that's what keeps you alive if you didn't go to dreamless sleep regularly you wouldn't be able to survive because you're going to the source the undifferentiated oneness but it's unconscious you do it unconscious when you come back into waking life or even come back into the dream state while you're still sleeping you're back in the you no longer feel that connectedness with the source you went there unconsciously yes you derived life energy from that the nourishment but it doesn't help you for very long when you go back into waking life perhaps at first especially if you're young you wake up in the morning and you feel ah a new day but for many people that ah a new day is very short lived and it might even not happen anymore so you wake up in the morning and go oh another day not another day and immediately all your problems arise in your where they live there's never a problem out here a challenge perhaps and so knowing yourself as awareness is like entering dreamless sleep consciously where the state of dreamless sleep becomes a conscious state and that's amazing you're then consciously rooted in the source of all life because the source of all life you carry that within you the source of all life is the source, the core of who you are the source of the universe the core of the universe is in you you're a microcosm of the macrocosm as above so below as below and it is inherently joyful to know yourself again not conceptually as as a direct knowing to know yourself as awareness and when you know it fully and this can happen here during our meditation when you pay attention to the gaps you realize while you pay attention to the gap to a gap you're not thinking there's a space of presence then you listen to the words that I speak which become thoughts in your mind and then there's the gap again and you're not thinking the same as me when I don't speak here when I'm not speaking I'm not thinking the words arise out of the stillness they are not prepared mentally in other words I don't know what I'm going to say next and that's a lovely way of speaking and interacting that can only happen if you're rooted consciously in that aware space of not and you may then discover that thinking becomes more productive is no longer dysfunctional no longer makes you unhappy because whenever you're unhappy look at your thoughts rather than what you think is making you unhappy this person this situation this uncertainty this or that lack but if you look more closely you'll see it's your thoughts rather than what is that make you unhappy and so that doesn't happen anymore in other words there's no longer you no longer invest thinking with a sense of self thinking that you realize is not who I am no thought is who I am and who I am, who you are is the underlying presence the light or the space and that's you experience yourself as essentially timeless it's a wonderful wonderful way to live it doesn't mean that the person evaporates it's still there but it's not who you essentially are and you know that and then even the person undergoes certain changes because underlying the person there's no that inner peace and that seeps into the person it doesn't mean the person loses all limitations and so on as a person you are form thought form, physical form you're still subject to the limitations of form there are certain idiosyncrasies to you as a person that may remain, characteristics peculiarities some habits may go especially if they are dysfunctional of course have caused negativity or suffering other habits may stay so the person is still there but there's always something greater, the transcendent and then of course you also have out of that space you become compassionate towards the world of form compassion has to allow the things that arise in the world of form to be as they are including the limitations in yourself that the person still has and the limitations in other people and you no longer react to others as if the limitations that they manifest in their life as if those limitations ways in which they behave which may be unconscious or negative you no longer take these limitations as their essential identity which is a enormous source of conflict in personal relationships when you react to a person's limitation and by reacting focusing attention on the limitations of that person and then beginning to believe that those limitations are who that person is so you're pushing the other person into a little box putting the person into a little box in your mind and unless that person is really present whenever you interact with him or her that which you focused on in them the limitations become even stronger in other words without knowing it you're making them even more unconscious so a little bit more stillness and of course that's meditation so if if this works for you then you begin to realize or maybe you realize it already but there's just an intensification of it realize that you don't need to think all the time many times presence is a much more powerful way of being interacting than thinking so it begins to operate in everyday life and then you experience life so to speak as in the background there's a person sorry, in the background there's consciousness the space of consciousness in the foreground there's the person although they're not really separate and a little bit like if you were the ocean you could experience yourself as the depths of the ocean that is very still and the surface movement where there are waves and ripples and that's the person the waves and ripple movements are the person the depths of the ocean which is vast is the spacious presence and is who you essentially are but this analogy is actually not bad because as you know ultimately there is not the waves and the ocean the waves are the ocean imagine yourself being the ocean and not knowing the depths of yourself only living on the surface being a little wave or ripple surrounded by other waves and ripples very quickly you would be in fear and anxiety and what's going to happen next oh my god, here comes a very big wave continuously concerned and upset about all these ripple movements but if you knew the depths you would rest there and then be a ripple while you're a ripple or little wave or big wave and enjoy that without being lost in it or thinking that limited wave is who I am that little ripple in the stillness make sure you're not waiting for the next thing then you're not fully here not waiting for the session to start but to be fully present in this moment rather than always being ahead of this moment that's the old mind pattern not waiting for something to happen waiting is a state of mind the usual state of mind and presence is when you're no longer waiting for the next moment believing that the next moment is going to be more fulfilling than this moment but to deeply embrace this moment the only one there ever is to go deeper into it if you're just moving around the surface of this moment you'll never actually encounter the power that is concealed in the present moment and then the present moment will never seem quite enough will always seem a little bit too insignificant well is this it?

and then you're waiting for some significant moment to give meaning to your life and many people spend their whole life waiting for their life to start whatever expression they use to describe it for their boat to come in I don't know what expressions people use and never always hoping for something more significant than this because they haven't gone deep enough into this and of course significant moments are usually disappointments these are moments that you project yourself forward to for or sometimes a long time when I finally get married at the altar that kind of popular belief media still subscribes to and many people when I finally get there, that'll be it and of course on the day of your wedding you're extremely stressed and things go wrong and everybody's taking photos hoping that at some point you will actually have enough peace to enjoy your own wedding when you look at the photos at some point in the future and the same thing happens when people go traveling that's a significant thing for people look forward to this big trip for a whole year you look forward and then it starts and the beginning of it is stressful as usual and finally you arrive at the hotel or your first hotel and then you start looking at the sights and you carry a camera and I'm talking as somebody who does not dismiss photography I love photography but the way the species that has arisen on the planet called tourist the way they they're a very peculiar species they look at everything through the eyes of their camera it's quite amazing when you see tourists going around visiting ancient monuments cathedrals, temples or landscapes they look at everything they're not experiencing the fullness of that moment they're looking at it even if they're not holding up the camera they're looking at whether this would be a good shot and so they're hoping at some point when they have more time to enjoy their trip and that is when they get home and look at the photos because the whole journey seems to be in the service of capturing these images and so they're not fully experiencing at all that moment they are postponing again they are postponing again hoping when they have accumulated enough photos get back home and say oh that's where we were and so there's not enough time of course during the trip to fully be there because you have to take the photos amazing I recommend that you observe the tourists when you travel and tourists are envied by some people in the third world like some visitors from some other planet who are continuously traveling and drinking drinks and eating good food and taking photos and so some peasants working the land in Thailand were asked why do you give alms to the monks why do you give food when they do come with their bowls every day and of course the peasants say of course we give food because it's good karma and then this will assure us of a better rebirth doing good things and then they are asked well what do you want to be reborn what do you want to be in your next incarnation and some of them said we want to be reborn as tourists laughter they may not realize how stressed out and unhappy the tourists are they only see the surface of it and perhaps if the tourists acquire enough merits, if they are lucky they will be reborn as Thai peasants and much happier similar thing happens the inability to fully be where you are and to consciously and fully experience wherever you are that's just an amazing thing another form it takes apart from the photography photography is to be burdened with information again tourists do it but it happens in many other areas of your life you go into visit an ancient temple or go into a museum or a cathedral or anything any monument or even nature and you have a guide either a personal guide or an electronic guide that you put on your ears that says recording or you have a guide book the traditional way that started in the 19th century the first guide books people traveled with guide books and then you experience through the information and that's all very well it's good to have information of course about when this was built and so on what the cultural context is but a very important dimension is missing and that is the actual immediate and full experience of that moment and then all you experience you don't experience the cathedral the ancient cathedral you experience the information that you are being fed about it but not the essence of it if you can have the balance that's good but if I had to choose between knowing about the ancient cathedral and fully experiencing the essence of it I would choose the essence of it and know nothing about it and walk into that space present ah and that implies to experience a place fully there must be a moment of spaciousness when conceptual information is not interfering with your actual experience of that moment as long as there is conceptual information which has its place sometimes it's helpful at other times and many times it prevents you from going deeper and actually experience the essence of a place or the essence of another human being if you have conceptual knowledge about that human being so called knowledge it may be pseudo knowledge the knowledge may be just your opinions you cannot experience the other human being it applies to a place and it applies to yourself what you do to a place have it obscured by a screen of knowledge you can also do and that is the normal tendency you also do it to yourself you have all kinds of things that you know about yourself or think you know about yourself opinions, viewpoints judgments thoughts ultimately they're all thoughts and so you never actually come to a full experience of the depth of who you are either in the same way that you don't experience the cathedral or the wonderful rainforest if you're walking in the rainforest and with continuous reference to a guidebook or continuously listening to the guide yes it's very interesting knowledge it's interesting but interesting is not enough if your whole life stops at interesting you don't go deep enough to really find the actual deep fulfillment of being alive interesting has its place interesting is connected with knowledge so you break reality up into conceptual bits and pieces and that's fine has its place if you can use it when it's needed but not to be trapped in that net and then being prevented from going deeper into the actual depths and power that is hiding underneath all that so that's the fate of contemporary humans and has been the fate not only contemporary going back a long way the dysfunction was already prevalent at the time of the Buddha otherwise the teaching would not have been necessary and otherwise the deep inside of the Buddha that life is suffering would not have been true already then life had lost to most people had lost its profundity, its depth and there was a disconnection in human beings from who they are beyond their conceptual knowledge about themselves and beyond the psychological form of themselves so that is the dysfunction, the disease everybody suffers from an excess we could call it an excess of thought activity thought activity which could be very helpful and useful and occasionally still is but thought that has proliferated to such a degree that you lose yourself in it and continue to look for yourself in it and then it obscures the present moment, the enormous potential that is there in the present moment, so this is the just a very brief summary of what it is in humans that the inherited dysfunction the inability to truly and fully be where you are and experience the aliveness of this moment no matter in what form, in fact go deeper than the form so whenever I travel whenever when you visit, coming back for a moment to that whenever I visit places where tourists congregate and you can't avoid them these days and of course sometimes you may turn into one yourself if you take a photo then from I sometimes say to Kim, oh now we are tourists but the question is there's nothing wrong with taking photos it's a wonderful thing if you tune into something and then capture that moment but is that preventing you from fully experiencing where you are and then you see all the little groups with guides and sometimes I walk past and listen for two minutes so much that I didn't know about that place and it's talking and talking and then I always prefer to just step go away and just experience it, especially if it's nature I don't want to be burdened with knowledge about nature, this can be fine for certain purposes but to experience the aliveness of the tree the aliveness of the plants the aliveness of the land at first hand, not through the conceptual screen how what a dreadful loss if you can no longer experience that except second third, fourth hand through concepts and so I've given a few examples but really it applies it's not just to when we travel visit unfamiliar places and so on but it really applies to every moment of your life, so the question the vital question is whether at this moment, which as you may know is the only one there is it's only ever now so if you doubt that you can check again in five minutes time and see if it's still now is this, oh yes it is the vital question is whether the aliveness of now is being obscured by conceptualization in your mind in other words by unnecessary mind activity that adds nothing to the richness of this moment in fact prevents you from truly experiencing the richness of this moment, not only of the outer whatever it is that you are perceiving at this moment or the other human being that you are interacting with at this moment but also the experience of yourself at this moment and are you trapped in the head only with a conceptual sense of self and that's all you know about yourself thoughts about and then you may know a lot about yourself or another person you may remember from one of the books I have the distinction of knowing yourself and knowing about yourself very different things so some people are very interested in learning about who they are so they might go to a psychoanalyst that's perhaps the most thorough thing you can do to get as much as possible as much information as possible about things that you had known about yourself and that could be quite interesting could be interesting, childhood all these things that I didn't know that I it can be a revelation, I didn't know I was unhappy as a child I thought I was happy and suddenly your psychoanalyst tells you or you realize that you were unhappy even that we don't know if that is true, could be a protection but anyway if you start investigating your past and so on, hidden motivations and so on you learn about yourself and that's again conceptual information and it's about the conditioned entity that most people identify with as themselves but you still don't know yourself you know about yourself and really there's a great longing in every human being to know themselves at a much deeper level and that is not arrived at through concepts, adding more concepts to your mind more knowledge to your mind so what is it then? It is going deeper within and having the courage to be in the space of unknowing about yourself in the space of unknowing is a term that I borrow from an old medieval book by an anonymous writer written in England in the middle ages and it's called The Cloud of Unknowing and it's a beautiful usually called mystical, it's a mystical treatise and it's The Cloud of Unknowing is about how to know God and the essential teaching there is you cannot know God through knowledge, conceptual knowledge any knowledge in your mind but only directly the same can be said about yourself because ultimately the depth of who you are and God are one and the same God being the source the unmanifested uncreated life the timeless one life that is the essence of who you are so you have to have the courage to enter that space in which you do not know anything about who you are letting go of attachment to opinions that you have had about yourself seeing yourself as a success or failure or mixture in life seeing yourself as a spiritual person or as a not enough spiritual person or superior to others or inferior to others any kind of comparison and this is the liberation that comes when you find the courage to be in the space of not knowing in which there is simply a space of awareness in you and it's still but it's alive where before there were thoughts and as we speak about it now I invite you to find that in yourself it's in everybody there just a space of where before there was a stream of thinking now there is a space of not thinking just that doesn't matter how long it can be here even while you listen to the words and the same space is here in me and the words come out of it and when there are no words there is no thinking the mind only operates the moment words come and that's a precious thing that the world still doesn't know much about it doesn't know that even that possibility exists of finding in yourself the space of emptiness in Buddhist terms fullness in Christian terms but not full of things full of life the fullness of life as Jesus put it the fullness of life it doesn't mean many things it means life before it becomes many things life itself the unmanifested as yet unborn just potential it's basically the state before the big bang which still subsists in you now before the universe came into being the original primal nothingness that no scientist can possibly understand no matter how hard they try and never will understand because it cannot be understood they say before the universe came into being there was an empty space or something like that there was no time and there was nothing no thing so that's all you can say you cannot then start thinking about that no thing because there's nothing to think about the mind cannot grasp it and yet the origin of all things was never lost and isn't really touched by time don't try to understand what I'm saying these are just pointers I don't understand what I'm saying either it's not the pointers point you only to the state of direct realization they are not a substitute for it if you try to work it out mentally you can't you go mad so you have to just use the words as pointers and don't say ok why did the universe come out of nothingness why did why is there anything at all you could ask why and in fact people have asked that question Stephen Hawking I believe said why does the universe go to all the bother of existing at all what's the point why he hasn't found the answer yet maybe he will but although he is very inspired in his thinking I don't think as long as he continues to think he's not going to find he may find many other answers but he's not going to find that one the why so philosophers ask why does the universe exist and then of course we can all give all kinds of hints and so on consciousness wants to experience itself in form it's a play of form consciousness wants to dream the dream of form because obviously that's what's happening billions and billions of life forms including this life form this life form sitting here very brief a brief spark human existence brief spark of consciousness and it's gone and that's called 1890 years but it's really it's just a every human being is that spark of consciousness coming into this dimension it comes and then goes back into the source and something perhaps takes something back to the source like a bee going back to the beehive with some nectar not all this accumulated not knowledge or anything like that but something takes back that's as far as I can go right now with this and that comes out of an intuitive tuning in so to know who you are beyond concepts embrace the not knowing in yourself and then you're getting closer to the essence of who you are in other words so let's see we can get a very limited understanding of what this not knowing is thoughts subside for a moment but the strange thing is there is something that is still present there I say something but it's not something but language is limited because language is about the world of things thoughts subside and there's something even when you're not thinking you're actually present and even if you were not perceiving at that time you could say yes I'm present because there's sense perception happening even if you close your eyes and even if you put ear plugs in or there's total silence we can even try it now you close your eyes all visual sense perceptions have become obliterated and there is no noise going on either so before you were aware of visual sense perceptions and you were aware of this voice and now there's neither visual sense perceptions nor auditory sense perceptions for a moment ah what's left you are still there the amazing thing is even if you're not reminding yourself of your past or your future or your present life situation or your name or looking at your body there is something that is still present you know that but it is not differentiated it doesn't have a history what is still present it has no past and no future to it you can't really say much about it you can't define it further because it is what the Buddhists call empty it is emptiness it is formlessness it is formless consciousness finding if you find that in yourself and it's always there underneath the movement of form which is thinking and emotions and even sense perceptions underneath it is always there if you find that even the most unprofitable life people who have messed their whole life up has become redeemed because you have found the one thing that really matters yourself of course you can't stay there indefinitely in that space at some point the world of form returns but what is possible is not to lose connectedness with that dimension in other words and this is the ultimate spiritual practice until it becomes a natural way to live in the background you can sense that spaciousness still even while you're perceiving things same spaciousness that you experienced let's go there again just very briefly close your eyes no more normal visual perception no more sounds what's left a sense of there may be some thoughts left but if you're very alert the alertness will obliterate the thoughts too so there are no thoughts left in that alertness alert what's left can't define it but you are still there in that formless simple presence you're actually being the essence of yourself and it is that which gives you your sense of identity even when you associate your sense of identity with your life history and your memories that your memories get mixed up with the essential sense of beingness that is the formless empty space in yourself that gets mixed up because that is the primordial I the timeless I and that is your identity in the unawakened unenlightened state that primordial consciousness this formless consciousness gets mixed up with the memory of who you are and thoughts and so you get a diluted version of who you are and you think you are your past history and your memories and your ambitions and your fears but if you disentangle your sense of beingness which is the essential sense of identity if you disentangle that from thought and we are doing it here if you disentangle your sense of identity from thought what is left then you can actually experience I'm saying you experience it but that's not right because language creates subject object divisions you experience yourself as the subject the subject experiences itself the eternal I experiences itself as formless consciousness it is that which is the very foundation for your identity you have the preciousness that you are the preciousness that everybody feels there's something there that is so wonderful and it's I but it gets mixed up with form and then people get some form identity so it's vital to disentangle consciousness and form which usually are mixed up together so this is and once you have disentangled it you may want to do that quite often but ultimately it's living in a normal life without losing in that awareness of the essential formlessness of who you are in the background even while you're perceiving forms you're looking at the flowers you're looking at other human beings you're dealing with things without losing yourself in the forms anymore because you still have in the background an awareness of the formlessness in fact the awareness is the formless in the background no matter where you go you are essentially a field of formless consciousness experiencing things of this world and that field of formless consciousness is also experiencing the person with a history with a past with a future so called future which doesn't exist because only the timeless exists so this is the great liberation it's the great secret and that is the becoming free of the frustration and unhappiness that usually accompanies living in a way that's completely identified with the forms and so you don't know the timeless and formless dimension in yourself it gets mixed up with the forms and then life is frustrating because the forms are never that satisfying at least not for long for a little while so you don't have to you don't lose the form dimension don't need to be scared of losing the form dimension ego, yes you lose ego because ego is unconscious identification with the forms but you don't lose forms, you still do things you learn new things, you accomplish things, you visit things but you don't lose that the only loss is the loss of delusion the loss of the unconscious identification with some form

[Speaker 4] (5:47:25 - 5:47:26)

wow

[Speaker 1] (5:47:28 - 7:01:54)

and of course there's more to it even than that if there is an awareness of that essential awareness self-awareness self-consciousness self-realization it's sometimes called in the background there is a connectedness with the infinitely creative potential of the formless timeless dimension out of which the entire universe has come and is continuously emerging so then you embody in your little life here something vaster you embody that creativity that can then flow into and touch even the world of form out here so a human being who is connected with a being this is how I sometimes put it if you're not connected with that formless being the formless consciousness then you're only a human and that's frustrating and gets heavy the older you get the heavier it gets oh god until finally you wake up and and say not another day that's if you only live through the human dimension but if the human and the being come together then you are a human being and so there are not that many human beings yet but they are being born on the planet and I mean it's a spiritual birth so human beings are being more and more human beings are now being born out of mere humans and so then you become a blessing on this planet if you're human alone no matter how hard you try you may create some good here but then you turn around you knock something over on the other side oh no I was doing good here I didn't realize this happened and so you don't create if you're human alone you always you end up creating some kind of you always contribute in some way even if you're well meaning some humans are well meaning many others are quite much that's another matter but some humans are well meaning and they want to create good but there's a lack of connectedness with the transcendental the transcendent dimension and only if you are connected with the transcendent dimension and realize it as your essential identity it can then move into what you do say and the very emanation of who you are it emanates even formlessly whoever you meet can sense that either they sense it consciously or unconsciously there's an emanation then of that formless presence and that's the how the if more humans enough humans go through this transformation and become human beings then that's how the world changes because the world as we describe as the world is the human made world on top of the paradise of the planet the nature of the planet and then we have the human made world and the human made world is a reflection of the collective consciousness of the human so if the human made world is a veil of tears and very often it is and for many it still is and if the human made world is a place of madness which it still is to a large extent and in history you can read a history book if you want to learn about human madness you don't need to read psychology you just read a history book if you doubt are humans really mad what is the predominant collective state of consciousness read a history book a 20th century history for example or any history and yet of course within the madness there are some humans who are even in a mad environment there are some humans who are waking up in between even in the madness to some extent 20th century was quite mad medieval times you can give many examples of madness in medieval times and yet even there within there there were some human beings being born enlightened beings, human beings great mystics arising in the midst of it lights in the midst of the darkness so in the secret then could be put in these words if you want something just a little pointer, sometimes it's helpful to have a pointer to remember not because the memory of it will help you but the pointer is the famous finger pointing to the moon if you've forgotten where the moon is then you have to, it can't be helpful to suddenly to see the finger first ah, ok and then you go you look away from the finger and then you look, oh there, there it is now by moon that means the actual realization the finger is the words that point to it now a dog usually can't do that and many humans can't do that, they continue to look at the finger well the finger of course is for example the scripture, the finger is any teaching or any sentence that points to the truth within yourself which is beyond words if you attach yourself to it, you mistake the finger for the moon and then you put it in your pocket or something that's my finger in the same way that the dog doesn't know that when you point to something the dog is supposed to extend to look that way but the dog, some dogs may may actually look to where you're pointing but most dogs will actually look at your finger when you point there, there, it's there it's quite an imaginative leap to look away from the finger and extend as if the finger were very very very long and then you look ah, there it's a huge leap and of course there's also a leap when we say and now I'm going to say it, consciousness becomes conscious of itself if you wanted to encapsulate what we've been experiencing, talking about and experiencing here now is then we could say consciousness becomes conscious of itself and that is what happens when you become conscious of the formless dimension in yourself, of consciousness itself consciousness before it becomes a thought, consciousness before it becomes a sense perception consciousness before it becomes something pure state of conscious, pure conscious, unconditioned timeless, before it becomes something conditioned, before it is born into something and so the Buddha talks of the unborn in the famous famous sutra where he says to his monks he always talked to monks, it was a different setting at that time and so he said approximately these words they may be not 100% accurate but approximately these words he said there is, oh monks that's the translation there is, oh monks the unborn the uncreated the unmanifested if there were not the unborn the uncreated the manifested there would be no escape from the world of the born, the created and the manifested and of course that was his realization when he when the Buddha encountered death and sickness and old age, in other words, when he realized the impermanence of all forms and he realized it at a very late stage in his life, everybody else knew it by then but he was perhaps in his twenties, late twenties, mid-twenties, I don't know when for the first time he left his palace and saw ordinary existence and for the first time he saw the short-lived the fleeting nature of all forms he saw a sick person, he saw an old person, he saw a dead body and he asked what is this and then his assistant told him, well that's a dead body, we all end up like that and that's an old man does everybody get old? He said yes, and because it came so late to him, it was not a natural thing anymore it was such a dreadful shock that he said then it all makes no sense if that's all there is the whole world is meaningless, it makes no sense but I'm going to find out if there is another dimension and that was his quest, his spiritual search and it took a few years and then he found the answer not a conceptual answer the answer as a realization of that which is timeless and formless and eternal in every human being and in every life form and lies at the essence of all of the world of form and then he showed that the possibility is there for you to live that also to find that dimension and that is the end of suffering so consciousness which is what you are becomes conscious of itself you could say you become conscious of yourself not as something but as consciousness and all that is the realization that you arrive at that arrives at itself in unknowing, the state of unknowing, it is not knowledge it is not knowledge that gets you there, it's the relinquishment of knowledge in the conventional sense that enables you to realize that dimension in yourself there is a nice book by the man who wrote the book the four agreements what's his name yes, and he also wrote a book something about knowledge the way of knowledge or something like that and that is when you see that title at first you think, oh, knowledge it's all about higher knowledge or more knowledge and when you start reading the book you realize what he's talking about is the relinquishment of knowledge it's a wonderful book, I'll let you know I'll find out the title now you can still use knowledge out here dealing with things in the world of form but not being in the power of that limited way of dealing with things and relating with human beings and so on, so you have knowledge but you have something that is infinitely more vast than that and that flows into your daily life and then you begin to embrace and to be an expression in your daily life of the formless that perhaps at first you can only encounter when you close your eyes become very still and realize you are still the essence of who you are is still there in fact is there more vitally than when you start thinking again the essence of I is more vitally here when you're not thinking than when you're thinking but that's not enough now as you touch it it can be there even when you are perceiving things let's start with a simple thing when you are perceiving just say you are a passive observer of things around you still a little easier so who is observing who is perceiving I am who are you now to perceive you don't need to remember your personal history you don't need to remember your name you don't need to remember anything you can perceive you don't need to remember language you can perceive as a pure act of perception without conceptual labeling you've had that you know that and you still know that what you are perceiving you don't call it anything you perceive a tree as in the field of spacious awareness just as the formless that's who you are so whenever you go you're perceiving things who are you no you're not you're not remembering your past you're not using language to perceive but somebody is perceiving the form of this moment is arising in the field of consciousness and that is what's perceiving this moment that makes the perception possible so that's who you are you are the space for the form and so that's a wonderful spiritual practice to go about and watch things or listen, watch or touch, bring in other senses even taste the predominant sense of course is the visual, the second sense for most humans is the auditory and then comes touch and then comes smell and then comes taste but all the senses are there and all the sense perceptions multitude of sense perceptions always happening who is experiencing that how does this sense perception arise what is the light in which it appears I am that light I am that consciousness in which the whole world of form appears I am that but in essence I am the space for that and so you don't need to tell yourself that it's a question of being the still space while you are perceiving you can do it out in nature or you can go to a coffee shop that's the second step little bit more difficult because in the coffee shop you are perceiving human beings human beings most of them are full of thoughts so they could stimulate mind activity but that's a good practice if you can sit that used to be one of my favorite meditations sitting in the back corner of a coffee shop drinking a cup of coffee and just watching the comings and goings of people the multitude of human life forms amazing without any thought at all just as a pure very peaceful still perception of the incredible richness of the world of form the world of human form in the coffee shop they are all coming in, going out asking for this, asking that sitting there, doing this some sit with computers and just to be there as a space for it a wonderful thing a wonderful meditation and you don't have to know anything about any of the people who are coming in and going out you don't have to know anything to be there fully and acknowledge every being fully I know nothing about them nor do I want to know anything about them if the mind started up it would start looking for some kind of conceptual knowledge and say I wonder how old she is, I wonder what he does for a living oh he looks really angry he must have a heavy pain body oh isn't she beautiful I wonder if she's married what kind, when the mind comes all kinds of stuff brings up useless and then it can speculate oh if your mind is well trained you might actually sometimes think the right thing you have then psychological knowledge but although that's surface knowledge too, you're not touching the essence of any of these human beings that you're judging so the wonderful freedom I'm not interested in any knowledge about them and yet I'm very I love to see them it's a strange thing on the one hand it might look like completely disinterest and yet it isn't I don't want to know anything nor do I need to know anything about them but well if they want to tell me something somebody comes up and say I want to tell you about my life story, then I'll listen to that and then I'll be the space for that, that's okay so I recommend then the two practices one practice out in nature, be there as the conscious perceiver you go like a little as if you've just been born because you're not bringing past knowledge into it so you walk across the grass and you can't I'm not saying you necessarily can do it all the time but bring that in a deeper perception of nature alertness it's just a field of spacious presence birds, cloud but I'm using words now for something that has no words it's just the perception and awareness of the awareness in which the perception happens two dimensions so you're not losing yourself in the perception either you're not going oh that tree, that bird the Bhagavad Gita talks about, the Bhagavad Gita the ancient scripture talks about the senses like wild horses and then you lose yourself in the senses at that time that was true, at that time the way in which people would lose themselves most would be in sense perceptions reaching out for this and that nowadays the wild much wilder horse is the mind thought activity thought activity pulls you out much more even than sense perception can so this should be part of everybody's life every day at least a few times when you're consciously bringing that kind of perception into your life even if you don't live surrounded by beauty there's always something natural there somewhere if only the sky or a potted plant or a little tree outside maybe or the piece of or some blades of grass whatever the essential thing is to be the space as you perceive there's no conceptualization you are there the presence for it next step the coffee shop next step gradually you're no longer just confined to being a passive observer of what happens but you're beginning to bring be able to initiate action without losing yourself in the action so you can walk from A to B you can walk or drive from your home to the supermarket and be there as you go through the motions be there as the conscious presence so you are a field of conscious presence moving so to speak although you may find that you're beginning to perceive things in a slightly different way that there is a presence that is not really moving the presence that is always here now to whom there is no space and what's moving is the world around you is moving it's a continuously changing flux of forms as you're driving but there's something absolutely non-moving cannot move because it exists outside of space and that is who you are and that is the consciousness and so in essence you never go anywhere the world moves through you, around you and so then you're also a very peace there's a deep peace in that which is never touched by the fluctuating forms and you're that peaceful presence that moves and perceives and that does something even to the world of form without in a miraculous way it's something it transforms somehow the world of form what exactly and how I can't tell you I know it's happening one could say it it gradually it dissolves gradually the world of form that could be the process of the entire so called physical universe becoming transmuted into what it already is which is spirit or formless let's not go too far into philosophy it needs to remain practical so you're beginning to bring that awareness that you are into action another way in which you can do it is to sometimes make movement part of your spiritual practices and so that you're not confined to sitting still always and to be, I can only be present when I sit completely still I can only be that's the beginning that's good but then as Kim often says it's through presence through movement that's the beginning of bringing that state of consciousness into doing and then gradually you build it up from there because as you interact more with the world it becomes more challenging the world of form becomes more challenging can you stay there as the awareness in the background when you're talking to somebody that's a challenge because then comes the stream of thinking and so you can perhaps see in your own experience when you begin to talk especially a discussion how quickly you can lose yourself in a mind stream it pulls you all your attention goes back into form thought forms and discussion happens that's an art so again start with non-problematic human interactions when you're talking just not talking not when you're visiting your relatives or your parents that's too difficult at first that comes much later do it in non-problematic human interactions just when you're buying something in a store or when you're asking somebody for information or you're having a casual meeting a stranger and you're talking about the weather I don't know if we talk about the weather here in England they love talking about the weather and usually of course they say it's awful isn't it and then you have to say you can say that again that's the accepted response it's a casual conversation and be there this is a balancing act it seems at first to be there as bring some spaciousness into the interaction be there as the space although you can still speak but in between you're still the space I'm putting my hands here because kind of what I'm saying is you are the background the foreground is whatever is happening or what you're thinking or speaking or what's happening is the foreground but eternally you are the background essentially the consciousness the space for it so to be connected with that the depth dimension while things happen in the foreground listening to somebody that's also a very useful practice listen and be there as a stillness that's listening don't listen by preparing your arguments or being somebody totally different even just if you can even just do that if you can listen to another human being truly listen you change the entire interaction and it has a much greater depth to it there's a true meeting, a great gift you can give to another human listen to him or her it's not so much that what this person is saying is not that important yes, you are listening to the words but when I say listen something is much more important than the words that you are listening to and that is the act of listening and by the act of listening I don't mean just the auditory perception the act of listening is the alert the field of alert attention that arises that makes the spacious or still listening possible and that is more important than any words that that person may be speaking it ultimately doesn't matter that much because it comes from the realm of relativity where the person may be talking about the weather they may be complaining about something that happened to them they may be talking about a great philosophical question or to some intellectual it doesn't matter what it is the words may have a certain importance but it is always secondary in the act of listening in the act of listening what matters is the listening itself which means I'll repeat it when I say the listening itself it doesn't mean the auditory perception is what matters, that is part of the natural act, otherwise you can't hear anything no, what really matters is the field of alert presence spacious, still presence in which the words are being received and that field becomes a field between you and the other human being and it may touch something in the other it may that is also deeper than the words and even if the other person doesn't know that even if the other person doesn't know that something within may respond and vibrate with that the same frequency of the presence within it may touch the presence in the other person the unconditioned and so that is then a complete change comes into human interactions a depth and I can only use the word that sacredness comes into every time when you meet another human being there is a dimension there that is beyond form and that is, and I believe although he uses different words Emerson, whom we looked at the other day he says that every human being is ultimately looking for that in the other somehow there is a deep longing for that to be recognized this is the way I put it in a book somewhere there is a longing to be recognized for who you are by the other and of course who you are is not your personal history who you are in your essence and if there is no meeting of essence to essence then there is always a sense of some kind of dissatisfaction in human relationships and human interactions so it is only when the essence is there then the dissatisfaction disappears and human interactions become actually deeply fulfilling so that is such a wonderful practice and you can practice all the time because you are always meeting people and you are listening to them just listening if you only just practice listening to other humans would be enough to transform your entire consciousness and probably other peoples too if that were your only spiritual practice, do nothing else no meditation my spiritual practice is listening and listening doesn't imply only that you can't talk anymore, you can only listen, no it means words can still come, it's not that you stay what do you think? I don't know, I'm just listening that's not the case, no then when it's time for you to speak then another miraculous thing happens words come out of the stillness of presence, you suddenly find yourself speaking come out and that's another aspect of this miracle that is embracing that state of consciousness that is the more active aspect listening may still seem passive it's not really passive but it may seem passive it's not passive but you can truly see that it's not passive is when actually you begin to speak and you may find the words are more empowered more genuine than they would be if you were just speaking from the conditioned mind there's a genuineness and an originality and a power that comes into the words you may not, not every statement you make is going to be about the secret of the universe no, it doesn't have to be but there's an aliveness and a relevance the empty chitchat talk tends to subside and there's a true, the words are genuine and true and you don't just speak for the sake of speaking as many humans do and if the situation demands your contribution you may find that your contribution is a helpful one, it's creative it's original you may say things you never had never said before and that in itself is a miracle because most things that humans speak is repetitions of what they said many times before and so suddenly something new comes out of your mouth oh and you didn't know it until you said it it came out of the unconditioned consciousness the seed, the ground of all creativity, of all anything that is born into this world comes out of that the mother of what is it called in the Tao Te Ching the mother of the universe or the great mother that's where it comes from that's the spaciousness so and then another practice then gradually then in concentric circles gradually the presence then touches everything you do including dealing with things in this challenging world phones ringing people demanding attention and that's the next challenge can you be there also as the presence and deal with things not necessarily if you live in a totally insane environment perhaps you may find yourself going somewhere else but many things you can do in presence and do them better because your attention is always total on what you do in this moment so the stillness or the presence flows into doing speaking writing walking that's all so your entire life then is we could say spiritual practice that's how it looks at first and then gradually it's no longer spiritual practice it's the normal way in which you live only the transitional period is called spiritual practice when the transition between the unconscious living and conscious living you don't lose anything of value except delusion silence formless and now form arises in the form of a sound and then it subsides back into nothingness formless consciousness remains and form arises again one more time this time just follow the sound as it gradually dies down with your attention the weaker the sound becomes the more alert you need to be when the sound has subsided completely the alertness remains arises again I have a topic for today unless it changes as I begin to speak I was looking at some questions earlier that people wrote in and several questions to do with abundance questions about the rightness or wrongness of having or seeking abundance or the relationship between abundance and the environment and questions of that kind manifesting abundance in your life is that a good idea or not the first thing people think of when we talk about abundance is lots of things things around you but really that's only the outermost layer of abundance not that important at the most fundamental level abundance is the feeling of abundance what does that word actually mean abundance well it's it comes from Latin and it's to do with the original meaning is overflowing overflowing you can have huge amounts of material things around you without having the feeling of abundance you're not happy with what you have and you're seeking more so you're not really abundant without the feeling of abundance many people are very wealthy and have an underlying feeling of lack and scarcity and fear and a great need to seek even more hoping at some point the fear will go I just need a little bit more and of course that's not true abundance there is no abundance without the feeling of abundance and the feeling of abundance another word for it we could use the word fullness at the most fundamental level then abundance is the feeling of abundance and what's the feeling of abundance it is to sense within yourself the source of all abundance to be connected within yourself with the source of abundance and that's what Jesus pointed to when he said I want you to have abundant life in fact he said more abundant life I believe I want you to have life and I want you to have a more abundant life the abundance of life in other translations translated as the fullness of life so that was an essential part of the teaching and the message and it was not to do with things because the message was not to do with having as many things as possible there is a place within every human where there is life where you can feel the life that you are in its undifferentiated state just a simple feeling of aliveness has no form to it and if you touch that within yourself, that feeling of intense aliveness that's the before life manifests into forms it's already within you unmanifested in its raw form you could say in its pure form pure form everything else is forms of life there is life and there is forms of life every form of life is an expression of the one life assumes a temporary form this body this flower this table but to feel the aliveness deep within you which is really inseparable from consciousness it's another word for it is to feel the underlying pure consciousness that is the life, life and consciousness are one, consciousness is the undifferentiated unformed, uncreated unborn, I'm using terms that some of them, also the Buddha used, the uncreated the unmanifested the unborn there is the uncreated the unmanifested, the unborn said to the Buddha well later it became they recited it, maybe that's why I'm talking like that later the monks started reciting it what he said spontaneously and so the monks then started to repeat it there is amongst the unborn, the undifferentiated the uncreated, if there were not the unborn, the uncreated, the unmanifested, there would be no escape from the born, the manifested and the created of course that's a very deep saying except of course when it becomes institutionalized religion, it loses its power so the essence then of abundance is feeling the origin and source of all life, of all manifested life which is the life that you are before you are a body, not temporarily prior to body and you can only do that now by reaching with your attention within and becoming aware that that which is reaching, the light of your attention is what it is it so rather than the light of your attention trying to find something inside you to realize that the light of your attention with which you are looking for the unborn is it already so you are what you are looking for so to be becoming aware at this moment that you are alive not conceptually but to feel it becoming aware that you are conscious it's a subtle thing but it's so obviously there it's so obvious and all pervasive that we overlook it in the same way that the fish probably overlooks the water and says where's the water become aware of that which cannot be named although I'm trying hard it cannot be named because the moment you name it it becomes something in your mind in other words the moment you name it it assumes a form a thought form a sound and then says oh yeah that's it, no before you named it that's it so it's a something subtle I'm using different pointers I'm just giving you different pointers in the hope that some will work for some of you and then other pointers will work for others not all pointers work for everybody so I'm saying be aware of the subtle background to your life that which is always there in the background now you could call that the I the eternal I before the I or the eternal I am before it becomes this or that the spaciousness a sense of aliveness the light of consciousness the stillness something that is undoubtedly intensely alive but it's not something it's aliveness itself now isn't it strange without any reference at this moment to past or future there's no doubt that you are alive that aliveness cannot be doubted and to sense that aliveness within yourself you don't need reference to your past you're not alive because last year you got a million dollars nothing to do with that or you're not alive because you're an influential person nothing to do with that you could be nobody in the eyes of the world and sense the same and if you lose everything you have you sense the same even more strongly probably because you don't get distracted by the many things unless your mind creates it again so to sense the inherent aliveness within yourself the inherent consciousness the intensely alive stillness that is being in touch with a source of all abundance and all life and the strange paradox is that some people can't feel that until they lose everything but losing everything is no guarantee that you will sense that either it's just a possible opening a possible opening but you don't need that because you're here if you're not here and totally hypnotized by the things of the world then of course there's not much chance unless the things of the world suddenly leave you all your obsession with forms of life and if the forms are no longer satisfying you you're deprived of them then you're left with yourself initially very painful but potentially an opening into the formless so the secret of life is to be in touch with that within yourself and from that state of connectedness with being look out onto the world and the first thing you see is abundance all around you because you're surrounded by millions of different life forms everywhere unfolding continuously unbelievable profusion of life everywhere whether you're out in the country natural world or whether you're in New York City or any city walking along 5th Avenue and there too profusion of manifestations of life you don't even need to differentiate between natural, you can actually enjoy all manifestations of life from the tree to the store display at Tiffany's if you want it's just life you don't necessarily need to you don't at that stage you don't need to have anything because you're already enjoying all that and that is a wonderful feeling of abundance already but you have to be in the background there needs to be the connectedness so there is a certain powerful field of stillness as you walk around 5th Avenue looking at everything you need to have a stronger connection on 5th Avenue than you need in the middle of the forest but it's not that you can't be in that place on 5th Avenue, you can so if you're walking out in the middle of a big city of course you get all kinds of your attention is pulled this way and that and the staying rooted in that field so that you're not dependent on your environment to feel peaceful if you're dependent on your environment to feel peaceful then oh I can't be peaceful here, I need to go out somewhere else yes I often mention of course that nature is helpful it is wonderful to go out to nature but if you are dependent on nature to become still and peaceful then your life becomes restricted and there is a lack of depth still you're dependent on a certain environment, fine you can you love nature it's beautiful you love being in nature it's wonderful but you are then dependent on that and you cannot take that state of aliveness into the city so it requires greater depth and intensity aliveness so that you can enjoy the aliveness everywhere, wherever you are and all manifestations of life see them as temporary play the temporary play of forms because that's what it is, there's nothing permanent here, nothing permanent if you take a movie picture of 5th Avenue, let's just stay with 5th Avenue that stands for all cities and all streets if you took a movie camera to 5th Avenue and film all the people running around the street and then a few years later let's say 50 years you watch the film then most of the people running around 5th Avenue will have disappeared already not only from 5th Avenue but from the planet so you watch ultimately insubstantial life forms going about their business or their play they call it business but it is play and to them it's serious but it's not it's the play of life includes Wall Street if you know it's play it's fine, but you can only know it's play through being connected to that which is deeper than the forms in yourself then you recognize the forms as the play of form but if you are not connected with the depths of being in yourself you don't recognize the movement of form as the play of forms because to you then that's all there is and then there comes a neediness I need these forms to make me happy and there comes a concern and seriousness about forms because that's all you seem to have so you get unduly anxious about the forms of life and everything is very serious most people in big cities are serious going about their business very much and there's fear underlying the seriousness they're serious because they're ultimately in a state of concealed to themselves fear and they're trying to get somewhere they never get there but they're always on the way somewhere, very important to get this done they never get it done because they do this and then there's something else there's lack of it's not abundance there can be no true feeling of abundance if you don't recognize the playful nature of the world if you are dependent for your sense of fullness on the forms there's no abundance you're just seeking more forms to fill your life up with abundance so here we have then fundamental at the most fundamental level abundance is being in touch with the source of life within yourself and recognizing it as the essence of who you are of course and then look around and experience the sensory world and then you can participate in the play without completely losing yourself in it and enjoy the play of form and then you experience as you do that you experience another level of abundance that is the abundance of experiences of experiencing life in various ways through where you go, what you do relationships sensory experience even and even there you don't get lost in it you can even enjoy food tastes good without the addictive enjoyment that is very different that goes I need more of this and then there's you can you need to take it in more, more drink another one sex, need more and it draws you out of where's the next sex object and of course it draws you out of there you can enjoy sensory experience without becoming addicted to sensory experience and that is to be able to enjoy sensory experience and whatever you do is also abundance, it's part of the fullness of life and then it's possible that also things come into your life and you can enjoy things also for what they are without getting worked up about owning them or fear of loss enjoy something beautiful why not but not obsessively accumulating one thing after another pointlessly but to honor the world of things also is part of being here so as things come to you so you're not really, you don't need to seek abundance for the sake of abundance you have to go to the place of abundance from there different levels of abundance manifest in your life they may include the outermost level things coming to you all been said already in the new testament by Jesus seek only that connectedness with the source within yourself which he called the kingdom of heaven and all the other things that you thought you needed for your happiness will be added unto you you thought you needed, you don't need them anymore for your happiness but they will be added so to appreciate beautiful things is also part of abundance and you don't always need to own what you appreciate you can appreciate beautiful things for a while that you see that somebody else has you can say oh that's a beautiful thing you have without the compulsion to say I need to have that too appreciate it you can look when I lived in London I would sometimes enjoy walking along Regent Street and Bond Street where the expensive shops are and look in the windows I couldn't afford a single item that I saw in these windows but I didn't really want it just enjoying some of the beautiful things and two minutes is enough okay I've enjoyed it now I couldn't have bought it but I didn't really need it even if I had the money I don't believe I would have bought it maybe one or two things I might have bought but not more so you can visit somebody's home and say oh this is so beautiful without mentioning oh his place his thing is much more expensive than mine it used to be the custom in Spain it's probably no longer the custom because the country has become modernized when you visited somebody's home and you said oh isn't this beautiful the host would immediately say take it it's yours of course you are not supposed to take it he would have been shocked some foreigners did make that mistake or to go about wanting to manifest material abundance in your life is perhaps not the right way to go about it because you are concentrating on the outermost layer of abundance and even if you manage to manifest abundance on the outer level it's not going to give you the true feeling of abundance it's not in other words it's not going to make you happy it's not going to fulfill you except for a few days the new possession nice and shiny whatever it is and there you look at it got it now it's mine and after a few days or a week or two or give it a month it wears off

[Speaker 4] (7:01:56 - 7:01:56)

hmm

[Speaker 1] (7:01:58 - 7:11:17)

it's no longer that fulfilling to be driving the Ferrari or whatever it is there's nothing wrong with the Ferrari but if you're looking to the Ferrari for happiness and fulfillment and to give you the feeling of it's not going to work for that long if you're just driving it because you enjoy that experience that's a different matter there is a difference here so don't condemn the world of things this has been done traditionally by many religious people they were afraid of it and so don't go there you must not have any possessions in many religious orders and so on not just Christian but also other religions monks nuns no you must not have any possessions in some traditions Buddhist monks are not allowed to touch money of course I can see the reason behind it but it would be even greater of course if you could touch money and you're free of attachment to the money that you touch I'm not attached to that and you can touch it it's fine rather than being a oh and of course you're not allowed to touch a woman oh it's dangerous because of course the reasoning behind it is it will take you into complete unconsciousness the sexual urge will arise up in you and will make you totally unconscious maybe that's the reason why in some cultures women are covered scared it could be chaos and yet if you if you are connected with the source then all that is not a problem so manifesting abundance is not really the right way go to the source and allow from the source for abundance if it wishes to manifest in your life you start with the source then you go into enjoying all the forms of life next level of abundance then you enjoy going relating with the forms of life the play of whatever you do in life you enjoy that and then that is how and out of that enjoyment of what you do that energy most likely also brings things into your life, forms that before you thought you needed desperately to feel abundance so they come as an icing on the cake and you might give them away again if they come you have them for a while oh I've had this for long enough now you have it and so the flow is there beautifully as you give things away new things come and if they are all taken away from you that's fine too you are quite happy with that so manifest abundance from the inside out not from the outside hoping that you go find some inner state through external things that is the dilemma of many people who practice manifesting which of course manifesting is a something that you can use and it works if it's done rightly but the dilemma or the fallacy is the belief that whatever you manifest is going to make you happy is to seek the fullness of life through what you manifest through things and that doesn't really work so when people manifest something in that way in their lives a material thing initially they are quite elated I've got it now I've got the house or whatever it is that I wanted to manifest and then that manifestation wears off and after a while brings about its own problems and a new level of problems and the feeling of fullness does not stay it doesn't stay with them nothing can give it to you can give you the true feeling of abundance and that's the amazing thing which implies nothing that you achieve in the future can get you there you have to start with that and you don't need to ask for things to be different in your life you start here and now where you are and here now you go within and see if you can find that place within where life is born continuously but which itself in itself is unborn timeless consciousness itself so don't start there and allow abundance to come from there rather than start with the outermost layer hoping that it will fulfill you if you are in touch with the whatever you want to call it that which cannot be named the Tao which cannot be named what about manifesting something yes you can if you want it's part of the play of life if you wanted to manifest something and you feel the connectedness with source say oh well I'd like to manifest maybe a bit more space in my life on an external level and some greenery it's a preference you don't need it for your happiness and fulfillment but a preference you can do that you can visualize it's a play of form and if you feel the abundance already visualization is very easy of abundance if you wanted it usually it comes even by itself if you are connected with abundance it comes by itself if you want to add something just as a play as a preference you can then it's playful nothing more it's not that important there are many books that tell you how to manifest but some forget to tell you that it's not going to make you happy laughter so you could get the impression that if you manifested enough pairs of shoes laughter I don't know how many it would take to make you happy but maybe 200 laughter maybe a few more 300 laughter or ask the great master of manifestation of shoes apparently is Mrs. Marcos they say laughter she has several thousand pairs yes so the just a little thing that some of these books don't mention but otherwise they may be quite useful but that little thing is quite vital it won't make you happy by the way that's laughter because happiness is really another word for I don't often use the word happiness because it sounds a bit superficial

[Speaker 4] (7:11:18 - 7:11:19)

laughter laughter

[Speaker 1] (7:11:20 - 7:29:19)

something good has just happened to me it's been so great and then the next day is oh laughter happiness happy unhappy so I don't some teachers use the word happiness even some great teachers and I know exactly what they mean Ramana Maharshi the great Indian sage used said happiness is your true nature I know exactly what he means and he is absolutely right except the term happiness as a pointer may not be the best but if you know what he means then you can see beyond the limitations of the pointer and say yes he is absolutely right because happiness is the connectedness with the unmanifested it is the joy that is not caused by anything out here uncaused joy that is the joy of aliveness itself the joy of being conscious of consciousness itself life enjoying itself life recognizing itself and in that self recognition there is joy I am life that's joy and it's very subtle that it's in the that joyful aliveness in the background of your life is very subtle at first and as you pay more attention to it you feel how vast power there is your mind has to become still by the way as long as you are interested in every thought that comes you can't sense that you have to let go of the thoughts at least don't be drawn into every thought that comes up and follow it with your attention like a somebody pulling has got a piece of a carrot on a string or something and pulling and you are running after it or a dog running after a bone on a piece of string that's the thought that comes into your head and you follow every thought that comes and before you know it half an hour has passed and you followed up a train of thought into all kinds, into weird places of fear and anxiety and feeling not good enough and anger towards others and you and finally you have depleted your life energy just by following up one thought which led up to a train of thoughts and then your mind doesn't leave you alone and another one comes up oh no, go this way now so you don't follow every thought with your attention if a thought comes say okay let it go if you don't give it your attention you're not interested in following it up just let it, it comes, there it comes where is your life going where are you really going with your life what are you going to achieve what have you achieved, you haven't done anything with your life, have you and you recognize it as just a thought don't follow it up and then your attention becomes free for presence for it reverts back into the formless where it came from it's consciousness, consciousness born into a thought becomes limited and consciousness the attention is taken out of the form the thought form and remains as pure attention and then you're aware of consciousness itself and then another attempt of the mind comes it wants to be born into another thought consciousness begins to assume a form of a thought but you don't follow it up you say okay let go and you remain when you drop a thought or let it fall drop, let it subside the consciousness that was trapped in the thought form is free again unconditioned it never can never, you can't destroy it it's always fresh and new and that's the amazing thing so our job is to disentangle to extract you could almost say the spirit from matter because even thought is matter it's a form it's a very subtle form of matter energy form so our job is to extract the consciousness, another word for it is spirit from its entanglement in matter there were some very ancient teachings that said similar things but here we're not using any mythologies or anything just direct pointing to this your job is to free the spirit from the dream of form so to speak that's one way of putting it because if you don't free the spirit, consciousness from the dream of form, that's still the human condition for most humans, that's their normal state they walk around life like a sleepwalker totally immersed in all the thoughts that continuously go through their head and they just like and that's the basic truth in the film Matrix where there are people walking around the street and the guy says they're all asleep they're all dreaming because what are they dreaming? they're dreaming the dream of their thoughts that's how it really is it's a dream of my problems let's talk about my problems and your problems and this and that this is what I need to do how dreadful it all is can't stop thinking about my life what I'm going to do no end completely trapped in the dream of matter of form of the person, the dream of the little me and waking up means really consciousness or spirit separates itself from form and the form collapses and it remains in its pristine state of pure consciousness formless that's what the Buddha called the unborn the uncreated, the unmanifested and that is realization another word for spiritual realization self-realization is another word for it and the self is not something that you discover the self is formless and that's why the Buddhists say there is no self and the Hindu teachers say there is the great self they're talking about the same thing but it's just a different way of putting it so it's an amazing thing now we think of course that we are doing it when we step out of thinking and I'm telling everybody that this is something you can do you can step out of thinking but what happens when seemingly a human being does that it is really a cosmic event part of a cosmic event and that is the awakening of consciousness or spirit out of the dream of form and it's when you think yes I'm stepping out of thought it's part of a huge thing that's happening in the universe but to a limited human being it looks as if I were doing it but the it looks as if I were doing it and that's fine to believe that I can step out of thought is part of that process there is nothing wrong with it so the spiritual teachers who tell you there is absolutely nothing you can do they are not quite right what they mean is you are not separate from the totality nothing that you do is not done by the totality when it's an illusion to think I can do something obviously you are part of the totality and whatever you do is done by the totality of life you can't separate yourself out of the totality because that's the egoic delusion that I'm a separate entity and there is the rest of the universe and somehow I've been thrown into this universe this alien universe that's the egoic delusion so the totality is working through you when you are stepping out of thinking say I'm deciding not to think really that's how it looks on the surface as if a human were deciding not to think but how can you do that it's because the totality is part of that movement but it's good to feel that you can do that knowing of course that it's part of a much vaster movement of awakening now there's no end to the questions the mind can ask about why did the universe go to sleep in the first place what's going to happen after it awakens what's the point of it all anyway we don't need to go to all that stay with the practical of what is possible for us and from a personal level it looks like an enormous improvement in our lives that's what it looks like from a personal perspective of course there's no such thing as my life it's a different matter but that's just from a limited perspective so free the spirit is the word then free the spirit that you are so that it doesn't continue to dream its nightmare the nightmare of your exclusively personal existence and your personal problems and nothing beyond that complete lack of transcendence in one's life just a limited little me complaining not getting enough having its problems and then dying so so we are you see how it's all connected and it always takes you back to the very source if we talk about abundance how it all ultimately comes back to the one vital thing the one thing that matters which is not a thing awakening so that's the dope and then all the other things that seemed absolutely important become either unimportant or at the most relatively important and that's all to do with the form that you are for a little while that's all relatively important but not absolutely important, absolute importance is awakening then you see the rest of your life situation where you live what relationships you have and the nature of your relationships your finances your possessions your status in society what other people think of you what you've done in the past failures and successes so called your whole life history and your forefathers your ancient family if you have that in Europe some people identify with being member of an old family goes my family was back 600 years, 600 I can trace my ancestors back to William the Conqueror well that gives you a big form identity it's hard to let go of that isn't it my ancestors go back to William the Conqueror you have all the pictures of your ancestors on the walls what a weight to identify with all that but it's satisfying to the ego because then they ask you what are your ancestors well I have no idea beyond my grandfather I have no idea so all these things become relatively important in your life all the things that make up your life situation and that includes also the body the physical body so it's yes of course it matters relatively whether you're healthy or not healthy it makes a difference whether you are poor or wealthy relative importance yes makes a difference in your life where you live makes a difference your relationship makes a difference but only one thing is of absolute importance and that is this awakening and staying awake no longer identify with the forms that arise be the formless essentially you are it anyway but know that you are it know it be the formless and then you realize that your entire life situation if anything is relatively important not absolutely if something goes wrong in it

[Speaker 4] (7:29:19 - 7:29:20)

okay

[Speaker 1] (7:29:21 - 8:43:25)

then it goes right again and then something else goes wrong and then you lose something and then you gain something and then you lose two things and in the end you lose everything and it doesn't matter it's always miraculous when people who have a huge a lot that they can identify with in the world of form to give them an identity I was just talking about the fictitious but not too fictitious man with many ancestors it's always miraculous when people who have a lot of that they can identify with well almost everybody has a lot they can identify with if only their misery but outer things if there is an opening in them into the spiritual it's almost miraculous when a person like Prince Charles yes there is in him an opening into the spiritual despite the fact of all his ancestors so you must be poor in spirit Jesus said if you want to enter the blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven poor in spirit means the spirit in you the consciousness is no longer burdened by identification with form because when the more these consciousness identified with forms the more rich it is heavy with forms so you don't need to be poor it can be quite possible that a poor person is so identified with his or her few possessions more so than a wealthy person who might be internally free so there is no way of telling so poor in spirit is to be free of identifications so that the spirit is not trapped in forms that means being so blessed are the poor in spirit those who have no possessions in the spiritual realm which are identification with forms theirs will be or rather is the kingdom of heaven or another example he gives become as little children if you want to enter the kingdom of heaven you must become as little children which are not yet excessively identified with form so there is still an opening in them in spirit but they don't know it unconscious innocent original innocence if you read some old stories part myth ancient religious myth there is some truth in some of them where you read stories like the fall of spirit has fallen into matter as a larger aspect of the fall and there is some truth in that and we've already seen what the truth is so it's not something that you need to believe in some abstract philosophy or talk about it it is a practical truth in your life here and now not some weird thing that you can start on the internet to talk about what do you think? has spirit really fallen into matter?

see it in yourself every moment you can see spirit is lost in dreams or spirit is free it's real oh it looked almost too perfect I mentioned in the new earth at the beginning something about flowers that flowers traditionally have been associated closely with spiritual realization and as a spiritual almost a messenger from the realm transcendental realm of spirit Jesus talks about flowers look at the flowers he doesn't say as you read in the translation consider the lilies of the field he said look at the flowers and I mentioned the Buddha the famous silent sermon you may remember remember reading it or maybe you were there when he held it where he held up a flower and smiled a little bit and never said a word and everybody was puzzled that shows you by the way the approximate level of spiritual realization the fact that everybody was puzzled except for one person who suddenly got it and of course then the the person doing a PhD about Buddhism says what is it that this person suddenly got well of course his mind stopped and he smiled naturally because he can feel the the life that is deeper than form and he saw the flower as an expression of that and himself and the Buddha temporary expressions of that the realization of that and ah that's it but I do recommend flower meditation not say I'm now going to do a flower meditation but in a more organic natural way to perhaps if you have flower at home from time to time just spend a few minutes don't overdo it just 3, 4, 5 minutes, 2 minutes, 1 minute just looking at a flower and allow the flower to help you to stop thinking acknowledge the silent presence of the flower because it's very silent the flower is very still it's not thinking it's alive it is there in this field of stillness just is but alive so you so for a minute or two or three the flower can teach you to be absolutely in this dimension of stillness connected with the source which of course the flower is very deeply because it hasn't gone out as far from the source as humans gone out even less in a way than animals it's still more closer to the source an expression of the source and so you allow the flower to connect you with the source in yourself it's where you meet it and it's just to acknowledge not only the external beauty of the flower without thinking, when you look at the flower, see if you can let go of all thought even thought, oh that's a beautiful flower that reduces it already to something, it's not a beautiful flower it's much vaster than that and you can't get the vastness so that it becomes an opening into the vastness of life itself the moment you say it's a pretty flower you think you know what it is but you've already reduced it to something silly almost and then you just, you realize how still it is as you look and see the beauty you also tune into the stillness that's in and around it and of course the moment you tune into the stillness around the flower you become still yourself, you can't tune into the stillness and still be noisy tuning into the stillness means to participate in it it's a wonderful meditation so if you have flowers at home, do it every day it's good to have at least one flower at home you can also do a whole bunch of flowers but I think one is almost more powerful you could take in the totality of this also, that is also lovely but you can spend the rest of the day pointing to this and looking at it something I started doing with E.T. TV something I don't normally do is to share with you a book and there are some books that I've loved for many years that are powerful timeless and you may have seen already started by sharing with the Tao Te Ching, the ancient Chinese book of wisdom written 2500 years ago and just as powerful as it was then, even in translation and I don't know if you've seen the second one was the Ralph Waldo Emerson not that old 19th century also containing timeless powerful spiritual truth books like that are more than books that I feel almost life energy fields and they have a life of their own after giving birth to the first time the power of now I had this feeling that I had given birth it came through this form and suddenly it went off into the world and it had a life of its own not that much to do with me anymore and it went into the strangest places and caused all over the planet reaching people who were ready at least one copy of the power of now even reached the bottom of the Pacific Ocean somebody told me that he was on a yacht and it sank and the book went down with it so when we talk about a book and I have chosen another one for today let's bear in mind that we are not at a college or university that's not our approach we are not actually studying the book as such but the book is more than a book it consists of powerful pointers towards spiritual truth, awakening, realization so we are looking through the book not at the book we are looking through the book at ourselves because every significant book is about you that applies even to literature if you read an important deeply alive work of literature it's about the human condition always in the story, hidden underneath the story is a truth about the human condition which is you and the book is powerful because it is about you and even more directly so in a spiritual book so that's really what we are looking at through the book, at ourselves at the truth of awakening or at dysfunctional mind patterns in ourselves, becoming aware of that so there is running through, as far as these books are concerned, there is running through history this thread of spiritual realization or truth that has been called by some people, I don't know who coined the phrase perennial philosophy perennial means everlasting always there, philosophy not in the modern sense of abstract solving of puzzles, but the original meaning of philosophy was about change in consciousness about how to live sanely in this world and so the book I've chosen for today again a book I've lived with for many years this book was written approximately 1900 years ago and the amazing thing about the author of this book one quote from this book is in the power of now, I'll tell you in a minute what it is the author of this book is highly unusual, he belongs to the rare species extremely rare species sometimes called philosopher kings that refers to people who have worldly power but are not unconscious rare combination worldly power and a high degree of consciousness perhaps not absolutely awakened state but a very high degree of consciousness and self-awareness and that's extremely rare so I've seen it for example I remember in the when I lived in London I would often go into the British Museum where there is a huge and wonderful section on Egypt and there are particularly two gigantic carved granite stone heads of pharaohs of Egypt one a man and one a woman huge size and when I saw them for the first time I felt both of them emanated such serenity that must be the depiction of somebody who is in a state of absolute peace there was no doubt because even the stone statue emanated that serenity with a much more powerful more powerfully than most Buddha images although occasionally you get beautiful Buddha images like that too they both have a very slight smile on their face just a hint of a smile and wonderfully serene gaze and I actually took photos of these two and I had them on my wall for many years but now the photos have gone the way of all earthly things and been lost or dissolved but that's fine for the time being if you ever go there they're still there the original stone heads and I'm sure you will find them easily just walk around the British section in the Egyptian section in the British Museum on the ground floor and you will very easily find them so philosopher king those were pharaohs they were the rulers but at the same time perhaps they lived in that state of awakened state perhaps not completely but conscious, very conscious state and the book I've chosen for today belongs to the same, written by the same kind of being a Roman emperor called Marcus Aurelius who was emperor for about 20 years between approximately the year 160 and 180 after Christ and while he was emperor he wrote that book he's considered one of the most just and wise emperors in a huge number of emperors many of which were could almost say completely crazy completely insane with occasional interludes of sanity but he perhaps was the most sane this unfortunately was not the case as far as his son was concerned who became emperor after him who was one of the worst so the awakened state is not easily transmitted genetically if you have seen the film Gladiator the emperor in that film is called Commodus and that's his son and in the film actually Marcus Aurelius appears at the beginning of the film and if I remember correctly in the film he is killed by his son I don't think there's historical evidence for that but it's quite possible that he did kill his father so the actor is so good who played Commodus the mad emperor his son I believe his name is Phoenix Joachim Phoenix he's so good that was the first time I ever saw this actor and whenever I see him in some other role now I think oh there's the mad roman emperor now the book that he wrote was not meant to be a book and was not meant to be published it was to himself and for a while that was the title and later it was published it was called to himself and then later the title became meditations and that's what it's called nowadays meditations meditations and so when he died people found this collection of notes to himself and all just very short notes very rarely more than half a page and often just two or three sentences so they found these notes and people must have realized that they were deeply significant and they became they were published in other words copied by hand of course and then distributed to some people and for about 300 years 200 years 300 years gradually the book became better known a book couldn't spread as quickly as it happens nowadays because first there was no print and there was no opera so and then what happened was what started then were the so called dark ages when very few, the Roman Empire collapsed the destiny of all form the Roman Empire collapsed the so called barbarians took over, smashed everything up and for 1000 years the book disappeared, nobody heard of it and miraculously one or two copies survived somewhere, nobody knows where in a monastery perhaps because the only people who could read and write during those 1000 years were monks in monasteries, they kept alive the literary and philosophical tradition and 1000 years later somewhere the book reappeared and somebody read it and said wow and they started copying it again and ever since then it's been, then it spread, it has been known to people and many people found it meaningful and many people still do so that's amazing how the life of a book it can disappear for 1000 years and suddenly reappear again and be just as alive and now here we are in the year 2009 looking at a book that was written 2000 years ago and it's alive for us as you will see in a minute it is alive it is vitally alive imagine the equivalent of this would be in the year 4000 people reading The Power of Now now this is an ideal book if you don't want continuous reading but either read it in bed or wherever you are, open it read one entry, two entries one page, they're all unrelated entries, the book is divided into chapters but it's meaningless originally it didn't have chapters but the publishers these days thought well every book must have chapters so we call it chapter 1, 2, 3 but it's meaningless it has some themes that recur but otherwise there's no division into subject or themes, it's just thoughts that came to him insights, realizations and reminders to himself of how to live so that probably means that he didn't quite live the truth all the time, he was not totally conscious all the time he needed to remind himself of the truth so these pointers that he wrote down were to himself and not he didn't realize that anybody would find these pointers powerful and meaningful anybody who had even the slightest opening to the truth within they would then recognize the truth that's there in the book amazing so I'll show you here what I have I have two books here one is an old edition and an older translation Penguin Classic it probably looks different these days it may have a different cover I've had this book maybe for 25 years for a while it disappeared too, I didn't and then I got it again I had it stored somewhere this is the Meditations Penguin Classic an older translation this was sent to me one or two years ago I received it in the mail from the publisher said we've just published a new translation of Marcus Aurelius and we realized that you quoted him in The Power of Now and I think you would like to have a look at it, a very different translation by Gregory Hayes the publisher is new to the modern library I love them both this translation is more formal and serene this translation is more modern and impactful and concise and this one is hmm so in a book like that where I also gave you sometimes alternative translations, it's good to look at two different translations to have two different approaches to the same truth and see how different a translation can be now you might think since he was a Roman emperor he would have written this book in Latin but he didn't the original is written in Greek every highly educated Roman would be virtually bilingual and Greek was a language in ancient Rome of culture and philosophy and so naturally when talking about these subjects they would use the Greek language so it's a translation from ancient Greek Marcus Aurelius lived at a time when Christianity had just come to Rome but he doesn't mention Christianity, apparently there's one mentioned somewhere, I haven't found it yet but they believe that a later copyist put that in he was aware he must have been aware of Christianity and many people have said that many of the truths that he speaks of seem to show a Christian influence but that is not an external influence I believe it's something that came from within because the time of Christ was a second wave of spiritual awakening coming not perhaps the second perhaps third or fourth one very powerful wave was, as I mentioned at some other time the time of the Buddha and Lao Tse who wrote the Tao Te Ching was an enormous influx of spiritual truth, it seems to come in waves the awakening of humanity comes in waves, there comes a wave of suddenly it flows from within, it flows into humans and then the wave subsides and unconsciousness returns not completely perhaps it's like somebody, let's say humanity is a single human being that is asleep and dreaming and this human being doesn't wake up like this human being wakes up out of the dream world a lot of the dream is nightmares it goes and dreams on but perhaps not quite as deeply and then comes another self-awareness and then it's overtaken again by sleep can't keep my eyes open anymore another thousand years of the dark ages and then something shocks it perhaps some deep, some suffering some enormous collective pain like something hitting you wake up life says, wake up and you go in our case I believe that hit my life on you, that wakes you up was the 20th century, the madness of the 20th century the dreadfulness of history, 20th century history this dreadful suffering was like shaking you awake and this is why from a larger perspective even the dreadfulness has its place because ultimately it's part of the dream the dreadfulness of the madness of it all the 20th century even that has its place and perhaps we would not be here it's almost don't want to say something like that but perhaps we would not be here if it hadn't been for the enormous suffering self-inflicted by humans on humans and so that served perhaps as an an awakener and this is why we are now experiencing another very powerful wave perhaps the last perhaps leading to a permanent awakening a permanent shift I'm not absolutely sure that this wave is the last one that leads to a permanent shift in consciousness so that from now on humanity or large section of humanity can live consciously without losing it again however if we look at history we see that yes it seems to come in waves perhaps this is a wave perhaps even this will have to subside again perhaps there will be another period of darkness and then finally the shift will happen that's possible it doesn't really matter there is an awakening here happening now that's all we need to know and to be part of that so that it happens through you that's all that matters and it's never lost no awakening is ever lost even though humanity may go back to sleep for a while who knows and yet no gain in consciousness is ever lost and then the sleep won't be quite as deep and there will always be some humans who stay awake even if collective sleep should return hopefully not would be dreadful but you can see there is the sleep state you can even when you watch the television CNN partly there are some people who are very unconscious still and occasionally there are some people who bring in who seem to be more awake than others much more I'm not mentioning any names now Marcus Aurelius was not you might have said well he must have had a great life he was a Roman emperor lived in a life of luxury and well he didn't he spent many years fighting it was a tradition for many emperors not to stay in Rome when there was a war they would actually go out and lead the soldiers into a battle maybe not personally with a sword but they would be present where the Romans were defending their empire from the barbarians in the north and for years he lived there living through the agony of Germany's winters and no central heating of course and he was getting old and not that many pleasures and during that time he wrote this book In the Power of Now I mentioned one entry from the book and I haven't looked at it recently but I may actually have misquoted it because when I wrote The Power of Now I didn't have any books with me so I caught it from memory but the correct quote I believe from this is and this is the old serene translation I didn't have this one then it says Love nothing but what comes to you woven in the pattern of your destiny for what could more aptly fit your needs love nothing but that which comes to you woven in the pattern of your destiny for what could more aptly fit your needs the pattern of your destiny is the totality in which you move and whatever you encounter, whatever situation you encounter in life in this moment, the only moment there is, must be part of this web of the pattern of your destiny where everything is connected with everything else. This is why I sometimes say, I speak of the inevitability of the form of the present moment it happens because why is this happening now it could not happen otherwise the entire history of the world has brought about the form of this moment obviously it has produced the form that this moment takes and that is the web, that is the pattern and to go against that is insane to not accept it so one theme that runs through it is to live in a state of non-resistance to what is so amazing that he didn't call it non-resistance to what it is but that is the basic message and that reoccurs many times in the book so let's have a look perhaps at one or two last few days I've been re-reading it and marking a few entries that I want to share with you and I love it, I can't put it down and it's not because I can't put it down because there's some what's going to next in it because there's no next, there's only this entry and then this entry because it's so alive oh so much, that's good, I don't know where to start let's start with a very, very short, to shrug it all off and wipe it clean every annoyance and distraction and reach utter stillness don't need more than that shrug it all off wipe it all clean every annoyance and distraction and reach utter stillness that's the first and the last lesson now just what does this serene translation say about this more poetic but less powerful perhaps oh the consolation of being able to thrust aside and cast into oblivion every tiresome intrusive impression and in an instant be utterly at peace now as you notice this translator uses stillness this translator uses peace, of course it is the same thing, peace is inner stillness so according to your inclination, some may prefer one translation, others may prefer the other, it is only the form in which it comes, the essential truth behind the form is the same of course and that is so you may love we talked previously about loving the form, having affinity for the form and calling that love and recognizing the essence which is love, so you might have an affinity with one or the other form of this book, one translation or the other, that has nothing to do with it, the essence is the same so that's fine just form and essence some forms are easier for others to use, for some people to use than others, so it doesn't really matter which one but that ability to shrug it all off and wipe it clean every annoyance and distraction and reach utter stillness, that possibility is there at any moment to say, I'm just returning completely to this moment which means you shrug it off, you wipe all distraction, all mental accumulations completely back in the present moment no problem, there is no problem here now, that in itself is a meditation you can remember that when you are not at peace, the possibility of returning to the present moment you can call it like usually one lives, one's intention is here in the past and here in the future and so the focus of your consciousness is either there in the past or here in the future but it's not where life is happening it's just here, and you're interpreting the life that's here through the past or through fears and expectations about what you want in the future past and future clouding your vision of what is of course it's confusing, you get confused and so you separate shh shh ah you wake up out of the dream the present moment is actually fine yeah, but what about tomorrow well, when it comes it will be the present moment the ability just to see how unproblematic the present moment is the problem arises from something else past and future where is past and future in thinking here there are one or two translations, I've changed a word or two to make it even well, in my view, better nothing that goes on in anyone else's mind can harm you nothing that goes on in anyone else's mind can harm you nor can the shifts and changes in the world around you then where is harm to be found in your tendency to see it it refers to harm in your tendency to see harm stop doing that and everything will be fine let the part of you that makes that judgment keep quiet even if the body it's attached to is stabbed or burned or stinking with pus or consumed by cancer or to put it another way it needs to realize that what happens to everyone, bad and good alike is neither good nor bad that what happens in every life lived naturally or not is neither natural nor unnatural the important phrase here is let the part of you that makes that judgment keep quiet the judgment that harm has happened without that all you are ever faced with is the isness of the present moment the rest is an interpretation or story and it is in your power to let go of the interpretation which is unnecessary and simply be with what is don't impose a story on it and strengthen your identity by fighting what is it's about living in a different from a different consciousness people try to get away from it all to the country to the beach to the mountains you always wish that you could too which is silly you can get away from it anytime you like by going within nowhere you can go is more peaceful more free of interruptions than your own soul in an instance recollection and there it is an instance recollection and there it is complete tranquility and by tranquility I mean a kind of harmony so keep getting away from it all like that renew yourself getting away from it all that expression many people want that and of course ultimately the only way to get away from it all is to go within now in the little book guardians of being which some of you may have seen about dogs and cats there's a little cartoon where the man walks with his dog and says to his dog oh isn't it nice to get away from it all they're walking out in the country and the dog says I suppose so although I don't have that much of an all to get away from another theme that runs through it is impermanence the fleetingness of all things and from the point of view of the practical man or woman they would say I don't want to hear this is very negative to be reminded of death or of the end of things the practical man or woman says no I just want to get I just want to get on with life I don't want to be reminded of death and yet eventually it'll catch up with you and then it's a bit late and if you've been identified with form all your life and finally the end approaches it's very painful extremely painful when the forms around you begin to collapse and you become aware of the imminent dissolution of your own form it's dreadful and the dimension of depth impermanence cannot develop in you as long as you're identified with form if you do not see the fleetingness of all forms you remain shallow so this is why I wrote somewhere any civilization that denies death, that doesn't want to hear about it, like western civilization still, doesn't want to hear about death, denies death is shallow and the amazing thing about impermanence is that the realization of impermanence opens up in you the dimension of space or stillness when it is not resisted this is why many spiritual teachings point to the fact of impermanence of all form as a device as a teaching device because the moment you see that how fleeting everything is and don't resist it something in you feels suddenly very spacious and peaceful and this could happen even if you go to, here in the west you can't do it but if you go to India you could go when a person dies in India the body is taken just a few hours after death because it's hot, you can't keep bodies for very long the body is taken to the cremation grounds out in public, how dreadful in public the body is taken to cremation grounds and there's a huge fire and it's placed into the fire and all the relatives they watch the body burn and that, of course many cry but it is a deeply spiritual thing to watch the destiny the fate of all forms to actually see it not as an abstract truth you can have an abstract truth yes, everybody dies eventually and when they die the body dissolves, that's an abstract you don't really know it and if you're a young person up to the age of 30 perhaps okay, you've been told or you think you're going to die one day but you don't really believe it that you are going to die, it's not me maybe at the age of 30 for the first time for a second an inkling comes to you that you may be mortal or as I heard I read an interview with a young person and she said in her twenties she said oh, I'm not worried about death because by the time I reach the age they will have invented something so, soon you will be ashes or bones a mere name at most and even that is just a sound an echo the things we want in life are empty, stale and trivial dogs snarling at each other quarreling children laughing and then bursting into tears a moment later ordinary human existence dogs dogs snarling at each other children, quarreling children laughing and then bursting into tears and then they die so he constantly reminds himself of the fleetingness of life and why is he doing that? that must have given him inner peace and stillness and again, why is this happening? why can, why potentially can the realization of fleetingness give you inner stillness?

because something in you that in you which recognizes the birth and death of forms is not form it's consciousness so there must be something eternal or timeless something that is not form in you to recognize formlessness as I said somewhere in a book if the whole world were blue you wouldn't see any blue in order to see blue there must be something that's not blue so in order to recognize the fact of impermanence there must be something, a faculty in you that is not part of that impermanence and that is timeless and that is consciousness itself so when you see the form you disidentify, when the form you see the form dissolving and this could be in your life with a simple thing like some kind of loss it doesn't have to be death every time some kind of loss in your life it could be the loss of a job the loss of your investments the loss of your partner someone close to you perhaps they leave you, they may not die but it's the same separation, the loss of certain life circumstances, the loss of your home many people in these economically difficult times are experiencing for example, the loss of their home and again, home your house where you live is something important in the world of form that you identify with as part of who you are it is very painful to be deprived of that but potentially there is here the possibility of disidentification from form and there suddenly you find yourself, although most people in this country lose their home, some do but most people eventually find some other home most even if you don't find another home and you find yourself on a park bench this could be a moment of complete disidentification from that which you thought you needed to sustain your life or the forms to psychologically sustain your sense of who you are you've lost that and what are you left with then what's left after you've been deprived of the forms that gave you your what you thought was a foundation for your life when life takes away the forms that you thought were the foundation of your life what is left the life that needs no foundation that is the foundation the formless, the essence and this is why many people many people have to go through loss to awaken to that some of the happiest times in my life I spent on a park bench without a home was beautiful no I'm not saying this will happen to you some people read the introduction to the power of now where I talk about having no home for a while and sitting around on park benches and they close oh no I don't want to go that way dealing with people that was one of his things he often reminds himself of how to deal with other people don't be irritated at people's smell or bad breath now he's using really he's using that as a metaphor for something else being irritated at the behavior of people but he uses that don't be irritated at people's smell or bad breath what's the point with that mouth, with those armpits they are going to produce that odor and then he argues with himself the next line says but they have a brain can't they figure it out can't they recognize the problem and then he answers so you have a brain as well good for you then use your logic to awaken his show him make him realize it if he'll listen then you'll have solved the problem without anger which means point out don't react to other people's unconsciousness whatever behavior they manifest comes out of their state of consciousness this is why he says with that mouth and those armpits they have to produce that odor that just follows why be angry about that why react you have a brain you can instead of asking them to be conscious be conscious yourself and then he says use your logic to awaken his now when he uses the word logic it's deeper than what we know as logic according to the philosophy of which he was a part which is called stoicism there is such a thing or no thing that is called logos in greek and logos is often translated wrongly I believe as the word logos is translated as the word for example at the beginning of the gospel of Saint John where it says in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God now what he translates, what in Saint John is translated as the word is the greek word logos, this is the original because the gospels are written in greek the word logos says in the beginning was the logos and the logos was with God and the logos was God that is logos the fact that the writer of the gospel of John uses the word logos means that he was familiar with greek philosophy so he uses a term that was already at the time of writing was already 400 years old logos and incorporates that into the christian teaching, so we have greek philosophy coming into christian teaching but the logos in that school of philosophy and that is why it is part of the perennial philosophy of spiritual truth the logos really is consciousness, the logos they are regarded as an intelligence that pervades the entire universe that animates and pervades, it is also the intelligence that makes it possible for you to think, but it is deeper than thinking, it is the intelligence that sustains the body and created the body it is the intelligence that underlies the whole, that is the logos and the teaching of Marcus Aurelius or what he reminds himself of is to live at one with that intelligence, consciously in conscious oneness with that intelligence with this consciousness itself so when he says use your logic it means live in alignment with that universal intelligence and you cannot live in alignment with that universal intelligence if you resist life if you resist what is if you complain about life if you have a quarrel with life the present moment and there is a beautiful if I can find it piece on that I can't find it but I know it more or less from memory he says if you quarrel with your circumstances you are like a tumor or an abscess in the world of form you become like a tumor or an abscess if you quarrel with what is internally or out aloud you are like an abscess on the world and many people of course if you observe human life many people live like that they live in if not continuous resistance to circumstances circumstances consisting of the other people what people say or do what people don't say but should have said or don't do but should have done and so on all that is circumstances and they their habitual state of consciousness is to quarrel with circumstances with what is and so he describes that you make yourself into an abscess you are out of alignment it's like some growth and that's you may not realize how widespread that state of consciousness is that lives even if it's just 50% then it's half your life living out of alignment with life and for many people it's more than 50% of their life almost 100% of their life are quarreling with circumstances internally or out aloud whatever is in the present complaining isn't that amazing to live like that and he saw the insanity of that so do you want to be an abscess and of course most of you don't do that anymore except occasionally

[Speaker 4] (8:43:28 - 8:43:43)

somebody and this is a good moment for a

[Speaker 1] (8:43:44 - 8:44:51)

humorous interlude somebody gave me a card that he gave to his wife and he showed it to me and I liked it, I don't know why he gave it to his wife and he showed it to me and I loved it so much and I said, oh I'd love to have that and then he got one for me it's all about complaining of course so the card shows this woman it's apparently from a TV show called Saturday Night Live and this woman looks very unhappy and the card says so I don't know if you'll be able to hear it it's a little digital recording she's going to say something when I open the card the card says so when you open the card it says how are things with you and then she tells you how things are with her I suppose I have to hold it to my microphone here how are things with you I'm depressed

[Speaker 4] (8:45:08 - 8:45:08)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (8:45:25 - 9:00:16)

now the reason why it's funny is because it's so close to the truth of many people just a slight maybe very slight exaggeration not that much laughter choose not to be harmed and you won't feel harmed don't feel harmed and you haven't been this again is about not creating a story in your mind this is what he did to me this is what he did and then it goes on he did that talk about it think about it you're creating a substitute reality you're creating a huge superstructure mental superstructure on top of the simplicity of what is if you don't do that it's almost as if nothing happened even if somebody cut off your arm if you don't complain if you don't make it into a story nothing much happened don't choose not to be harmed and you won't feel harmed what he's really saying is do not create a superstructure of story making impose it on reality and believe that to be more real than the simplicity of what is it's amazing and again of course this is still a lesson that most humans have to learn impermanence little pointer again to impermanence he is reminding himself of he says the age of Vespasian Vespasian was an emperor about 80 years before him the age of Vespasian for example people doing the exact same things marrying, raising children getting sick, dying waging war throwing parties doing business farming, flattering boasting, distrusting plotting, hoping others will die complaining about their own lives falling in love putting away money seeking high office and power and that life they led is nowhere to be found or the age of Trazan Trazan lived 40 years before him he was emperor then the exact same things and that life too gone survey the records of other eras and see how many others gave their all and soon died and decomposed into the elements that formed them all gone but most of all run through the list of those you knew yourself those who worked in vain, who failed to do what they should have what they should have remained fixed on and found satisfaction in this last sentence what he means by that is who worked in vain who failed to do what they should have what they should have remained fixed on and found satisfaction in their entire attention was on the world of form he is really saying their entire attention throughout their lives was on the world of form and he gives this whole list and of course the list that he gives marrying, raising children, doing business, flattering, boasting plotting, putting money away is still exactly the same these days no difference from 2000 years ago and so the entire attention is on the things the stuff around you and this is why he says they worked in vain because what they should have remained fixed on or at least there should have been a balance in their life of what I previously called the formless and the world of form what I express sometimes in you may remember this the formless and the world of form to have a balance in your life and for most people there is no balance there is only form and that is such a waste they are not focused on the eternal they are unaware of the eternal within Jesus talks about that also the famous story of the two sisters when he visits a house Martha and Mary and Martha is concerned about getting everything ready, you have to do this and that and the cooking has to be done she is agitated and stressed and Mary is sitting there listening to Jesus and Jesus says Martha says to Jesus please tell her to help me while she is just sitting there I've got so many important things to do Jesus says well she has chosen only one thing is necessary and she has chosen that one thing when Jesus says only one thing is necessary what he means is only one thing is absolute is absolutely important everything else may be important but it is only relatively important your job your relationships your home situation your financial situation, your health situation whatever you have in the world of form is relatively important, yes but not absolutely important but what determines whether your life ultimately has meaning or not is whether the dimension of depth the stillness, the spaciousness the formless essence whether you realize that within yourself or whether your life is consumed completely by the world of form which includes the thinking mind then your thoughts this is primordial form, thought is primordial form, your thoughts then consume your entire consciousness and the things of this world which are really all become thoughts in your head you don't have a relationship with your car or your house what you really have a relationship with is the mental concept of car and house and so ultimately all the things of this world are your mind and you don't even know whether there is such a thing as a car out there maybe all the cars we see in LA are just in your mind philosophers have spoken about whether what we perceive out there is actually there and nobody can know for sure is there even such a thing as an outside amazing question, but let's not go into that and ultimately it actually is helpful as the course in miracles recommends that you consider everything that you see as being inside you almost as a kind of spiritual practice and that's quite an amazing thing if everything that you see you can practice it for a day or half a day or an hour that everything inside is actually inside you watch that obnoxious person is inside me and of course if it's inside you it changes ultimately the division between inner and outer is not really there but let's put that aside let's stay with the practical gain a little entry about the story making in your mind giving things a significance that they don't really have like seeing roasted meat and other dishes in front of you and suddenly realizing this is a dead fish a dead pig or that this noble vintage whatever it's called is grape juice of course it's fermented grape juice and the purple robes the roman emperors would wear purple robes and the purple robes are sheep wool dyed with shellfish blood or making love something rubbing against your penis a brief seizure and a little cloudy liquid well that destroys many illusions perceptions like that latching onto things and piercing through them so we see what they really are that's what we need to do all the time all through our lives when things lay claim to our trust to lay them bare and see how pointless they are to strip away the legend that encrusts them so that you are not deceived by the world of form it's good to see that when you see advertising doesn't mean you can't enjoy things but not get into some illusory realm they inhabit some illusory mental realm because then the world will take you over and devour your entire consciousness when you don't look through things amazing our inward power when it obeys nature when he says nature by the way it again really is one of the many ways in which you can translate logos so in alignment with consciousness itself our inward power when it obeys nature reacts to events by accommodating itself to what it faces to what is possible it needs no specific material it pursues its own aims as circumstances allow, it turns obstacles into fuel as a fire overwhelms what would have quenched a lamp what's thrown on top of the conflagration is absorbed, consumed by it and makes it burn still higher obstacles challenges when they are not avoided but faced when they are not resisted internally he uses the words reacting to events by accommodating yourself to what you face as a consciousness rather than rejecting what you face then whatever challenge comes into your life and I say the same in the power of now it becomes fuel for your as I said it becomes fuel for your consciousness any difficulty

Q and A with Eckhart Tolle TV Part 6

[Speaker 1] (0:02 - 59:05)

And I say the same in the power of now. It becomes fuel for your, as I say, you become, it becomes fuel for your consciousness. Any difficulty in your life, any challenge in your life, if it's not avoided, denied, rejected, complained about, saying life shouldn't be happening to me, it's accepted as it happens.

Then it becomes fuel for the flame of consciousness. And you grow, consciousness grows, comes through you more and more. And then also at the same time, not only does that free you from the suffering, the self-inflicted suffering that is there when you reject what is, does not only free you from suffering, it also brings a power in that deals then with the situation.

So use whatever challenge comes into your life, you use it as a kind of fuel for the flame of consciousness. And that is done through surrender to what is. And some people need more of that than others.

If you choose presence in your daily life, you may not need the drastic challenges. Remember the, like life shaking you awake. If you're, if you're, if you wake up and stay awake, life doesn't need to shake you awake.

If you go to sleep continuously and the universal impulse of consciousness, if of course towards awakening, then life needs to shake you. Let's look at something from the poetic translation. There's a type of person who, if he renders you a service, has no hesitation in claiming the credit for it.

Another, though not prepared to go so far as that, will nevertheless secretly regard you as in his debt and be fully conscious of what he has done. But there's also the man who one might almost say has no consciousness at all of what he has done, like the vine which produces a cluster of grapes and then having yielded its rightful fruit, looks to no more thanks than a horse that has run its race, a hound that has tracked his quarry, or a bee that has hived her honey. Like them, a man who has done one good action does not cry it aloud, but passes straight on to a second as the vine passes on to the bearing of another summer's grapes.

How to live without ego, claim I did that for you, or claiming credit, but something is done and you move on, like nature. So, and then he sometimes has a dialogue with himself. So now he writes, according to you then, we should rank ourselves with things that act unconsciously.

Is that how we should live? Like the vine or like a horse that has run its race and then forgets about it, doesn't say I did that. And then he replies, exactly, yet we should do so consciously.

So be like, be as much in alignment as the things of nature that live unconsciously, live in the same kind of alignment with life as the vine, as the horse, as nature, but do that consciously. And that's an interesting point because that is the alignment that you naturally live in before the mind takes you over and before the mind creates separation between yourself and reality, yourself and the world, yourself and other people. Before that happens, you live in a natural alignment with what is.

So there's nobody, there's no ego that says, I did that. There are still some humans whose mind is not highly developed. They would perhaps be called retarded.

Some humans, their mind is not developed enough yet to have an ego. And those humans also can live in that simplicity. I've pointed out before, this is, for example, in the film, Forrest Gump, you have a human who would be considered virtually almost on the brink of retarded.

And he does, first of all, life always gives him what he needs. Things come to him. Secondly, even when he accomplishes great things, for example, he goes to Vietnam, he saves many people out of the, carries them on, he says, well, nobody there to claim credit for it.

He hasn't got an ego. He just tells the story of what he did. That's what happened, that's what I did.

There's no ego there to say, I did that. And so that's a pre-egoic state, like nature. So this is what he talks about is, we can live like that, but consciously.

That's the next stage. And this is the reason why the simpleton or the fool and the enlightened person have a lot in common. And why sometimes the simpleton or the fool or the enlightened person can be mistaken, the enlightened person can be mistaken for a fool, and the fool can be mistaken for an enlightened person.

The latter being the case in the nice film with Peter Sellers, Being There, where the fool is being mistaken for a highly unconscious being. They are close. The human being in whom the ego has not yet arisen can be used more easily by the logos, to use that term, by universal intelligence, because it's not the power of the logos, which is consciousness, is not obstructed by the ego.

And this is why there are many ancient legends and myths, mythology, where the fool has an important mission. That's an archetypal motive in mythology and literature. The fool can do something that the great heroes cannot do.

And again, it's the power of the egoless state, even if it's pre-ego. As the most recent example of that, of course, is the hobbit, Lord of the Rings. The simple guy, little and not particularly intelligent, only he can do this important, accomplish this important mission, not the powerful heroes, because they have an ego.

But our destiny is to live in that alignment with power consciously. And when that shift happens, your life becomes empowered by the universal consciousness, the logos. And it manifests through you one way or another.

Then the sense of I, of the doer, of I have to do that, goes. And that's good news and bad news, because then suddenly you achieve things when you have become free of ego, if not 100%, maybe 90%. That's enough for you to achieve great things.

If you've become free of ego, you achieve things that before the ego would have done anything to get you there. But of course, you couldn't do it with the ego. And when you've achieved it, unfortunately, the sense of I did that isn't there.

So you don't get that satisfaction. You get a satisfaction of being in alignment with power, but you have no personal satisfaction. Oh, that's a pity.

My ego would have liked to have written the power of now at the age of 25. I did that. Of course, I couldn't have.

The ego can't write that. It's not in alignment with power, the power of now. The ego is a denial of the power of now, so it can't write the power of now.

I'll just open it at random now. There's so much good in here, it's so wonderful. Don't let your imagination be crushed by life as a whole.

Don't try to picture everything bad that could possibly happen. Stick with the situation at hand, which means the present moment, and ask, why is this so unbearable? Why can't I endure it?

You'll be embarrassed to answer. Then remind yourself that past and future have no power over you, only the present. And even that can be minimized, which means the power that the present circumstances have over you, even that can be minimized.

Just mark off its limits. And if your mind tries to claim that it can't hold out against that, well then, heap shame upon it. The simplicity, if you keep to the simplicity of the present moment, can I deal with this situation?

Always. The power is there. Can I deal with what might happen tomorrow?

No, you don't have the power to do that for the simple reason that it doesn't exist, it's not here. Will I be able to deal with, no, you won't. You can only deal with the present.

The power can only come into the present. You don't need to have it for tomorrow. Oh, sorry, I forgot that you were there.

So you see that the perennial philosophy of the spiritual truths runs through from the most ancient times to now the same truths coming through different words, different forms, it's there. The truth of awakening, of living in alignment with the greater intelligence, the truth of surrender to the present moment, the truth of letting go of imposing stories on reality, the mind, not live in the mind, compulsive thinking, waking up to sanity. You can read a book like that, that is part of the perennial philosophy when you need it, you can read it because you need a reminder, a little pointer.

You can even have several copies, one in your bathroom, one by your bedside, one in your office. Book like that is, Tao Te Ching is like that. Meditations by Marx Aurelius.

There's no continuous text, it's not, you can open anywhere, read a line or two. You can do it with Stillness Speaks also, open it, read a line or two. Or even The Power of Now on New Earth, you can do that.

And other spiritually alive books. And they're to be used as a reminder, but not a substitute, a substitute for living it. So if you use the device that is here meant to remind you and to point the way, if you, anything that is done to excess, no matter how good, turns into bad.

So there is such a thing as an over-reliance, over-use of reminders, of pointers, where you almost compulsively read. Yes, you're taking in some energy. Yes, it does something.

And yet in your daily life, you're still not living it. And so it can happen, it does happen to some people that the reading of spiritual books or going to seminars or workshops or retreats or listening to speakers becomes a substitute for living it in every moment of your life. So you need to find the balance between using the help that the universe offers you.

It's beautiful in the form of a teacher or so-called teacher. It's just, there is no teacher as such. It's only, teacher is a function.

I am a teacher when I sit in this chair, but when I leave this room, I'm not a teacher anymore. It's only a function. It's not my identity to be a teacher.

It's a, that would be a form identity. So, but use the so-called teacher or teaching as a help. Don't get attached too much to the form of the teaching so that you can't let go.

Some people get attached to teachers. That's not the case with me because I work mostly with large groups. So it's more difficult to get attached to me as a teacher.

It's all in you. And if this book is powerful or any other spiritual book is powerful, how do you feel? Where is that power that you feel that's in the book or the clarity or the spiritual power that you feel is in the teacher?

How do you know that this is in the, that it's in the teacher? There must be something in you that recognizes it because there are others to whom a spiritual book would be meaningless. So that in them which could recognize is not awake.

They don't, a spiritual book is empty words. This is still the case with some newspapers and magazines. They just, there's nobody in the entire newspaper or magazine that has any inner access to spiritual teaching in any form.

It could be, I believe, the entire New York Times, although it's a good paper, they don't have a single person who is open to. So whenever anything spiritual is mentioned, I read something again yesterday in the New York Times, they have to kind of distort it and make it into something slightly absurd. It says a certain number of people in the States have said they've had some kind of realization of the divine or God.

And when they report it, they have to make it into something absurd. There must be a funny angle to that. They have a realization of God, this is weird.

So there are still people who don't. So when you see that you feel the truth of it, it must be in you, otherwise you wouldn't see it. So the power is in you.

And the answer is in you. And you are the answer to all your searches, whatever your search is, you are the goal. You are the answer.

It's never outside. And then of course a time comes when you don't need any more spiritual books, but you can still enjoy them. Then it's a different kind of reading.

You read a spiritual book, wow, this is so beautiful. Yes, yes, yes. You read like, oh yes, yes, that's it.

And there is an enjoyment in reading it. That's beautiful. And you don't need it anymore, but you enjoy it.

If the impulse comes, write down your own insights. When they come, they may come to you. You can be like Marcus Aurelius and write down little, out of the stillness, little, oh, even if they seem not that significant, write it down.

Then perhaps more comes because you've given it some attention. It has come as an original thought and you've given it some attention. Everybody knows, well, psychotherapists who work with analyzed dreams, they know that if you pay attention to your dreams, then more come.

You'll remember them more and more and more significant dreams. That's at least about what Jung said. Carl Jung said, if you give attention to your dreams, then, and write them down.

This is not what I recommend here. Daily life is enough of a dream. And you can do it.

I'm not saying don't, but what I'm saying is you give attention, you appreciate, then more comes. So if you give attention to an original thought that comes to you, rather than saying, oh, this is not important enough to write down, just write it down, then perhaps more comes. And then perhaps after a while, you have another book like this or whatever form it takes.

You don't write, you don't write, you can't write a book like that. I can't write a book that is powerful. You as the person, no person can do that.

And you don't have to. It's only if there's openness in you. And again, it's the, if you're too much in the form, the power doesn't flow through.

If you access the formless, stillness, space, that's where the power flows through. And it does it through this form. And if some of you become spiritual teachers in quotation marks, or you already are in some way, in some way you already, if that consciousness, if the awakening consciousness is arising in you, you cannot not teach because your daily life and your interactions with other people become, you teach by being present, you teach presence.

Even if you say nothing about presence, by being present in daily life and in your interactions with others, you teach presence. And so that is part of your purpose in life. Now, whether it or not becomes a more formal teaching situation, that may be the case or may not be the case with you.

But again, you can't do it. If you feel I'm now ready to be a spiritual teacher, that's probably not it. But if you have the feeling I don't really know anything, that could be it.

And not afraid of not knowing anything. If you have the feeling I don't know anything and you get what I should know, then that's not, doesn't work. But not knowing is the most powerful state.

I said that previously, not knowing and then see what words come. You can start by giving, if you're not doing so already, give little talks in your living room or somebody else's living room or not to your relatives because they may not listen to you. No.

Remember what happened to Jesus when he went back to his own village. Nobody wanted to listen to him. Who is this guy here?

Do we know who he is? He's the son of such and such. What's he, who does he think he is?

And if they had had newspaper at the time, they would have had self-proclaimed master misleading the multitudes. Well, thank you to the form of Marcus Aurelius, the consciousness, of course, wrote the book, The Timeless Consciousness, but it came through the form. The form was transparent enough for it to come through.

We don't need to ask, well, was he enlightened or not? Irrelevant. It was transparent enough for that power to come through.

And of course, in your life also, that's the important question is not, am I enlightened? Am I going to be enlightened or fully awake or whatever? No, at this moment, are you dense as the form, opaque?

The more negative, the more identified with thought, the more dense you are as an energy field, not transparent. So the only important question is at this moment, are you that transparency? So the form is still there, but it has lost its density.

That is the ego. That is identification with thinking. That is every negative emotion.

You become contracted and dense. And when that goes through acceptance, surrender, alignment with what is, space opens up rather than space becomes more important than form. And you feel that, you feel that in yourself.

The space that you are is more important than the form that you are. And you feel that in yourself as you feel that primarily you are your space. Very much secondary is, yes, you're also here as a body with a past and certain psychological makeup and some thoughts, but it's secondary.

And with that comes an enormous trust. If you can feel that primarily you are space, which you cannot define. You can't say, you don't really have a concept anymore of exactly who you are.

As long as you think you know who you are, that's not who you are. But when you no longer know who you are and become comfortable with not knowing who you are, then you're beginning to be who you are. No opinion really anymore of who you are.

You're just a space of consciousness. Not, you can't really just say much more. And so you're neither good or bad as that space of consciousness.

You're not good or bad. You're beyond good and bad. The opposites don't apply anymore.

Your past becomes irrelevant if you are that space of timeless consciousness, which is what you are. Your past is secondary. You can talk about it still and laugh about it, but it's not important, which is good news if your past isn't...

It's good news if your past isn't that great. But if you're very proud of your past and your achievements, then perhaps you want to hang on. So that can be an obstacle.

The great things that I did, I did them. And so the trust that comes when you are space, when you feel that you move around simply as a simple space of consciousness, fear goes, disappears from life, because fear is only... Identification with form produces fear.

Identification with space is freedom from fear. And so as we sit here with nothing happening except one little thing, the mind can drift off and create some imaginary happening. So you start thinking about past, future, dreamland, because the mind is not comfortable with nothing happening.

So you can, as you sit here, drift off into dreamland of past and future until finally the session actually starts, not realizing that it has started already. In the same way that people wait for their lives to start, not realizing that it started already. So what's the alternative then to drifting off?

The alternative is to just be present with your attention in the simplicity of this moment where there's almost nothing happening. So what's left of you when you're not following some train of thought and the space opens up? What's left then of this moment?

What's the content of this moment? Just whatever your senses are perceiving, the totality of the room, the lights, some noises, the voice, and that which makes it all possible. There's a light in which it appears, the consciousness behind it all.

That's what's left. It has no form, no time, just presence. And that's who you are beyond past and future, nothing to do with your personal history, except that your personal history has brought you to this moment of being aware that there is a dimension in you that has nothing to do with your personal history.

And nothing to do with conceptualization in the mind, any kind of mental noise, just a kind of an aware space. And that's the ground. All what arises out of that is joy and aliveness.

And it's peaceful to know yourself as that is peaceful. Where is this? It is peace, but alive peace.

So the peace is already there as the essence, never in conditions, outer conditions or mental conditions cannot provide you with peace, except the delusion of peace for short moments. So to seek peace in conditions, whether mental conditions or external conditions is frustrating. And you overlook the simple fact that the realm of peace, which is the unconditioned consciousness in you to the timeless, the light of the world, Jesus called it, is already there in its fullness, has always been there, will always be where, although the saying has and will doesn't make sense because it's timeless, but it's being, it's overlooked.

The essence is overlooked because of the seductive nature of the world of form, thoughts that continuously arise, sense perceptions, and you lose yourself in forms, thought forms and external forms and following up. And then you're full of stuff looking for yourself in some other stuff, more stuff for my mind. And then, so you overlook the essence that's always there.

So it's a redirecting of attention from attention to form and now we have to be careful when I say attention to the formless dimension in you, that it sounds as if the formless dimension in you could become an object of your attention, but it can't because the formless dimension in you cannot become an object of your attention, of your consciousness, because the formless dimension is consciousness.

Consciousness can't become an object to itself. So in that sense, you can never find the essence of who you are as if you say, I know I have it. You can never say I have it.

All you can ever say is I am it. So it can't be an object. You cannot make yourself into an object and I know myself.

You can't know yourself. You can know lots of things about yourself, all to do with mental content, but you cannot know yourself and it's who you are in your essence because you are the eternal subject, the basis of all knowing. The moment you say, I know myself, then there's I and myself.

You've already split yourself into two and basically that's the ego, where you split yourself into two and say, oh, that's me, and then you have a relationship with yourself, which my dog does not have a relationship with himself. The cat doesn't have a relationship with itself. The split hasn't occurred yet, me and who I think I am.

So usually the progression for people is first you have a dysfunctional relationship with yourself. You hate yourself a lot of the time and sometimes you say, oh, I'm really great, but not for long, and then you doubt yourself and then you're learning about becoming more loving towards yourself. That's great.

That's the stage of stickers on your bathroom mirror. I love myself. That's the intermediate stage.

And then from there, you go on to the realization that there are not two of you, that you are yourself. And what's left is the simple fact that I am who I am, or I am that I am, which by the way was God's answer from the Old Testament when they asked God, who are you? So you can't know yourself.

You can only be yourself. There's nothing conceptual to know. If it's conceptual, that's not who you are.

In other words, you have to embrace ignorance. As the Course in Miracles says, your understanding is not an important contribution to the truth. And of course, there's something in you that wants to, I want to understand myself more.

Of course, you can go that way for a long time. And of course, there's always more. And eventually you get to the end of the road where you give up.

And that's the moment when you're no longer a problem to yourself. And when you're not a problem to yourself, by the way, you're not a problem to others anymore either. How many people walk around with an identity, a sense of identity that basically consists of the belief that they are a problem, which seeks a solution?

Of course, there is a solution, but that's not where the egoic self is seeking. The solution is already here, it's not in time. This moment, the realization that at this moment, you already are who you are as the awareness in which the form of this moment appears.

In other words, you become aware that you are aware, you know yourself as the awareness. The awareness knows itself. That's an amazing realization.

That means that's the I am realization, but not this or that, just I am. And that's peace, to know yourself through that act of not knowing, not to know yourself in any conceptual sense, to be yourself as the awareness. And then the dance of forms, of course, continues your life.

And there's a peace in the background. The art of living is to be aware that you are the awareness, be aware that you are the presence, be aware as the presence, the awareness, while not only you look at things and observe things, but even while you do and talk, and you'll notice spaces in your life, and that's vital, spaces while in between things, where before there was no space, at least you didn't notice it, but now you notice that there are spaces, many spaces in your life where there's an opening into just pure presence. And it could just be picking up an object and putting it down again, looking at a tree without labeling it in any way, just being the perceiving presence for it, walking from here to there without making each step a means to an end, but just be present with every step. The spacious stillness when you're listening to another human being, just being there as the space, not as an object of some mental noise.

And so there's a gradual thing where the personality recedes a bit in your life, still operates when it's needed, but more and more there's awareness that arises, you are there as an aware presence rather than as a person with a past and a future. So the person begins to become transparent somewhat to the light of awareness that shines through the form. Whereas before it was dense, it's just pushing against, trying to get through a little chinks, occasionally get through, you have moments of, and then it's gone.

So it gets through. Now you may notice a certain alertness is required, not no tension or strain, but a certain alertness so that thought does not get hold of you and drag you along where it wants to go, the old conditioned thinking. So certain alertness is required and we are here, this is our meditation today here.

The alertness needs to be there for otherwise you drift off into the dream state of identification with thinking. And then suddenly, out of that alertness, thoughts can come, but they will be not a replay of the old conditioned thinking, but more vitally alive thoughts when they do come, insights, realizations, a new way of aliveness when you, that is there a fresh new thought, inspired, creative. And at other times, there's just, of course, love is part of what comes out of that unconditioned space, can't come from anywhere else.

We are lucky today to have an honored guest here. It's becoming a tradition as part of our sessions. And I'd like, this guest does not need introduction, but I would like to introduce her by telling you how I first got introduced to her.

She doesn't know that, I haven't told you yet. It was about 1986, perhaps, and I was living in London and the Course in Miracles had just been published, I think the year before, in England in a one-volume paperback. And whereas at first, when I heard Course in Miracles, I said, that's probably just another weird thing that's come through from California.

I had the European prejudice, late I realized that many wonderful things do also come from California, some weird things too. Of course, I didn't realize the Course in Miracles didn't really originally come from California at all, it came from Manhattan, Columbia University, well, unofficially, not sponsored by Columbia University. And so I was visiting a friend, having tea, and talking a bit about this Course in Miracles that I had actually discovered was actually quite profound.

So I had bought a copy. And my friend said, oh, I want you to listen to this. Somebody gave me this tape, a copy of a copy.

The sound isn't too good, but you'll still understand. This is a woman, she gives talks about the Course in Miracles. Okay, I'll just put it on now, listen to this.

He put it on and it almost seemed like I breathed in at the beginning of the talk and I didn't breathe out until the end of it half an hour later. There was such fire and empowerment in it. When the talk finished after half an hour, I went, wow, that's amazing.

And I said, what's her name? And she said, oh, I can't remember. Oh, it's Marianne Williamson.

Oh, never heard of her. At that time, there were no books yet and so on. So I still remember how the talk finished.

She said at the end, and it's almost over, thank you very much. Now, I can't remember what that refers to. I think it must refer to the egoic insanity of the world and it's almost over.

And we have her here and I'm going to ask her in a minute whether she still thinks it's almost over. Please welcome Marianne Williamson, please. So is it almost over?

[Speaker 3] (59:07 - 59:41)

Well, as you well know, even though it began in millions of years ago in time as we know it, it's not actually happening. It's a hallucination, which is all just the twinkling of an eye, anyway. So from that perspective, it's always beginning, it's always almost over.

And it's always ending in any of these moments that you discuss.

[Speaker 1] (59:41 - 59:43)

And in another sense, it's over already.

[Speaker 3] (59:44 - 59:51)

Exactly, in any moment, which you so profoundly describe, it can't exist.

[Speaker 1] (59:52 - 59:52)

Yes.

[Speaker 3] (59:52 - 59:55)

So when we're with you, it's over.

[Speaker 1] (59:56 - 1:01:01)

Yes. Yes. And so how is the, now the thing is the realization in humans that that dimension is there where this is recognized as a kind of dream.

That the important thing is whether humans realize it. Because as long as you don't realize it, you are part of that dream, which very often turns into a nightmare. How is the, I know that Marianne is much more in touch with I am with the world, the current affairs and so on, especially in the States.

How do you see the collective consciousness in, let's just maybe talk about North America and later about the world. How do you see the state of the collective consciousness now?

[Speaker 3] (1:01:02 - 1:05:42)

Well, from a spiritual perspective, we can't have a meaningful inquiry about anything in the world without the context of that inquiry being what's happened, being in the realm of spirit or pure consciousness. And one of the main points of the course in any study of truth with a capital T is that there is only one of us here. And that in truth, there is no world.

It's all happening inside us. And because within that perspective, all minds are joined because there's only one of us here. In whatever moment we as individuals reach that place of pure consciousness, the presence of which you speak, holy instant and course in miracle.

We don't just create that greater opening for ourselves, but simultaneously it's created for everyone else as well. I was telling you yesterday about a fascinating documentary I saw the other night called I Am. And in the documentary, there's a conversation about cruelty versus cooperation in the animal kingdom.

And there was something there that I'd never seen. And it was if a group of deer or a group of gazelle or a group of any animals that all travel together, how do they decide which waterhole to go to? Or when birds are flying, what happens to make the whole flock fly a certain way?

And what was so fascinating to me was in this documentary, they were saying that in this group, I can't remember if it was gazelle or deer or something along that line, there is an alpha male leader of the pack. But that in the decision of what waterhole to go to, and there were three of them, it wasn't the alpha male who made the decision. It was as each individual gazelle or deer, whatever it was, turned their head towards a particular waterhole.

When 51% of the animals turned their head in one direction, the whole group of them went there. And that often the alpha male was just like, oh, okay, we'll go there. And I thought that was so amazing.

We talk about that in terms of the 100th monkey or the tipping point, whatever that is. But this elucidation of the 51% in nature, I thought was fascinating. So I feel hopeful.

First of all, I think hope itself is a moral imperative. I feel hopeful about the state of humanity because there are so many groups just like this. Because you, people like yourself, are being filmed and people literally all over the world are participating in this deeper inquiry and experience.

It's not just an abstract teaching. It's the entire journey trickling down. And this is clearly happening.

And it does not belong to any one ethnic group or geographical region or religion. So the state of humanity, for me personally, is just fine, thank you. The problem we have or the challenge we have, the situation we have, is that there are institutional identities, mainly political, financial, in terms of business, technology, wielding tremendous material power.

And that material power takes profound forms such as nuclear bombs. And even though those material identities are never the source of the enlightened progress, I believe that they are there in a way as a signal to us not to tarry.

[Speaker 1] (1:05:45 - 1:05:45)

Yes.

[Speaker 3] (1:05:46 - 1:05:54)

Not to tarry. Because as the Course in Miracles says, the ego is suspicious at best and vicious at worst.

[Speaker 10] (1:05:54 - 1:05:55)

Mm-hmm.

[Speaker 3] (1:05:59 - 1:06:13)

And as soon as we reach that vibratory field of whether it's 51% or whatever it is, then all of those material forms will fall of their own dead weight. As soon as there's enough light, darkness cannot exist.

[Speaker 1] (1:06:14 - 1:06:40)

Yes, we already see that happening to some extent. Some of the monolithic, egoically created structures are- The wall in Germany. Yes, collapsing from within.

Of course. Russian communism collapsing from within. It's almost the saving grace, perhaps, of the ego that it seems to have built into it a self-destruct mechanism that eventually gets triggered.

[Speaker 3] (1:06:41 - 1:09:06)

Well, the Course in Miracles says there is a limit beyond which we cannot miscreate. However, in Course in Miracles terms, it is not up to you what you learn. It is merely up to you whether you learn through joy or through pain.

Oh, the ego's dominance will fall. The only issue is, do we go away of wisdom or do we go away, which would involve immeasurable amounts of human suffering? And that is our choice in the matter.

Not whether the ego's dominance will end, because like you said, it's got a built-in self-destruct. The issue is, how is this going to end? Is it going to end through joy or through suffering?

I'm a mother, and any parent has had the experience of something that happens when this fierce impulse arises within you and you say to your child about whatever it is, that will not happen in this house. And I look forward to the collective uprising in humanity, realizing that every child on this planet is one of our children, and realizing now that this entire earth is our house, it's our home. I think when it comes to certain forms of possibility, which are nothing short of catastrophic, just as we would, seeing that possibility of catastrophe inherent in a situation, say to one child, that will not happen here, that we will get to that place about this planet, that will not happen here, because as we do, as that conviction, because the Course in Miracles says miracles arise from conviction, as the realization that the transformation will occur, but that it is in our hands how quickly it occurs and how much suffering it does or does not involve, when that understanding is met with a conviction, we will not go that way. Then I believe something joyful beyond, just like the night of the falling of the Berlin Wall times what, a million?

[Speaker 1] (1:09:07 - 1:09:38)

Yes, yes. So what is the individual's role as far as the huge egoically created structures is concerned? And you are, I'm a kind of person, I almost withdrawn a bit from the world except for the teaching that goes out into the world.

You're a little bit more of an activist. So what is, how do you see your role as far as the?

[Speaker 3] (1:09:39 - 1:09:59)

Well, from a Course in Miracles perspective, we are all given our own assignment. We all have a particular part to play. You are a profound player in the world, as everybody here knows, because you are acting so profoundly on the level of cause.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:59 - 1:09:59)

Yes.

[Speaker 3] (1:10:01 - 1:12:08)

And when we are in that state that you mentioned earlier of pure consciousness, we receive nothing short of instruction. Whether it's conceived of that way or not, it's interesting looking at you having been born in Germany, moving to London, ending up in Canada. I feel strongly that there's something here about honoring one's incarnation, where you were born, nationality, sex, sexuality.

And even though in your case clearly there's a profound internationalism to your assignment. And you and I have discussed how my daughter lives in England, and she's got some soul connection to England, even though she was born in the United States. I have some, I don't, I take very personally and deeply the successes and failures, both contributions and mistakes of the United States as an American woman.

But from a Course in Miracles perspective, which is just one statement of truth, of course, at the deepest level, we're neither male, female, black, white, Jew, Gentile, American, Canadian. I mean, those are all. But when we are in that place of depth inquiry and depth knowing and depth experience, we're beyond all of that.

And yet we are sent to work. And you work plenty out there. And the Course in Miracles says every day we are to say, where would you have me go?

What would you have me do? What would you have me say and to whom? So I just try to do that as much as the next person does.

[Speaker 1] (1:12:09 - 1:12:16)

So honoring the form without identifying with it and believing that's who you are.

[Speaker 3] (1:12:16 - 1:12:17)

Or taking it too seriously.

[Speaker 1] (1:12:17 - 1:12:19)

Yes, that's an important.

[Speaker 3] (1:12:19 - 1:12:24)

Gandhi said, the greatest service I can be to my country is if I can reduce myself to zero.

[Speaker 1] (1:12:26 - 1:13:19)

Oh, that's a wonderful statement. So that really means discovering the unconditioned dimension in yourself. That's when you, the form as which you appear ultimately is recognized as an illusion, not who you are.

So the elimination of ego is the really inherently connected with the, what is perhaps the central point of this teaching, the possibility of compulsive thinking coming to an end, old conditioned compulsive thinking so that a space arises in you where there is no thinking but just pure awareness.

[Speaker 3] (1:13:20 - 1:15:30)

It's counterintuitive, but when we are there realizing the illusionary nature of the realm of form, that's when we have power within that realm. Because we don't take it seriously at the same level, we no longer fear it. We no longer fear it to dance because we know that we are not that.

We are not its success or its failures. And that's when we have the power from this perspective that we so embrace to do that which we are sent to do within it. Like that slogan, what would you do with your life if you had no fear of what the outcome would be?

Because when you were talking before about how the dream has become a nightmare, I don't know if you were saying that here or when we were talking before, that this world is a dream and it has become a nightmare. In A Course in Miracles, it says we do not go from the nightmare to awakening. We go from the nightmare to a happy dream.

So that when, right now we have 17,000 children on this earth who starve every day, just that fact alone. We have a billion people on this planet who live on $1, $1.25 and less a day. Now, when we have a planet where, and no dearth of food, by the way.

When we have a planet where everyone is fed, where basically there is no unnecessary human suffering, it will still be a world of bodies, therefore it will still be a dream, but it will have become a happy dream. And then we can wake up, which is real different from a lot of those people with the stickers in their bathroom, I love myself, I love myself, I love myself, because it's a real slippery slope to therefore I don't have to engage in the world because it's all an illusion anyway. It's not my karma if a child is starving, et cetera.

Right, Mike?

[Speaker 1] (1:15:30 - 1:19:32)

Right. Yes, so as sometimes happens in people's dreams, in the middle of the dream, they realize they are dreaming. The dream can still continue.

And this is very much when you wake up here, you realize what comes to an end is the identification with form, because you are rooted, I'm using, of course, somewhat different terminology from The Course in Miracles, but you know it's the same thing. So you're rooted in the formless. When you're rooted in the formless, the eternal in yourself, which we can call inner space, which we can call stillness, which we can call pure awareness, when you're rooted in that, then the world of form, not only, as you said, is no longer taken absolutely seriously, I sometimes put it this way, I say it matters, but it does not matter absolutely.

It has an importance, but its importance is relative, it's not absolute. The only absolute importance is whether you know who you are in your essence, and Jesus said that with Mary and Martha, when Martha was running around, getting concerned with all the things that need to be doing, and Mary's only chosen to listen, but that means you have chosen, he said only one thing is ultimately needed, and you have chosen that one thing. So I don't think he said never to do anything again, or work in the kitchen, but to know what is primary, and then what is secondary, tends to unfold with much greater ease, and no longer creates the suffering that is there inevitably when you believe that that's all there is and take it for absolutely real, and everything is deadly serious and matters.

That's why people walk around through life, they're really frightened throughout their life. What's going to happen next? It's the world of form is threatening to them, and the world is perceived as hostile basically, and that's the reason is, and they're trying to rearrange the world so that it's no longer hostile, but it doesn't work.

No matter how you rearrange things, it's still, you feel it as hostile. And so, and then the realization comes, well, it doesn't work that way. You have to first find the peace that is an essential part of who you are beyond form, that's always there, not dependent on time, and then from there, you can deal with the things of the world, give the world of form its due, even participate, but it is no longer that nightmarish thing that it was before when you were trying to get something out of the world to find fulfillment or whatever.

And so, that is perhaps what A Course in Miracles means and what you just mentioned, where as you begin to wake up, it turns into a pleasant dream. It's still the world of form, but it's as you're rooted in being, first of all, you no longer create suffering for yourself because usually your mind is the thing that creates suffering for you and you don't create suffering for others. That's an enormous contribution.

It's a contribution of not adding to the suffering of the world, an enormous thing. So that's the first thing that happens. And then, that's how the world changes, but it becomes a more benign dream.

[Speaker 3] (1:19:33 - 1:22:23)

In A Course in Miracles, when it's talking about the world of form, it says about the world in the illusion form, it's not that it's bad, it's that it's nothing, and that it's holiness or unholiness has to do with the purposes the mind ascribes to it. So when we, I love in the Course when he says, let me use your hands, let me use your feet. When we look at the realm of form with a kind of divine attachment, we are not less invested in what occurs here.

We are invested in love. I love that line, be fully invested in an effort, but not attached to the result. And I think that this is a very important issue because if we get this wrong, it makes the spiritual seeker ineffective in ways that perhaps we do not wish to be.

Look at something like you're here in Canada. You can turn on television. Canada humanitarian aid workers, your servicemen and women are all over the world doing profound work, risking their lives.

That's significant. You don't want to not let that in. You want to let that in deeply because once again, it is a realm of form and a realm of profound power.

Any time our spiritual, to me, any time our spiritual inquiry in any way ignores the suffering of human beings, does not include that as a factor, the unnecessary suffering of human beings, then perhaps there's a little insidious ego influence that we want to look at there. Yes, I mean, from A Course in Miracles, this perspective, this entire room is filled with illusion. The fact that your body is separate from your body is all an illusion, but that doesn't mean this room is not filled with profound reality, which is the love inside us.

So for me in the realm of form, yes, it's all nothing, but when I got a call, would you like to go be with Eckhart Tolle and do this? And what seems to me the obvious blessing of personal conversation with you as well. It's not like nothing real was going on here.

It's something profoundly real using the realm of form as a teaching device. So that's how I've... Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:22:35 - 1:23:30)

The importance of the present moment, I was telling you earlier, many years ago, I copied from A Course in Miracles all the sayings about the importance of being present. And it says, for example, the closest, the present moment or the holy instant, as it's called, is the closest approximation to eternity that this world offers. So the eternity, of course, is the timeless dimension, not everlasting time.

A Course in Miracles is full of the importance of what I call presence, of the importance of salvation is offered to you in this instant. It just, it says it has taken, it has taken time to misguide you so completely, but it takes no time at all to be who you are.

[Speaker 3] (1:23:30 - 1:23:36)

And the only place where eternity intersects with linear time is in the present moment, which is your...

[Speaker 1] (1:23:36 - 1:23:37)

Yes, yes. Yes.

[Speaker 3] (1:23:38 - 1:23:41)

You've led the world to a profound understanding.

[Speaker 1] (1:23:42 - 1:23:46)

That's the vertical dimension of depths, yeah.

[Speaker 3] (1:23:46 - 1:24:24)

You know, in both the Christian cross and in the Jewish Star of David, the visual symbol is that of the intersecting dimensions of the vertical and the horizontal. And the way A Course in Miracles talks about Jesus, it says he lived on the earth, but thought only the thoughts of heaven, which takes us back to that, how do you dwell within the realm of form? With your feet planted firmly here, but you're thinking so above this realm that the two intersect divinely and harmoniously and beautifully.

[Speaker 1] (1:24:25 - 1:25:00)

Yes. So you've come since the talk that I listened to in 86 or whenever the talk that you gave. And then, after that for a few years, I didn't hear anything more about, except that I went to a talk you gave because I loved that recorded talk so much.

The following year, you came to London, you gave a talk at the MindBodySpirit Festival and I went there and enjoyed that very much.

[Speaker 3] (1:25:00 - 1:25:01)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:25:01 - 1:25:02)

You didn't see me, but I saw you.

[Speaker 3] (1:25:03 - 1:25:04)

Although, maybe I did.

[Speaker 1] (1:25:06 - 1:25:43)

Yeah. And then, I didn't hear from Marianne Williamson for a few years and don't know how many years passed. And I had moved from London to Somerset in England.

And one Sunday, in the Sunday paper, the front headline mentioned Marianne Williamson, the big letters. I said, what is this? What's she done?

Do you remember that when suddenly you got out into the world? I think it has something to do with Elizabeth Taylor.

[Speaker 3] (1:25:44 - 1:25:46)

Oh, I thought you were going to say my first book.

[Speaker 1] (1:25:46 - 1:25:50)

No, that came, that came, that wouldn't be in the front page.

[Speaker 3] (1:25:50 - 1:25:50)

Thanks, Edgar.

[Speaker 1] (1:25:50 - 1:25:53)

That wouldn't be the front page of the News of the World.

[Speaker 3] (1:25:54 - 1:25:56)

Well, I was on, I remember in the London Times.

[Speaker 1] (1:25:56 - 1:26:16)

Yeah, no, you were very, suddenly, and then the book came out soon after that. And that first book was a return to, Yes. Wonderful book.

I'm sure many of you have read it and millions of people, I'm sure, have been helped and are continuing to be helped by it.

[Speaker 10] (1:26:16 - 1:26:16)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:26:16 - 1:26:26)

And so, and then, of course, many more books came after that. And the most recent book, which I haven't read yet, I was very surprised.

[Speaker 3] (1:26:26 - 1:26:29)

You shouldn't read it, because it might have an effect on you that one wouldn't wish for it to have.

[Speaker 1] (1:26:30 - 1:26:30)

No, I wouldn't.

[Speaker 3] (1:26:30 - 1:26:31)

It's about weight loss.

[Speaker 1] (1:26:31 - 1:26:31)

That's right.

[Speaker 3] (1:26:31 - 1:26:32)

So don't read it.

[Speaker 1] (1:26:35 - 1:26:37)

No, I said it on my Skinny Friends.

[Speaker 3] (1:26:37 - 1:26:38)

No, don't read it.

[Speaker 1] (1:26:38 - 1:26:44)

I'll disappear. Which might be a good thing.

[Speaker 3] (1:26:44 - 1:26:46)

I was gonna say, you won't be stopping.

[Speaker 1] (1:26:48 - 1:26:54)

So it's a book about the spiritual aspects of weight loss.

[Speaker 3] (1:26:54 - 1:27:25)

And it, of course, is an extension of the conversation we've been having that the epidemic, I don't know how much Canada is experiencing, but certainly south of here in the United States, we have a very serious problem here. And, of course, that stems from exactly, as the Course in Miracles says, you think you have many different problems, but you really only have one, and that is your separation from God. So the answer is the answer with a capital A, no matter what the form of.

[Speaker 1] (1:27:25 - 1:27:25)

Yes.

[Speaker 3] (1:27:27 - 1:27:59)

But this idea that when we identify too much with the body, our dense thinking about the body actually is an erroneous perception of the body, which produces dis-ease and dysfunction related to the body. And it is when we see the body as merely a container for light, having been thus reminded in consciousness, it returns the cells themselves to their native intelligence.

[Speaker 1] (1:27:59 - 1:28:00)

Yes, that's right.

[Speaker 3] (1:28:00 - 1:29:25)

So there are cells in our body that know how to keep the lungs breathing and the heart beating, and that same perfection, because we are a perfect idea in the mind of God, that perfect imprint is expressed in every aspect of ourselves. But for people who are dealing with a serious compulsion or even addiction in regards to physical weight, it's like a breaker switch has gone off. And we are, as the Course in Miracles would say, temporarily inaccessible to the power of the atonement in this one area where the perfect appetites are no longer operative.

The cells of the nervous system, the cells in the brain have literally been knocked out of their native knowing. And so, knowing that everything that you talk about is the answer no matter what the problem, achieving that pure state of consciousness that you speak of, takes, literally takes pressure off the body and gives the body an opportunity to heal. The Course in Miracles says the body heals when we're not looking at it.

And that all disease or dysfunction of the body arises from over-identification with the body. So this book, of course, in Weight Loss and Spiritual Lessons in Surrendering Weight, is taking this spiritual inquiry and applying it specifically to the issue of problems with one's body and weight.

[Speaker 1] (1:29:26 - 1:29:31)

And that could, of course, apply to other forms of addiction also.

[Speaker 3] (1:29:31 - 1:31:36)

Absolutely correct. It just seems to me that when it comes to drugs and alcohol, it is part of the mainstream conversation, whether someone has gone to a 12-step meeting or not, it is part of the mainstream understanding that it is a spiritual disease that needs a spiritual solution. I mean, that's kind of been part of the cultural jargon about the 12-step.

And even though Overeaters Anonymous exists and is a fine program, it doesn't seem to me that the issue of the spiritual problem and the spiritual answer has quite saturated the popular conversation about weight yet. It tends to be more on the level of effect, diets and exercise. And they could be great diets that absolutely work and great exercise programs that absolutely work.

The deeper problem is our inability to stay on the diet or sometimes so painfully for people, the diet did work, the exercise did work, but within a certain amount of time, the subconscious force of the addiction or compulsion just comes right back. So there's only one truth spoken many different ways and I don't think any of this is so much something that we don't already know by now. That path towards the 51% and you're a large part of this.

The Course in Miracles says enlightenment begins as an abstract intellectual construct and it makes its journey without distance. So I believe enough of us actually for a tipping point get it intellectually. We've all read the same books by now.

We've all listened to the same tapes. So in a way, and you're a perfect example of this, someone didn't come here today so much to hear something they didn't already know. People are here to access more deeply those things which by now we do already know.

And the era of data collection is over, I think.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:37 - 1:31:38)

That's a good saying.

[Speaker 3] (1:31:38 - 1:31:54)

I have to remember to quote you. And I think you are one of the few on the planet. I'm not saying this to pander.

One gets more than information. One gets a transmission listening to you and it's truly an honor to be in your presence and to learn from you. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:54 - 1:33:32)

Thank you. I'd just like to ask one question to your view on because I'm often asked that question and I'll tell you my general perception. It's, I know you were very much supported President Obama during the elections.

And often people ask me, how do you feel now about President Obama? And I still have to say, the underlying state of consciousness that he represents is so vastly more awakened than what preceded him and what surrounds him. And that still applies.

I think I still have a feeling that there's an underlying state of consciousness that is more evolved than what we've seen before and what is around him. On the level of form, which does not mean that he is free of mistakes. And from the beginning, I thought, why cannot he see that Afghanistan is not going to work, but I hope I'm wrong.

How do you see it now after a couple of years, him in relation to the country as a whole and the world as a whole? What is his function? Is he being dragged down or is he still able to, in your view, to remain conscious while dealing with all these unconscious forces?

[Speaker 3] (1:33:35 - 1:35:04)

I don't want to have a codependent relationship with Barack Obama. I don't want to always be basing my views on what his potential is. He's responsible for his actions.

I passionately supported the president and the way his administration has unfolded, I have come to believe that you simply cannot put new wine in old bottles. And in the United States, the Democratic and Republican Party have a lock on the narrative. And within that conversation, I have begun to doubt whether or not the kind of profound transformational shifts that we were led to believe, the president believed in during the campaign can occur.

I'm disappointed. I'm disappointed. And as a woman, I think that's part of what we learn in relationships.

At a certain point, what you do is what matters, not what you say or what I think in your heart you really believe. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:35:04 - 1:35:04)

Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (1:35:04 - 1:35:05)

He's an adult.

[Speaker 1] (1:35:06 - 1:35:15)

Yes. Of course, what your expression was, the Democrats and the Republicans have something about the narrative.

[Speaker 3] (1:35:15 - 1:38:17)

There's a lock on the narrative. And that goes back to what you and I were saying earlier about the state of humanity, the state of everywhere. And this is not just in the United States.

This is really Western civilization and actually global civilization to some extent. You see it everywhere. This new conversation bubbling up.

You see it in education. You see it in the arts. You see it in politics.

You see it in spirituality. In politics, it's an old conversation. It doesn't allow for the bubbling up of this spiritual renaissance that is trying to occur.

And it's too powerful, a segment of our collective expression of power to be ignored. And therefore, and yet for me as an American looking at this last election, well, not this very last one, but before where the Democrats got the House, the Senate, the White House. See, I'm of a generation that still remembers a great moral force at the center of the Democratic Party in the United States.

I remember Bobby Kennedy and I remember Martin Luther King. And the way I see it, we're now living at a time where one major political party in the United States sees the desperate amount of human suffering on the planet and they say, well, it's really sad, but it's not government's job to fix it. And if the private sector does something about it, that's great.

The other major political party, which I grew up believing saw addressing that suffering, the suffering of the oppressed, the injustice that so many people endure as the core of its reason for being there, now has become, at least in its current behavioral patterns, a party that looks at all that suffering, does what it can to ameliorate it on the periphery, but if we are honest with ourselves, is not fundamentally addressing the underlying causes that make all that suffering inevitable. And I don't know how the Canadian system works, but in the United States, our first president, George Washington, warned us about political parties.

There's nothing in the Constitution. So in the United States, third-party involvement has been extremely important. Abolition came from the abolitionist party.

Women's suffrage came from the suffrage party. Social Security came from the socialist party. So I am, it is, as they say in AA, it is about principle, not personality.

I don't care how cool that personality is. Something is rotten and it's not being fixed and I'm a mother and I'm too concerned about our planet and my country and all of our great-grandchildren to be willing to act patient when patience is perhaps not the virtue that it might appear to be.

[Speaker 1] (1:38:17 - 1:38:47)

Yes, so there is a rising new consciousness, but some structures that have been around for a long time and egoically created by the collective ego, some structures cannot perhaps be reached sufficiently by the rising new consciousness for them to change, to become instruments for change. And that might also apply to many economic structures, banking and so on.

[Speaker 3] (1:38:47 - 1:38:55)

Absolutely, and that is the question where we are right now. And for myself personally, I'm new wine.

[Speaker 1] (1:38:56 - 1:38:56)

Yes.

[Speaker 3] (1:38:56 - 1:38:57)

It really can't be put in those old bottles.

[Speaker 1] (1:38:58 - 1:38:59)

Yes, that's right.

[Speaker 3] (1:38:59 - 1:39:02)

And that's how- Form was never meant to be permanent.

[Speaker 1] (1:39:02 - 1:39:35)

Oh no, and especially at this time as there's an enormous power behind the rising of the new consciousness. And already we saw how the monolithic structure of Soviet communism collapsed because it was so rigid, nothing new could reach it. And so what then is really, we are destined to see is the eventual collapse of those structures in this transformational period on the planet, that those structures that cannot be reached, they cannot survive.

[Speaker 3] (1:39:36 - 1:40:13)

And then it takes us back to the concern about human suffering. You're right, they'll fall. But do they fall through tender care and careful midwifing?

Or do they fall chaotically and with harm that might not have been there had the new not been midwifed more consciously? That seems to me to be the right conversation. And then every individual has to ask for themselves, what part do I play?

Both conceptually and in terms of our behavior.

[Speaker 1] (1:40:13 - 1:41:04)

Yes, yes. And just coming just a little bit to your own evolutionary journey as you, The Course in Miracles was a decisive transformation for you when you discovered that. So that was the beginning of your, for most people, awakening is a process, the awakening process, I call it.

And so this has been going on for you since you discovered The Course in Miracles whenever it was 30 years ago. And how do you feel in your present evolutionary process here, peace is arising more and more in your life?

[Speaker 3] (1:41:05 - 1:41:16)

I had this question that was like a boulder in the road for me. And I think you answered it for me today.

[Speaker 1] (1:41:16 - 1:41:17)

Yeah.

[Speaker 3] (1:41:17 - 1:41:20)

So I'm feeling quite grateful.

[Speaker 1] (1:41:20 - 1:41:21)

Yes.

[Speaker 3] (1:41:21 - 1:41:22)

Thank you for that.

[Speaker 1] (1:41:22 - 1:41:36)

Yes, good, good. Thank you. Marianne has a weekly class, if anybody is in LA.

Where?

[Speaker 3] (1:41:37 - 1:41:48)

At a place called the Regent Theater right now that might be moving at some point. So if someone looks at my website, www.marianne.com, the information is there.

[Speaker 1] (1:41:49 - 1:41:55)

Yeah, weekly class and you discuss, you talk about a lesson in The Course in Miracles, usually how to apply it.

[Speaker 3] (1:41:55 - 1:42:02)

Or some situation in life with the perspective. Like you, Eckhart, I try my best to listen and then whatever.

[Speaker 1] (1:42:03 - 1:42:08)

And I am going to read your book anyway, The Weight Loss Book.

[Speaker 3] (1:42:08 - 1:42:13)

Thank you. Just don't do the lessons, okay?

[Speaker 1] (1:42:15 - 1:42:17)

Maybe you shouldn't do it either.

[Speaker 3] (1:42:18 - 1:42:19)

Well, I did them, that was kind of the point.

[Speaker 1] (1:42:24 - 1:42:31)

Marianne doesn't seem to have aged because I remember seeing photos of her from 20 years ago and she looked exactly the same then as she does now.

[Speaker 3] (1:42:31 - 1:42:32)

Well, my clothes are on.

[Speaker 1] (1:42:51 - 1:43:22)

Well, it's been just wonderful to sit with you and you've brought The Course in Miracles perhaps to so many people who otherwise would not have been open to it. And I think, I'm sure for many others, they too have been very open to it. They took it from you rather than going to The Course because you've kind of, in some ways, you have translated The Course in Miracles to make it more accessible to people.

[Speaker 3] (1:43:23 - 1:43:42)

I'm like the Russian literature professor, I'm not Dostoevsky. So I think, I always look at my book, A Return to Love, I see it as like the Cliff Notes of A Course in Miracles. But obviously, you don't just attend the Russian Lit class, you read the Russian novel.

[Speaker 1] (1:43:42 - 1:44:40)

I used for about two or three years, I used The Course in Miracles as a teaching device also in small seminars and workshops. So I still love it and picked it up again last night because I knew we were going to meet here today. And it's just, it's always fresh and new and every line is inspiring.

It's not for everybody, as you know, and as The Course in Miracles itself says. No, it's only one version of the universal curriculum, which is, as in the words of A Course in Miracles, the universal curriculum is the evolutionary path for all human beings, which is the same. And there are different versions of it and The Course in Miracles is one.

So if it's for you, you will know it probably when you pick it up and start reading it. And if it's not, that's fine.

[Speaker 3] (1:44:40 - 1:44:55)

I think it's so beautiful. One of the ways you can tell something is true with a capital T is if it dovetails with everything else you know is true. That's what's so beautiful about the multifaceted nature of the universal curriculum.

[Speaker 1] (1:44:55 - 1:46:47)

Yes, it's a wonderful thing being able to recognize the truth, the essential truth, no matter in what form it appears. That I couldn't do that until this inner transformation occurred in me. Before that, I could only see the differences in the different teachings.

They looked so different. There's the Christian teaching and there's the Buddhist and Hindu and then other Course in Miracles. I wasn't able to see that they're all one.

And after the awakening that I experienced, I still remember picking up an old copy of the New Testament at my mother's place. I was visiting my mother and there was an old copy, New Testament, which the Jehovah's Witnesses had given her, although she didn't want it. But it was there waiting for me.

And so I picked it up and I suddenly saw the deeper truth that's in the, although some of it has come down to us in a distorted way, but even beyond, I could still see the power behind the teaching and the deeper truth to which it pointed. And then a little later, I saw it in the Bhagavad Gita and the same, this all points to the same fundamental truth that's there. And then there's an inner recognition that says, yes.

And of course, whatever it says, you know it already, although you might not have been able to formulate it, but then you see it reflected. The same listening to a teacher who teaches from that deep place of realization. Immediately, I still love listening to other spiritual teachers.

When it's teaching that truly comes from that deep place, because it's such joy to listen to it in somewhat different form, the same truth.

[Speaker 3] (1:46:47 - 1:47:28)

Universal spiritual themes is the course. I was giving a talk in New York City with Robert Thurman, Professor Thurman, who is really the foremost North American Tibetan Buddhist, right? And so he was supposed, it was on Buddha and Christ from the Course in Miracles perspective.

And so he was going to talk about Buddha, and then I was going to talk about Christ as in the context of A Course in Miracles. So he spoke, and then they said, okay, Marianne, tell us now about Christ. I said, everything he just said.

It's been called a Christian Vedanta actually by the man who scribed it, yes. Bill Thepford, who said that of A Course in Miracles.

[Speaker 1] (1:47:29 - 1:47:32)

Christian Vedanta. Ah, Christian Vedanta, oh, that's interesting, yes.

[Speaker 3] (1:47:32 - 1:47:36)

And here's the Jew, so, you know, it's all one truth.

[Speaker 1] (1:47:37 - 1:47:46)

Yes, and other forms of Christian teachings that not the conventional Christian teachings, do you know Joel Goldsmith?

[Speaker 3] (1:47:46 - 1:48:17)

Of course, Joel Goldsmith, and I think a lot of what Elaine Pagels wrote about in the Nag Hammadi manuscripts and the Gnostic Gospels, there's more and more of an understanding that A Course in Miracles belongs in a broader category of the Gnostic mystical Christian tradition, which it's kind of interesting because you look at A Course in Miracles and then you look at a lot of traditional Christian interpretation, and you see 80%'s the same, and then, boy, where it deviates 20% is huge.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:17 - 1:49:00)

Yes, yes. Joel Goldsmith to me is the, is really a Christian version of what in India is called Advaita, which means non-duality teaching, because he uses Christian terminology, but it all points to the absolute non-duality of life. And Advaita teachings have become very popular in the West in the last few years.

There's only one, there's only God, and it's the oneness of all life, and to some extent, A Course in Miracles is also pointing continuously to oneness.

[Speaker 3] (1:49:00 - 1:49:14)

Sure, because nothing else exists. If you're, God is all, and what is all-encompassing can have no opposite. So when you're thinking without love, which is God, you're actually not thinking, you're hallucinating, which, once again, is like Buddhism.

It's all maya, it's all illusion.

[Speaker 1] (1:49:14 - 1:49:58)

Yes. The one obstacle that is common for people is that I've seen it with people who are drawn to Advaita teachings, the Indian non-duality. They begin to believe, they believe that the belief in non-duality is the realization of non-duality.

And then they stop there. And so there are people who teach Advaita, they have become maybe even quite well-known teachers, and they teach from intellectual level. They have mastered the terminology of non-duality, and they can answer any questions by applying the terminology of non-duality, and it sounds quite convincing.

[Speaker 3] (1:49:59 - 1:50:03)

But it hasn't trickled down from their head. They're still triggered when their mother calls.

[Speaker 1] (1:50:03 - 1:50:07)

That's exactly it, exactly. And so, very good.

[Speaker 3] (1:50:07 - 1:50:08)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:50:09 - 1:50:31)

And so, a good criterion you can have is after you've listened to it, it doesn't feel good in here. Something in here tells you that's not it. You can feel it here.

There are some Advaita teachers who have realized, and then it's a true teaching. But if it's only an intellectual realization, basically it's a fallacy.

[Speaker 3] (1:50:33 - 1:50:34)

You passed the test.

[Speaker 1] (1:50:43 - 1:50:44)

Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (1:50:44 - 1:50:45)

Thank you so much.

[Speaker 1] (1:50:46 - 1:50:56)

Thank you, Marianne. Thank you. Maybe just a little moment of stillness.

Thank you.

[Speaker 10] (1:53:34 - 1:54:20)

Eckhart, I've heard you make reference to a number of situations which I think convey the same idea. You've talked about certain cultures that go through a stage where this thought process becomes more developed, which I interpret in some ways as being almost a loss of innocence. Is it necessary for a culture or a stage of civilization to go through this process of losing innocence, of getting trapped in the thoughts and emotional process in order then to regain the development of awareness to reach a stage of enlightenment?

[Speaker 1] (1:54:21 - 2:14:00)

Thank you. Thank you. Okay.

That seems to be the process when we look at it. So there are still remnants of ancient cultures, very few these days, who have not gone through that process of loss of innocence or loss of connectedness with being, we could call it, the natural connectedness with being. And a few humans may still have it, very simple people, perhaps who live close to the land, never left, or very simple people sometimes still have it in some cultures, a natural connectedness with the root of life, with being.

They feel they are rooted in themselves and there's a stillness there. That is the natural. So what is happening when you lose it, whether it's an individual or whether it's a whole culture, a whole civilization, when you lose it, then you get lost in problem-making, get lost in mind, it's a loss of original innocence, you could say, which, of course, is replaced by what is called in Christianity, original sin, which simply means the dysfunction that we all inherit that is there in the collective. So the original innocence is replaced by the original sin. Original innocence, however, is much deeper than original sin.

Original innocence is always still there, even when original sin comes in, it only covers up the original innocence. It does not destroy the original innocence. So the original innocence remains and then a human being, either an individual or a whole nation, culture, tribe moves through the phase of being identified with mind, ego, thinking, problem-making, conflict-ridden, suffering life, suffering, inflicting suffering on other humans around you, continuous violence, and so on.

All that is part of the loss of connectedness with being. That's why so many ancient cultures and the innocent state, we once were in that. Many ancient myths exist in different cultures throughout the world that speak of the golden age, something, a time when everything was beautiful.

We have it in Indian mythology. At the beginning, humans, they say, lived in connectedness. I'm paraphrasing, but they were one with life, one with the divine.

There were no, they didn't inflict suffering on others. There was no violence. There was, that was, and many cultures have that myth still.

It survived as a myth. It's also expressed, of course, in the Bible, at the beginning of the Bible, like a paradise, the loss of paradise. And paradise, of course, is not a place.

It's a state. So the loss, is it necessary? Well, it's happening.

It has happened and is happening. So it seems to be an evolutionary process when innocence is regained, connectedness with being is regained. It is not the same as the state, as that state that was lost.

And that perhaps is why it is necessary to go through the state of being lost. When it is regained, it is regained at a deeper level. There's a great deepening.

Innocence is there, but from natural innocence, you now go to conscious innocence. You're fully conscious of your state rather than living in natural. For example, this is reflected in your relationship with nature.

As your consciousness changes, first, let's say, in the innocent state, there's a oneness with nature and a respect for nature as the old civilization said, as the Native Americans had, a respect for nature. They recognized nature as alive with spirit force. They recognized that the tree is not just a dead object that I can use for making money or for my benefit or to build a house or whatever.

They recognized the tree is alive with something more than what you see. And they respected that life. And every animal, even if they had to kill an animal, they respected the life that is in the spirit, presence in the animal.

So everything, they inhabited a universe that was alive with presence. Now, then we lost that. And more and more, we began to inhabit a universe that we were, we deadened ourselves to the aliveness of the universe.

We can't see it anymore. So that we ended up looking at the whole of nature as a utilitarian thing to be used, but no longer recognized the essential aliveness that is in everything in nature. Why couldn't we recognize it anymore, that it is essentially sacred and essentially one with the life that we are because we had lost that within ourselves.

We had cut ourselves off from the root of being, we were completely trapped in mind and then nature became dead and we could then exploit it, do anything because we didn't know that there was a sacred, there's a sacred presence there. We've lost the sacred presence within ourselves. Well, it was covered up.

Then we regain it. Then again, nature is alive, but this time there is the added dimension of conscious awareness. When you've always lived in oneness with nature, you don't even know that you live in oneness with nature.

It's totally natural. But when you do it with full consciousness, there is an added dimension to it. And so this is what's happening.

And this, it seems to be why the process is that we have to move through the stage of being lost and then regaining. Perhaps the truth of that is expressed in the parable of the prodigal son, which is, goes, predates actually, it's been, it's used in the, in various cultures, predates even Jesus, when Jesus used it. It exists in different forms.

The son of a rich father says to the father, give me my inheritance. I want to go out and make a life for myself. And so the father says, okay, you go out into the world.

And the son goes out in the world, squanders his wealth, becomes a destitute and becomes a beggar, and even forgets where he comes from. And then eventually the father sends messengers to the son to remind him who he is. Don't you remember that you are, and the beggar says, no, me, the son of the king?

No, don't. And gradually the memory comes back to him. And then he goes, comes back to his father's house.

And the father now loves him more than before. That's the story. So there's a deepening, what that parable means, there's a deepening after you've been lost.

When you regain that which has been lost, it is regained at a deeper level because there is, you're now fully conscious of it. There's a conscious dimension, the awareness that is there. That's why that seems to be our destiny.

But perhaps there is no, I just know that this is how it is. There may be exceptions. There may be certain people on the planet or small groups of people who don't go through it.

Who knows? We'll have to see. I can only see the general trend, the general movement seems to be, yes, we have to go through that.

There may well be exceptions to that. There may well be certain people who remain in the state of innocence and that is wonderful too. I don't know.

So that's the paradise regained. That is the cycle. And so I know that I had to go through it.

You had to go through it or are still going through it. And so the state of innocence is lost in childhood. Every child is still born with it, but then very quickly these days it is lost.

Well, not, it's never lost. It's obscured. That's the journey.

I have some questions here. And we also have some spoken questions. I'll start with one or two written questions.

Okay. My husband holds extremely different political views from mine. He believes in war, guns, Fox News, and Sarah Palin.

I do not. How do I constructively handle our differences? That's a good challenge.

For being not identified with mental positions. And that could be your practice. Viewpoints, opinions, our own mental, better say mental position means of course every mental position is a thought.

The thought says this is how it is, some kind of judgment or perspective on things. To be identified with a mental position is to derive your sense of self from that mental position.

It's a substitute identity, form identity, ego, substitute for the true identity, which is formless and has nothing to do with any thought, but is consciousness itself.

So that's a good opportunity then for not giving up your thoughts. You're not required to watch Fox News. But if he watches Fox News and the sound is there filling the house, you can either ask him to turn it down or close the door or surrender to what is, or walk out or ask him to walk out.

There are many choices other than negativity. The main thing is mental positions to withdraw your identification so you can still have your position, but there's no self in it anymore. It does not supply your sense of identity.

Then you can allow somebody else to have their mental position. And perhaps you can then discover that beyond both these, your and your husband's mental positions, there's something beyond where you are not in conflict, beyond all his thoughts and your thoughts. Maybe you can find that place, but your first responsibility is not to identify with the position.

And everybody has to practice that one way or another. It's a beautiful practice. It's expressed in Zen.

I don't remember who said it, who first said it. Some Zen master said, don't seek for the truth, just seize cherishing opinions. And that's enough, because many people spiritually inclined, they look for the truth.

Hopefully at some point within, at first it starts outside. But don't look for the truth, not even within, just stop cherishing opinions. That's the cherishing, not having.

Doesn't say stop having opinions, because that would be difficult. Maybe very advanced practice. But even I have some opinions about Fox News and so on.

But cherishing means to identify with the opinion and to be in the thought. And then it gives you your sense of I. And then anybody who has a different or conflicting position, it becomes a kind of enemy.

And both are trapped in form. And the other is probably trapped also in the form of thought forms. This is a very common human condition, trapped in thought forms.

They're all, most humans still on the planet, derive their identity from their thoughts. So the thought is invested with self. This is perhaps another way of speaking about the essential truth of the Buddha, who discovered that this sense of self is an illusion.

An illusory, you derive your sense of self from form, because every thought is a form, a thought form. It's an energy field. It has some form, not physical form.

So this is really, if this were your only spiritual practice, would be enough to withdraw identification from positions, thoughts. And so then, if you can try, for example, talking to the questioner, your husband then can become your spiritual teacher because he can continuously remind you not to be identified with mental positions. And then you don't resist the other person's mental position.

You don't need to. You allow it to be. You can even allow your own mental position to be.

If you resist somebody else's mental position, you only strengthen it. Try arguing with him about Fox News or Sarah Palin, then you'll see what I mean. And you may find the miracle that it can happen quite easily or can happen, that somebody's mental position either weakens as a mental position.

It's not that strong anymore because you're not resisting it. It may even dissolve when it's not resisted because it needs resistance to strengthen itself and to continue to gain energy through fighting the other. It's quite miraculous to see how it can happen when it's not resisted, allowed.

Oh, well, I know that's what you think. That's okay. Okay.

Don't explain the practice that you're doing. Just do it. Because if you start to explain to a person who is still identified or which means trapped in ego, what I'm practicing with you, because you have a big ego, is being egoless.

That won't work. Just do it. Don't need to say it.

Just.

[Speaker 7] (2:14:26 - 2:15:38)

Okay, so my question actually concerns my mother. My mother's actually been through quite a bit and quite a bit of suffering. And I guess just some main things would be losing two of her sons, one at the age of eight in a traumatic accident, coming to America and having the people that she trusted abandon her.

Suffering a brain tumor, being on like seven pills a day, severe emotional abuse. And you talk about how suffering often breaks open the shell of the ego. And it really seems that my mom's even more attached to thinking and more strongly identified with her ego.

And it's almost like she's a very gentle and kind person, but it seems like she's always lost in her thoughts. And they're not always bad thoughts, but if you, like you do the impressions of people who are lost in thought where they're like always looking around and you say something and they go, okay. And so that's basically what happens.

And so I'm not exactly sure how to approach it because I mean, it's just a fairly different situation.

[Speaker 1] (2:15:40 - 2:18:02)

Yes. Thank you. So you don't know what to do.

Yes. Well, I would say there's nothing you can do except be with her, be present with her. And what she can't do for herself, you can do for her.

So she cannot be at this moment yet. She cannot be there, the presence for her mind. She cannot have the awareness that is aware of what her mind is doing.

Her mind, she's identified with deep seated forms of conditioning and probably pain body. Perhaps collective pain body is part of it. People, I don't know what country was she born in.

India. Yeah. So it could well be that collective pain body is part of it.

Every country also has its pain body and the individual's pain body is partly part of the collective pain body. You have to supply the awareness that she at this time is lacking. So usually what we tell the person to do or there's not a doing is just be aware of your mind.

Be the witness of your mind. Be there as the witnessing consciousness so that you become aware of your mind patterns so that you're no longer totally trapped in your mind patterns. Now, if you tell that to her, that probably won't work.

Maybe you've tried. I have. So you probably said, can you be there as a witnessing consciousness?

And she said.

[Speaker 7] (2:18:08 - 2:18:23)

I mean, I've tried to be there for her. I mean, and maybe she might be complaining about something and I'll just listen and she'll say, what are you doing just sitting there and listening? It's just.

Well, then you say, I hear what you're saying.

[Speaker 1] (2:18:27 - 2:20:30)

I'm listening. I'm just listening. It's fine.

I'm just, I'm listening what you're saying. It's good. So don't, you can be the secondary awareness because if she can't do it, somebody is close to you.

Hold the aware presence for her, so to speak. Don't ask for any results. It's not a means to some end.

It's a satisfying and kind and beautiful and healing thing to do. If we use the word do, it's not really a doing. You hold the presence, the aware presence while her mind is doing what it does and her emotional body is doing what it does.

Instead of thinking, she shouldn't be going through all this. Stop doing that. Why doesn't she allow her to do what she does in the same way that you would allow your mind to do what it does, but just being aware?

Be there as the awareness. Hold the space of awareness for her. You hear that?

Now, she's Indian. That may be, there may be some opening in her. I've observed in Indian people, even people who are on the surface, completely identified with their minds or materialistic.

In many, many Indian people, there is an opening somewhere towards spirituality. It may be hidden, but it's there. Well, there is an opening, not in everyone, but the opening is potentially there in everyone.

But there's something that perhaps she can respond to within the tradition of Indian spirituality. Does she have any kind of practice?

[Speaker 7] (2:20:31 - 2:20:51)

It might just be an external, outward practice. Well, she does. She says that she does meditate before she sleeps because it calms her down.

Otherwise, she's always thinking about things, and sometimes she just doesn't sleep the entire night. But she says she tries to meditate. She doesn't always succeed at it, but she tries.

[Speaker 1] (2:20:52 - 2:21:25)

Well, that's a start. Perhaps you can tell her that she can also meditate just for a few seconds or half a minute in normal life. Perhaps you can ask her whether she can feel the energy inside her hands.

She may not want to do that, but you can try a few things, but mainly be there as the presence. Now, don't say I've been doing that for years and it hasn't worked.

[Speaker 7] (2:21:29 - 2:22:03)

I mean, I have, I mean, I tried to introduce her to the teachings, and one of the things that I noticed is she takes lots of medication, and some of it's stuff like steroid medication, and just lots of medication that affect her focus. So she can't really focus very well on maybe her hands or her breath. So I mean, I'm not sure.

I mean, she has to take those medications to live. So, I mean, with all that brain fog and everything, I mean, do you think that there's any hope? I mean, is it just consistently suffering?

[Speaker 1] (2:22:05 - 2:27:44)

It's just, she can't surrender to life. She's not able to do it, but you have to do it for her. Let's see, when this is the only way for humans who are not ready yet, the humans that are close to you, you have not surrendered yet for her, but you can do that.

If you were surrendered for her, it would be fine. You would be at peace. And if any healing is possible, it will happen in that way.

It can come through you, but you need to surrender to what the way she is now, complete acceptance. With complete acceptance comes an energy field of peace. With the energy field of peace comes the possibility of grace and healing.

But when you surrender, you don't surrender as a means to an end. You don't surrender in order for her to get better. That's not true surrender.

You just surrender to the way. I had to do it for my mother. My mother, occasionally I try to point her to the present moment or feeling the energy in her body.

Once or twice, she had brief moments of stillness and you can suddenly feel light coming through, aliveness coming through. Some years ago, she was visiting me. She was still alive 10 years ago or so.

And I remember she was visiting me and talking and talking and talking and talking about her. I had forgotten how much humans talk because I was living alone at the time. And her mind never stopped and just problems.

And I simply, I knew all I could do was be there as the aware presence for her. And after four or five days, for a minute, she stopped talking. And there was a moment of stillness.

And after the moment of stillness, she said something that wasn't part of her usual record that was playing itself again and again and again. After the moment of stillness, she looked at me and said, "'Isn't it strange we are born and then we die?' That's a deep insight. It's just the beginning of all philosophy, the beginning of all spiritual quest."

And she had that. The strangeness of our short-lived sensory, physical existence. Before she was totally identified with it and after also, but there was a momentary opening.

"'Isn't it strange we are born?' I mean, that's a moment of grace." And then the clouds came back. And they stayed until the end, unfortunately.

I had to surrender to that without demanding that my mother should awaken spiritually. I surrendered to the fact that that was where she was at. And it became very painful as the years passed.

Her body became more and more dysfunctional and she became more and more unhappy with it. She regarded old age as a personal misfortune that she was afflicted with. And I tried to tell her, "'It is not personal.

It's old age. It happens to everybody.' She says, "'Yes, but not in this way. Not like that.

It's terrible.'" It was the pain she generated, psychological pain was far greater than the discomfort and pain she suffered on the physical level. And the fear of what might happen to her, the fear of not being able to walk at all anymore, the fear of losing her eyesight, the fear of this, the fear of that, far greater suffering than any physical suffering that she suffered. And yet, except for one or two rare moments, there was no transformation.

And I was at peace with it. I surrendered. I allowed her to be the way she is, to manifest that state of consciousness.

And I could sense the being underneath that. I can sense that. If you can sense that being that is underneath all the density, the emotional density of the mind, and hold that, the rest is surrender.

I did not succeed except I surrendered. So, since I did not succeed with my mother in any other way, I cannot give you any more advice than that. I myself couldn't do it.

Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 9] (2:28:02 - 2:28:02)

Hi, Eckhart.

[Speaker 11] (2:28:03 - 2:28:03)

Hi.

[Speaker 9] (2:28:04 - 2:28:24)

My question is, when I try to maintain presence in my everyday life, I'm aware that my subconscious need for superiority sabotages me pretty regularly, and it happens very often. So I wonder what suggestions you have.

[Speaker 1] (2:28:27 - 2:28:33)

It would be nice for us to have one or two examples of how that looks.

[Speaker 9] (2:28:35 - 2:29:19)

I was afraid you would ask that. Well, typically when, like this morning, someone approached me, and they were anxious and worried and off balance, and I thought, it's sort of an automatic thing, sort of, you know, why don't you get your act together? And rather than just having a positive exchange, and then I notice, of course, when I'm anxious or off balance, I want everybody to be kind and understanding.

So it's, I judge that as not a good thing. I would like to be more automatically kind. Okay.

[Speaker 1] (2:29:23 - 2:29:25)

One more example, perhaps?

[Speaker 9] (2:29:25 - 2:30:07)

One more? Okay, when my question was chosen, and I was invited to be here, I was really excited about that, and it was tempting to think, and it was kind of my first thought that, oh, isn't this wonderful? I have this great question, but, you know, I quickly realized that in reality, that it might be a pertinent question, but it's not about me, and it's not, it doesn't mean that I'm great.

No, that was, okay. So it seems like a constant fight for me.

[Speaker 1] (2:30:09 - 2:34:11)

Well, of course, it's very normal, that kind of mind activity. It's just, as awareness arises, it seems to be more of a problem than it would be for a normally unconscious person. Now, the good thing is that the awareness is there of it.

If you were totally unconscious, that is, identified with those thought patterns, you wouldn't even know it, because the essence of identification is you don't know it. You are it. You are the thought.

So you would, then, instead of feeling superior and realizing that you feel superior, and then not wanting to feel superior, you would just feel superior. And that would be really unconscious. And that would be quite normal.

Now, because awareness arises, that's a good thing. You're aware of certain mind patterns, subtle things where you feel superior or special. It's another word for it, that's specialness.

Because specialness doesn't, superior always implies better than. Specialness could also be, I'm much worse off than you. That's why I'm so special.

My problems are much bigger than yours. Don't tell me about your problems. I'll let me tell you about mine.

Or as my dad used to say, when people said, I have a headache, or whatever ache that you have a headache, I've had a headache for weeks. That's not so much superiority, but well, in a way it is, it's specialness. I'm more special than you because I have more headaches than you.

I must be more interesting, or whatever the reasoning behind it is. It's irrational, of course. So awareness is there, which is a decisive factor.

It has come in. The awareness is aware of that mind pattern. Then, however, the awareness is obscured again by an additional mind pattern that says I shouldn't be having these thoughts, which are more thoughts.

So we have three things here in operation. There's the original thought pattern, harmless as it may be, but there's a recognition of the thought pattern, which comes from the fact that there's awareness. Through awareness, the thought pattern is recognized.

But then the mind comes in again. It uses the awareness, the recognition that arose through awareness to construct an additional level of problems, which says I shouldn't be having those thoughts. I'm not a good person anymore if I have those thoughts.

I'm not kind if I have those thoughts. And what is that? Thoughts.

So it can happen that as awareness arises, which is a wonderful thing, you're not totally identified with the mind pattern anymore. And then the mind is so cunning that out of that recognition, it creates new mind patterns. And the new mind patterns say, I'm not a kind person if I think that.

I mustn't think, I feel bad about thinking that. I shouldn't. By now, I should be rid of that, whatever it says.

So that's where you have to be careful just to become aware that the mind has come in again after the awareness. That is not necessary. But you didn't know that.

That was unconscious. So the mind has little, it's very cunning. You recognize the mind there, and then the mind comes back in again and uses your recognition to manufacture more thought out of that.

Ha, ha, ha.

[Speaker 10] (2:34:12 - 2:34:16)

Ha, ha, ha. Ha, ha, ha. Ha, ha, ha.

Ha, ha, ha. Ha, ha, ha. Right.

Ha, ha, ha.

[Speaker 1] (2:34:17 - 2:34:26)

Ha, ha, ha. And this is why it's very good to ask that question. It helps everybody, so you are special.

[Speaker 10] (2:34:27 - 2:34:28)

Ha, ha, ha. Ha, ha, ha. Ha, ha, ha.

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (2:34:29 - 2:35:50)

Ha, ha, ha. But of course, everybody has similar problems, so we are all special. Ha, ha, ha.

Ha, ha, ha. The, that's where you, once you're aware of that, you can then recognize that as unnecessary. You don't need that.

It's superfluous mind activity that does nothing except strengthen your mind. So, and then you can simply allow the recognition to be there without the additional mental judgment of let's say something wrong with you. And that in itself gradually dissolves the power of the mind pattern.

All you need is the awareness of what your mind is doing. And gradually, what your mind is doing becomes less dense, less powerful, and the awareness grows. So there's a shrinking of the mind pattern and a growing of the awareness.

The only way the mind can stop that pattern is by, as I said, by coming in after the awareness and creating more thought around that. So just be happy with being aware. It's a mind pattern.

It's nothing to do with who you are. You don't, you're not an unkind person. You're not whatever the mind says.

It's just this, that mind pattern. Isn't that interesting? There it is.

And that is in itself sufficient.

[Speaker 9] (2:35:52 - 2:35:54)

Great, thank you so much.

[Speaker 4] (2:36:12 - 2:36:38)

Probably my question is gonna be redundant and silly one you don't have to answer it if you think it's redundant. My suffering has decreased by far. But I still feel frustrated with the return of pain body whenever it comes.

And I know it's much less, much shorter and weaker and everything. And I try to not resist it, but I still do feel frustrated. And any comment?

[Speaker 1] (2:36:39 - 2:36:40)

Frustrated with?

[Speaker 4] (2:36:40 - 2:37:16)

With the return of pain body. And when I see myself reacting to whatever event it is, I have put these notes everywhere in my car, house, everywhere. But you know, if I don't turn around and the pain body comes back then, I catch it very often in the middle of the attack and I just leave wherever I am.

And I go to this silent place. I try to say, okay, it's okay. Just to be compassionate toward myself.

Yet I do get frustrated after it happened again. And yeah.

[Speaker 1] (2:37:17 - 2:37:59)

Well, that's lovely. Well, it's wonderful to see that there's already so much disidentification from the pain body in you. Maybe not enough yet for your, what you demand of yourself, of course, is complete freedom from the pain body.

But there's already a lot of detachment coming in. Does the awakening come in, in the middle of being taken over by a pain body reaction sometimes, as you said, in the middle of it? And then what do you do?

What happens?

[Speaker 4] (2:38:00 - 2:38:42)

If I'm shouting, then I just stop. And then I say, okay, just leave. And then I just leave, which is quite often with my poor son and his six.

And then I just try to leave the, wherever I am. And of course, he doesn't want me to leave. And at the same time, I'm thinking, okay, I'm the adult, I have to be able to master my whatever.

And I try to calm down. I do do that. And even he knows you.

And he says, okay, go read, listen to your teacher. But, and so, but, you know.

[Speaker 1] (2:38:42 - 2:38:44)

So how old is your son?

[Speaker 4] (2:38:45 - 2:38:45)

Pardon?

[Speaker 1] (2:38:45 - 2:39:05)

How old is he? Oh, well, I wish I had had parents who were as conscious as you when I was six. And I wish I had heard of the pain body when I was six.

Nobody told me, but so he already knows about all that.

[Speaker 4] (2:39:06 - 2:39:06)

He does.

[Speaker 1] (2:39:07 - 2:39:09)

And he knows it's your pain body.

[Speaker 4] (2:39:09 - 2:39:14)

He does. I tell him. That's wonderful, isn't it?

That was a mommy, that was mommy's pain body.

[Speaker 1] (2:39:14 - 2:39:29)

So it's beautiful. So it's already happening. Why just, if you remove yourself, if that helps, go to another room and sit quietly for a few minutes.

[Speaker 4] (2:39:30 - 2:39:32)

But what does it come back? It's been three years.

[Speaker 1] (2:39:32 - 2:42:56)

It's been there for thousands of years. So a few years is very little for thousands of years to dissolve. So it's inherited.

Every pain body is ultimately collective. It's part of the collective pain body, even if it looks personal. When you look deep enough and you follow it back far enough, you realize it merges with the collective pain body of humanity.

And when you dissolve yours, you not only do it for yourself, you do it for collective also. It's not just a personal thing. So you're doing far more good when you realize.

And so just a little hint. There may be certain typical situations that you already know that tend to trigger your pain body. And when a typical situation that you already know tends to pull you into that unconscious reaction, you know already what's it, when you, just as this situation, it might be a conversation or whatever it is, just at the beginning of it, you know, okay, here I need to be particularly alert because this is one of those situations that pulls me into unconsciousness.

You don't even need to think it, you know it. And so then you can be, but then you can carry on and with an increased alertness inside yourself as you continue to talk and be involved in that typical situation and bring your increased alertness into it. As you know, I sometimes use the expression, turn up the dimmer switch on the light.

You go. And when you know you're approaching a potential situation that tends to pull you into unconsciousness, then you have to turn up the light on your dimmer switch. You go like, okay.

Now you carry on talking, but you're not identified anymore with mind. You're identified with presence. You are the presence.

And so that's the practice. You can even write down, make a little list of typical pain body triggers for me. One, two, three, four, five.

And then you know them there. And then you go, you see when it's coming, you say, oops, there's one. Okay.

Become alert, present in your entire body. With pain body especially, you need to have attention in the energy field of the body because pain body is a partly physical, a physical energy, partly mental mixture. And so you're in there with your attention and you can feel the aliveness in every cell and then continue to talk and then use it as a practice and to play with it a little.

And if you fail, it's fine. At least you know you failed. The world is full of people who continuously get drawn into it and never even know it because they're so identified with it.

You're doing good work, not only for yourself, but for many others. Everybody does that who works with their pain body.

[Speaker 4] (2:42:57 - 2:43:13)

Can I be selfish, ask a quick question? I do feel that I have created a lot of pain body in him, like such as you mentioned that the first few. So does it stay with him or can I, other than being present, can I help him?

[Speaker 1] (2:43:13 - 2:43:21)

It's possible that your pain body has already infected him a little bit, but your presence will infect him even more.

[Speaker 4] (2:43:21 - 2:43:21)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (2:43:22 - 2:43:31)

So that counterbalances that a lot too. If you bring in presence, then he may not develop a fully fledged full pain body.

[Speaker 4] (2:43:31 - 2:43:32)

Yeah, I hope so.

[Speaker 11] (2:43:34 - 2:43:37)

Just a little. Thank you so much and thanks for your teaching.

[Speaker 4] (2:43:37 - 2:43:37)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (2:44:01 - 2:58:51)

From Yogita Sharma, not here. If everything is perfect in totality, then why to blame humanity of being unconscious? It had to be like this, so we should accept it.

Yes. That's what we're doing. Nobody's blaming anybody.

You shouldn't be unconscious. You should know better, but they don't. So you're arguing with what is, so, but you see it.

So, oh, I lost it. The, you don't blame, but you see it. And you also see that it is nobody's fault.

It is nobody's identity to be unconscious. It's not who you truly are and whatever patterns come through you in the unconscious state, it's not who you are. You're manifesting the current evolutionary stage of humanity through you.

As you can also manifest the awakening through this form and many still manifest the unconsciousness. And that's all that you see that there's no blaming in it. The seeing is part of the awakening.

To see it in another is part of the awakening. The moment you blame, it's no longer part of the awakening. When you see unconsciousness and start blaming, you are part of the unconsciousness.

But if you see the unconsciousness for what it is, that's part of the awakening. Even if you see it in another, there's something awakening in the totality. If you see it in yourself, very much more so, there's enormous awakening.

If you see unconsciousness in yourself, either in the moment of it happening, when you're arguing with somebody, identifying with your mental position, become emotional about it and start attacking the other, defending yourself and suddenly realize you're fighting for your life, trying to be right because you have identified yourself with an illusion, a mental conceptual image and a mental position.

Your sense of self is in your mental position. It feels threatened and you're now fighting for your life. You're even beginning to tell lies just to defend your mental position, to save yourself.

And if in that moment you wake up and see what's happening, that's true awakening. And in that moment, the whole structure of that collapses. Or if you wake up after it's just happened, you've just had this dreadful argument with somebody and you feel exhausted.

Even if you were right, you finally came out victorious. Perhaps you had finally, you were threatening him with physical violence and he ran off. So finally you came out victorious and you feel depleted.

And suddenly you wake up and see, this is what I did. That's awakening. But if in that moment you say, that's a dreadful thing, I should never have done that.

It was awful. You didn't, it happened through you. The awakening becomes unconscious again the moment you judge yourself for being unconscious.

That's unconscious again because judging is thoughts arising and you believe in the thoughts and they tell you who you are. You're unconscious again the moment you judge yourself. It could be your whole, I've met people who their whole, they said, the way I brought up my children was so unconscious.

Maybe that's why they turned out the way they did and then they feel terribly guilty. I can see why. But consciousness is now here for the child or the children.

That's their challenge was to have you as a father or mother. That's what life. That's what life gave them.

Life always gives you some form of limitation and ultimately that is a good thing. Life gives you some form of limitation and the limitation you got was your parents, for example. That was the case with me also.

My parents were in continuous conflict and shouting and even physical violence. And that was my fate to be born into that. And I was never at ease as a child, but that was all part of why eventually awakening happened.

The suffering that started already there later became depression and anxiety and unhappiness. That was all, it was all part of that. And so it's fine.

So if it was your child's destiny to have you as a father or mother, and it was your fate to act out unconscious behavior, which was not your choice, you were conditioned by your parents. They were conditioned by their parents. They were conditioned by their parents who lived in England, Italy, Greece, in a village and acted out the same unconsciousness that your parents or you acted out in New York.

And they traveled with the immigrants across the ocean. They didn't leave themselves behind. They came with the self.

And so to see forgive yourself means to realize this is not who you are and it was not who you are. If you see it now, that is the greatest gift you can give to the world is to see it and be free of it now. And then you do whatever you can to help your children, but not to compensate for something then you would go into some kind of reactive behavior.

Of course you do, wherever you go, you help. And you help, the greatest help you can give is to bring your presence to another human being, whether it's your adult children or whoever it may be, give them the gift of presence, your true presence. Not the presence of you, the person, the presence of you as consciousness.

That is the gift. And then many things become healed in that. Things perhaps that you caused by your unconsciousness, which wasn't yours, it was human unconsciousness.

You caused it, even that to say that you caused it isn't quite correct. It came through you. The unconsciousness manifested through you.

You weren't even there. Now you're there because you are the presence. You are the consciousness.

So it's absurd then to say I did that. No, it's not that. And then you are force for good in this world.

You bring your presence. And if you can't help your children, you can help others. So there's no guilt then also, of course, is a thing where the identification with mind, emotional images is very strong.

Guilt also has to be relinquished, both blaming, which is putting it on others, and blaming yourself and feeling bad about yourself. You need to transcend both blaming others, blaming yourself. Both need to be transcended to be free because as long as you blame, you're trapped in a mind structure, thought structure of who they are or who I am.

I am bad. They are bad. Responsibility, your responsibility, if you want to use that word, is to be responsible for your state of consciousness at this moment.

Your responsibility is to be present now. It's all you can ever be responsible for. Nothing had happened in the past.

There's no, you can't take responsibility for that. You can be responsible for the now, present. Then you're truly responsible in life.

And to some extent, you even undo the past. You heal the past through your presence. There's a related question here, which really is a continuation of what we are saying.

Philip Dickerson writes, how not to judge someone who has done something horrible. The number of people Mao Zedong killed eclipsed the number of people killed by Hitler, Stalin and Pol Pot, put together. Please help me to understand what this really means.

Don't judge. Well, I believe the answer has already been given. Do not equate unconsciousness with who another human being is.

Dreadful things have happened, are happening still on the planet through deep unconsciousness, which always means complete, what is evil? Complete identification with form. There's either the form of me, so that there's complete inability to feel the aliveness in any other form.

When there's complete inability to feel the aliveness in any other life form, we could call that evil. You're cut off. It also applies when the form that you identify with is a group identity.

The greatest evils in this world have not been inflicted by individuals or others, but by people who were identified with their group, their collective, whether it's a tribe, a nation or religion. Or a sect or whatever it may be. If you look at human history, you can see we think that criminals can inflict the greatest evil.

No, normal, respectable, so-called sane citizens who identify with a collective sense of self, which is a thought form that a group of people hold. They all hold it in their head. The thought form of us.

Complete identification with the collective, with form, this group form, that results in an inability to feel the aliveness, the life in any other form or group or individual who don't belong. And then evil happens very easily. You can kill and torture and maim.

You feel nothing, because you're so identified with this rigid form that the others are just concepts. You've made yourself into a concept, us, whatever label is attached to the group or the nation, and then you're doing it for the religion, whatever you call it, for the country, whatever you call it, for the ideology, whatever you call it. So if evil is any reality, then that's its reality.

Complete identification with form. And as we know, ultimately, identification with form is identification with thought. So your evil then happens.

You've been taken over by thought. And that, in its extreme forms, leads to evil, which really is loss of sensitivity and all empathy, nothing. And the opposite happens when you relinquish that.

Form identification goes, and you realize the essence of who you are is formless. And then you see the same in every other. You don't approach other human beings with concepts and throw them at them.

The moment you meet them, throw a concept at them. That's who you are. So really, there's the unconsciousness at work.

One could almost say there's nobody there, just dreamwalkers, whether they are Hitler or Pol Pot or Mao Tse Tung or millions of others who do dreadful things on a smaller scale. Dreamwalkers. Ha ha.

[Speaker 10] (2:58:53 - 2:58:53)

Ha ha.

[Speaker 11] (2:58:57 - 2:58:57)

Ha ha. Ha ha.

[Speaker 6] (2:59:18 - 2:59:49)

Hi, Jakob. I'm Michelle. And my question has to do with making your ego your friend, which is really what A New Earth allowed me to do.

It allowed me to see my ego not as an enemy, but as a protector, kind of like my big brother on the playground who's protecting me against the bully that just pushed me down in the mud. So I learned to see it as a protector, and then understanding that, learned to make it my friend.

[Speaker 1] (2:59:50 - 3:00:04)

Can you give one example, just so that we have a clear view of what you mean? Can you give one example of when, an occasion when the ego was your protector?

[Speaker 6] (3:00:10 - 3:00:14)

Probably the first thing that comes to mind would be in a family situation.

[Speaker 1] (3:00:14 - 3:00:15)

Yes.

[Speaker 6] (3:00:17 - 3:02:16)

Where my stepfather was visiting and staying with me. And was commenting about something around my house and saying that I should be fixing this or fixing that. And I got very defensive and noticed it right away.

And kind of wanted to come back with, well, this is what I've done with my home and I've done my best and this is where it's at right now. And if you'd like to fix it, you can buck up the money and I'd be happy to accept it. But it made me feel, I think it made me feel weak.

And I noticed that and I remember telling my mom about that. But it did, it made me feel weak. Which really is where I think the ego comes from is a place of feeling threatened and being hurt.

And then of course, here comes the big brother and there's my, the bully is my stepfather in this instance. But what that then allowed me to do was to accept that part of myself, kind of talk it down. And then it allowed me to see that in my stepfather as well.

And then to quote you from the book, you look through the ego to the sanity that is in every human being as his or her essence. So that's what the process of reading A New Earth helped me specifically with my ego. There was many other truths in there.

My question then is, is do you feel that that is a good way, seeing the ego not as an enemy but as a friend and a protector? Is a good way to accept it, to become aware of it, and then to gradually but lovingly dissolve it?

[Speaker 1] (3:02:17 - 4:56:27)

Interesting, thank you, thank you. So when he said those things, let's just stay with that example you gave. It's always easier to answer when one has a concrete example.

And that stands for all kinds of situations. The basic mechanism is always the same when the ego operates. So there was, when he made those comments, things that you could do or should do in your house or were not good enough or haven't done yet, there was something in you that felt either put down or hurt or being told what to do and didn't like it.

So he kind of fought back and said something back, which can easily lead, of course, to a reaction in the other, and then the other will defend himself, herself. So you have two egos fighting it out. Now that in you that felt diminished or hurt or put down was, of course, the ego.

So in a situation like that, I don't, I would not say that the ego actually is your friend here because it creates a lot of conflict for yourself, even if you don't say anything, even if you just think certain thoughts or have certain emotional reactions, you still have conflict in yourself. You don't want him to say these things, but he's saying these things. So can you be in that situation?

I'll just present an alternative version that might work even better than the ego defending yourself. So if you can be there, not as an entity that feels diminished by what this person says, or if there is an entity, then know that there is an entity, something in you feels diminished because you can know that. Can you go beyond that?

That's the question. Can you go beyond that reaction that is of this person when anybody tells you what to do? Similar example, somebody's driving, you have a co-pilot next to you, and the person says to you that you should be doing something that you're not doing.

You need to slow down, or why don't you do this? You need to, some people, co-pilots, they tell you what to do because they know better. Now, maybe they do.

Either they do know better, or they think they know better. And in my case, when Kim sits next to me, usually she does know better, and as she will confirm, whenever she says something to me, I say, thank you. You should slow do this or do that.

You're in the wrong lane. I say, thank you, and usually she's right. Occasionally, she's not right, but nine times out of 10, she's right, and so I say, thank you, and then, of course, the one time out of 10, she's not right, can't be helped.

I got a ticket. She said, go into this lane, and the policeman came up and stopped me, and I got a ticket, $100, but that was only one time out of 10. So even now, I still say thank you, even after this, and usually it still works, but if I had an entity driving the car called the ego that says, nobody tells me what to do, or I will feel inferior if she tells me what to do, then this entity that says, nobody tells me what to do, or who do you think you are, or it would say things like, I've been driving for 20, I don't know how many, 30 years without an accident, I could say, which is true, but it's a miracle. And usually, I say, thank you, and it works very well. She's usually right, and even if I knew that she's usually wrong, which is not the case, if you might have a co-driver who just drives so differently that she always tells you what to do, what he or she would do, but you wouldn't do it, you can still say, thanks for your advice, but I'd rather stay in this line.

Now, back to your situation. He comes to your home and says, you should be doing this and that. If you're there simply as a presence rather than as a little entity that needs to defend itself, you listen to what he says and say, oh, well, that's what I would say.

Oh, this is what you, you should do that. Oh, okay, thanks, I'll consider that. Oh, and then you should, this is wrong, is it?

You said, well, I'll look into, see, I'll think about that. Thanks for your opinion. I've completely changed it.

There's no longer him trying to control me. There's only him giving your opinion. And even if there is a bully hiding inside him, you're not seeing the bully, you're simply saying, oh, you don't need to defend yourself because the ego believes that's the strength in you, but that's a weakness.

You're much stronger if you find that place within where you don't need the defense. And so if you deal with that situation there, then you are free of ego and you deal with it much more powerfully and you're free because you don't have to do what he says. He doesn't live there.

So that's fine, but you can give him his due. Perhaps he likes a little bit of acknowledgement. Perhaps he likes you to think that he knows a lot.

Egos love these things. So you tell him, thanks for your advice, I will consider it. And then if he comes back a few weeks later and says you still haven't done it and say, well, I thought about it, but I decided not for this reason or that reason.

It didn't seem quite right, but thanks for your advice anyway. I did think about it. You can give him what he wants without giving anything away from who you are.

And there's no conflict in the situation, neither inside you nor outside. So usually the ego thinks it's helping you, but it's really not really helping. It's making the situation more complicated.

The strength of the ego is your weakness. And if the ego does not operate, it says you need me, you need me for protection. No, you don't.

You're much more powerful without that pattern of behavior. So it's a question of trying it out so that when you meet big egos, egos come into your life, it's inevitable in this world that from time to time or quite often, you will come into contact with big egos, walking egos. And so they may have all kinds of designs.

They want to tell you what to do. They want to control you. They want to do this.

And if you react to the ego, that's your ego. If you fight their ego, that's your ego. If you stand back, observe the behavior, and then say, be the presence, out of presence, you simply say what is right.

And that's much better. And sometimes you may even get good advice, which perhaps the ego wouldn't accept because it comes from somebody else. So it could well be that somebody does say something, but you are not hearing it because your ego says, nobody's telling me what to do.

Or your co-driver tells you something that is very helpful that, and you think, nobody's telling me how to drive. And a minute later, you have an accident. If you had listened, it wouldn't have happened.

That's possible too. So you have to be open to the possibility that sometimes your ego misinterprets somebody else's intention because the ego sees ego everywhere. So even an innocent comment made by somebody, if you have a strong ego, you may misinterpret it as if it were ego-motivated and will say something to defend you.

So the ego is always defending itself, but ultimately the ego is defending an illusion because the ego is an illusory entity, a mind-made sense of self. So the ego is true, it's very good at defending, but what it is defending is an illusion. And the strength in you is not the ego, it's the weakness in you.

It's reversed from one's usual way of looking at it or perspective. So you can try all kinds of situations so that gradually you become non-reactive because all reaction is of the ego. The ego reacts the same.

Certain energy comes towards you, the ego reacts against it. The Tao teaches and any spiritual teaching is not to oppose anything. So coming back to your situation, this person says, you should be doing this, you should do that, you should do that.

You don't oppose it. You say, oh, isn't that interesting? Or the co-driver says, you should be in the other lane, you should go more slowly, you can go faster.

Oh, thank you. May even be right. So you never go that, you go, oh.

So that's the martial arts. Don't oppose the other's attack by going, oh, oh. That's a Western way, it's kind of, oh.

And the Eastern ways, you step back in the same direction as the attack is coming. And then he falls. Or something else happens, we don't know.

But you go with it and then transform it. There's no opposition. So that's a very wonderful spiritual practice and it's absolutely necessary for everybody to bring in a different energy into human interactions.

And if you have the impulse to defend yourself, you can notice it in yourself and you can see, oh, there's the ego, an egoic impulse, an old reaction. The moment you've recognized the ego, you're also free to choose something else because you're not, there's, it's, strictly speaking, it's not even the ego anymore. Strictly speaking, ego only exists when you don't know it exists.

That's really the ego. When you know there is a certain behavior pattern happening in you which could be called the ego, it's not really the ego anymore because for the ego to operate in you needs your complete identification with it, your complete unconsciousness. So that's a very wonderful spiritual practice and it's absolutely necessary for everybody to bring in a different energy into human interactions.

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That's really the ego. When you know there is a certain behavior pattern happening in you which could be called the ego, it's not really the ego anymore because for the ego to operate in you needs your complete identification with it, your complete unconsciousness. So you cannot, to take it a little bit further, even we could say then, you can never see the ego in you because the moment you see it for what it is, it's not the ego anymore, it's only a behavior pattern.

So people who are most trapped in ego, most strongly identified with ego, they have no idea about ego. They don't know it. They are it.

The moment you see the ego, it's not the ego anymore, strictly speaking, and then you are free to choose something different. Many things that the ego feels hurtful about don't actually hurt you, they hurt the ego. Let's take another example, driving.

Occasionally it may happen, well it happens to me sometimes, you get insulted by other drivers for some reason, I don't know why. They may be shouting something at you. In some countries, you experience it more than in others.

In colder countries, they are more reserved. In hot countries, they shout more, they're more open, so they, and the windows are open, so they will shout something at you. And so the ego will feel, something in you feels hurt.

If somebody shouts, you idiot, something in you feels diminished. And there's an automatic reaction that comes in for most people, which is ego defense mechanism, or I sometimes call it the instant repair mechanism. And the instant repair mechanism calls you, needs you to shout something back.

And it needs to be a little bit stronger than the original insult. By doing that, the ego has repaired its, the injury caused to its self-image. The ego is an imaginary sense of self.

And so it happens so quickly that most people don't know that this is the mechanism behind it. They just shout something back because they have the strong need to do so. Why do they have the strong need to shout something back?

It makes no difference whether you shout something and this person hears it, makes no difference, and then he drives off. What's the point? Well, there is a big point because you feel a little bit better after that, or as the ego, at least you've done something to repair yourself.

But it's a self-repair thing, the ego does that. And once you know that, next time it happens, you can observe the impulse and then say, not do it, not by repressing it, that's never good. If you have to repress it, better to shout it.

Otherwise it might turn into a stomach pain or something. But if you observe the impulse and then you can try out something different, and that is non-reaction. So the driver shouts something and then you look at him.

That's a very disconcerting thing for the other person. And then he might shout again because he thinks you're deaf. And still nothing, it's very strange.

And the traffic may be moving, so you may not be able to see what further effect it has on him. But the interesting thing is that you feel, at first something in you feels diminished. I write about this a little bit in The New Earth.

As a practice, I say, don't do it always, occasionally. Do not repair your diminished sense of self when something happens, a certain situation happens. Accept the diminishment, it's an ancient spiritual practice, by the way.

And that's, for example, what Jesus was talking about with turning the other cheek. Because being slapped on the face is not so much a physical thing, it's a psychological diminishment. And so when he said, turn the other cheek, he was pointing to something.

And that is when one's, another thing would be not to reply when somebody is spreading false rumors about you. In some situations, you may have to state the truth. But in many others, it would be, it's pointless to say anything, but the ego would do it automatically.

But you don't have to do it, you can just let it be. So not to automatically and unconsciously repair that diminished sense of self, which is there even if somebody calls you idiot, you end up with a slightly diminished sense of self. And so not to do anything is an amazing thing.

At first it feels very strange, and you feel, and then you feel there's a power underneath that was never touched by that. And that you've suddenly, you feel that deeper power that was not touched by whatever anybody said. And that's an amazing thing to find the power that is deeper than ego.

And sometimes you have to have yourself, one of the ways in which you can find it is through a temporary diminishment of your sense of self in some situation. So that's quite amazing. It's something to experiment with.

Some people feel diminished in their sense of self, people with a fairly strong ego, if they ever have to say, I don't know. Some people just, whatever you ask them, they will never say, I don't know. They'll always have either some answer or even if they have to invent it or some kind of other thing they say, but it's not, I don't know.

Because the ego feels, some egos feel diminished when they say, I don't know. And those people, I would recommend them to practice and say, I don't know. And see what that feels like and whether they feel diminished and what's underneath that.

My brother was like that, my half brother, who is 20 years younger than me, when he was 16, 17, I noticed his ego was growing and he would never say, I don't know, no matter what question you asked him, even if he had no idea what the answer was, he would invent some fantastic thing and explanation. And I think once I said to him, why don't you try saying, don't know and see what happens, what it feels like. And then he did and he was still alive.

Perhaps more alive. It's a strange thing. The ego is a very strange entity.

So practice all kinds of human situations, every day, I'm sure you'll be able to practice one way or another. Thank you. Welcome to our private seminar.

I'm talking about spiritual awakening in daily life. And some people may not be quite sure what the term spiritual awakening even means. Or they may have strange ideas in their head of what spiritual is, what is spiritual and what is awakening.

And instead of defining right now, I'm just going to talk about spiritual awakening in daily life. And as I talk, what spiritual means and what awakening means will hopefully emerge while we talk. So instead of defining beforehand what these things are, because although we're not, this is not a talk on philosophy.

So we're not here to define terms. It's an experiential thing. It's not information based.

We're here to experience something and then to bring that into daily life, live it in our daily existence. Everybody has done some traveling and sightseeing, visited unfamiliar places, European cathedrals perhaps, or the pyramids in Egypt or Machu Picchu, Stonehenge in England, whatever it may be. And it's often an interesting experience for me to go into a place and walk around doing some sightseeing.

Let's say it's a cathedral, an ancient cathedral in Europe, and you walk in there and usually you have little groups of people with a guide. And they walk around. The guide has now come this way in different languages.

The guide explains what this means, when it was built or who is, this is a tomb or this king or whoever lies there and all kinds of interesting information. And just occasionally when I walk into a place like that, an ancient cathedral, I kind of approach the little group and just listen in and stand at the side and just see what he's saying, sometimes quite interesting. But I never feel drawn to actually sticking around for very long because I prefer to explore the place by myself without the interference of a voice explaining to me what things are.

Now, it may well be that I may have read a guidebook beforehand, or I may not. In most cases, probably I have not looked at a guidebook beforehand. So I'm actually going into this, let's say it's a medieval cathedral.

I'm walking into this medieval cathedral, not knowing very much about it, except it was built 1,000 years ago, whatever, and it took two or 300 years to build. But I prefer that experience of entering a space and not being burdened by information about it rather than entering a space and immediately being bombarded with facts about it. There are two very different kinds of experiencing that place.

One kind of experiencing that place is based on bits and pieces of information, on knowledge, on mental knowledge, on mind. And this is how most people travel for that reason because they want to learn new things. So as soon as they enter the cathedral, they say, okay, I'm going to join this guided tour.

Or these days, I have invented something to substitute the human guide. You can rent a little device recording with earphones and you can choose your language and you put it on your ears and then you choose your language and then it tells you where to go. Now turn right here, stop here, and then it starts explaining it.

You look. And you're continuously learning a lot. And then, okay, walk on now 10 steps and now look up to the left and you will see more information, information coming in, very interesting.

I'm learning so much about history. It's true, you are. You're learning a lot.

And so you walk around this cathedral with the voice in your head teaching you about it. What's wrong with that? Nothing.

It's fine. Why don't I do that? Because there is another way of experiencing, of perceiving that place.

And that's not something that people even know about. Some people do it intuitively. And that way is going into that place and not perceive whatever is around you through the veil of facts, information, knowledge, thoughts.

Ultimately, it all comes down to thoughts. One thought after another. There is another way of perceiving that place that is not based on mind activity.

And I love that other way more than the way of learning about. There's nothing wrong with that. Sometimes I read a guidebook afterwards after I've been to a place like that.

I read, oh, that's what I saw and have a little bit of information about it. But at first, I love entering that place and perceiving, first of all, the totality of this, the vast, let's say it's a cathedral, it could be other places, but there's always, there's a spaciousness there. There's a vastness.

There's a silence interrupted, of course, sometimes by the voice of the guides here and there and the clicking of cameras, but there is still a vastness, a silence. The whole place has a presence. There's an energy field there.

And the first thing that I love to take in is to enter and to take in the totality of that energy field that is this ancient cathedral, to sense it, to feel it directly. And it has its own presence. It's an energy field.

I like to get in touch with this ancient energy field, ancient and new because it's still alive. And then look around at this architecture and so on. And again, just see the shapes, the forms, the colors.

So you see, be aware also of the space itself because anybody who goes into a place like that and is struck by something, they go, wow. Even people who later seek out the guide, there may be a few seconds when they take in this and go, they sense something, a sacred presence, you could almost say. They sense it.

They don't need to know anything about it. In fact, you cannot sense the presence of that place if your mind is full of thoughts, full of knowledge. And if you enter a cathedral and you are, let's say you are already very knowledgeable, you're a historian or whatever, and you know much, you would have to let go for a moment of all that you know if you truly wanted to experience that place.

So I always a little bit feel sorry for most tourists because they don't seem to be aware that there is another way of experiencing life. There is another way of perceiving other than the mind, through the mind only. There's nothing wrong with the mind.

It has its place and it's needed for quite a few things in your daily life. But for many other things, for realizing the depths of life and becoming a deep person, that's a strange expression that's sometimes used. You say this person has a depth or we speak of a depth of perception.

What does that mean for a person? You would say there's a shallow person and there's a deep person. What does that mean?

I would say it means what we might call a shallow person, a person who is totally trapped only in the mind activity, the knowledge accumulated by the mind and perceives everything through thoughts. In other words, you walk around your life like the tourist who rents this little device and tells him comments about what they are perceiving continuously. That's fine.

Sometimes it may be necessary, but imagine going through life, not being able to get rid of that device. You can't take it off anymore. It keeps commenting.

So wherever you go in the street, it says, okay, look at that person there. And you have, and the thing even tells you whether you like it or not. I like that.

Oh, I don't like that. I wish I had an answer on whatever. And of course, this is how most people live because they have, they're so identified with the involuntary mind activity, the little voice in the head, they don't even know it.

They think they are the voice. And to live through the voice then makes your life quite shallow because whatever you experience lacks depth. You experience it through a concept.

Every thought is conceptual. So when, let's say you are in the street, a man or woman comes towards you and your mind immediately has to say something about whether you like or don't like or would like to do something with this person, whatever it may be, or have some kind of reference point or commenting on the way they look, weird or strange or nice, or I'd love to, whatever. Is there another way of perceiving this human being?

Yes, to perceive the human being in the same way, if that's what I said about the cathedral, if that resonates with you, if you have had a glimpse of that experience or perhaps more than a glimpse, then you know the difference between stepping into a place and going, no comment. Well, perhaps the mind says, oh, this is so beautiful. And then there's this stillness again.

So there is a still space through which you perceive instead of concepts through which you perceive. And suddenly there's a depth, not only you feel another dimension is suddenly present, not only outside of you, another dimension that the tourist who is totally dependent on either the mechanical guide or the human guide is not aware of that, that the tourist who only listens to the commentary misses the true aliveness, the sacredness and the depths of that place. And so also within, you are trapped in the head.

There's no depth then to you as a human being where there's something that responds to life, something deeper than the commentary in your head. And so many people these days are trapped then with this guide, the tourist guide they can't get rid of and it's called your mind. And so not that the mind is not a useful tool and even in the cathedral, it's sometimes, it adds a little bit to it if you know something about it.

And I would say that's the second stage to come back just for a moment to this cathedral analogy, one could almost say, you come back to that. Of course, ideally and what I do that occasionally, but sometimes we don't have enough time because when we travel, first I love to experience the place without knowing anything and truly experience it, the depths of it. And then perhaps go back to the hotel room and then look at a guidebook and then learn a few facts about it, could be quite helpful.

And then go back the next day, look at it again and then you have a balance between knowing things about it and still being able to experience it. So in other words, you have then some information in your head is, oh, this is, I read about that. It was built by such and such thing and then whatever.

And then again, you have the spaciousness where you perceive. And then you look at something else and you are, this is the statue of the saint so-and-so and some knowledge about it that you have had, might have overlooked a little detail. You can actually see a tear coming out of his eye or whatever.

Oh yeah, there's a tear, he seems to be crying. I don't know why, but it seems to be. And then again, you can take it in without the commentary.

So that's a little, you can experiment with that. And so I'm using that almost as just an analogy for the whole of your life. Most people are stuck with the tourist guide.

In the head, it comments continuously of what's going on in your life and evaluates and interprets and defines in words everything that you perceive. And so in whatever way it is defined or interpreted, depends on your particular conditioning, on the way you were brought up, what you were taught by the surrounding culture and so on. So the kind of tourist guide you have depends on your past.

And so it's really your past talking to you continuously, certain forms of conditioning from your culture, your education, your family background, what you have read. Your fears and ambitions are also expressed there as thought structures. They become thoughts, what you would like, want, what you fear, what if that happens?

Oh my God, this could go wrong. What if, of course, so it becomes very problematic because the voice doesn't stop talking. Except occasional moments when you suddenly feel a heightened sense of aliveness, perhaps you're out in nature and you're looking at a tree or a forest and for a moment you say, oh.

And then after a few seconds, the mind says, that's beautiful. But for about 10 seconds or 20 seconds, the mind wasn't saying anything. And that's the reason that you can know that it's beautiful.

Beautiful is not, the mind cannot really, the mind is concepts. There's no beauty really in that. If something from within you responds to beauty in nature, for a moment, there must have been a space of where the tourist guide in the head stopped talking.

And in that space, there is a deeper experiencing of whatever is there. There's a depth to your experience. What does that mean?

It means, yes, what you see is the same, but the state of consciousness through which you see it has deepened. A space has opened up inside you through which the perception happens. And that's the depths.

So you could say, when you look at something and for a moment you're not interpreting what you see, there's just the seeing. And you may be aware of the background to what you see, which cannot be defined, but there's a stillness inside while you perceive. This is what I meant when I talked about entering a cathedral without the knowledge in your head.

So suddenly the mind has become still and the perception happens. So you have two dimensions. You have a stillness in the background and whatever is going on outside is there.

The stillness is the depth that changes your perceptions. Then you see that the tree also has a depth to it and an aliveness and a sacredness that you didn't know before when you were conceptualizing the tree and said, oh, that's such and such a tree and whatever knowledge you have, or this tree is in my grandmother's garden too, or this, I'd like to chop this tree up and use it as my Christmas tree, or I wonder how much it would be worth the timber if I cut it, how much the timber would be worth.

You're not really, the tree is a surface phenomenon when you're in that state of consciousness, a utilitarian surface phenomenon. You cannot sense the depths, the aliveness, the sacredness of the tree, and I'm only using tree as one of many possible examples. Life really, the tree stands for life.

It could be a human being. You cannot sense the aliveness of that if you are totally trapped in conceptualization in your head. So there needs to be a depth to you in order to recognize that there is also a depth in life.

Otherwise you walk around for the rest of your life skimming the surface of life. Just every human being is a surface phenomenon because you just have judgments about them and whatever you see, it's just no depths. And then you can go into nature, and even there you will not know that nature has a sacredness to it because you can't sense it because you haven't, the space isn't there inside you to sense that when you go into a forest, an ancient forest, you've been there for thousands of years, and you cannot sense that that is a sacred space because otherwise you would go, wow.

And then you would, and if you don't know it's sacred and our civilization doesn't know, it looks at the forest as a utilitarian thing. How much would it be worth? So the people who cut down the ancient forests, they don't know what they are doing because they cannot sense that there's more there than what appears to be there on the surface of things.

But since they themselves are trapped in the surface of their own mind only, they have no idea what they are doing when they log an ancient forest. To them, it's just, it's a utilitarian thing. They talk to them and say, what are you talking about?

We are going to plant trees again. Yeah, but it'll take a thousand years to reach that. That sacredness, that no idea what you say, sacredness, what do you mean?

It's a tree. We are harvesting the trees. And so, and this is one example of what happens when you cannot get out of the conceptualizing mind.

Life has no depth anymore. And getting out of the conceptualizing mind is what I call spiritual awakening. So spiritual awakening has nothing to do with some kind of, suddenly, you have a new spiritual thoughts in your head and you start talking about angels or even God.

You suddenly start talking about God all the time and then people say, oh, he's become spiritual. No, he hasn't, he's become religious. Religious without spiritual is an ideology.

You could be a communist and then talk in those terms, whatever, it's an ideology. Sometimes religious and spiritual can go together, but in many cases, religious only is just more thoughts in your head, but different kinds of thoughts. Then God, of course, becomes my God.

It's your God is not the right one. And then you become my enemy and I will conceptualize you as the non-believer, for example, and the non-believers are evil, another concept and the non-believers must be killed because we know the truth and the truth is our God. Concepts, concepts in the mind.

You can no longer sense, and then when you do kill somebody, you're not killing a human being because you cannot sense that there is a being there, another human being you are killing. There's a mental concept there. You have conceptualized, you have deadened, just as you've deadened the forest to yourself, you've deadened the other human being and made them into, you put some label on, non-believer, American.

And so it's not a human being, it's American. This is, and that's how it, this is how the madness grows. So, and of course they don't know what's happened to them.

They don't realize what's happening. They are unconscious and not unconscious in the conventional sense of the word because unconscious in the conventional sense of the word means they're lying there. No, not that unconscious.

They seem to be very conscious, seem to be very alert with their guns or whatever they're doing, but they are unconscious because they are totally trapped in the conceptualizing mind. They no longer sense the aliveness of life. They have deadened themselves.

They don't know who they are beyond the conceptualizing mind where they're completely identified with their belief structures that gives them, the belief structures give them their identity, their sense of who they are. I am a, whatever label they have, we are, the we, we are, the only true, et cetera, et cetera. And then it's the others, it's the others, them, they're not alive.

They're just, they're concepts. So it's easy to, when you no longer sense what you're doing, to kill another human becomes easy because you no longer know that the human, the depths of the human being has disappeared. And that's perhaps why Jesus on the cross said, they know not forgive them for they know not what they do.

They have, in other words, they are unconscious. They have not awakened. And so we are coming here from the tourists going into a cathedral, we've, and we've arrived at terrorists, just an extension of really what is considered a normal state of consciousness and what it does to you to be trapped in that your whole life is a dreadful fate.

And the reason why we are on this planet, why we have arrived at such a point of extreme crisis is that this state of consciousness that we have been trapped in for thousands of years is, has created and is creating increasing havoc and destruction. It destroys nature. It destroys human beings, destroying each other.

What we do externally is always a reflection of the predominant collective state of consciousness. And if you read the 20th century history, you see what human beings have done to each other. The only conclusion you can reach is they are mad.

It's quite mad. And 20th century is just the most extreme form of that madness where human beings kill each other by the millions. Often they don't even know what for.

In the end, you don't even know anymore what the whole thing is for. The First World War, what was that whole thing about? And then the First World War led to the Second World War and so on and innumerable other wars.

So we need the spiritual awakening then is for the planet or humanity to survive is an absolute necessity. So having realized then that what is needed is to awaken out of complete identification with the continuous stream of thinking in your mind. Okay, well, how do we do that?

Simple first step. The first step is to realize that there is a continuous stream of thoughts in your mind. This is the first step of awakening.

It's not saying I shouldn't be thinking. No, the first step is to realize that there is a voice that talks most of the time inside you. And perhaps that until now, you had been so identified with the voice that was you.

You were talking to yourself. Sometimes people talk to themselves as I. Sometimes people talk to themselves as you.

You have a little voice that says you should have done that. Why didn't you do that? You're talking to, the voice is talking to some other voice and then perhaps there's an answer.

Well, I couldn't help it. Yeah, but you should have. So sometimes the voice splits itself into different voices.

Talking to each other becomes even more mad. And sometimes the voice also can have certain streams that one stream of the voice only comes up in certain circumstances. What some psychologists, they have discovered that this is the case.

Some psychologists call it sub-personalities. So in certain circumstances, perhaps a whining little girl suddenly comes up. But you're 30 years old, why are you still?

It's a sub-personality. And suddenly you have a whining voice in your head that complains about how unfair life is treating me. It's a sub-personality talking.

And then when that subsides, something else happens and another voice suddenly comes in and becomes extremely aggressive. Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh. Another stream, another aspect of that has arisen.

And so sometimes different voices take over, but really it all belongs ultimately to the one thing, the one voice in your head. So the first step to awakening, the beginning of awakening is to realize there's a voice in my head. And it's especially useful to realize in the moment of it saying, for example, voices have all, most of the mind activities, old thoughts, old patterns, repetitive thoughts.

For example, I had, when I was younger, I had a frequent thought that said, whenever something that wasn't good happened to me or that my mind interpreted as not good, the voice in my head would say, oh, you see, bad things always happen to you. And then I was just waiting for the next bad thing to confirm that I was right. And it would never have to wait for very long and something else would go wrong in my life.

And I would say, you see, it's happening again. Always bad things to you. I don't know why it's always to you.

And then of course you experience the emotion that goes with that kind of thought. And I completely believed in that thought. I was so identified with that thought, I didn't realize this is just a thought in my head.

It's not the reality. It's a conditioned way of interpreting the phenomenal world, the world outside you. And so the liberation then comes with beginning to realize the voice is saying the same thing again and again and again.

And it's not me, it's the voice. Who realizes that? You.

So there is a deeper dimension is suddenly there when you become aware that all the stuff that your mind is saying to you and to others when you have trouble, is not ultimately who you are. But the awareness that at this moment, your mind is reproducing the same old thoughts, there you're beginning to touch the depths that is within yourself that we could call the awareness, the aware presence. Because knowing that there is thought in my head is not a thought.

It's just a looking, an internal aware. Why do bad things always happen to me? And then you look at the thought and you realize a thought.

So you begin to, one could almost say, you listen to your thoughts, you become aware of the kinds of thoughts you think. And this is for many people, the first awakening. And what people realize when they first awaken, not everybody, because some people's thoughts are not too bad.

They can live with it quite well. They saw their thought activity is not predominantly negative. But many people actually find that when they become aware of their thoughts, they realize how many thoughts are actually negative.

The majority of people become aware that the larger part of your mind activity is negative thoughts. There are far more negative thoughts than positive thoughts. Not in everybody.

Some people have quite a few positive thoughts. One could almost say it's easier for people who are trapped in a lot of negative thinking to step out of their thinking than people who have relatively nice thoughts, their inner urge to awaken is not as strong. If you live in a self-made nightmare, as I did, the impulse to awaken is much stronger than you'd really, I can't stand my mind anymore.

I don't want to live with this mind anymore. Oh, that's good. It doesn't mean you have to kill yourself.

It just means you have to realize that your mind is not who you are. You are the awareness behind your mind. You are the space because the awareness is space.

It's not a thought, it's consciousness. So there's a depth of consciousness to you of which the thought activity is only like little ripples. You could say there's a vast ocean or lake, very deep, with lots of waves and ripples on the surface.

And the waves and ripples on the surface are the thoughts in your head. And so most people are trapped on that level. They don't realize that there is a depth underneath that that is vast.

And that if they ever wanted to become creative human beings or bring anything new into this world, it would have to come from the depth. It can't come from just the surface activity of your mind. That's repetitive, continuously, same kind of thing.

Nothing creative can ever happen on that level alone. One day I'm going to compose a great piece of music. One day I'm going to write a great book.

Just have to wait. Well, not if you don't get out of that. Of course, the mind is needed to write a book, yes.

But you cannot have a deep or inspired thought if you don't make room, a moment for the depths inside you so that you touch something deeper. You need to become still for a moment when you sit in front of your computer or piece or notepad and want to write something new and creative, bring something new into this world. Well, where does that come from?

From the repetitive noise in your head? No, it comes if for a moment the repetitive noise in your head subsides. That's the moment of stepping into the cathedral.

Ah. And then you wait. So there's a, open yourself to the stillness inside.

It's there. You don't have to make yourself still. Underneath, even in the most mad, the maddest person, underneath that, there is the realm of stillness.

They just can't touch it. It's there. So it's very easy to actually embrace, say, okay, you don't need to think all the time.

You need to have spaces of no thought, and it's not that difficult unless you're totally mad. But not that many people are totally mad. Most people are partially mad.

And the madness comes up occasionally in a more acute form. It's there. So can you walk into the cathedral and be there as an aware presence rather than a mind burdened with knowledge?

Can you walk along the street and look at another human being without commenting? Just look. And sense.

When there's no commenting, you can sense there's an aliveness in the other human being. There's an essence there that is deeper than, even deeper than your mind and deeper than their mind. And if you then communicate with that human being, while you, for example, while you listen to them, can you be still inside while you listen?

You might be talking about the weather. It doesn't matter. But be still and just be there as the space for that human being.

As you are there, you are there at the space as the space for the tree and realize what an incredible phenomenon this tree is. Beyond anything that you could know about it through the mind. What you know may be useful for certain things, but there's a depth to that thing that we call tree that you cannot capture through that, but you can sense something.

And the more you sense it outside, the deeper you go within. And there is an even greater depth in another human being. And the more you sense the depths of aliveness in another human being, the more you sense it in yourself.

It always goes together. So relationships become problematic if both parties are totally trapped in their noise-making mind, then very quickly conflict arises in relationships. And that's why relationships are full of conflict because people can't get out of that.

They have, they are trapped in here. So every discussion when they disagree becomes conflict. You have an opinion.

This is how it is. I'm right. You identify with your mental position.

Your partner has a different mental position. No, you're not, I'm right. You identify with your opinion.

Identify means your sense of self is in the thought that you have, in your mental position of this is how it is. Today, it's cold. Your partner says, no, it's not cold.

It's just mild. No, it's cold. I'm just giving us an oversimplified example.

Is this, even that could lead to an argument because you, are you accusing me of being a liar? All moving in concepts. Well, you did lie last week.

I wasn't lying. I was just. And it goes on and on and on.

So you're, and it's all happened. It's all the entire relationship is mind, mind against mind. So you identify with mind and that becomes the ego, the me that needs to be right.

Always, if the ego is wrong, it's death. Thinks I'm dead. I'll die.

Can't be wrong. I need to defend my position. Dreadful fate, but it's normal.

So we are now slowly getting to what spiritual awakening is because we have looked at what spiritual sleep is. We've seen what it means to be asleep or unconscious, normal, in other words, normal existence, the entire world, not the entire world. There's some awakening here and there.

More and more people, in fact, are awakening, going through the awakening process. We now know what that is because it means you're no longer identified with the mind. Who are you if you're not your mind?

You are the consciousness out of which every thought comes. And then it pops back. It's like a wave or ripple.

You are the consciousness that is far greater than any single thought or even greater than the totality of thought. And that consciousness is experienced when you first touch it as inner stillness. Stillness doesn't mean you go to sleep.

It means the mind is where the mind was before. There's a space. And out of that space comes all creativity, every great realization or insight that any human being has ever had.

The creative impulse comes out of the vast intelligence that is there. And then the mind, it flows into the mind and the mind becomes an instrument for that. And that's how the mind can be a beautiful thing when it's not just self-serving, but it is serving something greater than itself.

The mind as a master is mad. The mind as a servant is a great thing. So that's the shift in consciousness that is happening and needs to happen on this planet.

The mind finds its place as the servant of consciousness or awareness. So it's up to you then to invite the consciousness that you are beyond the mind into your daily life. And how do you do that?

You do that by inviting space, inner space or inner stillness into your life. For example, while you make a cup of tea or coffee, why not try to practice being still with every movement, just be aware, bring awareness into that, every movement. Pour the water, no commentary.

Look at a flower, look at a tree, look at the sky and for just a few seconds, just look. Listen to the wind, listen to the rain, listen to whatever sound you can hear and just listen. Bring the attention to sense perceptions, attention to sense perceptions.

That means the mind is quiet while you listen. The mind is quiet while you look. And that's a little practice that you can do many times during the day and it will deepen your life.

It will bring spaces into an otherwise, an existence that goes from one thing that you have to do to another thing you have to do and another thing you have to think about now. There's then there's no gaps. So the gaps are vital in daily life, inviting gaps into your daily existence, looking for the gaps in daily existence.

In everyday situations, a helpful thing, as many of you already know, is to feel that your body is actually alive inside. Normally people are not aware of that because their whole attention is on thought activity. But if you can feel that your body is alive, so the attention is, some attention can be in the energy field of your hands and you feel, yes, they feel alive.

There is an aliveness that pervades the entire body. Your body is full of life, but most people can't feel that. So if you can feel the inner body that you are alive inside, that the entire body at this very moment is a vibrating, alive energy field.

And it actually feels good to have some of your attention there, even while you're looking around the room. You can just, for people, people who are new to this can just start by doing it with their hands, feel the aliveness that's in your hands. You can feel it perhaps even more with your eyes closed.

And then you can still feel it even when your eyes are open. Simultaneous thing, you're present inside your body and you're present outside in your sense perceptions. What does that do?

It means your mind becomes quite still because you can't be thinking also at the same time because you're already present in the body and you're present outside. You become awake, really awake to this moment then. And your mind, there's not enough attention left then for thinking.

Part of your attention is in the inner body and part of your attention is on your perceptions. And what you perceive then is more alive than it was before. It's more surprising.

It's more, it has more depth to it. Every human being is more interesting then, more really there. New, things, you no longer feel that you're perceiving.

Experiencing the same old thing again and again. Life then is always new. Every day is a new day.

It's not a repetition. As people grow older, they reach 30 years, 40 years, 50 years. And for many people, life becomes more and more boring because it's so repetitive.

And they no longer look anywhere. They go every day, they go to work, the same place. They don't look at anything anymore.

There's nothing to look at. I looked at it yesterday and last year and five years ago. What's there to look at?

And even people they live with for a few years, after a few years, you don't look at your wife or husband anymore. They are part of the furniture. And you don't look at your paintings anymore on the wall because they've been there for too long.

You can't look, it's their old. And really, nothing new. And then you become that kind of person who said, I've seen it all.

Don't tell me about it. I know it all. I've had, yeah, I know.

I know that kind of person. I know that kind of thing. I've been there, done it.

Been there, done it. Life becomes more and more dull. Been there, done it.

You're not there and you're not. And so that's the fate of many people as they grow old in our civilization. And only a few, perhaps an increasing number now because more and more people are awakening spiritually, they remain alive, perhaps even become more alive as they grow older.

And then you have a truly, and then the person doesn't actually, even if they are 70, 80 years old, you don't get the impression that they are old people because there is a light shining through their eyes. There is an aliveness to them. And occasionally you meet people like that.

They may be old in terms of calendar years, but they are not old inside because they are not burdened by their mind anymore. Their mind can be used, but they are no longer being used by their mind, which says, I already know all this. And so every day is new and fresh and every moment is still alive because you're not putting your past, you're not obscuring it with past, the accumulated past in your head, putting it onto the aliveness of the present moment, stifling the aliveness of the present moment.

And so then spiritual awakening is then essentially intrinsically connected with the aliveness of the present moment, the only place where life is. And so you are more and more open to the now rather than live continuously in past and future, which is normal. For most people, it's future until they reach a certain age where there's not much future left.

And then they live mostly in the past. That's why many old people continuously talk about the past and the younger people continuously think about their future where they're going to finally make it someday and find fulfillment in some future when they have done or achieved this, whatever it may be. It could be a big house or recognition or for spiritually inclined people, it could be enlightenment, but it's put into the future.

I'm going to reach that place and then I'll be finally fully myself, fulfilled, happy, alive. I will become alive one day, fully alive. But without $10 million in the bank, I don't think I can feel alive.

Because I really need to have that sense of security. I need the sense of security without which I would just be in fear the way I've always been. And you'll be surprised if the $10 million happen to come to you for a few weeks, you will feel alive.

And one night you'll wake up and you'll be in the same fear as before because the stock market is about to collapse. So spiritual awakening is becoming awake to the aliveness of this moment. And becoming awake to the aliveness of this moment, the all that ever is, nothing else is ever going to come.

You can wait for millions of years if you lived that long. Nothing is ever going to come that's not this moment. Your life will always be this moment.

And that's a, it sounds, well, we know that. No, you don't. If you don't live it, you don't know it.

Life is always this moment. You don't know this if you don't live it. It's only through living it that you know it.

Otherwise it's just a concept in your head. Yeah, of course life is always this moment. And then what's next?

Where's the next moment? So you might as well then become friendly with this moment if there's nothing else. Be open to that.

Don't stifle it with an excessive amount of judgments and interpretations and definitions, but be open to the aliveness of this moment. Open means there's spaciousness here. So the shift is from a thought-based entity, which is the normal old way for humans, been for thousands of years, to a deeper entity that is based in awareness of presence, consciousness.

So because when you're not commenting on things compulsively, compulsively, who are you? When you're not continuously thinking about me and my problems, at this very moment, let's say, pretend that you don't remember your past at this moment. In fact, you don't because at this moment, unless you start a thought process, at this moment, your past is not here.

You're just sitting here now. But pretend for a moment, actually, there is no past and there's no future. What's left of you?

If I removed your past and your future from you now, what's left? I remember nothing. What's left?

I don't remember my name. Who are you? I don't know.

But there must be something there. Yes, there is something there, but I can't say what it is. That's who you are, consciousness itself.

When you remove the content from consciousness for a while, then you realize that you are consciousness. When the content, content is thoughts and emotions and thoughts and thoughts. When the content comes back, it obscures the reality that you are consciousness and you identify with content.

And that's why some people have been able to awaken spiritually because life took away their content. They lost everything suddenly. They lost their reputation.

In other words, their name. It happens sometimes that life does these things to people. They lost their money, their possessions.

They lost even their family. They suddenly were killed in an accident, a big earthquake came, everything lost. And they sit there, their house is in ruins, everything gone.

And suddenly some of these people suddenly had a deep spiritual awakening, why? Because life took away all the things that they had identified with as themselves, as the me. And what was left was what we just did now here.

When I asked you to pretend that there's no past and future, we took away for a moment, content from your life. And when you remove content, because content is going to disappear anyway. It's not permanent.

Whatever content you have is impermanent in your life. Things come and go. Or as the Buddha says, it's impermanence is the word.

Transient, everything is transient. And that refers to content. So as long as you are identified with all the content in your life, that can go very quickly.

Even your body can go very quickly. But if you just, beyond content is consciousness itself, rather than what consciousness has identified with. And you are that, I am that.

You and I, on that level, are the same. We are, you're in essence, the essence of who you are is consciousness. Everything else is added temporarily.

It's a disguise, consciousness disguising itself as this and that and that person, appearing in this particular form. That's the play. Leela, the divine play of life, as it's called in India.

And that's fine. The play is not to be rejected. It's what you can only enjoy the play of the phenomenal existence if you know what is beyond phenomenal existence.

So it's only if you know who you are beyond all the things in your life, you can actually truly enjoy the things in your life while they last. And you don't need to cling because you know nothing is going to last. Relationships, whatever.

It's only very young people who think there are lasting things. Then you reach a certain age and you realize, oh, it's so many things have evaporated that I thought were permanent. And more things are going to evaporate.

And a few more things are going to come and then evaporate. So not to live, and your life is no longer content-based, but essence-based. I'm giving you here in one little talk the entire essence of what spirituality really is all about.

And really, that's what it is. There's not much else that you need to know beyond that in the sense of knowledge, accumulated knowledge. It is now a question of living that.

And if you don't want to live it, that's fine. It means you have to suffer a bit more until you're ready to make this shift until the shift begins to happen. A human being needs to reach the point of readiness where they say, okay, I've done enough madness.

I've suffered enough. I'm ready for the shift. I'm ready to say, okay, this moment is all there ever is.

I might as well become friendly with it, acknowledge it, give it attention in whatever form it comes because the form is not the moment. It's the form that this moment takes, the now. It's not what happens.

The now is not what happens. It's the space in which it happens. And essentially, that space is consciousness.

Everything happens in the light of consciousness. You can say, as some philosophers have done, they question everything. Some philosophers, they said, is there anything I can be absolutely sure of?

Because everything can be doubted. I can doubt that you exist. You can doubt that I exist.

It could be a dream. Who says we are not dreaming right now? Who says that us sitting here is not a dream?

You cannot know for sure. But even if it is a dream, there must be something real there because the dream must appear to something or someone. There must be a light in which the dream appears, a space in which the dream happens.

So even if it is a dream, the one thing you cannot question is the fact of being itself. Being is. The being may be a dream or it may not be a dream.

But one thing you can be certain is that you are. I am is something that cannot be doubted. If I'm dreaming that I am, it's still, the essence of I am is still there in the dream then.

And that's an amazing thing. That's to realize there's one thing that is beyond doubt and that's I am. It's not as the philosopher Descartes said, I think therefore I am.

He confused consciousness with thinking, perhaps because he was always thinking. So he couldn't stop thinking. And then he said, okay, then if I can't, if I can't stop thinking, then the essence of who I am must be thinking.

I think therefore I know that I am. Well, he stopped too soon. He should have taken one more step and realized that beyond thinking, there's consciousness.

And then realized, because I'm conscious, I am. Because there is consciousness, I am. I am that consciousness.

And that consciousness that people believe in our civilization, that the consciousness is a by-product of chemical reactions in the brain. And many psychologists or scientists actually doubt that there is such a thing as consciousness. They say, no, there is no consciousness.

It's just a chemical soup. But they do recognize that the brain is the most complex thing on the planet. And they'd understand a tiny fraction of it only.

So who built that incredibly complex thing through which consciousness comes, if not consciousness? So consciousness is prior to whatever appears here. And what is the relationship between the brain and consciousness?

Even some scientists are beginning to say that, recognize the possibility that consciousness may be all-pervasive throughout the universe. And the brain is like a lens through which consciousness enters this dimension. So it's like a receiver.

It reduces and receives consciousness. So when you eliminate the brain, it does not mean you eliminate consciousness. You eliminate the receiver.

Like a TV, you can smash the TV and suddenly the image disappears. But the TV didn't produce the image. So that is our meditation.

I am consciousness. Not something to believe in, but we're using those words only as a point to the essence of who you are. Thank you.

This questioner says, sometimes I wonder seeing you sitting there in your chair, untouched by any outer challenge, on what base can you tell people to accept whatever life situation they are put in? So this is where I spent my life, sitting on this chair. As long as you're here as a human, you will find there will be challenges.

And I don't sit on this chair all my life. And most importantly, I'm not telling anybody that they should be doing something. The questioner seems to think that I'm saying you should accept whatever life situation you're in.

That has two errors in it. One is there is no should. To not telling anybody what to do.

It's only a suggestion. It says, try it out. So there's no authority behind it.

Just try it out. You have to be your own authority and find the truth for yourself. All it requires is the minimum of openness that says, well, I'm ready to try it out.

See what changes in my life if I give up my continuous mental complaining about what is. I've had that for 25 years. It hasn't done much for me.

So I'm not, I can let go of that. Perhaps can try it out. And the continuous complaining hasn't improved anything in my life.

In fact, done the opposite. So I could try it. Why not try something different?

It's only a suggestion. If it's not received, that's fine too. If there is no openness and the person says, I believe what you're talking about is rubbish.

That's fine too. That's your viewpoint. I'm happy with that.

Makes no difference. I'm not, there's no should or must, just a suggestion. Another little, a little error in the question is telling people to accept whatever life situation they are in.

I don't say accept whatever life situation you're in or try to try it out, but I don't, it doesn't apply to the life situation because the life situation is in time. It has a past and a future. Your life situation may be you have a job that is very repetitive and where you're surrounded by negative people and it's boring, negative.

There's a lot of conflict continuously around you. Am I saying accept that's your life situation? You're there, that's the situation.

Or you're in a totally dysfunctional family relationship. You must accept the dysfunction in your family relation. No.

The only thing where acceptance applies is the present moment. Not the entire situation. Another example, you're sitting, you're homeless, sitting on a bench, just a few cents in your pocket.

Okay, am I saying you must accept or am I suggesting that you should accept your situation, that you are homeless, that you have failed, that you are destitute now, that you accept that the fact that you're a loser? No, these are all mental stories that you might be telling yourself. Am I asking you to accept the stories that you are telling yourself, that your life has failed, that you have achieved nothing in the 50 years that you've been here?

No, acceptance is not to be applied to that. Acceptance applies only to this moment. At this moment, you're at your place of work, surrounded by these people, and there's your tryout, taking responsibility for this moment and see if you can accept that this is where I am right now, knowing that change is desirable because you don't want to stay here forever.

Another example, I've stuck in the mud. I wrote about it somewhere. You find yourself stuck in the mud.

And so there's no point in complaining of saying how dreadful it is. It just is. Why add the dreadfulness to it?

It's a challenge. Of course, it's a challenge being stuck in the mud. It's a situation that requires some action unless you really want to stay there, but it's unlikely.

But in the meantime, you can accept the simple is-ness of this moment instead of adding inner resistance to it. This does not remove your ability to bring about change in the situation. In fact, it enhances your ability to bring about change in the situation.

As you all know the saying, which is very true, what you resist persists. And I'm sure many of you have already found that out in your life. And then suddenly, when you let go of resistance, you let go of an attachment to something.

I need this to happen in order to be happy. I don't want what is. I want something else.

To be okay with what is, which is the simplicity of this moment, is the beginning of true change. It does not mean that the form of this moment persists when you accept the form of this moment. If there's something that is more pleasant and better for the unfoldment of this life form, then that will come about either through action that you take or through something that happens to change the situation or both cooperating together.

But the basis for true change is freedom from negativity. And that's what acceptance implies. No negativity about what is.

And then you see what this moment requires. What is it that is required now so that life can express itself more fully or consciousness can express itself more fully through this form? It might require action.

But preceding the action is the state of alert presence. So any seemingly unpleasant situation, there is such a thing as an unpleasant situation. You could fall into a river and it's cold and wet and there you are cold and wet.

You have to do something, but complaining about it is useless. But becoming alert and present and saying, well, this is what is, and now then action takes place. So acceptance always, as the Course in Miracles has an expression, it says, single out this moment.

So out of your entire life situation, my marriage, my job, my finances, my health situation, all these are life situation. You have a health situation. Maybe your health is good.

Maybe there's something not quite right. So you have a health. You might think of it in terms of, I have a health problem, whatever.

That's part of your life situation. Am I saying accept the fact that your whatever kidneys are not working well, or your circulation is, blood is too high, blood pressure is too high. Should you accept the fact, just this moment, not any situation, out of the single, out of the situation, you single out this moment.

And that is a new thing for many people. They don't realize that that's possible. So the focal point of your attention is not in the life situation.

Yes, you know exactly what your life situation is, but you single out, what about this moment? Can I accept this moment within my marriage, within my health situation, within my finances, which have just collapsed. And yet here I am sitting in a bus, just had to let go of my BMW.

And here I sit on a bus. So what's wrong with that? Unless the mind says there's something wrong with that.

Can I accept this moment? Yes. So you bring acceptance to this moment.

That's the basis. And then you can, you are not governed by reactivity. And then true change is possible.

You can initiate change. Sometimes change even happens without you doing anything. But I'm not telling you that that's what you should do.

You must accept this moment. Because if your preference is to reject this moment and you prefer unhappiness, that's fine too. Life wants to experience for a while through that form unhappiness, the drama, the script being acted out on stage, the stage of life.

So you are pretending to be an unhappy little me and you're playing your part, associating with other unhappy little me's because they tend to congregate. So you attract other unhappy little me's. And then you can either reinforce each other's unhappiness, which is usually good.

Or you can be in conflict, which also reinforces each other's unhappiness. Or you can be in conflict as a little unhappy group with another unhappy group. It simply means that for a while life wants to continue dreaming that particular dream, and eventually it will want to wake up.

So when the time is right, then you will see the truth of this and you'll say, okay, I'll try that. I've had enough unhappiness. I don't really need any more.

That's really all that's required, that you've had enough unhappiness. Do you want any more? No, I'd rather not.

Well, so how do you, then don't generate it. You don't want any more unhappiness, don't generate it. Because it's not the situation that causes the unhappiness, it's my reaction that causes the unhappiness.

Even if you're in prison, it is. Nobody could call it a great, it's not a great thing. It's good, I'm so good that I'm in prison.

I love it here. No, but it is, you can come to a simple acceptance. I mentioned in the New Earth, three levels of relating to the present moment.

One is the simple acceptance of what is. If you can't enjoy the present moment, which may be the case sometimes, I'm not saying you can't enjoy the present moment. You must enjoy this moment.

Perhaps you can't enjoy it. If you've just fallen into a cold puddle and there you stand, don't know where to go. You can't enjoy your freezing cold and shivering.

You can enjoy, no. But you can accept, that's what is. And the moment you accept, even there, you can sense an inner peace in the background.

And then there are other situations that can actually be enjoyed. Many, probably most. And you'll see that where you cannot enjoy is a minority of situations.

Relatively small number of situations you just can't enjoy that are physically unpleasant, but you can still accept. So you can bring acceptance to the present moment or you can bring enjoyment of simple things. It's not the big things that are really, truly the joyful things.

It's noticing all the little things in life, that's at least how I experience it, where true enjoyment lies. Just raindrops dripping, listening to the wind, or just the simple stillness of a room and just a piece of furniture, and it's there in its simple beingness, there it is. And a glass of water, and this, if you really looked, it's beautiful.

It's all beautiful. And so you enjoy the simplicity of a scent, a smell of something, of doing a simple, performing a simple action, and enjoy, you're not performing the action as a means to an end. You actually enjoy doing what you're doing.

You bring enjoyment. And so you see true joy consists of many, many, many little things in life. If you wait for one big thing to feel joy, then you may have to wait for a long time.

And when the big thing comes, before you know it, it's over. I'm waiting for the great wedding, the wedding, my wedding or somebody else's wedding. I'm waiting for the, that'll be, it's all great.

And before you know it, it's over. And even on the day, maybe things go wrong and suddenly the bride or the groom are unhappy. Oh, this shouldn't be happening.

The photographer hasn't turned up. The cake has fallen off the table. Oh, it's my whole, my whole, I've been looking forward to this day.

It's all spoiled. And if it all goes well, but even then the day soon will be over. And then the next day you wake up and it's just the first day of your married life.

Was that it? What's now? What now?

What now? So there's such a thing as an anti-climax, that's the expression. And then you have to look for some other high.

Let's go somewhere. Where can we go? Okay, let's go to Hawaii.

That must be great. So let's book it. In five weeks we'll be there.

Okay, can't wait, right? Can't wait. You miss the five weeks, all the little beautiful things you miss.

And finally you get there. But then you don't get the room that you booked in the hotel. You get a different room, hasn't got a good view.

Wherever you go, little things go wrong. So if you look for a situation to satisfy you, then you're always out. You're lining yourself up for disappointment.

So paying attention to small things. Life consists of small things. It's just a succession of small things.

Even for somebody who is, let's say, a great famous person in the public eye, you think everything this person does is so significant. Every day there's something big. But if you analyze the big thing every day, let's say you're the president of the United States and now you're giving a big speech there and in the afternoon you give a big speech and then you meet the king of so-and-so and the president of such-and-such and then you phone this person.

But if you analyze all this is so big and significant in your life, if you look at each of these events, you see that it also consists of little things. You pick up the phone and say, put me through to the president of France or whoever you want to talk to. And there you have another voice talking and you are talking.

Or you step into the limo and there you are sitting in the limo driving somewhere and then you step out of the limo and then you face an audience, you go up to the stage. That's, it's always just a little, all that consists of just little steps. So what you do really isn't that important but the energy that flows into what you do, that you bring to it, that you manifest is primary.

Okay, so I'm still sitting on this chair unchallenged by anything. I mustn't move because then the challenges start, I suppose.

[Speaker 4] (4:56:48 - 4:57:16)

I can walk into a room and feel other people's pain. And when I was younger, I identified with that and thought there was something wrong with me. Now that I'm older and have more experience, I realize that I'm not the only one who feels that way.

That it's not me. So I've disidentified with it but I still have to deal with it. So any advice?

[Speaker 1] (4:57:17 - 5:03:47)

Thank you. Well, the vital thing, you're already doing that, the disidentification. And as presence grows, you are less affected by it.

It takes a little longer for a woman because there's more sensitivity to energy fields in the female form than it is in the male form. So for a woman, it takes a little longer to need, a woman would need more presence because there's such sensitivity in many women to energy fields. The feminine has that sensitivity.

And so you can feel it more than a man can, generally speaking. The main thing is already, you're practicing already, which is the disidentification from it so that there is awareness and it. You haven't become it.

You are the awareness and there's it. It is allowed to be in the field or the space of awareness. No longer that problematic because it is not who you are.

And so negativity, of course, is contagious, highly contagious. The immunity gradually has become more present. The immunity is there because intense presence is no longer susceptible to that illness, the negativity.

And so when you feel a negative energy field, you touch this, you set a room that you go into. There are also other energy fields in this. Even when there's a full moon, for some reason, it seems to influence some people's behavior.

Lunatic, that comes from the word lunar, the moon. When we were in Chicago two years ago with Oprah, one day there was a full moon and I read in the Chicago paper that on that night, there were something like 15 murders on that night. And all kinds of energy fields impinge upon us, but there needs to be something in us also that resonates with it.

So as your pain body gradually shrinks, also you'll find there's less in you that resonates with negativity. The pain body, of course, takes a while to dissolve. It dissolves through presence.

But as long as there's some pain body there, there may well be something that resonates with certain forms of negativity. And then you feel it. It's nothing personal.

Even the pain body is not personal. Nothing is really personal. And then as the pain body dissolves, then you find you're free.

You can go into a negative energy field and you're fine. It's just, not that you build up, presence doesn't build up a barrier around yourself. It's not like that.

It's just, it passes through. It's a different frequency. It can't hang on to anything inside you anymore.

So it goes through you. I haven't studied astrology, but it sometimes seems to me that there may be some truth in some of that. And the less presence there is in you, the more it applies to you.

And the same applies to the full moon. The less presence there is in you, the more you are susceptible to these energy fields. And the moment you think a negative thought, especially if you think more than one negative thought, it goes on for a few minutes and then it leads to another and another.

You connect to negativity and a million other people in the same city. Kind of. And then you are in it.

Nothing personal. And then people are surprised if they can't get out. It's not just yours.

You have connected with the whole city or beyond. That's why it's so important to keep yourself as clear as possible through presence. The less you carry inside, the less likely it is that it'll affect you.

Well, now you may still be able to feel it, but it does not impinge upon you, especially if you're, as a woman, you probably are still able to feel the negativity, but then you no longer need to, there's nothing in you where it gets stuck. So it passes through. You know it's passing through, there it is, but it has nothing in you to hang on to.

It can't attach itself to anything. And the same applies when people are negative and their dialogue is negative, what they speak to you is negative. And again, if you are in the state of alert attention, there's no negative thought in you that this can connect to.

And so you're immune, so to speak. The mental negativity can't hang on, can't lodge itself in your mind. If there's nothing, there's no frequency in there that it corresponds to.

[Speaker 4] (5:03:51 - 5:04:07)

I've been told by some spiritual teachers that there's something in my system that is trying to take this on from other people to rid them of it. But I mean, it's nothing I do consciously, and I don't even know if that's true.

[Speaker 1] (5:04:09 - 5:14:35)

Well, to some extent, presence does that. But presence doesn't take it on, it dissolves it, not only for yourself, but wherever you go, you go there as a field of presence into an energy field. To some extent, something happens, it dissolves through presence.

And so, yes, that's a beautiful thing. You don't take it on. You don't need to suffer for others, but you can let go of suffering for others.

So you let go of suffering. The same thing you do, for example, when you sit with a person who is in suffering, it is your job to relinquish resistance. And if they can't do it, you can do it for them.

Enter the state of surrender. Do it when you're with somebody who is dying, when you're with somebody who is seriously ill, or has had some other kind of disaster, or is just completely unhappy. So be with that person, and become very still and very alert.

And that means you surrender for them. And very often that has an effect, it affects them, it burns up some of the suffering. It invites them also into that space.

Sometimes they're able to join you in that space, but even if they are not, it does burn up suffering. That's the most beautiful gift you can give, is your presence. So you bring that undiluted presence, just that.

I have the decade, this is Wolfgang Achlewitz. I have the decade long experience that fear arises when I talk or should talk in front of many people in similar situations. I cannot deprogram myself to accept this and speak.

What can I do? The easiest thing is to sit in front of a group of people and talk about what you feel at this moment. So you would say, as I sit here, my hands are wet, I can feel trembling, there's a panic, I'm sweating, because I'm talking to you.

And the more you talk about what's actually there, the more quickly you actually transcend it and you connect with people. So the simple truth, I'm so nervous. Okay, it's okay to be nervous.

You begin to accept the way things are. This is what, it's not that I should be, no, just speak from your heart, completely honest and open, and then you connect with people and after a few minutes, if you have something to say, it'll come out of you. If you have nothing to say, then you better have a script to read.

I remember when I had my, I was very much ego trapped in my 20s. Even talking in a room where there are four or five people discussing something, I found it difficult. It was to me almost like public speaking.

So I was, should I say something or not? And often I didn't. Fear dissolves when you start doing what you fear instead of thinking about it, as long as it doesn't kill you.

Often the doing is the answer rather than the thinking about. Do and then see. I had a friend who came to see me regularly where somebody would come for spiritual advice and so one day he met a woman on the internet and then every week he came, he told me the relationship was getting deeper and deeper and I said, what relationship?

Well, he said, well, we are talking to each other and then beginning to talk even on the phone after a while. He said, now I'm really falling in love with this woman and I think about her all the time. I said, no, you're not thinking about this woman, you're thinking about, there's a mental image in your head of who that woman is.

So, and then he said, yes, but I'm married, should I see her? I said, it's all. I said, go and, you must meet her, I'm not even talking to you about it anymore.

I said, go and meet her and he did and that was the end of the relationship. It ended after one minute. And then I stopped seeing people individually.

All problems are really, this is perhaps a more obvious kind of mind created problem, but all problems are actually created by unconscious thinking, all problems. When that goes and you step out of compulsive unconscious thinking, all you're left with is whatever is right now, a situation that you either take action or you refrain from taking action. Some situations you need to take action, other situations there's nothing I can do right now.

So it's either one or the other, neither is a problem. Action or refraining from action, there's no problem. If it's an emergency, obviously it's action that's required.

Others, where action is possible, action happens. And if it's not, nothing, nothing I can do. Surrender, accept, let go, be just present.

And even if it seems unacceptable, then you have to go even deeper because some situations seem unacceptable. They are just, if you accept the unacceptable, you go very deep. Unacceptable meaning the death of a loved one, your own approaching death, the loss of your precious car.

Unacceptable, then you need to go very, really deep because that takes you into awakening. And often doing isn't possible anymore. When death approaches, to still think in terms of doing is absurd, as they still do in hospitals where they give you potent drugs just so that you can live another two or three months and suffer.

Or even six months or a year because death is unacceptable. To the Western mind, still, to a large extent. And it basically thinks you do until the very end, you have to do something.

But yes, doing is fine, but there comes a time when doing needs to be relinquished. And that's beautiful. And that's where real realization happens.

I envisage whether it will come through this form or through some of the forms here, places where people learn how to die beautifully, where they learn about old age so that it's not just something that, where people are put away and just waiting for the unacceptable to happen while they watch television. But true places of spirituality where they use the great opportunity that's there in old age as the body begins to dissolve, great opportunity for awakening. The flowering of life, it could be.

[Speaker 5] (5:14:56 - 5:16:18)

I have a question regarding doing good and doing bad in the context of the world, whether I'm a child or a CEO and the attitude of the universe toward that behavior and the role of that behavior. And also how, on one hand, grace and on the other hand, consequence behave. Together.

Okay. I mean, is it, you know, with a child, if they behave in a way that's dangerous, is it better to show them grace and just give them a hug? Or does it serve them better to provide a consequence?

And the same with a CEO who perhaps inflicts suffering on individuals. How is the world best served? Is it through offering consequences or through showing grace?

[Speaker 1] (5:16:18 - 5:16:28)

I see. I'm beginning to understand what you mean. The first part was a little general, so I couldn't get, but now when you mentioned the child, then it was helpful.

[Speaker 5] (5:16:34 - 5:17:02)

It seems like sometimes people who do bad in this world are rewarded materially, often, and some who do good live without much, much material reward or recognition. There just seems to be I don't know, I'm confused about it. I don't know if that makes sense.

[Speaker 1] (5:17:04 - 5:17:16)

Okay, it's always easier to answer something that's a concrete situation. So for example, with your child, can you give just one example of choice of behavior?

[Speaker 5] (5:17:17 - 5:17:19)

Well, there are some children who bite.

[Speaker 1] (5:17:20 - 5:17:20)

Bite?

[Speaker 5] (5:17:20 - 5:17:20)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (5:17:21 - 5:17:22)

Okay, now we're getting somewhere.

[Speaker 5] (5:17:22 - 5:18:15)

There are some children who bite other children. And it's true. And they do it, some do it just because they're still sensing with their mouths and others do it out of anger, but it's a behavior that's harmful and frightening for others.

So parents certainly are confused about whether the child is able to understand consequences or whether it's just more love, more love, more love that's going to help that child to grow out of that particular behavior or running into a street or breaking away in a parking lot. Any of those behaviors are dangerous and it's important to modify them. But is it through firmness or is it through grace and love?

[Speaker 1] (5:18:15 - 5:18:18)

Okay, now I understand completely what you're asking.

[Speaker 5] (5:18:19 - 5:18:19)

Or even stealing.

[Speaker 1] (5:18:19 - 5:26:00)

You needed to mention the biting, then now I get it. Okay. Well, that's a very subtle balance because of course certain behaviors have consequences.

And if that's completely ignored on the side of the parent, then eventually the consequences of that type of behavior will come worse. So at some point they will learn that biting others is wrong and they will experience the consequences. If you don't show them the consequences or make them aware of what they are doing, we'll talk about how in a second.

If you don't, then eventually when they go to kindergarten or school, eventually another child will bite them back, which may be a more painful way of experiencing the karmic result of their behavior. So the more you wait, the more painful the karmic result of your behavior becomes. Or youngsters who are left free to do whatever they like.

And eventually the parents try to shelter them from all consequences of their actions and protect them from consequences. And eventually then they will do something and then society will show them in the form of a police coming to your door that there are consequences to actions. And then the karma might have worsened by then because the consequences may be, and what they do to others may be far worse than what they would have done at the age of six.

So eventually the universe will show you the consequences. So it's good for a parent in a gentle way to show the child the consequences of certain unconscious actions, if only not just to protect them from karmic retribution at a later stage, but also sometimes simply to protect them from themselves because they might get themselves into a very dangerous place if you don't. And I've seen some parents that allow their children to walk along the seawall or whatever, and they can go to one false step and they would be gone.

But the parent just didn't want to interfere. So they lose a balance between allowing and showing the child what is not right and protecting the child. Now, the important thing is then when you show the child what is wrong, that the showing does not come from a place of fear, because if it comes from a place of fear in you, and that could be, for example, when you see the child going close to a precipice or whatever, or close to the traffic or the road.

And sometimes I observe mothers or fathers who become almost hysterical because out of fear, and then they run up to the child and they shake the child. Don't you ever do that again. That's for the child, it's a dreadful trauma.

It's almost worse than being run over by a car. Or it's the emotional equivalent of being run over by a car. Can you imagine the trauma inflicted on a little child when a big grownup shouts at them?

And there's an outflow of extremely destructive fear energy onto the child. And that moment within a space of one minute, the child's pain body is growing, it's absorbing all that. And then they are surprised if a little later the child goes into extreme negative emotions and moods and shouts and screams.

The child has already absorbed the fear of the mother. But of course the mother wanted to do well. It wanted to protect the child, but the mother was unconscious.

Doesn't realize that the protection is almost worse than that which she's being protected against. It's almost like using an insecticide that is far worse than the insects. And so the question then, your question, grace is very important, you used that word.

Grace must be part of the showing. Grace is a compassionate space where you recognize that the child does not know yet. You don't punish the behavior.

You simply show clearly that this is wrong in the same way that we have to show our dog. In some ways, dogs also need to be taught that certain behaviors have consequences. So you don't hit a dog, well, I don't know, maybe if you have a put book, what are they called?

Pit bull, you might occasionally have to slap because it might have enormous energy, but our dog doesn't need that. Our dog comes, we hold out a little treat and usually the dog will go, ah! And sometimes it gets, you get your finger in there and that is karmically not good for the dog.

So, we say, we say, when it happens, we go, ouch! And the dog is a little bit shocked and realizes on some level that she has just hurt you. You go, ouch!

The dog, and the dog realizes, oh, I shouldn't have done that. That's a very gentle way of doing it. So the grace, when you do a child, the worst response is always the one that comes out of fear because out of fear also comes anger and so on.

So when you pull the child back from the road, getting too close to the traffic, and you might have to act fast, but the important thing is that just enough consciousness in you that you do not put fear onto the child. So you pull back in awareness and then, oh, this is very dangerous, but not the fear, just an alertness rather than the fear, that's grace. And so that's the, every parent has to walk this, find this balance, of course, between interfering and stopping the child and showing the child consequences and allowing the child.

There needs to be a balance. It's not always easy, not always immediately obvious which one, whether to allow or whether not to not allow. But if you're not allow, the important thing is that it doesn't come from negative reaction.

So that's the, might maybe helpful a little bit for you. Again, self-awareness is the key, especially in a moment of crisis. You need to be doubly alert within yourself.

The more critical a situation is, the more alertness is required.

[Speaker 8] (5:26:19 - 5:26:43)

My question to you is, in the book, The Secret, it's based on the law of attraction, where you attract everything into your life. Whereas your book, The Power of Now, is being in the moment and letting the universe guide your life. So I just want to know your thoughts on that, on the difference.

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (5:27:00 - 5:43:44)

Well, as we can see, if we look around, the universe or life creates life forms everywhere, wherever we look. So the universe loves to create form. It seems.

It can also create form through the human form. Humans can create as they do. And humans are not separate from the totality of the universe.

So there isn't human creation and the universe creating. It's all one. It's the totality.

We are the universe. You are the universe. So when you create, or when I create something externally, whatever it is, any structure that you build from simple thing, building something, or using your mind, your thoughts to help in the act of creation, to create something on the mental level before it becomes physical form, that's a way in which the universe can create through the human form.

I could almost say indirectly or secondary creation. You may have heard the expression, we become co-creators with God. Your question is really, is it up to us to initiate the act of creation or should we simply rest in presence and then see what happens?

The foundation, of course, for creation is resting in presence. That's the very foundation, because resting in presence, that is touching the source of, true source of creativity and the true source of fulfillment or satisfaction, which is not form, but the formless life itself. It is essentially fulfilling to sense the timeless presence that we could call I am, to sense that directly in yourself, not as an object in your awareness, but as yourself.

So it's a self realization of consciousness, not a subject object realization. And that is essentially happiness, if we want to use that word, aliveness, fulfillment. And that is essentially your identity, your true identity, which has no form.

That's why the Buddhists say there is no self. Self in the sense of anything that you consider yourself that has form, psychological or physical form is not who you are. The essential self, which the Buddhists deny and just call emptiness, or which in India is called the Atman, that is the formless and that's the very basis.

If you go into, if you create before having consciously realized the source of creation, then you belong to all those billions of humans who create out of the state of identification identification with form, which we could call the ego state. But that's also the universe. If the universe did not want to experience itself as the egoic entity also, then it would not be, the ego would not exist.

So it seems the universe loves that dream, or which becomes a nightmare sooner or later of the egoic consciousness. So whenever you create, because you believe that the object of your creation is going to make you happy or fulfilled, then you create out of the egoic consciousness and it's stressful and frustrating and never really fulfilling. But that's the dream of the ignorance of who you are.

And perhaps the universe needs to dream that dream and then wake up out of that dream into a conscious realization of itself. And that also is happening through the human form. So the humans can create out of the ignorance, identification with form, in which case also they create a lot of havoc.

Of course, they create a lot of conflict because the more deeply you identified with form, the more you come into conflict with other forms that are also deeply identified with their form. That it's not just the individual form, it's also the collective forms of tribes, religions, religions within religions. You see what's when you listen to the news, you can see one Islamic sect is killing another one, and they both, even within the same religion, they hate each other.

And this has happened. And that is complete identification with form. It's not, it's happened, it has happened in Christianity.

In Christianity, at the moment, they may not be killing each other. They did not enough of that in the Middle Ages, but they still, many still hate each other. And whoever does not agree with your little group, of course, is the antichrist.

That's a nice word you can impose on others. Buddhists haven't come up with that yet. I have never heard of the anti-Buddha, Buddha.

So, and that's within the totality, that's fine too, because that's the dream of identification with form. And how do I know that? Because I've been in that dream, and I've come out of that dream of identification with form.

And what is true for the individual is true for the totality. So it's a collective dream. It's also an awakening that happens when the suffering and the madness becomes so pronounced that it forces you to open your eyes.

And then you look and say, what am I doing? What are we doing? What have I done?

What have we done? So this happens when the suffering becomes very acute, as happened, for example, in a very large scale in the 20th century, when after the first world war, when for the first time, the tools of technology and science were used in warfare. There had been warfare for thousands of years before, but now it became magnified through the tools of science and technology, bombs, gas, poisonous substances, artillery, tanks, submarines, machine guns, and suddenly they created havoc that they'd never seen before on such a huge scale, millions and millions of dead, and nobody actually remembered how did it all start.

What was the beginning of the first war? They just drifted into it totally blindly, identified with their little tribe, their little nation. That's one way of creating, and whenever you have not touched the source of life within yourself, touched it, realized it, live from it, then you create and add to the karmic burden on the planet, because whatever you create has negativity attached to it, and karma creates further resistance.

It provokes resistance, creates more resistance, and though contributes to the continuation of the dream. So to put it very simply, when you think something is going to make you happy, if you create this or that, that's not going to happen. That's the ignorance.

If you're looking for fulfillment through something that you imagine you're going to create, it's not going to fulfill you, it can't. You have to come from that state of fulfillment already. Then a different kind of creation can happen.

You could, of course, just sit for the rest of your life somewhere and hope that somebody will put some food into your mouth, as if you go to India and you're truly emanate peace, then that will happen. They will put food into your mouth. If you do it in a Western country, it probably won't happen, but they'll put you away, and then they'll put food in your mouth.

That's okay. Most people find that even if they rest in presence, at some point, the impulse to act will be there. It could be action on a small scale, very small scale.

It could be action on a larger scale. It may not immediately be action. It may be an inspiration or an idea or a vision that suddenly rises into your mind, and then you contemplate that and it feels empowered.

And it is not something that says you need to achieve that in order to become happy or fulfilled. The energy that goes with it is so empowering that it is the same as if you had already achieved it. That's the act of creation has that energy that flows with it.

It is as powerful as the actual achievement in itself, if not more so, because the actual achievement is already the end of the creative process. The moment you have completed the creative act, you're already at the end of it. And what now?

So the empowerment is in the doing, not the arriving. That's the egoic delusion is that the empowerment is in the arriving, but the empowerment is in the doing, in the act of creation. It's not just the empowerment.

It's also the joy and aliveness that comes with it. So you don't need the, as it's called in the Bhagavad Gita, the fruit of the action. You're not looking or are more focused on the fruit of the action that it's called in the Bhagavad Gita, which means the outcome, the desired outcome.

You're not, your attention is not mainly in the desired outcome. Your attention is on the doing itself. Although yes, you have a vision of what it is that wants to come into being, but your attention is fully in the doing and the enjoyment and the empowerment of doing.

It can be very intense, the act of creation, the energy that flows into it can be very intense. It's so intense that it might even look to an outsider as if you were stressed, but you're not. But there can be that intensity of creation.

So when something comes through or you, in whatever form. And that's beautiful. Then you are the universe, the creative, the one intelligence, the one creative intelligence is creating through the human form.

And that's beautiful. So it says deep enjoyment in the act of creation. It's the, the motivation is not egoic anymore.

The motivation is not a sense of lack or fulfillment or of unfulfillment, but enjoyment. So in that sense, this, the secret, I don't remember if the secret talks about that, the book, that the foundation is the present moment as oneness with that. And then creation is fine when you no longer believe that certain things that you add to your life or create are going to make you happy or fulfilled.

So that's the difference. So the question then, do I need to make plans? I can't answer that as such.

You may be one of the few who will rest in being for the rest of their lives in that, in this bodily form and just sit somewhere or walk around. And that's fine too, but it's less likely. There are very few.

It happens, maybe in India happens more than in the West, just as well because the environment there is more receptive to that kind of thing. As for example, Ramana Maharshi, the, some of you may know, have heard the famous, the wonderful spiritual teacher who passed away in the early fifties. He just sat, when he was a young boy, he left his home.

He had a realization of being, of awakening. And he sat next to a temple away from his hometown. He left his family.

Nobody knew where he was. And he just, there was no movement into action, just being, no speaking, didn't want to eat, just bliss of total oneness with the source. But after a few years, he started to put food in his mouth and then he started to speak.

So a little bit of doing happened even to him, but no planning. So in his case, he didn't say, okay, I'm going to set up an ashram. That happened by itself.

The ashram organically grew. So it can happen to some people who are just either totally present and then something happens around you. In most cases, some kind of doing will be involved.

It could be a spontaneous unfolding of what is happening already. Let's say you're playing an instrument and you love it so much that you just, you enjoy playing it. And then gradually music comes to you.

You compose something or spontaneously play. And suddenly, without any vision of what you want to achieve, things can grow. This can happen.

It has happened to people. Just the intense enjoyment of the doing leading to organic growth into form. The Beatles loved making their music and I don't think they had necessarily a vision that we are going to be the greatest ever, but it happened out of the deep enjoyment and the intensity of that act of creation.

[Speaker 11] (5:43:45 - 5:43:45)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (5:44:09 - 5:47:07)

As usual, we start with a moment of silence, which implies also inner silence as much as that is possible and becoming comfortable inside yourself, at home within your skin. When I chose the topic for today, I suddenly had the image of Stargate. God, we talked about the portal.

So I had this, suddenly this image of a kind of gate that you walk through. And the next idea that came into my mind was, well, that would be an interesting film. And within 30 seconds, this story arose that one could show in a science fiction film or series, which could be called Nowgate or something like that.

Or the Dow gate or the mind gate.

[Speaker 10] (5:47:08 - 5:47:09)

To make more.

[Speaker 1] (5:47:11 - 6:01:57)

So the story goes like this. A terrestrial finds a stranded, highly advanced ET somewhere on the planet, helps him or her to get back to his or her UFO. And as a reward, the ET gives him a little device and says, when you're in danger and demonstrates it, it's a little mysterious looking thing.

Whenever you're in a difficult situation, you can use this. And he gives him a short demonstration, but he doesn't yet know what exactly it is. And then to cut the long story short, it turns out that when he presses his little device, it's amazing this can come in half a minute, this sort of thing.

He presses the little device, a kind of luminous space develops, not quite as like in Stargate, a little bit more transparent. So it throws up this kind of doorway or gateway and he has to step into it. But unlike Stargate, when he comes out the other end, and then once he's come out the other end of the thing, the gate collapses.

But once he comes out the other end, he's in exactly the same place. And the only thing that has changed is his state of consciousness. And so he uses it in when life becomes difficult, a conflict, whatever, some form of suffering arises.

And so he steps and then he goes to the bathroom and he uses that, he steps through. And then it's exactly the same reality to start with. And then so when his state of consciousness has become rooted in presence through this, first of all, he becomes peaceful inside.

So the first thing that happens when he goes through the gate of now is he becomes peaceful and accepting of now, no matter what the situation is. So that's the first change that he immediately notices. And then he goes back into whatever situation it is that caused the conflict or the suffering or whatever it is.

And then he acts upon the situation, but his actions and his words carry the energy of that state of consciousness now. And so he finds that after a while, the situation becomes transformed because his state of consciousness has become transformed. So he does enter another dimension, but this entering another dimension is primarily within.

And he also experiences, we can now beginning to leave behind the science fiction film because really it is also an analogy. It's not just an idea for a science fiction movie. I'm also using it as an analogy for us here to look upon accessing the portal of now, finding the portal of now.

And once you have found it, you walk through it. It's a kind of analogy. Finding it means realizing the possibility that there is a different state of consciousness.

And immediately you enter the state of aligning yourself with the now. You go through the gate and you see no longer resisting the now. That's the beginning of the arising of the new state of consciousness.

The dropping of resistance, seeing that it is futile because what is is the most simple equation. I don't know anything about mathematics, but let's say let's have a mathematical equation from somebody who can't go much beyond addition and subtraction and multiplication. That's me.

Finding a mathematical equation for the spiritual dimension or entering it, which is what it is, which is what is equals is. And you can't argue with that. You can, but it hurts.

So that's the equation for constructing the now gate. It's handed to me by some ET. And it's a little thing that ET can do.

Easy to forget, but once you remember what is is and what is is, whatever is the case right now. By realizing that, you enter through this, you go through the gate. And then suddenly peace, arises inside or spaciousness because you become the space for what is.

You become the space for what is. You become present. And then whatever you say or do is charged with presence.

Or it may be that for a while you don't say or do anything. Presence has two aspects to it, which I haven't very often spoken about, but it's important, maybe never, I don't know. There's the still, absolutely unmoving aspect of presence.

Absolute, just absolute empowered stillness, which comes with acceptance of what is. Nothing to do, nothing to say, just resting within that field of now. And then there's the dynamic aspect of presence.

And that depends on whatever is required in any given situation. In the dynamic, when presence suddenly becomes dynamic, it flows into action, what you say or do. Sometimes it can be so intense that it becomes totally dynamic.

This may be experienced by a mountain climber. The mountain climber who needs to be absolutely and utterly present, if he climbs up the wall with every movement, experiences the presence in its dynamic aspect. Or anybody engaged in a dangerous activity that requires your total presence, that's the dynamic aspect of presence, dynamic manifestation.

And then there's the presence at rest. And very often, there's a balance between the two. Let's say you're sitting at a conference table discussing this or that.

This is a good example of experiencing presence in its balanced state. Whatever it is that you're discussing at the conference table, it's important. And there may be people who are totally involved in the discussion and think they are present, but they are not.

Because there needs to be some awareness of the space in the background. Even while you're discussing something else, you're discussing whatever it is that the mind thinks is important. The question is, is there still some space?

Do you, are you bringing that spaciousness into that situation? Or are you completely absorbed in reacting and thinking? So that applies right now.

Could be at any time you have to check within yourself whether there is some space inside you while you are engaged in dealing with the things of this world. So we have, we can look at it as three areas, ways of accessing the portal of the present. One is through what action, whatever you need to do.

We'll be talking about that. Presence flowing into what you do, say, action. And you have also presence that arises when you are confronted with a situation, seemingly that comes to you.

It's not something that you do. It's something that is inflicted upon you. So you suddenly find yourself in this or that situation.

So accessing presence, finding the portal of now when you are active is one thing.

Finding the portal of now when life brings you, confronts you with a challenge is another area where it is important and easy to miss. And then we have a third area of consciously choosing that state of consciousness when there's nothing much going on in your life, no action is required right now, and you're not in a particularly challenging situation.

And then you go and you, instead of what normally a person would do when not confronted with something that needs to be done right now or not in a difficult situation, usually what happens is people drift off into some kind of dreamland. So let's talk about that area first. And how much of that you experience in your daily life depends how busy you are.

If you are busy continuously, you may not even have a lot of time in your life when there's nothing particular that you need to do. So that varies. Some people are so busy, there's not a moment when there's nothing to do.

Well, at least what their mind tells them will come to that. But most people have a little bit of, occasionally, you have a period of time when there's not much to do right now, either because you're stuck somewhere waiting to get from A to B. And while you're on the plane or in the car or wherever, there's not that much you can do, or you arrive at home and you've done all the things that you had to do during the day, and you find yourself with a little bit of spare time, as it's called.

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. Spare change.

[Speaker 10] (6:01:57 - 6:02:01)

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

[Speaker 1] (6:02:01 - 6:03:03)

So usually people then will fill that spare time with something to, what they call, relax. They look for something to help them relax. And that, of course, a very common thing is television.

Another very common thing to relax is have a drink, spirit drink, alcohol. Ha, ha. That is initially experienced as relaxing.

You could also, some people start making phone calls. Nothing much to say, but let's just call up a few people. And you say, what's up?

Well, I'm doing this and that, and what are you doing? Well, I'm hanging out, chilling out here.

[Speaker 10] (6:03:04 - 6:03:06)

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

[Speaker 1] (6:03:06 - 6:03:11)

Okay, and then they talk and talk, and then you put the phone, who else can I call now?

[Speaker 10] (6:03:11 - 6:03:13)

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

[Speaker 1] (6:03:14 - 6:03:16)

What's up? And so on.

[Speaker 10] (6:03:17 - 6:03:21)

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

[Speaker 1] (6:03:22 - 6:26:10)

Just filling your spare time with something. And then finally you get tired and you go to bed and that's basically your life. It's the busyness and the spare time, and then you go to sleep, and then it starts again.

Busyness, spare time, sleep. 20 years later, it's still like that. And finally you retire from work and then you end up with mostly spare time and not knowing what to do with it.

Now you have a whole day to fill up. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. And you've missed something very vital, and that's the possibility of truly experiencing life, the aliveness of life, the depth of life, the power of life.

So let's now see where, look at what you can do. I'm not saying don't do anything like that anymore when you have nothing in particular to do, a weekend or in the evening. I'm not saying don't watch TV anymore.

Don't let yourself be hypnotized by television anymore. Occasionally you can if you want to, but you can see what television, which is the favorite way of relaxing, in quotation marks, what it does to you, it kind of puts you to sleep. It's a hypnotic, it has an hypnotic effect on you.

You know what a hypnotist does? He shows you one, he says, focus on this, on this finger, and then follow it with your eyes. That's what they used to do, or pendulum.

And then you go, and then the hypnotist says, and now you're beginning to be very relaxed, and you find yourself, their eyes are beginning to close, or they may even stay open and you'll still be asleep. Okay, that's it. And that's what TV does.

You stare at the screen for hours on end, and your own mind activity completely subsides. You become free of this problem-making entity in your head. It's wonderful, isn't it?

You become free of the me, of the self, and you're watching other people's problems, not me. They have the same problems as you, but it's the same thing basically, but unfortunately you are not involved in it, so you can relax. So you're linking into a collectively produced mind stream of mental, a lot of mental activity, but fortunately it's not yours.

You've given up yours, and you let yourself be taken over by somebody else's mind stream. So you haven't left the mind stream. You're only not, you're only temporarily free of the heaviness of the self.

The self has gone to sleep for a while. Unless you watch politicians on TV, in which case the me will still occasionally come in and comment. So it's an illusory freedom from mind.

You're not really free from mind. You're just as deeply immersed in the mind stream as before, and you are in a state of semi-consciousness. So it's relaxing, and eventually depletes you of energy and of creativity.

So why not set aside in your daily existence a little bit of time for the present moment and for experiencing the power of the present moment, either at the end of the day or in the middle of the day when there are periods when you can't be busy because of the situation. If you're in a traffic jam, it's hard to go anywhere. It's just not moving, or you're waiting at the airport, or you're waiting in the doctor's waiting room, or you are wherever you are, then there's a moment of cessation of the normal activity.

Then use the naturally occurring moments of cessation of activity, and instead of feeling anxious that you're not being active, embrace the non-activity and see if you can find the portal, the gate into now. So what do you do? A little thing you can do is look around.

One portal of the now is wherever you are and whatever surrounds you, to become conscious of it. And the moment you do, this could be in a waiting at the airport. You're sitting in the lounge immersed in feeling anxious.

Why not, okay, let's see what's up. Let me become conscious of my surroundings. You're looking at people.

In an airport lounge, the most obvious thing you see is people. You notice a shift from before. You were half semi-conscious of your surroundings because you were immersed in thinking or arguing with the situation.

But there shouldn't be a delay. They should, but there is. And then you remember what is is, the magical formula.

And suddenly you sit in the same airport lounge and instead of being angry inside yourself with all the inefficiency of all these people or the weather, shouldn't be snowing. They should build better planes, whatever the mind says. And suddenly what is is, okay, and what is is this moment.

Okay, so I might as well wake up to this moment and look around externally, first of all. There's no stress in this room. People may be stressed, but there is no stress that you can actually see.

Alertness, the first thing that comes is when you become conscious of this moment is a certain alertness arises that wasn't there before. That's the sign that you are stepping through this portal. The alertness is what shows you you have stepped through the portal of now.

Alertness is the key. Alertness, I can demonstrate easily, I sometimes do. Alertness means some of the consciousness that had been trapped in thinking becomes freed for experiencing or perceiving.

So when all consciousness is trapped in thinking, you look like this, you look dull and lifeless, absent. And if you talk to somebody, often you find even then people are absent in their mind while they talk to you. There's a kind of deadened look because all their attention is in here and just a little bit of attention, they just barely see you.

And what they see is their image of who they think you are. So they're not really looking at you. So they're barely there.

Or they're so concerned with what they want from you or from the situation that all their attention, which is thought, all their attention is there. They are not there for you. They don't acknowledge your presence.

They're absorbed in their mind. We really need to talk about, let's talk about this. So it's all, your mind sucks up your entire consciousness like a parasite.

And here you say, okay, I'm going to free some of that by becoming present to the isness of now. So the alertness is a sign that some of the trapped consciousness has become freed. And first it becomes free for sense perception.

And when you, the predominant sense perception is visual. So an important portal in everyday life is visual. Let's start with visual sense perception to truly look rather than think about something else or even think about what you're looking at, which isn't present either, not yet, to actually just look wherever you are.

You're beginning to be there. And if you have a, wherever you are, doesn't matter what you're looking, what it is, whatever is around you, you begin to look. And then you notice something perhaps.

There are two dimensions to the looking. One is what you are seeing. And then another very subtle dimension is yourself.

You are an essential part of that. But what is the yourself when you're not thinking about your problems? Who are you when you're not thinking through your problems and desires and fears?

You're not looking at the world through your desires and fears, but you're just looking through consciousness. So you're not looking through the thought structures at the world, you've stepped out of the thought structures and you're looking through consciousness. But it's not that you are looking through consciousness, you are the consciousness through which the perception takes place.

And if you can sense that, that there are two dimensions, the moment you become present, there are two dimensions. There is the dimension of form. Let's go back to the airport lounge to make it tangible.

There's the dimension of form, you're looking at bodies sitting on chairs, people and looking outside, planes, looking around. But there's another dimension there without which you wouldn't even see anything. And that is the key to living in presence is to become aware of that dimension that underlies whatever else happens externally.

And we could call that becoming aware of the background to all experience in yourself, which is not something that you can capture or see. What is that? Well, we could say that's becoming aware of attention itself, becoming aware of that you're aware.

In the background, the awareness knows itself as awareness. You can experience that as a stillness in the background. And in the foreground, there's the airport lounge.

You've gone through the portal, the magical portal into another dimension, far more significant than any distant galaxy that you could travel if you go through the Stargate. Because when you go through the Stargate and you end up in another galaxy, sounds very exciting, but you end up in the same state of consciousness that you went through the other end. So you will experience the same kind of thing as you did back home.

And you create the same kind of thing when you interact with whoever you find there. And you won't even see beings that inhabit a different quality of consciousness because of the difference in vibrational frequency. You bring your, with your old egoic consciousness, you go to the galaxies and you'll always find yourself.

No true transformation. So this Stargate is much more exciting because here you truly enter a different dimension. The only true different dimension is a different dimension of

consciousness.

So it's subtle, it's simple, it's subtle. It's not complex, what we're talking about. It's the opposite of complex.

This is not anything that you can work out mentally. I'm really trying to understand what he's talking about. Don't.

Because you can't, even I don't understand it. Because understanding in that sense means intellectually applying concepts to it, it's meaningless. That's not the dimension we are going.

There is the possibility of living in another dimension of at least being rooted in another dimension and then living in this dimension. Being rooted there and living here. Let's go back to the airport lounge where before there was a little unhappy self sitting and complaining.

And suddenly the unhappy self remembered the equation, what is equals is. And started to wake up to the simplicity, the unproblematic simplicity of the present moment. And an alertness arose.

And in that alertness, the now no longer unhappy self is no longer the self but has become deeper. The depth has opened up. And this person who on the surface may be a businessman or woman and carry a briefcase and look respectable has become more than just a one-dimensional being.

The depth has opened up because he or she has become aware that the essence of him or herself is awareness, is consciousness. And here I am, not I as my past or the person, I as the essence of I, the I is consciousness. Here I am and here is this external place that I see.

I see, I can also hear and be rooted in the background to this experience. I am the presence. Otherwise there would be no seeing and no hearing.

I'm the light behind the perception. There's a stillness, an alive stillness in the background. And so you've entered another dimension.

And so becoming alert to sense perceptions is one way of entering that dimension. The alertness arises and then you have whatever you perceive and the alertness in the background. You're then rooted in the alertness.

You are the alertness. You are the awareness. At this moment, there's listening.

Who or what is listening to these words? I am. Who is I?

Consciousness. And so these words come out of that and are received by that. And so you can seek whenever you have nothing to do for a moment, see if you can enter that dimension, bringing attention to sense perceptions.

You arrive home, sit down for a moment and look around, bringing attention to nature. There may be a plant you can look at or a tree outside. Can make it even easier.

Can be easier if you look at something natural to enter that state than to look at a human being at first. You look at a flower or a tree and there's a flower, there's a tree and there's just pure perception for just a moment. Listening, looking, the two predominant senses, use them and then be aware of the two dimensions.

You can also listen to music. Certain types of music are more conducive to listening in presence. Music, for example, that is not emotional, that's easier than to listen in presence.

If music sounds like somebody who is going through emotional turmoil, then it stimulates your mind and your imagination. Italian opera. Ooh.

Ooh. With certain types of music, listen to the spaces between the sounds and immediately you're in touch with this dimension that we call awareness or presence. There's the sound and there's the space between the sounds.

For example, the shakuhachi flute, the Japanese flute.

[Speaker 10] (6:26:11 - 6:26:15)

Ooh. Ooh.

[Speaker 1] (6:26:20 - 6:26:35)

Ooh. You don't just listen to the sounds, you listen to the spaces. They're more important than the sounds.

I'd like to carry on doing that.

[Speaker 10] (6:26:35 - 6:26:35)

Right?

[Speaker 1] (6:26:45 - 7:02:14)

So. So it's a very wonderful way of, you know, this kind of thing. The shakuhachi, for example, used to be played by people in Zen monasteries.

Nowadays it's played by professional musicians and there's something not quite there anymore. The presence isn't there, it's played by professional musicians and the gaps get shorter because they think we can't have that long gaps, we have to make it more interesting. And even if the music that you're listening to, even if it doesn't seem to have any spaces in between, there's sometimes maybe beautiful music but perhaps you can't actually detect any, the music is continuous sounds, weaving, then you need to be the space for it, you are the space for it and from that spaciousness you are the awareness for the sounds.

If the sounds have gaps, then that can be very helpful because what we call gaps simply enable you to be aware of awareness. First you're aware of a sound but when the sound subsides, I'll do it again, that's your opportunity to be aware of what remains when the form is gone, which is the formless consciousness. That's why this type of music is so helpful in awakening consciousness.

Awakening consciousness means consciousness becomes conscious of itself. So you can do the same with the bells, of course. You can follow the sound of the bells, here again we're using sound to enter the now.

Simple things. You can do it with birdsong. You can, whatever sounds arise naturally, you follow the sound with your attention.

Just give it your complete attention and at some point the sound dies. It ends. There's cessation.

And the practice has not finished when there's cessation. The practice becomes, fulfills itself when the sound dies and all that remains is a space of awareness. But nothing is filling it up.

So that's the opportunity of death, any form of death in your life, any form of loss, when any form leaves you, and the sound is an example of that, a cessation of form is the greatest opportunity and opening into that state of consciousness where you realize that the essence of who you are is formless consciousness itself. And so we can practice with a simple thing like listening to the sound of a flute or the sound of a piano. There are some classical pieces, piano pieces, beautiful ones, that have lots of short gaps in it.

And usually people just listen to the sounds. Next time you listen to a slow piano piece like that, be aware of the spaces, not just the sounds. And realize the power is in the space, because the power is consciousness.

And here we go with the bell, following attention, follow the sound with your attention. When the sound dies, what remains is just awareness. Another beautiful practice is to be aware that you are breathing.

Now, that's always there, so you can use it whether you are busy or not busy. You can always direct attention from time to time to the fact that you are breathing. Breath is a strange thing.

It has traditionally been associated, rightfully so, with spirit, the breath of God hovering over the waters of the deep, and then the breath of God, that's how it all starts according to the Bible, infusing everything with life. So breath and spirit are often regarded as almost synonymous, and the reason is that breath has no form as such, you can't see it and touch it, it's ethereal, formless almost. As I said in A New Earth, the European languages are Indo-Germanic, many words have their origin in Sanskrit, nobody knows how it happened, they must have been connected in distant past.

So the German word for breath, Atem, or to breathe, Atmen, is Atman in Sanskrit, which means the divine within, so that's where it comes from. So breath, directing your attention, simply being aware that you are breathing, what then happens is, even just one in-breath and one out-breath, feeling the whole length of the in-breath and the whole length of the out-breath. Now you cannot, breath isn't something like an external object where you say, there it is, I can see it, and you can't touch it, you can't see it, unless you breathe noisily you can't even hear it.

So easily breath becomes what really merges with awareness. Awareness of your breath is so subtle that all you're really aware of when you're aware of your breathing is you're aware of awareness. So breath is almost transparent as a form, it's a transparent form, so why breath for thousands of years has been used in meditation is because of its nature as form that is almost no form, it's almost transparent as form, therefore it is so helpful in awakening consciousness.

And so when you're aware of your breath, when you're really aware of awareness, and that's why it's such a powerful practice, don't do it in a natural way, you don't, even to say I'm now going to do a practice, wouldn't do it just naturally, it's always there and just remember from time to time to notice that you're breathing. And this looks like something insignificant, but it is highly significant because if you really notice that you're breathing, not like the mind does, the mind says, am I breathing? Yes, I'm breathing.

Notice means bring your attention to it, air moving in, just one conscious in and out breath and a different dimension is there in your life, just one conscious in and out breath, do that 20 times a day, two conscious in and out breath, even better, three, so your day, whenever you go to the bathroom, whenever you go in the elevator, rather than look at a person and say, should I say something or not, it's cold today, isn't it, because you feel uncomfortable with not saying anything, be comfortable with just being and breathe.

And not look forward to the end of the in-breath, it's a mental habit, always, already wanting to be at the end, be present as they say in meditation practice, be present at every step of the breath, you're just there at every step, in-breath, there's no thought when you're present with your breath, no thought, otherwise you can't be present. So it is extremely significant because really, as I said, I haven't actually put it in these words before, when you are aware of your breath, what you're really aware of is your way of awareness. So that's the beauty of it, and what that means is you've entered the dimension of presence and this is, space has opened up in your life, space.

So in your daily life, use your breath, even just one is fine, just one, if you have to watch television occasionally, don't get drawn too much into the screen, look away sometimes because it's not that interesting, one conscious breath. And this takes you also to another portal which is to sense the aliveness of the inner body, which also is the beginning of formlessness. When you become aware that the body is alive within, which is another beautiful portal into now, into presence, because it takes attention away from thought activity, and you're beginning to sense the formless.

The energy of the body is not yet the formless as such, it's halfway between the world of physical forms and the unmanifested, as I call it. And the inner body, or the energy, the chi, is the bridge between the manifested world of forms and the formless, unmanifested, the source. So halfway there, there's that.

So going deeply into the body will also take you to just realize the realization that the entire body is simply a manifestation of consciousness, it's just consciousness becoming conscious of itself, the entire body becomes conscious of itself, every cell becomes conscious. It's a beautiful practice, directing attention into the body whenever you can in daily life, and this is a particularly good one when things around you become turbulent, other human beings, see if you can keep some attention in this inner energy field, or take a conscious breath, so that you remain rooted in presence, in the other dimension. And then either you do nothing, or whatever you do or say becomes charged with the energy that flows from there, which is very different.

Your words become charged with that power, or what you do becomes charged, or even if you just look at a person, there's an energy flow. There's not a me saying, I'm going to send you good energy now. It happens, it's a natural thing that happens.

So it's not so much that me as the doer, I'm now going to save the world. There's no self-identification with that. It's not my energy, there's no such thing.

So, sense perceptions, breathing, sounds, maybe music, choosing presence, remembering to choose presence, remembering to be one with the present moment, remembering the formula, what is equals is, in any situation. Let's talk for a moment about encountering situations that would usually be regarded as challenging, something happens. And there, that's another great opportunity for becoming present.

It's also an opportunity for becoming even more unconscious than the normal state of unconsciousness. And it's a challenge. Many people will become reactive in a challenge, upset, angry, complaining, fearful, and then all kinds of thoughts arise out of that, this shouldn't be, these judgments.

Or a challenge can, if you remember the is-ness, and then you look, and then suddenly a challenging situation brings increased consciousness, presence. First comes the realization, this is what is. You may remember from a new earth, in any situation, or in anything you do, you will be unconscious in what you do in any situation, unless there's one of the three modalities of doing, conscious doing, is there.

One is acceptance of what is. If you were driving, get stuck in the snow, or whatever, acceptance, not necessarily enjoyment because that's the next stage. To enjoy what you're doing, there's an outflow of energy.

If you can't enjoy what you're doing, can you accept that this is what I have to do, or this is what is? And again, peaceful energy is suddenly there when you respond to a challenge from the basis of acceptance, not the basis of rejection. So, completely different energy flows into what you do, and you activate forces outside yourself, when you bring acceptance to any situation, you activate forces outside yourself that will come in and exert a helpful, beneficial influence on the situation.

You can verify it in your own experience. I have innumerable accounts of people who told me that this is what they experienced. When this consciousness of non-resistance is brought to whatever you do, or wherever you are, the acceptance level, enjoyment and so on, is another possibility.

But let's just stay with acceptance. You may not be able to enjoy being stuck in the snow at night, and there you are, don't know what to do, where to go, but you're either in resistance, or you're in acceptance. If you're in acceptance, it is much more likely that something helpful will come in from the outside, into the situation.

Why? Because when you are in acceptance, you are open to life, which is the greater consciousness. You're not blocking yourself off.

Any negative emotion is a restriction, and is the closing of the door to the power of intelligence, or consciousness, whatever you want to call it, that which pervades the universe, that which is accessible to you, because you're not separate from it, you're it, suddenly any resistance, any negative thoughts or emotions close, and there's not much help that the universe can give, in the same way that the sun can't warm you when you run into a house and close all the shutters.

The sun is still there, it's not concerned, there's a continuous outpouring, it's continuously giving, but the little me says, oh no, close the shutters, okay, I've done, now I'm in control. So, the acceptance opens that, and you find many, if you then bring acceptance as your normal state, you will fluctuate between enjoyment and acceptance in any given situation. In some situations, enjoyment means there's an, ah, somewhat more dynamic, it's the same energy, but it goes from peace, just very restful peace of acceptance, to a somewhat more dynamic movement of enjoyment.

And then the third modality, as I call it, happens from time to time when there's intense creativity, for example, and that is, an intensity is added to the enjoyment, and that intensity we could call enthusiasm, whatever we call it, intense energy outflow. It could also happen in a limit situation when you're confronted with some danger and sudden action is required, there's a similar intensity, and the action doesn't come from fear, it comes spontaneous action out of presence, and there's a sudden enormous influx of energy and action happens. So, it's the creative energy of, so there's enjoyment, but a deepened enjoyment, an intensity of, any creative person has experienced that, and does experience that in the moment of creation, there's an intensity, which might even be misinterpreted as stress, but there's no stress whatsoever.

Stress means there's a little me trying this or that, or looking to the future, wanting something from the future more than you want to be in the present, then stress arises. And then that energy cannot be there, it doesn't operate. And so, you have it also in great performers, whose performance, whether it's dance, whether it is music, or singing, or whatever it may be, you have at the peak of their performance, they are, there is that intensity of energy suddenly moving through them.

And this is a quality then, that only there if you're absolutely present, if you're worried about whether your act is going to be good or not, it won't come, no matter how good you are technically. It's only if you're intensely, totally one with now, it comes, the intensity is suddenly there. So, an important gateway to the now is, important access to the gateway of now, is situations that usually you would regard as challenging, and there, allow those situations to be, to awaken you into total acceptance and intense presence.

So, wait for it, when it will come, sooner or later you'll find a little one or a bigger one, and see if you can immediately recognize that opportunity. If you don't recognize the opportunity and remember the magical formula, then you miss it and the situation will draw you into some unconscious reaction. And even there you can still wake up, even finding yourself in an unconscious reaction to your mind saying, how dreadful this is and what's going to happen, how awful situation, complaining, and even at that point you can still wake up and, oh, look at the mind, and be the awareness.

What is, is. Look at the fear. Whoa.

And at that moment, even that, the equation even here applies, you missed the first opportunity, you entered a state of fear, the first opportunity was complete acceptance of what is. You missed it. Second opportunity, there was a reaction.

And then you remember the formula, what is, is, and what is at that moment is a reaction, and the emotion that is part of the reaction. So, what can you do? The formula still applies.

What is, is. Fear. So, why not allow yourself to be in fear?

And miraculously you'll find fear becomes transformed. But it's not even that you want that. You just bring the space for it.

You have the space for that. So, the gateway of now, the now is entered through the acceptance of is at whatever level. So, it's never too late to accept what is.

It's too late. I should have accepted what is. I've missed my whole life.

I never accepted what is. What can I do now? Nothing.

So, that's the good thing is, it's not too late. It's never too late for is. So, presence flowing into your active life.

Presence flowing into when things seem to be making you a victim, as the mind might tell you, and they're realizing you're not a victim. When the complainer goes, you're not a victim. There's no victim.

So, presence flowing into activity. Conscious doing, so that always checking within yourself, am I in acceptance, enjoyment, or enthusiasm? You have to have a look inside at this moment, when any given moment, the moment, the now, okay, no, I'm not in acceptance, and I'm not enjoying it, and I'm not enthusiastic about this.

Okay, there's no, there's an absence of, there was an absence of consciousness, but the moment you notice it, the consciousness begins to bend. You see, I'm not accepting, I'm not enjoying myself, and I'm not enthusiastic, certainly not. There's suddenly a consciousness there, you're not trapped in the state anymore.

And then there's the possibility of saying, okay. And then, of course, you always begin with acceptance. You don't say in a difficult situation, I should be enthusiastic about being stuck out in the cold here.

No, you can't. Oh, it's great to be cold and having no food and water, and that's just not possible, perhaps. But accepting that there's the, when life does something to you, those are the situations.

When you are active, another type of situation. And when there's nothing much to do, then to invite presence in those moments. Not continuously, not, just make it, become familiar with inviting that into your life.

So here we have the true Stargate. Much better than, much better than, I still, I enjoy watching the other one, too, sometimes. But much better than the Stargate into another galaxy.

So the essence of all this, then, is knowing yourself as the, what we call the gateway of now, is really the gateway to yourself. And so, living in that state of consciousness means simply to know yourself, not mentally, but experientially, continuously, as the space for what is, as the awareness, to be aware of awareness while things happen around. Then you're all, then you live in the now.

Whatever happens in the foreground, you are there as the space for it, and the space is consciousness, and the space is formless, and the space is timeless, and the space is who you are, beyond the temporary form of me. That's liberation. It's liberation from the illusion that you are the form.

And it's liberation from the illusion that the forms are threatening out there. And liberation from the illusion that some form out there is going to fulfill you. So it's liberation from illusion.

And it's so simple, you can go through life simply remembering, not as a memory, but as a continuous knowing, sensing yourself as consciousness. So you are the consciousness, and whatever else happens, happens. Then nothing really upsets you that much, and even if emotions come occasionally, they only, they don't touch the innermost depths of consciousness, they touch the surface layers.

Oh, there's happiness. Consciousness reminds. Happiness.

Unhappiness. It doesn't go very deep. Even happiness and unhappiness, just fluctuations.

In the background there's the continuous, that's consciousness. Never ceases. Where in the foreground things go.

Well, maybe one day I will give a musical concert involving both the didgeridoo and the shakuhachi flute. And maybe even, as they do in India, there's a type of vocal music that is the imitation of drums with a human voice. Thank you.

[Speaker 8] (7:02:14 - 7:03:43)

I am that guy that you described, that once taken over by my pain body, my friends and family say, who is that monster? And so I've been practicing, observing, and being the watcher, and that works well. Clearly my pain body cannot survive the life consciousness.

But, you know, it's afraid, because its existence is threatened, and it's figured out how to take me from relative presence to deep unconsciousness very rapidly on certain triggers. And so my question is really around that kind of rapid activation of the pain body. Are there any practices for dealing with that?

And once deeply unconscious, is it even possible to be the watcher, or is that what it means to be deeply unconscious, the complete absence of consciousness? And I just need to wait until it feeds, and, you know, let it go dormant again.

[Speaker 1] (7:03:44 - 7:12:49)

Thanks. Now, the main form that your pain body takes, I assume, is anger. Yes.

Because that's the one form the pain body can take that is the quickest, that comes so rapidly in some people that you can't catch it. But you also mentioned that there are certain situations that tend to trigger your pain body. So one thing you can do is when you are in such a situation where you already know from past experience that your pain body may get triggered in that situation, you can be more than usually alert, highly alert, to see, regard it as an experiment, to see if you can catch it.

It could also be a certain conversation going in a certain direction, in a direction that you know, for example, is going to trigger the pain body. And once it's going, okay, bring up, feel, be in the body, to use the inner body awareness as an anchor so that you can hold on to presence. So be fully there and then see if you can catch it.

If you are prepared, you are more likely to catch it. That's one thing you can do. So when you know those familiar situations, I don't know what it is in your case, it could be visiting certain people or having a talk or certain topics that you are discussing with somebody or your partner that tend to bring it up, so that you can, whatever it is, you can probably even write, just write down what the usual situations are, the most likely situations are.

And sometimes, as I said, you can see events leading up to it before, because you know it from experience, with the conversation, for example, with your partner or whoever is going in a certain direction. And you say, oh, this is where we are going. And so then you can be doubly present.

You have to just be, not suppress it, not, I mustn't have a pain-body attack, no, but to be there as a watcher, just, pain-body doesn't like the intense light of consciousness on it. Pain-body being, of course, an accumulation of old emotion that is almost an entity that lives in you. Another thing you can do is, after a pain-body attack, because, just before I go on, in the middle of it, as you suggest, if it's very strong, there's perhaps nothing much you can do.

If you're totally in the grip of it, you are it, and so you won't even know that anything else is possible. But as presence grows in you, one day you may find, whenever it still happens, one day you may find, to your astonishment, that even in the middle of a pain-body, there's suddenly in the background, there's a little light of awareness from where you're observing what's happening to you. It doesn't necessarily mean immediately the pain-body attack will come to an end, but there may be a witness in the background, oh, oh, that kind of witness, oh, oh, there it is.

It may be at first very, very much in the background, and then gradually more. It's an amazing thing when one wakes up in the middle of a pain-body attack. It can happen.

If it doesn't happen yet, that's fine too. There are other ways. Another one being, after it has happened, you could, just as a structured practice, not necessarily immediately after, perhaps the next day, you can, usually I don't recommend going into the past or anything like that, but in this particular case, you could try to replay the events just leading up to your loss of consciousness.

Just replay it in your mind, and then you might experience a mild form in a pseudo kind of pain-body attack. It's not the real thing because the pain-body knows, but you may get just a resonance or an echo of what you actually did experience on that occasion. And there it will be easier to stay present.

So you replay it in your mind, not compulsively, only you sit down and say, okay, I'm going to do this for five minutes now, and then you're done with it. Don't replay it in your mind for the next few days. So that's a little bit like you get a, you know what they do when you get a vaccine.

You get the same virus, but in a weakened form. So that's a little bit like that. So if presence is the immunity, then presence builds up more easily like that.

That's another thing then you can do. And if you are close to certain people who have enough understanding of this process of consciousness and unconsciousness and of the pain-body, you may ask, one thing you can do is to have a little game, which is play acting. For example, with your partner or friend, whoever it is, say, why don't you play the game that you talk about this and accuse me of having done this or that, and then, but don't tell me beforehand.

Say, do it when I'm not expecting it. Because if he tells you, okay, let's do it now, then nothing is going to happen because you know full well. But if it comes unexpectedly, and then in that moment he raises a flag or something and says, ah, this is, it's a rehearsal.

This is, that could be interesting to see what happens then, whether the pain-body is, the pain-body will be there probably, but what happens to it when the pain-body sees that it wasn't a genuine situation? It may deny that it wasn't a genuine situation because pain-bodies are very clever. It will shout, say, I don't want anything to do with, this is, the pain-body wants it to be real.

But you'll have to see, experiment a little bit. So, and then the, you could get, I'm not, that's a little joke, you could get an actor to play into your life, pay him or her to come in twice a week to ring your doorbell and say something to do that you know is going to trigger your pain-body. So there are various things then you can do.

Another interesting question is how long does the pain-body attack last? You have to observe that in yourself. And it is, as presence grows, you may find that the time, it lasts, the time span, the life span of the pain-body shortens.

So instead of being around for an hour or whatever, or even more in some, it could be several hours, you may find you go through it much more quickly, but I don't want to put anything, any suggestions into your mind. You have to just observe to see how long it tends to last. At the moment, I'd like to ask you, what's the average life span of a pain-body attack until you regain consciousness?

How long?

[Speaker 8] (7:12:50 - 7:12:57)

Yeah, for this kind of activation, it's severe, I have to... Can you say that again?

[Speaker 10] (7:12:57 - 7:12:57)

Okay.

[Speaker 8] (7:12:57 - 7:13:06)

Sorry. Yes, for this kind of activation that's severe, I have to go to sleep and wake up the next morning, that's the only place it subsides.

[Speaker 1] (7:13:06 - 7:18:23)

Yes, so even if it happens in the morning, then it would be there throughout the day, yes. And of course, it colors, as you well know, it colors all your subsequent, because you will experience the rest of the day through the emotional pain-body. Also, as you know, your mind activity, while you're in the grip of the pain-body, is the pain-body speaking through your mind, so it takes possession of your mind, all your thought activity is a reflection of the emotion of the pain-body.

So what your mind is telling you, or what your mind is telling other people, or the way in which your mind is judging certain situations that you're in, they're all totally distorted by the pain-body. It's an amazing phenomenon. So I recommend, then, continued vigilance and a little bit of experimentation, a playful approach, although the thing the pain-body likes the least is not to be taken seriously.

And so that's precisely why you shouldn't take it that seriously, because the pain-body is serious. So spending as much time as you can in inner body awareness helps, even while you're free of the pain-body, because then the more presence you get into the cells of your body, the harder it is for the pain-body to take you over. And so when all is well, you grow in presence power, and then it will be much easier to be there when it happens.

So the general tendency is like this. First, you will tend to observe a shortening of the pain-body's lifespan. So from a whole day, it may come to a couple of hours, one hour, half an hour.

That's one thing that tends to happen. Regaining consciousness, at what point consciousness comes back. You may find it comes back after you've had a good night's sleep.

You may find it comes back as the energy of the pain-body weakens gradually. You may find consciousness coming in sooner, even while it's still a little bit of it, the remnants of it are still there, and consciousness comes in already. Ah, there it is.

And then even sooner after a while, until you reach the point that I mentioned before, that when there's enough presence in you, in the middle of it, the witness may be there. Or the witness is there even as it happens, and at the same time you know it's happening, and then the pain-body can't survive for that long. It's a good motivation for presence.

The pain-body has its place. And don't beat yourself up afterwards, and just accept it's nothing personal. It's just the human pain-body.

And presence grows, so it becomes fuel for consciousness, really. I had a very heavy pain-body. My pain-body wasn't anger.

It was, well, sadness, depression, unhappiness, heaviness, poor me, that kind of thing. And it lingered sometimes for days at a time with associated thoughts in my head that started in childhood. Whenever something happened that wasn't good, one of the habitual thoughts I had as a child up to the age of, well, probably into my twenties, and I already had that thought when I was eight, bad things always happened to me.

Always bad things happened to me. And so whenever something went wrong, the thought came, oh, of course, always me. It's always bad.

It's always. I didn't know I had that thought, because I was that thought. I totally believed in it.

Well, I wish you success, and next time we meet, you can give us a progress report.

[Speaker 8] (7:18:24 - 7:18:25)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (7:18:25 - 7:18:25)

Thanks. Yes?

[Speaker 2] (7:18:44 - 7:20:53)

The secret of dropping into this moment is really allowing this moment to be as it is, as Eckhart would say. And in the words of this person sitting here, it's really resist nothing. Resist absolutely nothing.

So whatever arises, you surrender to. Even if there's resistance, you surrender to the resistance, allowing it to be here fully and completely. And what does that mean?

What does that look like? That means, say, for example, if the pain body comes up, surrendering, accepting it, resisting nothing of what arises physically, mentally. But what it means is that you accept it so much so that you are willing to feel it and be with it forever.

Because the moment that you have even the slightest bit of I want it to go away, you're not allowing it to be as it is. You're not accepting it. That slightest bit.

And we all know that when that slightest bit comes, it's like, oh, no. Oh, I want it to be different. No, I want it to change.

Oh, no, please. OK, I'll accept it. I'll accept it.

I'll accept it.

[Speaker 10] (7:20:53 - 7:20:55)

But oh, no.

[Speaker 2] (7:20:59 - 8:14:38)

It's letting go of time completely, of future, of past, and fully being here in this moment just as it is. Pain body and all. Or even physical pain.

Or even emotional. Any emotion. Sadness.

Grief. Anger. Doesn't matter.

Just allowing it to be. Being the space. Because you are that space.

But the moment that you begin to resist what arises in that space, we've become identified with that form of whatever is arising. So by allowing it to be as it is, it's like we separate ourselves from the form, realizing that this space in which the form arises, this space is who we are. And all we are is that witness to what arises.

But of course, it's more than just witnessing, because we are feeling human beings. We have to feel what arises. And feel it completely.

Non-resistant to the present moment. Demanding nothing. Accepting everything.

Just as it is. And the moment that you accept it, it's like the space opens up. And you can sense into that stillness.

The stillness of who you really are. And realize, ah, okay. This is pretty cool.

I am this space. And all this, the form, the play of consciousness, is really nothing at all. It's not that important.

What's important is that we are this space. That recognition of that space. Then we don't lose consciousness.

In other words, become unconscious. Identified with whatever is arising. Thought, emotion, opinion, judgment.

And believing that that is real. The Course in Miracles, their introduction, where it says, Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists.

Herein lies the peace of God. So it's not about getting rid of what's out here, what's playing. It's about sensing into and realizing that you are the space in which the play happens.

And then when that happens, it's like you recognize, it's like the two become one. And not forgetting that you are the space, even though the play is all dancing around. There's ups and downs.

All forms being impermanent. And recognizing the impermanence of form. And then nothing becomes a real problem.

It doesn't mean that you won't ever feel emotions. You will. And that's all part of it.

Part of the play. But there isn't that resistance to the emotion. And here in the West, it's strongly ingrained in us that emotions are somehow not so good.

And Eckhart and I will kind of quite often joke, because I'm this Asian woman. Lots of emotion, fire, you know. And when you hear Chinese people talk and they're speaking in their native language, it looks like they're yelling at each other.

I mean, seriously, it does. It looks like they're yelling at each other. And Eckhart would say, well, actually, you know what they're saying?

They're saying, I love you. I love you. I love you.

And you know, but here, you know, we're more conservative, more, you know. So it's actually quite interesting, because I was born in Canada. In this Asian body with the Asian cultural ancestry.

And even though I was born in Canada, I could still feel very, very much Asian and Chinese in the way that I just interact. And it's interesting, because when I was younger, I felt like, because in Vancouver, where I grew up, I think at that time, there were only maybe like three Chinese families at our school. So I was one of those kids who went through a lot of suffering and was teased a lot.

Get teased even walking home from school and such. To the point where I just said, I don't want to be Chinese anymore. And I stopped talking Chinese.

I just stopped. I didn't want to do it. And none of us kids, I come from a family of four siblings.

And it's interesting, but all of us went through the same thing. We all decided at a very young age to stop. And it's like, wow, you know, now that I'm older and, you know, it's like, wow, I can't even, you know, I can't even speak to my mother.

My mother was born in China, and she was, and she speaks Chinese. In fact, she speaks very little English. That's how come we got along so well when growing up.

We couldn't talk to each other. We couldn't fight. We couldn't understand each other.

But what I'm pointing to is that all of us, no matter where we have come from, we have somehow came to this point where all of us, for some reason or another, decided that we can't really be. I mean, yes, it may be some part of cultural conditioning and the way that, you know, expressions come out. But we've all learned to somehow kind of hide ourselves.

And we've all reaching that point where it's like, I can't hide myself any longer. Now, I don't mean the self as in the egoic sense of self, but I mean our true self, the true identity of who we really are, which is really no identity at all, no identification with who we think we are. Because we are not any thought.

I am not Chinese. Even though quite often many people may look, and this is what happens, is that we begin to place labels. We become so identified with the thought process, with words, labels, that we actually can't see past them.

Which, the first lesson in the Course in Miracles is being able to look around the room, or look wherever you are outside your window, and you look at things and you say, This table does not mean anything. This room does not mean anything. And see how we label things and begin to view our perception through this filter of labels, of judgments, of ideas, opinions, whatever they are.

And that's how we see it. So when I was younger and being teased, that's all that people could see. And we even do this probably daily, especially if you've been married for a long time.

You may come to your partner and you're viewing them through all the experiences that you've had with your partner. All maybe the hurts, all the ups and downs. And you no longer see the being that he or she is.

And we do this all the time, and it's beginning then to recognize when we do that. Can we let it go? Can we just drop the veil?

Drop all thoughts. I mean, thoughts are useful. They bring in a form of communication.

But that's all it is. It's a pointer. Can we let go of every thought and see that it's not real?

No thought can possibly be real. The only reason why you can understand me is because we have agreed that certain sounds make up a meaning. See how we give it meaning?

If you were in another country, you wouldn't understand at all. One of the best talks that I have been to with Eckhart was in Germany. The very first time we went to Germany.

And he didn't think he could do a talk in German. Although he spoke Deutsch. He didn't think he could use words like consciousness and all that sort of stuff in German.

So they had a translator to translate. And he did one talk, but it really felt like it just wasn't working. Translation wasn't working.

Because you know when Eckhart gets on a roll, he can get on a roll and it's hard to stop. When he stops, it's like the flow stops. The energy stops.

So the second talk, which would have been a three hour talk, he says, I have to do it in English. I think enough German people understand English and I'm just going to have to do it in English. I can't have the translation.

So anyway, so he started the talk off speaking German. Just to tell them that he was going to do the talk in English. There was not going to be any translation.

So anyways, 20 minutes into the talk, he realized, I'm still talking German. So I'm going to continue speaking German until, you know, I just can't do it anymore. He did a three hour talk in German.

And at first I was like, oh boy, I'm disappointed. You know, like I can't understand anything. But then there's that surrender that happened and all I can do is just be still.

And I realized, I thought, oh my gosh, how often I've sat there listening to him. Listening to the words when really I just needed to listen and be in that stillness. Listen to the space, the silence between the words.

It's just like in music. Music is half sound and half silence. And that's what makes it so great is that stillness.

Well, that was the best talk I had ever been to. Really, sincerely, just feeling that stillness. I walked out of there so high.

It was just like, wow, okay, you can speak any language you want. You know, it doesn't matter. And we do this even in our everyday lives.

We will put more of our attention, in fact, 100% of our attention on words. On what the other person is saying or what is externally happening outside. Or even in our thinking.

It doesn't even have to be coming out as the words. We can be thinking it. 100% of our attention goes outward.

When really, if we could just take a breath and tap into that source of who we are, the stillness, which is always right there. And that was the great discovery for me in that talk was that, wow, that stillness, it's always here. But my attention with the form of this moment, how much attention I give to the form is what covers that stillness up.

So can we then practice keeping some of our attention on that still, small place within as we go about our daily lives. And trust that if there's really anything important that's happening out there, you'll end up giving more attention to it. But really, most of it, probably, I don't know, 97% of it.

I've heard that 97% of all humans are dysfunctional. So I guess it must be 97% of everything out there must be pretty well dysfunctional. So why give it all of our attention and place our importance out there and forget about who we are in here.

And that this is the most important, that vital connection, that communion with the divine essence of who we are. And then when that connection happens, then perhaps the outer world begins to change. Because we have changed.

And I don't mean changed in the sense of stillness change, but that who we think we are dissolves into the nothingness, the nothingness of who we are. Then absolute stillness remains. And then our perception of the world shifts, changes.

And when we begin to look out there or hear and listen to what is out there, we also begin to perceive and listen to the space, to see the space. So we begin to see through what we've given meaning to, what we've labeled. So it's like seeing through the person.

You're saying, I feel like he sees right through me. He's seen beyond the person. So then we begin to play in this world, yes, in this form, yes, with our cultural conditioning, which is fine.

It's not a problem. It only becomes a problem when you become truly identified with it and you believe that it's true about yourself or true about the other person. And then the beauty of the uniqueness of the form shines through.

So we have all different colors popping up, just like the flowers and the human beings. And you go, wow, isn't that beautiful? Instead of, well, that's different.

I'm not so sure, so I'm a little frightened about that. But we begin to interact, seeing past the meaning and into the light. Of consciousness, of who we are.

I am no different than you are, and you are no different than I am at the deepest level. Only in the world of form are we different. And that's what is so beautiful as well.

If we didn't have any mirrors to see ourselves in, we wouldn't be able to see our own face. But what I see is your face, and I would think that you are me. So resist nothing.

Feel everything, completely. Demanding nothing to be different than what is here now. Because quite often, it's really not so bad out there.

It's more in here that makes it bad. Nothing is neither good or bad, but thinking makes it so. So wherever and whatever you are feeling in this moment, you feel.

You fully accept. And we'll do a little meditation of resist nothing. The new CD that's out by Sounds True, and it's called Resist Nothing.

And on that are several different meditations just to assist you, help you, just to be present with whatever is that's going on for you in your life situation. And we all have something going on, sometime or another. And what's interesting is that after I did this CD, my life has been pretty, you know, kind of even.

Not much up, not much down, you know. There's some like this. And it's easy to kind of be with something that goes like this.

Isn't it? It's quite easy. Oh, I could ride this wave.

It's quite easy. And then suddenly, it was just like right after the CD, it was just like something just peaked. And it's like, whoa, my roller coaster went right up.

And it's like, wow, okay, all right, I can do this. But it gave me another appreciation that, wow, when the roller coaster is really high, so when things, something that happens in your life to bring up, to intensify that emotion or intensify whatever is going on that brings about some emotions, to really have to be with that, I began to appreciate again just how challenging it can be just to be present with something that is so intense and not expect it to dissolve so quickly.

So if you listen to that CD, there's this thing where I say, and it can still happen. Believe me, it still can because I have done this. Oftentimes, if emotion is felt fully and completely, it can dissolve in 30 seconds.

And it was pretty good. I was getting pretty good at that until that something happened where I had to really begin to say, okay, wow, wow, okay, this is not taking 30 seconds. I've got to be with this more and longer for whatever reason.

And without going into the head about it, about why is this not changing, because as soon as I did that, realizing that, wow, okay, no, I have to listen to my own teaching and accept this moment fully, like as if I were going to experience this for eternity. And that's the moment that it begins to dissolve or change in that full acceptance. So when you do that, something arises, step back just for a moment, close your eyes if you wish, and just drop into whatever it is that you feel in this moment.

You can try it now, just observing, feeling what it is that you are feeling. Take a breath into your body, into the sensations. Become aware of your breathing.

Become aware of the sensations. Just notice how you are feeling. And perhaps a label comes up of what you're feeling.

Agitation, sadness, happiness. The label isn't so important. So once the label arises, you just let that go and just feel.

Resisting nothing. Notice how you're holding your body. Are you holding?

Can you relax? If thoughts arise, just notice and let them go. Don't give any meaning to what is arising, to what is in you.

But simply feel. What does this emotion feel like? Be with the sensation of the emotion.

Be with the sensation of this moment. Judge nothing. Labeling nothing.

Giving meaning to nothing. So no meaning to anything. Simply be.

Experience this moment. And once you feel, experience what it is that you are feeling, sense into that space the stillness in which the sensations arise, in which the thoughts arise. Just watching, feeling.

There's nothing to do, nothing to get. But simply be. Resisting nothing.

And if you notice that there's resistance there, then you be with that. Dropping the label of resistance and feel the sensation. What does resistance feel like?

What does it do to my body? Brings tension and contraction. Can I even be with that tension and contraction?

And the moment that's fully accepted, something in you shifts. For all forms are impermanent. Breathing.

Neither running to or running away from what is. But simply be with what is. Any movement towards it, any movement away from it is resistance.

Can you feel that space? Can you feel that emotion? That sensation?

The two are really inseparable. But only one is real. If you're wondering how long this meditation is going to go on for, you're in your thinking mind.

If you're wondering how long you're going to feel this sensation or feel an emotion, you're in your thinking mind. To be fully present in this moment requires the acceptance of whatever it is that shows up for you in this moment. Neither past or future are real.

What's real? And tapping into that stillness, staying with that stillness, when you're ready, you can gently open your eyes, yet keeping some attention inward. And with that attention inward, and yet the outer form exists, is the true union, the true marriage, where the two become one.

So the marriage is not out there between people. It's between you as the form, and God as that inner stillness within. That's the true marriage.

That's the true merging. So then we move about the world as this one singular movement. We have form and we have the stillness together in this world.

And then we can dance this way, and the dance is much more fluid, flowing. And still we bring stillness then into this world. Rather than the separation, the separation is forgetting about the stillness, and no longer exists, and all you are is this thinking entity of body and mind, instead of the trinity of bringing in that stillness.

So then we live in this world, and not be of this world. Imagine Christ on the cross, and the world is the horizontal plane, and yet the connection is the divine essence of who you are, is the vertical dimension of that cross. And here you are in this world.

We're hidden there, all right? We can't go anywhere. I mean, we're in this body.

The temple, the church, is your body. And we are the body of Christ, Christ consciousness. The divine consciousness.

So our connection still is that, is here, vertically, and yet we are in this world. Yes, pinned there on the cross. Can't go anywhere.

No way out. Absolutely no way out. But then is there a way out?

And that is through the dimension of Christ consciousness. Of your connection, your marriage, your communion, with the stillness within you. God is not outside, but God is within.

It's the only place. So it doesn't matter about these temples and churches. Yes, they're beautiful, and yes, there could be a space, which that's all it is, is a space to go, so where you can go and commune.

But really, that space, if all those churches and temples were just blown to bits, all you have is yourself, which you are the temple. You are the body of Christ, and we embody Christ. Or we're going to embody the ego.

You cannot have both. You cannot serve two gods. God the Father, or the God of the world.

Can't have it both ways. We think we can for a while, but it only leads to suffering. And all paths, whether you do the path of suffering, the path of devotion, the path of knowledge, all lead to the divine essence of who we are.

And we'll see what happens. Will it be boring? I doubt it.

Only when you get bored is when you know that you're in the mind. We need to get to that place where there's this little sort of, I don't know if you call it a joke, but I've said this before, I've used this before, was that there's this famous English writer who was at a cocktail party. And somebody came up to him and said, Are you enjoying yourself here?

And the famous English writer says, It's the only thing that I'm enjoying here. So, are you enjoying yourself here? I don't hear anything.

Oh no. It's the only thing that you should be enjoying here. And that's yourself.

The true joy comes from within. Anything that makes you happy or laugh that's outside you, it's temporary. But what can bubble inside you continuously comes from within.

Even in the midst of sadness or grief or loss of a loved one, there can be peace. You can feel that sadness yet feel peace. And when your commitment is to this divine essence of who you are, then you use every single opportunity as a spiritual awakening, as a deepening.

I'm faced with that this moment, these days, with probably two potential beings that I love so dearly, whose lifespan in their bodies will soon be coming to an end. And that's my father, who's 88 years old. And he's ready.

He says, I'm ready. I'm ready to go. And our beloved Maya, who has a heart condition, and we know that she will sooner or later leave body.

And using this opportunity as a deepening spiritually, contemplating death, as we all have to sooner or later contemplate our own deaths, and feeling the beauty and the essence, being with that essence. And really the form passes away, but who we are at the core is eternal. We are eternity.

Oh, I have to tell you guys this. We drove from Vancouver to here, and we were like stopped overnight in Red Bluff. And we went to a restaurant to have dinner.

And somehow we got to talking about Eckhart's father, who left body I think about five years ago. And Eckhart said, he mentioned about his father's ego. Because he had, even though he was very spiritual in a sense, he still had this big ego at times.

And when he said that, the glass of water that was full of water and ice, burst. It literally just, poof, burst. And we went, okay.

We kind of forgot about what we were talking about. We wondered, wow, what was that? We didn't even touch it.

And everyone was coming over that worked there, and they were like, oh yeah, if you put it down maybe too hard. And we go, we didn't touch it. It was nothing.

We didn't do anything. It just burst. And then I said, what were we talking about just before that happened?

And we realized we were talking about his father and his ego. So he didn't like that. So he may have left body, but he was definitely with us.

And the experience of just feeling that energy, because it's energy. It's like water. You boil water, yet all it does is change form.

So the essence of who we are is of the one life, is eternal, is stillness with no limitations, no borders, nothing. The space. So if you can imagine this universe, this space, we are at that space.

And we would not recognize who we are as space consciousness if we were not in form. And we wouldn't know that space existed if there was no forms. What name could we give it?

There'd be no even dimension to it. So we are awakening consciousness through the form. We're recognizing ourselves.

But from the moment we are born, we are taught to forget about ourselves and begin to identify with our name. Oh, they keep calling me Johnny or Alice. Oh, and they're looking at me.

That must be me. Because they say I'm supposed to call them Mommy and Daddy. That's who they are, is Mommy and Daddy.

No, it's not. So we're coming back home to recognize and be in that space. And that's the flowering.

That's the purpose of our life. And there's no other purpose. And I still have to even remind myself about that.

There's no other purpose but just to recognize that space. There's nothing for me to do. Sometimes I still wonder what I'm going to do when I grow up.

Honestly. I'm just like, well, what am I supposed to do? Wow, I've got, you know, because contemplating now with my father being ill and with Maya being ill, it's like this contemplation.

Jeez, I've only got so many maybe years or minutes left on this planet in this form. What do I want to do? And then it's like, come on.

Just be. Just be. Just be still and move from there.

And whatever it is that I'm supposed to be doing, it's only in this moment that I'm doing it. So what's the quality that you will bring to this moment? Am I going to infuse this moment and what I'm doing in this moment in my thinking mind?

Or am I going to create and infuse whatever I'm doing with presence? With just finding that inner stillness in this moment with whatever it is I am doing. That's our work.

That's our realization. That's our creation is in this moment now. Not what I'm going to do in the future, but how am I bringing this moment into creation?

Stillness or with thinking about it?

[Speaker 1] (8:16:05 - 9:00:15)

As we sit in stillness, you need to be alert so that the stillness is not just out in the room, but also within. Alertness is a frequency. It has no tension in it.

One could call it relaxed alertness. But there is an intensity to it. And that's really what the teaching is.

The essence of the spiritual teaching is to demonstrate, to share energetically the intensity of that state of consciousness that is arising. Often or usually when one speaks of intensity, one associates that with stress, almost anxiety. You must get this done.

People who are doing their work, putting out a lot of energy, stressful energy, contracted. And then that's usually when one speaks of intensity, one has that association. That's the old consciousness, which may occasionally still, of course, arise in you, because many people that you work with or live with are still living in that consciousness and manifesting it.

But here there's an intensity that is peaceful and relaxed. And again, when we speak of relaxed in the old consciousness, what you associate with relaxation is becoming a little bit sleepy. I can let go now.

I've done the day's work and can hang out, veg out. And as the term implies, you're falling below thinking towards the vegetative realm. And that's fine.

But this is not what this is about. So there could be various misconceptions. One is a misunderstanding of intensity, of intense alertness, and also a misunderstanding of relaxed.

Relaxed meaning free of tension or stress. Now, if you are possessed by the ordinary, normal, unawakened consciousness, then all you can think of when one speaks of relaxation or intensity is either stress or sleep. And peace usually implies, from the point of view of the old consciousness, a certain decrease in one's sense of aliveness.

You feel peaceful. Some people feel peaceful only when they get very tired. And of course, yes, it is very peaceful to go to sleep.

It's a beautiful thing. If you can catch what we call tiredness, this is, of course, not where we are going. I'm just explaining the other direction.

What we call tiredness is a pull. Usually we think we know what we talk about when we say tired. Even there, you could bring in some awareness and stay aware when you're tired.

And if you bring some awareness into your tiredness, I'm diverging slightly now. Don't worry. If you bring some attention into when you're feeling really tired and then feel what it feels like, then you will notice a pull.

Something is pulling you. And what is pulling you? It would conventionally be called sleep.

But that pull has a sweetness to it. It is so sweet and wonderful that when it becomes very strong, you would rather go there than survive if you have a choice. People get lost in the wilderness, can't find their way home, get cold.

And they know when they lie down they're not going to wake up again. And yet, at some point, they become so tired, but the pull towards that sweetness is so strong that it's so beautiful to let go. And then they go there.

And that is the realm, of course, when in deep sleep you go to the unmanifested, the source, but you don't know it. You join with the source. In deep sleep, you merge with the source.

And then when you emerge back from deep sleep, you have a vague memory of, oh, that was good. Well, you don't remember. I'm not talking about dreams, but the dreamless state of sleep.

So the pull of the formless is there, too, and that pulls you below thinking. And it's beautiful. And so this is not the way we go.

We go to the formless by transcending thinking. And there also you encounter, at first it's so subtle you may hardly notice it. At first, all you notice when you transcend thinking is a spaciousness.

But within that spaciousness, there's also very subtle joy at first, and it can become very intense as you become attuned to it. So alertness without tension. I'm demonstrating now without words, which is not easy.

Energetically, yes. And what is that alertness without tension? It's to have an analogy.

If you had just landed on this planet as an ET, and nothing that you see you can name because it's all alien to you, how would you be? You would go, oh. You would just be a spacious awareness.

You have no words to describe things. That's a relaxed alertness, which sometimes comes to people naturally when they use the expression, wow, wow. Two seconds, three seconds of no thought.

You don't know what to say or think. Wow. Now, for most people who enter that state, many people still enter that state only occasionally and accidentally of alert, absolutely alert, intense presence because life forces them into it.

As you know, dangerous activities may do it. They stop your mind, and you feel so alive that you want to go back to your dangerous activity again and again, get almost addicted to whatever it is, motor racing. Ooh.

No thought, just intense aliveness. And when the car stops, then go, ooh. You're back in time.

You were in the timeless. Serious illness can do it, too. It wakes you up.

You suddenly become acutely aware how short-lived this form is, and you step out of time. And sometimes people say, I really began to appreciate the present moment, but really it means I stepped out of time. And sometimes when they get healed, it stays with them, which means the illness, the serious illness, brought about a shift in consciousness.

It can happen, but I wouldn't wait for that. If you choose presence now because you realize strongly that that is what wants to realize itself through you, then it's less likely that life will force you, have to force you into presence. So you can either voluntarily walk into paradise or be dragged into it screaming, no.

So when we sit in stillness, when you sit either alone or we sit together as now here in stillness, as long as there is a certain intensity, thought is kept at bay. It happens maybe just fragments or not at all. And there's no effort involved or willpower.

Presence is not willpower. It's not willpower that says no thought. It just can't happen in intense presence.

And the moment you can actually experiment in yourself with when the level of intensity goes down a little bit, more thoughts start coming in. Interesting. And when it goes down even further, more, more, until there's only thought.

That means you're completely a person again, just a person. So now you cannot be a non-person for the rest of your life in this world. You have to, as I've said several times, you have to be both the presence and a person in one.

So carry that state of presence with you so that thought, not the absolute intensity perhaps that we have here. It's beautiful here as we sit in presence and experience. It can be so intense that no thought arises at all.

And you should choose that at home or wherever you are in nature, as much as you can, choose to enter the state of intense presence when you know there's nothing right now that you need to deal with. Don't believe your mind that says, no, no, first you have to think about all these problems and make another five phone calls. No, do it.

A little bit of length of time doesn't matter. Choose intense presence. Then some of that stays with you when you go back into everyday life and the mind needs to work again.

And then thoughts become interspersed with presence. There are thoughts here, let's say here are five thoughts, but in between the thoughts, presence is seeping through, which means even as you speak to people, speak with people of this or that or look for where to go, there is a peace that you carry inside. And that peace is another word for the stillness or the presence that seeps through thoughts.

So that otherwise you have just a wall of thought. Nothing can't get through. Presence wants to get through, but it can't.

So it's pushing from because it's the evolutionary impulse of the universe. Presence is pushing here, see, but it can't get through. There's too many thoughts, one thought after another after another.

It's just a stream of continuous. And there's something that wants to manifest through you. Now what happens when pressure like that builds up eventually?

Something happens. Oh! That was the ego, by the way.

The wall of thought activity, unawareness of anything else is ego, and something that wants to come into this dimension through this form can't get through, but pressure is building up. What happens then? Suddenly something cracks in the ego, the wall of continuous thought.

That's painful to the ego. And that whatever that is, it can be many things. It can be a psychological malfunction.

It can be a physical malfunction. It can be some drastic thing happens. Something goes drastically wrong in your life, a breakdown, whatever it is, mental, physical, some absolute disorientation and confusion, whatever.

But you didn't make room for life. You didn't make room for what really matters, what wants to manifest through you. And so if an entire civilization does that, let's say a country, or countries are not really separate anymore these days, there's just the civilization.

And if the vast majority of people live trapped in the egoic state, then what tends to happen is it attracts disaster to itself because in the absence of that, when that is denied, that which wants to evolve really is a denial of life itself. And then disaster happens. And then that's what has its place.

And then it happens that way. So it's highly recommended that you cooperate, align yourself with the evolutionary impulse. It makes life not only easier, but also more empowered because when you let it through, ultimately we're talking about the essence of who you are.

When you let it through, it can begin to operate in your life and be in relationships, in what you do, even influence the way in which you think so that thinking is no longer dysfunctional as it is when thinking is all there is. When thinking becomes dysfunctional and becomes an enemy really, you create your own enemy, and it's your mind. So then thinking can become fruitful too when the alignment, the opening is there.

But it may well be that at first you don't notice much change and the mind says, why am I doing this? It doesn't make sense. What's the point in being still?

How is that solving your problems, says the mind? Haven't you got things to worry about that are really more important than stillness, at least right now? Maybe when I've solved my problems, then I can relax and then I can investigate all that.

But in the meantime, I've got too much on my mind. Some people say on my mind or they say on my plate, but that really means on my mind. On my plate means outside.

And of course, everybody has too much on their mind when there's no awareness. And you cannot wait for the end of your problems before you can be present or for the situation to be more helpful. It has to be done wherever you are, which is now, that opening.

So when we practice here or you practice on your own, then we invite that state of intense presence as we do here now and become familiar with it. And then what builds up, so to speak, is presence power in your life. The more you enter that state, it doesn't matter for how long, just a few minutes, several times a day.

Some people might call it meditation, but it's more like meditation is usually associated in one's mind with some technique. And any meditation technique really is designed to take you into presence. It's not the technique, it's not the meditation.

Unless it's a meditation that has virtually no technique, as they sometimes do in Zen, where they say they don't even use the word meditation, they say sitting. And so when the Zen person asks you, he doesn't ask you, how long have you been meditating? He says, how long have you been sitting?

20 years. 20 years I have been sitting. Oh, and you still have that big ego?

Of course, if you identify with a conceptual self that has been sitting for 20 years, then yes, you have a big ego. Any conceptual self. So there is a type of meditation also in Tibetan Buddhism that, although I don't know very much about Tibetan Buddhism, but there is a type of meditation which is called, my Tibetan is not very good.

Dzogchen, or something like that, Dzogchen, which really is awareness. And it's not a technique, it's simple. And that is the deepest practice, I believe, I would say, that is the very heart of Tibetan Buddhism.

And the rest, of course, may be beautiful and so on, but it's a lot of elaboration, beautiful things, even philosophy is on top of all that. But if you go deep into the heart, you will find the pure awareness is the heart. If that ever is lost, then the whole thing would crumble.

So the heart is the... It's usually, I believe, considered a very advanced thing in Tibetan Buddhism. First, they give you things to play with, with your mind, can play for a few years, until gradually they take you deeper there, hopefully.

And then finally you touch the formless in yourself, which has always been there, of course. And that's the technique, no technique, just that. And that, of course, is the most pure form of meditation.

The others are there for those who are not quite ready for the technique-less form of meditation. And then, of course, you can also let go of the word meditation. That's good.

You're not doing a meditation anymore. That's a hindrance, that thought that I'm doing a meditation. And that very idea that you're doing a meditation comes in between you and who you are.

Because then you believe that you have something in between that needs to get you to where you want to get to, not realizing that you are already who you are. So this is this presence. When I had a talk, this panel conversation, with the Dalai Lama and a few other people, the moderator asked the Dalai Lama, he said, Eka teaches to be free of thinking, and the Dalai Lama seems to emphasize quite often to cultivate also your mind.

Perhaps this is something that in his culture is important because he might see that they neglected that aspect, cultivating your mind. So the moderator asked the Dalai Lama, what about that, letting go, becoming free of thinking and cultivating your mind, which you emphasize. And the Dalai Lama said, well, I would say that becoming free of thinking is for the few.

And I would like to add that he's probably right, and it was until recently that would have, not that long ago, that would have been entirely true. But my feeling is, I feel very strongly that there is a shift coming so that this state of presence is no longer just for the very few. Traditionally, it has been for the very few.

But now it is for not yet, of course, the majority of the population. But even if it were only for 3% of the population, it would be huge numbers. Even 1% would be huge numbers, and if 1% of the population entered presence and embraced the state of presence as their habitual state, then it would spread much more quickly from there.

So we are here to do that and allow it to happen. Again, we are not making it happen. It sometimes sounds, again, misinterpretations can happen easily, that when I say you can invite presence, sometimes one can feel, okay, I have to make it happen.

And then that moment you think, I have to make it happen, some kind of effort and tension comes back in. Okay, now you can see, I'll demonstrate now what that looks like when effort to be present, effort to hold presence, you become tense in the body and you're holding in. Now, with willpower, you can shut out thought.

You can practice that. It's not recommended. But with willpower, especially if it's associated with stopping breathing, you can hold thought at bay.

But just in the same way that after a while you need to breathe very deeply when you've been doing that, when you let go, an influx of thought comes that's even more powerful than before. So that won't help you really, those methods that involve willpower. But presence is gentle and powerful.

There's no willpower. It's not that I want it. You just, you're open to what wants to come through you.

So when I say practice, again, it's just open yourself to that, choose that. The ability to choose implies that there's already some presence there. It's only from there that you can say, yes, I want more, please, more of that.

I'm open to that. And then the art of living then becomes leading the rest of your life like that and not like that. Each finger representing a thought.

The lack of gap meaning complete identification with a stream of thinking. And this is just a little opening and if it becomes even more powerful then your life will look like that. There's actually more space than thought.

And that's wonderful when that happens. More space than thought, isn't that? And that's easy.

Don't believe your mind when it tells you you can't. You have to think. It's more important to think about this now than to not think.

Now your ability to, if you are interested in manifesting things in your life, which you may not be, that's fine. You may already have manifested the things that needed to be manifested in your life or you may be one of those sweet beings who are not drawn into creating anything out there. The frequency holders, hopefully they're frequency holders because otherwise they're just lazy.

And the frequency holders can of course easily drift into that when they forget that they are frequency holders. They forget that if you don't do very much externally then you need to embody presence. And the little that you still do, everybody does something, if only sweep up the leaves or whatever, the little that you do becomes imbued with presence and there's the quality in every doing and the peacefulness that flows into what you do.

And those, the danger of the frequency holders is that they fall from that beautiful state of presence into a state that is lethargic and is really below thinking. That can, so you need to be very alert when you're not, your life consists of very small little things to do. You've created just a little world around you and you're happy with that.

But you'd be too careful that you don't drift off into, frequency holders who don't know about presence can easily become, get drawn to drugs or become drifters or become very unhappy in this world, they don't fit in anywhere. But it can also happen that a frequency holder, this is one's natural tendency, somebody can be a frequency holder for a few years and then it can be a shift and you can suddenly become an active person. And vice versa also, you can be somebody whose mission it is to create new forms, hopefully consciously, and then after a while it may happen that suddenly you go within and you become a frequency holder.

You've created what you needed to create and you withdraw, maybe for a few years. And perhaps then you come out again, so that can happen too. You may not be one or the other for the whole length of your life or you may be like myself, a natural frequency holder who is responding to life that says, no, no, you come out, you have something to do out here.

No. Can't I stay at home? And life says, no, sorry, can't.

Okay, I have to surrender to what life wants. And so you go out. It's not the natural thing for this form to be out in the world and doing things, but it's surrendered to it.

And occasionally still the pull comes to withdraw. And in the meantime, one is surrendered to what is beautiful too. So there's no resistance to doing it, but occasionally just a pull.

It's those who are into being active and then bring presence rather than creating through the unconsciousness of the ego that is the continuous wanting where you really are creating to make yourself feel bigger and to make yourself feel better in your own eyes or in the eyes of the world. That's the egoic creation. And when those people then become present, then they may still embody this need to create, but then they are no longer engaged in egoic creation.

They can cooperate with what wants to be created as part of the evolution here. And so they create. They become active but continuously connected with the alert stillness as they go out into this world and create.

The moment you lose touch with that, you lose yourself in the doing again. And that is the danger of those humans as opposed to the frequency holders whose danger is to go to sleep. The danger of those who are called upon to create in this world is that they, even as presence begins to flow into what they do, the doing can become so overpowering that they lose themselves again in the doing.

And so they become stressed. And they think that something that they are doing is more important than their state of consciousness now, which is peaceful and alert presence. So something is more important that they want to get to.

Stress arises. They lose themselves again. That's the danger of those.

And in between, there are many humans who embody, who are partly frequency holders and partly... And some don't know what you have to see within whether at this present time, this is a time for you to withdraw or it's a time to come out. It may be only you can know that, what it is that is required.

So if you are... Let's talk for a moment about those that create and manifest new structures, new forms. The foundation, of course, is the fullness of the present moment.

It's from there that you create. If you create from a sense of lack or neediness or wanting, it becomes egoic. And your power of creating is greatly diminished.

But if you come from a place of fullness already, then whatever you create is not... Its purpose is not to enhance your sense of aliveness or well-being or happiness or to put it in simple words, you're not creating in order to feel more fulfilled or more happy than you are now or to become rid of your sense of insufficiency or unhappiness. And there are many books that are quite good these days about how to manifest.

Some books put too much emphasis on the manifesting, implying that if you only become a master at manifesting things, finally you will be okay. Of course, that's not the case. You could be the master of manifesting whatever you want, but if you have not found that which is timeless and formless within yourself, then nothing that you manifest will ultimately satisfy you.

So the foundation for any book or any teaching about manifesting needs always to be very clear that yes, there's nothing wrong with... It's part of what the universe does too. And then it does it through you consciously.

That's beautiful. But if it's only about that, it is one-sided and one-dimensional. The most vital dimension is the unmanifested, out of which all manifestation flows.

But if you're not aware of the unmanifested as the essence of who you are, the formless, timeless, stillness, consciousness itself, then whatever you create either will not satisfy you or it will even cause you anguish and problems. The very thing that you created, at first it looks great, and then suddenly it says, oh, it's bringing so many problems. So that's one way of speaking of the foundational aspect of creating is to speak of the, and some of these books do that, which is good, the gratitude for, the gratitude, they call it.

Gratitude. Now what does that imply? Gratitude is one of the most powerful factors in creating what's not there yet.

So the gratefulness for what is there is one of the most powerful tools for creating what is not yet there. Now what does that mean, gratefulness? It means that you appreciate what is.

You value, you give attention to, you honor whatever is here at this moment. So if you want abundance, there are still people, of course, who would like to have a little bit more abundance. There's nothing wrong with that in your external, but you need to find that sense of fullness first, which is inseparable from the present moment.

Instead of feeling a sense of lack and then try to create abundance, then your power is greatly diminished. You'd have to work very hard, and maybe then you'll make it, but then even that won't make you happy. Find first of all that sense of intense aliveness and fullness that is already here now.

You can start with external things to appreciate the aliveness and beauty of what is already in your life now. For example, how the light reflects off this table. You begin to see that there's usually...

Q and A with Eckhart Tolle TV Part 7

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 54:27)

In your life now, for example, how the light reflects off this table, you begin to see that there's usually only people who take acid would appreciate that. But you don't, there's no need for that, because it's actually, all that acid does, it intensifies your sense perceptions as far as I can tell by the very limited experience of taking it once. It intensifies your sense perceptions, and your sense perceptions become so intense that there's not much room for thinking and conceptualization.

And therefore, sometimes people go around and say, wow, wow, wow, and they're not thinking, they're just perceiving. So the advantage is that it has eliminated your stream of thinking, and then for some people that is so revolutionary that they think it's the greatest thing that ever happened to them. And all it did was that it made sense perception shout so loud that there's nothing else but perceiving.

You get bombarded, it's almost violent, you get bombarded with sense perception, smell, hearing, seeing, oh, wow. But you haven't, there has been no increase in consciousness, no intensification of presence, it's just you have turned up the volume of the things around you, everything is shouting at you, visually shouting, even the smells become, you can even smell a glass of water, especially if coffee has chlorine in it, but even without it, even without it you can smell, I did that, smelled, oh. But the fact is there is, it is miraculous what surrounds you at any given moment, at any moment now, what surrounds you even from just the perspective of the surface reality of sense perceptions, sounds, sights, is alive and has an inherent beauty to it.

Not just those things that are obviously beautiful like the flowers, they are just wonderful, yes, but even things that would not be normally called beautiful, that's why I talked about the reflection of the light of the table or the carpet, and even artificial light, it's light, there's a beauty to it that one wouldn't normally see unless you become really present and then you acknowledge all that surround as just wonderful, you become, you honor everything and you see the beauty that is actually there in everything.

Some artists, this, I don't know when it started in the history of art when they no longer depicted important, so-called important subject matters like important people, portraits of important people or of huge buildings, paintings of buildings or religious figures that they painted. At some point in the history of art, some painters started painting seemingly insignificant things, a bowl of fruit or just one fruit on the table or a landscape that is not spectacularly beautiful. There are many of the French, maybe I think they're called impressionists, they have wonderful landscapes, but not the landscape that shouts at you and says, look, I'm grandiose, gigantic, waterfall and rocks and so on, that is fine too, but that's like taking acid and the landscape shouts at you and says, look how beautiful I am.

But some painters then started to paint seemingly unremarkable landscapes and saw, because they saw, even in the seemingly unremarkable, they saw intense beauty and aliveness. And in that sense, if we contemplate those paintings, it can teach us to be more aware of the aliveness and beauty in the seemingly ordinary because it's there. So those artists must have seen that, must have been present enough to see and just totally ordinary, there's a little hedge, there's a tree, there's a field, nobody would look at that twice.

And they sat and started, first they saw it, presence, wow, and then they started, and some of that perception through presence is still there in the painting. And people, even people who are not very present, can obscurely can sense that this painting has something, they don't know what it is, but it has something. And the multimillionaire can say, can't feel, okay, I'll pay 25 million for that.

But of course he could just go, he could just go into any landscape and stand or sit there and contemplate, it's free. And so this, the practice of abundance, this is, it's seemingly, what I'm talking about is seemingly not connected with abundance, but it is. To see the beauty that is around you is a form of abundance, it's abundant life around you.

And if you don't honor that, if you're unhappy with, you pay no attention to it, you do not honor what surrounds you here and now and say, I want something else. If you don't see the beauty in your little cabin, but because you want the mansion in Beverly Hills, then there's this gap. You're trying to manifest through a sense of lack and incompleteness.

You're trying to manifest abundance when you don't feel abundance. Now, if you work extremely hard and maybe you'll even get there, probably you won't, but maybe you will make enough money and finally you have a mansion, it won't help you because when you finally sit in your mansion, you will be the same as you were in your cabin, not being able to honor the present moment. And the same dissatisfaction will surface again and you will be very surprised and say, well, how can that be that I'm still unhappy?

I was unhappy in the cabin, I'm unhappy here. Not the first few weeks or months that you are there, but after that, when the egoic delusion goes and the story you're spinning around in me and my achievement, suddenly you can be unhappy again. Well, of course you didn't appreciate.

Now, if you're in your cabin, let's say cabin or whatever, or maybe it's not even a cabin, it's a tent, and you're complaining in your mind about how dreadful it is to have to live in a cabin, little cabin or a tent at your age, still having not made it yet, or the various ways in which people have interfered with you, what you wanted prevented you from achieving what you could have achieved if it only hadn't been for this ex-wife or husband. And if your parents had been more conscious and helped you to get whatever better education or hadn't messed up your life with their negativity, maybe then something could have happened, complaining about, I don't want to be here, it's awful. You don't see the light shining off the table, you don't see even the flowers, you don't really appreciate nothing.

So that's a state of non-abundance, and most likely you will continue to experience non-abundance in various other forms, non-abundance, and even if you achieve the mansion, as I said, you will still basically have it be in the same state. And what is the alternative? The alternative is to appreciate the beauty of the cabin or the tent or what surrounds you, the little things.

But to do that, you need to be alert. Without the alertness, all you have is the mind giving its judgments and say, why do I have to sit in this old chair? It can't afford anything else but this old chair, dreadful.

It's not even not comfortable. I deserve something better. Yeah, you do perhaps, but you haven't honored this chair.

You have to honor the chair first. This chair? And then, of course, as we all know, the painter Van Gogh painted, he must have appreciated his old chair.

There's a famous picture of an old rickety chair and there must have been a lot. Now, he was not present in the rest of his life because he cut off his ear, but he must have been very present while he was painting and looking in that area. He painted this chair because he saw how alive and beautiful it was.

He didn't have judgments about it, it's old or whatever. He also painted a pair of shoes, his own shoes, by the way. I think they're called peasant shoes, but they were actually his own shoes.

He painted a pair of old, worn out shoes and now people, nobody would have bought these shoes or the chair if he had said, give me $10 for this chair, no way. But now this painting is $25 million and the same with the shoes. Isn't that amazing?

You wouldn't give any money for the shoes, but for the painting of the shoes, you give millions. And that's because the painting embodies the additional dimension of presence. So you're not really buying a painting of old shoes.

You're buying a piece of presence to the extent that that is possible, that presence can flow into something material. Now, if you don't have enough money to buy one of his paintings, then why not just look more consciously around you? You find similar things everywhere.

Well, your shoes probably won't be as old as his, but it doesn't matter. And your chair won't be as ugly as the mind would have said, an ugly old chair. You will have just an ordinary chair.

Start with what is around you. Bring intense alertness to the sense perceptions and by doing so, honor the is-ness of each little being. Because even inanimate things are really alive.

Energy fields, the atoms inside are vibrating continuously. They just look inanimate, but you can actually sense the aliveness when you don't conceptualize. So that's the beginning of feeling of gratitude really is for what is here in this moment.

And you don't have to say in your mind, oh, thank you so much. Gratitude can happen without any words. It's just an honoring, an honoring of life.

Life that has taken on form to honor the forms of life that are around you at this moment. And then something emerges that is, you may notice, you feel alive within yourself. You feel a field of alive presence that is the background to the sense perceptions.

And that is presence. So you feel the background to your sense perceptions, which is your very own presence or the presence of God through you, which is the same thing. You feel that presence in the background of all perceptions.

When you listen to the sound of the wind in the trees, sunlight streaming through the window or an artificial light bulb even, light, and everywhere, you have then the two things, the what is in the world of form and the formless that makes all these perceptions possible. And that is, and there you have the source of all abundance, which is consciousness itself, out of which everything arises. And the moment you touch within yourself the source of all abundance, then you can create out of that sense of fullness.

If you then use your mind or allow it, this feeling, to flow into your mind and create what it wants to create, a thought may come to you of what it is that you want to create. And let's say it's a better place to live. Then you can, yes, you can.

What does it feel like, that better place? Let's say you want a mansion. You probably don't need a mansion, but maybe just better than a tent.

You want to be warm. So if you visualize a house on a hill, for example, what does it feel like? What does it feel like to be in that house?

It feels the same fullness that you're experiencing now. That's what it feels like. No different from now.

You're already there and the house is already there. There's no difference in the aliveness that you feel now. You create out of there and you can, if you like, you can see yourself in the house feeling just as alive.

And when you finally, the house comes, then that becomes the reality for you. You have exchanged the tent for the house, but basically, the enjoyment is the same. A little bit of discomfort perhaps may leave you.

If you get from a tent, you move to a house, you don't, it gets warm, you have more heat around you, perhaps a more comfortable chair to sit in, which is nice. That's, maybe you have, when I graduated from, I had a bicycle for many years up to the age of 32. I would ride around on a bicycle and then enjoyed that tremendously.

And one day, my dad arrived in England to our visit and he was shocked that at my age, I was still riding on a bicycle. It never occurred to me. And then, somebody gave me an old car and I enjoyed driving that.

It's just as much, it's more comfortable, but the enjoyment, I loved bicycles, I still do. The enjoyment is the same. Or sitting on a bus, for a while, I used mostly public transport.

I've spent wonderful times sitting on buses, just being present and completely present and looking out. You don't have to concentrate on the traffic. You can just look at everything, all life flowing past you, feels abundant.

But if I'd had a concept in my mind, I was still, let's say, 15 years ago, 12 years ago, bus was my mode of transportation. If I'd had a concept in my mind, you are now 40 something, 50, whatever, 48, whatever, I can't remember. And it said, and you're still on, you haven't made it yet.

You're still traveling on a bus and it could be a source of suffering, a diminished sense of self. Why, at your age, can't you have a car? That's what my mom said.

Any, it doesn't, the fullness is there. whatever the situation is, there is the fullness of life around you. And you can then create, but no longer out of that sense of unhappiness, hoping to whatever you manifest is going to free you of the unhappiness.

No, it's only whatever you create is in the service of the whole, that is one aspect of it. It's in the service of the totality of other humans and the planet and the whole. Those are the things that want to be created through you.

And whatever you create, then is empowered by the totality, the universal consciousness itself, and not a little me that has said, I need this or that to be happy. If you align yourself to what the totality requires, then it is more than likely that abundance will also flow into your life externally because you're already coming from abundance as your primary state. And then there will be some forms of abundance coming into your life.

So abundance is here and now as an inner realization or an inner state. Out of that, you can manifest or the universe manifests through you. So the essential thing to appreciate the seemingly unremarkable in your life.

If you don't appreciate the seemingly insignificant and you're waiting for something significant to happen to you, then you always pursue some idea of what is significant and don't realize that the significant is hiding in the seemingly insignificant. Because even the most interesting life, let's say you are somebody who continuously does important things and continuously travels and so on. Even there, every moment just consists of relatively insignificant things.

Let's say, okay, here comes another trip, I'm catching a plane, I'm traveling first class to Paris tomorrow for three days doing important things there and then I'm coming back. But if you observe, now that looks to some people as that's a very desirable life or you must be, it's great, it's so exciting. If you're not present in every moment, it's not that exciting.

It's just stressful and you have jet lag and very soon you get tired of the champagne that they give you on the plane, you get tired of the caviar and say, no, just give me a glass of water and you're unhappy. And because if you overlook even the significant trip to Paris consists of little moments. The limousine comes to pick you up and then you sit in it, you're going to the airport.

Now, what's your state of consciousness at that moment? It's just, are you present or you can appreciate that. Appreciate every, then you're walking somewhere to the plane and then you're sitting somewhere.

It's not, in itself, every moment is not a big thing. Even when I give a talk, one could say, okay, now you're going to talk to 2,000 people tonight. That's a big, big thing.

I wish some people say, oh, I wish I was doing something like you. Well, it still is just little things. The car comes, takes me to the green room somewhere and then I sit in the room.

And then people come and they say, oh, we can't start yet, there's a delay. Kim says, we need another 10, 15 minutes. There's people are not getting in, there's chaos there, and just sit.

And if I had an idea in my mind that something usually significant is going to happen now, I would become stressed. I have to give a talk. I have to give a talk now, the next moment.

All these people are waiting for me to give a significant talk. No, that would be stressful and it wouldn't be very good, would not be enjoyable. But to appreciate just the room as it is, there's again, there's another table suddenly in the green room and there's a chair I'm sitting on and there's some flowers and usually they put two bananas there.

And a glass of water. And so you just look around, there's just the simplicity of this moment. If you leave that, then you get into some kind of expectation, look anxiously, looking forward to the next moment, which is very unknowable, completely unknowable, and just stay with what is.

And then finally, you just can take one step at a time and you walk to your chair that's on the stage without any thought. You can't have any thought in your head when you're going to transmit presents for two hours. And then you sit again, there's another chair.

There's always a chair that you sit on somewhere. And there you sit and there's just presents. Again, every moment is relatively insignificant.

And why look for something significant but see the depth that is in all the little things because really your whole life consists of little things put together. Okay, yes, there are such things as weddings. People say, okay, significant.

There was a watch company for a few years, their advertising slogan was significant moments. I don't know what that meant, but then the people were wearing a watch and then they were looking and there was something significant happening around them. Know that it's an amazing thing when you no longer look for that in your life, but see, it's already around you, the depths and the aliveness of everything around you, which can only be recognized by being in touch with your own depths and aliveness.

It is from that place of intense aliveness, spacious presence that you can appreciate the aliveness in all things. And what really happens is it is more than just the sense perception of a chair or the sense perception of the table, the sense perception of the glass of water. Even within the sense perceptions, you can sense that there's more than what you are just perceiving on the surface.

That everything has a presence, an alive presence to it. And that's a wonderful revelation. And you see that everything that surrounds you at any moment has an alive presence to it.

It's all alive. Even the so-called artificial things, because they're still alive, they're still consisting of vibrating energy fields. And that's an amazing, when you can sense that aliveness, it's not so when we talk of beauty and in little things, it's not just that what you see, because behind the seeing, there is the sense of aliveness.

And when you, that's your, and then you see when you are in touch with that within, you can actually almost penetrate into the spaciousness of each object and feel it's alive. Then you don't have to wait for something to happen in your life to feel more alive. You can already, you commune with the aliveness around you.

And that's the practice then to bring, it eliminates that unsatisfied person that otherwise you carry around with you as your mind identification with that. It eliminates that. And you're there as consciousness perceiving its own creations ultimately, because you are consciousness and every life form has come out of that.

Out of the unmanifested. The Big Bang, they say, is that which started it all. And nobody knows exactly what that means.

Especially nobody knows what was there before the Big Bang. Nothing. The only answer you can give is nothing.

Because if there was something there before, then there was already something created. There was nothing, no thing, just a vast emptiness or fullness, which is the same thing. So there was the one, only the one.

And then the one became the many. The one, they call it explosion, but that's a silly word. And the one started to become form, create form, flow into forms.

And it's still doing it now. The explosion, we are part of the so-called explosion of differentiation of life forms. The outward journey into manifestation.

And yet, that which started it all, the nothingness, the black hole at the center of it all, is still within you as your essence. So the primordial state of the, before the universe came into being, was never lost. Every form has that as its essence within.

And that is the space. Inner space. That is timeless.

That's, out of that, the whole entire universe came. So you are a microcosm of the whole thing. You're a microcosm containing both the formless essence of all things and also embodying the form, the temporary form.

Now, to be conscious of the formless essence is an amazing thing. That's a miracle. The universe, through you, right now, amazing miracle.

The universe through you, right now, is becoming conscious of itself, not just of what it has created, but of its own essence. When you become conscious of yourself, the universe becomes conscious of itself. Isn't that wonderful?

So in that sense, there's an evolutionary process at work in the universe. In another sense, of course, there is a timeless at the heart of all things. It's almost, it's like a contradiction, but at the heart of all things, there's a timeless, formless.

And in the, it looks out here as if there's an evolution. So create, if you feel called upon to create, open yourself to see what it is that wants to come into manifestation through this form. Not what I want to create, the little I.

What is it that wants to happen through me? And then just wait. If you don't know yet, just wait.

Time may pass on the surface reality where time seems to apply. In the meantime, bring presence in. Presence, grow in presence power.

Presence power accumulates, and it could be some years and nothing is happening. It's possible. And suddenly, something happens.

Suddenly, something manifests through you. People sometimes almost complain and say, okay, I've been practicing presence for a year now, and nothing has changed in my life. Well, maybe you haven't been practicing quite as much as you think you have.

If you're complaining that nothing has changed in your life, don't underestimate the power that is in presence. And even if seemingly nothing much is happening yet, there's enormous power that comes through you and flows into this world and flows into your body and through you. And you don't even try to understand what it wants.

You don't even try to understand what it wants to do. No, you can only ever get glimpses of what its ultimate purpose is. There's no single human being who knows intellectually what the ultimate purpose of that vast power is that wants to come into this world through you.

You don't need to. The human mind could not possibly. It would be absurd to even try to understand it.

But you can align yourself with the power because you ultimately are it. It is the one power there is, the one consciousness. It is, that's all there is.

It is the one. And from the point of view of the timeless one, yes, one could say the whole world of form is a kind of dream. One could say that.

Because just as a dream evaporates very quickly, everything that appears, every situation and every human dissolves fairly quickly here. And in that sense, one can speak of it as a kind of dream. When you're in the midst of it, it looks real.

But when you see closely, you realize every form is short-lived and fleeting. And that's fine. And then the forms become, you realize it is a kind of playful thing, form.

The universe wants to play this. And then you start playing it too. It's no longer dreadfully serious.

You start playing, you can manifest forms. And even nice forms and helpful forms, beautiful. The dream becomes much more pleasant.

And you know there is an awake part from where you can watch the dream, knowing it's a dream, a kind of dream. When you think that's all there is, these forms, you have to hang on to them. Oh, it's fearful.

It's, they're all short-lived. And that contemplation itself is liberating. To contemplate the short-lived nature of all forms is liberating because then the forms of life won't assume an importance that they don't have.

But you appreciate, what you really appreciate when you appreciate the world of form is you appreciate that which animates each form. The one. So really that what it comes down to, it's God.

Whatever, wherever you look, it's God appearing as this, that, that. And what you really love and appreciate in each form is the divine formless out of which each form comes. But to be able to sense that, you have to sense it in yourself first.

And that seeing, that is seeing the beauty in everything. That's really what it means. And that seeing the world without a sense of separation, not me and the rest of the universe, which is the egoic state.

Here's me, and there's the rest of the world. And somehow you have to survive in the rest of the world and against it. That's the ego.

And so without the sense of separation created by the mind, all there is is the continuum. You and the universe are one. And in a way one could say you are this, you are the, when you get in touch with the, the spaceless essence, the formless space, timeless essence of yourself, that is the heart of the universe.

The heart of the universe does not have a particular location. It's not somewhere out there. It is concealed in every being.

So that is God in you, as you. Some mystics had that realization and then they shouted suddenly, joyfully, they shouted, yes, I'm God. Sufis, some Sufis, some Christians shouted, yes, yes.

They shouldn't have done that. Because it gets misunderstood and the ego that identifies with form doesn't like that. And so usually then bad things happen to them.

But they probably didn't mind anymore. Jesus tried somehow to convey what he had realized to his listeners. So he had to use some language that they could understand.

Relatively, he was talking to relatively simple people. Now, he couldn't have said the formless. They would have gone, what?

He had to use terms that they could somehow relate to, to convey something that's beyond words. So he said, I and the Father are one. It is not I who does things, it's the Father through me does it.

He used, it was a patriarchal society, so he had to use, if he had said mother, it would have said, well, that's only a woman. It was a patriarchal society, so he called it father. In a different society, he would have called it mother.

And in a way, the term, the mother, is closer to the reality than father, because mother is the openness, the feminine is the openness, the open vessel. So in a way, it's closer to the formless spaciousness than the masculine, not that it in itself is either masculine or feminine, no. So he used the term father.

And then they said, oh, good teacher. He said, don't call me good. There's only one good, and that's the one.

The good is the God, God is the good. He didn't say that, I'm saying that because I'm speaking English, where good and God happen to be very similar. There's only one, only one is good, or something he said.

Only the one, only one is good. Don't call me good, what does that mean? It means don't transform this form into, don't focus on the form, realize the formless through this form, you can do that.

Realize the formless in yourself. You are the light, he said. He said not only I am the light, he did say that, but he also said, you are the light of the world.

You are the light of the world. What is that? Which means the very thing that illuminates the whole world.

The consciousness that illuminates the whole world without which nothing could be. You are that. So it was a hard job to use language to convey something that's beyond language.

And at a time when everything, language was so limited, at that time in India, they had already a highly developed terminology for such things as for the spiritual dimension. But where Jesus was teaching, that highly developed terminology was not yet in existence. And even if it had been in existence, the people he spoke to would not have understood.

So once you connect with the one, you realize that the space within, you can then look at any teaching and see the truth that's hiding in the words. You're not then misled by the words. And wherever you look, you can penetrate and say, oh, I know exactly what that meant when it was said.

You can look at the essential truth of Buddhism, the words of the Buddha, and see the truth that's in there, the truth of the teachings of Jesus. You can use any tradition. In the Hindu tradition, it's the most highly developed spiritual tradition.

You see it in so many forms there. And it's always, it's a recognition. Oh, yes.

And then you can also, because there's so many books these days that come out, and you only need a few, really. And so you can go into a bookstore and open a book and read from that sense, place of connectedness with being, and then sense whether the words have power or not, whether they have come out of presence or out of accumulated knowledge. So all you need is, or you look on Amazon, I think you can read a few pages from each book there, just to really see.

You can then feel whether that is, and then you might enjoy, if it comes from presence, it may help you, or you may just enjoy it. Or you may not want to read it, don't need to. So you can use your wisdom that is there when you connect with the formless.

And then you look at teachings. There was one question asked, what about channeled teachings, the question asked. Can we trust channeled teachings or not?

Teachings by dead masters. And of course, this again, here, the same thing applies. A teaching is not true just because it's channeled.

And a teaching is not untrue just because it's channeled. You have to apply your wisdom when you look at a teaching. And of course, there's the famous dictum as regards the dead masters.

Just because they are dead doesn't mean they're smart. Which of course is true. Sometimes people are impressed when something is channeled because it's channeled.

So channeled neither means that it's true or not true. You have to use your wisdom and take a look at the teaching and sense whether it comes from a deep place or from a superficial place. And just easy to do after a while, very easy.

And then you cannot be misled anymore, it's fine. So some teachings are helpful. There are some channeled teachings are deep and other channeled teachings are not deep.

They might just tell stories, what life is like on other planets and so on. If you might enjoy reading it, it doesn't. On the other hand, some channeled teachings are deep.

Ego can come in into any teaching. So you have to be aware of that. Any teacher that you go to, there could be ego creeping in when the teacher says, there are many teachings around these days, but no teaching has actually reached the level that I'm at.

Then you know that, oh, could that be ego? Yes, probably. And even into channeled teachings, ego can come in.

It can be the ego of the person who's doing the channeling. It can be the ego of the entity that is channeled. Even in that realm, people can still carry egos wanting to be important.

So be alert and look and see, and you'll know what's right for you and what's not right. Increasingly, I would say the only reason why you read more books is just for the enjoyment of it. I still read spiritual books occasionally, sometimes books that people send me.

Well, I can't read them all, but, and I sometimes think there's a deep enjoyment when I see the truth again reflected in some other forms. Yes, that's it, he's got it, he's got it, yes. The bell is a wonderful meditation device.

I always recommend that you follow the sound with your attention, and then it gradually subsides, and then all that's left is attention itself. So the form dies down, the form arises, and then gradually it dies, and when the form has died, all that's left is consciousness. First, there was consciousness of the sound.

And then the sound subsides, and then there's just consciousness of nothing, or consciousness of itself. Same thing, no thing.

[Speaker 2] (56:19 - 1:13:03)

Welcome to this Qigong meditation. In this Qigong meditation, we will move through various stages, through the gross physical body to the very subtle body or energy. And then gradually, as you practice this Qigong meditation more and more, you'll find you'll move right into stillness, transcending both gross and subtle body.

You can do this practice either standing, or sitting comfortably in a chair. You can also sit in traditional cross-legged meditation posture. When you get to the level of beginning to feel the qi in the body, this qi is fluid, it wants to move.

It's meant to move, it's not meant to be stagnant. So all qi flows. Flows in the body, and what we call outside the body, throughout the whole universe.

It's energy, alive, vibrant, fluid energy. And staying connected to this energy can lead you to the source of this energy, stillness itself. And from that still point, movement happens.

And this movement happens through this energy. Then energy manifests itself into form. So this energy can be very subtle.

But when we practice Qigong, we are practicing so we can begin to feel this subtle body. The energy that you are. For you are 99% empty space, and through this empty space, energy flows.

In connection to this, spontaneous movement can happen. Even spontaneous words. For true creativity arises from stillness, becomes energy, then form.

So let's go into this Qigong meditation together. Sitting comfortably in a chair, come to sit at the edge of your chair. Sit right up onto your sit bones, so you're not rolling back, but sit right up onto your sit bones, just on the edge of your chair, with your feet parallel, flat on the floor.

And legs, perhaps, and feet hips, hip distance apart. Your hands rest comfortably on your lap, either face down or face up. And your spine is nice and straight, so imagine the crown of your head being pulled towards the heavens, and your sit bones and your feet being pulled towards the earth.

You may wish to close your eyes. And let's just become aware of our breath. Just notice how you're being breathed at this moment.

And become aware of your body. Scan your body from head to toe, toe to head, just noticing perhaps any tension, tightness, pain. Just notice, and now relax your body from head to toe.

Relaxing your face. Now we'll move into the counting of the breath. And what that would look like is that we're gonna be regulating the breath, so the inhale is on a count of four, and your exhale is on a count of four.

So you inhale, two, three, four. Exhale, two, three, four. Inhale, two, three, four.

Exhale, two, three, four. Inhale, two, three, four. Exhale, two, three, four.

Continue your counting on your own. If thoughts arise, just notice it and return your attention to the counting, to inhaling, exhaling, regulating your breathing. If you find as you do this, you can even breathe deeper, you can count for six.

So inhaling for a count of six, exhaling for a count of six, only if you feel comfortable to do so. Staying present, now you may wish to stay and remain counting your breath, or you can stop counting and now begin to follow your breathing. So follow your inhalation and your exhalation, keeping your attention on the breath.

If you'd like to take this a little deeper, begin to feel and sense the breathing, feeling the breath as you inhale, feeling it in the body, sensing the breath, and feeling and sensing the breath as it leaves the body. And going a little deeper yet, and that is to begin to feel and sense the chi, your energy body. Perhaps it feels like a slight tingling, a warmth, or even a numbness.

Just feel into that energy. Or perhaps you're feeling a contraction in your body, some ache or pain. Feel into that.

For those aches and pains, it's trapped energy. Breathing into that energy, breathing into that sensation of perhaps stagnant chi. All energy flows.

It's meant to flow. It's meant to move and not be stagnated. So just now allow your body to move however it spontaneously wants to move, without thinking about it, just tapping into this energy, being vigilant with awareness, feeling the breath, feeling the energy, and just allow the energy to move you.

This is not about a certain form or structure. It's about expressing, allowing this energy to express through your body. And just natural, maybe even simple or gentle movements, maybe nothing large, but maybe small movements.

Just allow it to move. Keeping connected to this energy and following this energy, just watching it move through you. Breathing as you move, just allowing it to take its expression.

Chi is soft and fluid, and so much of the time throughout the day, we move through our minds, allowing our mind to dictate our movement. Just allow energy to start moving through the body, opening up your chi channels. Now make sure that your mind isn't thinking that you have to be moving.

You don't have to be doing anything. This is not about doing. It's about being one with life, the energy that you are, and expressing that life through your form.

And when you're ready, if you feel like you want to stop, you can stop. If you feel like you want to continue moving, feeling and sensing, following your breath or counting your breath, you can do so. But for now, it's a joy to be with you in Qigong meditation.

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:14:07 - 1:19:30)

I haven't mentioned being in the body for a while, so let's feel it now, that you are actually, feel the energy field of your, as you sit there, and I sit here, we feel a certain aliveness pervading the body. It's very simple, but some attention has to go there, otherwise you can't feel anything. Which means you have to take some attention away from thinking.

If you're fully in thought, you can't feel your body at all. You don't feel alive anymore. Just abstractions.

So the beautiful thing is, it's not only that your body loves being acknowledged and getting your attention, it's a very healing thing to do, and most importantly, it slows down your thinking considerably, if it doesn't even stop it completely, because if you have your attention here, you can't have it there. And this is the embodied state, it's quite nice. What you're feeling is not ultimately the physical body, it's already halfway beyond the physical body.

Qi, life energy, and I call that, it's halfway between form and formlessness. It's a bridge, Qi is a bridge between the formless dimension and the form. So it's wonderful to sense that.

And it can be, you can do it anywhere, when there's enough room, you don't need to focus on externals 100%, have some attention in the body. We sit here, boredom disappears, for example, when you have attention in the body, you're not bored, you actually enjoy being, feeling alive. And that can serve as an anchor for staying present.

And that can be one way of looking around at the world without unnecessary mental labeling, as clarity of perception. And looking at the situations that arise in that clarity of perception. And from that clarity of perception, you know what you need to do, or what needs doing in that situation.

It's a higher intelligence that you contact via the body, a higher intelligence than the quiet knowledge of the human mind. And then you know what to do, it acts, it tells, you have an insight, or spontaneous doing. Or if there's nothing to do, being is enough, you can enjoy just being.

Sleepless nights are a wonderful opportunity for going into the body. Oh, I can't sleep, I wish I could sleep. Why don't you do something useful, go into the body.

And then you lie there and feel the aliveness. Oh, I wish, I hope I won't go to sleep too soon, because it's so nice. And before you know it, you've gone to sleep, perhaps.

And then you wake up in the morning, perhaps you still feel a lingering sensation there in the body, and if you don't, as you wake up, put your attention into the body first, before you start thinking about the day. For just a couple of minutes, three minutes, two minutes. It's a good start of the day.

To feel alive, it can't be a bad start of the day. I'll tell you what a bad start of the day is, it's listening to the news, first thing. It's a grounding, but not a heavy grounding, it's rooted in being.

Hi.

[Speaker 3] (1:19:59 - 1:20:59)

Hi. My question is on sexuality. I would say instinctive impulse.

When I see, for example, a woman jogging, to look, most times I look. And also, when the lady is beautiful inside also, how do I balance not getting too lost in the little play, you know. That's my question.

[Speaker 1] (1:21:00 - 1:31:38)

Okay. Thank you, I know what you mean. You may have heard of something called Tantra.

It's a, that means basically bringing consciousness into something that is usually unconscious. For example, sexuality. I would even include other things like eating.

Things that tend to pull you into unconsciousness. I don't know if you've observed some people, who the moment they start eating, they become quite unconscious, relatively speaking. And then when they stop eating, there's a bit more consciousness again.

They go. And then they wake up. So eating consciously would be bringing some awareness into that.

Tantra is traditionally used to point to the possibility of bringing consciousness into sex. And sex starts the moment you're looking at a woman jogging. And basically what Tantra means is not to make it into a means to an end, not to look to the next moment and the one after that.

The final moment of man-woman union always being orgasm. But sex starts with looking. And to be at every moment, honor the moment and enjoy the moment for what it is.

Which is, there's nothing wrong when your body, mind, organism gets drawn to that. You know that this is happening. If you don't know that this is happening, you become the reaction and then you're lost.

But if you know that this is happening, you can actually allow yourself to be drawn. You can look and enjoy just looking. There's no need to go beyond that.

I enjoy looking at all kinds of humans, including women or men, it doesn't really matter. I enjoy the human form. I like to sometimes sit in a cafe in a corner and simply watch the human beings come in, leave.

Some are old, some are young, some are beautiful, some are not so beautiful. They're all beautiful inside. But on the external, the variety of the human form is just quite wonderful to watch.

And if you don't want anything, the question is whether the attraction turns into wanting. The attraction is the attention moves there and it's unconscious. And then the moment comes when you realize that the attention has moved there.

There's no need for you, as some spiritual traditions might tell you, you must not look at a woman. The moment you notice your attention moving, look somewhere else. By denying it, you really intensify ultimately the unconscious urge to look.

There's even in Buddhist monasteries, the monk, when I first visited a monastery, I could see a woman was trying to give a monk something, a pencil or something, and he said, I'm sorry, I can't take it from you, you have to put it on the table and then I'll take it. I'm not allowed to take something from a woman. And this is how, because the power of sexuality was so strong that for a long time in the past, people were afraid of it because you can't control yourself.

If you even just take something, there might be a flash of energy coming. Who knows what will happen next? If you just take a pencil from a woman, what's going to happen next?

So to enjoy, you can also, for Tantra, you can enjoy touching someone. There's no need to, it's all really connected with the self-sufficiency of the present moment and not always needing, wanting the end result, and that includes any kind of sexual attraction. If you bring in present moment living into normal life, you can also practice it there, where you simply enjoy whatever phenomenon is arising at this moment for what it is, instead of it becoming some kind of wanting something in the future, wanting more.

Observe the impulse and if you get lost in it, then you have to wait until you wake up and then can observe yourself running after her. I remember I had a friend in England many, many years ago who suddenly became very interested in spirituality and asked very deep questions. And a couple of times, we were sitting somewhere outside in a park or cafe, and I was talking to him, that was my early form of teaching, seeing individuals coming and asking questions, and I observed a couple of times he was listening to me, it was so important to him, just this vital question was being answered, and suddenly I could see him, he was looking somewhere else behind me.

And I thought, what's going on? He stopped listening. And then I looked around and there was a woman sitting there behind and spirituality was so important for him, but then something else came up that was even more powerful at that time, and that was the attraction.

And then I pointed it out and he suddenly, he was like a man waking up from sleep or from a dream. He was completely lost. And then it happened again.

And after that he was able to be aware of that pull. If you are aware of that pull, you are not the pull. You are not in the grip of that pull.

It's nature. The pull is part of the physical nature. But then if you are not aware, you become the pull, and it dominates the next thing that you do.

You may run after her or you may try to approach her or you may lose yourself in fantasizing for the next 30 minutes. All kinds of things happen. If you become the pull, the pull becomes action or it becomes thought.

So are you the pull that you can sense or are you the knower, the one that knows that this is happening? And if you can be the knower, you can allow yourself or your body, your physical organism, to experience whatever is happening at this moment without losing yourself in that. It's a spiritual practice.

So I recommend that you go into a place where you are likely to encounter many beautiful women. I don't know where that would be, the beach or... And practice.

Sit there and let your attention be pulled. It's a wonderful practice. And women can do it with men or with other women or men.

With men it doesn't matter. The important thing is, can you be the awareness of what's happening or are you losing yourself in the pull? So as a practice, just be there, space for the impulse, space for the attraction, without believing that you need to change something.

If you suppress it, I don't think it's the most skillful thing to do, to actually say, I must not look, because something will build up inside you. It will make it even more powerful. And it will not become obsessive.

The awareness will deepen as you practice that. And then you have a choice. There is always a choice.

It doesn't mean you cannot act. You can act from the awareness. You can still, if you want to meet someone, you can still approach her and say, I don't know what, nothing comes to mind.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:39 - 1:31:41)

That's why I've never done it.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:45 - 1:41:32)

It has arisen in the past. And the question, what can I say? I don't know.

But you may be better at it. Anything, stay with, be the awareness rather than be what happens in it. And you can do it with any kind of appetite.

If you feel pulled to eating, I'm sure you don't, but if somebody feels pulled towards eating more than the body really needs excessively, there's always a moment when the impulse comes to eat more. And so you want, are you able to observe the impulse, knowing that you've just had a meal an hour ago, are you able to observe the impulse arising, or do you become the impulse, and then the next, you don't wake up until you have halfway through the sandwich that you've taken out of the fridge, and suddenly you realize you are eating a sandwich. People have reported to me that this is what happens to them.

They suddenly realize they're already halfway into a sandwich and didn't know how it even, they moved to the fridge unconsciously. The impulse was completely unconscious. And a similar thing happens to people who feel the pull towards alcohol or some kind of drug.

They have the drink in their hands and they didn't know how it got there. It was automatic, unconscious. So if anybody feels a pull, an excessive pull towards certain things, be there as, can you be there as the watcher of that impulse or that pull.

Then there is some freedom that comes in. You can say, yes, I choose to eat another sandwich, or I choose to follow this woman and see where she goes, or I choose to have another drink, or I choose to light a cigarette. Or you can just be with the impulse and observe how it arises.

What does it feel like? Everybody knows what it feels like, a sexual feeling. What does it feel like?

Just observe the feeling of it. Oh, interesting. Or the feeling of hunger.

It's not really hunger. It's the feeling of the need for food when the body doesn't really need it, as an addictive need. What does it feel like in the body?

Where does it arise? Observe it. Or the impulse to light a cigarette.

Where does it, can you be there when the first impulse comes? And the more you practice Presence, the easier it is to be there as these other two, otherwise unconscious impulses come. And then you will sometimes find that the impulse subsides when you're observing it for a minute or two, and then you don't need to go to the fridge and eat a sandwich.

Then you don't need to run after that woman. It's enough to say, Oh, beautiful. And you allow her to be wonderful.

And then you look at a beautiful flower. And so being the Presence, rather than being the reaction, the impulse, the pull that arises, be the space for it. Make it into spiritual practice.

Rather than believing that you're not spiritually advanced enough because you still feel that pull, that's not how it is. Spiritually advanced means you're there as a witness for what is arising. That's all.

So practice this ample opportunity, I'm sure, in your life, and find out that you can be free even as these impulses arise. You don't need to lose yourself in it. I had a great teacher in that respect, and that was my father, who passed away two years ago, and I loved him dearly.

But he, almost to the end of his life, which was the age of 90, he experienced what you describe very, very strongly throughout his life. So much so that whenever he saw a woman, a beautiful woman, he would be lost. His attention would be totally drawn, and his behavior would become unpredictable.

And even when I was a child, I observed it. My mother constantly complained about it. And he was well-known in the neighborhood for that.

In fact, other women warned their friends that look out for this man. And so later on I realized, in addition to the sexual pull, there was something much more powerful in him that was a psychological pull towards the female, and the psychological pull towards receiving attention from the female. Because from what he told me about his childhood, he was the seventh child in the Catholic family.

The seventh child, and everybody was tired of more children in the family. His mother was tired, his sisters were tired, and then the seventh child came, and oh no, not another one. And then he got very little attention from his mother.

The mother was exhausted. He got relatively little attention. He had all these older sisters around him, and they didn't give him that much attention either.

They were living their own life. He was craving for the love of his mother, and never got it. And for the rest of his life, he craved for the attention of women, and he would do anything to get it.

And that often took the form of trying to seduce women, but it never became a true, meaningful relationship, because after he had done that, he very quickly became angry because his feeling towards women was ambivalent. The draw was there, but also great anger because the primordial woman, the mother, had not given him what he needed. So in addition to the sexual pull, there can be a strong, in certain cases, a strong psychological pull for attention, but that may not be the case with you.

But I learned a lot about people driven by unconsciousness, an otherwise very intelligent man in many areas, extremely intelligent, but complete loss of consciousness in certain areas of his life. And again, that is a subject that is interesting and that may apply to one or two of you still, that even as presence arises very strongly in you, there may be one or two areas of your life, whenever that arises, whatever it may be, a certain kind of relationship, a certain subject matter, whenever that arises, you still revert to complete unconsciousness. Old reactive patterns happen.

It could be, and in some cases it's to do with sexuality for some people, in other cases it may be to do with money for some people who from an early age have had psychological issues about money never being enough, and whenever the subject comes up, you lose consciousness completely. So you could have a person who is quite present in all areas of his life, but the moment the telephone rings and on the other end this voice says, this is your investment advisor, I have some news for you, you can see the descent into unconsciousness. What's going on?

Before he was completely present. And if you know that, and you may not, perhaps only other people can tell you that that's still there in your life, listen to them. If ten people tell you that's the case, they may be right, then it's to become particularly alert when certain situations come up so that you can be present as the witness, don't lose yourself in it.

Okay, so next time we meet, you can give us a progress report. Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (1:41:51 - 1:42:51)

So you made a joke about people studying PhDs. I'm doing one right now. And because I've been trained in this special field for a good long time, it may make sense to endeavor to stay in this field and help to raise the energy frequency of the people around me.

I find it hard to sustain this and part of me wants to leave because it's saying you may be more fulfilled in one-to-one interactions somewhere else where you can actually make a difference. Could you comment about this? Okay.

[Speaker 1] (1:42:54 - 1:43:17)

Well, of course, you're asking somebody who abandoned his PhD. I'm not saying you should do that too, nor am I saying that you should not abandon it, so let's just see is the subject matter? What is the subject matter?

[Speaker 3] (1:43:19 - 1:43:30)

I work with Rolls-Royce to develop greener engines for jet engine applications for airplanes at your university that you abandoned.

[Speaker 1] (1:43:40 - 1:43:42)

You are? Oh.

[Speaker 3] (1:43:46 - 1:44:00)

So, as you know, the mind structures there are very intense and in conflict and I don't have enough presence to sustain myself.

[Speaker 1] (1:44:04 - 1:44:06)

And you are how many years into it?

[Speaker 3] (1:44:06 - 1:44:09)

Oh, I'll finish it, so maybe half a year.

[Speaker 1] (1:44:09 - 1:44:10)

You finish in half a year?

[Speaker 3] (1:44:11 - 1:44:21)

Yes, but previously I was thinking about going into academia because I really love teaching. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:44:23 - 1:44:26)

Well, if it's only half a year, you might as well finish it.

[Speaker 5] (1:44:26 - 1:44:27)

Oh, I will.

[Speaker 1] (1:44:33 - 1:47:08)

The next step, of course, then you have to see whether you want to carry on in the academic world or step out of it into something different. A time came for me when I felt so much of an outsider in the world of sherry drinking, academia and ego stalking and people identifying with their knowledge with a few, there were a few exceptions there. At some point, it wasn't a question of deciding whether or not to carry on, it was a realization, that's it.

So when the answer comes to you, it's no longer a question, then it's the true answer. If it's no longer a decision-making process, but the realization from within comes so strongly one day, it could come now, it could come tomorrow, tonight, or in a year's time, that, okay, this is what I have to do. I'm never telling people what to do because the answer, what to do, has to come from within.

So, it's not a decision-making process or you can't, or if you put up the number of reasons you could theoretically say, okay, here I'm going to put down on this side of the paper the reasons for staying in the academic world, and here I'm going to write down the reasons for not staying, that's one way, but that's not the powerful way of arriving at a true answer. The powerful way is become still and wait for the realization to come ready-made, and you can't even question it. Then you believe or stay and know how to stay.

It might come and say, I'll stay for a year and see what I can do with presence and continue to work. Who knows? It can only come to you, but when it comes, it's no longer a question, there's no question about it anymore.

So you have to wait for it to come from that deep place, and it's quite possible that it's already there, but you don't recognize it. It's quite possible that deep down you already know, but you don't fully realize that you already know.

[Speaker 3] (1:47:13 - 1:47:44)

I surrendered to the PhD three years ago. It wasn't a choice I would have made, but I realized that I'm good at what I do, according to the world. So I thought that my soul knew then, but I find now that I don't, so maybe we'll just have to just stay for a little longer.

[Speaker 1] (1:47:47 - 1:49:47)

Yes, yes. It started with, I'll tell you just very briefly how it came with me to do a PhD. I had already, this strange awakening that happened to me, happened to me in the same year that I started doing the PhD before I went to do graduate work, because what happened was the shift happened within, but on the outer level my life carried on.

It had a momentum its normal way, except that some things just came very easily, so the scholarship suddenly was offered, and there was nothing else to do, so I drifted into it, and I enjoyed being there in these strange, unreal surroundings of the university, divorced from normal reality, and after a year I already realized this is not my life anymore, academic work, and basically stopped working on it, but still not knowing what to do, so I carried on doing supervisions, which is teaching undergraduates, it's quite well paid, some people live on that for ten years, and stayed for another two years doing that, and virtually stopped working on the PhD, and then suddenly one morning say, I'm leaving, no question about it, I have to leave, and so a couple of months later I was gone, and so wait for the answer to come, it can only come to you, but not through analytical thinking, so you're already deeply connected, so it won't be long, I believe, now that, before it comes,

[Speaker 3] (1:49:48 - 1:49:50)

thank you for sharing,

[Speaker 1] (1:49:51 - 1:50:05)

in the meantime, enjoy the present moment, even there, it's quite beautiful, on your bike, along the river,

[Speaker 3] (1:50:06 - 1:50:09)

I row, it's beautiful, that's my, that keeps me sane,

[Speaker 5] (1:50:28 - 1:50:29)

It's hard not to be nervous

[Speaker 4] (1:50:29 - 1:51:22)

about the microphone, can we help our kids, and I suppose to make it broader, it could be anybody that we love, really, or that we're working with, but with respect to children, can we help them transcend this period of unconsciousness that I think all of us have gone through, or is it necessary for them to go through it on their own, sometimes I feel quite helpless when my kids are suffering, and I get drawn into the suffering very easily, so I want to be able to help them get there faster, if that makes sense at all.

[Speaker 1] (1:51:25 - 1:51:30)

Well first, you have how many children? Two children. How old?

[Speaker 4] (1:51:31 - 1:51:33)

My daughter is seven, and my son is four.

[Speaker 1] (1:51:37 - 1:51:53)

Well first of all, they're very fortunate to have a conscious parent, that's you, and their father is conscious?

[Speaker 4] (1:51:54 - 1:52:04)

Not so conscious, but conscious enough that he's supportive of me being here, and being with the kids, so that's something, right?

[Speaker 1] (1:52:10 - 1:55:41)

So there are more children nowadays born, what the percentage is, I don't know, who may not have to go through the deep unconsciousness that we had to go through, I certainly had to, and also there are more children born nowadays to parents who are in the awakening process, in other words, relatively conscious parents. In my generation, I can't think of any conscious parents. There might have been some, but very rare, extremely rare.

They are still rare now, but much less so than before. My parents certainly were lovely, I loved them, lovely beings, but deeply unconscious, and that wasn't the normal state. So the question is then, how to help them to stay relatively conscious so that they don't get drawn into the mass unconsciousness that pervades, still pervades mass culture, and the technology that promotes unconsciousness and addictive behavior that children get addicted to, the most powerful teaching is not what you say or do to them, but your state of consciousness at home.

So that's the very foundation for teaching your children, has nothing to do with teaching. The foundation for transmitting consciousness is not even wanting to transmit consciousness to them, but to hold the space of presence as you interact with them at home, and also to hold presence as much as possible as you interact with your husband, because there's a relationship there that will infect them with either presence or pain body. So the most vital thing is before even thinking of doing anything is the being, being conscious there, because they observe how you behave, and they kind of, they take that on board to some extent.

Of course, another influence is the mass culture, especially as they spend more time at school. And then, occasionally there may be things that you can point out to them so that they stay in touch with immediate experience, for example, sensory experience. Don't let them lose touch with nature.

Many children these days are so involved in technological games, they don't experience nature anymore. It's something totally alien to them, and that's a very harmful thing. It's a great deprivation of not being deprived of the immediate experience of the natural world, which puts you in touch with the deeper levels of your own being to experience an animal at home is a great help.

I hope you have an animal or two.

[Speaker 5] (1:55:41 - 1:55:41)

We do, yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:55:42 - 1:58:07)

A dog. Yeah. So there's one way already, if children relate to the dog, it's a non-conceptual relationship.

You touch the dog, you look after the dog. I'm getting them out into nature periodically without the gadgets. Without gadgets, right.

That they usually have. Yes. It goes on for hours.

It used to be more television, but now it seems to be even more that, and then the rest of the time there's television, which is the state of semi-comatose hypnosis. Also, so to somehow, it may not be easy because everybody else is doing that kind of thing. Not saying you have to eliminate that completely, but discourage them from spending 100% of their free time with those things.

Take them into nature without the gadgets. And encourage them to direct sensory experience, to touch, to feel, to look at things, not to confuse conceptual labeling with true knowledge or experience. Your youngest is four, he said.

So at that time they're already four. They know what things are called and so on. That is, again, so that they don't, when they are learning language, not to equate concepts with reality.

When you teach them what it is, encourage them to touch it, to see it, to continue to feel it, not just to say, this is called such and such. Continue to look at it. Otherwise, the moment you have a label, you stop experiencing and all you have is a mental label.

[Speaker 4] (1:58:08 - 1:58:24)

And they label themselves as well. I mean, I notice this is much more with my daughter, maybe because my son is still young, but she'll come home and say, I'll never get it. I'm stupid at this or that.

[Speaker 1] (1:58:27 - 2:02:25)

That's a good way to encourage, to point out that not to identify with their thoughts. So if you can occasionally point out that's a thought, it's just a thought, and they don't have to believe in every thought that comes. If you can somehow work with their, to realize that they are not their thoughts, so there's a space between them and their thoughts, to observe their thoughts, and just when thoughts come, you can explain it's no more than a thought.

It might not be the reality. It's not true. Pain body, they have pain body a little bit, as most humans have.

Disidentify from the pain body by pointing out that this is the pain body. I often have said, don't call it pain body for the children. Give it a name.

Call it something. And occasionally they get taken over by that. Point out to them afterwards, what was that?

What took you over? What would you call it? So that an awareness develops.

There's the emotion, and there's the awareness. So encourage that kind of thing. They're able to look at the emotion that takes them over from time to time, which is associated with certain thought patterns also.

And after the event, not during the event initially, see what was it that took you over when you started screaming yesterday. What was that? And then see what does it feel like.

Invent some game so that you can make it into something that they can be aware of. And then let's wait for next time it comes and see how that feels. If you have it, then you can point out after you've woken up from your pain body that, oh, that happened to me.

The same thing happened to me. Awareness. The key in education is to show the possibility of being aware rather than always being identified with whatever arises in their mind.

When I was at the Dalai Lama event in Vancouver last November, October, somebody asked about education, and I suggested to introduce a new subject into the school curriculum, a subject that is more important, more vital than any other subject. And somehow it should flow into every other subject, and that subject is awareness. If we could make awareness into a school subject in the curriculum as the most important one, which one can teach children to be aware of their thoughts as they arise, to be aware of their emotions as they arise, to be aware, more aware of sense perceptions, to be aware of your feelings and other people's feelings.

Perhaps one could devise games that promote awareness. We were already talking earlier, the question before, it can also be done through the Internet. Anything that promotes I don't work with children so other people may be more qualified to come up with these things, who knows.

So awareness is the key thing, whether you call it, you don't have to call it that, just practice it. Because if they can remain aware, then everything will be easier in their lives. If they lose awareness, then they have to go through suffering, and then eventually find awareness again through the sufferings they undergo.

So it's an interesting thing. I'd like to hear more if people have ideas about what to do with children, how to teach presence to children, awareness to children.

[Speaker 4] (2:02:25 - 2:02:27)

I'd like to hear more too.

[Speaker 1] (2:02:29 - 2:03:41)

So for schools then, I know there are some schools that specialize, there are certain Waldorf schools and others, and it's a good thing they particularly encourage the students not to get too much lost in abstraction at an early age, to do things with their hands, to make things with their hands, pottery, all the wonderful things, to make little simple things out of wood, to stay in touch with the immediacy of the sensory environment, not to get lost, not even to learn reading and writing too early. Some, I believe, it's far too early to get into those concepts. In my generation, six was the year when you began to read and write, but I believe sometimes these days they try to teach that at an earlier age, which I believe is not a good thing.

So there's a lot there that can be done, but the central point of it all is presence or awareness. That's the teaching.

[Speaker 5] (2:03:42 - 2:03:44)

Thank you. Thank you very much.

[Speaker 1] (2:04:03 - 3:59:04)

Should you engage in intimacy even though now that you are awakening and understand you don't need a human being to complete you? Should you engage in intimacy? Now, of course, should doesn't come into it at all.

Neither should you engage in intimacy, nor should you not engage in intimacy. Should is not, there's no should. You either do or you don't.

Maybe the question means do I have to? Only you can know that. Whether you feel that that is the right thing now, then it arises.

But the fact that you no longer need to be completed psychologically does not mean that necessarily you no longer engage in intimacy. It just means that the egoic part of an intimate relationship is then no longer there. And that's a great relief.

You can still have an intimate relationship on a physical, emotional level without the psychological need that says I need you to be the answer to my life. Psychological completion. Because it is that delusion that there can be a human being who is psychologically going to complete me that creates all that, a lot of the conflict in relationship.

Because after a while you realize that the other human is not living up to your expectations because no human being could. But you can still have an intimate relationship even without the need to be psychologically completed. You still have a physical form.

So the physical form may, for example, have sexual desire. And again, it may also have emotional feelings which exist within the greater context when you are awakened or even the spirit dimension is already there in your life. Then there's the greater context for all that in the spaciousness of who you are.

Those things appear or happen. Not as an answer to your life's problems and not as an absolute need, not even an absolute need on the emotional, physical level, not as an absolute need. But the form as which you appear may feel drawn to another form and that's fine.

And if it doesn't work or if there is no other form because you are in prison or some other reason, then you can live with that without turning into an unhappy being because you are in touch with that which is beyond form. The unfulfillment on the level of form creates, yes, there's some area then in your life that's unfulfilled and you can feel that. And yet it does not turn into, it doesn't make your life miserable or makes you unhappy or creates a mental interpretation that tells you that your life is dreadful and meaningless because that need is not fulfilled.

Because as presence enters your life, that need exists as a small manifestation within the greater spaciousness that you are. And if it's met, it's fine. And if the need is not met, you can live with that also without turning unhappy or feeling that you're not alive anymore.

No, you are intensely alive and in the depths of that aliveness you are not a form identity. And in the depths of that aliveness you have no needs of other forms. But you can enjoy other forms but the absolute need is not there because all forms are already contained in that, in you.

You're ultimately from the deepest, seen from the deepest level, you're always meeting yourself in another form. So, no should or shouldn't, you may or you may not engage, as you put it, engage in intimacy. I assume that the belief that there's a human being there that's going to make you happy has dissolved and you realize you don't need that not to make you happy or to fulfill you.

And so, with the psychological need gone you can appreciate another human being and you can appreciate emotional or physical levels if they are there. Dear Eckhart, since I've had a spiritual experience I do not feel the old passion with which I lived my life. Is it a holy indifference please comment.

The questioner is 70 years old in brackets here. Since I have had a spiritual experience I do not feel the old passion with which I lived my life. Everybody finds that when the spiritual dimension enters your life, the transcendent dimension enters your life, then the various situations of your life, things that happen, events, places and so on are no longer, no longer have the power that they had before.

Before all you have, you look to the things of the world to find some kind of fulfillment or satisfaction there. And they have enormous importance and heaviness, situations and people. You are looking to the world for fulfillment.

And that's why everything that happens has such seriousness to it in the, as long as the transcendent dimension has not come into your life. And that's why everybody is so worried and fearful, expecting things that the world cannot give. So the transcendent dimension to some extent loosens the absolute attachment to the things of this world, situations, places, relationships also.

It brings in a sense of spaciousness, of freedom. You can enjoy places, situations, people. What no longer operates is the addictive quality that in the unawakened state all these experiences have.

And that's the vital difference, enormous difference between grasping for sensory experience or any life experiences, wanting to experience more on that, including the experience of drama, which can be very addictive. Grasping for experiences, looking for fulfillment through experiences, never really finding it for very long. There's an addiction behind that.

So addiction has much wider implications than what we usually call addiction to substances and so on. In the unawakened state there is an addiction to experience, because something is expected of experience that ultimately is not there. So there's a continuous greedy reaching out, whether it is relationship experience, sexual experience.

All these are fine, but the question is, is the addictive element there a greedy grasping for the drama, life drama, an unconscious need to experience drama, reaching for sensory experience, including eating. Eating can become compulsive. There comes the addictive quality into that.

Instead, to enjoy food, fine. But without the awakened, the transcendent dimension in your life, there is a grasping. It varies from person to person where the main area of their grasping is.

The main area of their grasping may be food, it may be sexuality, it may be relationships, it may be money. For many people, there's the absolute importance of their investments and money. And you can see the moment they talk about it, they become upset, unbalanced, confused, unconscious.

Grasping, even wanting to experience, needing to experience, excitement, perhaps go out, experience something dangerous. Experience, I'm grasping, why am I seeking danger? Some people seek extreme experiences.

I'm seeking that because through that, I want that deepened sense of aliveness. Of course, it's very short and then always leaves behind that, okay, that wasn't enough. So you're always looking then for the next thing.

And if you're very limited, if your personal life is limited, and you can't, maybe you can't travel or you don't have the possibility of experiencing different kinds of relationships, you're stuck in, you can still go into the dream world of imagining experiences and lose yourself in there. Or you can read novels and romances or whatever and escape into that, into somebody else's life who is again full of the characters and those novels are just like you. They're all grasping for experiences.

So that's a very, it's a normal kind of existence as long as the transcendent dimension isn't there. The pursuit of experience and believing that there's some kind of solution there for your life through changing this or that in the outer world of experience. And that makes life into some, just a frustrating search for some answer there which isn't there.

And the transcendent dimension comes in and then your relationship with experiencing changes. It becomes spacious. The grasping element, the addictive quality in your relationship with experiences begins to dissolve.

And it actually enhances your ability to enjoy experiences. When the transcendent dimension has come in, the stillness, the spaciousness, the alert presence, that becomes, no matter what experience you go into in your life, that always becomes a vital part of the experience. So before there was just, let's say, enjoying eating food, there was the addictive quality with that, the grasping of, you're totally in that, it takes you over.

And now there is a spaciousness while you enjoy the food. You can enjoy the taste. You can enjoy a meal.

Before there was a grasping for it, it wasn't true enjoyment. All those people who are continuously grasping for experience, they're not really enjoying it. It's a, they sometimes seem to be on the surface, but they're not.

It's not really, they're not really having fun. To use a colloquialism, meaning truly enjoy, you're not really having fun. All those people who are running after things, they're not really having fun, to use that expression.

If you want to have fun, the transcendent dimension needs to be there, and that becomes the essential part of every experience, the added dimension to every experience. And then you sit there and enjoy that food, but you don't need to eat more than you really want, the body really wants. You enjoy what's there.

You enjoy activities, doing this or that, again without the grasping. That's the, why it seems to, as the questioner says, your relation, the way I interpret it, the relationship, your relationship to experiences changes. And that's the vital part of awakening, and that's an enormous freedom.

And that also means when things happen to you that before would have caused unhappiness, some form of suffering, in other words, experiences that would have been called bad or unpleasant, now there is the freedom also to be with that and still feel connected with the underlying peace, even while the outside experience is actually turning into what the mind would call negative, not good, unpleasant.

So, and of course, in life, as you go through life, many experiences are things, experiences of things dissolving, experiences of things being taken away because there's a continuous gain and loss in life, the experiences of things going wrong, which means not according to the expectations, and you are able to be with what is because there is the spaciousness there that you bring to every experience. So the experience, on the one hand, no longer is looked to for fulfillment because you know it can't do that, and on the other hand, the experience no longer has the power to make you unhappy when something is dissolving or experienced as not pleasant on the sensory level.

Then there is the added depth to who you are. So if you're stranded somewhere in the middle of nowhere and it's raining and cold, of course, with the added depth of presence, you can be with that without transforming it into suffering. No experience is then transformed into suffering.

There may still be unpleasantness or pain on the physical level, but you no longer transform certain types of experiences into suffering. Yes, the unpleasantness may still be there, the discomfort, even pain, on the physical, but not suffering. It's only when the experience has an absolute importance to you that it can easily turn into suffering.

When the experience does not have an absolute importance to you but only a relative importance, because the absolute is your presence here. That's the absolute, the unconditioned presence, this. That's the absolute.

Then the relative loses its power to make you unhappy or to cause suffering, because you're not looking to it for personal, absolute personal fulfillment. The fulfillment is only there in the transcendent dimension. All experiences become an adding to.

It's added. It's the icing on the cake, one could almost say. It's something that is added to who you are, as Jesus said.

Be only concerned with the absolute. That should be your main concern. Otherwise, experiences will...

I don't know if he said that. I'm paraphrasing wildly now. Be only concerned with the absolute, the kingdom of heaven, which is your inner state of pure presence.

Be only concerned. That is your main job. And then the rest of your life will fall into place.

It will look after itself. And that's how it is. And life becomes so much easier when the rest of life falls into place.

And even things that don't go as they should, that's fine too. You can be with that. And don't add negative reaction to that event, which causes further negative events.

Every time you add a negative reaction to an event in the realm of cause and effect, you are causing further negativity, not only for yourself, but even within the totality of the collective consciousness. But you can only be free of that, of adding negativity to events, when you are not dependent on the event for your happiness, well-being and inner peace. Then, when the event turns around, it's no longer what you would want it to be, no need to add negativity.

You allow it to dissolve or to do what it does. You can take action. Now, that's a vital thing.

Are you adding through resistance? Why do you resist an event or something that happens? Because you'd want it to be different so that it can make you feel okay.

And the mind says, the event that is there now is not making me feel okay and fulfilled and happy. But there it is. So it's making me unhappy.

You resist it. Negativity arises. Unhappiness arises.

More negative events follow. You will see how quickly situations that seem to be negative from a conventional viewpoint, how quickly they dissolve when you take the negative out of them and see that every event is as it is at this moment and any negativity is the addition of your mind to it. It's not in the situation.

Nothing is either good or bad, but thinking makes it so. You are adding that. And that's the seed that attracts further negativity, unpleasantness, and so on.

So there's the be content with the fact. I'm talking to the original questioner, but of course it's everybody's question, everybody's experience. Be content with the fact that the way in which you experience life has changed and that the addictive quality has gone out of your life experience.

And then realize that you actually enjoy everything truly now when you don't need it anymore for your true well-being. You don't need to derive ultimate satisfaction from any experience. That's an amazing shift.

I'll say it again. You don't need any longer to derive ultimate satisfaction from any experience. It can't do that.

And so you go to the place where ultimate satisfaction resides, and that's not an experience. Presence is not an experience. It sometimes is called that, an experience of presence, because in some people at first presence arises and then it's gone again.

And then it seems that they experienced presence. But it's not really an experience because it has no form. It's that which underlies all experience.

It's the space for all experience. So you're free in relation to the world of experiences. There's now freedom.

The freedom to enjoy and the freedom to allow things to be that you cannot perhaps enjoy as an experience, but it no longer makes you unhappy. The end of negativity. Welcome.

There was a man that many of you have heard of. Some of you read some of the teachings. Socrates, he lived roughly 2,400 years ago in Greece.

He never wrote anything. His disciples later wrote down what they remembered, and his main disciple was Plato. And Plato then wrote the Socratic Dialogues.

We don't know, of course, whether what Plato wrote was exactly what Socrates taught. In a way, what Plato wrote, in Plato's writing, Socrates is a literary character. So the characteristic of Platonic Dialogues is that Socrates asks questions.

His people who come to him for teaching, he doesn't seem to immediately have the answer. He asks questions, and then the person answers, and he gradually leads the person to the answer. Now, in the Dialogues, which some of you may have read, some of them, not perhaps many people these days read Plato, in the Dialogues, the impression is given that Socrates kind of manipulates a little bit the people who come to him, and the impression is given that he already knows the answer.

He just pretends not to know the answer. That's what comes across in the Dialogues. And I think that is the character that Plato created, but I believe, and I have evidence for this belief, that that's not actually what happened.

I believe, and I'll tell you in a minute why, that Plato actually started every teaching session from a place of not knowing the answer. And so unlike the impression we get if you read, if you read the Platonic Dialogues, that he already knows, he's just pretending not to know. No.

How do I know this? Plato said, I'm sorry, Socrates said, they call me the wisest of all men, and the reason why they call me the wisest of all men is that I'm the only one who knows that he knows nothing. So, and again, when we read it retrospectively after having read the Platonic Dialogues, we think, oh, he's just, again, some kind of affectation.

He's saying, I know nothing. No, I believe that is his genuine starting point was the ability to go into that state of not knowing rather than coming from already having accumulated knowledge just waiting to come out of his head. And this is why he was able to think creatively.

He actually taught, one could say, almost he taught humanity how to think for the first time, to think rationally, but his thinking is creative. It's fresh and new. And it was a process between him and the people who came to him.

There was an energy field that arose, and out of this energy field, the answers came. Sometimes they came through him. Sometimes they came through the people who came to him.

Another interesting thing he said, that's not reported in Plato, but written by another disciple of his called Xenophon, and he said that Socrates frequently pointed out that he received counsel from a divine voice. And again, that's something that the Western rationalists try to ignore. To them, Plato is the absolutely clear, rational, analytical, conceptual thinker.

And they don't see, because they don't know that dimension within themselves, they don't see the depths out of which his thinking actually came. So he said frequently, as reported by Xenophon, that he received guidance from a divine voice, Socrates. Not in the sense, one doesn't get the sense that some entity spoke through him, but obviously he was referring to inspiration from a dimension within him that was beyond thinking, beyond conceptualization, beyond the rational thought.

So the impression we get of Socrates is really we see half the story. We see only the upper half of the iceberg. Well, the iceberg actually is, you see far less than half of it.

You see only a tiny fraction of it. And that was when we, when these things are taught at universities and so on. The more important dimension is actually completely missed.

They only look at the upper. What's he saying? But where did all that come from?

What was the state of consciousness out of which such a creative teaching, such creative thinking could arise? And so it is that most, these dimensions, the dimension of conceptualization, of thinking is in everyone, but the dimension of non-conceptual intelligence is also in everyone. But in the same way that we only see one half of the whole or less than one half of the whole when we look at Socrates through the eyes of Plato and through the eyes of Western interpreters, in the same way most humans go through life only knowing themselves and knowing the world in one dimension.

And that's the, we could call that the dimension of form. And so let's bring it now after having gone to Greece, let's bring it to a very immediately verifiable place here and now. As you sit here, you are aware of yourself as a form identity, obviously, because you are aware of your body, which is a physical form.

You are aware of, although you may not remember your past, you have vaguely, you know that you have a past, you have a name, you have an address, and you have a life situation that may not be happening right here now unless you're thinking about it, but you have a life situation, your whole personal past is there, and you have thoughts going through your head, perhaps, and this is what most people identify with and know, that's all they know. They know themselves as that form-based entity.

And what else is there? There is that in you which is continuously overlooked because the world of form, which includes thinking, thoughts that continuously arise, the world of form has such a hypnotic pull, it's so seductive that you follow it, first you have the senses, the outer senses, but more importantly, you have the seduction of continuously arising interpretations of what the sense is, the sensory input. If you look at your consciousness, your state of consciousness, the sensory input plays a relatively small part in what goes on in your mind.

A much greater part of what goes on in your mind is either an interpretation of the sensory input that's immediately interpreted through the conditioning of your mind, the filter, or it is ignored completely and you are totally absorbed in the stream of thinking, in other words, totally unaware of your surroundings because you're absorbed in the seduction of thoughts arising and drawing in the totality of your attention, your consciousness, and so you become an entity that is entirely, consists entirely of thought, the me, and you know no other dimension in you. That's all, and anybody else who says even, if you're totally identified with that, even the suggestion that there may be another dimension would immediately be ridiculed or the mind-made entity feel threatened by it. That's why in many publications, the slightest hint of spirituality must be ridiculed.

The Mormons, they talk about spirituality, but they have to bring in something that makes it a little bit ridiculous. New York Times, for example, and Time magazine, and many, almost every, not all, but there are some exceptions, but that's not anybody's fault. It's the mind-based entity that knows only form.

It knows only thought, and that's a dreadful limitation of it reduces your life to something very small. Really, you live in a box, in a little box in your head that you cannot step beyond the conditioning of your mind, and every thought that comes immediately grabs you and you go into it, and so many people are hardly aware of what the world around them, and if they are aware, they immediately judge it. And so you can see people walking through the forest, walking along a beach.

Even they're only peripherally aware for brief moments, they say, oh, lovely, and then they go back into, hmm. Oh, look at that, it's a lovely sunset, isn't it? And so the degree to which humans are absent from life, which is, of course, here and now, the present moment, that's where life is, nowhere else, the degree to which humans are absent from life varies from person to person, but many humans these days are extremely absent so that they don't actually experience life as such.

Their entire life consists of their life situation, which is the story in the head, and that's what absorbs their attention. That's the only thing that matters. So you only know form.

External forms that you identify with, they're all translated, of course, into mental forms. Every external form that you identify with, possessions or other people's opinions or status or prestige or success or failure, they're all ideas. Even your house is an idea, basically.

When you identify with it, my house becomes an idea in your head. It's not the house, it's the idea that you identify with rather than the house that you identify with. The idea of my house, which becomes, so the idea, of course, is a thought.

And the thought becomes imbued with self because you identify with it, and there you have the condition that the Buddha talks about as ignorance leading to suffering. Because if you only know that and you don't know the, what in Buddhism is sometimes called the emptiness, the formless dimension to who you are, then your life is a succession of problems, frustrations, troubles. One damn thing after another.

And if nothing is going wrong at this moment around you, your mind is rehearsing the next thing that's going to go wrong. Well, not just one, the next succession of things that may and probably will go wrong because you know from your past that things go wrong. And so that's the dreadful condition of ignorance.

Ignorance doesn't mean you're lacking in education. You can be highly educated and totally ignorant in spiritual terms, in transcendent terms, totally ignorant because you're totally identified with your mind. In fact, if you are highly educated, the likelihood is much greater that you are totally ignorant because then you are more identified even with your mind.

And so then how do we realize, experience for ourselves the transcendent dimension within, that is that which goes beyond form, that which goes beyond thought? In order to realize that which goes beyond thought, we could say that, well, thought needs to come to a, needs to cease, to come to a stop for a little while. For example, now, the cessation of thinking in which there seems to be nothing but it's not really nothing.

It's no thing, yes, because it's no form. There's just something that we cannot really conceptualize because the moment we talk about it, we make it into something. That's the famous phrase, first sentence in the Tao Te Ching.

If it can be named, it's not the true Tao because the Tao is the formless that pervades the world of form. So the cessation of thinking is really where the dimension of the formless in you opens up. And this teaching and any true spiritual teaching, no matter what terms they use to point to it, is about this.

It's about the opening up in yourself of that spaciousness that is formless consciousness. I'm already using too many terms because then the mind says, ah, now I know what it is. It's formless consciousness, which, of course, that's another concept.

So it's not to be used as an explanation, but to be used as a signpost. Formless consciousness points to that which cannot be named. So if I say formless consciousness, don't be like a dog that looks at your finger.

But if I say formless consciousness, you have to look where there's nothing in you. Now the advanced, those of you who are advanced spiritually, are able to go into that dimension of not thinking just like that. When almost, when you want to, you go, it's nothing to think about, so I want to think.

And you can actually, as you sat here, for example, waiting for the session to start, and I sat in the green room waiting to come in here, was I sitting there as a form identity or was I sitting there as a formless presence? And when you were waiting here, were you sitting here as that form identity, thinking about your life this morning? When is he going to come?

What's this? What do these people look like? Are they more advanced than me?

Are they, what else? Or thinking about the problems. I shouldn't have come.

Why did I come? What about tomorrow when I'll have to deal with those? Then you sit here as a form identity.

Why is it taking so long? It's already five past. Why isn't he here yet?

Or were you sitting here as just a simple formless presence with no judgment, allowing what is to be, allowing this moment to be? Now, that is interesting. When thinking ceases and there is that spacious presence, then you are, of course, the implication is, of course, that whatever is, you're allowing it to be as it is.

That is the result of not thinking, but it can also be a practice that takes you into not thinking as a conscious practice. If you're not yet able to simply go into the spaciousness of presence, then you can use the spiritual practice of becoming friendly, as I sometimes put it, becoming friendly with the present moment. In other words, whatever is the case at this moment, you're completely at one with that.

You don't oppose it internally. That, as a practice, takes you also into, what opens up then is spaciousness inside you if you use that as a practice. And it's a beautiful practice, allowing life to be as it is at this moment.

Why should I allow? Well, because it already is. And if you see then, thinking is not busy anymore because most of the time you're denying what is or running away from what is, and that's all the thought activity.

So you have to see for yourself whether you're able to embody that state of no thought simply by saying, right, this is actually much more, you feel much more alive when you're not interpreting continuously than when you interpret. An enormous freedom comes in. Suddenly the box that you were trapped in, that the majority of humans are still trapped in, the box through which they peep through little holes into, suddenly that opens up and you're out of the box.

And that is the state that Socrates referred to when he said, I am the only one who knows that he knows nothing. Implying, of course, that everybody else also knows nothing, but they don't know that. They believe in every thought that comes into their head.

And so they are full of knowledge, which means accumulated concepts, which means accumulated thought forms in the head, and through that they judge life and other people and so on, and it creates a dreadful reality because you don't have, it's not the whole, it's a partial, very partial fragment what you are aware of. So when you judge another human, for example, and to judge means to equate somebody's unconscious behavior, stupidity, with who they are. When you judge another human and talk about them in negative terms and so on, you miss, again, you miss the vital dimension in that other human being, which is the formless.

We could say the divine. And when you miss it in another, you miss it in yourself because you get drawn into believing in judgments, which are thought forms. So you are trapped in your own thought forms.

You're trapping the other person in your thought forms, but primarily you are trapping yourself in your own thought forms. So one could say consciousness becomes imprisoned in form, and that is the ignorance which creates suffering for yourself, and then you inflict suffering on others. So the vital practice is to become aware of that in you that has nothing to do with any form, that is presence itself, spaciousness.

Stillness. Now stillness doesn't mean you need silence outside you. You can have a lot of noise around you and be completely still.

You don't need silence to be still. In fact, it is a wonderful thing when, let's say, there are disturbing noises around you, and in our civilization, there's an enormous amount of noise that we produce. It's almost as if we could not stand silence.

So every moment needs to be filled up with some kind of noise, and then again, that's simply an externalization of what happens in the human mind, which has become so identified with the voice in the head, the continuous noise of thinking, it cannot tolerate silence. So it must be externally manifested as, okay, what can we invent to create more noise? It's not enough that the machines are noisy, but no, we need to create.

Very hard to find a restaurant these days that's not noisy. That's simply an externalization of an inner state. But when you allow what is to be, because you happen to be in a restaurant that's noisy, you can either walk out, but you've already ordered, you're hungry, and you know that the next one is going to be just as noisy.

And so there you are, and say, I can't sit here in this noise. I don't want to be here. What's that thoughts arising in your head?

I can't stand this. Why do I have to? Or you can say, okay, my choice is to be here.

I've ordered the soup already. Can I allow this moment to be as it is because it is? And when you ask yourself that question, and after that question, if it works as it should or could, if it works, after you're asking, can I allow this moment to be as it is, you enter the state of no thought.

And you suddenly realize all the thoughts that were telling you, this is dreadful, I can't stand this, they were just thoughts. But you believed in them. While you believed in them, they had you in their grip.

And if you ask, can I allow this moment to be as it is, suddenly the space opens up. You become, one could almost say you become the space in which whatever is happening at this moment unfolds. And so you discover the stillness inside you that has nothing to do with external conditions.

And then you're in the same inner state in whether you're in the forest, beautiful, surrounded by beautiful nature. Oh, I can really be still here. And you can be, your senses are alert to all the beauty around you.

And as you realize that the stillness in you is actually always there underneath the thinking, you can be then an hour later in the shopping mall, just before Christmas, when they play these dreadful songs again every year, I have to listen to this dreadful stuff, all corny, and they start playing it six weeks, seven weeks before Christmas, they start playing that already. I can't stand this, get me out of here. And then say, okay, is that true?

Can I really not stand it? Or can I allow this moment to be as it is? Of course, another choice you always have is you can walk out.

But then you have to allow that moment because in the next moment you're in the traffic and it's cold. So wherever you can't escape, eventually you always get to the point, can I allow this moment to be as it is? And say, yeah.

And then you can actually enjoy the shopping mall as a manifestation of the incredible play of life forms that is taking place on this planet, the multiplicity of life forms, not the humans that run around. And you look, before you were judging them, say, look how these stupid people, they're doing their Christmas, what are they doing? It's so pointless.

On its own level, it may be true, but it's a fragmentary truth. It's a fragment of the truth. It's not the whole.

So it's not entirely wrong to say that they're engaged in totally pointless activities. Of course, they're totally identified with form and so on and so on. We know, so life becomes pointless.

We know all that. So there is a relative truth to some of the judgments of the mind, but it's not the whole. But when you relinquish the judgments of the mind and allow this moment to be, then suddenly it's actually, you see manifestations of life, which is also the shopping mall.

So there are the human beings. Some are nervous, some are, you just observe. Some are nervous, some are, ah.

And so, and then you see all the things that the humans have made, brought into existence. All the things. Thousands of things everywhere.

Things, things. Wherever you look, ah. But, and again, you now look very differently at this.

You enjoy. Actually, when you allow, you enjoy the multiplicity of things too. And you can walk and look.

So you're enjoying life as it unfolds in this moment. That is what the universe has brought into existence at this moment. And you allow.

And then you realize you are actually still. You have the same stillness inside you that you had when you were in the forest an hour ago. And so that's the entry point into the state of the formless dimension, the spiritual dimension, the essence is always, of course, in the present moment.

And your relationship, so to speak, your relationship with the present moment determines whether you are trapped in form or whether the present, or whether something opens up there for you. So there's always, the present moment is always, it can be a closed door. You want to get somewhere else.

Or suddenly it can open up whatever arises in this moment. Whatever form arises in this moment, it can be something that you judge as being not enough or undesirable, not fulfilling, or it can be something that becomes an opening. And so we have shopping malls, we have the forest.

We also have more challenging situations sometimes than shopping malls. Shopping malls are not that challenging, but there are other situations in life that present a challenge, a difficulty, and that usually means something in the world of form is becoming shaky in your life. That could be, for example, when your company is not doing well and you think you might be losing your job.

So something in the world of form is no longer solid. Or your pension plan, maybe it's not going to survive by the time you retire. It looked so solid, this form in your life, and now it's shaky.

And then it can happen that in one person's life, at one particular time, several things start shaking, being shaky at the same time. Your marriage, your mortgage, and it can happen that the same similar thing can happen to a million people all at the same time. That sometimes happens, but that doesn't really matter because it really happens to one person.

It's one person who has to deal with it, whether this one person is multiplied a million times or whether it's just your particular life situation. It doesn't really matter. The individual still has to deal with it.

And you become aware that, yes, the world of form is not as solid as it looked before.

And that when you, again, that can create an incredible amount of fear. Or it can, you can ask the same question, bring your attention to this moment.

Okay, now what is shaky about this moment? My job? No, I don't feel anything shaking right now.

My mortgage? At this moment, no, but it's not a problem at this moment, is it? The job, the mortgage, the marriage that may not survive this, that my pension plan that just collapsed.

What am I going to live on the last 20 years of my life? Is that a problem? No, it's not a problem at this moment.

It may become a problem at some other point, which of course will again be this moment. And then you have to ask yourself again, is it a problem at this moment? If you go into this moment deeply enough, also that which is beyond form opens up.

Again, when your life becomes problematic, past, future, past is unsatisfying, didn't go as it should have gone. The future is threatening. And so you live between the unsatisfying past that didn't quite work out as it was supposed to and the threatening future, you move.

Dreadful existence. And then imagine your whole life, which becomes of course accentuated when certain periods, when the challenges arise, it becomes even more so than the normal state of it's always there, but when things get difficult, it's much more threatening and the past seems much more unsatisfying when everything I worked for in the past 30 years is collapsing. And there's an incredible opportunity if you can use that moment and say, okay, bring your attention to this moment.

And then you go deeply into first the surface of this moment, which is your breathing and you're perceiving, no problem. You're either standing, sitting or lying somewhere. You look around, there's the multiplicity of life forms around you, wherever you are, even in your room, there are objects.

You may look out of the window, there's a sky or wherever you are, you look around and then you become aware of the inner space, the space of consciousness itself. Otherwise you couldn't be perceiving anything, which is the stillness, which feels incredibly alive. And that is knowing yourself as that essence is true happiness, if we even want to use the word happiness.

And then one could say, when you know yourself as that simple, pure essence of just consciousness or awareness, presence, whatever you want to call it, you know yourself as that, that is ananda, bliss, happiness, true fulfillment. And you're happy for no reason, simply because you're happy simply because it arises out of being. So when you know that you are, I am, which is presence itself, formless, that is happiness, that is ananda, that is the bliss of being.

And there's no external reason. In fact, often it comes to people when externally things are collapsing, dissolving, shaky, and then suddenly you go deeper. Ah.

And in that, you are, the person that you still are on the level of form has receded and something else has come into this dimension, one could almost say, where the person has become an opening for presence or divine presence, the presence of God, you could say. And that is, you're then free of the burden of the person or personality, which, of course, can still operate, will still operate, but now there is the possibility for you to live in the two dimensions, as a person and as formless presence. And from then onwards, nothing in the world of form is any longer dreadfully threatening and nothing in the world of form is dreadfully serious.

And even if something drastic happens on the level of form, people dying around you or your own death approaching, yes, from a fragmentary perspective, it is still tragic, number of people dying in an accident or in a terrorist attack or whatever it is. Yes, it is tragic, but if you are from a holistic perspective, it is not absolutely tragic because you realize the truth of that which is beyond death. Not only in yourself, but also, of course, in every being.

You realize the truth of, as in Buddhism, it's sometimes called the deathless, that which is beyond death. I love these Buddhist terms because they just deny the world of form without giving you any form to believe in. It's not as inspiring, of course, as Jesus saying eternal life.

It's the same. He points to the same thing. The danger with eternal life is that you can completely misinterpret it, start believing in it as if it were a future event and believing that it's about life going on and on and on and on.

Of course, eternal doesn't mean it goes on and on and on. That would be dreadful. Even paradise would become dreadful.

How many years have you been here? 58,300. Of course, eternal is timeless.

Time doesn't come in anymore. The nature of the formless dimension in you is it is beyond time. In that sense, it is eternal.

So eternal life can be misinterpreted and has been, of course. The deathless, the Buddhist term, pointing to the same thing or no thing, is more difficult to misinterpret or believe in. I believe in eternal life.

Yeah, okay. I believe in the deathless, or even more, another Buddhist term, I believe in emptiness. That's not very inspiring, is it?

But the kingdom of heaven, again, pointing to the same thing or no thing, again, you can easily misinterpret it, but it's more inspiring. Ah, kingdom of heaven. When is it going to come?

They have been asking that for 2,000 years. When is it going to come? It even says in the New Testament, which the teaching of Jesus has become distorted in many ways, but he says very clearly, the kingdom of heaven does not come with signs to be observed.

It says literally. And then he adds, you can't say, ah, there it is, or look over here. He already said it.

And then for 2,000 years, they think it's going to come with signs to be observed. So he gave you an inspiring thing to kingdom of heaven, and he gave you a warning at the same time. He says it's not going to come as if it were here or there.

That's not, and it's not, it is within you. Truly, I tell you that. When he says that, it means you really have to listen.

And so if, if even you have 10% of your life, to put it like that, you can't really quantify, but let's say if you have 10% of your life of formless presence, that already would be an enormous improvement in the quality of your life, your life experience. But more than that is even better. If you can have half, half, that's an amazing thing, that half of your waking life is spent in just being present, being the formless presence rather than being the person.

And then gradually also what can happen is not necessarily an absolute division between formless presence and being identified with form. In other words, losing yourself completely into identification with thinking and reacting and so on. What happens is the two begin to come together so that even while you are thinking, there is still a spaciousness in your thinking and in between your thoughts, which enables you not to identify with every thought that comes.

You can still be the spaciousness even while you're thinking. So thinking becomes interspersed with spaciousness. So before you had, let's say, every finger of my hand is a thought.

Before you had one thought after another, there's nothing, there's no space at all. What about this here? But on the other hand, when you think about this, what about tomorrow?

What he said to me, I'll never forgive him for that. And then suddenly you have that. Again, yes, you still have these thoughts, but you have a spaciousness in between them, so to speak.

And so from that spaciousness, you can be aware of the kinds of thoughts that arise. So you are still basically rooted in the spaciousness, the formlessness, even though thoughts are happening. And it may even happen that some old thoughts still come, old patterns, because they've been around for 20, 30, 40 years, and you still, certain thoughts that you've been thinking for those many years still habitually arise, but there's a change.

They no longer possess you completely. You're not totally drawn into them anymore, and gradually they lose their ability to make you unhappy, because the unhappiness that is many people's daily existence really consists of, and comes down to, identification with thoughts that are telling them something. And these thoughts make you very unhappy.

Losing your job cannot make you unhappy, but if you start thinking about it, how dreadful it is, all kinds of judgment arising, the futility of your whole life, the futility of the past 30 years, the whole meaninglessness of it, the likelihood that you will never get a job again, and if you do get a job, you're going to pay much less than you earned before, and you probably won't be able to pay your mortgage.

That makes you unhappy. But the loss of the job is the loss of the job, and here you are. You can take action, if possible, see if there is another job, and while you take action, you can be spacious and present.

There's no unhappiness in losing your job. There's the unhappiness in thinking about it and deriving an identity from that, a very unpleasant identity. When you have a great job and all is going well, and you just got your bonus, if you're working on Wall Street, you just got your annual bonus of $10 million, because you sold many of these things that I can't pronounce that are going to collapse, of course, in two years' time, but that doesn't matter.

You sold these, and then you can really, the identification with form for a little while seems to satisfy you until that becomes shaky, as it will, a reform sooner or later. Either your company will collapse, or the whole economy will collapse, or you collapse. And then the identification with form becomes unsatisfying and a source of unhappiness.

But the amazing thing is to see what makes you unhappy is your mental interpretations. Many philosophers said that. It's often mentioned in ancient philosophy.

They already saw that truth, that the unhappiness is in your mental judgments or interpretations, not in the situation. And so that becomes enormously liberating to realize. So you allow the situation to be as it is, go deeply into the present moment where there is no problem, and you connect with the, as I call it sometimes, non-conceptual intelligence.

Non-conceptual means formless intelligence, which cannot be measured in IQ tests. There's no IQ test that can measure your formless intelligence. IQ test measures how you can manipulate certain conceptual or visual forms.

And that intelligence also often brings up new insights and ideas. So instead of going into thought activity and allow it to make you unhappy, let's stay with losing your job, instead of going in there for the next few years or the rest of your life and thinking about how unfair the whole thing is. And you get angry if you believe in God, you get angry with God.

If you don't believe in God, you get angry with everybody else, or life in general. And you become bitter and cynical and hard, and you already know how dreadful, your mind is full of knowledge, of answers, trapped in form without even knowing it, very unhappy. And so go into the present moment, allow this moment to be as it is.

And if thoughts still arise, I'm a failure. My last 30 years have been in vain. It's a thought.

And there you have a spaciousness after the thought. In that spaciousness, you're not a failure at all. You are aware, presence, alive, blissful, one could almost say.

You're undoubtedly not a failure here. You're only a failure in the thought. And then comes the next thought.

What am I going to live on? Okay. And you might follow it for a minute or two or three or five, but not for days and weeks.

And then comes again the spaciousness. You're living now, aren't you? You're breathing now.

You even have enough food perhaps, even if it's only baked beans. Well, that's what I lived on for a few years. That was in England.

Heinz baked beans. Now, that could have been very unhappy if I had had thoughts that I believed in that said at my age, I'm in my 30s, and I'm still living on baked beans. And look at the people who were at university with me.

They're in BMWs now. But thoughts like that didn't really arise anymore. That was lucky.

So I was very happy with the baked beans, and I'm happy now that I'm not eating baked beans but something else. So this is what I've been reduced to, the baked beans. And then there comes a space.

Is that so bad? No. It's fine.

Because there's more. They don't even taste that bad, and I feel there's an aliveness that I can sense that has nothing to do with the baked beans. So thoughts get interspersed with space and then loses the power to make you unhappy, and gradually even the old thought patterns begin to subside, those old judgments about yourself, other people in your life, what they did to you, things that can be very strong lodged inside you with an enormous emotional charge can be so strong that at the thought of one particular person in your head can transform your entire state of consciousness, your ex-husband or your first husband, your second wife, what she did to me, what he did, just one thought can pull you. And again, if you have a little, a nod in you that is enormously charged with old emotion, pain, body, as I call it, then presence is required so that you can be, you can allow that emotion to be there, but still have the awareness around it. And it helps to be here, sitting here, being continuously pointed towards that dimension within yourself so that when the big challenges come, there's enough presence so that it doesn't, the presence in you or the spaciousness does not become completely obscured.

And then even a heavy old emotion, when it's the moment you can feel it, you can say, oh, that is, can I allow this to be as it is? The thunderstorm inside me, well, you can allow the external thunderstorm to be, and you can allow the inner thunderstorm to be, and then there's space around it. You can feel this anger still there, but you detach the anger from thoughts so that your thoughts are not feeling the anger.

You just feel the anger now. And so there's space around it, awareness around it, and then it gets gradually transmuted. So spacious living, it's sometimes, yes, sometimes you may, you will experience pure presence in your life, and it's beautiful when that happens, and those time periods will gradually become longer.

Pure presence when you're with another human being, the ability to listen in pure presence, the ability to look in pure presence without judgments, without concepts. So not knowing, the same place that Socrates talked about, the place of presence is the state of not knowing and becoming comfortable with not knowing and not judging. And that's a wonderful thing if you can do that with other human beings while you are with other humans or meet other human beings.

You don't need to judge them or interpret them. All situations that arise in your life, you don't need to judge it or interpret it. It is as it is at this moment.

And then if action is possible out of that deeper intelligence that immediately opens up when you accept this moment, action arises. If no action is possible, there's simply a background of peace. Even in this inner situation that may be difficult or unpleasant.

So moments of not, at first moments of pure presence, that's beautiful already. When you're not challenged, contemplating an object, a flower, how the light reflects off the table, people around you, life forms, all temporary life forms like clouds. Clouds don't last for very long in the form they have now.

Five minutes later, you don't recognize the cloud or it's dissolved into something else. With humans, it lasts a little bit longer, a few years, and then you don't recognize them anymore and then they're gone. So it's temporary forms continuously, and that's not dreadful that forms continuously dissolve, but there's something that pervades this world of form that is eternal and timeless.

Life itself, you could call it, consciousness, God. So you have, you could say, three states of consciousness. These are all temporary things, there's no absolute judgment, truth here.

It's a way of looking, no more. Three states of consciousness. One is, yes, the state of ignorance, totally identified with every thought that arises.

Then space begins to arise in your life. Then you have thinking interspersed with space, which in other words, awareness is present or awareness is felt in the background of your life, even while thinking happens, even while old thoughts happen. But the nature of your thinking then already begins to change because very dysfunctional thinking, when there is an awareness there, begins to change.

But dysfunctional thinking means thinking that creates imaginary problems, makes you unhappy and makes others unhappy. If your thinking makes you unhappy, you can almost be certain that you are making other people around you also unhappy. And they do it to themselves and to you.

That's called normal relationships. So you have complete identification with thinking, the state of ignorance, you have thinking interspersed with space or awareness and a continuing sense of awareness in the background, even while your mind is doing what it's doing. And then you have the third, spaces of pure presence when there is virtually no thinking or just little fragments of thoughts that come like little puffs of clouds and dissolve.

But most of it is like a huge blue sky and occasionally you have a little puffy cloud that suddenly rises in the blue sky and dissolves. And another one little comes up and dissolves. But mostly the sky is clear.

And that is enormous. When that comes into your life, that is, well, liberation, that is salvation, that is awakening, that is, you're free. And this is, you can, sometimes people ask me, is that something that we can make happen or is it something that we just have to hope that it's going to happen?

It's not going to happen. It's happening now. Happening is even the wrong word because happening is something to do with the world of form.

Something, form arises or dissolves or it does something to another form. You can certainly invite it. Let's put it like this.

You can invite presence into your life. Again, I gave you the example of you sitting here before we started and me sitting in the green room. Now, I don't know whether you were sitting here as mainly, some of you probably were sitting here as mainly presence, embodied presence, and others perhaps were there more as a person with thoughts and judgments and concerns and likes and dislikes, all kinds of things, a person, normal person.

And I was sitting in the green room. Now, was I a person or presence? Now, imagine a person sitting in the green room thinking, what am I going to talk about?

What do they expect? I have to talk for another hour and a half or whatever it is and is it going to work out? Are they going to be inspiring?

Is the inspiration going to be there? I'm supposed to be a great spiritual teacher? That's what people, they expect something of me, so I better deliver.

If I don't, then the whole thing is not going to work anymore and they're going to dislike me. That would be a person thinking, can I live up to what they expect of me? That would be a dreadful state, having to sit there.

So it just wouldn't work. It would be awful. So the only choice then is to be there as a simple, aware presence.

And there's no thought is required for that. I don't need to know beforehand. I need to be comfortable with not knowing.

Socrates again, I need to be comfortable with its place of no thought. Oh, and it is wonderfully comfortable. And you're a simple presence.

You're not a spiritual teacher. You can't be a spiritual teacher when you think of yourself as a spiritual teacher. It's only when you know your formless, your essential formlessness, then perhaps teaching can come through you into the world of form.

Inspired thoughts can come out of the space of no thought. And it's a wonderful space to be and there's no fear there because there's only this, only there's the sense perceptions, but they're not significant. Well, there's a rule, there's this, there's that.

And then there's an intense awareness there, just a field of awareness. There's no person. It's just a field of awareness.

There's no conceptual identity anymore. It's just an aware presence. And that's a wonderful, powerful state that I recommend highly.

And whatever forms you have in your life because you interact with the world of form here in the external, that if you embody more and more that aware presence rather than coming as a little person, then you will see how that it makes an enormous difference to the effect that you have on the world around you, but not you as a person, but the power that flows through you into this world of form which then transforms even the world of form. Not that the forms will become permanent.

No, it still applies that all forms are temporary and dissolve and come and go. It doesn't make the forms satisfying. There's no ultimate satisfaction in any form in your life, any thought form, any physical form.

It cannot give you satisfaction, nor are you looking for it because the satisfaction is already in the presence, in your very presence. That is satisfying. And then, as I sometimes put it, the world of form suddenly becomes satisfying, but only because you are not looking for satisfaction in the forms.

It's already in you as in the being that you are. That is the satisfaction, that which is satisfying. And then the forms are actually enjoyable.

Every form. You don't need to necessarily have certain forms. You can, but you don't need to have.

You can enjoy without needing to say, this is mine, but occasionally you might want to buy something. There's nothing wrong with that, knowing that, of course, eventually either it's going to break or your body goes before it goes or somebody steals it or you drop it or you give it away. But you enjoy things around you or you may be given something while it lasts.

You never, the whole sense of ownership also changes. As a feeling of mine, this is mine, changes, and you don't really get that anymore. You can have something and enjoy its presence here, an object, but that feeling of attachment to it and seeking, I can't let go of that.

That isn't there anymore. So you can enjoy things without looking to them for some kind of self, self-fulfillment, self-reference, me and mine. So it's natural that you will still occasionally, yes, you buy things, but you will probably accumulate fewer things than in the ignorant state where you would look for satisfaction partly through accumulating things for other people it's something else, but they're all looking in some dimension or form.

So living with something and just, you look after it, as it says in one ad for an expensive watch, you never actually own this watch, it says. The implication is it will outlive you. You never actually own it, you just look after it for the next generation, that's their slogan.

But I love the first part especially because the next generation isn't going to own it either. And it might even break before they get it. But you never actually own this watch, there's a little bit of spiritual truth in there.

Now often you don't know whether there has been attachment until you lose it. Because it's easy to deceive yourself and then say, I'm not attached to anything in my life anymore. And then somebody scratches your car, or the car is gone when you go to the parking lot.

And that's the moment of truth. That tells you whether you were attached or not attached. So this is a new way to live.

And the whole purpose of your existence on this planet in this form, temporary form, is for this consciousness to come through you. So in other words, the evolution is, the goal of evolution is awakening. I know that from myself.

Many universal answers, you just have to look at yourself to see that you know the purpose of suffering, because you can look back on your own suffering. What is the role of suffering in human existence? Just look at your own life and see your own past suffering, where it has brought you, and so on.

Well, the answers you can find, the universal questions, if you look deeply within, you can find the answers within you. And so the universe is awakening. And it's awakening here where we are through the human form, which is not separate from all other life forms.

It's awakening here. Where is it all going? I don't know.

You can't possibly conceive. It would be absurd. It would be like a tiny bacteria trying to understand, let's say a bacteria in your body trying to understand who you are.

So you can't. You don't even need to. We don't need a vast conceptual understanding of the purpose of the universe.

All we need is the awakening of consciousness. And for many people, that's because they've been suffering. That provided the motivation for many of you to be here.

Because if all had been going well and all the forms in your life have been so satisfying, what would you want to do with spiritual awakening? What's the point in that? Just enjoy the next meal.

Enjoy your Christmas presents. Enjoy whatever the next item you're going to buy. Enjoy the next sexual act.

Enjoy the next sense pleasure. Enjoy the next drug. Take it all in.

The next affair that you have with somebody, the excitement of it. Isn't it all great? Well, unfortunately, that's not quite how it is.

There's always another side to every enjoyment, and that side looks very different. Oh, my God.

[Speaker 5] (3:59:04 - 3:59:08)

Oh, no.

[Speaker 1] (3:59:09 - 4:03:39)

Oh, my God. I feel sick. So it's wonderful if we can be grateful for what is.

We can be grateful for also even for what was. Your past that has brought you to this point, it means, well, that looks like a success story. If your past has brought you to spiritual awakening, well, that looks like a huge success.

And you might have lost your job. You might have done the wrong thing. Maybe you made one mistake after another, perhaps, some of you, or many mistakes, one wrong choice and another wrong choice.

Why did I get together with that person? That was a dreadful mistake. I should never have taken that job.

And then that was wrong. Why did I do that for 10 years? That was so pointless.

Okay, but it suddenly, all that which didn't make sense, retrospectively, suddenly seems to make sense because it's taken you to, oh. So the chaos of your past, and I'm talking about that because my past is a bit like that. One mistake after another, why?

One failure and another failure and not... Up to the age of 50, almost, a failure in the eyes of the world. And then suddenly a success.

Laughter But it wasn't a failure, of course, and I didn't see it as a failure. I was a failure up to the age of 29 before the awakening happened. That was a dreadful thing.

And after that, there was no conceptual identity, particularly. And so every present moment was actually basically fine. Without carrying the burden of a conceptual identity, the present moment is actually okay.

There may be some discomfort in it sometimes, but okay. But that's how it is. It's basically still okay.

For a while, when I was going through the awakening, I lived in a bed-sitter. Bed-sitter is where you have a room where you cook and sleep and sit. A bed-sitter.

It doesn't have a bathroom, so you have to share the bathroom with other bed-sitters. So my particular... The toilet had to be shared with six other bed-sitters.

And sometimes in the morning, you have to line up to wait to go to the loo. And that was just what was. It was, yes, some discomfort, leading occasionally to constipation, but...

And there wasn't much. You had only a little stove with two little rings, so you couldn't do much cooking, but it worked with the baked beans. LAUGHTER So the present moment was basically fine.

Yes, there could be more comfort and so on, yes, but it's basically fine. There was aliveness, beauty outside. There was the sky, there were trees, a couple of potted plants.

There was the city, walking around the city, life.

[Speaker 5] (4:03:40 - 4:03:40)

It's fine.

[Speaker 1] (4:03:40 - 4:58:55)

Without the burden of a conceptual identity, the me with its problems and its past and its future, it's basically fine. But it could have been dreadful. And before the awakening happened, it was very unpleasant, very dreadful.

So go into the present moment, and sometimes people ask me, what would you say to a person who actually is starving, they don't have enough food? Okay, I don't know. You have to...

I never was actually starving, because I always had baked beans and bread, toast, baked beans on toast. So you can have all kinds of hypothetical situations. Yes, there are people who are starving.

It is also a fact that there are, in some third world countries, where people have very little, or they struggle to survive. Every human being has their own challenges and their own past, and every human being is only a tiny aspect or fragment of the totality of human awakening. There is no absolute separate reality to any human being.

Any human being is a temporary manifestation in form of that timeless consciousness that is awakening here. So there's no... We look at a human being and say, oh, this person's life is so terrible, it's not, it's all, it is, it is a cell, every human is a cell in the totality.

And every cell has its own particular path of awakening. So in some, I have seen people in third world countries that look totally at peace, and they were sitting begging by the side of the road, and they looked much more peaceful, not all, some, than the tourists who were walking past, who were wealthy tourists. They were...

And you see in India sometimes, occasionally you see some people who are maybe have only one leg and sitting by the side of the road and completely peaceful. Thank you. So in some of those, this transformation has also happened.

They've never heard perhaps of anything spiritual. They've never gone to a spiritual talk. They've never read a spiritual book.

That wasn't their path. But their path was something else. And some of them, through the extremely unsatisfying nature of the forms around them, miraculously realized that which is beyond form.

And so then they start... And many of them, they couldn't put it into words. They're just at peace and present, and they look at you.

And some of them, actually, particularly in a place like India, which has a spiritual tradition going back thousands of years, some of them became spiritual gurus or teachers, whether they spoke or not. You didn't have to speak. You could just sit there, and people would see the presence in them and give them food.

And then two more people would sit around them, look at them, trying to get a more picture of their presence. And then gradually, before you know it, there's an ashram. And that person around somebody who has no conceptual identity whatsoever, just pure presence.

That's beautiful. In the West, this is not how it works in the West. It's very different.

But so it's many different ways in which awakening happens on this planet. And there's only one consciousness. There's only the one manifesting as the many, the unmanifested, timeless one coming through and manifesting in this dimension.

Who knows where it's all going? We don't need to know that, but it's a beautiful process. The awakening of the universe in this dimension, in the timeless, it's already awake.

Everything has already happened or everything is continuously happening as one. It's only in this world that we experience the differentiated world of form. There seems to be past, future, and evolution.

So you are becoming gradually or suddenly free of this dreadful burden of carrying a conceptual identity and knowing nothing else. And then a time comes when you use as much, sorry, as little of your conceptual identity as is possible in daily life. That's the more advanced stage.

In other words, when people ask you about yourself, you can still answer. You can say, this is where I live. What do you do for a living?

I don't answer when people ask me, what do you do for a living? I don't say, I am the formless one incarnating. It confuses people.

So you keep it simple. I'm a writer. Oh, okay.

What do you write? Spirituality. Oh, okay.

And then you can talk about where you're from, where have you lived? That's fine. It's your concepts.

What about your parents? Okay, that's, yeah. You can use the conceptual identity when it's needed.

Without believing that it's terribly important. And when you're alone, you certainly don't need it. Reference to tell you who you are.

You don't need the concepts to tell you who you are. You are life. You are consciousness.

That's all you need to, and you don't know that conceptually. You know that directly, immediately. Nationalities and all those things, collective identities.

Yes, when somebody asks, yeah, that's me. I'm such and such nationality, but you're not really. Race also doesn't, it's just the body, appearance of the body.

Okay. Welcome to our private seminar. I'm talking about spiritual awakening in daily life.

And some people may not be quite sure what the term spiritual awakening even means. Or they may have strange ideas in their head of what spiritual is, what is spiritual, and what is awakening. And instead of defining right now, I'm just going to talk about spiritual awakening in daily life.

And as I talk, what spiritual means and what awakening means will hopefully emerge while we talk. So instead of defining beforehand what these things are, because although this is not a talk on philosophy, so we're not here to define terms. It's an experiential thing.

It's not information-based. We're here to experience something and then to bring that into daily life, live it in our daily existence. Everybody has done some traveling and sightseeing, visited unfamiliar places, European cathedrals perhaps, or the pyramids in Egypt, or Machu Picchu, Stonehenge in England, whatever it may be.

And it's often an interesting experience for me to go into a place and walk around doing some sightseeing. Let's say it's a cathedral, an ancient cathedral in Europe, and you walk in there, and usually you have little groups of people with a guide. They walk around.

The guide has now come this way in different languages. The guide explains what this means, when it was built, or who is... this is a tomb, or this king, or whoever lies there, and all kinds of interesting information.

And just occasionally when I walk into a place like that, an ancient cathedral, I kind of approach the little group and just listen in and stand at the side and just see what he's saying. It's sometimes quite interesting, but I never feel drawn to actually sticking around for very long, because I prefer to explore the place by myself without the interference of a voice explaining to me what things are. Now, it may well be that I may have read a guidebook beforehand, or I may not.

But in most cases, probably I have not looked at a guidebook beforehand. So I'm actually going into this, let's say it's a medieval cathedral. I'm walking into this medieval cathedral not knowing very much about it, except it was built a thousand years ago, whatever, and it took two or three hundred years to build.

But I prefer that experience of entering a space and not being burdened by information about it, rather than entering a space and immediately being bombarded with facts about it. There are two very different kinds of experiencing that place. One kind of experiencing that place is based on bits and pieces of information, on knowledge, on mental knowledge, on mind.

And this is why most people travel for that reason, because they want to learn new things. So as soon as they enter the cathedral, they say, OK, I'm going to join this guided tour. Or, these days, they have invented something to substitute the human guide.

You can rent a little device, recording with earphones, and you can choose your language, and you put it on your ears, and then you choose your language, and then it tells you where to go. Now turn right here, stop here, and then it starts explaining it. You look.

And you're continuously learning a lot. And then, OK, walk on now ten steps, and now look up to the left, and you will see more information, information coming in. Very interesting.

I'm learning so much about history. It's true, you are. You're learning a lot.

And so you walk around this cathedral with the voice in your head, teaching you about it. What's wrong with that? Nothing.

It's fine. Why don't I do that? Because there is another way of experiencing, of perceiving that place.

And that's not something that people even know about. Some people do it intuitively. And that way is going into that place, and not perceive whatever is around you through the veil of facts, information, knowledge, thoughts.

Ultimately, it all comes down to thoughts, one thought after another. There is another way of perceiving that place that is not based on mind activity. And I love that other way more than the way of learning about.

There's nothing wrong with that. Sometimes I read a guidebook afterwards, after I've been to a place like that. I read, oh, that's what I saw, and have a little bit of information about it.

But at first, I love entering that place and perceiving, first of all, the totality of this, the vast, let's say it's a cathedral, it could be other places, but there's always, there's a spaciousness there, there's a vastness, there's a silence, interrupted, of course, sometimes by the voice of the guides here and there, and the clicking of cameras. But there is still a vastness, a silence, the whole place has a presence. There's an energy field there.

And the first thing that I love to take in is to enter and to take in the totality of that energy field that is this ancient cathedral, to sense it, to feel it directly. And it has its own presence, it's an energy field. I like to get in touch with this ancient energy field, ancient and new, because it's still alive.

And then look around at this architecture, and so on, and again, just see the shapes, the forms, the colors. So you see, be aware also of the space itself, because anybody who goes into a place like that and is struck by something, they go, wow. Even people who later seek out the guide, there may be a few seconds when they take in this and go, they sense something, a sacred presence, you could almost say, they sense it, they don't need to know anything about it.

In fact, you cannot sense the presence of that place if your mind is full of thoughts, full of knowledge. And if you enter a cathedral and you are, let's say, you are already very knowledgeable, you're a historian or whatever, and you know much, you would have to let go for a moment of all that you know if you truly wanted to experience that place. So I always a little bit feel sorry for most tourists, because they don't seem to be aware that there is another way of experiencing life, there is another way of perceiving, other than the mind, through the mind only.

There's nothing wrong with the mind, it has its place, and it's needed for quite a few things in your daily life. But for many other things, for realizing the depths of life and becoming a deep person, that's a strange expression that's sometimes used. You say this person has a depth, or we speak of a depth of perception.

What does that mean for a person? You would say there's a shallow person and there's a deep person. What does that mean?

I would say it means what we might call a shallow person, a person who is totally trapped only in the mind activity, the knowledge accumulated by the mind, and perceives everything through thoughts. In other words, you walk around your life like the tourist who rents this little device and tells him comments about what they are perceiving continuously. That's fine, sometimes it may be necessary, but imagine going through life, not being able to get rid of that device.

You can't take it off anymore. It keeps commenting. So wherever you go in the street, it says, OK, look at that person there.

And the thing even tells you whether you like it or not. I like that, or I don't like that. I wish I had an answer on whatever.

And of course, this is how most people live, because they are so identified with the involuntary mind activity, the little voice in the head, they don't even know it. They think they are the voice. And to live through the voice then makes your life quite shallow, because whatever you experience lacks depth.

You experience it through a concept. Every thought is conceptual. So when, let's say, you are in the street, a man or woman comes towards you, and your mind immediately has to say something about whether you like or don't like or would like to do something with this person, whatever it may be, or have some kind of reference point or commenting on the way they look, weird or strange or nice, or I'd like to, whatever.

Is there another way of perceiving this human being? Yes. To perceive the human being in the same way.

If that's what I said about the cathedral, if that resonates with you, if you have had a glimpse of that experience or perhaps more than a glimpse, then you know the difference between stepping into a place and going, no comment. Well, perhaps the mind says, oh, this is so beautiful, and then there is stillness again. So there is a still space through which you perceive instead of concepts through which you perceive.

And suddenly there is a depth. Not only do you feel another dimension is suddenly present, not only outside of you, another dimension that the tourist, who is totally dependent on either the mechanical guide or the human guide, is not aware of that, that the tourist who only listens to the commentary misses the true aliveness, the sacredness, and the depth of that place. And so, also within, you are trapped in the head.

There is no depth then to you as a human being. There is something that responds to life, something deeper than the commentary in your head. And so many people these days are trapped then with this guide, the tourist guide they can't get rid of.

And it's called your mind. And so, not that the mind is not a useful tool, and even in the cathedral it sometimes adds a little bit to it if you know something about it. And I would say that's the second stage to come back just for a moment to this cathedral analogy.

One could almost say you come back to that. Of course, ideally, and I do that occasionally, but sometimes we don't have enough time when we travel. First, I love to experience the place without knowing anything, and truly experience it, the depth of it.

And then, perhaps, go back to the hotel room, and then look at a guidebook, and then learn a few facts about it. Could be quite helpful. And then go back the next day, look at it again, and then you have a balance between knowing things about it and still being able to experience it.

So, in other words, you have then some information in your head. Oh, this is, I read about that. It was built by such and such, then and then, whatever.

And then again, you have the spaciousness where you perceive. And then you look at something else, and you say, oh, this is the statue of the saint so-and-so, and some knowledge about it that you have had, might have overlooked, a little detail. You can actually see a tear coming out of his eye, or whatever.

Oh, yeah, there's a tear. He seems to be crying. Don't know why, but he seems to be.

And then again, you can take it in without the commentary. So that's a little, you can experiment with that. And so, I'm using that almost as just an analogy for the whole of your life.

Most people are stuck with the tourist guide in their head. It comments continuously of what's going on in your life, and evaluates and interprets and defines in words everything that you perceive. And so, in whatever way it is defined or interpreted depends on your particular conditioning, on the way you were brought up, what you were taught by the surrounding culture, and so on.

So the kind of tourist guide you have depends on your past. And so, it's really your past talking to you continuously, certain forms of conditioning from your culture, your education, your family background, what you have read. Your fears and ambitions are also expressed there as thought structures.

They become thoughts, what you would like, want, what you fear. What if that happens? Oh my God, this could go wrong.

What if... So it becomes very problematic because the voice doesn't stop talking. Except occasional moments when you suddenly feel a heightened sense of aliveness.

Perhaps you're out in nature and you're looking up at a tree or a forest or... And for a moment you say, wow. And then after a few seconds the mind says, that's beautiful.

But for about 10 seconds or 20 seconds the mind wasn't saying anything. And that's the reason that you can know that it's beautiful. Beautiful is not...

The mind is concepts. There's no beauty really in that. If something from within you responds to beauty in nature, for a moment there must have been a space where the tourist guide in the head stopped talking.

And in that space there is a deeper experiencing of whatever is there. There's a depth to your experience. What does that mean?

It means, yes, what you see is the same, but the state of consciousness through which you see it has deepened. A space has opened up inside you through which the perception happens. And that's the depth.

So you could say when you look at something and for a moment you are not interpreting what you see. There's just the seeing and you may be aware of the background to what you see which cannot be defined, but there's a stillness inside while you perceive. This is what I meant when I talked about entering a cathedral without the knowledge in your head.

So suddenly the mind has become still and the perception happens. So you have two dimensions. You have a stillness in the background and whatever is going on outside is there.

The stillness is the depth that changes your perceptions. Then you see that the tree also has a depth to it and an aliveness and a sacredness that you didn't know before when you were conceptualizing the tree and said, oh, that's such and such a tree and whatever knowledge you have, or this tree is in my grandmother's garden too, or this, I'd like to chop this tree up and use it as my Christmas tree, or I wonder how much it would be worth the timber if I cut it, how much the timber would be worth.

You're not really, the tree is a surface phenomenon when you're in that state of consciousness, a utilitarian surface phenomenon, you cannot sense the depth, the aliveness, the sacredness of the tree, and I'm only using tree as one of many possible examples. Life, really, the tree stands for life. It could be a human being.

You cannot sense the aliveness of that if you are totally trapped in conceptualization in your head. So, there needs to be a depth to you in order to recognize that there is also a depth in life. Otherwise, you walk around for the rest of your life skimming the surface of life.

Just every human being is a surface phenomenon because you just have judgments about them and it's just no depth. And then you can go into nature and even there you will not know that nature has a sacredness to it because you can't sense it because you haven't the space isn't there inside you to sense that when you go into a forest, an ancient forest that's been there for thousands of years and you cannot sense that that is a sacred space because otherwise you would go, wow. And then you would and if you don't know it's sacred and our civilization doesn't know, it looks at the forest as a utilitarian thing.

How much would it be worth? So, the people who cut down the ancient forests, they don't know what they are doing because they cannot sense that there is more there than what appears to be there on the surface of things. But since they themselves are trapped in the surface of their own mind only, they have no idea what they are doing when they log an ancient forest.

To them it's just a utilitarian thing. You talk to them and say, what are you talking about? We are going to plant trees again.

Yeah, but it will take a thousand years to reach that sacredness. No idea what you say sacredness, what do you mean? It's a tree.

We are harvesting the trees. And so this is one example of what happens when you cannot get out of the conceptualizing mind. Life has no depth anymore.

And getting out of the conceptualizing mind is what I call spiritual awakening. So spiritual awakening has nothing to do with some kind of suddenly you have new spiritual thoughts in your head and you start talking about angels or even God. You suddenly start talking about God all the time and then people say, oh he has become spiritual.

No he hasn't, he has become religious. Religious without spiritual is an ideology. You could be a communist and then talk in those terms, whatever.

It's an ideology. Sometimes religious and spiritual can go together but in many cases religious only is just more thoughts in your head but different kinds of thoughts. Then God of course becomes my God and your God is not the right one.

And then you become my enemy and I will conceptualize you as the non-believer for example. And the non-believers are evil. Another concept.

And the non-believers must be killed because we know the truth and the truth is our God. Concepts, concepts in the mind. You can no longer sense and then when you do kill somebody, you're not killing a human being because you cannot sense that there is a being there, another human being, you are killing.

There's a mental concept there. You have conceptualized, you have deadened, just as you've deadened the forest to yourself, you've deadened the other human being and made him into, you put some label on. Non-believer.

American. And so it's not a human being, it's American. This is, and that's how it, this is how the madness grows.

So, and of course they don't know what's happened to them. They don't realize what's happening. They are unconscious and not unconscious in the conventional sense of the word because unconscious in the conventional sense of the word means they're lying there.

No, not that unconscious. They seem to be very alert with their guns or whatever they're doing but they are unconscious because they are totally trapped in the conceptualizing mind. They no longer sense the aliveness of life.

They have deadened themselves. They don't know who they are beyond the conceptualizing mind where they're completely identified with their belief structures that gives them, the belief structures give them their identity, their sense of who they are. I am a, whatever label they have.

We are the we. We are the only true et cetera, et cetera. And then it's the others, it's the others, them.

They're not alive. They're just, they're concepts. So it's easy to, when you no longer sense what you're doing to kill another human becomes easy because you no longer know that the human, the depths of the human being has disappeared.

And that's perhaps why Jesus on the cross said they know not forgive them for they know not what they do. In other words, they are unconscious. They have not awakened.

And so we are coming here from the tourists going into a cathedral and we've arrived at terrorists. Just an extension of really what is considered a normal state of consciousness and what it does to you to be trapped in that your whole life is a dreadful fate and the reason why we on this planet have arrived at such a point of extreme crisis is that this state of consciousness that we have been trapped in for thousands of years has created and is creating increasing havoc and destruction. It destroys nature.

It destroys human beings destroying each other. What we do externally is always a reflection of the predominant collective state of consciousness. And if you read the 20th century history you see what human beings have done to each other.

The only conclusion you can reach is they are mad. It's quite mad. And 20th century is just the most extreme form of that madness where human beings kill each other by the millions.

Often they don't even know what for. In the end you don't even know anymore what the whole thing is for. The First World War what was that whole thing about?

And then the First World War led to the Second World War and so on and innumerable other wars. So we need the spiritual awakening then is for the planet or humanity to survive is an absolute necessity. So having realized then that what is needed is to awaken out of complete identification with the continuous stream of thinking in your mind.

Okay, well how do we do that? Simple first step is to realize that there is a continuous stream of thoughts in your mind. This is the first step of awakening.

It's not saying I shouldn't be thinking. No, the first step is to realize that there is a voice that talks most of the time inside you. And perhaps that until now you had been so identified with the voice that was you.

You were talking to yourself. Sometimes people talk to themselves as I. Sometimes people talk to themselves as you.

You have a little voice that says you should have done that. Why didn't you do that? The voice is talking to some other voice and then perhaps there is an answer.

Well, I couldn't help it. Yeah, but you should have... So sometimes the voice splits itself into different voices.

Talking to each other becomes even more mad. And sometimes the voice also can have certain streams that one stream of the voice only comes up in certain circumstances. What some psychologists have discovered that this is the case.

Some psychologists call it sub-personalities. So in certain circumstances perhaps a whining little girl suddenly comes up. But you're 30 years old.

Why are you still... It's a sub-personality. And suddenly you have a whining voice in your head that complains about how unfair life is treating me.

It's a sub-personality talking. And then when that subsides something else happens and another voice suddenly comes in and becomes extremely aggressive. Another stream, another aspect of that has arisen.

Sometimes different voices take over but really it all belongs ultimately to the one thing, the one voice in your head. So the first step to awakening, the beginning of awakening is to realize there's a voice in my head. And it's especially useful to realize in the moment of it saying, for example, voices have all, most of the mind activities old thoughts, old patterns, repetitive thoughts.

For example, I had when I was younger I had a frequent thought that said whenever something that wasn't good happened to me or that my mind interpreted as not good, the voice in my head would say, you see bad things always happen to you. And then I was just waiting for the next bad thing to confirm that I was right. And it would never have to wait for very long and something else would go wrong in my life and I would say, you see it's happening again, always bad things to you, I don't know why it's always to you.

And then of course you experience the emotion that goes with that kind of thought. And I completely believed in that thought. I was so identified with that thought I didn't realize this is just a thought in my head, it's not the reality.

It's a conditioned way of interpreting the phenomenal world, the world just outside you. And so the liberation then comes with beginning to realize the voice is saying the same thing again and again and again and it's not me it's the voice. Who realizes that?

You. So there is a deeper dimension is suddenly there when you become aware that all the stuff that your mind is saying to you and to others is not ultimately who you are. But the awareness that at this moment your mind is reproducing the same old thoughts there you're beginning to touch the depths that is within yourself that we could call the awareness, the aware presence.

Because knowing that there is thought in my head is not a thought it's just a looking an internal aware why do bad things always happen to me? And then you look at the thought and you realize a thought. So you begin to, one could almost say you listen to your thoughts, you become aware of the kinds of thoughts you think.

And when this is for many people the first awakening. And what people realize when they first awaken, not everybody, because some people's thoughts are not too bad. They can live with it quite well.

So their thought activity is not predominantly negative. But many people actually find that when they become aware of their thoughts they realize how many thoughts are actually negative. The majority of people become aware that the larger part of your mind activity is negative thoughts.

There are far more negative thoughts than positive thoughts. Not in everybody. Some people have quite a few positive thoughts.

One could almost say it's easier for people who are trapped in a lot of negative thinking to step out of their thinking than people who have relatively nice thoughts. Their inner urge to awaken is not as strong. If you live in a self-made nightmare as I did the impulse to awaken is much stronger than you really...

I can't stand my mind anymore. I don't want to live with this mind anymore. Oh, that's good.

It doesn't mean you have to kill yourself. It just means you have to realize that your mind is not who you are. You are the awareness behind your mind.

You are the space. Because the awareness is space. It's not a thought.

It's consciousness. So there's a depth of consciousness to you of which the thought activity is only like little ripples. You could say there's a vast ocean or lake very deep with lots of waves and ripples on the surface.

And the waves and ripples on the surface are the thoughts in your head. And so most people are trapped on that level. They don't realize that there is a depth underneath that that is vast.

And that if they ever wanted to become creative human beings or bring anything new into this world, it would have to come from the depth. It can't come from just the surface activity of your mind. It's repetitive continuously.

Same kind of thing. Nothing creative can ever happen on that level alone. One day I'm going to compose a great piece of music.

One day I'm going to write a great book. Well, not if you don't get out of that. Of course the mind is needed to write a book.

Yes. But you cannot have a deep or inspired thought if you don't make room, a moment for the depth inside you so that you touch something deeper. You need to become still for a moment when you sit in front of your computer or notepad and want to write something new and creative.

Bring something new into this world. Well, where does that come from? From the repetitive noise in your head?

No. It comes if for a moment the repetitive noise in your head subsides. That's the moment of stepping into the cathedral.

Ah. And then you wait. So there is a open yourself to the stillness inside.

It's there. You don't have to make yourself still. Underneath even in the most mad, the maddest person, underneath that there is the realm of stillness.

They just can't touch it. It's there. So it's very easy to actually embrace saying, OK, you don't need to think all the time.

You need to have spaces of no thought and it's not that difficult unless you're totally mad. But not that many people are totally mad. Most people are partially mad.

Ha, ha. And the madness comes up occasionally in a more acute form. It's there.

So can you walk into the cathedral and be there as an aware presence rather than a mind burdened with knowledge? Can you walk along the street and look at another human being without commenting? Just look.

And sense. When there's no commenting, you can sense there's an aliveness in the other human being. There's an essence there that is even deeper than your mind and deeper than their mind.

And if you then communicate with that human being while you, for example, while you listen to them, can you be still inside while you listen? You might be talking about the weather. It doesn't matter.

But be still and just be there as the space for that human being as you are there as the space for the tree and realize what an incredible phenomenon this tree is. Beyond anything that you could know about it through the mind. What you know may be useful for certain things, but there's a depth to that thing that we call tree that you cannot capture through that, but you can sense something.

And the more you sense it outside, the deeper you go within. And there is an even greater depth in another human being. And the more you sense the depth of aliveness in another human being, the more you sense it in yourself.

It always goes together. So, relationships become problematic if both parties are totally trapped in their noise-making mind. Then very quickly, conflict arises in relationships.

And that's why relationships are full of conflict because people can't get out of that. They are trapped in here. So, every discussion, when they disagree, becomes conflict.

You have an opinion. This is how it is. I'm right.

You identify with your mental position. Your partner has a different mental position. No, you're not.

I'm right. You identify with your opinion. Identify means your sense of self is in the thought that you have in your mental position of this is how it is.

Today it's cold. Your partner says, no, it's not cold. It's just mild.

No, it's cold. I'm just giving an oversimplified example. Even that could lead to an argument because are you accusing me of being a liar?

[Speaker 5] (4:58:58 - 4:59:05)

laughter laughter It's all moving in concepts.

[Speaker 1] (4:59:09 - 4:59:11)

Well, you did lie last week.

[Speaker 5] (4:59:11 - 4:59:16)

laughter laughter I wasn't lying.

[Speaker 1] (4:59:16 - 6:00:28)

I was just... laughter And it goes on and on and on. laughter So you are...

And it's all happening. The entire relationship is mind. Mind against mind.

So you identify with mind and that becomes the ego. The me that needs to be right. Always.

If the ego is wrong, it's death. It thinks, I'm dead. I'll die.

Can't be wrong. I need to defend my position. Dreadful fate.

But it's normal. So, we are now slowly getting to what spiritual awakening is because we have looked at what spiritual sleep is. We've seen what it means to be asleep or unconscious.

Normal in other words. Normal existence. The entire world Not the entire world.

There's some awakening here and there. More and more people, in fact, are awakening. Going through the awakening process.

We now know what that is because it means you're no longer identified with the mind. Who are you if you're not your mind? You are the consciousness out of which every thought comes.

And then it pops back. It's like a wave or ripple. You are the consciousness that is far greater than any single thought or even greater than the totality of thought.

And that consciousness is experienced when you first touch it as inner stillness. Stillness doesn't mean you go to sleep. It means the mind is where the mind was before.

There's a space. And out of that space comes all creativity. Every great realization or insight that any human being has ever had.

The creative impulse comes out of the vast intelligence that is there. And then the mind, it flows into the mind and the mind becomes an instrument for that. And that's how the mind can be a beautiful thing.

When it's not just self-serving but it is serving something greater than itself. The mind as a master is mad. The mind as a servant is a great thing.

So that's the shift in consciousness that is happening and needs to happen on this planet. The mind finds its place as the servant of consciousness or awareness. So it's up to you then to invite the consciousness that you are beyond the mind into your daily life.

And how do you do that? You do that by inviting space, inner space or inner stillness into your life. For example, while you make a cup of tea or coffee, why not try to practice being still with every movement.

Just be aware, bring awareness into that every movement. Pour the water, no commentary. Look at a flower, look at a tree, look at the sky and for just a few seconds just look.

Listen to the wind, listen to the rain, listen to whatever sound you can hear and just listen. Bring the attention to sense perceptions. Attention to sense perceptions.

That means the mind is quiet while you listen. The mind is quiet while you look. And that's a little practice that you can do many times during the day and it will deepen your life.

It will bring spaces into otherwise an existence that goes from one thing that you have to do to another thing you have to do and another thing you have to think about now. Then there's no gaps. So the gaps are vital in daily life.

Inviting gaps into your daily existence. Looking for the gaps in daily existence. In everyday situations.

A helpful thing, as many of you already know, is to feel that your body is actually alive inside. Normally people are not aware of that because their whole attention is on thought activity. But if you can feel that your body is alive, so the attention is, some attention can be in the energy field of your hands, you feel, yes, you feel alive.

There is an aliveness that pervades the entire body. Your body is full of life. But most people can't feel that.

So if you can feel the inner body, that you are alive inside, the entire body at this very moment is a vibrating alive energy field. And it actually feels good to have some of your attention there, even while you are looking around the room. You can just, for people who are new to this, can just start by doing it with their hands.

Feel the aliveness that's in your hands. You can feel it perhaps even more with your eyes closed. And then you can still feel it even when your eyes are open.

Simultaneous thing, you are present inside your body and you are present outside in your sense perceptions. What does that do? It means your mind becomes quite still, because you can't be thinking also at the same time, because you're already present in the body and you are present outside.

You become awake, really awake to this moment then. And your mind, there's not enough attention left then for thinking. Part of your attention is in the inner body and part of your attention is on your perceptions.

And what you perceive then is more alive than it was before. It's more surprising. It's more, it has more depth to it.

Every human being is more interesting then. More really there. New.

Things are, you no longer feel that you're experiencing the same old thing again and again. Life then is always new. Every day is a new day.

It's not a repetition. As people grow older, they reach 30 years, 40 years, 50 years and for many people, life becomes more and more boring. Because it's so repetitive.

And they no longer look anywhere. They go every day, they go to work in the same place. They don't look at anything anymore.

There's nothing to look at. I looked at it yesterday and last year and five years ago. What's there to look at?

And even people they live with for a few years, after a few years you don't look at your wife or husband anymore. They're part of the furniture. And you don't look at your paintings anymore on the wall because they've been there for too long.

You can't look. It's there old. And really nothing new.

And then you become that kind of person who said, I've seen it all. Don't tell me about it. I know it all.

I've had yeah, I know that kind of person. I know that kind of thing. I've been there, done it.

Been there, done it. Life becomes more and more dull. Been there, done it.

You're not there and you're not... And so that's the that's the fate of many people as they grow old in our civilization. And only a few, perhaps an increasing number now because more and more people are awakening spiritually, they remain alive, perhaps even become more alive as they grow older.

And then you have a truly and then the person doesn't actually, you don't get, even if they're 70, 80 years old, you don't get the impression that they're old people because there is a light shining through their eyes, there is an aliveness to them. And occasionally you meet people like that. They may be old in terms of calendar years, but they're not old inside because they are not they are not burdened by their mind anymore.

Their mind can be used, but they are no longer being used by their mind which says, I already know all this. And so every day is new and fresh and every moment is still alive because you're not putting your past you're not obscuring it with past, the accumulated past in your head putting it onto the aliveness of the present moment, stifling the aliveness of the present moment. And so then spiritual awakening is then essentially intrinsically connected with the aliveness of the present moment, the only place where life is.

And so you are more and more open to the now rather than live continuously in past and future, which is normal. For most people it's future until they reach a certain age where there's not much future left and then they live mostly in the past. That's why old people, many old people, continuously talk about the past.

And the younger people continuously think about their future where they're going to finally make it someday and find fulfillment in some future when they have done or achieved this, whatever it may be. It could be a big house or recognition or for spiritually inclined people it could be enlightenment. But it's put into the future as I'm going to reach that place and then I'll be finally fully myself, fulfilled, happy, alive.

I will become alive one day, fully alive. But without ten million dollars in the bank, I don't think I can feel alive. Because I really need to have that sense of security, you know.

I need the sense of security without which I'll just be in fear the way I've always been. And you'll be surprised if the ten million dollars happen to come to you for a few weeks you will feel alive and one night you'll wake up and you'll be in the same fear as before. Because the stock market is about to collapse.

So spiritual awakening is becoming awake to the aliveness of this moment. And becoming awake to the aliveness of this moment, the all there ever is, nothing else is ever going to come. You can wait for millions of years if you lived that long.

Nothing is ever going to come that's not this moment. Your life will always be this moment. It sounds, well, we know that.

No, you don't. If you don't live it, you don't know it. Life is always this moment.

You don't know this if you don't live it. It's only through living it that you know it. Otherwise it's just a concept in your head.

Yeah, of course life is always this moment. And then what's next? Where's the next moment?

So you might as well then become friendly with this moment. If there's nothing else, be open to that. Don't stifle it with an excessive amount of judgments and interpretations and definitions.

But be open to the aliveness of this moment. Open means there's spaciousness here. So the shift is from a thought-based entity, which is the normal old way for humans, been for thousands of years, to a deeper entity that is based in awareness of presence, consciousness.

So when you're not commenting on things compulsively, who are you? When you're not continuously thinking about me and my problems, at this very moment, let's say, pretend that you don't remember your past at this moment. In fact, you don't, because at this moment, unless you start a thought process, at this moment, your past is not here.

You're just sitting here now. But pretend for a moment actually there's no past and there's no future. What's left of you?

If I removed your past and your future from you now, what's left? I remember nothing. What's left?

I don't remember my name. Who are you? I don't know.

But there must be something there. Yes, there is something there, but I can't say what it is. That's who you are.

Consciousness itself. When you remove the content from consciousness for a while, then you realize that you are consciousness. When the content, content is thoughts and emotions and thoughts and thoughts.

When the content comes back, it obscures the reality that you are consciousness and you identify with content. And that's why some people have been able to awaken spiritually because life took away their content. They lost everything suddenly.

They lost their reputation, in other words their name. It happens sometimes that life does these things to people. They lost their money, their possessions.

They lost even their family. They suddenly were killed in an accident. A big earthquake came.

Everything lost. And they sit there. Their house is in ruins.

Everything gone. And suddenly some of these people suddenly had a deep spiritual awakening. Why?

Because life took away all the things that they had identified with as themselves, as the me. And what was left was what we just did now here when I asked you to pretend that there is no past and future. We took away for a moment content from your life.

And what is when you remove content? Because content is going to disappear anyway. It's not permanent.

Whatever content you have is impermanent in your life. Things come and go. Or as the Buddha says, it's impermanence is the word.

Transient. Everything is transient. And that refers to content.

So as long as you are identified with all the content in your life, that can go very quickly. Even your body can go very quickly. But if you just beyond content is consciousness itself.

Rather than what consciousness has identified with. And you are that. I am that.

You and I on that level are the same. We are in essence the essence of who you are is consciousness. Everything else is added temporarily.

It's a disguise. Consciousness disguising itself as this and that and that person. Appearing in this particular form.

That's the play. Lila, the divine play of life. As it's called in India.

And that's fine. The play is not to be rejected. But you can only enjoy the play of the phenomenal existence if you know what is beyond phenomenal existence.

So it's only if you know who you are beyond all the things in your life, you can actually truly enjoy the things in your life. While they last. And you don't need to cling because you know nothing is going to last.

Relationships. Whatever. It's only very young people who think there are lasting things.

Then you reach a certain age and you realize oh it's so many things have evaporated that I thought were permanent. And more things are going to evaporate. And a few more things are going to come.

And then evaporate. So not to live and your life is no longer content based but essence based. I'm giving you here in one little talk the entire essence of what spirituality really is all about.

And that's that really that's what it is. There's not much else that you need to know beyond that in the sense of knowledge, accumulated knowledge. It is now a question of living that.

And if you don't want to live it, that's fine. It means you have to suffer a bit more until you're ready to make this shift until the shift begins to happen. A human being needs to reach the point of readiness where they say okay I've done enough madness.

I've suffered enough. I'm ready for the shift. I'm ready to say okay this moment is all there ever is.

I might as well become friendly with it. Acknowledge it. Give it attention.

In whatever form it comes. Because the form is not the moment. It's the form that this moment takes.

The now. It's not what happens. The now is not what happens.

It's the space in which it happens. And essentially that space is consciousness. Everything happens in the light of consciousness.

You can say as some philosophers have done they question everything. Some philosophers have said is there anything I can be absolutely sure of? Because everything can be doubted.

I can doubt that you exist. You can doubt that I exist. It could be a dream.

Who says we are not dreaming right now? Who says that us sitting here is not a dream? You cannot know for sure.

But even if it is a dream there must be something real there because the dream must appear to something or someone. There must be a light in which the dream appears. A space in which the dream happens.

So even if it is a dream, the one thing you cannot question is the fact of being itself. Being is. The being may be a dream or it may not be a dream.

But one thing you can be certain is that you are. I am is something that cannot be doubted. If I'm dreaming that I am it's still, the essence of I am is still there in the dream then.

And that's an amazing thing. That's to realize there's one thing that is beyond doubt and that's I am. It's not as the philosopher Descartes said, I think therefore I am.

He confused consciousness with thinking. Perhaps because he was always thinking. So he couldn't stop thinking and then he said, okay, then if I can't stop thinking then the essence of who I am must be thinking.

I think therefore I know that I am. Well, he stopped too soon. He should have taken one more step and realized that beyond thinking there's consciousness.

And then realized because I am conscious I am. Because there is consciousness I am. I am that consciousness.

And that consciousness that people believe in our civilization, that the consciousness is a byproduct of chemical reactions in the brain. And many psychologists or scientists actually doubt that there is such a thing as consciousness. They say, no, there is no

consciousness.

It's just a chemical soup. But they do recognize that the brain is the most complex thing on the planet. And they'd understand a tiny fraction of it only.

So who built that incredibly complex thing through which consciousness comes if not consciousness? So consciousness is prior to whatever appears here. And what is the relationship between the brain and consciousness?

Even some scientists are beginning to say they recognize the possibility that consciousness may be all-pervasive throughout the universe and the brain is like a lens through which consciousness enters this dimension. So it's like a receiver. It reduces and receives consciousness.

So when you eliminate the brain, it does not mean you eliminate consciousness. You eliminate the receiver like a TV. You can smash the TV and suddenly the image disappears.

But the TV didn't produce the image. So that is our meditation. I am consciousness.

Not something to believe in. But we're using those words only as a pointer to the essence of who you are. Thank you.

This telling yourself of stories and then believing in them is just an amazing habit, deep-seated habit. The story of me, I call it sometimes, to strengthen your sense of identity. The end of stories is a wonderful beginning of wonderful simplicity in your life.

You don't need to impose stories on reality. You need to include people, people that you know, your parents. You don't need to tell and retell yourself the stories of what your parents did or didn't do or failed to do.

Or about yourself, what you did or failed to do. And continuously deriving your identity from the movement of thinking. The past.

Becoming free of the past and becoming free of identifying with thinking, the same thing. Again, presence, presence, presence is the way out. Presence.

The moment of stillness before we start. Not waiting for anything to happen, but just being in the moment now. Make sure you're comfortable in your own skin as you sit there.

If you're not comfortable then just notice that you're not comfortable and allow yourself to not be comfortable and then you become comfortable. I have a little treat in store. We will talk about, not only talk about, but go into the essence of the book that has been with me, accompanied me for the past 30 years.

A book that I've gone to, back to, periodically, I still go back to periodically, pick it up, read a page or two or three and meditate on it. It's one of the great treasures of spiritual literature and it is a book that was written in China 2,500 years ago. The Tao Te Ching.

Now that's a huge, seemingly a huge gulf that separates us from that time period and yet the book is still vitally alive and if a book that was written so long ago is still vitally alive it means it must have been written from a very deep place and point to something that is timeless. If it were not written from a deep, timeless place within the author and did not point to something that is beyond time, a book written 2,500 years ago would be irrelevant, meaningless, incomprehensible. Many books that were written 20 years ago are out of date or if you read yesterday's newspaper it's out of date.

So for something to still be alive now and to be deeply meaningful to many people there must be something there that is timeless and that is the essence of the book and that's what I would like to go into with you. So we are not going into a book, we are not going just going to study a book, we are just using the text to go deeply within, to discover something within ourselves. So all that the book is, is a device that helps us discover ourselves and our connection with the greater whole, the universe, whatever you want to call it.

So just very briefly, the historical context, it might be helpful to know just a little bit about that. This book was written about 2500-2600 years ago in China. In other words, 500-600 BC.

Now that was a very exciting and meaningful time period, something incredible was happening during those, let's say, one and a half to two centuries. For the first time in the history of humanity, as far as we can see, there was a universal wave of spiritual awakening coming over the planet at that time. So the author of the Tao Te Ching, Lao Tse, is a contemporary, more or less, of the Buddha in India.

So the Buddha and his teaching arose at the same time, approximately, as the teaching of Lao Tse, the author of the Tao Te Ching. So there was the Buddha arising in India, beginning to teach, and another significant teacher in India whose teaching did not go very much beyond India even to this day, but has remained very meaningful and profound in India, Mahavira, taught at approximately the same time as the Buddha, and it developed into Jainism, a religion, a very beautiful religion, still practiced widely in India, based on Ahimsa, non-violence and respect for all living beings.

All those things were revelations when they first came into being at the time, the teachings. So we have the Buddha in India, we have Mahavira in India, all arising at the same time. In Persia, we have Zoroaster, sometimes called Zarathustra, not to be confused with Nietzsche's Zarathustra, which is a completely different character.

Zarathustra, the prophet in Persia. We have at the same time in ancient Greece, and that was a time before the famous Greek philosophers started to teach, Plato, Aristotle, Socrates. It was earlier than that.

Those were philosophers that arose for the first time there. They are called pre-Socratic philosophers because they predate Socrates. We only have fragments of their philosophy, but those fragments are enough to show us that their teachings were in some ways, this is how I feel, more profound than the later, more differentiated teachings of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

My favorite pre-Socratic philosophers are Heraclitus and Parmenides, and we only have small fragments, but the fragments show us that those teachings were still in touch with the source of being, the source of life, the oneness that underlies all phenomena. And later, as the philosophy became more differentiated, that was becoming lost. The philosophies became very interesting and much more differentiated, but the connection with the root of all life, the unmanifested oneness, the transcendental dimension, gradually became lost.

So those philosophers, 500 and 600 BC, still had that connection. And they showed people, they also realized that humanity had lost it. So it was part of the wave of awakening that was coming over the planet, the teaching of those philosophers.

This is not philosophy as we understand it these days, it's about inner transformation, not speculation. Those were not speculative philosophers, in the same way that Buddha wasn't speculative, Mahavira wasn't speculative. So it is a transformational teaching.

It's about inner transformation, not about figuring something out with your mind. So we have that arising, the awakening arising in Persia, the awakening arising in India, the awakening arising in ancient Greece, and now we come to China, we have Lao Tse, his teaching at the same time was arising in China. All part of this wave of awakening that we are now experiencing again, even on a much larger scale now.

So we are at a similar time period, except that the wave of awakening that is coming into this world, of spiritual awakening, is on a much larger and more powerful and all pervasive scale. So we are in the middle of that. A hundred, two hundred years ago nobody in the West was discussing the Tao Te Ching, and this is why we can go back to it and understand it, because we are awakening.

Lao Tse was, we know very little about his life, he was, they say, in charge of the archives of a kingdom called Shu, and reached, I don't know how old he was when he was becoming bored with the life of the court and the intrigues and the conflicts around him, and so he decided to leave his job and to leave his homeland and just go out into solitude. And the story goes, nobody knows whether it is true, that he left and he got to the border of the kingdom, there was a front, a little border crossing and a gate, and the gatekeeper said, I'm not going to let you pass unless you write down your wisdom. So he must already have had a certain reputation as a wise man, but he had never written anything.

And so, all he could do, he said, okay then, I'll write it down, we don't know how long it took, he wrote it down, and the gatekeeper let him go, and that is the Tao teaching. That is the teaching, and that is the book. And then, according to one story, the last we ever know of him, he was sitting on a water buffalo, riding off into nowhere, and that's the last that anybody ever heard of him, nobody ever saw him again.

That's one version of the story. Another version of the story is that he continued to teach and reached the age of 160 years. The Tao Te Ching is the title of the book, which is not usually translated.

People have tried to translate it, but unsuccessfully. Usually, they give you subtitles. So it says, Tao Te Ching, one of the traditional subtitles is The Way and Its Virtue.

And that's already somewhat of a mistranslation. Although Tao can be translated as The Way, you just can't translate Tao. Even if you translate it as Way, it's pretty meaningless.

And if you're a Chinese person, you're not at a great advantage. You still won't know what Tao is. So you're not at a great advantage.

The Tao is something that cannot be named. We'll come to that in a minute. So the subtitle, The Way and Its Virtue, Virtue is a mistranslation of the Te in the Tao Te Ching.

Virtue has become a dead word in our language. When did you last say Virtue? When did you last use that word?

Probably many years ago, if ever. So the word Virtue is not alive. What it really refers to is the power.

So to translate, it's the power of the, of spirit, of the transcendental dimension. The Way and Its Power is a better subtitle for the Tao Te Ching. The Way, how to live.

The Way, to living in alignment with the one power that underlies the universe. The one thing that you cannot name, that is not a thing. Living in alignment with the ultimate, which sometimes is called God, but the moment you call it God, it's not it.

You've made it into something. It is not something. It is something that flows through the entire universe, animates the entire universe, and at the same time is beyond it.

That is the Tao. And that is something that you can discover within yourself. You can live in a way that connects you with the inner source of all life, of all being.

So the Way and Its Power, He is teaching us how to live so that we are in alignment with the power that underlies all life. Which, as Lao Tzu says, for lack of a better word, I'll call it the Tao. And the Tao, that's a good thing, because you can't do much with a word that you cannot exactly see what it means.

The same way that Buddha used the word emptiness. You cannot worship emptiness. It's almost, it's a negative term.

It negates form. So it's always been the tendency for humans to worship concepts. The concept of God arises in your mind, and then you start talking about God.

The concept of God becomes an idol, because it's no more than a thought. So that you can't do that with the Tao, because you can't picture it. You can't form an image of it.

In the same way that you can't form a picture, an image of emptiness. So that is the transcendental reality that the book points to, and it shows us the way to it. So there's great power there.

And the book came to me for the first time in my twenties, maybe mid-twenties. Somebody said, have a look at this. This is interesting.

And I looked at it, and something drew me into it, but then I couldn't quite...it was so obscure that I couldn't... I knew there was something hiding there in the book. There was some truth hiding, but I couldn't get it.

It was there, and then I put it aside and, OK, I have other things to do now. And then years passed, and then in my early thirties, I rediscovered the book in a different translation. There are many translations available.

And not only was the translation better, something had, by then, taken place within me, an awakening, a shift in consciousness. And through that new consciousness, I looked at the book, and I said, Wow! That's...he's talking...

I know what he's talking about. I realized the depth and the profundity of what those words were saying. And since then, I've been reading the book in different versions.

Not the actual physical book, but the Tao Te Ching has never left me. It's always been with me in one form or another. So that's the story behind the Tao Te Ching.

And now, let's see if we can go a little deeper into it. We are going to use... There are two translations that, at the moment, are my favorites.

We will use Stephen Mitchell's translation, fairly recent, Tao Te Ching. Another translation that I've had for a number of years, that I'm very fond of, is by Jia Fu Feng and Jane English. They, together, translated the Tao Te Ching.

And that's another beautiful translation. I will be using, mainly for today, Stephen Mitchell's translation or version of it. And the first two lines of the Tao Te Ching are very famous.

I've quoted it quite a few times. But even there, sometimes translations differ. However, the first two lines are the Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao.

What he's saying is you cannot really speak about the ultimate reality. Whatever you say about it is not it. However, he then continues to talk about it.

So, how is that? Well, he's telling you not to attach yourself to the words. Not to begin to believe in the words or in concepts.

Not to make it into some new belief. The truth is not in the words. That's what he's saying.

The truth, the words only point to the truth. And the truth is only to be found within you, beyond the realm of mind or of thinking or of concepts. So that's just a little very important, those first two lines.

The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao. And now let me tell you about it. Because the Tao is in you and the only place where you can discover it is in you.

And so, the book shows the way to discover who you are beyond who you thought you are. Beyond whatever your mind is telling you who you are. And now, the closest he comes to defining the Tao, which cannot be defined.

I'm just saying the closest he comes to defining it is in these little lines, which I will read to you now. And again, you need to listen to that not just with your head, but you need to listen to that with your belly or your entire being, those words, because you cannot understand them just through the mind. If they are meaningful, or if you can sense the power that is in the words, then you are sensing your own power beyond thought activity.

There was something formless and perfect before the universe was born. It is serene, empty, solitary, unchanging, infinite, eternally present. It is the mother of the universe.

For lack of a better name, I call it the Tao. Note that he begins by saying there was something formless and perfect before the universe was born, before the arising of form, before the Big Bang, you could say. He uses the past tense.

In the next line, he says, it is serene, empty, solitary. It is not only that which was there before the world came into being, it is that which continues to be there timelessly at the core of your being. That which was there before the Big Bang is still present in you, the unmanifested one life, one consciousness without which you are nothing.

It is the essence of who you are. And of course, if you say that to a normal materialist scientist, whatever, I'm saying a normal scientist, not a great scientist, then he'll say, what is this nonsense? Or if you tell it to somebody who is totally close to you, they'll say, this is mumbo-jumbo.

There was something before the universe was born, and there's something. What are you talking about? And now listen, he very wisely, Stephen Mitchell, put in a little quote by one of the great scientists, Albert Einstein, what he had to say about it.

Somebody who did a lot of thinking, but whose thinking was rooted in the stillness, which, as we shall see, is an essential part of the teaching of the Tao. His thinking was rooted in the Tao, in the stillness beyond the noisy mind. That's where Einstein's realizations came from.

And so, he was not just trapped in his noisy mind, like most scientists, and then deny the reality of the transcendental, but he was connected with it. And he said, I'm not used to quoting from books in talks. Here's Einstein talking.

The scientist's religious feeling takes the form of a rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law, which reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, in comparison with it, all systematic thinking of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection. This feeling is the guiding principle of my life and work, the recognition of a vast intelligence that underlies all of creation. Instead of saying, what, something more intelligent than me?

That can't be. That's mumbo-jumbo. But something that I can't understand, I can't categorize, what mumbo-jumbo is that?

This is what the dowdy jingle standing on tiptoe and you're not stable. It's in the flower. It creates that.

It's in you. It pervades the very space around us. It comes through the human brain, becomes, the brain is like a, gives it some form.

And when the brain goes, it no longer goes through that form. It's the very consciousness that you are. So this shows that Einstein was in touch with that dimension.

That's why his thinking was inspired. That's why he had sudden revelations. Now, now we come to the first, slightly longer, just a few lines, never more than a few lines at a time.

How to live to be in touch with that? Can, I'll read the whole, this little section first and then we'll look at the lines and go into it. Not just, not with the intellectual mind, but sensing our way into it.

Can you coax your mind from its wandering and keep to the original oneness? Can you let your body become supple as a newborn child's? Can you cleanse your inner vision until you see nothing but the light?

Can you love people and lead them without imposing your will? Can you deal with the most vital matters by letting events take their course? Can you step back from your own mind and thus understand all things?

Giving birth and nourishing. Having without possessing. Acting with no expectation.

Leading and not trying to control. This is the supreme virtue. For virtue substitute power.

The power moves through you if you live in that way. You become it. You realize your oneness with it.

Back to the beginning. Can you coax your mind from its wandering? It wanders about.

If you look at your own mind, that's what it does. It goes. One thought leads to another thought and goes on and on.

Sometimes I call it the voice in the head. Can you coax your mind from its wandering and keep to the original oneness? In other words, is it possible for you to sit still for a moment and don't give attention to every thought that says, follow me.

I'll show you the way. That's what every thought says. I'm important.

Think about this. Think about this. Okay, and once you follow up one thought, then it becomes another one and another.

Stream. Then you get, that's how most people live. Continuously immersed in just chatter, mental chatter.

Streams of thinking. It's even become literature in the 20th century. It's called the stream of consciousness.

James Joyce. You get 30 pages without any punctuation marks. He wrote down how he observed his own mind and he wrote down how it works.

It goes on and on. No period, no comma, nothing. Normal.

So once you know that and most people don't even know that. They are so identified with it. That's who I am.

I think. It's not even that they say, I think, because they are the thoughts. And they miss the vast dimension underneath thoughts.

That's why I say, okay, just don't give all that importance to your thoughts. Just come to a point of rest. This is where the present moment becomes so important because it's the present moment that can take you out of the stream of thinking.

Just becoming alert to this moment. There's nothing much to think about as you sit here. What can you add to this moment that's better than what's already here?

Or when you look at a flower, why add thought to it? Or when you look at another human being, why add thought to the beautiful perception of that? And you keep to the original oneness.

The moment you're no longer dominated by thinking and you realize there's a realm beyond thinking inside me, you're connected to the oneness because it's only through thinking that the illusion of separation arises when you start calling things this and that and judging and naming. Doesn't mean you can't do it anymore, but you're not trapped in it anymore.

[Speaker 5] (6:00:29 - 6:00:30)

Ah! Ah!

[Speaker 1] (6:00:33 - 7:13:22)

Can you let your body become supple as a newborn child's? When you are immersed in thinking, your body becomes rigid because it reflects what's going on in here, a lot of which is problematic. I need to think about this.

And the more problematic your thinking is and all thinking is problematic, the more lifeless your body becomes and the flow of energy through the body diminishes. You get rigid, you get tense, you're holding in. Can you let your body become supple as a newborn child?

This is a free translation. If you go back to the more literal translation, he's actually saying can you concentrate your chi or your vital energy until your body becomes supple as a little child's? This is really, he's teaching body awareness.

Can you go within, take attention into the body and to feel that you're alive inside? Can you feel the aliveness in your hands? Can you feel the aliveness in your feet?

Can you feel the aliveness that pervades the entire body? Takes you out of your mind. Even as you sit here, can you feel that?

There's a very ancient Taoist practice thousands of years old, almost as old as the Tao Te Ching which tells you you should breathe with your heels from your heels upward. It says can you breathe from your heels upward? Of course you can't because you can't suck in air with your feet.

But it's just what it's saying is it is directing attention to your feet and you imagine that you're breathing from down there. You're breathing through your heels. What that does is you suddenly become aware it starts from the bottom of your entire energy field.

I'm breathing in, just simply imagine are you breathing in from your feet. Energy starts to move in from down there. Imagine that you're actually breathing in from your feet and then the energy of the breath flows into the body.

Very ancient practice. That particular one I only discovered two days ago that somebody that thousands of years ago they recommended that already. And I said, oh that's the inner body.

That's what I was talking about. I always talk about. Can you cleanse your inner vision until you see nothing but the light?

That is perhaps a somewhat obscure, although there's light in it, but to the mind it's a little obscure. What do you mean cleanse your inner vision until you see nothing but the light? The light is the light of consciousness.

Cleansing your inner vision as to still the mind until you become aware of awareness. Until you become aware that you are conscious. And then that remains always there.

This entire little chapter is really how to be in the world, but at the same time connected with the source. At this moment it might be easier if you forget. Don't think of yourself as somebody having a past.

Don't think of yourself as somebody having a future. What's left of you right now without that? Consciousness.

Just a presence. Not an opinion or memory. That's the light of consciousness and that's the Tao really.

You cannot grasp it. You cannot make it your object of knowledge and say, oh, there it is. There's the light of I can see the light of consciousness.

No. You are the light of consciousness through which everything is seen. You can't see it.

You can't grasp it. It underlies everything. It's so there.

It's who you are. It's your presence. Vanessa, your presence is not quite right because it's not yours.

It's you. It's oneness. If I say your presence then there's you and presence.

But language works in that way. It creates duality. And that's what the Tao Te Ching is about.

It's realizing that that's an illusion. Can you love people and lead them without imposing your will? Imposing your will in another translation it's always helpful to look at different translations it says can you be without cleverness in this world?

I talk about cleverness in one of the books that the ego is clever because it tries to work out some advantage for myself or for us. It has its little schemes. It tries to use people.

That's cleverness. Politicians are clever most of them. Very few are intelligent.

PhD doesn't mean you're intelligent. Well, whether they have PhDs or not it has nothing to do with that. Intelligence is to see the larger whole of all and then not just act to enhance one little fragment and then be in opposition to the rest of the world of life.

But see the totality. Can you be without cleverness? Can you deal with the most vital matters by letting events take their course?

That's a very fundamental teaching of the Tao is not to interfere in the way things are moving. And even if so you don't, there's no violence whatsoever and that's of course beautifully practiced in all martial arts. In martial arts the opposing energy that is coming towards you is not resisted.

This is deeply influenced by the Tao Te Ching. Non-resistance going with the movement of life. The western approach is somebody comes towards you and you hit back.

It comes towards you and you go Oh! And the eastern is it comes, the force is coming towards you and you go with it and then suddenly your opponent falls. The very energy of that attack movement is used to defeat the opponent.

You have not opposed it. You go with it. There's almost we can say no violence in it and yet extremely powerful.

And that can be applied in many things. It can be applied in daily life in not getting involved in useless discussions, not identifying with mental positions of rightness. I'm right and you are wrong and then you start this energy totally takes you out of yourself.

Not engaging in useless discussions. Being able to listen in a state of openness to another. Not identifying with your opinions and then opposing somebody else's opinion.

Can you step back? Oh! Before that, can you deal with the most vital matters by letting events take their course?

Now I looked at another translation that's a little closer to the original which says instead of by letting events take your course, it says by becoming the female. Can you deal with the most vital matters by becoming the female? The female principle.

Female is often used as synonymous with the Tao. So one could almost say that the feminine principle is the principle of allowing, which is like this. Whereas the male principle is this.

If you want to see it and express this is the male goes like that. The female goes like that. And according to this teaching, the female is one could almost say expresses the Tao more clearly than the male.

It's somewhat easier to express the Tao through the female form than the male form. If you're male then you have to discover the female in yourself to be one with the Tao. Also you have to discover that the allowing, for example, when I say allow this moment to be as it is.

That's a female. You're not fighting what is. You're allowing what is.

There's an embracing. You see it when sometimes with Guan Yin statues the holding hands like that or Virgin Mary statues which are all expressions of the female. All embracing.

All embracing. Can you be the female in any situation? So in a discussion some women would say, I don't like this idea.

I want to be powerful. They don't realize that the power of the female is enormous. The power of allowing is far greater than the power of interfering.

Can you be the female? Let's see what else we have. Before we go to another longer one.

How you receive this depends on your degree of openness to this message. So this sounds very familiar to me. That's why I'm just reading it to you.

Just a few lines. Some say that my teaching is nonsense. Others call it lofty but impractical.

But to those who have looked inside themselves this nonsense makes perfect sense. And to those who put it into practice this loftiness has roots that go deep. So there are some people in whom the openness is not there and then whatever we are talking about here is totally nonsensical.

So there needs to be something in you that recognizes the truth of this beyond words and concepts. Empty your mind of all thoughts. Let your heart be at peace.

I'm going to read the same again in a different translation. Just gives you a slightly different sense, different feel. Empty yourself of everything.

Let the mind become still. Empty yourself of everything. Let the mind become still.

Watch the turmoil of beings but contemplate their return. Watch the turmoil of this world, of all the activity of this world, of all beings involved in running around. Watch it, which means be the awareness and contemplate their return.

They all return to the formless sooner or later. All the forms. Imagine you're seeing a movie.

I always, I love to see old movies, like movies made in the 30s or so, or 40s. And I love seeing, for example, you see street scenes, actual street scenes, big city, London, New York, whatever, people, hundreds of people running around to go about their business. But this is what the turmoil of beings, as it's called here, you have to see it and I see that in amazement I watch that.

This refers to watch but contemplate their return and when I watch that I realize all these people, the actual street scenes, all these people are no longer there. They're all dead now. It was so important what they were doing.

It looked so important. Running around, cars going and if you had seen a speeded up version of the movie, if you see a speeded up version of anything, if you saw a speeded up version of this room, like you sometimes see how a flower is a wonderful image, if you see, like do it on film, how a plant comes suddenly out of the soil over a period of a few hours or a few days it's filmed. So you see that period within a few seconds contracted.

So you see actually how the plant comes out of the soil, then leaves come out of the plant and the flower comes out and suddenly you see the flower is wilting, the leaves are wilting and falling off and then the entire plant goes gone. This is what it's talking about. You have to actually see.

It's an amazing thing when the touch, to see that when you truly watch that, something inside you goes, you can't put it into words, it goes, wow. Because you realize that applies to everything in this world is that way. It comes into being every body.

I'm really, I'm looking at my own body when I see it. It's just a slightly different version of that. It lasts a few years longer than the plant.

But if you saw even the baby growing into an adult, maturity, vitally alive, physically active and then gradually winding down and then beginning to look like a wrinkled apple or a pear and then suddenly the life force leaves and then sooner or later all the molecules and atoms say goodbye, we're going our own way now, and there's nothing left. Just an emptiness. If you saw this room and the people in this room, and let's see if we didn't move from this room and we had a camera here, you would see gradually the bodies dissolving or evaporating whatever, it would go very quickly.

I sometimes compare them to soap bubbles popping. So if you saw this, if we had this camera here over a period of, let's see, how long do you want to live? Another 50 years?

Then the soap bubbles would pop one after another. Pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, pop. Nothing left.

And then for a little while longer the physical forms would stay and then you would see gradually even the physical forms crumbling. They could take 2,000 years or whatever depending on atmospheric conditions. And even then the chairs could become dust.

So everything is dissolving. Birth, birth, dissolution. Everything, every form.

It's impermanent. And to watch, it's extremely powerful to watch that. This is why he's telling you, watch the turmoil of beings but contemplate their return.

Be aware of the impermanence of all forms. Not as a negative thing but simply as you see it for what it is. And if you are aware of the impermanence of all forms that all forms are short-lived, how can you be aware of it?

There must be something in you that is beyond that. It's only from as I sometimes say if the entire universe were blue, the color blue would not exist for you because there would be nothing to differentiate it from. If we said everything is blue, you say, what are you talking about?

There's blue. What's blue? If there's no other color.

If everything were impermanent, you wouldn't even know it. But there is something in you that is beyond that. It's only from there.

And that is why the contemplation of impermanence can put you in touch with that because that in you, which is the consciousness, the timeless presence, the light of consciousness, is not touched by that. And then the question the mind asks is, well, what about when I die? I lose consciousness.

Or if a brick falls on my head, I lose consciousness. What about that? All it means is that consciousness can no longer flow through your brain into this world.

It then has to withdraw and seek another channel. Consciousness is not affected. You cannot lose consciousness.

Isn't that amazing? Why not? Because you are consciousness.

It's the essence of who you are. So you can't lose yourself. Consciousness, you can also say life.

You can call it life. You can call it Tao. It's the unmanifested underlying, the timeless essence of all life, that which animates all life forms for brief periods, each form of brief period.

You are that. You can't think about that. If you think about it, it doesn't make sense.

You have to sense that in yourself. Now, sense that. You can't know it as an object of knowledge.

You can only know it as yourself, because it's the subject of all knowledge. Each separate being in the universe returns to the common source. Returning to the source is serenity.

Another word for serenity is stillness. All things return to the source out of which they have come, the life, the unmanifested one life. Returning to the source is stillness.

Now, the wonderful thing is we don't have to wait until we die to return to the source. To live a life that is filled with power and wisdom, we can return to the source before the body dies and live in a state of connectedness with the source of life. And that's why it says returning to the source is stillness.

When you find the stillness within yourself, you're returning to the source of all life. What is stillness? Just a moment when you're not thinking, but still conscious.

Just an inner space. Like now. Okay.

Ready for this? Shhh. Hear all your thoughts.

And now we go Shhh. And thoughts come creeping back. And then we go Shhh.

And suddenly there's a... Can you sense that there is a space inside you that's just conscious? Where you don't call yourself anything or call me anything.

You're returning to the source, to the formless, the timeless in you. If you don't realize the source, you stumble in confusion and sorrow. If you don't realize the source in yourself, you stumble in confusion and sorrow.

That's how most people live, unfortunately. Stumbling about, unconnected with who they are, disconnected from who they are, not realizing the source of their being. There is immediately there is confusion, which is mental confusion, the mind creating all kinds of pseudo-problems.

You yourself, you become a problem to yourself. You become a problem to others. You become a problem to the planet.

You become a problem or you contribute to the problem-making of the world. And that's the normal way to be. You stumble in confusion and that's confusion, and sorrow is the suffering that comes when you are not connected with that dimension in yourself, in your daily life.

You suffer. That's the destiny. That's what the Buddha said.

Life is suffering unless you go beyond suffering, which is the teaching. It shows you the way. Say as the Tao Te Ching does.

Confusion and sorrow, you can't get rid of it no matter how you try to rearrange your outer life or think if I achieve that or that I'll be fine. You won't. So you stumble in confusion and sorrow.

You need to find the source. And it's not even hidden. It's just there underneath the mental noise.

So when you realize the source, realize of course doesn't mean you have some kind of intellectual idea about it. Realize is when you have no idea. When the ideas, the importance of ideas diminishes and there's just a space of awareness.

Ideas are secondary. In fact you will have some interesting ideas coming out of that. Creative ideas, new ideas, new insights, but they are secondary.

When you realize where you come from, you naturally become tolerant, disinterested, amused, kind-hearted as a grandmother, dignified as a king, immersed in the wonder of the Tao, you can deal with whatever life brings you and when death comes, you are ready. Beautiful images explains who or what you become when you live in connectedness with that. No longer as a little entity that thinks itself to be separate from the universe and from other human beings and from everything.

You become tolerant, tolerant, disinterested, which means not uninterested, disinterested, amused. There's a little bit of amusement at all the things that people in this world feel is so serious and so important and all their fears and ambitions and all the things they run after. You then become a little bit amused at all this, what is called the turmoil of beings running around like little rabbits.

All this, I have so many problems to think about, oh my god, what's happening? Oh no, god. You become a little bit, you become amused a little, there's a slight smile, you don't, sometimes you might even laugh, but there's a slight little bit of a smile, because you know it's not ultimately real.

What they believe to be so important is ultimately not that real. It's a temporary thing. It's relatively real, not ultimately real.

In other words, everything is a little bit like a dream. For example, what happened to you yesterday? Where is it now?

A little bit like a dream. Whatever was important then, even breakfast this morning, okay, did I have breakfast or was it a dream? Not that much difference.

Or you come to the end of your life and suddenly you think back all those years, that was a long dream. Was it a nightmare? And you become kind-hearted as a grandmother.

Nice image, the grandmother was already been through everything. It's a little bit like the big-bellied Buddha that you see, that is influenced, a Taoist-influenced Buddha, the Chinese big-bellied Buddha. He sits there.

Sometimes people who think they have lots of problems in their lives, I recommend that they should get a big-bellied Buddha and look at it quite often when they think they have problems. Because the Buddha, he's actually laughing, he has a huge belly and he always goes ... It's not serious.

It implies that he is connected with something deeper. He doesn't take the world that seriously. And so his influence is beneficial.

It's only people who take the world not that seriously they can actually be of benefit to the world and improve the world. But if you think that the world is absolutely serious, you're not going to improve it. You can just contribute to the madness.

You will be fighting one or somebody or some organization or some group of people. It's serious, serious. That little bit of detachment you become the Buddha, the big-bellied Buddha or the grandmother.

And dignified as a king with a certain dignity or integrity to who you are. The same dignity and integrity that each animal has that many humans have lost. One with itself.

I feel always when I look at a dog or a cat or a bird, whatever it is, it is one with itself, with who it is. It has enormous dignity. And then sometimes you can see the contrast if you look at a particularly silly human being.

And sometimes silly human beings have a dog that's very dignified. the only times when they get out of their silliness is when they pet their dog. For a moment, they can truly be themselves.

With all other people, they're playing some kind of silly roles, not knowing that they're playing roles. And then they come in. For a moment, their dog gives them the ability to relax for a moment and be who they are without pretending.

And that's why they don't know it. That's why they love their dog or their cat so much. Because they can be themselves.

They find themselves through that. That's the integrity of the animal. The dignity of the animal.

But it's in you also. This is a nice one about people who are in control of something, of an organization or country or whatever. How to rule a country or an organization.

When the master governs, the people are hardly aware that he exists. Next best is a leader who is loved. Next, one who is feared.

The worst is one who is despised. If you don't trust the people, you make them untrustworthy. The master doesn't talk.

He acts. When his work is done, the people say, Amazing! We did it all by ourselves.

So the greatest ruler is not even aware that he or she is there. Hardly aware that he or she is there. Does not interfere.

Never says, Look at me. I did that. Identifying with their actions and taking credit for what they did.

I did that. Or arguing with somebody. You didn't do it.

I did that. That same thing can exist. This talks about having gone beyond ego and beyond mind and identification with action.

You also find this phenomenon in some very simple people who haven't developed an ego yet. They sometimes do wonderful things, but there's no entity that says, Look, I did that. Or how it feels, I did that.

Beautifully expressed in the film Forrest Gump, where the hero or the anti-hero does not have an ego. He is below ego. He helps many people and many good things come into his life, but he has no sense of a separate self.

He lives in the right way. Not what this describes, because this describes going beyond ego, but he hasn't arrived at ego yet, so he still lives in a sense of oneness. If you live in a sense of oneness, the universe to a large extent becomes helpful.

Helpful things come into your life because you are no longer separating yourself from life. That begins with being in a state of oneness with the present moment, accepting the moment as it is. That's really all you need to do.

Then you're in a state of oneness with life, not imposing anything on the present moment, judgments, reactions, and if they are there, accept that they are there. You can always accept what is, whatever level, either accept what is externally or accept what is internally. Now here's a very wonderful thing about how your state of consciousness affects the world, that there's a correlation between the collective consciousness of humanity and the state of the planet.

And there is a correlation between your state of consciousness and whatever happens to you. Not always apparent immediately, but there is a correlation between what's within you and what happens to you or what you attract into your life. And, furthermore, it's not so much that what happens to you is your fate or your destiny.

Your destiny is determined not by what happens to you, that's what people think, that what happens to me determines my life. Your life is determined, your destiny is determined by how you respond to what happens. And what happens next is determined by how you react or respond to what happens now.

So something seemingly bad happens, something goes wrong, if your reaction is negative, you attract the next negative thing. If your reaction is a response that says, well, this is how it is, now let's deal with that. The next thing will reflect that state of consciousness.

Many people are trapped their whole lives in a stream of same kind of unpleasant things happening continuously to them, because they don't realize at any given moment there is a freedom for them to change their lives by reacting differently to what happens. Your present reaction determines the future, not what happens. Your reaction to what happens determines the next moment.

That's how you can change your life rather than being trapped in bad karma for a very long time. Very easy, but it requires awareness. And here we talk, the Tao Te Ching talks about how the collective consciousness affects the planet.

In harmony with the Tao, the sky is clear and spacious. The earth is solid and full. All creatures flourish together, content with the way they are, endlessly repeating themselves, endlessly renewed.

When man interferes with the Tao, the sky becomes filthy, the earth becomes depleted, the equilibrium crumbles, creatures become extinct. The master views the parts with compassion, because he understands the whole. His constant practice is humility.

He doesn't glitter like a jewel, but lets himself be shaped by the Tao, as rugged and common as a stone. Beautiful images, when humans collectively live out of touch with the greater consciousness, the Tao, the transcendent, the reality, whatever they manifest externally, externally reflects that state of disconnectedness. And then the planet around them suffers.

It's simply a reflection of a state of consciousness. And so, this eternal principle he already saw 2,500 years ago. And that also implies that the solution to what is happening to the planet cannot be found exclusively on the external level.

Yes, of course we need to change things that we do on the external level, but unless the consciousness, the state of consciousness that is our habitual state changes, even if we remove one evil from somewhere out there, it will be replaced by some other thing that has the same harmful influence on nature and the planet. So the fundamental is the shift in consciousness in humans, in humanity, but not waiting for others to change. Humanity is you.

Humanity is I. You are humanity. The shift in consciousness needs to happen in you, and then the planet will be saved.

So that is vital. Here we have the two beautiful lines. The master, the master always means the enlightened being, the being in touch with the Tao.

Here he happens to use the he pronoun, but he changes continuously in this translation. Chinese doesn't differentiate apparently with the pronoun. Traditionally, it's always he in the old translation of the Tao Te Ching, but in this Stephen Mitchell translation he shifts continuously from he to she.

It happens to be he here, but it doesn't matter. The master views the parts with compassion because he understands the whole. He understands the whole, he's connected with the whole.

Then you can look upon the parts, the individual human beings and the many different life forms with compassion because you recognize them as expressions of, manifestations of the one life that you also are. Manifestations or expressions of the one consciousness that is the essence also of who you are. And you see it, you feel when you don't impose thoughts on, continuously impose thoughts on reality, but allow things to be, allow a flower to be with that spaciousness, spacious perception.

Shh, shh. Oh, a moment, another human being. That's compassion comes out of that state.

And compassion has a deeper level to it and that is the recognition of oneness. Out of that comes true compassion. The recognition that in essence you and I share a common source and consciousness.

Not just, not a source in the distant past, a source we share, a common source now. And that's not an intellectual thing. The realization comes the less you impose thoughts on other people, judgments, definitions.

And on yourself you start thinking about my life. What about my life? And then you define your life as either good or bad.

Fulfilling or unfulfilling. Satisfying or unsatisfying. And you have all kinds of opinions, all kinds of opinions about me and my life.

And you have a whole, a whole structure in your mind develops that you call my life. And for many people that mental consists of thoughts, all clinging together. They say, this is all part of the edifice of my life.

And it's here. And they all cling together and people think that's who they are. It's just thoughts about its definitions about them.

They're just thoughts. And when you don't know that, that cuts you off from who you, the power that is there underneath all that. The power of consciousness itself, of the Tao.

You're cut off and you live as if that thing were real and you try to somehow make it better on the level of the thought structure of my life. Or try to convince yourself that, oh, my life isn't that bad after all. And then you get a little bit of, okay, I'm feeling a little bit better today because I just had the thought that my life isn't so bad after all.

Or you see somebody who is suffering and say, oh, I'm better off than that person. And you have a little bit of happiness. My life isn't so bad.

Many people's lives are far worse than my life. Okay, I should feel good. Okay.

A little bit of feeling a little bit good for a few moments. But the structure of my life is not a satisfying one for almost anybody. If you don't go beyond that structure, you might think the people you read about in People magazine or wherever, are better off.

They're just as unhappy as everybody else. Because they, unless they've gone deeper, some may have. My life, it's a figment of the imagination.

There's no such thing as my life. I don't have a life. How can I have, what does that mean, I have a life?

I am life. I am an expression of the one life. The one consciousness, the Tao, expressing itself briefly through this form.

And the very power of all life is here. Why have some mental structure that gives me a sense of identity, that tells me who I am with definitions and judgments, and not good enough or better than? All kinds.

Unnecessary, as sometimes called in the Tao Te Ching, unnecessary baggage. Walking around with unnecessary baggage. My life is so heavy and it's hard, I have a hard life.

Where's your hard life at this moment? Can't see it. It's only when I start to think about it, oh, it's back, oh yeah.

But where is it ever now? It's an imaginary entity, the me that is up there, consisting of all kinds of thoughts and opinions, is an imaginary entity, unreal. It's wonderful to see that in this moment you don't have that baggage of my life, you are alive right now.

I don't need to define myself mentally as either good or bad, or better than, or success or failure. All that cuts you off from the power that's actually there, of the Tao. This is why it says, as we read earlier, empty yourself of everything it said, which means empty yourself of these ideas that otherwise dominate you, the ideas of who you are.

Jesus said the same thing. Almost literally to me it means exactly the same. Blessed are the poor in spirit.

Poor in spirit, that means inside you do not carry baggage. The baggage of your thoughts, of who you are. So the same thing, blessed are the poor in spirit, means you are internally unencumbered by heavy thinking and identification and creating an image of who you think you are that becomes my life.

And then you even believe that you could lose your life. I'm going to lose, he lost his life. There must be, he must have been separate from life.

Who was he if not life? Without life he isn't. He couldn't have been.

You cannot be, you are life. You can't separate yourself from life and say I have a life. Who are you then?

Separate from life? What is other than life? Well, I that's life.

But you don't have it, you are it. Only the mind tells you that you have it. Insane.

But normal. Normal and insane. One more.

He who stands on tiptoe doesn't stand firm. He who rushes ahead doesn't go far. He who tries to shine doesn't shine.

Dims his own light. He who defines himself can't know who he really is. He who has power over others can't empower himself.

He who clings to his work will create nothing that endures. If you want to accord with the Tao, just do your job then let go. He who stands on tiptoe doesn't stand firm.

Look at me. Me. My life.

Unhappy or look how miserable I am. Look how great I am. He who rushes ahead doesn't go far.

Always looking to the next thing. What do I have to do now? Always grasping for the next thought that I need to worry about.

And the next thing. Entire civilization stressed. Stressed out.

All disconnected from the Tao. They're all rushing ahead. No time for anything else.

No time. No time. He who rushes ahead doesn't go far.

You don't really reach anywhere. He who tries to shine dims his own light. By trying to play roles or identifying with yourself as special, look at me, you cut yourself off from the power of the Tao.

By not directing attention to yourself, the power comes through you. Not identifying with anything that you do because you don't do it. It's a pity in a way that I wish, sometimes it's a little joke, I wish I had written The Power of Now when I still had a big ego because now the ego would feel so great, me, me.

But then of course The Power of Now couldn't have come through the ego. And here, important, he who defines himself can't know who he really is. This is what we were talking about, these constant definitions of who you are in your mind.

Why not just be the consciousness, be the presence right now? That's where the power is. What a wonderful teaching.

Timeless. It helps of course to have a translation that makes it more accessible by somebody who is deeply in tune with that state of consciousness. Traditionally the Tao Te Ching has been always translated by academics who had a wonderful knowledge and command of ancient Chinese but absolutely no idea of the spiritual dimension.

The Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, stillness. We started with it, we end with it, moment of stillness. Somebody sent me a little poem which I came across the other day and I'd like to read it to you.

It's by Harvey Cohen, thank you very much. Although somebody else sent it to me. The title of the poem is The Bottom Line and it goes like this.

So you've dabbled in the occult, burned candles, gave up sex. You've traveled to Sedona to visit the vortex. You've meditated, visualized, affirmed with love and grace.

You've forgiven all your irritants till you're blue in the face. You've been ested and you have tested tarot and astrology. You've met your guides from the other side and did past life therapy.

So you've been roved and hypnotized, there's nothing you've avoided. You've tried acupuncture, heavy breathing, even been Siegmund Freud-ed. You've chanted mantras and you've armed and journeyed near and far.

You've seen many of the channels and taken every seminar. You've floated in a tank and have gone to the psychic route. You've had your cards and wrinkles read, did primal scream to shout.

You burn incense in the afternoon, sometimes reflex your feet. You've become a vegetarian and you very seldom cheat. You gave up salt and sugar and your diet's really pure.

Although at times you still get gas, just why, you're not sure. You drink herb tea until you see the best in all at last. Your Kundalini straightened and no longer at half-mast.

You've had your aura cleaned and your chakras looped and tuned. You've seen E.T., that's the movie, at least four times and two times for cocoon. You go to sleep with crystals and you wake up with a tape that subliminally instructs you to get your mind in shape.

You've gone here and there and everywhere, tried everything you know. The past that's called enlightenment is such a busy show. But after all that's said and done and all the things you've tried, there is a truth that you should know while you are on your ride.

The light you see that seems to be coming from the things you do is only as bright as is the light that radiates from you. We need to understand a few basic things about this. And I'd like to remind you of something that's already been written in The Power of Now.

And that is that your life consists of what you call your life is usually your life situation. Your life consists of your life situation which is your job, your financial situation, your relationships, your living situation, your health situation, whether you are young or old, or whatever is happening in your life. All that makes up your life situation.

And for most people that's all there is. They don't know anything else. Their whole life consists of what they call my life.

When they refer to my life they are talking about their life situation. And in The Power of Now I differentiate between your life situation which is one level and a more fundamental level that I call your life. We are going to talk about these two levels today at a time when for many people their life situation is becoming challenging.

They are encountering new limitations suddenly coming into their life situation. The only difference between our present situation and the situation in the world and what normally happens is that many people experience similar things at the same time. So many people at the present time experience some form of challenge or limitation coming into their life as many of the structures, the external structures in the world are becoming shaky and some have collapsed already as you may remember from a new earth.

I speak about the collapse of Soviet communism which nobody could have predicted and I speak of the impending collapse of many of the structures that are ego based, that are an external reflection of an inner state of consciousness that is the ego. And those structures which of course includes financial structures and so on are now beginning to collapse and something totally new will arise. How long this collapse will take I cannot say.

But everybody can clearly see and even the experts are talking about a very much systemic I hear this word on the radio a systemic crisis or something like that. In other words the crisis is not to do with this or that on the surface of things but concerns the very structure of these organizations. In the same sense that the human mind the problems of the human mind have not to do with content of whatever is the content of your mind but the very structure of the mind, the human mind that needs to change.

So for many people limitation in one form or another is coming into their life situation and that is actually not what the media wants us to believe that these things are dreadful. The challenge that many people are encountering at this time is actually the that which will push them into a new state of consciousness. That is the possibility that is the promise whenever you encounter a crisis situation whether it's personal or collective there is the opening into a new way of being.

The possibility. It doesn't mean that everybody will embrace that possibility. So we need to first of all see not believe what we are told in the media that we should be in a state of fear.

That the only real response the only natural response to what's happening is a state of fear. That is an unconscious response. We need to see that change is absolutely necessary in this world and the dissolution of many of the ego based structures is absolutely necessary for the planet to survive and for humanity to survive.

So what's happening is not dreadfully bad. What's happening needs to happen. The totality the intelligence behind phenomena is doing it.

So it is a good thing and if challenges come into your life which might mean limitation financial limitation. You may have to move somewhere else. You may have to downgrade.

Uncertainty may come into your life. Oh! That shouldn't be happening.

I should know what's going to happen for the next 20, 30 years of my life. Well, you don't know anymore. And that is wonderful that there is suddenly an opening into uncertainty.

So is it possible for you to embrace uncertainty and not demand that you should know what's going to happen to you in your life situation. To embrace not knowing. To embrace uncertainty.

And to embrace, yes, there are difficulties, there are challenging situations, but that is part of being here on this planet in this form. I'd like to remind you of there's a book called The Road Less Travelled and I never got to read the whole book. I basically got stuck on the first two sentences of the book and those first two sentences of the book were so good that you didn't need to read anymore.

I don't know whether that's a good thing for an author to write such a good book that all you need is the first two sentences and if you don't get that you can still read the rest of the book, but if you get that well, so the first sentence is life is difficult. Okay. And the second sentence, I don't know literally, but it says something like, and if you know that life is difficult and you accept that life is difficult it's no longer difficult.

It's only difficult if you say it shouldn't be. But if you go with yes, the uncertainty, this is part of being here in this form, there is continuous uncertainty and the certainty, the rigidity of things is an illusion. The certainty that all these structures are solid and you can sometimes see it that the world trade center looked very solid and gone.

And all the structures, the big banks, they looked so solid nothing could possibly happen there, they are forever. And within a few weeks they're beginning to crumble. Soviet communism, nothing looked more solid than Soviet communism.

You say, this is so rigid, it can't possibly, it must at least survive for another thousand years. The rigidity of it and the people who embodied that is a it's not going to move. When you saw the Soviet rulers greeting the military parades huge tanks and rockets going past nothing can be more solid than that and within a year it collapsed.

The whole thing collapsed. Now one good thing of course about traveling to India is that there the external reality is a little bit less solid than in the West. So you're less likely to delude yourself that you live in a solid reality that can be controlled or that you can be in control of.

There you see the structures are actually a bit shaky everywhere. And even if you go into a luxury hotel you never know what's going to happen. So we are learning to go with the flow of things as the expression goes and the flow of things is fluid.

It's not a continuous change. Something new is arising and why demand that you should, there should be certainty in your life. Be open to uncertainty and see how empowering that actually is and not say okay but what about my pension plan?

What the mutual funds? I had saved all my life and now look I got the statement I lost 50% of it. Yes.

So but you're still here. That's your life situation. Whatever happens that's your life situation and you may remember a year ago you were looking at your mutual funds and said wow it's made so much money.

[Speaker 5] (7:13:23 - 7:13:24)

It's great.

[Speaker 1] (7:13:25 - 7:58:36)

It feels good and then you look at it again. Okay now I can relax now. And then you relax and then the next one comes and says oh my god life is difficult.

Things are dissolving and see if you resist internally what is happening as the media teaches you to do then of course you resist the flow, you resist the arising of the new. The arising of the new state of consciousness primarily in you and eventually the arising of new external expressions of that state of consciousness. A new world.

We don't need to be concerned about that. That comes of itself. What we need to be concerned about is to be open to this transformation.

To be open to not knowing. So there's our life situation and it's interesting. There may be interesting changes happening in our life situation and we say it's fine whatever change comes you look at the situation and see yes oh suddenly a limitation is coming into my life.

I lost my job and my investments are not worth that much anymore. Okay then how can you overcome these limitations? Limitations can be overcome always on two levels.

There is the external limitations. Limitations can be overcome on an external level and other limitations can only be overcome on an inner level. So you need to see whatever situation you encounter in your life is there anything I can do to overcome these limitations.

It might involve moving somewhere else where you don't have a huge mortgage anymore. It might involve moving to a different location. It might involve finding a different job or thinking outside of the box and doing something totally different you never even thought of.

Of thinking creatively. So whatever limitation you encounter in your life you look at first of all at the externals of the situation. Is there anything I can do and then you become still and then you start thinking again and you look at the situation what are the possibilities then you become still again then you look again you think or you talk to someone and then you go back into stillness and that process may take a while not necessarily just a day of looking what it is what is it that I can do and going within where you are not looking for anything but become comfortable with what is here and now and when you become comfortable with what is here and now you are stepping out of your life situation into life.

Life is now. Life has nothing to do with what's going on in your life. It has nothing to do with past and future or what your relationships are or what your financial situation is or your living situation is or even your health situation is.

That's all your life situation. That is not life. Your life situation exists in time.

Past and future. Life is now. So it is vital that you learn to step out of your life situation so that periodically so that your life situation does not absorb your entire attention continuously because if it does, it will drain you and eat you up because you'll have continuous stuff to think about.

One problem after another in my life situation. Do you think, oh now I have to worry about that problem and that and you're thinking about there's a continuous succession of problems that I need to worry about and if I don't worry about it, it's all going to collapse totally even worse than it has done so already. I need to be responsible and worry.

You're being eaten up by your life situation. Your mind it comes down to your mind because your mind gives power to your life situation. The continuous involuntary mind activity really is your life situation.

If you don't think about your life situation, there is no life situation. What situation? You step out of that periodically vital to learn that and come into life and then the mind says, what do you mean by life?

Okay, let's see where that is, that life. You step out of time your attention you remove your attention from past and future, okay? How do you do that?

Well, a little help would be what about now? What's wrong with now? Do I have a problem now?

Now? Of course I have a problem now. Look at my bank statement.

Of course I have a problem now. I need to move by the end of the month. I'm not talking about the end of the month or what's going to happen to your mutual funds.

I'm talking about do you have a problem now? No. I can't see any.

I'm trying hard to find a problem in this moment. Well, there's a stain. No, there isn't.

I'm just saying there's a stain here. Is that a problem? No, it's a stain.

Okay. I have a backache. I don't.

It's just an example. I have a backache. Is that a problem?

Only if you start thinking about it and saying, am I going to have to live with that for the rest of my life? Or why do you always have a backache? I wonder what's wrong with me?

No, it's not a problem. It's a backache. It's just that.

You stay with what is now. Don't spin some stories about what is now. Don't judge it, compare it, say it shouldn't be.

You come into now. The first level of now is whatever is around you. That's only level one.

Level one of now is your sense perceptions. Wow. That's already a revelation.

When you step out of being totally possessed, eaten up, eaten alive by your life situation, and you step out of that into even just becoming aware of sense perceptions, you're entering the now, because you can only perceive now. And you're not perceiving any problem. You're perceiving what is now.

Sense perceptions, this room, the people, the incredible variety of human forms. Amazing to see. Every human form is different and unique in some way.

It's beautiful. You can sit in a public place and be in the now and watch people. Nothing to do with your life situation.

You're there as a presence watching, perceiving this moment. The incredible fullness of this moment around you in the form of life forms, human life forms, animal life forms, plant life forms, the air, the incredible forms and shapes that are continuously moving the spectacle of phenomena. Unbelievable variety.

It's fantastic. And you have no idea that this is going on around you when you're totally trapped in your life situation, which really is your mind. So we are learning periodically to step out of that level that I call life situation and enter life.

Life is now. This was level one of now, what is around you. Be alert to that.

Because otherwise you miss the whole thing because you're so concerned about your conceptual reality, which really is what a life situation is. You're so concerned about your conceptual reality that you miss reality. Your conceptual reality eats up your entire attention continuously and you're worrying about your life, which in reality is your life situation, but you call it your life.

It's not life at all. And so this is a dreadful fate for a person to be consumed by their life situation. And so they miss the life.

They're trying to find the life, the fullness of life, in their life situation and they're hoping that they can eventually sort out their life situation so that they can find life. But if your life situation is all you have, you're never going to find life because your life situation is a set of thoughts and concepts in your head. To become empowered, you need to rise, one could say you rise above your life situation, which doesn't mean you don't deal with things anymore.

You still deal with things, but you realize there is a level or a dimension to you that is far more powerful and vital than whatever is happening in your life. So accessing that dimension is vital and that really is what spirituality is all about, not having some weird ideas about this or that or beliefs. It's nothing to do with ideas.

It's nothing to do with concepts. There's no such thing as spiritual concepts. Concepts are not spiritual.

They're not even spiritual thoughts. There's no such thing as a spiritual thought. A thought is not spiritual because thought is form.

Spiritual is the formless dimension in yourself. Level one, then, whatever surrounds you. You can say, yeah, but this is still form too.

Yes, it's form too, but it's not a mind form. It's not a conceptual form. It's what is here in the world in terms of physical forms.

Be open to that. Level one of the now. Level two of the now, don't get attached to the numbers.

I'm just saying two. Level two of the now is feeling that you're alive. Level two is so your attention was on what is around you.

The world is multifaceted. There's incredible play of phenomena all around you and you acknowledge that and it's beautiful. It has nothing to do with what your relationships are doing at the moment or what your bank statements are doing at the moment or whether you have a job or you don't have a job or whether your wife has just left you or their husband has done this or whether you're...

Nothing to do with any of that. You're stepping out into presence. Level two of presence is to feel that you're alive inside.

You've already noticed that the world around you is alive. That's a big step forward. You have noticed that the world around you is vitally alive.

To notice that, you need to have stepped out of your life situation, your conceptual reality. Wow. Okay.

You breathe. It's beautiful. The play of forms.

Then you feel that you inside are alive. Your body is alive. You feel the aliveness in your hands, your arms, your legs and the totality of aliveness, the global aliveness inside in the background and you can still look around and see the incredible aliveness around you.

If you feel the body inside, you're already moving to an even more vital dimension than the vitality of life forms. There's your body. It feels good to be embodied, to sense the aliveness even in an everyday situation.

When you're listening to the news and say something dreadful has just happened, there will be negative growth next year in the economy. Negative growth. What does that mean?

We are now officially in a recession. Oh my God. We are going to buy less at Christmas.

Oh no. We are not going to run around like mad rabbits this Christmas. Oh, that's dreadful.

So even when you listen to the news, I'm exaggerating a little, but there's some truth in it. Even when you listen to the news, you can feel the aliveness within while they're saying we are now officially in a recession. The entire automobile industry of the United States may collapse and drag everybody else down.

And you feel the aliveness inside. So there you have something more vital than that. And if you are part of the automobile industry of the United States, and if it affects you directly or indirectly, when the situation arises externally, then you will deal with it.

You will address it in the now. And you accept whatever is, and you look at it, okay. What is it that I can do?

And then you go into life. Then you go out again and look at your situation. And you go back.

Find the balance between dealing with your life situation and entering life. So level two said the aliveness in the body while you listen to the news, for example, or while the phone rings and somebody says, oh dear, we need to do something. Well, if anybody comes to you and says, we need to do something, you step out of the life situation and become present where there are no problems.

So you can hang on to your inner body and then an even deeper level of your life situation, because they are all connected, they are ultimately all one. At the deepest level, the one that contains it all is the realization that underneath it all, who you are is not the thoughts that go through your head or whatever is happening externally, but you can actually sense within yourself that you are that in which all the phenomena appear. That's the deepest level of life.

Life is the consciousness that you are. The I, the I am. You attach nothing else to I am.

The I am is the deepest, who you are in your innermost identity that is consciousness. It is formless. It is the light in which everything appears.

And to feel yourself even at this moment, to feel that nothing that can be defined is who you are. Nothing that can be thought is who you are. Nothing that happens around you has anything ultimately to do with who you are in your essence.

Success or failure ultimately has nothing to do with who you are. Success cannot give you your true reality. Failure, success is not who you are.

It's all the play of forms. It's all to do with time. It's your life situation.

Stepping out of that, into the power and the fullness of the present moment, where you know yourself as consciousness itself. Another word you could use as a pointer is to realize the stillness within yourself. Consciousness is still, alive, vibrant, but still.

Underneath all the things that are happening externally and internally in your mind and your emotional field, you remain as that. And that can be in any situation when you are the master, the spiritual master knows him or herself as consciousness in any external situation. You can actually sense a spaciousness inside you, no matter what's happening.

And even while you're thinking, well, you're going to think much less because there's no reason to think totally unnecessary things all the time. To sense always in the background the I am, the stillness, that which is precious, something very precious, indestructible. And sometimes you may need to encounter a life-threatening challenge that suddenly comes in to sense that.

But whenever a form in your life begins to dissolve or collapse, there's a greater chance to discover within yourself that which is beyond form. So let's say the entire stock market collapses and then you get your statement and it says zero. That moment of looking at your balance and you say your mutual funds have gone from $500,000 to $5.

So this form that was important to you has dissolved. And you look at that and instead of resisting, because this is what is, ultimately it's only a figure on a piece of paper. Only when you start thinking does it become a big problem.

But the reality of it is you're opening this thing, you're taking it out of the envelope and you're reading and there is little scribbles, computer printout, which has a little figure on it. And that's all that it is in the reality of the present moment. Unless you make a problem out of it and start thinking what's going to happen to me in the future?

How am I going to survive in my old age? I've worked for nothing, 30 years of work for nothing. What does all that mean?

It means it's a story around the simplicity of a figure on a piece of paper. And then once you are trapped in that you're lost. So to see very clearly this is the master, you're becoming a master when you just see the simplicity of any moment without going into spinning stories around me, my past, my future.

It was all in vain, I failed, it's all been pointless, I'm never going to make money again. What's my... All mind stories, mind created stories.

So the solution to your financial or other problems is stepping out as much as you can into the aliveness of the present moment which is who you are in your essence. You are the now in which everything happens, the consciousness in which everything unfolds, the timeless space, and then look at the situation. So you're coming from a...

you're rooted in a deeper place and then you're dealing with the externals. But always be very careful because the externals have a pulling power and you're living in a world that's totally hypnotized by the externals and in a world that continuously tells you how important the external is and every time you listen to somebody say, this is so important, you should be worried, you should be in fear, you should think about this, let's discuss it. And the world has this pulling power.

So you need to realize everybody's hypnotized into believing that this is all that there is and this is absolutely serious and important. It is important perhaps, but it is only relatively important. It is not of absolute importance.

Of absolute importance is finding the essence of who you are and then deal with things from there so that a different energy flows into, even into what you do, so the two are not separate. Even your so-called life situation changes, is affected by the power of life itself when you are aware of that in yourself. So a different level of consciousness flows into what you do.

A different energy flows into what you do when you realize that whatever you do is at best only relatively important. Whatever happens is relative. The only one thing is absolute and that is finding life or as Jesus calls it, the fullness of life, which has nothing to do with your life situation.

And the strange thing is the life situation tends to unfold with greater ease when you are connected with something, that dimension that is deeper than life situations. And then even on the external level of your life situation things happen more lightly, more easily. And that's the beauty of it and this is the practice then and no better opportunity than the present time when you are being challenged rather than being deluded for a few more years that all is well when it isn't because eventually things are going to dissolve around you anyway and if they dissolve, don't dissolve around you, then you dissolve before they do.

So it's better to see that fact now than wait until you are 92 years old. You may not be that alert anymore to find the reality of who you are and the reality underneath phenomena. So here's the mastery of life is to live in two dimensions simultaneously and then see what happens.

You are practicing then every moment and whatever situation that arises in your life becomes a practice for staying present within that situation, to feel the depth of who you are, the power of now, the power of consciousness as you deal with things. So this is what it means to become empowered. That's what everybody wants, but they are looking for it where they can't find it.

They are looking for some power in their external life situation. The power must come from within. It does not come from your thoughts or from whatever happens out here.

So another way of putting this is look at whatever limitations arise in your life. Let's say you're trapped somewhere in some unpleasant situation or place and you want to get out. Look at the situation.

What is it that I can do? Or perhaps there's nothing you can do for right now. It's a beautiful thing to see at this present moment there's nothing I can do.

I can't even pick up the phone. It's Sunday today. I can't call anybody.

Nobody's at work. There's nothing I can do except be with what is. Stay.

The next day action arises. Not losing yourself in the action. Another important thing because it's very easy once you start to speak and to act you totally lose yourself in that.

You will get stressed. The slightest stress means you've lost yourself in your life situation again. It is possible to deal with things effectively without stress.

Just be more powerful than the situation. For most people the situation is always more powerful than they. So they feel smaller than the situation.

That's normal. And that's a delusion because it all arises from consciousness. So you are actually far more powerful.

The power of who you are is far greater than anything external. But people don't know that. So they are always reacting to something, defending themselves against this or that.

Realizing that the situation actually has very little power. And if your state of consciousness changes external reality reflects the change. This does not mean that anything remains absolutely solid in external reality.

It still is subject to continuous fluctuations so you don't attach yourself to anything. But it's beautiful to see that external reality reflects basically your predominant inner state. If your inner state is empowered and it can only be empowered when you are not lost in your life situation then the empowerment is reflected around you.

And it may come in many forms. It may come as financial abundance. It may come as anything any form that the aliveness can take.

So it's an incredible thing to discover that you are actually more powerful than the world around you. Not in the narrow egoic sense that you say I can control everything that happens. No.

So this is a wonderful opportunity now to experiment with consciousness with your life situation and your life. Where is the life at this moment? Do you feel the aliveness of this moment?

And then the universe uses you because it is going somewhere there is an evolutionary impulse at work on this planet and everywhere else because if it's happening here it's happening everywhere as above so below then the consciousness that wants to come into this world can freely flow through you and express itself. How? In many different ways according to your particular form.

It might be some enlightened business. It may be that you are producing something that affects many people and brings that consciousness to others through some artistic creation or this or that innumerable possibilities how you can be an opening for the evolutionary impulse of the universe that wants to come through and then wherever you go people will be affected by this transformed energy. You cannot not affect the world when you live in the new state of consciousness whoever you come into contact with is affected by that.

Even if you were a hermit you would still affect the collective consciousness. If you are a frequency holder as I call it in a new earth, a frequency holder is somebody who is not very interested in going out into the world and changing the world or building up some huge great organization to make the world a better place or to create a great work of art or to come up with some new discovery or write a great book not that there is anything wrong with these things. For some people that is their life purpose but there are some other people who are not drawn to that, who are content with remaining in a relatively small circle of influence a little, maybe just contemplatives is the old word for those people, people who feel they don't want to go out there and change the world, they just want to be present.

And that's fine because they hold the frequency of that state of consciousness because whatever state of consciousness you are in affects the totality of consciousness, is part of the totality of consciousness. So I was a frequency holder for a large part of my life never very interested in going out into the world and achieving the great things I was kind of happy being withdrawn and until something came into my life and I felt that there's more that I can do that was a thought that came I was doing little work workshops with people ten people at a time fifteen people for a number of years giving talks in people's living rooms and then it was fine in many ways I felt happy being a semi-hermit and occasionally going out and doing little things happy not being famous, I never thought I would want to be famous but then a thought came I could do so much more in this world but it doesn't seem to be happening and one day I sat under an oak tree you could call this there's a question later on we'll have some questions someone is asking a question about divine discontent the question is do you ever experience what might be called divine discontent that is the discontent that leads to something very positive and you could say there was a moment that came at that time when I experienced a mild form of divine discontent which simply is a sense of there's more than I can do, that I could do but it's not happening that's a mild form of divine discontent it's not some unhappiness oh I have failed, I'm in my forties and what have I achieved that's not divine discontent that's just a form of normal unhappiness with divine discontent there is not some lot of mind activity around me and my life there's just a sense of my present life situation has these limitations around me but I could go beyond that, I could be much vaster, the world needs what I what I know comes through me, I know that the world needs that, so why isn't the world, I'm speaking for some of you too why isn't the world opening up these channels for me so that was the divine discontent, so I sat under an oak tree in Somerset where I would sometimes go magnificent oak tree and I said to the universe which ultimately to myself please use me I was talking to myself ultimately so because I am that please use me I'm here, so I was a frequency holder and yet after many years of a frequency holder I had this sense of okay, now expansion is what is called for in this world a moment of divine discontent please use me I didn't hear any answer and then I said something that some years later I almost said maybe I said too much I said I want acceleration okay, and then I went home and nothing happened for a few months I didn't know that while nothing was happening for a few months in my little cottage in Somerset somebody there don't take it literally the countdown has already started like the rocket ship which goes 10 9 8, 7, 6 and then one day I woke up and said I have to move I have to move to the west coast of North America and that was the beginning and so the rocket ship had taken off suddenly and finally I landed at the the desk of Oprah a few years later I never wanted to say that much it's too much and then the lesson was to surrender to that it wasn't too much it was what was needed if I had been stuck to some previous idea that I had about how my life should unfold I would be saying oh I'm overwhelmed it's too much surrender now to what is now surrender to this enormous energy stream that's coming through you asked for it you said acceleration and there it is and continuously even in this my life many people believe my life situation must be wonderful in many ways it is but no life situation is totally satisfying and there are always things that happen and change there is no ultimate certainty in any life situation you cannot derive long lasting satisfaction from any life situation even if you become famous I can tell you that now the life situation has not the power to satisfy you for long the satisfaction needs to be found in life and life is now and if you find that then your life situation is fine it unfolds and becomes empowered probably so don't expect your life situation does not have the power to make you fulfilled and it does ultimately not have the power to make you feel unfulfilled you have to go deeper where you are bigger than that although there was this divine discontent for a little moment I'm certainly not happier or more fulfilled now than I was when I, as one magazine said Eckhart Tolle suddenly emerged from complete obscurity so when I lived in complete obscurity I didn't know I was in complete obscurity

[Speaker 5] (7:58:36 - 7:58:36)

but

[Speaker 1] (7:58:39 - 8:01:47)

I was not less happy than I am now the state is the same so it is fulfilling to see that consciousness is evolving through this form, yes but there's no there's no increased happiness through that the happiness was already there basically the sense of, because I was deeply rooted, as I still am, in life life is always more vital to me than the life situation I've always going, even now I'm always a little bit out of balance, even now, although great things are happening but I'm not recommending that to anybody I'm just saying I'm a little bit out of balance because I'm always more vitally drawn to the present moment and the aliveness of that than whatever I have to deal with on an external level, so I'm always going a little bit too much so sometimes it's a little bit chaotic around me because I don't deal with everything if I dealt with everything I would lose, I would become stressed it's just too much so many things just put aside and then after a few months they're not a problem anymore because the situation has changed and I don't do anything when I feel I'm not enjoying it anymore stop, what's the point what is the point in doing something that you cannot enjoy but don't be don't prematurely say ok, I definitely can't enjoy this see if you can connect with the power of now and then do whatever you do so don't immediately say well, this, what I'm doing definitely I could never enjoy maybe, maybe not just try connecting stepping out of the situation into the power of now and then do perhaps you can enjoy it and if you still can't, then go and do something else but no compromise, don't live with unhappiness or with continuous stress or frustration that is dreadful way to live the large part of the world lives like that so what a wonderful challenge here and whatever comes where it's a life situation and the challenges of your life situation, they draw out that which is deeper so without the challenges you would be comfortably sitting in your armchair for the next 30 years or until you retire and watching your investments grow and grow and then drop dead laughter laughter

[Speaker 5] (8:01:47 - 8:01:49)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (8:01:51 - 8:02:11)

and you would live with complete certainty that you're being looked after because you've got your life insurance and your investments are growing every year and nothing can possibly go wrong and there's nothing okay, everything is great watch TV every day for five hours

[Speaker 5] (8:02:15 - 8:02:17)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (8:02:17 - 8:02:18)

and that's it

[Speaker 5] (8:02:18 - 8:02:19)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (8:02:24 - 8:04:34)

no evolution, no flowering of consciousness and then there's somebody else who made a total mess of his or her life and ends up in prison and sits there for 20 years and suddenly wakes up in the midst of that and realizes I am alive and the situation is just relatively unimportant to feel that who I am in my essence is beyond any limitation on the external level so that's why I often get letters from people in prison that say I have woken up in prison I'm free I'm no longer unhappy and I have another 20 years to do nor I'm not unhappy anymore I rarely get people I get letters from people who say I've woken up because my investments are growing every year laughter laughter laughter in fact I've never had a letter laughter laughter laughter sometimes I get letters from people who wake up because they encounter some physical illness and often change happens then any challenge has the opportunity to wake up if you're not being challenged by life then wait it'll come

[Speaker 5] (8:04:35 - 8:04:35)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (8:04:41 - 8:50:28)

now isn't that wonderful that means whatever happens now it's no longer some problem that comes into your life, it's a challenge it's not a dreadful thing it's great it's an opportunity to be more conscious more present with what is so that brings us back to the first two lines of that book life is difficult of course it's full of challenges but once you know that and say that's what it is, that's life then it's no longer difficult it just is what is it only remains difficult if you have the idea stuck in your head that it shouldn't be laughter it's a paradox life is difficult and once you know that it's difficult it's no longer difficult knowing that it's difficult implies accepting that it's difficult, but to say it is difficult only when you resist life so what this implies is when the resistance goes then it's no longer called difficult it's challenging and every challenge brings increased aliveness my friend Steve who is here can testify to that because he was faced with a challenge recently of being stuck in a hotel room in Bombay with mad terrorists running all around the building for several days and he went deep inside wasn't difficult for him because he was already immersed in presence for many years so he was able to step out of the situation which certainly could be called difficult and go deep within into the power of the present moment into consciousness itself well it's wonderfully still in here usually in these places you have some background air conditioning sound but here you just have stillness so we can start by noticing that it is still in this room and of course the moment you notice that it is still outside you are still inside you have to be still for a moment to even notice that there is silence outside so it's already a meditation to notice that there is stillness you can do it in the middle of the night if you wake up it's usually the most silent time when most people are asleep and you simply notice that it is silent in the room or outside and you cannot notice it by thinking about it that's the wonderful thing to notice that it is silent you have to become silent inside so there is already a shift in consciousness but the simple fact of becoming aware that there is silence around you you have become silent within which means for a moment the stream of thinking has subsided but you haven't gone to sleep you are alert awake there isn't space that has opened up inside you and I would say that the silence is part of nature also because wherever you go in nature and we'll be talking about that or there may be sounds, nature has all kinds of sounds, produces all kinds of sounds from animals to the wind, to the rain to the flowing water and so on there's always also the deeper dimension of silence so if you walk in a forest for example you hear all kinds of subtle sounds but underneath all the subtle sounds in the forest there is an all pervasive silence also now if you go into the forest only with your mind then you will only notice the sounds and what the mind will try to interpret oh that's such and such a bird that's that, it will label so that's fine you might think you are present in the forest but you're not really you're simply judging what you hear but if you become aware of the the silent dimension underneath the sounds and in between the sounds then you become present because the moment you become aware of the silence you also have become silent the mind has become still in that moment where you notice oh there's silence in that moment you are silent not perhaps when you say it then it's also you're already back in words but before you say it so you are able to notice it that means a space has opened up inside you, a space of awareness of presence, of no thought of a shift in consciousness in fact it doesn't matter if it only lasted for two seconds, it was there a shift and you can't really remember it you can't memorize it it's not memorable because in that space of silence nothing is happening, the silence itself is eventless all events take place in the silence but the silence itself or the inner stillness itself is eventless and this is why I sometimes say these talks that you listen to are not interesting because the interesting means mind stuff what really matters about us being together here is that we enter the deeper dimension together and that deeper dimension of still presence is not interesting because it's not differentiated you can't say there are not bits and pieces oh look at that, oh look at that in the same way that the sunset is not interesting or the sunrise it's too vast, it's too awesome you can't say oh that's an interesting sunrise no you just go wow there's nothing, it's not, it's beyond interesting it's deeper than interesting it's deeper than the mind can analyze the moment the mind starts analyzing you have reduced it and there is a place for that also but that's not the vastness of being there is a place for analysis but if you're lost in analysis, continuous compulsive judgment and analysis then well life becomes impoverished you're lost then in the mind so you have to be able to use the power of analysis of the mind yes but not be used by it and then you can have thoughts, of course you have thoughts, you're not going to be totally free of thoughts but the important thing is you then have a thought but the thought doesn't have you because it's terrible to be had by a thought I have to remember as we sit here and I talk to this wonderful intimate group which I had years ago I had meetings like this in living rooms that was wonderful and then the groups became too big and now we have something strange we have a little group here and a vast group of people that I actually don't see but we attempt to connect on the unseen where the lens of the camera is there are thousands of people apparently behind that lens but basically only one person that one there it's really only addressing one human being one I and so that the whole subject matter of our gathering is to connect more deeply with yourself and we may be talking about nature but really we're talking about yourself to go deeper so that you have a very deep connection with who you are beyond the movement of thought so that your identity is not derived from the movement of thought any longer you can still think but your thoughts are no longer telling you who you are opinions about who you are which then translates of course also into opinions about other people and so you can relate more deeply to others when you're present but first you need to find that depth in yourself and we'll see today how nature can help us with that once you found the depth within yourself all your relationships deepen, they have an added dimension and you can then see that relationships that do not have the dimension of depth are very surface phenomena there's no true relationship it's just two mind made entities two minds are bouncing off each other with their opinions and mental positions and so on and even if they're talking about something deep it's unlikely it will be deep even if it sounds deep it won't really be deep because the depth doesn't come from the words now you may I don't know if each one of you perhaps remember something that I remember I don't often talk about the past but I'll just bring it in just one little memory now because it's relevant to this moment what we're saying now and perhaps you have a similar memory I have a memory of being 10, 11 and 12 years old and being mostly unhappy as a child because of I was unhappy at school didn't like that at all at home my parents were usually in conflict so there was no peace there and if there was peace I knew it was only a brief interval between conflict so even when there was no conflict for a day or two I knew it was like walking on through a minefield and so that's the case of course perhaps some of you had a similar experience and there's nobody to blame it's just people act according to their conditioning and level of consciousness nobody can act beyond their level of consciousness so you can't really blame anybody of course they suffer their consequences yes but that's another matter so I was basically an unhappy child but I was given a bicycle at the age of 10 and we lived in a city but it was only a short bike ride 15 minutes or so out of the city and that was my salvation and I would quite often occasionally even I just didn't go to school I just said goodbye I'm going to school and then I went off into the country and then I reached the outskirts of the city not particularly overpowering landscape of exceptional beauty just ordinary some wheat fields occasionally groups of trees groves hedges but it was nature and I would slow down on my bike and very slowly and start to look I looked at and I listened to the wind and the leaves and birds and I slowed down and then every time I did that I a burden so I was shedding a burden and a sentence would repeat itself in my mind and it's a strange thing that's I didn't know why I didn't even question why I thought this particular sentence and that sentence was this will always be here and it kept repeating this will always be here this will always be here I later years later I remember that I realized that sentence must have meant that I must have realized that there's the man-made dimension and there is nature and nature compared to the man-made world is virtually timeless there's a the time spans in nature are virtually infinite compared to the short-lived man-made things so I there was what I actually experienced at that time was transcendence through nature transcendence of my personal condition the narrow suffering condition so nature enabled me to experience that the transcendence of a different dimension that is beyond the man-made world and perhaps some of you have similar memories when you were a child how you related to nature or how nature helped you or gave you a sense of support and I believe there aren't many children nowadays that are actually deprived of that unfortunately because because they are so captivated by their electronic gadgets and computer screens and so on that their main attention is in this world of little screens so it's important for every parent to encourage children to experience nature vitally important for their well-being as it is for every human being too for every adult now there may be one or two people being with us here there who perhaps are stuck somewhere in a room and can't get out because of physical disability or they may be in prison and they say what can I do, what can we do we can't get out into nature well you need to remember that your body also is nature so you can start there every time you take a breath that's nature nature is breathing the air that you are breathing is nature the very fact of breathing is a natural process it's not choice it's done for you, it's not so much that you breathe, although we say I breathe but you're not the body breathes so it's a natural thing that happens you wouldn't say I'm beating my heart you don't do that, but that's the same thing the body does it it's a natural process for some reason we say I'm breathing because breathing is semi- voluntary you can stop it for a while but not for that long, because if you stop it for too long nature takes over so nature takes you live with nature with your body so even if you can't get out you can start by being aware of that level of yourself the physical level the natural part of who you are the body and not just by saying okay I'm looking at my hands or my feet not just the physical not the external image of the body but you can go into the body with your attention and that's, you're in nature even if you're in a present cell you can do that and even if there's no opportunity you might be in an office block in Manhattan and you look out of the window and all you have is maybe a little bit of sky okay, there's a little bit of nature there you can look at that but you have more nature than that in yourself so as you sat in your office wherever it is go within first be conscious that breathing is happening the body is breathing be conscious also of the the preciousness of the air it's such a precious substance so to acknowledge that is actually part of what sometimes is called to live in a state of gratitude now some people say what can I be grateful for there's nothing in my life that I can be grateful for well, are you breathing?

yes well you start there if you start being grateful for the tiniest things then gradually that expands and that shift in consciousness of honoring life no matter how small it is the manifestation of life as yourself by honoring that gratitude arises and a totally different state of consciousness then brings about good things but you have to start with the good that is already there there's not enough good in my life people say I need more good life hasn't given me what I needed start with what you have and the most obvious thing to start with is I'm breathing and it's something very beautiful to feel that you are absorbing this energy that is air that then merges with your being it's an amazing thing to honor the process of breath to honor the fact that you are breathing and that is you can start with that that is becoming honoring the present moment if you are looking for the present moment which is of course all there ever is some people read it in the power of now and were surprised and they're still surprised when I say the present moment is all there ever is in your life, there's nothing, there is no past and future in your experience except when you think about it but not in your actual experience oh, well yes, it's actually true the greatest philosopher could come and he could not argue with the fact that you only ever experience the present moment, there is nothing else the mind asks well, where is the present moment? well start with your breath, that will always take you into the present moment because you're breathing now, and you're only ever taking one breath this one, all other breaths you either remember or anticipate mentally and it's actually said that the Buddha recommended this as a meditation maybe even before the Buddha, but the Buddha certainly recommended that people should be aware of their breath as a meditation he didn't say, as far as I know that that will take you into the present moment and he didn't say that will actually stop your mind too, he just said be aware of your breath and so breath awareness meditation has become a Buddhist meditation that's practiced, but the dangerous thing is with practitioners of meditation is they make it into something to be achieved through it they want to become good at it you can't become good at one breath this is just one breath so there's nature and there's the present moment here, now, here oh and I thought there was nothing to be grateful for, I'm breathing or breathing is happening and it's and then as you become aware of that, you're beginning to feel that your body is also alive on the inside to feel that there isn't there's an energy that is pervading the entire body, that's nature and it's very close, it's the closest and you can't get to a tree that close as you can to your body or anything else so that's really the closest you can ever get to nature, it's there in yourself as the physical body but when you become aware now, this is something for us for each one of us to do right now, not to do but to notice there's no doing as such because we don't have to do anything you can do, sometimes it helps to move about, to get a little bit of sense that your body is alive that can help but you can see there's the body is alive, can I feel that yes the breath is happening and there's aliveness in my feet my hands, my legs very subtle at first, but it's there and there's nature and that's already a deeper level than what you see out in nature when you look at a tree, you can't to get deeper than the image of the tree, you have to have gone deeper within yourself so that you can sense the aliveness of the tree you cannot sense the aliveness of the tree unless you can sense the aliveness in yourself if you don't sense the aliveness in yourself, you're only approaching the tree with your mind and your mind might say, oh that's a nice tree but you're missing the depth of it you're missing the fact that there's more here than what the mind tells you there's here when the mind says there's a tree or a flower or whatever it is what you're looking at and call a tree and then believe that the word that you have attached to it actually describes its reality no, it's a label it's an abstraction that you put onto this thing that you cannot really understand it's a vitally alive, mysterious being with great depth as much depth as you because all forms all life forms are connected and come out of the one source of life so you're beginning to go to feel that when you feel the aliveness of the inner body it's not quite the deepest source yet but you're going towards the non-physical the life energy that comes from the source so connecting with yourself through breath and feeling the inner body is part of connecting with nature often people only notice nature when there's something unusual happening for example a thunderstorm, you cannot help notice that, suddenly there's a flash of lightning or you go to a place where there's a tornado happening of course then you notice nature or you go out into alpine regions, high mountains overpowering you're climbing up mountains and suddenly you hear as I remember a few years ago in Switzerland I was walking and suddenly you hear a huge like a cannon like a cannon being fired and there were chunks breaking off the glacier and of course that is such an overpowering thing it stops you and you go wow is it coming this way but most of the time nature is more subtle than that and so to notice the nature in its subtle aspect which is always there now that requires you to have a certain degree of alertness attention alertness is required in other words if you are totally immersed in the thinking mind you miss the whole thing and even sometimes I walk in the forest quite often I see people walking some are wearing noise machines as if the noise machine that they have in their head anyway were not enough they put speakers onto their ears so that they don't hear nature don't hear anything natural just hear and even those who don't have these things on their ears whatever they are these days technology changes so quickly I no longer know what they are called I can't catch up it's no longer CDs this is old fashioned it's other things now even if they don't have that often I can see two friends walking in the forest and they are talking to each other, animators, nothing wrong with talking to each other but they don't they 98% of what's around them they don't notice occasionally they say oh look at that let's talk about something more important and even people walking alone often they are not really there they are partly there but a lot of their attention is still in their thoughts and even if they are looking and saying oh this is they are exclusively there as the judgmental mind the interpreting mind not yet as presence but nature offers such a wonderful opportunity to enter the state of presence which is the state of spacious awareness of just that there is no conceptualizing thought happening just spacious aware presence the most miraculous state for human beings to be in the next stage in human evolution that's nature offers you that opportunity more than anything that is man made because everything that is man made has been made with to a greater or lesser extent the mind has come in and transformed nature into something that still is if you trace it back everything goes back to nature even a piece of plastic cannot be made without something natural to start with which then the mind transforms and even a car everything in the car if you trace it back where it comes from of course it comes from nature originally but in the intervening time period the human mind has transformed it into something else and there's nothing wrong with that except that the man made things are not as suitable for going deeper and experiencing the state of presence than things that are not have not been made through thinking that came spontaneously out of the one consciousness out of which everything comes produced by the one life, the one underlying intelligence field everything has come out of that and there is no thinking that goes into the when nature manufactures a flower look at that it doesn't say let's have a committee meeting and draw up a blueprint and talk about what shape should it be let's put into the computer the proportions of it and work it all out it gets very complicated and they could never manufacture something like that the subtleness of it the incredible delicacy of it so yes of course this has incredible harmony and beauty but no conceptual thinking has gone into its making it's not an intelligence has created that it must have but this is not not analytical thought has not created that and this is why the flower then is more suitable for entering the state of no thought of pure presence than for example this clock because the moment I look at this clock the mind says oh it's such and such a time and it's nothing wrong with clocks I like ticking clocks but it's to be and once you are firmly rooted in presence you can look at anything and be free of thinking and you can see the beauty even in a clock or a car and say wow oh it's just but as a help nature is much more helpful because nature exists in prior to thought we could say evolutionary scale oops there we go I could have held this flower up and stopped speaking and that would have the Buddha's silent sermon 2,600 years ago people still remember it he sat there and he was going to speak and then suddenly he saw this flower and he took this flower and looked at it for how long nobody knows but it must have gone on for a long time and everybody got restless that's called the Buddha's silent sermon and then after half an hour one hour we don't know because they didn't have clocks then one of the because they were all monks at that time other people didn't have access to anything to spiritual teachings I talk about that in the New Earth at the beginning one of the monks all the other monks looked puzzled what's he trying to do and one monk suddenly started to smile and the story goes that he was the only one that understood that sermon of the Buddha the one who smiled and this smile was according to the story or the legend or the scriptures the smile was passed on from generation to generation of teacher and pupil so he became a teacher that monk and they say he passed on the smile which really means the realization to the next and the next and the next and after six or seven or whatever generations it became the origin of Zen that's how the story goes so what is it then that he smiled about well let's not conceptualize it I think you will realize it for yourself as we progress here not are we then returning when we go into nature are we then returning to the level that trees live at or flowers or minerals or birds whatever it is are we is it an act of return to a primordial stage of being not quite we join whatever natural thing it is that we are perceiving we join it in the state of no thought but when we go there we have gone through thought already we rise above thought the flower exists below thought so and then we meet in the dimension of no thought but at a very deep level we don't we do not become the flower or the cabbage well if you had a choice you'd probably rather be a flower than a cabbage but cabbage is beautiful too we are not regressing cabbage is fine for the cabbage but not for us the cabbage is totally at ease with itself one with a source doesn't inhabit a world of problems, doesn't generate conflict, the cabbage is rooted in being so is the tree, so is the flower and even the dog well most of them and the cat except those who have lived for too long with neurotic humans they are rooted in being and this is why people love dogs and cats there's actually a deep reason, a deep meaning to that because they can sense that the dog or the cat is more deeply rooted in being is more at rest within him or herself than the human the human has gone out very far from the source into further and further differentiation everything originates from the one source of all life, the unmanifested formless, timeless one source everything then comes out of that source and humans are a product, a very differentiated product gone out a long way from the source a little bit like the prodigal son in the new testament who leaves the father's home and squanders his wealth and becomes destitute he's left the source, he's gone so far out that he becomes destitute he doesn't remember his origins anymore so the dog and even less so the flower or the tree they haven't gone out that far, so to speak from the source, there's still more of a connection with their origin and this is also why they are not fearful of death they don't think about, oh, I'm going to die, and when an animal dies, an animal is very accepting, it surrenders into that it doesn't make a problem out of living and it doesn't make a problem out of dying it doesn't live on the level of problem making, which is the level when you lose your sense of connectedness with the source and this is because you identify it with the thinking mind, then a world of problems arises, you create a world that's what you manifest then, and that's what you end up with on this planet on this beautiful planet, which is paradise you end up with layers and layers of complexity and increasing problems oh my god it's all getting so complicated, it's just survival is getting complicated very complicated so really now, when we talk about nature exists closer to the source we have gone out very far, and for us it's not a return to the original level where the animal lives or the tree lives it's a transcendence where you regain awareness of the source of being with full consciousness rather than as a natural state and you don't really know, the dog doesn't know that the dog is one with being he just is one with being the tree doesn't know if you tell the tree, are you one with being, if the tree could understand you, of course it doesn't, it doesn't have conceptual, are you one with being or no so there's a but if you look at nature everything exists it's so much so at rest within itself, it has so much integrity everything natural has such integrity integrity, the word originally means being one with yourself not having split yourself into two or three for example when you say me and my life the tree doesn't say me and my life my difficult life the tree is life an expression of life the human says I have a hard life and the hard life that the human says he or she has is a mental construct because it has no real reality except as a movement of thought because the only real life that you have is at this moment, ever, always this is your life now I sit here, breathing, perceiving this aware presence this is life, this is your life the rest is memories or anticipation through thinking so the dog doesn't have a life, the dog is an unproblematic expression of life so is everything in nature it is life manifesting the one timeless sacred the one, deep down the one formless life becoming form as millions of life forms coming out of they say with the big bang it all started who knows before the big bang there was nothing nobody understands that because you can't understand nothing no thing no form, no time out of that void which is also the fullness of infinite potential came the forms more and more differentiated over millions and millions of years and then finally it becomes the human mind the most differentiated as far as we can see, there may be others even more mad somewhere else in the universe continuously thinking and analyzing and evaluating

[Speaker 5] (8:50:32 - 8:50:33)

and so

[Speaker 1] (8:50:33 - 9:00:16)

then the entity that has to carry that mind is completely out of touch with the source, you are not cut off from the original source, the original oneness you just don't know it's there and so that's it that's the state of being lost lost in your mind, lost in the world, split yourself in two or three, having a life that you don't like me and my life me and my story my sad story and then life is perceived no longer as a joyful expression of the underlying oneness but becomes a burden gets heavier and heavier and so this has happened to humanity the humanity is this species is at a critical stage now, there's a possibility of a shift into a deeper state or a higher state if you want to call it that, of transcending conceptual thinking going beyond you can still think but no longer trapped in thinking, this is where humanity has to go and as you transcend conceptual thinking you regain what was lost eons, eons ago you regain your sense of connectedness with being you feel deep down you're connected with something vast and it's not different from who you are just when we put it into language it sounds as if that was something different from who you are you're connected with being with a sense of simple beingness being comes from the word to be the most primordial thing and everything in nature is an expression of that underlying beingness and including the physical body this body this body all that we perceive in this world is existence it exists this body exists this body exists underlying existence is being being is the formless timeless dimension within yourself, it's very much like the black hole at the center of the galaxy when I was writing The Power of Now I wrote I don't know why I wrote that, it just came to me one day I wrote there is a black hole at the center of every galaxy and the editor saw it and said you can't say that because you don't how can you know that, the people are going to argue with that, so it was taken out and some years later I read an article by a scientist and it said now scientists believe that there is a black hole at the center of every galaxy and so why did I know that?

I knew that because I could feel the black hole inside myself this spacious formless one life, the origin that's and so and I know that the human being is a microcosm you can understand the whole universe by understanding yourself you are just a microscopic version of that so that's the we are regaining by no longer being lost in the conceptualizing mind we regain something that was lost a long, long time ago, very much like the prodigal son in the New Testament your origin not your origin you can't say, it's not really your origin in time, it's not saying, ok my origin was six billion years ago, that's where I started when the big bang happened, that was the beginning of me that's true of course that was the beginning but it's not so much that the origin is in the distant past or not even in the near past the origin is timeless the origin of your being it is still there this primordial nothingness before the big bang is still in you now nature can help you rediscover that if you approach it not with the conceptualizing mind but you approach nature and perceive nature in a state of alert attention spaciousness and that's a wonderful wonderful first we could call it a practice but then it's no longer a practice it becomes a natural way of being first in nature and then even in the man made world, but we need to first of all be able to, we are going into it now do it in the forest or on the beach or in the field wherever it is before you can be in that state, in the shopping mall where everything it's not so you can't really find being that easily you have to be rooted very deeply in yourself to find being in the shopping mall because everything is surface phenomena buy me, do this do this, eat a hamburger look here, look here and then after 20 minutes in the shopping mall you are totally exhausted because all the energy is flowing out of your eyes into phenomena and music is in the background not the most profound music and yet you could be walking in the forest for three hours and not feel exhausted, in fact feel invigorated isn't that strange? So the shopping mall takes it out of you and the forest or whatever the beach or the desert puts it back there is something there very very different and but not for everybody there needs to be the openness and the alertness so that all the seemingly insignificant things in nature you are alert to that for example you're looking at you're walking a tree a slight movement of leaves in the breeze perhaps a sound associated with it your senses are alert not strained there is no tension you don't go no, just alert and you live in that alertness of course there is no thought anymore because if you were thinking you would not be alert thought is not alert it's a lower state alertness is a higher state than thought higher consciousness than thought but good thoughts which means creative thoughts original thoughts original insights can only come out of the alertness you need to have the alertness and then sometimes thought becomes fruitful and original and creative out of that but if you never touch the alertness then thought is repetitive old records CDs not records anymore and not CDs anymore old iPods or whatever so nature then you have to approach nature with that alertness attentiveness like a little child as if you had come there for the first time into that place let's say maybe you drive somewhere or maybe it's close to where you live you get out of the car out of your door for most people even wherever you live there will be something natural when you step out of your house even if you live downtown there may be a little tree somewhere not acknowledged by most people

Q and A with Eckhart Tolle TV Part 8

[Speaker 1] (0:02 - 9:00:12)

For most people, even wherever you live, there will be something natural when you step out of your house somewhere. Even if you live downtown, there may be a little tree somewhere. Not acknowledged by most people.

Almost everybody walks past it without looking, because they have more important things to think about. But you, for a moment, you acknowledge that. Not by saying, oh, I should be acknowledging the tree.

You just acknowledge, you give it attention. And in that moment, you notice little things about it that before you didn't notice. How the quivering leaves, how the light shines through the branches or the leaves, how the light interacts with the tree.

And you notice all these things without having to call it anything. It's just a noticing. And this is a practice.

You can practice that as a choice. Because you choose to relate to nature in a different way. And when you do that, then nature gives you something back.

What it gives you back is some of that energy of connectedness with the source that the tree is still in. This energy comes back to you. The tree gives you that back.

It says, have some of this. I have more than enough. And you get, so it helps you to feel that connectedness.

But you are also helping the tree. I'm saying that intuitively. The tree hasn't spoken to me like that.

Maybe some trees speak to some people, but not to me. Well, Prince Charles years ago said he talked to the plants. And that's of course a wonderful thing.

And I think he meant he not only talked to the plants, I think he meant he gives them his full attention. And ever since the newspapers have been making fun of him because they don't understand. It's just the mind doesn't want to understand that.

So, you're giving it attention. It's not just that the tree, and I'm only using tree as an example. It could be a tree, it could be a flower, it could be an entire forest.

Because the attention that you give, you can give to either a single natural phenomenon or being like a tree or a flower or even a blade of grass or a little plant, whatever it may be. You can also give attention to a more inclusive energy field like an entire valley. That is, it has its own energy field, its own spirit almost, one could say, or a forest as you walk.

So there are two modalities, one could say, of being there in, let's say, it's a forest. You can notice single things, like trees or plants, and for a moment you give them attention. There's a looking, an alertness.

And then you look at something else. And there's no choice really involved in not saying, okay, what can I look at now? It happens naturally.

Your eyes, you'd look at this, and then suddenly you look at something else. And then you look, you take in the totality of what's there, just a general, without always necessarily focusing on one thing, you take in the totality. And that is, there's an expression in Zen which is translated as a choiceless awareness, an expression that also I believe Krishnamurti used, choiceless awareness of, so you take in the totality of what is around you.

And then the nature, the entire energy field of what's around you then connects with you, and you connect with it. So it gives you what some of that connectedness with a source that nature never lost almost transmits itself to you. But it's a reciprocal process.

What you give nature is the awareness of itself, because we need to remember that nature, it's not that you are separate from nature, you haven't been put into nature, you have come out of nature, you are nature also. You are nature that is in the process of becoming conscious of itself. And so what you then give back to the tree, or the flower, or the forest, is awareness of itself.

It recognizes, because this flower, it, I would say it does not know it is beautiful, it just is, the flower is. It's beauty is there, it comes from the source, and now when any human perceives this flower as a true act of perception, not conceptualizing it or judging it, something responds from within. There's some, something is touched within, there's such beauty there, but even to call it beauty, you don't need that.

There's something there, something within responds, almost a recognition, because, and when you perceive in such a way, you realize that you and it are not separate. The illusion of separation which is created by the thinking mind disappears, and there's a sense of oneness. When you are not calling it anything, this pure, spacious perception, immediately there's not me and the flower, there's a continuum.

The flower arises within the field of consciousness, it comes out of that, and so this is really what love is. You love the flower because you recognize it as ultimately one with who you also are. You're connected to the source, through the flower you can connect to the source, but you feel it within yourself.

It's an amazing thing, allow nature to take you back by choiceless awareness, presence, you can allow nature to take you back to the source, but as it takes you back to the source, you are going to the source with the awareness, full awareness, of the beauty, of the sacredness, of whatever you want to call it, full awareness. And then suddenly you have a love of nature and a deep empathy with nature that even the people who lived before the human mind developed into the monster that it has become now, there were people who lived close to the land, close to nature, that was a natural oneness, they didn't even know it because there was nothing else. So natural, simple people who lived close to nature, they didn't know the preciousness of nature because you can only know the preciousness when you're beginning to lose it, then it becomes precious.

When there is nothing else, then it's just what is. In the same way, if the entire world were painted green, the color green would not exist, you wouldn't know it. So this is a having lost, which seems like a tragedy on the one hand, that we lost connectedness, well we didn't lose it, but it's forgot, our connectedness with being is lost.

Being or with a source became obscured, almost we could say we lost it, and it seems a tragedy, but it's not really because I believe it was a necessary cycle in the evolution of humanity, because it's only by losing it that you then regain it at a deeper level, at a new level is reached, and that is why we are here, that's the process. But your practice then needs to be bring your gift to nature, nature has a lot to give you, but it only can do that if you bring your gift to nature, and that gift is consciousness, awareness, you are there, when you go anywhere in nature, or even in the city street, there will be something, whether it can be the clouds, it can be even the way of the sun, the sunlight, that's nature too, acknowledge all these things with your awareness, by bringing awareness to it, and that looks like I can only, one can only say that much about awareness, it needs to be experienced, and what I mean by awareness, you can never understand unless at least for a moment you become aware, I could be speaking for weeks about awareness or presence here, and you would not know, conceptually you might know everything about it then, you could write a PhD about awareness or presence without ever knowing what it really is, so let me just demonstrate very simply what awareness is, it's just senses are alert, visual, even if there's nothing to hear, can still have an alertness, auditory alertness, and you know what happened, I talked about it at the beginning, the mind becomes still, when you have nothing to hear, there's nothing, beautiful, that's just what raises awareness, to become aware of what awareness is in yourself is the key, nature can help you there, and speed up this process, so, but the vital, you don't need anything beyond this moment, you have nature, you carry it around with yourself, in yourself, as this physical form, awareness is the key, sometimes it's called attention in some teachings, doesn't matter, you remember the Zen teacher who would always say, when they asked, please explain the meaning of Zen, he would always go, like that, and that was the explanation, another Zen story, the disciple said to the master, I'm going off somewhere else now, can you just write something down for me so that I remember the essence of the teaching, obviously he didn't have it yet, otherwise he wouldn't have asked, he still thought it was something memorable, so the teacher wrote on a little piece of paper, whatever they had, attention, and the disciple looks and says, okay, can you just say a little bit more please, I need a little bit more, and so the master writes something else, and the disciple looks and reads, attention, attention, oh, well, I wanted just a little bit more, can you just write something else, and then the master writes, and then the disciple reads, attention, attention, attention, so the disciple becomes a little bit frustrated, and well, I know that now, the disciple says, what does attention mean anyway, and the master says, attention means attention, oh, that's the end of the story, whether he got it or not, we don't know. This attention is the vital thing, and there is no tension in attention, it just happens to be a similar word, so if it's, there's no straining, there's no, it's not concentration, concentration is just focusing on one thing, and there's always some straining involved with it, it goes, attention, it facially looks like, so that's not it.

There's a little bit of the very young child, if you can, in true attention, there's a little bit of the openness of a very young child in whom the conceptualizing mind hasn't started up yet, before the child starts asking the question, what's this called, what's that, what's that, and before they start asking, why, why, why, before all that, of course they have to go through that stage, but before that, there's a moment when there's already consciousness beginning to blossom, but not yet taking form as thought, so there's a short period where the child is in that state of open attention with light shining through their eyes, and then they go, what we are then really talking about is the cessation of thinking, of having to think, not forever, thinking still happens, but there's actually the choice not to think, when there's nothing to think about, which is a lot of the time, a lot of the time, nothing is added to this moment by thinking about it, the depth, the fullness of life now, you cannot add really anything to it by thinking, some situations require thinking, that's fine, many situations don't require thinking, that's even better, and if you have to think, prior to thinking, enter the state of attention or no thought just for a moment, and you will see the quality of thinking improves, the thinking that you then do, or that then happens, but to have spaces of not thinking, that's what nature offers you, otherwise you're not really using the vastness of its wealth, nature, when you are thinking about it, you can only, the vastness of that is only accessible to you when there is the spaciousness of not thinking, it doesn't matter for how long you don't think, don't try to stop your mind as such, because that creates a conflict in yourself, and you would perhaps try to exercise willpower, and you may have limited success, if you go out into nature and say, I mustn't think, and you'll probably stop breathing too, so there's no willpower that can't do that, one way of not thinking naturally is, yes, bringing attention to sense perceptions can be very helpful there, just bring attention to sense perceptions, then there won't be enough attention left for thinking, if you're fully attentive with your senses, there's not attention, not enough consciousness left for producing thoughts, just you're too alert, that's a simple thing, another one that is, you can do in daily life and not just in nature, is work with the present moment, accepting what is now, whatever form this moment takes, you say, fine, this is what is, and then you will think much less, a lot of thinking is there because you're trying to get away from what is, so if you're not you can become friendly with the present moment, you become more relaxed, open to life, and naturally, the compulsive thinking mind subsides, because there's only ever the simplicity of now, of this moment, so that's a, you can do it in nature more easily than in the office, of course, you can do it in nature more easily than in the shopping mall, you can perhaps do it more easily when you're alone in nature, than when you're with a friend in nature, because two people together, most people think, okay, what can we talk about now, let's talk about the stock market, okay, so it's probably easier alone than with a friend in nature, but visiting your family, visiting people with whom you share a lot of past, to then to remain clear, present, requires more intense presence, so nature then is a good place to start being present, and then you, a wonderful thing happens then as you're, as the present deepens, you can bring your presence anywhere you go, even visiting your relatives, or even the shopping mall, not that you might choose to spend more time than necessary at the shopping mall, because the compulsion to acquire, which is a substitute for a feeling of aliveness, will have left you, so the compulsion, what can I get now, why this compulsion to buy things you don't really need, because for a moment you get a sense of aliveness, and that moment is quite short, it's when you pay for, when you pay for the stuff, and then they put it in the shiny bag, and then you say, there you are, oh. And then you walk home, and there is the bag, and then you take it out, and then the sense of fulfillment quickly leaves you.

And then so this means of course another visit to the shopping mall is required, and so why that? Because for a moment you feel there's a sense of lack in most humans that comes from disconnectedness, they cannot sense the being within them, they cannot sense the aliveness, the being that they are, they cannot sense the I am, the primordial sense of beingness, they're disconnected from that, they're up in the head, and the head says, I need, and now I need, what else do I need? I need this, and I need that, and I need that, where can I go?

Look, maybe that will do it, or that, oh I need another meal, I need another chocolate cake, whatever, on whatever level the neediness manifests it will be there, I need another relationship. I knew somebody who had enough money, and he bought one car, a very expensive car, and there's nothing wrong with that, it's fine if you enjoy a car, but very quickly he found it didn't fulfill him the way he thought it would, and so I think that was, what was it, Aston Martin or Bentley or something, and then he bought a Ferrari, and then for a while that was, yeah, that's it, and then that wore off also, and then he bought another one, they had three cars standing there, and he said, oh, that's a piece of garbage, it's a piece of garbage, it wasn't fulfilling anymore, and so that really is whatever, all these are substitutes, and of course, unfortunately, if the whole economic structure that we, well, it's a little bit shaky now, this is probably a good thing, but the whole economic structure can survive only if enough people still live in that neediness to consume, if not enough people consume, they say this is very bad, the economy is going downhill fast, people are not consuming anymore, of course you will, so what I'm talking about is the neediness, the neediness to have substitute fulfillment then goes, so we create a different, very different society, very different world is then created, of course the transition will be a little bit painful for some people, but the more you are surrendered to life, to the present moment, the easier it will be, so nature then is the, can be for many people the entry into the state of being, connectedness with being, because nature is really being, through every form of life, being speaks, not through words, being communicates itself to you through every natural form, and within yourself also, through, existence is the forms of life, existence, billions, billions of life forms, underlying the billions of life forms is the one life, so you are not just that, I am an expression of the one life, a temporary expression of the one timeless life, can you sense, that question is, can you sense the one timeless life within yourself as consciousness, can you, at this moment, can you feel your own presence, your own awareness, these words are not quite right, it's not yours, nothing is yours, but let's just for a moment put it like that just to get you there, can you feel, can you feel your own presence, which don't mean your thinking, I don't mean your feelings, they may be there, but underneath it isn't there, isn't there a presence that perceives this moment as in whatever form it arises at this moment, isn't there an underlying light, isn't there an underlying space in which all this arises, even if it's all a dream, it might all be a dream, but even then, if it is a dream, there's no point in arguing whether it's a dream or not, isn't there an underlying space in which the dream arises, somebody's having this dream, who is that somebody, you, but not you as the person, the person is part of the dream, if it is a dream, well it's dreamlike, that's for sure, because everything passes very quickly, it certainly is dreamlike, our existence is dreamlike, there's no doubt about that, but who is having this dreamlike thing, to whom is it happening, to me, who are you, you can't attach a name to it, you are consciousness, the essence. So when I say can you feel your own presence, another way of putting it is, can you be aware that you are aware at this moment, can you know, aware of your own awareness, aware of awareness, self-awareness, self-realization, you don't need to think, there's nothing to understand in it, nothing to understand, just that, and that's the transcendent dimension in you, it transcends everything, transcend means it's beyond, as it says in the Buddhist scripture, something like, what is it, gāte, gāte, gāte, beyond, beyond, gone to the farthest shore, gone beyond, and this is not a, some extraordinary state reserved for one person in a billion, it's a natural state, because we had lost it for so long, it just seems so extraordinary. It's the most wonderful thing if you can go into any situation as that clear space, not as a person, the person is there for a while, you can still bring the person out of the cupboard when you want it, if people ask me what do you do, or whatever, usually I say something, yeah, I'm a writer, okay, that doesn't create any problems, I don't, I'm not saying I am formless consciousness and I was never born, and that would lead to problems. So you can pretend that you are a person and then give a clear answer, and that's fine, and still know that that's not the truth at all, not that you are lying, but it's a tiny, tiny temporary aspect, and still be there as a spacious presence in any situation, doesn't matter where anymore, just spacious presence, and a lot of the time don't need to think, just be there as a presence, and you are truly, that's true intelligence coming into this world, real intelligence is not what the IQ test measures in you, I'm incapable of doing IQ test, I mean, I've never done one, but I just looked, glanced at one and I know my IQ would be very low, my mind doesn't work in that way, it doesn't work analytically, and so that is only a tiny aspect, this is not true intelligence, I'm not saying that because my IQ test would be low, it's not, nor should it be an insult to anybody who has a high IQ, and I'm now removing their sense of identity by saying it doesn't matter that much whether your IQ is high or low, it's not that, but there's a true, the true intelligence is the unconditioned consciousness, the thinking mind is the conditioned consciousness, conditioned by the past, conditioned by innumerable factors, conditioned by the language that you inherit, there's past in every word that you inherit, the moment you start speaking a language, you inherit an entire world view that's associated with that language, an entire energy that comes with the language that you're born into, and then that becomes part of who you think you are, your identity, it's not, it's a temporary acquisition, it's a form of conditioning and then people are, I'm English, German, Italian, Greek, whatever, it's nothing to do with who they are, it's a form of conditioning, so, and then there is the unconditioned, unconditioned and underneath it, spacious awareness, unconditioned, and everybody, it's in everybody, just stop thinking for a moment and there it is, and the mind says, oh, that can't be that insignificant because there was nothing happening just now, and then you don't need to desensitize yourself anymore and all the other substitutes that you may have for a sense of aliveness, whatever drugs people use to feel more alive for a little while, relationships, they need to change relationships quickly because quickly the novelty wears out and then, okay, maybe somebody else will finally make me happy and do it for me, maybe he's right here or she, and there's nothing wrong with any of these things, buying something or even enjoying a drink or whatever, but the compulsive nature then is no longer there, you don't need substitute aliveness, another one of course is drama in relation, you need the drama to have to feel we are still alive, we haven't been fighting in one month, something must be wrong.

Even with your dog or cat, if you have a dog or cat, approach them as much as possible, not through language, of course sometimes you speak, but approach them just bringing also awareness, just look, watch your dog or cat, how he runs around or rests or eats or sleeps, and just bring aware presence, look into their eyes, connect with the, because there's so much being coming through them, through their eyes, and that's why people are drawn to dogs or cats, they love them, and even people with big egos, they sometimes when they see a dog, they go, oh, for a moment the ego subsides, for a moment they look into the eyes of the dog and they feel a little bit more themselves even, more, oh, and again that's nature, it's the being that speaks through this little animal, more connected than the master, than the owner, the being of the dog, and this is what people relate to in the animal, this is why they spend so much money on their animals, because it gives them a glimpse of being, of that connectedness, but it's a secondary thing, but if you can be, the dog can help you if you bring, always realize it's in you, you feel that in yourself when you relate to the dog or the cat, it's not in the dog, it's also in the dog or cat, but it is primarily felt here.

Thank you. Thank you. A door opened, it means it's time to finish, and there comes the dog.

Hi! Hi! Hi!

On E.T. TV we can have some stillness, on normal TV that would be dreadful. Often people ask questions about manifesting, or the power of, not the power of now, the power of intention, and how does that relate to the power of now, and about wanting, or one person asked a question about what's the difference between wanting, continuous wanting that I write about in A New Earth, always wanting or needing the next thing, and what's the difference between wanting and intention, intending to create something, and what is the importance of manifesting things in your life, or creating, or is that counterproductive somebody asks, maybe we should focus on something else, not on manifesting or creating. Now there are many exciting books these days, about creating and manifesting, the secret teachings of Abraham, channeled teachings, and so on, and so it's always interesting often people ask, well, how does that relate to stillness, and inner peace, and acceptance of what is, and surrender to the present moment, and living in alignment with now, is there a conflict, is one wrong, or misleading, or leading you into illusion, and how does that relate to manifesting, and so they ask, and then expect me to answer. So this is an important question for almost everybody, unless you've reached the age of 95, and then you can be almost sure that you're not really into manifesting anymore, when it's, you've done that, been there, done that, and some people don't have to reach 95 before they have a feeling that my life is not, does not need to be focused anymore on creating or manifesting.

So it may have something to do with the stage, not necessarily chronological age, there's some, it has something to do with where you are at in your own life, but really your own life is a microcosm of the microcosm, so if you look at the universe, the first thing you see that it likes to create, and it likes to manifest, on this planet alone, the universe is continuously creating and manifesting countless life forms, millions, millions of life forms, and then outer space, we can only assume, we don't know what exactly is there, but there's a vastness of life out there that we don't know, that's for sure, and probably many more life forms than we have on this planet, which is more than we can count, and the life forms, both in the sea and on land, including humans, they seem to enjoy a dance of coming into being and destruction, they eat each other up, if you're born in the sea, you go around, it's a transformational process, and this entity becomes you, and then suddenly something comes up from behind and gets you, and you become that entity, continuous dance, and also if you observe life on this planet, the universe also seems to manifest conflict, and sometimes people say, I don't want conflict, but if there were no conflict at all in your life, challenges, and so on, what would that be like? Imagine going to a movie that has no conflict in it, and you're sitting there and thinking, would that be interesting? Maybe, I doubt it.

A movie in which nothing goes wrong, everybody's perfectly fine all the time, no challenging people, everybody's so conscious that nothing happens, it's, well, could try that, maybe that's an idea for a script writer, or maybe the script wouldn't be very long. How many people would come and watch that movie? Don't know.

So you have that, by just looking, not having a theory about life, but just looking, you see that the universe loves to manifest, and also it seems to be the case that life forms over periods of time become more differentiated, many more come, and even the human societies become more complex. We've had ancient civilizations that were quite complex, but probably our present civilization, if we can call it that, is the most complex, which of course includes problem-ridden also, that goes with complexity, it's full of, and every individual who is part of this civilization has a life that is full of problems, because you live in a very complex civilization, so it produces complexity. I mean, computers, just getting into, I can't get into that anymore, maybe I've gone beyond that age.

It's so complex, I cannot learn all this stuff that you need to know on computers. Boys can do it, six-year-olds. To me, it's too complex, and the differentiation of the analytical mind, science, cutting every phenomenon up into little pieces, and then you have little pieces, and then each piece is cut up into further pieces, and the microscopes get bigger and bigger.

Now let's examine that, and everybody's specialization gets narrower and narrower, because you have to be, because there are thousands of people writing PhDs about your subject, so you have to have only a little corner, and then you have to take that out and then examine that, and then spend three years examining that. Complexity. Of course, complexity cannot go on forever.

On some level, complexity, at some point, if a tree grows too many branches, eventually, suddenly, a winter storm comes, and most of it collapses. So the universe likes to create, to manifest, to experience a play of form. That's one movement, and you can see it in yourself.

On some level, you enjoy that, or you enjoyed it, or you still do enjoy it. And then there's something else in humans. You can only really see that, perhaps, in yourself, an inner phenomenon.

The universe also wants something else. It wants not only to experience that manifested life, it also wants to experience peace, and something that is not touched by the continuously fluctuating forms. It wants to know itself deeply, directly, and to experience that.

In its essence, and that really is the root of spirituality, is that the universe not only wants the outward movement, it also wants the inward, the return movement to the one. And so, every human being also embodies these two movements, and that seems, you are torn sometimes, between the outward movement into form, and the inward return movement to the source where it all started, but the source that was never really lost, that is still there because it's timeless. The source of all life is timeless, and it's in you.

And you feel drawn back to that, and that is the pull towards spirituality, peace, and the stillness being, rather than doing. And then you wake up the next day, and you look in a shop window and say, oh, that looks nice. I need to get that.

I'd like to do this, get that, achieve that, and then you get, okay, but on the other hand, I want peace also. It's the two, exemplified by perhaps, Eckhart Tolle exemplifies the return movement mostly, and you have Tony Robbins goes, it's that. And not one or the other is right or wrong.

It's only, perhaps, few. Totally lose yourself in one or the other, maybe that's not quite it, unless you live in a cave somewhere, and you can lose yourself in being. Can, is it possible, and perhaps this is a challenge of the universe here on this planet, and perhaps on other planets, is the challenge to reconcile the two movements, rather than have them separate, either one or the other.

Is it possible to reconcile the inner and the outer? Movement towards stillness and being, and the outer, it wants action and doing. And I would say that it is, and that is our challenge at this time.

Traditionally, let's talk about human doing and action first. Traditionally, it's been very unconscious, what humans have manifested in this world, to a large extent, has been unconscious. They have been identified with doing, and identified with form, because form is about the outer, the creation of form, and your own form, and creating more forms.

And so, that has been going on ever since anybody can remember, recorded history and beyond, this identification with form, and identification with doing, and we call that ego. Now, what happens then is that the one consciousness that underlies everything, timeless, formless, the one consciousness moves into form, assumes forms, and enjoys the play of form, but it's not enough, it seems, for the one consciousness to enjoy the play of forms. It needs to completely believe in it to really make it real.

It's not real, but to make it seem real, you need to lose yourself in that dream of form, the play of form. And this has happened to humans. So, identified with the form, that you believe yourself to be a separate entity.

You have a life of your own. There is no such thing, but a life of my own doesn't exist.

There's only life, and you are an aspect of that one life.

But humans believe that I have a life of my own, and then others have their life. And of course, if I have a life, then of course, one day I could lose, I'm going to lose my life. Oh, God.

I'm losing my life. I lose my life. Who are you, and who is life?

You must be separate from life if you can lose your life. So who is saying I is not life? Who is that I?

What is that I that says my life? Consciousness. The unmanifested, timeless, one life.

So every human then believes that they have a life of their own, and become, that means, they're identified with the form of life, that particular form of life. This particular physical body. This particular sense of being.

This particular psychological life form, the thoughts, accumulation of thoughts, your past, your history, your viewpoints, and the emotions that go with these thoughts, feelings. It all becomes all part of that form identity. That's me, encapsulated form identity.

And so consciousness is trapped or believes to be trapped in that. So we could say that in that state, the universe or the consciousness has entered a dreamlike state. It wants to do that.

It must enjoy that dream up to a point. Consciousness has entered that dreamlike state, where it is completely identified with form. It doesn't realize that every other form is an aspect of itself.

Every other form. And of course, then you are just an isolated entity. It becomes quite unpleasant after a while.

So you have to get together with other entities, and instead of having an I form, you have a we form, us. And that becomes encapsulated. It starts with a tribe, or big family, or tribe, us.

And all the others are totally weird and evil. People just beyond the mountains in another valley, you go, they're all dreadful. That was quite common, and in some places still is, when people didn't get around that much.

To the Greeks, or also the Romans, everybody beyond were barbarians. The word barbarian comes from trying to imitate the foreign language that those barbarians speak. So there comes then, and for a while that universe seems to be okay with that, to have consciousness identified completely with form, and then the movie goes on.

You read history, world history, and that's the movie of what happens when consciousness is identified totally with form. And then comes a point when it's time for another stage to arise, where the dream of form is no longer, your consciousness is beginning to awaken from complete identification with form. And that is happening to many humans, and this is why human beings are drawn to spiritual teachings, with the awakening from the dream of form.

Who am I? What does it mean, I? What is identity?

What does it mean when I say I? What does it feel like? What is I?

What am I? Now most people, yet if you ask them, who are you, they will define the word I in terms of form. They will say, well obviously this body, that's I, that comes maybe first, and then there comes the mind with its accumulations, its accumulated, its habitual thought movements, its memories.

There come the emotions that go with the thought movements, the psychological form of I. So they say, well I am this body, then there's a name, which of course is just a sound. You say, John, I am John.

And many people say, they think that's already a big part of who they are, when they can say their name. Oh, okay. And then they add a little something else.

I'm an architect. Oh, okay, we're getting even closer to who you are. And I'm a father, which, okay, good.

And your age, okay, something like that. Okay, we're almost there now, just need a few more details, and then we know who you are. And so you can put it on a piece of paper, a summary of it, or if you want a detailed account of who you are, you can write down your life history in a book, and it becomes your autobiography.

Oh, that's interesting. Now we know who you are. And if that's not enough, and if you think there may be hidden parts of me, then you can go to psychoanalysis for 10 years, and then all these hidden memories and hidden desires and feelings that you had when you were four and a half years old towards your mother and your father and your grandmother.

They all readily, they all come up, and then you can add that, and then, okay, now I've got it. I've got my autobiography, and that's I. I'm me.

I'm complete now. And then you look 50 years later, which is not much on a universal scale. 50 years is very little.

I know that now. I thought when I was 20, 50 years was a lot. I'm older than 50, by the way, by the body.

The 50 years pass, and what's left of the body and the psychological me, that entity in the head with its history, what's left? Nothing. Well, maybe there's one or two copies left of your autobiography, and maybe one person finds a copy in a secondhand bookshop.

This is somebody's autobiography. And your grandchildren or their descendants, well, after... My mother passed away three years ago, and I realized recently that I'm virtually the only person now who remembers her, because all her friends died before she did, and her family.

And all the other people who knew her only knew tiny fragments. They said, oh, she was a little bit of an eccentric, and she was outspoken, and so on. They had little fragments, but the person who really remembers her more than a fragment is me, and when I go, nobody remembers her.

And then all that's left is photos, and a generation later, nobody will know who this person on the photo is. But this is strange how an identity evaporates that seemed so solid and real. And so form, we're talking about form identity.

That is when you're asked, who are you? Or you ask yourself, who am I? Okay, now is that all there is to who you are?

Is that what can be defined through form, what can be that which is form, thought forms, emotional forms, physical forms, a conglomeration of that put together for a while becomes what you think is I. Is that really your I, your identity? Or is there something else?

Well, perhaps we can just, at this moment, see as you sit here, right at this moment, you don't remember your past. You don't have to. Let's pretend you don't have one.

You have no past. There is no past. Let's say there is no past.

Which, by the way, is the truth. Ultimately, there is no past. There's only the now.

So, okay, and no future. Let's pretend there's no future. Well, there is no future anyway, but there's only this.

So you can't remind yourself. You don't even, unless there's a thought in your head that says, I am such and such, even that you don't know right now. Let's say you don't know anything about who you are.

Nothing that you can formulate, conceptualize, call something. You don't, what is left, is there, what is lost? Nothing is lost.

In fact, when you encounter this which cannot be named, which is a formless presence, aliveness, that's the, you've touched that which is beyond form, consciousness itself. And that is identity. That is where your sense of I comes from.

And so you are more truly yourself when you don't remember your past than when you do remember your past. And you are more truly yourself when there's not a single thought in your head than when you are full of thinking, thinking about me and my problems. And whenever you feel this sense of I, this, the light of consciousness, which you can know directly in the stillness that is always there, available to you as the essence, your essence identity, your essence identity, timeless, that's always there.

And that is one with universal consciousness. It's just coming through this form. It's never lost.

When this form dissolves, the consciousness goes out like a little tentacle, being. So let's stay with this for a moment here. You have no past or there is no past.

What is lost? Nothing essential is lost. You get a stronger sense of who you are in your essence when you are not telling yourself in your mind who you are.

This is why I said in Stillness Speaks, I believe, you are never more truly yourself than when you are still. And still means, of course, the mind has become still. It's an inner.

Whether there's noise outside or not doesn't matter. You're never more truly yourself than when you are still. Then you can sense the essence of who you are.

And that does not depend on the age of the body, whether you're 20 or 90, it's the same stillness. That frees you then from the suffering that comes if you have identified with form, which then sooner or later will leave you, you suffer. If you identify with a strong or beautiful body and that body eventually grows old, you begin to suffer.

Because you seem to dissolve. You haven't realized who you are. And so we have, you have form identity and essence identity.

And suffering, you begin to suffer. Suffering arises through knowing yourself only as form identity. My history, my story, my body, my past, my this, my that, my that, my, my, my.

It's whatever you identify with in the world of form. If you know yourself only as that, that's the state of form. The state of unconsciousness, the dreamlike state.

Consciousness is dreaming the dream of form. And then it acts, attempting to become free of its inner state of incompleteness, dissatisfaction, and fear, which is inevitable when all you know is your form identity. There's always underneath the surface or even very much on the surface, there is dissatisfaction, fear, unease, discomfort, fear, I am not enough.

This is not enough. This is not the right place where I am now. This is not the right people I'm with.

This is not the right thing that I'm doing right now. There comes the need to go out and search for more forms that I can identify with so that I can feel more complete. But the only way you can actually reach the state of being at home, being rooted in yourself without the dissatisfaction that always comes again and again and again, and without the fear, the only way is encountering that which is beyond form.

And it's so much, it's right here. It's closer. It's God's realization.

It's another word for it, but let's not go there. The God within, the timeless within. And so the universe then has, all the people who are into creating traditionally have been very unconscious because those who were most identified with form had the strongest desire to manifest and create more things out there and conquer an empire or accumulate more and more possessions or have more power.

So they got driven. So all the powerful people, the people who created human history, if you read the history books, they were deeply identified with form and they were all unhappy of course, very unhappy, hoping by achieving this, that or the other and conquering this, that or the other, the other tribe or whatever, to become free of their state of unhappiness and of incompleteness and never getting there. And that's been, so traditionally the doers, there were always some people who were not into doing, but in many traditional societies, there wasn't much of a place for them.

Later monasteries came into being so they could become monks. Long story. So we still associate going out and doing with unconsciousness.

I believe there's a line by T.S. Eliot in a poem where he says, the best lack all conviction and the worst are full of passionate intensity, talking about contemporary humanity, early 20th century. The best lack all convictions means that they don't know what to do. They get, because they are torn between, there's some inkling of inside them of their essence.

So they're not, the desire to do is not as overpowering as it seems. And those who are totally identified with their form identity. So that's an interesting that where we are at as humanity as a whole is a realization that there is an essence that has nothing to do with a form.

And only if we are rooted, if some of our attention is in that formless essence, can we do things in this world without creating more havoc and suffering for others and ourselves. If we only go into doing without the rootedness in the eternal dimension, which is stillness, which is here now, always now, then there will be no more inseparable from now. Whatever you do, you lose yourself in the doing.

Identify it again with form and creating some new problem. So the foundation for all doing is conscious being. So that's the important realization about what about manifesting.

That's good, but before we talk about manifesting, before we build some new building or structure, get the foundation first. Do you have the foundation? Don't start building a house without any foundation.

Let's manifest this great business empire. This is going to change the world. Yes, but have you laid the foundation?

What foundation? Being. Being?

The formless, the formless. The eternal. No, we haven't thought about that.

No, of course you haven't. You can't think about it. The foundation is being rooted, realizing what that means, what being is.

Not intellectually, not by trying to understand, because as you may have noticed, there's nothing much to understand about being. Being. Can you explain a bit more, please?

Being. Stillness. I don't understand stillness.

Can you explain stillness? No, because there's nothing in it to explain. You can't look at it under a microscope or dissect it.

Aspects of stillness, PhD. So the human needs to find its, his or her, timeless and formless essence, essence identity. That's the foundation.

If you haven't that, forget about manifesting or creating. You just create more trouble. That's okay.

Then you're at the stage where the universe still likes to create trouble. That's okay. And I'm not saying you, you, you, you, you find that which is so close, closer to you than hands and feet, the stillness, the formless consciousness itself, without which there would be no sense perception and no thought and no feeling, that it's a light in which everything appears, that which, the life within the form.

And that's always there as your S right here. It knows itself here. It's not that I know it.

It is I. I am it. I and it are one.

I know myself. I know the universe. Sounds like two again, but that's because we're using language.

I know myself. I know I. I, the I knows itself.

And so this is the end of all differentiation and complexity because you're going back to the timeless, unmanifested source of all life. There's no complexity in that at all. Depths, yes.

Infinite depths. The vastness. The vastness of the as vast or vaster than the outer space.

It's inner space. The vastness of that inner spaciousness. So what you thought of as I is a tiny, tiny bit.

And underneath there's a vastness that is as vast, although not an extension as outer space, which is an externalization of who you are within. The vastness of inner space. People don't know to what extent they have reduced their own reality to this little entity that runs around the surface of the planet for a few years and then evaporates.

And of course, that's the form. But what is it that animates that form? The foundation.

And it's not something that you find, say, okay, I've got it now. And then you forget it again and then you start getting bored about the next thing you have to do. And identify it with every thought that comes again and reacting.

And you lost, not this. The secret is to stay connected with the being while you do. And then whatever you do is conscious doing, not unconscious movement, unconscious creation of form, but conscious creation.

And maybe you'll do much less than you would have done before, but it's more powerful. Very different kind of doing. Conscious doing and conscious manifesting, if that's what happens through this form.

Foundation comes first and remains primary. Being needs to remain in your life. Whether or not you are engaged in a lot of doing or not, being is primary.

If you lose touch with being, you lose yourself in your mind and you lose yourself in doing. And you don't want to do any good for anybody, really. And it may well be that the universal consciousness may use you and you do something that is then in alignment with this new stage that is arising on the planet.

And then you do something that is conscious creation, co-creation. Before the universe created unconsciously, and now through the human form, there's a possibility that the universe can create consciously. In that sense, all those books and teachings are quite exciting that tell you that there is an important relationship between your thoughts and so on, and the outer reality.

And that thought creates form. Yes, this is true. Thought creates form.

And it's exciting that if humans can fully realize that, and then fully realize their power, their creative power, which is vast. And as unlimited, eventually they'll know that as the universal creative power, because humans and the universe are not separate. You are an aspect of the universe.

You are the universe expressing itself as this form. So it's wonderful, creative power is there, but it's not the wanting power that is the, to understand the universe. To answer the question that somebody asked, what about this wanting, needing comes from a state of dissatisfaction and insufficiency.

Now, Buddha called it desire. And the Buddha of course said, become free of desire. And then that's the end of suffering.

He looked at humans and he saw that there was this unconscious reaching out continuously for wanting. He called it desire. I call wanting is a more direct term that you can actually feel.

I want, I need, I must have. Now, this is still very much in many humans there, the identification with form that results in continuous wanting. And it keeps a lot of our economic activity system going.

Advertising depends on humans who are identified with form. It does not mean that when you are, when you know your essence, you cannot enjoy form anymore, that you will say no more. Maybe some humans might do that.

But again, there's a possibility of living in balance with form. You can enjoy all the forms around you and even create new forms without any sense that this is mine or any sense of attachment or any identification with the form. And only then can there be true enjoyment of forms and beauty.

But then the compulsive nature of your relationship with form will go. The compulsive running to shopping malls the day before Christmas and then running to shopping malls again the day after Christmas because they've reduced the prices even more or whatever. It's amazing.

Before Christmas they're all running and then after Christmas it's even cheaper. I need, I must have, that's not the true enjoyment of form. You can enjoy form by looking at a shop window and say, oh, beautiful.

Well, what, do you want to buy it? No. Or you might buy it and then it's in your house.

Oh, it's beautiful, beautiful. And then maybe the next day you arrive and a burglar has been there and it's gone. Oh.

And it may only be in that moment that you know whether you were attached or not. Because you might have had it in your home and said, I'm not attached at all. But when you get home the next day and the burglar has taken it, then you'll know whether or not that was true, what you thought that you were not attached.

That's a good test. So we need to then, doing and stillness need to be in balance. Now it does not mean that you separate your life into one part of your life is you sit still and in the other part of your life you run around.

That's not the balance. The balance is when the two are fused together. And even while you're walking around the shopping mall, not running around the shopping mall, walking, you can be in stillness as you look around.

You may, perhaps you go with the convention of buying Christmas presents or maybe you don't. Doesn't matter. If you do, okay, let's see what I can find.

Still. Bring the stillness into the shopping mall. Let it come with you into the shopping mall.

Just to give one example in the North American context or the bazaar or whatever if you're somewhere else. And see if you can, even while your attention flows out, have some attention within. Feel the background of aliveness or stillness.

As I always point out, the beginning of that is feeling the inner body, the aliveness within the body. That's the doorway into the formless. You're already moving into the formless.

Feel the alive. The body is alive. No, it's alive.

It must be alive. But can you feel that it is alive? And that's life energy.

It's the bridge between formless and form. And there it is. And then if you can walk around the city, well, here you don't walk, but you drive around.

If you drive around the city, can you drive with not too much thinking, just presence? Or walk around to the shopping mall and just look. You bring a stillness in wherever you go.

And then when you have to think, you can pick up the phone and say, oh, I found something nice. Maybe should I get this for my mom or dad? Whatever.

Always the two dimensions. That's the most vital thing. And then you can also look into manifesting.

But then the question is, what is it that wants to manifest through this form? It's no longer, this is what I want, the surface I. What is it that wants to manifest through this form?

Very different. And you may not know that immediately. There may be a time period when you don't know exactly what to do with your so-called life, which is not yours, just a conventional way of speaking.

There may be, for a while, you don't know what to do with your life. And so you're just there, being as still as possible, doing whatever activity you're already doing, but bring stillness into it, presence into it. And then at some point, either the realization of what it is that you need to do, that wants to be done through you, comes from the outside.

Somebody tells you something. Or you wake up one morning and say, ah, this is what I have to do. And then you start taking action, always making sure you're not so attached to the outcome that you think it's more important than the present moment.

An action can become egoic when you lose yourself, it becomes egoic when you lose yourself in the doing. And a good sign or good criterion is when something happens to, that is against your, seems to be an obstacle, a person or situation. Say, I want to do this or achieve that, and suddenly somebody says, no, you can't do that.

No, they won't allow you to do that. Or a situation becomes a challenge, it's difficult, it's blocked, you want to go. Somebody says, no, you're not qualified to do that, you shouldn't do that, it's not allowed, whatever.

You need this and that, which you don't have to achieve. Obstacles come all the time. If you get upset, that means the ego is back in the doing when obstacles come.

If you're not upset, you're still present and you look at whatever the obstacle is, and you look at it with this penetrating gaze of presence, which is stillness also. You look at whatever the obstacle arises, you bring this penetrating stillness to it, and that is like a light shines on it. And then that dissolves the obstacle or it shows you a way around it.

That's the power of consciousness. It always happens. Either it shows you how to get around it, or it shows you how to use the very force of the obstacle, and you turn it around, if the obstacle is wanting to go this way, and you go with it for, I'm just demonstrating now, something counteracts what you want to do, it's coming this way, you want to go that way, but you don't meet it head on and start complaining, say, no, this shouldn't be happening. No.

Perhaps you go with it for a little while, and you go, and then you turn it around. And the very power that was against you then works for you, and you achieve your goal through that. It happens, and this is the wisdom that comes with non-resistance.

So whenever you go into this conscious doing, resistance always pulls you back into unconscious doing. It can easily happen, because it's an old habit pattern, unconscious doing. Inner resistance to whatever arises in the present moment pulls you back.

Inner resistance is some form of negativity, some form of complaining, some form of fear, aggression, anger, and this is important because whenever you complain about what somebody else does, you're already beginning to fall into that trap of unconsciousness. And of course, yes, you meet lots of people who are still trapped in ego, and they may not like what you do, but just no judgment. Just look at what the situation, they say this, they want that, you want that, and they don't say, oh, they're dreadful, I know what he wants, he wants to deceive me, and he always does that, he wants to go.

No, just clear, this is the situation, this is what he says he wants, this is where I want to go, and see, okay. Never any judgment of a person or situation, just clear seeing, clear facing. This is the power, it's like a light beam of consciousness that falls onto the illuminates that situation, that moment, that person.

That's the power of consciousness. No resistance. Jesus already talked about the power of non-resistance, and the moment resistance comes, you're drawn back into identification with form, protection, resistance, fighting, it's a, are you going to succeed all the time in this?

No, it's a shift from a way of doing that has been with us for thousands of years, and a new way of doing that is only arising now. So you are transitional beings between the old consciousness and the new, and don't judge yourself if you fall back occasionally into the old consciousness, but you will quickly know it, how will you know it? You begin to suffer.

You get upset, you get upset about situations, you get upset about people, you get upset about what somebody said, you get upset about what somebody should have said but didn't, you get upset about what somebody did or failed to do. Oh, there's a sign that you've fallen back. Beautiful line in the Course in Miracles, I am never upset for the reason I think.

Now, upset is a generic term, could be any, in any way that you're out of alignment with is-ness, there's a disagreement with the is-ness of the present moment, and then you become upset. Now, many people are upset a lot of the time, but they don't realize they are upset, and if you talk to them and say, why are you upset? They say, I'm not upset, I'm just bloody angry.

Or, I'm not upset, I'm deeply hurt because he didn't invite me to his birthday party. Deeply hurt. Not upset.

I'm never upset for the reason I think. Now, the deeper meaning of this, of course, is you are upset because you have lost awareness of being, your essence, identity. And the reason, you think, is superficial.

If it's not, when you lose connectedness with being, just wait a few minutes and something or somebody will upset you. And so, if we believe that that which seems to cause the upset is the actual cause, this is not the case. These are interchangeable, could be anything.

And it will. So you'll be upset many times every day. By other people, by situations, by the slightest things, or the biggest things.

Upset, upset, upset by the entire world is so frustrating. I'm never, so that's a little sign then, if you're upset, you want to go somewhere, but people are not cooperative. Situations are not cooperative.

And you can talk to yourself. So that's a good sign then. You can use, also shows you to what extent the ego is active in you, because what's upset is not you, it's the ego in you.

The ego is the erroneous identification with form, a false sense of I, which wanted something to make itself feel more at ease or bigger or more important or whatever, and is frustrated in its aims. Well, that's a good, then it's like a little, if you had a little it's almost like having a little technical device on your arm that tells you whenever your ego comes back it goes, bleep, bleep, bleep, bleep. You don't need that.

Well, if somebody here is a technical wizard and is going to invent it, it's fine. But you don't need that, because all you need is to know if you're upset or not in everyday life. Now for many walking egos, upset is their normal state.

They might not even know it anymore because they're upset virtually all the time, and just waiting for some other thing to happen to explain why they are upset again. But of course there's the underlying dissatisfaction is always there. Foundation then is stillness.

That's the return journey. That's the return journey. So can we be then simultaneously in the return journey to the source of all life, spiritual dimension, God, stillness, and still be active in this world?

And then if we are that, what we then do in this world becomes empowered by the intelligence that emanates from the source. And then the source creates through you. No longer, the power of the source is then no longer distorted by the ego, and its power greatly diminished to a trickle.

So the source is like light, you can say sunlight, wanting to shine through fully. But for a long time it's become reduced to a tiny little hole, and there's a little bit of light coming through just to keep you going. And now it can come through, and the use you, when we use language we always create duality.

So when I say it uses you, it's not quite true because you are it, but language does that. It uses, let's then, once we know that it's okay we can use those words. It uses you then.

Now what exactly it wants, I don't know, perhaps it simply wants to create beauty, or forms that are alive and joyful, and enjoy that. It's enjoyed the drama for thousands, hundreds of thousands of years. It's enjoyed the drama of people cutting each other to pieces and eating each other up.

It's enjoyed the drama. The movie is changing now, and perhaps it's creating a much more pleasant movie. And who knows what is in store for us.

I've never, I can't predict the future. I'm not particularly interested. The present moment is wonderful enough.

But something is, there's a change happening. And of course there comes a point in your life when you may not, the source may become much more important than whatever you do. So you reach a time when you say, well, I've done this and that, and it's been wonderful.

And then all you are is you are just still and you emanate that stillness. And even then you affect the world around you without any doing. If you just be there, and whoever you come into contact with, there's some almost, one could say transmission, even if they don't notice it.

You can do that, and some humans perhaps will mostly live in that way. How much doing you do, how much varies from form to form, person to person. Some will be very active and conscious, into conscious doing and create and enjoy the creation.

And others may do relatively little, or may just continue to do what they are doing already, but whatever they are doing will be a vehicle for consciousness or stillness that flows into it, this power, this beautiful energy that flows. It could be even a person who just gives information. Let's say you work at an airport and you give information to people, and maybe you stay there, and then everybody who comes to ask, where is gate number 16, you say, well, you go that way, and it's only about a three minute walk.

And there were not only the words, there was a transmission of stillness with the words. Not in the sense that I am going to transmit stillness, no. It happens because you let go of the sense of doing, of I do, it happens.

And the person, this one traditional word for it is blessing, the person goes away being blessed with that energy. And so, when you do, beautiful, so what you do really is secondary. Some may do great things.

Others may do things that look on the surface not so significant. And ultimately, what you do is secondary, but how you do it is primary. And how means the consciousness that flows into what you do.

Or if you're working with your hands again, it can also happen that how do you put together this piece of wood and this piece of wood, there can be presence that flows into the doing, and that's beautiful, and that expresses itself in the final product. If something is made in the state of presence, then it contains energetically, it contains quality, quality. Now there are perhaps quite a few things in this world that are not at all conducive to presence.

Maybe it could be certain things that are extremely repetitive. Even that perhaps is possible, but let's say you're in a factory and all you do every day is, well probably by this time you've probably been replaced by a machine anyway, but there are certain things, or you live in an office environment that is so insane that when you bring stillness into it, there is an incompatibility with your surroundings that will result in your dismissal, or will result in your walking out. But if there is even the slightest compatibility, if it's not 100% insane, the environment, if it's only 90% insane, then there may be a possibility that if you bring stillness to it, this alert stillness, you walk into the office and you listen, and you're alert, and you answer the phone, and you go to the committee meetings where everybody's, and you sit there and listen to everybody, you don't say, oh everybody's insane.

You know they're insane, but you don't say it mentally. They're not insane in their essence, that is on the surface. And you are there as the still point.

It doesn't mean you can't speak anymore, but you embody the being, rootedness in being, and then it is possible if it's only 90%, the environment is only 90% insane, some change is possible. And perhaps the one or two people will be changed by their interaction with you, and a shift happens in them. Or if it's a meeting, suddenly there's a change in energy in the room.

Or suddenly you are the only person who says something meaningful, and suddenly everybody listens. Or your silence is enough to bring some harmony to the surroundings. Many ways in which this can affect the outer world, and even if you stay at home, and all you do every day is water the plants in the garden, and make a cup of tea, and look around, and you're still there, you're still there at the beauty, like a little child, but with a depth that is perhaps not yet there, a depth of non-conceptual knowing, then at this you are a point where the universe is contemplating its own creation, and knowing its own beauty, and its sacredness, and its aliveness, and through you.

And that's enough for a fulfilled life, isn't it? That's enough, the mind is in, yes, but I should be doing something meaningful that is meaningful, and for some people that is how they contribute to the shift in consciousness, by being a point of consciousness through which the universe sees its own sacredness, its own beauty, where the flower recognizes its own beauty, because the flower doesn't know it's beautiful, it needs you to perceive it and respond to it, and go, not call it anything, but go, really there is no ultimately separation between you and the flower, it's a single field. So when you contemplate the flower, the flower becomes conscious of itself through, it's one consciousness, and so if you provide that, that's a wonder, that's the universe waking up through this form to its own sacredness, and beauty, and aliveness, and depth, and all you do is walk around the garden every day, and make a cup of tea, it's wonderful.

And if that's not enough, then occasional thoughts come, maybe thoughts that come will say, wow, I made all that. You become like God, and God saw, he rested on the seventh day, and he saw that it was good, or something like that, at the end of May, he saw that it was good, see the goodness of all that. And so it varies, you may be, I call, one word I have for that which I used in New Earth, a person who is not called to do very much, is frequency holder, because what you do is not a doing, you hold the frequency of that consciousness of presence, and you don't have to do anything, you just hold the frequency, by embodying it, by embodying presence.

That's a fulfilled life, every moment is fulfilled. And who knows, it could be that you do that for two years, and one morning you wake up, and suddenly, suddenly something wants to be done, and suddenly you start doing something, and you pick up the phone and say, we're going to have to do this, a huge enterprise where everybody can come and experience beauty and healing and so on, I'm going to transform my garden into a healing center, and I'm going to, maybe, maybe not. One person asked the question, it is connected with this, somebody who is fully awake, would they still have a personal identity? And of course we know the answer by now, you are in touch with your essence identity, and the person can still operate.

You have the two dimensions, you have your personal identity, but you are not lost in your personal identity. You know that it is not ultimately who you are, it is only temporarily who you are on the surface, but not who you are in your essence. And so in that sense, no, you still have a personality, but you are not possessed by your personality.

It still operates, and you can function normally. You don't need to look weird, but if you do, that's fine also. You certainly have no desire to stand out and say, I am special, of course then you would have fallen back into some form identity.

There is something to be careful of which is called the spiritual ego, one could say, and that is the identification with form, coming back even sometimes to people who are able to periodically go into the stillness and feel the power and be that, and then they come out again, and then the old ego pattern reasserts itself, and it remembers the beauty of stillness and the power of stillness, and then it says, oh, I am very special, more special than you.

Well, it may not say that in words, because the ego at that stage can be very subtle, so it doesn't say more special than you, but there's just a sense of superiority that can creep in easily, the sense of me, and again, one needs to be careful. Any kind of conceptual identity that you really believe in is another trap, being trapped in form. Ultimately, you're only yourself, and you fully, when you have virtually no concept in your head of who you actually are.

Now, that doesn't mean when somebody asks me, when I go somewhere, whatever, across a border somewhere, somebody says, well, what do you do, what's your profession, or what do you do, I don't complicate things by saying, I don't do, or I don't do, or I don't do, I be, I just be, and so it's good if you have a little concept that you can give to a person if the situation requires it, you can say, I'm such and such, and then they believe you.

Don't say, I'm a spiritual teacher, when you cross a border. Teacher is okay, spiritual teacher, and of course, you're not a spiritual teacher, and I'm not a spiritual teacher, because that's another form identity, if you believe I am a spiritual, that's who I am, and then the next moment when I go do my shopping, I'm no longer a space of a large presence in the supermarket, but I carry around the identity of, here's a spiritual teacher walking around the aisle. Very subtle traps can happen. Now, that doesn't mean that at this moment, this form, spiritual teaching happens through this form, so I could say at this moment I'm a spiritual teacher, but when I get up, I'm no longer a spiritual teacher, it's only a function, it's temporary, in the same way that I could do somebody's accounts, well, I couldn't, but, and I would be an accountant, but if I carry accountant around with me in my head, I'm a walking accountant, I mean, that's a terrible trap, you know, it's only, these are only functions, they're not who you are, or whatever it is, any identification with that brings you back into form, and so to be free, and that's a continuous practice in daily life, to be as, one can express it negatively, it's not negative, but it sounds sometimes negative, to walk around as nobody in particular, not be anybody in particular, just be as a presence, but nobody in particular, just an alive presence. You don't need to be anybody in particular, except when you conform to the conventions, when you talk about yourself, it's fine, you observe the conventions of this world and say, I'm a doctor, I'm an accountant, I'm this, I'm that, not a spiritual teacher, but whatever. But not to be anybody in particular, this is these, to be free of carrying around with you a defined identity, which is either, in many cases, it either take, puts you into position of superiority towards others, or an inferiority towards others.

If you have some defined identity, you always look to, then you give everybody else an identity too, that's a dreadful thing. It's not only you create the present for yourself, everybody else, once you look at the world through your defined identity, then you give everybody else a form identity. First you do it to yourself, once you've done it to yourself, you do it to others, and then you reduce every other being to a form.

And then usually, because all this is part of ego, usually then you will try to locate where this other being is in this form, as either superior or inferior to you. It's an unconscious process, where does this person fit in? The ego is always looking to where inferior or superior, am I inferior?

And if ego feels inferior, it's uneasy, and then tries to get something to reduce the other, so that you can feel, if only make negative comments or whatever, or say, or if somebody, on a very simple level, the other woman wears a very nice dress, and you feel diminished by her beautiful and expensive dress, you say, oh, that dress would look good on your sister. The ego loves to do these unconscious things, because by diminishing somebody, it believes that it has grown a little bigger itself. Amazing delusions, it's a whole delusional system operating.

Gossip, by talking negatively about others, every time you say something negative about others who are not there, this is quite a common thing, you feel a little bit superior, because you have judged the other as not good enough, certainly you have put yourself in a position of judging the other, which implies that you are superior, morally or whatever, you know what she did, she did that, and then she said, and then how dare she, and then, she's always wrong, of course.

Amazing silliness, but for many people, it's their life, that's how they live. So be nobody, so to speak, be a presence, but don't define yourself, except when absolutely necessary, when you have some interaction with somebody who says, what's your name, and so on. Of course, name, nothing wrong with your name, as long as you don't believe that that's who you are, and so on.

But the practice is to gradually shed the belief that you are here as a person, and just be yourself, so let the person become transparent to the light of consciousness, and then you have the two, there's the form, but essentially, you are that which animates the form, the underlying deeper consciousness, and that, by living in conscious connection with that, you live in conscious connection with an intelligence that is far greater than whatever your mind could manufacture, although it may use your mind, but it will then inspire your mind with creative insights, creative ideas, and so on. It can use your mind, or it may bypass your mind, and will simply emanate throughout every cell of your body, you emanate a beautiful, alive, peaceful presence.

If your mind is not highly developed, it may not say, universal consciousness may say, well, this mind is not that great, I'm not going to use this mind, but I'm going to use the entire body to emanate peace and aliveness and presence and healing for the world. It uses whatever is there, or if you're an artist, then suddenly your artistic creations become inspired, empowered, beautiful. In my case, that doesn't happen because I can't draw and paint, it just doesn't happen, so the consciousness is not going to flow into my arm and my hand, and suddenly I'm going to produce a masterpiece, and that's not going to happen, nor am I going to produce the unified field theory that Einstein couldn't find, because my mind doesn't work in that way, physics and mathematics, it just, so the consciousness is not going to use my mind and bring up, make me into another Einstein. The consciousness uses what is there and empowers that, and there's always, everybody has something that consciousness will use and flow into, if only every cell of your body, that's more than enough, and then there's nobody to claim credit when something has been produced, created, you just step back, it's not, I did that, or the way people go, yeah, yeah.

No, you just step, because you know it's not, not I didn't, I did it, yes, but not I, it's, the one I. Welcome to our gathering, meditation, talk. As you may know, I spent a little bit of time with the Dalai Lama recently, and one of the most impressive things he said, and he said it several times during those days, when people ask him all kinds of questions, complicated questions, the impact of technology on the economy and the economic and this and that, and several times I heard him say, I don't know.

Now, you can look upon this as a kind of, this as something, a superficial thing, I don't know, or something that's actually very significant, because it points to a certain state of consciousness, in which the realm of conceptual thinking isn't that important anymore. And I could actually feel that many people felt love towards him deepening when he said, I don't know. People laughed, and he laughed, and there was an opening, which would not have been there if he had given a very clever answer.

And sometimes, after he said, I don't know, actually, he said something that was meaningful and deep. At other times, he didn't. But it started, whether or not something came out of that not knowing.

The point of departure, the foundation, is that state in which you don't need to know conceptually. And once you realize that, it's a kind of denial of the self, the mind-made self, because the mind-made self lives on taking up positions of knowing, opinions, viewpoints, judgments. And the more one is identified with opinions, viewpoints, judgments, reactions, the stronger the self, which already the Buddha discovered a long time ago, that sense of I, a me-ness, the me that's ultimately illusory, and creates all kinds of trouble and problems for yourself and for others, if that's all you know.

If that's the only dimension that you move in, the mind-created self, then you will create suffering for yourself and others. So to come to a position of, not a position, a place of not knowing, it is an act that from the point of view of the self looks almost, one could say, negative. It looks like a kind of suicide, self-annihilation.

Who am I if I don't know, if I don't have a position, some mental position that I identify with, what's left of me? So we come to the denial of the absolute reality of the form of me. We don't need to go as far as saying that some teachings do, some spiritual traditions, they proclaim that to be, the whole thing is totally illusion, they say, and from a certain perspective you could say that.

The whole thing of egos walking around this world, going through their drama, and then dissolving, and then other egos coming up and going through the same kind of drama and dissolving, and the same kind of drama and dissolving. So you are born, and then you go through a little bit of turmoil here and there, into one or two little happinesses, and then that's the end. But mostly, of course, while you are in between the birth and the death, you are waiting for the end of problems, and while you wait for the end of problems, you are creating problems for yourself and others.

That's ordinary existence, normal existence. And so this act of self-annihilation, this is one way of putting it, it sounds a little bit frightening, self-annihilation. But all that's annihilated wasn't real anyway, not in absolute terms, it was relatively real, one could say.

The fact that we are here is relatively real, but it won't last for very long, so was it ever really real? If it dissolves like a dream, if the whole story of me dissolves like a dream very soon, in that sense, it's very fleeting like a cloud. So the vital question then is, do you assert the self, or do you deny the self?

Can you live in a balance where the self is still there, but you don't realize it not as ultimately who you are? So when the Dalai Lama says, I don't know, and of course everybody projects something onto him, he's the Dalai Lama, so they give him a strong identity. Now his challenge is not to fall into that same illusion.

In other words, people believe that he's a mountain, and he knows his deeper reality is that he's a valley, and that's your job too, to know that for yourself, not the illusory self, the essence of who you are. So there are the two modalities, the two dimensions that you move in, on the one hand, in the world of relativity, the relative. Yes, you exist as a form, a physical form and a psychological form that thinks and acts and has feelings and has a history and a so-called future, not that it ever comes, but that's another matter.

In the world of the relative, you can say there is a past and a future, that is not true in absolute terms, because of course you've never experienced past or future, so it can't be true in absolute terms. It has never been in your immediate experience, there has never been any past or future, only now. You remember the past, well it's now.

You think about the future, now. In absolute terms, only in relative terms, yes, let's just say for a moment, yes, there is a past and future, that's all part of the form identity as which you appear temporarily, a mountain, me. Now, the form identity naturally wants to strengthen itself, become perhaps, if possible, bigger, a bigger mountain.

I'm only a little hill, I want to be a bigger mountain, and so you do things to strengthen your form identity. That can be done in many ways. Most people, many and probably most, spend their whole life trying to somehow defend, at least defend, the little that you have, the mountain, to keep up this mountain, defend your form identity from injury and so on.

Even the slightest insult is an injury to your form identity, so you have to be on your guard. Or they try to add something to their, something more I can identify with, as me, so that I can stand out more. That's the need of the form, the self, to stand out more.

Now, is that wrong? Well, there's no wrong or right or wrong, it's just that something very important is missing. I am not saying if your desire is to be a better person, that's not a bad thing, to be a great actor, actress, I'm just saying that because we're in L.A., and it's full of people who want to be great actors and actresses. To stand out, it's not necessarily, you're not saying, don't do that, no. But is your life one-dimensional? Is your life only concerned with defending and strengthening your form identity, the mountain, by adding more things that you can identify with, and then the mountain gets bigger.

And if you can't find positive things to add to the concept of me, if all else fails, you can start complaining about the people and other people in the world, and be very negative about how dreadful the whole thing is, or what life has done to you, how unfair it all is. And in doing so, you also strengthen your form identity, because you are more unfairly treated by life than most other people. And so the mountain can grow bigger in that way also, not just by becoming a multi-millionaire, can the mountain grow bigger, or by becoming a famous actor, the mountain can also grow bigger, the self, by continuously complaining, and being annoyed, and being against this and that and that.

Always find something to be against, and taking up a position against. So some egos or selves are just mainly preoccupied with finding something to be unhappy about, and then voicing it, either in their head or out aloud. And by doing so, their sense of self, the mountain, gets bigger.

And so, in very extreme forms, you can see it, occasionally you meet people in the street, they are talking out aloud, and uttering one curse after another. And they're all, they're blaming everyone, and when you pass, they might say something to you, it's not personal of course, how awful is he, who do you think you are? And so they have built up an enormous mountain, so anything can be used by the self to strengthen itself.

And of course it can be done in very subtle ways also. Some people are very spiritual, much more spiritual than most other people. And they do all the right things, so that their self-concept, which again is the mountain, is in a more subtle way, bigger than other mountains.

Or they're religious, which means of course they are right and everybody else is wrong, except their little group. Oh, that's a very, very good way of strengthening the mountain, the self-identity of me, the righteousness of it. And again, you're missing the dimension of the absolute, the dimension where you are not the mountain, because when you are the mountain, you're identified with that, the surface of life.

You are unaware of that. When you identify with the valley, and now what that means, we'll go into that, then yes, there's still some form here, but mostly there's the formless. A similar example could be given, you have a bowl.

This example is actually mentioned, I believe, if I remember correctly, in the Tao Te Ching. You have a bowl or vessel, and on the one hand you have the form of the bowl or the vessel, and to most people that's what is there, that's all there is. Not realizing that the most essential thing about this vessel is not the form, but it is the space, which you cannot see, cannot be perceived by the senses, does not have to seem any existence at all, because space does not stand out.

Space is the valley. And so in every human being, the two dimensions are there. Yes, you are a mountain, you exist, because to exist means to stand out, Latin root, ex, out, exist.

You exist, you stand out as a form identity, yes, but you are also, and more essentially, the formless. Now, that can only be found underneath all the forms and all the doing that the self is engaged in all the time, to realize that beyond all the doing and thinking and activity, there is a silence or a stillness in you also. And that could come as a glimpse, next time somebody asks you a question and you say, I don't know, and for a moment, the mountain has become a valley.

And in that moment of saying, I don't know, where you have not emphasized your form identity, you have, one could say, surrendered your form identity, and if you are very alert, in that moment, you feel deep inner peace. I don't know. It's actually so nice not to know.

I don't need to know. I don't need to know. So it could happen in that little moment.

I don't know. What is your position on the health debate? Now, everybody, of course, has their position.

That's how it is. You're wrong. I'm right.

Now, I haven't followed it very closely, so I can truly say without making any effort, I don't know. But if you have followed it closely, it's more difficult to say, I don't know. And if you have a mental position, am I saying, get rid of your mental position?

No, that's too much to ask. But if you realize, yes, there's a mental position in me, and that's how it's, I think that's how it is, how it should be. If you recognize a mental position as a mental position, then also there's already some freedom.

You're not totally identified with the form, which is the mind form. There's also a little bit of the valley in you. And then you don't need to be aggressive to somebody who says the opposite of your mental position.

You can still say, well, this is what I believe, and yes, you know the nice phrase that probably started in the 60s in psychotherapy, and it's now become a normal speech, I hear what you're saying. Now, this is not always used in the original sense. I hear what you're saying sometimes is used, you're just, underneath it it's saying, and I know that you're wrong.

Originally it's meant to be used in that state of openness, where you don't, and that's a wonderful thing that happened at the beginning of an opening, where you don't completely identify it with the position of me. And so there's freedom. So in many, many ways that are easily overlooked, on the one hand overlooked, in many ways the valley in you, the valley nature, which is really the timeless, the absolute, the non-relative, the eternal in you, whatever name you want to put it, it is there, the formless, without which nothing could exist in the world of form, consciousness itself, whatever you want to call it, to be aware of that dimension in yourself, even while you're pretending to be somebody in this world. You still go about your business with a name, a history, and even opinions, but no longer totally identified with your name and your history and your opinions.

And there's an enormous difference between having an opinion and being in the grip of an opinion. To be in the grip of an opinion means to be in the grip of your mind, and mistaking that for who you are in essence, defending what is ultimately a relative truth. Why is it relative?

Because very soon you won't be anymore in this form. So it is your, your life has to move in this dance between valley and mountain. Not that one moment you are a mountain, and then you say, okay, now I'm just going to be still.

Now I'm the valley, and then the phone rings, and then I'm the mountain, and the, your bank manager says, what about your, your account is overdrawn by, what? In the grip of a fearful reaction, emotion, thought, and then shouting and, no, you need to, the two need to be there at the same time, rather than fluctuating between being trapped in the world of illusion and then going into meditation once a day. But don't disturb me.

Don't move the furniture. It has to be here. Okay, now I can be at peace.

And of course, sooner or later, usually sooner, something happens to disturb you, a drill starts up next door. So the art of living, the supreme art is to embody simultaneously the relative and the absolute in yourself. And that is the purpose of life.

The purpose, while you're here, and I don't mean in this room, but here on this planet, here as this human form, short-lived, the purpose is this, to live this state of perfection where heaven and earth, one could say, come together, earth being the world of form and heaven the formless, to use those terms, to embody that. And that is your practice. And where do you practice?

You practice every moment, and you use your daily life to see if you can be spacious while you're engaged in the world. Spacious means the valley. So that's it.

And still not lose the ability to be engaged in the world. One could almost say it's a tightrope. We are walking.

Now, when we talk about being present, that means of course to have the awareness of space, not so much the awareness of space, space and awareness are the same thing, in yourself, to be aware of that dimension in yourself, that is presence. Presence is consciousness, but no conceptual thinking. The space of consciousness to be that right now, right now, this moment.

Now, you are that. It is the very light in which all this is perceived. It is essentially who you are.

It is formless. That's the valley. And so as you listen to these words, there's a space in you, and you can't do much with it.

You can't know it as an object of knowledge. I, oh, there's the space. I've got it now.

Of course you can't, because you are it. It is always subject. It can never be an object.

In that sense, you cannot know yourself. You can only be yourself. You can know everything else.

You can know all the things that make up the mountain through psychoanalysis or whatever method, introspection, regression therapy, remembering your past, past lifetimes and so on and so on. You can know all kinds of things about the form identity, that what makes up the form identity. You cannot know what lies beyond, behind that, because you can only be it.

It is the eternal subject. It is that through which everything is known. Consciousness itself, the light of consciousness, the eternal, the universe, the unmanifested which underlies the universe, through this form, wakes up to its own nature.

Knows itself, self, but not as subject, object, as self-knowing, which is a state of not-knowing, called a conceptual viewpoint. So in the practical realm, it is therefore vital that you have space in yourself. Be aware of space in yourself.

Stillness or space, just two different pointers to the same thing, no thing. At this moment, at this moment, is there space in you? Now if you're not bored, when you listen to these words, there is space in you.

So don't try to figure out, don't try to figure out whether or not there is space in me through the mind, say, okay, let's see, how do I know whether there is space in me? A very simple criterion to use is if you are not bored or angry right now, or irritated, there is space in you. The dimension is there.

That's because it's only from there that you can sit here and not be bored, or irritated, or angry. Now if you are bored, or irritated, or angry, you can either walk out and be irritated, bored, and angry somewhere else, or even there, you can say, oh, I feel bored, irritated, angry, and who knows that? How do you know that?

Well, I'm aware that I am bored, or irritated, or angry. So are you the boredom, the anger, or the irritation, or are you the awareness of the boredom, the anger, or the irritation? So I'm giving you another chance.

So before you walk out, you can try that. Now, I assume that most of you are not bored, irritated, or angry from sensing the energy field, and so there's the... Why are you not bored, irritated, or angry?

Because there is a stillness or space in you now. Oh, and you haven't disappeared as a form identity. You're still sitting there in the chair.

Yes, there's a body. There may even be occasional thoughts, occasional in and out. And then again, under all of that is...

There may even be a little bit in your stomach that says, oh, I should have had breakfast. Am I picking up somebody's thought? I should have had breakfast, other than I wouldn't be hungry now.

Okay. And again, the stillness underneath it and between it. And so your life then is continuously a movement of being there as a form identity, but knowing yourself essentially as the space.

Then you are free from being trapped in the form and making your life a misery. Because no matter how hard you try and what you do, you can do all the right things. But if the valley is missing in your life, then the most vital dimension is missing from your life.

And no matter how conscientious you are and do all the right things and are tidy and very... Logically and maybe you have a life plan for the next 15 years. For every year, you know what you want to do.

Nothing wrong with that. And you'll still be creating misery. Because no matter how hard you try, if that vital dimension is missing, your life is one dimensional.

And then even the greatest success, who knows, one or two of you, in three, four years' time or five years' time, maybe we're reading about you in People magazine. And there are worse magazines than People. People is actually...

People is not so negative. There are many others who love talking negatively. And then you taste what success is like and fame.

Now, am I saying don't seek success? No. The beautiful thing is you can still play in the world of form.

And you play more beautifully when you realize it is only a relative truth. And anything that you achieve as this mountain is only relatively true and valid. And it'll come to an end.

And everything you achieve as a mountain will have its other side to it. Everything you lose, there's loss and gain. There's always the interplay.

You may gain many things and they will produce their own challenges. And you'll see the other part of success. And so no matter what you do, you will never for long find that now your life is actually great.

It's working. It's all working now. That on the form level never really happens for very long.

But that doesn't matter when you're in touch with the formless. However, I'm not saying that if you're in touch with the valley that it does not affect the world of form. It does.

You will notice that first of all, the sense of heaviness and seriousness, which is ultimately fear, goes out of your life. And when you're no longer dealing with situations and people from that place of seriousness and heaviness and ultimately anxiety and fear, then the world that you experience, the world that you experience or what you experience as the world changes. Because a different quality flows out.

It is that quality that comes from the unmanifested. So there tends to be a great improvement in the way in which you experience the world because you experience in a more gentle way. Even the so-called problems are experienced in a more, because you are not giving them that, you're not feeding the so-called problems with your reactivity and your heaviness and your fear.

Because the more fear you bring to the challenges, the greater the challenges become or the so-called problems become through your reaction. And it's only from the place of being the valley that you can be in a state of non-reaction when challenges arise in the form of people or situations. People can be very challenging.

Situations can be challenging. But if every challenge brings out the fear, you cannot be without fear as long as you identify it with the mountain because you want to survive as this thing that fear only goes when you're in touch with the space. And then you don't need to react.

Respond when necessary, yes. React, no. And many problems are dissolved when you simply don't react because quite often there's nothing much you can do.

Anything you do, in many cases, not all, sometimes action is required. But in many cases, anything you do, you only add to the problem. I had, when my mother was getting old, she was, I tried to open her a little to this essential truth.

But she had a few glimpses and that was good. But on the whole, she just could not let go of complete identification with her form identity. And I remember when she was 84, 85, she died when she was 86.

She called me every day and complaining about, of course, her body was failing, her eyesight was failing. And she was, it wasn't so much a problem of the physical, it was a problem of the mind saying, what's going to happen to me? And what's the fear that came up?

And always she said, what do I do? What do I do? And I couldn't eliminate from her mind the word do.

Especially Western people are conditioned to believe that everything has a doing solution to it. Everything, every problem, you have to continue to do something about it to solve it. The slightest, slightest irritation, what can we do about this?

And many things, of course, some things, yes, require action, but many other things require bringing a different state of consciousness to the situation rather than doing. They do it to their own bodies. The slightest, the slightest thing, they run to the doctor.

I'm not saying don't go to the doctor, no. But the slightest thing, oh, okay, I'll give you a pill, you're doing something against it. There's a little pain here, do something.

And so a few times I said to my mother, there's nothing to do. Just accept this moment as it is. And also she believed it was her personal problem that she was afflicted by this disease called old age.

And she had been singled out by destiny. And I tried to explain, no, it is a human, it is a human condition. Why to me?

Why does this happen to me? It's called old age. What do I do?

Nothing. So the obsession with doing, and again, I have to emphasize, I'm not saying never do anything again, no. But the obsession with doing that is part of this dimension of me and believing that if you only do enough, eventually everything will be sorted out in this world.

Every situation in your life will be sorted out. You just have to do, do here, do, do, do, and finally you can sit there and say, I've done it all. So there's doing and there's silence, stillness, the two.

This is another way of saying the two dimensions, the outgoing and the ingoing. The outgoing into doing and creating and manifesting, and the ingoing, which is the return to where it all started, the source, or the oneness, out of which the whole phenomenal show, we're in L.A., so we call it show, the whole show started, and into which, when the show is over, falls back, and then maybe another show continues. Now, again, instead of relinquishing all doing, which perhaps is recommended by a few yogis, you can try that too, do and be, I'm using a different pointer now to point to the same reality, do and be at the same time.

If you cannot do and be, now what do I mean by be? By be I mean a background of space, stillness, awareness, while you do here. Don't lose yourself in doing, that's really what, so that doing does not take you over.

For many people, it's not that they do things, the doing has taken them over. It's an energy field, an energy stream, which includes thinking, part of that energy stream of doing, because thinking is a form of doing, a primordial form of doing. They have been taken over by a collective energy stream of doing, which includes thinking.

What do I have to do now? And, of course, because they are lost in doing, with a vital dimension missing, they are unaware of, they are only aware of this, and unaware of that, so they are dancing around the surface of life in doing, not knowing that underneath there's a vastness of power and aliveness and energy that has nothing to do with doing, it's primordial energy, intelligence itself is there, but you don't know that, and you're trying to find little crumbs on the surface, like my dog, except, of course, that the dog is in touch with, but doesn't know it, but he is, she is, but you know how dogs are looking always for where's the next thing to eat, and sometimes they go around like in the most unlikely places, suddenly the dog is chewing something. What do they find? They always find in the corner, in the elevator, in the corner, she finds something to eat.

What's there to eat in the elevator, but she's crunching something, and in the same way, the humans, they go around looking for what's the next thing I need to do to feel a little bit better, to solve the problems, and anxious. For a dog it's simple, it's just concerned about the next bit of food, but for humans that primordial desire is multiplied into hundreds of things, but it's the same. So they go around to the surface of life, not knowing what they're missing.

You know that expression, you don't know what you're missing. You're missing the vastness underneath the surface of life. It's just in you, but in you and in the universe, you are a microcosm of the universe, so that the vastness, that power is in you, and if you could get in touch with it, it might even flow into what you are doing and change it.

So your doing could perhaps become empowered by an intelligence that is greater than the limited noisy mind that says, I need, I want, I must have, and then all the doing is designed to get you what you must have and what you need and what you want. But perhaps there can be a different kind of doing that flows from a much deeper place, but you have to be open to that dimension. Ah, and so then you go around your life being and doing, being, not alternative, alternately, but at the same time, while you're doing, you do, you be.

That's the two dimensions active in you, but you don't need to do all the time anymore. That's the beautiful thing. You're freed from the compulsion to do, which creates a lot of mischief and trouble, because at least 50% of what you do in the delusional state is not only unnecessary, but counterproductive.

All it does, it creates problems. And the so-called improvements that very often people come up with, every improvement creates another set of problems. Now you have to solve those.

It's the same with many medicines. You take this medicine, but then you need to take that one because it has side effects. Now to counteract the side effects, you need to take that one.

So instead of withdrawing into the valley, in the Tao Te Ching, there's a beautiful expression, the valley spirit. The valley spirit is the dimension of the Tao, the unmanifested, the very life, the formless life underneath the world of form, the source of it all, which pervades everything, formless, timeless in you now. That's the practice then is not lose touch with that when you do, which includes thinking.

And that's the big challenge, because it's when the stream of thinking takes you over, you're completely one-dimensional. And you have all experienced being taken over by a stream of thinking. It could even happen while you sit here, when you lose connection with the stillness underneath, and suddenly you don't hear the words anymore or they don't make sense anymore.

Valley spirit. What do I do to get there? Tell us what to do.

Give us a technique or a program, a five-year program. Twenty-five steps to get there. To not doing.

A 15-year course at the end of which you will find yourself. So you've all experienced being taken over by a stream of thinking and losing yourself in it and not only that, you probably still occasionally do experience it. Now you can, when you're really, when you've really been taken over by a stream of thinking, you don't even know of course that you've been taken over by a stream of thinking.

That's the problem. You don't even know that you've been taken over, because now if you know that you've been taken over by a stream of thinking, you're not 100% taken over by a stream of thinking, because one part of you knows, oh, I'm completely stuck in my mind. How do you know that?

Well, you're not totally stuck in your mind. And if you know that, okay, your mind is just not stopping, it's not wanting, okay, at least you know that. If you know that, you have a choice of stopping.

Well, how do I do that? The answer is stop doing, which means stop thinking. Well, how do I stop thinking?

Maybe that's the wrong approach, because if I say stop thinking, it may lead to a big problem in yourself, because I can't do it. Now, I'll give one little hint for people who can stop thinking and another little hint for people who as yet cannot stop thinking or believe they can't stop thinking. Some of you already are able to stop thinking unless you're really in turmoil.

Let's practice it when nothing, you're not being challenged by life. Don't wait for a big challenge when you're in turmoil and say, oh, I must stop thinking, but I can't. When nothing is going wrong for a while, can you stop thinking when you're not being challenged by life?

Don't wait for a challenge when the doctor says, he may be wrong by the way, but when he says, okay, you have six more months and then that'll be it. Of course, that's a great opportunity to stop thinking and doing and future and all that, but don't wait for that. It's probably easier to do it then than when you believe that you have another 30 years to go, because then you have time, okay, I'll stop thinking in a little while, but first I need to solve my problems.

Some of you can already by a simple, not willpower, by a simple decision say, I don't want to think now. I'm letting go of thinking now. You can stop your mind, but that's not a doing.

You can relinquish thought, so it's not really a doing. Now, you might ask, especially if you're interested in certain spiritual philosophies like Advaita, non-duality, well, who is doing the stopping? Who is stopping to think and who can decide to stop thinking if you are ultimately an illusion and it gets very complicated?

The fact is, if you're able to choose presence, which is what it is, say, okay, I choose to be present now instead of to think. Instead of thinking, just alert spaciousness, no tension, relaxed alertness, relaxed alertness. You can choose that.

Some of you, don't know how many, many times I recommend during the day say, okay, there's nothing to think about. Every time you stop at a traffic light, why think? Look, be.

Why think about your problems while you're stopped at the traffic light? There's nothing you can do. Be.

So you can be the valley while you're there and then you go on. It's amazing if you try to practice with that, just go into not thinking. What that means is when we say you can choose not to think, what is really happening is presence is choosing to come through this form into this world.

But from our relative perspective, it looks as if there was a person stopping thinking and choosing to be present. And that's a beautiful thing. If you have that ability and then you practice with that in daily life.

For example, you don't think when you listen to somebody. Be there as an alert stillness rather than reactive entity, which means a valley again. When you listen to another human being on the phone or in person, are you there as a reactive entity, valley?

What's he trying to do? Working out all kinds of things. Or can you be there as a spacious presence while you listen?

Completely different energy comes in when you're there as a spacious presence every time you listen to somebody. And of course, you do that a lot every day. Of course, everybody does it every day.

You listen to people and you can listen as the valley spirit rather than as the limited entity, the mountain that needs and wants something and protects itself and has schemes. So it's not connected to a deeper intelligence. It's only when you can be there as the alert presence, a deeper intelligence comes into this world, which is the unconditioned consciousness through you.

And then the interaction is fresh, new and always, no matter what the interaction is about when you're listening to another human being and there is the presence, there is something there in that interaction that is more important than what is being talked about. That means you are not lost in doing because what is being talked about, whether it's a business deal or exchange of information or you know what happened, let me tell you what happened. Okay, some story that they're telling you, whatever it is that they're talking about or there's something else present and that connects you with the other human being.

Because if you're only on the level of words when there's an exchange, you're not really connected to the human as a being. You're only connected to the human but not the being. The human is a form.

The being is a formless. You are a human being, which means you are form and formless in one. But the being is the essence of who you are.

The human is a temporary form, the relative truth, which you are stuck with for a little while. It doesn't matter. The relative truth and the absolute, the human being.

Now if there's only the human in any interaction, I wrote about that briefly in A New Earth, talking about children, how you listen to children, how you respond to children. If there's only the human, then the deeper dimension is missing and it's very, children even get angry after a while with their parents and the parents don't know why they're angry because you are not there as the being in yourself and you don't acknowledge their being if everything is on the level of doing. Do this, have you done that?

Now you need to do this. Let's do that. That's, if you can bring in being into the interaction, it might even, usually when I go to places like, let's say, talking to somebody about some administrative stuff, this or that, whatever it may be, the bank manager, all kinds of information, inquiring about this or that, always come from, yes, you talk about what you need to know, you ask questions, and then usually after I feel the impulse after what we've spoken about, we've come to the end of it, usually I connect, I feel the impulse to ask some personal question.

It comes from within, I can't leave that human being without, because I've already connected on the level of being, realizing that whatever role people play in the world of doing is only relatively true, it's not who they are. So if you think there's a waiter delivering the meal to your hotel room, it's not a waiter, it's just this being is playing this role temporarily, and you are not a client in the hotel, it's absurd to say I am a client in this hotel, you're not, it's ridiculous. So can you connect with, feel the formless both in yourself, first you have to feel it in yourself, the spaciousness, and then you can feel it in the other, then you don't believe that there is some absolute truth that this person is a waiter, he's not a waiter.

So it's a wonderful thing when suddenly there's a connection that is deeper than the relative world of form with the other human being, and it's there because that's the being underneath the form, but you have to be still for a moment when you look at that other human being, you have to be still for a moment and look, and in that stillness you sense your own being, the spaciousness, the stillness, and then you can penetrate through the form in the other and feel it, the same being in the other, and you have transcended role playing and you've transcended being trapped in form identities, your own form identity and somebody else's form identity, and you still can function in the world of form, but you don't completely believe in it anymore, and when you don't completely believe in it anymore you function much better. It's the way, and people love you. Suddenly people say, oh, here she is, she's so nice.

What is so nice about him or her? Well, they don't know the answer. They feel somehow that something in them is acknowledged by you, and when they feel that something within them is acknowledged, and that which is acknowledged, of course, transcends the form, when they feel their essence is acknowledged, the essence loves you, so you become very popular, and people won't know why they love you.

They just say, oh, he's such a nice person, and that's fine. You don't need to explain, and if you can, a side, a byproduct, a side benefit of this would be, of course, that if you are engaged in some business, the more people like you, the more they will come to you with their business, but that's another matter. It's just a benefit that is secondary.

Also, you don't, if you're in negotiations with another person about this or that, you're not excessively focused on the outcome. You're focused on the presence now, which is fulfilling in itself, to be there as presence and feel the presence in the other is fulfilling in itself. The outcome, you don't need the outcome to feel better about yourself or the relationship, and then, of course, the outcome is much more likely to be positive from the limited viewpoint of your business.

That's not why you do it. It's not a means to an end. It's not a doing anyway.

It's only when we talk about it in language, it becomes a doing, so it's wonderful practice. That's your practice. It doesn't matter where you practice, wherever you are in your life, you practice.

Every situation, every moment is the two dimensions, and that's the end of fear comes with that, fear being a normal human condition for most people, sometimes buried under something else, fear in its many manifestations, nervousness, tension, anxiety, anger really comes out of fear, stress really is a form of fear, all many forms of fear, quite normal. Why? That's all you know.

It's fear. You don't know that. You don't know that.

Once you know that also, it's the end of fear because there nothing can be destroyed. That's why the Course in Miracles starts, which is all you need to know, the prologue, the first before it all starts. It says, this course can be summarized in the following words, nothing real can be threatened, nothing unreal exists.

Herein lies the peace of God. Nothing real can be threatened, and that is here because nothing unreal ultimately exists in the world of form. The form is ultimately not real in itself.

Nothing unreal exists. Herein, which means knowing that, lies the peace of God. God, of course, is the formless, timeless, eternal, unmanifested that is both within and beyond the world.

Some of you, as I mentioned earlier, are able to step out of their mind, and you can practice that through a conscious choice. Be present. Nothing to think about right now, just be present.

You don't carry your history with you when you are present. Your life situation, I use that word in Power of Now, very important. Your life situation, everybody has one, past, future, relationships, job, health, finances, where you live, what happens to you, what you do, and all your life situation.

You have a life, you're here with, you have a life situation, of course you do, but you also have, it's not that you have a life, you are life itself. When your life situation is all you know about yourself, which is another way of putting, that's all you know, then you miss life. Now, you're very good at dealing with your life situation, but you miss life.

You do all the right things, but it never really gets you anywhere because you miss life. Life is now, and life is not in the doing. Life is in the being now.

Step out of thinking into alert stillness, if you can, and also another way is not to completely believe in every thought that comes into your head. Realize it's a thought, it's a position, it's a judgment, not completely identified with it. It's a story that you are telling yourself.

It's amazing how many stories people tell themselves in their head. Many are completely distorted. It's not the reality, it's the thought.

It's the stories, how you see the reality. The reality usually is much more simple and more benign than the story. One of the early lessons in A Course in Miracles says you're supposed to look at things around you in the room and say, nothing that I see in this room means anything.

This table doesn't mean anything. This glass doesn't mean anything. This hand doesn't mean anything.

This floor doesn't mean anything. Now, what does that lesson mean? It doesn't mean anything.

What it means is it's attempting to erase the continuous conceptualization of reality, like scribblings on a blackboard, because whatever you think it means is a concept in your mind. If you deny the continuous and compulsive conceptualization of reality, it's like erasing the conditioning of your mind. Coming to the place where the Dalai Lama is, don't know.

This lesson in A Course in Miracles, all it's teaching is to come to the place of spacious emptiness, alertness, no longer trapped in the world in conceptual thinking. It doesn't mean anything. Of course, that's another.

You're moving into a different dimension. By living in this way, you inhabit, suddenly life opens up, and all the narrowness that the mind had imposed on it dissolves, and life becomes spacious, because you found the space within. There's suddenly a spaciousness to life, not a threatening place anymore.

What's life going to do? Where's my next threat coming from? Again, the same thing, for example, there's an entire spiritual teaching based on denying the reality of your story, and Byron Katie's teachings is based on the simple fact of denying your story.

How do I know? Do I really know that this is true? No, I can't really know that.

So it takes you to the same place where the Dalai Lama is, don't know. So it's a wonderful thing. You can enter that not knowing, but it's only not knowing from the viewpoint of the conceptual mind.

You're actually connected with a deeper intelligence, unconditioned, and if you really need to know something, it comes, but it comes out of the spaciousness of not knowing. Well, it's a little bit like jumping off a cliff and then seeing if you can fly. To the ego, it's a little bit like that.

The ego says, don't go there, because the ego has worked it all out. It explains the whole, it has its philosophy of life. It might be very defective, limiting philosophy, but it has some kind of philosophy of life.

Every person has their story through which they interpret reality, and usually it's not a pleasant work of fiction, but at least you think you know. It gives you some illusory foothold, and of course the ego thinks, if I let go of that, I won't know anything anymore, which in a way is true, but not completely true. In a deeper sense, it's you only let go of a distortion of reality created by the conditioned mind, which is part of the collective human mind in its present state of evolution, and so the collective mind of which your mind is part has created this human-made world, which is full of problems, and they seem to be, they pop out one after another.

When you think one economy, and then it's that, and then it's that, another war. A little spiritual practice I recommend is to go to a public place, like a cafe, or wherever you can sit, or out in the park, and watch humans, people, people who are in the park, people watching. The only difference between ordinary people watching and this kind of people watching is that your practice is not to attach any label or judgment on any human that you watch.

You allow them to be as they are, as they walk along or sit, whatever they do, and enjoy the incredible spectacle of the multiplicity of human forms. There is no good or bad or whatever, just allow them to be, and so the mind does not call them anything. You're there as an innocent observer.

It's a beautiful thing, it even does something to the energy field where you are, where you're sitting. It's something you bring in a different frequency, but that's a secondary thing. Don't start thinking, I'm here to bring in a different frequency.

Just be there as an alert watcher. It's, you begin to love other humans, which for some people is a hard thing. It's easy to love a dog.

Well, it's easier to love a dog than a human, usually, because the dog has, there's no mind in the way. Dog doesn't judge you, or the dog has unconditional love, tails wagging. It's a dog, tails wagging.

It's easy to love a creature like that, but the humans are different. Who are you? What do you want?

What does he want from me? So that's a beautiful practice, and the next step up, of course, is to watch people that you know very well in the same way, when they are moving wherever you are at home or whatever, where there's a lot of past that you share, and then be present, even with people with whom you share a lot of past, but your first practice is with strangers, so to speak, with whom you don't share a lot of past. Next step up is you practice with relatives, friends, family.

Just spend little moments when you just, you watch them, without wanting anything. Do it with your children, without saying, you should be doing this, why are you doing that? Just what?

You can also say, yes, brush your teeth, that's fine, but what? Beautiful. So that's incorporating awareness practice into everyday life, and it's so enjoyable.

It's such great joy. I've been doing it for many years, people watching. You love everybody, no matter what they look like, because it's all, the human form expressing itself in so many different ways.

Of course then, maybe people, by the way, it's less likely that people will even notice you when you're in that still presence watching. You don't, you very rarely actually attract attention to you, which, maybe to the ego that's not such a great thing, but, well, some egos are uneasy with attention, it's a reverted thing, anyway. Well, there are two egoic states.

One is to want to be seen, and the other egoic state is to be afraid of being seen. Two faces of the ego. The ego may say, okay, I go to a place where people watch other people, and so, I used to, a long, long time ago, a long time ago, I lived in Spain, it was in the late, middle 60s, as a teenager, and this has changed now, but at the time, every Saturday evening, there was a cafes along the main avenue, one cafe, outdoor cafe after another, and every Saturday evening, all the people would dress up in their best clothes, and just walk up and down, and up and down, and some people would be sitting in the cafes watching the people walking up and down, and then the people walking in turn would sit there and watch the others walk up and down. It was the most enjoyable activity for a Saturday night. It has changed now.

They don't dress up anymore, but that's an egoic activity, is wanting to be seen, and the reverse of that is being scared of being seen. I hope that nobody's looking at me. That's ego, too.

In a conventional task, we think of ego as somebody who says, look at me, but the other is equally ego, just as strong, the shy one. So it's going beyond both, and just, if people are looking, then again, if you're not there as a thinking person, you're there as presence, it doesn't matter if they're looking. It doesn't add anything to who you are, or doesn't detract anything from who you are.

Even the attention of 100 people doesn't add anything to who you are in truth. To the ego, it could be a great thing. It loves, many egos love attention, except those who fear attention.

So if you are in a position where people are looking at you, again, to be still and present, you go beyond both the timidity of not wanting to be seen, or the pride of, oh, they're all looking at me. Ego is narcissus, is the image of who you are in your mind, which gets reinforced by others. It's a phantom.

Welcome. There are at least two reasons, maybe more, why we always start with stillness. One is that I love stillness, and the second reason is that I don't know what I'm going to say.

Now, sitting in front of an audience and not knowing what to say could be a nightmare. If I thought I should know what to say. But it's not a nightmare if I am comfortable with not knowing what to say.

Then it's actually quite pleasant. And that is the state of consciousness in which conceptual thinking is not that important anymore. You may have heard the story of the disciple who asked the Zen master, or rather the Zen master asked the disciple in the usual Zen way, which can sometimes seem a little bit abrupt.

The master asked, do you understand Zen? And the disciple said, no, master, I don't. And the master said, neither do I.

And here you can see the two different modalities of not knowing. The disciple's not knowing, and the master's not knowing. Now, as you sit here, you can be either a disciple or a master listening to yourself.

There's content, the content of your mind, which consists of thoughts. And most people have the need to fill up their mind and their life with more content. It's a compulsion, almost an addictive searching for more stuff to identify with so that you can increase the content of things that the mind identifies with.

So most people carry around content in the mind in the form of thoughts, bundles of thoughts that contain a sense of self that you identify with, or in the words of Don Miguel Ruiz, that you have faith in, and that's all they know. Their life consists of content, both externally, one could say, everything absorbs their attention continuously, stuff, things, things to acquire, things to be worried about, things to do, problems, and thoughts, one after another. You have to think about this and this and this continuously.

So your entire inner space is filled up with content, no breathing room, a room full of stuff. And that's the self, there's a self-identification with stuff, which ultimately is the mind, thought stuff, and you feel you're choking to death almost, life is experienced as frustrating and bringing up one dilemma after another. So the essence of our gathering here is to find the inner space that is there, although you may have accumulated a lot of content in your mind, there is always behind it or underneath it the vastness of inner space or stillness.

Even in the most nervous and irritated and hyperactive human mind, even there underneath, there is a dimension of stillness. You just have to look for it, to feel it, to sense it within yourself, underneath all the stream of thinking, and the stillness is the gap between two thoughts, for example, right now. What I'm saying right now is not that important.

All the words I'm using are pointing to the gaps. I could be telling you fascinating stories, but sometimes I do. But here all the words are really pointing to the gaps, to the space behind the words or in between the words.

And I'm directing your attention to the space within, becoming aware of it. And we're saying that because we're using language. It's not so much that you become aware of the space or that you become aware of the stillness.

You are that. There isn't really a duality there anymore. Awareness becomes aware of itself.

Consciousness is conscious of itself. When we use language, immediately we create a subject and an object and we say, I am aware of stillness. But if you go into it more deeply, you realize that the ultimate I and stillness are one and the same, and you become still.

There's just a presence there. It's not you are aware of the presence. You are the presence.

And that liberates you from the stuff in your mind, the accumulation of content. It's a wonderful realization to realize suddenly that there is a vast dimension of peace inside you, no matter how mad the content in your mind may be when it gets activated. One way of putting it is on the one hand, usually you're always conscious of something.

There is the consciousness flows into a form, sense perceptions. And then of course, thoughts arise and immediately label the sense perceptions. Consciousness becomes a thought, feelings, emotions may arise.

You're concerned with all kinds of things. There's always consciousness goes into this and that and that. Something to look at, something to think about.

Of course, there's never a clear looking because you're always looking through this veil of thinking. Well, we are beginning to step out of that. But can you be aware of the simple fact that you are conscious at this moment?

So when we put that into language, one could say, you are becoming conscious that you are conscious. And that's this enormous aliveness in that, but it's peaceful. It's this deep peace in that aliveness, not the nervous aliveness of, in the ordinary state of consciousness when peaceful is associated with sleepiness, but it doesn't have to be like that.

There is a peace in you that is vibrantly alive, a stillness that's vibrantly alive. If you don't find that, you've missed the most important thing in your life. That's the pearl of great price that is mentioned in the New Testament, the pearl of great price, the one thing that matters, everything else secondary, finding that dimension in yourself.

Not, and you can't find it at some future point, once your life situation gets a little better, once your problems are solved, no. That dimension is absolutely one with what we call the now. In fact, we could say it is the now itself, the formless now.

The now that is ever present, this place in which everything appears, you are that. So beyond the person with its problems, there is something much vaster in you. And if you don't find that, no matter what you do on the level of the person, you always find frustration again and some form of suffering, no matter how you rearrange your life on that level of the personality.

And if you find that dimension, then it changes the entire way in which you experience your life. One thing it does is you realize that everything in your life that you thought was so important, is not that important. It's only relatively important.

So the seriousness goes out of your life about me and my problems. And many people walk around with a heavy burden of that. Burdened by their stuff.

Burdened by their life. Burdened by their past. And when you look at them, there's just a very dim light that shines through their stuff.

And mostly what's looking back at you is their stuff. So everything is filtered through the stuff in their minds, which is the conditioning, the past inside them, the thought structure. And everything is immediately distorted.

Whatever, every person you meet, this gets distorted. Every situation you go into gets distorted by that. Because you're looking at it through the filter of all that.

The me, heavy, the me personality, the heaviness of that. The density, the density of that. And nobody, well there are some now, but in the mainstream culture, nobody teaches you that simple thing, that there is a dimension in you that frees you from all that.

At school, nobody has ever heard of it, it seems. Well, in the mainstream culture, now there's a big movement coming in where people are waking up to that. Because that's what it is.

Waking up. Awakening. A term that's been used for thousands of years already in spirituality.

Awakening. The Buddha is the one who is awake. That's what the word means.

So, of course, ordinarily people think they're all awake already. But if you look, then you see they're not awake. They're in the dream world of incessant and compulsive thinking.

So the most wonderful thing then is to wake up and realize who or what you are beyond that accumulation. And then, of course, the mind expects some kind of answer. Okay, now tell me who or what I am beyond that.

But the strange thing is you can't conceptualize that. It's a state of not knowing. Let's go into that.

There is such a term in spirituality as self-realization. And ordinarily people would think that then you really, you truly know who you are. And there's some kind of miraculous revelation that then tells you who you are.

It is true that there is a miraculous revelation, but it's not conceptual. So the awakening from the point of view of the conceptual mind is a state of not knowing anymore who you are. Because everybody else knows who they are through conceptual concepts.

Can you embrace the state of simple, aware presence without needing to know anything about yourself, but being that consciously? Being who you are rather than knowing who you are. Being the consciousness.

And that's the state of not knowing from the point of view of the mind. This is what Zen talks about. No mind, it says.

The no mind no, or it talks about beginner's mind. Now the beginner doesn't know yet. The beginner looks and doesn't know.

It's free of preconceived ideas and concepts. So the beginner's mind is that. And that's not only the beginner's mind.

It's also the wisdom, the wise person's mind. Socrates said, all I know for sure is that I don't know. And that's what the wisdom.

All the other philosophers, they were identified with the stuff in their mind. They thought they knew all the answers, all on a conceptual level. Socrates had the wisdom to, because that is the wisdom is to embrace the dimension that is deeper than concepts in yourself, deeper than judgments, deeper than thoughts.

And from there, you don't, you have no knowledge, which is conceptual. There is a depth there, which almost looks like ignorance from the point of view of the conceptual mind.

And yet there's a deep knowing in there.

And as that arises in your life, you walk around the world in that state of innocence. One could almost say, not the original innocence that is there before all that mental stuff starts, but a regained innocence, which is also innocence, but has a depth to it that the original innocence perhaps does not yet have, because when it's, that's your natural state. You don't even know it, but when you've been through all the delusion and then return to the natural state, there's a knowing there, an added depth to that.

So the transformation of consciousness then means that you, as you go through life more and more, the, the still alert presence that you are, operates when you perceive things, you perceive through the still presence. That's the innocence. That's the original, sometimes in some Indian teachings it's called the natural state.

That is also what in other Indian teachings is called the force state. One, this one state is the normal wakeful state, which is really a state of sleep. Then there's the state of dreamlike, normal dream, and there's dreamless sleep.

So we have dreamless sleep, the normal dream state, conventional dream state, and the normal wakeful state, which is another form of dream. And then you have the turiya, which means the fourth. It is the fourth state of consciousness.

And that is the possibility of being in a state that compared to the normal wakeful state, compared to which the normal wakeful state is a state of sleep. That is a state of clear alert presence where the unconditioned emerges through you. And that is happening now on the planet to growing number of humans.

And that changes everything. It frees you from the delusion that all you are is the accumulation of stuff in your mind. And the identification with that, and the knowledge which creates a false and absurdly limited sense of self.

And all kinds of problems that this absurdly limited sense of self creates wherever it goes. And that absurdly limited sense of self is never at ease, not for long. Never content, not for long.

Briefly sometimes a desire has just been met. It just got something, so some new illusion. Ah!

And the next day or a week later, oh, he was supposed to make me happy, but he made me unhappy. Or she, or it, whatever it was. So that the absurdly limited sense of self, that is the identification with the conditioned mind.

And all the thoughts that continuously go through your head as the voice in the head. Which for most people is, they think they are that. They think they are the voice in the head.

So in the voice, they are the voice. And the voice speaks to you, speaks to you. They are asleep.

The voice is talking. They are talking in their dream. Their opinions regurgitate it all the time.

All the old stuff coming back up. And of course, that's what Jesus pointed to when he said, you must become as little children to enter the kingdom of heaven. And the little children, what is it?

They don't have yet the conceptual framework that they impose on the world through which they perceive everything. There's a clarity of perception there that is almost light. You can say it's light coming through them.

No, you can, that light is in you also. It just has been obscured by the stuff. And so you can perceive in the same way and even more deeply than the child, because it's a regained innocence of perception.

And you go through the world in that innocent state. As you walk along the street, you look around. People, no need to call them anything, to label them.

Trees, there's a sky, shop windows, cars, noise, it's all there. And there is the background to your sense perceptions is alert stillness. This is becoming a little child, but it's not a regression.

And that while you live in that in such a way, you are free, entirely free of the conditioned personality that causes you so much problems when you identify with it. You're free. So who are you then at that moment when you are just there as a field of perception?

You don't know who you are, but on a deeper level, there is a deep knowing, but you couldn't call it anything. Your life itself, your consciousness itself, whatever you want to call it. So you know that you are the background for all that.

You are the space for all that. And of course you can't space, you cannot conceptualize. It has no form.

There's no form. The essence of who you are has no form. That's the beauty of it.

And at first, perhaps for a while you're able to be the presence, and then you slip back into being the personality. And there's always a, you can notice then the immediate totally different energies takes you over. And the parasitical entity, the human mind, and then for, oh yeah, ooh, ooh.

There's the, you know the two images for theater, tragedy and comedy, the two masks that are symbols for theater, the comedies and the tragedy. And I saw a beautiful cartoon some years ago in a spiritual magazine where there was a serene face looking a little bit like the Buddha, and with a slight smile, because the Buddha, all the good, the most powerful Buddha images have a very slight smile, or at least an emanation of that. There's a peace that comes through.

Now, and so this cartoon, this image was holding, in one hand was holding the mask of the tragedy, and in another hand was holding the mask of the comedy. So you have those two opposites, and behind it, the eternal peace, the unconditioned presence. And then if there should, even if there should be some tragedy or comedy in your life, you can still sense the peace underneath it, and you can cry if somebody close to you dies.

You can cry and still sense the peace underneath it. So the Buddha is smiling because of that. Just a hint of a smile.

It's very, an all-pervasive peace in the background, of your being in the background. And sometimes it may be so powerful that it becomes, it almost obliterates everything. And then it's just in the background as you go about your business.

Now you have to be careful when you start talking to people that your mindstream does not obliterate the awareness of presence, the awareness of awareness, or the awareness does not obliterate that. The moment you get into a mindstream, start talking, the mind comes in and pulls you. It wants you to go back into a complete identification with it.

So there, alertness is required, so that even when you have a discussion with someone, not to lose the stillness in the background. And one way of doing it is while you listen, be alert and still. When you listen to another person, alert and still.

Really listen. Rather than saying, oh, I don't want to think while you're listening. Because then you're not really listening.

Listening is a powerful thing. It can be a spiritual practice. You can listen to people, or easier of course is to listen to natural sounds.

It brings alert attention. And then you notice there's a sound, and behind the sound is the alert attention. Listening.

The most powerful thing is to listen to no sound at all, which is the silence. Wake up at two o'clock in the morning, suddenly it's all silent around you, and instead of going into thinking about your problems, you become aware of silence, and you listen to it. And immediately there's inner silence.

The moment you become aware of silence, you've become still. Just need to acknowledge it. And then you'll be surprised that you can actually acknowledge the silence even behind the sounds, even when there are sounds.

You go out into nature, there's birds, you can hear the leaves in the trees, water dripping, whatever it is. But underneath it all there's a silence. And then this happens inside you too.

There are thoughts. Underneath the thoughts there's silence. And then the thoughts separate, and there's just silence.

And then a few more thoughts may come, and then just silence. That is your practice, is to be that in daily life. Just the most wonderful things.

It doesn't really matter what you do in your daily life, whether what you do is regarded as fulfilling or not fulfilling. It's what is the energy that flows into what you do? What is the state of consciousness behind the doing?

So that's the practice. It's a gradual liberation from the personality, which is the conditioned self. In some cases it can be a sudden liberation.

That's more rare, but that can sometimes happen when you meet death, or the imminent death. And then survive. Or some kind of psychological death.

But don't need to wait for that. Die now. Here and now.

Die to the fictitious self in the head. You can do that now. Death.

Oh, death is not that bad, is it? In fact it's beautiful. Are you thinking at this moment?

Just a question. If you know that you're thinking, then there's some awareness there. It's only from the level of awareness you can know that you're thinking.

If you don't know that you're thinking, and you're just thinking, then it means you are dreaming. I'll give you just a little bit more space so that you can practice self-observation. Now, you may remember in The Power of Now, if you read it, I talked about a mouse that was, a cat watching a mouse hole, waiting for the mouse to come out.

Now, the cat watching the mouse hole, if you have observed a cat watching a mouse hole, is completely still. Can be still for a long, long time. It sits there.

That is probably the transcendent state for cats. Now, I'm asking in The Power of Now, can you do the same as the cat watching a mouse hole, by putting some attention inside you and seeing, okay, let's see what the next thought is that's going to come up. So the thought is a mouse.

You are the cat. Let's see what the next thought is that's going to come up. And if you're very alert, the mouse doesn't come.

It's not coming. You're so alert that the next thought isn't even coming. All you are is

presence.

And then at some point, probably there will be a decrease in your alertness and you go, what time is it? How much longer are we going to sit here? Or you remember your troubled life.

You suddenly remember you have problems. Not this moment, of course, but in your head. And then perhaps presence comes back, and you remember, oh.

And you become the cat again, watching the mouse hole. Interesting, the alertness, freedom from thinking through alert presence. And then thought comes back in.

And alert presence. Just knowing this is enough to bring about an awakening in your life, that there's the possibility of shift between levels of consciousness. Now, I haven't told this story in some years, so I'll tell it now, again.

The Zen master. There's a Zen master who used to teach. In only one way, he became famous, because he never gave any explanation.

Whenever he was asked, can you explain the meaning of Zen please? He would go, yes. Say, that was his teaching.

And he became famous for his teaching. In another version of this story, whether it's true or not, I don't know, but it may well be true. In the monastery where he lived, there was a young boy who was supposed to become a monk.

And the young boy would sometimes jokingly imitate the master, and he would go like this. And one day the master saw it. It was in the kitchen.

And it's a Zen story. The master got a knife and cut off his finger. And the boy, screaming, ran towards the door.

And the last moment, the master called his name, whatever his name was. And the master said, turn around. And then the master went.

And the story goes that at that moment, the boy had satori, a flash of enlightenment. Lost his finger, but got enlightenment. And the boy later became a fingerless, well, this finger was missing, teacher of Zen.

Attention, presence. But I don't know anything anymore when I'm present, says the mind. No precisely.

But there's wisdom. Out of that comes wisdom. Out of that come insights.

Out of that come realization. Out of that comes joy, aliveness, inner peace, creativity. Out of that, it all emerges.

Out of that, even a new and interesting thought can emerge out of that instead of the compulsive, repetitive thinking, the old records in your head. Suddenly you have an, ah, why did it come? Because there was the space of stillness.

Came out of that. Any creative solution, whatever, you have to access that. Or maybe nothing comes.

Beautiful. If nothing is needed, nothing comes. You just be there, feeling fulfilled, joyful, peaceful.

It's good enough. And then the rest of your life, you just, you still pretend that you are a person. That's fine.

You have your things, talk about. You can see a movie, go to a bar and have a drink. Well, until you're firmly established in presence, I recommend not to drink too much because then you quickly lose presence.

Once you're firmly established in presence, you might even be able to have a few glasses and not that I wouldn't, I don't enjoy more than one glass. I enjoy occasional glass of wine. That's fine.

There was a teacher who gave his disciples alcohol to drink to test their degree of presence. Can you still be present when you feel you're becoming dizzy in the head? That was Gurdjieff, the Russian teacher.

Can you still be present? Have another vodka. Well, I think it was Oprah who once said, silence doesn't look good on camera.

So you can always edit it out if necessary. But Oprah tried it for a minute and that seemed to work. Usually the belief is that you can't have silence on a TV screen, at least not these days.

When I was a child, there actually was silence. Well, there were only two days channels and often in between programs you would just see an image and sometimes some background music, image of a building or city or it said, we'll be back soon. And so the TV wouldn't draw you into continuous, what comes next, one exciting image after another each one lasting just a few seconds as it does these days.

But you could actually be still and look at the TV screen. And so perhaps here's another opportunity for doing that. And as you look at the stillness, become still inside, tune into the stillness, the most precious thing there is, your deepest identity is stillness.

If that gets covered up, then you don't really know who you are anymore. And then you look for yourself in all kinds of things without ever finding yourself until you regain what had always been there covered up by the noise, the stillness. Stillness is very patient.

Stillness is space, inner space. And it's as tolerant as outer space. It allows everything to be and it cannot be touched by anything, cannot be spoiled, only covered up.

So every human being, that's the amazing thing, has that dimension within no matter how insane they seem to be on the surface. Becoming comfortable with stillness also means becoming comfortable with yourself, the rare state for many human beings. And then you're able to be somewhere in your room, at home or outside in nature, wherever, without needing some kind of physical contact with the world or some kind of additional stimulus in your life, either some kind of excitement, nothing wrong with excitement, but you don't need it to give you a sense of aliveness anymore because the aliveness comes from a deeper place than any excitement could ever come from. And then you don't need drama to give you a sense that you're still alive. That's another form of excitement.

And you don't need to desensitize yourself to mental or emotional pain that is there when you're not in touch with that dimension within. And it's so close. It's just there's a mental noise or the emotional wave movement and underneath it there's a sea.

The sea or the lake is still. The deeper you go, the stiller it is. Now most people can only go there when they go to sleep.

So they go to a wonderful place but don't really know that they're there. They just derive life energy from it. They wake up again and perhaps if they're lucky, say, I had a good night's sleep, I feel so good.

I don't know if you have ever done this consciously and that is, well, we all have experienced being tired and some people regard that as a negative thing, but being tired, if you can bring some consciousness into being tired when you are tired, very tired, I'm not hypnotizing you, I hope nobody's going to sleep. And your eyes are getting heavier and heavier. When you are very tired, what people call tired, what is that actually?

What does it feel like? What is that? So if you can put some attention into be alert, this is almost a paradox, have some awareness to investigate what does it actually mean and what does it actually feel like to be very tired.

It feels like something from somewhere is pulling you and it almost says, come this way. It's like a magnetic pull. And the pull is very sweet.

The pull is a place of such wonderful sweetness and rest and peace that it becomes irresistible. And then people say, I can't keep my eyes open anymore. But really what that is, is something is pulling you away from this world and it's so precious.

And this is why when you finally go into bed and close your eyes and for the brief time span when you are very tired that you are still conscious, it's deeply, extremely enjoyable. You all experience how nice it is when you finally are very tired and finally you lie down. All your problems are gone, forgotten.

You can't, there's no energy left to think about your problems. And so you're just moving towards that beautiful place and then you disappear in it. And it's, the pull is so powerful that even people who, there have been stories about people who were lost in the wilderness or lost out in the cold and snow and they got more and more tired.

And finally, although they knew if I lie down and close my eyes and go to sleep, I'm not going to wake up again, they did it anyway. Because the pull became so irresistible and the beauty and sweetness of going into sleep, so overpowering that they gave in and there was no fear. There's no fear of death.

They knew they were going to die but in that moment there was no fear of death anymore. There was just being pulled, giving in to that enormous pull. So that's the strange thing then for humans and other life forms on this planet is that every day or every night they drop unconscious.

The whole population, gone. It could be a science fiction story, you visit a planet and then suddenly the whole population drops, becomes unconscious and it's normal. And it's called Planet Earth.

So there's a really where you're moving to the source. Every human being and every life form that experiences sleep returns to the source, the unmanifested source and then comes back into the manifested, recharged. But it's an unconscious return movement.

It does not free you from suffering in this world of, the outer world of manifestation when you come back to it. The spiritual path is about finding that realm without losing yourself in it, realizing your essential identity with it and remain conscious. And that happens, for example, if you stop thinking without falling asleep.

At first you may not notice the same overpowering sweetness of being that you have that pulls you towards sleep. It's very subtle. At first there seems to be a kind of blank, empty space, but there's enormous power there to the mind that looks like nothing.

And that's why it's sometimes described as nothing or no thing or emptiness because the mind is used to noise. It's not really capable of grasping that it cannot be grasped. I sometimes compare it to stepping after you're spending several hours in a noisy discotheque, which is a metaphor here for normal existence.

You step out, close the door behind you and you find yourself, it's the middle of the night and you're out in nature somewhere. There are very subtle sounds and there's an all-pervasive silence, an alive silence around you. But because you're deafened by the noise, you cannot yet, it's too subtle for you to then perceive that.

So at first you go into a place that seems, oh, there's nothing here. So gradually you become attuned to the inner stillness and realize its depth and its sweetness and its aliveness. I brought with me today a book.

We're just going to look at a few lines from that ancient book. This is our second session. We had at some previous point, we already had a session on the ancient Chinese book of wisdom, the Tao Te Ching, and this is our second session on the Tao Te Ching.

Something important to remember is we are not really studying a book. We are using the words of that book to look at our essential reality. We are not studying something outside ourselves.

And that applies whenever you read any book that is spiritually vitally alive. You're not studying. It's not an academic subject.

You're not studying a book. You're not absorbing information outside of yourself. You are, if it's a spiritual, true spiritual book, the book is about you.

Every true spiritual book is about the most essential dimension of who you are, rediscovering it, finding it, living from that dimension. That's what any spiritual book is about. And so somebody even called the Tao Te Ching that was written 2,500 years ago, the world's first self-help book.

Sometimes, these days, people speak dismissively about self-help books, and perhaps the reason is because there are so many and they are of such varying quality and depth, and inevitably there are always more self-help books or books of any kind that are not so powerful and not so deep, and relatively few that actually are vitally alive because they were written from that place within the author, which ultimately means they were written by consciousness itself. So there are always more false diamonds than real diamonds, of course.

And some books are mixed back. You have some beautiful insights and a lot of fluff in between. That's fine too.

It's sometimes worth reading a book just for the two pages. If you could summarize all the insights in some books, you could get it down to two pages. And that could change somebody's life, and that's fine.

If they had to read another 150 pages in the process, fine, at least they got that. But then you have some books that are almost undiluted with the system. What elsewhere is dispersed throughout a book.

Sometimes you get it in literature, you get deep insights occasionally. Every 30 pages you get one sentence that stands out and says, wow. And there are some books, however, that are the cream instead of skimmed milk.

And those are the books that are eternal, well, not eternal, but relatively speaking they survive for a very long time and they are beyond the particular culture out of which they came. Otherwise, how could a book written 2,500 years ago in China speak to us now? It's like something coming from a different planet, from a different galaxy.

But since it touches the deepest dimension of human existence, its essence is timeless. And that's why it's still alive, and that's why it's still read these days and valued, appreciated, and is helpful for many, many people. An amazing thing for a book to survive that long.

One miracle is that even its physical form survived for that long. And then to survive to be still not just of interest to some historians, but of vital significance to a human being. Amazing, miraculous thing.

2,500 years ago. And of course the same thing applies to the teaching of the Buddha, for example, which is still as vitally true and alive as it was about the same time, 2,500, 2,600 years ago. The author of the Tao Te Ching is Lao Tse, who lived about the same time, give or take 100 years, which isn't much, as the Buddha in India.

Lao Tse lived in China, the Buddha lived in India, as I pointed out already. So at that time, just a brief recapitulation, there was an enormous wave movement of spiritual awakening. Not as all-pervasive and powerful as it is now, but for that time it was an incredible thing, when at the same time period teachers arose in different parts of the planet and teach things.

And many people, relatively few, but still people responded to that. There was the Buddha in India, there was Mahavira in India, there was Zoroaster in Persia, there were the ancient Greek pre-Socratic philosophers, very deep insights in ancient Greece, all at the same time. It all happened virtually simultaneously.

And so this book then, Tao Te Ching, survived, and miraculously, of course, it has to get translated. How do you get that across from ancient Chinese symbols? How do you...and there are about a hundred translations into English available now. And sometimes you compare translations and you see, are they translating the same book? Is that the same text? So for the translator itself, now this is another important point, it's not only that the book, to be spiritually, vitally alive, needs to come from the deepest place.

When a book like that gets translated, even the translator needs to be attuned to the essential message of the book. And so many translations have been done of the Tao Te Ching, and all the translations that were done initially were done by academics at universities. They had great knowledge of Chinese language, but no attunement at all to the essential teaching.

And so you got many mistranslations of that, and only recently, relatively recently, people came in who translated who had both knowledge of Chinese and, most importantly, inner attunement to the essential message of that. Tao Te Ching, a strange title, not to be confused, by the way, with the I Ching, which is another book, also Chinese, also interesting, but this is the Tao Te Ching. Tao has never been really successfully translated.

It doesn't lend itself to that. You need to keep that in Chinese. But even if you're Chinese, you won't be any wiser as to the meaning of Tao.

So even Chinese people don't have that advantage. When you talk of Tao, their mouth opens and you ask them, what does that really mean? They go, oh.

When I first heard of the Tao Te Ching and read it, that was a few years after a shift in consciousness, immediately I said, wow, yes, wow, wow. And then I asked my next-door neighbor at college, graduate school, he was Chinese, student of mathematics, I wanted to talk to him about the Tao Te Ching, and he said, what? Never heard of it.

Just very briefly, the Tao has also different shades of meaning, dimensions of meaning. On the one hand, the Tao is the is-ness of all things. Tao is the suchness, the is-ness of this moment as it is.

That's the Tao in its manifested aspect. The Tao is also the source, the unmanifested source, out of which the is-ness of all things emerges. So it's manifold meaning.

The Te, again, traditionally, that word Te is traditionally translated as virtue, which is not really a good thing anymore, since virtue is a relatively dead word. When was the last time you said virtue? Really, the Te refers to the flow.

Anybody who is in tune with the Tao is an expression of Te, which is right action, right living. Ethics comes into it, in the sense of virtue, but it's not something that needs to be learned externally, something that naturally comes from the source of life. When you're in tune with the Tao, the source of life, then all your actions and your speech are virtuous, which really means charged with the power of the Tao.

So Te really is power, the power of the Tao, the intelligence, the intelligent power of the Tao. When you're in tune with that, you don't need to think about ethics anymore, because then that flows naturally from the core of your being. In that sense, you can say virtue, but the closer translation actually would be power.

And if the book didn't already exist, a good translation for Tao Te Ching, I think, would be the power of now. Because Tao is inseparable from the present moment. Tao only is timeless presence.

There is no past or future in Tao. Let's look at a few lines. The translation, I have two translations here, one that I like very much, or version, Stephen Mitchell's version, and another version is by Jane English and Jia Fu Feng.

They translated it together. But you may have others that are your favorites. You have to look around, whatever you respond to.

Now Stephen Mitchell, fortunately, does not exclusively use the masculine pronoun, as it's done in most other translations, he, the master, he varies between she and he. So sometimes the master is seen as feminine, and sometimes the master is seen as masculine, which is a wonderful thing, since the Tao has many qualities that are closely related to the feminine, the openness, and so on. There are many images in the Tao Te Ching that are feminine images, to point to the essential nature of the Tao.

Not that the Tao itself is feminine, but to get a feeling for what Tao is, the Tao Te Ching uses feminine imagery. So here we have a little few lines about the master. The master keeps her mind always at one with the Tao.

That is what gives her her radiance. The Tao is ungraspable. How can her mind be at one with it?

Because she doesn't cling to ideas. The Tao is dark and unfathomable. How can it make her radiant?

Because she lets it. Since before time and space were, the Tao is. It is beyond is and is not.

How do I know this is true? I look inside myself and see. Let's look at it again and see.

The master keeps her mind always at one with the Tao. That is what gives her her radiance. She keeps her mind at one with the Tao.

In the next line it says, if it is ungraspable, how can her mind be at one with it? It says, because she doesn't cling to ideas. Interesting.

She doesn't cling to ideas. That reminds me of the famous Zen saying, I don't remember who said it, but Zen master said it, don't seek for the truth, just cease or stop cherishing opinions. That is, I believe, points to the same inner state of disidentification from thinking.

She doesn't cling to ideas. Cling to. It doesn't mean she doesn't have ideas, the master.

But the master does not cling to ideas. And the Zen master, when he said, don't look for the truth, just stop cherishing opinions, he didn't say, don't say, stop having opinions. Just as Lao Tse does not say, don't have ideas.

He says, don't cling to ideas. And the other master says, stop cherishing opinions. So this clinging, which is the same as cherishing, is self-identification with thoughts that arise.

In other words, you then believe completely in every thought that comes into your head. Amazing. You believe in it, that means you are it.

That is self-identification with thinking. So how then to be at one, always at one with the Tao? So simple.

On the one hand, you could call it stop cherishing opinions. Now any thought that arises ultimately is an opinion you could say. Stop cherishing, stop your self-identification with that.

Or don't cling to ideas in the words of Lao Tse or this present translation here. So that there is always a space between you and your thoughts. Or rather, you are not the thought, you are the space for the thought.

This is how I put it sometimes. You're familiar with that. And perhaps in yourself you know it.

You don't have to be in your thoughts, but you can be the space for your thoughts. Then no matter how weird your thoughts are, it doesn't matter that much. You don't say, oh my God, I shouldn't be having these weird thoughts.

No, because that's another thought. I'm supposed to be spiritually advanced and why am I still having these thoughts? There must be something wrong with me.

Does that sound familiar? That's also thoughts. That's more thoughts that say, I shouldn't be having these thoughts, there's something wrong with me.

And then you believe in those thoughts. Thoughts that judge other thoughts. That may sound familiar to some of you and there's nothing personal in it.

It's the human mind. So you don't need to eliminate thoughts or to say, I should only have pure thoughts because I'm a spiritual person, because by now I should have transcended all impure thoughts. Well, then you're in a dilemma because in this world of polarities if you only want to have pure thoughts, you're creating the other polarity in the unseen.

And sooner or later, the other polarity will come up from behind, creep up. This has been done sometimes by Christians who try to practice the teachings of Christ without entering the state of consciousness out of which that comes. So they try to be pure and spiritual and good Christians and denied the other polarity, repressed it, and then suddenly they get overpowered by something deeply destructive and negative.

So you have a nice, wonderful person who always talks in spiritual, just so, and spiritual. And before you know it, he's screaming at his wife or even hitting his wife, where did that come from? And he can't even admit to himself that this is what's happening.

So if you push away certain thoughts because they do not fit into the mental image of who you are as this or that, then they assume a life of their own. And before you know it, they invade your mind again, if only in your dreams and suddenly you have dreadful nightmares. During a day you're such a spiritual person and at night you suddenly have dreadful nightmares.

Monsters come or you become a monster. Oh my God, this shouldn't be happening. And that's because you're pushing something away.

The true spiritual does not lie in one thought or another thought. It lies in being there as the space for your thoughts. Then it doesn't matter anymore, really.

Whatever thought arises is no more than that. It's a form that arises at this moment. You don't resist it.

You don't need to resist it. But you are the space for it. You don't become it.

Somebody sent me a sticker to put on the car. I haven't put it on my car yet. A very wise sticker.

I don't know where it originated. It says, you don't need to believe every thought you think. So this is the practice then of being the space or the witness for your thoughts rather than being the thought.

And you can practice with your opinions. Many thoughts are actual, most thoughts can, all thoughts could be called opinions, but there are certain things that are definitely, clearly recognizable as opinions when you are talking to people every day when you're having a discussion or talk with friends or colleagues or neighbors. They will express their opinion, whatever it may be about, and you may express your opinion.

And you can then observe whether or not there is self-identification with your opinion. And your opinion, of course, is a mental position, the position of the mind. Are you identified with a mental position?

If you are, then you are cherishing opinions, in the words of the Zen master, or you are clinging to ideas, in the words of Lao Tse. And how do you know that? You know that when, as you discuss things, you become either defensive or aggressive in the expression of your opinion.

Emotion flows into, and you get worked up in, why is that happening? Why are you becoming defensive or aggressive? And, of course, you have to look inside yourself to see whether this is the case or not.

Are you becoming defensive or aggressive? You feel the influx of emotion, and why is this happening? Because unconsciously you feel threatened by somebody who attacks or questions or contradicts your mental position.

Why do you feel threatened by somebody who questions your mental position? That is a sign that you had identified with a mental position. And identified means your sense of self was in it.

So the person is not attacking your opinion in your unconscious viewpoint. The person you are being attacked, your very life is under attack, because you identified this. This is not true, but this is how it is perceived, as if they were attacking your very existence, because you identified with a mental position.

There was a self in it. So anybody who questions it questions your very existence. It's an unconscious process.

So that's an amazing thing to realize in yourself, and it's a deep-seated unconscious pattern in most human beings. And of course, as you become conscious of that, you can usually see it much more clearly in others, more easily, in your friend or whoever you're having, than in yourself. Usually you say, oh, yes, that's what he always does.

Of course, now I understand what my husband or my wife does. I understand completely that's step one. And that's why I was so happy when I heard Obama say, you don't have to be disagreeable when you disagree with someone.

What that really implies is, because if you do become disagreeable and you disagree with someone, you're identified with a mental position. So you can express, you don't have to relinquish all opinions or mental positions, no. But is that who you are, or is that something in you as a mind movement?

Enormous difference. And if you can have a discussion between people who are not identified with their respective viewpoints, it's a wonderful thing. It's quite beautiful.

An exchange of ideas. But nobody is identified with their ideas, and that's a conscious discussion, a conscious group of people. We call them then conscious, as opposed to unconscious people who are identified, because that's the difference in spiritual terms between conscious and unconscious.

Conscious means non-identification with form. That's what conscious is. And primarily, forms appear as thought forms.

Those are the primary forms. That's where you experience the life of form in yourself as arising thoughts. So occasionally one is able to witness that, and it's always beautiful.

Then a discussion is actually a beautiful thing. Whereas normally in the old unconscious state, as soon as people start discussing something, I feel the strong impulse to leave the room in the unconscious state. Or you can also try to be there as the one conscious presence while the other is identified.

It may be possible to pull the entire group into consciousness. It may be. But it depends how overwhelming the force of the unconsciousness is in the room and in the people.

So either you stay there as the conscious presence in the room, and then you might say something not against anything or anybody, just put forward your opinion. That might change the vibrational frequency in the room. Or you may have to remove yourself, because ultimately it's insane.

And nothing good comes of it if each person is identified with their mental position. Nothing will come of it. Perhaps some kind of compromise, if you're lucky, some kind of compromise that everybody dislikes.

So, to be at one with the Tao, with the source of life, so that the primordial intelligence can operate through you, you don't have to look for it. Where is the, how can I connect with the primordial intelligence? Eckhart was talking about primordial intelligence.

Well, it's already there. Rather than looking for it as something, just stop doing certain things that block it, and then naturally it's there. So you can also say you don't have to find your true self.

That would be quite hard. I'm looking for myself. Because how could you not be your, if it's your true self, how could you not already be it?

So it's just stop obscuring your true self, if you want to use that expression. So the vital, very vital practice then for everyone is stop identifying with thoughts. And that requires an alertness as you go about your life, especially when engaged with, in conversation with other people, but also in the continuous self-talk that goes on and on in most people's minds.

There also it is vital that you are not totally identified with the arising self-talk. And it's a very strange thing, that self-talk, that you have to look at your own self. Do you have one voice that says, I, in your head?

I, I'm this, I'm that. Or do you have a voice that addresses you as you? It varies from person to person.

What kind of self-talk do you have? Is there some self-talk that is predominantly negative? Is there self-talk that is very critical of yourself a lot of the time?

Is there self-talk that is very critical of others a lot of the time? Is there self-talk that is critical of situations? Is there self-talk that's critical of places where you are?

Or self-talk is critical about what you are doing, but really don't want to be doing. You just have to do it now. But really, as the sticker on the car says, I'd rather be fishing, or

I'd rather be surfing, not driving.

So, I look at the kind of self-habitual self-talk, or do you have two voices that argue with each other? Why can't you ever do the right thing? Well, I'm doing my best, but...

All that is an amazing thing, the voice in the head. I say the voice in the head, and of course for many people it's the voices in the head. What I just mentioned, I believe there was a psychologist who identified those two voices as the top dog and the underdog.

The top dog says, you're no good, why can't you do that? And the underdog says, oh well, I'm trying so hard. And of course, which is the true one?

Are you truly the top dog? You're neither. So, you are the space for those thoughts.

So, all these things are really the vital spiritual practice is for you to become the awareness underneath your thoughts, the awareness around your thoughts, so that you're no longer totally controlled by, and your life is not controlled by, the thoughts that arise that say this or that. And you don't then, you don't feel good, this is a little superficial, and say, okay, I must think positive thoughts otherwise I won't feel good. Okay, I'm really better off than most people on the planet.

And I have to remind myself that I'm actually, that most people are worse off than me. Just think about that to make myself feel a little better. Okay, I have to think about all the poor people who are the best.

And then I can feel better about myself. The true sense of aliveness doesn't come through the medium of thought. It comes from a more vital place within.

It comes from the awareness itself or the consciousness itself. So, the shift then is you step back from your thoughts and look at them and say, oh, a thought. Occasionally, sometimes Buddhists, they practice mindfulness, which is closely related to this, which is becoming aware of whatever your mind does.

I don't think the word mindfulness is such a wonderful translation because it sounds as if your mind were full. But we know what they mean. So, it's awareness practice so that you are not your thoughts.

And then naturally you feel a deeper sense of aliveness and connectedness. And space is when you're not identified anymore, with every thought, and you have spaces in between the thoughts where there's no thought but simply a conscious presence. And that is the Tao.

And that is who you are. And that has no form. And you couldn't say anything much about it, really.

It is ungraspable. The Tao is ungraspable. And this is a pitfall of many spiritual seekers.

They're looking for something to grasp, some kind of experience or some kind of realization, thunder and lightning experience, looking for something as if, or looking for God, as if God could be found as an object in consciousness. And that's why the Zen master said, don't look for the truth. We could all say, don't look for God, don't look for yourself.

Just step out of the mind. Be the space. The Tao is dark and unfathomable.

How can it make her radiant? Because she lets it. She doesn't need to understand it.

It cannot be understood. In fact, in that becoming conscious, understanding plays a very insignificant role, if at all. Perhaps understanding, the main part of understanding is understanding the obstacles to it, but not it.

So again, many spiritual seekers think they need to arrive at some greater or deeper understanding of reality or of God or whatever, or of who they are. No, it's not, the realization does not arise from increased understanding. And that's almost insulting to the human mind.

It says, well, why then have I been studying all these books for 25 years? Well, at least you're here now and realize that that's not the way. So she lets it.

The Tao is dark and unfathomable. This implies you cannot understand it because the moment you understand it, it's no longer unfathomable. You say, oh, now I've got it.

You can never say, now I've got it. If you say, now I've got it, you haven't got it. How can it make her radiant?

Radiant means when you are connected with that, the power flows through you. The radiance comes through. And so she lets it.

She doesn't understand it, but she is attuned when she is connected with it. So in the Course in Miracles, too, it says, you still think that your understanding is a great contribution to the truth, but that is actually not the case. I don't know what the second part of that statement is, but basically it's your understanding is not an important contribution to the truth.

Now, what is the case, however, is that when you are in tune with the Tao, if there is anything here in this world that you need to understand, you will understand it. You don't understand the essence. You cannot understand that.

You can't understand God. You can't understand consciousness. You can only be consciousness.

You can be conscious, in conscious connection with the consciousness, but you can't understand it. This is why I cannot answer questions when people ask me, can you please define what consciousness is? No, I can't.

Nor can you. But you are it. You can be it.

You can realize that you are it. Then out of that realization, minor understandings arise as whatever, in any situation that you find yourself in, the intelligence operates through you and suddenly you know what is right for this situation. In that sense, understanding comes out of it, but the understanding comes out of the prior position of non-understanding.

The most basic not knowing is vital because it is a state of not thinking. It comes out of, it doesn't come out of your own thinking. You embrace the spaciousness of not thinking.

And then understanding in a limited sense comes out of that, but not understanding of the deepest, that deepest unmanifested, uncreated dimension. Since before time and space were, the Tao is. Is and Tao is one.

It's just is in it. No past, no was, no will be. It is beyond is and is not.

What does that mean? It is beyond is and is not. Beyond existence, what exists or does not exist, beyond is and is not, there's existence which is all forms of life exist.

The vaster dimension, what I call being or what is the Tao, is the unmanifested out of which all existence comes. Existence comes from Latin. It means to stand out.

Ex means out. So existence means a form, but underneath and within each form, there is the formless essence of all life, the Tao. Underneath it, so to speak, all language is very limited because language comes from this world of up, down, left, right, and so on.

Underneath it, there is the unmanifested, the being, and then there's the existence. All existence comes out of being and is essentially being, expressing itself in form. So you yourself have the two aspects.

You exist as a physical and psychological form temporarily, and in your innermost, there is the timeless dimension of being that frees you from being totally caught up in the temporal existence, which is a dreadful thing. How do I know this is true? I look inside myself and see.

The ultimate truth of the universe is within you. You find the ultimate within you. Wherever you go, it will still apply.

I'll read the first line of another verse, just the first line for the moment. Verse 20. I mean a poem.

I don't know if you call them poems. Chapter 20. Stop thinking and end your problems.

Stop thinking and end your problems. All problems are generated by thinking. How do I know this is true?

The famous test that I've many times mentioned to people, and I recommend that you, if you still need it, that you write it on a little card and put it on your bathroom mirror or wherever else you tend to look quite often. And I'm not talking about affirmations such as, I love myself. Well, that's fine, too.

It's better than hating yourself, but it's still within the polarities. No, what I mean is to write something a little like, what's the problem now? What's the problem now?

If you think you have lots of problems in order to touch reality, because problems are generated by continuous thinking, it's not to do with right now. No. The problems exist in the mind in the future, or the imaginary situation that's going to arise perhaps in the future.

Maybe it will arise. Maybe it won't. But usually the imagined situations are far worse than the actual situations when they happen.

So what's the problem now? What happens when you look at that phrase? What's the problem now?

Your attention then goes from being absorbed in, okay, oh my God, what's going to happen to now? Okay, is that a problem now? And then you have to wake up into now to answer the question on this little card, what's the problem now?

You have to actually wake up into the now because you never know there might be a problem now. You have to focus attention and look. And so suddenly your attention moves into the present moment, and there you stand in front of your bathroom mirror and, okay, what's the problem now?

I don't know. You look. Well, then the mind says, oh, you're looking old.

It looks in the mirror. That's the problem. No, of course it's not a problem.

It's a thought that arises. And usually the mind has, of course, more complicated things to say, but then you realize that at this moment it's not actually a problem. But the mind says, yes, but it will become a problem in the next moment.

But, of course, when the next moment comes, it comes again as this moment, and then you have to ask the question again. What is the problem now? And the amazing realization will come to you that there never is a problem now, only a situation.

You can deal with it or leave it alone for the time being. It's never a problem. Some situations demand immediate action, and then, of course, it's not a problem.

There's no time for it to become a problem. If it demands immediate action, you look and you act. Other things you may have to think about, you might occasionally have to think, okay, what are the possible solutions to this situation?

And what you do then is to apply focused thinking, but before you do that, you become still, present. And then out of that then comes, okay, what are the possibilities in this situation? I could pick up the phone and make a phone call to that person.

I can look, go to that place and ask for help. I can go there, too, and I can do that. One, two, three, four, five, write it down, put it aside, okay, and then which one of these can I do now?

And then you do it. It's not a problem. If I juggle ideas, thoughts in my mind uselessly, that's a problem.

What if? What if? Attention back to now.

What's the problem now? And so it's always amazing to realize that the now is free of problems because you're breathing, you're perceiving your senses, you feel the aliveness in the body, more than enough to deal with any situation that may arise or may be there. Of course, that's why people love dangerous activities.

Some people get addicted to danger because it stops their mind and they have no problems while they're climbing up the mountain. They're totally present. So for a little while, you can't carry your problems up the mountain wall if you're climbing up a sheer wall of a mountain.

If you carry your problems with you, you're going to fall off. So you have to leave your problems and be totally present and so that's why it is so, you feel so much more alive there because the mind, the parasite that otherwise sucks up your energy is not active at that time. Or you go surfing.

You can't think about, I wonder how high this, you just, you look and you do or you look and you don't do or you fall in. It's all fine. There's no thinking.

You can't think. You're not going to be very good at it if you're thinking. Stop thinking and end your problems.

What difference between yes and no? What difference between success and failure? Must you value what others value?

Avoid what others avoid? How ridiculous. What difference it says between success and failure?

What is meant by that is that success and failure are mental labels that you attach. And so the Master, she does not live or he does not live according to these mental labels where you go, wow, I am so successful and then attach yourself to that idea because it may turn into the opposite. Or you don't describe yourself as a failure or a success because both are ways of identifying with a form in your mind.

I am a great success. I am the best-selling author. Okay.

What if three years from now nobody buys the book anymore? What happens to my sense of identity then? Well, I can still then cling to and then say I once was a best-selling author.

So, deriving your identity from a conceptual sense of self, and very often success or failure is part of one's conceptual sense of self and it gives you your sense of who you are. It's a very limited sense of who you are. A conceptual identity either as a successful person, and of course there is always a fear that it may not last.

And of course it probably won't because nothing lasts forever. So, successful person, precarious conceptual sense of self, and continuously you will find the more successful you are, the more things come in that the conceptual image is being attacked. They are beginning to write about you in People magazine or they are beginning to...

People is still quite benign, but there are other magazines that will tear you to pieces. And so you have to... Your conceptual sense is very shaky.

Your identity is derived from myself as the one who is successful. When many people want that, there is nothing wrong with achieving. The question is whether you need that to give you an enhanced identity or whether you simply enjoy the play of form in this world and you contribute, but there is no self-identification in a conceptual way and that is great freedom.

Identity then, failure, another very strong sense of identity for people, another conceptual identity of thinking of yourself as somebody who has failed at something. My life has been a failure. It's too late now.

I've made so many mistakes. I've married the wrong person. I chose the wrong career.

I tried but it didn't work out. The world didn't recognize my talents. I never had a real chance.

Life never gave me a chance. If only my parents had taught me at an early age. If only they had not.

If only the system wasn't so. If only then perhaps, but it's too late now. That's a heavy sense of self.

It's a conceptual identity that is as heavy or heavier than the person who thinks I've made it in the world. I'm the great one who has achieved wealth, fame and so on. They are both heavy but as I say perhaps the miserable one is even heavier.

And of course I'm giving you these two extremes which do exist in certain people. For many people there's a movement, they fluctuate between these two of thinking of yourself as oh actually not bad, quite good. I'm actually still better looking than most.

Or if that's your conceptual identity. Or I still have more money than most of my friends or neighbors. Or then you shift into oh I'm losing.

I'm losing it. I'm losing out. The others are overtaking me.

People I was at school with, they're already there and I'm still here. Oh dear. So again so here we have where does your sense of self come from?

The conceptual, the concepts in your mind or does it come not from any kind of thought but from that which is deeper than thought? The stillness, the depths, the presence that you are. And that's the liberation.

It's when your sense of who you are comes out of the presence of who you are in essence which is the consciousness that you are. And then it is secondary. I sometimes say it is no longer of absolute importance then what your life situation is.

Once you know who you are, and you can only know it in this moment, you can't say okay now I know it, what's next? No. Once you know who you are in this now, the only place where you can know who you are, your life situation is only of relative importance.

It's still relatively important, the way I put it, whether you are poor or wealthy. Well it does make some difference in your life. Yes, true.

It's of relative importance whether you are healthy or the body is not doing very well. Of course it's relative importance. Whether you have satisfying relationships is important.

Whether you have a nice place to live or an unpleasant place to live, yes of course it's important but it is not of absolute importance anymore. Everything in your life situation then is of relative importance because there's only the one thing that matters absolutely and that is knowing who you are beyond all the forms. Knowing yourself as the presence underneath it all.

And then you can live with any life situation and be at peace with it and still deal with it and still be active but be at peace with whatever the situation is at the moment. You are deeper than that. You are beyond that.

You are the consciousness. You are not ultimately the person who is having a life situation. The person who has a place where he or she lives which may be good or not so good.

The person who has relationships. The person who has money or no money. Yes, these things matter but they don't matter absolutely.

If they matter absolutely it means you don't know the absolute. Then they matter absolutely and they have the power to make you miserable, the things of this world. Even success can make you then miserable as it's often the case.

There are as many people made miserable by failure as people made miserable by success. So what is who am I? At some point we talked about that as a meditation method so to speak, the simplest meditation method to ask who am I?

And of course that is the most vital question and none, whatever concepts are arising in your mind about who you are are not who you are. So the wonderful liberation is to go beyond a conceptual sense of self and this is not only liberating to yourself so to speak but you liberate other people from imposing on them also a conceptual sense of self. This is a dreadful thing to do to other human beings because then you no longer recognize the essential aliveness and your essential oneness with that so-called other human being.

You no longer recognize that. To you then the other being, human being becomes reduced to a concept in your head and so you have a set of beliefs about who that other human being is. And why are you doing that to another human being?

Because before you did it to yourself and you continuously do it to yourself. Then you cannot not do it to another human being, imposing a conceptual identity onto others. And so that's an enormous improvement that then happens in relationships when you do not come from a conceptual sense of self and therefore no longer impose a conceptual sense of self on others, a set of judgments, a set of criticisms of who they are, judgmental judgments.

That's such a normal thing to do. It doesn't mean you don't see certain behavior patterns in another human being. It may well be that you see that the person who knocks on your door and wants to sell you something, what he's trying to sell you is a fake and he's trying to tell you that it is genuine so you're not going to say in your mind, okay, I must not believe that he's an honest person.

No, you don't have to believe anything. And here comes something in that there's a knowing for which you don't need concepts. You can know if a person tries to deceive you, you know it without having to call him a thief or a manipulator.

You see it and that's all. You see what behavior pattern governs this person and then you also see there is something deeper than that behavior pattern. You don't react as if that behavior pattern were the ultimate reality of that human being.

And that's a wonderful thing that you can do for another human being is not to act as if the behavior they manifest were their ultimate reality because it isn't. And sometimes the miracle happens that you can free without consciously doing it, not thinking that I'm going to free you, but by being in that state of consciousness, you can free, sometimes it happens, you can free a person from their limited unconscious behavior patterns because you are not acknowledging it. You see it, but you don't acknowledge it.

If you acknowledge it, if you impose judgments, you reduce the human being to something that is not, but by doing it to another, you do it to yourself. And this is perhaps why Jesus said, judge not so that you are not judged because you're really, you're judging always yourself. And so in the Course in Miracles there's a beautiful line.

That was the first line I ever heard about the Course in Miracles when it came to England in 1980-something. I was, I saw this strange thing, people said, Course in Miracles said, oh no, another weird thing has come from California. And of course it turned out it wasn't from California, it came from New York, but was actually written at Columbia University, would you believe that?

And this person, I asked the person, have you ever heard of this weird thing called a Course in Miracles? And the person said, I don't know much about it except one sentence, and that is, what you perceive in another you strengthen in yourself. So perceive here means what you focus on in the other.

If you focus on the other is dishonest, if the other is unconscious in some behavior in the other, what you focus on you strengthen in yourself. If that becomes your reality, it draws you into the same. So here freedom then comes from not imposing conceptual identities on others.

Which you can only do if you no longer impose or believe in or derive your identity from conceptual sense of self in your own mind. And so you end up, of course, with something that the ego does not particularly like, because the opinions that you have about yourself are becoming quite insubstantial or weak. In other words, you are beginning to have fewer and fewer opinions about who you are.

That's being attuned with the Tao. And so when then people ask you about how do you see yourself, as I have occasionally once or twice have been asked by people who came to interview me, so how do you see yourself? Well, I don't know.

Not in any particular way. I gave very unsatisfying answers to these questions. I don't know.

I don't see myself. If I saw myself as a great spiritualist, spiritual teacher, that would be the beginning of delusion, because it would be the beginning of identification with a form identity. If I saw myself as a successful author now and derived some satisfaction from it, yes, it's fulfilling to know that many people are being helped.

This is wonderful, but I didn't do that as such. It happened through this form. I would have been very unhappy for many years when my conceptual reality was one of, if I had had one, my mother had it for me, of being unsuccessful in this world, a failure, a person who has made so many mistakes and now it's too late for everything.

So that would have been, for 20 years I would have lived in that very painful conceptual reality. You have failed. Look at your friends from school.

They've got their big cars now. They've got their careers. What have you got to show for it?

Nothing. If I had had that, it would have been painful. But fortunately, even on the park bench already, there was no conceptual identity and the park bench was a beautiful place.

It was fine. Only others felt sorry for me and that was fine too. I remember my father, a little later, I acquired a bicycle.

My father then came for a visit to London where I was living and at that time he was a businessman. He was staying in this hotel on the 10th floor and I visited him in his room. Opposite the hotel was a park and there was a railings and I chained my bicycle to the railings and very proudly I said, I was about 30 or 31 then, my father, I said, look down there.

There's my bike. And he got very upset. He said, what?

Oh, poor you. You have to go on a bike in London. That's terrible.

What a terrible thing. I never expected that response. It was a nice new bike.

And so deep down he felt, oh, my poor son, he failed, although never went that far in his belief as my mom did. But fortunately, before she passed away, her son became successful. I'll just read the rest of this chapter, 20.

There's a little bit of humor in this chapter. Lao Tse talks about himself, but humorously. It's funny.

I'm excited as though they were at a parade. I alone don't care. I alone am expressionless like an infant before it can smile.

Other people have what they need. I alone possess nothing. I alone drift about like someone without a home.

I'm like an idiot. My mind is so empty. Of course, that would be an external viewpoint.

There's always a certain similarity between the master who has gone beyond thinking and the simpleton who has not yet arrived at thinking, the so-called fool. The fool is pre-thought. The master is post-thought.

But they can be confused. You can confuse one with the other, which is beautifully expressed in an old film with Peter Sellers called Being There, where the main character in that film is a very simple person who has never even arrived at ego yet. And yet, because of the similarity with that state and the transcendent state, he's mistaken by everybody for the wisest person around.

And even in the end of the film, put forward to become President of the United States. I am like an idiot. My mind is so empty.

Other people are bright. I alone am dark. Other people are sharp.

I alone am dull. Other people have a purpose. I alone don't know.

I drift like a wave on the ocean. I blow as aimless as the wind. I'm different from ordinary people.

I drink from the Great Mother's breasts. In an alternative translation, the last line is, I am nourished by the Great Mother. I'm nourished by the Great Mother.

He had quite a sense of humor, Lao Tse. There's a lot of humor in here. It's not necessarily immediately visible, but it's there.

We didn't get very much done in the Tao Te Ching, but that's fine. Only two little chapters. That doesn't matter, because the truth is in every line.

It's like a hologram. Any spiritual teaching really, it doesn't go, you have to know this first for you to understand that. The truth is everywhere, in every statement, in every sentence, on every page.

One of the most important teachings of Zen is to be free of reactivity. And I think that you just embody absolute presence. And it's such simplicity in that.

Very powerful, extremely powerful teaching, embodied by the Zen masters, who on most paintings look quite fierce. If you've seen drawings of Zen masters, they look quite fierce. But if they're good drawings, and if you look closely, then they're real works of art, and you can see underneath the fierceness, there is compassion and softness.

The fierceness is there to cut through mind and ego in the other. Many years ago, I talked to a Zen monk. That was about two or three years after I went through this awakening.

And I was visiting a monastery, and he said, well, Zen is really to do about not thinking. And that was a great teaching for me, because I suddenly realized why I had been so peaceful for the past two years. There wasn't much thinking going on anymore in my head.

Some, a necessary amount, but certainly not thinking that makes me unhappy. That was my usual thinking, was thinking that made me continuously unhappy. I didn't know that, that it was my thinking.

I thought it was something to do with my life. I'm unhappy because of my miserable life. But what was my miserable life?

My miserable life was the thoughts in my head. That was my life. There was nothing wrong with my life there.

Yes, I didn't have any money. I lived in a little room in what they called Bed-Sit in London, where you cook and do everything in one room. And I had to share that with other people.

The bathroom is seven or eight people in different rooms, and always had to line up for the toilet, and I had indigest constipation because of that, and many other things. Little complaints, but on the whole, it was fine. But the problem was, the unhappiness was in my head.

It was my thoughts. And so the anxiety, what's going to happen to me, am I going to make it? Anxiety, or opinions about my life, how dreadful it all is.

Thoughts. And then, that night, the thoughts kind of collapsed, and then I woke up the next morning in the same dreadful room, which wasn't dreadful anymore. And into the same dreadful life, which wasn't dreadful anymore, suddenly, because the dreadful was a thought, and the rest was alive.

So I woke up, and it was beautiful. It was fine. There's nothing wrong with this room.

There's nothing wrong with waiting for the toilet. You can just wait. But I didn't realize, I said, where does that peace come from?

I don't know. So I visited some teachers, and finally I met this Zen monk, I can't remember the name even, and he said, well, Zen is really about not thinking anymore. And that was a great teaching for me, because I suddenly realized why I had been so peaceful for the past two years.

And the strange thing was, I didn't know that I wasn't thinking that much anymore. I just wasn't thinking that much anymore. And the non-thinking I experienced as peace.

So I called it peace. But not until I talked to him did I realize, oh, it's because my mind isn't very active anymore. The inner voice in the head, the voice in the head isn't saying that much anymore.

And the little that the voice is still saying is not very important. And the voice doesn't make me unhappy anymore, but the little that it's still saying, it just says a few things. It says things, oh, isn't that nice?

So it doesn't make you unhappy. It's a great step if the voice in your head loses its power to make you unhappy. That's the end of unhappiness, because all unhappiness really derives from the voice in your head telling you something, and you believe it.

And then when that goes, you look around and you say, oh, there's no unhappiness in this table or this flower or the air I'm breathing or the street scene I'm looking at or the tree or the cup of tea. There's no unhappiness anywhere. It was all in here.

But I didn't know that it was in here, and I thought it was all out there. So, that's the end of unhappiness. That's awakening.

Whether it happens gradually, as it happens to many of you as you sit here, or whether it happens suddenly through some huge knock on your head that knocks the thoughts out of you. But it doesn't, you don't become stupid. You become more intelligent when excessive thinking subsides.

You would have thought, or the mind probably would have thought, oh, I'll become stupid because I won't be knowing things anymore. You don't need to know a lot of things that you think you need to know. For example, about other people.

You don't need to have firm opinions about who they are, because then you freeze them. They get frozen into conceptual structures in your head. You do it to other humans.

It's almost an act of violence. You freeze them and say, that's how he is, how she is. Just a few judgments and concepts and you've wrapped up the whole person.

That is a dreadful thing to do to a person, but it's unconscious, of course. You don't do that anymore to others. Oh, isn't that, doesn't that improve relationships with other humans?

And then you don't do it to yourself, because people who do it to others do it to themselves also. A set of, just a bundle of thoughts about who I am. That's not who you are.

You are infinitely deeper and vaster than that. It's absurd. So to let go of those opinions about myself and others, and then life flows.

Beautiful in relationships, the flow of life in yourself. You allow others their freedom and you yourself become free. You feel free inside.

So that monk then gave me the recognition of why I had been so peaceful over the past two years. Thinking. And so I began slowly, and then when later people came to ask me a few questions, then later gradually I pointed out that there's a voice in your head.

I don't know when I first said it to somebody, and they said, what? I'm not insane. I said, yes, you are.

But so is everybody else, and I was too. And of course, that's the reason why very few people understand Zen. The reason is, you can't understand it.

You can't understand it. You can't understand it conceptually. That's why you have the famous Zen story.

Well, I don't know if it's famous, but we have a Zen story where the disciple is asked by the master, in the usual way of the Zen master, he kind of catches the disciple by surprise, do you understand Zen? Says the master, and the disciple goes, no, I don't. And the master says, neither do I.

So the difference between the disciple and the master is, the disciple doesn't understand, but thinks he should understand, and the master doesn't understand and is fully okay with not understanding, so he's at a deeper level. The need to understand conceptually is gone, and there is rooted in being and presence. And the disciple thinks, I should understand, I should understand.

And it's not only Zen, because it's yourself. You don't need to understand yourself. Many people are kind of trying to figure out something about themselves, some answer about, some ultimate answer about who I am, or what's wrong with me.

Many people have that persistent feeling that there's something wrong with them. Many people believe they are a problem to be solved, a walking problem to be solved. So you go to the psychiatrist, say, can you solve the problem that I am?

So to have some ultimate, some final conclusion about me, you can't, because you're much too vast and deep to be encapsulated in a few thoughts, no matter how complex the thoughts may be, it's not who you are. So the need to understand yourself is just as, to drop that, is just as vital as the, if you want to understand Zen, because ultimately the essence of Zen is you. Otherwise, it's not a subject outside of you would be pointless.

If Zen were a subject to be studied outside of you, what's the point? But Zen is just a way of approaching the reality of who you are. So to understand Zen, or to rather to let go of the need to understand, it really means also to let go of the need to understand who you are.

And then you go deeper into an intelligence that does not need to be conceptualized through thoughts. And then you're rooted in that vaster intelligence. You don't become stupid, you become for the first time, truly intelligent.

You're rooted in that deep intelligence. Creativity resides there, aliveness, freshness, joy, and you're there because you don't need to have an opinion anymore about yourself to have your identity derived from some thoughts in your head. Or you ask others, what do you think of me?

I don't want to know what you think of me, it's just thoughts. I don't even think anything of me myself. So I don't need to know what others think of me, it's just thoughts.

Some person says he's the greatest teacher ever, the other says he's a fraud, the other one says he's talking mumbo-jumbo, the other one says he's talking great wisdom. It's just thoughts. So to let go of needing to understand yourself, and then you can be yourself, rather than have, and derive your sense of identity of who you are from that deeper level that is not conceptualized, aliveness.

Alive peace. And you live as that, and not as the conceptualized identity in the head. That's the unhappy me that I carried around, and many carry around.

In the head. Conceptualized identity. And it's always not enough.

There's always something missing. It always needs more of this or more of that, and confirmation that I exist, that I'm good enough, please tell me I'm good enough. Amazing awakening.

No problems, you don't have any problems unless you go here and look for them. Just the situation in this moment. Just whatever you need to deal with in this moment, there's no problem in this moment.

Because at any moment you can look for it and ask yourself whether there is truly a problem in your life, but always there's a simplicity of this moment. You can look for just this. You have to be alert to see, is there a problem?

Not really, not now. And then again, because the mind says, no, but you're going to have a problem tomorrow morning. And then when tomorrow morning comes, you have to go there again, say, is there a problem now?

Not now, because now is too small for a problem. It's just whatever the situation is now. Well probably you have to go into your mind and suddenly you go, past and future.

What's the image of Atlas, the man who carries the globe, the earth on his shoulders? Oh, can't stand it anymore. Life, I can't stand life anymore.

Can't stand it. Well, what you can't stand isn't life, it's the stuff in your head. The truth is liberating.

It's a relief. Who said that? Oh yes, the truth will make you free.

Oh no, that's not complete. Know the truth and the truth will make you free. So the truth itself is fine, but to know it, which means to realize it is within yourself, know the truth, that's the truth of who you are and the truth will make you free.

2,000 years ago, in case you haven't read the New Testament. Welcome. Make sure you are here with your attention rather than in your mind and in your thinking, like then you'll be somewhere else.

A helpful thing is to look at this from the point of view of the present moment. Come out of your mind means come into the present moment. The present moment is this.

The surface of this is the depth of your sense perceptions and the depth of this, and that's the real present moment, the depth. The depth cannot be defined conceptually. It can be pointed to, that's why I'm using words, but it cannot be understood conceptually.

The depth of this, and that's the real present moment, and your mind will not know what I mean when I say depth. Depth, what does that mean? To the mind, it's just another concept, but if depth can be a signpost, so rather than look at it, if this is the signpost, you say depth, what's that?

You have to then let go of the concept and sense, so to speak, inside right now, the depth that makes all the sense perceptions and the experience of this moment possible in you, the space in you. The light in you in which this room appears is seen, is perceived. The light in which this voice is heard, it appears, that has no form, but it makes all this possible.

This may be a dream, but even if it is a dream, there's something that makes this dream possible to be, and that's the essence of who you are, and you sense that within yourself, and that is, when you do that, another way of putting it, you're then sensing what now actually means. So beyond what appears in the now, which is this room and this voice and the flowers and the light, there's something deeper that cannot be understood or conceptualized. We could say it's consciousness itself.

You are the light of the world, somebody said 2,000 years ago. You are the light of the world. Now, that's not the you that has a name and a little history.

There's a deeper essence to you, the consciousness that you are. That's the light of the world. So we become aware of that, and that's becoming aware of the now.

It's one with the now, what we call the now. That's the power of now, is to become aware of that directly, and that frees you from the temporary, the temporary person. There's nothing wrong with the person, that you are for a while, but if that's all there is, then it's very frustrating.

Little me with a little history, and the end will come soon. So you become still and alert and spacious inside. Ah, nothing needs to be understood at this moment.

There's an intelligence there that doesn't need to understand conceptually, which means cut it up into little bits and pieces. That's conceptual understanding. Oh, and not small enough, I need to understand more.

And then you get a grinder or whatever. That's called a PhD. But you never get beyond, you never get beyond, you never get beyond it.

You just can cut smaller and smaller segments, and then you need a big microscope. And of course, the ultimate mystery can never be known that way, because it cannot be worked out conceptually. So you become still inside and alert, spacious.

The greatest thing is finding the spaciousness inside yourself. Right now, where you don't need to know even who you are anymore. What for?

You are that light, but you don't need to call it light. You are that space, but you don't need to call it space. Just be it.

Of course, what's in the way of that, can that be a continuous realization? Rather than just when you are in a protected environment like here, nothing is impinging upon you. Nothing is impinging your senses.

Everything is conducive towards this realization. No phone is ringing. No computer screens flashing, saying, give me attention.

But then life, you go back into life. And then, is it possible to live this realization as a continuous state of being? Yes, that's the art.

That's why you're here, to bring that into your daily, not just to have little experiences. And then you remember them and say, I had a great experience there five years ago. And then life happened.

So as we are here, we are here to bring that together. In the background, there is that presence, in the background of who you are. And that's the essence of this gathering.

And that's why we are here. And even while we look at seemingly other things, they are not other things. At the most, we look at the things that tend to obscure the realization of the depths within yourself.

Things that tend to interfere and take you away, obscure it. That is helpful to know what tends to habitually obscure that realization. Because if you don't know it, you get taken over by it without even knowing it.

It has you. There's no recognition of it. So it's very helpful to recognize how it happens that this, the depths that you are, becomes obscured through misuse of the mind.

Dysfunctional mind patterns and habitual ways of thinking. It's also wonderful, of course, to be here and occasionally just experience the stillness in between the words, without thinking that it needs to be filled with something. And then you can experience the same experience when you're at home.

It is, one of these habit patterns of the mind, dysfunctional habit patterns, is that this moment needs to be filled with something. Of course, you have to do things, but also see if you can experience the spaciousness of this moment. This civilization tells you you have to fill every moment with some kind of doing.

And then you lose the sense of being. And when you lose the sense of being, no doing is ever enough to satisfy you, except very briefly. Ah, I got that done.

And 10 seconds later, the mind says, oh, okay, now I have to think about, oh, yeah, I still, okay, all those things to do. Oh, and then I got, oh, I got that done. So, throughout history, from time to time, there were individuals who recognized, even a long time ago, they recognized the habitual dysfunction of the human mind.

And they recognized it as a dysfunction. And they said there is a way out, there is a way beyond. They pointed to the nature of the dysfunction, and they pointed to the way beyond.

A very famous person, of course, was the Buddha, who saw that. He described the dysfunction. He saw that if you live in the dysfunctional state, you suffer.

So normal human existence, he said, is suffering. But there is a way out of suffering. So that's, Buddha is a famous example of someone who had this recognition.

One of the most important moments in the history of humanity, not the battles, or the kings, or the mad emperors, or the politicians, that's not, one of the most important moments in the history of humanity was the recognition on the part of one human being of what's wrong with humans and what's right with humans. So the Buddha said, I teach suffering and the end of suffering, which means I show you how you create your own suffering, I show you how you can go beyond your own suffering that you create by stopping to create it. That's the message of the Buddha.

And there were others also who had that realization, most, Jesus had the realization expressed in different terms according to the listener and the culture. And always a few people here and there had that realization, there's a thread running through history, and that thread is sometimes called the perennial philosophy. There's a knowing there that surfaces from time to time and then gets buried again and then surfaces again.

And a few people get changed by it in history, but most humans don't understand. Except now, more humans are beginning to understand than before. Not just understand, able to realize the truth of it.

And I find it wonderful to discover when I read an ancient book, to see, wow, there's already that basic realization there of the dysfunction of the human mind. And this is why in these sessions from time to time, I talk about a book or a teaching that is ancient or, well, from some time past. You may know that I've already spoke briefly about the Tao Te Ching, about the meditations by Marcus Aurelius, and about the teachings of Ralph Waldo Emerson in the 19th century.

But it's always, it's just looking at the fundamental truth through slightly different lenses. That's all it is. And when we talk about it here, it's not like a university lecture.

I don't want to give you knowledge about history. You don't need that. It really, whatever we talk about here, is about you.

So if we talk about this philosophy that few people have heard of, called Epictetus, E-P-I-C-T-E-T-U-S, who lived about 2000 years ago. He was born in the year 55, Greek. We're not really talking about Epictetus.

We're not really talking about, we are talking about, it's always about you. So this, I only discovered this really a couple of years ago, his teachings. I had a book that I bought a long, long time ago in England in a secondhand bookstore, but I never got into Epictetus in that way.

The translation, I think, was not very good. And then I got this book and said, wow, this is wonderful. It's a good, it's a wonderful translation too.

This is the Penguin Classic, Epictetus. Just something that may be helpful to know about him, because how did he get this realization of the, how did he discover it? What helped him to discover it?

Yes, he had one or two teachers, but his main teacher was his personal circumstances. And his personal circumstances were as follows. He was a slave.

He was born into slavery. His mother was already a slave. So he grew up as a slave and for part of his adult life, he was a slave.

His body was also crippled. He described himself as lame. Nobody knows exactly in what way.

And there is one ancient source that says that his master, the person who owned him, mistreated him and he caused, he broke his legs or his leg or something like that. That may be true. So here we have first two factors.

A person who is not free externally and a person who is not free as far as mobility is concerned. A person who has no status in society. And another factor is that his master, who was quite wealthy, lived in Rome and was always at the court, the imperial court of the infamous Emperor Nero, one of the many completely insane emperors.

If you read that, any politician is very sane, at least relative to them. And the other one, even the most insane western, well there have been some others, but let's not go there. So he also would often, for some reason, maybe he accompanied his master as a servant, he would actually observe what was happening in court.

He was a nobody, but he observed the most important people in the empire, how they behaved, what they did and what happened to them. Of course, the closer you were in court to the emperor, the more dangerous your life would be, especially if the emperors is mad. So his teaching was his condition, which one would say would really probably create an unhappy human being.

If you're a slave, you're crippled, and you have to watch all these wealthy and powerful people, so on the surface that would be enough reason to justify unhappiness or a low opinion of yourself. And perhaps that was the case initially. But he discovered in himself that the cause of his unhappiness was not the situation, and here we come to one of the two central points of his teaching.

The cause of any upset or unhappiness, he said, is not the situation or the condition, but the thoughts that my mind is creating concerning the situation or the condition. And the moment he realized that, there was no more suffering. He became free from external condition, and that is the second point of his teaching, the possibility for humans to become free as far as their internal state is concerned, to become free of externals.

That's his teaching. The two are connected, of course, that any upset arises from your mind and not from the situation, the suffering, the unhappiness arises through judgment or situations. And we always look to externals, he says, for our fulfillment, and we never find it.

And he points to the possibility of becoming free of that, and then no matter what the external situation is, inside you have a space of freedom. You are no longer a reactive entity, you are no longer governed by external events, and that's an incredible freedom. Because if your inner state is always dependent on external events, then you're at the mercy of what happens or fails to happen but should happen.

You're at the mercy of what people do and say or should do and say but don't. You're at the mercy of everything. And so you live in that way, that is unconscious living, dysfunctional living.

And he saw all that through his own condition. So, wonderful thing. Then he became free internally, and a little later he was given his freedom externally.

This was not totally uncommon. It happened quite frequently that a slave, after working for 20 or 30 years, the master would say, I'll give you your freedom. And he did.

He became free, and he became a teacher of so-called philosophy, which is very different from what is called philosophy at university these days. This philosophy is intensely vital. It is teaching you how to live.

So he was more a spiritual teacher than a philosopher, but at the time the word for it was philosopher. He became a philosopher, and then he moved to Greece, and he set up a school of philosophy, which became quite famous, and people would travel, many Romans would travel to learn with him. And in the end, even when Nero was no longer emperor, the emperor Hadrian actually visited him to pay his respects, the slave, become a philosopher.

And even the emperor Marcus Aurelius considered him to be one of his teachers. So his social condition and so on becomes irrelevant there. Marcus Aurelius had certain realizations, perhaps not the deepest possible, but he saw some things very clearly, and he was wealthy and powerful, and Epictetus saw the same things very clearly, and he had no power and no wealth and wasn't interested.

It made no difference. External conditions then become irrelevant. So, he also teaches to use all conditions in your life as something helpful, because you can practice.

He compares it to having a sparring partner if you're training for the Olympics or whatever. Every condition is something you can, you use the ability, growth in you, the freedom. If you are challenged by a condition, then how do you approach the challenge?

With inner resistance, or are you able to accept what is, there's great power in that, and then you grow internally, so to speak, in consciousness, the light grows. The more challenges you have, the better. And he said, to quote one sentence, he said, if you look at tragedies, ancient Greek tragedies, they're really based on certain dysfunctional mind patterns, and that creates the tragedy.

You can look the same way at any modern movie or novel. People behave in certain dysfunctional ways, and that creates the drama. So, he says, behold the birth of tragedy, when idiots come face to face with the challenges of life.

Idiot means a person who is unconsciously reacting, and then you create your own drama in life, when you come face to face with the challenges of life. But even in translation, this is a very good translation in this book, Penguin Classic, it is powerful, and it is I'm sure more or less exactly how he spoke. And that's wonderful, I'll read a few things to you in a minute.

It still has the power to transform. So, a little story in connection with that, you may remember, some of you, in 1992, Ross Perot was running as an independent president for president of the United States, and he had chosen as his running mate a person called Stockdale, and Stockdale, of course, Ross Perot didn't become president, so

Stockdale didn't become vice president, but he later became the vice admiral in the Navy. What's important about Stockdale is that in Vietnam, he was a fighter pilot, and he was shot down, and he was a prisoner of war for seven years, four years of which he lived in solitary confinement, and he credits his survival to the teachings of Epictetus.

He had apparently a little book with him of the teachings, and he said that was what kept him alive. When he was shot down, the story goes, and he was ejected from the plane, and then he could see the soldiers coming towards him with rifles, he said, he whispered to himself, I'm leaving the world of technology, and I'm entering the world of Epictetus, and the next seven years were his, the application of the teaching. I will now take a few very short passages and read and then talk about each one.

I must warn you, sometimes he can be quite extreme, and you say, oh, no. It is not events that disturb people, it is their judgment concerning them. Death, for example, is nothing frightening, otherwise it would have frightened Socrates, but the judgment that death is frightening, now that is something to be afraid of.

So when we are frustrated, angry, or unhappy, never hold anyone except ourselves, that is our judgments, accountable. When we are frustrated, angry, or unhappy, never hold anyone except ourselves, that is to say, our judgments, accountable. An ignorant person is inclined to blame others for his own misfortune.

To blame oneself is proof of progress, but the wise man never has to blame another or himself. So you look to the root cause of where unhappiness arises, where upset arises, not the situation, it's my judgment about the situation. A vital teaching.

And as you practice that, gradually, you become free of attachment to your mind. You gradually disidentify from what your mind is saying. And gradually, more spaciousness arises in you as you disidentify from the judgment of your mind by recognizing it as a judgment.

So that's the work, you could call it. That's the practice. And life continuously gives you stuff to practice with.

Stuff happens continuously. And of course, if you say, why I want to have some peace and quiet? But life doesn't allow you.

And if you do get peace and quiet, then that becomes the problem. There's nothing happening anymore. And now he has a little bit of advice of how to approach things so that you become free of the dependency on externals.

In the case of particular things that delight you, or benefit you, or to which you have grown attached, remind yourself of what they are. Start with things of little value. If it is a piece of china that you like, for instance, say, I am fond of a piece of china.

Because otherwise the mind says, this is the precious thing from so and so that I inherited. It's a piece of china. Yes, but I bought it at Sotheby's at the, it's a piece of china.

So if you discover attachment, say, I'm fond of a piece of china. When it breaks, then you won't be as disconcerted. Now the next step here is where you go, oh.

When giving your wife or child a kiss, repeat to yourself, I'm kissing a mortal. Then you won't be as distraught if they are taken from you. Of course, it's a fact.

You are kissing a mortal. You are kissing a mortal, aren't you? Yes, it's a fact.

Of course the mind says, yeah, but why should I remind myself of that? Well, it might seem a little extreme to you, but just to have the, you don't have to say that verbally, but to have the, you don't have to say that verbally, but to know at the back of your mind that any human being that you're with or yourself, yes, you are mortal. The end could come at any moment.

Of course it could. I'm kissing a mortal. And now comes a little bit, some other piece of advice.

They're all very closely related, of course. Whenever planning an action mentally, rehearse what the plan entails. If you're heading out to bathe, picture to yourself the typical scene at the bath house.

That's where they used to go to bathe. People splashing, pushing, yelling, and pinching your clothes. You will complete the act with more composure if you say at the outset, I want a bath, but at the same time, I want to keep my will aligned with nature.

So you know what you want. That's one aim that you have. Of course, you will go there to have a bath, but that's not all.

I also want what he calls keep my will aligned with nature means not to fall out of alignment with the present moment and the flow of life internally, not to step out of alignment with that, to keep my will aligned with that. In other words, let's translate it into our terminology. I'm going there to have a bath, but I'm also going there to stay present.

So you have an inner aim and an outer aim. So what he's really actually saying is don't have just outer aims because then you get lost in the outer. As you pursue your outer aims, remind yourself that you have also an inner aim that's even more important than the outer aim, and that is to stay present as you engage in action and do things.

That's extremely useful to remember because otherwise you go into situations and they don't unfold as they should, the mind says, and you get upset. And upset, by the way, is a form of suffering. Anger is a form of suffering.

Now, the egoic mind doesn't know that. The egoic minds have a right to be angry in this situation, but you're suffering. Suffering?

No, I'm not suffering. Now, if you look into your body, then you will know that you're suffering because if you look and see what the anger does to the physiology of the body, to your heart, to your breathing, to the circulation of your blood and so on, you realize that your body is actually suffering from this emotional state. It is suffering.

For the first time they discovered it when they discovered 200 years ago, whenever it was, somebody was shot in the stomach and the hole just didn't heal. So that was the first person, they could peer into his stomach and see when he got angry, the lining of the stomach became red. First time they saw that.

And many other things happen in the body. So it is a form of suffering. And so, two aims.

I'm here to get from A to B, but I'm also here to practice presence, to be present. I'm here to discuss the important business deal, but I'm also here to be present. The two, you have the inner aim and the outer aim.

That's what he is saying. If you forget the inner, you get lost in stuff and it overpowers you and you get overwhelmed. And life becomes frustrating.

Lost in externals, as he would say. Externals. All that matters.

I want a bath, but at the same time, I want to keep my will aligned with nature. Do this with every act. That way, if something occurs to spoil your bath, you will have readied the thought, well, this was not my only intention.

I also meant to keep my will in line with nature, which is impossible if I go all to pieces whenever anything bad happens. You go all to pieces when something bad happens because you're not aligned with the flow of life. You're not aligned with what is in the present moment.

That's the dysfunction. Wonderful teaching. And it's as relevant now as it was then.

Sickness is a problem for the body, not the mind, unless the mind decides that it is a problem. Lameness too, is the body's problem, not the mind's. Of course, he was talking from experience.

Say this to yourself, whatever the circumstance and you will find without fail that the problem pertains to something else, not to you. In other words, you can be free of problems. Another way of putting it, there is no problem.

There only is what is. And that's an incredible liberation if you can go through life realizing that there are no problems. There are only situations.

If you can live that experience then you're a master, living as a master. There are no problems, only situations. Under no circumstances ever say, I have lost something.

Only say, I returned it. And now another one where you go, oh no. Because it could be misinterpreted as being insensitive.

And it has, this has happened historically. Some people did not fully understand the teaching and they thought it's to do with desensitizing yourself to life and putting up a barrier to life. Where you go, nothing touches me anymore, like a wall.

You sometimes have to put up a barrier with Zen practitioners too. Because it can also, this is certain similarities with his teaching and Zen. And the way he lived would be very much like a Zen master lives.

Just this is what is, what is the problem. Now some people observe the Zen masters and they kind of, but they can't, they don't live it in the right way, which means they don't surrender to what is, they put up a wall to what is, against what is. And that, this is how this teaching could be misinterpreted and lead to insensitivity.

So this is not becoming insensitive to life or to other human beings. It's to open yourself more to life and other human beings. On the surface, it might look desensitizing yourself.

No, it's opening yourself because it's all to do with acceptance. So there's a huge difference between putting up a wall to life and accepting life. And people who put up an inner wall, it's a misunderstanding.

And of course, behind that wall, they suffer. But of course, they're hiding their suffering behind the wall. I don't suffer.

I'm a Zen practitioner. I have gone beyond the wall. I've gone beyond.

And then the wife says something, leave me alone. I'm in control. Don't talk to me.

I'm meditating. I can't deal with it now. I need to meditate.

Go and meditate. It's acceptance. So very different.

But when you read this, the next thing especially, it could be misinterpreted. There is a deeper, there is a compassion there. So don't misinterpret.

Under no circumstances ever say, I have lost something, only I returned it. Did a child of yours die? No, it was returned.

Your wife died? No, she died. She was returned.

My land was confiscated? No, it too was returned. And then somebody says, but the person who took it was a thief.

And he says, why concern yourself with the means by which the original giver effects its return? As long as he entrusts it to you, look after it as something yours to enjoy only for a time. The way a traveler regards a hotel.

Whatever it is, if it's there, enjoy it, knowing that of course it will leave you or you have to let go or it will decay, whatever. Enjoy, no attachment. And this is real.

True enjoyment becomes possible only then, because if you're attached, you're not really enjoying the thing. You make it into a means of something else. Make me happy or make me bigger.

I own this. It makes me feel bigger. You're not really enjoying it.

Whenever you see someone in tears, distraught because they are parted from a child or have met with some material loss, be careful lest the impression move you to believe that their circumstances are truly bad. Have ready the reflection that they are not upset by what happened, but by their own view of the matter. Nevertheless, you should not disdain to sympathize with them, at least with comforting words or even to the extent of sharing outwardly in their grief, but do not commiserate with your whole heart and soul.

It's interesting. Do not commiserate, which means do not enter their unhappiness. Compassion, I wrote something like similar in the power of now that compassion has two aspects to it.

One, you can feel their pain. This is empathy. You feel the other person's suffering because you have had your suffering.

It's probably if you have never suffered, compassion would be difficult, but if you have suffered, you can feel the other person's suffering also. But for compassion, true compassion to arise, true compassion has a deeper aspect to it. In addition to that, there's a depth and that is the depth that today we started with, the depths within yourself.

If you can feel that depth and there's peace in there, there is a space that is not touched by suffering in you. So that in the background, so to speak, there can be that peace. You're connected with that deeper, the depths within yourself.

Even as you empathize with the other person, and feel the suffering of the other person. So you have the two dimensions. Yes, I feel your suffering, but at the same time, there's a deep peace underlying that.

And then compassion is something that's actually very helpful to the other person. If you only commiserate, as he puts it, if you only commiserate with the other person, you're entering their frame of reference, you're entering their suffering. There's no help in that, really, to the other person.

The help comes if you stay rooted in the eternal within, and then you connect with the other person. That's really what he is saying. So there's a peace in the background, even as you empathize with the other.

And that's healing in the deepest sense. That is where healing flows from the depths of who you are to the other. And that's where it sometimes happens that the other person suddenly also becomes peaceful, doesn't know why.

So it's not, it doesn't work through verbalization. You can't say, you know, I should have known that your husband or wife was mortal, shouldn't you? No, that doesn't work.

It comes from the depths of who you are. That's the eternal. You don't need to talk about that.

And that's also, in any situation where there's, you empathize with others, whatever their problems. It might not be a physical problem. It could be that they are in a huge personal drama, and they want to talk to you about their drama.

Are you completely entering their reality? And then, of course, you get depleted after a while. Some people love that.

They say, this is what happened. Listen to me. Listen.

And they almost suck your energy in. And the energy, they need that energy to feed their drama. So if you enter it, after an hour of listening or trying to figure out some solution, well, why don't you do that?

And he said, no, I can't do that. Yeah, but all you could do, no, I've tried all that. It doesn't work.

Of course, they don't want an end to their drama. They are identified with that whole mind movement. So that doesn't help, except an hour later, you feel, I'm trying to be compassionate and helping.

It doesn't work. No, you don't enter their reality completely. You recognize that as a construct, an artificial construct created by their mind.

That's all the suffering. But you don't say that. You know it, but you don't say it.

Because the construct does not like to be challenged in that way. And you would not be reaching that human being. You would be only talking to the unhappy self, the mental construct.

And it is not receptive to that kind of talk. It doesn't want to look at itself, because that's the end of it. He was quite funny, too, from time to time.

What do we value? Externals. What do we look after?

Externals. So, of course, we are going to experience fear and nervousness. Faced with external circumstances that we judge to be bad, we cannot help but be frightened and apprehensive.

Please, God, we say, relieve me of my anxiety. Listen, stupid. You have hands.

God gave them to you himself. You might as well get on your knees and pray that your nose won't run. A better idea would be to wipe your nose and forego the prayer.

Show me one person who cares how they act. Someone for whom success is less important than the manner in which it is achieved. While out walking, who gives any thought to the act of walking itself?

Who pays attention to the process of planning, not just the outcome? If the plan works, of course a person is overjoyed and says, how well we planned it. Didn't I tell you with brains like ours it couldn't possibly fail?

But a different result leaves the person devastated, incapable of even finding words to explain what happened. So not just talk to the result. How you do is more important than the end result that you want to achieve.

How you do something is to do with your state of consciousness as you do it. Is your state of consciousness, does it come out of the inner power? That is, there's deep peace and a powerful energy flow and your complete attention is on the doing.

Or are you looking to what you want to achieve through the doing and then the doing is of a totally different quality? It goes, there's no, you get upset while you do things because you haven't arrived yet where you want to arrive. You look there and you do here.

And of course that's, I call that low quality action. And while you do, you're upset, you're angry with other people, you're blaming and accusing and shouting and angry with yourself, whatever, dysfunctional states, psychic disharmony. You're engaged in some big, important business enterprise, but how are you doing it?

In a state of psychic disharmony, creating unhappiness all around you. Yes, but I'm creating something great. No, you're creating unhappiness.

Whoever comes into contact with you gets infected by your inner dysfunctional state. And of course, and then if he does, he or she does finally achieve success. It's totally tainted by the energy that brought it about, karmic.

And then he drops dead. So how you do, pay attention to how, not always look to the end result because how is your state of consciousness now? When you're driving somewhere, what's more important, your state of consciousness in the moment of driving or arriving where you want to arrive?

Of course, most people think arriving is more important than this moment because there's something important at the other end. That is not true. What is more important is this moment because, why?

Because it's the only reality ever, this moment. There is nothing else. So how could it be less important than some imagined future moment?

And when that arrives, of course, then some other imagined future moment becomes more important than that one. This is normal living, but it's insane. These are deep-seated mind patterns in humans.

They are insane. They're normal. So many humans spend a lot of their lives in states of psychic disharmony or dysfunction, whatever you want to call it, and don't even know what they are doing.

They don't know what they're doing to themselves and they don't know what they're doing to others around them. They contaminate the planet, the world with this negativity. They don't know it.

So this is what, when you recognize that, you see it immediately in others around you, and if you are very alert, you can see it in yourself also. But the seeing is the beginning of freedom. When you see, okay, I'm creating a dysfunctional state right now, oh, now you have a choice to step out and become present.

When you see you're creating your own suffering, then you have a choice. You can step out of the stream of thinking, and the mind says, no, I can't step out of the stream of thinking. I just can't stop thinking.

I have to think about this. What's going to happen when this happens, and what if he doesn't, or that might go wrong and this can, what if I don't get it and this happens? Oh, God.

Oh, God. Hello. And of course, sometimes life does that to you, but it doesn't say hello, it goes whack.

And then for a moment, you're, oh, what was all that? It was all mental fictions, nothing to do with this moment, the only reality, this moment. God, I could read the whole book to you, it's so much in it.

Let any danger loom, and you will discover what we really practiced and trained for. So what you learned as the spiritual teaching, when you are confronted with danger or challenge, then you can practice, that's the most important part, to apply it in actual life situations in your daily life. Now, if you don't practice, because of our negligence, we forever compound our problems and make our situations out to be worse than they actually are, very common.

So for instance, whenever I'm on board a ship and gaze into the deep or look around me and see nothing but ocean, I'm gripped by terror, imagining that if we wreck, I will have to swallow all this sea. It doesn't occur to me that around three pints will be about enough to do me in. So is it the sea that terrifies me?

No, it is my imagination. Again, in an earthquake, I am prone to picture the whole city coming down on top of me, whereas in fact a single brick is enough to dash my brains out. Simple.

The complexity is never in the present moment. The complexity of one's problems and one's situation is in here, not here. It's always simple.

A brick falls, okay. Or at the right moment, you step aside. Now, one important thing here, when you become endeavoring to become free of externals and dependency on externals, there needs to be a balance between dealing with externals.

You can't say nothing, I'm not dealing with anything anymore because I'm free of externals. And he talks about this. Let's read a little bit.

It isn't easy to combine and reconcile the two, the carefulness of a person devoted to externals and the dignity of one who is detached. A person devoted to externals, okay, now we need to do this and this and this and this. But without detachment, you don't have the dignity which is the spaciousness while you do things.

So it's the balance between giving attention, but at the same time, not attaching yourself to the external. This is not impossible, otherwise happiness would be impossible. It's something like going on an ocean voyage that was at his time a little bit more hazardous than it is now.

What can I do? Pick the captain, the boat, the date, and the best time to sail. But then a storm hits.

Well, it's no longer my business. I've done everything I could. It's somebody else's problem now, namely the captain's.

But then the boat actually begins to sink. What are my options? I do the only thing I'm in a position to do, drown.

But fearlessly, without bawling or crying out to God, because I know that what is born must also die. I am not father time. I am a human being, a part of the whole, like an hour in a day.

Like the hour I must abide my time and like the hour pass. What difference does it make whether I go by drowning or disease? I have to go somehow.

Whatever you can control about externals, you do what you can. This I can do something about, this I can do, this I can do. Then it begins to unfold, and then in ways that you could not have predicted very often, and then it comes, you become aligned with what is as it unfolds.

Now there's one or two things that Epictetus did not yet see totally. That is, one is to some extent your inner state of consciousness and the external reality that you experience as your reality are linked. They're not totally separate.

So he doesn't talk about that. For him, there's the external that we need to accept, whatever is beyond our control. But as your inner state changes, your reality also changes, not in ways that is exact.

You cannot trace everything that happens to some thought or something like that. But your habitual state, your habitual vibrational frequency, emotional state, habitual thinking patterns, they tend to create certain reflections also in the outer. Very simple examples, of course.

If you believe that most humans are dishonest and out to deceive you, then you meet those people all the time. Isn't it strange? Any deep-seated belief that you have about other people or life, it tends to confirm itself in your experience, if only because perception becomes selective.

If you believe that everybody is dishonest, then you will look for, your perception is selective and honest people, you won't even see them. This is just one example. I could give hundreds of examples.

You don't see, if you look for the bad, you don't see the good in humans, for example. So your perception becomes selective and then reality confirms to you that all your thought patterns are actually correct. Yes, they are all evil.

They're all dishonest because it's become selective. That's one aspect. And also there's certain attractions.

You attract people that whatever you're afraid of, you tend to attract that. So if you're afraid of being robbed, you tend to attract that. I asked a famous person that I met a couple of years ago, do you have a, you don't have a bodyguard?

Because I've met some other famous people who always walk around with bodyguards.

And he said, well, actually, I'll tell you what it is, I'm sure he doesn't mind. Sting.

So I said, you don't have a bodyguard? He said, no. That would be like walking around with a gun in your pocket and then you attract certain situations where you need the gun.

And of course, that's very true. So that's inner states and outer reality. Another thing he didn't quite see yet as deeply is that thinking can be transcended altogether, not continuously, but the ability to step out of the stream of thinking and just be present in that spaciousness.

That's a creative state. Creative in the sense of not necessarily creating a work of art, could be that, but it doesn't. Creative in the sense of dealing with life as it happens in this moment in a creative fashion and not a conditioned way.

Responding creatively to what this moment requires, that's creativity. But that does not happen if you apply preconditioned thinking patterns to what happens in this moment, because then you will be judging, interpreting according to your past conditioning, what's happening in this moment. And it's never, that's never it.

You're imposing the past on the present. And so people do that with other humans. They immediately judge them according to their conditioning in the mind.

Can you meet another human without judgment? Well, for to be able to do that, you have to stop thinking, because every thought about that other human being is going to be some kind of judgment. So is that possible?

Can you come to be with and face another human being and look at him or her and listen to him or her and just be a spacious presence while you look and listen to him or her? Yes, you can try it. Look at me in the same way that I look at you.

Do I need some judgment about you? What can that add to the experience of this moment? It doesn't add anything.

It detracts from the aliveness that is in you and that is in me and that is all around us. It detracts from that. Any judgment and reality immediately shrinks into quietness.

That's the way it is. You have a suspicion and suddenly you judge the other human being or the situation that you are in. It immediately gets fixed.

It becomes like a piece of ice where before there was flowing water. And suddenly you pronounce some mental judgment or some mental conclusion. This is how it is.

This is how it is. And the whole flow of water suddenly gets frozen. And it's hard.

Once you have fixed reality in your mind like that, you're stuck with that. And whenever you meet that other human being that you have imposed that on, you get that rigidity that you cannot allow the human to be other than the judgment that you have imposed upon him or her. And if they display other behavior that completely contradicts your judgment, you won't even see it.

Or you will misinterpret that in some way. So that's, can you be, and this is perhaps the essential teaching, can you be spacious this moment here? Spacious as a presence.

Be here as a presence rather than a person. You don't lose anything. You can pick up the person that you are when you walk out of here.

The person will still be there, don't worry, if you still want it. You can pick up the person with all its history and problems. But for the time being, just practice with other humans.

That's practice. Being a spacious presence for them while you listen to them. Or look at them.

Don't tell them what you're doing, because it's not a doing anyway. Just, this is wonderful, not having to judge other humans. This is gradually the ability in you to do that.

It's not a doing, judging is a doing, but language is limited. The ability for you to do that grows as you practice being with others, not impose judgments. And your mind says, yeah, but you become defenseless.

Silly nonsense. You don't become defenseless. And there are things, if there are obvious things about another person, you see it and you still don't judge it.

If a person comes and says, look, I'll sell you this gold watch for $50. I paid $5,000 for it. I'll take $50.

You say, no thanks. You don't have to say, you're a thief. You probably stole it somewhere.

Or you got it in Thailand for $10, and now you're wanting to sell it to me. No, no thanks. You see, without even saying anything, you see the intention behind it, and you still can be compassionate.

You don't say how bad this human is. You just walk away. It's fine.

Don't need to, because who knows that human may awaken tomorrow through some drastic event. And suddenly, if you had judged that person and said he's a thief, well, maybe tomorrow he suddenly awakens and the thief collapses. So that is not who he or she is in their essence.

You don't get the essence through judgment. The essence in the other human becomes obscured, and the essence in yourself becomes obscured to yourself. Just a little bit more.

Here, first of all, a very extreme one. Don't judge it. Just listen.

It's a dialogue, very short. His son died. What happened?

What happened to him? What happened? His son died.

Nothing else? Nothing. The ship was lost.

What happened? The ship was lost. He was thrown into jail.

What happened? He was thrown into jail. He's in a bad situation.

Discrimination is a stock comment that everyone adds on their own account. So the man I mentioned to you earlier, Stockdale, he practiced these extreme teachings in an extreme situation and as a prisoner of war in North Vietnam for seven years, and he says it worked for him. Acceptance and non-judgments.

No more suffering. Physical pain may still be there, but no suffering. Suffering being the superstructure on top of the physical pain, the mentally created superstructure on top of it.

And this is an interesting little piece now about people who are waking up. He doesn't use that term. I use that term.

People who are beginning to wake up, living in presence. The tendency can be for them to be drawn back into unconsciousness with the habitual people that they spend time with. And he talks about that here.

It is inevitable if you enter into relations with people on a regular basis, either for conversation, dining, or simple friendship, that you will grow to be like them, unless you can get them to emulate you. So it's either you go there or they come to you. Place an extinguished piece of coal next to a live one, and either it will cause the other one to die out, or the live one will make the other reignite.

It's true. Since a lot is at stake, you should be careful about fraternizing with non-philosophers, as he calls it, in these contexts. Remember that if you consort with someone covered in dirt, you can hardly avoid getting a little grimy yourself.

He's talking to people in whom this is just growing, not to people where it's already fully manifested. They can associate with anybody. But in people in whom it is growing, the presence is arising, it can very easily become obscured again by people you meet.

It becomes obscured by a glass of alcohol. Once presence is firmly there, even one or two glasses of alcohol won't make any difference. You can have it or you don't have it.

But while it's arising, it's better not to protect it a little bit, like a delicate flower that grows. I mean, what are you going to do if your friends start nattering about gladiators, horses, and sports stars? Or even worse, if he starts gossiping about shared acquaintances?

He's good. She's bad. It's good this happened.

It's too bad about that. What if he sneers, ridicules, and even plays slow-down tricks? Do any of you have the musician's ability to pick up an instrument, immediately identify which strings need attention, and bring the whole instrument into tune?

Or Socrates' gift in every setting of winning over the company to his side? Not likely. Inevitably, you're going to adopt the common person's mentality instead.

So why are they stronger than you? Because they talk such garbage from conviction, whereas your fine talk is no more than lip service. It lacks life and vigor.

Anyone listening to your speeches might well come to hate that damned virtue you keep proclaiming. That's why those fools get the better of you. Conviction is quite a potent and irresistible force.

So until those fine principles take root in you so that you can begin to rely on them a little, I advise you to use discretion in associating with such people. Otherwise, whatever you write down in class will melt away like wax in the sun. Keep out of the sun, then, so long as your principles are as pliant as wax.

This is why philosophers say that we should even leave our native land, since old habits pull us back and make it hard to embark on new routine. Also, we can't stand running into people who say, look at him, this so-and-so trying to become a philosopher, ha-ha-ha. So it's better not to talk, really, about what you're practicing or learning, as little as possible, unless there's receptivity in the other human.

If there's no receptivity, then it's enough for you to practice, not talk about it. Let's see what else I can find. Here's a funny one.

It shows a lack of refinement to spend a lot of time exercising, eating, drinking, defecating, or copulating. Tending to the body's needs should be done incidentally, as it were. The mind and its functions require the bulk of your attention.

Give attention to your mind. That really means be present with your mind. So you've seen the wake-up call.

Thank you. Vigilance is required. Vigilance is that alertness, alertness, especially alert to see what your mind is, what kind of thoughts your mind is producing.

A helpful thing also is the alertness to sense perceptions. That slows down the mind considerably and brings you into the present moment, the surface of the present moment. Sense perceptions are the surface of the present moment.

But if you touch the surface of the present moment, you can go deeper from there into the depths of the present moment, which is your spacious consciousness itself. So alertness to sense perceptions is the first, is really where the portal begins to open into the present moment. If you ask, where is the present moment?

How do I get out of my mind into now, the simplicity of now, the reality of now, the power of now? Sense perceptions, looking, listening, smelling, touching. Oh, you're suddenly back in the now.

It's the surface, but that's a good start. And then you sense underlying the sense perceptions, the field of presence. You can't, it has no form, but it's there, that which makes the perception possible.

And then you have, and that's the way to live, is to have that in the background while you deal, either just contemplate sense perceptions or begin to deal with things here, continuing to sense the presence that you are in the background. What is presence? This.

And then you realize that it's not just inside you, the presence is within and without. The, in other words, the universe around you is not just inside you, begins to feel more alive. It's almost as if you could sense an aliveness, even in the space.

So it's within and without. You sense that aliveness, which has no form, formless aliveness. You can't put it under a microscope.

It is the precondition for everything. You cannot examine it as an object of consciousness. Okay, I'm now going to look and examine the aliveness of presence.

Who is looking? The aliveness of presence. I'm now going to looking at it.

You can't. It is it. I am it.

I cannot look at I as if I cannot, if I make myself into an object that I'm going to analyze or look at, it doesn't work. The, the presence is the, is the eternal I. So you can only be it, but you cannot make it an object and say, oh, there it is.

It is prior to everything. So you are prior to everything. In that sense, there's nothing you need to understand to realize who you are.

What you need to understand perhaps is to what prevents you from realizing who you are. That's helpful to know, but who you are, you can't know because it's the eternal subject. It can never be an object.

And so that's, you don't need to understand more about yourself to wake up spiritually, to be who you are in your essence. You are already that. The only understanding would be helpful to see how that realization is obscured in you.

So what you understand is never the reality of who you are. It's the illusion that obscures who you are, that you can understand to some extent. So when you judge another human being, whatever you say about them is also tends to be the, the illusory self that you see there.

The mind, the mental construct, which either is, might actually be there, or it's a total projection of your mind or completely a combination of the two. So the, you have the knowing, two types of knowing, conceptual knowing and non-conceptual knowing, which most humans don't realize yet the possibility of that. So that's quite a relief that you don't, there's nothing you can add to who you are already by some further understanding through the mind.

It's by relinquishing, trying to figure something out about who you are, that you suddenly, who you are in your depths opens up now. So this is the same teaching as Epictetus, going and taking it a little bit further. We're in a different time period.

More humans are open to it. And the need for awakening is much greater now for humanity or to awaken. At his time, it was still a luxury.

Now we have to, and that's good. The essence of the teaching is that we have to awaken. Awakening is of course, the freedom from having to think.

That's really what it comes down to. Yes. You don't have to think.

You can, if you want to, but increasingly you can go through life without an excessive baggage of thought. You can go through life without thinking. Suddenly you feel much lighter.

Situations are much lighter. Other human beings are lighter to you. They're not a problem to you.

Amazing things happen. As you practice, the ultimate renunciation, renunciation is a religious, spiritual term. It's the ultimate and usually it's used with reference to possessions, sexual relations, money, power, renunciation of whatever.

Traditionally, the renunciates in India possess nothing. They have nothing and that was also for a long time a tradition in Europe in the Middle Ages and early Christianity. In early Christianity, people lived in the desert, renouncing everything.

The desert fathers, as they're called. And that's all very nice, but if the ultimate renunciation hasn't happened, then all that is not even that helpful. If thinking, the compulsion to think and addiction to thinking and identification with thinking is not renounced, all other renunciations don't really make that much difference because you would still be attached to whatever thoughts arise in your mind.

And if you've renounced possessions, the first thought that will arise in your mind will be, I am someone who has renounced all possessions. You haven't renounced thinking. So the possessions that you were identified with, which in reality of course was only a thought, which means this is mine.

It is part of who I am. That was a thought you had identified with, but now you let go of that. And that's replaced by another thought that you identify with, which is, I'm the one who has renounced and all these inferior humans have not renounced.

Basically, nothing has changed. Now, you could of course have somebody who renounces all possessions and at the same time renounces self-reference to thinking, then that's fine. And you could also have someone who has all possessions and renounces thinking and possessions are still there, but don't matter anymore.

Or perhaps he'll give them away. Who knows? But the ultimate renunciation is breaking the addiction to thinking as a dysfunctional, useless activity.

And then apply thought when it's needed for certain things. That's fine. And be free when it's not needed, especially in relationships.

A lot of the time, thought isn't needed in a true deep relationship. Transcendence of thought is needed for a relationship to be deep and true. Of course you talk to each other, but the foundation of the relationship must be the space, the inner space in each one, which is ultimately one space, one consciousness.

So practice the ultimate renunciation and then, ah, what a relief. Don't have to think all the time. But don't go to sleep.

Stay awake. Okay? Thank you.

So as we sit here, I'd like to put a little question mark into your mind and like you to ask yourself whether at this moment you're thinking. So you will know the answer. And try it again.

I'll stop speaking for a few seconds. And just be alert inside yourself to find out whether you're thinking, because usually you don't even know that you're thinking. You're just, you are the thinking.

So there's no outside thing that knows that you are thinking. You are just the thinking. You become the thinking, the thinker.

And the thinker is the person. And to step out of the person, you have to experience that there is a dimension in you where the person is not. But something deeper is there.

That's why we want to explore. So again, a moment of stillness. In the power of now, I talk about a mouse, sorry, a cat watching a mouse hole.

Now, if you've ever watched a cat watching a mouse hole, then you will have noticed that the cat could spend a long time there being extremely alert and just watching in the same way that my dog watches a treat when I put it down and say, not yet. And then the dog goes. And so the cat watches the mouse hole.

It's in a state of complete attention. So one spiritual master, I believe it was a Sufi master, said his teacher had been a cat when he was asked who had been his spiritual teacher. He said, a cat?

How is that? And he said, I watched a cat watching a mouse hole. And by watching a cat watching a mouse hole, I realized, I awakened.

Because by watching a cat, he entered a state of alert attention in which there's no thinking, like now. Just that. There's no, just a short moment, but it doesn't matter how long.

It's a wonderful thing to realize that you can not think. It's a wonderful thing to realize that you are still there when you're not thinking. As Oprah said, when we started for the first time with a moment of silence and we started to talk again, she said, okay, I'm still here.

I just checked in. I'm still alive. I'm still here.

I haven't disappeared. One more time. Be alert.

You need to be alert to know whether you're thinking or not. So there's an alertness like a cat and there may be thinking or there may not be thinking. There may just be the alertness.

I also mentioned in the Power of Now that another question you can ask yourself is, what's my next thought going to be? I'm going to just watch out, see what's the next thought is that's going to come into my mind. And if you're very alert, it'll be quite a while before the next thought comes.

But the moment the degree of alertness decreases, thoughts come flooding back in. Interesting experiments you can do with yourself and your mind. Now, from the point of view of the usual thinking mind, the realization that there is a dimension in you where thinking either does not happen at all or becomes unimportant.

To the thinking mind, that is either a threat or completely uninteresting. Because what could be less interesting than not thinking? So from the point of view of the thinking mind, the state of consciousness in which there is no thinking is either a threat.

Oh, I don't want to go there. I'm going to disappear. But of course, Oprah didn't disappear after the stillness.

I'm still there. I'm still alive. And then when she said that, I said, perhaps you're even more alive now.

And that is pointing to something. There is an intensification of aliveness when you begin to enter that, let's call it, dimension in yourself. The dimension in which compulsive thinking doesn't operate anymore.

But you have to be careful because you could easily, because, okay, what we're doing here is we rise above thinking. We become so alert that thinking either doesn't happen or is seen as unimportant. From there, you can easily suddenly drop through thinking to below thought.

In other words, you go to hot sleep. So when you stop thinking, there's the alertness. Here's the thinking level.

That's the normal level for most human beings while they are awake. And even when they dream, they're still going on. Here's the thinking level.

Underneath the thinking level, there's consciousness. Above the thinking level, there's consciousness. And even within thinking, there's consciousness.

Thinking is an expression of consciousness. But there are infinite varieties of manifestations or expressions of consciousness. This flower is an expression of consciousness taking on the form, this beautiful form, incredible beauty.

Consciousness being born into forms. And consciousness, not all consciousness is form. There is a dimension of consciousness that is formless, out of which all forms come, the ground of all being.

And that's what we are exploring here. Thinking. You rise above thinking or you fall below thinking.

My dog is below thinking. Now that doesn't mean that the dog is stupid. The dog has its own intelligence.

And in some ways, the dog is superior to humans in some ways. For example, it's more joyful than most humans, has more fun than most humans, lives more intensely in the present moment where life is than most humans, doesn't worry like most humans do, and is loving towards all beings. Some dogs are loving only towards certain beings, but our dog is loving towards all beings.

But the dog doesn't think. The dog is conscious, but there's no conceptual thinking. I'm sure the dog doesn't have thoughts.

The other day, the dog was in the bedroom in his little house. Quite late, it was already night. The dog was already sleeping.

And I was still doing things near the door, the entrance door to the apartment. I was opening the sliding door and looking for something in my coat. And when the dog heard the sliding door near the exit, she came out, she must have woken up and heard a noise, came out running to see what I was doing, whether I was getting my coat to go out.

So she came running. And then for 10 seconds, the dog stood there looking at me and realized I was just taking something out of a pocket, and I wasn't going out. So after five seconds, the dog must have realized I wasn't going out and went straight back into her house and back to sleep.

Now, did the dog begin to think in her house, oh, I can hear something. He's opening the sliding door to the wardrobe. I wonder if he's getting the coat out to go out.

And then I need to have a look because he may leave me alone here. Okay, I'm going to have a look to see what's happening. And then the dog would go and look, oh, what's he doing there?

Oh, I think he's just taking something out of his pocket. He's not going out after all. Why did I bother to come out?

I might as well go back to sleep. Now, I'm sure that's not how it happened, but that's what would have happened for a human doing that. Now, the strange thing, how would that happen for a dog?

The whole thing must have happened without conceptualization. There was the listening to the noise, and there was a sudden knowing that that noise of the door could mean that I'm going out. And then there was just getting up, finding out.

I'm sure, although you can't really get into the dog's mind, I've tried, I'm sure it was without any decision-making process or mental commentary. There was just an immediate response to a situation, and then there was a recognition of what was going on in that situation, and immediately not a decision to go back to bed, but just a going back to bed. So there was consciousness there at work, but not through conceptualization.

And for humans, of course, it would be usually different. There would be, as you're doing that, there would be the running commentary that I just mentioned, if the dog had a human mind. There are some anthropologists who have looked at the history of the human race, and they wondered where or how did thinking start to start?

When did humans begin to think? And it seems likely that at first there was no conceptual thinking. There was only thinking in images.

So when they closed their eyes, they could suddenly see certain images of things that had happened, or things that they imagined. So the moment they closed their eyes, certain images would be there, and when they opened their eyes, they still lived very much like the dog, just an immediate response without the interference of conceptualization. And then thinking started.

And there's one anthropologist who has put forward the theory. He has some evidence for it. I forgot what the evidence is, but his theory is very controversial.

I believe, however, that he may be right. He believed that at first when thinking began to happen in humans, and thinking in the sense of words in your mind, those humans at first thought that some entity, a god or a spirit, was talking to them. And so the voice of the god or spirit that suddenly appeared in their head said, oh, you better go to the lake and make sure that you catch another fish.

And they would go, oh, why is there no fish today? Somebody is talking. Why don't you go there?

There might be a better catch there. Okay, thank you. I got a message.

I should be going there. It was their own thoughts, but for a long time, because it was something new, they didn't realize that these were their thoughts. They believed some spirit helper or something was telling them to do something.

And then, of course, sometimes it might also be the same kind of voice that is telling these days the terrorists to go and shoot people. You must shoot these evil people. Go, do it.

Oh, okay, I'll do it. No idea that they are obeying something that is in their own mind. And so that's how it all started.

And then thousands of years passed. And now we have human beings who are completely identified with mind. And their whole sense of self is derived from mind, from mind activity.

And the awakening of consciousness is the realization that beyond your mind, there is a great depth to who you are and great freedom and a far greater intelligence than is in your thinking mind. Then the thinking mind can be used by that greater intelligence. But for the thinking mind to be used by that greater intelligence, you have to find within yourself that greater intelligence, which we could call unconditioned consciousness.

You have to find that in yourself. If we don't find it, we are going to kill ourselves, because this evolutionary level where we are identified with thinking is no longer functioning well. It has become destructive.

It has reached the end of its lifespan or usefulness. And so if humans don't achieve the transition, they will either regress to an earlier stage of development and then have another go. It could take a few hundred thousand years, but the universe is patient.

Or the species becomes extinct, and then consciousness simply decides to move through other channels to express itself. It could be another life form very easily. Consciousness does not mind through which channel it comes into this world, but it wants to come into this world.

I don't know why, but I know that consciousness wants to be born fully into this world from another realm, from the timeless, unmanifested, where consciousness does not evolve. It's already full and complete, because it's timeless. But from the timeless realm, for consciousness you can use other words if you want.

The Tao, God, transcendental reality, doesn't matter, just words. That which we cannot name, it wants to come through the forms into this world and somehow do something here. Perhaps it wants to dissolve this world, to outshine this world, to transform it, to spiritualize matter, transformation of the universe.

But I know what our task is, to wake up here out of being trapped in your own little mind, the little mind. It's not yours, it's just the human mind. And that's why I started today by asking you to see if you can have a little space inside yourself where you're actually not thinking, but still awake and alert.

That's the opening into the greater intelligence. At first it seems there's nothing happening. No, don't expect anything to happen, that will come.

It's the beginning, you open the door. You're opening the door to another dimension. Now the thinking mind knows nothing of it, and you cannot use it to enter that dimension.

The moment you use it and try to figure something out, what's in there, you're out again, you're not in that dimension anymore. We are opening the door to another dimension of consciousness within ourselves. And then see if the door can stay open while we go about our daily business, or if it can be open occasionally, and then as we go about our daily business.

And from the point of view of the mind, it's not interesting because there's nothing, to the mind it's nothing. And that's fine, to the mind it's not interesting. And of course it isn't, because when you're not thinking for a moment, nobody could possibly call that interesting.

It's deeper than interesting. But at first it might appear, well there's nothing there, there's nothing happening. But you have to persist and see, wait a little, and see if you can enter that dimension more fully.

Just you open the door, and first of all you experience not so much a positive thing, but an increasing absence of negative things. All the negative things that are continuously produced by the thinking mind, by unnecessary thinking. So as you bring that dimension into your life, you experience an increasing absence of the negativity that is normal when you're totally trapped in your mind.

All the negative thoughts that go through your head, and that emotions then respond to. So our destiny is to shift from thought into the realm of no thought, and then being able to use thought from there. In fact, who or what is it that then uses thought?

The intelligence that is the realm of no thought then uses your mind. And then you become productive in this world. You contribute something truly new to this world, in whatever form.

Whether you're an artist, or a writer, or you work with people, or you are engaged in some organization, you then make a very different contribution because it's no longer ego-based. Ego is the unobserved mind. The mind without awareness.

That you mistake for who you are. Me, the person. And it's a dreadful thing to live your entire life never going beyond the personal dimension.

Never seeing the transcendent dimension in yourself and in the world. So it's essential then to no longer be trapped continuously in thought. And don't expect results from the dimension of no thought.

It could be a while before there's any tangible result on an external level. In other words, that you suddenly write a masterpiece, or you suddenly become a great performer, or suddenly you help thousands of people with this or that and become a beneficial influence in this world. It could take a while, and we don't know what form it'll take.

It may not happen immediately, but as you begin to enter that dimension occasionally, and then the mind says, you see, nothing is happening. I've been practicing being free of thinking for a few months now, and my life hasn't changed at all. It's still the same.

In fact, it's become less interesting because I worry less. Of course, worry makes your life very interesting. And it gives you the impression that your life is so important.

My life is so important that I'm worrying all the time, and these are very important things I need to worry about. And so then from the point of view of the mind, your life has become less important. So, okay, I've been doing it for several months.

That's enough. I'm going back to my old ways. And sometimes people write to me and say, okay, I've been practicing awareness, presence for a year now, and where do I go from here?

There were years when I lived mainly in the state of awareness without any, many tangible results. Occasionally I would help people. That was very nice.

I enjoyed that. Help would, not I would help, but help would come through that opening. But beyond that, there wasn't much happening that went on for years.

And occasionally I thought, well, there is more that could happen, but it's not happening yet. That's fine. And in the meantime, there was a, I realized retrospectively, there was a, whatever words we use are not quite right, but let's just put it like this, there was a buildup gradually of energy, of presence power, one could say.

There was an intensification of that in the background of my life that had no visible manifestation really in the external, not very much. And so that presence was there. And one day, in fact, I gave a little, it came to me to say, please, please I can do more.

I said to myself, accelerate, please. Accelerate. Acceleration.

I was talking to myself, because you're always just talking to yourself. And then a little bit later, it happened. And then the energy stream came that became a book.

And so on. And in the intensification of what I was doing already, on a very small scale, but suddenly there was a whoosh coming into this world. Whoosh.

But for years, there was just empty space mostly inside, walking around and just very pleasant, enjoying the beauty of every moment of the trees and of the animals. And something was there in the background. And then finally it came whoosh into this world.

And perhaps when it's, it may well be that after a while the energy stream that goes out may subside again and I just go back into whoosh, just the space. In some way I do that continuously, because after a talk, whoosh, you go back into whoosh. So there's the coming out of the consciousness stream going into words and into energy that flows out and then the return into just stillness, space.

No need to think very much unless there's something to think about. Where am I going for dinner? Where do I have enough?

But even there, it's amazing how many things you can do without unnecessary thinking. Just experiment. I recommend that you experiment in your daily life.

This is the most beautiful spiritual practice. Experiment whether you can do many little things without the interference of thinking, with just presence or awareness there. What I mean by that is you are conscious that you're doing something, but you're not thinking about it.

And whether you can actually even register things without formulating words in your mind. Little things, little experiments, it's all very fascinating. You can have a little clock, if you have a watch or a clock that doesn't have, especially if it doesn't have digitals on it, you can experiment with yourself and see whether you can look at a clock or a watch and know what time it is without in your mind telling yourself what time it is.

And that's quite a strange thing. There is a knowing without conceptualization then. If you know that it is a certain time, whatever it is, without saying to yourself that time it is.

You don't do it with a digital clock because when you read the numbers it's almost impossible not to say the numbers in your mind. Just one little experiment and then many other things when you're doing a certain task. Every master, the moment you become a master you don't think anymore.

Intuition takes over. Otherwise you can't be a master. Sometimes you have to learn first gradually through the mind to do something.

There may be certain steps that you need to learn, whether you're building something or whatever it is that you do, learning to play the piano or whatever it is. At first it's driving a car, whatever. At first it takes effort to learn, to become an artist, a painter.

You learn the techniques and so on. And then a moment comes when all that is not helpful anymore. If you never go beyond the techniques you won't be a great artist.

A great artist knows the techniques and then steps beyond it and then something else takes over. And that's where your life becomes empowered. But you need to open the door to the empowerment.

And it's not, you cannot get there through thinking. And even something that seems to be an intellectual thing, like writing a book, if there's any inspiration or power in the book, whether it's fiction or non-fiction, it has to come from the place, the empty space inside you that you go into where for a moment you close your eyes and then you look again and nothing comes. You go back and you look again until something comes through spontaneously.

But it won't come spontaneously. You have to have learned, you need to learn to write first before you, I mean, before you can write a book you need to be able to write. Or if you want to become a great tennis player, you cannot go into the state of no thought very deeply and suddenly step on a tennis court and take a racket and be immediately a great tennis player.

You have to go through many steps first before the intuition can take over. But that's where the dividing line is between somebody who has learned to do something well, and many people do that, and somebody who brings in something new or goes beyond doing something technically well, where inspiration comes in, where empowerment comes in. So it's vital to find that dimension in yourself.

So go around your daily life, see how much you can actually do without the interference of conceptualization. It's amazing. Observe yourself.

Is it possible for you to be for a moment free of thinking at any given time? For example, now, no thought, just presence. You haven't disappeared, but what is there to add to this moment by thinking about something?

You don't need to add anything. And what is there then when you're not thinking? What's there left of you, what you had called you?

There is definitely something there. No past, let's say, because to have a past, you need to think about your past. To have a future, you need to think about your future.

Now, if you're not thinking about your past and your future, you don't have a past and a future. There's only now-ness. There's only this moment.

So you have, let's say, you have no past, you have no future, there's only this moment now, and there's nothing to think about. There's still something there, and that's the essence of who you are, consciousness itself. It cannot be defined.

It's neither big, nor small, nor fat, nor thin, nor old, nor young. Timeless essence has no form. There's nothing much you can say about it, but there's definitely a strong sense of beingness or aliveness that's left when you take that, the rest, away.

And that's when you take thought away. You haven't disappeared. In fact, thought wasn't at all who you are.

You thought so, but it wasn't. If you take thought away, you can actually, you touch the essence. You know the essence and when I say you know the essence, that's not absolutely correct, because the moment we use words, we create duality.

You know yourself as the essence. You don't know it like a subject and object knowing. I know this.

In this world, that's through thought, there's always the knowing subject and that which is known. But here, the knowing subject and the knower and the known are one. You know yourself to be consciousness.

It's not separate. There isn't a me that says, I am consciousness. There's consciousness, you know yourself as consciousness.

I am that. No separation, no division anymore. And when I put it into words, it sounds almost complicated, because we cannot really verbalize because it's too simple.

It's not a differentiated state. Everything out here is differentiated. This is undifferentiated state of pure intelligence or pure consciousness.

It's always there to be easy to just touch it in you. It's always underneath the mental noise in everyone. It's there for you, waiting for you, almost one could say.

It's waiting and it wants you to come through you. Just open, open, and it comes through. It doesn't matter if you are a saint or a sinner.

You open, there's a space between two thoughts, and it comes through. What you did in the past is irrelevant, whether you accumulated many spiritual credits by spending 20 years in a monastery, or whether you're stuck in a prison and the opening happens and the spirit doesn't ask, well, are you qualified for me to come through? It will come through wherever there is an opening.

So your personal past doesn't have that much to do with it. The only thing is it got you here to this moment where you realize the possibility of living in a different state of consciousness. Your past got you here.

Well, that's good enough. Whether your past was a successful past or a failure past, whether you built up great things already in your life, or whether you messed your life up completely, becomes irrelevant. So you become free from the past through this, because another dimension comes in.

This is why it has happened to some people who were criminals, and at some point suddenly all that subsided, and a space opened up inside them, and the unhappy self suddenly wasn't operating anymore. Now, to some people it comes as a spiritual experience, which means it comes and then after a while they say, oh God, it's gone, I lost it. Okay, that's the normal thing.

Sometimes it comes once and stays forever, you never lose the connection again with the open space. But for many people, first it comes and then it leaves them, and they don't realize that they can actually welcome it and encourage it. You don't have to wait for it to come again at some point.

Why don't you ask for it to come back? I'm not saying you ask like, please come back. No, you ask for it to come back by simply walking across the room without thought.

Just see if I can walk across the room without needing to be already where I want to get to, the door, just be present in every step. Can you be present in each step as you walk across the room? Oh, you're not thinking, you're just present with that.

Can I be present while I look out of the window to check the weather, and can I know what the weather is like without saying something to myself or having some kind of relationship or attitude towards the weather? Can I open the curtains in the morning and say nothing, just look and know? There's either sunshine or there's rain or whatever it is.

You open the window and there is an awareness that's looking through your eyes. And do you have to say something to yourself then? Do you have to say, oh, it's another dreary day.

I can't take any more of this. Do you have to say that, or is it just an old habit that you've slipped into? Do you have to say, oh, I hope it stays like that today, or whatever, it's going to be too hot, or whatever comment you have, do you need to comment, or can you look out of the window and just know and be the knowing without conceptualization and without like or dislike, just allow it to be and know in the same way you would, I suggested you can look at your watch and know what time it is without saying to yourself what time it is. And so you look out of the window, and for a moment there is a space, you are the space through which the perception happens.

You are not a person. Don't worry, the person is still there on some level, so you're not going to be spaced out for the rest of your life and then walk around, oh, I don't know where I am anymore. That doesn't happen.

But it's a wonderful thing if you realize that you can actually be there as the counter space for whatever you are looking at. Even at this moment, you're looking at this person, and this person is looking at you. Can you be the conscious space for the perception, for the looking, rather than be a person that always has some kind of thing to say, like, what's he talking about?

That's a thought. I don't understand. That's a thought.

Can you explain more? I don't get it. Don't believe that thought.

The thought says I don't get it, and of course on the level of thought you don't get it, but on another level you get it. You get it by being it. And so, can you be in your car at the traffic light and just be there as the space for the perception of the red light?

It's peaceful. Suddenly the traffic light becomes peaceful. You are there as you're just seeing.

There's the seeing and there's the space. Why comment on the red light or think about something that's going to happen or might happen or happened in the past or something? Just be, perceive, and be the space.

And then the strange thing is, that which you perceive is more alive, and even the traffic light, the red light, has a beauty to it. It sounds very strange, and normally it's only sometimes people who take acid talk about weird things like, when I saw the traffic light, I went, wow. No, you don't need to take acid for that, and it may not be a wow, but it may be, wow, that has its own beauty and aliveness, that colour.

And you're not saying it, you just know it. And if you can see the traffic light like that, even more so, that will be the case even more so if you look at the tree that's right next to the traffic light. It has a presence, it has a beauty, it has an aliveness, beyond the concept of tree or the bird that just landed on a branch.

An aliveness, a beingness that you then recognize from your own beingness and aliveness that before was obscured by mental noise. So unless you become like little children, because this has something to do with how little children perceive the world before they conceptualize. Unless you become like little children, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

Ah, so that's what it is. But it's an even deeper state than the child state, because the child still has to go through the thinking stage and then come out of it. The child has certain things still in common with the dog, not quite, but still no conceptualization, just wonder.

And so that's a gradual practice of choosing to step out of the conceptualizing mind whenever it is unnecessary, which is about, depending on your life activity, 80% of the time, you don't need to think a lot. You could think thoughts may come and go, but you don't, there's no need to continuously think. It's become familiar with spaciousness.

And then think when it's necessary. And you be empowered then and your thinking becomes actually empowered. You can actually, if you wanted to create something in this world, this is what some popular books talk about, manifesting your external reality, of course you can, through applying focused thinking, you can manifest, but if you're in touch with the spaciousness, the unconditioned consciousness inside, then that comes through and will manifest through you.

And then it comes as a sudden knowing that this is what I want to do, but the I that wants to do it, it's not the ego I, it is the deeper I. So you become aligned with what the universe wants, it's not just what the little me wants. That's the beauty of that.

So you can then, you as the greater consciousness can manifest if you want to. Don't fall into the trap of believing that something that you manifest is going to bring you fulfillment. It's only on an external level, the fulfillment needs to be there already now.

Fulfillment is being in touch with that dimension in yourself before anything happens. That's where fulfillment lies. The rest is the divine play of form.

But the divine wants to play out there, it wants the manifestation. It wants two things, there are two movements in the universe. One is the movement into differentiation and into form and into birth, into bodies, into thinking.

The universe started from a point of nothingness. That nothingness became one, let's just, it's all not quite right because we can't really talk about it. Out of the nothingness came the ball, whatever, before the Big Bang happened.

There was just one point of potentiality for the entire universe. Then at some point the explosion, if we could call it that, out of that was the beginning of the process of differentiation into increasing number of different forms. And we are still part of that explosion into greater and greater differentiation.

But at the same time, this is the pull, the outward pull. Then there's the inward pull back to the source, to the timeless source out of which it all came. And so we as human beings are at a transitional stage where we are becoming strongly aware of the pull back to the source.

So there are two movements in the universe. One is out into more and more form and more and more thinking, it's still there, that movement. There are still many people who believe that the problems of this world can be solved if we just think harder about them, have more committee meetings about the problems of the world and discuss them, and eventually they can be solved.

They don't realize that the problems of the world are there because we have lost touch with the source out of which everything came. So by going into further differentiation, we cannot solve the problems, we'll actually increase them. So we need to balance now, return to the source and going out into the world.

It doesn't mean we don't do anything anymore. We can still create and do, but not lose ourselves in creating and doing and thinking. Lose ourselves in the mind.

Connect it with the timeless, formless source of all life within, the space of no thought. Connect it with that. Then we can create, not we as persons, but we as a universal movement of consciousness.

Consciousness wants us to be co-creators of the universe, of form. So we can be that, but only if we are connected. We need conscious connection with the source.

So that's the destiny. That's your life purpose. That's why we are here.

And if it sounds complicated to your mind, it's only to the mind. It's not complicated at all. It's actually very, very simple.

It's so simple that you can't even think about it. Welcome. As we sit here, we can drift into discursive thinking or simply be still and present using the opportunity of being in this collective energy field to support the arising dimension of stillness in you, which is also power, unconditioned, timeless.

So you give up all knowing, the accumulated knowledge, don't need it here, in order to access the source of all knowledge.

Q and A with Eckhart Tolle TV Part 9

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 58:21)

The accumulated knowledge, don't need it here, in order to access the source of all knowledge. But the giving up of the accumulated knowledge, of course, is also the giving up of the mind-made self that consists of accumulated thought forms. So as we sit here, we are dying a little death, or a big death, and realize that nothing real actually died, only the illusion of a false self.

What remains is consciousness, consciousness, the very bare fact that you are. So at this moment, there's the opportunity of sensing something much more fundamental than the history of who you think you are in the mind, my past, your sense of identity. You no longer need to derive from that.

It's still there, you can remember it if you want to, when you need it, rarely. But who are you really beyond the story of your life, beyond your personal history? Who am I really?

There's no conceptual answer, it would be just another thought, but direct realization. And suddenly there is that space of open, spacious awareness in which you don't seem to know anything anymore. You can look at the world in absolute innocence and see its beauty and aliveness and miraculousness without calling it even beauty and aliveness.

You merge with whatever you perceive because considering yourself to be a separate entity, here's me and there's the rest of the universe, was created, this delusion was created by compulsive, unconscious, continuous mental interpretations and labelings and judgments, so-called knowledge, opinions. And suddenly, as we sit here, spacious awareness replaces, so to speak, compulsive thinking, and that's enormous liberation to realize that dimension in yourself. You're liberated from the person, the thinker, the me, the troublemaker, the problem maker, the one who dwells in continuous, almost continuous discontent and sense of non-fulfillment and anxiety and fear.

What about me? And you realize you are so much deeper than that absurd little entity, but you have to have the courage to go to that place of what looks like, from an external, habitual mental viewpoint, looks like a place where you don't know anything anymore because the compulsive interpretations have dissolved. And you merge with everything.

You look at the flower, a human being, and there's no longer a sense of me and the other because the sense of me and the other was created by concepts, continuous conceptualization of reality, compulsive conceptualization of reality, a deadening habit. And so you come suddenly, there's an intense increased aliveness because the veil of conceptualization falls or is pushed aside, is allowed to drop. Maybe that's the best way of putting it.

And then you suddenly interact and perceive without the veil of conceptualization. And you suddenly inhabit a universe that is intensely alive, where even inanimate objects, you can sense their beingness. And you can sense the very fact of your own being as the very basis for this universe, the I am, beingness itself, the fact that you are.

That in itself to know that you are, not this or that, but to know that you are, to know it directly is joyful. So to know your own, your being is joyful, just the fact of being. The ancient Indian teachers knew that and they still know it now, some of them, always some awakened beings there.

So they call it being, consciousness, bliss, sat, cit, ananda, is to be aware of the being that you are means consciousness, the unconditioned, the light of the world, becoming aware of itself. Awareness is aware of awareness, so to speak. Not aware of something, aware of nothing, the no thingness.

You can be aware of this flower, but even as you are looking at this flower, you can be aware of the awareness in which this flower appears. To sense that, another way of putting it, to sense a spaciousness in the background of your being, a vast space, a still alive space, and in the foreground, things happen and appear and disappear. And then whatever happens and appears and disappears is actually miraculous.

But you no longer relate to it in a needy way. I need this to be there and that to be there in order so that I can feel okay. No, the okayness is much prior to all that, what appears or not appears, does not appear.

So as you have the vast spaciousness in the background, you can interact with much greater ease with the foreground of your life, with other humans. You don't need them anymore to fulfill you. And you don't fear them anymore because they might not do what they're supposed to do, strengthen your ego or give you something or stay attached to you to fulfill you in some way.

So you begin to relate to other humans without that, the neediness or the fear in freedom and really love. That's love when you don't want anything from the other anymore, and yet there is a recognition of shared being. In the same way, there's the recognition of shared being with a flower.

And there's no concepts there, just that you don't necessarily say, oh, the flower and I are really one. I have to think about that. Or I'm trying to be loving because I'm supposed to love my neighbor.

I'm trying, trying, doesn't work. You can't do it through conceptualization. It's only through the spaciousness that opens up that the true recognition of being, in whatever life form appears in front of you, that recognition of being is there.

Being recognizes itself. It disguises itself in millions of life forms, temporary disguises.

And you recognize, you look through the disguise, and sometimes the disguise is very strong.

That's the play of the universe. Let's, you have to really, let's really disguise ourselves, and some humans are heavily disguised. God disguising him, her, itself very well.

And with others, the disguise is not so heavy, but the heavy disguise is more challenging. It's more fun in a way. I'm talking about, of course, difficult humans.

To recognize shared beingness in a flower is, of course, much easier because the disguise is far, far, far less, much easier than to recognize the shared beingness when confronted with an angry human, who says, you. You. But there's a space for that also.

And you look, oh, give him or her the space to do their act. And you don't need to react. Let them do their act, but you don't need compulsively to react because if compulsively you react, you adopt your own, your disguise again, and you play your part in the drama or the dream of existence.

All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely play as, or however else Shakespeare's phrase goes, so to recognize your essential beingness is such a simple, it's so simple that it becomes difficult for the complicated humans. It's so, such a primordial fact. And then consciousness recognizes itself, really.

That's what it is. And that is joyful or blissful. And so the Indian teachers, masters, they string together three words and make it into one, Sat-Chit-Ananda, being, consciousness, bliss, to describe that state of connectedness, of oneness with being.

It's very simple, too simple. And what you access also is intelligence itself, the unconditioned, out of which anything new arises, an insight, an idea, that is the place of true intelligence. I call it sometimes non-conceptual intelligence or the unconditioned consciousness.

And that's where suddenly creativity opens up in your life because the person is not creative. The mind is not creative, but it can be an instrument of true intelligence. And the mind has no intelligence of its own.

It borrows its intelligence from universal intelligence. So the secret then is to not lose touch with who you truly are as you go about this world, seemingly participating in the play, but knowing at the same time, not conceptually, being the space and then pretending also to be the person while you do things. So you are the space while you talk to someone, listen to someone in spacious awareness.

So you bring that dimension into the interaction. If you only did that, listening whenever other humans are talking to you, if you only did that, if you are able to use every opportunity whenever any human being talks to you, listen in spacious awareness instead of listening through mentally, immediately agreeing or disagreeing or thinking of the next thing you are going to say, or I know exactly what you need. Let me tell you what you need.

I know that already, but be there as an open field of aware presence. If you only did that, would be enough to transform your life, your relationships with every human, because the old patterns would no longer be operating through you, would transform your relationships with all human beings. And of course, will also help others without you feeling that you are helping, you're not doing anything, but it is an invitation to others if there's a slightest openness in the other to join you in that field of aware presence.

And if they don't join you in that field of aware presence, it's fine too. But if that were your only spiritual practice, listening in that way to other, you would be enough to transform your life. And if enough humans transform their lives in that way, then of course the world gets transformed.

It's only a collective expression of the collective consciousness. Unless you live as a hermit, in other words, you never listen to anybody except your mind, and most of you are not hermits, so you interact with people and every day you listen to people on the phone. Well, unless you get so much into texting that you don't talk to them anymore.

For teenagers, I may have to think of some other way of being if they only, if they don't talk anymore. No, no, it goes with your thumbs. You can see I'm a, I only had a phone for a few months of that kind, so I do like.

So if that's your only spiritual practice, quite enough, just the listening. Because whenever you listen, well, you are not there as an egoic entity. You're not bringing in your past.

You're not even there as a person anymore. The person recedes and you're there as a wench. And it doesn't mean that now you have to be, you can't talk anymore, no.

It means then as you talk or reply or give your viewpoint, you very clearly realize that what you are giving is your viewpoint. You don't merge with your viewpoint and then anybody who questions or attacks your viewpoint is considered a mortal enemy because you have confused who you are with a thought in your head, which is your viewpoint, which is insane. So you can still, you don't have to say, I have no opinion anymore about anything, no.

All it means is you recognize that these are opinions, viewpoints, in other words, thoughts, and they have their viewpoints and opinions, thoughts. Now, they may be still totally identified. That's okay.

You allow them to be that. But you are there primarily as space. But in that space, your viewpoint can be expressed to say, this is what I believe, that there's a spaciousness around it.

And you are the spaciousness. You are not the viewpoint. And you can give your viewpoint.

And then you say, my view on the president of the United States is that he's doing very well. And, or you say, my view is that I feel a little disappointed as some people say. Or then you can allow the other person to say, no, I think that the president of the United States is controlled by aliens.

Well. Maybe he is. It's a viewpoint.

So you're beyond needing, allowing those to be. The identification with mind structures, viewpoints, is gone. You are not there as a mental entity that needs identification with thinking to give it a sense of who, to give you a sense of who you are.

It's a dreadful state. Because you're continuously in conflict with other thinkers. In fact, you need the conflict, because without the conflict, this phantom that consists of identification with thinking couldn't even survive.

So you have to generate more conflict with other thinkers so that your thinker can feel its boundaries more clearly. If it sounds insane, it is because it is insane. And it's called normal, too.

So what arises then is a new consciousness on the planet. Like a new species coming out of the earth. Like the old.

There's a shift, a huge shift happening. Otherwise, we wouldn't be here. And no need so much to look at what's going to happen out there, because what's going to happen, what looks like out there, is determined by the within.

So remember the, because it's so easy to forget. Why is it easy to forget to be the spacious awareness while you listen to other humans? Because the gravitational pull of the old mind structures and the mental habit of absorbing all your consciousness into thinking is very strong and old.

So there is a momentum there, or a heaviness, a heavy, old pull of the mind that is used to possessing your entire consciousness and continuously transforming your entire consciousness into thinking. And it wants to come back in there. It wants you to give your total identification, your total attention to the thinking, become one with the thinking.

So the pull will come. And so it's recognizing when the pull comes. And then the moment you recognize it, the alertness grows.

So you suddenly become, oops, I'm being pulled into, and then alertness suddenly arises. And then there's no thinking. And suddenly you're again, you're aware of the space, of your awareness.

So you may have to, quite a few times during the day, experience that shift, falling back into the old, or it could take a few minutes, you're back into. That's how normal living goes like that. You're talking to yourself continuously.

But some people are better at disguising it than I do at the moment. But really, that's how it is. If it were not so well disguised, they put on a mask.

And you think, you think they're not thinking. Not surprisingly, the word person comes from Latin persona, which means mind. And they put on a mask.

But really, under the mask, there's that going on. And sometimes with people who are considered a little bit insane, you can see it more clearly, but they're not really much more insane than the normal person. And then they look at you, and the thing is, who are you really?

What are you trying to do? Do you know me? I know exactly what you want.

But you're not going to get it. It's good to laugh at this, because that in itself is a liberation. When you recognize those normal human patterns in others, and occasionally even in yourself, and you say, wow, there it is again.

Now, as you know, sometimes some disaster in your life can also pull you out of identification with the mind and make you present. Can happen. There's always the opportunity, the opening when things collapse around you.

When the crack appears, the light shines through. That's why the cracks are good. But this is a voluntary death, not the involuntary deaths that humans experience when some kind of disaster happens and all the life collapses around them.

So one more suggestion for your practice. You'll remember the listening. It's just a beautiful practice.

Don't give up when you lose yourself in thinking. Just notice it and come back to alertness. There is a degree of alertness in which compulsive thinking doesn't happen anymore.

So, and there is a, when you find that dimension of alertness in you, you suddenly realize that normal existence, which is the voice in the head, identifying with the voice in the head, is a dreamlike state. And you suddenly, this is why there's traditionally the term awakening used in different spiritual traditions, because the normal state of being identified with the mental, the voice in the head all the time is a state of a dreamlike state. You're not here.

There's nobody there. There's just a dream happening. And suddenly the alertness comes and you wake up.

You wake up out of the dream. Wow. And perhaps after a while, the old, you fall back into that state.

And then you come back out because you're beginning to suffer. It's a good sign. Some kind of pain or suffering arises.

Oh, lost it. But of course, the moment you realize you lost it, you haven't lost it. So listening.

And the other, another practice that's very helpful is sensory awareness, looking or listening to sounds without interpretation, anything. So occasionally when there's nothing else to do, which surprisingly, even in a busy person's life, there are lots of moments when there's nothing else to do because you're waiting for the next thing to happen. And you can be just practice non-labeling perception of things and natural things, inanimate objects, whatever is there.

There's also, you are the space, the spacious awareness through which the perception happens. You are the light of the world. And in that light, which is consciousness, this appears and that appears and that appears.

And gradually awareness becomes more permanent. The frequency of losing awareness is lessens and the time period during which you lose awareness lessens. And then gradually it becomes the permanent foundation for your life.

In other words, self-realization continuously. But there's no point in asking, when is it going to be permanent? How much longer do I have to wait?

Just deal with this moment, much easier, just this. And it's always simple. Well, that's a strange title for our talk.

Transcendence, to transcend transcendence. Transcendental meditation, highly recommended by all dentists. It's always good to start with a joke.

Sorry. To transcend of course means to go beyond the limitation or limitations or boundaries, to go beyond boundaries. Not that you attack the boundary, you go beyond it.

No, it does not imply that you destroy the boundary. You kind of go through it or maybe you climb over it. So that seems to be why we are here, not just here in this room, but here on this planet in the human form.

It's to go beyond limitations because everybody's born into certain limitations. To start with, the moment you're born, you have a body. So you're suddenly, you're limited to this, this, I'm trapped, am I this body or am I in this body?

But your body can certainly be perceived as a limitation. And then you have your surroundings, your parents and your home environment and whatever other factors are there, the country you live in, the city you live in. For some people, the limitations are not so bad.

And for others, depending on where you are into what kind of circumstances you're born, limitations can be very severe. You might even be born already with a physical defect, even more severe, or your environment may be extremely more than normally dysfunctional, more than the normal dysfunction. You may be born into poverty, crime, whatever it is.

It's almost one could say to have a little image at birth, you're given, let's say using the analogy of a wood carver. So you're given a piece of wood and it seems some people are given a piece that says, oh, that looks quite nice, I can do something with that. And others are given an impossible piece of wood, what am I going to do with that, it's dreadful.

What can I ever make out of that? And of course, some people succumb to the limitations and for the rest of their lives, continue to be conditioned and limited by the environment and the conditions, the circumstances into which they were born. So a person may be born into a dysfunctional home environment never transcends it.

And when he or she gets married, creates a similarly dysfunctional home environment. And the children of that marriage, similarly the next generation create a similarly dysfunctional home environment. For example, nobody transcends the limitations and that is fairly common.

Or you're born into poverty, of course, then it's very hard, depending on also where you live geographically to transcend that. We're talking, by the way, at the moment about transcendence on the external level, which has its place. And then others are able to generate enough energy to go beyond the limitations, step beyond their conditioning.

There are many examples, people who've become famous and have achieved great things in the world who were born into a very unpromising situations. And there is a place for that. It's a wonderful thing to do, to rise above or to transcend the limitations.

Some people need seminars for that. And that has its place, they have their place too. If you can't generate enough energy, you need to go to Tony Robbins, for example, and that's good.

Then you can, yes, you can do it. Yes. And you can take action, it's good.

It's to do with manifesting externally. And that has its place, the universe wants to do that. That's one of the things the universe does is manifest form, more complex forms, more beautiful forms.

The forms proliferate in the universe and we are co-creators. It's not just that God creates forms, flowers, beautiful things, mountains, planets, suns. You are God and through you, creation also happens and you can create forms.

That is the outgoing movement of the universe, the movement out into differentiation, increasing complexity and form. From the Big Bang, let's say, if that is the case, that was not a complex universe because that was the primordial one, then became the many. And so even if you look back from the little we know about the planet, it was a gradual evolution of a greater and greater complexity of forms.

More complex life forms. So the universe wants to do that. So that means it also wants to do that through the human form.

So the human form becomes a co-creator and that has its place. It is the outgoing movement of the universe into the creation of form. And when a human being overcomes their limitations, transcends their limitations, then the universe has also overcome that limitation through that human being.

It's not really a personal thing. There's nothing personal, ultimately. You are the universe.

You are the life that is evolving through billions of forms. And often it's the case that precisely those people who encountered the most severe limitations generate enormous amount of energy to go beyond. This can be sometimes negative energy, but it doesn't have to be.

It can be just a positive response. So we have stories like one in ancient Greece where public speaking was highly valued as an art form and they didn't even have microphones. So you had to really project your voice.

And that was, they had to be taught because you had to reach many people. They had to be able to hear you. I remember many years ago, my first group of more than 100 people was the last time I spoke without a microphone and I had to project my voice.

There's only the now. And everybody said afterwards, wow, that was the most forceful talk you've ever given. It changed even what I said because I had to shout.

So in ancient Greece, one of the most famous orators, if that's the word, public speakers, I don't remember his name. He had a speech defect. He was born with a speech defect.

He couldn't talk. There was something wrong with his tongue. He could only talk like that.

And he was determined to become a great public speaker. So he would spend for a few years, he would go to the beach, put pebbles in his mouth and start talking to the sea. The pebbles were there to perhaps to create an additional obstacle to generate even more energy.

So he began to give speeches to the sea alone. And eventually he became the greatest speaker in his lifetime in Greece. There are many similar cases throughout history of people who encountered the most severe limitations and were able to transcend or not necessarily transcend that particular limitation as in the case of this speaker, but sometimes to transcend, to become creative or extremely empowered in another area.

Stephen Hawking, for example, whose body is totally paralyzed and he cannot speak and move and do anything himself. But what he can do is think. So he's made a very useful contribution to science.

But if he had, I'm not saying this is awakening yet. We haven't arrived there yet. At the moment, we're talking about transcendence of worldly conditions of form.

So he was able to become a productive thinker, but because he did not resist internally, complain internally, the severe limitation of his physical form. I mentioned that briefly in a new ask maybe, because I used to see him every day many, many years ago at the university where I was and he was, I just saw him every day having lunch a few tables away, being fed by his students. And at that time he was only well-known in his field and in the town, but he wasn't yet famous.

And I could see what a dreadful fate that was to be totally paralyzed and not being able to communicate anymore. At that time, the machine that he uses now hadn't been invented yet, this little synthesizer that he uses. So all he could do was produce croaking sounds and some people who had been with him for long enough could interpret the croaking sounds.

Croak, croak, croak, croak. He'd always have an interpreter and miraculously they could tell you what he was saying. Croak, croak, croak, that meant, some more apple pie, please.

That's what he said. Now he has a synthesizer, he presses one or two buttons or how it works, I think he has one or two fingers still have movement. And so the synthesizer says, apple pie, please.

Now it would have been very easy for him to, when it happened, it happened to him, the illness overtook him when he was a graduate student. Suddenly, motor neuron disease, it's called in England, but here I believe it has a different name. And he could have rebelled against it, lamented his fate, become despondent, give up, become embittered, have self-pity, say, what can I possibly do now?

I can't even communicate anymore. The body is going to, they predicted his death many years ago that he would only live a few more years. And he didn't.

So, and I saw that when I looked at him once very close, he was coming in, I opened the door for his wheelchair and I looked into his eyes and I saw there was no inner resistance and there was no unhappiness inside him. There was just, just that. There wasn't a, his disease, his physical disability had not translated into become part of his personality.

It had not, the personality had not identified with it and incorporated it into its sense of self. If the personality had incorporated the condition into its sense of self, it would have become an extremely heavy personality. Heaviness of suffering would have been in it.

And if you carry the heaviness of suffering in your personality, then it is very hard, if not impossible to make, to contribute anything that is beneficial to anybody else because you are burdened with a heavy self. And the heavy self will prevent any influx from the creative dimension within you to come through. It will not allow that.

So you cannot be creative when you are burdened with that heaviness of a suffering entity. So what I saw when I looked into his eyes was there was not a suffering entity. There was the physical suffering.

Yes, must have been the physical disability, the discomfort, the loss of dignity, of that everything has to be done for you. You can't go to the toilet. You have to, you can't feed yourself.

All that which could have become a dreadful thing if there had been a self-identification with the condition. But there was not a self-identification with the condition. There was only the condition.

And so he was able to do his work, contribute more than others. Of course, he had much more time. He couldn't do anything else.

But if he had complained, then he could have done a lot else because he would have been stuck in his mind going around in circles, complaining about his unhappy fate. So that is transcendence. I observed that, how transcendence can work and why it happens.

It does not happen, transcendence of conditions. It does not happen when you complain about the conditions. While it can happen, let's say you get angry about your being poor and you then transcend your poverty and with your anger you build up a business.

You work day and night. And maybe you even make it despite all the odds. You finally have a business.

But the limitation that you have entered is just as severe as the one you left. Because you are trapped in that heavy sense of self, the personality that is conditioned by anger.

And it is almost one could say a more severe limitation than poverty.

So the transcendence of conditions and the transcendence of limitations then is not achieved through rebelling against limitations. Because if you do that, you find yourself very quickly in similar, not limitations of a different kind, but maybe more severe than the ones you left. Or you work so hard in a desperate attempt to show the world that you are somebody, that your body gets ruined through stress.

And when you finally achieve your status as a billionaire, your heart is almost gone. Your circulation, all the functions of your body, your body is ruined. Well, you've gone from one, you've transcended one limitation and fallen into another.

But it is possible if it's done through non-resistance in a positive way to transcend limitations. And people have done it. So Stephen Hawking's just one example.

There are many, there are even probably books about how people transcended limitations. I don't know if there are any, if not, maybe one of you can write one. So you can sometimes see it in films, films that are based on certain people's lives, how they have overcome all the odds and finally made it.

[Speaker 17] (58:22 - 58:23)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (58:30 - 1:27:44)

And of course, once you finally make it, then you realize, yes, it's been a wonderful journey. I have transcended all that. And here I am.

And you find, yes, of course, but even where I'm now, there's a new set of limitations. It's a good thing that I went beyond that. I'm happy about that.

It's a good thing I transcended all that. But you're not free. You're not free.

If you've come from poverty, built up a big business empire, you're certainly not free. Okay. So we have transcendence on the worldly level, which is a good, has its place, and is a wonderful thing.

But it always leaves you with another set of limitations, which are really external, but ultimately the limitations that you don't escape are internal to transcend. Now we come to a different kind of transcendence, which is we could call spiritual transcendence, whatever you want to call it, where you transcend identification with form. And that, of course, is the true transcendence.

You transcend identification with external forms, with things, with your position in the world, with relationships, with whatever people think of you. But ultimately what that means is, because all those things that I just mentioned, things or possessions, status in society, your entire life situation, and so on, that you experience that as through your mind. It's a form of thoughts.

These are thoughts in your mind. So if you identify, let's say you identify with your car, identify means it enhances your sense of self. It's not just that you enjoy a comfortable car.

That's perfectly fine. But is there a link with your sense of self and the car, which in many cases there is? So you have transcended poverty.

You have achieved the Bentley. Now, what is the new limitation? The new limitation, you have transcended that.

The new limitation is the self-identification with this external form. Then let's just take the car as to stand for almost anything else that you could identify with. Let's just use car.

Could be a house. It could be a big structure that you've created, whatever it may be. So you identify with a car.

It means you, in a subtle way, it enhances your sense of who you are. Now, of course, that requires you to be seen with the car. To enhance that, it requires other people who see you.

So you get an envious look from the person in the other car and the ego feeds on that. Or a beautiful woman or a handsome man in another car looks at you and your car. And the two suddenly fused into one, they come together.

She loves you and she loves your car. And you sense that and there is the ego feeds on, you feel enhanced in your sense of self, of who you are. And so if you lived totally alone on an island, that car would very quickly no longer be able to serve as an enhancement of your sense of self because nobody's there to look at it except you.

Then you could have to recreate stories in your mind. Imagine people looking at it, but it doesn't work very well. Now, what you identify with really is, if you look at the root of the identification, it's not really the car, but it is the idea or the concept of the car in your mind.

So the identification ultimately is not with the external object. The identification is with the image or idea in your mind or the concept in your mind that says, this is my object. And this idea, my object, my car is a thought form.

So what you identify with, if you look at it very closely, is not the car. It is the thought form of my car. So what you are trapped in is not really the external form.

The external form is fine. A beautiful car is a beautiful thing. If it's a comfortable, beautiful car or whatever it does, fast, you can, well, let's not go there.

That's fine. So, but you don't, it's not the external thing. So any identification with something, self-identification is on the level really of thought.

It's on the level of the mind. And so that's where you are trapped. You're not really trapped in the car.

You can drive a Rolls Royce and be totally free. But the question is, is there identification with a thought, a thought form as me, self, there is a sense of self in the thought. And that is where you are trapped.

And that is where almost everybody is still trapped, which is the self-identification with thought. That's where, that's the root of all identification with form, because there seem to be lots of people identify with all kinds of forms around them, their dress, what they'd wear. We've talked about the car already.

Big self-identification, of course, with the way you dress for many people, not the people here, of course, have already transcended that. And again, it's not saying, oh, I mustn't, and now I have to wear just cheap things because I need to show that I'm not identified with. No, because you're identified again.

Because if you put on something that looks cheap, because you see yourself as so spiritual that you no longer wear designer things, although you could afford them, but you don't wear them anymore because you're now spiritual. You're trapped again in a thought form as me, the spiritual one who no longer buys or needs designer things. This is, you have a new thought form of the me, which is just as strong as the one who identifies with designer clothes.

And then you identify with that. And you can feel in a subtle way superior when you go through the shopping mall to all these people who are still identified with their designer clothes. And you're trapped again without knowing it.

Trapped in a new thought form of this is me. So all kinds of things, we have clothes. You can be, of course, identified with the physical body.

Now, the physical body for many people is a source of pride, if you're young enough. Can be a source of pride or your appearance. It might be strong or good looking or better looking than others or most.

There's Muscle Beach in Santa Monica. So if you can go there. If you don't have muscles, don't go there because your ego will suffer.

Identification with the physical body, again, ultimately is not identification with the physical body. It's identification with the thought form of the physical body identified with. Now, for many people, as you may know, physical body has a negative identification.

They are not happy with it. And this is why they sell so many magazines for people who are not happy with their body. And the magazines will tell you, either how you can be happy with your body or you can change your body so that eventually you can be happy with your body.

Or accept your body as it is. But even that's not quite it. It's not to identify with the thought of my body.

Other things, of course, you identify with is where you live. It's an extension of yourself. And again, doesn't mean you can't live in a nice house.

The question is, is there a thought form of my house? And then you're identified with that. That's the trap.

And that is what, in order to be free, needs to be transcended. You don't need to transcend the physical car. Later, once you have transcended the thought form, you're totally free to say, I still want this car.

Or say, no, I don't want it anymore. Or I still want to be in this house. Or no, I don't need such a big house anymore.

It doesn't matter, one or the other. The imprisonment is inside you and the freedom is inside you. So the self-identification with thinking is the primordial imprisonment.

And that is what needs to be transcended for you to become truly free. Or another way, to awaken as a human being, to awaken. Now, what does that mean when we say you awaken?

What do you awaken from? You awaken out of identification with form. As long as you're identified with form, and all form ultimately boils down to thought form.

Because there's nothing, everything is, you experience everything as that. It's a mental form in your mind. You don't know whether there even is a car out there.

Nobody knows. It could be your dream, the dream of car. Nobody knows whether, philosopher has been discussing that for thousands of years, how do we know that things that we perceive are actually there?

Because all we know is what happens, what is sent to us into the mind through the sense organs. And then the signals that come through your sense organs are somehow decoded in there. And out of that, a world arises.

But what is there actually out there, we don't know. And we can say, well, it may well be a kind of dream that we are dreaming. There are lots of things to justify that assumption that it is a kind of dream.

Well, what is it? What characterizes a dream? Well, it comes for a little while and then it evaporates.

Well, it's the same as life, isn't it? Everything comes for a little while and then you see, oh, it's dissolved, it's gone. Just lasts maybe a little bit longer than the dream in the night and it's gone.

Your childhood, last year's vacation, last night's dinner. What was that? It's gone already.

Everything is fleeting like a dream. This is perhaps why a film like The Matrix, so many people responded to it because there's a basic idea underlying it and that is you're all dreaming. And perhaps deep down, everybody recognizes there's some essential truth in there.

Well, if that is the case, at least we can be in a more pleasant dream. But if we know we are dreaming, then the dream will become more pleasant because there will be another dimension in the dream and that is the knowing. Then you're no longer dependent totally on the forms that arise in the dream all the time, needing to give you your sense of self or perceive the forms that continuously rise in the dream as threatening your sense of self.

The two movements. So, and that means transcending the forms, transcending identification with the mind and the forms that continuously are created by the mind. And once that, when that is transcended, that the transcendence is not something done that you're, okay, I've transcended now.

The transcendence needs to be a continuous thing. The transcendent dimension, when you're awake, which means no longer identified with form, the transcendent dimension is there in you all the time. Now, what, how does that, what is that transcendent dimension?

It is a space in which you are not thinking in the background of your life. Right now, as I speak, I can sense a space. I'm trying to show it visually here somewhere or here, here, where there's a stillness and the words come and then plop, stillness.

And that's, it's not difficult. Yes, you need to be, it requires a certain alertness. If you're half asleep, then you lose it, which becomes obscured.

So when you, you then begin to move around this world, no longer continuously imposing mental structures on everything that you perceive. That's how the transcendent dimension comes into your life. Another way of putting it, you're no longer continuously judging every situation, every event, every person that comes into your life.

Your life, by the way, means the present moment. That's your life. So you're not continuously judging, trying to define everything that arises in your life, which is the now, the present moment, and you give it room to be.

And then you suddenly, from being, the shift happens then, from being a person, you become a person, which means forms, a bundle of forms that consciousness had identified with. From that, you become consciousness that has no form and you play with the world of form, which is a dream. You allow it to be, you participate in it even, but there's always, there's a spaciousness inside you so that your attention is not completely absorbed by the dream all the time.

The dream is there, it's beautiful, but it doesn't devour your entire consciousness. So there is a free space in you where you have what we are doing here and what the process is. We are, extricate, what's the word?

Extricate, no, extricate may not exist as a word, but extricate, okay, he says it does exist. We extricate consciousness from its identification with form, we take it out of that, and that, we have it, that's pure consciousness. It's formless.

So we take it out of our thoughts by not identifying with the thought. There's a thought, but the thought wants your complete, it wants to devour your entire consciousness. Every thought form is greedy.

Every thought form wants to proliferate. It wants to lead to other related thoughts and it wants your complete attention. So, and that pull has been there for thousands of years.

Every thought form says to you, this really matters. You must think about this. And most people follow every thought that arises.

It draws them in like some enticing thing, come this way, says the thought. I'll take you where you need to go, okay? And there you are in the middle of the night for two or three hours.

And you do that, and you take it where it wants you to go for years. And you're not getting anywhere, of course. It just wants your complete attention.

It wants, it's like an, it's anything in form wants to continue in that form. It has a momentum to it. And one thing that happens, once you see it, you can say, okay, I'm not going there.

And then you step out. And before you know it, the thought that was so important, of course it wasn't, the thought that was so important collapses, you haven't fed it anymore with your attention. You have not.

And then that is available to you as light, we could say, aliveness, consciousness. That is power, pure power. And before it was being misused by useless thinking.

So we take, it's a rescue mission or whatever you want to, you take, you could say that consciousness has been kidnapped by thought, and it needs to be rescued. You take it out of that, and then you have consciousness there available for, you can create a beautiful dream out of that, because you have creativity there now. And it, this is then the unconditioned consciousness, which is the source of all creativity, of all that's new and alive and beautiful, and you can create, you can use that power, or rather, it then uses you to express itself without the identification.

You can create forms without the identification with form. And one way you do this, of course, is, but when you are active, when you are working, I don't like that word, but work isn't, maybe the word should gradually become obsolete, because work somehow implies that you don't like what you're doing. And there's a proverb somewhere, I don't know where from, enjoy what you do, and you'll never do a day's work again.

So enjoy what you do. And then, now, the trap here is another attachment when you become active, it's all very well taking consciousness out of thought as we sit here, but when you become active and start doing in the world, there, very quickly, you can slip back into identification with thought. And when you are doing things and you're active, the danger is that you become attached to the result that you want to achieve through your doing.

The end result, where you need to get to, becomes more important than the doing now, which, again, is, because the end result, it's a thought form, you're not attached to anything out there, you're attached to the thought form of the result, the end result. And there's a new trap in there, so when you become active, a high degree of alertness is required so that you remain centered in present moment, and give that more attention than where you want to go. You know where you want to go, that's there, but the doing now, if you're not enjoying that, what is the point?

The great fallacy is to say that once I get there, I'll be fine. Won't, no, you won't. You have to be fine already.

And then you'll be fine when you get there. So this is an ancient teaching, non-attachment to the fruit of the action, ancient Indian teaching, even from the Bhagavad Gita, which in India could be called karma yoga, which is the spiritual practice of staying conscious in action, in the doing. Non-attachment to results.

All that, is that difficult? No, all it means is enjoy what you're doing, and see that the doing now is primary. The goal is secondary.

You can have a goal. It's a thought form, of course, but it's secondary. So this is the awakening, the awakening from identification with form, self-identification with form, which means the entire sense of self that was an illusion, because it was identified with form, based on thinking, thoughts.

A bundle of thoughts constituted the sense of self, loosely held together. Some come and go, but basically a bundle of me is this, what's me and my life is this, and this, and this, and this memory, and that, and that, and those possessions, and those, and all those things, and that was the self. And that is the, if that's not transcended, that limited sense of self based on identification with form, then life is frustrating.

You just go from one frustration to another. So ultimately, another way of putting it is that you can say you need to transcend yourself. And again, that's a very ancient teaching.

The 2,600 years ago, the Buddha talked about that. Because the self that you think you are, the Buddha said, well, that's not in the sutras, but I'm, my intuition tells me that this is what the Buddha more or less said. The self that you think you are is an illusion.

You're identified with form, you're not form. And as long as you're identified with form, thought forms, you suffer. That's what he said.

And he didn't really say, some people believe that he said all life is suffering. No, he said all identification with form is suffering. Because all identification with form creates a false self.

And as long as you live in a false sense of self, you suffer, there's fear, always around the corner or underneath, if you look closely, there's fear somewhere when you're identified with form. Because everybody knows that forms are fragile and everybody knows that forms are fleeting. Even if you don't know it consciously, you somehow can feel that.

Everybody can feel the fleetingness of forms. Something could happen to my car any day. It's parked out there.

Well, who knows if it's still there when I get there. And then, of course, when it's not there, and if you had identified with it, then the thought form of my car will create suffering because there's no longer a correspondence there in the sensory input. And the thoughts go, oh, my car.

[Speaker 17] (1:27:46 - 1:27:47)

Oh.

[Speaker 1] (1:27:48 - 1:38:12)

Oh. Oh. Upset.

Upset. Upset. Now, it's easy to deceive oneself and say, I'm not attached to a thing.

Sometimes you don't know it until you finally get to the place where your car was and it's gone. And then you'll know whether you were attached or not. Or your social position, let's say, suddenly you lose it.

The papers suddenly say, let's say you're a VIP, and suddenly the papers say, you messed it all up. And so where you're attached to your position, to the opinions of others about you, which again are thought forms in your head, because that's where you know them, the opinions of others are their thought forms. So you take them on board, they become your thought forms.

And you identify with them as give you a sense of self-worth. So our practice then is to take identification out of thought, consciousness out of thought. Simple, simple.

And a radical shift inside you, radical shift. I'm saying simple because thought is complex. And all the problems of the world, when you look at the problems of the world through thought, you'll want to commit suicide because of the complexity of it all, because that's all, my God, so many problems.

I mean, even your own life, even your own problems may be enough for that. Oh no, so complex. And so when I say simple, it means this new state of non-identification is a state of great power and simplicity.

You become more simple, but also more empowered. The shift, you can say it's hard from looking at it from one point of view, the shift from the old state of consciousness, the false self, to the new state of liberal, the awakened consciousness, which the Buddhists call no self, which the Indian teachings call the self, the big self, as opposed to the small self. And of course, people who haven't realized it within believe that there's a huge conflict between the Buddha saying, Buddhists saying, there is no self, and the Hindus, Hindu teachings saying, there is the Atman, the ultimate self.

And people who just study the scriptures think there's a huge conflict here because you say that there is no self, and we say that there is a self. It's just concepts. It's just little pointers.

They're talking about exactly the same thing. But you don't know that until you realize it within. Of course, it's the same.

The Atman has no form. It has, so it's not a, it's the formless. So forget about no self and self, and just say the formless.

There we are. And the amazing thing is that those, the realization of this truth is already gone, is there throughout, you go back thousands of years, and it's already there. It has come, there's a little thread running through of a few people here and there always throughout history have realized that truth.

It runs through history, the undercurrent, not the madness of history. They just, there's a thread. Sometimes it's called the perennial philosophy, that which the timeless truth of human existence has already been there, but very few people were able to realize it.

Many people who came into contact with those teachings, but were unable to realize them, so they only looked at the teachings through the mind, they misinterpreted, and the very same teaching became part of their false sense of self. This is quite common in religion. All religion points to the transcendent, but what has happened is that in most cases, religion has become part of the false sense of self, the opposite of transcendence.

Well, is that a, it's funny and sad at the same time. It's probably better to see it as funny. When you see human, the human dilemma, the human unconsciousness, when you see those basic patterns or this really, this one basic pattern of delusion, when you see it and recognize it, first perhaps in others, you can see others doing it, and then eventually in yourself, then if you laugh, sometimes you can't help it, especially if you see it in yourself, you may begin to laugh, and that's liberating.

That's a moment of transcendence too. And then you see, all my drama for the last 20 years, 30 years, it's been manufactured by my mind out of nothing, for nothing. Complaining about situations and people and feeling this and that in the sense of self.

All based on one basic delusion. One basic delusion creating the entire drama of my existence and dreadful suffering. I can't take anymore, can't take anymore.

So then it's a beautiful thing, then when through this, the nightmare of your life turns into a dream that's quite pleasant because the way in which you experience life changes when the transcendent dimension comes in. It changes the way in which you experience life because you no longer then experience life through the filter of a false self. And the false self distorts everything that you experience.

The false self wants the conflict. The false self wants the unhappiness. It doesn't know that, but why does it want it?

Because it strengthens itself through it. So you can see it when you observe people in daily life, how they do it. They want it because it gives them a stronger sense of who they are.

It can start with a simple thing like complaining about situations and other people or your own life. Complete distortion, you're looking at it through the false sense of self, which through every little complaint strengthens itself. Because when you complain about something, it means something is found deficient.

It could be a place where you are, oh, look at this, oh, it's dreadful. Or a person that you've just met and then you complain about him or her, whatever. Something is found deficient, which means you put yourself in a superior position to that situation.

You are the judge of it. You are the judge of this situation or this place or this person. You're judging it as wanting in the old sense, not wanting something, but wanting meaning lacking, yeah.

And so you become really superior to whoever you complain about or criticize. It enhances the false sense of self. And you can sometimes see it in people who have nothing else to identify with.

They run around the street shouting angry obscenities or remarks to everybody who comes past.

[Speaker 17] (1:38:13 - 1:38:13)

You!

[Speaker 1] (1:38:16 - 1:49:26)

It's their sense of self, their false sense of self strengthens itself through accusing everybody of being bad and evil, or whatever they say. Wow, that gets stronger and stronger. I have to do this because I have nothing else I can identify with.

I need those thought forms. It can be very strong. So what we need to learn is take attention out of thinking.

That is transcendence. You transcend the primordial forms, which are thoughts. And then in your life, you have form and space.

In daily life, there's not just forms. One thought after another, one reaction after another, one thing happening after another. Forms.

If you're not doing something, you have to think about this. Just chasing forms, really forms chasing you. You chasing forms.

And then you go to sleep for a while, and then you wake up and you have one minute before you remember. Like the dog chasing the rabbit. That's a dreadful thing.

There's only form in my life. Just things that I have to think about and do and be worried about and react against. Forms, forms, forms.

No space. And now there begins to be also space in your life. And that changes everything.

So while forms happen, there's a, the need compulsively to impose interpretation on what's happening goes. And you allow what is, people, situations, places, which before you would have criticized or complained about. They are as they are.

Of course they are as they are. Are they a problem? No, if you don't criticize and complain, they're not a problem.

Can you still take action if change needs to, if things need to be changed? Very often action is necessary and perfectly fine without the complaining about it. You take action without complaining.

It's a different action that flows, different energy flows into what you do. So there's, and then you move through life as a spacious being, not a heavily burdened personality. A spacious, that is, nothing else is spiritual if you want to use the word spiritual.

Spiritual has nothing to do with what kind of thoughts go through your head. You can think about angels and God for 24 hours a day. It's not spiritual.

Spiritual is not identifying with thought. That's when there is space in you, that's the spiritual dimension. And that is, that's the liberation.

That is the transcendence of your mind, the transcendence of, you can call it the transcendence of the world. You can call it the transcendence of time because this is the time, the space in you is the timeless dimension. It's not.

And this is what Jesus said when he said, I have overcome the world. Otherwise it doesn't make sense, of course. I mean, what had he overcome?

He wasn't a powerful person in the world. He hadn't overcome anything in this world. I have overcome the world.

He said, this is some of, this, I believe, is one of the, there are some things in the New Testament which I feel were literally said by him. There are many others that are a bit distorted. Some are completely distorted, and some he didn't say at all.

But the, I have overcome the world, that is, yes, that's what it is. I have, he said, I have transcended the world. I have transcended this.

And that's at the bottom of all the teachings, that's what it is. Jesus also said, deny thyself. What does that mean, deny thyself?

Deny means recognize that the self is not, is false. It's not real. Thereby you deny it.

You can't deny something that's real. If it has any reality, how could you deny it? But you deny it because you recognize it's illusory nature.

You deny unreality. So there's a profound teaching there, but now where in the churches will they tell you what that really means? And of course, what Jesus was talking about, the religious teachers in his time, when he said, they have taken away the keys to the kingdom, they themselves haven't entered, and they're preventing others from entering.

Timeless words. So this is the, our practice then is the relinquishment of compulsive thinking, which is judgment. Now, if this were not happening in the collective energy field of the planet at this time, we wouldn't even be sitting here.

We wouldn't be here. We are here because this is happening in the collective energy field. And often, a question that people ask very often is, well, is this just happening to us or do we have to make it happen?

Or can we just sit back and allow it to happen? And there's no, neither answer is entirely correct when they say, we have to make it happen and we just have to sit back and allow it to happen. They're both deficient.

You have to bring the two together because when you, there's nothing in you that's not part of the totality. So whatever happens in you is part of the movement of the totality. And part of what the totality wants is you to feel that you can make it happen.

That's how the totality works through you. So it's good to feel that I can choose to step out of thinking. Of course, you can only choose because the totality is doing it through you.

But when the totality does it through you, the one, the one consciousness does it through you, it feels as if you could do it. And that's good. I choose to step out of thinking.

Now, why can I do that? That's because consciousness is awakening in here. So it's not, it's not the little me bringing about the shift in consciousness, but it's just, I am part of that.

I am an expression of that shift. You are, when I say I, I mean that I, I, I. So the teachers who tell you there's nothing you can do, don't even go there about wanting to change your state of consciousness.

Just do what you're doing. They're not quite right. And the others who say you really have to work hard to get there, they're not right either.

Allow it into your life. Open, cooperate with the evolutionary impulse of the universe. That's what you can do.

Stop putting up obstacles to the evolutionary impulse of the universe. Live in alignment with the present moment. Internal alignment.

Don't bring a no to the present moment. Don't bring a yes to the present moment. And step out of thought as much as you can in daily life.

And just, but this requires you to have, the glimpse that is needed as you're here is to the glimpse of being conscious without thought right now, just this moment. You don't have to think all the time, it's an illusion.

[Speaker 17] (1:49:27 - 1:49:27)

Why?

[Speaker 1] (1:49:32 - 1:56:03)

But it's so much more beautiful to just sit here and you haven't lost anything at all by just being here as a field of consciousness. And bring it into human interactions when you look at another human being. Why do you need to judge?

What's, you can learn that from the dog. The dog looks at you and doesn't judge you because the dog is at a pre-thought stage. That's why it's so wonderful to look at a dog because you're looking at non-judgment.

Now we are not going back there. We are going post-thought. We're also, there we meet the dog in non-judgment.

The dog is in the pre-thought. We are going to post-thought. But we meet, and suddenly you meet the beautiful dog and yes, we're both in non-judgment.

You may have heard the saying, God, the little prayer, God, please make me into the person that my dog thinks I am. Now, of course, the little mistake is that the dog doesn't think. But the dog has, love comes.

Because the dog isn't blocked by thinking, there is an openness to joy and love there. The dog loves, looks at you and the tail goes. The dog is not thinking, not criticizing you, just non-judgment, just a flow of energy.

And so, this is where we get to now as we go beyond having to think. We can still think beautifully when we have to, but beyond having to think, and there we are in that same state, but it's much deeper even than the dog's state. Because there's a deep knowing there.

And that may well be the reason why humanity had to go through the egoic state. It seems that otherwise, why would it have happened? Some people seem to think it was a big mistake.

I don't think there's such a thing as a mistake. It had to happen. How do I know that?

Well, just know it from myself. I had to go through the illusion of ego and so on and suffer deeply. And because of the suffering created by the false sense of self, because of the suffering when it became unbearable, the release happened, awakening, like a flower bud suddenly.

So, usually what happens, you can observe the whole history of humanity in yourself. You can even observe the entire history of the universe in yourself, as above, so below. Observe the, from time to time, the compulsion in you.

There's a little entity still, the false self, that wants to come back in, which really is a bundle of thoughts. Wants to come back in. And then you can, it wants to use the internet to amplify itself.

And complain and bring up criticism and gossip and lies. It loves lies, it doesn't differentiate between lie and truth. If a lie serves my purpose of enhancing my sense of self, any lie will do, so put it in.

And then technology amplifies it. Sends a signal to the world. And then send it out to 5,000 people.

And then some of those 5,000 will read it and believe in it. And then it goes into their minds. And then they got on it.

Here we are attempting to use the same medium for sanity. Oh, by the way, there's no need to think in between the ringing of the bell. Just as you listen to the sound, you don't need to think about it.

[Speaker 11] (1:58:51 - 2:00:41)

I wrote you a note in which I explained a dark night of the soul experience that I've had a number of years ago. In which, I was in the middle of the night what really culminated in a catastrophic breakdown of sorts for me. Maybe sort of similar to what I read in your book, The Power of Now.

And during that, there was a cathartic release. I was in the fetal position on the floor crying, frankly. And there was an utter and complete surrender.

This is sort of a humbling story. After that happened, I was sitting in an empty room in a chair and there was this unbelievable post-cathartic stillness that took over me and there was complete silence. And then the strangest thing started happening.

I began witnessing my thoughts. And as I witnessed my thoughts, I had this unbelievably simple awareness that if I'm witnessing my thoughts, what am I? And that completely changed my life.

I can't even begin to tell you what happened after that awareness happened. And then one thing led to another. And then there was a point where I started realizing that what I am, I couldn't find a boundary for.

Okay? And so I was sort of interested because in your book, you talked about this in The Power of Now, about the dark night of the soul experience. But I'm sort of wondering about your journey from there through the process of realizing that this awareness, that I am, is not personal.

It's intimate, but it's not personal. And that seems to be the toughest part of it all to really get a handle on. So if you could walk me through that, I would appreciate it.

[Speaker 1] (2:00:50 - 2:15:57)

It seems that, I will comment, but the most important thing, I think, is it seems that what your mind is trying to do is to understand awareness. And you can't really, the mind can't. So you cannot really come to a satisfying conclusion about the nature of awareness.

It's only awareness itself, really. In awareness, awareness is known, but awareness as an object or thought is not it. And that's why the Tao Te Ching starts with the line, the Tao that can be spoken of is not the true Tao.

So all that language can do is use pointers to point you in the direction of awareness, or language can point out the obstacles, the likely or possible obstacles in yourself to the state of awareness. So there are these two kinds of pointers. One is points, the pointers to the moon, awareness being the moon.

So the words, there's only this moment, and so on, it all points to the same. Whatever I talk about is really, they're all pointers. They're either pointers towards awareness, or they are pointers that look at the obstacles that may arise in yourself, in a human being, so that you recognize them when they happen, so that the obstacles in the form of certain mind patterns don't take you over and obscure the arising awareness.

But once awareness has arisen, the mind is not useful anymore, and you don't need further pointers in order to, the mind will continue wanting to understand a bit more about awareness, but really, this is where conceptual understanding comes to an end. And I can call awareness personal, and I can call it impersonal. It's not personal in the usual sense.

Everybody has a certain sense of, I'll just say a few words about it, but we're not trying to understand awareness. We can't. Everybody has a sense of I-ness, of identity.

Everybody has the sense of him or herself as a, hard to describe, the sense of I. Now, usually the sense of I is mixed up with certain mind movements, thought patterns, which you could also call stories, the thought patterns that hang together as a story. And so your sense of I gets mixed up with a story, a thoughts in your mind, and that is called the personal sense of self.

But the story really is nothing. They're just thought forms, temporary thought forms. The real sense of I is the awareness inside the thought forms, without which the thought forms could not even be there.

So the true sense of I is the awareness that got mixed up with the story or the thoughts. So most people have a sense of identity that is of that mixed kind, where consciousness or awareness has become entangled in thinking. And then people only know themselves through thinking.

They believe they are what their mind tells them they are, and their memories, and so on. And that's called the personal sense of self. But even there, the substance behind it and in it is the consciousness.

It's not the story. That's where the sense of the preciousness that everybody feels that I am. And when the mind says, I don't want to lose that.

I don't want to die. This is what people are scared of. They might lose themselves.

They might lose that preciousness. Everybody deep down feels that preciousness inside. Even people who are unhappy, they're still here.

They haven't dumped off the bridge yet. They feel a preciousness still inside, hiding somewhere. And that preciousness is consciousness itself.

It's not your story. Now, that consciousness is not personal. It really only becomes personal when it gets mixed up with memories and a story, or expectations and memories.

So what happened to you then was the disentanglement happened spontaneously. And so there was the realization of that which is there when consciousness is no longer entangled in form because the consciousness is the formless. It's the unconditioned consciousness.

So that is called then self-realization in some traditions, or it's called awakening in other traditions, whatever you call it. That's the realization of the formless essence of who you are. And so the mind, of course, continues, but there's no longer investment in it.

Some consciousness still flows into mind activity, but the important thing is there is no longer a self in the mind activity. And so, because the self is realized as essentially formless and timeless. So that's a beautiful thing.

Now, the fact that mind activity still continues means that occasionally the mind is wondering about consciousness and awareness. And so the mind needs to then see that it is futile. And since there's no self in it anymore, it won't be too difficult.

The mind just needs to be told that it cannot, you cannot come to any kind of satisfying or satisfactory conclusion about the nature of awareness or further conceptual understanding of what awareness is all about. The mind would like that, but there's a vastness in awareness and awareness begins to operate through your mind without needing your mind to understand more about it because that's what the mind always says, I need to understand more. You don't, you can understand a lot more about the things of this world.

There's many things that you can still study. Everybody can, there are many books you can still read, things you can still learn. There's always the possibility of acquiring more in this world.

It's fine, nothing wrong with that. But as far as self-realization is concerned, there's no more. There may be a deepening or the aware state may express itself more and more fully through your mind at your mind may have your mind becoming the surface of awareness can take a word adjustment from a self-serving mind to becoming aligned with the aware state may take a while.

I'm speaking from my own experience. Not that I ever could explain awareness, you can't explain emptiness, but the ability to say things, to point, to give pointers to other people, the ability to understand even what had happened to me when the shift happened that took several years to understand, for example, to understand that my mind activity had become reduced after the shift by perhaps 80%. In other words, I was spending long stretches to talk on the point of the external point of view of time.

I was spending long stretches in the timeless con paradox here because you have the outer and the inner. And this was the reason why I felt so peaceful, but I didn't know that my mind wasn't saying much anymore because it wasn't saying I'm not saying much. And all I knew was there was a deep sense of peace and aliveness.

And I was looking through, perceiving things through the sense of peace and aliveness so that even the traffic became peaceful and there was nothing wrong with the traffic and there was, or whatever, and things that before I had resented having to live in the, I had little money, so living in a little room, which in England is called a bedsitter, where you have a little stove in a corner and then you have your bed and you have a seating area and then you share the bathroom with, I think, eight or nine people in different rooms. And so before, I didn't like where I was and suddenly it was great. It was fine because there was this beautiful light shining through the window.

The little objects on the table were full of aliveness and even waiting for the bathroom wasn't that problematic anymore, except occasionally I had developed constipation because of the waiting. But that in itself wasn't a problem either. It was, the same, or I had complained about going, take having to go by tube or underground, which is the subway in London, can be very unpleasant at times.

And again, there were blissful states traveling in the subway, waiting for the train. Wow. But it all, it wasn't in the world of form.

It was, the form was perceived through the awareness. But understanding, very little. All I could have said, suddenly I'm so peaceful, I don't know what happened.

That was all. That was my limit for two years, approximately, that was the limit of my understanding. And so that's how it is.

So what does take then perhaps time from our external viewpoint is the alignment of your mind with the aware state. And then gradually it can flow into the mind structures and you can speak about opening yourself up to awareness and many other things. You can, pointers will arise that may be helpful for others.

You may write a book, but not too soon. It's often the case that people write books too soon. So just let it mature.

And the only, the one thing that you won't get much further in this conceptual understanding of awareness itself. And that's the answer. What do you make of people who walk out on relationships, their families, or jobs to sit on the proverbial park bench so that they can wait to be, to awaken?

Well, well in most cases I would say to walk out of your whatever your situation is in order to awaken doesn't work awakening is usually within where you are right now if you can't awaken there it's unlikely that a change of environment will do it however and for most people to stay where they are and bring presence into where they are and what they are doing is the right path there's no general rule however for these things there are isolated cases I've known of one or two people who actually left their families there was such a strong draw or inner impulse and they had to obey that impulse they couldn't say no to that and they actually awakened somewhere else it can happen it's rare whenever people say I can't do it where I am now usually that's not the case but there are always exceptions to every rule and in some rare cases it happens that people do walk out something that even Christ Jesus acknowledged he said I don't know if he actually said that or whether somebody wrote it down incorrectly he even talked about hating your family I doubt that he said hating for your family but he said the what is absolutely important is your spiritual awakening nothing else is more important than that but you can't usually separate it out from yours your usual surroundings you can't you don't need to remove yourself usually unless you're one of the rare ones who do have to do that but then it's not a question of deciding the impulse will be so strong it won't be a decision-making process it won't be coming from your mind saying should I stay or should I leave then if you can't

[Speaker 3] (2:15:57 - 2:16:50)

help it and then it just happens my question is what actually happens to someone after they die and is there some remnant of them as a personality that travels on to another life and begins anew there when that after that person dies do they remember themselves do they do they remember you if you only

[Speaker 1] (2:16:50 - 2:35:01)

remember this lifetime in this lifetime you only know yourself as the form identity or the ego then that identification with form as an energetic residue continues and will seek another form to identify with and I would say that is the desire to reincarnate so if you are strongly your desire to reincarnate you can test it in your present lifetime and that is the compulsion to identify with mental and emotional forms that arise in your daily life and that is the degree of consciousness or unconsciousness the degree to which you are identified and many humans are still totally identified with the forms that arise continuously in their field of consciousness as thought forms and as emotional forms which become reactive patterns thought patterns emotional patterns and that's that's how you know yourself as that's them that's me people say and that's the limit of their sense of identity they only know themselves as certain formations in their mental emotional field now how long does that survive probably not very long because even now I don't remember that much from my early life because I'm not that interested anymore and even sometimes last week I'm not that interested in keeping memories alive so the details of your form identity I don't think survive for very long the essence survives and that's the essence then is to what extent is that energy field an energy field of desire to experience itself which is really consciousness not knowing itself in essence existing in a dreamlike state and needing to experience more of the same needing to experience more identification with form so you can test it in your present life to what extent are you free of identification with your mind the mental emotional field is there already the transcendent dimension in you in other words do you know who you are beyond the form of you from many accounts we've had of people who had a near-death experience there comes a moment when you die where the possibility of the formless the formless dimension briefly opens up it's described in the Tibetan book of the dead and reported by many people that sometimes experience as luminosity very luminous field the formless dimension opens up briefly when you die according to many accounts but if you've been identified with form throughout this lifetime you will not be drawn to that and so you will flinch you will withdraw from that and so you will enter another realm of processing the experiences of this lifetime sometimes called the astral dimension which is another experience of form and the experiences are being processed in like a like a bee coming to the honeycomb it's not the details of your life experience become irrelevant but the underlying energy behind your life experiences are being processed you bring it back and so you don't really become more enlightened if the body is gone you carry the state of identification with form if you haven't gone beyond that in this lifetime in many Buddhist scriptures tell you that the great opportunity for awakening is in this as this form in the body a great precious opportunity many people seek advice from the dead and of course they may not realize the truth of the saying just because they are dead doesn't mean they are smart so the ego would in some form survive not all its details but the egoic entity as an energy field needing certain experiences wanting desiring desire body of the ego can be very strong so the more you're drawn into identification with form in this lifetime the more you can be sure that you'll get more of it because you want it you need it and that's the unconscious state so you the question is do you know who you are in a deeper sense in this lifetime if you do then there's a freedom suddenly there's a possibility for you not to be trapped in the cycle of reincarnation but the cycle of reincarnation happens every day if you're trapped in it every day here it is see we can predict with some certainty that it's that tendency on an energetic level is going to continue so the question is reincarnation is this people ask do we reincarnate into the body another body different bodies what really reincarnation means identification with form that's what it means carnage comes from suppose it comes from Latin flesh but really flesh means form you incarnate into a new form that means you don't know who you are except as a form and so how do you become free of the compulsion to identify with form you can't do that after you die the question is do you reincarnate on a daily basis in your life into every thought that arises in your mind you identified with it every emotion that arises that accompanies the thought that arises do you reincarnate and then you become that and so what always looks out of your eyes really is not the consciousness that you are the light is obscured by this identification in other words it's a dreamlike state and so what looks at you is the entity which is a really a dream form that is the consciousness that is asleep that everybody it's an ancient theme that we are all dreaming consciousness that is asleep that is identified with form is looking at you when somebody is totally identified you look at them and all you see is that that limited ignorance of a little entity that wants something or fears something there's no the light is obscured by density it's a dreamlike state and the universe obviously wants to experience that for a while until it wakes up so death is needs to be experienced in this present lifetime the only real death is the cessation of identification with form and so you can then allow thoughts to arise and emotions to arise and you are the space for it that means the basic ignorance has dissolved and then you know who you are and my intuition tells me that then you continue to know who you are even when the body dissolves because you basically have already died we're all here because we are engaged in the death process you are drawn to it because it's not really death it just it looks like it's life we're becoming more alive what dies is the illusion that we are the form is who we are not just the physical form but the mental forms the mind I am the other mind in dreadful state it's a dreamlike state it's often turning into a nightmare which is a good thing because it's not until it turns into a nightmare that the desire to awaken comes so nightmares are good the cycle of reincarnation can only be broken today in your present lifetime here and now many traditionalists wait for the cycle of reincarnation to disappear in some future lifetime not realizing that this is the the opportunity for it is in the present moment and only in the present moment what can you dis-identify from form so that's the essential task then you know who you are and then you remember yourself wherever you go then the desire they need the compulsion to identify with form again of course won't be there so what happens then I don't know as the Dalai Lama says you go into other realms where the ignorance of this realm no longer applies the Buddhic realms whatever you want to call it or you can choose to reincarnate if you want to help people that's quite something come back here the supreme sacrifice it comes back to the basic question do you know who you are not conceptually there's nothing to know conceptually about who you are so do you know who you are experientially right now do you know yourself as the formless which is also the timeless that's which is beyond death and the transition between being identified with form and knowing yourself as the formless is the psychological death the only real death which really is an entry into life true life truly knowing who you are so all the the people in your life your family and friends they are formations consciousness assuming these dreamlike states that's not who they are here again do you can you relate beyond the forms as which they appear can you sense when you're with them the formless in them can you sense that they also are there's the light of consciousness shining through them record in other words recognize yourself in the other so the we don't really need to be concerned about what happens after death we need to be concerned with dying now so that in the ancient saying we find death before death finds us and that's the that's our task if we don't find it here then all we get is more of the same I'm sure of that do you recognize the essence of yourself as timeless and there's nothing to do with any thought in your head do you recognize yourself as consciousness itself formless right now nothing to know in the conventional sense it's not knowing in fact it's letting go of all conceptual knowing you are the light of the world somebody said two thousand years ago he said two things he said I am the light of the world and he also said you are the light of the world who is he talking to is he talking to mr.

so-and-so who has his little life and his little knowledge and little concerns is that the light of the world and that's completely unimportant it's a temporary formation it's like a foam on top of the ocean and wave a little foam formation and it's gone a ripple effect on the surface of the vastness of consciousness it says me me and it's gone and another little ripples me me am I going to remember me no it's ephemeral it's fleeting that me is fleeting and that's fine we can enjoy that also the fleetingness of that but what is the light behind that what is the light in which the little me that says me me what is the light in which that appears the light of consciousness so that is how Gurdjieff the early 20th century spiritual teacher talked about self remembrance and what he means of course is being present being having the awareness in the background of your life do you remember yourself he would sometimes come into a room of full of people talking and doing things and he would say stop and everybody had to go as a he used it as a device to break identification with form stop because they were everybody was engaged in identification with they were talking about discussing the meaning of life what happens after death well I think this happens stop ah oh that's the

[Speaker 6] (2:35:01 - 2:35:36)

answer that's the answer I have a friend who very suddenly recently lost his mother and I'm watching him try to process this and I'm wondering if you have any words of comfort based on your insights on death and dying thank you

[Speaker 1] (2:35:36 - 2:59:42)

now dealing with death and dying which is of course everywhere around us although it's to a large extent hidden in our society because society is not yet comfortable with acknowledging the pervasiveness of death and dying without taking refuge into some kind of belief structure I'm not saying that every belief structure that every belief that you may have about death is wrong but I'd like to approach death without telling you this or that without even telling you they are waiting for you on the other side you're going to meet again I don't want to go there but to something more I'm not saying this won't happen and I'm not saying it will happen but to leave it at a more vital level that does not require some kind of story making even if the story is true some kind of conceptualization in your head so to to be with a fact of death somebody close to you or in your case it's indirectly so your job is to be with someone who has suffered loss and so you are dealing with it indirectly with this your friends grief and so in your case of course rather than I would recommend rather than tell your friend some story that they are going to survive or you will meet again or they have moved on just be accept what your friend feels fully the grief that your friend feels and your friend's job is to accept the fact of death now if you are able to accept not only the fact of death which is all around you continuously but also the fact that whatever you feel at this moment the sadness or the grief say yes to both the dead body that you might see and the grief that you feel bring an acceptance to that rather than thinking it shouldn't be it should be otherwise many people are shocked when they encounter death in our civilization because nobody has told them not really that everybody around them is going to die they know it as some abstract fact at the back of their heads they know that yes they're going to die and it's another abstract fact in the back of your mind is that I am going to die too but you don't really believe it until perhaps somebody very close to you dies and then it begins to dawn on you that I'm going to die too and then their mind will push that out of the way again as you may know in some Buddhist countries the monks regularly visit the morgue where they keep the dead bodies on display and they sit there for a few hours at a time and meditate on death they meditate on the fact of impermanence of the physical form which the Western world has hardly heard of impermanence of the physical form can't be death is a travesty it shouldn't be happening they contemplate the impermanence or if you go to India where there is soon after death they take the dead body and they burn it on and everybody watches to a Westerner that is oh this is dreadful well that's what is that's what that's what happens to the physical form if if one had lived with the as in ancient older cultures they lived in closer proximity to the fact of death and therefore had greater acceptance of the naturalness of death for us it's more difficult but we need to learn that to realize that the physical form is impermanent and if you can accept a great loss and death is one of the greatest losses of death of somebody close to you if a great loss comes into your life and you can if you can be in a state of non-resistance when this dear person that was has been in your life for so many years suddenly disappears and leaves behind this emptiness you can be in a state of non-resistance to that and even non-resistance to whatever you feel if you feel grief allow yourself to feel the grief you can be the awareness or the space for for that then you go beyond unhappiness you may still feel grief but you go into a state of deep inner peace it particularly in the face of death whenever something great loss comes into your life it leaves behind a space an emptiness let's imagine could happen to anybody maybe this body or that body suddenly goes plop and suddenly there's an empty chair where before there was a body it's really this is how it is if you could see how it how all pervasive death is if you imagine I like to use the analogy of a soap bubble if you imagine everybody here is a soap bubble and any of the soap bubbles could go pop at any moment and you know what happens to a soap bubble when it goes pop there's nothing left just a little drop that's strange but there was a minute ago there was something there and a minute later there's nothing there now if you're if you are totally attached to the form of the soap bubble then it's dreadful because that was but but the essence of the soap bubble wasn't the form of the soap bubble because that was insignificant the essence of the soap bubble was this space in the soap bubble and so nothing is really lost and in fact the I sometimes like to use the expression a hole appears in the fabric of your existence when great loss suddenly happens so there's a fabric everything is in place you have a house and you have your relationships and you have your job and you have this and that that's all in place but it won't be in place for long because sooner or later a little thing is going to enter a big hole I'm now using a different analogy a big hole happens in the or a small hole my investments small hole some small loss somebody close to me dies huge loss some kind of lost with loss means there was where there was something there's no nothing where there was somebody there's no body and that's what the pain comes from is the emptiness I experienced it acutely many years ago I was visiting my mother when my stepfather died and he was always sitting in the same chair many years and so I arrived at my mother's place and I had the strangest experience when I saw the empty chair he had always been in it and suddenly he was good it's just an empty space there was nobody sitting in the chair just an empty space and that was actually a deep deep realization of the formless the formless dimension comes into your life when a form in your life disappears and if you can not if you can be with it not resist it internally it becomes transformed into a spiritual deepening and you get to a very deep place within yourself and in that very deep place within yourself that is the formless essence of all life that's where that's the grace that's hiding behind every loss and every death that it leaves behind formlessness the form disappears and for a moment you're aware of the formless and that is the spiritual when you cannot if you don't resist it but allow it that great deepening happens and suddenly you go so deep that you realize that death is not ultimately real without formulating any more theories it's a deep knowing that the essence of life is life is formless the essence of who you are is formless it was what was it Leonard Cohen Cohen singer there's a song I believe that goes there there is a crack a crack in everything that's how the light gets through and of course there's very deep truth there's a crack in everything which really means every situation eventually you'll find this the crack in it which where the form begins to collapse any structure any situation and that's where the light comes through and that's what you learn and that's what the Buddhist monks learn when they go to the morgue they they become at home with that fact oh so there is even behind death is not the most dreadful thing it is actually beauty hiding hiding behind it so great opportunity wait for the next crack to appear in your life it may be small or it may be large and then see that there's grace hiding there and the light which is the formlessness the formless shines through and this is why some people have gone even people who have had never any spiritual training or any spiritual teaching may not have read any spiritual book it has happened occasionally that some people who experienced deep loss in their lives became transformed and suddenly became awake through that through their loss and this is I believe how the first spiritual teachers thousands of years ago it happened to them they must have had deep loss in their life and through the deep loss and acceptance because they couldn't resist any longer it was too painful they accepted and suddenly through the opening the formless they lost everything the light comes through the formless essence of all life and you are in touch with that suddenly you are that that's and from there you know that death is not ultimately real just as the physical form is not ultimately real it's a little bit every physical form is a little bit dreamlike a dreamlike temporary appearance but there's something there that is real but that has no form and it cannot really be named that's why the Buddha calls it emptiness so that you can't form some image around it it's of course very clever because no matter how hard you try emptiness is the one word that you can't form an image around it or believe in it any other word that you use well I use sometimes formlessness that's pretty hard too but emptiness is even better perhaps and of course the Western people Western scholars say Buddhism is life-denying because they don't understand in what sense in what deep sense the word emptiness is used in Buddhism so they say it's life-denying and then if you ask them then why is the Buddha smiling they say oh I don't know if Buddhism is life-denying what is there to smile about but the Buddha is quite blissful but he's denying life there must be something wrong here it's not it's actually supremely life-affirming but it's not equating life with the forms of life it's going to the essence of life the unmanifested timeless essence that lives through each form appears as each form and then disappears again as that form the one consciousness the one life and death is an opportunity to experience that to be that to go into that what do you think of the Occupy Wall Street movement could this be a vehicle for real change in human consciousness several people have asked that of course Occupy Wall Street is now as I spread of course to many other places not just Wall Street it's not called the Occupy movement it was even in Vancouver whether it still is here I don't know if it was even here for a while maybe still is we had a little place downtown where the Occupy movement was and in a little corner there there were a few Buddhist monks meditating and a reporter came and asked them what are you doing here and they said we are occupying the present moment and of course that's part of the answer the the movement prerequisite for the success of whatever that is because they probably don't quite know what success means yet in because they're not focused on actually what exactly it is that they want the success would be a prerequisite for success would be that the participants occupy the present moment that is the basis and perhaps some of them do they are perhaps some of them are there we see structures in this world that I have been created by the ego the egoic ignorance the egoic consciousness and many of them are not capable of change not true true change and true change wants to happen in this world because there is a change in consciousness but the old structures which includes the politicians the political structures all those that are there in place they are not capable of changing this has also happened to a large extent to many religious structures a lot of the allowed to a large extent the awakening of the spiritual awakening of humans that is happening on the planet especially in certain parts of the planet much more than others most of that is not happening through the existing structures of the old religions but outside of the old structures some of ages if the structures are not to register the old some of the old structures may be able to become vehicles for change also in there may be some Christian churches that are capable of that of also being vehicles for the awakening some Buddhists some and other religions Sufis perhaps then they are but a lot of it is happening outside these structures and the occupy movement is also something a great need for change which cannot be accommodated by the existing structures this it's an embryonic movement whether it grows into something larger or whether it remains for a while on the mental level as a mental thing and then grows into something else but I do feel certain that many movements for change are going to happen outside the existing structures and this perhaps could be a beginning of that of embryonic beginning of change that's happening outside the structures although because I say embryonic because it's still almost unformed yet they don't know exactly it's not focused on anything specific there's just a general sense of not not yet hasn't clearly taken form yet which is fine because everything needs to be an organic growth to that and yes it could lead to something much bigger and other movements could arise inspired by that and then bring about change outside of the existing structures and even bring about collapse of certain existing structures which would not be a bad thing although many of the existing structures are actually going to bring about their own collapse but that's a different matter the banking system and so on they they are very busy bringing about their own collapse the so the the danger is that because the egoic consciousness is still floating around in the collective of course the danger is that some of these movements or I get hijacked by again by the old consciousness although the initial the the impulse for it is is a different state of consciousness is nonviolent change so there's always the danger when that happens that the the the ego takes over again and and perverts it that's we have to just accept that that is a danger it may not happen because there's a fairly widespread awakening on the planet so on the whole I feel it's a good and inevitable thing and we'll have to see where it goes where it what it grows into or whether something totally different will arise somewhere else but yes change outside of the structures is definitely happening it's happening especially where the governmental structures were extremely rigid in the Arabic countries I mean there was no room for any change it was if you think they're rigid here which they are in those the old regimes in the in the Arabic countries were infinitely more rigid and so they were totally incapable of embodying any kind of change so it had to happen outside of the structures and if you feel drawn to participation but dissipation in some kind of movement that's a good thing the important thing of course is that you occupy the present moment while you participate so that you don't lose yourself in egoic reaction that you can you can embody that state of the state of presence and so it's not only you it's it spreads from one individual spreads in the same way that an unconscious individual can draw others into unconsciousness it's amazing when you you can have a group of people discussing something and one person is deeply unconscious and five minutes later everybody is shouting but in a similar way it can also happen that out of five people one person is present and the entire energy field of the group can be elevated into greater presence so it can go go either way

[Speaker 9] (3:00:21 - 3:00:37)

what happens to the mind when one has Alzheimer's and is there a deeper intelligence underneath all of this thank you this is of course connected

[Speaker 1] (3:00:37 - 3:16:56)

with what we've been talking about consciousness expresses itself becomes this temporary formation and then consciousness withdraws from that and usually that's called death and it seems with Alzheimer it's withdraws from the the mind before it withdraws also from the body so the light of consciousness is no longer flowing through the prism of the mind and it withdraws perhaps it's had enough said enough of of this and goes back and then eventually of course the body also goes away essentially the same thing would happen if a brick falls on my head now hopefully not sometimes one needs to be careful with manifestation don't especially when you are connected and present you have to be very careful now if a if a brick falls on my head now then consciousness will no longer be able to flow through the prism of this mind it would withdraw and it would appear to you that I've become unconscious the essence of who I am is withdrawing from and so that's why this happens Alzheimer we don't really know but I've read a very interesting study some years ago we tend to look at it from purely chemical perspective because science is based on material chemical things and change in the brain chemistry or this brain cells deteriorating whether I'm sure that also happens there was a there are certain studies that are not really pursued very much that can't be very helpful some years ago somebody studied Alzheimer in the closed community of nuns a very large monastery where maybe 200 or so nuns live and of course a certain percentage of them developed Alzheimer's similar percentage to the percentage of total population and one researcher had the idea of examining the application letters that every nun had written before they were admitted as nuns most of them were still fairly young so they had to write about their lives why do you want to become a nun what have you done and so on what is your view of life and he examined all the letters that they had written and he could just by looking at the letters he could determine with just one or two errors who would be most likely to develop Alzheimer and what he found was that the the writing the way in which they expressed themselves some some had a creative way of expression some had the way in which they put things there was an element of creativity and a fresh way of looking at things it was a life and other letters were didn't have these creative spark to them and those he said the likelihood of them developing Alzheimer was much greater he could almost he could say almost with the very little error he hadn't been told these will probably develop Alzheimer and these probably will not and that's that never nobody really after that pursued that anymore because we look at it in scientists look at it from the point of view of brain chemistry mainly so it seems that there was those who did not there was a connectedness a deep connectedness with the source of creativity inside them with being and those that developed Alzheimer were not as deeply connected to the source of creativity in them and that's something that could could be pursued in other words the I would look for the solution to Alzheimer not in the realm of brain chemistry because brain chemistry accompanies that illness but look at it in the realm of states of consciousness and I believe although I have no scientific evidence for that that as presence grows in a human being the likelihood diminishes of developing Alzheimer but that is something that would needs to be tested I'd like to work at some point with older people perhaps in old people's communities because it's such a wonderful opportunity old age of disidentifying from form and our civilization doesn't know that yet it doesn't it sees old age as a something that has to be endured it doesn't recognize that old age spiritually from the point of view of awakening is the greatest opportunity and so there is a sense of uselessness around old age in the West that's all pervasive and that perhaps has a lot to do with the arising of this disease that sense of uselessness that comes with old age that sense of lack of purpose true purpose inner purpose awakening so I'd like to take this the teaching as much as possible into also old people's homes and so on so that old people's homes become changed into ashrams every old people's home should really be an ashram it should be as what the greatest places on earth they should be where where human consciousness identity disidentifies from form because what else is there to do when we are getting to the end of this life form what else is there to do then to use this opportunity to disidentify from form and nobody knows that possibly even they don't know it so that's a great shift talking to you about this has given me new a new impulse to actually pursue this a bit more now usually I wait for things to come to me and say okay let's do it the such sadness around communities where old people live just waiting rooms for death just so such a tragic missing so tragically the that opportunity of old age some ancient civilizations still knew that there was something sacred about old age because they could see that it's the beginning of of letting go of form so in the ancient civilizations you still have that respect for old age and the veneration for old age and and old people are worthy in old civil in old cultures old people are the guardians of being for the entire culture it's they because they are rooted more in the formless than those who still think the forms are all that matters so they hold that and and the West doesn't have that anymore so of course it has it there's a beginning of an awakening in in in the West that is true but that could be an enormous acceleration of the awakening process if we realize the importance of old age and then perhaps the disease of Alzheimer will not occur so much anymore but ultimately of course we need to know the the truth of the words that summarize the course in miracles the those words that that present a summary of the entire course of miracles really a summary of all spiritual teachings which are nothing real can be threatened nothing unreal exists herein lies the peace of God so even for those who have Alzheimer or and those people close to them the ultimate truth still applies nothing real can be threatened nothing unreal exists and when you know that peace arises what is self now I noticed that it's spelled with a capital S I don't know whether it's mistake on purpose probably on purpose there's one self that's the illusion that is the identification with the mind and the ego which is the unobserved mind and there's a self that arises there that is a dreadful burden to live with you carry around most people follow their whole life they carry the burden of a mentally defined sense of who they are me what about me that's the little self the the illusory self and that's the self that most people refer to when they say I but I potentially has a deeper meaning and is the deepest words perhaps we could say in the language in its truest sense I refers to who you are beyond the form beyond the thoughts and the emotions you as the consciousness is the self now the self has no form you cannot grasp it you cannot see it you cannot really define it you can never say ah there it is because who is saying that you are the consciousness the perceiving you are it you can never see it as an object external to yourself it's the essence you are not not what is seen you are the seeing you are the consciousness behind the seeing you are not what you hear you're the conscience behind what you hear so it's it's never this is what Jesus said when he used to jump the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God he said in in one of the Gospels the kingdom of heaven does not come with signs to be observed you cannot say ah here it is or ah it's over there it's a free translation more or less that's what he said and so and of course what do Christians do they're waiting for the kingdom of heaven to arrive when they've been told you won't be able to see it you can't say ah there it is it does not come with signs to be observed literally he said that it's and I'm sure that's one of the there's a lot of things that people later put into his mouth but that that is one of the things the words that were uttered by somebody who knew the reality it doesn't come with signs to be observed you can never see it or grasp it or know it as an object for your knowledge because you essentially are it as the consciousness that perceives the consciousness behind your thinking behind your emotions behind your perceptions behind your experiences the very light of the world another thing he said he not only said Jesus I am the light of the world he said also you are the light of the world so he's pointing what is the light is the light of consciousness which illuminates the world you are that that is the self it has no form therefore it seems that Buddhism and Buddhists and Hindus are in disagreement but only those who haven't realized the reality behind their teachings those Buddhists and Hindus who have not really realized the reality behind their teachings they are in disagreement and they have arguments whether there's self or no self atman anatman the the Hindus say believe in atman that the existence of self the fundamental underlying reality and the Buddhists say no anatman no self and then whenever you see a Hindu and a Buddhist discussing perhaps even with negative emotions whether the one or the other is true then you'll know that they haven't experienced they haven't known the reality behind the teaching because the reality behind the teaching is exactly the same it's just a different perspective on the same the Buddhists like to deny they don't want to give it call it something as if the moment you call it you say the self the danger is that you make it into a mental object and start believing in it the Buddhists don't like that so they say there is no self which in a way is true also there is nothing that can could you could say there it is it's it is a an empty space almost you could say but it's potential fullness also it's full and empty at the same time it's all the same the self that's why the the Dalai Lama I saw giving a talk a while ago and he to Hindus and he said you believe in atman and we believe in anatman what does it matter and he laughed makes no difference that's a good answer but

[Speaker 3] (3:16:59 - 3:18:05)

when I grew up it was a Methodist teaching and it was sort of dry yet there was this prayer Lord forgive us our trespasses and forgive us those who trespass against us and when you opened the door last time to the book the Course in Miracles then I came across that principle of the forgiveness and I had a question on that what is forgiveness is it different from compassion is it different from the Buddhist concept of bodhicitta and I don't know thank you thank you

[Speaker 1] (3:18:27 - 3:40:02)

and again it comes back to the state of connectedness with being it's only from that state of connectedness with the deeper dimension of who you are from there it becomes easier to forgive because forgive means there was something that was done on the level of form by one life form to you perhaps another life form pain was inflicted or whatever it may be treat whatever the transgression is is and it's only from there that you can see the relative nature of what was done because you are in touch with a space within you that was never hurt by that that dimension in you is beyond what can be injured it's only the form can be injured the psychological form somebody might have insulted you deeply the psychological form of who you are can be can feel pain or the physical form of who you are can feel pain and somebody inflicted that out of unconsciousness then recognizing the first step in forgiving is to recognize that this was an act of unconsciousness and you do not equate what this person did with who that person is and it's only from the place of connectedness with being that you can say no longer hold a grievance about that because you are in touch with that inside you that is beyond what can be injured if you're not in touch with that space then you're still it's hard to forgive not forgiving means not to harbor grievance or resentment or any negative feeling about it and really that's only possible when you are connected with the formless in yourself as cause and miracle says nothing real can be threatened nothing unreal exists herein lies the peace of god nothing real can be threatened this means what is ultimately real cannot be threatened but what is ultimately real is not the form it's that which is deeper than the form that cannot be threatened nothing real can be threatened nothing unreal ultimately exists it just seems to herein lies the peace of god means in the knowing of that lies the peace of god but it needs to be the not conceptual knowing but a knowing on the level of the depth of your being and then from there you can look at anything anybody did to you and say it's it's it's almost as if it didn't happen for a while for example i harbored grievances against my father for many years because he was he suffered from enormous amount of bottled up anger and living with him as a child was like living with a powder keg or an unexploded bomb somewhere in the house and everybody one knew that at any moment this the slightest thing somebody said and usually it was my mother the slightest thing somebody said and this on this bomb would explode and there would be the entire house would be filled with destructive energy and for a sensitive child and any child is sensitive young child it's a terrible thing to live in constant anguish at an explode any explosion could be happening at any moment whenever he's in the house so i had the ambivalent feelings of fearing his return home after work and wanting him to come home divided and that was expressed once in a dream that i had as a child and in the dream i had cut my father up into little pieces and put in a plastic or some kind of sack and hidden under the bed and after i had done that in the dream my father arrived home and i greeted him and loved him and of course all this resulted even after but i was an adult already resulted in quite quite a bit of grievance towards him because my childhood was fearful and unpleasant as a result and it was only when a transformation happened inside me and i there was suddenly that deep inner peace that i realized he did what he did according to the way in which life had conditioned him he had when he was a child he had enormous amount of resentment against his family because of and of course the story can go on many generations he was the seventh child his father died when he was 15 and they took him out of the school they had to pay for school boarding school they took him out of boarding school because they said he we can't afford it anymore but his sisters were still in kept in boarding school so and then he had to do menial jobs and every day he was his anger was growing and growing and growing he carried it around the rest of his life there was not enough consciousness in him to disidentify from the anger he was the anger was using him it lived in him as an energy field and he could come up any time he was as much a victim as i was and i saw that after i had gone through the transformation and found inner peace i could see that he he did he was a victim of his own circumstances there was not enough consciousness in him to see what he was doing and immediately forgiveness happened i didn't even have to say i have to try to forgive he never did it was as if he had never done anything to me because basically he hadn't he wasn't even there there was only the unconsciousness in him acting up as and then as he grew older some of that anger dissipated remnants of it remained he also came into touch with some spiritual teachings especially the power of now that helped to to some extent and so his ego grew less not didn't quite disappear but it grew less which when i was a child his ego was gigantic and it was continuously fueled by anger and an angry ego is something it's it's the uh the incredible hulk that's you and that's so the forgiveness happened naturally and very often you see that when an injury happens very often it's there's a mental judgment of a situation and actually beyond that mental judgment not that much happened let's take a simple example you arrange to meet somebody or somebody he says i'm going to help you with your moving i'm going to help you move house i'll be there at five o'clock to help you move with my car and he doesn't turn up and that just is as it is now your mind then mind then comes in and says he let me down he or he betrayed me or he was whatever the judgment of the mind is uh and it is very often it is the the judgment of the situation that creates the emotion that feels injured if you can just be with all he you said he would come but he didn't turn up that's the fact whatever your mind wants to add to it gives you the sense of injury and strengthens the ego so if you can just be with the pure facts this is why all that stuff when people about talking about other people what they failed to do or what they did what he did to me he betrayed me well what did he do well he went off with another woman or man he betrayed me betrayed me is an interpretation and the more you have that thought that he betrayed me the more you feel the emotion that that goes with that thought and you feel and who is it that feels that emotion the ego itself feels betrayed because who you deeply are who you are in your essence doesn't feel betrayed the other fact is he went off with another woman that's what he did is that all yeah he that's what he did if you refrain from adding a story to it then you don't experience the this may not be this comes easy when you are connected with who you truly are then it is easy to let go of the unnecessary imposition of stories upon events the event is neutral the story interpretation of it is what creates the anguish and so if you can just be with what is but you can see how people cherish talking about what somebody did or failed to do and then he did they talk about again and again and feel more and more aggrieved in who they are nothing really happened he didn't turn up he didn't return the money that i lent him i lent him the money but he hasn't paid it back yet that's the fact of it that he is dishonest well you don't need that he he did something to me he defrauded me mr madoff did it this a deeply unconscious person i wonder what he's doing now he's sitting in his prison cell and many many people have not forgiven him interesting position to be in to have aggrieved so many people and created so much anguish and suffering in humans but for every single one of them beyond their financial loss they have their own lesson to learn he has his lesson to learn and life has given you if you lost money with mr madoff or whoever else that is on yes you lost that money but there is a deeper lesson you can learn in any loss any loss is a of course one lesson is of course don't invest with him again that's understood or anybody else like that that's understood that's easy to know but beyond that there's a deeper lesson to learn and that is any lesson that comes with any kind of loss any kind of loss is a potential opening into the formless because what you lose is something on the level of form whether it's money or reputation or some possession or even an ability to do something and suddenly you can't do it anymore any kind of loss is a loss on the level of form and so you react to that and it's painful but if you can see that the simple isness of that situation one day you get your investment statement just to continue with that example from mr madoff and everything seems fine you see you've added a few thousand dollars to your investment of course it was all fiction and the next day somebody rings you as somebody wrote in the new york times yesterday that i read he got a phone call from his banker relative two years ago and he said are you sitting down no mr madoff has been arrested what i lost everything potential like any situation that you encounter in life there is always hiding something there that is deeper than the actual surface situation on the surface situation of course you take necessary action whatever you need to do on the surface you do it but deeper than that there is what is the lesson here and that lesson is acceptance of this moment as it is included includes the loss the disappearance of this form and there comes the possibility of awakening to the formless that's the grace that's hiding behind every loss it might even happen to mr madoff because now you're saying he does not deserve to go beyond uh identification with form i want him to suffer at least for a few more lifetimes but nobody can predict what happens a person who had everything and suddenly lost everything nobody wants to talk to him anymore he is nobody everybody despises him what do you do you either commit suicide or you go into total emptiness because it's already empty so forgiving then forgiving mr madoff forgiving your father forgiving your ex-husband forgiving somebody who did something to you when you were a child somebody who robbed you somebody who defrauded you that's all on the level of form it has a relative reality but not absolute reality you are connected with the formless you can feel that place where you were never injured by that event even if you lost everything you can suddenly feel it's actually okay to have lost everything and you feel that which is the fullness of life itself so forgiveness is then of what happened when you're connected with that level of being it becomes easy almost natural when you're not connected it's an effort and it's never really true forgiveness i'm trying to forgive him another form of forgiveness is really of the acceptance of the present moment because so we widen now the range of what forgiveness is and non-forgiveness of the present moment is really what non-acceptance of the present moment is there's a resentment of what is in the present moment so do you need to forgive the present as much as you need to forgive the past which means allow what is to be don't argue with it allow it and then you get that takes you immediately deeper and then you can take action if that's what's needed but first you allow you forgive this moment very often things happen that shouldn't be happening the mind says from a traffic jam to some kind of disaster to some kind of drama on a personal level to the tiniest thing to a bigger thing and you constantly need to be alert and aware so that you don't become a reactive entity which means every event that happens determines your state of consciousness every person you meet determines your state of consciousness reactive you meet an unconscious person who is rude and unpleasant and immediately you become rude and unpleasant in other words you're at the mercy of circumstances and people and any unconscious person can draw you to his or her level of consciousness immediately and that's you live in reactivity non-reactivity it's really a wider aspect of forgiveness if to forgive situations and people which is allow them to be as they are because they already are as they are at this moment and then power comes that is deeper than form it's only really then that you can feel your inherent power and even if somebody took away your power on the level of form let's say somebody conspired against you where you work and you lost your job as a result of this these dishonest intrigues of this person you lost your job as a result of that on the so on the level of form you lost something on the level of the formless nothing was lost there can be no loss there so you forgive what that person did if you don't forgive you get trapped not only in corrosive negative poisonous energy that your mind produces and the emotions reflect in the body and you live with that some people live with that for years and that is an unconscious also an unconscious way for the ego to continue to thrive because the more grievances you harbor the stronger the ego gets it with forgiveness the ego shrinks because the ego needs its enemies it always looks where can i have my next enemy so in the absence of enemies the ego begins to dissolve so it's a really it always comes back as i said to be connected with the deeper dimension of who you are and then forgiveness comes naturally to you rather than as an effort no more grievances because nothing real can be threatened and i am in touch with that within myself that's what happened to me when i forgave my father i didn't even know i had forgiven my father there was no actual act in my mind that says okay i'm now going to forgive him i just discovered one day when he was visiting me or i was visiting him i suddenly discovered oh i have no negative feelings about him at all there's nothing there anymore it's i just said and even occasionally he would still get angry not as much as when i was a child but even then it didn't matter anymore i saw the conditioning there that he was acting out so i never consciously said i need to forgive him

[Speaker 3] (3:40:02 - 3:40:30)

i just discovered that i had forgiven him now if i understand you then it's the repetition of this process that changes so there's a different flow in one's life the repetition and the attitude if i understand you that instead of resisting or reacting to be almost grateful for oh another

[Speaker 1] (3:40:30 - 3:42:27)

opportunity yes really every every situation that comes is there for there's one reason which is the surface reason why the situation is there which is for example let's you invested with the wrong person and so you lost it for example and then the deeper reason is life is giving you an opportunity to use that situation to go deeper within yourself to go to a place where that is more real than the level of form doesn't mean you become inactive necessarily but every situation especially loss and so on is an opportunity be aware also as i said of the mind's interpretation of events because for as far as psychological injuries are concerned what people that includes for example what my father did unconsciously as far as psychological injuries are concerned then very often very often they are based on mental interpretations of what he did so i was for years i kept it alive i kept the original emotion alive by thinking about what he had done as when i was when i was a young child if you don't feed it with your thoughts very often an emotion and negative emotion gradually subsides but if you're connected with the depth of who you are it can sometimes disappear in an instant if it doesn't disappear in an instant the pain body we know about the pain body the pain body may disappear suddenly all at once or it may gradually as you don't add to it it will gradually become transformed the energy that's trapped there

[Speaker 3] (3:42:27 - 3:42:54)

becomes freed it's a wonderful practice so it's those thoughts that then uh again they cause this forgetfulness that occurs yes that that's as soon as so as soon as i uh if i'm able to be present and then see the thoughts then knowing that they cause forgetfulness if i can yes then go deeper

[Speaker 1] (3:42:54 - 3:51:47)

yes and very often it is a thought that creates the sense of injury that creates a sense and that then creates the grievance unless there's a physical injury then of course you have a pain or something like that but if it's very often you'll find it's the mental interpretation of an event that creates the emotion that we call grievance and so and that again is to do with not being not having your entire sense of identity in the in the movement of thinking but go deeper to be trapped in thinking that's the main part of the problem because events are as they are and then there's a story that's built around it i gave the example i believe in stillness speaks of a man who finds himself penniless on a park bench okay well not penniless but 50 cents left and he looks and so there's one way the man can say i'm ruined or he can say oh there are 50 cents left in my pocket the first one is a story the second one is a fact now usually and you could give hundreds of examples it's just a very simple example usually in unconscious humans the story and the fact are confused they get mixed up because and so they believe the way in which they interpret an event or what somebody did is the reality of that event or what somebody did because they are trapped in their thinking only and that's the very fundamental unconsciousness is to confuse fact and interpretation and build so then whatever opinion you are of you have of another this person you tell a story about another person and very often what you need to do is when you listen to another person doing it or even do it yourself okay what's the fact here and what's the addition that my mind is adding what is my mind adding to it the story that the mind is building up around it and then if you if you suddenly if you separate the story then you're left with the bare fact the bare fact doesn't even require forgiveness it just that's just what happened but once you add the story to it you get a sense of self that is part of the story the me that was done something to me the artificial mind created sense of me and so you have the story and you confuse it with the reality and it's an amazing people do it all the time whenever you listen to people they cannot tell the difference between a simple fact and their interpretation of the fact and sometimes the interpretation is totally totally wrong they can it is often possible to interpret a fact in a way that doesn't apply at all i know what his real intentions are and i'll tell you about that he did that how do you know you don't know you're perhaps just projecting your fears onto the other person don't even look for egoic intentions i believe even the course in miracles says that somewhere it's pointless to look for what the egoic intentions are that you just end up with stories simplify life see the fact without adding unnecessary story to it you have these many many teachings from different traditions tell you that see i mentioned a few in a new earth you remember the story somebody wins my version of the story it's an old story somebody wins a car in a lottery some people say oh isn't that great so you have already have a story it's on the other one says oh it's bad it's but all the man says is well let's we'll see he doesn't add a story to it the story about the the monk who is accused of having fathered a child you might remember that from a new earth there's a monk the zen monk lives and the parents come and say the the teenage daughter says he's the father of my child and they come and accuse him they have a story and he refuses to manufacture a story because normally you would say these people do you know what they did to me they wrongly accused me of being the father of the child and then you can elaborate from there and the girl is totally evil of course because she's inventing all these lies about me these girls she's not evil she's just immature and fearful so all these are stories that don't really apply but the ego create would create those stories the zen master refuses to create stories out of the situation so all he says is is that so he doesn't say the girl is evil he doesn't say the parents are bad inventing they're spreading lies about me whatever the you can come up with a huge amount of grievance in the mind all that would be in the mind so the zen master would have a lot to forgive if he had come up with a story about this girl and the parents who wrongly accused him once you have a story you have the emotions that reflect what the mind is saying you feel aggrieved you're a victim and then you need to think about forgiveness but it's difficult but if you don't create the story in the first place there's nothing to forgive and the strange thing is you embody a different energy that turns every seemingly negative thing into what ultimately something good has happened in this teaching story because the girl after a became a little bit more mature and and confessed who the real father was the parents then came back and took the baby that they'd given to the zen master to look after which he did not saying no look they've given me the child i'm supposed to look after this baby what look how am i supposed stories stories he can either say yes or no but he said yes and he gave the baby fullest attention never complained just this responding to the present moment and there was no drama so the less drama you create out of events because this is what we are talking about transforming events into drama the less drama you create out of events the less you have to forgive because a lot of forgiveness is with the to do with the stories the the grievance created by the stories that the mind even invents now apart from that there are sometimes some real injuries they may be physical injuries people who are very cruel who do something to injure a person no doubt these things exist children who have cruel parents or whatever these things exist in my case this was not the case my father was not a cruel father he was simply in the grip of his unconscious anger so even in those cases where there is something real that happened again be connected with who you truly are with the spacious stillness within you and you see that ultimately there you sense that realm but you were never injured to feel that in the stillness of who you are it all comes back to the same thing really one could almost say that every answer or sometimes the answers are a bit long but basically at the bottom of every answer there is the the fundamental fact of connectedness with with being with who you are

[Speaker 16] (3:51:49 - 3:51:51)

thank you thank you

[Speaker 3] (3:52:02 - 3:52:27)

the hardest word that i'm having trouble with right now is responsibility and i have a hunch that most of the things that i consider responsibility are just my ego telling me things i have to do but i also when i think about the future of the earth and human evolution and stuff like that sometimes i have big emotions of responsibility so i'm just curious thank you

[Speaker 1] (3:52:27 - 4:00:15)

about the right relationship to the word responsibility okay thank you yeah it's a talking about the ability to respond so to take responsibility for what is it that you can take responsibility for primarily it's taking responsibility for your state of consciousness which determines what kind of world you create you because you are humanity humanity is an abstract concept doesn't exist humanity is the human being you are humanity so for humanity to take responsibility you need to take primarily responsibility for your state of consciousness because only a diseased or dysfunctional state of consciousness produces a diseased and dysfunctional world out there by world i mean the human made world that is has been imposed on the what's already there the planet which is potentially of course a paradise the planet pristine unbelievable jewel a being of great intelligence we are not separate from it but the being is going through a transitional process and every transitional process is critical it may or may not work in which case the being will go some other way but the your state of consciousness determines what kind of world you create what kind of action you take and what consequences your actions have so here this is why my main work is to address the cause of dysfunction which lies in the human mind the dysfunction of the human mind or as it is sometimes called in zen the sickness of the human mind so as i see it and i don't think anybody who reads history can doubt it there is a deep-seated dysfunction in humans has been there for thousands of years and if we know if there's no shift in that then the dysfunction will destroy us it probably won't destroy the planet because the planet has enormous resources but it'll take a while would take a while for the planet to recover all you have to do then is primarily take responsibility for your state of consciousness now now and this is what the entire teaching really is about what is what is my state of consciousness at this moment am i generating disturbance am i generating negativity am i generating conflict and suffering for myself and others am i generating inner pollution am i polluting my beautiful the beautiful being that i am with continuous absurd movements of thought producing negative emotions producing an entire entity that is illusory that i call the me so to take responsibility it needs to be just of course a an awakening where you can say okay i will take responsibility now some people don't know that there is even the possibility of taking responsibility that's why you are so important anybody who realizes it this is you are the beginning of the transformed world i don't know who first coined the famous phrase you hear it quite quite often these days but i need you need to be the change that the change that you want to see out there you need to embody that and that's not primarily what you do there's something more primary than what you do it's who you are who you are is your state of consciousness whatever you do flows out of that so that's the primary is that so the change is the transformed state of consciousness now that is your responsibility anybody once you've seen that that's your responsibility now you know it people who are not yet at that level don't realize it and that's fine you can't expect the whole world already to be at that stage it's enough for you to take responsibility knowing there's still a few millions others who don't know that they can take responsibility because they live in such unconsciousness that they see the entire evil in others what they see as evil it's all in them and they make half the world into their enemy it's all out there they still you don't you that's fine your response it's only those are required to take responsibility who are up to it and but even those who are totally unconscious still on the one hand they don't know what they're doing obviously they as jesus said on the cross they know not what they do in other words they are in the grip of unconscious forces or unconscious mental emotional streams they don't know what they do they they cannot be held responsible and people say well they should be held responsible no they can't be they don't know what they do however the fact that they are not responsible because they can't be responsible does not mean that they do not suffer the consequences of their unconsciousness so they generate suffering and eventually suffering is the fire in which the ego gets burned up the collective ego and the personal ego that's the that's the long way the slow way the painful way and then there's a there is a shortcut which is any spiritual teaching is just is it cuts through that the painful way the long way of waking up more and more suffering the planet might not endure that such a long learning process for humanity so if the learning process of humanity does not become shortened it is doubtful that the planet can allow the humanity to learn through further suffering for another 500 years or even 200 years or even 100 years so that's you're responsible for all that

[Speaker 15] (4:00:30 - 4:00:56)

um hi um i wasn't expecting to do this so i'm winging it here um my question is in regards to right action and what right action looks like and consequences um during consciousness and the awakening process um if i know something is is happening what do i do if i'm forgiving and feeling

[Speaker 1] (4:00:56 - 4:01:15)

compassion what is right action can you ask a question with a little bit more actual detail of like an example okay it's always easier when people can actually see it there recently on a

[Speaker 15] (4:01:15 - 4:02:10)

forum which i participate on a man confessed to sexually abusing a child several children and some reactions were very strong amongst people some people felt disgust and anger some people um felt compassion i felt compassion i felt um this man was in deep suffering and i also felt that some action needed to be taken because i was afraid for other children even though this man said that what was happening was in the past and there was a lot of conflict on this forum and regarding that so i wasn't sure what to do and i didn't really know what right action would look like i wasn't looking for to harm him i wasn't looking to judge him and my question is what what is right action

[Speaker 1] (4:02:10 - 4:05:36)

in a case like that yes the right action would be of course the motivation for right action in this case would be to prevent further suffering to others through him so there's no general recipe that i can give you except be very alert so that you know in that particular situation this particular person whether it's right to try and stop him from inflicting further suffering if you have a very strong feeling that this may be the case that he may inflict further suffering on others rather than out of revenge or any other motivation so only you can you have to go deep within where you find the answer in that particular situation what is right here there can be no abstract answer to that it's not possible it's not an answer that you could find in a book or that anybody else could give you i would have the same arise if that were happening here somebody said so if somebody said to me i tend to abuse him then i would be confronted with that question and i cannot tell you beforehand what i would do until the moment when it happens so there's no easy answer and certainly no abstract answer but all i can refer you to is your inner knowing which is not through conceptual thinking because then you can have arguments for arguments against go deeper than conceptual thinking and see if you can find an answer there often it's good in that case to formulate the question in your mind that you have no answer to and then let go of the question and just become still and the answer may not come immediately it may come a few hours later or the next day if you have to do it again formulate the question in your mind then let go of the question just become still and then the answer comes in that moment or some other time when you least expected it that's all i can say i don't think anybody else could say more than that because it would be an abstract external thing that is never never right for the actual situation in that moment so that's all that can be done here it presupposes of course that you are able to go deep enough into stillness and then allow the knowing to be there no other answer here is is possible thank you thank you thank you

[Speaker 10] (4:05:54 - 4:05:59)

can everybody hear me i'm nervous now everybody's looking at you

[Speaker 1] (4:05:59 - 4:06:07)

but nobody is labeling you in any way everybody's totally present

[Speaker 10] (4:06:08 - 4:07:32)

and allowing you to be just as you are thank you um so what i still struggle with is people's perceptions um when a person says something to me that's rude or meant to hurt instead of becoming defensive i actually shut down and i don't say anything back and then later on when my ego starts getting you know charged up i start thinking um man why didn't i say anything and oh now this person thinks i'm weak and it affects me to the point where you know i i'm depressed or i'm concerned about just the future like okay what if this person says something to me in two days am i going to be able to you know stick up for myself so my question is two parts um how do i or what is the appropriate response in that situation when a person is saying something rude or something that's meant to hurt what is the appropriate response and how do i get to a point to where after it's happened that it doesn't affect me in the way that it does well one practice is to be

[Speaker 1] (4:07:33 - 4:12:14)

transparent so this i'm not necessarily recommending this depends what the situation is if it is something that is happens a stranger or somebody who happens for just on one occasion a stranger says something to you that is meant to hurt or is rude or even in the traffic even the traffic it feels if somebody tells you you're an insane idiot you perhaps you feel something inside unless you're so alert and present that it it passes through you and you just continue to look this happened to me a few times i was i drove in in the many years in england i had a very old car and people would sometimes laugh at it it was a russian-made car well it wasn't that old but they laughed anyway and so i would sometimes be at the stopped at the traffic lights and people were crossing it and usually if you're in a car you kind of you identify with you're not just you you are in your car so if somebody laughs at your car they laugh at the whole of you and you have to be that was lovely practice to to be totally empty and thoughtless and just look at them and they looked back very disconcerted because there was no reaction becoming transparent to something that is offensive or so there's nobody there to receive that remark nobody there's no but nothing where it hits you it goes right through what if it's a person that you see regularly that's another matter there you you could also do that but that would be the practice of a hundred percent permanently enlightened master and even that hundred percent permanently enlightened master might find that something else comes out of his or her mouth at some point you can say something back that is strong without getting lost in the energy of it this behavior is is not acceptable you have to be prepared of course to walk out if it comes to that if there's a lot of fear of the i can't i can't walk out and i don't like to stay there if it's your boss for example is it your boss what it's not my boss no but other people at work yes yeah so to be to clearly state something to others also requires presence so that you're not in the grip of extreme anger and nevertheless forceful if you are present you can even use anger although it's a it's that's not easy there are some situations where some you can almost pretend to be angry sometimes you have to do it with a child who is about to do something dangerous don't go there or forceful but not aggressive so you're that you can explain that i find your behavior unacceptable i don't i'm not going to have it anymore or whatever you come words come to you and be be present express what you feel but don't get drawn don't bottle it up let's see if you can't be empty it's better to say something rather than keeping it inside you and then think about about it for hours what i could have said and then play replay in your mind all the great things that you could have said to him this probably happens to you sometimes all the

[Speaker 10] (4:12:14 - 4:12:15)

time

[Speaker 1] (4:12:19 - 4:12:42)

so and maybe one or two of these things you can actually say one of these days and allow yourself to express what you feel if it's not your boss then is it several people who do that or mainly one mainly one

[Speaker 10] (4:12:42 - 4:12:50)

and does that person also do it to others um yes and no i mean it depends on the person

[Speaker 1] (4:12:50 - 4:16:55)

maybe one other person yes and of course some of these people are very unhappy that's why they need to externalize their unhappiness and trying to make somebody else unhappy so at the same time as you speak you have to realize you're dealing with somebody who is unconscious and probably in some form of suffering often it's the case if children children who are bullies often experience very unpleasant home environment and so that all their frustrations they then come out when they are with other children and some people carry that energy for the rest of their lives they're continuously angry with others and they choose the easiest targets to express really their suffering to and the people with heavy pain bodies the pain body wants others also to be in pain it says it wants the other to be in pain or also to give me pain back they might even want the drama but often you can stop people like that just by one or two very clear remarks talk to them i was sometimes bullied at school being physically relatively weak i couldn't fight back well i probably could have but i didn't except for one on one occasion when somebody pushed me down the stairs and i fell and that was the most respected dangerous student at the school he was only eight but but everybody was afraid of him and at that moment i turned around and started hating him and he left me alone after that i got bullied by others but the worst one left me alone but don't hate your whatever you do presence is is necessary sometimes you may also able to just turn it around by on to him or her by some comment that they make about you you can turn it around see what comes to you spontaneously but presence can be very forceful too presence is not necessarily a passive state so be as present as you can at work and people's behavior may even change without you doing anything the sort of presence right spontaneous action comes out of that also so access that state at work and then see what action comes to you so in general terms if it's any other place where it happens stranger does it or whatever it's great practice to be not be there as a target complete non-reaction this case is different because it happens frequently so let me know how it goes okay thank you

[Speaker 4] (4:17:18 - 4:17:25)

hello um eckhart you have given me so much over the past few years that i want to give you

[Speaker 1] (4:17:25 - 4:17:47)

something that i made so thank you thank you oh chewy peanut butter power cookies thank you homemade oh homemade

[Speaker 4] (4:17:48 - 4:17:48)

oh

[Speaker 1] (4:17:53 - 4:18:30)

carefully handmade by yourself yes so there's presence inside them there's the energy of presence is in there that's why they are powerful that's right they come from the source yeah made with lots of love oh thank you yes thank you by bon bonnieville bonnieville yeah bon bon bonnevilles bonnievilles chewy peanut power cookies

[Speaker 4] (4:18:40 - 4:19:36)

enjoy um my question to you is um what do you feel is the difference between intuition and fear for an example um i have four children and i feel particularly sensitive towards one sometimes i look at her and i feel as though i get like an uh-oh moment maybe she's going to be sick or get an accident or something like that and i struggle with how to interpret that i don't know whether it's my intuition telling me it's a deep knowing of this or is this just fear i know these things are

[Speaker 1] (4:19:37 - 4:20:49)

hard to describe in words and emotions although we label emotions many emotions overlap and the the mind tries to say this is this emotion and that's that emotion but they kind of they all hang together for example we talk about anger and then we talk about fear as if they were very separate things but of course they all hang together so in a way anger is a is the face that sometimes fear shows is we call anger this one so the emotions kind of hang together so and they're difficult of course also to describe conceptually but what does it feel like when when you feel this what may be either an intuition you're not sure or what may be fear can is there any way you can just say a little bit more what it

[Speaker 4] (4:20:49 - 4:21:34)

feels like that fear or that intuition well i don't i don't really like that i don't like the energy that that brings so i don't when when it pops into my head i don't like that because i feel that i don't want to feed that energy or put that on anybody but um i sometimes i can just dismiss it easily and say that's just a thought and through your practice and your words it really is helpful but sometimes i question and just say i hope this isn't the higher powers telling me that you know this is true so the way it feels when it happens is a struggle that's the way it feels

[Speaker 1] (4:21:38 - 4:21:51)

so that would be for example a situation that your child is in and you the fear tells you or the intuition tells you to stop or to take the child away or do can you give just one example

[Speaker 4] (4:21:51 - 4:22:15)

because it's easier to understand with an example yeah or i mean a different example would be um you know if you're getting on an airplane and you have like a oof i don't know if i should get on this airplane is that fear is that intuition so you experience that sometimes um yeah and do you

[Speaker 1] (4:22:15 - 4:48:40)

act on it or you go ahead i usually go on i flew across country to see you yes maybe that's the answer it seems to be fear has a different field feeling quality to it now first of all let's just talk about fear there's on the one hand psychological fear which is the fear that most people experience a lot of the time then there's what we may also call fear that's to do with an actual situation that is an actual threat here and now so that fear is actual and it's something is threatening you physically if a wild animal came into this room or a pit bull that hasn't yet met caesar milan came into this room and started is about to jump off the stage ah then you might experience fear at least the first few rows and so that would be experienced not not as not as a thought but as certain changes in the physiology of the body heartbeat a more rapid breathing maybe contraction of muscles maybe almost a kind of paralysis or it might also result in some people jumping up and running to the back of the room or whatever it may happen so this is fear actual we we may call that fear but i wouldn't even call that fear it's an immediate response to physical threat or fire let's say there's a suddenly the flames the curtains go up in flames so many people would probably experience the physiological thing but fear and some people who are deeply present may just watch it and then find themselves either walking out or running out you can't predict what response comes out of presence but it's no longer fear but the actual the the the fear that most people are have as a companion most of the time is psychological fear when there's no actual threat it is produced largely by thought activity and it's often also connected to old emotions such as the pain body and that often also brings about physiological changes as if there were an actual physical threat so contraction in the energy field of the body and you might not even know that a lot of the time that's people's normal state for many people and it might be underneath the surface as long as you identified with ego there's always some fear somewhere even though it may be you may it may not be on the surface but there's fear psychological fear great fear of psychological diminishment of loss of self and very often people go into situations and look at situations through the eyes of that old fear the either the emotion through the old emotional body if it's a situation that resonates with the emotional body or they look at a situation through the mental structures of fear fearful thinking so once perception of reality then becomes distorted by fear and it may also influence what you do you change your behavior some people are crippled by fear and whether they act on it or not it's crippling to perceive reality largely through that filter it can happen occasionally that you have an intuition that something is not right but that feels very different it's there's a knowing an intuition is a knowing that is very different from for the energy of fear the energy of fear is like this with intuition there's a powerful knowing and then when that happens but you will know the difference between a fearful thought or fearful emotion and that that powerful knowing and that knowing has no fear in it and it's not a negative feeling at all and when you get that before boarding a flight then it might be better not to board but it's not fear but it's unlikely to happen because so many so few planes actually crash so it's statistically unlikely but it could happen and the same applies to your children when you observe what they do you don't need fear it's very it's quite contagious it transmits itself to the children and when you tell a child to stop doing something because of fear the energy then flows into the child if the child absorbs your fear and that eventually becomes part of the child's brain body the old emotion so it's it's quite a contagious disease fear also the reactivity when a child doesn't do this by the way this fear can easily just one little switch and it turns into anger so when a child does something that is potentially dangerous often there's an angry reaction by the parent but the parent is angry because underlying the anger there's great fear that something may happen to the child and so they pull the child back and talk you never do that again you hear me you never do that again they love the child that's why they're doing it but it's insane you never you must never go there again do you hear me it's a terrible shock for the child i mean it's like a the the energy that's being put in child is is an assault on the emotional field it would be better if the child did it and broke a leg than getting getting getting you know that dreadful emotion put on child so anger fear go together there are certain obvious things that you would not well you'd have to simply say you do need neither an intuition to tell you nor do you need fear when the child is walking on a a wall sometimes children love that they want to climb up and walk on the on the wall it's very must i remember doing that too all children love that but you realize that on the other side of the wall there's a drop it goes uh 100 meters down to the cliff and the wall is this wide now to to take the child away from there requires neither intuition nor fear you just see and you see the danger that is there and then you simply say i'm sorry i have to take you away from there um some some situations are so obviously dangerous for the child you don't need intuition or fear you just need to look and see the danger is so immediate then you you remove the child gently with pleasure explain we might may understand or may not it may even protest and cry but that's what you have to do so very important with children not to impose on them the energy of either fear or anger but they really go together and if a situation you find yourself in a situation and you get a sudden knowing that this isn't right or this is not right to be here or it could be many of you may have experienced it occasionally you might be walking along the street and there you see a group of people at the corner and you can sense if your presence you can sometimes sense a disturbing energy field there where this group of people is and you can already sense it or there's some distance away you can sense a disturbance in the energy field there and you don't need even you don't need fear for that you just sense the disturbance and then you feel yourself you cross over and walk to the other side maybe nothing would have happened but but definitely there's there's a violent energy field there whether the violence is already expressing itself on the surface or just underneath the surface one can sometimes feel that there are places certain parts of cities or sometimes entire cities where there is a latent violence that you feel in the collective energy of that place and you and that is again if you have to be there then you just have to be there in in presence if if you go into into fear then you're much more likely to attract violence with same with animals of course as we know if they if you are in a fearful emotion and meet a vicious dog that it's it's more likely to attack you but if you meet a vicious dog and you can be present now that requires a high degree of alertness the dimmer switch needs to be turned up full by dimmer switch i mean the intensity of your presence needs to be like that and if the if there's no emotion that the dog feels it's very unlikely that it will attack you it can't and so in a dangerous situation let's say you have to walk through a dangerous part of the city just be turn up the dimmer switch of presence i call it sometimes to the dimmer switch so it goes normal presence is just you're fine and then something happens and you go or something even more drastic happens i'm acting out a little bit but it doesn't have to you don't have to go like that but this is just symbolically showing you the first time i went to san francisco i was staying in a little hotel years ago and the receptionist gave me a little map and said we are here and here's the the city center it sounded a bit like the the book of genesis in the old testament because he said you can go anywhere here but not here and then he drew a little square somewhere here you don't go there but anywhere else is safe don't go here okay and the first day i went with my map and of course i didn't go there and the next day i felt confident and i was walking without a map and as i was walking and walking suddenly i found myself the energy field was suddenly changing from one block to another and there were people hanging around the street corners on drugs and i could feel a shift in the energy some violent some people were shouting at others and the i thought oh this must be the forbidden part of the city later i realized it's called tenderloin and the and i could feel my presence the dimmer switch going up quite a bit and i was walking along and i also another strange thing i noticed as i became present the way i walked the way in which i walked changed a little bit and so i kind of i was tuning into the way that people in that part of the city walked the way they kind of shuffle a little bit and and nobody noticed me as a not as an alien who doesn't belong i was dressed just normally and so i put one man looked at me and said something but didn't follow me and then that was it i walked on just quite present oh and a few blocks onwards i was going through it suddenly energy field changed again and there was no fear because just presence arose maybe it wasn't the receptionist must have had a reason why he told me not to go there but it was fine and then i entered suddenly i was completely out and i ended up in a department store in a cafeteria where everybody was well dressed and having their lunch and and talking talking animatedly about their business deals and or the latest fashions and different planets suddenly it's five blocks away four blocks away and so then my energy level as having a coffee my heartbeat accelerated because of the coffee but my this the presence went down a bit it was that was the end of that episode but fear attracts of course this is becoming a well-known fact and you can verify it in your own experience fear attracts what it fears what you fear you tend to attract so it's it's vital to rise above fear but ultimately you cannot rise above fear unless you transcend the egoic mind so that your sense of identity and of and so on is not derived from the movement of thinking that's the egoic mind that but you can contact the deeper levels and where you there is no nothing is to be feared at that deeper level of who you are because it's formless nothing can be threatened except form but who you are in essence cannot be threatened if you contact that find that then that is the end of fear so to really to reach the end of fear you need to know yourself you need to know who you are or what you are or rather you need to be who you are in your essence and that's the end of fear and that's a beautiful thing so you can't get rid of fear unless you get rid of you no longer derive your identity from a false sense of self identification with thoughts identification with form which includes the physical form also the body to sense the formless essence of who you are this is what we always do here do is not the right word because there's no doing but that's what it is and in presence sometimes and as you say an intuition may arise you know what to do there's no question it's not it's not a jarring restless emotion at all it's not an emotion it's a deep knowing that comes out of it and that is it's good to act upon that but it's immediately recognizable it's never there's no violence on it there's no negativity in it nothing disharmonious in it my mind keeps telling me that i'll lose my soul if i surrender to full awakening what is the relationship between body mind soul and presence my mind keeps telling me that i i will lose my soul if i surrender to full awakening you will lose yes that's of course the the mind of course will say that or make you feel that because what is lost is the mind's power over you and the identification with the mind what is lost is the false sense of self that is the egoic mind the false sense of identity the false sense of i the word i the greatest illusion people say it all the time i what are they referring to to an illusory sense of identity and then that dissolves as you awaken spiritually and something else arises and that is the presence and when you then say i that is more true you're speaking of the one timeless presence then i has a true meaning so that arises and if you believe that you're going to lose your identity in that that's an illusion your only identity is already that even if you are completely unconscious your only sense of identity is comes from the one universal i which is consciousness itself which is shining through the mental formations that may be very dense but it's shining through them and the mental formations are thought forms and stories that the mind is telling and these thought forms and stories the me the story of me and my problems and so on that you believe that that story and those thought forms that make up the stories you believe that those are your sense of identity that way to come from but if you look more closely and more deeply you would see that there is no identity in the story of your life that your true sense of identity if you are very careful and alert and see or feel where that sense of you comes the i me as this there's so there's something in your sense of identity that cannot really be named it's mistaken as the story but really what happens is the light of consciousness shines through the story of me and that gives you the sense of who you are so you're mistaking that which shines through the thought forms and the story you're mistaking that and believe that it is the thought forms that give you your sense of identity but they don't and that's why when you become still and thought subsides for a moment for example now there is no loss in your sense your true sense of self in fact you are more fully yourself in that spacious no thought than you were when you were identified with the story but when you were identified with the story and the thought forms even there it was the light that was shining through the consciousness that ultimately was the basis for your sense of identity of feeling i but when you experience realize it truly in its undiluted form unobstructed pure presence and then you realize at this moment even without remembering your story even your name because you don't you don't know your name until i ask you what is your name and then you go into the recesses of your mind and get the information out but even at this moment without remembering your name or your story and just being absolutely just present here have you lost yourself have you disappeared or is the essence of who you are actually more fully present now without reference to the story of me and you'll find that you are actually more fully present here without reference to the story the essence of who you are has always been will always be and always is the light of consciousness and so the liberation is to encounter it to to realize it directly so nothing you cannot lose yourself you can only find yourself because you you've lost yourself already temporarily so to speak when you are lost in thought forms and the thought form say i'm the only thing that's real about you but how are they able to say that how are they able to say i'm the only thing that's real because there's a consciousness there that flows into the thought forms and they assume a form but the essence behind the form is the light of consciousness so you don't lose yourself or your soul or your if you surrender to full awakening but you you fully realize yourself there beyond past and future beyond the mind you've been lost already that you've done that

[Speaker 10] (4:49:36 - 4:49:50)

i uh i read a quote where you were discussing people's food choices and how that's connected maybe to their spirituality and i'm wondering if you can elaborate on how that's connected

[Speaker 1] (4:49:51 - 4:54:06)

especially concerning ahimsa thank you i would say i've never as i never do to tell people you should do this or you should not do that but you should be present with whatever your food choices are and then the right food choice will happen for you rather than giving a an abstract guideline it needs to come from within rather than as something from without so if you're a vegetarian that's wonderful it doesn't mean that immediately makes you into a person who is spiritual you could be egoically identified with being vegetarian in which case it would be a hindrance to the realization of the spiritual dimension so i i shocked a vegetarian once when i said did you know that hitler was a vegetarian that person was very strongly identified with a mental image of me as a spiritually evolved vegetarian and so yes he was a very child i don't know why he was a vegetarian perhaps i don't know i haven't read about it but i know that when he whenever people around hitler were eating chicken soup and so he said condescendingly so you're eating dead bird soup so it really is it comes the answer to that comes from within you and you have to do what feels right what corresponds to your state of consciousness at any time when you go into when you even look at food or even think of food it is helpful to sometimes when i buy some food i go into a supermarket or somewhere and i look at the shelf i imagine that this is going into my body and then the body either opens up to it or closes down and so if you're in touch with the body then that is quite helpful it makes it easier the mind often doesn't really know what what the body really wants it's the mind remembers some past pleasure and wants to repeat it and that's where overeating also occurs because it's just overeating is on the external level on the physical level the need to fill a sense of insufficiency that is ultimately there on the psychological spiritual level the sense of not enough is ego the ego lives from that sense of insufficiency of not enough and of needing more and for some people that becomes into the physical realm in which case then you eat more than the body really needs or wants and again it's it's a spiritual dilemma it can only be really ultimately transcended if you realize that you are not that needy entity that says i need more so body awareness helps a lot in food choice and then it's up to you what it is that you feel and you will know that what you will not be in a dilemma you will know what is right for you and so this is all important answers need to come from within you i wanted to ask what is the

[Speaker 6] (4:54:06 - 4:54:17)

role of being in service to others in one spiritual development and uh well you guess you can say it in the overall evolutionary impulse of the universe to borrow a phrase from your book

[Speaker 1] (4:54:17 - 5:12:31)

okay thank you thank you it can be a wonderful spiritual practice if it arises from the right place inside you and it can also be a strengthening of your ego if it arises from a different place inside you jesus talked about that when he talked about giving arms some people he said like to be seen when they give arms to the poor they want to be seen and he says those people are not going to get a reward in heaven what that means we'll look at in a second because they have their reward already and of course what their reward already is is that it's a feeding of the ego that's their reward so now there are two ways of being seen when you give service either you give something in to somebody it could be help providing active help or giving something that you have a way to somebody to help them whatever it is that one needs to be to look at the motivation and there are two ways of being seen one is to talk about it more than is necessary or to just make sure that others see what you're doing or aware of what you're doing then you have your reward through that which is the feeding of the ego but there's another interior way of seeing it when you have your own self image and you're in service because it makes you feel better of you feel better about yourself it improves your self image that is still fine it may help somebody so it's a good thing to do but it doesn't really help you to become free internally so there's a self image that some people need to feel that they are giving to others and there's this image of i am giving to him you're the doer you see yourself as the doer of good and you see yourself as sacrificing something that you give to another so it it improves your ego really how you see yourself because what is ego but an inner self reflection ego is like an inner mirror the where you you are not yourself you have an image of yourself and you live through this mental image of yourself and the image of yourself is usually not satisfying so every ego tries to improve the image of oneself and it can do it in many many different ways but and then you have the image of me the doer of the good deed and that really strengthens the image and then there's another way of giving i think the expression is where the left hand doesn't know what the right hand does or something like that the right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing which means you don't have the self image as you are giving of something that you own you are helping the other there's an outflow of energy in whatever form and it's not yours it's not yours you're not giving anything that is yours because ultimately nothing is yours you're giving energy because that energy in whatever form comes from the source of all energy all energy derives from one source and so you give you allow yourself to be a vehicle through which this energy flows out into the world and then the sense of me the doer isn't there and the sense of there's the poor person that i am helping isn't there either these concepts so they're simply the process that happens through you and that is the non-egoic way and then to be of service is a beautiful spiritual practice too because the the ego is out of the way dissolves through that when you realize you are not you don't own anything ultimately and the energy is not yours it's universal energy that comes through so to be a vehicle for that and in that way you are a help really when that happens you begin to live in that way you're always in service to others you're even in service to others in ordinary situations that would not normally be recognized as service to others because you recognize the other in their essential being which is the greatest service that you can give somebody far greater than anything material although there's nothing wrong with that either but the greatest service is to recognize the essence or the reality of the other person everything else passes away everything else is transitory but that recognition of the other as god i don't use that word very often and to one with who you are to see that that is the greatest service you can give which it is the realization of who that person truly is beyond the form not to come from form not believing this form is helping that form but realizing there's something here that is beyond form so if you're only in form then you can also very easily deplete yourself i'm trying to be helpful i need to there are many people who are social workers or therapists and after a few years they experience a burnout because they're continuously trying to give and and help and and and then they need they can't do it anymore so in the power of now i believe i wrote that whenever you you help people there needs to be a balance between that maybe i didn't write it there there needs to be a balance between the doing out there and being rooted in in being and so that's no matter where you are in life or what you do otherwise you will lose yourself in your service to others very quickly and then you're not of service to anybody anymore then you'll need therapy yourself or you'll need charity yourself so in to stay be rooted in being while you do is essential so that the energy can continue to move through you so you're addressing you can address the causes of human suffering in the external world sorry the effects of human suffering in the external world but the cause of human suffering is in the consciousness in human consciousness so that is vital to be rooted in yourself not be part of the unconsciousness that produces the dysfunction that is in this world there are people who try to do their best even organizations often try to do their best to help others and they become part sometimes without wanting to they become part of the mess there's infighting in the organization itself it's amazing how in many institutions and organizations the enormous amount of infighting that there is they are supposed to help people sometimes they are even religious organizations the enormous amount of conflict in there and there's so stop stop stop doing just connect with the spaciousness that is within you stay rooted there and then do never lose the rootedness in this remember i use this and this the two modalities or dimensions this is the world of form and doing this is the formless and being so when you help others the two need to be there also always the balance between doing and being you cannot solve the problems of this world through doing only because if there's only doing and you try to solve the problems of the world you will contribute to the problems of the world hence the expression the road to hell is paved with good intentions thank you very much staying present not drifting off into thinking and not going to sleep not falling below thinking rising above thinking so there's often they have the three choices really the you can get lost in thinking as usual if you look at people who are absorbed in their thought processes then the most apt adequate word is absent which of course is the opposite of present so you can easily see that you unfortunately you can't see it in yourself because then you would be present if you if you saw your own absence you would suddenly be present so you cannot see your own absence you can only see somebody else's absence but that's a that's a good enough lesson too because then you can see wow that happens to me too sometimes you can say but it's such a remarkable contrast between the state of presence in the state of absence and occasionally you get in some people or in yourself drifting in and out from into absence and then into presence so you get a couple of minutes you've gone you're gone and then suddenly you're here again and then you once when you at the transitional point it's very noticeable the change in consciousness the qualitative change or vibrational change whatever you want to call it that's a and then you have also you can go into you can fall below thinking so and sometimes the it happens to some people who are not yet firmly anchored in presence they go from presence suddenly they go they dive through the thinking layer directly into a sleep-like state so you can have a person being present one moment and the next moment hmm as i've observed in buddhist monasteries some of the monks especially the early morning meditation first they are there and then suddenly they come but another thing that happens as the you undergo the shift the process it's a process it's a shift one thing important change that takes place is is your investment in thinking is no longer total even while thinking still happens gradually you're not totally in it thinking may still happen you may still be absent but thinking it doesn't have the seriousness anymore that it had before habitual thinking uh one way of putting it is there's a little bit of distance between you and thought this and above all thinking no longer has the power to make you unhappy which is the usual thing because whenever you're unhappy it's because you're thinking about something uh without a story in your mind you cannot be unhappy not unhappy you can have a heaviness in your energy field but that's not unhappiness and you can allow that to be there but to be unhappy an unhappy human being needs a story to justify his or her unhappiness and of course the story is the movement of thought and it becomes so overwhelming that you believe in every thought that arises it tells you your story why you're unhappy and so you're unhappy so it's never the situation that makes you unhappy it's your thinking that makes you unhappy that's interesting thing to observe in yourself acceptance of the present moment as it is and there can be no unhappiness just accept this moment as it is as society is fine and if you're unhappy you can accept that also you can say no i can't i can't accept the present i'm unhappy i can't be present now you can accept this moment acceptance of this moment as it is is a doorway into presence also acceptance of this moment as it is and at this moment if you're unhappy say okay i'm unhappy that's what is and then observe what happens to the unhappiness when you accept it completely

[Speaker 16] (5:12:33 - 5:12:36)

it can't survive with acceptance

[Speaker 17] (5:12:36 - 5:12:36)

yes

[Speaker 1] (5:13:02 - 5:20:43)

marina asks from north carolina in my efforts to be in the now i find i'm able to reach a state of peace and connectedness i think that i wouldn't call it effort but i know what you mean it feels complete and fulfilling and yet there's a voice in my mind saying that to be truly connected i should find a way to be in service to others can you help me understand the role that being in service to others plays in the evolutionary impulse of the universe thank you for bringing a ray of hope to humanity it is an interesting synchronicity to me that the day of your program launch is also my birthday happy birthday the evolutionary impulse of the universe the arising of presence you cannot not be of service to others as presence arises one way or another the way in which you are of service to others will vary from person to person you will not may not immediately know what your way is again the mind sometimes wants to know too soon okay what am i doing what i'm going to do with it now i'm present be present and gradually the realization of how you are to serve others whether it's through direct spiritual teaching or whether it's through some activity into which the energy frequency of presence flows you don't know you need to it may come to you it might take a while it took years for this teaching to come out of the state of presence so many years it may take a while or it may happen very quickly there is an acceleration happening on the planet now of the arising of presence so it's probably happening more quickly to you than to me the how to be of service to other whether it's through direct spiritual teaching or some activity they will come to you either through an external circumstance that will tell you what it is that you need to do it can come from the outside as a synchronistic event and this you very many people are telling me that they're finding that things that are just right as they live more and more in presence come into their lives the right offer the right you're meeting the right person and suddenly what it is that you need to do arises from the outside it comes or you wake up one morning and with the realization of this is what i need to do and then i would wait and see just to make sure that it comes from a deep enough place and if it's still there the next day and a week later and there's a deep sense of peace with it and power then it comes from a deep place and then it's good to act on it this is how i got taken away from living in england i loved england but one morning i knew i have to remove myself without knowing why and it was so strong that i removed myself i knew i had to go to the west coast of north america not knowing why and it took a while before i got rid of everything removed myself landed on the west coast what now don't know and so i sat there for a few weeks in presence and the mind yes came in occasionally and said this is you this is why did you come here and the mind even got a started to look at uh ads for fly flying back to england fares and then at some point the impulse came to buy a notepad carried the notepad not home i didn't have a home somebody had put me up and there in his kitchen the pen came and a very strong impulse came to write and i wrote what is enlightenment somebody had once asked me that but that i hadn't i remembered more or less what i said but that was a new and stream that came and i'd written one page and i knew this is a book it's coming and so there was simply something i couldn't have predicted obedience to what came out of the present moment and the trust to go just into the with a limited amount of money into no complete unknown but don't do it on an impulse that is a restless kind of impulse or uh that comes out of any kind of negative emotion and see if it's it's it's still with you after a while then it's right it's peaceful and it's powerful it seemed the book could only be written on the west coast of north america because of the energy field there i realized that later when i went back to england the writing stopped i could only do editing and so all kinds of things people will be called upon to serve in all kinds of capacities according to your abilities it may be that you produce something artistic or music that is inspiring to many people whatever it is we don't know it may be that you've set up a business and everybody who comes there is greeted as an for who they are so you recognize everybody as spirit as consciousness and not and everybody who comes away from your business feels lighter and more themselves many things can be used as excuses for spiritual transmission and spiritual teaching and if you already have some business or some activity it is quite possible that this could be continued to be used then as a vehicle for transmission of spiritual energy and then it will become empowered beautiful thing there's no predicting how this will change your life except that it will change your life and even if some people may not remove themselves they may stay where they are and yet it will change might not change what you do but it will fundamentally change how you do what you do that's always the most important thing is not what you do it's how you do it what is the consciousness that flows into it is it the egoic consciousness or is

[Speaker 5] (5:20:43 - 5:23:28)

it the unconditioned consciousness thank you for the opportunity the last conversation that i had with my dying son 14 year old with cancer 13 years ago after praying on that night he asked me mom how can i become more aware of the presence of god that was his last question so i remained silent and then i answer there's nothing that we can do only to ask and it will be given to you and he didn't say a word he just moved his hand and kind of grasp what was in the atmosphere and he just grasped it smile and gave me a hug so i felt i needed to share this to you and with the audience tonight and my question eckhart is what's the relationship between the ego and consciousness stillness while we are sleeping especially at night long sleep and our mind is active and we are dreaming and we feel that is a reality but sometimes we are aware it's not a reality but i want to continue in that reality i feel magnetized so what is that interaction that is happening there thank you there are two dimensions to sleep

[Speaker 1] (5:23:28 - 5:30:09)

one is when you're asleep and you're dreaming and the other one is normal life there's also identification with all the things that the mind produces and there's a connection of course between the two the focal point of what we do of awakening is to awaken in the dream that is called ordinary life and the presence that comes into your life through that which is a disidentification from the mind patterns the mental emotional conditionings the ego which is identification complete identification with the mind which is ego that may also have an effect eventually on what happens in your dreams it may transform the nature of your dreams your dreams may become more benign or more pleasant and you may find from time to time or more often within the dream you suddenly become aware that you are dreaming it can be quite nice but the most important thing of course is that you become aware in ordinary life that you are dreaming when you are dreaming when you're totally identified with the mind to become aware then and then that awareness may come into the dream also and suddenly they oh i can do anything it's only a dream usually soon after you wake up the ego gradually diminishes as you stop identifying so much with the mind and that is one of the reasons why the nature of your dreams becomes more benign because the ego does lives in a violent reality it is there's enemies and there's fighting and defensiveness and aggression and and that reflect is reflected in the dreams many dreams arise they're usually often there are emotions associated with dreams we tend to think that what we feel when we dream is emotions that we have when we dream is caused by the they are caused by the dream that's but they're not it's usually the other way around that the dream is caused by pre-existing emotions in you the mind is trying to explain the emotions that you feel and it creates images as explanations for the emotions that you feel this is the genesis of many dreams um when you look at it afterwards it looks as if it were the other way around i felt fear because i saw this dreadful monster running after me in the dream i was real no that the monster there was an emotion of intense fear in you the mind didn't know what to do with it and then it created an image to correspond to the emotion and that image became the dream it translated the emotion into an image and it it became so you saw it there and then you confuse of course cause and effect the dream is the cause of the underlying emotion the underlying emotion is there because of the egoic consciousness that creates an unpleasant reality and creates many negative emotions that are completely unnecessary but it's created by the ego with its paranoid delusional systems and many other dysfunctions so that is interesting because it can also be applied to everyday life i saw for example dysfunctions in human consciousness i observed a person uh who suffers from paranoia and paranoia means you see enemies or you feel persecuted by people or groups of people or followed you misinterpret reality and when i looked closely at this i saw that there was intense fear in that person and the fear was so much the fear could not be explained by the reality around this person because the reality around this person was fine the mind had to explain the fear so the egoic mind came up with a delusional system and says i am fearful because of this person who is following me it wasn't he was just walking and i'm fearful because these people are watching me while i'm here they're here they belong to this this conspiracy of government conspiracy they have a whole department controlling wanting to control me and that's why i feel this fear so again it's the other way around and then eventually that person ended up with at least a hundred people in full-time employment in their view just to to follow me and to control me they're all around me the government must be spending a lot of money on one person but that is because the fear came there the mind attempted to explain the fear and came up with that delusional system so that's the the important thing is presence in ordinary the ordinary the dream of ordinary life that bring presence into that more and more and that will change also the nature of the the dreams that you dream when you're asleep at night we have two dream worlds here but the for your focal point must be the dream world of

[Speaker 9] (5:30:09 - 5:31:02)

ordinary existence i've always had a hard time expressing anger um my instinct is to kind of suppress it which doesn't feel healthy but when i feel that strong emotion come out lashing out doesn't feel healthy either and i'm wondering if there's like a happy medium between the two or what would being present with anger actually look like

[Speaker 1] (5:31:02 - 5:32:06)

yeah maybe you can observe i assume you're talking about yourself rather than a friend of mine has a problem with anger and she asked me to ask you this question uh interesting thing to observe is when it happens whether it involves certain thoughts or thought processes that trigger it um so that requires some awareness because these things can flash very quickly to what extent is the anger caused by the situation or is the anger caused by your thoughts about the situation

[Speaker 9] (5:32:07 - 5:32:15)

um it seems to happen pretty quickly i before i even put thoughts to it i feel the anger come up

[Speaker 1] (5:32:15 - 5:32:18)

um could you give a recent example

[Speaker 9] (5:32:20 - 5:32:55)

well i have um three small children and um so daily i'm suppressing my my anger i don't want to yell at them all day um so i'm i feel like with their fight you know just little fightings and things like that i'm daily seeming to be pushing that anger down and then if my husband comes home an hour late as soon as i see him then all of this anger suddenly comes up

[Speaker 1] (5:32:55 - 5:38:02)

but again yelling doesn't feel the right thing to do yeah so this suppressing it like that is not a good thing to do because although you're not shouting at them in other ways they pick up on the energy of anger which is quite strong when it happens and it affects things people around you so they do something and that they shouldn't be doing and you get angry but of course they are children so they are supposed to do what they shouldn't be doing so they're doing exactly the right thing otherwise they wouldn't be children or they would be uh have no volition volition of their own children are supposed to cause trouble i mean if you do the puppies do the same if you if you get a puppy you're asking for trouble now with a puppy maybe you wouldn't get angry although it could happen too because they can be quite tiresome and very similar behavior to children and even when dogs reach adolescence again they're very similar to trying things out how powerful they are and with a but with a puppy perhaps it's easier not to be angry because realize that's how the puppy is supposed to be but maybe you think the child is already should know better but they don't and so i believe it does originate from perhaps a thought that is unvoiced that underlies some thoughts are not don't become voiced thoughts they are assumptions that are their semi-conscious assumptions in your mind that children should behave differently so this can be a good practice i'm not saying it's not a challenge not just the question of what to do with your anger that's one question and a more important question is how not to be angry at least not as a habitual thing don't demand absolute perfection of yourself so occasionally you may still experience anger so the important thing is to be there as a witness of the energy that we call anger you so that the anger doesn't take you over so you can feel the anger you can practice for example by reliving a recent situation briefly in your mind usually i don't recommend that you go back into the past in your mind but sometimes it's helpful let's say something happened this morning or yesterday with your children that made you angry if you could briefly this almost sounds like therapy but you could briefly go in and briefly see the situation and you'll get a little bit of a remnant of the anger perhaps and with that you can work and see witness it witnesses be be the awareness as the anger arises and feel it in the body and that's the that is your your practice so that next time it happens maybe it's a little bit easier to be there as the awareness as the anger comes up and then it can be released by breathing it out for example or for a moment of spaciousness looking at the sky or whatever and then see if you can deal with the situation consciously without the anger the there may be a pain body in you still and so that gets triggered periodically that pain body would mean more prolonged outbursts of anger do you experience how long do you stay angry and that's maybe an important question with your husband a little

[Speaker 9] (5:38:02 - 5:38:32)

longer than with the children yeah 15 minutes half hour where i'm feeling that i'm not yelling at that time i'm just sort of and when you're angry you yell at him um not in front of the kids i don't want to yell at him in front of the kids so i usually and the kids are always usually around so i'm just kind of walking around irritated which doesn't feel good no do you tell him i mean

[Speaker 1] (5:38:32 - 5:52:26)

not that you need to tell him i'm sure he knows but uh but if you say it that implies that there is an awareness there that you are not the anger but you know that you're angry there's anger in me if he's conscious enough he can allow you to to to voice it when it's there there's i feel that already does a lot to release it the simple admission that there's anger in me not so much i am angry that it means you kind of you are it but there isn't this energy there's anger in me now because of this the children did that and then you came if he is conscious enough and allows you to say it by simply saying by admitting that there's anger right now the need to externalize it is less you're not holding it in you're allowing it to be so if he helps you to allow it to be you can talk to him about it can you help me i want to work with this not to push it away or to suppress it but if i allow it to be and that's a transitional stage that hopefully you go beyond the transitional stage so that anger arises much less but the transitional stage is allowing it to be as it arises and if you if he can help you with that then he can allow you to be angry when you're angry and that helps you to allow yourself to be angry and by allowing it you become the space for it that's what is implied when you use the term allowing you become the space for the anger and the added benefit of course is when you are the space for the anger it is much less likely to take over your mind and and prolong it by thinking angry thoughts which fuel the anger so allow yourself to be angry so when it something happens with the children you're angry okay that's my practice it's good another opportunity for allowing myself to be angry and you'll notice very quickly it evaporates uh so you can even welcome anger anger really cannot survive when you welcome it well it can for a while but but not for too long and by the way this is the case with other conditions too any form of unhappiness because anger one could say unhappiness is a generic term any form of anger is a form of any anger is a form of unhappiness and unhappiness can take on many forms and so to allow yourself to be unhappy it's okay i'm unhappy there's unhappiness here okay that's all right then the unhappiness goes what that's not supposed to be like that because i can't survive in that in that environment of of saying yes the unhappiness can't survive in that that liquid or whatever you call the the acceptance environment it can't thrive there unhappiness needs further friction further oh i shouldn't be unhappy but i am unhappy it likes that because then it can strengthen itself but the gentle acceptance part of whatever arises in this moment is as it is remember marcus aurelius this is the one a few of the very few quotes i actually remember by heart love only that which comes to you woven in the pattern of your destiny for what could more aptly fit your needs so this moment whatever arises externally or internally is what is and the change in consciousness happens when you become welcoming to what is and if it's anger there's the anger be this can i be the space for this i recommend that i've said it a few times in other places can i be the space for this now this means whatever arises externally or internally at this moment whatever form this moment takes can i be the space for this use it as a mantra as a pointer as a question external or internal it's the form that this moment takes now don't fight the form that this moment takes because you would be going against the universe itself because the universe has brought about this anger in you because you are the universe you're a vital part of it it has produced it for whatever reason you don't need to inquire because you might have to travel back a long time to the to the beginning of the anger six million years ago uh so the most powerful the transcendence is achieved through allowing so so far you've been you thought i mustn't i must get rid of but now you practice just be the space for it feel the let the energy be there and be the space hold it be the space for wow maybe you do something spontaneously i'm not telling you what to do i'm just doing it now because i'm imagining i'm angry whatever comes to you oh and then you deal with it more consciously and say no put that down you might have to take it away and then the what about the other angry the children do they get angry oh yeah yeah of course they would absorb also your anger even if you don't externalize it and after years it would become part of their pain body but they may also come in of course with inherited patterns so that's fine so don't let the if there is a tantrum pain body in the child don't let it well i'm not saying don't be be watchful because what the pain body wants because the pain body in a child is as clever as the pain body in an adult the pain body in a child already has an enormous amount of cunning and cleverness in it and it wants to manipulate you the pain body it wants to manipulate you into feeding it so when the child has been taken over by the pain body the pain body will do what it can and it's clever to get anger from you and by getting anger from you it it feeds on the energy so it requires great presence not to feed the child's pain body just first of course you need to know that it's a pain body in the child it's not it's not who the child is it's it's part of the human condition at the present time that this happens in human beings so it's not personal and by recognizing it as the pain body you've already enabled yourself to not confuse it with who he or she is then you're free to be there as a space for it it's easier i'm not saying it's it's easy but it is easier to be the space for the child's especially a small child a child's pain body than to be the space for an adult's pain body although the pain body can be as strong in a child somehow through the form of the child it manifests in not quite as overwhelmingly as in the adult form and so if you can be the space for the pain body your the pain body will be not be able to use your reaction it doesn't arise then you can catch it when the child starts shouting or screaming or something in order to well sometimes the child wants to the pattern in the child may want to manipulate you into doing what it wants that's the early forms of ego so by throwing a tantrum the worst thing of course as you can do is to after saying no four times and then the child starts screaming and then finally you you give the child what it wanted originally that's dreadful thing to do because what that is teaching to the child is if i'm just unhappy enough i'll get what i want i just need to show that i'm really unhappy then finally i'll get what i want and that's it and there are many adults walking around on this planet to whom that happened as a child and who believe unconsciously if i'm really unhappy i'll finally get what i want and of course that may work with an unconscious parent but as soon as you become an adult it doesn't work anymore but there are adults who spend their whole adult life not realizing that it's not working so they throw tantrums either externally or internally like the woman on the card and it's the universe isn't helping them nobody in fact everybody's running away so don't teach the child that when just show me that you're really unhappy then i'll give it to you so you need there needs to be that presence recognize the pain body and gently just be the space for it and in other places i've spoken more about it that you can when the child is conscious at times when the child is not in the grip of the pain body talk to the child and ask explain a little bit about that what came into you when this happened yesterday what was it how did it feel like what what what was that does it have a name or a color or what does it look like and don't say pain body that's too abstract and then the awareness can grow in the child by by by calling attention to it that and not seeing that it is something in the child that happens occasionally and then you can talk about yours to the child you see it happens to me too to mommy it happens too suddenly this it comes in and this red dragon takes you over he's in your body breathing fire you can act it out it might be helpful i mean i act out things sometimes because it's helpful there's the pain body and so if you do that with a child when the child is is normally conscious it's humorous so it's not don't make it a serious thing it's a light-hearted thing that's not to be taken too seriously not you there's a bad thing in you no you act it out and next time the tantrum happens you go and what that will do i've never said that before but what that will do is it'll it'll awaken the the awareness that because when you were explaining it there was more awareness in the child when you go through the same motion when it happens and the child is unconscious it awakens some awareness of oh and it brings about a separation in the child of consciousness and the pattern that is there so it might not stop it don't expect immediately by going it'll it'll collapse but it there'll be some awareness in the background and that can grow and next time you have an attack of anger look in the mirror and go that was because anger wants to be taken seriously it cannot survive non-seriousness it needs light-heartedness anger and light-heartedness or making fun of anger anger can't survive so

[Speaker 17] (5:52:27 - 5:52:29)

it is

[Speaker 1] (5:52:30 - 5:52:32)

it's a lovely practice

[Speaker 9] (5:52:33 - 5:52:38)

thank you it's helpful thank you

[Speaker 1] (5:53:00 - 6:04:53)

if you are for example oh the the the headline here is no problems in the present moment if you are for example diagnosed with a cancer and you're suffering from it you can accept it and not add resistance to the suffering but still the suffering is in the present moment can't we call that a problem in the present moment i mean if we don't call it a problem how can we be satisfied of the present moment when it is painful thank you for your work and for being who you are well i've come into contact with several people who have suffered from cancer and spoken to them and many of them have been able to step out of the normal reactive pattern that would arise that we could call normal you suffer and of course you resist the great opportunity when something like that happens is a critical situation of that kind can either take you into deep fear and unhappiness or it can push you into presence and the awakened state and sometimes both things happen to a person sometimes at first they move into deep fear and unhappiness and suddenly sometimes with the help of a spiritual teacher or teaching there's a shift that happens and they come to a state of complete acceptance or surrender not to surrender to the idea of illness not surrender to the idea i have cancer and i need to surrender to this just surrender to whatever the condition of this moment is all you ever need to surrender to is not some idea in your mind you don't surrender to an illness yet the illness is an idea in your mind the condition of this moment is what is weakness disability whatever it may be pain surrender is always surrender to now the problem part of any condition whether it's cancer or aids or any illness or any other condition that is usually considered critical the problem is still not a problem unless the mind makes it into a problem that sounds a little strange but that's how it is the case i remember reading a story about byron katie visiting a woman in cancer ward who was at far gone very poor cancer that had progressed and byron katie was saying to her it's not a problem and the woman who was there in bed got a little bit angry and she said it's not a problem i'll show you what the problem is and she lifted her sheet and showed her her one of her legs was huge it's small and two or three times the size and and of course then only somebody like byron katie could actually successfully say that she said oh so and so you think um i've forgotten now that you think the leg shouldn't be two or three times the size is that the problem that you think your leg should be should not be twice the size of your left leg is that the problem and it was said in such a way with such presence that finally the was mind activity then the mind activity said this should not be happening and all suffering really arose from that mind activity that said this should not should not be happening beyond the mind activity there's only ever the conditions of this moment and that is an amazing realization and that is when the illness can push you force you into the state of presence and i've seen the light shine through people who have had cancer at some point suddenly they were forced into presence the ego got eroded and there was light shining through wonderful thing so the consciousness was actually flowering the mind stopped saying this should not be happening there was surrender just to the present moment and of course when you have a critical illness where the doctors tell you you don't have much future anymore then the thing that the ego always looks to is removed which is can be very painful the dreadful dreadful thing to the ego is no more future my god what imagine no more future is taken away from you what are you left with well you're still left with your past so you can always take refuge there but with the help of a spiritual teaching can be pointed out to you that center your life in the present moment just this and that's where the light begins to shine through and so you become you walk around on this knife edge of now because if you leave the knife edge of now you suffer you can also practice that when you have psychological suffering walk walk on the on the knife edge it's just a knife edge of now the razor's edge it's actually title of a novel by somerset maugham that's quite a nice novel they were also spiritual to some extent one of the characters there is ramana maharshi the razor's edge of now and people who have who are in intense suffering have enormous motivation to walk on this razor's edge of now so that is where suffering can become extremely beneficial and helpful in your spiritual awakening if allow the suffering to force you into that place or dimension where there is no suffering and that's the absolute now and then you live like the rose that emerson observed outside his window absolutely in the now and then there's a flowering of consciousness through this form the the person becomes eroded without past and future the personal self becomes eroded and only the greater self or the non-self whatever you want to call it emerges beautiful so i've seen it with some aids patients i've seen it with people suffering from cancer it is always a possibility it's a wonderful thing where the that which will conventionally be called dreadful becomes grace and so that's then if that's if life gives it to you that's fine that's what you accept that it is part of your past or if you choose presence perhaps life won't give it to you if you voluntarily choose presence maybe life won't say force you into presence i'm not promising that i'm just putting it forward as a possibility or maybe you choose presence and life wants you to be more intensely present and then still gives you something like that but it's a beauty of of living of just living in in this on this razor's edge of now it's just and the power that's there you don't need more much more time for your life your life is totally fulfilled in that moment already you don't you don't because usually you think you need time to be more fully myself that's the egoic delusion i need time i need to do this and that i haven't done that yet no you're already fully yourself there in the the depths and the intensity of now who you are emerges fully so whatever happens to you is grace it's great that's the i recently read a story i don't know if i can remember it correctly of uh there was a a king and the advisor of the king or minister and the king had an accident he hurt himself and the advisor of the king threw up his arms and said god is great god is great and the king had just just had quite an injury and the advisor god is great the king got so angry he said put him in in jail he's happy because i'm injured not going to have that and so he paid the king said to him i'm going to put you in jail and he again said god is great god is great so he ended up in jail then the king went out two weeks later the king went out on a hunt and he got lost and he got captured by some wild tribe and they were going to put him in a pot and cook him and at the last minute that the head of the tribe saw that the king was not a perfect human being because he had this injury so they let him go and so the king arrived back home and realized and then he he called the the advisor from his his present and said i can understand now why you threw up your arms and said god is great god is great but why did you throw up your arms and god is great when i put you in prison i can see now why you did it when i injured myself because ultimately i survived because of that but why did you do it when i saw you in prison and he said well if you hadn't thrown it in prison i would have been hunting with you and they would have taken me isn't that an amazing state of consciousness whatever happens to you say god is great

[Speaker 6] (6:07:10 - 6:08:14)

um originally i had a a question under the heading of having opinions and i'll read my question because it's a little lengthy it was if presence means allowing what is without resistance then is it possible for the people in ettv forum to have many different viewpoints and disagreements on a subject and still remain egoless okay it seems we've had i don't know if you ever check in on the forum rounding yeah that's wise um but uh it's kind of a microcosm of the macrocosm yes it basically is it's uh you see the human mind on the screen and it is a great honestly a great teaching yes yes um but it's gotten a little crazy lately yes well that's what the human mind is exactly

[Speaker 1] (6:08:15 - 6:09:34)

and uh so so even people who are drawn to the teaching of course that does the fact that you are drawn to this teaching on the one hand it means there's something in you that recognizes something there there's a truth there but it does not mean that you you are fully fully conscious human being so that all the patterns that still operate in normal human unconsciousness may still be operating in you although there is some opening there so you feel drawn to the teaching and yet of course all that stuff is still there and it's wonderful if you can see it on the screen because it's like a mirror there's nothing personal in it when you look at all these comments whatever people have it's oh i'm looking at the human mind there it is oh oh and so the your question just gave me the idea just now to maybe write something about it and put it on there so that people can be more vigilant i'm not going to say don't write obnoxious things it means continue to write whatever you want to write but know what you're doing

[Speaker 6] (6:09:36 - 6:09:43)

would you be able to talk a little bit about opinion versus judgment yes that kind of thing yes

[Speaker 1] (6:09:44 - 6:14:05)

opinion versus judgment that's a very good point oh there's nothing wrong with opinion there's nothing wrong with judgment except of course that judgment makes you suffer ultimately it's painful it's not usually recognized as such a judgment is an opinion that you completely identify with as yourself usually it's about a situation it's about another human being it's about a group of human beings whatever it may be so it's an opinion but you identify it with it so completely by the way an opinion of course is a thought or a group little group of a bundle of thoughts because you identify so closely with that thought or bundle of thoughts which we call opinion that it's taken to be as the absolute truth um and there's a sense of self in it a sense of identity because it's my it's your opinion that's what identification means there's a sense of self in that thought now whenever has invested a thought with a sense of self anybody who has a different thought or questions that thought let alone attack that thought and say this is completely wrong anybody who even questions it is immediately regarded as a almost one could say a mortal enemy because if you question a thought that i had invested with a sense of self you are questioning my very existence that's the illusion but that's the mechanism behind the illusion i'm completely unconscious those people are not going to say to you you are questioning my very existence they don't know that but they feel that so when they feel that then all that stuff arises immediately you attack the other another one thoughts that others condemn others for it's very easy to find reasons to condemn others very easy and again those thoughts put the others in a position of inferiority because if i can condemn another righteous judgment perhaps is the correct expression how dare they say how dare you say that that's that's in the moment you say or think that the ego goes now let me tell you and so when they're on their computer keyboard that flows into what they write you can't see them but you read it and it's a lack of awareness of thought patterns and what role thought plays in your life it's being wedded to thought and deriving your identity from that why do they do that because they can't feel the alive the deeper aliveness that they are it's a pseudo satisfaction so all you can do is see it and not react but perhaps point out if you are using the forum of the computer screen whatever it's called you can perhaps point out uh well not make anybody wrong because it doesn't work but point out right as much as possible without your own ego involvement simply by stating your opinion not so you can state opinion yes nothing wrong with that without having an opinion

[Speaker 6] (6:14:06 - 6:14:14)

of your own you know like your relative fact yes and that can be egoless yes yes you can have

[Speaker 1] (6:14:14 - 6:15:38)

opinions about politics without ego it's rare but possible you can have discussions where you put forward your opinion without identification with it and there are some good things that have developed out of psychotherapy well it's almost a little bit cliche now but it is basically good for example the expression i hear you or i hear what you're saying this can be it can be just a cliche and behind it there's a there's a anger and judgment but if it's a true statement it's a beautiful thing which means i'm open to hear what you're saying i it's not saying that i agree with you right i hear what you're saying however my opinion is or you put forward whatever is um so you inspired me to go there and have a look to see what people

[Speaker 6] (6:15:38 - 6:15:41)

good luck

[Speaker 1] (6:15:43 - 6:16:15)

but i do know that the on the through the internet um the human mind it just magnifies in many cases the insanity of the human mind nothing personal in that but it does magnify it you can you find all kinds of highly interesting things there that is true all kinds of information all kind and all kinds of madness and all masquerading as the truth

[Speaker 6] (6:16:18 - 6:16:47)

well it's interesting too that um because you can't see someone yes and you can't sense them um you can't hear the inflection in their voice yes you you don't know their backstory so it's sort of a phantom coming out of nothingness that you're you know it doesn't give you a lot of um clues yes as to hang on to as to make an opinion or yes judgment yes

[Speaker 1] (6:16:48 - 6:17:19)

if you write things then it's good not to you don't even need to say that somebody is wrong just put forward what you feel is right don't say you are wrong just say what's right or don't don't say this is bad just say what's good right that that may be helpful yeah but i i will have a look and perhaps i'll write something too great how dare you

[Speaker 17] (6:17:25 - 6:17:27)

thank you

[Speaker 13] (6:17:48 - 6:18:44)

so um i've been studying acting for the last little while and um i i understand how presence is important in acting and any kind of creativity how that's connected um but many acting teachers uh talk about drawing on past memories of painful experiences to bring forth authentic emotional expression when it's needed in a scene during a performance um so in a way it's like they're calling on their pain body sort of to fulfill this creative need so my question is um what is your perspective on voluntarily revisiting memories of past pain for the purpose of seeking authenticity in the art of acting oh okay thanks

[Speaker 1] (6:18:44 - 6:23:34)

yeah well usually i don't recommend visiting the past but there are some practices that can temporarily be helpful one is now for the time being i'm from little i won't talk about acting i'm trying to look at the second part of my answer i didn't know that until i said it the you can some people have a very heavy pain body that takes them over the the plastic pain body as most of you know i call the accumulation of past pain that still lives in you in latent or manifested form some people's pain body is so heavy that they can absolutely stay they cannot stay aware when it's it becomes so suddenly it is impossible for them to to stay aware as it explodes into their lives especially anger which can some people come so suddenly that it takes them over and they lose presence immediately and they wake up whenever that wave of anger has subsided and say oh what was that it's gone well they were totally in the grip of it and for those people i would sometimes recommend to relive in their mind a past episode that something that made them angry and then experience the arising of the emotional field and because it's not the actual situation but a reliving of the situation it won't be quite as powerful as the actual situation but powerful enough for you to practice staying present as the awareness in the background while it while the energy arises and that can be a very helpful practice for those who otherwise cannot stay present so if you can do that by by going by reliving a past episode of total loss of awareness they can then stay aware while that happens and then perhaps there may be enough awareness next time still a remnant of awareness even though it probably will still be happening in now too in the case of acting that would be a similar thing but you would be doing it for a different reason if you can have to see whether you can relinquish that energy when you've come to the end of the acting if it stays with you for a long period of time or you notice that you enter certain negative moods after you've done your acting which stay with you for hours or days then it's i would say it's not worth doing that then there may be another way of generating that emotion rather than visiting the past in you if you if it can be relinquished as soon as you don't need it anymore then it's it could work um it could even help you with the awareness practice if you voluntarily consciously evoke a past emotion which then of course is no longer a past emotion it becomes a present emotion whether or not there is another way of generating the emotion you need in acting i don't know you have to find i haven't done any acting you have to find out for yourself whether you can so completely believe perhaps in the situation that you're acting out which by the way is just like normal life um if you can so completely believe in the your particular the script that whatever it is you're acting out and you're so completely in it that that situation itself that of course is the script is making you angry because you're so in it then you don't perhaps you don't need to revisit the past i don't know i don't know whether i could even whether i could generate anger if i tried acting i don't know how i would do it so i may try it i'll let you know what happens let's see what what could i remember

[Speaker 13] (6:23:36 - 6:23:49)

there's also the reverse um where a teacher has an acting teacher i was listening to said that you could imagine a possibility of something happening that would be devastating to generate

[Speaker 1] (6:23:49 - 6:24:43)

that kind of an emotion yes which is so yes yes that's right and again you have to be careful to see whether that lingers in your energy field after the acting for a long period of time uh which is not good um if you can't get rid of if you if a negative if you if you're in the grip of a negative mood after being in the acting in some drama let's say and you stay you find yourself being in a negative mood for days afterwards or weeks then you'll you'll have to see how you can cleanse through meditation practice through awareness practice or some other means perhaps including physical some physical practice combining some physical activity with presence so that you can

[Speaker 13] (6:24:43 - 6:24:59)

cleanse yourself immediately afterwards yeah maybe using those strategies is okay but only a few your primary one is presence first yes yes yes thank you

[Speaker 14] (6:25:18 - 6:26:16)

hello thank you for being here my question is what's the difference between the exercises and sentences to repeat in a course of miracles and your teaching of stillness i also heard you say that there's a spiritual thought doesn't exist thought is is a form is a prayer then also a thought form can you explain a bit about this because when we came over here in a plane indian man was sitting behind us and at least one of one and a half hours he made his prayers loud always it went and then the second sentence and then the third and then he repeated and repeated and i thought that that doesn't make sense uh

[Speaker 1] (6:26:23 - 6:33:49)

well let's say causing miracles and uh the the the purpose of the cause in miracles is to bring you to a place where the words are not needed anymore it meets you where or not you personally but the human being it meets the human being where the human being is in the realm of thought the cause in miracles would say that otherwise there's no meeting at all it has to first of all meet the human being where it can be reached and that is in the realm of thought in the same way that a psychiatrist in order to reach a deluded patient there's no point in the psychiatrist telling the patient i am telling you you are not napoleon that will only strengthen the delusion of the patient that he is napoleon he is no he will never reach the patient but if the psychiatrist for a little while enters the mind of the patient says okay so you are napoleon suddenly there's a meeting once they have met because the psychiatrist have gone have entered the delusional system of the patient once they have met there's a possibility for him to take him out of the delusion if they never meet nothing can be done in the same way the cause in miracles is attempting to reach people where they are in the realm of thought and gradually take you out of thought but throughout the course thought is still used and but it will more and more in the later lessons it points to the stillness and towards the end the final lessons it says the use for words is almost over now towards the end of the course in miracles so it takes you it's designed to take you into presence or stillness so if you can enter presence or stillness right now or wherever you are if you already have presence and stillness a spacious awareness in the background of your life when you deal with people and situations you don't need the cause in miracles if you can enter stillness when you're not being disturbed but but as soon as you interact with people you lose presence awareness or stillness then the cause and miracles may still be useful because they have certain lessons that can be used as pointers for example one lesson i remember it says in a situation where you feel upset or angry or irritated it says you can say i could see peace instead of this i could see peace instead of this it's a pointer the words don't miraculously produce peace but the words are pointing to the possibility of approaching that situation in a different state of consciousness so really the words are pointing to a different state of consciousness the it's not it's not in the words it's that to which the words point so and as the buddhists tell us correctly the finger pointing to the moon is not the moon only the dog might think that the finger pointing to the moon is the moon because if you tell a dog go there most dogs it will look at your finger so it's not it's not the the words are pointers and particularly useful cause miracles for human interaction it really uses relationships as spiritual practice and that's a good thing so many lessons can be applied to relationships and you need it or if if the cause is right for you it's not definitely not for everybody but it might be useful for some people who still find that they have a lot of conflict with other people and a lot of upset with other people so you can bring the lesson into relationships if you don't have that anymore of course you don't need the cause in miracles and even if you if you if you understood deeply or could practice deeply just lesson one of the course it has 365 lessons just do lesson one nothing that i see here means anything that's what the lesson tells you this table doesn't mean anything this flower doesn't mean anything this room doesn't mean anything what does all that mean it means you are giving up all your interpretations and judgments you're approaching you're cleaning the blackboard of your mind erasing all the scribbles on it or let's say or the let's call it a deleting all the noise on the tape no they have don't have tapes anymore they uh delete all the the digital signals whatever they in the in your mind nothing that i see here means anything takes you to a place of not knowing anymore and what's left when nothing means anything you're not thinking anymore if you deeply could do deeply lesson one don't need anything else so because it would stop your mind from its useless interpreting and judging and so on so in your own life if you feel if you have you already practiced cause in miracles lesson if you still find difficulties in relationships with other people so you can still use it then it can take you it can eliminate help you to become more conscious there in the end it takes you to the essence of this teaching which is awareness pure awareness or stillness and that's the end of and also by the way the course says this course is is a beginning not the end so it's it takes you to that place where you open yourself up to awareness which can then flower through you if it's for you it's definitely not for everybody

[Speaker 14] (6:33:50 - 6:33:57)

i use these sentences when i feel i'm getting angry now so i say some sentence and and push it

[Speaker 1] (6:33:57 - 6:34:47)

down yes but don't push it down don't push it down just you can say the sentence and then allow it to dissolve if that's what it wants because if you get upset or angry and try to hold it down it'll build up don't hold it down just allow it to dissolve different approach never attack an inner state never attack any emotion that arises because it creates resistance again allow it to be and then if it's not resisted it dissolves lovely practice now you ask something else about prayer the indian man behind you and in general prayers is this

[Speaker 14] (6:34:47 - 6:35:02)

talking to me or how do you how do you explain prayers that's a huge topic of course prayer the

[Speaker 1] (6:35:03 - 6:41:04)

in the way this this he uses prayer as a kind of repetition a kind of mantra perhaps uh the the good thing about it of course is that it stops your mind from doing other things like indulging in fear producing thoughts or negative producing thought negativity producing thoughts so it it stops your mind from that but ultimately that kind of thing for us for anybody has to be left behind when jesus said pray unceasingly or pray without ceasing uh that does not mean because it would be absurd that you that he's telling you to continuously pray pray without he's using prayer in a very different sense but it's possible that people who wrote down what he said misunderstood because they didn't realize the truth in themselves jesus teaches presence it teaches points continuously to the present moment the importance of the present moment and the importance of staying awake there are parables about going to sleep not going to sleep but staying awake jesus says the truth will make you free which implies that right the way you are you are not free because you are run by the conditioning of your mind so the all the basic teaching is there you just have to see it repetitive prayer if you need it that's what you will practice and a time will come when it's no longer right for you so any meditation method can be helpful let's talk about meditation you have a method some people count while they meditate from one to nine from nine to one from one to six from six to one they count their breath or they do this or that have a mantra that they repeat in their minds which keeps out other kinds of thinking now the purpose of a mantra is not to speak stuck with the mantra but to eventually let go of the mantra the mantra reduces all thinking to just one thought movement so you can focus on that and then it's meant to be dropped when you drop the one thought that was left first your mind was full of all kinds of thoughts then the guru comes and says i will give you mantra you repeat every day 500 times and if you do that it brings your mind to a one-pointedness some people then get attached to the mantra my mantra i could know then you are meant to at some point the guru will point out it's time for you to let go because what is left when all your thoughts have flown into one thought form and then that one thought form is dropped just awareness is left so it can be take you there if you don't get stuck on the way if you get stuck on the way then you're stuck until you suffer a bit more again so that's let's leave it at that um it's knowing when to let go of something that was that is helpful for a while like a ladder you climb up a ladder and then you don't need it anymore or the buddha has a famous example of a raft you used to cross the river the raft in the buddhist the buddha uses the parable of the raft he's talking about the teaching buddhist teaching and buddhist practice so you use the raft to cross the river when you have crossed the river you don't carry the raft around with you it's heavy that there's a point where you let go of the raft there's complete freedom then whether you still call that buddhism or whether you still call yourself a buddhist is up to you but suddenly there's freedom that's something is helpful for a while until it's a hindrance any kind of practice and in the end there is just awareness presence consciousness and some gurus teach that directly they don't give you they hardly give you any technique and that's for certain people who are ready for that that's fine so it's what you feel drawn to is what is right for you and then know

[Speaker 12] (6:41:04 - 6:42:28)

when it's time to let go thank you namaste my name in this form is rena and my question is about euthanasia in pets and uh it in february my little dog was diagnosed with lymphoma and oh i'm sorry and there's nothing that you can really offer um it's a matter of making him happy until his time and uh i was pretty upset and panicked by it and my vet said you know when starts to be symptomatic bring him in we'll give him a shot he'll go to sleep and all that so when i was so upset i thought well um this is a good answer it's a good plan i you know i have an idea of what to do but then i thought about it and i thought you know um i have power over his life he's a little guy i bought and i have power over his life i can end his suffering but really am i ending my suffering i mean i don't want to see him suffer but on the other hand doesn't he have the right to really go through the dying the work of dying in the process of dying and i guess that's my question about feeling what is right action you know what is the right thing to do thank you

[Speaker 1] (6:42:34 - 6:49:02)

answers to questions like that are difficult to find when you start thinking about it because as you know your mind can assume different positions and you might have one voice voice in your head arguing one way one course of action and another voice in your head arguing another course of action and suddenly you are stuck what is what is the right what is the right thing to do in a situation like that and so the answer always has to come from within you but you have to go beyond the mind that is putting forward either the yes or the no arguing for or against some kind of position i never or very rarely probably never i don't know i can't remember give advice as to what actually a person should do because i believe when you get in touch with the unconditioned intelligence within you because in other words become still then the answer will come through you it may not come the very first time but it may come the next time and as you bring it take it into stillness i know that probably i would if our dog were suffering i would probably be inclined to if there were no way beyond the suffering and you can if i were sure that the animal is actually intense suffering i would probably feel the compassionate thing to do would be to end the suffering but that is and every individual's decision but not so much decision but has to come from a deeper place where it's not a decision it's a knowing and any individual case animals and pain is a strange thing they animals are very much surrendered to pain when we took our dog to the vet a couple of months ago the vet discovered a broken tooth and said oh she must have had this broken tooth for quite a long time and probably had a toothache for several months never knew it the only thing we knew that she didn't wasn't interested in chewing bones anymore and so and the vet also said it's amazing how how animals can be with pain where humans would complain and all kinds of humans of course has a psychological level of suffering on top of the physical suffering there's an there's an entity that comments and is resists feel sorry for itself and all those things so humans are animals have capacity for surrendering to pain but also animals are surrendered in deaths also the same way that animals don't make life into a problem they don't make death into a problem either there's something in animals that knows it is connected with the the life itself and so they know in some non-conceptual way they they are rooted in being so they don't have that that fear of death that humans have so could take that into a meditation become still maybe with your animal there and then perhaps the what the animal needs will come to you from within or from the animal itself and then the the painful decision-making process then no longer determines what action you do so i was at the vet and when the tooth got extracted from maya of course with an anesthetic and the same afternoon the the receptionist said this is very sad for us there was a dog that had to be put down and i could hear it was being done in a room and there was a little girl crying and i never saw the dog or the girl but i cried a little too not i didn't even know the dog or the girl that cried but that's how it is the the end of form comes to all all beings including ourselves so becoming familiar with death is a good thing so that when death comes to someone close to you and even a dog some people who don't have animals to say oh how can you make such a fuss about an animal but one is there is a deep very deep connectedness with that being it's not not only that being through that being you sense the entirety of being and so that is not something you can lose that remains untouched by death so in a way don't believe that you lose that that would be very painful in a way the dog is only an opening for that as are you

[Speaker 16] (6:49:06 - 6:49:06)

thanks

[Speaker 8] (6:49:27 - 6:49:44)

i wanted to ask you if you could shed some light on the idea of raising kundalini since it's surrounded by such mystery sometimes reverence sometimes fear and perhaps you can help shed some light on where it fits in in our spiritual journey

[Speaker 2] (6:49:49 - 6:56:21)

so kundalini for those of you who may not know is the rising of energy into the spine up the spine which some eastern teachings will say that's part of the awakening path the process that we have to have this kundalini awakening coming up the energy coming up through the spine and i remember actually asking ekhart about this one time and he says well never happened to me and yet you know we'll read these books and they'll say okay this has got to happen before my spiritual enlightenment is going to happen so it may happen and it may not happen so i wouldn't for me i wouldn't pay so much particular importance on what i read but what my experience is in this moment can i feel the energy in my body in this moment i mean that that whole kundalini awakening it's really what it's saying is that when we're unconscious our bodies are contracted there's no opening there are chi channels meridians are not open blocked energy our life force has become contracted and blocked within the body so as we're sitting there meditating or having this awakening happening and coming you know more and relaxed in our body and we can start to feel the energy then it's like our whole chi channels our whole body begins to open up the contractions in our back the back muscles begin to relax and the back spine begins to lengthen because now we're giving ourselves space and then we can feel this energy begin to wow i feel energy coming up my spine but you may not either not everybody is going to feel feel that so it's just being present i mean you can feel energy right now when you are present doesn't have to be in the back to be in your hands because really ultimately the energy that is flowing within you is not just only in the spine it's actually the whole body is bubbling with energy flowing but every thought form that we identify with you can say then so you believe in a thought form you can almost say that it almost like sort of contracts that energy you know keeps it from not moving so then the body because you're holding yourselves okay i believe in this and i believe in that and i want this and my desire is to be this way and so it's like then we move and we're like really stiff right we just know you're not one with life anymore you're one with the thought form so when we can just become one with life our body begins to relax the chi begins to flow and who cares if there's gundalini so i'm not sure if that's the answer you wanted to hear no the other alternative is you can go back and study the books be present the real experience is is your direct experience not what an experience of another so many people have wanted that you know awakening like what happened to eckhart you know where all the ego virtually dissolved right there overnight and they're so busy when holding on to that i want that to happen i want that to happen where they're forgetting the present moment and really that's all there is is this moment is your ego here in this moment or not okay it isn't and then the ego comes up and say but i want this forever tomorrow oh no what'll happen is it gonna be there or not we just this moment only ever exists it's just this moment right now so let's just go into stillness for a moment if you've come out let's go back in and just be still knowing that thoughts when they arise are just thoughts don't take them too seriously it's all that arises is form the moment that we arise out of sleep is form the eye comes into being comes into the form state keep some attention inward and that's the practice thank you

[Speaker 1] (6:57:06 - 7:09:19)

we'll start off with maybe one little question that i'll read from my list of questions and then we will go on to any spoken questions this is a very short question and hopefully the answer also will be short who becomes enlightened so we could say the person does not become enlightened but the person becomes transparent one could say and then light comes through the light of consciousness comes through where the person was perhaps still is for a while it's not an attainment it's a disappearance of the density of the mental emotional layers that identification with which is the person so the person becomes trans transparent so to speak all this the structures for example it starts with the mind the mind movement is interspersed with spaces and that's how the light gets through the light of consciousness and so nobody becomes enlightened as such enlightenment if you even want to use that word enlightenment is a an awakening of consciousness was consciousness and asleep well in some way yes whenever there's identification with something consciousness is dreaming the dream of form and so on the one hand consciousness wants to continue the dream of form and on the other hand the dream of form means creating more forms this is one movement in the universe is to create more differentiation in the forms this is the universe is obviously creating form look at the life even on one planet even if you just look at the life forms in the sea millions of light different life forms so the universe actually loves that movement into form and then there's something else that the universe loves and that's the return to the source to know itself how do i know these things well just through knowing this with the outer movement the return movement us here this gathering anybody who is present with us here here is really part of the return movement to the source universe wants that as much as it wants to flow out into things and create so you have the two movements and it may not even be a question of either one or the other it is possible for us to embody within both movements so that we continue to create but not blindly anymore not egoically anymore not compulsively anymore which is there for example with the compulsive wanting more things wanting more that's a that's part of the the ego and that's part of the universe's need to more more things most but we can also we can be embody the return movement and then when the awakening happens the awakened consciousness can also create why would it do that not out of any need out of joy a joyful creation like an an artist is joyful in it not not an egoic artist but an artist who deeply enjoys the act of creativity so we can consciously create form but be aligned with the source so through the human form the source can create consciously rather than than dreaming the dream of form which is identification with forms conscious creation a beautiful thing so there may be some questions about that today we'll see i know that a very important we live in this at this time on this planet and perhaps everywhere it could be that everything that happens here is a reflection of whatever happens in the universe there's a definitely a strong pull towards the return movement of the awakening of consciousness it awakens out of identification with form through how do you know that well because it happens to you you otherwise you are consciousness identified with form the ego trapped in form the dream of form and then consciousness disidentifies from form wakes up and knows itself for the first time doesn't nothing needs to change for you to know you stay where you are and then you suddenly know reality as yourself and then you become a conscious co-creator the universe moves through the human form and creates either a lot or little doesn't matter or nothing it doesn't need to create it's free not to create maybe you're a frequency holder who doesn't he's not interested in creating you can just be aligned with the source and yet there too something you're still here in this dimension something of the source will flow through you into this dimension don't attempt to understand all this intellectually because it cannot be understood i'm giving as much and perhaps too much already of what can be understood the entire thing is far too vast for the human mind to understand it doesn't need that it's not necessary you can be aligned i've said it before you can be aligned with the the source but you cannot understand the source and yet you can be one with it conscious oneness with the consciousness you cannot understand consciousness god amazing what they did in the 19th century there were some vast these philosophers they created huge system and every philosopher created his own system of thought to explain the entire universe intricate and then they presented these as books that here's the this entire universe explained and then they had followers uh and now kind of it's not fashionable anymore to attempt to explain the entire universe in some kind of system hegel did it fichter schelling schopenhauer to some extent or he had deep insights into something beyond but it's still a little limited because you normally can present as a mentally constructed system that explains the universe or god you can explain neither the manifested and let alone the unmanifested many humans are going through the enlightening process enlightening has two fortunately in the english language light has two meanings which is very nice as you go through the enlightening or awakening process you become lighter not physically but psychologically a lightness comes into your being not the heaviness of the ego the seriousness of the ego the who you become lighter but also the other meaning of light is the light shines through you you become porous to the light consciousness moves through you you can even i can sometimes i can when i go to a public place or anywhere no i'm occasionally i'm wrong but usually i can point out the people who in whom the process is happening and who are most likely to come up to me and talk to me and say oh we write your book i can look at they haven't seen me i've seen them and said out of these these are the most likely to i don't think that i just see it and then i put my sunglasses on

[Speaker 2] (7:09:55 - 7:20:56)

this exercise that we will do is called whole body breathing and it's intended to not only quiet the mind but to help you to become aware of the energy that you are an energy that permeates within the body and extends beyond the body connecting you to the universe you may wish to do this exercise sitting just right here at your computer or you may wish to stand whichever position you choose be totally present with what is arising and be conscious and aware of your entire body and the energy that flows come to sit at the edge of your chair so your sit bones are at the edge of the chair your feet are flat on the floor about hip width apart and your spine is upright and hold your hands in front of you palms facing each other but not touching and you may wish to close the eyes if you're standing you're standing with your feet hip width apart and your knees are slightly bent imagine the crown of your head reaching towards the sky palms in front facing each other and close your eyes as you inhale your hands move apart and as you exhale through the mouth or through the nose your hands come closer together but not touching so inhale hands move apart and exhale bringing them closer together so inhale through the nose and exhale through the nose or through the mouth so our breathing is coordinated with the movement of your hands and imagine the chi between your hands not only imagine it but feel it see if you can feel the energy between the hands so your hands could be moving wide apart or just very little just be present with this energy what's between the hands be present with your breath coordinating breath and movement inhaling deeply and exhaling allowing your total body to relax relaxing the shoulders relaxing your jaw relaxing your hands your fingers you may even notice that it's not only your hands are moving but your arms are moving apart as you inhale and exhale come together now feel yourself breathing not only through the nose but with your entire body so when you inhale every cell of your body inhales and as you exhale all the stagnant energy in your body releases through every pore it's a whole body breathing your body breathes every cell becomes alive even the hairs on your body your entire body is breathing is alive is energy if you're standing make sure your knees are unlocked this simple exercise is rejuvenating for your entire body calming for your mind breathing in deeply you can feel the breath coming in through your toes and exhale relax if thoughts arise just return your attention to the breath return your attention to the chi between your hands we're not doing anything just breathing simple breathing with your entire body and a few more deep breaths and when you're ready the chi between your hands one more inhale and as you exhale bringing the chi between your hands to the dantian your belly scanning your body making sure that everything's relaxed your shoulders your face your arms your belly your legs and your feet and your toes notice how you feel in this moment perhaps you feel calmer relaxed energized and when you're ready you can slowly open your eyes

[Speaker 1] (7:21:00 - 7:25:59)

thank you namaste from vince in the power of now and in the new earth the way you describe the ego makes it sound like it has a personality of its own it seems to be a collection of habits desires etc that run counter to some deeper or more authentic dimension of reality what are the benefits and potential downsides to describing ego as a personalized entity rather than say as a more impersonal pattern the question then i'll just repeat or paraphrase it what what is the advantage or the downside of talking about the ego in terms of an entity as if it were a personalized an entity or talking about the ego as a simply a collection of impersonal patterns mental emotional patterns and the questioner mentions that i often talk about the ego as as if it were an entity in itself so what are the benefits and potential downsides to talking about it because these two are just two ways of looking at it if you look at it in one way it is like a person like a being that has its it wants to survive so this conglomeration of patterns working together it wants to survive it has certain needs so it has certain characteristics of an entity and that's why the the the downside of looking at it as an entity is that it might scare you you may get scared you might get scared of your own ego and think there's some demon inside me that wants to take over my life so that's the downside then is it creates some kind of emotion around it and you feel threatened by it if you call it it's a collection of patterns then you don't have that but the downside of that is that you may underestimate the force behind it and the it's the persistence behind the patterns and the fact that they are the patterns have a certain organization to them a certain they kind of go together they reinforce each other so there the downside is that you underestimate the egos and you say well there's still some unconscious patterns in me or that's you probably won't even say that but anyway that's you have the two ways of looking neither one is the one right way another you can i can add a third way of looking at the ego which is to say it's an illusion that's the eastern approach approach in many cases to say if the ego is an illusion or you can even have a saying the ego doesn't exist it's just an illusion and again everything is a somewhat limited perspective and every perspective will has it's helpful in some ways may be helpful and in other ways has a as the questioner says a downside to it so not one perspective really can encapsulate the ego so you can really have there's no need to embrace just one perspective realize that the ego is it is a personalized entity it is and consisting of a conglomeration of mental emotional patterns and it is ultimately a dreamlike entity and in an illusory form it's it's all that together you could say and so that's then there's also no disagreement between one person saying there is no ego because it's an illusion and the other one says oh yes there is there's just two viewpoints perspectives ego is of course the unobserved mind plus its emotions

[Speaker 4] (7:26:13 - 7:26:30)

i agree um if the purpose of the universe is that form awakens and consciousness becomes aware of itself why is it such a rare phenomenon oh okay seems like we've been designed to not awaken

[Speaker 3] (7:26:30 - 7:26:34)

and we've been lost in that okay thank you

[Speaker 1] (7:26:43 - 7:34:11)

well as you say it seems like you've been designed not you personally but not to awaken but the opposite is actually true you've been designed to awaken in the same way that the seed that falls into the ground has been designed to become an oak tree and whatever the little onion bulb that you put into the ground now is designed to become a beautiful flower in the spring but not right now because in this realm where the universe where the consciousness that underlies the world of form that expresses itself through countless temporary formations in this realm it evolves in time and it exists in another realm in the timeless in this realm however time applies the universe evolved from the state of oneness into multiplicity and even on this planet there's an evolution of consciousness forms become more complex as consciousness moves into different life forms and gradually there's a flowering of consciousness in the universe it you are part of that and it all happens just like the seed it happens in it's a process in time there's a paradox here we need to act by the way we need to be able to accept and live with paradoxes paradoxes because if it's not a paradox it's not the truth the mind seeks the truth this is how it is or this but it can't be both now some physicists are beginning to realize that even there in the realm of science is it a particle or is it a wave well it depends how you look at it so you have to live with paradox and the paradox also applies the moment we talk about finding the timeless dimension in yourself we awaken to that and we say I sometimes say when I give a talk we are here for the next two hours to find the timeless within ourselves so you can see the paradox and people say what do you mean you count why do you need two hours to find the timeless in yourself but you do not the moment of realization of course is timeless but the realization of the timeless as a permanent as always present in your life that takes time that's the awakening it takes time to awaken but you have been you're like an alarm clock you have been set to simplify it a little you've been designed to go off eventually all we know is we don't quite know at what time and when you go off you realize time was never real and you might even think well I didn't really need to go through all that time but that's how it is so here things evolve in time and every human has been is a seed for that or more than a seed already designed to awaken that's why we are here as to express that to be vehicles for that and it's happening now beginning to happen more in the past it's been the privilege of very few individuals here and there have always been some here and there and now many more are going through the awakening process and for most people it is a process process means you awaken and you go back so back in time and that's why it takes time you so you go back in and then you gain something ah great no problem peace aliveness presence deeper relations relating beyond form seeing the essence of life in all life forms and then something happens and the density comes back the dream of form comes back and you fall go back to sleep so it's a bit like somebody is asleep and dreaming even dogs do it I watch my dog and then and then you're overtaken by dream by the sleep sleep again all kinds of things I would be wise to know what happens in a dog's dream but it's probably similar to human dreams except it's consists of other concerns bones and other dogs so it's a gradual a gradual timeless and back in time so and that's rarely does it happen to an individual to be awakened all at once and then does not fall back into identification with form with thought and so on it's happened it happens occasionally but for most it's a process so let's enjoy the process and the more you ask why is it taking too long that's your idea you're focusing on time and even the belief well it needs to it's it's it needs to take long it doesn't need to take long it doesn't need to take time to realize who you are that is just now but to have it as a continuous knowing in the background of

[Speaker 4] (7:34:11 - 7:34:22)

your life may take a little time the gradual process that is also fine consciousness is fine

[Speaker 1] (7:34:22 - 7:44:22)

yes consciousness wants to experience itself as form the universe let's say once obviously to experience itself as form because that's what it's is happening it it it it produces forms it expresses itself through form as forms that's the outward movement of the universe and it's a dream it's dreaming that that that dream it loves that and then there's the awakening is in the in the middle of the dream there's a realization of the source where it all came from and comes from the homeward journey home to the unmanifested timeless one before the Big Bang the nothingness that no physicist can understand they don't even go there because he can't the moment you go there what was there before the Big Bang nothing nothing so the whole universe came out of nothing yes and of course the greatest physicist cannot understand that so every physicist's mind stops the moment they go to the Big Bang they can't go any further beyond that their mind must stop otherwise they go insane and that's because there you touch the unmanifested the timeless the eternal the emptiness and nothingness which is also the fullness which cannot be described with any word that is what underlies the universe and that's never gone away that is still the essence of every life form the emptiness these the formlessness that Buddhists talk about the emptiness at the heart of all things the form that really means the form it doesn't mean emptiness is a misleading term probably it is the formlessness these the spirit the spirit but that spirit makes it into something again that which absolutely cannot be named the moment you name it as the Tao Te Ching says the moment you name it you've lost it that's not it that can only be known when the mind stops and you realize that what left is the light of consciousness just that in which all this appears I am that so there is the outward journey of the universe into form the dream of form and then there's the awakening of suddenly who I am because I am the universe as you are I speak as there's only one I essentially I am the universe and then suddenly I know myself in my essence I go home to the origin my origin my the formless life that I am and then I can then the universe changes because the way in which I experienced the universe the moment I know myself as the formless then I'm home and at the same time there's still there's still the dream of form happening but the dream of form changes when you are no longer totally lost in it you can then enjoy the dream of form and even become very powerful as a co-creator of the creating process humans are going to learn already they're doing it now to create form simply by thinking certain forms into being but you cannot do that fully unless you're really you're rooted in the formless and then the ego is no longer operating and then the formless can use you what the the form of you to express itself through and so a time will come when humans can create any form external form simply through thought thought is creative rather than being having a destructive mind you can just use the power of that when you're connected to the formless consciousness it can use that through you and so this of course this irony is there's very little that that humans would even want to create when you are so deeply connected you don't need much in the world of form so when you are able to create any form you like you're going to just occasionally use it but it's not that much that you need formless awakening to the timeless in you awakening to the formless in you that's happening now and it's accelerating on the planet I have no idea whether the whole of humanity is going to awaken or only part of humanity or certain percentage will awaken and then that will draw in the rest or humanity will split into different dimensions or species we don't need to know all that but we are part of a vast vast unfolding of cosmic proportions and that's the more we are open to that and know that the more quickly it happens in this world of time so the timeless erupts into the world of time it may eventually dissolve this entire dimension I don't want to speculate too much cause in miracles for example seems to point to the possibility that the universe eventually will be this dreamlike dimension will dissolve entirely we don't need to speculate about that because it's much more simple than that awakening disidentification from form being the light that you are what Jesus said I am the light of the world is can be a very powerful pointer that you can sometimes use of course it's only a thought but it's a thought that points to an underlying reality so it's a kind of mantra almost I am the light of the world so if you occasionally say it and after that there's nothing to think because if more thoughts come then you're not the light of the world you are something or somebody I am the light of the world the light in which this room appears the light in which every thought appears that arises so to know you are concepts need to disappear from your mind a concept that you apply to yourself this so you need to become comfortable with not knowing where you are conceptually I am the light of the world doesn't really say anything it's not it doesn't explain to you who you are it's a helpful pointer no more it's not an explanation as an explanation it's not

[Speaker 16] (7:44:22 - 7:44:48)

very useful but as a pointer it's very powerful my question is regarding meditation regarding what

[Speaker 7] (7:44:48 - 7:45:53)

meditation I get stuck at thinking about not thinking so I'll spend hours you know trying to meditate and it just doesn't ever seem to go away just the thought pattern you know it just keeps coming back it just is like I can't remember like what the dialogue is right now but it's always the same repetitive thing that just never goes away it's like maybe for a minute I'll be able to stop thinking but then it'll just it'll creep back in I'll just be like it's gonna be great when you're able to stop thinking when you try to stop thinking it's impossible it's like

[Speaker 2] (7:45:53 - 7:46:02)

saying don't look there they're their thoughts can you be okay with just the thoughts passing

[Speaker 7] (7:46:02 - 7:46:22)

through like clouds passing through the sky yeah for a certain amount of time after several hours it starts to get it starts to get difficult to to you know when you're yes when you're sitting

[Speaker 2] (7:46:22 - 7:48:14)

there trying to meditate you're no longer meditating and you try to meditate meditation is not about trying it's about being being still even though thoughts are happening to become aware that thoughts are happening and when you are aware that thoughts are happening so you're not involved in the thoughts that are going by arising and coming and going and arising and coming and going once you can be aware of that you have you can say step out of thought step out of thinking and these thoughts still may happen but it's like you begin to then see your awareness sees the form that goes by whether it's in thought whether it's in sound whether it's in bodily sensations it's all form once there's awareness that these forms are there they're just there it's like consciousness awareness itself becomes aware of itself so it's like it turns in on itself and sees I am this awareness it's seeing the floating forms that go by so allow them to come don't fight them off the more that you fight them off it's you're in resistance mode resistance to what is and what is is that there's thoughts not a problem then the mind will come in to create a problem but it shouldn't be this way oh there another thought I shouldn't have this I want this to stop it's

[Speaker 7] (7:48:14 - 7:48:34)

another thought maybe okay I think I think that I don't know how to stop fighting it so except that

[Speaker 2] (7:48:34 - 7:48:51)

you fight it you'll stop fighting it the moment you accept even the fighting of it and then mine

[Speaker 7] (7:48:51 - 7:49:09)

will say but now what so could you rephrase that in a way that I could like stop if there is some

[Speaker 2] (7:49:09 - 7:53:35)

sort of resistance to the present moment so you're fighting the present moment you're resisting it except the resistance as well it's what is it's the unconditional love for what is happening in this moment that is awareness awareness is the unconditional love so if there's resistance if there's fighting it if there's negativity even and you want that negativity to stop it's like I can't stop make it stop I can't make this the thought stop I can't make this feeling go away I wanted to go away even accept that that wanting for it to go away fully accept it resist nothing and demand nothing that's meditation even all the trying that we do accept the trying I just see it okay just trying you are the space in which all things manifest itself the mind telling you one thing and the mind again telling you another thing then the mind again telling you another thing so on and so on it just keeps coming and coming and coming and coming and coming and coming and we are this sort of consciousness that cuts through that form and we just go let it come it's coming anyways we're warriors on this spiritual path so it's like okay it's fine let it come I'm here can it touch me no can this emotion can this taught thought truly touch who I really am no because who I really am is this space in which this is arising this moment now even in meditation this moment of I want this thought to stop I gotta stop thinking I wanted to stop okay that's a thought you wanted to stop and then fill into that space feel it feel everything because it's there relax into it what's going on for you right now I don't know some kind

[Speaker 7] (7:53:35 - 7:53:56)

of judgment I guess mm-hmm and what's that judgment saying you can't pay attention to what to what's happening you you have no awareness so you have no presence and that's another thought

[Speaker 2] (7:53:56 - 8:03:46)

form identification with a thought form we all have these little cells and it's the egoic self whether it's somebody it's ego whether somebody says I'm great and it's ego whether somebody says to themselves I'm the worst person in this world or I can't do anything right or I can do everything right it's all ego our life situation circumstances we've developed formulated these ideas these opinions and others have put it on us and then we put it on ourselves and we formulate this structure that we call ourselves whether it's been from the circumstances your life situation as a structure of you know I'm no good you can do nothing you can't do anything right nobody will ever love me whatever that is we've accumulated and believed that this those thoughts are true what was said to us is true and we hold on to that as this is who I am so then we begin to go through our life with this filter so looking at life through all these different concepts and ideas and judgments that we have now taken on to be true and we see life through this and soon enough it gets so tightly woven all these different ideas and concepts that we can no longer see life itself but we can only see that which is right in front of us the most which is our platforms and we only see then thought forms we see people we see animals we see nature only through our thought forms we don't see life as it is we don't see reality we only see the thoughts and make that our reality so every thought form that you have about yourself that we all have about ourselves is not true that's the illusion that we begin to awaken to that every single thought form that we hold in our minds is simply not true it's not the truth we made this world as it is now we've given it lots of names concepts we've given them you know these the world this land countries borders call it Canada we call it United States we call it China we call it India we believe that it actually exists but it doesn't it only exists as a thought form including time time was made by man it is now 10 o'clock here 12 o'clock there 1 o'clock over there and we think it's actually true but there is no time in reality there is no time only as a thought form we have all agreed to this thought form and this is the illusion we agree so much that we actually fall into the illusion that it's true that it is now almost five minutes to 12 is it really now is only now there's only this moment the eternal moment you are now sitting in this theater in Vancouver British Columbia really show me Vancouver British Columbia well it's here on this map really it is such joy we are joy itself when we see beyond the veil of our thoughts peace is there peace comes only beyond that veil of thought beyond the illusion the mind made illusion of all thoughts all opinions all judgments true perception does not happen through the mind the spiritual essence that we are does not happen through the mind our realization of who we really are does not and cannot happen through the mind so everything that we can point to it's not this it's not that it's not this it's not that it's not this it's not that and it'll come to you one day so suddenly thank you so a good practice to be when you're in meditation and these thoughts keep on coming coming it's not to keep your attention so much on the thoughts but even if you can keep your attention on your breath and the inner body or the sensations of you in your body whether it's some energy or tightness or pain or anything that you feel is better than keeping your attention on the thoughts that will keep on endlessly arising so long as we believe in thoughts to be real reality is not outside this moment now it's no wonder Jesus says be still and know that I am there's a beautiful poem that was recited one day at a gathering that I was at and I hope I get her name right I believe her name is Anne Frank a beautiful young poet and she suddenly came out with time moves I am still the body moves I am still the mind moves I am still she dies I am still he dies I am still I die I am still yes

[Speaker 8] (8:03:46 - 8:05:53)

still I still am namaste for the past several years I've been making a concerted effort to live a especially sort of you know conscious present spiritual path and doing yoga and meditation and retreats and that sort of thing and now when I hear people talk about you know spiritual stuff I I kind of cringe it's like I feel like there's this spiritual thing that's like separate you know separate from this you know this special dimension at first it was really great you know because I was meditating like you know ten hours in a weekend and I could tell everybody how cool it was and you know how special and and unique I felt you know it's practicing this special spiritual life and and now I just I listen to what you say and other people say I just want to hear about like how I'm no one and and I mean that sincerely in in being in this but just not having to even though you know I am conscious all these words that just seem to get in the way a lot of the time I mean you know their concepts and everything but I just I just I hear the I feel the sweetness of not just really not having to be this special unique you know spiritual person on top of being a regular person it's like this you know double-decker sandwich that I got to carry around and I'm and it's and it's getting stale and I I don't know I don't think there's a question in

[Speaker 1] (8:05:53 - 8:16:24)

there but I know maybe you could speak speak to thank you yes okay thanks well you overdid it a and hence the reaction now because you have to get back to some normality after all that specialness over that was your spiritual practice where you thought of yourself as special and your practice as special you went quite far to an extreme and you're now experiencing the reaction to that extreme and that's good in other words you don't want to hear about anything spiritual anymore I've had it right so you overdid it now there's a reaction don't mention to me anything spiritual anymore you say but of course you know the famous expression what is it the baby and the bathwater don't throw out your baby with the bathwater it's all spiritual so it's all spiritual it's so separate so now first you went to that extreme now you go to an extreme of reaction and eventually you end up in the middle where every moment is spiritual as it is it's not nothing special spirit is not separate from daily existence so that's when we say spiritual we are not referring to some realm out there that is to be achieved at some point where you become more special than you are now it's not going to happen it's here and now we're going deeper into the here and now that's spiritual now you are a little bit tired of these words because you went too far that extreme so you have to realize if you're a little bit perhaps like a Christian who has who was once very religious and suddenly got fed up and then occasionally I have people in talks who were ex-Christians and the moment I say occasionally I say Jesus said they go oh don't talk to me about or anything it's remotely Christian I don't want to hear that I've had all that so they don't realize because of course they had a somewhat distorted view of what the whole thing was about so they didn't but they can't stand the terms anymore and that's fine it's a phase you will come through that maybe it's happening already it's the ordinariness spiritual means the more spiritual you are the ordinary you are the more non-special you are and again for the ego that means okay I have to become more non-special how do I become ordinary okay that's I need to somebody to teach me to to be ordinary so I understand your dilemma and perhaps you understand it also and so this nothing special chopping wood carrying water West is then defines spirituality ultimately what is the spiritual life chopping wood carrying water which is the kind of thing you do in same monasteries at daily doing in my case it's buying some food in the store going to have a cup of coffee taking the dog for a walk in the forest listening to the BBC world news having a glass of wine occasionally with a meal watching a movie nothing extraordinary and so quite an ordinary existence and so it's it's hiding in there the spirituality is in there it's not away from there to just this and so I'm sorry about these words that we use but language is limited so we have to use certain words and perhaps you're the emotion around these then eventually it's going to go and you become neutral again and you can use them for what they are which is simply point useful pointers no more thank you how do you experience God what do you see when you see someone do you see more than their physicality how I experience God I've been talking about this is really the only thing I talk about now in different words what do you see when you see someone do you see more than their physicality no I don't see more than their physicality I see exactly what everybody else sees but I feel or sense something that is deeper than the physicality and that is hard to put into words there's a there's a sensing of there's more to you than what I see not as a thought but as a knowing and I because I know there's more to this form than I can see or you can see here so the the consciousness beyond the form looks through the form and senses of we don't have a word for it I can say we I sense or I feel it's not quite right maybe sense it is closest can't I would have to create a new word for it I sense the who you are or what you are beyond what I see or beyond what you are telling me or be want what your mind is saying or your emotions are doing so there is a there's a connection with presence the presence that is in you the presence that you are and that I have that more strongly than what I see so that kind of almost obliterates what I see what I see is the same as everybody anybody sees but that that strong sense of consciousness the alive presence that your eyes almost stronger than what I see so there's there's more of my attention is in that than in in my perception of what I see it's hard to put into words something that is so far beyond words and but this is not something special to me this is something whenever you look at a human being and for a moment be free of definitions or interpretations then you neither of yourself nor the other no definitions be there as a spacious awareness then you begin to sense an aliveness within you and the same aliveness in the other and then whatever the human beings do isn't that important anymore you don't react to they may be saying something silly or intelligent or whatever it doesn't matter that much there's something deeper there they may be deluded they might want something from you it doesn't matter anymore it's very it's very beautiful because it's only from that place that you can really relate not the it's not the personality the mind level that's that's the way to go for humans to recognize each other as essentially sharing the same life the same consciousness recognizing oneness on a sense level not not an intellectual level feeling oneness and that's love in the deeper sense not the ego love but the true love is you can the love comes from there it's you'd recognize the that there is ultimately no other the more you think in terms of others the more you're in ego he's like that she's like that she does that he does that oh remember I wrote in the book the famous Jean-Paul Sartre philosopher said hell is other people in the in the French original if you translate literally says hell is the others that's the egos perception of other people strong ego would see other people and of course it can become so strong that you end up with things like paranoia because every strong ego has already an Ellis element of paranoia in it even before it's recognized as pathological but it's still normal it has an element of paranoia in it and so the straw any strong ego goes around the world in that way of what does he want what does she want what do you want from me oh I don't I know what he's thinking evil intentions and so on very critical of others they want something that all very normal but already part of the insanity

Tami Simon Interview Eckhart Tolle on ExperienceOfAwakening--

[Speaker 2] (0:06 - 1:25)

Eckhart, you've now had the chance at Eckhart Tolle TV to answer over a hundred questions from different members of the Eckhart Tolle TV community, and we still have more questions. But what I'm really curious about today is to hear about you, your experience. Most of the questions have been about our community members and their process of awakening.

But in your case, awakening wasn't really a process. It was a sudden and complete overhaul, if you will, rewiring, restructuring of your being. And as important as this event was, a rare event, actually, in human life, you've written about it in just a few paragraphs in The Power of Now.

But I've never heard you tell the story of your awakening. And that's where I'd like to start, if you will, in as much detail as possible.

[Speaker 1] (1:28 - 15:25)

Well, the background to it is several years of inner states of anxiety and depression in my 20s. And even at university, I got to university late because I didn't have any qualifications. Initially, I left school at 14.

So later in England, I got the qualifications to get into university. I was already in my early 20s, and I had a full-time job at the same time. And at that time, gradually, the depressions and a lot of states of high anxiety also started.

I did very well at university in my degree course, and I worked very hard. I wasn't aware of that so much at the time. But later on, years later, I met somebody who was a student at the same time in a different faculty, but he observed me, and he said, oh, you were always working.

You were working until midnight in the library, and I couldn't believe it. And then I realized, oh, yeah, I must have been working very hard. But the motivation was fear, anxiety of not doing well.

So it wasn't enjoyable. I was motivated by anxiety. And that came to a head after I graduated.

I did very well. I was happy for two or three weeks. And then the anxiety and depression came back, even worse than before.

So that night came, I was living in a little bedsitter, as they call it in England, in London. I had finished my university course and didn't know what to do next. And that night, I woke up again in the night with a very active mind.

But at that moment, of course, I was my mind. I didn't know that there was an active mind, because I was the thought processes that kept me awake and were telling me how many reasons I had to be in a state of fear, the uncertainty of future, what am I going to live on, am I going to make it, and so on. Unhappiness with who I was as a person, inadequacy, and so on.

And so there was this incessant mind activity that during that night again, creating enormous amount of anxiety to the point of breathlessness. And feeling completely cut off from the outside world, meaning alien. It seemed alien when I remember looking at objects in the room, they seemed completely alien to me.

It's only later, years later, I read a novel, I don't remember much of it, but a similar feeling was described there, and I recognized it. It was by Jean-Paul Sartre, and the novel was called La Nausea, existential anguish, and so that was how I experienced it. So intense unhappiness and fear, and then the thought came as I was lying in bed that the burden of living was too much, I didn't want to do it anymore, I can't, and so the thought arose, I can't live with myself any longer.

That thought repeated itself a few times, and then a moment came when I became aware of that thought as a thought, and the thought then said, is that I can't live with myself, what does that mean? There must be two of myself here, because if I can't live with myself, who am I and who is the self? There was a sudden, I was looking at that statement that my mind had created, I can't live with myself, and I saw the strangeness of it.

I had separated myself in two, and so I saw who am I and who is the self, and that question, that was the last thought, the last significant thought before the awakening experience, this last significant thought posed a question, and that question was, who am I and who is that self that I can't live with, is there one or two here, am I one or two? That was the last thought, and the answer to that question did not come as a thought, the answer to that question, I didn't know at the time, by the way, that this is what was happening, but I can explain it now, I couldn't have explained it then, the answer to that question came not as a thought, but as an inner stepping back from thought, an inner disidentification from thought, and so I suddenly realized, but not through analytical thinking, that that self that I couldn't live with had no actual reality, that was the unhappy self, so its illusory nature was recognized, but not through thinking, not through thinking this, the self is really illusory, no, the illusory nature was recognized as an indirect recognition beyond thought, I could see that it is nothing, but without saying that mentally, so am I one or two, the last question led to a disidentification from the me, the unhappy me, the whole sense of self that was burdened with unhappiness and fear and anxiety and inadequacy and so on, so that self kind of dissolved, because I must have withdrawn completely my identification with it, so I stepped out of the mind-created self, and what remained was myself as consciousness, but not as the unhappy me, and so the unhappy me began to get shaky and then something happened to it, it must have, in its final stages, I think there was again, I felt almost disappearing into some black hole, because it was a kind of death experience, it was the death of the unhappy me, and so the perception of that, it wasn't so much visual as more like a feeling that I was disappearing into some hole, and there was still some fear left there, anxiety of what's happening to me, and then, but I heard a voice, again not as an audible voice, but more as a realization, don't resist, or resist nothing, I think it said, and so I just let go, and then a kind of void opened, but not a visual one, and I don't remember much else, I must have gone to sleep soon after that, so there was the, am I one or two, was the question that arose, I can't live with myself, that question brought about an inner separation between the mind-created self and the consciousness that had identified with it, that was fueling it, so the consciousness that had created this dream-like figure or self stepped out of it, and so I realized, yes, I was two, the self and I, but only one was real, and so the consciousness that I am was real, and the unreal was no longer being sustained, by my identification with it, I'm explaining it now, but I couldn't have explained it then, it just happened, it took several years, I don't know how many, maybe at least seven or eight years before I could have explained it in the way in which I'm explaining it now, and the next morning I awoke, at first I didn't even remember that what happened in the night, so my eyes opened and the first impression was of everything being fresh and new around me, it was the old familiar room, everything felt alive, everything was amazing, and even simple objects, their very presence was lovely to look at, the light coming through the curtains, I knew it was alive, and most important of all, a deep sense of peace inside, so I was looking at everything through the peace, and I thought, wow, it's wonderful, and I picked some things up and looked as if I'd been born into this world for the first time, and of course I can give an additional explanation now, which I couldn't have done then, I wasn't bringing the past into my sense perceptions, there was just the sense perception, without the labeling of the sense perception, there was just a peaceful background to it, and I wasn't calling it anything, it wasn't the old familiar objects in the room, because the old familiar self wasn't there anymore, there was only consciousness there, a field of consciousness, and that day I took a bus and went into downtown central London, and the same, in the middle of the traffic, watching the people, and then getting off the bus, walking around the city, this incredible sense of peace, and I thought, well, this is amazing, today I feel so peaceful, but then the next day it was there still again, the peace.

Then I actually got a notebook, and I wrote down, something important has happened to me, but I don't know what it is, but I'm just going to write down these things, because I might lose it again and forget about it, forget what happened. I haven't, by the way, haven't looked at that notebook in a long, long, long time, so I don't know exactly what I wrote there.

[Speaker 2] (15:26 - 15:27)

But you still have it?

[Speaker 1] (15:27 - 15:27)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (15:28 - 15:28)

That might be curious.

[Speaker 1] (15:29 - 15:30)

I'll have a look one of these days.

[Speaker 2] (15:31 - 16:21)

Now one thing, you were lying down during the entire experience, so when this separation, yes, yes, in bed, yes, and it was dark, yes, yeah. Now sometimes people say that you can't describe awakening as a quote-unquote experience, and I notice even as you recount this, there are aspects where it's hard to find the words, because it wasn't being processed through that part of your mind. So if it's not exactly an experience, what's happening outside of, I mean, you can't quite give a visual for it, you can't quite say that you felt this or that, that's very curious to me.

[Speaker 1] (16:23 - 18:59)

It's not an experience as such, because an experience is something that is added to you, one could say. When you experience something, it's something new that is added to your life. You might call it a life experience, but this is definitely not a life experience, and it is the opposite of something being added to you.

So in that sense, it's the opposite of an experience, because instead of something being added to you, something is being removed from you. So something that before was heavy and looked substantial is being, something dissolves rather than something being added, and it leaves behind something that, again, is not entirely new, but had been obscured before. So it's not an adding onto, and that perhaps is even for spiritual seekers, an important thing to consider, because many people are looking for some spiritual experience as if it were something that can be added to them, and that's not how it is.

In that sense, one could say it's a negative experience. So, or you could say it's a loss rather than a gain, but it's a beautiful loss. But in the transitional moment of loss, it can still be painful, because it is a kind of death.

So you lose something, but what you gain is not something that comes, that just, it emerges, had been there before always, your essential reality, but it's not added on. Hard to explain, I can only point. So the important thing is not to look for an experience that, not to look for an adding onto me, because everything else is like that.

One wants to have more of more experiences, and that's the big minus experience, not a plus experience.

[Speaker 2] (19:03 - 19:51)

For many people in the process of awakening, integrating their physical form with vast, infinite states of being creates certain interesting experiences, challenges. Sometimes people who touch big states of openness will then find their body shaking, or that there's a sense of, wow, this is so much energy, and this physical form isn't used to that much energy running through the nervous system. And here, your experience, or your minus experience, so complete, seemingly, such a huge restructuring, what was that like for you physically?

[Speaker 1] (19:52 - 21:37)

I don't remember anything, any kind of painful physical experience accompanying it. There was, part of the sense of peace was a much heightened sense of aliveness in the inner energy field of the body. So I felt my entire being felt more alive.

I hardly knew that, because that was part of the total experience afterwards of, not experience, because it was lasting, of that vibrantly alive sense of inner peace that was there all the time. And part of that vibrantly alive sense of inner peace was the aliveness that I could feel throughout the entire body. But that was very pleasant.

It wasn't an unpleasant thing. So why it is that some people seem to experience even painful things as the energy increases, it could be that the pain or the pressure is felt where there are still blockages in the body. And it could be that with that, what happened, the surrender that night, if you call it that, may well have dissolved also all those blockages that would have been there otherwise.

But that's, I'm guessing, I don't know the ultimate answer of why I didn't experience that.

[Speaker 2] (21:38 - 21:42)

Were you even aware of an inner body, quote unquote, before?

[Speaker 1] (21:42 - 21:57)

No. No, I was completely in the head. So there was no, I didn't feel alive, except the turmoil in the head felt a bit alive, but not a pleasant aliveness.

[Speaker 2] (21:57 - 22:05)

So what did that feeling inside your body feel like? I wonder if you can describe it for me in even greater detail.

[Speaker 1] (22:06 - 23:20)

Well, as you know, later, that became part of, many years later, became part of the teaching where I'm, as you, pointing out to people that they can actually, what happened to me accidentally, that one aspect of what has happened, they can actually consciously direct their attention away from where it normally dwells in the movement of thought and direct attention. So when you're asking me what it felt like or feels like, and my answer is to direct you or whoever is listening to this, direct them to the actual, you can actually go there right now in yourself and relive what happened there to me accidentally by consciously choosing to direct attention into the inner energy field of the body. Usually I tell people, start with one part of the body, put attention into your hands.

And as we speak.

[Speaker 2] (23:20 - 23:26)

Yeah. If you can describe the feelings to me, that's what I'm curious about for you, even right now, right here.

[Speaker 1] (23:26 - 27:42)

A tingling would be going too far, although for some people, some people describe it as tingling, but it's on the way towards tingling inside. A, if I could make a sound, it doesn't have a sound, but if it were a sound, it would go, it's a, it's the, it's a, it almost feels like a vibration. It's not quite a vibration, but it almost feels like a vibration.

So very hard to put into words because language is designed to reflect objects ultimately, whether physical objects or mental objects, but language can't really find adequate words to talk about that, which has no object to it as such. So all I can say is approximate. It's a bit like tingling.

It's a little bit like a vibration. It could even be as a warmth. Sometimes actually the temperature in the body sometimes increases for people as they become more aware of what I call now the inner body.

And once you can sense the energy inside your hands as that, the tingling or vibrating aliveness, very subtle, perhaps only, that's fine, then it becomes easier to be aware that it's in other parts of the body too. And so you, it's a very pleasant way of becoming rooted more deeply within the being that you are. And also it's a very effective way of becoming anchored in the present moment, whereas the mind is never really in the present moment.

It's always elsewhere. So you take attention away from thought into that, and then you rest in that, and you can still speak and listen, and you can even think, but you want, you're not going to do more thinking when you fence the inner body. You're not going to do more thinking than you actually need to do it at that moment.

And it may well be that you don't need to do any thinking that moment. Maybe it's just, so that's, the inner body is part of what I now call presence, the state of presence. So you are, you are present with your whole body.

So that kind of happened to me accidentally, and you could say, as I began to understand after years what had happened to me accidentally, and as I began to work with people who came to me to ask questions, and then I began speaking to them, answers came, then that which happened to me accidentally, I became part of the teaching, and I realized this is something that you don't have to actually wait for, for you to happen to you accidentally, neither the inner body awareness nor the surrender to whatever is, and the disidentification from thinking, all these things you can actually do. You can, so I'm showing people a way, but a lot of the teaching comes out of that spontaneous occurrence that happened to me, so to speak, and so what happened that night, and gradually as I began to understand it, and help people with their problems, it gradually over the years became more differentiated, and became a spiritual teaching, and that took years and years, and it was an organic process.

The foundation is, didn't change.

[Speaker 2] (27:43 - 28:01)

Now just to clarify one thing, are you saying that in a state of presence, when someone is present, that the inner body will always be there in some wakeful, slightly tingly, or something like that way, that there's always that physical correlate?

[Speaker 1] (28:01 - 28:15)

An aliveness there, an entire, the presence is an entire body state. It almost seems that in presence, even things around you are more present.

[Speaker 4] (28:15 - 28:15)

Mm-hmm.

[Speaker 1] (28:16 - 28:53)

So it really affects everything that your body, and the moment you look at things in presence, you realize they are alive, so it's not only you, you become more alive, it seems that the world around you becomes more alive, or rather you, it may not, it is not more alive, but you recognize for the first time it's aliveness, and you share, you share the aliveness with the flower, you recognize your own aliveness in the, aliveness is one word I'm using, I could use other words.

[Speaker 2] (29:00 - 29:23)

When you started making sense, if we can say that, of your experience, having a framework for it, did the question ever occur to you, why me? This kind of sudden, very thorough awakening happens to so few people in any generation, did you have the thought, why me, why does this happen to me?

[Speaker 1] (29:23 - 31:25)

Never, I never had that thought, and I believe the reason for this is that I'd never perceived it as something that happened to me, really, when I talk about it because we're using language, it sounds as if it was something that happened to me, but that's, language works like that, otherwise I wouldn't be able to use language at all, but if I look deeper, I'll have to say, I never had the feeling that that was something that happened to me, and that is because the essence of that is the disappearance of the me, the me becoming, so we, the me, the sense of personal or separate identity as, that's me, me, that sense of the form identity as the me became so weakened in that, that something was shining through then, where the me was, there was only a transparency, there was still a form, of course, some, to some extent, but no identification with it, and without the identification with the form, it became, the form became semi-transparent, and the entire thing that happened, if we can even call it happened, was that as the me became transparent, the consciousness came through very strongly, and it is not, it's not the me, it's the consciousness, which is formless, and it has nothing to do with the person, so it only happened because the me almost disappeared, that it could happen, and for this reason, it never occurred to me to ask, why did it happen to me? I don't know if you, does that make sense?

[Speaker 2] (31:25 - 31:59)

Yeah, it does make sense, I guess the question though still remains for me, this body-mind form was somehow selected by the cosmos to undergo this minus experience for, I would say, in my words, the benefit of other people, how come it was chosen, that particular body-mind, like maybe that question didn't occur to you, but here I'm asking it now, if you were answering, just looking at this from the outside, what would you say?

[Speaker 1] (32:00 - 32:40)

I don't know if it was chosen, it would of course happen to any me that recognizes its own essential nothingness, any me anywhere in the world that recognizes that essentially its sense of identity was to a large extent illusory, and then it's, the realization is there, why did the realization come to this particular illusory identity, I don't know, I never actually asked myself that question, it's a mystery.

[Speaker 2] (32:42 - 33:42)

Even though you might not have asked yourself that question in the past, here in this moment, if you take a look at it, do you have any ideas about why perhaps this, I mean, Eckhart, there's plenty of people who understand everything you said about the panic, the anxiety, there's a sense that there's a little me, there's an awareness that there's two of me here, but that's where the story ends for them, then maybe they pray to have the kind of awakening you had, lying on the ground, face down, praying, crying, whatever, and nothing happens, they wake up the same miserable wretch the next morning, and perhaps keep reading books, become a member of Eckhart Tolle TV, or who knows what, and so there's something clearly unique in your particular story, in anyone's story, but rare in your story, so it's, it for you, it just goes into the mystery.

[Speaker 1] (33:43 - 33:44)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (33:44 - 33:44)

Column.

[Speaker 1] (33:45 - 36:34)

Perhaps the form was ready through previous lifetimes, one way or another, I've never investigated past lifetimes, because I lost interest in past, but it may well be that the form was prepared for that, and that's the reason why it happened, but that would, I would be reluctant to say that that is actually the case, because that would mean the only way you can really awaken is if you've had enough incarnations, and so on.

I might, the teaching is really pointing out that virtually anybody can awaken, and not like as drastically as happened here, but almost anybody can at least enter the awakening process. There's a term in Buddhism which is, I think it's called a stream enterer, so anybody can enter the awakening process. Yes, some degree of readiness is required, but anybody who reads a book like The Power of Now or New Earth or any other spiritually powerful book that came, was written from a deep place of realization, anybody who reads that and is open to it and recognizes the essential truth in it, anybody who's drawn to a spiritual teaching and goes, there is an openness there, although there are still millions of people who don't, they wouldn't touch a spiritual book, and if they opened it, it would be totally meaningless. So I'm not talking of all those people, they obviously have to wait a little longer, but others who are, in whom there is an openness, then the awakening process can begin, they can enter the awakening process, and that's all that's needed.

And I don't see, I just cannot see myself as a chosen one, it's something inside me that says no to that, but I may be wrong.

[Speaker 2] (36:37 - 37:40)

So I had the opportunity to interview you once before, Eckhart, about 10 years ago, and one of the things you reported to me then was that after this awakening, you experienced an 80% reduction in mental activity. And I'm curious in your life what it's like for you in terms of your relationship to thoughts, meaning do you sometimes have hours go by where there literally are no thoughts, or are there thoughts coming but they just float by and there's no attention is given to them? So what's it actually like?

And I'm sure it's different, obviously, if you're in the middle of an airport doing something than if you're just relaxing at home, but I'm curious to know more about the interior of your experience.

[Speaker 1] (37:40 - 43:41)

Yes. Well, there are long stretches of no thought, and I can still function in that state. For example, you talk about airport, I can perfectly check in or walk to the, go through security check, and then on to whatever, the lounge, without any thought, and this would not be uncommon that I would do something or go from where I get into the car and drive to the store to buy something.

And again, virtually no thought is not uncommon. So, and it does make occasionally little fragments may come up like little puffs of clouds, and then they're gone. So it's, there can be, or let's say I'm sitting at home not doing much, and occasional thoughts can drift in and out of awareness like clouds, like the sky is blue, but little puffy clouds come from time to time and they go.

The thoughts have no, I don't follow them and they don't even try anymore to get my attention, as is the case with people who are still very strongly identified with thought. Every thought pulls you, every thought pulls you where it wants you to go, and thoughts don't really have that pull anymore. They just, when they appear, there's a blue sky and the clouds appear and disappear, appear and disappear.

And there could even occasionally be a stream of thoughts in certain situations, or maybe not even connected to anything happening outside of me. There can be times when there are certain streams of thoughts, but again, they are harmless. They are not the thoughts that have this gravitational pull that just, and you have to follow them with your entire attention.

But it's a thought that, yes, from time to time, there may even be more clouds than blue sky, but these clouds are no longer the heavy weather clouds that I had in the distant past and that other people perhaps recognize in their own lives. They are more like innocent little puffy clouds with thoughts, but no thought matters that much. And then it disappears.

It's not amplified by following it up and identifying with it and then becomes a heavy thing that takes possession of you. So it never feels as if any thought were taking possession of me. So yes, then to summarize, I think if anybody entered my inner state, they would be surprised how little thinking there actually is compared to probably what is still, for most people, normal, almost continuous.

How relatively little there is. Yes, there is some, and that which there is, doesn't have the heaviness anymore that it has when you're identified with the thoughts and they have a gravitational pull and they develop into streams and proliferate and develop into streams and you lose yourself completely in it. So that doesn't happen.

So I'm most, the not thinking is almost, would say predominates, unless there's something specific to think about. But then occasionally, yes, clouds come and go and so on, but there's always an awareness of the sky also. And it doesn't really matter whether I'm out in nature, walking in the forest, looking around.

Let's just describe, let's just describe perhaps one minute of me walking in the forest, walking, looking, the dog, trees, no thought, just looking at the trees, the plants, the aliveness of it, sensing the energy field. And then a thought may come and says, oh, when I get home, I need to, I need to do this or that. I forgot to do that.

I need to, when I get home, I still need to do that. Or I need to buy some, I need to buy some bananas later. Okay.

And then it's gone. And then some other thought comes of something, maybe could be anything, a person that tried to contact me the other day, didn't, and then it's gone again and back. So puffs come, go, go.

Predominantly, really awareness. It's so much nicer than thinking.

[Speaker 2] (43:43 - 44:01)

So just to be sure that I fully hear you correctly, it never happens that one of these puffs kind of has a little hook that comes down that catches you by the neck or something like that. And, you know, just a little hook that comes in, like I forgot to do something.

[Speaker 1] (44:03 - 44:27)

Good question. I have experienced in the past, not for some time now, occasionally some thought coming in, and hook is a good word, I experienced in the past sometimes, and I can't remember when the last time was, occasionally some thought coming in and wanting more of me then just appear and disappear.

[Speaker 3] (44:28 - 44:28)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (44:28 - 44:32)

It goes, I perceive it, it goes like this, it pulls your sleeve.

[Speaker 3] (44:33 - 44:34)

Yeah, yeah.

[Speaker 1] (44:36 - 44:52)

And so that's, I usually, I notice it and then there's an intensification of presence. There's a conscious, a conscious choice at that moment to be more intensely present.

[Speaker 2] (44:52 - 44:53)

Interesting.

[Speaker 1] (44:53 - 46:15)

Yeah. The same thing happens when a challenge comes in, in everyday life, something goes wrong, whatever it may be, and a challenge comes in, and what otherwise could easily develop into some kind of minor drama. And again, at that time, usually it's not even so much a conscious choice, it almost happens naturally, that immediately there is an intensification of presence.

So that's something that I hadn't mentioned before. There is the normal level of presence is the ticking over of the normal level. When the challenge comes in, there is a, I call it sometimes the dimmer switch, is turned up, and there's more intense presence when the challenge comes, because only more intense presence can burn the, the thoughts that want to arise there.

And so there's then a, and hard to describe what a heightening of presence is, but if I could act it out.

[Speaker 2] (46:16 - 46:16)

Please.

[Speaker 1] (46:18 - 47:53)

It's like normal, normal presence is, and more intense presence is, and back to normal, more intense, the more intense presence is a, there's, presence becomes a sharp sword, as I sometimes compare to that in intense presence, which if you're surrounded by pandemonium, could happen, then that is required, and so there's the, or if there's a very strong pull by some thought that says, come this way, I will lead you to a wonderful place, it's called drama and unhappiness, just follow me, you will love it, and then you have to go, you can't fight that thing, you can't say, no, go away, you give it more power, you just go, you have to have that fierceness then, the presence becomes fierce presence, whereas before, presence was gentle, gentle presence.

[Speaker 2] (47:55 - 48:19)

And have you noticed in your life, what it is that happens in your life, what kinds of thoughts might require you to turn up the volume on presence, for example, you know, for some people, it might be thoughts about money or thoughts about their intimate partner, I'm just curious, have you seen any pattern for you, which ones are the tuggy thoughts?

[Speaker 1] (48:20 - 48:20)

Well.

[Speaker 2] (48:22 - 48:25)

I know I'm getting personal here, Eckhart, but I can't help myself.

[Speaker 1] (48:28 - 49:01)

The incomprehensible world of personal finance, having to see my accountant tomorrow, for example, and not understanding all the paperwork and so on, can sometimes lead us to an attempt of the mind to get in there and start thinking about it and then, and then I realized, back to presence, it's a, that could be, for example, that kind of thing.

[Speaker 2] (49:01 - 49:17)

And of course, you teach so many different approaches to turning up presence. What is it that you do? When you turn up presence?

Do you have a standard approach? Do you intensify the feeling of the inner body? Or what do you do?

[Speaker 1] (49:17 - 49:46)

I, it's just, it just happens. I do it, I could say sometimes I do it or sometimes it just happens, but I cannot say how this because there is no how. I could say if it's, if you, if it doesn't, if you don't know, if you don't do it, I could recommend that you, to somebody, to be more intensely present in their inner body.

[Speaker 2] (49:46 - 49:47)

But in your experience?

[Speaker 1] (49:47 - 51:32)

But in my case, I'm not, I'm not saying, okay, I need to be more intensely present in my inner body. There is no, it just happens without any intermediate step. It just happens.

I can, I can even do it here. I can be present in the normal, gentle way, or as I just demonstrated, or I can be present more intensely, which is the sharp sword, and it's, it requires no step really. It just happens immediately.

Let's see. It's, they're both quite pleasant. They're very pleasant, the normal presence and the intense presence.

And then you could have, again, let's say I am participating in a conversation or whatever, then there is the presence is in the background. So I may be talking or contributing to the conversation. And then the presence is there as a sense of still aliveness in the background, which I sometimes call space, inner space, to sense the inner space.

That's vital because otherwise you get, your mind takes over. So, but that doesn't, it does not happen anymore, fortunately. So degrees of, degrees of presence.

[Speaker 2] (51:35 - 52:30)

One of the things that I've discovered about you, you're now working on Eckhart Tolle TV with you and getting to know you better over the last couple years, is how sharp and precise your mind is. I didn't know this, I think in the beginning, because so much of your teaching was about exploring the space in between thoughts, that I didn't realize Eckhart is actually quite sharp and sophisticated. For example, when you tell a story or you teach on a book, you're very exact.

You have the details right, or you don't state them. And I'm curious if you've found any relationship between the space in your mind and the exactitude and precision of your mind and what that relationship might be.

[Speaker 1] (52:30 - 55:07)

Hmm. Well, with the space, the sense of space, thought actually works better, works more precisely, more simply, and more, has more power to it than let's compare perhaps to an engine, a car engine. A car engine that is but the owner, let's say, misuses the engine by sitting in the car a lot of the time.

The car is in neutral and he or she is just putting the foot on the gas just to hear the sound of the engine and it goes for hours. He sits in the stationary car going, not going anywhere at all, just to get so used to it. And then when he finally needs to go somewhere, the engine isn't that efficient anymore because it's worn out.

So the same applies to the mind. If there's continuous misuse of the mind, and you can't even call it use because the mind has taken over, and there is every hour of the day, there's continuous stream of thinking, a lot of it useless, repetitive, and even negative. And if then this person who is usually immersed in the stream of repetitive, continuous thinking, mental noise, has to actually apply their mind in order to analyze something, or relate something, or find a solution to a problem, to certain situations require thought, then their mind isn't actually that effective anymore.

Just like the engine that has been misused, it loses its sharpness and its power. So I'm using that analogy, and I believe it is true. My mind, I believe, works better now than it did when I was at university.

Usually people say, well, you lose your mental powers as you grow older, but I don't find that. I think my mental powers in my 20s were less than they are now. And I can also think more creatively now than I could then.

[Speaker 2] (55:09 - 56:07)

Okay, Eckhart, I think I have a pretty good sense of the, or a sense of the inner landscape of your mind. And now I'd like to see if we could talk some about emotions. Some teachers who emphasize disidentification, still value and want to welcome and feel the full range of emotional experience.

You could say a sort of tantric approach, if you will, you know, bring on the rage, bring on the desire, bring on the sadness, even. There's no identification, but these are different kinds of clouds that move through space. And I'm wondering if it's like that for you, or if it's not like that for you in terms of the range of emotions and the depth of emotional experience.

[Speaker 1] (56:07 - 56:09)

It's not like that.

[Speaker 2] (56:09 - 56:10)

I had a feeling.

[Speaker 1] (56:14 - 1:04:39)

There's a relatively little, and what there is, is very short lived. It can come as a, let's say, anger on very rare occasions, as a flash that goes through and then passes out again, is not, thought doesn't get hold of it and starts amplifying it and prolonging it. So it doesn't, any emotion that arises, sadness, perhaps seeing some human suffering or other suffering, any life form, suddenly sadness arising.

I can cry. Occasionally I cry when I see a movie, it can happen. And so the emotion is there.

I can also, I also cry when I see occasionally something, a human being in suffering. And so the emotion comes and then it passes again. It lasts maybe a minute or two minutes or less.

And it's rare. So there are, doesn't happen that often, any kind of emotion really. This doesn't mean I'm dead inside.

If there were no presence and I didn't have any emotion, then I would be dead inside. So if you, if you have no presence and no emotions, that means you're not truly alive inside. But if you, if there is presence in you, if there's awareness, then that is the primary source of aliveness.

And compared to that emotion is only a turbulence within that primary aliveness. So if you have nothing, if you don't have access to the primary aliveness, then you need the turbulence to give you some sense of aliveness. And that's why people need, many people need their drama, their daily drama or weekly drama or the drama in relationships truly.

We are still, we are still alive. It's still without the drama. It's everything seems to die down.

So people love their drama. They create it in their daily life unconsciously, because at least it gives them some sense of aliveness. As I get excited about my problems and talk about it, at least I know I'm alive, but I, this doesn't, I don't have that.

You don't actually need all those things when there's presence. So within the field of presence, occasional small turbulences happen. They're rare.

That's how I experience it. I don't want to pronounce judgment upon people who instill, say they are present, but they love indulging in all kinds of emotions. I haven't been inside them, so I can't really tell what their state is like, whether it's just a justification for loss of awareness or whether there is something that is actually, they just love the emotion, despite the fact that they are aware.

I would have to enter into these people to know how they experience that. So I'd better not to pronounce any judgment on them. So many days pass without any particular emotion arising at all.

So it's much more common not to have any emotion. By the way, to feel empathy with another human being, to feel love or loving kindness for another human being, I don't regard that as an emotion. That emotion is the neediness of attachment to another human being.

But the outflow of loving kindness or love towards another human being is not a turbulence. It's a deep thing that comes out of the recognition that the consciousness that I am is the essence of who you are also. So what I love in you is consciousness loves itself.

What I love in my dog, when I look at the dog, although the fur is nice and soft and it's lovely to touch the dog, but when I look into the eyes of the dog, there's something that I love in the dog that is more than the fur or the tissues or the blood and bones that is there. If you look under the skin and under the fur, there's just really a bag of organs and blood and bones and tissue. That's not the same with a human being.

That's not what you love. So what I love in the dog is the consciousness of the dog, because I can see there is a consciousness looking. Within the limitations of the dog form, there is the consciousness coming, looking, and I see myself in a somewhat very different form.

And the same when you look at another human being, and there is the connection, the inner connection, that's not, to me, this is not an emotion at all. It is much deeper than that. And so that is there a lot of the time.

I actually, I love so many things, not just when I connect with humans. I haven't spoken about that yet. It just came to me because it's so natural.

I don't usually, I don't think about that. I love inanimate objects. I often, I pick something up and hold it for a few seconds because I love its presence.

It could be the toothpaste tube. It could be a book. And I love it, not because what's written in it, but its simple physical presence.

Anything, anything, it could be anything. The table, the surface of the table. It's, so there's, the world is, that is an aspect, I would say, of this, the sense of aliveness of the world that you inhabit, and of not reducing everything around you to a means to an end.

It's for, I'm using this for this or that purpose, and it needs to get me there, but to appreciate it for what it is, not for what it can do for you, but simply for what it is. So that's the lovingness towards things, the appreciation of things. But all that is not emotional.

There's no emotion there. And again, the true love between humans is emotion between two humans can be part of what is the deeper foundation for the connection between two humans is awareness, presence. That's the consciousness that connects you.

In addition to having that as a foundation, there can be emotions floating around the surface too, but they are not the focal point, they are not the main thing of what connects you. So I don't want to create the impression in anybody that they should get rid of their emotions, because that's not how it works.

[Speaker 2] (1:04:39 - 1:05:06)

No, but you don't seem to be a very big fan of emotions, I would say, from hearing how it works inside of you, meaning something like sadness. Some people, some maybe melancholy, loving people might see sadness as something quite beautiful and interesting and worth really spending some time in. But it sounds like for you, it's more like a cloud formation that's passing.

[Speaker 1] (1:05:06 - 1:05:40)

Yes, yes. I also, I don't, I don't feel drawn to music that's emotional. So, and so it's not, I'm not afraid of emotion.

It's like being in a, it's the, a place that is much deeper than than any emotion, and more permanent aliveness, not a temporary high or temporary low, which is what emotions are.

[Speaker 2] (1:05:41 - 1:06:07)

Yeah, I mean, it sounds like what you're saying is without being explicitly judgmental. It sounds like what you're saying, though, is that your sense is that people who indulge, quote unquote, take their emotions for a ride. It's really a way that they can feel alive, because their inner presence and sense of aliveness isn't active and awake enough.

So they this is the way they can feel.

[Speaker 1] (1:06:07 - 1:06:26)

That's right. Yes, yes. And as far as they are concerned, I mean, they're right, because then at least they're in connected to that substitute, as I call it, some substitute sense of aliveness, but at least there's some aliveness there then.

So rather than being dead, have some drama. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:06:26 - 1:07:38)

Yeah. Okay. Now I have a slightly different question here, Eckhart, which is some people who have experienced some degree of wakefulness still seem to manifest quite a difficult time in certain areas of their life.

Maybe it's in their business life, or it's in their relationship life, or it's with their physical health. And the spiritual openness that they've touched doesn't seem to translate into these other aspects of their life. And what I'm getting at here is I'm curious if you think that spiritual awakening in and of itself, quote unquote, solves all of our problems, or if at the same time, it's quite important for people to do their psychological work, focus on their physical health, concern themselves with nutrition, or do these things just naturally happen?

They naturally happen, you don't have to worry about?

[Speaker 1] (1:07:38 - 1:15:22)

Well, spiritual awakening does not immediately solve all your problems. Nor does it mean that your life from then on, will be free of challenges. So the challenges continue.

Not that you would be likely to find yourself continuously in dysfunctional situations. That's very unlikely when you are spiritually awake, or even relatively conscious, if not even fully awake. It's unlikely that you would find yourself for long periods of time, or most of the time in dysfunctional or unpleasant drama situations, and so on.

However, challenges remain. Life will continue to give you challenges. That's part of being here as a physical form.

So there will be no end to the whatever challenges of whatever kind will come from time to time. And so it's not that spiritual awakening removes all those things, all those challenges. But it does improve your life immeasurably, even on the outer level to a large extent, but challenges will still come.

And whatever new situation you go into, there will be some new challenge that arises there. And that spiritual awakening doesn't mean that does not happen. What happens to spiritually awakened is, even as they are confronted with a challenge, the challenge is seen within the context of a deeper transcendent dimension.

There is a spaciousness in which the challenge is not seen as something, some gigantic thing that completely occupies your attention. It is here within the spaciousness of presence, and there's the challenge. You primarily dwell in the presence.

You don't dwell in the problem. That's why the challenge doesn't become a problem. It remains a challenge.

So you remain rooted in the transcendent dimension. And from there, you do what you can, if there's anything you can do to deal with the challenge. Also, what doesn't happen is you will never encounter situations in life that are totally satisfying.

You will never encounter physical locations that are totally satisfying. You don't encounter living situations that are totally satisfying, even relationships that are totally satisfying, or activities that are totally satisfying all the time. You never encounter that.

No matter where you go and what you do, you will always find an element of unsatisfactoriness that's part of living in the world of form, but every form is limited. And so to believe that with spiritual realization, the element of unsatisfactoriness will disappear from your external life experience, is not the case. It remains.

But that is no longer a problem because it is all seen from the larger context of what I sometimes call the transcendent dimension. In other words, your happiness or your sense of satisfaction is never derived from the conditions of your life. This is where people, of course, look for happiness and satisfaction before they awaken.

When they are unawakened, they look for the satisfactions in the conditions of their life. For a little while, they find it here, and then for another little while they find it in some other condition, but always they find the condition does not ultimately provide happiness and satisfaction. And that eventually, that very fact, eventually produces more and more suffering, and the suffering eventually produces the awakening.

So it's all fine. But the fact is, conditions cannot give you happiness or satisfaction because there's always something that's not quite right. And so the difference between an awakened and an unawakened, or an unconscious human being, and even a somewhat conscious human being, is that the unconscious human continuously is looking for the right conditions as some kind of prerequisite for happiness.

The awakened human does no longer look for the perfect conditions in my life because his or her happiness or satisfaction or aliveness or joy or peace, whatever you want to call it, he doesn't, he or she does not need to derive it anymore from the conditions of their life. It comes from the unconditioned consciousness, the alive presence that you sense that you are, consciousness itself. This is the ultimate satisfaction, and this is the transcendent dimension of life, formless.

It has nothing to do with the conditions of your life. So, and then you can have a spacious relationship with the conditions of your life without clinging to conditions or becoming repelled by conditions. You can have a spacious relationship with the conditions and allow them to be the way they are at this moment, as they are, in all their loveliness for a while and in all their defectiveness with something is missing, something goes wrong within it.

So life becomes, for the first time, satisfying because you're not dependent on the conditions of your life for your satisfaction or happiness. And that's the great liberation. So it's a misperception in people to believe that once I awaken spiritually, everything is going to be just absolutely great.

Everything around me is going to be absolutely great. No, it's not in the nature of the world of form to be like that. It's a continuous flux.

It's a continuous change. So it's not going to remain. If it's absolutely great today, it won't be tomorrow or next year.

So, and you don't need it. You don't need that. What you need is to be in touch with that which transcends all conditions.

This, I'm only putting what the Buddha already talked about very clearly also in his teachings.

[Speaker 2] (1:15:23 - 1:15:53)

So in your own life, have you not experienced after your awakening, the need for something like seeing a therapist for psychological trouble about something or other or seeing a physical coach to help you with this or that or saying, you know, I still need these other inputs to work out things on the relative level that are still problematic? Or is it not like that?

[Speaker 1] (1:15:53 - 1:17:13)

No, I've never, never occurred to me that I needed to seek help for something on a psychological level. I could have sought help for my body is not, I mean, it's seems perfectly fine. It's not a perfect body.

It's a bit crooked here and there. And it's not, but I'm okay with that. And it doesn't cause me much trouble at all.

So far, eventually probably will because things decay eventually. So many people tell me you should see a physical therapist, and maybe it would be helpful. But somehow for some reason, I, I, I don't like my energy field to be invaded by someone no matter how conscious that physical therapist may be and how wonderful work he or she does, somehow have a reluctance to get fee my energy field invaded by that.

But that's not necessarily saying that there's great wisdom in that that's just a characteristic that's there in me.

[Speaker 2] (1:17:14 - 1:18:17)

Okay, I've got I just have one final question. In talking about your awakening minus experience, there can be a sense that there's a gap between we people in the process of awakening, and Eckhart Tolle's dramatic experience. And yet I asked you to do this, I wanted to hear about this, sort of like seeing a vision of something that's possible and the value in that.

But how individual do you think awakening might be? Perhaps it will look very, very different. For someone who's listening, watching, going through the process of awakening, what do you think about that?

How much has to be there? This is what it's like, no matter who you are, what time or place and how much is quite individual?

[Speaker 1] (1:18:20 - 1:22:52)

Probably the, the awakening, what happens in the awakening must be the same in every human being, but the way in which that human being then interprets what happened or the way in which he or she talks about it, or thinks about it, or even how he or she interprets it could be very enormously. If, for example, awakening could happen to somebody who is still, who is very much within the within the cultural context of a particular form of spirituality. So if an awakening happens to somebody who lives in an ashram in India, it might be interpreted very differently, or somebody who is a Christian.

And again, that's why you can see some people talk about the birth of, the birth of Christ in me, and I suddenly, they say, I got this incredible sense of Christ entering me. This could be one way of interpreting the, the awakening process. And they are not entirely wrong, because if Christ means anything, Christ is the transcendent human, Jesus becomes the Christ.

The Christ has no past to it, the Christ is the transcendental reality. And even St. Paul in the New Testament said something like, I must, I must diminish and Christ in me must grow. So it looks then as if, if I talk about it, and somebody like that talks about it, they talk about something totally different, but fundamentally they are not.

It's only when it reaches, when that which is, which takes place in the formless is then seen from the dimension of form, it may look very different from person to person. But the fundamental disidentification from mental forms, that is the same, because it's only then that the Christ consciousness, or Buddha nature, whatever you want to call it, then suddenly is born in you. Another way of putting it, and that's beautiful.

So that's one part of the answer. The second part is then what that person does with the awakened state, how the awakened state works in that particular human being. And when that human being then interacts in the world with others in situations, that also varies enormously.

So not everybody who awakens becomes, writes a book and becomes a formal spiritual teacher. It could be very different. It could be that some creativity comes through you.

It could be that you work with a group of people, innumerable possibilities. And again, that varies from person to person. And also, a few personal characteristics also may remain, then they're not part of, you don't have the ego anymore.

So you're not identified with them. But certain traits that you had before you awakened may still be there after you awaken. It even happened that in India, one famous spiritual teacher, he was a chain smoker before he awakened, and he was still a chain smoker after he awakened.

So he died, of course, because he smoked too much. Not that he minded very much. So yes, so there are variations on the surface.

But the core is the same. I'm sure that what happens deep down in you is the same in anybody in the awakening process.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:54 - 1:23:09)

And if our conversation has initiated a greater longing in people for a deeper level of awakening, what would you say to our viewers in response to that?

[Speaker 1] (1:23:10 - 1:24:50)

Well, the longing for awakening is already part of the awakening. So if there's a longing for awakening, then the door is already there. The door is already a little bit open.

Because otherwise you would belong to those millions who not only have no longing, but actually would intensely dislike even the concept of awakening, or have never even heard of it. It doesn't even enter their consciousness. So if there's a longing for awakening, then you're already touching it.

And it's already beginning to happen because the longing is there because you're recognizing that something in what we are saying here is true. There's an immediate saying, yes. On some level, you can sense that there is a truth in here about the human condition and about you.

And that in you which can sense that, is that part that is already awake. And that needs to grow in you. But don't believe the mind might be telling you that you are not there at all yet.

And yet you are listening to this and you are going, yes. Wow. That means part of you is already awakening.

So don't believe your mind when the mind doesn't know that because it cannot recognize, the thinking mind cannot recognize awakening. It says, I need to awaken. It's happening already.

So if you recognize that, then that will be a great help.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:51 - 1:24:58)

Wonderful. Thank you Eckhart. Thanks for giving us a window into your inner world.

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:24:58 - 1:24:59)

Thank you.

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[Speaker 1] (2:13 - 3:43:58)

No expectancy, not waiting for anything to happen, being completely present here. We'll be sitting together here for an hour and a half or two hours, simply to allow that state of consciousness that is free of future, free of past, timeless state of simple presence to emerge here within yourself, because that's why you're here. You didn't come here to be fed new thoughts, concepts, ideas, perhaps a few signposts, they are useful, but you didn't come here to collect more signposts, which say Rome or Mecca or Enlightenment, and then carry them home, put them in your library or living room.

Isn't that a beautiful signpost? Or worship the signpost, a concept, an idea, a thought. We're really here, this is not a normal conference where information is conveyed that you take home.

In a way, we're here so that the opposite of that can happen, a relinquishing of concepts and ideas. Ultimately, and that may sound a little bit frightening to the mind, relinquishing thought. What is stillness other than a state of consciousness that is free of noise?

This is not some distant goal to be achieved in ten years' time or in a future lifetime. If this state of consciousness were not emerging in you already, you wouldn't be sitting here. But to the mind and the egoic sense of self, which is a mind-identified sense of self, a mental image, me, my story, my past, my future, that may be a little bit frightening, no thought.

Who would I be without thought? That's yesterday we saw Katie ask the question, who would you be without this particular thought? It's all about relinquishing attachment to thinking and ultimately going beyond the compulsive need to think.

And what then arises is presence, a state of clarity, simplicity, of simple beingness, a very deep allowing, allowing this moment to be as it is. That is love, that is compassion, that is a deep care and embracing of whatever is. In other words, embracing life, saying yes to life.

Where is life? Here, now. Life cannot exist separately from here and now.

So any denial of the now, resistance to the now, running away from the now mentally, always trying to get to the next moment because fulfillment is there somewhere, and you miss this life. And then you reach the age of 85, still looking for something, and you've missed the beloved, the divine that is here every moment. Now this moment, and there's only one moment, appears in different forms.

This moment happens to be beautiful externally, beautiful surroundings, wonderful people. So it's a little bit easier as we sit here to enter the state of allowing. There may be moments that appear not good on the surface, not good in little ways or big ways, you miss a bus or a plane, something little, or something major happens, some breakdown in your life, some loss.

What happens then usually, resistance comes up, not a deep no to what is, that is the reactivity of the little me, the mind made sense of self, the story. It gets stronger. The deeper the no is to this moment, and when a challenge comes, the no can become very intense, and that of course is pain, is suffering.

The stronger the no, the deeper the challenge, the stronger the reactive no. And what I call the little me, which is a mind made image of who I am, based on my past, things that happened to me. Not only that, more importantly, based on an interpretation of those things that happened to me.

So the things that happened to me, with a mental interpretation of those events and people from my past, over the years an image forms in the head, me, I. And there's a story, of course, that is an intrinsic part of the image of me. So everybody lives in that work of fiction created by the mind, and the me is the main protagonist in that work of fiction.

It may be the big drama, it may be a tragic comedy, a mixture, so being trapped in a sense of identity that is very small. My past, my story, which needs to be continuously revived mentally, and the little me lives in resistance to what is, because the artificial, the fictitious nature of that entity cannot be sustained except in the state of resistance to now, or denial of now. Now, every life story, the little me story, is ultimately unsatisfactory.

It is not satisfying. Anybody who sits here, if you look at the story of me, it didn't quite work out the way it should have. That's not how I imagined my life to be.

Every, it looks as if something had failed, it had gone wrong, something along the way, that shouldn't have happened like that, that wasn't meant to happen. So to discover this element of unsatisfactoriness in the story of me, always. However, if there is a little me sitting here, there may be one or two who are thinking at this moment, he may be talking about everybody else, but I'm okay, because I've just found my, the ideal partner, I've just fallen in love, and the story has now come to a satisfying conclusion.

So, the little me says, okay, but he's wrong about me, but he may be right about everybody else. My story is actually fine if the happy ending is there. Or you just got the dream job, or you just won five million dollars in the lottery, and then the little me says, oh, this is it.

If that's the case, we'll meet again here next year. You will have returned by then from the honeymoon. The fiction that there can be a satisfying end to the story of me is upheld, of course, by the media and all those things that you watch on TV and in cinemas.

And the end of most films tells you, yes, there is such a thing as an end, a satisfying end to the little me. So, the director cuts after the wedding, or just before, cut here. And now, for many others, it may be a revelation, the realization that, oh, do you mean to say I'm not the only one whose story is not satisfying?

I thought it was just everybody else was fine, and just me, I wasn't doing well. So, to realize my story, so far, hasn't been all that satisfying as a story. The little me doesn't feel complete.

What's... he's looking for something. What's...

And there's pain in the story, suffering, sorrow. But then the little me says, okay, it may not have been a satisfying story up to this point, but you've still got the future. And the little me says, this is where the satisfying conclusion is going to happen.

So, this is why, when you live from that mindset of the little me story, the future is such an essential, such a vital part of everybody's existence, because it's there where the little me says, a satisfying conclusion to my story will be reached at some point, I will get there. Whatever the satisfying conclusion of the story is, it depends on what kind of story the little me has fabricated for itself. It may be material success, it may be finding the ideal partner, it may be reaching a state of enlightenment.

One day, I'll get there. So, the future promises fulfillment. That's why everybody is running towards it.

If you go to a big city, I was in New York a few days ago, and everybody's almost running, continuously. Imagine a visitor from another planet coming and looking at that. Where are they running to?

And of course, they're running to the future. They're trying to get away from this moment, because you're hurrying, moving. Future.

They're all, everybody is running towards the future, because this isn't good enough. I need to get there. So, it's a frantic attempt of the little me to reach the future.

And if you cannot get out of the story of me, but of course here we are getting out, even just by recognizing the nature of the story, by looking at it, we are beginning to step out. Because it can only sustain itself if it remains unconscious. It can only sustain itself, the fiction of the little me, can only sustain itself if it remains an unconscious movement.

But when you look at it, that basically means you're now witnessing, you're watching the mind and the structure of the mind. The recognition of that is already the beginning of the end of the unconsciousness that sustains that movement. And it has been running humanity for many, many thousands of years.

So, just here at the moment we are simply looking at the mechanical unconscious nature of the mind structures. But it's more than that. By seeing it, the seeing is not part of it.

The seeing is part of something that is arising that is not nothing to do with the conditioned consciousness, the mind. And that's arising here. So, if you have not stepped out of the story of me at all, the worst thing that could happen to you would be not to have any more future.

Because then the little me gets into a panic and says, what do I do without, the story will not reach a conclusion. If you take away future, you take away the possibility of a happy ending to my story. And it is the worst thing that could happen for me to tell you, to tell you have no more future or almost no more future.

And the strange thing is, really this is what's happening here in a subtle way, not going to shock you in any way, but in a very subtle way, gradually we are removing future. From our consciousness, so the whole, that level of consciousness gradually is replaced by something else. We are going into that gradually.

So that the little me doesn't go into contraction at all and you run out of the room. The future, seeking salvation in the future, seeking completion in the future. That's one aspect of future, salvation for the little me.

The other part of future is, the little me also knows that the future is very threatening. It is drawn towards it as an answer to its story, but it knows at the same time that the future is going to kill it. Of course it will, the little me.

So a dreadful dilemma arises for the little me. It's drawn towards future as an answer, as salvation, as fulfillment, and at the same time it's continuously threatened by the future. Because anything may happen, I may lose what I already have, which may not be all that satisfying, but at least I have that.

And the future may take it away from me. So the two movements that govern whatever the fictitious entity that humans are trapped in, whatever action it undertakes is governed by two motivating factors which are to do with future. A deep striving towards future as an answer is the movement of wanting and needing.

That's why they're all running towards it. Traditionally this has been called desire in spiritual teachings. The other movement connected with future is, My God, what's going to happen to me?

What's the future going to do to me? That's called fear. Fear arises.

So humans move between these two in a continuous conflict or dilemma. Desire, which is wanting and needing, and fear. So drawn to future and fearing it at the same time.

Easy to see why humans live in such misery. And then the whole fiction of me cannot be sustained without being in opposition to something. The me to be sustained needs to be in conflict with something almost continuously.

Because its survival depends on not me. It depends on sustaining the illusion that this is a separate entity, this is my boundary. And here are the others and the rest of the world.

And that can only be sustained. The illusion of separateness, of an encapsulated sense of self. And basically because of fear that underlies the little me, it's also a state of continuous contraction.

Both psychological contraction and even physical contraction. Protection of the little me and its encapsulated sense of self. It needs, so that its illusion of separateness can be sustained, it needs enemies in some form or other.

Why is it if you open a history book, why is it that human history, 90% of human history is the history of insanity? Anybody who opens a history book says, that is mad. So we need to get to the root of human madness to go beyond it, not say, oh they are mad.

It's to see, I am mad. To see, I am mad is actually a very positive thing because where does that seeing arise? Sanity.

It's only as sanity rises you can see the madness. And we can see the collective madness of humanity as human history. Unbelievable.

Madness, killing, suffering. So how does that arise? It arises in each individual.

Embedded in the very structure of the egoic sense of self is the need to have enemies. Enemies not necessarily in the form of people, although often that is the case too. Enemies in the form of situations, conditions, even places.

And so what's the very root of that? What is the real arch enemy of the little me? The present moment.

The thing it always is in opposition to, trying to get away from or fighting, if you look to the very root of its need for enemies, is to make the present moment into something that you need to oppose. And what is the present moment now? Life.

Because life cannot be in any other place, in any other moment, except now. So the little me lives in opposition to life. Its enemy is life itself, which is now.

If that's not mad, what is? So it's me against the universe, the little me. Now without, there may be temporarily, the little me may have brief moments of relief.

Never for long, because it cannot afford to be in a state of non-opposition to what is for long. It cannot afford to be in a state of peace for long. It cannot afford to be in a state of joy for long.

It cannot afford to be in a state of love for long, because all those things arise only when there is no opposition to what is, but a deep embracing of what is. So the little me fears that embracing of what is. Its very existence depends on not embracing what is.

To recognize that is a wonderful realization. Something within that recognition, is there something in there that has nothing to do with the little me? So there are two movements.

You may find it even within yourself here. Something emerges that is deeper than that entity, egoic fiction. It's emerging now.

And there is still the momentum behind the egoic fiction of me also maybe operating. And you can be sure that it doesn't like this. The deep need that is embedded in the very structure of the egoic mind, is really a deep need for unhappiness.

Never made conscious, because its survival, the survival of that mind structure depends on unconsciousness. When you make it conscious, suddenly you see, wow, this is mad. My need to be unhappy, never recognized fully, always it comes in a hidden, concealed way, because the reasons for my unhappiness are always out there.

This is making me unhappy, that is making me unhappy, the present moment is making me unhappy. What is, is making me unhappy. Now as long as there is unconsciousness, the causes of unhappiness are out there.

And there is always the interpretation, if only those things changed or I could change them, I would be okay. And then you are engaged in continuing fighting with what is. I'm going to change these things out there to remove the causes of my unhappiness.

If your behavior changes, if I can make you to change your behavior, then I can be happy. My unhappiness will go. That's the illusion.

And many people reach the end of their incarnation trapped, the majority still, reach the end of their incarnation trapped in that illusion. If only things were different. Not seeing that unhappiness is embedded in the very structure of the mind.

Its need, because that is an intrinsic part of its need to fight, to sustain, its separate sense of me. To see within oneself the need for conflict, the need for enemies and the need for unhappiness. You can see it in relationships, love, harmonious.

If you meet a person, the first few days or weeks, sometimes even months, total harmony. And then first something arises that is very different, a completely different energy. The need returns for conflict.

And the longest humans are without conflict is often when they fall in love. And that can last a few weeks, or if you went to live on a South Pacific island. You may be free of unhappiness for a little while.

But you can be sure that the unhappiness which is in here, not there, in the structure of the egoic mind, will find a reason for you to be unhappy, even there in paradise. There will be something that's not right. Could be anything.

Mosquitoes, boredom. When there's, let's say, somebody could create for you an environment that has removed all causes for unhappiness. Deep unhappiness would still arise out of unbearable boredom.

Even to the point of suicide. Because you can sometimes see that with people who are born into great wealth, where all their needs or desires are immediately met. And often, one should say, they should be blissfully happy, they've got everything.

And often deep misery arises. Deep dissatisfaction with everything. So you can't get away from that.

But there's a deep reaction, a revulsion to what I'm saying in the little me that says, well, he may be right, this may apply to other people, but really, I'm unhappy because I have reason to be unhappy. The others may be in delusion, but my misery is real. And so to see, to look through that is an amazing realization that you carry around within the structure of your mind unhappiness.

I'm using that as a generic term. The Buddha used the term suffering. Other traditions use the term delusion or illusion.

Or even sin, Christ is. Something not right, always, sin has been misinterpreted. Jesus uses it.

Dukkha, as the Buddha put it. Unsatisfactoriness, suffering, unhappiness. In the seeing of that, it already begins to dissolve.

If that level of consciousness out of which the recognition arises is sustained, the structures of human unhappiness, which are the structures of that egoic conditioned mindset, begin to dissolve. And what then happens? It only happens if your attention moves into the now.

And sustains itself in the now. And so in order for that deep conditioning to dissolve, the ego likes to make that into a problem too. It says, okay, oh my God, it must take so long to get rid of that illusion of all that unhappiness that is in my mind.

How long is it going to take to get rid of all that? If it's taken 100,000 years for it to arise in humans, unhappiness, suffering is not a personal problem of anybody. There's nothing personal in it.

It's the human condition. If it's taken so long, will it take just as long to get out of it, another 100,000 years? And the ego says, yes, yes, it will.

Give me time. That's why there's a strong attraction to cults. Every cult promises something.

You are going to be very special. You are going to reach that. Or we, as a collective ego identity, that can easily happen.

The little me joins with other little me's and says, us. Same illusion, slightly different form. We against the rest of the world.

Some countries do that. We against the rest of the world. Religions, we, us.

So sometimes the personal me becomes partly a collective me. Moving out of that illusion. Now, cults give you time and promise something.

And the leader usually says, if you stay with me for long enough, you can become like me. Almost, not quite. And there's an attraction because time is given.

There's a spiritual longing, which is the longing to be free of all that. And the ego comes back and uses that very longing and makes more time, needs more time. So the illusion that a spiritual seeker can easily get trapped in, and not only in the cults, is that I need more time to become free of all that.

And the amazing realization is, not only do you not need more time, time is the very illusion on which the existence of that mindset, the continuing existence and the survival of that depends. And so in a very subtle way it will always try to get in there and please, more time. You don't need another hundred thousand years to get out of the illusion that has taken a hundred thousand or a million years to build up.

A beautiful line in the Course in Miracles says, it has taken time to misguide you so completely, but it takes no time at all to be who you are. To be who you are means who you are in your essence underneath the conditioned mind structures. And the only access you have to that is through the little doorway of now.

And it's only here, it's only through the power that is inherent in the present moment, that all those mind structures dissolve. The power of the present moment is the power of life itself, your very being. And they dissolve here and now.

What arises in the now is presence, allowing this moment to be. Let's say really that is, here we have the key. Since the survival of those mind structures depends on enemies and fighting the present moment, which is the root of its need for enemies, when you allow this moment to be, the whole illusion collapses.

Now, sometimes people ask, can I make this happen? Can I make this shift, this revolutionary radical transformation of consciousness that you point to, that you talk about, that all the ancient teachings point to, in their essence, talk about, point to? Can you make that happen?

Sometimes people ask that question and say, you sound as if we could make it happen. Well, no, you can't really make it happen. That's why I say, when you do not allow this moment to be, then you're trying to make something happen in the future.

When you're allowing this moment to be, you're not trying anything. You're not trying to make anything happen. It's the opposite of needing to make something happen.

Allow. And the little me says, this is a place of weakness. Don't go there, because you will have no defenses anymore.

You won't even know what's going on anymore, if you don't continuously judge and label what's happening at this moment. If you don't continuously interpret what is happening, so you know what's going on, he's like this, what does he want from me, how can I get something from him? Or even looking at incredible beauty, the immediate need to say something, to relate it to something that you want, there's a flower, the need to pick it, now it's mine.

To immediately, to relate to everything immediately through mental noise. Instead of allowing it, because in the allowing, a stillness immediately arises. And there's no need to interpret.

Allowing implies you give up the need to interpret the world continuously through the mind. And the ego says, no, no, I will become totally ignorant, at the mercy of everything and everybody. And the ego says, I will be stuck in this dreadful present moment for the rest of my life.

I will be stuck in whatever situation I'm in now, that situation that's making me so miserably unhappy, I will be stuck in it for the rest of my life, if I allow it. I can't allow it. That's why I've been fighting it for 20 years, to get out of it.

Are you out of it? No, not yet, but I will. So the allowing really is something, when we talk about it, say allowing this moment to be, your ability to allow this moment to be is grace.

It arises. Not everybody in California, even California, has come here. So the message perhaps would not yet be meaningful to everybody.

But to be able to sit here without running out of the room or falling asleep, which can be different defenses against the truth, or feeling, what nonsense is he talking about? To be sitting here without that, or even if it arises, the need to run out of the room, to simply stay with it and watch that, and see how it arises and how it subsides, and then be back here. That means through grace, whatever, something is already arising from within you that is not the egoic me, that's not part of the madness.

It's arising, that's why you are able to allow this moment to be. And whatever arises in the moment, yes, yes, it's good. This is relatively easy right now, although it may not be easy for everybody even here, because you carry around still to some extent the burden of me.

So there's two things, there is the power of this moment here, and the energy field here. Occasionally it may become obscured by a return movement of the me-entity as a wave, like a cloud. Sun appears and then a big heavy cloud moves in again.

And that happens when you sit here, you lose presence and begin to think about your problems, which are never now, which exist in future, or the heaviness of past and the two together, my problems. Let me remember what my problems are. Oh yes, waking up in the morning, open your eyes.

For some people there can be a moment of when the noisy mind hasn't started yet. There's a simple presence and you look around after opening your eyes. Not everybody, some people wake up immediately burdened by the heaviness of the little me.

Others have a moment of freedom and then after a minute the mind starts and you remember your problems. Oh this and that and that and that, oh my God. And immediately the heaviness descends, the state of contraction returns, and then you turn around in bed.

I can't face another day. And that's the human condition. And we are moving beyond the human condition.

No flower has ever said that, I can't face another day. Because it also awakens when the sun rises. It has not yet removed itself out of the totality, its interconnectedness with all that is.

It hasn't removed itself out of that and claimed a separate existence for itself, me. And this flower isn't even saying, I want the sun, why did they put me here? It's open to this and because it's not denying what is, it's not resisting what is, it is open to something here that's even better than the sun.

And it loves it. But if it said, no, no, I want the sun, it would be closed to this. This moment being fully alive to the power of this moment.

And I often say, to be fully alive to the power of this, feel this moment with every cell of your body. Be here with every cell of the body. Every cell is alive and you sense a subtle, otherwise you're stuck in the head, trying to work out what I'm saying and there's nothing to work out.

Being alive, feeling the very aliveness that you are, the entire energy field is present, every cell is present. You don't need to make an effort, it is present. And you sense that you're everywhere, you're not just here, you're throughout.

So keeping, be here completely, not as a head attached to a body, be here totally. Otherwise you can't allow, the head is not enough to allow this moment to be. The entire being allows this moment to be.

The head is not enough to be present. Be present with the entire being. Sometimes people ask, doesn't it mean that you become identified with the body if you feel the body?

No, it's a way of going beyond identification with the physical form of the body. To feel the very essence that gives life to the physical form is not the physical form. To feel it, and then the Advaita person may say, but aren't you saying that I should identify with an object that arises in consciousness as the feeling of the body?

And isn't that, isn't the truth that knowing that I am the very awareness underlying it all. But the body is that, it's a temporary appearance of the consciousness that underlies everything. It temporarily appears as the body.

It's not the body. In a way you could say it's an illusion, the body is an illusion. But within the illusion is something that is not an illusion.

Otherwise even an illusion needs a little bit of reality. Otherwise it wouldn't be. So to sense the aliveness, the presence in the body, this is just a temporary way of putting it.

And feel the aliveness throughout and then suddenly there's a field of aliveness not only within but also without. That has nothing to do anymore with your story. There's a field of aliveness within at first, but suddenly also the surrounding world has an aliveness to it.

Not that you need anything, it's beautiful but it's all form, it's temporary. But that presence of beingness is beyond form. So you know that which is beyond form as yourself, which is a field of still presence, intense aliveness, still presence.

And forms appear in that and that's beautiful. The body appears and it's fine. Thoughts appear, that's fine too because you're no longer trapped in the thoughts.

You are that which makes every thought possible. So the key is that stillness that is so alive, that is now. So when we talk about the present moment, the now, what does that mean?

The mind says it doesn't mean anything. The mind says there's no such thing as the now. Can you show me where it is?

There's only past and future and something very fleeting here that really has no meaning. That's what the mind says. But there's, when we say the now, there's a mystery in there and there's a key in there.

What temporarily we call the now is something very strange. This moment, we are here, before this moment happened as an event in time, it already had a shadowy existence in your mind as the anticipation of this moment. It was going to happen.

You knew you were going to come here. And soon it will be over and it will recede into the past and it will be a memory. Another present moment will be there or the same moment filled with the appearance of some other event, phenomenal event.

Your whole life, it's strange how when something is gone it evaporates into nothingness. Even this, there will come a time when nobody will remember this beautiful moment as an external appearance. These bodies will go, so the memories will go and then a few photos may survive of this event, live a little bit longer and then become yellow.

And then there may even, some people may have videoed something but that probably has a limited lifespan too. And so eventually the external appearance of this moment will have evaporated completely including the bodies and yet there is something here that is beyond the external appearance of this moment. There is something deeper.

The very essence of your life which is like a phantom, your childhood, where is it now? Events of last week, gone, dissolved. It comes into the now, gone.

What remains is the field of now in which your whole life unfolds as form, the stillness that is underneath whatever happens. Things happen. The stillness is there and allows it to happen.

To know yourself as that stillness is freedom. Freedom from form. Freedom from the world.

Freedom from self as the little me. And then the world is a beautiful place. It's no longer threatening, it's not threatening and it's no longer promising.

It loses the qualities of promise. Something there is going to give it to me. Nothing, you don't need, it's here now, you don't need to be given anything.

Your very essence is life in its fullness now. I don't want you to believe in that as an idea in your head. The words are only a little signpost.

It's only if you are in the now with every cell of your body, that's how it's initially I put it, you can realize the truth of this, that life in its fullness, an expression Jesus used, he said, I want you to have the fullness of life. Life in its fullness beyond anything happening or not happening. Nothing to do with how much time you still have as this form.

Nothing to do with any life situation or condition, good or bad. Life in its fullness is already here. And that's, I call that sometimes the power of this moment, which is life.

So, you don't need the world anymore then. And you don't fear the world anymore. And you don't need the future anymore, you don't fear the future anymore.

It has a peripheral existence, only practical purposes. Let's meet tomorrow at four o'clock, okay. That's practical, it works on that level.

Beyond that, future is no longer needed to give you a sense of promise of some kind of deeper identity or fulfillment. It's an illusion, it never comes. How can it give you that?

There's only this. So, it's going beyond your life situation and the conditions of the me. To a place of greater depth, where you need nothing.

Need nothing. And then as a little gift, many things come to you on the phenomenal external level. Life suddenly becomes so friendly.

Whereas before it was an enemy to be fighting, life suddenly becomes friendly. Even the phenomenal existence has suddenly a friendly face. Why?

How can it change from being, from life being what Churchill called when he talked about human history, Churchill said about history is one damn thing after another. And for many people, that's how they perceive their existence. One damn thing after another.

And that doesn't happen anymore. Life is no longer perceived through external existence, is no longer perceived and created through the me, fictitious mindset of me. So, when you're not fighting life, when you're fighting life, life fights you.

It's a mirror. And when you allow and say yes, life suddenly says yes. Oh, you embrace it, that means life can flow through you freely.

Consciousness, life, God, just words, can move and even express itself through this form freely. And from being a burden on the planet, which is what humanity is right now, you become, and from being a burden to yourself and a troublemaker to yourself and others, a little me, from being this burden, suddenly there's a blessing that walks on the planet, there's a lightness to it, no longer the heaviness of the person. And that's, love is now present.

The person talks about love, but of course, it's all fiction. As K.G. said yesterday, little personalities don't love, they want something. So the whole wanting the deep energy, the craving and wanting and needing future, goes.

So, and things you had, the little me said, I need that for my happiness. Often, they just come when you don't need them anymore. They may not, it doesn't matter.

But the strange thing is, many things simply come icing on the cake. The cake is what matters. And you have the cake, or you are the cake.

Seek only the kingdom of heaven. Now seeking is a temporary phase, you're not seeking anymore. Be who you are, that's the kingdom of heaven which is within here, now.

All the other things that you thought you needed will be added onto you. Doesn't matter anymore. Seek, seeking, coming to the end of seeking.

Seeking implies future. Seeking, even seeking to understand more. I need to understand more about spirituality.

I need to understand more about Buddhism. I need to understand more about Advaita, what are they really talking about. You don't need to understand more, you've understood enough for you to have come here.

What else is there? Then, that's the edge, you've reached the edge of understanding mentally, working out. Any further, it's just the mind trying to get back, OK, I need some more knowledge.

I can't quite work out what stillness is. If you explain a bit more, perhaps I can get there. Is your concept of stillness the same as the Buddha's concept?

You could do a PhD. Stillness in Spirit, the World Religions. 400 pages.

And then you become the world expert on stillness. And perhaps, if it's all mind, the world expert on honey who has never tasted honey. It's quite possible, you could be the world expert on honey without ever, because it's all concepts.

So, we are tasting, not just tasting the honey, we are the honey. So, a state of consciousness arises in which thinking plays very much a secondary role. It may come in occasionally, for this or that.

Your sense of who you are, of being, has nothing to do anymore with any thought in your head about who you are. Story. So, your history is fine, it's just things that happened to this form.

You don't need to say, I'm trying to forget my history. Burn your photo albums. No need.

It's just no identification. That's just so and so. My ex-husband, my ex-wife.

Photo. No longer seeking the self, seeking to strengthen itself through identification with your history. That was my ex, what he did to me, I'll never forget.

Let me tell you about it. That means seeking a stronger sense of self through the history. And the history becomes the story and becomes the me.

So, it's the self-seeking in your past goes. It's just past, no problem in it whatsoever. Self-seeking in future goes.

And future is only practical relevance to your life. I'm booking a flight for next month. That's how future works, it's fine.

No self-seeking in it. I'm booking this flight, it will take me to such and such a place. And when I get there, I will find the answer, the fulfillment.

So, all that self-seeking goes to strengthen the sense of self artificially. And that means you are yourself already. And as you always were, now.

And maybe the mind goes, well, who am I then? Step beyond the edge of understanding. Allow this moment to be.

Be the stillness. You are not condemned from now on to permanent inactivity or passivity in stillness. At first it's good as it arises.

Let it arise in an environment that is conducive to stillness. Although sometimes it arises in people by itself or accidentally in an environment that looks totally non-conducive to stillness. That's the other way, that's the way through suffering, as it happened to me.

The stillness suddenly arose out of dreadful mental noise and resistance. And here, this is another way, not through suffering. Suffering has played its part because it's taken you here and it's been good.

And this is a voluntary embracing of that. Not to be pushed and kicked into the kingdom of heaven. Life would do that to you anyway, eventually.

So there's no need. But it takes time. This saves time, removes time.

And as it removes time, it also removes suffering. So you can get to the end of suffering through time and further suffering until there's a self-destruction of the egoic entity when it has created so much misery for itself that it continues to exist. It cannot exist anymore and it self-destructs.

Or you've had enough suffering to come here and the eternal message of all spiritual teachings is you don't need to suffer anymore. And the greater your suffering has been, or if you're sitting here and feel you've come here with a burden of suffering, perhaps physical, some dreadful situation, or not knowing how much more time you have as this form, not quite knowing, nobody knows. Let's just go into very deep yes.

And the worse your suffering up to this point, the deeper your yes will have to be and the greater the opportunity. It can happen that the yes uttered once can be so deep that the no never returns. One deep yes to life.

The end of all no. And that is your opportunity. You may be ready.

It could be through the very fact that perhaps the form may not remain in existence for that long. Maybe it will. There may be an element of uncertainty and that now deepen.

You can go very deeply into the yes and into the now and into presence so that past and future falls away almost completely except a few practical matters. And you walk on this straight, this path of now. I sometimes describe it as a tightrope of now.

And that is the flowering of human consciousness. If you walk the tightrope of now and on a tightrope, to walk a tightrope you have to be very present, totally present every step. There is no little me.

You can't remember your problems on the tightrope. You would fall off immediately. Even fear, you can't fear the next step.

You would fall off immediately. There is only this step. And there is a total presence with every step.

And this is the state that is arising and it is only in that utter and complete presence that the little me dissolves. And all the problems that cling to the little me in fact make up its very existence. They cannot, they fall away, they cannot survive in intense presence.

Look at any problem in your life, no matter how serious it looks, and see if it can survive when your attention is totally here. And then you become what you have always been, which is consciousness itself. The field of still presence that underlies everything.

So the person dissolves. The heaviness is gone. That's the fulfillment of your human existence.

Now, it doesn't matter how much longer this form exists. A few weeks, 50 years, doesn't make that much difference. Fulfillment is, this flowering is the realization of who you are.

But you wouldn't be able to say very much about it through the mind. If somebody asks, who are you? There may just be a stillness.

And now the strange thing is, from the point of view of the mind, it looks as if you knew less about who you are than before. And it's true. It is a voluntary embracing of the state, and this is also key, a voluntary embracing and saying yes to the state of not knowing anything anymore.

That's why it's so frightening to the little ego. An embracing of not knowing, and there's vast power in that not knowing. Whatever you need to know at any moment, which is always this moment, will arise out of what looks like the state of ignorance to the mind.

Whatever you need to know or anything you need to do to know at any moment, wherever, in relationships, in any situation, arises out of the state of not knowing. So to become comfortable, happy with not knowing. It's a great thing to discover if you work with people as a therapist, counselor, but of course everywhere, not to think, how can I help this person?

People sometimes come to me, sometimes with a story, sometimes a difficult story, less so these days with stories. How could I possibly help? I could try to work out how I'm going to, I don't know, I'm happy with not knowing.

So allowing the space of not knowing, and now this applies to your entire existence. It's fine not to know and then you stay with the not knowing, which is the stillness. And whatever is needed suddenly comes, it may come as words, as an action, simply an emanation of love.

It happens, it's no longer totality, life moves through and then you return to the state of not knowing. It could be a simple thing like going for a walk and watching everything around you in that attentive alertness. You're not walking there as a little me with its problems.

You're walking as a field of awareness that looks at the universe, the phenomenal universe and its beauty, not needing to impose mental noise on anything, interpret, just don't need to know what this tree is called. You might know it, it's no longer important, it won't interfere with the beauty of that moment. No longer the heaviness of a person walking through the street, a field of consciousness, of awareness.

And you look at the world and you see, oh, if you had a few thoughts in your head, you would say, this is good, every moment is good. And God saw his, her, its creation and saw that it was good. You look, that which looks through your eyes at the world is then pure consciousness, the light that emanates from the source.

The light that emanates from the one source looks through your eyes, sense perceptions and loves its creation because you created it. You are consciousness appearing as form and it's good. So you walk as a blessing on the earth, no longer as a burden and everything and everybody loves you for that.

Even nature, you will feel nature, trees, flowers love your presence. It's almost as if their very being moved a little bit towards you because within the totality where there is no separation between this and that, when you see beauty without mind, it's a self-recognition, consciousness. The flower, which is an expression of consciousness, recognizes its own beauty through you, it's not you.

So even nature finds fulfillment through that, it knows itself through you, what looks like you. And yet, all that is form, the eternal is underneath the forms. This very moment, what are the ingredients of this moment?

The mind, the voice, your perception of the voice, the totality of this space, people, flowers, lights, sense perceptions, those things. Okay, that's good. There's also silence, that's even better.

And to acknowledge the silence, listen to it, alert, that's the arising of stillness. Silence is helpful, ultimately you don't need it. Stillness doesn't depend on external silence, but it's good, it's helpful to listen to silence.

And it's only the stillness in you that can even be aware of silence. If your mind were very noisy sitting here, silence would be meaningless, a concept. The moment you listen to silence, a stillness arises.

Through the stillness, you become aware of silence. So it's within and without. And then the realization, it's always within, it may not always be without, but that dimension of consciousness is always there.

And then it may arise at the most unsuspecting times, you may find yourself in the middle of a noisy situation at work, little knees fighting. And suddenly silence arises and you're watching without condemnation, without interpretation. And then perhaps some words arise, you say something very different, anything that arises out of your inner stillness has a very different quality.

Even if it becomes words, it always has some of that stillness, the place from where it came, it still has a fragrance of that, a freshness and a newness. And perhaps you say something and it's come out of the stillness. Completely different dimension of consciousness is coming.

Love, basically, beyond what the ego thinks love is. We've been speaking about that which cannot be spoken of for quite a long time. Life is full of paradox.

Basically, we have moved beyond time, more deeply into the now. It looks according to the clock as if we've been sitting here for one and a half or one and three quarter hours, but it wasn't really like that. One deep moment, timeless, the timeless dimension of consciousness is coming.

And that looks like an event in time, but you have to accept certain paradoxes. That's how it is. Let's acknowledge the silence without, through the stillness within.

And now meet everything, everybody, through the stillness. Bring the stillness. Be it, because you are it.

And that is the dimension of the sacred that is arising, inseparable from the stillness. Sometimes questions are fine, but I feel at this moment there's no need for that. It would only be the mind trying to figure something out that you already know.

And I know that you already know. And your mind says, no, no, I don't know. Yes, you know.

No. No expectancy, not waiting for anything to happen, being completely present here. We'll be sitting together here for an hour and a half or two hours, simply to allow that state of consciousness that is free of future, free of past, timeless state of simple presence.

To emerge here within yourself. Because that's why you're here. You didn't come here to be fed new thoughts, concepts, ideas.

Perhaps a few signposts, they are useful. But you didn't come here to collect more signposts which say Rome or Mecca or Enlightenment and then carry them home and put them in your library or living room. Isn't that a beautiful signpost?

Or worship the signpost, a concept, an idea, a thought. We're really here, this is not a normal conference where information is conveyed that you take home. In a way, we're here so that the opposite of that can happen.

A relinquishing of concepts and ideas. Ultimately, and that may sound a little bit frightening to the mind, relinquishing thought. What is stillness other than a state of consciousness?

That is free of noise. This is not some distant goal to be achieved in ten years' time or in a future lifetime. If this state of consciousness were not emerging in you already, you wouldn't be sitting here.

But to the mind and the egoic sense of self, which is a mind-identified sense of self, a mental image, me, my story, my past, my future, that may be a little bit frightening. No thought. But who would I be without thought?

Yesterday we saw Katie ask the question, who would you be without this particular thought? It's all about relinquishing attachment to thinking and ultimately going beyond the compulsive need to think. And what then arises is presence.

A state of clarity, simplicity, of simple beingness. A very deep allowing, allowing this moment to be as it is. That is love, that is compassion, that is a deep care, an embracing of whatever is.

In other words, embracing life. Saying yes to life. Where is life?

Here. Now. Life cannot exist separately from here and now.

So any denial of the now, resistance to the now, running away from the now mentally, always trying to get to the next moment because fulfillment is there somewhere, and you miss this life. And then you reach the age of 85, still looking for something, and you've missed the beloved, the divine that is here every moment. Now this moment, and there's only one moment, appears in different forms.

This moment happens to be beautiful externally, beautiful surroundings, wonderful people. So it's a little bit easier as we sit here to enter the state of allowing. There may be moments that appear not good on the surface, not good in little ways or big ways.

You miss a bus or a plane, something little, or something major happens, some breakdown in your life, some loss. What happens then, usually, resistance comes up. Not a deep no to what is.

That is the reactivity of the little me, the mind made sense of self, the story. It gets stronger. The deeper the no is to this moment, and when a challenge comes, the no can become very intense, because pain is suffering.

The stronger the no, the deeper the challenge, the stronger the reactive no. And what I call the little me, which is a mind made image of who I am, based on my past, things that happened to me. Not only that, more importantly, based on an interpretation of those things that happened to me.

So the things that happened to me, together with a mental interpretation of those events and people from my past, over the years, an image forms in the head. Me. I.

And there's a story, of course, that is an intrinsic part of the image of me. So everybody lives in that work of fiction created by the mind, and the me is the main protagonist in that work of fiction. It may be a big drama, it may be a tragic comedy, a mixture.

So being trapped in a sense of identity that is very small. My past, my story, which needs to be continuously revived mentally. And the little me lives in resistance to what is, because the artificial, the fictitious nature of that entity cannot be sustained except in the state of resistance to now or denial of now.

Now, every life story, the little me story, is ultimately unsatisfactory. It is not satisfying. Anybody who sits here, if you look at the story of me, it didn't quite work out the way it should have.

That's not how I imagined my life to be. It looks as if something had failed, it had gone wrong, something along the way. That shouldn't have happened like that, that wasn't meant to happen.

So to discover this element of unsatisfactoriness in the story of me, always. However, if there is a little me sitting here, there may be one or two who are thinking at this moment, and he may be talking about everybody else, but I'm okay. Because I've just found my, the ideal partner, I've just fallen in love, and the story has now come to a satisfying conclusion.

So the little me says, okay, he's wrong about me, but he may be right about everybody else. My story is actually fine if the happy ending is there. Or you just got the dream job, or you just won five million dollars in the lottery, and then the little me says, oh, this is it.

If that's the case, we'll meet again here next year. You will have returned by then from the honeymoon. The fiction that there can be a satisfying end to the story of me is upheld, of course, by the media and all those things that you watch on TV and in cinemas.

And the end of most films tells you, yes, there is such a thing as an end, a satisfying end to the little me. So the director cuts after the wedding, or just before, cut here. And now for many others, it may be a revelation, the realization that, oh, do you mean to say I'm not the only one whose story is not satisfying?

I thought everybody else was fine, and just me, I wasn't doing well. So to realize my story, so far, hasn't been all that satisfying as a story. The little me doesn't feel complete.

What's looking for something? And there's pain in the story, suffering, sorrow. But then the little me says, okay, it may not have been a satisfying story up to this point, but you've still got the future.

And the little me says, this is where the satisfying conclusion is going to happen. So this is why, when you live from that mindset of the little me story, the future is such an essential, such a vital part of everybody's existence. Because it's there where the little me says, a satisfying conclusion to my story will be reached at some point, I will get there.

Whatever the satisfying conclusion of the story is, it depends on what kind of story the little me has fabricated for itself. It may be material success, it may be finding the ideal partner, it may be reaching a state of enlightenment. One day, I'll get there.

So the future promises fulfillment. That's why everybody is running towards it. If you go to a big city, I was in New York a few days ago, and everybody's almost running, continuously.

Imagine a visitor from another planet coming and looking at that. Where are they running to? And of course, they're running to the future.

They're trying to get away from this moment, because you're hurrying, moving to the future. Everybody is running towards the future, because this isn't good enough. I need to get there.

So it's a frantic attempt of the little me to reach the future. And if you cannot get out of the story of me, but of course here we are getting out. Even just by recognizing the nature of the story, by looking at it, we are beginning to step out.

Because it can only sustain itself if it remains unconscious. It can only sustain itself, the fiction of the little me can only sustain itself if it remains an unconscious movement. But when you look at it, that basically means you're now witnessing, you're watching the mind and the structure of the mind.

The recognition of that is already the beginning of the end of the unconsciousness that sustains that movement. And it has been running humanity for many, many thousands of years. So just here at the moment we are simply looking at the mechanical, unconscious nature of the mind structures.

But it's more than that. By seeing it, the seeing is not part of it. The seeing is part of something that is arising that is not nothing to do with the conditioned consciousness, the mind.

And that's arising here. So if you have not stepped out of the story of me at all, the worst thing that could happen to you would be not to have any more future. Because then the little me gets into a panic and says, what do I do without, the story will not reach a conclusion.

If you take away future, you take away the possibility of a happy ending to my story. And it's the worst thing that could happen for me to tell you, to tell you have no more future or almost no more future. And the strange thing is, really this is what's happening here in a subtle way, not going to shock you in any way, but in a very subtle way, gradually we are removing future.

From our consciousness, so the whole, that level of consciousness gradually is replaced by something else. We are going into that gradually. So that the little me doesn't go into a contraction and you run out of the room.

The future, seeking salvation in the future, seeking completion in the future. That's one aspect of future, salvation for the little me. The other part of future is, the little me also knows that the future is very threatening.

It is drawn towards it as an answer to its story, but it knows at the same time that the future is going to kill it. Of course it will, the little me. So a dreadful dilemma arises for the little me.

It's drawn towards future as an answer, as salvation, as fulfillment, and at the same time it's continuously threatened by the future. Because anything may happen, I may lose what I already have, which may not be all that satisfying, but at least I have that. And the future may take it away from me.

So the two movements that govern, whatever the fictitious entity that humans are trapped in, whatever action it undertakes is governed by two motivating factors which are to do with future. A deep striving towards future as an answer is the movement of wanting and needing. That's why they're all running towards it.

Traditionally this has been called desire in spiritual teachings. The other movement connected with future is, my God, what's going to happen to me? What's the future going to do to me?

That's called fear. Fear arises. So humans move between these two in a continuous conflict or dilemma.

Desire, which is wanting and needing, and fear. So drawn to future and fearing it at the same time. Easy to see why humans live in such misery.

And then the whole fiction of me cannot be sustained without being in opposition to something. The me to be sustained needs to be in conflict with something almost continuously. Because its survival depends on not me.

It depends on sustaining the illusion that this is a separate entity, this is my boundary, and here are the others and the rest of the world. And that can only be sustained. The illusion of separateness, of an encapsulated sense of self, and basically because of fear that underlies the little me, it's also a state of continuous contraction, both psychological contraction and even physical contraction.

Protection of the little me and its encapsulated sense of self. It needs, so that its illusion of separateness can be sustained, it needs enemies in some form or other. Why is it, if you open a history book, why is it that human history, 90% of human history is the history of insanity?

Anybody who opens a history book says, that is mad. So we need to get to the root of human madness, to go beyond it, not say, oh, they are mad. It's to see, I am mad.

To see I am mad is actually a very positive thing, because where does that seeing arise? Sanity. It's only as sanity rises you can see the madness.

And we can see the collective madness of humanity as human history. Unbelievable. Madness, killing, suffering.

So, how does that arise? It arises in each individual, embedded in the very structure of the egoic sense of self is the need to have enemies. Enemies not necessarily in the form of people, although often that is the case too.

Enemies in the form of situations, conditions, even places. And so what's the very root of that? What is the real arch enemy of the little me?

The present moment. The thing it always is in opposition to, trying to get away from or fighting, if you look to the very root of its need for enemies, is to make the present moment into something that you need to oppose. And what is the present moment now?

Now, life. Because life cannot be in any other place, in any other moment, except now. So the little me lives in opposition to life.

Its enemy is life itself, which is now. Now, if that's not mad, what is? So, it's me against the universe.

It's the little me. Now, without, there may be temporarily, the little me may have brief moments of relief. Never for long, because it cannot afford to be in a state of non-opposition to what is for long.

It cannot afford to be in a state of peace for long. It cannot afford to be in a state of joy for long. It cannot afford to be in a state of love for long, because all those things arise only when there is no opposition to what is, but a deep embracing of what is.

So the little me fears that embracing of what is. Its very existence depends on not embracing what is. To recognize that is a wonderful realization.

Something within that recognition, is there something in there that is nothing to do with the little me. So there are two movements. You may find it even within yourself here.

Something emerges that is deeper than that entity, egoic fiction. It's emerging now. And there is still the momentum behind the egoic fiction of me, also maybe operating.

And you can be sure that it doesn't like this. The deep need that is embedded in the very structure of the egoic mind, is really a deep need for unhappiness. Never made conscious, because its survival, the survival of that mind structure depends on unconsciousness.

When you make it conscious, suddenly you see, wow, this is mad. My need to be unhappy, never recognized fully, always it comes in a hidden, concealed way, because the reasons for my unhappiness are always out there. This is making me unhappy, that is making me unhappy, the present moment is making me unhappy.

What is, is making me unhappy. Now as long as there is unconsciousness, the causes of unhappiness are out there. And there is always the interpretation, if only those things changed or I could change them, I would be okay.

And then you are engaged in continuing fighting with what is. I'm going to change these things out there to remove the causes of my unhappiness. If your behavior changes, if I can make you to change your behavior, then I can be happy, my unhappiness will go.

That's the illusion, and many people reach the end of their incarnation trapped, the majority still, reach the end of their incarnation trapped in that illusion. If only things were different. Not seeing that unhappiness is embedded in the very structure of the mind.

Its need, because that is an intrinsic part of its need to fight, to sustain, its separate sense of me. To see within oneself the need for conflict, the need for enemies, and the need for unhappiness. You can see it in relationships, love, harmonious.

If you meet a person, the first few days or weeks, sometimes even months, total harmony. And then first something arises that is very different, a completely different energy. The need returns for conflict.

And the longest humans are without conflict is often when they fall in love, and that can last a few weeks. Or if you went to live on a South Pacific island, you may be free of unhappiness for a little while. But you can be sure that the unhappiness which is in here, not there, in the structure of the egoic mind, will find a reason for you to be unhappy, even there, in paradise.

There will be something that's not right. It could be anything. Mosquitoes, boredom.

When there's, let's say, somebody could create for you an environment that has removed all causes for unhappiness. Deep unhappiness would still arise out of unbearable boredom, even to the point of suicide. You can sometimes see that with people who are born into great wealth, where all their needs or desires are immediately met.

And often, one should say, they should be blissfully happy, they've got everything. And often, deep misery arises, deep dissatisfaction with everything. So you can't get away from that.

But there's a deep reaction, a revulsion to what I'm saying in the little me that says, well, he may be right, this may apply to other people, but really, I'm unhappy because I have reason to be unhappy. The others may be in delusion, but my misery is real. And so to see, to look through that is an amazing realization that you carry around within the structure of your mind unhappiness.

I'm using that as a generic term. The Buddha used the term suffering. Other traditions use the term delusion or illusion, or even sin.

Christ is something not right, always. Sin has been misinterpreted. Jesus uses it.

Dukkha, as the Buddha put it, unsatisfactoriness, suffering, unhappiness. In the seeing of that, it already begins to dissolve. If that level of consciousness out of which the recognition arises is sustained, the structures of human unhappiness, which are the structures of that egoic conditioned mindset, begin to dissolve.

And what then happens, it only happens if your attention moves into the now and sustains itself in the now. And so, in order for that deep conditioning to dissolve, the ego likes to make that into a problem too. It says, OK, oh my God, it must take so long to get rid of that illusion of all that unhappiness that is in my mind.

How long is it going to take to get rid of all that? If it's taken 100,000 years for it to arise in humans, unhappiness, suffering is not a personal problem of anybody. There's nothing personal in it.

It's the human condition. If it's taken so long, will it take just as long to get out of it, another 100,000 years? And the ego says, yes, yes it will.

Give me time. That's why there's a strong attraction to cults. Every cult promises something.

You are going to be very special. You are going to reach that. Or we, as a collective ego identity, that can easily happen.

The little me joins with other little me's and says us. Same illusion, slightly different form. We against the rest of the world.

Some countries do that. We against the rest of the world. Religions, we, us.

So sometimes the personal me becomes partly a collective me. Partly moving out of that illusion. Now, cults give you time and promise.

And the leader usually says, if you stay with me for long enough, you can become like me. Almost. Not quite.

And there's an attraction because time is given. There's a spiritual longing, which is the longing to be free of all that. And the ego comes back and uses that very longing and makes more time.

It needs more time. So the illusion that a spiritual seeker can easily get trapped in, and not only in the cults, is that I need more time to become free of all that. And the amazing realization is, not only do you not need more time, time is the very illusion on which the existence of that mindset, the continuing existence and the survival of that depends.

And so in a very subtle way it will always try to get in there and, please, more time. You don't need another hundred thousand years to get out of the illusion that has taken a hundred thousand or a million years to build up. A beautiful line in the Course in Miracles says, it has taken time to misguide you so completely, but it takes no time at all to be who you are.

To be who you are means who you are in your essence underneath the conditioned mind structures. And the only access you have to that is through the little doorway of now. And it's only here, it's only through the power that is inherent in the present moment, that all those mind structures dissolve.

The power of the present moment is the power of life itself, your very being. And they dissolve here and now. What arises in the now is presence, allowing this moment to be.

Let's say, really, here we have the key. Since the survival of those mind structures depends on enemies and fighting the present moment, which is the root of its need for enemies, when you allow this moment to be, the whole illusion collapses. Now, sometimes people ask, can I make this happen?

Can I make this shift, this revolutionary radical transformation of consciousness that you point to, that you talk about, that all the ancient teachings point to, in their essence, talk about, point to, can you make that happen? Sometimes people ask that question and say, you sound as if we could make it happen. Well, no, you can't really make it happen.

That's why I say, when you do not allow this moment to be, then you're trying to make something happen in the future. When you're allowing this moment to be, you're not trying anything. You're not trying to make anything happen.

It's the opposite of needing to make something happen. Allow. And the little me says, this is a place of weakness.

Don't go there, because you will have no defenses anymore. You won't even know what's going on anymore, if you don't continuously judge and label what's happening at this moment. If you don't continuously interpret what is happening, so you know what's going on, he's like this, what does he want from me, how can I get something from him?

Or even looking at incredible beauty, the immediate need to say something, to relate it to something that you want, there's a wind, there's a flower, the need to pick it, now it's mine. To immediately, to relate to everything immediately through mental noise, instead of allowing it, because in the allowing, a stillness immediately arises. And there's no need to interpret.

Allowing implies you give up the need to interpret the world continuously through the mind. And the ego says, no, no, I will become totally ignorant at the mercy of everything and everybody. And the ego says, I will be stuck in this dreadful present moment for the rest of my life.

I will be stuck in whatever situation I'm in now, that situation that's making me so miserably unhappy, I will be stuck in it for the rest of my life if I allow it. I can't allow it. That's why I've been fighting it for 20 years, to get out of it.

Are you out of it? No, not yet, but I will. So the allowing really is something, when we talk about it, say, allowing this moment to be, your ability to allow this moment to be is grace.

It arises. Not everybody in California, even California, has come here. So the message perhaps would not yet be meaningful to everybody, but to be able to sit here without running out of the room or falling asleep, which can be different defenses against the truth, or feeling, what nonsense is he talking about?

To be sitting here without that, or even if it arises, the need to run out of the room, to simply stay with it and watch that, and see how it arises and how it subsides, and then be back here. That means through grace, whatever, something is already arising from within you that is not the egoic me, that's not part of the madness. It's arising, that's why you are able to allow this moment to be.

And whatever arises in the moment, yes, yes, it's good. This is relatively easy right now, although it may not be easy for everybody even here, because you carry around still, to some extent, the burden of me. So there's two things.

There is the power of this moment here, and the energy field here. Occasionally it may become obscured by a return movement of the me entity, as a wave, like a cloud. Sun appears, and then a big heavy cloud moves in again.

And that happens when you sit here, you lose presence, and begin to think about your problems. Which are never now, which exist in future, or the heaviness of past, and the two together, my problems. Let me remember what my problems are.

Oh, yes, yes. Waking up in the morning, open your eyes. For some people there can be a moment of, when the noisy mind hasn't started yet.

There's a simple presence. And you look around after opening your eyes. Not everybody, some people wake up, immediately burdened by the heaviness of the little me.

Others have a moment of freedom. And then, after a minute, the mind starts, and you remember your problems. Oh, this, and that, and that, and that.

Oh, my God. And immediately the heaviness descends. The state of contraction returns.

And then you turn around in bed. I can't face another day. And that's the human condition.

And we are moving beyond the human condition. No flower has ever said that, I can't face another day. Because it also awakens when the sun rises.

It has not yet removed itself out of the totality. Its interconnectedness with all that is. It hasn't removed itself out of that, and claimed a separate existence for itself.

Me. And this flower isn't even saying, I want the sun. Why did they put me here?

It's open to this, and because it's not denying what is, it's not resisting what is, it is open to something here that's even better than the sun. And it loves it. But if it said, no, no, I want the sun, it would be closed to this.

This. This moment, being fully alive to the power of this moment. And I often say, to be fully alive to the power of this.

Feel this moment with every cell of your body. Be here with every cell of the body. Every cell is alive, and you sense a subtle, otherwise you're stuck in the head, trying to work out what I'm saying, and there's nothing to work out.

Being alive. Feeling the very aliveness that you are. The entire energy field is present.

Every cell is present. You don't need to make an effort. It is present.

And you sense that you're everywhere. You're not just here. You're throughout.

So keeping, be here completely, not as a head attached to a body. Be here totally. This is, otherwise you can't allow, the head is not enough to allow this moment to be.

The entire being allows this moment to be. The head is not enough to be present. Be present with the entire being.

Sometimes people ask, doesn't it mean that you become identified with the body, if you feel the body? No, it's a way of going beyond identification with the physical form of the body. To feel the very essence that gives life to the physical form is not the physical form.

To feel it, and then the Advaita person may say, but aren't you saying that I should identify with an object that arises in consciousness as the feeling of the body? And isn't that, isn't the truth that knowing that I am the very awareness underlying it all, but the body is that. It's a temporary appearance of the consciousness that underlies everything.

It temporarily appears as the body. It's not the body. In a way you could say it's an illusion, the body is an illusion.

But within the illusion is something that is not an illusion. Otherwise even an illusion needs a little bit of reality. Otherwise it wouldn't be.

So to sense the aliveness, the presence in the body, this is just a temporary way of putting it, and feel the aliveness throughout, and then suddenly there's a field of aliveness, not only within but also without. That has nothing to do anymore with your story. There's a field of aliveness within at first, but suddenly also the surrounding world has an aliveness to it.

Not that you need anything, it's beautiful, but it's all form, it's temporary, but that presence or beingness is beyond form, so you know that which is beyond form as yourself, which is a field of still presence, intense aliveness, still presence, and forms appear in that, and that's beautiful. The body appears, and it's fine. Thoughts appear, that's fine too, because you're no longer trapped in the thoughts.

You are that which makes every thought possible. So the key is that stillness that is so alive, that is now. So when we talk about the present moment, the now, what does that mean?

The mind says it doesn't mean anything. The mind says there's no such thing as the now. Can you show me where it is?

There's only past and future, and it's something very fleeting here that really has no meaning. That's what the mind says. But when we say the now, there's a mystery in there, and there's a key in there.

What temporarily we call the now, is something very strange. This moment, we are here. Before this moment happened, as an event in time, it already had a shadowy existence in your mind as the anticipation.

of this moment. It was going to happen. You knew you were going to come here.

And soon it will be over, and it will recede into the past, and it will be a memory. Another present moment will be there, or the same moment filled with the appearance of some other event, phenomenal event. Your whole life, strange how when something is gone, it evaporates into nothingness.

Even this, there will come a time when nobody will remember this beautiful moment as an external appearance. These bodies will go, so the memories will go, and then a few photos may survive of this event, live a little bit longer, and then become yellow, and then there may even, some people may have videoed something, but that probably has a limited lifespan too. And so eventually, the external appearance of this moment will have evaporated completely, including the bodies, and yet there's something here that is beyond the external appearance of this moment.

There's something deeper. The very essence of your life, which is like a phantom, your childhood, where is it now? Events of last week, gone, dissolved, it comes into the now, gone.

What remains is the field of now in which your whole life unfolds as form the stillness that is underneath whatever happens. Things happen. The stillness is there and allows it to happen.

To know yourself as stillness is freedom. Freedom from form. Freedom from the world.

Freedom from self as the little me. And then the world is a beautiful place. It's no longer threatening, it's not threatening, and it's no longer promising.

It loses the qualities of promise. Something there is going to give it to me. Nothing, you don't need.

It's here now. You don't need to be given anything. Your very essence is life in its fullness now.

I don't want you to believe in that as an idea in your head. The words are only a little signpost. It's only if you are in the now with every cell of your body, that's how it's initially I put it, you can realize the truth of this, that life in its fullness an expression Jesus used He said, I want you to have the fullness of life.

Life in its fullness beyond anything happening or not happening. Nothing to do with how much time you still have as this form. Nothing to do with any life situation or condition, good or bad, life in its fullness is already here and that's I call that sometimes the power of this moment which is life.

So you don't need the world anymore then and you don't fear the world anymore and you don't need the future anymore you don't fear the future anymore. It has a peripheral existence only practical purposes. Let's meet tomorrow at four o'clock.

Okay. That's practical. It works on that level.

Beyond that, future is no longer needed to give you a sense of promise of some kind of deeper identity or fulfillment. It's an illusion. It never comes.

How can it give you that? So it's going beyond your life situation and the conditions of the me to a place of greater depth where you need nothing need nothing. And then as a little gift many things come to you on the phenomenal external level.

Life suddenly becomes so friendly whereas before it was an enemy to be fighting life suddenly becomes friendly. Even the phenomenal existence has suddenly a friendly face. Why?

How can it change from being from life being what Churchill called when he talked about human of history Churchill said about history is one damn thing after another. And for many people that's how they perceive their existence. One damn thing after another.

And that doesn't happen anymore. Life is no longer perceived through external existence is no longer perceived and created through the me fictitious mindset of me. So when you are not fighting life life can when you are fighting life life fights you.

It's a mirror. And when you allow and say yes life suddenly says yes. Oh you embrace it that means life can flow through you freely consciousness life God just words can move and even express itself through this form freely and from being a burden on the planet which is what humanity is right now you become and from being a burden to yourself and a troublemaker to yourself and others little me from being this burden suddenly there is a blessing that walks on the planet there is a lightness to it no longer the heaviness of the person and that's love is now present the person talks about love but of course that's it's all fiction as Katie said yesterday little personalities don't love they want something so the whole wanting the deep energy the craving and wanting and needing and future goes so and things you had the little me said I need that for my happiness often they just come when you don't need them anymore they may not it doesn't matter but the strange thing is many things simply come icing on the cake the cake is what matters and you have the cake or you are the cake seek only the kingdom of heaven now seeking is a temporary phase you're not seeking anymore be who you are that's the kingdom of heaven which is within here now all the other things that you thought you needed will be added unto you doesn't matter anymore seek seeking coming to the end of seeking seeking implies future seeking even seeking to understand more I need to understand more about spirituality I need to understand more about Buddhism I need to understand more about Advaita what are they really talking about you don't need to understand more you've understood enough for you to have come here what else then that's the edge you've reached the edge of understanding mentally working out any further is just the mind trying to get back ok let's I need to some more knowledge I can't quite work out what stillness is stillness if you explain a bit more perhaps I can get there is your concept of stillness the same as the Buddha's concept you could do a PhD stillness in spirit the world religions 400 pages stillness and then you become the world expert on stillness and perhaps if it's all was all mind the world expert on honey who has never tasted honey it's quite possible you could be the world expert on honey without ever because it's all concepts we are tasting not just tasting the honey we are the honey so a state of consciousness arises in which thinking plays very much a secondary role it's it may come in occasionally for this or that your sense of who you are of being it's nothing to do anymore with any thought in your head about who you are story so your history is fine it's just things that happened to this form you don't need to say I'm trying to forget my history burn your photo albums no need it's just no identification that's just so and so my ex-husband my ex-wife photo no longer seeking the self seeking to strengthen itself through identification with your history that was my ex what he did to me I'll never forget let me tell you about it that means seeking a stronger sense of self through the history and the history becomes the story and becomes the me so it's the self seeking in your past goes it's just past no problem in it whatsoever self seeking in future goes in future is only practical relevance to your life

I'm booking a flight for next month that's how future works it's fine no self seeking in it one I'm booking this flight which will take me to such and such a place and when I get there there I will find the answer the fulfillment so all that self seeking goes to strengthen the sense of self artificially and that means just you are yourself already and as you always were now and maybe the mind can well who am I then step beyond the edge of understanding allow this moment to be be the stillness you are not condemned from now on to permanent inactivity or passivity in stillness at first it's good as it arises let it arise in an environment that is conducive to stillness although sometimes it arises in people by itself or accidentally in an environment that looks totally non conducive to stillness that's the other way that's the way through suffering as it happened to me the stillness suddenly arose out of dreadful mental noise and resistance and here this is another way not through suffering suffering has played its part because it's taken you here and it's been good and this is a voluntary embracing of that not to be pushed and kicked into the kingdom of heaven life would do that to you anyway eventually so there's no need but it takes time this saves time removes time and as it removes time it also removes suffering so you can get to the end of suffering through time and further suffering until there's a self-destruction of the egoic entity when it has created so much misery for itself that it continues to exist it cannot exist anymore and it self-destructs or you've had enough suffering to come here and the eternal message of all spiritual teachings is you don't need to suffer anymore and the greater your suffering has been or if you're sitting here and feel you've come here with a burden of suffering perhaps physical some dreadful situation or not knowing how much more time you have as this form not quite knowing nobody knows let's just go into very deep yes and the worse your suffering up to this point the deeper your yes will have to be and the greater the opportunity it can happen that the yes uttered once can be so deep that the no never returns one deep yes to life the end of all no and that is your opportunity you may be ready it could be through the very fact that perhaps your the form may not remain in existence for that long maybe it will there may be an element of uncertainty and that now deepen you can go very deeply into the yes and into the now and into presence so that past and future falls away almost completely except few practical matters you walk on this straight this path of now I sometimes describe it as a tight rope of now and that is the flowering of human consciousness if you walk the tight rope of now and on a tight rope to walk a tight rope you have to be very present totally present every step there is no little me you can't remember your problems on the tight rope you would fall off immediately even fear you can't fear the next step you would fall off immediately there is only this step and there is a total presence with every step and this is the state that is arising and it's only in that utter and complete presence that the little me dissolves and all the problems that cling to the little me in fact make up its very existence they cannot they fall away they cannot survive in intense presence look at any problem in your life no matter how serious it looks and see if it can survive when your attention is totally here and then you become what you have always been which is consciousness itself the field of still presence that underlies everything so the person dissolves the heaviness is gone that's the fulfillment of your human existence now it doesn't matter how much longer this form then exists a few weeks 50 years doesn't make that much difference fulfillment is this flowering is the realization of who you are but you wouldn't be able to say very much about it through the mind if somebody asks who are you there may just be a stillness and now the strange thing is from the point of view of the mind it looks as if you knew less about who you are than before and it's true it is a voluntary embracing of the state and this is also key a voluntary embracing and saying yes to the state of not knowing anything anymore that's why it's so frightening to the little ego an embracing of not knowing and not this vast power in that not knowing whatever you need to know at any moment which is always this moment will arise out of what looks like the state of ignorance to the mind whatever you need to know or anything you need to do to know at any moment wherever in relationships in any situation arises out of the state of not knowing so to become comfortable happy with not knowing it's a great thing to discover if you if you work with people as a therapist counselor but of course everywhere to become not to think how can I help this person people sometimes come to me sometimes with a story sometimes a difficult story less so these days sometimes with stories but how could I possibly help try to work out how am I going to I don't know I'm happy with not knowing so allowing the space of not knowing and now this replies this is the consciousness it applies to your entire existence it's fine not to know and then you stay with the not knowing which is the stillness and whatever is needed suddenly comes it may come as words as an action simply an emanation of love it happens so it's no longer totality life moves through and then you return to the state of not knowing it could be a simple thing like going for a walk and watching everything around you in that attentive alertness you're not walking there as a little me with it's problems you're walking as a field of awareness that looks at the universe the phenomenal universe and it's beauty not needing to put impose mental noise on anything interpret just don't need to know what this tree is called I mean you might know it it's no longer important it won't interfere with the beauty of that moment where you just no longer the heaviness of a person walking through the street a field of consciousness of awareness and you look at the world and you see oh if you were if you had a few thoughts in your head you would say this is good every moment is good and God saw his her it's creation and can't remember the exact words and saw that it was good you look that which looks through your eyes at the world is then pure consciousness the light that emanates from the source the light that emanates from the one source looks through your eyes sense perceptions and loves it's creation because you created it you are consciousness appearing as form and it's good so you you walk as a blessing on the earth no longer as a burden and everything and everybody loves you for that even nature you will feel nature trees flowers love your presence it's almost as if the very being moved a little bit towards you because within the totality where there is no separation between this and that when you see beauty without mind it's a self recognition consciousness the flower which is an expression of consciousness recognizes it's own beauty through you it's not you so even nature finds fulfillment through that it knows itself through you what looks like you and yet all that is form the eternal is underneath the forms this very moment what are the ingredients of this moment the mind the voice your perception of the voice the totality of this space people flowers lights sense perceptions those things okay that's good there's also silence that's even better and to acknowledge the silence listen to it that's the arising of stillness silence is helpful ultimately you don't need it stillness doesn't depend on external silence but it's good it's helpful to listen to silence and it's only the stillness in you that can even be aware of silence if your mind were very noisy sitting here silence would be meaningless a concept the moment you listen to silence a stillness arises through the stillness you become aware of silence so it's within and without and then the realization it's always within it may not always be without but that dimension of consciousness is always there and then it may arise at the most unsuspected times you may find yourself in the middle of a noisy situation at work little me's fighting and suddenly silence arises and you're watching without condemnation without interpretation and then perhaps some words arise you say something very different anything that arises out of your inner stillness has a very different quality even if it becomes words it always has some of that stillness the place from where it came it still has a fragrance of that a freshness and a newness and perhaps you say something and it's come out of the stillness completely different dimension of consciousness is coming love basically beyond what the ego thinks love is we've been speaking about that which cannot be spoken of for quite a long time life is full of paradox basically we have moved beyond time more deeply into the now it looks according to the clock as if we've been sitting here for one and a half or one and three quarter hours but this wasn't really like that one deep moment timeless the timeless dimension of consciousness is coming and that looks like an event in time but you have to accept certain paradoxes that's how it is let's acknowledge the silence without through the stillness within and now meet everything everybody through the stillness bring the stillness be it because you are it and that is the dimension of the sacred that is arising inseparable from the stillness sometimes questions are fine but I feel at this moment there's no need for that it would only be the mind trying to figure something out that you already know and I know that you already know and your mind says no no I don't know yes you know we don't have a lot of ritual here just a minimum these bells I'll ring the bells before I start it's a call to attention to be present here completely instead of being lost in the mind in the thought alert completely here not needing to be somewhere else as you sit there it helps to be in the body to feel the inner energy field of the body inhabit the body as you sit here some of your attention is in the aliveness the animating presence of what on the surface looks like a physical body the rest of your attention is on sense perceptions and now in that state of alertness something miraculous happens it doesn't look significant at all from the point of view of the mind but in that state of attention you can be here fully awake fully alert without needing to interpret this moment mentally without needing to label what's happening you can be so aligned with this moment that thought is no longer needed and you haven't gone to sleep you're more awake than you would be if you were thinking just an alert presence we could call that the awakening of intelligence one more time the undercurrent as we sit here and words come out of my mouth the undercurrent of this is always the state of attention the state of presence the words may refer to certain obstacles to the state of presence that arise the conditioning of the human mind ways in which the state of presence can easily become obscured I may talk about that who knows and yet no matter what words come what matters here is the undercurrent of presence in other words what really matters is the silent field underneath the words which you can become aware of for example in the gaps between the words there the silent field emerges so to speak it doesn't really emerge you can become aware of it just the small gaps between words and when you're aware of a gap between two sentences or two words there's a gap in your thought stream because you're paying attention to the gap of stillness and that is the new state of consciousness that is now emerging on the planet emerging in you a state in which you're no longer trapped in mental noise and a state in which you no longer have your sense of who you are in the mental noise in the head you don't derive your sense of identity any longer from thought from the story that your mind is telling you who you are the storyline of me and my life we're going beyond that narrow confined personalized sense of self which humans have lived in for so long so it's a shift in identity that's taking place here humans have been trapped for many thousands of years in an egoic sense of self and that consists of an accumulation of mental content humans have been a content based species that means deriving their sense of who they are from the content of their mind whatever the mind accumulates from early from an early age it begins with your name your name I call that the basket into which further experiences further content is thrown and in which it accumulates and then that

[Speaker 2] (3:43:58 - 3:43:59)

basket

[Speaker 1] (3:43:59 - 9:45:15)

that is the basket is the name that you think you are that your parents gave you that becomes the receptacle for experiences that are accumulated knowledge that is accumulated successes defeats sufferings relationships all those things gradually form a a whole that is the me that is a mentally derived sense of self I'll just ask you for a moment to imagine to imagine that you don't have a name what that feels like not if you don't know who you are on the level of concepts that is let's just for a moment if that is possible imagine that that basket doesn't hold together anymore what is there if you are not the name and that which is accumulated in that receptacle and of course the name is just sounds it's just sounds that come out of your mouth if it's not pronounced it is an image in the head and that's me that's me and what is there when that goes so you can't remember your name and you're comfortable with not knowing your name then the experiences that have been accumulated on the conditioning doesn't quite hold together anymore it's still there but it's not a me things have happened where this form is things have happened to this form but it's not it's no longer a person there simply a field of awareness which is what you are and the story that you have been telling yourself in the head of who you are becomes unimportant it does not give you an identity anymore you don't derive your sense of self anymore from the story in the head which is accumulated experiences accumulated knowledge and a sense of self derived from that accumulation content of the mind and every experience is content everything that happens to you some experiences are become stored up they become part of the accumulation and they the self they become they strengthen the sense of self they are accumulated to enhance the sense of self so in the when you live in that way from a fictitious sense of self you are always looking for things to enhance your sense of self to strengthen it or to protect it that sense of me because some of the content you might lose or you want to add to who you are not the sense of not being complete is an essential ingredient of the fictitious sense of self everybody has that and everybody interprets that as a personal problem that very sense of not being complete becomes part of who you are and who you are striving to be haven't arrived yet and even those people who are being told by the world that they have arrived have the feeling that they haven't arrived yet and there's something wrong with the world must have gotten it wrong they are telling me that I have made it and I can feel that I haven't made it and then you read about people who have everything fame and fortune and good looks and then they have they can't stop drinking and they need to go from one psychiatrist to another have they made it and in our culture they are shown as examples of this is you too can achieve that and everybody yes, everybody swallows that and then the message that is there in the culture is that yes, you can make it because look at those people they made it if you meet them you will realize that they haven't made it at all and some of them actually will come they read the book there are some famous people who loved the power of now because they saw very clearly that what the world was telling them was not true otherwise they would never have read it what for if you've made it you don't need spiritual transformation so it is wonderful a few of those people who have achieved all possible worldly success realize that's not it either and I still don't know basically who I am and I wake up in the middle of the night in a state of dread and anxiety and my relationships are continuously in chaos and to see that the attempt to complete yourself to find a more complete and more fulfilled sense of self on the level of the story that attempt is futile because on the level of the story that you're telling yourself in the head of who you are you're not going to make it no story has a happy ending a few false happy endings such as a wedding that used to be the traditional happy ending on films and plays but we all know that's a false happy ending there's no happy ending because all your achievements are going to dissolve and you're going to die and then no matter how many millions you have in the bank it becomes meaningless and what is left of every story is the two inch gap between your date of birth and date of death on your gravestone that contains all the sufferings all the drama that was part of me and my story and somebody derived their sense of self from all that they thought that was who they were it's sad they never realized who they are they were trapped in a fiction their sense of identity trapped in a fiction for a whole lifetime maybe if they were lucky shortly before their death or on their deathbed the whole story collapsed and something else emerged and that happens occasionally occasionally as death approaches maybe it's only a few minutes or a few hours away there's suddenly and some people who have been sitting with dying a dying person have reported that in certain instances something shines through suddenly it's almost a light that comes through and that happens when the mentally made sense of identity the fictitious sense of identity dissolves because that is a heavy it heavily obscures the light of consciousness that is underneath and it can happen shortly before death that fiction dissolves and suddenly it's like a flowering there's an enormous light shining through as if a flower had just opened and it could have opened before but it just it opened only a few minutes before death but at least it opened and one could say the purpose of that life is fulfilled but the message here is that you don't need to wait for your death approaching before you can know who you are beyond a mental image of who you are you don't have to wait for death to approach because you might not get it even then you may get be trapped in that image even as you die and that means you would die in terrible terrible fear and anxiety because that image is dying the me is dying the transformation of consciousness that is happening to each one of you is that kind of death but it is not the physical death it's the death of what I call the me or what in some spiritual traditions is called the self which is a mind made sense of self that is dissolving so really why we are here is to undergo that death voluntarily well partly voluntarily because if you hadn't gone through great suffering already due to being trapped in a mental image of me which is a suffering sense of self a sense of self that is unhappy a lot of the time so you've been trapped in a suffering sense of self and the suffering has become so acute that something within you said this is too much there must be something else I can't go on like this I'm saying this because that happened to me so it looks as if you had chosen to come here and that's fine that's one perspective on it but really you were driven here because you want to die you want to die that death of the self the little me in the head because that's not who you are now the little me doesn't want to die so there are two movements inside you one is the movement towards liberation and it's a very strong and increasingly powerful movement to become free of that something far vaster is emerging in you than even the most even the heaviest and most dramatic story of me than even the heaviest me could be that thinks oh I'm so heavy nothing you can sometimes see people you say well there's no chance that they would ever become liberated in this lifetime if you look at the heaviness of their drama and their total identification with the drama of me but you might be wrong because very often the most unlikely people suddenly step beyond and perhaps the monk that's been who's been practicing meditation for 30 years hasn't stepped quite beyond yet there's still a me and mental image of me as the spiritual one and there might be a criminal here in a prison cell who suddenly whose sense of mentally made sense of self suddenly dissolves and what emerges is great joy aliveness and peace and a state of connectedness with being a vastness which is not separate from you is one with who you are can only express in paradox it is you and yet much greater than you so we are here to connect with that vastness that lies underneath the storyline of me and we are allowing the story of me to come to an end your sense of identity is no longer derived from the content of your mind whatever thoughts go through your mind you are no longer a thought-based entity thoughts still happen but thoughts don't give you an identity anymore then thought is not problematic the continuous stream of thinking is only problematic because your sense of self is trapped in it that makes life extremely problematic and every thought tells you how problematic your life is I'm not complete I need I want I must have where is it?

to complete myself I'm looking for myself I want to add something to the content of me it might be acquisition it might be material things it might be relationships or it may be in higher developed human knowledge it is still the search nothing wrong with knowledge but here we are speaking of the self-seeking through knowledge to seek a stronger sense of me through knowledge and we've all met people whose sense of self is primarily identified with all their knowledge if you go to universities you meet many of them I was there in other places the content that is that primarily gives you an identity might be appearance it might be could be anything the it is amazing what that sense of self can use and does use to strengthen itself from the smallest to the biggest it will it can it's like an animal like maybe a pig that will eat almost anything and absorb it and that's me me and it's not anything even a miserable experience can be added to my basket of miserable experiences and I when my sense of self is predominantly unhappy as is the case with many with others it's half-half happy unhappy happy unhappy in others it's predominantly unhappy and they're telling everybody or themselves in their head this unhappy story and how they're trying to get out of it for years they've been trying to get out of their unhappy story of me and but their their primary sense of self the content with which they are identified in the mind and in the emotional field mental emotional content is misery so when that is the case what they're looking for to strengthen their sense of self is a further piece of misery because other things wouldn't fit in that basket they would not be compatible with all these things that are in the basket if it's predominantly misery I'm looking for more misery my self gets even stronger a more miserable self but the ego loves that that ego feels stronger in that so the world is full of people who are looking for further unhappy experiences mad as it might seem to strengthen their sense of self and you can actually you can sense it when you have certain sensitivity and presence when you meet someone who has a very that very heavy sense of self that is predominantly identified with misery and that of course the pain body comes in there which we may address a little bit later so it wants more of that it will use anything to strengthen itself you've all the tiniest things you all know these things that everybody does it it seems things name dropping that's just a tiny example of I want to add something to who I am or I spoke to such and such that famous man the other day whether it's true or not in many cases it's not true they just why is that because they want to add a bit more content maybe I can become a bit bigger I can really it's all a search for yourself and it's a never ending search on that level and then you might come when you go beyond name dropping and go beyond deriving your sense of identity from your car perhaps all of you have gone beyond that well some then you may come to the search may continue on another level the search continues then on the spiritual level which is also a search for acquisition to add to this who I am it could be in the form of greater knowledge I want to understand the universe what's it all about the mystery and I want to and then image forms of me the one who's gone beyond material things the spiritual one and you've all met people who are and it happens so easily because that tendency of image making and of needing to add to the content of me is so strong even seeking for answers means I want to add more content there's nothing wrong with investigating or examining but I'm speaking here now of doing that in the service of a self to derive a greater self from that and that's the delusion so everyone is trapped in that seeking for a deeper greater stronger me sense of self it's never enough it definitely who you are now your story will tell you who you are now is not enough the basket isn't full yet or what it contains isn't good enough I need to add better things to my basket other things and so I need the future without the future I cannot be myself is the delusion I can only complete my sense of identity through having more future enough future please give me more future so that I can know myself please give me time so that I can know myself that is the mind pattern because for everything else you need time please give me time to make money you need some time please give me time to learn a language give me time to find a mate give me time to make a cake everything requires time and on that level it's fine you need it of course you need time for all those things but then if you then step into knowing who you are give me time to know who I am is the delusion that's the beginning of the delusion that you need time to find yourself and when that is the delusion your whole life then all once the delusion that you need time to find yourself is firmly established and it happens quickly then all further activities all further action all further thought all further aims are coloured and distorted by that delusion so they're all an expression of the delusion of needing to find yourself all the desires and fears that dominate a person's life that provide the motivating power behind what people do the desires and fears the basis for that is that mentally made sense of self it fears that it may never become complete or it might lose the little it has and it desires more content in whatever form some form some content that's why spiritual traditions speak of desire let go of desire but I'm not saying let go of desire let's leave that for a while just look at desire why make another problem and say you should let go of desire just look at it and see how it operates so there's and then you have what operates on the personal level operates collectively so the that personalized sense of me that isn't complete and fulfilled and needs something never happy with what is it's not enough never happy with this moment it's not enough not good enough the me is not complete always at odds with something or someone which it likes because then it feels I know more who I am when I'm at odds with something or someone than when I'm at peace it doesn't like peace it likes to be in conflict in one way or another because then the me gets stronger in any kind of conflict or opposition that's the contracted state of me and it so you're these days many people have stress what does that mean? it means you're in conflict with this moment and that's again part of the whole civilization is a stressful civilization because it's the whole civilization is an externalization of the human consciousness so everybody is under stress which means they're in conflict with what is they don't want to be here because they need to be in the future that's called stress I need to be there and you can actually see the reaching out how stressful it is it tears you apart never quite getting there that reaching out and it's in people's faces they can't be here because they need to be there urgently and this that sense of self likes that because it feels stronger in that in that conflict it contracts more and then you have a pseudo substitute sense of self that at least now I know I am because you're in a fighting mode with life you're in a fighting mode with the present moment which is life whatever it is I'm against it what do you think about the present moment I'm against it it shouldn't be and then that sense you can see how it's so deep seated that the discontent the unhappiness that's part of that the self and if the self does not want to be free of that that's not where the longing for freedom comes from the longing for freedom does not come from the self the self speaks of freedom but then sabotages it continuously it says I'm looking for peace and then creates conflict and then you can see how it operates collectively the same mindset operates collectively let's have another peace conference and in the meantime they produce more and more massive amounts of weapons so let's talk about peace the peace process they're still talking about peace process and they're continuously throwing grenades and machine gunning the peace process talk about peace peace they don't want peace because the mindset depends on non-peace for its survival so whether your sense of self is predominantly a personalized sense of self or whether it's predominantly a collective egoic sense of self a religion a nation or a racial thing then that can be even stronger than the personalized it's actually exactly the same principle at work exactly the same mechanism at work but can be even more mad than the personalized sense of self which is mad enough but you can see how mad humanity can become when they identify with a collective me that's the height of madness and what they are capable of doing when the egoic sense of self is a collective one then all the respectable citizens become monsters and the criminals are harmless compared to that and the crimes against humanity criminals are not committed by criminals they are committed by respectable citizens and still are nationalistic religious whatever they are whatever their mindset whatever their mental image is the mentally made sense of self of us they need their enemies they need fighting they need to be at odds with another nation fighting another religion then I know who I am when I'm at odds with something so it operates on all levels hence the madness of human history and the madness of everybody's life just as my life was completely mad I mean when you look at the surface it looks ok they look as if they were sane well I must I mean if you look at big cities the running about like frightened chickens it's not all that sane but it's still just when you look you see that everyone's life is dominated by that conflict so there's self seeking through this that the other to strengthen the sense of who I am and there's that is the madness self seeking through future there's the madness so if we can see the madness we're already that is the beginning of freedom we already have one foot in freedom when we see the madness of self seeking through future of self seeking through further content and that includes any question that arises in your mind at this moment I want to know something more because in this transformation of consciousness your understanding is relatively unimportant the little that you need to understand you've understood already I just pointed to simply see the madness beyond that what emerges that state of consciousness that is emerging you cannot really understand or figure out through the mind what that presence is what do you mean by presence because that is a state of consciousness that is not based on content the presence is as I sometimes describe it a spaciousness a sense of space that surrounds whatever content there is in your life thoughts emotions sense perceptions or experiences even sitting here and listening the truth is not in the words the words only point so don't accumulate the words you can't take the truth home with you nor do you need to because you are the truth so the words only point to that spaciousness that is inside you in that spaciousness and so you that spaciousness you bring to every sense perception that spaciousness is there you don't really bring it you realize it's already there for example when you look at something let's say it's the flowers when you look at something and there's no mental noise around it there's simply this perception of that and I recommend that practice highly to look at a flower in the state of such alertness relaxed alertness that you don't need to label it in any way the first thing you notice when you do that is how still a flower is and I'm sure you never noticed that before when you looked at it through the mind the mind has no knowledge of stillness the mind is noise so when you look at a flower an amazing thing happens the first thing you feel of course you see the beauty there's the color and there's the light shining through the petals it's very beautiful but you notice more than that you notice that it is very still and anything in nature you suddenly notice that there is an essence beyond that which you see that lives in a state of deep stillness and when you notice that what does that mean when I say you notice that it means at that moment that deep stillness is there in you when you notice it in a flower that a flower lives in that state the noticing it is the arising in you of that state of stillness and that is a state of great sacredness and aliveness and beauty but deeper than the beauty of form it is the formless that arises in you the formless consciousness so that is what I mean when I use the word spaciousness perhaps you didn't quite know what I meant so we are gradually getting there I'm giving you a few more pointers to what that means there is a wake up call nature here is so alive all plants that have good karma come to California and there is such profusion of plant life here so anything to truly a flower a plant could be you don't you wouldn't need any more spiritual teachers any flower could be your teacher and you don't wouldn't need any other teacher if you can truly be with a flower and be alert and watch so the intelligence that created that flower and that beauty operates in complete stillness it doesn't need noise it doesn't need to have a committee meeting to find out how we can create a beautiful flower let's discuss it let's feed the information into the computer and let's talk about that and let's break it up into little mathematical formula and okay how can we let's create a beautiful something incredibly beautiful let's bring the most intelligent minds here on the planet and let's create something incredibly beautiful and after a lot of noise making they would never be able to create something like that and it's so the the greatest the greater intelligence operates without noise only the human mind is an aspect of the vast intelligence a tiny aspect that is noisy and that's fine too if you're not seeking yourself in the noise if you're seeking yourself in the mental noise that's it's torture it's a prison it's awful otherwise okay the mind is a particular expression of intelligence and it's it is noisy there's no problem there and that's not who you are it operates in you no problem you need it for certain things it's helpful for many many things you need the mind except for knowing who you are except in other words except for the most important thing in your life for everything else it's fine and when you truly notice that a flower exists in complete stillness it not only is still inside you almost sense that it's surrounded also by stillness a field of stillness everything in nature and it's beautiful it's alive but it's not noisy so the noticing of that dimension is the spaciousness that is around the content in your life and I've only given the example of the flower so far but it you will see that it applies to all the content in your life to all your experiences they happen let's now shift from the flower to a traffic jam you're sitting in a car stress you want to be you need to be there but it's not you're not moving so that is an experience there's an experience of stopping stopping no movement the same spaciousness that is of course easier to become aware of when you contemplate a flower that event that we call the traffic jam you can also notice it notice that it is surrounded within the spaciousness because that spaciousness is always the now in which it happens so what you become aware of there's the traffic jam which otherwise would have irritated you tremendously and brought up anger or frustration made the unhappy story of me even more unhappy instead there's the traffic jam and how do you how do you find the spaciousness around that event simply by allowing that moment to be the moment you say yes to anything that happens completely instead of fighting or resisting what is you become aware of a dimension that is deeper than the event now whatever label I use for that doesn't matter just every label is just a little pointer I can call it a spaciousness around it a stillness in which it happens and that now next time there's a traffic jam see what happens when you completely say right here I am the car is not moving it is as it is and suddenly there's a stillness around the content and then your next practice will be an emotion arising anger arising maybe you didn't catch the traffic jam in time so you became angry anger comes up and here too you can allow that say there's anger here it is anger has a lot of energy to it it is as it is there's the energy that we call anger trapped energy like something trying to get out it is as it is now it's not so easy here it's easier to see the spaciousness the silence around a flower than the silence and spaciousness around anger but the same principle is at work you can anything that you allow any form that arises that you do not resist because you see the futility of resisting a form that has arisen it is what can you do of course you can then action is possible but in the meantime it is so the whatever arises in the now is completely accepted and through that a deeper dimension suddenly reveals itself to you and that I sometimes call the spaciousness around things the spaciousness around whatever the content is and then you can take the whole story in your head of me and my past and my life situation and see also that it's surrounded by spaciousness another word for that spaciousness is the now what that means is you become aware of the now in which everything happens undoubtedly it does it cannot happen anywhere else nothing can happen outside that field of now mostly people are not aware of the field they are only aware of what happens in the field not only are they aware of what happens in the field they are identified with what happens in the field of now and they react to what happens in the field of now in their search for a self in their search for a self whatever arises in the field of now they cling to or they run away from they have a there's an identification with content that happens and there's complete ignorance of the vastness in which it happens so you get you get trapped in form and by reacting to every form that arises in the now your own form identity gets stronger the illusion that you are this psychological form with its story and this physical form gets stronger with every reaction to another form that arises this is the secret of life the mystery when you see that how that operates and then you can see why the self needs the reactivity for its continued life it perpetuates itself through reactivity because every time you react to something there is a strengthening of your form identity the psychological sense of me you can see how the me loves discussions how the me loves to be right and so you react to this person's opinion you can even spiritually maybe it happened to you this weekend somebody said gave an opinion and there was the reaction saying no you're wrong I know better maybe you do but there is a self seeking there and there is a strong energy behind it the reactivity so most people go through life in that mode of reactivity and whatever arises in the now they react to and most of the time it's a no a form arises or there is a subtle turning away from it so to see that is the beginning of freedom and then you see the miracle that happens when whatever form arises it is not resisted it's allowed and that form could be an event an external event it could be a thought that comes in or an emotion that goes through you it's simply allowed to be because what's the point in saying no if it is it's allowed and there it is that is the key word allowed means you're no longer a reactive entity it doesn't mean that you cannot respond to what is required you respond but not react react is the conditioning is playing itself out the self is strengthening itself through the reaction response is action arises that is totally right for this situation but it doesn't come unless you first say yes and then action comes there's enormous power in that yes it is the power of life itself the power of consciousness itself that is there the moment you say yes to life then the power of life is there and flows through you not egoic power that I want to know I must have all that a deeper not power over some other form but the power of life itself is suddenly there when you say yes to life and saying yes to life is saying yes to now this moment and that is there so instead of going through life and reacting to the content that arises in your life continuously new things thoughts emotions external events people places the scenery around you changes continuously that's all content instead of reacting to content the content is allowed to be and then you are aware of instead of just being aware of identified with what arises in the now you become aware of the now itself beyond the phenomena that arise in it that is the miracle of transformation of consciousness what does that mean? you become aware of the now itself you become aware of an under current of stillness in which everything happens you sense it not only that even that's not quite correct you realize that you are it and then it's so easy once you realize you are that deep under current of stillness the world is no longer problematic that moment you know yourself to be that whatever content there is in your life including the story in your head of me is no longer problematic it's simply the story of me but you don't get your identity from it anymore what's left are simply your photo albums either physical photo albums or the photo albums in the head those things that happened to me ok or video video thing these days people record things on video film so you may have a collection there of two years ago five years ago ten years ago that was me with my first wife that's me with my second wife and there's the third wife you're not saying no that is all illusion of course there's your first second and third wife or husband but it's you're no longer it's simply ok you're no longer in a reactive relationship to those events that are took place in the past and are now remembered now in the field of now where else can they be remembered they're remembered in the field of now you're no longer in a personalized and reactive relationship you're not seeking yourself in your reaction to your three ex-wives or ex-husbands just one example so those stories go then you know what he did to me or she did to me and I'll never forget what he did and said and so on it simply is a is things that happened in the past not me there's no identity in it you don't need it anymore for an identity and the future is fine too of course you need future for many things nobody denies that but you don't look for yourself anymore in it you can't find yourself there so it's no longer problematic it's no longer threatening the future nor is it all that promising it just is and you deal with it you make arrangements for next week to do this or that next year going this or there make appointments for the future work out something that you're going to do without seeking an identity through it simple effortless doing not straining effort means really you're seeking yourself in something everything when you're seeking yourself in it is effort and it's strain and it's stress then after that life is so simple and why is it so simple I'm not saying no challenges will ever come anymore of course they come challenges are wonderful but they are simple because they're only now there's nothing that big that can come into the field of now and the power is there to deal with it now when you allow whatever arises to arise and if it needs a response if it needs dealing with there's vast power that immediately flows through you and action you take action a few people have experienced that in emergency situations who who suddenly did just the right thing and people say how could you have been so courageous to have done that there was no thought involved there was a greater power that took over so and then those people say well I don't know I just did it I don't know how it happened they don't think they did anything great because there was no me involved in it your whole life can be like that simply by continuously by dwelling with your attention in the field of now the field itself then let it happen let the world happen it's great let the forms come and go as they will no form stays for that long every form that comes comes and goes let it come you enjoy the play of form the form around you the fear of loss is no longer there because why is there the fear of loss because there is an identification with some content and there is the fear that if I lose that I lose part of who I am it's the fear of loss whether it's fear of material loss any kind of loss that goes so it's basically it's the end of fear as and you can see what a miraculous transformation that is when humans no longer live dominated by fear my god you can actually live in a state of joy and aliveness continuously no matter what arises because what arises isn't that important it's a form it's short-lived it's a play of phenomenal existence the universe playing with form consciousness playing with form let it play with form you yourself become a participant in the play of form you can create without self-seeking and then you create beautifully but when you create and there's self-seeking in it you create there's a negative energy field in that I need I want I must have without that I'm nobody oh I mustn't lose that and then there's competition I need to fight him and her because he might get there before I do and all the things that create our civilization goes and the power of consciousness itself flows through you it loves to create so it'll create through you who knows what you don't need to know it now let it flow and then all there is left really in your life is the simplicity of this moment and it's always quite simple when you're no longer seeking yourself in past and future then you can honor this moment and honoring embrace the now because it is life it's an expression of life you embrace what is yes through that embrace you know the spaciousness that is around the form that is there ah this is the new state of consciousness that is arising in humans this is the end of a personalized sense of self so you're only a person now on the surface just as a matter of convenience and for practical purposes you are still a person on the surface but there's not an identity in that person there's not a sense of self anymore that I need because you realize that there's the surface of you as a person and you can keep your name even don't you don't have to say I'm no longer using my name nor do you have to say when somebody asks you what's your name would you say I have gone beyond name and form because self-seeking can come back in through the back door and when you tell somebody that you've gone beyond name and form you're actually telling them I am very special I am more special than you you still have a name a while ago I asked somebody I don't know why I asked it I don't usually ask when were you born or where were you born and he said I was never born of course it's true but when he said it it wasn't true so you have to you don't become special you become quite ordinary in that as that new consciousness arises it doesn't say look at me quite ordinary the need to be special which is part of the mentally made sense of self and that's an essential ingredient of it please let me be special if I cannot be special and be a great success at least let me be special in my misery please let me be more miserable than other people the need for specialness goes it's wonderful you can be quite you don't need to be anybody in particular you are the field of now it's vast it's alive you are the spaciousness around phenomena the need to stand out to make an impression isn't there even to have an to strengthen your identity through having an opinion and telling somebody you can still words of course will still come out of your mouth but not in a self-seeking mode the need to be someone look at me that's the egoic need or it gets inverted some egos don't like to be looked at don't look at me but really they want to be looked at it's just the reverse it is so simple you you sit here and you get it and once you get it what that really means is that it arises and you have even a taste of it you can never go back to the original madness for long because even to have a taste of this means what that means it it has emerged of course it can become obscured again temporarily and then you're black back as a little me in the head and with its problems and you can easily see when you look in the mirror or you look at somebody else the moment it becomes obscured a veil goes down in front of your eyes are like suddenly veiled and there's a people there's a deadness suddenly that comes over people when they're trapped again in mind and what the expression in their eyes is telling them I don't want to be here it's a basic ingredient I want to be somewhere this isn't this isn't it let's get somewhere else let's get to the future fast trapped in thought trapped in mental noise now mental noise of course it'll still be there in you mental noise has a momentum it's been there for half a million years it'll it has a certain momentum so occasionally your mind may still be noisy and then you see hmm there's so much noise look at all that noise in the head you're no longer trapped in the noise even there you can there can be a spaciousness around that I'm full of mental noise and that's okay even that you can allow if that's the case at this moment all right let there be mental noise go on let there be mental noise and you'll be amazed how quickly you go beyond it beyond anything that you allow completely oh I'm so unhappy with my life okay be unhappy let me be unhappy I say okay to my unhappiness it's fine I allow myself to be unhappy I'm unhappy I say yes to my unhappiness it's not that bad to be unhappy see what happens if you do that I don't mind being unhappy that is it's miraculous the power of surrender that really what it is the power of the yes that you bring into the no the no still has a momentum the no to what is predominantly and it has a momentum so it will appear and reappear inside you unless the miracle of radical transformation happens to you here and now as you sit here that's possible too in some cases it happens that once and for all the no dissolves and never returns it can happen it's very rare usually you have to suffer dreadfully for that to happen so you're not suffering perhaps quite enough here mostly the no still has a certain momentum and you will know the no when it happens you will be able because presence is arising all that is required of you is to see that you are in the no modality in the no mode of consciousness in any moment there's an inner tightening there's an inner contraction and there is a monologue or a dialogue in your head that complains about this moment and says this shouldn't be happening this no, no, no I don't want this or the no is a more subtle thing it's disguised as there's something more important that I need to get to not this isn't the moment I'm interested in I need to get to I need to get there not I'm not interested in now I'm interested in then, there that's very habitual and that's a disguised no because it's not an obvious no it's simply a denial of now because the future is regarded as more important whether it's the next minute or tonight or this weekend or in a few years when I will have made it it doesn't matter the future is regarded as more important and that is a subtle no disguised no to what is I need to get to the future and again of course it's connected with the self-seeking I need to become somebody in the future some bigger self some presence you cannot see it you become the no as most people still are in this world they are walking no's but there is enough presence in you many of you have been here the whole weekend and presence is arising anyway there is enough presence in you to recognize the no when it happens and not to fall into the error of super imposing another no on that no and saying you see I shouldn't be feeling I shouldn't be in that contraction I'm doing it again you see it's no good it just doesn't work for me no that would be a no on top of the no when you see a no in whatever form it comes to this moment you see you recognize it's a no and you recognize it's some form of tightening or contraction and what you do then you say oh ok that's how it is there's the contraction there's the no again let it be let the contraction be and see what happens you see so you always you bring the yes into the no the yes into the no that is that's all you need it's very simple nothing is rejected and denied or complained about nothing that is inside or outside and then more and more you know who you are beyond that which arises in the now you're no longer looking for yourself in that which arises whether it be an event a thought an emotion a sense perception anything you know yourself to be the field in which it arises or the spaciousness around all the content all the events in your life you are that and that's the state of peace no matter what happens there's always because that undercurrent is peace itself and it's you it's not it is the essence of who you are which is not separate from the essence of your partner your person next to you anybody or any form and the miracle is once you know who you are you know you cannot necessarily say anything about it it's a miracle that I can say so much about it something that cannot be spoken of once you know who you are you know your own essence and you know the essence in every other form life form because you are one in your essence with every other life form and then you look at the flower and recognize your own essence in the flower and then you look at a cat and recognize your own essence in the cat and then you look at another human being and you may have to pierce through layers of mental ego stories mental noise the veil and you pierce through it just stay alert and you look you can ignore the story and all that you look and then you know the essence of that human being is who you are you know every life form as yourself manifested in a different form because the universe or consciousness likes the play of form that's the beauty of the manifested universe and you know yourself to be the unmanifested one life before it is born into a form the one life before it becomes something or someone the one life after a form dissolves the timeless one consciousness if God has any meaning that is what it is so self-realization and God-realization of course the same the only place God can be known is in yourself as your own essence not separate as Jesus already said the kingdom of heaven is within it's not there in space or time so you know God that's how it is if you don't like the word drop that word it's only a word don't get entangled with any word and so when you know each life form as yourself that is called love and that is an essential part of the new consciousness you are then continuously in a state of love not the egoic so called love that says I can't live without you don't you ever leave me not that kind of love that clinging no the love that knows the other as yourself it's so simple and love your neighbor as yourself because the teaching of Jesus only exists in fragments that people have written down Jesus was pointing to a state of consciousness that is possible for humans that is emerging here now which he sometimes called the kingdom of heaven and what he said was I wasn't there but I know what the essence is timeless it speaks the truth no matter it's always the same once you know the essence you know what they said even if you get a mistranslation you still know what they said when the essence speaks know in that new state of consciousness you know your neighbor to be yourself you love your neighbor as yourself when you know your neighbor to be yourself so you love your neighbor not he didn't mean as you love yourself but as yourself because your neighbor is yourself and of course people have been trying to love their neighbor because unsuccessfully for so long because they didn't realize the depth of the teaching they thought all we have to do is to obey a few commandments and do as he tells us but the depth was that it was pointing to a completely new state of consciousness and you cannot practice the foot of the new state of consciousness in the old state of consciousness and that's why the discrepancy comes that Christianity has a history of violence amazing but the truth is there hidden simple very simple this is the now it hasn't changed never will change we are moving beyond thought there's a book by Krishnamurti which is called The Awakening of Intelligence and really this is what it is but intelligence not as defined by academic textbooks is not the intelligence that can be measured in IQ tests all that IQ tests measure is your ability to solve little puzzles intelligence is so much vaster than that and that is what is arising here and now an intelligence that is that operates noiselessly that does not exclude thought the vastness of it includes thought but it's far beyond thought thought is small but thought even thought can be inspired informed and energized by that vast intelligence when thought is no longer trapped within itself when a self is identified with thought thought is like a knot K-N-O-T you have tied yourself into a knot intelligence cannot flow through freely this is the untying of the knot in both senses of the word the no to life and the knot is being untied then the vaster intelligence can move through and it can even express itself through the mind you can speak from that state of still presence it then will the energy of that field then flows into the words and the words are empowered of course they are not new very rarely does it happen that one creates new words nor is it necessary every word is old it has a history there's nothing you can do about that every thought most thoughts is conceptual words it's old it has a history and yet when a word arises out of that vastness not the prison of a little mind self-serving mind a mind that is now open to the influx of the greater intelligence then it can be the mind can also be inspired by that it can then give form and it will come creative forms new forms there's a freshness a newness an aliveness and a power to the forms that the mind then gives birth to because the mind becomes aligned one with the vastness of intelligence as it did with every creative person in the world every creative person somewhere in their field of creativity were aligned with the greater intelligence not usually in their whole lives but here our whole lives are becoming transformed by that so I've been speaking for a long time words have been coming out of my mouth this mouth and yet the words came out of the field of presence of course they are old words but there is a power to those words that goes beyond the informational value of the words that has its place too the words point to the truth they have a certain informational value you can then see where madness is and you can see where the end of madness is the informational value of words but the words that come that are spoken from presence have an energetic quality to them which comes from the vastness of presence or consciousness they are so to speak charged with the energy of that and that's why it's beautiful to sit here and listen to the words that come that are spoken by presence as the words you listen to the words the words are being decoded by your mind the mind extracts the meaning from the words but that is not the end of the words then the words go deeper into yourself and what's left of the words is the energy of presence that they carry they become carriers of that and then they awaken the presence in you they go in so you can drink in when words come are spoken from presence you can drink in those words and after a while you are not even bothered anymore with the information level of the words that's why some people come to all my talks they don't hear anything new anymore nor is it necessary but there is a there is an awakening through the energy quality of the sound of the words of presence and that's the beauty of spiritual discourse and that's the power of spiritual discourse spiritual discourse does not come from a person does not come from accumulated knowledge and you know it when you hear it you can sense the power something within you responds it is a self recognition the words have an energetic quality to them that's why we've been here and you've been listening now if you were only here as a mind if the screen of mind as you were sitting here had been so dense that all that you could get from sitting here was the informational value of the words but the screen of minds might have prevented you from allowing these words to sink more deeply into yourself then it's not all that interesting after a while you sit here and say okay I've heard enough now I've taken a few notes I could have read this in books perhaps yeah it was interesting but what's the next thing where's the next interesting bit of information that's the mind let's go on to the next bit there's a little gap now gaps are good whatever arises in you as sense experience as you go out of here things that arise from within things allow it all so completely that you can sense the now itself in which it happens as yourself that's the secret the open secret thank you there are some beautiful lines that illustrate what we've been talking about and it goes something like this not that which the eye sees but that whereby the eye can see know that alone to be brahman the eternal and not what people here adore not that which the ear hears but that whereby the ear can hear know that alone to be brahman the eternal and not what people here adore not that which the mind thinks but that whereby the mind can think know that alone to be brahman the eternal and not what people here adore it goes on a bit I've forgotten the rest and it's a beautiful illustration not what people here adore not what God or your essential nature is not something not content not form the best description through words is to say not what it is not and then you're left with what it is which cannot be named but can be known but cannot be known conceptually because every concept is again a name and a form it can be known simply easily in the silent space of stillness which is in everyone underneath the mental noise no matter how heavy and turbulent the mental emotional noise may be no matter how heavy the egoic sense of self is in everyone as the essential nature is the stillness of pure consciousness your essential nature the essence your essence not separate from the essence of the universe are these just words yes the words point to that they cannot encapsulate that they cannot explain not even attempt to explain if a question arises in you that says please explain a bit more I don't quite get it yet it is not possible to these are pointers the analysis of pointers is pointless but the mind wants to have content so it will ask questions about the pointers instead of allowing the pointers to point it wants to analyze the pointer the signpost let's look at this signpost let's examine it let's get out the microscope so what I'm saying the mind cannot get allow the statement to work in you as a pointer not as an explanation of the universe because there can be none but it can work those were like those beautiful words of the Upanishads or whatever words arise here pointing to the dimension of the formless one life that is you so what really it is pointing to all these words point to is that dimension of stillness within that is vibrant with life but still extremely awake but still underneath thoughts in between thoughts in between words is the canvas on which the whole phenomenal existence is painted it if you try to understand it you won't get it you have to relinquish even that the desire to understand it because that is an obstacle that is still the mind you're getting deeper where you give up trying to understand you give up even the pursuit of knowledge the desire to analyze to possess another piece of knowledge and then as Gangaji said yesterday and then put it away somewhere in a drawer okay now I've got the mystery of the universe what's the next thing and that stillness is not ignorance it only looks like that from the point of view of the mind it looks as if you were moving into a realm of ignorance and not knowing anything anymore and that's why the mind doesn't want to go there the egoic sense of self doesn't want to go there and yet this is the new state of consciousness that's emerging and it's not ignorance it's intelligence silent intelligence and our whole civilization one could say is trying to run away from that from the stillness because it's threatening threatening to the mentally created sense of self the image of me it is noise it's noisy it's telling stories it's identification with form there's a question here I have more than 50 questions it says if space is the body of God as I use that pointer in the book somewhere no more than a pointer if space is the body of God what's the devil is there such a thing or another question there is a question about the nature of evil is there such a thing there's identification with form is that if evil is anything it's simply the ignorance of not knowing who you are and identifying with a temporary form and therefore fighting other forms that you think are also separate forms around you and threaten your form or you want to dominate other forms or get something from other forms identification with form the psychological form of me the story in my head the image self and identification with me as this physical form that is not knowing who you are and that creates whatever then action arises out of that state of illusion creates suffering for yourself and others and we could call that evil yeah it's also ignorance Jesus on the cross didn't say you evil ones what did you do to me he said they know not what they do forgive them they know not what they do so the if whether you see it as a factual or symbolic it doesn't matter the the truth of crucifixion would be the essence of evil is there it seems and yet Jesus doesn't call it evil says they know not what they do so ultimately what we perceive as evil arises out of the ignorance of who you are which is ultimately the ignorance of knowing not knowing God and that's one in the same I'll start with one or two questions that can be answered quickly they're not really in order just I may not be able to answer 50 questions there's enough here for another book or two if if your questions are not answered then buy the next book and it may be that and if if you derive some sense of self from whether your question is answered or not you can watch that Buddhists talk about true realization as emptiness while you use the term being are you not speaking of the same realization yes that was an easy one I sometimes more recently have been using also as you know the word spaciousness which gets close to emptiness ultimately emptiness is consciousness without thought beautiful this really is what stillness is the most the beautiful state of being what I call sometimes presence simply being present and we talked earlier about watching a flower in that state of simple presence and then the stillness arises you realize that flower is so still and very alive and the whole beauty of it has come into being through the stillness it's even surrounded by stillness if you approach it with your mind you can't know that so you bring a stillness into your perceptions you perceive through stillness especially nature you miss the sacredness when you do not perceive nature through stillness you miss both the sacredness that is in nature and your own sacredness when you bring the noisy mind into nature and when you bring all your knowledge into nature that has its place for certain things your knowledge is necessary but not for what really matters you to be able to put aside the accumulated knowledge and simply enter that state of a large presence that is still and yet awake and alert and so you bring you perceive the world through stillness not all the time perhaps but often the stillness will be there and there's a depth now to everything even to what you perceive because you perceive a deeper essence in every form which because the stillness is what the buddhists call the emptiness what i sometimes call the spaciousness it is being before it becomes beings and a blessing comes with whatever is perceived a blessing falls on everything that you perceive through stillness and we can do that right here to be here in a state of such simplicity that even the desire to understand is put aside the mystery cannot be understood it can be known beyond concepts as yourself but it cannot be understood or become an object of knowledge the only there's only one thing here to to learn not even to learn because learn would mean as if you had to acquire something the state of presence the state of thoughtless awareness the state of stillness in which you are connected with intelligence itself but you no longer need to rely on accumulated knowledge it can be used still of course but you are connected connected with something much deeper and more vibrant with yourself ultimately you are yourself instead of running to the future to find yourself you continuously dwell in that sense of being it is fulfilled and fulfilling every moment i'm giving you now a positive teaching as opposed to the negative what you are not it is fulfilled and fulfilling every moment the aliveness even goes into the body you feel the aliveness in every cell of the body of the simple the joy of aliveness and of being and oftentimes there will be no need to think what is there to think about there's so much aliveness and beauty be connected with that stillness and look at the beauty around you or simply all the beauty that's within you the essence of beauty that is an form external form is in you as being as the essence of being so even if you were in a prison cell and you can't find any beauty or you've probably seen beauty even in the in the wall but essentially you would find the essence of all beauty within yourself in your very being as the joy of simply being stillness alert presence what kind of civilization would humans create if the majority of human beings lived in that state it would be a kind of heavenly realm same planet which potentially is heaven it's only with the humans that have put so much concrete and poison on it that it's almost becoming hell but it still is potentially heaven so all you learn here is either to get a glimpse of that state or to go deeper if in many of you it has already emerged and it's simply a question of a deepening that happens to dwell there more fully more deeply or to allow it to emerge more fully whatever perspective you choose on it what did jesus say take no thought for the moral for the moral shall take thought for the things of itself take no thought that's the old translation in the new translation it says don't be anxious about tomorrow in the old translation it says take no thought and i'm told that in old english to take thought meant to be anxious it's very wise because the majority of thought is anxious problem making worry what's the next to be free of thought the compulsion to think not the ability to think you can think beautifully and clearly when you're free of thought when you're free of thought that means you're no longer run by thought by the mind you're no longer dominated you're no longer your sense of self is no longer in thought and then thought can operate beautifully when it's needed but only when it's needed the rest of the time this simplicity of stillness and occasionally fragments of thought come in never problematic like clouds passing by just a little bit of noise just passing through a little bit more and yet there's this there's always the stillness we are here simply not to learn anything new to encounter that dimension in ourselves and many of you are encountering it now and some of you not yet and to those of you who are saying well it all sounds very nice but how do i get there use a portal which could be the feeling of your inner body which takes your attention away from thought remember when you are not thinking you are more intelligent more awake more life than when you are thinking the difference is such that the thought state the state of thought identification is like sleep or dreamland and then you awaken out of thought this is why traditionally many spiritual traditions the term awakening is the key word in buddhism the very root of buddha means the one who is awake christian in christ's jesus teaching many parables are about of being awake to be free of more recently the tip their spiritual teachings krishnamurti's teaching i can be summarized in two words which he never did he must have had his reasons i love krishnamurti a great love and for the teaching and the power of what the teaching it was it's very extremely important in the evolution of consciousness and really what's happening here is the same continuation no more no less oh yes summarizing uh he never said it but really just don't think all he said was let's investigate the nature of thought can't ought to take us there let's look into it because he taught in the negative tradition like buddhism for those of you know so and that is more many of the teachings take you even the course in miracles which some of you know which is the one channeled work that i love there may be one or two others they it consists of words words words pages and pages of script and yet all designed to only get towards the end to take you into the region of stillness when words are no longer needed so it meets you where you are in the noise and and then takes you by the hand out of the noise and for some people it works but here there's not even a method there's no practice there's no exercises here there's simply the power of presence teaching directly and that presence emanating and that works for those who are ready for it and then you don't need the intermediary step of a practice or a teaching if you have one it's fine but but presence is emerging directly now thoughtless awareness ramana maharshi who many of you know who lived in the first half of the 20th century highly respected great indian teacher when asked by someone how can we judge whether we are doing making any progress on the spiritual path how can we know it he said the degree of absence of thoughts is your measure of progress on the spiritual path and this is an insult to the mind sitting here is an insult the mind says how dare you i've been cultivating thought all my life i have two degrees my whole identity is lodged in thought i'm so much more clever than most people and you're telling me to stop thinking to you're telling me to be stupid now you cannot make yourself stop thinking unfortunately or fortunately it doesn't work you can't make yourself stop thinking unless presence that arises in you is already of such power that thought simply stops and then it looks as if you were making yourself stop thinking this presence your mind stops but the quickest way to thoughtless awareness is and it always comes back to that is to surrender to the now because the whole compulsion to think is to do with not surrendering to now to life that's why the mental noise the mind is so active it really is always trying to get away from it now why to uphold the mind-based sense of self to accept this moment completely then very quickly a stillness and a peace emerge no matter what this moment contains whether you live in a palace or in a prison or in a mansion little hut makes no difference or whether your life situation as i call it the external circumstances of your life whether everything is just crumbled around you or whether you've just won the lottery makes no difference although it's more likely that you will get it when everything is just collapsed around you than when you've just won a million dollars because that can prolong the illusion a little bit more not a lot more i avoid the now by sleeping i'm the one that snoozes snores in the room right now can you help please speak loudly well i don't know if you're awake at this moment but you could give the person sitting behind you permission to be a zen master and hit you when you drop off that's what they do sometimes the zen master walks around with a stick and after you've been hit you go thank you whatever works yes staying awake many times this question has been asked in some one form or another if we just allow how will anything get done is that what about initiate thank you now this is a frequent misunderstanding of the state of allowing what is to be allowing the now to be instead of complaining about what is having an inner resistance to what is trying to deny or get away from it not facing what is fully and and it is true that most action that takes place is because people need to get to some future point where they to hope that they find salvation by being fully themselves when they get reach that point in the future so they're trying to get away from now that's the motivating force behind most activities in our civilization is to try and get to the future to some other point where it's going to be better i will be more fully alive myself will have found myself ultimately really it's finding god or myself and yet they are missing the now so out of dissatisfaction and discontent and denial of what is which is life itself inseparable from now they run towards the future to an imagined or projected now that is going to be fulfilled and better and that provides the action for building up a whole civilization and then that is karmic action because every action that arises out of that state of dissatisfaction and denial of life is one could say almost poisoned and that's why in our activities in creating all that wells on the material realm we have also created an enormous amount of poison it's strange isn't it if you look at it in a fresh way there are humans and they are continuously producing so much poison poisonous substances they're all everywhere on the planet these poisonous substances that's because every action they take is tainted with the dissatisfaction and the denial of life now so and then it looks as if when i accept fully the now am i able to take any action or am i going to be completely stuck in this moment the way it is if i don't resist it in some way or another and i give the example in the book of somebody who is stuck in the mud can't get out so can't get out of this mud now you could be in a state of great unhappiness and then you would be struggling and getting angry about being stuck in the mud and it becomes part of your story in the head it's just the last straw this is what i needed getting stuck after all this typical isn't it always happens to me i'm repeating what my mind used to do by the way it just always happens these things always all the bad things happen to me and so there's anger and in your anger you're struggling and you're getting even more deeply into the mud and then there's the state of okay this this this is what is i'm here stuck in the mud no denying that it's the simplest the simplicity of this moment is here i am stuck in the mud all right that's how it is now i don't want to be stuck in the mud for the rest of my life so now i start moving oh yes completely different energy comes because you've said yes the power comes in and perhaps you will see a way out there's a branch hanging there and you pull yourself out of the mud which you hadn't seen before just a small example you will suddenly life will become supportive and cooperative because you haven't denied the now you will get out more easily more quickly without it becoming incorporated into an unhappy me story so you be action you take on the basis of acceptance of now is far more powerful than action that arises out of denial of now action that arises out of denial of now is poisoned and has many will have many karmic effects action that arises out of the state of acceptance has no poison to it no side effects and it's far more powerful so and this operates on all levels and you always look what is it that is required what what does this moment require okay i'll initiate that i'll apply for a job so i'm sitting here i'm running out of money ten dollars left in my pocket okay and you go into stillness that's how it is there's ten dollars and here i am breathing feeling my inner body what is what action can i take and then action comes let's look let's look at the paper let's do this pick up the phone make a call it comes not out of fear or a need to simply it arises out of a peaceful state peaceful action is much more powerful than angry action or self-seeking action so it you will not become a passive vegetables by accepting the passive vegetable by accepting the now vegetables are beautiful but it's not for humans to revert back to the vegetable realm of course vegetables exist in no thought the whole vegetative realm as well as animal realm or beautiful expressions of consciousness but without thought without the mental noise that humans are trapped in so it's beautiful for them they exist prior to thought one could say we cannot return to that we cannot revert back to pre-thought but we sometimes try to if we can't stand the torture of our minds anymore we try to go back to pre-thought by having five whiskeys and that often works it takes you gradually below thought so there there is a kind of liberation there too but it's not where humans are moving to the state of presence is the arise your your eyes above thought in which thought can still operate beautifully when it's needed but you no longer have your home in thought this is an important question here many of you may have that or similar question what suggestions if any do you have for individuals who are working in a profession occupation where left brain rational thinking is constantly required well I was in such a profession and I must admit that I left perhaps it wasn't absolutely necessary I didn't have a teacher so I just thought I I was working on a PhD as heavy mind stuff and it became completely pointless so it abandoned me or I abandoned it and then I went to I spent two years on a park bench now this is not the way you need to go don't be frightened I've heard of several people who has read the introduction to my book where I mentioned the park bench and said oh no I don't want to read anymore so many people have to work with computers these days which also stimulates thought and left brain activity and it pulls your attention out of the body onto the screen it a lot of energy goes out of your eyes energy loss if you stare at the screen for several hours a day the question is whether your present occupation profession activity is compatible compatible with the state of presence that arises and many activities are compatible still with the state of presence even the use of computers is compatible with the state of presence if you simply remember to take enough space or spaciousness during the day you have moments when you withdraw attention from the screen or from whatever activity or you might be on the telephone a lot talking about the stock market or whatever is it going up or down and points and so on and it's the energy field that surrounds you may be agitated which is very normal these days there's the nervous energy field in which you may have to live every day let's get to the next thing where's the next thing it's whole and even in places that should be places of healing you they are dominated by this mad nervous energy like hospitals and schools hospitals everybody running around and there's the tension the anxiety even in jobs that used to be the most comfortable jobs you could get like school teacher nowadays the most stressful jobs you can find so there's the level of agitation nervous tension and stress has been increasing the question is can i bring presence into that can presence emerge even here in many cases it can especially and this is why and i will be going into that there are several questions about being in the body use that during the day this means attention is taken away from thought and when you feel the inner body you feel that there is a spaciousness in the body and for a moment mind activity subsides you connect with the inner spaciousness and aliveness that's in every cell of the body and you do that for a minute or two and then you go back to your normal activity and then you withdraw again after a little while maybe once an hour it doesn't matter whatever possible when you're going up and down the elevator bring in gaps so that you're not dragged along by a mind stream an agitated mind stream whole day long dragged from one thing to the next one thing this needs doing and now this and now that and you're always catching up and never quite managing to catch up this is how most people's working life is so you don't get dragged along by a mind stream which is externalized the collective mind stream of your your company or your institution your workplace so if you can bring presence into that by periodically withdrawing for brief moments into the body and then gradually learning that you can be engaged in certain even left brain activities and still have some attention in the body for example when you listen to someone on the telephone attention in the body could be you may not be able to to feel the entire energy field of the body in an agitated work environment just it sounds too simple to be true but just take your attention into one part of the body and hold some attention in there while you listen on the phone for example and the hand is for many people the quickest access point to the body there are two good access points that operate for most people one is entering with your attention enter the hand left or right and for those of you who don't even know what i'm talking about because your attention has been in the head for so many years if you hold your hand and you can tell this to anybody who is asking you and even people who have no interest in any spiritual book many people will be ready to listen when you talk to them about connecting with the inner energy field of the body you don't even have to tell them that it takes your attention away from thinking they might become frightened just say it's good for you it's good for the body it feels good which is all true it's very healing which is all true to inhabit the body you begin to inhabit the body by simply feeling the energy field in one of your hands and you can hold it up if you can't feel anything yet the quickest way to feeling the inner body is holding up either your left or right hand not moving it closing your eyes and then asking yourself a question and the question is without opening my eyes without moving my hand how can i know whether my right hand is still there now the mind may try to find it might say come up with some conceptual answer and say well i don't know but you have to take go more deeply how can i know that question draws your attention into the right hand because to find out how you can know your attention will go from thought thinking about your right hand to sensing your right hand from within and after a while with your eyes closed you say oh yes i can feel something there isn't certain aliveness there that must be my right hand it feels quite good it's actually alive and you can then learn to hold your attention there for a while hold it in your right hand that means you've entered the body and then say okay let's see if the left hand i can also feel that yes left hand is there no doubt i can feel that also and then you bring together the feeling of left and right hand into a single feeling of hand you no longer have an image in your mind of left and right because your attention is completely on that feeling of aliveness and you bring together left and right into a single feeling of hand first you feel them simultaneously eyes open or closed doesn't matter and then you bring it together to bring it together it's easier with your eyes open simply there's a sense of hand and then even that label drops and there's simply an aliveness there and so if you can be in your hands you can be in other parts gradually from there put your attention into arms not quite as strong the feeling but it's there and your feet the aliveness there your legs there's an aliveness there so gradually you bring together different parts into a single sense of aliveness you inhabit the body that means your mind is slowing down considerably because attention is being taken away from thought and there's a spaciousness in the body and that simple thing can be your anchor for presence when you are in an environment that is nervous and agitated and mind dominated as much as possible go into the body you might be walking into a committee meeting with lots of egos around and whatever people demanding this or that and you sit there you listen to their demands and you are you feel an aliveness either in the entire energy field of the body that comes after a while or just one part is enough feel your right that can you that can keep you sane simply feeling your right hand can keep you sane in a mad environment you're bringing in presence and so instead of leaving let this world be transformed by people as if possible bring presence into where you are and so the world instead of people leaving although if you have to leave you will leave if you find it impossible to bring presence into that environment you will have to leave there in most places now i would be able to just be present no matter what but there are a few places i know i wouldn't stay i don't want to give any examples if i worked in an i'll give one if i worked in an in a discotheque for six hours every night being bombarded by heavy noise i would leave that wouldn't be the job if i if somebody chained me there to that place i would surrender and there would be deep peace but if i'm not chained to that place i would leave so if as presence arises it's not so much anymore of trying to figure out what you need to do as presence arises what you need to do will become obvious as a sudden insight with which you may wake up one morning and you know what it is that you need to do and it you do it there's no longer any doubt it is so clear those insights arise out of presence so whether you have to leave or change whatever it may be you will know what you have to do beyond mental agonizing mental decision making and doubt should i shouldn't i on the other hand if i but what if then how am i going to make a living many of you will be taken out of your habitual surroundings presence will take you out and others will stay where you are and transform your environment because you are then there as a field of presence in your family or in your relationship some of you will you will walk out of the relationship if the partner is not ready for presence you will walk out or he or she will leave you but you cannot predict whether or not your partner is ready for presence the most unlikely people seemingly unlikely are ready for presence so who knows the beautiful thing is that presence will begin to operate in your life and it will transform what is around you either take you away or transform where you are you transform and this could be your family environment too because just as many workplaces are agitated and nervous energy fields many family many homes are equally agitated and nervous energy fields if you walk into some homes they're like madhouses with screaming and shouting and never a sense of allowing this moment to be every member of the family is out of their bodies completely trapped in thought and trying to get away from the now imagine a family living in that way and you do teach children what presence is not by words by being present by giving them space by surrounding them with space when they come in shouting this and that you know what happened in school you're you this you welcome that moment in which this child appears and you embrace this moment and the child disappears in this now and there's you as i call it sometimes you give him or her space to be you allow this person to be and you listen in that sense of spaciousness just listening oh okay all right okay not wanting to change anybody and here pain bodies are important as several questions here about the pain body pain body as you know is accumulated emotional pain from the past it is an aspect of the self pain body is an aspect an important aspect of the egoic sense of self pain body is not always active pain body has dormant periods and active periods when it is dormant the sense of self you can live with it's still it's still a troublemaker yes it's still problematic yes it's you are still a nuisance to yourself and others yes but well you can live with it but then periodically that sense of self becomes energized by the accumulated pain from the past that every human comes into this world with that is inherited genetically passed on because of human madness there's a vast amount of human pain in the collective energy field and this accumulation of pain part of which is collective a part of which is personal through your present incarnation accumulated in childhood through parents and emotional pain and the pain body is a field of contraction aliveness energy contracted trapped tight and it has a life of its own almost although it depends for its existence on you it is a temporary life form that lives in you and like all most life forms sometimes it's asleep and sometimes it's awake so when it's asleep okay you haven't you have a self still have problems but it's okay you can deal with things then periodically the pain body becomes active it moves into the mind structure that we call the self and it energizes all those mind structures of the ego the egoic self and then you become a deeply unhappy self and you are trying to make others unhappy a deeply unhappy self will try to make others unhappy because it will also feed on others unhappiness and emotional reactions so that is its job is when it flows into the egoic self the pain body moves in it it is looking for food and it will get food through your mind by feeding on your negative thinking about me and my life my dreadful life or all the dreadful people around me that shouldn't be here what am i doing here my dreadful life situation and my dreadful story and it's awful it's the pain body may either be anger predominantly or it may be deep sadness or it may be a great sense of heaviness or it may be an agitation of fear and then the fear moves into the mind oh what's going to happen to me if that what's he going to do if he leaves happens i lose my job or that then all night you worry energized mind structures mad mind structures made even more mad by being energized by the pain body and the pain body loves it it's it gobbles up every negative thought and you can go on for hours it's feeding on the energy of your mind until it's had enough and then so that that means you've gone through a pain the pain body attack or feeding time whatever you want to call it is over and you feel relatively okay again in the meantime you've made many people unhappy around you because the pain body is not just feeding on your thoughts it's feeding on other people's reactions if anybody is around you it'll try to get something from them a painful something to to give me more pain please so it's i want you to be unhappy because when you're unhappy you will feed me your emotion emotional reaction i will absorb that and it will feed me so i will push your buttons that is part of the madness of the self the artificial mind created sense of self it because it periodically becomes energized by collective human pain and you think you're having a personal problem there's nothing personal about it it is human pain not and and it's it wants to be there the pain body is having a great time it's become you it has taken possession temporarily you're acting it out and children have it because humans are born with the pain body some heavier than others so children you can see the transformation in a child very quick from angelic to monster but it doesn't last as long as with most adults usually children's pain body attacks are much over much more quickly and it's gone again and it's amazing when you watch the transformation from a human being into a pain body and back to a human being so when you have children family tell them about the pain body use a different word but so that a witnessing presence grows in them from where they can watch what's happening to them make it into a game begin by explaining it after the pain body attack not in the middle don't say this is your pain body you must watch or get rid of it you shouldn't have a pain body no you allow and then when the child has come back to full consciousness say what was that let's say what was it that came over you what did it feel like and did you remember yesterday it also came in the morning didn't it yeah isn't that funny what does it feel like maybe even temporarily giving it give it a name so that it helps a little bit in witnessing it and next time it happens in the middle of it you call out there it is again the child won't want to listen because the pain body is in charge but something will be there a little bit of witnessing will be there and then the child will quickly discover that you also have a pain body and so you work together and i know of families they've told me that often their children tell them oh what's that it's your pain body mom or whatever you want to call it and that's wonderful witnessing comes in so the pain body cannot use you anymore it cannot continue to feed on the cycle of unconsciousness of becoming you and then feeding on your mind and on other people's emotions and reactions so simply making it conscious is part of making the structure of the self the false self conscious so that when you make it conscious it no longer dominates you you watch it for a little while you watch it in action it's still there but there's a witnessing presence and that is the presence that grows and it grows even as you sit here from now on not a single person in this room will not have grown in presence through being here and the ability to witness what otherwise is the most difficult thing to witness in yourself which is that enormous amount of human pain your ability to witness it will have grown even that applies even to those of you who have very heavy pain bodies you are the most promising candidates for liberation those who have heavy pain bodies because their longing to be free is greater can't stand this anymore i had a dreadful pain body and so i couldn't stand it anymore gone evaporated all at once which is relatively rare so it's a it's a gradual gradually it loses energy its energy charge it's fine it doesn't turn into suffering anymore it's simply emotional pain suffering requires a self a mind-made self suffering requires a me and a storyline without a me and a storyline you no longer suffer because there's nobody there to suffer because only if you have a story in your head of who you are and what your life is that that is suffering what is left is simply pain and even that is a word that we might not even need anymore there's simply a certain energy field there that is feels a bit agitated or tight or heavy and you allow it to be just as you allow whatever arises in this moment to be allowing to be implies of course you're there as the witness you watch it you allow it yes there's there's the anger there's a fear fear is a very common thing in most every pain body has even if it's not predominantly fear an essential ingredient of every pain body is fear there's fear somewhere even if it seems to be anger mostly underneath it you will find fear and of course there's a desire not to want to feel it it's the most normal thing in the world is not to want to feel fear the most normal thing in the world is to not to want to face it let's think about something else so that i just don't want to feel what i feel but you can't because the feeling will catch up with your mind and then it'll go into your thoughts and you will think fearful thoughts and by thinking fearful thoughts about what's going to happen to you you're feeding the pain body so you can see that how you can allow the pain body to be there and face it not harshly but allowing is a gentle thing not face it by opposing it or say okay let's see who is stronger you or me no you simply just as you would allow an event that takes place externally to be you allow the pain body to be it is it is there's a fear and then you don't even need to call it fear anymore there's simply that movement and you lie there it's four o'clock in the morning you've been it's used your mind for a while and then you woke up out of identification with it and all that's left now is that vibration that before you called fear but now is simply a vibration it's not that bad when it's no longer an unhappy me it's only a vibration now and you allow you can certain words may be helpful in your mind just as little pointers and the words that may be helpful may simply be it is or i allow it to be it's what is in the field of now let it be there it's there so let it be there and that what then develops is even around the pain the spaciousness through the allowing and that at first it's only a hint of spaciousness around the pain and then it grows you allow more you continue to allow and there's still the vibration but the sense of spaciousness around it gets larger and that may begin with simply being able to feel the space in your body where there is no pain body the pain body may be the vibration of it may be here but in your arms or legs there's simply there's still a spaciousness and aliveness and you feel that that becomes part of the space around the pain body and you so you sense the field of spaciousness in which the vibration happens and gradually the shift happens from you realize the spaciousness is so much vaster than the pain that's happening in it before there was only the pain and i was the pain it was dreadful dreadful dreadful and now the pain is no longer i it's no longer a self it's no longer an unhappy little entity it's simply a vibration and around the vibration because you allowed it to be there is a space and then the space the sense of space grows the allowing becomes deeper and then you can you the little smile comes it's only a vibration it's not that bad at all it's okay it's just life vibrating something was trapped in here and through accepting and realizing the space that is around it that energy then becomes freed that was trapped in the pain body and becomes aliveness ultimately consciousness it contributes to your sense of presence like putting something into a fire and then the fire consumes it it grows stronger so the pain body becomes fuel for your presence and then there's a vast sense of spaciousness and remnants perhaps little remnants of pain still appearing here and there that's called freedom that's called liberation it's a simple process so it is it is a process of depersonalizing pain of realizing that there is not a person in it it is a fiction to believe that my identity is that's that suffering me it's human pain the whole transformation of consciousness that we are involved in is a sense of depersonalizing your sense of identity so that your sense of identity is not trapped in an image of me the little person that the personalized sense of self this narrow personalized me with my past and my future both of them very problematic and when that goes you are no longer a problematic entity and the little self says who would i be without my problems oh i don't know if i want to let go of all of that so many years invested step out into the unknown so familiar with a miserable little me but you are stepping out and it is dissolving that's the beauty of transformation and the simplicity of it and the pain body is your greatest asset in your in the arising of presence because it is the pain the energy that is trapped in the pain body will fuel presence presence will transform it into itself so if you have a heavy pain body you're lucky if you have a light pain body they still hope for you too you humanically has come to the end of suffering that is with the end of the old consciousness humanity has come to the end of suffering and you see the suffering has been unbelievable the madness of it self-inflicted most of it self-inflicted suffering is it we are coming to the end of suffering we have suffered enough as a species you have suffered enough no further suffering is needed to become free you've had enough enough to be here are we feeding the insanity of mind and the planet by watching violence on the news tv or movies yes and who is watching the violence the pain body who is financing all these violent films pain bodies who makes these violent films pain bodies make them pain bodies watch them pain bodies love them pain bodies pay to watch them so i forgot to mention that another way in this culture in this civilization in in ancient times we didn't have the tv and movies so all the pain body had to feed on was your mind and other people's emotional reactions but now we have a whole industry designed to feed pain bodies why else would anybody watch violence on a screen and pay for it and sit there and love feeling bad oh dreadful dreadful but they pay to get in because it feeds the pain body there is a whole industry designed to feed the human pain body amazing and no talk about let's abolish violence politicians say let's abolish the violence on tv they won't because there's a great demand for it who is demanding pain bodies they love it and as long as they are there they'll produce those things it's amazing it's one doesn't see the madness of our civilization because we are so used to it but when you see it it's actually it's almost funny when you see it's a tragic comedy but it turns into a comedy begins when you watch it when you watch your own tragedy and realize it as a story when you watch your own drama and realizing as a mind-created fiction designed to give you a sense of identity in the absence of any true sense of identity okay i'll hang on to the miserable one it's when you see it the drama your own drama as illusion then you either laugh or smile and then you begin to laugh and smile a lot more when you see it around you there was a time when i would see people privately a lot and people would come in and many people then i don't see people rarely see people privately and when i do not many people tell me their stories anymore but there was a time when they did and often as i sat there simply in a sense of allowing this unhappy me to be there and a great sense of presence and peace and aliveness and while they told me their drama i couldn't help but i had always a smile on my face no thought just a smile and then sometimes they got angry and said you're laughing at me at my i'm telling you all this it's serious stuff and you're laughing at me and then i had to explain no no uh i can see that this is an illusion what you mean it's it's an illusion yes and it feels so good to just be here the presence is so wonderful that's why i smile it's nothing to do with your particular story and some left at that point at that the teaching hadn't developed quite yet that fully so i wasn't able to explain as well as i explain now so and some just left another interesting event is sometimes when pain bodies arise while people sit in a group situation and the pain body is being addressed and something inside quivers let's get out of here somebody's looking at me pain bodies don't like to be looked at i'm using looked at as almost a metaphor which means to put the light of attention on it they because they thrive in non-attention inattention if that's the word they thrive in in and through unconsciousness when you become conscious and look at the pain body directly it shrinks it withdraws it tries to get away it might become extremely dormant pretend that i'm not here anymore but it's waiting just like a fox would be very clever it was waiting for better moment and so sometimes sitting here is not the best moment but some heavy pain bodies have reacted in a group because they couldn't stand it anymore they were being addressed directly and suddenly they became agitated and one person gets up and stomps out of the room and or even shouts i happened once shout something this is all a lot of rubbish somebody in england once shouted it's all a lot of rubbish and there was a there was a pain body speaking it was such a perfect illustration it was just such as just a small group i had then 15 people or so but it was such a perfect illustration of what i had just been speaking about that other people thought i had engaged an actor to illustrate it so the question to yes you are feeding the pain body when you watch violence but i probably your desire to watch violence will be greatly diminished if it's still there simply by being conscious of that process you may still occasionally feel that in you which wants to watch it it may be still be but then you can oh there it is and news of course news is also mentioned in the question there are a few people in a few offices around big cities and they choose what they give you feed you as news they choose say this matters this is important we are going to feed them this and that and that and they what they choose is an expression of their state of consciousness and often the pain body is an important part of their state of consciousness so what you watch is not the actually the wild news is what a few people who embody a particular state of consciousness and usually it's not the new one choose as significant and you can imagine what they choose and you know what they choose there's a lot happening that they wouldn't choose and yet even there occasionally even into television where there's relatively little consciousness which usually pulls you into unconsciousness but even there there are a few sometimes consciousness moves into that channel also it happens through a few programs that bring in more awareness even a few films and i got a letter recently written by a tv station and the interviewer a person who interviews said i would like to ask you if you want to be interviewed for tv canadian national television ctv but i very much doubt that you will agree to my request because of what you said and then he quoted something that i had said in the letter which is if you want to find out about the insanity of the human condition i recommend that you read a history book or you watch tv tonight so he said i know it's unlikely that you will give me an interview but i just want to ask anyway i am very happy if consciousness i don't reject tv as a medium if consciousness moves through it it's beautiful and perhaps this will happen increasingly there are some programs that are expressions of all price doing very great work has already transformed many people's lives and a few others so that there is something there that is moving towards an awakening so i may say yes to the interview and the amazing thing is they want to put it out as part of their news program this is a miracle i've been saying for years in groups i've been saying for years our meeting here is not going to be on tv tonight i said because it's not significant enough for the people who choose what is significant in fact it's extremely significant it's one of the most significant events on the planet is this gathering it goes beyond the personal because it's about the transformation of human consciousness and oftentimes i've said in groups like this you see but they're not going to put it on tv tonight and perhaps soon they will that would be another miracle so what is your identity mr tolly are you not a man a spiritual teacher a knowledgeable person a successful author in other words do you not have goals and desires how else would you have achieved your present status quote unquote or position quote unquote as a teacher i'm just looking at the one two three four definitions yes a man that's part of my form form identity happens to be that it's been like that since birth but a spiritual teacher a knowledgeable person or successful author that's fairly recent i wasn't even a few years ago well at some point somebody called me a spiritual teacher and that was probably the beginning but for many years when i left my normal existence behind i was really nobody i didn't have a job occasionally if somebody people would come to talk to me or ask questions or little groups here and there small groups people would come but i had no identity on an external level not even spiritual teacher certainly not a successful author and a knowledgeable person i was at once but most of the knowledge i had acquired at university has disappeared i wouldn't be able to pass a single exam now and even the spiritual books that i've read there's not that much that has been retained a few things not a lot a successful author yes my mother is very happy now because for many years her the what made her existence so hard was to know that her son had failed in the world her son hadn't made it and that's many mothers would have felt it in her position the because on a worldly level i hadn't made it nobody really no not an important position no position at all so she said what you've had so much intelligence and you've thrown it all away and now it's too late and then suddenly the book came and it became successful and now i am a successful author and my mother is very happy now because the world is telling me and her that i'm somebody there's no difference at all before the world was saying it wasn't even saying i'm nobody it wasn't saying anything that's even worse the whole basis of the teaching is not to be not to be to to honor your form identity yes you're a man or you're a woman and you have a certain job of course you honor your form identity but to realize that who you are is not that your essential nature is not being somebody your essential nature is being nobody or nothing a no thingness your essential nature is not content is not object there is a no thingness to your essential nature that is the whole teaching and to see the beauty and the peace and the aliveness of that no thingness that is the essence of your being that's the teaching i'm not denying that you also exist as a form a temporary form which will go but while it's there you can honor of course also that temporary form and you will but not derive your sense of identity from that you simply know it as the form that you are clocks are strange things it seems to me that no time has passed and yet it's exactly the same now but the hands have moved strange and i have another 43 questions i do keep all the questions and i may use some of them i may also use some of the answers that i gave here but i do value all your questions and i thank you if they were not answered here most of them were not now what i'm saying now don't take it as a personal insult no question is that important no answer is that important it's fine to have these questions but really why we are here is to go beyond the need to figure it all out beyond the need to know and contact that deep sense of knowing that is there when the need to know is no longer there in that presence whatever you truly need to know at this moment you will know essential knowledge vital knowledge not the distance between here and the moon or something like that no vital essential knowledge if there's anything that you truly need to know out of all you need to be is become still enter that allowed stillness drop the question you've asked the question then you drop the question enter the allowed stillness if you truly need to know the answer it'll come sooner or later you will know not perhaps immediately suddenly it'll be there whatever it is you take it into the stillness many things will dissolve in the stillness or many questions dissolve in the stillness but if if an answer is needed it will be there but the transformation of consciousness that you are going through that is happening through that form is not based on answers no answer to a question could help you and you don't need that because the transformation of consciousness is happening already you don't need to understand more about it on the mind level than you do now i don't understand more about it than what i have said on the level of concepts there's a deep knowing but there's not mental understanding that is more than what i have said i read something from a physicist recently who described human beings as patches of consciousness floating in space little patches of consciousness that's what you are there's only one consciousness expressing itself as this particular patch of consciousness so you're leaving here very soon and you're leaving no longer with the that heavy personalized sense of self but greatly diminished in your sense of self if it worked for you so this has not been a personal growth seminar but a personal diminishment thank you welcome to our afternoon together many of you have only just arrived here and perhaps some of you are not yet completely here there may be parts of you that are still arriving so let's wait for them to get here the truth of course is it's very rare for a human being to be completely here the usual state is to be peripherally here just enough so that you don't bump into things and the rest of your attention is taken up by what appears to be much more important than here and that's past and future and somewhere else and almost everybody believes unconsciously because when you make it conscious you see the fallacy of it everybody believes almost everybody believes past and future to be more important than here and now that's an implicit assumption that's how people lead their lives if you ask them maybe they won't admit they say well no but how do you live do you live as if past and future matter more than this as if you didn't know that this now is all there ever is that your entire life unfolds within the space of now that your life is never not now now you may start thinking and say is that true it would be hard to argue with that very hard that your life is never not now you can remember the past only now you can think of the future only now whatever you think do feel experience can only happen now i don't believe the greatest philosopher could argue with that but the mind is very clever it may find reasons why this is not the case but in any way humans live not recognizing the truth of that the shift in consciousness that is happening on the planet is very closely connected with that realization because the shift in consciousness that is an absolute necessity on this planet now is not something that is going to happen it's happening now in you at this very moment or not at all and that doesn't make sense to the mind either the shift in consciousness is not to do with improving your ability to think or adding more information to the store of information that each one of you already has your knowledge if you wanted to improve yourself on that level there are many universities you can go to to add to yourself in terms of knowledge but that adding to is not the shift in consciousness it is a continuation of the same consciousness that is the state of being completely identified with your thought processes with the content of your mind the content of your mind which is thought one thought after another identification with the content of your mind leads to a sense of self a sense of identity a me that is based on thought activity based on a mentally constructed story and the emotions that accompany that mentally constructed story which is the most fascinating story on the planet which is the story of me and all the identifications that go with that the reactive patterns that go with that all the knowledge the opinions the viewpoints the achievements and the non-achievements the successes and failures which make up the story of me your sense of who you are that begins with your name to which many other things are then added identifications which are all thought forms the child begins to say this is my toy which means there is a beginning identity and humans have to go through that and the tragedy is if they get stuck in that limited content-based thought-based sense of self or identity for a child it is good to say this is my toy not yours it's mine and in that statement which is the arising of a thought form that is invested with a sense of self there's the beginning of a mind made me it's the beginning of a story because you're telling the story that this is mine the thought form is what matters not the toy because the thought form is invested with a sense of self 20 years later the toy becomes the bmw mine same thing same thought form it's not the car that matters it's the thought form that has a sense of self in it that matters and that's only one level possessions you may graduate beyond that most of you in this room have gone beyond that level otherwise you wouldn't be here of identifying with material possessions occasionally it may still happen but surely you have gone beyond that except perhaps that and then you identify with the thought that you are somebody who has gone beyond material possessions which is another little story it looks more advanced so the identification with thought forms the identification with thought as me becomes more and more subtle as you progress spiritually you recognize certain very simple identifications and then more subtle identifications come in there's the identification with other people's opinions of you which you adopt becomes a thought form what the world thinks of me am i important or not important that may shift one day the world may tell you you're important and the next day it changes its mind so many things come into come form a bundle of thoughts and identifications and patterns that is your sense of who that's who i that's me me the mind made sense of self and this is i sometimes call it the old consciousness that's been the dominant state of consciousness on the planet for as long as we can remember recorded history and beyond that far beyond that to be identified with that very limited self and one of the first human beings to discover that cage that trap that dreadful limitation and to see how much pain and suffering this delusion causes that all you are is a mental story that identification with thought to see how much suffering that sense of self causes to yourself and if you cause suffering to yourself you make others suffer one of the first human beings to see that was the person we now call the buddha 2600 years ago he saw the delusion of what he called self that we could say is the self that we spell with a small s but if we now say there is a self with a big capital s that's we have to be very careful with statements like that because very easily another concept forms in the mind with which one can identify you then become you become somebody who believes in a greater self that can add something substantial to your sense of self and most usefully you can disagree with others who don't share that opinion or that viewpoint which strengthens the self enormously if you can disagree with somebody somebody who does not agree with your mental position challenges it questions it and then you defend it and an enormous amount of energy goes into the defense of mental positions personally and collectively warfare collectively they are defending collective mental positions not a me but an us against them we against them on the personal level it's me against all those who threaten me an amazing state this is coming to an end now but you don't need to believe that we are here this afternoon because something else is arising or is being realized we need to be very careful with words i often i like to stop almost every other sentence and say that's not quite it it just points to it so be careful with getting attached to a statement no statement statement is very rarely absolutely true they're all little pointers and this afternoon there's only one thing we ever talk about what's that the flowering of human consciousness another pointer what's that the mind will say explain give a definition and then a definition comes then the mind says okay now define that or it adopts another mental position say this does not agree with the mental positions that i have formed in my head these are not my positions now you may have noticed already that this afternoon does not work so well on the level of thought it's not really a lecture it looks like it on the surface but it isn't it's not a workshop either i don't know what it is if tonight you call somebody up and they ask you what did he talk about and if you can say well he talked about this and that and that and that then you probably didn't get it but if you say well i i don't know i can't i don't really remember what he talked about it's more likely that then you got it and this is strange this gathering here this afternoon is pointing to a dimension within you that is deeper than thought and deeper even than the flux of emotions a dimension of consciousness within you the possibility of realizing that dimension within yourself that realization that realization is the flowering of consciousness and it is not it has nothing to do with adding new concepts to the content of your mind this afternoon does not work if you expect something to be added to you but of course there is the unconscious belief that something needs to be added to me so that i can be complete and full and fulfilled and being completely myself there is the unspoken unconscious or semi-conscious belief that who or what i am is not yet enough and that is a walking entity that believes that that is one of the core beliefs of the mind-made sense of self i am not yet enough i need more to be fully and completely myself and that walking entity that needs more to be fully and completely itself will become frustrated this afternoon sitting here because it is not being fed more concepts or opinions information knowledge interesting and fascinating ideas that it can add and then walk out a little bit expand it because you have added to the store of knowledge with which you can then identify the me the story of me has expanded then a little bit so it doesn't work like that so if you cannot get beyond that entity with its very strong need for more then you may not make it you may not be able to endure sitting here the whole afternoon because you will continuously be waiting for a statement that explains it all where suddenly it goes click now i know what enlightenment is when is he going to say it come on and you may notice in yourself this enormously powerful need which is part of the conditioned mind-made entity this enormous need there's nothing personal in that at all oh that's a disappointment i thought it was my problem this enormous need for the next moment where surely it's going to happen and then what and you can see it in people's faces when they go about their daily business the tension the strain because they need the next moment and they're saying isn't it here yet and this is an people live like that it's normal if you watch tv a lot of what you see how people whatever you see films soap operas or whatever or the news readers they're all in that state of where is the next moment where surely things are going to be resolved so you may encounter frustration and when you find it that's fine don't say don't be frustrated when you encounter frustration as you sit here that's fine you notice it you see it for what it is that means you are not the frustration that's a pattern that you then discover in yourself and whatever you discover as a pattern is fine because there it is you see it if you don't see it you are it and then you become fidgety and then finally you will jump up and run out of the room i don't want to discourage anybody from visiting the bathroom but i mustn't get up otherwise people will think that i am identified with the now i we are pointing here to a deeper dimension of consciousness within yourself where the need that deep seated need for the next moment which is very closely related really one with the enormous needs that people have for needing to add more to me to make me complete which is ultimately a delusion because you never get there we are here to go beyond that and as i speak that dimension may arise in you where the need for the next moment suddenly falls away and you don't go to sleep if you go to sleep that's fine too but it is an enormous thing when you suddenly you're able to simply be in that beautiful state of relaxed alert presence and perceive whatever you it is that you're perceiving without the need for more something now arises in you that is not conditioned we could say but be careful with any word they're only all words are pointers no more we could say what is arising is the unconditioned dimension of consciousness sometimes called awareness so the shift in consciousness that is happening on the planet in you otherwise it's not happening is something that you may not even have been aware of that shift because there was still so much identification with thinking and from the point of view of thinking nothing much is happening here and this shift is the shift and it is an enormous incredible transformation in a human being when that happens it is the shift from being based in thought to being based in awareness it is the shift from being dominated in the grip of thinking the continuous stream of thinking and self-identification with thinking to what i sometimes call consciousness without thought now thought will jump in now and make that into a problem and into something to be achieved how through more future okay that sounds great how do i get there that dimension of consciousness is already fully developed in you underneath the stream of thinking that's why you can't get there if something is already fully here you can't get there that could only take you away from it so what a little hint before i continue that some of you may find very useful as you sit here there are two dimensions one could say to this talk the words and the spaces between the words usually an audience when an audience comes to listen to a lecture or talk all they are interested in is the words the concepts the thoughts which they can add to their mind the content of their mind the content of me it is rare very rare for an audience a listener to be conscious not only of the words which in you exist as thoughts they go into your ears become little nerve impulses are then decoded and become a thought that's on one level on another level the entire talk is happening within you to be conscious not only of the words but of the ground that underlies the arising the coming and going of words now in you these what is auditory perception becomes thought if you become conscious of which all that that means is notice this makes it more simple if you notice not only the words but the space or stillness between the words which is there usually ignored then sitting here can be a very powerful transformation within you why the mind wants to understand why so will satisfy up to a point the mind only up to a point because if you become aware of the silent spaces the ground like the canvas the space or the silence the stillness the gaps is where the canvas so to speak shines through there's the words and there's the the background the words are the foreground awareness of the background does something amazing inside you awareness of the foreground all that it does all that does is create new thoughts because that's the foreground the words becoming thoughts and there's the mind grasping at each new one and if you're sitting here only interested in the foreground you're here with a tension in your head a little bit and the tension implies what's the next thing then okay go on oh and now consciousness of the background what happens inside you through the simple act of noticing the space or the stillness or the gaps there's nothing much there thought says there's nothing there what am i noticing nothing from the point of view of the mind this is true but every moment that you notice that little space the underlying space that is a moment of space inside you and that is an amazing thing when space arises inside you what is that what does that mean the mind says space arises it is a moment of pure consciousness with nothing in it except awareness a space of pure awareness i've already said too much just unconditioned i've recently come to call that space consciousness this is not a term from science fiction we're talking about inner space the one thing that in your lifetime here you get any achievement no matter what you achieve you are poor and deprived and ultimately have not flowered if you have not found space within yourself and then all that there was in your life all that there is in your life is things every thought is a thing then you are trapped in a world of things both external things and you know what that is like so much going on objects situations you have to deal with and the next thing and another thing that absorbs your attention a life dominated by things happening what's the next thing and then the inner things one thought after another and identified with each arising thought becomes a part of the problematic me completely dominated by we could call that object consciousness objects everywhere and when people interact with each other superficial interactions relationships close relationships families at work every interaction is dominated by object consciousness something is very important here and it's not the relationship it's something that we need to get out of it something we need to get to some other point it's not this moment it's the next moment that is always goes part of object consciousness what's the next object that matters no space no space also by the way means no love because you are trapped in forms form identities every form reduces you every form that you identify with reduces you to that form every thought and the bundle of thoughts the me that's the human condition to be trapped in object consciousness not knowing the freedom that is there waiting underneath it as the vast spaciousness that is within you that is the unconditioned consciousness itself where you go beyond a purely personal sense of self and the amazing thing is that is is so close to you that you could never get there if you create a distance by believing that something will enable you to get there that is a danger that is built into every technique some techniques are very good they are there to bring about space consciousness but the person practicing the technique will have put the technique between him or herself and the space and to create it a little bit of future so as you sit here simply to be aware not just of the words but also of the underlying space or the gaps you could call it between words and in every moment when you are when you notice that like now and now and now there you have a sense of simple intelligence and you can perceive this room the body sitting on a chair listen to the words this perception happens but you're perceiving it through the stillness that is there in between the words you're no longer perceiving through the conditioned mind that labels every perception compares it to something of already projects itself forward to the next moment where it's good there's going to be something that is more complete than this and this is an amazing if this is all if you have only moments here as you sit here of perception through stillness or awareness in which that which is perceived is not labeled mentally by calling it something comparing it to something putting some mental just that is an amazing thing if you can then walk out of here perhaps in the break and take a cup of tea or coffee from someone and while he or she gives it to you your hand reaches out for the coffee or tea and within that space of taking this coffee and lifting it it's happening without mental commentary it's possible that the mind then will come in and say oh it's happening without mental commentary that's okay afterwards it comes in sometimes but it is an amazing thing we are when that and from the point of view of the mind made self this is not significant at all because it always says okay and yeah okay i got that now what's next because the mind itself is based on what's next and what what and that does not add anything to it but that is the most amazing thing if and this is only a tiny it may arise initially and many of you it's arising already you may not even know it fully that already in your life there are spaces and i'm absolutely sure that in many of those spaces are already arising and you may not even have fully known this you may only have noticed it as occasionally peace in your life as you go about your daily business a space of peace you may only have noticed it as inner peace in the midst of doing something perhaps not beyond that and not perhaps recognized it as the arising of unconditioned consciousness within you thousands and thousands of years of collective human conditioning subsiding as that space arises and then you are looking at the cup of coffee or a flower or the sea or you go from here walk three four steps down a stairs staircase in a state of simple alert presence that is an amazing thing way to live what does it how does that change my life says the little me and above all how does that solve my problems don't i need to solve my problems first before i can allow myself to explore this dimension of consciousness or don't we need to tackle all the problems that are out there in the world all the enormous amount of suffering that is on the planet don't we need to sort that out first before we can allow ourselves the luxury of transformation of human consciousness the mind asks it may be a legitimate question of course so much suffering yes in oneself and in the world but what comes first can you tackle human suffering without going to the cause the root cause of human suffering self-inflicted humans inflicting it on themselves each other and themselves so ultimately self inflicted by humanity on itself as you saw the warfare that is human history why is all that what where does that madness come from why this need this seemingly this inability or unwillingness to live together peacefully why can't they do it why can't we do it what is what is it that impels humans to violence not just the obvious violence out there that we see in the world but also violence in relationships that may not even be physical violence the violence at work the fighting battles for a little bit of power a little bit more position more power a little bit more money a little more right than you this what where does that come from that self-inflicted suffering it comes from not knowing yourself beyond the needy little entity that is the mind identified me with its story which needs not only does it need more it also needs conflict that's an amazing realization that there is something in me that needs conflict to keep it going why is that what is the mind identified self that needs conflict why does it need look at a simple thing like the need to be right which is a great source of conflict in relationships if you look a lot of conflict in relationships is based on the need to assert my position as right me to be right which implies i need you to be wrong and an enormous amount of emotional force goes into defending one's mental position and proving that i am right and you are wrong this is one of the ways in which the mind made me strengthens itself because if i can be right i have added a little bit to my sense of self i have diminished yours it's all delusion but it works it's on the level of delusion of course i have diminished your sense of self and i have added something to my sense of self i am right i have identified with a mental position and then asserted the position as me and in some cases it goes as far as physical violence that need to be right collective entities need to be right too we are right our belief structure which is not recognized as a belief structure is called the truth it's not recognized as a story it's called this is how it is and so we are in possession of the truth our interpretation is not recognized as an interpretation we this is the truth we are absolutely right you are absolutely wrong so we create an enemy and that's enormously satisfying to the mind made self you can see how satisfying it is inside you when you can be right and so finally perhaps you've even triumphed and you've shown the whole world that you are right sometimes that the the mind made me does that by let's say there's a committee meeting or something and one person gets up and shouts his or her point of view and before anybody has a chance to question it they walk out of the room they'll just say you are all totally wrong this is how it is and then quickly walk out before anybody can challenge it and then you walk and then feel enormously enhanced in your sense of self and then it wears off so then it has a need for enemies the mind made self because it's a sense of self the story of me is defined through those things that impinge upon me that those things that are problematic this is how you we all know people who is where you would say who would they be without their problems you i'm sure you've met one or two but of course the question really some have it more strongly than others but everybody's sense of mind made self a lot of the story of me is the problem problems of me that go into my sense of identity and in many human beings if you removed the the problems i'm in conflict with this situation and that's and i and not much would be left of their sense of identity with if you remove the conflict out of the mentally constructed story the story comes to collapses what's not much left without my enemies without my ex-wife and ex-husband and whatever things without the belief that the world has treated me unfairly which surely is the truth without the belief that i didn't make it something prevented me so there is a need in the structure of the mind to be in opposition with something or someone this is the mind made self is looking for the next thing to be in opposition with a human being or a situation or a place anything will do because and that is one of the mind patterns that is very very frequent very common mind pattern when you are totally identified with the self is complaining about something or someone in the head if you're very alert you can catch yourself complaining a lot of the time and looking for the next thing to complain about where is the stain in the carpet there that shouldn't be there why didn't they remove that they should have done something about it long time ago shouldn't they don't you agree oh yes yes it's dreadful they they are just awful yes of course every time you complain you've made something or someone wrong a situation a person a place the weather and when you make something or someone wrong the fiction of me the mind made me grows a little bit stronger so every little complaint in the head that you have about a person a situation or my life my what happened to me is is satisfying to the mind made self because at least now you think you know a little bit more strongly who you are your sense of self has become a little bit enhanced through complaining so some people have that pattern so strongly that their very identity is a complaining one me my my what they did to me life what life did to me oh let me tell you about it and so to discover that pattern is liberating what does it mean to discover it it simply means to see it oh oh okay there it goes again that means you're no longer trapped in it and that is another instance where when you see something like that that was a habitual pattern in yourself that was you had identified with completely when you see it that also is one way in which the unconditioned consciousness is arising in you because that in you that recognizes that sees a pattern is free is not part of the pattern and the seeing doesn't need to label it you simply see it any inner pattern that's been habitual in you that was part of your sense of self you see it you internally you recognize it oh and perhaps the next time the complainer comes as you walk out of here and suddenly you see it oh okay there it was again something is arising that is not part of that and that is also the unconditioned that is very similar to you noticing the gap between words here that is another way in which that dimension is arising and so you are becoming free of thousands of years of collective mental conditioning that has created unbelievable suffering on this planet a nightmare of suffering on this planet simply because human beings have been completely trapped in a narrow personalized collective or personal personalized sense of self me form totally identified with mental formations as a me complete absence of space no space therefore no love because love arises out of the unconditioned not through identification with a form as a me the me form in the head of course needs other humans to add to it as thought forms to enhance my sense of self maybe okay you are the ideal person you meet someone and very often when you there's a strong attraction it means that this person is ideally enhancing my sense of self i feel more myself when i'm with you you are here to fulfill me and we are going to sign a contract that you are going to fulfill me for the rest of my life and i'll get very angry if you don't and it usually happens the anger comes the anger comes and the frustration comes because nothing in this world can live up to the expectations that you have as a mind-made little self with its story that's as yet incomplete nothing in this world can live up to those expectations because the story-based me says okay do something make me complete it looking for places situations conditions people and sooner or later and usually sooner frustration sets in it's not living up to expectations it's not at every retreat we have some people who get extremely unhappy because their accommodation does not live up to expectation oh i hadn't booked i had booked a better room i'm not saying you can't go to the office and say you made a mistake i think i'm in a shed and i booked the best okay we made a mistake or they say no well nothing we can do about it now the world let me down again and that's the strange thing and you may have noticed the world lets you down a lot that includes people and then the little me comes up with strange theories and interpretations the story becomes very twisted and it says i'm not trusting anybody anymore because they've all let me down that's how they are they're all like that they talk about spiritual but even the spiritual people let me down and the story that then gets incorporated into the story and and when this and that is a little bit satisfying at least the world lets you down but then you the story that you form out of that gives you a little bit of self-enhancement because obviously you are right and increasingly the entire world is wrong that's you can feel inflated in that way it can go to the it can go the borderline between what we call sanity and insanity is not clearly defined and when you look at what is usually called insanity and then you see most of it is just a little bit more pronounced versions of what is normal you can see it more clearly oh and we call a person insane just a little bit more of identification with that identification with a story complete absence of space so that a dreadful fate going through life and never realizing the most what is both the most simple and the most profound thing in a person's existence which goes beyond the person never realizing the that's something of such simplicity which is knowing yourself not not as that which arises in your consciousness in consciousness as objects thoughts sense perceptions situations events emotions knowing yourself not as that which arises but as the space in which all those things that make up your life which ultimately is not your life but only your life situation all those things that make up your life that conventionally you would identify with as my life a dreadful limiting thing those things that arise come and go knowing all those things ultimately not to be who you are and knowing yourself to be not that which arises in consciousness but consciousness itself as you sit here what does that mean what arises here words thoughts sense perceptions they come and go underlying it there's a space of awareness without which nothing would arise if you were not aware there would not be this room it all comes to life knowing yourself in your awareness and simply noticing the space which is the inner space of no thought oh somebody said truly i tell you unless you become as little children you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven now to know what he meant you have to look at a little child and how a little child perceives the world and perceives you one year old one and a half before the entire structure of the conceptualized mind including the conceptualized me before all that begins to come into operation there is a time in a child's life when they perceive the universe through unconditioned consciousness and there's an innocence and a clarity and a love that flows through their eyes and you can see it when you are very alert and you watch a child and a joy he or she looks at you and you look into the child's eyes and it's liberating because you are not being judged by the mind there is a pure awareness looking and with that pure awareness always comes a very subtle joy which is a simple joy of aliveness itself it has nothing to do with your life situation and the child has that for a brief moment as awareness grows before the mind takes over then we go through identification with mind the story of me we begin to suffer life gets difficult heavy and serious it's a serious business this life very serious you better take it seriously too and you carry a burden of yourself the conceptualized self becomes the burden and then there's the possibility of realizing who you are beyond that and then you encounter the childlike state again it's the same and not the same in one way it is the same openness space of awareness and yet if you have been through the dimension of thought and you've come out the other end so to speak which we all have which humanity has now there is an added dimension of depth to that awareness that is not yet there in the child and yet it's very similar to that state innocent perception innocent open perception the ability and this is essential the ability to look and now i'm using look in a wider sense than just referring to visual perception i'm using look as almost an analogy for something deeper which the ability to hold in awareness whatever arises the ability one could say to give attention to whatever arises in this moment to meet everything that comes into the space of now with that innocent looking which begins with looking at a flower without labeling it and thus realizing how alive that really is that you don't really know what it is that it remains a mystery that it has a depth to it that you didn't know about it before because you you thought you knew what it is when you gave it a name and so to look at a flower in that way where you suddenly know its sacredness and its beauty so deeply as not being separate from who you are and then to look at another human being in that way in other words to meet things and people through that inner dimension of space which is also unconditioned intelligence itself in which it appears that you don't know anything and yet a far deeper intelligence than the conceptualized mind has is suddenly flowing through you and then to meet a problem a challenging situation not so much a problem because all problems exist in the head all there is is really a situation that may be challenging to meet any life challenge not a story in the head but an actual challenge which can only be here now to meet any challenge in that state of clear aware alert presence and to simply look at it within that alert spaciousness that means an intelligence far greater than the conditioned mind with all the things that it has learned can now come in and deal with the situation some people have encountered that when they were faced with life or death situations and they had never heard any spiritual teaching like that they simply suddenly the mind stopped and they were able to confront the situation in that state of complete alert presence and they just looked whenever there is a true emergency the mind is far too slow and it doesn't have enough intelligence to deal with it so it sometimes happens that the mind steps aside because you want to survive the mind steps aside and the unconditioned conscious consciousness comes through in that moment when there's a life-threatening crisis and then you become far greater and deeper and more intelligent than you thought you were because it wasn't you you stepped aside you as the mind made me stepped aside and then that came through and out of that action sometimes comes and you find yourself doing without premeditated saying okay now i need to run over there jump into the water and pull this man out of the water but it might be cold uh should i or shouldn't i no none of this happens you're just like a bird sitting on a branch the bird there are no thought processes involved in animals they are beautiful expressions of consciousness but they're not thinking should i or shouldn't i jump off this branch now it could be dangerous let me think about it now you when you when you look at a bird you will notice its strange movements the typical bird movements every animal has its own way of being in the world and the bird is as all animals are extremely good at looking because they there's an intelligence in an animal that operates beautifully that has become obstructed in humans animal is limited yes through its form it has certain limitations but it lives in greater harmony with the totality because it is a more perfect expression of the totality than humans are so the bird is sitting on a branch and it looks and to a human observer it might appear as if the bird were thinking about what to do next but it's not it's simply looking or the cat now due to the limitations of animals a cat cannot help feeling desirous of eating the bird the cat cannot go beyond that condition pattern and yet within the limitations of its form it operates beautifully the cat when a cat also looks whenever a cat comes into a new place comes around a corner or upper hill and then the cat doesn't move just move on it stops and it looks and then at some point movement happens no premeditation it simply happens and usually they do the right thing and all you can anywhere in nature you can observe how things function how beings function without thought beautifully now we as humans can learn from that realm of functioning as pure expressions of consciousness but we cannot go back to the pre-thought stage not thinking that much i can't even remember my problems and then another one oh that feels good and so you are leaving the problematic evolutionary stage level that we call thinking but you're not moving beyond thinking you're falling below thinking and even that is liberating from pain it liberates you a little bit from the dreadful pain of thinking i've identified with thinking and then one more drink and finally you drop off the chair you fall off so you have successfully left the thinking realm but you've moved into pre-thought and unconsciousness and you're now on your way towards the vegetable realm and if you become even more unconscious you will move to the mineral realm which also have some consciousness it's beautiful for minerals to be minerals they are not they are not in a world of problems minerals are fine but we are not moving back there it is the destiny of humans to step beyond thought and it doesn't mean that they're not going to think anymore from then on thought operates quite beautifully when it's needed because thought has become free of self it has become simply functional and it's a beautiful function it's become free of claiming to be someone to a me so where does that leave me who am i if i'm not that a pattern arises in you for example complaining needing to be right whatever the pattern is and you see it look you look at it before you thought you were that pattern you didn't know it was a pattern it was the problematic me now you see it as a pattern it loses its sense of self and you are the space within which that is seen you are that which sees it the awareness that sees the patterns so the story continues of me until it comes to an end which it does sooner or later but while it continues yes it's still there my past is still there and yet you even honor it but you are not seeking yourself in it anymore this is the form as which you appeared or continue to appear for a little while in this world of form and yet you know yourself to be the consciousness that underlies all forms as that which sees the aware presence as you sit here you listen to the words you are that which listens not what you're listening to the listening you are the listener or the listening when you see you are not that which you see you are the seeing that which sees not that which is seen and that means self-realization beyond the little self that was conditioned and even when you think you are not looking for yourself in the thoughts identified with each little thought you are that in which thinking happens the space in which it happens and that's a wonderful freedom ultimately freedom from form freedom from the world which is that because the world is the world of forms and every form has a limited lifespan it's amazing how quickly forms go everything in your life every experience every situation it's here one day and the next day it's gone even this morning breakfast somewhere where is that now it's disappeared the experience is already gone you arrived here you were looking forward to coming here now you're here but you're on the express train of time which operates on the surface of things not in the depths of consciousness but on the surface of things in the world of form time seems to be the dominant force and it seems that you can't get out of that express train it pulls you along and now you're sitting here and before you know it the conference is past it's gone oh that was nice we had a nice session you can hang on then to a thought form and even that i eventually forget about the conference and then you have a photo that was the conference and then the photo fades and then you can't what was that there are few forms here there must be people but i can't it's amazing how quickly time dissolves things and frightening to the mind itself that wants to hang to something permanent surely there must be something permanent that i can hang on to no and so that's why everybody lives in fear because deep down that everybody knows it's not going to last it's not going to last i'm looking for something that's going to last that is like a sense of truly being being of being rooted in life of being impermanent a sense of permanency of ah at home i want to find home i want to be at home let people live their life they're never feeling hot at home i haven't arrived yet wait and you can't in the world of form it is not in the nature of the world of form to satisfy you if you're looking for yourself that's why it's so frustrating this world and that's why you've all seen how when you finally find the ideal form that you thought would complete you which might be a situation or person or place it didn't quite live up to expectations something came in there that spoiled it all again and that's how it is it's every form is already being consumed that's why a poet once compared time to a fire and it's burning you up and that's beautiful to see how impermanent all the forms are in this life to the little ego egoic entity it is dreadful now why is it liberating to see it to see that the story of me will end will finally become the dash between my date of birth and my date of death on my gravestone it will become reduced to a one inch dash and it mattered so much it was so serious my achievements my successes my failures what people did to me and what i didn't achieve and it was so important and then the soap bubble pops and sometimes very suddenly and that's usually regarded as the most dreadful thing but death is something very strange what is death a form dissolves where there was something suddenly there's nothing oh and it could be the death of a person or it could be the death of something that was important to me a thought form something i had identified with as me it could be a whole way in which i had interpreted the universe i had sorted it all out in my mind i knew exactly where things fitted in where my little universe was my philosophy of life and suddenly death comes and goes and my explanations don't make sense anymore and that's what death can do it removes form not only from out here it can also remove form inside you as thought forms that can be very painful but it can also be an incredible spiritual opening into formlessness because what's left when a form dissolves and this is why every death is sacred whether it is the death of a person or if you have even sat some of you may have sat with an animal that died and even death of plants there's always the dimension of the sacred that comes into this world through death and i'm not denying that death is also sad on the level of form that tears may happen when a form dissolves and yet whenever a form dissolves there is suddenly that space that is beyond form it's like a little opening of space appearing in the fabric of existence that before was so neatly arranged my house my living room every item of furniture was in its place and one day i come home and it's collapsed where there was a house there's an empty space that's a form of death too and when it's not resisted through running away internally into future into some thought some new thoughts to explain it all when my explanations okay there must be some explanation just be with it surrender to the factor of death no matter in what form it comes because it'll come it comes all the time in one form or another how can you be in this world without encountering death and if is death the dreadful thing that it's made out to be on one level yes it is very sad there is pain perhaps emotional pain but if you are in touch with who you are beyond thought you will encounter the strange phenomenon of sensing peace underneath the emotion which may be pain so in any kind of death a form dissolves and for a moment there's an opening into the formless the unconditioned consciousness which is sacred shines through but you need to allow it internally when we are all conditioned into believing that it is the most dreadful thing and a terrible injustice that there should be such a thing as death the fact is there is and so ancient cultures that were still in touch they were not where people were not so completely absorbed in thought they could sense that the sacredness of death and there are always signs of respect whenever a person dies in more ancient cultures people would feel very reverent suddenly they might have hated that person who suddenly died and yet the moment this person dies they show great respect and there's they take off their hat make the sign of the cross and are very quiet and whisper as if in the presence of something some great mystery which is the truth they are in the presence of a great mystery but it's not hidden as it is in western civilization death is denied that no dead body must ever be seen unless you're a close relative don't look at death in ancient cultures you see the dead body so welcoming death when it comes into your life as an opening into the formless one life one consciousness which is as you sit here we are all dying we are dying to a false sense of self and it's beautiful that's a beautiful death you've probably died quite a bit already to be capable of sitting here and embracing that death of that self voluntarily you must already have died perhaps a few times so to speak and that was painful because there was still resistance you suffered suffering is another way if you want to avoid spiritual teachings and omega conferences and retreats then eventually suffering will work also for you it may take a little longer the only thing with spiritual teaching is it speeds things up if you're ready you may not have noticed that we are talking only about one thing all the time space whether it's through death whether it's through becoming aware of space awareness during this talk perception looking without the conditioned mind it's only a habit a deep-seated habit of labeling everything so all we are doing we're going to move our bodies in a little while the secret is of this transformation is not so much to make it happen but to allow it to happen because if you think that yeah you have to make it happen that can easily become another problem and the fallacy of believing that you need to achieve a particular state which is very widespread in spiritual circles i need to achieve a state it's called enlightenment that's why i'm here because i want to achieve that state the truth is you've achieved it already it's the unconditioned that is already there underneath the conditioned so how do i fully know that i don't i don't why believe the speaker when he says you are enlightened already you can add that to the content of your mind how do you truly know it beyond believing and the key to that is and this is a very powerful portal into space inner space the most powerful we are going deeply into that for the rest of this afternoon deeper and deeper into that space and that powerful portal is simply called to allow what is now because what is and now are inseparable so i don't even need to say now to allow what is to be as it is because it already is that is the most powerful opening voluntary opening death is an involuntary opening to allow is a voluntary opening to allow internally this moment to be as it is the form that this moment takes which changes all the time and a lot of the time people don't want the form that this moment takes they want another moment not this i want that and when they get to that they don't want that because the mind structure always wants the next and more allow this moment internally to be as it is and you will notice enormous power comes with that which the ego egoic little selves tells you you will become powerless if you don't fight anymore but you become empowered and space is that which arises whenever you allow this moment to be no matter what form it takes because there's only one moment ever which is this one the form it takes changes the moment doesn't change it's a it's a fallacy to believe that many more moments happen in your life there's only ever this moment can't get out of this moment but the form changes there's the space of now which is the space of consciousness which is you the form changes and usually people resent the form it takes it's not quite right yet this isn't what i wanted so there's an internal no to the form that this moment takes which is keeps the little me going but it's it's the story of no the no keeps the story very much alive of me if i'm not fighting anymore then the story will dissolve who am i without you bring a yes to now with that suddenly there is space around what happens this is only a way of putting it and that's an inner space spaciousness so here's that annoying little thing happening again and instead of the usual reaction there's simply the recognition that you cannot argue with what is you can but it's called suffering and then you internally you become aligned with whatever form this moment takes instead of reacting to the form that this moment takes which strengthens your own form identity the illusion of me the reaction keeps it going whatever the reaction is complaint and so you bring a yes to now uncompromising because it is otherwise you're accusing the universe of not doing a good job you say i could do better this isn't how things should be this isn't how life should but it is this is now don't mistake a mental interpretation of what is for what you need to allow now this is very important because otherwise you might think that let's say you lost your money on the stock market there may be one or two here who experienced the dark night of the soul so and that's good it all makes sense you lost 80 of your money okay and 80 of your sense of self perhaps that was part of what you possessed is also dissolved and now what is it that you allow do you allow the story that okay i worked for nothing i saved for the past 30 years i've been working for nothing i've i've had three marriages they failed now i failed at this my business empire has also collapsed i it's all been quite pointless and it's too late now to start anything new what could i possibly do now so life has dealt me a dreadful blow this is called a story of me and as such it it's satisfying even if it's an unpleasant story at least it tells me who i think i am i still have an identity and i keep telling myself my my story of me you want to listen to me listen what happened to me it's dreadful and so that's not when i went p and i say allow what is we're not talking about allowing some fiction in your head because that isn't it's a story it's a thought movement it's much more simple allowing what is to be allowing what is to be refers to is this moment which in the case of the person who lost his or her money on the stock market means standing at a bus stop waiting to catch a bus breathing looking around the sky the trees the aliveness in your body other people walking past then the bus comes getting in paying your fare sitting down watching and there's an alertness and there's a beauty you're watching the dance of life going on all around you you know at the back of your mind that you're going to visit your attorney to file for bankruptcy but that's the story every moment you have a choice it's not that you forget what what this trip is about but what is it that dominates your consciousness is your consciousness being absorbed by your story or is your consciousness present are you totally absorbed in the conditioned consciousness or are you present here as an aware a space of awareness which is who you are beyond form so another way of putting it is are you here as the form only or are you here as the formless one consciousness honoring yes honoring the form that you are while you are in that form that's why you're going to see your attorney so you honor it and then you see your attorney and then you shake hands and you look into his eyes there's just you sit down and you breathe and then you sign a few papers and then you look for somewhere to live you pick up the phone and then you sit in a little room on a not as comfortable as before and you're just present with what is and occasionally the story will want to come in and get hold of you again and occasionally you get lost in it again now the amazing thing is the more you are out of the story the more intelligence begins to operate in your life that it even affects the story on the level of story so the likelihood that something that is pointing towards harmony something that is fits into your needs at this moment will come in is far greater when you're out of the story than when you're in the story and perhaps trying to look for a solution from within the story where you are an unhappy failed entity trying to become a happy successful entity that's hard work and it may not work at all and if you if you get happy you won't be happy for long as just that entity but if you can step out of the story as much as possible and be the aware presence you'll be amazed how how much intelligence comes into your life to support you not just from within by finding yourself suddenly doing the right thing you do something and just happens you have suddenly have an idea may even come as a thought oh that's what i'm going to do and then you go and do it or you're walking through a park not with the burden of the story of me but as an as an alert aware presence and suddenly you've run into somebody and he offers you a job and you lost just lost your last job and you lost your money and so synchronistic events coincidences come very often almost one could say miracles come into your life when you access the unconditioned consciousness and when you don't access it you are very limited life is still flowing through a little bit but it can't flow through a tightly tied knot which is the egoic me entity which is it's a state of in of contraction and so nothing can flow not only the inner energy in your body the entire intelligence of the universe cannot fully express itself through that not so an amazing power operates in your life when you access that which is so simple so it's essential not to get your life have your life absorbed by the story of me which is thoughts it's another way of putting not to be absorbed all your attention being devoured by thought to step out of that step out of the story as much as possible into the space of now and then become friendly with the space of now instead of antagonistic towards now become friendly with whatever appears in the space of now that great power lies in that when you no longer deny internally whatever appears even if it is death because sometimes death will appear in the space of now whatever appears in this place of now you become friendly with it whatever because it is the pursuit of happiness that's usually regarded as something desirable and positive but that may be a dangerous thing the pursuit of happiness you may be missing something in that pursuit that's already here pursuit implies of course that you are seeking it where is it it implies that you are looking for a state a desirable state that lies somewhere in the future and that becomes a pattern built into the very structure of the human mind that is the seeking pattern the mindset the collective mindset that is always looking to the next thing the next moment in the hope that happiness will be found there or that I will find a more complete version of myself there that's a very normal thing to be doing the bank robber does that because he's not interested in the money but what promise the money holds he may believe that it will liberate him provide freedom freedom of movement enhance his sense of self happiness and it could be there in the spiritual seeker too who is looking for the answer some state that one has read about enlightenment perhaps that will finally provide lasting happiness yes so both the bank robber to take one extreme on the evolutionary scale and the spiritual seeker are still manifesting the human seeking mode and that is so normal for most human beings to be in the seeking mode but to many it hasn't even occurred that they are in the seeking mode or that a different state of consciousness is possible and wherever you watch television the media films almost everybody you watch is in that seeking mode but the newsreader always they are not at ease with the present moment because the present moment is regarded as insufficient underlying that is the belief that I am not yet enough that's a very deep-seated thing I am not yet enough and so I am not happy I can only be happy if I'm have finally arrived at that sense of completion within myself where I feel I am now fully myself surely nothing else will bring me lasting happiness than finding myself fully being myself fully so the bank robber seeks that through the money and all throughout civilization people are seeking this that or the other and they are ultimately in a search for a more complete version of themselves an enhanced sense of who I am because that sense of who I am in most humans is deficient you can notice that that it is deficient if you only even imagine that somebody tells you you haven't got much longer to live would be the most dreadful shock because you would feel but I haven't arrived yet but I'm not complete yet surely I need more time the most precious thing the one thing that I need to complete myself find myself find that deep lasting happiness and peace to find that the one thing I need is more time and so that you then trapped in a state of consciousness that we could call time bound where whatever you do is governed by the notion of time and unless you are very old it will usually be future that is of the greatest importance to you the time ahead of you as you get older the time behind you as the time ahead of you shrinks the time behind you there seems to be more of that more past and then in older people the past assumes a greater importance they remember it they're looking for themselves through memory of me and my past what happened to me and think about it and talk about it that is quite normal because future has shrunk but some old people they don't have seem to have realized yet that there may not be that much future left so they're still looking to enhance themselves through more this little word more is so vital if we want to discover the inner pattern the inner pattern that is perhaps one of the most great the most pronounced characteristic of that state of consciousness that I believe is now coming to an end on the planet the state in which you are identified which means you derive your sense of self your sense of identity from a mentally constructed image a conceptualized me memories conditioned patterns experiences memories all kinds of identifications which become thoughts make up a bundle of thoughts and emotions that accompany those thoughts and that mentally created bundle becomes a sense of self a me and it is that mind made me a story my story my history it is that that most humans derive your sense of self from I am my story and that sense of self is always seeking it is a characteristic of that sense of self that it is in the seeking mode and it exists in a state of not enough and that's an amazing realization that most humans although many are now moving beyond that state of consciousness but on the planet most humans are still trapped in that state of consciousness where their sense of identity feels incomplete I am not fully myself so the belief then to a large extent unconscious is if I could only be more then I finally will arrive at self-completion myself will be complete so the need for more becomes overriding in one's daily existence more to add to who I think I am to me what does that mean to a child where this is already starting this mind movement the formation of a mind made sense of self to a child it begins when a child claims possession of something and every young child does that and it will this child will scream if you take away the toy in very deep pain already nothing much and it's not probably even taken away somebody just picked it up to look at it and it's enough for the child to scream it's mine and that scream remains in most humans it may not be when they reach adulthood the scream may not be you can't hear it anymore but it's often inside so what does it and this is only the way it begins this is one thing where the child already feels I have been diminished in my sense of self because that toy has been taken over what has happened the simple thing that has happened is the toy of course became a thought form it's not the toy out there it's the thought form of my toy and the little word my is essential here because then I have invested the thought form of toy with a sense of self and that's a collective we are all collectively conditioned to do that so this is the just the early beginning of a huge development of mind movements where the I seeks to add more thought forms that it can that it can invest with a sense of self and so it is looking out for more of me so to a child then that's one thing and then the child identifies with whatever it can incorporate into its sense of self so this is the growing egoic entity and this it seems that needs to happen to every human being we cannot tell a child no this is not your toy there is no such thing as possession let go of that thought it doesn't work you have to allow the child compassionately to go through that it's the beginning of delusion we could say yes and then it goes on and then you can see how that how the child begins to suffer through identifying more and more with that self and fearing that something that I regard as me one will be removed from me and then the child grows and the toy becomes the car mine and other possessions may come this is one level then other levels of identifications come what other people think of me or other another other people's opinion of me can become more valuable than a possession it's only just a thought form but I can hang on to that and it can then cling to the bundle of thought forms and reactive patterns that go with it and emotions that accompany it this me oh they think I'm great so many people think they will find themselves through enhanced recognition by others maybe when others will recognize how great I am then I will have found myself so there's this this is the striving for self being fully myself can take the form of that needing the recognition and this could take you to the end of your life especially if you don't get it or striving to have wealth it could take you to the end of your life especially if you don't get it if you get it then you discover the strange thing that it doesn't complete you I still feel I'm not enough that wasn't it I've got all the things that I thought would complete me and there's still and then comes a critical stage the suffering that is there whenever you have not really found yourself the suffering that is built into the very structure of that mind-made identity because suffering is that sense of lack that sense of not enough in that sense of fear that's underlies that state of consciousness and so you've made it in the eyes of the world and yet it doesn't seem to have worked if you haven't made it you can be stuck in the illusion for longer until the very end and then create an identity your story then changes into somebody who hasn't made it and then the story will seek explanations why the world is so unfair has treated you so badly that it prevented you from being fully yourself they did something to me whether you identify them individually or whether they are the collective or whether they are a political party or whatever they and that is another thought forms that will then supply you with a sense of self and that's quite satisfying too temporarily at least now you think you know who you are you are the one who has been treated unfairly by life okay so you are trapped one way or another in a conceptualized sense of self and me and it's not enough and if you make it everybody tells you you should be happy now and you feel that pain that's that sense of lack and some start drinking then or take drugs just to dull the pain that they feel there are famous people we all have read about them who were very unhappy very deeply unhappy the illusion has been removed from them that the future will complete them because surely they have everything already how can the future complete me i can't think of anything else and when you arrive there you can go into despair and drugs and so just to dull the pain or you suddenly see the fiction of the self that the entire culture is immersed in and tells you this is how it is and you suddenly see this is not and then you might become interested in going beyond that going beyond a conceptualized me in the head and you realize that happiness on that level cannot be found the illusion of happiness yes many times you will think there it is i have it now i'm complete i'm getting married tomorrow all my shares have gone up by 100 percent i'm complete or i've become a master at this or that playing the violin the computer the greatest computer wizard in the world i have abilities that nobody else has i can throw a ball better than anybody else and so they pay me millions just to throw this ball once a week and everybody thinks i'm the greatest i'm the great example to everybody they construct an identity for me out of the ability to throw this ball and i buy into that for a while i actually believe that i am the greatest ball thrower and it's myself and then after a while that wears off because it's a fiction it's a conceptualized entity in the head and the fact that it is in millions of other heads doesn't change the fact that it's a delusion a fiction so the pursuit of happiness is undertaken by the conceptualized entity the me it is seeking more of me amazing that is one level of consciousness that is the level of consciousness that has dominated the planet for as long as humans can remember since recorded history and far beyond that and it is a dangerously dysfunctional state in many ways because that neediness expresses itself in many ways that create enormous amount of suffering to others around you and to yourself the need for more is the the need for having an enhanced sense of self and that is not only personal it's collective too when that same mindset becomes a collective mindset the me becomes an us that's even more mad than the personal and it creates dreadful it's suffering it's done so throughout history the need of nations and religions and tribes to enhance their sense of identity through strangely enough being in conflict with others they are actually seeking conflict you can see it whether you look at this on a personal level or whether you look at it on the level of the collective there seems to be the need to be in conflict with something or someone if there were not this need why would human history look the way it is look at the 20th century hell created on the planet that potentially is a paradise humans create their own hell and they do it collectively and they do it on a personal level there are many humans not just in places where there's shortage of food they create hell in many different ways even in so-called prosperous countries if you look into the individual human being many of them carry their own heaviness their own hell inside their relationships at work and they might look happy on the surface so much suffering so much suffering on the planet human created suffering so the the entity the conceptualized me is condemned condemned to seeking more it's condemned not to be happy not to be at ease the structure of that mind made self does not allow it so unhappiness is actually built into the structure of the egoic mindset it is not ultimately to do with the content of your life the reasons why i am unhappy they are interchangeable so there is the need for more to enhance me the me that is never complete the story of me that hasn't quite worked the way it was supposed to work up till now there are not many humans who feel that the story has gone very well indeed the story of me and if there are some all you have to do is wait a little and then the incompleteness returns the sense of incompleteness and people believe this is their personal problem everybody else seems to be okay except me the sense this is built into the very structure of that conceptualized identity its need for more its need for conflict in order to enhance its separate sense of existence this is the me and this is the other now i need to get a strong sense of me if i can be in conflict with something or someone it enhances my sense of self or if i can take something away from another in my delusion i believe that that will also enhance my sense of self and that could be just a thought form that i'm trying to take away from somebody through making a remark that diminishes the sense of self of another person by say and i question anything that that person identifies with as not good your car is no good this dress would look good on your sister little remarks all these they are unconsciously designed to diminish another person's sense of self they don't know what they are doing and they believe if they can diminish somebody else's sense of self they have enhanced their own sense of self a little bit all that it means is the illusion of me has grown a little so all you have enhanced is the illusion but to the illusion it feels great for a little while and so that it can become extremely greedy the need for more is incessant we see that the same egoic entity becomes collective in a corporation we've read about these things recently and we were surprised to see how greedy these big corporations are their whole reason for being seems to be to accumulate more perhaps in some cases the people at the top didn't even forgot what they manufactured it was and it didn't matter anymore what except we need more more so a greedy entity is simply a magnification of that mind pattern so let's not fall into the trap of saying there are a few all these directors they are evil no they are just in a position to be more greedy than others and so the same mind pattern operates on all levels it becomes the terrorist what does he how can it how can somebody kill hundreds or thousands of people even himself or herself in the pro what are they what is going on in here what is and people are at a loss to understand what what are they doing well it's very simple they live in and through a conceptualized entity which to a large extent is in their case collective it's a collective me based on their conditioning their religion their upbringing their belief systems their story the collective story of us and they don't know it's a story the way they interpret reality it is the truth to them they are totally identified with those thoughts that make up the self complete identification with thinking self-identification with thinking so you have a collective conceptualized entity and us and that entity has its own version of reality which isn't recognized as a version of reality it is reality to that entity in that entity then you've already deadened yourself to the deeper aliveness that is there underneath all those mind movements underneath the conceptualized me the deeper consciousness that is not conditioned the dimension that is in every human being underneath the conceptualized sense of self that is conditioned form thought forms underneath that this is the redemptive factor in human existence underneath that is a dimension of consciousness that we could describe as unconditioned vast but they don't know that the terrorist certainly doesn't know it and as yet most humans don't know it but more and more are waking up to it now the terrorist is so deeply identified and that's only an extreme manifestation of the same that's everywhere so deeply identified with the conceptualized that the entire identity is derived from those mind movements he's already dead to the deeper aliveness within him or her and then when you live through a conceptualized sense of self you manufacture a conceptualized identity for everybody else you impose mental labels on other people and groups of people you call them something a word a set of words and to you that is the reality of those human beings there are mental labels they are thought forms that you impose on another you can do it to an individual or to a group and once you have deadened yourself you're no longer relating to another human being you don't even see them anymore as human beings you are totally trapped in mind totally trapped in thought and thought is an abstraction you impose an abstraction on the sacredness and aliveness of another human being and that is what you relate to and then you've basically already killed them their aliveness is not there anymore you don't know it the next step can easily be physical violence and you will not know what you are doing you're operating in the realm of mental abstraction and you're reducing the world to that and you are making you love your enemies not in the sense of Jesus you love your enemies you love having enemies in that mindset the terrorist loves having enemies he doesn't love his enemies but he loves having enemies because they enhance his sense of self the us through all these remove America and in many countries collective identity would suddenly dissolve who are we now without those on whom we can project something the enemy is gone there was even within America because the same structure operates in everyone when Russia ceased to be the enemy there was I can one could sense a little bit of sense of loss in certain circles what are we doing now we've lost our main enemy they even made a humorous film about that where the president of the United States gets together he's seeking re-election and he gets together with an advisor and says we need an enemy come on and since it's a humorous film they come up with Canada as the enemy the most unlikely enemy they manufacture it and it works so this the need for an enemy to enhance one's sense of self is very great in the collective it happens in Germany national socialism the same egoic entity which became collective it's a very dangerous entity on all levels and it's they ended up with the whole world became their enemy great now we know who we are who are you well Germans we are that's that's who we are a concept in the head a conceptual entity

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[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 33:48)

How do we know who we are? Who are you? Well, Germans, we are, that's, that's who we are.

A concept in the head, a conceptual entity. It's a dangerous thing, very dangerous thing. And on a personal level, it operates in the same way.

And that's been going on for so long. Well, how does it operate on a personal? Who is your enemy?

It doesn't have to be a person or a group of people. The enemy can be a place, a situation. So wherever you are, something you complain about in your head.

And you might have noticed that the, that entity loves complaining too. Reacting against something and complaining about it because in every complaint, it strengthens itself a little. Because if I complain about a place or a situation or another person, I've put myself in the mental position of rightness.

I am right because that's, but the complaint, the assumption underneath the complaint is that I'm right and what I'm complaining about is wrong, obviously. That's the underlying assumption under, behind every complaint. I'm not talking here about complaint that you, in order to change a situation, you go and call somebody up and says you delivered the wrong thing I ordered.

A TV and you delivered a washing machine. These are perfectly fine. Or you tell the waiter this, I ordered a salad, not the soup.

On that level, complaint is fine. It's purely functional, but that is very little. But the other complaining that goes on is the self-talk in the head, which sometimes also becomes verbal, of course, where you complain and you can't do anything about it, nor are you even trying to do anything about it.

You just want to be right. And that's an unconscious need to feel a slightly stronger sense of self. So every complaint is an attempt to be a little bit more of me and then it wears off after a few minutes and you need something else to complain about.

And you can see people who, how sometimes they look for the one thing that's not right in a situation. They look for this little stain in this beautiful carpet and then their focus is on the stain. But this really bothers me.

Why didn't they do anything about that stain? But that stain is 2% of the carpet. Yeah, but they shouldn't have.

Why don't they? And you're more, drop the complaining and that already diminishes your sense of self. I don't know who I am anymore.

And then come the problems, my problems that I need to think about day and night. Problematic situations. They've been going on for years.

Complex, very complex. And you can wake up in the middle of the night and suddenly you get this overwhelming mind stream of your complex problems. And they've been going on for years, but it's vital that you think about it now.

Think. And underlying all that thinking is what's going to happen to me? So that sense of identity loves its problems, loves its enemies, loves conflict, but it never tells you that openly.

It needs to remain unconscious because if you make it conscious, you even start to laugh. And that's very liberating. If you laugh at patterns that you discover within yourself and you see them, that's even sitting here is liberating when you suddenly see conditioned mind patterns.

There's nothing personal in it, just human conditioned mind patterns. And you see them, seeing is the beginning of you being free of them. Seeing means you're no longer totally identified with the pattern.

The main enemy really all boils down to the main enemy of the mind made self. The one thing that is, doesn't like and wants to get away from and is not happy with and often complains about, just really, it's this moment. It doesn't like it.

Or it ignores it completely because the next moment is so much more important. This is why I have to think and think about what's going to happen. This, just this moment at the most, it's a stepping stone that gets me to the next one that's more important than this, that's for sure.

And what is the next moment? It's future. And where is the future?

Has anybody ever encountered it? No. I've been waiting for it a long time, but all I could ever find was this moment.

But one day it's going to come, just a little bit longer. And so you see what seems so overriding, so overwhelmingly real, time, past and future. Seems to dominate everything.

You can't get out of time. You just, it drags you along until finally you collapse and die. It seems so overwhelmingly real, this time thing.

And yet nobody has ever encountered it. All you can ever experience, find, is this moment. So if you go more deeply, you actually discover that time and thought are so intrinsically related as to be virtually one.

And you discover all that future is, ultimately, is a thought form in the head, in the human mind. It's not here now. Is the future here?

Only this, only now. And then we can check again in five minutes time. You can see the paradox.

Five minutes later, it's still now. Now, if we try to work this out intellectually, it won't take us anywhere. We might write a PhD about it, is whether time is real or not.

But all we need to see at first hand that your life is always now. Of course it is. It's always this, just this.

The rest is thought forms. Now, because people are so trapped in thought forms with their sense of self that they give that greater importance than this. And that's a delusion.

And so they are cut off from the deeper levels of their being that can only be encountered when the movement away from this comes to an end. And in other words, your attention, instead of being absorbed by thinking, moves into the immediacy of now. That is the meaning of waking up, of spiritual awakening.

What do you awaken from? What do you awaken out of? You awaken out of thought, self-identification with thought, into now.

And then the mind comes back and says, and now what? And you may notice when your attention moves into now, a certain alertness comes with that. You may become more aware of your sense perceptions.

And you may also notice when you are present in this moment, the compulsion to label all your sense perceptions and experiences drops away. And you are able to look at something, or more importantly, someone, a human, but let's just stay with non-human for a while. You're able to look upon something or listen to something or touch something without compulsively, immediately, mentally putting a label on it, calling it something, or arriving at some conclusion about it, or comparing it to something.

You can be with something like a tree or a flower, and simply look without labeling. That is a new state of consciousness arising, where you are moving out of the trap, the prison of compulsive, conceptualized thinking. And above all, where your sense of identity or your sense of self shifts from being the thinker or the thought to being the awareness that is prior to thought.

That's an amazing thing to happen to a human being. It begins with such a simple thing as being able to look at something or touch it. And it's being perceived within a field of spaciousness, or we could say stillness.

Have you become unconscious? No. There's consciousness, but not the labels, not thinking.

There are many of you, because I know this is happening on the planet to more and more people now, there are many of you who already experience that in your daily life from time to time. And you may not even notice that this is what's happening, that you are simply able to be with something without calling it anything. And you may perceive that only as a piece in the background.

There's a certain sense of peace in the background. And through that, you're perceiving the world. You can then walk through the city or drive through the city, mostly here, without being there as a conceptualized entity and perceiving the world through the conditioned mind structures.

So you are there as behind the wheel of your car, a driving story of me. And whatever you perceive, only just enough so that to not be involved in an accident, but you're thinking about important things. My life situation, which involves past and future, the future matters so much.

I'm on my way. Where to? The future.

And you continuously miss this, this. So the arising of spaciousness inside yourself is really what it is. And until you find some space within yourself, which even that is not quite right because that space is the essence of who you are.

Without that space, you can look for happiness for a hundred lifetimes. Where is it? Because you're only looking to objects in your consciousness, believing that when I've accumulated enough objects in my consciousness, I'll be full and complete.

Object in consciousness means thoughts. Object in consciousness means whatever happens to you becomes an object in consciousness. You don't experience the world out there.

Whatever you experience as the world happens inside you. Who knows whether there's anything out there at all? Everything that you, the speaker here on the chair, where is that happening to you?

The words, where are they? They are inside you. They are rising in consciousness.

So humans are looking for themselves through what I call sometimes object consciousness. They are obsessed with the world of objects, the world of things. Not just material things around them that of course they're also obsessed with.

Situations, events, the next thing and another thing. And the world of things impinges upon you continuously saying, this matters, everything matters. Oh, what's the next thing I need to deal with?

And you can never catch up so many things. And your life becomes a burden of things. And then there are the things inside really, every thought is an object that arises in consciousness.

And there's a stream of thinking, one thought after another. This is what Thoreau referred to when he said, our life is frittered away by details. Simplify, simplify.

Simplify. Details are the worlds of things, objects in consciousness. So you get like a room full of furniture and you can't move in it anymore.

And you think you need more. No sense of spaciousness within. And potentially the dimension of space consciousness as opposed to object consciousness, which is thought, is in everyone.

Underneath the movement of thought, there's the vast spaciousness already fully developed, fully complete in every human being. And the essence of who you are is that not anything that arises in object consciousness but you are the very spaciousness that is beyond objects, things. So really all that is required is to discover in oneself that dimension of consciousness and thus realizing the fullness of being and of yourself that is already here.

That's the end of seeking. Not the end of doing, but the end of self-seeking through doing. Then doing becomes quite nice.

It's a play. You participate in the game of the universe. You cannot not do, so you might as well participate.

You do. It's a dance. But self-seeking goes out of the doing because you've already found yourself not as a conceptual entity, as the depth, the still, spacious field within yourself.

You can't, future cannot help you to get there. It can only prevent you from finding it. And what is the quickest way to realizing the truth of this?

What is the, is there a shortcut? Is there something that does not give me time because time is the illusion. If I think I need time to find that inner space, I'm deluded again.

So what, how can I know this without making it into a future state that I want to achieve? Which is another concept. How?

And this is so simple. That's the secret of the universe as far as humans are concerned in their present evolutionary stage. The secret lies in simply no longer internally resisting, resisting, denying, or running away from what is at this moment, this whatever is at this

moment.

To find an inner alignment with the form that this moment takes. And the conceptualized egoic entity can't do that. But you can do that.

When you see the truth of it, there's the possibility of living in a state of yes to what is, an inner yes. The conceptualized egoic entity lives in the state of no to what is. And that is the greatest transformation happens when there's the shift in you internally from denying the present moment because it's not yet enough, it's not really what I wanted, this shouldn't be happening, I want something else, I definitely don't want this.

I want the next moment. It's going to be much more, much more complete. But you always have only this.

And then the strange thing happens. At first sight, it seems that the form that this moment takes, because that's all it is, there are not many moments in your life, there's only this moment ever. But the form that this moment takes changes continuously.

Different forms come into that space of now, which is that inner space. Forms appear in the space of now in your life. A situation, a person, an event, a place.

And very often, the form that this moment takes seems to be a limitation. It seems to limit me. I want to be limitless.

I want to know myself as limitless. Many people feel that the form that this moment takes, how could I accept that because this form limits me so much. And this could be where you live, it could be relationships, it could be your physical body.

You cannot not encounter limitations in the world of form. You can change, you can have slightly more pleasant limitations. You could be sitting in a tiny little room and saying, oh, I'm so limited here, I want to expand, I want to live in a mansion.

And you might succeed. 10 years later, five years later, you live in a mansion, you seem to have expanded. And then you sit in your mansion.

What now? For a while, it feels great. You have expanded because you have identified with the thought form of mansion.

You have expanded. But sooner or later, the mansion will limit you in other ways. Your new life situation will suddenly show you there are other limitations.

You may become famous and suddenly discover that great limitations come with fame. You're free of the limitations that came with poverty. And now you encounter other limitations that come with that.

So it's yes, you can play around with different forms in your life and experiment and expand into other forms, not expecting to find the limitless in the world of form and realizing in one way or another, the form that this moment takes will be some form of limitation that it is in the nature of form to be limited. And that's a deep realization. And then the running away from the form that this moment takes, the reactive relationship to the form that this moment takes isn't there anymore.

When you see the truth of this and are able to say yes to the form that this moment takes instead of resisting the form that this moment takes internally, which keeps you trapped in your own mental form. So what does that mean? It means quite simply, you become friendly with what is.

It doesn't mean now you're condemned to non-action out of that state of yes, intelligent action arises when it's needed, not when it's not needed. You embrace what is, even if it seems very limited or limiting because it already is. You can't remove is out of existence.

So you become internally aligned with that. So when you say yes to what is, space arises, so to speak, around what is. This is a way of speaking, but that's all we can do here.

A sense of space or spaciousness arises around the form that this moment takes. And that liberates you from the limitations of form. And you cannot find the spaciousness by always running away from the forms that arise, but being with them.

Surrendering to the form that this moment takes is the key. The inner surrender, whatever is, is part of the totality, the web of interconnectedness that is the universe. This event is part of that.

There is a certain inevitability to the form that this moment takes. Yes, then perhaps action arises and it changes. You're actually amazed how quickly the form that this moment changes when you don't resist it anymore internally, because a greater intelligence comes into play now.

And things, miraculous things can happen even on the level of form, but they didn't happen when you lived in non-alignment with is. They only happen when you live in alignment with is. And to some people, that means yes to the most dreadful limitation.

And that is why traditionally it's people who reached that realization found the most dreadful limitation in their life and surrendered to that. The archetype of that is Jesus on the cross. This is the human archetype.

This is true for each human being. The most unacceptable form of limitation that a human, and you don't need to be a Christian to believe this or to see the truth of it. In fact, if you're a Christian, you may not see it because they tend to have a narrow interpretation of something that is very deep.

So you have somebody on the, a human being in a situation that is a manifestation of the most extreme limitation. Totally. And symbolically, the words that came out of his mouth were at first, "'Why hast thou abandoned me, God?' The last, no.

The next words that came were, "'Not my will, but thy will be done.'" Which means thy will is the will of the one. Not to make it into a mental concept. The will of the one is whatever is now, not my will, but thy will be done, a complete yes.

And at that moment, the cross, which is the symbol of the ultimate limitation, becomes a symbol of the divine. It's the dual symbolism of the cross. It's a torture instrument and it's a symbol of the divine.

And that is whatever may be happening in your life and be the greatest limitation in your life, it is not only the limitation, it's also the opening. When it's not internally resisted, the opening into space. Because space comes with a yes to what is.

You are no longer bound to what is. You are no longer bound to the form. You know yourself as the formless one life, one consciousness.

Oh, that's the true happiness that lasts, the heart of happiness, the core of happiness, not the superficial happiness that goes, whoo, whoo, whoo, whoo, whoo. And the next moment, whoo, whoo, whoo, whoo. Whoo, whoo, whoo, whoo, whoo.

That's, so nothing needs to change for this to happen in your life, this transition. Whatever is, is the best that is for you at this moment. You work with that.

Say yes to that. Don't believe the mind when it says, okay, I'll say yes when I get this out of the way. And enormous power moves into your life.

The very intelligence of the universe manifests through this form, which then becomes an opening. And it's the end of suffering, the end of the suffering entity. You may still get a toothache from time to time, but that is how it is too.

You surrender to that also, surrender. That's all. No time is required for the shift in consciousness.

You can only do it now, yes to now. And find yourself through that. Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (34:15 - 35:41)

♪ Gate, gate, para, parasam ♪ ♪ Gate, bodhisattva, gate ♪ I would like to explore with you this afternoon the deepest truth of human existence.

[Speaker 1] (35:41 - 1:57:31)

When I say that, that may sound a little bit abstract, interesting, but abstract, human existence. And it may sound a little bit philosophical, but this is not a lecture on philosophy. Nor is it a lecture at all.

The best way to look upon it is as a meditation. Although somebody is speaking, look upon it as a meditation. So when I say the deepest truth of human existence, it sounds a little bit removed from your everyday concerns so let's put it in another way.

We are here to explore the deepest truth of who you are because you are human existence. We are here to explore the deepest truth within yourself. Knowing yourself at the deepest level.

A level so deep that knowing yourself and knowing God become one and the same. There are two levels to this talk. If it can be called that.

One is the words and one is the gaps between the words. A certain stillness. I just point this out because it is helpful as you listen to be aware not only of the words, but of an underlying field of stillness out of which the words come.

Nothing personal. There's a field of stillness that is both within and without gaps between the words. A silent space in between and underlying the words.

And simply to be aware also of that dimension. Then listening to these words is more than absorbing information because there isn't that much information here. It's not an information-based talk.

Then it becomes a meditation to just sit here and listen. And the deeper teaching, if it can even be called teaching, is not in and through the words. The deeper teaching lies in the dimension of stillness.

Because the moment you acknowledge that underlying dimension, you have accessed a realm within yourself that is deeper than the stream of mind with which most people are identified as themselves. Simply as we sit here to acknowledge, to notice, to listen to an underlying stillness, that which acknowledges that in you, that which is able to listen to that dimension, listen not to something, listen to nothing, to nothing. Just the act of listening.

That in you which is able to acknowledge that dimension, to be attentive to that dimension, is a realm of stillness underneath the stream of mental noise. In other words, the moment you pay attention to that dimension of silence, there is a stillness in you. Because through thought, you cannot pay attention to silence because thought is noise.

So already, although through words, we are going to progressively explore the deepest truth of human existence, even as you sit here and follow the words that progressively explore the deepest truth of human existence, that deepest truth of human existence is already emerging in you as you sit here and listen, even now, simply by paying attention to silence through the inner stillness. That is the only way you can notice. The stillness in you notices that.

And you have gone beyond the continuous stream of mental noise that for most people is who they think they are. So the answer to the initial question that I asked, I said, let's explore the deepest truth of human existence, the deepest truth of who you are. The answer of that is never really in the future.

Not even within the framework of this talk is the answer of who you are beyond the conditioned mind. Never is that answer in the future. It's always now.

So our question, what does that mean? The deepest truth of who you are, knowing yourself. Doesn't everybody know themselves already?

And most people would say, yes, I know my name and all those things that are associated with my name, things that cling to that initial form identity that my parents have given me when they taught me what my name is, such and such, whatever it may be. First, what's your name? The little child is asked and is very proud to be able to say his or her name.

And the parents say, very good. That's the way human existence goes. And nobody realizes that already through the initial first label, mental label, first identification with a thought, a sequence of sounds, the first limitation, a delusory limitation on who you truly are beyond mental concepts.

The first limitation has already arisen. You have already entered a prison of conceptualization. It is the beginning of it.

But we need to go that way. Humans have to move through that. It would be futile to tell a child, you have no name.

Don't identify yourself with a name. That the child has to go through the stage. Every human being has to go through the stage where they begin to accumulate experiences, knowledge, labels, words, concepts, all kinds of things, cultural conditioning, personal conditioning through their environment.

And these things then cling around the name. And after a few years, gradually a sense of self develops, a me. Even in a small child, it begins to develop.

When the child says, my toy is bigger than yours, it feels good to the child to strengthen its sense of self through feeling I have more than you. I know more than you, or my father is stronger than yours. You can add a bit more to that sense of self.

And again, that is a normal process. And so gradually the accumulations continue and you become an adult. And then you have a certain sense of self based on the conditioning of your mind.

That is the mind that never stops. That is the mind that is a continuous stream of thought processes. And the thought processes are strongly connected with the conditioning of your mind.

So the stream of thinking, and this doesn't depend on culture. It doesn't depend whether you live on India, in India or in the West. It is the same in every human being.

The stream of thinking goes on incessantly. And a lot of that is to do with me and my concerns and my problems and what's going to happen to me. There's a story of me, which is my past.

Things have happened to me. Things that I have accumulated. The content of my mind is a kind of story that people like to dwell on, talk to themselves about their story, have a monologue or a dialogue in the head.

And so a sense of self develops that is mind based. And that's again happens to everybody. A sense of self develops that is content based, content and form based, a psychological form of me.

And for most people, that is who they are. So if you ask them, who are you? They will tell you a little story.

It could be, they could keep it brief. They could give you a brief summary of me or they can make it very long. They can go on for hours because my story is so interesting and dramatic.

Have you got enough time to listen to it? Let me tell you what my story is and what I have suffered, what I have seen, what I have, my triumphs and my victories and my defeats, what people have done to me and all the bad things that I have done. I'll tell you about all of this.

And so this is why psychoanalysts make a good living because there you pay them to listen to you and to the story. And if you want to be thorough in psychoanalysis, you have to go three times a week, for a few years. And so you tell your story.

And as you tell the story of me, more and more layers of complexity become revealed about me. And it's so interesting. And so after you have completed your course of psychoanalysis, if ever, if ever, then the psychoanalysts might tell you we have come to the end.

By the way, that's very rare. He will tell you we have come to the end of our analysis. We have analyzed everything about you and I will give you the file.

It's big. Here it is. You can take it home.

This is you. This is you. And if then somebody asks you, do you know yourself?

You say, oh yes, it's all here. The content of my mind has been analyzed and here it is in this file. Or it might be a computer disc these days.

And so I can tell you all about it. And of course, when they say I know myself, what they really mean is I know a lot about myself. I know many things about myself.

A lot of information, many facts. And they forget who the I is that knows because all that knowledge is knowledge about. It's form knowledge.

You know a lot about your psychological form identity. Not that there's anything wrong with it. Each person moves within a form identity, has a form identity, which is not to be rejected, but to be honored.

Part of your form identity is the function that you have in this world. The social function, your profession, whatever you do, your activity, your relationship to other people as a mother, as a father, as the boss. Many other things come into it.

Your cultural background, your nationality, the nation that you feel you are part of is part of that conditioning. It is not to be discarded, but also to be honored. You honor the forms that are the content of your mind.

You identify with as me. The only thing is if you only know yourself as those forms, because every form identity consists of various roles that people play within that form. And that usually is the limit of people's self-knowledge.

Plus if they've done psychoanalysis, they know about their childhood and all those things that happened then. So is there more to who you are than the form identity, which has two levels. We've been speaking about the psychological form of me.

And of course, then there is the physical form of the body. So people identify with the two. There's my physical body, me.

And there's a psychological story. And that is the story of me. And that includes all the conditioning or the reactive patterns.

All those things are in there. The content of the mind is the psychological form of me. So we have the two levels of identification.

And sometimes the body can be a very strong identification in certain people. It becomes part also of the psychological form identity. If, for example, your body is very beautiful or your body is very strong, that enhances your psychological form identity.

It gives you a feeling that you are stronger, more beautiful than others. And the sense of self becomes enhanced through that. And that can last for quite a while.

And it works quite well until you reach, the body begins to grow old. And then the beauty fades. And if that was the main part of your form identity, great suffering starts when the beauty fades that you thought that was me.

So the form identity, both physical and even more strongly psychological form, has certain characteristics. And one of the characteristic of form identity is that it never feels complete. It never feels, except for brief moments which turn out to be delusory, never feels really at ease or at peace.

It never feels that you are freely and fully yourself yet. Yet is added by the mind because that's a little escape which says, okay, yes, there is this recurring, almost permanently underlying sense of lack, of insufficiency and of incompleteness. And many people who are not conscious enough don't feel it directly.

It becomes translated into continuous wanting and needing this or that to fill that hole that they feel. To fill that sense of lack and insufficiency with something to make myself complete in this form identity. And so there is an enormous need in human beings to add more to me, to make me complete.

And that is the search, that is the enormous momentum behind human wanting and needing. The Buddha speaks of desire. And again, that's a little bit abstract.

At his time, it was a powerful word perhaps, but desire really is wanting, needing. And then you look for things to add to the accumulated content of mental identifications to complete my sense of self. So you look to, and it's strange, it's a little bit like a, it'll grasp at anything to add to me, whatever it can.

And a very common one, of course, is material possessions that I identify with. I have more than you. This enhances my sense of self.

I identify with my house, I identify with my car in a very subtle way. I feel it's an extension of me. The car has become a mind object and that mind object is used to strengthen, to enhance a deficient sense of self.

And for a little while, it works. You feel bigger as you step into your BMW. You have expanded.

Your sense of self has grown and you are more powerful than all those little puny little cars around you. And for a little while, that works. You feel almost you have arrived.

And then before long, it wears off. And then you sit in that car and it's not that fulfilling anymore. It's just a car.

It gets you from A to B. Oh, that wasn't quite it. And then you look to the next thing.

And the next thing could be a relationship to complete me because the last one didn't work. It didn't complete me. Something went wrong.

So you go out and look for it there. The ideal one I'm going to meet one day, I'm looking for the ideal partner that is going to complete my sense of self. And then it happens at times that you find him or her.

That means it's called falling in love. And it says, okay, I found you. You are going to complete me.

You are going to make me happy, which you sometimes read in the lonely hearts columns, looking for someone to make me happy. What they mean is to make my sense of self complete, to fill that lack that I feel. And so you might get married.

And for a while, the illusion is there just that it was there with the BMW, that now I have arrived. This is when you fall in love. You have this euphoria of completeness.

This is... Finally, the story of me has completed itself. I have arrived.

I made it. And then comes the honeymoon. And then comes ordinary existence and all the things that arise in ordinary existence.

And sooner or later, this ideal partner fails to live up to what she had promised when he signed the wedding document that is to complete you, to make you happy. It's not working anymore. That feeling disappears.

And then it becomes, oh, I made a dreadful mistake. It wasn't the right one. He wasn't right.

Or you begin to look elsewhere. But in the meantime, you've been looking every day for hundreds of little things to add to me to enhance your sense of self, all kinds of little things to whatever. One could make a list of hundreds of things, how that egoic self and mind-made entity looks for little things to add to me.

Experiences can add. Anything, drugs maybe to have an experience with that, maybe that. Food, even food, I can add that.

It's a psychological need. The body has a limited need for food, but the psychological me has a great need for food because even through that, it can make itself feel a little bit more complete. A box of chocolate works for an hour or two.

And you can see the impulse behind it when people reach into the bag of chips or the chocolate, and there's no, there's more. It's not the body really that wants. It's the mind-made self that seeks some completion through that.

And when the bag of chips is empty, it looks for the next thing. So in many little and big things, there is this enormous need to add to me and in everywhere to make myself complete because it's never, that completeness never lasts. And so people believe that their sense of not having arrived, of not quite having made it yet, of not being truly and fully yourself, people believe that this is their personal problem.

They believe that others exist who have made it because you see the movies and you see the magazines that show you these glamorous, famous people who apparently, surely they must have made it. They look so happy in their glamorous surroundings. And the culture tells you that that is the way to go.

You can make it, just try harder to have more possessions or more status. That's a big, intangible, but enormous thing to add to oneself. Other people's view of me is an enormous piece, bigger even, can be bigger than the greatest mansion.

That need for others to give me their approval, their high opinion. And so there's the need for status in society, for others to tell me that I am great and good enough. And that's an enormous, these are enormous chunks that are identifications that you can add to the deficient sense of self.

And for a little while, it also works. And then if you've met any of the famous people that you see in the magazines and films, whatever they, sports, movies, famous this, famous that, people who are told by the surrounding culture and the world that they are special, that they have made it and they are great role symbols in society. And if you meet them, you will see that underneath the glamorous facade, there is the same sense of deficiency of it didn't complete them.

The whole world telling them that they are great and deep down, they feel this is a big lie. Also, there are famous people who have actually, through that, have seen through the delusion of that, the meaninglessness of this world, which to a large extent is mad because it's the human egoic mind telling you that you are important. And some people striving a lifetime to add that to their sense of self.

To the world, please tell me that I matter. My sense of self depends on it. Please tell me that I am important.

And then of course, only a few are told that. The others are left in limbo and are unhappy there. And those that are told they are important, they are unhappy there, not complete.

And it happens occasionally that a few of those people who made it rich and famous, they begin to go deeper because they have everything and they can't possibly think of any more to add to me. Because what can you add when you have everything? Could buy anything, go anywhere, and everybody thinks you are God and still feel.

And so some of those actually see through the delusion and then penetrate to deeper levels of their being. But for many of us, there is always the hope that through this or that addition to me, added content for the mind, the mental identifications, that through that, I can complete myself and my life is going to work. And finally, feel that I have arrived, I'm home.

I'm fully myself. And what people don't realize is, it is not their personal problem, the fact that they feel that they haven't arrived, that they haven't made it. It is built into the very structure of the mind-made sense of self.

That deficiency and sense of lack is inseparable from those mind structures, from that identity. So it is nothing to do with what you could possibly add. Nothing that you add could fulfill you, is the truth.

And that is, for spiritual seekers, this is a very subtle point. Because that mindset, which is collectively conditioned, nobody's personal problem, that has an enormous need for more, for more of whatever it may be, more. That mindset is quite deep seated.

It implies, of course, that you have an enormous need for future, because it's only through future, and you're looking into future, where you can get the future, the mind-made self tells you, will enable you to get that. And this is why very few human beings are actually where they are, rooted in the presence of now. They are reaching out in that drive for more.

They are reaching continuously. They are being pulled out of now, which is all there ever is, which is life itself. Nothing else ever exists except now.

But they are pulled out of this into a mental projection, a psychological future, where they're going to complete themselves, because they will reach that more there. That's the momentum, and that's how most people live, in that continuous, almost desperate search for being ultimately yourself, finding yourself through more, through future, finding myself through future. Everybody's doing it through looking where you can add more.

Where is the more? I need more. And then you become frustrated with the more gross levels of more, and then you move up into the subtle levels of more, where you seek to add, perhaps, spiritual experiences.

And a spiritual seeker needs to be very careful and look whether, within him or herself, the need for more still operates, and then the spiritual search becomes a need to add more to me as spiritual knowledge. Spiritual knowledge is valuable and beautiful as a pointer, but it can become mental content that I identify with as me. Spiritual scriptures and spiritual knowledge is wonderful.

This country is the cradle for that. It has got the most beautiful and profound maps or signposts towards who you truly are, to point you to that. And if used rightly, it works beautifully and powerfully.

But if used by a mind that is seeking more to add to me, then the very scripture can become a hindrance because you accumulate maps and signposts. They are beautiful and you carry great knowledge. And in a very subtle way, a spiritual ego could also come in.

It's very more subtle than the BMW ego. It's the ego coming back through the back door, and there's a very subtle sense of, I am now more than all those poor little worms who have not yet seen the light. I have studied those things.

I have studied with masters. I've been to monasteries, or in the West, it's workshops. I have done all those, and there's so much.

I have, there's a very subtle sense of more, but never enough because you haven't, well, I haven't quite arrived yet, but I'm already more than all those, all those mere more. It's a very subtle thing, and you have to be very vigilant to see it in yourself. That still, that deep-seated collective mental conditioning, the need for more flows even into the spiritual search, the spiritual seeking, seeking to become fully myself.

And again, there's a great psychological need for future because I seek to complete myself in future so that the same mindset can operate in that realm also. And so it's good to know that because once you know it and you know that the sense of insufficiency or lack is intrinsically linked with that mindset, you can't get out of it, no matter what you do, no matter how much you add, it's never enough. Even spiritual knowledge, if it's only an adding of experiences or knowledge, it's never quite enough yet.

But the search goes on, the great need for more of me until you see how it operates in yourself, until you see that there's a continuous movement away from what is now, until you see the need for this mind-made sense of self. And this is really lies at the root of that continuous conflict in the world collectively and personally, the madness of human history. Why is that?

Why is human history so insane, 80% of it? Look at the 20th century, incredible. How can humans do this?

There must be an enormous dysfunction at the core of the human mind and this is it because a great need of this mind-made sense of self is actually in order to continue to feel its sense of self, it needs to create opposition with others, situations, and people because only by fighting against, by having issues with, can it continue to feel its mentally derived sense of self. You need the sense of separation of me against you. There's a need for conflict and problems built into the mind-made sense of self.

It never says that openly. It says, I'm looking for peace, joy, and happiness. But then what it says and does is the opposite in many cases.

So you can see the need for conflict in personal relationships, in organizations, nations between nations and nations, religions, and even within religions. Any human structure, sooner or later, they will be in conflict. There's these relationships every few days, most relationships, you seem to be forced to act out that kind of conditioned script where you are in conflict with each other.

And problems, the little self says, the egoic self says, I want to be free of problems. But problems are part of its sense of identity. It's looking for the next one.

And we all know people who you say, who would they be without their problems? It's easier to see it in others. All that is the structure of the self that needs its enemies to continue to feel its very favorite way of enhancing your sense of self through enemies is to argue and feel the enormous momentum behind being right in an argument, making the other person wrong.

If you can make the other person wrong, you can strengthen your sense of self. Of course, you don't know that you have really only strengthened the illusion, but for a moment, it feels good. Not really, but the ego says it feels good.

The body knows that it doesn't feel good at all. But the ego says, I've tried. I've shown him that I'm right.

And for the moment, you have added that big rightness to the sense of self and it grows. And then after a little while, it wears off. And then you need somebody else to make wrong.

And you might even be looking. It's, of course, unconscious. And then you start discussing a spiritual matter and you say, you don't know what you're talking about.

Let me tell you. Or you say something and somebody doubts your point of view. Now, what your point of view is a mental position, a thought, this is how it is.

And somebody else says, that's not how it is at all. But you have a mental sense of self. You have identified with the thought.

Identified means your sense of self is in that thought. It's a me. Your self is in the thought.

One could say, I sometimes use the expression, you have reincarnated into the thought form for a moment. Reincarnated means your self is in it. It's one with your sense of self.

So when somebody says, no, you're completely wrong. It is an attack on your very life. This is illusion.

Because your identity is in the thought. And so there's an enormous amount of emotional, the defensiveness that comes or the aggression that comes when you defend your mental position. In very unconscious people, it can easily degenerate into violence.

And then violence, in many cases, that is the root of violence. Making the other wrong. Even a nation, collectively the same mindset operates, making the other nation wrong.

Okay, let's prove that they are wrong. We'll attack them. And then we are right.

And the more enemies we have, the more we feel our sense of self. So it operates whether on a personal or collective level, that delusion that through fighting and opposition, you can strengthen the self, the me. And so it's always looking out.

It's not really, the egoic self isn't really looking for peace. It says that. It cannot show you openly that it's looking for trouble.

If it weren't, human history would not be the way it is. The world situation would not be the way it is. The madness of it.

And I always say, if you doubt it, read 20th century or any other century, but the 20th century is the most mad. Or watch TV tonight. If you doubt the madness, what is this?

And so it is built in this need for enemies, for problems and conflict. Everybody carries that in here and is forced to act it out to strengthen the illusion of me. And it always works for a little while.

So all these things operate, the adding and the needing opposition, needing an enemy works. Those two work very strongly. So you're always looking for the next thing.

And so what is humankind to do? If humankind is trapped in this collective conditioning of the mind, are we ever going to find the sanity? Are we ever going to find who we are beyond that delusion?

And there's nothing wrong with a form identity but if your sense of self is completely in it, it becomes dysfunctional. Form identity is an aspect of who you are, the form aspect. Function, social function, all those things I mentioned, beautiful.

But if your self is in it, if you derive your sense of self from that and have nothing deeper than that, it's always a cause of problems and suffering. It's beautiful being a mother but if you only know yourself as that role, you will be clinging and you will be clinging to that form. If you don't know yourself beyond form, there's always a dysfunction that comes in.

So how do you know yourself beyond form? This is the question that's been asked ever since the spiritual search started because it is a spiritual question. It is the ultimate spiritual question, who am I?

Am I more than this? And of course, you could add answers on the mind level by adding beliefs. They're a little bit comforting.

How do I know that I am more? How do I know that? How do I step out of this continuous stream of thinking?

A lot of it is to do with self. That's why it never stops. It's so compulsive because I need to keep myself going.

It's almost constant but it's always overlooked. And that is the mind-made egoic self, its main enemy, it has many, it needs them, but its main enemy that it continuously fights and ignores, opposes, resists is actually the present moment, the now. It doesn't want this.

It never wants the now. There's always an unease with the now. There's always more, sometimes more than unease because I'm looking, I'm on my way to the future that is going to fulfill me.

I'm not, this is, the now is a stepping stone. It enables me to get to the mental projection of future where I'm going to complete myself. So please don't hold me up now.

I have no time for now. I have something much more important on my mind and that is myself as this future projection where I'm going to make it. That could also be a spiritual thing.

It could be a spiritual mental image of a future stage to be achieved as a strong mental projection. And you're just trying to get away from this because you need to get there. Full liberation, attainment, realization can have an enormous pull towards future.

And you don't realize you are trapped in the same mindset that the BMW person is trapped in. It's become a pull towards future and trying to make it. And so I've met many spiritual seekers who've become unhappy after 30 years of search, 40 years of search, 50 years of search.

When am I going to arrive to really? Have you ever looked at now? Have you ever looked at the only thing that never leaves you?

The only thing that is ever real, the only thing where anything can ever happen, be said, thought, experienced, it's got to be now. Life is always this moment, but the mind made egoic self is striving towards the next one for its completion. It's looking for itself there.

It doesn't know that it is already here. Here, if you could only acknowledge fully and deeply this here and this now, if you could go deeply into this now, you would find that yourself beyond a mental story is already totally complete. And only on the level of form could you add things, and that's beautiful, never to find yourself.

You can learn new things, it's beautiful. Explore new countries, beautiful. More of this, even have more possessions, but you can't find yourself through that.

If you try to look for yourself through more, even spiritual experiences, they are nice too. But if you're looking for yourself, that never works. So adding more is beautiful, except you can't find yourself through more.

More works on the phenomenal level. And when you realize that, you give up. You recognize, first of all, the egoic need to make the now into an enemy and to run away from it, to make it into a means to an end, to resist it internally, to criticize it, to project yourself away from it.

I'm not interested in this because this is a limitation on who I am, who I want to be. I'm on my way to the future. Everybody in the big cities of the world, they are all almost out of breath.

And if you stopped any one of them, they would give you a reason why they are out of breath, because I need to get there. But the common denominator is they're all trying to get to the future. And the whole life is spent like that.

And the spiritual aspirant, metaphorically speaking, maybe he's not running around, but there could be this same inner urge for future inside. So the breathlessness would become a metaphor. When am I going to be myself?

Have you looked deeply into now, the only thing that never leaves you? All there ever is? Your entire life here in this space of now?

Don't talk to me about now. I don't want this. This is a limitation.

I don't want the place where I live. This is not what I want. I don't want to have the place where I live, the place where I work.

All these are limitations on my life. I want to limitless. I want to find myself as that which is beyond limitation.

That's why I'm trying to get away from the now. But has it worked? How many years have we been trying to get away from it?

Well, 55, 60. And have you gotten away from the limitations of now? Not yet, but I have some more time left.

But, and you see the fallacy of that, and then you suddenly, you pay a little bit more attention to now. First you see the pull away from it, and you notice that. And then your attention moves into just this.

Now, just this often is not, sometimes it's beautiful, but more often than not, okay, it's not that interesting. I mean, why should I linger here? And at other times, it's not only not interesting, it's actually, this is not where I want to be.

This not, this now, because this now is a limitation on my life. I'm trying to get out of this. Okay, but you can't.

So you look more deeply, and then something opens up within you. You pay attention to this moment. And then comes the realization, all you ever have is now.

The one thing that is permanent in your life. Now to the mind, it hardly makes sense to say that. What does that mean?

It's always now. The mind is, no, it's not always now. There's so many different moments in my life.

They're all different. It's not the case. The form that this now takes changes continuously.

Forms appear in this field of now. And because people know only the form that appears in the now, they believe that there are many different nows every day and every hour, one moment after another moment and another. But of course, it is always the one eternal, timeless one moment.

Only the form in which it appears changes continuously. Now, the very form in which it appears, this is the reason why many people don't want the now because it's not satisfying enough. It doesn't add enough to me.

It might even threaten my sense of self, the form that this moment takes. And in any case, it's not fulfilling enough. It might even be a limitation on me.

I want expansion. And here I am in this little prison cell in certain extreme cases where the now is seen as very, very limiting or your body, your physical body may be ill, can't move very well anymore. So that becomes very, the now, the form that this now takes can, in some cases, be extremely limiting.

And you are asking me, a person might say, not to try and get away from it? Yes, because that didn't work. Why not try something else?

Why not try to live in alignment, inner alignment with the form that this now takes? In other words, to embrace the now internally, no matter in what form it comes. To say yes to now, which after all is life.

It is inseparable from now. Life is always now, never not now. And so you say yes to life by saying yes to this moment and whatever form this moment takes, you say, how can I argue with it?

It already is. It is, it is the is-ness of this moment. Of course, I can change it.

I can take action now. If I'm stuck in a, I'm locked in a building, I've lost the key, this is the now. Of course, then I can get up and shout out of the window and say, can somebody please open the door?

But if nobody hears, maybe somebody will come. But at this moment, this is this now. Now you can internally argue with it and resist it, or you can say, that is the is-ness of this moment.

That is the suchness of now, the form it takes. And you see the futility and even madness of arguing with is, because whatever is, is already the case. So you, the shift in consciousness happens the moment you say yes to what is, because the entire structure of the egoic mind-made self lives on resistance and opposition and on making the now into an enemy.

It lives through that, that keeps it going. So the beauty of is, is we can step out of thousands of years of collective conditioning, not through needing more time to step out of it. And this message cannot yet be heard by everybody.

There are still many people on the planet, before they are ready to listen to this, they need more time. But since you are sitting here, I assume that something in you hears the message that to find yourself, and we will look more deeply now, but see what that, what does it mean now? To find yourself, you don't need future.

For everything else, it's helpful on the practical realm. It works quite well. Now, when you say yes to whatever form this moment takes, what happens?

Here comes the form of that this now takes. You say, all right, I welcome this because it is. The form that this now takes, usually something in you, which is the egoic structures would have resisted it as limiting, not enough.

It's not what completes me. And through resisting this form in a situation, an event, a person, a human being, it's all, it can only appear in the field of now. Through resisting it, any form that appears, you strengthen your own form identity.

There's a contraction in your form identity when you resist a form that appears in the now. And that contraction is the strengthening of the illusory self. And so it likes that, it has a strong momentum because it survives in and through that resistance.

When you relinquish the resistance because you have seen through the futility and madness of living in that way, and you embrace the now, there's the form that the now takes, and you bring a yes to that. And suddenly what I say now is only a little metaphor or a pointer. There is a sense of space around what is happening in the now.

There's a larger spaciousness, inner, perhaps even outer, a space around the form of now, which could be a human being, a situation, something has gone wrong, which happens a lot. The mind would call it wrong because it's against what should be happening. This shouldn't be happening now, but here it is.

Yeah, but it shouldn't, but here it is. Oh, okay. You become aligned with that isness, and that is suddenly, whew, oh.

There's a spaciousness around the form of now. It happens within a field of, yes, peace around it. You can't, it is not something that you can easily capture in words or thoughts because it is formless.

Through that act of what ultimately we could call surrender, entering the surrendered state of consciousness, surrender to God, that's a little bit abstract. Who knows what God wants? How do I surrender to God?

Surrender to whatever form this now takes because the totality has brought this about. It is intrinsically linked with the totality of the cosmos. Everything is totally interconnected.

So the form that this now takes could not be otherwise. The whole universe has brought this about as form, and there's a little me in the head that has an argument with it and strengthens itself through that argument. That is suffering.

That is the cause of human suffering. That is not knowing yourself beyond this little form. So suddenly there is a depth of spaciousness that is there when you surrender to what is completely.

An uncompromising, yes, that is surrender to God. And in that, the egoic structures that live on resistance and on denial of now subside. And there's a depth to your being suddenly and a peace that is there no matter what form this now takes because quite often, as we pointed out, it is a limitation.

It appears as a limitation on your life. Not, don't want that, but it's here. So the limitation, now people sometimes spend a whole lifetime running away externally and internally from limitations.

And I'm not saying don't change a situation if change is possible. But if you would find whatever situation you get into, you encounter new limitations and you are going to find that. Yes, you can improve your life situation, but even if you improve it, some other limitations will appear.

I gave the example in the talk yesterday, an unemployed actress working as a waitress, being in resistance to that or being in surrender to that, seeming limitation through being in the surrendered state in my little story that I gave. To explain that, in the surrendered state, she honored the now, each customer in the restaurant, instead of saying, here I am, I'm a brilliant actress and what has life given me? A waitressing job.

And then the now you can't honor because the now is so limiting and unpleasant, you would be fighting it internally, continuously, and every customer would, you would make him or her feel that, that you don't like this now and you are part of it. And then if she enters the state of, all right, this not a mental concept, I might as well accept that I'm a waitress. That is a further conceptualized sense of self, strengthening that.

Of course, you're not a waitress, it's a temporary function. You're nothing permanently as on, it's all a temporary function. So don't derive an identity, an unpleasant, not enough identity from saying, I'm a waitress.

This is what life has given me. Simply accept, not that you are a waitress, it's a delusion, accept this moment. And there you are, there's a customer.

And you say, can I help you? You're honoring and saying yes to now. With that comes in a totally different energy into the interaction.

And the customer senses that he or she is being honored. You honor the now and any form that comes into the now that goes with it, without saying, if you honor the now, whatever form this takes is honored. And so, and I gave a little humorous example that after serving many people in that way, she meets a director who gives her a card and call me up, my name is Steven Spielberg.

And the shift came in. Three years later, she's a famous actress, world famous. And is her life now free of limitation?

No, she can't walk alone in the street anymore. Everybody wants something. Totally restricted her freedom of movement.

What does she do there? To see that before long, some form of limitation will recur in your life, in the now. And you surrender to that.

You can change a situation, but knowing the limitless is not to be encountered in the world of form, because form means limitation. So you say yes to the now, even if it is a form of limitation, seemingly. You surrender to that, yes.

And suddenly around to the seeming limitation, there is spaciousness. At certain depths. What really is arising here, although we need to be careful with words, all forms, thought forms, physical forms, are conditioned, it's the conditioning.

Conditioned consciousness, consciousness appearing as a form, consciousness appearing as a thought form. Consciousness appearing in many, many forms. But there is, the appearance arises out of a vast realm of the unconditioned consciousness.

Before it takes form. And that is within every human being, that dimension is there, one could say, underneath the conditioned, which is all thought forms and emotional forms.

There's the depths of unconditioned, which could be, can be felt, cannot be known as such as you know an object in consciousness.

People look for God or themselves, believing that at some point in the future, of course, they are going to find God or themselves as an object in consciousness, as a knowledge in a subject-object relationship, as if they could know it in the way that you can know a tree, but you can't because the unconditioned is not an object. It is the ground out of which all mind objects, objects in consciousness arise into which they subside. So you can never know yourself in the normal sense of the word, but you can be that.

And that is felt, one could say, it is a realm of stillness underneath the mental noise and every word will reduce it. It is far more than that. Every word is no more than a little pointer.

A realm of aware presence that is beyond thought. Thought can happen, come out of it, but in itself it is consciousness, one could say, without thought, unconditioned. Oh, that is the deepest meaning of now.

Because the strange thing about now is that it never leaves you and it doesn't change the field of now because it is, the essence of now is, it is the unconditioned consciousness, the field in which all phenomena happen. And this, and now the beauty here is to know that, one could say, you know the now beyond the form it takes, but you don't know it in a subject-object relationship. You know this field of now, when you surrender to the form, you know that which is beyond form.

Surrender to the form, the limitation, and then that emerges that is beyond form and beyond limitation as yourself. And this is, goes against how everybody lives in this world. They do not surrender to the limitation of this form.

They think they want to get away from it. Surrender to the form of now takes you into the depths of the now itself, which you then know as the essence of your being, but don't know anything about it, a direct, unitive knowing as yourself. I would go so far as to say that you are the now, totally one with it.

It never leaves you. You can't leave yourself. The essence, the unconditioned dimension of who you are.

And when you know that, you can allow the conditioned and the form to be, and it's beautiful. The form as which you appear, because you don't need it anymore to derive a sense of self from it. Then the forms are beautiful also.

You honor them really for the first time. When you know yourself to be beyond the form, you honor all the forms completely also. So to surrender to the limitation, the seeming limitation, this is the essential truth.

The ultimate truth of all religions is the surrendered state of consciousness. There's even one religion that's called surrender, Islam, but it is the essence of all religion. In Christianity, that essence is contained in the image of the cross.

Jesus on the cross is all of humanity. The cross is the ultimate symbol of extreme limitation. Couldn't be more limited than to be nailed to a cross.

It's a torture instrument. So in a way, for a while, humans experienced the world, which is a world of form, almost as a torture. It's so heavy.

And then that can take up time until suddenly they can hear the message of surrender. And then at that moment, as symbolized by that image of Jesus, surrender happens on the cross, total surrender to extreme limitation and the seemingly unacceptable, not my will, but thy will be done. Thy will is the will of the one.

And then my and thy merge in the act of surrender. There's no longer my that opposes thy. When my and thy merge, there's total surrender.

Your will is one with the totality. And at that moment, the cross becomes a symbol for the divine. The very limitation turns into the symbol for God or the divine.

So it's not by resisting or running away from, but by that deep act of surrender that the divine is realized. And that, amazingly, does not take time. Surrender can only be now.

It may take time to dwell in the surrendered state as your permanent state. You fall back into resistance because the momentum of the collective conditioning is so strong. And then you reenter surrender.

But the moment of surrender is always now because you surrender to the now and in the now. So it can only be now. So that one decisive act or spiritual practice is the one that doesn't take time.

And that's the beauty of it. It really means you don't need future to find yourself and you need to add nothing to you, to find yourself, nothing. Then you can play with the realm of phenomena and add things.

It's beautiful. It's a play. But you no longer need it for yourself.

That's the essence of spiritual realization. All the teachings point to it. That is to see that what grace to see that the very thing that looked so heavy, which is the world of form, the very thing that seemed to be limiting me on all sides, that very thing is the doorway into the formless and into who I am beyond form.

And you see that ultimately they are one. Form is emptiness. Emptiness is form.

They are one. And that is the message of eternal salvation. The most sublime message for humankind.

Nothing else is needed. But that.

[Speaker 3] (1:57:41 - 1:58:29)

Thank you. Welcome.

[Speaker 1] (1:58:39 - 3:43:09)

It's brave of you to come here to spend the whole evening with someone that most of you haven't listened to before and to sit here for so long. It could be dreadfully boring. You can always sneak out.

It's hard to say what this evening is. It's not a workshop. It's not a lecture.

On the surface, it looks like a talk. The best way to look at it is to regard it as a meditation because as the words are spoken without wanting to sound too esoteric, there's a kind of transmission. Transmission of what?

One could say a state of consciousness. Not that I'm doing it. It happens.

You can't do grace. Grace happens. That transmission of a state of consciousness that I sometimes call a new state of consciousness that is arising on this planet, although it's been pointed to by teachers since ancient times.

It happens. Transmission, of course, is a limited word or like all words, all words are limited. If there were not something in you already that corresponds to that state of consciousness, that responds to that state of consciousness, that recognizes that state of consciousness, there would be no transmission.

And that in you that responds to this has nothing to do with the thinking mind, thought activity, the accumulated ideas in your head. That all has its place, but there is a deeper level to your being. So the words are one dimension of our gathering, but that is not the only and not the most important dimension of our gathering this evening.

If there were only the words, then soon boredom would set in, in you. On the level of words, this is not all that satisfying. It's not like some seminars where you know exactly what you're getting.

Information, six steps to total enlightenment, eight steps to incredible wealth. And often you even get a folder to take home so you know exactly what it is that you got. Information, facts that you can take home.

Something you can add to the content of knowledge. But this gathering doesn't really work on that level. Relatively little is given to you in terms of content information.

So what then is that other dimension? What is that transmission? What is that state of consciousness?

How can you be receptive to that? What is the right way of being here? I can give a few pointers, a few hints of how to be here.

Pay attention, be aware of not just the words, but the silent spaces in between the words. Just acknowledge that dimension that underlies this talk. The spaces in between words.

Now, that is not information. That is not new facts. That is not content.

And mostly, one would not be aware of that. What the mind is interested in is the words. And you can sometimes see it in people's faces.

There's a strained expression they're trying to grasp on the level of words, what it is that I'm saying. And so far, to the mind, what I have been saying is nothing. What's he talking about?

And yet silence, that dimension is a vital part of our gathering. Without the spaces between the words, I couldn't even speak. One could almost say it's like a canvas.

You paint on a canvas, and most people are not aware of the canvas. They only look at what's on the canvas. But a little analogy, a little similarity here is since we are in the East, certain forms of Japanese or Chinese paintings where mostly what you see on the painting is empty space.

And there's a little branch here, and a little rock there, and a tiny bird up there, and 90%, 80% of this painting is empty space. And those are deeply spiritual paintings to simply watch in the right receptive state. To watch such a painting is similar to sitting here and listening to the talk, because here, the spaces in between words are more important than the words, just as in those paintings, one could almost say, and it sounds a little mystical or mysterious, and those of you who know the Tao Te Ching, to those, it will be familiar.

One could almost say, with reference to those paintings and to the essence of our gathering, one could almost say that what is not there is more important than what's there. And this is too subtle for the thinking mind to understand. And it's not even meant for the thinking mind.

The very purpose of those paintings and the very purpose of this gathering is to take you beyond the thinking mind. A dimension of consciousness that is, one could say, deeper or higher, whatever perspective you want to use, than thought, thinking, continuous thinking. And since all thinking is conditioned, obviously, because all the thoughts in your head have been put there by, you've lived in a certain environment and you gradually accumulate all the thoughts in your head that go with your culture and your surroundings and your education and experiences that forms the conditioning of your mind.

And so all thinking, of course, is conditioned thinking, and all thinking is connected with past, conditioned by the past. Now, most human beings only know themselves as that thinking conditioned entity. Their identity is that conditioned identity, conditioned by the past.

They don't realize the depths to their being that is there if they could only acknowledge that dimension within themselves that is deeper than thought. Unconditioned, and we need to be very careful now before I continue to speak, words are thought. So no word is it.

Every word is only, this evening, is only a signpost or a pointer to that. The rest is the silence that underlies the words, and that's in between the words. The words themselves are never it, and they're limited.

They cannot encapsulate that. So having said that, I'll continue to use words. Remember the first sentence in the Tao Te Ching, the Tao that can be named is not the true Tao.

The Tao that can be spoken of is not the true Tao, and that's the most important thing to realize. Otherwise, it will be made into some new belief. It will become further thought.

The very message that there is something deeper and vaster than thought, and that depth and vastness is the essence of who you are beyond that limited conditioned entity, the very message of that can easily become corrupted and can then simply be incorporated by the mind into further thinking, and then it becomes beliefs. Which you can then defend and argue about and identify with as a viewpoint, a perspective, and my opinion, my mental position. That's how people get their identity, to be right about their mental position.

And if it's to do with Taoism, then let it be that. So the limitations of words, the conditioned is operating in you as continuous streams of thought accompanied by corresponding fluctuating emotions. And for most people, the stream of thinking never stops except in dreamless sleep.

And most people still are completely identified. They are completely in, one could say, trapped in that continuous stream of thinking, a lot of which is very problematic. So your whole identity is trapped in streams of thought, me, a mental image forms of who I am, conceptual, a conceptual sense of identity, a conceptual me, a story-based me with my past, not quite fulfilled yet, the story of me.

Hasn't gone the way it was supposed to go, this story of me, but of course, I've still got future. So when people are trapped in that mind-made sense of self, not knowing who they are beyond that, then they desperately need to get to the future to complete their sense of self. That is the underlying motivation behind people's continuous psychological moving away from now into needing to get to the next moment.

Not that future is not helpful when you meet somebody or plan a journey or a course of going from here to there or how to build this house, practical matters. I'm talking about psychological future, the enormous compulsion to reach the next moment, and it's so normal that most people never even question it. To live in that state of unease, almost continuous is so normal that nobody wonders, what is this?

And sometimes it's only when you go out into nature and you watch nature, then you can see how peaceful that nature is. The animal, even though they killed other animals, but a lot of the time, an animal does not move in such a problematic universe. It's not stressed.

It is more deeply, more truly rooted in being. So humans are reaching out continuously, internally, towards that future moment that they need to get to, both on a small scale and a large scale. Running, needing to get there in big cities, even here, although it's a little bit, we will walk a little bit more slowly here than other big cities.

It's just too hot to walk that fast. So that's good, that slows you down a little. And so you see, they're all running around, stressed.

Of course, they all, if you stop them and ask them, why are you running? They will give you some reason. I need to get there or there because that, but basically, they're all running towards the future, need to get there, and seeking completion there on a larger scale, hoping that my sense of identity, which feels incomplete to everybody who has not gone beyond a mind-made sense of self, a conditioned sense of self, everybody's sense of self feels incomplete.

If it does feel complete to you right now, it is a temporary delusion. An example of that would be just having fallen in love with your ideal partner that's going to make you happy. A temporary delusion that now your sense of self is complete, that you have arrived.

And so if we meet again, next time I come here, then you will realize that it was a delusion because by then you will have found, oh, it didn't quite work out. He didn't make me, he was supposed to make me happy. And it worked for a few months.

Or you might feel you suddenly made it because you just completed the business deal of your life. You just signed this morning, you signed the contract. And finally, you know, I've got nothing to worry about anymore for the rest of my life.

I made it. My sense of self is complete. Another delusion.

So if we meet again in a year's time, further reasons for unease, stress, and unhappiness will have arisen despite that big deal. Sometimes it might even have magnified the problems that you have already. They've been magnified by a lot of money.

So it's a temporary delusion to believe that your sense of self is complete if you have not gone beyond the conditioned story, me and my story, mind-based sense of self. Based on thought and thinking and the emotions that go with that, then there is no lasting sense of completion of having arrived, of being able to say, oh, that's it, peace at last, fullness of life at last. Fullness of life is an expression that Jesus used, sometimes translated as abundant, abundant life.

Other translations say fullness of life. He promised the possibility for you to have that because all the ancient teachings teach exactly this, but people don't see it anymore. Jesus taught a state of consciousness that is possible for humans to enter, and he called it sometimes the kingdom of heaven because compared to the normal human consciousness, it is the kingdom of heaven.

And to see that that state of non-completion of feeling my story hasn't quite worked as it should have, people think that is their personal problem, that their relationships haven't quite, that wasn't supposed, my marriage wasn't supposed to be like that. I must have married the wrong man or woman. And then you try another one and another and perhaps.

And people believe that it is their personal problem that their sense of self, that they have not arrived at that sense of deep, alive peace that is possible for humans, and they think there's something wrong with them. And I think there are many, there are others in this world who have arrived, but they haven't. Well, except those who have gone beyond that conditioned.

But the newspapers tell you that all the rich and famous made it. If you meet them, you realize they didn't make it. They are just as ill at ease, stressed, fearful.

Their life is conflict-ridden, full of problems. But the culture is telling you that these are the people who made it. And many people believe that.

And then films come that tell you, yes, you can, the happy ending is possible. The wedding, films used to end with the wedding. Nowadays, it's less common because most people are beginning to see it as a delusion.

But the happy wedding used to be the final scene of the film. Every director who knew anything at that point said, cut here, because otherwise the delusion will evaporate. So to realize that sense of dissatisfaction, that sense of unease has nothing to do with your personal situation, it is built into the very structure of the human mind, into an identity that is derived from that, that has built in dissatisfaction, non-completion as its inevitable companion, that state of consciousness.

Not only that, the most dysfunctional aspect of that normal state of consciousness is it even needs conflict and problems. To sustain itself. It's not just that it produces conflict and problems because it lies in the very structure of that.

The structure of that mind made sense of self, the me, the egoic me, to sustain itself, a prolonged period of absence of conflict and absence of conflict and absence of problems is intolerable to that sense of, though it doesn't admit that openly, they all said, I'm looking for peace and love. And yet what they produce in their lives is conflict. Wherever you look, where people get together, relationships, relationships between two individuals, families, relationships in companies, institutions, tribes, religions, governments, nations, enormous amount of, so much so that mankind almost several times came close to self-destruction recently because before they didn't have the means, the madness was already there, the dysfunction.

20th century history is an extreme manifestation of that deeply dysfunctional state of consciousness. The madness of the unspeakable suffering created by humans, inflicted on other humans, and that is collective and it's continuing. And then the suffering that each human creates for themselves in their daily life that you don't see when you look at them in the street, they look all okay, they're going about their business.

But so much problem-making and heaviness, the heaviness of me, the heaviness of living, of life, the heaviness of the self, the mind-made self, that identity, but that sense of identity needs its conflict because it only sustains itself by having, to put it bluntly, enemies. Because by having enemies through your enemies, you define your own sense of self more strongly. And I don't mean enemies in the narrow conventional sense only.

I mean enemy, for example, in the deep-seated need to be right and the other person to be wrong. When your need to be right, which is there, you can see it everywhere, it's an enormous source of conflict, then to be identified with one's mental position, opinion, viewpoint. Identified means, the word means, you derive your sense of self from that mental position.

It gives you your identity. That's why when somebody questions your viewpoint, your perspective, your mental position, doubts it, contradicts it, attacks it, unconsciously it's being regarded as an attack on yourself because you're confusing who you are with mind, with a thought, with a mental position. So the need to be right, to assert your selfhood, so to speak, to assert yourself is deep and, of course, unconscious.

It's the source of enormous conflict. The need to be right could be regarded as the source of warfare, of worst world war, second world war, the collective need for us to be right against them and to assert their position. And so that is one aspect of what I mean, what I call the need for enemies because when you're strongly defending with that enormous emotion that's behind it, your position, you're creating an enemy, the one that you are trying to prove wrong.

And in some cases, it becomes even physical violence, proving wrong. Killing somebody is the ultimate way of proving that person wrong. For very unconscious people, and there are many, to kill somebody is the ultimate way of being right.

And the whole nations do it, religions do it. The ultimate way of asserting yourself and strengthening the illusory sense of self is to have a strong enemy. And so that is enormously satisfying to the self.

The stronger the enemy, the stronger the contraction that comes as you defend your position. And now that strengthens the delusion that now you know who you are. And then you say, it feels good.

And of course it doesn't feel good. The body knows that it feels bad. It doesn't feel good to the body.

But in the egoic delusion, good and bad are confused the other way around. So to see that embedded in the structure of the human mind, and that is the dysfunction, because there must be a reason why humanity has created what it has in human history, and why we are actually at a very, very critical stage in the evolution of mankind, where the dysfunction of the human mind now, relatively recently, started relatively recently, only now, because of the means of science and technology, the dysfunction of the human mind is threatening the survival of the planet and of humanity itself. That wasn't the case before. It was the same dysfunction, even at the time of the Buddha or of Jesus.

It was the same dysfunction, but it never threatened the survival of humanity or the planet, because the means were not there. Now the means of science and technology amplify the effects of the dysfunction of the human mind. And we can see, for the first time, when we look at modern history, just how mad and how dysfunctional the human mind is.

My God, how can they do this? What is, are they mad? Yes, they're mad.

They must be. To create that, and now it continues. Science and technology continue ever increasing ways of destroying life.

So this is, we have reached a critical stage. For the first time, the dysfunction threatens the survival of the planet. And that is the reason why it's only now that that message of all the ancient teachers and teachings, now for the first time, has become urgent for humanity.

And this is why there is now an acceleration. What I call the arising of a new state of consciousness is no different, it's the ancient teaching, but it's now becoming accelerated and empowered because of, we need to change now, or it's the end. And this is the good news, because it seems to be the case in evolution of animals and plants, it's only when a critical stage is reached where the normal way of behavior, the normal way of acting doesn't work anymore, that a species goes beyond its limitations and develops into something more advanced.

They say at some point, life developed in the sea. And then at some point, fishes and other sea animals started to move on land. Why would a fish voluntarily jump on land and start crawling?

They didn't. It must have been that a vast expanse of water suddenly got cut off from the rest of the oceans and the water started receding more and more. Life in the water began to be impossible.

They became dysfunctional as fishes. And so over a long, long, long period of time, they were forced to go on land because they couldn't live the old way anymore. This is a simplified analogy of what is happening to humans.

It becomes more, as you reach the end of one stage of evolution, it becomes more and more dysfunctional. So here we are looking, when we look at the inbuilt dysfunction that is nobody's personal problem, the dissatisfaction, the continuous arising of new problems in one's life, the sense of never, always quickly something comes in to spoil whatever good comes to you. It's, oh no, more problem, more conflict, and the next thing.

But, and then you're seeking it out unconsciously. In your need, nothing personal, built into the human mind, it's need for enemies. And so it's enemy strengthens your sense of separateness, the separate self.

So collectively they do it because when you identify with a collective me rather than a personal, like as political groups, religious groups, how they love their enemies because they feel stronger who they are in their mind made sense of self. The more enemies, the better. It strengthens that.

So there is a seeking out of conflict in that state of consciousness, but that of course is unconscious. Now, you are condemned to that state of dissatisfaction and the mind made sense of self continuously looks to the future for completion, for salvation, to try and make it, to make my life work, to become who I truly am through this or that, that I'm going to get there. Just give me some more time and I will complete myself.

This is the hope. This is why everybody's reaching out there. Needing, psychologically needing the future, that inner urge to get to the next moment.

Everybody lives like that in that, and you can see it in people's faces, the unease with the present moment because the present moment, they don't even look at it. They need to get to the next one. Moving away from the only thing there is, which is the present moment.

The only thing there ever is in your life is now. In the dysfunctional state, the normal human state of consciousness, the now is ignored because you're trying to get to the next, which is much more important than now because I'm going to get my fulfillment there. That's what matters, not this.

I'm just on my way there. That is built into that. So the main enemy, the arch enemy of the ego, the egoic sense of self, one could say, is the present moment.

It stands in opposition to it. It's internally, it resists it. It denies it.

It tries to get away from it, run away from it. In that state, that normal state of consciousness, you make the present moment, which is the only moment there ever is, the only place where life unfolds, that is made into an enemy. That is the inner, how you relate to the present moment.

You're either trying to get it out of the way or you are actually internally resisting it, complaining, judging. That's not it. And so it's amazing to see what people do to themselves, but it's nothing personal.

They are simply expressing that human condition in its present evolutionary stage, which is coming to an end, thankfully, or we disappear. So they don't realize that what they are doing to themselves by denying the only thing that has any reality, the only thing where you can find life, which is now. It's hardly exists for most people.

On the periphery, they see it, but of course they're on their way somewhere else. And when they get there, that's the now again, because the future only comes as the now, their state of mind does not allow them to acknowledge it. And they are away somewhere else because that's not fulfilling either, because the unfulfillment is in the structure of the mind.

No matter what comes into your life, you will find that problem-making, conflict-making, unfulfillment will appear in one form or another. Yeah. Unless you step out of that state of consciousness into now.

And the strange thing happens when you acknowledge now, become aware of this moment, the only one. Your life has never been not this moment, never. It's always now.

Your whole past, what happened in it, it must have happened in the now. It didn't happen in the past. It can't happen in the past.

It happened in the now. And then you remember that when? Now.

Future, nothing will ever happen in the future. It can't. For something to happen, to be, it requires now, because there is no life apart from now.

Now you can't, the mind tries to think about this and argues, yes, but for your past. No, there is a truth here that is so self-evident that life is inseparable from now. The only place where life is, can ever be, now.

Oh, yes. And when I said at the beginning of this talk, pay attention to the underlying stillness. There's stillness in between the words, the undercurrent.

One could say the canvas on which the words are painted. One could say the ground out of which a word comes, into which it returns. What I'm really saying, when I say, be aware of that dimension, I'm saying, be aware of the present moment.

Not like most people think, they think to be aware of the now, they need to be aware of what is happening in the now. That's not the now. This, what I'm saying now is very subtle, not difficult to understand.

You can't even really understand it. You can only sense directly what it is that I'm pointing at. What I'm pointing to.

From when I say now, when I say present moment, most people confuse that with what is happening now. So in the case of these words, you would confuse the words with the now, but the words, they really come from the past. Every word comes from the past.

The now is not content. Content is, in this case, words. The content of this now is the words, other sense perceptions, this room, other noises, that is the content of this moment of now.

But to be aware of the now itself beyond what is happening in it, that is the message, the only message of our gathering here. And it's so subtle that you may get it or may not get it. You may get it right now, then you could go home now.

You could get it the last minute. You can get it after you go away from here and say, what did he talk about? It didn't make sense.

And suddenly you get it. And so I said, there is a state of consciousness that is non-conditioned. The state of consciousness that is not the dysfunctional state that most human beings are trapped in.

And when I say that that state of consciousness exists, as all the teachers have said, ancient Buddha, Lao Tse, all, in all the teach, they pointed to that state of consciousness. Now, the conditioned state of consciousness the dysfunctional state of consciousness listens to that message, which one could call the message of liberation, the message of freedom, the message of awakening, awakening out of that, all that past, conditioned past. Freedom, liberation, awakening, enlightenment, salvation, end of delusion, end of suffering.

They were all pointers that ancient teachers used to point to the same thing. And however, the thinking mind, the conditioned mind listens to that message of liberation and says, oh, that's very interesting. Oh, yes, I believe you're right.

And then incorporates it into its content and makes it into another mental position. The message of liberation is then made into further bondage. And the thinking mind says, there is a state that is free and to get there, all I need is more future.

I will get there. It will, of course, make it into future because that's how it operates. It seeks completion in and through future.

So it says, okay, please tell me how to get there no matter how much time it takes. In fact, the more time, the better. Please give me time.

How many lifetimes? Five, 10, I'll take it. Or some teachings may promise, if you work hard at it, in 20 years, you can reach level eight or 10.

And that's very satisfying to the mind. Now it knows where it's going. It's going to the future and it's a very important future, much more important than making money, much more important than looking for the ideal partner.

I've gone beyond all that. Now I'm going to the future because I will find liberation there. I will find enlightenment there.

And that is when you graduate from an ordinary seeker in the material realm to a spiritual seeker. And so then that becomes your identity, a spiritual seeker. And of course, it makes you feel better than others who haven't yet seen the light, not knowing that you are still trapped in the same mindset, the same conditioned mind structures as everybody else.

You've just exchanged one future goal of completion where you're going to find yourself for another. So some people, at some point, see that on that level it doesn't work and then they switch to the spiritual. And that doesn't work either, but that may take long, many years for you to find out.

Now, if one or two people here feel offended, that's good because what is it that feels offended by this? Your sense of self. What is it that feels angry about what I just said?

Yourself. It feels diminished by what I've said. It feels threatened by what I've said.

It feels, are you telling me that I have invested 15 years of meditation and countless workshops and traveling to India 10 times and all that has been for nothing? And so there is an inner, this can't be right. You get angry and you defend yourself.

Or you may run out of the room. Say, he talked nonsense. So the delusion of the spiritual seeker is the seeking.

Seeking implies future. Okay, where do we go from here? And there's nothing to seek.

So what's left? And then one says, okay, well, what's left is this moment. And then you say, yeah, but this is not what I want.

I never even asked to be here. I didn't want this moment. It just came to me.

And many people feel, get me out of here. And of course, that's the very way of not being in the now is to feel, I must get out of this moment. Most people go through life like that, trying to get out of this moment.

So, am I saying there's nothing you can do, give up all spiritual practice, go home and watch television? Well, no. I'm saying, look at your relationship with this moment.

Are you denying it, running away from it, feeling bad about it? This is where life is now. And your whole life, you've been running away from it.

You've made it into an enemy, not because it's a personal shortcoming of yours, but because it's part of the human condition. Is it possible to live in such a way that the present moment is no longer an enemy? Is it possible to be open to the present moment and even welcome it, say yes to it?

Because you see the futility of saying no to it. Is it possible to welcome the present moment this now, make it into a friend, become friendly towards it, not demand that it should be different from the way it is, to be completely aligned with the way it is now? Okay, what can you do?

This moment, I'm not talking about your life situation and saying, okay, I might as well be resigned to the fact that I live in this dreadful place and have a bad job and a bad relationship. No, that's your life situation. No, that's not welcoming the now.

Welcoming the now is only now. You might be in prison. What can you do?

You can try to escape, but there may be no escape. So what is left to you? Resist what is or say yes to what is?

With saying yes to what is, your state of consciousness changes immediately. Regardless of what it is that you said yes to, the worse the better because the worse it is out there, the deeper the yes will have to be. So for many people, life consists of a series of obstacles, a series of limitations that come into the now.

Of course, the only place where life is. One limitation and one obstacle after another. And they say, no, I'm not going to say yes to that.

I want freedom. I don't want that. And so you get stuck more and more in the same.

The very resistance creates more undesirable circumstances, creates more resistance, creates more limitation. So as an experiment, bring in the yes to now. And don't demand that the form that this moment takes as a situation, a person, an event, whatever form it is, you're sitting here somewhere, a room, a chair, you don't demand that the form that this moment takes should be different.

You accept the suchness. Suchness is a word that the Buddha used. You accept the suchness of now.

You don't demand and say, no, this shouldn't be. But it is, life says, what are you going to do? That acceptance does not mean that you become passive and you can no longer act.

It simply means that any action that you take does no longer, no longer arises out of a state of dissatisfaction, a state of unease, a state of conflict. Any action that you then take will flow out of a state, an empowered state that comes with a yes to what is. And the quality of any action you take will be vastly different and vastly more empowered and intelligent than any action that you could take in the reactive state that wants to get this out of the way, now I'm going to do this.

That's karmic action. You create more pain, more suffering. It's an amazing thing, the possibility of living in alignment with now, not in opposition to it, but the mind-made self will warn you now and say, no, you will be stuck for the rest of your life in this moment that you want to get away from.

This is not true. You have been stuck for your whole life in this moment that you want to get away from. To be stuck is to be stuck in that state of consciousness.

So what happens when you, and to use another expression, what happens when you allow this moment, the only one there ever is, when you allow this moment to be as it is internally, no matter what form it takes. Now, more often than not, the form that this moment takes looks like some kind of limitation on you because life, phenomenal life here, the life of form is full of limitation. Every form is limited.

Every form is limitation. Your own body is a form of limitation. Every place you are in in some way limits you.

So very frequently, or a person comes into this now and that person limits you in some way. You don't want this person to be there, but he or she is there. You could be your husband or wife.

After the honeymoon is over, you begin to feel that your husband or wife is of limitation. It's unconscious, of course. And then after a few years, there's a state of almost continuous, you move in the house together, but you don't really want to be with this person anymore, but you are.

So what you accept very often when you say yes to what is, only the now. I'm not saying accept that if your husband drinks and beats you up. I'm not saying say yes to that.

That's a life situation. Say yes to this moment, then right action happens. Only this moment.

So whatever limitation it may be, you could be in prison. This is a too very, what really encapsulates limitation is being in prison. What could be more limiting, or perhaps even more limiting than that is a certain physical condition.

One feels limited by one's own body. Something goes wrong with the body. That's extreme limitation.

You suddenly maybe can't even move anymore, or they put you in prison. You can't get out. And even there, even no matter where, you practice acceptance of this moment.

And people have been writing to me from prison. They are practicing that and teaching others. And they're saying my lives, our lives are becoming transformed here.

Freedom, inner freedom from external conditions. Why, how, what is, how does it work? What, why is it empowering to say yes to what is when the ego tells you no, you will become disempowered when you say yes to what is.

Why is it empowering? Because that yes is, gives you access to the state of consciousness that is unconditioned. It is a portal into that state of consciousness.

How? What happens when you say yes? How it happens when you allow this moment to be no matter what form it takes because you're no longer in opposition to it.

What I say now are only words. They can only point to the truth. They're not quite it.

You have to look beyond the words. When you allow this moment to be, you are no longer a reactive entity. You don't react.

Now, the egoic sense of self is continuously reactive. That is one of the ways in which it sustains itself. Not to allow what is, is reaction against what is or trying to run away from what is.

Reaction, what is it that you're reacting to? You're reacting to some form that this moment takes. A person, a situation.

It takes the moment, the form changes continuously. The now is always there and the form changes. And then you react against, not this form because the form, it mostly will be some form of limitation.

Even when you go on holiday sooner or later or Paradise Island, you will encounter some form of limitation. And even if you're in the most beautiful surroundings and everything is perfect, you'll encounter some form of limitation, if only your own boredom, no conflict anymore. It'll come.

So when you no longer react to, when you react to a form that this moment takes, a limited form, of course, every form is limited, you strengthen your own limitation, your own limited conditioned form identity as the me. Every time you react to some form out there, you strengthen your own form identity, which is your limited me identity. This is why the little me loves to react and complain and because it gets stronger in that.

And the delusion is that with every reaction, you are a little bit more yourself. The truth is with every reaction, you strengthen the illusion a little bit more, but the illusion likes that. So we are, I'm just putting in neutral language, the truth of karma, of action, reaction.

So you strengthen that. Now, what happens when you say yes instead of react against? The form is allowed to be, that form that this moment takes, even if you're in prison.

That's where I am sitting here, walls around me, bars on the window, breathing, little space of this room. All right, this is now. It is as it is.

It always is as it is. You can't really argue with is. Argue with is, is mad and normal.

And so you allow it. Now, what you're not strengthening now is your limited form identity. And so your limited form identity, the illusory self doesn't like this.

What opens up when you say yes to what is, and I'm only using symbolic language now because one can't really talk about it. What opens up is a space around what is. So to speak.

Or one could say a spaciousness around this form that this moment takes. One could say it is an inner spaciousness, a sense of space that is vaster than what happens. And that space or spaciousness is also a deep sense of peace.

Surrounding, one could almost say, that now, that form of now, there's suddenly spaciousness around it. Even if it's dreadful on the level of form, even if on the level of form, it is a most dreadful limitation on you. And sooner or later, you will encounter extreme limitations on you.

One reason is because you have a body and then you get old. And as the older you get, the more of a limitation the body becomes, one form of limitation. And then there may be others.

So sooner or later, they come. And so, with the yes, a vast sense of space or peace suddenly is around that. And you allow it.

And that is a strange shift where, which means now your inner state is no longer governed by the external condition. The condition is there, but it's no longer determining your inner state. You've gone beyond reaction.

And then you begin to glimpse the vastness that you are underneath the conditioned reactive sense of self. In fact, you go beyond that limited form, me. Not that it doesn't, you no longer exist for a little while as this form, but you have already glimpsed, or more than glimpsed, you have already realized a dimension that is far deeper than the personal self, deeper than self.

Or you could say the universal self. You've gone beyond the personal self to the universal self. However you want to use words, a Buddhist would say you've gone, that is no self.

It doesn't, it's just words pointing to the same. And that is the message of liberation from conditions. Liberation from being a conditioned entity, not by continuously fighting the limitations of your life, hoping at some point in the future you will reach the unlimited, when the unlimited is already here.

Already the vastness of that is already here. And so how could you reach it through some encountering, some situation in the future that is free of limitation in this world of form, which is limitation. So no matter what situation you go into, it will be some form of limitation.

So it's not by running away from it, not by internally resisting it that you become free. You can, on the level of form, you don't become free, but that's the beauty of it. The very fact that you don't become free on the level of form enables you to go beyond it.

It's only because you are limited on the level of form that you can reach the unlimited. Limitation and the unlimited go together. That's the beauty of it.

And the strange thing is the more limited your life is, potentially, the greater the opening into that deeper dimension. And a few people have found that almost accidentally, people whom life dealt dreadful blows that you say, no human being could endure so much, so many dreadful blows and so much suffering, either physical or in their life situation, or extreme conditions, concentration camp, prison camp, could die any moment. And some of those people broke through those extreme forms of limitation and in one moment entered the state of unconditional yes to what is, no matter what, because they could not live with the no anymore.

This burden of self created by the no became unbearable. And so in one moment, it all shifted from most dreadful suffering and misery to deep peace and aliveness. And people, how incomprehensible.

In the midst of unacceptable conditions, the shift happened. And the strange thing is very often when this shift happens, external conditions change very quickly. Often they improve immeasurably because you no longer resist it.

Resistance keeps them in place, keeps all the conditions in place. Non-resistance, they become fluid. Resistance, because there's always a strong, deep interconnectedness with your inner state and your external conditions.

If your inner state is resistant and rigid, the conditions you encounter are resistant and rigid. If your inner state is open, and yes, the conditions become fluid and move quickly, miraculous transformations happen as byproducts of that inner transformation in the outer world. One person who practiced this in prison wrote to me and said, I have 10 more years to do here, but I'm free already internally.

And then a year later, he wrote to me and said, they're releasing me in six months time. And he wasn't even up for parole. Nobody knows how it happened.

Miracles happen, not that you will ever become free of as long as you inhabit the world of form. Yes, certain limitations will be there. Perhaps less extreme, perhaps relatively benign limitations.

But no matter what it is, it doesn't matter anymore. You welcome, you even welcome them. So it's the beautiful thing is humans think, I need to become, go beyond the limitations of my life.

And they're trying to run away from them. They try to change them by feeling unhappy about them, which is an unconscious way of trying to change them. If I show God that I'm really unhappy, he's going to do something about it.

I just, that's an unconscious mechanism by people. It's like a child. If I cry really hard, then eventually somebody's going to come and do something about it.

Some children learn that as they grow up. If I really cry and show them that I'm miserable, then eventually mom or dad will come and do something about it. And often the children use that to manipulate the parents.

They cry far more than they really would need to in order to get what they want. That works to a limited extent when you're a child with certain parents. When you're grown up, it doesn't work at all because the more you're internally complain about what is and feel miserable and unhappy, the less likely it is than anything is going to change.

So that's suddenly things shift more quickly. Not that it matters that much anymore. It is a by-product of an inner transformation.

And another by-product of that inner transformation that comes with a yes is you become more intelligent. Not meaning that you will become better at solving IQ puzzles, maybe not necessarily on that level. But intelligence is vast.

It's not, it goes far beyond the limited ability to solve mathematical problems or puzzles or... Creative insights come, realizations come. Your words are more alive, more fresh because they come out of the state of empowerment because you're aligned with life now.

Which is now, of course, aligned with the very power of life itself. And so that moves through you, speaks through you, acts through you. And a lot of your speech and action is no longer conditioned.

It's a newness comes in, an aliveness. And what you emanate changes. If you are in resistance, you emanate resistance.

And if you emanate as an energy emanation resistance, you attract more resistance. And so now you emanate peace and aliveness. And then that is reflected in your external life.

And it draws people to you because especially those who are ready for that transformation also, they recognize that something has happened in you. And it may not happen all at once. It's for a few rare people, it happens all at once.

For most people, it happens gradually. You shift from being in alignment with what is to being again, you move back into out of alignment with what is for a while and come unhappy again. And then you notice, and then you shift back into alignment, empowered again.

And so gradually you begin to notice the qualitative difference between the states of consciousness. So the portal into that state of consciousness is, there are several portals, they all ultimately are one, but it's the yes to what is. And you suddenly sense the spaciousness.

Another portal that I pointed to at the beginning is to notice spaces, to pay attention. To the silent space that takes your attention away from thinking into now. What happens to thinking?

What happens to that continuous stream of thinking that usually you are trapped in and identified with when you bring yes to the now? The strange thing is that stream of thinking slows down considerably. The moment you become welcoming to now, the compulsion to think continuously lessens.

The compulsion, the momentum behind the mind stream becomes far less and it goes down. Because you then realize a lot of that continuous stream of thinking was to do with trying to get away from this moment. That's why it's so compulsive, trying to complete myself in the future.

That's what a lot of thinking is about that. What's going to happen to me? How am I going to complete me?

How am I going to find me? In the future. And that's why you're constantly working things out, trying to control it, rehearsing, imagining possible situations, good and bad.

And that's all the continuous stream of thought is that. But when you say yes to what is, a lot of that unnecessary mental noise comes to an end when you're not fighting the is-ness. You don't need that anymore.

So you, some people say, how can I stop my mind? That's not easy. Don't, better not even to try to stop it directly.

Become friendly with this moment. And then you can, the mind by itself calms down. Another portal, of course, is to simply pay attention to spaces.

What happens when, as I speak, you're aware also of space around the words? The mind becomes still. What happens when you pay attention for a moment to the silence?

There's some traffic noise, but there's also a lot of silence in this room. Pay attention means acknowledge it, notice it, listen to it. Not to the traffic noise, that's there too.

But the traffic noise happens within that space of silence. Listening to silence, immediately thinking stops. You cannot think and listen to silence.

And what does that mean, thinking stops? Does that mean you become stupid suddenly? Does that mean you go to sleep?

No, there is a state of consciousness that is alert, awake, present, but you don't need to think. You rise above thought. The same thing happens when you say yes to what is.

That is another portal into that state of consciousness where the need to think is not there anymore. The compulsion to think, and then you become intelligent because then you go beyond the conditioned mind which is only a tiny aspect of the vastness of the one intelligence that underlies everything in the entire universe. The human mind, only a small aspect of that.

Nothing wrong with it. It's only when you get trapped in that small aspect of that and think that's me, then you live in a delusory little prison. So the most wonderful thing to encounter, and this is why we are here, is that state of consciousness where you are free not to think.

And you don't go to sleep and you're not stupid. You become very intelligent because the vastness of intelligence, most of that does not operate noisily. Only the human mind is a noisy aspect of that intelligence.

That intelligence created nature, the planet. And every flower and every tree grows in complete stillness and is so the beauty that comes out of that. And it's perfect in what it is.

Nobody thought about how to make that. The one intelligence brings it forth out of stillness. So there's vast intelligence that lies in that stillness.

Stillness is only a word. It doesn't seem to be significant as a word. The mind says, what do I do with stillness?

That doesn't solve my problems. But we're only using a word. Stillness is the unconditioned consciousness, the one consciousness itself.

And it's always been there, even underneath the mental noise. You could never find it in the future because it is inseparable from presence. It is presence itself.

Past and future are only byproducts of the human mind. And non-problematic in them, if you don't get lost in them, they are fine. On this level of form, they are needed.

But if you get trapped in there, then it becomes an illusion. Your whole sense of self becomes an illusion. So we are encountering a state of consciousness, alert, present, awake, completely here, free.

And then in that state, you look at something and you know what it is without needing to call it anything in your head. But you know far more. And you realize the depth and the aliveness that there is even in the sense-perceived world, the depth and aliveness that nothing ultimately is dead, that the entire universe is alive.

When you go through life labeling everything immediately mentally, which is what people do because they are trapped in the mental noise, immediately everything is dead and you no longer sense its aliveness. What's this? Oh, that's a lily.

Oh, okay, a lily. That's a nice lily. Do you really know what that is?

There's a little label comes up and they give you the illusion of knowledge. You can use labels, but don't get trapped in labels. Realize you can be free of labels and see what depth there is to this, what we call lily or whatever it is.

I've forgotten most labels. See the depths and the mystery that is there, the miracle of life. You limit it so much by labeling and you limit yourself.

You can use labels when they are needed, but go beyond labels when you don't need them. And a lot of the time you don't need them. You don't need them for other people.

The freedom that comes from meeting another human being simply in the state of openness, it comes with a yes to what is because the yes to what is often is the yes to another being, yes. And you don't need to label anymore. You just, clarity, peace, aliveness.

This is what then comes through you. This is then the fulfillment of your life purpose is to allow that state of consciousness to come through you into this world. What you do on a personal level is secondary.

It's an excuse for that state of consciousness. Maybe you continue to do what you're doing on the level of form, but bring the new state of consciousness to that. Or it might change completely.

Suddenly your life changes totally. Who knows? Doesn't matter.

But to see that the transformation of consciousness is your life purpose because you're then aligned with the purpose of the universe, which is flowering of consciousness. It wants to flower through this form. If it can't, it will flower through some other form.

It doesn't mind. Any form will do. There's not one form that is more worthy than another.

The only question is which form is open. There's no form that is more or less worthy than another form. That's good news for some, bad news for others.

Because some people go around thinking of themselves as more worthy than others. And others go around thinking of themselves as less worthy than others. Surely I'm not worthy enough for liberation.

Or surely I'm more worthy than this person I've been at it for so long. And so the sense of worthy or unworthy, of course, is part of the mind-made sense of self, part of its conditioning. And there's no worthy, more or less worthy.

The question is, is the opening there? And that seemingly least worthy sometimes suddenly opened up. And the seemingly most worthy stayed closed because they didn't want to let go of the mental image of me as the one who is worthy.

This is the message of liberation. Whenever we speak of this state of consciousness, that is the state of, I sometimes call it presence. Presence.

And yet, of course, in this world of form, yes, there is a future, so to speak. Doesn't come, but we operate with that or the practical level, no more. So it's the end of psychological future.

Practical future is fine. Psychological future is an illusion. On the level of practical future, we are going to meet after a little break.

The body wants to move. And when we meet, it'll be now. Just the same as this, exactly the same as this.

When we come back in about 15 minutes, according to clock, clock time, we will address one more obstacle to this state of consciousness, a big one. And we'll enter more deeply, and it sounds paradoxical whenever we talk about it, even to say we are entering more deeply into the now sounds like a paradox, but that's how it is. We will enter more deeply into that state so that when you go away from here, it will have emerged.

In many of you, it was already emerging, so it's simply a deepening, an acceleration of that. Once it has emerged, there's no stopping. It's like once a plant has sprouted, it will push through anything, even if obstacles come.

And there's no merit in that, no personal merit. It emerges because it wants to emerge. It doesn't choose you because you're special.

It chooses you because there's less of you. It gives way.

[Speaker 3] (3:43:20 - 3:43:21)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (3:43:33 - 4:34:37)

The enlightened master embodies a state of consciousness that is the destiny of all of humanity, a precursor, perhaps. Just as Jesus, his death especially, is a symbolic expression of what each human being needs to undergo, the death on the cross, to be nailed to the cross, the most extreme form of limitation. Total surrender, total acceptance in the face of that, in the face of the unacceptable.

And suddenly the cross, the symbol for limitation, becomes the symbol for liberation and the divine in one. So whatever limitation you encounter in your life, big or small, looks like a greatest obstacle, but is potentially the opening in one. So the enlightened master, that state of consciousness, humanity is moving into that state of consciousness.

It's not relevant. We don't need to know, well, how long is it going to take? No matter.

The question is, is it happening now in you, through you? What's the difference? Are you, if you're not the master, the spiritual master, why are you not the master?

What's the difference between you and the master? Does he know much more than you? No, some masters knew very little worldly knowledge.

They didn't need to. They didn't need, no master ever had a PhD as far as I know. They don't need that.

Of course, spiritual master lives in continuous surrender to God, God, the one life, the one consciousness that underlies all of phenomenal existence, is within each form and beyond all forms, and is the essence of who you are. So what does that look like? Surrender to God, continuous, aligned with now.

Same thing, surrender to God, aligned with now. State of surrender, the empowered state. Where you go beyond the person that you think you are, beyond a limited personal, limited sense of self, me, through the surrender.

So am I saying from now on until the rest of your life, you have to live in a state of surrender? Oh, that's a big job. But that's not really that much, only now.

That's not that such a big thing, only now. Not the rest of my life, now. Just this little, just this so small, this now.

Just this. And then see how every problem dissolves. Only a challenge may remain in the now, and then there's enough power in you to meet the challenge in the now.

But problem, this mind stuff, dissolves because it's an illusion when you bring the problem to the now. Oh, I've got so many problems in my life, I'm just burdened with. What's the problem now?

Well, I've got my home situation and job and then my health and money and my wife, and no, now, what's the problem now? Now? Yes, here.

And then you start looking for the problem. And then very reluctantly, the person may admit, well, it's true, there is no problem now. And the next word is but, and then comes in past and future.

But it's very hard for a problem to survive now. And in that state of alert presence, problems don't even arise, they just can't even arise. There's no problem.

A challenge may come now. There it comes in whatever form, an elephant coming towards me, a challenge now. And then you meet it by facing it and then right action will happen.

Maybe you'll run away. It's not a problem. And again, one or two in you are experiencing anger at this moment.

Why? Because part of your sense of identity was revolving around your problems. They are important.

Surely you cannot deny the importance of my problems because by denying the importance of my problems, you're denying my importance. So if that arises, you can watch that and see, oh, my sense of self was in my problems. Isn't that interesting?

Of course, people encounter many challenges and limitations in their lives. But they are met now. You face them now fully.

And then they don't turn into mind stuff that you lie in bed thinking about all night. A little help for staying anchored in the now, it helps to be connected with the inner energy field of your body. That also takes your attention away from thinking so that you can be really here and you can be more intelligent than thought could ever be.

Well, you can still use thought, but are no longer used by thought. Most people are used by thought. Can't stop.

So to feel the aliveness that is in your body, very subtle at first, the very energy in the cells of the body, hands, feet, there's a certain aliveness there. Sometimes it helps to close your eyes for a moment and you can sense that there's a certain aliveness in your hands and your arms. And you continue to pay attention to that.

And then you can feel that aliveness in your legs and your feet. Oh, the body is alive with energy. And you can continue to sense that aliveness as you sit here and you can still listen, but that provides an anchor for staying present.

And so the far less thinking when you sense that, you can't think that much when you can sense the inner body, feel be rooted in there rather than just in the body. It can be continuously in the head, be rooted in the aliveness. And there's already an intelligence in here.

The body is an external, temporary manifestation of a vast intelligence. Ultimately, it's not who you are, but there's intelligence in here in every cell, DNA, organ, far greater than the human mind. That intelligence takes the appearance to us of a physical body.

That may change, but at the moment, you appear to be a physical body, temporary. But there's an intelligence there that if you had to use your mind to regulate the functions of all the organs of the body and coordinate them in a smooth, the temperature, the blood circulation, the kidneys, the liver, innumerable functions all need to be coordinated. Who could, no mind could do that.

Not even the greatest computer could do that. All the computers put together couldn't coordinate all the functions of one body. So there's vast intelligence at work here in the body.

So you're already contacting that one intelligence there that is greater than the human mind. Simply take your attention there and the mind calms down. You can't think and sense the body.

You can still think a little, but you can be, you're very conscious in that state. And in that state of be connectedness, rootedness in being, you can perceive and you can look around the room and continuing to feel the aliveness in the body. And you can then realize you can actually perceive without labeling.

And you perceive deeply, beautifully with enormous clarity. It's as if you had never seen the world before when you're no longer clouded by mental compulsive, mental labels. And you go into nature and look at trees and flowers in that state.

Wonderful, deepening. You meet another human being in that state. Imagine what it does to human interactions when you don't impose continuously compulsive judgments as soon as you meet somebody.

We have to formulate some kind of judgment about them in the mind. And you meet them simply in that state of clear, alert presence. And you've already gone beyond reacting to their form.

The form has its limitations. You allow that. Simple alertness.

Then you notice something when you perceive without labels and it might not, maybe the labels come after a few seconds, but there's a moment when you, clarity, a simple, deep knowing beyond words. And then it gets longer and the knowing stays with you. And to the mind that looks as if you didn't know anything anymore.

You don't need to compulsively interpret every situation that happens to you. You allow it to be. You don't need to find some kind of immediately some personal relationship to what's happening.

How does that fit into what I want? It just is there. So you no longer operate as a limited little self.

But as an expression of the one intelligence through this form. Your presence is the presence of God in this world. And then you notice when you perceive something, a human being, a flower, you look in that alertness and this is another slightly different approach to what we've already been talking about.

You sense something. There is that which you perceive, the flower, the tree, the human being. And you sense the alertness itself underneath the person that makes the alertness that makes the perception possible, the awareness, the aware alertness that makes the perception possible.

And you know yourself as that. You feel that, you sense that alertness. So there's the object in your consciousness and they change continuously.

The objects that arise in your consciousness when you move away from here, the scenery around you changes. Cars, traffic, your home, continuously the objects that arise in your consciousness change. Another way of putting it, the form that the now takes changes, same thing.

What remains is consciousness, the field of consciousness. What remains is now, the field of now. And if you can be aware of that field of now, which is the field of awareness itself, not just what's happening in it because it doesn't last very long, it comes and goes, objects come and go.

You listen, you hear, you feel, your thoughts arise, thoughts come and go, emotions come and go. In the now, in the field of awareness. And suddenly, most people in this world are lost in the objects of consciousness.

The thoughts are objects of consciousness. Sense perceptions are objects of consciousness. And all their sense of self always is totally identified with those things that come and go.

And you can't hang on to anything for very long. That's why it's so frustrating to live here when you're identified with the objects that come into your consciousness, emotions, thoughts, sense perceptions, and they don't know the essence of all those things that come into consciousness, which is consciousness itself. If you knew yourself to be that, then whatever happens in your life is secondary because there's a depth to your being that is much vaster than anything that happens.

What happens is a surface phenomenon in your life. And there's a depth to your being that is, and there are little waves that come and go, surface movements. That's the form that the now takes.

But the now has enormous depth. Those are the objects that arise in your consciousness, but the consciousness itself is vaster. And you are that.

So, and you've been looking for yourself in what happens, not knowing that you are not what happens, but the field in which it happens. And so you become free of what happens or doesn't happen. A wonderful sense of lightness and freedom when you can allow things to be.

And because you know there's so much depth to you. So the, it's so simple. So, and that's why despite the ancient teachings, so few people got it because it's too simple.

First of all, they try to understand it through the mind. You're already beginning to complicate it. So it's so hard for humans because of the complicating mind, the truth of realization is so close.

And then they brought up schools to teach people that one elemental truth, Zen arose, Zen Buddhism. People study it for 20 years. They go to monasteries and try to, try to get it.

Do you understand Zen? No, not yet. And of course, one moment comes when perhaps they realize there's nothing to understand.

Zen is when you give up trying to understand totally. Mind subsides. Awareness, presence is there.

Alertness. So this is arising now here on this planet that is burdened with human unconsciousness, the dysfunction of the human mind for thousands and thousands and thousands of years of that. And that dysfunction has left behind pain on the planet, human pain, residues of collective human pain.

And if you don't realize that you still carry residues inside yourself of collective human pain, ultimately all human pain is collective human pain. People personalize pain and say my pain and derive an identity from it. But your pain is human pain, emotional pain, emotional suffering.

I need to point this out. If you don't know it, you can get overtaken by old pain that lives in you that isn't even you, isn't even, it goes back a long, long time. And it lives in human beings as a residue, an energy field of past pain, which all that it means is very tight, like frozen energy, hard, heavy, sometimes turbulent, the human pain body.

And so for many people, this pain that they carry inside is part of their sense of self, the mind made sense of self. And the mind made sense of self becomes amplified by the human pain that you carry inside. So the sense of self that people carries heavy with past, with human past.

You carry this pain body, that is a good way of looking at it is that it is an entity that lives in you, like that is nothing weird. Even if you think a thought, it's an entity, a thought is an energy form, an entity that has a lifespan, it's born and it dies. There are thoughts that are like viruses, some thoughts take over your whole mind.

So there are many other thoughts come and go, they come, evaporate, come, evaporate, that's all part of the mental noise. And so there's also emotional entities that is your share of human pain that you were born, you inherited that. You were born into this human form on this planet, fairly mad planet.

So how could you not be born with a certain amount of pain? And you are born into form, consciousness born into a little form. Of course, you will experience this limitation.

There's the, I believe it was the Buddha or Buddhist master, it's all the same, who said when a mother came to him and asked, why does my baby need to, my little child need to suffer so much because the child was already ill? And the Buddha said, because he was born. It's an, comes with that, but that is part of the limitation of being here.

And that you remember the very limitation is the potential opening. Your very pain is the potential opening. As long, don't personalize the pain.

When the pain body, which has two stages in most people, dormant for a while, then active. When it uses your thought processes to feed on every painful thought until it has ingested enough energy because it lives on pain and then it becomes dormant for a while, digests the food, and then when it needs more, it begins to rise up. A little trigger in your life, a little thought, suddenly brings up enormous amount of pain, anger, sadness, fear, heaviness of depression, anxiety, fear, and all the thought processes that go with it.

The pain body is feeding on that. You're thinking about me and what's going to happen, what might happen to me. And the pain body loves thinking, so that's why people lie awake at night.

Pain body is feeding on your mind. Your story has become extremely heavy and problematic because human pain has flown into the story of me. Your sense of identity, so it becomes heavy.

And then after a little while, depending on how long your pain body needs to feed, then you feel a little bit better suddenly. And then it's gone. And a few days later, two weeks later, the pain body needs to feed again.

And it not only feeds on your mind, it feeds on people around you. It wants to provoke people to give you more pain. Drama, I need some more drama to feed on my partner's reaction.

So it then looks for trouble, really. Relationships work beautifully for pain bodies to feed on. Wife and husband feeding their pain bodies and pressing the right button so that the partner can give them some feedback of pain.

So this is being forced to reenact their drama again and again. It's a replay of the last one. And they do it for years and years.

If you take a video of husband and wife drama, then play it back five years later, doing exactly the same, the same words, the same accusations, the same blaming, same reactions, and it works every time. They're replenishing their pain bodies through the drama. And the egoic sense of self needs, loves it because the pain body is an aspect of that egoic sense of self.

And so if you don't know that, every time the pain body comes up, if you don't recognize it, it can easily obscure the consciousness that is arising in you because you become identified with the pain again. In other words, the pain becomes me. And so completely identified with the arising pain, you are it.

Once you're identified with the pain body, you don't want the emotional pain to end because at that moment you've become the pain body. The pain body wants to continue to feel the pain. That's why sometimes, let's say it's anger.

You can see how people, they don't want an end to the argument. You can see how they walk out of the door and a minute later they are back in again to continue. And it goes on and on until the pain body has had enough.

So all you need to do, because it is a vicious circle, you can't stop the pain. It's there. If you stop the pain, I'm not going to feel this.

I'm above it now. It'll come up. You can't put a lid on a boiling kettle.

You recognize it as your pain body, ultimately not even yours, the human pain body. Now there may have, things may have happened in your childhood or later that added more to the pain body that was already there. There's no child in this mad world that does not suffer, does not encounter the human pain body through his, his or her parents, school environment.

Most children absorb further pain from the parents' pain bodies. You don't need to feel guilty about it. It's all part of that human dysfunction.

It's fine. So you've had in your childhood, perhaps things were added to it. So you watch the movement of pain, whatever form it takes in you, predominantly, it may be predominantly anger or predominantly fear or predominantly deep sadness, whatever it may be, you watch that and oh, there it is.

Something, a little trigger happens and you feel it. So you bring, one could say, the witnessing consciousness to it. You simply watch the movement of pain.

You could even tell your partner or your wife or your husband, my pain body is coming up. And at that point, he or she may run out of the room, but the pain body is not really that dangerous anymore when you have acknowledged it. Pain bodies that you identify with are, can be quite vicious.

When, once the pain body has been acknowledged, it's not that serious anymore. And once you acknowledge it, you allow it to be because it's what is at this moment. It is.

Okay. Let's say it is fear. My pain body consisted of mostly fear.

There were, of course, other things came in too. There was sadness of depression, sometimes anger, but a lot of it was fear. So I would wake up in the middle of the night in my warm bed, but for a moment, there was simple clarity and, oh, and then the first thought came in.

And then the next thought about my future, oh, and I'm not going to make it. It's too late already. I failed.

This is going to happen. That is going to happen. I'm going to lose the little that I have.

They're going to take it away from me. Proliferation of thinking until the body is shaking with fear. Now, I wasn't conscious then.

If I had been a little bit more conscious, I could have watched the movement of fear and see how it feeds on future projections through the mind. It loves, if your pain body is fear, it loves the mind to project itself into a future problematic situation where either you are going to lose something or something bad is going to happen to you. And it's happening now.

According, this is what it feels like. You can die many, many times. The worst thing's happening and you feel as if they were happening.

That's what the pain body loves. And all you need to do is bring awareness to that and, oh, the pain body's here. It helps to feel other parts of the body that are relatively free from pain.

Pain body is often in the middle of your body, stomach, chest, here, contraction, heaviness here. Sometimes you can feel it all over the body, but wherever it is, feel that, bring awareness to it, allow it to be so that it can't use your thoughts anymore. It's just a movement of pain.

Then it can't feed anymore. So you're not feeding it with your thinking. This is helpful to be able to bring attention into the body so you can bring attention into the pain body.

Underneath the pain body, there's intense aliveness. That is the inner body, the energy field, the aliveness that is there. So pain body, you need to allow it when it comes and then it'll pass quickly.

You need to be very alert when it comes. Without that alertness, it can take over your mind quickly and... So alertness is essential.

That's why it's essential for you to enter that state of presence when you're not being challenged by the pain body, like now, so that there's enough presence when the pain body comes, you can stay alert. And there's pain. Now, the difference is enormous now.

Pain is still there for a while. Periodically, it will try to come up and it'll try different ways of getting you to identify with it. It'll try to catch you out when you're less conscious.

It'll try briefly when you're very conscious and then it can see not much of a chance. It'll withdraw. Two hours later, it may suddenly come in after you've watched a film on TV that contained a lot of negativity or violence.

Suddenly, that's the chance it'll come in. Sometimes it may come in when you're tired. Your alertness goes down.

It may come in when you've been drinking a couple of drinks. Suddenly, it's there. It waits for an opportunity.

It can come in when you react to a little thing that goes wrong. That negative reaction is sometimes regarded by the pain body as an opportunity to flow in when you go, ah, and suddenly, it's not just, ah, it goes on for hours, but it started with that trigger and when you reacted to it, the pain body came in. So it's a clever little thing.

So it'll wait to catch you. Be alert, present. And watch it.

Sometimes it might succeed and it'll take you over again, but more and more, you'll be able to watch it when it comes and then allow it to be. And the very pain you say yes to, because this is the primordial lesson, it is, it is, okay. A child can't do that.

A child sometimes needs to shut off the pain to survive. Humans sometimes, if they've suffered a lot as children, cannot feel anything anymore because as children, they had to shut off their feelings and then they could never feel again. So it's important if that's the case with you, to start bringing attention into the body as we did before, feel, hands, feet, then gradually the ability to feel emotions will be there again.

And you can feel your pain body. Pain bodies that you, that are suppressed, sometimes pain bodies are suppressed in people, or not expressed at all in some people, just remain unexpressed inside, they can easily lead to physical illness. When a pain body is active, the likelihood, and you're identified with it, and you're going, walking out in the street, the likelihood that you will encounter either an accident or something bad happening to you increases enormously because you attract other pain bodies to you.

Other people's pain bodies that are also active can sense yours. So you may be walking into a shop, wanting just to buy a little thing, and suddenly the shopkeeper gets abusive. What did I do to him?

I didn't do anything. His pain body recognized yours. And suddenly you got into an argument, violent argument, shouting, and then you walk out of there.

What was all that? I did nothing, and he attacked me. Well, you walked in with an active pain body.

Driving, it's dangerous when your pain body is active because the pain body wants the accident, unconscious, of course. It wants something bad to happen, so it's just waiting. And then it'll purposefully, it's unconscious, do something wrong so that an accident happens.

People don't realize that many accidents happen in that way, especially when one meets, when two pain bodies meet on the road, an intersection, two pain bodies in cars. None of them wants to stop. Road rage, a relatively recent phenomenon, it's a new way of pain bodies, in very unconscious people, to come up and they might even kill somebody.

Many violence, acts of violence are committed by active pain bodies. So just bring awareness to that. It's not, and then when you bring the yes to that, it seems difficult at first.

One doesn't want to say yes to pain, but it is. So you bring that. So for a moment, when you bring yes, one could say you bring consciousness to the suffering.

You suffer consciously. You don't resist the suffering. When you don't resist the suffering, it can't last for very long.

This is the amazing thing. When you don't resist emotional pain, it cannot last for very long. When you bring surrender to it, because pain, the origin of pain is resistance.

Of course, it goes back a long time in human history. The origin of human pain is resistance, is to be out of alignment, to be out of alignment with now, with God, with the one power, is the origin of human pain. So it's resistance.

Further resistance can never free you of pain. Only non-resistance can free you of pain. It goes to the root of pain.

So one could say conscious suffering, while there is suffering, you bring consciousness to it. Okay. Symbolized by Jesus on the cross who surrendered to the suffering.

Yes. And so that it gets transmuted quickly and it becomes an opening. And suddenly you walk out of the suffering.

You walk through the pain. And as you do it, the pain becomes transmuted. It becomes presence.

And then you'll be thankful for pain because it's without it, there would be no evolution of consciousness. I would not be sitting here if I hadn't had a very dense pain body. So dense that I couldn't live with that anymore.

Can't live with that self anymore that is so painful, so heavy. It was so heavy that it went all at once. It self-destructed.

For most people, it's a gradual process. So the transformation of consciousness is the end of suffering. Suffering takes you to the end of suffering.

The Buddha encapsulated his teaching by saying, I teach suffering and the end of suffering. So it's not by running away from suffering that you come to the end of suffering. It's by walking through suffering that you get to the end of suffering.

It's not that bad. Is that it?

[Speaker 3] (4:34:38 - 4:34:38)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (4:34:39 - 4:47:33)

Just that? Yes. So it's the end of suffering.

When you no longer identify with human pain, that's already the end of suffering, really. The pain may have a certain momentum. It may come up again and again and again and again and again, and then it's gone.

Suffering means there is an entity, a mind-made entity whose story becomes very unhappy. And that mind-made entity is a suffering entity, a me. And you're telling yourself your problems in the head.

And you're telling other people your problems and your sufferings to get confirmation that you are real, that they are all real. When you no longer identify with that, there's still some human pain in you, but it's not suffering anymore without that entity, without the story around the pain. A me, a self, just pain.

And then pain comes to an end. That's how you use the pain body. And just be grateful that it's there.

In most of cases, the pain bodies brought you here. It's because you suffered. If you were totally adjusted to this world, you would be very happy now watching TV, the latest soap opera, having a little drink and going to borrow, going to the shopping mall, and then going to work, and then you have a dinner.

There's nothing wrong with any of this, of course. You've done all that also. But a point came when that existence was no longer satisfying, or it may have been this broad suffering itself, the emptiness of that, and suddenly you're walking in the shopping mall with enough money in your pocket and felt bad.

And then you bought another thing and it still didn't feel much better. And nothing satisfies you after a while in this realm. And then things, you lose things suddenly that you had identified with.

Life takes something away. Loss, death in one form or another. Forms leave you that you had identified with.

They leave a hole. That's wonderful. Every time you lose something, it's an opening into the formless, because a form dissolves.

A form dissolves every time a form that you had identified with dissolves. God shines through because God is the formless one life, appearing as billions of forms to us, to our eyes. But whenever one form dies and you as the form complains and weeps when a form leaves you or dies, even if it's just a material form and you lose it.

But no matter whether it's a physical form or material form, any time death happens, which means a form dissolves, you lose it, it's taken away, it dissolves, and there's pain. And that pain is not resisted. Then you realize that the pain was there as your form's reaction to the emptiness that was left behind.

But that emptiness is the formless one, God. This is why when you read stories about people who accidentally realized this, who accidentally became liberated, they all suffered tremendous loss somewhere in their lives. And at some, they just totally accepted it at some point because they couldn't stand the pain anymore.

And then the acceptance of that loss, of that hole that had appeared in the fabric of their existence was God shining through. And suddenly, enormous peace came in the face of enormous loss. But you don't need to wait for disaster to happen to you because you've already chosen liberation.

You have already chosen the death of the false self. Voluntarily, you've come here. It's amazing.

So you've had enough suffering already to bring you here. You don't need much more. So it's easy now, aligned with now.

How could it not be easy? The now is always easy. Only when you leave the now, it gets difficult.

I'm saying, of course, you need to do a little bit of planning. But leave the now as your main dwelling place. Stay in the now.

And then do you deal with past and future? Of course. Are we meeting?

Yes, we are meeting tomorrow, four o'clock. Okay, where? Okay, I'll see you there.

That's future. Of course, that's fine. Or I'm going to study medicine for the next six years.

Okay, that's future. You've planned the next six years. And then you come back to now.

If every moment in the next six years is because you try to become a doctor and you're just trying to get there, that's dreadful. And once you get there, then you're just a junior doctor and you have to become an important doctor. And when you finally make it, you're exhausted and your body's ill.

And then you can spend the money you made in getting your body repaired. And you never get there to the sense of completion. You can get the Nobel Prize in medicine and they give it to you and you look unhappy.

So you can make plans, but to realize, come back to this easy place which is now. This is not a superficial thing as you get with some teachings that say, just be happy, smile, be happy all the time. No, it's deeper than that.

And yet it is true to say, and it's amazing when you recognize that the now is simple. The now is you can deal with. Not the future, that's difficult.

How can you deal with? That's stressful. I'm going to travel for the next three months from one country to another.

So if I had thought about that, protected myself mentally into all these situations, I would be stressed continuously. But all I ever do is talk in the now. This moment I'm talking, well, that's fine.

If you protect the next 30 talks, what happens if I can't think of anything to say? What happens? That's the message, that's the liberation.

Liberation from past and future. Liberation from continuous, incessant, compulsive thinking, which is to do with past and future. Liberation from a false sense of self, which is to do with past and future.

Liberation from suffering. It's now. Nothing to remember, of course, as you move away from here, except you go home, they may ask you, what did he talk about?

He talked for three hours about the now. Yes, there's only now. That's what he said.

Blessings on your journey. Ever more deeply moving into the now. That vertical dimension into depth, timeless.

The rest will look after itself. Just get this right, the now right. Get the now right.

Everything else looks after itself. Get this right. How do you get it right?

By recognizing the rightness of it. Thank you. So, let's look at some of the great mysteries of human existence.

Things that adults don't look at anymore, don't ask questions about anymore. Only children still do.

[Speaker 2] (4:47:34 - 4:47:39)

Let's explore together some of the great mysteries of human existence.

[Speaker 1] (4:47:50 - 4:48:57)

But while we sit here and listen to the words, realize there is another dimension than the words. And what is that dimension? What is the dimension of the human being?

One could say, simply to notice the silent spaces. While the words happen, you hear the words, but some of your attention is also on the silent spaces or the silent background.

[Speaker 2] (4:48:58 - 4:49:25)

While we sit here, attentive to the words, realize there is another dimension than the words. What is that dimension? One could say, simply to notice the silent spaces.

While the words happen, you hear the words, but some of your attention is also on the silent spaces or the silent background.

[Speaker 1] (4:49:25 - 4:50:48)

It's very simple. It's simple to notice that there is, apart from the words, that there is also a stillness here. And a strange thing happens when you notice silence, which means pay attention to silence.

A strange thing happens inside you at that moment, and that is, in that act of noticing silence, thought activity, the stream of thinking, stops during that moment when you notice silence.

[Speaker 2] (4:50:49 - 4:51:14)

And a strange thing happens when you notice silence, which means pay attention to silence. A strange thing happens inside you at that moment, and that is, in that act of noticing silence, thought activity, the stream of thinking, stops during that moment when you notice silence.

[Speaker 1] (4:51:14 - 4:52:12)

And for a moment, the stream of thoughts comes to an end while you listen, the stillness listens. So this is accessing a new dimension of consciousness that most people are not aware of. The possibility for the stream of thinking to come to an end without any loss of consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (4:52:14 - 4:52:34)

And for a moment, the stream of thoughts comes to an end while you listen, the stillness listens. This listening constitutes the access to a new dimension of consciousness that most people are not aware of. The possibility for the stream of thoughts to come to an end without any loss of consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (4:52:35 - 4:53:14)

And in the moment of noticing or listening to that dimension of silence, you are also completely present here in this moment, completely inhabiting this moment, being in it totally.

[Speaker 2] (4:53:16 - 4:53:30)

And in the moment of noticing or listening to that dimension of silence, you are also completely present here in this moment, being in it totally.

[Speaker 1] (4:53:37 - 4:54:30)

And this is the reason why we are here, to access that dimension in ourselves, to go beyond the continuous stream of thinking that most people are completely identified with as themselves, me. The self, the me, is in every thought, no distance. And that is the state of absence.

And here we are entering the state of presence.

[Speaker 2] (4:54:31 - 4:55:00)

And that is the reason why we are here, to access that inner dimension, to go beyond the continuous stream of thinking that most people are completely identified with as themselves, me. The self, the me, is in every thought, no distance. And that is the state of absence.

And here we are entering the state of presence.

[Speaker 1] (4:55:07 - 4:55:49)

Otherwise you are completely trapped in the conditioning of the thinking mind, with all its patterns, with its accumulated knowledge, experiences, past. You are simply acting out a script in the mind when you are totally one with that. There is no freedom in that whatsoever.

[Speaker 2] (4:55:50 - 4:56:12)

Otherwise you are completely trapped in the conditioning of the thinking mind, with all its patterns, with its accumulated knowledge, experiences, past. You are simply acting out a script in the mind when you are totally one with that. There is no freedom in that.

[Speaker 1] (4:56:16 - 4:56:30)

So the possibility arises of living in a different state of consciousness from the normal state.

[Speaker 2] (4:56:31 - 4:56:38)

So the possibility arises of living in a different state of consciousness from the normal state.

[Speaker 1] (4:56:48 - 4:57:08)

So you will have noticed already that here, in this talk, your mind, thinking mind, is not being fed or stimulated.

[Speaker 2] (4:57:10 - 4:57:21)

So you will have noticed already that here, in this talk, your mind, thinking mind, is not being fed or stimulated.

[Speaker 1] (4:57:24 - 4:57:45)

And if you sit here, and you are still completely identified with the stream of thinking, you will already notice restlessness, impatience, and discontent arising.

[Speaker 2] (4:57:46 - 4:57:58)

And if you sit here, and you are still completely identified with the stream of thinking, you will already notice restlessness, impatience, and discontent arising.

[Speaker 1] (4:58:02 - 4:58:06)

And the thinking mind says, What's he talking about?

[Speaker 2] (4:58:06 - 4:58:10)

And your thinking mind says, But what is he talking about?

[Speaker 1] (4:58:10 - 4:58:14)

I can't figure out. He's not really saying anything.

[Speaker 2] (4:58:14 - 4:58:17)

I can't figure out. He's not really saying anything.

[Speaker 1] (4:58:22 - 4:58:49)

Because the thinking mind and the sense of self that comes with identification with the conditioned mind, a mind made sense of me, that sense of self is always looking for more to add to itself.

[Speaker 2] (4:58:50 - 4:59:07)

Because the thinking mind and the sense of self that comes with identification with the conditioned mind, a mind made sense of self, that sense of self is always looking for more to add to itself.

[Speaker 1] (4:59:09 - 5:00:11)

So here it will be looking for some new ideas to put in here. Oh, that's interesting. New beliefs.

Now I know what I believe in. Or maybe some new emotional experiences. And it's not being satisfied here, because the thinking mind is not getting the food that it wants, that it wants to add to itself and then feel a little bit bigger when you leave here.

Add it something to me.

[Speaker 2] (5:00:11 - 5:00:28)

And so he does not find satisfaction here because his thinking mind does not receive the food he desires, the one he wants to appropriate to feel a little bigger, when you leave here, with the feeling of having added something to me.

[Speaker 1] (5:00:29 - 5:01:39)

And that's because the sense of self that is based on me and my story, my past, everybody's sense of identity, really, is what is it that people tell you when you ask them, who are you, their identity, they will give you the name and they completely believe that that's who they are. They say it with great conviction. This fact cannot be doubted that I am John Smith.

Yes, I am. And then they will tell you what they do in relation to society, for a living. And then if there's enough time left, they will tell you a little story or a long story.

And that's the story of me.

[Speaker 2] (5:01:43 - 5:02:10)

And that's because the sense of self is based on me, my story and my past. What do people tell you when you ask them, who are you? The identity they give you with great conviction, the name, John Dupont, cannot be doubted.

Then they will tell you what they do to make a living and if there's enough time left, they will tell you a little story or a long story. And that's the story of me.

[Speaker 1] (5:02:13 - 5:03:27)

And so the person will be talking about perhaps the roles that he or she plays in this world and believing that that's who he or she is. I'm a mother of three. I'm an accountant.

I'm such and such. I'm unemployed. I'm successful.

I'm unemployed. They're little conceptual identities, concepts in the head. Of course, everybody has certain roles to play in this life, But to believe that that's who you are, to be identified with that, that's a terrible prison, bondage.

[Speaker 2] (5:03:29 - 5:03:39)

Of course, we all have certain roles to play in this life. But to believe that that's who we are, to be identified with that, that's a terrible prison, slavery.

[Speaker 1] (5:04:02 - 5:05:44)

This concept occupying your mind totally. Otherwise you will be a mother for the rest of your life, and your children will remain children to you. And you always know better, and you'll tell them what to do.

You are trapped in the role. And so the world is full of people who are trapped in the roles that society has given them, their conditioned roles, which is mindforms. That's what a role is, certain mindforms, mental formations, thoughts.

So this is another aspect of being identified with the content of your mind.

[Speaker 2] (5:05:45 - 5:05:51)

So this is another aspect of being identified with the content of your mind.

[Speaker 1] (5:05:54 - 5:06:23)

And that sense of self, identity, me, that is derived from identification with that is never at ease, fulfilled, at peace for very long, not for long.

[Speaker 2] (5:06:24 - 5:06:39)

And that sense of self, identity, me, that is derived from identification with that is never at ease, fulfilled, not for long. Not for long.

[Speaker 1] (5:06:40 - 5:07:17)

So that self lives in a condition of not enough. And there is a feeling attached to it, that is, I am not complete yet, I haven't made it yet, I haven't arrived home yet, I need to be more, I need to grow in my sense of self.

[Speaker 2] (5:07:22 - 5:07:31)

I haven't arrived home yet, I haven't arrived home yet, I need to be more, I need to grow in my sense of self.

[Speaker 1] (5:07:32 - 5:08:11)

And everybody, even if on the surface it looks as if the story of me had completed itself, and sometimes this culture tells you that the famous people or the wealthy people, they have made it on the surface. So there is the illusion that you can arrive at a state of completion of your sense of self that is based on a story, the happy ending.

[Speaker 2] (5:08:22 - 5:08:40)

And if you meet the famous people or wealthy people, you realize that the story of me is not a story of me.

[Speaker 1] (5:08:40 - 5:08:57)

Their state is the same as everybody else's, they don't feel that they have arrived. There is fear, there is discontent, a sense of lack, and they have everything.

[Speaker 2] (5:08:57 - 5:09:04)

But if you meet celebrities or rich people, you will realize that they are in the same state of mind as anyone else.

[Speaker 1] (5:09:12 - 5:12:23)

So this sounds like bad news, as if you couldn't possibly make it in this life. No, if you have enough time left, then that sense of self will still feel, OK, I have enough time to complete myself. I surely have another 40, 50 years ahead of me, and surely that is enough time to complete the story of me and make it into a happy one that ends happily.

So it's not realized that the discontent, unhappiness, that problematic me, that everybody knows at first hand, people don't realize that this is not their personal problem, but it is built into the very structure of the mind. It is a structural dysfunction, not a dysfunction based on content. And every sense of self, with its story, knows that the story, didn't quite work out the way it should have up to this point.

Things along the way did not go the way they were supposed to go. And so, at this moment, and there is the belief that through future I can still complete myself. And then as you get older, you realize, it never seems, that moment of completion never comes.

And then future shrinks as you get older.

[Speaker 2] (5:12:23 - 5:12:47)

And every sense of self, with its story, knows that the story, didn't quite work out the way it should have up to this point. Things along the way did not go the way they were supposed to go. And so, at this moment, and there is the belief that through future I can still complete myself.

And then as you get older, you realize, it never seems, that moment of completion never comes.

[Speaker 1] (5:12:48 - 5:13:38)

And then future shrinks. And so what many old people do, as the future shrinks, they, more and more they look to the past. At least I can hang on to that.

And they keep that going through thinking and talking about it. Just keep it going. And if the identity is an unhappy one, the mind made identity, because life has done such dreadful things to you, treated you so unfairly, that you have an identity that is based on complaining, that's fine, it's better than no identity at all.

I have to keep that going.

[Speaker 2] (5:13:39 - 5:14:03)

And so what many old people do, as the future shrinks, they, more and more they look to the past. At least I can hang on to that. And they keep that going through thinking and talking about it.

And if the identity is an unhappy one, the mind made identity, because life has done such dreadful things to you, treated you so unfairly, that's fine, it's better than no identity at all.

[Speaker 1] (5:14:03 - 5:14:37)

I have to keep that going. So there are many people who are trapped in a very unhappy sense of self, with continuous complaining in the mind about life, people around me, what they are doing to me, God, if there is a God, they believe in God, or they say they can't possibly be a God, look at what he did.

[Speaker 2] (5:14:40 - 5:14:55)

So many people are trapped in a very unhappy sense of self, with continuous complaining in the mind about life, people around me, what they are doing to me, God, if there is a God, maybe they believe in God, or they will say, God cannot exist, look at what he did to me.

[Speaker 1] (5:14:57 - 5:15:16)

And once you are trapped in an identity, it becomes rigid, and you don't want to let go. Through thinking and talking about yourself, to yourself and to others, you don't want to let go of the me, it doesn't matter how unhappy the me is.

[Speaker 2] (5:15:17 - 5:15:29)

Once you are trapped in an identity, it becomes rigid, and you maintain it by thinking about it, and by talking about it to yourself and to others. You don't want to let go of the self, no matter how much it suffers.

[Speaker 1] (5:15:36 - 5:16:54)

So if you have enough time, there's the search for more to complete me. More possessions perhaps, maybe that would make me feel a little bit more secure, a little bit bigger, the bigger the car, maybe that will do it. It's bigger than other people's, and so the car becomes a thought form.

It's not the car that really matters, because it's only metal, and in a few years it will be rust. It's not the car, it's the thought form of car that contains the self, the me, and the me is in the thought form that identifies with the thought form of car. Me, car, thought form.

And that is very normal. And if it's a big car, the me, the illusion of me, has become a little bit bigger, through the thought form.

[Speaker 2] (5:16:54 - 5:17:39)

So, if you have enough time, you look for more to complete me. More possessions perhaps, maybe that would make me feel a little bit more secure, a little bit bigger, a bigger car, maybe that will do it. It's bigger than other people's, and so the car becomes a thought form.

It's not the car that really matters, because it's only metal, and in a few years it will be rust. It's the thought form of car which contains the I. This I is the thought form which identifies itself with the thought form car.

I, car. That's what happens. In addition, if it is a big car, the I, the illusion of the I, grows through this thought form.

[Speaker 1] (5:17:41 - 5:19:47)

For a little while. For a while. And after a little while, it doesn't work so well anymore as to satisfy the sense of self.

It only works for a short period of time. And then, hmm. Then you have to look for the next thing.

That's the more. And you look for the next thing, and this continuous looking for the next thing to complete me is the psychological need built into here. For the next moment.

Future. And everybody is looking for that. If you observe people, how they live, there's the need for the next moment, because it will enable me to get what I need to complete me.

And then comes maybe the house. Big house. Bigger than the car.

And that's the thought form again arises. The me, the self, is the thought form of my house. My.

My is a very interesting story. To say, mine. Children learn that very early on.

One of the first things they learn is the beginning of the self, egoic self. That's mine.

[Speaker 2] (5:19:51 - 5:20:19)

And then comes maybe the idea of a house. A big house. Bigger than the car.

And then comes again the thought form of the me, which becomes the thought form of my house. My. My.

My is a very interesting story. To say, my. My is a very interesting story.

Children learn that very early on. One of the first things they learn is the beginning of the self, the egoic self. That's mine.

[Speaker 1] (5:20:23 - 5:20:36)

And so an idea develops and the whole civilization is based on that, the idea of owning something, ownership.

[Speaker 2] (5:20:37 - 5:20:45)

And so an idea develops and the whole civilization is based on that, the idea of owning something, ownership.

[Speaker 1] (5:20:47 - 5:21:03)

If you look at it clearly, you can see that to say, I own this. This table, whatever, this house, this car. It is mine.

[Speaker 2] (5:21:06 - 5:21:19)

If you look at it clearly, you can see that to say, I own this, this table, whatever, this house, this car. It is mine. But what does that mean?

[Speaker 1] (5:21:20 - 5:21:32)

What? It's a story. You are telling yourself a story about this.

It becomes a thought-form.

[Speaker 2] (5:21:32 - 5:21:39)

It is a story that you are telling to this subject, a story that becomes a thought-form.

[Speaker 1] (5:21:42 - 5:22:07)

Now, if you were mad, you might be telling yourself the story that I own this huge office block. I own this 20-storey office block. You walk past every day and you say, that's mine.

[Speaker 2] (5:22:08 - 5:22:20)

Suppose that you are mad. You might be telling yourself the story that I own this big office building. I own this 20-storey office building.

You walk past every day and you say, that's mine.

[Speaker 1] (5:22:21 - 5:22:36)

Now, and then it's possible that the rest of society may agree with your story and they give you a piece of paper to show you that they agree with your story.

[Speaker 2] (5:22:37 - 5:22:45)

Now, it is quite possible that the rest of society agrees with your story and they give you a piece of paper to show you that they agree.

[Speaker 1] (5:22:51 - 5:23:02)

So, if you believe that you own something and nobody else agrees with you, you are mad. If everybody agrees with you, you are wealthy.

[Speaker 2] (5:23:18 - 5:23:19)

Wealthy.

[Speaker 1] (5:23:22 - 5:23:36)

Wealthy. And that wealthy is important because it makes the story bigger. And that wealthy is important because it makes the story bigger.

[Speaker 2] (5:23:38 - 5:23:44)

Until it becomes unhappy again. Until it becomes unhappy again.

[Speaker 1] (5:23:46 - 5:24:53)

So, to see how important the concepts are in the head. And so people live in and through a conceptualized sense of self. Mental concepts.

And the moment you inhabit a conceptualized sense of self, then you also inhabit a conceptualized reality because everything that you perceive is interpreted according through the eyes of the mind-made self, the me.

[Speaker 2] (5:24:53 - 5:25:06)

And the moment you inhabit a conceptualized sense of self, then you also inhabit a conceptualized reality because everything that you perceive is interpreted according to the eyes of the mind-made self, the me.

[Speaker 1] (5:25:11 - 5:26:28)

So, that is the compulsion to immediately interpret and label every experience, every perception. And those people who are very good at that, those people who can quickly label things, analyze things, store information, regurgitate information, cut things into tiny pieces to examine, they're good with concepts, that is called intelligent. And if you're very good at cutting the tiniest piece of knowledge into an even smaller pieces, then you get a PhD.

[Speaker 2] (5:26:31 - 5:26:39)

If you have a PhD, then you get a doctorate.

[Speaker 1] (5:26:43 - 5:27:07)

If you have been to universities, you know how tiny the segments are that people do their research on. So, that is the human condition.

[Speaker 2] (5:27:08 - 5:27:10)

Et c'est cela, la condition humaine.

[Speaker 1] (5:27:13 - 5:29:20)

And the need for more is not only a personal need because that sense of self becomes a collective sense of self through companies, corporations, nations, tribes, organizations. They are all created by that conceptual self and they are an expression of that, a collective expression of that. So, it's easy to say, you look at a huge corporation and see how greedy that corporation is.

Only recently, the famous collapse of Enron Corporation in the United States, huge! And then you see the entire corporation was dominated by the greed for more. More, it wanted to grow, grow.

They would do anything to grow. So, it's easy to say, look at this evil corporation. It's just a magnified ego.

[Speaker 2] (5:29:21 - 5:29:25)

Et donc, c'est facile de dire, regardez comme cette entreprise est corrompue.

[Speaker 4] (5:29:25 - 5:29:28)

En fait, elle n'est qu'un ego à grande échelle.

[Speaker 1] (5:29:33 - 5:30:39)

And so, this, the self, the entity, the self, when it moves through life, the me, has two important things that it is concerned about. One is the wanting movement, wanting more. And the other is the protective movement of, I don't want to lose anything that I already have, the little that I have.

So, those two movements are wanting and fearing. Desire, fear. And human beings move between these two.

Whatever, any action undertaken by the egoic self is either desire, the need for more, or fear, the need for protecting me.

[Speaker 2] (5:30:40 - 5:31:13)

Et le soi, cette entité, le soi donc, ne se préoccupe au fil de sa vie que de deux choses importantes. La première, c'est le mouvement du désir, celui de vouloir plus. Et la deuxième, un mouvement de protection.

Je ne veux rien perdre du peu que j'ai déjà. Ces deux mouvements sont vouloir et avoir peur. Désir, peur.

Les êtres humains évoluent entre les deux. L'origine des actions entreprises par le soi égocentrique est soit le désir, le besoin d'avoir plus, soit la peur, le besoin de protéger moi.

[Speaker 1] (5:31:14 - 5:31:46)

And every human being that you meet in that state, the little self, looks to see what can I get, it's unconscious of course, what can I get from him or her to add to me, and then it looks, is this person a threat to me? So it looks through the eyes of fear and desire at each person you meet.

[Speaker 2] (5:31:46 - 5:32:02)

Chaque être humain est dans cet état d'esprit, son petit soi, à la recherche de ce que je peux obtenir. C'est inconscient, bien sûr. Ou encore, cette personne représente-t-elle une menace pour moi?

Donc il regarde chaque personne qu'il rencontre avec les yeux de la peur et du désir.

[Speaker 1] (5:32:04 - 5:32:37)

And so this is how human beings live. And one more thing that makes it even worse, that self, the mind-made self, needs to have a clear boundary which is also thought, of course, a boundary between me and the rest of the world and others.

[Speaker 2] (5:32:37 - 5:32:52)

C'est ainsi que vivent les êtres humains. Mais autre chose vient encore aggraver la situation, le soi fabriqué par le mental a besoin d'avoir une frontière clairement délimitée, qui n'est que penser, bien sûr, une frontière entre moi et le reste du monde, y compris les autres.

[Speaker 1] (5:32:52 - 5:33:12)

And with that comes the need, unconscious again, for that sense of self to define itself more strongly through opposition.

[Speaker 2] (5:33:14 - 5:33:21)

Et avec cela vient le besoin, toujours inconscient, pour ce sens du moi, de se définir plus fortement par l'opposition.

[Speaker 1] (5:33:25 - 5:33:45)

Le petit soi a besoin d'ennemis quelque part, car sans eux, The little self needs enemies somewhere, because without enemies, its sense of identity would no longer be rigid enough. It would become fluid.

[Speaker 2] (5:33:46 - 5:33:47)

it.

[Speaker 1] (5:33:59 - 5:35:14)

Collectively you can see it, how religions, nations or different churches within the religions, tribes, how they love their enemies. They love them, not in the way that Jesus talks about it. They need their enemies because they define their sense of self through that.

It becomes stronger. Christians did this for a long, long time. Some still do it.

Muslims do it a lot these days, to define your sense of identity through having an enemy. This is not particular to any one religion. Any religion lends itself to that.

Nations do it. Who would you be without the enemy that strengthens the illusory self enormously to the point of falling into the trap of the reason?

[Speaker 2] (5:35:14 - 5:35:53)

Who would you be without the enemy that strengthens the illusory self? Who would you be without the enemy that strengthens Defining one's identity through the fact of having an enemy is not specific to a religion. Any religion can do it.

Nations do it too. Who would you be without the enemy that reinforces so much the illusory self? And on a personal level, this means that you need problems.

[Speaker 1] (5:35:55 - 5:37:30)

So that's, again, it's unconscious, it's built into the structure of the mind. And so we all know people who are attached to their problems because it's always easier to see it in others than in oneself. And so many people's story-based self is mainly a collection of problems and conflict in my life.

And when you ask them about their life, they will tell you their problems. So if that is the human condition, personally, collectively, we can see why human history looks so insane, mad.

[Speaker 2] (5:37:31 - 5:37:41)

If that is the human condition, personally, collectively, we can see why human history looks so insane, mad.

[Speaker 1] (5:37:43 - 5:39:42)

Read 20th century history. It's a nightmare. It's a nightmare.

And if you watch TV tonight, the news, it's a continuation of that. So the world that human beings have created is an expression, a manifestation of their state of consciousness, rather unconsciousness. So now we can see why history is the way it's been ever since history, we started recording history.

So there is such a very strong element of dysfunction or madness in the human psyche. And all the great teachers, they saw that. Buddha, Jesus, Indian teachers from India, Hindu, they all saw that in the human condition there is an enormous dysfunction.

Buddhas called it suffering. The human condition is one of suffering, that's what he said.

[Speaker 2] (5:39:45 - 5:40:00)

Buddha, Jesus, Indian teachers from India, they all saw that in the human condition there is an enormous dysfunction. Buddhas called it suffering. The human condition is one of suffering, that's what he said.

[Speaker 1] (5:40:01 - 5:40:08)

Jesus called it sin. Of course, it's been misinterpreted a lot.

[Speaker 2] (5:40:08 - 5:40:20)

Of course, it's been misinterpreted a lot. In India they call it illusion.

[Speaker 1] (5:40:21 - 5:41:11)

So they saw that, and they also saw that there is a way beyond. A different state of consciousness is possible for humanity. A different state of consciousness is possible for humanity.

Buddha calls it the end of suffering. Buddha calls it the end of suffering. Jesus calls it salvation or the kingdom of heaven.

[Speaker 2] (5:41:12 - 5:41:14)

Jesus calls it salvation or the kingdom of heaven.

[Speaker 1] (5:41:16 - 5:43:48)

In Indian teachings it may be called liberation or enlightenment. In Indian teachings it may be called liberation or enlightenment. So, at last we come to the good news.

But... sitting here and seeing the human condition, seeing it, just seeing it for what it is, is already... It is necessary because if there is no change in the human state of consciousness, the planet and humanity would probably not survive another 100 years.

Because the dysfunction is now being magnified by the means of science and technology. And so, for the first time, humanity is faced with the possibility of bringing about its own extinction. And so now, a new state of consciousness has to arise in humans.

[Speaker 2] (5:43:56 - 5:43:58)

And this is why it is arising.

[Speaker 1] (5:44:03 - 5:45:23)

Now, am I putting another idea into your head? I don't want to put any ideas into your head. And some of you may ask, how do you know that a true change is happening?

How do you know that? This gathering here is part of that transformation of human consciousness. So, this is what we are looking at now.

The transformation of consciousness that is possible and is happening here.

[Speaker 3] (5:45:24 - 5:45:24)

Why?

[Speaker 2] (5:45:25 - 5:45:34)

How? So, now we come to the heart of the matter. The possibility of a transformation of consciousness, the one that is happening here.

[Speaker 1] (5:45:35 - 5:46:15)

Why? How? How do we get out of thousands and thousands of years of conditioning?

Very interesting. I want to become transformed. Yes.

And it says, tell me more and tell me how to get there.

[Speaker 2] (5:46:16 - 5:46:33)

And the little self says, oh, but it's very interesting. Yes, I want to transform myself. And it adds, tell me more, explain to me how to do it.

How do I get from here to there? How can I get there?

[Speaker 1] (5:46:40 - 5:48:41)

In other words, another image forms in the mind of me attaining a state of consciousness, an ideal. And so, okay, the big car didn't work, the big house didn't work, status in society didn't complete me, three marriages didn't complete me, experiences, travelling, knowledge, PhD, but now there's a possibility of attaining, of adding to me the ultimate attainment. And so you become a spiritual seeker.

And that's when you become a spiritual seeker. And the last one, and don't realize that the same mindset, with its need for more, and need for future, to complete me, still operates.

[Speaker 2] (5:48:41 - 5:48:52)

Et vous ne réalisez pas que c'est le même état d'esprit, avec le même besoin de plus, ainsi que le besoin d'un avenir pour compléter le moi, qui est encore à l'oeuvre.

[Speaker 1] (5:48:52 - 5:49:29)

And so, after 20 years of seeking, you get a little tired. A few times you actually thought you found it. Plusieurs fois vous avez vraiment pensé avoir trouvé.

The great experience. La grande expérience. And suddenly, it receded into the past.

[Speaker 2] (5:49:31 - 5:49:34)

Qui s'est soudainement évanouie dans le passé.

[Speaker 1] (5:49:37 - 5:49:56)

And then you became somebody who once had a great experience. Et alors vous êtes devenu quelqu'un qui, un jour, a eu une grande expérience. Better than nothing.

[Speaker 3] (5:49:59 - 5:49:59)

C'est mieux que rien.

[Speaker 1] (5:50:02 - 5:50:24)

You can talk about it. Vous pouvez en parler. Think about it.

Y penser. And feel unhappy about it. Et vous sentir malheureux à ce sujet.

And after a few years, that feels very familiar.

[Speaker 2] (5:50:26 - 5:50:29)

Et quelques années plus tard, c'est devenu une habitude.

[Speaker 1] (5:50:41 - 5:51:21)

So the self, the man-made self says, OK, well, tell me how to get there, no matter how much time it takes. In fact, give me time. And I'll get there.

And in some teachings, you get it, it feels good. The teachings say, there are twelve steps.

[Speaker 2] (5:51:28 - 5:51:39)

Il y a douze étapes. And then you know exactly where you are. I'm at four, where are you?

[Speaker 1] (5:51:48 - 5:52:35)

So in some teachings, you may have the twelve steps, and the only one who has attained thirteen is the leader of the group. So the mind-made self lives through time. Time is past, gives its identity.

Future holds the possibility of completion. So it's time-bound. So the mind-made self lives through time.

[Speaker 2] (5:52:35 - 5:52:45)

Time is past, gives its identity. Future holds the possibility of completion. So it's time-bound.

[Speaker 1] (5:52:45 - 5:55:27)

And this is why that sense of self and time so go together. That's why time is so important to us in this civilization. And time is a strange thing.

It goes on and on. And yet, the most common expression you hear about time is, I don't have it. Not enough.

And there's so much, everywhere, time. And time is a very strange mystery. And time is a very strange mystery.

And time is a very strange mystery. A great mystery. On the one hand, it seems so real.

Nobody could deny it. Because we are spending time here. You spend time coming here.

And then, very soon, this will be over, because time is passing. And then, before you know it, you're going home again. Time is passing.

And you can't stop the thing. How do you stop? It drags you along.

It's like you're sitting on an express train, and it never stops. You see the landscape.

[Speaker 2] (5:55:28 - 5:55:36)

And you're going home. It's like you're sitting on an express train, and it never stops. You see the landscape.

[Speaker 1] (5:55:41 - 5:56:19)

Even our gathering here, for a long time, it was a future event. There it was coming. Another three days, two days, one day.

And then it's here, and it goes. Was that it? The express train is gone.

It's gone into the past. From the future, it approaches slowly. The more distant, the more slowly.

Just like space. The more distant, the slower. And then, suddenly, it comes.

Before you know it, it's gone.

[Speaker 2] (5:56:30 - 5:56:49)

But everything is so fleeting. Before you know it, it is gone. And before you know it, it's gone.

And before you know it, it is gone.

[Speaker 1] (5:56:49 - 5:58:26)

And after you know it, it's gone. Everything is so fleeting. everything.

Before you know it, it's gone. It's strange. There was a, I believe, a poet who spoke of time as a fire that consumes us all.

And, in a way, this is true, because what fire leaves behind is ashes, and that will remain of these bodies, burnt by time. At Christmas I visited old friends I hadn't seen in many, many years. And when I saw them at first, I thought they must be ill.

And then I realized, no, it's time did that.

[Speaker 2] (5:58:26 - 5:58:31)

This is terrible.

[Speaker 1] (5:58:31 - 5:59:48)

Time did that to you. I didn't say that. So, it's a very strange thing, time.

It seems we can't get out of it, but on the other hand, we never have enough of it. It consumes us. Okay.

But then there's something else, and that's strange. Time really is past and future. That's time.

Now, the strange thing is, you never actually really encounter past or future, ever.

[Speaker 2] (5:59:52 - 6:00:04)

So, it's a very strange thing, time. It seems we can't get out of it, but on the other hand, we never have enough of it. It consumes us.

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (6:00:18 - 6:01:34)

So, the strange thing is, all there ever is, is now. It's always now. And the strange thing is that nothing ever happened to you.

You never did anything or experienced anything in the past. Whatever ever happened to you must have happened in the now. And as the future never comes, of course, because when it comes, it's now.

[Speaker 2] (6:01:34 - 6:01:39)

And as the future never comes, of course, because when it comes, it's now.

[Speaker 1] (6:01:45 - 6:02:15)

And so we can see, even when we remember the past, what you remember is a memory trace that you are giving attention to now. You can only remember it now. And what do you remember?

The event, the thought form that happened in the now. So, the memory must have happened in the now, and you can only remember it now, so you can't get away from now.

[Speaker 2] (6:02:21 - 6:02:55)

And so we realize the strange thing, that actually, there is, ultimately, there is memory. And there is no past and no future in your life.

[Speaker 1] (6:02:57 - 6:03:06)

The future is what you project now.

[Speaker 2] (6:03:06 - 6:03:10)

So there is no life apart from now.

[Speaker 1] (6:03:15 - 6:03:49)

So it's strange that, on the one hand, time seems to be so powerful, but on the other hand, this is not philosophy, it's too simple. Philosophy would be more complicated. We'll keep it simple.

Time seems so real, and seems to do things to us, and yet, if you look closely, you can't find it.

[Speaker 2] (6:03:49 - 6:04:04)

You can't find it.

[Speaker 1] (6:04:07 - 6:04:42)

All you ever find is this moment. So, what it does to the body, if time is ultimately not real, maybe the body is ultimately not real, maybe both are aspects of the same illusion.

[Speaker 2] (6:04:44 - 6:05:01)

So, whatever the effects of time on the body, if ultimately time is not real, maybe the body is not real either, and both are aspects of the same illusion. But this we will now put aside for the moment.

[Speaker 1] (6:05:05 - 6:05:36)

To realize that your entire life unfolds in the space of now, never was not now, never will be not now.

[Speaker 2] (6:05:37 - 6:05:46)

To realize that your entire life unfolds in the space of now, never was not now, never will be not now.

[Speaker 1] (6:05:52 - 6:06:07)

And the strange thing is, when people are trapped in their egoic mind-made identity, all they are interested in is past and future.

[Speaker 2] (6:06:08 - 6:06:21)

And the strange thing is, when people are trapped in their egoic mind-made identity, all they are interested in is past and future.

[Speaker 1] (6:06:22 - 6:06:33)

In other words, they are interested in everything except what is real.

[Speaker 2] (6:06:34 - 6:06:43)

And they miss this almost continuously.

[Speaker 1] (6:06:47 - 6:07:26)

And so the present moment, at best, becomes a stepping stone that enables me to get to the next moment. And very often I'm trying to get away from this now. I resist it, I don't like it.

I'm on my way to somewhere much more important. It's the next moment. And very often I'm trying to get away from this now.

[Speaker 2] (6:07:26 - 6:07:37)

I resist it, I don't like it. I'm on my way to somewhere much more important. It's the next moment.

That's where I'm going to find myself.

[Speaker 1] (6:07:38 - 6:08:23)

So we come to the, there's a little, an opening now. At first it seems very small. The opening is out of the conditioned mind.

And that freedom from thousands of years of conditioning through accessing the power that lies hidden in the present moment.

[Speaker 2] (6:08:23 - 6:08:40)

We come to a little opening now. At first it seems very small. The opening is out of the conditioned mind.

And that freedom from thousands of years of conditioning through accessing the power that lies hidden in the present moment.

[Speaker 1] (6:08:40 - 6:10:03)

The transformation of consciousness that is happening is simply, one could say, finding a new relationship towards now. A new relationship with now. A new inner attitude towards now.

It is somewhere. I mentioned the need of the mind-made self for problems and enemies. A new relationship with now.

[Speaker 2] (6:10:04 - 6:10:10)

I mentioned the need of the mind-made self for problems and enemies.

[Speaker 1] (6:10:13 - 6:10:39)

And one could say that the greatest enemy of the mind-made self is the now. People don't realize that they have made the now into an enemy.

[Speaker 2] (6:10:39 - 6:10:44)

People don't realize that they have made the now into an enemy.

[Speaker 1] (6:10:50 - 6:11:06)

And the transformation of consciousness is not something that could happen to you at some point in the future.

[Speaker 2] (6:11:07 - 6:11:14)

And the transformation of consciousness is not something that could happen to you at some point in the future.

[Speaker 1] (6:11:17 - 6:11:35)

The transformation of consciousness is simply aligning yourself internally with this moment.

[Speaker 2] (6:11:36 - 6:11:44)

The transformation of consciousness is simply aligning yourself internally with this moment.

[Speaker 1] (6:11:48 - 6:11:56)

And you can only do that now.

[Speaker 2] (6:11:57 - 6:12:09)

Is it possible to live in such a way? Is it possible to live in such a way?

[Speaker 1] (6:12:15 - 6:12:39)

So that you welcome this moment, the only moment there ever is. It's always this moment. There's only one ever.

It's this one. You welcome this now, no matter what form this now takes.

[Speaker 2] (6:12:40 - 6:12:52)

So that you welcome this moment, the only moment there ever is. It's always this moment. There's only one ever.

It's this one. Whatever its form, you welcome it.

[Speaker 1] (6:12:55 - 6:13:48)

Now the little me in the head says, No, I don't even like this now. I want to get away from it. It's not completing me.

It's actually stopping me. It's an obstacle to where I want to get to. An obstacle to the story of me.

That's what the now is. This now, the little me says, is actually sabotaging my life, my story. That's why I want to escape this now.

[Speaker 2] (6:13:51 - 6:13:52)

I want to escape this now. I want to escape this now.

[Speaker 1] (6:13:52 - 6:14:43)

I want to escape this now. That's why I need to get to the next moment. And that is a structural dysfunction, to live in such a way that the now is continuously resisted.

The possibility now arises to bring a yes to this moment.

[Speaker 2] (6:14:43 - 6:14:50)

The possibility now arises to bring a yes to this moment.

[Speaker 1] (6:14:53 - 6:15:01)

Because it is. Because it is.

[Speaker 2] (6:15:02 - 6:15:10)

Because it always is as it is. Because it is always as it is.

[Speaker 1] (6:15:10 - 6:16:16)

And you can scream and shout and complain, but it still is as it is. Now, the little self says, yes, but I want to improve the world. I want to make the world a better place.

This moment is dreadful. I don't want to accept this dreadful thing. And so you run away, run away from this.

What happens?

[Speaker 2] (6:16:17 - 6:16:20)

And so you run away, you flee from this moment.

[Speaker 1] (6:16:21 - 6:17:05)

What happens then? But really, it remains as the field of now. When it disappears, the mind projects past to accommodate what's just happened.

But really, everything is in the space of now. It comes into the now.

[Speaker 2] (6:17:06 - 6:17:40)

And then... Then it disappears. But really, it remains as the space of now.

The form has vanished. The mind projects past to integrate what has just happened. But really, everything is in the space of now.

Everything comes into the now, then changes, but everything continues in the space of now.

[Speaker 1] (6:17:41 - 6:17:57)

So there's only one moment, one now. It never leaves you. Not many moments.

Many forms that this moment can take.

[Speaker 2] (6:17:57 - 6:18:07)

So there's only one moment, one now. It never leaves you. Not many moments.

But many forms that this moment can take.

[Speaker 1] (6:18:08 - 6:18:20)

And what form this moment takes, whatever happens, is not a separate event. There are no separate events.

[Speaker 2] (6:18:22 - 6:18:30)

And whatever form this moment takes, whatever happens, is not a separate event, because there are no separate events.

[Speaker 1] (6:18:32 - 6:18:48)

We know from ancient teachings and from modern physics that everything is interconnected. There are no separate entities or events.

[Speaker 2] (6:18:49 - 6:18:58)

We know thanks to traditional teachings and modern physics that everything is interconnected. There are no separate entities or events.

[Speaker 1] (6:19:02 - 6:19:12)

And that means, what appears in the now, what happens in the now, is an expression of the totality.

[Speaker 2] (6:19:13 - 6:19:19)

And that means, what appears in the now, what happens in the now, is an expression of the totality.

[Speaker 1] (6:19:19 - 6:19:39)

And that means, it could not be otherwise. The entire cosmos has brought this about.

[Speaker 2] (6:19:39 - 6:19:43)

The entire cosmos has brought this about.

[Speaker 1] (6:19:44 - 6:21:12)

So that is the inevitability of the form that this moment takes. When you recognize the inevitability of Is, then you see the madness of resisting that. And what the resistance does, it strengthens the me-entity.

It strengthens the illusion. And that's why the little me loves to make the now into its enemy. When you see that, the possibility of living in a different way arises.

[Speaker 2] (6:21:14 - 6:21:19)

When you are aware of this, then you have the possibility of living differently.

[Speaker 1] (6:21:26 - 6:27:23)

And internally, you align yourself with now. And that means, you allow this moment to be as it is. The Buddha used the word, I don't know if you can translate it, suchness, the suchness of things.

And the little me says, no, nothing is ever as it is. It's never going to change. You will get stuck in this dreadful now for the rest of your life.

And it doesn't realize that it's been stuck in its own mind patterns all your life. When you allow this moment to be, you say yes to it. Yes.

That yes is the end of this moment. of thousands and thousands of years of collective conditioning. The no to now, the reaction, the reactive no to this moment, to the form this moment takes, strengthens the psychological form of me.

And with the yes, no matter what form this takes, you bring a yes to it. And a strange thing happens, there's suddenly, one could say, a space around what happens. And also, inner space arises, a sense of spaciousness.

And that is the arising of the unconditioned consciousness. And there is vast intelligence in that unconditioned consciousness. The conditioned consciousness is the human mind, which is a small aspect of that vast one intelligence.

So, something happens, it may be a challenge that comes into your life, life does that, it happens in the field of now, and it is not resisted, but simply given attention. You look at it. It arises, and you simply allow a flow of attention.

[Speaker 2] (6:27:23 - 6:27:25)

You look.

[Speaker 1] (6:27:47 - 6:32:38)

And this is an enormous change, the ability to simply be there with what is in that state of alert attention. And in that state of alert attention, enormous intelligence operates. And if action is needed, action will happen, and it will come not out of resistance, but out of the intelligence that is that state of alert awareness.

It often happens also that suddenly an external factor may come in to do what is required in that situation, a synchronistic event for example. You are connected now with the one intelligence which is not confined to your brain. So, you can meet life in that state of welcoming whatever happens, even if on the surface it looks bad.

It could not be otherwise. Is, you cannot argue with is, so you might as well welcome it. But are there not everywhere dreadful situations in life, injustices, violence, people doing dreadful things to other people?

Are you asking me not to do anything about it? See what happens if you bring, if you are there as the space of unconditioned intelligence. Go into a situation as not a little entity that is fighting and unhappy and angry and wants to create a better world out of its anger.

See the true transformed world can only arise out of the transformed state of consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (6:32:39 - 6:32:46)

See for yourself that a truly transformed world can only arise out of a transformed state of consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (6:33:08 - 6:34:41)

Now, in a state of yes. And that suddenly the portal is open and the unconditioned intelligence moves through you and begins to operate in your life. You are now being lived by life.

And then you can walk around, you can look on, you can look at something and allow it to be so completely that the compulsion to label it mentally isn't there anymore.

[Speaker 2] (6:34:44 - 6:34:45)

So...

[Speaker 1] (6:34:58 - 6:38:08)

you are not trapped anymore in the labels, concepts, thoughts. This is the awakening out of the dream of thought. Not that thought does not happen anymore, but that thought is recognized as thought.

You see it for what it is. The seeing is the unconditioned consciousness. We can point to it here through words, but the true teaching is to sense the space out of which the words come.

Some of you have studied Zen. What is Zen all about? This.

An uncompromising refusal to leave now. Except for practical matters. Tomorrow I will meet at such and such a time.

Okay. Back now. There was a Zen teacher who when asked what is the meaning of Zen, some teachers would hit you or some teachers give nonsensical explanations, but there was one teacher who became famous because all he became famous because all he would ever do was raise his finger when he was asked, can you explain Zen to us please?

[Speaker 2] (6:38:09 - 6:38:09)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (6:39:14 - 6:41:21)

Now, the last secret, the secret of now is to sense the now directly. Not as what happens in it, but as the underlying field. And then you realize that the now isn't really separate from who you are, because you are that field of aware presence.

And some people have used different words to describe it. It is simply beingness, presence, I am, I am, but no longer this or that.

[Speaker 2] (6:41:22 - 6:41:41)

The now is the self-definition in the Bible somewhere.

[Speaker 1] (6:41:42 - 6:41:52)

They ask, who are you? What's your name? God says, I am as I am.

I am that I am.

[Speaker 2] (6:41:52 - 6:42:21)

I am So this is the essence of being, as the essence of being.

[Speaker 1] (6:42:25 - 6:44:46)

So your identity is no longer the little story, but that field. So your spiritual practice is simply to bring a yes to this, to the now. And many times the old no will come back, the wave of resistance to what is.

What do you do then? You notice it and say, oh, there's a no, as a space of alert, aware

presence.

[Speaker 2] (6:44:54 - 6:44:59)

And you still remember your roles and your past.

[Speaker 1] (6:45:05 - 6:46:26)

After this, it's just a continuous stepping out when you get drawn back into the concepts, conceptual self. And you notice it, you become unhappy, suffering. And you become unhappy, you've lost the now.

Oh, where's the now? My past, my future. And then suddenly your attention goes, oh, there isn't actually a problem here, is there?

And then you lose yourself again, and it sucks up your attention, that thing here.

[Speaker 4] (6:46:28 - 6:46:34)

And then you lose yourself again, and it sucks up your attention, that thing here.

[Speaker 1] (6:46:35 - 6:46:51)

So it's a continuous back and left. And so increasingly you walk on this narrow edge of now. Beautiful.

[Speaker 2] (6:46:51 - 6:48:09)

And here we encounter again the paradox of time.

[Speaker 1] (6:48:14 - 6:48:30)

I will see some of you in what looks like tomorrow. But when I see you, it won't be tomorrow.

[Speaker 2] (6:48:35 - 6:48:35)

Strange.

[Speaker 4] (6:48:48 - 6:48:51)

Thank you. Dankeschön.

[Speaker 1] (6:50:18 - 9:45:14)

Welcome. It seems we are spending this evening here together, except for those of you who have more urgent business to attend to and have to leave early. That's okay, too.

This evening won't be comfortable for you unless you become comfortable with the present moment, because that's all you're getting. And if you don't become comfortable with the present moment, then you may feel a strong urge to leave before it's over, in search for some other moment, more stimulating, more interesting, some other moment that offers you more than this moment. And that's a very normal thing to feel that inside.

The pull towards the next moment is deep-seated in every human being, in the human mind. It is part of the collective conditioning of the human mind. And most people live like that all the time, being pulled internally away from this, that movement that pulls you towards the next moment, which I call the psychological need for the next moment.

Where is it? And wherever you go, in businesses, institutions, families, you can observe that stress, it translates, it becomes stress, of course, and many other things, the inability to be at home in the now, all there ever is, life itself, the inability to be at home with all there is, ever, this moment. It's so strange.

All other beings on the planet have no problem with it. Trees, flowers, they love being totally present. The animal, except a few animals that have lived for too long with humans.

Certain dogs can get very impatient. When are we going to go for a walk? Waiting, waiting.

If they were out in nature, they wouldn't have to wait to go for a walk, but because they live with humans, they have to wait. But on the whole, you can, even dogs that have lived close, very close to humans for thousands of years, there's still an enormous ability, despite all that, despite certain human traits that sometimes affect dogs, an enormous ability they have preserved to be in the now, to be in a mode of receptivity and openness to celebrate life, aliveness, this moment. And if you have a dog or watch a dog, it is a pleasure to simply watch the openness, the readiness of an animal like a dog to celebrate life.

The slightest excuse is good enough, and the owner of the dog, burdened with problems, and what's going to happen next? Not here, somewhere else. In thought, in the mind, trapped in mind structures, which are future projections.

And all that's needed, you only need to look at a dog, some dogs, and they already wag their tails. Just a look is enough, and they respond, alive. So humans have lost that, and that's only a small part of what they lost.

They lost the ability, one could almost say, to be. So lost in doing, so lost in past and future and time, so lost in thought, because that's all that past and future are, mind structures. They are nowhere else except as thought forms.

Past and future are thought forms. Nobody has ever touched the past, except in the present moment, as a memory, a thought form, but only in the now. Nobody has ever met the future, you can't, because there is no such thing.

And humans live as if it were more important than this. Of course, it's a form of madness, but it is so normal that nobody questions it. That's how everybody lives.

You watch TV, they're all doing it. It's so normal. So you get lost.

There are many aspects of being lost. Lost in thought, really that's what it comes down to, because past and future are thought forms. So we are here, this evening, not to add more information to our store of knowledge, because everybody here has more than enough knowledge.

It's not that. No more knowledge or information needs to be added to you. If I tell you that the present moment is all there is, that's not really new information.

But you might say, oh, that's a strange thing. Yeah, that's right. But then you know that you always knew that, so it can't be new information.

Of course you knew that the present moment is all there is, you must know that. So we are here not to add more to our mind, to our thoughts, but to access within ourselves a deeper dimension of consciousness, one could say, a deeper level, a deeper dimension of consciousness that exists in every human being, no matter how lost they are in thought and time and past and future, and doing the next thing and the next thing, and you never get there. When is it all going to end?

When am I going to arrive to make it just this little bit more? And you never get there, because you're so identified with the movement of thought that you're never here, present to life. So we are here to access a dimension of consciousness that one could say is in every human being, even if they appear mad and confused and in turmoil inside, in every human being there exists a deeper dimension, deeper than thought, a dimension of consciousness deeper than thought, that occasionally breaks through the density of thought.

In most humans it occasionally breaks through that deeper level, and those are moments when that breaks through, when you suddenly feel intensely alive, you feel an inner peace and aliveness. The mind might say, I feel so happy, but it's deeper than that. And that you might then remember as a wonderful moment, and then it gets covered up again by the movement of mental noise that most people are completely identified with.

Nothing wrong with thinking, of course, but if that's all there is to your life, the movement of thought, the incessant mental noise, which psychologists, even psychologists who are not interested in necessarily, some are, but interested in spiritual things, have discovered that most of human thought activity, 98% of it or so, is completely repetitive, the same old thoughts, and you are forced to think them again and again and again, and they become you, you are those thoughts, that means to be identified with those old thoughts, and those thoughts are the filter through which you perceive reality, and through those old conditioned thoughts, you judge and interpret the world around you, to other people, events, what happens, but it's all the old conditioning, the old thoughts, reactive patterns, which are part of that, so that your entire sense of self, of me, is bound up with the activity of thinking, plus the emotions that accompany those conditioned thoughts, conditioned from childhood on, and through cultural surroundings, your childhood, conditioned, even genetically conditioned, by the whole history of humanity, mentally conditioned, people carry that conditioning around, and identify with that as me. The strange, and this is why life is so unsatisfying for most people, because what they derive their sense of self from, their sense of who I am, is thoughts, plus some emotions that accompany those thoughts, and that's not very much, and it's all conditioned by your past, but they think that is the self, what Buddha called the self, and said this is ultimately an illusion, but people live in that their whole life. That sense of self that is based on thought, includes even emotions, not that there's anything wrong with thought or emotions, but when they become a self, an identity, a me, that's where delusion starts, and that's where life becomes very problematic, because that me that is created by thought, that sense of self, never feels complete, never feels at ease for very long, always needs a bit more to add to me, because I'm not yet enough myself, this is the feeling that almost everybody has, if they look within, there's the feeling I'm not yet fully me, and on one level that is true, because there are probably many things that you could still add to your life, and there's nothing wrong with that, you can still learn to play the piano, you can learn other skills, you can learn a language, you can add new experiences, you can travel to countries, new countries, learn all kinds of things to add to me, but if you're looking for a deeper sense of self, a more complete sense of me, an improved me through that, then you won't find it, not for long, and always the sense of not quite enough yet will reassert itself, so there is built into the mind made sense of identity, a continuous sense of insufficiency and lack, and not enough, and this implies the need for more to add to me, in order to be more fully me, and for that the me needs future, that's why it's so interested in the next moment, because it's through the next moment, it's through future that it can get the more that it desperately needs to add to itself, and so humans are condemned to live in such a way, a sense of self that is never enough, that feels uneasy and needs more, compares itself to others, and say they have more, I also want more, continuous comparison, does he have more than me, has he got physically stronger than me, has he got more possessions than me, has he got more knowledge than me, is he more spiritual than me, or am I more spiritual than he, or do I have more, do I know more than, knowing more, having more, being more, am I more important, or is he more important than me, so that continuous unease when you meet people, and the need to be superior, and the fear of you might be inferior, it's a hard way to live, and so that's the little me, as I sometimes call it, but it feels pretty big, it feels heavy to carry the burden of the me, and it needs to strengthen its sense of self, through having more, through disagreement, through being right, through reactivity, everybody here knows someone, acquaintance, friends, who love to have enemies, to react against something, to disagree with something or someone, they're looking out for the next thing they can disagree with, and the moment you disagree, say you are wrong, sometimes these talks, fortunately I say very little that anybody can disagree with, but nevertheless, some people still manage, and then there's one little thing, and one little statement, and their mind gets in there, and says, and then they don't hear the rest of the talk, one hour is gone, but after the hour, a very emotional entity, puts up a hand and says, an hour ago you said that, and I completely disagree with you, you're wrong, and there's an enormous amount of emotion behind that, and it's very satisfying to the mind made me, to be in a position of right wrong, to be right, to prove someone wrong, and it's enormous what it does in relationships, partners, what they do to each other, this need to be right, to assert their selfhood through being right, that means every time you're right, you imagine that your sense of self has grown, and that's what it feels like, you have just triumphed in this argument with someone, and you have blown yourself up, and if you really looked inside, you would feel that the body doesn't actually feel very good at all, that there's a blockage in the energy flow in the body, that it feels stuck, there's a tightness, and yet to the little egoic entity, it feels good to have blown itself up for a moment, and have triumphed, and then a little while you shrink again, which doesn't last very long, and then you have to look for the next thing to react against, somewhere is my next enemy, it could be just a situation that you don't like to be in, you have something to complain about this, perhaps only in the mind, it's enough, it keeps you going, to complain about this dreadful traffic jam that you are sitting in, and so even that is satisfying, it strengthens, even that strengthens the egoic sense of self, because you have made a situation wrong, and yourself right, the traffic jam is obviously wrong, but luckily enough, that gives you the opportunity to be right, so one could almost say, that you are morally superior to the traffic jam, and that's only one little situation, now imagine one's whole life, consisting of these mind movements, of such situations, where your sense of self depends, on being in some kind of antagonistic relationship, towards people, situations, and events in your life, and that's one single human being, and then millions of whole nations, live like that, and then that same unconscious mind pattern, is a collective one too, then you can have an entire nation, looking for their enemies, because only through that, or religions, you can have an entire religion, looking for those who don't believe, because their sense of self becomes stronger, through saying they are wrong, we are right, so the need for enemies, is built into that mind structure, that we are talking about, and this is on a personal level, and the need to be in conflict, is part of that, and that's strange, because on the surface, the little self says, I want love and peace, it says that on the surface, but then when you see how it lives, each moment, that you see that in the moment, it doesn't want love, it wants to complain about the traffic jam, it wants to prove that it's right, I'm right, and you are completely wrong, it wants to show that this is absolutely wrong, this shouldn't be, it shouldn't, but it is, but it shouldn't, you are morally superior to reality, and that strengthens one's sense of self enormously, and so people go, some have it more strongly than others, everybody can detect those movements within themselves, but there are some people, who are totally possessed by them, and there are some others, who are beginning to step out of that collective conditioning, and this is the people in this room, and many, many others on this planet, still a minority, who are stepping out of deeply conditioned mind movements, stepping out of an entire sense of identity, that is ultimately illusory, and that has created so much suffering on the planet, so much conflict, so much non-peace, because that little, or heavy, depending how you look at it, entity, that one carries within, so to speak, is threatened by peace. It doesn't want peace, not for a little moment, I'll give you a little moment of peace, and then can't stand this anymore, because your sense of self, that boundary between me and the rest of the universe, or us, even worse, there's only one thing worse than the egoic me, and that's the egoic us.

If you think criminals are those, who inflict suffering on humanity, that's a tiny, tiny, tiny amount of suffering, that criminals inflict on other human beings. Most of, 98% of the suffering, that humans inflict on other humans, are inflicted by very respectable people, citizens. Look at the 20th century, the warfare.

Even concentration camps were built by respectable citizens, and all the unbelievable amount of suffering, that was inflicted by humans on other humans, in the 20th century alone, and now this is just a continuation, the world situation is just another chapter in that. Isn't there something mad there? Of course there's something mad.

Is there another way? Yes. What do I have to do?

First of all, see the conditioning of that egoic self, just recognize it, see it. See it in the history of humanity, see it in the people around you, and see it in yourself, without any blame, because otherwise, what the ego would love that, they're all dreadful, these egos, they're all around me. And so there are actually humans who say, I hate humans.

The French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre said it beautifully. His saying is usually translated into English as, hell is other people. Literally what he said, the literal translation from French is even better, it's hell is the others.

And that is a very strong egoic sense of me, and the rest of the universe. Us, and the others. And that must not be lost, that conditioned mind pattern wants to have that rigid separation between me and the others.

Us and them. That must stay in place. And in order for it to stay in place, that sense of separation between me and the universe, in order for that internal barrier, that internal sense of separation to stay in place, I need to maintain, regularly, conflict.

I need my enemies, because if I go without conflict and enemies for too long, this boundary begins to dissolve between me and others. Peace that lasts for too long becomes threatening to that egoic sense of self. Who am I?

It feels so peaceful, something wrong here. I don't know who I am anymore. And so, on an individual level, that is often experienced as the need for unhappiness, even.

That people carry that, that continues to be in conflict with situations and people and events, is unhappiness. To be in a traffic jam and be in a complaint, mental complaint about it, is unhappiness. To be anywhere and complain about what is, except when you're talking to somebody who can do something about it.

Please give me fresh food. You say in a restaurant, this food is off. That's not complaining that I'm talking about.

Then the waiter can hopefully do something about it. Say, this is not right. I asked for a room with a bath, and this room has not even running water.

So you go talk to somebody who can do something. But if there's nobody who can do anything about it, why complain? Because the ego loves it.

Why complain in the head or talk to yourself about it, talk to other people about it, feel the emotions that go with it. And that's how it's so normal to live like that. To be at odds with, with what?

Reality. I'm against it. What do you think of reality?

I'm completely against it. Of course, reality is ultimately only ever the present moment. But that's enough for the ego, because, and here we come to the crunch of it.

People started pointing to it at the very beginning already. The ego has an intense dislike of the present moment. It would rather make it into an enemy, or at least try to get away from it, which is also a kind of making it into an enemy.

So you have to be very alert within yourself to catch yourself being trapped in that mind movement, where you are in conflict with the present moment. And the ego loves it. But when you see it, this is the beginning of freedom, when you notice in yourself that you are making the only thing there is ever in your life, you're making that into an enemy.

Not this now. You find something in it to argue with, to react against, to disagree with, and even talk about it to yourself or to others. And then you can see, and then there comes the movement towards future and say, I want something better than this.

This shouldn't be. This moment should not be happening. Of course, there are many dreadful things that happen on this planet continuously, even at this very moment, because of the inner state of humanity.

The dreadful things that happen have their cause not in external situations. It looks like that only. The cause of the suffering that humans inflict on each other and themselves is within, of course.

It's within. Each human being carries that unconscious conditioning inside. And one could almost say they are forced to act it out.

And that's what gives people their sense of personal self. It's totally conditioned. So you have to be very alert to, in yourself, to catch yourself being in an antagonistic relationship with the present moment.

Not saying yes to it, but meeting this moment with an inner no. And imagine living like that for 30, 40, 50, 60 years. Sometimes covered up with a little smile, but you're just looking for the next thing to react to.

And what that does even to your body. What that does to the otherwise harmonious energy flow that nature intended for the body, because what it leads to is a continuous physical contraction. So if you can catch yourself in that inner no to what we could call, and this is a wonderful expression.

It goes back to the Buddha, really. The is-ness of this moment. Buddha had the term such-ness.

The is-ness of what is now. And how mad it is to fight it internally. You're fighting against life.

And the mind now says, yes, but there may be something happening that's totally wrong. Things happen continuously that the mind could call wrong. Now this is very important.

Now we are coming to the core of the transition. How from the old conditioned state to what we could call the new consciousness that is already there, even at this moment, when you observe and recognize your own mind patterns. That recognition, that realization, the observing presence in you is not part of the old conditioning.

And this is why it can feel so liberating even to be sitting here and to be hearing something that one would otherwise say, well, that sounds like bad news. But even in one sense it is. But when you see a deeply conditioned pattern in yourself, you have already stepped out because the seeing is the emerging of something new, a deeper consciousness that sees, that witnesses an old conditioned movement in yourself.

So when you sit there, and just to take a simple example, the traffic jam, as is in most people's experience, there are many worse situations of course, but the traffic jam can be pretty bad for the egoic self too. To see the moment you are complaining internally, to watch that mind movement and then say, oh, I'm fighting what is. And you can see also the very same moment you see the futility of being internally not aligned with now.

Out of alignment internally with now. And now the mind will say, yes, but nothing is ever going to change if I accept everything. This is a silly doctrine.

I heard a mind somewhere saying that. And I'm not going to listen to this for one more minute. The mind will try to tell you that you will become ineffective when you internally become aligned with what is.

You will become, the mind says, totally passive. Nothing, you're never going to do anything again, because if this moment is fine, what are you going to do? And the worst thing the mind will tell you is that you will never going to get out of this moment if you accept it.

This dreadful moment, you will be stuck in it forever. One of my favorite films is Groundhog Day. Where one man is stuck in the same day, forced to relive it again and again.

And he's one of the most unaccepting people you can imagine. But gradually, having to repeat the same suffering again, the same day, he wakes up into the same day again and again. Gradually, he just can't resist anymore.

He commits suicide, he wakes up again the same day. And finally, he goes with it. He lets go of inner resistance and he goes with it.

And suddenly, he does good things on that day. Suddenly, he helps people. Suddenly, he becomes a power for good.

Because internally, he's aligned with what is. And he transforms his entire world around him. The town where he's stuck, where he hated so much.

As he begins to accept, he transforms the town. And suddenly, he's out of it. But he doesn't get out until he says yes to it completely.

And this is a universal lesson. It's very deep. True transformation change cannot come into your life unless it's the basis, the absolute foundation for true transformation.

True transformation can only be a transformation of consciousness inside you. Otherwise, it cannot be true. You can achieve all kinds of things.

You can, through thought power even, yes. Through thought power, you could create almost whatever you wanted. You can use affirmations.

You can use imagery. You can use, as long as you're not totally unrealistic, you could achieve almost anything. Well, there are limitations, of course, too.

If I wanted to become a great pianist, even at my age, it would still be possible. Everybody would say, the experts would say, no, you can't. Yes, it would be possible.

Would it make me happy? No. Would it make to a deeper sense of me, of self?

No. Because there will always be others who are better. And even if I'm the greatest, the time will come when I'm not the greatest anymore, and then my sense of self will suffer.

So becoming great at playing the piano makes me happy and fulfilled for a while, and then the same thing does the opposite. So you can achieve things through applied thought. This is not what our meeting is about, so I'm only going to talk about it for three minutes.

If you think and feel that you already have it, and also apply yourself in practical matters, you actually take action towards it also, it's not enough to shut yourself in a room and think you're going to win the marathon in the next Olympic Games, and never take any external action, or do something that is totally out, beyond the limitations of your physical vehicle. I could not become heavyweight champion in boxing, no matter how much visualization I do. And even if I succeeded, of course it wouldn't make me happy.

They are not happy. But yes, you can achieve many things, but it will not be true transformation, and it will not fulfill you. This does not mean, don't do it, do it.

Because it's a play. You play with it. You can play with things in the world of form.

You want a big house? Go and get it. And then you sit in the big house.

And then after a little satisfaction for a little while, especially if you invite people whose houses are not as big, so that gives some food to ego for a while, but that wears off too, unless you have continuous cocktail parties. And then you have to compete with others whose houses are even bigger. That's another problem.

But after a while, then you sit and you made it. You got the big house, and then you sit there, and then the fulfillment of self that you derive from it begins to wear off. And then the mind comes.

And the beautiful view, you may not even look at it anymore because you've seen it so many times. Oh, well, yeah, there it is. And now what?

And you wake up in the middle of the night feeling fear. Where does that come from? I might lose the house.

If the stock market crashes completely, I may have to sell it. And then you sit in the big house, and it's not fulfilling anymore. And then the mind might say, it's not big enough.

That's why. So you try and get a bigger one. Or it says, yes, but the car doesn't go with it.

You need a better car. Or the wife doesn't really fit anymore with the house. I now need a trophy wife to go with the house.

And then you can imagine what kind of relationship that's going to be that is entirely ego-based. You want her to add to you her youth or beauty as an image, to be admired with her by others. And she wants something else from you, whatever it may be.

Probably the house. So you play with things on the world of form. It's beautiful.

There's nothing wrong with big houses. They're nice, very nice. You can sit in them, move about.

But not such a great deal, really. So once you have played with things, you realize whatever you can bring about in your life is not such a great deal, even becoming famous. For many people, I want to come out of obscurity.

There's a strange expression. He's living in obscurity. What does that mean?

One magazine said, suddenly Eckhart Tolle emerged from complete obscurity. I didn't know I lived in obscurity. But it was in the magazine, so it must have been true.

And then I've had a little taste of being famous after living in complete obscurity. And it's not a big deal. What I love is that so many people are experiencing transformation of consciousness.

And that is nothing to do with the entity that sits here. It's because simply there's an openness, an opening. So some writing happens through it.

Some words come through it. That's all. It's an opening into the unconditioned.

And then something new emerges, something fresh, something that can transform the world. But on the external level, being famous is completely meaningless. People recognize you.

It's not even that great anymore if you sit in restaurants and they say, what's he eating? You drink coffee? You wrote a spiritual book.

You shouldn't be drinking. Oh, sorry. Now I go to Starbucks with a baseball cap.

Oh, my God. So that's... Once you...

The things seem great when you don't have them because then the mind can say, this is going to fulfill you. And then you get it. And then...

Is that it? Or you could become even so famous that you can't even step outside anymore. What a nightmare.

But the mind before said, I want to no longer live in obscurity. So you play around with things, get things. It's not...

You're not going to find yourself in anything that you can achieve. And this doesn't mean you shouldn't play with it, with the world of form. But if you're looking for yourself in the fame, in the recognition, in the possession, in the relationship, in the experience, even in the knowledge, I can become more and more knowledgeable than I know more than anybody else.

That was my identity for a while when I was at university. I didn't have much money. I didn't have good looks.

I didn't have a strong physical body. What was left? Knowledge.

The ego can build itself up through that. And then after a few years, I had read enough books. I knew more than most people.

I don't anymore. I've forgotten most things. But at that time...

And that felt good to the ego. I could tell them, oh no, you've got the facts completely wrong. But a continuous feeling of unease because there were others, the older professors, they knew much more.

Unease. What do they think of me? Do they think I know enough?

So that's the self-seeking. If you're looking for yourself in the things of this world, in all that, you're never going to find it. So all the things of this world that you can achieve and add to yourself are beautiful.

Play with them. They will come and go. Nothing will stay around for that long.

You can have a house, but at some point it will go. Or you go first. Whatever you achieve, after a while it's not an achievement.

You can become President of the United States, and then that will be over after a few years. And then you sit there. That was it.

So it's overrated enormously through the mass culture, the external what achievement or possessions or attainment or recognition can do for you. That's an illusion that is being perpetrated continuously through the media. It can't do anything for you if you're looking for yourself.

If you play with it, it's beautiful. The world of form. A million dollar comes, a million dollar goes.

Stock market goes up, stock market goes down. One day you sit in a mansion. A little later you sit in a one-bedroom apartment.

Another chair, less soft. Walls are a little closer. The view not quite as good, but it feels good to be alive.

There's nothing wrong with this moment. There's an aliveness. There's the sky.

There's a little plant. And I'm alive. You sense that aliveness that you are underneath the movement of thought.

I have been looking for that. What I call aliveness here is very deep. It is also inner peace.

There's also a joy in it, a subtle, alive joy. Which in normal existence people have little glimpses of. They can get glimpses when the movement of needing the next thing for a moment subsides.

And they think why they feel so good for a moment is because they got that thing. That's not true. Why they feel so good is because the movement of needing the next moment desperately to fulfill me for a little while isn't there.

You just bought the BMW and it stands there. And you're looking at it and say, it's mine. For a moment you don't need anything anymore because you've got it.

And you feel good. You think you feel good because of the BMW. It's nothing to do with that.

Where is the goodness in that piece of metal? No, it's in here. I feel it in here.

Yes, but I feel it because this is mine. No, for a moment the movement of wanting the next thing subsided. I need, I need, I must have.

Where is? Ah, ah. And it doesn't last very long because there's an illusion attached to it.

The illusion is it's there. And then comes the wanting again. So you have glimpses of it sometimes.

Whenever a sense of well-being is there, that means you become at ease with what is now. You feel intensely alive. The movement of thought is not as hyperactive anymore.

It's thought begins to slow down as you become present to the now. And you may sense an aliveness running through your entire energy field. Every cell is alive with life, aliveness.

So the sense of beingness, aliveness, ultimately, what that is, is who you are beyond the mind-made story of who you are. That is never enough. My history, which is what I derive my sense of self from, of course it's not enough.

It's all those kinds of things went wrong along the way in my history. My history, yes, also my personal history is a succession of mistakes. And yet not mistakes, because we are here.

It's brought us here. It's brought me here. It's brought you here.

So nothing was a mistake. But from a purely mental perspective, you could say, why did I do that? That was a mistake.

That didn't work out. And that relationship didn't work out. And then I failed there.

And then I succeeded there. But it made me unhappy. That's the history of me.

But the mind says, yes, all I need is a little bit more of the story to completion. It will get me to completion. It never happens.

The ultimate illusion of completion of the story of me is the wedding. The typical thing you see in films. Da-da-da-da.

And that's the end of the film. They don't show you what happens after that. So to step out of that, you are not your story.

Oh, thank God for that. And no matter what happened in your history, it has taken you to this moment. It has taken you here.

All the mistakes. Without the mistakes, you probably wouldn't be sitting here. You would be watching TV.

You must have suffered enough to have come here. And it's great. If I hadn't suffered, I wouldn't be sitting here.

If I hadn't had a nightmare for years, living a nightmare. All the things I described were extremely pronounced in me. The dreadful way to live of every moment is bad.

But it worked. It worked. It produced enough suffering to suddenly trigger an awakening.

And this is why we are here. And sitting here may look on the surface like people listening to a person speaking. But there is something deeper happening.

There is a deeper recognition happening in yourself. First, a recognition of what ultimately is not you. What you thought was you.

What gave you your sense of self is ultimately only mental content. A collection of memories and reactive patterns and thoughts. And that's not that much.

And to realize that that is not who I am. But if you now look very closely, throughout your life, all the different things that happened, and there are many people in this room who have gone through such drastic changes that one could almost say that you have already lived more than one incarnation in one lifetime. In the past, it was more normal to have one single incarnation.

You stayed in the same place and you did the same thing and then you died. That still happens in certain places. But it is more common now for people to go through tremendous changes.

And if you look, you might even find that 20, 30 years ago, who you were then seems very different from who you are now. And yet, because things have changed, the story has changed. It may not be the greatest story.

It still has insufficiency built into it. It still has lack built into it. But the story has changed.

It's not the same story anymore. And yet, if you look very deeply into the deepest sense of who you are, of I am, where does that feeling of I come from? That sense of something so precious in here, and that's called I.

And then saying, I don't want to lose that because there's something so precious here. It's unimaginable that the world could ever be without I. And that sense of I am, of beingness, of presence, that is at the core of yourself, gets mixed up with memories and with mind movements and with the story.

But if you, one could almost say, if you distill from the story of your life, the sense of I that remained, even when your life was totally different 20 or 30 years ago, like a different incarnation, even there, at bottom, there was still an I, I am. Not the I of the story, but a deeper sense of I am-ness. That was to you, and this is you, and that doesn't change.

At the deepest level, the sense of who you are, regardless of what happens in the externals of your life, that changes. Even if tomorrow, let's say you're a multimillionaire and tomorrow you lose it all, and the day after tomorrow you are penniless, the sense of I, the story would have changed, but the I-ness, I am-ness underneath it would not have changed, or the other way around. If you win a million dollars tomorrow and today you have nothing, you might sit in a bigger house, have a slightly more pleasant story to tell yourself, and a fictitious sense of self that would have expanded into a bigger house, I have expanded into this mansion, me.

For a little while, it feels good, then it goes. But deeper than that is something that never leaves you, which is almost impossible to put into words because it goes beyond anything that language can really speak of. And language here can only point, can only point to it.

You need to sense that, use the pointer, the words, and to find that deeper sense of I am underneath the story that remained the same. Now the mind says, what is that? I'll give you another pointer.

What other thing is there, so to speak, it's not a thing, what other thing is there that never changed in your life apart from that deepest sense of I am-ness? What other thing is there that was always the same, that was always there? The present moment, it was always now.

No matter what happened in your life, it was always now, even that's a paradox to even say it. It was now, doesn't even make sense. But it was always now.

Isn't that so? And so we come to something very mysterious, that these actually are one. And what we call the now, the present moment, is actually much deeper, something that contains a very deep mystery that you can never fully understand.

We can only get a glimpse of what that means. This now is actually much deeper than we realized, because we thought that the present moment is what happens. But what happens, happens in the field of now.

It isn't the now. What happens changes continuously. Things come and go and come and go.

You leave here totally new experiences after you leave here. And so this is why people think one moment succeeds another moment and another moment and another moment. That's not true.

If you look more deeply, it's always one moment, this one. It's always this moment. What changes is the form that this moment takes.

That changes continuously. But because of the continuously changing forms that this moment takes, people believe there are thousands of moments every day. Whereas, of course, everybody can verify in their own experience that there is only one moment ever.

This moment. Your life was never and will never not be now. And you will never not be yourself.

So with the now, through the now, we have access to a deeper dimension in yourself. That is one with the now. And the deepest statement I can make is something that you cannot fully understand through thinking about it.

But you can sense the truth of it. And that is, you are the now. And that is so perplexing, it actually stops the mind.

And that's a good thing. You can't think about this because you wouldn't get anywhere. But there is a knowing that is possible for you through this pointer.

You are the now. This is... That's amazing.

And then the mind, after a little while, the mind stops, but then it never stops for long. And then the mind says, Yeah, but what does that... does that actually mean anything?

Now the mind would like, please, a little bit more explanation. Just a little bit more, please. Why not?

What is this now that never leaves you? That is one with the deepest sense of beingness of I am. That Jesus pointed to when he said, before Abraham was, I am.

That God pointed to, God is your deepest self. When God said, so to speak, I am that I am. That is God's self-definition.

And it is your self-definition because at the deepest level of being, of I am, of now, you are one with the one. And what is the one? I will give you one other pointer.

But we need to be very careful with pointers that point to a reality within yourself that cannot be understood through thinking. And yet we are using thought to point to it no more. So one needs to be careful so that a pointer does not become transformed into some new belief without the realization.

So what is this I am, this now, that which never leaves you, that which always and eternally is, we could say, it's the essence of all life, before life becomes a form of life. All forms come out of one life. There's life and what you see around you are forms of life.

The one life. The one consciousness. The primal, primordial intelligence that permeates the entire universe, your body, everything, the one intelligence, the one consciousness is that.

And it cannot be known through thinking about it. Of course not. You cannot understand it as such.

You can get little glimpses of, oh. But the knowing of it comes from a deeper place. Now what do you have to do to know this for yourself?

You already know it. It is not new knowledge. It is the most fundamental knowing.

The basis of all knowing is that. And it is who you are. And it is there when the continuous dream of thinking, for a moment, subsides.

And what is left, you don't remember. In other words, you don't remember your story for a moment. Your problems.

The next thing that you have to do tomorrow or tonight. And all this stuff associated with your life situation, which isn't now at all. Your life situation is complicated and problematic.

I know that. Because every life situation is. But that complexity cannot be now.

Now is always very simple. Just this. There is nothing complex about this moment.

It can't be. Because it is only this. It can be challenging.

Yes. Something I need to deal with right now. And it happens.

Action happens. Yes. But complicated.

It can't be complicated. The now is too simple. There are so many things I don't know what to do first.

Well, you have to do one thing. You can't do more than one thing now. Do this.

So if you step out of thought, you step out of past and future into now. And this is the access point. The access point into the new state of consciousness, which isn't new at all.

It's just a way of speaking. It's new to you. It's new to humanity, largely.

Although the great teachers already pointed to it. But it never was realized on any large scale. Amazing.

That there is this dimension in you that is accessible only through the portal of the present moment. Because it is inseparable. This moment is inseparable from being itself.

From who you are at the deepest level. So all that is required is for you to realize that this portal is always there. It's called the now.

And you will feel being pulled away from it continuously through the movement of thought. And then you suffer again. Some form of your life will become problematic again.

And then you remember, okay, what's the problem at this moment? With that question, it's kind of a useful question, comes an alertness. What is alertness?

It is consciousness without thought. It happens to some people in a moment of danger. They're suddenly confronted with danger.

Thought cannot cope with it anymore. It has no experience of this situation. Thought, sometimes in danger, when your life is threatened, thought suddenly collapses.

And you go, and fear also goes. People have reported after their lives were threatened by some imminent accident, for example, or they were hanging on a cliff wall. What is there to think about?

You can't think. And no right action is going to come out of thought in that critical emergency situation. All you can, thought subsides, gets out of the way.

And an intense alertness and aliveness takes over. Stillness, it is a stillness too, but there's an intensity to that stillness. And out of that, which is the unconditioned intelligence in you, that is what one could call the I am-ness that is now emerged.

It's the unconditioned consciousness itself. Out of that, right action happens. And it's not premeditated.

There's no decision-making involved. It is spontaneous. And then when the emergency is over, the old thought-dominated state of consciousness comes back.

And then the next thing is you begin to remember your problems again. But then you remember also for that moment you were actually, you lived in a state of blissful clarity. And some people have that when an illness comes that may be life-threatening.

Life-threatening is an expression that's ultimately a delusion because life has no opposite. People think life and death doesn't exist. Birth and death, yes, life has no opposite.

An illness comes and you may only have a few more weeks or months to live. That can also wake you up out of identification with the story because the story becomes so burdensome and unhappy that you cannot live with the story of me anymore because I haven't got enough time to find myself in the story anymore. And it pushes you out of identification with that mind movement.

And suddenly I have seen people who may not have much longer to live. That applies to all of us because it doesn't really make much difference. A year, 20 years, 50 years, it's over quickly.

The ego says, oh, I've still got time. I've time to find myself. No, you haven't because you can't find yourself in time.

Either you find yourself in the now or you don't find yourself. So it ultimately does not matter how much more time you have. Oh, that's a relief because the mind says time is a critical factor to my existence.

I'm not going to make it without more time. So be stepping when something you're confronted with death, that can also do it. Or let's take more everyday situations.

The greatest sportsmen know that there is a state of absolute presence when they are exercising whatever sport they do. There is the zone, as they sometimes call it, and they enter the zone and everything happens by itself. Something else takes over.

And right action, there's no thinking involved anymore. Not a single thought, but right action flows out of a deeper level of consciousness. It plays.

It takes over. And I believe that is probably the reason why people love watching some sports. Some sports are watched because of ego identification with their team.

That's one of the many ways in which the ego gets a little high or low, whatever it may be. We won. Who is we?

Well, my team. What did you do? Well, I just sat there.

So I don't mean people watching sports to get some little ego boost, but people watching sports because it is very satisfying to watch an action that is being performed out of the state of presence, of no thought, of absolute alertness. And it is beautiful to watch. And that may be why people love watching tennis for hours.

All they are really watching is two people hitting a ball. And when I saw it first, I said, why is it that people love to watch that? And for hours, they are always hitting a ball.

And then I started watching, and I could sense at times that the tennis players were in that state of the flow was there. And sometimes when you watch that, you get a taste of that when you see it in someone else. That's perhaps why people love watching that.

And so there is that state that some artists also have, out of which they create. They don't create by thinking, okay, what clever thing can I paint here now? What about putting a little structure?

Well, some artists do, but it won't be very great. I can do a little dot. Should I put the dot here or the dot there?

Great art doesn't happen in that way. Great art happens when you become present. No past, no future, not even thinking about what am I going to do.

Just an alertness arises. Now, there is only this moment. All creation comes out of that space of now.

That space of unconditioned consciousness to which the portal is now. So the artist sits in front of the canvas or whatever the medium may be and looks. If visual is involved, the artist looks.

And in that looking, there is an intense alertness. In that looking, there is no thinking. Even the writer, the creative impulse out of which the words come, is that state of simple looking or listening.

In writers, one could compare it more to a listening. An alertness, a simple, alert presence. And out of that state, which is ultimately a state of no thought, comes the movement, a creative movement.

The hand moves. Or the mind begins to move, if I'm a writer. And suddenly, words are beginning to form.

And that's a strange transition from a deep knowing of what you want to write. It's already there at a pre-verbal state. It has not taken form completely.

It comes out of the formless. It's a birth of form. It comes out of that.

And then it becomes finally. And then it becomes a word. And you write it.

I do this movement because I'm one of the few writers left who have used a pen. Most people, it finally goes into. But it's the beauty of that.

And so there are certain people that are called creative or great. Even, you'll probably laugh, but I saw Michael Jackson on TV the other day. And even if you say he's strange and weird, that's what people say, there's one strange thing happened.

The moment he goes into the music mode, something takes over. Wow, what is that? And he actually said you can't think.

You cannot think. It doesn't come from thinking. You can't learn it.

It doesn't come. You can learn the externals, yes, but not the essence. So the moment he switches into the music mode, an energy takes over and it's beautiful.

And the moment he stops, an ordinary strange human being. Well, everybody is strange. Some are more strange than others.

So the question is, is it possible not to just have access to that in a little area of one's life, but to bring that into one's life? Yes, this is what all the ancient teachings have pointed to. It is possible to live in that state in which you are no longer the instrument of the conditioned, a puppet of your conditioning.

Something emerges from within you that is deeper than the form, the conditioned mind form that you thought was you. And that emerges the more we become aligned with the present moment, and it requires simply very often to remember that the present moment is all you ever have, and then direct your attention to it. How?

Simply by becoming aware of your sense perceptions. There's an enormous looking and listening sound like relatively insignificant words, but what we call here looking and listening, there's enormous power in the ability to look and the ability to listen. But it must be true looking and true listening, which is the alert presence of just, and it's still, just that.

And then, if action is required, it comes. You may be listening to another human being. The most beautiful thing you can do is to listen to another human being who is speaking.

And in true listening, there's an alert presence, a field of aware presence, a field of consciousness, and that unites you with the other person. That is a unifying field. It is beyond thought.

So what we are pointing to here, everybody here knows what I mean. Everybody here has already had glimpses of that and perhaps not even realized the importance of it. To realize that perhaps the incredible importance of looking, you may find yourself looking at a tree and not commenting on it mentally inside, not saying anything about it, a simple aware looking.

So there's the tree and there is the presence through which the perception happens. And usually you would be identified with that which you are perceiving. You would become translated into thought, interpreted, judged, compared to this or that.

This tree would look good in my garden. It's called such and such. My Aunt Mary had a similar tree.

I wonder when it's going to flower. How old is it? You're not really looking.

That may have its place for certain things. But if you really want to know the tree, you have to look. And everyone here, it is so simple, has that ability to be alert, to look, and to listen.

Without having to be pushed by life into an emergency situation where you have no choice anymore. You just have to be present because you're hanging by a thread on a cliff wall. Okay, are you going to do it now?

Okay. It sounds to the mind, it doesn't sound important. The most incredible transformation happens if you're able to even perform a little movement without the interference of thinking.

And in many of you, this is already happening. And you feel this as peace while you do it. There is a peace in the doing.

This is really what it is. So you lift up a glass, or you pour yourself a drink, hopefully not whiskey. There's nothing wrong with that, but usually as presence emerges, it can easily become obscured again through becoming intoxicated.

While you pour the water, there's simply an alert field of presence in which the action happens. To the mind, that is not important because the mind says, Well, come on, I've got other problems in my life than pouring a glass of water in a state of alert presence. And yet, that is the way out of all the ultimately mind-created problems in your life.

This is the emergence of an intelligence that is not conditioned. This is what all the whole teaching of Zen points to. To be utterly and completely here, now, in this moment.

And to look and to listen. That is the Zen master. One master of Zen said, when asked, What is Zen?

Zen said, Doing one thing at a time. One thing at a time. And then the questioner said, Okay, anything else?

And then what? After you've done the one thing, what do you do then? Another definition of Zen, which Zen is simply already.

I don't really know how alive Zen still is these days. But it was a beautiful emergence when Zen came into being of what is possible. The transformation of human consciousness.

That is possible. It came through that vehicle that we call Zen. It came through Jesus in other forms.

What was the Zen master's definition when asked about what is Zen? What is the essence of Zen? Can please explain it to us?

And this master became famous because all he ever did was he would raise his finger and look at you. Please explain to me the meaning of Zen. And some got it.

And that is, then the mind, once you have access to that dimension, the mind becomes a beautiful tool, no longer a problem, because you are the presence. You are the aware, conscious presence in which your sense perceptions happen, in which the things that happen to you in your life happen. Things come, things go.

It's always now, always a deep sense of beingness, of presence in which things happen. So you know yourself as ultimately consciousness, which is formless, timeless, eternal. One could say it is the light of God, the light of the source.

But the light is not separate from the source, just as the sunlight is not separate from the sun, ultimately. It is an extension of the sun. One could almost say we still live within the field of the sun.

In the same way, we could say consciousness is formless and timeless. Then, out of it, forms come, are born. And the first form that is born will be a thought.

And then it subsides again. And consciousness remains. And a sense perception happens.

Now, if you can sense that while you go about your life, interact with people, perceive things, have experiences, play with things, you can not lose yourself in the world of form, which is thought, which is emotion, which is the entire sense-perceived world around you, which has such pull. Give me your attention. The world says this matters, this matters, that matters.

Give me all your attention. And it pulls you in. And every thought pulls you in.

Because ultimately, the world, the human world is the world of thought. Every thought pulls you in. Think about this, this matters, so important.

What am I going to do tomorrow? What am I going to do? Nothing.

It's not here now. But that's how thought operates. And it pulls you in.

It's easy to lose oneself in the world. Which is ultimately the world of things. The world of form.

Not only things on a conventional level of things. And that's enough. How many people's lives, especially in the highly developed countries, how many people's lives are almost completely consumed by things?

One thing after another to worry about. It's so complex. Every person has this.

So many things in my life that I need to give attention. I'm not saying don't do it anymore. But don't lose yourself in the world of things.

Easy. Things on one level is possessions. Things on another level is situations and circumstances in your life.

Things on another level is all the thoughts that go through your mind. Are they also things? Yes, they are form.

Forms that consciousness takes. And it's very easy to lose yourself completely in that, become totally identified with that. And this is how people live.

It's a dreadful way to live. One damn thing after another. For many people, that is how they experience their life.

Why can't life leave me alone? One damn thing after another was Churchill's definition of history. And, of course, he was right.

It's both human history is one damn thing after another, and every individual life is one damn thing after another. It doesn't have to be like that. But these things, the world of form, that is, has an enormous pull, a gravity.

One could almost say a gravitational pull. And so you can easily just start thinking about, if you have investments, you can notice it when you start thinking about the stock market, how it pulls you in. And how it pulled you in when it all, it lost so much not long ago.

How that, if you had, if you were unlucky enough to have things there. But wherever your things are, they'll pull you in. Now, if you can deal with things without losing yourself in things and remaining aware of what?

Remaining aware, one way of putting it, is to say remaining aware of the space of the present moment in which all things happen. And that is immediately, when your attention moves into now, there's a little bit of stillness. And it feels good.

And you realize the now is actually not bad at all. I just thought it was dreadful. My life was dreadful.

But when I wake up into this moment of my life, it's not actually that dreadful. Oh, another way of putting it is, if while you perceive, deal with things, interact with people, you can be aware of yourself perceiving, interacting, dealing with things. What does that mean?

It does not mean being aware of yourself as the walking story. It does not mean thinking about me and my problems. As you sit here and listen to this voice, and this is the key, can you be aware of yourself as the aware presence through which the voice is being perceived?

That means you are not losing yourself in that which you are perceiving. Because otherwise, if you're sitting there and lose touch with yourself as the aware presence, you will put all your attention onto the speaker and the voice. And you will expect something from the speaker.

And in this case, it's the speaker. It could be anything, any experience, any perception. But then you will expect something from the speaker in this situation that the speaker cannot give you.

You would expect to be given to find yourself in something the speaker says, to find yourself in some new information, or to project onto the speaker something that the speaker cannot possibly be. You could say, you are the messiah. You have lost yourself, and you have made the speaker into a special object that you seek to derive some kind of self-fulfillment from.

Because then you won't stop there. If you say, you are the messiah, the next step would be that you are one of the followers, one of the chosen. And that's great, more ego food, and restarting all over again.

A new religion, 3,000 years later, same place. So, here again, if you have been sitting here not knowing yourself as that, not sensing the aware presence, if your entire being is part of that aware presence, then it would have been boring to sit here. What is the speaker?

The speaker will, at first, he might be a little bit entertaining, but after a little while, then the speaker will become no longer, if he isn't the messiah, then he is no longer interesting to me. He hasn't given me what I was looking for. And then you go into another experience, wherever, which also will not give you what you were looking for.

Although a few experiences will have the appearance as if they were giving you what you are looking for, yourself, ultimately. And then you will always be disappointed, because after a little while, you will say, oh, that was an illusion. I fell for it.

He deceived me. He let me down. This is how it happens when sects and other organizations come into being.

They make one person special. He can give it to me. And then after a while, it doesn't work.

And you say, he let me down. You can come here, sit here for this evening, and go away and say, well, the speaker let me down. He didn't give me myself.

You wouldn't say that, because it's an unconscious movement of looking for oneself. I thought he would give us six techniques of that, and eight steps to this, and 14 this, and 16 that. But we didn't get any of this.

And we walked out empty-handed. And that's because you were looking for something that nothing and nobody can give you. But if you could sit here as knowing yourself as the aware presence in which this experience happens, sensing the field of now, which is the same, sensing the field in which this perception happens.

One early 20th century teacher called it self-remembering, which can easily be misunderstood, and people might think they have to think about themselves. It's not that. It's deeper than that.

So then you realize that the speaker never had anything to give you, nor did you need anything of what really matters, which is yourself, the essence of your being. And then to walk away here empty-handed will be a beautiful thing. Very empty.

So much so that there is one religion that used that word emptiness to describe the ultimate that a human being can realize. And then the scholars come. Buddhism, for those of you who don't know, uses that word emptiness as the ultimate.

Buddha used it. And the scholars come and start thinking about what that could possibly mean. And then they come up with strange things, theories, like the academics who study Buddhism, not anymore perhaps because Buddhism is more alive in the West now, but when it first came in the 19th century, the scholars came and studied.

Buddha said, emptiness. And then this professor of theology wrote, Buddhism is a nihilistic, life-denying belief system, atheistic belief structure. Every word is wrong, but that's how it was.

He just used another pointer. He said, emptiness. It's not a very inspiring term, of course, emptiness.

What do I do with that? Unless you realize it, it's meaningless. What is emptiness?

This, knowing yourself as the space. That's a good word. Space in which everything happens.

You are that space. And so we have, one could say, the world of thought and the world of things that become translated into thoughts, which we could call object consciousness, the consciousness of objects, where consciousness becomes objects. For most people, that's all there is.

That's what their life consists of, things, stuck full with things, object consciousness. One thing after another. Okay, what do I have to do now?

What's the next thing to do? And the mind never stops, except when they fall to sleep. In the last moments when you drop off, you have a little bit of peace because you're falling towards unconsciousness.

But it's better than being tortured by your mind and you go, oh, oh. And you might sit there after being tortured by your mind all day long. You get home, you pour yourself a whiskey and you drink it.

And then gradually you're moving towards unconsciousness. And then for the first time in that day, you experience a little bit of peace that comes when the mind slows down and stops. But you are falling, one could say, below thought.

But it's better than perhaps being tortured. But this is not where we are going. We are not going to the level of animals or vegetables.

It's beautiful for an animal to be an animal. It's perfect, in many ways more perfect than any human. Trees, vegetables, beautiful expressions of consciousness in their own way.

It is the destiny of humans to go beyond thought, not to fall back below thought. And many things that you take that give you a little relief from your mind tend to be things that take you towards unconsciousness, towards sleep. But there's no need to go there.

Here we are going beyond. And we are finding a stillness and a peace without loss of consciousness. In fact, a deeper consciousness.

Otherwise, almost nobody would want to give up being human. If I asked you if you could have inner peace, because that is one aspect of what we are talking about, knowing that is finding the dimension of inner peace, which is the dimension of the formless consciousness within yourself. Inner peace at any price?

No. Would you rather be an unhappy human or a happy cow? Not that many cows these days are happy because cows are being treated abominably by humans.

That is, if I had to be a cow, I would live in India or in Switzerland. But very few humans would say, I would rather be a happy cow without any problems than an unhappy human. You don't want to give up being human.

So inner peace, not at the cost of loss of consciousness. Cow is a beautiful being, closer to the source than humans, just as everything in nature is. It hasn't removed, it hasn't gone out that far yet, not as far as humans from the source of all life.

More deeply, more intimately connected with the source of all life. Every animal, every tree, every flower. And they are all expressions of the one consciousness and they are all closer to God if God is the one, the source, than any human, except those humans who are finding their way back.

But finding their way back is not going back to the level of, it's going beyond. So when true inner peace is there, there is a deep knowing that comes with it, an awareness, a presence. We had, as humanity as a whole, had to move through thought, being lost in thought.

They had to go through that, otherwise it wouldn't have happened. There is nothing that happens that is not meant to happen because the totality has brought this about. This applies to everything.

It applies to every event. Humanity had to go through the suffering, self-inflicted to a large extent. The suffering of humanity, the greater part of it, is completely self-inflicted.

Humans are doing it to themselves, to each other. And we had to go through that, and it was to do with losing yourself in thought. It all started with, in mythology, myth tells us, and there's deep truth in it, two human beings ate of the tree, the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Good, bad. I like this, I don't like that. Thinking starts.

They ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And at first it was a beautiful thing, and you become powerful, they became powerful through that, and more and more they lost themselves in it also, in thought. They lost their deep connection with the source, with themselves, with the divine.

Paradise was lost, and paradise can be regained. Now that we have, humanity has arrived at a very critical stage in its development because mind, the human mind, human thinking has proliferated enormously through science, through technology, and all the things that science and technology creates. Not that in itself it is bad or good, but it is an extension of thought.

And if thought is not rooted in the deeper levels of pure consciousness, of awareness, of presence, thought becomes mad. Thought becomes self-serving. Ego.

Human life becomes dominated by ego, personal and collective. And so that's the way humanity went. What seems certain now is, if there's no transformation of consciousness in humanity, mankind or humankind probably will not make it as a species, and some other species will replace it, and consciousness can take any form, it doesn't mind.

It loves playing with forms. It says, OK, humans, let's drop that. We tried that.

And nothing is lost. There's only one life. Billions of forms of life.

All come and go. And yet, the possibility is here of the flowering of human consciousness, of a new, one could say words are always limited, a new level in human evolution where life on this planet is not made into a hell, because potentially it is a paradise. The planet is a paradise.

The planet is pure, pristine, a jewel of just unbelievable. And the same, what have humans done to it? Especially the past hundred years, because of the proliferation of magnification of thought through science, poisons everywhere, eradication of nature, madness.

But it is a beautiful divine being, the planet. And this is just an external expression of what each human being has done within. They are, in their essence, pure, beautiful, alive.

And that remains, that level of pure consciousness remains in every human. The inner peace is there in every human, covered up by toxic substances, toxic thinking, ego-dominated thinking, self-seeking through thought, me, me, them, must have, more, ha, ha. Enemy, where is the enemy?

We are moving out of that. The quickest way to this realization, and it is so quick that it doesn't require any time, is what we've already pointed to here too many times tonight, an inner alignment with life. Life is now.

Not to make this moment into an enemy, to say yes to it, to welcome it, to allow it to be, that's really enough. To allow this moment to be as it is. And see how quickly things actually improve when you allow this moment internally to be as it is.

Even perhaps welcome it, because it is. And if you're still questioning the wisdom, and still saying, why should I do that? Whatever happens at any moment, which is only the one moment, whatever happens in your life, appears to be a separate event.

This happens and then that happens. But if you look, physicists who have studied, who have looked beyond the surface appearance of things, found that the entire universe is interconnected. The actual, what seems like a separation between different things does not ultimately exist.

It is a web of interconnectedness. The entire cosmos is one. Everything is connected to everything else.

And Buddhists have always spoken of this, for 2,600 years, of the interconnectedness of all things. And so, if something happens at this moment, it cannot not be, it is inevitable. Anything that is, has an inevitability to it.

Because the entire cosmos has brought this event about. So, to not be aligned with it internally, is to cut yourself off from the flow of intelligence that expresses itself as the universe. And to be aligned with what is, is to be also in alignment with the one intelligence, which then flows through you and will affect what you do.

It will do through you. You are not separate from it. That's when life gets so much easier.

I don't have to struggle with all that. I don't, not the little I, through the simple act of surrender, which is ultimately what we are talking about. There's great beauty and power in that.

Only the little me says, don't surrender. Surrender just to this moment. Become aligned with that, and see there is a beauty in everything, even in death.

Because death happens, the end of a form, a form dissolves. You become aligned with that. That is the spiritual practice.

That is the essence of all teachings, if you really look deep enough, to live in alignment with life. And your, whatever form this moment takes, even if it seems to be a limitation on you, which is often the case, I don't want to be here in this place. I want to be somewhere else.

I don't want to be stuck here. I want to be somewhere else. I don't want to, I want, very often this moment can be perceived as a limitation.

And of course, in some ways it is. The body may become limited, maybe the body may get old, you can't move anymore the way you did. Your very body can become a limitation.

There are certain things that are as they are. And enormous change happens when you accept them as they are. Not, it's not defeatist, not accept I am ill, just this moment, not the idea of I am this or I am that.

Only this moment you need to accept. Oh, just this. And then there's a beauty in whatever happens.

And with that comes a gratefulness for what is. It can be a gratefulness for the tiniest things that otherwise you would have overlooked. A gratefulness for the table that you touch, its being, a little flower, a glass of water.

Not that you have to think I am grateful, it becomes, it's a natural way in which you interact with the world. You are grateful for what is, the beingness. Without self-seeking, seeking yourself in it.

And then your life improves dramatically when the moment that gratefulness comes for whatever is, you're already abundant. You already have abundant life. The expression that Jesus used, I want you to have life and I want you to have it abundantly.

Jesus said abundant life. He said the depths of life. The depths of aliveness.

He was not talking about more things, not that kind of abundance. He did not say, I promise you consumer goods and shopping malls. Because when we speak of abundance, we think more things, no deeper.

So the abundance, even if you only have one object or two objects in your life, you give them attention. You look, you touch. And when you give attention, don't use them as a means to an end or some kind of self-story around it and say, look at me, this is, I'm such and such an age and all I can afford is this little table.

Or the opposite, look how big my table is. Not that kind of attention. No, pure, simply to give something an attention without self, just attention.

Acknowledge its being. Look at it, touch it, pick it up, see it. Immediately when you give something attention, a gratefulness comes with that, an aliveness.

That's abundance. And then, because it's the depths of abundance, that is abundant life. Ultimately, you're getting in touch with that which is beyond form in you.

And then the forms in your life are little addings on, icing on the cake. Not necessary, but quite nice when they come. Not that bad when they go.

That's the play of form, the dance of form. And that dance, as you leave here, continues. You step out of here, and the dance of your life and the forms of your life continues.

Why not participate in it? It's not deadly serious when you don't need this to be in a certain way anymore. Just play with the things of your life and give attention to this.

Just what is. And there is a depth in what is that's deeper than the form. And that really gives the form its beauty, its aliveness.

The depth is in you. Yes to what is connects you with that depth. It seems so simple.

How can that be? The inner yes to what is connects you with that depth in you. Ah!

That is where you and the one life, the one consciousness that we could call God are one. No separation. Formless form.

You are the bridge. Your home is the formless. But for a little while you move between the form and the formless.

But you need to come to an acceptance of the forms in the now. Even if they appear limiting. Accept first and then see what happens.

Then they change. Accept first, no matter how limiting it seems. The ultimate limitation is the cross, the crucifixion, the cross.

How can one accept being crucified to a cross? Can't accept that. But this being that is you ultimately, each one of you, accepted the most extreme form of limitation, torture instrument, the cross, the torture instrument, said not my will but thy will be done.

Thy will, whose will? The one. The will of the one that brought this event about.

And the torture instrument suddenly became a symbol for the divine. And you don't need to be a Christian to understand that. Most Christians have a limited understanding of what that means.

The torture instrument suddenly becomes an opening and becomes a symbol for the divine. They are one. The greatest limitation, when totally accepted, becomes the opening.

So if there's still suffering in your life and if there's acute suffering in your life, the greatest limitation can become the opening. But it may be that you don't need that much suffering anymore. You've had enough.

There's nothing you need to remember. Let's be still a moment and simply allow this moment to be. Be.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

As we are approaching the end of the weekend, a weekend of awakening, I wonder how many questions have managed to survive in your mind. You may feel a pressure, almost a kind of pressure inside your mind, of a question or questions wanting to be asked, needing to be answered. And when those questions are answered, there'll be more because every answer will generate further questions.

And so there's no need, there's no end to the number of questions you could ask about awakening. It is true that certain answers can be helpful they can take you up to a certain point of understanding. Up to a certain point, understanding can be helpful.

One could say it's like understanding how do I get from here to the edge of the cliff. And to know how you get from here to the edge of the cliff to know that, certain signposts may be required to point you in the direction of the edge that way or that way. And when you have reached the edge, signposts are not necessary anymore.

In fact, they become a hindrance. An essential part of the process of awakening and that is something that the human mind and the human ego look upon as almost an insult. An essential part of the awakening is letting go of the need to understand more.

And to realize that ultimately awakening is not to do with understanding more. And finally, when you have reached complete understanding, you awake. And the great surprise or even shock that comes that has come to those who have awakened they didn't know more when they awakened.

If anything, they knew less. So if we can participate here this afternoon as you sit here, participate in what we could call renunciation. Not renunciation of sugar or sex or material possessions or whatever it is that people try to use to become free.

A deeper renunciation because all those that I mentioned and many others are surface renunciations that could actually and very often do strengthen your conceptual identity as the one who has renounced. The one who is superior because he or she has renounced sugar, money, sex, whatever. Possessions.

A deeper renunciation than that and I will put it very bluntly don't be shocked. It's the renunciation of thought and realize it is not through thought that you can awaken. It is not through adding more to the accumulation of thought in your mind that you can awaken.

It is not through any adding to yourself in any way whether material things or thought forms or ideas or beliefs or experiences. It is not through adding more to yourself to the content of your mind that you awaken. It is not through adding more thought to the huge accumulation of thought forms that each human being including yourself already walks around with and derives their sense of self from.

The me. And the momentum that this accumulated thought structure that most people identify with as themselves that accumulated movement of thought with all its accumulated content thought forms, knowledge, experiences, memories all thoughts that has enormous momentum and an essential part of that momentum is that it needs more to add to itself because the thought structure of yourself the mind made self believes that it is not yet complete.

It needs more and that more could be more understanding. It says, I don't yet understand the purpose of the universe. And it might say, I've come here listened to all these speakers and I still don't understand the purpose of the universe and how it all works and how I fit into it.

What's my place in it? That's the most important question. What about me?

There's all that, but this is more important. In a deeper sense that is true. In a superficial sense it's an illusion.

So there is this need in the mind that is the mind to accumulate. And if you are here this weekend that means you have gone beyond the baser, base forms of accumulation well, more or less and that is needing to accumulate material possessions and thus by and again it's not the material possession that is ultimately what counts to the mind it's the thought form because you don't know what's out there you only know it as a thought form that's what it wants identify with another thought form the mansion mine the car my car a thought form becomes invested with self and so it is added to the accumulated thought forms that make up the me and so you have already gone beyond to a large extent although it may still linger a little bit those base forms of identifications you may also have gone beyond of needing to add to yourself other thought forms the thought forms of people think that I am great the thought forms of getting recognition oh aren't you great the thought form that needs to feel that you are famous you've made it in the eyes of the world the world tells you yes, yes, you are important the phone rings all the time everybody wants to talk to you I am important and that's a nice thought form and many of us longing for that that need in millions of people particularly in western culture that longing of I haven't made it yet once I make it then I'll be complete and that means once I have added further thought forms to me further mental images of who I am which other people will tell me that's who you are ah you are such and such satisfying mental labels president of this or that so you may have gone beyond status or status for many years English pronunciation is status status here so that you understand what I say status it's that you've gone beyond that probably but the movement of needing to add more to yourself may still be there but it may have moved to more subtle dimensions and the more subtle dimensions could be the dimension of knowledge dimension of accumulating thought forms as knowledge spiritual knowledge perhaps having read many spiritual books attended many workshops retreats Buddhist monasteries or other monasteries or you may have come here and also in that search of more adding more to me and perhaps that more the most subtle of all mores was the the more spiritual realization need to the ultimate attainment I can add that and then I'll be finally complete and you look for it then in the realm of understanding more which is mind and that can keep you trapped in the subtle realms of needing more for the rest of your life and that is the fate of being a spiritual seeker for the rest of your life in itself not such a bad identity spiritual seeker better than many others but the seeking movement is there the not yet having found is there because because there has not been a renunciation of the movement of thought because it's the movement of thought that is the momentum behind the search for more so when we speak of renouncing thought we are not saying that you are never to think again it is the awakening out of the stream of thinking with which perhaps you've been identified all your life as a me and the possibility of stepping out of that movement of thought is always here now and it is here now as you sit here listen you can sit here with a burning question at the back or the front of your mind I'm going to ask him when the moment he stops speaking I'm going to ask him that question doesn't doesn't make sense or you can sit here as a field of alert aware presence in which the words are being perceived almost as if they were coming from within yourself in which all the other peripheral perceptions are taking place visual man sitting on a chair flowers I'm labeling the perceptions right now but as you perceive in that spacious field of presence that you are you perceive through that the need to label the compulsive need to label what is going on around you at any moment to work it out to interpret I need to know what's the speaker going on about that compulsive need is renounced now that sounds as if you could do something as if you could when I say this it sounds as if you could choose to step out of that continuous stream of thinking into spacious awareness and from one perspective you can it is true but it's only a perspective and whatever words say is only a perspective because words are thoughts these words these thoughts that have become words point beyond themselves they are pointers in themselves they are not really helpful if you can never go beyond the signpost like the dog that continuously looks at the master's finger and the master says, the stick is there, there, I threw it there if you can't go beyond the signpost then it's you go home with a few more accumulated signposts not enough yet of course so is it true that you can choose to step out of the identification with that stream of thinking and be present yes, from one perspective but how is it that there are other people in this city who didn't come here and if they were here they would say what the hell is he talking about it doesn't make sense at all I occasionally, because now so many people read The Power of Now occasionally it gets into the hands of people who are not quite ready for it yet and occasionally I get e-mails that say your book makes no sense whatsoever so when I say you can choose out of to step out of the stream of thinking this may not be true for everyone but how is it that you can do that and somebody else in this city who may be engaged in other activities right now cannot do it well, perhaps they can but they don't know they can somehow the apple is not ripe yet and so here we come to the limits of language because it's ultimately not you doing it it's a way of putting it it's a way of looking at it but when you feel that, yes I can step out of presence which is still a thought, that's not it of course I can step out of identification with thinking to experience the peace that is there when you can be without the need to think and the thoughts that may still arise are not that important anymore because there is space around them you can do that because it's happening here, through you it wants to happen there is an evolutionary impulse at work in humanity and to say that you can step out of identification with mental noise identification with concepts identification with the seeking entity, the me to say that really means when you feel, yes that unconditioned consciousness is suddenly there it wants to flower through this form if it didn't want to flower through this form, you couldn't do it because you are it and not separate only language creates the separation so whatever we say about it do not believe there is any absolute truth in anything that words can say about it so a shift, an inner shift from thought to awareness, presence and then the miracle happens and it is happening for many of you here now of being here as a field of awareness rather than as a person and the miracle is there when you can look upon this room listen to this voice and let it be so completely allow it to be as it is so completely that there is no need to add mental commentaries to it you can look at the flowers and perceive it through what we could call stillness alert aware stillness and that is the arising of an intelligence far greater than the limited human mind which is only a small aspect of the vastness of intelligence the one intelligence and that's again a very limited word the arising within you of non-conceptual intelligence that is what Krishnamurti called the awakening of intelligence and that is there when you renounce thought thought subsides it can still happen and when it's needed it's there beautifully not problematically when self a sense of self is invested in thought thought becomes problematic and the self that almost everybody lives with is burdened with that sense of self is in itself problematic you cannot separate problematic from yourself they are indistinguishable to walk around with a mind-derived self is to be problematic is to live in a problematic life situation and to experience your life as problematic because you live mostly then in past and future which is problematic whereas this moment is not problematic ever if there's no room for problematic here here how can a problem survive here it only survives as a thought form in the head that is invested with self what's going to happen to me?

that's the ultimate question am I going to make it? or is the universe going to defeat me? and so you get, this becomes the antagonistic attitude towards life the fight against this or that the fight against the fight against violence the fight against hatred and then you get the fight against illness we are going to get you problematic so to step out of all that so that your self, your sense of self is no longer in the movement of thought that's all that it is there's still a movement of thought your sense of self is not invested in every thought that arises this way, you're pulled this way and then you're pulled that way or you may have deeply lodged thoughts that never leave you obsessions convictions beliefs this is how it is just ask me I'll tell you how it is deeply entrenched thought forms that many people walk around with and it's they say that's me they don't see it as thought forms that they walk around with they are the thought forms they are the convictions they are the one who is looking for somebody to disagree with to strengthen their sense of self they are their thoughts so stepping out of that is the great liberation it's the renunciation and to some people the renunciation of that thought comes because they can't stand thought anymore it becomes so painful that finally they renounce and what they do then is they the renunciation of thought of course is also the renunciation of past and future except for practical things that's okay but as that overwhelming concern with me and my future and things that happened in the past things that are going to happen to me or not going to happen to me renounce that and recognize that past and future are only thought forms no more they have no existence time which is past and future has no existence except as thought you cannot encounter past and future nobody has ever met the past touched it seen it lived in it you may think people lived in the past how can they live in the past? the Romans they lived 2000 years ago that sounds plausible but of course they didn't they lived in the now and so unless you create a thought form of past there is no past and the moment you can only create a thought form at this moment out of the fullness of now which is consciousness itself oh is that what it is?

yes the now is unconditioned pure consciousness itself primordial intelligence and out of that arise forms

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[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 15:32)

Consciousness itself, primordial intelligence, and out of that arise forms, thought forms, and they become the conditioned form consciousness, and then thought forms become material forms. So we have thought, which are objects in consciousness, sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions, they are all objects because they become, you perceive, what you call a flower. It somehow, the image goes through your eyes, becomes a nerve impulse, whatever they say, then gets reconstructed in the brain, which nobody, the greatest doctor has no idea how it works, and then you get an image arises of a flower.

It's a thought form too, an object in consciousness, not conceptual thought, sense perception, conceptual thought. Objects in consciousness and consciousness. Most people walk around identified continuously with objects in consciousness.

They don't know themselves as the underlying space, space consciousness. Here we have another pointer, in case you didn't get the first one. In ultimate terms, objects in consciousness are things, because we are speaking of form.

So most people's lives consist of things that they are concerned with. Thoughts are things, material things, that comes first, and that's for a large part of the population of the planet. Their entire existence is consumed by concern with material things, and that applies both to the poor part of the world, and to the wealthy part of the world.

The poor are concerned with material things because they may not have enough to meet all the needs of the body, and the wealthy are concerned with material things because nothing is ever enough to the me. I need more. It's the unconscious movement of more.

So there's one level on which one's life, one's entire existence is concerned with things, objects. And then things in a wider sense are anything that arises in your mind as an object. Thought forms, experiences, knowledge.

One thing after another arises inside you. It's a burden to live in such a way, one's life being consumed by one damn thing after another. You know how life is.

It never leaves you alone. The next thing comes, and it demands your attention. It can be a thought that demands your attention.

It can be a phone call, which is also a thought. This is important. This is what's going on.

And when you've solved one thing, another one comes up from behind. So you may have noticed the world of things doesn't leave you alone. It always has something, always some new thing comes up to demand your attention.

You're surrounded by things, and not only outside, unfortunately. And then you carry the accumulated content of thought forms inside you, which is object consciousness, we could say, and you are burdened with that. And this is how people live, how they at work, in families.

That continues one thing after another. What's the next thing we have to do? And another, another.

And when they're not concerned with things, they go into the hypnotic state of switching on some entertainment device. First consumed by things, and then finally click. What a life.

It's living in a room crammed full with things. You can't even move in it anymore. And then you step out of identification with thought forms.

How do you do that, says the thought form. Give me a technique, says another thought. Okay, there are seven steps.

That will take you seven years. Now if we did that here, this gathering would be more satisfying to the mind. Because you could go home and tell your family, when they ask you, what did you come away with, what did you learn?

And you could say, I learned seven steps, and it will take me seven years. Oh, that's great, you got your money's worth. And so it's satisfying to be given more time to the mind, because it has that need.

It loves it. And it's just waiting for something like that. And it's frustrating to the mind to be sitting here and saying, okay, yeah, but how?

We can say, renounce thought. We can say, renounce time. But even that is still maybe a little bit abstract.

To put it even more simply, we could say, renounce the next moment. Because you notice that most of your life, you're more interested in the next moment than in this one. It's a deeply conditioned movement.

Renounce that need for the next moment. The psychological need for, okay, what's next? And be completely with this.

What is now. Completely allowing this moment so precious. Not precious because it's fleeting, that's a superficial way of looking at the present moment.

Sometimes people say, this moment is so fleeting, just, you know, it'll be over soon. Just hang on to it and remember it, remember it. Take a photo of it.

No, it's not precious because of that. Because the present moment is not fleeting. The forms are fleeting that arise in the field of now.

Come and go. But when you enter the now with your attention, and don't take it too literally, it's just a pointer, when you enter the now with your attention, then you renounce the next moment. And a completely different quality of being arises when you become present to what is.

Instead of denying it, running away from it, making it a means to an end. And it is at that moment the mind falls away. And then you realize how vast the space is inside you, and how relatively insignificant anything in object consciousness is compared to the depth, the spaciousness within you.

The stillness. How relatively insignificant any thought that comes into your mind is. Relatively insignificant.

How relatively insignificant anything that happens or doesn't happen is. You see the relativity of whatever happens in the realm of object consciousness, in the realm of things. Okay, it's nicer perhaps to live in a beautiful place than to live in a beautiful mansion, than to live in a little hut or a little room on the surface.

Yes, it might be nicer. But if you have not found the dimension that is beyond object consciousness in yourself and live in a mansion, the mansion is not going to do that much for you. And if you have found it in the little room, whether you are in a little room or a mansion, it doesn't matter that much anymore.

Because there is such aliveness to the field of now, it doesn't really matter where you go, what the things are that surround you, they matter relatively but not absolutely. And then the universe around you is recognized as playful, forms that come and go, experiences, different places come and go. It's a bit like when you are rooted in the now, you are rooted in being, you are rooted in yourself.

And there is such fullness to now, it is the fullness of life itself, because before life becomes a thing, before life becomes an object, before life becomes a life form, there is life, consciousness, whatever word. And to know yourself as that is the ultimate liberation. What is liberation?

What are you liberated from? You are liberated from the world of things, from obsession, from being consumed by things, which includes thoughts. You are liberated from time, also as an obsession that you are consumed by.

And you are liberated from a very heavy sense of self, the me, what the Buddha called the self.

[Speaker 3] (15:34 - 15:36)

Ah, all that.

[Speaker 1] (15:45 - 2:02:32)

The key then, the little opening into what we might call space consciousness. This is not from science fiction. Space consciousness within yourself, the unconditioned consciousness.

How do I get from being consumed and identified with object consciousness to recognizing myself as space? Ah, it doesn't work by trying to run away from the world. It's through allowing whatever form this moment takes, the world of form, the world of objects, allowing whatever form this moment takes, internally allowing it to be as it is.

External forms, inner forms, thoughts, emotions, feelings, allow the suchness of this moment. No longer make the now into an enemy. The moment you allow what is to be, there is what one could call a sense of space around what is.

It could be an event that usually would trigger in you upset or impatience or anger. And you'd simply say yes to it because it is. And suddenly there's space around the event.

It's just a little pointer. And this is a beautiful thing to discover, the space around things. Why should I allow something to be?

Because it is. It already is the case. Yeah, but it shouldn't be happening.

But it is. At this moment, the mind says, nothing will ever change if I allow this moment to be as it is. The deeper truth is, if I internally am antagonistic towards this moment, ultimately nothing is ever going to change.

Because that is the old consciousness, which it keeps itself in place, the egoic consciousness, the mind-identified consciousness, the object-identified consciousness keeps itself in place through fighting what is, the me. How could one argue with the is-ness of this moment once you realize that the entire cosmos is connected, interconnected, everything in the cosmos is totally interconnected. Physicists know that.

So nothing that happens is isolated, an isolated event. It is connected with the totality. And within the totality, it makes sense.

In many, many cases, you could never work out through your understanding, mental understanding, how an event that on the surface looks senseless or looks as if it shouldn't be happening, you could never work out through intellectual understanding how the totality has brought this event about. Because no mind, no human mind, can even understand a fragment of the totality. It would be presumptuous to an absurd degree to believe that through the human mind you could understand the totality of the universe and then explain it through words, using five vowel sounds, A, I, E, O, U.

Five sounds are the basic sounds. And then there are the others. They are called consonants, I think.

They are sounds that are produced through air pressure, produced by shh, ff, chh. So you have the five vowel sounds plus a few noises produced through air pressure. And we believe that we could explain something, the universe.

So you see how useful it is to give up trying to understand. But what we can see, and this is confirmed not only by the ancient wisdom traditions of humanity, such as Buddhism, but also even through recent discoveries in molecular atomic physics, is the interconnectedness of all things. That we can know.

Yes, we don't know how. We can't understand how, in what way. But we can see, yes, it all is ultimately one.

The universe is one. It is one both at the unmanifested level, the primordial one, the unconditioned one, the unborn, as the Buddha called it, the unborn, the uncreated, the unmanifested. Beautiful saying of the Buddha.

He said, there is amongst, that's how the translation goes, there is amongst the uncreated, the unborn, the unmanifested. If there were not the uncreated, the unborn, the unmanifested, there would be no escape from the born, the created, the manifested. So, yes, we can see, the universe is one, both as the unmanifested, obviously, and it is one as an organism, even in the manifested realm.

It is one organism, which has many different cells to it. One cell in the organism is humanity. Humanity also is one organism.

And what humans are doing to each other is a diseased organism in many ways. So the universe is one organism. Whatever happens has its place within the totality, even if it seems completely incomprehensible.

And many things do happen. Why is this happening? And just to simply see what one could call the inevitability of what is within the context, the larger context of the whole, to see the inevitability of whatever form this moment takes in your life, whatever happens, could not be otherwise.

You do not need to understand it. Occasionally it happens that after an event you can get a glimpse of understanding, only a glimpse if you are lucky, tiny glimpse. Some of you may have experienced something seemingly negative and incomprehensible happening to you, life doing something to you, making you ill, serious illness, losing everything.

It doesn't make sense anymore. I went to church every Sunday and I worked my off and I lost it all. This wasn't supposed to happen.

I don't understand anymore. And years later, you sit in the Inner Directions conference and suddenly say, wow, if that hadn't happened, of course, I wouldn't be here. I would still be slaving away in the corporate office if those bad things hadn't happened to me, I would never have gone beyond the conditioning.

So occasionally you might get a glimpse, but in many other cases you may not get a glimpse of why. But it is wonderful to see that yes, there is an inevitability to whatever form this moment takes. And so if you do not resist the form that this moment takes internally, you are no longer trapped or imprisoned by the form that this moment takes.

Because very often that's what it looks like. That's why people always try to get away from this moment. Very often it looks like a limitation upon you, upon your life.

That's not what I want. What am I doing sitting here in this office, in this place, in this relationship, in this, that, this, that, the other? Whatever form this moment takes to align yourself with it, the moment you do that, and it's not a doing, only through language it creates the illusion that you're doing something.

One could say it's the opposite of any doing. To internally align yourself with what is, is the opposite of, OK, I have to do something. You don't have to do anything, just this is as it is.

Always. Recognize that. There's no doing involved.

This, it is as it is. You align yourself with a form that, you don't fight the form. The moment you fight the form, the form of me gets strengthened in yourself.

The me that is based on thought forms gets stronger through the struggle, the reaction, the reactivity against what is. Ultimately you could say the illusion of me gets strengthened through fighting what is. And you can verify that in your own life when you are resisting whatever situation, or in disagreement with someone, this shouldn't be, reactivity, to see how your sense of self feels a little bit inflated through that.

And you can see when you watch angry people who are fighting, there are some people who live almost continuously in angry opposition to what is, the entire universe is against them or they are against it. The world is their enemy and they're just looking for the next thing to get upset about. And you can see how that strengthens, how that inflates the egoic sense of self, the reactivity, the fighting what is, the complaining pattern in the mind.

And every time you complain, you strengthen a little bit the form identity of me, the complainer, the thought form, the reaction. The egoic identity inflates a little bit through the complaint because every complaint means that you are right and what you're complaining about is wrong. Situation, the person, the place.

You are superior to that which you are complaining about. That is the illusion, how the illusory self entity inflates itself continuously through that. It doesn't ever last for long and they need something else.

But once you watch that process in yourself or in another, it's a little bit easier to see it in somebody else. How the self importance grows through every complaint. The imagined superiority of me as compared to that which you are complaining about.

And some people complain about the world. Of course it's a mad place but complaining doesn't help very much. They complain about humans, people.

People are so unconscious. God! You should know better.

But they don't. So to see how that fighting what is strengthens the thought made me. And accepting what is, allowing it, surrendering to this moment, the form that this moment takes, that's all that ever changes.

This moment never changes. It's always now. Saying yes to the form doesn't mean you can't take action.

If action is needed, it comes out of the yes instead of the no. Totally different quality of action. It comes out of saying, well, this is how it is.

Here I am, two coins in my pocket, wet, not much food in the stomach. That's what is at this moment. And you go beyond the form of this moment and there is suddenly a peace from deep within.

And there is a beauty even to that moment, the form of that moment. But the beauty may not be in the form, but it comes from a deeper place of the formless, the formless life that you are, the very life that you are underneath the form as which you appear. You know it, not through rejecting the forms, but through accepting the forms.

So the magic formula then is, but it doesn't work if it remains a thought form, the forms that seem to limit you in your life are the concealed openings into the formless. The conditions that seem to limit you are the portals into the unconditioned, that which you are in your essence. And some people have experienced extreme forms of limitation in their life, physical, material, physical through the body not working properly anymore, physical limitations, present camp, some other awful limitation.

And some people have experienced, have realized when they let go of resistance to this moment, even in the most dreadful situations, the most dreadful limitations, they suddenly realized the formless space that they are. Peace. So if you can look upon your life and see where is it that life seems to limit you, what is the area where you feel hemmed in by life, the forms in your life, your life situation.

It could be relationships, it could be a place where you live, the people you live with, the physical structures around you, the house or the work situation, whatever it may be. And so almost everybody experiences some form of limitation in their life, some form of limitation, and see if there, and then you might notice also that you are in an almost habitual resistance to those limitations, those forms in your life. And see what happens if you let go of the resistance to what is.

Use that and see what happens if you let go of the no to this moment. You may be surprised how quickly things change, how quickly the stuckness gets unstuck when you surrender. And some of you have experienced it already in certain areas of your life, how quickly you become free of the conditioned, not by trying to reach some point of the unconditioned in the future, the limitless, but by not offering inner resistance to the conditioned.

With that deep acceptance of what is comes a word that I usually avoid because it can easily become a thought form and it has been misused so much. With acceptance of what is comes love. You love what is.

We don't even need to say love. It's there when there is an allowing of whatever form this moment takes. Love arises.

So the secret is not to turn your back upon the limitations and trying to reach some point in the future where you realize yourself as unlimited. Once you have sorted out your life situation, it's never going to happen. Not for long.

Then something else crops up. Instead of looking for some liberation at a future moment, the more limited you are in your life situation, there are degrees of limitation. Very limited, for example, would be if your body may not make it for that much longer anymore.

They might have said, you may have two more months. You may be limited in other areas. You may be listening to this on a tape and find yourself in a prison cell.

Those extreme limitations are the most powerful openings, the most powerful openings into presence, into space. When you surrender to that, and so it happens in some people's lives, there is one big thing, one what Christians used to call, or still do, your cross. One big thing in your life that is a dreadful burden or seems a dreadful limitation.

Most of you have many little things. That's fine too. That works too.

But the one big thing works even better. If you're lucky enough to have one big thing in your life that's absolutely unacceptable. Nobody could accept that.

Well, that's what the mind says. And then surrender happens. For many of you, it will be a case of little surrenders.

Even today as you leave here, there may be an opportunity for a little surrender in some situation. What is a little surrender? What is surrender?

It's the shift from no to yes. Surrender is detecting an inner no to what is. And then saying, ha ha, there it goes.

And then to see, well, but it is. And then you look upon what is. Acceptance means it's not judged anymore.

It's allowed to be. And there's a field of attention. There's your prison cell, which you've been extremely unhappy about for the past ten years.

And even more unhappy because you know you have another 15 years to go. And then you listen to the tape. And then you sit there and you look upon the walls that surround you and maybe a little window with bars on and an uncomfortable place that you sit on.

And there's light shining perhaps through the window. Oh yes, and your body is alive. It feels alive.

Every cell is alive. And yes, even the wall has aliveness to it. Why didn't I see that before?

Because I was looking at the wall through a screen of mental concepts. Why couldn't I feel the aliveness that is in every cell of my body before? Because I was preoccupied with the thoughts in my mind.

Mind objects in my consciousness. One after another. All saying, this is dreadful and unacceptable.

This is what my life has come to. This is what the world has done to me. Telling yourself the story in your head again and again and again.

So you couldn't feel the aliveness. You couldn't see the light. And you couldn't sense the stillness and the peace that were always there as inseparable from spacious awareness.

The essence of your being was always there. Never knew it. And this is how surrender to one big thing can take you once and for all.

Surrender is no more than surrender to this moment as it is. No other spiritual practice is required. But if you're happy with other spiritual practices, that's fine too.

But every spiritual practice ultimately points to that. So why not do it now? What beauty in welcoming the only thing there ever is, which is now.

What beauty in welcoming the form that this now takes. Whatever the form may be. And realize yourself as that which is deeper than any form.

Stillness, peace, space. Not that which happens, but the space in which it happens. That's who you are.

And so, when you look at night into space, the vastness of outer space, vast, infinite, infinite depth, that's the external version of who you are. And then you also notice when you look there, you see, oh well, it's so simple. There are basically two things in this world.

Space and things in space. It's as simple as that. The world consists of space and things in space.

Or rather, things in space are the world. Let's change it slightly. Things in space are the world, and space is that, which goes beyond anything that words could say.

But it's so obvious, even if you look through the senses, that there's basically even this room. There are things, bodies, chairs, flowers, lights, and there's space. The space usually nobody notices.

And usually nobody notices the inner space, the stillness that is underneath the noise, the incredible spaciousness that is there within you. So you are the bridge between the object world and the formless, unconditioned, the one. And you move through this world, interacting with form still.

Your body is form too. Thoughts still happen, occasionally. You interact with other forms, and the play of forms continues all around you.

And you are rooted in the formless, which is peace. And the world is then the play of forms around you, so to speak, so to speak. And nothing in the world of form matters that much anymore.

And it's only then that, and this is almost a paradox, something that is not of this world, which is the world of objects, something that is not of this world shines through this form into this world. The formless, a certain transparency happens through surrender to what is. A certain transparency happens, and so the unconditioned shines through into the world of form.

And the world of form then is experienced as a more benign place when that comes through you. And it transforms how you experience the world of form also. Not that the world of form will lose its characteristics of having polarities.

It has polarities. The world of form will always have certain polarities, otherwise forms could not survive. High, low, hot, cold.

But the manifestation of the polarities of the world of form will become more benign, not the harshness. So one could say love comes into this world and love is not of this world.

That's how the world changes.

Not that it matters that much anymore whether or not it changes. And you certainly, as you surrender to what is, you relinquish the need for the world to change. And then it changes.

And that includes the need for your world to change, your situation. It must change. Well, first accept what is and then see what happens.

Thank you. As we are approaching the end of the weekend, a weekend of awakening, I wonder how many questions have managed to survive in your mind. You may feel a pressure, almost a kind of pressure inside your mind of a question or questions wanting to be asked, needing to be answered.

And when those questions are answered, there'll be more because every answer will generate further questions. And so there's no need, there's no end to the number of questions you could ask about awakening. It is true that certain answers can be helpful they can take you up to a certain point of understanding.

Up to a certain point, understanding can be helpful. One could say it's like understanding how do I get from here to the edge of the cliff? And to know how you get from here to the edge of the cliff, to know that, certain signposts may be required to point you in the direction of the edge, that way or that way.

And when you have reached the edge, signposts are not necessary anymore, in fact they become a hindrance. An essential part of the process of awakening, and that is something that the human mind and the human ego look upon as almost an insult, an essential part of the awakening is letting go of the need to understand more. And to realize that ultimately, awakening is not to do with understanding more.

And finally when you have reached complete understanding, you're awake. And the great surprise or even shock that has come to those who have awakened they didn't know more when they awakened, if anything they knew less. So if we can participate here this afternoon, as you sit here, participate in what we could call renunciation, not renunciation of sugar or sex or material possessions or whatever it is that people try to use to become free, a deeper renunciation, because all those that I mentioned and many others are surface renunciations that could actually and very often do strengthen your conceptual identity as the one who has renounced, the one who is superior because he or she has renounced sugar, money, sex, whatever, possessions.

A deeper renunciation than that and I will put it very bluntly, don't be shocked, it's the renunciation of thought and realize it is not through thought that you can awaken. It is not through adding more to the accumulation of thought in your mind that you can awaken. It is not through any adding to yourself in any way, whether material things or thought forms or ideas or beliefs or experiences.

It is not through adding more to yourself, to the content of your mind, that you awaken. It is not through adding more thought to the huge accumulation of thought forms that each human being, including yourself, already walks around with and derives their sense of self from, the me. And the momentum that this accumulated thought structure that most people identify with as themselves, that accumulated movement of thought with all its accumulated content, thought forms, knowledge, experiences, memories, all thoughts, that has enormous momentum and an essential part of that momentum is that it needs more to add to itself because the thought structure of yourself, the mind-made self, believes that it is not yet complete. It needs more, and that more could be more understanding.

It says, I don't yet understand the purpose of the universe. And it might say, I've come here, listened to all these speakers, and I still don't understand the purpose of the universe and how it all works and how I fit into it. What's my place in it?

That's the most important question. What about me? There's all that, but this is more important.

In a deeper sense, that is true. In a superficial sense, it's an illusion. So there is this need in the mind, that is the mind, to accumulate.

And if you are here this weekend, that means you have gone beyond the baser base forms of accumulation, well, more or less, and that is needing to accumulate material possessions, and again, it's not the material possession that is ultimately what counts to the mind, it's the thought form, because you don't know what's out there, you only know it as a thought form. That's what it wants. Identify with another thought form, the mansion, mine, the car, my car.

A thought form becomes invested with self, and so it is added to the accumulated thought forms that make up the me. And so you have already gone beyond, to a large extent, although it may still linger a little bit, those base forms of identifications. You may also have gone beyond needing to add to yourself other thought forms, the thought forms of people think that I am great, the thought forms of getting recognition, oh, aren't you great, the thought form that needs to feel that you are famous, you've made it in the eyes of the world, the world tells you, yes, yes, you are important.

The phone rings all the time. Everybody wants to talk to you. I am important.

And that's a nice thought form, and many are longing for that, that need in millions of people, particularly in Western culture, that longing of, I haven't made it yet. Once I make it, then I will be complete. And that means, once I have added further thought forms to me, further mental images of who I am, which other people will tell me, that's who you are, ah, you are such and such, satisfying mental labels, president of this or that, so you may have gone beyond status, or status, for many years I, English pronunciation is status, status here, so that you understand what I say.

Status. It's that you've gone beyond that, probably. But the movement of needing to add more to yourself may still be there, but it may have moved to more subtle dimensions.

And the more subtle dimensions could be the dimension of knowledge, dimension of accumulating thought forms as knowledge, spiritual knowledge perhaps, having read many spiritual books, attended many workshops, retreats, Buddhist monasteries or other monasteries, or you may have come here also in that search of more, adding more to me. And perhaps that more, the most subtle of all mores, was the more of spiritual realization, the ultimate attainment. I can add that and then I'll be finally complete.

And you look for it then in the realm of understanding more, which is mind. And that can keep you trapped in the subtle realms of needing more for the rest of your life. And that is the fate of being a spiritual seeker for the rest of your life.

In itself, not such a bad identity, spiritual seeker. It's better than many others. But the seeking movement is there, the not yet having found is there, because there has not been a renunciation of the movement of thought, because it's the movement of thought that is the momentum behind the search for more.

So when we speak of renouncing thought, we are not saying that you are never to think again. It is the awakening out of the stream of thinking, with which perhaps you've been identified all your life as a me. And the possibility of stepping out of that movement of thought is always here now.

And it is here now, as you sit here. Listen. You can sit here with a burning question at the back or the front of your mind.

I'm going to ask him, when the moment he stops speaking, I'm going to ask him that question. It doesn't make sense what he's saying. Or you can sit here as a field of alert, aware presence, in which the words are being perceived, almost as if they were coming from within yourself, in which all the other peripheral perceptions are taking place, visual, man sitting on a chair, flowers.

I'm labeling the perceptions right now, but as you perceive in that spacious field of presence that you are, you perceive through that, the need to label, the compulsive need to label what is going on around you at any moment, to work it out, to interpret. I need to know, what's this speaker going on about? That compulsive need is renounced.

Now that sounds as if you could do something, as if you could, when I say this, it sounds as if you could choose to step out of that continuous stream of thinking into spacious awareness. And from one perspective, you can. It is true, but it's only a perspective, and whatever words say, it's only a perspective, because words are thoughts.

These words, these thoughts that have become words, point beyond themselves, they are pointers. In themselves, they are not really helpful. If you can never go beyond the signpost, like the dog that continuously looks at the master's finger, and the master says, the stick is there, there, I threw it there.

If you can't go beyond the signpost, then you go home with a few more accumulated signposts. Not enough yet, of course. So is it true that you can choose to step out of the identification with that stream of thinking and be present?

Yes, from one perspective. But how is it that there are other people in this city who didn't come here, and if they were here, they would say, what the hell is he talking about? It doesn't make sense at all.

I occasionally, because now so many people read The Power of Now, occasionally it gets into the hands of people who are not quite ready for it yet. And occasionally I get emails that say, your book makes no sense whatsoever. So when I say you can choose to step out of the stream of thinking, this may not be true for everyone.

But how is it that you can do that, and somebody else in this city, who may be engaged in other activities right now, cannot do it? Well, perhaps they can, but they don't know they can. Somehow the apple is not ripe yet.

And so here we come to the limits of language, because it's ultimately not you doing it. It's a way of putting it. It's a way of looking at it.

But when you feel that, yes, I can step out of presence, which is still a thought, that's not it of course. I can step out of identification with thinking to experience the peace that is there when you can be without the need to think. And the thoughts that may still arise are not that important anymore, because there is space around them.

You can do that because it's happening here through you. It wants to happen. There is an evolutionary impulse at work in humanity.

And to say that you can step out of identification with mental noise, identification with concepts, identification with the seeking entity, the me, to say that really means when you feel, yes, that unconditioned consciousness is suddenly there. It wants to flower through this form. If it didn't want to flower through this form, you couldn't do it, because you and it are not separate.

Only language creates the separation. So whatever we say about it, do not believe that there is any absolute truth in anything that words can say about it. So a shift, an inner shift, from thought to awareness, presence, and then the miracle happens, and it is happening for many of you here now, of being here as a field of awareness, rather than as a person.

And the miracle is there when you can look upon this room, listen to this voice, and let it be so completely, allow it to be as it is so completely, that there is no need to add mental commentaries to it. You can look at the flowers and perceive it through what we could call stillness, alert, aware stillness. And that is the arising of an intelligence that is far greater than the limited human mind, which is only a small aspect of the vastness of intelligence, the one intelligence.

And that's again a very limited word. The arising within you of non-conceptual intelligence. That is what Krishnamurti called the awakening of intelligence.

And that is there when you renounce thought. Thought subsides. It can still happen, and when it's needed, it's there, beautifully, not problematically.

When a sense of self is invested in thought, thought becomes problematic, and the self that almost everybody lives with, is burdened with, that sense of self is in itself problematic. You cannot separate problematic from yourself. They are indistinguishable.

To walk around with a mind-derived self is to be problematic, is to live in a problematic life situation, and to experience your life as problematic, because you live mostly then in past and future, which is problematic. Whereas this moment is not problematic ever. There's no room for problematic here.

Here? How can a problem survive here? It only survives as a thought form in the head that is invested with self.

What's going to happen to me, that's the ultimate question. Am I going to make it, or is the universe going to defeat me? And so you get, this becomes the antagonistic attitude towards life.

The fight against this or that, the fight against violence, the fight against hatred, and then you get the fight against illness. We are going to get you. Problematic.

So to step out of all that, so that your self, your sense of self, is no longer in the movement of thought, that's all that it is, there's still a movement of thought, your sense of self is not invested in every thought that arises. This way, you're pulled this way, and then you're pulled that way. Or you may have deeply lodged thoughts that never leave you, obsessions, convictions, beliefs, this is how it is.

This is how it is. Just ask me, I'll tell you how it is. Deeply entrenched thought forms that many people walk around with, and they say, that's me.

They don't see it as thought forms that they walk around with, they are the thought forms. They are the convictions. They are the one who is looking for somebody to disagree with, to strengthen their sense of self.

They are their thoughts. So stepping out of that is the great liberation. It's the renunciation, and to some people the renunciation of that thought comes because they can't stand thought anymore.

It becomes so painful that finally they renounce. And what they do then is they, the renunciation of thought, of course, is also the renunciation of past and future, except for practical things, that's okay. But as that overwhelming concern with me and my future, and things that happened in the past, things that are going to happen to me, or not going to happen to me, renounce that and recognize that past and future are only thought forms, no more.

They have no existence. Time, which is past and future, has no existence except as thought. You cannot encounter past and future.

Nobody has ever met the past, touched it, seen it, lived in it. You may think people lived in the past. How can they live in the past?

The Romans, they lived 2,000 years ago. That sounds plausible. But of course they didn't.

They lived in the now. And so unless you create a thought form of past, there is no past. And the moment you can only create a thought form, at this moment, out of the fullness of now, which is consciousness itself, oh, is that what it is?

Yes. The now is unconditioned, pure consciousness itself, primordial intelligence. And out of that arise forms, thought forms.

And they become the conditioned form consciousness. And then thought forms become material forms. So we have thought, which are objects in consciousness.

Sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions, they are all objects because they become, you perceive what you call a flower. It somehow, the image goes through your eyes, becomes a nerve impulse, whatever they say. Then gets reconstructed in the brain, which nobody, the greatest doctor has no idea how it works.

And then you get an image arises of a flower. It's a thought form too. An object in consciousness, not conceptual thought.

Sense perception, conceptual thought. Objects in consciousness and consciousness. Most people walk around identified continuously with objects in consciousness.

They don't know themselves as the underlying space. Space consciousness. Here we have another pointer, in case you didn't get the first one.

In ultimate terms, objects in consciousness are things. Because we are speaking of form. So most people's lives consist of things that they are concerned with.

Thoughts are things, material things, that comes first. And that's for a large part of the population of the planet. Their entire existence is consumed by concern with material things.

And that applies both to the poor part of the world and to the wealthy part of the world. The poor are concerned with material things because they may not have enough to meet all the needs of the body. And the wealthy are concerned with material things because nothing is ever enough to the me.

I need more. It's the unconscious movement of more. So there's one level on which one's life, one's entire existence is concerned with things, objects.

And then things in a wider sense are anything that arises in your mind as an object. Thought forms, experiences, knowledge. One thing after another arises inside you.

It's a burden to live in such a way. One's life being consumed by one damn thing after another. You know how life is.

It never leaves you alone. The next thing comes. And it demands your attention.

It can be a thought that demands your attention. It can be a phone call, which is also a thought. This is important.

This is what's going on. And when you've solved one thing, another one comes up from behind. So you may have noticed the world of things doesn't leave you alone.

It always has something. There's always some new thing that comes up to demand your attention. You're surrounded by things.

And not only outside, unfortunately. And then you carry the accumulated content of thought forms inside you, which is object consciousness, we could say. And you are burdened with that.

And this is how people live, how they at work, in families. That continues one thing after another. What's the next thing we have to do?

And another, another. And when they're not concerned with things, they go into the hypnotic state of switching on some entertainment device. First consumed by things.

And then finally, click. What a life. It's living in a room crammed full with things.

You can't even move in it anymore. And then you step out of identification with thought forms. How do you do that?

Says the thought form. Give me a technique. Says another thought.

Okay, there are seven steps. That will take you seven years. Now, if we did that here, this gathering would be more satisfying to the mind.

Because you could go home and tell your family, when they ask you, what did you come away with? What did you learn? And you could say, I learned seven steps, and it'll take me seven years.

Oh, that's great. You got your money's worth. And so it's satisfying to be given more time to the mind, because it has that need.

It loves it. It's just waiting for something like that. And it's frustrating to the mind to be sitting here and saying, okay, yeah, but how?

We can say, renounce thought. We could say, renounce time. But even that is still maybe a little bit abstract.

To put it even more simply, we could say, renounce the next moment. Because you notice that most of your life, you're more interested in the next moment than in this one. A deeply conditioned movement.

Renounce that need for the next moment. The psychological need for, okay, what's next? And be completely with this.

What is. Now. Completely allowing this moment so precious.

Not precious because it's fleeting. That's a superficial way of looking at the present moment. Sometimes people say, this moment is so fleeting, just, you know, it'll be over soon.

Just, it's so, just hang on to it and remember it, remember it. Take a photo of it. No, it's not precious because of that.

Because the present moment is not fleeting. The forms are fleeting that arise in the field of now. Come and go.

But when you enter the now with your attention, and don't take it too literally, it's just a pointer. When you enter the now with your attention, then you renounce the next moment. And a completely different quality of being arises.

When you become present to what is. Instead of denying it, running away from it, making it a means to an end. And it is at that moment the mind falls away.

And then you realize how vast the space is inside you and how relatively insignificant anything in object consciousness is compared to the depth, the spaciousness within you.

The stillness. How relatively insignificant any thought that comes into your mind is.

Relatively insignificant. How relatively insignificant anything that happens or doesn't happen is. You see the relativity of whatever happens in the realm of object consciousness, in the realm of things.

Okay, it's nicer perhaps to live in a beautiful place than to live in a beautiful mansion than to live in a little hut or a little room on the surface. Yes, it might be nicer. But if you are, if you have not found the dimension that is beyond object consciousness in yourself and live in a mansion, the mansion is not going to do that much for you.

And if you have found it in the little room, whether you are in a little room or a mansion, doesn't matter that much anymore. Because there is such aliveness to the field of now it doesn't really matter where you go. What the things are that surround you it's relative, they matter relatively but not absolutely.

And then the the universe around you is recognized as playful forms that come and go. Experiences, different places come and go. It's a bit like when you are rooted in the now you are rooted in being.

You are rooted in yourself. And there is such fullness to now. It is the fullness of life itself because before life becomes a thing, before life becomes an object, before life becomes a life form there is life, consciousness, whatever word.

And to know yourself as that is the ultimate liberation. What is liberation? What are you liberated from?

You are liberated from the world of things, from obsession, from being consumed by things which includes thoughts. You are liberated from time also as an obsession that you are consumed by. And you are liberated from a very heavy sense of self, a me, what the Buddha called the self.

Ah, all that. The key then, the little opening into what we might call space consciousness. This is not from science fiction.

Space consciousness within yourself, the unconditioned consciousness. How do I get from being consumed and identified with object consciousness to recognizing myself as space? Ah, it doesn't work by trying to run away from the world.

It's through allowing whatever form this moment takes, the world of form, the world of objects, allowing whatever form this moment takes, internally allowing it to be as it is. External forms, inner forms, thoughts, emotions, feelings. Allow the suchness of this moment.

No longer make the now into an enemy. The moment you allow what is to be, there is what one could call a sense of space around what is. It could be an event that usually would trigger in you upset or impatience or anger.

And you'd simply say yes to it because it is. And suddenly there's space around the event. It's just a little pointer.

This is a beautiful thing to discover, the space around things. Why should I allow something to be because it is? It already is the case.

Yeah, but it shouldn't be happening. But it is. At this moment the mind says nothing will ever change if I allow this moment to be as it is.

The deeper truth is if I internally am antagonistic towards this moment, ultimately nothing is ever going to change. Because that is the old consciousness which keeps itself in place, the egoic consciousness, the mind-identified consciousness, the object-identified consciousness keeps itself in place through fighting what is, the me. How could one argue with the is-ness of this moment once you realize that the entire cosmos is connected, interconnected, everything in the cosmos is totally interconnected.

Physicists know that. So nothing that happens is isolated, an isolated event. It is connected with the totality.

And within the totality it makes sense. In many, many cases you could never work out through your understanding, mental understanding, how an event that on the surface looks senseless or looks as if it shouldn't be happening, you could never work out through intellectual understanding how the totality has brought this event about. Because no mind, no human mind can even understand a fragment of the totality.

It would be presumptuous to an absurd degree to believe that through the human mind you could understand the totality of the universe. And then explain it through words, using five vowel sounds. A, I, E, O, U.

Five sounds are the basic sounds. And then there are the others, they're called consonants, I think. They are sounds that are produced through air pressure, produced by sh, f, ch.

So you have the five vowel sounds plus a few noises produced through air pressure. And we believe that we could explain something. The universe.

So it is how useful it is to give up trying to understand. But what we can see, and this is confirmed not only by the ancient wisdom traditions of humanity, such as Buddhism, but also even through recent discoveries in molecular atomic physics, the interconnectedness of all things. That we can know yes, we don't know how, we can't understand how, in what way, but we can see yes, it all is ultimately one, the universe is one.

It is one, both at the unmanifested level, the primordial one, the unconditioned one, the unborn as the Buddha called it, the unborn, the uncreated, the unmanifested. Beautiful saying of the Buddha, he said, there is, O monks, that's how the translation goes, there is, O monks, the uncreated, the unborn, the unmanifested. If there were not the uncreated, the unborn, the unmanifested, there would be no escape from the born, the created, the manifested.

So to, yes, we can see the universe is one, both as the unmanifested, obviously, and it is one as an organism, even in the manifested realm, it is one organism, which has many different selves to it. One cell in the organism is humanity, humanity also is one organism, and what humans are doing to each other is a diseased organism in many ways. So the universe is one organism, whatever happens has its place within the totality, even if it seems completely incomprehensible.

And many things do happen that see, why is this happening? And just to simply see what one could call the inevitability of what is, within the context, the larger context of the whole, to see the inevitability of whatever form this moment takes in your life, whatever happens, could not be otherwise. You do not need to understand it, and occasionally it happens that after an event you can get a glimpse of understanding, only a glimpse if you are lucky, a tiny glimpse.

Some of you may have experienced something seemingly negative and incomprehensible happening to you, life doing something to you, making you ill, serious illness, losing everything. It doesn't make sense anymore, I went to church every Sunday and I worked my off and I lost it all, this wasn't supposed to happen, I don't understand anymore. And years later, you sit in the Inner Directions conference and suddenly you say, wow, if that hadn't happened of course I wouldn't be here, I would still be slaving away in the corporate office, if those bad things hadn't happened to me, I would never have gone beyond the conditioning.

So occasionally you might get a glimpse, but in many other cases you may not get a glimpse of why. But it is wonderful to see that yes, there is an inevitability to whatever form this moment takes. And so if you do not resist the form that this moment takes, internally, you are no longer trapped or imprisoned by the form that this moment takes.

Because very often that's what it looks like. That's why people always try to get away from this moment. Very often it looks like a limitation upon you, upon your life.

That's not what I want. What am I doing sitting here, in this office, in this place, in this relationship, in this, that, this, that, the other. Whatever form this moment takes to align yourself with it.

The moment you do that, and it's not a doing, only through language it creates the illusion that you're doing something. One could say it's the opposite of any doing. To internally align yourself with what is is the opposite of, OK, I have to do something.

You don't have to do anything, just this is as it is. Always. Recognize that.

There's no doing involved. This, it is as it is. You align yourself with the form that you don't fight the form.

The moment you fight the form, the form of me gets strengthened in yourself. The me that is based on my thought forms gets stronger through the struggle, the reaction, the reactivity against what is. Ultimately you could say the illusion of me gets strengthened through fighting what is.

And you can verify that in your own life when you are resisting whatever situation or in disagreement with someone this shouldn't be reactivity to see how your sense of self feels a little bit inflated through that. And you can see when you watch angry people who are fighting, there are some people who live almost continuously in angry opposition to what is. The entire universe is against them or they are against it.

The world is their enemy and they are just looking for the next thing to get upset about. And you can see how that strengthens, how that inflates the egoic sense of self, the reactivity, the fighting what is, the complaining pattern in the mind. And every time you complain you strengthen a little bit the form identity of me, the complainer, the thought form, the reaction.

The egoic identity inflates a little bit through the complaint because every complaint means that you are right and what you are complaining about is wrong. The situation, the person, the place. You are superior to that which you are complaining about.

That is the illusion how the illusory self entity inflates itself continuously through that. It doesn't ever last for long and they need something else. But once you watch that process in yourself or in another, it's a little bit easier to see it in somebody else, how the self importance grows through every complaint.

The imagined superiority of me as compared to that which you are complaining about. And some people complain about the world. Of course it's a mad place but complaining doesn't help very much.

They complain about humans, people. People are so unconscious. God!

What? You should know better. But they don't.

To see how that fighting what is strengthens the thought made me. And accepting what is, allowing it, surrendering to this moment, the form that this moment takes. That's all that ever changes.

This moment never changes. It's always now. Saying yes to the form doesn't mean you can't take action.

If action is needed, it comes out of the yes instead of the no. Totally different quality of action that comes out of saying, well, this is how it is. Here I am.

Two coins in my pocket. Wet. Not much food in the stomach.

That's what is at this moment.

[Speaker 3] (2:02:34 - 2:02:35)

Hmm.

[Speaker 1] (2:02:35 - 3:37:34)

Okay. And you go beyond the form of this moment and there is suddenly a peace from deep within. And there's a beauty even to that moment, the form of that moment, but the beauty may not be in the form, but it comes from a deeper place of the formless.

The formless life that you are, the very life that you are underneath the form as which you appear, you know it not through rejecting the forms but through accepting the forms. So the magic formula then is, but it doesn't work if it remains a thought form, the forms that seem to limit you in your life are the concealed openings into the formless. The conditions that seem to limit you are the portals into the unconditioned.

That which you are in your essence. And some people have experienced extreme forms of limitation in their life, physical, material, physical through the body, not working properly anymore. Physical limitations, present cam, some other awful limitation.

And some people have experienced, have realized when they let go of resistance to this moment, even in the most dreadful situations, the most dreadful limitations, they suddenly realized the formless space that they are. Peace. So if you can look upon your life and see where is it that life seems to limit you, what is the area where you feel hemmed in by life, the forms in your life, your life situation.

It could be relationships, it could be a place where you live, the people you live with, the physical structures around you, the house, or the work situation, whatever it may be. And so almost everybody experiences some form of limitation in their life, some form of limitation. And see if there, and then you might notice also that you are in an almost habitual resistance to those limitations, those forms in your life.

And see what happens if you let go of the resistance to what is. Use that and see what happens if you let go of the no to this moment. You may be surprised how quickly things change, how quickly the stuckness gets unstuck when you surrender.

And some of you have experienced it already in certain areas of your life. How quickly you become free of the conditioned, not by trying to reach some point of the unconditioned in the future, the limitless, but by not offering inner resistance to the conditioned. With that deep acceptance of what is comes a word that I usually avoid because it can easily become a thought form and it is so misused so much.

With acceptance of what is comes love. You love what is. It goes, we don't even need to say love.

It's there when you, there's an allowing of whatever form this moment takes. Love arises. So the secret is not to turn your back upon the limitations and trying to reach some point in the future where you realize yourself as unlimited.

Once you've sorted out your life situation it's never going to happen. Not for long. Then some new things, something else crops up.

Instead of looking for some liberation at a future moment, the more limited you are in your life situation there are degrees of limitation. Very limited for example would be your body may not make it for that much longer anymore. They might have said you may have two months, two more months.

You may be limited in other areas. You may be listening to this on a tape and find yourself in a prison cell. Those extreme limitations are the most powerful openings, the most powerful openings into presence, into space.

When you surrender to that, and so it happens in some people's lives there's one big thing, one what Christians used to call or still do your cross. One big thing in your life that is a dreadful burden or seems a dreadful limitation. Most of you have many little things.

That's fine too. That works too. But the one big thing works even better.

If you're lucky enough to have one big thing in your life that's absolutely unacceptable. Nobody could accept that. Well, that's what the mind says.

And then surrender happens. For many of you it will be a case of little surrenders. Even today as you leave here there may be an opportunity for a little surrender in some situation.

What is a little surrender? What is surrender? It's the shift from no to yes.

Surrender is detecting an inner no to what is. And then saying, ha ha, there it goes. And then to see well, but it is.

And then you look upon what is. Acceptance means it's not judged anymore. It's allowed to be.

And there's a field of attention. There's your prison cell which you've been extremely unhappy about for the past ten years. And even more unhappy because you know you have another fifteen years to go.

And then you listen to the tape. And then you sit there and you look upon the walls that surround you and maybe a little window with bars on and an uncomfortable place that you sit on. And there's light shining perhaps through the window.

Oh yes, and your body is alive. It feels alive. Every cell is alive.

And yes, even the wall has aliveness to it. Why didn't I see that before? Because I was looking at the wall through a screen of mental concepts.

Why couldn't I feel the aliveness that is in every cell of my body before? Because I was preoccupied with the thoughts in my mind. Mind objects in my consciousness.

One after another. All saying, this is dreadful and unacceptable. This is what my life has come to.

This is what the world has done to me. Telling yourself the story in your head again and again and again so you couldn't feel the aliveness. You couldn't see the light.

And you couldn't sense the stillness and the peace that were always there as inseparable from spacious awareness. The essence of your being was always there. Never knew it.

And this is how surrender to one big thing can take you once and for all. Surrender is no more than surrender to this moment as it is. No other spiritual practice is required.

But if you are happy with other spiritual practices, that's fine too. But every spiritual practice ultimately points to that. So why not do it now?

What beauty in welcoming the only thing there ever is, which is now. What beauty in welcoming the form that this now takes, whatever the form may be. And realize yourself as that which is deeper than any form.

Stillness, peace, space. Not that which happens, but the space in which it happens. That's who you are.

And so, when you look at night into space, the vastness of outer space, vast, infinite, infinite depth, that's the external version of who you are. And then you also notice when you look there, you see, oh well, it's so simple. There are basically two things in this world.

Space and things in space. It's as simple as that. The world consists of space and things in space.

Or rather, things in space are the world. Let's change it slightly. Things in space are the world, and space is that, which goes beyond anything that words could say.

But it's so obvious, even if you look through the senses, that there's basically even this room. There are things, bodies, chairs, flowers, lights, and there's space. The space usually nobody notices.

And usually nobody notices the inner space, the stillness that is underneath the noise, the incredible spaciousness that is there, within you. So you are the bridge between the object world and the formless, unconditioned one. And you move through this world, interacting with form, still.

Your body is form, too. Thoughts still happen, occasionally. You interact with other forms, and the play of forms continues all around you, and you are rooted in the formless, which is peace.

And the world is then the play of forms around you, so to speak. And nothing in the world of form matters that much anymore. And it's only then that, and this is almost a paradox, something that is not of this world, which is the world of objects, something that is not of this world shines through this form into this world.

The formless, a certain transparency happens through surrender to what is, a certain transparency happens, and so the unconditioned shines through into the world of form, and the world of form then is experienced as a more benign place when that comes through you. And it transforms how you experience the world of form, also. Not that the world of form will lose its characteristics of having polarities.

It has polarities, the world of form will always have certain polarities, otherwise forms could not survive. High, low, hot, cold. But the manifestation of the polarities of the world of form will become more benign, not the harshness.

So one could say, love comes into this world, and love is not of this world. That's how the world changes. Not that it matters that much anymore, whether or not it changes.

And you certainly, as you surrender to what is, you relinquish the need for the world to change. And then it changes. And that includes the need for your world to change, your situation.

It must change. Well, first accept what is, and then see what happens. Thank you.

Welcome. I believe we are waiting for the workshop on the now. I would also like to welcome people who are with us in other places, in Toronto, Lenox, Massachusetts, Fort Lauderdale, and even Ireland.

Galway in Ireland. In all those places, it's later than it is here. So you are in the future, and we are in the now.

And since you are in the future, you can tell us, if you could, what it's like to be in the future. Because so far I haven't met anybody who has ever experienced it. I haven't met anybody who has ever experienced anything that is not now.

Ever. And even if you had a time traveler, if there is such a thing, if you traveled into the past and then came back, and then I asked you how you experienced that past, you would have to say, well, to me, it was the now. And even if you were a time traveler from the future and came back here from the future to become governor of California, you would have to say, well, there it's also now.

Now, most, this is something that one cannot really argue with, the fact that life is always now, that your life is always, always has been and always will be now. And yet, on the other hand, time seems to be so, such an enormous force in one's life, such an overpowering thing that absorbs most people's attention almost completely. And if you look at it, it seems that time cannot be denied.

There must be something that we call time because it's everywhere. You can test it, buy a fresh apple and put it on a windowsill. It's fresh, it's alive, full of life, shiny.

And you come back two months later and look at it and it's soft, it's shrunk, it's shrivelly and you can't even eat it anymore. What happened? It's time.

Any event in your life, how fleeting it all is. If you look at your past, the last vacation you had, gone up in smoke. This morning's breakfast, while it may still be in your stomach, but the experience of it has already receded.

And when not long ago I met some friends I hadn't seen in a very, very long time, 25 years or so. And when I first saw them I got a shock and maybe they got a shock when they saw me. I don't know.

But my first impression was that they were ill. And then I realized, no, 25 years had passed. And the woman who was last, 55 or so when I saw her was now 75 or more.

I don't know. The shock, what happened to you? Then I realized it was time.

What has time done to you? It burns you up or it dries you out. One can look at it from any perspective you like.

And then you reach the end of your life and even the memories, the memory traces in the mind, my life. Was that ever? It still seemed like a dream.

It's gone. Even this gathering here lasts until later this afternoon, 5 o'clock or so. Then you'll be gone.

It'll be over. Time has dissolved. It only exists as a memory that you remember now.

If you remember it, you'll have to remember it in the now. So wherever we look, time seems to be dissolving things. Imagine this room.

Imagine yourself as a disembodied field of awareness in this room, observing a speeded up version of this room like the films that you have seen when you see a flower coming out of the soil, the bud opening all within one minute and wilting. Now if you were a disembodied intelligence in this room, observing what happens to this room, let's say it were condensed. The elapsing time were condensed every minute 500 years.

And you're here watching. It would be the most dreadful shock of your life, because the first thing you would see is bodies in this room dissolving one after another. They would dissolve.

Just a few bones left and then dust. So you would be sitting here and everywhere people would be popping out of existence. And then the material things would take a little longer.

But there too the wooden things eventually become dust and crumble. Even the walls. And then it gets speeded up even more.

You can see it all returning into nothingness out of which it came. Is that a frightening thing? From one perspective, it is.

There's also a strangely peaceful thing that comes over you when you contemplate how impermanent all forms are. So your life, if we speak in terms of time, has a past and a future. Your life situation.

We can look on it as if you have these ancient scrolls that you unroll. And then, let's say, on the left you have writing and images. That's your past.

Your past situation. On the right you have writing and images. That is your future.

And that becomes, the further you go, more and more illegible. You can't quite figure it out. And at some point there's your date of death.

But that's illegible too. So most people walk around with a sense of self, a sense of existence that is very wide. That is my past, my future.

Their life situation. And to most people, their life situation gives them their sense of identity. Those are the circumstances of your life.

What the past, what you experienced, learned in the past, what happened to you in the past, what people did to you, what you did to other people, how you interacted with the world. And then the continuation of that, the future, which is, to most people, very, very important. So time seems to be very overwhelming and one cannot deny on one level its existence.

And yet, now comes the strange, indisputable fact that all you ever experience is the present moment. So on the one hand, time seems to be an enormous power and yet on the other hand, if you pay close attention, you realize that your life is always no more and no less than this moment. From the point of view of time, this moment doesn't even exist because it's only the transition from past into future.

So we are here to explore more fully that dimension in you that we call the now. So as we are here, we are temporarily folding back the scroll of your past and your future, your life situation until what remains is just this moment. And what we'll do is we go more deeply into this dimension here.

When you leave here, you can pick up the scroll and unroll it again. But hopefully, you will realize the power that lies concealed in that central part of your life that to most people is peripheral. When you realize nothing in your life can happen, nothing you can experience, nothing, think nothing, feel nothing, do nothing that is not at this moment.

Most people live as if this moment were an obstacle that they need to overcome. And this moment is life. This moment conceals the fullness of life.

The only place where life can be found is now. And to most people, it's an obstacle. That's a deep-seated mental habit that we all inherit collectively.

They are more interested in some other moment, the next one, or the one after that. They treat this moment as a means to an end. I really want to get to that moment.

Most of their lives, they live like that. And that is a dysfunctional way to live because you miss your entire life. You miss the dimension of depth in your life.

And all you have, you're floating around on the surface of things. At first sight, this moment is not interesting in many cases to the human mind, which is used to past and future. So to realize the aliveness of this moment, it helps greatly.

I'm telling you this now because this is essential so that you can endure sitting here for several hours without feeling that you cannot stand this now anymore. If you cannot stand this now anymore, that means you cannot stand yourself anymore. You need to escape into some world of make-believe in the mind.

So how to be here and stay anchored in here and explore the vertical dimension of your life because you've been concerned about the horizontal for a whole lifetime. My life situation, these things that happened to me didn't quite, that worked out, that didn't work out. But no life situation, anybody's life situation here has worked itself out to their complete satisfaction.

Every life situation has a dilemma in it. Every life situation is problematic. Every life situation is as yet unresolved.

There are lots of loose ends, things that should have gone differently but didn't. The story is not totally satisfying ever of me. The story of me, that's the life situation that exists in time.

But the story of me, of course, still has a future. I think one day I can complete the story of me and one day I will feel completely and fully myself. I will have arrived at that sense of being totally rooted, that sense of total security and peace and aliveness.

Be fully myself. One day, the story of me will reach that point where I can say, that's it. That's it.

It's complete. I have arrived. And then I will be myself.

But I'm not fully myself yet. Almost everybody feels that. And if you make the mistake of picking up a gossip magazine with lots of photos, you can see the images of people who the publishers pretend have made it.

Their stories are complete. They live in a mansion. They look glamorous.

But then you just wait for the next edition when you see that they're on drugs. They're continuously getting divorced and married with all the suffering that comes. Their life is in shambles too.

It hasn't, the story hasn't quite completed itself. And on that level, it never really will. On the level of your life situation or on the level of time, there's always a sense of incompleteness.

If you derive your sense of self from the story of me, there will always be some sense of incompleteness. I'm not yet fully me. 500 years later, if it could prolong your life, I need another 500 years.

Just give me a little bit more time. And if this were a seminar where I could give you steps how to achieve at the state of inner connectedness, the state of that is also the state of peace, in 14 easy steps that only take as many years, you would probably feel satisfied because you could take something home with you and feel he has given us time. That feels good.

Now from one level, sitting here is unsatisfying because our gathering works on a different level. Nothing is being given to you. Not even food for thought, ultimately.

So how does it work? What is the point in sitting here? Sitting here works on three levels.

One is something is being pointed out here. You are given little pointers so that you can look at something that before you had taken completely for granted in your life and question that and see that ultimately there is a dysfunction here. Before you can see that something is dysfunctional or even insane, I call normal insane.

Normal human consciousness has a strong streak of insanity to it. If anybody doesn't believe this, go and buy a book on history, human history. 20th century is best because it's the most insane of all, when humans killed a hundred million or so of their own species in one century alone.

But all the centuries are pretty mad. Just you can't see it in such magnitude. The madness has now become magnified and perhaps it's also accelerating.

Yes, there is a strong element of dysfunction in the human mind and we are addressing that here. You will see how that can be recognized in the collective energy field, consciousness of the planet, of humanity, of history and primarily in yourself, in your own life, because the collective is only a reflection of the individuals. And when you see a pattern in yourself, for example, that you are never present in the only place, in the only time where life is, here and now, that are very rarely present in the here and now, when you see that, become conscious of that, to some extent you are already stepping out, you have one foot out of that dysfunction when you see it.

The person who knows that they are mad, that person is not completely mad anymore. Because the seeing of a dysfunctional pattern in oneself is not part of the dysfunctional pattern. So as we speak, it seems that part of the time, what we are pointing to, is the so-called bad news.

The bad news of human dysfunction. But it is good to see that, because you become in the seeing of it, you become free. It is the first step to freedom, one step out.

If you have seen the film A Beautiful Mind, you will see that there is a person here who is totally identified with his highly, high-powered mind, and at some point in the film you realize that his reality, to a large extent, is delusional. The viewer realizes that the reality of this scientist is delusional the moment that he also realizes his reality, to a large extent, that he has delusions. Delusion.

And that is the moment when he begins to become healed. Because when he realizes delusion, recognizes delusion as delusion, something has arisen that is not part of the delusion. Awareness.

Presence. Ah. So it is good to point out certain dysfunctions that you can then see in yourself.

Nothing personal in that. That is one level on which this gathering works. The other level is giving you little pointers to show you how you can exit the dysfunctional state of consciousness.

Or, to look at it from another perspective, portals into a different state of consciousness. That is the other level at which this gathering works. And the third level at which this gathering works is not to do with words, or thoughts, or concepts.

It is to do with this is hard to put into words because it's not to do with words, becoming attuned to an energy field that is here in this gathering. That has nothing to do with the words, and yet out of which the words come. The energy field of presence.

And even if you went to sleep occasionally, that would still be working. It would seep in. And for those of you, there may be some who got dragged here by a friend and cannot stand staying here the whole afternoon, I will give you something now that perhaps one day you will find extremely helpful when the time comes and suffering arises and you become ready for this transformation.

And this is also for everybody else here, for the rest of this gathering, I will be reminding you throughout, we come now to the first exit point out of the time bound state of consciousness. As you sit here, make sure that you can sense, even if it's only in the background, the aliveness that is in your body. Because your body, undoubtedly, is alive.

But most people have no feeling of connectedness with the aliveness that is in every cell and in every organ of their body. And not just aliveness, the intelligence that underlies the entire functioning of the body. They live in the upper compartment here.

They occupy this building, but they live in the loft. And in the loft, they run around from one corner to another like a little mouse. Very busy up there.

And saying, I'm so restless. I don't know what to do next. What's the next thing that I need to do?

What's next? Next is always, when you're identified with the time-bound, mind-identified consciousness, the next thing is always more important than this. What's the next thing I have to do?

And then you have a whole industry to satisfy your greed for the next thing, the mind's greed. More stimulus, switch this on that, switch that. And so, that state of unease is quite normal.

And then illnesses come very quickly because you're not here. So, it is a dreadful fate to be trapped up here in the continuous stream of thinking that is the human mind, 98% of which is totally repetitive, doesn't get you anywhere whatsoever, in fact, gets you into a lot of trouble. 2% you need.

Maybe 10%. But all the thinking that goes on, that most people are totally identified with as who they are, one thought arises, next thought arises, the next thought arises. Oh, I'm so worried about that.

I don't know what's going to happen. Of course you don't know what's going to happen. I need to know.

And then, it always functions through past and future, so you have this enormous weight that you carry. On your left you have your past, on the right you have your future, both are enormous burdens because the past is also not all that great. Sometimes you try to convince yourself, and the future is very problematic.

It has two faces, hope and fear. Maybe things will get better. Maybe I will find myself somewhere there.

But on the other hand, deep down, everybody knows that eventually things will not get better. Because no matter how long they get better for, a point will come when they get worse on the level of form. They must do.

Because it is the destiny of forms to dissolve. So even if you build up an empire, and it's just a question of which one goes first, you or the empire. It is in the nature of forms not to last.

And so if you derive your sense of self from this, that you carry around as me, it is a place of continuous fear and unease. Hope, fear and unease, of not enough, of insufficiency. And so you walk around life with this burden of me, this unease, trying to I'm not full yet.

What does... I'm not yet... I need to try a little bit more of this to complete my sense of self.

Buy that. All advertisers know that your sense of self is not complete yet. And what they want to do to make you feel even more incomplete.

And so you buy their product and for a moment you can add the mental image of this product to who you think you are. Because it's yours now. My such and such car, house, dress, shoes.

So you've added a object, mental object to who I am. It's mine. For a moment it completes you.

It doesn't last long. Sometimes it's only the act of shopping that completes you. The adding something to me.

And then you get home and you look at it and it still feels good and then you put it in your wardrobe and five years later you discover it's still there. It was only the act of adding that was important. And people look for things to add.

This is why the future is so important. Because your sense of self is derived from a mind-made accumulation of images and thoughts about who you are. So you need it's always not enough.

So everyone is on the lookout for more. That's why they desperately need the future. Because the future will give them the more they believe.

And it does. But it doesn't complete them. Never for long.

Fame. Wanted fame. And most people think if fame and fortune come, then surely I will have made it.

Now, if you look at all the famous people, they are just as unhappy as everybody else. Some are more unhappy. Except for a few who have looked through fame and fortune and seen that's not who I am.

And they've gone deeper. Sometimes you have to get everything that you thought you needed and still not feel complete and then you realize that that is not where you find your identity. Your true self.

And that is not where you find the lasting peace that is part of who you are in your essence. There's nothing wrong with adding things. Experiences, knowledge, expertise, even possessions.

But if it is a search for an identity, if there is a me invested in that, then that also is a form of suffering. Because you never get there. So, the need for more is overpowering in human beings because they are looking for themselves.

The need for more could even be here with the need to be fed more concepts. But you're not given many here. So there's a feeling of I'm not being given what I want or need.

No, of course not. Because to find yourself nothing ultimately needs to be added. The adding to works well on the level of your life situation.

There you can play around with learning new things. It's fine to do. Explore new countries.

Buy this or that. It's like this is beautiful. Without looking for yourself in it, that's beautiful.

So on that level, yes, adding to yourself is fine. Exploring new things. But if you're looking for some permanent satisfaction peace in that, it cannot be found there.

If you're looking for yourself, you won't find yourself there. It will always be that, hmm, what now? So we realize here that to be who you are in your essence, which has nothing to do with the story of me, you do not need more of anything.

You mean I'm enough already? This can't be. Look at the mess I'm in, my life situation.

Look at my debts, or whatever. Look at my investments, they've all plunged. Look at this, look at that.

It can't be. Well, you're asking me then to look at your life situation. What about your life?

Life? What life? Here.

Now. Can you feel the life that you are? Can you feel the aliveness?

This is one entry point. In the inner body. Or do you only dwell up there in your head?

If you do, you will notice as you sit here, you get more and more restless. If you're only up here because you cannot be only up here and absorb what is being said here. So you become more restless and begin to twitch without even knowing it, because you're not in the body.

And then you look at your watch. Time. Time.

What's the time? How much longer? What's next?

Where do I have to be at five? The exit out of the mind-identified consciousness that is the continuous stream of thinking, very powerful exit point, is to direct attention into the inner body. And for those of you who cannot feel that the body is alive, in the background as a subtle sense of aliveness, a little thing that can help you is hold up your left or right hand, close your eyes, and ask yourself if there's any way you can know whether that hand is still there or not.

I tell this to people who tell me, I cannot feel anything. Okay, then let's see if this is true, that you cannot feel anything. Close your eyes.

Is your right or left hand still there? Now, sometimes people are just in their minds, they say, yes, it's still there because I saw it there a minute ago. But that's not it.

Can you feel that it's still there? Yes, of course you can. You have to direct attention at that moment away from thinking and the attention flows into the hand.

Of course it's there. I can feel it. And if you hold the other hand, it becomes easier to feel that also.

And you can then realize that you can actually bring together the feeling of two hands into a single feeling of hand, hand. And then can you feel your feet in the same way? Do they almost start tingling?

I don't want to make any suggestions, but that is what one feels. There is intense aliveness throughout the body. Can you now enter, if you have found one entry point into the body, like your hands, it becomes easier to begin to feel the other parts of the body, not perhaps as strongly as hand.

And then to feel the entire energy field of body as a single feeling, sensing in the background as you sit here. So some of your attention is out of the words, auditory perception, and some of your attention is in the inner aliveness that you feel. You are now becoming present.

You are now rooted, becoming rooted in yourself, in your very being, instead of living in the stream of thinking that is totally conditioned by the past, out of which nothing new ever comes. It's a circle. It goes round and round.

That's why in ancient cultures they talk of the vicious circle of existence. It's a very concrete thing. Stepping out of that, you do not become stupid.

To be identified with that is stupidity. No matter how much knowledge you have accumulated, if you are identified, which means every thought draws in your attention completely, that is stupid, no matter how knowledgeable you are. And you will put it to stupid ends.

You will put your intelligence to stupid ends. This is what the whole world does. Look what it does with the great inventions.

Splitting the atom requires intelligence. Building an atom bomb is stupidity. Building a chainsaw requires great intelligence.

Cutting down all the ancient forests with it requires great stupidity. If you cannot get out of that conditioned thoughts, stream of thinking, you remain ultimately stupid, dysfunctional. There is enormous intelligence that lives inside your body, far greater than the human mind could ever even understand, let alone imitate.

How could the human mind run all the thousands of functions and coordinate them of the body? Every cell embodies intelligence. The one consciousness taking temporary form as that cell, as that organ.

So people say, how do I contact the greater intelligence? How do I find God? And then they look, they think, okay, if I'm I have to work hard and then at some point in the future perhaps I will find himself, herself, myself, however they conceive it.

But that's not where it is. The entry point into the greater intelligence that is beyond the human mind, that pervades the entire universe, that expresses itself here as this beautiful flower, takes form as that, unproblematic. The flower has no problems.

I wonder what's going to happen to me tomorrow. It is there in all its beauty, an unproblematic full expression of that. So this, the same intelligence dwells here.

You can contact it. There's a saying in the, I believe it's the Koran or an associated book, God is closer to you than your jugular vein. And another saying, God is closer to you than hands and feet.

God is closer to you than hands and feet. Now how is that possible? Because hands and feet are so close.

What can be even closer than hands and feet? The inner of that. So if you can sit here and dwell, be rooted in your inner energy field, at the same time you have exited the continuous stream of thinking to a large extent.

Because you can either have your consciousness being consumed by thinking, or you can have your consciousness in here, in the body. So most people's lives are consumed by their mind. It burns up their life energy uselessly.

You lie in bed, you worry, you travel to work, you worry, you think, should, shouldn't have, what if, and so on. All going around in circles. If you could exit, even for a few minutes, and find stillness, because that is the entry point into inner stillness, when you leave identification with a conditioned mind.

Now the conditioned mind will tell you, don't go there, because you won't know what's going on anymore. You will lose your mind. Not true.

It is only if you are connected with that, that you can use your mind in a fresh, creative, and constructive way. So if you can sit here and feel, yes, I am alive, feel it in the background, so to speak, and at the same time you can listen. There is an aliveness here.

You are getting closer to who you are than you ever are when you are identified with the story of me. You are stepping out of the story, deriving your sense of self from telling yourself, dwelling mentally, continuously on your life situation, which exists in time. Not in the now.

I am not denying the existence of time on its own level, or the existence of your life situation, but there is something more powerful that people haven't discovered. Yet, it's the only place where the new, where true power can come into your life. You have to access this tiny thing that to the mind doesn't even exist now.

And the inner body is a powerful anchor for accessing now. You then realize you can sit here without needing to interpret this moment in any way. It is as it is.

Because otherwise, interpretation of what happens to you throughout life is compulsive when you are identified with a compulsive thinking mind. Any situation you go into, you will immediately label it out of your past experience. Any person you meet, you will immediately label according to your past conditioning.

So, you go through life carrying a screen of conceptualization, which is your thought processes and emotions associated with your thought processes. Wherever you go, you judge immediately, compulsively. That's how it is.

Immediately, you say, this is how it is. Some people do it more than others. So, you are surrounded by that screen, inhabiting a conceptualized reality, which is all conditioned by the past.

And then you put labels, mental labels, which are concepts, onto other people. You formulate concepts about who they are. You take a tiny segment out of their behavior, which is another form of conditioning, which comes out of them, and then say, this is who he is, this is who she is.

That's what it does. Or you do it to a group of people. You conceptualize a group of people, call them this or that.

Immediately, you cannot sense their aliveness anymore. You cannot sense that here is a feeling, alive, divine, ultimately human being. You cannot sense that anymore.

All you can see is your concept of that human being or that group of people. This is how a person can commit acts of great violence against a group of people that they have conceptualized in the head. Made already lifeless, so to speak.

And then, these are not humans anymore. You can put a bomb there. You've killed them already in your mind.

You've conceptualized them already. That's how you can see how what on a personal level is simply a screen that makes your life heavy and difficult, that imposes stories on everything that happens to you. On a collective level, it lies also at the root of the dysfunction, the collective dysfunction in humanity.

What are we doing to ourselves and to others? So where the root then is to be identified with the conditioned thinking. The solution is to step out of conditioned thinking.

And the mind says, Oh, you can't possibly do that. Who is talking? Conditioned thinking.

Feeling the body? No, you can't. I can't feel the body right now because I've got too much on my mind.

Who is talking? The mind. So the mind will tell you also when you lie awake in bed, you need to think about this now.

If you don't think about this now, it will all collapse. It's four o'clock in the morning. There's nothing you can do.

You are tortured by your own mind. The body believes that every thought that you have is a reality. Every fearful thought that you have, that you're actually in some fearful situation.

So the body is continuously contracted and says, Oh no, dreadful things are happening right now. Your energy field gets disrupted. Energy doesn't flow freely anymore.

And then do that for a few years. What that does to your body? Oh, this goes wrong here, that goes wrong there.

Nothing is flowing anymore. So there you are in bed. Something in the head is telling you that you need to think about this now.

No, I don't. There's no action I can take at this moment. I've thought about it already for 20 hours.

And it is my choice at this moment not to think. It is my choice to feel the aliveness that I am. And then the mind says, No, you can't do that now.

Can you identify the thinker and not confuse the thinker with who you are? If you are not the thinker, who are you? Or rather, the thinker asks, Well, if I'm not the thinker, who am I?

When you realize that there's a stream of thinking going through your head, you take one step back internally from the thinking. And when you're in the body, that's easier, of course. You take one step back and there are the thoughts.

And you can choose at that moment that you do not want to think. What for? Many situations in life would be far more beautiful if you were not imposing interpretations on them.

Especially relationships. We may come to that. But at the moment we are in bed at 4 o'clock in the morning.

So the mind will usually tell you sometimes it says, I have no time to go into the body. No time. I have too much to think about.

It's a lie. But you have to see it as a lie. It is.

You have to recognize it is a conditioned mind pattern. The mind doesn't want you to go into the body. And then you go into the body.

You have stepped out. You realize more. Once you are in the body, you realize a dimension of yourself that is not the stream of thinking.

An aliveness. I am that aliveness. That is a thought.

But I'm translating into the thought what is ultimately, when you sense it, it's not a thought. You feel alive. Before you did not feel alive.

Humans that go through the world with that conceptualized reality are not truly, they do not truly feel alive. They need a substitute life. They need continuous stimulus to give them a feeling of that they are still a little bit alive.

They need drama in relationships just to have that excitement. Yes, I'm still alive. We are fighting.

The relationship must still be real. Children at an early age, children, very young children, are connected with the aliveness that they are until concepts come into the head. And in this modern civilization, they very quickly get out of their body and the moment, especially they start using the mass produced screen, electronic screen gadgets, they are totally out of concept and stimulus, mental stimulus and become addicted to that to feel alive.

They can't feel the life that they are anymore. They cannot live without stimulus anymore. It's a mad world.

The most beautiful thing in life, the delight of life, the delight of being that plants can feel, although we cannot get into plants in that way with animals, we can see it a little bit more when you watch a bird that sings, that flies from one branch to another, when you watch an eagle in flight for an hour without moving the wings, any animal, a cat purring, they are delighting in being alive. And I'm sure this flower delights in being alive in its own way, not the same consciousness as the human. Basically, yes, the same one consciousness, but a different expression of that.

But somehow everything natural is still connected with the delight of being. It is rooted in being. Humans, of course, are also rooted in being, but they don't know it anymore.

That's why in the power of now it says at the beginning, the beggar is sitting on a box of gold, but has never looked inside. Has always been begging for just a coin, little coins here and there. And this is what humans, human existence has come to.

They have lost the delight of life. And we are returning to that. The beauty is when you're returning to something, you go to a deeper level than when you lost it.

And it is not just the delight of life. There is peace in there. There is also you are touching the source of all creativity, intuition, realization.

True intelligence is there when you step out of the conditioned stream of thinking without losing consciousness. Because that is another way that some humans attempt to do. They realize obscurely that they cannot live with this dreadful torture in their head anymore.

So they go to drinks. One drink. Feel a little bit better.

Another drink. Much better. Why are they feeling better?

The mind slows down a bit. They're stepping out. They're coming a little bit free of the mental torture.

And the third drink, then you feel really great. And you start feeling more alive. And then another one.

And another. And another. And you're going towards unconsciousness or sleep.

So it gives you a temporary reprieve, a temporary aliveness. Because you're getting out of mind. But you are going towards unconsciousness.

You are sinking below the level of thought. At first it's beautiful because even that is better than the torture of the mind. And then if you went any further, eventually you would end up in the realm of minerals.

And you would become as peaceful as a stone. Now a stone, too, has some aliveness in it, but it is a very distant aliveness. A stone, too, is an expression of consciousness in this.

It is a pulsating energy field. If you could see it on a molecular level, you would see that the stone, too, is a being, an expression of the one consciousness, and a very peaceful one. Plants are very peaceful compared to humans, but a little bit less peaceful than stones.

Animals are very sane, most of them, compared to humans. They're not destroying the planet, for a start. They're not making themselves unhappy.

They don't inhabit a problematic reality. What about me? However, it is not for us humans to go back.

We are not going back from thought into unconsciousness. If I asked you, would you, if you wanted peace, inner peace, let's say you live a tortured life, like this is quite normal. It's just a degree of intensity.

You lead a tortured life. I ask you, you can now choose. You can become a happy animal, a happy cow.

Cows are quite happy, not the cows that are badly, despicably treated by humans in factory farms, another aspect of the insanity of humanity, but a cow that is alone living in Switzerland on the hills. And they look quite happy. And they even put up with a silly bell they ring around their necks.

They look quite happy when you look at them. It's actually a contemplation. You look at that cow and go beautiful, beautiful.

And yet, and yet, if you could choose to become a happy cow or remain as a tortured, unhappy human being, you would probably choose to remain a tortured, unhappy human being. Unless you are so unhappy and so tortured that you would do anything whatsoever, including suicide, to get out of that. In which case you are so fed up with suffering that it would be easy for you now to step out of that once and for all identification with that limited, absurdly limited, sense of self.

We are not going back to that it's beautiful for plants to be plants, for an animal to be an animal, or a stone to be a stone. They are beautiful expressions of life. Our way is the way beyond the stage of mind, of thought, of deriving your sense of self from that.

Then, thinking can still happen, but it no longer has the capacity to make you unhappy. Thinking can then become a very powerful tool for creating whatever you need to create on the level of form. And thinking will become extremely empowered when it's no longer invested with a sense of self.

When your self is no longer in thought, then truly will you be able to use thought beautifully and powerfully. If humans could immediately create anything with thought that they wanted now in their egoic state, the world would be in an even greater mess than it is now. Ultimately, yes, thought is very powerful to create, but that is not the solution to anybody's dilemma.

If now I gave you all the power in the world to create any situation you like in your life, it would not help you. Because whatever situation you create, you walk into with the same mind structures. So the same mind structures will then create the same circumstances, the same drama.

Instead of in a little house, it's a drama in the mansion, the big mansion. Instead of nobody knowing about it, they might write about your drama in the papers. But it's not more significant, really, than anybody else's drama.

If you were transported to paradise, an island in the Pacific, beautiful everything, at first it would be wonderful, but then as you're not connected with a deeper sense of aliveness, after a few weeks or months, you would get bored. Intolerably, intolerable boredom would arise, and restlessness. No drama, nothing is going on.

Exit point, body. Exiting the conditioned head, noise in the head. Stay there, feel it, another exit point, become more conscious of this moment, and you may have heard the New Age saying that whatever happens to you, you have chosen it.

I'm not telling you this, though, because that is something you can argue with, and many people would. They say, there's no way I would have chosen this. No way, you're completely wrong.

I wanted something totally different. Okay, that may be true. So I'm not saying that you have chosen whatever happens to you, or whatever situation you're in at this moment.

But you can live as if you had chosen whatever happens at this moment. First of all, you can see nothing that happens is isolated from the totality. Everything is connected with everything else.

There is no isolated event ever in your life. When you see that, you see that whatever happens has a certain inevitability to it. And that is called the inevitability of is.

It is. Now this is the most, you cannot argue with that little word. Is.

What's happening right now? Whatever form this moment takes, it is as it is right now. That statement is always true.

And if you argue internally with the incontrovertible fact of is, you're very unhappy. You make yourself very unhappy. And you make others automatically also unhappy.

There's nobody who makes themselves unhappy who don't make others around them unhappy also. So here we have the exit point is become aware of the form that this moment, the only moment there ever is. The form that it takes right now, that changes continuously.

But are you going through life resisting, resenting, denying the form that this moment takes? Here I am waiting in line and I've been standing here for an hour and a half and it's not moving. How can they be so stupid?

I'm going to write letters and you write the letters of complaint in your head. There's nothing wrong with letters of complaint but you're writing them in your head now. You're not actually writing them.

And as these thought structures arise, there's enormous contraction, enormous suffering really, but it's not recognized as suffering. Is, and I'm taking an easy situation, just a long waiting period to recognize that the suchness, another word that the Buddha used, the suchness of this moment is always already as it is. And instead of resisting it internally, instead of denying it by mentally projecting yourself away from it into some more fulfilling future moment that isn't here, or looking for the future moment that's going to be more fulfilling than this one.

And if you're looking, you get up into thought because it's thought that does it. You leave your body, you leave the aliveness of now and you move into identification with thought. And the thought denies or rejects what is.

It criticizes it, it says this shouldn't be, or I hope it's over soon. I hope this moment is over soon. Is a deep-seated mind habit in humans is not usually recognized because it's unconscious, but you can see how dysfunctional it is if now we make it conscious.

People living in such a way, they, if you were saying, how often would you say during the course of a day, I hope this moment is over soon. If you uttered that consciously, you would maybe utter it a hundred times a day. And what are you saying if we now re-translate that phrase, and what you're saying is, I hope life is over soon.

Because this moment is life. Or you're saying, I hope to find life eventually. I hope to feel truly alive eventually.

I hope a moment will come when I feel that, when I find life. Does it ever come when you're trapped in that mind pattern? A few times, many times, the delusion of having found that moment will come occasionally.

It's called falling in love, winning a million dollars, getting a great job, getting married, going on vacation. The delusion that now you have found a moment that is good. And before you know it, it's gone again.

Or even in the middle of it, you're walking along the beach on your vacation that you dreamt about for several months, and you're thinking, next week I'll be back in the office. When really it doesn't matter whether you're on the beach or the office, to feel the life that you are. So the life is concealed in now.

So the first thing is to detect in yourself when you're telling the present moment that you don't want it. The only moment there ever is and you don't want it. The only time there ever is and you're saying, get out of my way.

I'm on my way somewhere else. If you stop people here in this city or any other big city that are running around like excited little, getting to the next thing. If you stopped anybody and asked them where are they going, they would give you their destination.

It's all very important, but everybody would be going towards the future. They would all be saying, I'm going to a future moment that's more important than this one. If you really ask them, okay, compare the importance of where you are now to the importance of where you want to get.

They would say, okay, where I want to get to is more important than now. Always. And the whole civilization lives like that and it seems to make sense.

Because, you see, confirmed on television that everybody lives like that. It must be okay. And yet, it's dysfunctional.

And then people ask, would I still be effective? What would I do if I accepted the now? Would I not become a passive doormat that says, do to me whatever you like?

No. The present moment is accepted in its is-ness. That means you face fully the form that this moment takes.

You welcome it. You allow it. If you can't welcome it, at least you can say, there you are.

There you are. There it is. This is the form that this moment takes.

There's my car. Somebody has smashed the windscreen. A little thing that could cause a little unhappiness.

But the mechanism of little and big is all the same. You get back to the car. Somebody smashed the windscreen.

It is already as it is. Nothing, you could add nothing to it that would improve it through any reaction. So that brings and you're beginning to approach reality, which is now this is vital.

You bring to it a state of alert presence. And in that alert presence you are looking actually or metaphorically attention flows from you onto the situation. It may be a challenge.

It may be something that requires action. It may be something that requires immediate action. And you look.

Allow this moment to be windscreen smashed. Okay. Raining, car getting wet inside.

What can I do?

[Speaker 2] (3:37:35 - 3:37:35)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (3:37:36 - 5:08:01)

You immediately out of the acceptance, right action arises. Out of rejection of what is action will also arise. But it is more likely to be not quite right for that situation because it's tainted with a lot of denial and rejection and negativity.

And then you're on the phone and you're in a very bad mood and you're trying to get somebody to repair the car and they can hear how bad your mood is and they don't want to do it because you're not nice. And they can... The universe doesn't respond very well when you are denying what is.

You don't get a good response. So you're making, when you make this moment into an enemy, you're making reality, the universe into an enemy. To see the power that can come through you when you accept the now in whatever form it comes because you realize the futility of saying no to it.

Saying no to life. And if something dreadful should be happening at this moment then your acceptance needs to be deeper. Something dreadful may be happening right in front of you or to you.

Surrender is required. Surrender to what is at this moment. And people in the most dreadful situations, we have reports of people who have suffered in the most dreadful circumstances or situations.

Illness. Prison camp. Complete loss of everything in their lives.

All at once. And some of them, some of them were in hell and remained in that state until they died. Others were forced through suffering out of the state of resistance.

They couldn't stand the suffering anymore. They couldn't stand themselves anymore. They couldn't stand the resistance anymore.

It became unbearable. So a moment came, and they never perhaps read any book about it, never heard any spiritual teaching. A moment came when internally they no longer resisted the is-ness of this moment.

There was acceptance. And suddenly, they later talked about it, an enormous amount of peace was suddenly there. An enormous amount of aliveness in the midst of hell, in some cases.

Suddenly a serenity, a peace, and they didn't understand why. What happened? What happened was the yes, the inner yes to what is.

And very often, very problematic life situation changed suddenly when they offered no resistance. Because when you offer no resistance to life, which is now, life begins to work for you. You open the gates to the greater intelligence of which you are a part, to come through.

So something can come through that is more intelligent than the limited human mind. And this comes into the world as right action, spontaneous right action. Because some situations, they need to be accepted, but action may also be necessary.

Other situations, you cannot act for the time being, and all you can do is, this is how it is right now. And you're free of suffering. I'm in prison.

These are bars. Here I am. The mind will say, ten more years you have to do.

But you are sitting there just at this moment. I'm getting many letters, more and more letters from people in prison, whose life has changed dramatically. Now what does that mean?

When you accept the now, your mind will always try to draw this moment and make it part of the story of me. So if they put you in prison, rightly or wrongly, your mind would draw that and you would be interpreting this as this is where they have put me. This is what society has done to me.

This has happened because of my parents. This has happened. You have a story associated with it that tells you the story of who you are, and it's very painful.

This is me. People cannot, people usually confuse the story with which they interpret this moment with the simplicity of what's actually happening. So in the prison cell, the simplicity of this moment is body sitting on chair, feeling the aliveness inside and looking around at the walls, but there too there is an aliveness.

You see a little bit of sky perhaps through the window. Some people are making noise. You feel you're getting underneath the surface appearance of this moment, which doesn't look so good perhaps, to a deeper aliveness.

And as you look at the walls and the bars on the windows, you let go of the story and feel the simple aliveness of this moment. You're perceiving the wall and the bars and the sky beyond and you're aware of yourself as that which perceives not the story, the consciousness. And in any situation you will notice there's a story and there's the simplicity of this moment.

I gave a few examples in the book Stillness Speaks. There's the story what a miserable day. There's the simplicity of this moment.

It is raining. There's the story. He didn't have the decency to return my call.

It's a story that you're telling yourself in the service of being right, which is a mental thing. And when you can be right, you feel you're a bit more yourself. It's dysfunctional, but that's how the egoic mind structures work.

He didn't have the decency to even return my calls. And then you can elaborate on the story of who he is. Or you can see the simplicity of this.

He didn't call. No, he didn't call. No.

That's what it is. The phone is not ringing. Little phrases are little stories, but for most people the little stories always then becomes elaborated, and they go through life with stories.

She let me down. She did something to me. What happened?

I was there and she wasn't there. Oh, is that all? Yes.

So in any moment, can you extract the simplicity of this moment, the singularity of this, without confusing it with a mental story that you superimpose on the simplicity of this moment? That is a story of me about this and they, what they did, and usually in the story you are right. And usually in the story either another person or a situation, of course, has to be wrong.

It doesn't matter whether you make a situation wrong or a person wrong, as long as you can be right. Why is it so satisfying to be right? Because it strengthens the mind-made sense of self.

You feel for a moment if I can be right, if I can only complain enough about something or someone, the more I complain, the more I feel more strongly my sense of identity. It's an illusion, it's an illusory sense of self and it's a suffering sense of self, but to the ego it loves that suffering. It doesn't even know that it's suffering when it's complaining.

It feels good to complain, I'm really getting into it. And the more I complain, the more strongly I get the me and the not me. The stronger the separation gets between the imaginary mind-made separation between me and the rest of the universe.

And that goes so far as to become for many people almost a sense that the entire universe is basically out to get them. The entire universe is basically considered as hostile and you need to defend yourself continuously from it. They're out to get me.

You may have heard the famous phrase just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they're not after you. And so that's what the dysfunction feels, what built into the conditioned thought structures, the need to blame is continuously there, coupled with the need to be right. And all those are stories that are imposed that cover up the simplicity of this moment.

So mentally you cover up what could be very, very simple. And that is all the Zen stories that you may have heard. Zen is there for you to discover the simplicity of just this.

Because that's all there is. Do not confuse this moment with a story that the mind imposes on it. And then you get underneath the surface appearance of this moment and you feel a power that before was not there, available to you, when you allow the form that this moment takes to be without imposing interpretations.

And if interpretations come habitually, automatically, it will be easier for you now to recognize them as just interpretations, just stories. When the complainer comes into your head, maybe later today, maybe as you sit here, the habitual mental habit of complaining, then you can discover that Oh! And this is an enormously beautiful thing when you can discover the complaining voice in your head as not yourself, but simply thoughts.

It's the complaining voice in the head. Whereas before you thought that was me, that was I. You were the complainer, identified completely.

So a space of freedom arises. Ah! You're stepping out of conditioned thought.

Thousands and thousands of years of collectively conditioned mind structures. And the more you step out, the more alive you feel. And then every moment that you totally face, because you say yes to it, there's an enormous power that flows through you when you look this moment straight in the face.

No matter what it is. Even if you get home and your house has collapsed. And you look, there it is.

That was my house once. And what can you do? It already is.

It is. Oh! And in any situation that you completely allow, you will find a miracle.

Something emerges out of that situation that looked on the surface very negative. When you completely allow it, something else will emerge out of it that you could never have thought of, that will be better in one way or another. Something will emerge.

There's a grace hiding in every moment in life. The grace is hiding no matter what form this moment takes, even if it looks dreadful. But you can never know it if you don't bring the allowing to it.

And some of you here have already experienced it here and there. You were confronted with something that you would never have chosen. An illness, deep loss of possessions, or relationship, or status in society, or reputation, or whatever.

You would never have chosen it, and yet it somehow drove you into an acceptance. At some point you said yes to what is. Not the entire situation.

Again, not the story. You never say yes to. I have to say yes to the fact that I'm totally ruined now.

What story is that? You can't say yes to that. I have to say yes to the fact that everything has been totally useless in my life.

30 years of work for nothing. My wife has left me. Everything has fallen to pieces.

I have to accept that. No! That's the story.

You can't accept stories like that, because the story itself is the resistance. All you accept is just this moment. Here I am sitting on a park bench.

Here I am. You look. Two dollars in my pocket.

Two, one, two. And then you look. There's breathing.

The body is alive. Trees. And you look.

And you're alert. And the sky. There's a field of alert presence that even flows into your sense perceptions.

And then, if little thoughts arise, they would be thoughts like this moment is good. It feels good to be alive. You are present in this moment.

For a while, you relinquished the story, which is complicated, which is to do with the stock market, divorce attorneys, it's to do with your health situation, it's to do with loss, it's to do with all the things that have happened in your life, your life situation, that you could also be sitting on that bench, totally burdened with that. And your face would look very different from one situation to the other. One situation is a compulsive telling yourself your story.

And if anybody should be unlucky enough to sit next to you on the bench, you maybe start telling them to get some feedback of, yes, you're right to be truly unlucky, and you should really be suffering, you're right to be happy. Of all the right to be unhappy, that's what you would love to hear. And yet, there's nobody there.

So you have to tell it to yourself. What's going to happen now, it's just no point in going on. Can you see how burdened you are, what a burden you are carrying with that, if you can't step out of that?

And the thought structures might even be telling you that you're getting, maybe, if you think hard enough about your unhappy story, you'll find some solution. You won't. You will find a solution only if you step out of it, into the aliveness of now.

And that requires a shift from mind identification to alertness. The first thing is to enter the body. There you are.

Already parts of the story fall away, because you cannot hold that at the same time as you can feel the body. Then, the alertness rises. Alertness means conscious awareness.

Before, your conscious awareness was eaten up by compulsive thinking, like a car that's uselessly burning up gas. You keep your foot on the accelerator, the car is in neutral, and for hours and hours, the engine of the car goes vroom, vroom, vroom. It wears out very quickly, and it uses up a lot of gas.

So, your thoughts absorb your consciousness and make it into more thoughts. They gobble up your aliveness, proliferating thoughts. If you could see, psychically, you could probably see dark clouds emanating from your head, and then a dark cloud hanging over your head, and you can step out of that by entering the body and realizing what is the reality of this moment.

Story begins to fall away, and you single out this instant that the Course in Miracles calls the Holy Instant, because it's the only place where holiness or sacredness can be found, and your attention rises. It's partly in the body, and partly on your external sense perceptions, which also begin to be alive and beautiful, because you're aware now of what you see, and what arises is a field. I'm not just speaking about this.

As I speak, see if that can be your reality at this moment. And what replaces the story-based sense of self is an alert presence. That alert presence we could call awareness or consciousness, and it is it emanates from the one that it is better not to name, the source of all life.

It comes from that. It is the light of the one that is consciousness, like the light of the sun is still part of the sun. Consciousness, the one consciousness that you are, before it becomes a thought, before it becomes a world, that emanates directly.

It replaces thought, and it is in that you are now connected with the one intelligence that manifests as billions of things that come and go. You're connected with that. And the moment you connect with that, it becomes, it wants to help you.

It is ultimately not separate from who you are. It's just that you're becoming aligned with life. The delusion of being a separate little me that has to protect itself from the world goes.

You become aligned with life, and as such, life now is no longer perceived as hostile. It actually, you will, this is suddenly the place where miracles and coincidences come into your life, that before, couldn't, because you were saying no to life continuously. Life couldn't help you.

It's like the sun. You're putting a hood over your head and it's like saying, no, the sun is shining, but you're pulling this over your head. You don't see it.

Take that off. To the sun it doesn't matter. And suddenly you find you're sitting on this bench, and you've stepped out of the story, and aliveness arises, and you actually sense what we could also call the I am.

That is not the I that is usually meant when you tell your story. Usually when you say I, you want to know who I am, what I do for a living. You want to hear the story of I, not that I, a deeper sense of beingness, or presence that's who you are.

You get in touch with that. That is, that usually gets mixed up with the story, the sense of beingness or presence. It's mistaken for that.

But if you can feel that directly as presence, your own beingness, before thought arises, even if fragments of thoughts come, it's fine. And eventually when you need to use your mind, it works beautifully. But right now, here on this park bench, where the story would be telling me that my life has gone to pieces, well, it hasn't really.

There's intense aliveness here, the aliveness that I am. And that attracts whatever it is that you need. Suddenly, somebody sits next to you and starts talking because he wants to know why you look so alive and so peaceful.

And before you know it, he's offering you a million dollars to invest. So you can try again. If your first investment business collapsed, helpful things come in from within as realizations, from without as events.

Coincidences tend to happen more and more that you cannot explain. So the simple thing for this to happen is make room for this moment. Space for this moment.

Body, allowing this moment to be as it is. And what has come in now, we've already, as we were talking, a third exit point out of mind and an entry point into presence, we already touched on this, is sense perceptions. Bringing conscious awareness to what you see now, what you hear now.

Bringing an alertness to your sense perceptions is another exit point from the mind-identified state. Because when you become alert and truly see something, you're not interpreting it. Ah!

Oh! And you may catch yourself whenever you first look upon something, your field of vision moves from here to there. Something enters your field of vision.

A flower, a chair, the first moment or two, that's a conventional way of putting it, you look at it, there's a little space in which the perception arises and you haven't mentally called it anything or made it part of your story. There's a space of alert, aware stillness whenever you first look upon something. If you become aware of that, it will extend.

And then comes a depth into your sense perceptions that wasn't there before. A deepening. The depth is you become aware of the awareness through which you perceive.

The stillness through which you perceive. The consciousness is all one thing. The consciousness through which you perceive the world.

There's the perception and you sense yourself as the consciousness in which the perception happens. That is beautiful and powerful when you can go through life as that field of intelligence. When you look upon things and above all look upon other human beings.

Bring that into relationships. Instead of meeting people with mental concepts, giving them a conceptual reality, allow them to be as they are at this moment and look and listen in and through still, aware presence. That is also love.

Whenever you look upon something and do not label it mentally, there's an allowing.

Allow that human being to be there. Give them attention.

There's a flow of attention. And in that you are not making the other human being into other. The separation that comes from identifying with conceptual thinking falls away.

And without that sense of separation from you and between you and others and you and the rest of the universe, there's now the beginning of a realization of oneness of yourself with all other life forms. Before you couldn't know that because you conceptualized every other life form. You put a label on everything that creates the barrier.

So you... And the amazing thing is this is how you suddenly become very deep and very intelligent and you move about life being not just the little person. The little person becomes just a surface phenomenon which is really what it is, including your life story.

Yes, it's still there but no longer absorbs your identity. That is much deeper. You are a field of intelligence, a field of consciousness that's going through life.

A person also but on a deeper level. You are greater than the person you thought you were. Far deeper, far greater.

And that flows even into your life situation, even into the circumstances of your life and they tend to unfold more harmoniously as this unconditioned consciousness that you are comes through, shines through. Humans are ready for this now. There is an evolutionary impulse in the universe that wants this shift in human consciousness to happen.

The planet desperately needs this shift in human consciousness to happen because if it doesn't, humans will destroy the planet very soon if it does not happen. So there is now a certain urgency. This is why many humans feel this impulse, this change happening.

They are ready to listen to this message. They come to a speaker like this speaker who is not a stage personality, who doesn't jump up and down, does no show. He just sits there and talks almost monotonously and yet people come and recognize something.

They recognize something that deep down they already knew. And as you sit here, it comes forth. It gets drawn out of you more quickly, that level of consciousness.

We will take a little break now. That looks like time. This is clock time and we will meet in 25 minutes and look at one of the greatest obstacles for most people to presence that is the accumulated pain from the past that humans carry inside.

Thank you. We've been speaking about the form that this moment takes that implies that there is something else there apart from what happens. Because what happens at any moment, the one moment which takes different forms, is the form that this one moment takes which is confused usually with what that moment is.

So people believe there are thousands of moments in every day because different things happen every day in people's lives. And yet, if you look more deeply, life is always this moment. There's never not this moment.

So how can there be thousands of moments if there's only this moment ever? So there must be something not quite right here. Either one is true or the other is true.

And of course the truth is the now is not what happens. It's usually mistaken for what happens. All people see is the event that happens.

What they do not know, what they are not conscious of is the now itself. What is that? Is there a now apart from that which happens in the now in a way?

Yes. Not as separate things. They interpenetrate the event and space.

Because now is the space in which something happens. What does that mean? Rather than giving more pointers or more concepts, I'd like to demonstrate it directly with a sound.

These are Tibetan bells. I'll ring them perhaps two or three times, or four, who knows. And each time we will listen to it in a different way.

The first time I ring this bell, I just ask you to listen to the sound that lingers for a while and then gradually dissolves. Just listen to it alertly. See if there's enough alertness in you so that you can follow the sound as it travels on its journey into non-existence.

So to follow the sound with your attention as it travels into non-existence slowly, be there as the alert perceiver of the sound. If you're not alert, you'll drift off into thinking instead. Now see if you can listen to the sound not just through the ears.

Feel that your entire body you need to be in there is listening to the sound as the sound happens. Listen with every cell of the body. Be receptive to the sound with every cell of the body.

For the sound to be there two things are needed. The sound and the space of now or the consciousness in which the sound appears and disappears. Who is that?

You. The consciousness in which the sound disappears, first appears and then dissolves. So we have two ingredients.

The first is concrete. Something arises. The second ingredient is not easy to grasp or hold because it is only an open space.

It is the same space that when you enter the inner body the space of consciousness that permeates every cell of the body, the consciousness that you are that temporarily takes on form as the body and in the external world, temporarily consciousness takes on billions, millions of forms. In this case we are reducing it to only the sound of the bell so that we can realize that it is possible, as we ring the bell again, to be conscious as you listen of the sound and of yourself as the consciousness in which the sound happens. We could also call it the still space in which the sound arises and then disappears.

So as you listen now, not only listen to the sound, but be aware of the field of awareness itself, and that is who you are. So be aware of the deepest I am, which is the field of awareness the essence of who you are, consciousness itself. Be aware of that, not as a concrete object but as the space without which there would be no sound.

You may have heard the famous riddle, if a tree falls in the forest does it make a sound if there is nobody there to hear it? And of course the answer is no. If a tree falls in the forest and nobody perceives it, sound doesn't happen.

Sound needs an ear and it needs a perceiving consciousness. Now there is the sound of the bell and there is that which knows that there is the sound that which makes the listening possible, the space the now, yourself the I and when the sound has died down, died we could say, every form dies sooner or later, and this sound form doesn't last for too long it has died and then what remains is just a space a beingness a presence, an awareness that is not, you cannot really conceptualize it very easily, you can't really talk about it, and yet we do you are using little pointers there is a spaciousness an aware presence and then something else arises, words come externally and there is a spaciousness can you be aware of yourself as the field of awareness in which you are perceiving this room in which you are perceiving visually and through your ears the reality of this room, so that there is not only that which arises in this reality that you are aware of, and most people are identified with or react against there is always some identification can you be aware of something deeper, at any moment in your life there is always something deeper than that which is happening in the moment, and that something deeper is yourself and yourself is very deep indeed there is an enormous depth to it there is an enormous realm of peace to it it's because it is being itself, beyond the little person and even now as you listen to these words, can you be aware of yourself not as the walking story line but as of your deeper aware presence which is felt throughout the body just a presence a beingness I am, that's all one could say, it is a feeling of who you truly are, even if you forgot most of your story or it changed dramatically from being a pauper suddenly you are a millionaire and everything is changed externally and yet, if you go a little deeper, the sense of presence or beingness doesn't change, it doesn't matter what the externals, if you go deep and that is the now that is the space of now the timeless dimension of consciousness the timeless dimension of who you are, beyond the things that happen in your life, which is that, life situation past, future, story yes, that continues to exist for a while but if you are lost in that dimension, then you are lost in the world completely lost in the world of things and in the world of thoughts lost in your mind lost, everything absorbs your attention totally and you identify and react and there is no you don't feel any ground under your feet just the world pulls you this way and that way and it brings up one problem after another just as you sort this little area in your life out, something else collapses behind you that's what the world does it's unstable the world of form is not stable, it's not in the nature of form it looks stable, you can look at huge buildings or corporations or a few years ago the communist government in Russia looked like the thing that would last, that was so immobile communist government and all the people that represented it were totally stable, nothing is ever going to change it wasn't, it dissolved where is it, it's gone oh, buildings gigantic buildings can collapse as we know through an act of nature or through human madness they looked so stable the human body can go from one day to the next gone situations if the surface reality looks so solid physicists know that there's nothing solid it just looks that way if you travel to India you sometimes realize that the world around you is not so solid the illusion of solidity is less there you realize things are could go wrong at any moment they don't go as planned whatever plans you make it's not going to work and that's wonderful you see also the instability of the human form, you see it more clearly in India because all old people and sick people and mad people are shut away in the west, whereas there they're mostly in the street and the reality it's staring you in the face the reality of human existence it's not different really from the reality of human existence it is not stable the world of form is not stable if you expect stability you hang your identity onto some form and then you suffer because it will go and then your identity is left dangling from nowhere so the liberation from that is liberation from being entangled with your sense of identity in forms forms are beautiful the forms of life, you play with them they come, they go situations, people, relationships these objects come go, nothing lasts that long and so deep down everybody knows that on the one hand they hope that eventually they'll accumulate enough forms to identify with to complete their sense of self but ultimately, deep down everybody feels this isn't going to last and of course it isn't and this is why underlying human, normal human existence is an enormous amount of fear enormous amount of fear it's not always recognized directly as fear it's nervousness, it's stress it's tension, it's anxiety and really everybody is running around trying to get somewhere they're stressed if you're not stressed these days means there's something wrong with you you're not doing your job properly I saw a cartoon in which the boss asks an employee you are the only person in this office not suffering from a stress-related disease, how come? stress is normal stress is a form of fear it's because that's all you know, the world of form and of course you're in fear and it's so easy to there's something so obvious that is there that is deeper than that and is the essence of your very being and it's there as the deepest sense of being is our presence and it's there as it begins to be there as you enter your body it's there when you don't deny the form that this moment takes or resist it but allow it and there's space allowing means there's space it is there even as you perceive through sensory perception and you're aware not only of the sound but also of the underlying consciousness the underlying presence that you cannot pinpoint it's spacious you can never grasp it and say here it is because it has no form it is the formless life timeless formless one life God, if God has any meaning, true meaning in the deepest sense that is the one timeless, formless life or intelligence the one being that underlies all life or form and you can perceive visually also just as you perceive the sound as you look upon a flower or a tree or anything man-made there's the perception of it and there's the underlying field of still presence an alertness also is part of that an alert still presence as if if you want to experience it directly without any sense perception one could compare to the state of listening or waiting for something in an alertness to capture something and any gesture to accompany that inner state of alertness would be the raised finger not the raised finger in the sense of I'm telling you what to do the raised finger that says pay attention, be alert know yourself as that alertness itself you are deeper than the person there was a spiritual master who was asked by his student, where did you learn to be so still and alert who taught you enlightenment, because that's what enlightenment is, knowing yourself as that which underlies everything that arises knowing yourself as the space of now, so to speak so they asked how did you, who was your teacher and he said, my teacher was a cat watching a mouse hole I watched the cat watching a mouse hole for a long long time hours and hours and that's how I learned to be in the state of alertness now the cat of course is only interested in the mouse, maybe the cat is not aware of alertness itself or maybe there is such a thing as the enlightenment of cats in any case how does a cat watch the mouse hole like this and that's what the master watched the cat and by watching the cat entered the same state and became conscious of consciousness itself through that this is self-realization this is becoming aware of self the deepest self the deepest I am so when a cat watches the mouse hole the cat does not think how much longer do I have to sit here because it does not have a story about what it's doing why do I when is it coming out I'm not hanging around here much longer in that case the cat would be immersed in thinking and would have a story and it wouldn't look like that it would look like but it just looks, there is no story there is no thought, there is just that and so that works many things in nature can teach you because nature has no mind has no thought to it it's wonderful, anything any tree, any flower can teach you to become still just look at it and continue to look and then you realize there is more to the tree than what you see there is more to the flower than what you see there is an essence there a very still present essence that is beyond the beautiful form the form is beautiful most humans they go into nature, they can be hiking for days never really see because while they are hiking they are thinking if you are lucky they are thinking about what they see but they are labeling it but they are most probably thinking about their investments or the stock market or whatever but if you can go into nature and truly anything natural can connect you with that because it's still it's surrendered to this moment it's deeply connected still with being, the one life it's closer to God than any human one could say, unless that human has returned everything natural therefore is sacred and when you go there in a state of open alert attention you will realize that everything natural has sacredness to it and the moment you realize that every flower in the tree there is more there, no matter how beautiful the form that you see there is also something deeper there is a stillness there is an aliveness there is a sacredness there that cannot be really conceptualized but the moment you realize that you realize it's also in you because if it were not also in you you wouldn't even notice it it's only because it's also in you that you are able to notice it so it arises as allow nature to free you of the story of the mind, of time that's why it is here, not only does it help is it absolutely vital for the survival, the physical survival of humans, if too much disappears too much of the forest then we won't be breathing anymore and that will be it but in addition to that to being the prerequisite for our physical survival there is something, a deeper reason why nature is so vital to us so let it help you so as you watch you sense a presence, a stillness a peace that emanates and it's also in you and with that, the separation between you and it falls away there is a oneness in that aware space there's the flower or the tree and there's the awareness which is what you are in which the flower or the tree appears and is seen and the awareness and the form that arises in the awareness are one ultimately it is the space that permeates everything and so that frees you from an excessive reliance on the unstable world of form and that also frees you from fear because fear, all that fear is is you put your reliance on something that cannot and will not last and deep down you know it and that's why Jesus said when talking about the things, all things in form, he described as the world where moss and rust consume and thieves break in and steal because that is the destiny of forms, it's to be consumed either it collapses by itself or somebody comes and removes it or removes you from it and he said it, the world the entire world is that so to get entangled in that and seek yourself in it of course you're in continuous tension, fear nervousness and not enough and so the knowing yourself as that which is deeper but not separate from the world of form is freedom liberation from that not that you deny the world of form you could go to another extreme, you could say nothing that I see here is real, some people have that as a belief that arose through the sages in India who went so deeply into the state of beingness, of being the consciousness the space and that became so instead of being in the background as it is to you as this first comes, you're now aware that there's a foreground to your life in which things happen including thoughts and emotions but also external events there is a deeper ground or background to your life which you recognize as still aware presence consciousness, I am I am that I am the vast space of now of consciousness you know yourself as that and that as you go through your life you're aware not only of what happens but also of yourself as the ground as the space in which it happens and that frees you from the forms and it can become so strong it has in some humans it has shifted so that the background sense of presence has become so overwhelming that the world of forms seem to become more and more insignificant and insubstantial so some sages went so deep into that that they said they laughed and said it's all so unreal because compared to what they knew to be the unchanging timeless reality of their being the world of form, yes did look completely insubstantial and unreal like ripples on the surface of a vast sea and every ripple says, I am so and so on the other ripple says my name is such and such and even occasionally a big wave comes and says I am such and such and then they are gone the forms, you know when waves break on the shore of the ocean you say, sometimes the Pacific was very still, can be very still and yet every minute or two quite a big wave at first you didn't see it as a wave it comes and then it breaks and at that moment it seems to have an independent existence from the ocean and as I was watching in the spring in California a child next to me was saying to the father, look there's a big one it's coming for a moment the wave had the ocean had an independent the wave had an independent existence a big one and then it was gone so some humans go so deeply that the whole world is just ripples on the surface of the vastness of being and so they dwell in that and then they say they laugh and say, it's all unreal but it's ok now unfortunately this then others come and make it into a concept they go to the sage and the sage laughs, you come with your problems and says well, just be still and watch and be alert then problems tend to disappear and you'll know what to do if you have to take any action you'll know what to do and the rest they laugh it's all unreal anyway, the sage then said and so the disciple wrote down, it is all unreal and then the next day they got very upset and then somebody they go back to the sage oh, I thought it was didn't you say it was all unreal it was a mental concept and as a mental concept alone it doesn't help you to say it's all unreal or the famous Zen example of that, the disciple says I've realized the truth master, there's only Buddha nature, that's their way of putting it, there's only that and everything has Buddha nature and that is the essential reality of all forms I've realized it completely now and in that moment the master takes a stick and hits the disciple over the head the disciple screams and is very angry and the master says if all is unreal and empty where does that anger come from anger was the form reacting but now we come to the inner this brings us now to phenomena that arise within you such as emotions or thoughts they also come out of the vastness of consciousness of being and just as you bring awareness to the world around you, be there as that which perceives the underlying field you also can bring that to your inner feelings a little bit more subtle because the inner can overpower you very quickly and it's got you the ability to allow the form that this moment takes to be as it is, is not only applied, not only applies to the external world it also applies to whatever form the present moment takes inside you as an emotion as a feeling and so what does not work here is to say I should not be feeling this or I don't want to feel this or go away because if you say go away to an emotion you create another one on top or if you have a mental image of yourself of someone who is already free of these emotions because you've been practicing meditation for 20 years or you are a good Christian and you have a mental image of yourself as a good Christian you may have to deny certain emotions that you feel that don't correspond to that image you have of yourself so some people don't even recognize what they feel oh no, no I'm not angry at all or they shout I am not angry and so that doesn't work. What doesn't work is oh, you're not angry then what's that? What does it feel like?

Can you watch that? Can you feel it? Can you bring some presence to it?

Yeah Can you separate that from the story? Because it renews it, it likes to use the mind and the story will add more energy to the emotion and the emotion will amplify the story What he did to me the next day you're still thinking about it and talking about it the emotion is still there, you keep it going next month, it's still next year, what he did to me last year, I'll never forget and the emotion is still there you're not like the duck that I speak of all the ducks do that on the water, when they get into a fight there is a lot of what could be duck anger maybe it is, it looks like like a lot of flapping of wings, two ducks ducks get into a fight last for half a minute and then it's not like humans half a minute, then they separate and then each duck kind of stands up on the water a bit and flaps their wings vigorously they let go of the energy, the excess energy that came during the fight that in humans would become emotion and then a story and would go on for a long long time there they let go of it in a few seconds, they flap their wings and then they swim in total peace they look around if they had a human mind, of course it would become much more complicated because they would be having a story, you know what this duck did to me?

what the duck did to me? let me tell you about it now, a lot of emotion arises, a lot of very unhealthy emotion, no emotion is to be condemned as wrong or bad, but you can see that certain emotions are not good for the body certain emotions are almost as if you were eating a poisonous substance as far as the body is concerned so there is no moral judgment of good emotions or bad emotions the only thing we can see is that some emotions do not have a good effect on the body anger resentment sadness depression, fear dreadful one and so if you could observe when an emotion is active, if you could look into the body, you would see the changes, the physiological changes that the body goes through when there is an emotion the stomach lining changes color when you are angry juice, stomach, juice everything, the circulation changes breathing slows down or becomes much more shallow it has been said it is hard to be angry when you are breathing deeply it is anger is so these emotions arise and some don't feel so good it is ok to recognize as you go through life more aligned with the present moment there are fewer and fewer emotions that arise otherwise continuously out of resistance to what is an enormous amount of emotional stuff is generated continuously when you unconsciously as most humans still do when you unconsciously resist whatever arises in this moment there is anger or there is fear of running away the complaining is accompanied by an emotion what is the kind of emotion that comes with a complaining mind pattern it is partly anger partly something else some emotions are kind of borderline cases in which a mixture of fear and anger and so on so less of this arises the more you align yourself with the present moment less and less do reactive emotions arise that come from denial or resistance so with that you are already becoming free of a lot of totally unnecessary resistances in the body that have a very bad effect on the functioning of the organism however every human being still carries this is the truth passed on genetically from the distant past in humanity is an enormous amount of human pain because if you look at human history you see how much pain humans have created because of their mental dysfunction how much pain they have created for themselves and other humans just the suffering has been dreadful that humans have inflicted on each other and themselves continuously the cruelty the torture, murder, war continuous warfare, violence and of course that leaves a residue probably if you approach it from a scientific external physical viewpoint probably the DNA of every human being has built into it pain also and that's you come into this world already with an energy field of human pain that is the human condition and it differs some humans have more of it than others it doesn't necessarily mean that you are closer to spiritual realization if you have less pain the opposite may be the case because you want to be free more if you have more pain this is what we call the pain body inherited pain from the past the genetic pain, the racial past of humanity sometimes the past of a particular country becomes part incorporated into each person's pain body who lives in that country and is born in that country the past of a race also so every country has also their collective pain body this country has a collective pain body which is there less than some of the collective pain body that certain of the old European countries have where there has been even more violence over more centuries and millennia than here a large part of the collective pain body in this country that has become part of everybody's pain body has to do with certain acts of violence that were perpetrated as this country was colonized and discovered to do with black people enormous amount of violence inflicted on them and the native people so that has what has been done to them again through human madness and dysfunction has seeped into the collective pain body and it is something that every human being then has some of that carried inside and then comes the personal aspect you are a child and your parents have a pain body and you see that around you that energy and things are done to you by an unconscious world at school, the educational system so further pain is added in childhood emotional pain and every emotional pain you suffer leaves a residue an energetic residue inside you and it joins the pain that is already there a field of emotional heaviness, contraction or tightness, life energy that is trapped and so humans carry that inside and it is usually personalized and mistaken for my problem my personal pain the pain body in humans as you probably know already, is sometimes dormant and sometimes active in some humans it is mostly dormant and only comes twice a year maybe Thanksgiving and Christmas when they meet their family but in most humans it comes periodically it needs to renew itself the energy rises, the emotion is triggered by an event something somebody says or does and then suddenly an enormous reaction comes the triggering event is usually quite small but the reaction is one of enormous pain anger or fear or deep sadness out of proportion to the triggering event but you don't see that when it happens you believe that this event caused you to feel that, or this person when he made this insensitive remark caused you to feel this enormous amount of pain it just happened that this insensitive remark had a certain similarity with your pain body it said something about you it didn't acknowledge your existence and your father and your mother never acknowledged your existence so that kind of thing can easily trigger if that's where the trigger lies for your pain body then enormous emotional pain arises and immediately moves into your thought structures and will dictate what you think it will also then feed on your thoughts which are then angry thoughts or fearful thoughts or depressed thoughts and it will feed on every thought that you can think what is happening now is you are indulging in pain not you you've become the pain body and you are loving every minute of it now the consciousness that you are has become dormant so to speak and something has taken the place of you and is shouting and screaming at someone perhaps or running away in dreadful fear and thinking extremely fearful thoughts and if you at that moment you could wake up and observe what's happening and there's no reason why you should not be able to do that now as there's so much presence arising in you if at that moment you could feel yourself, feel what's happening, you would notice pleasure in pain you would notice that you don't want to get out of it, but you would also notice that you are not that you are the one who observes it, you are the awareness that would come the end of that particular pain body movement, bringing awareness to it that cuts the link between the emotion and your thought processes otherwise the emotions feed your thoughts amplify and energize your thoughts and the thoughts feed the emotion you can see it when people talk angrily about what somebody did to them or think about it, and it can go on for hours until the pain body has finally taken in enough energy and they become dormant again for a while and then there's you feel better for a while like waking up out of a dream and sometimes you might even say what was that all about, and if you had it with your partner it could be after, when it comes to an end you can't even remember how it all started and then if you do remember it you realize that the triggering event was nothing just a tiny thing but the emotion was enormous so whenever this happens don't confuse the rising pain the emotion with who you are can you be there as the awareness that feels the pain without totally being it now this still implies that you have to allow it it's here it is what is at this moment at this moment there's this what does then disappear the awareness replaces thinking identification of thought with the pain so the link between your thought processes and the emotion is cut and there's an awareness that you now bring to it and that means quickly it will run down and each time you bring awareness to it some of that energy becomes freed, because the awareness is like a sunlight like something shining on it and it dissolves the hardness of the emotion gradually the awareness is like that spotlight or sunlight it dissolves the hardness of it and the more often you bring awareness to it whenever it comes the more the energy that had been trapped in there becomes freed, it kind of melts one could say almost that's one analogy you could use it melts and what you notice then is increased aliveness because many people's aliveness is consumed to a large extent by their emotional pain that's in the pain body it is like having a little psychic parasite don't go no this is just let's just say it's a way of looking at it but comes close to the truth because everything is energy energy forms, no more no less, every thought you think is an energy form that arises for a moment, it has it's a little entity, a little being every thought it doesn't have material reality but yet it has energetic reality so every emotion also is a little temporary being inside you an energetic formation and so is the pain body which is the accumulation of past emotion so you have this little psychic thing living inside you maybe that's what inspired all these films science fiction films with the thing coming out of your stomach and maybe that is the meaning because if you go back to the Old Testament on almost every page you read Jesus met somebody with an evil spirit inside and Jesus put attention on that person and just looked often the evil spirit would depart and if you read that you say that is strange, in those times almost every other person must have been possessed by an evil spirit because he continuously meets people with evil spirits and that's just one way of looking, nowadays it's not so helpful to say that modern humans need a different way of looking at it and yet the reality is the same, if we say evil spirit we make it too difficult but there is some reality there there is also the fact that humans who have very strong pain bodies and are completely unconscious of them, in other words completely identified, can attract certain energies that are because the planet is full of energy fields that we do not see so a very strong pain body can attract from somewhere else an energy field that corresponds to the vibrational frequency of that pain body and then that would magnify the pain that's already there, so a large part of violence that's perpetrated by humans is perpetrated by humans who are possessed by their pain body and are totally unconscious totally unconscious if that could be taught at schools, the simple fact that you can be aware of emotion inside you as it arises and a six year old can learn that if you use the right language you can tell a six year old that they can be aware of whatever strong emotion arises in them without needing to be totally identified at first they won't know what you mean at first you may have to say it after the child's pain body has had an episode of screaming or shouting or withdrawal and then say there what was that, pointing it out gradually enabling the child to see it a hundred times more important to learn that at school than all the abstract stuff that I never liked and most of it I could never do so, but the main thing is for you to live it to notice it when it comes when a relatively small thing brings a strong reaction bring awareness to it get out of the story that wants to align yourself with the pain body so that you can watch the energy of it and then you can even say if you are somebody you trust you can say to your partner my pain body is now active watch out to be able to say that means you are already very very conscious indeed if you can be say that while the pain body is there you are close to buddhahood almost the pain body does not like to be looked at directly it doesn't like your attention on it it has its own kind of intelligence it's cunning and if you truly bring attention to it, sometimes you may be able to do it now, just as it first comes, as it arises ah, there it is then it sometimes happens that it comes and it feels the attention on it and it shrinks back again and what it's saying is I haven't got a chance now I'll wait until a better opportunity arises and then it'll wait it'll seem dormant but it'll just wait for the right remark that serves as a trigger or the right action or anything sometimes if you live alone it could even be a thought that comes into your head that triggers it oh my just a thought that confirms that you are indeed a victim of life and suddenly

[Speaker 3] (5:08:01 - 5:08:02)

ooh

[Speaker 1] (5:08:04 - 7:08:13)

and so how long the pain body stays active varies from person to person it could be the more conscious you are the more quickly the energy passes and then it may come again but a little bit less each time a little bit less but it could take how long, nobody knows depends very much on the density until you're completely free doesn't really matter it is there to teach you to be aware that's what it's there for it's great if you have it and that gives you also the motivation to bring awareness into your lives because do you want to suffer forever do you want to mistake that for who you are for the rest of your life it's a wonderful motivation being in the body is an extremely helpful thing to be in the body when you're feeling fine because then it's easier to be there to catch it with your attention because there too you can feel it inside your body where the emotion is if you're habitually you're always in the head it's much harder to be there and catch the pain body when it arises as an emotion in the body so to bring attention into the body whenever you can it's extremely helpful then you begin to be to dwell in here and then be there as that happens and then you can watch it in other people and don't mistake it for who they are which is a wonderful thing because if you think their pain body is who they are then you will suddenly formulate a concept about that person and that becomes obscures the reality of that person oh he is a complete jerk and that concept has then dismissed that person as that all aspects other aspects of that person have disappeared underneath that concept you've seen his pain body yes it is a jerk, the pain body truly is but there is something else there too, there must be then you don't mistake that for the reality of that human being and don't personalize it neither for yourself it's not your personal problem, it's humanity it's human pain not your pain, human pain it gets easier when you realize it's not yours it's human pain and it's also easier to allow it in others to realize it's not their fault it's human pain so compassion arises when you see it around you compassion towards the so called shortcomings of other humans they are not really shortcomings but that's to see where they fail whenever that energy comes in and then you see that there are certain humans who are in almost continuous possession of an active pain body and they are often those people who commit acts of violence on the planet they have suffered enormous pain and they want others to suffer pain too and they themselves want to suffer more pain, that's why they are doing it it's completely dysfunctional but again once you see it and underneath all that even in the most violent person there is the unconditioned consciousness the space the essential reality the essential reality of I am that has never been touched by anything that they did, no matter how dreadful it has been there is hidden underneath the hell that lives in some people there is still the original purity and innocence of their being that has nothing to do with the form and there have been cases of murderers and others who committed dreadful acts who suddenly, through enormous suffering suddenly their entire pain body dissolved that can happen in rare cases that all at once, through enormous suffering, perhaps an hour before they are going to execute you or a few days, or a few weeks or months, suddenly all that which is not you but had pretended to be you goes and something emerges that is almost another being but it's the essence of who you are so and that is beautiful when it happens the greatest amount of pain is perpetrated by the collective pain bodies of nations tribes religions any collective identities and they carry their collective pain body and the collective pain body wants the same as the individual pain body but ultimately there is no individual pain body but when it manifests as a collective the collective wants to inflict pain and wants to suffer more pain and so humans have been engaged in warfare ever since the beginning of recorded history and beyond and it's only the individual that can become free we cannot have a social program unless the individual has become free no matter how you want to change the structures of society and a great attempt was made through communism which was a wonderful idea at the beginning equality for all no personal possessions everybody the same rights everybody the same status it was a good idea it came very early before the mind structures had undergone any change so the idea came in the old mind structures had not changed so very quickly the idea got perverted and they created instead of heaven on earth hell on earth first they thought they had to kill a few million in order to eliminate all those who stood in the way of the revolution in their own countries so the present moment was said it's a means to an end we need to get to heaven on earth it's somewhere in the future let's create hell then first so that we can get there but it always applies to what Jesus said on the cross they know not what they do ultimately and a shift is now happening it's happening here in this room as we sit here as we realize that which is deeper than the person in us that which is deeper than the what we thought of as personal pain that we felt inside us and we realize yes you realize who you are that is what everybody's ultimate purpose on this planet is to realize who they are beyond the story and when you don't realize that nothing will satisfy you no substitute will do except that and so when God was asked somebody apparently it's in the Old Testament somebody asked God what's your name? and God said I am that's the entire truth is already contained in that I am that I am that means the innermost sense of who you are of identity is one with the divine it's where you and God merge so there is a place in you where you and God are one and your purpose in life beyond any personal purpose that you have because many people want to know what am I meant to do here? I know I am meant to do something but I haven't quite found it yet many people have that feeling well first of all find the essence of what you are meant to do then what you are meant to do on the temporary level of form will emerge the divine will then express itself through you in one form or another but before you can truly find that which you are meant to do on the level of personal form go to the more essential place you are meant to realize who you are beyond the personalized sense of self and now the good news here is to realize that you do not need future or time and so this message ultimately no spiritual teaching goes to the root goes to the core goes to the essence that is not applicable to anyone no matter what their life situation is there are some teaching that you can make it just use the power of this or that and you can achieve anything you like that on its own level is true too but what if you only have an hour to live or a day or a week or a year it does not require time for you to be yourself nor do you need anything that you do not yet have now to be yourself no more knowledge is required now it does not mean you can't learn new things but not in the search for who you are or to confirm your identity or to show that you know more than others or that you find fame and recognition that does not work but if you enjoy learning new things on the level of form it is beautiful but you do not need more things to be who you are you do not need more money, more possessions more status, more knowledge more experiences including spiritual yes but I haven't had the fireworks yet aren't you supposed to get these inner fireworks well some people have them, others don't and it's in the nature of fireworks that they come and go the question is who is having these fireworks to whom do they happen in what is the field in which they happen the field of consciousness in which the vision of Jesus or Krishna or the Buddha happens some people have visions and they are beautiful and then they go and say 10 years ago I had this wonderful vision and I felt so great for 3 months afterwards who was having that vision I was having that vision and who is I I well I am I I am consciousness in which that beautiful vision appeared and that is that doesn't come and go that's the essence that is timeless and that realizes itself, that's the purpose of the universe on the level of humanity the evolutionary level of humanity, the purpose of the universe is for consciousness to realize itself through the human form and then the mind asks and what happens after that now you may have noticed that's what the mind does it says what then, what next it's better not to feed the mind with too much stuff that becomes imagination to the mind but you become a self aware cell in the totality of consciousness and all these are just approximations words, we cannot use words to describe something that is totally beyond the realm of form of objects, of phenomenal existence you become, so to speak a self realized just as this body has cells the entire universe consists of one could say this is just an analogy sparks of consciousness you become self aware and through you the universe becomes self aware first the universe played the game of form and the drama that comes with that and enjoyed that tremendously for hundreds of thousands of years at some point consciousness must have said let's play the game of form and pretend to be somebody special, somebody in particular let's pretend to be a human person and then play around in the world of form oh, that will be great and then for a while it played but it still knew its origin and then it said well, it's not doesn't feel totally real because I'm always at peace and then said, ok, let's forget who you are play that game ah now we can really get into it and then the point comes when it gets tired of the drama and the pain and then it recognizes itself much more deeply than it could ever have done before it lost itself and found itself this is just a little story of the universe, don't take it to be it's not literally true it's a metaphor for something that we cannot really talk about so you have been searching for yourself for a long time many humans are still searching in the world of make-believe the world of forms hoping at some point to find a sufficient number of objects out there that they can identify with as mind objects and say now I'm finally complete and full and they suffer and here we have seeds of realized consciousness some of you not yet fully it's just emerging who you are not yet perhaps your permanent reality you may be drawn into identification with thought identification with the story of me, identification with the pain body periodically and go through further episodes of that and then wake up again perhaps more quickly more and more quickly you wake up out of the forgetfulness you remember you forget who you are identify and then remember who you are you wake up again and it's always waking up into the now suffering can do that now because you are at a point where suffering can act as an alarm clock that says you must have lost the now otherwise you would not be in suffering pain perhaps, yes emotional pain, yes but suffering requires a psychological entity, me so any suffering that arises means you must have lost the now and so you will blame a situation always no, no, I haven't lost the now this creep did something to me or my boss did it yes, those are your teachers they are the challenges that come and unless you meet the present moment in the state of intense alertness and face it the challenge will draw you back into an old reaction and you get identified with that so meeting the present moment, not only allow it to be that's beautiful, it's an essential part of the new consciousness but also look it straight in the face allowing is the gentle aspect of presence of consciousness and looking it straight in the face is the fierce aspect of consciousness and both are needed yes to what is and facing it not in any opposing way facing it in a state of openness you look it straight in the eye and there's alert attention a current of awareness flows out and watches looks and as it looks there's a stillness that flows into the looking and intelligence operates still and then right speech right action and so on, all the things that the buddhists try to put into practice you don't need to try to put it into practice, it arises out of being fully present in the now if you're trying to put into practice right this, right speech, right thought right this, you can't if you're not fully present in the now you're trying to, the christians have done the same I'm trying to love my neighbor as myself it's very hard and finally you have to give up they hate their neighbor they haven't recognized their neighbor as themselves they haven't gone deep enough within themselves to the essence and seen their neighbor from there, from that still place of non-conceptualization of not imposing a conceptual reality on their neighbor they're able to meet their neighbor in the field of nowness of presence then as a natural consequence they love their neighbor as themselves because they recognize their neighbor as themselves there's no effort involved in it you cannot try to love someone for a while, it might look as if you succeeded and then the opposite of love will come up and then you'll hate yourself for it, it becomes more and more complex then you need to see a psychologist and then after 10 years of psychoanalysis you've analyzed every nook and cranny of yourself and you say, I now know myself do you? well, all you know is things about yourself your story the deepest secrets of your story and even the deepest secrets of your story are not that deep no time is needed to be who you are don't lose the now or you lose yourself whenever it happens that's fine too you will notice it quite soon and then it's step back use a portal or an exit point as we called it whatever it may be, the inner body sense perceptions yes to what is allowing just enter the field of aware presence directly from past and future just this what is the problem at this moment is the question that reveals all your problems as mind made constructs if there is a problem at this moment it will manifest as a challenge that is right in front of me or the problem is something that requires action now, that I can do now and act beyond that what is the problem at this moment this is a good pointer that question that can point you to reality whenever you feel burdened by your life situation just a moment, let's check in here the only thing that's ever real is this moment and what is the problem at this moment that wakes you up and then you have to look inside well, I feel fear here a contraction, is that a problem no, it's an energy field here that I feel ok, so it's not a problem well, no and then what well, this thing is I've just lost that and I don't know what's going to happen I've got this court case coming up tomorrow and I have to ok, what's the problem at this moment and you can feel the mind straining to get away from this moment so you may have to ask a question several times, what is the problem now and finally there'll be an awakening and you go ping, there is no problem now thank you welcome we're all practicing the power of now and so we're not waiting for the next moment for the speaker to speak or what the next thing is that he's going to say except for one or two minds that I can hear that are saying come on, let's get on with it now the fact that I'll be speaking for a while may create the misleading expectation or impression that I'm here to fill your mind with more stuff more content information knowledge, words and if you have that expectation in other words if you expect the talk to be interesting then you may walk out after 10 or 20 minutes what do you mean not interesting interesting means food for thought that's an interesting thought I don't quite agree with it there are deeper things in life than interesting deeper things in yourself than what's interesting to the mind to thinking but most people haven't found that dimension within themselves they are stuck in interesting and if you're stuck in interesting you're also stuck in boring because a lot of the time life isn't that interesting and then you're looking for the next interesting thing to fill your mind a sunrise is not interesting can't be called interesting it's vaster and deeper than that but if you had a few interesting little clouds blocking the sun that might be called interesting or look at these interesting little clouds so the talk here is not to fill your mind with more stuff you can go to many places for that universities the internet television everywhere they are filling your mind with more stuff information knowledge and pseudo knowledge theories beliefs, standpoints, positions so if this talk doesn't work on that level how does it work?

is the talk going to work on the emotional level? is the speaker in a moment going to jump up and down the stage to create an emotional high in you? and when you get home you've reached the low already no doesn't work on that level either because the speaker is uncharismatic and it's a miracle that so many people come to listen to an uncharismatic speaker that means there must be something real going on and what else could this be?

is it entertainment? that's another way some talks are entertaining not really there may be occasional laughter so these three levels I mentioned the mental level of information or knowledge the emotional level or the entertainment level they may be present here in small doses I remember for example my first talk in Holland two years ago happened to be very funny I don't know why everybody laughed a lot including myself so there must have been some element entertaining element there why are we here? that's only a small fraction of why we are here what this evening is about so if it's none of these things or not primarily any of these things why are we here? you are here to try out and I use simple terms because it is so simple to try out a different level of consciousness from the normal and many of you have already tried it out and quite a few of you perhaps already live at least partly in that different state of consciousness from the normal state which is a state of continuous incessant thought activity the compulsion to think to interpret to label everything to judge everything immediately and to perceive everything through the veil or the screen of thought activity that's the normal way to live it's so normal that most people don't even know that that is how they live because everybody lives like that everybody they see on TV lives like that but in many human beings now the ability is developing is arising a new found ability and that is to step out of the movement of thought if only for a moment time doesn't matter there and there's a moment of simple alert attention so the secret of our evening together the only thing that ultimately matters here I'm telling you this now in case you have more important things to do you can go home early to find in yourself the ability to be conscious without thought and the mind says can you explain a bit more I know that many of you are ready to hear this, there are many audiences to whom I would not put this so directly because they would not be ready for it it would be a shock and half the audience would walk out now the mind says what's such a big deal about conscious without thought I don't want to become a vegetable or a tree or a stone or even an animal because they are conscious in their own way but they don't have conceptual thought activity they are not burdened with continuous mental noise they are present in the now and they don't inhabit a world of problems their life does not consist of one damn thing after another Churchill's definition of history of course he was right but not just history that's one damn thing after another your own life your life you may have noticed something works out here very well and then something goes wrong there but the heaviness of living yes, life is challenging even for an animal even for a tree there's nothing wrong with challenging but humans have something else there is a heaviness to human existence especially in these times a weariness almost as if every human being carried a burden it's the burden of themselves ultimately it's also perceived of course as the burden of my life one damn day after another and many people wake up in the morning open their eyes for a moment are conscious without thought and look at the light coming through the window and for a moment they sense an aliveness for a moment it's good to be alive they touch what one could call being just to be is very sweet and after a few moments a few seconds the first thought comes in and already a weight comes and it will be either something that happened yesterday or more likely something that's going to happen today and that leads to the next thought oh yeah, and that oh no, and that all these today oh my god, I've got to get on with it come on, let's go and then switch on the TV and listen to the problems of the world and then you get in the car and then you're in the traffic jam and already the weight the heaviness has descended and millions upon millions live in that way how can you live in this world if all of the millions live in that way how can you live differently surely it's not that almost impossible well the mind may be telling you that surely you can't you have so many things to deal with every day surely you can't expect me to be in a different state of consciousness I've got things to deal with I've got responsibilities you are okay you are a spiritual teacher you've got nothing else to do I sometimes listen to people angrily defending their right to be unhappy and yet underneath the heaviness that lies on top of you there is something else it's so close you can't measure it ultimately the heaviness is the stream of thinking that you mistake for yourself that you are so identified with that it becomes a sense of me thinking I am the thought that I am thinking at this moment that is what life is like for most people I am it's an unconscious belief that I am this thought I am so much in this thought that I am the thought you could say the thought has self in it the thought, every thought that arises takes you over grips you completely and then the next and the next accompanied by emotions that correspond to those thoughts fearful thought, fearful emotion fearful emotion creating further fearful thoughts lying awake in bed at night oh my god how am I ever going to get out of this get me out of here out of myself I saw a cartoon the other day two men speaking in an office one man looking very grim and saying to the other man I am sick and tired of being chained to myself 24 hours a day the usual expression is chained to my desk chained to myself 24 hours a day I live with this thought made mind made entity that's a form of collective conditioning for humanity everybody inherits that thousands of years of conditioning of the human mind of identifying increasingly more and more with mind activity and a sense of self derived from a mental concepts of who I am that I need to revive in my mind continuously and think about my life and my problems and talk about it to others so that they can confirm that my problems and my story are indeed very serious and real, absolutely real, yes you're right you should be unhappy so how can you undo if you recognize the madness of living in such a way with a noise machine in the head how can you undo thousands of years of collective mental conditioning, human conditioning conditioning do we need another thousand years to undo that or another thirty years a lifetime, two lifetimes three lifetimes the mind would be happy with that if I could tell some of you would be happy if I told you, you need two more lifetimes and then you'll be ok free, liberated oh, ok I can live with that two more lifetimes of unhappiness the mind would also be very happy go away here if I gave a recipe, a chart for the next seven years of how to become free of your mind and your mind made sense of self the mind would be happy because the mind loves future it loves to be given more time the mind loves more of anything in fact it's looking for more whatever it is, I need more to feel more fulfilled fuller, myself I'm not fully myself yet says the mind the mind made self because the story of me has not yet found its satisfying conclusion, hasn't fully developed yet I haven't started living yet, I'm only 85 I'm still waiting I'm waiting to make it finally he made it he made it and those who make it that's a funny expression whatever that means are successful in the world or what the world considers to be success and those who make it they get a little high as if in a drug and then they are just as unhappy as those who haven't made it I've met many who made it in the eyes of the world and they recognize it's an illusion it didn't make me happy fulfilled, at peace I still wake up in the middle of the night in fear so nothing no more is given to you, not even time because this is the wonderful thing that the mind doesn't like to hear to be free of thousands of years of conditioning does not require time or future at this moment you can step out of the movement of thought and allow quite simply an alert presence to be there you are not here any longer as the carrier of your personal history but you are here as an alive field of aware presence a moment, a gap in the stream of thought to the mind it's not significant it's the greatest thing that can happen to you those of you who are still not quite there two little hints that may be helpful as you listen to these words you may be able to feel the inner energy field of your body the aliveness that undoubtedly is there in your body the inner sense of aliveness very subtle in the background your hands, your arms, your legs your entire body has an inner aliveness to it most humans never feel that they are alive that every cell is alive intelligently alive because the body is fulfilling thousands of functions simultaneously so there is an intelligence at work in what looks like a physical body the intelligence that coordinates the thousands of functions of the body is not something that you can see nobody has seen it and yet it is there you are not doing it at this moment you are not working your liver or your circulation or your heart or your lungs on all these countless things that are happening at this very moment the body is looking after itself it has its own intelligence that in many ways is greater than what the mind could do so the aliveness in the body is an intelligent aliveness and the wonderful thing is when you direct attention there it removes attention away from thinking you cannot feel the aliveness of the inner body and think a lot doesn't go, doesn't work because you haven't got the consciousness is taken out of thinking and moves into the body feel that and then you become kind of more rooted in your being not just the physical being that's the external but that which underlies the physical you become more rooted in the being that you are instead of living in the upper floor which is the mind exclusively so as you sit here and listen to the words have some attention in your inner energy field, feel that alive presence that you are listen from there with the entire being, not just with the head, so to speak, it's a little hint of where your attention is where your sense of presence is, to be present you can't be present just in the head you're just thinking when you're thinking you're not present all thinking is of the past it uses past concepts to be present here as, to be rooted in yourself in being to feel that subtle sense of aliveness and you can still, you have enough consciousness or enough attention left to listen to the words, they are not complicated there's nothing you need to work out in your mind about these words because they are neither interesting nor complicated there's absolutely nothing to work out in your mind and if your mind is telling you I have to work that out no, you don't, it's too simple so directing this is one that is helpful for you, it can give you a taste of being rooted in the now in yourself, in being and yet not losing the ability to perceive in fact whether you perceive visually or through auditory perception or any other kind of perception in fact you perceive more clearly when you are not perceiving through the veil of continuous thinking that clouds every perception that brings past into every perception of the now because every perception must be now, it brings past it colors the beautiful moment and it obscures it with past and that's why people go through life continuously judging and interpreting according to their mental conditioning they live in a fantasy land maya the veil of illusion so here listening as you sit there and sensing that that aliveness inside that helps you to be become still inside without losing consciousness if you became still and were beginning to lose consciousness through having a few drinks that is not the way we want to go then it would be better to be in turmoil and at least there is a little bit of consciousness there rather than going towards sleep yes it's nice if you become free of your mind a little bit after three whiskeys a bit less thinking, you feel better for a while you start laughing perhaps for a moment it feels good but then the next drink again pulls you towards more and more unconsciousness so you leave the realm of thinking which has been in the last few thousands of years the human realm you leave that dimension of consciousness and move towards sleep or unconsciousness and there are also some humans that you may have met who are so simple that they can't think very much we would call them perhaps mentally underdeveloped and they seem to be happy most of the time they laugh and in a way you might envy them you say, oh I wish I was happy like them and yet if you had a choice you probably would not want to be like them if somebody said, okay you can choose to be the village idiot or your unhappy self that you've been for 40 years, which one do you choose and you would hesitate a moment and say, okay I'd rather be my unhappy self because that is not the way to go for us regression to a previous state falling below thinking no, no when you step out of thought here and experience the thoughtless state which is so simple for those who are ready and many are ready, others are not whoever is not ready is not going to survive the next hour here it's just too excruciatingly boring this shouldn't prevent anybody from going to the toilet thinking that everybody else is going to think that I'm not ready as you sit here continuously feeling that aliveness so rooted in yourself when you see images of Buddha in the I don't mean the fat Buddha that is influenced by Taoist teaching, that's a beautiful one too, with a huge belly, who laughs all the time because he has no problems because he's not thinking but there's another, the other Buddha Southeast Asian Buddhas Japanese Buddhas and the genuine ones if you look closely have a slightly, very slightly protruding belly just a little bit they're rooted in here their center of gravity is not here because otherwise the Buddha would look so their center of gravity is here in the center of their perceived body so they rest there ultimately how you sit or walk doesn't matter, that's just one little hint you don't need to sit in a particular way another little hint because you may realize the essence of why we are here is to get a taste for some of you or to deepen for others that state of conscious thoughtless presence out of which anything truly new comes do you think when Rembrandt was painting just to choose one example do you think he was there with a brush in his hand thinking, okay, I wonder what my next brush stroke is going to be if I put it there, then it may clash with that I'm not quite sure but maybe two more centimeters to the right let's measure it might look better over, no he just looked at the canvas and waited and then it happened who is painting? I don't know, not me, he would have said if you had asked him creativity arises out of the state of thoughtless presence in which you are more awake much more awake than when you are immersed in thinking you don't lose the ability to think because occasionally you have to think for certain things thought is very helpful but thought when it possesses you becomes a dreadful thing, thought when it pretends to be you is a dreadful burden so we are going we are rising, so to speak above thought not falling below conscious without thought not unconscious without thought that's easy you can just knock yourself out with whatever conscious another little hint as you sit here feeling the aliveness in the body and you may want occasionally to direct your attention to the gaps which are quite small in between the words that you are hearing and you may notice you can't think about that what does it mean all I'm asking for you is to notice the gaps of no words in between words in between sentences small who would ever pay attention to that normally and yet what does that do to you when you become aware of a gap you're not thinking because it's a gap of stillness, a gap of silence there's nothing there so you become aware of what when you listen to a word you're aware of the words the thoughts that have become sounds but when you're aware of the absence of something the absence of sound what is it that you're aware of nothing what does that mean it means you become familiar with what one could call awareness itself without an object and you may notice again you can't think about that because every thought takes you out of it now this is an amazing it is a radical revolutionary amazing thing for a human being to discover in him or herself that possibility that dimension of consciousness you can be aware of awareness or in other words because there seems to be some duality here which isn't there you become self aware or to put it in other words awareness consciousness becomes conscious of itself of no object in it and then the mind comes in and says yeah but I can't hold it for very long it doesn't matter the length of time is irrelevant a second two seconds and so usually I touch upon this mainly in retreats when we go deeper not so often in talks but the fact that this is being mentioned now is must mean that many of you or most of you are ready to hear this are ready for this because whatever words come out are being drawn out by the collective field in the room so there's the possibility for you to become self aware that is who you are and you cannot put a name or concept to it it's like a feeling of coming home it's always there that the awareness is the background to all your experiences you couldn't experience anything in any experience there must be someone or something that makes that experience possible, that makes that sense perception possible even a dream, a dream like thing and ultimately all of life is dream like even a dream you say, oh it's only a dream, it's not real and yet even in a dream and our ordinary life is also a kind of dream because it passes, everything passes very quickly, the forms in your life, they pass very quickly go fleeting everything is very fleeting every experience is fleeting and then comes the next, the next form so it's always not just a dream that you dream when you sleep the dream of normal existence that has a dream like quality and yet even in a dream that you dream at night there must be something that is real because something that enables the forms that appear in the dream to be there there must be something there that makes the dream possible there must be a canvas on which the dream images are painted there must be a field of consciousness in which the dream happens out of which these forms come and when they finish to which they return so there is in that in this dream like world there must be an essence that is not part of the dream and if you do not know that essence consciously you are lost in the dream just as you are lost in the world of thinking with no other reference point, nothing else in your life but the continuous flux of thoughts and then experiences lost in thought and lost in the world homeless hoping to arrive home and always looking to the future for that sense of fulfillment or completion that only the present moment can give you noticing the gaps the silence between the words not significant from the point of view of the mind when you notice the gap, stillness is in you because only the stillness in you recognizes it and the stillness is also the alertness can you bring that into everyday life that you wake up many times during the day you wake up out of being lost in some kind of activity being lost in some kind of mind stream can you many times during the day wake up out of being lost in the concerns of things that need that demand your attention this is so important deal with this immediately yes, yes it is and thoughts every thought pretending think me I matter, I'm so important me, me, think and so people become prematurely old because life becomes heavy and many people you see, you can see the heaviness they carry and the tightness of living and having that kind of sense of self comes they become more and more rigid and it never stops up here can you wake up out of thought into the aliveness, the alertness that you only have that is inseparable from present moment that is ultimately the meaning of now ultimately what the now is is yourself the field of consciousness in which the entire world appears the now is the space and then there is the content of your life there is the space of who you are and there is the content of what happens in your life most people are completely lost in the content of their life what fills up their life I call it sometimes life situation and Churchill's definition of history applies one damn thing after another and then you remember things from your life situation that becomes your personal history which is a stream of thoughts with some emotions that go with those thoughts and for many people their personal history is a dreadful thing to carry they are not happy with it not happy with the story of me not happy with what somebody did to me or what they did to me or what I did to them not happy with the way it went my story and so you carry for the rest of your life a pseudo identity called your personal history and that gives you your sense of self what a dreadful thing a story that you repeat in your head again and again and tell others about it probably that you keep alive through thinking and the emotions that go with it you keep alive you have to cling to this because who are you without that now of course you don't have to forget your story no but see how much deeper you are than the content of your life if you are only looking to content your life will never be fulfilled because it is a bottomless pit the ego looks for more to fulfill me material possessions bank account knowledge experiences relationships drugs food whatever it is as long as it is more it is looking to add more content hoping at some point to be fulfilled to be yourself the point never arrives because your life is content based content and content cannot satisfy anybody except very briefly and then you need more you can realize that now because you probably have all experienced already getting what you want and then that wasn't enough or what made you happy one day the next day the very same thing made you unhappy good example of that is your last marriage she made me so happy and then she made me so unhappy so looking to content which is to the world what can the world offer to make me happy there is always something that comes in that seems to spoil my enjoyment of this I came here I paid two thousand dollars to come to this paradise island and what are these cockroaches doing here the mosquitoes it's too hot it's boring everyday the sun shines and the great job finally I got this big important job and then it's making me ill with stress and then suddenly they call me in and say we don't need you anymore says the big corporation head the head of the corporation you can go with the services are no longer required thanks nice knowing you that was my life my identity the content of my life in Japan it used to be content not anymore I believe people identified so strongly with their company when they lost their job they would commit suicide I'm nobody content and content comes and goes it's not ultimately satisfying it cannot be so you drop that expectation and then you just allow this moment to be as it is including the imperfection the so called imperfection of this moment this shouldn't be happening yeah but it is what disappears is the gap between what I want and what is I want means I want it to be in a certain way the content of my life should be like and that is the gap of unhappiness of suffering and most people continuously go through life I want and this is and there's the gap so most people want to get what they want whereas the secret is to want what you get at this moment whatever this moment presents you with always has already something inevitable unavoidable to it and that's called is any situation this moment is always as it is if you argue with it you're mad it already is but if you accept the isness what the Buddha I believe called suchness nice word it's such as it is always instead of creating these expectations of what this should do or should not be happening or isn't right you cooperate with the form that this moment takes you drop your expectation that it should be different you bring a yes to it the isness because you realize it's pointless to argue if it already is then a greater intelligence is available to you that is not available to you when you reject deny or don't want what is that cuts you off it is a denial it is a contraction of your entire being the yes opens you to life which is now a deeper intelligence and yes of course very often this moment may demand that I do something action may be required and action can come either from denial it can come out of the dislike of what is and that can be quite strong we have an entire civilization built upon dislike of the present moment trying to get to some future moment it's going to be better and this is the reason why progress so called progress is destroying the planet but it's progress we are finally it's going to be better and better when we've destroyed all the forests and contaminated all the oceans we will finally have completed our progress that's where we are going so action of course our civilization, the western world and part of the eastern world which is also the western world now they are all doing the same thing of course they are very active a lot of activity creating things everybody is running around like mad everybody is under stress and they feel guilty if they are not suffering from stress are they creating a happy civilization are they creating fulfillment, peace no it seems to me from what I observed that people are becoming more and more unhappy and stressed and they are all saying they don't have enough time for anything, no time no time for the present moment certainly not for the present moment so we have an entire civilization that's extremely active that's creating a lot of things but there is a basic there is a flaw in almost everything they create almost not everything, almost everything the flaw can be seen on an internal level that all the people who participate in this enterprise are basically stressed and unhappy you can visit some big corporations, institutions government offices hospitals, schools these days, or universities and you will find everybody is stressed and they don't look very happy happy? more important things to do than that are they alive feel the aliveness the goodness of life no, goodness of life no time for that yes discontent with the present moment can generate a lot of activity but there is a flaw whatever is created through that activity has a basic flaw in it and that flaw expresses itself externally as the destructive aspect of our civilization the life threatening aspect of our civilization and internally as increasing unhappiness we can carry on like that we could perhaps another hundred years how much longer the planet can endure this kind of civilization we don't know more than a hundred years if there is no occurrence, probably not a change is now not just an option but a necessity for the first time it is true for humanity humanity has to change to survive that's why we are here and the change is inside you in consciousness so that you are no longer run by the egoic me that needs more and more and more and is going to devour the whole world and still not be fulfilled you can have action arising out of discontent that's our civilization you can also have action arising out of acceptance of what is which is a state of inner peace and aware presence you become aligned with the present moment internally aligned at one with the now you don't separate yourself from the form that this moment takes before you would have argued with it it's never enough, it's never right it's not the right kind of thing that should be happening but it is so you bring the yes to what is and this does not incapacitate you which means I accept what is therefore I'm never going to do anything again the Buddha we believe sat continuously like this according to the image but that's not the case he was continuously traveling teaching for many many years, he was active every moment ultimately of course there's only one moment and whatever form that this moment takes every moment may have a certain requirement some moments need you to act and if you are aligned with the moment the kind of action that you take is qualitatively totally different from the kind of action that you take when you deny dislike the present moment out of that feeling of I want to get somewhere better than this yeah it can make you do things but it is in eastern terms karmic action produces more suffering more unhappiness because it arises out of unhappiness we are going to fight for peace if it arises out of anger out of impatience communism was a beautiful experiment we are going to change the world, the mind saw the world is not just it should be no possessions no individual possessions, everybody is equal wonderful but nothing had changed they had forgotten about the egoic sense of self with it's need for more it's need to be right it's need for power and for enemies it's paranoia of others feeling threatened by others so it turned into a nightmare and it came out of anger too yes justifiable anger Russia was so unjust the political system was so unjust yes and the next one was even more unjust turned out to be this is where the change happens and it happens it's almost invisible when it happens inside you it's almost imperceptible how does it happen?

stepping out of 100 200 thousand years of conditioning of the mind into the eternal timeless freshness and newness and aliveness of now that is not separate from who you are what is the now not the content that fills this moment with sense perceptions with experiences with thoughts and emotions not the content that fills this moment that's not the now that's what happens in the now the content the now is deeper the now is who you are as the space of conscious presence that makes it all possible that makes the whole world possible well, how do I know that? step out of thought into that still inner space it's not the right word because realize that you are in your essence not what happens in your life don't ever look for yourself in what happens or try to complete yourself through some event some happening, some place some situation, some person you are not you can never find yourself in what happens which is content you are not what happens you are the space in which it happens you are not your thoughts you are not your thoughts they come and go you are the vastness in which these thoughts appear and disappear because underneath all your thinking there is the stillness there is the pure being the pure consciousness the timeless dimension of yourself and at first when thinking stops for a moment there seems to be nothing there there is still a tendency of the mind to look for something so you become comfortable with that state of simple being alert present being you learn what it means to look without needing to call this flower, this plant, anything to simply look to simply perceive, as you sit here perceive this room perceive the words or let's just say the visual perception perceive this room, the speaker, the screen, the lights without needing to call it anything are you stupid?

have you become stupid in that state? the mind would say that because the mind would say yeah, but I don't know anything anymore now that's good but a deeper knowing comes out of that state wisdom can only come if you access no thought the dimension of no thought in yourself the only thing a wise person has that you don't have or that's the wrong way of putting it the wise woman, the wise man has nothing that you don't have he or she is simply aware of the dimension of stillness the dimension of no thought that's out of which all wisdom comes which is also in you so bringing that into everyday life through being aware of the inner energy field of the body being alert to sense perceptions another way of entering the state of alert thoughtless presence look around the room a few times a day where you are sitting in that room as if you had just been born into that room it requires a high degree of alertness yes, but that is in you so periodically even if it's only five seconds at a time you bring in thoughtlessness not in its usual usual thoughtlessness usually is a negative term but here thoughtlessness implies more consciousness more intense awakeness to awaken and it's not and then you realize the compulsion to think is just a habit deep seated habit and you don't listen to the mind when the mind says I have no time to be present now not even ten seconds not true you're waiting at the elevator the lift, press the button are you projecting yourself mentally to where you want to get or are you really there are you immersed in thought or are you using that opportunity to simply be present with your entire being, standing there not waiting for anything because most people spend maybe 70% of their lives waiting for something there's always the next thing to do that hasn't quite been finished yet there's always the next thing to happen that I'm just waiting for this why not use all waiting periods for being present and then you step into the elevator and you press ground floor and it's going down and there is an aliveness in your entire energy field and it's beautiful, that moment has a fullness to it that is more than the externals that you perceive because after all there's only four walls around you and a light above you and some buttons so on the external level this moment has nothing to fulfill me but if you go deeper into that moment which is into yourself it's actually very fulfilling but you have to step out of that which takes you out of the moment learning what it means to be present and alert and then perhaps you arrive at the ground floor and you forget and you go about your business and ten minutes later you're in your car, the traffic light stopping, thinking, come on and suddenly you remember oh the now, this is the now and then again you look at the red light and the red has an intensity to it, it's quite beautiful that before to notice that you would have had to take acid because taking acid I'm not recommending this but for some people it can give them a first glimpse of what it means not to be burdened by continuous mental commentaries but it doesn't really raise your consciousness it simply amplifies sense perceptions and the red of the traffic light don't do it the red of the traffic light becomes so intense you can't think about it anymore it just is overwhelming wow so it gives you a little I took it once just to try it out because people told me people told me this is like acid isn't it and I always had to say I don't know I haven't taken it and finally I said ok I need to be able to answer these people so I'm going to try it once and so what I've experienced was the amplification everything was vibrating there was intensity of smell, hearing visual, tasting everything was amplified nothing special that I experienced otherwise but some people say wow the world can be so alive it always is you just don't know it because of the screen of your thinking so here this is much better than acid but there's a slight similarity, yes but here you notice it because you become more awake there's the traffic light and here I am and you feel the energy field in your body as you sit there and you become aware of the movement of people and you just look look the movement of cars you just look oh it's not that bad before you were complaining about that moment what's this, why am I sitting in this I should be there but I'm here yes can you argue with that? well you can but it's mad so you accept the is-ness of that moment and enter that moment more fully so nobody can tell me that they cannot bring that into their everyday life not continuously yet it's not required it is more important how often you become you awaken out of thinking than it is how long you remain in the state of not thinking that looks after itself, yes after a while that will be longer more important how often you step out of thinking becoming alert there's an intelligence there that wasn't there before and it doesn't need to call the world you know what you are looking at without concepts you look deeply you also sense a certain aliveness in whatever you look at which is no different from the aliveness that is in you everything has being-ness to it everything has presence to it, even so called inanimate objects have a beautiful presence when you are not thinking about them, just looking so I'm not telling you now you must live in that state of consciousness just occasionally bring it in enter it five seconds is fine two seconds see the change in relationships as you are able to face another human being without the compulsive judgments and labels of the mind so you are there facing the other human being simply in alert presence perhaps you can feel your inner aliveness as you sit there look at the other person or listen to what he or she has to say and that is what happens now is sense perceptions are rising in a field of stillness that is you they are no longer being met by the mental screen when you need concepts of course they'll still be there you haven't forgotten when you look at a flower and don't label it as flower or don't say that would look good in my garden or that reminds me of a flower somebody once gave me or I'd like to open a flower business or whatever when you're just looking at a flower and there's no label then you see there is a mystery there that is more than a flower, you reduce reality to something absurdly small when you think that the label can encapsulate the reality of what is there, there is a mystery that is totally unknowable to the human mind and the mental concept reduces that mystery to something knowable but that's an illusion people think when they call, give names to things, they know what it is they know nothing, it's just a name, it's all pseudo knowledge daddy, how do the birds find their way thousands of miles to the other part of the planet how do they do that?

oh, that's instinct, oh thank you now I know so yes, we need the mind but to believe that it can give us access to the depths of reality the depths of life the depths of who we are who you are that's an illusion it's a little instrument beautiful, powerful in its own way but incapable of doing so many things useful for a small part of your life yes but there's so much more so much greater depths and it all starts with looking at something and simply be alert and present with it or a human being there's space in the relationship suddenly because you are in touch with the still space within just looking you all may remember, I may have mentioned in the talk two years ago those of you who were here the Zen master who would never explain the meaning of Zen when people asked him he became very famous all he would ever do to explain what Zen means which is quite mysterious to the human mind people spend twenty years trying to figure out what it means and can't figure it out why? because Zen is about no concepts, it's about no thought, it's about alertness awareness, so he would say what's the meaning of Zen can you explain please said the university professor and all the Zen master ever did was this this is it oh some people got it because there was such intensity there this oh, thank you others didn't get it did you hear my question they said I didn't hear your answer if you were faced with a life threatening emergency situation either you would become paralyzed by fear or it would push you into that state spontaneously, absolute alert, thoughtless, aware presence there is no fear in that there is no personal history in that, there is no me in that, there is no thought what am I going to do next in that because there is no time just that and then you act and what you do may be something that you never thought you could have done but it just happened the mind stepped aside because in an absolute emergency it can't do anything because it hasn't got the time to think so some people spontaneously enter that state of presence when they are in an emergency situation and then usually then they fall back into their normal state but it can give them a taste or a glimpse so as you leave here you will be either walking somewhere or driving somewhere or on your bicycle present are you there as the carrier of your personal history plus your problematic future that you need to think about now or are you there as aware consciousness a field of conscious presence looking, perceiving the aliveness sensing the aliveness that is all around you even in stones the beingness the presence of everything and the aliveness that is in you the aliveness that is you the underlying presence there is always a choice you can be a walking story it's never a happy one for long don't let the movies fool you that end with a wedding it doesn't work like that the story isn't really happy for long unless you bring in presence then something that is even deeper than happiness is there and even the story of your life tends to improve when you access that deeper dimension even on the level of content which is you don't really need anymore because it's fine as it is then suddenly it improves the universe becomes helpful becomes cooperative life tends to become helpful in the other state the universe is threatening life is perceived as hostile what's going to happen next I don't dare not think about what's going to happen next to me what's going to happen to me I'm not a clairvoyant but I can predict what's going to happen to you you're going to walk around for a few more years and then you'll die me too and whatever you experience in those few more years cannot fulfill you it'll never be enough the only thing that can fulfill you is being yourself and that's inseparable from now the field of now that frees you it liberates you from the world and then you you walk around with much less heaviness for the next few years on the planet instead of at the moment humans are very heavy on the planet wherever they step life gets exterminated and that's to do with their state of consciousness but there is another way to live and this is it thank you

[Speaker 2] (7:12:19 - 7:13:21)

The Findhorn Foundation in the north of Scotland is a center of spiritual service in co-creation with nature which emphasizes education and community The Findhorn Foundation is at the heart of one of the best known intentional communities in the world and is a major international center of adult educational, personal and spiritual transformation about 14,000 visitors a year come to the foundation in one of the many ways that it is possible to visit, live and work there Eckhart Tolle gave a weekend retreat in the Universal Hall to a group of over 300 people this is a record of that event

[Speaker 1] (7:14:42 - 7:39:24)

Welcome to our weekend retreat at this beautiful, sacred place our theme for this weekend is stillness which is inseparable from who you are in the depth of your being one could say everybody is still already the stillness is already there, it does not need to be found even certainly does not need to be created because it's already there the only thing is you may not notice it if there's a lot of mental noise then you just don't notice it that it's there and also you don't notice the dimension within yourself that is far deeper than the movement of thought and your whole identity is then bound up with the movement of thought a mind created sense of self a personal history and no more that is soon coming to an end soon next year or in 40 50 years time, it's soon soon so who you are and stillness are one and the same and if you have not yet gone completely mad in this mad world that means you have some access to the stillness inside you you may not remember it afterwards because it's not memorable since stillness is timeless and the mind cannot memorize it or think, oh that was interesting I'll remember that because stillness is not interesting interesting is a mental thing just as our weekend here is not going to be interesting you may have noticed that already but interesting is not the ultimate it's only the ultimate to the human mind you can go out here and look at a tree or flower or the sunset and could you say this sunset is interesting only if you were trying to write a PhD about sunsets if you had to analyze it or the oak tree the oak tree becomes interesting the moment you start to analyze it mentally and there is a place for that also in this dimension but if you get caught up on that dimension only where you break things up into little bits and pieces and analyze them and by the way most kinds of analysis you have to kill the thing first before you can analyze it or in the process of analysis it gets killed but if you just be with the oak tree contemplate it truly look then what you are looking at goes beyond interesting it's far deeper than interesting same as the sunset there is nothing interesting about it and yet it is awe inspiring it is deep there is a depth there that defies analysis by the mind the moment you analyze it you have reduced it to something lifeless and most people in our civilization and this has been going on for a long time are trapped in that dimension where compulsively they go about their life analyzing, interpreting and labeling things as soon as they enter their field of consciousness they do it to people they do it to situations that they encounter immediately have some personal reactive relationship to it they do it to nature and they can no longer perceive the sacredness that is there in nature because they approach it only through thinking thinking and that is a dreadful present that you then end up in the present of your own mind and then you approach your whole life only through that and your whole life becomes reduced to a conceptual reality in the head consisting of thoughts that you have about things viewpoints opinions and even so-called knowledge knowledge is thought a label and gives the illusion that you know all and all it is it's a thought that you have put on something and then it loses its depth and aliveness and you begin to relate to reality through the veil of thinking and you relate to yourself through the veil of thinking because you yourself become a conceptual thought-based entity an egoic self a me with its unfulfilled personal history its desires and fears and frustrations and its hopes that it will find ultimate fulfillment of its unfulfilled and unfulfilling sense of self based on a story in the future which again is a thought-form that's what the future is nobody has ever encountered it except as a thought and yet most people live unconsciously as if the next moment or the one after that were more important than this moment the only thing there ever is this one moment that you could never escape from have never escaped from will never escape from that is inseparable from the life that you are also inseparable from stillness because the moment you enter the now with your attention a stillness arises the essence of the present moment no matter how mad it may appear on the surface is always stillness it is also sacredness the only place where the sacred dimension can be found is now you have to be present to this moment, you have to wake up into this moment to realize that life is sacred when you are lost in thought sacred is meaningless it could become another of the many concepts that you can play with and you could write a PhD about it without ever having encountered it yourself so this the depths of now is inseparable from your very being your very life and it is the sacred one life and yes this is why we are here to deepen our awareness of that dimension and it's the sacred is everywhere if you become truly present you would find the sacredness everywhere it's easier here in certain places that are called sacred there is less of a density in the structures the physical structures the forms there is a transparency almost to the forms, something shines through the forms and this is why we call those places sacred but even here there are some people who cannot sense that because they are not present enough when they walk in the garden they are still in their head thinking about where they are going the day after tomorrow and the accumulation of problems which are thought forms that are part of their sense of self I have important problems to think about and occasionally you get a glimpse three seconds of presence and you get a glimpse and immediately there comes the movement of thought again so some people cannot be present here most of you can and those who cannot I believe will quickly deepen and see how easy it is to be present and how hard it is not to be present normally people tell me the opposite they say it's so hard to be present and this is what the mind believes but the opposite is true not being present to the now is hard to live trapped in your mind is hard that makes living into something that is a struggle and an effort and you never get there you never make it because you live for the future which is only a thought form and this is another aspect of living trapped in thought with your whole sense of self trapped in thought hoping that at some point you will find yourself complete yourself or it's all going to work out in the end and in the way the mind imagines it it cannot work out because every form dies and every structure eventually dissolves again and the mind only thinks in terms of forms and structures and it hopes that life will work itself out on that level of structures and forms and it's always disappointed because it cannot and the miracle is it's already working out at this very moment it's already as it should be at this moment you have already arrived at the place of sacredness at this moment it's easier to see it here to sense that here more difficult to feel that this moment is sacred when you find yourself at Piccadilly Circus or Times Square and you need to be an enlightened being perhaps, which simply means very present to see the sacredness in the flashing Coca-Cola sign at Piccadilly Circus and you need to be a Buddha to see the sacredness in a prison camp and if one says the prison camp also has the dimension of the sacred if one says that prematurely, this will be misunderstood and really will not make sense unless you know within yourself that that which is beyond form the one formless life is indestructible and some people who were in prison camps realized it for themselves so we are here to find that dimension that is deeper than thought within ourselves that has nothing to do with time and so people ask sometimes how do I still my mind?

I want to find a stillness and then, yes, there are some good meditation methods and eventually that also has to be left behind otherwise it comes in between who you are you put a method there to find yourself that is a space between you and yourself and every method eventually needs to be left behind you don't need it it's the last thing you leave behind and this particular teaching works without methods but if you have a method it's beautiful and you use it until you don't need it anymore every thought in your mind when you are not aware of it as a thought has a sense of self in it a sense of I am you identify with the movement of thought and that is the essence of unconscious living and that is why people continuously live for the future the thought form of future where they are hoping to complete their insufficient sense of self the happy ending of my story this is not to say you should not pursue certain activities learn new things explore new countries meet new people learn this and that, acquire knowledge expertise here and there develop your abilities physical or mental and create whatever you are called upon to create in this world it is beautiful to create in this world and on that level of course there is always more that you could do and as you grow older there are certain things that you can no longer do so gradually on the level of form your life becomes reduced, there are already many many things that is unlikely that I will be able to do I'm not going to win the title at Wimbledon anymore it would be a miracle if I managed to do that not totally impossible but I'm not even going to try it and many other things would say well it's just it's too late and this is true for many things it's too late on the level of form I need to accept yes no I'm not going to be the heavyweight boxing champion it's just too late for that or it never was possible so on the level of form yes depending on where you are in the in years there may still be many things that you can add to what you can do and what you know and what you explore or it may be that you're reaching the end of the lifespan of this form so there's little time left and there isn't that much more that you can add to yourself and that's fine too now the question is are you looking for yourself when you attempt to add more to who you are and that is the dilemma of human existence there is a compulsive searching for more not that there is anything wrong with doing new things no but there is a compulsive striving towards the next moment and the next and the next hoping to add more to who I think I am thought forms possessions attainments, recognition by other people, all thought forms, my, I have not enough yet, I don't feel secure enough, I only have five houses and three cars and I still don't feel secure and I think the houses are not big enough that must be the reason or they all they write about me in the papers and then okay by the way I don't have five houses it's just an example or to get recognition they all write about me and then I read in the papers finally people have recognized who I am they think I'm great and that gives, temporarily gives you the feeling of I've now added that universal recognition to who I think I am and many people strive for that, they think when are they going to discover me when are they going to realize that I am special they may never realize it

[Speaker 3] (7:39:24 - 7:39:24)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (7:39:27 - 7:56:01)

there is a search for specialness in the mind made sense of self that in some cases is fulfilled and in most cases is not fulfilled on the level where it's seeking and so in either case that sense of specialness you could say there are two ways of being unhappy not getting what you want and getting what you want because all the people who have attained universal recognition in whatever field they are not happy either, they are not at peace with themselves they do not feel the sense of security and the sense of finally having arrived that before they had it, they had associated with that idea once people recognize me then I will have arrived and then the moment comes and at first it feels good and then you see that people's opinion of you are only thought forms they are images that they create or if they are very well known the media creates fiction that has your name and then you read about yourself in the paper and you see who is this they are writing about there is nothing to do with me at all and so many people become unhappy, even more unhappy when they attain recognition the world tells them yes you are special and yet I don't feel special or they see this is an illusion, that's not me it's an image, a mind created image and a few people then go beyond all the mind created sense of identity because they have attained what the world tells us is desirable wealth property, recognition attainment here or there and yet it has not provided them with what they were really looking for myself a sense of being rooted in life the fullness of life as Jesus calls it the fullness of life and so there are many famous people who take drugs and they need to dull the dreadful unhappiness they feel inside because even the illusion of more in the future that most people are still living by doesn't work anymore because if you already have everything the illusion that the more by attaining more in the future you are going to be happy can't work anymore for you what a dreadful fate you can't look to the more anymore to feel that you are yourself and so they feel even more unhappy, they cannot escape into the next moment anymore so they need to take some drugs so that for a little while I feel better or a few break through to a deeper level within themselves and realize that that sense of specialness that operated on the level of better than or more than was an illusion you can't pursue it and it will take you nowhere, it can never fulfill itself because it is a thought form me the special one that you wanted to incorporate into the story of me that is the basis of your identity as long as you are trapped only in thought me the special one some people have the fiction in their head that they are and I don't want to take away anybody's fiction if they still like it you could have the fiction in your head that in a past lifetime you were Napoleon and that can give you a sense of specialness but it is derived from the movement of thought and images but that keeps some people going nobody might agree with you that you were Napoleon but at least temporarily it keeps you but you have to keep thinking about it and tell the story to others and others have other stories where other people say yeah that's true, that's who you are but it is based on the movement of thought and the emotions that go with those thoughts so you have a whole identity based on a personal history, very little and it's not going to last very long, the soap bubble of my personal history is going to pop soon and everybody can say I'm not predicting my imminent death, nobody knows but everybody's death is ultimately imminent because one year or fifty years it comes quite soon and it will be now when it comes not tomorrow and so to be trapped in that sense of self a conceptual reality that is a dreadful fate it's constant neediness which even gets translated into the spiritual once you have realized okay I'm done with possessions, I know that that's not it but be careful here with other thought forms that arise to replace for example you might have spent twenty years of your life making money and then you see okay I'm now giving away my BMW I'm going to buy a bicycle because I'm spiritual and I will only wear certain spiritual clothes or this or that, it doesn't matter what it is, I'm on my bicycle and then I can be on my bicycle and look at the person who is still so unconscious that he's driving his BMW and can think how much superior I am in my spiritual and of course what you're carrying now is a much heavier thought form than the BMW thought form so your sense of self has become have, can, it could, it's quite possible that the BMW man has less of a sense of self than the man on the bicycle it's possible, probably not but it's possible so be careful with any how the mind shifts and then chooses another story to feel, but always to feel, to make itself feel more than one way or another so that it can it works through comparison because it's thought, I think of I have an image of who I am and then I need to compare that to who I think other people are so I impose images of myself, mental concepts and images and then I impose them on others and then I compare my image with that image, hmm okay, I'm more spiritual than this or he's more spiritual he's been at it for much longer than me and then you get how much you know, knowledge is another one, you casually mention from your great store of knowledge, you casually mention a few things and the other person is dumbfounded doesn't know what you and it's obvious that you know more than he and that gives the feeling of ah, and so it works with little things to enhance it's always very precarious sense of self and then it loves being right and it loves others to be wrong because it's the only way you can be right it loves being right and feels itself enhanced momentarily through ah, I'm right so it's always the strengthening of the fiction of self, the fiction of me me and my story and that people go through life looking for that that's the purpose of their life is to strengthen the fiction of me ha ha ha and and so that becomes the motivating force behind their actions, what they do and it's always, it's an uneasy thing because very often you feel less than somebody else, then you have to kind of work around that less special than he he knows more but on the other hand I look better ha ha ha and then other people if they cannot achieve the specialness in the way in which the world tells us you ought to be special, they achieve a reverse specialness by feeling unfairly treated by life by feeling that they are a victim of certain people or situations and in their thought form of being a victim they feel very special so you can still win even if you lose ha ha ha ha ha ha the mind is very clever and a victim identity can be very strong strongly lodged in some people's minds and as soon you meet them and after 5 minutes they will tell you their story you know what happened 25 years ago it happened ha ha ha and of course yes dreadful things did happen 25 years ago and they happen today also in this mad world but building an identity around some form of suffering that happened at some point or repeatedly in this mad world where suffering is inevitable to build a sense of specialness around that then you have put yourself into a dreadful prison with bars all around but at least you think you know who you are you have a story oh great at least I have a story my life treated me more unfairly than most people I'm I can feel more then and so whatever the mind it will find something to give itself an identity a conceptual identity and it is very much afraid of losing the story of abandoning it stepping beyond it and usually the story needs to become unpleasant for people to be pushed out of it because in a way the story is a dream the dream of who I am and if a dream becomes very unpleasant then you will want to wake up if no dream of me is ultimately all that pleasant but some are more unpleasant than others so see how the self the conceptual self continuously tries to survive, not only to survive and protect itself from others and to use others to enhance itself, use them in one way or another and that determines the relationship between humans when you haven't stepped beyond that there is wanting to use another human or needing feeling you need to protect yourself from another human being those are the two things that govern relationships in the egoic state you either use them or you fear them you need them and you are afraid of them and sometimes both at the same time and of course that also means there is no true relationship it gets distorted because you don't know who you are, you have only an image in the head that tries to make itself stronger because it doesn't feel enough yet I'm not enough yet and so for some people the sense of specialness is attained by frequent complaining in the head and out aloud about life and situations and people and what's going on and it really shouldn't be happening they should do something about it it's all very bad indeed why doesn't he and there is blaming continuously complaining and blaming and that the ego loves because it makes itself right by doing that.

When you complain about something or somebody you feel you are right and the person or the situation you complain about is wrong I'm not saying complain in a practical sense when you say I'd like to exchange this thing that I bought because it's not working that's fine, it's practical and you do something about it but the complaining that is the telling of stories in the head that has no practical purpose whatsoever that constantly is in a conflict relationship with the present moment there is always something about it that isn't right and so you complain or something has just happened and you complain or you complain because it hasn't happened yet so many people feel they cannot be themselves or truly at peace with themselves because of something that happened or something that hasn't happened.

Those are the two reasons why you cannot be yourself either something has happened and that's preventing me from being myself truly or something hasn't happened yet and if that doesn't happen I can't be myself laughter laughter isn't that it's a strange thing, I need something to happen so that I can be myself

[Speaker 3] (7:56:04 - 7:56:05)

laughter laughter

[Speaker 1] (7:56:07 - 7:57:15)

laughter so we are not all the many ways we are talking about this here so that you can recognize it when it happens in you because it is a universal pattern in every human, it's inherited it is the collective human mind in its egoic unconscious state that operates in that way that keeps you trapped on the surface of your being on the little surface movement the wave movement of life the forms of life, all the things that happen and you are continuously trapped in that on the level of form just and of course on the level of form which includes even thought forms, they are primordial forms when you are identified with every thought that comes into your head laughter and of course there is never an end to it because the next thought comes immediately afterwards it's a string laughter and so it goes the whole day long it goes

[Speaker 3] (7:57:17 - 7:57:18)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (7:57:21 - 7:57:35)

and occasionally you get the little glimpses that keep you sane so that you can still survive here, you are not they keep you from committing suicide or they keep you from going totally insane, you have little moments of

[Speaker 3] (7:57:36 - 7:57:37)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (7:57:41 - 8:02:34)

and they may be short but they keep you alive there is a little bit of joy seeping through from the depths of your being through the layers, the heavy layers of mind there is a little bit, a little crack appears here and there, if it didn't you would be totally lost in here and you certainly wouldn't be sitting here laughter and so occasionally there is moments, it may be when there is sudden beauty and it's overwhelming or sudden a moment of danger that wakes you up out of the continuous voice in the head laughter and suddenly there is more intense aliveness beingness, presence and then thought comes back laughter or it could be for some people danger in the form of a physical illness can come and suddenly that wakes you up oh and suddenly you realise all the things that you pursued and you thought were important are not important at all, so already something collapses on the level of thought, all the things that mattered so much and suddenly you develop a physical illness and see it doesn't matter at all and so that can be helpful for some, it can be an awakening for some people or it may be some people are kept sane by an animal because whenever, it's the only way they can relate to another being that is non-conceptual because when they meet humans they are trapped in the concepts that they have about every human they meet they impose mental concepts and images in the form of what they think about, they know exactly what they think about you they are not relating to you, they are relating to the thoughts in their head they have about you and most people do it to each other so you have only two thought made entities trying to be in a relationship each one both needing and fearing the other and this is of course why relationships are so problematic these days so some people are kept sane by an animal and the pets fulfill an incredible function that hasn't been fully acknowledged and recognized in this world, they keep humanity sane because there you have when you touch the dog or the cat or whatever it is and for a moment some people even there they carry ego but those are the extreme cases you touch the animal and you can be yourself you don't need to psychologically protect yourself from the animal or want something from you just can be with that and you can something transmits itself because the animal lives more deeply connected with the source of life than most humans less removed or one could say the illusion has not grown to such an extent of being a separate entity a me and the rest of the universe the animal still has the oneness with the totality hasn't lost it totally is deeply rooted in being so the animal does not create a world of problems the animal is one with life and humans have separated themselves from life they have a conceptual image this is me and there is the rest of the world there is a barrier and there is the other the other human being a dreadful concept, other and they are needing others and fearing others walking through life and other is mentally another concept so the egoic self the stronger you are trapped in the egoic sense of self the more you will emphasize the otherness of others and others will all become reduced to walking caricatures because the few labels that you have about them you reduce them and they are basically all caricatures and sometimes when people you listen to people they mention about somebody they met or somebody they know and see how stupid that person is and they have a few judgments and when you listen to that you see this caricature of this strange distorted human being and when you meet them you say this is the person we are talking about

[Speaker 3] (8:02:34 - 8:02:35)

yeah

[Speaker 1] (8:02:37 - 8:28:06)

and so the animal is not burdened by the continuous stream of thinking it does not have a conceptual identity like the humans so it hasn't separated itself so it can be an access point for some humans into being where they can be with a being without and it is for some humans it's a moment when they actually thought subsides when they pat their dog or you have a purring cat on your chest suddenly you think thought quietens becomes more quiet and you have a space of stillness and you feel the purring of a cat on your chest or simply to watch an animal if you can truly watch it can take you out of your mind and you become present because the animal is present and the same with the realm of nature the trees and the flowers and the blades of grass they are all present they are all surrendered to life, one with life a beautiful temporary expression of one life and so for some humans that's their only access point and for some even that doesn't work anymore I knew someone with a very strong ego who had ego battles with her cat if the cat didn't come she had the kitchen window open and the cat one evening didn't appear and she said where's my cat and then she would shut the window and said if she doesn't want to see me I don't want to see her and so the poor cat had to stay outside all night that also happens so there are cases where humans cannot even relate to animals anymore so this is where you and so we see millions and millions of humans living in a pseudo reality with a sense of self that is ultimately a fiction that is always insufficient, always feeling a sense of lack, always needing more always even needing to make enemies so that it can still define itself as me and the other needing some kind of conflict so that it's separate sense of self can remain intact what can I be in conflict with today what can I complain about now so that I can feel a little bit more myself ah there it is and so when millions of humans live like that then the result is what we read as human history a dreadful tale of incredible suffering that humans inflict on each other and other life forms on the planet incredible suffering and so the same you see on television when you switch on the news you will see just how mad the collective consciousness is of humanity in its present evolutionary stage and yet here we are here we are and we recognize that all that is a form of one could say collective mental illness that humanity is suffering from and so one could say well how can God allow a whole species to become mentally ill I heard that question somewhere in somebody's mind and of course you can ask the same question on a personal level how does God allow me to be ill how dare he, she, it to allow me to be ill, to suffer and of course within the larger whole everything has its place and everything is as it should including your personal illness for the moment doesn't mean healing cannot happen but there are many humans here who were brought here who would not be here if they had not suffered some kind of dysfunction in their lives physical illness perhaps or some great loss and so you can already see on your personal level that your suffering your physical suffering, whatever it may be to some extent began to dissolve the egoic structures in your mind it started to shake it loose so that something else could come through and you suddenly found yourself becoming interested in the present moment and then you end up here and no matter what your story is and some of you may feel that it was all one big mistake the story of me was all one big mistake you are here now and that's an amazing thing to be to be here now and see that was the story and the outcome of all that big mistake was that now you are stepping out of it and you realize it as yes, on the level of form this is how my life unfolded and now let me speak personally for one moment I could easily look upon my whole life let's say until the world told me that I was important a few years ago it happened before that nobody told me I was important until that I could look at my whole life up to that point as one complete disaster nothing actually worked out I tried that for a few years and then I was at university and then I did my PhD and then I gave that up and then I drifted for two years and then I went into that and then I tried that and it didn't many things, ok, and then my mother said ok, now you're 45 what have you achieved? others have already built up big businesses and so on the level of story it was a big disaster and yet fortunately at some point already I had given up identification with the story the story was only my identity up to the age of 29 and it was a very unhappy one even there even when I was relatively successful the only worldly success I had was I did well at university up to before I became a graduate student and it made me happy for two weeks and so how isn't it strange that a failed story can produce the flower the flower of consciousness and perhaps the flower of consciousness needs the mud out of which it grows you have the beautiful image of the lotus in Buddhism, the symbol of Buddhism the lotus flower it grows, it has its roots in the mud and it grows out of that and there is nothing more beautiful in human life than a failed story and the good news is every story ultimately fails because the story is based on the forms it identifies with forms and no forms last for that long no building lasts for that long eventually it crumbles all forms are temporary and they are beautiful the essence that is hiding in each form is the formless one life that is indestructible but even this beautiful form it is not eternal as a form but the eternal shines through the forms here that is why, because the forms are transparent and you also are not eternal as this form and yet a transparency is happening in you even as you sit here so that that which is beyond form no matter what we call it, stillness presence beingness a deep sense of I am that before got mixed up with the story of me and that the preciousness of being is your true specialness what the egoic self had been looking for on the level of the story I want to be special that very thought obscured the fact that you already could not be more special than you are now but not special in the egoic sense that more than he or more than she special in the sense that there is a beauty and preciousness that is the essence of your being and that is what deep down you can sense, even the person who is most completely identified with their story and their conceptual sense of self they feel that somewhere there is something precious that is me but they confuse it with the forms, thought forms it gets that essence of being which is formless and timeless gets mixed up with form with thought and a story in the head and that is what the Buddha calls the fictitious self the self that the Buddha even 2600 years ago recognized as an illusion an enormous insight, the greatest perhaps the greatest insight of all humanity when he recognized the self is an illusion and by that he means the self that is identified with any form thought form, physical form anything and that is the illusion to lose oneself in some form and then the preciousness of being that is the essence that is timeless and formless in every human and in every life form one could say incarnates in form and there's nothing wrong with incarnating in form as long as you know yourself as that which is beyond form but if you lose yourself in the incarnation and ultimately you had to do that too, that was part of the totality of how things work to lose oneself is as the Buddha called it suffering then you suffer because you don't know who you are anymore you're looking for yourself in some form in some thought form in some physical form that you identify with which is also a thought form me and so everybody is looking for the essence of their being not knowing that the specialness that they look for is already the essence of who they are but they can only find it when they stop looking for themselves in the future through more so the one place it's all like some strange game the one place where you truly can only find yourself in that one place most humans never look which is the present moment they look there for themselves and to feel I want to be more on the level of form you can temporarily be more, that's true and then that dissolves again but there is a level within yourself where more does not operate you do not need to be more, you are already a full expression of the one life you are already complete on the level of the timeless the essence of your being now the only reason why you needed time was you needed to be ready to hear this truth and recognize it as a truth for that one could say you need time to hear the message that to be who you are, you don't need time but the paradox is there are still many humans to whom this would be meaningless and they don't come here they need, in other words, they need more time they need to continue to look for themselves and they need to continue to be frustrated in their search that is part of the larger design the frustration is built into human existence and so that's what the world is for the so called world it is there to frustrate you laughter laughter and to drive you deeper to eventually drive you out of identification with form because as long as you are identified with form it is so frustrating and you can never make it, you can never arrange the forms and accumulate all the forms that you need you think you need to be yourself or sometimes you can do it for very brief time span you can suddenly find everything is now working in my life my health is good my relationship is great great money possessions, everybody loves me laughter they all write good things about me um it's all working, my job my living situation my finances, my health, my relationships they're all great but before long something there starts to crumble here and there, it's either the finances or it's the relationship or it's the living situation, it's in the nature of the world of form nothing stays fixed for very long and so it starts to crumble again here, you just sorted it all out laughter and so that's why humans, they experience life as a series of frustrations why can't it work laughter and it doesn't work because they are looking for themselves there they are demanding that the world of form should make them complete and happy, I demand that this world should complete who I am, should give me my sense of self I just need this and that from there and then that's all, this is what I demand and then it's not happening there's something wrong here life isn't working it seems to be working for everybody else but it's not working for me I read in the magazines all these glossy people they, it's it seems to be working for them but only if you look at the glossy pictures if you visited them at home you would see that it's not working for them either so it's built into living here is frustration it's meant to be frustrating this is the larger the whole there is a purpose but people haven't seen it so it's quite a relief to recognize first of all the world cannot make me happy to demand that situations people, places or attainments should complete me or make me happy are bound to be frustrated whether I attain or do not attain okay so that looks very negative doesn't it and that's why when you don't go deeper when you only see the surface you see oh all is vanity as the Old Testament prophet said vanity of vanities all is vanity I've seen it all, I can't remember the exact words but I'm giving you a free translation I've seen it all I've done it all and it's all completely meaningless that's what he said and that was probably an elderly man who had tried it all and now why did they put this into the Bible isn't it very negative to have such a statement that life is completely vain, whatever you can achieve is vanity they put that in there because when you see the truth of it you're already becoming free of it the seeing of the inability of the world to make you happy the seeing of the short lived nature of whatever forms you encounter in your life what is it in you that is able to see that and say ah or even laugh what before was a dreadful story and frustration, you suddenly step out of your own story and see that your own frustrating story is not your personal dilemma but the human condition and you derived your sense of self from that which is nothing personal whatsoever it's the human condition and that it's the human condition in it's unconscious state it's unenlightened state and that's what gave you your sense of personal selfhood and that you wanted to cling to and now you step out of it by simply seeing it the seeing means something is arising that is not part of that unconsciousness and that is why they put it into the bible because when you see it that which can witness that in you the impermanent nature of all forms the fictitious nature of the mind made story what is it in you that is able to look at that and see that is not thought, that is the ability to be aware and hold up the mirror of awareness and simply see it there or let's say better the light of awareness shines on it the light of awareness shines on it and sees what before you were trapped in, the frustrating story of my life and there is no life that is not ultimately frustrating it only begins, it loses its frustration when you do not look to the world anymore for your satisfaction or for yourself when you give up demanding that people, places, situations should make you happy and give you fulfill you, you don't demand it anymore, then suddenly the ability arises to allow the forms of this moment to be as they are because life at this moment already always is as it is it always the isness you cannot doubt whatever forms appear in the present moment it always is as it is and so most humans are in a conflict relationship with the isness of life they internally run away from it or reject it criticize it complain about it or look somewhere else I don't want the isness of this, I want that so when you see what the world cannot do for you you no longer drop your demand because you see it as absurd to demand something of the world that it cannot deliver and then you can simply be with whatever is and is and this moment are always inseparable of course, whatever is at this moment is as it is I don't demand that this place even if you come here and you demand that Fintan should make me happy, if you came with that demand you would probably already have experienced frustration here because no place is capable of doing that for long or doing it at all and so you come here and say oh that shouldn't be here there's a royal air force base right next to the spiritual center, it doesn't make sense and so you can complain about that that shouldn't be, why did they put that here they should have gone somewhere else and then you can say I came here to find peace and what do I find I find screaming jets I'm going home

[Speaker 3] (8:28:06 - 8:28:10)

and that's only one thing

[Speaker 1] (8:28:11 - 8:33:57)

and you'll find many more my roommate snores I can't get a night I have to wait for the bathroom and it's not sunny this is late May and it's not sunny, I should never have come to Scotland so if you just little examples of if you expect a place to fulfill you, it can't do that no place, even if you went to a South Pacific island there would be something that is not quite right, it doesn't fit there whatever it is the sunshine every day it's too much the mosquitoes at night they didn't, I didn't know about that they didn't mention them in the travel brochures so here again a beautiful opportunity to drop the demand that a particular place should make you happy or give you peace or help you find yourself and simply then bring a yes to whatever form this moment takes, instead of demanding that the form of this moment should be different in order to satisfy me so you bring an inner alignment into your relationship with the present moment let's put it like that the way in which you relate to life which is always now only now an inner alignment comes in with now so you do not internally separate yourself from now, which is life life and now are one because that is a source of great frustration and suffering and so whatever form this moment takes there's a jet flying it may be raining and then there's some sun coming through, good, bad the mind could call this good could call this bad, but it all is as it is at this moment and an enormous freedom comes into your life when you drop the demand that this should be other than it is and then you no longer demand that Fintan should make you happy or give you peace and then every moment or rather the one moment is as it is you go one step at a time to wherever you go and you look around and you stand and you walk and you sit and there are people coming, people going things here things there and suddenly as you bring an inner alignment to the now something arises within you that has nothing to do with the form that this moment takes and it arises because you allow the form that this moment takes to be as it is so in allowing the form that this moment takes internally embracing it, saying I might as well say yes because it is life because it is the only moment there ever is the now I might as well embrace it and say yes, that's how it is this does not diminish your ability to change if anything needs changing action arises out of the alignment with what is so you can be aligned with getting something that is not good, you can have food that's gone cold and then you bring it back to the kitchen and you say, this food is cold, would you please heat it up again if it's possible nothing wrong with that but the action comes out of alignment the same action could arise out of an inner resistance to what is and then this immediately self comes in, a complaining self a self that enhances itself through its complaints and then walks the same action but with a fundamentally different energy field, you then walk with that plate to the kitchen and say what is this, don't you know, don't you heat your food here, what, you should be, this you should be serving you are in this your action is to enhance yourself through it, to make the self right to strengthen the fiction of me and then you do that to another human and that other human is going to defend itself and try to react in order to reduce the diminishment of their sense of self because that's what the ego tends to do, it says you are wrong it tries to diminish the fiction of that other person and then the other will defend itself and come up with even bigger cannons and start shouting back at you in order to defend its diminishment of, again, the diminishment of the fiction what a world laughter

[Speaker 3] (8:33:58 - 8:33:59)

so you could

[Speaker 1] (8:33:59 - 8:43:20)

live, when you live in alignment with what is intelligence arises in your life that is far greater than the accumulated knowledge of the mind or the ability of the mind to analyze or solve IQ problems or crossword puzzles that's a limit very tiny form of intelligence, nothing wrong with it but it's tiny but that's what this world calls intelligence you can memorize and analyze and be quick in giving answers manipulate thoughts and keep as many thoughts as possible in your head laughter and yet there's a far deeper intelligence that our civilization knows nothing of and it's that out of which all true creation comes, true creativity comes and so that is accessed when you bring a yes, no more than that a yes to the present moment that by the way includes the past because there are some people who carry a strong grievance or resentment connected with something that happened in the past somebody did it to you or a situation happened in the past and there's still a strong grievance that they carry and how does that work when I say accepting the present moment accepting the present moment the way it is now includes accepting the past because it is only because you believe that something that happened in the past is interfering somehow with your ability to be alive or to be yourself or to be fully yourself at this moment you're saying okay maybe you lost a limb or something like that, somebody cut it off ten years ago and you carry the grievance so how does when you accept this moment as it is you accept this as it is one limb is missing that is as it is, that is the form that this moment takes well and you accept that this is how it is then you don't have the reference to the past anymore as having caused that and on the level of form of course that is a disability it prevents you from winning

Wimbledon this year you can't do it anymore yes on the level of form perhaps that imposed some limitation on your life but the world is full of limitations that are inherent in form if it's not one set of limitations you will encounter some other set of limitations so there's almost never a present moment that does not have certain limitations even the noise coming occasionally from the air force base next door could be considered a kind of limitation or even if you can't get a good night's sleep because your roommate snores could be considered a relatively minor limitation in your life but there are large limitations and they are also to do with the world of form and that's what the world of form does you can exchange limitations you can of course improve your life on the level of form there's nothing wrong with that as long as you're not looking for yourself in it it's beautiful to play with forms in your life ok I'm going to make money now I'll play with that but not hoping that once you've made enough then you can finally be someone if you're not someone now, being you cannot find it through money or through future then you can play with the world of form and the miraculous thing is when you drop your demands towards the world of form it should make you happy then wherever you find yourself whatever situation you find yourself in whoever you meet wherever you go place situation, person is actually quite satisfying because you have touched something within yourself that is deeper than the movement of thought which is form deeper than form the movement of thought is still form so the simple thing of internally bringing a yes to this moment is that all?

yes but it needs for you to do that requires a certain degree of presence to be able to say this is as it is instead of being taken over by an old reactive pattern governed by the fictitious self that says this doesn't fit into the story of me or how can I fit this into my this isn't completing my story in fact this shouldn't be in my story at all, get out of here so many people they were walking stories often when they meet other humans they don't want to be with other humans say get out of my story you shouldn't be in here I want somebody else in here and again so you step beyond, you step out of the movement of thought and the stillness and the peace arises the moment you become friendly with what is, that's all become friendly with what is, no matter what form this is takes it's going to change anyway quite soon and people who are stuck for years are usually stuck because there is a resistance pattern inside them that keeps them stuck in the same situation and the resistance pattern says I want to get out of this dreadful place that I'm in and every day they go to the office and they say this is and the same energy is there, the negativity and the resistance and every time they answer the phone, yes laughter and so you get some people traditionally people at government offices carry a lot of frustration, I don't know if that's still true, probably is everywhere these days laughter and so you people are continuously, and they say why am I stuck in this boring job with all these dreadful people, they always want something from me and 25 years later they're still stuck and complaining and then they hear the message, it is possible to live differently, it is possible to say yes, not to not say yes to a story not say yes to okay I might as well accept that I've spent 25 years in this dreadful office and I'm probably going to spend another 10 years in this dreadful office, I might as well say yes to that because I read that in a book somewhere laughter no, this has nothing to do with bringing a yes to some kind of story about your life or if you were in prison to say okay I might as well accept that everything has failed in my life and I've been in here for 20 years and I've got to do another 15 years and I might as well accept that I've been a miserable failure saying yes to the present moment only means the present moment, not a story it means it takes you out of the story and that is vital in your spiritual life now, as a spiritual practice it is as often as possible to break the continuity between past and future okay I'm coming from there and I'm going there I'm just busy trying to get there and getting this done, I'm on my way there, don't stop me now

[Speaker 3] (8:43:21 - 8:43:22)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (8:43:26 - 8:43:31)

and break okay but what about this moment where are you at this moment, this moment

[Speaker 3] (8:43:32 - 8:43:33)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (8:43:34 - 9:03:55)

oh and suddenly you wake up out of that stream of past future that was pulled you from past to future that is old conditioning, same old thing, same old thing no matter how much you complain, the more you complain, the more you're stuck and suddenly you take the present moment out of the story and you ah, you wake up and suddenly alertness comes for example you might hear the birds singing oh and you realise it's beautiful and you feel yourself breathing and you feel an aliveness in the body, every cell is alive the life that you are that which animates the body and as you feel that aliveness you're also aware that there's a stillness around you and in that stillness there's this incredibly beautiful sound that this little being produces which is a celebration of life every moment you've stepped out of the story into the aliveness of the present moment and yet you can still deal with things you may still be walking wherever you have to go and when you arrive there you're there and confront another human being you can still be present so there's more and more presence rather than time it's reversing whereas before you were dominated by time now you use time still but allow presence in which means break the story as often as you can step out into the aliveness of this moment and then a far greater intelligence comes in and love and joy, all the things that otherwise you can only think about but never experience all those suddenly come in and transform even the story not that the story is ever going to be continuously wonderful in the level of form forms always come and go but because you're not dependent anymore on the forms of your life, the circumstances of your life, you have accessed the life that is beyond form that is you the stillness the aliveness the I am that is deeper than I am this or I am that and then all those all the beauty and aliveness and joy that is there in the moment even if the forms were crumbling it can be there you would be missing the whole thing because you would be drifting continuously adrift in the mind only and the bird you would not even hear it or hear it for a moment and say oh that's pretty and then okay my problems what are my problems whenever you think you have problems a good question is what is the problem now well well I'm trying to see my lawyer about this thing and there's a bank I'm going bankrupt and I'm seeing my lawyer about what is the problem now there's no problem I'm sitting here breathing beautiful bird sing bird song stillness space there's an aliveness that I feel inside every cell is alive there isn't really a problem now but there may be one tomorrow and of course when tomorrow comes you have to ask the same question what is the problem now as you sit in front of the lawyer and say sign here to declare your bankruptcy you say okay what is the problem now here's a piece of paper and here's a pen scratching on a piece of paper and then you put it down and you listen to the bird and see the tree and the flower and feel the aliveness within and say I'm still alive so you don't need the idea I am a bankrupt person to give you your sense of self anymore because your sense of self comes from the life that you are the aliveness of your very being and then yes on the level of form it happens that I had to declare bankruptcy I'm still breathing and the bird is still singing and a million people before me have survived that and this is just one example a more extreme example a friend of mine Byron Katie spiritual teacher was visiting a woman in hospital who had advanced cancer and she came into her room hospital room and the woman was of course very unhappy and she and Byron Katie said to her I don't see a problem and the woman got even more unhappy and she said you don't see a problem I'll show you a problem and she took off her blanket and showed her right leg was two or three times the size of her left leg this is a problem and Byron Katie said oh so your problem is that you think your right leg should be the same size as your left leg and in that moment the woman laughed for the first time in a long time she laughed because she dissociated from the thought form she stepped out of thought which judged this form as wrong which judged the present moment as wrong, should not be she was trapped in the thought form, this should not be invested with a sense of self and so the stepping out is vital for you the story has a momentum that will reassert itself again and again because that is the momentum of the mind and I'm not saying that you no longer deal with things in your daily life you deal with them much more effectively when you have access to the deeper dimension where true intelligence resides, that can then flow even into the way in which you deal with things on the level of form so even on the level of your story the story will unfold more harmoniously when you no longer demand that it should make you happy or do anything for you then you can truly honour this level of form because the neediness is gone because you are not looking to it anymore to give you a sense of who you are, because who you are comes out of the aliveness and depth of this moment and so to step out of the story and into this moment as much as you can is vital, always ok, just a second, where is it now, especially when you get upset you lose yourself in some thought movement or you can help others if you have an agreement with your partner or friend and when you can see that they are not losing themselves in thought which almost certainly is going to be a world of problems it's not that they are solving problems by thinking they are creating problems by thinking to solve the true solutions always come when for a moment you step out of thinking and become truly intelligent by becoming still and present and alive and then if thought should come back often a little later you suddenly have a creative insight that before wasn't there and then it came because that dimension operated in your life and then it comes more and more and then everything changes your relationships change because you don't demand that the other person should do something for me enhance my sense of self you don't compare yourself to others and try to be more than another to strengthen your sense of self it's fine to allow everyone to be as they are and you don't need to change them to say you should behave differently and then I'll be happy if you behave differently you will make me happy but in the meantime I'm going to be very unhappy and I'm going to show you that I'm unhappy so that you behave differently and then finally make me happy and many relationships work like that the partners show each other they're very unhappy because they want to change in their behavior and of course by their unhappiness they strengthen the same pattern and so especially in this beautiful place here don't pollute the garden of Fintan and be a walking story here that is heavy your steps become heavy and where a walking story steps no grass grows and so humanity that is collectively how humanity is on the planet now a great heaviness has descended on the planet and that is the collective human mind with its accumulated enormous amount of negativity and dreadful delusion and that's the heaviness that weighs heavily on nature also and all life forms feel that pain so here step lightly don't carry don't carry the burden of personal selfhood around with you which is your past and your problematic future but be light as take one step at a time and be the presence through which you perceive be there with every step and when you perceive the tree the flower you are able to perceive against the background of stillness so you are not creating a barrier of concepts between nature and yourself a field of oneness arises between nature and yourself and then nature will be extremely helpful it's teaching you to be one with life to be still just go to any tree and see how still it is and the moment you notice how still and alive and surrendered to life the tree is that in you which notices that is the stillness otherwise you wouldn't even see that there's stillness there if you approach it only with thought you would have some kind of personal thing to do with nature oh that tree that would be great in my garden and don't feel guilty if that thought crossed your mind or even more the wanting to pick a flower don't do it here also why I must have that it's mine now even on that level the personal self can come in or it comes in oh that looks like a tree that my aunt Mary had ten years ago in her garden I wonder if it's still there oh she was a strange person wasn't she but to be truly present there as you're a field of aware presence walking and then it may happen that in addition to the beauty that you see around you and give walk sometimes and be with give some attention to perhaps a tree or flower for a little while just be with it no wanting, nothing just being with it and then you may notice there's the form you may notice in the background the presence that you are the light of consciousness in which this tree appears the presence the stillness that you are as the background to whatever you perceive but trees flowers different noises in nature and so there's the that which appears, the form and that which is the space that enables this form to appear which is the space of yourself the space of now the space of consciousness the one consciousness the light of consciousness in which forms appear so that is and even here as you sit here you can sense that in the foreground there's this room, there's the voice the shapes and colours and yet what is it that makes all this possible to be to be the being, being itself before it becomes something that is the one life the one consciousness that you are underneath the form so you are in two dimensions one could say at the same time the formless space and form and this is your practice in nature nature is not challenging it doesn't, you can stay present easily with a tree or flower human beings are more challenging and so they pull you quickly into identification again with form with thought, reaction because most humans still come from thought they are thought entities and they want you to contribute to their universe and they say give me more thought confirm to me that my story is important and then you can tell me yours and I'll do the same for you laughter laughter laughter and in bed tonight as you lie there you may find the mind wanting to drag you along with it again and think about, okay there's only one more day or whatever it is, one more day or three more days or four more days left here and then I have to think about the things that are waiting for me when I get home let me think about my problems now laughter and then you suddenly remember ah, the now all there ever is this moment where is it of course you can't see it but sometimes it happens that you wake up your sense perception suddenly wake up

[Speaker 3] (9:03:55 - 9:03:56)

ah

[Speaker 1] (9:03:56 - 9:04:28)

and then you feel the aliveness in the body and you can lie on your bed feeling the aliveness within that permeates the body yes, this life is subtle but it's there and then the need to think lessens and you can just be a field of aware presence and perhaps you can listen to certain noises that you hear from nature and if it's your roommate snoring that's fine too, that's what is

[Speaker 3] (9:04:29 - 9:04:30)

and be

[Speaker 1] (9:04:30 - 9:04:50)

and if you have to remove yourself from that room that's fine or if you throw something at him or her you can do that too your ability to do things is not diminished when you live in surrender all it means, I surrender to what is I could try it, let's see if he wakes up if I throw something at him

[Speaker 3] (9:04:50 - 9:04:51)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (9:04:54 - 9:05:25)

okay still snoring laughter and you see that things that before would have created frustration and upset and anger and there's so many that happen in a person's life, all those things that before would have created that now are simply part of the is-ness of this moment and suddenly you have a space around it

[Speaker 3] (9:05:26 - 9:05:27)

okay

[Speaker 1] (9:05:28 - 9:26:07)

and that space is the space of presence and so you get to know yourself as the spaciousness around things so to speak not the thing you are that which allows the thing to be and then to disappear and then something else to come that's the now, that's the deeper meaning of now is the space in which everything happens and so the now and yourself are one and the power of now of course is the power of life of the very being that you are, and when I say yourself of course I don't mean the fictitious self of the story that is form based and thought based but the deeper being that you are being itself freedom from the world ultimately, and then the world becomes a very pleasant place not frustrating anymore things still come and go gain and loss happen birth and death continuously happen and that's how it is and there's an underlying peace and that peace is inseparable from who you are that's our practice this weekend and that's the way we can live our life which isn't really our life at all which is simply life living us life living through us we don't have a life because then there's me and life not possible, we are life the one life in many forms that are born and die continuously the one consciousness, the one life and so life can then live freely through you and it can flower and that flowering may take form also as a creation or it may remain simply as an emanation that comes through this form and that emanation one could call love not the egoic love that says I want you, you stay here I need you and I want you or it says make me happy sign here on the dotted line but the true love the love that is a recognition of oneness as an emanation that's the flowering I suggest you stay for a little while until you feel ready to move stay with the stillness that is here the sacred field the sacred space until it's time to move thank you the bird is teaching much better than I could I'm sure they got it wrong when they say that Saint Francis was preaching to the birds of course he was listening to the birds they didn't understand such a divine sound and such a wonderful exquisite balance between stillness and sound that bird knows about balance there's always quite a long gap and then the next sound comes out of the stillness and it's always fresh and new it's never a repetition of the previous sound with this bird this is why it's so amazing and that would be enough if you have that around as your teacher what else do you need? the bird is teaching the balance between form and formless that's the art of living to live in both dimensions sound and stillness form and formless things and no thingness in this teaching the dimension of stillness of the formless is emphasized because the entire civilization is lost in form in things in objects in thoughts the entire civilization is lost in that dimension of things that includes thoughts and that's why there is a particular emphasis in this teaching on that which is missing balance needs to reestablish itself because no civilization can survive without the balance between form and formless now, everybody has form already more than enough that's why this teaching isn't based on knowledge or new facts interesting facts new information information and because the world is full of that you can push any button of the many devices that you have and you get information information and you're drowning in information and ultimately you see it's what is the point of it all if that's just more of that is that going to save the world more information or more things are we going to find the fullness of life through more things and greater and bigger shopping malls again form or are we going to find ourselves through improving our ability to think and analyze and solve problems analytically that were created by excessive thinking in the first place or as Carl Jung put it, you cannot solve a problem on the same level of consciousness that created the problem and so what created the problem of our civilization is that humans lost touch with the formless dimension which we could also call spirit which we could call the sacred which we could call if that word had not been misused so much, we could call God, but we won't call it that and Jesus said what does it profit you if you gain the whole world and lose yourself or your soul that's really you could already see the tendency where things were going and form also includes time so we cannot deny that time has or seems to be real on the surface of life, because it's everywhere, as far as forms are concerned time seems to do something to the forms, the life forms and it's strange it gradually grinds the forms down, it erodes the forms it does something to them, some people have even looked upon time as some dreadful illness that inflicts everybody and that's one way of looking at it everybody is suffering from a lethal disease the outcome is the end of the form it's just a question of when and so you see it as my father says who is 87 now he says mirrors are not the same quality they used to be laughter laughter laughter laughter laughter so the art is to live in this world where time seems on the one hand to be everywhere and control everything but where on the other hand time is also recognized as ultimately an illusion because if you look more deeply there is no time there is only ever this moment and therefore that is the portal into the formless dimension it's the narrow gate that Jesus talks about that leads to life the narrow gate that leads to life, yes it's very narrow it's only this to find it and

Jesus says there are not many who find it to find it you need to roll up the scroll of your life on which your story is written past future, very unclear you can't quite figure out what's it all about and you roll up people usually live carrying a burden some more than others but every carrying the burden of past me, my history and I'm hoping or fearing which way it's going hope, fear so you have this walking with myself that's the self the form based, mind based time based self and that has a heaviness to it and the more you carry of time, of past and future and think about it and talk about it and refer to as your sense of identity gives you your sense of self things that happened in the past and future, hoping to find yourself, we talked about it then you are lost lost in form, because all these are thought forms time and form go together so you need to roll up you know these old scrolls you had to roll them before there were books you had scrolls you rolled them there's a beautiful story of a vision that the woman who wrote or wrote The Cause in Miracles that came to her as an inner voice, before the whole dictation started she had a vision in which she found a scroll in an old box, a very ancient scroll, and as she started to unfold, unroll the scroll, she saw symbols on the left and other symbols on the right and she heard a voice saying if you read what's on the left, you know the past and if you read what is on the right, you'll know the future and she looked to the left and the right and then she rolled it back to the central panel on which was written God is and she said this is all that I'm interested in I don't want anything else that's all I want God is and then the same voice that had explained to her that is past and that is future said congratulations you made it this time so her focal point had become the present moment if her focal point had not become the present moment the spaciousness that was necessary for the wisdom to come through her, out of the formless it was then given form by her mind, but the spaciousness would not have been there if she had said okay, that's interesting let's see, I'm going to look at the future and then years later she would still be looking at the

[Speaker 2] (9:26:07 - 9:26:08)

oh wow

[Speaker 1] (9:26:10 - 9:32:25)

and the past is interesting too and God is the isness of now just that, and this is, you can use that as an image for your own life as much as possible be interested in this, and that is what we called getting out of the stream of the continuity between past and future as often as possible break that, make space as if you had a veil and you say this is the veil of my life in which things are written, this is a fabric and then you go in there and separate it and then you put your head through into another dimension the way you see it in some of these films of magic and that is the awakening into now and as we are all, we are transitional humans at this evolutionary stage of humanity many humans alive now are transitional beings they are dysfunctional as their manifestations of the old consciousness they are becoming more and more dysfunctional because the old consciousness that is totally identified with mind, form and time that's been running human history for thousands of years is reaching the end of its life span it cannot survive much longer and so every human being carries the old also still inside and many humans and certainly those present here and many others are transitional beings in the sense that the old still has a momentum within them as the new is arising, I call it new because ultimately it's timeless, it's not new there's no time at all but let's say I saw the name of one second hand shop was called new to you so no words can really ever express the exact truth you have to be allow for the fact that language is never quite right and especially is never quite right when you begin to speak of spiritual truth the formless because every word is form and ultimately can only function by expressing reflecting something in the world of form and then it becomes difficult when the language is used to express something that is beyond form and that's why Jesus used parables and he never said this is the kingdom of heaven he said the kingdom of heaven is like or is a little bit like that or like that and he gives you little stories and then the form of the words as long as you don't get entangled in the words and say oh this is how it is if you allow the words to be pointers, little signposts then it can work but if you say there's the truth it's not the truth is not in the word and especially in spiritual discourse, the truth is that to which the word points so you have to look beyond the words especially here and so we learn to bring a balance into our lives between time and timelessness between the world of things, handling that situations things objects and not getting lost in things in the world of things in the world of situations in the world not losing yourself in the world and that world includes not only the external world but also the world that you carry as the mind made world in the head because that one creates that one the human made world the so called external human made world and the inner state of consciousness of course one continuum the inner the outer only reflects the inner and so on the outer level for example we have a civilization that is extraordinarily noisy if somebody came from some past civilization even 200 years back, thousand years back and would arrive here in a city or even in a small town they would say what is going on this deafening noise everywhere and the machines everywhere that make noise, have I arrived in the hell realm and if they don't have the noises that are produced by machines they have to make noise just for the sake of noise there's some good music but a lot of so called music that you hear in restaurants I don't know if it's the same here in North America hard to find a restaurant without loud music you just open the door and put your head in and you go out again

[Speaker 3] (9:32:26 - 9:32:27)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (9:32:31 - 9:45:15)

and a lot of that is for the sake of making noise it's called music laughter there are some exceptions of course, some music can have a divine function too in some rare cases it still has music that comes out of the stillness that when you listen to music that came out of the stillness whoever created it or whoever is playing it or singing it it comes out of that state of consciousness and whatever then it assumes a form and yet the form is fresh and new it's come out of that and the stillness still clings to it has a fragrance it still emanates that even if it's sound and that's the beauty of all art true art it reflects still that state of consciousness out of it and then you have a lot of pseudo art in this world where clever minds are trying to be even more clever let's think of something new what can we do here maybe we could do that here or that could go there that would look clever they call it art but it lacks something it's totally trapped in form there's only manipulating old forms nothing new has come in and nothing that can lead you back to the formless which is the original reason for all art is the sacred to be a portal an access point for the sacred so that when you see it or experience it you experience yourself in it you see yourself reflected the formless reflected shining through the form that is why it's true art always there is more than what you see or hear it's not just what you see or hear there is more than that and that shines through the form and that is what can happen to you what is happening to you ultimately it's not everybody's purpose to create works of art a few humans do that that is their function partly in this world but much more importantly is for you to become that work of art your whole life and your very being becomes transparent so that the formless can shine through and that happens when you are no longer totally identified with the world of form and that happens when you have access to the realm of stillness within yourself and then something emanates through the form that is not nothing to do with the form it may emanate only as a silent emanation and not assume any form as such and so that is sometimes the case with so called there have been very few in the past holy people who simply in India they have always existed in any generation in India there have always been a few holy men or women who never did anything and that's very rare for the west they say what did they create what did they do and they never did anything they just sat there and the west says what a useless existence come on get a life, get a job and some even because people when you are trapped in form you misperceive it completely because all you see there is a useless form sitting and they say they are parasites on society they allow themselves to be fed by other people they bring them their food, they should work for a living like myself and that is when the mind that knows nothing but form, looks at the form it will totally misperceive it and so that's the beauty that in India they have always recognized that because they haven't completely lost touch in fact they may have gone at some point too far in the opposite direction so that they lost interest in form because they went into being more now India is becoming western the more you read about India the more you see they are all into computers these days and so forth and that's fine too but the question is where is finding a balance I was totally lost like most people completely lost in form and then a shift happened and I lost the balance and I became completely lost in the formless we can't really be lost in the formless it's just a way of putting it because the formless is essentially who you are and yet from a normal perspective it looked as if I had lost it because there was somebody who had this promising career and suddenly just sits around on park benches not doing anything anymore just being and tasting continuously the sweetness of being of simply the beauty the sweetness of being alive the joy of simply being and then looking upon the world and seeing it reflected in all life forms reflected the joy of being in the trees and the birds and even in the humans who are running around like mad and knowing that deep down there there's also the very same being and it's beautiful so from an external perspective the ability to handle forms was gone to manipulate the world of form was gone for a while and then gradually had to reestablish itself so I could do again and of course be at the same time and that is the it is not the destiny of each one of you to move so deeply into being that you're no longer capable of handling the world of form around you it happens occasionally but it tends to happen more to those people those few who experience a dramatic shift from one to the other and then for a while they're gone there's of course the beautiful the beautiful sutra of Buddha gate gate gone gone gone to the farthest shore and yet it seems it is our destiny here while we are still in form to balance form and formless here and that's why we are here and for most of you the transition to a new and what is the new state of consciousness that's arising it is the state that is balanced the two dimensions the manifested and the unmanifested balanced in a human being and that is such a radical transformation that when a certain number of humans live in that way so they become what before was a work of art you become the work of art you become that which is transparent to the formless the divine and then that will change the entire world the way what you experience as the human made world will be changed completely it is not necessary to speculate now what is the world going to look like when enough humans live in the new consciousness that's not important now the important thing is for us to enter that new state and then what that does to your story who knows how that changes the story the way in which your life unfolds in time what you do out here how that affects where you live what you do and so on you cannot predict nor do you need to predict that are you going to become a great artist are you going to win Wimbledon and of course bear in mind that great artists and the tennis players they are not enlightened masters they have access to that which is greater than the limited human mind in the small field of their activity and most of them when they go back into normal life away from where they have mastery they are just as mad as everybody else and sometimes even more mad because sometimes the mind made entity gets in there and looks at what they did and says, I did that that was me the greatest illusion and then of course it feels very special, the ego then derives its it identifies with whatever came out of the state of no ego and says, I did that and then begins to believe what other people are saying about you and that you are the greatest because they all, they project their images of specialness onto you and then, oh the great pop star, whatever and the great pop stars also they have when they compose their songs or some of them where there is even a glimpse of aliveness and freshness yes, there's something there and then the personality the person comes back the moment they step back from the act of creation or the performance they step back and there's the old personality and sometimes it's a dreadful burden for some ability that comes from the non-personal realm to be integrated into the personal and they just can't do it, it's totally misperceived, just as the world misperceives it and then they believe themselves to be very special

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[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 34:23)

Ability that comes from the non-personal realm to be integrated into the personal, and they just can't do it. It's totally misperceived, just as the world misperceives it, and then they believe themselves to be very special. And there comes a huge conflict between power that comes out of the formless and the limited person that misinterprets it and claims something out of that.

And the magic that comes from the formless realm into your life is what, when you look at our civilization, it seems to be gone completely because the civilization is almost totally not sacred. It is profane. It is a dreary, burdensome structure that humans have created.

When you look at the mainstream civilization, and so many humans, no matter what country you go to, they seem to be tired. They are weary. There's a weariness that they carry, and the civilization is grinding them down.

Another day of dreary activity, of pointless running around, and even those who are still running around, they know deep down it's pointless. What is the point? And you ask the big executives in companies, where are you going?

Why are you running around like mad? And they can't give you an answer except that, well, we are expanding. The organization is expanding.

We are swallowing up other organizations, and that's our reason for being, is to grow, to get bigger. It's to accumulate more, and so it's all, this is why we are, and it's totally meaningless activity. And so there are many reasons why the entire civilization is reaching a point of collapse, and one is that the humans who are still sustaining it they can't carry the burden of their self-created structures anymore, the over-complicated world, absurd complexity for the sake of complexity that they have created, and they cannot carry their own burden of their own creation anymore, mind-created, just a reflection of their state of consciousness in which there is no gap in the stream of one form after another, one thought after another. The voice in the head that never stops speaking becomes a civilization that is obsessed with form, that is obsessed with things, and therefore knows nothing of that which you could say is the most important dimension of human existence, the sacred, the stillness, the formless, the divine, all these have become meaningless in our civilization, and yet many humans are beginning to realize what's happening, and so there is in many a search for something else, and that number of humans is growing every day, and that's the beauty of it. So, each one of us here is part of the transformation of consciousness that's happening on the planet. It's not going to happen, it is happening.

If it were not happening, you could not even sit here. It would be intolerable to sit here. And yet, there may be something in you that's the old consciousness that doesn't want to be here.

You may occasionally feel that arises. There's something that doesn't even understand what is being said, that hears only the sound of the words, and says it can't go to where the words point, so you get stuck with the form, the sound, stuck with the thought, and says presence, stillness, stillness. Well, you haven't actually explained what you mean by stillness.

So this is a good example where the word is only the pointer, and then you have to jump off the word. Stillness points to stillness. It's not something to be believed in.

And the stillness, of course, is already in you. It is not something that we need to create here. We need to bring about by doing the right things, and then eventually we'll become still.

Follow a certain course of a recipe. If you do A, B, C, and D, you will finally become still. That's very seductive.

But you have given yourself something to do before you can be still, which means before you can find yourself and be yourself. That is the problem of every method, every spiritual method. Not that I would outright condemn all methods, but the danger with any method is that it gives you time.

It says, OK, you will arrive and find yourself. Why not find yourself already? Why create something between yourself and yourself?

So the stillness that is already at this moment in you fully, the stillness out of which the thoughts come. Every thought comes out and then goes back in. Sense perceptions get you a little closer to it.

When you perceive, and do not label it, whatever you perceive, you just let it be, then there is the perception, the form, and there is the, one could almost say, this is a limited analogy, no analogies are that great, but you could say there is the canvas on which the perception is painted. There is a background of spacious stillness. That's yourself.

That's the consciousness that you are, formless. Not the conditioned consciousness that is the forms in your mind, thoughts. They are there too.

But simply being able to sense that which underlies whatever you perceive, or think, or feel. Gurdjieff put it, the Russian teacher who lived at the beginning of the 20th century, put it like he called it self-remembrance. And of course that can be misinterpreted as if you had to think about, okay, let me remember who I am.

My name is such and such. No. He meant to remember, not even to remember, words are never right, to know the knower.

To know who knows this. Who, in a dream, let's say you dream, and then you wake up and say it was only a dream, it was unreal. Of course it wasn't totally unreal because something within the forms that arose in the dream must have been there to enable these forms to exist.

There must have been a consciousness in which this dream unfolded. And so, in other words, there must have been a dreamer of the dream as the consciousness in which it happened. And that is the timeless and formless dimension without which forms would not exist.

And so our normal existence is very much like a dream because just like a dream everything dissolves fairly quickly. Every situation, everything is... And even the seemingly solid reality that surrounds us is not really that solid.

First of all, there's nothing solid. It just appears solid. It's just energy fields in motion.

And they're not going to remain in that form for very long. If you could look more deeply you could see everything is already dissolving. It's temporary.

It comes into form and dissolves. The bodies that are sitting here are already dissolving. Even this table.

If we look in 200 years it will still look more or less the same. But if we could speed up on camera what happens to this room over a period of 3,000 years which is very little on a global scale then we would see that even all seemingly solid objects are crumbling. Within one minute you would see everything becoming dust and then disappearing.

And it would be a shocking and liberating thing to watch a film like that that shows you what is actually happening to the seemingly solid world around you. And deep down it's a liberating thing when you see how short-lived every form is. Because what is it in you that sees that?

The short-lived nature of all forms and you witness that. That is the aware presence. From the stillness you see that.

And actually you become more still the more you see how short-lived every form is. And you don't run away from that fact. You just stay with it.

Let's see how important it is to face death in your life which is everywhere. Which is what our civilization is trying to hide continuously. There is no death.

Don't ever look at a dead body because it just isn't done. So there are people who have never seen a dead body. And certainly if it's not a close relative you would not be able to see a dead body.

Because the civilization needs to hide death. Because it's the most threatening thing to somebody who is totally identified with the world of form. Death is the most dreadful thing and you must not think about it or talk about it.

And so whenever you are faced with death there is and even just watching it and when the table dissolves that's death too. If you saw it over a period of 3000 years and saw it crumbling within a minute the entire room and everything in it goes or you would see a human being being born. Somebody showed me a clip from an ad from some country.

It takes one minute. A baby is coming out of the womb and shoots out like a cannonball into the sky and screams all the time. But as the baby travels up into the sky it already begins to grow and grows and goes higher and higher and finally reaches full maturity and then starts going downhill and is still screaming.

And the closer and then becoming an old man as he approaches the ground hair is falling out and finally the last scream and he lands in the grave. And it says underneath life is short. Now whether the people who made that film knew that they were making a spiritual film I don't know.

I think they were selling beer or something like that. But that is deeply spiritual when you see how quickly everything dissolves and you don't run away from that fact. And this that again what I mentioned yesterday the Old Testament prophet who said vanity of vanities all is vanity to see that is liberating.

Because this now if everything were permanent it's the same as saying if the entire world were blue there would be no blue because you couldn't differentiate it. The color blue wouldn't exist. Now if everything were impermanent you wouldn't even know it because you only know it if there's something that's different.

So I just give you this to consider and not to think about to consider that there's something in you that recognizes the impermanent nature of all life forms and that is the formless. And the more you realize the impermanence of all forms the more the form you are aware of the formless in yourself. But you and the formless are ultimately one so when I say you are aware of the formless we are already making a little mistake that's created by language.

What it really is that you are more fully yourself. You are more aware of yourself not as two but as one. You become more self-aware.

Awareness becomes aware of itself. And there was a question here written by somebody who probably doesn't like public speaking. Later we may have some more questions.

In the now sometimes I'm aware of expanding. What is this? It seems to be awareness itself.

If I am aware of awareness duality, which am I? Good question. I am aware this is what it seems like when we talk about it.

But that's not how it is. It's only when we put it into language we formulate a sentence which has a subject and an object. But really when you become aware of awareness which really is the secret to a balanced human life to become aware of awareness and then also the forms.

But what does that mean? Who is becoming aware of awareness? The language that we use here creates the illusion of duality.

So it would be much better if we rephrase that and we say the awareness that I am becomes aware of itself. No duality. The awareness that is the essence of who I am becomes aware of itself.

And that is a miraculous beautiful, incredible thing. What traditionally has been called self-realization. Becoming aware.

Awareness becoming aware of itself. As simple as this. But every word reduces it again to something that is far greater.

And of course there is a sense of expansion because you are no longer trapped as the questioner mentions expanding. You are no longer trapped. Your consciousness is no longer trapped in the form.

That's the incarnation. The incarnation of consciousness into form and the realization of consciousness as the formless. And so some spiritual traditions speak of reincarnating many times.

And you say you reincarnate again and again until you wake up, until you realize who you are beyond form. And that is true. You are born again and again.

But I want to make it not as something that I want you to believe in, but to make it true in your experience. And to make it true in your experience, all you need to look at is today. How you reincarnate today.

Now how does that happen? How do I reincarnate today? I thought it just happens once in a lifetime.

You know the sticker that the born again Christians have on their cars says born again Christians. And the Buddhists have on their car born again and again and again. How do you reincarnate today?

And how many times do you reincarnate today? Every time you lose yourself in a thought or an emotion or something that happens out there, which also of course you experience as thought and emotion. Let's say you lose yourself in a situation that says this is important, you must deal with this.

Okay, what's going on here? And then you lose yourself in the reactive pattern and in the mental interpretation or this is awful, you must do something about it. Whatever it is, you identify with a form.

Every thought that arises in your mind that grips you completely, there's a sense of self in it. It's unconscious of course. Your sense of self means your sense of identity gets mixed up with the form of that thought or the emotion.

And so you're completely incarnated in the form that arises in your life. And so humans go through life not knowing, not realizing that every day they reincarnate many times. They lose themselves continuously in forms.

They react to the forms around them. They're totally in the reaction. There is not an awareness in the background.

Of, okay, this is what's going on. So there's no space, there's only form. There's no stillness, there's only noise.

And that means being compulsively reincarnate, reincarnating every day many times. And even while you sit alone in your room and you start thinking about, oh, oh, if you were talking out loud the voice in your head that you identify with, everybody would recognize it as insane. But, oh, but then on the other hand, I don't know, then what if I do that, then you, I wonder what happens if I go, oh, that would be dreadful if that happens.

I just hope that the, oh, no, I hadn't thought of that before. And you reincarnate continuously into some new thought form. And so, of course, that's why Buddhists talk about coming to the end of reincarnation simply means not losing yourself in form again and again and again.

And it doesn't mean you reject all forms. Some spiritual traditions go a little bit far in their attempt to find the formless dimension. They say, don't even look at anything beautiful because it's not going to be around for very long.

It's all dissolving already. Don't even look at the flower. Certainly don't, they tell the monks, never look at a beautiful woman.

You must not look. And so they go, hmm. laughter Because you would reincarnate in many ways.

You lose yourself in the attraction and that's dangerous. So a monk mustn't even, he can't hand a woman something because it's dangerous. He has to, he puts it on the table and then she picks it up because otherwise there could be some indirect contact.

Now, the idea behind it may be a good one, that you mustn't lose yourself in form. And yet, to reject the world of form is perhaps again losing balance again in the other direction. All beauty is dust.

Because whatever I look upon is already dissolving. The flower that looks beautiful today, tomorrow will be gone with it. And so, in some traditions, the entire world of form is rejected completely.

Now, occasionally, that seems to work. Mostly it doesn't. But here and there, some people realize this even within that tradition.

But that probably doesn't have anything to do with the traditions. They would have realized even if they were sitting in an office. They were ready.

So, it is always problematic if that which is a natural process of disidentification is forced into an artificially created structure. It may work. It works if there is a human being there who embodies the two dimensions, who embodies the awakened state.

Then it can work. In many cases, there is no human being. There is only the tradition.

And then, usually, it doesn't get you there. So, the form... Not rejecting forms outright.

I work with to see that in every form, something is hiding that is one with the essence of who you are. That is not something you can think about. It is if you...

Anything that you look upon and you are still enough to listen to, the bird, whatever it may be. Anything that you can be with in stillness. So that you sense yourself as the still space in which that object or that being is perceived.

Then you sense that that essence that you sense yourself to be is also there in that being. And even in inanimate objects. Even a table has being, has presence.

Some people need to take acid for the first time to realize that the table is alive too. But this is not what I recommend here. All you need to be is present with it and truly be alert and still and then look.

The moment you call it table you are under the illusion that now you know what it is. You don't know at all. It remains totally unknown and mysterious.

Just because you put a label on it doesn't mean now you know. You just have a thought in your head or a sound that comes out of your mouth and you say that's what it is. And then you cannot go deeper into it because you get stuck at the label.

You hit the label and then you are stuck. Oh, that's a table. Okay.

What's the next thing? You never can go deeper into anything. You only hit one label after another.

Okay. And therefore it's always a search. Because you only hit the surface of things you always then immediately the mind says okay I've done that.

I know what that is. Where's the next thing? There's this continuous looking for the next thing because you can never stay with one thing where the depth that is in everything reveals itself to you.

And that's the restlessness of our civilization that always asks what's next? What's next? And you already see even in relatively young children these days that continuous need for the new stimulus they can't sit still for a moment.

Okay. Because they are used they are addicted to the next thing. Some new mental stimulus because they live in a civilization that is totally only on the surface of things.

Lacking completely in depth. So now you can bring in depth even into your perceptions of things. Perception is much closer to the unmanifested or to being than thought.

Thought is far removed. It's an abstract but you get for many people to become present when they realize oh I'm lost. I'm lost in some problem some world of problems.

Where's the problem now? And they wake up. And the first thing they notice is sense perceptions around them.

They hadn't been aware of that at all because all their attention was in the thoughts. And suddenly they look at the floor. The hand.

The table. The light. And in the looking there's a stillness.

In fact the strange thing is you cannot even look at anything without stillness because even the person who labels things compulsively which is almost everybody there's always a moment when they first let's just talk for a moment about the visual sense but it includes all sense perceptions. There's always a first moment when you first look at something a tree a flower, a table anything there is a one second or so in which there is stillness. And then the mind interprets it or labels it.

But if you can catch yourself when you first look at something there is a brief moment of non-labeling otherwise you wouldn't even see it. And then it recedes almost one could say the sense perception immediately loses its sharpness and aliveness because after one or two seconds the mental label replaces the aliveness that was there. Dead.

And then you look at the next thing or you listen to a bird and there's a moment of pure listening. And then after two seconds the mind says something. Oh, that must be a black bird.

Or what's the name of... Gone. Or whatever the mind says about it.

So if you can catch yourself whenever something new enters your awareness, whether it's auditory or visual, tactile smelling, tasting even, relatively undeveloped senses for contemporary humans there you can be there and be conscious of that first moment when there's no labeling. There's the stillness and the alertness. And if you become conscious of that you may find that it becomes longer.

You don't need to automatically label it. And so the stillness that is the background to sense perceptions becomes faster. It's always fast but you didn't know it.

And so that is how another way in which the stillness in you expands. So to speak. Everything is so to speak about stillness.

The stillness in you expands. And then more and more you move about your life not just when you are passive, passively perceiving, but also bringing it into activity that state of consciousness so to speak that is stillness flows also into what you do. So that you notice you can actually do things better with if they are done in a state of still presence than if you are thinking what you want to achieve through this movement where you want to get to in the next moment.

[Speaker 2] (34:23 - 34:23)

No.

[Speaker 1] (34:23 - 51:22)

You're just present with so there's a stillness to what you perceive and there's a stillness that flows into the action and the action may be simple. Walking across the room. Opening a window.

Turning on the tap. Feeling the water. Listening to the water.

Looking out of the window. In the morning you open the curtains. And why?

It's simply a deep seated habit to immediately call this day something and say oh no, not another grey day. No, just let it be. And then there's immediately a depth to everything that wasn't there when you immediately put a label on it.

So you stay with things a little longer and that depth is your own depth and the depth there. They are really one. The things of the world then are no longer experienced just as a surface phenomenon but as alive.

Because the depth is the aliveness also in you. And so this is the shift that is happening to you is that you bring in this so called new consciousness into everyday situations. And you break the continuity of your story.

Then intelligence comes in more and more. Also love. Because the only way love can come into your life is through space.

Not through form. Love has no form. And again in the egoic state love gets entangled in form so you think you need only this form you love.

Not realizing that true love is the recognition of the formless in the other. Which is the recognition of yourself in the other. And that is inseparable from looking upon the other in stillness.

Without a form arising and saying this is who she is or what she is. And if form still arises in your mind, recognize it's only a thought. It's not who that human being is.

And then what beauty if you can recognize the formless in form. First you can recognize it in natural things very easily, much more easily. Because natural things are less challenging than humans.

Humans are were natural once. But now they have become whatever. The world of nature you approach first of all and relate through stillness and presence more and more.

And then gradually you bring it into human relationships. Easy with humans you meet for the first time. Let them be.

And as you're listening vital to be able to listen to another human. It doesn't mean that the words all your attention is on the words when you listen. We're only listening almost as an analogy.

There is a field of attention, of still attention that flows out towards that human being. One could say, you give him or her space. And then that person may be speaking, words arise in the space.

But you are there as the spaciousness that allows words to come. You are there as a field of aware presence. And then words may come out of your mouth suddenly.

And that's very different from so called normal human interaction that is all completely mind dominated. To be still with another human being while you listen and sense yourself as the awareness while you listen. So some of your attention is on the words and some of your attention is now with challenging humans get into your body so that you can be present with your entire energy field, every cell of the body is present as you listen.

Because humans can be very challenging. They want, because they are dominated by mind, they want you to contribute to their mental structures. The drama, whatever it is.

Their pain body may be active. Everybody here probably knows about pain body, which is another way of identifying with form. The old emotion that arises, slight trigger, triggers pain body, a pain body episode, pain body being the old stored up emotion from the past, human suffering, human pain, that hasn't gone away, that is partly personal and partly collective, humanity.

Ultimately, in the larger sense, it's all just human pain. It's not ultimately personal at all. And that is a little entity, energetic entity that lives in you, sometimes dormant, and sometimes active.

And sometimes half dormant, half asleep, with one eye open, waiting for an opportunity, just for a trigger, so that it can come up. And the trigger could be a remark your partner makes. Are you accusing me of being a little...

No, I didn't say that. Yes, you did! And then we start.

The drama, that awakens the partner's pain body, and that's supposed to happen. They feed each other. You totally reincarnate into old pain.

You live it. It lives through you. Not knowing that you are going through another reincarnation.

And you may be a Buddhist and having thoughts in your head that you want to arrive at the end of the cycle of reincarnations and that some abstract entity is in your mind. And you don't know that while you are fighting with your wife, you are reincarnating at this very moment. I must get back to my meditation.

I don't meditate an hour a day. I'll have to reincarnate again and again and again, while you're doing it now. Oh.

So this is one of the most frequent ways in which people reincarnate, is into the old emotion that wants to feed on the experience of more pain. And it pretends to be you. You identify with it.

It occupies your entire space. And you feed on the other person's reaction. And you love it.

When I say you, I mean the pain body. At that moment there is a mistaking the pain body for who you are. That's reincarnation.

And then finally it subsides. And then the next episode will be in a week's time, just like the soap operas. Or it will feed on your mind.

If you have no partner, it will feed on your thinking. How dreadful my life is. What he did to me, she did to me, they did to me.

The world, politicians, people, whatever the mind can think of that's a negative thought, the pain body loves it. The pain body is the addiction to negativity that humans carry. And it's a little entity, an energy form.

And all that is required is for you to see, to recognize it. Then you don't reincarnate into it anymore. And even if you were reincarnated, it is possible in the middle of negative thinking or in the middle of a drama with your spouse to suddenly know what's happening.

That means some of your consciousness has stepped out of the form and is there as pure awareness. Before it was totally trapped in the form. And then when you suddenly see what's happening, that means what's happened there, some consciousness has stepped out of the incarnation and is there as pure consciousness watching.

And there you are, the angry entity screaming. Oh, look at that. And then it can't go on for that much longer because when there's awareness there, presence, which is simply the still watcher, then it can't very well renew itself much longer because it needs your unawareness, it needs your complete identification with it to really renew itself.

So then it quickly subsides. It goes, hmm. Well, that was good at least.

I woke up in the middle of it. Sometimes you wake up afterwards. There it was.

Too late. But it's not really too late because at least I'm awake now. Next time maybe I can catch it a little earlier.

And then next time it comes. There it is. And you can sometimes see how a little event can be used as an excuse by the pain body.

Just a tiny thing going wrong. Somebody slams the door on your face and there's a reaction far greater than the relatively insignificant event. And that's because the pain body was waiting for something.

So shining the light of attention, of consciousness on it is all that's needed. Then you don't reincarnate completely into it every time and renew the old cycle. It's always the same.

Always the same. If you're not present, in 30 years' time you'll still have the same episodes with your wife or husband. Or it may be a new wife and a new husband, but it'll be the same.

And the strange thing is you look for somebody saying you get to divorce finally. I can't live with this pain body anymore. I mean the one that I live with.

You still have your own. And so you get divorced and say, okay, now my next husband or wife I'm going to choose somebody who doesn't have a pain body, who's conscious. And then you meet somebody who looks conscious.

They've done spiritual work for 25 years. And then you start living together and within about four weeks you will encounter an aspect to that person that wasn't supposed to be there. So that's the challenge of the pain body.

Whether you are in a relationship or not it'll be there. Relationships are a good opportunity because that's the favorite playground of pain body renewal. But if the pain body doesn't have the relationship, it'll just use your mind.

That works too. So watch for that because there's a momentum there that's very strong because it's been there's such a huge amount of human pain, collective human pain on this planet built up over many, many thousands of years. And really, all that your pain body is, or it looks personal, it's really human pain.

Although something in your so-called personal life may have added to it, but really it is basically impersonal. Just as the movement of thought is basically impersonal. The emotions are human emotions.

The thoughts are all thoughts that are being thought by the collective human mind. And people think, that's me. But it is impersonal.

It's just that when you identify it, it gives the illusion of being personal, of being a person there. You are being thought by the collective mind. And so well, where is the personal then?

Well, the strange thing is that stillness isn't personal either. Presence, stillness is not personal. And yet it is essentially the beingness that you are.

But it's not personal. Personal means a little thing that there's me and the others. So ultimately there's nothing personal.

Neither the unconsciousness that identifies with forms nor when the consciousness arises is not personal either. And yet the essence of who you are, the I am, that is nothing to do with person. But it gets mixed up with the personal.

The forms that the person identifies with, that make up the person. As you know, person, the word comes from Latin. It means persona, the mask that you wear.

And these are the roles that you play when you interact with other humans. As long as you're identified with mind and emotion. You play the roles that are personal.

You play the script in your mind. The conditioning of your mind. Again and again and again.

Born again and again and again. Until you've had enough. And then you're fed up with the suffering that that entails.

[Speaker 6] (51:24 - 51:25)

Ah!

[Speaker 1] (51:25 - 58:27)

And the readiness comes to step out of that. That's the end of reincarnation. Before we have a few questions, there may not be any questions left.

That would be good too. Hello. Can you listen to the sound of the bell at the same time as you're aware of the awareness that is listening?

In other words, aware of yourself as the presence in which the sound happens. And then all that's left is spaciousness. Presence.

Form and formless. So even while you listen to the form, which is the sound, follow the sound as it slowly dies down into formlessness. That is death too.

When the sound slowly dies down, when I ring this bell again, after the Royal Air Force has passed, follow the sound until it disappears. That means the sound dies. Death means a form is dissolving.

Dissolves. And then what's left is formless. Consciousness.

You can do the same with your breath. That's an old meditation method. The simplest one, one of the simplest, doesn't really give you time to observe your breath.

The Buddha recommended that. It's perhaps the most direct meditation method because it doesn't give you time. Unless the meditator comes in as a conceptual identity and says, I must get better at observing my breath.

When you observe how your breath moves out, the end of the out-breath is also a little death. And there's a moment of stillness. Any ending is helpful in that way.

Because any ending is the ending of any form. And it's always some kind of death. When you accept it fully, it's an opening into the formless.

Even the ending of our little retreat can be like that. Because that too is a form. And you could say, oh, what a pity.

This form is dissolving. And you want to hang on to the form. A recipe for unhappiness.

Not realizing that the very reason why this gathering is meaningful is that it takes you beyond form. So the more you welcome all the endings in your life, goodbye, form is going. The more the formless is there in your life.

The egoic entity works the opposite way. It hates. It wants to think, oh no, I want to keep this.

But it's going, going, gone. Everything. If you're old enough that you can see the death of this physical form approaching, that can be very beautiful too.

To feel, to accept that, but not as a thought. Oh, I'm going to die soon. No, let it push you into being present.

Just that. If any questions arise, please ask. One person there.

I think the microphone will travel to you.

[Speaker 3] (58:33 - 58:57)

You use a lot of humor in your, a lot of laughter in your presentation, and there appears to be a lot of laughter in you. I have this sense that once the humorous thing is said and the laughter begins that that too is a porthole into presence. Can you speak about that?

[Speaker 1] (59:01 - 1:07:10)

The humor arises spontaneously when you look at, really whenever this humor arises, we are looking at the world of form and see that the normal existence, which is the identification with form, is a form of madness. And when you see it in your own life, the seeing is free. In that moment of freedom from that old conditioned form, there is the spontaneous relaxation, and that produces the laughter.

So it's enormously liberating. The more you laugh at the world of form, not in a malicious way, but in a free way to see the forms do not, they pretend, all the forms pretend that they are deadly serious. The world wants to be taken really, every situation says, I'm so serious.

And if you have no inauspiciousness, then indeed every situation is dreadfully serious. And so the absolute seriousness of the world of form disappears when you are rooted in the formless, and that means laughter arises more frequently, even in relatively unlikely situations, and it does not mean that you have no empathy or compassion. It's sometimes when I used to see people individually, they would come to me and usually they begin by telling their story.

At that time I just let them, okay, tell me the story, and sometimes while they were telling, and sometimes it was a very unhappy story, very unhappy. And sometimes while I was listening, there was a smile on my face, and it just, I don't know how it got there. And sometimes the people who were telling suddenly stopped and said, what are you smiling about?

Are you laughing at me? No, and then I found it hard to explain. There was a time when I didn't have really many words to explain.

So I found it hard to explain why the smile was there, not smiling at anything they said, smiling because I recognized both within myself and within them, underneath the story, I recognized the dimension in which that story is relatively meaningless. I recognized that underneath the story you are absolutely fine. I recognized the dimension in you where you are, was never touched by the unhappy story who you are.

And because I recognized that, the smile came. And so, but quite a few times people got angry because they thought I was smiling at their story or at them. It wasn't taken all that seriously anymore.

Just as my own story lost its seriousness, it continued in some way, playing itself out, but it wasn't serious business anymore. It doesn't mean you don't honor the world of form. It doesn't mean that you have become callous towards things.

No, not at all. There is you still here as this form identity, you still carry a form also. So you can empathize with the suffering that arises in anyone who is totally identified with form.

And yet that is one aspect of compassion, that you know full well what it means to be trapped in form is suffering. And I've been through it. I know the suffering.

So there's the empathy on the level of form of suffering, but there's also the recognition of that which is already beyond suffering in me, in you. It's one. And there come the two aspects of compassion.

On the one hand, we share being trapped in this form, seemingly. On the other hand, we also share the timeless and formless dimension of existence, where we are already free, and you bring the two together, and that's true compassion. Because true compassion doesn't just mean you weep when the other person weeps, you weep also.

You may weep, but underneath the weeping, there's joy. The joy that knows of the formless. That knows that you are in your essence indestructible.

Not as an abstract idea, but as a feeling realization, so to speak. So humor is a wonderful thing, and I'm sure that Jesus and other teachers had a lot of humor, too. All the teachers did, and just the disciples later on said, oh, we mustn't put that joke in.

That doesn't look serious enough. Beware of any spiritual teacher who is deadly serious. Because even the Zen masters who look dreadfully serious, they only look like that.

There's an enormous amount of humor inside them that's hidden in all the Zen stories and the way they deal with people. So they just look like that. But if you look into their eyes, or if you see a drawing done by a great artist of a Zen master, you see underneath their perhaps frightening demeanor, there is a softness also, and there's a gentle smile hidden somewhere there.

And then, of course, you have the beautiful image. Traditionally, all Buddha images have a slight smile. This is the Buddha smile, a very slight hint of a smile that comes with knowing yourself, knowing the essence of being.

And then you have the images influenced by Taoism in China of the Fat Buddha. They are wonderful. There's this man with a huge belly, toothless in many cases, or just one tooth left.

And his belly is huge, and he's continuously laughing. Laughter And many people have that at home in China and nowadays in the West also. And it's wonderful to see whenever you think you have a problem, just look at him.

Laughter And he's laughing not at you. He's laughing not because he despises the world or he's callous towards human suffering. He's laughing because he's rooted within in the formless.

And so that's a wonderful image. Laughter You can also practice a laughing meditation. I haven't done that yet.

Laughter That frees up a lot of rigid structures inside. But here the laughing happens spontaneously and it's wonderful. Okay.

One there, and then we go there. Okay. Oh.

[Speaker 4] (1:07:11 - 1:07:16)

Thank you. Can a fool realize his enlightenment?

[Speaker 1] (1:07:18 - 1:07:22)

Thank you. Can a fool realize...

[Speaker 4] (1:07:22 - 1:07:22)

A fool?

[Speaker 1] (1:07:23 - 1:19:18)

Oh, thank you. Wonderful question. There are some wonderful images.

Fool is a very ancient mythological figure. The tarot card of the fool and so on. Now, by fool, let's say we mean someone whose mental capacities are undeveloped.

I would say somebody who is not trapped in the usual structures of compulsive thinking, not because he or she has transcended compulsive thinking, but has not arrived at compulsive thinking. And in that sense, that human being is already enlightened because he has not... It's not the enlightenment that we are addressing here, but that state of not yet trapped in thought has many similarities with the enlightened state.

One could say he doesn't need enlightenment because in his own way he already is enlightened. In modern contemporary mythology, which is films, there's a beautiful example of that in the figure of Forrest Gump in the film. Somebody whose mental capacities are undeveloped but who lives in many ways just like an enlightened person would live.

First of all, he doesn't have an ego. Everything that comes, everything he needs, naturally comes to him. His life unfolds naturally.

He doesn't struggle for anything. Everything comes at the right moment. And he achieves, he even does great things, but never says I did that, because the I hasn't arisen yet.

He has to go to Vietnam, and even there wherever he goes, he is a force for good. Even when he has to go to the war in Vietnam, he saves many people. He's a great hero.

He doesn't look at himself as a great hero because he doesn't have a mental image of myself having done that. He just explains that's what happened. I did that and so on.

And so in many ways he is already enlightened and you can say he doesn't need enlightenment because he is already there. For us, we can't go back there. He doesn't really need to go through thinking.

He's fine. It seems to be the destiny of some humans to be connected and there may be a few remaining civilizations, remnants of ancient civilizations where humans live in oneness with nature and oneness with each other and they don't need the Buddha. They already, just as an animal, there are some dogs or cats they sometimes meet.

In some cases they have suffered a lot or they are very old and they have reached the enlightenment of the dog or cat being. The old cat who cannot be bothered anymore with catching birds because the cat knows it's pointless anyway. They're too old.

And so they go around and they're just completely there. And the old dog. There are beings who seem to have completely fulfilled the purpose of their existence in that form and have found the connectedness with the formless within.

The form has fulfilled its purpose and the connectedness is there. This is not our destiny to return. We are all, we have been or are most of us halfway stuck in the human mind.

So there's no way of going back. We cannot become fools again and yet when you go beyond thinking from the point of view of mind it often appears that you no longer know anything. So in that way we also become fools from the point of view of conceptual thought.

And there are many similarities with the way that an enlightened person lives who has transcended thought, means is no longer trapped in thinking, to somebody who has not yet gone through the evolutionary stage of being trapped in thinking. Didn't have to for some reason. Consciousness flowered there through that form.

And that's beautiful. For us it's transcending thought and then becoming a fool again. Yes one could say, but yet we don't become forest gum.

There is a knowing that comes when you have transcended thought. There is an awareness that wasn't there before in the natural state. It's a regaining of the natural state, but the regaining of the natural state that also all ancient civilizations speak of The myth of the golden age that exists in India, in almost every civilization, you have the myth that there was a time when humans lived in peace and happily.

The world was a kind of paradise. You have the same myth expressed in the beginning of the Bible. So there must be an ancient truth there.

There is a natural state that humans lost. Those humans who didn't lose it don't need it. They are fine.

But it is the destiny, the evolutionary destiny of consciousness is for humans to lose it and then to regain it. And that's where we are. And so in some ways you will look to humans who are still trapped in thinking when you live aligned to the present moment, don't compulsively label things, are no longer a walking story.

You become quite simple. The need to be special falls away. You become very ordinary.

Very ordinary because you don't need to project a sense of specialness anymore and attempt to find your identity in there because you already are in touch with the preciousness that is the essence of who you are. So you don't need to seek a specialness in form anymore. So what a freedom that comes to us now of not needing to be special anymore to get some sense of who you are.

To become ordinary. You have that beautifully expressed in the Taoist sages. The whole Tao Te Ching, the Chinese Book of Wisdom, is all an expression of ordinariness.

To be ordinary. Not to project yourself wanting, needing to be someone. But happy to be no one.

And that looks quite foolish from the point of view of our civilization. And people may look upon you as nobody. And that's wonderful.

The only regret is not really a regret. I have about the power of now that became so well known and with it the being that gave it birth no more, just is the projection of specialness. Whereas there was such beauty in being totally ordinary and nobody doubted that I was ordinary.

Well, a few of you said, you must go and see him, he's so ordinary. Just to be, just to live with the present moment, see what the present moment nothing could be more ordinary than just to live aligned with whatever is here now. That's all you ever have to do.

It's pretty ordinary. Just this. The famous Zen saying, chopping wood, carrying water.

It's expressed in that, it's a very profound Zen saying. This is meant to encapsulate the whole of Zen existence. Chopping wood, carrying water.

Two of the most ordinary activities at that time when people did that. In our cases, there'll be something else. Most people, well, don't chop wood.

Well, perhaps some people still do. It is beautiful to be just just that. Whatever you happen to be doing at this moment, there's no more than this moment.

Chopping wood. Ah. Carrying water.

Just that. Peace. Aliveness.

No interference of mind that says, how many more weeks or years do I have to chop this wood? If I don't do something now, I'll still be stuck in ten years' time chopping wood. The illusion of time is back.

Here. But only on the external. Not in here.

On the external level, the clock keeps ticking. Tick, tick, tick. Or whatever modern clocks do.

This is not the end. There is no end. But this is not the end even on the level of form.

After our little break, I will meet with you again here in about 30 so-called minutes. And we will sit together just in silence for a little while. Unless something else happens.

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:21:08 - 1:21:27)

Yes, I'm going to start with, I'm aware that you are not, that you don't find personal history important. But still, I would like to ask you some questions about your life and your background. So, how did you grow up?

Where did you grow up? And in what kind of family?

[Speaker 1] (1:21:28 - 1:24:26)

I grew up in northwest Germany up to the age of 13. My father was a journalist. My mother a housewife.

Then my parents got divorced when I was 12. And my father dropped out of conventional life and society. He was an early drop-out, before the term drop-out even existed.

And he went to live in Spain. So, my parents got divorced. My father left to live in Spain.

And I was very unhappy at school. So, at 13, I refused to go to school any longer. That was my only act of rebellion as a child.

I was, on the whole, a very meek, obedient child. But something within me prevented me from going to school. I just couldn't do it anymore.

So, I stopped. My mother didn't know what to do with me. So, finally, it was decided that I should join my father in Spain, who had remarried, and lived a very unconventional life.

He lived on his savings for a few years, and then he started working there. So, I spent my teenage years from 13 to 19 in Spain. So, the Spanish language became my second language.

I was taken out of the culture that had surrounded me for the first 13 years of my life, and then placed in a completely different environment and culture. And that probably was a good thing, because if one spends one's whole life in one particular cultural environment, one tends to become conditioned by that particular culture without knowing it. So, by experiencing different cultures as a child, that somehow perhaps made the cultural conditioning less deep, less rigid.

And my father was always a very unconventional person. Some people would call him eccentric. So, when I got to Spain, he asked me, do you want to go to school here?

And, of course, I said no. And so, he said, okay, then don't go to school, and do what you like. And that's what I was able to do.

I was reading certain books that I liked to read, studying. I began reading some literature. I went to language classes in the evenings and afternoons, and studied some other subjects that I was interested in, like astronomy and so on.

So, I grew up without especially in my teenage years, without the pressure that most youngsters experience. And then at 19, I went to on my own to live in England.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:27 - 1:24:30)

Okay. And then you started to have an education in England?

[Speaker 1] (1:24:31 - 1:39:57)

Yes. In England, I was offered a job, although I didn't have any formal qualifications.

Miraculously, somebody offered me a job, and I was actually teaching English and Spanish, sorry, German and Spanish for a few years at a language school.

And then a kind of quest started. And also, what also started at that point was already the beginnings of depression that I would experience periodically. And living in a state of increasing anxiety, a kind of generalized anxiety.

And I was looking for some answer to the dilemma of life and living, and I was looking to philosophy and the intellect for an answer. So I began to read a lot, and then I thought the answers would probably be found at the universities, the professors would know. So I took the exams that I needed in evening classes to get to university, and then I went on to London University, where I did languages and literature.

And increasingly became more and more unhappy, and continued to search and absorb more and more knowledge. And gradually, beginning to realize that they didn't really have the answers to life's dilemma. I remember there was one professor at London University that I liked very much, and I would go to his classes and admired him.

Very knowledgeable, and one day we arrived on a Monday morning, and we were told that he had just committed suicide. And that shook me inside, and I realized that certainly these people that I looked to for an answer didn't have it either. And so my depression intensified, and I did very well in the degree examinations, because I studied so hard, out of fear really.

I was driven by anxiety. And then after graduating from London University, I didn't do anything for about a year, and that was the year in which I became even more unhappy and depressed, and when an inner shift suddenly happened inside me. It was in my 29th year I woke up in the middle of the night, and this was not uncommon for me, waking up in the middle of the night and feeling intensely depressed, and in a state of great fear at the same time.

And that happened again that night, and the thought occurred to me, I can't live with myself any longer. And that thought repeated itself in my mind, I just, I can't live with myself. And then suddenly, I looked at the thought, I kind of stood back from that thought, and looked at it, and said, that's a strange thought.

I cannot live with myself. Am I one, or am I two? This thought seems to show that there's two people here, I and the self that I cannot live with.

I didn't have an answer to that question, it's just that question, that puzzle arose in my mind. Much later it reminded me of koans that they have in Zen, that are puzzles that are designed to stop the mind. For example, what is the sound of one hand clapping, is a famous koan.

And it doesn't have an answer on an intellectual level, and so the question that arose in my mind also didn't have an answer on an intellectual level. Who am I, and who is myself that I cannot live with? But that question triggered an inner shift.

Something inside me, and I didn't understand it at that point, must have disidentified from the self, the unhappy me, as I later called it. So a kind of inner disidentification happened. The I am, which I later recognized as the consciousness that I am, separated itself from the conditioned entity, the conditioned consciousness that provided me with my sense of identity, the self.

And that consisted largely of an unhappy story. So then I felt I was like being drawn into some kind of vortex of energy, as if I were disappearing in that. And there was still a moment of resistance.

And I heard something almost like a voice inside me that said, resist nothing. So I gave up resisting the feeling of, almost the feeling of disappearing into nothingness. And so that, I don't remember very much else of that night.

All I know is that the next morning I woke up and I opened my eyes and I looked around the room and everything seemed as if I was seeing it for the first time. Fresh, new, alive. The light coming through the windows.

Familiar objects on the table. It looked fresh, new, and alive. So I got up and went out for a walk and I looked around and everything seemed so peaceful.

Even the traffic in the city seemed so peaceful. And I knew something strange had happened. There was suddenly, everything was filled with aliveness and peace and I didn't know why.

And so, and that went on. And then this inner peace as the background to all experiences and the background to all sense perceptions, even as the background to my thinking, they never really left me again. But it took me a long time to understand it, to be able to put it into words.

And so a little later I started investigating other spiritual teachings for the first time. Buddhism, Christianity, and more contemporary spiritual teachings. And very quickly I recognized the truth that is in many cases hiding underneath sometimes centuries of cultural additions, interpretations, and misinterpretations.

And I could see the truth that's in Buddhism, that's in Christianity, the original teachings. And in turn, they shed light on what had happened to me. For example, I picked up the New Testament and I read Jesus' words, the peace that passes all understanding.

And I said, that's exactly what I feel. I have this peace and I don't understand what it is. So he must have had the same experience.

Peace suddenly arose which was not causally related to anything in the external world. It wasn't caused by something wonderful happening in my external environment. So it didn't seem to have a cause, an external cause.

And then later I visited Zen teachers and so on. And again, I recognized the truth of Zen immediately. But they also helped me to understand and put what had happened to me into a wider context.

For example, I remember talking to one Buddhist monk who said, who talked about coming to the end of always having to think, thinking. And he said, Zen is about not thinking ultimately. And I immediately realized something that I actually, strangely I hadn't realized before, that my thought processes ever since that happened that night, had become reduced by maybe 80%.

So I wasn't actually thinking that much anymore. And that's why there was so much peace. So I realized the continuous mental noise, as I now call it, which is the compulsive and largely useless thinking that most people are continuously engaged in, that had come to an end.

There would still be some thought, and thought could, I could use thinking when I needed it and occasionally thoughts would come in and out, but there were huge stretches of no thought. And in those long gaps and intervals of no thought, there was that wonderful experience of inner peace. And I realized that inner peace had been there before, even when I was still anxious, but had simply been covered up by the anxiety, by the hyperactive mind.

And so this then gradually developed into a spiritual teaching. So the spiritual teaching now attempts to show people that they have within themselves already what they may perhaps are looking for on the outside. The aliveness, the peace, the sense of deep inner fulfillment is already present in every human being as their innermost essence.

So it's not a question of needing to obtain or acquire something new, which is often what spiritual seekers are looking for. Everybody is looking for, to acquire something to fulfill him or herself. They may be looking for it on a material level, or on the level of experiences, or on the level of accumulating knowledge, or accumulating wealth, or spiritual seekers want to add more spiritual experiences to who they are, or find themselves at some point in the future, and you can't because if you're looking to the future to find yourself, you're missing yourself already, the essence of your being, which you can only find in the now.

So my realization that night took me years to understand, and in the process of understanding it, at the same time people would already come to me occasionally and ask questions. So gradually I was able to talk about it, and I was able to recognize in others what I had been through. It's the same dilemma, perhaps with the exception that I was suffering from it more acutely than many others, that's all.

I was even more deeply immersed in the mental noise and the emotional turmoil than would be normal. But the same mechanism operates in everyone. So the teaching now is to point out that there is a dimension in you that is deeper than what you normally identify with as yourself, that is deeper than the me, the personal history that most people believe is who they are.

And so the recognition of that dimension comes when you make room inside yourself for the present moment, because it can only come out of an inner alignment with now, as I call it, which is life itself. The stream of thinking is always concerned with past and future. So for most people who are identified with thinking all the time, every thought is invested with a sense of self, a me.

Every thought grips you completely, and you are in it. This is what identified means. Every thought that arises becomes a me, and you think it, and you are in it.

And so most people are dragged along all day long by this mind stream, one thought after another. And within that mind stream there is a mind-made sense of self, a me, consisting of past memories and experiences, and things that my mind has identified with, and that contribute to my identity. They are all thought forms.

For example, my possessions, my knowledge, my experiences, or what people have done to me, or what I have done to people, things that whatever you identify with and then hang on to in your mind becomes a me. And that was really the self that that night I recognized as not really me. So there's the mind stream, there's identification with the mind stream, and there's the possibility of stepping out of the mind stream by accessing the present moment.

Now to most people the present moment is, almost doesn't exist, because what they are really interested in is the next moment, or the one after that. So they live always towards the future. They live towards the next moment.

And unconsciously they regard the next moment, the next point in the future that they need to get to, unconsciously they regard that as more important than this moment. Not realizing that the future moment that they so desperately want to get to, tonight, tomorrow, whatever, in any activity needing, wanting to get it out of the way as quickly as possible, needing to get to the end point. On a small scale, on a large scale.

[Speaker 2] (1:39:58 - 1:39:59)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:40:01 - 1:45:40)

And so they don't recognize that the future has no existence except as a thought form. So when you always live towards the future you live your life trapped in a conceptual reality of thought forms, which assumes a greater significance for you than the immediate reality of life, which is always now. Because your life consists entirely of the present moment.

And to most people that's if you truly realize the significance of that statement, your entire life consists of the present moment. Your life is never not this moment. Even when you remember the past, you can only remember it now.

And when you think about the future, you can only think about it now. But people live as if the present moment were an obstacle that they need to overcome in order to get to some better point, which never arrives. So that's a mad way to live.

And it makes living hard. It makes living into an effort. We've been conditioned over thousands of years the human mind, which was a wonderful thing, the ability to think at some point a long, long time ago must have arisen in humans, the ability to conceptualize mentally.

And this has opened up a whole new dimension for humanity. And of course it has made humanity the most powerful species on the planet, because humans are not physically the strongest species, but they were able to dominate all the other species because of their ability to think. And so that developed slowly, probably in a mythological form, it's expressed in the story of Genesis, at the beginning of the Bible, when they eat this apple that comes from the tree of the knowledge of good and bad to differentiate this that that comes only through the ability to think, to analyze, to separate.

And so that gradually developed in humans, and at first it wasn't a problem. It opened up new possibilities. Then over thousands and thousands of years the thinking mind became stronger.

It grew and grew. And gradually they lost connectedness with something that is deeper and more essential within themselves. We could call that being.

The sense of aliveness. A deeper intelligence even that is more than just the thoughts that go on in your head. So gradually humans, because of the growth of the thinking mind, lost their ability to sense their deeper connectedness with life.

And then now we have arrived at a point where our whole sense of who we are is caught up in the mind and in thought. So we have been through an evolutionary stage, which was a necessary one for humanity. And we could call that the stage of mind, the stage of thought.

And to such a point now that we are completely possessed, I use that word, we are possessed by the mind without knowing it. We cannot stop thinking. It seems we can, but for most people that's not yet a reality.

They have to think. The compulsion to think and to derive your sense of self from the movement of thought. We are arriving at the end of this whole evolutionary stage.

And for humanity now to go on, it needs to transcend the mind. No longer be possessed by the mind. To go beyond the compulsion to think into a deeper level of being.

So it's almost like regaining what they have lost. But when you regain something that you lost, you regain it with a deeper awareness. And this is the process that we are involved in now, that humanity is involved in now, because an evolutionary transformation, a transformation of consciousness, really is no longer a luxury so to speak, is no longer optional for humanity.

For the first time in the history of humanity, a transformation of consciousness is a necessity if humanity is to survive, because we are creating havoc on the planet. We are creating hell to a large extent on a planet that potentially is paradise.

[Speaker 2] (1:45:42 - 1:45:54)

Is that why you I mean, you could have chosen just to stay on your own and being on your own, but you chose to be a teacher and to go out and teach. Why is that?

[Speaker 1] (1:45:54 - 1:47:55)

Yes. Being a teacher was the response to a demand that came to me. Not so much, it wasn't a conscious choice that, oh, I want to teach or I need to teach.

It simply arose out of first of all, individual people coming to me and asking questions or wanting some kind of help or becoming drawn, becoming interested in what I had to say and experiencing an inner shift after coming a few times. And so, being a teacher that developed organically without me ever deciding I want to be a teacher and so from seeing individuals it gradually developed into occasionally meeting in small groups and that went on for a few years. Out of all these meetings with individual people and small groups I had I took notes after meeting with people often because things that I said in those individual sessions or group meetings were things that were new to me also.

They came out of that moment. They came out as a response to a person's question. So I would often take notes and I had a collection of notes after a few years.

Some of those notes later became incorporated into The Power of Now, the book. So The Power of Now is in part the result of my work with people over a number of years and in part the arising of also a new teaching in the process of writing it.

[Speaker 2] (1:47:57 - 1:48:14)

I read in an interview you gave that for a lot of years you were only absorbed in being and you were not doing anything. And it was a kind of unbalance in your life. Could you describe that?

[Speaker 1] (1:48:14 - 1:51:11)

Yes. Well, after the transformation happened that night my external life for a few more years went on as if nothing much had changed on the external level. I went on to do graduate work.

However, my heart was never fully in it anymore. In intellectual pursuits, in analytical work. But my external life had a certain momentum.

So it went on for a few more years and then that momentum came to an end. And a point arrived when I was at Cambridge doing graduate work and some teaching and suddenly I realized this has come to an end and I simply walked away from it all. And after that, two years followed in which I did very little and I didn't have a home of my own.

I would drift from here to there. Spent most days just sitting. When it was warm enough I would sit outside on park benches or walk around.

I was then in London at that time. And I was so deeply immersed in the the the peace almost the bliss of the simple experience of being the simple feeling the goodness of life every moment that I lost interest in future completely. There were no ambitions and I wasn't even interested in doing anything.

So from an external viewpoint one could say my life for a while became unbalanced. I became so deeply immersed in being that I lost interest in doing. One could almost say I lost the ability for a while to be active in the world.

And then gradually the ability to be active in the world came back. So a balance after a while re-established itself. So I'm now able to be active in the world and at the same time be rooted in being.

One does not exclude the other. But for some reason I had to go very deeply within for a while. Perhaps even on a larger scale it may be that some people for a while have to go very deeply into being simply to provide a balance on the level of the collective consciousness because most human beings are totally lost in doing.

So it may require a few humans who go very deeply into being to provide a balance although on a personal level it might look as if they were unbalanced.

[Speaker 2] (1:51:12 - 1:51:21)

Are you always in presence now? Don't you get relapses? Don't you ever get angry or frustrated?

[Speaker 1] (1:51:22 - 1:52:55)

No. I live in surrender to the present moment and so that is always there. Whatever happens right now I recognise that it is futile to argue with whatever is happening at this moment.

So emotions occasionally still come. If I see human suffering I sometimes weep. I can cry and yet even then there is a deep sense of peace in the background even though I may cry externally if I see especially humans inflicting so much suffering on other human beings and on animals and on nature, on the planet.

So sometimes tears come and yet deep down I know that ultimately life is timeless and indestructible and I know that death is not the opposite of life but only the opposite of birth. Life is beyond the forms of life. Life is timeless and immortal.

That which underlies the entire manifested world and that dimension is present in each human being.

[Speaker 2] (1:52:59 - 1:53:02)

So what is your life like today? Do you have a family?

[Speaker 1] (1:53:03 - 1:57:48)

No. My life is now very different from what it was before, especially before the book came out. I was already teaching before the book came out but soon after the book came out the book grew very quickly.

At first through word of mouth for one year and then other people discovered it and started writing about it and speaking about it and then it accelerated. So soon after the book came out the teaching developed a momentum that was almost overwhelming and it turned my external life around completely from living a very sheltered life, a very quiet life, almost a hermit life. Suddenly everybody wanted me to teach and demands for this and that were coming in, invitations flooding in from all over the world and so on and then I responded at the beginning to almost every invitation and then I realised it's impossible, I can no longer respond to every invitation.

So nevertheless my life is now almost public and the groups become bigger and bigger in the United States the average number for talks is 2000 people now and so I'm very much out there in the world and this is not something that naturally I would have chosen for myself. My natural inclination would be to be withdrawn, not to be known. I like to be invisible in public places, not to be noticed and that becomes more difficult now and yet I accept the fact that this is how it is.

So there's a lot of travelling and there's been so much in the past few years that now I feel I need to cut back for a while and I believe my feeling is that the cycle of going out into the world which has lasted now for 6 years may be coming to an end and there may be coming a cycle of withdrawal for a little while in which I may another book may come into being and so I've had to surrender to the fact that my external life changed completely. It's been wonderful too to see how many people are being reached by the teaching, the book and the talks and the retreats how many people are open to the message. That was the greatest surprise after the book came out because when I was writing the book, the book wrote itself, one can almost say my feeling was that only people who had already been on the spiritual path for a long time would respond to the book and that was not the case.

People responded to the book, both people who had been on the spiritual path for many years, they responded but also people who had never read a spiritual book in their lives who had never had access to that dimension they suddenly wrote to me and said, my life has changed, this is incredible I've read this book several times already and it's fresh and new every time and there's so much peace in my life suddenly.

So the book seems to have reached all kinds of people no matter what their background is, also education doesn't seem to matter very much some highly educated people are open to it and others who are not equally open because it's not difficult to understand on an intellectual level and yet, not everybody is open to the book there are some people there are people who wrote to me and said I bought a copy for a close friend and he found it completely meaningless he read two or three pages and said it doesn't make sense to me and so they put the book on the shelf and it may well be that in ten or twenty years time they take the book down from the shelf again and suddenly there's an inner readiness so many people are open but certainly not everybody

[Speaker 2] (1:57:49 - 1:58:04)

I have some more questions about this new situation of yours I mean you have become a success and your books have sold in millions of copies all over the world and you have become famous and you're making a lot of money how do you handle that?

[Speaker 1] (1:58:07 - 2:00:34)

I'm not very good at handling the external things like money and so basically it hasn't made very much difference to my life and I haven't really paid much attention to it most of my attention is absorbed by teaching or answering questions and so on and yes I live in somewhat more spacious surroundings now than I used to but that's really all so that hasn't made very much difference I'm hardly aware of it for a large part of my life I lived with very little money and probably people would have said I lived below the poverty line as they call it and yet I never felt poor I always felt I have quite enough and now I don't feel wealthy any more than I did then so it's exactly the same feeling so it's a very abstract thing the fact that now there is more wealth in my life on an external on the external dimension is only an abstract truth to me it has not affected me inside at all and it's only very slightly affected my external life I don't I walk around cities and look at shops and I sometimes like to look at things but very rarely do I actually feel the impulse to go and buy something it's enough to look at a beautiful object and then walk on so I don't know what I wouldn't know what to buy with it there is the possibility at some point that there may be a centre a spiritual centre coming into being so if that happens then some of the income from the book may flow into that that is something that I'm not actively planning now but I have a feeling it may happen

[Speaker 2] (2:00:35 - 2:00:50)

and I also imagine that many people want to have something from you and maybe they are admiring you or putting you in a place of a guru and how do you relate to that do you need to protect yourself

[Speaker 1] (2:00:51 - 2:03:43)

yes before it used to be the way that people, anybody who wanted to see me would just call me or talk to me on the phone I would talk to them and say can I see you yes come and then after the book came out that became impossible because the phone kept ringing and so in one sense when I was only reaching a small number of people however there was the satisfaction of having close personal contact with people who came to me now the close personal contact because the numbers have grown so much that has become lost to a large extent and yet the teaching is reaching far far far more people than it did before so really and this is very much the same in any situation in life, every situation has its own limitations there were certain limitations to my life on an external level when the teaching was not yet reaching many people the teaching was very limited in that sense although it was very satisfying now the limitation is that people cannot access me personally very easily I have to have several people in between me and the world simply because on a practical level it's the only way I can live I cannot reply to every email or answer every letter and thousands and thousands of letters come in all the time and emails and I cannot just pick up the phone and answer it so that it's harder for individual people to reach me it's difficult if not impossible and that's simply I need to accept that is a limitation that's unavoidable knowing however that the teaching is reaching far more people than ever before yes it's a pity, I still sometimes have a little group at home in Vancouver of people I've known for a long time even before the book came out they used to come to see me so occasionally we get together as a little group of 20 people or so in my living room and I enjoy that very much so that's how it is it's always a question of surrendering to whatever the present moment presents you with and whatever limitations there may be at this moment there's no situation that is free of limitation of one kind or another

[Speaker 2] (2:03:45 - 2:03:52)

do you have an explanation why your teaching applies so much to modern people

[Speaker 1] (2:03:53 - 2:08:30)

well the the terms used, the words the terminology that is used in the teaching the words that are used which are no more than pointers not philosophical explanations they are relatively neutral they are not they don't carry the weight of centuries and centuries of past as they do in ancient teachings so they are not culturally conditioned in that sense, relatively neutral and so they can reach many people no matter what their background is people who may have a religious background can be reached if they are open enough because I don't deny that there is deep truth in every religion this is why I quote in The Power of Now from Buddhism and Hinduism and Christian teachings and even people who have no religious background whatsoever can be reached by the teaching this is one reason perhaps why it has reached so many people and another reason is that the The Power of Now was written it came out of that state of consciousness that it points to so it came out of a state of inner stillness and receptiveness spontaneously, the writing was a spontaneous act although I incorporated some of the writings that I had done in previous years there was an enormous very strong creative impulse that flew into the writing it flowed into the writing so the book contains an energy this sounds perhaps a little mysterious but many people have said it that when people read the book the words go beyond the mere informational value of the words this is why one can re-read the book many times and still feel it's fresh and new and every time you read and it may just be one or two pages the reading of it can put you back into the state of the state that I call presence because whatever the book speaks about ultimately points to that inner state of alignment with the present moment, so people can just pick up the book, read a couple of pages and feel the mental noise slows down or subsides and they become awake again alert, present in the now and they can sense some peace inside and so that's what it's all about, so that is at work in the book and it is also at work in the group sessions because as you in the group sessions nothing is ever prepared I don't come with a script I don't even come with any idea in my head what we are going to do today or talk about today when I start when I sit down on the chair I have no idea even a few seconds before opening my mouth what's going to come out so in that sense you can say it comes really out of the immediacy of the present moment and so what words come out depends very often on the energy field of the group and so there is an interaction between the teaching the teacher and the taught there is an ancient eastern saying that says the teacher and the taught together produce the teaching and that's how it is and that's why the teaching has great power because it doesn't come from the accumulated knowledge of the mind but it comes out of the immediacy of the present moment, it's not prepared and even on a retreat that lasts for 3, 4, 5 days sometimes there is absolutely no pre-planned structure to the retreat, it all grows organically out of the present moment

[Speaker 2] (2:08:35 - 2:09:10)

I have one question at least one more you talk about surrendering and you talk about suffering as one path to surrendering to presence and you say that some people don't need the suffering but anyway surrendering is beyond will and wanting so what does it take and what about grace I imagine that it takes grace also, could you comment on that?

[Speaker 1] (2:09:17 - 2:14:03)

You won't surrender which means, surrender means only accept this moment as it is but you won't be able to surrender unless you're completely fed up with suffering you've had enough suffering and at some level you recognize that most of your suffering is self-created it is created out of resistance to what is it is created out of an interpretation of something that is, it comes from a thought, from an interpretation, not from the situation so you realize really that I've had enough suffering and only when you've truly had enough suffering in your life are you able to say I don't need it anymore suffering is a wonderful teacher suffering is most people's only spiritual teacher and suffering deepens you it gradually erodes the mind made sense of self the ego and for some people the point arrives where they realize I have suffered enough and that for example is the case with almost all the people who come to a retreat if you ask them they've all had their share of human suffering otherwise they wouldn't be open to the message they've had their share of human suffering and they've reached a point where they are ready to listen to the message that says there is another way to live there is another way in which you can live that does not create further suffering for yourself because to a large extent humans create their own suffering and so when you are ready to hear that message and that's really the message that is in every religion that's the message the central message of Buddhism is the end of suffering and even the central message of the teaching of Jesus is finding the pearl of great price finding the kingdom of heaven that is within you here and now as Jesus says and that of course is the end of living in a state of suffering so one could say that you need suffering for you to realize, for you to come to a point of realization that you do not need to suffer anymore, there is a paradox here, if I had not suffered I would not, this teaching would not exist so you could say it has come partly as a result of intense suffering because as a human being I would not have evolved spiritually if I had not suffered so suffering was my main teacher and suffering is for many people their main teacher but then some people are, when they are ready they come into contact with a spiritual teaching or teacher and that can speed up the process of realization that you don't need to suffer anymore you are ready to hear that so that was, the Buddha talked about nothing else already 2600 years ago that there can be an end to self-inflicted suffering and when you don't inflict suffering on yourself anymore and remember it's the thoughts, your thoughts make you suffer more than anything else, it's not usually the situation it's your interpretation of the situation, of how dreadful it all is and so when you see that then you see there is another way to live in which I no longer mentally argue with what is and that's the end of self-inflicted suffering and if I no longer inflict suffering on myself I no longer inflict suffering on others because the two go together

[Speaker 2] (2:14:06 - 2:14:15)

but what will make me or somebody else take that step is it just acceptance

[Speaker 1] (2:14:16 - 2:15:52)

it's acceptance but acceptance won't come unless you've reached this inner point of readiness and this is why I never try to convince anybody that what I'm saying is true or they should practice something, I never say you should do this or trying to convince somebody who doesn't want to believe it that is pointless only if you are ready internally for it and so one way of putting it is to say if you have suffered enough then you're ready then you're open to it and you immediately see the truth of it you immediately see that you ultimately make yourself suffer it's not the situation, it's the mental interpretation of the situation which in most cases is a form of resistance and that creates the suffering and so you need to when you hear these words if you don't immediately recognize the truth if there's an inner arguing that's fine there's no should here there's no the teaching never says this is how you should live, it's only if you can hear the truth of it, it will make sense to you and then it can help you so it can only help those who have an inner readiness but there are many many people alive now in whom the readiness is there they are able to hear it to truly hear it and immediately recognize yes this is true convincing never works

[Speaker 2] (2:15:54 - 2:15:59)

but being in the present I mean is it a possibility for everybody

[Speaker 1] (2:16:00 - 2:16:07)

it's a being in the present moment is a possibility for those who are ready for it not yet for everybody

[Speaker 2] (2:16:08 - 2:16:16)

what if we were all living in presence, I mean what would happen, would we have electricity and would it work

[Speaker 1] (2:16:16 - 2:18:04)

one thing is certain that the world would look very different from the way it is now, we can't possibly imagine how the human world would look if everybody lived in a different state of consciousness in a state that is predominantly a state of inner peace what kind of civilization would we create out of a state of inner peace it's impossible to predict all we can say is that probably it would not be as complex as it is now people would not be running around continuously engaged in largely pointless activities it would probably not be such a noisy civilization as it is now because no civilization has ever been as noisy as this one and that's simply because whatever human beings create externally is a reflection of their inner state so we are polluting the planet simply because our inner selves are being polluted by an enormous amount of negativity of continuous resistance so the outer is always a reflection of the inner so if the inner is predominantly a state of inner peace we create a peaceful world on the outside what exactly what exact form that would take we don't know, we'd have to see what it is it would probably be a much more simple world more harmonious and beautiful not nature is beautiful already but I'm speaking of the human made human made world

[Speaker 2] (2:18:07 - 2:18:13)

is it possible in a few words to say what is the essence of your teaching, is that possible?

[Speaker 1] (2:18:15 - 2:21:08)

well, the essence is very simple and the essence could probably be taught and perhaps one day will be taught to very young children at school and children are very close to it anyway the essence is I could put it in the most simple terms because the most simple is often the most powerful the essence is to make the present moment into your friend, not your enemy to always ask yourself what is my relationship with the present moment at this moment of course what is my inner relationship with the present moment is the present moment am I friendly towards the present moment or am I hostile towards the present moment, is the present moment my enemy and then that would be enough to bring about a change because when you realize that you are making the present moment into your enemy and you also know that that's all you ever have in life, then you realize it is a mad way to live to treat this moment as if it were an obstacle to where you want to get to and you never get there because it's always now then your relationship towards the present moment changes it changes and your relationship becomes one of yes rather than no to what is it does not mean that you become passive or that you will never do anything again it simply means that the foundation for any action you take is the state of yes to what is and if there is a state the inner state of yes to what is that is the state of inner peace and inner peace is much more powerful as a foundation for right action than the state of resistance and negativity so that is the essence find that state of inner alignment with the present moment which comes with the yes and then see what happens see how your world changes as you no longer resist the isness of this moment

[Speaker 2] (2:21:08 - 2:21:29)

thank you it was what you concluded the teaching about your role as a teacher and you said something about you have nothing to teach to nobody something like that could you just state that how you see your role as a teacher

[Speaker 1] (2:21:31 - 2:24:11)

in conventional terms teaching means that I give you information that you didn't know I add something to you so a student absorbs new information accumulates new information but in spiritual teaching the teacher just points to the truth that is already in every human being and also points to the way in which that truth that is already in every human being is covered up and anybody who is ready can immediately recognize the truth of the teaching as if they had already known it because on some level they already knew it and that's why I say I don't really have anything to teach in the sense of adding information to you there is nothing that you need to add in order to find yourself and be yourself you can add on an external level it's nice to learn new things, it's nice to explore this or that and yet on an essential level the essential level is the level of who you are your innermost sense of self it's the level of being on the most essential level no matter where you are at in your life, what your life situation is, on the most essential level nothing needs to be added to who you are so the spiritual teaching is not an amour it's not an addition it's simply a pointing towards that which is already there and those who are ready then suddenly recognize the truth of it, recognize means they already knew it, it's almost like remembering, ah yes and then there's no there's no question about convincing is not necessary it's immediate realization, then spiritual teaching works as it should so that's how it operates and that's the difference between a conventional teaching and spiritual teaching, in some sense one could say the spiritual teaching is almost the opposite of the conventional teaching if anything it takes something away from you it takes away that which covered up who you are but it's not taken away by the teacher, it's taken away by yourself when you see it and become conscious of it

[Speaker 2] (2:24:13 - 2:24:18)

that's very clear yes thank you very much thank you for your time

[Speaker 1] (2:30:04 - 3:36:21)

meditative meditation welcome to our meditative evening perhaps meditation to meditate successfully the idea that you're doing a meditation can be quite an obstacle so maybe that's the first thing we can get rid of tonight the preconceptions and the expectations that come with that term so why did we call it guided meditation well we had to use some word to get you here haha meditation is usually something that you do among many other things doing implies all kinds of things, it implies time even future to some extent and yet true meditation, if you even want to call it that, it's better not to call it anything it's not to do with doing it's not a doing it's the realization that you are of being which underlies all doing is prior to all doing thoughts emotions is prior to that and yet the simple realization not the realization who you are because there can be so many perspectives on that not the realization how you fit into the totality of the cosmos, how that seemingly little life fleeting existence fits into the totality somewhere not realizing how I fit into the whole it's impossible to comprehend but an alignment with the totality without the need to mentally understand anything a realization a simple realization that you are which is expressed in the sublime words I am and if you've missed elementary grammar at school you might not realize that I am is the first person singular of the verb to be you think it's two completely different words the realization that you are not as a concept but as a deeper sensing of the life that you are the aliveness the life and something helpful to realize that is to pretend for one moment that there is no past and no future shh I'm saying pretend so that everybody is still with me if I said there is no past and future some of you might suddenly start thinking just a second aren't you going to sign books in an hour huh and the moment you go into thinking you're off into the realm of mind the realm of things objects in consciousness every thought is an object in consciousness and every thought has a pulling power so it arises and it pulls your attention in and you start thinking okay but there is I came here half an hour ago there must be a past not realizing of course when you came here it was the present moment and when the books are going to be signed it will be the present moment because there is nothing else okay but no need to believe that let's pretend let's pretend for a moment that there is no past and future okay or let's just say past and future become peripheral to you who you are there's only this oh that is the entry point into the realization I am thinking is not required for that realization in fact it it's a hindrance and you may sense a global feeling of presence or beingness that incorporates what we call the physical body when you are present completely present here now you are present not just with the head with the totality of your being in other words you sense an aliveness that's there in every cell of the body that is our meditation to be present with every cell of the body a subtle sense of aliveness in which the personal dimension becomes relatively unimportant what arises here is the dimension of conscious presence or consciousness itself it's spacious the moment you start to think a form arises consciousness is born into a form a thought form most human beings on the planet are lost in the forms that arise in their consciousness and when I say in their consciousness it's not entirely correct because there is not such a thing as my consciousness ultimately this consciousness and I am that if you use the word expression my consciousness this whole language unfortunately operates you create a duality and so here is me in this consciousness the same thing happens when you talk or think about my life and everybody thinks about it a lot of the time it's amazing how fascinating my life is and that's such a fundamental error or delusion to say my life because it implies that you have a life and that implies that you are separate from life there's you and there's life and you have it and then of course you start being afraid because you might lose it and then what's left of you so just to see that to say my life is obviously an illusion because how could you be separate from life you are life you don't have one and life takes on form temporary forms becomes what looks like a physical form and on the inner level life becomes thought forms and emotions and sense perceptions forms that consciousness takes is born into continuously the continuous dance of form amazing spectacle beautiful, wonderful but it gets heavy and serious when all you know is the forms that consciousness takes and you never know yourself as consciousness itself being so we could say the forms that consciousness or life takes we could call that existence it stands exist means to stand out ex means out from latin is stands from stands, standing to stand out so whatever arises sense perceptions things thoughts they exist first they have a certain life span come and go entire universe exists, life forms go in and out of existence and then there is that which is prior to existence being I am so the play of form is a beautiful thing well forms are things but when that is all you know you don't know that which underlies the dance of form then the dance of form is no longer a dance it's not fun anymore it's not experienced or perceived as a play anymore it becomes deadly serious because that's all you know and every form matters it matters absolutely you know how worked up people get about things and you can see even people who mentally perhaps realize certain truths they say I'm beyond things now and then suddenly the phone rings what happened what he broke the contract another word for word for form we could just say the world and so the world is the world of things it's the world of material things which absorbs many people's large part of many people's attention what's the next thing they're looking always for the next thing to acquire to derive satisfaction from to associate with to identify with but things are not just material things and of course material things are everywhere in our civilization particularly we are we are suffocating under proliferation of things and bombarded with messages that we need more things but things are also events they are forms that arise and they pretend to be all important and life is not a play anymore and the older you get the heavier it gets and the more serious it gets you may have noticed in the statues of the Buddha the Buddha has a slight smile usually the good ones there are some bad ones where the Buddha looks serious but the good ones there is a hint of a smile and then you may ask why is he smiling if all is nothingness as some say emptiness then there is nothing what is there to smile about the smile arises because the Buddha is in touch with that which is prior to things to objects to form to the world not because he has made it in the world he is not smiling because somebody has just given him a garden for his monks and nuns to walk in he is in touch with that which is prior to all things we could call that if things are objects that arise in the field of consciousness then consciousness itself could best be described as space a sense of spaciousness or space in your life which doesn't exist as your life by just using language space consciousness which is not a term from science fiction but refers to the realization that space is the essence of who you are the spaciousness of simple being and your entire life experience is determined by whether or not and how much space there is in your life and for many humans on the planet there is no space it's not that the space isn't there it cannot be destroyed done away with but they don't know it's there all they know is the forms someone could say all they know is the dimension of waves and ripples on the surface of life that's the world experiences, events, sense perceptions drama, thoughts emotions, ripples ripples on the surface of life itself and I am life I am the one life I speak for each one of you as the I am that which I am is life itself it takes on a temporary form and it's beautiful it's a continuous stepping back from seduction of things it's not that you reject things but you stay you can remain conscious of consciousness while you participate in the dance how does that look in practice? somebody comes says oh you know what just happened this and this and this in other words lost in things, the world of things and it matters each thing matters absolutely you know this okay and now there's the possibility either you get drawn into that and react on the same level and fuel that dimension what copy now what are we going to do now or you can be there while that person speaks you can be there as an alert aware presence in which the words are being received oh okay there's an alertness there you haven't gone to sleep but you're in fact much more awake than you would be if you were reacting you just oh that's well okay and for a moment there's a space there's a space in which this thing happens the person is talking and then you will find yourself saying something or doing something and it will be appropriate and while you say or do something there's still a connectedness with the underlying field it's a global thing it's the entire being a connectedness with the underlying field out of which the doing comes or out of which the words come speak much more intelligent certainly the words that come out of the field which really is the field of pure intelligence, consciousness itself will be much more relevant much more powerful much more intelligent than anything that could come out of the conditioned conditioned reactive mind and another thing that comes with it is there's always when you're in touch with the I am you could call it otherwise other words you can call it stillness, beingness, presence that is also the realm of peace that is the realm out of which peaceful peaceful action can come words, peaceful words, words that have the energy carry still a fragrance of that state of being action also can carry that fragrance creation, you can even create something out of that state like a work of art or whatever it may be a little simple object and whatever comes out of the state of connectedness with being and don't trust words, they're never quite right you're not connected with being because you are being but we have to use words out of that state of connectedness with being whatever comes out of that has a beauty to it, has a power to it has a quality and it may just be the quality of a simple gesture or the quality of a step or the it doesn't matter what it is so that's really the purpose of life while you are here in this form is to be in the two dimensions one could say, this is nothing final here the two dimensions of, there's the dimension of the world and there's the dimension of being or presence which is the unmanifested or other words that you may want to use and the art of living is to be in the world participate to the extent that you want to or is required of you and as the old expression goes to be in the world but not off it that's an old Christian expression so the world which is the world of things which includes thoughts because every thought is an object, it has a form, a thought form the world of things including your mind no longer has the power to draw you in completely and you no longer give it this absolute reality it is the world of the relative it helps greatly if you can become friendly with the present moment because being can only be realized of course in the present moment and the delusion is that something is happening in this moment that prevents me from being from being myself from being present still at peace in love it all goes together because all love can only arise from that dimension the delusion that the present moment is some kind of obstacle to where I really want to go or be and that's a very common, it's so widespread that it dominates many people's lives entirely the delusion that the present moment is some kind of obstacle in my way they don't say that or don't think that but they live like that if you said it or thought it you would immediately say this must be insane but if that becomes your daily experience almost always that the present moment is okay where's the next thing because this isn't it, this can't be it but I'm looking for some for more, something more but not this the more could be anything could be the tiniest thing because life consists of a succession of the tiniest things the great things happen rarely and once they pass they're back to the tiny things so it's the tiniest things for example the belief that once your child has brushed his or her teeth it'll be okay and after then of course there's something else that's needed there's always the next thing that you need to get to in the unconscious belief because if you make it conscious you see the absurdity of it in the unconscious belief that there is something there for you in the next moment or the one after that and so the present moment or whatever is becomes a means to an end, no more the end is the next moment and what is the next moment, the future moment a thought in your head that's its only reality is that true? it must be true because nobody has ever touched or smelled or seen the future it's always only a thought in your head and so you live for a thought in your head that is the mind obsessed mind dominated mind possessed state could also be called egoic state because ego means to be totally identified with a mind made sense of self and every thought which many thoughts are about the next moment, the future every thought draws your attention in so completely that you identify with it and so identify means it becomes invested with a sense of self laughter that's the great illusion so you're looking for yourself somewhere in that realm because in some future moment there's a hope that things will be okay I can finally relax, of course it never comes because it's the future, it never comes so here becoming friendly with the present moment and stop treating it as an enemy laughter or run away from it or use it okay as a stepping stone you are here but you want to be there laughter laughter laughter you can look almost everybody on TV looks like that laughter it sounds almost too simple becoming friendly with the present moment and all kinds of things happen in the present moment the form that it takes changes continuously the present moment itself remains as space and then in that space something happens and the secret to life is to be internally aligned with the form that this moment the only moment there ever is takes instead of rejecting the form that this moment takes or devalue it and make it into a means to an end internally aligned means yes, you say yes to what is your child hasn't brushed his or her teeth yet that's what is why don't you brush your teeth now there is a different way of doing things or you tell me well you haven't experienced I have four children laughter there is another way of doing things that honors life which is now and only in honoring life in saying yes to the form that this moment takes can you go beyond that in yourself which is beyond form if you react against the form that this moment takes you will continue to be trapped in form a form identity, a me that feels stronger every time it reacts against something, the me gets stronger in every no to what is every time you can argue with what is, you complain about what is, the little me, the mental formation feels stronger for a while and then you have to look for the next thing to argue with so the secret is the form that this moment takes often looks like a limitation on your freedom it may look like a limitation on your life one way or another you're sitting in an office but you don't want to be there you're in a traffic jam but you don't want to be there so that's a limitation your partner is getting obnoxious so that's a limitation there's always something that should I want to be free I want to be fully myself not this and that keeps you trapped it's only when you bring a yes to the form that this moment takes, that's to do with the manifested world, the world of manifestation is producing the form that this moment takes as an event a person wanting something whatever it may be, a situation, a place that's the form and you may say, what doesn't make sense, I don't want this but it is and whatever is, is part of the totality, the entire universe has brought about the form that this moment takes, otherwise it couldn't be everything is totally interconnected now you may not be able to see how these things are interconnected, why should I be stuck in this traffic jam right now does it make sense what is the purpose in that it shouldn't be yet it is and if you become internally aligned with the form which a moment ago looked like an obstacle but now you say, well it is it is there it is with that that space the dimension of space within yourself which is being opens up because you haven't made yourself smaller by reacting against the form you haven't trapped yourself in a form identity by reacting against some form that this moment takes so by saying yes to the form that is and in some cases it is truly from a conventional viewpoint one would say this is terrible how could this happen to a human being or to me how can this happen to me I don't, this is not what I want it's awful, it could be serious, an illness, whatever great loss collapse, somebody close to you dies goes away, leaves you forms are not reliable in this world, they are fleeting that includes the human form, even the seemingly solid structures are not really that solid, they just look solid, talk to a physicist he'll tell you they are not solid at all and sometimes you realize they are not solid, so suddenly something crumbles a form crumbles form and the formless and you cannot find the dimension of the formless as long as you are battling against the world of form I want freedom, I want to find myself and I can't find myself sitting in front of this computer screen, I can't find myself having to clean this right now, I want to be doing something meaningful, I want to you're missing something not something, you're missing that which is concealed underneath the form that this moment takes and that's easy to do and that's the great deception that most humans are subject to what they are looking for in some future moment is already here hiding in the most unlikely place called the present moment what what what is it that they're looking for, but all the people that are running around like rabbits or whatever in the cities there must be some purpose where are they all running to what is their purpose and they all have even if they want more money or they want more of this or more of that hiding behind that there's always they want to be more fully themselves, they want to feel a sense of security, of aliveness they want to be more fully who they are, they want to they're looking for themselves, they're looking for an ultimate sense of being rootedness of saying, yes I have arrived I'm fully myself now secure and they are looking through this or that or that they try to get there not realizing that they can't it's been hiding all along underneath the seemingly unsatisfactory form that this moment takes so you come, it's a completely different way to live the alignment with the suchness of this moment it's only then that is the true meditation meditation you then space arises when the form is not resisted space a difficult situation, an unpleasant place, whatever it may be, somebody screaming this or that that's what is and then it's still there, but there is a dimension of depth to what is that frees you from being totally dependent on the world of form and from that space, it comes with allowing, allowing is the key allow this moment and suddenly space is there, because through saying yes to what is, immediately an inner spaciousness arises and out of that spaciousness action can come, out of that spaciousness words can come or out of that spaciousness nothing may come, it may just remain a spaciousness, which is beautiful too, very effective action can come out of that and out of that spaciousness comes the recognition that every life form that comes into your field of consciousness is really an aspect of the one life the temporary form that the one life the one consciousness that you are has taken and that recognition it's a flower, it's a tree it's a cloud, it's another human being, it's the cat it's a pebble, a stone a wall a chair whether we call it alive or inanimate, doesn't matter everything is alive and everything is a form of life and the essence is life itself beingness presence some great artists have looked at a relatively an ordinary landscape nobody would have looked at it twice and they looked and then they took up the brush and then there was a when the painting was finished yes it was a picture of that landscape but it also had the fragrance of that which is beyond form that was there as the backdrop the background to the sense perception of the artist there was a true looking against a field of alert, aware stillness then it became a painting and then even not immediately perhaps but at some point even humans who hadn't perhaps not perhaps almost completely trapped in form recognized something in that painting they couldn't quite say what and so it became what they call great art somebody was able to look at the world of form so deeply that the formless became part of the perception and that is not this is meant to be our normal state to bring that dimension into this world of form that which transcends the personal because everything that is personal about you is pertains to the world of form my past my thoughts my opinions my viewpoints of who I am who others are, what I know or think I know my story my future all form and it's all destined to dissolve fairly quickly as all forms do pop, boop salt bubbles oh where's, it's gone oh it can't be they don't, the amazing thing is they don't teach yet at school that forms dissolve quickly that could be lesson one and every child would see it oh yes they don't teach it they teach other things which they say are more important or are important matters it's to do with the world of things don't look for the significant in your life at some future moment when am I going to make it when am I going to be recognized when am I finally going to get that sense of security that can only come when you have a certain amount of money in the bank when is my story finally turning going to turn into a happy and satisfying one

I'm waiting waiting for my life to become significant and you miss the depth because the depth is in each moment or rather the one the only moment there is and your life becomes very significant when you bring the inner yes to the present moment then something arises in you that is beyond the form that perhaps looks as if it were an obstacle but it is the truth of this was expressed is expressed in mythologically in the image of the cross somebody surrenders to the most dreadful situation pain, suffering and somebody surrenders to that and so at first the cross is the greatest obstacle to finding yourself to being yourself to life it seems to deny that there is any meaning to life now the cross stands for anything loss, death and it will come into everybody's life of course and then there comes this this is the form this moment and suddenly there is a peace in the background that suddenly is there in the most dreadful situation, externally and so the cross becomes suddenly an opening that works with little things and certainly works with big things the actor who played superman died yesterday he experienced a dreadful accident broke his neck couldn't move anymore he also experienced a certain degree of surrender in the years after that even a certain peace one could see it became an opening and so they said something beautiful in the news he truly became superman only after the accident from a conventional view point it would be an irony in the film he flies and in reality he is confined to a wheelchair but the true superman is in the wheelchair he also said something they showed an interview he gave it one year ago he talked about the accident he said I was one when I was riding I was always completely one with the horse we were a oneness and he said but at that moment I got distracted by a thought and I lost the present moment and then the accident happened then he said you see how important the present moment is how important how precious the present moment is because it is life itself, it is inseparable from the very being that you are and knowing that is the art of living in this world remembering you are not what happens because people get so drawn into what happens you are not what happens and you are not what you do because that's what life consists of things happen to you that's the passive experience of life and then you react or you do things, that's the active and that's for most humans that's all there is they are dependent on what happens to them and on the doing, what they do so there's what happens, what's the next thing that's going to happen I'm hoping that it'll be good underneath the hope there's the fear that it'll be bad what happens and what you do are only relatively important, not absolutely absolutely important is is whether you are aligned with life at this moment that is your purpose to live, to learn, to live in that way here on this earth as this temporary form is your purpose to learn that and what you do doesn't matter, the success of your life is not determined by what the world tells you is successful the world doesn't know it, the world is completely lost are you aligned with life with being with yourself, with the now it's all one and then what you do externally is secondary how you do it is what matters whether you six, seven, eight hours a day you move dishes or whatever you do then it flows into that, being flows into that, or if whatever you do seems incompatible with being, you will find yourself very quickly removed life removes you oh the boss calls you in and says we don't need you anymore we don't want peaceful people here oh he says you're the only person not suffering from a stress related disease you're not doing your job some of the structures of this mad world can perhaps be transformed from within other structures of this mad world you simply leave or they collapse by themselves and there's wisdom is required for you to know but that's easy because wisdom is the place of wisdom is accessing the present moment alert still present and you watch and you listen you watch and listen even if there's nothing to listen to as one Zen master would often call his disciples by their name Mary yes master nothing John yes nothing to simply call them out of identification with the stream of thinking into presence into stillness into alert awareness you don't have to fill it with something it's space itself so he called them into that state and there was nothing he didn't have to put anything into it why fill it up ha ha ha ha ha ha there'll be enough things that will go into space there are all kinds of things will go oh but you don't have to hang on so much anymore you can enter your space space not yours you are space so it's not your space things things enter space and then they leave okay experiences events people and you remain as space the background so the foreground is the world the foreground is the world of things the world of thinking the world of emotions coming going that's the foreground of your life that most people are completely lost in and then there's the background the Buddha's smile is I would call the background smile this was expressed in an extreme form by the teacher Krishnamurti who once said in a talk do you want to know my secret and of course everybody wanted to know his secret they'd been coming for 30 years to listen to him and he said this is it my secret I don't mind what happens I don't know how many people got it amazing now of course we understand what that means now I don't mind what happens I'm not what happens and I'm not looking for myself in what happens I am not what happens nor am I looking for myself in what happens I am the space in which it happens not what happens I am presence I am consciousness I am life temporarily appearing as a form of life so the dance of the forms of life is actually quite beautiful when you don't mind what happens anymore because you welcome what happens because what happens is the present moment and it's not serious thank you you

[Speaker 6] (3:37:14 - 3:37:18)

music music

[Speaker 3] (3:37:26 - 3:37:27)

music music

[Speaker 6] (3:37:42 - 3:37:42)

music music music music music music music music music music music

[Speaker 1] (3:39:21 - 4:06:14)

welcome to this gathering we are running a little late which is in the timeless dimension irrelevant and in time it matters if you were getting impatient restless if the mind started to say things like what's going on why is it taking so long that means you are carrying time inside the more time psychological time you carry inside the more stressful life is it seems to be it seems to be it seems to be that time is what we'll talk about for a little while now I had that feeling when I realized we would be starting quite late so there's something to do with time here and this was confirmed when half an hour ago I was sitting in the green room and I received a beautiful gift from someone, thank you very much of a tub of anti-aging cream laughter laughter and then I knew for sure that we have to talk about time laughter and of course I will apply the cream laughter laughter and see what happens laughter and of course for most people time is the most powerful factor in their lives and nobody could deny the reality of time because even for words to come out of this mouth requires time and we are going to spend time here how much I don't know we'll see we'll spend an hour and a half, two hours three hours, who knows here and from a conventional viewpoint this is a correct statement we are going to spend this amount of time here here if you look more closely all we ever spend if you can even use that word, is the present moment here so in your immediate experience there's always only the present moment so it is not in absolute terms, it is not true to say that we are going to spend two hours here in conventional terms yes in absolute terms the only reality that these so called two hours have is as a thought in our heads where we call that an hour, two hours apart from the thought in our head future and past have no existence and this is an amazing realization not just to be understood intellectually but to realize in the depth of your being that your life I've never said that before by the way, that your life is always now your life is always now, never not now, what we call past and future the only reality is they are thought forms in the human mind in your experience in your immediate experience they cannot exist, they do not exist, there is no past and future all you can know about past and future, about the passing of time is what time does to things you remember when you look in the mirror I'm saying this inspired by the anti-aging cream you look in your mirror in the bathroom and then you get a photo of yourself 20 years ago and you compare them and then you can say, oh time did that time did that to me so time is a little bit like a criminal leaves evidence everywhere wherever you look you can see well, yes, time evidence that time seems to exist is everywhere, not just the bathroom mirror, everywhere and yet you can never catch the criminal just very elusive so in your immediate experience there is no such thing as past and future in your immediate experience there is only now only in the mind the human mind, which is the movement of thought there time has its existence and the more you are identified with the movement of thinking the more important time is for you and collectively, of course, time has never been more important to humans than in our civilization this present civilization everybody almost everybody is stressed everybody says there's not enough time everybody lives always towards the next thing the next moment the next day the next hour always living towards that this is so deeply ingrained that people don't even realize it anymore we are gathered here tonight in order to realize, of course many of you already are realizing that that there is another dimension in every human being that we could call the timeless dimension and for most people on the planet it doesn't exist, they don't know that that is there and that it would free them if they could only be conscious of that dimension within, it would free them of an enormous amount of suffering unhappiness discontent that is there when your state of consciousness is completely dominated by time past and future so a word for this, the realization of the timeless dimension of consciousness a word that we could use for this realization is the word awakening you awaken out of identification with this continuous stream of thoughts that produces what we call time this is why we are here we are not denying that we still need to handle time in our everyday life on a practical level to make an appointment and so on that's fine but we do not need to be dominated by time psychologically we are here in order to deepen or accelerate the awakening that is already happening in almost every one of you that is sitting here because it is that which has brought you here if you were not awakening already to the timeless dimension of consciousness in yourself you would find it very frustrating to be sitting here and gradually the frustration would build up the impatience the restlessness of the mind that would be saying what is he talking about I have no, I don't understand it doesn't make sense what is he talking about he has been talking for 15 minutes and I don't know what he is saying he has not given me information, he hasn't told me something new, yes at the present moment he already said that 5 years ago, there is only the now I came for something new to take home so some new bit can add to myself what is the next thing he is going to say ah, there it is so if you can be sitting here and enjoying being here somehow, you don't know why you enjoy being here and sitting here, but somehow it feels there is a rightness to it and there is almost a recognition of all these words that you hear are simply confirming what deep down you already know and the words of course in themselves are not all that important, they are merely little signposts that point beyond themselves they are not explanations it's not philosophy nothing even, a complete explanation of the universe wouldn't help you if you cannot awaken out of the time bound state of consciousness so all this is the words are there on the surface the words are not the essence of this gathering, the essence of this gathering is within you it is within you and it emerges that is, as you sit there in a state of simple receptiveness or presence you simply hear, just as I sit here in the simple state of presence and out of that the words come so the words appear in your consciousness in the space of your consciousness and if you can sit here and be aware I'm giving you already when you learn public speaking they say don't tell them the important things until the end but I'm telling you the important things now in case you have something more important to go to so then you can go this is also a very useful little hint in case you decide to stay for the rest of our evening here and this is a very unusual thing to do mostly you would be focused on the words and there would be a mental commentary that accompanies the words where you compare what the words are saying with your own opinions or your own knowledge or your own beliefs and you say yeah that's true, no I don't quite agree with that oh that's rubbish that would be the normal way of listening to a talk so your attention is on the words that kind of attention has a grasping quality to it sometimes you can see it in people's faces when they're at a lecture, hopefully not here they go it's like a little animal waiting to pounce on something now what they pounce on may be something that they agree with like yeah that's it or they pounce on something like that's completely wrong and then of course when something like that happens in a normal talk then your mind is so active that for ten minutes you don't even hear what the speaker is saying because you don't so that's a normal state of consciousness so when you go to all universities and so on, they're either in that state of consciousness the pouncing state or they're half asleep so is there another way of listening to a talk there is and this is my suggestion to you to make this your presence here more meaningful and that is yes to be aware of the words but also to be aware of, now we need to be very careful with words also to be aware of that which makes the perception of the words possible use slightly different words, another little sign I suppose but also to be aware of your own awareness with which these words or the sensory perception of the words is being received so there are two ingredients as you sit here of this moment one is the words that flow one after another this rule they come, and of course in time, they need time to come out of this mouth that's one level and that's for most people that's all that ever exists is that level of reality then there is a hidden concealed level of reality that for most people does not exist they are not aware of it and that is a deeper dimension you could say your very presence the very presence that you are as consciousness that is the space for these words in which they appear so you are the space for whatever perception happens so as you sit here you are aware of the words and what I'm saying now, there's no point in even trying to think about what that means, you either realize it directly, or you don't you're not only aware of the words you're also aware of yourself as the underlying awareness and that is not something that you can be aware of as if it were an object in your consciousness and say, ah, there it is a word which is a verbalized spoken thought is an object in consciousness one object, everything that you perceive and even thoughts have a form they are thought forms and forms come and go they come and go arise and dissolve and then there is that without which none of this would be and that is the simple your simple presence here the presence the conscious presence that you are is it possible for you as you sit here to be aware of yourself as the conscious space as well as of that which happens which here happen to be the words so you sit here and there is the background to what you perceive is an inner spaciousness and that's an amazing thing this is what they've been what all the spiritual seekers look for and traditionally they haven't found they don't find it, that's why they're called seekers because they are looking for it as if it could be grasped by this pouncing consciousness where is it? where is the enlightenment that I am looking for I'm looking for it it's going to happen to me one day and you've already made it into time and future as if something could happen in your life and suddenly reveal to you your own reality in some future moment so the simplicity of the realization is to see immediately at first hand that dimension in you that is, has nothing to do with time because that is the consciousness that you are the awareness that you are to feel to sense your own no words are absolutely correct so don't argue with the words, please just a signpost they may not be the greatest signpost but they are signposts and there's no point in saying I don't like the color of this signpost I don't like the way the letters are written, doesn't matter it points somewhere that's what matters so can you sense your own presence as you sit here which pervades by the way your entire energy field your own presence is not just a head phenomenon it pervades the entire body but it is not the body it is deeper than the body so as you sit here it is very helpful if you can feel an increased or intensified and it may happen to quite a few of you even without me saying it to experience an intensified sense of aliveness throughout your entire body you can hardly say what exactly it is but it just feels that every cell is alive there's a field, an energy field that pervades the entire body there's a presence here that is the doorway into that dimension of yourself that is formless and also timeless if you cannot find that dimension in your life then you live you are condemned to continuous almost continuous frustration because all you have is the world all you have is your thoughts plus the world out there and that is very frustrating there is no fulfillment there is no lasting satisfaction, there is no happiness if you are trapped only in the surface dimension of life and of course all the media they all tell you yes you can find ultimate satisfaction but they are all unhappy everybody is like hypnotized by the world of form, the dimension of form and formless or timeless or eternal which is another word for timeless, for most people it's just an empty it's just a mental concept if you go to theology they might use the word eternity but it's like people talking about honey writing a PhD about honey but they never tasted it so it's just concepts but the amazing realization is eternity is an actual presence, it is the only true presence, it is presence itself and eternity is the essence of who you are it's not some theological concept this is what it has become but it is something absolutely real infinitely more real than the world of form which is subject to time in which everything is going to be devoured and is already in the process of being devoured by time this monster everything goes the flowers, if you sit here for long enough you'll see the flowers go

[Speaker 6] (4:06:15 - 4:06:16)

gone

[Speaker 1] (4:06:17 - 5:16:29)

and then if you could sit here for long enough to watch the speaker or let's just speed it up although of course it's going to slow down a little because of the anti-aging cream but if you could sit here for long enough you would see the speaker getting being devoured by time and suddenly the body collapses and then if you stand a little longer suddenly it becomes dust and then all is left of the speaker is a little pile of dust and then a gust of wind comes and it's gone phew everything here is subject to of course the famous Buddhist word impermanence, the fleetingness of everything very fleeting it is time and this is one reason why it is frustrating if there is nothing if there is no other dimension in your life life is a succession of frustrations and many of you have experienced that and that's why you're here and now to get out of that is not to find some new something new to believe in some new theory which says yes but ultimately you are eternal and you just have to believe that no you don't have to believe anything you go deeper in fact the more you can let go of belief because what is belief except to have a succession of thoughts and say this is reality this is the truth but it's a bundle of thoughts and somebody else has a different bundle of thoughts and says oh no you're wrong and then you start fighting it's called religion and then but the amazing thing deep down in the most religions you have a core where there was once the truth sometimes spoken by the founder and then progressively misunderstood progressively misinterpreted more and more progressively it became thought but at the beginning of the great religions there was this simple message which some people some one person said the kingdom of heaven if you do not find that dimension then you live in unhappiness or somebody else said it was the Buddha if that's what he said the deathless realm Amaravati the deathless realm he also points to the dimension that is at the core of every human being only waiting to be discovered realized covered up in many humans when that dimension is covered up and please remember as you sit here be aware of your presence as an entire field of consciousness as well as the words your presence is more fulfilling more alive more deeply fulfilling than these words could ever be if you don't even have a glimpse of your own presence as you sit there the simple fact of the awareness that you are you can't catch it it's just there no form that is so much more fulfilling than these words could ever be without that awareness of awareness the words are silly if you cannot if you don't have the words plus the that to which the words point if you don't have that then all you have is the words and then you are like the person the reviewer of the power of now for time magazine time said what was the expression he used mumbo jumbo something like that didn't make sense there was nothing inside well it was there but it was covered up that could respond to the words so the words are here to pull out not just the words but also the presence of the speaker which is no different from your presence and so there is a meeting and there is an energy field in the room of presence that makes it easier to stay in that state and if the speaker stopped speaking it wouldn't matter very much in fact some of you who are already deeply connected with this presence that you are perhaps would even wish that the speaker would stop speaking wouldn't it be so much better if he would shut up and if that's what you are thinking you are right it would be the only reason why the speaker continues to speak is that there is still some of you, I don't know how many who would be very frustrated and would run out of the room so we'll keep you here through the words and continuously as you listen sense that presence that you are we could call that also of course a stillness within just another pointer it is the dimension of stillness now what is stillness stillness is the inner equivalent of silence outside and what is silence outside, silence is the absence of noise that's defining it in negative terms silence is the absence of noise and then if silence is the absence of noise stillness, what is this inner, the stillness is of course the absence of the movement of thinking this is again defining it in negative terms but stillness is more than just the absence of thoughts stillness is the very essence of who you are because stillness is consciousness itself before it becomes something before it becomes a thought before it becomes an emotion before it becomes a sense perception this the unconditioned dimension of consciousness, the essence of who you are, in which your past is totally irrelevant, it doesn't even exist on that level, whatever is in your past whether it's you achieved the greatest things or your life is the greatest mess that one could possibly imagine, you've messed up your whole thing and for some people for many people it's in between those two extremes, it becomes irrelevant so who you are where do you derive your sense of self from, your sense of identity of who you are, and most people poor wretches they derive their sense of identity from their past and what is past, we saw that earlier in the past a bundle of thoughts so who you are is infinitely more real in the dimension of presence than in the dimension of past so to realize this timeless dimension in yourself where you no longer need reference to your life story to explain and define through your mind who you are and most people of course still live like that and that's a dreadful prison that you are trapped in mind made prison you derive your sense of identity from your past which is a bundle of thoughts that's me and then of course this identity, this me this time made conditioned, time bound me is an unsatisfied entity because the past hasn't fulfilled me yet, it has not yet allowed me to truly be who I can be and want to be and maybe one day will be so I need the future to get to me to get to the fullness of me eventually just give me enough time and I will find myself and I will complete the unhappy story of me and so everybody then is running towards that in order to complete the story which in the best of cases is ambivalent not quite sure it wasn't that there's quite a few things went wrong in my past or maybe one or two great achievements and then I'd have to remember that all the time, okay I got the gold medal in this 25 years ago I got the gold and you look at it, that is just one example or even to say I wrote this great book, The Power of Now I have to remember I have to look at it to remind myself that I wrote that and then oh I feel bitter about myself now and there may be some of you who perhaps are dreaming of writing something like that and say well then my life would really be sorted out everything, I would have arrived recognition everybody loves me and then whatever imagined situation that the mind made self imagined it would complete this would complete me fulfill me when you actually arrive there then you realize that every situation that you arrive at or every condition that arises in your life has a new very unusual that you didn't know before, a new set of frustrations around it so before you thought okay fame is going to finally make me happy and when you reach fame you realize it's not that great in fact I'd rather not have it but now you're stuck with it and it has its own limitations the same with anything any condition that the mind imagines when I reach it, the great big house one day finally I will complete myself in a big mansion and then I can sit in it and look around and say I made it I made it and that only works if you invite others who have not quite as much as you and they will come and admire your place and then you go well this thing, well 50,000 bucks for that thing there you are somebody you are somebody now and then the people go home and then you sit there again in your big house and then you go to sleep and in the middle of the night you wake up and then the heart is beating where does that fear come from there's something missing I have to plan another dinner party whatever new situation it will not be the fulfillment of your story there will be and of course those of you who know Buddhism around you will recognize very clearly this is what the Buddha said in slightly different words wherever you go whatever you do, whatever condition arises in your life you are going to find dukkha, which is translated as unhappiness or misery or unsatisfactoriness or not enough and that's an amazing realization 2,600 years ago he saw that already in the human condition you are condemned to continuous dukkha unsatisfactoriness, misery unhappiness, frustration and if you look around that's the world and what that state of consciousness manifests collectively of course is dreadful if you look at human history, especially recent history, but any history dreadful insanity why is human history so insane because it was produced by people who are mentally sick because insanity is a vital part of the collective human state of consciousness and this is why human history, 85% of it, 90% I don't know is mad just read it I always recommend the 20th century because that's just the height of madness or if you don't like history books watching the news on TV is enough every evening you see this is mad and of course it's produced by the human conditioned mind by that state of consciousness that is totally unbalanced why is it unbalanced because it only knows let's just put it like this for a moment it only knows one half of reality which is the world of form it does not know the dimension of depth the dimension of the timeless the dimension of stillness it doesn't know that if it knew that it would be healed it would be balanced and it would manifest and create a very different world from what we have known since recorded history a very different world but we cannot wait of course, a mistake would be to say okay, let's wait for the new world to come, it's going to come it's not going to come if it is not arising through the realization at this very moment of the essence of who you are the simple essence of who you are so once that is there you can bring the art then the art of living then is to continuously live in the two dimensions yes you are still, you are active and you are doing whatever you have to do in this world but in every situation in the background you are in touch with and now what we call that I can give you a choice of signposts choose the one that works for you in any situation you are in touch at the same time with in the background dimension, the dimension of stillness you are in touch with the awareness that you are, you feel you sense your own presence even while you listen to somebody you sense your presence the presence of consciousness the presence of presence you sense that as yourself you are and presence cannot be defined further, you cannot say presence ok, what does presence consist of? this is the question of the human mind that is saying please analyze it of course what the human mind does it cuts in order to understand things, it dissects things, it cuts them up it analyzes it cuts them up into little pieces now you can do that with a flower although of course you miss the essence of the flower but you can learn a great deal about the flower if you start cutting it up and putting it under a microscope you learn a lot about the flower except the essence of the flower because the essence of the flower is one with the essence of who you are and that essence is formless it is it cannot be defined through the mind it can only be known directly as the simple realization of your presence of presence I say your presence it's not quite right to put it like that but temporarily I'm saying your it is not yours it is universal presence manifesting through you ultimately the whole personal thing is part of the surface dimension where you feel you have a separate identity as a separate person but that's only in the dimension of time, it's short lived what's going to happen to this person with its history of course we all know what's going to happen to this person and the history it's going to suddenly one day go pop where is he he passed away when? yesterday but yesterday he was still sitting in this chair he's gone yeah popped soap bubble, like a soap bubble they go, they look so real and then suddenly it goes a little drop of water dissolves it's gone it looked, everything looks so real here it looks so real this is why people take everything so seriously because the dimension of depth is missing and if the dimension of depth is missing everything in the surface dimension is deadly serious my life is very serious I have to think about it especially at four in the morning what am I going to do with my life what am I going to do with my life I've messed it all up, it's too late now yeah but you achieved some great things, yeah that's true deriving your identity from the stream of thinking and then you suddenly have a good thought about yourself and then it gets cancelled out by a bad thought and then you need to ask others to get some kind of reflection of who you are what do you think of me what do you think of my life let me tell you about my life it's a sad story and if you're lucky you find somebody who confirms to you that yes it is indeed very sad and yes you have a right to be unhappy they missed that one in the declaration of human rights the right to be unhappy but and of course if this dimension is all you know unhappiness is guaranteed and stress is guaranteed and the heaviness of life is guaranteed and that eventually it's not going to get any better is guaranteed because if it does get better it's only temporary time will make sure that even if your so called life does get better it's only temporary because then it will get worse again and then you go and so that's the reality of your existence unredeemed existence unconscious existence and then there's the possibility of awakening and awakening at first comes perhaps for most people in glimpses for a moment the mind is not saying anything and of course a moment later the mind says oh I'm not thinking I'm not thinking but even as for some of you as you sit here is it possible for you to sit here and simply surrender the compulsion or the erroneous belief that you need to think continuously a deeply ingrained belief an unconscious belief it's very rarely formulated the way I formulate it now but if you formulate it it says never stop thinking which by the way is the advertising slogan of the Globe and Mail I believe never stop thinking I'd like to get a photo of myself standing in front of that billboard and I will look tortured because if you never stop thinking it means you are possessed by your mind you are possessed your mind has become a virtual autonomous entity that has taken possession of you and it lives up here it's almost like science fiction something from science fiction it has come into you and taken hold of you and this has been going on for so long that you don't even know it you are it you believe you are it and every thought that arises you are completely in the thought you are identified with it and you pronounce judgments upon situations and people and yourself and your life and somebody else's life and what they did and shouldn't have done but did to and the continuous commentary on whatever is happening in your life it's immediately commented upon by this entity it knows immediately complete absence of space inner space you are completely in the grip of this thing which never stops talking and this is who you feel I am that's me a dreadful condition it's normal and of course this is why I always say normal equals insane the normal world has produced normal human history and it is insane so there you have that thing and the first glimpse of a realization comes when you realize that you have a voice in here that never stops speaking oh it's talking king there comes the beginning of freedom because now the total identification with the voice is no longer there not a hundred percent you realize there is a thing that is the conditioned mind that is the voice in the head and I say the voice you can split that voice up into a number of voices which sometimes argue with each other psychologists know about that so you get to many people have this the voice in the head for many people splits up into several voices and they are often antagonistic towards each other one says oh well I can't help it I'm always and the other yes you never achieve anything yeah but I try I do my best but it just but basically it's the voice and it's the voice that talks when somebody gives their opinion and then suddenly oh you're wrong you're completely let me tell you how it is I've studied this matter I know more than you the voice is talking it's asserting it's existence it's exerting itself it needs to be right to be wrong for the mind made self that voice is death so you get enormous amount of emotional suffering that goes with asserting people asserting their mental positions and it talks it's conditioned by the past by your past the cultural past of your country and your family background and your personal history that's a little that's the entity and gradually the ability to realize that there is a voice arises and then the voice loses it's power over you it no longer totally runs your life and that's the beginning of awakening because what you awaken out of is identification with the continuous stream of thinking it never stops never stops and here we awaken out of that so for many people the first awakening is the realization that there is a voice where does that come from that comes from the arising awareness in the background that is the spaciousness and only from that spaciousness can you see that which is not spacious the spaciousness contains that it is the space for that it is the awareness it is the stillness it is that in you which cannot be defined further it can only be known directly it cannot be cut up into little segments because it has no form but it is the essence of who you are so when you are in you know yourself as the space so you are not what happens the thoughts that arise the sense perceptions that arise in your life all those things that happen continuously you are no longer looking for some kind of self confirmation in what happens and you because you already know the essence directly you know it directly in yourself as that and that means wonderful liberation comes with that and that is you don't have gradually you lose opinions about yourself and the need to define your life through further thought goes and with that comes an enormous freedom you no longer compulsively define through continuous mental thinking and judgment who you are and once you become free of always needing to pronounce judgment upon yourself good or bad you are still trapped in judgment good is better than bad but you can't have just good then it turns into bad you can go on and say here I am the greatest I am the best I am the best and one night you wake up and say maybe I am not the best I am the worst I am the worst because you lived only in one polarity then the other got bigger and bigger and suddenly the other polarity any mental thing you have about yourself that you try to be, I am spiritual very spiritual more and more spiritual than most people no I am certainly more spiritual than that guy here and what about him oh no so you have a self image which is again thought based and you compare yourself continuously to others and of course depending where you what kind of comparison you use you always find people who are better than you in one way or another and then you find others who are worse than you in one way or another it's an absurd way to live only to get some sometimes some satisfaction because somebody else is not as good as you at least in your opinion and then the next day to experience the opposite because somebody obviously is better looking than you or has more money than you or has more power and influence than you or is more famous than you or is more spiritual than you all based on thought the entire self based on thought that is the freedom of going beyond that so that you don't need self definitions anymore and opinions about yourself gradually dissolve and then simply you are neither good nor bad neither spiritual or unspiritual you are the simple in any moment in any situation you are the space for whatever is happening here you are the conscious presence not you don't carry the baggage of my personal story and my personal history and then look at the world through all that baggage the veil you see clearly you don't need to and once you no longer define yourself compulsively mentally you no longer need to define everybody you meet compulsively you can allow another human being to be you no longer compare and say he is less than me I am more than he, whatever it's absurd you simply there for the first time a true relationship is possible when the judgments of the mind the compulsive definitions of the mind are no longer operating or in the intermediate stage as you are awakening at least you no longer completely believe in what your mind is saying you recognize it as a thought a judgment conditioned by your past and you recognize it there goes another judgment and you no longer completely believe in every thought that arises and that's wonderful, all that is freedom all that is the arising of the unconditioned, everything else is conditioned the compulsion to judge others what a freedom, what a gift to give to another human being this gift is the gift of not imposing definitions or judgments on another but simply be there as a conscious presence in any human interaction you are a conscious presence, a space of consciousness the same applies to situations the egoic self the mind made self also compulsively interprets every situation this shouldn't be happening but it is yeah but it shouldn't but it's there ok it's a why don't they he should know better yeah but he doesn't they should, why don't they well they don't the disagreement with reality that the conditioned mind has disappears and then arises an incredible thing it is an inner oneness with life and then you see that in the old unconscious state you are never aligned with life, you are always out of alignment because the mind is there and life is here and you miss life continuously, you are not actually alive because life is here and now and the mind is there and then life is continuously happening here but I am somewhere else and at the best of times what I do is I argue with what's happening here and that is deeply ingrained this arguing with what is and the mind doesn't realize that that whatever is, is already the case so to have any kind of inner disagreement with the reality of this moment is the state of being out of alignment with the totality of life then the totality of life, the greater the one intelligence that underlies all life, which is consciousness itself that consciousness cannot then fully express itself through this form only little trickles come through this form you have enough consciousness to formulate thoughts just little trickles but the fullness of consciousness cannot flow through you when you are out of alignment with life it's only when you bring yourself into alignment with life so out of alignment means you argue with what is you have inner resistance to what is you are always running to some other moment but always never this one is never quite right except when you are half asleep because you don't have the energy to argue anymore but that's not the way we are going so you realize the fullness of life you've missed it always and then you bring your conscious state consciousness into alignment with now and suddenly an enormous power flows through you which is the power of now which is the power of life itself which is the power of unconditioned consciousness and if I were a religious teacher I might even use the word God but I don't want to use words that have too much baggage attached to them and have been too misinterpreted by the human mind you are then you come into alignment with the one power there is the one life and then the one life can express itself through you even through your mind it can even use your mind and you may suddenly find that quite a few thoughts that you have are original thoughts and then you say them and say people wow that's interesting and so or whatever it is creativity suddenly comes in because the old has gone the old, the conditioned is no longer running your life you become one with life itself and then infinite possibilities open up of creation of creativity of being a powerful good in this world, a good that is deeper than the good on the surface of life which is the opposite of bad there is good and bad on the surface of life but in the dimension of the timeless there is only a timeless good which actually includes the opposites that can only be realized within and there is a new way to live life another way of putting it is you are surrendered to life one with life you no longer argue with the is-ness of things, so the entry point is not to resist whatever form this moment takes no, do not offer internal resistance through arguing through thinking through pronouncing judgments through emotional contraction some people have lived in that state for most of their adult life and you can see it they are always in a state of dissatisfaction just waiting for the next thing to complain about and this is why the complaining voice which for many people is very big and a very important part of the egos the false mind made self attempt to sustain itself is lodged for many people in continuous or almost continuous complaining so it's interesting when you can catch the voice when you are complaining about people situations things, whatever places anything, give me anything and I will complain about it you go to the most beautiful place on holiday you'll find something to complain about if only that it's too short, it's time to go home soon should we should acceptance of this moment and immediately something opens up that is deeper than the form of this moment for most people the form of this moment which is their life situation at this moment where they are, the work they are doing where they live, who they live with the conditions of their life the state of health of their body for many people the form of this moment represents what they consider to be an obstacle an obstacle a hindrance a hindrance to full a full life so, their work their partner or their family even their house where they live their financial situation, their health situation the country they live in whatever you can find anything, the climate if you want to complain you have plenty to complain about when it rains in the winter here but whatever it is always is regarded the form of this moment and this is deeply ingrained, you have to see it to go beyond it, you have to first see that this is a conditioned, collective form of conditioning to regard your life where you are, what you are doing and so on, as a hindrance to the fullness of life and that is a deep misperception a deep error and as long as you regard and react to the form of this moment as if it were a hindrance or an obstacle you remain precisely trapped in that form and what you then project becomes true for you and then if you believe that this moment the form of this moment is keeping me back from living fully then that becomes true for you but it is not the truth the forms of this moment need to be transcended, they are not here to make you happy they are here to take you to the inner state of transcendence and then you move beyond but first, they need to be transcended within how do you transcend a state of health that is unsatisfactory how do you transcend a living situation that is unsatisfactory or a work situation that is unsatisfactory how do you transcend that, you transcend it by taking your attention into the present moment only and saying, this moment this is what is this is the chair I'm sitting on this is a window there is a wall yes, it may not look right but this is what is the light is coming through the window I'm breathing and you become friendly even a body you say, ok, this leg isn't working anymore or here there is a pain or here there is that, this is what is you become friendly with whatever is that's what is one can argue with that it is even an emotion you say, ok, I feel sad ok, then feel sad it's what is you become, by accepting what is you become bigger than what is how does that work by accepting the present moment, only the present moment and not a story about the present moment but the present moment what do I mean by story about the present moment if you run out of money except that my pockets are empty and my bank account is empty or oh, you look zero or nothing that's what is pockets empty, bank account is empty I may have to do some take some action but in the meantime that's what is no story the story would be you failed all the past ten years, all the struggle for nothing look, this is what you've ended up with empty, nothing to show for all the work you've done in ten years all in vain, what's the point of it all and of course, as you know, the story goes on and on you can't, so that you can't, this is not accepting to say I'm miserably poor and I'm a failure and I might as well accept that I'm a failure and poor no this is mistaking a story for acceptance acceptance means to have no story around the simple reality of the present moment and then it becomes beautiful because then you sit on a park bench, perhaps even without a home and you say oh you don't have a story about it this moment is actually not bad and you don't even need to say that you sense that this moment isn't bad because it's beautiful and there is an aliveness in you that is deeper, you could even be in a prison cell, let's say park benches are still relatively nice places let's even if you have no money or no home, let's put you in a prison and perhaps you haven't even done anything, perhaps even wrongly imprisoned, even worse and there you sit and you would be amazed if you let go of the stories around the present moment what remains is the simple reality of this moment the sense perceptions around you and if you accept the form no matter how limiting it seems in the moment of completely accepting the form the formless dimension deep within becomes accessible to you it reveals itself in other words by accepting the form no matter how limiting it may seem this is what is, that is this is what acceptance means it is one with what is and suddenly that which before you regarded as an obstacle or hindrance becomes an opening but the opening is within the opening is the realization of space of yourself as the underlying space for this and then you become free even in the present cell and then even if you're sitting on a park bench, I can talk more about park bench because I've experienced that I haven't experienced prison yet, you never know who knows, my next talk in the states, homeland security may suddenly get me dangerous transformation of consciousness through saying yes to what is and not arguing with it and not fighting it the depths that you are opens up and you feel there is suddenly spaciousness is there and so you sit in your present cell and you feel what I at the beginning I described as the awareness of awareness or the consciousness of consciousness, you feel the presence that you are beyond the form that you temporarily also are, you feel the formless presence even in the midst of an unsatisfying form and of course forms are always unsatisfying, even for a little while they may be satisfying this chocolate is really satisfying me but you eat more and more and suddenly you switch, it switches over and the chocolate will make you sick and you eat more and more because the mind remembers oh it makes me feel good and you have forgotten oh it makes me feel sick so the forms always turn into, turn around there is no satisfaction and only when you don't need the external forms which includes everything situations, people places even good health when you no longer need this to feel who you are to give you an identity to give you the sense of aliveness, then you can actually enjoy the forms of this life until then you desperately need this or that and of course it's never enough the world is frustrating and not satisfying, the forms are actually mostly problematic, you don't enjoy them, even if you buy something big it becomes a problem, you buy the big house and with the big house come big problems, you have to start thinking about that you can't enjoy you can only enjoy when the freedom is there from needing these forms then you can enjoy whatever form is there this flower the light the air in the room the people, beautiful beautiful and when the people go maybe everybody suddenly says this is all rubbish, goodbye I can still sit here suddenly alone it's good to be here that's the simplicity of realization simplicity of being being present in the only place there is the only place where life can be found is here and now, the doorway is in whatever is here and now is not this is a shift now from regarding the here and now as a hindrance which is normal to realizing that the here and now is actually a hidden doorway into presence or into being by simply becoming friendly with it by simply dropping your silly stories about it and seeing the simplicity of this moment without the story just this so when things don't go as they should which is often the case you get stuck in a line up for a ticket it's what is without the story there's no suffering, there's no unhappiness it just is I read an account of in some older civilizations that have not gone quite as mad as this one some people have that still naturally being one with life there's less unhappiness I read some early accounts of westerners going into North America and they observed how the native people when they had to line up for this or that to get some goods or medical treatment or some official document, there were westerners waiting in line and there were a few Indians waiting in line I saw some, read some accounts and they were amazed when they observed that the native people they just stood or sat there they could be there for hours they weren't complaining or impatient they were just there sitting or standing and the westerners they were going, oh for God's sake why don't you stop complaining and the natives were just two hours, three hours four hours and even if they say come back tomorrow okay any place is a good place because you're always somewhere it doesn't really matter where you stand, sit or lie I think I can sit here, I can sit in a car or I can stand somewhere what does it matter ultimately you're always somewhere it's all delusion of the mind say I need to be there but you're here, you need to be exactly where you are at this moment because where you are at this moment is part of the totality of the universe, of life you're not separate it's not here's me and there's the universe you're totally one with the totality it's like a web and that any situation whatever form it takes is as it is because that's the universe produces the situation that's all so it's useful to realize wherever you are is the right place for you and of course it doesn't mean let's say okay I'm not going to move now I gave the example in a book Power of Now I believe let's say you're suddenly you're walking and you suddenly get stuck in the mud up to your knees or more okay well the first thing is to say I'm stuck in the mud there it is and then of course you take action the action you take once you have surrendered first is going to always be much more effective than the action that arises out of a struggle against life so that is to remember any action you take first of all have you accepted this moment you have to be clear, you have to really be alert to see am I creating any kind of resistance or is the space clear cut through okay this is as it is and then action comes a lot of action comes intuitively and spontaneously out of the state of presence even words sometimes because sometimes action means you have to say something and if you say something because the situation may need changing, you maybe need somewhere to have to say something whatever the soup is cold, my room is dirty in a hotel hasn't been cleaned, there are cockroaches everywhere, please get me another room but have you first of all said this is what is then if you speak it is clear there is no accusation about it and there is a clear communication you say what you have to say that means you are not creating resistance in the other so no struggle but effective action never against you are never fighting a situation or a person this is never truly effective always produces more suffering and more opposition no fighting situations not fighting people aligned with what is and then act uncontaminated by negativity clear and sometimes there is nothing you can do fine it is what is you are free you are free of dependency on external conditions beautiful that is the state of liberation liberation or freedom is free of the conditioned mind which reacts, which complains which fights against simple, this is the simplicity of awakening simplicity of how life could be how life can be how life has to become for humanity now if we are not going to create even more havoc on the planet even more havoc than the insane human mind has created already this transformation of consciousness is at the essence of the complete transformation also of all the dreadful things we have done on this planet they arise out of a diseased state of consciousness and this is what is happening now and this is the Lada context for our gathering here is the transformation of human consciousness that is not going to happen but is happening already here and now in you otherwise you would not be sitting here anymore it is happening already and it it is up to you now to live it and many times you may fail the old consciousness may assert itself again and again you start complaining with reality against reality the entity in your head possesses you again and then suddenly you go

[Speaker 6] (5:16:29 - 5:16:30)

ah

[Speaker 1] (5:16:33 - 5:20:21)

and the alertness is back the alertness of presence back and you go back to sleep you wake up again so many of you are already experiencing the falling back into mind identification and then waking up again falling back, waking up that's fine for a while and then you realize gradually the awareness the level of the dimension of consciousness that we call awareness predominates over thinking so it is a gradual shift from thinking being dominated by thinking to awareness of presence that is a new state of consciousness thinking then can still operate but not as an autonomous entity, simply as a tool through which awareness can express itself this is your life purpose, is to live that whatever you do on the surface of your life whether you are working a company or you are a teacher or you are a nurse or you are a hairdresser or you are a gardener or you at the moment are nothing at all these things are just labels anyway they are temporary things whatever you do externally is secondary the main purpose of your life is to awaken and to bring that state of consciousness into whatever you do and bring presence into your words so all the things arise no longer out of the conditioned self but arise out of the unconditioned and then a new world through you comes into being it's the world around you it spreads out so we are not, our aim is not to create a new world out there but the transformation of consciousness and then naturally the reflection of that is a new world and the transformation of consciousness even that, I wouldn't seek it as a goal it's already here in this moment when you become aligned with it, with life simple and wonderful so don't ask what's the meaning of my life this is the meaning of your life and for some of you what you do will suddenly change dramatically as a new consciousness arises more and more others will transform will stay where they are and transform what they do by bringing that new consciousness into their actions and suddenly transform their environment it's a beautiful adventure to be alive on this planet at a time of incredible problem and incredible possibility of a total shift in consciousness that's it that's your purpose thank you

[Speaker 3] (5:21:43 - 5:21:48)

music

[Speaker 6] (5:21:51 - 5:22:01)

music music

[Speaker 4] (5:22:47 - 5:23:09)

music music music music music music

[Speaker 3] (5:23:23 - 5:23:53)

music music music music music music music music music music music music music

[Speaker 1] (5:23:58 - 7:01:23)

music music music I had forgotten what the title of our intensive was and I just realized when I was waiting there I believe he said the secret of happiness it's an interesting topic for lack of a better word we call our gathering intensive intensive although you may well ask what can possibly be intensive about just sitting here for a few hours and listening to somebody usually when you think of intensive it involves perhaps physical movement jumping up and down emotional expression catharsis screaming, weeping that's intense or intensive or it could involve intensive use of the mind so if it's not intensive physically it's not intensive emotionally this is not to say that you may not have occasionally emotions passing through your body while you sit here and if it's not intensive mentally because we are not going to discuss deep philosophical problems or mathematical problems or whatever other problems the mind can create to entertain itself then what's intensive about this gathering it's not in the physical realm of movement or doing it's not in the emotional realm it's not in the mental realm so if you are here expecting emotional physical, mental stimulation you will be disappointed because we are not here to add anything to the mind we are not here to add content to the already considerable accumulation of content that is in everybody's mind we are here to access a dimension of consciousness that has nothing to do with the content in your mind you cannot access that dimension of consciousness through thought thought and yet to some extent thought plays a subsidiary function here for us because some thought is operating because thought is required for these words to come out of this mouth but these words are not what this is all about it is not the main thing here the words are only pointers or signposts pointing to a dimension that is present in every human being already but usually completely we could say overlooked it is that dimension is already present in each and every one of you and yet the tendency is for the human being to be so fascinated by the content of their lives which includes your external situation the physical realm the things that surround you things that happen one thing after another content content is what happens externally and internally internally it is the movement of thought it's the content and the emotions that accompany those thoughts so everybody is fascinated almost we could say hypnotized by the content of their lives and they call that accumulation of content things, forms physical forms, thought forms sense perceptions they all form one kind of form or another and so this accumulation of content usually people refer to as my life and when you say my life you have already transformed your life and yourself into content my life, you've already split life into two bits life and me I have a life that means there's life somewhere there and then there's me and I have it and the moment you believe that you have life then of course you could also lose it and then what's left when you lose it who are you if you are not life so the realm of content is not what matters here and that includes the words that are spoken here now you may have noticed or you may not depends how hypnotized you are by content you may have noticed that there are words being spoken here but there's also something else here and that's a background to the words and we could call that there is a stillness or silence here also, oh I hadn't noticed that yeah but now you do that silence was here all the time underneath and in between the words but perhaps you were only focused on the words not focused on the space the silent space out of which the words continuously come so as a first step into this consciousness that has nothing to do with content as the first step we notice that here there is sound words and there is an underlying silence also now if you were totally fascinated by the words only very quickly here, sitting here you would arrive at a point of frustration because the words in themselves are not that interesting they're only a help to get you they're only pointers to get you to that other dimension so if you were never able to even notice that there is a stillness here also then it would become frustrating to sit here for very long because the words are not that interesting not some exciting new ideas but only pointers so for this intensive to be to work for you I suggest as a first step notice this dimension that we could call stillness or silence that is there underneath the words in between the words now it's a strange thing when I say notice the silence something happens to you these words are pointers notice the silence now observe what happens inside you when you hear these words and you there's a shift then your attention moves before your attention was on form the words now your attention is on nothing not a thing no thing your attention for a moment when you just notice silence you become still inside in the very moment of noticing silence the mind has also become silent because only the silence in you can notice the silence out there thought cannot notice silence completely unaware of that dimension because thought is noise, thought is form mental formations so form cannot know, doesn't even know it exists, the formless dimension which right now we call silence when it's the inner we could call it stillness so thinking has no idea of silence or stillness for the thinking mind it does not exist because the thinking mind is form and when you are totally trapped in the world of form then the deeper dimension the only thing that can free you from being bound to the world of form does not exist for you you are then totally trapped in content seeking happiness in the things of your life so we notice that there is a silence in this room in this room the moment you notice it in that moment you are not thinking and if you can sit here and pay equal attention to the words and to the silence then a deeper dimension is arising as you sit here and you may notice after a little while the mind may say something about the silence or something that has nothing to do with anything that's here and then you can take your attention back to the silence and what that also means I call it you become present you become you totally inhabit this moment it is only in the cessation which means stopping of mind that you can be fully present here and now and this is an amazing thing and so we are here in this intensive because in almost each one of you, there may be one or two exceptions, people who didn't come voluntarily here husband or wife or boyfriend or girlfriend dragged them here and they said you need to come and listen now with the exception of those people even there miracles are possible this dimension is already arising in you otherwise you would already be extremely frustrated sitting here the body would start to twitch and move and you would start looking around can't stand it anymore here so it is already arising and here that's why you have come here and this is a deepening process and the reality of course of intensive is you learn here that the rest of your life is also the intensive so when we finish here the intensive continues and is called your life of course it's just words there is no such thing as your life there is only life there are deep seated collective mind patterns that are also still active in you and those mind patterns have no idea what this is all about and occasionally you may find yourself being drawn back into those mind patterns which live on time past and future and you are being lost in a mind stream not here anymore and the mind stream will be talking the inner dialogue some kind of commentary it may even be commenting on something that is being said here or it may be commenting on tonight's dinner or tomorrow's problem because every problem is tomorrow's problem never now never now just the same as in the London pub there was a sign which still is there which says free beer tomorrow and then if you come back tomorrow and say I want my free beer the innkeeper will point to the sign and say tomorrow of course that's how going to a pub in London can be a deep spiritual experience because it shows you that tomorrow never comes when it comes it's today the next moment never comes when it comes it's now but nobody seems to know that because the mind patterns deeply conditioned collective mind patterns live on past and future all the movement of thought in your mind is conditioned of course by the past whatever thoughts you think are to do with the language in which you think those thoughts which in turn is a creation of thousands of years of collective past so even the language already contains an enormous amount of past the very structure of language how you think in your language and then the collective past of your culture and your surroundings which creates the kinds of thoughts that go through your head and there is the personal past of your upbringing and your environment and your parents and there is still the mum's voice in there somewhere and the dad's voice is still in there somewhere and other voices are in there talking and it's all past, it's the movement of thinking content of your mind and when people say my life they are referring to the movement of thought in my head the thought forms that are going through my head is my life because apart from the thoughts in my head there is no such thing as past the only existence past has is as a thought in the head, is that true? you have to examine and look carefully, is that really true? but this is not you don't find the truth of this through some complicated intellectual analysis is there a past or not arguments for arguments against and then we can have an argument, you say there is a past and I say no I'm telling you there isn't you better believe me no we don't need that we can just look and see immediately if you just ask yourself have you ever been there in the past or whatever ever happened in your life was that now or was it ever the past of course nothing can happen if it's not in the now, it can't for anything to be, be implies now, being implies now and to be is the infinitive is is the third person singular of to be in English one might not think that because they look like different words or whatever you want in Dutch or in German also they have the infinitive, in German it would be sein is to be and ist is is, so what's the connection it's the same word, it's just changed through frequent use, it looks as if it were a different word but is and be are the same thing and they are always inseparable from now there is no is apart from now can't be, so nothing ever is in the past for anything to is to be it must be now so what we call past when it so called happened it was the now and when I remember it and talk about it now it's still the now there's no life apart from now and then the incredible thing is this verb to be has also a first person singular and that looks like a completely different word again I am and I am is also inseparable from now you cannot be anywhere except now but nobody seems to know that because everybody lives for something else they live as if there was something much more important than now and for most people it's called the future and what we said about the past applies to the future it does not exist except as a thought in the head tomorrow free beer never comes because tomorrow is only a thought in the head the next moment a thought even to say that we are going to spend a few hours here tonight on a conventional level is true but if you look deeper in absolute terms we are not it's only always now it's only when you start thinking and looking at your watch then you remember ok we've been here for such and such a time and we are going to spend here another two or three hours oh my god I can't, it's too much so this only when you start thinking the future suddenly appears and of course it has its place in the practical realm that's fine but beyond that it's a trap it's an illusion so there is only ever now past the accumulation of past in the mind has become a kind of phantasm a kind of entity a mind created a little thing that says I I, me mine, my, I I like myself, I don't like myself, I love myself I hate myself, I don't have a good relationship with myself, I must improve the relationship with myself I wonder what's going to happen to me what will happen to me my life it's not working out my life I have to do something about my life, it's really really so much has gone wrong in my life, so much this wasn't what I expected when I was young I imagined my life to be very different from where it is now how could this happen, I'm missing out on life life is passing me by everybody else seems to be alive, I'm not I don't I don't have a life so there is an entity there one or two of you may have recognized something just now I gave you just a few to choose from to recognize there's certainly one that applies to one of you I could go on for a whole hour probably so there is a little man or woman in here talking all the time and worrying about my life and won't stop talking and this man or woman in the head has a history it's made up of history it's made up of mind content it's made up of past accumulations from the so called past a conditioned entity called I, or at least it says I and when it says I it means me and my story and I have an opinion of myself it may vary, one day it may be quite good and then something happens and my opinion of myself changes I have a view of who I am which again is the movement of thought and it is quite normal to be completely identified with that movement of thought in your head and derive from it your sense of who you are that's me and my life so it's the identification with content or form me and my life so a sense of self derived on from your so called personal history so we have this entity the me or the I and it's past made up of past and it's what kind of state does it exist in it's a state of very frequent unease discontent lack something missing here in my life what is it, ok start thinking there's something missing in my life some people have not quite sure what's missing others know very well what's missing I need a relationship a man or woman that's my destiny to meet and still haven't met him or her when finally I become prosperous then I will be free I need this, I need that and in the meantime oh I need enlightenment because you've already seen all the other things didn't work laughter ok let's try this one last thing laughter laughter and if that doesn't work then I give up laughter oh maybe you're getting close to enlightenment laughter so this me is occasionally happy something good has happened or somebody has recognized you as a great person laughter I feel good about myself today laughter and then time passes a few hours and ok it's no longer that thing doesn't make me feel good anymore it's wearing out it wears off and then something missing again laughter restlessness discontent and then comes the question the unconscious surge comes how can I fill up this restlessness and discontent I've got to do something ok let's go to some stimulus loud music something is happening laughter it feels more alive and then you leave now and of course the me is for many these days is very stressed because it needs to get to the next moment and stress has become so widespread that it's the whole civilization is run by stressful people laughter stress or what does stress mean stress is normal therefore it's not recognized as a mental disease if everybody has a disease you can't recognize it anymore as a disease so stress is normal but it is also insane I usually equate normal with insane if you doubt that I would refer you to a history book human history or the news tonight on TV so so stress is I need to get to the next moment or the one after that but in the meantime I am here it's a mental projection to there while I am here now when you see how this works I will act it out now because it's easier to see it and you spend your whole life a large part of your life like that except when you are drunk or take some drugs this is Amsterdam so here you would have a smoke laughter and when you smoke you become a little bit free I am not advocating anything but laughter you become a little bit free of this incessant little me that's complaining and searching and looking for this or that and talking continuously in your head and never shuts up and you are so identified with it you don't even know that there is a little thing in your head because you think it's you you don't even for most people they don't know that they have a thing in their head they are the thing in their head laughter and so it's a burden to live with it's torture to live with that it's never at ease or very rarely at ease so it needs occasionally to have a puff laughter and then it's quiet the voice becomes a little bit more calm sigh and you feel a little bit more alive sigh and you can even laugh smile because the little me doesn't laugh that much, life is too serious it's not that much to laugh about, I have serious problems laughter or you drink it's also a little bit of liberation from this incessant voice and then you feel a little bit better a little bit more alive for a little while sigh you are not trying to get to the next moment so is the secret of happiness, have we found it? no not yet because you are falling below the movement of thought that's one way of becoming free you fall below thought this is also the level where in mythology you have the so called fool who is an important figure in some tales, in the most recent manifestation of the fool is perhaps the hobbit in Lord of the Rings, a very lovable creature but he doesn't think that much, his mind is not highly developed he is still below largely below thought and identification with thought and therefore in mythology the fool is closer to being than the ordinary mad human he is also in some way less mad than the more highly developed human and he has access, he is sometimes used as an instrument by life for important functions, the hobbit has to do this big thing and he is he doesn't know much and yet life uses him because he has a deeper connection with life the animal has that connection too the dog, the tree they don't have a an entity in their head that talks continuously and has a life and talks about my life and a problematic world no, they just are they are so when you take drugs or whatever you experience a little bit of freedom but you are moving towards sleep a few more drinks and you drop off the chair and in the meantime you had a little bit of freedom but you were going so we are not going this way otherwise I would be distributing things to smoke here first of all how do we become free of this conditioned, uneasy discontent a lot of the time unhappy a lot of the time complaining a lot of the time thinking of him or herself as inferior or superior to him or the other person this stress needing to why always needing to get to the next moment because I feel unfulfilled in this moment I haven't there is something missing here in this moment that's why I'm trying to get to the next moment in whatever form the next moment appears it could just be I'm trying to get this thing ready I have to finish this work by tomorrow so I have to make a cup of tea the me exists in a state of basic dissatisfaction and unease and lack therefore it seeks its own fulfillment it comes from the past it's a product of the past and it's unsatisfying and it seeks satisfaction in the future so this is where every little me hopes to find him or herself the completion of my life so that my life actually begins to work I want my life to really work well now it's only working in part and there are big things that are sabotaging always my life so you're looking for completion of the me in the future and that's why every mind made entity thinks of the future as more important than anything else, more important than the present moment because you're trying to find yourself ultimately there even if you need to get to the future you try to get the content that is still missing according to the story of me there's still certain content to me that's still missing so through the future it hopes to get this content whatever it may be content could be the idea of wealth the idea of possessions possessions could be content my, when I have when I can move to a big house then I will feel I have become somebody I have expanded into the house and when you move in for a little while it works, you move into the big house and you look around and you seem to have expanded because you identify with this as me, content really it's a mind form it's not the house but what the mind makes of it so you expand into the house and you can sit there and feel bigger and you've made it the expression in English is making it funny expression I have made it but that only works if others are confirming to you that you've made it it's not enough if you tell yourself I have made it if nobody else agrees with you so you need to invite others to your big house and only when they say or imply that you have made it then you feel ah, it's working I finally arrived and that works for a while how long depends on the individual it could be a few months or a year or five years and if you're a slow learner it could take 20 or 30 years and you keep having dinner parties and they're all wonderfully fulfilling always they come and they admire you and they say you're great and then 40 years pass and then gradually you look in the mirror and say there's something wrong with this mirror something has changed and then all the young and beautiful people don't come to your house anymore and they don't tell you that you've made it anymore well that's for the slow learner but usually it goes faster than that after a year, two, three years it doesn't work anymore to give you this enhanced sense of who you are you need to look to the next thing whatever that may be relationship, of course, that's it and then that works everybody knows about relationships how they work intimate relationships euphoria at first wait a moment first comes the expectation could he be the one or she be the one and then comes the first dinner dinner date everybody's playing this role you can see in restaurants when the couples who've only just met you can immediately recognize them because they're acting out some part and and then the relationship starts and then euphoria begins you've maybe fallen in love can't think of anybody else just thinking that's what all the pop songs even now, many of them are still about that except the country songs they're about the next stage because the country songs as you know they're about she's left me on a Harley and she's gone with this other guy in the meantime you have the euphoria and the next stage is then when you live together then something happens something happens and you wonder did I make a mistake one day comes this first thought hmm she's not supposed to behave like that that wasn't the idea I don't need to explain the rest we all know and so then of course you can always try another relationship and so some people are addicted to that kind of thing ego fulfillment through that and then they they can't even be with one for very long because they already know it's not going to work anyway so they already look out for the next one so the ego believes by adding this or that or you may find experiences maybe you're done with physical things possessions or dinner parties or relationships now I want to experience things when you go off on balloons around the world or whatever because you can afford it so you can buy any experience you try everything you take the mushrooms you go to a desert island you dive anything mountain climbing everything is explored live life to the fullest and even there you wake up in the middle of the night and this feeling of unease and discontent and anxiety still not it and if if you achieve everything that the world tells you you need to be fully yourself then you're really in a bad state because then you have no other escape anymore if you already have everything the world tells you you need to be happy and you're not happy where do you go from there? and there you can go either into recognizing the falsity the emptiness of all those things that you had identified with or you have to just drug yourself so that you can't feel the pain anymore and so I recently read an interview with a famous actress and I admired her honesty and it's not about her it's about the human condition when I tell you this now so she was honest and courageous enough to tell the interviewer that when she got the Oscar for a film her name is Nicole Kidman she was sitting in this sumptuous hotel suite in Hollywood after the Oscar nomination after she got the Oscar she had everything the world admired she was on every front page and there she was she said I was sitting in this suite and thinking here I am with the Oscar and I still don't have a life what an amazing realization and so of course the life that she was looking for she was looking for in the realm of content something to add that will complete me and of course as the human story goes a few months later she met the ideal man so suddenly she felt she had a life and a few months later the ideal man had to go to a drug rehabilitation clinic oh no why do you always I thought I had a life and now it's the very life that I thought I had is now making me unhappy again it's the human condition so if you cannot go beyond this collective conditioning of deriving your sense of who you are from the little me which is your personal history and the conditioning and needing the future to complete myself to find myself to finally make it it doesn't work everybody will tell you it doesn't work those who have made it and as a last resort of course the spiritual person needs the future in order to arrive at some state that you have been told is possible to achieve so you need to arrive at some state of whatever you call it liberation enlightenment I need to get there I need to become that and of course the same mind pattern that needs the future for it's projected fulfillment still operates I need to become this or that and again the present moment is a stepping stone that enables me to get there to become that and the spiritual seeker who cannot break out of this mind pattern deeply conditioned remains a spiritual seeker and for the ego itself that too can be quite satisfying because it loves time so if I could tell you that by doing this or that in 25 years time you will reach the state of enlightenment the ego itself would feel quite satisfied oh 25 years I can make it, I can still make it unless you are 90 years old already give me time please give me time to find myself, give me time and so the one vital thing is ignored and we call that vital thing, which is not a thing initially we call it the present moment the present the very thing that the little me always tries to get away from or that's never enough or that's just a means to an end or it's even made into an enemy get me out of here get me out of here some people who have extreme forms of this dysfunction it's a dysfunction that is operating in everybody some have it to a greater extreme than others people who embody this dysfunction to an extreme degree make the present moment habitually into their enemy for example their continuous contraction, they don't want to be where they are and whatever situation they go into they very quickly find something to complain about and to see why this is a very bad situation or whoever they meet they very quickly find something to criticize about that person and immediately condemn him or her so any situation they encounter the little me has this particular function in their case is that it immediately criticizes complains and judges, this just isn't good enough wherever they go they will complain and find something is wrong and it's easy in this world of course to do that all situations are enemies some people go to court continuously fighting this or that in its extreme form you look into a person's eye and you see they are just waiting for you to say the one wrong word and then they'll get you complaining in the head he shouldn't, they shouldn't, this shouldn't I don't know making the present moment into an enemy, making the present moment into an obstacle another variation of that unconsciously considering the present moment all there ever is life itself I treat it as if it were an obstacle I need to overcome get out of the way who are you talking to? to life, get out of there I want to get there, not here, there and when that is your state that you manifest life reflects it back to you and it gives you one huge obstacle after another and you experience life as hostile if you're complaining all the time then life will reflect back to you your state of consciousness and it will show you it becomes a hostile place as it is for many humans on this planet life is very hostile so that it is the change must be within, if you live in a violent country yes, you experience life as hostile but it has to start with yourself the moment you start addressing the dysfunction of the human mind and going beyond it things around you change at first just a little ripple perhaps one or two people close to you perhaps one or two people you meet accidentally and how you treat them how they treat you and how you treat them non-reactive and so gradually the change spreads around you and it can only be violence which is one extreme manifestation of the dysfunction I'm talking now about physical violence but there are many other forms of violence that you do to yourself mentally you can only go beyond it not by creating some new laws or new constitution that comes much later by addressing the dysfunction of the human mind in yourself addressing first of all means recognizing it seeing the whole structure of your mind which is the human mind not a personal problem it's not a personal thing isn't that a relief to know that what you thought were all your personal problems and the whole problematic my life is not personal at all it's structural it's in the very structure of the conditioned human mind the problem making the unease, the discontent the sense of lack the fear, the anxiety is part of the structure of the human mind you can put any content in and the structure will resurface after a little while again and then you are unhappy in a big house before you were unhappy in a small house and then you are angry in a big car before you were angry on your bicycle first we need to recognize the madness of living in this way if we don't see it then we will get trapped in it again and again the madness that has been human the normal human existence ever since we can go back in history it's insane with a few lucid moments if humanity were a single human being and you looked at the history of this human being you would say well this is clearly a highly pathological psychotic individual great propensity to violence completely unpredictable has committed mass murder many times but occasionally he has had, he or she has had a few lucid moments where something else came through little moments of awakening and some have become, some of the lucid moments came through the great creative humans who created because they were in touch with something deeper than the little unhappy me and then the most lucid moments were the great spiritual teachers who recognized the madness of the human mind called it by different names but that was the great, the early life awakenings of humanity amazing insights 2600 years ago the Buddha saw it all saw the suffering that humans create for themselves and for others so much that he equated human existence with suffering and that of course is unawakened human existence because the whole teaching also shows that there is a way beyond the first step is the recognition that the human mind which includes your mind is quite insane and it's not your personal problem when you the recognition is already liberating and this is why when we have been talking about the madness of the human mind many of you laughed because when you see it suddenly you feel it's true, it is mad when it's actually shown to you because one takes it for granted, it's so much part of one's existence, you don't see it yes, stress is a mental disease, of course it is when you look at it and the whole way in which humans live ok, that's liberating and that insight has come from somewhere else it has come from a place where you can look at the whole content that makes up the human mind including even the structure of the human mind and see it for what it is and that seeing or that knowing is there because something that is not part of the movement of thought can see that and that's why we are here we had to address of course the madness first because if you don't see it it can pull you back in again and again and even if you see it it will still occasionally pull you back in again and again so we have all that how do we step out of all this dysfunction that is reflected in human history and even nowadays in most of what you see in politics and almost everywhere some in more extreme forms than others there are places on the planet where the dysfunction there are focal points of dysfunction of enormous violence and madness and then there are places that are relatively peaceful like this country and the people seem relative to some other places quite sane relatively sane relative to other places quite sane that is true and yet even here there is dysfunction in people's personal lives in relationships at work, in work situations in politics wherever there is the suffering that humans generate for themselves and for others unconsciously yes there is suffering even in Holland so how do we go beyond the first step is already very important it is to see it in one's own life without falling into the mistake of believing that now you have another problem saying oh I am mad it's nothing to do with you it's a movement that operates in you, it's taken possession of you so we see it it is liberating to recognize madness as madness and if you recognize madness as madness you can't be completely mad if you are completely mad you don't know that you are mad those people are completely mad or they shoot you if you say you are mad the real madness there is no recognition of madness as madness and you don't even have to call yourself I am mad because that would be identification with the conditioned content of your mind you can only see that there is this mind movement in me and there is this voice in the head that pretends to be me and continuously says I and refers to I and my story I and my problems I and my anxieties I and my desires I and my wants I and my needs I and all this is implied when this entity speaks the word I and it's if that's all there is in your life then frustration is inevitable suffering is inevitable and every happiness that you think you find will turn into unhappiness so we need to look at now the one thing that this entity that has taken possession of you so to speak the words are just trying to convey something through the words, they are never an ultimate truth because if you only hang to if you only attach yourself to the words then your little mind is going to say I don't agree with your term of entity I don't think we have an entity in the head I think it's something else, it doesn't matter I'm just using little pointers they are only helpful as pointers not as explanations so I'm just suggesting this is one way of looking at it there is there is this little entity in your head and it's a moment of thought it never stops it talks and for a lot of the time you've been identified with it it's become you it needs desperately the future because it believes it can complete itself there but it doesn't work for everything else time and future is quite good except for finding yourself being yourself this implies also if we want to use the term happiness which is the title of our gathering you cannot find happiness through this little entity not the true happiness many forms of false happiness and the true happiness, I don't even like to call it happiness because it's something much deeper but let's just for a moment call it that there's that the one thing it doesn't like it overlooks tries to get away from makes it into an enemy makes it into an obstacle the present moment the present moment the present moment is actually a portal out of this whole conditioned state the present moment is the opening but usually of course you only see you don't see the depths of what that means present moment usually you only see the surface appearance of the present moment and when you only see the surface appearance of the present moment a lot of the time it doesn't look that great what's so good about this moment the mind says, there's nothing special it's just boring I mean and that's at the best of times what's so great about this I'm on a bicycle or I'm sitting somewhere doing this and that trying to get home, trying to do this what's so great about this moment but you only glance at it superficially and say no, that's not what I want and actually and then you consider the present moment not as an opening you consider it as the very thing that prevents you from getting what you want so it's blocking me for many people their lives have so many so called limitations they believe the present moment is blocking me, it's preventing me from getting where I want to get here I sit in this crummy little room and I want to get out of here and I want to have a life oh that sounds familiar I want to have a life somebody else said that in some other room a bit more luxurious it is habitual for the mind made self the egoic entity we can call it that to resist or deny the present moment that's normal you have to make it conscious so that you see what the mind is doing if you make it conscious and see there's resistance, there's denial then there's a choice suddenly the possibility opens up to say ok let's experiment let's see what happens if I simply say well this is the present moment and the present moment is life itself you've seen that now it is inseparable from being itself from life itself so I may as well welcome this moment I may as well see what happens if I no longer internally resist or judge it of course the judging and the resisting is usually unconscious so first you notice that there is judgment or resistance because that's the old habit and then it can be relinquished you bring to the present moment the word yes because you don't argue anymore with the isness of life the isness of life which is now it's always now and there you have the present moment which is there's only ever one moment that's the strange thing I need to just mention this briefly there's only ever one moment, it is this one the belief that there are many moments throughout a day or in an hour is created through confusing the appearance or the form that the present moment takes which changes continuously with the essence of what the present moment is it will the form is let's examine it now this sense perceptions this room a man sitting on a chair the visual sense perception of that a voice, auditory sense perception peripheral awareness of the room and other people in the room the body on a chair certain colors here and there perhaps some physical thing you can feel perhaps a little pain because you've been sitting for a while there's a little pain there perhaps an emotion passing through because for a moment a thought comes about tomorrow and my problems and a little anxiety flutter comes in and then you come back to okay this moment and thoughts may come in also come in but if you're attentive here there's not really much need to think just as I don't think so just as I listen to the words you listen to the words and there's no need to think in between I don't know what the next word is that's going to come out how could I know just you listen I listen, we listen we listen to the words that come the vocal chords that are being used for these words happen to be belong to this band sitting on a chair here, that's all so this is the form of the present moment inner and outer forms arising sense perceptions okay, this is all now it's all now it's all now okay, that's how it is it's neither good or bad it just is as it is and that's always the case with now this could be worse or it could be better the mind might say the mind might say okay it could be better greater sense pleasures I might be sitting with a beautiful man or woman about to make love or I could be on a beach in Hawaii but well, even on a beach in Hawaii you would either be sitting or standing or lying on that beach there would be sun on the skin okay, a little bit better than the lights here but it's not that much of a difference I mean just staying with just the simple is-ness and not the fantasies of the mind that say I could be happy there try this just try this first because if you're not happy here, probably you couldn't be happy there either and I've had letters from people in prison who have put this into practice and they have written to me and said, I have found freedom freedom from dependence on external conditions now what we are talking about at the moment are the conditions of the moment the conditions that arise at this moment and for any condition to arise it can only arise in the now there is no other condition apart from the now nothing arises in the past or the future for anything to be, to exist to be, it has to be now being and now are one so it's life itself so we are experimenting with life itself it looks at the moment as if we were separate from it because I'm using language but that's fine there's the form of this moment which changes all the time because after a while you move away and then the now, other forms appear in that now but it doesn't mean that there are many different nows, it's always now what is true is that the forms that appear change continuously in the one now it does not mean that there are many nows because it's always the one now so when people believe there are many different moments, that's only a superficial way of looking at the world things continuously change but there is an underlying something which is not a thing there is an underlying space out of which all these forms, the appearances come now, what we want to is to experience to get to, to sense to become one with, to realize ourselves as that underlying formless dimension that is not, has nothing to do with time it is timeless another word for which is eternal the dimension of the eternal in you, one could say the dimension of the eternal but as long as you regard the forms that arise in the present moment as obstacles then they become obstacles and they become that which blocks your access to the deeper dimension of the formless in yourself as long as you regard what happens internally or externally as undesirable and as an obstacle or as an enemy or as something to be run away from as long as that happens then whatever form this moment takes, the very form becomes the blockage and that's of course how most people experience life they experience life, their limitations of life very strongly and they believe that the form of the present moment limits them they believe it if they sit in a little tiny room and say, ok here I am I want to, my life to expand, ok but have you actually gone deeper into this moment and have you found an inner relationship of yes, or are you are you rejecting the form of this moment and as we've seen you can do the same you can be in the most luxurious suite in Beverly Hills and still reject the form of this moment you can do that anywhere and it's habitual now what happens if you do not reject the form which seems so limiting, the form seems limiting a lot of the time it looks as if it were the very thing that you don't want in the present moment you're on a crowded bus, I don't want to be on a crowded bus, but you are I'm stuck in a traffic jam, I don't want to be stuck in a traffic jam but you are I've got these noisy children at home, I don't want to I want some peace and quiet for my meditation but the noisy children are there they are, it's all the is-ness of this moment I need this or that to be happy but I don't, I have this but this is what is you have to start start with this and this is where the transformation of your life which isn't your life the transformation whatever language says is wrong somewhere so you need to know that so every word has only relative validity as Goethe said the moment you speak you already begin to to be wrong the moment you speak, you're wrong denn wenn man spricht beginnt man schon zu irren and we are talking a lot here, so this is why you need to know that the words are not never absolute, they're never quite right especially when they address the transcendental because words come from the world of things the table is here when I say that the words work I sit on the chair okay, that's true well, even that one could argue with if you're a philosopher you can say, how do you know that there's really a chair there so we start by paying attention to the form of this moment and finding a new relationship with the form of this moment because we have realized that if you argue internally or resist internally the isness of now the form that the now takes you suffer but what happens if you accept the isness, because you've realized that to argue with is, is mad and it's dysfunctional, and makes you unhappy, and then if you become unhappy, you make others unhappy that's your business then, when you're happy you make others unhappy cannot make others unhappy so instead of running away into some thought structure that says me in some future existence where I'm happy either as a wealthy man or an attractive man or woman or somebody who has achieved enlightenment stay with just this just this moment, and no matter how limiting the form of this moment seems to be you cannot argue with the fact that it is right now the way it is it is, one could say to use philosophical language this moment is always already the case the form it takes it is, ok, let's see form life is taking at this moment if you bring an inner yes to whatever form this moment takes, the crowded bus the traffic jam the noisy place where you happen to be the children screaming telephones ringing loud noise starting up behind you some drill what does your mind do then? does it say, oh what a dreadful noise no that's a mistake already the noise is what it is the dreadful you supplied now if you don't supply the dreadful there is just the noise as it is and if you don't resist it's just one example if you don't resist the noise internally through judgment and contraction it passes through you if you resist it it hits a barrier what a dreadful then the noise hits you because you have said dreadful you have become dense and if you are dense things hit you and they are painful so in order for things not to hit you whatever it is, noise or other things, people people are even more irritating than noise I can deal with noise but people so irritating no you supply the irritation and the people are as they are in the now so there is no irritating person there is only a person behaving according to his or her conditioning at this moment the irritation is what you give but humans confuse the two they mix up their reaction with the neutrality and the simplicity of the isness of now mix them up and say it's dreadful a dreadful thing no, there is the thing and there is me supplying the dreadful awful weather there is nothing awful about rain it's just water coming from the sky I supply the awful so can we be with the simplicity because now when we don't impose mental judgments on the form of this moment the moment actually becomes quite simple and it no longer has the capacity to hit you in other words your inner state of being is no longer dependent on what's going on what's happening or not happening whether somebody is behaving nicely or behaving unconsciously your inner state is no longer dependent on that when you accept the isness of this moment, the form of this moment, it is it already is the entire universe has brought it about if you wanted to investigate the cause of the form of this moment you have to travel back a billion years one thing leading to another and another and another and finally the form of this moment is this room with all the people in it or a crowded bus the entire universe has conspired to bring about the moment of this crowded bus in which you are sitting and hating it which also that has been brought about by the universe and the sudden awakening is also brought about ah, I can actually be here in this crowded bus in a state of non resistance because it just is as it is and if I don't give the judgments, impose judgments on it, it's actually not that bad at all it just is and so when you become open to the is, the form of this moment is no longer a limitation it's almost as if a door were suddenly, before it was a big door closed suddenly a door opens and this door is really within one could say an inner door opens and suddenly you sense a background peace in the foreground whatever is happening is happening externally or even internally an emotion that's the foreground too the peace is deeper, here's the emotion and you say ok, there's the fear it is can't argue that there's this you don't even have to call it anything you just feel it there it is I can feel it there's nobody that says go away, I don't want to feel this but it is, you can't argue with is it is but how long am I going to it is, just stay this is, I don't want to be feeling this for the rest of my life we're not talking about the rest of your life, just this moment it is ok ok

[Speaker 6] (7:01:25 - 7:01:26)

hmm

[Speaker 1] (7:01:31 - 7:14:09)

hmm and even there suddenly you can feel under here peace aliveness peace and still the turbulent movement, inner, outer it's accepted the form of this moment is accepted and becomes an opening in the unconscious state the form of this moment is rejected and it therefore becomes the obstacle, that which blocks you from finding access to the deeper dimension who you are in essence the formless essence of who you are no form the peace is a space and we're using a word which is a form to describe of course the formless so when I say it is space that's not quite right either because we've already transformed it into some form by giving it a name but as you know we're just using language as pointers as in the Tao Te Ching at the beginning the Lao Tse says the Tao that can be spoken of is not the true Tao because the Tao has no form and by talking about the Tao you give it a form, as if it were something that has form but it doesn't so as long as we know this is just language and just pointers then we don't go astray so here we have by simply coming to an opening to this you call you make the present moment let's put it in the most simple terms as I sometimes do which could be understood by a five year old child the present moment can be your friend or your enemy for most people the present moment is an enemy but if the present moment becomes your friend no matter what form it takes you have an unconditional acceptance of this friend because if it's your friend you accept it is and then the very condition that was a blockage becomes an opening into that which really we can no longer talk about in words but just a few little it is a spaciousness underneath it all then you have the condition and you have the space not that you have it you are it you are the space for whatever condition is going on and what is another name for that space the now that's the essence of now the depth of now you are the now in which everything happens you are that and that now is timeless no past no future and that is is finding yourself but it has nothing to do with the I that the little me utters some people may still call it a deeper I am because it's beingness itself these are all attempts to create pointers there's no more than that the essence here is the form which looks like a limitation can become an opening into the formless if the form is particularly unpleasant let's say your body is incapacitated you can't move your limbs anymore if the form is extremely limiting this is just one example or you're in prison if you then bring an acceptance to that it is as it is it can very quickly get you very deep very deep in that sense we can say the worst thing that happens to you in life and some people carry throughout their lives some dreadful burden could be physical whatever it is the worst thing that happens and you have to look at it always in the now bring an acceptance to it a total acceptance of the isness then the worst thing in your life becomes the best thing that ever could have happened to you because it then becomes the doorway and that also you have access to the this is the dimension we could call the sacred dimension the only thing that's sacred is not a thing sacred of course in our civilization has become meaningless, it's just an abstract concept, nobody knows what anybody is talking about in fact very few people use the word sacred anymore the sacred realm is the realm of the formless of space there is no sacredness in form and yet the strange thing is when you have access to that and again language separates it in essence you are that formless then you can sense that dimension shining through every other being and so when you then meet another human being or an animal or a tree somehow you feel this very this essence that you know as yourself that is completely formless shines through the form of that other form and you sense it through your own so to speak and so although I said the sacredness is not in the form the sacred shines through the form it is the formless that shines through each form and you can only sense that when you found it in yourself and then you love everything every being as yourself in essence and that's the true deepest meaning of love which has no wanting in it whatsoever it is simply a recognition of the other as not really other it's a recognition of the other as yourself in essence and that's the recognition of course of oneness which is liberation liberation from form after that you can play with form still move in the world of form without being imprisoned by the world of form and so that dimension is true happiness, although I don't like that word because it's too superficial to describe that but we had to get you here so because the little me says I want happiness and you get something much better I also would say the cross the Christian symbol Jesus on the cross is contains that truth not in words to reach people beyond words because Jesus stands for the Christ stands for is the archetype for every human being the cross is a torture instrument it is a torture when you are identified with form you are attached to form and that is torture that's suffering when you surrender to form the form that appears now complete acceptance then the torture instrument form becomes the opening so you have the dual symbolism of the cross because why is the cross in Christianity a symbol of the sacred when it's a torture instrument how can they use a torture instrument and then it becomes a symbol of the sacred at the same time because they are one what looked like torture and what is the sacred have merged into one through acceptance you've gone beyond the limitations of form and beyond attachment to form then the very form is the opening we are acknowledging both dimensions words stillness form formless that is also in the world of form where we seem to have these bodies they want to move so let's move the bodies and take a little break and when we meet again here it will be now on the level of form 30 minutes will have passed thank you

[Speaker 4] (7:14:39 - 7:15:08)

awaken to a long forgotten memory dawn is breaking waves are coming in everybody here standing in wonder beneath the rain and the thunder rising in love

[Speaker 3] (7:15:31 - 7:16:01)

the mind in connected to the Om Shanti Om Om Shanti Satchitananda Om Shanti Om

[Speaker 4] (7:17:04 - 7:17:16)

Om Shanti Om Shanti Beneath the rain and the thunder Rising in love

[Speaker 3] (7:17:22 - 7:17:45)

Om Shanti Satchitananda Om Shanti Om Om Shanti Satchitananda

[Speaker 1] (7:18:05 - 8:11:04)

Now there isn't a lot that you need to remember from this evening. The truth is already there. The essence is not in memory.

But I suggest if you want to remember something, I suggest one little pointer. And that is the question which you can ask yourself. No matter where you are, what the situation is, who you are with, what's happening or not happening, the question is, can I be the space for this?

Can I be the space for this? No. The truth is, of course, you are already the space for this, because it is pierced in this space.

But consciously be the space for this. Many things are implied in that question. Can I be the space for this?

Of course, implied is, can I accept this? Because you are the space when you accept this is-ness of now. It does not mean that you cannot still act also.

If action is necessary, it sometimes is. Response is necessary in a situation. You can be both the acting agent, the form that arises, and the space, without losing the sense of space while you act in this world.

Do this, do that, whatever is required. And that's the balance of living in the formless and still being able to deal with the world of form. Much better deal with it in a very different way when the formless is present in the background.

Then the way in which you deal with the world of form is very different from the way in which you deal with the world of form when form is all you know. Because when form is all you know, then other forms, either you think you need them or they are threatening. And the world of form is heavy and really very serious.

When there is no sense of space, the world is a very heavy place, very serious. Everything matters absolutely. And for some people even the tiniest problem matters so much.

It's amazing what people get upset about. Of course sometimes big things happen. But it is amazing how people get upset about the silliest things and it matters.

Everything seems to matter absolutely when the truth is it only matters relatively. It's only there that you can approach this world, which is the world of form. You can approach it with a sense of freedom.

It's there where compassion comes in. The compassion arises from the space, not the form. And then you have allowing the forms to be as they are is compassion.

Not demanding that every human being should behave as if they were enlightened. And if they are not, immediately you pick out all the things that shows you then they are really silly or in bad intentions and do this and that. And they lie and they do this and then he did that and then he said that and that was wrong and then he did that.

Compassion with the human limitations, then you become a bringer of space. So in any situation you are there in a, one could almost say a two-fold capacity. You are there as a person, still for a little while, longer, until the person dissolves.

It's already in the process. You are there as a person and you are there as timeless space. You could say, if you wanted another pointer, you could say consciousness itself unconditioned.

Unformed, formless. Just that you are there as that and still do what you have to do on the level of form. And then you meet the conditions of the world that come at you.

Some things you do and other things come towards you. It's always a two-fold movement. You act upon the world and the world acts upon you.

Things happen to you and then at other times you make things happen. You encounter conditions continuously changing. And then you have a very different relationship to the conditions that you encounter in your life, which include people that come into the space of now.

Situations, people, happenings. And that relationship is the realization or the letting go of the hidden assumption that the conditions that arise in your life, external, internal, should satisfy you. They are here to give you satisfaction.

And that is the unconscious ego life. It's always dissatisfied because the condition isn't satisfying enough. And when you go into a satisfying condition, you look forward to something a lot and then you expect satisfaction once you get there.

And then often either you're disappointed, it doesn't quite work out according to your expectations, or it ends too quickly. Oh, the condition didn't do for me what I thought it would do for me. Conditions, then you realize, are not here to make you happy.

They can't. They're here to be transcended. Every condition in your life, yes, you deal with it, but it ultimately is here so that you become free.

And then you transcend the condition. And everybody will experience, everybody sitting here, very soon, for example, you will experience the body getting old. Gradually.

And then again the question arises, can I be the space for that? Because if you're not the space for that, if you cannot be the space for that, you suffer greatly when that happens. Can I be the space for that?

And again, it is a condition. It is not satisfying. Nobody can say that when your old age comes and death approaches, it is a satisfying condition, but it is a condition that can have a wonderful function in your life.

Can you be the space for that? And if you are the space for the gradual dissolution of the body, that can be an incredible flowering of the formless, shining more and more through the dissolving form. And so it happens with some old people.

As death approaches, they become more and more luminous from within. You can sense it coming through. As the form dissolves, the formless shines through into this world.

If you can be the space for that, then you transcend the condition. Inner dependency on the condition. You're not dependent on what happens or does not happen.

The inner dependency is gone. You transcend, which means you go beyond. And then you can say, as Krishnamurti did, when he was asked, what is your secret?

No, he wasn't asked. He actually said, let me tell you what my secret is. Let me tell you what my secret is.

Yes, please, we've been coming for 30 years waiting for you. And his secret is, I don't mind what happens. Which, of course, means I'm the space for what happens.

I know myself as the space for what happens. Wonderful. We have already pointed to the present moment as the doorway.

First closed when it's resisted. Resist it, the form of it. Then when you realize your essential nature as space, and you surrender, because that's what it is, you surrender to life.

The most, it's not weakness, the greatest power comes into your life when you surrender to life. One with life. One with now.

One with whatever form the now takes. You surrender to life. Everything else is resistance, and you make yourself small through resistance.

Through surrender, there's a vast power in your life. So that is the key. Every moment, am I surrendered to this moment as it is?

Then the blockage becomes the opening. That is one of the great way of entering space consciousness, which I sometimes call it, it's not a science fiction term, space consciousness. Everything else is object consciousness.

The whole world is concerned with object consciousness. Shopping malls, object consciousness. Universities, object consciousness.

The news on TV and the whatever films you see, object consciousness. What children learn at school, object consciousness. Fed, all that, you know, everything, everybody's life consumed by stuff, another word for objects, stuff.

Things to do, one object after another. What to do next, another thing to do, another thing to do. What do we have to do now?

Things to think about, object consciousness. And object consciousness grasps objects, grasps. Okay, I need to think about this now at 3.30 in the morning in bed. You have to think about this now, it's very important. You have a huge problem. Think, think, think.

Oh, oh, God. It's never... Object consciousness.

Not knowing that freedom lies in that very space in bed at 3.30 in the morning, you could enter space consciousness. You feel an aliveness, a presence, you're not thinking. You just feel a presence where before there was thinking, there's now simply a formless presence, that you are that and it's far greater than you too.

And there's no problem there. It was mind created. So you enter.

And then you sense the qualitative difference between trapped in object consciousness and maybe in space consciousness. And space consciousness is not thought. You're conscious but there's no thought.

What is there to think about? A lot of the time thought can only detract from the aliveness of this moment. And then you practice object space consciousness even when you're looking at objects.

How do you do that? By not naming what you're looking at. You're just looking.

There is just the looking and there arises a form against the background of spaciousness or presence. Not naming continuously. What for?

Yes, you know it's a flower but you have to tell yourself something about it in your mind. Or even say, that's a pretty flower. That reminds me of my aunt who had that in her garden 10 years ago and I'd like to have that in my garden too.

I wonder where you can buy these. How much do they cost? Or they're called such and such.

I studied about this at university. You're not seeing the flower anymore. There's no sensing of the miracle of this.

There's just object consciousness. Can you approach things just being the space for the thing? And the compulsion to define through the mind, you recognize it as part of the insanity.

You have the definitions when you need them, of course. You're not going to forget language. You're not going to forget thought.

But you're no longer possessed by thought, by object consciousness. Then comes a freedom and you can experience the world as the space for the world in the simplicity of just this. This is why Jesus said, truly I tell you, you must become as little children if you want to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Become as little children, he meant not judging anything, not defining, being in a spacious alertness, like a child before the child learns definitions and concepts. Then a child looks at the world in the original state of no thought. This child, of course, is pre-thought, before thought.

We are moving beyond thought. And that's the difference again of depth and of knowing. But we meet, so you become a child in that sense, but it is deeper because it's no longer the natural state.

You lost it and then regain it, so to speak. Just words. There's nobody there to regain the state.

You are it already and so on and so on. But this is essential, a wonderful practice, being with simple things, just being as the space. So it's not just when challenging things happen that you ask yourself, can I be the space for my mother-in-law or whatever it is?

And don't ask yourself that question before you meet her because that's abstract. I wonder if I can be the space for my mother-in-law. I'll try next time.

No, you only ask yourself the question when she's actually there, standing or sitting in front of you. And you don't even have to call her mother-in-law, just this. Can I be the space for this moment?

Oh, and it opens up. And there she is talking. And you're the space.

The need to react to immediately when the object consciousness comes at you to immediately reply with some object consciousness. So she makes some cutting remark and you make a cutting remark back or accuse her and immediately you go on, same old story. It's been going on for 15 years.

Space. And there she is. And then you might find, I don't know what this is, it must be her mouth.

Or her mind. And you have this. And then you may find that as you are not feeding it through opposition, it exhausts itself after a while.

Because it's not fun anymore. If she's not making you angry or upset, what's the fun? The fun has gone out of it.

So gradually she'll calm down. And perhaps suddenly space arises in her too. Of course it could be.

Mother-in-law has a bad reputation for some reason. But of course it could be any. It could be your father, your mother.

It can be quite a good test for presence. Can I be the space for my mother? Or my father?

When he says, What have you done with your life? You should have listened to me 30 years ago. Can I be the space for that?

Or am I going to contract and hate him again and hate myself and all the complicated things that happen? Just be the space for that. Another beautiful thing of inviting the space into your life, of being the space, is to remember that you're not here for that long.

And for that purpose, I always recommend occasional visits to the cemetery, which I love, walking around, and look at the gravestones, especially the famous dash that I wrote about also. Date of birth, date of death, dash in between. That's your life.

And just that is a deep meditation. Just look at the dash on the gravestones and then think about your problems. You can't because you realize the relativity of your problems and all the things that are so important and dreadful or whatever they are.

That's where it'll all end, be reduced to that. Soon, quite soon, it's amazing. And that's the contemplation of impermanence.

The Buddhist word is a good one, to see how fleeting the forms are. And just, for example, just watching, have you seen a film, a speeded up version on a film, how a plant grows out of the soil and first the stem comes and goes, flower opens, and then it goes with us. And then another one comes.

And the same in human life. And if you could see a speeded up version of a city, you can see for a few years, the human being runs around the city, one city and another city. And one day, always the contemplation of impermanence, and you see it everywhere.

If you don't, if you have to just see, I saw a science fiction film some years ago, there was a time traveler who arrived here or at some point on Earth, and he traveled from 2,000 years in the future back here in order to witness some disaster that he knew was going to happen any moment now. Some huge disaster. And he was a scientist, and he wanted to find out more about it.

And the humans who realized that he was a time traveler from 2,000 years in the future, said to him, but you could save so many people, just tell them where is it going to happen so that the people can save themselves. And he said, but you're dead already. Of course, in his 2,000 years, it didn't make any difference to him whether these people would have died 2,000 years ago according to his time, or 1,950 years ago.

To him, they were all dead already. That's another way you can look at things. All the people walking around the city, they're dead already.

If you just look at the forms, so short-lived. And that contemplation, when you don't, when you just look at it and face it, can also bring about a sudden opening up of something within you that is a deep peace that comes when you see how short-lived every form is. I always, when I watch old films, 1930s, 1940s, all these actors running around the screen, they're all dead now.

And I look at it, it's amazing to see. They look so alive there, and they are suffering and loving and hating. And they're all dead.

Old photos, I love to watch old photos, especially crowd scenes in a big city, everybody cheering some political rally. They're all dead now. Just, it mattered absolutely to them that this politician should become the president, and he's dead too.

And that's the, it has a wonderful, it's a meditation to just, to actually see the impermanence, because something in you that recognizes impermanence as impermanence is the formless. It's from there, the timeless, that you can see that.

That's, it goes very deep when somebody very close to you dies, to allow that, can you be the space for that?

We already mentioned your own death as it gradually comes, or suddenly, but can you be the space for somebody very close to you? And again, on the level of form, yes, there may be, you may feel suffering, you may cry, but with the acceptance, if you can be the space for it, then underneath the crying, there will be a peace. And then, sometimes impermanence, when people study Buddhism or something, that it becomes, first of all, they know it as an abstract thing in the head, everything is impermanent, okay, okay.

But it doesn't, it has to really hit you, then you know it with every cell of the body and beyond. You feel the impermanence. And even, I'm certainly not attached to forms, but when my father died last year, it hit me again, how short-lived and relatively unimportant the form is.

My father lived for 90 years, partly trapped in ego, like most people, partly even more ego than most people I've ever met, and in part, in his last few years, becoming occasionally free of ego. There were moments of opening up into the space, there were moments of surrender. So he lived still in two worlds, the ego world with occasional lapses into consciousness.

So it was wonderful to see how gradually the ego became eroded. But the ego, of course, wanted to be important, so every ego wants to be special in one way or another. If it cannot be special in triumph, it can be special in its misery.

So that's, but when my father's coffin touched the ground in the grave, it hit me here, the truth of impermanence and of the unimportance of all the ego's desires and ambitions, the sound that the coffin made when it fell the last few inches to the ground in the grave. Wow. And that was, there was pain, suffering, there was deep sadness, and at the same time, enormous peace underneath it.

Tears came and peace underneath. It was the most powerful, that one sound seemed to be a pronouncement of the significance of human life only on the level of form. It all very quickly comes to that.

And so, as the saying goes, find death before death finds you. And that's what we are doing here, because death is when the form dissolves, and the deathless is the formless. Find the formless before the form dissolves.

And then you realize that death too is only a relative truth. In absolute terms, there is no death. Death means the form dissolves.

So we are dying here, voluntarily, dying to the self, the mind-made object self. And that's beautiful. And then death really is not that threatening anymore when it comes.

So contemplate impermanence wherever you find it, which means everywhere, and be the space. Be the space. Now, before we, if there are any questions, we may ask some questions, but before we go there, when you are the space, the compulsion to think lessens.

So whenever anything you encounter, any person or condition, situation, can I be the space? And when you are the space for it, yes, this is the gesture perhaps that expresses being the space for what happens. Can I be the space?

Yes. And when you are really the space, there is not much thinking when you are the space. Space is in no thought.

So the compulsion to always impose thoughts on whatever is going on is no longer there. And when that comes, freedom from being a conditioned entity, conditioned by form, conditioned by the past, and you can be here as the unconditioned consciousness. You transcend the person.

You are here as the unconditioned. And then you become a blessing in this world. One way or another.

It varies. But the essential thing is the compulsive naming, interpreting, judging, falls away and is replaced by an alert presence. You could call it, that's true, unconditioned intelligence.

The human mind, the thinking mind, is only a tiny aspect of that vastness. It's not true intelligence, what you can measure in IQ tests. It's a tiny aspect of true intelligence.

So you could call what is this process of becoming free of the conditioned, which is the thinking mind, you could call it the awakening of intelligence. Or the awakening, your awakening, the awakening of consciousness. And compared to that, your life before that was a dream-like state, because being always trapped in your thinking mind is a kind of dream.

And the world is full of people who are dreaming and they are actually running the world. So the old conditioning is still running, to a large extent, the world. As you can find out if you watch the news on television, the same old thing is still running the world.

Occasionally you get a little bit of a lucid moment when somebody is just not insane. In Russia you had Gorbachev, the first time in hundreds of years that the leader of the country was not insane. And Gorbachev was like a Buddha compared to the others, like a great enlightened being compared to the previous leaders of Russia who looked like stuffed figures who went like greeting the masses of weapons filing past them.

There was actually a theory that one of the previous communist leaders had been replaced by a machine like Dole because he had died years ago and they were still wheeling him out. But that expresses the mechanical nature of that kind of existence and of course it's not confined to communism. All these other systems have it too.

I'm not mentioning any names of people who are alive. Becoming free of this conditioned entity that otherwise runs your life and you think it's you. The only thing that really has any true meaning in life is becoming free of that.

Everything else from now on, I suggest, you use every opportunity, which means every moment, which means whatever rises in the now, any condition you encounter, has a twofold purpose. One is, yes, you have to deal with the condition, but can you also be the space for the condition? And then gradually it's no longer you, the conditioned entity who is dealing with the condition, it's spontaneous action that arises out of the unconditioned consciousness.

It could be words, it could be action, and that is the only way the world can change. From the conditioned, no matter how much thinking we do, how can we create a better world? But the question is, have you woken up?

If you haven't woken up, no matter how hard you think and try to create a better world, you're going to create the same thing again. Communism was a wonderful attempt to create a better world, wonderful ideals. Everybody's equal, no property, the people decide everything, we don't want kings and queens.

Same rights, same for everybody, wonderful. And what happened? They had overlooked the fact that they were still asleep.

The old mind structures were still operating and tried to create a better world. And what did they do? They recreated the same hell that they had reacted against.

Under the Tsars, Russia was dreadful and under communism it was just as dreadful for normal, ordinary people. The suffering, dreadful suffering they created. Insane leaders suddenly arose out of these wonderful ideals.

You get somebody like Stalin. Where did he pop up from? We were meant to create a utopia and here comes this.

So the wonderful thing is we do not need to start thinking about how to bring about a better world. The better world arises out of the awakened consciousness. When you become free of your conditioning which is your collective human conditioning.

And this is why we're here. To become free of that. And to recognize it when it happens again.

Occasionally it will be back in your life. You'll be back as a little conditioned enemy acting against this or that and fighting, losing the space. And suddenly you wake up and say what's going on here?

And then you suddenly become the space for this entity. Okay, here we go. There it is.

And then it subsides. So waking up out of thought. Thinking becomes secondary now.

This is the new stage of awakened humanity. Thinking no longer runs your life. It remains as a useful tool but it becomes secondary.

It doesn't give you your identity anymore. Thinking is replaced by which we could call awareness. Spacious awareness.

Consciousness. Presence. The state of no thought.

And that's the arising state. I suggest you cooperate with it. Invite it in.

That state of no thought. Say yes. Now when you think you cooperate with it what is actually happening?

It's a limited perspective. It means it's arising. It looks as if you could choose it even.

I sometimes say you can choose, some of you, not to think. Not through willpower. Because if it's through willpower then you'll think even more when you run out of willpower.

But through simple can I be the space for this is the choice not to think. Because you don't need to think. And then philosophers ask me who is choosing not to think?

Is it something that happens to me or am I doing it? Another philosopher. And of course the answer is when it looks to you as if you were choosing not to think then that is what's happening.

So all these arguments for those philosophers among you is there a doer? There's no doer. Yes, there's a doer.

It's just they're both right and they're both wrong. So put the two together. Yes, there is a doer if you look at it from this perspective and there's no doer looking from that perspective and then let's forget the question and stop thinking.

Now any questions that may arise are of course thoughts. Now some thoughts may have a useful function as pointers. And those thoughts if they become questions are thoughts to do with your transition into the new consciousness, the arising consciousness.

It's not new. It's not old. It's timeless.

Your transition and whatever obstacles there may be in your transition that you see and questions about that, vital questions or something to do with a close relationship in connection with the awakening in yourself. Those would be vital questions. And then other questions that are simply the movement of thought would be abstract questions which are not helpful right here.

Simply they arise because the mind wants to entertain itself and keep itself busy or even as an obstacle to stopping thinking. So the mind comes up with a question and says, I don't think you are right about what you said about stopping thinking. Or it says, but such and such teacher, he said you can never stop thinking.

What about that? So if possible, vital, true questions that are pointers, not questions that are just designed to feed the mind a little bit more and keep it going or ask, what do you think about George W. Bush?

So please, there is one thing here called microphone and maybe another one there. Hello Eckhart, could you please comment on the direct sensing of the energy in the crown of the head That's all. Thank you.

One more question to you. Can you sense it now? Yes.

Could you sense it while you were sitting here? Yes. And you sense it at other times too?

Oh, ever more. Ever more. Increasingly.

Yes. Very direct. Also very direct in contact.

That's the main reason I came here. Very beautiful. Thank you.

Some people experience energy movements like that as different parts of the body that were hitherto closed open up to the incoming energy and the thing to do with it again is not to interpret it, over interpret it or formulate some kind of identity around it that is dangerous too to simply be the space for that movement and then it will change. The change comes as you are the space and then you will not put up any obstacle for what is happening. Allow the energy movement and you will then also feel other openings.

But the crown in some cases can be very active in certain people. But allow it to happen. It will find its own way.

No need to interpret what's happening. Just be with it. Don't give it any phenomenal thing that arises like an energy movement can be important but it is part of still part of the world of form.

So no energy movement that happens in the body or wherever it may be is the ultimate realization or answer. But it can be part of the transformation that is happening in you as things are becoming cleared. It can be part of that transformation.

If you attach an excessive importance to it a phenomenal thing becomes it. But nothing is it. And eventually this energy movement will also subside and it will lead you into the formless.

But never attach an absolute importance to any energy movement. But be glad that it's there. But it's a phenomenon.

And as a phenomenon it has form and eventually it will transform. And so just allow that process.

[Speaker 5] (8:11:12 - 8:11:36)

I live in a society that requires people to be on time for their appointments. It's not in my nature to be living by these deadlines and I've taught myself to feel stress while getting ready to go so that I will feel pressured to watch the clock. How do I find space in those moments and still be on time for my appointments?

[Speaker 1] (8:11:36 - 8:16:47)

Thank you. Thank you. Now as you know there is what I call clock time and psychological time.

So your question as I see it is how do you not transform clock time which we need in this world into psychological time? So clock time, the world has deadlines and appointments and so on in itself is not problematic but whenever you are engaged in any kind of activity let's say I have one hour to finish this, to get ready for that or one hour to get ready for the trip or whatever it may be and so you look at the clock and then it's very easy for this to become transformed into psychological time and then you look to the one hour and you want to be at the end of it already but you are in the middle of it and stress arises. I have to do this quick. You can actually act fast without stress if your attention is in every movement that you are making that surrendered fast action expressed in the Zen saying hurry slowly.

So that is surrendered fast action and you can actually go in a state of great alertness no thinking you can just look and do what do I need to pack and then you just look open mandra and move fast enjoying the aliveness of that moment the energy movement up to a point but you live in a mad world so the mad world will often give you deadlines that almost nobody could meet it becomes completely absurd so you are supposed to finish three jobs overnight and you can't do it and there is a place to say I will do as much as I can but I won't do this because I can only fit this in and be present with this every moment every moment the moment is given complete attention to the doing not where you want to get to you can still do fairly fast but you are not stressed you are present in the doing and you do as practice that as much as possible being totally present in every moment if you notice you can't do that anymore the world is imposing totally unrealistic deadlines on you there you have to take a stand and say I'm not going to participate in this madness I will do what I can but I won't do that I'm not going to drive myself mad so you bring in sanity as much as you can into the structure of your work life but you yourself have to find out just how mad the structure of your work life is some structures can be transformed from within by people who awaken and bring in a new energy into the work environment other structures are from the outset already so insane the very structure and the people who are running it are so unconscious that in some cases the best thing is to walk out so you have to experiment with to what extent you can be present and bring a new energy into what you do so that you don't do it with stress nevertheless not losing the ability to act fast but fast without stress hurry, slowly hurry, slowly practice, try running after a bus or tram and feel the movement of your body breathing it's wonderful you may catch it or you may not you're not stressed if you're projecting yourself into the tram or the bus then you're stressed because you want to be there but you're here but if you can be present with every step it's fine and if you miss the bus it doesn't matter at least you feel alive so you have to see to some extent you can be present and still do fast but there may come a point where this isn't possible anymore when the world gets too mad around you and there you have to say that's it

[Speaker 6] (8:16:48 - 8:16:49)

thank you

[Speaker 5] (8:16:51 - 8:17:25)

since my consciousness is rising I feel so much more happiness but now comes the question sometimes it's rapidly decreasing when I you just had the example of the flower who grows and dies does people, humanity have the same purpose as the flower?

[Speaker 1] (8:17:26 - 8:17:27)

yes

[Speaker 5] (8:17:33 - 8:17:44)

then when I compare the flower to myself for example I feel this sadness coming up

[Speaker 1] (8:17:44 - 8:18:20)

ah, but you are flowering too maybe your mind doesn't know that your mind the mind doesn't understand awakening and there are people who are awakening you may be one of them who don't even know it because their mind keeps telling them that nothing much is changing the mind doesn't recognize presence the mind cannot recognize space and space is not memorable there is already more happiness in your life as you are awakening as you are more present is that correct?

[Speaker 4] (8:18:22 - 8:18:22)

correct

[Speaker 1] (8:18:23 - 8:18:55)

now that happiness is the flowering you call it happiness one can call it many things there is already the flowering beginning in your life it is the flowering of consciousness and next time you look at a flower look at a flower for a little while without naming it and then close your eyes and feel the beauty here because it is here where you responded to it

[Speaker 5] (8:18:57 - 8:19:02)

so except to be and to be the beauty there is no purpose in my life?

[Speaker 1] (8:19:03 - 8:24:55)

you don't need to the purpose is to wake up out of thinking the purpose is the arising of consciousness in which thinking plays a relatively unimportant part now that is the purpose so the purpose lies not in thinking which means you cannot construct a satisfactory construct through thought that explains to you your purpose because the very purpose is to go beyond thinking so it is not through thinking that you can understand what the purpose is the last thing you can do through thinking is you can point to you that says your true purpose is not to be trapped in thinking anymore ah thank you that's the end of the question is that right? thank you thank you good evening Mr. Toller I don't know if it's an essential question but we saw tonight it's important it's difficult to transcend the thinking the ego the personality what I wonder already a long time is why did we develop the ego in the first place and why is it so important for humanity to transcend that ego?

thank you a brief answer the why questions are also a little bit also the mind wants to explore a bit more and understand the important thing of course is to awaken to recognize one's own state of identification with thinking to recognize how unhappiness and suffering arises out of that state and then go beyond it so you can go beyond that state without understanding why and how the ego arose however we can talk about it I will make it very brief it all started with the apple when that happened which is a mythical tale of what happened to humanity when that happened the apple came from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil the knowledge of good and evil is the good and bad is the ability to differentiate and choose this is good this is bad and it led to these first humans becoming aware of having a self image they became aware of themselves as if from the outside they suddenly realized they were naked but the main thing is the knowledge of good and evil is the arising of the ability to think which was a wonderful thing on the one hand but on the other hand gradually as this ability grew and grew and grew they lost their original state of connectedness with being with God with life I don't use God very often with being with the source of life to feel their connectedness with the source that was paradise there were no problems no violence because they lived in that connectedness thinking arose it took thousands of years before humans became completely lost in thinking and then derived they lost their connectedness with being unaware of who they were beyond form totally identified with form thought form and that's the state of the ego on the other hand humans developed through the ego also they developed the ability to change the world through thought to become the most powerful being on the planet it was an evolutionary stage the egoic stage for many thousands of years we are now at the very end of that evolutionary stage and already at the beginning of a completely new evolutionary stage and because we are at the very end of this evolutionary stage it gets more and more dysfunctional because it's the end of a stage it's been dysfunctional for a long time but the further back you go the more this don't want to go into that too much but it was a stage all we need to know it was a stage in the evolution it must have had its place otherwise it wouldn't be there it had its place but we need to recognize it's insanity now and we need to recognize that the world that we have created a reflection of which you can see if you read a history book 20th century the most mad of all probably in terms of suffering inflicted by humans and other humans see the madness of it and then see the root of it in yourself nothing personal and then go beyond it now see the madness go beyond the why is a secondary thing it's interesting for the mind to have a little bit of understanding but even if you understood the why it wouldn't take you out the out takes only your attention to now your inner state now thank you

[Speaker 4] (8:25:00 - 8:25:10)

I had a question about the energy systems it's like my body is on fire when I breathe it lights up from

[Speaker 1] (8:25:10 - 8:26:34)

head to toe and when I breathe I can feel every chakra in my body stabilizing it's like I'm just on fire when does that happen?

I had a dream a couple of months ago when light was poured into my body my second body from then on thank you some people experience enormous energy movements in various forms in their body these are temporary they can sometimes accompany the shift in consciousness and the important thing is again what I said to the earlier questioner it is a temporary appearance of energy movement it is not it, it's a phenomenon that accompanies in some cases an awakening so you need to be the space for it, allow it without attaching an excessive importance to it then quickly it will pass through and will become transformed so just be with it, allow it and wait for it to pass because it has a certain function it will burn up certain things in you and then it will pass

[Speaker 4] (8:26:35 - 8:26:36)

thank you

[Speaker 1] (8:26:38 - 8:26:40)

perhaps one more question

[Speaker 4] (8:26:40 - 8:26:51)

good evening, my question to you is if you become more enlightened and you go into the flow of that energy how do you stay grounded in our mad world

[Speaker 1] (8:26:51 - 8:26:54)

can you read again so if you become

[Speaker 4] (8:26:54 - 8:27:02)

more enlightened and you go into the flow of that energy how do you stay grounded in our mad world

[Speaker 1] (8:27:02 - 8:27:04)

how do you stay grounded

[Speaker 4] (8:27:04 - 8:27:08)

grounded in a mad world

[Speaker 1] (8:27:08 - 8:27:09)

oh yes

[Speaker 4] (8:27:16 - 8:27:28)

because for me it's confusion if I feel some kind of enlightenment and then I see the sad mad world then I will disconnect because

[Speaker 1] (8:27:28 - 8:30:58)

ok thank you it certainly is a challenge to live in this world and if you are awakening then you see the madness more and more clearly the temptation is to react to the madness and that means you lose the space and the mind comes back the mind then interprets and says I can't live here anymore it judges the world the key is to remain in this mad world to remain there as the space for the mad world now the mad world is an abstract concept the reality of what you call the mad world is whatever form this so called mad world takes in this moment in front of you so in this moment you may be going from here to there you may be with one or two people or more people in a room you may be in a situation in a car in wherever but there is always only the simplicity of this moment so you can't figure out how am I going to deal with this mad world instead of mad world just deal with the present moment as it appears in front of you in the form of a situation or in the form of a person that's all there ever is and that person or that situation may have some elements of insanity it's not unusual in this world so you still encounter many people that the mind would call irritating or completely mad and yet you have to be the space in this moment you have to be the space of this moment because you are that already you are the space for the madness not the entire world that's too much just as it appears in front of you at this moment then if you react you become part of it every reaction to the mad world and rejecting it you become part of it there needs to be an acceptance you recognize it as mad but you allow this moment and this person to be as he or she is at this moment without reacting then you don't reinforce the madness being the space for it so you can't do anything about the mad world but you can give fullest attention to whatever appears in front of you at this moment no matter what form it takes can I be the space for that yes not for the mad world you can't be the space for that because the mad world is only a mental abstraction whatever form the so called mad world takes is in the simplicity of the present moment and there you are the bringer of sanity by being the space for whatever appears last question

[Speaker 2] (8:31:03 - 8:31:08)

Mr. Thaler I find it very difficult to

[Speaker 5] (8:31:09 - 8:31:19)

combine learning, studying actively thinking with no thinking being present it's very much a dilemma for me

[Speaker 1] (8:31:19 - 8:31:28)

yes, thank you do you like what you are learning and studying or are you doing it just because it's part of getting a job

[Speaker 2] (8:31:28 - 8:31:31)

no I do it because I like it

[Speaker 1] (8:31:31 - 8:31:55)

you like it periodically move your mind away from let's say you have books or do you study with books or computer screens

[Speaker 2] (8:31:55 - 8:32:02)

well I'm doing literary research and also writing so it's combined

[Speaker 1] (8:32:02 - 8:35:27)

literary research I did that once now I have to admit here that I gave it up that does not mean that you should give it up and especially if you like it you are not just doing it to get a PhD or to get a job with your PhD or whatever it is, you actually enjoy so if there is an element of enjoyment while you do it then you can actually feel the enjoyment in the background that helps a little and periodically move away from the concepts and just get in touch with take a few conscious breaths in between your work feel the inner body the aliveness inside the body close your eyes feel the inner body look out of the window focus on sense perceptions, especially nature and just look without naming all these things are to do with stepping out of the mind bringing your attention to your breath bringing your attention into the body or bringing your attention to sense perceptions also to counteract an excessive amount of conceptual work, meditation may help so you may want to introduce meditation period into your life where you practice being free of thinking as much as possible but the main meditation of course in this teaching is everyday life and use the conditions of everyday life when you travel bicycle, bus whatever it may be, car again there are great opportunities for being in space awareness rather than thinking don't think about your work when you don't want to think don't let it run your life don't think about your project research project continuously you will actually have more insightful ideas if you have periods of not thinking not focusing on that then you get your PhD if that's what it is will be more original because all original thought comes out of a moment of thoughtlessness without moments of thoughtlessness no original thought so the great and every original thought has a flavor has a power because it comes out of that place so balance, bring more balance in also through some activity perhaps going out into nature nature is a great help to balance the excessive mind activity always stay in touch with nature an animal may help too

[Speaker 3] (8:35:27 - 8:35:29)

I have lots of animals

[Speaker 1] (8:35:30 - 8:36:06)

wonderful to have a dog or a cat they are not thinking they just look at you and you can relate them they are joyful just so just use little things to step out of that carry on if possible otherwise give it up if ever unhappiness arises around it then it's time to step out thank you applause music

[Speaker 4] (8:37:04 - 8:37:08)

music music

[Speaker 6] (8:37:15 - 8:37:18)

music music

[Speaker 3] (8:37:25 - 8:38:13)

music music music music music music music music music music music music music ♪ One day more ♪

[Speaker 1] (8:40:29 - 8:45:15)

Welcome to our meditative evening. Also for some of you watching elsewhere, it may not be an evening. It may be morning or afternoon, but whatever it is, one thing we can be sure of, it's the present moment, all there ever is.

And as we sit here, I'd like to suggest, first of all, that you make sure that you're still breathing. That's a little step. Am I still breathing?

Just a second, let me check. Yes. In that moment, when you check whether you're breathing, your attention moves away from thinking and begins to move into the body.

Of course you're breathing, otherwise you would have collapsed. But mostly, of course, breathing is unconscious. So to...

A very easy step of getting out of being trapped in the continuous mental noise that we call thinking, being trapped in there and being dragged along by every thought that arises, stepping out, moving your attention voluntarily, not because life has just given you a hard knock. That is another way of getting out of the mind. But simply, okay, am I still breathing?

And in that moment, attention moves away from thinking. There's a tiny gap because in the moment of checking whether you're breathing, you're not thinking. If you're thinking at that moment, you still don't know whether you're breathing or not.

So it's only if you stop thinking, it might only be a second or two. And so, thousands of years ago already, some people discovered that and then they made it into a meditation. Brice Awareness Meditation, Anapanasati, et cetera, et cetera.

But it starts with, let me see if I'm still breathing. That's the mini meditation. Anything, when you step out of the noise of thinking, that's meditation.

And it is also a different state of consciousness that arises. So let's do it again. Am I still breathing?

Yes. And then perhaps you feel a certain aliveness because you've put some attention into the body. You feel a certain aliveness within.

Hard to describe because it has no shape as such. Somehow you know that you are alive. That's another way of taking attention away from thinking.

And so these things become an anchor for being present. Present, your attention in the now.

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[Speaker 1] (0:02 - 1:26:28)

And so these things become an anchor for being present. Your attention in the now. And that is the new state of consciousness that sometimes in ancient Indian teachings is called the fourth state, because there's dreamless sleep, there's the dream state, there's the ordinary waking state, which is the thinking state, and there's a state of presence in which you have risen above thinking.

Sometimes it happens to you accidentally. There are moments in your life when you feel suddenly, without any reason, a deep sense of peace and aliveness in the background. Nothing much has happened.

Or you are doing some kind of physical movement that requires your full attention so that there isn't much room for thinking anymore. You're climbing a mountain, for example. Any thought and you would slip off the wall, fall off the wall.

And as you climb up this mountain, suddenly you feel intense aliveness and presence. And it feels good. The goodness of being alive.

And then you come down the mountain, and the moment the danger passes, the mind starts again. And then the mind says, oh, you have to do that again. That was so good.

A shock can also do it. Or something suddenly appears in front of you and you don't quite know what it is. Something entirely new.

Say an animal as you're walking in the forest or something. Suddenly there's a moment of just presence. The mind hasn't come in and said, oh, this is called such and such.

And I saw it last year, and my aunt saw it the year before somewhere. There's just an alert present space in which the perception arises in that space of alert presence. So the thinking human, the personality, the thinking person with its history, its story, its problematic story.

I don't think there's any story that's not problematic. Any life story that is not problematic and just has a certain heaviness to it. Let me tell you about it.

So that recedes and is replaced by a space of awareness, aware presence. In that state of aware presence, the mind can still operate, but it is relatively unimportant. A thought may come, and you're much more likely, if a thought does come, that that may be an original thought that is empowered, not a repetitive old thought that you've thought about, that a thought that you've had thousands of times.

Because most thoughts in your head, and it's nothing personal in anybody's head, most thoughts that you think, you have thought many, many times. It's the old thoughts. It's easier to see it in others.

Your relatives. So in the absence of presence, there's only that repetitive mental noise. And part of that mental noise is the story of me.

It's the problematic story that is hoping at some point in the future, it will no longer be problematic. Not realizing that what it calls future has no actual existence, except as another thought. The only existence we call future has is as a thought in your head.

Beyond that, there's no such thing as future. If there were such a thing as future, somebody, some great explorer, would have found it. And we would have a monument.

He discovered the future. So far, it hasn't happened, and it's not likely to happen. Because it is a conceptual thing only.

When the future comes, which is a thought, it can only appear in the space of your aware presence, the light of consciousness can only appear as the now. Whatever form it takes in the space of now that you are, something appears. That's the now, the form of now.

So no such thing as future. Future is a thought. And this also applies to the past.

Because apart from the thoughts in your head, let's say this happened to me. I did this. He did this to me.

She did that to me. I did that to him and them and then they did that and then... It didn't happen in the past when it happened.

If it ever happened, because you know how the mind works, it gradually reinterprets the future. So what you see as things that actually happened, maybe they didn't. Or maybe they did, but when they happened, it was a now.

The only place where things can happen. And in order to have the idea that there is such a thing as future, you have to think about that now. So it's only you're in the light of now that the appearance of future arises.

But again, of course, there is no past. Even if time travel were a possibility, you could only arrive ever in the now. You could never say, oh now I'm in the past.

You see already the sentence doesn't make sense. Now I'm in the past. I've traveled to the Roman times and now I'm here in the past.

No, you're in the now. We cannot fully understand, nor do we need to through the analytical mind, how it is that it appears as if there were future and past. But we can see without using, without making it into a philosophy, but much in a much more simple way by simply looking and seeing all there ever is, is now.

That is direct evidence. Time, which is past and future, can only appear as a thought. Time, you can, if you were a police inspector and you were looking for a criminal called Time, a very dangerous criminal, because he goes around murdering people all the time and killing off everything.

First deceiving them that Time is going to get them where they want to get to. And then after this criminal has deceived them, he or she kills them. Everybody's hoping to get to the future.

And of course, the very essence of future is in the end, it kills you. Time kills you. Everybody's hoping for more time to fulfill themselves.

And then Time gets you. So the police inspector looking for the criminal called Time can only find secondary evidence. Yeah, he's been here.

There's a dead body. Or he's been there, there's a rotten apple here. And then you can go on looking.

Or you can look at a photo of yourself 25 years ago, 30 years ago, and then look in the bathroom mirror. And then you see, again, you have secondary evidence of this, what this criminal has already done to you. And he's going to do more, even more damage.

And yet, Time itself, you cannot experience. People think they're experiencing Time. You don't experience Time.

You experience only ever the now. But sometimes people call that Time. I don't know why.

It's the now. So you don't experience past, you don't experience future, you cannot experience Time. The criminal can never be caught, because the criminal is a phantom.

And yet, bodies die. So who kills them, if there is no Time? Let's not go too far into all this.

We cannot deny that in this surface reality, there seems to be such a thing as Time. We use, we use Time really to fill in some void that we don't understand. Okay, it's Time.

That's Time does that. It seems to exist. It seems that you cannot get out of it.

It seems that it has you, it drags you along. And you deteriorate further and further. And finally you dissolve.

Okay, that seems to be the case, as far as the world of form is concerned. Forms are short lived. And the very essence of the thinking mind is that it's usually thinking about past and future and its very thought processes are conditioned by the past.

What do you think is conditioned by your past? The question is, is there another dimension to you, to me, where this, what is ultimately an illusory thing, does not apply anymore? Is there a dimension in you where there is no Time?

Not as something to believe in, some comforting belief, but to actually, to be known firsthand. This brings me to the purpose of your life, which is the, they tell me, the title of this talk. I could, nice, I could get it in there.

The purpose of your life, if there is such a thing, is twofold. Primary purpose and secondary purpose. Primary purpose does not involve time, and that's a very strange thing.

Usually the moment you talk about purpose, you immediately think, okay, future. Usually you can't think of purpose without bringing up the idea of future, because it seems to imply that purpose is there and I'm here. Purpose is where you want to get to.

And whether or not you get there determines whether there's success or failure. So what I'm suggesting is, for you to realize that there is another kind of purpose, which is primary purpose. Secondary purpose involves time, and we will get to that a little later.

But primary purpose, we can't get to a little later, because primary purpose is to do with realizing what the purpose is for your life is without time. And the first thing I can, first little pointer we can use, is to say, okay, I can tell you what the purpose is. The primary purpose is to sit here in that chair.

And my primary purpose is here and talking. Your primary purpose is to sit there and listen. But the listening and the talking isn't that much different, because I can say I'm very, I'm listening to the words that come out of this mouth.

So it's the same thing, basically. Your primary purpose is to sit here, to be sitting here. The entire, the universe has conspired to put you here.

The totality of all the molecules and atoms that are floating around the universe, some of them temporarily gathering together and manifesting what looks like a person. They've come together, and the atoms and molecules in your body, at some point they were in stars. They were forged in the furnace of stars.

And in this weird way, it's all coming together, and the totality of life has suddenly put you here. Everything is connected to everything else. It's all timeless.

It's only when we look at it through our limited perspective, it appears that things, all these things happened in the past, and finally they brought you here. But ultimately, it's all happening in the timeless present. And that whatever is at this moment is because it cannot be otherwise.

The totality has manifested the form of this moment. And so this is what has manifested. I'm sitting in this chair.

And my purpose is that. This is my primary purpose. Now, the mind says, that sentence doesn't actually make sense.

Because you're already here. So how can it be your purpose? Your purpose is to be here fully, to align yourself with this moment internally, and to realize that wherever you are, is where you're supposed to be.

And whatever you are doing in the now, is what you're supposed to do. It doesn't mean you can't do something else. In this moment, I'm doing this.

And I'm supposed to do it this moment. I'm drinking a glass of some water. This is my purpose right now.

Now my purpose is to put the glass back on the table. In what way is that different? If I know that this is my purpose, in what way is that different from the normal way of doing it?

Thinking about something else while I do it. The normal way of drinking a glass of water is, you want to get there already. While you pick up the glass, you already wanted to be here.

And while you're sipping the water, you want the water to be already in your stomach. And while it's traveling back towards the table, you already wanted to be there, even while it's still here. And this is only a tiny example of how people spend their whole life, not really wanting to be with what they're doing, because every doing is a means to an end.

And so they are not fulfilling their primary purpose at all. They are missing the whole thing. If every action you take, or almost every action, or 95%, 99%, whatever it is, even 90%, whatever you are doing is really a means to an end.

And where's the end? In the future. And where is the future?

It's a thought in your head. So that is the fate of humans, which is the fate of humanity right now, although some are beginning to step out of it. To live in such a way that is extremely frustrating and gives rise to continuous discontent, stress, anxiety, fear, and all kinds of things, because you're not fulfilling your primary purpose, which is to be aligned with the now, the only thing there ever is.

Internally aligned with the now, instead of reducing whatever you are doing in the now, or wherever you are in the now, never being fully where you are, because your thoughts are taking you somewhere else, and never fully being in the doing of what you are doing. So the doing is a means to an end. This is the fate of humans who are trapped in the mind, who are trapped in thinking, because it's by being, it's because you're trapped in thinking that you live always for the next thing, because the next thing is a thought.

So your purpose is to live aligned with what is so that nothing that you do is a means to an end, but is an end in itself. That's the primary purpose. The secondary purpose is, yes, it's also a means to an end, but it's unimportant as such.

My primary purpose, I'll do it again. The glass is traveling, and it's fine. It's a beautiful moment.

The next moment is not going to be better than this one, when the water reaches my lips. It's fine. It's fine.

And it's beautiful to hold this glass, the shimmering water, see the aliveness of it. Of course, if you're in the thinking mind, you don't see it. It's a glass of water.

What are you talking about? If you're trapped in the thinking mind, you inhabit a conceptual universe that is dead, because everything you label, and you have concepts for everything, and that's a glass of water. There's nothing miraculous about this.

No, because you have never really looked. You've never really experienced it, neither when you're swimming, nor when you're in the shower, nor when you're drinking it. You've never actually, truly experienced water, because mind thinking was always interfering and creating a phantom conceptual universe that most people are completely trapped in.

So they don't experience the aliveness of the universe around them. One could say they are not present. They are not where they are.

And they are not total in what they do, because every doing is a means to some end. And the end is in the phantom dimension called future, which never arrives. I'm describing the human condition.

It's painful. Suffering, the Buddha called it. It's suffering.

It creates continuous suffering, either low level suffering, as is discontent, irritation, or more acute forms of suffering. So primary purpose is to be here fully and to be total in whatever you do, so that it does not become reduced, so that the preciousness of the present moment does not become reduced to a means to an end. And there, already you have your life purpose, primary.

That's the very foundation, foundation of your life. And many times, you forget your primary purpose. But now, at least now you know it.

It's not, I haven't told you anything new, because when you listen to these words, you say, Oh, of course, I knew that. It's so obvious. It's so obvious.

You don't need convincing. You knew that. Of course, I knew that.

So why didn't I live it? Wrong question. The question is, am I living it now?

Okay. And that's the continuous practice of present being in the present moment. Many times, probably, you lose the now, you lose sight of your primary purpose.

And you fall back into some form of dysfunction, which the world calls normal behavior, normal existence. And you can watch films, TV, video, whatever, films, video, and they're all manifesting the same normal dysfunction. That's what it's all based on.

With occasionally, you get little glimpses here and there. That's always wonderful to see, glimpses of sanity coming into the insanity of normal existence. So primary purpose has nothing to do, for example, with how old you are.

Secondary purpose is to do with what you do as an so-called individual. And it's secondary. So we're not going into this right now.

It's, as I said, a little later. Primary purpose, you could be 95 years old, you could have only one more day to live, one more hour to live. Primary purpose would still apply.

Even if you have one minute to live, or a few seconds to live, you can be totally fulfill your primary purpose and enter presence. Presence is the arising of something new. Timeless is a better word.

It arises in you a timeless dimension of consciousness. And I cannot explain to you beyond a few little pointers, what presence is. I suggested, check if you're breathing or not, you'll be, there's a presence.

As I speak about it now, there are two dimensions to this moment here, the words and the presence. The presence is nothing to do with words or thinking. It is formless.

You cannot say, ah, there it is. You can never make the big presence into an object, a mind object, because presence is the eternal subject. Presence is the eternal I am.

Presence. In the New Testament, Jesus called it the kingdom of heaven. And he says, it says literally, the kingdom of heaven does not come with signs to be perceived.

And you can't say, ah, I've got it now. There it is. It is, I'm reluctant to use any word to describe it, but I'll use some.

The only pointers, it is the consciousness itself. Before the consciousness becomes a form as a thought, an emotion, a sense perception, it is the stillness underneath all your thinking, which has always been there, will always be there, because it's timeless. Underneath all the thinking, there is a vast realm of consciousness that you touch when the mind subsides for a moment, there's a space between two thoughts in which you are conscious but not thinking.

And in that space, you're looking at a glass of water, and you see, without naming it, and you can sense its aliveness, because you can sense your own aliveness. And your own aliveness and the aliveness of this glass of water are one and the same aliveness. So the sense of separation disappears that you have when you're trapped in continuous mental labelling.

Here's the glass of water, and here is, I am here, my name, my history, and all that. And then you look at a flower, and you don't call it, you don't give it a name. You don't need to call it anything.

To truly see the flower, the mind needs to be still, and you're looking at it through stillness rather than mental noise. So the stillness, not the person that you thought you were, is looking at the flower, and ultimately, realizing that the flower is pervaded by the same stillness that pervades you. And so there's a recognition.

And whatever you perceive is pervaded by the same formless, no-thingness that the mind cannot understand, that no scientist has ever found. They haven't even started to look. And so it is a new way of being in the world, where you are no longer primarily a time-based entity called a person, sustained by continuous thought activity.

I mustn't stop thinking because I won't know who I am anymore. If I stop telling myself the story of me, and telling others so that I can get some feedback and confirmation that the story of me is real, if I stop telling the self-talk, if the self-talk that upholds my identity comes to an end, who am I? Carry on talking.

What do you think of this talk? Well, I think he's got a few points there, but on the other hand, I don't... I read another book last week.

It said the opposite of what he said, so I have to try to work that out. He says there's no time, but I absolutely disagree with that. Or even worse, it's all a load of rubbish, or garbage in America.

Everything is labeled the moment it arises. The little mind commenting on everybody you meet, and immediately it has something to say about the other person. And usually what it has to say has something to do with me and my story, and how this other person might fit into my story, or doesn't fit into my story, or could make my story more interesting, or is threatening my story.

Oh, I don't like him. And of course, there's no meeting. You never meet the other person.

You're meeting your own mind structures, your mind forms, and you think you're meeting somebody else. And in that state, many people get married. They never really met.

And then, of course, very soon it becomes unsatisfying, because you find out that the other person doesn't really fit into your story as well as you thought. And instead of enhancing your mind-made sense of self, it becomes a threat to your mind-made sense of self. Okay, it's time to get a divorce lawyer.

That was a big mistake. Now let's look for somebody else. A new way of living so that this little man or woman in the head doesn't run your life anymore.

There's nothing wrong with this little man or woman, except when he or she runs your life, because it'll make a mess of it. It has good intentions. I don't doubt that.

It has good intentions. But that's where the proverb, the phrase comes from. The road to hell is paved with good intentions.

This is when the ego, yes, I want to protect myself, and I need the best for myself, of course. Wonderful intentions, and always creates havoc, not only in people's personal lives, but collectively, the ego, the collective human ego, creates even worse havoc in the collective, which you can read about when you read a history book. I bought a history book the other day.

I saw it in a bookstore, and it looked interesting, and I read a few pages here and there. It's a thick book, Harvard professor of history, very well written, and he emphasizes a little bit more the human side of history, rather than the conceptual side of politicians getting together and all that nonsense. But the human suffering is so vast and unbelievable.

It's the 20th century history. It's called war of the world. The suffering is so unbelievable.

I mean, I already knew how insane history is. I talk about it a lot. But there I saw it again, and it's even more insane than I had realized.

Speechless. And this is what a dysfunctional state of consciousness produces. In one's personal life, it might look relatively harmless, but it produces dissatisfaction, continuous dissatisfaction and conflict, and never unease, never being really at ease for long.

You might be at ease with somebody, you fall in love with somebody, but it doesn't last, that sense of ease. If there's no shift in human consciousness, the madness will continue and another hundred years, I don't believe the planet could survive another hundred years if there's no change in the collective consciousness. But a change in the collective does not happen until the change happens in the individual.

The individuals make up the collective. This is why we are here. We are seeing, we are looking at the insanity and how it works.

And that is already the first step in liberation. Because who is it in you that can see the truth of this? Who or what is it in you that recognizes madness as madness, insanity as insanity, and might even laugh because it's so insane, either you cry or you laugh, or both.

Who is it, what is it in you that sees your own mind, its continuous chatter, its continuous self-talk, it's how negative it is a lot of the time, because negative thoughts are much more prevalent than positive thoughts. You can say, oh what a beautiful flower, but you won't think about that for very long, but a negative thought will survive for half an hour, an hour, two hours in your mind. The thought of beautiful flower, which again is not you haven't really seen the flower, it's a superficial thing, that thought remains perhaps for 10 seconds.

Oh that's a beautiful flower, and now let me think about what he did to me yesterday, and what he said, and what I'm going to do to him tomorrow. So what is arising is a dimension from where you are able to see what the mind is doing, awareness. The shift is from being a thought-based entity to an awareness-based, I don't even want to say entity, because it's you are much more vast when who you are, you realize that who you are has nothing to do with the thoughts that are going through your head.

It is vaster and deeper, it is you you touch it when you there's a moment of a gap between two thoughts, and you can never define that through thought. That's why sometimes in some meditation practices, or some spiritual teachings, you use the words, the question, who am I, as a little mantra or a little pointer. Who am I?

Now that of course is still a thought, those are still words. Who am I? Who am I?

This can actually work if you are alert, and do not attempt to answer the question. Whatever answer you find after you ask, who am I? That's not it.

Who am I? The answer is, in the space of alert, silent presence after the question. Who am I?

I don't know. That's it. That's it.

You can't grasp it. It's the essence of your identity, of what you feel. Everybody feels there's something very precious.

I am precious. And this sense of preciousness that people, you don't want to lose that. Even people whose life is relatively unpleasant, they still don't want to lose their sense of I.

But the sense of I gets usually mixed up with a story in the head. I am this, I am that. What we are doing here, we are attempting to take the sense of beingness, or I, or consciousness itself, out of its identifications with form, which primarily are thought forms.

So consciousness has been dreaming the dream of form. This is why, from the point of view of an awakened being, the normal human state is a dreamlike state. And if you discover that in yourself, if you get glimpses of, or many of you more than glimpses, of what it is to be present, and then you fall back into thinking, the qualitative difference is vast.

And you can then see how the two dimensions in yourself, and many of you, are going back and forth. Okay, you're present, and then something happens, and you go back into, and then something happens and you notice you're suffering. Oh, I forgot the primary purpose of my life, which is now.

Oh, thank God. I thought there were lots of problems, but there isn't actually a problem. That's an amazing realization.

There is no problem. And then the old machine in the head goes, what do you mean there's no problem? You better start thinking about your problems.

You're not going to solve your problems by just sitting there. An amazing realization is, in the present moment, there is only what is, but there are no problems. And if your attention remains in the now, you no longer inhabit a world of problems.

Challenges you may still face, but they come to you in the space of now. Not a problem, because you have to take some action. If a challenge comes, there's a situation, okay, well, you look, and this is essential here, instead of thinking, okay, I was immediately reacting when something arises, a challenge, a problem, so-called problem, you look at the situation.

The situation may come in the form of a person, a difficult person, the world is full of them, a difficult person or situation, suddenly something doesn't click, shouldn't be happening, says the mind, but it is. So you're looking at the is, and you're applying this state of consciousness to the situation in which you are simply directing attention at this situation or person. So the person may be coming at you and saying, you did that, you, I'll always never forget what you did 10 years ago.

And then three years ago, you said that, and I've been thinking about it ever since. And you look, now by look, I mean, it's more than the eye or the visual thing, or maybe part of it, but the real, what it really means is, there is attention, a space of attention. You give that situation or that person the space of consciousness.

And there's a sharpness to that, which is non-aggressive. And yet, there's a certain intensity, perhaps that's a better word. There's an intensity of consciousness with which you meet that situation.

And you look. And so there's a spacious, spacious looking. There's just an alert presence.

And then you'll find whatever you need to do, you do it. It comes as a harmonious, organic movement, not a reactive force. The reactive force would say, when the difficult person comes and says, what you did to me, what do you mean I did to you?

Do you remember what you did? Or we'll shout something back or whatever. That's the normal way.

So here comes the non-reactive. Now, if that person starts, wants to hit you, of course, you will take action. You don't necessarily remain there, although you might.

You don't, you can't, nobody can predict what comes out of presence. There are no rules. It doesn't say, when an unpleasant person comes towards you, then you have to get out of the way or you have to not move and let him hit you.

No, there is no rule. What spontaneous action arises out of presence and an intelligence is then at work in this situation, whatever the situation is, that is far greater than the intelligence of the thinking mind. So you meet challenging situations and people through that space of presence.

That is the same space that is when you look at the flower. Now, a flower is not challenging. It's a little easier to be present with that.

It all virtually invites presence. The flower says, please, here I am. Look at me.

Because it's only through your conscious perception that the flower, which ultimately is not separate from who you are or what you are, there is a oneness. The flower recognizes itself through your perception. The flower is so innocent, it doesn't even know of its own beauty.

But the one consciousness out of which this flower came, the one consciousness out of which this body came, in that one consciousness, the flower suddenly recognizes its own beauty. Ah. That happens when you go through nature and you're present and not imposing mental labels on what you perceive.

And you realize it's all sacred. The flower is sacred. The tree is sacred.

The blade of grass is sacred. But you don't tell yourself that it's sacred. Well, occasional thoughts may arise, but you sense the sacredness of that, of the forest, of the desert, of the sky.

A long, long time ago, humans in very ancient civilizations, humans still knew of the sacredness of the universe that surrounds them. Then more and more thinking happened, which is conceptualization, when everything becomes more and more dead, because it's conceptualized. Everything around you becomes more and more dead, and the aliveness and sacredness of the universe, including your own aliveness and sacredness, is lost.

It's not lost, covered up. You don't see it anymore. And that's where we have arrived, collectively, as a species, where we inhabit a lifeless world, because everything is, there's a veil, the density of mind between you and the universe.

And that is dissolving now in you. And that is the liberation, the liberation, the arising of that new consciousness, the fourth state of consciousness. And it is, it's not necessarily a spectacular event with drums and trumpets.

It's a very still thing. Shh. There's vast power in that stillness, vast power, the power of life itself, the very intelligence of life is in that power, the unconditioned intelligence.

And the more you embrace that within yourself, the space rather than the form, because that's what it is, the inner stillness, this one between two thoughts, that is for the formless dimension of consciousness itself. So that is, you live from there rather than from and through the form. You still honor the form, which means you, of course, occasionally you have to think, that's fine.

And thinking can become empowered and actually a wonderful tool when it is no longer the repetitive and largely negative, conditioned mental noise, useless, heavyness, a burden. The more you get in touch with the space, the stillness, the alert stillness, the more the usual thought processes and the conditioned thinking becomes gradually eroded. It's like karma, karma being all the unconscious conditioning that you inherit and you mistake it for who you are, and it forces you to relive it again and again and rethink it again and again.

And then that comes to an end as the new arises, and then the mind can fulfill its rightful purpose in the practical world. And then it can even be the servant of the creativity that comes only from the unconditioned. And then the mind can come in and give it form, one form or another, it's fine, it's beautiful.

You can manifest then also through the mind, you can manifest things. People recently have been talking a lot about this, manifesting things in your outer life, rather than not through struggle and stress and negativity, that after 10 years of struggle, stress and negativity, finally you become a millionaire, and you have finally, you've made it, it's pointless. You've been unhappy for 10 years, you continue to be unhappy even with your millions, and in the process of making your millions, you've made many other people unhappy.

And that's called success. Now they know who I am, and I know who I am. Not in that way, and not in a way that comes out of the continuous neediness of the ego that says, I don't feel fulfilled, and there's something missing here.

I haven't arrived at the fullness of myself. I think I need to have a bigger house, because through the bigger house, I can fulfill myself. I can finally identify with that.

The ego doesn't spell it out like that, but it feels, and then you get the bigger house through more struggle and stress, and skillful maneuvering, and eliminating the competition. And then you get the bigger house, and for a while, it feels, yes, now I'm beginning to know who I am. But after a few weeks or months of sitting in the big house, you begin, hmm, something missing.

It's not fulfilling me anymore. But I need, okay, I'm going to look for the trophy wife. You get the dating service, whatever, and the rest we don't need to go into that.

The continuous reaching, searching for, I want, now I want this, and I want that, and I want that. It's not that. And yet, you live in this surface reality.

This is the world of form. You can enjoy the world of form for what it is, without expecting something from it that it cannot give you. So you can enjoy things and manifest things, no longer out of the neediness of the ego that says, I need this to make me happy, because the world of form can't do that.

I need this so that I can get a sense of fulfillment and success of having arrived. But really, what people want is to be fully themselves. They don't know that.

They want that sense of aliveness, of being myself fully. But they want it through this, that, or the other. They don't realize nothing can give it to you because you already have it.

And the only way of knowing that you already have it, and not only do you have it, you are it. You are what you're looking for already. And you don't know that because you're always looking somewhere else.

You can only know that in the now, by aligning yourself with the now and the power that is there within you. The empty space, the formless, the consciousness, the stillness, whatever you want to call it. There's the power, and there I am.

The I am that is stripped of all this and that. The pure experiencing or knowing yourself as the being, as being, as life itself. I am life itself.

I don't have a life. People think they have a life. Well, some people say, I don't have a life, but they mean something else.

I don't have a life. Or they say, get a life. Okay, I'll try.

So there are two ways of saying I don't have a life. One is the deluded way. You say, I don't have a life.

And you mean my life story is not satisfying? And no matter what I do, I don't seem to find satisfaction. That is, I don't have a life.

Or there's another way of, another meaning to I don't have a life. And you say, I don't have a life when you realize that you and life are not two, but one. There is no you and life.

And you cannot lose your life. How is that possible? Because that would imply that there's life and there's me.

And I lose it. And what's left then? Me.

So you say, I don't have a life. What it really means is I realize that I and life are not two. I am life.

I am one with life. I am a temporary manifestation of the one life in this form. As the flower is a temporary manifestation of the one life, the one consciousness, the one spirit.

I don't use that very often. It has too much history, that word. The one life temporarily appearing in this form.

And the one I, it's the same thing. The one life. The one out of which the many come into which the many return.

The one I that's sitting here and here, appearing in what looks like different forms. The one knowing yourself as that and realizing, of course, I don't have a life because I am life. I am the universe experiencing itself temporarily as this form and as this life story.

It's a flicker in the life of the universe. Every individual life is like a tiny flicker of there goes your whole life story. From the perspective of the universe, all those things that I'm so worried about and you know all the important things.

A flash and billions and other flashes. The universe is experiencing itself in form. It wants that.

It wants to experience self in billions of life forms. But it's all one totality of experience. And you are one cell in that totality.

But it wants something else too. The universe not only wants to experience the outward movement, it also wants to know itself who or what it is beyond the form. There's the outward movement.

Consciousness becomes this, that and that and that and my billions of forms. But consciousness also wants to know itself. It wants to lose itself in billions of forms in order to suffer and then know itself, its essential nature as timeless, formless, unlimited, eternal peace.

And so, this is why we are here. Primarily, our gathering is not about the outward movement into form, because this has been going on for millions and millions of years already. And the universe loved it.

The dream of form. It dreamt the dream of form. The consciousness, the universe, dreaming the dream of form, and then suddenly in the dream of form, the form sits there and hears the words, this is the dream of form.

And you are not the form. You just thought you were. You thought you had identified with every thought, identified with the short-lived body, identified with the story of me, all very short-lived interests.

Who am I? Not this, not that. Who I am cannot be defined through form or through a word, but you can know it directly.

You can know yourself as the timeless, eternal subject of all experience, untouched by any happening or event. The eternal I am-ness that underlies all the manifestations. And then you can look at the manifestations and recognize yourself, the one, in every manifestation.

You can recognize the essence of who you are in the flower. And you love it, because you love yourself. Because you recognize yourself, and recognizing yourself is love, because there's only the I.

And then another human being. You recognize the essence of the other, not the story, not whatever your mind is saying of who the other is, none of that. You recognize the beingness, not through words, but through stillness.

And at that moment, you recognize yourself in the other, and the sense of separation goes away, that you're created by excessive thinking. And there's love. So love is recognition of the one, recognizing yourself.

And that is the transformation also of the dream. For a while then, the dream becomes very pleasant, because within the dream of form, in which you continue to move as this body for a little while, within the dream of form, something else arises and shines through, and that is the recognition of that which underlies all form. I am.

Then the world of form loses its density and heaviness. And you experience the world, or your life, your so-called life, which isn't yours, you experience it very differently. It has a lightness to it.

Light in both senses of this English word, light, which is the lack of heaviness, but also the light of consciousness shining through the world of form, which you recognize. So the transformation of the world happens as your state of consciousness undergoes the transformation, and the recognition happens. And this is reflected in the universe around you, because they are really one.

The universe that you inhabit reflects your predominant state of consciousness. And when you awaken to who you are beyond form, then the universe in which you still move as this form, the dream, reflects that recognition, which means it is no longer a threatening place. As long as you don't know yourself and you're totally identified with this form, psychological and physical, all other forms are basically threatening.

And that's been the history of humanity, continuous fighting against other forms, because every other form is a threat, either personal threat or collective threat. When we get together, that's us and that's them. And then you get the concept of the alien other.

Another human being is then so alien, you conceptualize them through the head and make them so other that any kind of violence can be inflicted on them, and you don't feel it, and you don't sense it, because you've totally deadened yourself to the aliveness of the other through mental conceptualization, as you have deadened yourself to your own aliveness through mental conceptualization. And that goes, and then you experience the transformation of the world. There's more harmony.

You no longer expect from the world what it cannot give you, which is yourself, which is peace, which is the recognition of the essence. Happiness, I don't like that, even like that word, it sounds a little too superficial. It's deeper than that.

You don't demand that the forms of this world, people or situations should make you happy and fear that they might make you unhappy. So fear and expectation go away, that's good. And then you can experience the world of form and enjoy it, including other human beings, interaction with other human beings, because you're always meeting yourself.

Isn't that wonderful? And you always look different in some other form. I appear in so many forms, it's so beautiful.

I like to sit in cafes, sometimes I sit and drink a cup of coffee and just watch all the people that come in and get their latte or whatever it is, or they sit there and just watch, looking at myself appearing in so many forms, and there's no thought. What is there to think about? Anything the mind can say about one of these beings is ultimately an illusion.

It's just judging the form, that's not the being. So being there as the space of consciousness at Starbucks, there's a space of consciousness, and there I'm looking at myself, drinking coffees, whatever they drink. It's beautiful.

And every being is beautiful, no matter what they look like on the outside. When you're in touch with the beauty of being, the aliveness of being within yourself, then you can always look through the form and sense the beauty and the aliveness in the so-called other, which is no other. And then your life improves immeasurably because you don't create an insane world of conflict with others anymore, because there are no others.

And then others love you because they recognize that something is there. They recognize themselves through you, but their mind may misinterpret it and say, oh, you are very special. The mind might even get attached to you and say, I want to marry you.

But that's the mind. But yes, people, of course, feel drawn to when they feel recognized in their essence. It's the most beautiful thing you can give to another, which is no other.

When humans, they feel essentially when they meet you, that you are recognizing them in their essence, and they're not being judged. And they can sense that unless the density is so much in their mind that they can't sense anything anymore, which is possible too, and that's fine. So they are not being judged, so you feel.

Most humans feel the only time they can relate to other beings and are not being judged is with little children before they start to speak, which means think. And that's why many people love looking at little babies, because the baby looks back at you and there's no judgment. The baby, of course, hasn't arrived at the thinking stage yet.

We are not going back to the baby stage. We are stepping beyond the thinking stage. But the baby is already, is still in that state of non-judgment, and the baby will look at you, and when you look at a baby, suddenly you feel good inside.

Everybody here probably has experienced that. You feel, look at a baby, the baby looks, there's a light shining through the eyes, and you look into the eyes of the baby, and the baby caves, and you know the baby is not judging you. And the same with a dog.

You go, the dog comes up wagging its tail, it's so beautiful, he has no opinions. And immediately you love him for it, for not judging you. And in a sense, recognizing you, because the dog has so much love, you just need to look at the dog, the tail starts wagging, oh joy, the joy of life, just incredible.

And the humans, they probably had it 10, 20,000 years ago, before the thinking stage started, the joy every moment of being alive, the playfulness. That's why it's so liberating to be with animals. Ah.

But of course, no, we are not going back to this stage of a dog, that that is beautiful for the dog. That's not for us. We are stepping beyond, or rising above, thinking.

That's what presence is. And then, yes, there are some similarities between that state of having gone beyond thought, and the stage of not having arrived at thought yet. There are certain similarities.

Any being that has not arrived at thought yet is also more connected with the whole, and supported by the whole, than the thinking human. As expressed in mythology, through the figure of the fool. In many ancient mythology, there's this figure of the fool, who is a simpleton, and yet the fool is entrusted with tasks by the intelligence of the universe, that more so-called intelligent or developed humans could not do.

You have it in the Lord of the Rings, for example, as a more recent mythological tale, where the hobbit, a very simple person, all the others around the hobbit are more intelligent, but only he can do that, perform that task. The universe uses the fool to perform this all-important task, because the fool is aligned with the totality. And of course, the same thing in Forrest Gump, the film.

Again, you have the so-called the simpleton, which, and always the universe supports him. And there's no ego, there's never claiming it, I did that, I achieved that. The fool hasn't arrived at the ego stage yet.

Normal humans, they are full of ego, full of mind, full of me, and so they are blocked. The universal consciousness finds it hard to use them. And then you go, where we are going, beyond thought, where again you have the connectedness, and the universe supports you.

It becomes, you experience life as not antagonistic anymore, but as helpful. Things happen, and then you don't need to do that much anymore, that's the amazing thing. It just, things happen, the movement, and you go with the movement.

I was ready to retire last year, I thought, okay, I'm not going to do that much teaching anymore. And then the universe came, and the phone rang, and said, it's Oprah. I said, okay, it's not time to retire yet.

And this, one can only look upon the, what's happening in amazement, what's going on? Wow. Am I doing it?

No, of course I'm not doing it. Just an opening for it, as you are, an opening for consciousness to move through. That's what life wants of you, of course you're not separate, but when we use language, we always separate.

Life wants consciousness to manifest into this world, the light. In the New Testament, Jesus says, you are the light of the world. You are the light of the world.

You are the consciousness that illuminates the world. And that's, know yourself as that, and that's freedom, that's liberation, that's awakening, that's the end of suffering and madness. And it's happening right here, right now, through this form.

Well, that's something to be grateful for. Thank you.

[Speaker 16] (1:30:58 - 1:34:03)

Hello, and welcome everyone. My name is Tammy Simon, and I'm the founder of Sounds True, a multimedia publishing company. Thank you.

And Sounds True is so honored to be sponsoring this evening here tonight with Eckhart Tolle at Royce Hall at UCLA. Eckhart Tolle is a world teacher. As a world teacher, his message goes across every boundary, division, any obstacle.

His books, including A Power of Now and A New Earth, have been translated into 32 languages, and he's just returned from a nine-city tour in Europe. And part of the reason for his appeal worldwide is that his message is one that connects us to our innate, natural human spirituality. And although Eckhart uses language, it's in such a way that he's pointing to what is beyond language.

And that's what we'll be experiencing here tonight together, this state that he calls presence, an alert, relaxed, open, spacious way of being. And tonight is really not so much about accumulating more language or more ideas or more concepts. It's about this experience and this experience that we're all about to have together.

In just a couple of minutes, Eckhart will be joining us on stage. And before he does, I just want to make two final comments here. One is to ask everyone to please turn off your pagers, cell phones, noise-making devices of any kind.

It seems to interfere with the state of presence. And then secondly, instead of the normal conventional applause, the way that I would ask you to help us welcome Eckhart on stage is to sit for a few minutes and to allow the thunderous inner applause of being, our own natural stillness and silence connecting here together, to sit in that silent thunderous inner applause for a period of time. And when Eckhart's ready, he'll join us on stage.

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:34:52 - 1:46:26)

Welcome. You're here now. No matter how you got here, somehow you're in that seat now.

And I suggest to start with, you feel yourself being here now in that seat, including whatever mental or emotional movements are inside you now. Tammy mentioned turning off cell phones and other noise-making devices. She forgot to mention one, but where's the switch off button?

Now, if you try to switch off your mind, can be very frustrating. As if you didn't have enough problems already in your mind. And now you add an additional problem, which is, I can't figure out how to switch off my mind.

So you have more mind and perhaps more discontent or upset because you've heard or have perhaps occasionally experienced inner stillness. You know that such a thing is possible or believe it's possible, but can't seem to do it. So let's not even try because we don't want to add more problems.

Okay. So please just stay with what is. Without demanding, this should be different.

This moment should be different. Now you've already had a little taste of that because getting here, it seems to be, especially in LA, getting to the place always seems to involve certain challenges. It's a dynamic place, maybe that's why.

A few years ago, a hundred people came through the back door and occupied seats without tickets. And then the hundred people who had tickets came in and didn't find their seats. So let's consider that our session, our spiritual session started the moment you may your way to this hall.

So let's say that's where it all started. And that's good because now you still may have some of the energy that was generated by the conditions that you encountered on your way here. And this is good because it means we have something to work with.

So you're not, you don't come here as Buddhas, although the Buddha is there underneath, just waiting to come up. You come here as a mental, emotional entity. And that's your experience.

And that's something you can work with, not try to get rid of. Work with means to bring it into the light of awareness. To look at it, to see it's there, upset, impatient, restless, complaining, why don't they, why do they, how?

They should, shouldn't. This is too much. I can't stand it anymore.

Thoughts arising. Many of them empowered or amplified by an emotion that corresponds to the thought. A thought alone is relatively light, but when it gets amplified by an emotion, it goes.

And then it's not that you have a thought, the thought has you. So it takes you over. Some of you may have seen the film came out earlier this year, the number 23, where the protagonist becomes completely obsessed by the number 23 and sees it everywhere.

But of course, it's not the number 23 that he's obsessed with. It's the thought 23. So it shows you what can happen in an extreme form when a thought takes you over completely.

And in this case, of course, it runs this person's life and it's amplified by fear. So there is no, there's this, all that's left there is that enormous thought empowered by a very strong emotion. It occupies this person's entire inner space, so to speak.

And this is an extreme form. Another film that shows the same thing came out a few years ago, A Beautiful Mind, where a person is actually based on a true story. A highly intelligent person becomes totally obsessed with certain fantasies.

Again, thoughts, and these thoughts take him over so completely that he actually sees them as if they were external things and people which are not actually there. So interesting to see what this being taken over by a thought, what this is like in an extreme form, because to a greater or lesser degree, we all suffer from that condition. And sometimes, sometimes the thought is relatively harmless.

It's you, and you can justifiably say, I'm having a thought. The thought occurs to me, but at other times, you are not having a thought, and you're not, when you are not having a thought, but the thought has you, how do you know that this is happening? You don't even know that you're having a thought.

You are so identified with the thought that whatever judgment this thought pronounces upon the world, you believe to be absolute reality. And the world is full of people like that. It is the human condition in its present dysfunctional state, nothing personal in it.

And you see it in very extreme forms, not only in when you actually see, yes, this person is mentally ill. You see it also in certain places in the world where people are so obsessed with collective thought forms, be they political or religious, that it creates havoc where they live. Year after year, the same thing is playing itself out.

Totally obsessed with certain ways of looking at the world. There is no other way of looking at the world, but this way. They don't even know that this is their way of looking at the world.

That is their reality. They are possessed by thought. And so to a greater or lesser degree, it is everybody's fate so far.

It's been like that on this planet that you're being possessed by thought plus the emotion that goes with thought. There's a self in every thought that arises. And there's an absolute conviction in this identification that this thought is absolutely the reality.

So here as an initial exercise, I suggest that you just have a little look inside and see whether perhaps you, whether perhaps a thought is having you. Or a thought plus an emotion is occupying your entire space. There's almost nothing left.

Okay, now I'm inviting you to look and see what kind of thought it is. Okay, it says that. It pronounces this or that kind of judgment.

And you feel what is the emotion that goes with the thought which pronounces this or that kind of judgment. Okay, then you feel that. So you bring a vigilance into your inner state, an alertness.

Okay, that's there. You don't demand that you shouldn't be having this thought. It's there.

How can you demand you shouldn't be having it if you're having it? There it is. But suddenly you recognize that this is a thought.

And you also recognize the feeling that goes with the thought. How does that feel? You have to see what it feels like.

Is it a contraction? Is it a turmoil? Is it still?

[Speaker 18] (1:46:29 - 1:46:30)

Oh, okay.

[Speaker 1] (1:46:31 - 3:20:33)

So the moment you direct your attention, then you realize that you are having this thought. The thought no longer has you because suddenly your attention brings another dimension into this whole unconscious game. Your attention brings up a dimension that before you might not even have known existed.

So just this see what is my inner state now. You simply observe thoughts. What are they saying?

This thought is that. Another thought that says that. And whether justified or not no longer matters.

It's a thought that arises. An emotion goes with it. And suddenly you have a little bit of space inside around that thought or that emotion.

There's a little bit of space which comes with attention. Attention is space. And so you have a little bit of spaciousness around.

Even if it was a very heavy thought, you have a little bit of space around it. And in that space, there is a simple sense of presence or beingness. There is no turmoil in the space.

So there is a dimension from where you can know that there is, if it's turmoil or whatever it may be, or just a slight upset, very normal conditions. Almost everybody who lives, especially in a big city like this, every day you experience conditions, inner conditions that arise continuously. And usually you identify it.

Some people experience conditions that are relatively benign or even quite positive. They are good at handling the world out there. They make money.

They are successful. They have a positive outlook and deal with things as they arise. So they have a good kind of conditioning.

Their parents already were out to succeed and they taught their children to succeed. And here we go. Go for it.

Yeah. Go. And that seems okay.

That mental conditioning seems to be quite good. But everybody, even in this so-called positive form of conditioning, after a while, it wears you down and it's not enough. And even that after a while leads to a sense of, this isn't it.

This is not enough. And even that will take you sooner or later into some form of unhappiness. And often the unhappiness is already there underneath the conditioning.

Just comes up at night at three in the morning when you wake up. And then you have other people who suffer from very destructive or negative forms of conditioning. They were brought up to believe that everybody's out to get you.

So at an early age, they buy a gun to defend themselves and so on. So that's many forms of mental conditionings are there in people, but they are all thought forms. And for many humans still on this planet, that's all there is to their lives.

They are thought forms that are invested with a sense of self. So identified with the mental emotional conditioning. And that to a large extent determines how you experience the world.

Because you look at things through your conditioned mind, a filter. And we are not here to improve the conditioned mind. There is a place for that.

There are many workshops you can go to or books you can read, how to improve. And for many people, it's a step on their development, their spiritual development. First they realize, yes, there's something I can do about it.

But this is not what we're doing here. We are here to access, or in many of you have already accessed it. So it's a question of deepening a dimension that has nothing to do with your past.

A dimension of consciousness that is timeless. Nothing to do with your personal history. The only good thing about the personal history here, the helpful, the one helpful thing about your personal history is that it got you here.

Now, I don't necessarily mean here, this place or listening to this speaker. It got you to a point of awakening. If you were not awakening, you would not even be here.

And the few of you who came here accidentally believing this talk was going to be about something else, they will either be surprised and suddenly something within them will respond and say, wow, I thought I was something else altogether. Or they will become very frustrated within a few minutes, or if you're not frustrated already, and say, what is he actually saying? And this is the reason why if you are a graduate or undergraduate student at UCLA, they will not give you credits for attending this gathering.

They don't even realize what this gathering is all about, because if they did, they probably wouldn't have allowed it to take place here. So it's a question really, not of the speaker trying to convince anybody of anything, but a recognition in you that what these words are saying is true, and you recognize it in yourself through your own consciousness. Because deep down, and by deep down, I mean underneath the condition mind, it might not even be that deep, just underneath it, there is a vast intelligence that surpasses anything you've ever learned.

And even if you have three PhDs, far beyond anything you have ever learned, it's relatively insignificant, no matter how highly educated you are. There is a vast pool of intelligence that is unconditioned, that is the space underneath the mind out of which any creative idea that has ever come to anybody has arisen. Anything that was new, that was something powerful, that came into this world, often within the madness of normal human existence and human history, occasionally flashes of great creativity or incredible insights came here and there.

Most of human history is madness, but here and there you get flashes. Flashes. So if humanity were a single human being and you looked at the history of this single, this human being, you would say this human being is suffering from a dangerous mental disorder or psychosis.

A very violent person really should be locked away. But occasionally he or she has lucid moments. That's humanity up to this point.

Now we have arrived at a point where lucid moments are not enough anymore. They will not help us to survive this madness into the next century, into this new century. Lucid moments are not enough.

What is needed and what is happening, otherwise all these people would not come to listen to a speaker who is not charismatic. If so many people come to listen to a speaker who is not charismatic, there must be some truth there somewhere. And of course the truth is not in the speaker.

The truth is in you. And that is the truth of who you are beyond the mind-made sense of self. The noise machine in the head and the emotions that go with it.

The ego entity. By ego, I mean complete identification with a conditioned mind. True.

No space. That's what ego means. No, you don't realize, you don't recognize the most important, let's put it like that for a moment, the most important part of you, the most important dimension to who you are is totally unrecognized.

And this is still the fate of the majority of humanity although far more people than ever before are now actually awakening. They are going through the process of awakening out of that state of unconsciousness. Now, when you talk to a normal world and talk about unconsciousness, they think you're talking about having fainted or going, but unconscious means in our language that there is complete identification with a stream of thinking.

All you are then is a conditioned entity playing out your conditioning, which may be quite good or maybe not very good or in between. For most people, it's in between. Happy one day, unhappy the next.

And unhappy more often than happy. Discontent, sense of something is missing here, lack, not enough. I haven't fully arrived at myself yet.

So nothing seems to be actually fulfilling for very long. The continuous need to look for something to add to who I am. Okay, there's another experience.

Ah, or I can buy something new. Go out and look there. Ah, yeah, how much is that?

Okay, take it. Take it home. And then it's a nice, shiny bag.

And you've read all the ads about it already, which tell you if you want to be a true individual, you buy this product. And then you have this nice, shiny bag. And then you get home and you take it out.

Now I know who I am. And for a little while, it works, maybe an hour or even a couple of days. But then you wait a couple of days and then of course, okay, what's next?

The discontent is there again. Something missing. Something missing.

Always looking for that which is missing. And where is the ego looking for that which is missing? Always, because it's obviously not here.

It's not even looking here. It already knows that what is missing isn't here. So the ego isn't even looking here.

It's looking in the next moment for what's missing. So that's why everybody lives, not consciously, but unconsciously, as if the next moment or the one after that were more important than this moment. It's a normal way to live.

People don't realize that this is how they live. Very rarely are they actually at home or one with this moment. Very rarely.

And some people are only at home or one with this moment when they are getting tired and the noise machine in the head is too tired to produce more thoughts. Oh, so you're halfway towards sleep and for the first time that day, it feels good to be alive. Oh.

And then you're longing for the complete annihilation of self in deep sleep. Get away from that, from the self. Get away from the noise machine with its continuous stuff-producing machine.

Stuff. You need this. You want this.

Stuff. And then you go. And then you sleep.

If you're lucky, all night long. But you probably, the noise machine wakes up at three in the morning and starts working. Oh my God.

And you remember that you have problems and the great heaviness descends upon you, especially if you're in bed. There is no problem, but the mind doesn't know that. And there you are.

And then the body responds with an emotion that the body doesn't realize that all your thoughts are just thoughts to the body. The body responds to thought as if thought were a reality. So when you're thinking about your problems and how very, very challenging your problems are, then your body reacts as if this were, you were actually in a crisis situation at three in the morning in bed.

So that's where people, the noise machine in the head, then for many humans, the only way they can be free of it is when they move towards unconsciousness. And of course, another way of moving towards unconsciousness is alcohol, which helps also to some extent, not always, but it helps some people to feel a little better for a while. Suddenly, all the day they were stressed and obsessed.

And then finally they get to their, wherever they keep their drinks or to go to the bar and pour themselves. It calms down the noise machine in the head for a while. But there's a price.

The price is you're moving towards unconsciousness. But on your way towards unconsciousness, you feel a little better. Yeah.

So drugs, whatever it may be, smoke, have a smoke. So this is not the way we want to go. So there's no smoking here, no alcohol.

And if one or two of you have had a couple of drinks before coming here, don't feel guilty. It's fine. That's what is.

You're still awake, I assume. So there is another way of becoming free of the conditioned mind that you inherited, that you came already into this world with. The ego, of course, looks for liberation from its unsatisfying, unsatisfactory state.

It looks, the ego knows this is what, it knows something is missing, but it always looks in the wrong place. As we already said, it looks there, but never here. So it never goes deep into life, into what is.

It ignores the simple reality of the present moment and looks towards the next moment for satisfaction, for that which I can add that will make me complete. Hence, it's obsession with future, with the next moment. And hence, everybody lives that way, almost everybody.

As if the next moment were more important than this moment. And this isn't that strange. It's a form of mental illness because the next moment doesn't even exist, except as a thought in your head.

That's the only absolute reality that future has is it exists as a thought in your head. And it is fine as for practical purposes, it's a helpful thought that there is such a thing as future because it enables you to make an appointment. So it's helpful we got here because of future, because of this thought that there is such a thing as future.

But there isn't because nobody has ever seen it or touched it or experienced it. And since nobody has ever seen, touched or experienced it, we can assume that it doesn't exist. And obviously it doesn't because when the future comes, it's the now.

The next moment comes that you wanted to get to. And finally you get there and it turns out it's the now again. And many people experience that even people who make it, this city is big on making it.

So even some of the audience have made it and just they're here miraculously because obviously there must be something missing. And others are still perhaps hoping to make it and perhaps believing that coming here will help them. It might in some strange way, but let's not go into that now.

There's something missing and whatever you achieve, you will find yourself in the now. That's the weird thing. When finally you move into that big house, right?

Wherever it is, up on the mountain with the greatest view in the world. And then you sit there in a big armchair and you look around and there's a satisfaction. I made it, I made it.

And then it turns out after a few days, oh, it's still the now. I thought there was more to it when I projected myself into the next moment or the one after that, when I projected myself into that situation that was so great in my mental projection. And now that it's here, it's just this.

And even the big house after a while, the novelty wears off. You invite a few, you have some dinner parties so that everybody admires the house and that's good. Get recognition.

And then it was, oh, what now? I don't even need to work anymore. You can just sit all day.

Okay, I've made it. Not enough because it's only the now. And the ego doesn't like it.

And so it carries on looking. More experiences, relationships, sex, drugs, dangerous going to this, experience that, experience that, travel there, travel there. And wherever you go, you find yourself, you sit in the hotel room or on the beach in Fiji.

It's the now. And the ego runs away from it, not realizing that what it has been looking for is hiding here. No matter what form this now takes, it is hiding where the conditioned mind, which is the ego, has never really looked.

It always made the now at best into a means to an end. Okay, this now, I need this now because it enables me to get to that more important moment, which is the future. Okay, a stepping stone, best of times.

Or the ego had to reduce the now to an obstacle. And for some people, that is their normal existence. Every day long, every day long, whatever comes into the now, they look at it as an obstacle.

Get out of the way. I want to get there. Every person that comes in, I want something else.

The ego always wants not this. It wants to use this to get there. It wants to use every person that comes into now to get there.

So every person the ego meets, okay, are you going to enable me to get to the next more important moment? How can I use you to get where I want to get to? So the now is made into an obstacle.

Or for people who are very strongly, very strongly identified with the egoic mind, they make the now into an enemy. Continuously complaining it's never enough. They shouldn't, why don't they?

This is never... They can go into the most wonderful place and after five minutes, they found the one thing that's not working as it should. And they're complaining, they should do something about it.

If not, I'm going to do something about it. And if they're not complaining verbally, they're complaining in their heads. They're complaining about situations, about other people, about what's happening or complaining that something that should be happening is not happening.

This sounds insane because it is insane. But it is not, nothing personal. It is not recognized as insanity because it is fairly normal.

And if it's normal, then it's not recognized as an illness. So that is the dysfunctional state of consciousness that is condemned to perpetual discontent, perpetual unhappiness, perpetual upsets. Conditions are so upsetting always.

Life is so upsetting. People are upsetting. Without people, maybe it would be okay, but hell is other people, said Jean-Paul Sartre, the philosopher.

Hell, the literal translation of what he said is actually hell is the others, the others. And the ego is big on emphasizing the otherness of other people. It loves other.

So it continuously is critical and suspicious and judgmental because they are, here's me and there are the others, me. And the more I can emphasize the otherness of others, the more strengthened I feel in my fictitious sense of self. So some people have this hard ego shell and everybody they come into contact with is basically an abstract entity.

They have D, they have made through mental abstraction, made other human beings into just thought forms by pronouncing judgments and believing in their judgments. But they've already done it to themselves because they live through a conceptual identity. This is who I am, thought forms, memories, that's me.

No, it's not, it's just thoughts. So the end point of entry into the awakened state of consciousness is the present moment where the egoic self has never even looked, doesn't want to know. So anybody who is ready can open themselves to this and see, okay, let's find out what's so great about this moment.

Okay, then you look and then the ego says, well, this moment, there's so many moments every day, so many moments happen, so where am I going to look, which moment? And of course, that is a delusion again. There are not many moments and you can verify that in your own experience by asking yourself, is it still the now?

Yes, at any time I suggest as a spiritual practice, tomorrow, so-called tomorrow, it's a thought form. When it comes, it's the now. So, or even tonight, when you walk out of here, when you walk out of here, it's the now.

When you get home, it's the now. Ask yourself sometimes, is this still the now? Am I here now?

Yes, because there's nothing else, it's always now. There are not many moments, only the form in which this moment appears to you changes continuously. At this moment, the form is this room, people in this room, the voice, the space around you and whatever thoughts may be going through your head, hopefully very few, and whatever emotions may be in here or feelings or physical feelings, that's all part of what the form that this moment is taking.

This is the form. Now, the egoic consciousness or unconsciousness looks at the form and says, not enough, that's not what I wanted. This isn't it.

And then immediately it looks away or it runs away or it internally resists it, it judges it, there's a contraction, not this. This should not be happening. Either this should not be happening or something should be happening, but it isn't.

So the spiritual practice is a simple one, the primordial, the most fundamental spiritual practice is to take your attention into the present moment. You might as well because you never have anything else. You might as well pay attention to this one thing that's all there is ever is the now.

The form changes. So here we have, now, what do we mean when we say the form of the present moment changes continuously? And this is why people believe there are many moments every day, but there aren't.

It's always now, okay. Now, what the mind says, what do you mean? It's a meaningless statement, it's always now.

Or the mind says, you said that half an hour ago or you might even have written it down. There's only the now, okay, what's next? I want more information, please.

I'm collecting information because maybe if I collect enough information, I'll be happy. Okay, let's, you have to go a little deeper into what we call the now. And that involves not just what you perceive.

It involves something else that is always present. Let's just put it this way. By the way, whatever words we now use, especially now that we get to the deeper levels, whatever words I use now are not quite it.

They are only pointers towards it. So I have to mention this now because there are always some people who are very much identified with words, which after all are only verbalized thoughts. And they hang, they grasp with all this.

I don't think you're, I don't like the way you're putting this. I don't agree with this phrase or how you use that expression. Or I don't, that doesn't, it's not quite right.

Of course it's not right because language comes from the world of physical objects and it works on that level. The table is here that works and makes sense. But if even if there, if you look more deeply, that's not true either.

But let's leave that alone. There is no table, of course. There's something else we see it as a table, but it's an energy field.

So let's not get into this. So language is never quite right. So don't, it's only used as a signpost to point beyond itself in spiritual discourse, true spiritual discourse.

Language only has the function of a signpost. So now I mentioned this now so that your mind, not you, because you know the truth, but if your mind is blocking the deep knowing that is already inside you, if your mind is blocking it, your mind is then attaches itself to the words and says, I don't like these words. I would use different words.

Well, fine. Doesn't matter. It's like examining a signpost that says Rome.

And instead of going to Rome, you say, I don't like the way this is written, this signpost. I don't like the color. I don't like the letters.

And then you, okay, I'll write another one. And years later, you're still writing signposts or you're collecting the signposts. So no word we use is absolutely right.

Knowing that we can continue to use words, knowing that they only point to something that's beyond. Okay, here we go. There's something inside you that already knows all this.

And you might, your mind might say, and this is how silly the human mind is, nothing personal. The mind might say, oh no, I don't know the truth. Of course the mind doesn't know the truth.

If you sit here and it feels good to be here because listening to these words is virtually as if you are listening to a truth that you already know, that means you are open to that dimension within yourself that's deeper than thought. Because there you already know. There is already a deep knowing that is not conceptual.

In other words, is not thinking. So this can be sometimes experienced in a gap between two thoughts. And you realize you're awake and present, but not thinking for just a little gap.

Don't try not to think. Just observe the gaps that arise in your life spontaneously from time to time. And you're actually, this is the beginning of realizing that dimension is not by trying to put yourself into some state, but by realizing that this state is already arising in your life spontaneously.

And the mind doesn't even know that because it knows nothing about that which is beyond the mind. So for example, you may find yourself sometimes being in a state of alive joy. For no particular reason.

Not because something good has just happened. It's just, you look around, perhaps at a cloud or the sky or a tree or an animal, and they feel a deep sense of peace, presence, and aliveness, or another human being. You meet another human being and you don't want anything from him or her.

There's simply an outflow of spacious attention towards another human being. That spaciousness has nothing to do with thinking. And this is why I use the expression space consciousness.

This is not a science fiction term. And it is not something abstract. It is something that is already in you, but is so easily overlooked because this object consciousness, which is the grasping mind, is looking for all the answers on the level of mind objects.

In other words, things that it can grasp. The mind is an interesting fact that in the way we use language, we say the mind grasps it in the sense of understands it. That's what the mind, it says, ah, there it is, now I can examine it.

Or there it is, it's mine. There it is, I can analyze and dissect it and find out all about it. I cut it into pieces.

Okay, even smaller pieces. I can analyze each piece. And even smaller pieces.

And then each piece, I can do a PhD on that. And another PhD on that. And so knowledge proliferates.

And there's so much knowledge, it is vast. Most PhDs are read by three people. Only the great, only the very few in the world who share your specialty, just that field.

Only one or two in the world can understand what their PhD is about. But this is how specialized knowledge has become. And it is object knowledge, object consciousness.

Every thought is a thought form. It is an energy form that has a certain lifespan. Unless you're an unfortunate one and your entire space is occupied by one big proliferating thought, like in the number 23 in the film.

But this is an extreme case. It happens to many people. Completely obsessed with object consciousness.

Almost everybody is completely drawn into the mind's attempt to grasp at things, identify with form, thought forms. It often identifies with external objects, of course. But every object represents really a thought in your head.

Who knows whether there's even anything out there, but we know that there's a thought that this is my car, or this is my house, or this is my this, and this is my position, this is my position in society, and so on. These are all things that belong to the realm of object consciousness. And almost everybody, except those who are awakening now, which includes everybody who is still here, otherwise they wouldn't be here anymore, except maybe one or two whose partner is holding them down to the chair.

You stay here and listen to this. But anybody who is still here free voluntarily and hasn't left, or is not feeling upset or angry, and if there are one or two who are feeling upset and angry, I suggest you look at that and say, isn't that interesting? There it is.

And by looking at that, a little bit of space, you're not totally possessed by the object consciousness. Just the looking, and I use looking not just meaning visual, just paying attention. Attention is liberating.

Just paying attention and look, bring your awareness to whatever is here. And here we get to the deeper meaning of now. We already mentioned the form of the now continuously changes.

It's like, it's so fleeting, the forms that life takes, that you could describe it as vapor, vaporous stuff. The forms look very solid, but they continuously come and go in your life. The now takes continuously fluctuating forms.

Okay, the form of this now is the room, is the voice, is your body and whatever feelings you have. And is there anything else perhaps that we have been overlooking that's an essential dimension? Yes, there is.

Let's see what that is. You could say, and it has been said by poets and philosophers and some spiritual teachers that the life that we experience is dreamlike because all the forms are so fleeting. And let's just say, okay, we don't know whether this gathering here is actually a dream that you are dreaming or real.

Now, I don't want to go into that too far because that would become perhaps philosophy. And for that, you can go take a course at UCLA if they're still doing philosophy. Here, this moment, the form that this moment takes could be a dream.

But even if it is a dream, and we don't know because is there anything we can know for sure? We cannot know for sure that this is not a dream. It may be that you are having a dream in which a person sits on a stage and says, perhaps this is a dream.

And that person in your dream is saying, perhaps it is possible to wake up out of this dream. And you go, oh, I may be dreaming. But even if it is a dream, there must be something, there must be a field or a space or a light, whatever you want to call it, in which the dream happens.

Otherwise, it wouldn't be. So there must be, we can say the dreamer of the dream, or we can say the consciousness or the space in which this dream appears and is known. And that, the existence of that, we cannot doubt because otherwise it wouldn't be.

And so fundamentally there is underneath all the appearances of this world, all the forms that continuously arise, come and go, all the so-called many moments, there is another dimension without which none of this could even be. And that is, we need to be very careful now because we are using words and every word that we use belongs to the realm of object consciousness. But we are speaking now of the space that enables this world to be.

Let's call it just for a moment, the inner space. All the experiences in your life, all the things that happen in your life have happened, the so-called past, all the things that happen, happened in a space. Otherwise they couldn't have happened.

Or in a light, you can call it a light. And that is the space that you essentially are underneath the continuous movement of objects of consciousness. There's the objects of consciousness and there is that which underlies all that.

Which is a simple space consciousness, which is not anything. It is not something that you could say, ah, I've got it now. Because the moment you say, there it is, it's not it.

The moment you say, ah, now I know myself. No, you can't. You can only know things about yourself.

In other words, all the objects in your consciousness, all your conditioning that you can know. And it's interesting. Maybe it's even fascinating.

I am so interesting. I'm so fun. My story is so fascinating.

You can talk for a long time and some people have had fascinating lives. This is true, but their fascinating lives in a few years will pop like a soap bubble. And they're popping all over.

Oh, that was so fascinating. And then what's left is, because we are talking about form. It has its place, but it is only a tiny aspect of who you are.

Because the end of all the forms and all the, whether it's your life is fascinating or dreadful mess. It all ends up, as I said before, somewhere as the dash between your date of birth and date of death on your gravestone. That is your life on the level of form.

Whether it's been fascinating or dreadful misery, it all comes to the same thing. A two inch dash. Or if you made it in this world, then you buy a huge one.

And then the dash is five inches. Now to the ego, because the ego knows nothing but form, this is extremely depressing. And if you were sitting here as the ego, you would say, only the ego, you would say, I don't want to hear any more of this.

This is so depressing. I want whatever it is the ego wants. It wants many things.

That a life that knows only object consciousness, a human life that is confined to just the play of object consciousness is no matter, even if it's rich in events or achievements, it is impoverished. And in fact, true achievements as a creative act is not even possible if your life is consumed only by object consciousness. Because any true realization, any original, even thought, most thinking is conditioned thinking.

It's repetitive, it's old. Anything that is fresh, new, empowered, anything that is beautiful, a beautiful creation or deep realization does not come out of the accumulated object consciousness. It comes out of the space, the space that is underneath that, the space of awareness, the space of consciousness without an object.

And you find it by directing attention away from the world of object consciousness, which ultimately is thoughts, sense perceptions, even sense perceptions become translated into thought. Direct attention away. Now, where do you direct attention?

You cannot make space consciousness into an object of attention. Because if you make space consciousness into an object of attention, you have more object consciousness. And that is why Jesus said, the kingdom of heaven does not come with signs to be observed.

You can't say, ah, I've got it. There it is, object space consciousness. I have it now.

I have achieved space consciousness. So it cannot become an object of your attention because it is attention. So when you look, you look at something, let's say you can try this out when you're a moment in nature or anywhere in your room or here.

If you look at something for the first moment, a tree, a flower, an animal, whatever it may be, you look at something, your gaze falls upon it. And there's, let's say it's a beautiful flower. And if you now need to be very vigilant and observe yourself, the moment you look at that flower and you truly see the beauty and something within your response, there is a space before the mind comes in with labels.

And that is the space of space consciousness in which the flower appears. It is the light of consciousness in which the flower appears. So you have, we can do the same about this room.

We know all the things that we can perceive in this room or about ourselves. All these objects that arise in consciousness at this moment, at this moment, these objects are arising in consciousness. Oh yes, interesting.

Is it possible to be aware of another dimension that underlies all these objects that arise in consciousness? Is it possible to be aware of yourself as the space in which the various continuously changing objects arise? Is it possible to sense the presence that you are as that which underlies all the things that have form, that arise as form and arise and subside?

Come and go, come and go. And you are, at this moment, you are the space for this. For this room, you are the space for this voice.

You are the space for whatever you experience in your mind, whatever thoughts, you're the space even for the thought. If the thought does not absorb your attention completely, you can be the space for the thought. The moment, for example, you realize, there goes a thought, and I'm verbalizing it now, but when you realize it, there's no verbalizing, there's simply the awareness that there is a thought, an old thought perhaps, or a thought that says, this should be, this should not be, why don't they, and so on and so on.

Another one of those thoughts. And the awareness is there and says, oh, and the awareness sees the thought come and go, or an emotion, an upset, this shouldn't be, okay, and suddenly there's an awareness that is aware of this form that arises. That is you.

That is space. And that is, in essence, the now. That is the deeper meaning of now, because now is not what happens, now is the space for it.

Now is the space of consciousness, let's say, but don't, consciousness is just a word, so it's just a pointer. You can only understand it and knowing at this moment by sensing within and sensing yourself as the underlying presence for whatever you perceive or think or feel. You are the presence or the space for that.

And when I put this into language, when I say you sense yourself as the underlying space, we've already gone wrong because language has a structure which requires a subject and an object. So when we put this into language, I say you sense your very self, it looks as if you had made yourself into an object. I feel myself, but that's only due to the structure of language.

In this realization that you realize yourself as the eternal subject for whatever happens. And this eternal subject is not anything that can be defined in form, anything that can be defined through language or through thought or through any opinion, which is thought. Your essential self is totally beyond anything that you could say about it or put words or thoughts to or labels.

It cannot be defined. It can only be known not as an object, but known as the subject. So all these words are continuously pointing to this realization of yourself as the underlying presence in which the world and all the things that come and go appear.

So a very, perhaps the most direct way of not just knowing or sensing that when you sit here and say, yes, and again, you can never grasp it. You cannot grasp it because you are it. So you cannot grasp yourself.

You are it. Now, how can I know this in my daily life is the question. What do I do in my daily life which one object after another arises and demands my attention?

Every object and every thought that comes, this is important, deal with me now, give me attention, pulls you in. The phone rings, the computer, the emails. You haven't answered my email.

Okay, then the next thing. Oh, and he wants this and she wants that. One thing after another, it pulls in your attention.

You lose yourself in the world, in the world which is the world of form, which includes your mind, lost in your mind, lost in the world, completely ignorant of who you are in essence. And that is impoverished, a life that is impoverished, not knowing that. But many, there are, of course, spiritual seekers who have been seeking to know that dimension for many years.

The mistake that they make, if they haven't, if they're still spiritual seekers, first of all, they seek it in the future like everybody else is seeking something in the future and they seek realization in the future. And they seek it as if it could be an object in their experience. I want this great realization they're all talking about.

One day I will going to get there. No, you're not because one day is now and you're not looking to now. One day is the future projection.

It's here already. But how do you know that it's here? You're just saying that no, you can.

The easiest way to know this is to have a different relationship with the present moment because the present moment is and remains the point of entry into that deeper state. Even though on the surface, it may look unsatisfactory, it is always concealing the deeper dimension. But you can only know that if you find a relationship with the present moment that is non-resistant.

Internally. Where you say to the present moment, I realize that you are life. I realize that life is always now.

I realize that apart from now, there can be no life. And so, since I realize that the now is all there ever is, I might as well become friendly with the now and honor it and give it my attention as it arises in whatever form and say, there you are. This is what is at this moment.

And I surrender my resistance to what is. That is the end of the ego. To be able to do that, there already needs to be something in you that is beyond ego.

Only from there can you surrender. So anybody who can hear this message and the possibility of living in a way that treats the present moment as a friend rather than an enemy or an obstacle or a means to an end. If you can say to the present moment, there you are.

And give it your fullest attention knowing that past and future are relatively unimportant. They're only of practical purpose, useful for practical purposes, but not for living. Not for finding the fullness of life, as Jesus puts it.

I want you to have life in its fullness, he said. What's he talking about? Objects in space or space?

Is he talking about life forms? Is he talking about the shopping malls? The fullness of life, is it there?

No, he talks about something that is beyond form. It is life itself beyond form. And so to have the fullness of life, you need to come to an openness towards the present moment.

And then for whatever arises in the now, I recommend the mantra. That good mantra is something, as you know, it's a very little phrase, a helpful pointer. The mantra itself is nothing.

It only points to what matters. The mantra is, if you remember nothing else, hopefully you won't remember much after this evening, perhaps just this little thing. And it concerns your relationship with the present moment.

And the mantra is, can I be the space for this? And I'm phrasing it as a question, not as an affirmation, because the question is more open. It invites you to find out.

It invites you to enter into the state where you say to the present moment, there you are. Even if it looks unsatisfactory. Even if something has just gone wrong.

The thing has just broken down. You've just lost something. Something has just been gone up in flames.

Whatever life is fleeting, the forms are very fleeting. And often the present moment, the mind would say, this shouldn't be happening. But it is.

No, but it is, is, is, is. You can't argue with that. Or if you do, you suffer.

So you become aligned with life internally. The ego is continuously out of alignment with life, which is now. And the ego is that way.

Life is here, always happening. And the ego is trying to get there. Not even trying, not even...

It's here. So you go more fully into life. And you do not demand that this moment should be different from the way it is.

You surrender the demand. And it's because you see it's dysfunctional. You've done it, and this is nothing personal, because we all inherit that.

You've done it all your life. Reduce this moment. Demand that it should be different.

And now try something else. Become friendly with the is-ness of life. Are you then condemned?

Are you... Does this mean you're going to be stuck in this undesirable now? No.

First, you open yourself to what is. And you look, and you take it in with your attention. This now.

This, there it is. If action is required, it will come out of the state of attention or awareness. You look, and you act.

Or you look and do nothing. If nothing can be done, nothing, no action is required, nothing. You simply surrender to what is at this moment.

In some situations, you need to act. In many other situations, action would be futile. You just have to wait.

And you don't even wait. You say, this is what is now. That's fine.

Can I be the space for this? Somebody falls ill, you fall ill. You lose something.

You lose your job. Little things go wrong. Big things go wrong.

Can I be the space for this? And then you accept the is-ness of the present moment. And that, out of that simple step, arises an entirely new state of consciousness.

Because when you accept the is-ness of now, you become the space for what is. But you were that already, but you didn't know it. So you become what you already always were, but unconsciously.

You were already the space for whatever is, the conscious field in which things arise, but you didn't know it because you were so drawn into the world of objects that you lost yourself in every arising object. Unaware of your essential being, which is another word we could use to describe, to talk of the space that you are. Unaware of your essential being, which is timeless.

The dimension, this essential being-ness, which is sometimes another word you could use is the I am, before it becomes this or that. The being-ness or the I am-ness. I am and being is the same thing.

To be is the infinitive of I am. They look like two completely different words, but they are the same word. The being that you are, which is deeper than the form.

The form is, we could, if you want to use words, existence. The existence is, existence means to stand out. X means out.

You exist as a particular form, yes, for a little while, until the dash on the gravestone. You exist, you stand out for a little while as this form, and there's something in humans that wants to stand out, and that's fine. It has its place.

It says, here I am. Okay, but you are not, I am for that long up here, because it requires an effort to stand out. You go, here I am.

I am, I have achieved, or I am the greatest failure. I'm greater failure than you. I affirm my specialness as the great failure, or I affirm my specialness as the great hero who has achieved whatever, and then it all collapses around you after a while.

In the world of form, nothing lasts. We all know when Napoleon ended up very frustrated, and he sat on this island the last few years, or now. It all dissolved.

All the break battles, it all gone up like puffs of smoke. That's the world of form. It's in the nature of the world of form to be ephemeral, fleeting.

So there you are, and you lose yourself in that, and you think that is of the greatest importance, whatever happens in this fleeting world of continuously fluctuating forms. That's very frustrating. Some people know that already when they're 25.

Others have to live to 75 and still don't know it, that you can't find anything lasting there. And so underneath that is, has always been the timeless consciousness that you essentially are. You were always, you will always be, you always are.

It's the most correct statement. You always are already the space for the world because you are, in essence, consciousness itself. That is nothing to do with thought, and that is the dimension that is beyond, we could say it is deeper than thought, but I sometimes put it in a different, as you know, high and low or deep and are very relative terms.

There is ultimately no such thing as high when you leave earth. There's no up and down anymore. So we can say deep, the deeper consciousness, or we can say the transcendent timeless consciousness.

We are rising above compulsive thinking. And compulsive thinking, by compulsive thinking, I mean unconscious thinking that is conditioned by the past. Humanity's destiny now, and it's already happening, is to rise above thinking.

Then thinking will have found its place. It will no longer dominate your existence. You are moving.

The shift is from being a predominantly thinking entity with a few lucid moments to being a predominantly aware being. The shift from thinking to awareness. Awareness is spacious attention.

And then thinking can actually be fruitful. No longer the old addictive thinking, because if you only know thinking, thinking is addictive. Can't get enough of it.

Why can't you get enough of it? Because it keeps the object, it keeps the mind, the egoic mind going, and it tells you who you are. I need to think about me and my life.

And then most people are only too happy to tell others about me and my life. And often me and my life consists of their complaints about life and their complaints about other people and what they've done to them, or what life has done to me, and what my ex-husband, my ex-wife did to me. These are the stories that make up people's lives.

And they don't, it's so, what is there beyond that? Beyond that is who you are. The presence, the consciousness.

Sometimes we use the word stillness to describe that state underneath the mind. But underneath may not be the right word, because it is really a rising above thinking. We already mentioned drugs or alcohol or getting tired as ways of falling below thinking.

And then this is not the way we are going, regression. We are moving beyond thinking. And then thinking becomes a beautiful tool because there's no sense of self in it.

There's only the function of thinking. And it's a wonderful tool, and it will be so powerful when it's no longer burdened with dysfunction. When the ego is identified with the mind, thinking is, 95% of it is dysfunctional.

And then the dysfunction will disappear from thinking. And you do not rely on thinking anymore to tell you who you are. And equally important, you don't rely on thinking anymore in your relationships with other human beings.

So a different dimension comes into your relationships, a dimension that is beyond object consciousness, where you immediately have little opinions and judgments about other people. And you are relating not to another human being, but to a screen of mental definitions about that human being. There's no meeting at all.

There's no true relationship. So the ability to be with people, with nature, in that space of simple, alert attention, increasingly comes into your life, where you go into a situation and you're not there as a conditioned thinker, but as a simple, spacious presence. And you look, you go to the meeting, and you are there as an awareness, a field of awareness.

And I'm not just talking about it at this very moment. You can be, you can sit here as a thinker. What's he talking about awareness?

I can't quite figure out what that means. Of course not, because awareness, you can't find out what awareness is, except by being aware. You can't find out what awakening is, except by awakening.

Awakening means to step out of identification with thinking and be the presence. Oh, you mean that? Yes, just that.

And then at first, from the point of view of the mind, it looks as if nothing significant had happened when this shift occurs. And it's not a shift for most people that happens all at once. It is a gradual stepping out of identification with thinking, a rising of presence, a gradual increasing ability to be with things, to perceive against the background of spacious awareness, rather than continual judgment or definition, an ability to sense your own presence beyond any thoughts or words and derive your sense of who you are from that, rather than your personal history, which of course consists of a bundle of thoughts. Nothing wrong with that. You don't need to forget your personal history, but if that's all you think you are, then you've missed out on the most important thing in life, which is finding who you are beyond your personal history.

So we enter into that new state and then because it's a gradual process, you fall back a few times into identification with thinking, negative states, complaints, blaming people or situations for my problems, which of course I created through my thinking, but I don't know that. And so I blame somebody else for that. And then it develops into a thought form that proliferates and then it, no space, loss of space, dreadful condition, normal.

And all the great, all the creatures of humanity pointed to this shift, the simple possibility of living so aligned with the present moment that you know yourself as the space for whatever arises. And whenever you know yourself as the space, you're not fighting what is, you become one with what is internally. And when you become one with what is, the very intelligence that underlies the entire universe then operates.

And any situation that needs action, then it will arise out of that oneness with the situation, right action arises, right words arise out of your oneness with what is, out of the space that you are when you accept this moment as it is, that simple thing. And as a little reminder, can I be the space for this? And conditions arise continuously in your life, good, bad, good, bad, bad, bad, good, good.

They arise continuously. And more and more, you just are with what is without this always immediately naming it as good or bad. It just is.

And the totality of the universe has brought about the form of this moment, of course, because everything is connected to everything else. So the totality of the universe has brought about the form that this moment takes. It couldn't be otherwise.

So I might as well say, there it is and be the space. Which I am already. But now knowingly be the space for that.

And then you are no longer disconnected from life. Life is no longer experienced as hostile as it still is for many people. But the universe then becomes benign and even helpful because then you are connected with the one intelligence.

So whenever you enter and you just try it out for a week, two weeks, whenever you can, be one with the present moment. Even especially when before you would have reacted against it. Especially when before the mind would have complained.

When before the mind would have blamed somebody for my problems to illusions. There are no problems apart from the problems created by your thinking mind. What do you mean?

I mean, there are no problems except what the mind is doing. Apart from the mind, there are challenges. And the challenge can only arise at this moment.

The challenge can only be dealt with in this moment. Challenges are real and life never leaves you alone. It gives you one challenge after another because otherwise you would go to sleep.

It's that which keeps you awake and that is the food for your practice. And that's why we said at the beginning, if you feel upset here as you came in, that's great. You have something to work with.

What does that mean? It means you have something that you can bring your awareness to and be the space for that. And through something that before was upsetting, it can actually take you into the space underneath that you are.

Use any conditions that arise and no longer demand, which the ego does, and that's why the ego is so frustrated all the time, no longer demand that a particular condition should make you happy. Condition means a situation. It means a place or it means a human being.

This demand that he should do this to make me happy. She should do that to make me happy. This place is not good enough.

It's not making me happy. This situation, a new situation you go into, should make me happy, but it isn't making me happy. Situations, people, places are not there to make you happy.

They are there to wake you up. So the world is not here to make you happy. Oh, well, that's a relief because it hasn't done it so far.

The world is not here to make you happy. It's to wake you up. Well, or it can pull you into greater sleep.

There's the two possibilities. Conditions are here to be transcended. Internally.

So that internally you go beyond dependency on external conditions. And when I say external conditions, it includes the conditions of your mind, whatever thoughts are being produced in your mind. You go, you transcend that.

You go, transcend means you go beyond. And in other words, you realize that you are already beyond, essentially have always been beyond, but didn't know it. The timeless dimension of who you are.

And then the great liberation is you don't have any particular opinions anymore about who you are. You just are, because you just are the space. You are the consciousness for this moment.

That's all you are. You don't need an accumulation of thoughts called opinions that tell you who you are. Not good enough.

Better than. Not as good as. Hope to become better.

Did bad things in the past. Did great things in the past, but not anymore. Whatever.

Hope to do great things in the future. Fine on this level. Why not do great things and have great, say, okay, I want to become a great actor.

Be in LA. I want to become a great tennis player. Okay.

But don't look to that for happiness, for fulfillment, for finding yourself. That's fine. You play with the forms of life.

It's beautiful. But don't take them too seriously. There are many unhappy actors, even those that made it.

And some, quite a few, are awakening spiritually because they have everything and realize, oh, that's not it. Okay. Then the illusion that something else that they could achieve would make them happy is gone because there's nothing else that they could possibly achieve.

And so the spiritual dimension, either the spiritual dimension opens up, which is they recognize the timeless within, or they become very unhappy and then try to take drugs so that they feel a little bit less unhappy. Can I be the space for this? Simple question, a simple pointer.

Okay. After you've used that question, you need to go and say, okay, what does it mean to be the space? Okay.

Spacious attention, just this. You look, you listen, and you know yourself as the awareness, as the space for whatever is happening. And then what's happening or not happening, is not that important anymore.

It's not so important that it can make you unhappy. The world then loses two things. It loses its ability to fulfill you because you realize it can't.

It also loses its sense of threat because otherwise when you're in the ego, there's always this dilemma. On the one hand, you're hoping that the future and the things that you could acquire in the future are going to make you happy and fulfilled. On the other hand, of course, the ego knows deep down the future or time, which is past and future.

Time, of course, is going to kill me eventually. So it looks to time, hoping to get this or that, but knowing deep down, eventually it's all going to be taken away from me. But let's not think about that.

And all you then end up with is this moment, all there ever is, and being the space for that. That's the shift in consciousness. So if you're a spiritual seeker, let go of the future.

You're not going to find enlightenment there or liberation. Just what is. It's already here and you are already it.

Thank you.

[Speaker 5] (3:21:08 - 3:21:19)

First of all, let me just ask you what happens to you when you have those moments, the moment of silence like we just, we had right there. What goes on in your mind?

[Speaker 1] (3:21:20 - 3:23:53)

Well, you have what we call silence is an external phenomenon. You would say that's the absence of noise. And then you have stillness.

The way I use the word stillness is the inner silence and stillness or inner silence means that there is a gap in between thoughts. So there is a little bit of space inside your mind, so to speak. And in that space, you're fully aware and fully present, but there's no conceptual thinking going on.

So there are no words arising in that space. And that's what we call stillness. So most people have a voice in their head, which is the continuous thought processes that they are usually identified with.

So for most people, that is their basic reality is the voice in the head. And they are so identified with these continuously arising thought processes that they don't even know that they are identified with every thought that comes. They don't know that there is a voice in the head because they are the voice in the head.

So to find that there is another dimension inside you that we could call stillness, we could have other names for it, where this mental noise is not operating for a while, that is like finding the depths inside yourself that perhaps you didn't know was there. And that essentially is the spiritual dimension. So it really is about finding that dimension in yourself where the continuous mental noise for a while subsides.

So when your question then is, what goes on in your mind? We could say nothing really goes on as such. There's still an awareness of noises that you hear or your eyes may be open.

You might be looking at things, but you're not labeling the noises that you hear. You're not interpreting them. They're just there.

You know they are there. Or if there are visual perceptions, you're not labeling compulsively this compulsive labeling that most people live with. That subsides for a while, and that's an incredible liberation.

[Speaker 5] (3:23:54 - 3:24:19)

Why, I mean, I guess in a practical sense, what would you recommend to people who are going to be watching this, who are having their very busy days, you know, grabbing half a cup of coffee, running to work with, you know, the half a bagel in their hand, missing the bus, reading the paper, listening to their iPhone on their BlackBerry, what common practice should they be doing during the day to get to that place?

[Speaker 1] (3:24:20 - 3:29:34)

Yeah, good question. Because most people's reality is that one thing after another arises, one thought after another, one thing after another that you need to deal with. And in most people's lives, there's no space at all.

And if they talk about space, they'll tell you, I don't have time for space. There's so much going on. I don't have time to sit down and take, but that is not true.

That's actually the mind speaking. The thought processes want to carry on. They want, they have a certain momentum of their own.

But everybody has time for a moment of space. And that could start with a simple thing like taking one conscious in and out breath occasionally while you're waiting at a bus stop or at the traffic light or while you're going up or down in the elevator instead of mentally projecting yourself forward to the next thing that you have to do, that you're going to or that you haven't done. Why not take a moment when you're simply conscious of your breath, you're breathing in, the breath is always there.

So you just put some attention on that. One conscious in breath, feel the air going into the body and one conscious out breath. And during that space, you have taken attention away from the voice in the head, as I call it.

And a little bit of space has opened up inside you. And that feels good. And in that little space, you feel a bit more alive.

There's a certain aliveness and power in that space. It's not just nothingness. There is a power in there.

And so that's one thing you can do occasionally everybody has time for one conscious in and out breath. And there's so much time that people spend waiting for things. But usually while they wait, they're immersed in thinking, but why not use the waiting time to just become more conscious?

So this is one thing they can do, take a conscious breath. Another thing I recommend is to get in touch with the, what I call the inner body, which means to feel that the body, your body is alive, to get in touch with a sense of aliveness inside your body. And sometimes people don't know what I'm talking about.

So I always recommend if they don't know what I'm talking about, can you find out if, can you feel a certain aliveness in your hands? So you have to direct your attention, your inattention to that and feel, I can feel a little bit of warmth or tingling inside my hands. Now to the mind, that's a meaningless thing.

It says I have other more important things to worry about than my hands, but it is vitally important to get in touch with that basic aliveness so that you are not only up here in the head all the time. You become more rooted in yourself, more deeply rooted in being. And you can start with a simple thing like feeling the aliveness in your hands.

And if you can do that, you can also feel it perhaps in your feet and in your arms and your legs. And perhaps then suddenly you feel your entire body is alive. Every cell is alive.

Most people have lost that sense of basic aliveness because all their attention is continuously absorbed by thought processes. I'm not saying don't think anymore. Of course, we need to think to operate in this world.

And thinking is a wonderful thing. It's a wonderful tool. But not to be able to get out of it at all, that is a very dreadful state really.

And most of one's thinking is not creative. Psychologists have examined the nature of thought and they found that 98 to 99% of one's thoughts are very repetitive. They turn to be the same thoughts.

So a lot of thinking that goes on is actually quite useless. And not only useless, it's often very negative. And the more negative thinking you do, the more negative thoughts you have, the more the body responds with corresponding negative emotions.

Anxiety, regret, fear, guilt, all kinds of things that always the body always reflects your thought processes. That's the emotion reflects your thoughts. So just to experience that you are not your thoughts.

You are the awareness behind your thoughts. And to know that, you have to find that little space inside. So I've just given these two ways of doing it.

And you can do it during the day. It doesn't take long. Everybody has time for that.

Because there's so much waiting time in one's life, even in a busy life.

[Speaker 5] (3:29:35 - 3:30:20)

You know, I want to ask you, one of the things that was so interesting to me that you started with The Power of Now and then have continued in this book was about this little voice and how it can contribute to conflict with other people. Because you made a list of those emotions, but the other voice in there, that ego voice can be envy, can be the voice that you think that something's been done to you by somebody else. It brings up these kinds of resentments.

And this is a very exciting thought because it has to do with not just little conflicts between people, but larger conflicts. And so can you talk about that voice and how we have to still it as far as our relationships with other people and perhaps even other countries and all kinds of things like that?

[Speaker 1] (3:30:20 - 3:33:49)

Yes. Now, because people are so identified with the voice in their head, after a while, certain thoughts tend to be repetitive thoughts that one thinks and a certain mind-based image arises in the mind that they are thoughts that you identify with as yourself, the memories that you have, the things that you have done or the things that people did to you and all kinds of things that you identify with mentally that you think that is who I am.

So we call that the ego. The ego is a mind-made sense of self, me based on mind activity. So now the ego has a certain structure to it.

It needs certain things to survive. It needs to emphasize the otherness, as I call it, of others. So it needs to judge people.

It needs to immediately conceptualize and define a person that you meet. Immediately, you will find judgments arising and comparison arriving. How the image of who I am, how does that compare to the other?

This person. Inferiority, superiority. The ego needs enemies because by creating an enemy outside, somebody who is against me, I emphasize that sense of self, the mind-made sense of self.

So there is a basic dysfunction built into the structure of the ego. And so that works both on a personal level and on a collective level because there's the collective ego of tribes and nations or whatever the collective derives its identity from. It could be a religion, too.

And so you have the struggle between tribes, nations, religions against the others, the non-believers or the evil others. Continuously, you have that playing itself out in history. There's always the other tribe, the other nation, the other religion, or even the other sect within the same religion is the enemy.

So there's this built-in tendency to make others into enemy. Why is that? Because the ego needs to emphasize the otherness.

By creating enemies outside, you have a stronger sense of who you are, but it's a false sense of who you are. An example of that in Nazi Germany, for example, they ended up making the whole world into an enemy. There were enemies in the East, enemies in the West, everywhere.

And of course, at that time, people had a very strong sense of national identity. Very few people committed suicide at that time because they were so immersed in this false sense of self that gave them a temporary feeling of, now we know who we are. So the boundary between self and other becomes very rigid.

[Speaker 5] (3:33:50 - 3:33:53)

We are different than everyone else, and we are better than everyone else.

[Speaker 1] (3:33:53 - 3:36:06)

Yes. And similar thing, some religions, they emphasize the evil non-believers. And once you have conceptualized another tribe or another group, you can no longer feel their humanity and their aliveness because you have transformed them into a mental concept.

You attach a label to them. Once you've done that, violence becomes possible and you don't feel anymore what you are doing to another human being because you have already dehumanized the other human being by transforming them into a mental concept. But before you did that, you had already done it to yourself without knowing it because you had identified with certain mental concepts and said, that's me.

The collective one is, that is us. That is our identity. That is who we are.

These are our beliefs. That's our history, whatever it is. So a false, you already derive your sense of self only from concepts, and then you impose the same thing on others.

And then there's the structural need then to make that even stronger, so the enemies arise. So humans, if you read a history book, you'll see continuous, completely senseless and pointless warfare between nations. The worst of it was the 20th century.

And so when you see that, then there's no doubt that there is a very strong element of dysfunction in the human mind. And really, this is what we are addressing when we become more conscious of compulsive thinking and we become conscious that we have been deriving our sense of self from what we've been telling ourselves in our minds of who we are, in other words, from thinking, then suddenly we see this operating in ourselves. We see this unconscious process operating in ourselves.

And by seeing it, another dimension has arisen. I call it awareness or presence.

[Speaker 5] (3:36:07 - 3:36:41)

You know, I'm fascinated about, you know, I've kind of leaped over to your new book. And of course, one of the, I guess, most inspiring aspects of reading your story, especially, you know, I'm a mother of a teenager and teenagers can get very low on themselves sometimes. And as all people have moments of great darkness and you hope that there'll be a moment that they'll see the light or something that will happen to get them over.

And so I'm wondering if you can describe to me your moment of great darkness and how that turned into light.

[Speaker 1] (3:36:43 - 3:39:50)

Well, at that time, I was 29. And for most of my 20s, I had been living in states of depression and anxiety. I was very rarely, moments of happiness were very, very rare.

So I was basically an unhappy human being, like many these days. And so plagued with these deep depressions. And if it wasn't depression, it was very acute anxiety.

And one night I had to, I woke up in the middle of the night and again feeling this intense fear and anxiety and almost nausea. I didn't like who I was. I didn't like the world.

And a thought came into my head that said, I can't live with myself any longer. And then the thought came back a couple of times. And in that moment, I became conscious of this thought.

And what does this thought mean? I can't live with myself. There's an I and there's a self that I cannot live with.

So am I one or am I two? So I just looked at this, the structure of this sentence, this thought that had arisen. And at that moment, I realized that not, when I talk about it now, I'm explaining something that I didn't understand at that time conceptually, but it just happened.

It was an insight that happened non-conceptually. I realized that the unhappy self wasn't who I am. The unhappy person with its continuous succession of unhappy thoughts about my life and what's going to happen to me and regrets about the past and fears about the future, all that, that was the unhappy self.

And I suddenly, because this sentence arose, I can't live with myself. I realized there's a self and here's I. And there was separation happened between the unhappy self and the I.

What exactly that meant, I didn't know at the time. I just realized the next day I woke up and I felt deep peace inside myself, which never completely left me since then. And only much later, I understood that the I was the stillness or the consciousness that I am beyond thought.

And the self that I couldn't live with was the mind-made self, consisting of habitual thought patterns and emotions that go with these thought patterns. And that wasn't real. So that collapsed.

The mind-made sense of self was no longer there. And there was simply a sense of presence or beingness, non-problematic beingness, aliveness. And that was, I realized who I am, not a mind-made self, but something that cannot really be defined.

It's consciousness itself.

[Speaker 5] (3:39:53 - 3:40:10)

As you had been kind of spiraling into this moment, had you sought other remedies? Had you gone to psychotherapy? Had you gone through religions?

Had you been on any medications? Did you go other routes before you came to that?

[Speaker 1] (3:40:10 - 3:42:32)

Well, I'd been looking for answers. I was in a kind of dilemma. And so I was looking for some answers.

Mostly the answers I was looking for was intellectual answers. I've been reading philosophy. I've been reading psychology.

I hadn't been to any psychotherapy or anything like that, nor had I taken any drugs of any kind. But there was a kind of search, almost I could say a desperate search for some answer. But I was, including I had read some spiritual philosophers without really understanding them.

I looked at the religions, again, without really understanding it. And so it wasn't a gradual process of understanding. It was a very sudden disruption of the usual thought processes and the arising of something new.

But then later, as I began to understand what had happened to me, I realized that this is everybody's dilemma. The unhappiness that I had been living in, that state of unhappiness, really, to a greater or lesser extent, this is how most human beings live. Moments of happiness are few and far between, but it can be otherwise.

And I'm not saying that you should be seeking happiness as such. But you should be more conscious of a dimension in you that is deeper than thinking. That's where freedom lies.

In every human being, there is this possibility of finding that inner freedom, a dimension that is not conditioned by your past. And then you no longer derive your sense of who you are from your personal history, because that's a dreadful restriction to derive your sense of who you are from your personal history only. It doesn't mean you no longer have a personal history.

Of course, you remember your past. But that is no longer where you get your sense of identity from. You have your memories, but your sense of identity of who you are comes directly out of the present moment, the inner space of presence, of consciousness.

[Speaker 5] (3:42:32 - 3:42:38)

Tell me why you chose to live in Vancouver. Why do you live there?

[Speaker 1] (3:42:39 - 3:44:26)

I was living in England for many years, and I woke up one morning and I knew I had to move to the west coast of North America. I didn't know why. Just a very strong impulse came.

Although I liked England, I still feel a deep inner link with England. I wasn't born in England, but I spent most of my adult life there. I just had to obey this impulse.

It wasn't just that it came for a few minutes. The next day, it was still there. The next week, it was still there.

I felt, okay, I got ready. A few months later, I took a plane. I didn't know where it would be, California or wherever.

At first, I thought California, kind of the image that immediately came. I knew one person in Vancouver. I flew over to Vancouver, stayed for two or three weeks.

Still not knowing why I was there, took a Greyhound bus to California, stayed with a friend for a week or two, and then suddenly, this strong impulse came to get a notebook and a notepad and start. The writing stream came. That became the power of now.

When my visa expired, I had to go back to England, and the writing stream stopped. A couple of months later, I went back to Vancouver, and there, immediately, it started again. So, I could only write on the West Coast, it seemed.

I moved back and forth between Vancouver, living on my savings, running out very quickly. The book was written partly in California and partly in Vancouver, and then circumstances arose that told me Vancouver is the place to be, to settle, at least for the time being. The book was published there.

[Speaker 5] (3:44:26 - 3:44:30)

Well, you could live anywhere now, obviously, and so why do you still stay there?

[Speaker 1] (3:44:30 - 3:46:02)

Well, I still, I'm very much, I love the energy field. On the West Coast, generally, certain parts of California also, and Vancouver and surrounding area there, there's a certain stillness that surrounds, I can feel it even in the city, although there's car noise, the noise of engines and all kinds of noises, and yet, it's almost, one could say, it's surrounded by a field of stillness. Perhaps it is because you have, on one side, you have the huge ocean, on the other side, you have the mountains, not densely inhabited, very few people live there.

So, you have that great sense of nature also still there, and the energy field is very gentle. I always feel it when I cross the border, coming from Washington State, moving into British Columbia, the moment you cross the border, you feel the energy field changes, and you go, ah, there's suddenly, oh, it's much more quiet, much calmer now, the energy, you can feel that. I like the shift also, going into the States, you feel a certain nervousness in the energy field, which can occasionally be exhilarating, too.

I actually like the change from the calmness of British Columbia, and then moving back into the more nervous energy field of the States, back and forth.

[Speaker 5] (3:46:03 - 3:46:07)

We like to think, I mean, here in the East, that there's more of a nervous energy field. Do you sense it here?

[Speaker 1] (3:46:08 - 3:46:08)

Yes, yes.

[Speaker 5] (3:46:09 - 3:46:48)

And we're all very worried, busy people, and so, you know, when you come from the West Coast with your ideas of peace, and, you know, you've got this beautiful climate, and it's all this, and so people from the East will go, well, easy for him to say, okay? Isn't that nice? You know, when they're sitting out there, and on their mountain or something, right?

And so, you know, so do you wonder, I mean, when you, do you take offense if people say, well, that's sort of West Coast thinking, that's sort of, I don't know, it's a self-help guru sort of, you know, thing. It's a trend. How do you respond to things like that?

[Speaker 1] (3:46:48 - 3:47:43)

Well, self-help is a great thing. Of course, yes, it's true that there are many superficial books and trends in the so-called self-help movement, but basically, self-help is a wonderful thing, and there's some of the greatest books in history were basically self-help books. So whatever, for example, the Meditations by Marcus Aurelius, recently written 2,000 years ago, books like that.

Basically, they are self-help books. Self-help, it's true that many new things began on the West Coast, but this is not confined to the West Coast, or it's not confined even to one particular culture. This is spreading all throughout Western Europe, too.

People are very responsive to this now in England, in Germany, in Scandinavia, in Holland.

[Speaker 5] (3:47:43 - 3:48:07)

I guess I don't even want to say so much about the West Coast. It's more just, you're thinking, you know, it becomes part of popular culture, this book. But you're comfortable that it's part of popular culture, that it's on, that the media has taken it up.

You're comfortable with that because it gets your message out.

[Speaker 1] (3:48:07 - 3:50:08)

It gets the message out. It reaches millions of people, and many of whom are actually ready for some inner change because this is not adopting some new belief system. It's not a new religion.

It's nothing to do with beliefs. It's to do with an actual, immediate experience, and it's not even to do with a feel-good thing, or an emotional thing, or an emotional high. It's not that.

It's something much more simple and much more basic. Now, the fact that the book has reached so many people, with the help of Oprah, of course, it also means that it reaches many people also who are not ready for it. So they open the book, they read a few pages, and they see this is completely meaningless.

So they put it back and say, this is rubbish. That's fine. They're not ready for it, or maybe they need to find their spirituality in some different way, or maybe they need to go through more suffering before they're ready for it because it seems that humans need to go through a certain amount of suffering before they're ready for inner change.

True inner change. And this is what it is about. So whether you live in Vancouver, or Toronto, or London, or Berlin, it doesn't really matter.

When the time is ready, then suddenly you will pick up a book like that, if that's how it comes to you, and suddenly you will read, and something from within will respond, and you'll recognize there's a truth that basically I have known already. It's not entirely new. When you read a truly real spiritual book, it's never that you say, oh, that's totally new.

It's a recognition of what deep down you already knew. And that's a wonderful thing when you recognize the truths that are there. But of course, the book then reaches other people who are not yet ready, who don't recognize it.

So either they throw the book away, or they write a review about it and say, this doesn't make sense at all.

[Speaker 5] (3:50:09 - 3:50:21)

You know, we're talking about the power of now, but we have to talk about the power of Oprah. A very powerful force she is. Tell me about working with Oprah.

What's that like?

[Speaker 1] (3:50:23 - 3:53:26)

Well, the wonderful thing is that Oprah basically is no different on camera from how she is off camera. So I observed that she doesn't play roles when she's on camera. She's simply herself before she goes on, sits down in front of the camera.

She's the same person when she gets up. So she, and this is quite rare on TV personality, not to project some kind of role, to play a role. And because she is herself, that's what people respond to.

She's the genuineness in her. They recognize that. And so she told me that story of how it happened for her.

She was, I believe, in her 20s and she was a news reader at some local TV station. And her great aim in life, she said, was to be like Barbara Walters. That was her image.

I want to be like that. And so she was reading the news one day, very kind of trying to project this confident image of the news reader. And she was reading a number of countries, some news item.

And she came to a country and she read country, England, France, Canada. And she said, did I just say Canada? Of course I mean Canada.

And then she started laughing on the news. And at that moment, the role that she was playing collapsed and she could feel that power and aliveness coming through. And that was the beginning of her true career.

So she had to give up of that mental image of wanting to be Barbara Walters or this or that. And just could be, when the role collapsed, she could be herself. And that's where the power comes from.

And now, of course, her main passionate interest is spirituality, to bring this to people, to use her function in this world and her incredible influence to bring spirituality to millions of people. As I said to her, your role is an essential part of awakening, the spiritual awakening, the shift in consciousness on the planet. So I believe what Oprah and I did together, the web seminar last year was very significant because it was part of that shift in consciousness.

And sometimes people ask me, well, what's actually happening out there in this world? How do you know that there's a shift in consciousness happening because there's so many bad things happening? Well, one good thing happening was the recent election of Obama.

This is the difference in consciousness between Obama and his predecessor. It's just so striking. That is a real, real shift that has taken place.

I'm not saying he's the messiah. Not one person can change an entire country, but it's a very significant thing that happened there.

[Speaker 5] (3:53:27 - 3:53:36)

I was going to ask you about that, about what you thought about, I mean, we're looking for hope, and so you see hope in him.

[Speaker 1] (3:53:37 - 3:54:03)

Yes. Well, I'm not saying that the answers will come from him, but he is a manifestation of a change in consciousness. The fact that he got elected is a sign that there is a shift happening in the collective consciousness.

So he's not the answer. He's a manifestation of the answer. The true answer comes from within human beings collectively.

[Speaker 5] (3:54:04 - 3:54:17)

You know, there's an emotional thing about, I mean, reading a book, people so much hope that there is an answer in there, but they're also frightened that, you know, how can this one person have the answer? How can you have the answer?

[Speaker 1] (3:54:17 - 3:58:54)

Yes, it's not that this one person has the answer. It's just that a shift is happening collectively, and really the answer can only come through you. It comes from you, how you deal with the things, how you deal with daily existence, how you deal with the challenges, and not taking on board all the things necessarily that you hear in the media.

Everybody will tell you every day that the economic situation is terrible everywhere, and there's a lot of fear in people. They might lose their job. The investments are losing their value.

Many people are losing their jobs. So there are huge challenges coming, but this is also a great opportunity for human beings to wake up when they are being challenged. How do you respond to these challenges?

And I would say that your life is not determined by what happens to you, which is what people believe, but that means you're at the mercy of every little circumstance. Your life is really determined by how you react to what happens to you, and how you react or rather respond to what happens to you determines what happens next. So if your reaction is of a negative kind, if there's fear and anxiety or continuous mental complaining, this shouldn't be, but it is, then that's your state of consciousness, and then the next moment or the future reflects that state of consciousness.

But if you're able to work and live in alignment with the present moment rather than continuously being in a state of hostility towards what is, this is the present, this is where the present moment comes in the power of now, the importance of not making life which is the present moment. Really, that's all that life ever is, this moment, because where else do you find life except in this present moment? So that's a fundamental thing that first of all, you need to realize that life is now and never not now.

It's only this moment ever. Past and future only have a secondary reality. The past only exists if you remember it now.

The future only exists if you mentally project yourself into some future moment, but even that you can only do now. Your entire life unfolds in this space of now. You cannot think, feel, experience anything that is not now.

The people don't live like that. They live as if past and future, especially future for many people, were more important than the present moment. And they have a very strange relationship with the present moment, which means with life.

Many people, for many people, the present moment unconsciously is regarded as an obstacle because they're here, but they want to get there. So they, how do I get there? They're here.

They ignore this. How do I get there? So they're stressed.

They're continuously stressed because they're continuously trying to get away from now. Instead of fully giving your attention to what you need to do now, you project yourself to the next moment and you want to be there already. So you devalue this moment.

It's a dreadful way to live. So they're making, either they're making the now into an obstacle unconsciously. And then there's this prediction, if I get to the next one, then it'll be okay.

Or the next year, or when I achieve this or have that. But the same structure operates when they get there because it was still now and they want to be somewhere else. So that's a dysfunction, making the present moment into an obstacle or even worse, making the present moment into an enemy.

You treat this present. You don't like where you are. You don't like who you are with.

You don't like what you are doing. What an insane way to live. But it's, I could almost say it's normal for many people.

That's their normal reality. They don't like where they are. They don't like their surroundings.

They don't like their job. They don't like, the present moment becomes an enemy to them unconsciously.

[Speaker 5] (3:58:54 - 3:59:08)

What about people who have really, their present moment is they're in an abusive relationship or they're incarcerated or they're, you know, or they just found out they lost their job today and they have children to support.

[Speaker 1] (3:59:08 - 4:03:31)

I'm getting many letters from people in prison, for example, who have actually read The Power of Now or A New Earth and I've had letters from prison saying, I've realized I'm actually free. I'm still in prison, but inside I'm now free because I've learned not to resist internally the present moment. I can say, this is what is.

It's just this moment. Here I am sitting, I'm breathing. I'm looking, there's a little window.

I'm looking out of the window. I can see a little bit of sky, one person draw to me and I feel myself breathing and I feel the aliveness in the inner body. And this is, I've come to accept this moment, not accept that I have to be here for the next 20 years.

I just need to accept, become friendly with this moment, no matter how difficult it seems. Many years ago, I write about it in The New Earth. I was a graduate student in Cambridge and there was this man in a wheelchair and he couldn't move his limbs.

He had to be fed. I saw him every day at lunch. His head was slumped forward.

The food would fall out of his mouth when people fed him. One day, I opened the door for his wheelchair to come through and he was kind of, he looked at me with his blue clear eyes and at that moment, I saw he was not in suffering at all. So I realized at that moment, he had completely surrendered to what is, the isness of life, the isness of this moment.

And that was Stephen Hawkins. Later, I realized he wasn't world famous at that time. He was just well known in Cambridge.

Years later, I saw his image on the cover of a news magazine and said, oh, that's the man I saw every day in the restaurant in Cambridge and he was still in his wheelchair. He was supposed to die years earlier. He was still alive.

And when I looked into his eyes, I saw in this one of the worst things that could happen perhaps to a human being, to be totally paralyzed, only your mind is still working, but totally paralyzed, can't do anything for yourself anymore, can't even speak anymore. And he was, he lived in a state of acceptance and because he lived in that state of, which is not negative, it's a very positive state, just this is, just to say this moment is as it is. And then you can take action, but you're no longer resisting the isness of now because the isness already is as it is.

It is already the case. So you come from a state of openness towards life. And that's perhaps why his thinking became so creative because he said he was able to come from a state of openness to life instead of complaining.

It would have been very natural for a person like that to withdraw and to go into a state of deep negativity and feel sorry for yourself because the worst thing that could happen to a human being has happened to you. That would, the mind would be telling you that if you were listening to your mind. And I read this article then that I found in the magazine and there was a beautiful line in that article where he said about his life, who could have wished for more?

This person in the wheelchair, paralyzed, said about his life, who could have wished for more? And so that means coming into alignment with the present moment, no matter what happens, even if it looks on the surface, it might look unacceptable, losing your job or even losing a loved one, whatever loss it is. But if you come into alignment, then out of that seemingly unacceptable situation, something good arises.

If you internally, you come into a state of yes to the isness of this moment, then even if it looks bad on the surface, there's always something hiding underneath it, underneath the seemingly bad. But you won't find that if you continuously resist. You have to come to a state of openness to life, to now.

[Speaker 5] (4:03:32 - 4:03:45)

Do these thoughts that you have are, often we see Christian references, we see references to Buddha. Is this a mix of different religions that you're looking at?

[Speaker 1] (4:03:45 - 4:05:13)

No, it's the one basic spiritual truth. And that one basic spiritual truth expresses itself in different forms in the different religions. So I'm going to the basic spiritual truth instead of taking things from different religions and mixing them up.

No, the different religions are just expressions of the one basic spiritual truth. And so I want to go to this, I'm going to the source of that and express it in a way that people can understand and realize in their own lives without having to subscribe mentally to this or that religion. Somebody who has no religion can understand this and experience it.

Or anybody who has, whether they are Christians or Buddhists or whether they subscribe to Islam or any belief, it doesn't matter because the basic truth is there if you look deep enough in all the religions. And so it's finding the core of spirituality that is there in all religions. Sometimes you can't see it very clearly because there's so much else on top of that, so many beliefs and so on.

So we go to the core of religion rather than treating religion as an ideology, which is what it often becomes.

[Speaker 5] (4:05:13 - 4:05:45)

You know, it's interesting when I'm hearing you talk, I think about, I mean, it's so helpful. But I think about when people often are very miserable and can't figure it out, they'll go to a therapist and they will start reviving their childhood and speaking very much to those things. So is that something that you would not recommend then?

Because much of that is going back and talking about the circumstances of your childhood and how your parents raised you and things like that. Is that destructive as opposed to helpful?

[Speaker 1] (4:05:46 - 4:07:40)

Sometimes understanding the past can be helpful, but delving into the past too much and trying to find some kind of ultimate answer in the past, I think is misleading because the answer has to come by going more deeply into the present moment rather than into the past. To become more present to what is, which includes, of course, your emotions, to become more conscious of what kind of emotions go through your body, what kind of thoughts go through your head. So becoming more aware, becoming more present in the now.

And if you do that, become more open to what is, then sometimes memories may suddenly come from the past and you may suddenly realize that a certain emotion that you experience frequently might have its root in the past, something that happened in childhood you might have forgotten. The answer is not in the past. The answer is in a state of aware presence in the moment, in the now.

So remembering the past can occasionally be helpful. It will come naturally as you become more present because if the past is still alive in you, it will manifest in one form or another in the present moment. That's the only place where it can manifest because that's all there is.

So if you're still carrying stuff from the past inside yourself, if you become more open to the present moment, more conscious of the present moment, then you will see that in the light of the present moment, in the light of the awareness. But you don't have to go there. It will reveal itself in the now, whatever is still concealed inside you.

[Speaker 5] (4:07:41 - 4:07:52)

It's funny, you know, we're talking about the now right now and yet somehow there is something about somebody's past that kind of unlocks something about who they are. I mean, I look at you and I just wonder what kind of a little boy you were.

[Speaker 1] (4:07:53 - 4:11:48)

Well, that might be interesting, but that cannot really tell you who I am. It might be interesting to... I don't remember very clearly.

I think I was basically unhappy most of my childhood because there was continuous conflict and my parents were continuously fighting. And basically, I was probably a sensitive child, so that affected me very strongly. And that perhaps then was the origin perhaps of my later depressions and anxiety.

That's all true. But even knowing that, it doesn't help me understand who I really am. Those are things that I can understand about myself.

I'd make the difference in a new earth about knowing yourself and knowing about yourself. So if you go to a psychiatrist or rather psychotherapist, you often learn more things about yourself, about your past, about your conditioning that you perhaps weren't aware of. And that's fine, learning things about yourself, but that still doesn't mean you know yourself.

So what does that mean when I say knowing yourself? Knowing about myself? Okay, it's knowing about my history and my past emotions and so on.

Knowing myself can only happen in the present moment. And that is knowing something within me that is timeless. And that timeless thing is what we mentioned at the beginning when we started our conversation here.

And that is not your thoughts or your emotions, but the space underneath your thoughts and emotions, the aware space, the present space, where there's simply an awareness, a knowing that is non-conceptual, just pure consciousness. Thoughts are consciousness that has taken some form, a thought form. Emotions are consciousness that has taken on the form of an emotion.

It comes and goes. Thoughts come and go, come and go, continuous flux. And underneath that, there is a conscious space of presence.

Jesus called that the light. You are the light. Jesus said of himself, I am the light.

Sometimes people forget that he also said, you are the light. You are the light of the world, he said. What does that mean?

The light in which everything appears, the light which makes all sense perception possible, the light which makes all thinking possible, the light which makes all feelings possible, which is consciousness. Without consciousness, there wouldn't be anything. There needs to be consciousness for something to be.

It comes into being through the conscious space. The Buddha called it emptiness. And this is the same as what Jesus calls the light.

There is an unconditioned, timeless dimension in yourself. Not some distant thing that you can find if you work very hard for the next 10 lifetimes. No, that is immediately accessible, but is actually simply covered up by a thin layer of thoughts and emotions.

It's kind of that covers up that. It's just a reorientation of the focus of your attention to take it there occasionally, find that dimension. It's right here, here now.

[Speaker 5] (4:11:49 - 4:12:19)

I have one last question because the fact your life is changing. I won't talk about what you're planning for the future, but how do you keep yourself in the now? And when your influence, there's all this star power around you too.

There's many demands. There's more people wanting things from you. So how do you keep it from...

How do you keep your ego in check?

[Speaker 1] (4:12:20 - 4:14:48)

Well, ego, yes. Ego means to have some kind of concept in your head. Concept, of course, means thoughts.

Some concept in your head of who you are. So if then I begin to derive my identity from the concept in my head that I'm a very special person now, that means I've fallen back into ego and I no longer know who I am essentially because who I am is beyond any definition. Who you are is beyond any definition.

So if I got lost again in some mental concept, that means, okay, I've become, so to speak, unconscious again. So far, I don't think it has happened. I'm not identifying with any concept and I'm just staying with what is.

What is it that this moment requires me to do? And I look at that and I do that. It's fairly simple.

Just do what is at hand. Face, fully face the present moment. And then life remains simple.

If I project myself continuously forward, I think this afternoon I have to go there and tomorrow I have to give this big talk. I hope it's going to go well. What if it doesn't go well?

I would be dreadful. But if you just stay with what is needed now, of course, I can plan for the future by looking at my appointment book and see what I'm doing tomorrow. That's fine.

But I'm not projecting myself forward to tomorrow's talk and think, what if it doesn't go well? What if they don't like me? Or what if the words won't come?

Whatever the mind does, then things get difficult. So simply staying with just this, just this moment, then life remains simple. And not believing that you are this or that.

If people think you're special, as sometimes happens with people when they become famous or well known, then people project some kind of image. I mean, to Oprah, it happens on a huge scale, this projection. And so the challenge then is, yes, it is a challenge to remain not to take that on board and believe in the projections that other people have towards you.

Remaining simple, just not living through some concept of who you are, just being the presence, the awareness.

[Speaker 3] (4:14:50 - 4:14:59)

It now gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce the panel and, of course, His Holiness, the Dalai Lama.

[Speaker 4] (4:15:29 - 4:18:53)

So, good morning, everyone. And we have a wonderful creative challenge that is to have two panels of one hour in one hour. That means, I don't know if I'm correct, that one of the panel will have to travel half the speed of light to compensate for the time.

So we have to be very creative, that's for sure. So now our panel is about creativity and we will hear various aspects of creativity. And since I believe in Tibetan language, there is a word that refers to creativity that comes out of investigation in depth into one's mind, creative thinking.

But there are so many other aspects of creativity in science, in heart, in meditation, in neuroscience, in education, that perhaps His Holiness would like to ask our colleagues to express a few aspects of the Western aspect of creativity before calling upon you. So we have a wonderful array of participants. Professor Murray Gell-Mann received the Nobel Prize of Physics in 1969.

He works now at the Santa Fe Institute and is Emeritus Professor at the prestigious Caltech, the California Institute of Technology. And he's, among many other things, the one who discovered the squark. And so Dan Siegel is a therapist, an award-winning educator, director of the Mindsight Institute, and his forthcoming book is about Mindsight, how to develop insight and compassion.

Eckhart Tolle, as you know, in the former presentations, is a spiritual teacher, author of the wonderful book of The Power of Now and a New Earth. And it's quite remarkable that in such an individualistic society, millions of people have attempted not to identify to their ego, thanks to him. And the blue men, two of them here, also there are a few red and gray men along.

I think you have seen a good deal of what they were and what they represent, so I don't need to introduce them in detail, except that they have been performing throughout the states. But especially, they are now involved in education through the Blue Men Creativity Center and the Early Childhood Program in New York. Sir Ken Robinson is a worldwide leading educator in development of creativity, innovation.

He works with various governments and is professor of education at Warwick in UK. So he is, I think, for our panel. His honesty is a neat presentation.

So since we have to travel the speed of light, I think it's proper to begin with a Nobel Prize of Physics. And it is possible that Professor Gelman must also say a few words about rugby, by the way. So it's up to you.

[Speaker 9] (4:18:53 - 4:22:12)

Well, the great museum curator, Kirk Varnadoe, the late Kirk Varnadoe, was also an enthusiastic rugby player. And he compared modern art to the invention of the game of rugby, which happened one day in the early in the 19th century, when at rugby school, a soccer player picked up the ball and ran with it with a fine disregard for the rules, thereby founding the new game of rugby. And he pointed out that in modern art, you don't play by the rules, you play with the rules.

And that's an aspect of creative thinking. Often it happens that, well, let's say first, that in theoretical science, which is the kind of thing I've done most of my life, most of the challenges to scientific orthodoxy are not right. And many of them are crank.

But every once in a while, scientific orthodoxy is wrong on some subject. And one has to challenge it. And the conventions in such a case say that you mustn't think the following way.

It's bad. If you think that way, your papers won't be published, you won't get a job and so on and so forth. The only problem is that in the cases I'm talking about, thinking that way is actually right.

So you have to go up against that prohibition. And how do you get the idea of what to challenge? Well, it bubbles up from some hidden part of the human mind sometimes.

There are several stages to it. Everybody agrees in science and in art and in other fields as well. You have a problem, you have some contradiction between what's available and what you need.

And you ponder that contradiction and try to get out of it. And after a while, conscious further, conscious thought doesn't do any good. But somewhere out of sight in some deeper part of the human mind, this process, this search continues.

And one day while cooking or shaving or running or sometimes by a slip of the tongue, the correct answer may come to you. That happened to me once with a slip of the tongue. I was giving a lecture on why some idea wouldn't work.

And I made a mistake, slip of the tongue, and I had something that did work. So it's that same deeper part of the human mind that's presumably involved in the search for how to educate the heart. This search for forgiveness, compassion, is something that surely involves, at least occasionally, these parts of the human mind that are somewhat outside of conscious awareness.

So there is possibly a relation between creative thinking in art and science and in other fields on the one hand and the search for compassion, forgiveness, and so on, on the other.

[Speaker 4] (4:22:14 - 4:23:05)

So you spoke of compassion and education. Those are the two central themes of our gathering. So compassion, we need to be creative, even revolutionary about compassion.

If we think of the challenges of the modern times, the short term of the economy, the middle term of the quality of life, and the long term of the environment, those are seemingly incompatible, except if you have the thread of altruism, of consideration for others, that will prevent you from cheating others in economy, that will make you consider the quality of life of those you work with, and that will help you to consider the future generation. So in your work as a psychologist, as a therapist, how do you bring compassion in others' life and also in education?

[Speaker 7] (4:23:06 - 4:23:33)

Thank you. First of all, it's an honor to be here with all of my esteemed guests and with all of you and with your holiness. What I'd like to do creatively is I'm recovering from laryngitis, so I'm very aware of my internal impulse to cough.

So I will say very slowly the things on my mind, but it very much relates to the theme of what you're asking, Matthieu, about...

[Speaker 4] (4:23:33 - 4:23:36)

By the way, the doctor told Dan, don't speak the whole week.

[Speaker 7] (4:23:37 - 4:28:39)

Yes, I said right, you know. So here's what I'd like to just present as take-home thoughts about that. That compassion and creativity are healthy for the brain.

And that in education, we have focused on the basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic, which set up a pattern for the brain to learn things in a very fixed way. And we give those skills in modern education in most schools, maybe not the blue school, but in most schools. Now, what I'd like to propose is that there are three other basic R's of reflection, where we look inward and realize that without an active effort to train the mind, then the brain, as it gets past seven or eight years of age, begins to get fixed in its way of seeing things.

As Eckhart has taught us with the power of now, it starts to believe that the thoughts are the identity of the person. And as that happens, the brain has a natural tendency to imprison us in this false belief that our thoughts and our feelings are the total of our identity. And in many ways, creativity is imprisoned as well, because one way...

Oh, one way... The last time I spoke with His Holiness, we were told, when the translator begins to speak, you stop. And the clock keeps on turning.

Because otherwise, it's not fair to him. He can't follow the next thing you're saying. Okay.

So anyway, so the idea here is that creativity emerges from novelty. And it is exactly as Dr. Gelman was saying. It was scientific orthodoxy that the brain didn't change after childhood.

But now we know that certain factors, beyond just exercise, help us keep on growing our brains. And that includes novelty. So we realize that creativity is really a part of creating novelty for the brain.

It's about keeping the brain growing, not just in childhood, but throughout the lifespan. So reflection allows you to go inward and get beyond the fixed ways of thinking. That's the first thing.

But then I want to talk about relationships, because this is the first moment I've been able to actually address His Holiness directly since in April of last year. You asked us a question. We were on a panel together at the Seeds of Compassion meeting.

And you challenged us as four scientists. Richie Davidson was one of them, Andy Meltzoff, Alicia Lieberman, and myself. You challenged us in a very provocative way, saying that you in religion have not been so effective, whether it was theistic religion or non-theistic religion, to make the world a kinder and more compassionate place.

And you suggested that in science, we should look for a secular ethic that could promote compassion. So ever since we had that communication, I have not stopped thinking about that. And it's challenged my fixed ways of thinking as a scientist and as a physician.

And this addresses your question, Matthew, to now give you a response. And it's a question for you, Your Holiness. One thing that emerged was the idea that if we start seeing compassion and creativity as forms of brain health or brain hygiene, then perhaps we can introduce to education and then make it a standard practice in all societies, a practice of brushing your brain every day, just like we brush our teeth.

So that we would have a form of, for example, everyone knows you brush your teeth every day, not once a month, not once a year. But if we had a form of mind training that was about reflection, it would promote the compassion circuits of the brain. It would liberate creativity.

It would keep the brain young. And in many ways, it would develop another ours. We have reflection and relationships like the one I started with you when you encouraged us to think about that.

You'd have resilience. So in all these ways, we can promote creativity and compassion in the world. They go hand in hand by promoting a kind of training that allows us to look inward and liberates us from the way the brain falsely creates identity and keeps us seeing things through very narrow lenses when we can open them wide and feel the freedom of seeing life as it really is and connecting with others in a deep, compassionate and kind way.

[Speaker 4] (4:28:50 - 4:29:13)

So, Your Holiness, you often express views about what will be required in modern education to really bring out good human beings. So could you share a few thoughts with us about that subject since education is one of the main topics of our gathering? Yeah, the creativity, actually.

[Speaker 2] (4:29:19 - 4:30:22)

It seems to me the creativity that I think is more related to more intelligence. Although I think other species of mammals also have some degree, certain degree of creativity but compared with human beings, much, much less. Why?

Intelligence. So I think the main factor, creativity, that's something to create new thing, new thing, new thing. So that's, I think, mainly related with intelligence.

Compassion, mainly related with, I don't know, Tibetan word, dumbedikthi.

[Speaker 8] (4:30:23 - 4:30:33)

It's, qualities related with the heart but they tend to express themselves more in the form of a wish and intent.

[Speaker 2] (4:30:35 - 4:34:43)

Then creativity, we have, what should I say, by nature, because of this brain and the potential of creativity is there but then I think for creativity, I think it is necessary some kind provoke. So sometimes, you see, the life easy, no problem, then maybe creativity also may remain asleep or rest. Yes, more challenge.

More difficulties. Then, you see, our intelligence become much more, And also I think, so I think the factor to bring creativity, one, challenge. Another, experience, past experience.

Then also I think another sort of factor for creativity may be contradictory. If there's no contradictions, then creativity may not develop. So contradictory for forces, external matter or mental level, they are contradictory.

If you look, if you remain just like that, contradictory, contradiction. So then, then the creativity responds for that, then try to synthesize these things. So that may be, I don't know, my knowledge is very limited.

I don't know. Then compassion, compassion, as I mentioned earlier, wish. But the relation with creativity I think different way, not direct, indirectly.

That means I feel compassion, or then also I feel creativity, there also can be one realistic creativity, one unrealistic creativity also there. I think in most cases, unrealistic sort of thing is usually destructive. Realistic may be, generally speaking, more positive.

Positive means in the sense, anything which you want, even you want to harm other, the method should be realistic, then more effective. So therefore, in order to develop realistic sort of approach, we have to know the reality fully. In order to know the reality fully, objective attitude is very essential.

For that reason, calm mind is important. There compassion works. Compassion open our mind and then how my mental state remain calm and with that kind of mental state, you can see the reality more clearly.

Too much emotion, then you can't see the reality. So that way, maybe some connection. But otherwise, these two things are creativity, mainly with intelligence and compassion, mainly with the warm heart.

So I think two separate things.

[Speaker 4] (4:34:44 - 4:35:26)

I don't know. So if constructive creativity has to be attuned to reality, that means the mind should stop distorting reality. We should bridge the gap between the way things appear and the way things are.

That means in a way, the mind has to remain in its natural state and sort of perturbed state. So I think, Eckhart, maybe you could tell us a few things of how creativity could arise from a mind that is not completely distorted by mental constructions.

[Speaker 1] (4:35:32 - 4:42:11)

We started off by talking about the genesis of rugby and when I heard that, something just came to mind, a news item that I listened to a few days ago on my and His Holiness' favorite news channel, which is the BBC World News that I listen to every day. And I believe you also listen to that. There was a news item on the BBC about soccer, football, soccer is the name.

And researchers had looked at a phenomenon in soccer that is called, I believe, the penalty shootout. So I haven't watched a soccer game in about 20 years, so I only have a vague recollection of what that means. It's often the decisive moment in a game when one player is selected to try to kick this ball into the goal, and there must be better expressions for it, to score.

And there's an enormous pressure at that moment on this player. Everything depends on it. His whole nation sometimes is watching.

And so it's of incredible importance, not on a cosmic scale, but on a relative scale. And so the researchers examined what happens when the referee whistles, and then that is a signal for the player to shoot. And those players who do not pause, who immediately shoot after they hear the whistle, are much less likely to score than those players who, when the whistle goes, they don't immediately shoot.

There's three, four, five seconds, even more when they become still. And then it happens, and the likelihood of scoring is infinitely greater than those players who do not stop. So this, when you ask for an explanation, well, people will give some kind of mental verbal explanation, say, well, they concentrate.

That gives them a moment of concentration. But what does that mean when we say they concentrate for a moment? The question I'd like to ask is what happens in that moment of going within?

So the attention, which usually would be on the desired outcome and the pressure, the attention on the self, me, I have to perform, that the attention is taken away from all that. And there is a redirecting of attention into the depths. And so at that moment, I believe, because I'm familiar with that process, I believe it is the basis of the creative process.

And in soccer, it is a rudimentary expression of the creative process. A redirecting of attention within where you touch a deeper layer, a deeper level of your being. And that is the, where all power resides.

And when you touch that power, at that moment, the whole, all conceptual things, including the concept of me, conceptual self goes. There's simply a deep, intensely alive stillness. And out of that stillness comes the power.

And that power is not my power or your power. It is universal power. And that power then can either become a masterful kick of the ball, or it can flow into other channels and it can become, be born into form.

It could be a mental, I believe that also scientists, after they've done a lot of thinking, as you mentioned, there's a moment of cessation of thinking. And often in that moment of stillness, and stillness is not just the absence of thinking. There is a power in the stillness.

There is non-conceptual intelligence in the stillness. Intelligence, when we measure intelligence with IQ tests, all we measure is conceptual intelligence. But there is a vaster, much vaster intelligence in every human being that is non-conceptual, not words and concepts.

You can't analyze it. But everybody has that within, potentially. And I believe that is the source of creativity.

Now, this does not mean that when I am asked to kick this ball and score a goal, I go deeply within and it's going to happen. Now, why doesn't it happen? I've gone deeply within.

I've contacted the source of power. It's not working. Or if they ask me to come up with a great theory of physics, okay, I'm going to become still and then perhaps the theory of relativity or something or the unified field theory or the answer to everything is going to come to me.

It's not because I don't know anything about physics. So it can only come, there must be a vehicle that is ready for the power to flow into. The vehicle could be the human mind.

There must be something that has already been prepared for that in the world of form. So, and this is why some researchers have found, I read it recently in a book called Outliers, that to achieve proficiency and become masterful at something, one prerequisite is, they called it 10,000 hours of practice. And so 10,000 hours of practice, then the possibility arises that the vehicle is ready to be receptive to the power of creativity.

[Speaker 4] (4:42:23 - 4:42:49)

Education. The wish of all parents is that education will help them to provide for their children to become good human beings, to have confidence in life and to have happiness. Well, it seems that education does almost everything except that.

Boosting intelligence and a bunch of information. So how do you solve that?

[Speaker 6] (4:42:49 - 4:49:39)

In five minutes, of course. I'm trying to shake off this image of Eckhart on a football pitch. I really started something.

Yeah, you did, sir. I take it all back. And the referee blows the whistle and Eckhart waits 10 seconds for 10,000 hours.

And he still misses. Well, you see, I wanted just to pick up on something the Dalai Lama said. And actually, that's something I've always wanted to say.

Which is that this power of creativity is unique to human beings. There's a prior power, which is the power of imagination, which is really where this comes from, which is the ability to bring to mind things that aren't present. I mean, if you take a small child into the garden, if you have one, and point at the moon, the child will look at the moon.

If you take a dog into the garden and point at the moon, the dog will look at your finger and wonder what your problem is exactly. No, we are born with the capacity to project ourselves into other places, to imagine forwards and backwards, to conceive of a past, to conceive of a future. And not just one future, but many futures.

Not just one past, but many pasts. Eckhart's work is about dwelling in the present. But it's not only about that.

It's recognizing the real power comes from recognizing there is only this present moment. The problem, I think, is that that power has to be cultivated, creativity is a step on, because you could be imaginative all day long and never do anything. To be creative, you have to do something.

And it's a very practical process. It's putting your imagination to work. It's, so to speak, applied imagination.

And it depends on skills. It depends on training. It depends on confidence.

And it depends on knowing things, as you said. And often in education, I think a mistake is made in believing that you just have to allow people to be creative. Actually, you have to help people to be creative.

You have to teach them. It's like saying, we hope you will all be literate. And good luck with that.

Here are the keys to the library. Callers. You know, you need to be helped and facilitated, as with all processes.

You need teaching and mentoring for it to happen. And this is why I believe we have such a big problem right now, which is that all children are born with immense creative potential, much more than their dogs. And, I mean, other animals may have something like imagination and creativity, but they show no signs of it in the way that we do.

Look at the building we're in. Look at the conversation we're having. I mean, other animals may feel elated, but they don't write poetry.

You know, they may get depressed, but they don't listen to Miles Davis and drink Jack Daniels. You know. We do.

And the problem is that these capacities, like literacy, need to be cultivated. And it's essential, they do, for our humanity. And it's essential because of the sort of futures that we face.

These are the powers that will deliver us into the future, or, I think, make us stumble in the face of it. And current systems of education do the exact opposite. Our current systems of education are rooted in the idea that education is really about learning facts and information, primarily.

Propositional knowledge, which is important. But there's no space for people to develop their real creative capacities. It's not the fault of teachers, I don't think.

But we have education systems which were rooted in the principles and ideals of industrialism. They were designed to do particular things, and they're based on standardization. And so far from encouraging creativity, the whole emphasis is on knowing certain things and getting them right.

And there's one answer, and it's at the back. And don't look. You know, because that's cheating.

And don't talk to anybody else, because that's cheating too. I mean, outside of schools, that's called collaboration. But inside schools...

And I think this is a fundamental issue of human rights. It's an issue of economic development. It's an issue of the cohesion of our communities.

And it means we have to look hard at the curriculum. In most schools, for example, the arts, which are not the only source of creative thinking. Science is hugely creative.

You can be creative at anything. But some people think in the way the arts facilitate. And if that's the way they think, this is a tough world for them now, because they get cut out.

And assessment is really now focused entirely on the process of standardization. And education has become depersonalized. And the only way to revive it is to personalize it.

I don't think there's a kid in Vancouver who gets out of bed in the morning wondering what he or she can do to raise the province's reading standards. You know, they, you know, call me. I'm at your disposal.

You know, they will read if they're encouraged and engaged to read. So somewhere along this process of industrial education, we've lost sight of the heart of education, which is the minds and hopes and aspirations of the students who pass through it. And we have to revive that if we're to not just save education, but help our children prosper.

And I think that's what's so compelling about the work of the Blue School. And it's what's so compelling about what we've heard here about compassion. Creativity is one of a nexus of ideas which will deliver us a more humane education that we don't just need, but our children are yearning for.

[Speaker 9] (4:49:40 - 4:50:46)

So, could I add a word to those wonderful remarks of Sir Ken Robinson? An education professor once remarked on the fact that creative thinking enters far more into problem formulation than it does into problem solving. Problem formulation is often by far the trickier part.

And school, he remarked, this education professor remarked, school is almost the only place where the problems are all formulated for you. How do you learn problem formulation in a conventional school? It's, that's the place where creative thinking really comes in.

And we need far more exercises in that than merely in problem solving. Yes.

[Speaker 4] (4:50:53 - 4:51:08)

So, Matt and Chris, we have seen your performance. We have heard you explaining what you mean by creativity, but for the sake of this panel, how would you bring precisely what is missing in education to your work?

[Speaker 13] (4:51:11 - 4:54:23)

Well, first I want to say that sometimes we used to say that when we first got bald and blue, and if we thought we were going to make a living from that, they would have put us in a padded room and thrown away the key. And as I sit here with His Holiness and some of the greatest minds on the planet, I'm so humbled. But I would say if we had, when we first got bald and blue, said we were going to make a living and be sitting here, they'd throw away the key, melt it down, grind it up in a blender.

But, you know, our job, I feel, is now to translate all of what you said about creativity and the process and the workings of the mind into the classroom and apply it to the actual education of the children. Eckhart, you said something very, just came home for us the other day in one of the sessions about teaching awareness. And so that's something that we're very much trying to do with the help of Dr. Daniel Segal, with the help of Sir Ken Robinson, who sits on our Board of Advisors. Maybe we could all be on the Board of Advisors, if you don't mind, after this session, we'll talk. But this awareness, first of all, we feel like creativity has to be sewn into every single part of the educational process. We feel like social and emotional learning, not a separate subject, but part of everything, so that the skills of empathy, the skills of compassion, are all sewn into your literacy and your math and your social studies as strongly as anything.

And that's how teaching to the whole child, you know, might happen. And so, you know, it's not the easiest task, truly, to take even these 10 minutes each of this incredibly profound and intelligent thinking and make it happen in the classroom. But through teaching children how their own minds work, awareness to their own process, awareness to creativity, awareness to how they treat themselves, how they think of others, we're hoping that these children will come out with these special skills that we're going to need to build a harmonious and sustainable world, which is what the mission of the Blue School is.

So that's our hope.

[Speaker 15] (4:54:30 - 4:54:35)

Since we're talking about compassion, I just want to add that the iPhone that we blended was a prop.

[Speaker 4] (4:54:43 - 4:55:40)

So there are 16,000 young children who will hear His Holiness in one hour time. And this is very, very valuable. We're all speaking of education.

That's what His Holiness will do, inspire them. And we have to give place to the next panel. So again, relativity, getting at the speed of light.

So as a conclusion, His Holiness, you often speak of intelligence and information in education as being tools. A hammer can build a house and can destroy it. So you've always been stressing to introduce more human values in the education.

So could you, as a concluding thought, remind us of what are your views on what's missing in modern education and what can be added to modern education?

[Speaker 2] (4:55:44 - 5:05:46)

Now we are in 21st century. We have, I think, quite clear memory what happened in 20th century. The other day you mentioned the 20th century.

There have been 200 to 300 millions of people killed during that century. So usually I describe 20th century become like century of bloodshed, century of war, violence. If through this act of violence really, truly solve many problem permanently, then maybe some justification, but that not.

Still a lot of problems. And then, firstly, nobody want die, kill. War means kill, eliminate.

So everybody, even I think the plants also have to survive. I think human nature in springtime everything grow new life. So we feel happy.

Autumn leaves fall down and these things, trees become then something like naked or like that. So we compare springtime, I think less. So that's, I think, the indication of our basic sort of nature.

We want fresh survival, growth. So since 20th century become like the century of war, bloodshed and a lot of problem, not only suffering, but a lot of problems. This is created.

So therefore, now this 21st century should be century of peace, peaceful century. Peace does not mean doing nothing, peace, no. So long human being who have a lot of intelligence remain there, some form of problem bound to happen.

Different views, different ideas, different sort of interest always there. So these are the source of conflict. So therefore, I think so long the concept of we and they there, some problems always there.

So therefore, take for granted problem will be there. Now in order to be this century more century of peace, now we have to find ways and means to solve these problem through nonviolent way. So that's the dialogue.

In order to carry meaningful dialogue, you must respect other's right, other's view. Then for mutual benefit, then dialogue or compromise. Now all these things, of course, intelligence also important role here, but mainly on heartiness.

Or compassion, respect other. As just like myself, they also have the right to achieve their sort of happiness or their goal. So now in order to bring this century, century of peace, peaceful, ultimately peace very much with not intelligence, but here on heartiness.

So therefore, present our education system and our whole habit, I think as humans, I think very rightly, we, I think in the past, I think last few centuries, I think we really put all our hope on material values. Material development can solve all problem. But this is not the case.

I noticed this is a effluent society. The material facility, very good, plenty. But still inward, too much stress.

Our society or too much creativity also brings what's in the competition, competitive sort of feeling, isn't it? And you say, oh, sometimes I think ruthless competition, that's bad, isn't it? I think positive competition is good.

So in any way, this modern society where all the facilities there, but mental level, too much stress, too much worry. And ruthless sort of competition brings suspicion, distrust. So even within one family, distrust.

First, I think for certain time, very happy. Then eventually distrust. Both sides, too much self-centered attitude, then difficult, isn't it?

So family problems, individual problem. Nowadays, I think, for example, Japan, I was told among student, young student, there are many cases of depression, cases of loneliness increasing, suicide also increasing. So the material level, very good.

But these things, I think these cases and this event shows us material value alone, there's limitation. Logically, we have physical, the material value provide physical comfort, not mental comfort. So now modern education seems to see very much stress on the focusing, focusing the material sort of values of development.

So I think, I feel in ancient time about, oh, of course, I'm not expert. But I just, you see, they heard from someone from here, from here, from here, from here. That's my way of education.

Not reading, not serious sort of study, like that. So therefore, I heard about 1,000 years ago, this separate education institution started. At that time, moral sort of, moral education, take, I mean, responsibility, taking care of moral ethics, church.

So at that time, maybe sufficient. Moral ethics, church, look after. Brain development, newly developed institution, carry, you see, their responsibility.

So now time passes, the influence of church reduce, decline. The family values also decline. Then, you see, nobody take care about moral principles.

Now education institution alone have both responsibility, taking care of brain, taking care of warm-heartedness. So we need, I feel, and also some, my friend, you see, they fully agree, fully can share really we need more sort of research work, more study. Now everybody knows now something lacking in education field.

So education is the key factor to bring happier human society, happier world. So there are something lacking. So that, I think we need specialists like you and you, these people, you see, more study, more research work, and then make concrete sort of ideas or proposals.

Several times in Europe or in America, many cases, in India also, I expressed these things. But at the moment, you see, people agree, fully agree, but nothing happened. So now I'm hoping, now time is running out.

So it's some concrete sort of proposal or sort of ideas should come. Should not expect from me, no, I don't know anything. So you see, those educated people, those professors, I think now I'm going to speak to those young people.

So these young people are the real people of this century. We here belongs to the 20th century. Now we are ready to say goodbye.

So before our final goodbye say, we must show some right sort of guide to the next generation.

[Speaker 4] (5:06:00 - 5:06:08)

So this is a perfect position for the next panel. We will give a place to them. Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (5:06:44 - 5:08:41)

What a wonderful session, Your Holiness. You have really challenged us. And we have just a few minutes waiting for our panel to get their microphones on, because there weren't enough.

You see, we have to change. So I wanted to take this opportunity to share with you a story of another Peace Laureate. You know, the last few days we've had the luxury and the benefit of having so wonderful, so many wonderful Nobel Peace Laureates with us for this Peace Summit, starting with yourself.

But I wanted to share with you another story of a Peace Laureate who's Canadian. Canadian Peace Laureate who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957, a former Prime Minister of Canada, Lester Pearson. And when he accepted the Nobel Peace Prize over 50 years ago, he challenged the world by saying that we needed to seek peace in the world and that it was a task we were doing badly.

And here's a quote, and I have to get it right. But he said at that point, the grim fact is that we prepare for war like precocious giants and for peace like retarded pygmies.

[Speaker 1] (5:08:41 - 5:08:42)

Like a giant.

[Speaker 3] (5:08:44 - 5:14:10)

Now, we have to forgive him for maybe what we would see today as being politically incorrect. But his words today, I believe, are as relevant as they were 50 years ago. Why is it, why is it, Your Holiness, that we spend billions of dollars and huge resources to prepare for war and spend so few dollars and so few resources and so few, so little energy in our education, our research, our inquiry in preparing for peace?

If you think about science and the use of science, whether it's quantum mechanics or nuclear physics and the building of weaponry and satellite technology, and I'm all for science, believe me. But where are the arts and the humanities and the understanding that needs to be developed to allow us to know what it means to be compassionate, how to be kind, how to be empathetic? I believe there's a science there, and I think you do too.

And I know our panel this morning is going to take up from the 2006 meeting on

Educating the Heart where you challenged us just as you did this last panel. You said, we now know why we must do it. We have to get on with how we're going to do it.

And I hope today's panel will help us answer the how. So I'd like to introduce our panel. So we're so pleased, Your Holiness, to have five incredible intellectual experts with us this morning.

And I'm going to give a very brief introduction because I know our audience has already read the precis in the bulletin, but I would like to welcome to my right Stephen Covey. Stephen is recognized as one of Time Magazine's 25 most influential Americans and is a respected leader, authority, family expert and author, having written The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People. Next to Stephen is Adele Diamond.

Adele is one of the founders of the field of Development Cognitive Neuroscience and holds the Canada Research Chair Professorship in that field at the University of British Columbia. We're honored to have to my left Mayreid Maguire. Mayreid is a co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1976.

She was responsible for co-founding the Peace People Northern Ireland that resulted in a number of marches demanding an end to the violence in Northern Ireland. Clyde Hertzman. Clyde is Director of the Human Early Learning Partnership or HELP at UBC and holds the Canada Research Chair in Population Health and Human Development.

And Kimberly Schoenreichel. Kim is a former teacher for troubled children and youth and is now a professor in education at UBC. She spent the majority of her academic career conducting research aimed at understanding the ways in which children's empathy and compassion can be cultivated in schools.

So perhaps I'd like to start, Your Holiness, in asking you what role you think education might play in helping us prepare for peace.

[Speaker 2] (5:14:17 - 5:22:42)

Then I'm going to repeat what I already said. Obviously, you see, violence and wars, I think from the beginning of human history is part of our history, part of human life. A former president of India, Abdul Kalam, a Muslim, great scientist, he often used to say the seed of problem is the concept of I and me.

So, therefore, this violence actually has become the idea we and they, this big sort of demarcation. Then the destruction, destroy of your enemy or them, the victory of we. So that, I think several thousand years, that concept of India.

Now, firstly, of course, the violence very much related with that. That's the basis to create violence. And secondly, today's world, today's reality, no longer that vision, we and they.

Economy reasons, global economy reasons, and also environment reasons, and simply the sheer sort of human population. So unless we work together, the future of humanity difficult. So therefore, if you think today's reality, then war is outdated.

Others' problem is our problem. Our problem, also their problem. So, six billion human beings must work together with sense of we or us.

So that's now the new, according to new reality, we need that kind of sort of concept. So how to bring that? Two things.

Compassion. Compassion, there are two levels. One level, compassion.

Of course, these things I already mentioned last few days. But then I think here, some more people, new people may be here. So therefore, may not be harmful to repeat these things.

So it's two levels. Two levels of compassion. One level is more biological factor.

That compassion, no need training. No need help of wisdom. Spontaneous, like compassion from mother to their children, or compassion or sense of concern of your relatives.

At least those relatives, you see, show you positive attitude. Even those relatives, you see, the negative attitude, forget. Even you see, instead of the sense of concern of well-being, even you should wish more trouble for them, like that.

So these are biological factor, and very much oriented about others' attitude. Now, second level of compassion is now beyond that, not oriented to the others' attitude. Disregard others' attitude.

But still, they are human being. And furthermore, they are sentient being. Why we love ourselves?

Not the reason we're kind to ourselves, no. But simply, I want happiness. I do not want suffering.

Because of that, they say, I have the right to overcome suffering. So that logical process, the other, rest of six million human beings, all have same. All do not want suffering, want happiness.

So they also deserve, you see, because of that, to achieve happiness. And they're passing through difficulties. We must respond, sense of concern for them.

So that is genuine compassion, second level compassion. That compassion, not sort of biased, not oriented attitude, but oriented being itself, to the person or to the sentient being. So that, unbiased.

That kind of compassion, through training, through reasoning, as I mentioned earlier, today's reality. My future depends on them. So I have to take their interest.

Ultimately, for my own interest. So that's it. So, education now, very, very important role in that field.

Educate people. Now, what happened in the past century, 20th century, become century of bloodshed, century of war. What happened?

And spend a lot of money. Anyway, now nuclear weapon, you see, even just keeping this nuclear weapon, a lot of money required. At the same time, nobody dare to use this weapon.

So waste of time. Waste of money, isn't it? If you really love nuclear weapon, then you should use.

If you use nuclear weapon, doesn't matter. Senseless, right? Madness and senseless.

So therefore, as I was thinking this line, then, now time come, we have to get vision. The demilitarized world. And one time, one German professor expressed, now world become something like one body.

So each government, no need foreign ministry and defense ministry. You should treat your neighbor as a sort of domestic, sort of part of yourself. I think that's very good.

So the very idea, foreign ministry, dealing with foreigner, something different. They, and defense, protect yourself, because they may attack you. So this very concept is, I think, out-of-digit concept, like that.

So these things, through education, through awareness.

[Speaker 3] (5:22:44 - 5:23:25)

Thank you. Wonderful entree. Want to turn to my education experts here, Clyde and Kim, and ask them, first Clyde, what role do the schools have in educating the heart?

And can you give us some examples of things that might be happening? And then, Kim, kind of, what's your experience been here in Vancouver and across the province and throughout the world? And what can we help in terms of guiding and moving this agenda of educating the heart forward?

[Speaker 15] (5:23:26 - 5:26:18)

Well, Your Holiness, since you were here the last time, you challenged us to stop talking and start acting. And so, over the last few years, we've been trying to mobilize the schools in British Columbia to focus on social and emotional learning and to take seriously educating the human heart. One of the ways that we've been trying to do that is to get the whole education system to recognize that educating the human heart means starting right at the very beginning of life.

Because as children develop vision, as they develop hearing and touch and speech, particularly the sensory parts of those, develop connections with the deep, deep structures in the brain that have got to do with whether or not we feel like we belong or whether or not we feel threatened. And so the children who grow up in environments which are threatening, where they see lots of angry faces, where they deal with lots of this kind of touch rather than that kind of touch, and when they're shouted at and so forth, by the time they reach school age, their brains are actually different from children who have grown up in strong, emotionally accepting environments such that they sense threat where others don't. They see threat where others don't. And that means that there are huge barriers to them becoming compassionate citizens of the sort that you just described.

So one of the things that we've done over the last few years is we've worked with all of the kindergarten teachers in this province. So we're talking about several thousand kindergarten teachers when children are at age five, getting them to look at the state of children's development. Are they physically aggressive?

Are they empathic and helpful and so forth? And provide that information so that we can actually map out the contours of early social and emotional development for all of the neighborhoods in the province. And we've done this once, twice, three times.

So we are the first jurisdiction in the world that has thoroughly mapped the state of early social and emotional development. And what we've discovered is that in some neighborhoods in the province, only two or three or five percent of the children have a worrisome state of emotional development by the time they reach school age. But in other areas, it's 25 or 30 percent.

And it's totally avoidable. And so we are working now in the preschool period with the family strengthening programs and the criteria for quality child care to get those things embedded early. And then working with people like Kim to transition into schools and mainstream these kind of ideas.

[Speaker 3] (5:26:18 - 5:26:29)

So Kim, how does that transition take place? And what's happening after the children reach school and the types of experiences that you think might make a difference?

[Speaker 17] (5:26:29 - 5:28:02)

Well, Your Holiness, it's an honor to be here again with you to talk about education of the heart. And one of the things that Clyde talked about is that there could be children who come into school with problems. But we don't want to give up hope and say, well, forget it, they've come kind of damaged.

What we know is that schools, as you have said, education can play a powerful role. And one thing in British Columbia in which we're very lucky is that the promotion of social and emotional learning is prominent, is part of the goal of education. So in 2001, social responsibility is one of the four goals of education in British Columbia, in addition to reading, writing and math.

And the parts of social responsibility that schools promote includes things like contributing to classroom and school community, solving problems in peaceful ways, practicing democratic rights and responsibilities, and valuing diversity and defending human rights. So one thing that has been very easy for us to do in your last challenge to us when you, I think you told us just get to work now in 2006 and start doing things, that a lot has happened here. There are many initiatives across the province which really are focusing on educating the hearts of children and programs that bring in mindful attention awareness, programs for teachers, even a teacher training program now for pre-service teacher education programs to help them learn the strategies to educate the heart of children.

[Speaker 2] (5:28:12 - 5:28:36)

I want to know, as a result of the practice of these sort of education for heart, these things, in the result level, what differences those students who have that kind of education, that program, and those students who pass through that kind of education, what differences?

[Speaker 17] (5:28:41 - 5:29:01)

Well, we basically have been doing a lot of research. As you know, science is very important and we are finding differences in terms of children who receive these programs develop empathy, altruism, compassion, and even do better in school. So, we know there's a lot of things that happen by educating the heart and educating the mind together.

[Speaker 2] (5:29:02 - 5:29:02)

Wonderful.

[Speaker 3] (5:29:10 - 5:29:30)

Another form of education, which is families and the role families might play. And I know, Stephen, you are an expert on that and maybe you could share with us some of the things that you think the role of the family, the type of education and learning that takes place there in terms of educating the heart.

[Speaker 8] (5:29:31 - 5:34:28)

Well, I think that the family is the most fundamental and most important organization in the world. And that's where most of the real fundamental education takes place. So, I suggest we have a family of nine.

Sandra and I have a family of nine children and 51 grandchildren. But if you were to ask me what one thing has made the huge difference, it's the development of a family mission statement. And we put it literally on everyone's wrist or they put it on their ankle.

And a family mission statement basically, we serve God by serving others. So it gets them into the ethic of service and into the character development of subordinating themselves, me to the idea of we, what the Dalai Lama just talked about. So that you move from independence to interdependence and a high level of collaboration.

So to me, that has been the most significant one single thing that we have done. The second thing is very practical. I finished training Indian chiefs that run Indian nations in North America.

That's in Mexico, the United States and Canada, including First Nations. And after three days of training, they gave to me a special gift. It was called an Indian talking stick.

It was about this high. They put my name on the backside. They called me Bald Eagle.

Even though I did a lot of special blow drying that morning for extra body. Anyway, the idea is very, very simple. And this was taught by the Iroquois Federation to the founding fathers of the United States.

The idea is that you always give it first to the other person. And I cannot say anything until you feel understood, which stirs up empathy, empathic listening, so that you get inside your frame of reference, into your mind and into your heart. Did I really understand not only what you said, but how you feel about what you said?

And I can't say anything until I have done this. Then you pass it back to me. Now it's my turn to express how I see it and how I feel about it.

As this goes back and forth between us, creativity is unleashed. And you come up with third alternative solutions. Not my way, not your way, and not a compromise, but a new way that we have created together.

And that automatically begins to develop the spirit of interdependency and collaboration and cooperation and profound respect for other people. And so I teach this wherever I go. This is another form of an Indian talking stick.

You could use a pencil, you could use a piece of paper. The object is valuable simply because you do not get it back and cannot express yourself until that person gives it to you, meaning I feel understood. And both levels of compassion that the Dalai Lama just talked about are developed in this way.

Through empathic listening and trying to understand deeply what a person says and what they feel about what they say. So we focus a great deal on both developing a mission statement that we all participate in creating. It took us eight months to create this one.

We serve God by serving others. And the basic approach that we use to develop this is the Indian talking stick communication.

[Speaker 3] (5:34:29 - 5:35:58)

Maybe I could ask you, Stephen, to hand the talking stick to Adele. I'm absolutely certain that we get Adele and May Reid in this conversation because His Holiness is going to have to leave us very shortly to go and educate the hearts of 16,000 young people in a WE conference. So I want to be absolutely certain that we get both of our other speakers to share with us.

And I want to change the focus a little bit to the individual. And how does the individual learn without necessarily going to school or counting on their family? And Adele, you once said that you thought that people who are the happiest are those who make others happy.

And I'm wondering if you could share with us some of your ideas about how individuals can achieve that. And then to ask May Reid kind of the same question in terms of what you found through your experiences. How do you draw upon yourself to become compassionate?

What do you seek, not from others, but internally? How do you learn internally how to be compassionate and to be joyful and to live in the moment?

[Speaker 14] (5:35:59 - 5:39:05)

So talking stick moving back and forth. Your Holiness, you'll remember from Dharamsala that I'm very interested in practical, in moving beyond words. And if we want to educate the heart of children, we need to start with us, with you and I, because children learn what they live.

It's very nice to tell them things in school, but what they learn are from the examples of the people around them. So we need to start with us. And it doesn't have to be big things.

It could be when you leave today, you let another car merge in front of you. Or it could be just saying thank you to somebody in the store who was serving you or the people cleaning your office. There are any number of things you can do, little things you can do that teach you, help you and help the child.

Now, your Holiness has said, if you want others to be happy, show them compassion. If you want yourself to be happy, show others compassion. And there's profound wisdom in that, but you often don't realize it unless you experience it.

Because before you experience it, you often think it's a zero-sum game. What I give you, I lose. And I have to do a lot to give to you.

And once you do it and you realize how incredibly happy it makes you, just saying hello to a stranger on the street and seeing that person smile at you makes you happy. And so you get so much back from doing that. And I have a proposal for the schools of British Columbia that we have a competition, each school at the beginning of the year, for the children to use their creativity, to think outside the box, to think of ways that they could help other people.

They could make the world a better place. It could be at the level of class or grade or school. And then all the relevant people, the children, the teachers, the janitors, the people who work in the cafeteria, vote on what they think is the best plan.

And then the children do it. They make, they create the possibility of doing this, whether it's helping people across the world or helping in your school. And then at the end of the year, there can be awards for not only the brightest student and the best athlete, but the student who's shown the most kindness, shown the most compassion.

And it can come not only from the school, but from the students themselves, where they vote. I think it can go beyond this, where the province gives awards for this, not only to children, but to adults. And not only to the fancy people who are leading the brigade, but to the no-name people who don't have fancy degrees or fancy positions, but in their everyday life, are doing things to make the world a better place.

And I think my university, the University of British Columbia, could get in the act and offer a scholarship of a thousand dollars to any student who's won this award from their school. And I'm going to be quiet to give time.

[Speaker 3] (5:39:08 - 5:39:29)

In this little ear button, I'm getting very, very significant signals that we need to move along. I do want to allow Mary to have, if you like, the final word. So, Mary, over to you.

[Speaker 18] (5:39:30 - 5:39:31)

Thank you, Your Holiness.

[Speaker 10] (5:39:32 - 5:43:48)

We always, Your Holiness always stresses me for us to be kind to each other. And really, kindness is the greatest thing and the greatest virtue we can teach our children. Just saying to them going out in the morning, be kind to everyone you meet, because kindness develops compassion.

And you see, when we are educating our children, what are we educating them for? Well, I believe human beings are made to love and to be loved. And deep down inside us, we have this energy and this need to be loved, just to be accepted, just for somebody to reach out to smile and accept us.

And perhaps the hardest thing for any parent is to accept their child and to love the child with a passion exactly where they're at, and not wanting to control and to dominate and to form them into being successful in the world. And that is really an awful temptation to make our kids be like us. You know, every single individual is a new created being with tremendous potential.

And our children, the greatest gift we can give them is to allow them to be themselves. Now, we are called to be happy human beings. That's our first calling in life, to be happy, fulfilled, joyful human beings.

Wouldn't it be awful to reach old age and never known what it would be to be fully alive? And you know, like any other skill or gift, there are steps to being happy. And after all, we learn how to be the best golfer.

We spend hours being the best scientist. How many hours do we spend? And this is not a selfish thing, because if you are not within yourself, happy and compassionate and gentle and joyous, you cannot give this to your children or anyone around you.

So happiness starts within. And there are steps to happiness. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

And you can be a joyous person. Because we've taught the three R's. We never taught our children, or now we learned in our schooling system, the most important thing.

How do we deal with the emotions inside us? The desperate fear, the desperate anxiety, the desperate need to somehow fit into this world. How do we deal with those crucifying emotions which stop us being compassionate?

Because when you're in inner pain, it's like having a toothache. You can't reach out to others or compassionate because you're so frightened and here of people who are different, people who are more educated than you, because you are so insecure and lonely in here. The journey is a painful, fearful, lonely journey.

And the only way we can help, God help the little children coming into such a world. The only way we can help them through that journey is to help them understand that we all have these emotions. We are all afraid.

We all worry. We're all anxious. We wonder if we say the wrong word and get embarrassed.

Will people see that the emperor has no clothes? I think overcoming these emotions and the education system, starting from the children very young in the home, to learn to be happy, fulfilled, honest children. And I think it will do it through the education and through the families.

[Speaker 12] (5:44:03 - 5:48:16)

In Chinese philosophy, all of life is said to have two balancing characteristics, yin and yang. At the center of these two forces, there is stillness, the foremost dimension of consciousness. Yang is the outward movement into form, the energy of making things happen.

Yin is the inward return to the foremost dimension, the energy of allowing and accepting things to happen in their own time. In our everyday lives, most of us tend to engage in predominantly yang activities. It becomes essential then to find a balance between yin and yang.

In this program, you're invited to learn this balance through the practice of yin yoga. In yin yoga, your work is to be the space for whatever arises by allowing, accepting, and opening, thus returning to the formless dimension. This becomes your spiritual practice, your primary focus in yin yoga.

The secondary aspect to this practice is the physical body. On this level, yin yoga aims at reaching the connective tissues beneath your muscles, that is to say, the ligaments, bones, and the joints of the body. There are three points to keep in mind as you work with these postures.

The first is to find your comfortable edge, that place where the body begins to feel resistance. As you feel into this edge, simply allow the sensations of the resistance to be as it is. However, if you experience any sharp or acute pain, slowly back out of the pose.

The next point is to become still. There are three kinds of stillness you can access. The first is stillness of the physical body.

The second is a subtle stillness of the breath, accessed through conscious breathing. This leads into the third, that is stillness of the mind. Here, the mind becomes empty of thoughts, or if there are occasional thoughts, you don't identify with them.

Instead, you are present as the awareness in which the thoughts arise. The last thing to keep in mind as you practice yin yoga is to hold the posture and relax your body while doing so. You may hold the posture anywhere from 3 to 20 minutes.

It may be helpful to use props, such as a cushion, bolster, pillows, or rolled-up towels. Use these props under your head, knees, buttocks, or any other part of the body that may need support in holding the pose comfortably. Most importantly, don't judge or criticize yourself.

Your body's flexibility can vary from day to day. It can be influenced by your emotional and mental state, or can even be affected by your diet. Do not compare today's practice with yesterday's.

Start each practice anew and become the space for what arises in each moment. The core of our practice is acceptance of what is. This is the portal into presence.

[Speaker 1] (5:48:34 - 6:02:53)

Welcome to Kim's yin yoga session. If you're new to yin yoga, you may be surprised to find that each pose is held for quite a long time. Longer, it may seem, than is comfortable.

And that itself can actually be a very important, if not the most important part of your practice. The discomfort that arises as you hold each pose. The discomfort may be of two kinds.

It may be physical discomfort, including perhaps slight physical pain. And it may be mental discomfort. The mind does not like to be forced into holding still.

And so, what do you do when mental discomfort arises, or physical discomfort, or in many cases, both? Do you use willpower? It says, I'm going to hold this pose no matter what.

That seems one way of getting beyond the discomfort or the mental judgment that says, I don't want to go on. But this is not the approach that is most helpful. Willpower or effort or fighting against the discomfort that arises.

What you use is the power of your awareness. So, as you're in the pose and you notice after a couple of minutes or so, that discomfort arises, you apply your awareness to the discomfort. And what that implies is that you allow it to be as it is.

So you don't fight it. There is no effort involved. No willpower.

But a completely different consciousness is brought to it. And that is the consciousness of allowing what is to be as it is. And that's perhaps the most useful part beyond the physical benefits you may derive from yoga practice.

The most useful part is that it enables you to become familiar with allowing whatever arises in the present moment to be as it is. And what you practice with here is the discomfort itself. So as the discomfort arises, you're aware of it and you open yourself up to the is-ness of that moment.

It is as it is. And suddenly you find there's the discomfort and there's the space around it. And the space around it is the awareness.

So you don't react. You're not identified with the condition of discomfort. You become the space around the discomfort.

And that's a very interesting discovery when you first discover that that is possible. That you can become the space around the discomfort. So it exists there in your space, so to speak, but it is not who you are.

It does not control you anymore. You have transcended the discomfort, although it may still be there. Sometimes it may happen that as you practice bringing that aware space to it the discomfort suddenly subsides.

But that's not the purpose of this practice. If it subsides, it's fine. It's a bonus, an added bonus.

But whether or not the discomfort subsides does not really matter. You can practice successfully even if it does not subside. So you don't practice the awareness in order to get rid of the discomfort.

That would make it into a means to an end. But the arising of awareness here is an end in itself. In addition, there's another possibility for you here.

And that is using the stillness of the pose and join it with mental stillness. So as you hold a pose, see if you can be as still in your mind as the body is still. In other words, make it part of your practice while you hold each pose to be free of thinking as much as possible.

Now, what I mentioned earlier, allowing what is to be is really intrinsically connected with the ability to be free of thinking. So when you allow what is to be almost naturally, the mind slows down because a lot of mental activity is to do with denying the present moment in one way or another. So, observe that as you hold the pose and surrender to what is, allow what is to be, be the space around the discomfort, and it's almost naturally now what arises is a state of consciousness that is largely free of conceptual thinking.

In other words, there are no words going through your head. It's just a spacious presence or an alert presence. And so if you can bring that alert presence into your practice, that would be of the greatest benefit.

And you will find that the yoga practice is really a microcosm of the way in which you can lead your life. So, it's a structured setting, and in that structured setting, you practice bringing a different state of consciousness to the challenges of life. Now, in the structured setting, the challenges that come are limited, but they may be considerable.

Pain, discomfort, too long, too much, don't want to go, why am I doing this? These are all challenges, physical challenges, emotional challenges, mental challenges. And what happens in everyday life?

The same thing on a larger scale. Physical challenges, emotional challenges, mental challenges, challenges of situations, challenges of people. So, in that structured setting, you practice not being a reactive entity anymore to each one of these challenges and be controlled and dominated by the challenges, but to have invite the arising of a state of consciousness that transcends the challenges.

Presence, awareness. So, if you can allow the discomfort to be as it is, and if you can bring thoughtless awareness to that moment, then as you go back into daily life, what you have learned in the structured setting, what you have practiced in the structured setting of yoga, can be applied to daily life. So, when challenges arise in daily life, you can again realize that this moment is as it is, and the only sane way to live is to realize the one could say inevitability of the isness of the present moment, because it already is.

And so, you bring allowing the quality of yin, which is embracing, allowing whatever form this moment takes to be as it is. So, what you've learned in your structured yoga practice can be applied to any situation in daily life. And if you practice in your yin yoga sessions, holding without effort, holding effortlessly the state of alert attention, in which thought does not arise or arises only sporadically and is not important, that ability to face situations and deal with things in that state of alert presence in which thought either does not arise or is secondary, that is a revolutionary transformation of consciousness. If you can live that, you become intelligent and you transcend the conditioned mind.

You connect with the unconditioned consciousness, and that's true intelligence. So, it's amazing what can arise out of this seemingly small practice of holding a pose. So, I wish you well in your yin yoga practice and in your daily life practice.

Stay present, alert, connected with the power of now, the power of awareness, which is who you truly are.

[Speaker 11] (6:03:16 - 6:07:37)

Before the body, before the story, before the name, beyond the mind, attempt to find or explain. Before the breath, beyond the sense of pleasure or of pain, and after death, and after death, I am. Within the heart, the whole and part of everything I see, behind the eyes, beyond disguise, reflecting me at the silent core, and yet before phenomena began.

Oh, and after it, and after it, I am. And many differences separate us on the surface, yes, but I cannot find a boundary in consciousness. And when you ask me, where does awareness begin and does it end?

I have to say, I have to say, I've always been within the body, without the body, not subject to changing moods or states of health or points of view, without needs before the deeds and the monuments of man. Oh, and after them, and after them, I am. Many differences separate us on the surface, yes, but I cannot find a boundary in consciousness.

And when you ask me, where does awareness begin and does it end? I have to say, I have to say, I've always been at the silent core and yet before phenomena begin. Oh, and after it, and after it, I am.

[Speaker 1] (6:08:31 - 8:05:27)

Welcome to this afternoon we are spending together. As I was sitting in the back room just now, at five to one, a voice came through the loudspeaker and said, this is your five minute warning, show time in five minutes. That's what they do in theaters.

So this must be show time. But of course, it's not a performance. There may be an association in your mind of theater stage.

Well, there's no curtain, but there could be an association in your mind of this kind of setting with performance. But it's been canceled. And instead, all you get is a man sitting in a chair speaking.

And not even someone who has very much of a stage presence. So if you expected a performance or even if you expected a lecture that's not what you're getting. You're getting less than that and more than that at the same time.

The focal point this afternoon is not here on the speaker. The main character in this non-performance is sitting down there in that chair. And the words will always point you back to that.

If you think there's something interesting out here, there isn't. If you expected food for thought, you probably won't get very much. So just a few words I'd like to say about how to be here this afternoon.

Because if you don't know how to be here fully, very quickly it's going to get boring and uninteresting. Because you're not getting enough stimulus for thinking. So, and in an event like this with so many people, it's inevitable that a few are going to walk out after 20 or 30 minutes.

They knew not how to be here fully. They were not completely present here. They were absorbed in the stream of thinking, which is normal.

One reason why we are here is that you're being taken out of the stream of thinking and realize that you haven't disappeared. That when you step out of the stream of thinking, consciousness is still there. You're fully conscious sitting there listening.

That's awareness that doesn't need thought. This is the new level of consciousness that's arising in human beings. Otherwise, so many people wouldn't be here.

Certainly not to experience this speaker hasn't got that much to offer, but it's because something is happening within you that corresponds to these words. The words point back to that and the words and that which is beyond the words here in this field pulls that level of consciousness, which I sometimes call the unconditioned consciousness, out of you, so to speak. But it is already arising in most of you.

Otherwise, you wouldn't be here. With the exception, perhaps, of those who came here involuntarily because of insistence of their husband or wife. You must come to this.

Okay. Okay. I might as well check this guy out.

Okay. And then after 20 minutes, what's he talking about? I can't.

I just can't figure out what it is that he's talking about. And then restlessness comes in because not enough stimulus is being given to the mind. It often starts with a twitching leg that was designed by universal intelligence to wake you up.

Nothing better than waking up a little shock. And life tends to do that to us. The little ego says, please, no, I don't want any of this.

But it happens. So there's the twitching, and finally, can't stand this anymore. So there may be quite a few of you who have never come to a talk like this.

So just a few pointers of how to be here, not just as a mind or as a head attached to a body, and, you know, when you're a head attached to a body, you're always uneasy and waiting for the next thing. When is he going to say something meaningful? Some interesting new theory that I can believe in or disagree with even better.

That keeps it going. I disagree completely. So one thing we surrender here this afternoon is this inner need, which is the human mind.

This enormous inner need, usually unrecognized because it's so normal. This enormous inner need for the next moment. When you look at people, you can actually see they're looking for it.

They are overlooking always this, and they're looking there, the next moment. And with that comes that continuous state of unease with this moment. This moment becomes a hindrance to where I need to get, to the next moment that's going to fulfill me or do something for me.

Let's get there. Where is it? That's a normal human state.

And if you cannot step out of that, you will not be able to survive this afternoon here. So how do you step out of that momentum of the thought processes that are always moving towards the next thing? Move your attention into this moment.

First thing that it means for many people when their attention moves out of thinking into presence, they become more acutely aware of their sense perceptions, their surroundings. A certain alertness arises as if you had been away and now suddenly you're back. And it is true.

You had been away. Your attention, your whole sense of identity was absorbed by thought processes, most of them problematic. Another problem to solve before I can be free.

So why we are here this afternoon is to experience at first hand what many of you are experiencing already and know it. And many others who are present here experience already without knowing it. And I will be pointing to that to see that you can recognize that this state of presence is already probably arising in you even if you don't know it yet because it is not recognized by the movement of thought.

It is not recognized by the mind made me. It recognizes its problems. It recognizes its need for the next moment.

It cannot recognize the state of awareness, the arising presence. But we are here in this field to enable that state of consciousness to arise more fully. So your attention moves into the field of now.

And a very helpful thing that I may be pointing to quite a few times during this afternoon as you sit here is to feel a certain connectedness with your inner energy field, the inner body. To sense that you are alive. To feel, to sense a little bit the inner energy field of your body, hands, legs.

There is a certain aliveness there. Usually you would not be aware of it because all your attention is absorbed by thinking. Now you place some attention away from thinking into the sense of aliveness.

In the body as you sit here. That provides an anchor for staying present here. And this, you'll be able to listen much better when you are present here.

Anchored within the body. Inhabiting the body as you sit here. Just and feel a certain aliveness.

Maybe you cannot feel it everywhere yet, but a certain aliveness is there. That's enough to have some attention there. Then the rest of your attention is on the sense perceptions, especially listening and seeing.

So, being present here, it is an amazing shift in consciousness and yet to the mind it is meaningless. It is insignificant. It doesn't even recognize it.

It says, so this can't be important. My problems are important. How does that solve my problems?

It does. What is coming to an end, what has to come to an end on this planet very soon is a state of consciousness that is totally identified with thinking. Where you only know yourself as thought processes and you're totally identified with whatever happens and experience the corresponding emotions that go with those thoughts.

That is the egoic mind-made entity, me, with its little story, with its unsatisfactory story, never satisfying for long the story of me. Always something comes in to sabotage the story the way it should be going. And certainly it hasn't gone the way it was supposed to go, the story of me.

But I still have some future to make it work. The mind-made entity, conditioned by its surroundings, its past, to only know yourself as that, that is coming to an end as the normal human state of consciousness. Because that excessive identification with thought processes prevents you from knowing who you are at the deeper levels of your being.

You remain a surface phenomenon, an uneasy ripple or wave movements on the surface. Just here, always never sensing that deep connectedness with who you are underneath the movement of thought. And that leads to dreadful madness on the planet.

The madness of, that we experience in interpersonal relationships, the collective madness on the planet. There are certain focal points on the planet where you can see the collective madness more clearly than others, but it is everywhere. And when you get to the root of it, all that which creates this enormous amount of violence and suffering on the planet, and is even threatening the survival of the planet.

What is at the root of that, what one could only describe as dysfunction, human dysfunction, of which we've seen so much in the 20th century. And what we are seeing now is a continuation of it. What is it that lies at the root of all that?

But that is also within ourselves still, although the new is arising, the old consciousness, the mind identified state is still there, it comes in waves. There was an article written last week in the New York Times by an Israeli writer about the madness in the Middle East that we are witnessing there. And he used an interesting expression, he tried to get to the bottom of it.

What is it that makes people behave in such a way? And he came up with a very interesting realization, but perhaps did not realize himself how profound the implications are of this realization that he came up with. What he said was, the people who are involved in this conflict do not seem to have the ability, now he uses an interesting expression, the ability to accommodate a competing narrative.

Narrative means it is the story that you are telling yourself and others which interprets your life situation. A narrative can be a personal narrative, that is the story you are telling yourself and others about who you are. And a narrative can be a collective story, that is the story that everybody who is part of this nation or tribe is telling themselves and others and is reinforced continuously which is their interpretation of how things are.

And each side has its narrative. And then there is a competing narrative that is the opposite of my narrative. Every narrative is a story, every story is mind movement, is thought structures.

Every story is the movement of thought which becomes certain thought structures become deeply lodged in the mind and they hang on in there. This is how it is. And your sense of self, your sense of identity, your sense of who you are becomes entangled with that narrative.

Now people do that on a personal level in their own personal lives and in some places more than others, less so in countries like the one we are. But in certain countries, the collective narrative still has enormous hold on people. The collective mental conditioning overwhelms the mind and every personal sense of self it really is predominantly dominated by the collective us and our story.

Our narrative, this is how things are. And you find that collective identification very strong in all those places where there is an enormous amount of conflict and violence. And so there is the seeming inability to see what is happening that I am identifying with a particular way of interpreting reality.

And I am mistaking a thought or a set of thoughts for the truth of how things are or the truth of who I am if it's on the personal level. So people do it collectively and personally to themselves. Certain ideas form in your mind who you are, conditioning, parents told you, society tells you, or you react against what parents told you and society tells you of who you are and it's also conditioned.

And so you are, then your sense of self is in the movement of thought and there are certain repetitive thought movements that then provide you with your sense of self, personal, predominantly personal or predominantly collective. And there's the inability to see the limitations of thought, the inability to see that ultimately no thought that you have concerning anything or anybody, yourself, a situation, a place, an event, can hold the absolute truth. It cannot encompass the truth.

It can, a thought at best will give you an aspect of the truth. It can, every thought that you think about anything or anybody is a temporary perspective. When you know thought to be a temporary perspective, thought is beautiful.

Thought enables you to do many things. When you forget, when you do not know that every thought that you have about anything or anybody is one of many, many possible perspectives on this person, on this situation, on this place, whatever it may be. When you don't know that, you mistake an interpretation, a thought, a judgment.

Jesus used the word judgment a lot. What he's really talking about is thought because ultimately every thought is a judgment. As long as you know that, it's fine.

You can use thinking, thinking arises. But the illusion that anything that you can express through thought can embody the absolute truth is not there anymore. So you are no, that means when your sense of who you are is totally identified with the story that you are telling yourself and others, that is an illusory sense of self and most people are trapped in it.

Not just the people in the Middle East or Northern Ireland or wherever there may be long-standing conflict that's been going on for in some places hundreds of years. In what used to be Yugoslavia, they've been fighting for hundreds of years. Every generation absorbs the same mental conditioning, identifies with the same thought structures that says we are right, we are that and that and they are totally mind.

And then you are a mind-made entity. You don't know who you are beyond that your entire life then is designed to strengthen that ultimately illusory entity, me and my story or us and our story. And that entity is a thought form consisting of different thoughts that come together and that entity says me, I, or us, we, and them.

And because that sense of identity is so fearful and fragile because deep down you don't feel that you really know yourself. So it has to be reinforced by having the other to fight against. I define myself when I am trapped in a mind-made thought-based sense of self with a collective or personal or a mixture.

I am trapped in an illusion that seeks to strengthen itself, that seeks to strengthen its boundary, me and my mental position, my story, my truth. Of course you don't call it my truth, you call it the truth. And it needs the other to define itself through.

It needs some kind of conflict or enemy out there because then that state of self that is mind-made feels stronger for a moment and then you need some more. You can see it in your personal life as the need to be right in an argument. The enormous need to be right that has a lot of emotion with it and a lot of pain with it.

You have expressed your thoughts, somebody else says the exact opposite and says, you're completely wrong. What do you mean? And people usually in a situation like that become totally unconscious.

What that means, I'm not saying that they faint. And they become unconscious. It's almost like faint.

They become unconscious in the sense that they are totally identified with thought. That's spiritually speaking means unconscious, totally identified with thought processes and the emotions that go with them. And that is the energy that happens when there's identification with total identification with thought as me.

A mental position as me. And you can see in relationships, partners, how very easily they start arguing and it's each person identifies with their mental position. This is how it is.

No, it's not. Yes. So, and this has been going on for many thousands, thousands, hundreds of thousands of years.

And even intensifying that identification with thinking, intensifying. It was a necessary stage in human evolution. It all started with the apple.

Because the apple came from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It is the arising of thought. Yes, no, right, wrong.

Yes. You can tell the difference between this and that thought is the ability to separate, to cut up into little pieces, to analyze. And we had humans, humanity had to go through it.

It was an evolutionary stage. And I'm saying it was, although we are still in it to a large extent, but we are coming out of it. And as this evolutionary stage reaches its end, the dysfunction increases because simply it's coming to an end.

When it's, it no longer works. That's all. It doesn't work anymore for survival.

For a long time, it helped humans to survive. They could think about how to make a trap and do this. And then it has served its purpose.

It becomes dysfunctional just as the caterpillar becomes dysfunctional just before it becomes a butterfly. Life doesn't work anymore as a caterpillar. It's getting too hard.

I can't crawl anymore. But of course, something in the caterpillar says, no, I'm not going to change. That's just what I am.

Oh, it's fearful. What's going to happen to me? So this, the conflict in the Middle East is just one example of a dysfunction in the human mind, which this writer expressed in those words.

He called it the inability to accommodate a competing narrative, which means to see another perspective and see all. And to recognize thought, every thought as a fragment, not the truth, a fragment. So this, whenever you see whatever you can say about another human being is a temporary truth, a temporary relative fragment.

You can say he's a dreadful, he's the worst criminal I've ever met. Okay, this is one perspective. Maybe true at this moment.

And you may not have seen him interacting with his child. You may not have seen him at the age of six. You may not see him in 20 years time when he's enlightened, become free through his suffering.

But thought fixes everything. It wants to fix things. This is how it is.

Conclusions, premature conclusions that you draw concerning people, events, situations. And the mind is looking out for that. It's waiting whenever this mind-made entity meets someone, it's already beginning to judge.

How does this person fit into my thought structures? And then five minutes later, it has an opinion. And often then that opinion is there, it's fixed.

And then it's repeated to others. And then people cling to their opinions. It's part of who I think I am, me as mind.

So the movement that is happening in human consciousness that is happening now for the first time on a wider scale, because it has to happen for the species to survive, is a movement out of thought, out of identification with thought. The arising of something within you that is deeper than thought. Now, what is thought?

Thought is one of the many forms that consciousness takes. Consciousness in humans manifests to a large extent as thought. Consciousness manifests, the one consciousness manifests as an entire universe.

Flowers, trees, the planet, animals, temporary formations, galaxies. And in humans, it becomes thought. And to realize the vastness that is there underneath thought.

And that is the arising of a new dimension of consciousness. It doesn't mean that you're not going to think anymore. Thought still comes.

But complete belief in every thought that comes, that doesn't happen anymore. In other words, as this begins, you're beginning to have a new relationship to thought. You can see thought that happens inside you.

The reactivity of thought, very strong. The reactivity of the thought made me. What's the next thing I can react to?

To strengthen myself. To have a little enemy, at least for a few moments. And in having a little enemy, which can be a situation that I'm complaining about.

A person having a little enemy for a moment makes me feel more strongly. I can sense who I am. You did that to me.

It is satisfying to the entity, the egoic entity. For a moment, it feels stronger in its sense of self. Every time it complains about something, there's a contraction in my sense of self.

And also a strengthening of the mind-made entity. And then it's looking out, what's the next thing I can react to? And it sits behind a wheel in the car.

Some people, habitually, they carry their waiting for the next thing to react to. And you might think it's always another person. That is, everyone to some extent carries that inside.

This is not a personal shortcoming of yours. It is not a personal thing at all. It is collective conditioning of the human mind.

It is a collective structure. The need to react, the need to have a problem, an enemy somewhere, is unconscious. When you make it conscious, when it happens, you see it.

Ah! I'm right. And you feel the emotion that goes with being right.

With your partner, wherever. And it's an amazing thing when you watch that in yourself. You can see it in others more easily, of course.

Look how unconscious he is. I can't believe how unconscious you are. To see something in oneself, a reaction, a identification with a mental position.

And suddenly to see it, perhaps in the middle of it, is enough. And not even to say, oh, I shouldn't be having that reaction. I'm an advanced spiritual person.

I shouldn't be having that. Something is wrong here. But there it is.

And the advanced spiritual person, how does one become an advanced spiritual person? Does it require a lot of knowledge or some arduous practice of self-denial through beating yourself up or sitting in the cold for hours, meditate? I'm going to get there.

I'm going to get there. But the advanced spiritual person is the person that allows this moment to be. Oh, is that it?

Allows this moment to be because why should I allow this moment to be? Because it is. Because it always is as it is now.

But it is. Yeah, but this is not how it should be. It still is.

And then you see that you go through life or you have been going through life. A lot of your life has been an inner no. And the egoic mind made entity thrived on the no.

It thrives on having enemies. It doesn't need to go as far as to make you into a suicide bomber. It could.

That's an extreme manifestation of the same thing. It thrives on that. And then, of course, it says, I can't allow this to be.

There are so many things in this world that should not be. There are so many things in this world that are unjust, unfair. So much suffering.

So much. Yes, of course, that is true. That there's an enormous amount of suffering in this world and in yourself.

Suffering is present in every human being in different forms. In the affluent West, there is an enormous amount of suffering too. Not perhaps on the material level.

Mental, emotional suffering. And the illusion is to believe that when I allow this moment to be, I will become ineffective. I will become passive.

And nothing is going to change anymore. I will be stuck with this dreadful moment for the rest of my life. So to get rid of this dreadful moment, I've got to fight it.

And then, of course, the next moment, which is the same as this moment, dreadful again. That state. And here we have an approach, another perspective on what it means to be fully awake here and now.

We pointed already to the helpful fact that you can feel the inner body as you sit here, even now. That takes you out of the stream of thinking and thinking. And then you can become conscious of this moment instead of running away from it or internally denying it, fighting it.

You can become conscious of how things are right now. This is how things are. And you allow.

And what is could be a reaction inside yourself. It could be an old, and then you see it and don't make it into a problem. And you watch the emotion that comes with it.

There it is. You allow that. So you don't become an advanced spiritual practitioner by achieving something, total control of all my inner states and total control of external conditions.

I am in total control of my life. This is, of course, the ego feels, I need to, I need to stay or lie awake in bed all night, because I have important problems to think about. If I don't, if I don't worry, my life is going to fall apart.

I'll be irresponsible. Or as one famous actress said, I read in the paper some while ago, who, by the way, is always ill. She said about some situation, she said, I wouldn't be human if I didn't worry myself sick about it.

And worry is identification with thought, useless thought, a lot of it, of course, even psychologists who are not interested in spiritual matters have recognized that 95% of our thinking is pretty repetitive and useless. So, and one way of stepping out of it, that entire conditioned movement needs reactivity, needs opposition, needs resistance. It's the mind-made entity.

So when now the possibility arises of living in a different ways, and if it were not happening already, I could not make it happen to you. The fact that you are here and recognize something, some truth that you already know, that is already happening inside you, that means you don't need convincing. You recognize the fundamental truth of living, the possibility that there is the possibility now, perhaps there wasn't before for most humans, that there is the possibility now of living in alignment with the suchness of this moment, inner alignment.

And that is the state out of which, amazingly, effective action comes. Because an intelligence that is greater than the conditioned movement of thought is suddenly able to operate in and through you. And so that state of complete alignment with what the Buddha actually called the suchness of things, which is always what is here and now.

I call it the form that this moment takes. This moment, of course, is the only moment there is. Is it?

No, I don't agree with that. There is a next moment. Okay, that was somebody's mind.

There is only this moment ever. Nothing could be outside of it. Couldn't.

Nothing could happen outside of it. It has to be now for anything to be. Being is now.

Life can only be now. You could remember something that happened. How was it possible that this happened?

It happened in the field of now. It happened when it was now, and I remember it now. Now is the only reality it has.

In the future, there seems to be so much of it, until there's very little. And that can be frightening. Your future shrinks.

Your past grows. And you are gradually pushed out of your life. On one level, past and future seem so real.

Time, past and future. On one level, yes, you can't deny it that there is such a thing. Time, everything passes so quickly.

It's fleeting. Gone. Gone.

My childhood, gone. My first marriage, gone. Second marriage, gone.

And so there's... Please stop, you say to time. I don't want to be dragged along this stream of time towards my inevitable doom.

But you can't stop it. Also on one level, time seems to be very... to dominate everything.

And yet, on another level, past and future don't exist. There's only now, always now. One can't really argue with that, that your life is always this moment.

Your life cannot not ever be this moment. So on one level, you have what appears to be very real, and yet it's always now. Let's stay with that fact, because this is a practical session, not philosophical.

A discourse on time belongs somewhere else. There's a practical fact that it's always now. And if I'm never in alignment, or extremely rarely in alignment with now, then it means I'm out of alignment with life itself.

Which means the power that is inherent in life, the intelligence that is inherent in life, the beauty that is inherent in life, cannot fully express itself through this contracted entity that spends most of its time, its nows, in now, wanting to, needing to get somewhere else, the next moment. Which is really only a thought. Future is a thought, a mind movement.

So when we see that, and we also see another strange fact, that first we see there is only ever this moment. So you might as well make friends with it, since you haven't got anything else. Hmm.

But then a strange thing happens. People believe that the now is very short-lived. They think a now is only a brief thing.

I think in the, one of the leaflets about this our afternoon together, it said, spend an afternoon in the now. That will be the longest now you've ever experienced. But of course, yes, this is what this is about.

Now, the fact that change happens continuously doesn't mean that there are many different nows. The form that this moment takes changes. Continuously.

The field of now remains. Often things happen that are challenging in the now. A strange, it is very strange that when you allow whatever form this now takes to be as it is, the deeper level of your being opens up.

This is a miracle. When you see it in your life, how your life changes as you live in alignment with what is rather than against what is, that is the end of hundreds of thousands of years of conditioning and you are stepping out of thought. Because it is the movement of thought that judges continuously what is as not enough, not good or needs more than this.

The movement of thought, the thought made entity always needs more. I'm not full enough yet. Not complete yet.

It never is. Where's the next thing that I can identify with? That's why people look so uneasy a lot of the time because they're looking for the next thing to make their sense of self a bit more complete.

A bit more, please. Okay, more. And the more is supplied by the next moment which doesn't exist.

It's a dreadful way to live. And you see another fact. For thousands of years, the Buddhists have already recognized that everything in this universe is interconnected.

And now physicists also see that ultimately there is not, there are no isolated events or isolated phenomena. There is a web of interconnectedness that is the entire cosmos. It is all connected to everything else, not what appears to us as an isolated event, it's connected to the totality on deeper levels.

And that is good to realize. And this brings us to the strange fact of the inevitability of this moment. Because the totality of the universe has brought this about.

It happens because it cannot be otherwise. And then you allow it, you see that connectedness and you allow what is to be, you bring a yes to it. Suddenly, and now I'm using words to describe something that is really beyond words, with this yes to what is now, something opens up, which I can only describe, and many of you already know, have had glimpses of it, or it's already very strongly present in your life.

I can only describe as there is a sense of space around what happens when you allow it to happen. A spaciousness in which this event, and that is an inner sense of space, a spaciousness in which this event is happening. It could be, for example, the obnoxious behavior of some person close to you.

She's doing it again, he's doing it again. Before it brought up the inevitable, and suddenly you see the inevitability of this moment. And suddenly you allow, and so the event comes, and there's the, or something breaks down, and you go, oh, it's allowed.

That's strange. There's the event, or let's say some dreadful noise happens suddenly, and usually there would be reaction. This shouldn't be, they should, why don't they?

And suddenly you allow it. Oh, suddenly there is a space around it, a space around what happens. One could also call it a peace around what happens.

And you can notice it particularly when you do this when something so-called unpleasant happens, and you allow it. There's suddenly a space around it, a larger context in which that happens. And that space is a space of peace around it.

Some people had to be driven by life to an extreme form of suffering before that happened to them spontaneously inside. And in the midst of hell on earth, in the most dreadful conditions, something inside them stopped resisting this moment. And there was a vast sense of peace and space, despite the appearance of evil or badness in this moment.

That is the inner shift, is not when you demand that the world should change. People have been demanding that for a long time. But allow the is-ness of things and see what happens then.

Because the allowing is the arising of the new state of consciousness. If it were not arising in you, these words would be meaningless. You would not understand even what it means when I say allow this moment to be, or you would feel threatened by it, shout something and run out of the room.

And so that is what in spiritual language is sometimes called surrender. What really is alignment, inner alignment with what is. Now, what that really means is for thousands and thousands of years, human beings have been totally absorbed absorbed in what I sometimes call object consciousness.

Their entire attention goes into thoughts that arise often in reaction to things that happen. Every thought is an object in your consciousness and takes up your entire attention. And so people inhabit their entire life, consists, is crammed full with thoughts, object consciousness.

This knowledge, think about, I think about, I'm thinking about this, and then the next thing, and then the next thought comes, which each thought absorbs your attention. Each thought is connected to the me thought form. No space, complete absence of space, just one thing after another, one thought after another.

And what arises with the yes to what is, is space consciousness. Another word for that is stillness. Stillness.

Inner stillness arises through the simple yes to now. And that is the new dimension of consciousness. And that is the essence of who you are.

So you are on the one hand, something that is manifested in form. You have a form identity, a life situation. Every person here is somehow, one could almost say, trapped in their particular life situation.

Most of them problematic to a larger or lesser degree. The more the new consciousness is arising in you, the more the problematic nature of your life situation lessens. Not that life does not present challenges anymore, but you no longer perceive your life in terms of problems.

So there is your life situation, and that differs for each one of you. Some are asking themselves what their life purpose is on this planet. What am I going to do with my life?

Others may not have that much future left. In some of you, the body may not be healthy. In others, there may be some very problematic configuration of events in your life.

Life situations differ. Some are rich, some are poor. Some are important in the eyes of the world.

Some are not important in the eyes of the world. Or some of you may be important today and unimportant tomorrow in the eyes of the world. I was unimportant for many years.

Now I'm important in the eyes of the world. And then, who knows, next year I may be gone in the eyes of the world. That sense of who you are that's derived from your life situation, which is in the corresponding thought forms, we are going beyond that.

We respect that. Yes, you are in this particular situation, in those relationships. These are things that you cannot deny.

There is the story of me. There's the story of my life. And it's not going to come to an end this afternoon.

No, the story of me continues because that is part of my form. Identity. And some stories are happier than others.

But there is a strong element of unsatisfactoriness and unhappiness in every story. Not just yours. The element of unsatisfactoriness is built into the very structure of this mind form that is the story of me.

But it is only unsatisfactory as long as you are looking for some self-fulfillment, some enhanced identity through improving your life situation or the story that you're telling yourself about who you are. Then it's always unsatisfying. But when you realize that on that level, you're never going to be satisfied.

On that level, true completion is never reached. You can never truly know yourself, no matter how much you add to yourself through knowledge, possessions, relationships, whatever experiences, even spiritual experiences, wanting them to add to me. There are many people here who have had many great spiritual experiences.

Come and, oh, well, okay, let's hang on to that one. That was good. And you can tell yourself the story.

I had a great insight once. I had a vision. And now it's left me.

But I hope it's going to come back. That's the, on that level to seek something, it means to seek something that the world, because the story is the world, can't give you. The demand to be made happy through some rearrangement in your story is an impossible demand.

The demand to be made happy by the world, make me happy. I have a right to be made happy by the world. It is true, one could say that you have a right to the state of joy as your natural state of deep inner connectedness when you know who you are beyond thought.

It's not even that you have a right, that's a conceptual thought. It just is. But the world isn't even here to make you happy.

Oh, that means, oh, if it's not here to make me happy, then what is it here for? It's to wake you up. And one could say the world is here to make you conscious.

And to make you conscious until a certain point is reached, the world makes you suffer. Because you make demands and you have expectations that the world cannot meet. And you suffer.

The story becomes the story of the poor me. And even if the story temporarily becomes victorious, I made it. And then a little while later, it's become, the up has become a down.

What now? You can make it become president of the United States and then forget that you even were president of the United States. And that's, it's not, it's half fleeting.

A former president of the United States is suffering from the disease that many people, older people now have loss of memory. He doesn't remember that he was once president of the United States. That was me.

Oh, that is half fleeting. But it's no different from any other life. You can become an old man or woman and then you're 95.

And then you, was that a dream? Or did that all happen? You wake up in the morning, did I dream my life?

Or did it all happen? And it's not much difference. Not very much difference.

The only question is, are you waking up out of that dream? Which ultimately is the entire world of phenomenal existence has a dream-like quality to it because it, everything evaporates so quickly. Gone.

Gone. And then you still hang on to thought forms that were, but it's gone. And for many people, this dream-like existence has been somewhat of a nightmare.

And that is good. Because only a nightmare will want you to wake up, will make you want to wake up. I can't stand this dream anymore.

Then for a while, you demand that this dream must change. And for a little while, you rearrange it and it becomes a little bit more pleasant. You have a new identity.

I'm now rethinking myself. A new me. You can tell yourself some new story, but it's another story.

So the waking up is knowing yourself who you are beyond the story, and that cannot be defined through any concept or word. You can only know it at this moment. Here.

As the aliveness, the alert presence in which what you are perceiving at this moment is taking place. You're perceiving the voice, the room, the man on the chair allowing it to be as it is. And you become aware, one could say, of your own presence as the field in which that perception happens.

It wouldn't be without you. This phenomenon that you're perceiving is inside you. So you are the presence that makes this possible.

And at the deepest level, one can say, you are the now in which everything happens. And that is the arising from within of something that has nothing to do with your life situation. It has nothing to do with whether you have another 50 years to live, or another five months to live.

And nothing to do with whether the world is telling you that you are important, or the world is telling you that you are unimportant. What difference does it make? It's a story in the head.

And then what remains is always the aliveness, the incredible aliveness of this moment, which you don't even know when you're running away from it, deny it, resist it. The incredible power that is hiding behind whatever is happening at this moment. And that is not a power that is separate from who you are.

It is consciousness itself, which is the essence of your being. Not the form that it takes, that's temporary. So you could be sitting on a bus in the state of, yes, beautiful underlying sense of aliveness as you watch the streets go past you, people come in, sit next, and you are there as an alive presence.

And then the dreamlike nature of the phenomenal world becomes actually very enjoyable. All these life forms, the continuous flux of beautiful life forms coming together, separating. Even the traffic can be beautiful when the mind isn't saying, this shouldn't be.

It's all energy movement. If some of it may be a little mad, but that's because humans don't know who they are. So they create a somewhat mad civilization.

But you don't contribute to the madness anymore. You allow that also. And through the allowing, something that is not mad arises.

It can only arise through you. Can't wait for others to wake up. I'm not waking up unless you do.

You go first. So you sit in any situation, or you are standing at the bus stop, and the rain is blowing in your face, and it's windy, and it's cold. And it is.

And there's, in the absence of the story which says, I'm 45 years old, and I'm still standing at the bus stop. I don't have a car. Or I had a car, and it's gone.

This is what my life has come to. Look at those greedy people driving around in their big cars. I hate them.

Life just isn't fair. It's, and the story goes, and so very often the story of me clashes with the form that this moment takes. And this shouldn't be.

But it is. So there can be two people standing at the bus stop. Perhaps two people who have had the similar experiences they had.

They became wealthy, and they were married, and then they lost it all. Went bankrupt, the wife left, the children don't want to see them anymore, and they're standing at a bus stop. One person is standing there with a story running through his head, and it's miserable.

Getting wet, because that adds to the story. The wind. The most miserable existence.

And the other man experienced the same thing. And he's there. Cold, yes.

Getting a bit wet here also, yes. Wet is wet. There's no suffering in wet.

And he's, and then he notices, because he allows this moment without imposing a story on it, the air still smells good, or the sky, the cloud. He will see, first of all, he will see some beauty somewhere, even in the city. But more importantly, he will feel an underlying aliveness, an underlying goodness that has nothing to do with what form this moment takes, and nothing to do with a mental story that you're telling yourself about your identity.

This means your identity has shifted when you are no longer invested, investment of self in the story. Your identity has shifted from a narrative, from a story to something much more real. You are a conscious field of presence at this moment.

And you discover an underlying power and aliveness and goodness to this moment, even if the external form that it takes isn't all that great. And the miracle that happens, because you are now connected with the greater intelligence, with the power of life itself, even on the external level, life tends to become more supportive and helpful, because you are not fighting life anymore. Helpful factors come in, coincidences happen more.

It no longer matters that much, because this moment is as it is. And in knowing that it is as it is, a goodness reveals itself to you that was not apparent when you only saw the surface appearance of this moment. That goodness is not passive.

That goodness is an active power that then comes through you, manifests through you. And it may well be, to carry on with the analogy of the two men, you might say something to the man who is burdened with his unhappy story. Just a word or two, and perhaps there's a beginning of an awakening in him, a tiny moment where he steps out of his story.

And so you become, when you no longer, yourself is no longer in your story, you become, one could almost say, a blessing on this planet. Because something that is deeper than the person, a force, a power that is you and yet deeper than you, can express itself through you. And then it becomes your life purpose to be an expression of that whatever form that may take externally.

But for this to happen, it is necessary that you step out of identification with a storyline. And see, yes, of course, you have a history. But to not tell yourself that story at every moment, but to be here, take your attention out and be here.

And when you notice suffering arises, it's resistance, the story is back, the suffering me is back, and you can step out again. So an alertness comes every time you step out of the story. And a dreamlike thing happens when you fall back into identification with what you're telling yourself in your head about yourself.

It's like really, you can see now why in spiritual language, the term awakening is used, because it is truly an awakening out of thought. And when you fall back into thought and into the story, you can see the difference in consciousness of falling back in into, you're asleep, maybe not snoring, but almost. And so that presence, that is the key that as you go through your life, you have to frequently step out of the story, because the story is happy and unhappy and happy and unhappy, or in some cases, unhappy, unhappy, unhappy.

The intervals of happiness and unhappiness vary, but unhappiness will come again if it's not here now, if you're there in the story. You could have a perfect existence, good job, beautiful husband or wife, loving, beautiful, faithful, plenty of money too, beautiful children, all doing so well, nice house, two cars, everything is so great. It can't stay like

that.

Something will come in eventually, life does that. And if it stays like that for a very long time, the greater the shock when something does come in. That means some kind of loss somewhere, some interference, something not going as it should, and the awakening begins.

Let's be grateful for your sufferings, because you wouldn't be here otherwise. Let's be grateful for the unhappiness, the story that you had to live with. Something, it means it worked, the unhappiness worked because it took you here, and here made the realization that the unhappiness and the suffering has served its purpose, has taken you into awakening.

And once the momentum of awakening has happened, suffering becomes optional. And you are able to choose presence, to choose the yes to now, to choose to walk on the narrow, this very narrow path that is now. And more and more past and future are only there when you need them to refer to, make an appointment for next week, arrange to meet someone, say, I'm going to study this for the next three years.

Okay, practical, then you're back to now. Now, if the next three years you're going to spend every moment hoping to get to the end of the three years, then every moment is reduced to a means to an end. Life loses its aliveness, loses its power, loses its beauty.

A continuous stepping back into now, out of time, out of identification with thought, into the fullness of now. And some people had to go through enormous suffering to learn this, more suffering perhaps than anybody here. Suffering to the point where they couldn't stand it anymore.

And suddenly the shift happened, and there was an inner yes to now. Oh, what's happened? Can't explain it.

Suddenly there's a vitally alive peace. That's the peace that passes all understanding and can be there no matter where you are in your life situation. It can be there whether it's good or bad at the moment.

And if it's very good, you're more likely to be drawn back into the dream world. Oh, it's great, let's have another drink until the next shock happens. So we are becoming familiar here with the state of presence.

Alert, an alert acceptance of what is. With little things, big things. And if you fall back into reactivity, you fall back into a no, then you recognize it.

Oh, there goes another no, okay. Except you're unhappy, which means a story in your head, telling yourself why you are unhappy and have every right to be unhappy and could not not be unhappy. Everybody would be unhappy in my situation.

One of the thoughts I had since childhood that went on until the age of 29, whenever something went wrong in my life, the thought came, oh yeah, it's got to always happens to me, bad things always happen to me, always. And they did. That was a, at least I knew who I was, or I thought I did, an unhappy me.

And I could have told you many reasons why I had every right to be unhappy. Perhaps everybody in this room could do that. And yet, most of you have stepped out of that already.

But occasionally you get drawn back into the story. Oh. So the only teaching this afternoon is presence, is that state of consciousness.

The state of yes, yes to life, that's all, yes to life, no matter what, yes. And where's life? Here, now, now.

You can wait for the next challenge, or you can do it now. And that's an enormous shift. You no longer need a challenge to wake you up.

You are choosing to wake up. Ultimately, you are not separate from the totality, so you cannot choose. Okay.

There is no separate entity, but you can, with different perspectives, different levels of looking, it is a helpful way of looking at yourself and realize that you can choose to be present now. You can choose to step out of the story of me. You can choose to step out of the heaviness of my past and the anxiety of my future and constant preoccupation with that.

You can choose to say, no, I'm not having this, I'm having this, because only this is real. This is now. And so that choice is there.

If you look more deeply, it may well be that when you perceive this as having choice, at that moment, something greater than you, and yet not separate from you, ultimately you, is moving through you and expressing itself. And then you say, okay, I choose presence. Good.

And then every challenge that comes into your life, suddenly, instead of pulling you back into reaction, which it does usually, you can hold presence for when nothing is happening, everything is fine. As somebody wrote to me, I can be spiritual when I'm sitting alone in a room. But the moment I start interacting with people, I lose it.

And by divine grace, it is a fact that people are difficult, quite often. They're also wonderful if you look deep enough. Beautiful.

But you often have to look deep underneath the surface. First, you have to go underneath the surface in yourself to reach that which is underneath the surface in others. If you haven't gone deeper than the surface self in yourself, you will be relating to another surface self.

One story relates to another story. And the other story of me may be a competing narrative. Whether you have a big argument, or whether you get out a machine gun, it's only a question of degree.

So this afternoon is the arising of that here. And the mind says, I don't know if it really is arising. How can you be sure that it is arising?

How can you prove that it is really happening? Because, of course, it cannot be understood through thought. The very essence of this arising is something is arising that is deeper than thought.

And in the intermediate stage of this, thought becomes less heavy in your life. Thought loses its capacity to make you unhappy. Thought for a while still goes on with its old records or CDs.

I used to say records, and then one editor crossed it out and put in CD. I hadn't realized that things had changed. But it comes to the same thing.

It's better sound quality, doesn't make much difference as far as this is concerned. I can now hear myself much better. The unhappy story is much more clear now.

So the old records come back sometimes. But an interesting thing happens. You might notice that you're not totally in it anymore.

The same thoughts may still come, but there's a little bit of space between you. In fact, you are the space and the thought. Is this the old thought?

Oh, yeah, that is happening to me, all the bad things that happened to me. And then you may find yourself smiling occasionally. When an old thought, an old interpretation happens of yourself or someone else.

So as this shift happens, thought loses its heaviness and ultimately its capacity to make you unhappy, because nothing really ever makes you unhappy than a thought. And so that's, you have a space between yourself and thought. Or to put more accurately, you, more and more you sense yourself to be a deeper and vaster spaciousness in which occasionally thinking happens.

And then you more than, you will find that new thoughts occasionally come in that are actually creative, fresh, alive, and have a positive contribution to make to this world as an insight, something you say to someone, it just comes out of you. There was no intention. You just say the one thing that this person needs to hear and it comes out of you.

And so that happens more and more that thought loses its power to make you unhappy. And the thought that does occur tends to become inspired and helpful. It is no longer self-invested thinking.

You've stopped looking for an enhanced identity through constructing some new thoughts, through identifying with some new thought form, whether it be a flashy car, which you want to add to myself as a thought form. It's not the car that is added to yourself. It's the thought form that matters, which says, me, I am the Rolls Royce.

It's mine. It gets incorporated into the story of me. And then I got the Rolls Royce.

I made it. I made it. Until after six months, it's not fulfilling.

You're sitting there driving. It's not fulfilling anymore. Maybe that wasn't the right car.

Maybe too many other people have Rolls Royces. Well, if in London they do, then you have to think of something else. I need a different thought form to make me really feel special.

No end to it. That goes. Then thought is fine.

Identity has shifted. Ah, thank you. Our physical bodies may want to move a little bit.

So we will take a break and see if you can just take that presence with you as you walk around, look, even interact. That's a difficult one. It interact with people.

We may talk about that, how that can draw you back into mind and how to stay present in the interaction. We will meet again when the hands on your watch or clock point towards 20 to four, which of course will be the now again. Thank you.

[Speaker 18] (8:06:41 - 8:06:42)

Welcome.

[Speaker 1] (8:06:55 - 8:37:37)

I'm inviting you to be here fully, to inhabit this moment completely. To make yourself at home in this moment, the now, or whatever it is, the now, and it's so normal not to be at home in the now, but to look for your home somewhere else. And that deeply conditioned mind pattern, collective, if it is operating in you at this moment, you will already feel restless or impatient.

And a little voice in the head is saying, come on, get on with it. This need to get on with it is the need to move away from now into future. Looking for your home, for yourself.

A little hint that may make it easier to be here fully. Is to feel a certain connectedness with the inner energy field of the body as you sit here. Simply to, it's not complicated, simply to sense that the body is alive.

To sense an underlying, this underlying field of aliveness. So some of your attention is there. It's subtle, just, but in a very subtle way.

Yes, of course, the body is alive. Every cell is alive. Every cell is intelligent, more intelligent than the human mind.

So just to sense that. So to inhabit the now, one aspect of being fully present, a very rare state so far on this planet. And one aspect of that is to also to inhabit the body, to be in it, to have some attention in it.

So you're rooted, not totally in the head, not totally in your stream of thoughts, but with some attention in that aliveness that is here. And then it's easier to sit here and listen to a speaker who is not saying very much. Who is giving nothing to believe in, or even arousing your emotions.

Then it's easier to be here with yourself. So we are here to experience the possibility of living in a different state of consciousness from the normal state, which is not to be here. To be identified with a stream of thought, which is always about past and future.

And as you sit here, sensing, even as you listen, that yes, there is an aliveness throughout my body. And you feel that, and there's enough attention left to listen. So you're entering a state of alert presence.

And in that state, you're aware of the words. And in themselves, the words so far have not been very important. Because they point to something, that's all.

In themselves, they are nothing. So you can be here, and allow a state of alert presence to arise. In which you are able to allow this moment, the now, to be.

So I'm inviting you to enter that state of consciousness together. Which, from the point of view of the thinking mind, and from the point of view of that sense of self that is derived from continuous thought activity, a conceptualized me in the head, with its story, its name, its accumulation of experiences. From the point of view of that mind-made self, this state of consciousness is not significant.

It cannot be recognized by thought as significant. Thought is interested in the next thing, not this. Thought is saying, okay, you've been talking about the now for 10 minutes now.

What's next? I want to move on to the next thing. I've come here to be filled up, to be given something, to add something to the content of my mind that I can take home, and it's not coming.

Because nothing needs to be added to you. And to see that, ultimately, to be yourself fully, nothing needs to be added, that's an amazing revelation. Because everybody's looking to add something to me, to improve me through adding, to make me more complete, the self.

I want to be bigger, more important, more spiritual, more wealthy, more secure, powerful. And if you can't have that, it'll be happy to say, I'm miserable and I want to be even more miserable. It's a mind-made sense of self, a story, happy, unhappy, more unhappy than happy.

And from the point of view of that, this state of consciousness that we are allowing to arise is not significant. Presence, how does that solve my problems? How does that add more to me?

And yet, it solves all your problems. So as we sit here, to continue to feel that inner connectedness with the body, and occasionally detect a little voice in the head that's complaining, uh, uh, uh, not enough, I'm not being fed, give me something to grasp. And of course, usually this is what happens in this building, an institution of learning or education where you're being fed information.

And you're being told many things, taught many things except what really matters. So, even if you notice restlessness arising, notice it, watch that, allow that also to be, allow this moment to be, you might as well because this moment is always as it is. There is a suchness to now, the only place there ever is.

Or if you, that may be, not everybody in this room may know that there's only now. You can remember the past, but only in the now. And what you remember once was the now, otherwise it couldn't have happened.

There would be nothing to remember. So it's the, the power, the light of now that gives life to the past and the future, a mental projection. Some project it now, one day, this is going to happen tomorrow.

When it comes, it's not the future anymore. It's the now. And you can only project a future now.

You can only think of a future now. When it comes, it comes as the now. So this is an important realization because we are moving into the now and it's good to see how vital that is because it is life itself.

And humans live as if the now were totally, not only insignificant, they live trying to get away from it. Always, except for rare moments and, ah, I have arrived. But you never arrive for very long and then you realize you haven't arrived.

I've made it. Oh, no, I haven't made it. So present moment awareness is why we are here.

Not to acquire new ideas. To allow that state that one could call awareness, now awareness, which is a new state of consciousness for human beings, allow that to arise. And something in you loves it and responds to it.

And something else in you would rather be somewhere else and is saying, this isn't getting me anywhere. And one or two or more of you may leave because you're not being given content for the mind. And so you can go from here maybe to a lecture at a higher place of learning and you will get all that.

Lecture on Buddhist philosophy, so much to learn. And yet the essence is so amazingly simple. So as we sit here, we settle into now.

And if something within doesn't feel settled in the now, you notice that. Maybe a little notch in the chest, a little heaviness here. You notice that.

And allow that, an openness. You bring an openness to now. Instead of arguing with now or trying to run away from it.

So present moment awareness arises, which is a state of great intelligence. All creativity comes out of that. That state is known by anyone who has achieved mastery in any field.

In that field of mastery, he or she is able to access that state of consciousness where you are no longer dependent on the accumulated knowledge, although that may come into play. You're not dependent on the accumulated knowledge of the mind where newness can come in, a new creation, a new insight, realization, fresh, new, alive. That cannot be created by the human mind.

The human mind can be a tool in giving that form, but it cannot be derived from the human mind, which is a kind of a computer. It stores information. It analyzes information.

It distinguishes between this and this and that. As that, it works quite well. But creative comes from a deeper place of where the one intelligence that expresses itself in form as the universe, where that resides in each human being, that one intelligence that is far greater than the conditioned little intelligence of the mind.

It encompasses it, but it's far greater. And that is accessible in every human being as that state of consciousness of presence. And anybody who has achieved mastery in any field is familiar with that state, even if they don't know it, they may not be able to talk about it, but they sit and an alertness arises.

They're not trying to get away from this moment. Oh, I need to get there. There's total attention to the field of now.

And then the creative impulse comes or the creative insight happens. And then perhaps at that stage, the mind gives it expressions, perhaps through words or some movement happens for the artist or even to the scientist. The problem he's been thinking about for hundreds of hours, suddenly he or she enters the state of aware presence in which thought mind activity subsides, but you don't lose consciousness at all.

There's full awakened consciousness. Unconditioned, it has nothing to do with your past. It can arise at any point in your life.

Sometimes it arises accidentally when people are faced with death or a very dangerous situation that the mind could not cope with. And then the mind steps aside and that intelligence takes over while that critical situation lasts. And then people admire you and say, you did such a great thing and you realize you didn't do anything.

It happened. I didn't do anything. I just did it.

I don't know. You are a hero. Well, no, I didn't do anything.

So that human beings here and there have tasted that, but it has never arisen on the planet as a new state of consciousness, not collectively. It's happened to a few individuals here and there. And in many cases, only in the isolated field of their activity, those who created great things.

And then as a way of habitual state of consciousness for a few so-called masters who dwell in that new state, but it is the destiny of all humans to become masters, to be masters, to embody that transformed consciousness. That's why we are here. So that needs to be seen how important it is for you to allow that state to arise.

And it wants to arise. The intelligence wants to move through this form and flower through this form. Humanity on the whole has not yet flowered.

A few flowers here and there, Buddha, Jesus, many of them misunderstood and a few that we don't know about. And a few partial flowers, great artists, for example. Partial flowers because they were not yet able to live in that state, but they had access to it in their field of endeavor.

And now, because we're arriving at a very critical stage on this planet, this state needs to arise in humans as the next evolutionary step for mankind. We can't get out of our problems on the same level of consciousness that created the problems, neither on a personal level nor on a collective level. Accumulating more information, more facts, memorize more facts, is that going to solve humanity's problems?

Analysis. It's still the same state of consciousness in which you're identified with a mind-made image that is never fulfilled for long, and it needs more. It needs its enemies because it defines its sense of me through others.

And it feels stronger in its illusory sense of self, me, my story, my name, my history. Humans don't know themselves beyond that. And that covers up that which is unconditioned in each human being, the unconditioned consciousness, because they're totally identified with the conditioned, derive their sense of self from that.

And so why we are here is to allow that unconditioned to arise. And this gathering here is part of the transformation of human consciousness. I'm not giving you some new idea that says, it's all going to change at some future point.

It's changing already. Otherwise, you wouldn't be here if you were not, if that change were not operating through you, you wouldn't be here. Except one or two who got dragged here against their will.

You must come to this and listen. I don't want to listen to this. But sometimes, even those who got dragged to a gathering suddenly listen.

Oh, they recognize something as if they had known it. But this does not, let's not mislead ourselves and make this into a new interesting idea to believe in. And that idea would be consciousness is changing.

I believe that now, that's not enough. You've only strengthened your sense of self by identifying with a new belief and perhaps feeling a little bit more important now, because it's changing through me. And you will know that this is the case when somebody that you meet after this gathering, maybe your partner, your parents or a friend, and you'd say something about it and they say, no, that's not happiness, it's just nonsense.

And you get defensive. Oh, what are you defending? Yourself, a mental position.

It's become a mental position. And mental positions need to be defended. When you identify with a mental position, you derive your sense of self from that mental position.

You need to defend yourself. I'm right. No, you're wrong.

With a lot of emotional violence sometimes. So we're not making it into some new mind stuff. It's easy to happen.

This is how religions arise. At the core of it, there is a deep truth. And then the mind comes in.

And makes it into something to believe in. And to argue with and make others wrong and make yourself right. Oh, great.

Killing others to show that you are right. In that delusion, to make somebody else wrong can be a war on a collective level. Religious war, nationalistic war.

What on a personal level is making someone wrong. The need to be right. Identifying with thought.

Completely. That is coming to an end. And what arises is a state of consciousness that one cannot really talk about.

Because all the words are created by the mind. It's a miracle that one talks about it. The words, however, are not it.

They are only pointers. And if you're trying to understand what I'm pointing to, you won't. It can only be known directly.

How? Allow this moment to be as it is. Align yourself with now.

This is how we started. And this is the central core of our gathering. Is to align yourself internally with now.

It does not mean that you now become lethargic and no action will ever happen again. The opposite is true. It is a state that is both deeply at rest and if needed, dynamic.

That state of alignment with now will respond immediately to whatever challenge presents itself in your life at this moment. Action will arise out of that state. Out of that intelligence that is in that state.

And that far more effective action than action that comes out of the state of denial of now and needs to arrive at some future point to make myself bigger. To get somewhere. To achieve anger, restlessness.

Not enough. I have to make it. So to become familiar with that incredible state of unconditioned presence, which is the state that...

Nothing else is the whole teachings in Zen. And some of you have read books about Zen or even practiced Zen. And it's usually regarded as very enigmatic teaching.

You can't quite figure out what they're talking about. People spend years studying, trying to figure out what are they actually saying? And there's some deep, some obscure sense that there's something important here, but I continue to miss it.

And there are even monks in Zen monasteries who miss it. And it's so simple. It's all embodied.

It's all expressed in the beautiful gesture of the Zen master who would only ever give one answer to the question, what is Zen? And that his answer was wordless. It was this.

[Speaker 18] (8:37:48 - 8:37:49)

Oh.

[Speaker 1] (8:38:06 - 9:00:12)

And more people got it through this Zen master than other Zen masters who gave verbal explanations or would hit you with a stick. That's another method. And if they didn't get it when he did that, and he looked very fierce, the way Zen masters look, it shocks you into awakening.

But those who didn't get it, they said, did you hear my question? It didn't work. To become familiar, and I haven't very often gone into it as I'm doing this evening.

You must be ready for it. Otherwise, it wouldn't be happening. What arises in humans, in you now, is something amazing.

It is both simple and profound and amazing, and an amazing evolutionary leap. And what is that? It is the state of, and now please don't be frightened.

It is the state of no thought. It is the state without loss of consciousness. Instead, an enormous intensification of consciousness compared to which the state of thought is a dream-like state, as particularly the state of being identified with thought continuously with that stream of mental noise, which is still the normal state, is a dream-like state compared to the state of being free of thought.

Not that thought will never again arise, but you become familiar with that state in which there is a simple, clear space of alert presence. And the mind is not labeling what is. The allowing is so deep that it is not necessary to interpret this moment.

A greater intelligence than the little conditioned intelligence that is labeling or interpreting this moment now comes into operation. But from the point of view of the mind, the labeling intelligence, the analytical information-gathering mind, from the point of view of that, the state of no thought looks as if you didn't know anything anymore, and it's frightened of that state. And the amazing thing is, in many of you, because that state, it is an evolutionary universal impulse, that state wants to arise through humans now, and in many of you it is already arising at all kinds of moments, but it's often not recognized for what it is, because the mind cannot recognize it.

You can't do anything. There's nothing there for the mind. The mind is object consciousness.

It is consciousness with content. You're conscious. The mind is always identified with some content, thought forms, some form.

And when you walk through the city, you can see how the mind is either commenting on what you see, even that is rare, because most of the time, the mind is totally elsewhere, and you just have just enough awareness not to bump into people. You're just peripherally aware of your surroundings, just enough, but otherwise you're thinking about something much more important than this moment. And of course, it's some form of next moment, so much more important, but you need to get there as quickly as possible.

That's normal. And it's easy, so easy to overlook that this state is already arising in you, but it's immediately obscured again by mental noise. So one thing that you can do is to watch the arising of the state that is free of thought.

It is a state of simple, clear, alert presence. It is alert, but relaxed at the same time. And that is the essence of who you are, is that field of aware presence.

It can only be now, that is inseparable from now. That is actually the essence of now, of what now means. There is a now that is associated with objects that arise in the now.

That's mind, thoughts, sense perceptions, people, situations, events. They arise, objects in consciousness arise. Most humans only know themselves as an object in consciousness.

They only know themselves as a story that they are telling themselves, my past. Who are you? The name, which is a sequence of sounds, not much more.

I am John Smith. Oh, okay, now I know. And then there's a role that is an object in consciousness that you identify with.

Society has given you maybe two or three roles. You ask, who are you? You get the name as an answer.

Then you get, I'm a mother of three. I'm an accountant. I'm a divorcee.

I'm unemployed. I'm a professor of such and such, or whatever it may be. Or I'm somebody who's been treated unfairly by life, all his life.

Let me tell you about it. And so that's all people know. Mind objects, they derive their sense of identity from mind objects, thoughts, an accumulation of certain thoughts and images in the mind.

And that becomes a me. Now, the reason why people cannot stop thinking, it seems that they can't, but they can as the new consciousness is arising. But it's compulsive still to a large extent.

Thought is compulsive. Everybody, in almost everybody, the stream of thinking, they don't, I must think. Think, think, think, think all day long.

You must think about something. Even when there's nothing to think about, you must think, think. And psychologists examine that.

Even psychologists who are not aware of that there's a new consciousness arising, or if you told them that, they would say, come to me for treatment. But even psychologists, they have examined the nature of thought and what kinds of thoughts go through people's heads. And they've come to the conclusion in several studies that 98% of, or 99% of thought activity is totally repetitive.

The same thoughts go through your head again and again. But the mind is telling you, this is terribly important. I'm, I need to take responsibility for my life.

These are big problems that I'm thinking about. And you have no time for presence. The problems are too important for that.

And you can see the absence when you look into people's eyes sometimes. You can see there's nobody there. They are not here.

They are in some, it's the, they're not really looking. The look is inwards. It's, it's all, all their consciousness is absorbed by thought.

And that's where their attention is. It's, it can't go out. It goes back in.

And there's no emanation. There's no energy coming out of them. It's like a thick veil has descended.

And when you look, you can clearly see that they are somewhere totally different. A mind projection. Future, probably.

Unless they're so old, there's little future left, in which case they'll live in the past. And the strange thing is, you are fooling yourself that your thinking serves a useful purpose, that it's actually there to figure out how to solve your problems. But it's actually creating far more problems than solving.

The amazing thing is, useless thinking is the place where problems are being created. There is no problem here, now. Now I can hear one or two minds saying, surely the world is full of problems and dreadful things are happening at this very moment.

Are you telling me that that's all an illusion? No. Of course dreadful things are happening at this moment.

And that's because it is an externalization of the normal human state of consciousness, which is very dysfunctional now, especially in its final stage. That is very dysfunctional. So enormous problems, yes.

But are we solving them? The peace process, another peace process, and more bombs, and more peace process, and more bombs. It's only from a different state of consciousness that these things can be solved.

Now let's look at your own life, which seems that your identity is partly, consists of problems. The sense of who you feel you are, an essential ingredient in that sense of me, my life situation, my past, my possible future, if there is one, because you can never be sure. My past, my future, that I hope there is a future.

Because I need to complete my story and make it work. It's not really working yet. Not yet.

But any day now, this is actually going to work. That's a strange thing that it doesn't really work in anybody, not for very long. And then again, it's, oh, because the story cannot give you a satisfying sense of self.

It is only content in the head. So it's never satisfying for long. You never complete yourself in it.

And even if the world thinks you have, when you look into these people who seem to have made it, and even scientists, you realize that even they often think, no, I haven't really solved the ultimate problem yet. Even Einstein, who was a deeply, very much in touch with his inner being more than most other scientists, hadn't arrived at the, hadn't worked out the entire secret of the universe, whatever it was, the unified field theory, or whatever it was called, he couldn't work that out. But the world, to the world, he was the greatest of scientists, and he was, because he had access to that.

And yet, on the level of his story, it didn't have seemed to work out either, because he couldn't figure out the ultimate secret of the universe. So the story, in it's, cannot work structurally. In the very structure of that sense of self is contained the element of unsatisfactoriness of not working, not satisfying you, not, not completing you.

So it's great to see that, oh, that means your life situation is no longer all absorbing. It does not absorb your entire attention anymore. It is a desperate search to make it, to arrive, to attain, and that goes.

And then you realize there's something far more vital than your life situation. Not that you don't honor it, as your situation unfolds in time. You have a role in relation to society, temporary roles, you honor that without seeking yourself in it.

You play the role of mother for a while without being totally identified with the role. Then you become a stifling mother. But if you can play, you can honor your role beautifully without being absorbed in it and deriving your sense of identity from it and thinking that's who I am because the role comes to an end.

The chairman of the big corporation retires and then he sits there and the phone doesn't ring anymore and nobody tells him who he is anymore. And he had never inquired more deeply before. It's sometimes a little late when you reach old age and you have never inquired more deeply into who you are beyond objects in consciousness.

So here arises that which in ancient traditions is sometimes called the self, not the little self, the Atman, the one universal intelligence that is the essence of your identity. It arises as simple thoughtless awareness. One could say stillness.

That's only a small aspect of it. It is an inner field of stillness and yet it is so alert. And when you find for the first time there are moments when you can look upon something, perhaps some in nature, perhaps it is a tree, a flower, you perceive it and it is not being labeled by the mind.

That is the arising of thoughtless awareness. There is a knowing in that but it is very different from what the thinking mind calls knowing. And you haven't lost the labels.

If a label should be needed, it's there but it's no longer absorbing all your attention, the conceptualized world of labels. So, so far humans have lived not only in a conceptualized sense of self in the head but the moment you live in a conceptualized sense of self in the head, you inhabit a conceptualized reality. In other words, whatever you come into contact with is immediately made into mental concepts.

It is immediately judged, interpreted and labeled according to the conditioning of the conceptualized mind and the self that is in here, the me. So people go through life, every situation they immediately interpret it, judge it, classify it, comment on it internally, often complain about it, dislike it. So, and this is called intelligence.

And at school, the children who are very quick to label things, they are called the good pupils. The best pupils are the ones who can immediately come up with an answer and can retain information and spit it out quickly. Best student in class, the hand goes up always immediately, I have the answer.

And then you have others who are slower and the teacher asks the question and those are the children in whom this new consciousness often is already rising. And there is not an immediate label there because the question is actually quite deep and so it falls into the depths and the pupil or the student just looks. And then the teacher says, okay, you don't know obviously.

And it's often even Einstein was not very good at school, there was too much depth, he couldn't immediately produce good results in exams. So that's the amazing thing which to the mind looks not important, how is that going to solve my problems? You look at a flower, you look at a tree, you look at the sky or anything and the perception arises in a field of alert stillness.

It doesn't matter how long, it's a timeless moment now.

[Speaker 18] (9:00:14 - 9:00:15)

And maybe after three seconds.

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[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 1:15:54)

Yield of alert stillness. It doesn't matter how long, it's a timeless moment now. And maybe after three seconds of clock time, the mind may come in and say this is a beautiful flower.

But for three seconds, four seconds, five seconds, maybe much more. The sense perception happened within a field of still and alert presence. And maybe even the mind may come in after that and say, oh, I just perceived the flower in complete stillness, which is mental noise, of course.

But it is after that, the mind may come in different ways and claim and say something, or it may be very uneasy. The mind may suddenly come up with a huge amount of noise because it's frightened of that state of stillness because it thinks it's out of control now. I am not controlling the universe anymore.

If I don't interpret and judge every moment, how do I figure out what this thing is all about this moment? And the amazing thing is, more often than not, you don't need to figure out what this is all about. You just need to look.

In the same way that the artist looks at a canvas in a state of that intense presence, you look at a situation. And not attempting to figure it out. That is habitual, of course.

So the ability arises. At first, you see it when you're in little perceptions and it's not being labeled. There's a spaciousness suddenly that is there, in which it, and that is, what that means is the world around you that before was a conceptualized reality because you imposed mental labels on everything immediately which deadened the world around you.

People don't realize how dead the universe that they inhabit has become through immediate and compulsive mental labeling. All you relate to then is the labels. You mistake the labels for what's there.

On a simple level, you mistake, if that's a lily, I'm not sure, the label lily, you think you know what it is. What is this? Oh, it's a lily.

Hmm. That's the end of it. But there is such, the mystery that is there, the incredible beauty and depth that is there is gone completely because you've labeled it.

But if you allow the perception to arise in the field of stillness, it suddenly comes to life. It has a depth to it. And a beauty and even a sacredness which before, completely unaware of.

And the entire universe you realize is an alive organism that humans have deadened, well, to themselves. As far as they are concerned, the world is a dead place. So when you begin to allow perceptions to arise without compulsive labeling, the world comes alive again.

There's a depth to everything and a mystery. You don't fall into the delusion that when you have a little sound about something, then you know what it is. Lily.

Or even worse with human beings, when you have a little set of judgments about a human being, then you think you know who that human being is and the depth, aliveness and sacredness that is there in every human being is gone totally, it's not there for you. All you know is that, oh, he is a such and such, she is a such and such and this is what she did and said and this is how she always is. And if you've gone, all you know is you've said a little bit about the conditioning of that person and a lot about your own conditioning, that's all.

It was partly a projection of your own conditioning and partly perhaps a seeing of the conditioning of that person, if you're lucky. And so you reduce human beings to absurd caricatures by imposing a set of labels and think that's, people even do it to their partners. They don't see the partner anymore, just the opinion now, the labels that they have, that's how she is, that's all.

And that's, human relations are so problematic, conflict-ridden because there are no human relations. There are conditioned mind entities relating to each other but the being of the human being is obscured by the labeling. The being isn't there, just minds interacting.

So at first you walk, nature can be a great help as you enter that state of aware presence. You walk through nature or you sit somewhere and simply watch for a while, oh. Now this is very much like a one-year-old baby would watch the world, a baby that hasn't accumulated the labels yet in the mind.

There's a small stage when the baby's aware of surroundings but has not yet accumulated the necessary labels to interpret the surroundings. So it hasn't even started to ask, what's this, what's this, what's this yet? Because that's the mind, it simply looks.

And some babies, you can see it very clearly, there's enormous consciousness light shining through their eyes. Enormous love and joy looking through their eyes at you and you know they're not saying anything in their heads about you. They have no opinion about you.

There's true communication, true communion as they look. And some humans can sense that so they feel drawn to that baby and they don't want to leave. They might make funny noises or something through, oh little, but the baby doesn't really need that.

But they feel drawn to the baby because there's almost a self-recognition there. Oh, and that is the, it is the destiny of humans to re-enter that state. But when they re-enter that state, it will have an added knowing to it because they have moved through the stage of mind and thought.

Humanity as a whole has moved through that evolutionary cycle that is identification with thought a long, long, long cycle for humanity. And it's been tough. It's been tough on humans, as particularly in the later stages when in the later stages of any evolutionary cycle, it is that cycle, that state that is in that cycle displays increasing dysfunction.

So it's been tough for humans and even more tough for the planet as humans are moving into greater and greater dysfunction because the cycle of identification with thought is coming to an end and a thought-based self is coming to an end. The planet is suffering greatly from human madness because we really need to call it now madness. Nothing wrong.

It's not saying that shouldn't be happening. It is right for humans to be mad at this moment, but we need to see it also as madness that is also right. The caterpillar becomes a butterfly.

In the final stage of the caterpillar's life, the caterpillar becomes dysfunctional as a caterpillar. It doesn't work anymore. Humans now have become dysfunctional on the planet.

It's not working anymore. We are destroying ourselves and the planet. Yes, this is the end of the evolutionary cycle.

That's why it's mad, not that it shouldn't be happening. This is within the totality. It could not be otherwise, but part of this is to see that it is mad, not condemning it as bad and shouldn't be happening, but to see it.

And the seeing is already the beginning of liberation because that which sees the conditioned and its dysfunction is the arising of the unconditioned consciousness. And so increasingly, there's the ability to witness your own mind. And then there's the ability to dwell in the gaps.

One thought comes to an end, no other thought has started. There's a gap of still presence. And in that gap, there's great intelligence at work.

This could be a very passive state. You're sitting on a park bench, simply looking in amazement at the beauty of all these forms all around you. And then it exists as a dynamic state, which arises whenever you are confronted with a challenge.

And life tends to do that. It doesn't leave you alone for too long. And up comes another challenge, some situation.

And instead of being drawn back into the old reaction, the conditioned reaction, the old resistance pattern, instead of that, you meet the challenge through alert presence, stillness, allow it to be. And there is a flow, one could say, a current of awareness flows through this form into the situation that is the challenge. And this is an amazing thing, the arising of this ability to simply look.

To simply give attention. So what then flows through you, one could say, all words are limited. So take that into consideration.

They're only approximations. One could say what flows through you is, or what arises, a field of attention. And that is the expression of unconditioned intelligence.

And any situation that you face fully in that way, because the old reaction never faces the situation fully. It denies it, runs away from it. It never faces this moment fully, which is the only place where a challenge can arise.

And in that way, it is faced immediately and intelligent action, if action should be needed, arises. Or no action may arise and the intelligence that you are now aligned with, the one intelligence, acts upon the situation from some external point. In other words, here's the challenge, attention flows.

You allow the prerequisite for the current of awareness to flow into a situation. The prerequisite for that is that you allow this moment to be, because you have given up arguing with what is. You have seen that is already is.

Whatever is, is. Not that it cannot be changed, but at this moment, it is as it is. Not only that, it also could not be otherwise.

If it is, it couldn't be otherwise. Because the tiniest we separate events and say, this is a separate event. This is a separate situation, but nothing is separate.

Every event happens within the totality of the entire cosmos. It is a web of interconnectedness with which every seemingly separate event is connected. Whatever happens is totally connected with everything else.

So how could it not, it couldn't be otherwise for that reason. So it is madness to argue internally with the suchness of now. And that is, of course, to argue internally with the suchness of now is the normal human state of dysfunction.

And they think this is how they are going to change the world. The opposite is true. This is how the world remains the same in its dysfunction.

So the shift now is you see the futility of arguing with the suchness of now, no matter what form it takes. And then you allow the suchness of now to be as it is, which is not a state of passivity, but dynamic. You allow it, oh.

Now, certain situations, it is enough to allow the situation. Other situations require action, intelligent action. And the one intelligence that is greater than the human mind, the unconditioned, operates.

And it may operate as an external event that suddenly changes the situation. A coincidence, a factor that comes in that meets the needs of this moment. Just right.

And perhaps you did nothing. In some cases, you just sit there and watch. In some cases, no immediate action is possible.

There are situations, the challenge is there, but there's not yet anything I can do. So it's simply allowed and you continue the outflow of awareness that simply is there. And then when action becomes possible or necessary, it happens either through you or through an external factor or the situation changes by itself.

And this is amazing realization that in this way, problems do not arise anymore in your life because problems is to mentally dwell on challenges that either are not even here, that might arise, or challenges that at this time you cannot do anything about. And then you play around with thought in circles, round and round and round about these situations. And that's a problem.

Now you have a problem. And in its madness, the mind-based self likes that. It doesn't say that openly, but it can increase its sense of self.

You can enhance. It can enhance its sense of self because now it has serious problems. So I must be important.

This is the underlying assumption. And I like, therefore, I like to think about how important my problems are. And so you get totally absorbed by your life situation, by the story in the head.

And this is the state that I described as the state of absence. You're gone. Dream world in the head, thinking you're taking responsibility for your life by worrying and lying awake at night, thinking about what the future holds for you and what the future might do to you or what the future might withhold from you.

And it's, so that's, oh my God, this is how humans live. This is the normal way to live. And of course, by the way, normal these days means insane.

And so the root of dysfunction is in oneself. Where else could you really find it? And the transformation of the world is in yourself.

Out of that transformed consciousness comes a transformed world. Because we know the one good thing that has come out of physics, apart from the atom bomb and chemical warfare or whatever they do, hydrogen bomb. And a good thing that has come out of it is they have seen the interconnectedness between the observing consciousness and that which is being observed.

A change in perspective changes what you're observing. And that was an amazing realization that came out of modern physics and that has enormous repercussions. And you can see how the world, what we experience as the world in reality, now I'm talking about, especially the so-called man-made world, human-made world.

What we really experience, what you experience when you switch on your TV or in your, the world, whatever you experience as the world is basically your state of consciousness. So, and it's collective, it's not a personal, nobody to blame for anything. It's a collective human condition.

We have created this world. It is not entirely mad. There are redeeming features to it.

If it were entirely mad, it would already have self-destructed. It got very close in the latter, in the last century. It already got very close several times to self-destruction in its madness.

And it is still close. We are not free yet from the possibility of self-destruction, although the new state is arising. The only question is, is it arising fast enough?

Is it arising on a wide enough scale to compensate for the increasing madness of the old egoic consciousness and what it's doing to the planet and to human beings, to themselves, what they are doing to themselves? The fact that we are here is a good sign. This is the arising of the new.

I don't make any predictions because I don't know whether humanity is going to make it. Ultimately, of course, it doesn't matter. The universe is infinitely abundant in the life forms that it manifests.

The one intelligence manifesting as so many life forms and many life forms, after a while, the one consciousness says, okay, that's enough. I'm withdrawing from there. And it's gone.

And then it flows into something else and maybe it flowers through this form. I know that it wants to flower through the human form. And there's no predicting what the world will look like once human consciousness has flowered collectively.

There's no point in even speculating. Be it enough to say that you wouldn't even recognize the planet, it would look like some strange, perhaps heavenly realm, and if you went there with an ego, you would feel very uncomfortable. Oh, I need to get back to the old earth.

So that it is a great challenge and a great adventure and a great opportunity to be alive at this time. Not that you are separate from the consciousness, you are an expression of the one consciousness. The question is, is that one consciousness now going to move through you?

Is the cosmic evolutionary impulse finding a sufficiently clear space here so that it can move in and move through and then emanate through this form? Some people will create wonderful things. Others will simply emanate the state of joy, peace, aliveness, and love, and walk through the world emanating that state and be a blessing to whoever they meet.

That's quite enough, isn't it? And others may create great things. Others will say, I don't need to create anything.

It's simply to embody that state. That's the flowering, as I mentioned before, somewhere, maybe in the book, I can't remember. The planet, there was plant life on the planet for millions of years, they say, before there ever was a flower.

After millions of years of plant life, I'm told, one day, the first flower must have opened. And when a plant becomes a flower, it's an analogy, as I'm using it here, for a new level of, a new dimension of being, of consciousness. But what is happening to humans is much vaster than even that, but it's a beautiful analogy.

And then it took thousands of years before another flower came, probably, and then two or three. And then suddenly, a profusion of flowers all over the planet. And this is very similar.

We've had early flowers in humanity. The great teachers of humanity, one can look upon them as early flowerings of human consciousness. The possibilities that are inherent in the human form for the first time express themselves fully through those great teachers, sages, only some of whom we know about, some were relatively unknown.

So there were rare flowers here and there. And then a time comes when we are ready for the flowering on a much larger scale. And it cannot not be now, otherwise it's the end.

So it must be now. This is the time. It goes far beyond anything personal in your life.

On a personal level, it's very pleasant because it frees you from inhabiting an absurdly complex world of problem-making. That's great. So on a personal level, it takes the weight of you.

The weight of the self, the mind-made self that already the Buddha, the early flower that he was, recognized a profound insight too early, probably for much too early for his time to see the illusion of self that was the primordial insight of the Buddha. My God, he saw that. And so that's where it flowered.

As one Buddhist monk who was asked to explain the meaning of Buddhism simply said, the meaning of Buddhism is this, no self, no problem, finished. Oh. Oh.

Yes, but I'd like to learn some philosophy. Can you teach me? I have plenty of time.

Please give me time, says the self. I want to complete myself in time. So the burden of self, of that delusion, you don't walk around with that heaviness anymore because you become a heaviness on the planet.

And whatever you walk on, you crush. A heavy self walking, millions of heavy selves walking on the planet, crushing life. And they don't even know it.

Life, what's life? It's just a little something, says the mind. And this is timber.

It's worth $6 million, I would say. So, okay, we can cut that in no time. And it's gone.

A forest that was there for 100,000 years, where a field of sacredness, but the mind can't see it because the mind labeled it. And that's nobody's fault. It's the human dysfunction.

So the heaviness of self, the heaviness of self leaves you. Free of that delusion, that entity that was so hard to live with, the me, that I had such a problematic relationship with. And now, there's simply, where there was a heavy me, there's a field of aware presence, walking, sitting, moving, being.

It doesn't make problems anymore for itself. For other humans, for the planet. It doesn't create suffering anymore for itself.

For other humans, for the planet. So this is why, since ancient times, they've used the word liberation to talk about this shift in consciousness because all the ancient teachings, they point to it, and they sometimes call it liberation. From what?

Even in the New Testament, they use that expression. Free, Jesus talks about, you will be free. You will know the truth.

The truth will make you free. Free, they said, we're already free. We are nobody's slaves.

And Jesus said, no, you are not. And he used the language that he used at the time. He said, you are the slaves of sin.

Now, what's sin? If he were talking nowadays, he would have said, you're totally conditioned entities and you're completely unconscious. You're the slaves of your conditioning.

That's all. It's the dysfunction that is sin. No more, it's nobody's fault.

It's the original sin, which is the collective dysfunction. That's all. It's not the way in which it's usually interpreted, but there's a truth in it, a deep truth.

And just as there's original sin, there's original innocence, which is the sanity in you, which is the unconditioned consciousness in you. That's far vaster than the little original sin, far vaster, the little original sin is a little illusion. It only appears big when you are totally trapped in it.

So this is the liberation already happening. And as you walk away from here, you will have lost some weight, not physical weight, that doesn't matter, but the weight of me, myself, the problem making me. If this were not already happening here, you would not have been able to sit here for an hour and a half, according to clock time.

It would have become unbearable. Or you had to exert such willpower that you made yourself sit here, but that's unlikely. So the greatest adventure that any human being can be involved in, you are involved.

And some people are still asking about their life purpose. That is your life purpose. To embody this transformation.

That's your primary life purpose. Nothing else matters. Your secondary life purpose then is what form your external life takes as you embody this transformation.

But you don't really need to do a lot of thinking about that because that looks after itself. Thank you. Being here without expectancy, without a need for future, the psychological need.

Is it possible to be here completely where your field of attention is not being right now filled up with anything? Unless there's a lot of mental noise in your head as you sit here, in which case the stream of thought is filling up that space of now. And it's a strange thing to become aware of the space of now without needing to fill it up with something.

But if it's already filled up with mental noise, then you can at least see that and accept that. And in that seeing and in that accepting, there is a space even around the mental noise. And there's some spaciousness there even with a noisy mind.

So the little secret is when you become aligned with this moment now, no matter what's going on, there is space. And in that space, in that acceptance of what is, you go beyond what is. In the non-acceptance of what is, you remain stuck with what is.

Although you could remove yourself to some other place and the same stuckness condition would arise very quickly. Stuck again. So one could say, although all words are limited, there's object consciousness.

That's the normal state for most human beings. They're identified with objects in their consciousness. Thought streams, emotions, sense perceptions.

Some they like, some they dislike. And then there is space consciousness. This is just a temporary perspective on it.

And most humans don't know that yet. Some stumble upon this accidentally almost. And are astonished.

Space consciousness, what is that? It's, first of all, space consciousness arises at this very moment as you sit here and pay attention to the words. Words, that's object consciousness.

Words arise in your consciousness as temporary forms. Same as your own thoughts, not much difference. But you also pay attention, and this is unusual for many people, to the silent spaces between the words.

Paying attention simply means, one could say, to listen to the silence that isn't part of this talk. If it's a talk, they're just words, it's not really a talk. And that's a strange thing.

At first it seems pointless, or the mind says, listen to the silent spaces. Well, that's not very interesting. No, of course it's not interesting.

Only object consciousness is interesting because every object is so fascinating. Oh, look at that, on that. And every object you have some relationship with.

Reactual, but what relationship could you have with space? And it certainly isn't interesting as such. Interesting means it's feeding the need of the mind to add more content, more objects, because the mind wants always more.

It's the egoic mind, the self, mind made self. And space consciousness is nothing that you could add because there seems to be nothing there. So you pay attention to the silent spaces between words, sentences, and not only that.

Also, you simply pay attention, or one could say, listen, acknowledge that there is, one could say there are two dimensions to this talk. The words and the field, the space, the silence. Usually in a talk, people come to listen to the words, to take in new information, more of something.

And here, you're being invited, yes, to listen to the words, but it's being pointed out that there is a deeper dimension that mostly people would be unconscious of unless it's pointed out or they find it accidentally. There's an underlying field, how the words couldn't even exist without the space, the stillness. Certain kinds of music can do the same.

Music where stillness is an important element. And usually even there, people are not directly conscious of it. They only sense it is so deep and beautiful and sacred, and they still believe it's in the sounds.

But what really is the depths of that music lies in the ground out of which the sounds come. And the sounds point to that. And that's called very deeply spiritual kinds of music.

Because as you listen, something shifts inside you. Particularly if you bring conscious attention to the underlying ground, that shift happens to you the moment you pay attention to the field of stillness. That moment is the arising of that field of stillness in you.

Because with thought, you cannot listen to silence. With thought, the thinking mind, you can only listen to words or notes, sounds, but not silence. The moment you tune into silence, silence or stillness arises in you.

The moment you begin to listen to it, a dimension arises in you that we could call space consciousness, unconditioned consciousness. As it arises as a field of alert presence. And the objects are still there in consciousness, the sounds of the music, or in this case, the words.

But just as in those types of music, the sounds point beyond themselves, just as these words are not saying, listen to me, this is important. The words are not important because they point beyond themselves. So the words have no self-importance.

They are quite unimportant because we are here, not for that. You have enough of object consciousness, the whole world is immersed in it. You have enough information, bombarded by information, do you need more?

No. And a similar thing in certain types of painting, Eastern paintings, you have a landscape with a little tree down here, a rock and a bird maybe flying just at the top of the painting across. And 85% of the painting is empty space.

And so from a mind perspective, this is not a significant painting because there isn't very much there. Is that all? Couldn't he have done a little bit more to fill this canvas or the paper?

And that type of painting doesn't say, look at me, how great I am. Look at how, even the artist doesn't say, look what I can do. The artist denies him or herself and the painting denies itself as something because it's all pointing to something deeper than form.

And so a strange thing happens when you acknowledge that dimension in your life. And if you don't know that dimension, you don't know the most important thing there is, being itself, the ground itself, the essence of who you are. You go through your whole life immersed and identified with and having a problematic relationship with object consciousness.

And every object that arises in consciousness matters so much. And it has something to do with you. You need it or you want to push it away.

So in other words, all you know is the world. All you know is this dimension of stuff, material stuff, mind stuff. All you know is that, and you go around battling with the stuff of this world and you get tired after a while.

More stuff, there's only more stuff coming. All that you can gain here is more stuff or lose the stuff that you've accumulated as the content of your mind and then suffer because it's painful to die as that illusion. So notice as you sit here, if there is a restlessness in you at this moment, maybe you're not even hearing what I'm saying.

It could be that restless. That is you're immersed in object consciousness thoughts. And it's frustrating because nothing is being given to add to that.

And then you can notice that. Oh, oh, there's it, there it is. So, and you acknowledge that.

And suddenly you become conscious of the silent spaces. You listen to the silent spaces. And for that, to be able to do that, a certain alertness.

It's required. And the strange thing happens as you listen to silence and it may not never be there for long. Thought seizes, comes to a stop because you cannot listen to silence with thought.

You don't have to stop your mind. Just listen to silence. That's it.

And the moment thought resumes, you're no longer listening to the silence. And it is good to live in that way, the two dimensions. The essence dimension, space consciousness, the dimension one could say of the absolute and the dimension of the relative in which you move in this world as a physical body, interact with all these different forms.

And then there's a balance in your life. For most people, all they have is the world, the stuff, and they are lost in it. They are lost in it and trying to find themselves in and through it, for which they need future.

So our gathering here isn't really a lecture, a talk, it's something else. We don't even have a name for it. But in India, where they've been at it for longer, there's the expression satsang, which perhaps could be translated as in the company of being, to be with being.

Because this is being, being, existence is form. Being is prior to form. Being is the essence of who you are.

In the company, really it means, traditionally satsang means being in the company of the teacher. But the deeper meaning is being with yourself, not the mind made self, with a deeper essence of who you are. So we, this, I sometimes call this a portal into that state of consciousness that is the state of presence, of awareness, pure thoughtless awareness, the state of awake, being awake.

Thought arises again, yes. But as you dwell in that ground of no thought, thought loses its capacity to make you unhappy. You're no longer totally identified with every thought.

You recognize the relativity of thought. You recognize that no thought contains the entire truth. You recognize that whatever thought you think is a tiny fragment.

And in many cases, more often than not, the opposite thought is equally true. It's just a different perspective. And many other perspectives are possible and thought can then be contained.

The polarities of thought, you're no longer identified with one polarity. If they could know this in certain, in many parts of the world, where there is violent conflict, each party is identified with one perspective, one viewpoint. There's no, this is the truth.

We have the truth. Only our perspective is true. To see the relativity of thought and whatever thought you have about yourself, it's not it.

And so you can have a relationship with thought that is a little bit loose. And you stand back and say, okay, here goes another thought that's telling me you can't make it, you're not good enough, whatever it says. Or you're, if only the world would recognize how great you are, whatever thought.

And it's recognized as thought. You don't totally believe in every thought anymore because it's conditioned. Other thoughts arise as you inhabit, as you dwell, are rooted in being.

Increasingly, thoughts arise that are very different from the conditioned mind activity. Those are thoughts of greater power. Those are also thoughts that can create, manifest the famous, in new age, many people are interested in manifesting through thought.

And of course, everybody's doing it already. Everybody's manifesting whatever their world is through thought. Mostly it's unconscious.

But there's no point in dwelling on the possibilities that are inherent in thought as far as external manifestation is concerned, unless you have gone through the shift in consciousness so that you are not trying to manifest as a dissatisfied little egoic entity. And through your manifestation, trying to complete yourself or make yourself happy through this or that, that won't work. So it is primary to allow the shift in consciousness to happen so that you recognize yourself as not what you thought you were, as the illusion of me and my story which needs to complete itself and then desperately tries to manifest something, perhaps succeeds.

Of course, it works quite often. And then for a little while, it's great. And then that doesn't fulfill its purpose either.

Later, as this arises, you don't need to be concerned anymore with how to manifest because you become then a powerful manifester, if that's a word. But it flows from the depths of your being. That which is manifesting your reality then is not the little egoic entity, but the one intelligence which is flowering through you.

And that suddenly thoughts come that you couldn't even have thought before as an egoic entity. And then manifestation happens through you and it's beautiful. So thought is powerful and whatever you manifest in thought, through thought externally, will pertain to the world of external forms which come and go.

Nothing lasts forever. That remains and that's fine. So here we are not focusing on how to manifest, but on something more vital, how to be yourself first.

Finding the portals into the unconditioned state of consciousness, then that operates. And here is one portal. And that portal is listening to the space, the silence.

And then being aware of that which comes up the objects at the same time. As God is defined in one of the Upanishads, as it's not that which you see, but that which makes all seeing possible. It's not that which you hear.

It's that which makes all hearing possible. It's not what you think. It's that which makes all thought possible.

So this stillness, we could say, that is here as external silence, which is inner stillness, is the greatest mystery, enormous depths in that. And Buddhists, so that you cannot make it into another mind object, call it emptiness. And that's very clever.

If you call it fullness, which is equally true, then it's easier for the mind to say there is something there. It becomes a mind object. I believe in fullness, but it's much harder to say I believe in emptiness because that means you believe in nothing.

So this is a portal and it's an important one which you can use to access that state of consciousness. It's a simple fact. And outer silence helps initially with that practice because there is something you can actually listen to the silence.

Out in nature, there will be a few sounds, but underlying the beautiful sounds that you hear in nature, there will be this vast realm of stillness in which these sounds appear. And it is that which gives people that even if they are not conscious of it directly, they sense a depth, a beauty beyond the forms which are beautiful, but a depth to nature and a sacredness that they can't define. What is it that makes this so sacred and beautiful?

Yes, the forms, each flower, but there's even more. There's something that is beyond the forms that gives it its sacredness. And yes, it is the underlying field.

And so when you walk in nature, also you can be in both worlds, so to speak, or rather in the world and in being as you listen, you walk around listening to the sounds and to the underlying stillness. Alertness is required for that. No tension, just a relaxed alertness.

It arises spontaneously as you listen and there's a depth. And so already you are walking through nature in the state of thoughtless presence, awareness. Wow.

And then suddenly a thought comes in. It's no longer a problem. It's just a thought.

It comes in and another, and spaces in between. You are, and as you walk in that state, you're no longer, your history becomes unimportant. Your past and future, even your name and the story of me recedes.

And instead what arises is unconditioned, a field, the field of unconditioned consciousness. And nature is helpful because nature does not stimulate thought. A city where everything is human made is more likely to stimulate mind activity because the city is created by the human mind.

It's the externalized mind. The noise of the city is the externalized mental noise and never have humans lived in a more noisy civilization. Maybe one day this civilization will be called the noisy civilization because it, and of course the poisonous civilization also, it creates an enormous amount of noise.

It's an externalization of the increasing mental noise and you being totally, so they create a very noisy world and they looking for new means of making more noise. And they have to fill up every space with noise. I don't know how it is here, but in North America, finding a restaurant without loud music is almost impossible these days.

You have to look very hard and you open the door and put in your head and it goes, and walk out again. And noise is of course, it's something is happening, objects arising, right? So, so nature does not stimulate thought.

Of course, it doesn't mean that thought doesn't arise. Most humans, when they go into nature are full of thought and peripherally they see for a little while, they say, oh, that's a beautiful flower. And then the mind goes about their problems.

And then they look again, there's a moment of recognition of beauty. If they could catch that moment, there's a looking, but the label hasn't come up yet. There's a fragment, there's a little space when they look at this flower.

At first, you glance about the tree or the sky. And in many humans that the gap is for one second, two seconds. Or if you deepen, three seconds, four seconds.

And if you deepen even more, 10, 20. And then already you are walking or standing in awe of, and then perhaps a thought may come, beautiful. But many humans only have that as a gap of one second, two seconds, and immediately thought comes.

And that is the veil that descends between that. It's a conceptualized veil. Now, everything in nature exists in the state of no thought.

Intelligence manifests through all these forms. All these forms are the manifestation of this one intelligence and they are beautiful, but it is prior to thought. There was no committee meeting that said, let's work out how we can create a beautiful flower.

Let's think, a think tank. Let's, okay, let's draw our plans. Let's put data into the computer.

And then after a thousand hours of thinking, you still couldn't create a rose. But the rose didn't come out of thought. It came out of stillness.

The tree came out of stillness, grows in stillness. Timeless also. And the entire universe is very, very still.

No sound in outer space, only in science fiction movies, just to give the impression that something is happening because nobody could stand watching it, that silence. But no, there's no sound. A whole galaxy could explode, which would take millions of years and wouldn't make a single sound.

And whole galaxies are born out of complete stillness. And there is an intelligence at work in that stillness. The one intelligence.

Even the human mind has come out of it as a little experiment in noise. It's fine. And the monkeys also, that's a few experiments with noise.

Monkeys, some monkeys are very noisy.

[Speaker 7] (1:15:55 - 1:15:59)

They go, grr, grr, grr, grr, grr, grr, grr, grr, grr, grr, grr, grr.

[Speaker 1] (1:15:59 - 3:13:47)

Very much like the human mind. That's why Buddhists call the mind the monkey mind. So to use as a portal silence and listening to silence in nature or at home, anywhere, right here.

The silence here, the stillness is the true teacher. One could say, because it is the arising of space consciousness, of the unconditioned consciousness. So this is a powerful portal.

And as you listen to that, then you realize it's not really caused by the external silence. It can arise anywhere, no matter whether in your external surroundings, there is a silent space or not. Because there are situations in this noisy world, many places and situations, there's hardly ever a silent space.

You're bombarded by noise and noise making, even in the office or at your workplace. In the family, always things going on. Many families, we go there, there's two or three TVs on, children screaming, parents saying, get this done, do this, we're in a hurry.

And now a beautiful thing, when you notice that the arising of stillness can happen by itself, the listening to silence is really the arising of inner stillness. And for that, you don't really need, it's beautiful if you have the stillness outside and you use that as a portal. But once you become familiar, so to speak, with that state, it can be there no matter where you are as the simple arising of thoughtless awareness.

And this brings us to another portal, very powerful one, which takes you into the same place. And that is a portal of acceptance of what is, takes you also into space consciousness. And this is interesting.

Acceptance of what is, we spoke about it already, because it is, there's nothing you can do with is. You can argue with it, but it's futile. Is is as it is at this moment.

What can you do? And so you accept, or you don't accept. And if you don't accept, contraction arises.

The self gets strengthened, the illusion of the me in that non-acceptance, the boundary around me gets strengthened. So the sense of identity, the artificial, delusory, illusory sense of identity gets strengthened through the non-acceptance. This shouldn't be.

And the noise-making of the mind becomes stronger when you deny what is. Because if you watch the noise-making, the compulsive thought activity, a lot is to do with projecting yourself into a future moment. In other words, trying to get away from this one to a more fulfilling one, a more complete, powerful, pleasurable one.

So the acceptance of what is externally, then there's a stillness of peace, and a stillness arise, no matter what the external condition is, if it is accepted internally, welcomed, the isness of it. But if you can't do it, contraction arises. But if you are aware of that, the emotion that arises through non-acceptance, anger, sadness, you watch that, what do you do with that?

It is as it is. Then you accept that. And every time you accept on level one, you accept what is externally.

So you do not create inner resistance. You do not strengthen the illusory self through that. And a spaciousness arises around what is.

If you miss that opportunity, resistance is there. You can't do that. But suddenly you recognize resistance is there.

And you recognize the emotion that is arising in this situation. And instead of saying, oh, you see, you failed again. You see, acceptance is totally pointless.

You give up even trying to accept. You can't, you see, you're failing at this just as you failed at that. No.

No. If you see it, it's enough. There's the turbulence of the emotion.

What do you do with that? It already is. You allow it to be.

And that suddenly, again, there is a space around the anger or the irritation, the tightness, through the yes. Let's say an irritating noise happens and you feel the irritation. You don't catch it quickly enough to say, well, there were children where noisy before.

Irritation could arise and you don't catch it quickly enough. You've forgotten that this is a school and this is what children do. And so the mind says, it shouldn't be noisy here.

We've come for a spiritual talk. And so if you don't catch it soon enough, the irritation is there within a moment and it's accompanied by certain thoughts. The thoughts are critical of this moment.

And then suddenly you catch that and you say, hmm, you've sensed the irritation. You see the thought that goes with it and then you say, well, there it is. There's the turbulence, let it be.

What can you do? You can't argue with it. It shouldn't be here.

You have another problem on top of the irritation. You create the problem that you shouldn't be irritated with all the spiritual work you've done. You shouldn't be, by now, you should be beyond this by now.

Well, but there it is. And so you say, oh, the irritation. And you simply, there is a flow of this attention.

You give it some attention, gentle flow of attention. And it is. And suddenly there's a space around the irritation.

It's still there, but it's being contained within a greater spaciousness. So in other words, you are now in touch with space consciousness. You know yourself ultimately as not that which arises, but that which contains all that arises.

And you know yourself as that simply through accepting whatever arises instead of battling with it. So the doorway, the portal into self-realization is not some kind of needing to become more and more something that you are not yet. And beating yourself up when you're not living up to certain ideas in your head that perhaps have been put there by teachings or reading books of how enlightened beings should behave.

And I'm not there yet. That's not the enlightened being. Nothing in form is beyond the polarities as this form, including enlightened entities, beings.

They will express somewhere certain polarities in their life. They might like chocolate cake or whatever, or go to Starbucks and drink coffee as I do sometimes. And then people say, you drink coffee?

You shouldn't be drinking coffee. Well, it's only two or three times a week. Well, you shouldn't be drinking coffee.

You should be beyond that. And then you can internalize that as a voice in your head. I haven't made it yet.

The state of perfection has not been reached yet. You can struggle for a long time with that. And then you see that's not the way.

There's a much quicker way. And that quick way has no problems in it. And it doesn't make yourself into a problem or anybody else into a problem or any situation into a problem that is to be overcome.

The mind itself likes that because then it can struggle and be in opposition to something, even itself. It likes to be in conflict with itself. And so the doorway into the state of perfection is acceptance of the is-ness, whether it be external or if you miss it there, your second chance is internal.

It is. And then you are no longer completely caught up in what is, in a reactive relationship to what is. You become deeper.

You already are, but then you know that you are deeper than what is. And you know yourself as the spaciousness around you. Around what is.

And the irritation no longer matters that much. It's a human energy formation. Nothing personal in it.

The personal nature goes out of emotions and saying me. There's a me in every emotion, a self in every emotion otherwise. It's my problem.

This emotion is mine. It's part of my story. And then you realize it's a human emotion.

Your fear is not much different from any other person's fear or anger or sadness or irritation. It is an energy turbulence or heaviness. So as you allow it, the self, the delusion of self goes out of it.

It's only through non-allowing that you strengthen the self nature of every feeling, every emotion and thought, every thought. There's a self in it. But then as you step back from the workings of the conditioned mind, you realize it's the human mind.

And even that, it's not personal. The self that was in every thought is recognized as the Buddha did as an illusion, an illusory entity. And that arises now is self-realization.

And it arises through seeing what you are not. Thoughts, emotions, events, sense perceptions. In other words, objects in consciousness.

Then there's no self there. The Buddhist doctrine, the Buddhist teaching of anatta, no self, of course. So who am I then?

Space, stillness, the ground, thoughtless, aware, presence. Oh, in the absence of a spiritual teaching, all you have as a teacher is life and the challenges of life. And what that is going to do to you sooner or later, it will take away objects that you have accumulated in your mind, in consciousness, and identified with as self, loss.

Loss of possessions, loss of recognition, loss of people close to you, loss of physical abilities as you grow old. Or if you're lucky, before you grow old, you encounter some kind of disaster in your life and you lose a lot all at once. Maybe your job, maybe your health at the same time and your possessions or someone close to you.

And it goes within a short space of time, it's all gone. Or objects have like dissolved in front of your eyes that were me, part of me. And that is traditionally, and before there were ever any spiritual teachers or teachings, a few human beings realized who they were through sudden and great loss.

When objects that they had identified within consciousness, content was removed from them. The opposite of what the self, the mind made self wanted and thought would get me to enlightenment, the opposite, because the mind made self thinks of enlightenment in terms of more, surely enlightenment is the greatest thing. So it thinks of it in terms of something that I can add to myself as the attainment.

And then suddenly life does something to you and the opposite happened, not more, but less. Life takes things away. Instead of giving you enlightenment, it takes away the little that you had or the lot that you had.

And so empty spaces appear where before there was something and it's being torn out of you by life. Sometimes violent events can happen. Life tears something from you, accidents, illness, some, whatever disaster, that's a powerful teacher.

And so as it tears something from you, the opposite of what the self had been planning, because it had been planning a good outcome to its story, I was planning a happy ending for my story and now this has happened. It's destroyed everything, the whole script. I don't think I can put it back together again or I have to rewrite the whole thing.

And so suddenly empty spaces appear where before there was something, now there's nothing. Before there was recognition of you as somebody important, the world thought a lot of you, then you lose your position or your reputation through some scandal, maybe you did something silly and now everybody thinks you're nothing. They don't even talk about you anymore.

So that's an empty space, a content, a mental image is gone. It's not fat anymore, it can't sustain itself. And then you lose your house and then your wife leaves you and then somebody very close to you dies and then the stock market crashes.

And before you know it, there's mostly empty spaces where before there was something quite a lot. And now two things are possible, an even more fearful and angry and bitter and resentful self-contraction of the egoic entity that now quickly rewrites the story and gets identified with that. And then the story says, I'm the most miserable of all beings.

I have failed at everything. Life has treated me unfairly. And that becomes a new story, which is what you're telling yourself in the head or telling to others.

Before it looked like a great story, but now it's quickly rewritten so that you can identify with a new conceptualized sense of self. And that is a very bitter and resentful one and exists in a continuous state of contraction. But at least, you know who you are.

Instead of allowing the empty spaces, you quickly filled them up with new concepts. Now, this is of course an unhappy story, but it is far better to the self than no story at all that you can tell yourself and others. So it's all been in vain, 30 years of work, all for nothing.

They've all let me down. It's pointless. And then you have a lot to say about it.

And you have a new sense of self arising out of that. And then you die. But there's a potential on the other hand that you don't run away from the empty spaces and you may be so stunned by the empty spaces appearing suddenly that where before there was something, now there is nothing, that you just sit there, stunned and look.

And somehow you say, what can I do? It's all gone. And you may suddenly laugh and not realize, perhaps you don't have a word for it, that you have suddenly and spontaneously entered the surrendered state of consciousness.

And the space, all these empty spaces where before there was something through these holes in your life, space consciousness emerges. There was a BMW, now there's a hole. And through it comes, there was the big house, now there's nothing there.

It comes through there. There was the wife that was there, beautiful, attractive. You could show her off to everybody and so feel bigger.

And now she left you for another man, betrayed you, let you down or whatever the story says. And now there's nothing, she's gone. And what comes through is space, unconditioned.

And suddenly you say, what's going on? I should be unhappy and I feel so peaceful. And you walk around in that state of amazement.

You sit on a park bench and no story is happening in your head anymore. Life is enough without a story of me. Going through life without a story except some memories, it's fine, without the heaviness of a conceptualized identity.

And you can notice the conceptualized identity at times wants to reassert itself. And then you simply step into now, use a bottle into now because the conceptualized identity functions only through thought and thought functions only through past and future. So there may be some of you here who have already experienced what I just talked about, life taking things away from you.

And so that the arising of that which is unconditioned through the openings is already happening. And if that hadn't happened to you, you wouldn't be here. You would be happy watching TV now.

You would be happy in your unhappiness of being asleep and identified with a story of me, which seemed to still be, it's still working, still hoping it's going to work out. And suddenly it's gone. So grace comes in many ways into your life, not only in ways that are usually easily recognized as grace, grace comes in ways that you would never call grace until you realize what it is.

There was a film made about the life of Ram Dass, the spiritual teacher who suffered a stroke. And the title of that film is Fierce Grace. Fierce is.

And so sometimes it happens that grace comes into your life in strange ways that only afterwards you recognize as grace, such as loss, great loss. And loss is grace. Death is grace because every loss is a form of death, loss of something that you had identified with as content of their mind, of me, that is a death.

And that is grace. And that is a mind calls it awful, dreadful, shouldn't be happening, but it happens all the time. Now, a spiritual teaching, when you realize how this transformation operates, then the spiritual teaching comes into your life and you are suddenly open to hear it.

And then grace operates in that way, much more gentle. Grace is here, but it's more gentle than the fierce grace. It's both grace.

Maybe you already had the fierce. Maybe you'll get the fierce as the last thing you need to enter the surrendered state. Maybe you don't need it anymore because as we sit here, that which other people lose through loss, we voluntarily lose here because we recognize that ultimately it's an illusion.

And that is also grace. And so, as it has been said in a holy book, die before you die. That's how it's translated.

Sometimes translate it also as find death before death finds you. Because death will find you, forms dissolve. And now here you are finding death before it finds you and realize only forms dissolve and there's that which is beyond birth and death.

Perhaps not even that, because that's already a mental formulation. It may be enough to realize the peace that is here now as you no longer oppose. This moment.

And that peace is beyond words. That spaciousness is beyond words and concepts, but it frees you from fear. It frees you from the illusory self.

And some humans have then said, I now know that there is no death. Well, it's one way of putting it. But no belief is required here.

So bring that yes to now, no matter what the now contains. It could not be otherwise. It's one with the totality, the form of this now.

Opposing it is madness. And then change happens out of that. This is good to know that no matter what happens to you, nothing can really stop you anymore because it's all as it should be.

Whatever condition arises is as it is. And the yes to it will take you into that deep peace that comes with realizing the spaciousness around phenomena. You can give attention to the sound, listen to the sound, and listen particularly to the point where the sound begins to dissolve.

And what's left is just the field of attention, the presence, the awareness. In some teachings, it's called the I am, that is listening. So we have an object in consciousness, the sound, and consciousness as the ground that remains.

And you can be aware both as you listen to the sound of the sound, and strangely enough, you can be aware of the awareness that is listening, the listening presence at the same time. And we could call that awareness of awareness. Not awareness of something in awareness, awareness of awareness, self-aware.

This is an enormous shift in consciousness. I am that, I am that. That is the one presence, the one fundamental identity of all things is the I am presence, the one consciousness.

And so we have the beautiful phrase in the Bible somewhere, when God defines him, her, itself as, I am that I am, I am that. So that's the end of believing that I am this, or I am that, because every this and that is the beginning of a story, is the beginning of identification with some kind of form. In other words, it's the beginning of the dream, the dream of form, the dream of me being that form.

And so you realize the essence of I am is never I am this or that, because this or that is always form. And it's a story that starts with a form. But simply the eternal I am presence, eternal means timeless.

There's no time in that consciousness, because it's not object consciousness. Time operates in the world of objects. There can be no world of objects without time.

Time has no existence as such, it's created by the mind in order to create a world of forms. You could not even imagine a world of form without time. So time is in the structure of the human mind to create a universe, to project that.

And that's fine on its own level. But if you're who you are gets caught up in that world of relativity and polarity, then that is a state of ignorance. Knowing God, I don't use that word very often, is knowing I am as the essence.

It's so simple. And that is the one thing that everybody knows that there's something so precious in me, and I don't want to lose that. The essence of one's identity that gets mixed up with a story, that gets mixed up with form, is presence, is awareness, is the I am.

After we have taken a little break, because the physical bodies need things like breaks, we will look at something that is a great opportunity obstacle for many people to the arising presence. And that is the human pain body and how the pain body also can become, one could say, a portal instead of being an obstacle. Pain body, as you know, is the accumulated past in every human being, racial past, personal past.

And there's a lot of heaviness in there. Another profound statement in the Bible that I quoted earlier, be still and know that I am God. Be still and know.

Be still means dwell in that state of no thought that is stillness and know. So in that state of no thought, in that stillness, there is a deep knowing that I am God. I am presence is one with the one.

So in that little pointer, we have each word basically means the same. It's about being, be stillness, knowing, the knowing that is beyond mind, beyond concepts. I am God, not as a new form identity, of course.

So we are coming to know the meaning of consciousness without thought. To be awake means to be in the state of consciousness without thought. Not to be identified with thought is to be awake.

Portal into that state, we have seen listening to silence, acceptance of now as a portal into that state. And of course, the inner body is also a portal into that state, sensing the aliveness that is throughout your body. Now, at first, it may appear that is an object that arises in your awareness.

And at first, that may be the case because you feel certain energy movements, perhaps. As you go deeper, you realize there's vast spaciousness in here. And you realize the spaciousness that is in here, that is alive, but spacious, is one with who you are.

So although at first, it may appear that when we speak of body awareness, as if the body were an object that arises in your consciousness, as you go deeper in, you realize the space of consciousness that is the essence of what appears temporarily as a physical body. So the body also can become a doorway, a portal into space consciousness. And then that aliveness, that spacious aliveness as you go through this portal is suddenly everywhere.

It's not confined anymore to the space of this body. But the entry point is into attention moving into a body. And so as we sit here, we can have a generalized sense of aware presence or awareness is throughout the body.

We're sensing the aliveness that is in every cell. Very subtle at first, it's not just in the background. It's also a beautiful anchor for presence.

You may at times want to close your eyes and go very deep into that inner body so that you then lose the mental image of the form of the body. And then no longer different parts of the body, but just a one generalized sense of spacious presence. And that is beautiful.

It quickly takes you out of the story in the head into the power of now. And this portal of the inner body is of course a way of contacting, of not just contacting, but realizing the intelligence that is there in that spaciousness of the body. That intelligence that was already greater than the human mind.

Intelligence that operates temporarily as a physical body. Enormous from the point of view of mind, enormously complex, but it operates noiselessly, beautifully, with no thinking involved. Intelligence.

So it has been said in a holy book somewhere, God is closer to you than hands and feet. Or it's been said in the Quran, God is closer to you than your jugular vein, which is up here somewhere. One of the main veins in the body.

Closer to you than hands and feet, closer. What does that, what's closer than hands and feet? So that God means God must be very close to me.

And so if God, he, she, it is closer than hands and feet, must be even deeper than that, than hands and feet are out here. So it's inside that. And for thousands of years, humans have looked for God through thought, mental abstraction.

And for a long time, thought it's out there somewhere. And then one early astronomer who looked, used one of the first people to use a telescope, said, I've looked everywhere and I haven't seen God anywhere. Well, good, that's the beginning of the end of an illusion.

So this is a portal that is always there because the body, wherever you go, the body goes with you. Shifting attention from noise-making in the head. Vroom, vroom, vroom, vroom, vroom.

And then you notice it because it brings about, very quickly makes you suffer one way or another. And then you notice it. And when the moment you notice that basically you've lost the now, and so you suffer, that noticing is the arising of presence.

But that can be obscured immediately after you notice it by the mind again, which then judges the noticing and says, you see, you can't do it. And it says, oh, I can't be present now, not now. I have no time for the now.

Tomorrow, I'll look into the, look at the now again. And then, but first I have to sort all these things out, the, which are more important than now. So often you will find a thought telling you, you can't be in the body now.

It's just too much on my mind. And then you recognize that as a thought without believing in it. It's a thought because thought has a momentum and it wants to keep going.

And it will bring up other thoughts to justify that you should be giving your complete attention to thought. Every thought could be considered a little entity, a form, a life form with a short lifespan, but it's there and the entity wants to proliferate and grow and remain in its form. So the mind can be considered an entity too in itself, an energy field, an energy form, and it wants to stay in control.

It wants, doesn't want to make room. So it will bring up thoughts that tell you that, no, you can't do it now. This is too much.

Just, and then you recognize the thought and then you say, there's a thought that I can't do it. And then you move your attention into the body. Oh, and you might feel the pull of thought wanting your attention back up in the head.

And you just, there's no struggle. You can't struggle with the mind. You can just gently hold attention in the body.

If only, even the hands is enough as an anchor because then some of your attention moves into the body and even sensing the aliveness that is in your hands when the mind is extremely restless and maybe you cannot feel immediately any other part of the body. Just that is the beginning of the doorway, the portal. You're touching it as you go into hands and then simply holding the feeling of hand, sensing that.

So some of your attention is here and the mind is slightly less active. It hasn't got all your attention anymore. Now the mind will pretend, every thought pretends that it is, it matters.

And you must believe me. Every thought wants to matter, to be important. And you have to believe it.

Thought about yourself, your relationship with your partner, thought about your partner, thought about... And you're in it every... And so to realize that at any time you can shift your attention from the stream of thought into presence and a good doorway is the body and one of the portals.

It's... And simply holding attention in your hands helps. And then attention gradually moves more into the body because you sense this is so alive.

You may come across people in your daily life, maybe parents, friends, relatives, who are not yet ready to listen to the teaching of presence or acceptance of now. But many people are ready for this, such simple truth of sensing the body. And you can tell your father or grandfather or grandmother or uncle who is tortured by his mind.

Can't get out, has been telling the same stories for the past 30 years. And you can tell them, can you feel your hands? What?

It's... And then the very, just point out there's a possibility that you can feel an aliveness in the body. Just try it.

No, I can't feel a thing. I mean, leave me alone with that. You just try.

And they say, no, I can't feel anything. You can explain that the body contains intelligence. Most people can see that if you say that they couldn't control the functions of the body with their mind.

So there must be some other intelligence at work. And then say, close your eyes, hold your right or left hand like this. Is there any way you can find out whether your right hand is still there or not without opening your eyes, without touching anything?

Can you know whether this hand is still there or not? You can ask. And if they do it, after a little while, they'd say, well, yes, I can feel it.

It's still there. So, there it is. So that question can take their attention because if you only say move your attention into the body, they may not be able to do it if they have lived their whole life in the head.

But that little question, is there any way you can find out, how can you know whether your right hand is still there if you close your eyes and don't touch anything and don't move it, and suddenly they feel it? Oh, yes. So, this could be the beginning of something for somebody who is not yet ready for anything else.

At least they can begin to move some and then feel the benefit of that. Okay, the portal is opening up. That portal is beginning to open.

That's good. And then for yourself to have some attention in here so that the mind doesn't create stories again. While you go, while you travel on a bus, dwell in the energy field of body and watch the landscape go past you, the cityscape go past you, and simultaneously have attention in the inner energy field of body.

And there is the state that we pointed to earlier in which you are able to perceive without needing to label it because you have an anchor now for staying present. So you are not at the mercy of the conditioned mind which labels things compulsively. So this is the anchor.

And so you can then perceive with that freshness, newness, and aliveness that is there when you are not interpreting or labeling that which you are perceiving. So you sense the body at this very moment. You can sense a little bit of the subtleness, the energy field, the energy in the inner body, and hear the words and be aware of the totality of the room without needing to label because your attention is not exclusively in thought anymore.

It's moved out of mind. And so to use that anchor also in nature, it may be helpful, sit somewhere on the beach, on a stone, on a bench, enter the body, and then look and then listen. Oh, it's so easy now to listen without the interference of thought and to be in that alertness.

So whenever you feel overwhelmed by mind, a quick way is shifting attention into the inner body. And don't believe the thought that tells you that you can't do it, at least not now. One could say you have the choice now to be present.

That's an enormous choice. You have the choice to be identified with mind. It doesn't look like a choice because the mind pulls you in.

So you have the choice to step out of that and be present. You only have that choice ultimately because the totality with which you are intrinsically connected is moving through you. Presence is arising through you.

But from the point of view of this entity, from that perspective, and everything I say, every language, every thought is only a perspective. From that perspective, one could say that you have a choice now to be present. Ultimately, the only reason why you have a choice is that the evolutionary impulse of the universe is moving through you.

From the limited perspective of an entity, it seems that you have a choice, and it's a good perspective. I have a choice now, I can choose presence. How is it that you can choose presence?

Because it's happening. Ultimately, it's not you choosing. So this is a deeper perspective.

You don't have a choice, presence is emerging. But as a temporary limited perspective, it's helpful to say, I have a choice. That's part of the emerging presence is to see that you have a choice, and later you can let go of that perspective.

Because some of you have read certain teachings that say you have no choice, there's nothing you can do. Go home. It either happens or it doesn't happen.

So that's one kind of teaching. And that's one perspective, it has an element of truth also, but it's not the entire truth. No statement or perspective has the entire truth.

Another teaching says, unless you want liberation or enlightenment with the same urgency that a drowning person wants air, you won't get it. So which one am I going to believe? And they both seem reputable teachers.

So is one of them wrong and the other one is right? Or are they just different perspectives? And how can they ever be reconciled?

Where does the urgency come from with which I want liberation? It's all the one moving through you, but you can adopt different perspectives. Wanting liberation is good.

Wanting liberation in the future won't get you there. So if you shift the wanting liberation from future, a movement into future, into now, wanting liberation now, then it works. And if you want liberation now, you realize there's nothing you can do beyond what already is.

Okay, okay, let's see. If that impulse of wanting freedom, which usually seeks future, wanting implies you want something through future. If you see the fallacy of that, but don't go to the other polarity and say, okay, I've had it.

I'm going home and watch every soap opera that there is, and I'm going to drink beer because there's nothing I can do anyway. No, the wanting that moves into future, can you move that wanting into now, that urgency, that seeking? How can you seek in the now without future?

You can, there can be an intensity with which you face what is. So the seeking becomes an intensity of presence. And you meet the now with that intensity of alert presence.

Before that intensity became a mind movement of seeking, but now that intensity becomes the presence. And here's the now. And you embrace that in the field of presence and uncompromising yes to what is.

Now that now you've brought, and then the saying, the teacher that said, there's nothing you can do was also right because this is what is. Let's stop it here. It's hard to reconcile seemingly opposite perspectives, but this was a little attempt to reconcile that there's nothing you can do is true.

There's something you can do is also true. Neither contains the entire truth. And it's happening now.

So it's good whenever you are waiting somewhere, I mentioned that in the book, because it's amazing how much time people spend waiting for things in daily life. You're waiting on the phone. You're waiting on the computer.

You're waiting at the bank. You're waiting at the post office, at the bus stop, at the traffic light. So much waiting.

And most people are restless and uneasy and wanting to needing to get to the future. And then there's the waiting for some bigger event to happen in your life, making it one day, they will recognize me. And that could be a long wait.

So you have all these short waits and then you have the long waits. Let's just talk about the short waits. How, when you're waiting, you can bring, connect with the inner body.

At any moment when there's nothing else you can do, you might as well sense the aliveness that is here now. Use that portal, no matter where, traffic light, telephone, post office. Hold the line, please, they say.

And 10 minutes later, you're still there. And you could be in here. It doesn't really, it's only the mind that tells you, oh, you're wasting time.

You have to sit somewhere. So you might as well sit here. And you have to hold your hand in some position.

You might as well hold the phone. It doesn't really matter. Wherever you go, you'll be sitting or standing somewhere and moving in some way.

Is the next moment going to be so much greater than this one? At the airport, flight is delayed by three hours. Oh my, no, not again.

Well, does it matter whether you sit on this chair there or whether you sit on the plane or whether when you arrive home, you sit in another chair? There isn't that much more in phenomenal universe. It's what you can do with this body is limited.

And then at times when you think this is great, presence is arising, freedom is here. Suddenly you get overtaken by this incredible heaviness or turbulence. A little trigger did it and you're totally back in mind and heavy emotions that go with it.

And the energy field that you are shifts so that some people hardly recognize you. So great is the shift. Pain body, the accumulation of past emotional pain, human pain, going back a million years, personal pain to add to the pain that's already there in every human being for the simple reason that you are a human being on this planet, living in the collective human unconsciousness that has created so much suffering already for itself.

So you carry that, some of that suffering as an emotional field of pain with you. And then when you're at childhood, you absorb more of it through the suffering of the child from parents. So there's this emotional field, an entity, temporary being that lives in you that is the pain body.

Contracted life energy, can't flow anymore. An aspect of the egoic entity, the me. And sometimes it's not there, you can't feel it.

It's there, but it's dormant. It can't remain dormant for too long because it needs to feed. It needs more pain to feed on.

And that's what it recognizes, that kind of emotional pain, it loves that. It doesn't know anything else. So I'm offering you a perspective on something that is very real, not ultimately real, but relatively real in you.

And to say that it is like an entity that has its own little intelligence is quite close to the truth, not the absolute truth. It is not an enemy. There's nothing ultimately that's an enemy and that is not you.

It is life energy. And the only reason why it's painful is it's stagnant under pressure. Turbulent or heavy.

And through the egoic delusions, the me with its constant dissatisfaction and lack and future projections and not enough, that it's been over many thousands of years it's come into being in humans. And then added to through the enormous suffering that humans have inflicted on other humans that increased it and the torture, the rapes, killings, warfare almost continues in human history. So humans have been through a lot.

If humanity were one single being, you would say he or she has been through a lot. He's been through madness. Well, hardly, just beginning you come out of it and inflicted so much pain, suffered so much.

And that's in every human being. Sometimes the pain body is dormant. You can hardly feel it, not feel it at all.

And when it needs to feed again a little trigger which could be just a thought in your head that you totally believe in about yourself, about your relationship, about your position in the world. One little thought arises. You don't recognize it as a little thought and you believe in it completely and the pain body is ready to awaken.

It will link into that thought and suddenly it will come to life. It will awaken and through that thought that's linked into move into your mind or it will use a reaction. A little thing goes wrong in your life.

They keep you waiting for too long on the phone or whatever it is. But the pain body was ready to awaken and suddenly you get an enormous influx of turbulence, anger or deep sadness, whatever the energy field of your pain body, the predominant energy field is. And then the pain body has awakened and it will be feeding on your thought processes to start with.

And they will reflect the energy field of the pain body because the pain body can only feed on painful thoughts. And at that moment, then you are totally identified, your sense of self, of me, the story of me, is totally identified with that movement of pain. Totally identified with the thoughts that are being created by the pain body and are feeding the pain body, a vicious circle.

The old pain in you creates those thoughts. They're all total misinterpretations. They have perhaps a limited truth to them, but they are totally a total distortion of the truth, which is far beyond that.

But every thought is totally believed in and the emotion that comes with the thoughts is the pain body and it's feeding on the thoughts and getting bigger. The more you think about yourself or your life situation, the more it feeds. And you sit there in that heaviness of turbulence.

And then you're waiting for somebody close to you to come and feed the pain body externally to give you a reaction of pain so that you can feed on your partner's or somebody else's reaction, pushing the buttons. And you get the feedback of emotional pain. Drama, I love it, give me more drama.

This is the heaviness of it. It could be the drama of anger or it could be the drama of great heaviness. And the pain body is feeding and it works it uses your environment, at work it might do it.

It's looking for pain. So beware when there are walking pain bodies around and at any given time in the population, the people who are walking around the streets or driving cars, probably one can say 10% of those people are in the middle of pain body attack at any given time. And they are dangerous because they want something bad to happen.

They don't know it. They don't say that. They don't say, I want something bad to happen but they're looking for trouble.

And we all meet people like that in that state. They are looking for something bad to happen and they are looking at you, challenging you to give them some bad feedback or the driver is looking for the accident. Great many of accidents that happen in traffic are caused by driving pain bodies.

They are looking for the next bad thing. And the obvious next bad thing when you're driving is an accident. Particularly good when two pain, driving pain bodies meet then the likelihood is very high that the accident will happen.

And then they can create even more pain. There's a recent phenomenon in, I don't know if it's the same here, called road rage where after the accident, it's not enough for the pain bodies to have caused the accident and feel bad about it. After the accident, they jump out of their cars and beat each other up to feel even worse, even kill, some killed others.

So violence becomes possible in very unconscious people and there are still many around when they are in the middle of a pain body attack. There are certain situations where the pain body is more likely to arise because there's very little consciousness in you at those times, getting drunk, for example. Males particularly are prone to becoming violent more in certain cultures than in others when they drink.

After a few drinks, they're looking for, and they find something. I mentioned in the book for women, menstruation is a time when the collective female pain body tends to come up because there is a strong collective aspect to each person's pain body. There's a collective male pain body, there's a collective female pain body and women have suffered tremendously as women for thousands of years.

The cultures have been patriarchal and women have been subservient to men and used in many cultures almost like slaves. So there is a strong female pain body that arose through the suffering of women that tends to arise at the time of menstruation and just before, and a woman can observe it. At that time and bring more suddenly, how do you get beyond pain body, that vicious circle?

Simply know that it is there, bring presence to it, bring, sense it, feel it, there it is. Look at it, aware, give it some attention and what else can you do except to say, there it is. But when you watch it, as it arises in you, it cannot use your mind and become an even more unhappy story, more unhappy than even it is unhappy enough without the pain body, the story of me.

But when the pain body comes, the story of me becomes dreadful, an awful drama or tragedy, it's a very self-destructive story. So the pain body doesn't feed anymore on your thinking when you're able to bring attention to it, recognize it and allow it to be the heaviness or the turbulence so that it doesn't turn into the illusory self. And that is the primary challenge of all those who are now going through this transformation of consciousness.

Their primary challenge is not to lose themselves again in the pain body each time it comes because it has enormous momentum. Enormous momentum is contained in that and alertness is required so that you can recognize it when it comes. Especially if you can recognize it in its early stages, just as it begins to come up as a reaction, as a thought, and you feel the heaviness descending or the turbulence coming up, thinking, hmm, there it is.

Or you may recognize it next time, even in the middle of it, it can happen as presence is arising when you're reenacting the weekly drama with your partner to suddenly in the middle of it, wake up. And you suddenly realize we are acting it out again and to sense the turbulence of it. Wow, this feels very agitated, very turbulent.

Wow, there's the pain body, wow, it's interesting. What do you do with it? You can't get rid of it just like that.

It is, there it is, there's the human pain body. You allow it to be. It's a strange thing to allow the pain body to be.

And then the pain body is not a self anymore. It doesn't become a self, an unhappy self. All that's left of it is turbulence or heaviness or tightness, fear, anger, sadness, depression, whatever form, maybe there's one out there.

Yeah. So you will find pain body in yourself and you will see it more easily in others. And it's the challenge, it's your challenge to recognize it.

It's really all that's needed is to recognize it. Don't have to do anything beyond that, but to see it for what it is, just the seeing. The seeing implies that you've just let it be.

You can't see it without letting it be. There it is, all that's ultimately needed is to see it and say, there it is. And then continue to watch that.

Then it cannot feed anymore on your thoughts. It doesn't become a self. All that's left is, it's almost a physical thing now.

It's emotional, but it has a very strong physical component. It changes the chemistry of your body. If you could examine the inner chemistry of your body, you would see the changes in the body chemistry that happen every time pain body arises in you.

Color of the stomach lining changes to red. Innumerable changes in circulation, how the organs function. You could examine all that.

So it has a very strong physical component. It is almost reduced to a physical symptom when you watch it, emotional, half emotional, half physical. But the main thing is it's no longer an entity, a me.

You don't mistake it anymore. And then it's not, the energy then gradually becomes transmuted. It becomes freed from its stuckness.

It cannot, it couldn't flow anymore. But by allowing it, it begins to flow. And again, the energy that was contained in here.

Wow. And it's very often people with heavy pain bodies have the greatest motivation to become free because they just can't stand it anymore. Again and again.

I was such a person who had such a heavy pain body that one night when it came up very strongly again, I couldn't live with myself anymore. No, myself was the pain body. And the mind-made story energized by the pain body, heavy, intolerable, I can't live with myself.

I didn't know at the time that that wasn't myself. But the sentence arose in my mind, I cannot live with myself any longer. Can't live with myself any longer.

It's just too much. And then there was a stepping back from that thought. And I looked at the structure of the thought.

I cannot live with myself. Am I one or two? Am I two?

This sentence seems to imply that I'm two. I and the self that I cannot live with. Who is the self and who am I?

This could be a question that a Zen master might ask you. Who is the self and who are you? It's a koan, but it could be.

This koan arose spontaneously. It didn't have an answer. Koans don't have real answers, not on the mind level.

They just stop your mind. And at that strange moment, I, and this is the whole essence of the teaching now, what happened that night. I didn't understand it at all until years later.

I separated itself from the self, including the pain body. I, the sense of presence, consciousness, had become mixed with form, thought forms and emotional forms, the bundle of me. And suddenly, because it became so painful, I withdrew from identification with thoughts and emotions and remained in the state of the simple I am presence.

And I am is never unhappy. Only the self is unhappy. I am is free always.

So it came out and then the self was no longer being sustained by identification with it and it collapsed proper. And what was left was I am. And the next morning, I am said, how can I be so peaceful?

What happened? Something happened, but I don't know what. Just peace, wherever I go, there's peace.

In the middle of the noisy traffic in the city, that's peaceful, everything is so peaceful. What happened? No idea.

I didn't know until years later that the self and the pain body had self-destructed. And this is relatively rare, I realized later. For most humans, the process is a little bit more gradual.

It's a gradual disidentification from the story, the mind made self and the energy field of pain body. You're stepping out, you're drawn back in. Step out, get drawn back in.

And gradually, presence arises more and more. But that was just amazing to see how the story of me evaporated. And then I didn't realize either that the peace was there because there wasn't all that much thinking anymore.

Because without the story of me, there isn't that much to think about. And suddenly, everything was so alive, which of course it always is. It was no longer obscured by the veil of conceptualization and labeling, aliveness everywhere, peace.

And so that's, then this is the universal process of recognition. The pain that is old pain is human pain. Nothing personal, not an identity.

Just pain. So all that's required is to see it when it arises instead of being it, that is the illusion. Because then it's, I am that pain.

I am that story that's associated with that pain. I am very heavy. I am very unhappy.

And so there's the simple seeing. Then I am doesn't get mixed up with that. So that is our task, is to be there as the witness of the pain body, one could say, and let it be.

And at first you won't sense that there's a lot of space around it because pain body at first seems it occupies everything. They can be so heavy that they seem to, that they occupy your entire being and they seem to, that heaviness seems to color all your sense perceptions and all your thoughts and the entire world seems to be heavy with it. And so you allow it to be and at first there's just a little bit of space around it suddenly.

And then it suddenly there's a bit more space around it. And the more you allow it to be, the greater the spaciousness around it. And then it seems the pain body seems to shrink.

It does shrink, but also it shrinks because you have a different perspective on it. And then the space is so much faster than that. This is the process of transformation.

So also not making an identity out of the pain body for other human beings. Because as you go through life, very often you encounter humans that are in the grip of pain body and you will probably recognize it more easily now. If you know people well, you can see the shift that comes over them as the pain body takes them over immediately as the entire energy field changes.

And this has been a shock for many people who got married. These days it happens less, but in the past, many people got married without ever living together first. So they would get married and then start living together.

And so after getting married, you would certainly meet your partner's pain body. It can be a dreadful shock because of course you didn't know what it was. You just thought this was the person I married, the beautiful angel or Mr. Right and suddenly turns into this monster. Is he now showing his real face? Is she, is that her real self that she's been hiding from me? And so it can easily be misinterpreted and it's let, it's spoiled many honeymoons because it hasn't been recognized as the pain body.

It's not, oh, I made a dreadful mistake marrying that person. Of course, the truth is whoever you marry will have a pain body unless they're already free and there are not yet many that are free. Freedom is secondary from pain body.

The question is whether they are totally identified with it or not. As presence comes through you into the relationship, that will affect the other person also. If you can talk about the pain body when you're not being possessed by it in times of consciousness, talk about your last pain body attack and the drama that came out of it.

When was it? Oh yes, the day before yesterday. Where did it start?

How did it start? What triggered it? What did you first feel?

What did I first feel? And then what? And then we started shouting at each other and then we were totally in it.

Isn't that interesting? And three hours later, we finally came out of it. Three days later, who knows?

And so you can sometimes, I very rarely say think about the past, but in this instance, it occasionally can be helpful just to briefly relive a past pain body episode and as you relive it, bring presence into it and watch what happened. If you watch what happened, it will be easier to watch what happens when it happens again. Then you can watch it then as you watch it.

It's a little bit easier, much easier in fact, to watch a past pain body attack because you have a distance, it's only a memory, but even then it can happen as you start to remember it, it's happening again. So if you bring your attention back with your partner and say, let's look at the last pain body drama that we went through, and if you're not alert, it can happen that reliving it can activate it again and before long, you're shouting at each other again. No, it didn't start in me, it started in you.

You were the first to say, no, it didn't. And then perhaps in the middle of that, you suddenly wake up. When you wake up, it's the most beautiful thing that could happen is to wake up in the middle of a pain body attack and suddenly laugh or smile.

That's the beginning of liberation and it's really happening. Wow. And there are couples now who are, to whom this is happening.

If you don't yet wake up in the middle of it, you wake up just afterwards. Oh, there it was again. If your partner doesn't want to hear about pain body, then what can you do?

If you say, let's talk about pain body and he says, I don't want to hear about pain body. You do your own thing, I do my thing. And so all you can do is stay present when his or her pain body comes up.

And it wants you to be unhappy too. That's what pain bodies do. And it'll do everything it can to make you unhappy.

And finally get a reaction. So it's, you have to be really present. And then if one partner stays conscious, it cannot not affect the other.

Or in frustration, the other is going to leave you. And the frustration is that the pain body is not being fed enough, living with you. And so the pain body says, okay, I'm going to look for somewhere else for pain because this is not feeding me.

It also happens that people feel strongly attracted to each other because their pain bodies are mutually compatible. And sometimes this is the basis of certain relationships. It's unconscious, of course.

So there's, they are acting out what they have to act out and it works perfectly. And that strong, compelling pull towards another person, that is sometimes called falling in love, that enormous pull towards another person is sometimes, or has a strong element quite often, also of a pain body that recognizes a compatible pain body. And pain body can get mixed up with sexuality also, of only feeling sexually excited with somebody who is going to cause you some pain.

Doesn't have to be physical necessarily, but some kind of the drama involved, that pain in the drama that can give you the stimulus. And again, if that's the case, just watching it is helpful, it's enough. If that is, and this happens more often than humans realize.

And some humans are condemned to repeating the same cycle unconsciously. They say, this time I want a husband who is kind and helpful and gentle and compassionate, not that jerk that I had last time. And so you go and then you think you find the one and you start living together and suddenly the same jerk comes out again.

And you thought he was gentle and compassionate, but you got attracted to his pain body and it comes out, it's suddenly the same thing again. That was the attraction. That is described, there was some years ago, there was a very popular book.

It didn't mention pain body as such, but it mentioned from the perspective of women, women who love too much was the title, how unconsciously through being forced to act out certain conditioned patterns continuously choose the wrong man. And it happens to men also, of course. So this is very interesting to watch in oneself, in one's relationship.

Pain bodies with children, children have pain bodies also. Children also suffer from pain body attacks. In most children do.

If you're a parent, you will then recognize when the child is suddenly totally taken over by his or her pain body. Whatever the child does, withdraws completely, has a screaming fit, throws him or herself on the floor, or throws things, is transformed in one moment from an angel into a monster. And many parents have witnessed that in their children, say, what is going on here?

They don't realize it happens to them also, maybe a little bit more disguised. It's the human pain body in the child. And so a parent can simply point out to the child afterwards, not in the middle, except later on, but at first, not in the middle of it.

Afterwards, what was that? What did it feel like? Wasn't that strange?

When did you first feel it? Does it have a name? Temporary name or only temporary?

Oh, it's called the green monster. Okay. Okay.

And so occasionally it comes and gets hold of you. Yeah. Okay.

Two days later, the pain body, you can watch it. Oh, is the green monster coming? There it is.

And then of course the pain body will already be in the child and the pain body will always deny itself. And you just say, no, I'm not the green monster. Your partner would do the same.

If you said to your partner, is that your pain body? He or she will throw something at you and deny it. The pain body will never admit that it's the, oh yes, I am the pain body.

So this is the work of, you help children. If they teach at school that pain bodies happen, that people have pain bodies and that you can actually watch it, that would be an enormous thing to tell. Even a five-year-old will understand because it's so simple.

It's so obvious. There it is. And then presence can arise.

That's it. So we are, the pain body is, seems an obstacle, but it's the greatest incentive for becoming free. And it's almost as if the energy that is contained in there, then becomes the fuel for consciousness, becomes the fuel for presence, becomes transmuted and is transmuted into presence.

And so it often is that people with very heavy pain bodies quickly go beyond, disidentify from. People with moderate pain bodies, they can live with themselves. They have found an arrangement of living with themselves.

Periodically, yes, they get unhappy, but it's okay, I can manage. But if you're very heavy, you get so fed up with yourself that you will want to be free. In Eastern terms, one could say pain body is karma because it's the accumulated, is an aspect of karma, is the accumulated past in you, the conditioned past in you, which you identify as yourself.

That is karma. To identify with a conditioned past in me as myself is acting out karma. And the acting out of karma is the renewing of karma.

Action, reaction, that's the meaning of karma. Action, reaction, it's a vicious circle. You're being forced to act out your conditioning.

And a large part of your conditioning is the human collective conditioning. So that's the action of karma. And karma, you can't really get to the end of karma through time.

You can't really say, okay, if I wait long enough, finally, I will come to the end of karma. No, because it renews itself. It's to the end of karma is not through time, but through accessing the power of now.

Then you come to the end of action, reaction. So it's only in the now that karma dissolves through accessing the power that is inherent here in this presence. Wonderful.

Many of you would not be here if it weren't for your pain bodies. Already you've created so much trouble and suffering for yourself that you had to wake up, just as I did. So you're waking up.

When we have these gatherings, time passes very quickly, it's strange. And so it's happened again. It's only been one moment, that's why it passed so quickly.

There may be some questions in your minds, but the clock tells us that we need to stop. Now, what about these questions? Is there any question that is truly critical that you need to know the answer to?

There can be no presence unless you know the answer to this question. And you cannot let surrender to what is unless you know the answer. No, there isn't.

We don't need any questions.

[Speaker 6] (3:14:30 - 3:15:01)

When I had been in my darkest moment, I happened to read The Power of Now. What Eckhart Tolle had to say about happiness had been the impetus to go on this journey. I was in Vancouver to meet him.

You were there on a park bench for two years. And you were there with your wife, And you slept on the park bench?

[Speaker 1] (3:15:02 - 3:15:09)

Rarely, but I did spend most of the days on park benches in parks, different parks in London.

[Speaker 6] (3:15:12 - 3:15:14)

Did you eat three meals a day?

[Speaker 1] (3:15:14 - 3:17:49)

No, no. One meal a day if I was lucky. As you sit here, is it possible for you to simply watch what's happening around you without adding any interpretation to it?

To just be present with what is, and you get a taste of what it's like to be on a park bench with nothing further needing to be added to this moment. The sounds, sights, people, sound of the water, the light, just allow it to be as it is. With that comes peace.

You don't get continuously drawn into events and thoughts and emotions and reactions. You are the wider space in which all these things happen. You are the awareness behind it without which none of this would be here.

To just be atoms and molecules in space. You are the awareness that enables this entire world to be. And so knowing that that is who you truly are, not through a concept but through the actual realization of stepping back and allowing the phenomenal world to be as it is at this moment.

Allowing this moment to be as it is. That takes you deeper into yourself. And you may notice there's a certain peace in the background that happens.

An alertness is required for this. You need to stay alert to what is. To sense perceptions and the energy behind sense perceptions which is the consciousness.

The alertness is there. Without the alertness you will drift off into thinking. And then you think about the next what's going to happen to me tomorrow.

There is a place for making plans but not right here on the park bench. This isn't the place for thinking about tomorrow because you miss all this beauty and aliveness around you.

[Speaker 7] (3:17:52 - 3:17:55)

And then you're cold. You don't even think about it as a cold.

[Speaker 1] (3:17:56 - 3:23:23)

No, it just is. The sensation of it. You don't even need to call it cold.

And then that's okay too. The reactivity goes out of life. Always against something, wanting to clutch at something.

What about the search for meaning? Now you notice that just a moment ago you were in that state of alert presence. And it never takes long for another thought to come in and ask a question.

Because thought cannot tolerate the state of presence. So it will always come in and say, yeah but what about, I don't quite understand yet. Can you tell me what does it all mean?

Thought wants to add something. It wants to control in some way by understanding what this all means. Now, if you can let go, just for a moment, not for the rest of your life.

Just for this moment, let go of the need to understand anything. So that you're truly present in this moment. So you don't need to do it for the next hour or the next ten minutes.

Just right now. Just what is. But don't forget yourself because you are the consciousness behind it.

You are the space. The presence. Can you feel that your body is alive?

So stay with that feeling and then perceive. It's easier to perceive without interpretation when you can feel that your body is alive. You feel the inner aliveness throughout your body.

So some attention, some of your attention is there. The rest is on the outside world. That roots you in the present moment.

It anchors you in the present moment. And if a thought comes into your mind, you can watch that also. Just the same way as you watch a dog walking past, you can watch a thought arising in your mind and you don't have to follow it to where it wants to go.

So you simply watch the thought that arises in your mind and let it go in the same way that the dog walks past you. Or if you choose to, you can follow the thought and then you can say, I just thought of another question. You can do that too.

But to see the possibility that also in the same way that you observe the outer world, here as you sit on the bench, you can also observe the inner world, the world of thoughts and emotions. Thoughts want to arise continuously and that's fine, that's what they do. But there's no need to get drawn into each thought that arises and immediately go with it to where it wants to go.

Otherwise you're always following every thought. Like a dog following the scent. Does it matter which?

No, it doesn't matter. You can experiment. You can experiment with thoughts.

You can follow some thoughts and you can watch other thoughts. You find out for yourself. You can play.

You can see that you are bigger than your thoughts. You don't have to be dominated by your thoughts because thoughts create lots of problems too. Unnecessary problems.

And they can obscure the aliveness of life at this moment. There are many people walking around here who are thinking about other things. They're thinking about the next one.

They're thinking about tomorrow. But this is not the place for that. There is a place for planning and thinking about tomorrow.

But why spoil the beauty of this and the aliveness of this? We're thinking about the next moment. Is that going to be better than this one?

This is it. It's not going to get that much better. What could be more beautiful than this?

It's the awakening of something within you that is deeper than thought. That's really the main thing. And that's already there.

You just didn't know it.

[Speaker 6] (3:23:25 - 3:23:27)

Why didn't I know this?

[Speaker 1] (3:23:28 - 3:23:54)

It's a deep-seated habit of being totally identified with thinking. It's the human condition, which could be described as lost in thought. Because up to now, evolution has been unconscious.

It was automatic. But now evolution is consciously chosen by a species, and that's a revolutionary thing. And you are part of that.

[Speaker 6] (3:24:03 - 3:24:04)

I can still make movies.

[Speaker 1] (3:24:04 - 3:24:05)

I can still have a girlfriend.

[Speaker 6] (3:24:05 - 3:24:06)

Oh, yes.

[Speaker 1] (3:24:06 - 3:24:07)

Even if I'm conscious.

[Speaker 6] (3:24:07 - 3:24:08)

Yes, it's beautiful.

[Speaker 1] (3:24:09 - 3:30:25)

It's a playground. You play around with the world. You take action.

You relate. But you're not lost in it. Most humans are lost in it.

What about pain? Physical pain or emotional pain of losing someone? Most of the human pain is psychologically created.

There's an enormous amount of psychological pain. Suffering, I call that. When suffering goes and there's a possibility for humans now to live without suffering, that is a possibility, there may still be some physical pain.

It may be that you get toothaches or bodily pains from time to time. Suffering is another level that lies on top of the pain. Suffering implies a story, a little me that is unhappy, a mentally constructed entity, a little me that has an unhappy story that is its identity.

And that creates an enormous amount of suffering. Not only do you make yourself suffer, you make people around you suffer. To be at one with life is to be at one with the present moment because that's the only place where life can be found.

You cannot leave the space of now that stays with you, whatever you do and wherever you go. Your life has never been not now and will never be not now. Are you making the present moment into an enemy in some way internally through thinking about something that's nothing to do with now?

I need to figure something out. Well, first of all, be here fully. And then whatever is needed in your life comes.

It comes out of the power that dwells in the present moment that most people overlook. There's an enormous power here, which is the power of life itself. And most people look for something and ignore this.

And the power of life itself is inseparable from who you are in the depth of your being. Many times you will forget. But the moment you realize that you forgot, there's a possibility of saying, ah, yes, I lost the present moment.

And there's a possibility of choosing to reenter the present moment. The first thing that happens when you reenter the present moment, you become more aware of sense perceptions. There's a greater alertness.

And then you become more aware of the aliveness in your body. You feel the life within. It's like the entire vibrational frequency of your body shifts when you become present.

It's a different state of consciousness. Ah, more alert, more alive. And many times you will lose it.

And then you'll remember. Ah, that's good enough. Now, they don't believe the mind when it tells you, oh, you can't do it now.

You've got too much on your mind. You can't be bothered with the present moment. Those are just thoughts.

There's no need for you to follow those thoughts. Just watch them. They are thoughts that the mind throws up.

You don't need to believe in them because they're not true. When the mind tells you, you can't be present now because you've got too much on your mind, then, okay, you can say, okay, let's see if that's true. Then you feel, there's an aliveness in my hand.

There's an aliveness in my body. There's beauty all around. And you become present again.

Alertness, the alertness returns. And when there is time to think, then you think. Then you sit down and say, okay, let's think, what plane am I going to catch tomorrow?

What time do I have to go to the airport? What do I have to do now? Pick up the phone, make a phone call.

Fine. It's beautiful. You're not losing yourself in future.

It's practical matters. And once you've done the practical matters, you've thought about, you've planned your next week, then you come back to the now. The inner transformation is not really about finding lots of answers to your questions, but finding a new relationship to thought, where not every thought seduces you anymore.

And if a beautiful girl runs past and you find yourself following her, you don't have to think, oh, I shouldn't be watching this girl because I'm spiritual now. No. If you can let go, just for a moment, not for the rest of your life, just for this moment, let go of the need to understand anything, so that you're truly present in this moment.

Just right now. Just what is. But don't forget yourself, because you are the consciousness behind it.

You are the space. You are the presence. So you've probably come here with lots of questions, but let's start off with me asking you just one question, and then you can ask yours.

[Speaker 6] (3:30:25 - 3:30:26)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (3:30:27 - 3:30:29)

May I ask how old you are?

[Speaker 6] (3:30:30 - 3:30:31)

Yes. I'm 24.

[Speaker 1] (3:30:32 - 3:30:43)

24. Not that it matters. So 24 means you've already had quite a few life experiences.

You've been to school. You've fallen in love.

[Speaker 6] (3:30:44 - 3:30:44)

I think so.

[Speaker 1] (3:30:45 - 3:30:46)

Fallen out of love.

[Speaker 6] (3:30:46 - 3:30:47)

I think so.

[Speaker 1] (3:30:47 - 3:32:36)

And have had all kinds of experiences, perhaps in different places, meeting different people, different circumstances. The body probably has been well most of the time, but you've also experienced maybe one or two illnesses. Now, is there in all those things that you have experienced so far, which is a continuously changing flux of things, is there any ingredient in there that was always the same, that didn't change?

I'd just like to ask you to see if you can find any ingredient in all the things that you have experienced so far that's always been the same. We could start perhaps by asking, could it be the things around you? Obviously not, because the things around you change continuously.

Could it be your thoughts? No, because the thoughts that go through your mind also change continuously. Could it be your feelings or your emotions?

No, as you know, they also change all the time. So what is it, if anything, that hasn't changed, that doesn't change? Is there one ingredient in all your experiences, good or bad, up or down, that's always been there?

[Speaker 6] (3:32:40 - 3:32:44)

Well, I think I've been in here, I've been inside.

[Speaker 1] (3:32:45 - 3:33:30)

Now, when you say, I, what does that mean? What is that I? Now, because we've already seen, it can't be your thoughts, because they change all the time.

Your feelings or emotions, they change all the time. Your sense experiences, things that you perceive around you, change all the time. So wherever we look, there's change.

So when you say, I, and point to the I as that which doesn't change, it cannot be what happens to you, it cannot be the thoughts that go through your mind, it cannot be the emotions, the feelings that you experience. So what is the nature of that I? What does that word mean or point to?

[Speaker 6] (3:33:32 - 3:33:39)

It's the listening, it's what hears, what's behind.

[Speaker 1] (3:33:41 - 3:45:31)

What's behind the thoughts, what's behind the sense perceptions, what's behind all the experiences and the feelings and so on. And so, the question that I'm asking does not really require an abstract answer, but I want you to actually feel or sense inside yourself that which doesn't change. No matter where you go, no matter what you do, or who you're with, or whether the body is well or unwell, when I ask, you said, it's I, and I've asked, what's the nature of that I?

And now you may be stuck for words. But you said one word, and that was listening. Now, when you're truly listening, there is a certain alert spaciousness, because otherwise you're not truly listening.

And so if that had to be expressed through a gesture, it could be, you could raise a finger gently and say, listen. So I say to you, listen. And you listen, there's a moment of spacious awareness, and there's no thought in it.

So when you said listening, you were actually getting very close to the nature of who you truly are underneath all the circumstances of your life. And circumstances includes thoughts and emotions. If you don't find that, who or what you are underneath all the circumstances, no matter how many questions you ask and how many good answers you get, won't help you very much, and there will be no end to the questioning, because every answer generates further questions.

So we are talking about becoming familiar with a different state of consciousness. Not that that has never been there. It's always been there, because it's the I, but it's always been overlooked.

Because the circumstances, things that happen to you, and your thinking and your emotions, have such overwhelming pulling force that they always pull your attention in completely. And so attention is that which is there when you're truly listening. And in the moment of attention, there's no thinking, but there is an aware presence.

So the answer that you gave is absolutely right. Not everybody would have put it this way, but listening points to who you truly are underneath all the things that continuously change. Now I'd like you to, as we speak, this is not an intellectual discussion, because if this were intellectual, you should have gone to a professor of philosophy or some intellectual at a university.

I've been over there. And ultimately, you get many answers, but all those answers will always make you end up with more questions, because they don't get you to the core of who you are. So let's start off with that.

And what we are pointing to is a sense of I, of beingness, that is deeper than anything that happens in your life. It's always there, has always been there, right now. And that is closely related to the state of attentive listening, to get in touch with that, to sense it.

Underneath it all, there is a timeless presence. Even in 50 years' time, in 60 years' time, when this body is getting old, and this body, the cells, it won't be the same body. The cells of the body will have been renewed many times.

There won't be a single cell. Materially, there won't be a single thing that's left in 50 years, even though you may still be alive. There won't be a single thing that's left materially that's here now.

Every cell will have been renewed. And so the body will have grown older, and yet something timeless, deep within, will still be exactly the same as it is now, untouched by time. I.

I before it becomes this or that. Because the moment you say, I am American, I am this or that, I am a professional, or I am a jobless person, or I am a millionaire, or I am a homeless person, those all form identifications with changing circumstances. And so people look for something there to provide permanency in their lives.

They want to identify with something that they finally can say, there, that's it, I found it. What they really want to say is, I found myself, finally. So they look for themselves through external possessions, through acquired knowledge, through an accumulation of experiences, or sexual encounters.

Some people derive their sense of self from that. The more women you can conquer or seduce or have sex with, the more you feel, I'm getting somewhere. Of course, after a few years, you realize it's not getting you anywhere.

Nothing will get you anywhere, which means to yourself, if you're looking for yourself in any experience. And that's the fallacy of most people. They look for themselves in changing circumstances.

They look for themselves in their thought processes. They identify with their thoughts and opinions and their judgments and this and that, and it changes. Your opinions may change.

You may be a Democrat now in 50 years' time when you have become a solid citizen. You may become a Republican. You have a completely different set of opinions.

It's just a different set of opinions. And then you feel like the thoughts have changed, but the underlying I hasn't changed. So can you go through life being in touch with that, being in touch with that in the different situations, different circumstances, different places, so that you're not completely lost in the things.

I sometimes call it the thingness of life, one thing after another. There's nothing wrong with that. But if you haven't found yourself yet, you don't know what that I is, then you're looking for the I in things.

And things include your thinking, because every thought is also a formation. It has a certain form, a thought form. It comes and then it goes.

Every emotion, it comes. It's an energy field inside you. It comes, has a certain lifespan, and then it subsides, and then another one comes.

That's all the thingness of life. It's forms that come and go all the time. The only thing that doesn't come and go is I, that which underlies all that.

And that's not an intellectual thing that I'm trying to convince you of, because that would not be helpful. The question is, at this moment, can I sense the presence that I am, that is prior to anything that happens to me, or has ever happened, or can ever happen? Can I sense that right now?

Yes, you can. Because if you couldn't, you wouldn't have said listening, because listening you already knew. It came from that deeper place of alert attention that in itself has no content.

The content comes when things happen. But in itself, the I that you are, one could describe it as space. It's not lifeless.

It's full of life. All of life comes out of that. But in itself, it is spacious.

Buddha called it emptiness. And it's completely misunderstood by people, because the university professors look at the word emptiness and then say the Buddhist teachings are life-denying. The total opposite is true, because Jesus called the same space the fullness of life.

Because at the same time, it is life in its fullness. To be able to sense that, at first it's very subtle in the background. But as you become familiar with that dimension, it's always there somewhere, no matter what you do, even when you meet a beautiful girl and you're talking to her.

From there, you can listen to yourself talking, and it's fine. You're not totally lost in your experiences. There's always a sense of aliveness and peace in the background.

And that influences how you live your life. That sense, the I, the timeless I, because on the surface you have the time-bound I that grows older. It's identified with thinking and emotions and things happen to it and so on.

But underneath it is the timeless I. Now, the word I is probably the most frequently used word in the language. Whenever you listen to people, they say, what's the word they use most frequently when you listen to a conversation?

Probably, you'll find it's the word I. Now, what they refer to is not the timeless, because they haven't found that. They refer to a superficial sense of I identification with things, with thinking, with emotions.

I am angry. I am American. I am this.

I am that. Identification with something. So that I is the greatest illusion, because there's no substance there, nothing permanent.

[Speaker 6] (3:45:32 - 3:45:35)

So if I'm not something, am I nothing?

[Speaker 1] (3:45:36 - 4:08:42)

Yes. I would pronounce that differently, though. I would say, you are no thing.

Now, there's a difference between no thing and nothing. Nothing is simply denial. But no thing means there is a presence there, but it has no form.

Nothing that you can grasp. It has no shape and no form and no name. The ancient Chinese call it the Tao, which cannot be named.

There's a beautiful, it's 3,000 years old Chinese book of wisdom, the Tao Te Ching. I recommend it to everybody. And the first line in it is, the Tao that can be named or spoken of is not the true Tao.

And so that there is the presence that you sense, a presence that has no form. In ancient language, Christian, Hebrew, there's the word spirit. But I don't use that word, because it's been used for hundreds of years and misunderstood.

So if I used spirit, people would immediately have some image of what it is, some form, or call it the Holy Spirit. And there's hundreds of years of misconceptions of what spirit is, so we forget about the word spirit. But in its original true meaning, that's what spirit points to.

The essence of who you are is formless. Now, we could use the word consciousness as the essence of who you are. And you can sense it, but you can never grasp it.

And you cannot really know it. You can only know something that is not you, an object, anything that becomes an object of consciousness. I look at this plant, and I know it by looking at it, and by having a name for it, I say I know this plant.

This plant is an object that arises in consciousness. And I look at you. I see a shape and a form, and obviously what I see, nobody knows whether what you see out there is actually there, because the image that you have in your mind of your surrounding environment, there's an optical, the eye, like a camera lens, they send a picture into the brain, the picture is translated into nerve impulses and chemicals that reach the brain, and the brain decodes what I see and then reassembles the picture.

And then suddenly I see you. Nobody knows what's actually out there. But let's just leave it.

Here we have, looking at you, this is an object that arises in consciousness, in the space that I am. Then I look away, and another object arises in the space that I am. Or I listen to something that arises in the space that I am.

Or a thought comes that arises in the space that I am, the presence that I am. But the presence itself, you can't know it in the way that you know a plant, or you know a person, or you know a sound, or you know a thought, because it would have to reflect back on itself. You cannot make it into an object.

So you cannot make yourself into an object of knowledge. You can only be that presence, but you can't know it because you would externalize it. And this is the mistake that humans have made over thousands of years.

They made themselves into an object. And they talk about me and my story. I'm sure you have one, the story of me.

And so when you make yourself into an object, you live with yourself. Some people love themselves one day, and they hate themselves the next day. And the following day, they're not quite sure.

And then you have feeling guilt. People have relationships with an image that they have in their mind of themselves, me. People talk to themselves in their mind.

Well, that wasn't very good. You didn't do a good thing. You shouldn't have done that.

Who is talking to whom? There's a voice in the head that talks to yourself. The mind has split itself in two and is talking to itself.

And out of that continuous talking comes the story of me and identification with that. And the questions that you are going to ask probably have a lot to do with the story of me, to find out more about it, about my life. Because, after all, that's what everybody is most interested in.

You are here because you are the main character in the story of yourself. And the main character in that story has quite a few things that he feels puzzled about and doesn't understand. And wants questions.

And the story, in some ways it's worked and in other ways it hasn't worked. And so the character in the story has come here and wants to know how to make the story work better. Isn't that so?

Yes. Now, whatever answers anybody can give you of how to make the story work better, there are things you can make the story work better. But all that doesn't really help unless you get to the bottom behind the story.

The I behind the story. Then, if you are in touch with that throughout your life, the story will unfold with much greater ease. Because there is a deeper dimension that is there.

But if there is only the story, nothing will ever satisfy the main character in that story. You. If the main character in that story, you, has never known the deeper I.

The timeless presence that is the consciousness that you are. The attentive, spacious I. Can you feel that your body is alive?

Mm-hmm. Because when you feel the aliveness inside your body, I call it inner body, the usually hyperactive mind slows down. Now, the hyperactive mind is extremely repetitive.

You might have noticed that probably 99% of your thoughts, you've had them before, they're repetitive. So new thoughts are relatively rare when there's only the hyperactive mind. It's just the same old things going through your mind again and again.

The moment you feel the inner body, in order to be able to feel the aliveness here, some of your attention has to go from the head within, into the body. So you're removing some attention away from thinking. It doesn't necessarily mean that thinking stops totally, but it subsides, slows down.

There may even be little spaces in between one thought and the next thought. So thinking slows down because part of your attention is in the inner energy field, the aliveness that most people never feel because they're so absorbed in their thoughts, they don't even feel that they are alive anymore. So thinking subsides and there are even little spaces in between thoughts.

And then it's much more likely that thoughts that come then are new thoughts, sometimes they are insights, they are new ways of looking at things, sudden realizations. They can only come if you are able to calm the mind, but not as something that you feel, I need to calm my mind, but simply by diverting attention away from it, not by making some effort to calm your mind. All you do is you take attention away from it, and so then there is more spaciousness, not just one thought after another, and then your thinking actually improves, which means it's more alive, more original, it's more powerful, you have better ideas, and the way in which you interact with people is more real, because the real comes not from the accumulated stuff in your mind, that's all the roles that you play, not just you, everybody. Everybody plays their roles, they've been conditioned to play certain roles.

You have an image of who you are when you meet a beautiful woman, you play a certain role. You want to present the best possible image, and she does the same. You can observe it when two young people are attracted to each other, they meet the first few days and weeks, they look different from the way they usually look, because they present an image that wants to attract the other, and it's unconscious, it's a role that they play.

It's only after the honeymoon, when everyday life begins, that gradually the image, and you believe that that image that you see in her is who she is, and she believes that you don't know that you're both playing roles, but you cannot keep up the roles indefinitely, so after the honeymoon, gradually, they wear down the roles, and then some discontent arises, and suddenly the mask slips. You can't play a role continuously, the role of me, the attractive one. So that's to get out of the role playing that otherwise you're stuck with for the rest of your life.

You have a certain role for your partner for a while, you have another role for your work situation, you have another role for wherever you go, you slip into subtle differences in the way in which you behave. When you talk to the chairman of the board or the Dalai Lama, you will behave in a certain way, and then you might notice when you talk to the plumber, there will be subtle differences in the way in which you talk. You play a different role.

You think, oh, this is not appropriate here. It's only when you stop playing roles, when you observe the Dalai Lama, how he behaves. Now, you might have thought, well, the Dalai Lama probably plays the role of the Dalai Lama, but he doesn't.

There's such simplicity, openness, and genuineness in him. He talks the same way to everybody. Whether he meets the plumber or the pope makes no difference because he doesn't play conditioned roles anymore.

And that is only possible when you access a dimension within yourself that is deeper than the mind. And we just did it, or we are still doing it, simply by taking attention away from thought and direct it into the aliveness of the body. That means suddenly there's some space between thoughts.

And then you can relate to other human beings more genuinely. And you don't need to prepare things that you're going to say next. You don't say things in order to manipulate that person.

You don't say things in order to create an effect. They simply, spontaneity comes out of that place. The spontaneity doesn't come out of the accumulated stuff in your mind.

The spontaneity comes only to the extent that you can access the dimension that is deeper than mind, which we may call the deeper eye, which we may call alert stillness. That is always there. Alert spaciousness.

Access that so mind subsides. Then you live differently. The more you access now at the moment, these are only glimpses for you, but that's good enough.

A glimpse later becomes a wider space of that. So that is something to remember, not as a memory, but to remember to do in your daily life as much as possible. Wherever you are, whatever you're doing, whoever you are talking to, or even when you're alone, go within sometimes and feel that the body is alive.

There's life in my hands. You're not imagining anything. You actually feel that there is an aliveness here.

And then once you can feel the hands, you can feel the arms, the feet, the legs. You are inhabiting the body. And the body loves that.

It loves your attention. Most people don't give their body attention. Even if they look after the body extremely, like you go to a gym every day, or you use all kinds of stuff to put on your body, you might think that these people are looking after their body.

But all they're looking after is the external of the body. They are not necessarily present within. They cannot feel the aliveness.

Some maybe they can, but most not. They're only concerned with the external body. Here we are concerned with the inner, and it doesn't matter.

The inner body has nothing to do with what the external body looks like, whether you're 80 years old or 20 years old, whether you have a young body or an old body. The sensation of the inner body is always the same. It's alive.

And the body loves your attention. It's a bit like when you don't give enough attention to a child, after a while the child cries because it wants to attract your attention. The baby does it.

And then finally you give, because attention is energy. It's enormous energy. Now, most attention is consciousness.

Most attention for most people is continuously absorbed by thinking. You can see it when you talk to them. They're not there, really.

They're thinking. They're looking at you, but they're thinking about the next thought they're going to ask. As you sit there, maybe you're thinking about, okay, what's my next question?

And that's normal. It's not a personal fault of yours. It's normal to lose yourself.

And when you lose, that means you're not really present when you're thinking about the next thing. So that's normal. You don't have to beat yourself up for that.

It's normal. But there is another way to live, and that's the way to be present, to give attention not just to your thoughts, to give attention to your body. If you don't give enough attention to a child, of course a child can also become addicted to attention, but that's a different matter.

There needs to be a balance. But a child does need attention. It's vital.

Not an excessive amount, but enough, because attention is energy. And the body loves it as much as a child. It wants to be noticed.

It wants your attention. And if it doesn't, it cries. It might become ill.

That's the crying of the body. You're neglecting it. You're not inhabiting it.

You're inhabiting the uppermost loft in your house. You're in a big house, and you live always under the roof. You never go downstairs.

There are lots of floors. You have no idea what's going on there. So that's a vital thing, and it is a way of also accessing the space within.

That is the eye that has no form. That is the consciousness. That is also intelligence.

We think of intelligence as the mind's ability to accumulate knowledge and to solve problems. That's probably what we consider to be intelligence, but that's an extremely narrow view of what intelligence is. What people can measure in IQ tests is an extremely narrow view of intelligence.

I cannot solve the simplest of IQ tests. So I've never done a total test, but I'm sure my IQ would be extremely low because that is not how this mind works. Solving little puzzles, I've never been able to do that.

But intelligence is a much vaster thing than the ability to accumulate information and then regurgitate it or analyze it or cut it into smaller and smaller pieces, what they do at universities, research projects. The pieces are getting smaller and smaller and smaller. The Ph.D. subjects are getting more and more specialized because so many people are working on things and then you have to put your tiny piece there. Okay, I take this piece and write my Ph.D. about that. You can cut that up a hundred times. And then once you've written your Ph.D., somebody else comes and takes a tiny piece out of that and says, Oh, I can cut this up even further. And that's considered intelligence. But true intelligence resides in that dimension of alert stillness. If you have access to that, that's where the original intelligence resides.

So anybody who is creative, and there are not that many human beings in this world who are truly creative, anybody who is creative has some access, perhaps only in the little area of their field of expertise where they have some access to that dimension, the stillness. Einstein had it. He was very slow.

He was not considered intelligent at school because he was too slow. They said not suitable for mathematics, they said, and physics because his thinking was very slow. Now what does it mean?

It means there were lots of spaces in between the thoughts. He wasn't at school like one of the so-called intelligent children who always, when the teacher asks a question, the hand goes up immediately. I know, I know.

That's very superficial. Occasionally that may be okay. But there are some children, and that is not recognized by our society, who are very deeply intelligent but not in the way that we consider, what we consider intelligence, and they tend to be slower.

They don't immediately have an answer because they know it's superficial to have a true answer. You have to go deeper within. But if you allowed those children to go deeper, then you would see how original their thinking actually is.

So when we just went into the, you went into the body, already you noticed some new thoughts came, not the old thoughts. It only requires a tiny space for something new to arise. Not that you're doing it in order to have new thoughts.

You're doing it because it feels good to feel the aliveness within you. And the more familiar you become with that, with inhabiting your body, the more strongly you can feel that aliveness. It's almost as if you could feel every cell of the body vibrating slightly.

And it's a beautiful feeling, just an aliveness there. And that is an enormously healing thing to do for the body.

[Speaker 6] (4:08:44 - 4:09:18)

I really want to know about guilt. I feel guilty all the time for little things I'm doing or that I'm not doing. And there are things that I know I did that were mistakes to other people.

So I know that you're supposed to be free and liberated in the now, but shouldn't I feel bad about this stuff? I mean, and what's going to keep me, if I'm free and liberated in the now, from like doing bad things to people?

[Speaker 1] (4:09:20 - 4:22:27)

Human beings act out of their conditioning. So every human being is conditioned by their upbringing, by the surrounding culture, by many factors, conditioned to think and feel and behave in certain ways. And so people do all kinds of things to other people and even to themselves without knowing what they are doing.

They're simply acting out the conditioning of their mind. And Jesus knew that because he said on the cross, Forgive them for they know not what they do. So humans create an enormous amount of suffering for themselves and others, but they don't know that this is what they are doing.

People act out of conditioning. So when you suddenly see that something that you did in the past created suffering for yourself or others or both, when you see that, the seeing of it does not come out of the conditioning of your mind. When you become aware of certain behavior or thought patterns in you, the awareness, the presence, the deeper presence that you are has come in.

And from there you can see what you did was very limited. It created suffering for yourself or somebody else or other people, and you didn't even know it. So what was acting at that time?

If you say that was me and therefore I must be bad, you are equating the conditioned mind, your conditioned mind, the conditioning of your mind with who you are. If you say, I did that, therefore I am bad, and continuously think about it, you are equating who you are with what we could call unconsciousness. Unconsciousness means to be totally identified with the conditioning of the mind.

So you just have to act it out. Now there are still millions of humans on the planet who live in that way because the dimension of awareness hasn't arisen yet. So they never know what they are doing.

They continue to inflict suffering on themselves and others, to act unconsciously, but they don't know that this is what they are doing. They cannot do otherwise. So the moment you realize this is what I did, who you are is the awareness that sees that.

Who you are is not what you did. What you did was the conditioning of your mind playing itself out. So you become, you trap yourself in an illusory identity if you feel that I did that.

No, who is speaking, who is I? Are you the conditioned patterns of your mind or are you the awareness that sees, that's the spaciousness within the deeper eye, that sees what the mind is doing, it sees what the mind created in the past, it even sees what the mind is creating at this very moment. If you are aware of the things, the thoughts that go through your head, how you speak to another human being, you may be acting out a role and suddenly there's an awareness that you know that you are acting out a role.

And then comes the possibility of, instead of being the role, being the awareness and then act in a truly genuine way with enhanced intelligence. So the unconscious action was unintelligent action because it was action created by the conditioning of your mind which has nothing to do with who you are. So there's a tendency for the mind to personalize the conditioning and say, I did that.

And that creates guilt and that keeps you trapped in a very narrow sense of self because you have equated who you consider to be yourself with conditioned patterns that you acted out at the time. It wasn't you, it was unconscious, human unconsciousness, no more. And now you see it, so you see it and at this moment you would not act in this way because the awareness is there.

Maybe the awareness will stay and this will never happen again. It is also possible that the awareness becomes obscured again and the same behavior pattern happens again and you don't know it except afterwards when the awareness comes again, oh, I did it again. And this can happen quite frequently.

So it's important, it's good to be aware afterwards if you do not misuse the mind, don't allow the mind to misuse the awareness and make some identity, manufacture some identity out of that for yourself and say that was me, it wasn't me. That's the main thing. Who are you?

You are the awareness. Anything else is forms that arise, thought forms, emotional forms, behavior patterns. So your destiny and your purpose in life is to increasingly be the awareness rather than the conditioned pattern.

But as long as the conditioned pattern is there, it's there. It's good if the moment of transformation comes if the awareness is there while the pattern plays itself out. That's the beginning of the end of the conditioned pattern.

So if it's a certain kind of behavior, perhaps with women, you do essentially the same kind of thing and it happens again and again and the awareness comes afterwards and one day the awareness comes in the middle of doing it. In the middle of it, you see what you're doing. There's a seeing of it.

And that's the beginning of the end of the pattern. Then it may, just one or two more times, the pattern may come up in a weaker form and it will then collapse. So in other words, you are making what was unconscious, conscious.

And that changes it. So you do not have to manipulate yourself and try to engineer inner change. I have to make myself into a better person.

That doesn't usually work. That just creates conflict because you have one image of yourself as the good person that you want to be or that you would like to think of yourself as that or you'd like others to think of you as a good person and then you have unconscious behavior patterns that completely contradict that image of a good person. And then for the rest of your life you live in that conflict.

The good person can talk to the bad one in your head. It's just two thought patterns. So that doesn't work.

What works is to be the awareness, to see it, to be awake enough, alert enough, and that when the present moment comes in, to see are you present in this moment to what happens in this moment, not only externally but internally also. And are you allowing it? Don't reject anything.

If you feel a thought comes in, an emotion comes in, and maybe it's not a good thought.

Maybe your mind says, after the thought has come in, your mind says, oh, that wasn't a good thought, I shouldn't have thought that. But they are both just thoughts.

The so-called bad thought was just a thought and the next thought that said that wasn't a good thought was just another thought. Now, it's possible that the bad thought made you do something bad. That's possible.

But the good thought cannot prevent that. The only thing that can prevent that is to be conscious so that the thought does not control you, the conditioned mind doesn't control you. Be there as the witness to your thoughts.

Just don't reject anything. So don't go wrong there. I know you're concerned about your mind and certain thoughts that go through your mind.

And you would rather be a good person and have good thoughts all the time, but it's not happening. And I can assure you it's not happening to anybody. Somebody is just having good thoughts because the human mind is the human mind.

It has polarities of good and bad and high and low. So don't try to bring about on that level the perfect me. It doesn't exist.

Allow yourself the imperfections. Allow the thoughts to be there. They come.

If you fight them, you make them stronger. People who have the worst problems with thoughts are people who are spiritual, so to speak. They see themselves or are seen by others as spiritual.

They have to live the role, for example, the vicar, the priest. They have to live the role of a spiritual person and they cannot admit to themselves that they have bad thoughts. So they suppress and they may have bad emotions, anger, resentment.

And they say, No, I'm not having bad emotions. I'm a good Christian. They can't even admit to themselves and that makes it even worse.

And then suddenly very bad behavior comes out of them and they don't know where it came from. So all you have to, with thoughts, all you need to be concerned about is to be the awareness. Allow the thoughts.

Then they actually have less power over you because you are not, don't look for yourself in any thought that comes into your head. It's not who you are. They're just thoughts.

It's not who you are. If you have bad thoughts for two hours, it doesn't make you into a bad person. It just means that so-called bad thoughts are going through your head.

And then you watch it. And as you allow them, there is a deeper space, the eye. From there you watch.

Thoughts are like clouds passing. You don't have to follow every thought and then thoughts can become very tedious. You can have one repetitive thought pattern going on in your mind for hours or even days.

You don't have to follow every thought when you're aware. You watch the thought. There it comes.

What are you going to do to this obnoxious person? I'm going to kill this obnoxious person. Comes the thought.

And then the thought drifts out and the awareness remains. And then it's lost power already. It's nothing.

So you find a spacious relationship with your thoughts. You are nothing that arises in that beautiful space of who you are, the consciousness that you are, which is spacious intelligence. None of that is who you are.

They are forms. They come and go. So thought is not a problem.

Be there as the witness to what goes on inside you. Then change happens by itself. The mind will always have good and bad, up and down.

It has polarities. But that's not who you are and you don't have to act on it. Increasingly you act from the state of aware presence.

Action can come from the limited mind and it's not usually skillful action. Or action can arise out of the state of aware presence. So that's the end of guilt.

[Speaker 6] (4:22:30 - 4:22:42)

What's the test? I mean, how do you know that this is out of the awareness after the fact? If you could go back and look at your actions and go, yeah, that was out of awareness.

No, but that wasn't. How would you know?

[Speaker 1] (4:22:42 - 4:25:52)

Well, you know, awareness doesn't create suffering for yourself or others when it comes out of awareness. So you know when you look at action, it has a totally different quality to it. It's not self-serving.

The action did not happen because you needed something from that person. Awareness is not needy. When action arises out of awareness, you do not need to use the other human being for some purpose, ulterior motive.

But when you act out of the conditioned mind, the egoic mind, you're always trying to, you're not only trying to use the present moment because you're hoping to get to some better moment. You make the present moment into a means to an end. You also make other human beings into a means to an end because you want something through them.

So that's where you want to be with this beautiful woman because you want to be seen with her or you want to conquer her and so enhance your self-image. Or you want sexual pleasure from her. But you want something.

If you're acting out of awareness, the acting is not under the law of wanting. It's not that you want anything. And that's also where loving action can only arise out of that because love does not want anything.

True love does not want anything. So that's where it's totally selfless action. And when you look back on it, you can see very clearly whether there was self in the action.

You wanted something for yourself to enhance yourself or whether that was truly action totally free of self. And that's the most effective and the most powerful action is when the self, the image of me, the thought structure of me goes out of the action and action arises that is totally selfless. That action doesn't create problems.

The Buddhist monk said when he was asked, what's the meaning of Zen Buddhism? What's the meaning of Zen? And the monk said, oh, that's easy.

No self, no problem. That's it. So you begin to live and act without a mentally constructed self.

You live from the aware presence. But for a while, the two are there. And the awareness often comes in after something has happened that was unconscious and you see it.

Don't beat yourself up. It's only the human condition. But whenever you see unconsciousness has just happened or happened the other day and now you see it or you see it in the middle of it, it's good to see it.

The more you see it, the more awake you become. Don't personalize it. It's nothing.

It's not who you are. That's the main thing.

[Speaker 6] (4:25:54 - 4:26:03)

So can the now make me rich, powerful, free, happy, smarter, more loving, more loved?

[Speaker 1] (4:26:05 - 4:37:52)

Yes, all of those things. Rich? Yes.

Let's start with rich and then we'll look at the next one. Can the now make me rich? Yes.

Now what does it mean to be rich? Rich means it's not what people think it is. It's not to have lots of possessions.

That may be one aspect of being rich. But rich means to be in touch with the fullness of life. And the only place where you can find the fullness of life, the intense aliveness that you sense when you are present to now is here.

When you are open to the present moment, what comes in is a gratitude for what is, no matter what it's, a little plant, the air you're breathing, the light that's coming through the window, the sound of a bird, whatever it is, there's a goodness to it. And even if it looks bad, even if it's a dead animal or a dead human, when you are totally aligned with the present moment, there's a peace that comes into your perceptions. And with that peace comes a gratitude that is very deep.

And so you're experiencing really life for the first time when you become present. And so to be in a state of gratitude for what is, is really what being wealthy means. The present moment is always enough.

And so the definition of wealthy really is to be, to have enough, to feel already the fullness of life, an expression that Jesus used. He said, I want you to have the fullness of life. And people didn't quite understand what he meant.

Was Jesus talking about shopping malls, that you have 100, 500 shops in one huge shopping mall and you have thousands of things to choose from? Was he predicting the arrival of shopping malls? Is that the fullness of life?

You can walk around and have lots of money and credit cards and you can buy anything you like. Now, there are people who can do that. They are not happy.

So he's not talking about many, many things when he talks about the fullness of life. He's talking about the one thing. It's to feel the intensity of being alive.

And you can only feel that intensity of aliveness when you're in the present moment with your attention. One way of being in the present moment, as you know, is to feel the inner aliveness of the body, to feel the aliveness that is in every cell of the body. It's alive.

And the more you go there, the stronger that feeling becomes. And once you are connected with that, you feel that the world around you is intensely alive too. It was alive before, but you didn't see it because there was too much thought stuff going through your mind continuously.

The world became dead because everything was immediately labeled mentally. That's a tree. That's a dog.

The moment you label it, you don't look anymore. It's not alive anymore. Everything gets deadened through mental abstraction when you go around the voice in your head immediately calling things, calling things names, giving things names.

So when you become more present, there's this alert attention with which you meet your surroundings. Once you know the fullness of life that is already here now, and then gratitude arises for what is, no matter what it is, then living in this way, eventually that fullness that in essence is an inner realization rather than outer, that's the foundation for wealth, is to feel the fullness of life within. And then if you live in that way, in connectedness with that, eventually the fullness of life will also manifest for you externally in various ways.

Meaningful activity is a form of wealth. To know that what you're doing is helping other human beings brings an external fullness also into your life, which is a form of wealth. And wealth may also come in the form of things coming to you, more conventional things, home or car or whatever it may be.

Those things also come much more easily when basically you already feel the fullness even long before it comes externally. So basically you feel already wealthy when you live fully in the present moment, you never feel really poor. I perhaps spent 10 years of my life at least living what people would say below the poverty line, and I never felt poor, I always felt rich, although for a long time I had nothing, no external possessions.

But it was so fulfilling to live every moment fully present to the moment, that I felt wealthy, abundant. And much, much later did actually external abundance come into my life to some extent. And that didn't make me feel better, I feel just when now I have a car, during those years I used a bicycle mostly, or the bus, and I don't feel better now because I have a nice car, I feel exactly the same, but it's nice to have a nice comfortable car, with air conditioning in the summer, but the fullness hasn't changed, it hasn't done anything to change that.

So already the foundation is to be fully alive in the present moment, and then it is much more likely that external wealth will also come to you as an outer manifestation of an inner reality. If you feel wealthy already, but if you feel poor, and feel that you really need to make money now, even if you achieve it, you'll be unhappy with your wealth, because it comes out of the unhappiness. So there are many people who are creating wealth these days, they build up a big business or an enterprise, but it comes out of a deep dissatisfaction with what is, it comes out of an enormous neediness to show to the world that you are somebody, or to prove to yourself or the world how good you are, and that is not conducive to true happiness.

There are many wealthy people who are unhappy in their wealth, and they are not really wealthy, and they are basically still deprived, they are deprived of the fullness of life, and they have perhaps five or ten houses in different places, cars, yacht, and yet they are deprived of the fullness, and so they need more and more, and it doesn't help. So here we have living in the present moment, brings you into the fullness of life now, and then eventually it will also manifest in different ways externally for you. Power was the other thing, will it bring me power?

Yes, but not power to the ego, it will make your life more empowered, that what you do, much greater power flows into what you do, because what you are doing, the action that you are performing, whatever it is, in the present moment, the only place where you can do anything, the action that you are performing in the present moment is not a means to an end. For most people, they are active, but they are active because they want to get there, to that point in the future, they want the end result, their eyes are on the end result. So they may be busy building up a business, because they want to become wealthy, but they reduce the quality and aliveness of the present moment, because they are reducing the present moment to a means to an end.

They give it inferior status. In their minds, the future is more important, because that is where they are going to be wealthy. But then the pattern remains inside them, and even when they have the money, they still have the same basic psychological pattern, which means they need the next moment, and always they reduce the present moment to a means to an end.

So the action is not of high quality, it does not contribute to happiness, they don't make themselves happy, and they don't make others happy with what they do. So that's not truly empowered, and it is low quality action. High quality action comes when you don't reduce the present moment to a means to an end.

That's truly empowered action. Only when you no longer reduce this moment to a means to an end can you give your full attention to whatever it is that you are doing now. Some great artists do it, sportsmen do it.

When they perform, they are truly present. It's not a means to an end. They're totally in the now.

And so high quality action comes out of that, and this is empowered action. So living in the now brings power into your life, true power, not the pseudo power of the ego. And then whatever comes out of it, out of that action, will be good in one way or another.

It will not be, one could say, I call it, it's not karmic action, which means karmic action, it's an Eastern term, karma. Karmic action creates more unhappiness. It comes out of unhappiness and creates more unhappiness for yourself and others.

But out of presence, alignment with now, comes non-karmic action. It does not create more suffering on the planet. Because so many people are very, very active, but a lot of that activity ultimately creates more suffering on the planet.

So that's the power. What's the next thing that the now will bring you? What was the question?

[Speaker 6] (4:37:53 - 4:38:25)

I want to do what you're talking about. I want to feel good. I want to feel at peace.

But I guess I have a worry about, well, will I really be doing something good for the world? I mean, there's like people starving. There's all this sadness and all this pain.

And it's hard to believe that just me feeling peaceful is going to help that.

[Speaker 1] (4:38:26 - 4:52:30)

The only place where you can be free of the conditioning of your mind, because freedom is not an external thing, it's an internal thing, you can be in prison and you can be free. People have written to me from prison and they've read The Power of Now, and they said they now feel free. What does that mean?

True freedom is freedom from your mind, from the conditioned, all the conditioned thoughts and emotions that otherwise control you. Freedom is the freedom to step back from the conditioning into the deeper I, the awareness that you are. It's freedom from thought, ultimately, so that not every thought controls you.

So it's the freedom from conditioning. And basically it's the freedom from the past. So you're no longer determined, your behavior and your thinking is no longer determined by your past.

It's also freedom from future, because most people have a desperate need for the next moment. I call it psychological future. They need the fulfillment that they think the future will bring them.

It won't. So this is something for you to be aware of, because I know that pattern also still operates in you, believing that something in the future will bring you greater fulfillment than you have now. But it won't.

If you don't have it now, you won't have it then. You have to access The Power of Now regardless of your external circumstances. You can have that now.

You can't wait for the future, because once you're in the waiting mode, you'll always be waiting for the next moment. Even when you become a famous actor, it won't feel quite right. Maybe you're already famous, I don't know.

But it won't feel quite right, and there will be many things. When you're very famous, I've met one or two famous actors, and they come to this teaching. Why do they come?

Don't they have everything? No, they've realized they don't have what really matters. And suddenly they discover the spiritual dimension, because they've achieved everything else on the worldly dimension.

So go deeply into the present moment. Become deeply aligned and at one with the only thing there ever is in your life, the present moment. And that is where true power resides, and that is the only place where you can be truly free.

What's the next thing that you want? Happiness. Can happiness come in the future?

When I achieve this or that, then I'll be happy when I make it. But every situation that you go into will have a downside. If you're expecting circumstances to make you happy, they can do that for a while, and then you find, oh, it's not quite what I expected, and there's always another side to it.

And very often the very thing that makes you happy, if you have an external thing that makes you happy, that very thing will also make you unhappy. An example, a woman comes into your life who makes you happy. One, two, three years later, the same woman makes you unhappy.

It's the same thing. Or a job, a great job is offered to you, and it creates so much stress that you make yourself ill. It makes you happy first, and it makes you unhappy.

You become famous, and then you see the downside of fame. You can't go out in the street alone anymore. There's a riot the moment people see you.

You're a prisoner of your house. You can't go out without two or three bodyguards. Is that freedom?

And you thought you would be free when you become famous. I've met one or two famous people who, they can't go out alone. It's too dangerous, and people stop them all the time, and they gather around them.

They have to stay inside. Everything has to be organized. They have to jump in the car with tinted windows and bodyguards.

Is that freedom? Are they happy because of their fame? No, they have experienced the downside of fame.

It doesn't mean that you should not pursue goals. There's nothing wrong with being famous, but don't expect it to make you happy. The true happiness has to be found, it comes from being aligned with life internally.

And where is that? Now, here. A complete openness and yes to the present moment that takes you deep into the present moment.

That is, true happiness comes out of that. And then you can go on and do things and see if you can become famous. Why not?

Experience that. Experience as much as you can without hoping that some experience, or when you've accumulated enough experiences, you'll finally feel fulfilled and fully yourself. That won't happen.

There's no end to accumulating experiences and achieving this or that. You cannot find yourself there. You can only find yourself in the present moment.

For everything else, you need time to achieve success in your career, to learn to play the piano, to learn a foreign language. Even if you want to meet a woman, it takes time. You have to walk somewhere where the beautiful women hang out.

It takes time. Everything takes time. And so the mind thinks, OK, finding myself who I truly am will also take time.

It thinks, when I've added enough to who I think I am, maybe recognition from other people, fame, possessions, put all these things in the back, my back, and when I have enough things accumulated, then I will be full. And that moment will come at some point in the future. It doesn't.

Because the back, no matter how much you put in, it'll never feel full, besides from the fact that often things fall out of the back. You put something in here, and then something else falls out. You suddenly get wealth, and then you're unhappy in your marriage.

Or you're happy in your marriage, and suddenly the job doesn't work anymore. There's nothing... Stability isn't to be found in the external world.

It's in constant flux. This universe is not stable. People have this absurd illusion that they're living in a stable universe and that they can achieve some kind of stability in their lives.

They are shocked when suddenly big disasters happen, and you realize how unstable, really, everything is. So if you look... And that doesn't mean it's to be rejected.

Play in the world and enjoy the play. Play as much as you can. But don't expect anything out there to truly make you happy or fulfill you.

Happiness is to be found directly within yourself. It comes from being connected with who you are. This brings us back to where we started.

To be in touch, to feel the deeper I. And there's enormous joy in simply feeling the beingness that you are. To feel the I am that is deeper than this or that.

I am. The very life that you are, to feel that. To feel alive.

Out of that comes true happiness. And then you can play around in the world and you acquire things, and then you lose things, and you acquire some more, and then you lose some more, and in the end you lose everything. That's what everybody does.

You lose the body. In the end, its form dissolves sooner or later. But it's finding something that is deeper than any form inside yourself.

That's true happiness. Love also comes... True love comes only out of the true I.

True love cannot come out of the pseudo I that says I, the actor, I, the good looking actor, I, the famous actor, I, the American, I, the poor one or I, the wealthy one, or I, who is good with women. True love doesn't come out of that I. That's a pseudo I.

That's what most people refer to when they use that word that's so common, I. But the true love comes out when you're connected with the deeper I the I that has no form, the one thing that never leaves you, the one ingredient that's always there no matter where you are, what you do, what you experience, that never changes, the I, the consciousness that you are. When you live in connectedness with that, aligned with that, that's where true love comes.

Because when you meet another human being you can sense in them also there's the depths of the same I that is your identity. You recognize yourself in the other and the other as yourself. And you feel a deep connectedness much deeper than anything that you can say or think with the other human being.

And that's true love. True love is to feel that you're ultimately not separate. You're one.

That can only come out of the spaciousness that is part of the now. The now is space. What happens in the now is form.

Don't confuse the two. The reason why people think there are many, many moments in every day, in your lifetime, in every hour, because what happens changes continuously. The forms around you change continuously.

The thoughts that go through your head change. The emotions that you feel change. The people around you change.

So people think every time it's a new moment, this moment and another moment and another moment. If you look more deeply, you see it's not another moment. It's always now.

But the form that appears in the now changes continuously. But it's always now. And ultimately, now is who you are.

The space of now is the space of I. And then things happen in it and they change continuously. So there are two ways of saying, when they ask you, what is it that never changes?

What is it that's always there in your life, no matter where you go and what you do? You can say, it's always I. The deepest I, not the superficial I that changes.

The thoughts, the emotions, who you are in the world. But the deeper I, that's always the same. And so another way of looking at it is to say, it's always now.

The now never changes. And then you find the miraculous thing, they're actually one. The space of now and who you are in the depths of your being is consciousness itself, before it becomes something.

The very foundation out of which all life comes. You could say God. God dwells in the depths of your being, not as some entity, but as the formless one life itself.

That is the deepest meaning of what now is. And that's why the now can never leave you. So I am the now, in essence.

I am not what happens. I am the space in which everything happens. That's your true identity.

And when you live one with that, knowing that, your life will be fruitful and a great and wonderful adventure. When you don't know who you are, then no matter what you do, what you achieve, where you go, who you meet, it won't satisfy you. That's how simple it is.

[Speaker 5] (4:52:52 - 4:53:26)

It has arrived. It has arrived. We talked about it off the top, right?

Are you one of those people who worries about everything? What happened yesterday? What's happening tomorrow?

And your mind just keeps going and going and going and going. And there's always somebody in your life that says, you've got to live in the moment. You've got to live in the moment.

If you worry so much about yesterday and today, you're missing the now. Well, chances are, your friend who told you that read our next guest's book, because he can help teach you to live in the moment. Millions of people have read his work.

Oprah loves him. Spiritual writer, teacher Eckhart Tolle will be right here. Here's his bio.

[Speaker 1] (4:53:39 - 4:53:44)

Who you are and stillness are one and the same.

[Speaker 5] (4:53:45 - 4:54:48)

Now, if you're into this guy, you consider Eckhart Tolle one of the world's most influential spiritual leaders. People say he's a master of inner calm and peace. Was he born that way?

Is he some kind of a Buddha? Well, no. Here's how it happened.

Eckhart was born in Germany, spent his teenage years in Spain, then headed to Britain for university and grad work. Now, up until that time, Eckhart said he was depressed, he was anxious, he was often suicidal. But at the tender age of 29, his life suddenly changed.

He says he woke up one day feeling an overwhelming sense of joy and peace. And it took him years to figure out what had happened. It took him even longer to teach others how to get to the same place.

So, in a nutshell, here's what Eckhart says. You are not your mind. In fact, he says your mind is your worst enemy, that it overtakes the real you and creates thoughts that make you miserable.

So, if you want to achieve peace, well, then you've got to disassociate yourself from your mind. Eckhart's key? Live in the present.

Because according to him, dwelling in the past only leads to guilt and regret. Thinking about the future brings anxiety and worry.

[Speaker 1] (4:54:48 - 4:54:49)

You may have noticed that already.

[Speaker 5] (4:54:51 - 4:55:49)

And it's all summed up in Eckhart's enormously successful book called The Power of Now. He wrote it in Vancouver, where he currently resides. That thing came out over ten years ago and sold more than five million copies.

Yeah, you know, thanks in large part to this person. She's also a big fan of Eckhart's follow-up book, A New Earth. It was one of her book club picks.

This is the most exciting thing I've ever done. And last year, she made it the basis for ten weeks of seminars with Eckhart on Oprah.com. Thank you.

Everybody, say hello to Eckhart Tolle. Great to see you, man. Okay.

You know, when you first published that book, Paranay, with a small independent publisher, 3,000 copies, I can imagine you would have no idea that this was going to happen to you.

[Speaker 1] (4:55:50 - 4:56:46)

No, I thought the book would only appeal to people who were already deeply into spirituality or had been meditating for many years. And after about three or four months after it got published, I realized that many people were phoning and writing in to tell me they had bought more than one copy for friends or relatives. And then I began to realize that it was a kind of snowball effect.

And it would be growing and growing. That was a surprise. Another surprise was that for quite a few people, that was the first spiritual book they had ever read.

And it made sense to them. And so I hadn't realized the degree of readiness in people for this message. And that was the surprise.

And then more surprises came later. The book became what one reviewer called an underground bestseller for a while.

[Speaker 5] (4:56:46 - 4:56:50)

Usually in music, underground means people like it, but no one buys it.

[Speaker 1] (4:56:50 - 4:57:44)

Well, here underground means people buy it, but there's no publicity, there's no advertising, nothing on television about it. And so word of mouth. So it grew for about a year and a half.

It grew through word of mouth. Gradually it got to some cities. There was a time at that time I would take a few copies of the book to little spiritual bookstores in Vancouver every couple of weeks.

And then they would phone me again and say, We need another five copies. I would carry five copies. You did it yourself.

Yes. That was enormously satisfying to have this personal contact with the book. And at that time also there were not that many readers.

People could phone in and say, Oh, I'd like to meet you. And I said, Okay, what time do you want to meet? And then as it grew, after a while I couldn't do that anymore.

Rule number one, man, if someone wants to meet you on Facebook, don't.

[Speaker 5] (4:57:46 - 4:57:52)

That's the trick. Do you have horror stories? Horror stories.

Where you met somebody and you went, Oh, I've got to get out of here.

[Speaker 1] (4:57:54 - 4:58:23)

No, nothing that comes to mind. But the book does seem to, not only The Power of Now, also the later book, A New Earth, for some reason it does seem to upset some people. I remember my office getting, they told me, they don't show it to me, but they told me they got the old one package and somebody had shredded the entire New Earth book and sent the shredded version back to my office.

So something must have triggered something in here.

[Speaker 5] (4:58:26 - 4:58:35)

If you go back a few decades, you're 29 years old, a fateful night, is that what started this whole thing?

[Speaker 1] (4:58:35 - 5:01:08)

Yes, a night when I'd had many unhappy nights, but that night I was just so deeply depressed again and I'd spent the previous weeks in anxiety. What happened, a thought came into my head which said, I can't live with myself any longer. And at that moment a separation happened between myself and that thought and I looked at the thought and said, I can't live with myself, what does that mean?

There must be two of me, there's an I and there must be some unhappy self that I cannot live with. And through that, although I only understood the full implications years later, a separation happened between the unhappy self, which I later realized is a mental construct consisting of repetitive unhappy thoughts about me and my life, an unhappy story. I was continuously retelling myself the unhappy story of me and I was so identified with the unhappy story of me that there was no gap between that and me and that was the self that I couldn't live with.

And when I realized that there is a self I can't live with, something separated and I became the consciousness behind the unhappy self. And I could see that the whole structure of the unhappy self was a kind of fiction, a narrative that I kept repeating in my mind. So the separation happened and I realized that in essence I'm not my story, whether happy or unhappy, I'm the consciousness behind the story.

The consciousness or the space, whatever you want to call it, there's not really a name for it. And I suddenly realized myself as that and with that I was in a state of peace. From then onwards I never again identified with this unhappy mental construct, the me with its story.

And that's what I call now the shift in consciousness that happened, or you could also call it an awakening. And then later it became the teaching because I tried to explain, after a few years later people started coming to me, just casually asking questions. And gradually a spiritual teaching developed, but it's all based on that, disidentification from this continuous stream of thinking that you take to be yourself, but it's no more than a stream of thinking, it's not who you are in essence.

[Speaker 5] (5:01:08 - 5:01:25)

One other thing we know about however it is we are or we act, ultimately we are all affected by where we come from. That sort of sets the table for who we're going to be in the next phase of our life. And I wondered for you to get to that point, what were your folks like?

I never hear about what your childhood was like that would have set these sort of dominoes up for them to come falling down that one night.

[Speaker 1] (5:01:25 - 5:01:54)

Well, the childhood was already unhappy. There was always almost continuous conflict in my parents' marriage. And I was the only child that makes it even more difficult because if you have siblings then you can kind of relate to them.

And so I suffered a lot, I think the beginnings of the deep unhappiness and depression are probably there. But again, I'm glad now that it did happen because otherwise the shift wouldn't have happened.

[Speaker 5] (5:01:54 - 5:02:24)

You know the idea of being in the now, it's something that my friends, they've sort of stopped asking me to be in the now because they recognize it's not a reality for me because so much is like I'm sort of in the now but I'm going here trying this. The one thing we know is that our society is constructed in a way where we have a history and we have things to look forward to. How do you almost approach the unlearning of a people to change the way that this society is built?

This society is built on here's my past, learn from my past. If I don't learn from my past, I'm doomed to repeat the mistakes.

[Speaker 1] (5:02:25 - 5:03:20)

How do you put all that together realizing how society is? Well, this is all true. Of course, it's good to learn from one's past mistakes.

On the other hand, if you identify with your past and your memories and that forms the basis for your sense of self, that becomes a kind of prison. So nothing wrong with learning from the past, but the very essential thing is the realization that your life is always this moment. Your life is never not this moment.

And whatever you think or experience has to be in the now. So life and now are actually inseparable. It's tomorrow never comes, right?

Yes, when it comes, it's today. As they said in the British pub, there was a sign which said, free beer tomorrow. And that is so unfair to drunks.

[Speaker 5] (5:03:21 - 5:03:34)

That is so unfair to drunk people. You said Tiger Woods lives in the now, right? That Tiger Woods is a great example of the now?

Yes. What's the difference between being in the now and just being simply focused? Because when I watch him golf, he golfs like a man who's chasing something.

[Speaker 1] (5:03:35 - 5:04:26)

So what's the difference between in the now and being focused? I don't think he's chasing anything. I think he is present.

There's a nice story of a Zen master who was watching a sports person perform, and he was watching very closely, and the person wasn't quite making it. And the Zen master observed him and said, the need to win drains him of power. The need, because if you have the need to win, now the West, of course, subscribes to that.

It says you must want to win. But that's not the Eastern way, and I believe that that's the truer way, because the need to win, you project a goal to some future moment. You cannot fully be present in what you do if you have the need to win.

You want to get there.

[Speaker 5] (5:04:26 - 5:04:29)

But if you're a pro athlete, you only have to win, right? That's the challenge.

[Speaker 1] (5:04:29 - 5:04:53)

But the great ones, when they actually perform, when they are, as the expression goes, in the zone, they don't think about winning. They are absolutely and totally present. And so I believe that's where mastery arises, in that state of absolute and complete presence.

There's also a nice film, The Legend of Bagger Vance, where it's about a golfer who learns to be present.

[Speaker 5] (5:04:53 - 5:05:04)

You said that there are certain people or things that are better at being in the now than others. You said animals are great at being in the now, but then you also said women are better at being in the now than men. Is that true?

[Speaker 1] (5:05:05 - 5:06:13)

Yes, to some extent. Women are not quite as much in their head as men. Women tend to be.

They are in their head, too, but not quite as much. They tend to be still a little bit more connected with the body, the energy in the body, with their feelings. So they're not as mind-identified, not quite as, there are of course always exceptions, not quite as mind-identified as men.

And therefore it's a little easier. And so from many talks that I've given, there's always more women than men. This is beginning to change a little bit occasionally now, but still the case.

And the new earth is just taking the idea of the power of now to a much bigger level, right? Yes. New perspectives on it, and elaboration, and also indicating what it is that prevents you from being present.

Structures in your mind, the ego, the identification with the voice in the head, to become aware of that. If you're not aware of it, it will take you over again and again. I know you've got a lot of traveling to do.

When you come back to Canada, please come back on our show.

[Speaker 5] (5:06:14 - 5:06:30)

Thank you. That's what I want to talk about. EckhartTolle.com is his website, and there's a lot more to see with what he's got going on. Of course, he's got them books. Good to see you. Thank you for coming out.

Eckhart Tolle, everybody. Thank you very much for watching the program tonight. There's an awful lot more to come.

Thanks for watching. That's time.

[Speaker 1] (5:07:22 - 6:11:19)

Welcome to our meditative evening. Perhaps meditation. To meditate successfully, the idea that you're doing a meditation can be quite an obstacle.

So maybe that's the first thing we can get rid of tonight. The preconceptions and the expectations that come with that term. So why did we call it guided meditation?

Well, we had to use some word to get you here. Yes. Meditation is usually something that you do, among many other things.

Doing implies all kinds of things. It implies time, even future to some extent. And yet through meditation, if you even want to call it that, it's better not to call it anything, it's not to do with doing.

It's not a doing. It's the realization that you are of being, which underlies all doing. It's prior to all doing.

Thoughts, emotions is prior to that. The simple realization, not the realization who you are, because there can be so many perspectives on that, not the realization how you fit into the totality of the cosmos, how that seemingly little life fleeting existence fits into the totality somewhere. Not realizing how I fit into the whole.

It's impossible to comprehend. But an alignment with the totality, without the need to mentally understand anything, a realization, a simple realization that you are, which is expressed in the sublime words, I am. And if you've missed elementary grammar at school, you might not realize that I am is the first person singular of the verb to be.

You think it's two completely different words. No. The realization that you are, not as a concept, but as a deeper sensing of the life that you are.

The aliveness, the life. And something helpful to realize that is to pretend for one moment that there is no past and no future. Shh.

Shh. Shh. I'm saying pretend so that everybody is still with me.

If I said, if I said there is no past and future, some of you might suddenly start thinking, just a second, aren't you going to sign books in an hour? And the moment you go into thinking, you're off into the realm of mind, the realm of things, object, objects in consciousness. Every thought is an object in consciousness and every thought has a pulling power.

That's why it arises and it pulls your attention in and you start thinking, okay, but there is, I mean, I came here half an hour ago, there must be a past. Not realizing, of course, when you came here, it was the present moment. And when the books are going to be signed, it'll be the present moment because there is nothing else.

Okay, but no need to believe that. Let's pretend. Let's pretend for a moment that there is no past and future.

Okay. Or let's just say, past and future become peripheral to who you are. Oh.

There's only this. Oh. That is the entry point into the realization I am.

Thinking is not required for that realization. In fact, it's a hindrance and you may sense a global feeling of presence or beingness that incorporates what we call the physical body. When you're present, completely present, here, now, you're present, not just with the head, with the totality of your being.

In other words, you sense an aliveness that's there in every cell of the body. That is our meditation, to be present with every cell of the body, a subtle sense of aliveness. In which the personal dimension becomes relatively unimportant.

What arises here is the dimension of conscious presence or consciousness itself. It's spacious. It's...

The moment you start to think, a form arises. Consciousness is born into a form, a thought form. Most human beings on the planet are lost in the forms that arise in their consciousness.

And when I say in their consciousness, that's not entirely correct. Because there is not such a thing as my consciousness, ultimately. There's consciousness.

And I am that. If you use the word expression, my consciousness, this whole language unfortunately operates, you create a duality. And so here's me and there's consciousness.

The same thing happens when you talk or think about my life. And everybody thinks about it a lot of the time. Yeah.

It's amazing how fascinating my life is. And that's such a fundamental error or delusion to say my life, because it implies that you have a life. And that implies that you are separate from life.

There's you and there's life. And you have it. And then of course you start being afraid because you might lose it.

And then what's left of you? So just to see that, to say my life is obviously an illusion because how could you be separate from life? You are life.

You don't have one. And life takes on form. Temporary forms becomes what looks like a physical form.

And on the inner level, life becomes thought forms and emotions and sense perceptions. Forms that consciousness takes is born into continuously, the continuous dance of form. It's amazing spectacle.

Beautiful, wonderful. But it gets heavy and serious when all you know is the forms that consciousness takes. And you never know yourself as consciousness itself.

Being. So we could say the forms that consciousness or life takes, we could call that existence. It stands, exist means to stand out.

Ex means out from Latin. Istans from stans, standing. To stand out.

So whatever arises, sense perceptions, things, thoughts, they exist. First they have a certain lifespan. Come and go.

Entire universe exists. Life forms go in and out of existence. And then there's that which is prior to existence, being.

I am. So the play of form is a beautiful thing. Well, forms are things.

But when that is all you know, you don't know that which underlies the dance of form. Then the dance of form is no longer a dance. It's not fun anymore.

It's not experienced or perceived as a play anymore. It becomes deadly serious. Because that's all you know.

And every form matters. It matters absolutely. You know how worked up people get about things.

Yes. And you can see even people who mentally perhaps realize certain truths. They say I'm beyond things now.

And then suddenly the phone rings. What happened? What?

He broke the contract. He broke the contract. Another word for form, we could just say, the world.

And so the world is the world of things. It's the world of material things, which absorbs many people's, large part of many people's attention. What's the next thing?

They're looking always for the next thing to acquire, to derive satisfaction from, to associate with, to identify with. But things are not just material things. And of course material things are everywhere in our civilization, particularly we are, we are suffocating under proliferation of things and bombarded with messages that we need more things.

But things are also events, you know, forms that arise and they pretend to be all important. And life is not a play anymore. And the older you get, the heavier it gets and the more serious it gets.

You may have noticed in the statues of the Buddha, the Buddha has a slight smile usually, the good ones. There are some bad ones where the Buddha looks serious. But the good ones, there's a hint of a smile.

And then you may ask, why is he smiling? If all is nothingness, as some say, emptiness, then there's nothing that is there to smile about. The smile arises because the Buddha is in touch with that which is prior to things, to objects, to form, to the world.

Not because he has made it in the world. He's not smiling because somebody has just given him a garden for his monks and nuns to walk in. He's not smiling.

He is in touch with that which is prior to all things. We could call that that if things are objects that arise in the field of consciousness, then consciousness itself could best be described as space, a sense of spaciousness or space in your life, which doesn't exist as your life by just using language. Space, consciousness, which is not a term from science fiction, but refers to the realization that space is the essence of who you are, the spaciousness of simple being.

And your entire life experience is determined by whether or not and how much space there is in your life. And for many humans on the planet, there's no space. It's not that the space isn't there.

It cannot be destroyed, done away with, but they don't know it's there. All they know is the forms. Someone could say, all they know is the dimension of waves and ripples on the surface of life.

That's the world, experiences, events, sense perceptions, drama, thoughts, emotions, ripples. Ripples on the surface of life itself. And I am life.

I am the one life. I speak for each one of you as the I am. That which I am is life itself.

It takes on a temporary form and it's beautiful. It's a continuous stepping back from the seduction of things. It's not that you reject things, but you stay, you can remain conscious of consciousness while you participate in the dance.

How does that look in practice? Somebody comes, says, oh, you know what just happened? This and this and this.

In other words, lost in things, the world of things, and it matters, each thing matters absolutely. You know, this. Okay.

And now there's the possibility either you get drawn into that and react on the same level and fuel that dimension. What could be, what are we going to do now? Or you can be there, while that person speaks, you can be there as an alert, aware presence in which the words are being received.

Oh, okay. There's an alertness there. You're not, haven't gone to sleep.

But you're in fact much more awake than you would be if you were reacting. You just, oh, that's well, okay. And for a moment, there's a space in which this thing happens, the person is talking.

And then you will find yourself saying something or doing something, and it will be appropriate. And while you say or do something, there's still a connectedness with the underlying field. It's a global thing, it's the entire being.

A connectedness with the underlying field out of which the doing comes or out of which the words come. Speak. Much more intelligent, certainly the words that come out of the field, which really is the field of pure intelligence, consciousness itself, will be much more relevant, much more powerful, much more intelligent than anything that could come out of the conditioned reactive mind.

And another thing that comes with it is, there's always when you're in touch with the I am, you could call it other ways, other words, you can call it stillness, beingness, presence. That is also the realm of peace. That is the realm out of which peaceful action can come.

Words, peaceful words, words that have the energy carry still a fragrance of that state of being. Action also can carry that fragrance. Creation, you can create something out of that state like a work of art or whatever it may be or a little simple object.

And whatever comes out of the state of connectedness with being, and don't trust words, they're never quite right. You are not connected with being because you are being but we have to use words. Out of that state of connectedness with being, whatever comes out of that has a beauty to it, has a power to it, has a quality.

And it may just be the quality of a simple gesture or the quality of a step, it doesn't matter what it is. So that's really the purpose of life while you are here in this form is to be in the two dimensions, one could say, don't, this is nothing final here, the two dimensions of, there's the dimension of the world and there's the dimension of being or presence which is the unmanifested or other words that you might want to use. And the art of living is to be in the world, participate to the extent that you want to or is required of you.

And as the old expression goes, to be in the world, but not off it. It's an old Christian expression. So the world, which is the world of things, which includes thoughts because every thought is an object, it has a form, a thought form.

The world of things, including your mind, no longer has the power to draw you in completely and you no longer give it this absolute reality. It is the world of the relative. It helps greatly if you can become friendly with the present moment because being can only be realized of course, in the present moment.

And the delusion is that something is happening in this moment that prevents me from being, from being myself, from being present, still at peace. In love, it all goes together because all love can only arise from that dimension. The delusion that the present moment is some kind of obstacle to where I really want to go or be.

And that's a very common, it's so widespread that it dominates many people's lives entirely. The delusion that the present moment is some kind of obstacle in my way. That's not, they don't say that or don't think that, but they live like that.

If you said it or thought it, you would immediately say, this must be insane. But if that becomes your daily experience, that almost always that the present moment is, okay, where's the next thing? Because this isn't it, this can't be it.

I'm looking for some, for more, something more, but not this. The more could be anything, could be the tiniest thing because life consists of the succession of the tiniest things. The great things happen rarely.

And once they pass, then we're back to the tiny things. So it's the tiniest things. There's, for example, the belief that once your child has brushed his, his or her teeth, it'll be okay.

Okay. And after then, of course, there's something else that's needed. There's always the next thing that you need to get to in the unconscious belief, because if you make it conscious, you'll see the absurdity of it.

In the unconscious belief that there is something there for you in the next moment or the one after that. And so the present moment, all there ever is, becomes a means to an end, no more. The end is the next moment.

And what is the next moment? The future moment? A thought in your head.

That's its only reality. Is that true? It must be true because nobody's ever touched or smelled or seen the future.

It's always only a thought in your head. And so you live for a thought in your head. That is the mind-obsessed, mind-dominated, mind-possessed state.

Could also be called egoic state because ego means to be totally identified with a mind-made sense of self. And every thought, which many thoughts are about the next moment, the future, every thought draws your attention in so completely that you identify with it. And so identify means it becomes invested with a sense of self.

That's the great delusion. So you're looking for yourself somewhere in that realm because in some future moment, there's the hope that things will be okay. I can finally relax.

Of course, it never comes because it's the future. It never comes. So here, becoming friendly with the present moment and stop treating it as an enemy or run away from it or use it, okay, as a stepping stone.

You are here, but you want to be there. You can look, almost everybody on TV looks like that. It sounds almost too simple, becoming friendly with the present moment and all kinds of things happen in the present moment.

The form that it takes changes continuously. The present moment itself remains as space. And then in that space, something happens.

And the secret to life is to be internally aligned with the form that this moment, the only moment there ever is, takes. Instead of rejecting the form that this moment takes or devalue it and make it into a means to an end. Internally aligned means yes.

You say yes to what is. Your child hasn't brushed his or her teeth yet. That's what is.

Why don't you brush your teeth now? There's a different way of doing things. You know, you tell me, well, you haven't experienced, I have four children, and it's.

There is another way of doing things that honors life, which is now, and only in honoring life, in saying yes to the form that this moment takes, can you go beyond that in yourself, which is beyond form. If you react against the form that this moment takes, you will continue to be trapped in form, a form identity, a me that feels stronger every time it reacts against something. The me gets stronger in every no to what is.

Every time you can, you argue with what is, you complain about what is, the little me, that is a mental formation, feels stronger for a while. And then you have to look for the next thing to argue with. So the secret is the form that this moment takes often looks like a limitation on your freedom.

It may look like a limitation on your life, one way or another. You're sitting in an office, but you don't want to be there. You're in a traffic jam, but you don't want to be there.

So that's a limitation. Your partner is getting obnoxious, so that's a limitation. There's always something that says, I want to be free, I want to be fully myself, not this.

And that keeps you trapped. It's only when you bring a yes to the form that this moment takes, that's to do with the manifested world. The world of manifestation is producing the form that this moment takes.

As an event, a person wanting something, whatever it may be, a situation, a place, that's the form. And you may say, what, doesn't make sense, I don't want this, but it is. And whatever is, is part of the totality.

The entire universe has brought about the form that this moment takes, otherwise it couldn't be. Everything is totally interconnected. Now, you may not be able to see how these things are interconnected.

Why should I be stuck in this traffic jam right now? Does it make sense? What is the purpose in that?

It shouldn't be, but yet it is. And if you become internally aligned with the form, which a moment ago looked like an obstacle, but now you say, well, it is, it is, there it is. With that, space, the dimension of space within yourself, which is being, opens up because you haven't made yourself smaller by reacting against the form.

You haven't trapped yourself in a form identity by reacting against some form that this moment takes. So by saying yes to the form that is, and in some cases, it is truly from a conventional viewpoint, one would say, this is terrible. Why, how could this happen to a human being or to me?

How can this happen to me? Yes, I don't, this is not what I want. It's awful.

It could be a serious, an illness, whatever, great loss, collapse, somebody close to you dies, goes away, leaves you. Forms are not reliable in this world. They are fleeting.

That includes the human form. Even the seemingly solid structures are not really that solid. They just look solid.

Talk to a physicist, he'll tell you they are not solid at all. And sometimes you realize they are not solid. So suddenly something crumbles, a form crumbles.

Form and the formless. And you cannot find the dimension of the formless as long as you are battling against the world of form. I want freedom.

I want to find myself and I can't find myself sitting in front of this computer screen. I can't find myself having to clean this right now. I don't want to be doing something meaningful.

I want to, you're missing something, not something, you're missing that which is concealed underneath the form that this moment takes. And that's easy to do. And that's the great deception that most humans are subject to.

What they are looking for in some future moment is already here, hiding in the most unlikely place called the present moment. What is it that they are looking for? What is it that they're looking for?

But all the people that are running around like rabbits or whatever in the cities, there must be some purpose. Where are they all running to? What is their purpose?

And they all have, even if they want more money or they want more of this or more of that, hiding behind that, there's always, they want to be more fully themselves. They want to feel a sense of security, of aliveness. They want to be more fully who they are.

They want to, they're looking for themselves. They're looking for the ultimate sense of being rootedness, of saying, yes, I have arrived. I'm fully myself now.

Secure. And they are looking through this or that or that. They try to get there, not realizing that they can't.

It's been hiding all along underneath the seemingly unsatisfactory form that this moment takes. So you come, it's a completely different way to live, the alignment with the suchness of this moment. It's only then, that is the true meditation.

You then, space arises when the form is not resisted. Space, a difficult situation, an unpleasant place, whatever it may be, somebody screaming, this or that, that's what is. And then there's, it's still there, but there is a dimension of depth to what is that frees you from being totally dependent on the world of form.

And from that space, you see, it comes with allowing, allowing is the key. Allow this moment and suddenly space is there because through saying yes to what is, immediately an inner spaciousness arises. And out of that spaciousness, action can come.

Out of that spaciousness, words can come. Or out of that spaciousness, nothing may come. It may just remain as spaciousness, which is beautiful too.

Very effective action can come out of that. And out of that spaciousness comes the recognition that every life form that comes into your field of consciousness is really an aspect of the one life, a temporary form that the one life, the one consciousness that you are has taken. And that recognition, or maybe it's a flower, it's a tree, it's a cloud, it's another human being, it's the cat, it's a pebble, a stone, a wall, a chair, whether we call it alive or inanimate, doesn't matter.

Everything is alive. And everything is a form of life. And the essence is life itself, beingness, presence.

Some great artists have looked at a relatively, an ordinary landscape. Nobody would have looked at it twice. And they looked and then they took up the brush and then there was a, when the painting was finished, yes, it was a picture of that landscape, but it also had the fragrance of that which is beyond form that was there as the backdrop, the background to the sense perception of the artist.

There was a true looking against a field of alert, aware stillness. Then it became a painting. And then even, not immediately perhaps, but at some point, even humans who hadn't perhaps not, perhaps almost completely trapped in form, recognized something in that painting.

I couldn't quite say what. And so it became what they call great art. Somebody was able to look at the world of form so deeply that the formless became part of the perception.

And that is not, this is meant to be our normal state. To bring that dimension into this world of form, that which transcends the personal, because everything that is personal about you pertains to the world of form. My past, my thoughts, my opinions, my viewpoints of who I am, who others are, what I know or think I know, my story, my future.

All form, and it's all destined to dissolve fairly quickly as all forms do. Pop, boop, soap bubbles. Oh, where is it?

It's gone. Oh, of course, it can't be. They don't, the amazing thing is they don't teach yet at school that forms dissolve quickly.

That could be lesson one. And every child would see it. Oh yes.

They don't teach it. They teach other things, which they say are more important or important matters. This matter is to do with the world of things.

Don't look for the significant in your life at some future moment. When am I going to make it? When am I going to be recognized?

When am I finally going to get that sense of security that can only come when you have a certain amount of money in the bank? When is my story finally going to turn into a happy and satisfying one? I'm waiting.

I'm waiting for my life to become significant. And you miss the depth because the depth is in each moment or rather the one, the only moment there is. And your life becomes very significant when you bring the inner yes to the present moment.

Then something arises in you that is beyond the form that perhaps looks as if it were an obstacle, but it is. The truth of this is expressed in mythologically in the image of the cross. Somebody surrenders to the most dreadful situation, pain, suffering, and somebody surrenders to that.

So at first, the cross is the greatest obstacle to finding yourself, to being yourself, to life. It seems to deny that there's any meaning to life. Now the cross stands for anything, loss, death, and it'll come into everybody's life, of course.

And then there comes this thing, well, this is the form of this moment. And suddenly there's a peace in the background that suddenly is there in the most dreadful situation externally. And so the cross becomes suddenly an opening that works with little things and suddenly works with big things.

The actor who played Superman died yesterday. He experienced a dreadful accident, broke his neck, couldn't move anymore. He also experienced a certain degree of surrender in the years after that.

And even a certain peace one could see. It became an opening. And so they said something beautiful in the news.

He truly became Superman only after the accident. From a conventional viewpoint, it would be an irony. In the film, he flies, and in reality, he's confined to a wheelchair.

But the true Superman is in the wheelchair. He also said something, they showed an interview. That was, he gave it one year ago.

He talked about the accident. He said, I was one, when I was riding, I was always completely one with the horse. We were a oneness.

And he said, but at that moment, I got distracted by a thought. And I lost the present moment. And then the accident happened.

Then he said, you see how important the present moment is? How important, how precious the present moment is, because it is life itself. It is inseparable from the very being that you are.

And knowing that is the art of living in this world. Remembering you are not what happens, because people get so drawn into what happens. You're not what happens, and you're not what you do, because that's what life consists of.

Things happen to you. That's the passive experience of life. And then you react, or you do things, that's the active.

And that's, for most humans, that's all there is. They're dependent on what happens to them and on the doing, what they do. So there's what happens, what's the next thing that's going to happen?

I'm hoping that it'll be good. Underneath the hope, there's the fear that it'll be bad. What happens and what you do are only relatively important, not absolutely.

Absolutely important is whether you are aligned with life at this moment. That is your purpose, to live, to learn, to live in that way here on this earth as this temporary form is your purpose, to learn that. And what you do doesn't matter.

The success of your life is not determined by what the world tells you is successful. The world doesn't know it. The world is completely lost.

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. Are you aligned with life? With being, with yourself, with the now, so one.

And then what you do externally is secondary. How you do it is what matters. Whether you, six, seven, eight hours a day, you move dishes or whatever you do, then it flows into that.

Being flows into that. Or if whatever you do, it seems incompatible with being, you will find yourself very quickly removed. Life removes you.

Oh, the boss calls you in and says, we don't need you anymore. We don't want peaceful people here. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. Or he says, you're the only person not suffering from a stress-related disease. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

You are not doing your job. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. Some of the structures of this mad world can perhaps be transformed from within.

in other structures of this mad world, you simply leave or they collapse by themselves. And there's wisdom is required for you to know, but that's easy because wisdom is, the place of wisdom is accessing the present moment, alert, still, present, and you watch and you listen. You watch and listen, even if there's nothing to listen to.

As one Zen master would often call his disciples by their name, Mary, yes, master? Nothing. Didn't.

John, yes? Nothing. To simply call them out of identification with the stream of thinking into presence, into stillness, into alert awareness.

He doesn't, you don't have to fill it with something, it's space itself. So he called them into that state, and there was nothing, he didn't have to put anything into it. Why fill it up?

There'll be enough things that will go into space, there are all kinds of things will go, oh, oh. But you don't have to hang on so much anymore, you can, they enter your space, space, not yours, you are space, so it's not your space. Things enter space and then they leave, okay.

Experiences, events, people. And you remain as space, the background. So the foreground is the world, the foreground is the world of things, the world of thinking, the world of emotions, coming, going, that's the foreground of your life that most people are completely lost in, and then there's the background.

The Buddha smile is, I would call the background smile. This was expressed in an extreme form by the teacher Krishnamurti who once said in a talk, do you want to know my secret? And of course, everybody wanted to know his secret, they'd been coming for 30 years to listen to him.

And he said, this is it, my secret. I don't mind what happens. I don't know how many people got it.

Amazing, and of course we understand what that means, no, but I don't mind what happens. I'm not what happens and I'm not looking for myself in what happens, I am not what happens, nor am I looking for myself in what happens. I am this place in which it happens, not what happens.

I am presence, I am consciousness, I am life. Temporarily appearing as a form of life. So the dance of the forms of life is actually quite beautiful when you don't mind what happens anymore because you welcome what happens, because what happens is the present moment.

And it's not serious, thank you.

[Speaker 4] (6:12:00 - 6:15:36)

Hello everyone, welcome. I'm Rich Fernandez from the learning and development team here at Google. So about six months ago, we wrote a letter to Eckhart Tolle inviting him to come here to Google.

Eckhart, dude, come to Google, we said. Well, something along those lines. We make some of the world's most valued and most used technology.

We aspire to do epic stuff and to make a difference in the world. And yet, even as we create this dazzling technology, we wanna be sure to pay attention to our own inner technology. We wanna ask ourselves the searching and far ranging questions about how we're getting on in the world.

As we optimize our technology, how can we also optimize our lives so that we can be our best selves? All of this is a lot easier said than done. We operate in a hyper-connected world, always on, and we go at it with great pace and intensity.

The urgent question of the day is how we can take an intelligent approach to our work and our lives with all of the demands of our time and attention. Amidst this flood of information, how can we discern the signal from the noise in order to access and act on what is most essential to each of us? Eckhart Tolle takes a refreshingly contemporary approach to the question of what it means to live a meaningful and inspired life and with great intelligence.

And in so being, how we can each experience a great sense of clarity, peace, and the joy of being alive. So we're very lucky that Eckhart accepted our invitation and said yes to come here today. He knows our ethos, that we have a profound interest in being our best selves and doing meaningful and inspired work.

We seek to change the world for the better. And he understands that we understand that in order to transform the world, we must first render the necessary transformation within ourselves. So Eckhart is here today to assist and suggest with some things for us to consider.

Eckhart Tolle has written best-selling books including The Power of Now and A New Earth. And they've sold millions of copies worldwide and have been translated into 33 languages. He is widely regarded as one of the foremost teachers on the subject of wisdom and conscious living.

Joining Eckhart in conversation today is our Vice President of Product, Bradley Horowitz. Now, when we proposed to Bradley that he might engage in a dialogue with Eckhart as part of this Tech Talk, he was really excited, which makes sense because Bradley's cool like that. Bradley also helped create Google+, Google Apps, and Google+, which we all love.

So without further ado, please join me in welcoming Eckhart Tolle and Bradley Horowitz as they discuss what it means to live with meaning, purpose, and wisdom in the digital age.

[Speaker 3] (6:15:50 - 6:16:45)

So on behalf of Google and all the many Googlers here and those tuning in from our overflow rooms, welcome, it's great to have you here. And it's very special to have you here. I understand that you don't often visit corporations.

And so this has been a journey we've taken together over the course of the day. Eckhart had a moment to meet with some of us earlier. And we found that really valuable.

And one of the things we discussed this morning was wisdom and the difference between information and wisdom. Google has a mission to organize the world's information. And I think if you think about the hierarchy, there's signal and data and information and knowledge.

And at the very top of the pyramid is wisdom. And I wondered if you could comment a little bit on what you understand to be the difference between information and wisdom.

[Speaker 1] (6:16:46 - 6:19:03)

Good question. Let's set that aside for just one moment to say how happy I am to be here, how impressed I am by what I have seen and by the people who work here and the general energy field in the company. And if you have come, many young people here, if you've come straight from college, then I'm sure you don't know how lucky you are until you start working for another company.

But perhaps everybody who works here, one would, as they would say in India, you must have very good karma to be working here. And the openness of people that's reflected in the structure of the company, the way things are arranged, the little rooms that you have for quietness, for meditation, the cafeterias, and all that is just beyond belief. So I also experience an openness in the people who work here and far less ego because many companies are still predominantly run by very big egos.

I'm not saying that everybody here is entirely free of ego yet, but much less so than in many other places. So it's wonderful to be here. And if my book sales ever decline and I need a job, I hope you will, you probably won't, but because first of all, I have no computer skills.

And secondly, I'm too old. Since the average age here is probably about 30. So your question was important.

I remember it, I remember it.

[Speaker 5] (6:19:03 - 6:19:04)

I don't.

[Speaker 1] (6:19:09 - 6:38:32)

Knowledge, information, and wisdom, how do they relate? Of course, with the technological revolution, information revolution, digital revolution, whatever you call it, there's an enormous amount of knowledge available to everybody, almost the whole of the world's knowledge. And there's the interconnectedness between people and so on.

That's all very good, of course, to have all that accessible to you. There's a danger, though, that you get drowned in too much information and too much knowledge. And by drowned, I mean that the mind gets bombarded with an excess of input.

And therefore, you miss something that is essential for a human life to be truly fulfilled. And that is a place of peace, inner peace or stillness, a place that one could describe as the source of all intelligence that many people don't actually, don't even realize exists within them. So I'd like to just talk briefly about that, that really we're talking about the core of what spirituality means.

Spirituality is not having a particular belief structure, is not subscribing to a particular set of thoughts, spirituality is discovering a dimension within yourself that is, we can either say deeper or higher than the continuous movement of thinking. And of course, all this information and knowledge is experienced in you as thought. So the thinking mind has always been active for many thousands of years in humans, but now it's even more active than before because it gets energized by the incredible increase in input before all you had was simple, the simple sensory input in your immediate surroundings.

Then later came books, so you have the added input of that. And then gradually came the mass media and now this incredible revolution of information technology, computers and so on. So it energizes that movement of thought that's taking place in every human, which in itself is not necessarily a bad thing, it only becomes a bad thing and self-destructive thing if that is all you experience inside you in your consciousness.

If all you ever experience is that, I call it sometimes mental noise, then you begin to derive your identity from the thoughts in your head, what the thoughts tell you about yourself. And you are trapped in that identity that is based on identification with thinking. All spiritual teachings point to the possibility of finding something in you that is deeper than thinking, a space, a stillness that's always there.

And the informational excess of information you can only successfully deal with that if you have a balance in your consciousness between using your mind to absorb information, to put out new information, to work on the information that you have taken in, input. If you have a balance between that and something that is deeper than thought in you. And really, instead of giving you new knowledge here, I don't want to do that because I don't want to add to the knowledge that you're taking in anyway, far more than you ever need.

So instead of giving you knowledge here, I'd like to suggest that you experience at first hand in yourself that place of, I call it sometimes a presence, where you are alert, conscious, but not thinking. And every creative person has some access to that realm. If you have a truly creative insight, you have to go to that place that is deeper than analytical thinking.

Analytical thinking itself, or processing information is not creative. So even to find a creative, a new solution to a problem in your life requires some creative insight. So whether it's a problem in your work situation or your personal life, or something that you need to build or do and you have come to a dead end, or you want to create something, whatever it is, a work of art or a new system for the computer, I don't know the expressions for that, you need to go to the place where creativity arises.

And every human who is creative has some access to that, even if they don't know it. But it's not only the place where creativity arises, it's also the place that gives sanity to your life, to find a place of stillness, peace, aliveness, where you are not burdened by most, a lot of the time, unnecessary mental noise. So when you do start thinking again, it actually can be more productive.

So where is that place? How do you find that place if it's there in everyone? How do I realize that within myself?

That's really the question. I can just suggest to you three or four entry points into that state of consciousness. And after I've done that, we can carry on the conversation.

A very simple entry point, and this is why my first book is called The Power of Now, is the realization that your entire life consists of the present moment and only the present moment ever. Now, most people, perhaps in some abstract way, they know that, but they cannot sense or feel the truth of that. And I'd like to invite you to actually sense and feel the truth of what I'm saying, which no, not, even if there's a great philosopher here, he cannot possibly argue, he or she cannot argue with this statement that whatever you experience whatsoever is present moment.

There isn't, your entire life unfolds in the present moment. That's all you ever have. Most people don't live as if this were true.

They don't, they live as if the opposite almost were true, as if the future moment were more important always than the next one. And that is, that happens because of excessive identification with thinking, because usually the thoughts are about the next thing, the next, and the next, or what could happen or might happen. So if you can just come to this realization, well, this is all, all I ever have and ever experience is this moment.

This is undoubtedly true. There is nothing else ever. And at that moment, when you fully realize that, you can only realize that an alertness arises in you.

Wow. You become alert to, one could almost call it, the presence of the power of this moment, of the power of life itself in this present moment, which consists of, yes, it consists of sense perceptions. It also consists of, well, let's look, what is this present moment?

This present moment is this room, what we perceive here, what we visually, what we see here, the lights, the totality of the room. So let's become alert so that we can really perceive that. And beyond that which we perceive in this room, is there anything else about that we could call the present moment?

Well, if you look deeply enough, yes, there is also the inner energy field in your body that you can actually feel, that you're alive in your legs, your arms, your feet. That's also part of the present moment, to sense the energy field that pervades the physical body. That's also something you can feel.

So there's external sense perceptions and there's the feeling, the aliveness inside your body. And if you're totally in thinking, you can't feel that at all. You don't feel alive.

You're only alive in the upper story of the house, your head. The entire house, you don't inhabit then. So you inhabit, you begin to inhabit the entire body.

This becomes part of your experience of the present moment. So sense perceptions, yes. And there is an aliveness even to artificial light.

Of course, you might say I prefer sunlight. OK, me too. But there's a beauty and aliveness even to artificial light.

And there's a beauty and aliveness that is usually overlooked that's in the texture of this arm, this chair here, or whatever you're wearing, and certainly the flowers. And suddenly you become aware of that. And that's not all yet.

We're just going into the present moment. So you have that, externals, and you suddenly appreciate the aliveness of all the things that surround you. Other people have to take acid to get there.

So you don't need that. You know with acid people, sometimes they look at a teapot and they say, wow. Oh, my God.

But you don't need to do that. Just be present and then you appreciate the beauty even of a mass-produced teapot. If it's handmade and hand-painted, even nicer.

But even a mass-produced teapot has a presence there. It's there and it's an alive energy field. Every physicist will tell you it's not a dead teapot.

It's molecules and atoms in continuous movement. Everything is vitally alive and you miss that if you're totally trapped in the mental noise all the time, taking in information. Present moment, sense perceptions, so the inner energy field of the body.

And then what else is there to the present moment? Then you have to go, become really alert. And the next thing that you notice about the present moment is really the deeper level of the present moment.

It's not something that arises in your consciousness as does the table and this room and even the inner energy field of the body. These are all things, objects that arise in your consciousness. But if you go deeper even into the present moment, what you encounter is the most incredible secret of human life, which is you encounter the fact that at the bottom of it all, you are conscious.

There is the presence that you are without which you couldn't perceive anything. You couldn't perceive this room and you couldn't feel the body without that consciousness that you essentially are, which Jesus, by the way, called the light of the world. He said to his disciples, you are the light of the world.

And these disciples were not special people. They were fishermen, so certainly he wasn't telling them that they are VIPs. They were the opposite of VIPs and yet he said, you are the light of the world.

He also said it about himself, but he also said it about others. And so you suddenly discover that essentially, at the most essential level, the essence of who you are is consciousness. But consciousness isn't something you can say, ah, there it is.

Because consciousness cannot become an object to itself. It's the eternal subject. The I am that I am of the Old Testament where when God is asked for his or her name, God says, I am that I am.

That is the essential identity of all beings. So when we talk about the present moment, we talk about different levels of the present moment from sense perceptions to the feeling of aliveness in the inner body to the realization that ultimately what we call the present moment and the light of consciousness are one and the same because that's the thing that always remains. And that consciousness, you can sense it as yourself right now, the presence that you are, even beyond the physical presence.

And that is the alertness, that is the realization that is sometimes called awakening. And that is the place of also of stillness where you get out of the mental noise. And that is the source place of creativity.

That is intelligence that is non-conceptual. It's primordial intelligence. And if you touch that in yourself, then at first as glimpses, as brief realizations and then gradually integrated into your daily life, then you can live from that place, the source, and be a, not only a more productive human being, but also a more peaceful human being because then you no longer contribute to the conflict in this world because the conflict is only created by all those humans who don't know that level in themselves. They don't know who they are.

And again, to call Jesus again, on the cross he said, forgive them, they know not what they do. And why do they know not what they do? They don't know who they are, essentially.

So this, I've talked about this and in the hope that as I'm speaking, there is a, an experience in you of really of what the depths of the present moment. Because the present moment, people think its present moment is what happens. And of course, because what happens changes all the time, people say there are many present moments.

If you look more deeply, of course, there are not many present moments. There's only ever this present moment. There's only this ever.

So there are not many present moments. There's only the space of this moment. So there's what happens in it and there is the space in which it happens and that space is consciousness.

And that is who you are. And when you realize that, you become free of the false sense of self which, that when your mind tells you something about who you are, which has to do with your history and your successes or your failures or what other people tell you who you are, a little present. So that's really basically the essence of spirituality, which is very simple, but for some reason, it's not taught at school.

All kinds of inessential things are taught at school. But what really matters, the very foundation of human life, and it's not some belief structure. I'm not saying indoctrinate children, that children must believe.

It's not belief at all. It's an experience. It's a realization.

That's what needs to be taught. That needs to be subject number one at school. Who am I?

And everything else is easy once you have that. Q Well, I'm not sure I have any more questions.

[Speaker 3] (6:38:37 - 6:39:35)

We'll press on. I want to ask you about the work that we do at Google. And if you look at any given web page, it's almost a model of the mind.

There's all of these jumping off points. You can jump to this story or that story or Hawaii vacation. You can jump around so easily.

And in fact, the product I work on, Google+, allows me not only to examine the contents of my own mind, but all of these people's minds as well in a flood of a stream coming at me. And I'm wondering if the real reason you've chosen to come to Google today is because we're actively working against you. And you've come to help us get over that.

But more seriously, do you think there's a place for technology? And how do you make sense of the work that we're doing and how it impacts people's attention in relation to what you just described, sort of transcending the mind and going to a deeper place?

[Speaker 1] (6:39:36 - 6:54:11)

Well, it's, this, the technology is quite miraculous, of course. In itself, it's neither good nor bad. The, I only recently, which means like two or three years, started using it.

I came to it very late. I've, I still haven't developed an addiction to it, as many people have. There is a, there are incredible possibilities here with that technology.

And there's also a great danger with that technology. It could lead to contribute to the awakening. And an example of that is our gathering here, which people can apparently see on their screen.

So, this is just one example of how this technology can contribute to spreading a vital message. It goes far beyond any ideology or anything like that. The same thing, the work I did with Oprah some years ago, for the first time, the webinar, as they call it, went out and the whole, the first time, the whole system broke down because so many people tuned in.

And then, the second week, it started to work. We, we don't have that problem. So, there are incredible possibilities also for humans to connect with each other.

Well, that's another topic, how they really, whether they're really connecting as human beings. But also, that the fact that the flow of information is no longer monopolized by the powerful few corporations, but everybody can participate in that free flow of information, having led already to all these things, the Arab Spring and all those things that have been happening recently, all that is potentially good. The, the danger, of course, is, and again, that connects with what I've been talking about earlier, is that you get more and more inundated with, with information, with knowledge, with mind stuff, so that you more and more lose a deeper sense of connectedness with being, with presence, that deeper level that I talked about just now.

And that would then lead to increasing confusion in your mind and an inability, really, to create anything new anymore. You would be just trapped in the mental, continuously increasing mental noise. And if you look at people in this field who do come up with something really creative that is new, they all have some access to that deeper level in themselves, as I'm sure many of you have, and quite a few people don't even know that they have access to that.

It just happens. They become still, and they go for a moment or a few, they go, and you, you connect with the power inside you. You, you can actually feel that, the power of consciousness inside you as you become still.

And, and there's no mind movement in that. It's a kind of open and listening that, that opens up. And then, after a while, the mind starts working again.

And it's very often, then you have an answer, or then you have the creative solution or some new insight. But if you don't go there anymore, if you, you get continuously drawn only into the, into the, the noise, the mental noise, then you lose touch with the, your own power and you become more and more confused. And it could easily happen that what now looks like miraculous technology could, within two generations, could lead, I'm not saying that it will, and we are here now so there's hope, it could lead to a complete breakdown of civilization.

So here you have this miraculous technology and two generations later, all humans walk around like zombies. It could happen. It's an idea for a science fiction novel perhaps.

But it could happen because it's neither good nor bad. If we are not careful, it could draw us in to such an extent that we lose ourselves in our own creation, that we have created something that's an old mythological theme. We create a kind of entity that becomes a monster and then our own creation devours us.

That could happen. It doesn't have to happen. So this is, I believe, why I've come here, as a little warning.

If you're not careful, then what looks so wonderful here could turn out to be a monster, but it doesn't have to be. It could turn out into something, turn into something wonderful that contributes to the awakening of humanity. We need to recognize its dangers.

The danger is that this screen that you look at, of course, connects with your mind. It links into your mind and then you link into the collective mind on the screen and it grows and grows. The noise grows and grows and you become more and more confused and completely uncentered.

You walk around, I mean, youngsters, there are youngsters who are so addicted to their screen, they can't give attention anymore to another human being, to their parents or others. There's always something, okay. What?

I have an iPhone, I have to hide this here. That's the, why it's so vital. So what, if you work with your screen all the time, then what do you do?

You have to recognize the danger and you have to give yourself some space many times during the day, even if it's just for one minute at a time. Give yourself space so that a balance arises between that interaction with the screen, which is the collective mind, and connectedness with being is the way we could put it. So I suggest, I sometimes suggest to people to put a flower or a potted flower next to their computer screen so that from time to time they look at that for half a minute, even a few seconds.

And really look or learn to take a breath, a conscious in and out breath. Let's call that a mini meditation. Meditation is very helpful for many people, not for everybody.

If you find it hard to meditate, use mini meditations. One mini meditation is one conscious breath. What does that mean, conscious breath?

It means you look away from the screen. If you can, look at something natural, a plant or the sky, but if not, that's fine. Look at a light, artificial light, whatever it is, and breathe in and follow the breath with your attention into the body and then follow it with your attention as it flows out of the body.

What does that do? It takes attention away from thought and puts it into the body. In other words, it creates a space in your consciousness because while you are following the breath with your attention, you are not thinking.

And when you are not thinking but you haven't gone to sleep, you've created a space in your consciousness and there, that's it. So that's just one conscious breath occasionally. Two is even better, or three, but that's fine.

That's enough. And of course, that's the oldest, one of the oldest forms of meditation is conscious breath, probably already recommended by the Buddha who is supposed to have said, just be conscious of your breath for one hour and you'll be totally enlightened. But if you miss just one, you have to go back to the beginning.

And feeling the inner body. If you don't have, nature is very helpful to take you out of your mind, although many people walk around nature and they're still in their minds. But if you can interact with the natural world, the trees, the park, the beach, the mountain, the forest, walking occasionally and pay attention, truly pay attention to what you see without interpreting, that can bring you into connectedness with being and into the present moment.

Your dog, a wonderful thing I noticed here, people are allowed to bring their dogs. That makes an enormous difference to the energy field, not to every home and to the company. When you interact with a dog, there's a moment when you're not actually thinking.

That's why it feels so good, because you know the dog is not thinking about you. Although you might have heard the saying, please God, make me into the person that my dog thinks I am, the fact is the dog isn't thinking. That's why the dog relates to you with unconditional love, because the dog doesn't judge you.

And you know that the dog doesn't judge you and therefore the dog does not stimulate your thinking mind. It actually frees you for a moment from your thinking mind. That's why people love, when there's many people, unless you have a phobia, that's a different matter, most people love interacting with a dog, cats also, but let's talk about dogs because they're here in the company.

So when you pet a dog or even just look at a dog and the tail wags, there's something liberating there for a moment and that's why humans respond to the dog and you go, oh. If you look very closely inside yourself, at that moment, there's a moment when you're not thinking, when you're interacting with a dog, unless you're so obsessed with your mind that you immediately judge the dog. That can happen too, I've met people like that.

But for most people, it's a liberating thing because the dog is nature in its beauty and aliveness, has not arrived yet at the stage of thought that humans have had to go through. So it's, you experience that aliveness of nature in the dog. So, OK, you have that and you have, and if you don't have a dog, that's fine too.

You can feel nature as the inner energy field in your body. And you can even practice on the computer screen while you're looking at something, see if you can be in two dimensions at the same time while you are looking. Don't do it at first when there's something extremely demanding, just when there's something kind of routine thing you're checking on the screen.

And see if you, while you're looking, you can feel the inner energy field of your body as you do perhaps now in the background, so to speak. I recommend that as a kind of meditation. You can practice it when the screen, nothing is happening on the screen first.

Or put a flower on the screen and look at that and see if you can at the same time feel the aliveness in your energy field that keeps you rooted in being. And then you don't lose yourself totally in the collective mind that comes at you through the screen. That's a beautiful, I highly recommend that.

Put a little reminder on your computer screen, a little thing that says inner body or whatever else you want to call it so that you remember. And you will find you're more energized. It's extremely energizing to sense that, to be connected with that.

And so that one could call that the balance between doing and being in your life. Because thinking is part of doing. Doing is not just what you do physically.

Doing, thinking, is also a kind of doing. But the human needs the two dimensions, being and doing. And if that balance is lost, you could lose it in being, but that's not the danger of our civilization.

There may be some Indian yogis who get lost in being and don't want to get up anymore because they're so happy in being that there's no need to get up anymore, even put food in their mouth. That's fine. I'm not talking to them.

I would have to have a different message for them. But I'm talking to this civilization, people who are lost or who get too much doing, which really is thinking, there the balance is between being and doing. And even if it's not, doesn't have to be 50-50, 20 percent, it's hard to put a figure to it.

[Speaker 3] (6:54:11 - 6:54:12)

You like to measure things.

[Speaker 1] (6:54:12 - 6:54:29)

I know, yeah. So 25 percent being, 75 percent doing, and you're doing very well. Even 10 percent being would make your life much easier and much more enjoyable.

[Speaker 3] (6:54:32 - 6:54:42)

I want to remind the Googlers this dual presence technique of being and doing. Please don't do that while coding on the GFS, Big Table, or Megastore systems.

[Speaker 1] (6:54:43 - 6:54:45)

I don't know what you're talking about.

[Speaker 3] (6:54:48 - 6:55:13)

I do have a question. You've talked, I think most of us are engineers and technologists and we live a lot in the realm of thoughts and ideas and in our head and not necessarily in our being. My wife has also described to me these things called feelings that some people have as well.

Could you speak about feelings of anger and frustration and happiness and how they relate to this experience of being?

[Speaker 1] (6:55:14 - 7:02:07)

Yes. Sometimes words are used in a loose way and sometimes what I just described, I sometimes call it feeling the inner body. That word is a very vague word so it can be used to describe what we are just talking about, feeling the inner body, but then there's a different kind of feeling and that's feeling an emotion, for example, that arises.

So there's basically, there's thoughts. Let's look at your entire life. Your entire life consists of basically sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions.

I think that's about it, right? Sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions. Put them together, mix them up.

That's my life. Okay. So that applies to everybody.

Now, the particular mixture differs from person to person. What exactly goes into the sense perceptions and the thoughts and the emotions varies slightly from person to person, but basically that's the mixture. Now, the question is, you can't escape that.

Of course, that's normal life. Is there anything else? Sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions.

Okay. Let's see. There must be something else because how do I know that there's sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions?

Is the ability to recognize, to have a sense perception based on thinking? No, because to have a sense perception, you don't really need to think. You can just look and see.

So what else is there? And this is a key thing. There is something else apart from sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions, which is, we could call it an awareness.

There is a sense perception. There is an emotion. There is a thought.

And that is, we could call that pure consciousness. Otherwise, how could you have a sense perception? So there is something there that enables sense perceptions to be there, that enables a thought to be there, that enables an emotion to be there.

And that is the one, that is the thing that in most humans is hidden. They don't in other words, they don't know it's there. Because that is presence, which we could also call consciousness, which we could also call awareness.

And that is the spiritual dimension and that is the awakening. Once you realize that that is there, we could also describe that as the space for all those other things. So that's, so let's say, let's compare this room to your consciousness and then we say, OK, there's the furniture in the room.

There's the bodies in the room. And there are the other lights in this room. Those things are in this room.

So if we, if I asked you to describe the room, you would probably describe it in terms of the furniture in it, the walls, the ceiling, whatever you see. You would, when you describe that room, you would miss the most essential thing about this room because it's so obvious that you miss it, which is the space. That really is the essence of this room, isn't the walls or the ceiling or the floor or the furniture or the bodies in this room.

The essence of this room is the space in this room. But space is not something tangible that you can say, ah, there it is. Where?

And the same thing applies to inside. The space of consciousness is the very thing that enables everything else to be, but it's very much like the fish in water that's asked, that says, you talk, why are you always talking about water? You haven't shown it to me yet, says one fish to the other.

The other fish is a spiritual teacher. So what water are you talking about? Where?

What water? And of course you can't, it's everywhere. It's inside you, it's outside you.

But the amazing thing is you can be aware of it, but not as an object, but as the awareness itself. Ah, I got it now. I got it.

But you can't say what it is. You can't say, there it is. That reminds me of something I read in the New Testament where he said, the kingdom of heaven does not come with signs to be perceived.

You cannot say, it's over here or it's over there. But truly, I tell you, the kingdom of heaven is within you. Somebody said that 2,000 years ago, but very few people in the churches understand the depths of it.

It gets completely misinterpreted. But that's the depths of, that's the deepest spiritual teaching. Now that kingdom of heaven is that spaciousness that's in you, it cannot be observed as if it were a chair because it is the observing agent.

It is that which makes all observation possible. So it cannot become an object to itself because it is the eternal subject, the I, consciousness itself, the light of the source, you could call it, the light of God, the light of the one. The ancient Greek philosopher called it the one.

It's a beautiful term. And the Buddha didn't call it anything because he said, if I call it something, people will make it into some idol. So better not call it anything.

So when they asked the Buddha, what about God? Well, what they say is when he was asked that question, he kept noble silence. And of course, that noble silence itself is a state of presence.

So they asked the Buddha, tell us about God. And he went, and that's the answer.

[Speaker 3] (7:02:12 - 7:02:59)

So you've given us some clues on how to explore this within ourselves. You mentioned changing the balance and things we could do with the breath and a note on our computer monitor and looking at nature. These are some very practical suggestions.

I often find for myself that the time when I would probably most benefit from connecting to that part of myself is the time when I'm least able to. It's the time when I'm very activated and I'm either emotional about something or lost in thought or in the heat of the moment. Do you have any suggestions for how to sort of find that even in the midst of these sort of challenges that come along throughout life?

[Speaker 1] (7:03:02 - 7:13:23)

First, I recommend that you practice when you're not being challenged because if you can't do it then, then when you're being challenged, it's impossible. So first you practice when you're relatively undisturbed and there's a moment after getting up or you take a short break in your normal daily routine or several short breaks, one minute breaks, half minute breaks. So when you're not being challenged, then you bring in that awareness.

You become the awareness. You go into the present moment, perhaps as I described just now, starting with sense perceptions, become alert. You have to, an alertness is required to truly perceive things and immediately things become more alive and less problematic.

When you go into sense perception, because the problematic dimension is in the head and you go into sense perception, suddenly you go into the present moment and in the present moment problems disappear. Isn't that strange? The mind says, well I still have them.

Yeah, when you start thinking about them, you have them again. But when you're not thinking about them, you have no problems. Now some of you will argue with that, but let me explain.

You have situations in your life that can be challenging and you have to deal with these situations, but the only place where you can deal with the challenging situations is in the present moment. And dealing with a challenging situation in the present moment is not a problem. You're dealing with a challenging situation.

You're facing it. You're looking at it. And that looking is important.

What I call looking really is putting your attention on it, which is the power of consciousness. And while you're looking, you're not thinking. Every person who has achieved mastery in any field knows what I mean by looking because there's an absolute presence and then that person does what he or she does.

It flows from that presence. So you look, there's no problem. The problem is when you dwell mentally on something that will happen, could happen, might happen, a problem that's something I have to face next week, but not now, and you're totally absorbed in that, that's a problem.

An interesting thing, I may have even written that in the power of now, if you think you have problems, ask yourself, what problem do I have at this moment? But this moment really means this moment. And then you have to go, hmm, hmm.

Well, I've got all my, my wife, my ex-wife is suing me. I'm about to lose my home. A person close to me is ill.

I might lose my job. I have to look for a new job. OK.

What problem do you have at this moment? You're breathing, feeling the aliveness in the body, looking around. Well, at this moment, I don't actually have a problem.

You have to then admit, if you really go into the present moment, the problem cannot survive in the present moment. That's an amazing realization. Doesn't mean that you no longer deal with what you need to deal with.

You deal with it when the moment comes more effectively, when you don't waste your life energy in the mental realm of creating problems that you cannot be dealt with at this moment. And if you wake up in the middle of the night thinking about your problems and what you can do about them, it's extremely unlikely that you find any solution by worrying at four o'clock in the morning about it. But if you came still at four o'clock in the morning and wake up and go into the inner energy field of the body rather than thinking about your problems, in other words, leave the dimension of problems, come deeply into the present moment, then perhaps the next morning when you wake up, you suddenly say, oh, I know what I have to do now.

I know how I can deal with it now. And the right course of action happens because you've gone there, but not through the problem making faculty in the human mind. So again, coming back to your question, when things are, when you're not being challenged, practice it.

And then when you are being challenged by little things that goes wrong, so to speak, in daily life, tends to happen, you might have noticed. Things don't always go according to your expectations. Sometimes you miss the bus or something, you miss the plane or something else goes wrong.

It tends to happen actually quite a lot. It seems to be part of life. That's, by the way, it's the reason why people go to see movies because the substructure of every movie that you see, we could call it, it applies to virtually every movie you see.

If you can examine any movie you see, what actually happens in the movie? In fact, I can describe every movie to you in three words. Something goes wrong.

audience laughs Because there wouldn't be a movie otherwise. Nothing would happen. Nobody would evolve.

Everything would be dead. But in your own life, you complain. So you go, you see movies to see something go wrong, but when it happens in your own life, you complain.

Not you personally. You've transcended it perhaps already. audience laughs But so the strange thing is, things are not meant not to go wrong.

Going wrong is part of the totality of how life experiences itself. If things didn't go wrong, it would be very uninteresting and nobody would evolve because people only evolve through the challenges that they encounter. And in a good movie, the protagonist or the character changes as he or she faces that which goes wrong in the movie.

In a bad movie, so to speak, the character does not go through any changes. That which goes wrong is only solved on an external level. In the end, the bad guy is killed and that's the end of the movie, but nothing else happens.

So something going wrong is part of how life experiences itself and again, you can then bring awareness to that so that you don't always fall into reactivity when something goes wrong, but you immediately align with it. Or when people say, behave in a way that you find offensive or they behave in a way that they create difficulties for you because you wanted this and they want something else, you don't have to go into hostility or opposition. You can immediately say, oh, that's, you seem to have, this is what is.

And then how can I, how can I approach that without the negativity and just accept that something has gone wrong it's not wrong at all. It's called life. So something going wrong really, what it means is it's called life.

So you can, you welcome every little challenge. So it's a shift in attitude and then your practice becomes easier when you see, you can almost, almost welcome when things happen that before you called things going wrong, little things and later big things, oh, okay. And then you evolve just as a character in a good movie.

I gave a talk, I'm talking about this now because a week ago I was in L.A. and I gave a talk about transformational movies bringing consciousness into the movie industry. I gave as an example two movies by Clint Eastwood. An early one, I think it was called Dirty Harry, and that's the, although it's a very entertaining movie, it's quite satisfying to watch because the bad guy gets killed in the end.

Nevertheless, it's not a transformational movie. In the end you might, you might remember the memorable lines, make my day, when he is about to shoot the bad guy, make my day, punk. And that's the most satisfying moment in the movie for the viewer.

Not a transformational but entertaining movie. And then many, 30 years later Clint Eastwood made a movie again about bad guys and that movie was called Gran Torino. If you haven't seen it, I recommend that you see it.

And that perhaps shows a shift in his own evolution because again we are faced with bad guys but how that is solved, well resolved in the end is very different from the early movie. I'm not telling you how here because if you haven't seen it you want to experience it for yourself. So that's transformational, Gran Torino.

And the same actor, and I think Clint Eastwood directed the Gran Torino one, that probably shows his own evolution of his own consciousness from the early stage to the later stage. But here this really is a reflection of life. You can resist continuously life or you can internally align yourself with life so that your life becomes a good movie rather than a bad movie.

[Speaker 3] (7:13:28 - 7:14:04)

So if there's hope for the movie industry, there's certainly hope for us I think. So we're going to take the time we have left and take questions both from the Google Moderator online system as well as live in the room here. There is one mic in the center and so if you have a question you can approach that mic.

And if the technicians could get the Google Moderator questions up on the monitor here too, that would be helpful. And why don't you introduce yourself and maybe what you do at Google and then ask the question.

[Speaker 1] (7:14:04 - 7:14:14)

Sure. My name is Yonica and I do marketing. So I'm one of the, you mentioned there's lots of engineers.

I'm one of those people that agrees with you in all those codes and terms you mentioned.

[Speaker 2] (7:14:14 - 7:14:15)

I have no clue what you meant earlier.

[Speaker 3] (7:14:16 - 7:14:24)

So I just wanted to know about your journey. You had explained a little bit in the Power Hour Now about the nightmare of waking up when you're 29, 30.

[Speaker 4] (7:14:24 - 7:14:29)

And I just would love to hear about it, how you went from that state of anxiety into where you are right now.

[Speaker 1] (7:14:30 - 7:21:17)

Well, as I, for most people the shift is a gradual process from one state of consciousness to another. And occasionally it happens in some people, as it happened to me, that it happened, well, virtually overnight, the shift from one state of consciousness to another. And I was deeply depressed for many years and close to suicide several times.

And that night, as I described in the Power of Now at the beginning, I disidentified from the thinking mind. It happened, I didn't know that that was what was happening. It just happened.

I can't live with myself any longer, I thought. I was so dreadful. I can't live with myself any longer.

And then suddenly an awareness came in. I didn't know it was called awareness. An awareness came in and looked at the thought.

And the thought seemed, suddenly it looked very strange. The thought seemed to consist of two people, I and myself. I can't live with myself.

So then another thought came, am I one or two? And who is the, who am I and who is that self that I can't live with? That's almost a Zen-like question.

And like all Zen questions, it didn't really have an answer on the conceptual level. So on the conceptual level, I didn't get an answer. But the answer was that the myself and the I suddenly separated.

And I realized, although I couldn't have explained it then, that the myself was a mind-created entity, the me, the poor little unhappy me. It was consisted of mind movement and identity, a mental identity of an unhappy human being with an unhappy history and a very uncertain future. That probably applies to many humans, not if you work at Google.

But that, there was a separation. And what was, there was an I suddenly that saw that. And that I, years later I realized what that I was.

It was consciousness itself that had, so before there was consciousness and thinking forming one, a unity. My consciousness was trapped in my thinking. Through the suffering at that night and looking at that sentence, the consciousness separated itself from the movement of thinking and the self that I couldn't live with was not being sustained anymore by consciousness.

It was, and it kind of crumbled. It was a false self that crumbled and what was left was simply a space of awareness. And the next morning I felt very peaceful.

Never felt that peaceful before. Nothing had changed in my environment. And I couldn't understand it.

It took probably at least three, four years before I could begin to understand what had happened. All I realized, I'm suddenly so peaceful. The whole world is peaceful.

What's happened? So the mind itself had dissolved and later I talked to some Buddhist monks and others and through listening to them I said I realized when they talked about the teaching of the Buddha, later I also realized that Jesus was talking about the same thing, but I realized the Buddha talked about the delusional self, the unreality of the self, that the self is not real as it's called in the talk. There is no self really.

Anatta is the word in the Pali language in the Buddhist teaching. It's an illusion. That self is an illusion.

And so when I talked to Buddhist monks I began to realize, that was three years later, oh that must be what happened. This must be why I feel so peaceful. So understanding came much later that the realization it kind of just happened.

And then it became a teaching. So I'm now showing to people this is something that you can, that can happen in your life. But for most people it's a gradual process of disidentification from the thinking mind, which doesn't mean you don't think anymore.

It just means your identity or your self isn't trapped in it. So the thinking is free of self and that's very liberating. And you essentially, who you feel yourself to be and who I feel myself to be is not to do with the physical form or my personal history or what I have achieved in life, fortunately, because otherwise you get unhappy if you, if you don't have it.

For many years, before I wrote The Power of Now and it became successful, I was basically a failure in the eyes of the world. So he's already almost 50 and what has he achieved? My mom said, you have thrown away your life.

You had so many possibilities in your life. You walked out of graduate school in Cambridge. Why did you walk out of there?

My mom and many other people said, this person has failed in life. He has no job. He has no insurance policies.

Nothing. No pension plan. Just almost nothing in the bank.

Failure. And then a few years later, people bought The Power of Now and became a bestseller. Oh, a big success.

Okay, if I had derived my identity at that time from what the world was telling me or my mind would have told me if I had been listening to my mind, I would have been very unhappy. And I didn't, so I was fine because my identity wasn't derived from that anymore. And fortunately, even when in the eyes of the world, I suddenly became a success, I don't want to derive my identity from that.

It's a cheap substitute for who I really am. So I'm not, I don't see, I don't derive, but the satisfaction that comes is the satisfaction that the work that's happening, the teaching that's happening is transforming people's lives. That's very satisfying.

I don't get any personal satisfaction though because it's not, I don't feel it as this separate me produced it.

[Speaker 7] (7:21:19 - 7:21:20)

Q Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (7:21:20 - 7:21:21)

A Thanks.

[Speaker 3] (7:21:21 - 7:21:39)

Q I have a question about that. You mentioned for you the transformation came quite suddenly and for others it happens more gradually. Do you have any sense of why that is?

Is it because you had bottomed out and were having these feelings or is it because of a certain ripeness that had brought you to that moment or is it just inexplicable?

[Speaker 1] (7:21:39 - 7:23:19)

A I don't have the answer to that. I don't know why. Some people have said, well, it must have something to do with past lifetimes, maybe, or whatever it is, but I don't have the, or maybe I suffered more deeply than others.

I don't know. I think there are many people who suffer deeply. So I don't have the answer to that.

Q Thank you. A I'm quoting the Dalai Lama who loves saying, I don't know. Q Ha, ha, ha.

A But usually after he says that, he starts talking and then the answer is actually quite meaningful. Q Ha, ha, ha. A But the wonderful thing is always starting, really what he's starting with is this space.

I don't know. And then something comes. But he doesn't say, yeah, I know.

I probably, as Socrates, if you have read any Plato, ancient Greek philosophy, Socrates also taught in that way, although in Plato, perhaps I'm only talking to a few people here. In Plato, Socrates, the way he teaches is he continuously, when reported by Plato, he teaches as if he didn't know. So he asks these questions to, people ask him a question and he asks, well, what do you think?

How is this? In Plato, Socrates pretends not to know, but I believe the real Socrates, who never wrote anything, the real Socrates actually came from that place of not knowing, but that was misinterpreted by Plato as if Socrates were pretending not to know. But let's not go into deeply into that.

[Speaker 2] (7:23:21 - 7:24:07)

Q Hello. A No. Q My name's Mary.

I work in HR. So here at Google, I have this really wonderful class called Search Inside Yourself, created by Ming, whom I believe you met with. And yesterday was our last class and we talked about compassion and having compassion for the world.

So I work in HR, so all of us HR people have lots of compassion for other people because it's our job. But we also work at Google and Googlers are sort of a high-achieving bunch, not only high-achieving in the eyes of the world, but high-achieving to ourselves, meaning did I get up out of bed today and what did I accomplish? If I didn't accomplish anything, I'm a failure to myself.

So I was wondering if you had any advice for those of us who don't have as much compassion for ourselves.

[Speaker 1] (7:24:08 - 7:30:06)

A Okay. Thanks. Well, yes, compassion for yourself, of course, is as important as compassion for others.

Often I get asked questions like people who did something that they now realize was deeply wrong in the past. Sometimes people ask questions about they brought up their children in a way that they now realize was not very conscious. And so they may have caused suffering to their children or other people find they have caused suffering to loved ones and they now realize that what they did was wrong.

And again, I say this is an example where you need to be compassionate with yourself because no human being can act beyond their level of consciousness. So that was your level of consciousness at the time and you could not go beyond that. And again here, to make demands upon yourself up to a point, it might be a good thing to, as long as you enjoy it, it's a wonderful thing.

When the enjoyment of what you're doing is lost, then you have to be careful because there you have to come to a stop and say, okay, there's something here that's not right because I'm no longer enjoying what I'm doing. That really, that's the danger. And so as long as you enjoy, you don't need compassion.

Don't listen to, some people have a very active mind. Maybe that's what Freud called the super ego or some other entity that criticizes you. Some people have a particular function in their minds that's very critical of themselves.

Perhaps everybody has it to some degree, but some people have it to a high degree. And that's a dreadful thing to live with, living with a voice in your head that continually criticizes you and tells you, you haven't done well enough, you're not good enough, you should have done better. I mean, if you had to live with a person like that, you would leave.

I mean, it would be horrible to live with a person who continuously tells you these things, but if that thing is stuck in your head, what can you do? Now, what you can do is to become aware that all that it is, it's a particular pattern in your mind. It's a particular way in which your mind works.

And so it's a, you could call it a sub-personality, but what it really is, it's a mind pattern that operates in you. And when you bring awareness to it, you can recognize it as a mind pattern in you. In other words, you no longer believe every thought that arises that it says.

You recognize it's an old pattern that says the same thing that it said five years ago, or ten years ago, and it says that all the time. And you recognize it, so in other words, you're not trapped in the thoughts anymore. This is, again, the whole thing we are talking about.

You're not, you don't believe in every thought that comes into your head. What that really means is there's an awareness beyond the thought. And you realize, there's a voice in my head saying this again.

That's all it is. And when you don't energize it with your identification, it begins to subside. And in this way, you become free of the, of this dreadful burden of having that thing in your head talking to you and making your life miserable.

But what matters is the awareness needs to be there that frees you, because then you become the awareness rather than being the thought, or being trapped in the thought or possessed by the thought. Again, there's a movie that many of you have probably seen called A Beautiful Mind. It's about a scientist, actually based on a real person, what happened to him, quite a genius in his field, but he developed delusions.

He saw people that weren't there, whatever it's called, clinically, schizophrenia, whatever. And the great thing about the movie is the viewer, up to the point where the protagonist realizes that these things are illusions, the viewer of the movie doesn't know it either. The viewer participates in the illusions of the protagonist.

He believes these people are real, too. Until suddenly, the protagonist realizes, oh my God, I'm seeing things that are not there. And then he continues to see these things, but suddenly there's an awareness in him.

And so, although these people still appear to him that are not really there, there's an awareness in him there that he's no longer totally reactive to them. He doesn't feed them with his reaction. And gradually, they subside over years.

It takes years for them to subside. But the decisive point is, although the word is never mentioned, the decisive point is the awareness. Wow.

And that's the same thing that applies to any pattern in the human mind, not just a totally insane pattern. Bring awareness to it so that you're not tortured by that. And real compassion always arises out of awareness anyway.

[Speaker 3] (7:30:09 - 7:30:22)

My childhood violin teacher used to shake his finger at me and say, you hear, but you don't listen. And he didn't mean it as a compliment, but it seems like this may be the technique for dealing with the inner critic.

[Speaker 1] (7:30:22 - 7:30:25)

Ah, yes. Very good. Yes.

[Speaker 4] (7:30:28 - 7:31:04)

Yes? Hi. Thank you first, Eckhart, for coming.

Tip the microphone. Oh. Yeah.

Thank you. I wanted to ask you, it seems like the state that you're talking about of being at peace and being in the moment, it's a very appealing state. You feel more in touch.

And I'm wondering why society or people, why is there this attraction to distraction?

[Speaker 1] (7:31:05 - 7:35:36)

And what is it about us that leads us to develop these systems that take us away from that? Well, distractions, excitement, stimulus, are kinds of drugs or substitutes for the true feeling of aliveness within yourself. So in the absence of that true feeling of aliveness within yourself, which we could call connectedness with being, connectedness with source, you have to look to the outside for something to make you feel more alive.

Because when you're totally trapped in your thinking mind, there's a lack of aliveness. There's a sense that something fundamental is missing in my life. It's an unconscious sense for many people.

But that is the basis for many people's lives is actually a sense of lack. And that's an amazing thing, if you really look at that, that the basis for your life is there's something missing. And there are millions of people on the planet who live their lives on that basis without even fully recognizing it, as if continuously they were telling themselves and certainly feeling, there's something missing here.

So they're always, how can I fill that thing that's missing? They don't know what's missing, but there's something, does it, it may sound familiar to some of you because it's such a prevalent mind pattern, something missing. I need something.

And of course what's missing is the true sense of connectedness with being, with aliveness. And then of course you look for, OK, what's the next fix that I can get? Because, and then you kind of, you become a little bit greedy and addictive for some, for stimulus.

That's why the movies, the bad movies, they need to, they produce more and more things that stimulate it more and more into violence and so, because at least it's a substitute feeling of aliveness. And then you look for the next fix. Some people get it in drugs or alcohol.

It's almost like needing to suck up something to fill that thing that's missing. Or you're looking to another human being to fill it. Sex, where's my next, the next, or even the next affair, the excitement that comes from you just starting a new love affair.

Wow, now it's really happening. Of course, and then you start living together and then it goes downhill from there. So that doesn't work.

And so, always looking for something and not knowing that what you've been looking for is actually already within. It's in you. It's taking attention instead of out there looking for it, going there.

This is why I start in The Power of Now giving the parable about a beggar sitting on an old box, holding his baseball cap and, can you spare a dime? Can you spare, for years he sits on this box, can you spare a dime? And until finally somebody comes along and he doesn't give him a dime and says, what's in that box you're sitting on?

That's, I'm telling that parable in the book. He said, nothing, I've been sitting on it for years. It's just an old box.

And the man says, well, look inside. And he finally gets, OK, and it's full of gold. He's been sitting on it for years begging.

It's just a little parable. Of course, the real thing is not even close to you. It's essentially part of who you are.

So that's the reason why people, people also, they even look for stimulus in drama, in relationships, because it makes them feel, well, at least we are still alive. We are fighting. We must be alive.

[Speaker 3] (7:35:40 - 7:35:44)

Thank you. I think we'll have time just for one more question.

[Speaker 4] (7:35:47 - 7:36:26)

Hey, my name is Alex. I am an equipment maintenance tech, so I keep rooms like this operational. So you gave us some very practical things to try to rid ourselves of distraction.

I'm curious about another, another issue, really strong emotion. You know, for example, like right now, I'm like nervous. There's, there's no reason to be nervous.

Nothing bad could possibly happen. How do you overcome emotions like that, and jealousy, hatred, any strong emotion? Do you have any practical tips that we could try for that?

[Speaker 1] (7:36:27 - 7:41:56)

Thank you. Well, first, it's helpful to see the connection, which is usually the case between the particular thoughts that you are thinking and the emotion that you feel. Most of the time, the emotions are caused by particular patterns in your mind.

For example, anxiety is caused by thinking about possible future things that may happen, or things that you want to happen, but they may not happen. You may not get what you want. You may not get what you need.

You may lose what you already have. These things are all mind patterns that create fear. So it's, very often it is the thought that creates the emotion.

And the thought creates the emotion because you are totally, you totally believe in the thought. In other words, you're totally identified with the thought. Then the body responds as if the thought were a reality.

I might lose my job. If you think that, you wake up in the middle of the night, and then you start thinking more thoughts on those lines. The body can't tell the difference.

The body kind of responds to the thoughts that go through your mind. They affect the physiology of the body. I mean, if you doubt that, think of biting into a lemon, and you'll find saliva accumulating in your mouth.

So what you think affects the body. The body believes your thoughts to be real. So when you think that you might lose your job, you've lost your job already, according to the body, and you're destitute.

And that's how the body reacts, and that's how the emotion is created. So it's often then by looking, seeing a thought as untrue, that you actually begin to become free. You can only see it as untrue if there's an awareness there that is aware that there is a thought.

Without the awareness, there's only the thought. The thought then swallows up your entire consciousness, and there's nothing else you can do then. But with awareness, here's the awareness and here's the thought.

And then the thought may still operate for a while, but it's not empowered anymore, and the emotion then is also going to weaken. There may be times when there's not much thought, as in this one you just said, when you came up to the microphone, you felt nervous. Perhaps you didn't have any particular thought on this occasion.

You just came nervous because many people, when they go up to a microphone and speak in public, feel nervous. And again, in these cases, it's a question of simply allowing, acknowledging the emotion, and allowing it to be there. As I sometimes put it, you become the space for it.

You allow it to be there. So you could step up to the microphone. Actually, what you said is very helpful.

When you go to the microphone and you start by saying, I feel nervous, my hands, palms of my hands are sweaty because I'm here publicly. It's the beginning of allowing it to be there without feeling that I shouldn't be feeling nervous. Then you feel even more nervous.

But if you allow the emotion to be there, there comes a little space around it, and there's an aware space. Yes, there's nervousness, but there is an awareness around it. So you're not totally in the nervousness.

You allow it. And when you share it with others, it's even, it's a lovely thing when you share an emotion in that way with others rather than inflicting your emotion on them and saying, you did that to me. But when you say, when you said that, this is what I felt, there's an awareness there rather than, you made me feel this.

You can say, when you said that, this is what I felt. Or at this moment, this is what I feel. Everybody loves that and there's an honesty with that rather than coming up to the microphone and pretending not to be nervous.

It's actually much more powerful and you connect more deeply. If you're ever going to public speaking, perhaps you will, you connect much more deeply to the audience when instead of hiding the fact that you're nervous, you start off by saying, I feel really nervous. Then you connect with everybody.

If you're pretending, you don't connect. So again, just a brief summary. See what thoughts are causing the emotion, which is often the case.

Or in other cases, if an emotion just arises, allow it to be, be the space for it. And it's part of your experience of the present moment. And you might as well say yes to it because whatever arises in the present moment is as it is already.

Whether you argue with it or not, the present moment is always as it is. That's the is-ness. And when you become friendly with the is-ness, that in itself is a transformation of consciousness.

[Speaker 3] (7:42:00 - 7:42:32)

So there's a lot of people to thank. I want to start by thanking those that tuned in on the webcast. I want to thank all of you Googlers who chose to take your afternoon and spend it here with us.

I want to thank Rich and the learning and development team here at Google who make events like this possible. And of course, I want to thank Eckhart on behalf of all of us. Thank you for your wisdom.

Thank you for your being and also your doing in the world, your choice to share this knowledge with us. You've given us a lot to think about and more importantly, the ability not to think at all.

[Speaker 1] (7:42:33 - 7:42:34)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (7:43:47 - 7:47:09)

Rising with the tide, breaking with the wave. I surrender any notion that there is someone here to save. As if I'm separate from the ocean.

And I surrender to the mystery. In the lap of God I rest my case. The force that bore this world can carry me.

Who am I to question grace? Who dreamed me into form? Whose will sustains me?

Who brings what comes my way? And when I die, who claims me? Looking back sometimes, I have to laugh.

What a lot of work it's been. Clinging to a sinking raft. Just to keep from falling in.

So drown me in your darkest pain. Your softest kiss. Your sweet despair.

I've seen your face now. I know your name. And I can find you anywhere, I swear.

And I surrender to the mystery. And to the love that rises up to see. Come what may I vow to wait and see.

I really don't know anything. I surrender to the mystery. And to the love that rises up to see.

The force that bore this world can carry me. I really don't know anything. I really don't know anything.

I really don't know anything.

[Speaker 1] (7:47:40 - 8:32:56)

It's an amazing thing when this is just a sound of course, but even that can be disturbing when you are looking for something to be disturbed by. And even with a little thing like that, it's amazing to see that, that which was disturbing, when it's no longer resisted, is surrounded by peace. And that applies to small things, like that sound.

It also applies to big things. One could almost say anything can take you there. Anything can take you into peace.

Any condition that arises now that is not resisted. And very often if it is unpleasant or not harmonious, very often it will quickly disappear. And many of you have experienced that in your own life.

That things that you did not want, but were there, didn't go away until you completely accepted that they are there. And suddenly they were gone. And similarly something that you want in your life, many of you have also experienced that already, when the wanting goes, wanting implies future and so on, suddenly it's there.

When your inner, your sense of self no longer depended on it, it's there. So miracles happen through surrender. Incredible miracles, both small miracles and big miracles happen through surrender.

I recommend a film called Groundhog Day, which shows the human condition as one man is forced to relive the same day again and again and again. And he hates it. And he can't get out of it.

And he hates it even more. And he tries to commit suicide and he kills himself many times and every morning he wakes up again in the same day. Until finally he doesn't resist anymore.

Finally he allows that to be and that day from being the most dreadful day becomes transformed into a nice day. He helps so many people because his resistance is gone. That day becomes beautiful, wonderful and in the end he doesn't want to believe it anymore.

Let's stay here, he says, and then he's out of it. A beautiful parable. So although in the media to a large extent the old consciousness is still reflected, occasionally these days you can see the new consciousness coming through here and there in films.

They may not even be on the surface spiritual, be called spiritual as such and yet something is coming through the new. Whether it be a film about playing golf, the legend of vagabonds, a film about stillness and connect with animals, which I saw recently, although it's quite old, the horse whisperer, somebody who is able to enter the state of stillness and communicate with horses through stillness. And even American Beauty is a film that brings in something, a new consciousness comes in what is possible.

That last one I mentioned is a film where you are shown a piece of paper being tossed about by the wind and you watch that for two minutes and it's beautiful. It's miraculous, something nobody would look at twice. Every moment when you give it your attention has a beauty sometimes on the surface, sometimes hidden underneath the surface.

On the surface, in nature, how your perception of nature deepens when you are present as you walk in nature. The depth that a flower has that it didn't have when you labelled it mentally immediately because you relate it to a mental label, not to a flower. Oh, look at that beautiful so-and-so, blah, blah, blah.

No, truly look. And then the beauty that is hidden even and particularly in the face of disaster, loss and death, which everybody sooner or later will face. In him or herself and will also face with people close to you.

And there the beauty is not apparent immediately on the surface of things, on the surface of that moment. And the thinking mind can only see the surface and reacts to the surface phenomenon of this moment. And at this moment something or someone may be dying and the mind calls it dreadful, bad, awful.

If death is dreadful, bad, awful, then all of life is dreadful, bad, awful. Every form is destined to die. Each one of us in this room could have a date of death imprinted on his or her hand.

And you look, oh, what's my date? Well, it'll happen. When it happens, it won't be tomorrow, but now.

So if death is bad, then nothing makes sense. The whole of life is misery because everything is already condemned. The moment of birth, everything is already condemned to death.

What a dreadful, tragic, cruel world that is if death is bad. But it's a fact, it is. And what it conceals is beautiful and sacred.

And I want to point to this without giving you any explanation, mental or conceptual thing. That explains it somehow so that you can rearrange in your mind the way in which you judge death. Maybe it's not so bad after all.

You'll have another incarnation. You can go on. You'll have another opportunity to be miserable.

To look more closely at death without taking refuge in concepts, beliefs. Because you may believe or not believe that there's another incarnation coming. I'm not saying there is or isn't because we are not dealing here with belief.

If I say, yes, you will reincarnate, some of you will say, great, I knew that already. And some others will say, oh, I don't think that's true. And it would require belief.

Nothing here requires really belief on your part. So we'll stay with just the fact of death, which comes sooner or later. Which also comes in other forms in your life as loss, great loss of one kind or another.

Of physical ability, of social status, of a partner. Somebody leaves you, something leaves you. And, of course, the actual death of a human being.

Or the sense of your own approaching death. And usually this is regarded as so dreadful that you can't even talk about it. In hospitals, even now, they don't mention it ever.

Oh, no, you're not going to die. No, no, nobody dies here. And so facing what is becomes very powerful when that which is, is death.

And you face death. Without seeking refuge in some explanations. Just face it as you would face a flower or anything that appears, takes form in this moment.

But when something dies, one could say it's not that something is taking form at this moment. It's more beautiful than that. It's beautiful if something takes form at this moment.

You could call that birth. But death is something loses form at this moment. A form of life dissolves.

And when that is faced completely, that which is beyond form shines through the dissolving form. And that is why, although the present moment is always sacred, and you know that when you move your attention into it, it could be anywhere. And I don't need to define further what that means.

Only the mind would ask, please define sacred. I don't understand. You know what it means directly at this moment.

When you hear that this moment is always sacred, but you don't know this unless your attention moves and you become aligned with it. It's always sacred. But it is more deeply sacred at the moment of death, which could be your own death or death of somebody close to you.

Even the death of not necessarily a human being, but the death of some form that contained your sense of self. It dissolves. And more people have realized the truth of who they are and the truth of life through death, through facing death, or some great loss, which is the equivalent of death.

More people have realized it through that than through any spiritual teaching. Something that was defined in form loses its form. And if you've ever been with someone, I've spoken to many people who sat next to someone who died, and also to one or two people who actually died and came back.

And whenever that fact of death was not resisted, it was realized as a moment of incredible depth and sacredness. A woman I met witnessed how her son, 30-year-old son, died in hospital. She was sitting next to him.

And she said that was the most sacred moment of her life, and she was never the same after that. And that acceptance only, in her case, lasted for two minutes. After that, thought came in, and the emotions that come with those thoughts came in, and it was called dreadful.

But for two minutes, she was in the state of acceptance, and that had an incredible depth and sacredness. And even if you have seen people that were approaching death, sometimes you can see already before actual physical death happens, the form is already becoming, one could say, transparent almost. And something shines through that can almost be described as light.

And what that is, is the unconditioned, the essence, consciousness itself, shining through the dissolving form. So the most sacred thing in life is that which is most feared by the egoic entity, because the egoic entity is form, is identification with form as me, is identification with the physical form as me, and the psychological form, the story of me. And that goes.

In some cases, when people know they are going to die soon, it can happen that before the physical form dissolves, the psychological form of me doesn't survive in the face of death, when it's accepted. So already the me entity that perhaps they were controlled by, identified with throughout their lives, shortly before death, it could be a few days, a few weeks, a few months, already dies. And then a flowering happens through that human being.

It's the realization of who they are beyond the form. They realize it not as some intellectual realization, a deep experiential realization, as deep peace, and a knowing beyond needing any kind of proof that there is no death, that it is a form dissolving. And people have realized it in the face of great loss, when some form that they had invested with self left them.

It could be the loss of a partner, it could be the loss of all your possessions in the stock market crash. In the stock market crash, they happen occasionally, some people jump out of the window. They cannot separate, this is famous in the 30s or whenever it happened, many people apparently lost all their money, and many jumped out of the windows.

They could not separate from their story-based sense of self. And the story-based sense of self was deprived of their main ingredient. But it has happened to others who in the face of total loss, which is a kind of death, experienced a sudden inner opening up, a sudden space.

Why was there a sudden inner space? Because the inner form that they had identified with in their psychological form identity dissolved, it died. When a form dissolves, that which is deeper than form shines through the hole that it leaves, the opening.

This is an amazing thing. And it applies to every kind of death. An opening appears, one could say, in the fabric of phenomenal existence.

For a moment, that opening appears in what before was a dense fabric of phenomenal existence. And suddenly, within that density of the fabric of phenomenal existence, a little thing there dissolves. And for a moment, just light comes through.

Whereas before it was filtered through many layers of texture. And so it's the deepest spiritual thing is death. And that is good to know, because each one of you will face it sooner or later.

But the amazing thing is, this is death here. Because the form identity, that which I thought I was, the thought form of me, you realize is not me. It dissolves as a me entity.

So here, and this is the beauty of true spiritual teaching, in the presence of true spiritual teaching, which is not of a person, the teaching that is happening here, if you even call it teaching, is arising out of this energy field. Each one of you contributes to this teaching. To have a true view of it, you would look upon it as if it were, these words are arising out of your own consciousness.

There is no separation. And so a true spiritual teaching is similar to death. It also is an opening where suddenly spaciousness appears, where before there was only form, identification with form.

So you lose your fear of death here, because you're dying already. It's voluntary death. And it's beautiful.

And you realize, of course, people think life and death are the two opposites. Of course they are not. Birth and death are the opposites.

One can't exist without the other. Life has no opposite. Life is beyond form.

And it's that realization. When a thought subsides in your mind, even if only for a moment, that's death, ultimately speaking, because as one thought subsides, the next one has not appeared yet. There also is an opening.

And so this becomes a state of permanent connectedness, as long as you still walk around in this form, a state of permanent connectedness with that dimension of the formless one life that you are, the one consciousness that you are. That is the essence of all life forms that could be anywhere in the universe. The essence of that, the one intelligence, the one consciousness manifesting as billions of life forms, one of them the appearance of a person with a name, a little history, a little past, a little future, and then that form dissolves.

And to realize that which is beyond form frees you from identification with form, which is the world. And do you realize it? Here, now, when thought subsides.

Oh. And in many of you, spaces, although really one should only use this word in the singular, but I'll just for a while use it in the plural, spaces in many of you of pure awareness, pure presence are arising already in your life. So that is a beautiful death that is already happening, which is the transformation of consciousness.

You don't have to wait for physical death to come close to you. When it comes, it's beautiful. But you don't have to wait for that.

You can embrace that now. And that is the transformation where you are no longer identified with a form. The form is still there, yes.

The story is still there, but it's not who I am. My life situation is still there. It might be good, it might be bad.

It's not who I am. Who am I? I am that which is prior to all form.

Is that a belief? No, any belief is form. How do I know that?

I know that in the stillness of presence. I know that when I can look upon something, whether it be a flower, a tree, or even a man-made thing, although nature is more conducive to this realization, you look upon something without the old compulsive need to immediately label, interpret, or call it something, or see how you relate to it, how it fits in with me and my story. You just look, and there is a clear space of awareness, and it can happen in this moment as you sit here.

You are perceiving the words as if they were coming out of yourself. You are perceiving perhaps a body sitting on a chair. You are perceiving peripherally the rest of this room.

It's there. And the amazing thing is that those perceptions are arising in awareness. They are not labeled, interpreted, judged.

You don't need to find a personal relationship to those perceptions. They are allowed to be. They are now.

They are allowed to be. So what you have at any moment, the one moment, no matter what form it may take, the moment always has two dimensions. And this is so important.

It should be what children could learn at the age of six, the first thing at school, the one important realization in everybody's life is this. There are two dimensions. Now usually humans are only conscious of one dimension, the world.

The dimension of objects that arise in consciousness as sense perceptions and thoughts and emotions. That is the world that most people inhabit, the world of object consciousness, sense perceptions. And of course you get drawn into them and then immediately the mind comes in with thought objects to find how thought relates to that perception and that perception.

That is the world. That is the human mind. That is the only world that people know and it's a fearful world because objects are not reliable.

They come and go. It's form. They are born.

They die. So you have to hang on. Something leaves.

You're here. You're there. You inhabit only object consciousness and your whole sense of self is object consciousness.

You have a self image. You have a conceptualized sense of self, of me, and every concept is a thought. Every thought is an object in consciousness.

That's the world people inhabit and they're looking for something to free them from that dilemma which everybody perceives with a life that human existence is a dilemma and everybody is looking somehow to get free, but they are looking for freedom from the dilemma of human existence and the pain of human existence. They are looking for freedom in the realm of object consciousness. Where can I find that thing that's going to free me finally?

It could be a person. It could be some achievement. It could be some money.

Or it could be the idea that I have of spiritual enlightenment. I've just got to get there. And then spiritual enlightenment becomes an object in your mind and you say, I need to have that.

That will free me. I tried the two million dollars. Didn't work.

Didn't free me. I've tried the relationships. I've tried knowledge.

But now another object in consciousness. So that's the world. And it's a world in which I like to quote because that is a world where the collective world and the personal world of each human being consists of that because what is in the individual manifests as the collective, the collective of human history, which, as I've quoted many times before, I love that quote, Churchill defined human history as one damn thing after another.

And he's right. And for many people in their personal lives, they could say that too. How's your life?

Or how has your life been? One damn thing after another. Just when I thought I made it, something else cropped up and didn't want that.

Or then I lost it again. Or I thought it would make me happy, but it made me unhappy. As the old saying goes, there are two ways of being unhappy, getting what you want and not getting what you want.

And so looking, looking, looking, not realizing what they are looking for as if it were something external to them, as if it were something that can be obtained at some future point that never comes. Instead of looking there, the one where they are not looking is what they were looking for, that which frees them from that dimension, although you're still in it, but frees you internally is, quite simply, the realization of the other dimension. So what I called object consciousness is the dimension of the manifested world.

Things everywhere. And the other dimension is the dimension of the unmanifested. And we could call that space consciousness, to realize that space is already here within you.

And a few people have realized it through death, when something important in their object consciousness dissolved and left behind a gaping hole. And they faced it. Somehow, for some reason, they just sat there and didn't run away from it and didn't seek refuge in explanations and just sat with it, as the woman sat with her dying son.

And the hole appeared. And it was the most sacred moment in her life and changed her forever. And that is already here now.

And it's here, it begins to arise in the simple, the moment you look at a flower and perceive it clearly, without any mental commentary. So in that moment, the two dimensions, you are conscious in the two dimensions. You are conscious of the manifested.

And you sense that field of stillness, of presence, in which that perception happens, is the underlying unmanifested. It's the essence of who you are. And perhaps then it's gone again, and perhaps after a few seconds, words come in.

And then again another moment comes when you look upon something else, a stone. And there's the sense perception. And the old, deeply ingrained habit of automatic, compulsive labeling is relinquished.

And in some of you, in many of you, I know this is already happening spontaneously and you may not even notice it, except as peace coming into your life occasionally. And then once you notice it, you can consciously contribute to it by more and more existing in this world, especially when no demands are being made. And there are often during the day, there are times when you can just be, you're waiting for something, standing somewhere, sitting somewhere, and simply perceiving, looking, hearing, whatever, what other perceptions there may be.

And the perception arises in a field of simple presence or stillness. This is an amazing thing, but to the mind, the mind is thought, that is insignificant. It says, what, it's not interesting.

What's the next thing? Okay, you've spoken about stillness, now let's go on to the next thing. It doesn't recognize it.

What happened to me spontaneously to this form, overnight there was a letting go of compulsive labeling. There was deep surrender, and suddenly the next morning there was simply allowing everything to be as it is. The need to label was gone.

Labeling could still happen when it was needed, but a lot of the time it wasn't needed and isn't needed. So I would walk around the city, especially the first few days or weeks, because it was totally new, and maybe some people thought I had taken something. And it is true that some people get a glimpse of that when they take a drug, and for a moment they are forced into presence because their sense perceptions become so acute that they can't think anymore.

And it can be a realization for some people of what life can be like without the constant noise in the head, that there can be space, but this doesn't last, the drug won't last. This is much better. So I walked around in amazement, and that is a state of amazement that really stays with you, because you never say, OK, what's the expression?

Seen this, done that, or been there, done it, or whatever the expression is. That means it's all old. And for many people, the older they get, the more lifeless their world becomes.

They get older and they've seen it all, they've done it all, nothing new. OK, so the world becomes stale. Not the world, but their state of consciousness, which is heavy with past.

And so breaking through that, that happened to me spontaneously, and I walked around in that state of every sense perception happened within a field of peace. And that was just amazing. I was walking around Oxford Street in London, one of the least peaceful places, a million people walking along, trying to do their shopping, buses and taxis in the middle with fumes, and I was walking around, oh, it's peace.

All the sense perceptions arising in a field of stillness. And I didn't realize until much later when I talked to a Zen monk a year later, who said one sentence, he said, he just said, Zen is to stop thinking, that's all. That's what it is.

Oh, that's what it is. I didn't know that I'd stopped thinking. And this is, I know that this is the shift in consciousness that is destined to happen and is already happening on the planet.

I know that many of you already spontaneously experience those kinds of perceptions when you can simply look here, just to mention the two main senses, and the perception arises in an alert spaciousness, peaceful stillness. So you are not perceiving as a person anymore, as a me with a history, and the person of course wants something from the object of perception. There's always some kind of relationship that the person is seeking to make with the object of perception.

Either the person wants it, or the person fears it, or somehow trying to figure out how this object of perception fits into me. Is it important to me? How can I, am I going to be more of me when I add that to me?

[Speaker 7] (8:32:57 - 8:32:58)

Hmm, hmm.

[Speaker 1] (8:32:59 - 8:53:00)

Yeah, okay, I want that, yeah. And then you, the flower that you were looking at, you pick it, because now you can take it home. It's mine.

Just a small example, it happens on all levels. You meet another human being. Again, how can you be with that being and look at that human being, listen to that human being, allow this moment to be, this human being that appears here in front of you at this moment, and just listen, just look.

Without the person, is it possible to do that? Yes, it's possible, because it's time for that. And people are telling me it's already happening in their life, and then it becomes obscured again, and then it comes again.

But now that you can see it, you can contribute to it also by simply choosing presence and becoming aware of the underlying field, which is the deepest level of who you are, as the song that Kirtana sang at the beginning, the title of that was, I am. Not I am this, or that, because that would mean identifying with an object in consciousness. But when the identification, what remains is consciousness, I am.

The innermost sense of who you are that got mixed up with identification with objects in your consciousness, the innermost sense remains. That which you are really fearful, that which you have a feeling there's something of great value, something precious here, and I don't want to lose that, I don't want to die, but this precious sense of beingness, of aliveness, of presence, in the usual state, gets entangled with objects in consciousness, identifications. And so you derive your identity from the story, the accumulated objects in your mind.

But if you look to the essence of that sense of self, there is something real there, but it's not the story. At the core of it, there's something real, and that's consciousness. Even the greatest illusion, the greatest dream, hallucination, in every illusion or hallucination, there must be something real in it, or otherwise it would not be.

If it is, it is a form that consciousness has taken, temporary form. A hallucination is a form that only you see and nobody else agrees with. The rest is this world.

Everybody more or less agrees on what they see. In ultimate terms, one could say it is also similar to a shared hallucination, especially the nightmare world of the ego. Oh, dreadful.

So the simple thing, what looks so insignificant to thought, you can walk around the city, wherever you're at home, walking between here and your car, and simply be there as an aware presence. The person, what do you need the person for? When you need to remember something, it will be there.

When you pick up the phone, you don't say, this is the nameless presence. Or as one man said, who wanted to teach me a lesson when I asked him, when were you born? He said, I was never born.

Oh, sorry I asked that question. He's right, of course, although the way he said it was wrong. It was an ego thing, but ultimately that statement is true.

The essence is, who you are was never born. So the shift now is from being a heavy person. Every person is heavy.

There are degrees of heaviness. I'm not talking about physical heaviness, psychological heaviness. There are degrees of heaviness.

Some persons are heavier than others. Some are very heavy. Wherever they step, nothing grows.

Humanity as a whole is heavy. The collective person that humanity is, and see what humanity is doing to the planet. One could almost say that somewhat humorous comment I made could apply to the whole of humanity.

Nothing grows where they step. And that is the heaviness of the collective unconsciousness. And so the shift then is from personal, exclusively personal sense of self to realizing yourself as aware presence and be that.

And you will find, because we are at a transitional stage in the shift of consciousness, it is possible that you may walk away from here and never again fall back into resistance to what is, never again fall back into identification with thought movement and be present for the rest of your life, which after all is only this moment ever, but always, it's possible. More frequently it happens that you shift back and forth from being a person and totally believing that you are a person. This means drama starts.

You become an active participant in the drama of your story. And then suffering comes. And then you remember, oh, I forgot the now.

Any suffering that arises in your life must mean you lost the now somewhere. I lost the now. And then you go back into now and realize the space of now is okay.

Whatever appears in the now, I can face that. The now is never that complicated. It comes, you face it.

And action arises, or non-action arises if there's nothing you can do. That's always simple. Even if you think there's a choice in this moment, should I do this or this or this, when you let go of trying to figure out through thought, you just face the situation.

Should I jump this way off or should I jump that way? You just face it and then you find yourself moving this way or that way. And that comes out of presence.

And so you face this moment and your life becomes non-complex. And, of course, the power is always there that arises out of consciousness or presence. The power to face what is, is always there.

The only thing you can never face is the fantasies that the mind constructs of what might happen to you or what you might lose or what you might not get or a situation that may arise. What's going to happen? What am I going to say?

What's going to happen to me? Am I going to make it? And when am I going to make it before it's too late?

Have I missed it already? Is my whole life wasted? I've probably missed the boat already.

There's not much I can do now. So many mistakes I made. Oh, I could have achieved this and that.

Why didn't I? If only my parents had been different. Many people have this story of their life has been a failure, wasted.

Not silly story. Every story is unsatisfying. Even if it looks great for a moment, you get miserable again.

It's built into every story. Step out. Step out of it.

We are just presence. Hmm. And then the life is miraculous.

Even the city. The dance of life forms. Birds fly.

You just look. And it's gone. Clouds.

Nature has depth to it because you don't go through it with a screen of mind. It's just there. Oh.

Human beings, and this is so important, when that dimension, when that dimension of what I call space consciousness is present in your interactions with other human beings, that's what really everybody is waiting for, is for that dimension to arise. They're waiting for you. One could almost say every interaction, you can bring that.

Who are you? On the surface, you're a person. In your depths, you are consciousness.

So you interact with humans in the same way that you look at a flower, allowing them to be. They are what is at this moment. And you look.

Perhaps you sense the inner body so that you don't get drawn into mental stuff about them. And you listen to them. And you listen without preparing the next statement mentally.

You just listen. You don't know. You don't know.

People used to come to me for counseling, or whatever they called it, spiritual counseling sessions. And in the past, many people came with problems, sometimes heavy problems. I didn't know the answer.

I don't know the answer to these heavy problems. How do I know? So all I could do was sit there with them and listen, and becoming comfortable with not knowing, because that's part of it, and that's the little egoic entity that doesn't like that.

It says, I need to know what this is all about. I need to know what you are about. What are your motivations?

What do you want from me? Whatever you can figure out about another person. Is their conditioning combined with your conditioning?

And it's a shared hallucination. And then you can be with someone, and they're telling you their heavy problems. And you know that you don't know.

And you are comfortable with not knowing and allowing that space of simple listening to be there. But it's alert. It's not a listening that goes to sleep.

It's an alert listening, relaxed alert. So the words appear within that spaciousness that comes through this form. That is the dimension that most humans are not conscious of, the unmanifested space consciousness.

And when that dimension is present in this dimension, they're not really separate because they're intertwined. There is space consciousness even in... Let's leave that aside.

And suddenly within that space, things happen. Realizations happen. The person may stop speaking, as sometimes happens.

The story suddenly peters out, and they look around and suddenly feel there's a peace. What's this? One woman came with a heavy story, talked to me for half an hour or an hour about it.

And I just, spaciousness was there. I didn't know the answer. The problems were so complicated, nobody could have solved them.

And after 30 or 45 minutes of talking, she stopped. And it was like waking up. She had all these notes that she needed to all the problems, and she put that...

And she looked at me, and the next, her statement was a miracle. I couldn't believe it. She said, There's only love, isn't there?

Yes. Thank you. Goodbye, she said.

At other times it happened that some answer came through me, just suddenly said something. It just came out. Just like this talk comes out.

It's not rehearsed. It just comes out. Or something suddenly, words come out of the other person's mouth.

It suddenly reveals something. But they arise because there's a space of presence. And that space is intelligent, vastly intelligent.

That is true intelligence. And it's only when you're connected with that, that love can be present even in this world. Because it arises out of that.

It doesn't arise out of the object consciousness. That's the message. You know that.

You recognize it. So your mission is clear. To be, to know yourself as awareness, as presence.

And to put up with the person, yes. Honor it also. It's the world of form.

You honor the world of form. You don't say, I don't want nothing to do with the world of form. All I want is God.

But you're still here. And the world of form will keep bothering you. We are talking, of course, of God's realization as the essence of your being.

I would like Kirtana to come and sing her last song, which is my favorite song. If I cry, don't worry. I sometimes cry when I listen to that song.

And the title of that song refers to exactly what we have been talking about this afternoon, pointing to what we've been living, experiencing this afternoon. And it's nice sometimes to hear the same teaching in slightly different words expressed again. So the title of that song is, Who You Really Are.

And that's what this gathering is about. Knowing who you are beyond concepts, beyond a conceptualized sense of self. It's the end of the dreadful thing that is a conceptualized sense of self, the burden of that.

Listening to this is a beautiful meditation in itself. Thank you, Kirtana.

[Speaker 2] (8:53:37 - 8:58:42)

Could there be more to this life we call mine than a journey through space or a storyline more to life than the body can sense than the mind can conclude from experience Does who we are begin with breath depend on form or end with death Strip away these roles these names and tell me what remains and who you really are who you really are We measure success by the things we accrue or the bonds that we form or the deeds we do but these too will pass as hard as we try to hold on to form Form will die but inherent in this dance of form is the chance to see what's yet unborn and the choice to throw this chance away and be caught up in the play of who we think we are who we think we are This is your lifetime It could end at any time Where is your attention? Where is your prayer?

Where is your song? In a fortunate life comes a call to be free from the cycle of bondage and misidentity to wake from the dream and finally realize the truth of one's being before the body dies So before the final scene is passed See the screen on which it's cast See what's seeing this me and you and then you will see who you really are Who you really are Who you really are Who you really are

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[Speaker 1] (2:07 - 1:46:25)

Welcome to our evening together. I understand that the past few minutes presented to some of you a wonderful opportunity to surrender to what is. Life does that, always.

And if you didn't surrender to what is, you can now surrender to that. And if you're still not surrendered at this moment, if there's a little voice inside you complaining, a voice that may be familiar to you, what do you do with that? Recognize that there is a voice inside you complaining, a familiar voice, and accept that.

And there may be an emotional field behind the voice. Perhaps the voice may be empowered, fueled by an emotion of agitation, upset, anger. And the complaining voice in the head may be supplying new fuel to the emotion.

And for many people, that's all there is. That's me, they say. That's their sense of self, their identity.

And so they're trapped in a very limited self. So it's for you, the opportunity is there every moment to observe your inner state. And, yes, accept your inner state.

What else can you do? It is already the case. The emotion is already there.

The voice is there to complain, complain, complain. In some people that voice is stronger than in others. But everybody has some of it.

For some people it's their entire identity. Remove the complainer and there isn't much left. Who am I?

So we are here to find, to access, to realize that there is more to you than the patterns. Mental, emotional, reactive patterns that perhaps for a long time have succeeded in pretending to be who you are. In other words, complete identification with those patterns.

And now have a look again inside yourself. The voice may still be there. Or it may have subsided.

And the emotion that goes with it may still be there as an energy field inside you. Cannot be denied what you do with it. It is as it is.

This moment always is as it is. And so you surrender to the way it is. And with that comes what one could call a very different state of consciousness into this world.

And this is why we are here. To access that within ourselves. To deepen it, because in many of you that deeper state of consciousness that is not conditioned is already emerging.

It is, yes, it is a transformation of consciousness. When that emerges in a human being, it is an incredible transformation of consciousness. When you are identified with the patterns, sooner or later you will encounter conflict.

You will make yourself suffer. And everybody who makes themselves suffer, they make other people suffer too. And then comes violence.

Physical is the last level of violence. Before it comes to physical violence, come other levels of violence, emotional, mental. Violence that you do to yourself and to others.

Am I saying you shouldn't be doing it? That doesn't work. The patterns have their momentum.

You cannot fight them head on. You can only transcend them by, so to speak, taking a step back and allow whatever is to be. Externally or internally.

With that simple act. And it is so simple. That simple act of inner alignment with now.

That simple act of saying this is what is. This is how it is. And very often it is not the way it should be.

Life is very challenging. The world of form in which you move is very challenging. It never leaves you alone.

One challenge after another. So one way of putting it is we are here to find the dimension of inner peace. Not the peace that goes towards sleep.

Not the peace that comes when you drift off into sleep or have had a few drinks. Or the peace that comes when the doctor has given you an injection before an operation. In that case it would be better to stay in suffering and at least be relatively conscious in conventional terms.

Unconscious in spiritual terms. But a peace that is highly conscious. A peace that is alert, present, aware.

A peace that is inseparable from the unconditioned intelligence that dwells in you. That is far greater than even the most learned professor. Far greater than anything the human mind could accumulate or know.

And when you look at the world situation you see how urgent the transformation of human consciousness has become. If we are not to be drawn into a continuing cycle of self-destruction. And so this is why we are here.

A few words on how to be here this evening so that you derive the full benefit from being here. If your main interest as you sit here is on the speaker then it won't be long before you find yourself restless and bored. If you are not restless and bored already.

If your main interest or the focus of your attention is on the words that are being spoken. Also for a little while that can keep you going. And then after a while the mind says, OK, what's he really saying?

Is he saying anything at all? And you will soon notice that on an intellectual or conceptual level our gathering is not very satisfying. Of course if you wanted that you could have gone to UCLA where they have many satisfying lectures.

Intellectually satisfying. Even on an emotional level it's not all that satisfying to be here. The kind of thing you get with some preachers.

Building up a wave of emotion. So it could appear that there isn't much happening here. Not much being said.

And that's because your attention is either on the speaker maybe somebody dragged you here and said, check this guy out. And you come here and then you check this guy out. And you find not much there.

And you could be sitting here all this time forgetting the most important person in the room. And of course that's yourself. So if you could be here aware not only of your sense perceptions visual, the words, auditory sense perceptions yes, you hear the words you see the person on the chair but if you could also be aware of yourself as a presence a perceiving presence it helps to feel the aliveness in your inner energy field as you sit here.

To feel somehow to sense that every cell within your body is alive to feel the aliveness in your hands, your legs your entire body to have some of your attention there. With the rest of your attention you listen and you see. And that suddenly you might feel it feels good to be alive.

And the need for stimulus, intellectual emotional, sense perception experiential, the need for stimulus in order to make you feel alive then begins to disappear because you have a deep sense of aliveness already. When you are not in touch with a deep sense of aliveness then you need a next stimulus and nothing can keep you your sense of aliveness for very long you need continuous food for thought food for experiencing food for more of this, more of that to feel that I am still alive. Drama, you even need drama.

So as we sit here be in touch with the inner energy field of your body. Even if you can only feel it slightly it's fine. And even if you can only feel it in your hands, it's enough.

But usually if you can feel that a certain aliveness in your hands you can also feel it after a while in other parts of the body. So I call that the inner body which can become an anchor for staying present in the now. The only place, the only time there ever is here, now.

So instead of running away from now or complaining about now you move into now. You take your attention into the field of now. And then you may notice it's actually good to just be sitting there listening not even needing to look forward to the next sentence.

And you may notice the stream of thinking slows down. But you don't lose consciousness. You're highly alert.

That is the unconditioned intelligence within you that otherwise is completely obscured by the conditioned mind, by the voice in the head and the emotions that accompany the voice in the head that to most people is who they are. And the voice often complains and is not happy with what is. That's a normal state.

It looks to the next thing. It wants to get this out of the way. If it doesn't condemn it completely at least it wants to be done with it.

Be done with it. Where's the next thing? Come on.

Let's get on with it. One mind is saying. Get on with what?

Well, is it possible to live in such a way that your attention instead of being absorbed continuously by the stream of thinking that your attention is there meeting the now. Whatever form the now may take that changes continuously. You arrive with your ticket no chair to sit on.

A little challenge. The habitual reaction. You know what that's like.

Is it possible to meet that moment in a state of just attention. Here I am. We don't have enough chairs.

But I have a ticket. Can you get more chairs? Yes, we are trying to find some.

OK, I'll stand here and wait. And to realize that that moment isn't really bad unless the mind judges it. You're standing somewhere instead of sitting somewhere for a few minutes.

But the strange thing is one sense of identity one sense of self gets strengthened. The self that is derived the sense of self that is derived from mind it gets strengthened if you react and complain. Because then whenever this is not a personal matter, if you did it don't feel that this is a personal shortcoming of yours.

It's the human mind. Nothing personal in it whatsoever. If you make it personal then it becomes a problem.

You become a problem to yourself. And you say you see, I'm not spiritual yet. It's a relief to see that all those patterns are mechanical they're not personal.

They operate in every human being unless they've already gone completely beyond it. There are more humans who are now going beyond that. So the reactivity and the complaining is used in the service of being right.

If you can be right that implies that someone a person or a situation or a place or the weather is wrong. Whenever you mentally complain about something you put yourself in a position of rightness because obviously you know better. That's why you're complaining.

And I'm not talking about telling somebody to remedy something that is not real complaining that is passing on information. Please, this is not what I ordered. I ordered soup.

I didn't order pudding or whatever. Or you say the soup is cold but it should be hot. This is the I ordered a hot soup.

That's obvious giving information so that somebody can do something about it. But are you using that situation in the service of being right which is a mechanical unconscious pattern that you can observe in yourself? Why is that happening?

And why do so many people live in such a way that as they go through their day they go from one situation like that into another, into another, into another? Because the me, the mind-made sense of self gets stronger every time you go into reactivity and complaining. Because it is a position of imagined superiority towards that which you are complaining about.

And that strengthens the fictitious me, self. You can notice that if you observe yourself you can notice that after you've complained for a moment you feel a little bit expanded in your sense of self. You may also notice that you feel a kind of shell around you that has hardened.

And you may also notice a certain contraction in your energy field. And if you are very alert and in touch with your body you can notice that although you seem to be enjoying yourself doing what you do but you are not really it's suffering, but it's not recognized as suffering. The egoic entity, the mind-made me, likes it because it strengthens itself through that.

Your body doesn't like it at all. And if you can see what it does to your body going into that state, you would be shocked at what it does to the energy flow in the body, what it does to every aspect of the functioning of the body. So the body feels injured by this because it is, yes, it is a form of violence.

The ego is like that and it's not a personal thing at all. It is a wonderful thing to observe these patterns in yourself. There's the tendency then of the egoic entity to say, you see, you are no good.

It makes a problem out of it. How do I go beyond all my patterns? Don't even try.

Just be with whatever pattern arises in you at this moment. Place attention on it. Look at it.

And allow it to be. The most powerful transformer is that. It transforms your consciousness.

Now, this sounds as if you could do it. I'm saying this is something that you can... Can I do that?

Can I allow this moment to be? Yes. If you are sitting here, you can do it.

Not everybody yet can do that. There are still many in this world who are so completely identified with their mind and emotions to say that allowing this moment to be would be meaningless. And you become very effective because an intelligence that is greater than the accumulations of the human mind suddenly emerges.

And here's a situation in the field of now and you place that attention on it that has no reaction in it because it's... You receive what is like this. You say, I allow this moment to be because it already is.

And then there's a flow of attention. And in that attention there's enormous intelligence greater than the conditioned intelligence that is the human mind. And that, if action is required, action then comes out of that intelligence that is already in you, in everyone, simply obscured by the conditioned, by the human mind, by the stream of thinking, the continuous mental noise.

So in everyone that dimension of consciousness that in the ancient teachings sometimes called enlightened is already present within you. And for so many years spiritual seekers thought they had to achieve or attain a state of consciousness that they read about or heard about in the teachings. I need to become enlightened.

I need to become free, liberated. I need to achieve it. And so what they did was the old mind patterns came in and transformed the original teaching into future.

Which is how the mind operates when you're totally identified with it. The next moment is always more important than this one. That's how people live.

The enormous psychological need that is in everyone for the next moment that is so normal that most people don't even notice it. Everybody lives like that. Whatever you see on TV, everybody lives continuous stress towards what's next.

Missing the only thing there ever is which is now. For some conceptual reality that is future. Because future is no more than that.

A thought in your mind. Past is the same. A thought form.

Apart from a thought form, past and future have no reality whatsoever. And is that something that you need to believe or can you verify that for yourself? I would say you can verify that for yourself because if past and future had some reality you would find them somewhere.

Nobody has ever lived in the past. We tell ourselves yes, the ancient Greeks lived in the past but the ancient Greeks didn't live in the past. They lived in the now.

The only place where they can live. And how is it that you can even say or think that the ancient Greeks lived in the past because you're saying it at this moment. It comes out of the field of now.

Comes with God. The ancient Greeks lived in the past. Well, they didn't.

And out of it also comes the thought that you have a future. Something is going to happen to you tomorrow. But of course it can't.

And you are worried about what might happen to you tomorrow when nothing can happen to you tomorrow. Because tomorrow can only come as this moment. Why don't people realize that?

And what an insane way to live. To disregard the only thing, nothing that has any reality whatsoever, which is now. Your life, the one thing that never left you is now.

Cannot leave you. It's always life and now are inseparable. The essence of who you are because you are life.

You are both a form of life, a temporary expression, but you are also on a deeper level, you are life. Taking on a temporary form. We could also say you are the one life, the one consciousness that takes on form as a thought, as an emotion, as the entire universe.

But the essence of who you are is life, unmanifested in your essence, timeless, and life and now are one. Which means, maybe I should have kept this for the end of our talk, otherwise you'll go home. Which means you and now are one.

Because life and now are inseparable. Now the mind says, does that actually mean anything? But when I say you are the now, if you try to think about that, you won't get very far.

But if you allow that statement to be there as, one could say, a pointer, a signpost, something that points beyond itself, that is not a statement that is supposed to explain something, but to take you to a realization. So if you then say, I am the now, you can't think about that, but you can sense something there. The now, that no matter what happens, never leaves me.

That is one with who I am. And now you come to a strange thing. I said, I am.

Those are very, very mysterious words. I, I am. The most misused word in the language, and the most used word in the language, I.

But usually when people say I, they refer to me and my story. They refer to their fears, their ambitions, their desires, their memories, their reactive patterns. Me.

I. But there is a deeper sense to I that has nothing to do with your story or your reactive patterns, your memories, your stream of thinking. A deeper sense of beingness, presence, I am-ness that always is, was, will be the essence of your feeling of who you are.

And this is a very strange thing. When you look inside yourself, what is it that makes up your sense of who you are? This is the one thing that people think is, feel is so precious.

There is something in me that, the me, I don't want to lose that. It's why there's such fear of death because I don't, they feel like they can't imagine the world without me. A world without me?

Is that possible? So what is the, now when, to most people, me is their story. So when you meet somebody, when they talk about themselves, they say, I, I, I, what do you do, what do you, I, I, I am this, I am that.

But where, when you, they believe that their identity lies in their story, their history, their story, their reactive patterns. And that identity is, feels incomplete to almost everybody. Everybody in fact.

And I, an identity derived from a story feels incomplete. So you need the future to complete me and my story. That's how people live.

That's the desperate need for future. And the future never completes your story. No matter what you add to the story of me to make yourself finally have arrived, your whole life is made, suddenly it all makes sense and they always lose ends, even when you finally make it.

Everything is there and then sooner or later another form crumbles close to you. Because forms do that. No form is very stable in this universe.

So you arrange your life circumstances, try to get it all into place, career, working beautifully, relationships working beautifully. This is the story of mine. Careers, relationships, money, health, body, healthy, strong, everything beautiful place to live.

To come into learning things, knowledgeable, experience all kinds of things. And it's all great, it's all arranged, all the building blocks of my life are now in place. And if as long as nothing moves, that means I finally...

I finally made it, everything is arranged. And in some films that you see, that illusion is perpetuated, that it can all come, that the story of your life can come to a happy conclusion. And you can see that when you read a book of fiction, you get the so-called happy ending.

When you read a book of literature which has a certain depth, then you're never quite sure when you reach the end. It's... It won't be a this is it.

It leaves an openness. And so in reality, as long as your sense of I is derived from the circumstances of your life, the story of me, it is never satisfying for very long. And that's an amazing realization, and it's continuously things go wrong in it, which isn't wrong at all, but they seem to go wrong.

Things suddenly leave you, or things come in that don't fit into the story of me, that shouldn't be there at all. And there are many people who feel that their entire story has gone completely wrong. They're working where they shouldn't be working.

They're in a relationship they shouldn't be in. Their financial situation isn't what it should be. Their car isn't what it should be.

They don't feel they know enough, or are enough, or in other words, it just hasn't worked out at all. And the feeling that they have is, I'm not yet myself. I'm not yet me yet fully.

I have some idea of what I could be, but it's an idea in the head. You might live the delusion that I had for many years, that one day the world is going to recognize you. And you finally get the recognition that you deserve.

Throughout my twenties I lived in that delusion. Ah, is somebody going to finally recognize me? And of course I was continuously unhappy and unrecognized.

And then a strange thing happened. I recognized myself. And then the need to be recognized by the world disappeared.

And after many years of being nobody in the eyes of the world, suddenly the world thinks I'm great. Finally they recognize me. But unfortunately there's no real satisfaction in that anymore.

Because I know that they don't recognize me at all, they recognize themselves. And that's so much better. Ah.

They don't come to see me, what for? It would be absurd. But when they come, something that is there points to their innermost reality, beyond story.

That's why it's there is that love, that this self-recognition, self-realization. Ah. Who you are beyond the story.

Who you are beyond the circumstances of your life, which perhaps until this point provided you with your sense of self. So people confuse what I sometimes call their life situation with their life. And their entire, all their attention is absorbed completely by their life situation.

By the things of this world. And this is when you look around you as you go through your daily life, this is how most people live, with their attention entirely absorbed by things, in a wider sense, in a narrow sense and in a wider sense. Their attention, their conscience absorbed by things in a narrow sense, the conventional sense of the word, people's constant preoccupation with objects, possessions, this and that, identification with it, seeing, compare myself to others who have more or less than me, unconscious processes.

And then, but in a wider sense, things are anything that has form. Thoughts are things. They are not things, not physical things, but they are a form that consciousness temporarily takes, a thought form.

Thought comes, and thoughts are very much like clouds. A thought comes, then it goes. And another thought comes, or streams of thoughts usually.

The only difference between thoughts and clouds is that clouds are never the same. And thoughts, 95, 98 percent of it are very repetitive. And so the sky would look very boring if it were, but it's the same clouds again.

It's the same clouds as yesterday. And the next day again. I'm stuck in Groundhog Day.

And this is how life is for most people, because they are stuck with their conditioned thought processes. They are for years the same, and thought processes incorporating part of that is reactions, reactivity. So you're stuck with that, and so no matter what the situation you go into, you meet the situation with the conditioned processes of your mind.

You judge it, you interpret it, you react to it, out of the conditioning which is the me, the I, the story me. And so you repeat the same things again and again. Even if you go into a new relationship, many of you have experienced going through the same pattern in a relationship.

Same pattern in whatever, you could go to another planet with the conditioning of your mind and recreate the same situation of living amongst aliens on another planet. Nothing would change if that remains in place. If identification with the conditioning, which is just the stream of thinking, the emotions that go with it, the reactive patterns, the judgment patterns, the ways you interpret things, you immediately think, this is what it is.

And commenting on whatever happens out of the old conditioning, every event, every person you meet, immediately is judged, commented, put a few little labels on. Oh, now I know who he is. Because you've called him something, you've called him this, this, and this, that's who he is.

Next time you meet that person, you don't meet that person at all, you're meeting the stream of mind. The labels that you've put on that person, you say, hello, you're not meeting a human being, you're meeting your own mental labels. And then you react with, you interact with that human being through the interpretations of your mind already.

And so you recreate same experiences. And that's me. That's me and my story.

And so you can add more of the same kind than whatever fits into your story, you will then add to the story. You won't add something that doesn't fit into your story. So many people have a story of poor me.

That's a story that has a strong aspect of poor me to it. Unfairly treated by life. So if this is only one possible stories of different kinds of stories, but basically they're all stories.

If it's poor me and unfairly treated by life, you will select those things that conform to your story already. Things in your experience, you will almost recreate that. And so, yes, and you will interpret things that are maybe totally neutral as having been unfairly treated.

You go to a restaurant, the waiter ignores you completely, it's happening again. Because your mother ignored you the first ten years of your life, and then you have a very strong reaction, and then you can tell a story about, I went to that restaurant, and he looked, I could see him looking at me, but he didn't come over. He wanted to, you've added more to the story.

So it grows. And what's the actual, in most cases, the situation is quite neutral. What you add to it out of your story gives it fuel, karmic fuel.

So as an innocent thing of somebody not acknowledging you to some people who have a different story where that is not an important ingredient is meaningless. To somebody else, probably doesn't reach out your call to someone who has a story that has other issues, but not acknowledgement issues, it's fine, he didn't call me, okay. But to someone else who has a story that's associated with not being given acknowledgement, attention, out of the past conditioning, there will be an enormous reaction.

How dare he? Who does he think he is? He let me down again.

Everybody, all women let me down, all men let me down, whatever. The ways in which you interpret reality is through the conditioned story of me. It's a heavy way to live and then you don't see that the innocence that is actually in situations when you do not impose an interpretation on it, when you do not attempt to incorporate a situation or a person or an event into the story of me, or do not attempt to push it away because you can't fit it into the story, this shouldn't be in my life.

Why am I in this office? This shouldn't be happening. So you try to push it away.

See how automatic the process of labelling, interpreting is and see how simple life can be if you can allow this moment to be as it is without imposing the heaviness of a story on it, to try to fit it in or reject it because either it will enhance your story or it will make your story somehow doesn't fit in at all. It shouldn't be happening. It's one of the two.

So and so there's the conditioning that people live with the whole lifetime, the whole lifetime never being able to go beyond a limited sense of I. Is that who you are, the circumstances of your life that are not complete yet, never will be? The story that you tell yourself or others, a few reactive patterns.

Living your whole life trapped in that tiny little shell and even if for a while the story seems to improve greatly it's never satisfying for that long and things then tend to go wrong again. It might suddenly improve financially and then relationships collapse or you have great marriage but you're poor. Career taking off and you lose privacy.

You lose personal relationships. The world of form is always limited one way or another you encounter limitations. You cannot arrange forms around you that are all perfect.

So when you see that it's quite a relief to see that the feeling that you are not complete yet the feeling is not a personal matter at all. Everybody has it. Don't believe the magazines when they tell you with glossy photos that these are the people who made it.

Their stories are complete. They're not. They're just as unhappy as everybody else.

And ultimately it doesn't matter whether you're unhappy in a mansion or unhappy in a little room. It's the same in a state. Unhappiness is ultimately inseparable from deriving your sense of self from that limited story of me.

Unhappiness is even a necessary ingredient for that sense of identity. That sense of me needs its unhappiness and its conflict and its problems because it's through that that it can define its boundary. Me and my problems, that which impinges upon me.

Me and my enemies. It loves its enemies than me. It needs its enemies.

Enemies can be people or situations. And usually the enemy is the present moment. And there's a continuous state of contraction, of reactivity.

So this is how people live. They make the present moment into the enemy, the only place where life is. The only place where all there ever is is this.

They are against it. Not aligned with it internally. Out of alignment.

A strange way to live. Suffering. A great deal of suffering arises.

And so this the mind made me is a suffering entity ultimately. Occasionally it gets a few pleasures. But they never last that long.

Occasionally it gets a high. You add a thought form to me. Just thought of BMW.

The car is not important of course. The thought form that is imbued with self is important. My car as a thought form is what makes that car so important.

It's not the car at all. It's the fact that the thought of my car that thought has self in it. So you have and then you cling to that, you add that thought form to the collection of thought forms that make up who you think you are.

And for a while it's satisfying. I have expanded because I have added this big thought form. The self in the thought.

Me. And if you can add a big house or mansion in Beverly Hills. Mine.

And then you look at it and say you feel yes, you have grown. And then after a little while the thought form doesn't quite fulfill its function anymore. It wears out.

And it's just a car and then you just sit there and you realize you cannot sit in more than one room at a time. So you have 25 rooms there but you can't be in all of them at once. And you can only sit in one chair at a time.

And then the thought form of mansion isn't all that satisfying anymore. And if you have made it in the eyes of the world you've reached a dangerous point now. Because you can't think of anything else to add to me.

You have it all. There may be a few people here who have reached that point and have also seen the unsatisfactoriness that is even there. Otherwise you wouldn't be sitting here.

You would be enjoying. And it is not to say that you cannot enjoy the world of form. It is beautiful.

It is to be enjoyed. So many beautiful forms around you. Forms become heavy when there is a self in them.

A sense of me, self. Then they become problematic. And then you begin to suffer.

Be unhappy. So why not have a mansion? Am I saying renounce all your mansions.

Move out of Beverly Hills. No. It doesn't really matter.

You can enjoy that. Why not? Beautiful forms around you.

And if the mansion should collapse and leave you, you may suddenly find yourself sitting in a cabin somewhere else. Still feeling the aliveness within you. And the fullness of this moment.

The incredible fullness that is concealed concealed underneath the appearance that this moment takes. But you cannot get beyond the form that this moment takes as long as you are fighting internally with the form that this moment takes. Which is the normal way to live.

That keeps you trapped in form. Your own form identity fighting some form around you. But if you can allow whatever form this moment takes to be.

Because you have seen the insanity of living in any different way. And also because you have seen and this is maybe a little shocking at first when you see that since everything in this universe as Buddhists know as physicists know everything in this universe is totally interconnected. What we perceive as separate things bodies events situations are not ultimately separate.

There is a web the entire cosmos is one web of interconnectedness. There are ultimately no separate events or separate things. Every little thing is connected with the totality in ways we could not possibly understand.

Even Einstein could understand even 1% of how everything but he had great insight. Nobody can intellectually understand how in what way an event is connected to the totality. But we can see that it is connected to the totality.

And that means whatever is has come about by the totality. Whatever is cannot be otherwise. It doesn't mean that nothing is ever going to change.

No. But the is-ness of this moment this moment, the form that this moment takes is as it is because the totality with which it is connected has brought it about. So if you judge it and react it you take, you separate something out of the oneness and say this is a separate event and this should not be.

So when you see the inevitability of the form that this moment takes Wow! Even arriving here just to take a relatively insignificant example arriving here and finding not enough chairs. Why should that be happening to me?

I got my ticket. Well it it the entire universe has brought this about. Of course it has.

Every, whatever form this moment takes we cannot know how it is connected. It's only occasionally that in retrospect something happens to you that the mind says this is a dreadful thing it is a senseless thing that happened to me if the universe seems to be a place of complete where random things happen just complete absurdity like a theatre of the absurd to some people and only years later do you realize if that thing that I called dreadful at the time had not happened to me all this would not have happened.

I would not have changed I would not have realized this I would not have gone beyond this limited sense of me that I was and so occasionally you can get a glimpse of how a seemingly meaningless event does make sense within the totality within the whole but in most cases you cannot know through the intellect how this event is connected to the totality all you can know is that it is connected to the totality and so if you then allow it to be because you see the futility of eternally resisting the totality then you become part you were already but you somehow had removed yourself in an illusory way from the totality you become part again of that and an enormous energy and intelligence can express itself through you when you drop the resistance to what is the intelligence of the totality of the cosmos the one intelligence can express itself through you then and that is why all creative humans, no matter what their field of creativity is in their field of creativity they have the ability to step aside as their me and be in the state of surrendered aware presence the state of attention the state of looking looking at a canvas looking at a piece of paper looking at whatever, even scientists using thought for a while and then arriving at an insoluble problem and then looking thinking comes to an end for a moment and is replaced by what we could call pure attention or pure awareness and in that moment an intelligence that is greater than the accumulated intelligence of the mind operates and in that moment the creative impulse comes and the creative impulse always comes from beyond the little person the little me and the little person subsides when you allow this moment to be completely and give it your full attention the two go together you allow what is to be and you give what is your attention that is the awakening of unconditioned intelligence in you and that is when your life suddenly shows enormous capacity for transformation and renewal that goes far beyond what anybody could have predicted when they looked at the conditioning of your mind far beyond what any psychoanalyst could have predicted after analyzing the content of your mind for 12 years because that would be moving within the realm of the conditioned and so for those humans who do not move beyond the realm of the conditioned both personal, in a personal sense and the vast collective conditioning that you inherit, that is to do with the culture you live in the time period you live in the genetic conditioning, the very fact that you are a human already means you are conditioned in many ways, you have a mind, a human mind, which is collectively conditioned already, so those and then comes your personal conditioning from your childhood and your life experiences so those humans who don't go beyond their conditioning, you can predict more or less within this realm of relative certainty what, how their life is going to develop, yes things may change on the external level but you can more or less predict their relationships the problems they're going to have because it's all already there in the conditioning and the conditioning may be in some cases in some humans it's better relatively better than in others you could say although all humans have the basic collective conditioning, they are burdened with a mind that never stops thinking they are burdened with the pain of humanity that each human carries inside as the pain body, that's the collective that each human has on the personal there are variations some humans come into this world and say they've got it made already, when they're 18 they already drive the Ferrari everything they've ever wanted is given to them well, if you look at their life, you may find it wasn't all that great to have that others come into this life you could say every human comes with a as given a block of piece of wood and say here, that's your conditioning, and some blocks of wood look already quite nice oh, I can work with that easily can make that and other people get blocks of wood and say, what is this? they are born into totally dysfunctional families everything is the entire everything seems to be designed to make their life hard and difficult and yet they may end up in prison and yet at some point humans it happens to some humans and it's happening to more and more human beings on the planet now at some point something arises that cannot be explained from the conditioning of their mind something arises in a human being you could have never have predicted that this person the criminal who all his life committed crimes ended up in prison spent 10 years in prison and suddenly the suffering became so unbearable suddenly the story the life the I that is identified with me and my story collapsed through surrender because the suffering was too much ah and there was simply the is-ness of this moment and I'm sick I have received quite a few letters from people in jail who have experienced this very same thing suddenly becoming free of the me of the heaviness of identifying with me and my story what's left then a field of aware presence yes there is a they are still sitting in a prison cell but they are no longer deriving their identity from the story that says this is what they have done to me or this is what life has come to this is what our life has treated me unfairly this is what these bastards have done to me, they have put me in here and I have to, I've been in here for 12 years, I'm going to be in another 20 years and the story that is around I have failed everything failed, my whole life is totally awful it's an unpleasant story and some stories have to become very unpleasant before they collapse or not necessarily collapse before you withdraw your identification from it so it happens to some people that so many things go wrong that the story of me becomes more and more unhappy one thing and this is how traditionally people have had the spiritual realization of who they are beyond the story it's only when the story collapsed or became so unpleasant and heavy that they could not bear it anymore and suddenly something happened and something emerged from within that has nothing to do with the story a deeper sense of I which was always there but it got mixed up with the story so when you look at your life you may find that when you were in your teens, early 20s your life was very different from the way it is now, you may have gone through tremendous changes already totally different life situation perhaps but there was always that underlying at the deepest level, the underlying sense of I that didn't change if your story changed completely if you are poor now and a few weeks from now you are extremely wealthy and behold let's say you are poor and in the eyes of the world unimportant totally meaningless thing anyway it's wonderful to be unimportant in the eyes of the world if you are poor now and unimportant in the eyes of the world and suddenly in months time they discover you it could be true because there are so many actors in LA and so suddenly months from now you are sitting in a cafe and a man comes and says give me a call, here is my card and you read and it says we have a famous director and few months later you move from your little room to Beverly Hills and then you sit there in Beverly Hills and you think wow it seems like a new and completely different incarnation from being a waiter or a waitress only a few months ago and now the world suddenly I am on the front page of magazines that you look at yourself wow wow and then if you look deeper all of the story has changed you find the sense of I hasn't really changed on the surface the change has happened but the I am-ness hasn't changed no matter what happened on the surface of your life so people confuse that deep sense of being-ness of presence with the story so if you can step out of the story and feel that directly you will see the sense of being-ness of presence nothing to do with your life situation your past or your future nothing to do even with your name there is an underlying field of presence of being-ness and that miraculously is inseparable from what now is in its deepest sense so what does that mean?

it means consciousness itself before consciousness takes form that is the deepest part of who you are you are consciousness itself you are not what you are listening to right now, not what you think right now but how is it what is it that makes the listening possible at this very moment what is it? conscious awareness, conscious however you want to put it there is a field I sometimes call it the field of now the field of now and then things happen in it they come and go the form changes if you could live life in such a way that you do not lose touch with the field of now then whatever happens in the now will not overpower you and you will realize there is a far greater power inside you than there could possibly be anywhere in the world of form the world of form which is the physical universe looks sometimes so overwhelming but it's nothing compared to who you are in your essence the formless one life, one consciousness out of which all forms come and so just a little one additional pointer to this as you realize this, you realize that there are, one could say don't take anything too literally because they are only pointers there are inside you could say two dimensions this is very very simple this could be explained to a six year old there are two dimensions inside you and this you can verify because as within so without there are also two dimensions outside, what does that mean? right, it's very simple when you look around and I suggest you go do it at night, the sky is clear you look up at the sky and you see of course you still see what's around you the houses and so on then you look into space and then you realize when you look into space you realize that whatever you is out there there are two dimensions it's almost too simple there are things in space galaxies billions of galaxies of suns there are things in space and there is space when you look outside, that is obvious and when you look into space the vastness of space is almost beyond anyone's comprehension when you look out into that vastness with a few things in it, so called things you see it is awe inspiring to look out into space and when you truly look your mind becomes still you can't explain space they've tried but they didn't get very far and then as soon as you start speaking about space you ask questions well ok how far does it go?

well then some say well it goes on forever forever and what's behind that? and others say well it curves back upon itself and then you think ok, but then what is outside this thing then? there must be something outside if it curves back impossible totally incomprehensible but what you can think about is the things in space ah, you can actually get a telescope and look, oh there is a star that is such and such a star and then you can collect data about it you can think about it you can measure the light frequency that comes from it you can work out how big it is how many light years it is away that you can think about space you can't really think about so when you look outside there is space and things in space and even here in this room there are things in this room and another what is easily overlooked there is space without it nothing could be here and the strange thing is the same is inside you there are things inside you which are thoughts perceptions, thoughts emotions you look there is a sense perception the sense perception becomes a nerve impulse the nerve impulse is decoded in some way that nobody understands and then something is recreated in your mind as a thought form, which is the sense perception, a thing so whatever you see is a thing, becomes, is an inner thing, a thought that you think is also a thing anything that arises inside you is something and for most people that's all there is to their lives all they know is the things inside them with which they are identified as me what they don't know is just as outside there are things and there is the space in which the things appear the same is inside you there are things and there is a vast space of spaciousness inside you also which is actually as deep and as vast as what you see out there and cannot think about and that space we could also call it stillness an inner field of stillness in which thoughts happen because a thought is a thing when you allow the things in your life in this moment to be as they are also allow the things inside you to be as they are thoughts come, emotions come you perceive whatever is in the field of awareness now when you allow something spacious becomes is realized inside you a sense of space opens up inside you and you realize that there is in you what we could call object consciousness which is the continuous stream of thinking me, my story my this, my that and there is also inside you space consciousness and in many of you that dimension is arising in your life the unconditioned consciousness not a form it's just like space it's not a thought you can't think about it and yet all thought comes out of it so so we are speaking of inner a sense of inner spaciousness that is there when you allow the form to be as it is because allowing is space without allowing in your life everything is crammed full with objects one after one damn thing after another one damn thing after why doesn't life leave me ever alone and one thought comes after another and another and the same history of humanity as many of you know I've quoted it a few times one damn thing after another was Winston Churchill's definition of history and it's the same still, switch on the TV they're doing it again wasn't the 20th century enough, the horrors of that didn't they learn no one there's no end to it unless something shifts in here unless something shifts in here in a sufficiently large number of people on the planet otherwise it can only get worse and so this is why we are here, if this shift were not happening why would so many people be here would so many people respond to the book the power of now and other forms in which the new consciousness comes in by the new consciousness I mean space, the unconditioned it's not new, it's timeless but we call it new because most humans up till now had no idea that it existed so they were like people walking around destitute not realizing that they have a bank account in Switzerland with 10 million dollars in it please give me a dime didn't you know that you are this is a these analogies are always a little defective because a million dollars wouldn't save you at all wouldn't make any difference so people not in touch with that dimension not realizing that who they are in their essence is not anything is not anything they had hitherto identified with as me is not anything that happens in your life people have been looking for themselves in things this is how thoughts become invested with self so they are looking for themselves in situations an enhanced sense of self through adding a few more things it doesn't have to be material things some never go beyond the level of needing to add more material things to finally feel that I am now fully myself others graduate they move beyond material things and then try to add other things to themselves, still the same pattern may operate become knowledgeable add more of that in a search for me experiences as many experiences as possible I'm a collector of experiences I'm looking for the next thing to experience where is food again it's not food, the body doesn't want the food, it wants only what's needed but the need for more gets translated into the physical realm the body doesn't want unlimited sex, occasionally it wants sex it's part of the natural functioning of the body, but it's the obsession with sex or the obsession with food is the need for more which is in the human mind to add more, I feel so incomplete ok, let's have some more sex or let's go to the fridge and so the need for more which is deep seated in the human mind more which is the need for future the need for the next moment can become translated into the need for another sandwich or piece of cake and for a little while you feel ah and then again comes the feeling of lack, not enough ok, where can I get more now TV, another experience you watch violence on the screen anything to avoid spaciousness I will do anything to avoid spaciousness in my life ok, where is the next thing and this is how people live and we have an entire culture, an entire civilization an entire industry designed to a large extent to fill up people's to satisfy people's need for more to fill up people's inner space with more things and it is rare but it happens, because there is a shift coming, it is rare that anything you see in the media in films, for example that that dimension comes in and sometimes it does and it's wonderful to see it when the dimension of space comes into a film that is a mainstream film, and suddenly you have, wow, there is something there, and people may not know what it is and so they may find, they may say oh it's a great film, and there is something in it, they may recognize it something there so I don't see films very often, but occasionally I watch it, and it's wonderful I saw an old film recently, I only saw it a few months ago, The Horse Whisperer, and that is a film that has space in it and people don't realize when you watch it and there are some other films, when you watch it certain space arises inside you also a stillness in certain instances and so I could probably name a few, but you will see you'll know it when you see it it's beautiful when it comes through the mainstream media and a different dimension comes in so but to a large extent, it's still let's avoid that let's just not find your reality so the egoic entity which consists of thought forms and emotional forms doesn't want to look at space, because it consists of form of things ok, I want just a moment to but

[Speaker 2] (1:46:26 - 1:46:27)

it can't do much because

[Speaker 1] (1:46:27 - 1:53:35)

there is a vastness inside you and if no matter how disturbed no matter how not at peace a human being is in each human being that dimension we could call it space we could call it stillness we could call it peace is there it cannot be destroyed no matter what happened to you in your life and there may be some of you to whom dreadful things happened perhaps in your childhood because many dreadful things happen in this world at this very moment in many parts of the planet not only the obvious things but you don't see it in families everywhere no matter how dreadful things, whatever dreadful things happened to you in your life that dimension could never be destroyed or harmed or affected in any way there is a temptation when something dreadful happened to you in your life to continue to identify with that image that something dreadful happened to you it is good of course to acknowledge the pain you feel it is very important to allow it to be that's very important not to carry an identity around with you I am such and such that is heavy see realize who you are beyond that and it also applies if you did something in your life to someone because you were unconscious you couldn't help it this is for humanity don't carry with you the self image of someone who did that it was one of the expressions that human unconsciousness can take and what is human unconsciousness? unconsciousness is complete identification with a conditioned mind that's all and there is nothing ultimately personal in it it is not who you are it gets mixed up with the I with the now so we are the world is in a seems to be deteriorating but it has deteriorated for a long time the unenlightened state of consciousness of unconsciousness what we don't see especially these days on the news is that something is emerging at the same time and it often happens that the old unconsciousness deteriorates as the new arises simultaneously for example a limited example there was a spiritual awakening here in the 60s there was an enormous influx suddenly of people disidentifying from things that they had hitherto identified with in other cases they identified with something, some new image yes, that happened also but there was some space arising a little bit then it became obscured again but there was an arising of that which was not conditioned which occasionally yes turned into conditioning also but that's fine and that coincided there was the Vietnam war which people did awful things but at the same time there was the unconsciousness which became so obvious the unconsciousness that is in the human psyche became so obvious when you look at what it is doing and you can look at the whole 20th century and see what humans have done to other humans throughout the 20th century incredible suffering God no and don't fall into the temptation of believing that what you see on the TV screen is all there is when you watch TV I recommend that you don't watch all day long especially these days when you watch the news or anything else you may don't underestimate the importance of your state of consciousness at that moment I'm not saying don't do anything, whatever you do you will do but let the doing come out of the unconditioned not the conditioned so when you watch images on the screen death and destruction even without a wall many images on the screen are of death and destruction what you see in the news and if that were not enough they recreate the fictions on the screen are death and destruction

[Speaker 4] (1:53:35 - 1:53:36)

amazing

[Speaker 1] (1:53:39 - 2:14:50)

it's not enough to watch the news then you watch a film that shows the same thing when you watch the news don't underestimate your state of consciousness as you watch and be aware yes, there may be you may feel emotions arising in you as you watch but be prior to the emotion imagine what or who or what is watching those images who or what is feeling those emotions that moment sense, can you sense as you watch the field of presence of now, of consciousness of awareness that you are and allow those things to be there, not saying they are good they are at that moment in other words be there as awareness which is what you are as you are at this moment it may be a little easier at this moment to be sitting here and to let's put it this way this is the ultimate secret to be aware of awareness in yourself and when we put that into language, we have already created a non-existent duality because it's not that you are aware of awareness let's see there's two things here there's not you and awareness you are awareness you are consciousness prior to form without that this would not be even when you dream you wake up and you say oh it was all unreal it was only a dream well not the dream wasn't totally unreal because without consciousness there would have been no dream so the consciousness in which the dream happened was the one thing that was real in the dream not the forms that were happening in it ultimately they were like smoke, like clouds and here ultimately the one thing that is real is your consciousness the essence of who you are which is one with the consciousness to know yourself as consciousness consciousness or awareness so the way I put it just now is as you sit here yes there are things in your field of perception yes seeing happens hearing happens occasional thought comes what am I going to have for dinner tonight what's going to happen tomorrow because most thoughts are not future or sometimes not past yes is that all there is haven't you overlooked something oh consciousness stillness space inner space within which it all happens ah now that is the deepest meaning of now beyond the forms of now because the forms are not always what you might choose through the mind but if you can be aware of awareness in your daily life that is the unconditioned is then alive in you so to speak, words are all limited and then you go into a situation and there is a power in you that is greater than anything that you have learned it is also a space of no thought and that's essential to realize because otherwise you may be sitting here still after all this trying to figure out the essence of what we are talking about and that is the one thing that you cannot figure out through the mind the essence of this evening is not something that you could work out through the mind so what is the essence the possibility of being in a space of no thought and many of you, you may not know this the state of thoughtless awareness in which there is no loss of consciousness, very alert, deep knowing but not conceptual that state in many of you is already arising you may not even know it because to the mind it is completely insignificant because the mind is thought and thoughts are forms, objects in consciousness and objects in consciousness don't know about space consciousness consciousness itself so you may find when you wake up in the morning you open your eyes and there is simple spacious awareness for a few seconds then you may find when you lift a cup of coffee or tea in that moment there is no thought, there is a simple awareness of the movement and just a field of awareness in which it happens there may be many instances you may be sitting at a traffic light in your car and there is a moment of no thought and then thought comes in again and says, oh remember your problems you must think about this now you have great problems there is no person by the way who does not have problems because problems arise out of identification with things with objects and objects are short lived they are not reliable they let you down situations let you down people let you down sooner or later every object lets you down every situation lets you down you could become famous and then you are not happy it let me down I thought this was going to be it and that is amazing this is and then you may find yourself looking at a tree and there is a space of no thought in which the perception happens which is a stillness a life stillness and to the mind it is not significant how does that help me solve my problems it transcends problems problems are to do with identifying with thought forms there are no problems what do you mean there are no problems look at the world situation, isn't that a problem no it is not a problem it is suffering it is happening now problem is thought form in the now you may have a challenge never a problem a challenge you meet by giving it attention and if you give it thoughtless attention which is you look at it and out of just that small space of no thought, just pure aware presence comes the right action if it is needed that is how some people have found the amazing shift that happened inside them in a moment of an accident the last few seconds before an accident the car was coming towards you at 100 miles an hour and suddenly no thought a sudden dis-identification from thought forms consciousness moving out of thought forms into its pure state of consciousness looking and then they survived and then they said a strange thing happened to me the car was coming towards me I knew there was going to be an accident and it seemed as if things slowed down and there was no fear I felt incredibly peaceful although I knew I could die just that incredible sense of peace extreme alertness in that peace that's what they said couldn't explain it other people in extremely dangerous situations went into that state and they acted out of that state, in other words totally unpremeditated spontaneous right action happened when a situation occurred that thinking the conditioned mind could not possibly have dealt with it doesn't know enough, it's not fast enough it doesn't have the information it cannot deal with true emergencies thinking so sometimes it happens that naturally thinking steps collapses and something takes over that is far more powerful than thought not different from thought, thought is an aspect of the vastness of consciousness but this is when the unconditioned takes over and it's always still alert present and out of that the act or action happens, there's no doer in the doing and then the situation is over and then the old usually the old mind patterns come back, but sometimes something is left in that person, an opening is left in that person that faced death, for example, it was death faced death and looked death in the face and suddenly the shift happens, so for some it becomes an opening and then becomes the transformation of consciousness and the same in the mode of creation, in an artist and even a scientist, the creative impulse, the realization comes out of no thought still aware alert presence and that is grace, this is when space comes into your life grace comes into your life and you are then supported by life the struggle of me trying to make it, goes away it's like somebody who's learning to swim when I first learned to swim, I remember the struggle of keeping myself above water and then somebody said try this, I don't know if you can do this I learned in the Mediterranean which has a lot of salt he said try this, breathe in and then you can just float and I did oh, the water carries me it's not unfriendly and when space comes into your life the separation which is insane the egoic separation of me and the rest of the universe or even worse and this is how it usually is me against the universe that's how people live that separation isn't there anymore the more that space consciousness comes in there is a oneness with me and the universe not the separation of me and the universe I am not separate from the totality or could I be? I am an expression of the one temporary expression in this form oh space and grace happen to be similar in the English language and that's beautiful grace means something beyond the form that as which you appear temporarily here comes in something that's beyond that, a greater intelligence and also the word that has been misused so much love true love not the egoic love that says I want you don't you ever leave me it's one that in the Spanish language there are two words for love the usual one, the one that's mostly used is to do with wisdom sometimes embodied in language te quiero means I love you in its normal way, the egoic which really translated means I want you so in Spanish I want you and I love you are the same and then there is a deeper which is very rarely used they say it's poetic which would be te amo I love you which is the love that is beyond ego, which is the love that can only be there when there is space it is inseparable from space so how does that operate? a human being comes into your life it may be just a brief encounter or someone you've known for a long time here is an encounter what the course in miracles calls whenever two human beings meet, it is a holy encounter I would add it is only potentially holy and when that potential is realized a meeting of two human beings is beautiful even if they are pretending to be engaged in some superficial interaction like somebody is buying a newspaper and saying I'll have a copy of the L.A. Times please if you still buy it how much ok, keep the change or I'll have the change but there is a moment of are you meeting that human being or is that human being reduced to a form identity a function, a role is that what you are doing that is not a holy encounter holy encounter is when you can look upon a human being no matter how briefly in a moment of spacious, aware presence just look there is no thought in it there is just consciousness perceiving knowing yourself as the perceiving consciousness, not through concept you might not this is just one way of putting it I lived like that for years but after the shift happened in me and I couldn't have said what I am saying now if somebody had said to me oh you now know yourself as unconditioned consciousness I would have said what do you mean I don't know what you are talking about all I knew was peace there is such peace wherever I go it's peaceful for whoever I meet there is peace as an underlying field the middle of traffic there is peace as an underlying field, that's all I knew for years I couldn't say much about it so what happened to you well I was always in turmoil it was dreadful and suddenly I've been at peace ever since very deep, beautiful peace don't know that's all I can say and then after years I talked to other Masters teachers, Masters and they said Zen Zen, a few Zen people and they said what Master said Zen what's that no thought that's how they talk sometimes no thought and if you don't get it they may hit you and he said that and I said oh my god I realize now that for the past few years I haven't been thinking very much at all that's where the peace comes from wow I didn't know and then some others added a few more things so gradually I could say a little bit more about it and then I recognized it when others no matter what traditions came whether they were Buddhists or mystical Christians or Hindu or any Sufis any whatever tradition I recognized whenever the truth was being pointed to oh yes, that's what they are talking about

[Speaker 4] (2:14:50 - 2:14:52)

oh

[Speaker 1] (2:14:52 - 5:22:26)

it's so simple, it's everywhere two human beings meet and there is a flow of one could almost say a current of awareness that is there as the sense perception happens and another aspect of that of course is allowing this moment to be as it is and this moment is taking the form of this human being forms change continuously so you allow this form to be and there is the outflow of attention of awareness and now there is a true you are meeting beyond the roles that you play on the surface level of this world because on the surface level of this world you meet humans playing their respective roles one person plays the role of customer and the other person plays the role of employee or you play the role of doctor and the other one is the patient or you play the role of father or mother dangerous roles if you completely identify with them if you completely identify with father or mother you will continue to play the role even when your children are 30 and 40 does that sound familiar to some of you completely identified with being a mother I know what's best for you when they are 50 the mother is still it's beautiful to play the role of father or mother but to be identified exclusively with any role is a dreadful limitation and brings suffering so I can be a mother but can also be there as space for the child to be to give the child space to be able to look at the child without without some movement of thought that says you should be doing this now do that, why didn't you do that to just look to just give attention to listen listening and looking I'm using these conventional words meaning the flow of awareness which can flow into listening and looking but the looking itself isn't important, the listening the words themselves are not that important the child may be talking about what happened at school but there is space and that's the greatest gift that frees you of the roles you play not that you don't play them anymore but they have become spacious there is a lot of space around the roles and then you become much more effective even in the function even in the roles you play you become a much better mother or father or employee or boss or doctor no matter what the roles are when you are not exclusively identified with the role imagine meeting a doctor who is just there are many these days who are just doctors because they are so identified their mind is quite full with stuff they have been conditioned like that since childhood so they don't really they are not there you are a case history ok take that they hardly look at you they are so burdened, one patient after another ok next and then there is a doctor who may be equally busy but gives you attention just a moment and so goes beyond the role and is there as aware presence and you feel suddenly ah, it's so good there is space there is space here and as another human gives you space space arises within you too and it feels good to be there and then the doctor just makes one or two little remarks which were not premeditated which came out of that space that stillness in him or her which help you greatly he said something and I know some doctors who work in that way they are enormous blessing to all their patients not that they neglect their form identity their form identity becomes incredibly enhanced through going beyond form ah so you honour the world of form but are not trapped in it not consumed by it awful what it does to people when they don't know themselves as spacious awareness how forms consume your life completely my god it keeps the space ah and then no matter where you go there is always inspiration comes through that spontaneous action comes through that realizations a sense of oneness with whatever you perceive which is not there when whatever you perceive is enabled and interpreted and given some form identity not that you don't think anymore thought still comes you are no longer exclusively trapped in thought so you can look at a tree and there is a moment of spacious awareness as you look the perception happens stillness you look in and through stillness and then perhaps your child asks dad mum what's this? what's that? that is the age when children start the human mind demands labels and you must satisfy it that's the evolutionary state of the child the human mind wants the labels dad what's that?

and the dad would normally or the mum would normally say it's an oak tree or it's a tree and already the dad or the mum didn't realize that a prison is already forming for the child because the next time the child looks at a tree the looking will almost not be because immediately it recognizes it, classifies it oh tree tree, a tree a tree but if the father or mother could say when the child says what's that? says look touch see that?

these are it moves in the wind encourages the child to give more attention before the label is given and then you could say we call it a tree and then after you say it, encourage again to look look there, the movement of the leaves, these are leaves but now look listen to the noise the leaves make and then listen don't get lost, in other words, don't get lost in abstraction don't get lost don't get lost in a totally conceptualized reality it's a nightmare a conceptualized reality you walk around with a conceptualized sense of self in a conceptualized reality what a way to live and that of course is not surprising when millions and millions of humans live in that way what they create externally and all that is great in human beings when you look yes, a lot of human history is complete insanity but also here and there there are great and wonderful things that have come through human beings creations artistic otherwise or sometimes just acts of great love helping great insights great whenever this has come into it's always been through that not through the accumulations of the human mind the human mind may have come in at a later stage to give expression or form, but the insights the greatest greatly inspired things the great works of music of art all came from the deeper level of the unconditioned so one could almost look upon human history as a case history if the whole of humanity were a human being that human being would presumably be in a mental home but if you looked at the case history of that human being it would be a case history of insanity with a few lucid intervals of beautiful lucid intervals here and there and those are only point as to what is possible but lucid intervals are no longer enough now humans need to enter that state and that's a limited way of putting it, and it is happening, they are doing it it is happening, the doing and the happening are one because sometimes people ask me well, isn't it happening anyway? yes, it is but you still have to do it, your doing is the happening, so what you have to do nothing allow this moment to be as it is well, isn't that a doing?

no, not really everything else is a doing just this and naturally the aware presence is already there it doesn't need to be brought about it is only obscured that's all so it is very true when some of the, you may have read some of the buddhist masters they sometimes say you are already enlightened and that's a strange thing to say, but it is true it is not true if that becomes a thought form in your head then it leads to more trouble so, if you walk away it is ok, I am already enlightened but in a deeper sense of course it is true that the consciousness that is unconditioned is already here, in you now so the quickest way to it, so quick that it doesn't require time at all if time comes in that will be the obstacle the surrendered state of consciousness that says yes to what is that's all and then there is space the yes brings the space or makes you realize the space that is already there have space in your life or realize that what happens in your life or what does not happen in your life is not absolutely important relatively yes but not absolutely your state of health your finances your work situation, your relationships your home situation those are the usual levels that bring problems those things are relatively important it is good to honor all those this is the level of form but perfection perfection is not to be found there you get one right and the other one leaves you nothing that happens in your life is that important and nothing can give you yourself or take away yourself no gain in life can give you yourself and nothing that you lose is really significant as far as who you are is concerned so there comes a freedom with that a space between you and what happens also and here too a little paradox comes in what happens tends to be more benign more benevolent when there is space in your life as I said earlier grace comes support comes you are no longer living your little life you are lived by the greater life by the one life that's the only way the world can change when humans realize that and the most important change is in you now not the next moment thank you If you live in New York and this beginning is too slow for you I apologize two days ago when we got here I wanted to go for a leisurely walk along Park Avenue on the crowded sidewalk and I and I realized it's very hard to go for a slow walk I could feel the pressure behind me of people and so like in all the very big cities Hong Kong, London, New York everybody is desperately trying to get somewhere and that's quite normal now of course everybody is trying to go to wherever they need to be if some extraterrestrial visitor came and said where are they all going to why are they in such a hurry of course the true answer would probably be they are trying to get to the next moment which they believe is more important than this moment and of course when they arrive in that next moment they'll do the same again and so I started to walk fast same speed as everybody else but I wasn't trying to get anywhere so it was ok because if you can walk fast and you're not trying to get anywhere it's not stressful you're just walking fast it's quite invigorating my plan was to go for a slow walk but it's always good to adjust to circumstances so the slow walk became a fast walk and it was good so the stress wasn't there in my case I didn't have to get anywhere if I had to get somewhere would that be stressful only if the main focus of my consciousness would be where I have to get to either the place or the time then it's stressful if I'm projecting myself away from this reality the only reality now and then this mental projection into the so called future creates the tension and then you see it's a mental pattern so just a little recommendation for some of you who may be part of that desperate urge to get to the next moment is to try and not become slow like me I'm not always slow but be completely in the movement so that the main focus of your attention is where you are and what you're doing at this moment trying to catch a taxi running, somebody else maybe wanting to catch the same taxi and enjoy that movement and if you miss the taxi, enjoy that moment always is it possible to enjoy the is-ness of the moment and to always immediately adjust and become one with the moment that's the end of all stress and it doesn't mean you become ineffective, you become actually more effective you are not burning up energy uselessly in stress and anxiety because stress is always connected with fear and anxiety they are all mental conditions or rather forms of mental illness nothing personal in this this mental illness is not your personal problem it's a collective thing that we inherit and it's hard to even recognize it as mental illness because everybody has it almost everybody and then you don't, the entire culture is run by that and then you don't recognize anymore that it is actually dysfunctional well, perhaps you begin to recognize it when your life becomes more and more unhappy and then you begin to see that there's something wrong here particularly if it becomes unhappy and the world tells you that you've made it and then you're still unhappy so just a little recommendation for New Yorkers experiment with this fast moving about and see if you can be present in the movement your attention in the movement of energy then you're no longer trapped in the mind because the need to get to the next moment or the one after that is the need to get to the future now what is the future?

people believe the future is enormously important and unconsciously they believe it is certainly more important than this moment now I'm making something that is usually unconscious, conscious when you make something that is unconscious, conscious then you can more easily see the madness in it so unconsciously humans are driven by the belief that undoubtedly the next moment, with few exceptions occasionally you might be okay in this moment but usually the next moment is more important than this one in other words the future is more important than the present and that's a mindset now as we all know or maybe we don't the future of course never arrives the moment it arrives it's the present okay then you look to the next the moment it arrives it's the present but the mindset continuously looks to the future so with that comes an inability to be where you are rooted in being and in life and you miss the fullness of life, you have a substitute for the true rootedness in being which is the fullness of life itself, the power of life itself and the substitute is a mental thing we could call it stimulus or excitement in whatever form and the stimulus always asks what's next it always looks to the next thing it never goes deep at all into what is it remains on the surface of life what is and looks to the next it looks for some answer in this surface reality where it's always the next thing or maybe that's the thing that will transform my life will bring me whatever it is that fulfillment that I'm looking for the happiness that I'm looking for the completion that I'm looking for it must be there somewhere in the future which never comes because and that's an amazing realization and you need to realize that not just through mental concepts but with every cell of your body realize that the future does not even exist now the mind says that can't be true because I know that we are going to be here for an hour and a half and then we are going to leave so of course it exists okay but you never experience it I don't think the mind could argue with that the mind says yes the future exists but when you look more closely you see that you never actually experience the future so it doesn't exist it only seems to exist and that's fine it will continue to seem to exist on this level of where we move the surface reality where all the frightened rabbits are running around the future will future continue to exist and on this level you cannot escape it but the strange thing is if you look closely you never actually experience it you can't see it, touch it, feel it it's just not it never is part of your experience so there is something that we call future it seems to have a certain reality in this life an overwhelming reality on this surface level because the future well you need it when you do things even to go home you can say okay I need time future is really time I need half an hour to get home and you need the future to prepare a meal it takes time you need the future to make a cup of coffee learn a language learn, become proficient in this or that okay there it has its place and so it seems to exist overwhelmingly because not only you need the future to do things it's there anyway it won't leave you alone time it's dragging you along with it we call that time past is also part of that which actually just like future seems to exist and people who are very practical and say what are you talking about of course it exists this morning I had breakfast it's still in my stomach and so they don't look more closely to see that when they had breakfast it wasn't the past and the breakfast that's still in their stomach is here now time seems to exist and seems to dominate everybody's life we cannot deny that there's something there that looks like time that not only you need it to complete things, to acquire this or that to learn this or that it's fine in itself that's not problematic but of course time has another more unpleasant face because it's like the criminal who leaves behind dead bodies and you can never catch the criminal because time you can never say there's time time eventually kills you kills the body but well, before it does that the body gets old look at a photo of yourself 30 years ago if you're old enough and then hold it up and look in the mirror and then you see something happened here or you might say as my father did when he was 80 years old, he said the quality of mirror seems to have deteriorated so like a criminal leaving behind evidence everywhere in the form of dead bodies but you can never say there it is you can only assume that there is such a thing as time because it kills everybody in the end and yet you never experience time what you experience is now it's not time, it's just all you can ever experience know is this it's now it's never not now so we have a little apparent contradiction nobody can deny that on a certain level time or something that we call time must exist on the other hand you can never directly experience time you can even look at your watch and look at the thing the hands moving but it's always now and so what then is time, it's a thought it's what the mind does to explain change so really past and future are thought forms they are part of the structure of the human mind and so the more time dominates your life the more identified you are with thought because time is and thought go together so is there a dimension of consciousness in you in which time becomes unimportant is there a dimension of consciousness in you that we could call timeless yes and that's why we are here this is not something to believe in because if you believe that there is such a thing as the timeless dimension of consciousness that's only another thought you could even have a church and say the church of the timeless if you can't experience it build a church so here we are the entire talk here we are pointing towards something that is within you I really I talk a lot give talks everywhere the words differ, no talk is quite the same as another talk and yet it's always about one thing that's why I usually 5 minutes before the talk I ask what's the title of my talk in fact I don't remember what the title is it's always sometimes the title helps to get people it attracts, the mind becomes interested and once you're here then the mind got you here then perhaps something else is possible and the mind has no part in that and this is an important point as you sit here this gathering here is not something that is very attractive to the thinker the thinking mind in you because it's not stimulating enough it's not the thinker is not being given enough food for thinking in fact I'm taking away food for thought and so if you are here only as this thinking entity you very quickly become restless and you start to look to the next moment which is a thought and the thinker says ok why is he saying it again he's already said there's only the present moment why is he saying it again, I know that or as somebody said when I was still writing The Power of Now I talked to a young man in a cafe and he said I'm writing about the present he asked what are you writing about about the present moment he said nobody is interested in that anymore that's been done already think of something else the 55 steps to enlightenment now the mind would be happy with that because it's being given time and so I said oh that's great now I know exactly what I need to do in the next 55 years and when I get to the end then I'll be ok so we are using words here but the words are not there to feed the mind or even to explain the universe they are only here as pointers towards something that is beyond the words and that is the essence of this gathering it's not in the words the words themselves are never totally true when they refer to the deepest dimension within you they only point so don't attach yourself to any word and say I don't quite agree with the way you put it it doesn't matter it's just a little signpost you wouldn't look at a signpost that says whatever Rome this way and you say I don't quite like how they wrote the letter R it doesn't look right and it doesn't I don't like it and then you start thinking about it walk, just look at it and then go so it's letting go of attachment to the words the words are only little signposts there is something else here that is more important than the words and that is an energy field that is also in the words but it's also beyond the words and this you cannot analyze you cannot acquire it as knowledge you are not being given knowledge it's not nothing to do with knowledge in fact we can almost say although I don't want to frighten the minds we can almost say it's going beyond knowledge where you have the feeling I know which is all based on thinking thinking happens on the surface it's like a wave movement of ripples continuously changes now most people are so identified with this wave movement or ripple movement that they live up there in that reality they not only live there they try to derive their sense of who they are their identity from the movement of thinking from their memories from their personal history accumulated all consisting their entire personal history consists of thoughts and then you bundle them together the bundle is you could say that's your name that holds all this bundle together and that's me my personal history but the unconscious mind does not see it as my personal history it sees it as that's me me and my story the me who is not quite hasn't in many many cases unless something else has happened you've gone deeper the me based on personal history the identity based on personal history is not happy for long it lives in a state of restlessness of discontent of not in feeling of not enough yet something is missing here I don't know what it is but something is missing that's why I'm always looking to the next moment hoping that to be able to find that something that's missing here some people seem to know what they think is missing they think what's missing is I don't want to be on a bike anymore I want the big car, that's what's missing I want the relationship that fulfills me that's what's missing so some people know exactly or think they know what's missing I want recognition from other people that's what's missing I want my parents to tell me that I'm good enough that's what's missing and so you can have lots of further stories that tell you why the story of me has important bits missing and then this is partly why there's always the next moment is more important than the now because the mind hopes to find what's missing in me the story of me in the next moment or the one after so there's the search there's something missing here a sense of incompleteness and in some cases there's maybe a very unhappy identity many people have a mixed identity happy one day unhappy the next one day is oh everything is great and then a little thing happens somebody says something or something goes wrong or what's the point of it or or a mood comes can't be bothered anymore with anything leave me alone and others are continuously in a state of unhappiness they don't even know it anymore because if you're continuously unhappy you don't even know that you're unhappy it's just normal and you sometimes see it in people's faces always they're not at home within themselves they're always out there trying to get into some other place and every situation is immediately judged and found wanting something not right here sometimes people who are possessed by and there are many in the population most of them don't find their way to this talk but occasionally one or two stumble somehow accidentally into a talk and then after 10-15 minutes you hear somebody noisily stomping out of the room muttering to them this isn't what I was looking for this isn't this isn't I had other expectations that wasn't it they always have other expectations and reality never meets their expectations it's a dreadful state to be in and quite normal so there's the that's the my personal history the unfulfilled me looking to fulfill itself in the future because my past wasn't really that great things happened in there that shouldn't have happened this should never have happened but it did this shouldn't be happening here, this person shouldn't be here in front of me it's all wrong it's all wrong completely out of alignment with life here you have the little thinking entity totally out of alignment with life which is here and now simple, very simple life is always can only be encountered here and now and the dysfunctional mind is elsewhere looking for life where it cannot be found because it's looking for life through thinking which is all that time is past and future looking for yourself or the completion of yourself through thinking that is the dysfunctional state and then not only that the personal history based unhappy discontent little me has other ways in which it attempts to strengthen its fictitious sense of self it identifies with all kinds of things with whole structures of thinking, ideologies others identify with possessions or you identify with some belief structure and then that explains everything in the universe and you immediately have the answer it could be political, it could be religion as an ideology the depths of religion I'm not saying religion the entire religion is ideology but the way for many people religion, they don't know it is a mind made system of thought they haven't gone deeper into it it has degenerated into ideology although at the beginning of religion usually there is something else so it looks it identifies with this and that it it says I want happiness and peace but it can't stand if there is a period of time when there is no conflict it gets very restless partners living together, we are not fighting we haven't been fighting for two weeks we don't have a relationship anymore it needs conflict because that's one of the pseudo ways of feeling alive if I'm involved in drama at least for a moment I feel I get a kind of secondary substitute sense of aliveness I'm alive I'm suffering, I'm alive so the ego, which is another word we could call that entity, the mind made self that entity looks for okay, where can I find some more conflict because it defines itself it says there is the that's me this is me and there is the rest of the universe me and the world total sense of separation and of course the most interesting thing is me and all the rest is just secondary characters in that drama of me and you look at every, whoever comes into your field of vision, how does this person fit into this drama of me how can I, or is this person perhaps a threat to the story of me and myself is it, is this person okay, then you get this person I can incorporate into me, and this person I have to keep away, and so once you have a me, you have the other the other and the ego, the more deeply entrenched the ego is, the more you're identified with the stream of continuous thinking, which is how the ego keeps itself going the more strongly you feel the otherness of the other and then every other person is alien somehow and you look what does he want what's her motivation what's when it gets a little bit more pronounced then you recognize it as a mental illness called paranoia, but every ego has that need to emphasize the strangeness and the otherness of the other human being and that's then you live in a dreadful world where you never have true relationship because you are closed you have a conceptual sense of identity and you cannot sense your own aliveness anymore and you cannot sense the aliveness in the other once you are trapped in a conceptual identity in your head, me and my story then you will impose a conceptual identity on everybody else, in other words you have a few judgments about the others and then you tie a bundle around that and then you relate to your judgments of the other person, never encountering the other person who in reality is not other at all so you cannot sense that at a very deep level there is not only a connectedness there is even a oneness of yourself with every so called other, but you don't know that, so then to you it doesn't exist and then if collective because we have been talking about personal egos, then collective egos there is only one thing that is more insane than the personal ego and that is the collective ego the nation when people strongly identify with their nationality or religion can have that function too when it is misused by the ego for its own purposes and so you have the believer and the non-believer, we are the ones who know the truth the only ones, all the others are wrong we are right countries, and then if one country does it to another country you can see the entire population of the other country is conceptualized certain judgments are pronounced and then you cannot sense the aliveness anymore and the connectedness and so the ego then engages in warfare and it feels its own pseudo-identity more strongly the more enemies it has and this has been the history of humanity up to now and the same mindset is still continuing but at the same time, otherwise we wouldn't even be here or I would be sitting here and there would only be one or two people there at the same time there is something else arising that is not of the ego a new state of consciousness now don't get attached to the words I'm saying new it's not really new because it's been there all along inside you let's just call it new or say I saw a second-hand clothes shop and it was called new to you laughter so without getting attached to the words always knowing when I say something that's not quite it but it doesn't matter let's just for the moment say a new consciousness is arising in humanity already in the past you can see already certain people having undergone this realization some of them became spiritual teachers and they helped a few people but on the whole the mind was unable of course to understand this so it used it for its own purposes the teachings of transformation when the simple messages for example don't look for the kingdom of heaven you can't say the kingdom of heaven does not arrive with signs to be observed literally it says that you can't say ah there, oh look here it is many things were already said which are quite obvious but the thinking mind immediately got in there and made it into some belief structure so we have the insane ego and at the same this continuing which you can see it reflected you see it reflected in world history 20th century the height of insanity and of unbelievable madness and that still continues if you want to see the reflection of the human collective ego see it by reading the newspaper and watching the news tonight and then you say oh yes this is mad, yes it's mad I can see it's mad so it's good we've been talking about these things because it is good to recognize madness as madness because the madman and there is nothing personal in this madness it's something that is collective if a mad person recognizes his or her madness then he or she is no longer completely mad because the truly mad person has no idea they are mad that's why they are mad but if you know there is something that says oh this is truly mad the way I am thinking look at my thoughts for one hour I've been lying in bed between 4 and 5 in the morning and thinking about my problems this is mad this is mad so there is the ability arises to be aware of what your mind is doing and that is the beginning of sanity or rather the arising of a deeper dimension of consciousness that has nothing to do with the conditioned stream of thinking and this is the, let's just put it like this for a moment, the new state of consciousness that is arising in large numbers of humans on the planet now for the first time in large numbers not the majority of the population of course how many I don't know my intuitive answer which I gave the other day when somebody interviewed me and said well tell me how many people are actually awakening laughter I don't know how many laughter I'm in a peculiar position it seems to me that almost everybody is awakening and I need to switch on CNN or some other station to realize no not everybody is awakening yet but for some reason intuitively I said I don't know how many I guess it's about 10% in the western world, the rest I don't know but the western world and some of the eastern world it's about 10% and I have this is not arrived at through any research I don't do research laughter just an intuition of that's about right and now I'm not saying that 10% are already completely disidentified from their thinking mind and are already 100% aligned with the deeper presence that's a word we could use to describe the consciousness that is deeper than the stream of thinking no there are many who are now undergoing this process of a gradual disidentification of now we have to be careful with language because when we talk about these things using language which basically is about objects where language works ok say the chair is here and I am sitting on the chair ok that's not problematic but when we talk about something that is beyond the physical realm the language is no longer adequate knowing that it's not adequate we can continue to use it if we believe that I'm actually saying the actual truth is not in the words if you think it's in the words then you're lost in the mind again so the awakening process is a gradual disidentification from the stream of thinking where you become aware for example that there is thinking in your mind it can begin with and I'm not talking to people who have no idea what I'm talking about many many of you if not all are already going through the awakening process how do I know that because you're still sitting there you would have walked out or maybe one or two have such willpower that they're forcing themselves not to walk out I mustn't walk out because then everybody would think I'm not awakening another thing way of not being here is to always continuously look around and say I wonder if he's awake or he surely is not awake, can't be awake a gradual disidentification where you're able to see what your mind is doing for many people it begins with becoming aware of repetitive and dysfunctional negative thoughts that they have every day or recurring thoughts have had them for years thoughts that have made them miserable created dreadful suffering and misery because they didn't know that they were just thoughts they were so identified with the thought there was no space so the thought was considered to be absolute reality sometimes it may be early conditioning from childhood certain negative thought patterns if your mother or your father were unconscious they probably gave you many negative thought patterns some children are taught some parents tell their children you are stupid can you imagine that? when a child drops something for four year old, the mother or father says you are so stupid why did you do that?

now of course it's usually stupid parents who do that and then, this is just one simple example there is a mind pattern in the child, it's the mother or father's voice, it says you are no good, you never amount to anything I'm using one simple example one could write volumes of books about ways in which the human mind gets conditioned at an early age and then the conditioning remains in the mind as repetitive thoughts, sometimes triggered by certain situations, they may not be there continuously, only certain situations will bring them up again, and then you suffer the emotion that you feel when you think that thought is very painful but you are not present, you are identified then completely with the arising thought, you and the thought are one, you are the thought to you the thought is the reality and the beginning of awakening for many people is the ability to see these are the kinds of thoughts that habitually I tend to think, or rather that habitually tend to arise in my mind and then you suddenly realise it's a thought no more than that and you begin to no longer believe in every thought that comes every judgement every interpretation about yourself, what you are telling yourself about your life now in some cases you may be telling yourself good things, some people have thought structures in their mind where they have an exaggerated opinion of themselves they are telling themselves that they are a great unrecognised genius far superior to anybody they've ever met and nobody recognises them because they are all too stupid to recognise them this actually is not uncommon in some people, and again, totally deriving your sense of self from a fictitious mental structure now in some cases you can recognise it as complete fiction but it's always a story, no more even if some people confirm to you yes your story is right if you say the example I gave in a book if you say this skyscraper I own it it's mine now this may be true or not true if it's not true then the difference is between it being true and not true is that nobody agrees with you if you say this skyscraper is mine and they say no it's not, then they call you you need a psychiatrist or you're a compulsive liar in order to enhance the way in which other people see you not knowing that everybody realises that you are a compulsive liar you continue to lie compulsively, hoping that other people will think highly of you, and then you absorb their thoughts and make them yours and say, no I'm finally somebody, I want to be somebody, and that's why I'm saying I own this skyscraper perhaps deep down I know that I don't own it and then the other story is perhaps you do own it and then people say, yes you are wealthy papers have been signed but it's still a story now everybody agrees with the story but if you derive your identity from that it very quickly leaves you in a state of dissatisfaction, even if you own many towers it's all to do with the movement deriving your sense of who you are from mind movement so you realise certain habitual thoughts, ok when you are no longer identified the thoughts gradually lose their power over you and then you stop telling yourself who you think you are because you realise this story, yes you don't need to forget your past but that is not who I am, so the retelling of things from your past in order to keep up your identity doesn't happen then anymore and more and more as the disidentification happens between, now what actually is happening here when we say you begin to disidentify from thought ok first the thought came in and said, I am such and such a person, I'm the greatest or I'm no good doesn't matter which I'm no good at anything or I'm better than anybody else makes no difference what you think there and then suddenly you realise that as a thought, a thought, a comparative thought you compare yourself when you can see a thought, who are you you're not the thought anymore, you're the presence behind the thought the presence behind the thought is not thinking, it just is aware of the thought, it's like a mirror or a light that shines on the thought so to speak, just words a light that shines on the thought and that is you are now present you are now present and within the presence there may still be certain mind activity but it's not you're not in present in it anymore, it's not overpowering you anymore, it's no longer the self in it, the sense of self is then no longer in the movement of thought which means your entire personal history is not really relevant to the sense of who you are yes, you still remember what happened in the year so and so such and such, what he said he did, my ex-wife my ex this, he did this did that, but you no longer believe in the story he did, he did to me I'll never forgive him for dreadful things he did to me, that's a story you recognize it as a story and you recognize the addiction behind it because it keeps the ego going and you become something that is deeper than the movement of thought it's not that you become it you realize that has always been there but it was totally one could say covered up or better way of putting it is thought had been absorbing your entire attention into itself, your entire consciousness is always immediately consumed by thinking every thought dominated your mind completely when it came like a voracious animal the mind absorbed your entire consciousness and the mind is extremely voracious and then suddenly the consciousness that you are separates itself from the form of thinking now every thought is like a little entity every thought that arises is an energy form and so you were completely identified with the arising forms of thinking identified in with form even a car that people, many people identified with their car or their home or their job or their position in society, these are physical forms every physical form has an equivalent in the mind as a mind form it's not so much the external car besides we don't even know if there is such a thing as an external car, all we know is what's in the mind so this could all be a dream but that's fine, it is a kind of dream you disidentify from form so before your entire sense of self was trapped in one form or another always to do with thought form ultimately because even the car becomes a thought form this is my Rolls Royce or whatever my position my knowledge consisting of lots of accumulated thought forms this is my knowledge my this, my that and then something separates and there is just a sense of pure presence and this is the access point this is the present moment into that state of consciousness and the present moment is also the exit point out of the dysfunctional state of consciousness which lives and thrives on time and of course identification with thinking so the present moment is the way out of the egoic pseudo self and it is the way into that dimension where you recognize yourself as simply a timeless presence and the ability then arises in you to be conscious without having to think all the time you can look at something and be the conscious presence the spacious this is another very helpful word as a pointer you become the space for the perception for example, here the room you are perceiving through sense perception the voice of the speaker the colors the stage, the periphery of your conscious attention the room, the totality of the room, you feel your body on the chair this is all what is being perceived at this moment and it does not need to be judged or interpreted it just is as it is and you are the space for it you are the space for whatever is at this moment, internally or externally for whatever arises you are the consciousness the space for that you are the light, another way of putting it you are the light in which these things arise but you don't have a form, this is why we call it space so in essence your identity, your true then this is where your sense of everybody has a sense of a deep sense of I is somewhere, there is an identity somewhere where you feel there is something very precious in here, somewhere and you can feel that now with people who are identified with the mind this precious beingness, let's put it like that, this precious feeling of simple aliveness of beingness gets mixed up in form, it gets mixed up with a story, this is the story of me, and then the beingness in one way of putting it gets diluted because it flows into every thought form, there is a self in every thought and then you can only perceive yourself through a form you think this is me, this is me this story is me, this opinion I have of myself is me what other people tell me about myself is me, other people's opinion of me is me there is always identification with form and if you the separation happens here of form and something that is deeper than form and that is the essence of who you are in its pure I am-ness its pure beingness, where you can no longer say I am this I am that where you immediately sense as you sit here it sense the presence that is the essence of who you are yes, a personal history still exists within that space, but you are not that, you are the space, you are the presence you are the consciousness that is timeless and formless and whenever the mind subsides and there is a suddenly there is a space and you haven't gone to sleep you are awake there is an alertness in that space there is a stillness stillness is inseparable from that stillness is to be alert to be awake but not thinking so you encounter increasingly in the dimension of inner space so we have the two dimensions you can see the two dimensions of the world when you look into space at night when the sky is clear well there are probably too many lights in the city here, you have to go out of the city to see the stars when it's clear, what do you see? you see basically when you look up into the night sky, you see stars and space that's basically what you see in other words you see things and no thingness all things existing in the space the vastness of no thingness of the space itself, I'm using that analogy to describe a reality within yourself now, most humans in their normal dysfunctional state have forgotten no longer know the dimension within them that is formless they don't know themselves as the underlying presence they only know themselves as the form the continuously changing form and therefore the form that never satisfies for long the form that always leads to unease of not enough it fluctuates, all the forms continuously thoughts, objects all forms continuously change so when your entire sense of who you are is bound up with form your life is not satisfying, it cannot be it's frustrating there's always some fear there's hope, there's fear there's dissatisfaction there's unhappiness, frustration anxiety there's something missing yes, but what's missing you can never find it where you're looking for it because when you look for what's missing in the future you're looking to some form that you want to find and say, ah, this is what was missing, so this is the object consciousness which is the thinking mind the object consciousness looks for objects so people's minds are full of stuff things, thoughts, forms so they look for the one form that is finally going to make me happy, and they look for it as if you could look at it like this and find it, where is it where is it in the next moment, it's not here so it must be in the next moment so the not realizing that all along what you really had been looking for that deep sense of rootedness of being one with life of deep inner peace but aliveness at the same time not peace that has gone to sleep the peace that you have when you drink a few whiskeys and the mind starts to slow down because it's not clear anymore and of course even that is a little bit of a relief from the torture the daily torture of your normal mind and you feel a little bit that's why people drink because it makes them feel a little better because you can't think that much anymore but you're moving towards sleep or unconsciousness you're moving towards yes, you will drop off your chair and then you will be at peace, but totally unconscious we're moving in the other direction we're going beyond thinking you're not falling below thinking we're rising above thinking where there is the same connectedness with being that this is what everything natural lives in that natural state of connectedness with being because nothing in nature on our planet inhabits a world of problems only humans nature is aligned with life it lives and then it surrenders its form and it doesn't make a problem out of it, it lives beautifully and then it dies beautifully or surrendered it is surrendered to life so even your dog, if you're not awakening yet your dog will be more closely connected with being than you, because the dog is still in the natural state and that you can easily see that because you have problems and your dog doesn't and while your happy moments are rare, your dog celebrates life continuously you just watch the tail some dogs you just look at them just a little look is enough and their tail goes life is good, life is good and they are not telling themselves a story why life is good it's a direct realization now this is a natural state we lost that so we can't go back to the natural state, we go when we regain the lost state of connectedness with being we enter what word shall we use if it's not the natural state it's the transcendent state for humans they transcend the madness they transcend the identification with form they transcend the egoic consciousness and then you meet your dog in the same place but you've gone deeper because you lost it and found it again but you meet the dog in being and you not only meet the dog you meet everything and everyone from that place of formless presence where anything your mind can tell you about yourself is really not very important anymore and anything your mind can tell you about another person although it still will occasionally tell you things is not that important anymore there is something that is deeper more fundamental infinitely more alive than the movement of thinking which is fine for all practical things no problem but beyond that it's insane so use the mind for all practical things it's wonderful you cannot find yourself through it and you cannot recognize another human being through it you can only recognize yourself and the so called other when you are rooted in the formless dimension as knowing yourself as the simple presence or space for what is what is is always whatever form this moment takes and this moment always appears in front of you and it assumes a certain form a room with people in it and then you walk away and suddenly this moment assumes a different form a street with cars and you are here you are the space for this there you are the space for that and it's continuously the present moment only what appears in it changes so if it is continuously the present moment what does that mean?

it means in its depths the present moment is one with the space that is consciousness itself and that is who you are beyond time beyond form not that you don't have a body anymore or a memory that still exists but something much more vital is now recognized in your life and then what the ego in its madness has been looking for for years and years or lifetimes if you like has been looking for has been hiding all along there where the ego was never looking and it's called the present moment what an irony what an irony it's been here all along but I didn't know it that's why I use the analogy somewhere of a beggar sitting on a box saying can you spare a dime, spare a dime and then until one man says have a look what's in this box you are sitting on oh it's full of gold but you never looked here you always looked there little scraps I need this now I feel more fulfilled now I know who I am because I bought this shirt because they told me if you want to be an individualist buy this shirt then a million people run to the shop buy the shirt and then they put it on now I know who I am but it doesn't last for very long it lasts for half an hour and then you need something else to tell you who you are in some form of other so to have continuous access to that dimension where you are yourself that which is the fullness of life as Jesus called it I want you to have life and I want you to have abundant life is one translation of what he said or he said I want you to have life and I want you to have the fullness of it fullness does not mean lots of things you can have lots of things or not many things, it's irrelevant I'm not saying get rid of your things if you want lots of things it's fine if you look for yourself in the lots of things it's frustrating and it's suffering the fullness of life is already here for everything else you need time for everything else and that's not a problem for everything else you need time but for being yourself for encountering life beyond form you don't need time in fact time is the one obstacle it is here and now and to have continuous access to it you need to come to a relationship with the present moment that is friendly and the ego of course can't do that you need to see that this is all there ever is so I might as well make friends with the present moment because there's never anything else so if you're not friendly with the present moment in whatever form that means you are hostile towards life because life is always now if your basic state of consciousness is hostility towards now or reducing the now to a means to an end this moment is only important because it enables me to get to the next moment what do you do then if this is normal the present moment at best is a stepping stone that enables you to get to the next moment that's how the mind works what do you do then with human beings because a human being can only come to you in the present moment you will reduce everyone also to a means to an end and this is how the ego relates to other humans it reduces other humans to means to an end it wants to use them for its purposes and so relationships are dysfunctional because one ego wants to use the other ego it's dysfunctional can you embrace the now the now no matter what form it takes and say well I might as well be friendly with this because this is all there ever is, it's called life at the moment you say ok this moment is life even if I go out and get drenched in the rain if it rains and I can't find a taxi and then somebody something else happens, but it's life this moment is life in form and if you accept that, you're aligned internally, you're not saying I don't agree with this moment as it is it really should not be like this at all, if I were in control this moment would be different so completely out of alignment is the ego with now you enter into alignment with now, you say this is as it is and then immediately something opens up that is deeper than the form of this moment and that's the inner space, by accepting the form of this moment you become what you already were before, what you already are timelessly, the space for this moment, so then the dimension of space opens up and you feel there's something here that is actually not affected by whatever happens to be happening here or even here in the head as thought, or in the body as an emotion, there is something vaster, far deeper than anything that could happen in the world of form but you can only live permanently in touch with that if you don't make the world of form into some kind of enemy, obstacle or reduce it to something undesirable so you have to become friendly with the world of form in the present moment to have access to that which is beyond form and there is that is who you are beyond your personal history the eternal presence the eternal timeless space for the world and then you can for the first time really enjoy the world you can walk around New York and see wow, look at all that movement people running around cars, and you're not you're just looking, you're the space for it and everything is astonishing you just look like a little child because you're not interpreting, you just enjoy the movement of form because you're connecting with something deeper that's form and then you are at peace, whereas everybody else is running around and you say wow, this is good life is good and action can arise out of that also if action is needed it comes out of that vaster, unconditioned space because that space is also through intelligence the mind is a tiny aspect of the vast intelligence that is really formless non-conceptual intelligence nothing to do with what you acquired in the past that's where wisdom arises that's where realization arises that's where insights arise in out of that space the space of yourself the space of now and that's the secret of human life and that's the liberation from being trapped in the world being trapped in your mind being trapped in time which doesn't mean the world and your mind and the time won't go on they have their place too and yet you are beyond and you can participate and be beyond and participate if you don't want to participate it's fine too, you can sit under a tree but I would recommend that you go to India for that because then people will feed you because you immediately become a holy man or woman here they will take you away so continue to participate in life thank you welcome it seems that we are going to be here together for three hours except for those who leave early it seems a long time when the only subject matter of our gathering is the now and the only real topic that we speak about is the now and if you are not fully in the now as you sit here the three hours may seem a long time if you are not fully in the now as you sit here which is the normal state the normal state is not to be in the now you are already becoming impatient at this moment ultimately what that means is not that you cannot stand the speaker because he is not interesting enough but you can't really stand being with yourself for that long but this gathering the purpose of it is to help you in your ability to be present so if you are not yet fully present now and thinking about tonight's dinner or that you would rather be somewhere else or about something that happened this morning or twenty years ago that's okay I'm inviting you to be here, present at this moment as if there were no past and future just pretend for one moment that there is no past and future if the past is here the future is here you go and don't move away with your attention your conscious attention from this moment and whatever appears in this moment sense perceptions the room visual sense perceptions seeing auditory hearing the voice background noises feeling perception the body on the chair breathing and perhaps even the inner aliveness that is in your body the cells are alive you may be able to feel that in a very subtle way this is what appears in this moment and to know it you don't need to label it just look at it let it be allow this moment to be as it is and if there is impatience with what we are doing which is the mind saying give me something to think about and it's not getting very much to think about if there is impatience allow that to be, observe it there it is that movement in this moment so in addition to those things that make up this moment outer and inner is there anything else that perhaps we may have overlooked overlooked yes there is a presence in which those perceptions appear are perceived that is you a field of aware presence the field of attention there is enormous energy in that field and if you could sense that in the background of your life always but it is not a requirement the requirement now is just this moment because it is always only this moment and if you could sense in the background the presence that you are you are putting this whole puzzle together the floating atoms and molecules become a world but they wouldn't become a world without you the conscious presence that you are so you are the light that illuminates the world that makes it possible so to sense to be able to sense in the background of your life which is always this moment to be able to sense in the background of the now your own presence and you cannot grasp it because it has no form it is formless and then it may start with feeling the aliveness in the inner body that's part of the presence that you are a field of awareness and then there is the world there is the outer world and there is the inner world of thoughts, occasional thoughts of feelings, emotions physical sensations and then when you go about your life there are experiences things happen all the time good, bad continuous flux of things happening and this is why people say there are so many moments in every day that's not true there is only ever this moment but it takes on form that changes the form that it takes changes continuously nothing lasts for long every form that this moment takes is fleeting this morning is gone already you were having breakfast where is that moment? gone you walking through the door here, that's gone your whole childhood distant memory and even our gathering seems very real at the moment and yet very shortly it will be dissolved then there remains a memory except for one thing there is something deeper here we are here to touch a deeper dimension that does not come and go in yourself and that deeper dimension is inseparable from the present moment it is one with the present moment so in essence one could say although it sounds a little strange that you are the present moment you are the now the field of now the space of now and you can sense that as your own presence as you sit here allowing this moment to be as it is and feeling that which cannot really even be named or grasped in the background of your life your consciousness you could call it and that's just another word again a little pointer knowing yourself as that is an intense aliveness in you when you touch that and you thought perhaps that all that you wear or all that you are is confined to your personal history what a dreadful limitation of the depths of who you are to believe that who you are can be defined through your personal history those that little story of me the unfulfilling and unfulfilled story of me hoping that one day it will fulfill itself and I will find the completion of myself the fullness of myself that I'm looking for in the future hoping to get what I think I need to add to myself to make myself full complete, alive fully alive missing continuously the aliveness that is already in you it's almost a joke how humans live how they look for something where it can never be found how they look for themselves the fullness of who they are the completion of their sense of self how they look for that in the future in some next moment and how compulsively they are driven to seek always the next moment and how compulsively they ignore and even actively resist this moment that is the door that's always open not realizing that future has no reality except as a thought in your head that it can never come that it can never fulfill you you can never find yourself in it because it's only a mental concept when it comes the future is the now and then again there's the next moment where I'm hoping to get to now this is not the normal way to live most humans live predominantly for the next moment or the one after that and that compulsion is deep seated the denial of the now which ultimately is the denial of life itself and the denial of your own reality is deep seated in every human being because inherited collective conditioning and it can reappear at any moment even while you're sitting here it can reappear and if you looked at somebody at that moment of transition from being present to being lost in future which is lost in thought then you would notice an absence replacing the presence and you can see it in people's eyes and in their expression it goes like this presence is beautiful alive and then a thought comes in and it draws attention consciousness to itself it sucks up consciousness and then you notice the aliveness and the power that you could see in the eyes consciousness is disappearing and it goes you're gone now most people are gone all the time they go through their entire life with perhaps a few rare moments of presence they go through their entire life being absent from the present moment, the only thing there ever is and of course also that implies being absent from themselves and who are they? who is taking the place of the beautiful alive powerful being that potentially they are who is pretending to be you a little mind made entity called me and my story the story that has not fulfilled itself yet but is hoping to fulfill itself at some point in the future that's why I'm always looking there and when you're looking to future you are immersed in your mind the noise machine in the head is acting so one could almost say that almost everybody is possessed not in a spooky way but one could almost say everybody is possessed by their mind which is the continuous movement of thought out of which has crystallized a thought made entity that consists of all kinds of identifications my past things that happened to me my possessions my this my that or it could also be in part a collective sense of identity equally thought made that is even more restless and unhappy and destructive ultimately than the personal egoic identity the us the tribe the nation our little group our race our political party or position so most humans go through life mistaking the mind made entity that lives for the next moment because it's never fulfilled in this moment and the past wasn't all that great either it wasn't supposed to happen so many things in the story of me were not supposed to happen and usually this moment most of the time isn't the greatest place either, it's not supposed to happen either, I want something else but not this I want that not this but unfortunately this cannot be denied because it is it is something you can't really argue with and if you do, you're insane the form that this moment takes is already as it is but for most humans, there is the gap between I want and what is they are not aligned so humans are continuously out of alignment with the suchness the isness of now internally out of alignment an unpleasant place to be especially if you are there for most of your life now in nature nature is so beautiful because things are aligned with now plant life animals, they are just present of course every form has its own limitations animals too have their limitations and in some ways greater limitations than humans and yet compared to most humans the whole world of nature looks very sane whereas the human world looks to a large extent quite insane which means mad so to be out of alignment with the isness of this moment is the normal state of the mind made egoic self how do we become free of that?

the first the most important step is being taken already at this moment which is to see this if you see that you are out of alignment or have been out of alignment with now something arises in you that which makes that seeing possible is not part of the egoic structure it's presence it's only through being present that you can see the conditioned patterns in your own life and only by remaining present and continuing to look can you avoid making the seeing of these conditioned patterns in yourself into a personal problem that you need to solve at some point in the future the fallacy on the spiritual path of hoping striving to achieve an imagined state of consciousness in the future yes, but I'm not there now, so what else can I look for except in the future who is speaking? the mind the ego telling you the only way you can get there is in the future, that's the only place where you can find yourself now am I asking you to forget your personal past? no there's no need to forget your personal past or to forget what you have learned, your personal history but if that gives you your sense of identity that limits your life enormously so remember your personal history, of course it's fine but don't look to it for yourself a sense of self that can only come out of the aliveness of this moment present now you need to bring present moment awareness into your everyday life otherwise you walk out of here yes, you will have received an enormous boost of presence in this collective energy field most of you except those few who are totally close to it and are sitting there at this moment thinking what the hell is he talking about as you sit here most of you are absorbing as part of the collective field which can be quite powerful when people together enter the state of presence it intensifies it so it can be very helpful and yet as you walk away from here the momentum of the conditioning the old conditioning in your mind will attempt to reassert itself quickly at the latest it will come when the first little challenge comes into your life where the present moment isn't as it should be there's a traffic jam or something falls or somebody says something that they shouldn't have said and you feel you have reason to complain again what are you complaining about? well somebody did something of the situation that should you're complaining about the now which the egoic entity loves to do because it strengthens itself through every little internal you don't have to complain out loud it's enough to complain in your head which for some people is 80% of their mind activity and they go through life unconsciously looking for the next thing to complain about let's hope they don't find you because they find you very soon they will find something in you to complain about and to feel personally offended and in that the ego in it's imaginary sense of self feels stronger for a moment like a little balloon the complaining entity gets a little bigger and you feel I'm more fully myself now because I'm complaining about something and again it's unconscious and another unconscious aspect of this is that for that moment the ego feels superior to the person or the situation that it is complaining about that's another fantasy of course an imagined superiority because when you can complain about a situation or a person what he said and what he did and what they did and shouldn't have done and whatever it could even be the weather why don't the government do something about the weather it's a little exaggeration but it's almost like that some people continuously have arguments with God this isn't right how can you do such and some people angrily deny the existence of God because surely this moment would be different if I were in charge so there is an imagined superiority when you complain about something because you feel superior to what you complain about you're morally superior now and you're very right and somebody else is wrong oh that's great that makes me feel much bigger says the ego the ego loves to be right now to be right unfortunately somebody else has to be wrong so as you walk away from here you may notice habitual reactions coming back habitual thought patterns and reactive patterns and you may then suddenly you lose the now just as I demonstrated before you go from alive to half dead when you meet a person like that you know they are not really there they are in their thoughts but in most of you there is enough presence to notice very quickly when an old pattern conditioned pattern comes back a reaction, a reactive pattern comes back and after a short while you see it for what it is so you are no longer totally in it, the moment you notice, you see you are aware of an old pattern in you, you are no longer trapped in it the awareness frees you from it you become present again and you have a choice then you choose to be in this moment instead of complaining about the traffic jam or whatever the situation is or the the bad food that you are given in the restaurant am I saying that whatever happens to you, you are to say yes to only internally not necessarily externally why should you accept a fish that's gone off, if you are ordering fish it doesn't smell good anymore and it costs 20 euros on the menu so some people misunderstand this teaching and think okay I have to say yes to this moment and eat this but that is not the case an inner yes that means you are internally not complaining about the situation, you are accepting that yes, this fish is not really fit to eat you can't eat it anymore that's the reality and then you tell the waiter can you take this back please it doesn't smell good bring me some fresh fish if you have some that's not complaining that's rectifying the situation but you are not personalizing it you are not using the situation to blow yourself up as the ego how dare you serve me this me to me and that usually produces a corresponding egoic reaction in the other person and the waiter says what do you mean, nobody else has complained about the fish that we serve here and that one typical human situation so very well it is possible that quite often the situation may require a firm no I am not eating this and yet do you notice a difference between the complaining no that feels personally offended and a clear no this is not what I want please take it back internally there is still an acceptance of the fact that this fish you don't want to eat and you should take it back that's fine so it is as I mentioned briefly in the power of now you may remember it is a high quality no and high quality no's are fine they are often required in life now if you were stranded in some place and there is no food and the only food there is is this fish that doesn't smell good you may have to eat it and then you say somebody gives it to you and nobody else is giving you any food and it is the only food there is in that place then you would there would be the internal and external saying yeah ok I will eat this because there is nothing else to eat that's fine so at times you go along with the situation at other times you may have to say no and yet without the egoic involvement in the no that makes somebody wrong and makes yourself right then life unfolds with much greater ease you are less likely to fuel the unconsciousness in others if you are conscious if you are not there as an egoic entity needing to be bigger so you are less likely and so your state always transmits itself to others whoever you come into contact with your state of consciousness transmits itself to others and the more unconscious they are, the less presence there is in them the more they will react and reflect back to you your state of consciousness in order not to compulsively reflect back to people their state of consciousness there needs to be great alertness and presence in you and so let's reverse the situation in the restaurant you are the waiter and the customer says how dare you serve me this bad fish if you are present this is the isness of this moment an angry customer wanting to be right and wanting you to be wrong and you see that you see it without needing to label it you see there's the human ego and it does what it always does that's all there's not even a person there it's just the human ego operating through this being there's a being underneath but it's asleep there's a beautiful being underneath but it's and the ego is talking and some there are I've met some waiters observed some waiters the way they deal with their customers is beautiful there are some waiters who are like spiritual teachers and they go oh I'll see what I can do I'll certainly I'll take it back to the kitchen and if we have some fresh fish he will bring it to you and then the person that wanted an ego boost from that situation will feel a little uncomfortable because of the lack of reaction it's not getting the desired ego boost and it might make another attempt and add something and say something else I thought this was supposed to be a good restaurant I'm going to write to the papers about this and again the conscious waiter says doesn't reply react I'll see what I can do and then either comes back and says we have no more fish or bring something fresh so you will be confronted continuously in this world with people who want to use you without knowing it to enhance their sense of self and if you then resent that I resent that you want to use me to enhance your sense of self you are personalizing something that looks personal but isn't personal at all because the ego is a collective entity there's nothing personal in it, it is a form of unconsciousness that many humans in their current evolutionary stage manifest that's all nobody there, just a form of unconsciousness so you meet these people and that doesn't make you superior because the moment you feel superior you have fallen back into some identification with form as the me, the egoic form without knowing it so if you feel spiritually superior you have another ego the ego has assumed another disguise so as you walk away from here you will encounter many situations where the world often in the form of other humans, most of the time will pull you wanting to pull you back to its own level of consciousness wanting you to participate in the game of feeding egos and using others to feed yours and if there's enough presence in you you can actually choose not to participate anymore in that game you can remain clear as people attempt to pull your get some emotional reaction or mental reaction from you oh ok and you need to turn up the light of consciousness when you're confronted with a challenge when everything is going fine it's consciousness you're present, it's good you look at this beautiful tree the sky, feel the underlying presence that you are it's good and then an unconscious human comes knocking at the window of your car that's standing at the traffic light shouting obscenities you idiot you know what you just did no you my, whatever it is it may be totally imaginary he needs an outlet for his emotion that he's been carrying for three or four hours and he's chosen you and at that moment not to be drawn into a reaction at that moment is a critical moment either you will be pulled into his unconsciousness or you will stay present more intensely present than a moment ago when you were looking at the tree so looking at the tree is like this when you're present and when you're confronted with an unconscious human you have to go you have to look almost like a Zen master not quite as fierce and you have to be in touch with your whole body in that situation you can't just be in the head only if you feel the entire energy field of your body, the inner aliveness that will provide the anchor for staying present and you can feel it, it almost tingles sometimes when you're very much in there with your attention and that anchors you in yourself, your true being and prevents you from losing yourself in some egoic reaction emotional, mental reaction, calling the other person an even greater idiot in order to compensate for the ego loss, because to the ego, when somebody calls you something it's like the ego feels injured in its artificial sense of self, as if somebody had come with a hammer and knocked off part of you when somebody calls you, you idiot it feels to the ego as if somebody had come with a hammer and knocked off part of who you are and the unconscious repair mechanism immediately jumps in and will call the other person something else even worse, so that you can repair your diminished ego for example when somebody insults you the ego feels diminished in its sense of self it then automatically reacts and insults back, if possible even worse and that is the automatic ego repair mechanism expressed beautifully by an ancient teacher when he talked about somebody hitting you on one cheek the normal reaction is and it's totally automatic, there's no nobody says, ok, now I'm going to hit you back, no, you go I'm going to be as unconscious as you are that's of course not formulated, because when unconsciousness is recognized as unconsciousness it's no longer unconscious so the compulsion to repair your ego is very strong, the ego immediately jumps into action but the loss the diminishment of the ego that is experienced is actually an illusion, because the entire egoic structure has no reality so it is also an illusory loss nothing is lost when somebody calls you you incapable fool are you talking to me?

now if ten people within the space of a week in your new job call you incapable there may well be something to look at in your life that is a different matter but more often than not those things are egoic games that people play and so what to the ego feels like a diminishment is not a diminishment at all and you can simply find that out if you allow an apparent diminishment of the ego to be there without reciprocating in any way so that looks like this somebody says you stupid fool and you have to be really present now in your entire body because you are not resisting any kind of resistance or shutting yourself off against the energy of the other person is not the solution it's intense presence you fool and you feel something in you wanting to react you simply allow it because you see the madness of it and that is a very strange thing if you allow what to the ego feels a diminishment just to be there immediately after you may experience a boost of aliveness that comes from underneath the ego so what who you are can suddenly emerge a little bit more and that's almost very strange some people get angry when I talk about these things because oh I should not defend myself in some cases you may have to say certain things in many cases defense is only a reactive mechanism and so this is of course part of the teaching of Jesus also dealt with this to allow the diminishment of the ego and simply be present with it and then you feel there's great power underneath it and there's a stillness in that it is a very still power and that's why Jesus said don't do to people what they do to you don't love your enemies it's a strange way of putting it similar case would be to be wrong in a discussion you have an argument with your partner and suddenly to let go of your mental position that you are clinging to this is how it is and suddenly you let go of the position and are simply present at that moment and you feel much greater aliveness you haven't died when you are wrong or you might even say oh you are right I was completely wrong there you haven't died, you are more alive to the ego being wrong is a kind of death so bringing into everyday life presence what I have said here what I am saying here implies that there is enough presence, power in you so to speak so that you can be there when those things happen you can be there as the witnessing consciousness when the old patterns are happening if you are not there there is nothing you can do no matter how much any teacher can say if you are totally identified there is nothing you can do because you don't even know what you are doing and then there is the pain body that gives an added dimension to the momentum of the ego the pain body as you know is the accumulation of old emotional pain from the past in you all the pain that has not been fully faced and since humans very rarely fully face anything, because that would imply they have to be present in the now there is an accumulation remnants, energetic remnants of past emotional pain suffered especially in your childhood but also afterwards and not only that, that's only the personal aspect of the pain body then it has another aspect and that is the collective aspect of the pain body whatever group of people you live with, the surrounding culture or nation that you live in also will have some influence on how heavy your pain body is, because for most people, a part of their personal pain body is actually the collective pain body of their country or in some cases their race, if the race has suffered a lot as a race so countries have different degrees of pain body you can feel it as a heaviness when you enter a certain country that's in the air everybody walks around looking heaviness in the collective there is also the pain body of humanity because humanity has suffered so much dreadful pain most of which is self inflicted in other words by humans on other humans that is inherited by every human who comes into this world it's probably in the DNA somewhere, if we could decipher all the information that the DNA carries I'm sure we would find there, oh, there's all the pain in that little segment there this is the human pain so the pain body that humans carry is one could say the shadow of the ego because they have lived through in and through ego for so long that so much pain has accumulated because the ego creates always more pain it lives on separation it loves conflict it loves to oppose it is continuously in a state of fear fearful that the little things that I have identified with are going to be taken away from me and fearful that I may not find all the things that I still need to be fully myself so all that continuous fear creates emotion continuous fear thoughts create fear emotions over thousands of years and the actual physical violence inflicted on humans, whether you believe in reincarnation or not, doesn't matter it is inherited pain to a large extent, plus the personal, enough for your own lifetime, there's nobody you could come into this world without suffering pain and so you live with a pain body which is an aspect of the egoic self, and as you probably know, the pain body for most people is sometimes dormant and sometimes active, when it's dormant it's just in the background or you may not notice it at all and all there is, of course is still the ego doing its playing its games but at times the pain body arises needing to feed on the experience of further pain so it works in conjunction with the egoic mind structures it's the emotional field that lives in you as a little entity I saw a nice, this film there's a character in The Lord of the Rings that to me is a beautiful image of the pain body, a little devious being and that is really an image of the human pain body the emotional entity that lives in you and is cunning and knows exactly when the right time has come to move, to rise into your mind and then the emotion, the old emotion in you is looking out through your eyes and that is another thing I've already demonstrated what happens when presence is obscured by identification with thinking, the lifelessness that comes now a somewhat different thing happens when presence is obscured by an arising pain body something different then comes through the eyes and not only through the eyes it emanates, when it's strong it emanates through every pore of your body and people around you if they have a minimum of a minimum of sensitivity even if you did not utter a word and try to smile they could sense the energy that you are emitting at that moment and it would feel heavy, some psychics may even see it visually as dark, dark force coming out of you but let's just talk about the eyes when the pain body rises then this raw painful emotion that is looking through your eyes out into the world and it's looking for some feedback of pain who can give me more pain sometimes it will inflict pain so that it can experience a dramatic painful situation or it may provoke someone or a situation so that I get an emotional feedback so it looks and it's cunning it knows the right moment to come up and look through your eyes at the world and occasionally you meet people in the street or in a place and they are looking at you and you know there is an an active pain body looking at you and it's better not to interact too much with that person unless you are so present that you can stand and look back into the eyes of that person without feeling corresponding emotion, you look into the emotion, the turmoil of it holding that feeling, sensing your enorm, the power of presence that ultimately you are and that is like probably what Jesus did, who walked around continuously meeting, as it's described in the New Testament every village he went into every town he went into he meets all these people possessed by evil spirits, are there so many people can there be so many people possessed by evil spirits in every town in every village or is that just one way of putting it and he they were his presence was such that he only needed to look and the pain body would shrink so that is possible but if you if there is not enormous presence in you and you are confronted with the pain body it's better to move away move out of the way don't interact too much because very soon a provocation will happen and then the pain the pain bodies are so clever to getting what they want this is the game play between partners most frequently people two people living together feed my pain body is the name of the game and so that if ego were not enough pain body amplifies or magnifies the madness of the ego they work together they are ultimately one you could say pain body is the emotional aspect of ego so humans live with old pain that periodically needs to experience more pain recognizing it in others of course is easier than seeing it in yourself you can probably see it in your wife or your husband when it happens now that's already great because then you don't mistake the pain body for who that person is periodically most people who live together as couples will go through their pain body episodes and usually you know it is pain body when a relatively insignificant thing that one partner says or does provokes an enormous reaction in the other person that means the pain body is using it as an excuse for coming up and once it's taken you over it wants more, it doesn't want an end to the pain it doesn't want peace it wants more until it has fulfilled itself for a while taken on enough new energy through the feedback of others or if you are a hermit or live alone the pain body then will have to look to your thoughts to feed on in that case when the pain body awakens suddenly your thinking will turn very negative every thought will say something negative about yourself or about the world or about other people or about the place where you live anything but it's all negative it's all dreadful, my life is dreadful people are all dreadful or it may focus on one person that once was in your life and that spoiled the rest, just knowing that person spoiled the rest of your life my ex-wife my ex-husband, whoever it may be my mother, my father what they did to me and I'm not saying that humans do not do dreadful things to other humans yes, they do but is the emotional residue left by something dreadful that somebody did to you once and the memory left by something dreadful that someone once did to you is that going to determine who you feel and think you are is that becoming the foundation for your identity for sense of self do you want to give so much power to an unconscious person that years ago was in your life of unconsciousness and make the memory of pain and the feeling of emotional pain into part of who you are how dreadful and yet many humans are so identified with the emotional pain they feel that it's they don't want to let go they feel this is who they are, they talk about they may even say I'm a survivor of this or that it's wonderful that you survived this dreadful thing that happened to you in your childhood it's wonderful but to make an identity for yourself out of that limits you enormously what a dreadful limitation for the rest of your life you are a survivor of physical abuse it's you make yourself very small and you say this is my identity and then the resentment or the grievance remains as a thought form in your head that needs to be revived periodically, you need to think about what somebody once did to you and then you feel the corresponding old emotion and so people then become so identified with certain thought forms old thought forms the thought form has self in it, I am that that thought, I am the grievance, I am the resentment the resentment is an essential part then of the ego so some egos consist they don't consist of many different things that you identify with there are some egos that consist 80% of one chunk of memory or emotion one huge grievance that has taken hold of your mind and wants to stay there for the rest of your life, so we all meet people like that and again it's if you see it in yourself it may not some of you may have a little bit of that also, I am just describing the more extreme forms that are also quite common and if this should be the case for some of you you may notice somebody is getting angry at hearing this because the identity is being threatened who is angry? you or the egoic identity that feels threatened and if you can bring awareness to that you can see it and become the one who sees and feels the emotion in you so that the emotion itself is not denied or repressed but it is becoming depersonalized you are no longer deriving your sense of self from it the pain body, when you notice it in yourself that emotional pain it is very important as you feel it to be very alert and to sense not only the pain but also the one who is feeling it the looking at it the awareness through which you can feel the pain body the power of attention that is there the light that is shining on the pain in you so if you wake up in the middle of the night in emotional turmoil the emotion will want to survive in you as long as possible and use your brain to renew itself through your thinking, every thought is an energy field that can feed the emotion the old emotion and then the mind becomes hyperactive and you don't know that you are feeding through your thinking the negative thoughts feeding the old emotion and people can be stuck in that for a long time so if that happens, you wake up at night, emotional turmoil be there in the body, start by feeling your hands or arms the inner aliveness use that as an anchor for presence and continue to feel the turmoil that you feel perhaps in your chest area or belly area and watch feel it and feel also the power of attention that is the light shining on it you don't need to think thoughts about it it's unnecessary, you can just look in the same way, you can just look at a fruit or an apple you hold it there and you look and you can also look internally and feel what you feel and realize that you are the light that's shining on it, on this little movement of energy it doesn't like the light shining on it which means it doesn't like to be made conscious because it lives only as long as you are unconscious of it, only if it can pretend to be you, can it continue to revive to renew itself through you so that's beautiful practice and then the pain body is no longer renewing itself and all it has then is its old momentum and every time it comes up and is recognized it loses some of its energy charge and that energy charge in the pain body is not lost really it becomes transmuted because it was trapped energy that couldn't get out held in and then it becomes transmuted the image that I would use to compare to is like a block of ice that little sun shines on it and then it becomes freed so as the energy that was trapped in the emotional pain body is freed through simply watching it then there's much greater energy in you that provides a sense of aliveness grows in you because the aliveness was trapped in here in a low frequency vibration and then it's freed and it goes

[Speaker 4] (5:22:26 - 5:22:32)

and so

[Speaker 1] (5:22:32 - 5:56:05)

it is often people with heavy pain bodies that suddenly make the fastest progress on the spiritual path because it's too painful pain is an enormous incentive for becoming conscious until you have the direct means of becoming conscious in the absence of any spiritual teaching or teacher, pain is great life does that life gives you pain it's part of living as a form identity so pain pushes you everyone here, nobody here would be here if they hadn't had the pain that they did have and certainly I wouldn't be here if I hadn't had a heavy pain body so heavy that I couldn't live with it anymore and something had to give and then you realize you reach a critical point where pain ceases to be your spiritual teacher but it's brought you to this point, that's great it's worked, it worked no matter what pain you suffered you're here now you're not watching TV or whatever playing video games so it's brought you here I'm enormously grateful for the pain, my pain because the inner transformation would never have happened if I'd had a comfortable pain body that I could live with, it would just mean every two weeks I get a mood or I throw something at my wife or whatever but not so bad and then after a few hours I get out of it again but a pain body that wakes you up every night and you're actually shaking in agony of fear a pain body that makes the whole world appear like a that almost as Jean Paul Sartre once described in a book nausea, the whole world gives you nausea, makes you feel sick that's hard to live with and so life always gives you exactly what you need you've had the right all the pain that you needed you have had to bring you here some needed a lot of pain to get here others may only have needed a little that's fine and then comes a point where you realize I'm done with pain, I don't need it anymore, now when that realisation comes, you no longer create pain for yourself and how do you do that? Simply by becoming externally aligned with this moment because it's only that which really creates pain and what happens to your pain body then when you say I'm done with pain that will still come up occasionally because it has old momentum, it's old momentum is still there, it goes vroom, vroom but then a bit more slowly vroom vroom vroom it's gone the less you personalize the pain that you feel and associate it with this mental story that's in your head the more you're able to allow it to be there and watch it, the more quickly it becomes transmuted and it becomes fuel for your consciousness the pain becomes fuel for awakening so that may be the reason why there is so much pain, but don't tell anybody because not everybody is ready to hear this and if pain is still if new pain comes into your life in some form as physical pain or enormous loss suddenly in your life, you lose someone close to you your job and your home all within the space of three months, and I know people to whom this has happened she left me, I lost my house, they sacked me from my job and the stock market has collapsed and then I crashed my car and then the doctor says there's something wrong with the body life may do this, it does that to some people what then? if that should happen to you and you can bring uncompromising surrender to what is to it and stick to this moment only, because if you leave this moment, you'll be very unhappy, especially if everything around you has collapsed stick to just what is there at this moment just this, and the rest is surrender to what is it is as it is always then the enormous loss will become transmuted very quickly the more you surrender which is bring inner acceptance to something that is anyway as it is the more quickly the seemingly negative in your life will become transmuted not only will it become transmuted in you it will become, it will provide the fuel for consciousness in you strangely enough it also becomes transmuted on an external level where once you surrender situations very quickly change and the more you are aligned with what is and that alignment needs to be uncompromising when what is looks dreadful on the surface, collapse great loss and so on illness the doctor saying you only have a few more months to live and I personally know people who have gone through a deep, one incredible awakening you can almost see they are shining like a sun and they may die in a few months they know life has taken away time from them no more future which really is the greatest thing that can happen to you because time is the ultimate illusion that you have more future to find yourself in you don't find yourself there anyway so if life takes away future from you all that's left of course you could take refuge in the past and start thinking about but really all that's left is this and surrender to this and for some people what could have been the most dreadful thing that could happen to a human being through uncompromising surrender has become the awakening and the flowering of the entire being so if you encounter great suffering, external things going wrong in your life it's a it is truly a great opportunity for transmutation a very great opportunity and in the absence of that you will have to make do with all the little things that continuously happen in your life the unconscious humans you meet the egoic entities the little egos that meet every day wanting this and wanting that and the pain bodies wanting something from you you have to work with that bring the yes to that let's take a little break now and move the physical vehicle without losing presence and return when the clock hand indicates number four in the present moment we're all back well most of us are back and reentering in case we lost it temporarily the present moment of course you can't lose it you can be lost to it but you can't lose it because it's all there is but it becomes obscured the bell is the awakening into now and the bell for you can be any form of suffering that arises in your life little or small let it push you back into presence some forms of suffering don't look like suffering on the surface anger while the ego is angry it loves the anger it doesn't look like suffering at all but if you could examine what happens to the body the physical body while that is happening you would see that it affects many functions of the body the body suffers when there's anger but the ego loves it as you know to say don't be angry anymore that doesn't work but to recognize anger as an egoic reaction and to watch it when it happens that brings consciousness to it feel the energy of it we may have some questions one or two questions somebody just gave me written question I'm a woman, a widow and I had a very fulfilling love relation to a married man during eight and a half years who was very lonely and unhappy with his wife the only wish he had was to live with me but he felt too much responsible for the care of his wife as he could not find his way in this situation he killed himself five weeks ago how can I find peace in the moment of now and get power from the moment of now it takes a long time to leave the emotions it seems that you loved this man what you loved was not the flesh and bones that are no more or are in the process of decay now when there is true love there is always the unseen that which loves in you that which you love is a recognition of yourself in the other and the other in yourself recognition of oneness the flesh and bones and also the story that in many cases is a tragic one in many people's lives neither the flesh and bones nor the story of our life situation is destined to survive and most stories don't ever really work themselves out it seems when somebody dies too soon or in the middle of a seemingly unfinished situation or when a child dies or somebody dies through an act of violence by the hands of someone else or by his or her own hands through suicide it makes it a little harder to accept for those left behind but the human form is very fragile there is no guarantee that any one of us in as this physical form is going to make it even to the rest of this day the end of this day when you love someone not the egoic sense of love that always wants something that always wants to use the other but when there is true love I recommend if there is someone in your life that you love that sometimes you look at that person or if that person is not with you, you look at a photo of that person and feel the love arising and when you feel it fully close your eyes and let go of the image of the form of the other person and only feel that love inseparable from your being and then the other not in form is also present there because that which you feel is that which is the underlying oneness between what seems like different human beings, millions of human beings most of us can only recognize the underlying oneness in a few one or two individuals in their lives with increasing consciousness comes the ability which is beautiful to recognize the underlying oneness in every human being that you meet and that recognition is love and it has ultimately nothing to do with the form of that person the physical form of that person or the external life situation the story the often unhappy story that a person is trapped in it goes beyond that the forms are already always destined to dissolve so there is a reality there that is timeless in every human being a timeless essence that is formless and timeless love is the recognition of that essence in the other through your own if you can love at all there must be even though you may still have an ego the ego, it must mean there is an opening in the egoic structure through which reality can shine and it's only through that opening in the egoic structures true love can appear so if you love that being feel that love in yourself and feel the presence of the other ultimately not separate from who you are so shortly after the sudden death of a human being it is inevitable that some sadness will come in waves and that is simply something to be acknowledged and accepted when the sadness comes and after somebody has died in the weeks after that days, weeks, sometimes months, you feel waves of sadness coming and then leaving you again and then coming back and when that happens surrender to the sadness that you feel and if you have to weep allow yourself to weep focus even attention on what you feel and surrender it completely surrender to that when you surrender to sadness, accept that it's there don't feel I shouldn't be sad or this shouldn't have happened surrender means there is no arguing with this moment and this deep sadness sadness you may find when there is true surrender to sadness that there is peace underneath it one could almost say you see the other side of sadness as peace it turns around and you can be weeping and feel inner peace at the same time the weeping is to do with the form that has dissolved and when the acceptance of that is there, the inner peace is to do with the recognition that life that is the essence of each human being does not die events happen that seem meaningless you do not understand why this should have happened especially when someone commits suicide or dies violently or prematurely or a child dies it doesn't make sense and there are events that we cannot figure out through the mind why they took place but everything that happens strangely has its place within the totality of things no event is separate from the totality and even seemingly senseless events have their place within the totality of things everything is connected and once you can accept that you don't try to find some explanation work out in your mind to make you feel better work something out and this is not what I want to give you here work out some explanation in the mind that gives you some consolation it needs to be something real and the answer is in the love that you felt and if you don't mistake the love for the form of the person can still feel now that is real and now that this is springtime look at the flowers the blossoms and feel that that too is an expression of love and then close your eyes because those flowers and blossoms are not going to stay around for that long either all human beings are expressions of the one the one life the one consciousness assuming temporarily a physical form and then perhaps a little longer another form that is non-physical or if you believe I don't want to put any idea in your head, it is irrelevant whether you even believe in reincarnation or not but just to see that there is more to me than the flesh and bones there is more to you than the flesh and bones that seems clear you can find your loved one in every flower that you look at one more question on a piece of paper and then there may be some questions that some people may want to ask do you accept people as disciples? well you may know the beautiful eastern saying, I don't remember whether it is from Sufism or some other eastern tradition the teacher and the taught together produce the teaching the words that are being spoken here could not be spoken if you were not sitting there this event is one event one phenomenon that arises I do not see myself as a teacher it is not an identity simply a temporary function it looks as if this form were a teacher it is not quite right depending on how you want to use words from a more superficial level you could say anybody who reads the power of now is a disciple but that is a conceptual thing that would not be very helpful at the moment the teaching happens in this way there are no disciples as such and it is spreading to many thousands of people what form the teaching will take at any time, I don't know everything is continuously changing I don't know if ever the form changes and I work with just a few people for a certain period of time I'll let you know at the moment this is the only form that the teaching takes that's all I know if there are any questions before anybody asks questions just a little reminder if possible ask questions that are vital and alive a vital and alive question concerns perhaps yourself or somebody close to you but that is yourself is it something that is that you truly need or want to know a non-vital question is an abstract mental question such as do the people on Mars have pain bodies or your concept of this or that doesn't quite agree with what I read somewhere else so those are questions that are not truly alive the mind likes to play around or be right or say this is in exact contradiction to the ancient scripture so such and such could be if one looks at the surface of things things are full of contradictions if you only look at the form every religion seems to be totally different if you look a little deeper it's all one so please I don't know where the microphones are must be somewhere

[Speaker 3] (5:56:24 - 5:57:26)

hello hello my name is Margaret and I have one situation what I would like to tell last night after your teaching I came home cold, tired, hungry, etc and I fixed it this morning I woke up with this terrible headache which is familiar to me and the name is migraine what I did because I wanted to be here again today what I did was I took a lot of medication which was effective so now I am here but my question is, I ask myself if this is the most effective way that I'm dealing with it and maybe I would like to hear your view on this problem which is happening more often in my life

[Speaker 1] (5:57:26 - 6:16:17)

thank you yes, thank you many recurring forms of pain or illness tend to disappear as you bring more presence into your life there may be a number of reasons why these migraines appear but there could be a pressure of something that is not yet been fully lived there could be pressure of unexpressed emotions it could be some forms of pain are actually physical manifestations of the pain body the pain body can manifest itself also as a physical symptom so the quickest way to heal your body is to bring as much consciousness as possible into the body to give as much attention as possible conscious attention to the body and that is the practice of inner body awareness so you feel the aliveness that is in the body and bringing consciousness in that may also sometimes activate a dormant pain body there are some pain bodies that hardly ever express themselves and only manifest as physical symptoms and they thrive on your reaction against those physical symptoms that's what they live on because they need some kind of food so as you bring more consciousness into the body you may encounter suddenly certain emotions arising inside you that you didn't know were there the pain body you're shining the light on the hiding pain body that is the case with many people I'm only suggesting that as a possibility there are other reasons why such pains can be there including even a very rapid transmutation of your entire being there was a spiritual teacher called Krishna Murti who for many years suffered extreme pain in the head almost every day to the point of unconsciousness falling unconscious and nobody even he did not know why he never saw a doctor about it, he knew that the doctor in his case would not have the answer but he believed it was a kind of transmutation that was happening to him and he said sometimes they are working on me no matter what the actual cause is, I believe it will either disappear, the condition will disappear or the cause for the condition will reveal itself and then become transmuted as you bring more consciousness into yourself in the meantime you may occasionally need to take some medication pressure of something unexpressed is often the case of migraine headaches but not necessarily it may well be that you never find the answer of where it comes from and yet it may suddenly dissipate in the meantime while the pain is there and not just that pain, any kind of physical pain it is your job to surrender to the fact that right now it's there and I have met people for whom physical pain became a teacher I have met some people who suffered pain for years almost constant physical pain and one or two people I met, they had never heard of any spiritual teaching, they had never read a spiritual book but what happened to them when I met them I saw they were intensely alive and they were still in pain and yet something had happened I recognized the pain that was going on for years eventually drove them into surrender, very hard to surrender to physical pain but it drove them to surrender and it eroded their ego because in surrender the ego dissipates the ego can only exist in the state of non surrender we could even say the ego is the state of non surrender and so some people were driven to surrender by physical pain and few others I met by having a so called incurable condition and some people through surrender became cured quite frequently that happens I read some years ago a book written by a doctor about healing and he found the greatest number of healing happened in those people who were not those people who internally considered the illness as an enemy but who came to an acceptance of their condition a deep acceptance acceptance and that was the state he found through research that it was most likely to lead to a healing that acceptance my father is 86 now and he's a strange person, I love him dearly and one of his characteristics he's always had he's always refused to see a doctor and he's always had aches and pains nothing too acute but quite a few things that were with him for years certain pains ear, head bones and a number of symptoms that would be there with him always and people said you have to see a doctor about this and that was one area of his life where he early on in his life learned to surrender in other areas he still has a big ego but in that area he had this wonderful thought that came to him, he said I live in pacific coexistence with my illnesses and he said if I attack one of these illnesses a greater one will develop so that was I'm not giving as a recipe for everybody not to see a doctor but bringing awareness into the body is essential in any case that is always absolutely essential if you have a pain when you go home from here if something happens in the next day today or tonight or in the next few days and you experience a pain that you have not had before or rarely have then it could have something to do with being here and an inner change happening I know that some people who have fairly heavy pain bodies and are now very present with their pain bodies that means the pain body tries to come up and not that presence ever pushes the emotional pain down, it never does that presence simply looks at it but when a pain body needs to come up and he finds that you are very present and you immediately detect it it will shrink back, it will go oh and then it will lie in a little corner and wait for a better opportunity and you think it's asleep it's not there at all but it's very much like when a cat is asleep a cat is never really totally asleep and that's an amazing thing if you watch a cat it knows any kind of noise you can make and it will go but the slightest thing, an unusual noise, a little tapping that could be a little animal walking past and suddenly you know oh there's always some something in the cat is always awake there could be a mouse there something in the pain body is always and then it waits for an opportunity and an opportunity for a pain body to arise in a moment of less presence in you could be when you're suddenly for example you're upset in a situation, you're just fed up with the what somebody is doing or the traffic isn't moving and there's a moment of reaction and the pain body will go ah, there's my chance and suddenly the reaction will become magnified and from being an irritation with the traffic will quickly turn into how dreadful my life is anyway what and a huge stream of negative thinking what did it all start with? a little upset about the traffic and the pain body was there waiting another opportunity for pain bodies to watch bad films where violent things happen and of course those films are made by pain bodies the stripped writer it's written through the stripped writer's pain body, the producer has a heavy pain body and the people who pay money to watch these dreadful things are paying money to feed their pain bodies while they watch and they love feeling bad they pay money to feel bad and some almost advertise it, this film will make you feel really bad and all the pain bodies running to the box office thus is the state of our civilization so when you are very present the pain body may want to wait and if there's very little opportunity after a while the pain body almost says this is not, I can't renew myself in this way anymore if the pain body doesn't actually think but it has an intelligence there and then it sometimes happens that it produces physical symptoms in people who before didn't have them usually not serious it's pain here, back pain there, this, that, headache and aches and pains and suddenly there are people sometimes who sit in our intensives and who suddenly experience some extreme physical pain they haven't had before can't sit anymore and can't pay attention anymore I need to get out of here the pain body wants you to get out of here and because there's too much presence here it's the only way it can do that is by creating some physical pain now pain bodies can also create illness and they sometimes do and that is usually in people in whom the pain body does not have a chance to express itself in their everyday life and those would be people for example who repress their emotions because they conflict with the self image that they have it has happened in the past with Christians some Christians who misunderstood the deeper truth of the Christian teaching which is beautiful but they misunderstood and they try to live up to an image of myself as a good Christian who just does not do certain things a good Christian loves his neighbor he doesn't get mad at his neighbor so I can't allow myself because it would conflict with my self image to be angry with somebody close to me my children, my wife and so I can't afford myself to express these emotions I need to they need to be pushed down because I'm living an image which is an egoic thing to do I'm living this image of myself as a good Christian because that is sin and so then after a few years the pain body is being pushed down and down and finally a serious illness develops the emotion has created the unexpressed emotion has created a serious illness and then that makes me unhappy and then the pain body has something to feed on so it's better to than to repress is to express if you have to but be there while it happens be there as long as it happens see if you can be there as the watcher of what happens be there as the watcher of your pain body when it happens a marvelous thing to do never misunderstand this teaching and try to I can feel something coming on I mustn't have a pain body attack I must remain present and then you notice the body gets tight and will power comes in this is sometimes what you do when westerners meditate meditation of course is surrender to what is there's only the now that's all that meditation is about to show you that this moment is all there is and so that it's all about the surrender and then you can see even eastern people even buddhist monks I'm impressed they say they can sit there for three hours oh what an achievement and there's a boiling kettle there's a lid on a boiling kettle and should the door open while they meditate and the child or the wife comes in leave me alone I'm meditating another question

[Speaker 2] (6:16:22 - 6:16:35)

namaskar my name is Purnima and I want to ask if you can speak a little bit about forgiving forgiveness something I find very difficult in the light of your teachings

[Speaker 1] (6:16:35 - 6:30:49)

yes thank you non forgiveness is there when you mistake human unconsciousness for a person when you make an identity for someone and this is what the mind does when you make an identity for someone out of the movement of human unconsciousness when what somebody did once to you or to someone else or to large numbers of people somebody injured someone inflicted violence on someone showed cruelty perhaps your father, your mother whoever it may be there's a temptation there is the tendency for the mind to make it to make an identity out of that whereas all such actions they look as if somebody there knew what they were doing but all such actions are expressions of human unconsciousness the expressions of the collective ego expressing itself through one so called person and the expressions of the pain body which also is not personal it is human pain so it's only when you mistake that the expression of human pain as violence or cruelty or the expression of the human ego with its absurd needs to use others to enhance itself to make itself stronger when you mistake what is collective a collective state of humanity you mistake that for an identity then you create a perpetrator somebody who did something and that is a mind made identity for someone and of course then you have it is impossible to forgive when you believe that there is actually an identity behind what was being done that there is someone there whose identity it is to be responsible for that now the question arises so what does that mean? is nobody responsible for what they do?

this can't be right is no human being responsible for what they do for the evil that we see in the world the cruelty ultimately no and yet all human beings suffer the consequences of their unconsciousness whoever manifests unconscious behavior will experience further unconsciousness from others this is called karma so you suffer the consequences and in the process of that pain arises, you inflict pain and you suffer pain that's what all humans alive what humanity as life has been doing inflicting pain, receiving pain in varying degrees and in that process that looks pretty mad out of that occasionally here and there somebody woke up out of that cycle and recognized the fact that when such things are being done ultimately there's nobody there doing it it's unconsciousness when you see that compassion arises compassion even with the one who became the instrument of unconsciousness compassion with yourself because the equivalent of non-forgiveness towards another is to harbor feelings of guilt in yourself and both are very strong in the egoic mind if you cannot forgive yourself that is very similar of course to not being able to forgive another you are making an identity for yourself out of something that you did because you didn't know any better which is a colloquial way of saying you were not conscious enough to know better so there are some people who there are parents now who think back and say I made dreadful mistakes when I brought up my children I'm guilty of that you didn't know what you were doing you acted according to your conditioning you acted out your conditioning and this is what people do in the same family for generations and generations one generation after another acts out the same conditioning there are people in America now whose families immigrated three generations ago from somewhere in Europe and the dysfunction, the particular kind of egoic dysfunction in that family may go back to Roman times 2,000 3,000 years and it's a cycle that the parents teach the children the same particular kind of unconscious or dysfunction because unconscious can take different forms often it's violence, it can be other forms cruelty using others whatever it may be and so you can see the same thing handed down from parent to children they grow up, they do the same to their children until finally one person is there who wakes up and sees it for what it is and so forgiveness happens by itself when you recognize that none of that is personal it is something to do with the evolutionary stage of humanity and you happen to be here on this planet somehow you ended up here on this in many ways mad planet as far as humanity is concerned also potentially paradise as far as the planet itself is concerned, paradise in many ways potentially and you happen to be here in the midst of considerable unconsciousness so you cannot try to forgive it's not possible unless you look through the form that this unconsciousness took you recognize it as not nobody there ultimately then forgiveness happens automatically but there is something in the egoic mind that doesn't want to let go of a grievance or a resentment and that's another aspect there is something in here because resentment or grievance is very powerful ego food there are some egos that keep themselves alive through one big grievance one big resentment that have harbored for years and in other areas the person may be engaged in spiritual work and experience states of presence experience peace and yet there is something hanging on in there, in here and what it's hanging onto is my this big resentment and the ego is enough one big resentment is enough to keep the ego going and that's why it's got its teeth in that thought form that thought form is there and says I am not going away, I am you I am who you are and so there is a reluctance even once you see the unconsciousness it's not personal you can still feel there is something in here that says no, no, I am hanging onto this grievance, I am not letting go I've had it for years all those years are going to be wasted and then you see that and the seeing means you have already one foot out of it and then once you see it for what it is it will change whatever you bring consciousness to will become transmuted and what you bring consciousness to that is false in you, a false identification will dissolve anything you bring consciousness to that is real deepens that's the beauty of it so two levels here to work to become aware of as far as forgiveness is concerned recognize it for what it is and see in yourself perhaps the reluctance even though you have already recognized that ultimately it's human unconsciousness and no more than that and it's been going on for thousands and thousands of years, millions of humans inflicting acts of cruelty on others and it's going on even now in varying degrees the unconsciousness varies from person to person the roots of it are in everyone so you recognize that and then level two is observing in yourself that something in there does not want to let go and then say oh isn't that interesting and watch it it even has a feeling quality to it, there is an accompanying emotion perhaps that reflects that thought and it's become an identity it's become an identity I don't want to lose my identity, I'm hanging on in here but once you see it it won't survive for very long because it needs your unconsciousness to survive and so the beautiful words of Jesus he actually tells us why we should forgive it's all there forgive them for they know not what they do he not only tells you that you should forgive he tells you why a modern Jesus would have said they are completely unconscious that would be the modern translation for they know not what they do another question

[Speaker 2] (6:30:49 - 6:31:28)

thank you I would like to ask something about watching your emotions for example when I'm crying then I start thinking about what you have said watch your emotions and as soon as I start thinking of course the crying stops so now I don't know if that is my mind playing tricks because my ego doesn't want to feel that nasty feeling or it is presence making ending the pain

[Speaker 1] (6:31:29 - 6:39:23)

good good thank you you have to watch in yourself to see if the crying is associated with a story that goes through your head perhaps an old one it is possible that the crying happens as soon as the story replays itself in your head of something that happened or something that never happened but should have happened who knows what the story is there is the crying crying could be something that I never got but deserved or should have had life passed me by that is a big one, a usual one for many people I am missing out oh no, it is too late now I didn't make it or there may be the crying because of something happened once, an event and it is being replayed and as long as you are in the story in your head the emotions are there and the two work together you are not observing the emotion you are mainly fueling the emotion and the emotion is giving further energy to the story when you watch directly you feel the emotion itself sadness, whatever it may be and watching implies that of course you allow it to be, if it is there you cannot fully watch it if you are not happy with what is there and you are not really watching it it is just there it is and you are watching and if that is how you are watching it and if then it stops that means simply that the emotion is being dissipated through your presence there is no repression here if you are truly watching the moment you look at it it stops, that is possible that means the emotion may have been long-standing but not as deep as a pain body and then simply by separating cutting the link between the story and the emotion you have already done the most important thing cutting sounds almost violent, you don't have to do anything to cut it, but simply recognize the connection between the story and the feeling so you could think about if somebody died some years ago or some months ago or somebody left you or whatever it may be and that is the story that creates the emotion and then you dismiss the story and pay more attention to what you feel and then it may dissipate very quickly when you just give it attention and don't fuel it anymore and then suddenly there is peace underneath it it is good so that may be happening to you and then the same mind thing may come in again and then the same you watch again, pay more attention to what you feel than what you think you know full well that it is those thoughts that create the emotion and so certain thoughts in the head have their own momentum too and some thoughts get lodged, many thoughts pass through like clouds but there are other thoughts that stay in there they find a little corner in your mind and say okay I live here and I am not going to go away and periodically the same kind of thought comes and creates the same kind of emotions and they just won't go away they are refusing to go away and it can also happen that one big thought obliterates most of your mind and that is almost regarded as pathological but even within a normal human being it can happen that thoughts can become obsessive and those are the recurring thoughts that say I am not going anywhere and come back again and again, what do you do with that?

and watch the thought be there as to get into your body so that you can sense yourself as the underlying presence then your mind becomes a ripple phenomenon you are the ocean or the deep lake that's here the depths of who and the deep in the depths the ocean or the lake is still on the surface there is a wave movement that's your mind so if you are rooted in yourself the movement of the mind can't drag you along with it totally, you are here and then you just watch the movement and then it calms down because you are not identifying with each thought and that would even be the case in people who would be regarded as clinically insane for example people who have who hear voices which is no more than the normal voices that you hear in the head that everybody hears as their own thought processes some people hear them as auditory things auditory comments and that is usually regarded as insane if you can't not be drawn into what the voice says and this applies both to the pathological condition of hearing actual voices and to the normal condition of simply having the voice in your head which are your own thoughts if you can be there as the witness then they don't have power over you instead of being drawn in totally or reacting to them which creates further thoughts the in the film A Beautiful Mind which some of you may have seen which is about a scientist a brilliant scientist who goes mad and sees people that don't exist in his life he has these hallucinations they look very real but they don't exist but they are just right there in front of him he doesn't know it he thinks they are all real and the viewer of the film cleverly also thinks they are real until the moment he realises that he is insane that these people are not actually there at that moment the viewer also realises it but the important thing here for this character that is the beginning of his healing when an awareness arises so he doesn't need to react anymore he recognises it as not real he knows he is mad and anybody who knows they are mad are not completely mad anymore the really mad people don't know that they are mad and many humans don't know that they are mad of course is there another question?

[Speaker 2] (6:39:26 - 6:40:02)

My name is Lotte I would like to know something about the effect that this process of transformation into consciousness has on your old relationships friendships because I really feel it is difficult to be that compassionate tolerant, open minded person that I feel I am when I am alone but that is easy so I feel even that I get less tolerant and less patient with people around me

[Speaker 1] (6:40:04 - 6:54:16)

yes, this is sometimes not infrequently do I hear that somebody else asked a very similar question not long ago when she said I can be very spiritual when I sit alone in my room but the moment I go out and meet people it is gone now your question may not be quite as extreme but there is something similar here of course the ultimate challenge are people so when you are alone with yourself some people find it considerably easier to be present when you are out in nature which doesn't mean not everybody is present when they are alone some are totally in their mind too but probably yes it is easier and so really the most challenging thing in your spiritual evolution is other people and it reminds me of I believe Jean-Paul Sartre who said hell is other people and so or literally translated hell is the others and so yes humans are very challenging and you lose patience with them and think why can't you be more conscious why you have to act out the same kind of stuff with your friends, your acquaintances your family that is perhaps the most difficult for many people because the more past you share with a person the more difficult it sometimes seems to stay present when you are together with them so for some people the ultimate test is being with their when they are grown up visiting their parents and this is why Ram Dass made the famous statement if you think you are so enlightened go and spend two weeks with your parents and so observing in your case be more interested in your reactions than in what seems to cause your reactions so if people's behavior causes your reactions or seems to pay more attention to the reaction itself of what the mind is saying or what the emotion is expressing it sometimes happens that people who are evolving spiritually, quickly they find sometimes that they don't enjoy being with their old friends anymore they don't enjoy participating in what they loved before, for example getting together to gossip about others and that was so enjoyable for years gossip is a favorite ego one of the activities of the ego that the ego loves because whenever you can criticize somebody you can feel superior you feel more yourself more deluded of course but that's how the ego works so for years you loved gossiping and suddenly it's so empty and you think why are they doing that and suddenly you don't contribute anymore and you just sit there and at dinner parties where you used to tell your exaggerated story to make people laugh you exaggerated every story just an example and everybody loved inviting you to their dinner parties because they loved you were so entertaining the way you exaggerated what people said or did and suddenly you don't want to do that anymore and then people say what's happened to you you've become so boring and it may be that you don't take part in the drinking sessions anymore like to get drunk together and feel free liberated and it does happen sometimes as you evolve quickly some people around you don't want to see you anymore and others in other cases you don't want to see them anymore but it also happens that people around you become affected by the change in you without you wanting them to change they notice something in you and then suddenly they also become interested they may ask you one or two questions and you may notice or not even that their behavior changes simply because they are around you simply because the old games are not working anymore sometimes between two people two old friends the same type of interaction develops but condition patterns that have been operating for years both are playing a kind of role let's call it their friendship they play this one plays this role the other complements it with that role they play it out twice a week they meet playing their game and suddenly you don't play anymore and then of course the other person's role collapses because it needs two to feed the role then what's going on and then either they will leave you or a change will happen in the other person but if you're reacting to perhaps what is unconsciousness in others that before perhaps you didn't react to because you were part of it then that is also still a form of ego in you that's the awareness that you have of others you have it for a moment and then it becomes a judgment so there's presence for a moment where you see how they are completely stuck in their old behavior you see that but it doesn't remain a seeing the seeing the presence is lost and then the mind turns it into a judgment and then the reaction comes allow the people as long as they are around you and they can only be around you at this moment so they are part of the form that this moment takes if you are with them why not accept the way they are at this moment, what else can you do you become unhappy otherwise so you bring an acceptance to the whatever they do with that comes a compassion allow other humans their unconsciousness allow allow them as long as they manifest unconsciousness by getting angry about their unconsciousness nothing is changed in fact you turn unconscious yourself for god's sake wake up why can't you be more conscious and of course what the ego is going to reply is you talk to me about consciousness look at yourself and the cycle starts again or they tell you what's this airy fairy stuff about consciousness what's happened to you are you on drugs or something are you so as long as these people are there in front of you in the moment that's the isness of this moment nobody can act beyond their level of consciousness although a few try and the wonderful thing is change in others happens most when you no longer need them to change their behavior when the expectations that they should behave in a certain way is dropped and in that way even old standing relationships like with your parents become healed and become whole again when the expectation that your father or your mother should behave in a certain way towards you is dropped when the expectation that your father or your mother should understand you is dropped because there we have the gap between what I want why can't you understand me what difference does it ultimately make to you whether this person understands you or not none what is added to you if your father or mother understand you do you become a more fulfilled no, nothing really so when that demand is dropped that they should behave differently they should know better should understand me they should accept me I want them to accept me yeah, but they don't and there you have the gap between I want and what is and strangely all those demands and all that fruitless wanting is actually fuel for more unconscious reactions in you towards them so you're back in unconsciousness and see what happens if you don't make demands that people should behave differently they behave in this moment this doesn't mean you cannot tell a child don't walk there you might fall off, come here these are practical matters I'm not talking about that so bring acceptance to whatever behavior they manifest and see you may be surprised especially in your relationship long standing relationships at changes that happen when you don't need them to change anymore, to make you happy when you don't need those people parents, whoever to change anymore, to make you happy then very often it's almost a miracle change happens in them and suddenly they are more open and when you didn't need them to understand you anymore suddenly there is an openness and they ask questions about your life whereas before all they could do was criticize and all you could do was react against their criticism and get upset and every meeting every time you visited them it would end in that way and it's amazing how in long standing relationships people almost go there when they meet with their scripts as if they were reading their scripts and every time they go they have to act out the same script and in the end they get angry and doors are slammed and of course it's in the script perhaps I have one or two more questions

[Speaker 2] (6:54:19 - 6:55:16)

hello hello my name is Lucy and I have a question for you I'm thinking of the suffering of so many animals and I can somehow deal with my own pain my own fears but I'm shocked and infuriated when I see that millions maybe billions of innocent animals are slaughtered or exploited by human race nothing triggers my pain body as much as that and I think what can I do about it but most of the time it doesn't make any difference now I would like to ask you please enlighten me how can I handle it how can I deal with it

[Speaker 1] (6:55:16 - 7:00:14)

thank you it is true that what humans are doing to animals in factory farms where living beings are treated as objects shows extreme unconsciousness and in such situations there's always the external level and there's the inner level the primary level is the inner so that whatever you do does not come out of a deeply negative inner state because any action because sometimes action may be needed but be careful that action does not flow out of a deeply negative inner state so how can you not feel negative about that and this is not to be seen perhaps in isolation it is to be seen within the totality of what human beings are doing to other life forms on the planet to nature and to themselves to other humans they are also doing it to humans 20th century I believe more than a hundred million human beings were killed violently so at this very moment on the planet all this is happening humans are killing other humans, humans are killing animals and treating animals as if they were inanimate objects, simply for profit for greed, for more which is the ego which is the ego the greed of the collective human ego the ego doesn't see what it is doing when it destroys the forests which perhaps are the very basis for life on the planet there again when an ego looks at a forest in other words what does it mean, an ego an ego sees is the human mind, an ego is thought and to look through abstract thought at something, at an animal or a tree and you look at it through thought and thought will evaluate what it sees according to its form and what it can get out of it the tree will get a price put on it or at best you cut it into little pieces and examine it to find out how it works that's what the human mind does and I'm not saying no more science, but we have the tendency of the human mind is to de to make lifeless what it falls upon, if there's nothing else in you except thought and you approach reality only through thought whatever you perceive only through the screen of thought, you're going to make lifeless, in other words, thought cannot sense the life that is there thought cannot sense the holiness the sacredness that is in every life form because thought is an abstraction so all humans who are trapped in their heads and that's all, especially those who run the big businesses but everybody to some extent is trapped politicians and so on, I'm not saying there's one category of human that is worse than others, but they see only what has become made lifeless through their mind and so through the dimension of being is missing

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[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 4:51)

They see only what has become made lifeless through their mind. And so the true, the dimension of being is missing. And they don't know what they are doing when they kill life on the planet because they've already killed it.

They've killed the feeling of their own aliveness because they live exclusively in a conceptualized sense of self, an egoic sense of self. The ability to sense, to feel the deeper being that is the sacredness of life in every life form is not there. They don't find it in themselves, the sacred stillness, the sacred space that is within.

And if you don't find it in yourself, you haven't touched it because you're totally in the mind movement. You cannot recognize the sacredness in others. So humans are suffering from a form of mental illness, collective mental illness, which is to be trapped exclusively in the upper floor of your being.

And so this is the closest, perhaps, if you want to use words, that you can express the truth of this, is to say that when humans engage in such behavior, they are simply manifesting a form of collective illness, mental illness. For hundreds of years, Zen Buddhism actually has occasionally used that word to say the sickness of the mind, use that expression, the dysfunction of humanity, which is such that they will destroy themselves if it doesn't change. So you have to see that cruelty within the context of the whole, which is the illness of humanity.

And when you see it as illness, perhaps a little bit of almost compassion arises. It doesn't make it less dreadful, what is happening. But perhaps when you see it as an illness, there's no longer the need in you to make the people who do this into those who are considered evil.

Always we have to come back to Jesus. They don't know what they are doing. They don't know what they are doing.

And then you can still be, you will feel sad. Of course you will, when you watch that, you will feel the sadness and you can accept that you feel very deeply affected by what you see. But when you see it in the larger context of human illness, you may be able to be free of anger.

And if that is the case, then you may be able to take also some action on the external level. And the only action or the most useful action is not to try and convince people that what they are doing is wrong, but simply to show them what they are doing because not enough people have seen it. Simply to show what is happening.

Show them through disseminating information or whatever. And many humans will be shocked. Many haven't really seen what's happening.

And anybody who is not totally trapped in their minds will feel something and there may be change coming. But the true change happens through enough human beings to go through this inner transformation. Not until then will the collective illness on the planet become healed.

And our gathering here is part of that. Maybe one last question.

[Speaker 3] (4:52 - 5:31)

Good afternoon. My name is Marianne. Thank you for being here.

I read in your book, The Power of Now, that women can be especially vulnerable to their pain bodies just before their menstrual period. I recognize that and somehow I feel that it is not only my personal pain body, it's bigger than that. It also relates, I think, to the question that was just asked.

But could you please say something more about that?

[Speaker 1] (5:32 - 15:27)

What you feel there is the, I've spoke before of collective aspects of the pain body. We mentioned countries and so on. And there's also such a thing as the female collective pain body.

Because we've lived in mainly patriarchal societies for several thousand years. Before then, there were women where the female was respected greatly. There were matriarchal societies.

There was a time when most gods were goddesses, they were female. And then as humans moved more and more into their minds, they created male gods more and more. And then the female became more and more devalued.

And so because of violence inflicted on female, on countless women who were over the centuries were treated as slaves, sometimes sold, treated as goods almost, and so not respected. Raped, killed, used, exploited. Of course, that happened also, men also did it to groups of men.

But we're talking at the moment just from that aspect. So as something that we could call the female collective pain body developed, and that's the, many women's pain body, most, probably all women's pain body is partly collective. And so it's when your womanhood manifests itself most clearly through menstruation, which should be a joyful time.

That tends to activate the collective woman pain body in women. And many women are now conscious of that and actually become more alert when it happens because what, how much of your pain body as a woman goes back to your personal pain, and what portion of it is due to the collective female pain body ultimately doesn't matter when it arises and you begin to observe it, you begin to become conscious of it. And many women are now working in that way and are actually becoming more conscious at that time because they know they need to become more alert just as the time approaches, they already know, okay, it's coming.

And then they may feel the first movement as a reaction, as a thought, as an emotion, and then it depends on what level you can catch it with your attention. You no longer need, you don't need to question when you observe it in yourself, is what I'm feeling now collective or personal? It doesn't matter from the perspective of consciousness, it's enough for you to look, you don't need to even know its origin.

This applies to any kind of emotion that arises in you, not just in this context. For it to be transmuted and dissolved, you do not need to know its origin, although sometimes its origin will reveal itself to you as you pay attention to it. But many things that are inside humans, many emotions have their origin at almost at the very beginning when you still lived in the sea perhaps and you got eaten up five million times.

That was already a form of pain. So it goes back, sometimes you cannot trace it back and at other times it will suddenly say, oh, that's where it came from. That's fine.

So allow the origin to reveal itself if it wants to reveal itself. For the process to work, it is not necessary for the origin to reveal itself, although it is nice when it does. So all that is required is your conscious presence as the emotional field becomes activated.

And if possible, don't allow it to rise into your thinking. Once it gets hold of that, then it's more difficult to be present. You may need little reminders.

It really is like, and not just in this context, the female pain body, any manifestation of pain body is really like going to sleep, acting out a dream. You may need little reminders as if you were going into a dream. Sometimes you read strange, you see strange films like that, they enter somebody's, and in the dream, you could have a reminder that you are dreaming.

So you could put little reminders in your home so that when you walk into the bedroom or into the bathroom, you can have a face that looks like the masks, the traditional masks for theater, comedy and tragedy. One mouth goes up, one mouth goes down. You can have one with the mouth down and have a question mark.

Pain body as a little sign to watch because you may be immersed in pain body, walk into your bed, into your bathroom, and on the mirror, you see that image with a question mark, and then you, oh, might wake you up. There's no guarantee that it will. Another possibility is he will tear it down.

I don't want to hear any more of that nonsense about pain body. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. Or you tell your partner to wake you up when the pain body attack comes.

Wake me up when I fall asleep. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. All right.

So these are all things that arise as presence arises. Those things will arise also in the field of presence. Occasionally, they will obscure presence temporarily.

But now that presence is already active, has become activated in many of you long before you came here. In some of you, perhaps today, presence has become activated in you. There's no going back.

It can only become obscured temporarily. And probably, well, that's fine. At any given moment, see if you can be accepting of that moment.

And see if you can be not a walking pain body, not a walking storyline, but presence. Who you truly are. Consciousness taking on form temporarily as this body and this mind.

But you are more than the body and the conditioned mind. The underlying consciousness. Knowing yourself as that at this moment.

You don't need to be present or surrender for the rest of your life. That would be a problem. Oh no, now I have to surrender for the rest of my life.

I have to be present every day of my life from now on. That would be a big task ahead of you. Stressful.

Am I going to make it? But you don't need to. Only at this moment.

That's not a lot. Thank you so much.

[Speaker 4] (15:31 - 15:31)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (17:37 - 17:50)

It is our great, great honor at Unity FM and here at Unity to welcome our special guest today, Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (17:50 - 17:51)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (17:51 - 17:52)

Welcome.

[Speaker 1] (17:52 - 17:53)

Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (17:56 - 18:50)

Thank you. Well, our, one of our co-founders, Myrtle Fillmore, this has been her vision and Charles's vision that, and to have you here is such an honor. One of the things that she wrote, there's a letter that she wrote, is the most, the oldest handwritten letter that Myrtle has been found by Myrtle Fillmore.

And in it, this is from 1891, and I brought this quote because it speaks so much to what you talk about in both of your books. She says, My dear, you ask why you do not enter into the understanding you so desire. I will tell you, you are already in it, but you think you have some great thing to do to get there.

The kingdom of God is within you. All you need to do is be still and know.

[Speaker 1] (18:52 - 18:53)

Yes, that's right.

[Speaker 2] (18:53 - 18:57)

So that would be, what would you, would you like to add to that or?

[Speaker 1] (18:59 - 28:36)

Well, the human mind has been conditioned over thousands of years to seek fulfillment elsewhere, in space and time, and especially in time, so the human mind has been conditioned to look to the future or the next moment. Future sounds a little abstract. If we say the next moment, then we can actually feel what that means.

It always looks to the next moment, or most of the time, for fulfillment, completion. And in this way, the human mind, the conditioning of the human mind denies life because the only place where life takes place, the only place where life happens is in the present moment now, and outside the now there is no life. And even past and future don't actually exist outside human thought forms.

Now, this may sound a little bit difficult at first to believe because past and future seem so real, but all you have to, this is not a philosophical exercise, it's easier than that. All you have to ask yourself is whether you've ever experienced past or future. And then if you look closely, you realize all you ever experienced was now, and when it happened, it was now because it's only in this place of now where anything can happen.

And when the future comes, it can only come as the now. So, past and future are thought forms. They may be necessary on a practical level here, we can make appointments and get together here at this particular time, but when it goes beyond practical, then they actually represent a great limitation when they take over our lives.

Then time, past and future I call time, time then takes over our consciousness, and so this is the time-bound state of consciousness that most people are possessed by, and it is an essential aspect of the egoic consciousness. The ego lives in and through time, ego being the false mind-made sense of self. And so it comes as a surprise to people when they realize, well, it's actually true, my life is always now, and is never not now, and never will be not now, never has been.

That is not just an idea that you add to your mind, the fact that life is always now, this is almost like a little powerful pointer, it's always now, and really that almost stops your mind, if you really get that, to experience the truth of that statement, you have to step beyond the mind, because by continuing to think analytically, is it actually true that there's only the now, let me think, it's a pointer that takes you, when you truly experience the reality of that, actually takes you into the now, and there's an opening inside, there's a space that opens up inside, and you say, this is it? And what is this? You can't quite at first define what this is, but all you know for the time being is this is life, life itself is experienced now.

And so, for most people, now is what happens in the now, and that's why people believe that there are many different moments, every hour consists of many different moments, every day consists of many moments, but if you look more closely, of course there are not many moments, there's only ever this moment, and the reason why people believe there are many moments is because they confuse the now with what happens in the now. What happens, of course, changes continuously.

The now itself, however, is something that is, the moment we define it through words, of course, we limit it, and yet, knowing that words are not quite it, or words can only point to it, we can continue to talk for a little bit about the now, so the now then is the space in which everything happens, or the light in which everything appears. And the light in which things appear and disappear, they come, this is how everything continues to change in life, the impermanence of what the Buddha speaks of, everything continuously changes, it comes into the light of now, but the essence of every experience is the light of consciousness, which is the space of now. So the secret of now is that it is the formless foundation of all manifested life, it is the unmanifested formless dimension in which the manifested appears, and in essence, you are that light, and knowing that yourself as that is not done through thinking, it is not a thought that you add to your mind and say, okay, I'm light, okay, now I know it.

You can only know yourself as the light if thought stops, even if only for this moment, and you sense that underneath all the things that happen, sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions, feelings, there remains the substratum, which is space, the space of consciousness itself, which we could also call the stillness. Every word only shows you a tiny aspect of it, it's not it, it's stillness and it's vaster than stillness. It's consciousness, but even that limits it because it's only a word.

So finding that space in yourself, and this is what the quote is about, you can only find that space in yourself now because essentially it is the now. So who you are at the deepest level is inseparable from the now, and so that's the deepest meaning of now, and it's a realization, just one glimpse is enough to change your life. It doesn't mean that the time-bound consciousness won't take you over again, it will probably happen, but you've had the glimpse, that is the initiation of the awakening process, and anybody who can see the truth of this must already have had the glimpse, or in the moment of words like these being spoken, some people at that moment have the glimpse and wake up.

And so you realize the essence of yourself has nothing to do with the form of yourself, the body, whatever thoughts go through your mind, whatever emotions you have, that's fine, that's a level of form, I call it the human part, but we are human beings. Human is form, being is formless. Most humans know only the human part and identify totally with the human part, which is the physical form, the thoughts forms, the emotional forms.

You identify with external forms, possessions, achievements, this, that, and that becomes a... But really, external forms are also thought forms, they get translated into mental images. So you're really always identified with mental images, even your my car, you're not really identified with my car, but with the mental image of my car.

So that is the world of form, that's the human, and if that's all you know, then you're lost in the world, because this world is the world of form. And most people still live like that, lost in the world, which implies lost in their minds. That's where the world starts.

And the world being the world of form, and underneath it all is the timeless dimension, the spiritual dimension, the sacred dimension. And that's the essence of who you are, and that is the deepest meaning of now.

[Speaker 2] (28:38 - 28:41)

And we access that through the stillness, through the silence?

[Speaker 1] (28:42 - 29:18)

Yes, you could say the stillness, the silence is it, but you cannot, of course, ever objectify it. You can't say, there it is. That's why Jesus said, the kingdom of heaven does not come with signs to be perceived.

Because if it's a sign, you say, oh, there it is, the kingdom of heaven, there it's coming. It doesn't. First, of course, it cannot come, because it's already here.

And it can't be there, because it's the essence of here, it's here.

[Speaker 2] (29:18 - 29:32)

Well, to experience that, do we have to, when I think of going in the silence, I think of this quiet, meditative state. Is it possible to experience that as we are doing in our life?

[Speaker 1] (29:33 - 30:40)

Yes. And this is the part of the art of living in this world, of living, of conscious living in this world, so that you are able to balance in your life the two dimensions, form and formlessness, world and spirit, so that you provide, you are a bridge, so to speak. You, as this human being, are the bridge between the being and the human, the world, form and formlessness.

And across this bridge flows something into this world from the timeless, sacred dimension that is not to be found, it is not to be found somewhere in space or time. God, you could say. God is not found in space or time.

God is not hiding somewhere in outer space. We know that by now. Even conventional Christianity is beginning to realize that God is not out there somewhere.

Although... Anyway, let's not...

[Speaker 4] (30:41 - 30:41)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (30:48 - 34:03)

So, we are here bridging the two worlds, and through you, as you live consciously, the dimension of the sacred or the divine or the timeless flows through you, through your words, if you are conscious and present, through your actions, not necessarily big significant actions, every action is significant, even lifting a cup, consciousness can flow into that, presence can flow into that, into power, when you interact with other humans, and you are not preparing mentally what you are going to say, you are not judging them in any way, you are the space for them. That means, at that moment, something through you as this form, something from the formless, the sacred dimension of God, flows into this world of form. And in a strange way, it gradually transforms the world of form.

The world of form loses its density and heaviness. And what I'm describing is actually the deepest meaning of love, because when this flows into what you say, do, into your interactions, that space is essentially what love is, not the egoic understanding of love, which says, I need you, don't you ever dare leave me. But the love that recognizes that whatever you see out there in the world of form is a manifestation or an appearance in disguise, disguised as that particular temporary form, of who you are in your essence, on the formless.

So there's always a self-recognition when that dimension is open and flows through you into this world. When I say you, at this moment I mean the form of you, which is ultimately not who you are, it's just an appearance. And that's our mission then, is to bring that dimension of consciousness into this world, and that is what the universe wants.

And if we bring this dimension of consciousness into what we do and say, especially into interactions, we are fulfilling not only our purpose as humans, we are fulfilling the purpose of the universe, because the universe is moving continuously towards the greater and greater expression of consciousness. And gradually, I don't want to go too much into this, but my feeling is that gradually matter is becoming, through this, matter gradually becomes spirit and loses its density.

[Speaker 2] (34:04 - 34:17)

Well, would you like to lead us into that stillness? I know we would all be very honored to experience that, and it is our tradition in Unity to begin with prayer and stillness and meditation.

[Speaker 1] (34:17 - 40:21)

Well, we can, but the strange thing also happens when these words are spoken, you can actually experience in the background, you're hearing the words, you understand the words without needing to analyze them, and in the background of your perceptions, there is already the space. So even as we speak, in order to find the space, it is not necessary, it can be helpful from time to time to go into stillness, wonderful thing to do, but it is not confined to moments of stillness. The question is whether you are able to be aware in the background of your life and that means, of course, now, whether you can be aware of this thing that cannot be defined, we could call it, can you be aware of the consciousness that you are?

Can you be aware of the awareness that you are? Not the awareness of something, the awareness of awareness. Can you sense the presence that you are?

Yes, and again, it's not as Jesus said, you can't say, oh, yeah, I've got it now, or you can't say, okay, I have achieved presence, and then claim, because you can only have it now. You can't say, now I have it, I'm an achiever of presence, or even if you say, I'm enlightened, it's dangerous to say that because you're forming another form identity. You give yourself another form identity and imply that I'm going to be present forever.

But there's only now, so the only question is, are you able to sense this background to all experience right now and still be able to deal with things, perceive things, even take action so that there's always a stillness in the background, even while you talk to people. What do we need to do now? One can lose oneself so easily when you begin to use your mind, start words flow, they come out of you, they come out of the other person, and there's an enormous momentum behind the human mind, thousands of years of unconsciousness, and so the human mind is used to drawing your entire consciousness and using it, making thoughts, more and more thoughts.

So for many people still, all their consciousness is thought, takes the form of thought. They are not aware that underneath thought there is the vastness of unconditioned consciousness, out of which thoughts are not separate from consciousness, they are a form that consciousness takes. And then the question is whether consciousness identifies completely with a form and loses itself consciousness, or whether the forms can arise and you are still conscious of the background, of the space of awareness.

And, as you say, it can be helpful at first to find it in moments of, when you say, OK, I'm going to be still now, still. And perhaps many of you, perhaps already practicing that, this is an advanced spiritual group, so I'll tell you what it is. It's to be able to simply say, there's nothing to think about now, so why should I think?

There's no need to think. To voluntarily say, I will surrender right now. I'll surrender thought, relinquish thought.

And what's left? Now, two things are possible now. You can either fall below thought, or you rise above thought, that is an alertness, relaxed alertness, still alertness, you rise above thought.

And you can contemplate, you can then, this could be a spiritual practice, you can practice perceiving things through stillness. Without naming, without labeling. Whether you use auditory perception, or visual perception, or tactile, it doesn't matter, the predominant sense for most people is the visual.

So, you look around, you see everything, you even somehow know what it is you're looking, but you're not defining it, and limiting it by calling it something. That means the mystery of life is still there. You have not reduced the mystery and the incredible beauty of this by calling it something, and then believing if you attach a name to it, you know what it is.

There's always, this is a great illusion, if you call it, I don't know what that plant is, but if I knew it, if you call it something, Ficus. Yes. And then, most people believe now they know what it is.

True. Nothing has happened, you've just attached a sound to it.

[Speaker 2] (40:22 - 40:23)

And it's not even a real ficus.

[Speaker 1] (40:25 - 44:51)

Yeah. But even inanimate objects, even inanimate objects are intensely alive. Everything is mysterious.

And the mystery is there surrounding you, the universe, and the delusion is that by naming it, that suddenly you know what it is. So here the spiritual practice is to refrain from naming and labeling mentally. And that's the beauty.

You practice at first in easy environments, out in nature is helpful, easier than being in a city, because in a city everything is man-made and can stimulate thought, especially you see writing everywhere, advertising, and that stimulates thought. It's very hard to look at something written and then not let it become a thought. You'd have to turn it around, upside down, and then perhaps it works.

But even then the mind will try to figure out what's inside. So out in nature, anything natural, just looking, listening. And this is being there fully, no matter where it is.

You're absolutely present then. You're above thought in the state of alert presence. And everything becomes alive.

You suddenly realize that when you were immersed in thinking and always labeling everything mentally, the universe was no longer alive to you. You couldn't sense the aliveness of the universe anymore. And unfortunately millions still live like that.

They inhabit a universe that has become deadened by mental abstractions, continuous thinking, because every thought is some form of abstraction. It's not it. So the practice then is to bring that alert presence into perceptions and look around.

Do it in your room too, when you sit in your bedroom or your living room. Sit there for a while and just look around. Just to practice, can I perceive without this compulsion to label everything?

And that's a beautiful thing to do. Your perceptions become innocent. This is why Jesus said, unless you become like little children, you cannot enter the kingdom of God.

He means that those are little children whose minds have not yet started to conceptualize everything and judge everything. And yet it's not quite the same as a little child, because you have already transcended thought. The little child is still at a pre-thought level, and you have gone through it.

So there's an added depth or dimension to that state, but it has certain similarities with the state of the innocent perception of a child. And imagine if you can bring that into human interactions, so that whoever you meet, any human being you meet, you don't label them. You just are there as the space for that perception of that.

And so another way of putting this is that you are here as the aware space rather than as a person. So the aware space, the being part of the human, becomes more important than the human. The human is still honored to the level of form.

Yes, you have a name, you have a personal history, but you no longer derive your identity from your personal history, which after all is only a story you tell yourself in your head. And certain emotions still go with that story. That's your personal history.

Your personal history consists of thought and your photo albums. And your photo albums are not going to survive for that long either. Two generations later, they end up in some antique store, and then somebody looks at them and all they see is some human form.

Who's that?

[Speaker 2] (44:51 - 45:15)

I wonder who that was. We were talking today with Eckhart Tolle, and more information is online at www.eckharttolle.com. We thank you for being with us for this very special edition of The Leading Edge.

So Eckhart, what would the role then be of having the multitudes gather in prayer, or having multiple people gather in the silence?

[Speaker 1] (45:17 - 47:42)

There's an energy field that arises when a group of people, even just two, come together and enter the state of presence. And that affects, not only does it strengthen the presence in each member of the group, it helps, it's not presence, but it's not your possession, by the way. One might sometimes say, your presence or my presence, that's only a way of speaking.

Ultimately, there isn't your presence or my presence, there's only presence. You could say it's the divine presence, or the presence of God in this world. And it can be very helpful to come together in a group with the purpose of being present, so you're present together.

The difficulty often arises when the period of stillness comes to an end and the group starts to speak again. The moment you start to speak, then the challenge is not to lose that sense of stillness or presence even while you start to think and speak again. And that can be quite a challenge, because the momentum of the mind can be so overpowering, especially when you start discussing something.

So after sitting together in presence, somebody says, OK, now, let's discuss the meaning of presence. Well, I think it... No, no, you're wrong.

And before you know it, two minutes later, you're completely in some mind stream, identified with some mind stream. Off you go, and suddenly you're fighting with somebody who is identified with a slightly different mind stream. And so the presence is gone.

Oh, where has it gone? It's become obscured. You were not alert enough to remain.

The alertness was lost. Alertness is consciousness without thought. Presence ultimately is just bare, pure consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (47:43 - 48:06)

So this morning we were all gathered here in the Silent Unity Chapel, and Reverend Dorothy Pearson led us into the silence in a very powerful way. And I had this experience, and I'm wondering if you've ever had this experience, where in the silence there is such a feeling of being connected and feeling the presence of Source, that for me, I get very emotional.

[Speaker 1] (48:06 - 48:15)

Yes, it touches all levels. You can feel it physically, even. You can feel it on the emotional level.

It reverberates on all levels.

[Speaker 2] (48:15 - 48:20)

So is that an emotional release? What is that emotion that we feel?

[Speaker 1] (48:20 - 48:51)

Well, it's like, I would say, it's an expression of love. That's how I experience that. When love arises, because this is how love arises, sometimes it touches the emotion, and you cry.

It doesn't mean you're sad. There's great joy in that. So the joy can be so overpowering that it touches the emotional level also.

And it's very beautiful.

[Speaker 2] (48:51 - 49:23)

We have many questions that people through our online community, the UnityFM online community, and those that are here with us, many, many questions people have for you.

This one is from Shirley Bowman, and she's a member of our online community. And she says that in your book, you say that there is nothing you can do to prepare yourself for attaining enlightenment, and we've talked about that.

So what about prayer and meditation and what Unity calls the silence? Are those processes that is the intention for those to lead us to enlightenment?

[Speaker 1] (49:24 - 49:24)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (49:24 - 49:25)

How does that connect?

[Speaker 1] (49:25 - 49:58)

Yes. In fact, what I say in the book is that there's nothing you can do to bring about awakening. Awakening is the first separation of consciousness from thinking.

And so somebody who is able to go into stillness and practice stillness has already gone through that. So that person has already begun to awaken. But if we're doing it in order to...

That means you haven't found the stillness yet. You're trying to find the stillness, but you can't find it.

[Speaker 5] (49:59 - 50:01)

More silence, more silence.

[Speaker 1] (50:01 - 50:58)

Yes, it would be very frustrating because you would continue to come here, I just can't get there. And then after a while you would stay home and you can't do it anymore. And then you have to wait for grace.

In some form the grace will then come, perhaps not by you going to a group, it might come in a different form. Maybe you suddenly slip, you're walking on a wet road, and suddenly you fall and whatever, you break your arm or you don't, and suddenly your mind stops. The shock is so great that for a few seconds you're there in presence.

Oh, that's it. That would be the beginning of the awakening. And then you'll be able to come to a group and you've had a glimpse.

[Speaker 2] (50:59 - 51:00)

Can we do it without suffering?

[Speaker 1] (51:00 - 51:01)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (51:01 - 51:06)

Can we do it without the dark night of the soul? For those of us happy people, can we get there eventually? Yes.

[Speaker 1] (51:07 - 52:10)

Most people here probably to a greater or lesser extent have already gone through that phase of suffering. And for many of us it's only because of the suffering that we've gone through we are here now. If we hadn't had it we would still be completely identified with the egoic self, the little me, and pursuing its little aims and ambitions and problem making and so on.

So most of us have gone through that stage and the more you're able to invite presence into your life, the less you need suffering to force you into presence or to break the egoic shell. Because for some people the density of the ego is just enormous and they need some kind of shock. I don't know if I've met any recently.

[Speaker 4] (52:11 - 52:13)

Maybe a few.

[Speaker 1] (52:14 - 52:34)

There was a spiritual teacher in India who called people with, I don't know if some of you know Indian terminology, you can add the suffix G to a name as a form of respect. So if somebody is called Krishna, you can call them Krishnaji, which is a form of respect. So he called people with big egos, Egojis.

[Speaker 2] (52:38 - 52:40)

As a sign of respect. Respect the ego.

[Speaker 1] (52:42 - 52:43)

Accept the ego.

[Speaker 2] (52:43 - 53:44)

Accept the ego. Here on Unity Campus, of course, the grounds are spectacular and I was walking yesterday, of course, greeting the new earth and there is a garden not far from where we're staying here. It's the Lowell Fillmore Garden.

And there is a plaque and a poem is on it that is written by Lowell. And as I read it, I thought, this is a new earth. So I brought it to share just to hear your comments on this.

He writes, when for a purpose I had prayed and prayed and prayed until my words seemed worn and bare with arduous use and all my fervor and persistence brought no hope, I paused to give my weary brain a rest and ceased my anxious cry. In that still moment, after self had tried and failed, there came a glorious vision of God's power and lo, my prayer was answered in that hour.

[Speaker 4] (53:46 - 53:47)

That's right here on campus.

[Speaker 2] (53:48 - 53:59)

Like that's a new earth. Is that what you're saying? Because we've all had those fervent prayers.

We pray and pray and pray and pray. And that doesn't lead us to where we want to go. Why?

[Speaker 1] (54:00 - 56:18)

Well, for many people, prayer is still part of the old conditioning of your consciousness, which basically means you're looking to some future for fulfillment. Please let this happen. Then I'll be happy.

Please give me that. Then I'll be happy. Please don't let that happen.

And then I'll be happy. So the old mind structure which believes it needs the future for fulfillment is still operating even when people think they're being spiritual. And so they don't realize that the very same structure that worldly people are possessed by, they say, I can only get that bigger house or better job, and only people could recognize that I'm the greatest, then I'll be happy.

Or if I see my picture in People magazine, then I'll be happy. And it's the same mind structure, or the same mind structure even with spiritual people. Whereas this prayer is where the old conditioning still operates.

It could also operate in people who are seeking enlightenment. Now that seems something more advanced than asking in prayer to be given something so that you can be happy, not realizing that the only place where you can be fulfilled and happy is now. You just have to go deeper into it.

So if you are spiritual, then you might think, okay, I need you to hear of enlightenment or liberation, whatever it's called, salvation. Okay, I need to attain that. I need to become enlightened.

You read books about it and so on. And you can become very knowledgeable. And what is actually stopping you from realizing enlightenment or awakening or whatever is the belief that it's going to come at some future moment.

It's only when future is surrendered that it opens up. So it's only when you let go of that old mind structure that says, I need time.

[Speaker 2] (56:19 - 56:30)

So for example, let's say someone is scheduled for surgery. So they might want to go into a prayerful state about a future upcoming surgery. What would be the best way?

[Speaker 1] (56:31 - 1:05:27)

The most powerful way is to absolutely not leave this moment, to refuse to budge from just now, so that time virtually collapses. And then there's such intensity behind that state, and that can be there also if you believe that the body may go soon, may dissolve soon, not much time left. So there's no point in looking for something in time.

If you know that the body might go in two weeks' time, two months' time, then there's no point in looking towards time for some fulfillment. So then it can happen that even unspiritual people who've spent their whole lives in worldly pursuits are suddenly driven, otherwise they become extremely miserable and unhappy, the depths of depression, of course. But even then it has happened, can happen, that even unspiritual people are driven out of time into the now.

And suddenly the sacred, the spiritual dimension opens up in them, and they go, and you know, you can sense the transformation. Light shines through the decaying form, and it's an amazing thing. I've met a few people who, as they were going towards the dissolution of the body, entered that state of absolute intense presence, which is not a forced state.

It's not a state of, I need to be present. It's a very relaxed intensity. And that's also where the spiritual master lives, so to speak, has his or her home, which is in the present moment, always aligned with now.

No matter what appears in the now, you say yes to the appearance of the now. If the appearance of now is a difficult person, an ego G, then that's what is now. You don't say, you should behave differently.

No, of course, action is always possible. You can remove yourself from the ego G, and look the other way, or leave the room. But if you can't, you're stuck in an elevator with the ego G, then you have to say, there you are, you are this now, the form that this now takes.

So the primordial spiritual practice is, whether you do it shortly before death, hopefully you do it sooner, hence the ancient dictum, die before you die. This is the collapse of time. Time then only has a practical purpose, but is no longer important in your life.

You're not looking for time to find yourself. You can only find yourself now, because you are the presence. And so there's an uncompromising yes to whatever form this moment takes.

And even if it seems difficult, and even if it seems limiting, because the world of form is always limiting in one way or another, you cannot find the limitless in the world of form. Even if you achieve everything that you wanted to achieve, wealth, great fame, everybody loves me, everybody admires me, then you will find, even there you will find, your new life situation would have new limitations. You cannot find the limitless.

Oprah can't go for walks in the street or go shopping, she can't go out by herself, she would get mobbed. So that's a big limitation. What great joy there is in just walking around, looking around.

Can't do it anymore. Big limitation. So if she had thought that fame would make her happy, she would now become unhappy again.

So whatever you achieve in the world of form, sooner or later you will hit upon... It doesn't mean you cannot do things to go beyond certain limitations in your life. Scarcity, there may be a period in your life when you do things to go beyond scarcity, or healing your body, there may be things you can do to heal your body.

These are all wonderful things. But no matter what you do on the level of form, you will always hit upon some limitation. So when you encounter the limitation, it appears in the now, you say, OK, this is what is.

You don't judge it, you don't run away from it. And sometimes, for some people, the limitation is drastic. The body may become incapacitated, it might not heal.

Some people may experience healing, but not everybody experiences healing. Or some limitation where everything that you have worked on for 25 years, 30 years of your life, collapses around you. You pick up your phone and say, How are my shares?

The stockbroker says, It's all gone. The stock market has collapsed. And your house has collapsed.

Your wife has left you. No, this is what is. And if you bring an acceptance to the limitations that arise in the now, the very limitations become an opening into the space.

Because the surrender and the acceptance of something that is seen as inevitable, and the form of this present moment is always inevitable because everything is as it is. At this moment, it is as it is. You can't argue with that.

You can take action, yes. But right now, is means is. It's already is.

And not to recognize the is-ness and become one with the is-ness means to be out of alignment with life. So if you recognize... All you have to accept is the is-ness of this moment.

It doesn't mean you can't take action. But right now, this is what is. And then action arises out of a state of acceptance.

And enormous empowerment flows into it, not out of a state of negativity. But the important thing is, when you accept the form, no matter what limitation it seems to be, completely, the so-called limitation becomes an opening into the inner space. Because through the acceptance of the outer limitation, the inner space of the formless opens up.

This is how sometimes people have suffered enormously, were driven into awakening and enlightenment through their suffering. They were driven to a point where they just couldn't struggle or couldn't have any more resistance to the suffering because they realized at some point, the suffering arises not because of what's going on, but my resistance to what's going on. And so, surrender happens.

With surrender, the inner space opens up. The stillness underneath all that. And then, the very limitation becomes an open door.

I believe that's the meaning of the crucified Jesus on the cross, because the meaning of the cross is that it's an expression of the most extreme limitation that a human being can encounter, the most extreme suffering, totally helpless. So the cross is a torture instrument, but for some reason, the cross is also a symbol for the divine. And at first, this might seem very strange, especially if you come from outer space, you're not used to it, you see it for the first time.

How is it that the humans have made the torture instrument into a symbol for the divine? And that is because behind the suffering that is totally accepted, not my will, but thy will be done, not the will of the little me, there's an acceptance. And through the acceptance, the very thing that was the torture instrument becomes the divine.

It opens up. And that's the transmutation of suffering.

[Speaker 2] (1:05:27 - 1:05:49)

Yes. We've had many of our questions relate to prayer, and this one in particular connects to what you're talking about, because it's asking, this is from our audience today, what is prayer to those who are attempting to live in the now? And who are we praying to, and is it a monologue?

If we're living in the now, what is prayer?

[Speaker 1] (1:05:51 - 1:07:22)

Prayer, of course, is many different things according to where you are at in your consciousness. And as long as a person is still not, has not yet realized his or her oneness with the divine, then you're at a stage where the divine is approached on the level of duality. And for those people, prayer can be helpful up to a point until they need to let go of it.

So, if you still see God as outside of you somewhere, then you're addressing God or asking for something. But increasingly, as you realize your essential oneness with the source, then your prayer would change and perhaps would become more simple. And so perhaps would just be little pointers that you use sometimes to remind yourself of the oneness.

Some lessons in A Course in Miracles, for example, have nice pointers like, let me remember who I am. Let me be still. These can be little pointers that take you into the reality of the realization of oneness.

[Speaker 2] (1:07:22 - 1:07:24)

In Unity, we talk about affirmative prayer.

[Speaker 1] (1:07:25 - 1:07:26)

Affirmative prayer, that's right.

[Speaker 2] (1:07:26 - 1:07:27)

The knowing.

[Speaker 1] (1:07:27 - 1:07:46)

Yes, yes, and that can be helpful. So, personally, I don't use the dualistic prayer, but occasionally affirmations come into my head as just spontaneous thoughts, and that's beautiful.

[Speaker 2] (1:07:47 - 1:08:05)

Well, David from our online community says that, you suggest that we are not our thoughts. The filmers have been quoted as saying that every thought is a prayer. He says, well, both statements resonate with me since I struggle with reconciling them.

Are we separate from even our intentional, positive, prayerful thoughts?

[Speaker 1] (1:08:06 - 1:10:41)

Now, thought, of course, for most people in the old consciousness, thought is a manifestation of the old conditioning of your mind. It comes from the past, and all the thought structures are repetitive, to a large extent, negative. They feed the ego, which needs, of course, the negativity, which needs to have problems, which needs to have enemies.

So the continuous thought activity that most people are immersed in, involuntary and compulsive, they don't even know they're immersed in thought activity because they're so identified with thought activity that is who they are, or think they are. So, for those people, thought is totally repetitive, and it tends to recreate, also, experiences, because thought is creative, so you are identified with certain conditioned thinking, so no matter what you do, you create a similar reality because you're still totally identified with the same thought structures. So people, for example, they think, OK, I need to get out of this relationship, and then they have another relationship and get married to another person, and finally, and after a little while, you see, you've recreated the same thing.

And some people get married three, four, five times, and they recreate always the same thing. And some people even recreate very abusive partners sometimes, and they think, OK, finally, marriage number three, I finally found this person is not abusive, and after a few months, he or she turns out to be abusive. The same thoughts that you are immersed in tend to create the same reality, and so the awakening is the realization that there is conditioned thinking, the voice in the head, continuously going through your mind, interpreting your experiences according to your past.

So whatever you experience, there's a filter of your thinking, and you don't really experience the world, only in a very remote and indirect way, you really only then ever experience your thinking, the structure of your thoughts. You only ever really experience the past in you. It's a dreadful state to be in.

[Speaker 2] (1:10:42 - 1:10:44)

For most of us, yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:10:45 - 1:11:07)

And it's called normal, normal human consciousness. And this is why for many humans, unless they begin to awaken spiritually, no real change ever happens. And even if you win in the lottery, it's not real change.

It just means you have the same drama and the same unhappiness in a luxury environment.

[Speaker 2] (1:11:10 - 1:11:12)

Until we can recreate that old reality.

[Speaker 1] (1:11:12 - 1:11:17)

Yes, until you lose the luxury environment because your old thoughts are to do with scarcity.

[Speaker 2] (1:11:18 - 1:11:33)

And that is one of the fundamental, one of our basic unity teachings, is that our thoughts do create. That thoughts held in mind produce after their kind. And so part of the spiritual discipline that we talk about is, how do we become conscious in guiding our thoughts?

[Speaker 1] (1:11:34 - 1:15:28)

And this, of course, is why so little change happens in the world so far, because the old thoughts are recreating the old reality. If you look at human history, 20th century history, dreadful. And the warfare that goes on.

But some change is coming in, it's true. So this is the fundamental shift that begins to happen when you're aware that there is old conditioned thinking that is continuously coloring your experiences, that is continuously interpreting your relationships, misinterpreting your relationships, imposing your own past on your present relationships. And so it's recreating the same madness again and again.

So whatever you, all your interpretations are erroneous, because they are colored by the past in you. And this is why the course in miracles, for example, starts with little exercises, which, for example, tells you to look around the room and say, I see only the past in this mug. I see only the past in this table.

I see only the past in this carpet. Seems strange at first, but it's attempting to make you aware that this is what operates in you so that you can become free. And then it has another lesson which says, nothing I see in this room means anything.

This is one of the very early lessons in the course. Nothing I see in this room means anything. Why is that a lesson?

Because it's attempting to remove the meaning that you impose on the world through your old conditioning. So this is all the old thought that recreates the old reality. And then, at some point, awakening begins to happen.

You begin to be aware of your thoughts. It means you're not free yet, but a little bit of freedom has come in. And then you can, sometimes, you can already become aware of the most obvious, repetitive, negative, life-denying thoughts that have been going around in your head for years and years and years.

And suddenly, once you bring the awareness to it, the thoughts lose their intensity. And at some point, you can choose to recognize this as an old thought and say, oh, there's another old thought. And you can let go of it.

You can replace it with another thought. Or you can simply be present, even better. Just bring presence where before there was a thought that said, oh, he's a jerk.

I know this kind of person. I've met so many of them. So immediately you relate to this person through this judgment.

And he may not be. On a deeper level, he isn't. But even on a surface level, he may not be.

It may just be your interpretation. And then you recognize the thought, and then you can say, well, I honor the divinity in this human being. And that improves your relationships.

And it goes even deeper if you can be simply present. And no judgment at all. Just be the aware presence and listen to this person or look at this person and bring that into the relationship.

Then you become free of karma. Karma is all the old conditioning you carry around inside you that you are unconscious of, with which the past is recreated again and again. And karma can only dissolve through the arising of presence.

That's the miracle of human transformation.

[Speaker 2] (1:15:29 - 1:16:38)

We're talking with Eckhart Tolle, the best-selling author of A New Earth Awakening to Your Life's Purpose, online at www.eckharttolle.com. We thank you for joining us for this special edition of The Leading Edge. I'm Mindy Odlin, and we'll be back with more in just a moment.

Welcome back to The Leading Edge. I am Mindy Odlin, and this is a very special presentation of The Leading Edge. Our guest today, best-selling author Eckhart Tolle.

We've been talking about prayer, about presence, and I know many people from our audience today. We are here at the Silent Unity Chapel at Unity Village. They've been asking questions.

We have many people from our Unity FM online community asking questions. And this is one that just really jumped out to me because it's one that I want to know the answer to, too. This is from our audience today.

It says that they were listening to an interview with Barbara Walters on NPR this morning, and she says that she always asks people, what's the biggest misconception that people have about you? I would love to know. I get to be Barbara Walters here for a moment.

What is the biggest misconception that people have about you?

[Speaker 1] (1:16:39 - 1:22:44)

Well, there are probably different kinds depending where people are coming from. But I believe one is that they see me as special or enlightened. So there's a form identity that's created and projected that is almost the opposite of the reality because the reality of who you are is by relinquishing any kind of conceptual identity and any sense that you as this form is special, that you are more special than somebody else.

Enlightenment, that somebody is enlightened, is itself a contradiction. Enlightenment means that the sense of self, of I, the erroneous, the false, mind-made I, has become transparent or given way to the light of consciousness that shines through. The light of consciousness is nobody's achievement or possession.

So even to say I have achieved enlightenment is a big error. It means you haven't? Nobody achieves enlightenment.

It's only when the self that claims enlightenment gets out of the way or becomes at least transparent enough so that it doesn't cause problems anymore. Then that which is beyond the form shines through and that is the power. It's not my power.

The misconception is that this is my power. And of course it's happened sometimes even to people who have touched that and have that power flow through them. At some point their mind came back and identified with it and they've got another conceptual identity as me as very special.

And then the power becomes obscured again. It's like the clouds are coming back and obscure the sun. And the clouds are, of course, the stream of thinking and you have a new conceptual identity.

And it's more likely to happen to spiritual teachers who are surrounded only by disciples or followers and so they project certain things onto the teachers and continuously bombarded with projections. You are the greatest. And then after a few years, some remnant of egoic consciousness gets triggered and he begins to believe, he or she, that this is true.

So it's continuously going back into being nobody in particular. For example, being a spiritual teacher is not an identity as I see it, people believe this is my identity, but it's only an identity, it's only a function while the so-called teaching happens. Even the teaching doesn't come from this form, it's a process.

If there was nobody here, I would have nothing to say. The words come out because there's a space here that pulls out the words. I don't come here with some cumulative knowledge and this is what I'm going to say.

Nobody here, nothing, it is complete, just a space. I don't know anything. And then when I go away from here, the function is relinquished.

The important thing is then not to carry the conceptual identity of me being a spiritual teacher, because then I would still be a spiritual teacher when I'm walking around the supermarket and I would feel special. So always coming back to, I am just the, I am the space for this. I am, so it's no thing, no body in particular.

That's the main, so the misconception is the projection of specialness. That's how it is. And so when people, sometimes people when they come to talk, they feel an enormous arising inside of aliveness and presence and they might think it comes from here, but it can only come from within them.

Perhaps something that's here can pull it out, but it must be in you if you can sense it. Whatever you feel is there and the other person must also be in you. For example, stillness.

In order to be aware, for example, that there's silence in this room, for a moment you have to be silent inside. It's only the silence that can be aware of the silence, or the stillness which can be aware of the silence outside. If you have no stillness, you don't even know that there's silence because there's mental noise.

So the, yes, the strange thing is the specialness, that's the specialness as opposed to others who are not special, that's the delusion. I do feel special, but I know that everybody is equally special. So there's a sense of there's something very, this life that I am is precious and it's everybody's identity.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:46 - 1:24:09)

You mentioned yourself, the role of spiritual teacher, and I noticed in today's Daily Word, the Daily Word has this uncanny ability to provide the perfect word on a perfect day. And so here we are with Eckhart Tolle, the author of A New Earth, awakening to your life's purpose. And the Daily Word today is purpose.

And it says, I love what I do and I do it with purpose. As I reflect upon my talents and interests, which is what you were talking about, that you are a spiritual teacher, that is a role you play, the activities that bring me joy and fulfillment, I realize that these are the things that give shape to my purpose in life. And each one is a gift from God meant to be developed and shared.

Each new day I welcome the opportunity to put my spiritual gifts into practice, to grow them and expand the blessing that they are. I confidently share my talents with the people around me with commitment and enthusiasm. When I love what I do and I do it with purpose, I am a blessing to the world.

I am a unique and divine expression of spirit. My life is filled with purpose and meaning as I develop and share my spiritual gifts with others. So could you talk about what is a spiritual gift?

Because it does seem like there are those of us who are spiritual teachers, there are those of us who are healers, there are those of us who nurture in different ways. How does that tie into what you were saying?

[Speaker 1] (1:24:10 - 1:24:44)

As I say in the book, I see there's your inner purpose and your outer purpose. Outer purpose varies from person to person. It's to do with your activity, your outer function in this world.

Inner purpose is primary. It's the foundation for a satisfying and fruitful outer purpose. So inner purpose is the same for everybody.

Inner purpose, and of course the subtitle to the book is Awakening to Your Inner Purpose.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:44 - 1:24:47)

Awakening to Your Life's Purpose. You read this, right?

[Speaker 1] (1:24:51 - 1:25:18)

The subtitle actually was the idea of the editor. He called and said, I've had a great idea and said, Awakening to Your Life's Purpose. I said, that's it?

That's good. So Awakening to Your Life's Purpose already contains the answer because your life's purpose, your inner purpose, your primordial primary purpose is awakening.

[Speaker 2] (1:25:19 - 1:25:26)

One of the things that Reverend Paul Hasselbeck always says at the end of his program is to go out and be the best Christ you can be.

[Speaker 1] (1:25:26 - 1:25:26)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:25:27 - 1:25:29)

Our primary purpose.

[Speaker 1] (1:25:29 - 1:30:07)

Yes. The primary purpose is to be here as the awakened consciousness. Present.

Conscious. And let that energy off, which is spiritual energy, which is a very fine vibration. Ultimately all energy is one, but the spiritual is the finest vibration.

To let that flow into this world through whatever you do. And what you do is secondary. Primary is always how you do what you do.

So it doesn't necessarily mean that you need to find something great, some great enterprise, creating some great structure in this world. Some people will do that. But the primary thing is what energy flows into every little thing you do.

And even if you're engaged in some great enterprise, even if your name is Oprah, for example, every great thing consists of a hundred little steps that you take every moment. And even for Oprah, at some point, she steps onto the stage. One step, two, three, walks to a chair, sits in a chair, looks at the person, a question comes.

Spontaneously a lot of questions. Enormous ability. She has to tune into the other person and then the right question comes.

Funny comments come spontaneously. All these things that developed in her over 30 years of practice. And so that's one example.

Many people look for some significant life purpose. But the first question is, have you made every little action that you take significant? There's no point in looking for some great, abstract, significant thing.

What's the great purpose of my life? And you neglect to pay attention to what is at hand, whatever you are doing now, in search for something significant and believing that this moment is not significant. You're just looking for the significant thing.

And then, of course, you're not going to find it because you're neglecting the very foundation for all significance, which is this moment. So are you getting this moment right? Is this whatever you're doing at this moment done with presence, with attention?

Are you honoring this moment? And if you're honoring this moment, even if you don't know exactly where you want to go, if you honor this moment and see this moment as primary, then it's much more likely that if you are, if it is your destiny to create something out there in this world, it will come much more quickly. Even if you're doing something at this moment that you perhaps wouldn't want to do for the rest of your life.

Maybe you got a job that doesn't pay well and is repetitive. And yet, this is what is now.

You can be, if you're in a negative state there, at this moment doing that, it's much less likely that you will be finding your true life purpose.

So always come to make the present moment your friend. That's the foundation. If you're friendly with the present moment, then you're friendly with life.

Then life comes and will offer you whatever is most appropriate for you, which may have all kinds of things, working with people, working with plants, working with animals, working with structures, working with art, working with writing, whatever it is, in whatever form. And you may use perhaps already what you are doing, but as you bring presence into it, it becomes empowered and deeper. Let's say you're a hairdresser and you're quite good, but then suddenly you realize how important the present moment is and you pay attention to every moment, the person who is there, the hair, the doing, the words come, which means what you do will become not only very good, that you're a very good hairdresser, it means another dimension will come into what you do when people come to you.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:07 - 1:30:09)

Do you ever get tired of being so aware?

[Speaker 1] (1:30:10 - 1:30:11)

Ha ha ha!

[Speaker 2] (1:30:13 - 1:30:20)

I mean, when I think about every step, you know, being present with every step, with every snip of the scissors, it sounds like it could be kind of exhausting.

[Speaker 1] (1:30:23 - 1:30:52)

There's not perhaps an equal intensity all throughout your day. It's when you're engaged. You just zone out.

Well, of course, one gets tired sometimes, and there's a point at which although you endeavor to live above thought, always a moment comes late at night, or sometimes for me in the afternoon when it's time to take a nap. A moment comes around 5 o'clock.

[Speaker 4] (1:30:53 - 1:30:54)

Uh-oh!

[Speaker 1] (1:30:58 - 1:31:28)

When my level of consciousness falls below thought. And there's a little nap, and then wake up again. Oh, and then it's fine.

And then I go about things you've had. So, sometimes... At the moment, I don't have television, so that doesn't work.

Sometimes we watch films. We rent DVDs.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:28 - 1:31:43)

Well, that was the next question. Someone said, You are such an enlightened soul. I'm very grateful for your awareness, your wisdom, and your willingness to share your insights with the world.

Just out of curiosity, what do you do for fun? Ha ha ha! Do you have any hobbies?

Ha ha ha!

[Speaker 1] (1:31:47 - 1:32:31)

Well, it doesn't sound very interesting. I like walking out in nature every day. I go for a walk in the forest every day when I'm at home with a dog.

That's fun. My hobby for a long time was photography. And at the moment, I'm trying to switch from...

I'm always late with technology. At the moment, I'm trying to switch from the old-fashioned film photography, which I know very well, to digital, which I don't know anything about. But I have a little digital camera now.

I'm trying to take photos and master that.

[Speaker 2] (1:32:31 - 1:32:32)

Capturing moments?

[Speaker 1] (1:32:33 - 1:32:33)

What?

[Speaker 2] (1:32:33 - 1:32:34)

You're capturing moments.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:34 - 1:33:29)

Yes. What I capture most, what I do with the camera when I use it, I walk around nature with the camera and I look. There's no thought involved.

And I look at some, whatever. There's little, relatively insignificant things, usually leaves, trees, flowers, blades of grass, stones, whatever, or clouds. And at some point, there's something that particularly conveys the sense of divine presence that's there, the sacredness of nature.

And then I walk around a bit more, looking. And then there's something else. So it's not so much to capture something for the past.

It's to capture the sacredness. I'm not a master photographer. It's just a joyful thing to do, that's all.

[Speaker 2] (1:33:29 - 1:33:37)

Do you email us some pictures? We'll put them up on the website. One with a digital camera, I'll help you.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:39 - 1:33:45)

There are a few pictures in the little booklet that comes with a DVD of my Fintan retreat.

[Speaker 2] (1:33:45 - 1:33:46)

Oh, very nice.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:46 - 1:33:49)

And that has some photos that I took of nature.

[Speaker 2] (1:33:49 - 1:34:27)

Lovely, lovely. Well, speaking of pictures, one thing that many of our listeners are talking about, and there's many books coming out on the topic of treasure maps, the idea of taking pictures of things that we want to manifest and putting them up in front of us. This question is from one of our listeners on our online community.

He says, My husband and I happened to be starting a treasure map when we first started reading your book. I found it really difficult to continue the treasure map, sort of announcing to the universe all the things that I hope to see manifest in my life and, at the same time, stay in the present moment. Do you think the idea of treasure mapping is inconsistent with being in the now moment?

[Speaker 1] (1:34:28 - 1:41:14)

I don't think it is, because the only time when you can practice it is in the now. But the question is whether you have found the foundation for all power in the present moment, or whether you are still looking to the future for some kind of self-fulfillment, for the future to finally give you the sense that you have arrived, that you are somebody, that you are being recognized, that finally you can feel, at some point when you have the house and the car, that finally you can feel abundant when that comes, because right now you are not feeling abundant.

Why are you not feeling abundant? Because you are denying the now. So, you have to first find the foundation for abundance, because abundance has very little to do with the number of things in your life.

Abundance is the state of being. Abundance arises out of life itself, the being of life, which life is being, the I am. Being and I am is the same thing, it just sounds like different words, because I am is the first person singular of the infinitive, to be, for those who have missed grammar at school.

The infinitive is to be, the first person singular is I am, so it's the same word. So, when we talk about being, we talk about how do you experience being, you can only experience being as the I am. And the I am is the foundation for all abundance, it's the realization of the fullness of being in yourself, which has nothing to do with the number of objects in your life, so you find the fullness of being, Jesus pointed to it when he said, I want you to have life, and I want you to have the fullness of life.

In some Bibles it's translated as abundant life. I want you to have abundant life, he said. Now, if you look deeply, you will see very soon that he is not talking about many possessions, he is talking about the sense of the fullness of being in yourself.

Not shopping malls, not that he wasn't prophesying the arrival of shopping malls, but finding that present moment, that deeply satisfying sense of beingness that comes when you enter the present moment fully and become friendly with now, go deeply into now, that's the vertical dimension of life, the now, which to most people doesn't exist, they only know the horizontal, past, future, things, where am I, where can I find myself, I need to attain this, and then they might say, I want to make a treasure map, and then finally I can attain that. And so often, of course, people are not successful quite often with their treasure maps, because there is the erroneous belief that they need to achieve something that's over there in the future, that they need to get that in order to feel the fulfillment and the fulfilled sense of self. And even if they do get what they want, it will still not lead them to the fulfillment.

Even if they do get the house and the car, they may sometimes do, even if they do get it, but they haven't found the fullness of life that can only be found in the now, then for a little while they are elated, I made it, I made it, and then they sit there in the big house and say, OK, what now, where do I go from here, OK, what do I, I need, I need to invite lots of people so that they can reaffirm to me that I'm somebody, that my house is bigger than theirs, and so you do that for a while, and then that doesn't work either. And so you come to an emptiness when you, often it has happened with people who have achieved materially what they wanted to achieve, and yet they still feel empty.

And sometimes it's at that point, either they become even more miserable, or they begin taking drugs just to don't feel the pain anymore of the unfulfilled life, and you can't fool yourself anymore when you have achieved materially almost everything, and you're still unhappy, where can you go from there? You can't fool yourself that even more houses would make you finally happy, or some try even that. So the foundation is the present moment, and the fullness of life now, and so when you feel the fullness, and then you look at a treasure map, you are now, the approach is very different, you are playing, there's a playfulness in the world of form.

You are playing because you are in this world of form, and part of being in this world of form is to interact with the forms of life. And why not try this out, see if I can manifest, not to find some fulfillment, but as a joyful, playful game with form. And then you look at your treasure map, and you feel, whatever it is you are looking at, the house, you feel totally fulfilled already in that moment.

Obtaining the house couldn't possibly lead you to greater fulfillment. This happened to me, I drew spontaneously a picture, a circle on a sheet of paper before I ever wrote a book, and that said, book. It came to me one day spontaneously with colors, I drew a circle, book, and then I wrote, this was not so much me wanting to write a book, as something in me expressing what it wanted, the consciousness.

And I wrote, translating into many languages, changing the lives of hundreds of thousands of people.

[Speaker 2] (1:41:15 - 1:41:16)

Millions.

[Speaker 1] (1:41:16 - 1:47:06)

Millions, I didn't know that. And so it all came to pass, I had completely forgotten about this sheet of paper, and a few years ago I unpacked things that had been forwarded from England, a trunk, and I looked through it, and I saw this old paper. And there was the power of now, and I looked in amazement, it had all come to pass.

But I didn't want, this was so much a reality, this sheet of paper, that I already felt the fullness and the power of the power of now. I felt it already there. I didn't feel any greater or better when the book was out.

It was the same, the same feeling. So if you can feel the power, the unmanifested power, and then you can look at certain forms, and play with forms. What flows into the manifestation is the unmanifested power, that expresses itself in many ways.

One of the ways in which the unmanifested power, the one power, the one life, can express itself, and wants to express itself, because this is a universe that creates form continuously, on so many levels. Billions of life forms. So on that level, the universe wants to experience form.

So you are part of that. You can take part in that game, the universe is the game of creating forms, and enjoying forms. And so you can do that, if the foundation is the present moment.

And then you are not dependent on your creation, and you realize, of course, whatever you create at some point, it will leave you again, or you leave it. And that's fine. So you are not dependent on the outer form, to give you a sense of fulfillment.

Only then can you be successful at truly manifesting. So that's the finding the power first within yourself. There is, in this world, there are two movements.

One is the outgoing movement of the universe, which is the creation of form. Greater and greater differentiation. The universe, they say, they may be right on some level, not on the deepest level.

It started from a zero point of oneness. The astronomers say there was a big bang, and the zero point, and nobody can say what was there before then. Before then, they say there was nothing.

Very strange. So there was out of the nothingness came the thingness of the world. The multitude of things.

What the ancient Chinese texts call the 10,000 things. They didn't realize at that time it's billions of things. And so there's the outward movement of the universe, the creation of form, and the wanting to experience the form.

But there is another movement in the universe, which is the return to the source. The two movements are there. The forms go out, but there's also, and every human being has the two movements inside him or her.

One is the outward movement into creation, and one is the return movement home to the source, to the oneness. Which, in essence, is the spiritual dimension. The spiritual dimension is the return movement of the universe, and the universe also wants that.

It wants to know itself in its essence. It not only wants to create forms and lose itself in the forms. That's part of the game.

It also wants to find itself after having lost itself. It wants to find itself and know itself deeply for the first time. And this actually is happening through the human form, and probably through other forms in the universe, the same movement, because as above, so below.

So you are an expression of this universal, cosmic, two-fold movement. The outer and the return home. The outgoing and the return home.

And you are in between these two. So don't lose yourself in the outgoing. That's a great danger, and this has happened to a large part of humanity.

They lost themselves in the outgoing cycle. But ultimately, even that the universe wanted, because nothing happens that the universe doesn't want. So you lose yourself in the outgoing until finally the outgoing becomes so problematic and so differentiated, and then the return starts back to the source.

And then you can actually live balancing the two, connected to the source, and this, I believe, is the new earth, the new reality that's being created in this dimension. And humans can create that, which is create form without losing their connectedness with the essence of being, with God. And then that could lead to a kind of dimension that would be absolute bliss, also temporary, nothing lasts, but this would be a beautiful dimension when on the planet humans live, who create things, but don't lose their connectedness with being.

So then you could say that it's conscious creation rather than unconscious creation. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:47:07 - 1:47:44)

Well, our guest today is Eckhart Tolle. Eckhart, thank you so much for being with us this hour on The Leading Edge. I'm Mindy Odlin.

If you feel nourished and uplifted by this program or any of our programs on UnityFM, we invite you to make a contribution and help us continue to be this voice, to bring this voice of truth and awakening to the planet, to the planet Earth. And we thank you, Eckhart, for being here. More information is available online at www.eckharttolle.com.

Thank you for tuning in. Thank you for being a part of The Leading Edge and for being a part of the voice of an awakening world. God bless.

[Speaker 1] (1:47:44 - 1:47:45)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:47:45 - 1:47:55)

Thank you. Thank you, Eckhart Tolle. Thank you.

Applause Music

Ω Eckhart Tolle Compilation of Daily Motion video clips

[Speaker 1] (0:57 - 1:42:39)

Welcome, I believe we are waiting for the workshop on the now. I would also like to welcome people who are with us in other places, in Toronto, Lenox, Massachusetts, Fort Lauderdale, and even Ireland. And Galway and Ireland.

In all those places, it's later than it is here. So you are in the future and we are in the now. And since you are in the future, you can tell us, if you could, what it's like to be in the future.

Because so far, I haven't met anybody who's ever experienced it. I haven't met anybody who's ever experienced anything that is not now, ever. And even if you had a time traveler, if there is such a thing, if you traveled into the past and then came back, and then I asked you how you experienced that past, you would have to say, well, to me, it was the now.

And even if you were a time traveler from the future and came back here from the future to become governor of California, you would have to say, well, there, it's also now. Now, this is something that one cannot really argue with, the fact that life is always now, that your life always has been and always will be now. And yet, on the other hand, time seems to be such an enormous force in one's life, such an overpowering thing that absorbs most people's attention almost completely.

And if you look at it, it seems that time cannot be denied. There must be something that we call time because it's everywhere. You can test it, buy a fresh apple and put it on a window sill.

It's fresh, it's alive, full of life, shiny. And you come back two months later and look at it, and it's soft, it's shrunk, it's shrively, and you can't even eat it anymore. What happened?

It's time. Any event in your life, how fleeting it all is. If you look at your past, the last vacation you had, gone up in smoke, this morning's breakfast, while it may still be in your stomach, but the experience of it has already receded.

And when, not long ago, I met some friends I hadn't seen in a very, very long time, 25 years or so. And when I first saw them, I got a shock, and maybe they got a shock when they saw me. I don't know.

But my first impression was that they were ill. And then I realized, no, 25 years had passed. And the woman who was last, 55 or so when I saw her, was now 75 or more, I don't know.

The shock, what happened to you? Then I realized it was time. What has time done to you?

It burns you up, or it dries you out. We can look at it from any perspective you like. And then you reach the end of your life, and even the memories, the memory traces in the mind, my life, was that ever, it still seemed like a dream.

It's gone. Even this gathering here, lasts until later this afternoon. Five o'clock or so.

Then you'll be gone, it'll be over, has dissolved. Only exists as a memory that you remember now. If you remember it, you'll have to remember it in the now.

So wherever we look, time seems to be dissolving things. Imagine this room, imagine yourself as a disembodied field of awareness in this room, observing a speeded up version of this room. Like the films that you have seen when you see a flower coming out of the soil, the bud opening all within one minute, and wilting.

Now, if you were a disembodied intelligence in this room, observing what happens to this room, let's say it were condensed, the elapsing time were condensed, by every minute, 500 years. And you're here watching, it would be the most dreadful shock of your life, because the first thing you would see is bodies in this room dissolving one after another. They would dissolve, last few bones left and then dust.

So you would be sitting here, and everywhere people would be popping out of existence. And then the material things would take a little longer, but there too, the wooden things eventually become dust and crumble, even the walls. And then it gets speeded up even more, you can see it all returning into nothingness out of which it came.

Is that a frightening thing? From one perspective, it is. There's also a strangely peaceful thing that comes over you when you contemplate how impermanent all forms are.

So your life, if we speak in terms of time, has a past and a future, your life situation. We can look on it as if you have these ancient scrolls that you unroll, and then let's say on the left, you have writing and images, that's your past, your past situation. On the right, you have writing and images that is your future.

And that becomes, the further you go, more and more illegible, you can't quite figure it out. And at some point, there's your date of death, but that's illegible too. So most people walk around with a sense of self, a sense of existence that is very wide, that is my past, my future, their life situation.

And to most people, their life situation gives them their sense of identity. Those are the circumstances of your life, what the past, what you experienced, learned in the past, what happened to you in the past, what people did to you, what you did to other people, how you interacted with the world. And then the continuation of that, the future, which is to most people, very, very important.

So time seems to be very overwhelming and one cannot deny on one level its existence. And yet now comes the strange, indisputable fact that all you ever experience is the present moment. So on the one hand, time seems to be an enormous power.

And yet on the other hand, if you pay close attention, you realize that your life is always no more and no less than this moment. From the point of view of time, this moment doesn't even exist because it's only the transition from past into future. So we are here to explore more fully that dimension in you that we call the now.

So as we are here, we are temporarily folding back the scroll of your past and your future, your life situation until what remains is just this moment. And what we'll do is we go more deeply into this dimension here. When you leave here, you can pick up the scroll and unroll it again.

But hopefully, you will realize the power that lies concealed in that central part of your life that to most people is peripheral. When you realize nothing in your life can happen, nothing you can experience, nothing, think nothing, feel nothing, do nothing that is not at this moment. And most people live as if this moment were an obstacle that they need to overcome.

And this moment is life. This moment conceals the fullness of life. The only place where life can be found is now.

And to most people, it's an obstacle. That's a deep-seated mental habit that we all inherit collectively. They are more interested in some other moment, the next one or the one after that.

They treat this moment as a means to an end. I really want to get to that moment. Most of their lives, they live like that.

And that is a dysfunctional way to live because you miss your entire life. You miss the dimension of depth in your life. And all you have, you're floating around on the surface of things.

At first sight, this moment is not interesting in many cases to the human mind, which is used to pass in future. So to realize the aliveness of this moment, it helps greatly. I'm telling you this now because this is essential so that you can endure sitting here for several hours without feeling that you cannot stand this now anymore.

If you cannot stand this now anymore, that means you cannot stand yourself anymore. You need to escape into some world of make-believe in the mind. So how to be here and stay anchored in here and explore the vertical dimension of your life because you've been concerned about the horizontal for a whole lifetime.

My life situation, these things that happened to me didn't quite, that worked out, that didn't work out. But no life situation, anybody's life situation here has worked itself out to their complete satisfaction. Every life situation has a dilemma in it.

Every life situation is problematic. Every life situation is as yet unresolved. There are lots of loose ends, things that should have gone differently but didn't.

The story is not totally satisfying ever of me. The story of me, it's a life situation that exists in time. But the story of me, of course, still has a future.

To think one day I can complete the story of me and one day I will feel completely and fully myself. I will have arrived at that sense of being totally rooted, that sense of total security and peace and aliveness, be fully myself. One day, the story of me will reach that point where I can say, that's it, it's complete, I have arrived.

And then I will be myself. But I'm not fully myself yet. Almost everybody feels that.

And if you make the mistake of picking up a gossip magazine with lots of photos, you can see the images of people who the publishers pretend have made it. Their stories are complete. They live in a mansion.

They look glamorous. But then you just wait for the next edition when you see that they are on drugs, they're continuously getting divorced and married with all the suffering that comes. Their life is in shambles too.

It hasn't, the story hasn't quite completed itself. And on that level, it never really will. On the level of your life situation or on the level of time, there's always a sense of incompleteness.

If you derive your sense of self from the story of me, there will always be some sense of incompleteness. I'm not yet fully me. 500 years later, if it could prolong your life, I need another 500 years.

Just give me a little bit more time. And if this were a seminar where I could give you steps how to achieve at the state of inner connectedness, the state of, that is also the state of peace, in 14 easy steps that only take as many years, you would probably feel satisfied because you could take something home with you and feel he has given us time. That feels good.

Now, from one level, sitting here is unsatisfying because our gathering works on a different level. Nothing is being given to you, not even food for thought, ultimately. So how does it work?

What is the point in sitting here? Sitting here works on three levels. One is something is being pointed out here.

You're given little pointers so that you can look at something that before you had taken completely for granted in your life and question that and see that ultimately there is a dysfunction here. Before you can see that something is dysfunctional or even insane, I call normal insane, normal human consciousness has a strong streak of insanity to it. If anybody doesn't believe this, go and buy a book on history, human history, 20th century's best because it's the most insane of all.

When humans killed 100 million or so of their own species in one century alone. But all the centuries are pretty mad. Just you can't see it in such magnitude.

The madness has now become magnified and perhaps it's also accelerating. Yes, there is a strong element of dysfunction in the human mind and we are addressing that here. You will see how that can be recognized in the collective energy field, consciousness of the planet, of humanity, of history and primarily in yourself, in your own life because the collective is only a reflection of the individuals.

And when you see a pattern in yourself, for example, that you are never present in the only place and the only time where life is, here and now, that are very rarely present in the here and now, when you see that, become conscious of that, to some extent, you're already stepping out. You have one foot out of that dysfunction when you see it. The person who knows that they are mad, that person is not completely mad anymore because the seeing of a dysfunctional pattern in oneself is not part of the dysfunctional pattern.

So as we speak, it seems that part of the time, what we are pointing to is the so-called bad news, the bad news of human dysfunction. But it is good to see that because you become, in the seeing of it, you become free. It is the first step to freedom, one step out.

If you have seen the film, A Beautiful Mind, you will see that there's a person here who is totally identified with his highly high-powered mind. And at some point in the film, you realize that his reality, to a large extent, is delusional. The viewer realizes that the reality of this scientist is delusional the moment that he also realizes that his reality, to a large extent, that he has delusions, delusion.

And that is the moment when he begins to become healed because when he realizes delusion, recognizes delusion as delusion, something has arisen that is not part of the delusion, awareness, presence. Ah, so it's good to point out certain dysfunctions that you can then see in yourself. Nothing personal in that.

That's one level on which this gathering works. The other level is giving you little pointers to show you how you can exit the dysfunctional state of consciousness. Or to look at it from another perspective, portals into a different state of consciousness.

That's the other level at which this gathering works. And the third level at which this gathering works is not to do with words or thoughts or concepts. It is to do with, this is hard to put into words because it's not to do with words, becoming attuned to an energy field that is here in this gathering that has nothing to do with the words and yet out of which the words come.

The energy field of presence. And even if you went to sleep occasionally, that would still be working. It would seep in.

And for those of you, there may be some who got dragged here by a friend and cannot stand staying here the whole afternoon, I will give you something now that perhaps one day you will find extremely helpful when the time comes and suffering arises and you become ready for this transformation. And this is also for everybody else here, for the rest of this gathering, I will be reminding you throughout, we come now to the first exit point out of the time-bound state of consciousness. As you sit here, make sure that you are not you can sense, even if it's only in the background, the aliveness that is in your body because your body undoubtedly is alive.

But most people have no feeling of connectedness with the aliveness that is in every cell and in every organ of their body and not a lust aliveness, the intelligence that underlies the entire functioning of the body. They live in the upper compartment here, they occupy this building, but they live in the loft. And in the loft, they run around from one corner to another, like a little mouse, very busy up there and saying, I'm so restless, I don't know what to do next, what's the next thing that I can need to do, what's next?

No, next is always when you identify it with the time-bound mind-identified consciousness, the next thing is always more important than this. So what's the next thing I have to do? And then you have a whole industry to satisfy your greed for the next thing, the mind's greed, more stimulus, switch this on, that, switch that.

And so that state of unease is quite normal. And then illnesses come very quickly because you're not here. So it is a dreadful fate to be trapped up here in the continuous stream of thinking that is the human mind, 98% of which is totally repetitive, doesn't get you anywhere whatsoever, in fact, gets you into a lot of trouble.

2% you need, maybe 10%, but all the thinking that goes on that most people are totally identified with as who they are, one thought arises, the next thought arises, the next thought arises, oh, I'm so worried about that, I don't know what's going to happen. Of course you don't know what's going to happen. I need to know, and then it goes, it always functions through past and future.

So you have this enormous weight that you carry. On your left, you have your past, on the right, you have your future, both are enormous burdens because the past is also not all that great. Sometimes you try to convince yourself, and the future is very problematic.

It has two faces, hope and fear. Maybe things will get better. Maybe I will find myself somewhere there.

But on the other hand, deep down, everybody knows that eventually things will not get better because no matter how long they get better for, a point will come where they get worse on the level of form they must do because it is the destiny of forms to dissolve. So even you build up an empire, and it's just a question of which one goes first, you or the empire. It is in the nature of forms not to last.

And so if you derive your sense of self from this that you carry around as me, it is a place of continuous fear and unease, hope, fear, and unease of not enough, of insufficiency. And so you walk around life with this burden of me, this uneasiness, trying to, I'm not full yet. What does, I'm not yet, I need more, try a little bit more of this to complete my sense of self.

Buy that. All advertisers know that your sense of self is not complete yet. And what they want to do to make you feel even more incomplete.

And so you buy their product, and for a moment you can add the mental image of this product to who you think you are, because it's yours now. My such and such car, house, dress, shoes. So you've added a object, mental object, to who I am, it's mine.

For a moment it completes you, it doesn't last long. Sometimes it's only the act of shopping that completes you. The adding something to me, and then you get home and you look at it, and it still feels good, and then you put it in your wardrobe and five years later you discover it's still there.

It was only the act of adding that was important. So people look for things to add, this is why the future is so important, because your sense of self is derived from a mind-made accumulation of images and thoughts about who you are. So you need, it's always not enough, so everyone is on the lookout for more, that's why they desperately need the future, because the future will give them the more they believe.

And it does, but it doesn't complete them, never for long. Fame, wanted fame, and most people think if fame and fortune come, then surely I will have made it. Now, if you look at all the famous people, they're just as unhappy as everybody else.

Some are more unhappy, except for a few who have looked through fame and fortune and seen that's not who I am, and they've gone deeper. Sometimes you have to find, get everything that you thought you needed and still not feel complete, and then you realize that that is not where you find your identity, your true self, and that is not where you find the lasting peace that is part of who you are in your essence. There's nothing wrong with adding things, experiences, knowledge, expertise, even possessions, but if it is a search for an identity, if there is a me invested in that, then that also is a form of suffering, because you never get there.

So, the need for more is overpowering in human beings, because they are looking for themselves. The need for more could even be here, with the need to be fed more concepts, but you're not given many here. So there's a feeling of I'm not being given what I want or need.

No, of course not, because to find yourself, nothing ultimately needs to be added. The adding to works well on the level of your life situation. There you can play around with learning new things.

It's fine to do, explore new countries, buy this or that, and it's like this is beautiful. Without looking for yourself in it, that's beautiful. So on that level, yes, adding to yourself is fine, exploring new things, but if you're looking for some permanent satisfaction, peace in that, it cannot be found there.

If you're looking for yourself, you won't find yourself there. It will always be that, hmm, what now? So we realize here that to be who you are in your essence, which has nothing to do with the story of me, you do not need more of anything.

You mean I'm enough already? This can't be. Look at the mess I'm in, my life situation.

Look at my debts or whatever. Look at my investments, they've all plunged. Look at this, look at that.

It can't be. Well, you're asking me then to look at your life situation. What about your life?

Life, what life? Here, now, can you feel the life that you are? Can you feel the aliveness?

This is one entry point in the inner body. Or do you only dwell up there in your head? If you do, you will notice as you sit here, you get more and more restless.

If you're only up here because you cannot be only up here and absorb what is being said here. So you become more restless and begin to twitch without even knowing it because you're not in the body. And then you look at your watch, time, time.

What's the time? How much longer? What's next?

Where do I have to be at five? The exit out of the mind-identified consciousness that is the continuous stream of thinking, very powerful exit point is to direct attention into the inner body. And for those of you who cannot feel that the body is alive in the background as a subtle sense of aliveness, a little thing that can help you is hold up your left or right hand, close your eyes and ask yourself if there's any way you can know whether that hand is still there or not.

I tell this to people who tell me I cannot feel anything. Okay, then let's see if this is true that you cannot feel anything. Close your eyes.

Is your right or left hand still there? Now, sometimes people are just in their minds. They say, yes, it's still there because I saw it there a minute ago.

But that's not it. Can you feel that it's still there? Yes, of course you can.

You have to direct attention at that moment away from thinking and the attention flows into the hand. Of course it's there. I can feel it.

And if you hold the other hand, it becomes easier to feel that also. And you can then realize that you can actually bring together the feeling of two hands into a single feeling of hand, hand. And then can you feel your feet in the same way?

Do they almost start tingling? I don't want to make any suggestions, but that is what one feels. There is intense aliveness throughout the body.

Can you now enter, if you have found one entry point into the body, like your hands, it becomes easier to begin to feel the other parts of the body, not perhaps as strongly as hand. And then to feel the entire energy field of body as a single feeling, sensing in the background as you sit here. So some of your attention is out on the words, auditory perception, and some of your attention is in the inner aliveness that you feel.

You are now becoming present. You are now rooted, becoming rooted in yourself, in your very being. Instead of living in the stream of thinking that is totally conditioned by the past, out of which nothing new ever comes.

It's a circle. It goes round and round. That's why in ancient cultures, they talk of the vicious circle of existence.

It's a very concrete thing. Stepping out of that, you do not become stupid. To be identified with that is stupidity.

No matter how much knowledge you have accumulated, if you are identified, which means every thought draws in your attention completely, that is stupid, no matter how knowledgeable you are. And you will put it to stupid ends. You will put your intelligence to stupid ends.

This is what the whole world does. Look what it does with the great inventions. Splitting the atom requires intelligence.

Building an atom bomb is stupidity. Building a chainsaw requires great intelligence. Cutting down all the ancient forests with it requires great stupidity.

If you cannot get out of that conditioned thoughts, stream of thinking, you remain ultimately stupid, dysfunctional. There's enormous intelligence that lives inside your body. Far greater than the human mind could ever even understand, let alone imitate.

How could the human mind run all the thousands of functions and coordinate them of the body? Every cell embodies intelligence. The one consciousness taking temporary form as that cell, as that organ.

So people see, how do I contact the greater intelligence? How do I find God? And then they look, they think, okay, if I have to work hard, and then at some point in the future, perhaps I will find himself, herself, myself, however they conceive it.

But that's not where it is. The entry point into the greater intelligence that is beyond the human mind, that is, pervades the entire universe that expresses itself here as this beautiful flower, takes form as that, unproblematic. The flower has no problems.

It doesn't, I wonder what's going to happen to me tomorrow. It is there in all its beauty, an unproblematic full expression of that. So this, the same intelligence dwells here.

You can contact it. There's a saying in the, I believe it's the Koran or an associated book, God is closer to you than your jugular vein. And another saying, God is closer to you than hands and feet.

God is closer to you than hands and feet. Now, how is that possible? Because hands and feet are so close.

What can be even closer than hands and feet? The inner of that. So if you can sit here and dwell, be rooted in your inner energy field, at the same time, you have exited the continuous stream of thinking to a large extent because you can either have your consciousness being consumed by thinking or you can have your consciousness in here, in the body.

So most people's lives are consumed by their mind. It burns up their life energy uselessly. You lie in bed, you worry, you travel to work, you worry, you think, should, shouldn't have, what if, and so on, all going around in circles.

If you could exit even for a few minutes, and find stillness, because that is the entry point into inner stillness, when you leave identification with a conditioned mind. Now, the conditioned mind will tell you, don't go there because you won't know what's going on anymore. You will lose your mind.

Not true. It is only if you are connected with that, that you can use your mind in a fresh, creative and constructive way. So if you can sit here and feel, yes, I am alive, feel it in the background, so to speak, and at the same time, you can listen.

There is an aliveness here. You're getting closer to who you are than you ever are when you're identified with the story of me. You are stepping out of the story to deriving your sense of self from telling yourself, dwelling mentally, continuously on your life situation, which exists in time.

Not in the now. I'm not denying the existence of time on its own level, or the existence of your life situation, but there is something more powerful that people haven't discovered yet. It's the only place where the new, where true power can come into your life.

You have to access this tiny thing that to the mind doesn't even exist now. And the inner body is a powerful anchor for accessing now. You then realize you can sit here without needing to interpret this moment in any way.

It is as it is. Because otherwise, interpretation of what happens to you throughout life is compulsive when you're identified with a compulsive thinking mind. Any situation you go into, you will immediately label it out of your past experience.

Any person you meet, you will immediately label according to your past conditioning. So you go through life carrying a screen of conceptualization, which is your thought processes and emotions associated with your thought processes. Wherever you go, you judge immediately, compulsively.

That's how it is. Immediately you say, this is how it is. That's, some people do it more than others.

So you are surrounded by that screen, inhabiting a conceptualized reality, which is all conditioned by the past. And then you put labels, mental labels, which are concepts onto other people. You formulate concepts about who they are.

You take a tiny segment out of their behavior, which is another form of conditioning, which comes out of them, and then say, this is who he is, this is who she is. That's what it does. Or you do it to a group of people.

That's, you conceptualize a group of people, call them this or that. Immediately, you cannot sense their aliveness anymore. You cannot sense that here is a feeling, alive, divine, ultimately human being.

You cannot sense that anymore. All you can see is your concept of that human being or that group of people. This is how a person can commit acts of great violence against a group of people that they have conceptualized in the head, made already lifeless, so to speak.

And then, these are not humans anymore. You can put a bomb there. You're killing, you've killed them already in your mind.

You've conceptualized them already. That's how you can see how, what on a personal level is simply a screen that makes your life heavy and difficult, that imposes stories on everything that happens to you. On a collective level, it lies also at the root of the dysfunction, the collective dysfunction in humanity.

What are we doing to ourselves and to others? So where the root then is to be identified with the conditioned thinking. The solution is to step out of conditioned thinking.

And the mind says, oh, you can't possibly do that. Who is talking? Conditioned thinking.

Feeling the body? No, you can't. I can't feel the body right now because I've got too much on my mind.

Who is talking? The mind. So the mind will tell you also when you lie awake in bed, you need to think about this now.

If you don't think about this now, it will all collapse. It's four o'clock in the morning. There's nothing you can do.

You are tortured by your own mind. The body believes that every thought that you have is a reality. Every fearful thought that you have, that you're actually in some fearful situation.

So the body is continuously contracted. If it's, oh no, dreadful things are happening right now. Your energy field gets disrupted.

Energy doesn't flow freely anymore. And then do that for a few years. What that does to your body.

Oh, this goes wrong here, that goes wrong there. Nothing is flowing anymore. So there you are in bed.

Something in the head is telling you that you need to think about this now. No, I don't. There's no action I can take at this moment.

I've thought about it already for 20 hours. And it is my choice at this moment not to think. It is my choice to feel the aliveness that I am.

And then the mind says, no, you can't do that now. Can you identify the thinker and not confuse the thinker with who you are? If you are not the thinker, who are you?

Or rather, the thinker asks, well, if I'm not the thinker, who am I? When you realize that there's a stream of thinking going through your head, you take one step back internally from the thinking. And when you're in the body, that's easier, of course.

Just take one step back and there are the thoughts. And you can choose at that moment that you do not want to think. What for?

What for? Many situations in life would be far more beautiful if you were not imposing interpretations on them, especially relationships. We may come to that.

But at the moment, we are in bed at four o'clock in the morning. So the mind will usually tell you, sometimes it says, I have no time to go into the body. No time, I have too much to think about.

It's a lie. But you have to see it as a lie. It is.

You have to recognize it is a conditioned mind pattern. The mind doesn't want you to go into the body. And then you go into the body, you've stepped out.

You realize more, once you're in the body, you realize a dimension of yourself that is not the stream of thinking. An aliveness. I am that aliveness.

That is a thought, but I'm translating into the thought what is ultimately, when you sense it, it's not a thought. You feel alive. Before, you did not feel alive.

Humans that go through the world with that conceptualized reality are not truly, they do not truly feel alive. They need a substitute life. They need continuous stimulus to give them a feeling of that they're still a little bit alive.

They need drama in relationships just to have that excitement to feel, yes, I'm still alive, we're fighting. The relationship must still be real. Children at an early age, children, very young children are connected with the aliveness that they are until concepts come into the head.

And in this modern civilization, they very quickly get out of their body. And the moment, especially, they start using the mass-produced screen, electronic screen gadgets, they are totally in the world of concepts and stimulus, mental stimulus, and become addicted to that to feel alive. They can't feel the life that they are anymore.

They cannot live without stimulus anymore. It's a mad world. The most beautiful thing in life, the delight of life, the delight of being, that plants can feel, although we cannot get into plants in that way.

With animals, we can see it a little bit more. When you watch a bird that sings, that flies from one branch to another, when you watch an eagle in flight for an hour without moving the wings, any animal, a cat purring, they're delighting in being alive. And I'm sure this flower delights in being alive in its own way, not quite, not the same consciousness as the human.

Basically, yes, the same one consciousness, but a different expression of that. But somehow everything natural is still connected with the delight of being. It is rooted in being.

And so we see millions and millions of humans living in a pseudo-reality with a sense of self that is ultimately a fiction that is always insufficient, always feeling a sense of lack, always needing more, always even needing to make enemies so that it can still define itself as me and the other, needing some kind of conflict so that its separate sense of self can remain intact. What can I be in conflict with today? What can I complain about now so that I can feel a little bit more myself?

Ah, there it is. And so when millions of humans live like that, then the result is what we read as human history, a dreadful tale of incredible suffering that humans inflict on each other and other life forms on the planet. Incredible suffering.

And so the same you see on television tonight. When you switch on the news, you will see just how mad the collective consciousness is of humanity in its present evolutionary stage. And yet here we are.

Here we are and we recognize that all that is a form of, one could say, collective mental illness that humanity is suffering from. And so one could say, well, how can God allow a whole species to become mentally ill? I heard that question somewhere in somebody's mind.

And of course, you can ask the same question on a personal level. How can, does God allow me to be ill? How dare he, she, it to allow me to be ill, to suffer?

And of course, within the larger whole, everything has its own nature. It takes place and everything is as it should, including your personal illness for the moment. Doesn't mean healing cannot happen.

But there are many humans here who were brought here, who would not be here if they had not suffered some kind of dysfunction in their lives, physical illness perhaps. Or some great loss. And so you can already see on your personal level that your suffering, your physical suffering, whatever it may be, to some extent began to dissolve the egoic structures in your mind.

It started to shake it loose so that something else could come through. And you suddenly found yourself becoming interested in the present moment. And then you end up here.

And no matter what your story is, and some of you may feel that it was all one big mistake, the story of me was all one big mistake. You are here now. And that's an amazing thing to be, to be here now and see that was the story.

And the outcome of all that big mistake was that now you are stepping out of it and you realize it as, yes, on the level of form, this is how my life unfolded. And now let me speak personally for one moment. I could easily look upon my whole life, let's say until the world told me that I was important a few years ago, it happened.

Before that, nobody told me I was important. Until that, I could look at my whole life up to that point as one complete disaster. Nothing actually worked out.

I tried that for a few years, and then I was at university, and then I did my PhD, and then I gave that up, and then I drifted for two years, and then I went into that, and then I tried that, and it didn't, things, many things. Okay, and then my mother said, okay, now you're 45, what have you achieved? Others have already built up big businesses.

And so on the level of story, it was a big disaster. And yet, fortunately, at some point already, I had given up identification with the story, that the story was only my identity up to the age of 29, and it was a very unhappy one even there. Even when I was, that was my relatively successful, the only lively success I had was I did well at university up to before I became a graduate student.

And it made me happy for two weeks. And so, how, isn't it strange that a failed story can produce the flower, the flower of consciousness? And perhaps the flower of consciousness needs the mud out of which it grows.

You have the beautiful image of the lotus in Buddhism, the symbol of Buddhism, the lotus flower, it grows, it has its roots in the mud, and it grows out of that. And there's nothing more beautiful in human life than a failed story. Ah.

And the good news is, every story ultimately fails because the forms, because the story is based on the forms, it identifies with forms, and no forms last for that long. No building lasts for that long, eventually it crumbles. All forms are temporary and they are beautiful.

The essence that is hiding in each form is the formless one life that is indestructible. But even this beautiful form, finchon, it is not eternal as a form, but the eternal shines through the forms here. That is why, because the forms are transparent and you also are not eternal as this form, and yet a transparency is happening in you even as you sit here, so that that which is beyond form, no matter what we call it, stillness, presence, beingness, a deep sense of I am that before got mixed up with the story of me, and that the preciousness of being is your true specialness.

What the egoic self had been looking for on the level of the story, I want to be special, that very thought obscured the fact that you already could not be more special than you are now, but not special in the egoic sense that more than he or more than she, special in the sense that there is a beauty and preciousness that is the essence of your being, and that is what deep down you can sense, even the person who is most completely identified with their story and their conceptual sense of self, they feel that there's somewhere there's something precious that is me, but they confuse it with the forms, thought forms, it gets that essence of being which is formless and timeless gets mixed up with form, with thought and a story in the head, and that is what the Buddha calls the fictitious self, the self that the Buddha even 2,600 years ago recognized as an illusion, an enormous insight, the greatest, perhaps the greatest insight of all humanity when he recognized the self is an illusion, and by that he means the self that is identified with any form, thought form, physical form, anything, and that is the illusion, to lose oneself in some form, and then the preciousness of being that is the essence that is timeless and formless in every human and in every life form, one could say incarnates in form, and there's nothing wrong with incarnating in form as long as you know yourself as that which is beyond form, but if you lose yourself in the incarnation, and ultimately you had to do that too, that was part of the totality of how things work, to lose oneself is, as the Buddha called it, suffering, then you suffer because you don't know who you are anymore, you're looking for yourself in some form, in some thought form, in some physical form that you identify with which is then also a thought form, me, and so everybody's looking for the essence of their being, not knowing that the specialness that they look for is already the essence of who they are, but they can only find it when they stop looking for themselves in the future through more, so the one place, it's all like some strange game, the one place where you truly can only find yourself in that one place most humans never look, which is the present moment, they look there for themselves, and to feel, I want to be more, on the level of form, you can temporarily be more, that's true, and then that dissolves again, but there is a level within yourself where more does not operate, you do not need to be more, for you are already a full expression of the one life, you are already complete on the level of the timeless, the essence of your being, now the only reason why you needed time was you needed to be ready to hear this truth and recognize it as a truth, and you need time for this, for that one could say you need time, to hear the message that to be who you are, you don't need time, but the paradox is, there are still many humans to whom this would be meaningless, and they don't come here, they need, in other words, they need more time, they need to continue to look for themselves, and they need to continue to be frustrated in their search, that is part of the larger design, the frustration is built into human existence, and so that's what the world is for, the so-called world, it is there to frustrate you, and to drive you deeper, to eventually drive you out of identification with form, because as long as you're identified with form, it is so frustrating, and you can never make it, you can never arrange the forms and accumulate all the forms that you need, you think you need to be yourself, or sometimes you can do it for a very brief time span, you can suddenly find everything is now working in my life, my health is good, my relationship is great, great money, got possessions, everybody loves me, they all write good things about me, it's all working, my job, my living situation, my finances, my health, my relationships, they're all great, but before long, something there starts to crumble here and there, it's either the finances, or it's the relationship, or it's the living situation, it's in the nature of the world of form, that nothing stays fixed for very long, and so it starts to crumble again here, you just had sorted it all out, and so that's why humans, they experience life as a series of frustrations, why can't it work? It doesn't work because they are looking for themselves there, they are demanding that the world of form should make them complete and happy, I demand that this world should complete who I am, should give me my sense of self, I just need this and that from there, and then that's all, this is what I demand, and then it's not happening, there's something wrong here, life isn't working, it seems to be working for everybody else, but it's not working for me, I read in the magazines, all these glossy people, it seems to be working for them, but only if you look at the glossy pictures, if you visited them at home, you would see that it's not working for them either, so it's built into living here is frustration, it's meant to be frustrating, this is the larger, the whole, there is a purpose, but people haven't seen it, so it's quite a relief to recognize, first of all, the world cannot make me happy, to demand that situations, people, places, or attainments should complete me or make me happy are bound to be frustrated, whether I attain or do not attain.

Okay, so that looks very negative, doesn't it? That's, and that's why when you don't go deeper, when you only see the surface, you see, oh, all is vanity, as the Old Testament prophet said, vanity of vanities, all is vanity, I've seen it all, I can't remember the exact words, but I'm giving you a free translation, I've seen it all, I've done it all, and it's all completely meaningless, is what he said. And that was probably an elderly man who had tried it all.

And now, why did they put this into the Bible? Isn't it very negative to have such a statement that life is completely vain, whatever you can achieve is vanity? They put that in there because when you see the truth of it, you're already becoming free of it.

The seeing of the inability of the world to make you happy, the seeing of the short-lived nature of whatever forms you encounter in your life, what is it in you that is able to see that and say, ah, or even laugh? What before was a dreadful story and frustration, you suddenly step out of your own story and see that your own frustrating story is not your personal dilemma, but the human condition. And you derived your sense of self from that, which is nothing personal whatsoever, it's the human condition.

And it's the human condition in its unconscious state, its unenlightened state. And that's what gave you your sense of personal selfhood and that you wanted to cling to. And now you step out of it by simply seeing it.

The seeing means something is arising that is not part of that unconsciousness. And that is why they put it into the Bible, because when you see it, that which can witness that in you, the impermanent nature of all forms, the fictitious nature of the mind-made story, what is it in you that is able to look at that and see, ah, that is not thought, that is the ability to be aware and hold up the mirror of awareness and simply see it's there. Or let's say better, the light of awareness shines on it.

The light of awareness shines on it and sees what before you were trapped in, the frustrating story of my life. And there's no life that's not ultimately frustrating. It only begins, it loses its frustration when you do not look to the world anymore for your satisfaction.

Or for yourself. When you give up demanding that people, places, situations should make you happy and fulfill you, you don't demand it anymore, then suddenly the ability arises to allow the forms of this moment to be as they are. Because life at this moment already, always is as it is.

Everybody, every human being in life form is an expression of that one formless and timeless one life. And that is beyond anything that could be destroyed. It's life itself.

It has no opposite. The one life has not, death is not the opposite of life. Death is the opposite of birth.

And birth and death apply to the forms that appear on the surface of the sphere. So when death happens to life forms, even violent death, yes, it is from the perspective of the surface reality is dreadful. But from the perspective of knowing the transcendent dimension, even that is no longer dreadful.

It is transcended because the realization is there. The life that you are and the life that I am can never be destroyed. The essence of every life form is eternal.

It derives from the one. It's an expression of the one. To know that, not just as a belief, but deep within yourself to know that which cannot be destroyed, what the Buddhists call amara, the deathless.

This is the closest perhaps that the Buddhists come to talking about God. The deathless dimension, timeless, deathless, that which cannot be destroyed. Every human and every life form is a temporary expression of that.

When you know that within yourself, you look with deep compassion upon the madness that happens on the surface reality, perpetrated by humans who don't know who they are. And because they don't know who they are, they don't know what they are doing to themselves, ultimately, because every other is yourself. So it's not, the process is not to emphasize more and more the form of the me and the form, and as God continues to build me, he is building me up.

That could be the idea. God is building me up. God, of course, you can replace with universal intelligence, the universe, whatever you want to, whatever term you want to use.

And yet I know from inner realization that it's not really how it works. It's becoming diminished as a person, and then something else shines through that has nothing to do with the form of the person. But the form of the person was necessary, like the seed has to break open, and that was necessary, but the seed does not find its purpose, the purpose for its existence is not to become a better seed, or to look better as a seed, but to break open and no longer being a seed.

And then these amazing things come out of the tiniest seeds. In a botanical garden, I bought in a little, they were selling a little paper bag seeds for trees, and then I planted some in pots, and I bought, there were probably 80 or 100 tiniest seeds. You can hardly see the single seeds, and they became, it said this is the sequoia tree or something like that, and it becomes a gigantic, it can live for 2,000 years.

It comes out of something you can hardly see. But if the seed had a self-image of being a seed and were persistent in remaining a seed and stubborn and insisting, no, I'm seed, and I want to be a better seed, then it wouldn't happen, the whole miracle would not unfold. And there may be seeds who refuse to give way and break open.

The universal curriculum, every teaching is a form of that universal curriculum, but the essence of the universal curriculum is to reach the formless within yourself, which is where you and God merge, where you and the source of all life merge, where the little me realizes its true reality, where the little ripple realizes that it is the ocean. It continues to be a ripple for a little while, but if the ripple, and this is a dark book taken from the course in the text, if the ripple in the ocean thinks of itself as separate, imagine that, the ripple on the ocean, the world becomes very threatening because the vastness, I'm just, who am I on this little short-lived thing, on this vastness, and all the other ripples are my enemies, what do they want? And the waves.

And if the ripple could realize by going within, I am the ocean, temporarily appearing as a ripple. Oh, that's great. Of course, I'm not going to last that long not here as a ripple, but I'm eternal as the ocean.

What a liberation. Another analogy apart from the ripple, of course, gives the analogy of the ray of sunlight. And if the little ray forgets that it is actually part of the sun, because the light that comes to you from the sun is actually, it's an extension of the sun.

But if the ray forgets that it is an extension of the sun and says, it's little me, doesn't know where it comes from, it doesn't know its source, it just looks around at other rays and says, who are you? I don't like the way you look. But if the ray could find its source, oh, then you can enjoy all the other rays because they're all the same source.

And then you can look at another ray through the source. So you go in, and then instead of looking at the other from out here, you look at the other from the point of view of the source, and you realize the oneness. So you go, you don't look like that, that's two, me and you, you go there where we are both come from the same source, and you look from there and see, oh, we look like two, but we're actually one.

That's the realization of oneness, the greatest liberation there is. And really, that's, again, what any spiritual teaching is designed to do for you, is to take you to that realization of oneness, which has nothing to do with thinking. Thinking creates duality.

You have to go beyond thinking to realize oneness. So they react to your reaction, and you create a whole train of reactivity, and this is how the drama develops and grows. And it's all taken for absolutely real, and that's how it is.

You don't realize, the entity doesn't realize, it's creating the whole story. Something is still missing in my life. Something is still not right.

And then you try other relationships, and you try other places to live, and you try other activities, and sooner or later, and usually sooner, you come again to the place. This isn't right either. And then you ask, what am I really meant to do?

Where am I really meant to be? Because it's not here. It's never here, ultimately, because you're not at home deep enough in the now, so you can never feel, this is never it.

But there's no external solution to that. There's only an inner solution to that. You come home to the now, and so you have to drop down beyond the mental emotional accumulations that you confuse with who you are.

And you sense, as I sometimes say, the ripple on the surface of the Pacific Ocean stops thinking of itself as a ripple and senses its own depths. And suddenly, the ripple feels at one with the depths of the ocean, but also feels at one with every other ripple that it sees on the surface of the ocean, because it senses its connectedness with the totality, with the one, with the ocean, and therefore recognizes every other ripple as also being an expression of that. And then, for the first time, it can become comfortable with other ripples, really at ease.

The ripples, of course, in our analogy, are people. Here, a related question. As I'm awakening, I'm becoming more aware of how often I'm angry and it is getting tiresome.

How do I manage the expectations of myself? Well, it's the, so, you need to manage the expectations and then you need to manage the anger, anger management and expectation management. Expectation means you beat yourself up for being unconscious.

Which is more unconsciousness, because the mental image of who you are says, I'm not good enough, I can't do it. You see, I've been at it for 25 years and I still can't do it. You can't possibly be any good if you still can't do it after 25 years.

Those are thoughts that float around in your mind. And how do you feel? As I suppose that Byron Katie would ask that.

How do you feel when you believe those thoughts? Not good. You're beating yourself up and you feel an emotion.

Feel bad about myself. More ego, more conceptualized identity in your mind. Concepts in your mind about you, you derive your sense of self from that.

More of the same. So the, well, let's say it's anger, and then you wake up after the anger reaction, say, I did it again, I'm no good. So you have the second egoic reaction to the first one.

Anger is something that comes in in many people very fast. So there may not be, unless there's already considerable presence power in you, there may not be enough presence to catch it. It takes you over before you know it, especially old reaction.

And before you know it, you're talking and shouting and you are not doing it at all. It's the pattern. It's the mind pattern, mental, emotional pattern in you, which often related to what I call the pain body, which is old, accumulated, painful emotion, which could be anger, which could be a deep, depressed sadness.

Anger is a very frequent one. The pain body energy is just waiting in people who have accumulated old anger, going back to childhood, feeling powerless. And what does a child do when the child feels powerless?

It starts dreaming, it's all it can do. And sometimes it works. Sometimes the parents come and say, okay, you can have the sweet if you scream loud enough.

So it's powerlessness is always behind anger. And the ego pretends that there's your power there in anger, but anger arises out of a sense of powerlessness. And there's often fear hiding underneath it.

And when you are there looking at it, then you realize that at firsthand within yourself, there is a sense of powerlessness behind it. And the ego is pretending to be powerful, when really it's in a state of fear. You can see it even with little dogs.

The smallest dogs are the bark the most. And whenever they're little, I've seen little dogs, whenever a big one goes past, they get angry. Arr, arr, arr.

Arr. Arr. Arr.

Because, I mean, if I were that size, I would do that too, probably. Arr. Arr.

Arr. So you are a little Chihuahua, or you're a little sweet little Bichon Frise. And a Mastiff walks past, or a Rottweiler, who looks very quiet, because the Rottweiler knows its own power.

It doesn't need to, it goes. And the little one goes, arr, arr. Arr.

Arr. Arr. Arr.

But with dogs, we smile when we see that, because we somehow recognize that pattern. And we smile. And probably the Rottweiler has an inner smile too, when he walks past.

But with humans, it's more difficult to smile, when they go, arr. And words come streaming out of their mouth. It's more difficult to smile.

And what it's possible, not necessarily, you say, don't necessarily smile, but recognize it for what it is, when you see it in another. Don't equate that with who that person is. Recognize it, that the person has been taken over by that energy field.

And that already is a wonderful thing. That already, we could call, is forgiveness in a wider sense. We don't equate unconscious behavior with who that person is.

If we equate it with who that person is, that is, that's the real meaning of judgment. Judgment is not to say to somebody, I realize that you get angry a lot. And that person then might tell you, are you judging me?

No, it's a fact. If I see that you get angry a lot, that was just a fact, there's no judgment in it. But if I equate that with your essential identity of who you are, you are an angry person, and then I always expect more anger from you, that's a judgment.

Not recognizing a pattern that operates unconsciously through humans and taking that for their identity is judgment. And you can do it to yourself. So you can judge yourself for those things.

And that is just as much ego as judging somebody else. You can beat yourself up and call yourself no good. And whatever else the self talk tells you in your head, it calls you you.

In many people's minds, when the mind talks to you, it says you, see? You are such and such, you see? You can't do it.

Sometimes it says I, it might say I in some people, but in many it says you. Isn't that strange? You talk to yourself in your head.

One part of your mind condemns the other part. When you see it, you can rise above it and there's suddenly an awareness that comes with it. You're no longer trapped in those patterns.

I would recommend particularly to become particularly alert when you know you're getting stressed, something, a situation is building up in some kind of, for example, if you get, anger takes over when you get stressed, could happen. When you feel a stress building up towards it, you can become very alert so that you can, it doesn't take you over. What you know the anger is about to come.

Or if it's, if you know certain areas of your life are more likely to wake you unconscious, sometimes you know just beforehand that those are going to arise in the next minute or so. And then you can be alert, feel the entire energy field in your body, be alert with every cell of your body, then pick up the phone and talk about the financial situation with your investment advisor so that, and treat those as spiritual practices and realize nothing is more important than consciousness, not the situation, it's consciousness. Some people's pain bodies are, consist, as I said, predominantly of anger.

And you can, in some people, you can sense their semi-dormant pain body in the background even when they are not particularly angry right now. But there are people who are waiting for the next opportunity to be angry. That's their pain body.

And sometimes when you are sensitive towards other, you can feel energy fields, you can sometimes sense in other people they are waiting for an excuse to be angry. Some are when you look into their eyes, it's already there, but it's not them. It's that which occupies their inner energy field, which is the pain body.

And so they're waiting, and any excuse, and they will get angry at you or whoever it may be. So you become a grievance looking for a cause.

[Speaker 3] (1:43:04 - 1:43:28)

Thank you for being my spiritual teacher. You've really helped me a lot. You say, in the power of now, that you are here to enable the divine purpose of the universe to unfold.

Could you please explain what the divine purpose of the universe is? Ah. Ah.

Ah. Ah.

[Speaker 1] (1:43:34 - 2:11:39)

The universe wants to awaken consciousness coming into this dimension is the divine purpose. But the divine purpose is twofold. One is the universe delights in creation.

It delights in creativity. It delights in creating new forms. How do I know that?

Well, just look around on the planet here, the millions of life forms in the sea, on land, in the air. The universe delights in creating this multiplicity of forms and it delights in experiencing itself through all those forms. Because you are not a separate entity.

It's not the case as sometimes the ego, ego itself believes that here's me and there's the rest of the world or the universe. Or the ego thinks that it is in the universe. It's somehow suddenly appeared, fallen into this universe.

And then where am I? On this, I'm in this universe. You're not in the universe.

You are the universe. The one life expressing itself through countless life forms. And there's a growing complexity in life forms.

And with every experience, the universe is experiencing itself. Your life is extremely differentiated in human beings. The way in which life or the universe or the one consciousness experiences itself in this dreamlike world is extremely differentiated.

It is amazing that every human being is different of those billions of humans on the planet. Every human not only looks different, you could recognize if you know one person out of these billions, I can't remember how many billions on the planet now, you could recognize this person out of billions of other human beings just by looking at their face. This is how differentiated it is on the surface level already.

And then every life experience, of course there are many similarities, but there's a uniqueness to every life experience. Every life experience is a world that arises and subsides. My mother's life, your mother's life, your parents' life, anybody's life, was a particular world.

The way she experienced the world was very different from the way I experienced. It's like my mother and I, and I'm just taking one example from my personal experience, seemed to inhabit completely different universes, but we were in the same place. But experiencing life in a totally, totally different way.

And the universe delights in that complexity of experience, so it wants to experience itself as form. It means, and so the forms become evolving more, more complex. The humans that are alive now have far greater complexity than the humans that were alive 10,000 years ago, or 50,000 years ago.

Life at that time was more simple. Gather the food, gather the plants, or hunt an animal if they did that, prepare the meal, go out hunting, come back home. It's fairly simple.

It wasn't the complexity of New York City, LA, freeways, and all that's behind that. There were nuclear physics, whatever, and so on. So the universe delights in that, and you are an expression of that.

It wants to become conscious of itself through you, and it's doing that, attempting to do that through humans, but that one consciousness is not separate from you. You are an expression of it. But the universe also wants to know itself deeply, its own source.

It wants the source realization also. So I know that because I know it by looking within myself. There is an outgoing movement into creation, and there's a return movement that wants to realize itself in its essence.

The universe wants both. It wants to go out and create. It also wants to realize its own essence through you.

In a human life that expresses as wanting to do things in this life, wanting to contribute to this life, wanting to create something, to make something of your life, your so-called life, it expresses as that, and the other, the return movement, so you have the outward movement of the universe, the return movement expresses as coming totally into the present moment, stepping away from becoming into being. Becoming is the outward movement. What can I do now?

I need to do something. I want to create this. I feel that this wants to, there's something coming through me.

I feel a piece of music wants to come through me. A book wants to be written or something. Whatever, I want to do this or create this, set up this business or that or whatever, and then it's this becoming, doing, but then there's another movement that says, I just want to be and be still and this present moment, go deeply into this moment.

I don't need to become anything at all. I just want to be fully who I am already and go deeply into being. So you have, it's almost this contradictory movements.

In some humans, the outward tendency is greater. In others, the inward tendency is greater. Both are necessary and somehow both need to be there as long as you're here in a human form, both to some extent will be in you, but there will be different to different degrees.

Some are much more going within and to being, to the source, but I would suggest that it's not either or. There are certain spiritual additions that look upon it as more as either or. They say, forget about the world.

Just realize who you are and then you can just sit in a corner for the rest of your life and never do anything again. You don't need to. That's one way, but for us, it's finding a certain balance, which doesn't mean it needs to be totally in balance.

There are very few humans who are totally balanced between the outward movement of creating and the inward movement of connecting with your inner being at the source of all life. You need to have both so that the universe can create through you without losing itself in its creations. So you can create not from a place of egoic need where you depend on the outcome.

If I don't get that, I'll kill myself. If I don't achieve, if I don't get famous and rich, I don't know what I'll do. Not that, but a playful participation in the world of form and contributing to it, to the world of form without losing itself in the creation and in the doing.

If you become stressed, means you're losing yourself in the doing. This is more important than you completely forget. You become uprooted.

You're no longer connected to the spaciousness, the unconditioned, the one within. So to be and do at the same time. But some humans, yes, are much more drawn to being.

I call them frequency holders. They hold to the frequency of being on the planet. They're not interested in creating huge things out there.

They're interested in doing perhaps little things, gardening, cooking, looking after animals, being with animals, helping humans in some capacity, helping even physical, helping humans with their bodies and so on. So they're frequency holders. They're more into being than there's some doing, but you cannot, you always have to do something.

You can't, but they don't put the emphasis on doing, the emphasis on being, and then they allow presence to flow into what they do, and they affect the world also very significantly. Others have a greater tendency to performing creative action. They need to go out there and become active, but their challenge is not to get lost in what they do and thinking that's all important.

They forget that this is a play of form, and then there comes a seriousness and a heaviness into the doing, and they get unhappy. And when you are unhappy, whatever you create has some flavor of that unhappiness. So the divine purpose of the universe, to summarize my long explanation, is to know itself both through the creation of form and through realization of the formless essence of all life.

And that is the divine purpose of the universe, and that you are here as part of that. That's it. Thank you.

That's the secret of the universe. As far as humans are concerned in their present evolutionary stage, the secret lies in simply no longer internally resisting, denying, or running away from what is at this moment, is whatever is at this moment. To find an inner alignment with the form that this moment takes.

And the conceptualized egoic entity can't do that, but you can do that. When you see the truth of it, there's the possibility of living in a state of yes to what is, an inner yes. The conceptualized egoic entity lives in the state of no to what is.

And that is the greatest transformation happens when there's the shift in you internally from denying the present moment because it's not yet enough, it's not really what I wanted, this shouldn't be happening, I want something else, I definitely don't want this, I want the next moment, it's going to be much more complete. But you always have only this. And then the strange thing happens, at first sight it seems that the form that this moment takes, because that's all it is, there are not many moments in your life, there's only this moment ever.

But the form that this moment takes changes continuously, different forms come into that space of now, which is that inner space. Forms appear in the space of now in your life. A situation, a person, an event, a place.

And very often, the form that this moment takes seems to be a limitation, it seems to limit me. I want to be limitless, I want to know myself as limitless. Many people feel that the form that this moment takes, how could I accept that?

Because this form limits me so much, and this could be where you live, it could be relationships, it could be your physical body. You cannot not encounter limitations in the world of form. You can change, you can have slightly more pleasant limitations.

You could be sitting in a tiny little room and saying, oh, I'm so limited here, I want to expand, I want to live in a mansion. And you might succeed. 10 years later, five years later, you live in a mansion, you seem to have expanded, and then you sit in your mansion.

What now? For a while, it feels great, you have expanded because you have identified with the thought form of mansion, you have expanded. But sooner or later, the mansion will limit you in other ways.

Your new life situation will suddenly show you there are other limitations. You may become famous, and suddenly discover that great limitations come with fame. You're free of the limitations that came with poverty, and now you encounter other limitations that come with that.

So it's yes, you can play around with different forms in your life and experiment and expand into other forms, not expecting to find the limitless in the world of form and realizing in one way or another, the form that this moment takes will be some form of limitation that it is in the nature of form to be limited. And that's a deep realization. And then the running away from the form that this moment takes the reactive relationship to the form that this moment takes isn't there anymore when you see the truth of this and are able to say yes to the form that this moment takes instead of resisting the form that this moment takes internally, which keeps you trapped in your own mental form.

So what does that mean? It means, quite simply, you become friendly with what is. It doesn't mean now you're condemned to non-action.

Out of that state of yes, intelligent action arises when it's needed, not when it's not needed. You embrace what is. Even if it seems very limited or limiting because it already is.

You can't remove is out of existence. So you become internally aligned with that. So when you say yes to what is, space arises, so to speak, around what is.

This is a way of speaking, but that's all we can do here. A sense of space or spaciousness arises around the form that this moment takes. And that liberates you from the limitations of form.

And you cannot find the spaciousness by always running away from the forms that arise, but being with them. Surrendering to the form that this moment takes is the key. The inner surrender, whatever is, is part of the totality, the web of interconnectedness that is the universe.

This event is part of that. There is a certain inevitability to the form that this moment takes. Yes, then perhaps action arises and it changes.

You're actually amazed how quickly the form that this moment changes when you don't resist it anymore internally, because a greater intelligence comes into play now. And things, miraculous things can happen even on the level of form, but they didn't happen when you lived in non-alignment with is. They only happen when you live in alignment with is.

And to some people, that means, yes, to the most dreadful limitation. And that is why traditionally it's people who reached that realization found the most dreadful limitation in their life and surrendered to that. The archetype of that is Jesus on the cross.

This is the human archetype. This is true for each human being. The most unacceptable form of limitation that a human, and you don't need to be a Christian to believe this or to see the truth of it.

In fact, if you're a Christian, you may not see it because they tend to have a narrow interpretation of something that is very deep. So you have somebody on the, a human being in a situation that is a manifestation of the most extreme limitation, totally. And symbolically the words that came out of his mouth were at first, why has thou abandoned me, God?

The last, no. The next words that came were not my will, but thy will be done, which means thy will is the will of the one, not to make it into a mental concept. The will of the one is whatever is now, not my will, but thy will be done, a complete yes.

And at that moment, the cross, which is the symbol of the ultimate limitation becomes a symbol of the divine. It's the dual symbolism of the cross is, it's a torture instrument and it's a symbol of the divine. And that is whatever may be happening in your life and be the greatest limitation in your life.

It is not only the limitation, it's also the opening. When it's not internally resisted, the opening into space. Because space comes with a yes to what is.

You are no longer bound to what is. You are no longer bound to the form. You know yourself as the formless one life, one consciousness.

That's the true happiness that lasts. The heart of happiness, the core of happiness, not the superficial happiness that goes. And the next moment.

Ooh. So nothing needs to change for this to happen in your life, this transition. Whatever is, is the best that is for you at this moment.

You work with that. Say yes to that. Don't believe the mind when it says, okay, I'll say yes when I get this out of the way.

Okay. And enormous power moves into your life. The very intelligence of the universe manifests through this form, which then becomes an opening.

And it's the end of suffering. The end of the suffering entity. You may still get a toothache from time to time, but that is how it is too.

Surrender to that also. Surrender. That's all.

No time is required for the shift in consciousness. You can only do it now. Yes to now.

And find yourself through that. Thank you. There's such aliveness to the field of now.

It doesn't really matter where you go, what the things are that surround you. It's relative, they matter relatively, but not absolutely. And then the universe around you is recognized as playful forms that come and go.

Experiences, different places come and go. It's a bit like when you are rooted in the now, you are rooted in being. You are rooted in yourself.

And there's such fullness to now. It is the fullness of life itself, because before life becomes a thing, before life becomes an object, before life becomes a life form, there is life, consciousness, whatever word. And to know yourself as that is the ultimate liberation What is liberation?

What are you liberated from? You are liberated from the world of things, from obsession, from being consumed by things, which includes thoughts. You are liberated from time, also as an obsession that you are consumed by.

And you are liberated from a very heavy sense of self. The me, what the Buddha called the self. Ah, all that.

The key then, the little opening into what we might call space consciousness. This is not from science fiction. Space consciousness within yourself.

The unconditioned consciousness. How do I get from being consumed and identified with object consciousness to recognizing myself as space? Ah, it doesn't work by trying to run away from the world.

It's through allowing whatever form this moment takes, the world of form, the world of objects, allowing whatever form this moment takes internally allowing it to be as it is.

[Speaker 3] (2:11:47 - 2:11:50)

Okay, and then you started to have an education in England?

[Speaker 1] (2:11:50 - 2:27:16)

Yes, in England I was offered a job. Although I didn't have any formal qualifications, miraculously somebody offered me a job. And I was actually teaching English and Spanish, sorry, German and Spanish for a few years at a language school.

And then a kind of quest started. And also what also started at that point was already the beginnings of depression that I would experience periodically. And living in a state of increasing anxiety, a kind of generalized anxiety.

And I was looking for some answer to the dilemma of life and living. And I was looking to philosophy and the intellect for an answer. So I began to read a lot.

And then I thought the answers would probably be found at the universities, the professors would know. So I took the exams that I needed in evening classes to get to university. And then I went on to London University where I did languages and literature.

And increasingly became more and more unhappy and continued to search and absorb more and more knowledge. And gradually beginning to realize that they didn't really have the answers to life's dilemma. I remember there was one professor at London University that I liked very much.

I would go to his classes and admired him. He was very knowledgeable. And one day we arrived on a Monday morning and we were told that he had just committed suicide.

And that shook me inside. And I realized that suddenly these people that I had looked to for an answer didn't have it either. Yeah.

And so my depression intensified and I did very well in the degree examinations because I studied so hard out of fear, really. I was driven by anxiety. And then after graduating from London University, I didn't do anything for about a year.

And that was the year in which I became even more unhappy and depressed and when an inner shift suddenly happened inside me. It was in my 29th year, I woke up in the middle of the night and this was not uncommon for me, waking up in the middle of the night and feeling intensely depressed and in a state of great fear at the same time. And that happened again that night and the thought occurred to me, I can't live with myself any longer.

And that thought repeated itself in my mind. I just, I can't live with myself. And then suddenly I looked at the thought, I kind of stood back from that thought and looked at it and said, that's a strange thought.

I cannot live with myself. Am I one or am I two? This thought seems to show that there's two people here, I and the self that I cannot live with.

I didn't have an answer to that question. It's just that question, that puzzle arose in my mind. Much later, it reminded me of a koans that they have in Zen that are puzzles that are designed to stop the mind.

For example, what is the sound of one hand clapping is a famous koan. And it doesn't have an answer on an intellectual level. And so the question that arose in my mind also didn't have an answer on an intellectual level.

Who am I and who is myself that I cannot live with? But that question triggered an inner shift, something inside me that I didn't understand it at that point must have disidentified from the self, the unhappy me, as I later called it. So a kind of an inner disidentification happened, the I am, which I later recognized as the consciousness that I am, separated itself from the conditioned entity, the conditioned consciousness that was, that provided me with my sense of identity, the self.

And that consisted largely of an unhappy story. So then I felt I was like being drawn into some kind of vortex of energy as if I were disappearing in that. And there was still a moment of resistance and I heard something almost like a voice inside me that said, resist nothing.

So I gave up resisting the feeling of, almost the feeling of disappearing into nothingness. And so that, don't remember very much else of that night. All I know that the next morning I woke up and I opened my eyes and I looked around the room and everything seemed as if I was seeing it for the first time, fresh, new, alive.

The light coming through the windows, familiar objects on the table. They looked fresh, new and alive. So I got up and went out for a walk and I looked around and everything seemed so peaceful, even the traffic in the city seemed so peaceful.

And I knew something strange had happened. There was suddenly, everything was filled with aliveness and peace and I didn't know why. And so, and that went on.

And then this inner peace as the background to all experiences and the background to all sense perceptions, even as the background to my thinking, that then never really left me again. But it took me a long time to understand it, to be able to put it into words. And so a little later I started investigating other spiritual teachings for the first time, Buddhism, Christianity, and more contemporary spiritual teachings.

And very quickly I recognized the truth that is in many cases hiding underneath sometimes centuries of cultural additions, interpretations and misinterpretations. And I could see the truth that's in Buddhism, that's in Christianity, the original teachings. And in turn, they shed light on what had happened to me.

For example, I picked up the New Testament and I read Jesus' words, the peace that passes all understanding. I said, that's exactly what I feel, I have this peace and I don't understand what it is. So he must have had the same experience.

Peace suddenly arose which was not causally related to anything in the external world. It wasn't caused by something wonderful happening in my external environment. So it didn't seem to have a cause, an external cause.

And then later I visited Zen teachers and so on. And again, I recognized the truth of Zen immediately, but they also helped me to understand and put what had happened to me into a wider context. For example, I remember talking to one Buddhist monk who said, who talked about coming to the end of always having to think, thinking.

And he said, Zen is about not thinking ultimately. And I immediately realized something that I actually, strangely, I hadn't realized before, that my thought processes, ever since that happened that night, had become reduced by maybe 80%. So I wasn't actually thinking that much anymore.

And that's why there was so much peace. So I realized the continuous mental noise, as I now call it, which is the compulsive and largely useless thinking that most people are continuously engaged in, that had come to an end. There would still be some thought, and thought could, I could use thinking when I needed it, and occasionally thoughts would come in and out.

But there were huge stretches of no thought. And in those long gaps and intervals of no thought, inner peace, and I was still anxious, but covered up anxiety, the hype themselves already, what they may perhaps are looking for on the outside. The aliveness, the peace, the sense of deep inner fulfillment is already present in every human being as their innermost essence.

So it's not a question of needing to obtain or acquire something new, which is often what spiritual seekers are looking for. Everybody's looking for to acquire something to fulfill him or herself. They may be looking for it on a material level, or on the level of experiences, or on the level of accumulating knowledge, or accumulating wealth, or spiritual seekers want to add more spiritual experiences to who they are, or find themselves at some point in the future.

And you can't, because if you're looking to the future to find yourself, you're missing yourself already, the essence of your being, which you can only find in the now. So my realization that night took me years to understand, and in the process of understanding it, at the same time, people would already come to me occasionally and ask questions. So gradually I was able to talk about it, and I was able to recognize in others what I had been through.

It's the same dilemma, perhaps with the exception that I was suffering from it more acutely than many others. That's all. I was even more deeply immersed in the mental noise and the emotional turmoil than would be normal.

But the same mechanism operates in everyone. So the teaching now is to point out that there is a dimension in identify with as yourself, personal history that most is who they are, present inner alignment with now, as I call it, which is life itself. The stream of thinking is always concerned with past and future.

So for most people who are identified with thinking all the time, every thought is invested with a sense of self and me. Every thought grips you completely and you are in it. This is what identified means.

Every thought that arises becomes a me, and you think it and you're in it. And so most people are dragged along all day long by this mind stream, one thought after another. And within that mind stream, there is a mind made sense of self and me, consisting of past memories and experiences and things that my mind has identified with and that contribute to my identity.

They're all thought forms. For example, my possessions, my knowledge, my experiences, or what people have done to me, what I have done to people, things that whatever you identify with and then hang on to in your mind becomes a me. And that was really the self that that night I recognized as not really me.

So there's the mind stream, there's identification with the mind stream, and there's the possibility of stepping out of the mind stream by accessing the present moment. Now to most people, the present moment is almost doesn't exist because what they're really interested in is the next moment or the one after that. So they live always towards the future, they live towards the next moment.

And unconsciously, they regard the next moment, the next point in the future that they need to get to, unconsciously, they regard that as more important than this moment. Not realizing that the future moment that they so desperately want to get to, tonight, tomorrow, whatever, or in any activity needing, wanting to get it out of the way as quickly as possible, needing to get to the end point. On a small scale, on a large scale.

[Speaker 4] (2:27:17 - 2:27:19)

Yes. For example.

[Speaker 1] (2:27:19 - 2:33:00)

Yes. And so, they don't recognize that the future has no existence except as a thought form. So when you always live towards the future, you live your life trapped in the conceptual reality of thought forms, which assumes a greater significance for you than the immediate reality of life, which is always now, because your life consists entirely of the present moment.

And to most people, that's, if you truly realize the significance of that statement, your entire life consists of the present moment. Your life is never not this moment. Even when you remember the past, you can only remember it now.

And when you think about the future, you can only think about it now. But people live as if the present moment were an obstacle that they need to overcome in order to get to some better point, which never arrives. So that's a mad way to live.

And it makes living hard. It makes living into an effort. This is the most powerful species on the planet because through the humans are not physically the strongest species, but they were able to dominate all the other species because of their ability to think.

And so that developed slowly, probably in a mythological form, it's expressed in the story of Genesis at the beginning of the Bible, when they eat this apple that comes from the tree of the knowledge of good and bad to differentiate this, that, that comes only through the ability to think, to analyze, to separate. And so that gradually developed in humans. And at first it wasn't a problem.

It opened up new possibilities. Then over thousands and thousands of years, the thinking mind became stronger. It grew and grew.

And gradually they lost connectedness with something that is deeper and more essential within themselves. We could call that being, the sense of aliveness, a deeper intelligence, even, that is more than just the thoughts that go on in your head. So gradually humans, because of the growth of the thinking mind, lost the ability to sense the deeper connectedness with life.

And then now we have arrived at a point where our whole sense of who we are is caught up in the mind and in thought. So we have been through an evolutionary stage, which was a necessary one for humanity. And we could call that the stage of mind, the stage of thought.

And to such a point now that we are completely possessed, I use that word, we are possessed by the mind without knowing it. We cannot stop thinking, it seems. We can, but for most people, that's not yet a reality.

They have to think, the compulsion to think and to derive your sense of self from the movement of thought. We are arriving at the end of this whole evolutionary stage. And for humanity now to go on, it needs to transcend the mind, no longer be possessed by the mind, to go beyond the compulsion to think into a deeper level of being.

So it's almost like regaining what they have lost. But when you regain something that you lost, you regain it with a deeper awareness. And this is the process that we are involved in now, that humanity is involved in now, because an evolutionary transformation, a transformation of consciousness really is no longer a luxury, so to speak, is no longer optional for humanity.

For the first time in the history of humanity, the transformation of consciousness is a necessity if humanity is to survive, because we are creating havoc on the planet. We are creating hell to a large extent on a planet that potentially is paradise.

[Speaker 3] (2:33:01 - 2:33:14)

Is that why you, I mean, you could have chosen just to stay on your own and being on your own, but you chose to be a teacher and to go out and teach. Why is that?

[Speaker 1] (2:33:14 - 2:35:14)

Yes, being a teacher was the response to a demand that came to me. So it was not so much, it wasn't a conscious choice that, oh, I want to teach or I need to teach. It simply arose out of, first of all, individual people coming to me and asking questions or wanting some kind of help or becoming drawn, becoming interested in what I had to say and experiencing an inner shift after coming a few times.

And so being a teacher that developed organically without me ever deciding I want to be a teacher. And so from seeing individuals and gradually developed into occasionally meeting in small groups and that went on for a few years. And out of all these meetings with individual people and small groups, I took notes after meeting with people often because things that I said in those individual sessions or group meetings were things that were new to me also, they came out of that moment.

They came out as a response to a person's question. So I would often take notes and I had a collection of notes after a few years. And some of those notes later became incorporated into the power of now, the book.

And so the power of now is in part the result of my work with people over a number of years. And in part, the arising of also a new teaching in the process of writing it.

[Speaker 3] (2:35:16 - 2:35:26)

I read in an interview you gave that for a lot of years you were only absorbed in being and you were not doing anything.

[Speaker 1] (2:35:27 - 2:35:27)

Yes.

[Speaker 3] (2:35:27 - 2:35:33)

And it was a kind of unbalance in your life. Yes. Could you describe that?

[Speaker 1] (2:35:34 - 2:38:31)

Yes. Well, after the transformation happened that night, my external life for a few more years went on as if nothing much had changed on the external level. I went on to do graduate work.

However, my heart was never fully in it anymore in intellectual pursuits, in analytical work. But that was my external life had a certain momentum. So it went on for a few more years and then that momentum came to an end.

And a point arrived when I was at Cambridge doing graduate work and some teaching. And suddenly I realized this has come to an end and I simply walked away from it all. And after that, two years followed in which I did very little and I didn't have a home of my own.

I would drift from here to there, spend most days just sitting. When it was warm enough, I would sit outside on park benches or walk around. I was then in London at that time.

And I was so deeply immersed in the peace, almost the bliss of the simple experience of being, the simple feeling, the goodness of life every moment that I lost interest in future completely. There were no ambitions and I wasn't even interested in doing anything. So from an external viewpoint, one could say my life for a while became unbalanced.

I became so deeply immersed in being that I lost interest in doing. One could almost say I lost the ability for a while to be active in the world. And then gradually the ability to be active in the world came back.

So a balance after a while reestablished itself. So I'm now able to be active in the world and at the same time be rooted in being. One does not exclude the other.

But for some reason, I had to go very deeply within for a while. Perhaps even on a larger scale, it may be that some people for a while have to go very deeply into being simply to provide a balance on the level of the collective consciousness because most human beings are totally lost in doing. So it may require a few humans who go very deeply into being to provide a balance.

Although on a personal level, it might look as if they were unbalanced.

[Speaker 3] (2:38:32 - 2:38:41)

Are you always in presence now? I mean, don't you get relapses? Don't you ever get angry or frustrated?

Is it?

[Speaker 1] (2:38:42 - 2:40:14)

No. I live in a surrender to the present moment. And so that is always there.

Whatever happens right now, I recognize that it is futile to argue with whatever is happening in this moment. So emotions occasionally still come. I can, if I see human suffering, I sometimes weep and I can cry.

And yet even then, there's a deep sense of peace in the background. Even though I may cry externally if I see, especially humans inflicting so much suffering on other human beings and on animals and on nature. On the planet.

So sometimes tears come and yet deep down, I know that ultimately life is timeless and indestructible. And I know that death is not the opposite of life, but only the opposite of birth. Life is beyond the forms of life.

Life is timeless and immortal. That which underlies the entire manifested world. And that dimension is present in each human being.

[Speaker 3] (2:40:19 - 2:40:21)

So what is your life like today? Do you have a family?

[Speaker 1] (2:40:23 - 2:45:08)

No, my life is now very different from what it was before, especially before the book came out. I was already teaching before the book came out, but soon after the book came out, the book grew very quickly. At first through word of mouth for one year, and then other people discovered it and started writing about it and speaking about it and then it accelerated.

So soon after the book came out, the teaching developed a momentum that was almost overwhelming. And it turned my external life around completely from living a very sheltered life, a very quiet life, almost a hermit-like life. Suddenly everybody wanted me to teach and demands for this and that were coming in, invitations flooding in from all over the world.

And then I responded at the beginning to almost every invitation. And then I realized it's impossible. I can no longer respond to every invitation.

So nevertheless, my life is now almost public and the groups become bigger and bigger. In the United States, the average number for talks is 2000 people now. And so I'm very much out there in the world.

And this is not something that naturally I would have chosen for myself. My natural inclination would be to be withdrawn, not to be known. I like to be invisible in public places, not to be noticed.

And that becomes more difficult now. And yet I accept the fact that this is how it is. So there's a lot of traveling.

And there's been so much in the past few years that now I feel I need to cut back for a while. And I believe, my feeling is that the cycle of going out into the world, which is lasting now for six years, may be coming to an end and there may be coming a cycle of withdrawal for a little while in which another book may come into being. And so I've had to surrender to the fact that my external life changed completely.

It's been wonderful too, to see how many people are being reached by the teaching, the book and the talks and the retreats. How many people are open to the message? That was the greatest surprise after the book came out, because when I was writing the book, the book wrote itself, one can almost say, my feeling was that only people who had already been on the spiritual path for a long time would respond to the book.

And that was not the case. People responded to the book, both people who had been on the path for many years, they responded, but also people who had never read a spiritual book in their lives, who had never had access to that dimension, they suddenly wrote to me and said, my life has changed, this is incredible. I've read this book several times already and it's fresh and new every time and there's so much peace in my life suddenly.

So the books seems to have reached all kinds of people, no matter what their background is. Also education doesn't seem to matter very much. Some highly educated people are open to it and others who are not equally open because it's not difficult to understand on an intellectual level.

And yet, not everybody is open to the books. There are some people, there are people who wrote to me and said, I bought a copy for a close friend and he found it completely meaningless. He read two or three pages and said, I don't, it doesn't make sense to me and so they put the book on the shelf and it may well be that in 10 or 20 years time, they take the book down from the shelf again and suddenly there's an inner readiness.

So many people are open, but certainly not everybody.

[Speaker 3] (2:45:09 - 2:45:24)

I have some more questions about this new situation of yours. I mean, you have become a success and your books have sold in millions of copies all over the world and you have become famous and you're making a lot of money. How do you handle that?

[Speaker 1] (2:45:27 - 2:47:54)

I'm not very good at handling the external things like money so basically it hasn't made very much difference to my life and I haven't really paid much attention to it. Most of my attention is absorbed by teaching or answering questions and so on and yes, I live in somewhat more spacious surroundings now than I used to, but that's really all. So that hasn't made very much difference.

I'm hardly aware of it. For a large part of my life, I lived with very little money and probably people would have said I lived below the poverty line as they call it and yet I never felt poor. I always felt I had quite enough and now I don't feel wealthy any more than I did then.

So it's exactly the same feeling. So it's a very abstract thing, the fact that now there is more wealth in my life on the external dimension is only an abstract truth to me. It has not affected me inside at all and it's only very slightly affected my external life.

I don't, I walk around cities and look at shops and I sometimes like to look at things, but very rarely do I actually feel the impulse to go and buy something. It's enough to look at a beautiful object and then walk on. So I don't know what, I wouldn't know what to buy with it.

There is the possibility at some point that there may be a center, a spiritual center coming into being. So if that happens, then some of the income from the book may flow into that. That is something that I'm not actively planning now, but I have a feeling it may happen.

[Speaker 3] (2:47:56 - 2:48:11)

And I also imagine that many people want to have something from you and they are, maybe they are admiring you, putting you in a place of a guru or, and how do you relate to that? Do you need to protect yourself or?

[Speaker 1] (2:48:11 - 2:51:03)

Yes, before it used to be the way that people, anybody who wanted to see me would just call me and or talk to me on the phone. I would talk to them, say, can I see you? Yes, come.

And then after the book came out, that became impossible because the phone kept ringing. And so in one sense, when I was only reaching a small number of people, however, there was the satisfaction of having close personal contact with people who came to me. Now the close personal contact, because the numbers have grown so much, that has become lost to a large extent.

And yet the teaching is reaching far, far, far more people than it did before. So really, and this is very much the same in any situation in life. Every situation has its own limitations.

There were certain limitations to my life on an external level when the teaching was not yet reaching many people. The teaching was very limited in that sense, although it was very satisfying. Now the limitation is that people cannot access me personally very easily.

I have to have several people in between me and the world. Simply because on a practical level, it's the only way I can live. I cannot reply to every email or answer every letter and thousands and thousands of letters come in all the time and emails.

And I cannot just pick up the phone and answer it so that it's harder for individual people to reach me. It's difficult, if not impossible. And that's simply, I need to accept that is a limitation that's unavoidable.

Knowing, however, that the teaching is reaching far more people than ever before. Yes, it's a pity. I still sometimes have a little group at home in Vancouver of people I've known for a long time.

Even before the book came out, they used to come to see me. So occasionally, we get together as a little group of 20 people or so in my living room. And I enjoy that very much.

So that's how it is. It's always a question of surrendering to whatever the present moment presents you with and whatever limitations there may be at this moment. There's no situation that is free of limitation of one kind or another.

[Speaker 3] (2:51:05 - 2:51:13)

Do you have an explanation why your teaching applies so much to modern people?

[Speaker 1] (2:51:14 - 2:55:50)

Well, the terms used, the words, the terminology that is used in the teaching, the words that are used, which are no more than pointers, not philosophical explanations, they are relatively neutral. They don't carry the weight of centuries and centuries of past as they do in ancient teachings. So they're not culturally conditioned in that sense, relatively neutral.

And so they can reach many people no matter what their background is. People who may have a religious background can be reached if they are open enough, because I don't deny that there is deep truth in every religion. This is why I quote in The Power of Now from Buddhism and Hinduism and Christian teachings.

And even people who have no religious background whatsoever can be reached by the teaching. This is one reason perhaps why it has reached so many people and another reason is that The Power of Now was written, it came out of that state of consciousness that it points to. So it came out of a state of inner stillness and receptiveness spontaneously.

The writing was a spontaneous act, although I incorporated some of the writings that I had done in previous years. There was an enormous, very strong creative impulse that flew into the writing, it flowed into the writing. So the book contains an energy, this sounds perhaps a little mysterious, but many people have said it, that when people read the book, the words go beyond the mere informational value of the words.

This is why one can reread the book many times and still feel it's fresh and new. And every time you read, and maybe it may just be one or two pages, the reading of it can put you back into the state of what the state that I call presence, because whatever the book speaks about ultimately points to that inner state of alignment with the present moment. So people can just pick up a book, read a couple of pages, and feel the mental noise slows down or subsides, and they become awake again, alert, present in the now, and they can sense some peace inside.

And so that's what it's all about. So that is at work in the book, and it is also at work in the group sessions, because as you, in the group sessions, nothing is ever prepared. I don't come with a script.

I don't even come with any idea in my head what we are going to do today or talk about today. When I start, when I sit down on the chair, I have no idea even a few seconds before opening my mouth what's going to come out. So in that sense, you can say it comes really out of the immediacy of the present moment.

And so what words come out depends very often on the energy field of the group. And so there's an interaction between the teaching, the teacher, and the taught. There's an ancient Eastern saying that says, the teacher and the taught together produce the teaching.

And that's how it is. And that's why the teaching has great power, because it doesn't come from the accumulated knowledge of the mind, but it comes out of the immediacy of the present moment. It's not prepared, and even on a retreat that lasts for three, four, five days sometimes, there's absolutely no pre-planned structure to the retreat.

It all grows organically out of the present moment.

[Speaker 3] (2:55:55 - 2:56:30)

I have one question, at least one more. You talk about surrendering, and you talk about suffering as one path to surrendering to presence. And you say that some people don't need the suffering.

But anyway, surrendering is beyond will and wanting. So what does it take? And what about grace?

I imagine that it takes grace also. Could you comment on that?

[Speaker 1] (2:56:31 - 3:01:24)

Yes. You won't surrender, which means, surrender means only accept this moment as it is. But you won't be able to surrender unless you're completely fed up with suffering.

You've had enough suffering. And at some level, you recognize that most of your suffering is self-created. It is created out of resistance to what is.

It is created out of an interpretation of something that is. It comes from a thought, from an interpretation, not from the situation. So you realize, really, that I've had enough suffering, and only when you've truly had enough suffering in your life are you able to say, I don't need it anymore.

Suffering is a wonderful teacher. Suffering is most people's only spiritual teacher. And suffering deepens you.

It gradually erodes the mind-made sense of self, the ego. And for some people, the point arrives where they realize, I have suffered enough. And that, for example, is the case with almost all the people who come to a retreat.

If you ask them, they've all had their share of human suffering. Otherwise, they wouldn't be open to the message. They've had their share of human suffering, and they've reached a point where they are ready to listen to the message that says there is another way to live.

There is another way in which you can live that does not create further suffering for yourself. Because to a large extent, humans create their own suffering. And so, when you are ready to hear that message, and that's really the message that is in every religion, that's the message, the central message of Buddhism is the end of suffering.

And even the central message of the teaching of Jesus is finding the pearl of great price, finding the kingdom of heaven that is within you here and now, as Jesus says. And that, of course, is the end of living in a state of suffering. So, one could say that you need suffering for you to realize, for you to come to a point of realization that you do not need to suffer anymore.

There's a paradox here. If I had not suffered, this teaching would not exist. So, you could say it has come partly as a result of intense suffering.

Because as a human being, I would not have evolved spiritually if I had not suffered. So, suffering was my main teacher. And suffering is for many people their main teacher.

But then, some people are, when they are ready, they come into contact with a spiritual teaching or teacher. And that can speed up the process of realization that you don't need to suffer anymore. You're ready to hear that.

So, that was, the Buddha talked about nothing else already 2,600 years ago, that there can be an end to self-inflicted suffering. And when you don't inflict suffering on yourself anymore, and remember, it's the thoughts. Your thoughts make you suffer more than anything else.

It's not usually the situation. It's your interpretation of the situation, of how dreadful it all is. And so, when you see that, then you see there is another way to live in which I no longer mentally argue with what is.

And that's the end of self-inflicted suffering. And if I no longer inflict suffering on myself, I no longer inflict suffering on others because the two go together.

[Speaker 3] (3:01:28 - 3:01:36)

But what will make me or somebody else take that step? Is it just acceptance?

[Speaker 1] (3:01:37 - 3:03:13)

It's acceptance, but acceptance won't come unless you've reached this inner point of readiness. And this is why I never try to convince anybody that what I'm saying is true, or they should practice something. I never say you should do this, or trying to convince somebody who doesn't want to believe it, that is pointless.

Only if you are ready internally for it, and so one way of putting it is to say, if you have suffered enough, then you're ready, then you're open to it, and you immediately see the truth of it. You immediately see that you ultimately make yourself suffer. It's not the situation, it's the mental interpretation of the situation, which in most cases is a form of resistance.

And that creates the suffering. And so you need to, when you hear these words, if you don't immediately recognize the truth, if there's an inner arguing, that's fine. There's no should here.

There's no, the teaching never says, this is how you should live. It's only if you can hear the truth of it, it will make sense to you, and then it can help you. So it can only help those who have an inner readiness.

But there are many, many people alive now in whom the readiness is there. They are able to hear it, to truly hear it, and immediately recognize, yes, this is true. Convincing never works.

[Speaker 3] (3:03:15 - 3:03:19)

But being in the present presence, I mean, is it a possibility for everybody?

[Speaker 1] (3:03:21 - 3:03:27)

It's being in the present moment is a possibility for those who are ready for it. Not yet for everybody.

[Speaker 3] (3:03:29 - 3:03:37)

What if we were all living in presence? I mean, what would happen? Would we have electricity, and would it work?

[Speaker 1] (3:03:37 - 3:05:25)

One thing is certain, that the world would look very different from the way it is now. We can't possibly imagine how the human world would look if everybody lived in a different state of consciousness, in a state that is predominantly a state of inner peace. What kind of civilization would we create out of a state of inner peace?

It's impossible to predict. All we can say is that probably, it would not be as complex as it is now. People would not be running around, continuously engaged in largely pointless activities.

It would probably not be such a noisy civilization as it is now, because no civilization has ever been as noisy as this one. And that's simply because whatever human beings create externally is a reflection of their inner state. So we are polluting the planet, simply because our inner selves are being polluted by an enormous amount of negativity, of continuous resistance.

So the outer is always a reflection of the inner. So if the inner is predominantly a state of inner peace, we create a peaceful world on the outside. What exact form that would take, we don't know.

We'd have to see what it is. It would very probably be a much more simple world, more harmonious and beautiful. Not nature is beautiful already, but I'm speaking of the human-made world.

[Speaker 3] (3:05:28 - 3:05:33)

Is it possible, in a few words, to say what is the essence of the teaching? Is that possible?

[Speaker 1] (3:05:36 - 3:08:28)

Well, the essence is very simple, and the essence could probably be taught, and perhaps one day will be taught to very young children at school. And children are very close to it anyway. The essence is, I could put it in the most simple terms, because the most simple is often the most powerful.

The essence is to make the present moment into your friend, not your enemy. So always ask yourself, what is my relationship with the present moment? At this moment, of course.

What is my inner relationship with the present moment? Is the present moment, am I friendly towards the present moment? Or am I hostile towards the present moment?

Is the present moment my enemy? And then that would be enough to bring about a change, because when you realize that you are making the present moment into your enemy, and you also know that that's all you ever have in life, then you realize it is a mad way to live, to treat this moment as if it were an obstacle to where you want to get to. And you never get there, because it's always now.

Then your relationship towards the present moment changes. Yes. It changes and your relationship becomes one of yes rather than no to what is.

It does not mean that you become passive or that you will never do anything again. It simply means that the foundation for any action you take is the state of yes to what is. And if there's a state, the inner state of yes to what is, that is the state of inner peace.

And inner peace is much more powerful as a foundation for right action than the state of resistance and negativity. So that is the essence. Find that state of inner alignment with the present moment, which comes with the yes, and then see what happens.

See how your world changes as you no longer resist the is-ness of this moment.

[Speaker 3] (3:08:31 - 3:08:50)

Thank you. It was what you concluded, the teaching about your role as a teacher. And you said something about you have nothing to teach to nobody, something like that.

Could you just state that, how you see your role as a teacher?

[Speaker 1] (3:08:51 - 3:11:32)

In conventional terms, teaching means that I give you information that you didn't know. I add something to you. So a student absorbs new information, accumulates new information.

But in spiritual teaching, the teacher just points to the truth that is already in every human being. And also points to the way in which that truth that is already in every human being is covered up. And anybody who is ready can immediately recognize the truth of the teaching as if they had already known it, because on some level they already knew it.

And that's why I say, I don't really have anything to teach in the sense of adding information to you. There's nothing that you need to add in order to find yourself and be yourself. You can add on an external level.

It's nice to learn new things. It's nice to explore this or that. And yet on an essential level, the essential level is the level of who you are, your innermost sense of self.

It's the level of being. On the most essential level, no matter where you are at in your life, what your life situation is, on the most essential level, nothing needs to be added to who you are. So the spiritual teaching is not a more, it's not an addition.

It's simply a pointing towards that which is already there. And those who are ready, then suddenly recognize the truth of it. Recognize means they already knew it.

It's almost like remembering, ah, yes. And then there's no question about, they never, convincing is not necessary. It's immediate realization.

Then the spiritual teaching works as it should. So that's how it operates. And that's the difference between a conventional teaching and spiritual teaching.

In some sense, one could say the spiritual teaching is almost the opposite of the conventional teaching. If anything, it takes something away from you. It takes away that which covered up who you are, but it is not taken away by the teacher.

It's taken away by yourself when you see it and become conscious of it.

[Speaker 3] (3:11:33 - 3:11:39)

Yes, that's very clear. Yes. Thank you very much.

Thank you. Thank you for your time.

[Speaker 1] (3:11:49 - 3:49:35)

Now we're here to enter a different state of consciousness. And one important characteristic of the new state of consciousness, you're not waiting for the future to be better than the present. You're not waiting for anything to happen.

Our normal state of consciousness, mankind's normal state of consciousness is a state of non-presence, a state of absence. They're not really here. Your attention is never fully in the now.

So the fullness of life escapes you and there's a seeking for the fullness of life through future where it can never be found because it doesn't exist. The future comes as the now. When it comes, it's the now.

Now it's so normal to live in such a way that most people never even question it. That's how it is. And that's why life gets so frustrating for many people and it becomes a burden.

They are seeking for something where it cannot be found. They're seeking for the fullness of life, a sense of knowing, a sense of being fully yourself in the future through something that's going to happen in the future. The fullness of being, one day I'll get there.

That's the mindset. And this is the revolutionary teaching that you're not going to get there. You can only be there at this moment.

And to feel the power that is inherent in the now as the power of your own being. Your own being is the totality of your being. The physical is part of that, but it goes deeper.

But the physical is an important part of it. It's not separate from being. The physical is a temporary expression of who you are, but it's not separate from that.

So throughout the day today, as we go more deeply into being, I will be reminding you that it is your entire energy field, your entire physical energy field is part of this state of consciousness of experience of living the fullness of life now with every cell of your body. And as you sit there, not just listen with your ears, almost as if you are listening with every cell of the body to feel the aliveness, the very life that is in every cell, in every organ, the life itself. So to dwell in your own energy field, to be that, so that you're not just listening with a monitor in your head, because then you would quickly get very bored.

If you were only here with your mind and trying to figure out what I'm talking about, boredom would set in very quickly. If you cannot go deeper than level of mind, then you will soon wish that you hadn't come here. And whenever you lose your connectedness with the body, when you're back in mind, there will be moments when you drift off into some fantasy dreamland of future, what's going to happen tonight or tomorrow, or what am I going to watch on TV tonight?

And 10 minutes later, you wake up and suddenly you're back here. That's normal. Now, when I say listen with the entire body, it's a strange way of putting it, but I do not mean just listening to the words.

In a way, the words have second place here. They may be useful pointers or signposts, but the main teaching is through the state of consciousness itself, that is the state of, I call it stillness sometimes, and an energy field arises in this room that is an expression of the new state of consciousness. It's a powerful energy field, but it doesn't make any noise.

It's still, it's silent. And to be open with your entire being to the energy field, which in the East, they sometimes call it the Buddha field. That is the main reason why we are here.

So to be receptive to that with your entire being, and there's nothing then that you need to figure out with your mind. Your mind isn't really needed here, or it's only peripheral. There was a woman last night after the talk, came to me and she didn't speak any English.

She spoke only French. And she said to me, my French isn't very good. I can understand a bit.

I can't speak it very well. But when she said to me, I didn't understand a word of what you said, but I understood you. I understood with the heart, she said, not with the mind.

My heart understood. So she was open. What she meant, she was open to the energy field.

I call it the energy field of presence. It's very subtle. The mind can't grasp it or figure it out.

You're very alert. It needs to be an alertness to be open to that, an alert presence. And boredom in that state is completely impossible.

It's inconceivable. Boredom is a mental state, a state when you are in the mind, you are disconnected from the aliveness, the fullness and the depth of aliveness of your being, and you're trapped in the mind and the mind isn't getting enough food or stimulus. And then boredom sets in because the mind needs continuous food or stimulus.

What's the next thing I can gobble up that I can get my teeth into? What's next? What's next?

The constant restlessness when you're stuck in the head and all the media is to satisfy that restlessness, to give you food for the mind, mostly totally trivial. And so there's continuous chatter that you get when you switch on things and they talk in an excited voice, switch on the radio and these. If you didn't know any English or whatever language they happen to be speaking, if you didn't know the language and you just listened to the sound, it would sound as if they were saying something incredibly important.

But if you can actually understand what they're saying, it's completely meaningless. So boredom is a state, is a sign that you're identified with mind and the state of consciousness that we are entering is a state in which boredom just cannot arise. When you are so deeply connected with being, there's such aliveness there.

And in that aliveness, there's the joy of the simple fact of being, beingness, the subtle but very powerful sense of joy that depends on nothing outside. And boredom is impossible there. And then your external experience just becomes an expression or a reflection of the joy of life.

So it becomes pleasant, but you don't seek fulfillment through it. And that's why it becomes so pleasant. The seeking of fulfillment through some experience or other is no longer necessary.

The seeking for fulfillment through some future event, this, that is no longer needed. And that's amazing. That means you can already be who you are fully at this moment.

Welcome to our meditative evening, perhaps meditation. To meditate successfully, the idea that you're doing a meditation can be quite an obstacle. So maybe that's the first thing we can get rid of tonight.

The preconceptions and the expectations that come with that term. So why did we call it guided meditation? Well, we had to use some word to get you here.

You get it. I get it. I get it.

I get it. I get it. I get it.

I get it. I get it. Meditation is usually something that you do among many other things.

Doing implies all kinds of things. It implies time. even future to some extent.

And yet, true meditation, if you even want to call it that, it's better not to call it anything, is not to do with doing, it's not a doing. It's the realization that you are of being, which underlies all doing. Realization is prior to all doing.

Thoughts, emotions, is prior to that. The simple realization, not the realization who you are, because there can be so many perspectives on that, not the realization how you fit into the totality of the cosmos, how that seemingly a little life fleeting existence fits into the totality somewhere. Not realizing how I fit into the whole, it's impossible to comprehend.

But an alignment with the totality, without the need to mentally understand anything, a realization, a simple realization that you are, which is expressed in the sublime words, I am. And if you've missed elementary grammar at school, you might not realize that I am, is the first person singular of the verb to be. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

Now you think it's two completely different words. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. The realization that you are, not as a concept, but as a deeper sensing of the life that you are, the aliveness, the life.

And something helpful to realize that is to pretend for one moment that there is no past and no future. Shh, shh, shh. I'm saying pretend so that everybody is still with me.

If I said, if I said there is no past and future, some of you might suddenly start thinking, just a second, aren't you going to sign books in an hour? Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. And the moment you go into thinking, you're off into the realm of mind, the realm of things, object, objects, in your mind.

in consciousness, every thought is an object in consciousness, and every thought has a pulling power. So it arises, and it pulls your attention in, and you start thinking, okay, but there is, I came here half an hour ago, there must be a past. I'm not realizing, of course, when you came here, it was the present moment, and when the books are going to be signed, it'll be the present moment, because there is nothing else.

Okay, but no need to believe that. Let's pretend. Let's pretend for a moment that there is no past and future.

Or let's just say, past and future become peripheral to who you are, there's only this. Oh, that is the entry point into the realization I am. Thinking is not required for that realization.

In fact, it's a hindrance, and you may sense the global feeling of presence or beingness that incorporates what we call the physical body. When you're present, completely present, here, now, you're present, not just with the head, with the totality of your being. In other words, you sense an aliveness that's there in every cell of the body.

That is our meditation, to be present with every cell of the body, a subtle sense of aliveness. In which the personal dimension becomes relatively unimportant. What arises here is the dimension of conscious presence or consciousness itself.

It's spacious. The moment you start to think, a form arises. Consciousness is born into a form, a thought form.

Most human beings on the planet are lost in the forms that arise in their consciousness. And when I say in their consciousness, that's not entirely correct. Because there is not such a thing as my consciousness, ultimately.

There's consciousness, and I am that. If you use the word expression, my consciousness, this whole language unfortunately operates, you create a duality, and so here's me and there's consciousness. The same thing happens when you talk or think about my life, and everybody thinks about it a lot of the time.

It's amazing how fascinating my life is. And that's such a fundamental error or delusion to say my life, because it implies that you have a life, and that implies that you are separate from life. There's you, and there's life, and you have it.

And then of course you start being afraid, because you might lose it. And then what's left of you? So just to say that, to say my life is obviously an illusion, because how could you be separate from life?

You are life. You don't have one. And life takes on form, temporary forms, becomes what looks like a physical form, and on the inner level life becomes thought forms and emotions and sense perceptions.

Forms that consciousness takes, is born into continuously. The continuous dance of form, it's amazing spectacle. Beautiful, wonderful, but it gets heavy and serious when all you know is the forms that consciousness takes.

And you never know yourself as consciousness itself. Being. So we could say the forms that consciousness or life, it's one thing, takes, we could call it existence.

It stands, exist means to stand out. Ex means out from Latin. Instance from stance, standing, to stand out.

So whatever arises, sense perceptions, things, thoughts, they exist, for they have a certain lifespan. Come and go, entire universe exists. Life forms go in and out of existence.

And then there's that which is prior to existence, being, I am. So the play of form is a beautiful thing. Well, forms are things.

But when that is all you know, you don't know that which underlies the dance of form. Then the dance of form is no longer a dance. It's not fun anymore.

It's not experienced or perceived as a play anymore. It becomes deadly serious. Because that's all you know.

And every form matters. It matters, absolutely. You know how worked up people get about things.

And you can see even people who mentally perhaps realize certain truths, they say I'm beyond things now. And then suddenly the phone rings. What happened?

What? He broke the contract. Sir, I've got...

Oh, oh... Oh, oh... Oh, oh...

Oh... Another word for word or form, we could just say the world. And so the world is the world of things.

It's the world of material things, which absorbs many people's, large part of many people's attention. What's the next thing? They're looking almost for the next thing to acquire, to derive satisfaction from, to associate with, to identify with.

But things are not just material things. And of course material things are everywhere in our civilization particularly. We are suffocating under proliferation of things and bombarded with messages that we need more things.

But things are also events, you know, forms that arise and they pretend to be all important. And life is not a play anymore. And the older you get, the heavier it gets and the more serious it gets.

You may have noticed in the statues of the Buddha, the Buddha has a slight smile usually, the good ones. There are some bad ones where the Buddha looks serious. But the good ones, there's a hint of a smile.

And then you may ask, why is he smiling? If all is nothingness, as some say, emptiness, then there's nothing there to smile about. The smile arises because the Buddha is in touch with that which is prior to things, to objects, to form, to the world.

Not because he has made it in the world. He's not smiling because somebody has just given him a garden for his monks and nuns to walk in. He's in touch with that which is prior to all things.

We could call that if things are objects that arise in the field of consciousness, then consciousness itself could best be described as space, a sense of spaciousness or space in your life, which doesn't exist as your life, by just using language. Space consciousness, which is not a term from science fiction, but refers to the realization that space is the essence of who you are, the spaciousness of simple being. And your entire life experience is determined by whether or not and how much space there is in your life.

And for many humans on the planet, there's no space. It's not that the space isn't there. It cannot be destroyed, done away with, but they don't know it's there.

All they know is the forms. Someone could say, all they know is the dimension of waves and ripples on the surface of life. That's the world.

Experiences, events, sense perceptions, drama, thoughts, emotions, ripples, ripples on the surface of life itself. And I am life. I am the one life.

I speak for each one of us. The I am, that which I am is life itself. It takes on a temporary form that is beautiful.

It's a continuous stepping back from the seduction of things. It's not that you reject things, but you stay, you can remain conscious of consciousness while you participate in the dance. How does that look in practice?

Somebody comes, says, oh, you know what just happened? This and this and this. In other words, lost in things, the world of things, and it matters.

Each thing matters absolutely. You know this. Okay.

And now there's the possibility either you get drawn into that and react on the same level and fuel that dimension. What can't be done? What are you going to do now?

Or you can be there while that person speaks. You can be there as an alert, aware presence in which the worlds are being received.

[Speaker 4] (3:49:37 - 3:49:39)

Oh, okay.

[Speaker 1] (3:49:41 - 5:20:48)

There's an alertness there. You haven't gone to sleep, but you're in fact much more awake than you would be if you were reacting. Oh, that's warm.

Okay. And for a moment there's a space in which this thing happens, the person is talking. And then you will find yourself saying something or doing something, and it'll be appropriate.

And while you say or do something, there's still a connectedness with the underlying field. It's a global thing. It's the entire being.

A connectedness with the underlying field out of which the doing comes or out of which the words come. Speak. It's much more intelligent.

Certainly the words that come out of the field, which really is the field of pure intelligence, consciousness itself, will be much more relevant, much more powerful, much more intelligent than anything that could come out of the conditioned reactive mind. And another thing that comes with it is there's always when you're in touch with the I am, there are other words you can call it, stillness, beingness, presence. That is also the realm of peace.

That is the realm out of which peaceful action can come. Words, peaceful words, words that have the energy carry still a fragrance of that state of being. Action also can carry that fragrance.

Creation, you can even create something out of that state, like a work of art or whatever it may be, or a little simple object. And whatever comes out of the state of connectedness with being, and don't trust words, they're never quite right. You're not connected with being because you are being, but we have to use words.

Out of that state of connectedness with being, whatever comes out of that has a beauty to it, has a power to it, has a quality. And it may just be the quality of a simple gesture or the quality of a step, or it doesn't matter what it is. So that's really the purpose of life while you are here in this form, is to be in the two dimensions, one could say, this is nothing final here, the two dimensions of, there's the dimension of the world, and there's the dimension of being or presence, which is the unmanifested or other words that you may want to use.

And the art of living is to be in the world, participate to the extent that you want to or is required of you. And as the old expression goes, to be in the world, but not of it. That's an old question, expression.

So the world, which is the world of things, which includes thoughts, because every thought is an object, it has a form, a thought form. The world of things, including your mind, no longer has the power to draw you in completely. And you no longer give it this absolute reality.

It is the world of the relative. It sounds almost too simple, becoming friendly with the present moment. And all kinds of things happen in the present moment.

And the form that it takes changes continuously. The present moment itself remains as space. And then in that space, something happens.

And the secret to life is to be internally aligned with the form that this moment, the only moment there ever is, takes. Instead of rejecting the form that this moment takes or devalue it and make it into a means to an end. Internally aligned means yes, you say yes to what is.

Your child hasn't brushed his or her teeth yet. That's what is. Why don't you brush your teeth now?

There's a different way of doing things. Now you tell me, well, you haven't experienced, I have four children. It's, there is another way of doing things that honors life, which is now.

And only in honoring life, in saying yes to the form that this moment takes, can you go beyond that in yourself which is beyond form. If you react against the form that this moment takes, you will continue to be trapped in form. A form identity, a me that feels stronger every time it reacts against something.

The me gets stronger in every no to what is. Every time you can, you argue with what is, you complain about what is, the little me that is a mental formation feels stronger for a while. And then you have to look for the next thing to argue with.

So the secret is, the form that this moment takes often looks like a limitation on your freedom. It may look like a limitation on your life one way or another. You're sitting in an office, but you don't want to be there.

You're in a traffic jam, but you don't want to be there. So that's a limitation. Your partner is getting obnoxious.

So that's a limitation. There's always something that should, I want to be free. I want to be fully myself, not this.

And that keeps you trapped. It's only when you bring a yes to the form that this moment takes, that's to do with a manifested world. The world of manifestation is producing the form that this moment takes.

As an event, a person wanting something, whatever it may be, a situation, a place, that's the form. And you may say, what? Doesn't make sense.

I don't want this. But it is. And whatever is, is part of the totality.

The entire universe has brought about the form that this moment takes. Otherwise it couldn't be. Everything is totally interconnected.

Now, you may not be able to see how these things are interconnected. Why should I be stuck in this traffic jam right now? Does it make sense?

What is the purpose in that? It shouldn't be. But yet it is.

And if you become internally aligned with the form, which a moment ago looked like an obstacle, but now you say, well, it is. It is. There it is.

With that, space, the dimension of space within yourself, which is being, opens up. Because you haven't made yourself smaller by reacting against the form. You haven't trapped yourself in the form identity by reacting against some form that this moment takes.

So by saying yes to the form that is, and in some cases, it is truly, from a conventional viewpoint, one would say, this is terrible. Why, how could this happen to a human being? Or to me?

How can this happen to me? I don't, this is not what I want. It's awful.

It could be a serious, an illness, whatever, great loss, collapse. Somebody close to you dies, goes away, leaves you. Forms are not reliable in this world.

They are fleeting. That includes the human form. Even the seemingly solid structures are not really that solid.

They just look solid. Talk to a physicist, he'll tell you they are not solid at all. And sometimes you realize they are not solid.

So suddenly something crumbles. A form crumbles. The form and the formless.

And you cannot find the dimension of the formless as long as you are battling against the world of form. I want freedom. I want to find myself.

And I can't find myself sitting in front of this computer screen. I can't find myself having to clean this right now. I want to be doing something meaningful.

I want to, you're missing something, not something, you're missing that which is concealed underneath the form that this moment takes. And that's easy to do. And that's the great deception that most humans are subject to.

What they are looking for in some future moment is already here, hiding in the most unlikely place called the present moment. What is it that they're looking for? What all the people that are running around like rabbits or whatever in the cities, there must be some purpose.

Where are they all running to? What is their purpose? And they all have, even if they want more money or they want more this or more that, hiding behind that, there's always, they want to be more fully themselves.

They want to feel a sense of security, of aliveness. They want to be more fully who they are. They want to, they're looking for themselves.

They're looking for an ultimate sense of being rootedness, of saying, yes, I have arrived. I'm fully myself now, secure. And they are looking through this or that or that.

They try to get there, not realizing that they can't. And it's been hiding all along underneath the seemingly unsatisfactory form that this moment takes. So you come, it's a completely different way to live, the alignment with the suchness of this moment.

It's only then, that is the true meditation. You then, space arises when the form is not resisted. Space, a difficult situation, an unpleasant place, whatever it may be, somebody screaming, this or that, that's what is.

And then this, it's still there, but there is a dimension of depth to what is that frees you from being totally dependent on the world of form. And from that space, you see, it comes with allowing. Allowing is the key, allow this moment and suddenly space is there because through saying yes to what is, immediately an inner spaciousness arises.

And out of that spaciousness, action can come. Out of that spaciousness, words can come or out of that spaciousness, nothing may come. It may just remain as spaciousness, which is beautiful too.

Very effective action can come out of that. And out of that spaciousness comes the recognition that every life form that comes into your field of consciousness is really an aspect of the one life, a temporary form that the one life, the one consciousness that you are has taken. And that recognition, it's a flower, it's a tree, it's a cloud, it's another human being, it's the cat, it's a pebble, a stone, a wall, a chair, whether we call it alive or inanimate, doesn't matter, everything is alive.

And everything is a form of life. And the essence is life itself, beingness, presence. Some great artists have looked at a relatively, an ordinary landscape.

Nobody would have looked at it twice. And they looked, and then they took up the brush. And then there was a, when the painting was finished, yes, it was a picture of that landscape.

But it also had the fragrance of that which is beyond form, that was there as the backdrop, the background to the sense perception of the artist. There was a true looking against a field of alert, aware stillness. Then it became a painting.

And then even, not immediately perhaps, but at some point, even humans who had perhaps not, perhaps almost completely trapped in form, recognized something in that painting. They couldn't quite say what. And so it became what they call great art.

Somebody was able to look at the world of form so deeply that the formless became part of the perception. And that is not, this is meant to be our normal state. It is meant to bring that dimension into this world of form, that which transcends the personal, because everything that is personal about you is what pertains to the world of form.

My past, my thoughts, my opinions, my viewpoints of who I am, who others are, what I know or think I know, my story, my future. All form, and it's all destined to dissolve fairly quickly as all forms do, pop, boop, soap bubbles. Oh, where's, it's gone.

Oh, of course it can't be. They don't, the amazing thing is they don't teach yet at school that forms dissolve quickly. That could be lesson one.

And every child would see it. Oh yes, they don't teach it. They teach other things which they say are more important or important matters.

This matter has to do with the world of things. Don't look for the significant in your life at some future moment. When am I going to make it?

When am I going to be recognized? When am I finally going to get that sense of security that can only come when you have a certain amount of money in the bank? When is my story finally turning, going to turn into a happy and satisfying one?

I'm waiting. Waiting for my life to become significant. And you miss the depth because the depth is in each moment or rather the one, the only moment there is.

And your life becomes very significant when you bring the inner yes to the present moment. Then something arises in you that is beyond the form that perhaps looks as if it were an obstacle, but it is. The truth of this was expressed, is expressed in mythologically in the image of the cross.

Somebody surrenders to the most dreadful situation, pain, suffering, and somebody surrenders to that. So at first, the cross is the greatest obstacle to finding yourself, to being yourself, to life. It seems to deny that there's any meaning to life.

Now the cross stands for anything, loss, death, and it'll come into everybody's life, of course. And then there comes this, well, this is the form, this moment. And suddenly there's a peace in the background that suddenly is there in the most dreadful situation externally.

And so the cross becomes suddenly an opening that works with little things and suddenly works with big things. The actor who played Superman died yesterday. He experienced a dreadful accident, broke his neck, couldn't move anymore.

He also experienced a certain degree of surrender in the years after that. Even a certain peace one could see. It became an opening.

And so they said something beautiful in the news. He truly became Superman only after the accident. From a conventional viewpoint, it would be an irony in the film he flies and in reality is confined to a wheelchair, but the true Superman is in the wheelchair.

He also said something, they showed an interview that was, he gave it one year ago. He talked about the accident. He said, I was one, when I was riding, I was always completely one with the horse.

We were a oneness. And he said, but at that moment, I got distracted by a thought and I lost the present moment. And then the accident happened.

And he said, you see how important the present moment is. How important, how precious the present moment is because it is life itself. It is inseparable from the very being that you are.

And knowing that is the art of living in this world. Remembering you're not what happens because people get so drawn into what happens. You're not what happens and you're not what you do because that's what life consists of.

Things happen to you, that's the passive experience of life. And then you react or you do things that's the active. And that's for most humans, that's all there is.

They're dependent on what happens to them and on the doing what they do. So there's what happens, what's the next thing that's going to happen? I'm hoping that it will be good.

Underneath the hope, there's the fear that it'll be bad. What happens and what you do are only relatively important, not absolutely. Absolutely important is whether you are aligned with life at this moment.

That is your purpose, to live, to learn, to live in that way here on this earth as this temporary form is your purpose, to learn that. And what you do doesn't matter. The success of your life is not determined by what the world tells you is successful.

The world doesn't know it, the world is completely lost. Are you aligned with life? With being?

With yourself? With the now? So one.

And then what you do externally is secondary. How you do it is what matters. Whether you six, seven, eight hours a day, you move dishes or whatever you do, then it flows into that, being flows into that.

Or if whatever you do, it seems incompatible with being, you will find yourself very quickly removed. Life removes you. The boss calls you in and says, we don't need you anymore.

We don't want peaceful people here. Or he says, you're the only person not suffering from a stress-related disease. You're not doing your job.

Some of the structures of this mad world can perhaps be transformed from within. Other structures of this mad world, you simply leave or they collapse by themselves. And there's wisdom is required for you to know.

But that's easy because wisdom is, the place of wisdom is accessing the present moment. Alert, still, present. And you watch and you listen.

You watch and listen, even if there's nothing to listen to. As one Zen master would often call his disciples by their name, Mary, yes, master? Nothing, didn't.

John, yes? Nothing. To simply call them out of identification with the stream of thinking into presence, into stillness, into alert awareness.

He doesn't, you don't have to fill it with something. It's space itself. So he called them into that state and there was nothing, he didn't have to put anything into it.

Why fill it up? There'll be enough things that's been got, go into space. There are all kinds of things would go.

Oh, oh. But you don't have to hang on so much anymore. You can, they enter your space.

Space, not yours. You are space, so it's not your space. Things enter space and then they leave.

Okay, experiences, events, people. And you remain as space, the background. So the foreground is the world.

The foreground is the world of things, the world of thinking, the world of emotions coming, going. That's the foreground of your life that most people are completely lost in. And then there's the background.

The Buddha smile is, I would call the background smile. Wow. This was expressed in an extreme form by the teacher Krishnamurti, who once said in a talk, do you want to know my secret?

And of course, everybody wanted to know his secret. They'd been coming for 30 years to listen to him. And he said, this is it, my secret.

I don't mind what happens. I don't know how many people got it. Amazing.

And of course, we understand what that means. I don't mind what happens. I'm not what happens, and I'm not looking for myself in what happens.

I am not what happens, nor am I looking for myself in what happens. I'm the space in which it happens. Not what happens.

I'm presence, I'm consciousness. I am life. Temporarily appearing as a form of life.

So the dance of the forms of life is actually quite beautiful. When you don't mind what happens anymore, because you welcome what happens, because what happens is the present moment. And it's not serious.

Thank you. Welcome to the present moment. Here, now, the only moment there is ever.

And welcome to our little experiment. This is how I consider it. Of bringing the truth of presence, the truth of spiritual transformation, the transformation of consciousness to you through this strange medium that we call the internet, through this new technology.

It's a little ironic that a person like myself is using this technology, of course, with the help of many people. The person who is totally computer illiterate and doesn't even use email. And yet, here I am and here you are in this moment together.

The information that I'm going to give you may be of some importance. The information that will be part of our sessions. And yet, that is not the main thing.

That is not the essence of our coming together here. The essence of our coming together here is entering the state of consciousness that we may call presence. And my main endeavor is to allow you to enter that state of consciousness with me.

Here and now. There's no need to wait for the next moment or some other bit of information before you can become present, alert, still. And aware in the present moment now.

So a transformation of consciousness, a transformation of consciousness is possible. And a transformation of consciousness is already happening to many, many people around the world at this moment. How do I know this?

I know this because you are here listening, watching, sensing the power of presence within yourself. Not in me. I'm just an image on the screen.

I could say a mirror reflecting back to you who you are. So if you can sense a certain shift inside you at this moment, sensing an increased sense of aliveness, of alert stillness, then the transformation of human consciousness is already beginning to happen here and now. And it's happening here and now in the only place where it can happen.

It's in yourself. There's a certain urgency behind what we're doing here because we're at a critical time in the history of humanity. We've lived in the particular state of consciousness for thousands of years.

And that state of consciousness, or rather unconsciousness, is no longer working. It's becoming increasingly destructive. Just read the history of the 20th century and see how destructive that state of consciousness, that collective state of consciousness has become.

And if there's no shift in consciousness at this time, then humanity may very well self-destruct. So the question for us as a species is ultimately evolve or die. So there's an enormous power now, an evolutionary impulse pushing us into this new state of consciousness.

And this is the reason why I am here talking to you and this is the reason why you are here listening to these words. It goes far beyond the personal dimension. There's a deeper reason of why we're here.

It's an expression of an evolutionary impulse in the collective consciousness of humanity. It wants to evolve. It wants to reach a new evolutionary stage of consciousness.

And so I can feel in what I do, whether it's writing or speaking, I can feel the power of that evolutionary impulse behind the words and the power that comes even when there are no words. There's just a still, alert presence. There's still an enormous power that comes through when one sits there in simply the state of alert presence.

And that's the power of consciousness itself. And that is working through this form, this body, and it's working through you also. It is the same power.

Something in the collective wants that change. And all we need to do is be open to this evolutionary impulse so that we can cooperate with it rather than try to protect ourselves and our egos from it. And part of this teaching here is to show you this possibility of opening yourself up more and more to what wants to happen on this planet.

Not what I want to make happen or you want to make happen, but something far greater than the individual person. But it can only happen through the individual person. So I welcome you because you are part of this process and we are going to be here together regularly so that we can enter more deeply into that state and so that you can begin to live from that state of consciousness in your daily life, which is the main thing.

It's your daily life that determines where you are at as far as your state of consciousness is concerned. Not just it's fine to be here at this moment and become present, that's beautiful and necessary, but it's as essential to hold that state of presence in everyday life. And to learn that is why we are here.

So the dance continues, phenomenal existence, nothing stays in place for that long. And that is beautiful too, the continuous change, the continuous ending and beginning and ending and beginning experiences without looking for yourself in all that, in the dance of phenomenal existence, then it gets difficult. And the essence of our weekend retreat really is the essence of existence.

And that's by knowing yourself as the awareness in which phenomenal existence happens, become free of dependency on phenomena and free of self-seeking in situations, places, conditions, looking for a deeper me, a bigger me in phenomena, fearing change because I may lose something that I thought was part of me. Then phenomenal existence, people may pretend that they're having fun, but they're not really. It's a continuously enticing thing and also a threatening thing to be in phenomenal existence and not knowing yourself or only knowing yourself as a phenomenon in the head.

So the freedom is simply knowing yourself as the aware space and then let it happen. And you even participate in it. You're not just a passive spectator, although that element is always there even as you act upon, as this form acts upon the world and participates in the dance, you're not just watching the dance of other life forms.

You're also, there is a form, temporary form here that participates in the dance also. So you dance along, but you watch that also. You watch yourself dancing the dance of phenomenal existence.

And that's fine. Now the wonderful thing that happens when you know yourself as the awareness, you no longer demand that phenomenal existence should make you happy because everybody otherwise is demanding that. You don't know yourself.

You demand something from the world. The world owes me. It should make me happy.

I've given so much. It's what has the world given me? And of course the world won't do that.

Phenomenal phenomena are not designed to make people happy. To give the appearance of happiness for moments, yes. And then the tendency is to turn to either end or to turn into their opposite.

That's in the nature of phenomena. They quickly come to an end or if they continue, their satisfying nature is no longer satisfying. And it's an amazing thing when the demand is dropped that the world should make you happy.

And what does the world? The world means phenomena. The world means a place should make you happy.

I found the place, the ideal place to live. I'm really going to be happy there. People, this one, I found the one who is going to make me happy conditions, situations, anything phenomenal, expecting for ultimate fulfillment.

It cannot live up to that. The world cannot live up to that. And expecting to complete yourself, to find a sense of completion in phenomena also.

It cannot, the world cannot give you that sense of completion and fulfillment. So in the absence of knowing yourself, no space consciousness, as we could call it, presence, awareness, of awareness, self-aware, then it's a struggle. And ultimately it's frustration.

And you no longer demand that the world should make you happy. Phenomena, experiences, the reactive relationship towards experiences goes. Reactive, personalized relationship towards everything that happens around you.

You may even get angry or, about the weather not being as it should be. Tiny, it's a tiny thing, but it's just one of many things that people are reactive about. And then you may seek the ideal climate.

And when you finally get there, something else happens to spoil the whole thing. There's always something that comes in, in any condition, place, or situation, an element sooner or later comes in that is, a little thing that seems to spoil it. Something wants to come in it to detract from the, that was so nice for a moment.

And then a flaw comes in, and that is in the nature of phenomena. The little thing comes in, it's not quite working as it should. That wasn't in the plan.

And when you see it, it's never quite perfect, the phenomenal world. It's not, it's never, as long as you expect it to be perfect, just right, it's not. When you give up, the demand or the expectation that a situation, a person or a relationship should make you happy, should display perfection, should give you, a sense of self, then it won't.

If you drop the demand, then the strange thing is, it is quite a perfect place. You don't need it to be perfect anymore. The imperfection inherent in all phenomena, which means they come to an end, they continuously change, is actually part of the dance, and quite beautiful too.

That's expressed in Zen. A Zen master was sweeping the floor, and he knocked over with a broom, with a handle behind him, there was a vase on the table, and he knocked it over by mistake, and the disciple saw that. And the disciple, with a slight smile on his face, asked the master, is perfection possible in this for a human being?

And the master said, yes, the perfect human being allows imperfection to be there. So it's not really imperfection, it's the nature, accepting the nature of phenomena. But it's interesting to see, no matter what you do and where you go, something will come in, it seems there's a little element there that wants to spoil it.

It's not really. When you no longer demand anything, there's simply the acceptance of the continuously fluctuating dance, then that is fine too, that becomes part. And so now what we are really talking about is the state of aligning yourself with the is-ness of this moment, which is the dance.

Not demand that it should be different. When is the world going to make me happy? Nothing can make you happy for long.

But when you know yourself there's an abiding, alive sense of peace, we could call it joy, that's because there's such aliveness there. Peace coupled with aliveness really is joy. Joy is an alive sense of peace.

That is the joy of being, of being who you are. And it is there continuously as the undercurrent. It's the joy of knowing yourself as the very life essence before phenomena, the very awareness.

That knowledge is joy. And you then enjoy both the birth and the death of phenomena. Which happens continuously.

The end of this retreat is a kind of death of a particular experience. And you enjoy that.

But if you only have this experience, you might get sad about leaving this place because the experience comes to an end.

And then you project yourself, oh, in two days I'll be there, back. And you miss the here. So there's that which doesn't end, being, the awareness, and knowing yourself as that.

And then things happen. And you participate. And in the back, in the background, there's a witnessing presence.

And you watch yourself talking and doing it. Sometimes you watch emotions. The Buddha saw all that already.

He said, no matter where you go or what you do, whatever condition you find, whatever situation you find yourself in, he said, it will have three characteristics. Any situation, any condition. And they are expressed in the Pali language, which is a kind of similar to Sanskrit.

Anicca, anatta, and dukkha. I don't use foreign words very often, but. It's nice to see the truth expressed everywhere.

Anicca means impermanent, it passes. Any condition, wherever you go, it has the characteristic of impermanency. Anicca means impermanent, passing, fleeting.

And the strange thing is, even yesterday, it's gone. Last week is gone. Your childhood is gone.

Not very different from a dream. Because the forms are there for a while, and then they dissolve like mist or vapor. Was it all a dream?

And sometimes it happens even to people, they look back on something, just was that a dream or did it happen? It may even be to you when you're traveling back to your usual where you live, and you suddenly there's the Hollyhock experience recedes. And then suddenly you're back in your old familiar surroundings.

Okay, was that a dream, the whole Hollyhock thing? No, it was real, but it's gone just as if it were a dream. It's...

And so this is all sensory experience has that nature of anicca. And it evaporates, and it's amazing. And it's a fearful thing when you have to hang on to these things because you're looking for yourself in it somewhere.

Oh, it's coming to an end again. Or a relationship can be devastating, a relationship coming to an end again. As a friend of mine once told me when she had a relationship, and it came to an end, and she said goodbye to him on the train, the relationship, of course, and finished.

And she said, God, this time you've gone too far. And that is another that people have that they have an issue with God. You should talk, you shouldn't, you should know better.

Phenomena shouldn't come to an end. Why did you arrange things in that way? Everything should last forever and be completely static.

So that's the truth of impermanence. And if you expect the impermanent to be permanent, that is the other characteristic of all phenomena, of all situations, conditions that the Buddha called dukkha, suffering. If you expect the impermanent to be permanent, it's a suffering, dukkha, dukkha.

And the element of suffering then is the unsatisfactoriness that comes in because of the transient nature of phenomena. Dukkha can also be translated as plain misery, unsatisfactoriness, suffering. And the third characteristic, and again, we've already been talking about it, anatta, every situation, every condition, not self, it is not self.

And if you're seeking yourself in it, again, you're back in dukkha, suffering. Anatta, not self. Whatever situation you're in, if there's self-seeking, an enhanced seeking, an enhanced sense of me through identification with this or that, you're back in suffering.

So every condition, every situation has those characteristics. There's no self in it, it is impermanent. And if you don't know it, it's suffering.

And once this is the truth uttered, he may have been the first human being who saw the truth 2,600 years ago. Wow. And that simplicity then over the centuries became a huge religion.

And you have to study years to get it. It is possible that he also taught body awareness. Some people say he did, it doesn't matter.

Vipassana is a body awareness meditation in Buddhism to feel, be in the body. So Jesus recognized it, the impermanence. That is the realm, the dimension where moth and rust consume and thieves break in and steal.

He said that he described the dimension of phenomena. They are moth and rust. Now rust does, it consumes even the hardest of form, metal.

Moth, they are these little things that eat garments. So it's a nice visual image of impermanence of form. So if you put your attention on form and seek forms, then it crumbles.

You can see the crumbling and thieves break in and steal. Forms get taken away by thieves or by life, by God, who shouldn't have. It would be amazing if you could see the world of form, speed it up.

As you see in some films, when they speed up the film and you see our flower, there's the bud of a flower and then it opens. First it comes out of the ground. But flower opens.

And then it withers. And it's gone. And if you saw a human being, you would see something similar.

And the human form withers just like an apple. That is, there's an apple and then it's fresh at first. And then it gets wrinkled.

Now, another amazing thing, if you saw, I looked at flowers, a flower bed, and I saw how these forms, how they come out of the ground and go. The flowers come, open up and go. And then the next ones come.

So it's a continuous back into nothingness. And really the same flower is coming up again. Into existence, out of existence, into existence, out of existence.

And humans, I see, I was driving, I don't even remember what city it was, back from the city to the airport. And the city is full of people running around. And on the way to the airport, there was a huge cemetery.

And a few years ago, they were all running around the city. And it was so important. I also love to look at old photographs that you can buy in antique junk shops or where people, they found photographs in their attic or somewhere and can't even remember who they were.

And so they end up in a shop and you see all these people, long gone, not much is remembered. And they were trapped in their world of problems that were so important. And how quickly forms dissolve.

Look at a city scene in a photograph, hundreds of people cheering a political leader or something. And everybody's gone. The political leader and the cheering people evaporated.

And it was so important, total. And here we come to the relative importance of all things in phenomena. I'm not saying pay no attention anymore to the world of phenomena.

No, honor it, but know that whatever is here in the world is relatively important, but not absolutely important. The only thing of absolute importance is knowing who you are beyond phenomenal existence. Jesus said that you're concerned about many things, but really only one thing matters.

He said to Martha, only one thing matters, ultimately matters. So to honor the phenomenal world, but not believing that it is so serious. It's not that serious, not that heavy.

So, and there's something very strange when you contemplate the impermanence of everything and just see it. Don't even need to think about it or formulate a theory or to just see the impermanence of all forms. And when you stay with that, that is one way of knowing yourself beyond form, because that which sees the impermanence is the awareness.

And that's in Buddhism, sometimes they have the practice of contemplating dead bodies. The monks go and look at dead bodies in the morgue and sit there for two or three hours or a whole day. That's maybe taking it to an extreme.

And besides, in the Western world, they wouldn't even allow you to do that. They think you must be, one thing, we must be weird if you want to see a dead body, it's not allowed. You have to get special permission and you probably wouldn't get it.

Yeah. So to see the impermanence, whether in the human form or any other form, you might think that must be depressing. But if you stay simply with the seeing of it without coming to any conclusion, you don't need to draw any mental conclusion that, oh, this is dreadful, this is whatever.

Or even a theory, of course, even to take refuge in a mental theory that, yeah, but reincarnation, we reincarnate one, reincarnate into the next. We leave that aside towards something more essential. Reincarnation doesn't help you if in your next reincarnation, you still don't know who you are.

Simply to see the impermanence, the seeing is freeing, the seeing of it, because that is the awareness. So there is something very strangely peaceful about seeing the impermanence of all forms. And that is because the awareness sees that.

If, and that is the one thing or no thing that is not subject to birth and death. It is the universal awareness going through this form, moving through this form. But it is the universal consciousness, the one not subject to birth and death.

It sees. And that is why I mentioned that also, at some point, there is something sacred about the fact of death, the disappearing forms, because whenever the form disappears momentarily, something shines through at that moment of transition of disappearance from form into no form, the formless shines through. And that's the joy of being here also.

Because it is a kind of psychological death that you voluntarily embrace here. Who you thought you were, dies. Not that the form disappears.

But the belief that this, the me, this is me, that me goes. Your sense of who you are dies. And that's beautiful.

And there's a, suddenly, suddenly, you see how you had limited yourself in an absurd way to a little me and my problems. So one could say it is simply a shift from believing that I am this, or I'm that, and I want to be that, to simply go deeper. I am.

To know yourself as the I am presence, which is awareness. Twice in the Bible that occurs, and those are the most profound statement in the Old Testament, when they ask about God, who are you? What's your name?

And God, the one consciousness, speaking, of course, through a human, somebody wrote that. I am that I am. I am that I am.

That's what God says about him, her, itself. I am that I am. The I am, that's the I am.

The innermost identity of each form. So that everybody senses there's something incredibly precious in me that I don't want to lose when I die. And they mix that up with form in the head, my story, my life, my identity, that feels so precious.

So that gets mixed up with objects in consciousness, not realizing that that preciousness that you sense, if only in an obscure way, those people who haven't realized who they are in the background, they said preciousness, but they believe it's to do with the object in consciousness, the forms, not knowing that this preciousness is their own essence, which is consciousness itself. And this, they don't want to lose. And it's the only thing they can't lose.

So the innermost identity, something remained. You were a child, then you grew up, and perhaps your life changed dramatically, almost as if you had gone through different incarnations in one lifetime. It happens to some people.

Other people remain in one incarnation. They stay in the same place, perhaps into the same job a whole lifetime. Who knows, that could be how they realize through sheer boredom, finally.

But many people move through, their form goes, seems to change so dramatically. Suddenly, your form is so different in relation to the world. Even with me, this form, it happened.

This form was a hermit for years. Nobody paid much attention, except a few people here and there, to what the hermit said. And basically, it was wonderful being nobody, beautiful.

And then suddenly, the nobody becomes somebody in the eyes of the world, like a new incarnation. And nothing has changed in the innermost, absolutely nothing. But externally, it looks, oh, there's a new incarnation now.

But if you look deep underneath the events and the phenomena, the innermost, the essence of your being is the same. Deep down, the sense of I-ness underneath the changing phenomena around you is the same. And that is the I-am.

That is the awareness, the consciousness. People don't know that. They sometimes get a glimpses of that, and then it gets mixed up again with the objects that arise in consciousness.

So knowing yourself, not as arising objects in consciousness, as phenomenal experience or thoughts, but that which makes all that possible. This is expressed so beautifully in a very ancient scripture, in one of the Upanishads, some of which are even earlier than the Bhagavad Gita, very ancient Indian scripture, talking about the nature of God or the ultimate or the eternal or the one. And that's what it says is this.

I only remember a few lines, not the whole of it. Not that which the eye sees, but that whereby the eye can see. Know that alone to be Brahman, the eternal, and not what people here adore.

Not that which the ear hears, but that whereby the ear can hear. Know that alone to be Brahman, the eternal, not what people here adore. Not that which the mind thinks, but that whereby the mind can think.

Know that alone to be Brahman, the eternal, and not what people here adore. That the one, the underlying consciousness that makes thought possible, thought comes out of it, that makes sense perception possible, the very ground, that not what people here adore. What people here adore is mental images of God, or they make God some external object that they believe will give them salvation, and then they make that into God.

Not what people here adore. That's beautiful. That's the essence.

So I'd like to listen to one more song before we go on to exchanging hugs, if we haven't done that yet. And just listen, the song is again by Kirtana, and it is called, appropriately, I Am.

[Speaker 2] (5:21:16 - 5:25:26)

Before the body, before the story, before the name, beyond the mind's attempt to find or explain, before the breath, beyond the sense of pleasure or of pain, and after death, and after death, I am. Within the heart, the whole and part of everything I see, behind the eyes, beyond the skies, reflecting me, at the silent core, and yet before horror phenomena begin, oh, and after it, and after it, I am. Many differences separate us on the surface, yes, but I cannot find a boundary in consciousness.

When you ask me where does awareness begin and does it end, I have to say I've always been within the body, without the body, not subject to changing moods, states of health, points of view, without needs, before the deeds and the monuments of man, oh, and after that, and after that, I am. Many differences separate us on the surface, but I cannot find a boundary in consciousness. Oh, and when you ask me where does awareness begin and does it end, I have to say I've always been at the silent core, and yet before horror phenomena begins, oh, and after it, and after it, I am.

[Speaker 1] (5:27:14 - 5:42:43)

No more words are coming, so no more words are needed. Thank you. To see that before long some form of limitation will recur in your life in the now and you surrender to that.

You can change the situation but knowing the limitless is not to be encountered in the world of form because form means limitation. So, you say yes to the now even if it is a form of limitation seemingly. You surrender to that and suddenly around to the seeming limitation there is spaciousness at certain depths.

What really is arising here, although we need to be careful with words, all forms, thought forms, physical forms are conditioned. It's the conditioning. Conditioned consciousness, consciousness appearing as a form.

Consciousness appearing as a thought form. Consciousness appearing in many, many forms. But there is the appearance arises out of a vast realm of the unconditioned consciousness before it takes form and that is within every human being that dimension is there one could say underneath the conditioned.

Which is all thought forms and emotional forms is the depths of the unconditioned which could be can be felt cannot be known as such as you know an object in consciousness. People look for God or themselves believing that at some point in the future of course they are going to find God or themselves as an object in consciousness as a knowledge in a subject-object relationship as if they could know it in the way that you can know a tree but you can't because the unconditioned is not an object it is the ground out of which all mind subject-objects objects in consciousness arise into which they subside so you can never know yourself in the normal sense of the word but you can be that and that is felt one could say it is a realm of stillness underneath the mental noise and every word will reduce it it is far more than that every word is no more than a little pointer a realm of aware presence that is beyond thought thought can happen come out of it but in itself it is consciousness one could say without thought unconditioned that is the deepest meaning of now because the strange thing about now is that it never leaves you and it doesn't change the field of now because it is the essence of now is it is the unconditioned consciousness the field in which all phenomena happen and this and now the beauty here is to know that one could say you know the now beyond the form it takes but you don't know it in a subject-object relationship you know this field of now when you surrender to the form, you know that which is beyond form surrender to the form the limitation and then that emerges that is beyond form and beyond limitation as yourself and this goes against how everybody lives in this world they do not surrender to the limitation of this form, they think they want to get away from it surrender to the form of now takes you into the depths of the now itself which you then know as the essence of your being but not don't know anything about it a direct unitive knowing as yourself I would go so far as to say that you are the now totally one with it it never leaves you you can't leave yourself the essence, the unconditioned dimension of who you are and when you know that you can allow the conditioned and the form to be and it's beautiful the form as which you appear because you don't need it anymore to derive a sense of self from it then the forms are beautiful also you honor them really for the first time when you know yourself to be beyond the form you honor all the forms completely also so to surrender to the limitation the seeming limitation this is the essential truth the ultimate truth of all religions is the surrendered state of consciousness, there is even one religion that's called surrender, Islam but it is the essence of all religion in Christianity that essence is contained in the image of the cross Jesus on the cross is all of humanity the cross is the ultimate symbol of extreme limitation couldn't be more limited than to be nailed to a cross it's a torture instrument so in a way, for a while humans experience the world which is the world of form almost as a torture it's so heavy and then that can take a time until suddenly they can hear the message of surrender and then at that moment as symbolized by that image of Jesus surrender happens on the cross total surrender to extreme limitation and the seemingly unacceptable not my will but thy will be done thy will is the will of the one and then my and thy merge in the act of surrender there is no longer my that opposes thy when my and thy merge there is total surrender your will is one with the totality and at that moment the cross becomes a symbol for the divine the very limitation turns into the symbol for God or the divine so it's not by resisting or running away from but by that deep act of surrender that the divine is realized and that amazingly does not take time surrender can only be now it may take time to dwell in the surrendered state as your permanent state you fall back into resistance because the momentum of the collective conditioning is so strong and then you re-enter surrender but the moment of surrender is always now because you surrender to the now and in the now so it can only be now so that one decisive act or spiritual practice is the one that doesn't take time and that's the beauty of it it really means you don't need future to find yourself and you need to add nothing to you to find yourself nothing then you can play with the realm of phenomena and add things it's beautiful, it's a play but you no longer need it for yourself it's the essence of spiritual realization all the teachings point to it that is to see that what grace to see that the very thing that looked so heavy which is the world of form the very thing that seemed to be limiting me on all sides that very thing is the doorway into the formless and into who I am beyond form and you see that ultimately they are one form is emptiness emptiness is form they are one and that is the message of eternal salvation the most sublime message for humankind nothing else is needed but that

[Speaker 4] (5:42:53 - 5:42:54)

thank you

[Speaker 1] (5:43:06 - 5:51:20)

the hardest word that I'm having trouble with right now is responsibility and I have a hunch that most of the things I consider responsibility are just my ego telling me things I have to do but I also when I think about the future of the earth and human evolution and stuff like that sometimes I have big emotions of responsibility so I'm just curious about the right relationship to the word responsibility thank you it's a strange word it has been pointed out that if you look at the word it seems to be talking about the ability to respond to respond so to take responsibility for what is it that you can take responsibility for primarily it's taking responsibility for your state of consciousness which determines what kind of world you create because you are humanity humanity is an abstract conceptual concept doesn't exist humanity is the human being you are humanity so for humanity to take responsibility you need to take primarily responsibility for your state of consciousness because only a diseased or dysfunctional state of consciousness produces a diseased and dysfunctional world out there by world I mean the human made world that has been imposed on the what's already there, the planet which is potentially of course a paradise the planet pristine unbelievable jewel the being of great intelligence we are not separate from it but the being is going through a transitional process and every transitional process is critical it may or may not work in which case the being will go some other way but the your state of consciousness determines what kind of world you create what kind of action you take and what consequences your actions have so here this is why my main work is to address the cause of dysfunction which lies in the human mind the dysfunction of the human mind or as it is sometimes called in Zen the sickness of the human mind so as I see it and I don't think anybody who reads history can doubt it there is a deep seated dysfunction in humans has been there for thousands of years and if we if there is no shift in that then the dysfunction will destroy us it probably won't destroy the planet because the planet has enormous resources but it will take a while it will take a while for the planet to recover all you have to do then is primarily take responsibility for your state of consciousness now now and this is what the entire teaching really is about what is my state of consciousness at this moment am I generating disturbance am I generating negativity am I generating conflict and suffering for myself and others am I generating inner pollution am I polluting my beautiful being that I am with continuous absurd movements of thought producing negative emotions, producing an entire entity that is illusory that I call the me so to take responsibility it needs to be just of course an awakening where you can say ok I will take responsibility now some people don't know that there is even the possibility of taking responsibility that's why you are so important anybody who realizes it this is you are the beginning of the transformed world I don't know who first coined the famous phrase you hear it quite often these days you need to be the change the change that you want to see out there you need to embody that and that's not primarily what you do there is something more primary than what you do, it's who you are who you are is your state of consciousness, whatever you do flows out of that so that's primary is that the change is the transformed state of consciousness now that is your responsibility anybody, once you've seen that that's your responsibility now you know it people who are not yet at that level don't realize it and that's fine you can't expect the whole world already to be at that stage it's enough for you to take responsibility knowing there are still a few millions others who don't know that they can take responsibility because they live in such unconsciousness that they see the entire evil in others it's all in them and they make half the world into their enemy it's all out there that's fine only those are required to take responsibility who are up to it and but even those who are totally unconscious still, on the one hand they don't know what they're doing obviously, as Jesus said on the cross they know not what they do in other words, they are in the grip of unconscious forces or unconscious mental, emotional streams they don't know what they do they cannot be held responsible and people say, well they should be held responsible, no they can't they don't know what they do, however the fact that they are not responsible because they can't be responsible does not mean that they do not suffer the consequences of their unconsciousness so they generate suffering and eventually, suffering is the fire in which the ego gets burned up, the collective ego and the personal ego that's the long way the slow way the painful way and then there's a shortcut which is any spiritual teaching is just it cuts through that the painful way, the long way of waking up more and more suffering the planet might not endure such a long learning process for humanity so if the learning process of humanity does not become shortened it is doubtful that the planet can allow humanity to learn through further suffering for another 500 years or even 200 years or even 100 years so that's you are responsible for all that

[Speaker 4] (5:51:30 - 5:51:31)

thank you

[Speaker 1] (5:51:39 - 6:03:55)

that's the secret of the universe as far as humans are concerned in their present evolutionary stage the secret lies in simply no longer internally resisting denying or running away from what is at this moment whatever is at this moment to find an inner alignment with the form that this moment takes and the conceptualized egoic entity can't do that but you can do that when you see the truth of it there's the possibility of living in a state of yes to what is an inner yes the conceptualized egoic entity lives in the state of no to what is and that is the greatest transformation happens when there is the shift in you internally from denying the present moment because it's not yet enough it's not really what I wanted, this shouldn't be happening I want something else I definitely don't want this I want the next moment it's going to be much more complete but you always have only this and then a strange thing happens at first sight it seems that the form that this moment takes because that's all it is, there are not many moments in your life there's only this moment ever but the form that this moment takes changes continuously different forms come into that space of now which is that inner space forms appear in the space of now in your life a situation a person, an event a place a space and very often the form that this moment takes seems to be a limitation it seems to limit me

I want to be limitless I want to know myself as limitless many people feel that the form that this moment takes how could I accept that because this form limits me so much and this could be where you live, it could be relationships it could be your physical body you cannot not encounter limitations in the world of form you can change, you can have slightly more pleasant limitations you could be sitting in a tiny little room and saying I'm so limited here, I want to expand I want to live in a mansion and you might succeed ten years later, five years later you live in a mansion you seem to have expanded and then you sit in your mansion what now? for a while it feels great you have expanded because you have identified with the thought form of mansion you have expanded but sooner or later the mansion will limit you in other ways your new life situation will suddenly show you there are other limitations you may become famous and suddenly discover that great limitations come with fame you are free of the limitations that came with poverty and now you encounter other limitations that come with that so it's yes you can play around with different forms in your life and experiment and expand into other forms not expecting to find the limitless in the world of form and realizing in one way or another the form that this moment takes will be some form of limitation that it is in the nature of form to be limited and that's a deep realization and then the running away from the form that this moment takes the reactive relationship to the form that this moment takes isn't there anymore when you see the truth of this and are able to say yes to the form that this moment takes instead of resisting the form that this moment takes internally which keeps you trapped in your own mental form so what does that mean? it means quite simply you become friendly with what is it doesn't mean now you are condemned to non-action out of that state of yes, intelligent action arises when it's needed not when it's not needed you embrace what is even if it seems very limited or limiting because it already is you can't remove is out of existence so you become internally aligned with that so when you say yes to what is space arises so to speak around what is this is a way of speaking but that's all we can do here a sense of space or spaciousness arises around the form that this moment takes and that liberates you from the limitations of form and you cannot find the spaciousness by always running away from the forms that arise but being with them surrendering to the form that this moment takes is the key the inner surrender whatever is part of the totality the web of interconnectedness that is the universe this event is part of that there is a certain inevitability to the form that this moment takes yes, then perhaps action arises and it changes you're actually amazed how quickly the form that this moment changes and you don't resist it anymore internally because a greater intelligence comes into play now and things, miraculous things can happen even on the level of form but they didn't happen when you lived in non-alignment with is they only happen when you live in alignment with is and to some people that means yes to the most dreadful limitation and that is why traditionally people who reached that realization found the most dreadful limitation in their life and surrendered to that the archetype of that is Jesus on the cross this is the human the human archetype this is true for each human being the most unacceptable form of limitation that a human, you don't need to be a Christian to believe this or to see the truth of it in fact if you are a Christian you may not see it because they tend to have a narrow interpretation of something that is very deep so you have somebody a human being in a situation that is a manifestation of the most extreme limitation totally and symbolically the words that came out of his mouth were at first why has thou abandoned me God, the last no no the next words that came were not my will but thy will be done which means thy will is the will of the one not to make it into a mental concept the will of the one is whatever is now not my will but thy will be done, a complete yes and at that moment the cross which is the symbol of the ultimate limitation becomes a symbol of the divine it's the dual symbolism of the cross it's a torture instrument and it's a symbol of the divine and that is whatever may be happening in your life and be the limit the greatest limitation in your life it is not only the limitation it's also the opening when it's not internally resisted the opening into space because space comes with a yes to what is you are no longer bound to what is you are no longer bound to the form you know yourself as the formless one life one consciousness ah that's the true happiness that lasts the heart of happiness the core of happiness not the superficial happiness that goes in the next moment that's so nothing needs to change for this to happen in your life this transition whatever is is the best that is for you at this moment you work with that, say yes to that don't believe the mind when it says ok I'll say yes when I get this out of the way and enormous power moves into your life the very intelligence of the universe manifests through this form which then becomes an opening and it's the end of suffering the end of the suffering entity you may still get a toothache from time to time but that is how it is too you surrender to that also surrender that's all no time is required for the shift in consciousness you can only do it now yes to now and find yourself through that

[Speaker 4] (6:03:57 - 6:04:05)

thank you

[Speaker 2] (0:07 - 0:10)
Conscious sitting down.

[Speaker 1] (0:12 - 2:55)
There's a species that has developed out of Homo sapiens, a branch species called Homo turisticus. And they walk around continuously with either camera or something. You see them every day, they come in buses.

Now a strange thing is happening right now, the internet is down. Which means those of you who are joining us from elsewhere will be watching this in the future. No, I forgot the future doesn't exist.

So you'll be watching it in the present. Now when you're not, did you disappear when you're not thinking? When you're not remembering your problems, when you're not remembering whether your life is a big success or a big failure, to take two extremes.

If you think your life is a big success, you're in a state of temporary delusion. And just wait a little. A few times abdominal, a few abdominal breaths and you are in the body and out of your mind, in a good sense.

You're out of your mind, thank you, I am. Who am I? Because that also, when you ask yourself, who am I?

Consciousness awakening, at first it's painful. And then it says, what am I doing here? Not another incarnation.

I don't go into, I don't advise you to do it either, saying, I have no conceptual identity. They probably won't let you in.

[Speaker 2] (2:56 - 3:07)
We don't want people who have no conceptual identity. Technology is very difficult.

[Speaker 1] (3:08 - 2:11:15)
But then suddenly you realize you're nobody, beyond your job description and your function that you fulfilled for decades, perhaps an important function, member of the board. And suddenly you're not a member of the board, you're just bored. So a lot of our knowledge is just covering up our ignorance with words.

Entire PhDs are like that. I'm sorry that my chair is more comfortable than yours. And then there are other types of challenges that come at you seemingly out of nowhere.

It could be that an earthquake could happen here in a minute, or let's not manifest it. People who expect the conventional responses become confused. What, this is a weird person.

And so she decided to stay. And a few weeks later, when I got to know her better, she explained to me that that first night she was in her bedroom, and she said, I found you so weird that I thought you might creep in in the middle of the night and murder me. And if you're not careful, you think that all the important things is what's on the news, CNN or others, not to mention others.

I mean, they are trying to present what they think is important. I understand that, and it's their livelihood, that's fine. But if that deceives you and you think those things are really, those are the things that really matter going on in the world at this moment.

And all you look at is the deepest manifestations of unconsciousness. That should be the name for the news. So you have the six o'clock deepest manifestations of unconsciousness.

I was walking not long ago on my daily walk on this forest trail, and a couple were coming in the opposite direction, a young man and his girlfriend, wife. And as they were walking past me, he stopped and said, I know you from somewhere. Where do I know you from?

What's your name? I said, Eka, oh yes, YouTube, I'm watching you on YouTube all the time. Then he said to his girlfriend, he's a famous YouTuber.

So I have a new identity now. And now my ambition is, perhaps I too can become an Instagram influencer. All I need is weight for a different body.

In Thailand, just near Bangkok, somebody, they interviewed some near a Buddhist monastery. They interviewed some farmers and farm workers. They would give food to the monks.

That's the tradition in Buddhism in Thailand, the South Theravada tradition of Buddhism. The monks come with their begging bowls every morning. They just stand there.

And then the local people come and put food. They're dependent. It's done on purpose.

There's a wisdom behind it. All the Westerners would say, why don't they work for a living? The monks stand there with their begging bowls.

And then the poor people who hardly have enough, who hardly have enough themselves, they come and put some food, a bit of rice, whatever, in the begging bowl. And the monks just stand. They don't say thank you, because it's a privilege for you to give food to the monks.

That's part of the tradition. So the Westerners interviewed the farm workers. They said, why do you give your food to the monks when you have so little yourself?

And they began talking to each other and said, well, because we want a better incarnation next time. So we are accumulating merit. So next time we come, we are born into a better condition.

And then the Westerner asked, so what do you want to come back as in your next lifetime? And then they talked amongst each other. And finally the agreement was, we want to come back as tourists.

It's a wake-up call. Being is the one thing, of course it's not a thing, you're just using words, is the one thing that you can be absolutely sure about. The only thing that is beyond doubt in your life.

The only thing whose reality is beyond doubt. Everything else could be a dream or an illusion. Whatever you perceive could be a dream, an illusion.

You don't know that it's not a dream or an illusion. Because when this meditation comes to an end, then it evaporates into the so-called past. And everything that happens quickly dissolves, dissolves, dissolves.

The same way that a dream comes to an end when you wake up. Except that this dream seems to go on and on, replaced by another and another, if it is a dream. But what is it then that cannot be doubted?

That there is a consciousness in which, if it is a dream, whether it's a reality or a dream, it doesn't matter, the matter in which it arises, in which it is known, the light in which it appears. So your presence cannot be doubted. Whatever happens in that presence can be doubted.

But for it to happen, there must be a presence. And of course, I said your presence, it's not your presence, it's the One Universal. I particularly welcome those of you who are getting tired of their personality, that cumbersome thing, that weight you carry around, and creates the same old stuff again and again.

It's a good point to reach, to become tired of yourself. That is sometimes misperceived, and then you think you're tired of the world, you're tired of living, you're tired of... It's a misperception.

What you're really tired of is the self and the world that it creates, or seems to create, out there. And the same old conflict, the same old problems, or different problems, but basically the same, if you're deep down, the same old thoughts in your head again and again, the same complaints, oh dear. So the spiritual path, there are many practices you can use in order to access the dimension of presence, which is the spiritual dimension.

But the most direct practice that immediately accesses that dimension, we could call that surrender. What is that? It is to offer no resistance or opposition to whatever arises in the present moment.

Whatever happens, whatever arises, whatever people say or do, to become one with the is-ness of the present moment. The present moment always already is the way it is. There's no doubt about that.

Whatever form this moment takes, it is as it is. And if internally then you give up opposing, which is the normal state associated with dense personalities, instead of opposing internally what is, getting upset, getting angry, arguing with what is, either just in your head or out aloud, telling people what they should have done or should be doing, what they're not doing, what it should be like, what it isn't like, what I should be doing, what I'm not doing, whatever form the opposition takes, and I mentioned a few minutes ago, those of you who are getting tired of the old personality, and of course this is part of the old personality, the way in which it interacts with people and events and places, it's not usually pleasant.

There's always some resistance, always something not good enough, always something missing here and now. Wherever you go, the structure stays with you, goes with you. So you recognize that that's an important part of the false self that lives through opposition to what is.

It strengthens itself through that sense of separation, separating itself from what's going on, condemning it, judging it, and people. And then you realize, what happens if I just accept that whatever arises in the present moment, say, oh, that's what it is. You can still take action, but the foundation is acceptance, surrender.

And then immediately the false self can't really operate anymore. And something else comes in which is essence, which is awareness, which is consciousness itself. So the most fundamental spiritual practice is surrender, so that internally you're one with what is.

And immediately you are a spiritual master, because that's all a master. A master does not necessarily have more knowledge than you. You may have much more knowledge than a spiritual master, but the master lives in alignment with the is-ness of the present moment, that's all.

And that's where the power arises, because when you're aligned with the is-ness, that inner spaciousness opens up, essence is there, and that is the power that then moves through you and can become a thought, it can express itself in form through a thought, an action, a movement, something you do or make in many ways, or just as an emanation. That is true power, but it's not your power. It's universal power, and you become one with it.

Welcome to another live meditation. Sometimes people ask, what is meditation? And meditation could be defined in negative terms, simply by saying, you're no longer waiting for the next thing to happen, but you're not going to sleep either.

And, of course, to be added to this, you're no longer dwelling on the last thing that happened, or the one before, or the one before, but there's simply complete attention to this moment, and this is what we are here to learn and deepen, paying complete attention to this moment, without reference to the past. We're not imposing the past on the present. How do we usually impose the past on the present?

By commenting, interpreting, labeling, liking, disliking, saying good, bad. That's how we impose the past on the present, in other words. So in thinking, we perceive the reality, the external reality, through the veil of thought, which is conditioned by our past, the culture you grew up in, your personal history, the collective history, and so on.

When enormous liberation comes, the only true liberation, we no longer compulsively label and interpret things as they happen, or as they are. Whether it's things that are happening around you, things that other people say or do, and one could say that a higher form of intelligence begins to operate in your life, and you're able to pay attention to something without labeling or interpreting it. And that's a wonderful practice in itself, and we're practicing this now.

We can allow this moment to be as it is, without having to call it anything. The Buddha used the expression, or something like that, freedom from opinions. Actually, it points to the same thing.

So any situation in your life that arises, you can approach it through the veil of preconceptions and opinions and conditioned thinking and interpreting and labeling, or you can face it as it is, in that pure space of awareness. Just that. And look at it.

Look in a wider sense, not just visual looking. So you look at what is, and there's an enormous intelligence behind that, which is non-conceptual. It's nothing to do with knowledge.

And as this emerges, that which before had run your life, which we could call the personality, or the person that consists of incessant mind activity accompanied by waves of emotion, that which normally runs a person's life, a person's identified with, recedes, still there somewhere, of course, but something else emerges. We could call that, and I've called it that before, your essence identity, as opposed to your form identity, which is all that most people know about themselves, is their form identity, physical form, psychological form, the me, the psychological me entity. And that in itself, without the essence, awareness of essence, which is awareness itself, your personality is a kind of present, an enormous limitation that confines you, trapped in a personalized sense of self, and nothing else, nothing, not aware of anything beyond that at all.

The spaciousness, the depths within you, the vastness of that, the peace, the aliveness that's there, completely unaware of that, and just continuously preoccupied with protecting, defending, and strengthening that purely personalized sense of self. And that's what makes up most people's lives. And it's boring, it's so boring once you see that there's no solution there ever to the dilemma that the personalized sense of self finds itself in, even considers, it considers itself to be, most people are a problem to themselves, a walking problem in search of a solution.

Part of that is that sense of, there's always something missing here, not quite right, something lacking still. Of course there's something lacking, but it's not to be found within the realm of form, that which this personalized sense of self consists of. It can only be found beyond that.

And so there's suddenly a cessation in the stream of thinking, and just a sense of alive presence. As it first arises in you, perhaps you need to set aside a time or space every day when you access that, when you're not being disturbed, but ultimately that essence identity is not something that then exists in a separate compartment from the form identity, you as the personality, which of course is still there. It's not that occasionally you take a vacation from your personality.

At first it might seem like that. That's quite a relief too, from time to time take a vacation from your personality, and that's why people meditate, and other people might take drugs, but they're very different things. So it's not ultimately a question of taking a vacation from your personality, your person, the person, but of bringing the essence identity into everyday life, not as a separate thing that you do only when you're not being challenged, but to bring that spaciousness into everyday life, even while you're engaged in activities.

And then you move in the two dimensions, you embody the two dimensions, which we could call the physical realm, the physical and mental realm, the old world of form, whether it's physical forms or mental formations, to embody the physical and mental, and to use an ancient term, the spiritual dimension. In other words, the spiritual dimension coming into this world, so to speak. We are here to deepen our sense of I.

This is the most important thing, really, that you can do in this lifetime. Most humans, that's a sad fact, are not very deep at all. Most humans are superficial.

Their sense of I is derived from external things and is derived from certain ideas in their head. About who they are. Those ideas, of course, are connected to external things, what other people think of me, what I own, what I possess, my history, all things, ideas in your head.

So when the average person says I, he or she refers to that superficial sense of self that really is derived from the movement of thought and the emotions that go with it. But the wonderful thing is that there is the possibility in every human of deepening their sense of I, so that when they say I, they no longer refer to the mind-made, idea-based sense of self, but a much deeper sense of self or being that has nothing to do with thinking and has nothing to do with external things. And you arrive there, you get there, by dropping down, taking your sense of your attention behind thinking, let's call it that.

And that's what meditation is about. And that's why we're here. And that's what's happening while you listen to these words.

Already there is a deepening in you, which is part of the transmission, which miraculously works even through electronics and the camera. And you notice that there is a sense of presence or beingness behind your thinking. And that realization is already the deepening.

And of course, I'm inviting you to enter that state of realizing that there is a presence there in you, a presence that is more essentially you, or that's I, really, that is more essentially who you are than anything in the realm of external things, physical body, or ideas in your head. So there is a dimension in you that's much more real, deeper than anything in the world of form, because that's really what the superficial sense of self comes down to. It's identification with some form, external form, thought form, emotional form.

And identification with form means, what does that mean, identification? It means you derive your sense of self, of I, of who you are, from a few, some accumulation of forms, ultimately thought forms, emotional forms, thought forms. External forms are really also ultimately experienced as thought forms.

You cannot experience anything out there as it is. It has to become through sensory perception, and as your mind is transformed into a mental image, and that's the thought form. So identification with form is, if there's nothing else, of course the form dimension is there, you cannot deny it, but if that's all there is in your life, then you are a superficial human being, and a superficial human being is anxious, fearful, easily upset, worries a lot, gets depressed when things don't go as they should, gets temporarily elated when something so-called good happens, but it never lasts very long, and often even the elation turns out to be a delusion.

So a superficial human being is continuously frustrated in their search for something more real, more lasting, but because they are looking for that which is more real, more lasting and more fulfilling in the realm of forms, they never find it. And they remain superficial. But that which is more deeply fulfilling than anything in the realm of form is very close to you.

You don't need time to arrive at it. You don't need to acquire it. It is very close.

That space where you are essentially formless but intensely alive, intensely intelligent, but formless, that formless inner space is very close. There was an astronomer who once said that outer space, we don't realize how close outer space is. He said you can get in your car, and if your car could drive vertically upward, within an hour's drive from where you are, you would be in outer space.

An hour's drive is not that far. So if you go upward, you drive for an hour, and you are in outer space, a totally different dimension. Now inner space is even closer than that.

And when we call it space, it's another word for formless, undifferentiated. So on the one hand, your I is the surface I of the physical body, of all the sense perceptions, of thoughts and emotions. That's the surface I with its name and its history, its temporary form.

And then there is the deeper I. As far as the surface I is concerned, you and I are different. Physical appearance, different kinds of thoughts, different history, different name.

But as you go deeper within, behind thought, where all there is is a sense of presence, beingness, or aliveness, that's exactly the same presence, beingness, or aliveness that is in me. And if we both go to that dimension of depth within ourselves, we can meet there in a sense of oneness. The surface self, there is no oneness there.

It's all differentiated. So if I'm stuck only on the surface dimension, every other human being is totally other. That's the egoic dilemma.

The ego actually wants it, because it defines its identity through the otherness of others. So it loves to criticize and judge and dismiss and gossip about the faults of others. So it makes the others more other than it feels more itself.

Love is totally impossible in that state. And what the ego calls love, of course, is not love at all. It's a clinging and a wanting.

It's only when I realize that apart from my surface self, there is a deeper I that has nothing to do with thinking or any form, and if I can sense that deeper I as a silent presence within, not just when I go and sit on the floor and meditate, it's fine there as an introduction to it, but in everyday life, so that you can simultaneously be the form I, the form identity, and the deeper sense of self. You can function in this world on the two levels.

Welcome to our live meditation. And I trust you're not waiting for me to start the meditation. Because then you would have missed that it started already, and you would think about meditation in terms of doing something, but you don't actually do a meditation.

As long as you're doing a meditation, you're not really meditating, or the meditation is not fulfilling its purpose. Meditation, true meditation, is not a technique or a mantra. It's about becoming aware of the being dimension, that's already the essence of who you are, and you don't have to do anything to become aware of the being dimension.

In fact, all you have to do is to stop doing, and that's not a doing. Now, to stop doing does not necessarily mean stop external activities, but it means not to be focused exclusively on doing, so that your entire attention is continuously absorbed by the doing dimension, which, of course, all goes back to thinking. Thinking is doing.

And then it becomes some external activity, which is fine, because that is one level of who you are. You have to do things in this world, and you have to think. And it's good.

Doing and thinking is good. But if that's all there is in your life, then you're missing the deeper dimension. And then doing and thinking, this continuous absorption in that dimension of form, becomes frustrating, leads to anxiety or depression, burnout, a sense of meaninglessness after a while.

And all those who are not in touch with the deeper dimension, the dimension of being, which is the essence of who you are, which I sometimes call the essence dimension, or your essence identity, being able to sense, and this is why we are here now, being able to sense your essence identity, in addition to having a form identity, which is always connected with some kind of doing or thinking, that is liberating.

So what you are liberated from is an exclusive identification with who you are, on the level of form, the body, the mind, and whatever the mind identifies with in the realm of form. Mental images that arise, that the mind identifies with and says, that's me, that's my body, me, my possessions, my status in society, my work, my function, my social function, my social and economic position, my class, social class or background, my knowledge that I have accumulated, or any other image, which may not necessarily be positive, it could be negative, me, the victim, me, the one that was never given a chance, all these are mental images that you derive your sense of self from, and usually it's a certain bundle of images, which in every image is also a little story, and this bundle of images becomes the self, the me, or what you refer to when you say I, and yes, that is, one could say, who you are on the level of form, but even on that level, it's certain stories that you believe in, that tell you something about who you are in relation to others, and your past and your history, your successes, failures, achievements, these are perspectives on what happened to you, or what you did or failed to do, what other people did to you, one could have other perspectives, you could have the perspective, I'm a successful, wealthy professional, and your ex-wife might have a different story about you, call you an obnoxious jerk, or you can have a negative story about yourself, on this dimension of form, or one could easily have a story, I could tell you a story why I am a very unfortunate human being, you may not believe it, but I could, and it would be very convincing, and I could tell you a story why I'm one of the greatest, there would be stories, and every one of you, you could have a story that proves that you are justified in being miserable, or you could have another story that says you are actually very good, but they are all just stories, so there will be some stories in your mind, but is that who you are?

And the stories, of course, refer to other people, your reflection in the lives of others, and so they don't exist in isolation, and they are reinforced by others, and so on. Who am I? So the question is, are you what your mind tells you about yourself?

On the level of form, that's one way of looking at who you are, but there's a deeper dimension. We've just been talking about form identity, and what most humans don't know yet, because it's not taught at school, whereas it should be one of the most important things, it's not one of the most, the most important thing taught at school, there is in you a deeper dimension, and there's an essence identity that you can sense, even while you play whatever your role is, or your function is, in the world of form, and even while you do things, and deal with things, and speak to people, and even think, it is possible to sense, in the background of your life, your essence identity, and what is that?

It's this, being aware that there's a presence in you, which is not the right way of describing it, let's put it differently, being aware that you are a presence, being aware of the presence that you are, I am, another way of pointing to it, being aware, quite simply, right now, that you are aware, that you are, I am, and that has no content, it's just a knowing, a sensing, of a presence, and that is who or what you are, the one thing that you cannot doubt is that, there is a conscious presence here, I am that, before there's any content to it, that is the light of consciousness, and then things appear in the light of consciousness, or illuminated by the light of consciousness, or the light of consciousness, becomes those things, thoughts, sense perceptions, but there would be no sense perceptions, without the light of consciousness, there would be no thoughts, without the light of consciousness, in other words, there would be no world, without you, because you are the light of consciousness, in which the world appears, and that's form, the world of form, so it's a simple realization, of your own presence, or, of presence, the moment we use words to describe it, it gets distorted, because it's not, you don't become aware of presence, but when we form a sentence, we have a subject and an object, but what happens is that, presence becomes self-aware, or awareness becomes self-aware, consciousness becomes conscious of itself, and that is the awakening of consciousness, to itself, to its own essence, that can be felt or sensed more strongly, in the gap between two thoughts, when there's a space within you, of simple presence, much still taking sense perceptions, but there's no thinking, right now you don't need to think, you can just be aware, in that awareness, the words that I speak, are perceived, they're also understood, without any additional thinking on your part, the words are recognized, because they point to something that's beyond words, and you can only recognize the truth of these words, by sensing, that towards which they point, which is beyond words, and suddenly it makes sense, so, our meditation here, and as I'm talking, this is the meditation, only makes sense, if you can sense, what the words are pointing to, in yourself, and it has no form, it is, essentially, who you are, conscious presence, we don't need to go here, to the question of whether, is that conscious presence, not as many mainstream scientists, would say, is that not just an epiphenomenon, of brain activity, is it not just a byproduct, of the chemical soup, in your brain, or molecular activity, in the brain, or we might say, well, no, there is a consciousness, is not produced by the brain, although that would be the mainstream, scientific belief, if they even recognize, the existence of consciousness, or is consciousness, does consciousness pervade the universe, and is the brain only a, an instrument, highly complex instrument, that receives consciousness, and focuses consciousness, into a particular form, in which then, the universe perceives itself, as form, so is consciousness, perhaps more like a radio receiver, or a television receiver, which does not produce the program, it just receives it, and so if you destroy the television, or you destroy the receiver, and if the brain no longer functions, then that would mean, not that consciousness is lost, just mean consciousness, no longer manifesting, through that form, welcome, are you there, of course you're not there, you're here, I sometimes quote, I don't know who said it, when you get there, there's no there there, in other words, wherever you are, it's here, that applies to, the spatial dimension, it also applies, to time, there, can be used, with reference to, some other place in space, there can also be, some place in the future, I want to get there, tomorrow, I want to get to tomorrow, tomorrow, so when you get there, there's no there there, can be applied to space, and also applied to time, you're always here, and it's always now, there's no there there, let's talk about it briefly, with special reference to, the temporal, there's no there there, with reference to the temporal means, that there is never, a future, moment, there is no such thing, as a future moment, the there, the temporal there, there's only ever, the here, the here and now, nothing else exists, it just seems to, it appears to, and that appearance, that something else is there, is very strong and, it runs most people's mind, they live unconsciously, as if the there, were more important, than the here, that's the unawakened state, or one aspect, of the unawakened state, so any meditation, and our meditation here, if you want to call it meditation, is to bring your attention into, the now, so you become aligned, with reality, so that you learn to dwell, in the now consciously, that's really, the awakened state, so I'm inviting you, not just to listen, or try to understand, the simple fact, that there is only now, there isn't much to understand there, there's only now, or let me think about that, of course it's true, so there's not much to understand, but, there's only now, is a powerful pointer, to a shift in consciousness, so I'm not asking you, to agree conceptually, or figure something out mentally, but to experience, or to sense, what that implies, or what that means, there's only now, so, I'm inviting you to, to sense, let's put it like that for a moment, the presence, that is, the now, now whether you perceive that as something outside of you, or inside of you, it doesn't matter, ultimately, it's one and the same, this is a wonderful realization, if you can, join me in that, to feel or to sense, the now, itself, the presence, not what happens, in the now, what happens in the now, in this very simple now, are just words that, you perceive, and, other, the visual perception, the focus of your visual perception, and the peripheral visual perception, wherever you are, on the periphery of your vision, you see the room, or whatever it is, just as I do, but when I say, become aware of the now, the now, yes, it includes, the sense perceptions, but that's not the main thing that I'm referring to, becoming aware of the now, is to become aware of something that is, deeper than, the things you perceive, a presence, let's just say it's within you, it is, it's also without, but let's stay with the within, once you sense it within, you can also sense that, it pervades everything, a presence, that never changes, eternal, eternal, which does not mean, it goes on and on, but, it has nothing to do with time, there is no time in there, it is presence itself, another dimension, coming into this dimension of space and time, there are other pointers, one could use, to point to, that presence, that you can sense, and another one that I sometimes use, of course, is stillness, you feel a stillness, within, that presence, or that stillness, although I just said, that it is something that you feel or sense within, that's language, we're using language, it's not quite right, of course, because, you don't sense the presence, or feel the presence, subject and object, I feel the presence, that's how language works, it breaks things up into duality and multiplicity, that's the mind, but it's not really correct to say, although I sometimes do say it, I feel the presence, because, in that arising of presence, there isn't you and the presence, there is no duality, there is only, the presence, and you are, that, I don't need to point out to you, I'm sure you know that, that, as I speak, the presence can be felt, most strongly, by paying attention, so to speak, to the silence, or the stillness, in between the words, and underneath the words, that's why we call it a meditation, so again, there is no duality in that presence, you don't achieve it, attain it, it is you, it is the essence of who you are, the very foundation of your sense of identity, and that foundation of your sense of identity has no form, it is formless, timeless presence, so your true identity has nothing to do with that which arises in the dimension of form, which of course is first of all the physical body, and then it is the thought forms that arise in the mind, and then it is emotional formations that come and go, and then it is external things you identify with that give you a sense of who you are, that's all very limiting, you don't need to push that away, or push that out of your life, but realize there is something much vaster than that, if you miss that vastness, then your life is a very limited affair, reduced to the merely personal, and the most you can hope for is to identify, perhaps to go beyond the personal, a bit more with the collective, you identify with us, a group, which is dangerous by the way, if there is no transcendental dimension to who you are, so if you are unable to leave the world of form, then you have only the personal sense of self, or the collective sense of self, so the me, or the us, both are very limiting, both are ultimately egoic, but that's all people know, now in quite a few people, the formless dimension, the timeless presence, sometimes shines through a little bit, although they are identified with form, there are moments and on occasion that some presence shines through, they don't realize that, but it comes through when there is pure contemplation of beauty, for example, it comes through when there is an appreciation of just the presence of another being, without wanting anything from them, it comes through when there is some selfless action, helping somebody or being truly open, listening to somebody in that state of openness, when there is an experience of joy and aliveness, there is some presence coming through, and some people have that more than others, so the degree to which people are trapped in form, varies from person to person. For today's meditation, I'd like to have a little bit more silence, I believe we are ready for that, at least most of you, I'd just like to explain how this works in the context of our technology here, when I'm not speaking, all you do is you look at the screen and you look at the image on the screen, my job is to be here in the state of presence, which means to hold the state of not thinking, and as you look at me, please realize that you're not really looking at a person, it looks like a person, but when there's no thinking, no form consciousness, no concepts, where is the person? The person is generated by thought, so when there is no thought, all there is is something that's prior to the person, more fundamental, more basic, more real, formless, just consciousness, so it can be helpful then, if you're receptive, to be with someone, even if it's only through the means of technology, to be with someone who is in that state of no thought, which means above thinking, not below thinking, because that apparent person has become transparent to the light of consciousness, and somehow if there's even the slightest opening in you to that, you can sense that there is something there that is deeper than the person, in fact the person becomes irrelevant, but that in you that senses that, is of the same frequency as consciousness itself, so if you even have the slightest glimpse of there's something that transcends the person when you look at the image on the screen, you're right, but at that moment, you have already transcended to some extent your own person, person being form identity, psychological form identity, consists of thoughts and images, so it may look at first a little weird, as the human mind would tell you, to be staring at a person on the screen who is staring back at you, and perhaps once or twice a thought will come into your head, this is weird, it's just a thought, it's not really weird, it's much more weird to be trapped in your mental noise for most of your life, and to live on the basis of that, which is a false sense of identity, so what you endeavour is to, as you look at the screen, and don't wait for me to say let's start now, let's consider that we've already started with our silent meditation, because silence underlies the words, that is in between the words, all you need to do then, it's not doing at all really, is you're looking at the screen and you're aware of the sense perception, and you're aware that you're aware, you can sense the presence that you are as you look at the screen, and you're alert, you're aware that there is awareness, otherwise you wouldn't be seeing anything, or hearing anything, so the prerequisite for any sense perception is awareness, consciousness, so you become aware of that in yourself, and what the technology here provides is a reflection of the consciousness that you are, a helpful reflection, that's all, when thought comes in, you realise the thought has arisen, and you watch it like a cloud, and then it drifts past, and there's a space again, don't believe when any thought tells you, as we sit here, don't believe when a thought tells you that this thought is more important than sitting here in presence, thought likes to do that, it comes in to think about this, no, you've decided that the most important thing as you sit here is to be just present, if you like you can think for the rest of the day when we finish here, plenty of time for thinking, but this is a time for not thinking, rising above thinking, looking at the image on the screen will help you to stay above thinking, when you're feeling drowsy or sleepy, then it's a sign you're falling below thinking, so continuously looking at the image helps you to stay alert, connects you with alertness, those of you who find it hard to sit here in presence, and whose mind is still very active, thinking, feel the inner body as you sit here, feel the aliveness in the body as you sit and look at the screen, feel the aliveness in your hands, your feet, your legs, your arms, there's a field of aliveness, the life within the body, feel that in the background, that takes attention away from thinking, and then you have two things, you have the sense perception, that is helpful, takes attention away from thinking, and the connection with the inner body, and those two should keep your mind fairly clear, if you're able to hold attention there, it's no effort, just effortless, close your eyes for a moment, presence, spacious awareness, aliveness, life itself, the life that you are, consciousness, open your eyes, present, within and without, look at your left or right hand for a moment, see the hand, the skin, the texture, how it reflects the light, without thinking, just present awareness, sense perception, appearing in the field of awareness, looking back at the screen, awareness remains, what appears, changes, that's sense perception, form, look away for a moment, any object where you're sitting in the room, no matter what it is, look at it for a moment, take in its shape, its color, no mental labeling, just an aware presence behind the sense perception, amazing shift from continuously labeling everything and just being there as the presence, look back at the screen, space of awareness remains, this is how you gradually become free of being dominated by the person, of course you're still a person in your daily life, but there's something more vital and more powerful that arises from behind the person and begins to shine through the person, everything else is meaningless in this life, if that doesn't happen in your life, what's the point? It means evolution hasn't happened for you, no, it doesn't matter to the universe, but to the little entity it does, in ultimate terms it doesn't matter at all, only in relative terms, of course in miracles there's delay, does not matter in eternity, but it is tragic in time, there's nothing to think about now, now there are two movements inside you, one is the awakening consciousness and the other is the pull of the person of unconscious thinking that wants to continue to be in control and run your life, you cannot fight the person or the thinking mind, you can only recognize yourself as the presence behind it, there's an inertia in everything and the person is the principle of inertia, the gravitational pull, back into my drama, into my imagined problems, back into the old reactivity that keeps the person alive, just waiting for another excuse for a reaction, that's the inertia of the person, as you know the word person comes from Latin and it's original meaning is mask, so it is not something that is ultimately real, it is a mask, it's a mask that actors used to wear in ancient theatre, the word consists of two parts, per, p-e-r, means through, s-o-n is the same root as the word sound, s-o-n, sound through, it's the mask through which the actor speaks, the sound comes through, your primary task is to transcend that in this lifetime because that's part of the evolution of the universe, consciousness coming in.

Make sure you're not waiting for anything so that you're completely present, not waiting for me to add anything to this moment, not waiting for anything to be added to this moment so that this moment is completely self-contained, fulfilled, fulfilling, not waiting for anything is for many people something that they very rarely experience, occasionally, accidentally, when a certain desire has just been met and then for brief moments they are not waiting for anything to be added, but most people, most of the time, are never fully present, they're always more focused on some future moment, whether it's a minute from now or an hour from now or tomorrow or next week or next year or even just getting ready to do, to go somewhere, to do something or the intervening, it's always, your entire life is an intervening period, the arriving is just very little because then you wait for the next thing, you look to the next thing, it's all a journey, but if you are excessively focused on the destination, then you miss 99% of your life because the destination, the arriving at a destination is the end of this very little there. Now what? The habit is, if the habit, the mind habit is not to be present, you can't even appreciate the destination, very briefly perhaps, and then because of the underlying mindset of ignoring, denying, diminishing, devaluing the present moment, you can't even appreciate your destination in whatever form it arrives, the achievement, the destination, the end of a task, the outcome, and so you spend your entire life on a journey to some place that always changes, but always it's some future place, some future time, that never really arrives.

The fulfillment that the future moment promises is always very short-lived. So the Buddha saw that already, perhaps the most famous statement of the Buddha, one of the most well-known statements is, in order to go beyond suffering, he says, because he says suffering is a normal state of human beings, suffering in a wider sense, it doesn't necessarily always mean you're in intense agony, but a sense of dissatisfaction, a sense of unfulfillment, unhappiness in whatever form, an underlying discontent is usually connected with this waiting for something to take you out of the present moment. All that is what the Buddha calls suffering, so unhappiness, non-fulfillment, misery, including, of course, extreme forms of unhappiness, minor forms of unhappiness, like slight irritation, the Buddha would say is already a form of suffering.

Anger is a form of suffering, although it's not recognized as such by the ego, because the ego thrives on anger, but if you observe what anger does to your body, then you will know that it is a form of suffering. So the Buddha recognized that most humans are in that non-satisfying state most of the time, unhappy, except, as I said, when some desire has just been fulfilled and then there's a brief moment of, ah, and then the next thing comes. So the Buddha says life is suffering, and in order to go beyond suffering, you have to let go of desire.

Now, doesn't that not imply that you would no longer do anything? If you let go of desire, for what reason would you engage in any activity? Wouldn't you just sit there, nothing, whatever, there would be no civilization, because nobody would be, has no desire to create anything or do anything.

So that can, I don't think he was talking about it in that sense, but it can be misunderstood easily. When he used the term desire, he was talking about, the better translation might be craving, this needing the next moment, and needing to get away from this unsatisfying present, this pull, longing, a craving that manifests in different ways, craving for sensual pleasure, sex, and of course, adding things to your psychological sense of self, obtain this or that, get this or that, I must have this, I must attain it. So the desire is that state of craving, and in order to get rid of the dissatisfaction, humans then engage in activity in order to free themselves from an unsatisfying state. That is how many humans, most humans operate, but whatever they obtain, they're not happy, doesn't make them happy, except very briefly.

It doesn't free them from unhappiness, except very briefly, but we need to realize that craving is not the only possible motivating force behind action, behind doing. You can have an intention to create something, to engage in some kind of activity. You have an intention to do this or to do that.

It does not necessarily mean that there is this force of craving behind it, which ultimately is an extreme dissatisfaction with what is, and looking for some future satisfaction, something that will be, but if you create, if you have an intention to create something, it does not necessarily imply that there's also a craving. So these are two modalities of creating in this world. One is you create because your state of consciousness is a state of dissatisfaction and lack and neediness, and so you engage in activities in order to either cover up that state, desensitize yourself to the underlying pain, emotional pain, physical, even mental, or to the belief that something or someone can free you from that state of lack and dissatisfaction.

And so that's how craving arises. And many things in this world are created out of that state of consciousness. And then a kind of civilization arises, but it's not a happy civilization.

It's a civilization where millions of people are basically unhappy, needing medication to keep going. Millions upon millions need medication just to continue to function in this life because they haven't been told that another state of consciousness is possible for every human. Nobody at school, nobody told them.

At university, nobody told them. In the media, nobody tells them, or very rarely might get in accidentally, but it's normal to live like that. You see it everywhere.

In every movie, people live like that, the characters in the movies. But there is another way, and it does not mean that you no longer engage in activities, that you no longer create things, you no longer do, but it means that the activity, the motivating force behind your activity is no longer a state of neediness or dissatisfaction. Because if it is, then the activity is stressful.

[Speaker 2] (2:11:17 - 2:11:19)
I need to get there.

[Speaker 1] (2:11:20 - 2:48:53)
I'm not there yet. I need to get there. And stress is not a happy way to live.

It's not a skillful way, as the Buddhists would call it. It's not a skillful way to lead your life. To be motivated by unhappiness, neediness, dissatisfaction, a sense of not enough, never enough, never have enough, never am enough.

And whatever you achieve or get, always gets, well, that's not quite, there's always something that very quickly comes in that is another form of suffering, no matter what you achieve. Fame, wealth, you achieve it, for a while you're elated, and then, oh, you can see it has a huge downside. Not that fulfilling at all.

So in other words, doing, acting, manifesting, creating, is not enough. It's only one part of the equation. It's only one half of the whole.

What's the other half? If doing is only one half and your life will remain unfulfilled because you're not aware that there is another dimension other than the doing, then you get lost in the doing, consumed by the doing, consumed even by thinking and lost in your thinking because thinking is also doing. So what's the other part?

So we only have one half, it's the doing, the other is the being, being. If you lose awareness of being, then you are basically lost in doing. And only if you become aware of being, which is present, then you can act, you can do from that foundation of that rootedness in being, then an intention can arise, you can delight in creating something, enjoy doing something rather than being excessively focused on the outcome, what you want to achieve through the doing.

When you're rooted in being, then you can act while you're in connectedness with being and then the action is joyful, it's invigorating. In other words, you begin to enjoy the journey, every step of the journey, it's all the journey. The arriving is relatively meaningless and then you can create, you can manifest whatever it is that wants to be manifested through you, but you become a powerful manifester.

And why are you powerful? Because you're not needy anymore. You don't need whatever it is that your intention is to manifest.

You don't need it for your happiness. You don't need it for your fulfillment. You don't need it to be who you are because you already have access to the dimension of being, the timeless dimension of consciousness itself, which is inherently fulfilling.

That's the only true fulfillment. And that arises whenever you experience a cessation in the stream of thinking. For example, now, you don't need to think while, when I finish one sentence before I start speaking again, there's a gap in which you can be conscious, fully conscious, without any mental noise, without any thought, but just presence, just awareness.

For example, now, that's the portal into being, the dimension of being. So there's nothing happening there. There's no doing in being.

There's just being. We're only interested in one thing here for our live meditation, and that is to sit together, not physically together, but nevertheless together in presence. Thinking is not important here.

As much as possible, let go of thinking without any effort and realize that you are more fully yourself when you're not thinking. And when you're not thinking, you can realize what being is, what it means to be, and you can sense the being that you are, which can be expressed as the first person singular of the verb to be, I am. So you sense, or you are, the presence prior to thinking, the clear space of presence.

That's why we're here, to be that, to realize that we are that. I don't think as I sit here. The words just come out of the stillness.

There's no thinking prior to the words, and as soon as a word has been uttered, there's just presence or stillness. So you can join me in that. As I don't need to think, you don't need to think right now, but just be present.

The great teacher Ramana Maharshi, who taught during the first half of the 20th century in India, was once asked by a visitor to his ashram, this question, how do I know whether I'm making progress on the spiritual path? And he said, the degree of absence of thought is the only true criterion for your progress on the spiritual path. The extent, in other words, to which you are free of thought in daily life, still able to use thought whenever it's needed, perfectly, more efficiently than before, more creatively, because you have access to the unconditioned intelligence itself, which is presence.

How long you can sit in meditation, formal meditation, is not a good criterion for progress on the spiritual path, but to what extent presence comes into your daily life, which initially may just mean little moments of presence in between all the doings of your life, little moments of being, awareness, alertness, alert stillness, conscious, consciously looking at something, consciously listening, consciously walking across the room, consciously washing your hands, which does not mean when you walk across the room you're thinking, I am now crossing the room, or when you look at something, I'm now looking at that tree, that you're not present yet.

It can be an intermediate step, but the actual presence is when there's no background commentary. And when there's virtually no background commentary throughout your life, that is the awakened state. There may still be fragments of thoughts saying this or that, but basically or fundamentally free of the involuntary, compulsive background commentary in your daily life.

That's an enormous evolutionary leap to live like that. But you don't need to have that as some aim, I want to be totally free, just be free of background commentary now, that's easier, than to say throughout my life I want to be free of that, well, just do it now. Renounce unnecessary thinking, be present instead.

Then the ego diminishes and eventually cannot survive in you when you're present. People have practiced traditionally all kinds of renunciations in spiritual life, in Christianity and Buddhism and Hinduism and so on. And they're still being practiced in many cultures to some extent.

Renunciation of possessions, renunciation of your name, let go of your old name, adopt a new spiritual name, renunciation of physical comforts, exposing the body to discomfort. All these can be helpful, but if the most basic renunciation is not known, then the most basic attachment will still be there, and that's attachment to your thoughts, you haven't renounced unnecessary thinking. Then setting aside a period for being present is traditionally called meditation.

So you could say that's what we are doing here, although we are not really doing anything. All we are doing, which is not a doing, is realizing our presence, realizing presence. Right now, in different parts of the planet, little points of consciousness waking up, where before there was only a person, there's now conscious presence arising.

Different parts of the planet at the same time. Chip, chip, chip, chip. And this, of course, has no form, and there's no time.

Past and future become irrelevant in presence. And that's an amazing realization that who you essentially are, your feeling of identity, of essential identity, does not need the future to complete itself. It is already complete.

It does not need the past. So you don't need past to know who you are. That's a delusion.

That's a story. You don't need future to finally arrive at some more complete version of yourself, because presence is already complete. You are already complete in presence.

One could say presence is the cream, and whatever happens in time, and whatever happens in future to you, is the skimmed milk. But once you know the cream and have the cream, then skimmed milk is not that important anymore. So as more presence arises, you lose the fear of death, which, of course, arises, because you unconsciously think you need more time to be fully yourself.

Of course, the truth is you need to get out of time to be fully yourself. So we are here relaxed and alert at the same time. Alertness does not require tension, and to be free of tension does not mean that you are going towards sleep.

And at this moment, who are you? With no reference to your story, the space of presence, not a person. You still look like a person from the outside.

So with this shift, the person recedes, and presence arises. You don't lose anything real in this. But what about my personal identity?

I don't want to lose that. If you look more deeply, at the bottom of what you feel is your personal identity, there's the fact that right now you are conscious. That's the foundation of what you sense and call your personal identity.

Consciousness is your personal identity. It gives light to the story of who you are, which consists of thoughts and your past. Past is thoughts.

The consciousness is the light behind your story. Without it, there would be nothing. Let's close our eyes for a moment and just continue to be present without any visual perception.

If thoughts interfere, take your attention into the inner body. Feel the aliveness inside the body. Be present with every cell of the body.

Presence, of course, transcends the body, but it shines through the form. Open your eyes. Look around the room, wherever you are, and stay present.

Be the awareness behind the perceptions. Innocent, fresh perception. Alert perception.

And back at the screen. As we finish our meditation, you may want to sit a little longer in the stillness. And when you then start moving again, start doing things, carry that presence as much as possible with you.

As I don't have my bell with me, I will now simulate the bell as best I can.

[Speaker 6] (2:48:59 - 2:49:00)
Bing!

[Speaker 1] (2:49:16 - 2:49:18)
I think once is enough.

[Speaker 6] (2:49:21 - 2:49:21)
Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (2:49:47 - 2:49:50)
Your latest book is Lost and Found.

[Speaker 1] (2:49:52 - 2:50:34)
This is a very interesting challenge that came into your life not that long ago. The challenge was mercifully provided by one of your, or perhaps your most important spiritual teacher, whose name is Bhagavan Bernie Madoff. And he mercifully took away from you 30 years of savings, all their life's savings, to help you experience the essence of who you are.

[Speaker 6] (2:50:34 - 2:50:34)
Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:50:35 - 2:50:40)
However, you did not immediately experience the essence of who you are.

[Speaker 4] (2:50:40 - 2:50:42)
I'd say that was an understatement.

[Speaker 1] (2:50:43 - 2:51:11)
And you describe it in the book, how it starts, and that's wonderful, I believe it's chapter one or two, beginning the incredible amount of the reaction and the fear that comes when you lose all your life's savings. And you describe what it did to your state of consciousness, wonderfully explained and illustrated. I don't know if you want to talk briefly about it.

[Speaker 4] (2:51:11 - 2:51:12)
Sure.

[Speaker 1] (2:51:12 - 2:51:14)
And then something happened.

[Speaker 4] (2:51:14 - 2:55:13)
Yes. For those of you, those few of you who might not know who Bernie Madoff is, he ran a Ponzi scheme and actually all over the world, and ended up stealing $65 billion of people's money. And as my husband is very fond of saying when he tells his stories, and not all of it is mine.

So we did have our life's savings in there, and we got a phone call, or I got a phone call one day, my husband was away. We believed it was very safe. A friend of ours was friends with Bernie Madoff, whose father was friends with Bernie Madoff, and anybody could put, in our particular fund, anybody could put anywhere from $600 or $1,000 to whatever amount you had in this fund.

And we just kept on putting all of our money in there because our friend had been in it for 30 years. And also, as my husband says, that you start believing in gravity when every time you throw a ball up in the air, it comes down, every time for 30 years. So we absolutely believed it was safe, and then it wasn't.

And then we got the phone call saying it was gone, and I was shocked, and in terror, I think. First I was shocked, and then hysterical, and then in terror, and then I called a couple of very dear friends and teachers who I would say, we've lost all our money, and this was very soon after the phone call, and two of them said to me, you've lost your money, but nothing of any value is gone. And I said in that moment to both of them, now is not the time to be spiritual.

I was convinced, you know, like, don't give me that. We've lost our money. What are we going to do?

We're going to be homeless. We're going to be out on the street. And what are we going to eat?

And it was such a panic. And I started very soon realizing that it was going to be unbearable to live inside my mind, that I could not, absolutely could not live inside the mind that was telling me, what did you do? I can't believe you did that.

What's the matter with you? How come you didn't diversify? Even a four-year-old knows to diversify.

And I started blaming, of course, everybody, and then myself. And the ranting and the raving was so intense that I understood pretty immediately, within a day, that unless I brought myself back to what I had, not what I had lost, to what I could find instead of the money that I couldn't, what was already here, which is that animating aliveness or that indwelling aliveness that I've heard you speak of, unless I could bring myself back moment to moment to moment, every single time my mind wandered, then I was going to be lost.

[Speaker 3] (2:55:13 - 2:55:16)
I was going to be living in abject terror.

[Speaker 5] (2:55:38 - 2:56:26)
Because when people say to me, you know, how have you lasted so long as being this sensual, sexual? I say, you know, I'm a good listener. That's what's gotten me by all these years.

I'm really just a good listener, because what reads on screen as some kind of sexual attraction or chemistry, whether it's between someone of the same gender or a younger person, an older person, that's not really what determines it. What determines that chemistry that reads on screen is when the audience believes that those two people see each other in a way that nobody has seen them before. And they make a connection that way.

And they listen to each other. And you see that they feel that they're seen. And they feel that they're listened to in a way that they haven't experienced before, whatever the story is.

[Speaker 1] (2:56:26 - 2:56:39)
That's amazing you should say that, because last night I was looking at my notebook where I occasionally write down something that I read that's interesting. And I actually then scribbled it. I brought it to read to you.

It connects with what you just said.

[Speaker 5] (2:56:39 - 2:56:39)
Really?

[Speaker 1] (2:56:41 - 2:57:02)
And this is from an interview with Richard Gere. And he was interviewed, and he talked about acting. And he said, movie acting is primarily listening.

If you're really engaged, that's all a movie audience wants to see. They want to see you processing what's happening in your world.

[Speaker 5] (2:57:03 - 2:58:09)
Oh, that's interesting, because we just played husband and wife. It hasn't come out yet. But I've known him for a long time, so that's a good...

Maybe our essence have communicated somehow over the 20-some years we've known each other. That's funny. Well, I think it's true.

And that's why acting is such a great job. Because you're trained, if you're going to be good at what you do, to listen. You're trained to be present.

You're training to be somehow authentic, and at the same time, to be open to whatever the other person feeds to you. Really, the good actors have an idea of the boundaries. But within those boundaries is the freedom to react to whatever happens.

And when you're really... What's addictive about acting is when you're with somebody like Richard and something happens that's unexpected, and everything gets quiet, and you're there in that moment, and it's actually working. Now, whether or not anybody gets it on film is another question, but that exchange is so strong that you want to find that.

[Speaker 2] (2:58:30 - 2:58:37)
What's a day like in the life of Eckhart? It sounds like a bad reality TV show.

[Speaker 1] (2:58:38 - 3:00:10)
It's not terribly interesting. It's very ordinary. Unless when I'm traveling it gets a bit more interesting, because there's a plane to catch, and there's a hotel, and so on.

But when I'm not traveling, it's extremely ordinary. I love being, so there's always set aside time for just being still or walking in nature. And I'm notorious for not meeting deadlines.

everybody knows when they say this needs to be done, this thing needs to be done by so and so. Well, we'll see. And I love night times, so I sometimes don't go to bed until 1.30 or 2, and sleep about 5 hours. And I like little things, going to a cafe, have a coffee somewhere. Nature, as I said, love walking in nature, reading occasionally, being, doing whatever needs to be done, people call, there's always things that need to be done, I do them quietly. Some things don't get done at all, and then they disappear.

[Speaker 5] (3:00:12 - 3:00:14)
Laughter Easier for you, right?

[Speaker 1] (3:00:14 - 3:21:26)
Laughter Are you still able to go out in public, though? What? Still able to go out in public?

Well, that is interesting, I go out usually with a baseball cap, which I never really liked, but I've been wearing them for years now. And the, because I love privacy, I love to be invisible, I love to be in a room and being able to just observe what goes on in the room without anybody being aware that I'm there. That's more difficult now, so often people come up, even with a baseball cap, they come up and usually it's lovely, they say some, that it's been so wonderful, my life has changed, it happens almost every day.

And that's wonderful, I prefer not to be recognized, but the moment it happens, I'm happy, and I respond, and it's a loving interaction. But my preference is not to be seen. I'm an introvert by nature, so even to go out and give talks was a very strange thing for me.

I knew that this is what the universe wanted me to do, or the universe acting through me, so it's things, one surrenders into things, and then they're fine. It's not my nature to go out on stage and talk. And so every situation brings its own challenges, the loss of privacy and so on, could be seen as a challenge, and requires then surrender, to see in this world there are polarities, you gain something here, you lose something there, in the world of polarities, on the surface level, you experience polarities.

The gain here has to be paid for something. So the fact that the teaching has gone out to so many people, that's wonderful, of course then, yes, privacy is lost, you need to accept that. Before I had privacy, but very few people were reached by the teaching.

I did workshops in the 80s and early 90s, there was one evening talk in England that had been scheduled, nobody turned up. I was alone, I just sat there. But I had my privacy.

And then I had a workshop once scheduled, usually I had about 7, 10, 12, 15 people for little workshops, one workshop had been, somebody had organized a workshop for me, and I arrived for a weekend, Saturday and Sunday, one person turned up, waiting at the door, and said, OK, let's do it. So not that many people were reached, but wonderful privacy. So that's how it is, it's simple, I don't live in an ashram, where some spiritual teachers live in ashrams, where they're surrounded by people who go, and that can be, of course, comforting for a while, to the ego, if you still have an ego, hopefully not the spiritual teacher, but it's not, I prefer to be in normal, everyday life, and go to the supermarket, so it's not interesting, unfortunately, and not even glamorous, except occasionally when I visit Oprah, then suddenly it's, ah! Driving into the big, the gates open to the big mansion, and you drive in, oh! But otherwise not that much glamour.

Teach the child to be aware of their pain body, not while it happens, because nobody will be listening to you. You cannot make even an adult, you cannot make them aware of their pain body in the middle of a pain body attack. That does not work.

The human ego has to, at that point, the human ego has to develop and grow. Unfortunately, the way it is for most humans on the planet so far, is the human ego should be a limited time period when it grows in a human being, let's say up to the age of 20, 25, at the most 30, let's say mid-20s. Then the, you cannot prevent the arising of ego in a child and an adolescent, nor should you want to prevent it, it's not possible.

They need to develop a sense of separate identity that is part of the evolution. The tragedy is, unfortunately, if people get stuck with that ego for the rest of their lives, they never go beyond it. So, for a parent to begin with parents, it's to observe the growth of the ego in the child, which already starts with, may start at the age of two or three, when the child begins to, well, the child learns his or her name, and then the child learns that it is possible to possess something.

It learns the concept of mine fairly early, and so it possesses a toy, and it learns the concept of my toy, that's the beginning of ego. And then, also the beginning of the suffering that comes with ego identification, because if the toy is lost or disappears or somebody takes it, enormous suffering arises. Oh, my toy, mine!

This is the early suffering of egoic consciousness. The next step would be for the child to assert that it is better in some ways than another. I can jump higher than you.

Can you jump this high? No, you can't, look at me. I can do it.

And parents say, you're great, you're doing it, and that's fine, if you don't overdo the praise. Give praise when praise is deserved, but don't just praise anything, because then there comes an inflation of praise, and that can create a narcissistic personality, which is an overblown ego. Many parents these days do that.

They say, everything you do is so great, you're the greatest, you're wonderful. It feels good for the child, but, you know, when you print money, when you print money, it loses its value. It's called inflation.

I know that, but many politicians these days don't seem to know it. And they probably have a degree in economics, but that's on the side. So you are there to gently guide them, you observe the growth of their ego, has to gently guide them, and school, ideally, should prepare children for adulthood, and should also prepare them, perhaps, for the transcendence of ego.

Perhaps they can even, just when I said 25 years old, just a number came to me, could already be at 21. Ego is something that needs to be overcome, but something that is necessary for a certain stage of human development. So schools should encourage children not to excessively identify with concepts.

And there are a few alternative schools, I believe, that already, to some extent, do that. There are, perhaps, I don't know, Montessori schools, or Rudolf Steiner schools, and so on. To some extent, they encourage children not to be excessively drawn into conceptualization at an early age.

That is very dangerous. Also, to be given the devices at a very early age has a very detrimental effect on their development. I know it's an easy thing to do for parents, to keep them quiet, but it is not good for the growth of their consciousness.

Children need to remain in touch for as long as possible with nature. Some way, they need to be taken out into nature. Even if it's just a park, but preferably out of the city, periodically, where they are encouraged to interact with nature, leave all the devices behind.

Every school should do that, take them out in groups where they spend time connecting with nature without their devices. These are all important things. Also, to teach even abstract subjects, like mathematics, and so on, at too early an age is also detrimental for their development.

So, there are many things that I know, I have met quite a few teachers over the years who are already bringing that into their classrooms. But so far, it's mostly on an individual basis. It's rare that it has become, for it to become already part of the official curriculum, that's still relatively rare.

Although there are some schools now also, I don't know what schools they are, they may be private schools, that teach mindfulness, so-called. I don't often use that term, but basically, mindful is to be present in what you do. I don't use that term because it implies that your mind is full.

So, I'd rather not use that. But they teach mindfulness. So, for a parent to encourage the child not to get lost in conceptualization, to encourage the child to continue to interact with nature.

If you can't have an animal in the house, that is nature too, a cat or a dog, to encourage the child to look after the animal, to relate to the animal. Very important. Animal presence can be very important in a home, especially for children.

So, it requires teachers to finally establish the teaching of presence as part of the curriculum, and that implies also, it signifies help children to become aware of their emotions. That's one of the most vital things. And if it's not taught at school, the parents have to do it.

Well, the parents should do it anyway. Help the children to become aware of their emotions, because the emotions can wreak havoc with the child's life, and sometimes they get amplified in the teenage years, when many adolescents become very hostile, and they're consumed by negative emotions, by self-hatred, by hatred of others, by hatred of everything. Very destructive emotions.

So, the most vital thing that a child already at an age of four or five, needs to begin to be taught to observe his or her emotional field, rather than be always taken over by it. Many children, almost all children, already have pain bodies. Some stronger than others, and that's another important point here, where when you observe the tantrum, earlier, in the previous session today, somebody said their mind sometimes feels like a toddler's tantrum taking place in their mind.

Yes, the tantrums of toddlers can be quite violent. They may throw themselves on the floor, and scream, or throw, and that is the pain body. So, I would highly recommend, and this should be done at schools, as part of the curriculum, and there should be children, there are a few children's books that teach that also, teach the child to be aware of their pain body.

Not while it happens, because nobody will be listening to you. You cannot make even an adult, you cannot make them aware of their pain body in the middle of a pain body attack. That does not work.

Because the only person you'll be speaking to is the pain body, and the pain body won't like it. But afterwards, the next day, you talk to the child, what happened yesterday when you threw yourself on the floor? What was that?

What was that thing that got into you? Do you remember that? What was that thing?

What did that feel like? If you had to make a drawing of it, what would it look like, that thing that got into you? What would that look like?

What color is it? Encourage the child to place attention on the emotion. In other words, there's a presence there of rather, instead of being the emotion, the child can begin to become aware of the emotion.

This does not necessarily prevent the next pain body attack. But then you do it again. Next pain body, and then the next day, that happened again.

Was it the same thing? Did it feel the same as before? Was it the same little grumbling there?

But let the child use the terms. Yes, it was the same, okay. Encourage perhaps the child to make a little painting of it.

And the next time it happens, then you can say in the middle of it, or at the beginning of it, the tantrum is starting to happen, then you can say, ah, there it is again, isn't it? And that can bring in awareness even while it's happening, but you need to prepare the child first, otherwise it won't work. And that may not necessarily stop it, it will probably continue, but at least a little bit of awareness will have come in, there it is again, isn't it?

No, it isn't, it's not. Laughter Laughter So, I also remember as a child, there was a time in my early teens, I had very negative emotions, very self-destructive, violent emotions. I didn't act them out, fortunately, but they were, I was almost consumed by very destructive emotions, and of course nobody had any idea of presence or mindfulness at that time anywhere, would have been unheard of, and virtually all parents were very unconscious.

At least nowadays there are, there's a certain percentage of parents that are relatively conscious and bring up their children consciously as much as possible, but even then, you will find the difficulty of dealing with the child's emotions, so very important at an early age, begin to teach the child to be conscious of their emotions, rather than being taken over by the emotions. The worst thing you can do is when the child has a pain body attack, allow it to trigger your pain body, which unfortunately happens quite a lot too, because the energy of this, of the pain body is so raw, and so, there's such aggression in it, that an unconscious parent will be drawn into deeper unconsciousness, and then react and start shouting, Stop it! Stop it!

Of course it won't stop it. So the pain body has spread even to the parent. So that's, these are all important things to bring presence, so that the teenage years then become a little easier.

Another important thing that also should be practiced at school, but at home environment is very important, how do the parents live? When you bring up children, the greatest teaching is how the family relates to it, how the parents relate to each other, and so on. That's what the children absorb, rather than what they are being told.

That there should be the household, there should be presence in the household, in the family environment, and a very important aspect of that is to listen to the child. It's amazing that this should be practiced also at school, but more importantly at home, for the parent to listen to the child, and you would be amazed how many cases it doesn't happen at all, because the parents are so lost in doing, they have a busy life, they are lost in doing, and the only way they interact with the child is either telling the child what to do, or what not to do. So as you can guess, I'm in the summer, the southern hemisphere, we just finished our retreat here on the sunshine coast of Australia.

It's very warm, but a cooling breeze coming from the ocean.

[Speaker 2] (3:21:37 - 3:21:42)
So let's settle into the present moment.

[Speaker 1] (3:21:49 - 3:24:42)
Access the stillness that's already within you, even though you might not have realized it. Even with people who have the most turbulent and chaotic minds, there is stillness underneath it. And to find that, it is vital to find that stillness within, because otherwise you are at the mercy of your mind, and you are lost in that continuous noise.

So here, it's helpful for you to, as I'm sure you know already, to become aware of the silent spaces between the words, rather than just pay attention to the words. In fact, be more interested, so to speak, in the silent spaces than the words. The silent space on the external level is when I stop speaking, so the sound is no longer produced.

There's an absence of sound, and that's what we call silence. Maybe not complete silence here, because there are some background noises, or perhaps you can hear birds and the noise.

[Speaker 2] (3:24:43 - 3:24:56)
But, when I don't speak, there's the absence of noise, except for the birds.

[Speaker 1] (3:25:14 - 3:25:44)
And when you're aware that there is an absence of noise, there's a silence, which is an external thing. Simultaneously, something happens inside you, and that's why it is so wonderful to be aware of external silence. You may know this already, but whether you've heard this before or not, it doesn't matter.

[Speaker 2] (3:25:44 - 3:25:47)
The important thing is to realize it now.

[Speaker 1] (3:25:48 - 3:27:57)
So, when you pay attention to silence, what is it you pay attention to? Nothing in

particular. There is no content to silence.

When I speak, the words, the sounds are the content. When I stop speaking, there's no content. And if you're new to this, you might even ask, what is it that I pay attention to when I pay attention to silence?

And the answer is, nothing, really. Well, then the question arises, how can I pay attention to nothing? Well, you pay attention to that space of no content.

And then something happens inside you simultaneously. You might notice that when you pay attention to just the fact that there is a silence, you can do it when you're alone in a room, you can do it in the middle of the night, you can do it out in nature, you can do it in a church, preferably when it's empty, or a temple, anywhere where there is some silence, you become aware of it. Don't overlook the silence and don't always look for the noise.

[Speaker 2] (3:28:01 - 3:28:08)
So, what happens inside you when you become aware of that absence of noise?

[Speaker 1] (3:28:10 - 3:28:28)
Thinking subsides and you become still inside. The moment you become aware of silence and pay attention to silence, you become still inside.

[Speaker 2] (3:28:29 - 3:28:39)
The ceaseless stream of thinking subsides and what's left is only that alert space.

[Speaker 1] (3:28:45 - 3:29:07)
You may not be able to sustain it for very long by yourself, it doesn't matter as long as it's there, only for a few seconds, good enough to start with, and here perhaps you're able to sustain it perhaps during the entire duration of our meditation.

[Speaker 2] (3:29:09 - 3:29:33)
In other words, let go of thinking without falling asleep and just be here present as a presence, conscious presence.

[Speaker 1] (3:29:44 - 3:30:01)
Now, the words I speak are so simple that you can't really think about them because there's nothing to figure out. So, to understand what I'm saying, you don't need to add some more thought to it.

[Speaker 2] (3:30:09 - 3:30:28)
So, the best way of being here with me is to embrace the state of thoughtless awareness. No need to think.

[Speaker 1] (3:30:39 - 3:41:13)
And you haven't disappeared. The essence of who you are is not only still here, the essence of who you are has emerged more fully now when you are still. Largely, most of humanity has been trapped in the egoic consciousness for thousands of years.

And it has produced what we now know as human history. If you doubt that the human, that the normal state of consciousness of humans has a strong element of insanity, if you doubt that, you really need to read a book about, don't even go into distant history, there's too much of it, just read a book about the first half of the 20th century, that wasn't that long ago. Read a book about the first half of the 20th century and what happened in Europe, in Russia, in China.

Just read that and your mouth will drop open if you read it and see that actually is insane. That is, cannot be other than insane. So much suffering created not by natural disasters but by humans creating so much suffering for other humans and so many people, millions upon millions killed not only in warfare between nations but killed by their own governments.

Germany, Russia, China, in smaller places, Cambodia, just dreadful, unbelievable things. So there is a strong element of insanity in what is called the normal human consciousness because all these atrocities, these millions upon millions of people killed, they were not killed by psychopaths but the people, the number of people killed by criminals and psychopaths is very, very small compared to the number of humans killed by normal humans. Normal.

And this is why I've been saying for years, normal equals insane. It's a slight exaggeration but there's a lot of truth in it. So it is vital that we and this is why we are now again at a situation where you can see the same unconsciousness arising again in the collective going in the same direction as before but what is different here is there's a certain segment of the population where a new consciousness in whom a new consciousness is arising.

So that could save us but I cannot guarantee that it will. In the long term it's all beautiful. I know that the evolution of consciousness will proceed.

The only question is are we going to experience a regressive period for a while? That could be but no gain in consciousness is ever lost so what is happening here will become part of the collective human consciousness and even if humanity has to go through a regression as it did for example after the collapse of antiquity, after the collapse of Greek and Roman civilization which was relatively advanced humans had to go through the so called dark ages for several hundred years some people say it was a thousand years but a thousand years is very little in the whole of history. So it's not important what is important is that there is an awakening that is spreading still a lot of it is underground it is not visible on mainstream television newscast you will very unlikely that you will find an account tonight in the situation room of CNN about our gathering here this is a situation room there was a meeting at the Beacon Theater today and these people claim that it is possible to lead a peaceful and sane existence. What do you think?

And now let's go into the really good news which is what is this transcendent dimension now as a concept it's just that just a concept but what is the reality of it is it possible to experience or to know or perhaps at least to have a glimpse of that transcendent dimension not at some point in the future but here and now here and now where so what am I talking about what is the transcendent dimension let's so what we need to do now obviously is take our attention to the present moment because that's the only place where you can find the transcendent dimension of consciousness because it is timeless there is no past and future to it it is only by taking your attention deeply into this moment that you can encounter the transcendent dimension in yourself and the transcendent dimension in yourself is also who you are beyond the personality beyond the so called person and then you realize that you exist both on the level of humanhood you are a human as I call it you are a human which is your existence on the level of form physical form mental psychological form of who you are that is your temporary existence of a person and you also exist in the transcendent and that is the being human being human is who you are on the level of form body and mental form now for most people that's all they ever know about themselves that they are trapped in that level and that is what produces human history that is what produces what you can watch on TV in the newscasts tonight politics that is that dimension of consciousness then the being dimension is who you are beyond the stream of thinking step out transcend your life situation and I use that term in the power of now instead of being immersed and carrying around your life situation a burden a continuous burden some sense of self instead of that be the life you are life you are not just a life situation you are life you are an expression of the one life that manifests as the universe underlying the universe there is the oneness of life you are that one life that was there before the big bang if there was a big bang you are the one life the one out of which the whole universe came and not only out of which the whole universe came out of which the whole universe continuously comes continuously brings forth life new forms and you are that and so isn't that a much more satisfying way of being in this world than a walking problematic life situation you are life so and here on this retreat it's the recognition that you are a manifestation of the universe of the consciousness that underlies the universe and you are that universe experiencing yourself or the universe experiencing itself and you go

[Speaker 3] (3:41:13 - 3:42:14)
it's all so wonderful so the true meaning of retreat is

[Speaker 1] (3:42:15 - 3:54:08)
the retreat from your usual self from your usual mental mentally constructed mentally emotionally constructed self and if everything else is really happens on the surface of life now what happens on the surface of life can be very helpful and this is why we're here it can be very helpful it helps you to begin to let go of your identification with your usual self and then realize and of course many of you have already started or are well into that process of disidentification which we could also call the awakening process most of you are already engaged in the the awakening process has become initiated in you and then you are here in order to deepen it and some of you may not yet even know, there may be a few who may not even know at this moment what I'm referring to when I say awakening but you will unless you run away tomorrow already just give yourself a chance so we are there is the surface self that is the usual self that everybody has and for many people who are not yet awakened that's all they have or all they think they have it's very it's like saying you have an enormous amount of wealth but you don't know it so it's as if you didn't have it so when I say they don't have it, it really means they don't know that there is a deeper dimension to who they are and that is the real meaning of that is really true deprivation of really not knowing who you are on the deeper level of your being so there is the usual self and there is the deeper self and we are here retreating the purpose is to retreat from the usual self and discover who you are underneath the usual self who or what you are and that discovery does not happen conceptually after this retreat on the last day you may not be able to say much more about your real self your true deeper self than you are now and yet you might have experienced it very deeply and been in touch with it very deeply but what can you say about it what can I say about my deeper self it's hard to say anything because it's not it does not live in the world of conceptualization and you first encounter it in a moment of stillness alert stillness like now where you don't need to know your name you don't need to remember what your name is right now in order to be here fully you don't need to remember your personal history right now in order to be here fully and be fully yourself you do not need to remember your personal history in order to get that sense of being fully present and being fully yourself and that's quite amazing so you can sense something there is a sense of aliveness or presence that has nothing to do with your personal history or your name or your background or whether in the eyes of the world you are a huge success or a huge failure nothing to do with that because there we move deeper and so it's intangible you can never say I have found it now I have found my deeper self no you can't, it doesn't work like that, it cannot become an object in your consciousness because when you say I have found something there must be something that arises in your field of consciousness as an object in consciousness, you see something you hear something, you think of something a sense perception arises as something in your field of consciousness, I'm looking at the table, I have found the table or an idea comes into your head, I have found the answer as an idea but the depth of who you are that we could also call the transcendent dimension can never be experienced in that way as an object to your perception or consciousness because it is the eternal subject it is the I so you cannot know yourself in a subject object relationship you know yourself as

consciousness not conscious of something but conscious and that's the sense of the deepest sense of beingness or I that you can sense within yourself right now why not now, why wait until the last day of the retreat and say oh finally I've got it get it already it does not take time to be who you are quote from A Course in Miracles or if you want the complete quote it has taken time to misguide you so completely but it takes no time at all to be who you are and this is why I go to already in the introductory session to the very core of what this is about instead of saying just wait on day two I will get you closer and on day three you get just wait, you'll get there it's always it's always here now, you are always here now, let's go back to this strange thing of in order to sense your own presence which is not your own, we just call it your own temporarily nothing is your own in order to sense your own presence you don't need to remember your past in fact if you think about your past it takes you away from sensing the fullness of being of your own presence because you drift off into and you can see you're not here you're in dreamland a kind of hypnosis, hypnotized by your mind or in the middle of the night it goes, my problems me and my problems and many people define their identity primarily as a set of problems that need to be solved and one day they hope they will arrive at that point when their problematic self has become resolved but it never does you are not a set of problems that you need to resolve so let's go back to that beautiful very simple realization that you don't need to remember anything about what your mind tells you, who you are it doesn't mean that you now have lost all your memories, no they are still there if you need them they come back whatever analogy you want to use I used to say the filing system, when you need it you can pull it out but they don't use it anymore so it's a computer analogy you use now it's there somewhere in your computer it's all still there when you need it, of course it's still there but does it have to be there always when you don't need it that continuous problematic self talk does it need to be do you need to be burdened and walk around every day of your life burdened by the problem making well it's pretending to be problem solving but it's really problem making of your mind and to carry around with you the heavy entity, the me which goes and you're trying to get to a point at some future point you think I'm going to be liberated and free of all that and then I will start living and many people even if they don't verbalize it as I do right now the underlying mindset is when I can free myself from all these problems then I can start living and of course when you're 25 you can still believe that when you're 35 you say yeah it can still happen and you become 45 and 50 ok maybe I'll really start living when I retire and then you begin to live for the retirement ok only another 3 years now and finally the day comes and then on the first day of your retirement you sit at home and say

[Speaker 6] (3:54:13 - 3:54:14)
what now

[Speaker 1] (3:54:15 - 4:16:28)
who am I without my function my social function but nobody is telling me who I am anymore what am I going to do now and then you try golf and you drive around in the golf buggy and for a few weeks it feels good and you can drink and so and then that dissatisfaction returns the same mindset and it's still there despite your retirement in fact you become more aware of the dissatisfied mind now that you don't have that many external problems anymore and yet there's still the heaviness of the mind and the discontent so that's not the way to go so the wonderful news is there is a dimension in you that we could call the dimension of depth or the transcendent dimension where you as the person becomes something else where the person can only really often compare the person that you are to the ripple on the surface of the ocean that's the person but the ripple is one with the totality of the ocean if the ripple doesn't know that its existence is problematic fearful you fear every other ripple or you want to incorporate them into your life maybe if you come with me together we'll be a bigger ripple marry me laugh and you will make me happy and I will make you happy it has been tried many times laugh so to lead a satisfying existence as a ripple that only knows itself as the ripple and not as

the ocean is very frustrating you can't it doesn't work so the ripple needs to realize that it is much deeper than just the ripple there's a depth to the ripple where it's no longer a ripple where it's connected with everything and with every other ripple where it's connected with the heart of the universe not just on a human level and that is true awakening and after that and when that is realized and the ripple can sense that it's a stillness in you a presence that has no particular content then the ripple becomes relatively happy it doesn't mean in the world on the surface of ripples things still can go wrong still things can disappear and break down and ripples never last for very long that continues and yet you feel you can actually enjoy your ripple identity and enjoy the surface of life also it's actually quite nice here look at all those little ripples and ripple means whatever you perceive in this analogy ripple means whatever life form is there in your perception including yourself and whatever whether it's humans or whatever you perceive in this existence it is the manifestation of life of the one life that has manifested as a multiplicity of life forms and each life form is inhabited by the one life manifestation of the one life or the one consciousness and when you realize that the beginning of that realization is to sense the I that has nothing to do with your past or your future or your name or anything your mind is saying your simple presence that means the ripple is becoming aware of something much bigger and suddenly we have a relatively happy ripple and you can enjoy every moment of its ripple existence in a sense of wonder because it's no longer demanding that things that are not permanent should be permanent and it's not demanding anymore that the surface existence of things should satisfy me, you're here to satisfy me, you're here to make me happy you're here to fulfill me the surface of the ripple can't do that the conditions in your life they can fulfill you for a while and then it's no longer fulfilling this happens to relationships this happens to jobs that you find, activities unless you go deeper nothing is fulfilling for very long thought going a little bit beyond it there's such a thing as a collective mind many humans live virtually with a mind that has taken possession of them pretends to be them and they're stuck with it many thoughts are not your thoughts really they arise in the collective mind they are energy fields or energetic entities if any question comes into your mind right now please realize that it is irrelevant and please realize that it is an attempt of your mind to obstruct your practice of presence occasionally I may say something just to point you back to it because there is always a possibility that you may drift off into thinking it's also quite helpful as you are aware of being conscious to be aware at the same time that you are breathing to feel the breath going in and out and at the same time be the consciousness the presence thoughts are not important right now even if they pretend to be don't be concerned if an occasional ripple of thought floats around the surface of your consciousness not a problem so when you go into a meditation like this it can become very deep so that there is consciousness left pure consciousness and then as you open your eyes again, listen, look around begin to perceive externals again it's still in the background

[Speaker 3] (4:17:22 - 4:17:23)
welcome to our

[Speaker 2] (4:17:25 - 4:20:44)
meditation if that's what it is I said if that's what it is because it's a word that can also be misleading and cause you to believe that there is a separate activity in your life a regular activity that's called meditation and that is the rest of your life what is conventionally called meditation is more than just a practice it's a state of consciousness or it's a question of semantics you could say that meditation is a practice towards a state of consciousness it already becomes problematic because you are now working towards something so what is conventionally called meditation is not an activity it's not a doing so you can't do a meditation the very idea that you are doing a meditation is already the obstacle to true meditation and true meditation is ultimately not trying to get somewhere but already realizing that you are already there it's the realization of

being which is prior to all doing and it's always there it's usually for most humans it's not realized simply becoming aware aware that

[Speaker 3] (4:20:45 - 4:20:49)
you are right now

[Speaker 2] (4:21:00 - 4:21:13)
and it's not concepts not thoughts you are not a thought so any idea you have

[Speaker 3] (4:21:13 - 4:21:21)
in your mind about who you are is ultimately false

[Speaker 2] (4:21:34 - 4:21:54)
becoming aware that I am here and now and that's the arising

[Speaker 3] (4:21:54 - 4:22:03)
of spaciousness inner spaciousness

[Speaker 2] (4:22:15 - 4:22:51)
and the strange thing is that's always there but if you are not aware of it it is as if it were not there in an analogy one could say

[Speaker 3] (4:22:52 - 4:23:02)
you are a wealthy person who doesn't know it and you are then poor

[Speaker 2] (4:23:04 - 4:23:24)
I use the analogy of the somewhere in a book of now maybe a man sitting on a box a beggar sitting on a box for years has never looked inside the box and the box is full of gold it's his

[Speaker 3] (4:23:26 - 4:23:27)
but he didn't know it

[Speaker 2] (4:23:46 - 4:24:39)
or you could have another amusing analogy and say that you it's like the analogy when we use an analogy we use something from the physical world to point to something that is beyond the physical so we talk about gold because it's something precious in the physical world that's how analogies work so you could also say you are destitute and you don't know that you have a bank account in Switzerland with 100 million dollars or you've forgotten a number of your bank account, well nowadays

[Speaker 3] (4:24:39 - 4:24:48)
Swiss bank accounts are no more popular anymore but just using an analogy

[Speaker 2] (4:24:48 - 4:25:35)
it's overlooking something that's incredibly valuable you can't even mean to say anything, nothing in the physical world would even compare although in analogies we use those things Jesus used the pearl of great price and so on again things from the physical world point to something beyond just becoming aware of

[Speaker 3] (4:25:36 - 4:25:44)
yourself not as somebody

[Speaker 2] (4:25:44 - 4:26:07)
as a person but becoming aware of yourself as one could say nobody, so you are both, everybody knows they are somebody but not that many people yet except those who are awakening

[Speaker 3] (4:26:08 - 4:26:22)
know that at a deeper level they are nobody nobody would also

[Speaker 2] (4:26:23 - 4:26:37)
be called no form on one level you exist as form, physical form and psychological form as the personality and the body

[Speaker 3] (4:26:40 - 4:26:47)
on another deeper level you

[Speaker 2] (4:26:47 - 4:30:38)
are the consciousness that's prior to form but not separate from form so spiritual awakening is the becoming aware of yourself as just that spacious formless presence the light of consciousness and that realization is inseparable from the present moment and you could even say that what you are or who or what you are in your essence is the now, the present moment not what happens in it but the space of now the most dreadful fate is to be trapped in your personality not knowing there is anything beyond that no transcendent dimension complete unawareness of any transcendent dimension within yourself and then you carry the burden of a personality all your life the burden of yourself troublesome anxious angry, depressed

[Speaker 3] (4:30:45 - 4:30:46)
fearful

[Speaker 2] (4:30:49 - 4:32:28)
dissatisfied always a sense of something missing always looking to some other moment in the future for some kind of fulfillment and then reaching the end of your life and it wasn't very enjoyable and you never really found yourself every life is problematic occasionally briefly brief periods may arise in your life

[Speaker 3] (4:32:28 - 4:32:38)
when you feel everything is great and then very quickly

[Speaker 2] (4:32:40 - 4:33:43)
new challenges new problems arise it's more normal for life to be problematic than to be free of problems in fact externally life never ceases to be challenging almost as if some screen writer script writer or writer author in the sky infinitely creative would always come up with some new

[Speaker 3] (4:33:43 - 4:33:57)
obstacle to put in your path whatever form it may take

[Speaker 2] (4:34:13 - 4:37:06)
and if you solve one problem another one comes up somewhere else or the very solution the very way in which you solve the problem if it was done without wisdom creates two new ones that are both worse than the original problem and I just said in the absence of wisdom you try to solve a problem without this essential element that is not ultimately intelligence to not intelligence that is measured in IQ tests but something because that's a limited form of intelligence the IQ intelligence there is more to intelligence the real intelligence is wisdom and that can only arise if you know the transcendent dimension within yourself if you're aware of that that inner spaciousness that stillness in the background while you're talking while you're perceiving while you're walking or driving you can sense the beingness that you are the I am the spacious stillness in the background in the foreground you deal with things you think you do but you're connected to the transcendent dimension which is the essence of who you are if you're connected to the transcendent dimension you will still be faced with challenges but the way in which you meet those challenges is very different from the way in which you meet

those challenges you are underway on that dimension the way in which you respond to those challenges is very different what those challenges do to you you're not aware there's a lack of awareness

[Speaker 3] (4:37:07 - 4:37:08)
then

[Speaker 2] (4:37:09 - 4:38:17)
usually when you try to tackle your problems deal with the challenges of life you do so in a way that is ultimately not intelligent but is reactive and creates further problems also when you're unaware of the transcendent dimension you tend to magnify problems by your reaction to them you overreact but you don't know that you think it's a very adequate reaction

[Speaker 1] (4:38:45 - 4:39:20)
no need to think right now there's nothing to add to this moment by thinking about it so all that thinking would do is obscure your awareness your awareness of the present moment which means obscure your awareness if you have problems waiting for you you can think about them when we finish

[Speaker 2] (4:39:31 - 4:39:33)
and even then

[Speaker 1] (4:39:33 - 4:39:59)
I would suggest and recommend that you set aside brief periods when you think about your so called problems if they are real in other words the real problem is a situation that you need to deal with either right now in the moment when it arises

[Speaker 2] (4:39:59 - 4:40:09)
in which case it's not a problem it's a challenge or something that tomorrow you may have to do or next week or next month

[Speaker 1] (4:40:09 - 4:40:17)
and you may have to think about what you're going to do to the extent to which it's possible to plan

[Speaker 2] (4:40:18 - 4:40:21)
and set aside a period of time when you do that

[Speaker 1] (4:40:25 - 4:40:49)
and then when that's done come back into present moment awareness so the worst fate is for your mind to be occupied

[Speaker 2] (4:40:49 - 4:41:16)
continuously with past and future and as you know past and future exist in the mind remove the mind

[Speaker 1] (4:41:20 - 4:41:39)
thought there is no past or future past or future exists for you as thought it's indispensable for dealing with

[Speaker 2] (4:41:39 - 4:41:45)
the practical aspects of life but it's a huge obstacle

[Speaker 1] (4:41:45 - 4:42:53)
for going deeper within yourself deeper into reality a huge obstacle to finding that state of connectedness with a deeper reality a huge obstacle to knowing who you are so right now all you need to do and there's no doing just use the word all you need to do is look at the image on the screen listen to the words

[Speaker 2] (4:42:53 - 4:43:33)
which are all pointers signposts and as you look at the image on the screen and listen to the words be aware also of yourself as the still space the still presence

[Speaker 1] (4:43:43 - 4:44:06)
without which you would not be able to look at the image on the screen or listen to the words it's only because there is that light of presence that receives the sense perception of seeing and hearing

[Speaker 2] (4:44:08 - 4:44:11)
that there can be seeing and hearing

[Speaker 1] (4:44:43 - 4:44:49)
the moment you start thinking about past and future the moment

[Speaker 2] (4:44:49 - 4:45:13)
you start thinking some of your consciousness incarnates into form the incarnation

[Speaker 1] (4:45:14 - 4:45:44)
I believe incarnation comes from flesh the word incarnation is to become form, to become physical form but it's not necessarily physical you become a psychological form, every thought is that so some of the consciousness incarnates into mental

[Speaker 2] (4:45:44 - 4:45:51)
formations and that's ok

[Speaker 1] (4:45:51 - 4:46:03)
there's nothing wrong with that it's a good thing that you're able to think it's not a good thing to lose yourself

[Speaker 2] (4:46:03 - 4:46:32)
in the thinking why is it not a good thing? because it makes your life miserable and if you make your life miserable

[Speaker 1] (4:46:32 - 4:46:59)
you make other people's lives miserable without even knowing what you're doing that's the essence of unconsciousness the really unconscious people which is still millions, billions on the planet

[Speaker 2] (4:47:00 - 4:47:07)
they don't know that they are making their lives miserable and other people's lives miserable

[Speaker 1] (4:47:26 - 5:52:56)
so whatever it is realize that the primary factor in any situation is your inner state so there are quite a few people who are joining us from other parts of the planet I don't know where they are, I think it's over there now all of you here luckily have escaped the polar vortex especially if you're from places like Chicago you'll be very grateful to be here, however if you are in Chicago or similar places be grateful that you're experiencing a one in a lifetime weather phenomenon but don't forget to dress up warm enough when you go out be grateful for whatever your experience of this moment is and if you cannot be grateful at least allow it to be because it already is you might as well now if you did this little thing it sounds very little and it is very little allowing your experience of this moment to be the way it is just this little thing would remove oh well it's hard to put it in percentage terms let's say 95% of the suffering from your life I don't know about the rest the 5% we'll get to that sometime that would already remove a gigantic chunk of unhappiness in whatever form unhappiness is the most generic term one

could use, the Buddha called it suffering suffering and so for the next 6 months then that obviously is one of the practices not to internally resist your experience of this moment now of course many times possibly you forget that and that's fine the moment you realize that you forgot it it's there again and then you can accept the experience of this moment as the unhappiness that is arising in you because you forgot to accept your experience of this moment and so you feel this unhappiness arising in you and you say, where does that come from? Oh I forgot to accept my experience of this moment and then you accept the unhappiness and the weird thing with unhappiness is when you completely accept the unhappiness it cannot survive very long it doesn't like it cannot actually coexist with acceptance so the weird thing then arises that you say something like okay I'm unhappy it's okay, I don't mind being unhappy and then the unhappiness goes what's going on? that's not supposed to happen the unhappiness cannot survive for very long with the acceptance even the acceptance of unhappiness not indulging in unhappiness but the acceptance now the acceptance of unhappiness presupposes that there's an awareness there that knows that you're unhappy now that might sound like something very natural but it isn't because the most unhappy people and there are still millions and of course they have reasons for being unhappy and it's not necessarily the people who you'd think would have the most powerful reasons for being unhappy it's often those who you would think there are many millions who have it worse than they but these are more unhappy than those it's often the case so the unhappiness is something that when it's recognized as unhappiness and accepted something happens to it it begins to dissolve but the really unhappy people are so identified with the unhappiness which is a combination of certain recurring thoughts in your head, a certain narrative that is not pleasant whether it is about my life whether the narrative says my life dreadful thing, my life dreadful why did it all go so wrong so wrong, wrong and now it's nothing I can do or whether the narrative is about somebody else you know what he did what she said and did and what the narrative may be about something that hasn't happened yet and it goes on and on or something that happened in the distant past or not so distant past so there's a narrative and then there are emotions that are a reflection of the narrative, the narrative is thoughts certain types of thoughts certain thoughts that have a certain frequency and then that awakens the emotional frequency because the body thinks the narrative in your mind is reality, that is the reality that you're experiencing so the body reacts with an emotion simple example at night you can't sleep because you're extremely worried about what's going to happen to you or somebody close to you or even the world and it all sounds very critical there's a crisis in your head not outside your head, there's a pillow and there's a blanket or even something big and fluffy and soft down duvet and there's no unhappiness there and if you look around the bedroom also, where's the unhappiness?

the plant is okay it's not unhappy no, it's all happening in here and then the body says that is the critical reality that you inhabit, you are there is a crisis in your life the body doesn't know the difference between what's actually happening and what's happening in your head, what's happening in your head is taken to be the absolute reality and then you experience the emotion that goes with that kind of narrative and so there's no awareness and when you're trapped in that you don't even really know that you're unhappy because you are the unhappiness the unhappiness has become your identity so when you become the unhappiness you don't even know that you're or suffer, let's use the Buddhist term suffering when you are in this deep suffering you don't even know you're suffering because the suffering is a gigantic, huge chunk, part of your sense of self, you are a suffering entity and as all therapists know that once the patient or the client or whatever they call the people that come to them according to their school the they reach a point where there's a possibility of going beyond the deep seated patterns, unconscious patterns and there's a huge resistance very often because the person is afraid of losing a very important piece of their identity and sometimes it's the most important part of their identity, if they have lived with an unhappy sense of self for years and perhaps even decades they don't want to let go and again they don't know that consciously, they never say I do not want to let go if they could say that, that means there's already some awareness so lack of awareness, lack of presence, that is the unawakened state that still unfortunately millions of humans are trapped in that but the moment you know, you recognize your inner state that means there is an awareness, there is another dimension of consciousness that has emerged in you through you a deeper dimension of consciousness that is not the conditioned thinking so we can call it awareness, we can call it presence you can call it the unconditioned consciousness and then the beginning of freedom the possibility of freedom arises and it's from there that you recognize your inner states as they arise, from there that you recognize your unhappiness you can feel the unhappiness but the moment you become aware of suffering or unhappiness in you you're no longer feeding it with your thoughts as long as you're not aware, you're feeding it as a vicious circle, you're feeding it with your thoughts, with your narrative and you're trapped in the vicious circle, your narrative creates more unhappiness, the unhappiness creates more thought and you're trapped in that so for the next six months and hopefully beyond because it's a much more pleasant way to live you make it your practice to be aware of your inner states and meaning no matter what situation arises in your life, whether it's little things, big things difficult situations difficult people challenges, problems because the next six months are not going to be free of challenges and problems so whatever it is realize that the primary factor in any situation is your inner state because that determines how you respond so no matter what it is your primary responsibility is to be aware of what goes on inside you and that means whatever arises in your life is actually to be used in your practice so that you do not become dependent on what's going on externally in your life so your inner state gradually is no longer determined, perhaps still a little bit, yes but not completely determined by outer events, people situations and so on inner freedom arises that's awakening so there's a dis-identification from the movement of thought and the fluctuating emotions there's a stepping back, you're not repressing anything, you're allowing it, but you can only allow it because there's an awareness and that awareness is you, ultimately that is what I sometimes call the deep I as opposed to the surface I the surface I meaning not this I, but that I is interesting too, it's an analogy for consciousness, the I of awareness but now I'm talking about the pronoun I, first there's the surface I which is the conditioned person, the entity that you are for a while and there is the deep I which is the consciousness my usual analogy, which probably you've heard me say, mention quite a few times the ocean the surface of the ocean the wave or the ripple is the surface I and the ocean, the depth of the ocean is the deep I and an awakening human is a ripple on the surface of the ocean that until recently had been completely identified with its ripple existence on the horizontal dimension of the surface of the ocean looking at every other ripple as another other another other, another ripple not me, it's another and always you have to be very careful with the others and the ego actually likes the others to be as other as possible and then the little ripple begins to realize that it is the there's a depth the moment it stops thinking about its ripple existence yes and that there's a thinking subsides and something else remains, something else that is very deep has no form is just a a presence if we can even call it anything a presence well, I think an empty chair works just as well as me sitting in it because all meditation is about accessing the spiritual dimension within you which the Buddha called emptiness not the best translation perhaps of the original term I think spaciousness would have been better translation or would be a better translation than emptiness so finding that dimension within you, accessing that dimension and living your life with the awareness of that dimension which means living your life with awareness rather than just with the mind so usually people think that when somebody believes in God or angels or the afterlife that they are spiritual, it makes them spiritual but that's not necessarily the case and there are millions of people in this world who believe in God and have no access, have not found within themselves access to the spiritual dimension so we are here in the case of some of you who are perhaps new to this so to speak we are here for some of you to get perhaps a glimpse of it as you sit here and watch and listen and I will endeavor to put you in touch with that depth within you without which your life is frustrating and without which everything you undertake every endeavor and every activity ultimately becomes frustrating and for others we are here just to deepen it to provide a reminder on a conceptual level but to deepen the dimension that they already have access to within so that it can be sustained in everyday life one thing is accessing the spiritual dimension in a meditation setting like here and now that's already a good thing if you are able to do that when you sit still become still inside another thing is to carry that with you so to speak so that it is there when you lead your life when you do things talk to people interact even when you think to have that in the background so we have the two steps one could almost say first is you realize that within when you are not being disturbed like now, hopefully you are not being disturbed externally although you may be disturbed as you sit here by your mind that's quite possible who says what is he talking about because the mind doesn't understand it the conceptual mind alone is not sufficient to make this a satisfying experience for you this 30-40 minutes here so for this to be a satisfying experience you need to have at least a glimpse of what it is that I am pointing to and a glimpse also of that which underlies the words and that's ultimately not in me but ultimately you can only glimpse that in you there's a stillness behind the words as I speak within myself and there can be a stillness in you as you listen to the words and that would already be a glimpse of the spiritual dimension the realization that on the one hand on one level you have the auditory perception you are listening to the words you have the visual perception you are seeing this image and on another level you also notice that there's some stillness inside you now where the mind is not active you don't need to think right now to add something to this experience so you can just let it be as it is and so the dimension of stillness which is the spiritual dimension begins to arise in you or the way we can put it you become aware that it's there now it's always there that's the strange thing it's always there all pervasive and yet most people still don't know that of course that's very much like telling a fish that there's something that's called water and the fish says where?

I don't see anything called water where is it? can you point it out to me and say where? I can't see it so this is my task is to point out the water that you're swimming in and the water inside you and that's the end of that analogy as I pointed out at the beginning the Buddha called the spiritual dimension emptiness which would be better translated as spaciousness and Jesus called it the kingdom of heaven which translated into modern terminology if you change the word kingdom which is an old fashioned concept to dimension which is a more modern concept the dimension of heaven and you can even translate heaven into a more modern concept to make it work for you as a pointer so what is heaven? ah in some words heaven and sky are the same word in some languages what is the sky of heaven is spaciousness the dimension of spaciousness is the kingdom of heaven so the Buddha calls it that Jesus calls it that and time magazine calls it mumbo jumbo that's also true from the perspective of the conceptual conceptualizing mind because if you're totally trapped in concepts thoughts then it makes no sense and the only thing you can conceive of as spiritual is some belief system you say oh these people have belief systems these are spiritual people have all kinds of weird beliefs and of course it's not that at all so it's already there it's already present within you the strange thing is it's continuously overlooked because your attention is drawn into sensory perceptions experiencing with your senses reaching out with your senses listening, touching, smelling seeing everything demands your attention and then your attention is drawn to even more strongly the the interpretations of your mind in other words thought activity which actually can make you forget a large part of sensual perception in modern humans contemporary humans there's more thought activity in them than sensory perceptions so you're being drawn into yes sensory perception even more so into mind activity and then also drawn into emotions that accompany mind activity so your life consists one could say basically of the three levels sense perceptions thoughts and emotions and what's overlooked is the deeper dimension within which all these the three others exist that's the spaciousness within you it's always there it's just a question of redirecting your attention to it but that's not absolutely right to say that but unfortunately language works like that as you sit here let's just go through it again you're aware of sense perceptions especially visual and auditory, yes there may be some thoughts arising in your mind now whatever thoughts arise in your mind here and now obviously are quite irrelevant but that's another matter there may be thoughts arising in your mind from time to time so you're listening and you're thinking what's it driving at? when are we going to start our meditation? etc mumbo jumbo thoughts come and go and you may have emotions restlessness perhaps or a thought about tomorrow what's going to happen when I go there tomorrow and you have an emotion associated with that so as we sit here notice there are these levels operating in you and then you could ask yourself who or what is it that notices these things who or what is it in me that notices that there is sense perceptions what is it in me that is aware of sense perceptions aware that there are thoughts aware that there is an emotion and that's who you are at the level of the deeper level of the transcendent or the spiritual dimension the awareness of all this the still spacious consciousness in the background so to speak you could call it just to briefly use an analogy you're aware of the canvas on which your life is drawn painted an ancient question in spirituality is the question who am I and if you look closely you see that you're not your thoughts you're not your sense perceptions you're not your emotions they come and go what remains is consciousness awareness that's the water that the fish didn't know about as far as you're concerned and it's an amazing thing to realize that there is a greater depth in you than your surface life that consists of sense perceptions, thoughts and emotions they come together in different forms so every human has a somewhat different story of coming together of sense perceptions thoughts and emotions the coming together of sense perceptions thoughts and emotions form the human being the person and they come together in each person in a slightly or sometimes very different way so it's a it's a coming together of this that this creates the temporary form that we call the person but that can only exist in the light of consciousness without that there's no nothing there so your life is a little bit like this you're watching the screen let's say another analogy, cinema screen all kinds of things happen there of course the screen is inside you so okay let's imagine that there's a screen inside your mind and on that screen your life is being enacted with thoughts and emotions and things happening drama, this and that oh wow it's so interesting or it's so dreadful or I can't stand it anymore or I want more of it I haven't had enough yet and so on and suddenly you realize that there's a screen that's inside you and you are the projector you are the light of the projector and that changes of course fundamentally the way in which you relate to the events on the screen how does it do that?

well you can see for yourself if you see that you are the light of the projector it adds this dimension of awareness to what you are witnessing on the screen it gives you a certain detachment from what happens because you realize that there is something much more essential or fundamental in you than all the things that are going on in that screen and if you don't know that you are totally drawn into the events on the screen and for most people sooner or later the events on the screen turn into some kind of drama nothing lasts for very long, there's no real security in my life why do things always have to be so frustrating but then you always look for more on the screen, you look for some kind of solution on the screen it's never there, pseudo solutions come from time to time and happy moments and then again that's because you don't know who you are or what you are it doesn't matter whether we call it who or what, who or what you are essentially which is the light of consciousness, which is the projector which can be sensed within you at any moment like now as an aware presence now this pointer is very significant it points to the essence of who you are that is deeper or higher one could say than your form identity if somebody when I was in my twenties had told me I had a big ego more on the unhappy side the victim ego side but anyway big if somebody had told me like say I had gone to a psychic and the psychic said you will be one day a great spiritual teacher my ego would have gone wow yeah I'm going to be significant now if the psychic had been a good one he would have added but you have to die first and it's not going to give you any personal satisfaction what? that sucks what do you mean I have to die first well perhaps he would have explained your entire conceptual identity has to go so when you become a spiritual teacher you are not going to be proud of being a spiritual teacher so on that level it's not satisfying and so I probably would have said I don't know if I still want it laughter so the we have the my life and it's a conceptual identity in the head and it's a huge limitation to be trapped in it again you can honor your history it's coming back to accepting and honoring who you are that's part of who you are on the level of form it's fine you can remember your past you can look at the photos you remember stories what happened but there's no longer a sense of getting your sense of self from that so how do you not identify now we come to the core of it how do you not identify with your form identity your conceptual self well here we come to the ancient Greek dictum again know thyself know thyself at the deepest level now interesting fact is at the temple of Apollo in ancient Greece there was that inscription know thyself but of course most people didn't know what to do with that well they went to the oracle at Delphi and asked questions about am I going to meet the right person and then the oracle would say I lost this ring where did I leave it and then the oracle would say please tell me where I'm going to be in 20 years time these are all very superficial things that people were seeking and this is why there was this inscription know thyself but they had put a key there a secret key on this building in order to show people how to know themselves and that secret key for several hundred years nobody knew what it meant the secret key in ancient Greek it was the letter E in Greek and just one letter on the building what does that mean several hundred years later the philosopher Plutarch explained it in one of his writings it's the second person quite simply it's the second person singular and it means you are you are and that is the secret key to the saying know thyself what does that mean you are so when somebody reads that somebody reads that it says you are so how would you when you say to yourself of course you say oh I am yes you are I am I am what now the interesting thing is nothing was added to it it just said you are it doesn't say you are Greek you are a man or a woman or you are this or that or you are a democrat or republican it just said or you are rich or poor or old or young or whatever it said you are this is a pointer it's a pointer not an explanation or anything it's a pointer so when you read you are you translate it as I am I am what now this pointer is very significant it points to the essence of who you are that is deeper or higher one could say than your form identity and let's go through this now right now we are sitting here you are sitting here ultimately there is only one I and it's sitting there and here there is only one I you are sitting here you are aware of your sense perceptions that's part of the present moment you are aware of this room you are aware of the lights, the screen man sitting on a chair talking, you hear the voice you hear the background noise boom, boom, boom, boom I think it's they call it music boom, boom, boom, boom boom, boom, boom it's noise, it goes with the beer fest that's fine you perceive the totality of this room and yourself the body you are sitting on a chair and that's the present moment one would say but it's not the depth of the present moment, it's the surface of the present moment the surface of the present moment is sense perceptions hearing seeing if you are if one of your sense perceptions is missing either you don't hear or you don't see that's fine, you have the others and so you are aware of sense perceptions, you are aware of what you hear what you see, what perhaps even what you touch and is that all there is to this moment is that all there is well you would say yes, haven't you forgotten something? no just a second how is it possible for you to perceive these things how is it possible for you to have these sense perceptions you might also have a thought may come into your head what am I going to have for dinner later how much longer do I have to sit here I don't understand a word of what he is saying laughter laughter or what you had for breakfast this morning thoughts can come and go sense perceptions, thoughts I mean your entire life consists of a mixture of sense perceptions thoughts and emotions that's basically, you mix them in a particular way that becomes your life you mix them up in a pot sense perceptions thoughts, emotions, my life is there more have you forgotten something yes, of course you have forgotten something you have forgotten that if you were not conscious right now there would be no sense perceptions there would be no thoughts there would be no emotion if you were not conscious at this moment none of this would be and if there were nobody here no perceiving consciousness would there even be a room that's debatable or would there just be certain molecules and atoms floating around in space it only becomes a room when the perceiving consciousness makes it into a room so you are the consciousness without which there wouldn't even be a room here you are the consciousness without which there wouldn't be a man sitting on a chair you are that that is the essence of who you are is consciousness now here we come to the you are conscious right now this is one way of putting it but it would be more accurate to say you are consciousness that's the essence of who you are if I say you are conscious I have created a duality there's you and consciousness is something that is added to you but the essence of who you are is consciousness and when you are aware of yourself as consciousness then you become self-aware awareness arises awareness is when consciousness which is who or what you are in your essence when consciousness becomes conscious of itself that is the miracle of awakening and that's the arising of awareness and in that arising of awareness you have transcended thinking you can't come back to thinking and think much more effectively and creatively when you access a dimension but you have transcended thinking when you realize experientially like right here and now the silent realization that who or what you are is this conscious presence and underlies everything and that you sense as yourself that you sense as your own presence I call it your own but of course it's not your own it's the presence of the light of the world you sense your presence this underlies this underlies everything it's a little to give an analogy I could give two analogies let's say there's a painting the painting is painted on a canvas and let's say you are whatever is painted on the canvas that you as a person and when the thing that's painted on the canvas, the picture is totally identified with the form of the painting that is unconsciousness and ego but let's say what's painted on the surface becomes aware of the canvas on which it is painted strange analogy but it works for a moment, it might work if you are the painting you become aware of the canvas without which the painting could not be and that means you have become aware of the substratum in yourself the consciousness without which nothing else would be wow you are that now instead of canvas I prefer to use the expression space you are the space of consciousness the inner space but ultimately there is no division between inner and outer the inner space of consciousness consciousness pervades the entire universe but of course it becomes focalized for example through the human brain which is an instrument that consciousness uses to express itself through and to create this dimension that we inhabit this was already the philosopher one of the last philosophers of antiquity Epictetus already the main thing he perhaps his main teaching is you are not unhappy because of what is happening, you are unhappy because of what you are telling yourself about what is happening and once you realize that it is an enormous breakthrough first comes the realization then you have to verify it in your daily life because it is not enough to sit here and say wow isn't that amazing okay and then you carry on as if nothing had happened then you have to verify it in your daily life which includes the retreat situation and see whenever upset or unhappiness arises where does it come from is it the situation or is it my reaction which is a mental emotional thing to the situation and in most cases you will find it is your reaction and then at that moment freedom the possibility of freedom comes into your life the freedom to choose not to be in that reactive state towards what is happening in the present moment not to be antagonistic towards whatever is going on in the present moment for you but to come to a friendly way of being with the present moment after all there is nothing else so if you don't become friendly with the present moment in whatever form it takes that is a profoundly dysfunctional state it creates continuous unhappiness and many people are in a very minor way in opposition to the present moment there is always some complaining voice of something, this shouldn't be happening and that shouldn't be happening so as particularly let's use this retreat setting here or if you are at home you can do it in the next few days in your daily life and use this for self observation I am not saying eliminate mental commentaries why not just be aware of mental commentaries and how they are related to your well-being or how they interfere with your natural well-being and once you see that when something that has been or is very unconscious when it is recognized it tends to drop away so you don't have to use your willpower to eliminate negative thoughts from now on I will not think anything negative but just be alert be alert so that you know what's going on inside you so observe the ways in which your mind complains for example and this is one of the favorite ways of the egoic self to sustain and strengthen itself is complaining either internally or out loud if somebody will listen you will be very happy to complain to happy in your unhappiness to tell somebody why you are complaining in the hope that this will get reinforced by the other it works beautifully on the internet too so much so that a new species is arising through the internet which are the perpetually aggrieved they are just looking out for the next thing to be upset about and angry about the ego loves that offend it that's a big thing it's a very fashionable thing it seems these days to be offended even at universities students are practicing it they are getting very good at it every age has certain ways in which ways of being unconscious that are popular and this is one of them these days so here you observe your mind and once you realize how unhappiness arises more through the mind than through the situation you have a choice of okay you can ask what would this situation be like if I did not judge it and then you experience okay for a moment you are facing a situation without imposing the judgment on it mentally suddenly you experience a moment of opening a spaciousness where it's neither good nor bad you are not saying this is good because the positive thinking has its place but this is not about positive thinking let's say you are caught in the middle of the rain and get totally drenched this is so good unless you are really enjoying it which is possible you just refrain from labeling it, it is and when you do not judge a situation then it doesn't mean you no longer do anything about it you don't, okay I'm not judging getting drenched therefore I'm staying here and not removing myself from the rain I've become paralyzed because I'm not judging it so there is another way of taking action, responding to a situation that's not based on some kind of negative judgment and another thing that this guy Epictetus said the philosopher I don't know, I'm not good at quotes but something like true wisdom is learning to wish that all things should happen as they do I think I got that right true wisdom is learning to wish that all things should happen as they do that does not condemn you to inactivity that's a misconception and a misunderstanding of what that means it does also not mean that you, all the things that are happening when people inflict suffering on other humans that suddenly you say that's a good thing, no primarily it should be practiced with reference to your life, your daily your interaction with people and things and life situations, that's the primary practice and so not to it means no longer being in opposition to the present moment the unfolding of the present moment not to internally oppose it, that changes everything, that changes your entire the way you are, that changes you, that removes the ego, the entrenched illusion illusory identity that loves that opposition it sustains itself through boundaries, through condemning the other, it loves the otherness of others and emphasizes the otherness of others so that's a practice for us here especially on this retreat so that we observe our own mind and reach the place of freedom and if you're not part of our retreat, you're listening watching this from somewhere else you can practice it tomorrow when you're lining up at the supermarket or you're stuck in a traffic jam and you think it's bad or you're going somewhere at the airport and the flight is canceled or even worse they overbooked and you're booked but you can't get on they don't have a seat for you and then to notice that you actually can face these situations without the judgment and be totally free internally that gives you enormous power not egoic power the destiny of human consciousness is to pass through the thinking stage which we've been trapped in for several thousands of thousands of years to move through the thinking stage, not to abandon it completely but to transcend it so that we are no longer trapped in the thinking stage so that we no longer derive our sense of identity from the thinking stage, where thinking can become a beautiful tool without becoming the foundation for who we think we are so we rise above thinking and that is our destiny as each of us is an expression of universal consciousness and in particular an expression of human consciousness so we are rising above thinking so that we are and this is why we are here and this is what is really the essence of being here to discover in ourselves the ability not only to think you have that already but to rise above thinking where you don't need to think all the time where you discover there can be gaps in the stream of thinking there can be spaces in the stream of thinking where you are very awake nothing to do with a sleep state where you go you are alert you're bright you kind of light up and that is so you discover the ability to have these moments of no thought so if you discover within yourself that a lot of the time you are in a state of lack of insufficiency of not enough and you feel that the answer to the remedy is to be active in this world and achieve and do as much as possible then you'll probably find that ultimately that is not the answer to your state of lack in order to transcend to go beyond your state of lack of neediness of not enough spiritual practice and spiritual realization is necessary focus on the realization of being it's only there that you can go beyond that state of lack which is ego go within and discover who or what you are beyond the person

[Speaker 2] (5:53:22 - 5:53:24)
the essence

[Speaker 1] (5:53:24 - 6:01:20)
of this teaching is not doing but being there are certain teachings that emphasize and focus on developing your ability to do and there is a place for that but the essence of this teaching is to realize the depths of your being to go into the being dimension because there are these two dimensions every human being embodies the human level which involves doing and thinking and experiencing and acquiring and gaining and so on and every human being also embodies the deeper dimension of being and that's why you are a human being I emphasize the importance the primary importance of getting in touch with the being of you which is inseparable from the big being of the entire universe get in touch with the being realize the being and that is primary and that is the foundation for everything but there still remains the human dimension so on the human dimension you feel you still want to be active you want to achieve something as a human you have this most humans have a desire to contribute something to create something to do something to participate in the infinite creativeness of the universe to become a part of that so you have that and that is not to be denied it's just that in this teaching it focuses on the very foundation which is primary without the being no matter what you achieve on the human it will not satisfy you and ultimately it will create further difficulties for yourself and others in the absence of conscious being so conscious being is primary once you realize conscious being from there you can look on how to align your doing with being and then you can practice what is conventionally called manifestation techniques and you can create from the depth of your being so if you discover within yourself that a lot of the time you are in a state of lack of insufficiency of not enough and you feel that the answer to the remedy is to be active in this world and achieve and do as much as possible then you'll probably find that ultimately that is not the answer to your state of lack because your state of lack although you will experience temporary relief occasionally through doing and experiencing it will not go away through just doing in order to transcend to go beyond your state of lack of neediness of not enough spiritual practice and spiritual realization is necessary and that is not any doing as such that is focus on the realization of being it's only there that you can go beyond that state of lack which is ego you have to find your true identity who am I, who are you are you the historical person and are you that entity, that me with a past and a future and then comes the end, are you that or is there more to you than meets the eye is there more to you than your physical body and the thoughts that go through your head and the emotions that you feel is there more to you than that is there more to

you than the story of you from your life, your past your life, is that your identity or is there a deeper dimension and it's only if you find the deeper dimension to who you are that is beyond ego that you can become free of that state of lack and neediness and it's only then when you've become free of that state of lack and neediness then your doing can be fruitful because it is no longer a self-serving doing until that realization happens, ultimately all you're doing is self-serving even if you even if you are even if it's altruistic and you're full of compassion for the world and you just want to help everybody and everybody ultimately if you look deeply it's this self-serving there, you want to be better in your eyes, you're not good enough yet in your own eyes and it may well be and it's not it is more than likely that a lot of your doing will have unwanted side effects that produce the opposite of the original intention so don't look for freedom from this sense of lack in the realm of doing and of activity go within and discover who or what you are beyond the person and that is spiritual dimension within you that's the being and that's what this work and this teaching is all about only there can you be free of the sense of lack and once you're free of that then you can engage in joyful creativity joyful creation, joyful manifestation, enjoy every moment of it and not feeling that unless you reach the desired outcome you continue to be incomplete and you're not really enjoying the journey because you're so focused on the desired outcome that you can't enjoy the journey because the destination has taken precedence over the journey so you're obsessed with where you want to get in when you get there you won't be satisfied for a moment you say yeah I made it but the mind pattern in you that devalues the present moment and cannot honor the presence, the aliveness of the present moment is still in you and no matter where you go and who you're with or what you achieve you carry with you this mind pattern that makes it impossible for you to be aligned with the present moment so you carry with you the sense of lack and you would still suffer from it when you become a billionaire and so the way then is to go within and engage in this spiritual practice and spiritual realization

[Speaker 3] (6:01:20 - 6:01:21)
there's no other way

[Speaker 1] (6:01:34 - 6:05:24)
some people are still coming in finding their seats hopefully hello to everybody half a kilometer away at the back a good spiritual practice while we're waiting for everybody to settle down why not start with a good spiritual practice especially for people in the back rows and it may sound a little bit funny but it's actually a very powerful spiritual practice and that is to become aligned with the present moment obviously this is I'm mister now so I'm talking about the present moment become aligned with the present moment and uh refrain from complaining for example that you are too far away mentally a very powerful spiritual practice so then you become okay with the isness of things and the isness of things happens always in the present moment you might have noticed nothing ever happens that's not now one could almost say the word happen must imply present moment and most people completely underestimate the incredible importance of the present moment and of living in a harmonious relationship with the present moment and you would be surprised how many people in this world live almost constantly in an antagonistic relationship with the present moment and that of course causes a lot of unnecessary suffering and unhappiness so one of the most important things in life to be aware of is your relationship

[Speaker 3] (6:05:25 - 6:05:26)
so

[Speaker 1] (6:05:26 - 6:05:33)
to speak with the present moment and this is now

[Speaker 2] (6:05:34 - 6:05:38)

of course is the present moment

[Speaker 1] (6:05:44 - 6:08:34)
welcomed or appreciated or at least accepted for the way it is because it already is the way it is that's the weird thing about the present moment it's already the way it is no matter how you argue in their mind with it the isness of things is already the case and that's all there ever is in your entire life your entire life this is not something to just understand intellectually but to grasp at a deeper level your entire life unfolds in the present moment that's all there ever is that's all there ever is is this moment and most people live as if some future moment whether it's a minute from now or tomorrow or next year they live as if some future moment were always more important than this moment that isn't implied they don't tell themselves oh the next moment is more important than this one no it's an assumption an underlying assumption it's a mindset and that mindset is a form of conditioning cultural conditioning that mindset by implication if not literally always says there's something more important coming and I'm on my way to it and that is a dysfunctional way to live because you're never fully alive you never feel at home you're always looking for your home in some future moment or when you get old enough and you realize there's little future left then you think about the past more than the next moment which is why many old people talk continuously about

[Speaker 2] (6:08:34 - 6:08:44)
the past so coming into alignment

[Speaker 1] (6:08:44 - 6:40:04)
with the present moment brings about a shift in consciousness and this is so simple and yet so profound now this shift in consciousness is what our evening here together is all about it is about a transformation of consciousness in you and the reason why you're here most of you is that this transformation of consciousness is already happening it's a process for most people it's already happening in you and you're here because you know that this or you hope that this is an opportunity for for deepening this shift in consciousness or accelerating the shift in consciousness there are other terms we could use we could say it is about an awakening of consciousness it is about a spiritual awakening and this is a term that in several spiritual traditions is used and has been used for a long time the term of awaken which implies that the ordinary the normal state of consciousness of most human beings is a kind of dreamlike state it is a kind of sleep but people, if you tell that to somebody what are you talking about dream? I'm completely awake this is just nonsense welcome to our live meditation and a special welcome to those of you who've joined us through Sounds True it's best not to have any expectations about the form of this meditation just allow this moment to be as it is and you'll notice that we've started already with our meditation meditation is really all about becoming still without going to sleep let me correct what I just said it's not so much becoming still but being still becoming would imply that you have to go somewhere or do something being is already here and now and in a sane life a conscious life a harmonious life there needs to be a balance between becoming and being becoming is doing things getting things done and so on in this world dealing with things creating things achieving things and being is about being aware of the present moment which after all is all you ever have whatever you achieve through becoming in the future eventually turns into the present moment so as I speak to you the meditation if we even want to call it that it's perhaps best to forget about the word as I speak be aware of the silence or the stillness between the words being aware means just notice that it's there it's very simple so you notice that in addition to the words there's another dimension that is easily overlooked and that's the dimension of stillness which we could also call space space or spaciousness so when you notice that there are two so to speak two dimensions here dimension of words words which you hear and which then become thoughts in your head and the dimension of no thing spaciousness so you just notice that's all that's required that there is that dimension also present so you notice it in between

words and even behind the words so to speak now when you notice it what happens inside you what does it mean to notice the stillness be aware of the stillness it means you have become still inside it means you're conscious of the stillness but at that moment at this moment you're not thinking but you're alert present completely here but not thinking so that's the realization of the dimension of depth within you and without that realization your entire life is a surface phenomenon you run around on the surface of being never satisfied for long frustrated almost always feeling there's something important missing in your life and of course there is but you can't find it on the surface of your life the horizontal dimension looking here and there you have to not become still but realize that that dimension of stillness is already in you and another word to describe it is to say it's this alert presence that you can sense right now and you may find the mind wanting to come in from time to time and say something about it or even deny it or say I don't understand it or say what's the point I have other problems to worry about and I'll become still when I have solved all the other problems but why people experience, many people most people experience their life as a succession of problems and ultimately a frustrating experience is because they haven't discovered that dimension the most vital thing or no thing to discover within yourself that stillness is also power it's the source not only of yourself it is the source of life and nothing creative can ever come into your life if you are not connected with that whenever you feel joy for a moment perhaps in your daily life or a moment of loving interaction with another human being or an animal or when you suddenly see beauty somewhere and you go now without you necessarily being aware of it there has arisen a moment of stillness in you if only three seconds or perhaps a bit more and it's only there that the joy of life arises or the ability to really connect with another human being without it without the stillness you have only your conceptual mind thinking, thinking, thinking and you relate to the world through the conceptual mind judging, thinking, judging interpreting continuously the inner self talk, the monologue which may become a dialogue in your head you're no good says one voice, the other one says I'm trying, I'm trying whatever the voice in your head is doing and then you try to relate to another human being through that and before long concepts come in judgments come in so there's always a sense of insufficiency of lack of not enough there's always conflict arising when the dimension of stillness is not at all operating in your life or very briefly it's not enough yes, it's good if you can occasionally experience joy and a sense of aliveness and see beauty and a loving feeling towards another human being not the egoic love but a flowing, a goodwill flowing out towards another human being yes, it's wonderful, but if it's only brief moments, then yes at least that keeps you going but it could be much deeper, it could operate in your life continuously so that you never lose touch with it but the first step is realizing it's there, always it's already there it's already here I wrote in the little book called Stillness Speaks I said you are never more truly yourself than when you are still and you might think that's a strange statement most people when they talk about myself talk about their personal history and their personal problems and their life situation when they talk about myself, that's what they refer to they refer to my relationships my work situation my financial situation my home situation my health that's me and my life and of course all that, yes, that is the case but is that who you really are our purpose of course, just to remind you is not to become still then you create a problem but you discover that you're still already underneath the thinking your sense of identity your sense of who you are derives from the stillness underneath the thinking that's the essence of your sense of I am or your sense of being most people don't know that because that essence shines through the veil of thinking and emotions you could also call it the light that shines through the essence of who you are I am that sense of I am and most people don't know that it derives from that which is deeper than thinking in you and they think the thinking and the emotions are who they are so they confuse the I am with what happens in their minds and that's the state we call ignorance nothing to do with education how much or how little as I speak really every word every sentence is a pointer to that dimension but as we sit here together be aware of the gaps between the words that's more important than the words because that's what the words point to what is that gap it's stillness space the light of consciousness itself formless spirit nothing in it to understand nothing you can work out to get closer to it work out conceptually mentally by asking another question and waiting for another answer you have to give up trying to understand spirit God even understand yourself so as we sit here thinking is not important if it arises allow it to arise but be the presence behind the thinking be the deeper I am that you are already otherwise the I am gets lost in the thinking and then the thinking assumes the pseudo identity of I am dreadful condition normal

[Speaker 2] (6:40:04 - 6:40:05)
of course

[Speaker 1] (6:40:17 - 7:10:30)
so as we sit here we have the courage with a little bit of help we have the courage to embrace the state of not knowing there's no knowing no judgment it's a wonderful liberation when you no longer need to look to mind activity to tell you who you are and that's why we are here to access that state of connectedness with being the depth of being you are this formless light that shines through anything that arises in your life it's formless so there's always at any moment now there's always that which happens in your life here very little happens just the words that are being perceived peripheral sense perceptions where you are sitting perhaps the periphery you're aware of that a little bit maybe some thoughts come patiently so there's always that which happens and then there's always something more vital and that is we could say the light the light in which that which happens appears that is also the only thing that is, that cannot be doubted you can doubt the reality of whatever is happening around you and of course it has a dreamlike quality it comes and goes but you cannot doubt because it's immediately obvious that you are conscious or that there is consciousness that there even if it is a dream there is a light in which that dream appears that's the timeless consciousness and knowing that you can be awake in the dream because things continue to happen in your so-called life but you can be aware of the dimension of depth aware of formless consciousness itself like now and this is the meaning of what you read in the New Testament where Jesus says you are the light of the world and that is to know yourself as that not conceptually but directly to know yourself as the light that underlies everything to know yourself as consciousness is liberation from the world liberation from taking the apparent reality as something that is absolutely real it is not absolutely real it is borrowed from the light of consciousness it's like the light of the moon the moon has no light of its own it looks like that but it's the sunlight so the world has no life of its own you have no life of your own there is no such thing as my life you are an expression of the one life so I don't have a life I am life not my life just life the moment you say my you create a duality me and life and so they become truly effective the moment they become a field of awareness or presence rather than a person sitting with the other in case people don't need when he says I have been a frequency holder some of you may not know although I mentioned it somewhere in a book the human being the human being have different callings and different destinies whatever they do as a person frequency holder I call somebody who is not called upon by a desire or a destiny to do something big, to create a big enterprise, to have a big impact on the world, to set up some big structure, to manifest something big but somebody who is happy doing small things with great care, love and most importantly doing small things in a state of presence so a frequency holder could be somebody who is mainly does gardening or does a handicraft job and gives this person then embodies the presence in his or her work or might come into contact with people in a limited capacity and whoever this person comes into contact with comes into that field of presence so this person holds the frequency of presence and these people are very important too there are a number of you who perhaps could consider themselves to be frequency holders frequency holders have a hard time in this world because our civilization is not geared towards giving them an officially recognized place in medieval times

middle ages of course a frequency holder would become a monk or a nun or a hermit and that was there were millions of them and so it was a very recognized calling but nowadays it's not many many monasteries are closing down so frequency holders have to kind of carve out a niche for themselves where they can hold the frequency of presence and a human being who is present affects not only those humans who come into contact with him or her but a human being who holds that frequency of presence even if what he or she does is no longer important the consciousness behind it is what matters and this human being affects far more people than is obvious on the surface of things because whatever happens to one affects the totality because all humans are connected at a deeper level there is such a thing as a collective human consciousness oh yes what was the question oh yes he's becoming now a life coach which is a step it's a little bit of a step beyond being a frequency holder and is a little anxious and nervous but at the same time also grateful and joyful the question often that arises am I ready for this am I ready to help these people come with problems to me and if you think you are ready you probably are not and if you think you are not ready you may be ready if you know how to step out out of the way out of your own way become an opening a pure awareness when you sit with someone I assume you sit when you sit with someone you become a pure you give total attention to that person you become pure awareness you might have learned certain approaches in your training becoming a counselor or a life coach you've probably had training and there are certain modalities they vary there are different modalities of psychotherapy and counseling so whatever modality you were taught of course you will attempt to apply this modality but if you only have that you are not going to be very effective you may have some limited success and the question am I ready if it refers to have I mastered the modality that they taught me then that's a justifiable question and you might say well I am ready because I know exactly how it works but the real thing in a situation like that it is not the modality that you have learned and you applied not necessarily saying that you should not use it at all you can use it but realizing at the same time what is much more important it was underlies the modality that you use and this applies even in highly structured and intellectual and mental modalities like psychoanalysis which is very psychoanalysis you analyze you take this and this and this and it goes on for years but even there it happens that certain psychoanalysts who start off by practicing their modality and then the years go past and then gradually the good ones gradually without knowing it they develop the capacity of just sitting there and giving complete attention to the others they gradually step out of being totally identified with the modality and sometimes they might not even use it anymore and so they become truly effective the moment they become a field of awareness or presence rather than a person sitting with the other so that needs to shine through the modality that you use and you may find that after a while you use relatively little of what you have learned and you realize that you don't have to do it if you are fully present the right words will come up you will ask questions just like Socrates asked he always started with asking questions, not because he already knew the answer, it was a beginning of an attempt a joint attempt to find the answer through accessing the dimension of presence or awareness so if you can be there as a pure awareness while you sit with this some people call it client, some call it patient some call it anything so you sit and then you listen and then you ask a question and then you listen and then it can happen, if it works that the other person can join you, even without you actually explicitly stating this, there is no need for that the other person, without knowing it joins you in the state of presence and then you you share this field of presence while you sit there and out of that healings and the answers, if answers are needed, realizations healings arise out of that and this is why I said if you think you are ready you probably are not, because then you think it's now I know enough and I can do it that sounds great that you have this self confidence but no matter how much you know no matter how much you know this does not make you into a great counselor or therapist, knowledge alone does not do that it can be helpful but the true transformation and the true healing happens through embodying presence and yes it can be helpful to know a few approaches there are certain modalities that actually make presence or they may not call it that the main part of the modality those are very spiritual approaches to psychotherapy it's been many years since I read these books but I believe for example the modality created by Carl Rogers is one of them where you the main work with the patient is to give attention and unconditional acceptance unconditional means you don't judge you don't put labels on the person or their condition it's all based on attention now I have met a few people who have gone through Rogerian I think it might be called therapy and some of them said it was very boring because the therapist never really said anything so that seems to show that even though they can even you can't really teach it as I believe there are some Rogerian therapists who do embody it and others learn it as you have to have conditional they still are not able to enter the state of presence while they are with someone and then of course there is a modality you just listen and you don't judge okay time is over when is our next session this is also of course in any capacity and quite a few of you are already spiritual teachers in your own field maybe not formally or in your own field but you are already spiritual teacher and many others probably will become spiritual teachers in one form or another and so it's it's important that the no matter through what kind of form you do your spiritual teaching whether the entry point is body work or the entry point is counseling or something else or nutritional advice even there that can quickly become a spiritual teaching always realizing what the foundation for it all you need to access the power of consciousness while you are with someone and you don't need to be fully awakened or enlightened in order to be effective, it helps but you can be effective I've met quite a few people who are effective in the situation in the helping situation they are totally present when they go back into their normal private life less so and sometimes the people who work with them when they happen to observe these people or accidentally overhear something on the telephone talking to their bank manager or something and getting really upset and then there's this great person who I thought was so enlightened and is giving me all this advice gets so upset when he talks to the bank manager just only a tiny example he gets upset in many other situations even more and yet in the teaching situation you can be very effective so there are people, many in that area they can enter presence and then in their daily life sometimes they can and sometimes they can't the ego reasserts itself there are spiritual teachers also who do spiritual teaching sometimes even on a large scale can be very effective but if you saw them in their private life you would say oh my god why is the bird so alert? because he needs to be alert because otherwise a thing could suddenly pop up and eat it so the bird goes this is a wonderful beginning of freedom inner freedom when you separate the interpretation from the actual thing it could be a person, it could be an event or just a simple sense perception and suddenly you experience the very same thing that before was an unpleasant experience as actually not bad at all let's go back to the simple you're standing in a line up in a supermarket and it's just not moving and you get very irritated seeing all the things that you should be doing and you shouldn't have come at this time and why are these people so inefficient and suddenly you're just standing there and you're breathing and you're looking around, is that so bad? No it's no longer bad because your mind isn't telling you that it is bad it is as it is now you might say that's very little but what happens if something really bad happens?

What happens if you come home and suddenly see the house that you live in has gone up in flames what happens if you suddenly lose your home and you sit on a park bench what then? it still applies the same still applies are you adding a narrative to it or are you taking this one, oh there's the house it burnt down, now this of course is an advanced more advanced lesson but you have to master the simpler lessons first then you get to the more advanced lessons because you will experience, everybody does, big loss at some point in your life of whatever kind whether it's loss of a relationship loss of a loved one financial loss loss of your job loss of reputation who knows it's easy for the internet these days to lose your reputation, one wrong tweet can destroy your whole life so you could experience all that and you will, all these things will happen, as you remember life is not meant to make the world is not meant to make you happy it's meant to make you conscious, by challenging you, and by challenging you at first the challenges become unhappiness then you begin to realize most of the unhappiness is derived from unconscious thought processes and then suddenly, gradually you awaken and then the mind, the world continues to challenge you but now challenges actually help you and they intensify the awakening they no longer bring unhappiness, occasionally you might still fall back into unhappy reactions but you're no longer drawn into continuous unhappy reactivity the world is here not to make you happy and that's, oh my god that's so good to know because if I hadn't told you that maybe you would have gone through the next 40 years thinking the world would be here to make you happy and it didn't happen very frustrating the world is here to, the world challenges every life form continuously its life is precarious and challenging even for a blade of grass that grows it's challenging for a tree, it's challenging for an animal, it's challenging for the cat for the deer, for every life form is continuously being challenged so it needs, but what that does for example to a bird it brings about an alertness in that life form, the challenge brings about an alertness have you observed how alert a bird is? A bird goes, there's an incredible alertness there, why is a bird so alert? Because it needs to be alert because otherwise a thing could suddenly pop up and eat it so the bird goes enormous enormous alertness and this is how gradually consciousness grows through being challenged and the more you suffer 90% coming from your mind then gradually you are being forced into awakening because you can't stand yourself anymore you can't stand living with this unhappy self anymore and then you realize what the Buddha was talking about when the Buddha said the self is the illusion the self is the ultimately is an illusory entity and the Buddha said there is no self, it's just an illusion and as long as you live as long as this self what in Buddhism is called self which is the conceptual self, the mind made self, as long as you derive your identity from that life to again called the Buddha life is suffering all life is suffering so the basic teaching for example of the Buddha is life is suffering but the second part of the teaching of the Buddha is the possibility of the end of suffering that's the whole of Buddhism is there in that so the Buddha said I teach suffering and the end of suffering which means I show you how suffering arises and I show

[Speaker 3] (7:10:30 - 7:10:53)
you how suffering can end without presence

[Speaker 1] (7:10:53 - 7:23:47)
to keep a life interesting you need to look for something extraordinary so that's why you're always somewhere else because usually in the present moment if you're not present it's not that interesting so for today I have chosen a book again to talk about and this book I've had for many years it's been on the shelf occasionally picked up somehow it's one of those books that didn't get lost during my many travels in the past 30 years and I've always loved this little book when you take a book that you've had for a long time you take it off the shelf and you notice that the edges are turning yellow it means you're getting old so I looked and I said have I had this for such a long time wow it's turning yellow so so this book is by a spiritual teacher Krishnamurti whom some of you will be quite familiar with and some of you may never have heard of him and despite the name he has nothing to do with Hare Krishna or anything like that in fact Krishnamurti was not aligned with any religion or school whatsoever he was Indian but he didn't teach Hindu philosophy or anything like that so quite neutral teaching he was born in 1895 and passed away in 1986 he has an interesting life history which I won't talk about now that would take too long but he traveled around the world for 60 years talking, giving spiritual talks he was brought up mostly in England for early years he was in India where he was born and then in England for many years and later on his home base was Ojai in California there are many books by Krishnamurti most of the books were not written by him they are skillfully edited transcripts of his talks there are only about two books that were written by him and one of those

books is the book we are just going to look at today it's called Krishnamurti's Notebook and in 1961-62 the impulse came to him to get a notebook and write every day a few small short entries into his notebook every day and he did that for a year and a half or so and then suddenly stopped and that was it and the entries I'm going to read a few to you today and comment on each one they are all about the way in which he perceives nature so many descriptions of nature nature perceived through his state of consciousness of stillness so to read that to read those brief passages can also take you into stillness and as we read them here some passages together that's an invitation for us to enter the same state of consciousness through which he perceived what he describes and then he also speaks about his own state of consciousness and he would often go into very deep states of stillness or presence although he doesn't use the word presence so he would talk about his state of consciousness at that moment and basically those are the two types of entries in the notebooks observations of nature against the background of intense presence and direct observations and descriptions to the extent to which it's possible of his own state of consciousness Krishnamurti was not an ordinary human being he went through strange transformations and processes for many years he had intense pain in his spine and in his head which he attributed to a process some consciousness was doing something to him, transforming him, he never sought any medical help for it so as we look at some of these passages, oh by the way there's another book called Krishnamurti's Journal which again he did a little bit late, a few years after that, he also did this again, they're both good but I think the notebook is deeper and probably better if you want to read one of them and this is definitely not a book for continuous reading, this is a book you can open anywhere and read a page or even half a page and that's enough he is in different he traveled continuously so he was always in each place for a month or six weeks and sometimes less so some of the places he describes, he never says exactly where he is but from the way in which he describes what he perceives you can gather whether he's in Switzerland or in India or in Ojai or in England, wherever he happened to be or Paris, I think those are the places that are described here so I don't know where we'll start, I went through last night and marked a few passages let's start with something very simple well it's all simple but here he is in Paris staying somewhere in Paris where he gave a couple of talks and he suddenly looks on a piece of grass, a lawn and a rose bush somewhere in the middle of the city, a little park a lawn, but he was brought up in England where traditionally it's the old fashion, they say that a lawn needs to be tended and cared for for a long, long time that's the traditional British belief and it's only after 100 years or so that the lawn really becomes perfect so you have to cut it and roll it and look after it and so this kind of, what he also talks about so here he is somewhere in the middle of Paris and suddenly he looks at this little piece of lawn and a rose bush there was a beautifully kept lawn not too large and it was incredibly green it was behind an iron grill well watered carefully looked after, rolled and splendidly alive sparkling in its beauty it must have been many hundred years old not even a chair was on it isolated and guarded by a high and narrow railing at the end of the lawn was a single rose bush with a single red rose in full bloom it was a miracle the soft lawn and the single rose they were there apart from the whole world of noise, chaos and misery though man had put them there they were the most beautiful things far beyond the museums towers and the graceful line of bridges they were splendid in their splendid aloofness they were what they they were what they were grass and flower and nothing else there was great beauty and quietness about them and the dignity of purity it was a hot afternoon with no breeze and the smell of exhaust of so many cars within the air but there the grass had a smell of its own and one could almost smell the perfume of the solitary rose so something that is ordinary one would completely overlook because if you are in Paris there are many more interesting things to look at than a little piece of lawn and a rose bush but instead of focusing and writing about the spectacular things that you would usually focus on and look at in Paris, he never describes anything spectacular of that kind he looked at this little seemingly insignificant lawn and the rose bush and perceived it against his inner stillness and saw that intense aliveness which he's attempting to put into words and it's as presence arises you don't necessarily look for the spectacular you see the extraordinary in the ordinary through presence without presence to keep your life interesting you need to look for something extraordinary so that's why you're always somewhere else because usually in the present moment if you're not present it's not that interesting unless you're having some drama so you're looking for something bigger, something greater some big thing to come into your life, continuously missing all the little things of which your life really consists it's all little things but if you continuously ignore the little things then you ignore something very vital, the miracle of life all around you

[Speaker 2] (7:24:13 - 7:24:49)
what's the most important thing in your life it's to discover

[Speaker 1] (7:24:49 - 7:25:13)
the unconditioned dimension of consciousness the unconditioned dimension to who you are

[Speaker 2] (7:25:14 - 7:25:18)
you, the unconditioned you, the unconditioned I

[Speaker 1] (7:25:25 - 7:25:34)
which has nothing to do with your past or your physical body

[Speaker 2] (7:25:43 - 7:25:44)
or your

[Speaker 1] (7:25:45 - 7:28:53)
personal personality and the unconditioned dimension is not something that you achieve because it's already here it's something you just discover here and now achievement, if you think in terms of achievement and associated achievement with spiritual awakening enlightenment, realization or achieving the unconditioned consciousness if you use the word achievement or if that's the underlying assumption that it is an achievement there's an implication that it's in the past because you need to achieve it, sorry there's an implication that it's in the future because you need to achieve it, there's something to achieve you're pushing it away out of the present and so you miss it again because you're trying to achieve it and continuously as long as you're trying to achieve that spiritual realization or whatever you want to call it then it's always one step away from you or a hundred steps or a hundred miles or a million miles, it doesn't matter whether it's one step or a million miles it's not here that's the underlying assumption and so you cannot discover it because you think it's something to achieve the thought that there's something to achieve in the future prevents you from discovering what's in the present, on other levels of your life, achievement is fine, it's good to achieve certain things, to learn something new, to bring something into manifestation, to create something, even to have goals, but when it's about finding out the deepest reality of who you are the very foundation for your

[Speaker 2] (7:28:55 - 7:28:58)
life your existence then

[Speaker 1] (7:29:05 - 7:29:38)
the idea of achievement is a hindrance so the unconditioned dimension of consciousness

[Speaker 2] (7:29:41 - 7:29:51)
is to be discovered, it is

[Speaker 1] (7:29:56 - 7:30:49)

one could almost say, hiding or concealed covered up, behind and in between your thoughts behind and even within all sense perceptions and so to discover it you need to find that space in your consciousness

[Speaker 2] (7:30:50 - 7:30:52)
in consciousness

[Speaker 1] (7:30:52 - 7:31:46)
where you are not thinking, so to stop thinking may not be the best way of pointing towards it, although I might have used that expression a few times to stop thinking again implies that there's some active doing involved it might also make you believe that thinking needs to be forcefully pushed out of your consciousness which is not

[Speaker 2] (7:31:49 - 7:31:50)
how it works

[Speaker 1] (7:31:59 - 7:33:04)
it's to discover that that space of not thinking is already there between when one thought subsides before the next thought comes there's a space of pure awareness without mind activity you can do it here because this is a live meditation whenever I'm not speaking which is part of the time here be aware that I'm not speaking so we have the gaps between one sentence and another sentence between one word and another word the moment you become aware of the gap like now

[Speaker 2] (7:33:09 - 7:33:20)
you're not thinking it's very subtle and very simple

[Speaker 1] (7:33:35 - 7:34:04)
and yet that's the most important thing in your life to become familiar with that dimension conscious without thought, spacious still but alert not the stillness of moving towards sleep but alert

[Speaker 2] (7:34:04 - 7:34:05)
stillness

[Speaker 1] (7:34:25 - 7:34:34)
so in daily life become aware of that space that inner space of alert stillness

[Speaker 2] (7:34:36 - 7:34:38)
as much as you can

[Speaker 1] (7:35:00 - 7:43:08)
my name is Eckhart Tolle and I'd like to invite you to my first Google Plus Hangout which takes place on the 21st of July which is a Saturday and I'll be particularly happy to answer questions concerning spiritual awakening consciousness disidentifying from your mind dealing with the pain body and similar topics to find me use the hashtag Ask Eckhart on Google Plus whatever hashtag is I hope you know and I look forward to speaking to you on the 21st bye for now I find myself fluctuating between the path to spirituality and wanting more material wealth are these paths mutually exclusive your feedback is much appreciated fluctuating between the path to spirituality and wanting more material wealth are these paths mutually exclusive if material wealth becomes your primary aim then one could say they are mutually exclusive but if you engage in some activity that you truly first of all truly enjoy enjoy the doing and secondly if that activity that you engage in and enjoy doing makes some contribution some positive contribution to this world to the planet to other human beings adds something valuable to life increases perhaps consciousness on the planet then if those two things come together then you may find that as a byproduct of that activity some material wealth also comes to you

and there is no reason why you cannot enjoy certain forms material forms whatever it is that come to you and you enjoy that you may give away some of that and that's enjoyable too and you mean if beautiful things come or bigger things come the enjoyment of a beautiful thing or a house or even a car is not necessarily non-spiritual the attachment or the excessive preoccupation with it with the attainment of it that is not compatible that takes you away from reality the truth of who you are from awakening but you can be quite present and in touch with that which is beyond form and nevertheless enjoy forms that come to you not in an obsessive way of wanting to accumulate as much as possible of this or that but enjoy what comes without identification with the forms that come the house, the car, whatever the material thing may be so in that sense they are not incompatible renunciation which traditionally is recommended as a path to awakening is not, the true renunciation is not really renouncing material things it's renouncing attachment or identification with because many people traditionally in many cultures and religions who have renounced material things didn't realise that they had not renounced desire in their mind so they suppress they try to suppress desire and by having no possessions and refraining another part of renunciation would be celibacy for example, refraining from sexual activity as part of renunciation without realising that they have they spend large part of the day thinking about sex so that outer renunciation is not really the main thing the true renunciation is attachment to which operates on an inner level so you can have a very poor person being attached to their few possessions very strongly and seeking identification through that you could have a very wealthy person not being attached to anything of course the other way round can also be the case so it's the inner that matters and whether or not you are attached to some material thing you can usually often you may not be able to really tell it until you lose it or it breaks so it's always a little test when something leaves you or is stolen or breaks or destroyed if then upset arises anger or whatever then, oh, I was attached, I thought I was not but when you can let go when things come and then things go, perhaps things come to you and perhaps after a while you give it to somebody else to enjoy that's appreciating beautiful things that you the sense of ownership also begins to disappear so you look after something for a while and then

[Speaker 3] (7:43:08 - 7:43:11)
it's handed on to somebody else

[Speaker 6] (7:43:38 - 7:43:44)
is the ego the source of our thoughts or are our thoughts generated elsewhere

[Speaker 1] (7:43:44 - 7:44:51)
and pass through the ego oh thank you there is no ego apart from thoughts the thoughts identification with thoughts is ego but the thoughts that go through your mind of course thoughts are linked to the collective mind of the culture you live in humanity as a whole so they are not your thoughts as such but you pick them up from the collective most of them and so you identify with thinking and the identification with thinking becomes ego which means simply that you believe in every thought that arises and you derive your sense of who you are from what your mind is telling you who you are opinions, viewpoints that's me some people talk to themselves oh you are so good

[Speaker 6] (7:44:52 - 7:44:52)
laughter

[Speaker 1] (7:44:53 - 7:47:10)
why doesn't the world recognize you or the mind says you are no good same thing you are no good at all you fail at everything don't you again and then you believe in it and then you suddenly have a low view of yourself why do you have a low view?

because you believed in your thoughts and why are you thinking those thoughts?

probably you picked them up somewhere maybe in childhood maybe your mum was so stressed out that you said you are no good and so you pick up certain thoughts and they get stuck in your head thoughts that you hear in childhood they are little energy forms like entities and they get stuck in your head and don't refuse to go and the more you believe in it the more deeply lodged they become in your mind and so some people are stuck with very hostile entities I'm saying entity not in some spooky way but every thought is an energy form and as such we could call it an entity and there are many people in this world who are stuck with hostile life denying continuously critical and attacking entities that they carry in their head and they believe that is who they are and they are continuously attacking themselves and if they are not attacking themselves they attack others around them let me tell you who you are of course what they are really saying is let me tell you who I am so they project the famous you know the famous saying we don't see things as they are we see them as we are which means you look at reality through the screen of your thinking and your judgement which is conditioned by the past a dreadful prison to live in it's like blinkers, worse than blinkers it's like looking at reality through heavy veils ooh looks so dark here

[Speaker 6] (7:47:10 - 7:47:11)
laughter

[Speaker 1] (7:47:12 - 7:51:21)
is that a human being or laughter so and so the identification with thinking believing in your thoughts having no space outside of the movement of thought again here we come to the vital thing lack of space inside that is the unconscious condition, spiritually completely unconscious and then you are burdened with a heavy ego you are the ego which is not an entity apart from thought it is thoughts that you have identified with and the first moment of freedom comes when you realize that certain thoughts have been going through your head for years perhaps and that they are only thoughts and that you are not the thought you are the awareness in my case I became aware that I had a thought for example it started in childhood one of many negative thoughts I had bad things always happen to me bad things always happen to me and that was when I saw people around me ok they have got all these nice things and always there would be bad things happening and of course your perception then becomes selective when you have a thought like that you notice much more because in everybody's life in daily life things go wrong you miss a bus you get stuck in a traffic jam or you lose some money this is normal but if you have a thought bad things always happen to me you are extremely aware of those things and they confirm to you that the thought is correct this is the selective perception of reality through the screen of thinking so the reality will confirm to you not only that that thought or any thought of that kind actually attracts bad things negative things or if you believe people are basically bad and that's a deep seeded belief and you don't realize it's only a thought in your head or a belief not only do you would you single out where you observe unethical or bad behaviour in others you would ah there it is not only that you actually are much more likely to encounter people who manifest that kind of behaviour because you attract it and so that's just incredible how people create their their world through that so freedom comes from stepping out, encountering first of all a little bit of space inside your presence and then from there you realize certain thoughts as repetitive and just a thought bad things always happen to me, oh there it goes again I thought that before so that's the to become free of ego means becoming free of thought identification with thought that's the end of the ego it may reassert itself from time to time but at least that's the awakening what about your thoughts habitual thoughts do you

[Speaker 6] (7:51:22 - 7:51:30)
probably that I have to get everything right figure it out and get it right it rules me

[Speaker 1] (7:51:31 - 7:51:32)
and if it's not right

[Speaker 6] (7:51:34 - 7:51:42)
I escape I just won't do it I pretty much predict it ahead of time so I won't try a lot of times

[Speaker 1] (7:51:43 - 7:53:23)
yes some people are afraid of not succeeding in whatever they do because they have a self their self image which is derived from thinking would suffer if I fail at something then my self image will be injured and therefore I'm not even going to try and again that's to do with deriving your identity from thinking and even the thought I have failed is a lie I am a failure is an even greater lie you have not failed you can simply reinterpret and say I have learned something here this is not for me for example so but why believe the lies that your mind produces so as you know many people live with a very hostile mind but those people the motivation their motivation would probably be very great I would hope to get out of their minds but first they need to realize that their problems are self generated mind generated not world generated thank you

[Speaker 2] (7:53:50 - 7:53:54)
because you won't really enjoy the fruit of your labors

[Speaker 1] (7:53:56 - 7:54:20)
if habitually you cannot be present in the moment no matter what you achieve the enjoyment will be short lived because of the habitual pattern of dissatisfaction in the background it's always there some obscure sense of lack and often it comes into the foreground as real unhappiness

[Speaker 2] (7:54:20 - 7:54:30)
frustration and then if you realize that there's always

[Speaker 1] (7:54:30 - 7:55:29)
this waiting for the next thing which is thought when you're waiting for the next thing you're trapped in thought because that's where future happens now the realization that this is happening to you is very important first step is the beginning of something else arising and in all of you that has already arisen or that occasionally it still gets obscured perhaps probably I assume something else has arisen that's not thought that is beyond thought the ability to recognize thought the ability to recognize certain patterns that habitually arise in your mind your mental emotional field the ability to witness that which arises in your mental emotional field that's an enormous leap in consciousness another dimension one could say

[Speaker 2] (7:55:29 - 7:55:44)
has arisen we could call it presence we could call it awareness it's not thought but it's intelligence so intelligence is not confined

[Speaker 1] (7:55:44 - 7:55:48)
to thought there is a dimension in you

[Speaker 2] (7:55:49 - 7:55:54)
that is far greater far more

[Speaker 3] (7:55:54 - 7:56:05)
intelligent than any intelligent thought it's the place from where all

[Speaker 2] (7:56:06 - 7:56:18)
intelligence arises a place of where all creativity arises so there's the ability

to suddenly

[Speaker 1] (7:56:18 - 7:57:04)
be aware of your inner states to be aware of what your mind is saying the narrative the habitual narrative that you're telling yourself you're having a monologue or many people have a dialogue with themselves where they split themselves in two and then this one argues with the other why aren't you good enough why did you do this why do you never get anything right he shouldn't have said that yes but on the other so you can have a dialogue in your narrative where you can have a monologue says I am such a miserable creature because a lot of the time the narratives the unconscious thought processes tend to be more negative than positive for

[Speaker 2] (7:57:04 - 7:57:13)
many many people so to be aware that this is happening

[Speaker 1] (7:57:13 - 7:58:04)
that's an enormous gain in consciousness it's the beginning of awakening spiritually speaking something arises that is not part of the conditioned mind patterns so there's the ability to observe your inner states and that's a wonderful little pointer to ask yourself frequently what's my inner state at this moment and then look at it direct your attention to it the narratives what have I been telling myself and the emotion that accompanies the narrative what am I feeling what's the emotion so in addition to being a story in your head and an emotion there's a knowing

[Speaker 2] (7:58:04 - 7:58:14)
behind it there's a space behind it sometimes I call it inner space there's an inner space

[Speaker 1] (7:58:14 - 8:14:35)
from where you can be aware of what's happening on the level of the person the personality because that inner space, the awareness is not part of the personality but it's the being the knowing that is inherent in the being so the mental projection towards future creates the stresses between I'm here but I want to be there and for many humans that is their predominant state so you need to realize most humans have this inbuilt dysfunction they cannot acknowledge the present moment unconsciously they regard the next moment whether it's a minute from now or an hour from now or two years from now always regard it as more important whenever you are impatient trying to get somewhere waiting for something impatiently what's the next thing I have to do and I have to do that and you're pulled in all kinds of directions what's now, oh now I have to do that and that and that and there's always a pull towards the next thing that is, I call that sometimes you lose yourself in doing doing is necessary obviously you need to do but to lose yourself in continuous doing is a serious dysfunction but it's so normal that nobody realizes it so what, if you lose yourself in the doing, there's always another this is how stress arises stress is the gap in the gap between now and later the projected then now and then in that gap arises the stress arises so the mental projection towards future creates the stresses between I'm here but I want to be there and for many humans that is their predominant state they are always they are here but they really want to be there either there in space or time it's amazing and even you, awakening beings may still sometimes or often find yourself in that state where you suddenly realize that the whole day you've been stressed about this, that and that this is what makes so many demands upon you you need to deal with this and this amplified by the gadgets that we now use which is an amplification of the dysfunction through this and you lose yourself in the doing you become completely un-centered and basically lost there are many it happens even to children already at an early age these days and many children are suffering from attention deficit disorder and so on, which means their mind is being pulled away from the present moment lost in doing lost in doing really comes back to lost in

thinking thinking underlies doing so you are lost in your thoughts about the world and then you engage in all kinds of activities propelled by thought that now I need to do this now I need to do that so the basic condition still for most humans on the planet so fundamentally yes, they are lost in doing they lose themselves in doing but basically it means they are lost in their mind in the movement of thought now you identify then, they identify with every thought that arises many thoughts are about future or the past not that many thoughts are about the present moment and if they are about the present moment, then it is an interpretation of the present moment that is completely determined and colored by your past conditioning so very interesting to observe in oneself this tendency to deny devalue disregard reduce the present moment to a means to an end it's always a means to an end but it's never recognized for what it is in itself and often it is more than a means to an end for many humans this is a very dysfunctional way of being for many humans the present moment is actually regarded unconsciously as an obstacle that they need to get beyond there is a continuous underlying unease and what's the next thing that's going to go wrong I know it's going to happen lost in the mind lost in thought there was an Indian teacher who described the essential human condition as lost in thought and of course that's how it is this is then this movement of thought gives you your sense of identity the unease the uneasy narrative the problematic narrative of me and my life I have to think about this when I wake up in the middle of the night and I carry this heavy burden of my problematic life for many humans their identity is unconsciously regarded as a problem to be solved I am a problem that I'm looking for a solution to this problem that I am and of course then you go to a therapist now if the therapist is good he might be able to take you beyond that depends if he or she is not good then you get more deeply entrenched and 15 years later you are still undergoing psychoanalysis and find ever deeper layers of complexity in your past and there's no end to it so the present moment is devalued not recognized regarded either as a means to an end or an obstacle that is for many humans that is their predominant state of mental emotional state and as I said their identity is derived from that so it's the the error lies in identification with thought now the question arises who or what is it that identifies with thought if I am not the story that I tell myself about who I am if I am not ultimately that then who or what am I and what is it in me that identifies with the story what is it that creates this sense of identity that is mostly exists mostly in a state of unease or very often discontent because it cannot acknowledge the present moment that is the ego by the way that's what we call it the egoic sense of self there is a very simple spiritual practice to get you to the realization of who or what it is that identifies I suggest at this moment that observe yourself internally right now to see if there is any lingering emotion in you perhaps from earlier today or an hour ago or yesterday or the past two years or the past ten years can you feel for example is there an irritation somewhere is there some kind of anxiety is there kind of heaviness a certain heavy mood a despondent mood perhaps is it lingering there is there anger big thing some residue of anger from what happened earlier is that in you and then normally humans would say I am angry or they would say I am anxious, I am fearful I am in a bad mood now there is already a delusion when the moment you say I am angry or I am anxious that indicates already that you have identified with the emotion of anger or the emotion of sadness or the emotion of fear you have identified, you equate I with what arises in your field of consciousness so you say I am angry it would be more correct to say I am angry there is anger in me right now now it may sound a trivial difference between saying I am angry and there is anger in me but there is a significant difference which goes beyond mere syntax how you put words together because when you say I am you equate I with whatever condition is there in you this applies to emotion and it also applies to thought when because anger is often not just the anger as emotion, the anger also exists as angry thoughts and then they reinforce each other, it is a vicious circle when you are trapped in irritation or anger the emotion feeds the thought and the thought feeds more energy to the emotion it's a vicious circle and you don't want to get out of it you might notice when you observe an angry person or a despondent person or an anxious person they don't really want to be free of the anger they don't want their if you suggest it to an angry person you can be free you will not get a pleasant answer and you've seen angry people they are in the grip of anger or irritation they cannot help it then they shout at you and then they leave the room and a minute later the door opens they come back because they thought of something else to insult you with they are in the grip of it there is complete identification with thought and emotion they are lost in thought they are lost in emotion but who or what is it that is lost if I am not the thoughts and the emotion, who or what am I?

I just ask you to just have a look inside yourself and see what it is if there is anything there that's jarring and doesn't feel good but it's there and I'm not saying try to get rid of it no acknowledge the present moment, the present moment is what is externally or internally that's what is but there is a huge difference now you've already, by recognizing that there is, let's say, irritation anger or anxiety in you an additional element or dimension has come in and that dimension we could call awareness or we could call it presence and the moment awareness comes in you are no longer completely identified with it, one could say I sometimes describe it as let's say, there is the anger and as awareness of the anger comes in there is a little bit of space around it that's the awareness, the awareness knows that there is anger the anger may still be there, it may not immediately disappear but the awareness knows it's there or whatever else it may be the arising of awareness is spiritual awakening the disidentification that happens when awareness arises that is the spiritual awakening or the arising of the transcendent dimension of consciousness, transcendent because it transcends who or what you are as a person some people don't know that there is even the possibility of taking responsibility, that's why you are so important anybody who realizes it you are the beginning of the transformed world the hardest word that I'm having trouble with right now is responsibility and I have a hunch that most of the things I consider responsibility

[Speaker 2] (8:14:35 - 8:14:45)
are just my ego telling me things I have to do but I also, when I think about the future of the earth and human evolution and stuff like that

[Speaker 1] (8:14:45 - 8:32:52)
sometimes I have big emotions of responsibility I'm just curious about the right relationship to the word responsibility ok thank you it's a strange word, it has been pointed out that if you look at the word it seems to be talking about the ability to respond so to take responsibility for what is it that you can take responsibility for primarily it's taking responsibility for your state of consciousness which determines what kind of world you create you, because you are humanity humanity is an abstract concept it doesn't exist, humanity is the human being you are humanity so for humanity to take responsibility you need to take primarily responsibility for your state of consciousness because only a diseased or dysfunctional state of consciousness produces a diseased and dysfunctional world out there by world I mean the human made world that has been imposed on what's already there the planet, which is potentially of course a paradise the planet pristine unbelievable jewel the being of great intelligence we are not separate from it but the being is going through a transitional process and every transitional process is critical it may or may not work in which case the being will go some other way but the your state of consciousness determines what kind of world you create what kind of action you take and what consequences your actions have so here this is why my main work is to address the cause of dysfunction which lies in the human mind the dysfunction of the human mind or as it is sometimes called in Zen the sickness of the human mind so as I see it and I don't think anybody who reads history can doubt it there is a deep seated dysfunction in humans has been there for thousands of years and if we if there is no shift in that then the dysfunction will destroy us it probably won't destroy the planet because the planet has enormous resources but it will take a while it will take a while for the planet to recover all you have to do then is primarily take responsibility for your

state of consciousness now now and this is what the entire teaching really is about what is my state of consciousness at this moment am I generating disturbance am I generating negativity am I generating conflict and suffering for myself and others am I generating inner pollution am I polluting my beautiful the beautiful being that I am with continuous absurd movements of thought producing negative emotions producing an entire entity that is illusory that I call the me so to take responsibility it needs to be just of course an awakening where you can say ok I will take responsibility now some people don't know that there is even the possibility of taking responsibility that's why you are so important anybody who realizes it you are the beginning of the transformed world I don't know who first coined the famous phrase you hear it quite often these days you need to be the change the change that you want to see out there you need to embody that and that's not primarily what you do there is something more primary than what you do it's who you are who you are is your state of consciousness whatever you do flows out of that so that's the primary is that the change is the transformed state of consciousness now that is your responsibility once you have seen that that's your responsibility now you know it people who are not yet at that level don't realize it and that's fine you can't expect the whole world already to be at that state it's enough for you to take responsibility knowing there are still a few millions others who don't know that they can take responsibility because they live in such unconsciousness that they see the entire evil in others what they see as evil it's all in them and they make half the world into their enemy it's all out there they're still that's fine only those are required to take responsibility who are up to it but even those who are totally unconscious still on the one hand they don't know what they're doing obviously they as Jesus said on the cross they know not what they do in other words they are in the grip of unconscious forces or unconscious mental emotional streams they don't know what they do they cannot be held responsible and people say well they should be held responsible, no they can't they don't know what they do, however the fact that they are not responsible because they can't be responsible does not mean that they do not suffer the consequences of their unconsciousness so they generate suffering and eventually suffering is the fire in which the ego gets burned up the collective ego and the personal ego that's the long way the slow way the painful way and then there is a shortcut which is any spiritual teaching it cuts through that the painful way the long way of waking up more and more suffering the planet might not endure such a long learning process for humanity so if the learning process of humanity does not become shortened it is doubtful that the planet can allow humanity to learn through further suffering for another 500 years or even 200 years or even 100 years so that's you are responsible for all that most of the time there is a voice in your head that comments and has opinions and viewpoints and interpretations about what's going on in your life, I call that the voice in the head for most humans that is completely involuntary they don't even know that they have a voice in the head that never stops talking most of the time silently in your head and at other times it may even shout something out, so it wants to be heard and so if you walk in the street you will find most people look fairly sane, they are not talking to themselves it seems, because they are not talking out aloud, but if you listened into everybody's head you would be amazed of how noisy the inside of every human is, it's like you know these radio stations where the people talk in an excited voice, they go on and on, if you go to a foreign country and you don't know what they are talking about, you might think this must be extremely important but if you can understand what they are saying, you realize it's completely meaningless, it's just noise so a significant part of what happens in your mind the larger part is actually just superfluous noise thinking is a wonderful ability a wonderful tool if used rightly it is an instrument that causes dysfunction and misery for millions on the planet unhappiness for millions on the planet if thinking is not used but if you are used by thought so when humans say I think in most cases that's actually not true because they have no control over their thinking it's compulsive and involuntary and they are so identified with the thought processes, they don't even know that they are in the grip of their thought processes because they are so identified, they become their thought processes so whatever comes into your head you completely believe in it and then you, yeah that's how it is Leon just mentioned I don't know if we were talking this morning or yesterday about when I was struggling to survive on a physical plane I often ate baked beans on toast, I was living in England this is there's a little bit of relevance here too and that could have been a very unhappy period in my life not being able what to live on the next day or day after and again now I'm able to have good meals occasionally and I haven't had baked beans on toast in a long time now but Leon gave me a can yesterday now when I was reduced to eating baked beans on toast and again that's a wrong way of putting it, it could have been very unhappy, I was already in my thirties and so my mind my mental commentary, the involuntary thought processes would normally have said this is your complete failure you can't afford the rent you don't know, you have no income you've made a mess out of your life this is what I'm reduced to baked beans on toast, look at your contemporaries that are driving around in their BMWs they've got all that and so this is what life has done to me or what I have done to mess up my life I could have had many kinds of narratives accompanying what was happening in the present moment that would have created unhappiness and I wouldn't even have known it and this happens just a small example of how a narrative that you have that accompanies something that you are doing causes unhappiness and you can do the same thing without the narrative and you're free of unhappiness you're eating baked beans on toast and actually doesn't taste that bad at all and it is nourishing and you don't even have to say that, you can simply enjoy the sensory perceptions associated with that without building a sense of self around it the sense of self that you build around it arises through involuntary and compulsive thinking me and the Buddha was already talking about that so and this, I'm saying this now in case you need to leave early or want to go across the street if you only take this away from this evening but hopefully there will be much more, if you only take this away, if you look at whenever you feel unhappiness this is a generic term unhappiness in whatever form, unhappiness can arise as irritation can arise as anger, can arise as even boredom is a form of unhappiness sadness all kinds of states, they don't feel pleasant, unhappiness and usually they are attributed to a life situation something that's going on in your life so for example waiting at the airline counter and of course how often things don't go well there let's hope they don't drag you out of the plane but that could happen too whenever you feel irritation arising anger arising, upset in whatever form, ask yourself is this caused by the situation or is it caused by what my mind is telling me about the situation and in 95% of cases you will find that the mental commentary that argues and complains about something that's going on but should not be going on but it is, but shouldn't be and the gap between what is and what the mind says should be or should not be that gap is the arising of unhappiness and misery or as the Buddha called suffering it arises in the gap between the isness of things in this moment and the arguing with the isness of things in this moment imposing a narrative on it that says no this should not be I'm not talking about situations where you can take action to change it there are certain situations where action is possible and necessary of time, but even if action is possible and necessary at this very moment it still is as it is then you can take action but this moment is as it is so when you allow this moment to be as it is because you recognize the inevitability of is this seems so obvious but it's not obvious to most humans the inevitability of what is already the case now, and if you can internally align yourself with this inevitable now the next moment is a different thing but when the next moment comes it's now of course there is no next moment except as a thought in the head where is the future? you've never experienced it, you can't impossible and yet humans think about it more than the present moment they want to get to the future because they don't want what is they believe some kind of liberation or fulfillment will come next always missing the isness of things so if unhappiness arises examine does it come, is it caused by the situation I'm in or is it caused by how my mind is interpreting the situation

[Speaker 3] (8:32:54 - 8:33:13)

and you sense it very strongly

[Speaker 1] (8:33:13 - 8:46:56)
in other words you sense yourself also as this vast presence not just the person you are the wave on the surface of the ocean or let's better the ripple on the surface of the ocean and the ripple if it only knows itself as the ripple it leads a very limited life if it knows itself as the ocean then it leads a more fulfilled life even though on the surface of course things come and go and have their imperfections but you are then in touch with something that transcends the imperfections of your surface life and to some extent also changes your surface life makes it a more pleasant experience without saying that it will be of course there will be imperfections there will be gain and loss this is all part of your surface life in the physical dimension you can't live without gain and loss you lose something, you gain something hot and cold up and down a good thing, a good experience and a bad experience but you are no longer totally trapped in the outer form of the experience and even if it's a so called bad experience and particularly when a so called bad experience comes you can sense your connectedness with something that transcends that particular experience something that is deeper and this is how people have awakened spiritually, you've been in prison or in dreadful situations or close to death or are told that they only have a few more months to live and or have experienced great loss, people around them suddenly died in an accident or they lost everything they had and suddenly an emptiness appears in their life and that emptiness is at first perceived as a dreadful thing and sometimes the point comes when that hole in your life suddenly which was so painful suddenly you don't resist it anymore and you just go, well that's what it is you become completely present and suddenly that spaciousness that was always there in the background of your life, in between your thoughts, behind your thoughts, the ocean you're going to call it or the space is there and you sense it very strongly in other words you sense yourself also as this vast presence not just the person the person has come out of that vast presence in the same way that a little ripple seems to come out of the ocean it looks around and it looks in the mirror that's me takes a selfie me and tries everything to strengthen its identity as the me and there's nothing wrong with, let's say whatever way, there are many ways in which the little ripples try to strengthen their ripple identity and whatever the ripple whatever is closest the most salient factor in your ripple identity is what probably the ripple will focus on most if it's a physically strong ripple it will identify with physical strength if the ripple looks particularly beautiful it will identify with its appearance and try to enhance that even more and for a while that works but only for a while or if the ripple is particularly clever it can work things out with its ripple mind which is only a pale reflection of the one mind of the ocean but it can work out things with its ripple mind and then it gets a very clever ripple so much more clever than all the other ripples or the ripple has had a hard time and since it was born as a ripple and feels it's been a very disadvantaged ripple and it starts to complain a lot about what other ripples did to it and in that way it can also build up a very strong ripple identity as the victim of other ripples and can think and talk about it for a lifetime and it gives them a very satisfying ripple identity and so it will say things like you have suffered let me tell you about my suffering so it can build up that so even ripples that fail can have very strong ripple identities, it's not just the big ripples who have the big egos I'm actually talking about ego here it's not just the egos sometimes people think big egos are those who they drive big cars and they go around displaying either their wealth or their strength or their knowledge or whatever it is they identify with or they talk in a very loud voice and are always mainly concerned about themselves yes that could be part of it there are people like that, quite a few and who think they are better than most and then there are others who have the reverse of that they think they are they've been treated unfairly by life they have not had a chance or they love also making some people wrong it could be your parents it's all their fault I'm not saying there are no unconscious parents, some parents are dreadfully unconscious and some of you might

have had a taste of that but it could be their parents, it could be a group of people that they identify as those that cause my suffering and then they go on the internet and start putting things in about that group of people who are doing it to us or to me so whatever, you can create an enemy there and then that strengthens your identity and if you have more enemies your sense, your rebel identity gets even stronger because now I really know who I am because I'm not that could talk for a long time about that but it's ordinary existence for all rebels that haven't recognized who they are in their essence so it's vital to know that other dimension in you and that always starts, it's always there it doesn't start it's always there in the present moment which is now now the question is whether at this moment you can know or sense within yourself that underlying presence that is deeper than the person and it's very hard, it's very intangible it's very elusive you can't say it's here or it's there it's all pervasive it's your own presence and if you're thinking very much you can't sense it not while you're engaged in thinking about it, okay where is the presence I'm trying to find it but I can't I wonder if I'm doing something wrong well the only thing you're doing wrong is you're trying to find it through thinking so if thinking subsides for a moment what remains seems like nothing at first a spacious just a space but in that space which at first seems like nothing and certainly doesn't seem interesting that space if you don't immediately run away from it and then gradually you begin to sense that there is a depth there and a peace and there is more to it than one could ever put into words to that emptiness and if that connects you with something that transcends the thinking mind but without which there would be no thinking that is the ripple becoming aware of its own depths where it is more than the ripple and then the ripple continues to be a ripple for a little while but the way in which it experiences the world the surface world actually is different because it senses a deep connectedness with something that cannot be named really something deep and vast and it can sense that as the foundation for its life at the very essence of its life and then it can actually enjoy the short-lived play of ripples and it actually can also enjoy the way it looks as a ripple its identity no longer comes from its external form and then it can enjoy oh, this ripple looks in the mirror and says oh, this looks I look good why not? You honor the form and then says I'm going to wear something nice then I look even better and I'll enjoy that why not?

If that's not where you get your sense of self from, in which case it becomes obsessive and you lose yourself in that you can honor the world of form or you can realize that you have a great, a very good mind and you can which may be better than other people's minds and you can work things out then why not enjoy and cultivate it if it doesn't take you completely out of the deeper connectedness and then if there's a deeper connectedness and you have a good mind, then it becomes really a creative mind There are ripples that have a good mind without the connectedness and they can do limited things in the realm of analysis and compiling bits of knowledge and so on, that's fine they are not creative but if the ripple has a mind a good mind and has a connectedness with a depth, which means in between using your mind and even sometimes while you use your mind or while the ripple uses it because you are the ripple you can sense an underlying stillness an underlying presence so then you the ripple learns to think you thinking, applying thought to something hmm and then there's a train of thought, then you come to an end, doesn't go any further and then the ripple withdraws into alert stillness hmm hmm well you don't try anything, you don't go into alert stillness as a means to an end, it's enjoyable, you go into alert stillness, spaciousness opens up there is no thought now and that feels good how long that takes or lasts, we don't know could be 10 seconds it could be 5 minutes it could be 20 minutes depends so you go out into thought and you go back into stillness and then thought becomes inspiring, inspired

[Speaker 6] (8:47:29 - 8:48:01)
more than a question I'm seeking a little guidance I have a deep intention to transcend and to dissolve the illusion of separation and I wonder how that is a tricky way that the ego is a tricky way that the identification itself is keeping

me as not thinking that this moment is enough by seeking that, does that make sense

[Speaker 1] (8:48:01 - 8:48:11)
yes, can you say what is it you're seeking, transcendence yes, I'm seeking to experience

[Speaker 6] (8:48:11 - 8:48:18)
a greater disidentification with the form and it seems that somehow in the seeking

[Speaker 1] (8:48:19 - 9:01:31)
I'm not fully resting ah, thank you, it's good good question, yes it's true that the great obstacle for especially the spiritual seeker is the fact that they're seeking for something now, of course everybody is seeking in this world they're seeking some kind of relief greater aliveness even the egoically dominated people they want to feel more fully alive more fully who they are they want to be themselves more fully and so they seek it through this, that or the other, identification with this with that or the other ultimately always with some kind of thought they seek it there's a seeking and the seeking pattern, even when people become disenchanted with the usual things that people seek their happiness through in this world you realize it can't be found there, it's not in the it's not in what you possess, it's not in what you achieve ultimately you can't find true and lasting peace, aliveness you don't find yourself ultimately there, in things in thought it can't give you that the deep sense of rootedness in being of being at home within yourself and then you become a spiritual person the spiritual person already knows the spiritual person is no longer looking for a job on Wall Street perhaps I'm not saying that somebody cannot suddenly turn spiritual that's fine but the people are seeking it's a mind structure and when you see that you can't find it there, you think okay, now what I really need is spiritual realization or whatever you call it awakening, I don't need, I know that the car is not going to do it the big house is not going to do it the great job is not going to do it the bonus at the end of the year is not going to do it because you might have tried it already or you have the maturity that tells you it doesn't work or you've seen others who are unhappy who have all these things and are completely unhappy and then you say okay what will work because you read spiritual books, you listen to spiritual teachers, you see there is such a thing as enlightenment or awakening and that's going to work this is where I find myself finally, which of course is true but you carry with you the mind structure of seeking now the mind structure of seeking you then take it from the worldly things into the spiritual and so you become a spiritual seeker seeking implies of course that there is something there that you seek which implies future because you're not seeking it, you know that you're not going to find realisation by seeking in space you're not going to come look around this room and say I'm seeking awakening in this room so it's not the seeking that looks in space well some people think if I go to India I might find it they can try that you won't find it in any particular place so the seeking isn't a seeking in space it's a seeking in time it's a seeking in future in other words seeking implies you need the future to be who you truly are that's the belief the spiritual seeker needs future he might try India but then finds well I didn't find myself there either so you really it's not a place but it's the seeking implies future the next moment let's call it the next moment maybe I'll get it in the next moment but you can't because realisation is present moment realisation it has nothing to do with time or future and who you are does not require time everything else requires time learning to play an instrument requires time, learning a language requires time building a house requires time acquiring knowledge requires time making a cup of coffee requires time crossing the street requires time but knowing, being yourself knowing who you are does not time stops you from realising it future stops you from realising it so it's going into the present moment and finding a new attitude towards the present moment which is one of openness rather than of using it as a stepping stone to the next moment that's the fallacy that's also the spiritual seeker's fallacy, is to use this moment as a stepping stone to

the next one so you devalue this moment because you're thinking you're going to get there in the next one but the next moment what is that, what existence does it have? It's a thought in your head because there's no otherwise it has no existence it never comes the next moment always remains as a thought in your head it's never actuality it can't be because actuality and the present moment are indivisible they're one so you're still relying on thought when you look to when this moment is made reduced to, devalued reduced to a stepping stone to the next which is going to promise fulfilment then you miss it continuously because the next moment is a thought no more it doesn't exist in conventional terms it does but in absolute terms it doesn't exist if it did somebody would have seen it or touched it I've never encountered the future it's never the moment it comes it's the present there's only this so don't be a seeker or let's say if you have to seek then seek to be open to this moment be say yes to whatever arises whatever form it takes any form that arises in your life at this moment say that's what is you don't impose judgements on it it is what is already it already is then you have arrived you are and then you realise that you are the space for it you are not what happens you are the space for it you are not the thought you are the space for the thought you are not the emotion you are the formless space of consciousness itself which is no time has no time to it and so that's the end of seeking. You don't don't seek an experience.

Some people have spiritual experiences but the experience comes and goes. Some people have great spiritual experience like fireworks and it lasts and it lasts for a while and then because it's a form and then it dissolves or I had such a great experience three years ago, five years ago. I wish I could have that again.

I'm trying to have it again but it's not working. It's not an experience. It's the, you know, become aware of the the background to all experience, the space for all experience, the stillness behind all experience which is always there.

It's only covered up by mental noise, thoughts. Become aware that that's who you are and then that's it. You then you embody that.

You become an opening for that and that's all. That's your, the fulfillment of your life here is to be an opening for that and then perhaps your realization deepens of that. It's not an experience but it's the the sense of spaciousness deepens and more and more the balance changes between perhaps at first you are a person 90% of the time and the little 10% of space.

So you're not a person who is totally identified anymore. So you see some space and that's fine. It's already is a big improvement in your life and then as gradually there's more space that comes in between the thoughts, in between the emotions.

And then you're 70% a person, 30% space and perhaps eventually 50% person, 50% space and you're already a beautiful spiritual teacher. And that's fine if 50% form, 50% formless. I'm quantifying something it cannot be quantified.

It's a little silly but balance the dance between form and formlessness in your life. And as you grow old perhaps when you reach the age of 80 there's more and more formlessness. Or there may already be 90% formlessness and you sit and you might then decide to travel to India because only there will they fully appreciate it.

And you can sit under a tree and only occasionally you say a few words. That's the 10% of the person still there but basically you are an opening for consciousness to come through as was the sage such as Ramana Maharshi in India. Just sit there.

And in India as you sit there for long enough in that state people will come and live next to you. One, two, three, four, ten, twenty, thirty. And then before you know it you sit in the middle of an ashram.

I must admit I feel tempted sometimes to do that. But there's still a lot to do in the West. Every thought is an energy formation like you could say a little entity and attracts associated thoughts and becomes a bundle of thoughts.

They may arise from your personal but very commonly they arise from the collective.

[Speaker 3] (9:01:36 - 9:03:22)
In this world you have to be careful with what kind of thoughts you absorb from the collective because there's so much unhappiness in the collective energy field of humanity. So it's very easy to get drawn into that if you're not careful and participate in the suffering of the collective fear, anxiety, anger that's everywhere. It's also very easy to be affected by certain thoughts that can take over your mind that come from the collective thoughts and thought patterns.

Anybody who is not sufficiently present, sufficiently aware is susceptible to being infected by certain thoughts.

[Speaker 2] (9:03:23 - 9:03:46)
The mind, certain thoughts become lodged in your mind that every thought is an energy formation like you could say a little entity. Thought gets lodged in your mind and attracts associated thoughts and becomes a bundle of thoughts.

[Speaker 3] (9:03:47 - 9:04:01)
And without awareness you identify with the thoughts and then you're being possessed by certain thoughts.

[Speaker 1] (9:04:01 - 9:04:28)
They may arise from your personal but very commonly they arise from the collective. In your personal life you could develop some kind of thought that of an obsessive nature that occupies your mind and you can't get rid of it.

[Speaker 3] (9:04:31 - 9:05:06)
It could be the thought of one directed to one particular person, very negative thoughts. Even at the simplest level some people have you can have a melody that you can't get rid of in your mind.

[Speaker 1] (9:05:06 - 9:05:13)
You can have a whole day or two days and you can't get rid of some this thing that's in your mind it repeats itself again and again.

[Speaker 3] (9:05:16 - 9:06:00)
You can have certain assumptions about this world like they may be totally absurd and irrational or there may be some truth to it but only there may be an aspect of the truth. You might think that the most absurd thoughts could be there. You might think that the the extraterrestrials are already here.

[Speaker 1] (9:06:00 - 9:12:24)
Well they may be but and every other human is actually an alien and you just have to look at them carefully to figure out whether they are aliens or humans and that could I'm not excluding the possibility that some aliens may be here but I'm talking about obsessive thoughts that are probably not correct. And then it covers your subsequent perception of reality gets totally colored by the obsessive thoughts and it can explain everything in those terms. All the evils of the world have suddenly one explanation.

Another one that's also in the collective you can have a thought that the entire world is divided into oppressor and oppressed. Any human being either belongs to the oppressors or to the oppressed. That was an idea in communism in economic terms in terms of social power.

They divided humanity into oppressors and oppressed and then they look at you can look at any human being and to me he's oppressed he's an oppressor. Now the thing is of course oppressors and oppressed have existed and to some extent and some areas still exist. But to take one fragment of truth because the totality of human life is much vaster than that this is one aspect but if you take one aspect that then occupies your mind because of lack of awareness you are possessed by a thought and this thought that's the entire world this is just one example could give many examples.

The entire world is either the essential identity of any human being is either they are oppressed or they are the oppressor. Now of course if that is the thoughts that dominate your mind then obviously you would probably regard the oppressed as the good ones and the oppressors as the bad ones so that then that simplifies life enormously. You immediately can decide who is good and who is bad and you are probably good presumably.

Even if you if you are an oppressor traditionally you're you're you now recognize your sins and you will atone for your sins of being an oppressor and you side with the oppressed and therefore you become one of the good people. Okay so we had the same phenomenon in very extreme form we all know about Soviet communism we know about Chinese Mao Zedong cultural revolution quite a crazy time period we know national socialism in Germany all these the evils perpetrated by all these collective delusional systems that divided people into good and bad entire groups gave them an identity. I was in Cambodia a few years ago and visited the the death camps of where Cambodians are it's a small country so not many people are familiar with the recent history of Cambodia but they had a an extreme communist regime under a mad dictator called Pol Pot and in that risk extreme communist regime and Cambodia experienced dreadful suffering one third of the population was killed by their own government because they were the oppressors. An oppressor was anybody who could read and write because obviously they were exploiting the peasants.

Anybody who wore glasses he could would immediately like that's right oppressor they would be sent from the cities into the countryside to work on the fields where they didn't have enough food and most of them starved. A total lack of humanity total lack because of the entire country was dominated by one absurd and obsessive thought that that made them made it impossible for them to relate to any human being as a human being. They relate them through the conceptualization that they that thought had created for them.

They couldn't sense the humanity the being of the other human anymore the moments that imposed the conceptual identity on them. This is an extreme example of what can happen to you when you're taken over by certain thoughts in your mind. This is not to mean that of course oppressor and oppressive existed and exists but it's not not the entire explanation.

There are many other facts in this life but I'm saying all this because you need to be very alert so that your mind is not taken over by certain thoughts that are not that invade your mind and color your view of reality and there are there are certain irrational thoughts that are floating around in the collective at the present time so it's very easy to for you to absorb some of them and being possessed by certain thoughts and maybe it's so irrational that it's unbelievable but I'm

[Speaker 2] (9:12:24 - 9:12:32)
not giving any examples but you have to find it out for yourself with awareness you can and

[Speaker 1] (9:12:34 - 9:15:08)
be be very careful with observing your mind be there as the witness of your mind so that you don't get taken over by certain thoughts that your mind does not get taken over by certain thoughts and then you cannot perceive reality anymore as it is everything is colored by the veil of irrational thinking so when you nowadays these things can spread very quickly and easily these irrational things in the past they were confined to either one country or one area in a particular country but nowadays certainly rational thoughts can go through the entire world through the technology we have and can quickly affect millions of humans all over the world so in the past you had it as I said limited let's say the the the hunt for witches in the past totally absurd and irrational it's a mental disease that affect certain countries or areas in certain countries and this mental disease then so there were some places in in Europe there were villages and towns in Europe in the middle ages during that time of collective insanity there there were almost no women left in in some villages in towns at that time because they're all being burned or drowned because they were called it as witches absolute in great absolute insanity so don't underestimate how insane humans can become and the only antidote that you have against that is awareness so that your mind does not get affected by mental virus the awareness the awareness is aware of what your mind is doing so that your mind does not get occupied by one particular way of thinking which is probably irrational anything that's one-sided that does not see the totality of a situation like oppressor and oppressed if you don't see that the many factors that

[Speaker 2] (9:15:10 - 9:15:22)
make up a human being's identity so very be very careful with what you consume in the media

[Speaker 1] (9:15:23 - 9:49:59)
the media that brings the news to you be very careful with what you consume so that you take do not take on without knowing it unquestioningly certain ways of looking at the world realize that you're being how manipulative most of the mainstream media has become you need to watch that if you watch it knowing how you're being manipulated and they're they the people themselves are being manipulated too so it's they are in the grip of unconsciousness and they want to draw others into unconsciousness so they're not they're not the evil ones they just don't know any better as you know stillness is the essential ingredient in our life meditation the important thing is to become aware of it notice it it seems strange at first to become aware of stillness almost impossible because what is there to be aware of you can be aware of noise that's easy but still there seems to be nothing there so at first some people may find it hard or not even know what it means to be aware of stillness now stillness of course is just a pointer and usually in normal usage what stillness means is the absence of noise another word is silence stillness but when we use the word stillness here as a pointer it's not just the absence of noise but the also the presence of something and that's of course the wrong word already because it's not something let's use it anyway knowing how limited words are it's also the presence of something no not really the presence of something but the presence of presence now don't try to figure out conceptually what that means but use this opportunity to experience it firsthand to realize for yourself the meaning of this presence of presence you become aware in other words of let's put it like this for a moment you become aware of your own presence not the presence of the person you as the person but the presence of something deeper whatever almost as if the person that consists of whatever you experience externally and whatever you experience in the mind or whatever you experience in the emotional field those things coming together is usually becomes the what one experiences as the person and for most people that's their what's that's their life consists of that but that really is a surface phenomenon like ripples on the surface of the ocean maybe even waves on the surface of the ocean but no matter how huge or little the waves are on the surface of the ocean they're nothing compared to the depths of the ocean so to

become aware of the presence of presence or to put it slightly differently to become aware of yourself as the presence is like the ocean becoming aware of its own depth and to become aware of yourself as presence or the presence of presence it's helpful if the mind activity of the activity of thinking subsides for a moment and you realize you're still there the essence of who you are which you cannot define in any way what is that that's left when i'm not thinking about who i am when i'm not thinking at all perhaps now this great opportunity to experience the state of thoughtless awareness when i'm not thinking at all who am i presence so there is something left that is vital and essential the most vital part of you is to do something that usually humans are unaware of because they're only aware of the surface of their lives and when you're only aware of the surface of your life the tendency is for life to become quite frustrating and never really satisfying, because it's in the nature of surface phenomena not to be satisfying, except for brief moments. So, in conventional terms, we have heard the word superficial as applied to humans, and in conventional usage, a superficial human would be somebody who is only concerned with external appearance, or what other people think of me, how I look to others and myself. That's conventional usage.

But in a deeper sense, anybody's superficial is anybody who is unaware of that which underlies all their experiences, all their experiencing, sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions. And they are so drawn into every sense perception, and especially thought and emotion, and those get mixed up in a bowl, the bowl of your experience. So you can't even distinguish anymore between your mental interpretation of an experience that you're having, and the actual external facts of that experience.

So you bring your conditioning into the way in which you perceive the world. Situations, events, people, are always then immediately interpreted as the perception of them happens. The perception is colored and distorted by the conditioning of your mind.

And you don't know that. So that's all the unconscious state. And in a wider sense, you are superficial then, when that depth or spaciousness in you that is presence is lacking.

So that is the wider meaning of superficial. It's not just being concerned with the external appearance. Really, superficial means there is no spaciousness in you.

In other words, you are trapped in the person or the personality, the conditioning of all that, with nothing else. Or maybe occasionally little glimpses of spaciousness that come, and then they're gone again. But those glimpses that come occasionally in many people's lives, are enough to keep them going and prevent them from falling into complete despair.

Because occasionally they have little awakenings. And they don't even really know it. They just think, oh, this life is good right now.

It feels good to be alive. Because suddenly there's a moment stillness has opened up, a sense of aliveness, of just presence. For some people it happens when they're engaged in strenuous physical activity that can bring about, temporarily, that opening into spaciousness.

Unless the ego becomes involved in it, you want to win. That's a different matter again. Some people have to fall ill, and when they are ill they become a little bit spacious.

They haven't got enough energy to keep the egoic conditioning going, the continuous thinking, the continuous compulsive mind activity. And so, for some people, illness is an opportunity to experience a little bit of that spaciousness. Usually it doesn't last, or you're getting close to death, or you think you might die soon, and that can bring about that opening.

But why wait for some illness, or for you to climb a mountain, for your mind to stop, or approaching death? This is the opportunity for realizing that there is a dimension in you that is the essence of it all. And that really is the secret of what traditionally, in many spiritual traditions, is called detachment.

That really means there is a spaciousness, and that spaciousness in you enables you to be not totally drawn into every thought that comes into your head. That's not detachment, that's attachment. Really, attachment is when your attention, or your consciousness, is continuously absorbed, not just by things that happen, but for many people, primarily as their mind activity, every thought that comes in, sometimes fueled by emotions that go with thoughts, totally overpowered by the continuous stream of thinking, and in many cases, emotional thinking.

It's a complete dream world compared to being present. You are immersed in your own dream world. And that's how drama arises in people's lives.

That's attachment. So attachment really means to be completely identified with every emotion and every thought that comes. And detachment means there is a spaciousness around the thoughts, or the emotions, or any experience that you have.

There is a space around it, one could say. That space, of course, is in you. You're aware, in other words, not only of what's happening externally and internally, but more fundamentally, you're aware of yourself as the space in which whatever is happening is happening.

And when you live your life like that, there's always a sense of peace or spaciousness in the background, even while you're thinking. You're not totally drawn into every thought. Thought happens, and yet you're still aware of the consciousness that gives rise to every thought.

Ultimately, the thought is not separate from the consciousness in the same way that the wave is not separate from the ocean. It just looks for a moment as if the wave had a separate existence. And especially if you give it a name, if you say, oh, there comes wave, that's wave John, and that's wave Mary.

This wave is called Mary, was born 10 seconds ago. Wonder how long Mary is going to live. And then Mary comes rolling in.

And before you know it, it's gone. Oh, now Mary's dead. So ultimately, the mind activity is not separate from the consciousness, the presence.

It's just consciousness has assumed this temporary form. And you could say that even all sense perceptions are ultimately temporary forms, that consciousness appears as the tree, the chair, the dog, that human, that noise, sky, whatever appears in your consciousness, because the entire world becomes a world in you, in the consciousness that you are. I need my story.

All the things that I've been telling myself in my mind about myself and other people and my parents and my relatives and my co-workers and my ex-wife and my ex-husband, and what people did to me and what I did and shouldn't have done, failed to do. Who am I without that? I can't let go of that.

I need to think about this more. So it becomes a habitual place, the habitual place of the mental noise, where you feel, that's me. And so every therapist knows that you always reach a point with your clients, patients, whatever, depending on the school of therapy, depends whatever you call your clients, your patients, whatever.

There comes a point when you hit that resistance, they don't want to be free of their problems. And that the big challenge is, is this person going to overcome that barrier? Because that barrier is not just becoming free of my problems, but also becoming free of a very limited and ultimately fictitious sense of identity, the me.

So that is what I've described is the next step, one could say, in the evolution of human consciousness, is stepping out of self-talk, which is the conditioned mind, and realizing there is much more to who I am than this conditioned content of my mind. And that is the beginning of awakening. It's not those words, not that you need to believe that there is much more to who I am than the self-talk in my head, because that is still self-talk in the head.

I believe there's more to who I am. And you better believe it too. It seems almost redundant, or pity, having to add words to our beautiful stillness.

When we were just doing the meditation, I became aware of the air conditioning sound that keeps us cool here, sometimes too cool. But right now it seems perfect. And of course, one might think, if you start thinking, wouldn't it be nice if we didn't have to listen to that sound, because then we would have this beautiful, complete stillness, and maybe even with some natural sounds, if we could open the windows and then we could hear some birds or the air, leaves.

Yes, it's helpful to have that total stillness when you can find it. But ultimately, stillness is not ultimately an auditory phenomenon, or there can be the beginning of it. Stillness, when you become aware of it, when you pay attention to it, makes you still.

So when you pay attention to outer silence, it's only through your inner stillness that you can pay attention to outer silence. So the moment you notice it's still here, you are still. There needs to be something in you that corresponds to that, and stillness is absence of sound.

When you listen to stillness, there might be a few sounds here and there, but mainly there's no sound. So you're listening to nothing. And that's the key, that's why it's so helpful, because you suddenly become aware of nothing.

And when you become aware of nothing, what's left? Just the awareness, which also is nothing, formless in other words. So whenever you encounter stillness, maybe where you live, or when you go for a walk in nature, or at night when most people have gone to bed and the noisy collective mind isn't surrounding you anymore, then use it, notice it, and then notice that in the moment of noticing, you become still.

But here, of course, there's not complete external silence, but that doesn't matter. Anything that arises can be helpful. So this sound that's continuous in the background, you can ask yourself, who is hearing this?

How is it possible for me to perceive that sound, to hear that sound? And then you notice your own awareness. I call it your own, it's not really.

You notice the awareness. And that's the stillness. So you don't need the external silence, although it can be very helpful.

But when you don't have it, you could be in the middle of a noisy city, can stand there or sit or walk and be aware of yourself as the awareness that perceives all the noise and all the movement. And then when you perceive all the movement around you, and you become aware of yourself as the perceiving awareness, then you have the stillness in the context of movement and noise, external noise. So there's no need to demand that external conditions should be perfect so that you can become still.

In fact, it's sometimes the case that it's precisely when external conditions are seemingly unhelpful, that can sometimes be a greater opportunity to find that true stillness. And especially that is the case when external circumstances have the appearance of actually being a hindrance, something disturbing, something happening that upsets the status quo in your life. And those are great opportunities because then your motivation for going deeper as you suffer, when things happen in your external life that, quote, unquote, not be happening, then you begin to suffer.

And as you suffer, the motivation eventually arises of going deeper, of finding the place where there is no suffering. And you could still suffer a little bit on the external level of your life. So sooner or later, we find in our life that life does things to us, seemingly putting obstacles in our path, seemingly having bad intentions towards us.

We experience diminishment in some form. Of course, the ego says, or the egoic self says, that's terrible. I don't want any diminishment.

Diminishment meaning loss of something that had become part of your sense of self. It could be loss of possessions, could be loss of a relationship, loss of a loved one, loss of a healthy body, diminishment of physical health, loss of your persona, of what other people think of you.[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 9:22)
One day they tell you that you're the greatest and the next day they tell you, you're awful. Diminishment of whatever kind is abhorrent to the ego itself. There's a beautiful saying, I believe it comes originally, I'm not sure, but it doesn't matter where it comes, it comes out of consciousness, so it doesn't really matter.

But I believe it comes originally out of Sufism. And that is, when the ego weeps for what it has lost, the spirit rejoices for what it has found. And those people who, there's no human, by the way, who does not experience this in life several times, sooner or later, the next one comes.

Some people experience it even very early in life. Some children have experienced loss of a parent, of both parents. So diminishment comes sooner or later.

How do you meet it? Recognize it when it comes, not as a monster or the work of some malevolent deity or demon that wants to sabotage your life, but as an opportunity also. Now, you may not be able to be grateful for it in the moment of it happening.

That would be perhaps too much to ask. But you will find that later, a year may pass, two years, depending on what it is, suddenly realize that it has taken you deeper into the essence of who you are because something was removed from you that you thought you were, but it was a fiction ultimately. You had identified with something that ultimately is not who you are, it's a temporary thing.

Possessions, not status, great physically strong body, good looks, relationship. And then retrospectively, very often you are able to be grateful for the loss, for the diminishment because it drove you deeper. It brought out the essence of who you are beyond any form.

Now, it does not do that to all humans. It's for everybody. Diminishment is only a potential deepening.

The possibility is there. And many, many humans are not able to use it because nobody has told them. The knowledge, this kind of spiritual knowledge is still very limited.

It is not part of mainstream culture. People are dying every day without having any true assistance. People who are approaching death, who are getting old, our mainstream culture still knows nothing.

It's just, let's prolong life as long as possible, even if it's totally pointless and it creates a lot of suffering. Let's just, because we don't know what to do with death. That's one of the reasons why the foundation will hopefully be able to reach people to use the opportunity of this greatest diminishment, which is death, the greatest, when as you approach death, an enormous opportunity for spiritual awakening, realization.

But many humans, of course, miss the opportunity of that diminishment and with the result that the ego becomes even more hardened through it, or in the words of Brother David, shriveled, shriveled up to an even harder, lifeless thing. Then either you carry continuous anger or resentment or despondency for years, which becomes part of your egoic identity. And the ego loves any kind of identity.

If it's a miserable one, doesn't matter, I'll have it. Just give me a strong identity. I take miserable any time over being nobody.

So the opportunity of diminishment is missed. Often you see when people, they're wealthy people and suddenly something happens, they lose their money and then they jump out of the window because the entire sense of self was associated with their possessions. There are people who lose their reputation.

You remember, of course, the case of Mr. Madoff. He is a few years ago who had this scheme, fraudulent scheme and people lost millions or billions of people who was investing with him on Wall Street. They lost, it was a pyramid.

It was a Ponzi scheme, I think is the word. So he was deceiving all these people and they lost all their money and he had accumulated billions and then finally it all collapsed. Now he's in prison and his sons couldn't take it.

One of his sons, apparently the sons didn't know what was going on, I don't know if that's true, but they were also working in his firm, in his company. I think, believe one died of cancer soon after and the other committed suicide. Would have been a great opportunity if only somebody had told them, you've lost your money, you've lost your reputation.

This is a great opportunity. And find yourself, the opening is there. But it's just lack of information, nobody told them.

I hadn't actually thought of this until this moment because we want to bring the teaching to places where it otherwise would not be, go or would not reach. And I just thought of Wall Street. Yes.

Yes. Yes. Yes.

Yes. We will donate books and CDs to Wall Street. Yes.

Yes. So we'll have to call Goldman Sachs tomorrow. See if they agree.

Now, they won't be very interested perhaps at the moment, but they may become interested in the future. Just wait. And then it has often happened.

And I personally know of people who had genuine abilities and then they couldn't produce them all the time. They only, the ability came when it wanted to come, healing for example.

[Speaker 3] (9:27 - 10:18)
I love your teachings and I have a small practice I do every day, I meditate. I feel it's helped me tremendously in my life. I feel that all of the questions basically come back to the same thing, obviously being present.

But in my spiritual journey, I've come across certain ideas that I don't quite understand and I'm wondering if you could comment on them. And those would be things like a manipulation of reality and I don't just mean the power of intention, which I feel that I have employed in my life consciously, but things more like lucid dreaming or functioning at a higher frequency, that phrase, or octaves of the multiverse or seeing auras.

[Speaker 1] (10:20 - 17:43)
Well, all these things are different levels functioning at a higher frequency is the one expression that I can relate to most because this is another way of putting what this is all about, so we are learning to function at a higher frequency. There are many other, there are other expressions that have come to people. Some of them who have gone very deeply, perhaps the person who came up with function as a higher frequency, maybe went deeply and then this is the words that came to somebody else who goes to the same deep place.

Different words may come because what words you use to describe an inner reality, a deeper reality depends on the conditioning of your mind. So you will use different words, but also what people consider important also is a reflection of their state of consciousness. Seeing auras is a wonderful thing.

It's not the ultimate thing that will transform your consciousness. It can come as a by-product of a certain development of consciousness. Sometimes it does, sometimes it doesn't.

It is not something to be sought as the ultimate thing to achieve because even if you see auras, you're still in the same state of consciousness, which may be egoic. In fact, you may become so identified with your ability to see auras that your ego gets even bigger. Then there are, as consciousness evolves, it sometimes happens that certain abilities arise that are considered some almost miraculous.

To some people, they come, and to some people they come and then they go again. In India, those abilities that arise spontaneously as a by-product of spiritual awakening are called siddhis. So siddhis are, for example, to be able to telepathy or to know what somebody's thinking or to move things, to create telekinesis or whatever, any of these things spontaneously, very often, are things that happen.

And all the real teachers in India, they do not teach you to develop siddhis. They all point to the fact that siddhis, you should not give them too much importance when they do come because then you lose track of what really matters, which is your state of consciousness. So all the great teachers have said, okay, siddhis are fine.

They tend to come and go. And even if they stay, it's not the main thing. If you get drawn into that, you get lost and you're no longer, the evolution is no longer proceeding.

And in most cases, if you get drawn into some extraordinary ability, ego usually comes in because it's something you identify with as an enhanced sense of self in your mind. And then it has often happened, and I personally know of people who had genuine abilities, and then they couldn't produce them all the time. The ability came when it wanted to come.

Healing, for example, healing through oils, like I knew one or two people personally when they went into the healing state, suddenly there was oil that manifested, fragrant oil in their hands, and they would put their hands on people, and often there would be a healing. And then they started to practice more. And then they began to realize, although they never said that, that they couldn't, the oils didn't come all the time.

Then they tried, there's no oil, and I've got a room full of people wanting to be healed. They're coming at eight o'clock. And some because they had an ego investment, it became their livelihood.

And so what one of them did, I'm not mentioning the name, of course, what one of them did, as was told to me by his personal assistant, he put like a rubber thing filled with oil under his armpits, and then there was a tube going down. He had short sleeves, but the tube just went up to the edge. And then whenever he, when he went like this, the oil would, putting pressure on his armpit, the oil would be squeezed out and would flow into his hands.

And nobody would know it because it ran down. There was a tube ended here, the sleeve ended there, and the oil would run down into his hands. And so he, because he had an ego involvement in it, he became, he was both genuine and a fraud at the same time.

It's not uncommon for people who attach great importance to these powers to become. They have both a genuine power, and when it leaves them, they are a fraud. So, but of course that's their spiritual path.

And at some point there is, well, who could say that this person cannot evolve beyond it? If they, if he realizes what he's doing, at some point awareness may come in, and then he may well give up doing his healing. So all these things, what these various terminologies, expressions, they come on the one hand, they come from people whose state of consciousness values that particular thing.

And then often they create that expression, say this is the ultimate thing. And of course the ultimate thing is the one that I can do. And there are teachers who can perform so-called miracles, and in by relatively unevolved humans that can be mistaken for great enlightenment.

But sometimes these abilities, like yogic abilities, there are people in India who can stop breathing for an hour or two or three. They can, they bury them in a box, a sealed box, and they emerge days later. And does it mean that they have gone beyond ego?

Not necessarily. In fact, their ego may be very big while they're in the box, and especially when they come out of it and everybody goes. So, but if these things come as a by-product of awakening, it's fine, but not giving them excessive importance.

That's really the main thing.

[Speaker 3] (17:43 - 17:45)
Could you say a word about octaves?

[Speaker 1] (17:46 - 17:48)
No. No. No idea.

[Speaker 3] (17:49 - 17:50)
Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (17:50 - 17:51)
I look it up on the internet.

[Speaker 3] (17:52 - 17:53)
Me too.

[Speaker 1] (18:19 - 55:03)
So how do you get out of the self-talk in the head? One, you need to know that that's self-talk in the head. If you don't know it's self-talk in the head, you become the self-talk in your head.

You become the voice in your head. You don't know it, you are it. So you have to, the vital step, and I cannot tell you how to do that.

That minimum of awareness needs to be there where you know that there's self-talk happening in my head and it's telling you some kind of story. It could be the briefest of stories, like I shouldn't have come here, or I don't fit in here, all these people are too spiritual for me, or I'm so spiritual, these people are not spiritual at all. It's all little stories in the head.

Even every fragment of self-talk is a little story in the head that goes around. And then you look at reality through the lens of the little story. It's not just one story, of course.

There comes another one, and another, and some stories are not little, they may be big stories about yourself and your life and what's gone wrong with it, or what's gone right with it. Even that's a story. More pleasant than if it's gone wrong.

So you need to know when the self-talk happens in the head, hmm, the knowing is not part of the self-talk. The knowing is just an awareness that there is self-talk. The moment there is an awareness that there is self-talk, the possibility of freedom from the self-talk opens up.

If that awareness is not there, there's nothing you can do. You have to wait until life knocks you over the head so that finally some awareness comes in, and you go, huh. So you might have to sleep on a banana skin or something because you have self-talk, and suddenly you go, huh.

Oh, life told you to wake up. Awakening, which is a term that's been used for thousands of years in the spiritual context, not in the conventional context, to awaken means to come out of sleep, in conventional language, terminology. But in spiritual terminology, to awaken means to awaken, one could say, basically, to awaken out of the self-talk in the head because the self-talk in the head is a form of hypnosis, self-hypnosis.

You are hypnotized, you have been hypnotized by society, your surroundings, the surrounding culture, even the language that you were taught to use that becomes a large part of the self-talk, although some of the self-talk is also accompanied by images, but a lot of it is language. And all that, you've been conditioned, and you are possessed by that, which is an energy formation, and humans are possessed by that and mistake that conditioned entity, which consists of thoughts, they're so trapped in it, they're so identified with it, they believe in every thought that comes into your head. It's absurd, but normal.

Well, another word, rather than absurd, I could say it's mad, but it's normal. It creates incredible amount of suffering, unnecessary suffering that humans create for themselves and for others. You can't create suffering for yourself without making others suffer who are close to you and whoever comes into contact with you.

An enormous amount of suffering is created by not realizing that large percentage of your problems consist of self-talk in the head. That's amazing. And once you see that, you say, okay.

And then you can have a little bit of awareness and say, who am I? Am I that story, or am I the one who sees that, who recognizes that there's self-talk? And in order to recognize that there's self-talk going on in you, that's not a thought, there's just an aware presence that, hmm.

And then the compulsive nature of self-talk lessens somewhat because some awareness has come in, the light of awareness has come in. Shh. And then you realize you are that light of awareness, you are the awareness.

And there's a shift, the head may not immediately stop, it'll want to carry on, the self-talk wants to carry on, there's a momentum to it. You can observe that momentum if you can't do it in yourself, you can observe it in others. Once they have a story and they're telling you their story, they can't stop, they want to go on and on.

And they don't want an end, if they're talking about their problems, they don't want an end to their problems, they want a continuation of the story, which is the problem. Ha, ha. Ha, ha.

Ha, ha. Ha, ha. Ha, ha.

Ha, ha. They don't know that, that's why we call it unconscious. They don't know that their primary thing is they want the continuation of the story, because that's the continuation of the fictitious person that cannot live without its story, its storyline.

And so those people, do they want an end to their problems? Of course, they will probably tell you, yeah, I'd love. No, they don't.

They don't want an end to their problems because that would be an end to their story, which is their identity. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. They don't want an end to their sense of identity.

I need my story. All the things that I've been telling myself in my mind about myself and other people and my parents and my relatives and my coworkers and my ex-wife and my ex-husband and what people did to me or what I did and shouldn't have done, failed to do. Who am I without, I can't let go of that.

I need to think about this more. So it becomes a habitual place, the habitual place of the mental noise where you feel that's me. And so every therapist knows that you always reach a point with your clients, patients, whatever, depending on the school of therapy, depends whatever you call your clients, your patients, whatever, there comes a point when you hit that resistance, they don't want to be free of their problems.

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. And that the big challenge is, there is this person going to overcome that barrier because that barrier is not just becoming free of my problems, but also becoming free of a very limited and ultimately fictitious sense of identity, the me. This mind-made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive.

To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation. Who you are as a person is of little or no importance. Who I am as a person is of no importance, at least while we're here.

And then hopefully that will have some effect on the rest of your life when you go about your business so that the me, the person, loses its overriding importance in your life. It's still there, but it's no longer what dominates your life, so it's really transcending the person. And being here together can give you an intensified experience of the shift from being primarily a person to being primarily a presence.

I don't speak to you as a person. My mind is used as a tool through which presence speaks. That's why I have a little book called Stillness Speaks.

Seems almost paradoxical. This entire teaching, if you even want to call it that, is not, does not come from a person. It only happens because the person got out of the way, became transparent, subsided, and so something deeper was able to come through into this dimension.

And that's your destiny and purpose also. So to be the presence consciously, to experience yourself as that underlying presence is liberating. It frees you from the density of being only that person, knowing yourself only as that personal self, being a self in the Buddhist sense, which is ultimately a delusion, deluded.

What emerges is, in Buddhist terms, or you might say the no self, which is not something, it's not an object, it has no form. Or in Hindu terms, the transcendent self emerges, the formless self, not the me anymore. And it's timeless, there's no past and future to it.

And so this is recognizing yourself as essentially timeless, timeless awareness, timeless consciousness. So when you look at me, you're not looking at a person, but you're connecting with yourself. So the depths of who you are is reflected back to you, that's all.

When you go back into your daily life, there may be times when the person reasserts itself completely, so you lose yourself again in the person. And then you wake up again, and some presence comes back. There may also be times when you are primarily the presence.

That's wonderful as that happens more and more in your life. With that comes an openness, a non-judgment, the judgmental mind subsides. And a real sense of connectedness or rather oneness with other beings, human beings, other life forms.

And so that means the way in which you experience your so-called life, the way in which you experience the world, people, situations, events, that changes the reactive person. The reactive me is no longer running the show. And where before there was a reactive, judgmental person, there's now a deep benevolent presence.

When the ego weeps for what it has lost, the spirit rejoices for what it has found. So there's no need to demand that external conditions should be perfect so that you can become still. In fact, it's sometimes the case that it's precisely when external conditions are seemingly unhelpful, that can sometimes be a great opportunity to find that true stillness.

And especially that is the case when external circumstances have the appearance of actually being a hindrance, something disturbing, something happening that upsets the status quo in your life. And those are great opportunities because then your motivation for going deeper as you suffer when things happen in your external life that quote, unquote, should not be happening, then you begin to suffer. And as you suffer, the motivation eventually arises of going deeper, of finding the place where there is no suffering.

And you could still suffer a little bit on the external level of your life. So sooner or later, we find in our life that life does things to us, seemingly putting obstacles in our path, seemingly having bad intentions towards us. We experience diminishment in some form.

Of course, the ego says, or the egoic self says, that's terrible, I don't want any diminishment. Diminishment meaning loss of something that had become part of your sense of self. It could be loss of possessions, could be loss of a relationship, loss of a loved one.

Loss of a healthy body, diminishment of physical health, loss of your persona of what other people think of you. One day they tell you that you're the greatest, and the next day they tell you you're awful. So diminishment of whatever kind is abhorrent to the egoic self.

There's a beautiful saying, I believe it comes originally, I'm not sure, but it doesn't matter where it comes, it comes out of consciousness, so it doesn't really matter. But I believe it comes originally out of Sufism. And that is, when the ego weeps for what it has lost, the spirit rejoices for what it has found.

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Some children have experienced loss of a parent, of both parents. So diminishment comes sooner or later. How do you meet it?

Recognize it when it comes, not as a monster or the work of some malevolent deity or demon that wants to sabotage your life, but as an opportunity also. Now, you may not be able to be grateful for it in the moment of it happening. That would be perhaps too much to ask.

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And then retrospectively, very often you are able to be grateful for the loss, for the diminishment because it drove you deeper. It brought out the essence of who you are beyond any form. Now, it does not do that to all humans.

It's for everybody, diminishment is only a potential deepening. The possibility is there. And many, many humans are not able to use it because nobody has told them.

The knowledge, this kind of spiritual knowledge is still very limited. It is not part of mainstream culture. People are dying every day without having any true assistance.

People who are approaching death, who are getting old, our mainstream culture still knows nothing. It's just, let's prolong life as long as possible, even if it's totally pointless and it creates a lot of suffering. Let's just, because we don't know what to do with death.

That's one of the reasons why the foundation will hopefully be able to reach people to use the opportunity of this greatest diminishment, which is death, the greatest, when as you approach death, an enormous opportunity for spiritual awakening, realization. But many humans, of course, miss the opportunity of that diminishment and with the result that the ego becomes even more hardened through it, or in the words of Brother David, shriveled, shriveled up to an even harder lifeless thing. Then either you carry continuous anger or resentment or despondency for years, which becomes part of your egoic identity.

And the ego loves any kind of identity. If it's a miserable one, doesn't matter, I'll have it. Just give me a strong identity.

I'll take miserable any time over being nobody. So the opportunity of diminishment is missed. Often you see when people, they're wealthy people and suddenly something happens, they lose their money and then they jump out of the window because the entire sense of self was associated with their possessions.

There are people who lose their reputation. You remember, of course, the case of Mr. Madoff. He is a few years ago who had this scheme, fraudulent scheme and people lost millions or billions of people who was investing with him on Wall Street.

They lost, it was a pyramid. It was a Ponzi scheme, I think is the word. So he was just deceiving all these people and they lost all their money and he had accumulated billions and then finally it all collapsed.

Now he's in prison and his sons couldn't take it. One of his sons, apparently the sons didn't know what was going on. I don't know if that's true, but they were also working in his firm, in his company.

I think, believe one died of cancer soon after and the other committed suicide. Would have been a great opportunity if only somebody had told them, you've lost your money, you've lost your reputation. This is a great opportunity.

And find yourself, the opening is there, but it's just lack of information. Nobody told them. I hadn't actually thought of this until this moment because we want to bring the teaching to places where it otherwise would not be, go or would not reach.

And I just thought of Wall Street. And we will donate books and CDs to Wall Street. So we'll have to call Goldman Sachs tomorrow.

See if they agree. Now they won't be very interested perhaps at the moment, but they may become interested in the future. Just wait.

So you have already, I believe everybody here has already experienced some forms of diminishment to use that word through the physical form, the psychological me entity. And for many, the reason why you're here is because you've gone through that and it has deepened you. Even the collapse of a relationship, you don't have to be married, but you have a relationship, doesn't go well.

It ends, it's a little death, it can be painful. It leaves a little hole in you and takes, it seemingly rips something out of you. And for quite a while you feel it.

It's not pleasant, but that too is an opportunity. So when the ego weeps for what it has lost, oh dear, it's all terrible. I'll tell you what happened.

And I'll tell myself what happened. Even if nobody's listening, it'll go off in your head. Oh my God, I can't take any more of this.

I just can't take it, it's just too much. What's the point of it all? Just completely.

It's good to act out the ego sometimes because then you can actually see it. It's like a reflection in the mirror because it's funny because you remember everybody knows, familiar with that in some way. And that's why it becomes funny.

I'm learning from Marianne yesterday because she has other ways of acting out the ego. It's a little bit more feminine, but I can try that too. Woo.

It may look a little weird when I do it though. But there's a lot in it that doesn't really need to be explained in words. Just this simple gesture, implies a self-image to look at yourself through a self-image.

Look at me.

[Speaker 3] (55:31 - 55:59)
In this third and final part of our series on conscious manifestation 2020, Eckhart looks at what's possible once we come into presence, the fullness, the freedom, the natural abundance of life. Here's Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (56:02 - 4:34:16)
The collective suffering that humans are experiencing at the present time is also an opportunity that's opening up for millions of humans, not that they're all going to recognize that and be able to use it, but some will, perhaps many an opportunity for the beginning of an awakening, or perhaps even more than just the beginning of an awakening, the opportunity for an awakening of consciousness. Because if you don't, then you stay stuck in suffering. And you cannot create, manifest a better life for yourself or a better world from the place of suffering.

You need to have gone beyond suffering in order to be able to manifest a better world. So the foundational step then is what I just described. And then you, as the transmutational process continues in you, then you are able occasionally to perhaps have certain thoughts that are no longer in conflict with the emotional reality in you because there has been a transmutation of the fear.

And when you can feel that intense presence, this is a good time, if you even want to do it, you can have a visualization or an affirmation of the goodness of life or the abundance of life, that life is abundant and it's no longer a lie. Because when you sense that presence in you, before it was fear, perhaps, and then it's become presence. There is a feeling of intense aliveness.

There is a heightened aliveness in that presence that would not have been there if life had not challenged you and first made you suffer and then caused you to become more conscious in order to transcend the suffering. That's how evolution happens. And so there is an aliveness in that conscious presence that is inseparable from what we may call abundance.

That brings me to one of my favorite sayings of Jesus. He said, he said, I want you to have the abundant life. That's in one translation.

In another translation, it says, he says, I want you to have the fullness of life. So some Bibles translate it as abundant life. Some Bibles translate it as the fullness of life.

I want you to have the fullness, the fullness of life. He's talking, yes, abundant life. What does that mean?

Abundance in conventional terms, when you think of abundance, we think of many things. You can have lots of things when you have abundance, but true abundance is something, it's not lots of things, although maybe lots of things may come to you, but you don't need lots of things in order to experience abundance. You experience abundance through experiencing the presence within you is the abundance.

It is the fullness of life, the fullness of life that is within you now. Oh, and then we come to another saying of Jesus since I'm talking about Jesus, let's use another very important. The most important thing anybody's ever said about manifesting things is in one sentence that Jesus said that you don't need all the books written about manifesting.

Once you understand that one sentence, you don't need to read any of them. And that sentence is when you pray for something, believe that you have received it and it will be yours. Believe that, not, now the key, of course, is not believe that you will receive it.

The key is believe that you have received it and then it will be yours. The will be refers to the thing, whatever it is that you pray for. But what does that mean?

How can you believe that you have received it when obviously you haven't received it? Now, this can only be understood together with his statement about the fullness of life. It is when you realize the fullness of life, that is the power of your own consciousness.

It's not your own, but let's just call it your own. It's universal consciousness. And this awareness, this presence is universal consciousness.

It is, let's temporarily call it your consciousness. It's not yours because if you say your consciousness, you have a separation between you and consciousness, but there is no duality here. There's only the consciousness that you are.

So when you realize that this, the power of your consciousness, the power of consciousness is the fullness of life. And you can then, nothing that you could add to yourself could be any greater than that. So when you realize the fullness of life, which you can only realize in the present moment, when emotions, the emotion of fear or other negative emotion has become transmuted into intense presence, then this intense presence is the fullness of life.

Anything else that you could obtain in life and that you as a person may want or may enjoy or may need on a personal level is the icing on the cake. Now to this important realization that all manifestation, you can only be a really successful manifestation practitioner if you realize that whatever you manifest is the icing on the cake, because you already have the cake. You are the cake.

If you don't realize that, then life is frustrating because even whatever you do manifest, if you think that's the cake, it's not going to satisfy you for long. It might even make you sick if you eat too much cake. It may make you sick.

So the cake is the essence of who you are, is the presence. If you bring an image of what you want to obtain or achieve into that feeling of presence or aliveness, then that can become a very powerful manifestation. You want to have a better place to live perhaps, whatever it is.

But you don't need it to experience the fullness of life. You can only be successful at manifesting if you don't need whatever it is that you want to manifest in order to give you the experience of the fullness of life, which we could use other words to describe it, the experience of being fully yourself, the experience of having made it, the experience of a fuller sense of identity, whatever it may be, because people don't, they don't want the thing that they think they want.

They want the feeling that that thing will give them. You don't want the car just for the sake of the car. You want the feeling that is associated with a car and the mental image that's associated with I am the owner of this car, it's my car.

That's what they want. The car itself would be meaningless. So they want, whatever they want is always a secondary thing.

They want this fullness of life through something else. So I'm really describing how manifestation does not work. And even if it did work in that way, and sometimes it does in a limited way, it's not the answer and it doesn't make you happy.

And it won't ultimately solve anything. So the powerful manifesto, if that's a word, is the one who was already in touch with the fullness of life and manifest from the fullness of life. And again, Jesus said, so many beautiful things there.

Find only the kingdom of heaven that is within you, which is again, the fullness of life, which is the presence, the unconditioned consciousness, and all the things that you need or think you need will be added onto you. That's an amazing thing. So it's even when you do not specifically attempt or practice manifesting specific things in your life, which some people do and some don't, it's an interesting practice.

Even if you did want to manifest specific things, your life will change as a result of being in touch with that dimension within you, the fullness of life, because from there, manifestation happens. It even happens when you're no longer even want to manifest because you're fine, but you represent then a different level of consciousness in this world. And the way in which you experience this world changes.

And the way in which you affect the world changes. So you cannot help but manifest when you undergo this shift in consciousness. And even if you don't undergo it fully, you still begin to manifest a different world.

First of all, a different world for yourself, because the way in which you experience the world depends on your state of consciousness. One person may react to the same circumstances very differently from another person, depending on their level of consciousness. So one person gets encounter a particular form of adversity, a very unconscious person, and react in their way.

So they experience a very different world from a person who meets the same adversity from a different, from an awakened state of consciousness, experience it a different world. And not only that, the way in which the, let's say, whatever event you're experiencing in the present moment, the way in which you meet this event, the state of consciousness from which you meet this event determines the subsequent development of that event. This is a somewhat esoteric thing, but you, the so-called world and your state of consciousness are a single phenomenon.

There is not really a world if nobody experiences it. So the consciousness that you are and the world are a single thing. When your consciousness changes, the world changes.

First of all, the way in which you experience the world changes, it basically means the world changes for you. And if the world changes for a sufficient number of people, then even the so-called outside world changes. So for the world to change, there needs to be a shift in consciousness.

But you begin to experience this in your own life first, and then you begin to inhabit a different world. So you always, you manifest, of course, always, most people manifest, as I'm sure you know, most people manifest unconsciously because they're conditioning, the way in which your mind is conditioned determines how they experience events in their life. And that becomes their world.

So they manifest every moment. So how do you manifest your experience of this moment? That's another way of looking at manifestation.

How do you manifest this moment? It depends on your level of state of consciousness. And so there is your freedom.

You are not dependent ultimately on external conditions. And that's when you realize that, that you are not at the mercy of what's happening or not happening around you. So you develop, this is a wonderful realization, a wonderful freedom, that your consciousness is not dependent on this or that happening or not happening.

That's an incredible realization, and it's a sense of liberation. Meditation is really all about becoming still without going to sleep. Or let me correct what I just said.

It's not so much becoming still, but being still. Becoming would imply that you have to go somewhere or do something. Being is already here and now.

And in a sane life, a conscious life, a harmonious life, there needs to be a balance between becoming and being. Becoming is doing things, getting things done, and so on. In this world, dealing with things, creating things, achieving things.

And being is about being aware of the present moment, which, after all, is all you ever have. Whatever you achieve through becoming in the future eventually turns into the present moment. So as I speak to you, the meditation, if we even want to call it that, it's perhaps best to forget about the word.

And as I speak, be aware of the silence or the stillness between the words. Being aware means just notice that it's there. It's very simple.

So you notice that in addition to the words, there's another dimension that is easily overlooked. And that's the dimension of stillness, which we could also call space or spaciousness. So when you notice that there are two, so to speak, two dimensions here, the dimension of words, which you hear and which then become thoughts, in your head, and the dimension of no thing, spaciousness.

So you just notice, that's all that's required, that there is that dimension also present. So you notice it in between words and even behind the words, so to speak. Now when you notice it, what happens inside you?

What does it mean to notice the stillness? Be aware of the stillness. It means you have become still inside.

It means you're conscious, but at that moment, at this moment, you're not thinking, but you're alert. Present, completely here, but not thinking. So that's the realization of the dimension of depths within you, and without that realization, your entire life is a surface phenomenon.

You run around on the surface of being, never satisfied for long, frustrated, almost always feeling there's something important missing in your life, and of course there is. But you can't find it on the surface of your life, the horizontal dimension, looking here and there. You have to not become still, but realize that that dimension of stillness is already in you.

And another word to describe it is to say it's this alert presence that you can sense right now. And you may find the mind wanting to come in from time to time and say something about it, or even deny it, or say, I don't understand it, or say, what's the point? I have other problems to worry about.

I'll become still when I have solved all the other problems. But why people experience, many people, most people experience their life as a succession of problems, and ultimately a frustrating experience is because they haven't discovered that dimension, the most vital thing or no thing to discover within yourself. That stillness is also power.

It's the source, not only of yourself, it is the source of life. And nothing creative can ever come into your life if you're not connected with that. Whenever you feel joy, for a moment perhaps, in your daily life, or a moment of loving interaction with another human being, or an animal, or when you suddenly see beauty somewhere and you go, oh.

Now, without you necessarily being aware of it, there has arisen a moment of stillness in you, if only three seconds, or perhaps a bit more. And it's only there that the joy of life arises. Or the ability to really connect with another human being.

Without it, without the stillness, you have only your conceptual mind thinking, thinking, thinking, and you relate to the world through the conceptual mind, judging, thinking, judging, interpreting continuously. The inner self-talk, the monologue, which may become a dialogue in your head. You're no good, says one voice.

The other one says, I'm trying, I'm trying. Whatever the voice in your head is doing. And then you try to relate to another human being through that.

And before long, concepts come in, judgments come in. So there's always a sense of insufficiency, of lack, of not enough. There's always conflict arising when the dimension of stillness is not at all operating in your life.

Or very briefly, it's not enough. Yes, it's good if you can occasionally experience joy and a sense of aliveness, and see beauty, and a loving feeling towards another human being. Not the egoic love, but a goodwill flowing out towards another human being.

Yes, it's wonderful, but if it's only brief moments, then yes, at least that keeps you going. But it could be much deeper. It could operate in your life continuously so that you never lose touch with it.

But the first step is realizing it's there always. It's already there. It's already here.

I wrote in the little book called Stillness Speaks, I said, you're never more truly yourself than when you're still. And you might think that's a strange statement. Most people, when they talk about myself, talk about their personal history.

And their personal problems. And their life situation. When they talk about myself, that's what they refer to.

They refer to my relationships, my work situation, my financial situation, my home situation, my health, me and my life. And of course, all that, yes, that is the case. But is that who you really are?

Even if you have failed at everything in your life, most people's life is a mixture of successes and failures. But let's say every decision you ever made was a disaster or resulted in disaster. And everything went wrong and you failed at everything.

But suddenly, you encounter that dimension of consciousness within you. And you would go, wow. It liberates you from the limited person.

And suddenly, there's a deeper identity in you that's not the narrative of the person. A deeper presence in you that frees you, it liberates you from the person. So even if the person has done a lot of unskillful things, to use a Buddhist term, Buddhists like to use the term unskillful, which means really bad.

You've done something unskillful, one unskillful thing after another, resulting in a disastrous life experience. And yet, at this moment, you can awaken to presence. Then, retrospectively, you are grateful for all your wrong decisions.

Because they've brought you to this point. That's just an extreme example. You're more likely to become drawn towards the dimension of consciousness if you experience the unsatisfactoriness of normal existence.

At some point, unless you're extremely deluded, which is also not uncommon, at some point, you experience that there's a strong element of unsatisfactoriness in normal existence, normal life. There's always something going wrong, even if you practice positive thinking, which is a great thing to do, and yet you are still defiant. Why doesn't life leave me alone?

Why do I need to always get silent? If it's not one thing, it's another. You sort out one thing here, your job, professional situation, the relationship problem comes up, or the other way around.

Or there's a living situation. If you move from here to there, it looked great at first, and then it turned out to be not great at all. Experience that you never arrive at a lasting sense of satisfaction, that you can finally say, oh, I have arrived.

Feels good to be here now. That only comes when you discover the deeper dimension of yourself through presence. So it is a dimension of consciousness, and then at first you begin to shift back and forth.

Sometimes you're present, sometimes you lose presence completely, and you're just totally in the ego, conditioned ego entity reacting to things in its conditioned way, at the mercy of fear and desire torn by this and that, this way and that way, at the mercy of your mind completely identified with every thought that arises, very unpleasant state. And then suddenly, presence is back. And it may only require you to remember that there is such a thing as presence.

And where to find it? Stepping out of the stream of thinking for a moment, becoming present this moment, becoming aware of this moment. This is present at this moment.

But what is this moment? Well, there are levels to it. This moment is, of course, first, whatever you're experiencing at this moment, which implies sense perceptions.

Whatever you experience in this moment is this moment. So it's already helpful if you become more alert to your sense perceptions, no matter where you are. Give attention to your sense perceptions in this moment.

That implies there's less thinking and instead awareness is arising. And you're really looking, you're really listening or touching, whatever it may be, or tasting. It's just a complete shift.

A moment ago you were stuck in your mind and then suddenly you wake up. And that's why the term awakening is often used in many spiritual traditions. It's to step out of this stream of thinking that when you're identified with it, it drags you along, never stops.

Identified means you derive your sense of self from it. It's you, but it's not you. You think it's you.

And then you step out of that and it's like awakening from a dream. The dream of you, the person. The script that otherwise you act out, like an act on stage.

So you wake up, just as you awaken from a sleep-like state in the morning, dream state, you awaken into the present moment. And then something may be happening in the present moment. Maybe you have to take some action, maybe you have to say something, or maybe not.

We don't know. But if there's a situation in the present moment that requires some kind of response, you need to do something or say something, and if you become present, then your response comes from a deeper level. Whether they're words that you speak to a difficult person, or whether some action you take in a difficult, challenging situation, the action or the words, then if you're present, there's an alertness there.

And out of that alertness, there's a flow of a greater intelligence than the egoic mind intelligence. A greater, deeper, higher intelligence can use your mind, and then you're not acting out the script of your old habitual reactions. You can respond to a situation in a fresh and new and more intelligent way.

And you break the karmic wheel which goes on and on, repetition, same thing, action, reaction, action, reaction. So you may find as presence comes more into your life, this alertness, you feel the way in which you deal with people and situations changes, becomes more intelligent. But that is a deeper intelligence, which we could call is more closely related to what we could call wisdom.

Because intelligence, the way we interpret it in our civilization is a fairly narrow thing. There are many intelligent people in this world, and there have been always, and they've created havoc. They've got their university degrees, whatever.

Maybe they're actually also very good at doing IQ tests, and yet they produce politicians, many other areas of life. You can see, well, they're supposed to be intelligent, but their actions seem to show that it's not enough to have this limited type of intelligence. There's a complete lack of something deeper, wisdom, and wisdom arises out of presence.

Wisdom is the intelligence that comes through presence. The realization of yourself as essence identity can be continuous, and that is, you could call that a spiritual practice, but it's not really the right term. It's simply continuously directing attention in your daily life, in addition to paying attention to whatever you need to pay attention to, directing attention to what?

Directing attention to attention. Becoming aware, like, for example, now, becoming aware that you are conscious right now. That's a strange thing.

There's no content to that. There's simply a presence. And for that to happen, and I'm finally getting to it, that is, there needs to be the cessation of thought.

And so this is my invitation to you. You do not need to think continuously in your daily life. If your mind tells you that if you do not think and do not worry, then your life is going to collapse, that is not true.

It's a lie. But your mind might either explicitly or implicitly say that you need to, I need to really think about my life. Thinking has its place.

It's a wonderful tool. It can be used for manifesting. It can be used for creating.

It's a tool. But if it takes you over, if you're identified with a tool, then it comes to possess you, and that's a terrible limitation. So the new state of consciousness is a mixture of thought and spaciousness, so that you can go about your daily life, walking from point A to point B, in that state of simple, aware presence.

Let's do it now. I'm calling it do, but it's not doing involved. Simply become aware of yourself, as you sit here, just as I am aware of myself as a conscious presence.

This is a very strange thing. It's not, you can't say, you cannot become an object to yourself in this. Everything else is an object that arises in your consciousness, an object of consciousness.

But knowing yourself, you cannot be an object in your own consciousness. So you cannot know yourself in a subject-object relationship at the deepest level. You can only know yourself as the eternal subject.

In fact, there is a space of stillness in that moment, of knowing yourself as the essence identity. There is an alive sense of stillness and presence. Let's separate.

Let's just say, my two hands, this is thought, you're thinking, and then you go, and here's a space of no thought, just awareness. You can't define what that is. You can't think about it.

You can only be it. Stillness is one word we could use to point to it. Stillness.

It has nothing to do whether there's noise outside or not. Inner stillness is the cessation of thinking without loss of consciousness. And that is realizing yourself as the unconditioned consciousness, because everything else is conditioned by the past.

But that is the unconditioned in you. That is your essence identity. You cannot, by exercising willpower, that is not the way to go to stop yourself from thinking.

I'm not even saying stop thinking as an active practice, but simply become so alert that thinking stops by itself. One way you can do it is by becoming aware of sense perceptions. Acutely aware of sense perceptions.

I give the example in The Power of Now of a cat watching the mouse hole. And the cat watching the mouse hole is in that state of absolute attention. And the cat goes, no, you don't have to stare like that.

But that is the state of that is this state of awareness, consciousness, that's the only thing in your life that you cannot question. That the only thing that is absolutely and undoubtedly real. Everything else you can question, for example, whether our gathering here is a dream or not, you don't really know.

It could be that you are dreaming, that you're sitting here and there's a man talking on a chair suggesting to you that you might be dreaming. You cannot, as many philosophers have pointed out, you cannot know for sure that this life that you're experiencing is not a kind of dream. And from one certain one perspective, it is a kind of dream.

Look at, I like to sometimes look at old photographs, made, taken in 1900, early days of photography, 1920, whenever, of street scenes or gatherings. And you look, you can go to second-hand shops and they sell sometimes old photographs. You can buy one for a penny or two.

You have no idea who these people are, nor has anybody else an idea who these people are. But they're running around the city street, excited about this or that. And then there's another gathering, people sitting around a table, eating and laughing in this old photo.

And where is that now? It has evaporated like a dream. Nobody even remembers who they are.

And that is the same with anything that you experience here. It quickly evaporates. So there is a dream-like quality to human existence, any existence.

So you could say, OK, maybe it's all a dream, that may well be. But one thing you cannot doubt, that is that you are conscious. Because if you're not conscious, there couldn't be a dream.

A dream can only arise in the light of consciousness. So, the one thing, whether or not this is a dream or not, it becomes irrelevant. The only thing that matters, if it is a dream, is whether you can realize what the essence of the dream is.

Consciousness. And you can only realize that directly, here and now, as this. Oh, Descartes, of course, the French philosopher, said, I think, therefore I am.

If he had waited a little bit longer, before saying anything, he could have come to the point of cessation of thinking, and then he could have made the more profound statement, I am conscious, therefore I am. Thinking is only an expression of consciousness, a surface expression of consciousness. This mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive.

To be free, you awaken to who you are, beyond your history and your life situation. I will ring this bell and I'll ask you to follow the sound with your attention. So after ringing the bell, the sound will go on for quite a while.

Just follow the sound until you can't hear anything anymore, and then now ring it again. You may notice, in order to still perceive the sound as it gradually subsides, you need to become more alert. The fainter the sound is, the more alert you need to be to still be aware of it.

So the alertness, as the sound gradually subsides, the alertness increases. So you go, at first it's easy, the sound is there, and then it subsides, and you need to be more attentive, listen more acutely. And now I will ring it again.

Follow the sound with your attention, and when you can no longer hear the sound, see what is left when the object of your conscious attention, which was the sound, disappears, and what is left is the pure attention itself. Let's do this. So as the sound subsides, silence remains.

The silence that was there before the sound started, and you become aware of the silence. But the silence is the absence of sound, so you're really becoming aware of nothing. Silence is the absence of sound, so you're becoming aware of nothing.

It seemed almost impossible, but it is possible, because really, what remains is awareness itself. The awareness that was there that enabled you to listen, you are the awareness that was listening to the sound, and when the object that arose in the awareness disappears, what remains is the awareness itself. So to follow the sound with your attention to its death, because the sound dies in the end, the form that was there, the form, which is a in this case, one could say a sound is a form, too, auditory formation.

The form dies. What remains when the form dies? Just you can't really name it, because it's not an object, only objects can be named.

But we name it anyway. Consciousness remains. Your attention remains, whatever you want to call it.

Pure awareness remains. And you know that pure awareness remains, because you are it. You become aware of awareness.

One more time. One child says to the other child, look, I can do this, you can't do what I can do. I can do this, but you can't.

Or the child says, my dad has a bigger car than yours. You can't say to that child, don't do that. You are emphasizing your form identity.

But you know that's what's happening. It's a natural tendency in humans to emphasize. It could be a possession.

I have more than you. It could be my body looks better than yours, or is stronger than yours, or bigger than yours, or taller than yours. Or it could be I have an ability that you don't have.

Children, start with that. I can play the piano. What can you play?

I play the ping pong machine. So to emphasize form identity is a natural thing. There is a point where this should come to a natural conclusion.

I would say in a more evolved humanity, the emphasis of form identity as a person reaches adulthood, a little bit after, is replaced at the moment, this is not what's happening, but can be replaced by something more genuine and deeper. And that is finding your essence identity that's underneath your form identity. And that is spiritual dimension, finding the spiritual dimension in yourself so that who you think you are is no longer, you still have a form identity.

Yes, that level is still there, undoubtedly. You have certain abilities. You're good at this, you're not good at that.

You're better than the other person in this thing, but not as good as in the other thing. That remains, but it no longer gives you your sense of who you are. Sitting down mindfully.

Laughter Contrary to popular belief, you don't have to be slow to be mindful, or it probably helps, but you can be in a rush and still be mindful. That's actually a lovely experience of high energy, which means you're still present with every movement and not excessively focused on some future point, and then you just go. It's wonderful.

That's contained in the ancient Zen saying, hurry slowly. Seems to be a contradiction. Of course, what it means is on the outside you hurry, but on the inside you rest in being.

Doing, being. You don't get lost in doing, nor do you get lost in being. Om Om But if I had to be lost somewhere, I'd rather be lost in being, of course.

It varies from person to person to what degree you're more drawn to what's doing, to what degree you're more drawn to what's being. Almost nobody's right in the middle. I'm more drawn to what's being, as you might have noticed.

But I'm able to do. Talking is doing. Traveling, writing, speaking, is doing.

But the strange thing is, in my case, all the doing that I do, well, not all, but all the significant doing that I do is concerned with pointing the way to being. The speaking, the writing, traveling. But you may have a business, or you may have some function in this world, and everybody has to find some balance between doing and being, which doesn't mean...

The important thing is that initially, perhaps, it happens to many people, you have a compartment in your life when you become still and present. Sometimes it's associated with meditation, meditation practice. Or it's when you go out in nature, or when you're sitting alone in your room, and then you are able to become still, and that's already a huge gain in consciousness.

You're able to become still and present, and feel the being dimension of you. And then you go back into the world, and you start doing again, and for a while, you easily lose yourself again in the doing, and you're just as lost as everybody else in the doing, until you come back to your meditation practice, or to your room, or into nature, and then you go back into being. But eventually, and gradually, the two merge.

So when you're doing, you're not totally lost in it, you're not totally dragged along by your mind and by external things that demand, continuously demand your attention. You're able to deal with things, but not... Don't become crazy.

And when you're in being, the danger with being, we know what the danger with doing is. The primordial doing is in your mind, thinking is doing, so that's the place where you really get lost, and then it gets externalized, you get lost in stuff. But, the...

In being, when you go into being, when you're present, you're above, as I put it, you're above thought. Here's thought, this is where the human dimension, and then there's being. Being is not just above, it also, it envelops it all, but let's for a moment, let's look at it like this, it's helpful.

So, you rise above thought, and your dog is here, below thought. Doesn't mean the dog is not conscious, but the dog does not do thinking the way you do. The dog does not have an opinion about you, or about him or herself.

So, the dog exists below thought, and when you become present, you rise above thought. And below the dog, there's the tree, and the plants, they are very deeply still connected with being. The tree is, there's a consciousness in the tree, but it's impossible for us to conceive of it.

You can be sure that it's very slow, and it's a, it's a, nobody knows how it, how it is aware. It has no self-awareness, of course, but the tree is even more peaceful than the dog. So the tree vibration, this is why a tree is, now this has been recognized in ancient, many ancient cultures, and certain trees were considered sacred, so people had a special relationship with trees.

Because before they became so mind-dominated, they had a little bit more sensitivity towards energy fields, and they could sense something in the tree that they called sacred. They could sense the deep stillness within which the tree exists. Whereas modern humans, those who are completely identified with mind, do not have that deep relationship with the tree, except when you become present.

Because you look at the tree through your mental concepts, and that's, even the moment you name it, the veil has already come up between you and it, and that veil is the concept that the label that you give it. And then the illusion arises that you, once you have named something, then the illusion arises that you know what it is. So you've attached a label to something, and you think, now I know what it is, it's a tree.

It's an oak tree, what else do you want to know? Or you can go more deeply and attach other labels, so you can cut it into little pieces, and put a piece under a microscope, add more labels. That's the conceptual knowing that we've been talking about.

It covers up the other dimension, the deeper knowing. When you can be with a tree and join with the tree in that become aware of that space of stillness in which the tree exists. To enter that meditative state of consciousness, because that's what it is all about.

Meditation is about a shift in consciousness away from concern with doing and thinking and becoming aware really directly aware of the present moment. And that's perhaps the easiest and most accessible starting point for most people to enter the state of presence which is the aim of meditation, is to get you into that state of absolute presence in this moment. And that's being.

Becoming aware of being. Most people are always engaged in doing. That includes thinking continuously.

And a lot of the thinking that people do is not very uplifting. A lot of the thinking that happens compulsively creates negative feelings. And a lot of thinking is actually harmful and dysfunctional.

It doesn't serve any useful purpose, but you just can't stop it. Or you think you can't, but you can. And that's of course what meditation is about.

To realize there is in you a deeper dimension of consciousness. Deeper or higher, you could call it. Depending from where you look at it.

Deeper or higher than thinking. And that is the state of presence in the now. So it's an amazing realization for most people that they can actually easily access that state of presence by bringing their attention into the present moment like now.

So I would kind of or I'm talking my aim is to talk you, so to speak, into that state of meditation. And it helps if while I talk you can become conscious or aware of the small gaps between words as I talk. So you're just aware not only of the words of course you hear the words you take them in but you're also aware that there are little spaces between the words.

You just acknowledge that. These are little meditative gaps, so to speak. And in order to be really aware of the meditative gaps you can't be thinking.

You're just aware aware of that space. There is what does it mean aware? There is a presence in that awareness.

You know in that awareness like now you know that you are here as a conscious presence without any thought telling you that. In other words you become aware of yourself not as a person because to be a person you need to be thinking about you and your life and your problems and so on. But there is a deeper dimension in you, deeper than the person.

And this is what we are here to access So you become aware that really on the surface of your life there is the person with a past and a future and all the thinking and the emotions that keep the person going, of course. And so you're happy one day, unhappy the next. Happy one day unhappy the fluctuations of the person it's quite normal.

And the person is always concerned with doing and thinking and the next thing or the past the future. The past is never really present. When you become present like now you realize that there is a deeper part in you there is a deeper dimension to who you are where you are more than a person where you are a presence, a conscious presence.

The question is can you sense feel or be aware of yourself at this moment as a conscious presence without which there couldn't even be a person so it's almost like saying the person is the surface of the ocean or the ripples or the waves on the surface of the ocean but you are not just the ripples or waves on the surface of the ocean you are the ocean so there is a deeper presence in you and to access that and to sense that in yourself to sense yourself as the presence a presence that is what liberates you from being completely trapped and limited in an exclusively personal identity in other words there is more to you than meets the eye you are deeper than you ever knew by thinking about yourself and it's not difficult to access that dimension in yourself can one describe it well one can give a few pointers let's see if that makes sense the pointers I'm giving you now let's see if they make sense in your own experience at this moment sensing yourself as a presence there is a peacefulness there that is really the essence of what is sometimes called inner peace the person the surface of the ocean the waves and the ripples of the ocean cannot be at peace for long it fluctuates occasionally if things happen to go well yeah I'm happy it never lasts for very long and then the storm comes and big waves come or little little irritated waves whatever then you are unhappy but there is a deeper if let's say you are a ripple on the surface of the ocean with a name and a date of birth and a past and a future and problems and suddenly the ripple realizes there is more to me and realizes oh I'm actually much deeper and vaster I'm the ocean manifesting as the ripple and so you are the universe or the consciousness that underlies the sense perceived universe manifesting temporarily as a person you are the universe becoming conscious of itself at this moment in your life as a person you are not separate from the totality of the universe you are the universe the universe has or the consciousness that underlies the universe has given form to who you are temporarily in order to experience itself as a person it's an amazing thing and the universe here is in the process of becoming more conscious that's what the entire evolution of the universe is about, it's consciousness so you your life is part of the evolutionary impulse towards greater consciousness and if your life is not primarily about greater consciousness, which actually you can build into whatever you do, it doesn't mean you stop doing and just say all I'm interested in is consciousness no, it needs to flow into what you do if that if your life purpose is not aligned with the conscious evolving consciousness of the universe then what is the point of it all and then sooner or later you get very frustrated and things become pointless so you are here to become more conscious because that's what the universe has put you here for instead of universe you can use other terms you are more comfortable with them the universal intelligence God so, right now in addition to being a person which right now is not important it becomes important again when we finish our meditation I'm sure but right now something else is more important that's realizing yourself as the presence coming into the present moment and feeling just being aware right now that you are conscious if you were not conscious you wouldn't be able to hear hear, see, perceive anything the fact that you can perceive things the fact that you can think the fact that you can have emotions all implies that you are conscious because the meditative state is becoming aware directly of that consciousness sometimes the word that is used also is stillness right now you become still you become aware of just being of being that presence and that feels energizing you don't go to sleep you are actually alert and still at the same time and now you access an intelligence that is deeper than the thinking mind by entering that state of alert presence and then when you think again you are connected with a with the source of all intelligence with creativity you are you become empowered your thinking and your doing and your actions are then aligned with a deeper purpose of the universe not just little egoic desires so all this is so terribly important aligning your life with that presence so you need to during your normal day I'll give you a few hints how to invite that presence into your life by invite I mean direct your attention to it because it's always there that really is what supports you in life and if you can be aware of that fear anxiety happen less and less in your life because you can feel supported by that vast presence which is not just your own presence, it is the universal presence of consciousness you connect with that you are that so on a day normal day you go to work or whatever you do as much as you can become aware of just brief moments of yourself as the presence in addition to being a person so one of the things I recommend is it sounds almost too simple but from time to time look at the sky for a few seconds you look up it doesn't matter whether it's blue or cloudy today here is the early afternoon, happens to be a sunny day look at the sky for a moment you are looking but not thinking you could do that with anything but sky is easier because there is this vast expanse that has some correlation with the presence of stillness within you so you look and for a moment there is just the sky and you can sense yourself as the presence that is perceiving and you are not thinking so there is a brief moment of not thinking but not going to sleep alertness without thinking that's the key to bring that into your life more often and don't believe when your mind tells you that you need to think and think and think all the time bring in gaps of just alert presence, that's the being the rest is the doing the two need to be a balance in your life between being and doing, otherwise you go mad a civilization that completely loses touch with the being dimension is going to self-destruct at this moment you are aware of where you are you are aware of the room you are aware that you are breathing in addition to that sense perceptions perhaps some feelings a few thoughts floating through your head or maybe no thought maybe just a clear sky inside you with just little puffy clouds here and there little thoughts and then disappear again so perhaps you are the clear sky and the clear sky is the awareness so the essence of our meditation is to be aware right now whether or not your eyes are closed or open, doesn't matter whether you are aware that you are aware whether you are conscious that you are conscious can you sense your own consciousness it's kind of subject and object merging within you because usually when you are aware of something the subject is aware of the object but when you are aware of awareness the subject is no longer aware of an object because it is just awareness you are aware that you are aware object and subject merge into one self-awareness presence that's the sky, the clear sky occasional thoughts may come not a problem and you can be aware with every cell of the body an alertness that pervades the entire body it's not the body anymore it's just the space you are that presence there's nothing to know about it beyond that you can't know it you can only be it and as you no longer identify with the mind, the thoughts the presence can shine through the mind can even use your mind and inspire your mind another word we can use is stillness that's the stillness within you vibrantly alive stillness and of course you don't necessarily need to sit still to be in stillness you can move as you know and be in stillness that's the beauty of it you can do things and be in stillness can interact with another human being can even speak to them and be in stillness as I'm speaking to you now but I'm in stillness the words are just floating around the stillness and you can bring stillness to nature and nature will love you for it and you can share stillness with a tree see if you can be as still as the tree that's something or if the sky is clear at night you look at the sky there are stars but there's the vastness of space which is also stillness there's not a single sound in space only in science fiction movies but there is no sound in outer space the deepest stillness but even a flower is surrounded by stillness the flower exists in that still field so if you need a little bit of help to find the inner stillness go to a tree look at the sky the night sky or the sky at sunset as it gradually darkens very still and spacious or you can touch the earth it's also very still so many things can teach you stillness and help you and the quickest way to stillness in any situation no matter where you are whether on top of a mountain or Times Square or Piccadilly Circus in the midst of traffic is to welcome the present moment just that little thing no matter what form it takes whatever arises in the present moment you welcome it or at least you allow it to be non-resistance immediately you can sense in the background of your being that field of stillness or peace so that simple thing allowing this moment to be as it is connects you with the transcendent in you couldn't be any easier than that all you have to do is remember that this is possible and then do it meditation is about accessing stillness within you which is a dimension of consciousness above thinking awareness aware stillness there is also a stillness below thinking people become still when they get tired the most important thing in a person's life is to find that dimension perhaps first it comes in glimpses sometimes arises naturally perhaps when you are out in nature or relating to an animal or it can be there as the part of your meditation practice while you meditate or right here and now by paying attention to the silent spaces between words paying attention meaning noticing the silent spaces between the words that's the meditation not noticing just for one second and then go off into thinking but noticing the silent spaces while they are there for example between now and now and of course you can't notice the silent spaces and think at the same time to notice the silent space you become still inside because only the stillness in you can become aware of it so noticing those spaces between words for here is an important part of or the most important part of our life meditation and as you notice you become still inside and there is the dimension that transcends the person so first you access it here and as I said perhaps it arises naturally and if you access it here or as part of your meditation practice it's more likely to arise also naturally in other situations in daily life and when it does arise you notice it again a moment of alert attention when you look at the sky and you go without having any interpretation or words arising in your mind about the sky you just go there is an alertness in which an alert space in which the sense perception happens of the sky and what is the sky? nothing really it's not an object you can never touch it there is even no such thing as the sky it's only a perception from a particular location there is the background of space and there is the sunlight that creates the temporary illusion we could say that there is a sky but because it has no actual form it's a helpful thing to look at the sky it's a vast spaciousness today the sky here is totally clear and that's you can look at that spaciousness with inner spaciousness and if there are clouds you see that there are clouds and the clear sky also there and sometimes there is just clouds but still there is still a spaciousness there and the light is filtering through the clouds and that could be used as an analogy for your inner state of consciousness which can be totally overcast which means in this analogy clouds are thoughts for many people their state of consciousness is continuously overcast which means one thought leads into another into another and all their consciousness is absorbed by thinking so that's how most people still live on the planet and then comes a time when you realize oh there is an opening a bit of spaciousness there is some blue sky coming through in between the clouds so that means noticing the gap between two thoughts in yourself and then occasionally you may find there is mostly clear sky and just a few puffy clouds floating past which are little thoughts you don't have to give them too much attention and gradually gradually you begin to be able to have that stillness that spaciousness not just occasionally or when you are practicing meditation but have it always if not in the foreground of your life that's not always possible there are many things that happen in the foreground that you need to give attention to but in the background so when you are looking at something you don't immediately label it interpret it you don't immediately form some fixed opinion or viewpoint but there is a moment of non-conceptualization and there is a stillness in the background against which the sense perception happens and then whatever you look at, you look at there is a dimension of depth to whatever you are looking at which cannot be there if you immediately label everything and sometimes that you don't even need an interpretation you can just be there with a stillness against which the sense perception happens or if you need to have an interpretation then after a moment of stillness a thought arises concerning that particular situation event or thing or person that is being perceived allowing the flux of experience to be there to unfold one thing after another and instead of demanding that there should not be impermanence just enjoy the flow the comings and goings gain and loss hot and cold so these are all forms that arise in your experience and you experience yourself as a form you experience yourself as a physical form and as a person the larger part of who you are is of course not visible only the physical body is visible and as you know there is more to you than meets the eye all your inner space thoughts, feelings emotions and even the way in which you experience your body is an inner phenomenon but even that inner self is still form on that level consisting of mental activity thoughts emotions feelings and perceptions and that also is subject to of course impermanence the physical body changes with some people it's very noticeable some people you might have noticed it if you look at a photo of yourself when they were 20 years old and then you look at a photo when they were 40 or you look at a photo when they were 30 and then a photo when they were 50 or 60 sometimes they are hardly recognizable the entire shape of their face has changed not to mention the rest of the body so all is subject to fleetingness of things form whether they are inner forms or outer forms thought forms sense perceptions physical objects which can only be experienced as sense perceptions so all external phenomena are really inner phenomena so yourself your person the person who you are for a little while subject to change and eventually, sooner or later it disappears one day you're here the next day you're gone is there anything beyond that?

that's the question that has been asked by spiritual seekers for thousands of years and of course there is but just believing that there is a transcendent realm that is not subject to time and decay well believing in that as an article of faith might serve as a little crutch on your life it can give you a comforting thought similar to the thought of there is a God it's a comforting thought but it does not really help you experience the reality of it it's still just a belief of course as a belief you might be wrong in the power of now probably I wrote I used the term form identity and essence identity referring to the human being so you know a lot about your form identity which changes and is not going to last, even if it lasts if an aspect of your form identity lasts beyond your physical existence that will also be subject to change as form because no forms are permanent so if you if there is life after death you are not going to be Mr. so and so or Mrs. so and so for the rest of eternity your personal identity of course all forms are subject to metamorphosis and change and transformation so who you experience to be on your form level of your form identity is temporary even if it continues for a while beyond the physical form that is also temporary and then it shifts and changes dissolves, but as physicists tell us, energy itself remains it changes form there is an essence to life that is formless and that can be known not as an object in your experience but as the very subject of all experience and that is who you are in your essence and who you are in your essence is identical with what the universe is in its essence and that is the realization of your essence identity that frees you from unhealthy let's put it like that attachment constant compulsive obsessive attachment to your form identity and all the things that make up the forms in your life the objects around you and so on and so there is a clinging, if you don't know who you are on the essence level then there is a clinging to the world of form that is unhealthy and by that I mean it creates suffering because if you cling to something that by its very nature is fleeting and deep down you know that there is suffering even while you still have it not only when it finally dissolves or decays or leaves you even while you still have whatever you are clinging to, there is already that anxiety and that nervousness in the background form identity essence identity essence identity is not something that arises in your experience because it is the foundation of all experience and it is I sometimes call it inner space it is known, not in a subject-object relationship but it knows let's put it like that, you know it as yourself when the mind subsides for a moment, thought activity ceases like now and all that's left is a sense of presence it has no content from the point of view of form or form identity it is nothing and yet undoubtedly undoubtedly there is a presence there a knowingness let's put it like that, a knowing a knowingness an awareness not of something just awareness without the of to use an analogy light let's say you are a ray of light and usually you know what the light shines on things and it shines on something and you know it because the light shines on something if the light doesn't shine on something you can't see it in order to see light there needs to be a reflection so let's say you are the light and suddenly you realize your essential nature as light and not what you thought before you took yourself to be whatever the light reflects so it's a shift in the direction of your attention one could say, instead of going continuously either outward to sensory experience or to thought experience involved in one thought after another and your attention is drawn into that and it has a hypnotic quality, most people are completely hypnotized by their thoughts in the grip of their thoughts and they follow wherever they go, they follow them, their attention and then you suddenly there's a reversal of attention like now, this is why we're here and you become aware of yourself but not as a form as the very consciousness without which there would be no experience of any form and it has no features that's why the Buddha called it emptiness, sometimes he called it emptiness in other Buddhist traditions, I don't know whether the Buddha also used that term or it came later Buddha nature is another term you have not only the and that of course is essence identity that is your Buddha nature or if you want, Christ consciousness, whatever you want to call it so the greatest realization, the greatest thing to happen to you in this lifetime is the realization that there is the transcendent dimension in the background of your life and to have it there at first as glimpses then sometimes it stays for a while that realization which I sometimes describe as a stillness in the background while your life unfolds in the foreground and you become aware of more spaces arising in between thoughts more stillness arising, more presence more peace and then you realize that essentially who you are is not what happens in your mind or what happens externally that does not define who you are in your essence losing your job or getting the great job or the house or whatever it is, you get it or you lose it this is the constantly shifting forms if you look to that for your real sense of identity then you're going to find a lot of trouble in your life, you will be troubled continuously continuously but if you realize yourself as that alive stillness spaciousness then you can enjoy the world of form and if you can't enjoy it sometimes perhaps you can't you can at least tolerate it with a sense of peacefulness in the background, knowing that it's not going to last you can accept whatever is right now or if you can't enjoy it at least you can accept that this is what is right now it may change the next moment or in a year's time or 10 years time but in the meantime this is what is or you can take action to change it but even then in the meantime it is you take action, I'm going to do that, that, that and then you do it also in the present moment at some point the situation changes either the change may be brought about by your action or it just comes it's in the nature of things but in the meantime you lived in alignment with the is-ness of the present moment which in itself that acceptance of what is as I have often said that acceptance of what is if you realize you make that into your spiritual practice become one with the is-ness of this moment then the transcendent dimension your essence identity reveals itself as a piece in the background so the acceptance of form that whatever form arises in the present moment, forms change so there is a succession of forms arising and it's all in the now and you let go of dysfunctional mind patterns like this shouldn't be happening welcome to our live meditation for those of you who are joining us for the first time all that's happening here is we become comfortable with nothing happening so that we can shift our consciousness from doing to being doing is not just physical doing which obviously we are not engaged in right now well the mouth is moving but that's all or you may be twitching a bit but basically we are sitting or lying, that's physical doing so we stop doing on the external and more importantly the mind so we are here to experience get a taste of or perhaps even more than that go deeply into the state of being which in itself has no content it's a bit like having lived in a room full of furniture stuff for many years, always being worried about polishing it or getting more stuff or getting rid of this stuff and talking about the stuff in your room and for the first time you become aware also of the space of the room, which is the essence without which there wouldn't be a room and you realize the furniture in the room is secondary to the space in the room but space you cannot grasp, you can't say ah, there it is you can't even point to it where? you become, you sense it, you become aware of it you sense, one could almost say the presence of the space wherever you are now you can do it you can sense the presence of the space and to do that you might notice you can't be thinking thinking is to do with the furniture in the room but thinking is never to do with the space in the room a different faculty is required that inner faculty is required to sense or to become aware of the space wherever you are that is not thinking and most humans still don't know that they potentially have that ability or that faculty in other words it's not awakened in most humans yet and of course we are here for some of you to awaken that and for many others who are already awake to it to deepen it so let's go back to the room when you become aware of the space in the room you might notice it's a very peaceful thing to be aware of the space it suddenly becomes this and suddenly an added dimension to where you are because before you were concerned with the furniture and whatever filled the room stuff and that every bit of stuff has a history you talk about its history by the way may I point out that right now what we are doing I'm using the room as an analogy for of course your mind but I'm also talking about the room so we are on two levels here so you can take it literally and you can take it as an analogy for your mind or both so you may notice that suddenly the room which is the old room that you've lived in for many years suddenly becomes peaceful in the moment that you can sense the space of the room rather than always focusing on the different bits and pieces in the room the stuff suddenly you take in the totality which transcends what's in it the spaciousness of it and it becomes oh it's there's a sense of peace and some almost a peaceful presence which of course essentially is you could say yes it's in the room but of course it's in you in our analogy the furniture in the room the bits and pieces the stuff corresponds of course to the content of your mind the thoughts most of which are old and repetitive the furniture whatever is occupying your mind is the stuff, the furniture every item wants your attention you keep the old stuff alive by continuously giving it your attention and if you become aware of the space in the room you withdraw attention from what is in the room and you become aware of that which could be described as the essence of the room without which there would be no room without any room there's no room there's space, space and within you the same if you don't find the space within you the spaciousness which is the presence the presence that you can sense as if it were an external presence in filling the room is also in you now this is very deeply peaceful and in many traditions that's called the presence of God that all the mystics whether Christian or Buddhist or Hindu or Sufis they all point to that that's not the ideological God not the person but that which underlies all manifestation the eternal so the eternal is both within and without the moment you notice that presence outside of you you can be out in nature or you can be in a room you're no longer focusing on individual things you're focusing on the space between things one could say and you sense that as a silent presence, you can't say much about it if you're a poet perhaps you could, some poets have written about it quite beautifully sometimes words worth the English poet went out into nature and wrote beautiful things all pointing to that but the moment you notice it outside of you it's also within you so I call that usually presence you can call it the presence of God you can call it divine presence or you can forget about those terms the terms don't really matter so your entry point then can be you start with the external become aware of the essence of whatever wherever you are of that particular place whether it's in a building or outside the essence of that place which goes beyond whatever is filling that place, whatever is there as a form you become aware that there is also the formless dimension to that place spirit, another word and the more you are able to sense that in your life the more spiritual you are so how spiritual you are doesn't really have anything to do with your thought processes so thinking about God for 12 hours a day or more or talking about God doesn't make you spiritual, it's a concept and the test of course is always whether you are able to retain that awareness of the presence really awareness and presence are the same thing, the moment you use language you separate things into subject, objects and bits and pieces the question is are you able to retain that aware presence continuing to sense that presence that is of course inseparable from the essence of who you are whether you can retain, sustain that when all this stuff in your life whatever is happening shouts at you so to speak and every bit of stuff in your life says I matter absolutely I demand your complete attention if you don't give me attention your life will collapse I need you to worry about me says the stuff if you don't you are irresponsible of course that's not true your most fundamental responsibility is to find that which is beyond the stuff to access that dimension in you that's why you are here that's what the universe wants through you to awaken to that dimension to be it consciously first it seems that it's something outside of you it's the space in the room or here in nature and then you realize oh it's within me too and it's more essentially me than anything else it's where the whole feeling of who you are actually originates in that deep sense of being of presence and then it gets mixed up with things, with stuff and then you sense the beingness through the stuff still a little bit and then a possession can give you a little bit of aliveness you can sense your car if you just got it after a while it wears off if you just got it that's a little bit of sense of deeper sense of identity so it but where it really any identity sense of essential self comes from is from the formless dimension of presence and for most people it can only a little bit filter through all the things in their lives and it's never very satisfying because it's to a large extent obscured and it's mistaken for the thing it's like having a lampshade and you're mistaking the light that comes through the lampshade you're mistaking the lampshade for the light and then you attach yourself to the lampshade and not realizing what you love about the lampshade is the light that shines through it and then you worry about the lampshade if you think that we are doing something here, doing a meditation that can become a big obstacle to actually entering the state of meditation the notion that you're doing something one minute you're doing you're answering the emails and then you're putting the dishes away and then you're doing a meditation and every doing has a certain aim you're doing in order to get it done get it over with achieve the goal so in doing involves time can't do anything without time and the ordinary state of consciousness is always involved in time inseparable from time there's a deeper dimension within you that could be called timeless but as long as you're doing something to get there that becomes a paradox you can't use time to get to the timeless because you don't need to get to the timeless it's already there in you you just need to notice that it's there so that removes all sense of doing or you need to do so to speak it's not a doing it's a notice right now that there's a deeper dimension in you deeper than the physical that which you perceive through your senses deeper than thinking deeper than emotions emotional layers where is it? I still can't feel it somebody thinks become aware that you are become aware of the beingness of yourself aware of your own presence thinking doesn't help you here it actually prevents you from dropping down into the core of your being so you can allow yourself to let go of thinking or trying to figure something out become aware that right now you are conscious right now you are aware and in the gap between two thoughts there's a space or a spaciousness and in that spaciousness in that space you are aware you are conscious without any particular content you are conscious of consciousness that which is prior to all content but not separate from deeper than all content but not separate from all the content of your mind whatever you are aware of sense perceptions thinking emotions all these things you are aware of in many cases not just aware of identified with you derive your sense of self from those things situations which you are aware of through your sense perceptions plus mental interpretations plus emotional reflections that makes up the content of your consciousness that makes up what you call your life that's my life and you try to figure out your life by thinking about your life there is a place for that too, yes if that's all there is to your life however then you are to use one of my favorite analogies you are like a wave or ripple on the surface of the ocean who does not realize that it is not only a wave or ripple on the surface of the ocean being surrounded by other waves or ripples but this wave or ripple does not realize that it is also and more fundamentally the entire ocean and that this wave or ripple is only temporarily a manifestation of the entire ocean somebody once said I believe it was Alan Watts said something like you are something that the universe is doing in the same way that the wave is something that the ocean is doing so you are something that the universe is doing or being and if you can realize that rather than just thinking oh that's an interesting idea let me think about that I am something that the universe is doing in the same way that the wave is something that the ocean is doing you can start thinking about it that's one way, you might come up with a few more related ideas or the mind might say well this may be true or may not be true or the mind might say that doesn't make sense to me or I have no idea what he is talking about now like with all statements that point to spiritual dimensions they are just pointers and they are to be used as pointers signposts so if you can get even just a little taste or a glimpse experientially of what this means and perhaps you can do it by visualizing just yourself as a wave or ripple on the surface of the universe the surface of the ocean to keep the analogy and allow yourself to drop into the core of your being in the space between two thoughts and realize your essential beings I am no particular content as such but you feel connected to something limitless timeless vast, deep you are not only connected with it you are an extension of it an expression of it inseparable from it you have to have the courage in order to experience that to realize that the courage to enter the realm of not knowing anything and of not being anybody in particular that's the most beautiful experience if you want to call it that it's deeper than experience the most beautiful realization the most liberating realization that you are not just this little person which is just like a brief momentary spark that appears and disappears oh that was you that was me so every human being a brief momentary spark of light is born and dies so to speak oh that was it yes and all over the planet new sparks are born consciousness beings right now at this very moment new sparks are rising right now and right now other sparks are extinguished and each little spark has a name attached to it that gives the impression that there's something permanent there well that spark originates in the central fire, the central consciousness each spark is a manifestation of that and returns there so the most liberating thing is for you to become aware that there's more to you than the person, that you are connected with that depths within yourself and that is the universe not just the sense perceived universe and galaxies and so on but more essentially something deeper that underlies the sense perceived universe but as I said you need to have the courage to step into the unknown become comfortable with not knowing anything don't worry, all the things that you know when you need them you can still use but to know who you are essentially you need to become comfortable with not knowing anything become comfortable with not knowing who you are conceptually become comfortable with being ignorant so to speak and then something that cannot be known emerges you can't know it because it's the source of all knowledge where all knowing and all knowledge originates as you cannot know it but it knows itself through you so the you know how a humming sound that something is like a refrigerator or some noise in the room is going on and on you no longer know it's there in the background but when it stops then you suddenly know oh oh it feels so good there was this constant humming sound in the background I didn't even know it anymore I didn't know it and so for some people the first awakening is to become aware of the humming so to speak their mind, the constant chatter, the constant dialogues and monologues that make life so hard and so you become aware suddenly oh for many humans that's a moment of awakening what is my mind doing and then you begin to be able to differentiate between what is in this moment out there what is and your mental interpretation of what is if you're very unconscious the way in which you interpret the phenomena that surround you and that constantly change people, events, situations, places when you're very unconscious the way in which you mentally interpret and mentally react and mentally emotionally react to other people places, situations and so on are perceived as a single phenomenon you cannot differentiate between what is out there and how you see what is how you interpret it, what you call it the narrative that you spin around what is they are a single thing you experience as a single thing and so the way then in which a very unconscious person interprets the phenomena that happen around you continuously is determined by the conditioning of their mind the mental emotional conditioning so they don't experience almost anything as it is they experience it through the veil of their mental conditioning and a lot of that mental conditioning is verbal it is in many cases an important part of it is a narrative in your mind and so if you become aware of the narrative in your mind that's a great step forward, it's a great awakening and when you see that what you are, the way in which you are talking to yourself about something that's happening here and now and the mind says this shouldn't be happening, they should know better why can't they do better why do I always encounter situations like, why are people always so obnoxious, I just can't stand people anymore why is this person look how he pretends, he's pretending to be spiritual and just you can see he's completely unconscious what's this why did I even come here I'm stuck here in this room and is it even clean I could be in a much more comfortable, if I hadn't left home I could be in a much more comfortable place at home why did I do that, why do you always do things, it's completely pointless coming here, I mean what is this man even talking about and so it goes on and on and you don't, you cannot differentiate between what is and how your mind interprets what is it's crazy so the moment you can separate, you see here's the is-ness of things this is what is here I am and there's that person talking about whatever politics and you may find in yourself an urge to say something but it could happen here even here because it's unlikely that you left your mind outside the boundary of omega it came with you but that's a good thing because then you can become aware of it and so life suddenly becomes much more simple and you begin to practice here where you differentiate between the is-ness of things and your interpretation of it, this includes people too, every person behaves as they do according to their level of consciousness at this particular moment in many people their consciousness varies, sometimes they are really unconscious and at other times they are fairly present you might have noticed that could happen to you sometimes still, sometimes you're very present and then something is triggered, I got triggered, he triggered me, he always triggers me so you got triggered and then so what happens when you get triggered, something takes you over it's like you become somebody else for a while and you might even say things that you later regret when you're a bit more conscious again, you say oh I said something terrible it's too late, you said it of course then forgiveness has to come in oh there's another problem you have to forgive yourself, no you don't have to forgive yourself, that's too complicated you just have to see that you neither you nor anybody else can manifest behavior or speech that is beyond their level of consciousness at that particular moment that's obvious so if you get annoyed with people or of course some things on a practical level can you can have changes on a practical level, you can say don't do this I don't, this behavior is not acceptable and that's a clear statement, it doesn't have to be reactive being comfortable with just being but remaining alert become aware that there are moments when you're not thinking and then thought happens again and then there's another moment of just spacious presence which could arise spontaneously or you could invite it into your life consciously bring more spacious presence into your life in daily life with a simple thing like for example occasionally looking up in the sky well I don't see the sky yet because there are trees out there but mostly usually there's some sky somewhere look up at the sky and for a moment be aware of whatever is there whether it's clouds or clear sky or completely overcast just be aware of the totality of the sky which is a vast spaciousness without calling it anything in your mind just looking at the sky during the day it's amazing that people go throughout many people go throughout the day without ever really being aware of the sky because they're so concerned with what's happening down here below so they're never aware of that spaciousness that surrounds them so just looking at the sky brings about a moment of spaciousness and an interruption in the flow or the stream of thinking identification with which constitutes the person the personal selfhood sense of self so sometimes that arises spontaneously in your daily life a moment of space a gap between thoughts and when you don't know you're not really aware of it, then you only sense it as a moment that feels good a moment where you feel some joy or a heightened sense of aliveness or some inner peace or even just a contentment with what is and usually that means a gap has arisen in the stream of thinking you may not know that and may only interpret it as, as I said peace, joy aliveness happiness a generic term that covers all of those and when you become conscious of it when it arises spontaneously then it can deepen and you can be in it for longer you can be in the timeless dimension for longer slight paradox I'm talking about it from the dimension of form where there's time looking at the times and then the paradoxical statement arises you can be in the timeless for longer I've told the story before some of you may know it when I lived in London and travelled on the underground or the tube or the subway every day there were a couple of stations where there was a more than usual more than usually wide gap between the train and the platform so when the train arrived at the platform the doors opened and the recorded announcement would say, mind the gap and repeat again and again mind the gap mind the gap well and of course some tourists who didn't know English well enough gap?

what's gap? where's the gap? they would fall into the gap but that could be a spiritual pointer be aware of the gap, the inner gap be aware of what is a gap?

a gap is a space between two things I don't think that's a dictionary definition of it but I would define it as the space between two things there's one thing there and there's one thing there in the middle there's nothing there's the gap no thing nothing so finding the gap inside you between two thoughts either being aware of it as it arises spontaneously in your life when you're looking at beauty or something new and unusual before you interpret it there's a moment of just spacious perception and there's the gap look at the sky so let's say you're working on your computer and then the phone rings you answer text messages come in and then you become aware okay the moment of spaciousness and then you look at the sky completely different state of consciousness immediately arises and give yourself half a minute or one minute to look at the sky half a minute is fine but it's not that long it brings about a gap when the stream of thinking subsides and this the most important thing you can do if you even want to call it doing because it frees you from being here only as the person and you become aware that there is another dimension to who you are which is the traditionally called the spiritual dimension spiritual dimension is not elsewhere it's a dimension within you where who you are as a person is transcended and if you don't find that transcendence in your daily life then there is no spiritual dimension in your daily life even if you talk about and quote spiritual books there is still no spiritual dimension in your daily life unless there is the gap and it becomes as familiar to be the space as it is to be the person in fact more familiar more satisfying you really feel it there you are yourself in that space of course there are other ways in which you can invite that gap that space into your life apart from looking at the sky anything natural you look at can be helpful and bring about the gap the tree but you have to look innocently with innocent perception not judging it not comparing it or referring to your knowledge or memory about it or associations mental associations none of that just looking like a child who hasn't learnt the names yet so you can either look at one thing and sense the spaciousness behind the perception the peace or you can look at the totality of whatever surrounds you whether it's in a room or you look out of a window or if you are outside just take in the totality of your surroundings no matter where you are you could be in a mansion or in a prison cell it works in the same way and then you become aware of yes there's all these perceptions but there's also a sense of spaciousness behind them peace and when you access that dimension whether you live in a mansion or a prison cell still it of course makes a difference in your life but it's no longer of absolute importance that's how I put it it is of relative importance before you have access to that dimension whatever happens in your life is of absolute importance it absorbs you completely it determines your happiness or unhappiness would I rather be in a mansion than in a prison cell yes of course I would it doesn't have to be a mansion it could be a lovely cabin in the woods but if I had to be in a prison cell I could still be in the space for it and look around and surrender to whatever is there so just looking around you is another way of if you don't name it of being the space rather than being the person then after a while the person comes back and you start thinking again about your past and your future and your problems and what you have to deal with and people around you but imagine living all your life with nothing but that thinking about things you have to deal with the people around you, the situation and liking it and disliking it and reacting to it and your inner state depending on whatever happens to be happening around you whether that person close to you is nice or not nice terrible so at the mercy of whatever happens a little thing falls and you go you are upset and never really happy anywhere there is always something missing and then figuring out in your mind how you can become happy never getting there because you haven't found who you are beyond the person having moments of insight while you meditate informal meditation where suddenly perhaps you have a glimpse of just being the presence being the space that's wonderful but it needs to translate into everyday life otherwise you can only be free when you sit cross-legged on the floor and have your eyes closed and your hands in a particular position and then you open your eyes again and it's time to get up and immediately you are flooded with mental stuff stringing with me so you just meditated what you have to do now it has to so therefore I say it is more important if you have formal meditation it can be a wonderful help even more important it is to have spacious moments throughout the day so that you become liberated from your attachment to the person your complete identification with the person and then the depth within you is there and suddenly feel, sense that you are deeper than you thought and ever could think because in that spacious presence where you are the unconditioned consciousness that is not confined to this body that is where you are connected with the one universal consciousness and it merges with the one universal consciousness so when you look at a statue of the Buddha this is not a this is not the statue of a person that once lived nobody knows what the Buddha looked like a statue of the Buddha represents a state of consciousness and it is a state of consciousness of being the presence transcending the person and that's why the good statues of the Buddha have a hint of a smile so because that is where true peace is found alive peace and so the Buddha goes like freedom from the person

[Speaker 2] (4:34:48 - 4:37:10)
welcome to our live meditation which today apparently is not live due to technical difficulties one minute before we were due to start everything crashed nobody knows why but I do know that sometimes it's happened quite a few times before the energy of presence does affect electrical systems so it's still the present moment so I'm inviting you to become aware of the present moment which you may know has two levels to it the external level or dimension of the present moment so it's quite easy your attention moves into sense perceptions visual, auditory so this is what you're doing here looking at the screen being peripherally aware of your surroundings

[Speaker 1] (4:37:10 - 4:37:30)
and the deeper dimension of awareness of the present moment is to be aware of yourself as the presence

[Speaker 2] (4:37:31 - 4:37:42)
that's really the present moment consciousness to sense your own presence

[Speaker 1] (4:37:42 - 4:37:59)
when I talk about it there's a duality because language creates the duality I say sense your presence as if that which is sensing the presence and the presence were

two things but it's not

[Speaker 2] (4:38:01 - 4:40:59)
it's a single thing or rather no thing it's the arising of self awareness maybe a better way of putting it and as that happens you feel rooted in something very deep and vast and then whatever happens externally by saying external I include even your thought processes and emotions they're still on the periphery and of course whatever happens outside of them is perceived as peripheral when you're really rooted in being there is a calmness and a depth there is at the center words are not quite right but from there whatever happens around you and even whatever happens in your mind or your emotional field is the surface phenomenon and you can enjoy it and participate in it yet at the same time be rooted in something that isn't touched by the whatever is happening on the surface one could say on the surface of being because you are in touch with or to put more accurately you know yourself as the being itself or being itself and that is what all ancient and true spiritual teaching is only about that, there is nothing else that's what every teaching

[Speaker 1] (4:40:59 - 4:41:12)
points to, that's the pearl of great prize that Jesus talks about, that's the end of suffering that Buddha talks about because unless you know yourself as the presence

[Speaker 2] (4:41:16 - 4:41:24)
you are at the mercy of all surface phenomena whatever happens

[Speaker 1] (4:41:26 - 4:42:30)
has enormous power over you your thoughts, you are controlled by your thoughts you are at the mercy of your emotions you are at the mercy of events something good happens, you go wow and a few hours later, a day later and you are continuously in fear because you know you are at the mercy of very unstable fluctuations continuously and that's why ancient spiritual teaching talk about that you need Christian teaching, you need to be saved saved from what? You need to be liberated some teachings call it liberated you need to come to the end of delusion so what are you saved from, liberated from? Liberated from all surface phenomena

[Speaker 2] (4:42:37 - 4:43:44)
including your thoughts and emotions so that's what becoming aware of the now really is yes, you become aware of what's going on on the surface of being but primarily you are aware of being itself as the underlying presence the I I am you become aware of your I am-ness the essence of your sense of identity which gets mixed up

[Speaker 1] (4:43:44 - 4:43:55)
with mental, emotional stuff and you think you are your memories no, you are that which enables the memory to be

[Speaker 2] (4:44:00 - 4:44:18)
consciousness awareness there's the story of

[Speaker 1] (4:44:23 - 4:45:46)
it's a Zen story so all Zen stories are a little strange they are meant to be strange because they always point to something that you need to can only understand by experiencing it so the story goes there are two young monks in a Zen monastery and they're walking outside and there's a little hill just near the monastery and they see on the hill the master of the monastery is standing there and one monk says to the other I wonder what he's doing on that hill and the other monk says I think he's looking for a place to plant another tree because he likes planting trees I think that's what he's doing and his friend says no, I think he's looking

to see he's probably expecting somebody and he's wanting to see if they are approaching in the distance and then they say let's go and ask him and see what he's doing there so they walk up the hill come up to the master and say Master, what are you doing here? and the master says

[Speaker 2] (4:45:48 - 4:46:06)
I'm standing here on the hill end of story meaning

[Speaker 1] (4:46:11 - 4:46:33)
in the usual state of consciousness or unconsciousness the present moment is always in the service of something else it's used as a stepping stone towards the next moment you want to get to always reaching out to the next moment because all you know is surface phenomena

[Speaker 2] (4:46:37 - 4:46:39)
oh by the way, I'm just told

[Speaker 1] (4:46:39 - 4:47:33)
that we are now live so that's fine let's carry on the all you know is surface phenomena in the usual state of consciousness or unconsciousness and so you always look to the next thing to arise, the next thought the next emotion, the next event and the now is continuously in the service of some imagined next moment so when the monks go up to the master on the hill and say what are you doing here? they expect the master to say I'm here in order to do this, that or that but he's not, when the master says I'm standing here on the hill what that points to is that the master

[Speaker 2] (4:47:33 - 4:47:39)
is rooted in being primarily

[Speaker 1] (4:47:39 - 4:47:54)
that is his state of consciousness the present moment is not reduced to a means to an end, he is in the depth of being, which is the now the present moment his consciousness is rooted in that, his consciousness

[Speaker 2] (4:47:54 - 4:47:56)
is that

[Speaker 1] (4:47:58 - 4:48:59)
and so when the master says I'm standing on this hill period, so the monks are amazed, they don't probably still didn't get it because the implied question is, aren't you always here for something else?

well, it does not exclude the possibility that the master may also be on that hill in order to look for a place to plant a tree or in order to look for, see if someone is arriving as the monks have suggested but the master is primarily rooted in being whatever else he may be doing is secondary and peripheral and that's why the master didn't say I'm here to look for a place to plant a tree or to see who's going to arrive no primarily, I'm here now, standing on this hill, or in your case

[Speaker 2] (4:48:59 - 4:50:00)
or in my case I am here now sitting where I am and I am aware of myself as the presence therefore I'm rooted in being therefore I'm not reducing this moment to a means to an end I'm fully in this moment then I can still take action without losing myself in whatever I'm doing and then I go

[Speaker 1] (4:50:05 - 4:50:37)
you can see how you go completely out of yourself and then you go, what's the next thing that's going to upset me or what's the next thing that's going to satisfy me and of course what's the next thought that's going to come into my head and going

to take possession of me to such an extent that I become the thought, to such an extent that creates an emotion

[Speaker 2] (4:50:41 - 4:52:35)
reflecting thought so you emanate a completely different energy when you're rooted in being there's a calmness, a peace also a power that comes and emanates through you and all your doings will be will become more intelligent because you're in touch with the source of all intelligence all intelligence itself without being rooted in yourself being rooted in being most of your doing creates more problems more karma, more suffering and none of it is satisfying not for long

[Speaker 1] (4:53:04 - 4:53:27)
we could also say that when you're rooted in being then there's a stillness in you even while you're thinking thinking happens or there may be periods when you're not thinking which is wonderful, the space opens up and you're just present but there are times when you need to think

[Speaker 2] (4:53:29 - 4:53:45)
and even when you're thinking there's a a sense of presence behind your thinking in the same way that now that you are listening

[Speaker 1] (4:53:45 - 4:54:00)
but there's a sense of presence behind the listening without which there could be no listening and I am speaking which means the mind is active

[Speaker 2] (4:54:00 - 4:56:45)
but there is a stillness continuously behind it, so to speak and that stillness or that presence moves into the mind and then the mind is at the service of that which is beyond the mind rather than the mind serving itself self serving mind which is what the ego is, the false sense of self that distorts everything where you interpret the world other people distorted by a misperception a fundamental error underlying all your mind activity and that fundamental error also creating dysfunctional action action that creates more suffering for yourself and others even if the intention is good and may sound reasonable and then the old saying implies the road to hell is paved with good intentions

[Speaker 1] (4:57:14 - 5:16:02)
Now in a very strange and mysterious way how a situation develops is connected to the state of consciousness with which you meet the situation this is very mysterious hard to understand but you can experience it when you begin to practice or maybe already doing it you're faced with a situation are you facing it in presence not the reactive person which means you are you can sense this deeper presence that is within you as you look at this situation and you are there not just as a person but you are there more importantly as the light of consciousness and the light of consciousness is the awareness that looks at the situation and then if action is necessary you will know right action will happen which will rise out of this aware presence it might use your mind sometimes actually involves saying something but the saying will not be egoic egoically reactive it arises from the deeper level and you will say the right thing that is helpful in that situation you will not say something that it will inflame the situation create more suffering for yourself and others and therefore produce in eastern terms would say produce more karma you produce more and more karma and so how a situation evolves in your how your reality evolves and even what happens in a difficult situation is connected to the state of consciousness with which you meet that situation a very unconscious state will amplify the tribulation the trouble the problem create more chaos create more suffering for yourself and others and will be completely devoid of wisdom really active because why because you are possessed by energy formations sometimes they are collective thought forms that have taken possession of you and in this easy especially these days when people are online a lot on the internet

it's very easy to become very quickly contaminated with not the physical virus but a mental virus that you can you take in and suddenly a certain collective thought form has taken possession of your mind and there it is and you don't know it you identify with it comes part of your ego and you think that's you and then you start fighting and you think it's a good cause but you're beginning to fight and you get very angry and very upset and get it gets it's awful and you don't know that the enemy lives between your two ears ultimately not out there and you don't know that there's not enough awareness not enough light of consciousness to be aware of that and that's that is ultimately that is the greatest challenge for us humans now the greatest challenge is not external the external is actually helpful because it's there as an awakener it awakens you it's here every challenge is meant to we come back to what we talked about earlier you're not here to be comfortable when you are it's fine but it's the ultimate aim of your life is not to have a wonderful comfortable existence to be comfortable to live in your comfort zone yes there is a comfort zone but it's not not external deep within when you are aware when you are present you have access the transcendent dimension of consciousness which is the transcendent dimension not only not of your consciousness but the transcendent dimension even of the universe you have access that within yourself and there you have in that transcendent dimension one could say you are in a comfort zone but that is one that is beyond the polarities of good and bad and you can in other words you can be at peace even when the external situation is turbulent and very challenging and when you realize that that is just incredible awakening when you realize you can be internally at peace even in the face of challenges and not only even in the face of challenges the challenges forced you to go deeper because somehow you know that if you don't go deeper it's going to be very you're going to be really unhappy if you don't go deeper you're going to suffer more and more and nothing external will ever free you from that and so challenges are here in order to bring more consciousness because it's only the light that needs to grow that comes into this world the light of consciousness and that's the evolutionary process of the planet and the universe as a whole is that the light of consciousness comes more fully into this dimension it's the emanation from source and it emanates into this so the universe is engaged in a process of awakening or becoming more conscious and every life form is gradually becoming more conscious you can see how life evolved on the planet here at first they were just the simplest life forms and then gradually over hundreds of thousands and millions of years the growth of complexity to more complex life forms complex means a bit more consciousness more consciousness manifesting as more complex life forms and then there were several devastating disasters if they're called extinctions extinction events on the planet five I believe four, five devastating geologists have found that to examine that for devastating in some cases 80% of all life got exterminated in mass extinction for various reasons they assume planet was hit by a huge comet and other things happened to cause mass extinctions and then after millions of years new life forms even more complex developed after the mass extinction and then another one came millions and millions of years later there is something that is operative in the unseen what we see is only the surface reality there is a vast intelligence operating underneath the world of phenomena this vast intelligence is consciousness about the universal consciousness and that's the ultimate reality and this universal consciousness is the universe is in the process of manifesting more and more consciousness so it's being still being created it's not finished God is still creating this world and you are an essential part of this creative process you are not separate from the awakening you are an expression of the awakening universe so God is bringing more consciousness emanating this consciousness into this dimension in our case it's through you other life forms too but it's the human here is very important there's been conscious evolution for millions and millions of years sorry there's been evolution of consciousness for millions and millions of years but now for the first time here on our planet well maybe for the first time we don't know that much about human history only a few thousand years on this planet there's not just the evolution of consciousness there is also conscious evolution of consciousness and that happens through the human and our talking here being here together is an expression of that conscious evolution of the universe suddenly the evolution is not just the evolution of consciousness that's been going on for millions of years we've reached a stage where suddenly the evolution of consciousness becomes conscious evolution of consciousness so we are the universe through you through me the universe is realizing its own journey its own purpose its own essence ultimately the universe is becoming more this this is a transitional stage that we are at right now this is why it's so difficult because any transitional stage is difficult from one mode of being to another mode of being and the other this new mode of being is conscious participation in the creative process of the universe through the human form conscious participation in creation and that happens when you face a situation an external situation and bring conscious presence to it rather than reactivity you bring conscious presence you are no longer at the mercy of externals the external has the purpose of driving you to that deeper place of presence that presence because if you don't go there you suffer a lot and things get worse and then you meet a situation consciously and then it's no longer the same situation the way what happens after that the external world and your consciousness are a single phenomenon so what happens in the external world depends on your state of what happens let's say the next thing that's going to happen to a large extent depends on your state of consciousness at this moment and how a situation evolves that might be perceived as a difficult situation how it evolves from now on depends on the state of consciousness with which you meet or face that situation and deal with that situation and then you will find suddenly it changes and this is a very mysterious thing but the important thing is to realize you are not at the mercy of externals and it is of vital importance so that you become a participant in this conscious participant in the creative process of the universe is you begin to change external reality sometimes yes by taking action but primarily by being present so that your action arises out of presence which then becomes wise action and empowered action I never tell people specifically what to do because that's not my job how do I what do I do to change all the bad things that I see in the world well I'm not a my job is to address the causal realm my job is to address what I perceive as the realm of cause the world is the realm of effect when you address the realm of course then you can deal with the realm of effect the realm of effect will change as the causal which is consciousness is consciousness changes the world changes so what we need is more people awakening to who they are the light of the world and then we will find that reality changes as a reflection of the collective consciousness and I won't make any predictions except right now it seems fairly certain that we are moving into a time period of turbulence on the collective level and that's a good thing it's meant to happen it's here to awaken us although it could also make us more unconscious and it's quite possible that it will awake a certain segment of the population it will make another segment of the population unconscious that is not an impossible scenario and this other segment of the population just needs more time that's fine they just need more time this is quite possible I don't want to go too far into this or speculate any further but it will be much easier for those who awaken whatever the external circumstances may be it will be much easier to be to deal with that to some extent even be protected up to a point although ultimately what happens to the body doesn't really matter that much death will come sooner or later anyway we don't need to speculate as to the totality of humanity and so on yes I can see right now certainly we are moving into turbulence certainly some people are becoming more conscious and some are becoming more unconscious this is what I have observed in the world and my job and your job is to help humans become more conscious so that they can take right action and you if action is necessary or possible and you it's your primary responsibility is to yourself first and then you will affect others around you directly and indirectly even on others you may never be in contact with and I don't mean necessarily through technology by sending out messages but all humans are connected underneath the surface of things there is one human consciousness so any change in your consciousness is a change in human consciousness and so that's our purpose so we do not need to fear what's happening but just to realize that it actually is as it should be if seen from a larger higher perspective of human evolution the present moment is as it is and it could not be otherwise and this situation is what humans need for their further evolution they don't need their comfort zone right now unless it's the inner, the deeper transcendent dimension that I pointed out earlier so this is the message one could go on talking about this but the essence of it is this realization that

[Speaker 2] (5:16:05 - 5:16:14)
welcome whatever life brings to you

[Speaker 1] (5:16:15 - 5:17:08)
in the moment even if it is difficult don't complain because the moment you complain about what is you are in an antagonistic relationship with life and if you are in an antagonistic relationship with life you will experience life as antagonistic life reflects back to you ultimately your state of consciousness that is not an easy lesson to learn for some people and some people are even angry when they hear that but that's fine eventually everybody will realize that so that's our message I wish you well in your journey

[Speaker 2] (5:17:10 - 5:17:11)
towards

[Speaker 1] (5:17:13 - 5:17:37)
further awakening of consciousness and the realizing it's a journey without distance and it's ultimately a journey into yourself and the realization that who you are in your essence is consciousness

[Speaker 2] (5:17:37 - 5:17:39)
is the light of the

[Speaker 1] (5:17:39 - 5:29:16)
world just checking if everybody is present yes especially important as you begin to move around again leaving here many of you one little thing if you remember to live this little thing that would already significantly change your state of consciousness and that little thing to remember not as a memory as a concept that you remember but to remember to apply every moment is or concerns the value that you attribute to the present moment whatever may be happening in the present moment and the usual mistake or dysfunctional way of living unconscious way is as I've mentioned before is devaluing the present moment and overvaluing the next moment that's so unconscious that most people have no idea that that's how they live because everybody lives like that and everybody has been conditioned to live like that but that is a significant factor in unskillful living unconscious living and it strengthens the ego enormously ego lives always with reference to past and future for example I come here I emerge from behind the curtain and then I walk to the chair walking to the chair has as much value as arriving at the chair so by giving your complete attention to every step you actually honor this moment fully instead of unconsciously devaluing it because you believe you need to arrive somewhere else which is promises some measure of fulfillment no matter how small or sometimes some big fulfillment but no matter how small so if I walked in here in that dysfunctional and unconscious way the steps that I'm taking towards this chair would be devalued in my mind as being less significant than arriving at this chair or starting to speak and the arriving is always very short you arrive and then it's over so if you begin to travel again from here to home or from here to somewhere else if you can remember that the present moment is all you ever have and carrying your suitcase from here, well people don't carry they've got wheels these days so wheeling your suitcase from here to there or wherever it is to the bus, to the car to the airport to the train station is not those all those moments are not inferior to any next moment because then what and then you arrive at the train and then you look for something else now I need to get mentally I'm always somewhere else instead of giving fullest attention to this because this is the most valuable

moment why? because it's the only one, the present moment so to live as if the next moment were more significant more important is a very unconscious way to live and the strange thing is you never really ultimately arrive anywhere because the arriving is never enough the arriving is immediately replaced by some new mental projection some next moment even on a big scale often people experience that, some huge success that they've been striving for for years and finally it comes and then they sit there in their big house often it goes with success but or whatever, their private jet and it feels good for a while especially if you invite other people who don't have private jets then it feels even better because it enhances your fictitious sense of self but after a while even that wears off so you have arrived you've made it, that's the English expression, I made it made what? well in case you don't know that English expression it means I have succeeded in my endeavors I made it idiomatic expression strange one so the world is full of people who want to make it and when they make it there's a brief moment of satisfaction, that's the arriving then they go okay, now what?

the same dissatisfaction arises again and then you have to the making it is not enough, you have to make more so small scale and large scale just this little thing give your fullest attention to this moment because it's not true that the next moment is more significant because it never comes so it's a way of living absorbed in thought, if you always live for the future you're absorbed in thought because future is a thought it's never experienced as an actuality so essential part of being lost in your mind is to be lost in the future because to be lost in the future always looking to the next thing is to be lost in your mind because that's where the future is, not here and now this does not mean you will no longer make any plans it doesn't mean that on a practical level you can plan and say okay at such and such a time I need to be there whatever you use for your planning, probably a device and then if you're old generation like me you go like I need to be there and you tap in where you need to be in your diary or if you are with younger generation your fingers move in a different way they go like that or the old ones they go and still get it wrong every third one is wrong so there is a way of being totally present in the planning for the future so this is actually you're very focused in planning the next your next destination what time do I arrive there what do I need to do, when do I need to be ready and you can write it down and you're fully present in that and once you've done that your attention is again here and now, it was even here and now when you were planning it because you were not mentally devaluing this moment of planning and the strange thing is you begin to enjoy now all the small things in life that before you had overlooked or neglected because the mind projects the bigger thing and even on a small scale it's the bigger thing like I need to pack my suitcase and I need to get the bus that is on a very small scale, the next big thing that I need to get to in the meantime you devalue the moment between now and getting the bus or the train so that's and then once you're on the bus you think okay now I need to be then you get off the bus and then you know where do I need to go, do I need to go now and then you arrive there but of course that's only a very temporary relief because now you need to go

[Speaker 4] (5:29:16 - 5:29:17)
somewhere else

[Speaker 1] (5:29:21 - 5:29:30)
and when you're sitting on the plane or wherever or in the car you mentally project yourself to tomorrow morning

[Speaker 5] (5:29:37 - 5:29:38)
and

[Speaker 1] (5:29:38 - 5:37:40)
there's always a more important moment and it's in the future now what you neglect then and what you continuously overlook is all the small things that actually make

up the vast percentage of your life is all the little things that before are relegated to the periphery of your life what are those little things well whatever, for example things that you handle in your life things that you pick up and put there and objects around you the world around you, walking breathing, looking at the sky looking at a tree seeing, breathing in the air, looking at another human being sensing their deeper aliveness all the little things that constitute life even if you are a so called VIP in the eyes of the world which is pretty meaningless, it's just a narrative and you go from one significant thing to another but all the steps that you take even if you get picked up in a limo as I sometimes do when I go for a talk, the organiser sends a limo well a big car with plenty of room in the back, that's a limo and you can stretch your legs so then it's just very little things you walk to the car and you breathe and then you get in and you sit okay well it's just you're sitting somewhere and breathing and looking you're looking out of the window and then you arrive at a venue and you take a few steps into a car and you sit again and then you walk onto the stage it's all little things and even if you're the Pope or the president of a huge corporation or the president of a country it's still the same life consists of small things all the things that look at just your relationship with objects, this is usually overlooked because every object is treated as a means to an end but if you live in a way that is more present then the objects may still be a means to an end but they are also giving just short attention just picking up a glass there is pleasure in enjoyment in even just looking at a glass and the water and drinking and to realize that, most people realize that for the first time, if ever when they take certain types of drug like acid because it amplifies your sense perception and it shuts off your thinking mind and then for the first time you pick up a glass of water and you go oh wow so amazing so amazing I can't believe it and it is and then you drink and the taste is so incredible it is water, it is amazing it is liquid, alive it is alive, it is liquid no I haven't taken acid before coming here and it is just giving it your fullest attention without interference of thinking just awareness and all this the background then to that state of inner peace or contentment is all the aliveness of everything around you when you you pick up something put it in your suitcase pick up something else unfold it it is a nice thing to do taking a fruit maybe peeling it or biting into it the present moment in its richness that is usually overlooked because you are looking for something more significant but even the most significant thing, let's say you got the Nobel Prize can come to Oslo I think there is one Nobel Prize that people come to Norway for that is peace and then you stand on the balcony of that hotel that overlooks the square where the parliament is I think apparently that is where they go and there you are I have made it you are just standing on a balcony looking and breathing laughing unless you live through and for a narrative in your mind that you completely believe in and that becomes a conceptual sense of identity I am such and such a person who has achieved this and that and this is all the story and that is me a big narrative that gives you your sense of identity thought movement and then you feel bigger while you stand on this balcony and then you feel deflated when you step off the balcony or let's say you are a pop star what is the word that you a rock star that millions of people say wow wouldn't it be great especially youngsters wouldn't it be great to be a rock star you can do anything for a million people and of course they experience this in a magnified way they are on stage and energy moves through them and then they walk off stage and they are regarded as gods by the audience let me only touch you I hope nobody does that to me

[Speaker 5] (5:37:40 - 5:37:41)
laughing

[Speaker 1] (5:37:46 - 5:38:46)
may I just touch you they say to the rock star the rock star then having in most cases not that much awareness they feel they are more and more like a god because they believe in the narrative that all these unconscious people have mentally manufactured for them and then they begin to believe in it and then there comes a

huge conflict or discrepancy when they go off the stage and they sit in the green room or somewhere where am I now and then they have to take drugs because what happens there is a sense of a lack returns much more strongly than ever before a sense of lack and insufficiency so I need another fix a drug or I mean to smash up my hotel suite

[Speaker 5] (5:38:47 - 5:38:47)
laughing

[Speaker 1] (5:38:48 - 5:47:44)
that's what they do rock stars apparently laughing and that enhances their sense of self a little bit more so people live for many people live for something that's going to happen in the future and of course you may succeed in your endeavors this is a nice thing but it's not going to give you long lasting and ultimate fulfillment or tell you who you actually are it's not it's fine to achieve things especially if they are beneficial but for humanity and the totality of the planet it's lovely to have that but even that doesn't break up your identity when the Buddha was teaching 2500 years ago he told people to seek out a quiet place in the forest and meditate there that was an essential part of his teaching so nature was an essential part of his teaching I just like to share with you how I experience nature and the state of consciousness that's behind it and we start right now with something that I don't know whether the microphones can pick it up we listen to the stillness that is here now whether a microphone can pick up stillness I don't know we will see for me the stillness is not 100% because at the moment I have a little bit of a ringing in my right ear but the stillness is still picked up with my left ear and it's very deep and in order to listen to the stillness in nature a certain alertness is required so your senses have to go in acute listening and you can combine that with looking around so you are listening and you are watching what's around you the secret of being fully in nature and experiencing the sacredness of nature is to refrain as much as possible from thinking while you are in nature and just be the awareness behind all the sense perceptions the alert presence because that's the western mind especially tells you you can do something to remedy the situation you must be able to do something there comes a point when further doing is not possible and sometimes it inflicts more pain because it wants to do something because it doesn't know anything else another question I used to be very angry and resentful towards my parents, awareness of their unconsciousness removed these feelings yet in their presence I turn to a bitter person am I in denial this question beautifully illustrates the two dimensions one could say to acceptance or perhaps the two steps to acceptance the first step is an understanding you understand that your parents do what they do did what they did because of their unconsciousness so you can understand how unconsciousness controls people's thinking and behavior so you've understood that and that's good and because you understood that you no longer feel angry and resentful towards your parents it removed those feelings except when you visit them and that brings us to step two it's very good to understand and then become to some extent free but that's not complete freedom yet there also needs to be the presence in you and it's only that that provides the deeper dimension of acceptance so and when you're not with them it's enough to understand them but the moment you stay with them all the past comes back people with whom you share a lot of past very easy to be drawn back into past reactions and it's only by being absolutely alert and present that you can then become free even while you're with them so understanding often operates when you're not immediately challenged by this whatever situation it was that caused you the upset first you understand that it's unconsciousness in them but when you're actually confronted with them or any other situation then it's vital you realize understanding is helpful but not quite enough yet there also needs to be the presence the alert presence while you're with them and especially there you need to be that's the challenge and that's your spiritual practice to become especially alert in that situation

[Speaker 4] (5:47:45 - 5:47:56)
my second question is from my husband who's not here tonight and he was recently diagnosed with Parkinson's disease and his question to you is how can he heal this

[Speaker 1] (5:48:03 - 5:51:49)
well let's start with the second one there's something more important whether or not it can be healed I don't know there is something more important than the healing of that physical condition or any physical condition and that which is more important than the healing which I'm going to just briefly talk about now is also that which in some cases brings about the healing but that's not the main thing that which is more important than the healing is to use the condition in this case it's a deterioration of the physical form which comes slowly over years as far as I understand to use that to push you into intense presence practice that's all you can do so allow it to push you into that which changes the entire vibrational frequency of the physical body when you truly live in presence which affects every cell of the body the entire frequency of the physical form changes if you do intense body awareness you can feel that for yourself it's an enormously enlivening energy field and that also that practice also burns up the ego so the opportunity there is you have an enormous motivation to embrace the state of consciousness that we call presence that's the most vital thing and that may bring about healing or if it does not bring about healing it may delay considerably the onset or the process of deterioration that comes with that disease I mentioned in the New Earth that when I was a graduate student every day in the cafeteria I would observe the physicist Stephen Hawkins who was eating lunch there every day while being fed lunch he had a similar condition it wasn't called Parkinson's in England they call it a motor neuron disease or do they call it that here but anyway that's his condition at that time he wasn't world famous he was just well known in the university and everybody said and it was common knowledge that he had been given I think it was 3 or 4 years maximum 5 years to live and that was when 30 years ago or more so he had this deterioration, all the doctors said just a few more years that's all you have 30 years later he's still alive yes he's incapacitated but his mind is not and he has come as I mentioned in the New Earth he may not be I don't believe he is spiritually awake but he has entered a state of considerable surrender to his condition there's nothing in him that has created negativity as a reaction to his physical condition that's very rare

[Speaker 4] (5:51:49 - 5:51:50)
my sister

[Speaker 1] (5:51:50 - 5:51:52)
your sister?

[Speaker 4] (5:51:53 - 5:52:13)
yes she had cancer breast cancer a really bad kind and she got complications and infections and with the chemo and she was wonderful and happy and not showing and I saw her suffering so much

[Speaker 1] (5:52:14 - 5:52:15)
yes

[Speaker 4] (5:52:15 - 5:53:00)
and sometimes she couldn't talk it was so painful what she was going through and what they were doing to her trying to save her life a couple of times yes I wanted to run away I wouldn't because I hadn't been there for her but I was reading your books and trying to be present I know that I couldn't change the situation I could be there for her that's the only way I could help her but I couldn't take the pain away and the fright, she was frightened I couldn't take her fear away and I wanted to I wanted to run or think about the future so I did not want to stay present it was hard to stay present yes

[Speaker 1] (5:53:19 - 5:59:33)
sometimes acceptance means acceptance of the unacceptable and this is an example where what is happening seems to be impossible to accept but it is happening and of course there are millions in the world who go through similar pain doesn't make it any easier but it is a fact and many others go through other kinds of extreme suffering people who go through it and people who are around them who want to help like yourself, you want to take away their suffering you don't want them to suffer and you can't help so the important the only way is really to find a place within you where you touch something that is deeper than anything that has formed the very life within you if you can close your eyes and find that not necessarily now but in a painful situation to sense to go deep enough so that you sense the life that you are because the life that you are beyond form the very consciousness that you are that pervades the entire body and goes far beyond is also the life that she is so if you sit the same applies to a dying person it's another thing that sometimes can be very painful especially if death seems to come too soon even if it's an old person who is dying it can be painful but if it's a younger person who one would say is not meant to die but you sit with a dying person this can take for the dying person of course it's a different experience the dying person if there's been any even the slightest understanding of acceptance, surrender, stillness when they were in their lifetime the slightest and they will then be able to access that and go very deep sometimes it's more difficult for the person around them than for the person who is dying or who is very ill you need to take your attention deeper let's say you sit with your sister or with any dying person or very sick person and you sit there the mind says I should say something, I should help but of course there's nothing you can do but you can be you can go deeper into being and so really it's a becoming still let's say you just sit next to her bed or hold her hand let go of the idea of doing when my mother was falling ill and her body was failing as she was getting older she kept asking me what do I do and right now there's nothing to do that was the old conditioning in her mind because that's the western mind especially tells you you can do something to change the situation you can do something to remedy the situation they must be able to do something and of course all the the whole in hospitals it's all to do with doing but there comes a point when further doing is not possible but the western mind doesn't understand that, it continues wants to do and sometimes it inflicts more pain because it wants to do something why does it want to do something when whatever you do can only be causing more pain because it doesn't know anything else the western mind is not confined to the west but I call it the western mind even the east is now adopting the western mind be is not recognized in the west as anything that even exists or is valuable but you have to go into being and if you have done it before before the situation became so difficult that will be a help if you've never heard of it even then it might be possible so but anybody who's here and of course we will all face either being with someone close to us who is dying and we will all face of course sooner or later the moment our approaching death and if by then by the time you sit with someone close to you it dies or death comes approaching if by then you haven't gone into being haven't even touched it it may be hard to go that deeply within then but if you've even touched it during your life as you all have and many of you more than touched it then that will be any kind of extreme suffering of that kind either happening close to you or to you will bring about an enormous deepening it forces you to go deeper you have to become deep in a situation like that if you are not deep you suffer enormously but even if you are deep you still suffer you suffer on the surface you cry you feel sadness and pain but underneath the suffering you can suddenly sense a stillness a vastness in yourself so to speak

[Speaker 3] (5:59:34 - 5:59:38)
as the now becomes more and more my experience

[Speaker 1] (5:59:38 - 6:27:24)
I started to question why be in a relationship with another and I guess I want to

know a little bit more about how things shift in what we're seeking in a relationship and again through observing yourself in relationships you can actually find the answers to your question or the answer to your question nevertheless I will continue to speak it's to ask to find try to find some mental conclusion about the function of relationships when you are present or awakened actually isn't that helpful although many people actually wanted to know the answer to your question that's why you're here but you can observe yourself how relationships operate in your life or how new relationships if they come into your life how they differ from the old relationships when you were not present you may notice that when you're not present you seek something from the other person it may be a very subtle thing or it may be not so subtle but when you're not yet connected to the source within yourself which is the transcendent dimension which is the stillness which is consciousness when you don't know yourself as the light of consciousness as a living realization which is not difficult it's right here but when that gets obscured you seek because that's the only source of true satisfaction and peace and aliveness and then but if that is blocked you're unaware of it then you seek it through something else and often it's through another human being so you seek something that the other human being cannot really give you nor any other situation can give you because you may seek it through some imagined situation I have to work out the right structure for my life good income so that I don't have to worry anymore nice place to live lovely relationship on top of it and be able to travel wouldn't that be great and even that would not be would not provide permanent satisfaction, it would provide short-lived satisfaction always followed by dissatisfaction so you would be seeking something in the other human some kind of completion make me complete make me at home in the now help me find myself through you we'll have a deal I make you feel complete and you make me feel complete it sounds good when you say it like that but when you actually begin to live it it doesn't work not for long so you see in the old way of seeking relationships there's the seeking something through the relationship it could be just physical pleasure that is often the case and then of course comes the psychological pleasure through the relationship some kind of psychological completion through the other and as long as there's the seeking for completion through the other the relationship is doomed ultimately and as presence arises the mind may still ask well would I still need a relationship or want a relationship you don't need to find some kind of answer, abstract answer or arrive at some kind of conclusion about relationships and then live the rest of your life on the basis of that mentally arrived at conclusion about relationships the mind loves that it says I need to sort out in my mind what relationship is all about and whether it's still needed when I'm present and once I have the answer to that I can use that for the rest of my life and build my life on that of course you would be back in mind activity and that kind of conclusion is just a limitation you would impose on yourself and then even more challenging meeting humans with whom you share a lot of past the more past you share with them the more the old behavior patterns will want to come back in you know that with meeting your parents your wife your husband after many years of marriage patterns get very established of who you think he is, who he thinks you are and the way in which you interact or more difficult meeting your ex-husband or your ex-wife and be present then and there and be in the body so you're meeting human beings without past not that you cannot remember certain things they did but not to bring the past as an active operating principle into the interaction meeting everyone without past just in this moment through the power of this moment which is the power of presence which is who you are and not meeting the other person as a walking personal history and that is an enormously liberating thing to do when you can meet even your mother and father with whom quite a few people some people have a wonderful relationship with their mother and father which is beautiful some grew up in a relatively conscious family and many in this world did not grow up in a conscious, their father and mother were manifesting varying degrees of unconsciousness and resentment built up over the years between adult children and parents often this grievances, resentments complaints he doesn't understand me I get criticized all the time he doesn't even want to understand me my father, my mother and the same reactions happen every time you visit them and then you have a fight and then you leave and next time it happens again and then one day you meet them you arrive at the doorstep and you look at them and feel the inner body at the same time and then you come in and you sit down and you still, you look at them still feeling the inner body because now it's vital that you're anchored now it's vital that you're anchored in the now and then you get the old thing your father says, are you still involved in that spiritual airy fairy nonsense still haven't got a job have you I told you years ago you should be doing this and that then you have to be very present and just sit there and simply say well yes I'm still doing that yes but then he if it's your father or she if it's your mother after a while will feel a slight disorientation because you are not feeding the old patterns anymore you're not reacting and his or her ego will feel there's something missing here and so it will be hard for them to keep up that playing out that script if the other one isn't playing anymore isn't reacting anymore simply stating this is how it is and you don't even expect anything anymore because expectations that he or she should behave in a particular way to make me happy is to do with being identified with certain thoughts that's how things should be he should understand me so that I can be happy the whole thing is an illusionary edifice you won't be happy even when he understands he won't make any real difference to you now he understands me so now what what has changed nothing he doesn't understand me so the same nothing so you become free of that which you thought you needed when you were identified with thought in presence you don't really need anything psychologically speaking you don't need psychological this or that and there you are and then you can see the patterns in your mother or father crumbling and for the first time perhaps he or she will ask you a genuine question what are you really into what is that this has happened people have told me these miracles happen and if they don't that's fine too it doesn't really matter so there comes with presence comes an acceptance a compassionate acceptance of what is which very often means what is is the human being in front of you a compassionate giving them space to be because presence is you have found your inner space or spaciousness formless consciousness peace so in English we don't have a word that applies to both men and women I don't know if in Swedish in German you have the word mensch which means could mean it's man and woman but the English language doesn't have that so you have to say human being human being and that's great, I like that because I realize that that points to the two dimensions that constitute your reality you are a human undoubtedly which means you have a past you have mental emotional conditioning that makes up the person the ego, the personality you have a life situation you are a human and you have your desires as a human you have your goals and so on all the things that you experience as a human right, okay but what about being the being dimension is overlooked by most humans they are lost in their human nature they are completely unaware of that transcendent dimension of consciousness that actually is the essential reality to who or what they are I sometimes call it your essence identity, the essence your essence identity is the being of you and the being is timeless the being is consciousness itself and then there's the human and the two are together and if you can awaken to the beingness of you then of course you continue to be a human until you are no longer until the body dissolves in the meantime your task your mission your purpose is to as a human to also embody the being then you have both dimensions in your life the limited dimension of here that is temporal inseparable from time and you have the transcendent dimension to who you are in the timeless realm of consciousness itself and that is a continuous realization at first it may only come to you as glimpses in brief moments and you feel suddenly a sense of lightness very peaceful but very intensely alive and you go ah and you may realize you're not thinking in those moments thinking has subsided but you haven't fallen asleep you're awake and then you may remember those moments this was so wonderful sometimes it happens when you go into nature if you can really be there nature can help you in your awakening if you can really be there with all the senses and be aware of the awareness itself when you're out there in nature and sometimes it can happen to some humans almost accidentally they're out climbing a mountain or they're swimming somewhere in nature and suddenly the person subsides and just an awareness arises and they go wow and they think it's been caused by the beauty that they see but it's not really that it's been caused by the cessation of thinking and you can have that in the middle of a city and that's a this is your continuous practice is are you able to as much as possible let go of habitual especially habitual, useless self-serving thinking thinking that only feeds the fictitious self, the ego the entity that loves, actually loves its problems says no I don't love my problems yes you do because you talk and think about them continuously in fact you create them through unconscious thinking you create them, no no I don't yes you do and that this entity then becomes as first you have glimpses, sometimes accidental they may only be a few seconds and then perhaps a little bit longer and then the two are gradually the being and the human kind of merge the being seeps into the human and so the human the conditioned entity, the human becomes less and less obnoxious and less and less dysfunctional and less and less creating completely unnecessary and absurd suffering for yourself and others completely unnecessary and absurd suffering created unconsciously by the ego this entity in its attempt to strengthen itself, it loves its problems and its enemies oh I feel much bigger anger is great and you can talk about it all the time this is completely asleep completely asleep and so as the awakening happens presence begins to sometimes completely replace the person and at other times it kind of shines through the person in the same way that a light shines through the lampshade the light shines through the lampshade and the person still, yes the person still has its conditioning to some extent and can never be totally free of the conditioning there's always certain ways in which you behave that's part to do with how you were brought up your environment, all the conditioning the country, even the language that you speak is a form of mental conditioning, all those things they are still there but the most dysfunctional and unhappiness creating patterns they subside more and more certain patterns remain as long as you are a person, a human certain patterns remain but not the heavy deeply unhappy and obnoxious patterns they gradually dissolve and all is left with certain idiosyncrasies in your personality and so on that's okay so that the person remains but it undergoes a substantial transformation it no longer creates suffering even in the face of challenges because they continue to happen even as you awaken the universe will continue to present you with challenges, new ones no matter what situation you go into at first you oh this is great, I'm in a new situation and before you know it oh it comes up from behind another challenge it won't, the universe won't leave you alone but the wonderful thing is if you're not undergoing the awakening process every challenge that arises will make you more unconscious it will strengthen the self the self that is reacting is reactive and complaining all the time and reacting so the challenge will make you more unconscious if you're not awakening yet you can verify that perhaps in your own experience when things go wrong there is a reactive entity there that works itself up either you become angry or despondent or whatever the reactivity is people like in professions such as lawyers often encounter people in their most unconscious states because they tend to go to lawyers when things go wrong, they're being sued or the divorce is happening divorce lawyers to be a divorce lawyer potentially could be a very enlightening job because you encounter deep human unconsciousness which most people in a conflict situation like that become more unconscious than they are normally deeply unconscious and so that's when you're being challenged by life the challenge will create a reaction and you become completely identified with the reaction and you become even more unconscious than your normal state which is unconscious enough but now it's more unconscious can't stop thinking about it now as you're awakening challenge comes again and then you suddenly see the possibility of actually being more intensely present when a challenge comes and you go it's like you know what a dimmer switch is on an electrical switch you can turn up the light dimmer switch so when a challenge comes something goes wrong so to speak a difficult person arises a difficult situation arises some kind of loss arises whatever kind of loss it may be and instead of reacting and becoming more unconscious you suddenly sense you're becoming more present in the face of a challenge and that is when the challenges of the world are becoming helpful to you rather than make you unconscious they can intensify the awakening process when the Buddha was teaching 2500 years ago he told people to seek out a quiet place in the forest

[Speaker 2] (6:27:26 - 6:28:17)
and meditate there that was an essential part of his teaching so nature was an essential part of his teaching the story goes that the Buddha sat under a tree when, as the story goes he awakened spiritually or became enlightened so his enlightenment is associated with that tree

[Speaker 5] (6:30:11 - 6:30:12)
...

[Speaker 1] (6:30:37 - 6:30:49)
so here I am in the forest in northern California there are some amazing trees here, the redwood

[Speaker 2] (6:30:49 - 6:30:54)
trees I'm taking a little break

[Speaker 1] (6:30:54 - 6:31:27)
I have a little bit of a cold so that slowed me down quite a bit usually when I take a walk in nature the first part of my walk is fairly fast I don't have the energy for that today, and then when I return I walk more slowly and in a very contemplative way so I'm getting a little bit hot so I'll take the scarf off if I can get it off

[Speaker 2] (6:31:32 - 6:32:03)
oh, it's very long okay so I just like to share with you how I experience nature and the state of consciousness that's behind it and we start

[Speaker 1] (6:32:03 - 6:32:35)
right now with something that I don't know whether the microphones can pick it up we listen to the stillness that is here now whether a microphone can pick up stillness, I don't know we will see for me the stillness is not 100% because at the moment I have a little bit of a ringing in my right ear but the stillness is still picked up with my left ear

[Speaker 2] (6:32:36 - 6:34:24)
and it's very deep and in order to listen to the stillness in nature a certain alertness is required so your senses have to go in acute listening and you can combine that with looking around so you are listening and you are watching what's around you the secret of being fully in nature and experiencing the sacredness of nature is to refrain as much as possible from thinking while you are in nature and just be the awareness behind all the sense perceptions the alert presence and then you will notice that there is a depth to nature that transcends anything you could say about it or conceptualize it there are also arising within the stillness

[Speaker 1] (6:34:24 - 6:34:54)
occasionally very subtle sounds so it's actually quite helpful and can help you stay alert if you listen to the sounds so you are aware of both the stillness and the sounds of the leaves here occasionally we may get some distant car passing by, that's fine too so just be alert

[Speaker 2] (6:34:54 - 6:37:19)
and listen to both the stillness and the sounds very subtle sounds nothing spectacular and then it seems almost as if the forest were whispering and you can sense that it is a live energy field pervaded by the one consciousness out of which it has come so this contemplation of nature frees you from temporarily from yourself and preoccupations about yourself nature can help you transcend that trap

of only paying attention to that limited self and so as you walk or sit in nature the person the personality that you are recedes if you are alert enough it recedes, you don't remember your past you don't need to right now or what's going on in your life all that is replaced with alert awareness and so the most wonderful thing

[Speaker 1] (6:37:19 - 6:37:33)
most wonderful most conducive place for meditation is to be in nature and have your senses attuned to the sense perceptions of nature and that includes also

[Speaker 2] (6:37:33 - 6:38:09)
breathing the air everything slows you down meditation helps you to become still and so you begin to resonate internally with the stillness that's all around you occasionally of course

[Speaker 1] (6:38:10 - 6:38:46)
thoughts may come into your head you might look at something and occasionally the mind may say something, for example here the tallest and oldest trees here, and I believe the oldest trees here are close to a thousand years old those trees many of them are scarred so they have survived many forest fires, these gigantic trees survive

[Speaker 2] (6:38:46 - 6:38:54)
forest fires in fact I'm told that they actually

[Speaker 1] (6:38:54 - 6:39:12)
need the forest fires and some of those trees will not drop their seeds until the forest fire has cleared the space around them, it's burnt down all the smaller trees and then the seeds will fall and then a new tree will come into being

[Speaker 2] (6:39:14 - 6:41:34)
so this may arise as you walk you have that thought and you see it's amazing how these trees have lasted for so long and then let that thought go so don't follow it so that you return your attention to stillness and thinking again is replaced with awareness if I use poetic language I would say that being in nature nourishes the soul so there is something here that is very healing but you need to be there if you are engaged in continuous thinking then you are not really where you are if you sit somewhere in nature, you may occasionally want to close your eyes for a few minutes and then just listen to the stillness and be aware of any sounds that may be there and of course be aware of yourself, the presence the underlying presence that you are and somehow the presence that you are aligns itself with that still presence the energy field that surrounds you

[Speaker 1] (6:41:34 - 6:41:48)
you kind of merge with the energy field of the forest the boundary between inner and outer which is created by excessive conceptualization

[Speaker 2] (6:41:49 - 6:42:24)
subsides and so then you participate and not only participate in the stillness you are one with it and you are when you then look at the trees you feel no longer a sense of separation and it's almost

[Speaker 1] (6:42:25 - 6:42:33)
there comes goes a little plane which is fine too you allow it to be there

[Speaker 2] (6:42:38 - 6:42:41)
it's almost as if

[Speaker 1] (6:42:43 - 6:42:59)
when you perceive nature in that way as if in this case it's a forest it became

conscious of itself through you

[Speaker 2] (6:43:00 - 6:45:01)
because there is no longer a separation between you and it there is a continuity a continuum and I would suggest and I strongly sense that nature loves to be to become aware of itself through you so we have a continuum of consciousness and when you look at a tree or touch the tree or become aware of how still these trees are just deeply rooted in the earth and deeply rooted in being when you become aware of that we could say that the tree becomes aware of itself through you so what you provide you bring to nature is the aware dimension and a kind of completion so we could say that nature needs you and wants you to be aware of it and loves you for it oh

[Speaker 1] (6:45:16 - 6:45:34)
when the Buddha was teaching 2500 years ago he told people to seek out a quiet place in the forest and meditate there that was an essential part of his teaching

[Speaker 2] (6:45:35 - 6:45:48)
so nature was an essential part of his teaching and of course as you know probably the story goes that the Buddha sat

[Speaker 1] (6:45:48 - 6:45:59)
under a tree when as the story goes he awakened spiritually or became enlightened so his enlightenment

[Speaker 2] (6:45:59 - 6:47:21)
is associated associated with the tree a tree don't believe what science tells you there is more to the tree than that and you can know that and sense that if you become still enough and give it your attention looking almost sensing its stillness so but it is a reciprocal movement it goes both ways yes nature becomes conscious of itself through you but nature also helps you to realign yourself with stillness

[Speaker 1] (6:47:52 - 6:58:22)
if possible make sure that you are not disturbed while we are here and just give this time to yourself because really meditation in a wider sense just means being with yourself and everybody should take time out every day even if it is only 10 minutes to be with themselves now you may ask am I not always with myself throughout the day and you might even say I'd rather get away from myself in my usual preoccupations worries, anxieties fears so what does it mean when I say being with yourself I don't refer to your usual sense of self which I call the surface self that's to do with all the thinking that goes through your mind throughout the day the emotions you experience all the things that happen in your life your memories of who you are in every human being there is a deeper dimension to who they are and getting in touch with that deeper dimension within themselves that's really what meditation is and if you've never accessed that deeper dimension in yourself you'll always feel that something really vital is missing in your life even though you may have achieved many things on what I call the surface reality the surface level of your life maybe you can you have recognition maybe you have wealth you can buy whatever you like and yet you'll notice there's something that seems is still missing a certain underlying dissatisfaction or discontent it may not be there all the time but it always resurfaces and many people I've met quite a few people who have achieved fame and fortune and they all told me that after a while after the initial elation of being suddenly wealthy or famous recognized as important by the world and soon the old discontent came back a sense of insufficiency also to do with fear so no matter what you achieve on the surface level of life if you haven't found that deeper dimension to who you are your life is not really fulfilled and there's so much frustration the frustration that people continuously experience in life is not really to do with the imperfection on the outer level of their life because on the outer level things can never be perfect or

never perfect for very long things come and go you lose here you gain something there you lose something here so the dissatisfaction is not realizing that there is something deeper within you that is more truly who you are than whatever happens on the surface of your life that really is the spiritual dimension and the deeper self also connects you with the underlying deeper dimension of the universe because just like you what we see in this world the universe, the world whatever you call it it's all the surface of reality under that the great teachers and philosophers since ancient times have said that realized it there is an unseen dimension underneath that there is a universal intelligence underneath all the phenomena that we experience through the senses and you are one with that universal intelligence and the way to connect with that universal intelligence that underlies all the manifestations of life that continuously unfold around you is miraculous underlying all that there is an intelligence we can call it, there are other names we can use to talk about it but it's only in you that you can find it, you can't find it out there but once you find it in yourself you recognize it out there you can sense that intelligence or that consciousness is in everything so how how do you connect with the deeper level within yourself it's deeper than thinking so you can't get there through thinking about it it's deeper than the emotions and yet it's always there it's always there and it's not that it's totally hidden from you it's that the thinking, the thoughts the emotions and the sense perceptions draw all your attention to themselves so people are kind of hypnotized by those things, especially thoughts so they no longer can sense the dimension of depth because every thought really demands your attention and you go, you follow it with your attention and then it leads to another thought and another thought and every thought is a voice in the head and it thinks, thinks and you go and you think that's your life, all the thoughts that come and talk to you about who you are and what other people who they are and continuously your attention is being drawn into that mind activity and emotions go with it and that's the usual surface sense of self and it's frustrating if there's nothing else everybody has it has that surface sense of self of course but if there's nothing else in your life except that then your life is shallow and the spiritual dimension is missing so here we are because we want

[Speaker 2] (6:58:22 - 6:58:23)
to

[Speaker 1] (6:58:25 - 6:59:03)
find the dimension of depth within ourselves and it's already here we just need to become aware of it how? well that's what traditionally what meditation methods are for but here I'd like to suggest you to just investigate without actually using any technique as such just investigate with your attention

[Speaker 2] (6:59:04 - 6:59:14)
what it means to be yourself on the most essential level

[Speaker 1] (6:59:21 - 7:01:19)
what does it feel like to be yourself what is that sense of self can you get a taste or a glimpse of that sense of self without thinking about yourself how is it possible that you can even think about yourself and about your life and all the things that make up your life what makes that thinking possible what is the prerequisite for being able to think you need to be conscious if you're not conscious you can't think but usually this consciousness is completely absorbed by thinking and that is what keeps you on the surface level of reality and yourself so you only know yourself as defined by your mind you then have an image of who you are and really that is what ego means in the way we use it you then have a mental image you have a self talk and you think that's who you are me but there is a more fundamental sense of self underneath all that and that is your simple sense of presence so I'm inviting you now

[Speaker 2] (7:01:21 - 7:01:22)
to sense

[Speaker 1] (7:01:25 - 7:01:34)
that there is more to you than all your thinking what does it feel like without

[Speaker 2] (7:01:35 - 7:01:42)
the thinking to be yourself what is left

[Speaker 1] (7:01:45 - 7:02:13)
when you're not thinking but you're not falling asleep let's see if we can create a little gap in the stream of thinking to some extent me talking to you already does that so if there is a little gap in the stream of thinking like now you go and there is

[Speaker 2] (7:02:17 - 7:02:19)
a moment of no thought

[Speaker 1] (7:02:23 - 7:02:53)
but something is there a sense of presence or aliveness whatever you call it so can you sense now at this moment that inherent deeper sense of alive presence that has nothing to do

[Speaker 2] (7:02:55 - 7:03:03)
with your personal history it has nothing to do with the past

[Speaker 1] (7:03:04 - 7:03:19)
it has nothing to do with the future it has nothing to do with your situation in life or your name or your background

[Speaker 2] (7:03:22 - 7:03:24)
it's beyond all that

[Speaker 1] (7:03:32 - 7:04:44)
so another way of putting it can you sense that presence you can't define it it has no content it's just space spacious presence and then you know in that you know that you are alive without having to tell yourself that you are alive because the fact that you are alive is self evident because you are conscious and to say you are conscious is even that is not absolutely correct because in essence it's not that you are conscious but that you are consciousness that strange thing or no thing that's the essence

[Speaker 2] (7:04:45 - 7:04:47)
of who you are

[Speaker 1] (7:04:49 - 7:05:47)
and sensing yourself as that consciousness consciousness also frees you liberates you from being completely trapped in your personal sense of self of course that's still there on the surface but now you can sense that you are actually deeper than that now you may notice that as I speak

[Speaker 2] (7:05:47 - 7:05:52)
to you there are little gaps

[Speaker 1] (7:05:54 - 7:07:01)
between words or sentences now these gaps are not there to hypnotize you because we are here to de-hypnotize you from being totally trapped in your thoughts and deriving your sense of who you are from your thinking it's to bring you to that presence pure presence that's so refreshing so revitalizing to sense yourself as

that pure presence and so these little gaps in between words or sentences as I speak are very important

[Speaker 2] (7:07:04 - 7:07:33)
because you may notice that in those gaps you are not thinking in those gaps for example now you are just present and that's wonderfully

[Speaker 1] (7:07:34 - 8:02:36)
liberating to sense yourself as that presence now you may find occasionally your mind may come in and say something it might even feel threatened by this and there may even be one or two or three of you who couldn't stand it any longer and they are no longer with us here but if you're still here and you can sense that what I'm saying points to something very important and you can sense the reality of what I'm talking about you may have noticed the spiritual dimension does not require belief because it's to do with experiencing knowing directly not believing in something I would like to welcome you to our live meditation and a special welcome to the participants of the Wisdom 2.0 conference in San Francisco 300 miles up the road so to speak from where I am right now so welcome to the Wisdom 2.0 conference people who are with us now this is not a conventional meditation I may be speaking most of the time but there are also gaps in between the words which of course are always more important than the words and if you're aware of the gaps as much as you're aware of the words then you're already entering the state of meditation without having to go through any preliminary technique not that there's anything wrong with techniques so it's actually quite lovely to be aware not only of the words but also the stillness that's there the space one could say between the words even underneath the words and the miraculous thing is when you're aware of that for a brief moment whenever you're aware of the space you're not thinking so the more you're aware of the space or the spaces the less absorbed you are in the stream of thinking and not being absorbed in the stream of thinking not identifying with the stream of thinking is meditation and of course the aim of meditation is that eventually it becomes your normal state of consciousness in which case you may still want to practice so called formal meditation because you like it or you may not now usually in your daily life things constantly arise in your field of awareness demanding attention situations people things that need to be done and sometimes things are pulling at you from various directions demanding your attention at the same time and when you no longer know where to put your attention you're beginning to experience so called stress because stress means one thing is pulling this way another thing is pulling that way and so you get stress and as long as you're unaware unconscious spiritually speaking the world around you determines where your attention goes people situation, events your electronic devices that go ping the next text message comes in or whatever sound it is or go pong when the next email arrives and immediately your attention goes there and then somebody else somebody else so I call that losing oneself in the world and then of course there's your thinking every thought that arises seems to say give me more of your attention follow me to where I want you to go and so when you're unaware then whatever thought comes into your head has this enormous pulling power and so you identify with the thought and you're completely in it and it takes you this way and that way and leads to a whole succession of thoughts and so on the most primordial level it's thinking really that absorbs your attention your mind because even external things have to be transformed into mind stuff before you can experience it so that you can experience it all external objects before you can be aware of them have to be taken in through sensory perception then transformed into love of impulses and then reassembled somewhere to make up this picture of external reality but it's ultimately all you ever experience is your mind so that's really what we need to look at so most people are continuously aware of something and they are at the mercy of whatever arises in their mind that has this power to pull in their attention one thing you learn in meditation is you can you have a choice, you can direct your attention to one thing and then you can see if you can keep your attention on one particular mind object which could be becoming aware of your

breathing or it could be a mantra that you repeat in your mind one mind object or an external object the candle flame so you begin to realize that you can actually direct attention, you don't have to be at the mercy of whatever comes into your mind so as we sit here for example you can direct your attention your attention is of course in auditory perception and visual perception but in addition you can also have some of your attention on your breathing for example you're aware even as you listen and as you watch if your eyes are open you can be aware also that at the same time you're breathing you're choosing to have some attention there too that's a very calming thing and you become aware that your body is alive on the inside you can become aware that there's a sense of aliveness inside your hands another ancient meditation method to do it more methodically you become aware that your feet are alive on the inside, your legs your entire body there's a field of aliveness, you become aware of that you can then choose to put your attention on that rather than on something else where it would habitually go so gradually you become aware of your own power you're not at the mercy of events and things your thoughts ultimately there's a deeper dimension in you deeper than thinking and getting in touch with that accessing that realizing that that is the essence of who you are that's why we're here the purpose of this is to get in touch with that deeper dimension within yourself deeper than thinking and what is that we could describe it as the feeling or the sense of being you at the most fundamental level what does it feel like to be you now usually when you speak in terms of I let's use the first person what does it feel like, what's it like to be me, what is that sense of identity, the sense of self usually you refer then to certain things in your mind your history your conditioned mind the history of me, the story of me me and my problems me and my situation me and this and this and this so there's always on that level your feeling of being yourself is really to be identified with certain things that arise in your mind but here we are attempting to go deeper to a more foundational a more real sense of what is it that underlies all that what is it that makes the story of you that most people tend to be who they are what is it that makes the story of you possible what is the space, the light in which it appears there's something deeper without which there could be no story and yet it's not separate from it and that's always the same, there's a deep sense of beingness or presence in you that is prior and deeper than anything that happens in your life or in your mind so I'd like you to get in touch with that sense of being you at the deepest level what does that feel like and it's a very strange question, so I'm usually then your attention is directed to certain things objects in your mind what we're attempting to do here is to ultimately becoming aware of that attention itself which is awareness so when I ask you what's it like to be you I'm really asking you to become aware of your own awareness and that is not an object you can't say ah, there it is, I've got it now you cannot have it because you are it it's the essence of who you are, you cannot describe it because it has no form you cannot talk about it in terms of past or future because there's no time to it it is a timeless dimension and this bare sense of beingness that if that becomes the foundation for your life so to speak if you could not lose touch with that, in other words, not lose touch with the most essential dimension within you then the way in which you experience this world would change because you would be continuously aware of that which is deeper than whatever arises in this world or in your mind and to feel that within yourself brings about a sense of trust in life it is as if something were carrying you something vaster than the little me and you are connected with a vastness there that goes far beyond you as the person with the history and to sense that within yourself you can feel there is a power there that is the power of life itself when you don't know that all that is available to you is a trickle of that power but as you become aware of it, which really means become aware of awareness become conscious of consciousness which again when we speak, when we use words it's never quite right because the moment we construct a sentence we create duality subject and object and you say I am aware of consciousness that you have a subject and an object which isn't quite right because there is no I apart from consciousness so you would have to qualify it and say I am aware of consciousness as myself then you undo the original error that is semantic that brings about a sense of rootedness in being and brings about a trust in life in other words what is trust which in other spiritual traditions have other words for it faith it's the absence of fear that's really what trust is so when you are in touch with that within yourself the world is no longer perceived as a fearful place I just want to remind you that we are not here to do anything we are here to one could say experience something rather than do something and what we are here to experience and even that's not quite right I'll come to that in a minute what we're here to experience is very subtle but very powerful whatever name we give that reduces it it's not that it's very vast for the time being let's just call it stillness now when I said we're here to experience something that's not absolutely right but whenever we use language we are bound to falsify that which goes far beyond concepts it's not so much that we're here to experience something as to find that which lies which underlies all experience a dimension that is deeper than any experience becoming aware of that within yourself so some of you may have written down or have in your mind goals you want to achieve in life and that's good it's unlikely that achieving stillness will figure prominently as one of your goals or even number one and yet it's the most important thing in your life but it's a good thing that it's not on your list of goals to be achieved because if you make it into a goal to be achieved it implies that you need the future to achieve stillness which is of course true for all other goals but not for that which we call stillness temporarily we just call it for the time being stillness if you make it into a goal to be achieved you place it into the future and you'll never find it because it's inseparable from the present moment the now that usually people are not aware of as an actual presence and here we have another pointer we could use instead of stillness and that is presence and as the word implies presence is inseparable from the present the now now for most people yet the now is not a living realization they are only aware of what happens in the now and even that's not quite right they're not really aware of it they are reactive towards it and they are identified with it they are identified with their thoughts that arise they are reactive to what happens outside so I'm here just talking a little bit giving you pointers with every sentence every word is really a pointer towards that and I trust that as we sit here together giving up the idea that we are here to do something as we sit here together a realization arises within you that is the living presence within the thinking mind stops for a moment and there's just spacious awareness stillness you haven't gone to sleep you've become still without falling into dreamless sleep without falling into dreams just something has arisen that usually you would have overlooked and our meditation here, if we want to call it that is to become aware of the space within, another pointer the stillness, this space becoming totally at ease with the present moment a very rare state for most humans usually they're only at ease when some desire has just been fulfilled and then they're at ease for a little while, a few minutes perhaps or they're at ease because they're so tired they're moving towards sleep so I'm here to lead you into that realization of inner stillness of that dimension within lead you through words which are only pointers and through the demonstration of presence which you can sense if you pay attention to the underlying stillness that is here as I speak behind the words between the words tune into that nothing personal in that nothing to do with this person and as you tune into that the same dimension arises within you which again has nothing to do with that person that you think you are so there is a dimension that transcends the person it's in this person and it's in that person the dimension that transcends the personal and the person and everything to do with the person the personal history the personal problems the life situation the ups and downs of the life situation there will always be there the ups and downs of the life situation but the miracle is finding the transcendent dimension within you without which life cannot be a pleasant experience not for long it cannot be satisfying not for long, never for long so without the realization of the transcendent dimension the formless spacious stillness nothing will satisfy you it's frustrating, life is very frustrating without that dimension if you haven't found it, but of course the dimension is there in everyone it's not something that you need to achieve you can't achieve it let alone achieve it in the future you can discover it here and now within, it's lurking there underneath all the doing underneath all the thinking it's always there but completely ignored by most people if you're comfortable with theistic terms you could say God is always present but completely ignored by most people because if God has any meaning it is the transcendent dimension of life it transcends means it is beyond whatever arises in life beyond thought, beyond physical forms, beyond form it transcends form it is beyond past and future, it transcends time it has nothing to do with time it is presence, eternal presence and presence, eternal presence or eternity is not some weird abstract philosophical concept it can be and it points to a living realization so the most precious thing to find in life is that there is stillness inside you always you just have to pay attention to it but then the strange thing is that when you become aware of stillness you realize that the awareness and the stillness are not two but one so it's only when we use language we say I'm now I'm aware of stillness you put it into language so when you're aware of stillness there is a knowing where concepts are not needed words are not needed and there is no duality really it's only when you translate it into words there's a duality and you say I'm aware of stillness but what really happens is that awareness and stillness are a single realization there is no subject and object in this realization when we talk about it, it sometimes seems that there is a subject I am aware of stillness I can feel the stillness inside me when you put it into words that's how there's subject and object but when you look more deeply beyond words you see that there's not me as an entity who is aware of stillness as something in me it's only when we use language and that duality appears when I'm aware of stillness when I'm aware of stillness the awareness and the stillness are one the whole evolutionary impulse of the universe is towards that somehow and I cannot explain it in words it's beyond we don't even attempt to fully to really understand what is behind that, it's far beyond understanding but just to say that the evolutionary impulse of the universe is behind that consciousness wants to flower through the form the human it will flower through any form it doesn't say you are more worthy than this, I will choose this form because you are more worthy it flowers where there is a transparency where the form the rigid mind structures give way they die first identification with that me mind made self goes that and this is why we're here because as you sit here you are finding death before death finds you and these the mind structures that you are identified with as me the thought forms die so the flowering is happening here before death finds you you embrace death already but it doesn't matter when it happens and consciousness will move through, it could be a criminal killed several people inflicted suffering on others and of course on himself and in that midst of hell in itself waiting for execution suddenly inside the entire structure of the self mental emotional structures dissolves because the suffering is unbearable and suddenly something shines through and now he doesn't care anymore whether he the execution happens or not and there have been cases like that when this happens sometimes when people speak about it and tell others about what happened to them they may use certain words that correspond to their language or culture but when you look beyond the words you will see that they all point to the same and there are some of those to whom it happens who can't even speak about it they just look at you and you look at them they may be uneducated they may not have much to say and yet you look and you see there's something that shines through that is deeper than a person and any person could be the personal dimension and the person has given way to that and so it is always sacred when that happens but so far it's been relatively few human beings to whom this has happened no longer the case now it is the destiny of all humans to go through that transformation it is certainly your destiny otherwise you wouldn't be here the purpose of your life is to enable that to come through you and it's happening already so we embrace the death that is here when you surrender to what is that's the greatest death the resisting me entity gives way you can surrender through suffering or you can surrender through voluntarily through the yes to what is which as we saw yesterday takes you beyond the form you are no longer reactive to a form so the yes that simple thing takes you beyond form and I pointed out yesterday often that which you say yes to is some form of limitation because it's form and that in other cases that which you say yes to may be some form of death some form of loss and that is particularly powerful any kind of loss or death leaves an emptiness behind when a form is no longer there and you don't run away from that empty space and it's an opening into the formless one could say every form obscures God and the death of the form enables God which is the formless one life to shine through therefore death has been long been recognized as sacred in ancient cultures who had not denied death whereas the modern culture modern western civilization denies death it's not they don't know it's sacred they don't even want to talk about it they don't want to see a dead body you can't it's not allowed it's illegal to see a dead body they would send you to a psychiatrist if you asked to see a dead body there must be something wrong with you so death is hidden because the western culture is totally identified with form, with mind so the worst possible thing for it is death and even in hospitals they don't know anything about death where death happens continuously, old people's homes every old people's home potentially would be a spiritual center, the greatest ashrams would be old people's homes because that is the potential of old age but it's not recognized yet so they would be the most sacred places so these ancient cultures have recognized the sacredness of death not knowing perhaps why intuitively they knew it to be sacred but now you can see why it is sacred because the formless shines through where there was the form and that can happen when there is physical death but it can also happen when you die psychologically to the me and that is the spiritual transformation and that can happen through intense suffering or through the power of a spiritual teaching or in many cases a combination of both and I suspect that in many of you it's a combination of both you've had the suffering, otherwise you wouldn't have come and now there is the power of spiritual teaching which tells you you don't need to suffer anymore and you don't need anymore time before you can enter the surrendered state why would you need time to enter the surrendered state? Do you need more knowledge before you can enter the surrendered? Yes, but before I enter the surrendered state I need to understand the universe completely laughter you've had many pointers already everybody here has read scriptures beautiful pointers no, I have not yet fully understood the nature of the universe I need a few more years says the mind and the amazing thing is a deep understanding happens not in the way that the mind imagines it a deep understanding of the universe happens as you enter the surrendered state this mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive to be free you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation

[Speaker 2] (8:03:03 - 8:03:04)
when was the last time

[Speaker 1] (8:03:04 - 8:50:44)
you saw somebody just sit there and look around? because you have to get out your phone it clutters your mind even more so when I ask who are you?

if I ask that question don't go, let's do this for a moment don't go into the past can you feel or sense who you are without reference to the past in you you don't even need to remember your name right now what for? you don't remember your email address or your phone number or what happened to you 10 years ago don't need to remember that can you still get a sense without reference to your personal history can you get a sense of beingness or presence there's no past in that at all but what is that? you can't really describe it all you know is that you are I am you can sense the underlying beingness or presence of you but to really sense it what needs to happen is that for a moment the stream of thinking needs to subside and it may be happening for many of you at this very moment the stream of thinking that is normal for most people that never stops except when they fall asleep the stream of thinking for a moment subsides and when I asked you whether you can be sense yourself without reference to your personal history, what I was really talking about what I was really asking was can you get a sense of your presence without thought ah and there's enormous revelation here this question who am I does not have a real truthful answer on a conceptual level it's not in thoughts or words the true answer to who am I has no thought in it, it is a sense of presence of beingness and you can only sense that if it's only a moment, so the stream of thinking subsides and what happens is you are completely present without your mind saying anything you can perceive everything you can see, you can hear you're fully there and your mind is still still does not mean that you've gone to sleep it's the opposite, you're actually more alert in that stillness than you would be if you were identified with this continuous stream of thinking that's the stillness, the inherent stillness that actually every human has that you don't need to work hard to attain stillness or think that if I follow the right course of action, it might take me 10 years and then I'll be able to have a still mind no it's already there and if you're not totally miserable and unhappy every moment of your life that means without perhaps you knowing it anybody who is not extremely miserable all the time has a little bit of access without even knowing it to that stillness within they don't know it, all they know is from time to time they feel a little bit good they feel ah they don't know for 3 seconds they stop thinking ah they might have some other explanation of why in that moment they felt good maybe they were looking at a dog in that moment because the dog wasn't thinking anything about them because the dog doesn't think the dog is conscious but not conceptual thinking, the dog does not have an opinion about you and so when you were petting the dog perhaps you suddenly felt good about petting the dog, why?

because for a moment the dog freed you of the judgmental conceptual mind that otherwise would be very active if you were petting a human it would say something of course you can't do that because people would think you are insane you can't go up to a human may I pet you that would be nice if they did that to each other but but the humans have judgments about you so whenever you go to a human you know that he has certain thoughts about you so the other human cannot free you from your thoughts but the dog or the cat can for a short moment free you from your thoughts and in that moment it feels good that's why people love their pets so deeply there is a reason a deeper reason why they love because the pet frees them a little bit from their minds and there are moments when you interact with your animal you can experience brief moments of thoughtless awareness two seconds three seconds but it's enough to keep you going it's enough so that your life doesn't become totally miserable and then you might have other moments you might have moments when you engage in some physical activity, you swim or you climb a mountain and then there are moments that your total presence is required by the activity so that there's not enough left for thinking and again you feel intensely alive oh that was so good why was it so good? I love it, it's just so good, I don't know why it's good well it's good because it freed you for a moment from the incessant stream of thinking and there was some degree of awareness of presence arising but you didn't even know that so it's always that dimension of consciousness is in every human now I must admit there are still millions of humans where it's so deeply hidden in them that they have no access to it but there are others who can actually who are beginning to awaken to this dimension within themselves so now you don't have to wait for certain things to happen to briefly free you from your mind you don't have to wait for the next encounter with a lovely dog in the street or you don't have to wait for some beautiful moment in nature when you just go you take in the totality of a forest or the vastness of the sky and you go ah or at night you look up into this clear sky, the vastness of space the countless stars, which are suns most of them, and the vast distances and the stillness of it all and you go it can still your mind too that was my first meditation when I was a teenager, I didn't even know what meditation I didn't at that time nobody talked about meditation in the west I looked up at the sky at night when I was a teenager we were living in Spain so the sky was often, in the summer especially totally clear and I would sit on the roof of the house and go wow what I realized many years later that while I was doing that there was no thought in my mind the space the outer space created in me that inner space or inner spaciousness so that's another word for it, another pointer the inner spaciousness if you don't find that and I say find or discover I'm not saying achieve or attain it's not an achievement or attainment because it's already there as the essence of who you are but you have to discover it, that it is already there, if you don't find it you are condemned condemned for the rest of your life to live a very frustrated existence because life will be just one damn thing after another one damn thing and it never leaves me alone but what really doesn't leave you alone is your mind which reacts to every little thing that happens and amplifies every little thing that happens it's not so much what people call karma it's not so much what what happens to them it's how they respond or react to what happens and when you are unconscious you amplify every little challenge in your life becomes a big thing in your mind oh my god oh and you it was only a little thing but it gets it gets amplified personal conflicts arise all the time inner finding your life, your so called life you might have an opinion the narrative in your mind that you call your life might tell you that your life was a failure it might tell you your life was a great success but in this case you probably didn't come here because if you were totally satisfied for your life why would you ever look for anything beyond the material things and the mental things but nobody can be satisfied for very long so you have all tasted failure, so called and some of you might think the whole thing didn't work out I had such great plans when I was 18 I had great plans for my life and then it didn't work out nothing worked out my marriage didn't work out and then the second one didn't work out either and then I got a job but then I lost it and then I made some money but then it made me unhappy because I bore it so much and became so stressed out that I had to seek psychiatric help and that didn't help oh dear in other words your mind is cluttered by stuff your mind is cluttered and you can't get out of the clutter it's like a room full of clutter and these days it's even more cluttered because all the devices that people use clutter your mind even more every text message is more cluttered because 99 out of 100 text messages are not important they just clutter Facebook again, there might be occasionally important things but it can continuously bombard it but you need to take it all in and very rarely these days for people who are not awakening it's actually getting worse for people who are not awakening you can see there's not a moment when they are in the past occasionally when you were somewhere waiting for something there was nothing to do and you just had to sit there and maybe look around but nobody does that anymore when was the last time you saw somebody just sit there and look around no, because you have to get out your phone and of course what does that phone do? it clutters your mind even more if you didn't have your phone there would be a chance of having some spaciousness, you could perhaps look at the sky and go ah and appreciate the beauty of it and the depth of it and the spaciousness of it but no there's a text message coming in and what does it say?

it says, what's up? and then of course you have to reply of course so and that when that goes the naturally occurring spaciousness I'm not even talking about consciously embracing spaciousness, just the naturally occurring spaciousness in a normal person's life that rarely happens these days and that's a great dysfunction and I don't know what effect that will have on the civilization within two or three generations now there is, fortunately there is a segment of the population that is awakening spiritually perhaps to compensate for the dysfunction that many humans are forced to enact re-enact every day so clutter declutter your mind is not a process that takes a long time, to declutter your mind you don't have to go ok, now I'm taking out this thought now what's the next thought that I'm going to take out like if you declutter your room you have to say, what is it that I don't need but you don't, to declutter your mind is an instant thing, it's an instant thing of withdrawing from thinking and becoming present and you can do it as I just mentioned one example, looking at the sky because there you have spaciousness the sky is spacious and that is why Jesus used the analogy of the kingdom of heaven heaven means sky in most languages heaven and sky are the same word in French, in Spanish, in German heaven and sky are the same word so he's talking about the kingdom of the sky and he said that's the most important thing, just find the kingdom of heaven and everything else will work out in your life, that's what basically his teaching was I offer a new translation instead of kingdom of heaven I've already said sky, but there's an even better translation that I found and that is spaciousness, because the essence of the sky is vast spaciousness kingdom, my translation for kingdom is dimension so the kingdom of heaven is the dimension of spaciousness it is a dimension of consciousness in you so the kingdom of heaven again, when they asked him where is the kingdom of heaven because they hadn't understood what he was talking about where is it, when is it going to come?

and he said, and this is I believe one of the things that is more or less literally true of what he said, many other things are not literally true that were passed on and written down, but he said the kingdom of heaven does not come with signs to be perceived you cannot say, ah it's over here, or look it's over there but truly I tell you the kingdom of heaven is within you, in modern translation it says in the midst of you both are true the kingdom of heaven is within you, it is the dimension of spaciousness in you, and if you find that that solves not every single problem of your life, no but it gives you access to a dimension in you from where all the problems of your life and the challenges of your life can be seen in their true perspective and are no longer no longer have the ability to draw you in completely and make your life miserable, your ability to deal with the challenges of life, which are inevitable, life is not easy for anybody it's not even meant to be easy, it's not easy for any life form every life form is presented with life challenges from insects to plants to every little, every life form life is challenging and human life is particularly challenging the more evolved, the more problematic things get the more you can start thinking the more problematic life gets, so it does not mean when you find the kingdom of heaven within as the dimension of spaciousness that you are no longer challenged by life, no but the way in which you respond to the challenges changes you no longer amplify challenges, they are just there and you either take action or you accept what is for the time being in other words the challenges of life the problems of life no longer make you unhappy and that's a huge evolutionary leap forward so sometimes spiritual people who are spiritual seekers have a misconception that when they awaken spiritually become enlightened, whatever word you want to use that then they will no longer experience challenges or problems that's not true life continues every situation that you go into has a new set of challenges you could become famous and live in Hollywood or whatever and you would quickly find that before you thought when I attain this I'll really be okay I'll be wonderfully happy for the rest of my life please God just make me famous and I'll be happy for the rest of my life I just need just need 10 million, 20 million dollars to make it 20 I just need that and then I need to be recognized that I'm great by other people I really need that also but then I'll be really happy it's not going to happen even if you get what you wanted unhappiness will quickly resurface this was confirmed to me I've met a few people who got what they wanted and they told me how unhappy they became after a while after the elation of first having it I'm the greatest and then something happened to deeply challenge them so the challenges of life remain and that is a good thing because by being challenged when you are awakening spiritually the problems, the challenges of life no longer pull you into unhappiness and unconsciousness and reactivity and complaining and seeing yourself as a victim but they force you to be more intensely present, they bring out more spaciousness when you get challenged by life you go oh, there it is another challenge and you look at it wow welcome to our saturday meditation the focus of our meditation is stillness inner stillness what happens outside doesn't really matter so much stillness is just a word a pointer to most people it means silence absence absence of noise and in that sense stillness could be called a negative pointer it points to the absence of something but it doesn't really refer to the absence of noise even the absence of inner noise although it is true that when the inner noise stops there is stillness but every pointer we use is not really it it's not quite right ever, it reduces that to which it points to something we think we can understand so it's much more than the absence of something although as a pointer that works another word for stillness is presence and that's a positive pointer by implication presence points to the presence of something the presence of what all you can say here is the presence of presence so there are two levels one could say to who you are on the one hand on one level you are the presence of certain things the existence of certain things you are the existence of the body the existence of sense perceptions the existence of emotions the existence of thoughts so we can call that the presence of something that's you as a person and here we are not concerned with that we are concerned with who you are beyond the person, that deeper level and we are here together a few thousand people perhaps in different parts of the planet going beyond the individual persons personalities to a deeper level of being and that's our meditation and I am speaking the words point to it, the words of course are not it the silence the stillness the presence which cannot be perceived with the senses is what matters here so there is nothing for you to do except be who you are beyond the personality and realize there is a stillness in you that has nothing to do with the personality and its problems because a large part of your personality consists of your problems as you access the deeper level of stillness or where you just sense as I sometimes put it your own presence it's not your own but let's just put it this way where you sense your own presence or rather where you sense the presence that you are you are that presence before you become this or that person there is a presence an aliveness there is the light of consciousness in which the person arises but the light of consciousness itself is not the person it transcends the person it is not separate from it the light assumes a certain form and becomes a person in the same way that when you watch a movie there is the light the projector light and the ways in which the light is obstructed by the film and those obstructions of the light, not never total obstructions because then you wouldn't see anything partial obstructions of the light and that becomes the movie the characters, the events and so on that's a little analogy and normal life isn't really that much different so if you only know the obstructions to the light of consciousness the light of God then you are trapped on the level of problems and drama and difficulties anxieties, regrets past, future me, me but here we become aware of the presence not the presence of something in us that would make it into some formal thing again but more simply the presence of presence so the presence underlies the words that I speak it underlies the words that you hear and so I am inviting you to be aware of that in you that underlies the sense perceptions and the thoughts that's we could call that the essence of who you are that transcends the person that's the most important realization in your life but it seems to be still a secret because nobody, very few seem to know about it so and many are not interested yet until existence as the person only becomes increasingly frustrating both for the individual and for the collective on the planet society, civilizations where the transcendent dimension is missing completely nothing no individual or civilization can remain sane for long without it there is an increasing madness if that is all you know and the presence the realization of presence frees you from bondage to the person the personality with all its little concerns that keep it busy all day long and on a larger scale the collective realize that the concerns of the collective that you hear through the media and so on may be relatively important but ultimately they are not just as your problems which sometimes are related to the problems of the collective for example now in times of a recession and so on your problems too are ultimately not that important they certainly won't be important in 50, 60 years time to anybody and not to you because you as the person probably won't be there anymore that's quite soon I suggest you visit a graveyard from time to time and look at the gravestones with the names on them all these people thought that their problems were incredibly important this person asks after many years of meditation and all the twists and turns of life I'm now in the grip of intense fear and anxiety it seems it was always there only more intense now sitting with it, letting it be there seems to make it grow well fear, anxiety which is a form of fear very common some people have it, many have it in the background continuously and I would say there's some degree of fear even if you're not conscious of it if you're totally identified with the egoic mind you will have fear if only in the background and it may come out in other forms it can come, express itself as anger if you look at anger closely you usually find hidden underneath the anger is a state of fear so if there's fear one important thing is to of course you need to direct your attention to it you acknowledge that there's fear the important question that arises is are there any thought processes connected with the fear, in other words what are the thoughts that your mind is producing while you're feeling the fear is it possible that certain thoughts that you think frequently or habitually produce the fear, is it possible you project yourself into the next moment, into the future moment excessively trying to control something that you have no control over, what's going to happen to me or creating an imaginary scenario of loss that you might suffer it's not happening now but it might happen and many things that the thought activity excessive thought activity often creates scenarios of things going wrong that are not happening now, may never happen, often probably will never happen and even if they did happen the actual situation would actually be easier to face than the imaginary situation in your mind because there's nothing you can do there's no action you can take to remedy an imaginary situation except to stop thinking it but if an actual situation arises you face it and you give it your attention and then you take the action that you need to take but an imaginary situation you're totally at the mercy of it so it only exists in your mind so you need to see whether your mind is creating the fear by thinking fearful thoughts by projecting itself into the future and if that is the case then you can see oh so I'm creating those because my body cannot tell the difference between an actual event that's happening outside and what my mind is producing so when I'm thinking thought my life situation is critical if this is basically what your thoughts are telling you then your body believes that this is the actual truth that you are being threatened at this very moment.

The body doesn't know the difference that the tiger isn't in the room the threatening presence is your thoughts the body reacts in the same way whether there's a threat an actual threat in the room or your thoughts can create the same even palpitations shortness of breath because you're thinking fearful thoughts at night I had that for years an awful state it's insane it's a disease nothing is happening absolutely nothing there's a quiet room, nothing it's all happening in the mind so if that's the case then you need to tackle the thoughts because they will cause the fear and how do you tackle thoughts is by realizing the futility and the destructive nature of these thoughts and choosing to step out and what do you do to step out first you don't believe your mind that tells you no you can't step out you have to continue thinking no you step out and take a conscious breath or put your attention into the inner energy field of the body a conscious choice to remove attention from thinking and you may have to be really alert to do it if you're immersed in a mind stream it could even be that it's so powerful that you just cannot get out it has such gravitational pull it pulls you but at least you know that this is what's happening there's a state where you cannot help yourself yet but at least there is the beginning of a dis-identification from it when you know that this is what is happening so at least there's a part of you that knows this is not totally real the fear is being produced by my mind or in those early stages you may not yet be able to step out of it, it may be so strong that you're still totally in the grip of it but at least you know that you're in the grip of it the worst thing is to be in the grip of it and not even knowing it because you're so identified with it it is absolutely real to you so even to know that this is happening is already a step forward and then perhaps after a while the energy exhausts itself a little bit of this and then you can begin to say you will step out of those fearful thoughts because they are creating suffering and you take a conscious breath and another and another and then begin to feel the energy field of the body ah wow it's like this huge burden is suddenly dropped away and then you look around and this is a form of awakening out of complete identification with thinking it really is an awakening and you can observe it in yourself and you go ah so nice it's like a nightmare maybe everybody has experienced awakening from a nightmare and feeling such relief that you're in bed and it's safe you go ah and the same thing when you step out of fearful thought and become present ah and then see thought will then try to pull your attention back in it can go come this way laughter and then you might one little thought comes, do you follow it or don't you follow it, if you follow it laughter oh laughter laughter

[Speaker 5] (8:50:44 - 8:50:46)
laughter laughter

[Speaker 1] (8:50:50 - 9:49:58)
now it's also possible some people that the fear arises and you cannot detect any thought that created it it just comes wherever you are at some moment suddenly intense fear comes, that is possible too and that of course is what I call pain body which is accumulation of old emotions that lives in you and there are many people who for whom the pain body manifests predominantly as anxiety or fear and it can come up suddenly but usually then it flows into your mind also and produces fearful thoughts so fear can be in some cases if you still suffer from that affliction some of you may be able to see how your thoughts are generating the fear habitually or you may find that in you the fear arises spontaneously and then usually produces further fearful thought and that is the pain body wanting to feed on further experience of the same what makes up its life is the energetic frequency of fear which is a particular, you can feel what fear feels like, it has a we call that a frequency it feels sometimes the body actually expresses it through shaking I'm doing this because I want to give you I don't want I don't want frequency to be just a concept in your mind I want to give you a taste of what frequency means that's frequency and then you have a different frequency of presence nothing has changed outside, it's the same room you're a totally different reality in the same place a totally different world in the same place as you shift from one frequency to a different frequency Salvation is undoing Salvation can be seen as nothing more than the escape from concepts so you can see that why in some other spiritual traditions you had liberation because the escape from concepts is also the liberation from the prison of conceptual thinking when you're identified with it when conceptual thinking supplies you with your sense of self then you are trapped in a conceptual prison and that is ego, that is unconsciousness and people don't even know it that they are trapped in it so the spiritual realization is through letting go of the prison of concepts so that you no longer inhabit the conceptual reality which is what most people do where everything is every perception that you have is filtered through your conceptualization when you look on something you immediately have an interpretation for it you have a label for it you have a self-reference towards it I like it I don't like it so there's already you cannot see without concepts so inhabiting a conceptual reality you have a prison that you have for other human beings because you conceptualize them and for yourself because your self image is an edifice made of concepts and salvation is the escape from concepts and this little part ends with these three lines those who would let illusions be lifted from their minds are this world's saviors again it links in to the word salvation when you let go of the prison of concepts when you awaken in the terminology of the course in miracles you become a savior of the world because by embodying that state of consciousness you help others become free also even just by being not necessarily by formal teaching although you might do some teaching too and when you embody that state of consciousness in the terminology of the course in miracles you become a as it calls you become a teacher of god that's the term frequently used in the course even though you might not necessarily teach as such but by embodying this the awakened state of consciousness you cannot not teach it might not even be through words it could be through your non-reactivity through the way in which you relate to other human beings and so on then everything you do is a teaching the way in which you behave even your very emanation because every human being every life form emanates also a certain energy frequency so even by the emanation your emanation you would become a teacher and then some of you also of course will use words to teach so you will perhaps even in a formal sense you might teach groups give talks write books who knows but anybody who awakens even if you're not fully awakened even if you're awakening to who you are beyond concepts, you're already a teacher of god according to the course these are the interesting

lines here about defensiveness when you feel the need arise to be defensive about anything know that you have identified yourself with an illusion it is not danger that comes when defenses are laid down it is safety it is peace it is joy and it is god so when you feel the need arise to be defensive about anything know that you have identified yourself with an illusion when you become defensive about something then it will be something that is conceptual you as a concept or some concept you hold that you need to defend because you have identified with it so you are defending your sense of self your fictitious sense of self that means you are defending an illusion when you don't defend because the truth of who you are does not mean to be defended so to let go of defenses can be a way of accessing the deeper dimension of who you are and of course takes you beyond ego because the defensiveness is ego ego is conceptual identity and then there is one short line here in my defenselessness my safety lies you are safe already so you don't need to defend anything that brings me to at the very beginning of the course in miracles before even page one there are a few lines that are supposed to summarize the entire course and they go like this nothing real can be threatened nothing unreal exists herein lies the peace of God that's the summary of the entire course and the course is about as long as the whole Bible, it's huge but it can summarize in these few words if you understand what that means you don't need to do the course you might still enjoy reading it but you don't need it nothing real can be threatened nothing unreal exists herein lies the peace of God herein meaning knowing this lies the peace of God I'll just let it be at that, I'm not going to interpret those lines, I believe it's their most powerful if you just let them sink in judgment judgment again the choice to judge rather than to know is the cause of the loss of peace the choice to judge rather than to know so judgment is applying concepts and then you have another dimension that Course in Miracles calls to know and it would Course in Miracles would say that the judgment is not real knowing it's the illusion of knowing and you want to go back to this dangerous activity again and again because this dangerous activity frees you while you're engaged in it from yourself but then of course the moment you come back to your ordinary activities the self re-emerges undoubtedly you are here as a person with a history, a historical person, and hopefully with a future how much future depends to some extent on your age, but who knows you never know, even a young person can suddenly disappear like a soap bubble so you undoubtedly your history that has made you into who you are but if for a moment you forget your history and pretend that there is no past you can do it now I say pretend the reality is there is no past but I don't want to say something that you find too hard to accept so I say pretend let's pretend that there is no past, why do I say there is no past? because you've never experienced the past, it was always the present moment whatever you remember from the past was the present moment when it happened otherwise it could not have happened and you can only remember it now, in this moment in the light of consciousness you remember something that you call the past let's pretend a moment you don't have it you don't have a past and the most dreadful thing let's pretend that also you don't have a future you don't have a past?

ok, I'm ok with that but don't take away my future because that's a dreadful thing if you went into a doctor's office and he says I'm afraid you have little future left so but let's pretend there is no past and no future, there is only this moment and you don't need to remember conceptually who you are why? no need to remember the self concept the image of who you are no past no future who are you? how do you perceive yourself?

how do you what does it feel like to be you in this moment without past and future, is there anything left of you in this moment without past and future which means without concepts which means without thoughts but not without consciousness is there anything left of you in this moment if you have no past and you have no future, who are you without past and future and you cannot answer that question because any answer would be a concept concept is from the past who are you? so the answer to who are you without past and future cannot be conceptual words, no the answer of who or what you are without past and future can only be a realization a moment of ah so who am I without past and future what does it feel like to be me without memory, without memorizing who I am and that's now you're getting there there is something that is we have to use words of course which distort it but there is a strange sense of presence of beingness, you know that you are but without adding you know who I am but you don't know what or who because that's conceptual the bare sense of beingness or presence is left when there is no past or future that's just a pure sense of beingness or presence at first it seems to be nothing and you cannot analyze it and it's very hard to talk about but you know there is there's something or you could even say there's just a spaciousness a space, perhaps that's what the Buddha meant when he talked about emptiness there is a spaciousness and that's and then if you if you're aware of that it tends to deepen sometimes for brief moments you can get it accidentally in certain situations in life brief moments of liberation from the self and you go perhaps you see something very beautiful and for a moment you're transported out of yourself there's just a pure perception against the background of awareness ah for a moment you are liberated from yourself or a dangerous activity that requires your absolute presence you can't be thinking about your problems or your life situation, you have to be absolutely totally there and you feel so much more alive and you want to go back to this dangerous activity again and again because this dangerous activity frees you while you're engaged in it from yourself but then of course the moment you you come back to your ordinary activities the self re-emerges oh I have to climb another mountain now and that's good and then going beyond the self and as you know I've often spoken about there's a huge desire in every human to become free of themselves they don't know, they cannot verbalize it, they wouldn't say it in this way but there's a huge desire, there's even a lot, there's an obscure fascination that humans have it's most fear but also a pull about the end of the world everybody is fascinated by stories of the end of the world is coming oh there's fear but there's also a kind of longing because the end of the world is also freedom from myself and there are no taxes anymore to pay and no exams and no worries about careers the end of the world especially if the world is making you unhappy the end of the world would be a great thing of course the world is largely in your mind so you don't need the end of the world to be free of yourself it'll happen soon enough but of course you can lower your level of consciousness so that you fall below thinking by drugs, taking drugs or alcohol in large amounts and they have the effect of pulling you below thinking which but they liberate you temporarily from yourself also not always but often they liberate you from yourself and you feel, that's why people feel happy when they drink not everybody some people get even more aggressive when they drink, that's another story we might go into another day many feel happy because they don't remember their problems and this is a this is also there are some humans who exist below the level of thinking which is the level of egoic the egoic mind and in the past they used to be called fools or idiots these words you must not use anymore nowadays people who live below thinking and these people don't have a problematic sense of self because they haven't arrived at that yet, it's like the dog the dog doesn't have a problematic sense of self what problems does the dog have?

self esteem self esteem do you have a problem with self esteem? do you have a weight problem? are you anxious about the future?

yes, my next meal I'm looking for but that's all once the meal is there, it's fine the fool is a mythical figure too in mythology and literature the fool can do things that highly developed humans cannot do more recent manifestations of that in fiction, for example the hobbit he's not highly intelligent most other people the hobbit interacts with are more intelligent than the hobbit, it's a simple creature and yet only he can do certain tasks because he's still more deeply connected with being with the source, has not developed a conceptual sense of self and does not inhabit a conceptual reality Forrest Gump the movie another character like that who does great things and is supported by life but doesn't claim credit because he has no ego yet hasn't arrived at it yet so you're not here to go that way we are not attempting to regress from the thinking mind and fall below thinking this is why this may be a good moment to mention it I discourage certainly excessive consumption of intoxicating beverages while you're here even any consumption of intoxicating or if English is not your native language I'm talking about alcohol if you cannot enjoy a meal without a glass of wine that's fine but two or three or four can greatly interfere with the arising of awareness or presence unless you're deeply rooted in it then it doesn't matter anymore but then you wouldn't want to drink a lot so that's something to be aware of here because it will pull you below thought and then you might think you're present and you might even convince somebody sitting next to you at dinner that you're enlightened so that's one thing that can pull you below thought and we don't want to be pulled below thought naturally you will go below thought every night when you become tired and you go to sleep you will feel yourself moving below thought and for that brief moment you're free of yourself also it's delicious to be tired at night and you're in bed the pull is very strong and there's a moment when there's a delicious feeling but you can't have it for very long and then you disappear and then another reality emerges, the dream world and then you're back in some other form and the problems continue another way of becoming addicted to a substance is and again this is important here cell phones and other similar devices it's a huge challenge humans have not realized yet how huge this challenge is of addiction to those devices so my recommendation is here if you want to take real advantage of this situation engage as little as possible with these devices perhaps briefly for 5-10 minutes a day if you have to and for the rest of the time don't even leave it in your room or your safe and if you carry it around the temptation may be too great you might not be able to resist and you know it's in your pocket and some of your attention will move there, wonder what's going on there and it might even still be beeping a message a Facebook post I wonder what they're saying, how many people liked my last post so you may find a certain withdrawal symptoms if you don't engage but that's okay just observe it and you can say oh isn't that interesting I can feel this wanting to get there but saying okay I can feel it but I'm not going there and then it'll dissipate how can we break the addiction to negative thinking and is there a way we can present this to our youth well negative thinking is a many egos love negative thinking because it strengthens the ego the pain body also is often involved in it because the pain body can either feed on other people's reactions towards you which the ego the pain body tries to provoke when it needs to replenish itself then it feeds on the drama or it can feed if there's nobody around on your thoughts negative every negative thought it gets in my life is so fucked up it's so god it's so dreadful can it get any worse or what these people they're so dreadful I just hate these people why is it always this stuff always happens to me doesn't it it's just bound to happen to me why can I never get things right why can they never get things right what he did to me I just can't forget that let me tell you about it what I did was so horrible so horrible I did that 20 years ago I did that I did that terrible thing god what's going to happen tomorrow what am I going to say if he says that what am I going to say then what if I lose that job I think I might get the sack soon I have a feeling that I'll be out in the street I can walk back to my mortgage what can I do what time is it 3am oh god oh and then there's that other thing god I don't think I can take anymore of this ok on one level there is an addiction to that there is something in you that does not want to let go of that type of thinking so in order to do anything about it if I say now mention what you can do about it it presupposes a at least a small degree of awareness while these thoughts happen there must be a small degree of awareness from which you are able to witness whatever is happening and notice that you are engaged in a stream of negative thinking and actually liking it not wanting to get out you can especially with anger which is another form of negative mental emotional state you can see how people if you are trying to say to an angry person would you like me to help you let go of this anger see what response you get in other words the person does not want to let go of the anger it loves that anger while the person is in its grasp it loves it's the ego the ego loves that anger because in an angry state the ego gets inflated and even an insignificant person in the eyes of the world who has no power in the world can suddenly start shouting and suddenly the ego grows and everybody goes like you see I'm all powerful sometimes you see people in the street they are going around shouting at everybody that's their ego trip because they have nothing else but for the ego even that works don't approach that person and say would you like to be in a peaceful state I can give you some advice so if I say that what you do about it, it presupposes that you know what's happening to you at that moment during that time so there needs to be some awareness and it's likely that it is there if you ask that question you are here so that means there is enough awareness in you while it happens to first of all notice that a part of you at least likes it not the awareness but if you are aware you realize there is something in me that does not want to get out of it if it's been going on for years even your sense of identity or an important part of your sense of identity is in that negative mental emotional state some people have it in the background almost all the time but they are unaware of it, it becomes part of their identity and these are people if you are very sensitive and sometimes you don't even need to be that sensitive when you meet a person like that you can sense in the background there is something waiting for the next thing to be angry about or as somebody once said a grievance looking for a cause now the internet is full of people like that they love going on there so the internet has given the ego a new way of expansion and anybody can go in there and express find a cause and then express their grievance so identity can be associated with that if there is awareness then you can notice while it happens that there is an enjoyment of that negative state then you can also be aware that the mind activity that is happening in you is futile and fulfills no useful purpose whatsoever and then you go hmm these thoughts, isn't that interesting, what is the purpose of these thoughts, does it change the world, do they change the world change anything or do they just drag me drag me into this hole more deeply there is a unconscious belief in the mind also if I complain enough about something even if it's only mentally but especially out loud if I complain enough it's going to change eventually that somehow it works if I just show how unhappy I am then God or the universe or somebody is going to do something about it so many adults believe what little children sometimes find when they become really unhappy and start screaming then they get attention by their parents what's wrong, before they didn't get any attention but when they go I want this and the mother father comes what's wrong, I want this no you can't have it I want this no ok here it is and now they've learned a very important lesson, their mind and that lesson is unhappiness works and if that is repeated many times in childhood, the adult still has that unconscious belief in their mind and so they enter periodically enter states of unhappiness in the unconscious belief that things are going to change if I'm really unhappy now it might work while you're a little child because your parents can't stand the screaming anymore so they give you what you want the adult some adults never figure out that unhappy states do not work when they're adults and they continue to practice what they learned as little children for the rest of their lives never realizing that it doesn't work laughter so the recognition that negative thinking and unhappy states actually do nothing to change anything, if anything they make it worse laughter so if there's enough awareness and you can suddenly look at that and then you can ask yourself from the point of, from the deeper perspective of awareness do I want to continue to think these thoughts is that helpful or good, do I really want that is it what is it doing what would it be how would I experience this situation without it so you can, as awareness comes in, choice comes in and then there are moments when you may be able to step out and just be present and the negative stream negative mental emotional stream subsides but it's not gone yet because you don't get rid of it that easily a few moments later another thought comes into your head and immediately a new train of negative thinking starts and you can feel the pull of it there it can be very very strong especially if it's been in your life for a long time you feel the pull of negative thinking come this way, this is so familiar this is where you belong this is who you are and then you need awareness so you can't fight the negative states because that's another negative state but you can be aware and see its futility and ultimately see also how that you are addicted to it but when you see it you're not completely addicted anymore you're only completely addicted when you don't see it when you see it you are the awareness when there's no awareness you are it and you are the ego and you are the addicted the ego that's addicted to unhappiness so it's important by the way as I just mentioned little children if you have a small child to give attention to the child not wait for the child to go into a screaming state or some other negative tantrum and then give the child attention but give the child attention at normal times and don't give excessive attention when there's the screaming and especially don't give the child something after you've said no you can't have that and if he or she just cries enough then finally you give it that's not a good lesson to teach, either you give it immediately or you don't give it and if you think it's bad for the child then of course it's better not to give but of course the parent gives it because he or she wants the crying to stop so you're ok oh dear you're teaching a very wrong lesson by recognizing that there is let's say irritation, anger or anxiety in you you are no longer completely identified with it whenever you are impatient trying to get somewhere waiting for something impatiently what's the next thing I have to do and I have to do that and you're pulled in all kinds of directions what's now, oh now I have to do that and there's always the pull towards the next thing that is I call that sometimes you lose yourself in doing doing is necessary obviously you need to do but to lose yourself in continuous doing is a serious dysfunction but it's so normal that nobody realizes it so if you lose yourself in the doing there's always another and this is how stress arises stress is the gap in the gap between now and later, the projected then, now and then in that gap arises the stress arises, so the mental projection towards future creates the stresses between I'm here but I want to be there and for many humans that is their predominant state, they are always they are here but they really want to be there either there in space or time it's amazing and even you awakening beings may still sometimes or often find yourself in that state where you suddenly realize that the whole day you've been stressed about this, that and that this is what makes so many demands upon you, you need to deal with this and this and this, amplified by the gadgets that we now use, which is an amplification of the dysfunction through this and you lose yourself in the doing you become completely uncentered and basically lost there are many it happens even to children already at an early age these days and many children are suffering from attention deficit disorder and so on, which means their mind is being pulled away from the present moment so lost in doing lost in doing really comes back to lost in thinking thinking underlies doing so you are lost in your thoughts about the world and then you engage in all kinds of activities propelled by thoughts that now I need to do this, now I need to do that so the basic condition still for most humans on the planet so fundamentally yes, they are lost in doing they lose themselves in doing but basically it means they are lost in their mind, in the movement of thought now, you identify then, they identify with every thought that arises many thoughts are about future or the past not that many thoughts are about the present moment and if they are about the present moment then it is an interpretation of the present moment that is completely determined and colored by your past conditioning so, very interesting to observe in oneself this tendency to deny devalue disregard reduce the present moment to a means to an end it's always a means to an end but it's never recognized for what it is in itself and often it is not it is more than a means to an end for many humans this is a very dysfunctional way of being for many humans the present moment is actually regarded unconsciously as an obstacle that they need to get beyond there is a continuous underlying unease and what's the next thing that's going to go wrong I know it's going to happen lost in the mind lost in thought there was an Indian teacher who described the essential human condition as lost in thought and of course that's how it is this is then this movement of thought gives you your sense of identity the unease the uneasy narrative the problematic narrative of me and my life I have to think about this when I wake up in the middle of the night and I carry this heavy burden of my problematic life for many humans their identity is unconsciously regarded as a problem to be solved I am a problem that I'm looking for a solution to this problem that I am and of course then you go to a therapist now if the therapist is good he might be able to take you beyond that depends if he or she is not good then you get more deeply entrenched and 15 years later you are still undergoing psychoanalysis and find ever deeper layers of complexity in your past and there's no end to it so the present moment is devalued not recognized regarded either as a means to an end or an obstacle that is for many humans that is their predominant state of mental emotional state and as I said their identity is derived from that so it's the error lies in identification with thought now the question arises who or what is it that identifies with thought if I am not the story that I tell myself about who I am if I am not ultimately that then who or what am I and what is it in me that identifies with the story what is it that creates this sense of identity that is mostly exists mostly in a state of unease or very often discontent because it cannot acknowledge the present moment that is the ego by the way that's what we call it the egoic sense of self there is a very simple spiritual practice to get you to the realization of who or what it is that identifies I suggest at this moment that observe yourself internally right now to see if there is any lingering emotion in you perhaps from earlier today or an hour ago or yesterday or the past two years or the past ten years can you feel for example is there an irritation somewhere is there some kind of anxiety is there kind of heaviness a certain heavy mood a despondent mood perhaps is it lingering there is there anger big thing some residue of anger from what happened earlier is that in you and then normally humans would say I am angry or they would say I am anxious, I am fearful I am in a bad mood now there is already a delusion when the moment you say I am angry or I am anxious that indicates already that you have identified with the emotion of anger or the emotion of sadness or the emotion of fear you have identified, you equate I with what arises in your field of consciousness so you say I am angry it would be more correct to say I am angry there is anger in me right now now it may sound a trivial difference between saying I am angry and there is anger in me but there is a significant difference which goes beyond mere syntax how you put words together because when you say I am you equate I with whatever condition is there in you this applies to emotion and it also applies to thought when because anger is often not just the anger as emotion, the anger also exists as angry thoughts and then they reinforce each other as a vicious circle when you are trapped in irritation or anger the emotion feeds the thought and the thought feeds more energy to the emotion it's a vicious circle and you don't want to get out of it you might notice when you observe an angry person or a despondent person or an anxious person they don't really want to be free of the anger they don't want their if you suggested to an angry person you can be free you will not get a pleasant answer and you've seen angry people they are in the grip of anger or irritation they cannot help it then they shout at you and then they leave the room and a minute later the door opens they come back because they thought of something else to insult you with they are in the grip of it there is complete identification with thought and emotion

[Speaker 2] (9:49:58 - 9:50:00)
they are lost[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 5:44)
In thought, they are lost in emotion, but who or what is it that is lost? If I am not the thoughts and the emotion, who or what am I? Okay, I just asked you to just have a look inside yourself and see what it is, if there's anything there that's jarring and doesn't feel good, but it's there.

And I'm not saying try to get rid of it, no. Acknowledge the present moment. The present moment is what is, externally or internally.

That's what is. But there's a huge difference now. You've already, by recognizing that there is, let's say, irritation, anger, or anxiety in you, an additional element or dimension has come in.

And that dimension, we could call awareness, or we could call it presence. And the moment awareness comes in, you are no longer completely identified with it. One could say, I sometimes describe it as, let's say, there's the anger, and as your awareness of the anger comes in, there's a little bit of space around it.

That's the awareness. The awareness knows that there's anger. The anger may still be there.

It may not immediately disappear, but the awareness knows it's there. Or whatever else it may be. The arising of awareness is spiritual awakening.

The disidentification that happens when awareness arises, that is the spiritual awakening, or the arising of the transcendent dimension of consciousness. Transcendent because it transcends who or what you are as a person. Yes, you are still a person.

You have your personality. You have your memories that hasn't changed. You still have a narrative in your mind, but you call it your life.

But it's no longer, there begins to be a shift. A shift from identifying with that which arises either on the level of thinking or on the level of the emotion, to identifying with or being the observing conscious presence. That is the awakening out of identification with form.

Thought forms, emotional forms. So this is where when you realize thought, thoughts that go through your mind in the unconscious state, the thought has you in its grip. The thought, you don't think in the unconscious state.

Thinking happens to you and you can't help it. The thinking mind does what it wants to do and you don't even know that there's anything other than the movement of thought in you because you're so in the grip of it that there's nothing beyond that. So every thought that arises becomes the truth for you.

It has you in its grasp. One way of putting it is you believe in every thought that comes into your head, no matter how crazy. That's something, that's how it is.

And then you, if you look on the internet where people communicate with each other on social media and so on, you can easily see how a person's opinion becomes their identity. Now, an opinion is no more than a form of thought, a movement of thought, a certain mental position. Opinion turns into identity and then, because opinion has turned into identity, anybody who has a different opinion becomes threatening to you because it's your identity, your sense of self.

It's a fiction, but this person becomes your enemy. Ha, ha. Ha, ha.

Ha, ha. Ha, ha. Ha, ha.

So when thought becomes identity, then anybody who questions the thought that you had identified with is the enemy. And that's a deeply unconscious thing for human beings to be trapped in, a very unconscious state, and it wreaks havoc on the planet because it also happens collectively. Identities, there's a collective identity too in groups of people, nations, tribes, religions, or movements within religions and so on.

So to free yourself from that, that is spiritual awakening.

[Speaker 13] (5:46 - 6:13)
And then you can contemplate with detachment what time is doing to your body, okay?

[Speaker 1] (6:15 - 19:23)

Because your sense of identity is no longer derived from body, who you are, obviously. That's sometimes a difficult step to take, to go deeper beyond. There are some people who have a particularly, body that is more beautiful or more well-developed than normal bodies.

Normal bodies are kind of, well, I'm not sure. And then there are other bodies that are definitely not great. You can't, but people to still identify, it makes them unhappy.

For many years, I had body identification too, but not in a proud way. It made me unhappy because it was less, much less good looking than other, most other bodies, actually. And so if you have body identification, it can either, it can create pride and enhance your ego.

Well, any identification enhances your ego, even a negative one. So I had body, negative body identification made me unhappy for quite a few years. And that's also ego.

The ego, the negative profile of ego. The egos are not always happy egos. Many egos are miserable egos, just as strong as the happy ones that say, I am the greatest.

And then the other ego, I'm the most miserable, just as strong as the other. So ego is not just, hey, look at me. What's the egos?

Oh no. Why is all these horrible things always happening to me? I feel so miserable.

I'm not, it's all still egos and narratives. So anyway, I had ego identification, but I could see perhaps a little bit easier for if you have a negative identification with the body, it's perhaps easier to let go because you're more motivated to let go of that. But if you have a positive body identification, very good looking, whether man or woman or strengths.

If you look like Arnold in his younger years, how can you not identify with your body if your body looks just like, just coming, just like some ancient Greek god or something. Like, and so, or you're very beautiful. And every time you look in the mirror, you see how beautiful you are.

And you continuously, these days you continuously post images of yourself into the world. Look at me, look at me, look at me. And you have thousands of people who love you.

They send love signs. Me, me. And so many people have this, their strongest identification is with body and the rest, the psychological entities come secondary.

That's also ego, of course, but psychological entity, whatever they are on the level of their personality, it becomes secondary or whatever, what they have achieved becomes even secondary. But the body figures so prominently in their sense of identity. That goes on for years.

When I was in my 20s, and if somebody had asked me, if some god had come down and asked and said to me, I offer you a deal. I take away, I'll give you a great body like Arnold, or well, not, it doesn't have to be that extreme, but just a good looking body. Well, some would say Arnold is a bit, going over the top a bit, that's a bit, but just a beautiful.

I would have that, but we have to give up 20 years of your life. You are 20 years younger, but I'll give you a great body that you can enjoy for a few decades. For three decades, you can enjoy this.

I would have said, it's a deal. And I would be dead now. I wouldn't be here.

I would have enjoyed perhaps ego satisfaction during those years and sensory satisfaction through countless physical encounters with women. And would have exhausted myself. And would have died young as predicted by the god who came.

We were walking, or I was walking on a waterfront, I believe in Sydney, Australia. It was a lovely day. I believe it was perhaps a Sunday morning and not excessively hot, just a very pleasant temperature.

Everybody was enjoying themselves. And then I saw one man walking without a shirt on, just bare. And he had a fantastic body and everybody's kind of looking at him.

And I thought it's strange that he was the only person who felt too hot, he had to take off his shirt. Strange. And then comes a time, the time that eventually becomes your enemy, when you'd say you have, for years you identified with your good looks and then after a while you realize the same thing is happening to you.

It just takes decades. That's happening if you put a fresh apple on your windowsill and wait a few weeks and see what happens to the apple that you leave there. It kind of shrinks and becomes, it develops.

It goes. Before it looked. After a few weeks, the apple shrinks and it's old, an old apple.

It happens to all life forms and that can become a source of great suffering. There is still time for you when this suffering sets in, you realize you're no longer beautiful because old age is eroding your beauty. And then when you compare yourself to younger humans, you begin to feel inferior and to get resentful.

Look how he's young. And you feel diminished and that's painful. So many humans who are identified with bodies, as they get older, they move into a period of unhappiness, increasing unhappiness, unless they can break through that and go to a deeper level.

Some can, some cannot. It's, I would advise to go to that deeper level before the time starts to erode you as soon as possible. But there's always a chance to go there.

So at the latest, shortly before you die, I would hope. But for many people when they reach old age, the patterns are so deep seated that are associated with the ego identity. They're so, they have become so rigid and so deep seated that they get trapped in them.

There's nothing you can do. We've all met old people like that. Instead, old age is meant to be a flowering of consciousness.

When the body begins to dissolve, something else emerges and it can be a beautiful thing. In many other cases, this does not happen. And we've all met old people who are cranky and angry.

Your grandfather, perhaps. You're still in all that spiritual nonsense. Are you still doing that?

It's all rubbish, obviously. I know it all. I've seen it all.

And I have an opinion about everything. I know everything. And it's all dreadful.

They're all idiots, all of them. And then it dies. My God.

So no matter where you are at in the movement of time, this moment is the best moment to step out of the movement of time and take your attention into the timeless so that you learn to be connected with that consciously for the rest of your life in this form. What is this thing that you cannot doubt? You say, I cannot doubt that I'm conscious because if I were not conscious, I wouldn't experience anything, whether it's a dream or not, it's secondary.

Even to dream something, there needs to be a consciousness that is experiencing the dream. So there's a consciousness that's experiencing this world, I am that.

[Speaker 3] (19:24 - 19:30)
Now, this is a very subtle and simple thing.

[Speaker 1] (19:31 - 19:32)
Very subtle, very simple.

[Speaker 3] (19:34 - 19:54)
Can you be conscious right now of the fact that you are conscious? And you cannot do that by thinking about it.

[Speaker 1] (19:56 - 20:47)
That is an obstacle to that realization. You can only become conscious, that you're conscious by letting go of thought. You don't, just for a moment, let go of thought.

And what is it that remains of you when you let go of thought, but you haven't fallen asleep at all, but you've let go of thought? What is it that remains of you when you're not thinking? You're not thinking about the world and you're not thinking about yourself.

You're not thinking. Just a gap between two thoughts. The gap opens up.

[Speaker 3] (20:53 - 20:59)
And in that gap, you know that you are.

[Speaker 1] (21:01 - 26:14)
You don't know how you know it, but you know that there is a presence and you are that conscious presence. You know that. I'm already putting it into words, but the knowing is beyond words.

You know that you are this presence. Now, you know that you are this presence, so you know, but you don't know anything else about this presence. There's nothing to know about this presence.

And you don't know it in the same way that you know a table or a dog or another human. That's not how you know this presence. You know the presence in you knows itself.

You can sense your own consciousness. The consciousness knows itself. It's not an object, it's a subject.

So another way of putting it is you realize that you are. And the realize that you are, I wouldn't say that you exist. That's a different term.

Some philosopher and some spiritual teachers might use that term, but I would prefer not to say exist because to exist is to stand out, to be some particular thing. You exist as a person, you exist. Ex means out.

Ex is from Latin to stand, to stand out. Something that exists is manifested. That's why it exists.

It stands out. But this is prior to existence. The person that you are temporarily exists.

But prior to this person, there is a timeless dimension of pure being or consciousness where all you can say about yourself is, I am, if you want to say anything. And you wouldn't add anything to the I am. It's the realization of being between two thoughts.

You can sense it. It's nothing to do with intellect or thinking. You don't need a high IQ.

It doesn't matter whether your IQ is high or low, whether you're educated or uneducated. You can sense this beyond what your personal history is, whether you're an abject failure in the eyes of the world or you're the greatest thing that ever happened, the greatest VIP that ever happened in the world makes no difference to this realization. This is the essence realization and it's very, very simple.

That's the kingdom of heaven that Jesus was talking about, that you cannot say, oh, it's over here or it's over there. You cannot, it's not an object. It's the subject, the eternal subject.

So for a moment, and you don't need to say, okay, I'm going to meditate on it. You don't even need to meditate. Meditation is wonderful for those who practice it.

But this realization can be there at any moment. Like now, when you become conscious that you are conscious and beyond that, you don't know much, you don't know anything, but you have gone deeper into yourself and you have touched a deeper dimension out of which all those things that can transform your life into something benevolent and fruitful emerge. They emerge from that deeper dimension of being itself or consciousness itself.

Now, what are those things that make your life into something benevolent, your contribution to life into something benevolent and fruitful and even joyful? Those things are creativity, creative insights. They come from the deeper place of the unconditioned consciousness.

So in other words, in order to be creative, you have to have some access to that dimension that is beyond thinking. Then perhaps the creative impulse comes. This is the evolution, the evolutionary process, your evolution and the evolution of this planet and life on this planet and the evolution of the universe, a single phenomenon.

Your evolution is part of the evolution of the universe, the evolution of consciousness. And that comes, these are vast subjects.

[Speaker 3] (26:15 - 26:19)
Each segment of this one could talk about for many hours.

[Speaker 1] (26:21 - 28:50)
When you, in order to have access to any kind of creative spark in your life, you have to have some access to that essence dimension, the light of consciousness, even if it's only brief. For a moment, the writers, the artists, or even the scientists or the business persons, for a moment, their mind stops, but they remain acutely alert and present. And then the mind starts again, and then their ability

to bring some creative solution to whatever situation they encounter has suddenly increased dramatically.

Another way of putting that is you could, another thing that emanates from there and is inseparable from what I just called creativity is a term that's rarely used these days, but it's of extraordinary importance. If we don't, the world, if more humans do not find that in this world, then the evolutionary process is going to get much more difficult, but eventually it'll be fine. Wisdom, wisdom.

If you cannot find, if humans cannot find that dimension, then where does it emanate? That same place, wisdom emanates from that deeper place of presence, awareness, the light of consciousness. It comes from there.

The modern world doesn't even know what to do with wisdom, but I don't know. It's unlikely that you'll ever hear wisdom anywhere on CNN or Fox News or New York Times. Probably they don't talk about wisdom.

What is that wisdom? It's not intelligence, it's how to use the mind. The mind is, you can have very developed mind, but no wisdom.

[Speaker 3] (28:51 - 28:53)
That's very dangerous.

[Speaker 1] (28:54 - 33:04)
The more developed your mind becomes, which means your mind is separated. You can see, it sees isolated problems and tries to tackle isolated problems here and there. This is the problem, and this is what we need to do to solve this problem.

And at first it looks great, but because there's lack of wisdom, they have not looked at the problem in its totality. And so you have completely ignored the repercussions of what you're going to do to solve this problem because you focused only on this problem. But what are the repercussions of the action that you took to solve this problem?

You have not looked at the totality. And why have you not looked at the totality? Because you are trapped in your mind.

The mind can only focus on the particular. It cannot see the whole. Wisdom can see the whole, but in order to see the whole of a situation, for a moment, you need to come to a cessation of thinking and so that you have an awareness.

And then you look at the awareness, the awareness looks at the problem. And then you suddenly see things, first non-conceptually, you see how everything is interrelated. And then you see, if I do this, the repercussions will be that.

This is many times the world, the action taken to solve a problem, and this is important because the number of problems that we are facing collectively is increasing. We need wisdom to solve. If without wisdom, every action we take to solve a particular problem will actually make it worse.

Even if it solves that problem, it will have created two or three or four other even bigger problems. So wisdom is of extraordinary importance and wisdom emanates from that place of the realization of yourself as that spacious space, that space of awareness, of presence. Thought subsides.

So it's not only creativity and wisdom that emanate from that place. All the things that make, as I said before, all the things that make life fruitful and make you into a benevolent human being, what also emanates from there is empathy, empathy with other humans, empathy with other life forms, the ability to have compassion emanates. Because you're no longer trapped in your exclusive personal sense of identity, you cannot have empathy and compassion.

When you are trapped in this personally, exclusively personal sense of self, then all you need to do is protect this ultimately fictitious identity. And anybody who is engaged in protecting or enhancing and attempting to enhance this ultimately fictitious identity, this person cannot have empathy, cannot have compassion. It's not impossible no matter what, no matter how many religious books they read, they can't.

So it's empathy, compassion, and ultimately love. Love, which is, of course, these are all connected. They are, one could almost say, they are aspects of the realization of being, of your essence identity.

[Speaker 3] (33:04 - 33:18)
So they are enhanced creativity, wisdom, empathy, compassion, and ultimately love.

[Speaker 1] (33:19 - 45:19)
Now, love not in the conventional sense, which is egoic, which says, I want you and I need you. Don't you dare leave me. And don't you dare disappoint me or betray me.

And I'll get really angry. Not that kind of love, but a love that comes from the realization of being. When you realize yourself as the light of consciousness, you can sense that same light in every other being, even beyond their personality.

The personality may be, even if the personality is obnoxious, as many personalities are, even if the person is very difficult and many people, you might have experienced that many people are difficult. In fact, for many humans, their main problems in life come from other people. So people are very difficult and many personalities are obnoxious.

And yet there, even there, yes, you don't, you see the personality and the conditioned entity, but beyond the personality and the conditioned entity, you can sense the same beingness that you sense in yourself. There's a light of consciousness in every human, even if it might be veiled, heavily veiled, concealed by condition, heavy conditioning. And in some people, I must admit, the light is very deeply hidden, very deeply in some, in others, less deeply hidden.

And in many, the light shines, even periodically, sometimes it shines through more and then it's obscured again. There are other humans where it's so hidden that it might be even hard to sense it, but you can, if you sense it deeply within yourself, you can even, you can, and I have experienced occasionally in my life, meeting very difficult people, including, okay, on various occasions, mentally disturbed people, meeting them and for a moment sensing their consciousness by sensing my consciousness, it's the same consciousness, sensing that, and for a moment I've experienced, I'm not going into detail here, a deeply disturbed person for a few minutes, suddenly becoming extremely present and conscious, totally freed of their paranoid, in this case, paranoid delusions, completely free suddenly, less if the heavy clouds had suddenly parted. So there's a healing effect that you can have on other people, never in the sense that you have some kind of egoic identity that says, I'm going to heal the world, that's not how it works. Or then you meet somebody and immediately you tell everybody what's wrong with them and says, but I can heal you, that's all ego, so don't need to go there.

You're not doing anything. As the Course in Miracles says, a healer does not heal, he lets healing be. He lets healing be.

And so, and be is kind of the key word here because that's how it happens to the realization of being, the realization of consciousness. And so then, that the essence then is this realization, then the way in which you meet or face the problems of this world, the difficulties of this world, whether they be of a personal or collective nature, changes, which means your entire reality changes because your reality is not what happens to you ultimately. That's not your reality.

Your reality is how you react or how you face the state of consciousness with which you face what's happening around you. So far, my iPhone has not become conscious. Every day I look at it and say, no, not yet.

Last question. Many scientists believe we will soon create machines which can think far more powerfully than humans. Is it possible that such machines could become self-aware and develop consciousness?

And if so, could a spiritual machine arise or can such properties exist only through a biological substrate that takes us into science fiction? A very fundamental question that mainstream science has an answer for that, but I believe a change will come. The origin of consciousness.

Is consciousness an epiphenomenon? If you don't like that word, let's use by-product. Is consciousness a by-product of the physical brain or in other words, is consciousness created by the material brain or is consciousness ultimately independent of the brain and only manifests in a particular way, through the biological brain in the same way that a radio receiver does not produce the radio program, but it receives it and then it gives it a particular form and so we can receive it through it. It's a medium for transmitting consciousness, but the consciousness does not originate in the radio receiver.

And as I've already dwelt for two minutes on this particular image of radio receiver, you see what I believe to be the case that the consciousness is not produced by the brain, but it uses the brain, but that's up to you. It's not ultimately decisive what you believe here. Is it possible that machine achieve such complexity that they can become vehicles for consciousness?

If the brain does not produce consciousness, which I believe we are going to realize soon, even in the mainstream, if the brain does not produce consciousness, but is a conduit for consciousness, is it possible that machines, they would have to become incredibly complex because even our most complex computers are very primitive compared to the brain. If they ever achieve such complexity that they become capable of transmitting consciousness, it is conceivable, or there could be a symbiosis, but being biological and non-biological, as we've seen in some movies, biological and non-biological and become a semi-biological computer. And so, yes, of course, there can be all kinds of things.

The universe is infinite in its capacity for creating new forms. And it's well possible that it could create, through humans, another life form that is capable, not of producing consciousness, but of receiving consciousness. So, so far, my iPhone has not become conscious.

Every day I look at it and say, no, not yet. All right. Although sometimes it looks as if it had a mind of its own, as the expression goes.

This one could talk about for much longer, but it would also be interesting to write spiritual science fiction. Some of it exists already. Some episodes of Star Trek, The Next Generation, have a strong spiritual, as you can see, I'm a fan, have a strong element of spirituality to them.

I even played with the idea of showing an episode of Star Trek, Next Generation here, but we may not do it this time. Just present, just a space of presence.

There's nobody in particular here, not a person, just points of presence.

All expressions of the one consciousness manifesting as little points of light, which sometimes mistake themselves as persons. They flicker for a moment and then they die down and another one arises. That's you, the light of consciousness.

You are that, and then it withdraws and then the body goes, gone. And then it comes again. Wonderful.

[Speaker 11] (45:49 - 46:40)
My question is around the issue of psychiatric medications and awakening. We have talked about this issue on ETT Forum. It is an issue in my life situation and the life situation of many others on the Forum.

Some believe they need to go off their medications to awaken and others say without the medication they would not have enough clarity to even begin to bring presence in their lives. My question is, can a person take psychiatric medication and still awaken? Will psychiatric medication hold a person back or slow down the awakening process?

Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (46:52 - 46:58)
May I ask a personal question? Are you on medication?

[Speaker 11] (46:59 - 46:59)
Yes.

[Speaker 1] (47:00 - 58:34)
But you're also here. That is already part of the answer because for you to be here, there must be some inner recognition of awareness. And so despite whatever the medication is or whatever the condition, your condition is, there is an arising of awareness.

So it's easier for me to answer this question because you are standing there than an abstract question. You are living proof. I'm not saying necessarily you don't experience periods when you are taken over by whatever patterns there are in the mind, but there is an opening into awareness, which is not the case with many people who are not on medication or who are considered normal.

They are not standing here. Many of them are not and wouldn't be. In them, there is no opening.

So one cannot say categorically under this or that condition, awareness cannot arise, awakening cannot happen. As a general rule, before anybody seeks help of that kind, I would advise to explore other possibilities. If you wish to gradually become free of medication, which in many cases can obscure the awareness that wants to arise, you would need to do it with a physician who is relatively conscious.

There are some. There may be a twofold question. One question is, with medication, is awareness able to come through?

And of course, that depends what kind of medication or what period of time and other factors. But in some cases, I believe it is. In other cases, it's not, but it can obscure the awareness.

The other question is a certain mental, what is diagnosed as mental illness, can awareness arise there? And again, that depends on the nature of the illness. Sometimes in the West, shifts in consciousness are misinterpreted.

If they happen suddenly, they can be misinterpreted and misdiagnosed by a physician. And Western physicians, because they're conditioned by the Western system, have no idea of shifts in consciousness. It's not part of the medical model.

There are no shifts in consciousness in psychiatry. So you can either, you're normal, but normal, of course, is insane, but they don't know that. Or you're ill, you're diseased, the mind is ill.

And there are people who are put on medication, unfortunately, children sometimes in increasing numbers, in whom there may simply be a change in consciousness happening. There are children who, for the most absurd reasons, are put on medication just to keep them quiet. And people like who in India, Ramana Maharshi, the Indian sage who, when he was 17, 16 or 17, suddenly did something that in the West would have been regarded as a sign of severe mental illness.

He left his home, he went to, took a train, and he sat down by a temple and stopped doing anything, didn't even put food in his mouth, just sat. And of course, in the West, they would have put him away. And in India, they respected it and allowed him to sit there and fed him as people came.

And after a few years, he started to speak again. And it turned out that he was awakened, he had awakened. But the shift was so sudden that he became dysfunctional for a while, from a normal viewpoint, became dysfunctional, couldn't operate anymore in the world.

So this can happen to people sometimes, and it's totally misinterpreted. So often, what is called medical psychiatric illness, not always, can be a misdiagnosed shift in consciousness. At other times, there is actually a condition there with which it would be very difficult to live.

Many types of so-called schizophrenia. Schizophrenia is a huge term which can be applied if you don't know what exactly is wrong, you call it schizophrenia, it's almost like that. The same way in a physical body, it's a viral infection.

They don't really know, but this is a term that covers a lot of things. It's a viral infection. Oh, now I know what it is.

And then schizophrenia, now I know what it is. In many cases, it is true that in mental illness, the very cause of the illness can be total identification with certain mental movements. Lack of awareness.

I've had limited success when I worked with people one-on-one some years ago. I had some people who had forms of schizophrenia who came to see me who were on medication. And by sitting with them and pointing to the possibility of awareness, they were able to become free and eventually also become free of the medication.

For example, I remember one case, a woman came to see me who had severe auditory hallucinations, so-called voices. And again, we don't even know whether the entities actually are talking to her. That's possible, but it really comes to the same thing, whether it's thoughts in her head that take the form of a voice that she hears.

The voice tells her to do something. It's very insistent, or several voices sometimes, very insistent, telling her to do this, do that. And enormous energy behind that voice.

And the way I approached it was to point out the possibility of not giving, not paying attention to the content of what the voice says, but simply to be aware that there is a voice speaking and that it is a voice in the head. It is a thought. I called it a thought.

Maybe it's something else, but it comes to the same thing. It's a thought. It's a voice.

Whatever it says, there's a voice. Be the awareness for the voice. Don't fight it.

Be the awareness so that the voice, you don't do what the voice says because you disregard the content. So if the voice says, you are God, say thank you, there's a voice again. If the voice says, you are the devil, thank you, there's the voice again.

You are the awareness for the voice. Disregard the content. Then gradually, the voice lost its power because she disregarded the content of the voice.

Awareness grew. So ultimately, the healing in any case is awareness. So awareness can arise in the strangest circumstances.

And to people, you would never have predicted could arise to, and that includes even people who have a so-called psychiatric disorder or who are on medication. It can happen. Nobody can categorically say that it cannot happen.

In some cases, those people are closer than normal people. As you know, there was a movement in psychiatry in the 60s and 70s where they, some, it was called anti-psychiatry, where it was recognized that often psychiatric conditions are really something else. So it's really, it is simple in your case, that obviously, despite the medication, you are here and something, a shift is happening inside you.

Nothing can stand against the power of awareness ultimately because the power of awareness is the power of the evolution of the universe itself. So nothing really that it will, it seeks the slightest opening and it can come through that. So I would say that trust, that as it's happening, it will continue to happen for you.

And there may be a point when with help, the medication won't be needed anymore as awareness grows, but you need somebody who is conscious to help you with that, a physician who is conscious to help you with that. It's wonderful to see that it is working.

[Speaker 11] (58:38 - 58:41)
It's helped that I've disidentified from it.

[Speaker 1] (58:42 - 58:42)
Yes.

[Speaker 11] (58:43 - 58:44)
And I'm able to be the witness.

[Speaker 1] (58:45 - 58:47)
Yes, that's the power.

[Speaker 11] (58:47 - 58:51)
It's been, my symptoms, less power over me.

[Speaker 1] (58:51 - 58:52)
Yes.

[Speaker 11] (58:52 - 58:54)

And knowing that I'm not that.

[Speaker 1] (58:56 - 1:29:48)
That's right. So that's the key, to be the witness, to be the awareness for whatever it is. It's wonderful.

So I'm very grateful. I'm glad you asked the question and I'm sure there'll be many people who are in a similar position, have the same question. So yes, it is possible.

It is possible. Thanks. Thank you.

Thanks. So to completely rest within yourself, completely come to, the doing needs to come to a stop, but you cannot make that stopping into a doing because then, okay, I need to stop my doing mode. That's more doing.

Can you speak about how to be in this world with this constant push for connectivity on the internet without feeling that being present is another thing to do? You can make a list of things to do, answer emails, check Facebook, make these four or five phone calls, write the report. Call your stockbroker, therapist, whatever.

And number seven, be present. Yes, it's a good question. The being present isn't something, although sometimes when we talk about it, it sounds as if it were something that you do in the same way that when people meditate, many of you probably have a meditation practice and there's that sense that, okay, now I have to do my meditation.

It might even be on your list of things to do. But the very idea that you are now doing a meditation can be an obstacle to doing an actually effective meditation because you're still doing something. And so even while you sit and you, whatever the technique is, it could be that there's still that sense of doing.

And even there could even be a remnants of stress there because you're doing, but you also know that there are many other things that you still have to do, but now you really have to do this meditation. I'm doing it. Don't disturb me, I'm doing it.

I'm trying to do a meditation, I'm trying, but I have so much on my plate too. So the very sense that you're doing something can be the obstacle because we could say that meditation or being present is the realization of being that's always already there, but just not realized. So it's not doing at all.

It's the other dimension in which there's no doing, but there's being, and that is the fundamental dimension. Ultimately, there can be no doing without being. Being is the unconditioned consciousness.

So to completely rest within yourself, completely come to, the doing needs to come to a stop, but you cannot make that stopping into a doing because then, okay, I need to stop my doing mode. That's more doing. But if your approach is just be with what is, completely, nothing to do, nothing to achieve, nowhere to go, just being here, aware, aware of whatever appears in that space of awareness, and if possible, and it is possible, aware that you are aware.

That's it. So there's no doing. So you've gone into being, realized being.

It was always there and is always there. It's just overlooked continuously because of a certain state of consciousness in which the thinking mode has become so overwhelming that you have lost touch with the deeper dimension within yourself.

Now, when I say lost touch, does that imply that once you, when I say you, I mean humanity or you, does it mean that once you were in touch with that dimension, perhaps you were in touch with that as a baby until you started to think?

But you went, if that is the case, you were in touch with it unconsciously, didn't know it, it was a natural state. But it seems that if you go back into prehistory, humanity, they, many, many, in many, many traditions and ancient civilizations, there is a myth of the golden age. Once we had that.

In the Old Testament, it's written of as paradise or the garden of Eden. And there are other myths from different parts of the world, including India and so on, of the myth of a very distant past when the suffering wasn't there. The unhappiness wasn't there.

It was the golden age. It's just, is that just a story, a wishful thing? Or is it something, some very distant memory of a different state of consciousness?

And I would suggest that it is a very distant memory of something that we kind of lost, that's not absolutely correct word. But it does not mean that those ancient humans in prehistory necessarily, well, we know very little about anything that goes beyond 3000 years ago, but, and that's little. But it seems that humans lived in connectedness with a source because the mind had not yet, either not yet started up, started to produce thoughts or only very rudimentary thoughts.

And they were still able to rest in the being. In the same way that a cat or a dog, I'm using those two because many of you have observed them because you have lived with them. Many of you have lived with them.

When they rest, they rest completely. And you can become, if you contemplate a cat at rest, it can help you to actually become still. Or a dog, let's say, go completely, even if they're not asleep yet, they're just...

Some years ago, I saw a movie, I think it was called 1,000,000 Years B.C. It's just a ridiculous, ridiculous title, as if 2000 years made a difference in 1,000,000 years. But it was called 1,000,000 Years B.C. And you saw these transitional beings between animal and human. They were already walking and they had certain, already producing certain sounds, but not yet words, or just very rudimentary sounds that were beginning to represent things.

And then they got into a fight between two tribes, still making partly animal-like sounds. And then the fight comes to an end, a few get killed. And in the evening, they sit around the fire, and it's done very well.

I don't know if the rest of the movie is any good, but I just remember that particular scene. They sit around the fire. They have already discovered how to make fire.

That's an amazing thing. And they sit around the fire, and instead of talking, because they haven't got language about what just happened an hour ago, they just sit and they're completely just at rest. They sit around the fire and they all go, hmm, hmm, hmm, hmm, hmm, hmm, hmm, hmm, hmm.

No nervous excitement left, because it's not being kept alive by the mind and the memory. They're rooted, again, they're returned, they're rooted in being. And that's the, so every animal is more deeply connected.

It's still a deeper connection with being, but it's an unconscious connection. It doesn't know anything else. It's a natural state.

And it's quite likely that humans once had that in their evolutionary journey. And then they started to think, which wasn't a bad thing. It was an amazing thing that they began to think that was just associated with the creation of language, of course, also.

And that's an amazing thing. When they discovered they could produce certain sounds to represent things, amazing. And then they could produce sounds to represent activities.

And then they began to realize they were having these sounds in their head, too, that not, they were beginning to hear thoughts in their head. And some anthropologists believe that, not everybody agrees, they believe that at that time, humans mistook the arising thoughts as gods talking to them. So they heard their own thoughts and said, oh, what do you want me to do?

Kill that neighboring tribe. Okay, we must kill them. And then perhaps the first time, a few humans experienced sleepless nights.

And that was just the beginning. But an amazing, it was an amazing evolutionary step forward. In all this entire civilization, many civilizations arose out of that amazing thing.

But there was a huge price to pay. There's always a price to pay in this world of opposites. There was a huge price to pay for that.

And we all know what that is. It's loss of connectedness with the source. You are alienated from the source, unhappy.

People spend years trying to figure out what Zen is all about in monasteries and still can't figure it out. And this Zen master says, doing one thing at a time. Is that it?

Yes. Well, that stops your mind. Another question here about daily life.

Those are very useful questions to everybody. They're basically everybody's question. How do you balance just being on a moment-to-moment basis all the time with having to make a living and paying bills?

That has been the only difficult part for me. How do you balance just being on a moment-to-moment basis all the time? All the time.

With having to make a living and paying bills, that has been the only difficult part for me. Yes. In other words, how do you balance or bring together being and doing?

Otherwise, you can only experience presence and being when you're sitting absolutely still or you're not being disturbed by anything. That's fine too. At least you have it then.

But it's not enough. So yes, you rightly say, the question is a good one. How do you balance that with paying bills and so on?

In other words, activity in daily life. How can you have that awareness in your daily activities rather than lose yourself in the doing? Well, as a practice, any practice that we now talk about presupposes that there is a minimum of presence in you, because without that, you can't practice.

If there's a minimum of presence in you in any situation, then there's something that you can do. And a minimum of presence or awareness means you're not totally lost, but you can be aware at the beginning of an activity so that you don't get drawn into it totally that you lose yourself in it. And usually it means the future becomes more important than the present moment.

That means you're becoming lost in doing. That's a good indicator. The future moment becomes more important than this moment.

And you need to deal with that. So as a conscious practice, you can do, what do I need to do now? Okay, well, you mentioned paying bills and having to make a living, whatever it is that you do.

The present moment, is it a means to an end for you, or are you honoring the doing in this moment so that it is not primarily a means to an end? Are you trying to get to the future moment more than you want to be in the present moment? That's usually the case with unconscious living.

And usually people are stressed because of that continuous movement of the pull of future, which is no more than the pull of a thought of future, because there is no future out there. I've never seen it. So the future is the thought of future.

So you can, the balance between being and doing is done by being present in the doing, by giving your fullest attention to the doing, rather than believing that you need to get to the end of the doing. Give your fullest attention to whatever your activity is, in your daily activities. Don't make it a means to an end that includes any human interaction.

Low quality human interaction, we've all experienced that. Low quality human interaction is when you meet a human being who is treating you as a means to an end. And so you become reduced to, if you see somebody in a restaurant, you become reduced to a customer.

And so he's not a human being. If you see a doctor, you become reduced to a patient. He doesn't see you, unless he's aware, or she doesn't see you.

You become a patient. You become reduced and only wants to get it over and done with. The person who's trying to sell you something, to this person, you are a means to an end.

He wants to, he or she wants to get to the future moment where the sale is completed. If you refuse to go along with it, and you're not going to buy what he's offering, he's going to be in a negative state. And the negative state in him is already present, even while he's talking to you and still wanting you to sell something, because there's a strong desire for you to finally come to the end of it already.

He's using you as a means to an end, so that he can get to the future moment where he thinks he needs to be. And you can feel that, this is not a high-quality human interaction. And a lot of interaction between humans in our society is of that kind, because they are all just wanting to use the other in their desire, compulsion, compulsive desire, to arrive at the future point where they need to be.

So life gets reduced to something unpleasant, superficial. Nobody is really, nobody is here. They're not, they're not there.

So instead of demanding that these people should change, of course it needs to start with you. Don't make this moment into a means to an end, because it's precious. It's all you ever have.

And whatever appears in this moment is precious. It's the form that this moment takes. So if you're with another human being, it's a precious moment.

It's the form that this moment takes. Don't make it into a means to an end. Honor the form of this moment.

Honor this moment. So if you're dealing with another human being, let's say in business, you're honoring this moment. You're honoring this human being.

You give, in other words, you give this moment your fullest attention. You give the other human being who happens to be there at this moment your fullest attention. Your attention isn't 50, 60, 70 percent in the future where you want to be.

No, it's here completely. And then you, if you are a waiter, you will see that your tips increase a hundredfold if you give every guest your fullest attention and not treat them as a means to an end. If you're a salesman, you'll be extremely successful because the people will love you because everybody loves to be given fullest attention.

So you realize the second, it's second, the situation that every life situation is secondary. Whatever it consists of is secondary. Primary is your practice of presence, of attention, of awareness.

So you use whatever life gives you to do, bring that element of attention to it, of aware presence, and do it with infused, the doing becomes infused with presence. And it shifts. If you think, if you thought your job was boring, well, there was most likely not, not enough presence in the doing.

Even menial jobs, you can become transformed through presence. I have occasionally witnessed, not very often, people at a toll booth where cars stop every few seconds, a car stops and they say, two dollars please. Now, one would think that's not an interesting job where you can be present, but very rarely, once or twice in my life, I have seen somebody there who emanated awareness or presence and everybody was, everybody who stopped there, every driver, was given fullest attention in that moment.

The words didn't matter, thank you, two dollars, thank you, have a nice day. But the energy behind it, again, what we said earlier, situations are secondary, whatever happens. They're all, so treat your whole life as an excuse, whatever situation arises, it's an opportunity for bringing the dimension of presence or awareness in.

Don't believe that the situation is what absolutely matters. What absolutely matters is your state of consciousness, secondary is what you do. In other words, who you are or what you are, the state of consciousness is primary.

The doing flows out of the being. It's a practice, daily life is spiritual practice. One way of talking about what is Zen, one Zen master simply defined Zen as doing one thing at a time.

That's Zen. You can't get a more simpler definition than that of people spend years trying to figure out what Zen is all about in monasteries and still can't figure it out. And this Zen master says, doing one thing at a time.

Is that it? Yes. Well, that stops your mind.

And then what's left, what's left for you to do is doing one thing at a time. Not be over there, but be here, be present in the doing. And already you are practicing presence, one thing at a time.

It's fullest attention to this one thing. There's only this moment. And this moment then becomes different.

It changes. Its quality changes from low quality to high quality. The doing changes.

The relationship changes to high, high quality. High quality, what I call high quality implies there is the awareness becomes part of the situation. You bring in a new dimension.

So the secret of life is to move in the world of object consciousness, where things continuously happen and have to be dealt with. Okay. Phone rings.

Demands. I want this. You should come and do this.

Are you going to lose yourself in these continuous, the demand of the world of objects, of things that gives, give me your attention. And I'm only speaking right now of the external world, which says, I need you. I need your attention.

This and everything that arises says this matters. Absolutely. And it's serious.

So this situation is very serious. We have to do something now. Okay.

And you can see how you're completely lost in form. You can see. What now?

Okay. And what decisions are you going to take on the basis of that state of consciousness? Oh, we have to do, we have to let these people go.

50 people. We have to let them go. We can't afford to keep them any longer.

Okay. Sack them. Sack them all.

What next? Complete lack of space, which means complete lack of wisdom. Just absurd decisions are being taken.

Nothing can come out of that state of consciousness that does not create more suffering. Because it's a state of ultimately great unbalance, to use a mild word. And a state where everything pretends to matter.

Absolutely. And of course there's continuous underlying fear because all you know is the world of objects, of things, of things happening, of things going wrong, of things that shouldn't be, of things that need to be added to make, so that we can be profitable and make success, become a success. What for?

I don't know. The company needs to grow. It needs to grow.

Grow. What for? So that more people can be part of it and more people can be unhappy.

And to a large extent this is the energy that's still behind a lot of the structures in our civilization. That kind of energy is behind it. It's mad.

Of course it's mad. What is missing? Space.

Can you be here as the bringer of space in any situation?

[Speaker 14] (1:29:58 - 1:29:59)
Hello.

[Speaker 6] (1:30:00 - 1:31:52)
I've been to several of your retreats and my friend encouraged me to ask the question. And I've been thinking about it. And at the last retreat I went to for helping professionals in California, you answered part of the question.

You had picked it and answered it. But both of my parents were Holocaust survivors. My mother was from Auschwitz in 1945 and my father from Bergen-Belsen.

And I had a brother who died in the Warsaw ghetto there. And I have this identification with this collective kind of unconscious where I constantly try to think about what you're saying and how to apply the feeling of there is no problem in the present moment. And I go back, it doesn't happen all the time.

But when you say that, I think about them and I think, how could they have done that? How could they have said in a state of terror, there's no problem right now? And I think about it often.

And I also just want to say that I find it really ironic that you have probably been the most influential person in my life in terms of healing. And I go to many of your retreats, listen to the tapes, and you're of German descent. And I often think to myself, there is a larger picture here.

I mean, it's irony, isn't it, kind of? You know, I was a little nervous to ask the question and even to make the statement, but my friend was encouraging me to do it.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:52 - 1:33:27)
So thank you. Well, I can assure you my sense of self is not derived from any nationality. And there was a time, but I'll come to the main part of your question is, how could they at that time have said, how could they have said there is no problem in the situation that they were in?

That's your main question. I'll address that in a second. But first, interesting question about identifying with your national background or your family background.

There was a time when I was still in my egoic identity, when there was some feelings of unease, when I realized what the country that I was born in had done. And so there was some suffering there at that time. Later, when I transcended that sense of self, that evaporated completely.

But even at the suffering that had done, it had been worse if my family background, if they had been involved in any activity of that atrocious activity of that kind, it would have been far worse. But my dad was an outsider. He was actually imprisoned by the Nazis, not because of some deeply held political belief, simply because he couldn't keep his mouth shut.

[Speaker 6] (1:33:30 - 1:33:32)
My mother couldn't keep her mouth shut either.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:34 - 1:42:31)
And so one night he had been drinking, he just said, this craziness, we have to, how can this guy is so crazy, he's going to take us to our doom. And the next day he got arrested. And there's a long story that Monday I'll tell what happened to him after that.

And my mom escaped the work service that every young woman had to go to, to work on a farm or in a factory. So she was sent to a weapons factory to work. And she escaped after two days, she ran away, she got, she jumped on the back of a truck and escaped.

And then she lived in hiding for two years with her aunt in another city and police were coming to look for her. So that's the story of my parents. So that was a little bit of a relief for me at that time that they had absolutely no, not only not involvement, they were actually regarded as delinquents.

But now the most important part, in such extreme situations, of such extreme suffering, concentration camp and so on, and even nowadays there are places on the planet where people are in these situations of extreme suffering, where the death could come at any moment. They might only have, whether if you've been captured by some terrorists and you know they're going to kill you, whatever it may be. Now, there have been accounts of people who have, who were in concentration camps, who have actually broken through to a very deep level of consciousness by being in that situation.

So, and it doesn't happen in those cases by telling yourself that there is no problem in the present moment. That is, would be a very weak statement and not really, wouldn't work. So, but what does work is the situation like that can drastically burn up your ego completely so that there's virtually, there's complete self-annihilation before the body dies.

There's complete annihilation of the egoic sense of self and all that remains is an intense presence of consciousness. You are not there as a person anymore. I know that there are a few individuals who have gone there who have later been able to speak about it and I'm sure there are many others, a minority, yes, there are many others who never were able, they died there, they were never able to later on express what they actually went through, but I believe there is a considerable number of people who went through this, the deepest shift in consciousness that's possible in this impossibly painful situation. And it actually became totally awakened as consciousness and realized that there is no death.

And others, of course, went through terrible fear and died in terrible fear, but the essence of who you are is not subject to death. And there is a, when we see the dreadfulness of that situation, which is not to be denied, so we also have to see on a deeper level there is no death. And both exist to knowing that there is no death to the essence of who you are, knowing that from an inner realization does not mean that on another level the situation is not dreadful.

So we do not, one does not deny the other and it has to be recognized in its dreadfulness. That's part, in the same way that I sometimes speak of the how many people were actually killed by humans killing, murdering other humans in the 20th century alone. And the figure is that I quoted a figure in the Power of Now, but I later found out it was far too low.

Nobody knows the exact figure, 150 million, 200 million humans murdered by other, no natural catastrophes and so on, are nothing compared to that, what humans do to each other. And that's a form of collective madness. The Holocaust is one aspect of that.

Another aspect of that would be what happened in Soviet communism, millions killed. Also in China, millions killed within their own countries, not even in the conflict between two countries. First World War, the madness of that.

Second World War, the madness of that. The bombing of cities and entire civilian populations exterminated. Complete madness.

So we have to see that what the madness that is in the, ultimately the dysfunctional egoic mind and what it produces, and this is a dreadful, you need to recognize the craziness of that, the madness of that. But at the same time, if we are able to go deep enough, we can realize that, for a moment, regard humanity as of consciousness. There's human consciousness, which is a collective of humanity.

And every human being is an expression of the collective human consciousness. And the collective human consciousness is an expression of the universal consciousness. It's one strand, one ray in the universal consciousness.

So you have universal consciousness. Then you have the collective human consciousness on planet Earth. the collective human consciousness is evolving gradually through continuously, through billions of manifestations, humans are called human individuals.

It's evolving gradually. And it's, so another way of looking at it on the deeper level is the evolution of human consciousness is a very painful process. It's kind of, it goes to a nightmarish stage when humanity, when the history of humanity looks like the history of an, it's a nightmare.

And, but it is evolving. So we, it's, we ourselves are expressions of the evolution of consciousness. And knowing that we can still recognize the madness of what happened and to some extent still happening.

People often say, by the way, things are getting worse and worse. They say on the palm, they're getting worse and worse. Well, I say, if you look at the history, just look at the first half of the 20th century, it can't be worse than that.

We're not, so far, it's not definitely not worse than that. So, but this is a long answer to on two levels. No, they would not have said there's no problem in the present moment, but perhaps the situation forced them into a state of consciousness that we call presence that they didn't have a name for and eliminated the person completely.

That is always the possibility when it happens. So, and then we, for you, it's important to derive your sense of self from the arising presence in you, not from the historical past, your own historical past, or the historical past of your family, but to acknowledge it, what happened, but not derive your sense of identity from it. That is important.

Otherwise you get trapped in that sense of identity. Thank you very much.

[Speaker 10] (1:43:12 - 1:43:42)
Kirt, my question is around surrender. I'm curious, once the egoic shell has cracked open and the light of consciousness is peeking through, can the ego surrender itself to that light of consciousness or ultimately must it be surrendered? Kirt.

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:43:51 - 1:45:44)
The ego, I often talk of the ego as if it were an entity. It's not really an entity. It acts as if it were an entity.

It seems to be an entity that has taken possession of you, but ultimately what it is, it's only a particular way of your mind to function. A, an identification with the mind. So the ego itself is that dysfunctional way in which the mind works.

And when that comes to an end, the dysfunctional way cannot put an end to its own dysfunction. It can only dissolve when the mind, awareness arises. Awareness is not thought.

Awareness is consciousness prior to thought. And you realize that you are that and whatever the mind produces and says are thoughts, but the thoughts are then no longer endowed with a sense of self. And that's the end of the ego.

When you no longer identify with every thought that comes, that's the end of the ego. So that's what happens. So I don't know in the way you formulate the question, the ego cannot dissolve itself, but in the light of awareness, it dissolves.

[Speaker 10] (1:45:46 - 1:45:52)
Then what is that willingness to allow it to be seen?

[Speaker 1] (1:45:52 - 1:48:53)
That willingness is the evolutionary impulse of the universe, which created the ego in the first place in order to transcend it now. It was an evolutionary step for mankind. The ego was an enormous step for mankind.

A great thing. And then it came or is coming now to the end of its lifespan, that particular evolutionary movement or manifestation that we call ego. It had a lifespan.

It has outlived its usefulness now. We have learned a lot through it. And now it needs to go.

And that's always a critical stage. The transition from one state of consciousness to another is always critical. There could be a falling back.

There could be, we're at this transitional stage where the ego now needs to dissolve. The caterpillar has come to the end of its useful life as a caterpillar. It's been fine.

The caterpillar was happy for a while, crawling up the tree and eating the leaves. Now there are no leaves left on the tree. And it's time for the caterpillar to cease being a caterpillar and turn into something incredible.

That little slimy thing. Suddenly it doesn't know what's happening to it. Caterpillar doesn't say, I must become a butterfly or I'm trying to become a butterfly.

But the caterpillar suddenly notices that crawling is becoming more and more difficult. And it's looking for leaves. It's eaten all the leaves of the tree so there's nothing else to eat anyway.

If it doesn't change now into a butterfly, it'll die. So that's what's happening to humans. The shift to a different evolutionary level or dimension.

It's, this is us being here. That's all part of it. It's part of the shift.

The butterfly is emerging right here. The caterpillar is not totally gone yet. It's the transitional period.

Thanks. Even you can notice in every one of you, sometimes you're still a caterpillar and at other times, you're already a butterfly. Present, aware, non-reactive, aligned with the present moment.

[Speaker 10] (1:49:13 - 1:50:18)
I understand, I think pretty well, the basic idea of leaving behind the conceptual thought and retreating, making a retreat to being in order to reposition and to cope and to start out with, again, in the conceptual world we must live in at some time with fresh thoughts and new ideas. But I'm asking you and not necessarily expecting the answer just now, today, but hoping that this is a challenge and a

invitation for you to help us to have the one thing that I think I've not have been able to achieve in my own life and would like to. Even at 76, I'm still striving to have one, just one, really original thought.

That's what I'm looking for. And of all people in this world that I've heard about and met, I think you're the guy that might help us with that. Thank you.

Thank you, thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:50:20 - 2:20:09)
That's a lovely question, thank you. Well, there's one success to be reported. We already had an original question.

A very honest question and a question that actually, and surprisingly, nobody has asked before. So there you are. I don't know if that's the whole answer.

But that's certainly the truth. It's asking questions is a wonderful, wonderful thing. And it is, I would even say, more important to ask an original question than to expect an original thought or original answer, because an original question is an original thought.

A question is a thought. And so you'll find that the ability to ask questions, when in any situation, when you have to arrive at an answer, at a solution, to try to work something out, to ask questions and to ask the right questions is more important than expecting the right answer. And often the answer is already hidden in the question.

When you can ask the right question and say, oh, oh, and this already, Socrates knew because his entire teaching is questions and answers. It's called the Socratic dialogues. The Socratic dialogues, he continuously asked, he encouraged people to ask questions, and then he didn't immediately give answers.

He gave, asked more questions and gradually leading people to the truth, to realization of this or that, whatever it may be. So in many situations, I often, people present something to me. Do you want to do this or do you want to do that?

And then I said, have you asked this? Have you asked that? No.

Well, ask this and ask that and ask that, and then we'll know. It's an art that you can develop, asking questions. You need an alertness.

So I'm really talking about, you already asked an original question and a very honest question. So this is certainly an original thought. And let's see what happens after that.

The more you get in touch with the alert stillness that is presence, the more likely it is that you will perhaps more, have more original questions. And sometimes perhaps, well, original thoughts, an original question is an original thought. It is true that in most people, the thoughts that happen in your mental field, most of them are not even your thoughts.

You say, these are my thoughts, but they have come into you from the collective, especially nowadays when everybody's connected with the collective through these weird devices, you just turn on your thing and you look and you're taking in collective thoughts. Bzzz, bzzz, bzzz, and then you start thinking whatever it is, either you agree or you violently disagree. Yes, yes, yes.

No, no, no. And then you, so you, what people don't realize is that the thoughts live in you and pretend to be you. You think they're yours, but they are thoughts that have floated into your mind, most of them collective thoughts.

And so it's almost like being, carrying something in you that possesses you. It's, you're in the grip of certain thoughts. If you read social media and all that kind of thing on the internet, it's full of millions of people who are in the grip of certain thought movements and they are collective thought movements.

There are, for example, now that they're kind of, there's a separation of this one huge collective thought movement that goes one way. And there's another huge collective thought movement that goes another way. And you belong either to one or to the other.

You feel drawn to the one or to the other. And it's not ultimately nothing to do with you or who you really are. You are at the mercy of these energy fields that move through you.

And you say things and the energy speaks through you. The thoughts live in you, you're inhabited by thoughts. So the, as I mentioned before, somewhere, maybe not here, the people say, I think, but in most cases, thinking is not, you have no say in the matter unless there's some awareness.

You have no say in the matter as to what you are thinking. So there's as little truth in the statement, I think, as there is in the statement, I beat my heart because you're not doing it, it happens to you. Now, breathing is partly voluntary and partly involuntary.

You say, I breathe. Now you have some control over your breathing. You can stop it for a while, you can deepen it.

However, breathing also happens to you because although you can stop it for a little while, I don't think you cannot commit suicide just by holding your breath. Something in you makes you breathe. So breathing happens to you when you'd have to put some plastic over your head, oh, let's not go there.

But you cannot commit suicide, you cannot hold your breath for that long. So it's stronger than you. So breathing happens to you, the circulation of the countless, countless hundreds of functions that are being coordinated every second in your body, the temperature of the body, the circulation of the blood, every organ coordinating its functions with the other organs.

There's a vast intelligence operating continuously throughout your body. And it's happening to you, you are not doing it. You have no idea how the digestion works, you are not digesting your food, it's being digested for you.

You are not in control of the functions of your kidneys or your liver. Even now, the greatest scientists are still figuring out more and more about how these things work. It's just an amazing intelligence hiding there, but it's all happening for you and to you.

So you are not doing it, but you think that as far as thoughts are concerned, that you think your thoughts. You don't, unless there's an awareness in you where you become, this dimension has emerged where you become aware of what thoughts are going through your head and you can even say, I'd rather not think that because it's totally pointless and futile. And then it dissolves, that is possible.

Or to simply observe a thought takes away the momentum from a thought that is not pleasant. When you observe what a thought is doing to you, how a thought makes you unhappy, when you observe that, there's an awareness there. When you can see that this thought is making me unhappy and you see, you can, then it begins to dissolve.

But for most humans who are not aware, they are at the mercy of their thoughts, although they continuously think, this is what I think, as if there was a volition there, but what really is happening, this is the thinking that happens to me. So there's no, it's completely conditioned. So instead of saying, I think it would be better to say, I am being thought, I am being thought.

There is an eternal life there. There is a level at which the essence of that person, you know it beyond explanations, is eternal. You speak often about non-attachment.

I can understand non-attachment to objects but I can't comprehend non-attachment to my children or family. How can one be non-attached to those we love? Good question.

The question I can understand non-attachment to things. Okay. Now non-attachment to things, let's talk about that for a moment.

Non-attachment to things does not mean not appreciating things but it means not seeking yourself or to regard things as an extension of yourself or think of things as needing them to add to yourself in order to be yourself more fully. That's attachment to things. It's an ego dysfunction but in a way in which the ego survives and it's not pleasant because you always need more and nothing really satisfies you.

Whenever you buy something and seek some kind of self-satisfaction through it, very quickly you realize it doesn't work and then you look for something else. However, there is a way of appreciating things, beautiful things or simple things. Appreciate is not being attached.

You can love, even love a piece of furniture or whatever it is, a little object or a piece of something you wear too. I'm not saying all this needs to disappear. You can like things and appreciate them, love them in a sense of having appreciated without the self-seeking in it.

And when the thing leaves you, you lose it or it breaks or it gets stolen or whatever, without the attachment you'll say, oh, it's a pity but you don't, there's no reaction and no pain. You're able to let go and that's a sign that something you appreciated and yet when it's not there anymore, well, that's all right too. I always appreciated since I started between the age of 30 and well, up to the age of 30, I don't know, 36, my main transportation was bicycle and I always appreciated my bicycle and I developed a strange habit when I parked my bicycle and chained it to something, a railing outside or whatever.

I would take a few steps and look back on it and just appreciate its being. It's a very strange habit. You look back at it and look back one more time, there it is.

And sometimes people ask, why are you looking back at your bicycle? Are you proud of it? Well, it wasn't a particularly special bicycle, just a normal.

No, I appreciate it being there. And one day, I got a car, somebody gave me an old car and then I lent my bicycle to somebody and suddenly that person came and said, I'm so sorry, I lost your bike. I didn't lock it for a few minutes and now it's gone.

I had already gone through a shift in consciousness. So, I said, it's okay, it's gone, nothing we can do about it. Hopefully, somebody else appreciates it now.

Then I developed the same habit with my old car. I would look back when I parked it, I'd look back and just appreciate it being there. And I do the same now that I have a much better car.

And now with my good car, people think I must be proud of this car or something, but it's not that. I did the same with the bicycle. It's a strange habit.

I'm not recommending anybody that he should do that, but it's just a way in which I appreciate its being. And it's not attachment, but don't believe me, but the reality of attachment only comes out when it disappears. So, let's wait and see.

So, yes, it's wonderful not to be attached to things and yet being able to appreciate things. And then comes attachment to humans, attachment to human beings. And the questioner asks, I can understand non-attachment to objects, but I cannot comprehend non-attachment to my children and family.

How can one be non-attached to those we love? Well, you can't. Nor is it desirable.

Of course you are attached to those you love, and of course, if they should be taken from you, you feel pain and you weep. However, as you awaken spiritually, in addition to your attachment to a person that you love, there is a deeper level also present in which you relate to that person, not at all through emotion or the physical, but deeper through presence. You feel their presence.

You feel beyond emotion. You feel their essence. And that is vital because now it means that the love has become, well, what word do we use?

We could say, spiritualised. It's not just emotional, it's only a very limited form of love. But you also realise the formless dimension in the other human being and in yourself at the same time.

And as if a person should be taken away from you, the level at which you are attached to that person, at that level, you feel the loss and the pain of it. At the same time, there is the deeper level present in which you realise that which is not subject to death. There is an eternal life there.

There is a level at which the essence of that person, you know it beyond explanations, is eternal. The essence of who they are, and you can sense that in yourself, even while you weep, a person dies with whom you love. So we are not aiming for non-attachment to those we love, but what we are aiming for is going deeper in our love, so that there is not just the emotional level or the physical level, but a deeper level of true, ultimately, that's the true love.

And don't wait until somebody whom you love is taken away from you to find that level. Find that level while they are here with you, but don't look for it in the other. Find it in yourself.

The entire teaching here is about that. Find it in yourself and then look upon the other and sense it and recognise it also in the other. So there are times then when you can relate to a loved one, and that's an important part of the relationship, not through words and thoughts, not through physicality, not through emotion.

Those are there, but from time to time, relate to the other on a level that's deeper than physicality, touch, look, deeper than words, speaking, deeper than thoughts, thinking about the other, deeper than the emotion that you feel, look at the closeness, and so you go to that, is that possible? Yes. Be with the other person in the state of the clarity of presence, just absolute spacious awareness.

Look at the other in spacious and through spacious awareness. So there's the formless essence arises. And then they die because everybody close to you, of course, is going to leave you or you leave them.

They die first or you die first. And it's absurd not to consider that. And when death finally comes, yes, of course you feel pain, but to react as if that were the greatest unnatural thing to happen ever in the world, of course, that's what it feels like if you've never even considered death, the reality of it, which is all around you.

But to go beyond death, don't wait for death, die now to that exclusive identification with form. Die to the mind-made self. And then when death comes, you will weep and feel a deep peace at the same time.

It seems almost paradoxical, but I have experienced it, and I know others who have. You weep and you feel deep peace at the same time. There's a very strong pattern in me that doesn't want to live anymore, and that is really hard to deal with.

Can you please advise me? Well, first you need to observe whether there's negativity in there. It's just like, I can't take any more of this, or whatever thought comes up when you feel that you don't want to live anymore, can't take it anymore, I've had enough.

In other words, is it a resistance pattern that's still egoic because things are not going the way you wanted them to go? Or there may be a kind of tiredness of life, sense-perceived existence, situations, and so on. A weariness, perhaps.

You are not here, so I cannot ask you to explain exactly what it is that you feel, and how you experience that not wanting to live anymore. But anybody, no matter what it is, I suggest that you practice dying by surrendering completely to the present moment. Don't demand anything that this moment should be different.

It is the way it is. Then the ego dies. Instead of committing suicide, I highly recommend surrender.

Much more effective. Die before you die. Do situations still have the power to induce in you negativity?

Do situations still have the power to make you unhappy? Events, situations, people. Is that why you want to not live anymore?

Let's not surrender. Try surrender and see what happens. Which means no complaint about anything anymore.

Mental. Complete acceptance of this moment as it is. And even the thought, I don't want this anymore, whatever, is a resistance to what is.

You don't need it. So if you feel the pull of death, die now to the mind-made self, the ego. Allow the ego to die.

Complete surrender to what is. And see what happens. You may suddenly find the peace that passes all understanding.

It means you've died. The ego is dissolved.

[Speaker 6] (2:20:51 - 2:21:36)
Yesterday you talked about listening from presence and from stillness. And when you're listening to people directly and looking into their eyes, I can feel that presence. I'm wondering if it's possible, if you have suggestions for manifesting that in communications technologies like email and conference calls.

In my work, I talk to people and work with people who I never see. I've never met them. I don't know what they look like.

And yet, I'm often on calls with four or five people. And I'm wondering if you think it's possible to, I mean, I can be from a place of stillness, and they might just think that I've gone for coffee. So do you have any ideas?

[Speaker 1] (2:21:36 - 2:32:33)
Yes. So if you don't see them, you're just on the phone. Although with the technology these days, very soon it will be much more common probably to have these visual conference calls where you actually see people on the screen and it almost looks as if they're sitting around the table.

I imagine you could even put, I don't know if they're doing that, probably not. You could have a conference table and put little screens where the chairs are. And then you switch on and you have six people sitting around the conference table.

You see the screens. But for the time being, let's just talk for a moment about the telephone. Now on the telephone, a long silence could easily be misinterpreted as an absence, that you're no longer there, or the line has been disconnected.

Or it could be interpreted as complete lack of interest on your part. Therefore, I would not recommend any kind of long silence. But I find in my personal experience, although I don't use the telephone very much, when I do use it, and even if it's only for booking a ticket for a ferry or something like that, when I do use it and there's a human being at the other end, most of the time I do detect something deeper in our interaction than just the words that need to be spoken in order to conduct whatever business it is that you need to conduct. And I find that even through the telephone, being still does not necessarily mean that you're not speaking.

So you can be connected with presence and speak at the same time. I'd like to book a ferry for such and such a time. I find very often I get a response from the other person.

The other person likes to talk to me. They have no idea, they don't have my name, don't know who they're talking to. They just, they like, I can sense that they like to talk.

And sometimes I say a few words that have nothing to do with the business at hand, just to comment on the weather or how are you, a true question, not just a superficial, how are you, how to connect on a human level, not just use the human being as a means to an end, but realize there is a being, there is a human being. You remember, there's a human which is form, and there's a being which is formless. You are a human being.

Don't just operate on the human level, which is whatever you need to do on the level of form. Bring in the being and then you have the two. So developing the ability to speak and to listen in stillness.

So when you're listening to them, you're still. And the words come out of stillness, not out of nervousness, or out of a sense of impatience, because you have been waiting on this line for 10 minutes, and when finally somebody picks up the phone, you can feel that there's a tension in your voice, and you don't like that person anymore, because you've been waiting for 10 or 15 minutes on this call which says, your call will be answered very soon.

Your call is important to us, so please don't hang up. And in some people, they get more and more angry. And finally you talk to this human being, and then the human being can feel your upset and anger, even if you don't say anything.

Yeah, I want to book a ferry. So that doesn't work very well. So to communicate on the phone is a very subtle thing, in a very subtle way.

There can be a sense of presence that is detected by the other person, and that brings it to the being, the being level. It helps to initiate the call. Sometimes you can't always do that, obviously when you're ringing your credit card company, you can't start off by talking about the weather or something like that.

They want to know what the number is and why you're calling. But sometimes towards the end, you could say something, oh, I'm here, or where are you? They might say, I'm in New York, I'm in India.

Very often people are in India these days, and you talk to them. So you practice, and then you have visual calls, I don't know if you do that, and there you look at, you see the person on the screen, it's a little bit easier to connect, you have the visual dimension too. But in conferences and so on, it's always good to start in your company, or to have an agreement that you start with a moment of stillness.

So when you have a conference call, and all those people are conscious enough, you have to judge for yourself to see whether they would think you're mad if you suggest a moment of stillness before you start. I know people like Sounds True, I think Tammy told me in her company, often before the meetings, they start with a moment of stillness. Other companies I interviewed, or had a dialogue with, Eileen Fisher, who has a clothing company, they also, they always start with stillness.

Oprah also does it with her people before they discuss anything, they become still. So that's a wonderful thing to do. Yes, it's a very subtle thing on the telephone, but the few phone calls that I do have, usually somehow stillness manages to get in there.

You need to be aware of your inner state, of course. If your inner state is agitated when you pick up the phone, there's not much you can do. So if you cannot be still at the beginning of the call, you can be still perhaps just before you make a call.

Just before you make a call for half a minute, or one minute, take a few breaths, and then you make the call. That might help. Or if the phone rings, I've often recommended, if the phone rings, don't be the slave of the ringing telephone, because many people, the moment the phone rings, they go...

and they might even interrupt a pleasant gathering. You're just talking about something even important, and some people think whatever it is, the ringing phone is always more important. So they must answer it immediately.

You don't have to answer it immediately, and I always recommend, if you do answer it, give it a few seconds. Every time the phone rings, it can be a signal for you to become present. Just give it five seconds.

Three to five seconds. Five seconds is not long. It's one, two, three, four, five.

Even three seconds will help. Every time the phone rings, before you answer it, never come into presence. So every time the phone rings, it's an alarm clock to bring you into presence.

You can make that a habit. And if you get many phone calls every day, that will become a very powerful spiritual practice for you. So instead of rushing to the phone, you just become alert and still.

And you wait, but it's not a waiting. This can be misunderstood as if you had to hold yourself back and exercise willpower so that you don't jump and pick up the phone. That's not how it is.

So you don't go, I have to hold myself back before I answer it. No. It rings and you go, ah.

You enjoy the space before you pick up the phone and let it ring two or three times without straining mentally to get there already. And then you pick up. That would be a great practice.

And after a while, it gets easy. And that means every time the phone rings, there's a space of presence. Isn't that wonderful?

You're hoping to get more calls. You could do the same with text messages. Whatever sound you have to announce that a text message has come in, all kinds of, from whistles blowing to beeping or glass, the sound of glass.

And when that comes in, you could do the same. Why immediately rush to read the message, which probably isn't important at all, just pretends to be. Give it just the same space a few seconds before you pick it up.

And again, don't get impatient and hold yourself. It's not holding yourself back. It's just consciously giving yourself space.

In that way, you can use devices that otherwise would continuously take you out of presence and help you to be present.

[Speaker 3] (2:32:33 - 2:32:35)
So you turn them around.

[Speaker 1] (2:33:45 - 3:49:16)
Can we trust our feelings? Can we trust our somatic reading of life? Are you able to say something about intuition, which is not the same, but interests me as well?

Can we trust our feelings? Now, often you hear people say, trust your feelings. I would suggest, however, that that's not necessarily true.

Acknowledge your feelings. Yes. Be there as the observing presence for your feelings.

Yes. Be aware of your feelings, accept that they are there. Trust, which means to take them to be the truth or the truth for you, or using them as a guide to correct or a skillful action that may be doubtful because it depends where these feelings arise in you.

A little anecdote from my life to illustrate that. When I lived in England, in the country, in that alternative town, Glastonbury, for three years, I lived in a cottage and once a month I would travel to London or other cities in my beloved Russian-made Lada car to do a workshop. And usually a weekend workshop called things like transcending time or be here now.

Nothing much has changed, except that the average number of people I had was about 10. And since my income was not enough, I had to rent out a room upstairs in my cottage. So I had to, over these three years, a few people, it was a second room, which I also occasionally rent out.

Anyway, the room became vacant. I advertised in the local paper. Several people came to apply and finally chose a young woman who had just been offered a job in that town.

She came, she moved in. And after the first night in her room, she came down for breakfast into the kitchen, which was a shared kitchen, and she said, I can't stay here. I said, what's wrong?

I just, it's just a feeling. I always listen to my feelings. I just, I just can't stay.

There's something not right. So I was very nervous. And I said, okay, that's fine.

And that she found that very disconcerting because she had expected a more conventional response, which would have been what I've interviewed all these people, I've chosen you. And now what you're doing this to me. I'm not getting your rent money back that you paid in advance.

But I said, okay, I'll give you your money back. It's fine. So she was even more confused after that.

And I said, he said, I've spent one more night or two more nights. She spent the second night. And then in the morning she said, no, I think I'll stay.

I have a different feeling now. And I said, oh, that's fine. That's good.

And again, she was a little disconcerted because the conventional response would have been, which I did do, I just put another ad in the paper. And now you're telling me this. This, this is how to make the conventional responses are how to make life complicated for yourself and others.

But it's normal. It's how the ego responds. And so whenever somebody does not respond in that way, life becomes simple.

But when life becomes simple, people who expect the conventional responses become confused. This is a weird person. And so she decided to stay.

And a few weeks later, when I got to know her better, she explained to me that that first night she was in her bedroom and she said, I found you so weird that I thought you might creep in in the middle of the night and murder me. And later she said, living in the same house with you is like living in a float tank. I think she learned a lot, not so much through me explaining things to her just by being there.

Not that she didn't go through her episodes of neurotic reactivity, which is quite normal for most people, but that's fine. So feelings. Now, where did have the initial feelings that she experienced that she then believed that they were a correct guide for action?

Of course they were not because they originated in fear. And they also originated in a misinterpretation of reality, which is so easy to do for the mind, to misinterpret another person, to misinterpret a situation. You misinterpret because you see it through the conditioning of your mind.

You see it through your beliefs, your prior experiences in childhood. You see it through even other things that have conditioned your mind, maybe even scary movies about weird people who don't say much. And then just when you're having a shower, they creep in.

So it is not, therefore it's not that easy often to say, where does this feeling that I have arise? Where does this feeling originate? Now, does it come from a deeper, the intuitive place?

Intuition comes out of being present. Intuition is not, does not come out of the conditioning of your mind. So if you have an intuition also, it is usually not tainted by negativity, such as anger or fear.

So there's something certain about it. There is a quiet strength behind your feeling, a quiet strength. There's not a nervous energy behind your feeling.

There's more. You just know this is, this is right. You may not be able to explain to yourself or others why as a different quality, there's a more peaceful quality to it.

Now let's just imagine to come back to the story that happened with this young woman. And of course it could have been that theoretically I could have been a psycho and actually could not be trusted not to kill her. Theoretically that's possible.

So I don't know what the answer to this is, but the, I know from my own life, whenever there is a deep realization of what the right course of action is, it is always, there's a peace with it. And even if it was a psycho there, you know, there was absolute certainty that this is not right for you. There's an energetic imbalance, which comes from a deeper place.

But I cannot really explain in words, you'd have to, through life experience, you have to find out for yourself what a deeper feeling that comes out of presence and is a true intuition, how it is different from something that is, that arises from the conditioning of your mind. Now, a lot of the time people misinterpret reality because they look at reality through the veil of their conditioning. And that contributes to a huge amount of conflict in life, in relationships and so on.

And not only they misinterpret, they add this, what I call unnecessary baggage to situations through their reactivity, which is an ego device in order to strengthen the ego's always deficient sense of identity. So coming back again to that story, what had happened, if I had reacted in the normal way, becoming angry and accusing her when she said after one night she couldn't stay, and that would have strengthened, it would have come from my ego, it would have strengthened my sense of self, the separate sense of self. And again, if the reaction had been when she finally decided to, after the second night, decided to stay, I could have again said, no, now I've just spent, I mean, it wasn't that much, an ad in the local paper is relatively cheap, but the ego would have dwelt on that and said, now I've spent that, and all these people that are already said they couldn't come, now they have already found accommodation, I would have again made somebody wrong. And the ego loves that, to make somebody wrong, because when you make somebody wrong, and you would be, the ego could even explain, you're totally justified, because that's not fair, the person shouldn't just change like that, she's just, but instead of saying how people should be, if you just, this is what is, you can either accept it, or you cannot.

I could have said also, in practical terms, when after the second night, she said, I've decided to stay, I could have said, oh, it's too late, I've already had found somebody else, or I'd said, no, maybe it's better if you do go, because tomorrow night, you might again, after tomorrow, you might again not want to stay, all these things are possible, but the situation remained simple, because of non-reactivity, and this applies to so many cases, whenever there's some kind of, things do not go smoothly, because a person does not do what they're supposed to do, and then immediately, the ego constructs a narrative, and you know it, when you start telling other people about it, that strengthens it, so I could have picked up the phone, and said, you know, I had this girl, I rejected five other people for her, know what she's done to me, and then listen and tell the story, so satisfying to the ego, and then the person on the other end says, oh my god, you sort of, and then of course, I could have gone into thinking, oh, maybe she's totally neurotic, maybe she's a psycho, all spinning tails in the head, all kinds of things, there's a whole fictitious narratives that are taken for reality, and how simple things can actually be, if you don't add unnecessary reactivity to it, but in order to do that, it requires you to be present, not to be there as a person, because a person feels easily offended, so if you're there as a person, you get offended a lot, if you go on the internet, you'll find that the world is full of people who are deeply offended, and I can explain why, and it sounds totally reasonable, but the ego loves being offended, I'm not denying that there may be some remarks that are truly offenses, but that's a relatively small thing, and if it is something truly offensive, again, what could she have said, what that was truly offensive, she could have said, uh, I can't stay with you because you're too ugly, for example, now to the ego, that would be offensive, or she might have said, well, she happened to be white, but if you've not been white, you'd have said, I finally, I have this feeling, I cannot stay with a white male, okay, vigilance is required in your interactions with people, always a question, am I adding something to the interaction that is unnecessary, that is just there to strengthen my fictitious sense of self, to justify something, to make somebody wrong, big thing for the ego, because if I can make something wrong, there's always an element of victimhood, when I make somebody wrong, in relation to myself, there's always an element of, it may not be the main focal point, but there's an element of me being the victim, if I make you wrong, and the ego loves that, because it strengthens itself through that, and if I make somebody wrong, you know what he said, and what he did then, let me tell you about this, oh, how can somebody do something like that, and this means unconsciously, I'm always superior to the other, when this happens, when you're telling the story, what somebody did and said to you, you do it, because the ego, when you're telling, when you're making somebody wrong, because when you are right, now, you probably all know people in your life, when they talk, when you tell, when they tell you things, it's always others who are wrong, it's never them, it's very strange, why is it that I'm always right, and others are always wrong, they never ask that question, but that is a mystery of human existence, one of the great mysteries of life is, why I'm always right, and others are always wrong, I think philosophers haven't explored it in detail enough, and nobody has resolved this mystery, and everybody should ask themselves, how is that, I must be really superior to everybody, weird, so if you think back, the last year or two or three in your life, well, I'm actually talking to a group of people here, who are much more conscious than the average human, but nevertheless, even here, some of you may find, if you look back the last few years, that whenever there was some kind of argument or conflict, perhaps it was, was it always the others who are wrong, it's very easy to deny somebody's perspective, but if it conflicts with your own, and make them totally wrong, you can also make a group of people totally wrong, an entire group, an entire nation, an entire religion, you can make everybody wrong, it's great, you feel stronger and morally superior, now, does that mean there are not people who are deeply wrong, because they might peeve them, but maybe people are to deceive you, you might go and want to, you might go and buy a secondhand car, and the person is so friendly and kind, and he sells you something, that just breaks down the next day, and it's clearly lied to you, what do you do then, and even then, it's important not to amplify what has happened, by going into your mind, and creating a whole string of narratives in your mind, of what an awful person that is, and coming to all kinds of conclusions about that, and tell the story to yourself and to others, and amplify it in that way, and then you go back to him, and then you tell him really what you think of him, and rather than keep it simple, what action can I take to remedy this, even if you go to court, you can do it in a detached way, I'm not necessarily saying never do anything, just put up with anything and anybody, it's just, that's not what it means, even if you go to court, in order to rectify a situation that is obviously wrong, you can do it in a way that is detached, and just keeps it to the, just the essentials of the situation, practical, without the whole superstructure of you are the evil one, you are wrong, I won't repeat it here, but I think you may all remember the story I told, I believe it's in a new earth about the Zen master, who was accused of having fathered a child, and what his responses were at every stage of the process, is that so, now that's an interesting, so if you may remember the parents accused him, that he was the father of their daughter's child, and then the parents brought the baby to him, and at each stage when he was, the parents told him something, you are the father, is that so, you bring the baby, now you look after the baby, we don't want it, you are the father, and he had lost his reputation, et cetera, people were commenting about him on the internet, and he did not participate in the story making, and he didn't defend himself, and he didn't, he just said, okay, so it means a total refusal to go into any kind of story, cut, is that so, yeah, oh, oh, and finally it all became, resolved itself, the daughter confessed that he was not the father, and so on, and the parents came, wanted the baby back, please give us the baby back, we now know that, oh, you're not the father, please forgive us, we did a terrible thing by accusing you, terrible thing, is that so, okay, that is, that's whether this story actually ever happened, I don't know whether it's just a teaching story, or actually happened, but it doesn't matter, it shows you an extreme form of not being engaged in a story, not engaging in the story making, that is ego strengthening, so you can practice that in many, many situations in your life, refrain from calling up people, or telling up people what other people, and tell them about what other people did wrong, or how they failed, how they were deficient, how somebody lied to you, was dishonest, or expressed an objectionable opinion, and then conflict becomes almost eliminated from your life, or 90% of it.

Can we trust our feelings? Now, often you hear people say, trust your feelings, I would suggest, however, that that's not necessarily true, acknowledge your feelings, yes, be there as the observing presence for your feelings, yes, be aware of your feelings, accept that they are there, trust, which means to take them to be the truth, or the truth for you, or using them as a guide to correct, or skillful action that may be doubtful, because it depends where these feelings arise in you.

A little anecdote from my life to illustrate that, when I lived in England, in the country, in that alternative town, Glastonbury, for three years, I lived in a cottage, and once a month, I would travel to London, or other cities, in my beloved Russian-made Lada car, to do a workshop, and usually a weekend workshop, called things like transcending time, or be here now, nothing much has changed, except that the average number of people I had was about 10, and since my income was not enough, I had to rent out a room upstairs in my cottage, so I had to, over these three years, a few people, it was a second room, which I also occasionally rent out, anyway, the room became vacant, I advertised in the local paper, several people came to apply, and finally chose a young woman who had just been offered a job in that town, she came, she moved in, and after the first night in her room, she came down for breakfast into the kitchen, which was a shared kitchen, and she said, I can't stay here, I said, what's wrong?

I just, it's just a feeling, I always listen to my feelings, I just can't stay here, there's something not right, so I was very nervous, and I said, okay, that's fine, and then she found that very disconcerting, because she had expected a more conventional response, which would have been, what? I've interviewed all these people, I've chosen you, and now what, you're doing this to me? I'm not getting your rent money back that you paid in advance, but I said, okay, I'll give you your money back, it's fine, so she was even more confused after that.

And I said, he said, I've spent one more night or two more nights, she spent the second night, and then in the morning, she said, no, I think I'll stay, I have a different feeling now, and I said, oh, that's fine, that's good, and again, she was a little disconcerted, because the conventional response would have been, which I did do, I just put another ad in the paper, and now you're telling me this?

This is how to make, the conventional responses are how to make life complicated for yourself and others, but it's normal, it's how the ego responds, and so whenever somebody does not respond in that way, life becomes simple, but when life becomes simple, people who expect the conventional responses become confused, what, this is a weird person. And so she decided to stay, and a few weeks later, when I got to know her better, she explained to me that that first night, she was in her bedroom, and she said, I found you so weird that I thought you might creep in in the middle of the night and murder me. And later she said, living in the same house with you is like living in a float tank.

I think she learned a lot, not so much through me explaining things to her, just by being there. Not that she didn't go through her episodes of neurotic reactivity, which is quite normal for most people, but that's fine. So feelings, now where did her, the initial feelings that she experienced, that she then believed that they were a correct guide for action, of course they were not, because they originated in fear, and they also originated in a misinterpretation of reality.

Which is so easy to do for the mind, to misinterpret another person, to misinterpret a situation, you misinterpret because you see it through the conditioning of your mind. Now, a lot of the time, people misinterpret reality because they look at reality through the veil of their conditioning. And that contributes to a huge amount of conflict in life, in relationships and so on.

And not only they misinterpret, they add this what I call unnecessary baggage to situations through their reactivity, which is an ego device in order to strengthen the ego's always deficient sense of identity. So coming back again to that story, what had happened, if I had reacted in the normal way, becoming angry and accusing her when she said after one night she couldn't stay, and that would have strengthened, it would have come from my ego, it would have strengthened my sense of self, the separate sense of self. And again, if the reaction had been when she finally decided to, after the second night decided to stay, I could have again said, now I've just spent, I mean, it wasn't that much, an ad in a local paper is relatively cheap, but the ego would have dwelt on that and said, now I've spent that and all these people that I already said they couldn't come, now they have already found accommodation.

I would have again made somebody wrong. And the ego loves that, to make somebody wrong, because when you make somebody wrong, and you would be, the ego could even explain, you're totally justified, because that's not fair. The person shouldn't just change like that.

She's just, but instead of saying how people should be, if you just, this is what is, you can either accept it or you cannot. You all, I won't repeat it here, but I think you may all remember the story I told, I believe it's in a New Earth about the Zen master who was accused of having fathered a child and what his responses were at every stage of the process. Is that so?

Now that's an interesting, so if you may remember, the parents accused him that he was the father of their daughter's child. And then the parents brought the baby to him and at each stage when he was, the parents told him something, you are the father, you, is that so? You bring the baby, now you look after the baby.

We don't want it, you are the father. And he had lost his reputation, et cetera. People were commenting about him on the internet.

And he did not participate in the storymaking and he didn't defend himself and he didn't, he just said, okay, so it means a total refusal to go into any kind of story, cut. Is that so? Yeah.

And finally it all became, resolved itself. The daughter confessed that he was not the father and so on, and the parents came, wanted the baby back. Please give us the baby back.

We now know that, oh, you're not the father. Please forgive us, we did a terrible thing by accusing you, terrible thing. Is that so?

Okay. That is whether this story actually ever happened, I don't know whether it's just a teaching story or actually happened, but it doesn't matter. It shows you an extreme form of not being engaged in a story, not engaging in the storymaking that is ego strengthening.

So you can practice that in many, many situations in your life. Refrain from calling up people or telling people what other people, and tell them about what other people did wrong or how they failed, how they were deficient, how somebody lied to you, was dishonest or expressed an objectionable opinion. And then conflict becomes almost eliminated from your life or 90% of it.

So in itself, of course, it's neutral. The technology is neutral. It's not either bad or good.

It depends how it's used. But it is, at the moment, it is to a large extent a reflection of the unconscious mind. So if you want to learn about human unconsciousness, if you want to learn about the human ego, just go there and read what people post and look at the reactivity of people on social media and so on, the comments they leave.

You can learn a lot about unconsciousness and identification with mental positions. So the first thing, of course, is be careful with what you put out there, what kind of thing you post. If you post things online, is it reactive?

Give yourself a moment when you read something before you type in an answer or a comment. Give yourself a moment and go within and avoid making people wrong. You can talk about issues, but don't make people wrong and amplify your ego by making others wrong, even though their position, political or otherwise, you may regard as completely misguided or erroneous.

There's still a human being behind that. So you can put forward arguments against somebody's perspective or viewpoint without making another human being wrong. So what you put out is very important.

Is your communication conscious or not? Or is it reactive? And then it can be used for other purposes.

I'm there too sometimes. There are certain places where I appear on could go to YouTube or whatever. And then suddenly there's a spiritual teacher talking and there are some meditation sites on all these things.

So there's a great potential for raising consciousness there. Somebody recommended to me several apps for meditation, which I now have on my phone. I haven't tried them yet.

I've been there for a while, but I have four or five that are there. I want to try them out. So that's the very thing that otherwise would clutter your mind can actually also be used to bring about space or spaciousness in your mind.

So it doesn't necessarily mean that when you have your phone or the 99% of cases, when people look there, their mind is being cluttered, but maybe they're on a meditation app. Maybe they're looking at a beautiful, spacious picture and all listening to some sound or saying, take a conscious breath, have a little reminder every two hours, take a conscious breath and bring spaciousness. Oh yes, spaciousness.

So the very same thing that otherwise clutters your mind can now unclutter your mind. It's possible. So I believe that is also going to grow now.

And it has to, because otherwise that technology could potentially drive humans completely insane, remove their ability to focus on anything for more than a few seconds. People create young people who are totally uncentered, have no spaciousness within, don't even communicate with humans anymore because they prefer to communicate digitally. So these things are important, but what you put out is important.

So always take into consideration whether this brings people to presence or whether it clutters somebody's mind. And perhaps you can combine. Of course, what you do needs to be also commercially viable.

So, but I believe you can combine the two. It's not necessarily a question of either it's commercially viable and it clutters people's minds or its presence. And we're not going to, we are going to go out of business.

It doesn't have to be like that. It's up to you to be creative. Use, the more still you are, the more creative insights you will have into, and you might get some amazing ideas of what is possible.

I can't tell you what is possible. I don't know enough about it. I know very little about it.

So, but you're in a wonderful position. So allow yourself to go deep enough within, because then it is then the creative ideas seem to come. And if you find a thing that is not only brings people to presence, but also helps your company to grow, then that then becomes a conscious business, which is wonderful.

It's challenging. Of course, it's challenging. So don't let all your attention be absorbed though by that kind of activity.

Take still, you still need to connect with nature. Take it off as much as possible away from there, connect with nature and then bring it back. What tends to happen is that these devices, people are never, they're still in bed and they're still doing stuff on it.

And that takes you over there at dinner and they're doing stuff on it. It breaks the relation with other people. You're at dinner, I can see, I see people in restaurants, the couple sitting at having dinner together and both are on their phones.

Now that's probably means they have known each other for a while. If it happens on the first date, that's the first date will probably be the last one. But if happens after they've known each other for two years, then it's almost a normal thing.

So they're not present with each other or then they exchange a few words and then she looks at the phone again and then he stares into space and then she's still on her phone. I've actually observed it. She's still on her phone and he's staring into space and then finally he gets out his phone too because he doesn't want to be staring into space.

And then I wonder, are they texting each other? Two good things that I learned that in some huge companies, I believe it might be VW in Germany. Well, they've had enough problems, but now they tell their employees after 6 p.m. they're not allowed to use the company phones anymore, not to deal with emails or anything. They need to get off. And that's a very wise thing because the more people's attention gets absorbed by this, the more confused and non-creative they become, the more cluttered their minds become, the more ineffective they're even at their work. Not to mention as human beings, their quality of life decreases enormously.

So don't give yourself spaces. Don't allow these things to take over your life. That's vitally important.

So it's wonderful that some big companies like that have this policy now, no emails or anything after 6 p.m. Well, that's wonderful. I talked a couple of years ago to Ariana Huffington who has a famous news website and has also written some books. And she describes in her latest book how her life deteriorated more and more, although she was making a lot of money.

And finally she collapsed and hit her head on her desk and it was complete breakdown. And now she has, for example, in her private life, and that's a good thing, she has this policy of no digital device in my bedroom. So in her bedroom, she still has books.

Sometimes she reads in bed, but it has to be a book, not a Kindle, not the iPad, not the iPhone, no digital device in my bedroom. And that's a good thing to have that, at least you have that space for yourself. So everybody needs to be really conscious of the addictive nature of these devices.

Of course, there are certain questions that do not require an answer. Not all answers are necessarily conceptual answers. They may, when there's the non-conceptual space, the answer may come as an intuition, as a realization that you may not yet be able to formulate conceptually.

You just suddenly know, but you can't explain what it is that you know. And that certainly applies to your sense of who you are, which is you suddenly, there's a deep knowing inside yourself, perhaps because you asked yourself the question, who am I? And that's a beautiful question, it creates the openness.

And then you start to investigate, your attention arises, who, we talked about that before, but this is here relevant in this context. You ask, who am I? Question mark.

And there is a kind of looking, but it's not looking visually. There is a kind of searching. There is, the attention arises, right now the attention arises, who am I?

And it's looking, and suddenly it realizes what you're looking for is in the looking. There may be periods in your life when paying attention to your dreams, you can learn certain things. There may be messages there.

And the more attention you give to your dreams, the more the dream life responds. Are we able to control our minds while sleeping? Although I'm able to be present much of my waking hours, from the minute I fall asleep to the minute I wake up, my mind is chattering away.

I assume the question is talking about his or her dream life from the minute I woke up to the minute I wake, I fall asleep to the minute I wake up, my mind is chattering away. Well, it won't be chattering away during dreamless sleep. Every human, as you know, has periods of dreamless sleep.

And there's no mind activity there, where the mind connects with a source. But you don't know that. And then I assume, then you mean that you have a very active dream life.

There's not much you can do except go into sleep with as much presence as you can. So in the last 15 minutes before sleep, at least, don't engage in mind activity, television, no, listening to the radio, no, even reading a book, no. No, go into the body or use any other access point for presence or just go into presence directly and go into sleep from presence.

Don't confuse, this may not be the case with you, but it could be the case with some people, don't confuse suppressing thought with being present. It is, for some people are able to suppress thought, which requires an effort, and you become a little contracted when you do that. So in other words, some people can will themselves to stop thinking, but it's not real presence.

You can't really will yourself into presence. It's not will, there's no contraction that goes with it, and it's not really, not even an effort. So let me just demonstrate, because words sometimes are not sufficient.

If you will yourself to stop thinking, the body contracts a bit and you're holding something in and you go like this, and you might even stop breathing for periods of time. So, and if you hold yourself tight and you stop breathing for periods of time, you may be able to stop thinking while you do that. Some people call that meditation.

And some people have perfected it to such a degree that they can sit for one or two hours like that. And that holds thought at bay. And then the moment you let go, come out of your meditation, the mind is more active than before because you were holding the lid on a boiling kettle.

You're holding the lid down. But real presence is simply a natural arising of awareness in which there's no contraction in the body and there's no willpower that is exerted, but presence is simply allowed to arise like this. And that's a state of openness.

In that state, thoughts tend to quickly dissolve. Very different from the state of closedness, the tight lid to that. So, make sure that presence is not brought about by an act of willpower, exertion of willpower because that's not presence.

Presence is powerful, but soft, gentle, open. Some people have an active dream life, other people less so. Of course, everybody dreams more or less.

Some people remember their dreams. Others never remember their, almost never remember. The more attention you give to your dreams after you wake up, the more you tend to dream.

And there may be something said for some time, there may be a period in a person's life where paying attention to your dreams can be helpful, such as it's practiced in Jungian therapy and so on. There may be periods in your life when paying attention to your dreams, you can learn certain things. There may be messages there.

And the more attention you give to your dreams, the more the dream life responds. But I believe that that is a period in a person's life. And then you move on.

And then dream life becomes of less importance or maybe still occasionally you might get a very insightful dream. The important practice is presence in daily life. Then eventually the rest will look after itself and dreams tend to turn more peaceful also.

And you might even lessen the amount of dreams that you have. Not that that matters really anymore. Dreams are less needed to give you important insights when you are present because in presence, insights tend to come to you directly.

So you tend to less need the intermediary of dream images less because you're already connected with the source of all insights and wisdom. Funny thing is, if you go to a Jungian analyst, after a while you begin to have Jungian dreams. Isn't that strange?

Not that that's not valid or valuable. That's how it works. Because life responds to your, or consciousness responds to your expectations.

And the universe is moving towards, continuously towards creativity. It delights in giving birth to form, to life forms. And that is reflected in yourself.

There is, you feel the desire to create, to manifest. Just one or two little addendums. I don't know if that's the plural of addendum to what we've been talking about earlier.

Manifestation and so on. It does work even for people who still have an ego. So it works better and becomes more beneficial for yourself and the rest of humanity.

If whatever it is that you want to manifest is motivated from a non-egoic place. But it's quite good to attain things that if the ego is still operating, the ego can sometimes, you can engage in sometimes helpful manifestation practices. They're not as powerful as when you are free of ego.

But whatever you achieve eventually is not going to fulfill the purpose of making you happy, complete, or fulfilled. Course in Miracles says you will always know that the ego was the motivating force whenever you have achieved something, it hasn't satisfied you. It can satisfy you briefly, but not for very long.

But I don't discourage anybody from practicing because if you find out things that don't satisfy you, then eventually you may realize that nothing out there can satisfy you because the state of ultimate satisfaction comes from the state of connectedness with being. Therefore, anything out there is simply an addition. Or as I like to call it, as I said, it's the skimmed milk, it's not the cream.

And the skimmed milk will never satisfy you. Sorry, if your anti-dairy is not a good analogy. Then the skimmed milk nor the cream will satisfy you, literally speaking.

But another little anecdote that came to me just now on the way here, I remembered a couple of weeks ago, there was a U.S. Open tennis championship. And for the women, it was won by a 19-year-old Canadian. Teenager, I suppose, still a teenager.

And she was virtually unknown before that. I was interested to hear in an interview, she said that she started practicing meditation at the age of 12 and also started practicing visualization and manifestation techniques. She also said that when she's on court playing tennis, she's absolutely and completely in the present moment.

And she said three years ago, she wrote herself a check to herself and she knew approximately the amount of money she would gain by gaining the U.S. Open. She was $3.5 million or so. She wrote herself this check, had carried it for three years.

And last week, she received the check. A few years ago, Jim Carey showed me, he pulled out of his wallet a check. I can't remember how much it was, that many, many years ago he had written to himself, but he carries it around.

I think it was $10 million. And for after a few years after writing it, he received that check for a movie. So you can play around with that.

But remember, it won't make you happy. It's the game of form. So, and it's sometimes good to achieve a few things that you wanted to achieve and then realize that they don't make you happy.

And some often it looks as if you had made a mistake because you might have dedicated several years to something that ultimately was not right for you, but you were successful and you realized, well, that's actually making me unhappy. So a good thing is to realize that something you have been doing was not your correct path. One of the most useful things in life is mistakes.

Make as many mistakes, as many as possible. And then eventually you learn what your path is. And don't be afraid of making mistakes.

And retrospectively, once you become present, all these things are no longer mistakes because without them, you wouldn't be here now. You would not have become present. You needed to go through this journey, which in many cases is many disappointments.

Sometimes there's a disappointment of not attaining what you wanted to attain. And at other times, it's a disappointment that you attained what you wanted to attain, but it did not fulfill its purpose of making you happy or any kinds of deep, lasting fulfillment. So it's wonderful to have these disappointments.

And sometimes instead of being, what should I do? People ask, should I do this or should I do that? Some people become paralyzed through the inability to make a decision because which way should I go?

Should I go to a monastery and dedicate my life totally to, or should I apply for a job on Wall Street? And you may also notice you have different poles. You may have one pole that is a reflection of two universal movements.

One is the movement towards creation of form. The universe is moving continuously towards creativity. It delights in giving birth to form, to life forms.

And that is reflected in yourself. There is perhaps the field, the desire to create, to manifest, to do things, to change as well, to participate, create something, leave a lasting mark or whatever it is. That's the outward movement of the universe.

And then that is the out-breath one could say. And then there's a reciprocal movement and that is the in-breath. There's also something in you that is more interested in being than in doing.

You feel the pull towards back to the source, back to awakening. And you may notice different times in your life or even at the same time in your life, both poles, and sometimes the poles can be so strong that you're paralyzed in the middle. This is why I gave the extreme examples of wanting to go to a monastery for the rest of your life and not anything to do.

And then the next day you think, oh, maybe it would be nice to participate and to become big and important and drive the big cars. And then Wall Street job looks suddenly enticing. So there's the doing and the being.

They need to be balanced in your life. Not everybody is completely in the middle.

Nobody is completely in the middle.

You're either a bit more in the being dimension or you're a bit more in the doing dimension or you're very much in the doing dimension. You're very active, but there's always a remnant of awareness still there. So you don't lose yourself completely in the doing.

And then the doing can be quite fruitful. And the other way is possible too that you're very much in the being dimension without completely losing your ability to act upon the world, without completely losing your ability to do whatever your particular mission or task is in life. So you can, you're most happy rooted in being, but you're still able to do, to fulfill your, to do your work, your task, whatever it is.

Now, I'm always more pulled towards the being dimension, as you might've noticed. In fact, I must admit because of that, I'm not totally, I'm not really that well balanced, but I've come to accept that because there's no perfection on the level of the form. Sometimes I'm a little dysfunctional in the doing realm, but it's been fine.

So the world hasn't collapsed because there's still 300 emails I haven't answered. The world is still there. And I always admire Oprah.

She has a seemingly infinite energy to do, and she's continuously, how is it possible to have so much energy? And yet she is not completely lost in the doing. There's always some anchor in the being dimension.

So she doesn't lose herself in the doing, although she's so much better at doing than I could ever be. She doesn't lose herself. So in a way, we compliment each other quite well.

I'm much more in the being, but I can do, but I'm not that great at it. But I only become good at doing when doing is concerned with teaching being. And that's also a kind of doing, I suppose.

I'm doing now, I'm speaking. So it's a kind of doing. And you yourself will have to see where you fit in in the scale of the doing and being.

You will just, almost everybody has the two present within. And you may have, remember from one of the books, the term frequency holder that I used. And frequency holders in past ages would have been called contemplatives.

And in past ages, they would have lived in monasteries, people who have very little interest in achieving anything in this world, who just want to go within and be present. And there are a few, it's a very relatively small percentage of human who are real frequency holders who would find it very hard to function in this world. There may be one or two of you here, it's possible.

If you find it very hard to function in this world and you're able to function within a small sphere of activity, if it's a simple thing, if you lived in a monastery or in a commune, you would be able to fulfill your daily tasks, that's fine. But you're not interested in doing anything beyond that. Our civilization has no place for these people, unfortunately.

So we don't have monasteries really. There are still some, but not many people go there anymore. And so if that's your calling, then somehow you will able to be able to recognize it within yourself, if that is the case, and find some way of, find a sphere of activity where you can do little things and be like gardening is a lovely thing that can easily be reconciled with being a frequency holder or working something with your hands, making something carpentry, making something that you have your own place, your own job, you don't want to respond to anybody. And so frequency holders also have an effect on the collective human consciousness.

Because you affect whatever your state of consciousness is, you will affect the totality of consciousness.

[Speaker 7] (3:49:42 - 3:51:58)
Thanks for the opportunity. Over a period of six months or so, sickness or illness saw my dog get gradually sicker and sicker to the point where he was in much, much pain. The x-rays and pills and probing did not find a cause that was treatable.

We had a family meeting and collectively we decided to have the vet end his life to ease his pain by injection. And you made a comment about a lady who felt more grief when she lost her dog than when her mother died. Although it sounds mean, I had the same uncontrolled times of tears for many weeks afterwards with the death of my little buddy.

I've considered the notion of ego and suffering and pain when remembering my companion in the now. I feel that in the final moments that I betrayed companionship. So my question, how do I remove the ego side of not having my buddy or companion around whilst not removing and dismissing the love I continue to hold for him?

I realise that he's physically gone, but like in a recent interview with a quantum scientist author, I wondered about the connection. I met a nice chap here who lost a partner and he said that your talks help. Now, of course, I'm not comparing that loss, but I'm hoping you might find or might contemplate and give pointers again to perhaps how I can let go of the form and then still remember the love part without getting sadder and getting attached.

[Speaker 1] (3:51:58 - 3:51:59)
Yes.

[Speaker 7] (3:51:59 - 3:52:00)
Hope that makes sense.

[Speaker 1] (3:52:00 - 4:00:51)
Yes, thank you. I understand. And the same question would apply also to if somebody close to you dies.

People who have not had a close connection with an animal like a dog may not understand you. Only people who have had that will understand that it can be as painful as losing a human. And we had the same experience when our dog passed away under similar circumstances.

And in the end, because she was suffering too much, we had to ask the vet to come back and she died peacefully. And she had a wonderful life, was loved and gave love for nine years. And her consciousness, she was a female, benefited greatly from being together with us, with humans and with us in particular.

And we benefited from her unconditional, continuously loving presence. She loved almost everybody. Same.

She loved almost every other dog or animal and almost every other human with very few exceptions. And whenever somebody, whether it's an animal that you are very close to or a human, the moment a person dies or an animal dies, you realize what you loved was not the physical form or the physical form may be beautiful and part of the loving experience. But the moment the life is gone, that which you loved is not there anymore.

Something inhabits the physical form that is the essence, the organizing principle, the intelligence, whatever you want to call it, behind that keeps the molecules and atoms of the physical form together and organizes, holds them together. Science has not, doesn't know about that yet. It only, life, it equates life with matter, but life is beyond that.

And ultimately life is consciousness. And the dog is an expression of the one consciousness, different from a human. The human is an expression of the one consciousness or any non-physical entity can only also be an expression of the one consciousness.

The one consciousness expressing itself at different levels of evolution. So it's like a, you could say a ray of sunlight. You are a ray of sunlight and I am, and the dog is, and the flower is, all consciousness incarnating in form.

So that does not die. The essence doesn't die. And the dog, it's not a dog.

I mean, we think we know what we are talking about when we say a dog. No, it is a being, an energy field, a being, an expression of the one consciousness, we think we know when we label things and call it something, we think we know what it is. We don't know what a dog is.

And just by calling it dog, it's still, it's just pseudo knowledge. We don't know what a human is. Just the fact that somebody has a name, we think you know what that is.

No, it's an unknown phenomenon. It's through the language gives us the illusion that we know, but we don't really know. And so here you have the dog, this wonderful presence closed in matter temporarily.

And something happened because consciousness evolves throughout the universe and evolves in billions of ways and forms, in and through billions of ways and forms. It's a magnificent, ultimately totally incomprehensible miracle, totally incomprehensible to the human mind, but consciousness is engaged in this evolutionary process, the one consciousness, and whatever suffers is the one consciousness. It's not a coincidence that there's a religion on this planet where the main image is a suffering God.

Isn't that strange? I mean, we have some explanation for it. We say, well, that was Jesus who died for this.

Okay, let go of that explanation and just remain with the fact that here, the main image of that religion is a suffering, basically, although you call it son of God or God, doesn't matter, a suffering God. And there's a deep significance to that. You don't have to be a Christian.

In fact, if you're a Christian, you probably don't want to go there where I'm going now. There's a deep significance there because this suffering God is everybody. It is the fundamental human archetype.

It's the suffering that every human and every life form, but in this case, a human, he represents the human, that every life form goes through when this life form assumes the form of the material form, the separate, seemingly separate material, physical vehicle, and is then defined in form. There were ancient teachings. They are quite close to the truth that say that consciousness fell into matter as if it were a mistake.

But I don't think, I think it's a good image to say that consciousness, there was a kind of fall of consciousness into matter, but it wasn't a mistake. There is no, there are no mistakes in the universe. So, and if there is a mistake, it has a higher purpose for learning.

And so it's not a mistake anymore. So that, for those years that you lived together, you both, your consciousness and the dog's consciousness, which are not really separate, although we just call them that, benefited greatly and grew, evolved through being together. So it helped the dog and it helped you.

It added something to your consciousness, that being together with that entity, with that being. And that is not lost. I cannot tell you in what way this, that which animated that entity that we call dog continues on its journey back to the source, but it continues on its journey as you continue on it, not as a person, not as a personal identity that survives, but an underlying energy field, the underlying consciousness that gives rise to this form, of course, continues on its journey and ultimately is never separate from its source. It just believes itself to be separate.

[Speaker 14] (4:00:56 - 4:01:00)
What is the power of the dog's consciousness?

[Speaker 1] (4:01:53 - 4:02:17)
What does it feel like to be you at this moment? There is a powerful sense of presence there, which has no particular form, and that's you. And at that level, you are connected with something far deeper and more powerful than the little entity.

[Speaker 8] (4:02:22 - 4:02:30)
Hello, Eckhart. I'm so honored to be here. And I'm a little bit nervous.

[Speaker 1] (4:02:31 - 4:02:34)
That's fine. Nothing wrong with that.

[Speaker 8] (4:02:35 - 4:03:34)
I really have two questions, and I'm wondering if I can sneak one in really quick, an extra one. I work at the University of New England, and we have a Center for Global Humanities, and we have speakers come, it's like a public forum for discussion of problems that humans face. And we'd be absolutely honored if you would speak there.

Where is that? It's located in Portland, Maine. Oh, at a university?

Of New England. Of New England? Yes.

Oh, okay. And I organize the speakers, so. Oh, thank you.

And we have a really good group of followers who would just be mesmerized by you, so I hope you would consider that.

[Speaker 1] (4:03:34 - 4:03:49)
Okay, please mention it to Steven or Greg, and give your contact. I can't make any promises, but I've never been to Portland, Maine. I've been to Portland, Oregon, but not to Portland, Maine.

[Speaker 8] (4:03:50 - 4:03:53)
Oh, well, we have some really beautiful places in Maine.

[Speaker 1] (4:03:53 - 4:03:57)

Yeah, yeah, thank you. And the next question?

[Speaker 8] (4:04:00 - 4:04:39)
I'm wondering, you talk a lot, well, you know, being present, and you talk about conditioning, and how we are conditioned, and I think about my own negative thinking, and how some of that is conditioning, and then you know people who, they just seem to have this old soul, this spirit, and so I wonder about nature versus nurture, and what your thoughts are. Is there like a short gene for anxiety that causes all, I guess for me, being in the present, when you have that fight or flight, like how do you tame that?

[Speaker 1] (4:04:43 - 4:04:44)
How do you?

[Speaker 8] (4:04:44 - 4:04:53)
How do you tame that, you know, the fight or flight, when your heart is racing, is it just doing it, and being in the present?

[Speaker 1] (4:04:54 - 4:04:58)
When you are anxious, we mean, or nervous?

[Speaker 8] (4:04:58 - 4:05:01)
Anxious, and then it causes all that negative thinking.

[Speaker 1] (4:05:01 - 4:35:49)
Negative thinking, how to go beyond that? Yes. Okay.

Well, there are various ways, which I sometimes call portals into the state of presence. I just, for the previous questioner, we could break three really similar questions. How do I get out of my mind?

For the previous questioner, I talked about feeling the inner energy field of the body, but for you, I will talk about a different portal, and that is a very universal portal. All portals are closely related to each other. So this portal is called the present moment, and present moment awareness or attention to the present moment more than anything else.

It's a redirecting of your attention. As soon as you discover within yourself, you realize that you are entering a non-harmonious state of consciousness, through irritation, upset, nervousness, worry, anxiety, anger, subsisting for a long period of time, any kind of dysfunctional, non-harmonious state of consciousness, or to describe it in other words, unhappiness in whatever form, because unhappiness can take many forms. The moment you realize that, and for you to realize that, already requires a small amount of awareness, because the people who are really deeply unhappy, almost as their normal state, and there are many in this world, they don't even know it, because they don't know anything else.

So there are millions of people running around this planet in a state of unhappiness, in whatever form this unhappiness takes, and if you ask them, are you unhappy? They say, no, I'm not unhappy. What are you talking about?

I'm not unhappy. It's like listening to some machine that goes on, even let's say a noisy refrigerator that is always running in your room. You don't know it's running until something happens to it, and it suddenly stops, and you say, what happened?

Suddenly that dreadful noise is gone, and suddenly it's so beautifully still here. I never knew there was that noise going on all the time. So for you to recognize that you are in a non-harmonious state, requires already a small amount of awareness, because it's only from the awareness.

So we need to presuppose there's already some presence there, but you can recognize that you don't want that. You don't want the disharmonious state. Then you go into present moment awareness.

The disharmonious state arises usually because you are not, you lose the present moment, and believe something else is more important than the present moment. It also often usually implies there's some form of resistance to something. So present moment awareness is a conscious redirecting of your attention, away from the thinking mind, into the direct perception of present moment reality.

And present moment reality starts with you coming to your senses. Coming to your senses means you sit, so let's say, let me act it out. You are trapped, and you go, oh.

Oh. And you get more and more unhappy, or anxious, or you can feel the anxiety, and life is a heaviness there, and then you notice, oh, do I want that? Do I need that?

Does it have a useful purpose? No. Redirect attention to the present moment.

Okay, where's the present moment? Okay, the present moment always starts with sense perception. You're looking.

Suddenly, what's around you? Look. Start, look carefully.

Then you go, oh. And to really look, you need to just be silent while you look. It's the silent looking.

And this is you beginning to enter the present moment, and then incorporate another sense. Listen. So you begin to take in what surrounds you in the present moment.

Become aware that you're breathing. It's all aspects of the present moment. Visual perception.

Be where you are. Be here fully. Be here now.

Inhabit the present moment. Be present to, because that's all there ever is. There is nothing else except the present.

The mind will tell you that there are many things much more important than the present moment, but it's a lie. It's a delusion, because there is nothing else. Even when your mind tells you there are many things more important than this moment, it can only tell you that in this moment.

So there is nothing. So give more importance to the present moment, and so bring attention to the present moment, first through sense perception, through becoming aware of your breathing. And then the next step can be, as you perceive the world around you, also feel the energy field inside the body at the same time.

So you're more and more, more and more present. And this is already a shift in consciousness. Very different from a few minutes before you were immersed in useless thinking.

So there's already a shift in consciousness happening. And you can notice the difference in the energy field as the consciousness shifts from being absorbed in thinking to becoming present. And so that is the, you're waking up, basically.

It's a process of waking up out of, not out of sleep, but out of what is like sleep, which is being totally immersed in the voice in the head, totally identified with the voice in the head. So you become present through sense perception, feel yourself breathing, and feel the inner body. And then you can go one step deeper into what is the actual, the deeper reality of the present moment, because the present moment has a surface appearance, which is fine.

It's often the first step. It's what is around you through sense perceptions. Then you go into the body, and then you go deeper and become aware that as you are perceiving the world around you, there is a presence in you, which you can sense as your very own being, through which you are perceiving.

Otherwise you couldn't, if you were not here as a conscious presence, you would not be able to perceive this room and the plants and the flowers and whatever is in this room. You would not be able to perceive it if you were not here as a consciousness. So whether what you are perceiving is a reality or a dream is immaterial.

The fact is, whether it's a dream or reality, it requires your presence, the light of your presence in which everything appears. Now, can you become aware of the light of presence or the presence directly in you? In other words, can you sense your own beingness right now as I'm talking about it?

I can feel it very strongly in me, the fact that I am. Before anything else arises in consciousness, I am. So I know that I am.

Not this or that, not that I am a man or a woman or have particular age or a particular function, deeper than that. Before you add anything to I am, the I am is there. Before you add any sense perceptions to it, the I am is there.

So another, give you another little pointer to point to that place. What does it feel like to be you in its most fundamental, its most essential way? What does it feel like to be you?

And as I said before, don't remember, no need to remember your personal history for that. In fact, that becomes an obstacle. It's nothing to do with anything that ever happened to you.

Nothing to do with past or future. It's only to do with this moment. What does it feel like to be you?

And he doesn't have a conceptual answer, so don't answer it. What does it feel like to be you at this moment? What is the innermost self?

What does it feel like? And you will notice that there is a powerful sense of presence there, which has no particular form. You can't say much about it or anything really about it.

And that's you. That's the being, the self, the I am, that I am. And at that level, you are connected with something far deeper and more powerful than the little entity, the physical entity or the psychological entity.

It is there where you're connected to something vast. You're connected to the very core of the universe. And every human is.

That's the Atman, in India it's called, the divine within. And the divine within connects you to the soul of the universe, the outer, the Brahman, the divine without. What does it feel like to be yourself?

And then you suddenly hear, yeah. And you can't say anything about it. It's just a presence.

It's the presence of consciousness. It's consciousness. Another way of putting it, as you can see, I give you many different pointers because certain pointers work better for certain people.

Another pointer now, you become conscious that you are conscious right now. You suddenly realize that you are conscious. That's an amazing realization.

And to put it even more accurately, because if I say you realize that you are conscious, in that, putting it like that, there's still some duality in there. I realize that I'm conscious. No, you realize that you are consciousness.

Better way of putting it. You realize that the essence of who you are, your sense of self is consciousness, not anything that happened ever or could or will happen ever. And then this, as you, at first, perhaps it comes to you in little glimpses, and then gradually it becomes the backdrop of your entire life.

That continuously, no matter what situations you go into, or whether you're thinking or not thinking, there's always a part of you in the background that knows that you are consciousness. You know yourself as consciousness. Consciousness knows itself is another way of putting it.

And that is the transcendent dimension that can always be there in the background of your life. And sometimes it will come into the foreground when it obliterates every thought. I'm talking from my personal life, the non-personal life.

It obliterates, it can, it obliterates every thought. And you just go, ah. You are nobody in particular when it comes to the forefront.

Then the human, it shines away the human dimension temporarily. And there's only the being. When spiritual teaching happens, the being takes over for me.

When spiritual teaching doesn't happen, the human, to some extent, comes back. But it doesn't obliterate the being. So there's always the being in the background there.

When I talk, and I'm talking about this because you will experience the same, and some of you already know exactly what I'm talking about, then the being talks, the words come, it shines through. So you will observe in your life as you become familiar with dancing between form and formlessness, between the human and the being, and bringing them together, you will notice that sometimes the being becomes very strong. When you get very still, you may be surrounded by nature and you go, or somebody comes to you who is in deep agony or suffering, and suddenly you find yourself becoming totally alert and still.

And perhaps you start even saying something to that person, which is just right for that moment. Then the being takes over. And then in other situations, you become the human takes over, and there's just 10% of being in some.

And that's fine. You still, there's still some awareness of consciousness, of space in you. This is a wonderful process.

And many of you are already beginning to experience that in your life, this shift from the mental self, the usual self, as I sometimes call it, the human form self, to the transcendent self, which the Buddhists call the no self, and other traditions call the higher self. These are just words. Somebody who has never had a glimpse of it, as many academics who study religions, they say there's a total contradiction between what the Hindus believe and what the Buddhists believe because the Buddhists say there's no self, and the Hindus say there's the higher self, totally different.

They don't realize they just use different words to talk about the same thing, or no thing. If they had a glimpse of it within themselves, they would know that, but because they only approach it to the conceptual mind, all they see is the differences. This is the practice.

And hopefully, as I've been talking, you and everybody here has, at least perhaps to some extent, been experiencing what it means to shift from the human to the deeper self, what I call the being self. Right now, even if you don't know it mentally, if you are attentive here, if you are not dying from boredom as you sit here listening to me, that means it's working for you. It's that simple.

But if your mind is saying, when the hell is he going to stop talking? That means it's not working for you. And, but you've probably left already by now.

If you're here and there's actually, there's something that captures your attention, that's the truth in you, that's the being level in you that recognizes itself and is coming forth. That's all it is. Because what I'm saying, otherwise, unless you have some access to it within yourself, what I'm saying otherwise would be absolutely boring and meaningless.

I'm not saying anything to just the mind. What the hell is he talking about? Being.

So you need to have some access to it in order to find this interesting or makes you feel more alive. Being here means, yes, you have it. It's there.

That's it. Even though your mind might say, do I really understand what he's talking about? If you enjoy being here and listening and something in you feels alive, then you understand it.

You don't need to understand it conceptually. You can't. You get it?

Thank you. Thank you. Is it really possible somehow to be present and work fast and nevertheless be conscious at the same time?

Interesting. Yes, it seems at first that when you are in presence, it almost seems to people that they are forced to do things slowly. And sometimes I'm described as slow by some people close to me.

And it's true. But sometimes I can be fast too. There are occasions.

There are occasions when I'm quite, when it is demanded, I can be fast. Its presence does not have to be slow. Remember the famous Zen saying, hurry slowly, hurry slowly.

Translated into Spanish, date prisa lentamente. I think that's a good translation. So what does that mean?

How can you go fast and yet be present at the same time? It has a lot to do with the focus of your attention. So you're working here.

If a large part of your attention is where you want to get to, the result you want to achieve, then you are working here. If you said, one can't really put it in numbers or percentages, but I'll do it anyway. So if 80% of your attention is where you need to be, I need to get this finished.

And in the meantime, it creates a tension in you. There's a mental projection where you need to go. And in the meantime, you're doing this in order to get there.

If you can be more present and have 80% of your attention reverse it, have 80% of the attention in the doing itself and 20% on where you want to get to, because you have to get somewhere, then you can work fast. And working fast with presence implies enjoyment of the activity. And not being present usually implies lack of enjoyment of the activity and the arising of stress or to be working with distaste or some kind of resistance.

And that's not good for anybody. It's not good for you, for your physical body, the people around you. So you can practice with, just practice with practical things or even pretend that you're in a hurry.

So if you want to have just a trial practice, pretend that you're in a hurry and you need to get these things. Or maybe you don't even need to pretend because it happens often enough in real life that you're in a hurry, you need to get ready in order to leave the house or go out. And is it possible to do what you have to do within that space of a few minutes or whatever time you need to get ready and do it actually being fully conscious of every movement and enjoy the energy behind it, but it's really getting in touch with your conscious attention.

Enjoy the energy that's behind the doing rather than mentally projecting to the future, do it. And that's hurry slowly is the meaning, is what that means. Running the same.

If you have to run to catch a plane or a train or a bus or whatever, you can run and be totally centered and yet run fast. So it's a different kind of running. It's a smooth, more smooth, less stressful running.

You will actually enjoy every step of it because you're not excessively focused on the next moment. And of course, realizing as the Zen master says, Zen is doing one thing at a time. That's another way of pointing to this way of acting and working.

Zen is doing one thing at a time, which means giving your fullest attention to whatever you're doing at this moment. Then you know peripherally, of course, why you're doing it, where you want to go to. But in the meantime, you do it.

And then you're running. And it's not a stressful running anymore. You're actually, and if you miss the plane, what does it matter?

It's just, you're standing somewhere else and you're sitting somewhere else, not on the plane. Does it? And you're breathing somewhere.

I need to be on that plane. Maybe not. So that's, it's a practice of hurrying slowly.

There's also a tendency in our civilization to create more deadlines than are actually necessary for good functioning of things. I find there are often people create for themselves organizations and so on, create unnecessarily tight deadlines that often do not allow things to mature. And so that's, this has to be done by tomorrow night.

Why? And that often they don't even publish us do that. Sometimes they bring out books.

Some books have a slow time to, they gradually acquire their readers by word of mouth and so on. And some publishers, many publishers say, if not enough books are sold in the first six months, it's never printed again. There's not even given a chance.

There are some TV series that may actually be quite good. And they have one run and say, not quite enough viewers, but it was so good. It was just allow things to mature a little bit.

Why the constant deadlines, but you may be trapped in an organization that does that, which more likely than not, because of this world functions. So it's ultimately, you may have to create your own organization or if the organization is flexible enough, you may be able to create a different environment. I'm famous for not meeting deadlines.

And the world hasn't collapsed for some reason. But if I were an employee, I would have lost my job many times or probably would have walked out unless I could have introduced a different way of doing things. If there's room for that, that's good.

Life is so, it's extremely challenging. And those challenges of life, all the things that continuously seem to almost, almost designed to make your life difficult. If you look at your life, yes, there are interludes of we can suddenly, you can take a sigh of relief and you can say, ah, I've made it, I have arrived.

Something good has happened and here I am. But never for very long. Quite soon, something else comes up to spoil that lovely place that you thought you had arrived at.

Sometimes it's the case with relationships. Sometimes it's the case with your profession or what you achieve there or your social status or whatever it may be or possessions you feel. I made it and then these interludes are never last for too long.

And then life brings you another big obstacle. Now deal with this. And that brings about suffering.

If you don't know the deeper dimension of who you are, your reaction to the problems of life, the difficulties of life, the challenges of life, the manifold tribulations of life, then you begin, you suffer.

[Speaker 3] (4:35:49 - 4:35:58)
You get, become unhappy because you don't understand why you're here.

[Speaker 1] (4:36:01 - 4:36:16)
You're not here to find your comfort zone, although when you do have comfort zones for a while, enjoy it while it lasts. It's fine. But you're not here to find your comfort zone.

[Speaker 3] (4:36:18 - 4:36:48)
You're here to, well, I will go so far as to say you're here to, to make you feel uncomfortable, uncomfortable to experience difficulties.

[Speaker 1] (4:36:50 - 4:56:14)
And of course you are experiencing difficulties both on a personal level and on a collective level. Some difficulties are of a collective kind, such as increasing in the time period that we are living now. The external challenges are increasing.

Sometimes externals seem to be, you live in a relatively stable external environment as far as the collective is concerned. Economically, socially, or politically, you live in a relatively ordered and stable environment. And then most of the challenges that come to you are of a more of a personal nature, challenges that concern your health, that concern your finances, that concern your relationships and your living situation.

And so then you have most of your challenges come on a personal level. You're then relatively, you live in a relatively stable external environment as in Western countries has been for quite some time now. There have been, there are other countries on the planet while the West lived in relative stability collectively.

Other countries, of course, have been in turmoil and still are in extreme turmoil, where the challenges that most people in those places face tend to be more of a collective kind and then of a personal kind when the economic situation is extremely bad, the political situation is extremely unstable, there's violence around that could threaten you at any moment. But now in the Western world, we are moving from a relatively stable collective environment to a more turbulent collective environment. And it's becoming more turbulent into various areas.

And we only see the beginning of it. Now, this is not something to be afraid of. It is part of a normal cycle of development, but it's the same for an individual as it is for the collective.

And there are cycles, both as an individual, you find most people find they move sometimes into a period of turbulence in their personal life, when they're not just facing one or two challenges, when many things seem to be happening at the same time, many seemingly negative things seem to be happening at the same time. You lose your job, then you lose your marriage, divorce, then you might not even keep your home, you're suddenly, and you fall ill. So this is not all that unusual for a person to have to experience a sudden influx of challenges on a personal level.

And if you don't experience that, if your life is so regular that you go, you have a job that is not challenging, but you have almost 100% job security and you go every day, you go to the same office, come back, always, perhaps you have no, you're not married or not having no relationships, you're not challenged there. A few people may be like that until finally they fall ill or something, eventually something happens to all of them. But if not, if several decades, you had a very ordered life, that would be the most undesirable thing because there would be no evolution of awareness of consciousness in you.

You would remain stuck in your relative comfort zone and without any awakening of consciousness, you would not evolve as a human being. You remain stagnant. It's only by being challenged that you evolve.

And we have to look at why that is. But before we look at that, let's look for a moment at the collective again. Problems seem to be arising one after another in the collective and we can't even foresee what the next problem is going to be.

Suddenly something comes over, who could have foreseen what the 2020 would bring? Nobody foresaw it. Well, I haven't seen any psychics that foretold.

Well, there might've been one, I don't think so. So the important thing is to realize that whether the challenge or the adversity whatever you want to call it, whether it is mostly of a personal nature or whether it's of a collective nature, well, that's also personal. Collective just means that a large number of people in any location experience the same kind of challenge that is a collective challenge.

Of course, it still affects you personally. So a large number of people experiencing the same kind of challenge at the same time, the same location. So this is what's happening to many people now and it's going to continue to happen.

Now, what is the relationship of this? The relationship between realizing your essential identity as the light of the world and the challenges that you're experiencing that are coming towards you right now, more of a collective kind, but also of personal kind. The same external circumstances are experienced very differently by one person who is still very unconscious and another person who is much more conscious, which means more in touch with that which is beyond the conditioned personality.

This person experiences the tribulations of this world, the difficulties very differently from a person who is still deeply trapped in ego. The person is still deeply trapped in egoic identity that any challenge becomes very, very threatening. Not only that, even the possibility of challenges that might happen or going to happen, things that are going to go wrong is already an enormous source of suffering for many people who are trapped in their egoic identity.

They're even at night, they're in bed at night or doesn't have to be in bed at night, but then they're thinking, how much worse is it going to get? The world situation, for example, how much worse is it going to get? And then you can play out scenarios and you're experiencing emotions that are the same emotions that you would have if these things were actually happening or worse, probably worse.

Very often the scenarios that the mind, the unobserved mind creates, and again, it's lack of consciousness, lack of the light of, not enough light of consciousness in you, then all we have is the unobserved mind that is creating an enormous amount of suffering for you of playing out scenarios that are not here. And not only that, also reacting to challenges that are here in a very limited way through the old conditioning of their minds. And this is a very important point.

For you to realize, for us to realize that the vital thing as we move into this period of turmoil, external turmoil, the way in which you experience this is largely determined by your state of consciousness. If it's purely reactive, then it's going to be extremely difficult. Not only that, the reactive consciousness, I pointed it out before, is largely dominated by fear.

And any action you take that is arising out of a fearful and very limited state of consciousness is ultimately not going to be helpful, and in most cases will make things worse. Any fear interferes with your ability to be aware, to be conscious, and even to think rationally. Even that becomes difficult when there's fear, because then your thinking is no longer your thinking, it's fear thinking.

Thinking becomes controlled by fear. It's all part of the egoic consciousness. So our greatest challenge does not come from outside, no matter what happens.

Our greatest challenge comes from the inside, from our conditioned minds. And that's an important realization. In any situation, be aware of, in any given moment, which ultimately means in the present moment, be aware of your state of consciousness here and now.

And make that your primary reality. If fear arises, ask yourself, how does it arise? Why am I fearful?

And then in most cases, you will realize that the fear is produced by your thinking, not by the situation. In fact, the situations you can always deal with, they happen in the present moment, and you face them in the present moment. But the fear is the realm where you're incapable of taking action while you're in a fearful state of consciousness.

Or if you take action, it's completely contaminated by fear, complete lack of wisdom. So the greatest challenge is how do I face the external situation? What action do I take is always secondary.

Action may sometimes be necessary. But prior to taking action, you need to be aware of your state of consciousness out of which the action arises. And if that state of consciousness is egoic, then the action is going to, in many cases, make matters even worse, amplify the problem.

You know that when you meet a very unconscious person, just a simple example from your personal dimension, when you meet a very unconscious person, a person who is very angry, whatever, and what they want to draw you into their anger, how do you, what is your state of consciousness? Is your state of consciousness determined by this unconscious person? In which case you will react and amplify that person's unconsciousness.

And you yourself becomes drawn into unconsciousness. That's unconscious action. The same person, if you're aware of your state of consciousness faced with an angry person, you can stay present and you immediately know, even without any thought, that this person is in the grip of unconscious mind patterns, emotional patterns, and you can, instead of becoming reactive, you become more alert and thereby this difficult person, instead of making you as unconscious as they are, can actually help you become more present. In any difficult situation, whether it's a small difficulty or bigger difficulty, you can go either way.

You can go into reactivity. And once you go into reactivity, this reactivity is a force within you that has taken possession of you and it can grow in you. And then you try to still solve the external situation through this cloud of negativity, of reactivity, and you will make it worse.

You will amplify it. You will create more enemies of whether in the form of human beings or antagonistic situations, so to speak, adverse circumstances. So how things evolve in the externals, this is connected to your state of consciousness.

So it's vitally important for humans. You can try it out in your own life. If you're non-reactive, but present, when you're faced with difficult situations or people, and this applies to anything, whether it's lack of money, many people experience now lack of income, relationship difficulty, turmoil in their environment, make it your primary concern to be responsible for your state of consciousness first.

You can choose presence in your daily life. One thing, yes, as I said, is notice when presence arises spontaneously, when you can look at a person. Suddenly a person appears there in front of you, and you look at a person.

And again, for two or three seconds, there's no interpretation yet. And sometimes in those two or three seconds, you can already sense something about that person. You have an intuitive perception of that person.

How deep that is, we don't know. Perhaps you can sense something to do with the personality, or you can send something deeper that is the actual underlying consciousness, the essence of that person. You can sense that when you are present, you can sense often the presence of the other before you start interpreting the other.

You can sense their inherent presence or consciousness beyond personality. You're also aware of personality, but beyond personality, you can sense, one could say, their beingness. And then the mind usually comes in and perhaps has something to say about the person and have some kind of judgment or whatever it may be.

And, but if you are able to catch them, always the first moment, catch the first moment before the mind comes in and become aware of that first moment, conscious, so it's just not, otherwise you overlook it. So often for people, the presence, many, many people, most people have brief moments of presence, but they don't know it, it's overlooked.

[Speaker 3] (4:56:16 - 4:56:21)
So one could say the most important thing is always overlooked.

[Speaker 1] (4:56:23 - 5:01:01)
And so once you know that and you become aware of this first moment, then it actually lasts longer. This is wonderful, for example, with human beings. You, another, you meet a human being, you look at him, her, whatever, and then you become aware that for the first two or three seconds, you're not judging, you're just sensing.

Through your own presence, you sense the presence of the other. And when you become aware of that, it can last much longer. You don't have to immediately compulsively judge the other.

And that's a wonderful thing. It changes the way in which you relate to other human beings. If you can refrain from judging, the compulsion isn't there anymore because there's something else that's deeper.

And that brings about a connectedness between humans that otherwise would not be there because the moment the mind starts judging, separation comes in, a sense of separation. And the other, the human being that's in front of you becomes the other. Now, that's very important because the other, if you are operating exclusively from a egoic state of consciousness, without any awareness of any transcendent dimension within yourself or the other, then the other, you depend on the other as an ego.

In the absence of awareness, you depend on the other to be as other as possible because you define your own identity through the other, what it is not. If you emphasize that the other is different from you as the otherness of the other, you emphasize it, that strengthens your own, the boundary around your own sense of identity as an egoic self. So the moment you can, there's the ego, the moment you can criticize another, gossip is often a very well-known phenomenon when you gossip about other people, you criticize them in some way, in some way they are defective in one way or another.

What that does is it strengthens your egoic sense of self. The boundary becomes more rigid and you feel stronger in your sense of self because you are, the moment you judge implicitly, you are superior to the person that you are judging, that's implied in judgment, you are obviously superior. It's not fully understood by the conscious mind, but it's an unconscious egoic strategy to strengthen your ultimately fictitious sense of self.

So that's a very, very common thing and it can be done on an individual basis. It can also be done on a collective basis. Then you see that you, if you identify with a collective conceptual image of who you are, which could be whatever, these days, it could be political, or these days very popular things are gender and race.

So you identify very strongly with that, then the other becomes, the ego needs to make the other as other as possible. It's a crazy process.

[Speaker 13] (5:01:09 - 5:01:24)
It happens because you are unconscious, which means you're not awake yet.

[Speaker 1] (5:01:24 - 5:47:18)
That's when you're in the grip of these patterns, inherited, conditioned mind patterns. You're in the grip of them. And they have you in their grip and you don't even know it because you don't, you're so identified with the mind patterns that you are the mind patterns.

In other words, spiritually speaking, you are asleep. Who you truly are, the essence of who you are is not really there. Or very briefly, it has maybe little, then it's back into the sleep state.

Spiritually speaking, the sleep state is total identification with a stream of thinking, which continuously compares, classifies, judges everything. So suffering is one way and voluntary, entering presence voluntarily is a little easier. But you're only ready to do that now because you have had the suffering that you have had.

It has taken you to this point where you are, you realize the possibility of voluntarily entering by choice, a different state of consciousness. This possibility has arisen in you, which is an enormous thing in human evolution, where you are, in the past evolution has happened very, very slowly, a gradual increase in consciousness through multiple life forms over millions of years. And now for the first time, a life form can consciously cooperate in entering a new state, a new evolutionary stage, a new state of consciousness.

But you needed the suffering, it has had a function. And many of you know that you would not be here if you had not gone through states of unhappiness and varying degrees of suffering. So let's be really thankful.

You need suffering until you don't. And you have reached a point of realization where you don't need more suffering for your further, the evolution of your consciousness. But in case you do, life will give it to you.

You will continue, I'm not promising, I'm not telling you, you will not experience further challenges in life. The difference, however, is as presence arises more and more, you're not transforming the challenges of life into unhappiness and into an unhappy identity. You're not transforming the challenges of life into an unhappy self, a victim self, an angry self, a complaining self, a heavy self, a very dense self, a self that if you were conscious, you would never want to live with.

Unawakened people, in many cases, live with an entity, this mind-made self, that is so unpleasant, they would have left it long ago if that were a person that they live with. They would have said, no way, I'm out of here. I'm not living with you, I don't want to live with you.

You make me unhappy all the time. And in a way, many of you have reached that point where you realized something else is possible. There is another way.

And so that was the beginning of your awakening. For today's meditation, I'd like to have a little bit more silence. I believe we are ready for that, at least most of you.

I'd just like to explain how this works in the context of our technology here. When I'm not speaking, all you do is you look at the screen and you look at the image on the screen. My job is to be here in the state of presence, which means to hold the state of not thinking.

And as you look at me, please realize that you're not really looking at a person. It looks like a person, but when there's no thinking, no form consciousness, no concepts, where is the person? The person is generated by thought.

So when there is no thought, all there is is something that's prior to the person, more fundamental, more basic, more real, formless, just consciousness. So it can be helpful then if you're receptive to be with someone, even if it's only through the means of technology, to be with someone who is in that state of no thought, which means above thinking, not below thinking, because that apparent person has become transparent to the light of consciousness. And somehow if there's even the slightest opening in you to that, you can sense that there is something there that is deeper than the person.

In fact, the person becomes irrelevant. So, but that in you that senses that is of the same frequency is consciousness itself. So if you even have the slightest glimpse of there's something that transcends the person when you look at the image on the screen, you're right.

But at that moment, you have already transcended to some extent your own person, person being form identity, psychological form identity. Consists of thoughts and images. So it may look at first a little weird as the human mind would tell you to be staring at a person on the screen who is staring back at you.

And perhaps once or twice, a thought will come into your head, this is weird. That's just a thought. It's not really weird.

It's much more weird to be trapped in your mental noise for most of your life and to live on the basis of that, which is a false sense of identity. So what you endeavor is to, as you look at the screen and don't wait for me to say, let's start now. Let's consider that we've already started with our silent meditation because silence underlies the words.

That is in between the words. All you need to do then, it's not doing at all really, is you're looking at the screen and you're aware of the sense perception and you're aware that you're aware. You can sense the presence that you are as you look at the screen.

So, and you're alert, you're aware that there is awareness. Otherwise you wouldn't be seeing anything or hearing anything. So the prerequisite for any sense perception is awareness, consciousness.

So you become aware of that in yourself. And what the technology here provides is a reflection of the consciousness that you are, a helpful reflection. That's all.

When thought comes in, you realize a thought has arisen and you watch it like a cloud and then it drifts past and there's a space again. Don't believe when any thought tells you as we sit here. Don't believe the thought tells you that this thought is more important than sitting here in presence.

Thought likes to do that. Comes in to think about this. No, you've decided that the most important thing as you sit here is to be just present.

If you like, you can think for the rest of the day when we finish here. Plenty of time for thinking. But this is a time for not thinking, rising above thinking.

Looking at the image on the screen will help you to stay above thinking. When you're feeling drowsy or sleepy, then it's a sign you're falling below thinking. So continuously looking at the image helps you to stay alert, connects you with alertness.

Those of you who find it hard to sit here in presence and whose mind is still very active, thinking, feel the inner body as you sit here. Feel the aliveness in the body as you sit and look at the screen. Feel the aliveness in your hands, your feet, your legs, your arms.

There's a field of aliveness, the life within the body. Feel that in the background. That takes attention away from thinking.

And then you have two things. You have the sense perception that is helpful, takes attention away from thinking, and the connection with the inner body. And those two should keep your mind fairly clear if you're able to hold attention there.

It's no effort, just effortless. Close your eyes for a moment. Presence, spacious awareness, aliveness, life itself, the life that you are, consciousness.

Open your eyes, present, within and without. Look at your left or right hand for a moment. See the hand, the skin, the texture.

How it reflects the light without thinking, just present awareness. Sense perception appearing in the field of awareness. Looking back at the screen, awareness remains.

What appears changes. That's sense perception form. Look away for a moment.

Any object where you're sitting in the room, no matter what it is, look at it for a moment. Take in its shape, its color. No mental labeling.

Just an aware presence behind the sense perception. Amazing shift from continuously labeling everything and just being there as the presence. Look back at the screen.

Space of awareness remains. This is how you gradually become free of being dominated by the person. Of course, you're still a person in your daily life, but there's something more vital and more powerful that arises from behind the person and begins to shine through the person.

Everything else is meaningless in this life. If that doesn't happen in your life, what's the point? It means evolution hasn't happened for you.

No, it doesn't matter to the universe, but to the little entity, it does. In ultimate terms, it doesn't matter at all, only in relative terms. Of course, in miracles, there's delay.

Does not matter in eternity, but it is tragic in time. Life is not meant to be continuously challenging, to bring up to pit obstacles in my path, so it seems quite often. And to say, well, what is wrong with life?

And some people take it personally. They say, what's wrong with my life? There's something very wrong with me.

Or they take it personally and say, there's some God or God who must dislike me because I encounter one obstacle after another. And so that is an underlying assumption in many people's mind, but that is delusional because these challenges are meant to be there. They are an essential part of being here for a little while in this dimension.

And if it were not for the challenges of everyday life, big and small, there would be no awakening of consciousness. So through the pressure of challenges, we are being awakened. And not only humans, every life form experiences life as precarious and fragile and often difficult.

Many obstacles have to be overcome, not only for humans, but for all other life forms. Even a blade of grass has to be overcome obstacle until it finally comes up out of the soil. And it's every animal.

So every bird can see how alert birds are when you observe a bird. You could say the bird looks really present and compared to many humans, not you, the bird is actually very present. When you observe a bird, you see the bird goes like, very present.

But it's been like that for hundreds of thousands of million years. It has to be alert because if this alertness is there, it has survived. This has been generated over thousands and hundreds of thousands of years, that alertness, all the birds that were not alert, they disappeared.

They got eaten up. You have to, the bird was, the livelihood, the survival of each individual bird is continuously precarious and the bird has to be alert. So the bird is being forced into that state of alertness.

This is just one little example. And I know from my own life and many of you know from your life that you have gone through a certain amount of suffering in life. There were challenges, there were problems.

You had to confront them. Unhappiness arose. And at some point, something shifted in you.

At some point, there was a deepening. There was an awakening. And at some point you realized that the greater part of, to use a generic term, suffering or unhappiness in your life, which unhappiness is huge in the human consciousness, a huge weight in human consciousness, the greater part of unhappiness actually arises through a dysfunctional use of your mind and not so much the circumstances of your life.

And that's an interesting realization that it's the unhappiness that you experience, even if there are big challenges, small or big, the greater part of the unhappiness you experience arises through certain kinds of narrative in your mind, certain stories that you tell yourself about life, other people, or yourself. And that's an interesting realization which you can verify at any time tomorrow, if you haven't done it yet, and is the moment slightest irritation arises in a situation, anger arises, discomfort arises, ask yourself, what is causing this? And the first answer will be, well, obviously this rude person causes me to be irritated and angry, or this situation that I'm stuck in, the place where I live causes me to be irritated or angry, or a certain condition that my body is experiencing is causing me to be anxious or sad or angry that something has happened to me.

And so there's always, the first thing is you see the cause is there, there, there, that's the cause. And on the surface level, this is perfectly true, but that's only the surface level. And then, so next, tomorrow, when you encounter the first little thing that brings about perhaps a minor form of unhappiness in whatever form, be very alert like the bird, and say, okay, where does it come from, this situation?

I'm, let's say I'm stuck in the, I'm stuck at the airport, my flight's been canceled. This is a small, little situation, not a huge problem, but sometimes you might make it into a huge problem, the mind, so you're there and you can feel anxious, angry, irritated, ultimately you're suffering, it's a small form of suffering. So you say, well, this situation is, now ask yourself, if I did not add any narrative to this situation that I'm finding myself in, how would I experience this situation?

Narrative meaning certain thoughts that go through your mind that refer to the situation. Now, if I did not add the, ultimately, since we are using an airport analogy or example, this narrative you could consider to be excess baggage that you carry around and you carry it around in your life, you don't know it, and that becomes the burden of me. It becomes a burden of self, of a sense of a heavy sense of self, and you start discovering it in a little situation, like at the airport, you start discovering already the burden of yourself.

How would I experience this situation without the excess baggage of my narrative with which I judge the situation? Okay, you have plenty of time because your flight has been canceled, so you can experiment. Say, okay, now I'm here, now I am letting go of the narrative.

Nothing has changed in the situation. External situation is still the same. On the board, it says canceled, or maybe you're standing and there's a huge lineup, 100 people or more, which before, this was a terrible situation.

You're finding yourself absolutely dreadful. This airline is an awful, awful airline. That's all gone because now you're experimenting with experiencing the situation without the narrative.

So you remove the narrative. What remains then is the naked, so to speak, the bare, naked is-ness of that moment. The is-ness, the simple is-ness of the present moment.

And nothing has changed externally, but you have put down or let go of the excess baggage in your mind. And what is it that you're now experiencing? You're experiencing your body standing there.

You experience your sense perceptions. You look around, you listen to whatever sounds may be there, whatever other sense perceptions may be there. And you've realized that you're breathing.

Oh, that's interesting. I'm breathing. And then you say, okay, this isn't as bad as I thought it was.

Actually, without the narrative, I feel alive, I feel I'm breathing. And I might, I'm even beginning to feel a little bit of aliveness pervading my body in this moment. I can feel that there's an aliveness in every cell of the body that pervades.

I feel alive, I'm breathing. And you don't even need to tell yourself that. You simply notice it.

You notice whatever sense perception is here in the present moment. And suddenly you're experiencing the same situation as no longer something that causes you suffering because you have removed the mental narrative. If somebody, you can go up to somebody and say, do you know who you are?

If they say yes, that probably means they don't because they only know that which they can name conceptually and they think that's it. But if they say no, but you have to listen to see what kind of no that is, whether it's a no that comes, that is a no that says, I don't know, but I really should know. No, I don't, I have no idea.

But if there is another no, which is a no of the Zen master who says, I have no idea who I am. And then he says, do you know who you are? No.

And this is the most wonderful thing to find that place in yourself that you cannot really know conceptually. There's nothing really you can say about it. One could try and say it's very still or something, but it's limited too.

And that is, that's the place of where you really know who you are non-conceptually, but from the level of concept, from a perspective of concepts, you don't know who you are anymore. So you become comfortable. On one level, you know who you are.

Obviously, you have a name and a past and a history and relationships and a work situation and a home situation and a health situation. On that level, of course, you know who you are. But on the deeper level, you have to become comfortable with not knowing who you are.

And only then can you access the deeper level of who you are. If you're uncomfortable with not knowing who you are, you will immediately jump out of that stillness and take refuge in the mind and start thinking about your life again. I must remember who I am.

Some people have a fear of going to that place of not knowing who they are. That place of not knowing who they are, by the way, also includes when you're very deeply in that, and you also don't know who other people are conceptually, and you become comfortable, not continuously, there may be a time and a place for knowing people conceptually, but you can never relate deeply to another person if the dimension of depth is missing and all you're relating with is on the dimension of mental judgments of the other person.

So then you don't know them. So you become comfortable with not knowing who you are, and that includes not knowing who another person is and being comfortable with meeting a person and having no judgments in your mind, no conceptual thoughts about who or what kind of a person that is. And sometimes you can sense things about that person and without anything formulating in your mind.

And there you can connect on that deeper level. So becoming comfortable with not knowing, just like, as I said before, Socrates, the very foundation for all his teachings is he has no idea to start with. The starting point for, and Socrates, a great philosopher, the starting point for his philosophy, as he himself said, I am the wisest of all men because I am the only one who knows that he knows nothing.

What that really means is he is comfortable with a place of not knowing anything. And that place arises in the moment somebody asks him a question. What about this?

The answer doesn't start with some knowledge that he already has accumulated in his mind. The answer starts with not knowing and being comfortable with not knowing. And then at some point, we usually, with Socrates, he starts to ask questions.

He still doesn't know, but out of this place of not knowing comes a question. And then he listens to the answer. And then he still doesn't know.

And then another question comes. And another. Not as it's reported in Plato, as if he already knew he's just playing around with people.

No, I know that because I know how that kind of discourse arises. And it's a wonderful place to become comfortable with not knowing who you are or not knowing an answer or not having an opinion. At some point, you might have an opinion and sometimes opinions are fine.

You play around with opinions, not identifying with opinion, which is a mental position, but seeing that it's just a mental position that I happen to believe that this political party is better for the country than that political party. It doesn't mean you give up all that totally. You can still have those beliefs in your mind without being identified with the beliefs, which means you're not going to shout at people who have a different belief.

So not knowing who you are is a wonderful place. And because then you become the presence. Just spacious presence.

And that can be in your life, in the background of your life, all the time, in between your thoughts, when you're looking at something, when you're listening to someone, be the space. You don't need to know the next thing you're going to say. A good practice would be to, maybe one day we'll practice it today.

There may not be enough time. Invite, I could invite somebody up on the stage and say, no, sit there and see what happens and become comfortable with not knowing what to say. For many people, it would be a nightmare.

Some people have had nightmares where suddenly the curtain opens and they're on stage and there are 2000 people there and you don't know your lines. And public speaking, therefore, for many, there are many people for whom public speaking is the most stressful thing ever. Yeah.

If they could go into that space of becoming comfortable with not knowing and just being the presence and for a while they would say nothing and then the word, some words would come and they might be words like, look, I have no idea what's going to come out of my mouth. And that's fine. Of course, I can't tell you what else will come because it's not my situation at the moment.

Well, it is continuously mine, but you have to experience that for yourself. Mm. So in that not knowing, there is a deep knowing because you're going to the source of all knowing.

So you can know anything through concepts or through the presence that is deeper than concepts. And the two may operate in your life. If you are balanced, then you go into a forest, walk through a forest.

And for a while you might say, oh, that's such and such a tree or this forest. You might have knowledge about this forest and the birds, whatever you see in it. And to apply it, you look at it through concepts.

You can talk about it. And then the time may come when you let go of that. And now you're looking at the same tree that before you named mentally, you're looking at the same tree without naming it.

And then you take in the totality of the forest without naming it. And it's only then that you can know the forest on a level that's deeper than concept. You would miss the essence of the forest if you only apply concepts to your sense perceptions and you look at the forest through the veil of your concept conceptualizations.

But if you let go of concepts and you have the presence, then you can sense something that I would, can't really be put into words, but it's the aliveness of the forest. This mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive. To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation.

Unconditional love towards all humans is the transcendent love. You love the formless, you recognize the formless as yourself in the other. Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (5:47:22 - 5:47:23)
Hi.

[Speaker 9] (5:47:24 - 5:48:55)
First of all, greetings from your fans in Poland. I promised them to tell that. We all have the very heavy pain bodies there.

So you're... As you probably know. So your teachings is quite a salvation.

And my question is again the same topic like a one track mind. Actually that question about sex triggered the question in my mind because I've just listened several times to the autobiography of a yogi, of Paramahansa Yogananda, amazing book. And those spiritual masters, they explain very clearly and logically all kinds of things, including the symbolism of the Old Testament.

And according to them, that snake is the nerve running through the spinal cord and activates the sex nerve. And the forbidden fruit was sex because it was predictable that if humans tried that, it would cause the fall of the humankind from pretty much a god on earth with powerful mind to the level of animal. So my question is, do you think that sexual life actually is an obstacle in spiritual unfoldment if someone wants to attain a high level?

[Speaker 1] (5:48:56 - 5:50:42)
Oh, thank you. In many cases, it is an obstacle to the awakening consciousness, but in essence, it is not, it doesn't have to be an obstacle. It's not, it can be transcended, which means you don't eliminate it, but there's a much vaster hole in which it loses its importance.

So you transcend it rather than eliminate it. The elimination of it, I would not recommend except for very rare individuals for who that is right. So it's transcendence rather than elimination.

But to me, the beginning of the fall, I would interpret somewhat differently from the Bible as the beginning of the identification with the mind, the human mind, the knowledge, the eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the differentiation of conceptual thinking coming in. But that's one can interpret it in many ways. For most humans, I would say, do not attempt except with, unless you are one of the exceptions, do not attempt to suppress or eliminate sexuality, but bring awareness to it, and then it's no longer addictive.

And then it may fall away for some people, it then falls away by itself, but you don't need to make an effort.

[Speaker 9] (5:50:43 - 5:51:01)
And that's what made me feel bad. That because, you know, that there is that union between a man and a woman, and there's a lot of beauty in that. So actually I was sort of turned off by that information in the autobiography of a yogi and said, hmm.

[Speaker 1] (5:51:02 - 5:51:36)
Well, he still, he came from an ancient Indian ascetic tradition and there's a place for everything. So for most, for Westerners especially, but probably even for Easterners, it's really awareness rather than elimination of something that is so powerfully built into the human organism and use it for awakening rather than for letting it draw you to unconsciousness. Thank you.

[Speaker 5] (5:51:37 - 5:52:30)
My question is on sexuality and like, yeah. I would say instinctive impulse. When I see, for example, a woman jogging, I tend to look most times and I look.

And also when the lady is beautiful inside also, how do I balance not getting too lost in the little play?

[Speaker 1] (5:52:31 - 6:12:54)
You know, that's my question. Okay. Thank you.

I know what you mean. You may have heard of something called tantra. It's a, that means basically bringing consciousness into something that is usually unconscious.

For example, sexuality. I would even include other things like eating, things that tend to pull you into unconsciousness. I don't know if you've observed some people who the moment they start eating, they become quite unconscious, relatively speaking.

And then when they stop eating, there's a bit more consciousness again, they go. And then they wake up. So eating consciously would be bringing some awareness into that.

Tantra is traditionally used to point to the possibility of bringing consciousness into sex. And sex starts the moment you're looking at a woman jogging. And basically what tantra means is not to make it into a means to an end, not to look to the next moment and the one after that, the final moment of man woman union, always being orgasm, but sex starts with looking and to be at every moment, honor the moment and enjoy the moment for what it is, which is there's nothing wrong when your body, mind, organism gets drawn to that.

You know that this is happening. If you don't know that this is happening, you become the reaction and then you are lost. But if you know that this is happening, you can actually allow yourself to be drawn.

You can look and enjoy just looking. There's no need to go beyond that. Can you be, I enjoy looking at all kinds of humans, including women or men, it doesn't really matter.

I enjoy the human form. I like to be sometimes sit in a cafe in a corner and simply watch the human beings come in, leave. Some are old, some are young, some are beautiful, some are not so beautiful.

They're all beautiful inside, but on the external, the variety of the human form is just quite wonderful to watch. And if you don't want anything, the question is whether the attraction turns into wanting. The attraction is the attention moves there and it's unconscious.

And then the moment comes when you realize that the attention has moved there. There's no need for you, as some spiritual additions might tell you, you must not look at a woman. If the moment you notice your attention moving, to look somewhere else.

By denying it, you really intensify ultimately the unconscious urge to look. There's even in Buddhist monasteries, the monk, when I first visited a monastery, I could see a woman was trying to give a monk something, a pencil or something. And he said, I'm sorry, I can't take it from you.

You have to put it on the table and then I'll take it. I'm not allowed to take something from a woman. And this is how, because the power of sexuality was so strong that for a long time in the past, people were afraid of it because you can't control yourself.

If you even just take something, there might be a flash of energy coming. Who knows what will happen next? If you just take a pencil from a woman, what's going to happen next?

So to enjoy, you can also, for Tantra, you can enjoy touching someone. There's no need to, it's all really connected with the self-sufficiency of the present moment and not always needing, wanting the end result. And that includes any kind of sexual attraction.

If you bring in present moment living into normal life, you can also practice it there where you simply enjoy whatever phenomenon is arising at this moment for what it is instead of it becoming some kind of wanting something in the future, wanting more. Observe the impulse. And if you get lost in it, then you have to wait until you wake up and then can observe yourself running after her.

I remember I had a friend in England many, many years ago who suddenly became very interested in spirituality and asked very deep questions. And a couple of times we were sitting somewhere outside in a park or cafe and I was talking to him. That was my early form of teaching, individuals coming and asking questions.

And I observed a couple of times he was listening to me, which was so important to him, just this vital question was being answered. And suddenly I could see him, he was looking somewhere else behind me. And I thought, what's going on?

He stopped listening. And then I looked around and there was a woman sitting there behind and he, spirituality was so important for him. But then something else came up that was even more powerful at that time.

And that was the attraction. And then I pointed it out and he woke, he suddenly, he was like a man waking up from sleep or from a dream. Oh, it was completely lost.

And then it happened again. And after that, he was able to be aware of that pull. If you're aware of that pull, you are not the pull.

You're not in the grip of that pull. It's nature. If the pull is part of the physical nature, but then you're not aware.

If you are not aware, you become the pull and it dominates the next thing that you do. You may run after, or you may try to approach her, or you may lose yourself in fantasizing for the next 30 minutes. All kinds of things happen.

If you become the pull, the pull becomes action or it becomes thought. So are you the pull that you can sense or are you the knower, the one that knows that this is happening? And if you can be the knower, you can allow yourself or your body, your physical organism to experience whatever is happening at this moment without losing yourself in that.

It's a spiritual practice. So I recommend that you go into a place where you're likely to encounter many beautiful women. I don't know where that would be, the beach or the...

And practice, sit there and let your attention be pulled. Wonderful practice. And women can do it with men or with other women or men with men, it doesn't matter.

The important thing is, can you be the awareness of what's happening or are you losing yourself in the pull? So as a practice, just be there, space for the impulse, space for the attraction without believing that you need to change something. If you suppress it, I don't think it's the most skillful thing to do, to actually say, I must not look because it's something that will build up inside you, it will make it even more powerful.

And it will not become obsessive, the awareness will deepen as you practice that. And then you have a choice, there is always a choice. It doesn't mean you cannot act, you can act from the awareness.

You can still, if you want to meet someone, you can still approach her and say, I don't know what, nothing comes to mind. That's why I've never done it. It has arisen in the past and the question, what can I say?

Don't know, but you may be better at it, so. No. If let's say we love all, if let's say we all love each other unconditionally, how can I decide who is to be my partner?

Is this based on physical attraction? Isn't this a contradiction with this higher state of consciousness? Okay, so if you love everybody unconditionally, how can you possibly decide who is going to be your partner?

That's the question. Because it seems then there's no preference anymore. Or if it's physical attraction, isn't there a contradiction?

If you're in a higher state of consciousness, then shouldn't or not be physically attracted to anybody? Is that the implication in the question? Well, the love we're talking about, the unconditional love towards human beings and life forms, is a, is a, let's see, what is it that you love in the other when you love unconditionally?

You don't love their physical form. You don't love their psychological form, their personality. The unconditional love goes deeper.

It's a transcendent love that what you love is not the form, but the formless essence of the other. And you can only love that when you can sense within yourself that dimension of formless, when you can be still and present enough and then look at another human being. And then you can recognize something.

What you recognize is, for lack of a better word, the consciousness, which is the essence of the other human, as it is the essence of who you are. Consciousness prior to the consciousness being born into some kind of form, personality, which is there, and the physical form, which is there. But in every being, there is still the dimension of consciousness that is prior to form.

Although the human being has become form, consciousness assumed form has incarnated, so to speak. But that doesn't mean that the formless and timeless consciousness is lost. It's still there as the essence.

And when you can sense it in yourself, you can sense it because you are still and present enough. From that dimension in yourself, you can sense it in the other, and that is love. It's basically a recognition that, in essence, the other is the same as you.

But then, of course, there's always, that is the transcendent dimension to every human being. And in addition to that transcendent dimension, there is a form identity of every human being. Every human being has a physical form and an emotional form and a mental form.

That's the inner, that's the personality. So the physical appearance and the personality consisting of mental, emotional, conditioning, and so on. So there are the two levels.

The unconditional love towards all humans is the transcendent love. You love the formless, you recognize the formless as yourself in the other. But then you are still here as a form, too, and the form may respond to another form, the physical.

There can be physical attraction. It is not incompatible with a transcendent realization, although some ancient or not so ancient traditions may tell you that. It is not incompatible.

You can have physical attraction on the level of form. You can also have an attraction towards the mental, emotional form of that other human being because it resonates with something in your own form. So that means you may be drawn to another human being physically or mentally, emotionally, because you resonate with that.

And then perhaps you enter into a relationship. So the different levels operate. The transcendent remains.

It can become obscured through excessive attachment, of course, to the mental or emotional dimension in the other. So in a relationship, the realization of essence, identity, as I sometimes call it, can become obscured when form identity takes over completely, which could happen through the pain body, which could happen through emotional, getting identified with arising emotions and losing touch with the transcendent. Yes, that can happen, but it's not incompatible.

Everybody's challenge is to balance the two in their lives, in their relationships, to relate to the other on the transcendent level. And at the same time, if it's there on an emotional, mental, physical level. Without the transcendent dimension in a relationship, it's not ultimately satisfying and it cannot really, truly work for long if the transcendent is missing completely in a relationship.

It's physical attraction and attraction between personalities is not enough to keep it going. Can keep going for a while, but then it becomes frustrating and you see more and more of the limitations of the other person. And the other person sees more and more of your limitations, which are always there.

And when you live together, it becomes very obvious that the other person has his or her limitations. Now, as long as the realization of the transcendent dimension is there, that fine, those limitations can exist within the space of the transcendent and they're not destructive of the relationship. Now, you may find with, it's sometimes easier to have this unconditional love towards people that you don't know so well than people easier than towards people that with whom you share a lot of past.

Because they are the past, the form identity of that person can be very powerfully there in your mind, in your interaction. So that's the challenge of being present with family members, parents, grown up children, and so on. And of course, as you know, Ram Das recommends, if you think you're enlightened as a test, he recommends that you spend two weeks with your parents.

And that will tell you whether you're really enlightened or not. Go and spend two weeks, stay with your parents for two weeks. In most cases, that is a good test, unless your parents are enlightened, in which case there's not much point in using it.

It doesn't tell you anything.

[Speaker 12] (6:12:56 - 6:13:52)
If one is in the surrendered state of consciousness, can they, I've heard teachings from my own experience and from just reading, with romantic love, there can be, I need you, behavioral expectations. And then there's like the selfless kind of love where there are no behavioral expectations and you still love the person. My question is, if you're in the surrendered state of consciousness, if you're completely surrendered to what is, do you still have that kind of selfless love for a specific person romantically?

Or does that kind of dissolve? Or is it just only the universal, which is wonderful, the universal love? It's amazing.

Wow. But can you also have that specific kind of love? Okay.

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (6:13:54 - 6:23:30)
So the question you're basically asking, would you then love everybody equally so there would not be one person singled out as special, as the Course in Miracles calls it special relationship, which the Course in Miracles says, of course, it's of the ego to single one out as special. Now, if you single one out as special and what you see in the other is the form only and you're attached to the form, which doesn't just mean the physical form. Of course, that's an important part of it because it is part of the sexuality and all that, which is part of the attraction.

But it also includes the psychological form of the other, who you think that person is, their psychological makeup, how they behave and speak and act. That is also a form, that's a psychological form. And there can be strong attachment to those aspects, both the physical come together with the psychological, which includes also emotions.

There's an emotional link also there. And those coming, when they all come together, you fall in love. And aptly, it's called fall because it's a fall in consciousness.

But that's okay. If that's what you experienced and that life wants you to experience that, it's part of your learning, that fall in consciousness. Now, it's not immediately, of course, experienced as a fall.

It's experienced as a high. And only afterwards do you realize, oh, that was a fall. And afterwards can be after a year.

It can be after three months. It can be after the honeymoon. It can be soon after you move in together.

And so, and then the suffering starts. What before was the love now becomes the suffering. And then for a while, it can happen that you fluctuate for the next year or two or three between still feeling the love and the suffering.

And then usually it comes to an end after a while or you compromise and for some other reason, stay together. So that's the, now, if you are able to feel in the other, well, first of all, in yourself, that which is beyond form, the essence, the stillness, the presence, whatever we want to call it, and by sensing it in yourself and being it, then you recognize it in another. And that recognition that in the space of stillness is true love, which doesn't need the other because the other only reflects to you who you are.

But even there, it can happen that the form of the other, because you are not just the formless, temporarily, you're also the form. Temporarily, you are either a man or a woman. Temporarily, you have this body.

And this form, this man or this woman, and this body and the emotional field may find a certain resonance with on different levels, be it sexual, emotional, psychological levels, a certain resonance with the other form. And that resonance, that is what in the unenlightened romantic love makes up the entire relationship. But now, when you know who you are in your essence, all of those factors are still there, but they do not make up the entire relationship beyond the resonance between the sexual or emotional or physical resonance.

There's a deeper level present. So you can go through the motions of romantic love with the transcendent level also present in yourself and recognizing it in the other. So romantic love may, after a while, of course, for the relationship to be truly deep in any relationship, some transcendent element has to be there because it's not going to last otherwise.

It doesn't mean necessarily that people need to be totally awake already, totally awake knowing who they are, but some element of the formless must be there eventually in the relationship for the relationship to survive and be a true relationship. Otherwise, all you have left in the relationship is your judgments about the other and physical attraction and just mind emotional. And that's ultimately, it's not enough.

It's not enough. The added element, the transcendent element needs to be there. And if the transcendent is there, you can be quite content even without the romantic relationship.

You no longer say, I need that. It's when it's there, it's beautiful, but you don't need that. Yeah, cool.

So the mind, it is often in relationships, the mind prevents the deeper level, the transcendent level from arising in the relationship. So the mind destroys the relationship, identification with the story in the mind, which is about yourself and the other obscures love. It might even say love, well, it's no such thing as love.

I read in a novel last year by a British writer, it does Mac Ewan, he's a well-known contemporary writer, Ian Mac Ewan. And he wrote this book about, it's called On Chesil Beach. It's about two young people falling in love in England in the fifties.

And these two young people, they feel the pull towards each other and they begin to fall in love. But sexually they are completely repressed and very fearful about, it's in the fifties, so the sex revolution hasn't happened yet about sex. So they're both extremely fearful about sex.

And then they get married and their first night, they stay in a bed and breakfast on near Chesil Beach in the South of England. And they're trying to have sex for the first time and it's a disaster, dreadful disaster. And she is so shocked.

She runs out of the room to the beach. Oh, they don't realize it's actually quite funny. I don't explain what disaster, you can probably imagine it.

So she runs out and the next day, so they don't see each other that night, that's their honeymoon, their wedding night. And the next day he goes to the beach, Chesil Beach, and she sees she's walking on the beach. They start talking to each other.

And both feel still, the pull is still there, but both their minds are bringing up stories why it's not possible, it's dreadful. They are projecting things onto the other, what she is. And so the pull is there, but they both create stories in their minds that cuts them off from the other and they separate.

And then they spend the rest of their lives doing other things. The rest of their lives in the novel is compressed to five or six pages. And that shows how destructive the mind can be of true relationship, how the mind imposes interpretations on the other, that are total fictions.

But there's so much, as Don Miguel Ruiz would say, there's so much faith in these fictions that it's an impossibility for the human being to see what the mind is creating is a fictitious judgment on that creates a barrier between yourself and the other. This writer is not spiritual at all. He just observed human nature and he presented it.

And that is the ultimate lesson is spiritual.

[Speaker 11] (6:23:33 - 6:23:34)
Thank you very much.

[Speaker 1] (6:23:53 - 6:27:17)
This is what Bodhidharma looked like or may have looked like. He certainly looks present. There's a story of, I believe it was a British writer, Paul Brunton, I think it was, who in the thirties visited the guru, spiritual teacher, Ramana Maharshi at his ashram in India in order to, he was preparing a book on the spiritual teachers of India.

The book was later published and under the title In Search of Secret India. And he visited Ramana Maharshi. The guru at that time was not too well known outside his immediate circle.

And he had a list of questions, very important questions for his book. So he came into Ramana's room and Ramana looked at him in a state of thoughtless awareness. And Paul Brunton looked at him and he didn't ask a single question.

All the questions dissolved in the presence. On that particular occasion, that was the first time he met him. He may later have asked him questions.

Another little anecdote connected with Ramana Maharshi. A famous British writer visited the ashram. Somerset Maugham is his name.

And again, he was preparing a book, a novel that involved an Indian spiritual teacher. And just before he was to meet Ramana Maharshi, Somerset Maugham fainted probably because it was so hot. So they carried him into a room and he was lying there on a bed.

And when he came to, Ramana Maharshi was sitting there next to his bed, looking at him. And he was confused and didn't know what to say. And Ramana Maharshi said something like, silence is the best speech.

And that was the end of that encounter. And later on, in a novel called The Razor's Edge, Ramana Maharshi appears as one of the characters.

[Speaker 4] (6:27:18 - 6:27:56)
But my question is, in The New Earth, you give an example of Hakuin, the Zen master, and he's falsely accused of false beliefs. Well, there's false accusations towards him. And he responds with, is that so?

I was wondering if you could give us some other examples of how a conscious person might answer or respond to that situation and how the ego might respond to the same situation.

[Speaker 1] (6:27:58 - 7:41:40)
Well, the ego one is quite easy to imagine, isn't it? And the story, of course, is a story that's been around for some time about the Japanese, the Zen master, just very briefly to remind everybody, the Zen master who has a reputation, high reputation in where he lives, in the town or city. And then suddenly he is accused by the daughter of a neighbor who is 16 or 17, or something like that, who has become pregnant, that he is the father of the baby, the unborn baby.

And so the daughter of his neighbor tells it to her parents and they get very angry and, of course, tell it to everybody and they run to the Zen master and say, our daughter has just told us that you had sex with her and she is carrying your baby, the dreadful. And he listens and he says, is that so? Yes, you are the father, she told us, is that so?

And so immediately, of course, he loses his reputation. Nobody comes to him anymore and it doesn't bother him. He's completely self-contained, present, he is presence.

The baby is born, the parents come to him with the baby and said, here, you look after the baby, we don't want it, it's your baby. Is that so? They give him the baby.

He looks after the baby, feeds it. A year later, nobody comes to see him anymore because he's lost his reputation. A year later, the daughter becomes a little bit more mature and confesses to her parents that the Zen master is not the father, but the boy who works in the butcher's shop next door.

And the parents come to the Zen master and say, we're so sorry, we falsely accused you. She just told us that you're not the father. Is that so?

And he hands the baby back to them. And the baby had a very good start in life, of course. And so that was, the story is to show the absolute non-reactivity in very extreme form of non-reactivity, not impossible.

And the power that is in that, the power for good, because that situation, which potentially would be dreadful disaster and drama for anybody else with even the slightest ego left, would be dreadful, blowed, a disaster that gets transformed into something good through non-reaction, because all the good that comes out of it, the babies had one year with the Zen master, the first year of his life, and he's then going back. And then people come back to him. Okay, so you can see how non-reactivity transforms a potentially dramatic disaster into good.

Your question is twofold. You ask, how would the ego have reacted? No, I don't need to say too much about that.

You can imagine how an ego would say, how dare you accuse me? The daughter is evil. She's an evil bitch.

She accused me of being it. And the parents are just as bad. And then you talk to everybody about it.

You call them on the phone. You know what they're doing to me? They're trying to, and all kinds of things.

Talk to everybody about it. Blow it up more and more. Give interviews.

And of course you're the victim. You become the victim. That's the main thing.

So your victim identity becomes stronger and stronger. And you're angry. And anger, of course, is designed unconsciously as the Course in Miracles points out.

Anger is designed to make somebody feel guilty. That's the energy behind anger. So you want to make everybody, well, of course it doesn't really work.

And so you have a huge drama. So you can elaborate on that. You could write a play about that.

You could have a movie about that. The Zen, what happened to the Zen master with an interesting title, Zen Baby or whatever. No.

No, you couldn't have a movie about this, what actually happened in this story because nobody would watch it. There's no drama in it. Nothing happens.

He just sits there. So I don't think you could, even if you wrote a script, I think the producers in Hollywood would not finance it. It could be very nice.

Short film, it wouldn't be a long film. Now, of course, if you are present, that is not the only way. It's not what he's, the way he dealt with that situation is not the only possible way.

There are many other possible ways of dealing with the situation and still be present. For example, he could have said, well, is that so? But I would like to have a DNA test though.

So it's a practical step. You can still take practical steps. You're not condemned to complete inactivity just because you're present.

In fact, if action is possible, you do it. You could even state clearly, that's not the case. I'm not the baby, but there's a, you're not a victim.

You could simply state the truth. This is how it is. And the important thing is the unconsciousness of making yourself into a victim does not happen.

Anymore. And you are not imposing projections onto others, deep judgments, the little 17 year old daughter who is not mature enough to tell the truth. You don't need to say that she's evil and manipulative or whatever the ego would come up with.

No, you just state, it's not the case. It's fine. And whatever else comes out of presence, but there's always non-aggression, non-projection, non-judgment, because you see clearly that she did it because of her lack of consciousness.

So what judgment could you have? There's lack of consciousness. That's lack of consciousness is not a judgment.

But if you make that into something evil in the other person, that's the judgment. So all kinds of ways of dealing with it and still remain present. The story gives us the most extreme way because then we can really learn.

It shows us what is possible. So what a wonderful story. And the two, one could have, even tell two stories.

Tell one story of, this is an idea for somebody who likes to, who is a fiction writer here among you. You could have one story that tells its story from somebody who is dealing with something consciously. And then you have the same story where it develops into huge unconsciousness and drama.

Be quite interesting. So next time then, if something happens to us, see, bearing in mind, don't become a victim. Don't become a victim.

Don't make others into perpetrators and call them bad or evil. So the two go together. So wonderful, these challenges, aren't they?

I just got, as I was coming in, got inspired to tell you that little story. It only takes a few minutes about my mom because there's some connection with us being here and the event that I relate in that story that happened many years ago when I wasn't born yet. So my mom was 19, about 19 years old.

Of course, I wasn't there yet. It was in the war in Germany and she received notification one day in the mail to report next week to such and such a place a weapons factory, some one day's travel away from there for work duty, work service, which was a bit like military service but for women. And she got a shock and she ran on the same day to the government office and said, that must be a mistake.

I was promised I could do office duty. And they said, no mistake, you are to report next week to the weapons factory. So the following week she arrived.

After a long trip to the weapons factory with up to a hundred other young girls who were the same age and she was assigned to a bunk bed in the dormitory and work was going to start the following day. And she was on the upper bunk bed and below there was another girl, same age and they were both crying. And my mom being already impulsive as she's been all her life, said she was trying to, I'm not staying here.

Tomorrow morning I'm escaping. And the girl said, are you coming with me? She said to the girl and the girl said, no, we can't do that, they'll shoot us.

And the next morning, my mom left the dormitory early and there were some trucks leaving, big military trucks leaving the factory. And she just stopped a driver and said, can you give me a ride? And the driver, assuming she had permission, she was on leave or something, he said, yes, jump in in the back.

And she got driven out of the factory. And at the end of the day, she reappeared at her mom's home, her mom's place and her mom said, what have you done? They'll put us all in prison.

You can't stay here. They'll come. So the next day she went to another city to live with her aunt.

And of course the police came a couple of days later looking for her and my grandmother, her mom said, don't know where she is, she just disappeared. We haven't seen her. Then my mom lived in hiding for two or three years until they stopped looking for her with her aunt.

And three months later, the weapons factory got bombed and virtually everybody who worked there got killed. So the impulsive decision of a 19 year old girl is everything is connected and interconnected leads to us being here. As you probably know, Buddhism arose in India.

A person, Gautama Siddhartha awakened about 500 BC, that's 2,500 years ago. And a teaching arose. People then called him the one who is awake.

Buddha means awake, the root of it in Sanskrit. So it's not a name, it's a title. And then it grew and then much about a thousand years passed and then a man traveled at that time.

Of course, geographically, there was not that much of the instances, the distances were so vast between countries. But a Buddhist monk traveled from India, probably it could already have been Persia, into China. And his name was Bodhidharma, a legendary figure in Buddhism, because he is the one, they say, who brought Buddhism to China, which was something when they arrived in China and started talking, people hadn't heard this before, wow.

But at some point they connected it with some native tradition, which was Taoism. The deeper aspect of Taoism could then merged with Buddhism after a while. And of course, Taoism, the wonderful, one of the greatest books that I've spoken about, the Tao Te Ching, probably also originated 2,500 years ago or so, same time as the Buddha independently in China.

So eventually Buddhism became transformed in China because it mixed up with Taoism and a different form of Buddhism developed. But the interesting story is that this man, Bodhidharma traveled into China and he was the first, they say, and then the Chinese began to gradually adopt Buddhist meditation practices and so on. Fortunately at that time, the internet and Twitter had not been invented yet.

So nobody accused the Chinese of cultural appropriation. I've prepared, I'd like to, this is what Bodhidharma looked like or may have looked like. Let's see if it works to show the image of Bodhidharma.

He certainly looks present. And that is also, that is the beginning of Zen, that was the Chinese version of Zen and then in Japan, it became something else. So you can imagine the Chinese meeting this man, looking at them.

And then a problem arose because they learned about the Buddha and the Chinese writing, of course, is pictographs. It's not like Western writing where the writing represents a sound which represents the thing. So a Western language, Western writing is twice removed from the thing.

If you write table, the writing of table represents the sound and the sound, when you say table, it represents the thing. So they say, what can we do? But there must have been somebody awakened already there in China who came up with the Chinese character for Buddha.

They had to come out, create it, and there it is. And now the amazing thing is, it consists of two characters put together. The first one means man or human being.

You can see it's almost, you can see still, it's distantly related to a picture of a person. So that is the human being. Now, the next character is usually translated as no or not.

It's a character, it's a denial. It's also related to the idea of undoing or dissolving, but it's usually, it's the denial of not. So it denies the first.

So human being, not. And so if you go to scholars, they don't, they might say, well, they did this because they thought that Buddha wasn't really a human being. He was a super human, but that's not it.

There's a recognition there of the two dimensions that make up a human being. There is form identity and the recognition of the ultimate illusion of form identity. So there's form identity, the person, and the denial of form identity.

So the denial of form identity is the arising of essence identity. And so it's incredible how somebody must have had deep insight to create that character that explains the essence of what Buddha means, but it really is the essence of every human being. So in that sense, as you might know, the way I interpret the term human being is that the human is your form identity.

The human is the person that you are with a history and is both the body and the conditioned mind. That's the human personality. And the being is the unconditioned.

The being is your essence identity, which is the unconditioned consciousness. So you are a human being. And in a way you could interpret that character as also as the left side is the human.

And then there's the denial of the ultimate reality of the human and there's the emerging being. So that's just a, I mentioned that briefly also, I believe in a new earth. So it's wonderful to see that there's a deep understanding behind that character.

I'm interpreting that, I have no idea about Chinese. I'm not a scholar and I don't write or speak Chinese, but the moment I saw that and I was told this means Buddha, no, human being, human, no. Wow, that's amazing.

Do you remember, or maybe you don't, or you do in the gospels, there's a line that Jesus said, two words, deny thyself, deny thyself. And now look at that character, man, human, no. Deny thyself, which means recognize the ultimate unreality of what you call yourself.

Then the essence of who you are emerges, which is formless consciousness. To achieve the state of enlightenment as if it were something that you can add to yourself or something that will suddenly transform you into a miraculous being, which you already are, but you won't know it if you think that is going to come in the future. Enlightenment, or let's call it the ego-less state, okay, I want to achieve the ego-less state.

And of course, the ego-less state cannot be achieved in the future or in time. It is only by looking through it now that the ego-less state is here now. A state that you want to achieve is a mental concept in which that's endowed with self.

And as such, you can never reach it because it's an abstract concept of who I want to be, not realizing you are it already. So the ego-less state, it does not lie in the future. It has nothing to do with future.

You cannot make it into a goal. You cannot make, whether you call it the ego-less state or whether you call it enlightenment, you cannot make it into a goal. Goal implies future because the very entry point into the ego-less state or the enlightened state is the present moment.

If you make it into a goal that you want to achieve, you miss the entry point because you're looking to the future because goal implies future. And that is the dilemma of all spiritual seekers. Because they listen to spiritual talk or read a spiritual book and say, there is such a thing as the ego-less state or the enlightened state, and perhaps I can achieve it too.

And immediately they make it into a goal, project it away, it becomes mind, a mental image of who I want to be, future. And not realize that their very search for to actualize that image prevents them from being it now because the entry point is here, this moment only. The ego can only be transcended through accessing the power of the present moment.

No other way. Enlightenment is only in the power of the present moment, nowhere else. So it's never, it's only humans who give up the search who realize it's already here.

So you have to, one way or another, either because you're totally frustrated with the spiritual search or because you suddenly see the truth of it, give up the search as if it were future. Now there's still, there seems to conflict with certain teachings that say, basically, there are two conflicting spiritual teachings. One says, that seems what I've just said, but it's not quite it.

One says there's nothing you can do and you might as well totally relax because you can't bring it about. There's nothing, absolutely nothing you can do about it. So let go, forget about all, some teachers say that.

Forget the whole thing, just have fun. The other teaching says, if you do not want enlightenment as intensely as a man, a drowning man wants air, you're not going to get it. Now, what I just said seems to be more towards the other, that you cannot make it into something to want or to get, but really the truth is hiding if you bring the two together.

And how does that look? If you bring, how can you bring those together? On the one hand, there's nothing you can do, that's true.

And on the other hand, an intensity is required. You bring the two together, the very intensity that is mistakenly interpreted as an intensity that's driving you towards a future goal can become an intensity that is driving you into the present moment. That's the uncompromising intensity of there's only this moment.

And that, yes, there's an intensity there that goes, takes you deeper into this. It's not an intensity that drives you into future. There's nothing you can do is true in the sense that if doing requires future and time, that doesn't help you.

And of course, going into the present moment and becoming internally aligned with the present moment isn't really a doing. In that sense, there's nothing you can do. You can only allow the present moment to be and go deeply into it.

It's a question of how you use language. But so in that sense, they are right. There's nothing you can do.

And the others are also right. The intensity is required, the intensity with which you embrace the now. So that's, there's the point.

No future state. You're not becoming something that you are not now. And so you may have heard some spiritual teacher saying, you're enlightened already.

And that's deep down, that is true. Every human being is already complete within. On the level of form, there are all kinds of things that perhaps you could still do and play around with and add to yourself and learn or experience.

But in the depths of who you are, your essence identity is already totally complete. It doesn't require more time or more things to be added to who you are in your essence. And really, that is what matters.

In that sense, only future can only prevent you from being it, finding it and being it now. So it's, for some people, hard to get rid of this idea because it's no more than an idea in the head that I need to achieve something, become something. But it's not really true.

So it's truer to say, you are already it, you just need to realize it. That you are already fully yourself. You are already fully yourself.

You don't need more time or more of anything to be who you are already now. You're already divine, timeless, eternal in your essence. Everything else is on the level of form and it's a dance, a game, a play of form.

There, sometimes you get more and then you lose again. You can play. So no more spiritual seeking.

Intensity, yes. But the intensity that drives you into the now. Not an intensity that wants to actualize an imagined state.

Me as the enlightened one, which you already are. A couple of weeks ago, I spoke briefly at a conference in San Francisco. A big conference, close to 10,000 people.

Annual conference, mostly for business people. But always towards the very end, they have a spiritual person. Which is better than no spiritual person.

And then the organizer invited a small group of people who spoke at the conference and some who attended the conference to his home for dinner. Small group, meaning 150. And he organized even some entertainment.

The main person providing the entertainment is a kind of yogi, magician. Nobody knows exactly whether he's more of a yogi or more of a magician. Or whether it's a combination or whether everything is just tricks.

Anyway, this person, the main entertainment of the evening, when people had eaten in the garden, they had erected a tent, a big tent, enough for 150 people. In the middle of the area, there was a raised pedestal and on it was a gigantic water tank, glass, transparent. With a few fishes swimming in it.

And then it was announced that this man would now come and get into this tank and hold his breath for seven minutes. And that's what happened. He came, still wearing a few clothes.

And he climbed up. Submerged himself in the tank. And of course, everybody could see him.

He was floating in there. And there was a countdown for seven minutes. And while he was in there, he looked at everybody from inside the tank.

Like a fish would look at you. But completely, kind of still. And he managed to hold his breath for seven minutes.

And then finally he came out. And then after he had recovered from that ordeal, the organizer wanted me to meet him. So there were a few people standing around and he was there.

And one of the people standing around said, can you do that, he asked me. And I said, I don't think I can. But I can stop thinking for seven minutes.

And the man who had been in the tank said, it's very much like that. He meant, I suppose, being in the tank. And he probably meant when he's in the tank, he's not thinking.

Because if he were thinking, he wouldn't last for seven minutes. Presuming that it's not a trick, we don't know, but it didn't seem to be a trick. He was just in there holding his breath.

So I mentioned this story because I want to emphasize again this afternoon the main point of why we're here. And that is to fully realize that there are two dimensions, so to speak, to who you are. The one that is defined in form, which includes the physical form and the psychological form and the thinking entity.

So your consciousness has the two dimensions. There's an intermediate area, but we don't need to go there. There's the conscious dimension of thinking, and that creates your conventional sense of identity.

And there is the deeper space where there is a vast consciousness that is not defined in form. So there's the two of you, the known, the person, and the unknown, the undefined, or as the Buddha called it, the unmanifested, the unborn, the uncreated. And the Buddha added, this is one of the sutras in my free translation.

So he said, there is the unborn, the unmanifested, the uncreated. If there were not, sorry, the sutras are a little bit repetitive. If there were not the unborn, the unmanifested, the uncreated, there would be no escape from the born, the manifested, and the created.

And I'm adding in my free translation, and you would be completely stuck in it and with it. So there is a dimension in every human that is far deeper than what you conventionally consider is the I. So you can say there is the I that is defined through thought, and there is a deeper I that is not defined.

And the purpose of your existence really is in evolutionary terms, is to find that deeper being, the undefined, the unknown, and bring that into this dimension and into your life. And you all make that you have made the discovery already that you don't need to think continuously and that your deeper sense of who you are does not depend on what your mind is saying about who you are. There is a more immediate, much more real sense of I than you could ever find through thinking about who you are.

So to access the unmanifested, the unborn, the uncreated, if you want to use those words, you have to find within yourself the space of no thought, which is always there. It's just covered up by continuous thought. Doesn't have to be.

So gradually you find that the unknown you comes through more and more. First, you have to become comfortable. I mentioned it briefly the other day.

First, you need to become comfortable when you enter that space with not knowing anything, because that is the, you're accessing the unknown, the undefined, which is primordial intelligence itself. Not intelligence that has become thought. That's the only thing you can measure to a limited degree, but there's primordial intelligence.

In order to access that, you have to give up, not completely because it's still there, but your reliance, exclusive reliance, and main reliance on accumulated knowledge and on thinking. If you don't give up your reliance on conditioned knowledge and thinking, you can never go beyond. So you would be very limited, not be creative, and ultimately not wise.

You can have a highly developed mind, but lacking in wisdom. And to have a highly developed mind and lacking in wisdom as an underlying guiding force, and that comes from the deeper level, to have that highly developed mind, whether it's a person or a society, culture, is a dangerous thing because that mind can create havoc for yourself and others. And the more developed it is, the more destructive it potentially is also.

So you find that often with people who, some people who run countries, of course they have a university degree, and they, well, not all, but some might be considered intelligent in conventional terms. And yet very often their actions are actually very unintelligent. They don't take into account the totality of the situation, the deeper implications of their actions.

So they are not, whatever they say or do, is not connected to the realm of wisdom. Don't need to mention any names, but look at any politician that comes to mind, look at the past 20 years. Some may come to mind.

And such lack of wisdom, quite amazing. And then you have the highly developed industry that creates dreadful weapons of destruction. And these people who make these, they're all intelligent.

Otherwise they wouldn't be able to do that. But how can you build an atom bomb without intelligence? It requires highly intelligent people.

So wisdom, intelligence needs to be guided by something deeper. And that deeper then needs to, can actually use the mind, the human mind, as an instrument for its expression. And so, again, in order to get to that place, which is not a place, it's just a deeper dimension to who you are, you need to give up that reliance, that unconscious belief that you continuously need to think, to work things out, because otherwise things will get out of control.

So every moment you need to have some kind of, comes to some kind of conclusion about what's happening at this moment. Immediately have some kind of opinion and conclusion and call it something. And often at school, that quick, the quick, like very quick comeback is often encouraged.

The people who are, when the teacher asks questions, the one who can give the quickest answer is usually considered the best. And then there are others who may be slower and they don't even have time to raise their hand because they haven't, it hasn't sunk in yet. The question hasn't, the question needs to sink in for, and then at some point an answer may come, but they don't wait for them.

There was, for example, when Einstein was four years old, his parents became concerned because the serious concern was that he might be mentally retarded because he was so slow at thinking. So we need to have that courage to go into that unknown place. And what is that unknown place?

Which is not a place. It's not to impose immediately interpretations on the world and on situations and on people and whatever arises. So to be able to just look at things, look not just visually, but look in also use metaphorically, which means to give attention to whatever is here now and to feel the power of your attention itself, which is intelligence, like a light that shines on a situation or on a person, and to feel that inherent power of consciousness that falls, is not, doesn't, is not produced by you.

It comes through you. Then you feel enormous amount of so-called self-confidence, not egoic self-confidence, but you are connected with, you can feel there's a power at the depth of who you are, and that power can flow into this moment. And it is there when you give your fullest attention to something and you're not thinking about it.

You're just looking, you're just giving attention. It could be a situation, a person you're looking at, whatever it is. You're just there as a field of attention, of awareness.

And so you are the bringer of awareness. And that flows from a deep place that is far transcends who you are as this physical form. That deep place connects you, not only with others or other humans, it also connects you with a source of all life.

And so you are not disconnected. You just seem to be. And the ego is a disconnected sense of self.

You are not disconnected from the totality of the universe. You are an aspect of the totality of the universe. You're not autonomous.

That's the delusion that every person is considered to be an independent consciousness, whereas the truth is every person is an expression of the one consciousness. So when you can feel that one consciousness as presence within yourself, you don't go around in continuous anxiety anymore. What's the next thing that's going to upset me?

And of course it always comes. So in other words, a certain confidence comes in that is not based on anything that you have perhaps achieved on the level of form. It's not confidence because you have an important position.

It's not confidence because you have accumulated wealth, not confidence because other people think you're great, or not confidence because you have a certain ability that you have developed that you're better at than most people. Usually those things, or you look better than most people, or at least above average, either good looks or you have a great body. So all those things could give you your sense of confidence.

So a person who is very good looking would gain most, unless there are other factors where that person is even more remarkable, but in the absence of other factors, the good looking person would predominantly gain self-confidence from looking in the mirror and seeing other people's reactions to who they are, which could be admiration and envy, depending on who is looking at you. And the ego would quite love that. It loves admiration and envy.

And so it feels, you feel confident because you're so good looking. And that lasts for, could last for a few years. And then it gets shaky because good looks don't last indefinitely.

And that's just one example. But whatever it is, it could be wealth, it could be what other people think of you. So you derive confidence from some source, but it's always very shaky.

And instead of then creating a thought in your mind and allowing this thought to survive and even proliferate in your mind and start complaining and so on, you can recognize that every human does that. When I lived in England, in the country, I had a cottage and there were two bedrooms, three bedrooms upstairs. And because my income was low, I had to rent out two bedrooms.

And so I had a succession of people renting over a period of three years or so. And probably about, it was a place where people would spend, come for a period of time and then move on. I had probably 10 or 11 people.

And out of those, eight out of 10, sooner or later developed, when I got to know them, lived in the same house with them, relatively small place, be displayed, there were areas in their behavior that were quite dysfunctional, almost called insane. And I don't just mean quirks of their personality, different ways of doing, no, some more than that. Patterns that led to complete distortion of reality in certain areas of their lives.

And that wasn't just one person, it was eight out of 10. And only one person didn't fit into any of these. Two people stayed relatively displayed, higher degree of presence.

There were certain variations also in them, but they didn't get taken over by personalities, temporary personas, sub-personalities, they're sometimes called, whatever you want to call them. They didn't get taken over completely, leading to almost total distortion of reality. I had one person, however, that she came, stayed for two or three months and was quite peaceful.

And a friend told me that she had told him, living at Eckhart's place is like living in a float tank. And the moment she moved out, I heard secondhand accounts, she was involved in huge drama, including physical violence with men and other women. And she was known for always generating huge drama in her life, except when she stayed with me.

I didn't know that, otherwise I probably wouldn't have invited her in. So somehow in the energy field of presence, she was able to drop into or rise into presence. But the moment she left, the old patterns came back.

Now that was an unusual case. Mostly you find humans are not one single being. This is the point of the story.

Once you know that, you can no longer perhaps misinterpret when humans shift and then do display behavior that is not conscious. So, and instead of then creating a thought in your mind and allowing this thought to survive and even proliferate in your mind and start complaining and so on, you can recognize every human does that, has that to a greater or lesser degree. Okay, then that's a step forward to that realization.

And then you can allow them because you probably are the same. There are different people in you. There's a more conscious you and there's a more unconscious you.

And then the more unconscious you has many different facets to it, different sub, different ways of being unconscious. And then you can see, okay, now we know that we can't trust people, except in the sense as Byron Katie said, I trust everybody, said I trust everybody to do what they do. So you have to, you can't trust them to display consistently conscious behavior.

That would be absurd. So you go to a deeper place and see what the real trust is not from doesn't come from people. The real trust is finding that place of depths within yourself that does not.

And once you're there, then you can relate to humans from there. And you no longer say, I demand that you are conscious all the time. And if you're not, I'll hold it against you.

And then I'll never talk to you again. So it all comes back to that place of dropping down into where the mind activity subsides. And instead of always being trapped in your thoughts and relating to the world and to people through your thoughts, plus the emotions that accompany the thoughts, you go to that deeper place of just feel your own presence.

Let's put it like that for a moment. Feel the presence that you are, the beingness of you, the most, that deep level of I amness, the presence. The only thing that cannot be doubted that it is absolutely real, that exists.

That is the isness of you. And if that is in the background of your life, then you can allow others to do what they do. The likelihood is when you meet others from that deeper place, their behavior will become a little more conscious.

The very unconscious sub-personalities may manifest themselves less. Because when you erroneously mistake a person's unconsciousness, unconscious sub-personality, or whatever you want to call it, when you erroneously mistake that for who they are and mentally focus on that, you also bring it out more in them every time you meet them because those are the expectations. And quite often, unless humans are really present, they oblige and they give you what you expect them.

If you expect dishonesty, you're more likely to find dishonesty in humans. When you expect violence, you're more likely to find it. So trust, really another word for it in spiritual terminology is faith.

Because what is faith? Faith is not belief. Belief means you have a story and you say, this story, I believe this story to be true.

And of course, you'd have no idea whether it is true. But you say, if you knew it was true, then you wouldn't say believe anymore. You can't say, I believe in this table.

You don't need to, it's here. So belief would be belief in some abstract story or whatever it is. It could be an ideology, something your mind tells you, but faith is very different.

In some languages, belief and faith, unfortunately, are the same word. Faith is trust. Faith is a sense of deep connectedness with being.

From that deep place of connectedness, you can also manifest things. But let's not talk about that right now. That is the conscious connection with source, the source of life, which is within you.

And it's so easy. It's you just become still and direct your attention to what? You direct your attention to nothing in particular.

You're just aware of attention and that's it. So if the attention is looking for your true self, it doesn't realize that it is your true self because it's consciousness. You are consciousness.

And knowing that, that's trust suddenly, because you're no longer dependent on the continuously shifting things out here for your sense of the beingness of who you are. Because not only humans are continuously shifting, but even things around you, they come and go. Situations continuously come and go, change.

Impermanence, as the Buddha called it, fleeting. And so as long as you look to externals for any sense of security, including humans, can I trust him? Can I trust her?

That's very precarious. And usually when I would say, no, don't trust him or her, trust yourself. But then you're no longer in a state of distrust.

No, trust then arises, but not from him or her. It's such essential teaching, but not many people seem to realize it yet. Now at that deeper level, really many things that are different concepts on the external level, they really all, they merge into one.

So when we speak of trust, or when we speak of presence, beingness, perhaps to put it more accurately, we'd say the connectedness with beingness is presence. And out of the presence flows trust. And out of the presence also flows, and that's also inseparable from trust, flows what you could call goodwill or benevolence towards other humans and other life forms.

Because when your mind is telling you something about another human and fixes, constructs an identity for that human by selecting the unconscious, one of the unconscious aspects of that human, by selecting that, then manufacturing a mental identity for that human. And then for the rest of your life, continue to relate to that human through that mind form. Then you can, there is no, the goodwill cannot flow.

You can, there cannot be an outflow of goodwill anymore. It's blocked by the mind pattern. But if you no longer trap the other human and yourself in the mind pattern, then there is an openness for the outflow, let's put it like that, the outflow of benevolence towards the other person, the other human being.

Well, you could call it love, but it's not the conventional, better maybe to call it loving kindness. And that is a wonderful thing to experience in relation. It makes human contact much more pleasant if you can feel an outflow of goodwill, even towards a human that you might not meet very briefly.

And even there, sense it for a moment when you're not, there's no thought, there's just a presence, and you're looking at another human and you feel an energetic, one could say also an energetic connection for a moment, and it's an outflow of goodwill, no matter who, what their function is at that particular moment in your life. There's always then an added dimension. Otherwise you reduce other human beings to whatever their function have, whatever function they have in relation to you, the man who is selling you something.

Is he only the man who is selling you something? Is that, are you reducing this person to the function that he or she performs at that moment in relation to you? Or is there a deeper dimension so that there is a human being that you recognize?

And the way I, as you may, I don't know if you have heard me say that before, the way what I, how I interpret human being is you might notice that there are two words in the English language. In a way at first I felt it's a pity that English doesn't have one word for human being. It only has man, and that's supposed to include women.

So when you often, when you read, when people say men, it's supposed to include women too, but it doesn't, but it still means men. So some languages like German, they have a word that applies to man and woman, mensch. So that would be mensch is man or woman.

But English language, you need to have two words. You have to say human being. At first I felt, well, that's a pity, but then upon looking more closely at human being, I realized, oh, that's actually quite wonderful because there's a deep truth there.

You have the human and you have the being come together. The human is a form. It's the physical vehicle and it's the psychological form, including all the imperfections and all the accumulations and the conditioning, the person, basically the person who you think you are, the person who other people think you are, the person that you've been told you are, and the person you believe to be.

The person, ideas in your mind about who you are, that's a person and that's a human. Now, most people only know the human. They think they are the human.

They don't realize that they are also the being. But you have to know both really to be awakened in this dimension. You need to be awakened to the being dimension in you so that you can be in the balance between form, physical, mental, emotional, psychological form, the form who you are, the person, and the transcendent dimension, the essence of who you are, which is the being.

And your identity to awaken spiritually means that your identity shifts from the human to the being. And when your identity has shifted from the human to the being, the human becomes a more pleasant human. And it's more comfortable for yourself to be this particular human in that life, this particular lifetime.

And it's more comfortable for others to be with you as that particular human. And that's because you also know the being, the transcendent dimension. Wait.

That's good. Release it all, whatever it all is. Yes.

[Speaker 4] (7:41:43 - 7:42:01)
I'm very nervous to be asking my question because I feel like I have a lot of confusion. But I know that that's a good place to be asking my question from. I've been a financial planner for 33 years.

[Speaker 1] (7:42:01 - 7:42:02)
Sorry, what planner?

[Speaker 4] (7:42:03 - 7:44:07)
A financial planner for 33 years. And went back to school six years ago to become an energy healer. And I love it because I don't have to know.

As a financial planner, I had to know. You know, I had to give answers. But with energy healing, I get to hang out in the unknown.

And it's really fun for me. And I'm not attached to the outcome for my clients. I know something's happening, but I don't know what is happening, always.

And I love that. So the question that I have for you, wait. It has to do with something you said this afternoon that I got very confused about.

Any resistance closes the channel. Right. And I know that I have a powerful effect on anyone that I come in contact with.

I know I vibrate at a very high consciousness level. And that I'm here to contribute on that level. And I'm very good at manifesting.

But the place that I'm confused about is that I don't know how to figure out those internal resistances. I'm not clear on that. I'm clear on all the external resistances.

Like, do you want to do this or that? No, yes. But I get confused about being in the source and knowing when I'm in the source versus when I'm maybe in my egoic creation, because I'm so good at manifesting.

[Speaker 1] (7:44:09 - 7:44:57)
So what is in your daily life, your state of consciousness? Do you undergo great fluctuations in your state of consciousness? Do you still experience the pain body occasionally coming up?

What are your thought patterns throughout the day? Do you have episodes of negative thinking that you identify with? To what extent are you able to be aware of your thoughts?

Do you get taken over by streams of thinking on a daily basis? What is your state of consciousness in your daily life?

[Speaker 4] (7:44:57 - 7:45:58)
I'm very good at witnessing myself. I'm fairly good at being able to make a choice in the moment, a different choice in the moment when I'm witnessing myself. I've done a lot of work on my pain body.

I think where I have a challenge is in something along the lines of clarity as to, there's like a fear or something that runs maybe in me along the lines of knowing that I'm good at manifesting and not wanting to go in a direction of manifesting when I'm not sure that that's the direction. So there's that confusion in the piece that you said this afternoon. Any resistance closes the channel.

I just keep sitting with that going, where's my resistance that's closing the channel?

[Speaker 1] (7:46:00 - 7:46:25)
Well, only you can know that resistance arises as negative thinking that you are identified with and then an emotional contraction that reflects the negative thinking. Maybe there isn't very much resistance and that's why you get confused. You're looking for something that isn't there anymore.

Maybe you think there must be some resistance. Where is it? I'm confused now.

[Speaker 4] (7:46:28 - 7:46:38)
It could be because I have spent my life on a very deep healing journey and been very open to always looking at those places.

[Speaker 1] (7:46:38 - 7:49:01)
Yes. So trust yourself and not only not the personal self, but the deeper self and what emanates from that. And it seems to me that you're fine.

You don't need to be concerned about resistance right now. There's already enough presence in you to dissolve it when it comes. Nobody needs to demand that they should be totally free of resistance or that they should be totally conscious on a continuous basis that is not necessary.

Just detecting when you're not conscious is fine. Every time you detect a dysfunctional state that you have slipped into in a relationship or at work or wherever you may be, then the moment you know it, the moment you lost it, so to speak, that's an expression, I lost it, which usually means in common usage, I got very angry. But here I'm using it in a wider sense.

When you say, I lost it, it means I lost presence. I lost consciousness. I got totally identified with the stream of thinking.

I got totally identified with the pain body. I lost it in the way we use it here, or I use it means I lost presence completely. So you may sometimes still lose it, but I believe you're fine.

I don't think there's that much resistance. Your mind is perhaps looking for a problem where there isn't one. And that, by the way, is not uncommon because the mind always looks for a problem somewhere.

It's amazing. You could take a person to heaven, a person who is not, no, you are okay. You'll be fine in heaven.

But if you take a normal person to heaven, normal meaning unconscious, he would get very unhappy because, well, why is the problem? He will find something wrong. Peace would be very threatening.

They're not ready for that. You are ready for heaven, it seems, so embrace it.

[Speaker 2] (7:49:03 - 7:49:04)
Okay, thank you.

[Speaker 14] (7:49:05 - 7:49:06)
All right. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (7:49:29 - 8:51:35)
So it's not really true to say, I am aware of the awareness in me. No, the awareness in you is aware of itself. When the person and the deeper I, the person that I call the surface I and the deep I don't exist as separate.

So one day you're, and then for a moment you're, but the two can come together. And so then you're able to function in this world as a person, but always with an additional dimension that operates now through that person. In other words, the way in which you deal with difficulties and situations and people changes, it's no longer an egoic way of dealing with things, but dealing with things consciously, this greater intelligence can now operate and use your flow into your mind.

And then their mind comes up with the right solution suddenly, or spontaneously you take the right action. Whereas before you would have been reactive out of the egoic conditioning, which usually is wrong. It just makes things worse.

So that's the, then the two you can have, I sometimes put it like this. You can have one foot in this dimension where you are a person and you have the other foot in the transcendent dimension. So, and then you don't lose yourself anymore in your, ultimately in your mind.

And that means you don't lose yourself in the world anymore because ultimately the so-called world and your mind are one and the same thing. So you don't lose yourself anymore. You can, you operate within this limited realm, but you're no longer looking for yourself or for some kind of ultimate completion or fulfillment in this limited realm of the horizontal dimension.

Which means you can now pursue a goal still because the surface eyes still operates here. You pursue a goal, but you do not make the mistake of overemphasizing what this goal can do for you once you reach it. Yes, you might be very dedicated to what you're doing, but there is not an excessive projection into where you're feeling you need to get to.

I need to get there. I need to have achieved the success that will make me feel complete and fulfilled. And then I will have made it.

Made what? The ego. That goes, you pursue a goal, but your attention is in the doing rather than where you want to get to.

You know where you want to get to, but your main attention is in the quality of the doing now. Whatever action you take now, you're able to be present with it rather than always devaluing everything you do now in the service of this greater goal in the future that will never ultimately satisfy you anyway. And that is a very dysfunctional way to live.

Whenever stress arises, something has happened. You don't want to be where you are, and ultimately you don't want to be doing what you're doing now. Stress means there is a projection to some future point where you want to be, rather than here, you want to be there.

So the quality of the doing diminishes. There's no, the consciousness doesn't flow into the doing. The doing is a means to an end.

It goes like, I want to be there and here I'm doing. Instead of, yes, peripherally, you know where you want to get to, but that's not where your main focus is, your peripheral, but your main focus is the doing itself. So the doing is no longer in the service of the future.

It is self-fulfilling, and then it becomes actually much more empowered. In other words, you enjoy the doing, no matter what it is. There is an enjoyment of the energy that flows into the doing, and that's enlightened or conscious action, as I call it, conscious action.

It's not reduced just to a means to an end. Yes, it is also a means to an end, but it is not only a means to an end. It is fundamentally an end in itself, the doing itself.

That's already, this teaching has already, the ancient scripture, the Bhagavad Gita, which if you haven't read it, you should. Nobody knows how old it is, maybe 2,000 years or more. Again, one of the main lessons in the Bhagavad Gita is it is possible to perform an action without losing yourself in some desired goal, which in the Bhagavad Gita is called the fruit of the action.

Don't give, it says, don't give excessive attention to the fruit of the action, but just be conscious of the action itself, and this is regarded as a spiritual practice, and this is the, it's called karma yoga. The yoga in the sense of, yoga here means spiritual practice, not necessarily body movement, but that's fine too. Karma yoga, karma means action, karma, action and reaction, karmas.

So karma yoga is the practice, the action as spiritual practice, and that's a very, very powerful teaching that's been around a long, long time. Any activity that you perform as a person, by performing it in this way, becomes actually empowered, and then you have a foot in both worlds. You have the unconditioned consciousness acting through you, giving your attention, your fullest attention to the doing in the moment, in this moment, whatever you do in this moment, and if it's not just doing, it might be something else.

One isn't, you're not always doing, you're always walking around this world, perceiving things, and talking and perceiving and so on. You may be familiar, I'm sure you are, with the term that's mentioned a lot these days as in New Age teachings and others, gratefulness or gratitude, and again, that is related to this. What does it mean, gratitude?

Well, people say, well, you say thank you for, okay, it sounds a little weird, you say, thank you, thanks. Somebody asked me, I think it was a Buddhist, because Buddhists don't believe in God as such. It's not that they are atheists, but they don't believe it's a complete thing, but don't need to talk about this, but what is that, who am I thanking if I don't think of a God that has just given me something?

So why do I say thank you? I don't understand, who am I thanking? Gratitude is really appreciation.

It's an alternative term you could use, and what is appreciation? It is, again, it's related to be present with a sense perceptions, for example. You can have appreciation for anything by giving it attention, and to give attention, your mind needs to be free of the conditioned naming and labeling, so awareness, again, presence.

You give attention to this flower, for example, you give it attention, and so this is visual in this case, and you appreciate its beauty, but without mentally saying, you may, yes, the thought may come into your mind, it's beautiful, but you don't stay stuck in that thought, then the thought disappears, and you continue to be aware of that flower, and you appreciate its, it's just, if one had to use words, incredible presence and aliveness, and then a kind of thank you arises that is not necessarily verbal, it's a deep appreciation, but you can even do it with even so-called inanimate objects. There's a glass of water here, and I can see the reflections of the light in the water, it's really beautiful, and for a moment, the mind stops, and simply perceives the incredible beauty of this, without even calling it beauty. It's really, wow, and then you feel this, everything is a gift, there's a aliveness all around you.

Some people make a mistake with the gratitude practice, which is a way of being in the present moment. The mistake is they associate gratitude with a story in their mind, and the story would go like this, I really should be grateful what I have, because look at all these people who have less than me. Okay, well, this may be true, but it's not the path to true gratitude, because if you can only be appreciative and have gratitude by comparing yourself to others who are worse off than you, that is not true gratitude.

You're dependent on others to be worse off than you to feel a bit more grateful. I should be more grateful. It's just, don't look for gratitude on the level of narratives in your mind, but the immediate thing, sense perception, hearing birdsong, clouds, sky, whatever, even how light gets reflected off the surface, just this moment of pure appreciation of the aliveness of things, and there's always another factor that comes in, and it's important whenever you are aware of these things, whether you are performing an action, or you're simply contemplating something and feel this gratitude or acknowledgement of the being of whatever it is, there's a very subtle thing here. Again, let's make it experiential. Right here now, we take in the totality of this room and the lights and a man on the chair talking, and perhaps you're aware that you're breathing while you're contemplating all this, and now we come to the, perhaps the most important point of realization.

As you're aware of all this and appreciate it, are you also aware of yourself at the same time, but not the person? As you are aware of all this and you're inside, you're still, are you aware of that still, let's say, what words to be used, are you aware of that still presence that is aware of all this? Are you aware of yourself as that awareness?

And that's a very subtle thing, but it's very important. So you have here the outer world of the senses, which ultimately is only the surface reality, but beautiful too, but you're also aware of yourself as consciousness, as the stillness, which is the unconscious, the unconditioned consciousness. Now, when I put it like that, in words, a little error arises, which is created by language, because I'm asking, are you aware of yourself?

And that seems to imply that there's a duality there, but it arises because we're using language. When you say, I am aware of myself, that looks like a duality. There's I, and there's that which I am aware of, but that's not how it is.

It only appears like that when you begin to talk about it. But when you don't talk about it, there's just the awareness itself, because you are not separate from the awareness. So it's not really true to say, I am aware of the awareness in me.

No, the awareness in you is aware of itself. That's perhaps a better way of putting it. And that is so, that's the secret of the awareness not losing yourself in the world and in your mind while you're operating in this world.

Can you be aware of yourself as, now I'm using another term now, but it's all the same. Are you aware of yourself as the space, which is the presence, the awareness? Are you aware of yourself as the space for whatever it is that arises in your awareness, the forms that arise, your physical body, even your thoughts and trans-perceptions?

All these things arise in the awareness that you are. The awareness is the space for it. And so to be aware of that space is ultimately to be aware of yourself at the deepest level where you find that far transcends who or what you are as a person.

So you're aware of, and that space of awareness is actually the true meaning of the presence of God. The present moment, that is the power of the present moment, the power itself, of consciousness itself, of life itself. And that power is the power of now.

Then you're aware of yourself as that, and there's the world, and there, this is the, in some spiritual traditions, called the I am, the beingness of you, the essence of you, that is the I am that, in the Old Testament, God replies when, I can't remember who, Abraham or Moses asks, meets God, so to speak, it's a story. I mean, you can't meet God like that, but there's a story there, there's a deep truth in it. God, what's your name, he asked God.

And God said, my name is I am, the I am that I am. And he's very surprised, oh, I am is the name of God, wow. That's very strange.

I'm sure that's what he said, it's not in the Bible, but that is so weird. And perhaps he realized something, when the essence, I am, it's not just your I am, it is the I am of the universe, it is the being itself, the beingness of the universe itself. You can realize that within as your essence, and that connects you to the one, God, if you have to be very careful with words like that, because they have been misused a lot and misunderstood.

But the way I see it or perceive it or sense it is that the consciousness that is the hidden essence behind all the phenomenal universe that we see with our perceive, with our senses, behind it, there is a vast intelligence operating that is not part of this dimension, but somehow flows into this dimension and gradually creates more and more complex forms. It gradually expresses itself more fully in this dimension. And this, it flows into this dimension from the transcendent one that we call God, but we cannot, of course, understand at all.

God does not exist in space or time, but is transcendent to all that. But just as the sun emanates light and creates life here by the energy that it emanates continuously, and that could be used as an analogy in the same way, this is my perception, and perhaps it makes, perhaps you can sense the truth of it too, maybe not, maybe yes. The God's, the emanation of God into this dimension is like the emanation of light that comes from the sun.

And this emanation is consciousness. And this consciousness is behind every form that arises here. It's an intelligence that operates.

You could also call it the soul of the world. The ancients had a term for it. In Latin, it's called anima mundi, the soul of the world, that everything ultimately is a manifestation of that deeper transcendent aliveness.

And so the, what you sense in yourself as yourself, as the consciousness, is the light of God in you and as you. It is the light of God in you. That's how I sense it somehow.

And so just as the light of the sun is not separate from the sun, it's somehow, it's an extension of the sun, one could say, in the same way, the consciousness that flows, that is the essence of what you are, is an extension of God, is an emanation of the one source of all life. And that is you. That is the essence.

But that is the transcendent self, which the Buddhists call no-self. That is the essence. So in essence, you are the light of God in this world, one could say, the light of consciousness.

You are the light of, you are the light of the world as consciousness. And that's exactly what Jesus said to his disciples. You are the light of the world.

So there's nature and there's the present moment. Here, now, here. Oh, and I thought there was nothing to be grateful for.

I'm breathing. Now, there may be one or two people being with us here, there, who perhaps are stuck somewhere in a room and can't get out because of physical disability or they may be in prison and they say, what can I do? What can we do?

We can't get out into nature. Well, you need to remember that your body also is nature. So you can start there.

Every time you take a breath, that's nature. Nature is breathing. The air that you're breathing is nature.

The very fact of breathing is a natural process. It's not choice. It's done for you.

It's not so much that you breathe, although we say I breathe, but you're not the body breathes. So it's a natural thing that happens. You wouldn't say I'm beating my heart.

You don't do that, but that's the same thing. The body does it. It's a natural process.

For some reason, we say I'm breathing because breathing is semi-voluntary. You can't stop it for a while. But not for that long, because if you stop it for too long, nature takes over and you go, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah.

So nature takes, as nature, you live with nature, with your body. So even if you can't get out, you can start by being aware of that level of yourself, the physical level, the natural part of who you are, the body, and not just by saying, okay, I'm looking at my hands or my feet, not just the physical, not the external image of the body, but you can go into the body with your attention. And that's, you're in nature.

Even if you're in a prison cell, you can do that. And even if there's no opportunity, you might be in an office block in Manhattan and you look out of the window and all you have is maybe a little bit of sky. Okay, there's a little bit of nature there.

You can look at that. But you have more nature than that in yourself. So as you sat in your office, wherever it is, go within first, be conscious that breathing is happening.

Hmm, the body is breathing. Be conscious also of the preciousness of the air. It's such a precious substance.

So to acknowledge that is actually part of what sometimes is called to live in a state of gratitude. Now, some people say, what can I be grateful for? There's nothing in my life that I can be grateful for.

Well, are you breathing? Yes. Well, you start there.

If you start being grateful for the tiniest things, then gradually that expands and that shift in consciousness of honoring life, no matter how small it is, the manifestation of life as yourself, by honoring that, gratitude arises and a totally different state of consciousness then brings about good things. But you have to start with the good that is already there. If you want, there's not enough good in my life, people say, I need more good.

Life hasn't given me what I needed. Start with what you have. And the most obvious thing to start with is I'm breathing.

And that's something, it's something very beautiful to feel that you are absorbing this energy that is air. That then merges with your being. It's an amazing thing to honor the process of breath, to honor the fact that you are breathing.

And that is, that you can start with that, that is being, becoming, honoring the present moment. If you're looking for the present moment, which is of course all there ever is, some people write it in the power of now and we're surprised. And they're still surprised when I say the present moment is all there ever is in your life.

There's nothing, there is no past and future in your experience except when you think about it, but not in your actual experience. Oh, well, yes, it's actually true. The greatest philosopher could come and he could not argue with the fact that you only ever experience the present moment, there is nothing else.

The mind asks, well, where is the present moment? Well, start with your breath. That will always take you into the present moment because you're breathing now.

And you're only ever taking one breath, this one. All other breaths you either remember or anticipate mentally. And it's actually said that the Buddha recommended this as a meditation, maybe even before the Buddha, but the Buddha certainly recommended that people should be aware of their breath as a meditation.

He didn't say, as far as I know, that that will take you into the present moment. And he didn't say that will actually stop your mind, too. He just said, be aware of your breath.

So breath awareness meditation has become a Buddhist meditation that's practiced, but the dangerous thing is with practitioners of meditation is they make it into something to be achieved through it. They want to become good at it. You can't become good at one breath.

This is just one breath. So there's nature and there's the present moment. Here, now, here.

Oh, and I thought there was nothing to be grateful for. I'm breathing or breathing is happening. And then as you become aware of that, you're beginning to feel that your body is also alive on the inside, to feel that there's an energy that is pervading the entire body.

That's nature, and it's very close. That's the closest, and you can't get to a tree that close as you can to your body or anything else. So that's really the closest you can ever get to nature is there in yourself as the physical body.

But when you become aware, now, this is something for us, for each one of us to do right now, not to do, but to notice. There's no doing as such because we don't have to do anything. You can do.

Sometimes it helps to move about, to get a little bit of sense that your body is alive. It can help, but you can see this. The body is alive.

Can I feel that? Yes, the breath is happening. And there's aliveness in my feet, my hands, my legs.

Very subtle at first, but it's there. And there's nature, and that's already a deeper level than what you see. Out in nature, when you look at a tree, you can't, to get deeper than the image of the tree, you have to have gone deeper within yourself so that you can sense the aliveness of the tree.

You cannot sense the aliveness of the tree unless you can sense the aliveness in yourself. If you don't sense the aliveness in yourself, you're only approaching the tree with your mind, and your mind might say, oh, that's a nice tree, but you're missing the depth of it. You're missing the fact that there's more here than what the mind tells you there's here.

When the mind says there's a tree or a flower or whatever it is, what you're looking at and call a tree and then believe that the word that you have attached to it is actually describes its reality. No, it's a label. It's an abstraction that you put onto this thing that you cannot really understand.

It's a vitally alive, mysterious being with great depth. As much depth as you, because all life forms are connected and come out of the one source of life. So you're beginning to go to feel that when you feel the aliveness of the inner bodies, not quite the deepest source yet, but you're going towards the non-physical, the life energy that comes from the source.

So connecting with yourself through breath and feeling the inner body is part of connecting with nature. When you're in nature, you may be looking at something, whatever it may be, but then you can also take in the totality of where you are, whatever it may be, your surroundings, trees, mountains, the ocean, or just simple grassy surface, bushes. Take in the totality and then bring in other sense perceptions too, but that requires alertness so that you don't drift back into mental concepts.

Stay alert and you bring in, become aware, not just of the visual aspect of being there. You become aware of the sounds. There may be sounds, natural sounds, or there may be sounds that are not natural that are interfering, but that's fine.

There may be natural sounds, a breeze, you can hear the wind, the leaves are moving in the wind, or the birds, who knows, all natural sounds. Then there's also the air. You can feel the air, perhaps there's a very slight movement of air.

You can feel it on your skin. And then there's a sense of your smell. Maybe there's a certain sense arise as you become aware of your sense of smell.

Maybe you can smell the moisture in the ground or whatever. Be there with all your senses, all senses. You can also, for a few moments, close your eyes so that you can more focus on the other senses that tend to be neglected for many people.

So you just take in your, so you smell the air. You feel the slight breeze on your skin, sounds. It's a beautiful experience.

And you don't need to look for always the spectacular in nature. Sometimes nature can be very spectacular, but a lot of the time, it's just ordinary things. Yes, sometimes you have a beautiful, incredible flower or gigantic sequoia tree or whatever, incredible things.

And many other times, there's just normal nature there, nothing that says, pay attention to me. So you have to find, if you're alert enough, you will see the, concealed in the ordinary spectacle of nature, there is an extraordinary aliveness and beingness and presence. So you don't always look for the one, the great thing.

Just to be aware of all, many things that one would habitually overlook in a normal state of consciousness. It's just, there's a bush there. There's a grass here.

It's been cut. Nothing special. But if you really come alert, then you see everything is intensely alive.

There's a consciousness there. It may not be self-conscious, not conscious of itself. There is a consciousness that has manifested as the tree, the flower, the grass, the bush.

There's a consciousness that has manifested in that form. A different vibrational frequency, one could say to your consciousness, but it's not your consciousness. There's only one universal consciousness manifesting in countless life forms.

So you begin to recognize because, but only because you know yourself as consciousness, your mind has become still enough for you to know yourself as consciousness. You sense the consciousness that is inseparable from who you are, that is the essence of who you are, that is who you are. And then you can sense the consciousness in other life forms, it's only then.

And that sensing of consciousness in other life forms is a deep state of connectedness. You're no longer separate from it, which you are condemned to this separateness when you only relate to things through conceptualization, because that becomes a barrier to everything. The concepts become the barrier.

When they are free of that, the sense of separation disappears. And there's a oneness, for example, of you and the flower, the oneness of you and the tree, because there's no longer an entity there that is me, the conceptual entity. There's only consciousness perceiving itself in a different form.

Welcome. I just want to remind you that we are not here to do anything. We are here to, one could say, experience something rather than do something.

And what we are here to experience, and even that's not quite right, I'll come to that in a minute. What we're here to experience is very subtle, but very powerful. Whatever name we give that reduces it.

It's not that. It's very vast. For the time being, let's just call it stillness.

Now, when I said we're here to experience something, that's not absolutely right, but whenever we use language, we are bound to falsify that which goes far beyond concepts. It's not so much that we're here to experience something as to find that which lies, which underlies all experience, a dimension that is deeper than any experience. Becoming aware of that within yourself.

So, some of you may have written down or have in your mind goals you want to achieve in life, and that's good. It's unlikely that achieving stillness will figure prominently as one of your goals, or even number one, and yet it's the most important thing in your life. But it's a good thing that it's not on your list of goals to be achieved, because if you make it into a goal to be achieved, it implies that you need the future to be achieved.

To achieve stillness, which is, of course, true for all other goals, but not for that which we call stillness. Temporarily, we just call it, for the time being, stillness. If you make it into a goal to be achieved, you place it into the future and you'll never find it, because it's inseparable from the present moment, the now, the now that usually people are not aware of as an actual presence.

And here we have another pointer we could use instead of stillness, and that is presence. And as the word implies, presence is inseparable from the present, the now. Now, for most people, yet the now is not a living realization.

They are only aware of what happens in the now, and even that's not quite right. They're not really aware of it. They are reactive towards it, and they are identified with it.

They are identified with their thoughts that arise. They are reactive to what happens outside. So I'm here just talking a little bit, giving you pointers with every sentence, every word is really a pointer towards that, and I trust that as we sit here together, giving up the idea that we are here to do something, as we sit here together, a realization arises within you that is the living presence within.

The thinking mind stops for a moment, and there's just spacious awareness, stillness. You haven't gone to sleep. You've become still without falling into dreamless sleep, without falling into dreams.

Just something has arisen that usually you would have overlooked, and our meditation here, if we want to call it that, is to become aware of the space within, another pointer, the stillness, the space. Becoming totally at ease with the present moment, a very rare state for most humans. Usually they're only at ease when some desire has just been fulfilled, and then they're at ease for a little while, a few minutes, perhaps.

Or they are at ease because they're so tired. They're moving towards sleep. So I'm here to lead you into that realization of inner stillness, of that dimension within.

Lead you through words, which are only pointers, and through the demonstration of presence, which you can sense if you pay attention to the underlying stillness that is here as I speak, behind the words, between the words. Tune into that. Nothing personal in that, nothing to do with this person.

And as you tune into that, the same dimension arises within you, which again has nothing to do with that person that you think you are. So there is a dimension that transcends the person. It's in this person, and it's in that person.

The dimension that transcends the personal and the person. And everything to do with the person, the personal history, the personal problems, the life situation, the ups and downs of the life situation. They will always be there, the ups and downs of the life situation.

But the miracle is finding the transcendent dimension within you, without which life cannot be a pleasant experience, not for long. It cannot be satisfying, not for long, never for long. So without the realization of the transcendent dimension, the formless, spacious, stillness, nothing will satisfy you.

It's frustrating. Life is very frustrating without that dimension. If you haven't found it.

But of course, the dimension is there in everyone. It's not something that you need to achieve. You can't achieve it, let alone achieve it in the future.

You can discover it here and now within. It's lurking there underneath all the doing, underneath all the thinking. It's always there, but completely, ignored by most people.

If you're comfortable with theistic terms, you could say God is always present, but completely ignored by most people. Because if God has any meaning, it is the transcendent dimension of life. It transcends, means it is beyond whatever arises in life, beyond thought, beyond physical forms, beyond form.

It transcends form. It is beyond past and future. It transcends time.

It has nothing to do with time. It is presence, eternal presence. And presence, eternal presence or eternity, is not some weird abstract philosophical concept.

It can be, and it points to a living realization. So the most precious thing to find in life is that there's stillness inside you always. Always.

You just have to pay attention to it. But then the strange thing is that when you become aware of stillness, you realize that the awareness and the stillness are not two but one. So it's only when we use language, we say, I'm now, I'm aware of stillness.

You put it into language. So when you're aware of stillness, there is a knowing where concepts are not needed. Words are not needed.

And there is no duality, really. It's only when you translate it into words, there's a duality, and you say, I'm aware of stillness. But what really happens is that awareness and stillness are a single realization.

There is no subject and object in this realization. When we talk about it, it sometimes seems that there is a subject. I am aware of stillness.

I can feel the stillness inside me. When you put it into words, that's how it's the subject and object. But when you look more deeply beyond words, you see that there's not me as an entity who is aware of stillness as something in me.

It's only when we use language and that duality appears. So when I'm aware of stillness, really, the awareness and the stillness are one.

[Speaker 2] (8:52:06 - 9:18:47)
Just feel your body. Feel the vibration, the tingling of your inner body. Just by feeling even your hands.

Can you feel your hands? And that energy body acts as a bridge connecting you to stillness. That one life, it's energy, pure energy.

The same energy that are in the plants and the flowers and in other human beings before it's distorted by thought, by emotions. So continue feeling that as we go deeper within, and perhaps you'd like to close your eyes, listen to that silence that is in the room, and who is aware of that silence, that awareness itself. When we become aware of whether it's external silence or aware of some sort of object, whether it's outside of us or an object that is inside of us, such as thoughts or emotions, it's like turn that attention, your awareness onto itself.

By doing that, you tap into that stillness that is within, the stillness, the consciousness that you are, and that consciousness coming through your form and manifesting as your individual soul. It appears to be individual, but there is really only the one consciousness, the one life, the one spirit, and you are that spirit. And even though you may, on this level of form, be in different stages of consciousness, if you can say that, or as I was saying yesterday, some are buds, some are more open and flowering.

So you may be walking in, like both worlds right now, the world of form and that dimension that is stillness. It is the flowering of human consciousness, that unfolding that happens within, that we are moving, shifting from that material world, the sense world, the world of form into consciousness, into that stillness, into that dimension that is unconditioned, that is formless. And as we shift and move through that level, there are times where it's going to be challenging, where it feels up and down, and times that it just feels nice and smooth.

But remember that those times, if there is any movement, that is the movement of form, not your true nature. Your true nature is the stillness in which you are aware of the forms manifesting and moving through time and space. But the dimension, the core of who you are, that spiritual dimension, is the screen, the background, the ocean, the sky, the vastness, eternal, infinite, life in which forms appear and eventually forms dissolve.

The longer that forms stay in our field of vision or our life, and the more that we have that mind level, if we connect more to that mind level, we will grab hold of that form. And when it goes, it's more painful. There's more suffering involved as it dissolves.

There's a practice in India where people will go to maybe the Ganges or a place where they will burn the dead bodies and a practice where you sit there and meditate on death. Perhaps you can even go to a cemetery and sit there and meditate here in the Western world and meditate on death. But here in the Western world, we kind of like, we hide those things away.

Death? There is no death. What are you talking about, death?

We put it away, and yet in some cultures, it's almost like a celebration. It was in India one time, and I would hear all this music and this chanting as people are walking down the street. There's a stream of people, and I saw these people holding up this on a platform, a dead body with sunglasses on it.

I don't know why it needed sunglasses, but apparently it did. And they were just singing and chanting and dancing as they were bringing to the body to, I don't know where they were bringing it to, but someplace where they will cremate it in front of you, and you watch it. And part of connecting to that spiritual life, the essence of who you are, which is the eternal consciousness, which is no form, is while you are here in this body and on this level of the human realm, it is beautiful to be able to practice or to be with, to meditate on the dying, the death, the letting go.

It's the ultimate letting go. And even when we are on our deathbed, it will be the ultimate of I'm leaving this so-called world, the form, the ultimate death. When Eckhart's mother was getting older, her body was failing her, and she was very attached to her body.

You know, oh, you know, I don't wanna see, you know, have people see me using this walker. And we had just put her into an assisted care home, and we just said, you know, have you looked around? Everybody else is using a walker.

So she was very attached to her body. And I remember having the thought, I really hope as I age, I will age gracefully. And there is that process, because there is a slight attachment where as I was aging and as my body started to change, and I realized, wow, this is harder than I thought to be able to let go of certain aspects of the way you look, you know, the wrinkles that come, or your body starts sagging, or you start gaining weight, or whatever it is that the change begins to happen from this age of this dimension of the world of really celebrating only youth, that youth is the best thing on the physical level. But we forget that there is the eternal youth within us, but yet we have this form. So we are in constant reminder that are you going to be one with that divine consciousness?

Are you going to be more attached to form? And it definitely is a process of what appears to be a process, unless you're really, really super advanced, and you age and there's no problem at all, with no attachment to it. But there was, and it's like, okay, how can I age gracefully here?

Because I could see that attachment, because it's all around me, I see it all around me in commercials, and on the TV, or in movies, and the female movie stars in America, they speak about this all the time, where at a certain age, it's like nobody wants them anymore. So they had all this attention, and given all this attention, and suddenly you're just no good, you're too old. So they get injected here, and injected there, and I look at all these women who have been injected, and eventually, there's something very similar in their face, even though they have different faces, there's something very similar with all these different injections of Botox, or whatever they do.

And we recently have got a place now in California, in Santa Barbara, and I'm like, okay, I'm gonna be faced with this all the time, when I'm down there. Here it is, right in my face. And it's this continuation of this, being very meditative on the letting go, because I am on that decline of going down and the body definitely changing, aging, and then at some point, I'll leave the body, the body will be no longer this body anymore, as my consciousness is still here.

Her consciousness never dies, was never born, it is. So this is our practice in our everyday lives. Every moment can be used as a practice, and really is a practice if you are sincerely choosing and wanting the spiritual life.

There's nothing wrong with form, there's nothing wrong with having a business, having money, having a family, it's how much are you attached to it. If it all got wiped away from you, would that be okay? And really, the ultimate test is when it happens, or if it happens, because you really can't think how you were going to respond, you may think you know, but the ultimate test is when and if it actually happens.

So this is why we cannot think that we are so-called enlightened. We have no more attachments. We really ultimately don't know that until we are really tested.

So any thoughts you have about your spiritual life is a thought. So where does that leave you? It leaves you here in the present moment to connect with this present moment and be conscious, be aware, relaxed in this moment until something happens that you're called to action, called to speak.

But we rest in that stillness, in the soul essence of who you are without that desire to move outward, without that desire to speak or take action. Because if there's any desire in it, that desire comes from the mind, you have thought about it. Whereas a pure action arising from the stillness of who you are has no prior thought, no prior thought.

But when action comes, it comes. When words arise, they rise and you speak it. In the meantime, we watch our minds going back and forth, watch how the desires arise in us, watch how the concepts or the opinions or the judgments arise.

And all of that, as I mentioned yesterday, is on the level of the material of form. And how much of that material form life is causing you suffering will bring you out of that material world and into the essence of who you are. Because as we are, and everyone here, that you've come here this weekend, is on some sort of spiritual awakening.

So the mind, the mental level, the old sort of consciousness that is in you may think it still wants this world, the world of form. But the essence of who you are deep inside you is calling you to go into the life that is really meant as the truth of all beingness. So it's like we waffle back and forth because there is something that is undescribable, something that we cannot understand on the mental level, but it's bringing us home.

But your mind can still be in operation and still think, no, I kind of want this and I want that. And that's okay. You may have to go there and play that out and have that desire met before you get tired of it.

I met this one guy in India and we were visiting this guru who apparently grants wishes. Don't know how he does it, but anyways, it happened for him. And he desired more sex.

He wanted to experience more sex. So that's what he asked for. And he met this lady in India and of course he was thrilled, absolutely thrilled.

But then after about a few weeks or I don't know how long it was, whether it's a month or two months, I was there at that time for three months. So it wasn't more than three months. Anyways, he said, oh my, I go, how's it going, you know, with the girl there?

And he goes, oh my God, all she wants is sex. So, you know, oftentimes we get what we wish for until we realize, oh my God, you know, like it's way too much, slow down. I don't want this anymore.

So we get it and we play it out until it's absolutely, we get so tired of it, we can't stand it anymore. And then we go, okay, I've had enough of that. I'm going back to the essence of who I am.

Until life comes along and shows you something else, pulls at a different thread and say, you know, oh yeah, but you know, I want that big house, you know. And then you'll get that big house and you're happy and you might throw a housewarming party. And then all of a sudden it's like, wow, this house isn't so great.

Oh my God, my electricity bill is so big and, you know, whatever. So life will show us and it's showing you and it may show a few things at a time, one thing at a time and you get a break, it doesn't matter, but it will show you because you are on this awakening path, everything will be dropped away from you. And I don't mean in the literal sense, like your house isn't gonna drop away or, you know, I'm not talking about that.

I'm talking about that attachment to the things of this world. So we are shown, you will be shown what attachments you have and don't be afraid to look. Don't be afraid to even admit, wow, I have that attachment and, but you know what, I really want that.

Or even when the pain body comes up, there may be a time and it has happened with me where I feel the pain body arising, I go and I meditate with it and I ask myself, you know, I truly ask myself, do I wanna let this go? And there have been times where the answer is actually no. And as soon as that happens, whoop, I'm fully in that pain body.

So for some reason, you need to, maybe you need to experience that again, but you'll experience it and experience it until you just say, no, I don't want it anymore. That's not where I'm headed to. I don't wanna keep going, being pulled back.

And we'll keep getting pulled back until we're able to rise above it and choose only the one power, the one consciousness that truly exists as reality. For the forms that are impermanent is not reality. The forms that change and come and go is not reality.

So what is reality? But the one eternal life that is within you, deeper than that mind body connection.

[Speaker 5] (9:19:11 - 9:21:24)
And welcome. It's great to be with you. My name's Tammy Simon.

I'm the founder of Sounds True. And it's my joy and honor to welcome you to this special question and answer session about conscious manifestation with Eckhart Tolle. Our team has gathered many, many questions and sifted through them to select some of the most common and compelling questions about conscious manifestation.

And I'll be asking those questions to Eckhart in just a few moments. Here at the start of our program, for those of you who are unaware, I wanna let you know that Eckhart and his teaching partner, Kim Eng, are creating an in-depth teaching program. It's called The Spiritual Guide to Conscious Manifestation.

And it's a four-month learning journey that begins at the end of May next year with a four-day retreat in Huntington Beach, California. And then following the four-day retreat, there's a four-month online learning immersion and at-home curriculum that follows. And right now we're in the process of letting people know about The Spiritual Guide to Conscious Manifestation, the in-person retreat followed by the four months at home.

There'll also be a fully virtual version of the program that we'll announce soon. And also you can apply for scholarships to attend the program. So if you're interested in going even deeper into some of the themes that we'll be starting to explore here in this Q&A session, I encourage you to check out The Spiritual Guide to Conscious Manifestation.

You can just click the Learn More button that's under the player page. And with that, Eckhart, shall we move into the questions?

[Speaker 3] (9:21:24 - 9:28:25)
Welcome. Thank you, Tammy. Welcome, everybody.

Welcome to the present moment. Before we start, I'd like to mention that you might be hearing a strange pitter patter in the background, which is due to the heavy rain that's falling here at the moment. It's all part of the live session.

When I speak, you will probably hear less but when I stop speaking, you will hear it more clearly, for example, now. All right, Eckhart, shall we begin? Let's have a little meditative talk and then I will hand it back to you, Tammy, with the first question.

Wonderful. At any given moment, part of being present in the moment is what is conventionally called gratitude or thankfulness. I guess gratitude and thankfulness are the same thing in the English language.

Thankfulness is of Germanic origin or Anglo-Saxon and gratitude is of Latin origin, but they mean the same thing. So part of being present is when you're really in the now, almost inevitably, a certain appreciation arises for whatever is manifesting in the now. At this moment, what's manifesting, for example, here in the background, is the sound of the rain on the window pane or the external windowsill.

It kind of amplifies the sound and that's something to be grateful for because it's a life-giving substance that's just lots of trees here, very tall trees. It's actually not far from where I'm sitting. There's a rainforest.

Actually, this area of British Columbia is the largest temperate rainforest. And this is why they call it rainforest because it loves the water. It rains so much, it has created this wonderful vegetation.

It's been there for a million years. So you can be grateful for the sound of the rain instead of feeling it's something to be rejected or complain about. Gratitude arises for the life-giving substance of the water.

And this is only one example. Whatever arises when you're really present and give it attention, whatever manifests naturally, you welcome it. And even if it's something that looks like an obstacle or a hindrance, that can also be welcomed.

Life is full of these things that we call challenges. A real challenge always arises in the present moment and there are other challenges that arise in the mind. A real challenge arises something, an obstacle arises.

And again, there can be a kind of a gratefulness even for that because you realize that the evolution of consciousness requires obstacles. It requires the rising of a limitation in your life. Because only by encountering limitation do you become motivated to transcend or rise above the limitation.

And that requires more consciousness. In some simple cases, it may just require more physical strength. So, but whatever it is, it requires an influx of energy on whatever level, whether it's on just purely physical level or a more refined level of conscious attention, consciousness itself.

So, I'm just mentioning this importance whenever you are interested in manifesting. First of all, acknowledge what is already naturally manifesting in this present moment and see if you can become friendly with it. Instead of wanting to eliminate it in order to have something better, that's already an obstacle that arises when you're trying to, that you're creating an obstacle and you're trying to manifest something but there's an unhappiness at the basis of it.

So, when we begin to talk about, answer the questions, I'm sure I'll come back to that. It is a very common obstacle that arises and that is a dissatisfaction with the present moment, an inability or unwillingness to acknowledge the aliveness of the present moment, no matter what way it is and what form it takes. And that becomes a hindrance to your ability to manifest, powerfully, because that's ego.

Ego lives largely through non-alignment with the present moment that keeps the ego going. But let's go to the first question and then we'll continue talking about this importance of being aligned with the present moment and that the power resides in the present moment, the power that is available to you to manifest resides in the present moment, here and now.

[Speaker 5] (9:28:28 - 9:28:45)
This first question, Eckhart, is directly on that point. It's from Jack from Massachusetts, who writes in, do you have to be, quote, out of your head, unquote, and totally present in the moment to consciously manifest something?

[Speaker 3] (9:28:48 - 9:40:11)
Well, yes, that's a good question. Out of your head, I guess the questioner means by that, out of the thinking mind, head is often used, meaning the thinking mind. Yes, the foundation for manifesting is to be deeply rooted in the present moment and in the dimension of being.

The dimension of being is there when the mind, you encounter this dimension, you access this dimension, when the thinking mind subsides for a moment, and let's not just talk about it, but actually experience it in this very moment, the possibility for the stream of thinking to subside just for a moment, and yet you remain very conscious of that, and you're not only conscious of the sense perceptions around you, which you acknowledge and perhaps find some sense of appreciation, that we sometimes call gratitude, an appreciation when you become present, appreciation for whatever surrounds you, even seemingly insignificant little things. They're all there, they have a certain presence, sense perceptions, and then the deeper aspect of being rooted in the dimension of being is to sense the presence, let's call it your presence or it's not yours, but just as a pointer, let's for a moment call it your presence, to sense your presence, not your story, which is a personality of a person, because when you're not thinking, the story disappears, so the personality as which you appear most of the time, recedes into the background, and what replaces the personality, which is a narrative in your mind, it's a story, that's your personality, or the conditioning of the mind, so when you get out of your head, out of your mind, that subsides, and what is something else arises, so this entity, the personality, recedes into the background, and what arises is a sense of alert presence, and at first you notice it indirectly, because you become more conscious, more aware of your surroundings, your sense perceptions, and you acknowledge that and you appreciate that, this is indirectly, you become aware of the beingness of the present moment, that's the first step, when you begin to appreciate whatever the universe has manifested, or you have manifested in this moment, that's the world around you, that you take in your sense perceptions, visual, auditory, tactile, whatever it may be, so that is part of becoming present, an appreciation of what is, and then the deeper, we could call that, you become indirectly aware of the power of the present, the beingness of the present moment, and then you become aware of something deeper, that is there at the same time, and that is the presence itself, without which you could not be aware of anything, it's a very power of awareness, and that is very still, it is still, so there's no mental noise anymore, this is an alert stillness, stillness here means, absence of the thinking noise, the noise of thought, and what is left is awareness itself, we could call it consciousness also, consciousness itself, and that stillness is consciousness itself, in other words, you become conscious of being conscious, you know yourself, you know your essence, as that consciousness, that is much deeper than the person, as that conscious awareness or presence, as that you, you have no past, and no future, and as that presence, you have no age, doesn't matter whether you're 18 years old or 19 years old, that in that presence is ageless, and also that presence has no gender, man or woman, or any of the other many genders that people are very much concerned with these days, but as that presence, that is not male or female, it transcends that, and that is the point of power, that is the very foundation for manifesting anything in this world, is you have to go there first, and discover in that dimension, here and now, at this very moment, it is possible to let go of thinking, but not to become some spaced out state, or start, you're very alert, you're just present, and then you sense what we call stillness, is only one way of pointing to it or speaking about it, it is, of course, more than just stillness, yes, it's a good pointer, but stillness really means the absence of noise, in this case, mental noise, but this presence is not just the absence of something, yes, it is the absence of all my objects, it is the absence of all objects that may arise in consciousness, because it's the space of consciousness itself, but it's not just the absence, it is an absence of thought, and an absence of objects of consciousness, but there's also a powerful presence that is within you, but whether it is within or without, it's actually hard to say, but when you sense it within yourself, you also sense it is in the space that surrounds you, what we call space, is also filled with presence, so inner and outer kind of meet, become one, and that is a very foundation for spirituality, whether or not you're interested in manifesting or not, yes, if you are 95 years old, perhaps you've lost the interest, there's not much more that you want to manifest in this world, there's no need, or you might even be younger, you feel there's no need to manifest, that's perfectly fine, or you may be at a stage in your life where you feel the universe wants to manifest something through you in this dimension, but it doesn't matter what it is, but that is the foundation, so getting out of your head, as the questioner asked, yes, in that sense, it's important, but when you begin to manifest, then you will use your mind to some extent, you will, for example, you may, some people like to visualize something, so you begin to use your mind, or you may have affirmations, which is a controlled use of your mind, and yes, you do get, you need, first of all, you do need to get out of your head, as the questioner puts it, and then you sense the power of presence, once you sense the power of presence, if it is your choice to manifest, you want to manifest something, then you may use affirmations, you speak a sentence, a few words, that point towards where you want to, whatever you want to manifest, even a simple thing, I'm filled with spiritual power, it's not an egoic statement, because power, spiritual power is not power of the ego, it's not power over other human beings,

[Speaker 1] (9:40:11 - 9:40:18)
but by saying, I'm filled with spiritual power, can actually deepen your ability to sense that power,

[Speaker 3] (9:40:19 - 9:44:03)
because that is the power of presence, so I'm filled with spiritual power, can deepen that, so you use that pointer, and in between the statements, there is a space of just, where you can sense the power itself, it's a wonderful thing, so you can use your mind, you may have to use your mind to some extent, but it is a focused way of using your mind, and the wonderful thing is that, that dimension, we could call, yes, the dimension of presence or being, it's so fulfilling or satisfying, to sense that within yourself, that all manifestation, whatever you can manifest out of that, becomes of secondary importance, that's another important part of manifesting, this realization, whatever you want to manifest in this world, people want what they want, better, more abundance in their life, perhaps material abundance, there's a shortage of money, you want to experience an expansion on this dimension, fine, or they want to find some companion in their life, or they may want better health, or a better way of contributing to this world, as the expression goes, to make a difference in this world, they want to be a positive force in this world, that's all, these are all wonderful things, but the primary thing is to touch that, to not touch just deeper, to access that dimension within yourself, and stay rooted in that dimension of being, presence, that in itself is so fulfilling, that anything you can manifest, becomes the English expression, if English is not your native language, I don't know if you've heard the expression, the icing on the cake, the icing on the cake is the stuff you put on top of it, you have a cake, icing on the cake is the stuff you put on top of the cake, you put little ornaments to make the cake look nice, it's the icing on the cake, but it's not the cake itself is more important than the icing on the cake, so the icing on the cake is the step of the realization of being, that is this, sorry, that is the cake, the icing is whatever you manifest, Jesus said the same thing, he didn't actually use,

[Speaker 1] (9:44:04 - 9:44:14)
he was not familiar with English, and the expression icing on the cake didn't exist, I don't know whether they even had cake at that time, but Jesus used the expression,

[Speaker 3] (9:44:17 - 9:44:57)
seek only the kingdom of heaven, everything else that you may think you, that you need will be added unto you, seek only the kingdom of heaven, everything else will be added unto you, it's only an addition, it's not the main thing, so whatever in this life, whatever you may want to achieve, it's an adding on to the main thing, the main thing is the kingdom of heaven, which is your realization of being,

[Speaker 1] (9:44:57 - 9:45:03)
the realization of that which transcends the personal personality,

[Speaker 3] (9:45:05 - 9:46:20)
the realization of being, you see, I am, without adding anything to it, presence itself, and so then, that's the foundation for all manifestation, and out of that power, maybe some people like to visualize the situation, others may want to use verbal affirmations, and that's fine, but as you use those things, you stay connected with that dimension, so that means when you want something in life, the wanting is very different from the egoic wanting, because you no longer, you don't need it to be fulfilled or happy, so it's the different kind of wanting, you don't need it to be fulfilled, the fulfillment you have to find in the present moment,

[Speaker 1] (9:46:20 - 9:46:30)

you have to go deep enough into the present moment, so you find, and again, quoting Jesus again, because he talked about it,

[Speaker 3] (9:46:31 - 9:47:14)
in the present moment, you find what he called the fullness of life, that's actually an expression that Jesus used, he said, I want you to have the fullness of life, in some translations it's called abundant life, I want you to have abundant life, in other translations it's, I want you to have the fullness of life, and that fullness of life does not mean many things, it means that the essence of life itself, that is the fullness of life,

[Speaker 1] (9:47:14 - 9:47:22)
then all those things that you may want, will be added, well, maybe not all of them,

[Speaker 3] (9:47:23 - 9:47:26)
but many of things will be added unto you,

[Speaker 1] (9:47:28 - 9:47:36)
so that is the essence of manifestation,

[Speaker 3] (9:47:39 - 9:47:43)
we'll talk about some other aspects, as I answer some more questions.

[Speaker 5] (9:47:46 - 9:48:20)
This question, Eckhart, comes from Wiebke, from Barcelona, Spain, who writes in, thank you very much, Eckhart, for sharing your wisdom with us, why is it sometimes super easy for me to manifest, and it arrives in no time, and then other times, it doesn't seem to work at all, does it have to do somehow with me not fully letting go of wanting it, or believing that I already have it, am it? Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (9:48:21 - 9:48:57)
Right, well, another good question, so first of all, congratulations that you're already quite successful in manifesting quite often, and sometimes, yes, you're right, sometimes it may not appear, or it may also appear after a much longer time gap than you might have expected,

[Speaker 1] (9:48:58 - 9:49:09)
so certain things appear when you almost forget that you attempted to manifest these things,

[Speaker 3] (9:49:09 - 9:49:55)
let's say you spent a couple of weeks, or three weeks, repeating certain affirmations and visualizing it, and then after a while, it's good to let go, give it some space, and then nothing happens, and it could be that a year later, the very thing you almost forgot that you practiced this manifestation method in order to manifest this or that, and a year later, it suddenly appears, and you remember, oh, that's what I worked on a year ago to manifest, and I'd almost forgotten about it, that can happen,

[Speaker 13] (9:49:58 - 9:50:00)
but other things can happen too.[Speaker 2] (0:00 - 4:24)
Oh, and that is, there could be too much wanting, the wanting can be an obstacle. If you want some, if you want it too much, that implies you're not sufficiently rooted in the power of presence, and then the wanting takes over, and if there's too much wanting, by implication, you are saying that you don't have it. So in that kind of wanting, this is sometimes people try to exercise willpower, and they try to manifest, I really, I'm going to, I really want, I want this, there it is.

That is not necessarily a good way to manifest, because by saying I want it, you're also saying that you don't have it yet, but the most powerful way to manifest is the feeling that you already, that it's already here, and that only arises out of the fullness of being, of presence in the present moment, because then you merge the image of what you want with a sense of fullness, the fullness of being. So the image and the fullness of being come together, and that is a powerful way of manifesting it, which means you don't need that thing for your happiness anymore, you don't need it for your ultimate fulfillment.

The most powerful way to manifest is to regard it as a play, or a game, the game of life, the play of life, of manifesting, then there's also a sense of detachment from the outcome, an excessive attachment to the desired outcome is also an obstacle to manifesting. If you desperately need something, if you are unhappy, if you are unhappy, if you don't get it, then there's something wrong. So if you're unhappy, when you don't achieve whatever you want to manifest, then you didn't do it right.

So there needs to be a detachment, so to speak, from the desired outcome, so that you don't project this, whatever you want to manifest doesn't become a future projection, but whatever you want to manifest needs to be realized as already existing on some level in the unmanifested. That's why Jesus said, I want to go back to Jesus because whatever you want to learn about manifestation, just read what he explained it all, in very simple words, he said, whenever you pray for something, believe that you have received it and it will be yours. That's the entire secret of manifestation already there, and the importance of the words are not believe that you will receive it, because then there would be too much wanting, I want this, I will get it.

No, he said, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours, and it will be given to you. So believing that you have, in other words, it's already there, and how does that happen? How does it happen when your senses tell you that it's not there?

[Speaker 1] (4:25 - 4:35)
Let's say you live in a trailer, there's nothing wrong with living in a trailer, I love trailers, but let's say you live in a trailer, but you want a nice house.

[Speaker 2] (4:36 - 6:03)
Okay, your preference would be a nice house, but are you unhappy in your trailer, or are you appreciate being in a trailer, and you can hear the pitter-patter of rain on the roof. Well, I can hear it now, I'm not in a trailer, I can still hear it from the windowpane. So in a trailer, but you want a nice house.

Okay, where's the house? Because you look around, it's not here. Are you creating some kind of dissatisfaction by telling yourself a story?

This is what my life has come to. I've reduced to living in a trailer. I need to get out of here.

This is all disempowering, all those narratives, telling yourself stories that are not good enough, all very disempowering. Yes, your senses are telling you that you're not living in a nice house, just in a trailer, but that's fine for the present moment. So where's the house?

The house is in your imagination, in your mind, maybe you visualize it, or maybe you have certain verbal affirmations that you have a lovely house that you live in, and

[Speaker 1] (6:03 - 6:14)

then the visualization and the verbal affirmation, you bring it together, allow the visualization

[Speaker 2] (6:14 - 9:33)
of the verbal affirmation to be empowered by that sense of presence, so that it meets the presence, so that house merges with the sense of presence, and then inside you feel you already have it.

And the weird thing is, when you do get it, let's say next year, or in six months' time, or in two years' time, or in three years' time, when you do get it, and then suddenly you sit in your nice house, it makes no difference to your inner state anymore, because when you were in your trailer, you were already in the same state of fullness of life, when you sit in a nice house and say, okay, it's fine, but you're not, you say, yes, a certain amount of satisfaction may be there, but basically, your inner state is the same as it was before, because you already touched the fullness, you were already rooted in the beingness, the dimension of being, the fullness of life. In other words, when it does manifest, you don't suddenly become, oh, I'm so happy, I got it, oh, finally, it doesn't happen anymore, you say, oh, it's good, but your inner state is the same as it was before, no matter what you achieve, you already have the foundation for everything, you're already rooted in that, this is why Jesus called it, all these things will be added unto you, it's no more than that, an adding, or use the expression, icing on the cake, and you have an enormous sense of freedom, of liberation, because you're no longer, your inner state is no longer dependent on external conditions, there's something in you that is more powerful than any external condition, the inner state is not determined by external conditions anymore, and that's very different from when you achieve something, as I said, a certain amount of satisfaction may be there, but you did not need it for your fulfillment or happiness, you didn't need it for that, because you already found that. So, let's go on to the next question.

[Speaker 6] (9:35 - 10:19)
Eckhart, this is from Samantha in Tampa, Florida, who writes in, I understand that conscious manifestation means that I operate from a sense of the fullness of being, and yet the truth is I feel a sense of lack in certain areas of my life, and in particular with my finances, I can sit quietly and feel content and still, but then when I re-engage with my life, and especially my banking details, the feeling of lack returns. How do you advise that I work with this sense of lack when it comes to the practice of conscious manifestation?

[Speaker 2] (10:21 - 12:21)
Right, yes, another interesting question. The sense of lack, of course, is inseparable from the human ego. The human ego always operates on the basis of lack, whether it's financial lack, or other kinds of lack, in the human ego there's always a sense of, there's something missing here, and if you're wealthy, it probably won't be in the region of, if you have a few million dollars, maybe the sense of lack will come from somewhere else, it may not come from finances, it may come from something else, something very important that's missing in my life. Many people who are experiencing financial restrictions, or not experiencing that abundance that comes with having sufficient financial funds in their life, or income, they may believe that when they finally get enough, get this abundance in their lives, then everything will be okay, but that's probably not the case, because the ego will still be there, and you will sense that lack in other areas of your life, whether it's a lack of partner or companionship, or the lack of, inability to find any kind of real satisfaction

[Speaker 1] (12:21 - 12:28)
in any experience, no matter what you do and where you go, there's always an emptiness that you feel.

[Speaker 2] (12:28 - 14:24)
So I've met many wealthy people over the years, and many, some were able to, at least to some extent, go beyond ego and go beyond the sense of lack, but in others I found a very wealthy people with a very deep sense of lack, sometimes deeper than in some people who had very little money, and this sense of something not right, something is missing, and often they don't even know what it is, and then they want to fill it up sometimes with drugs, or a desperate search for experiences, for sensory experiences, maybe a desperate search for or needing to whatever experience, sex, sexuality, or in taking in substances, or eating of substances, and I need this, I need all of this neediness that's part of the ego, and always looking for the next thing to fill that void that they feel, and so this void that they feel is part of the ego, but, so let's come back to the question of finances, it is, the sense of lack is an inseparable part of the ego, that is true, but of course, when you have a shortage of money that restricts your life,

[Speaker 1] (14:25 - 14:32)
you can't live where you would like to live, or there's not enough freedom of movement

[Speaker 2] (14:32 - 18:04)
because there's not enough money, there is a sense of something missing, and you see it's not just in your mind, it's also here when you look at your bank statement, you see it's not very much there, going beyond the sense of lack that is an inseparable part of the ego, you need to, I believe the questioner to some extent has already done that, you need to discover the fullness of life, to use Jesus' expression, which is the fullness of being, which is inseparable from the present moment, so when you go there, you can see that abundant, another expression is abundant life that Jesus used, you can sense this abundant life in the present moment, regardless of whether there is actual abundance in this manifested dimension, you feel the abundance of life, and you see, when you appreciate all the countless manifestations of life that are around you, that you perceive with your senses, and you acknowledge the abundance of life, no matter whether you go out into nature, you see the abundance of nature, the abundance of brain right now that's coming down here that I can hear, there's an acknowledgement, an appreciation, even a potted plant, I have a potted plant there, there's another one here, to appreciate their manifestations of the aliveness of the universe, and there's an abundance in everything, you live in a city, there's abundance everywhere, you can look into a shop window and you see abundance of goods there, you don't even need to go and buy them, you just appreciate, you go past a flower shop, and you see abundance of plants and flowers, and you appreciate and you feel abundant already, but the deepest abundance is the feeling of the fullness of life, and then, I believe what the questioner is asking, at times when he looks at his bank statement, the sense of lack comes back, because then you see, oh, I have very little, there's not much left, and then the mind will start creating a narrative of lack, and will tell you that you've been wronged, that actually you don't have much, and that can be a great hindrance, it will diminish your power of manifestation,

[Speaker 1] (18:05 - 18:21)
so what do you do when you look at your bank statement, or you go to the ATM machine, and you want to get out $300, or whatever it is, and it says, you put it in,

[Speaker 2] (18:21 - 18:47)
it says insufficient funds, and that's the time of, I'm not talking about right now, what you can do on a practical level, the question is, as much as possible,

[Speaker 1] (18:49 - 18:58)
do not succumb to the feeling of financial lack, even if there is financial lack in

your life,

[Speaker 2] (18:58 - 19:33)
do not succumb to the feeling of lack, and that is, whatever you can do to generate a sense of abundance, and the main thing, of course, is going within, and sensing the fullness of life, even when you look at your bank statement, don't personalize it, don't have any kind of projection,

[Speaker 1] (19:35 - 19:44)
this is just factually, these are the figures, and then perhaps you have a certain course of action,

[Speaker 2] (19:44 - 20:08)
in addition to feeling the sense of abundance, you may have to work out a certain goal that you have, that may give you more abundance, so perhaps you have something that you want to do to create more abundance,

[Speaker 1] (20:08 - 20:17)
and then your manifestation can flow into that, so that the sense of abundance flows into the,

[Speaker 2] (20:17 - 20:40)
whatever it is that you are wanting to manifest in your life, you have to combine action and whatever technique you use, or whatever method you use,

[Speaker 1] (20:41 - 20:50)
it is to be recommended that you combine it with some kind of action,

[Speaker 2] (20:51 - 21:35)
so that you can generate abundance even on this outer level, so this applies in many cases, people have, let's say, you might feel a sense of lack, of something meaningful in your life, or you might feel a sense of lack, of feeling that you are not good enough, you are not enough in this world, and some people then come up with, what is it that I want,

[Speaker 1] (21:35 - 21:41)
and the egos, I might say, in many young people you have that,

[Speaker 2] (21:41 - 21:54)
you might say I want to be a famous this or that, I want to be, if you ask young people, because they are always online and doing things in the virtual world,

[Speaker 1] (21:54 - 23:20)
I want to be a famous YouTuber, I want to be a famous, okay, now what, let's say somebody says I want to be a famous YouTuber, that is not good, that is not enough, you can sit down and then you imagine, I am a famous YouTuber, and even if you feel the power of beingness, there is still something missing, and what is missing is in the dimension of doing, let's say you have the dimension of being, you are rooted in the being and you feel the fullness of life, and then you say, okay, I am an influential and famous YouTuber, but what are you doing, do you have anything to convey to people on YouTube, is there anything that you are enthusiastic about, is there anything that people would love to hear from you, or that people would find helpful, it is not enough, the foundation, yes, the foundation is to be rooted in the dimension of being, so that you sense the fullness of life within you here and now,

[Speaker 2] (23:20 - 23:27)
but then for many things, maybe not for all things, but for many things,

[Speaker 1] (23:28 - 23:51)
you need to also address the dimension of doing, you have the being dimension, that is the foundation, the doing dimension is, okay, let's come back to the famous, I want to be a famous YouTuber, do you have something that you feel enthusiastic about, that perhaps other people would appreciate, it would help them, what could it be,

[Speaker 2] (23:51 - 24:07)
is it music or singing or information, conveying information or entertaining, whatever it is, and then you focus on that, develop technical skills,

[Speaker 1] (24:07 - 24:27)
because putting things on YouTube, skills of editing and cameras, producing videos, and enjoy the doing of it, when you are engaged in the doing of it, this enjoyment of being flows into the doing, and again,

[Speaker 2] (24:27 - 24:34)
do not be attached too much to the outcome, that is very important,

[Speaker 1] (24:34 - 25:18)
but enjoy the doing of it, so that the being flows into the being dimension, flows into the doing dimension too, so you enjoy learning how to produce videos, learning editing, video editing, learning, and then whatever subject matter you have, that you feel enthusiastic about, that would help the world and other people, then you learn more about it, or you go more deeply into it, and then you begin to practice, and it's all a wonderful thing, and you're not attached to the outcome, but from time to time, then you're able to, from time to time, you go within,

[Speaker 2] (25:19 - 25:34)
and you imagine yourself as a famous YouTuber, that's reaching hundreds of thousands or millions of people, who are being helped, or you contribute something to other people's lives,

[Speaker 1] (25:34 - 25:43)
by doing whatever it is you're doing, and by doing that, you are a famous YouTuber, then it's more powerful, if you feel that this is already the case,

[Speaker 2] (25:43 - 25:52)
it's already, I'm already a famous YouTuber, perhaps for the time being, you only get 20 views per video,

[Speaker 1] (25:52 - 26:07)
that's fine, at the moment, that's fine, but even that you appreciate those 20 views, great, I've reached 20 people, and then you go within, and again, if you're already a famous YouTuber,

[Speaker 2] (26:07 - 26:20)
and you're helping, it's not just this image of me as a famous YouTuber, there must be another dimension to it, that relates to the world,

[Speaker 1] (26:20 - 26:24)
how does that affect the world, whatever you want to achieve,

[Speaker 2] (26:24 - 26:50)
that can be, that empowers you, what does, how do you help, what does the universe want to manifest through me, when I say universe, I mean the intelligence that pervades the universe, that's behind it all, the universe of the intelligence behind it all,

[Speaker 1] (26:51 - 27:00)
the divine intelligence behind the phenomenal world, what does it want from me, and maybe it wants me to become a famous YouTuber,

[Speaker 2] (27:01 - 28:40)
but the most important thing is not the famous, it's just, what is it that, the energy that's flowing through me, so in addition to visualization, or affirmation, in the being dimension, you may need to address also the doing dimension, and again, bring the two together, enjoy the doing, don't use it, don't treat the doing as a stressful thing, because you need to achieve this or that, no, you enjoy the doing of it, that's the power, the power of presence, has to flow into the doing, the doing is not just a means to an end, it's an end in itself, that is a very important realization, so that the doing does not become stressful, if it's stressful, it means you are excessively attached to the outcome, which means you want to be there, but you are here,

[Speaker 1] (28:40 - 29:26)
and that gap between there and here creates stress, and that's, and then you, as far as manifestation is concerned, that is disempowering, now some people who work very hard, with that mindset of stress, exercise willpower to achieve this, and sometimes they actually do achieve, occasionally it happens, but it doesn't make them happy, it makes them, when they achieve, they are still unhappy, and in the meantime, anybody else they had contact with, in whatever work they were doing,

[Speaker 2] (29:27 - 29:43)
they are made unhappy too, so if that is your underlying mindset, I will achieve sheer willpower, and of course it's stressful, you create stress for yourself, you create unhappiness for yourself,

[Speaker 1] (29:43 - 30:01)
and whoever you are in contact with, you make them unhappy too, some companies operate like that, everybody is stressed and unhappy, so if you work in a company like that, my recommendation would be to depart,

[Speaker 2] (30:01 - 30:19)
and so if your environment is dysfunctional, that can be a considerable hindrance to your power of manifestation, if you are trapped in a dysfunctional environment,

[Speaker 1] (30:33 - 30:50)
so look out for any sign of stress, when you are moving towards your goal, and you are active in whatever area, look for any kind of stress that arises, there is something not right, if stress arises,

[Speaker 2] (30:51 - 32:39)
now this is not to be confused with a kind of feeling, a low energy activity, when you engage in something meaningful, there is intense energy behind what you do, but this intensity of energy is not stress, there is an enjoyment behind it, so yes, you may be very intensely engaged, but as you are intensely engaged in whatever it is, let's say, let's come back to this person who wants to be a famous YouTuber, at this moment he or she is learning how to edit videos, how to do that, and again, enjoy the learning process, trying this out in bed, asking questions, what can I do here, there, and then there is the next thing to master, enjoy the doing of that, rather than, why am I not a famous YouTuber already, I need to get there to feel happy, no, you are happy in the doing, and then even if you don't become a famous YouTuber, you will still be happy, maybe you reach only a thousand people, or five thousand, or ten thousand, or two hundred, and even out of those two hundred that you reach,

[Speaker 1] (32:41 - 33:13)

some people may contact you, and something else will arise out of that, many things arise, you have to be always open to new possibilities, you haven't even thought of, not everything that you achieve in this life comes through wanting to manifest, often it's a good starting point, but sometimes, quite often, the best things may come that you never even thought of to manifest,

[Speaker 2] (33:13 - 33:55)
but if you hadn't started with this particular manifestation, the other things that you never thought of would never have arisen, so sometimes the universe, so to speak, may have greater plans for you than you could even think of, but you have to take the first steps, and sometimes the first step is, I want to manifest this now, and then you practice, you go into being, rooted in the fullness of being, then you visualize, or you affirm this or that,

[Speaker 1] (33:56 - 34:02)
and in doing that, you feel it's already there, in the unseen,

[Speaker 2] (34:03 - 34:07)
and then, in addition, you may have to go into the doing dimension,

[Speaker 1] (34:09 - 34:24)
and in the doing dimension, don't lose touch with being, because if you lose touch with being, you're lost in doing, and you're stressed, and you're not effective anymore, and even if you achieve what you wanted to achieve through sheer willpower

[Speaker 2] (34:24 - 34:31)
and hard work and stress, it'll make you unhappy, and make others unhappy, so it's pointless.

[Speaker 6] (34:38 - 35:05)
Eckhart, we have one final question, one final question here. This comes from Nadine in Denmark, who writes, Hi Eckhart, I'm very concerned about the current state of turmoil and disruption on the planet, and I want to help create what you call the New Earth. What role could conscious manifestation play?

[Speaker 2] (35:07 - 39:18)
Right, yes, yes, many people have this concern, not surprisingly. We are in an area of upheavals on our planet, increasing upheavals, so be prepared for more things to come. The greatest contribution you can make is your state of consciousness, because the upheavals are mostly caused by certain dysfunctions in the collective human consciousness.

There is something in the human consciousness that creates suffering for other humans. It's been there for a long, long time. This is not the first time.

Sometimes the world is in moments when it's not so... There have always been some areas on the planet where things are... There's violence and dysfunction more than other parts.

But then there are time periods when many parts of the planet become affected by upheavals, human suffering inflicted by other humans. The greatest enemy of humanity is the human mind, obviously, because it's humans who kill hundreds of thousands of other humans, millions in the 20th century, countless millions, 30, 40, the most exact number. So the greatest danger for humanity is something, there's a certain dysfunction in the human mind, and that manifests in the world.

Most of the things you hear about when you listen to the news or you watch the news are manifestations, yes, manifestations of the unconsciousness of humanity. And when I say unconsciousness, I mean lack of awareness, ego, unconsciousness, complete identification with the conditioned mind. And when you watch the news, almost all of it is manifestations of the most extreme forms of unconsciousness happening on the planet.

The dysfunction in the human mind that all the spiritual traditions have spoken of, there's something not right, there's something wonderful in the human consciousness, and the potentials are enormous, and humans have created wonderful things too, but there is an element of insanity that all humans inherit from the collective.

[Speaker 1] (39:20 - 39:24)
If you doubt that, listen to the news tonight.

[Speaker 2] (39:24 - 41:30)
If you doubt that, read a book on history, 20th century history, good place to start. And then you see that there is a, what we could call a mental illness in the collective consciousness of humanity that creates that suffering. Mental illness is one way of looking at it.

And at times, the mental illness becomes more acute. At other times, it's more latent in the background. And at other times, this mental illness comes into the foreground and creates an enormous amount of human suffering.

So, whatever world humans create, inevitably must be a manifestation of the collective consciousness of humanity. It comes out of the collective consciousness of humanity. And in this case, better say the collective unconsciousness of humanity.

Your greatest contribution is your state of consciousness, so that whatever the unconsciousness that you see around you, so it does not draw you down into unconsciousness also. Are you able to remain conscious? Which means, are you able not to succumb to either anger or fear?

These are two important things that I've observed many humans succumb to easily when they engage with the news and so on. Either anger or fear. And if that is the case, then be aware of that.

[Speaker 1] (41:31 - 43:16)
And it seems natural almost on a purely human level that one should feel anger or fear. There's a third thing that you could feel is compassion for human suffering. And that is beautiful and wonderful.

And the question arises, is there anything I can do? And whether you are in a position to alleviate human suffering on a practical level, I don't know. Some humans are in a position, but in many cases, you may say, well, it's horrible, but there's nothing I can do about it.

I only see it. I watch it. What can I do?

Don't underestimate the importance of your state of consciousness, because your state of consciousness is connected to the totality of humanity on an unseen level. Don't underestimate the importance of staying conscious and present as you observe the suffering around you. Yes, compassion may arise.

Sadness may arise. But stay conscious and present and realize that what you are witnessing is a manifestation of where humanity is at present on its evolutionary path, where it is at present.

[Speaker 2] (43:16 - 43:41)

And the suffering is part of the evolution of consciousness and part of the egoic consciousness that is approaching its end.

[Speaker 1] (43:41 - 43:47)
The egoic consciousness in humanity has been prevalent for thousands of years.

[Speaker 2] (43:49 - 44:09)
And now the conflicts that are arising now, which are going to be even more serious than what we are witnessing right now, are the final manifestations of the egoic consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (44:16 - 44:45)
What you are witnessing on one level, yes, we need to recognize that the deep dysfunction, the deep unconsciousness that makes humans do these things, then seemingly many unconscious human beings get killed, suffer.

[Speaker 2] (44:46 - 44:50)
We need to recognize the madness of it. That's important.

[Speaker 1] (44:54 - 45:29)
But as you become very present, you may begin to realize there is another level of truth. There are levels of truth. On one level of truth, what we are witnessing is dreadful, and it needs to be recognized as such.

On another level of truth, what we are witnessing is certain events that are part of the evolutionary path of humanity.

[Speaker 2] (45:33 - 46:06)
If you consider that a human being is a ray of consciousness that assumes a particular physical form, the essence of who you are, what you are, is consciousness, a ray of the one consciousness, like a ray of sunlight, one could say. We could say a spark of consciousness. That remains even when the body dies.

[Speaker 1] (46:07 - 46:20)
The essence of who or what you are, this particular ray, is still there. It's not dead. So there is an aspect to a human being that is not subject to death.

[Speaker 2] (46:20 - 46:22)
Only the physical dies.

[Speaker 1] (46:23 - 52:42)
And the consciousness that's behind the physical form, whether you call it soul or the divine spark or the ray of consciousness, that goes on. So every human is part of the evolution of human consciousness and goes on to another lifetime, another lesson to be learned, another incarnation, unless they no longer need to reincarnate, in which case you would go on to other dimensions where evolution continues there, too. Only the body dies.

And that's a liberating thing to realize. You need to realize it for yourself, too, otherwise you will be very afraid of death. Death is all around you.

But death is particularly awful to witness when it is violent death happening to children, to young people. But if you realize that there is an essence in every human being behind the physical manifestation that is not subject to death, then from that higher perspective, what we are witnessing is a kind of nightmare that humans can awaken out of. So we are witnessing a nightmare.

For many humans, their life has become a nightmare. And so we are witnessing a nightmare that's happening for many humans. And what happens is a nightmare is a dreamlike state, a state of unconsciousness.

Eventually, when you're trapped in a nightmare, a point comes when you awaken out of the nightmare. And then you look back and say, that was horrible, that was a terrible nightmare. So at some point, a human being can evolve out of that.

And every human that leaves, if you leave their body, you will find that you look back and say, that was a terrible dream, this lifetime was a terrible dream. And then there's a collective dream of humanity, collective suffering, a terrible nightmare. Because what's happening, part of the evolution of consciousness is the awakening of human consciousness.

The key term is awakening. That's the whole purpose of us being here, not to witness, but to embody, to be part of the awakening of human consciousness. Now, what does that imply?

It implies that before it awakens, it's asleep. It's in a dreamlike state. That's the egoic state.

And that creates all the suffering that is created by the human ego, the collective ego and the individual ego. Collective ego in the form of a nation or a group of people, or the individual ego creates enormous suffering, but it's a nightmare. It creates a very painful dream.

But if within the dream you recognize, suddenly you recognize something, your desire to awaken will become very intense if you're in a nightmare. It will be much more intense than if you're engaged in a relatively pleasant dream where you're relatively comfortable and things are going okay and you have your little things that you drink and take But if the dream becomes very unpleasant, becomes a nightmare, your motivation to awaken will be much greater. So the awakening of consciousness and the intensification of the nightmare come together.

And that is the whole purpose of it, where you're witnessing the truth, both coming together, the intensification of the nightmare and the awakening of consciousness. The more painful the nightmare becomes, the stronger the motivation to awaken. This is looking at the whole situation from a much higher perspective.

And then every human who is engaged in the nightmare, at some point, they awaken. Not perhaps in this lifetime, but at some point they awaken and they look back and say, oh, that was a nightmare. I'm glad I'm out of it now.

That was a horrible nightmare. But if it hadn't been a nightmare, I would still be trapped in the dream. So the crisis of humanity that we are experiencing is inseparable from the awakening of human consciousness.

They come together. It's only under immense pressure that consciousness evolves. Only under immense pressure does consciousness evolve.

[Speaker 2] (52:43 - 52:54)
That is a function of suffering. Suffering represents that intense pressure under which consciousness evolves.

[Speaker 1] (52:55 - 53:22)
And once it has evolved, the suffering is recognized as a kind of nightmare. It is then transcended and is recognized as a kind of, very similar to a nightmare, a very painful dream. So that's the crisis we are going through and we're moving into.

[Speaker 2] (53:22 - 53:30)

But it's an inseparable part of the awakening of human consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (53:35 - 53:49)
It doesn't mean that we should not help on this dimension wherever we can. Obviously we do. It also means that we have compassion for humans that are trapped in the nightmare.

[Speaker 2] (53:49 - 53:50)
It's horrible.

[Speaker 1] (53:50 - 56:21)
I still have memories when I saw the witnessing the destruction in Israel and Palestine and the destruction of buildings and people dying and then the other side, terrorists. I remember when I saw the destroyed buildings when I was a child, I was born three years after the end of a horrible nightmare, a collective nightmare that was called the Second World War. And when I was a child, still, because all the cities in Germany had been, most cities had been erased through bombardment.

And as a child, my favorite playground was still the ruins of houses that had been bombed. We played in the ruins of houses and I remember that when I watched the ruins of houses in the Palestinian area, I said, oh, that's where, as a child, I was born at the end of this particular nightmare and it was a natural thing for me. I thought it's normal for almost every other house was still a ruin and that was my playground.

So these things have happened already many times before on a much larger scale, even in the 20th century, on a gigantic scale and it may get even, it will probably, the situation will most likely deteriorate more in the world in the next few years, but that's perfectly fine. It's all part of the evolution of consciousness, but your contribution is vital and your contribution is to stay present and conscious while this is happening.

[Speaker 2] (56:22 - 56:31)
Stay present and conscious while this is happening and do not succumb to fear or anger.

[Speaker 1] (56:32 - 58:59)
They're totally pointless. First of all, anger is totally pointless. Obviously, you would, and if you act out of anger, you contribute to the unconsciousness or fear.

Fear is not recognizing the essence of who you are as a human being and whoever every other human being, the essence of every other human being as conscious awareness itself, which is not subject to death. So recognize it. Ultimately, you do not die and no human dies, only the body dies.

Whether that is a belief that you have, but it doesn't need to be just a belief. It is possible to actually experientially realize that dimension in yourself that is the invisible you, which is you. Most of you is invisible.

I mean, nobody can find you by opening up your brain and looking for you. Nobody can find you because the essence of you is invisible. It's not part of this material realm.

The essence of you is invisible. And I can sense that essence and then there's a body that has a limited lifespan. So then the realization of immortality ultimately liberates you, of course, from the fear of death.

In essence, you cannot die and no human can die, but that's a wonderfully liberating realization. And that's why it has been said in some spiritual tradition where it originates, I don't remember, die before you die, which means die to the ego itself, the conceptual identity, the narrative, remind me, and identification with the physical body. Die to this.

And before you die, physically die. Die before, find death before death finds you is the expression. Find death before death.

[Speaker 2] (58:59 - 59:31)
Finding death happens when we started today with becoming aware of yourself as consciousness and ultimately the person subsides and this person is what dies eventually. So when you become aware of yourself as consciousness, you find death before death finds you.

[Speaker 1] (59:31 - 59:57)
It's only the death of the person, the accumulated stuff in the human mind that you identify with, the character that you play in this lifetime, the script that consciousness plays out when it is not awakened. When consciousness is not awakened, it plays out a script and that script is the condition, entity that you call I, the person.

[Speaker 2] (59:58 - 1:00:30)
And that is recognized as illusory when you go deeper and you realize, even when you let go of that entity, the script, the character that you play unconsciously, what remains is the light of consciousness itself, totally free of time and not subject to birth and death. So therefore Jesus taught that also.

[Speaker 1] (1:00:31 - 1:00:53)
He talked about eternal life. He said, I want the possibility of finding eternal life. That's one of his main teachings and eternal does not mean it goes on and on.

That would be very boring. Eternal means timeless. The timeless life that is consciousness itself.

[Speaker 2] (1:00:53 - 1:01:10)
He used that expression, eternal life. It doesn't mean you live forever as this thing, but you find the essence of yourself. And in Buddhism, you have a similar term.

[Speaker 1] (1:01:11 - 1:01:31)
I'm just saying it because they all recognize this, but they use different terminology to express it. In Buddhism, we have the expression Amara. Amara is translated as the deathless realm or the deathless dimension.

[Speaker 2] (1:01:32 - 1:02:09)
The dimension in which there is no death. Amara. Amara means death.

A denies it. The deathless realm, which is a dimension of consciousness that you find within yourself. Jesus talked about the eternal life, which is the same thing expressed in positive terms.

In Buddhism, it's the same thing expressed in negative terms. So Jesus says eternal life. Buddhism says the deathless.

Buddhism says everything in negative terms. And Jesus sends the token of positive terms pointing to the same reality.

[Speaker 1] (1:02:10 - 1:02:30)
So you find that. Then you find death before death finds you. And when you find

death before death finds you, you realize there is no death.

And then you're able to stay present when you contemplate what humans are doing in the state of unconsciousness.

[Speaker 2] (1:02:31 - 1:04:12)
And then you can say what Jesus said on the cross, supposed to have said on the cross, forgive them, for they know not what they do. They know not what they do. Which of course means they are completely unconscious.

They don't know what they do. And when you realize that, you forgive them. You don't make their unconscious behavior, the behavior motivated by unconsciousness into their identity.

That is the forgiveness. And you recognize unconsciousness being acted out in this world, causing suffering. But you don't make an identity out of it for other people.

You recognize they are displaying behavior that is caused by the present evolutionary state of humanity. On its path towards awakening. So let that be sufficient for today.

I wish you well. Stay present. Stay conscious.

[Speaker 6] (1:04:19 - 1:05:41)
Thank you, Eckhart. And thank you everyone for being with us. For those of you who are interested in diving even deeper into this topic of conscious manifestation at this time, the most comprehensive offering that Eckhart and Kim have ever created on this topic is coming up.

It's called The Spiritual Guide to Conscious Manifestation. And it starts at the end of May in 2024 with a four-day in-person retreat in Huntington Beach in California. If you want to learn more, you can press the learn more button.

In a few weeks, we'll also be announcing that there'll be a virtual version that's available. And if you're interested in receiving a scholarship for the virtual version, you can write to support at EckhartTolle.com. Again, that's support at EckhartTolle.com.

And I hope to be with many of you at The Spiritual Guide to Conscious Manifestation. And thank you so much, Eckhart, for this fabulous and helpful and deeply instructive Q&A. Thanks, friends.

[Speaker 1] (1:05:56 - 1:15:46)
Problem solving is sometimes necessary in life because problems drop up all the time. Although I prefer not to call them problems, but that's a word that is mostly applied to situations that need some kind of response or action, challenges is another word. It's important to practice accessing non-conceptual intelligence before you apply, and even while you apply, your analytical mind so that you approach the problem both with the non-conceptual intelligence and with the analytical mind that looks at a situation, can divide up, for example, a complex situation into, for example, possible steps that I can take to solve the situation, one, two, three, four, course of action, you think about it, you focus thought, analyze, look at the possibilities, but fluctuate between, this is quite an art, between thinking about it, applying focused thought, which is different from compulsive overthinking, such as happens when you are worried and so on, to apply focused thought, but to really skillfully and effectively apply focused thought, you need to have access to the non-conceptual intelligence in you that is beyond thought.

So there's a continuous stepping back out of thinking into, where you take in the totality of a situation without breaking it down, where you look at the situation without any verbalization or conceptualization, just being very alert and very still. And you look at it, look not necessarily visually, hold it in your awareness as a totality and then just become still. Even let go for a moment of the entire situation, just become still, alert and still.

And then an answer may come out of that or as you continue to, there could be one answer that solves the whole thing or you may continue to apply thought after that. And then perhaps again, step back into alert stillness and then apply thought if thought is called for. And there's so much intelligence in you that is not accessed, potential intelligence.

It's all this huge realm of non-conceptual intelligence that arises out of the unconditioned consciousness. So, and most people move only within the conditioned and they try to solve all their life's problems with the very same instrument that in many cases has created the problems. Because many of your problems without you knowing it are actually created by unconscious use of the mind or rather the mind being doing what it does.

You are not using it, it's using you. You're mistaking the mind for who you are. So that's a huge set of problems in your life comes from that dimension.

And if you are able to bring awareness into that dimension so that your mind creates as few problems as possible or perhaps even no problems at all anymore, then the mind can be left for solving problems. And what are those problems? Those are not the problems that are generated by the mind but the problems that come to you seemingly from the external world in the form of situations you encounter, in the form of things going wrong, so to speak, challenging people, very common source of problems.

But again, very important to differentiate between is this really a problem or am I contributing to it being a problem? Am I contributing all of it? If I did not argue with the is-ness of this moment, would there be a problem?

No. So there would still be a challenge perhaps to deal with. Yes, not a problem.

It's sometimes not easy to tell the difference between is this something that's actually mind-created or is it out there? Now, if you arrive home and your house has collapsed in an earthquake, that is clearly, perhaps on the very deep level, it's created by your mind too, but we're not going there right now. It would be the dream of your particular incarnation would have created that, but we don't need to go there.

On the level that we're dealing with it now is to say your house, it has collapsed in an earthquake, you did not create it. Although many new age people will tell you, why did you create that? What?

Yeah, if you experienced it, you must have created it. I never say that, although there are many, there are different levels of truth. So one does not invalidate the other.

I usually don't go there because I would lose, not that I mind, but I don't want to lose you because it's important for you. So, your awakening, I'm happy to lose you when you don't need me anymore, which hopefully will be very soon, but the mind, my mind suddenly stopped. Very weird thing, the mind, very weird.

Very weird. But when it suddenly stops, that's a good thing. If you're okay with it.

It's not a good thing if you think, oh, that shouldn't have happened. So the mind, let's see it start again. Again.

The different levels of truth at a deeper or higher level, of course it's true to say whatever there's a correspondence between inner and outer and whatever it is that you experience is part of your particular consciousness and so on. But I rarely say you created this if it's a bad experience because your mind would suddenly say, no, that's not true. And then you wouldn't be hearing the rest that I'm saying, which may be much more important than to say you created this.

I'm more interested in you waking up into awareness than believing in a particular perspective. Whatever perspective you need will arise from within you. Whatever perspective you want to approach reality through will arise from within you.

I don't want you to adopt a particular perspective. And in order not to generate resistance in you, I never really say that you created it if it's something bad, but I do say accept this moment and whatever arises in this moment as if you had created it. No, that's more acceptable.

[Speaker 8] (1:16:13 - 1:17:04)
I work with technology and I actually, it was quite interesting to hear you talk about technology a few times in the past couple of days and the way that you mentioned that smartphones are actually an extension of our minds and the way that the internet is actually, it's a space for our unconscious mind to actually be reactive. So one of the things I do for work is to raise a bit of the ethical questions around that and the thing that we usually call digital nudges, which is when we try to influence other people through technology. So I would really love to hear a bit of your opinion and then maybe your advice if there is a way for us to use technology as a tool and as a channel to actually increase humanity, our consciousness and presence.

[Speaker 1] (1:17:04 - 1:19:42)
Yes. So in itself, of course, it's neutral. The technology is neutral.

It's not either bad or good. It depends how it's used. It is, at the moment, it is to a large extent a reflection of the unconscious mind.

So if you want to learn about human unconsciousness, if you want to learn about the human ego, just go there and read what people post and look at the reactivity of people on social media and so on, the comments they leave. You can learn a lot about unconsciousness and identification with mental positions. So the first thing, of course, is be careful with what you put out there, what kind of thing you post.

If you post things online, is it reactive? Give yourself a moment when you read something before you type in an answer or a comment. Give yourself a moment and go within and avoid making people wrong.

You can talk about issues, but don't make people wrong and amplify your ego by making others wrong, even though their position, political or otherwise, you may regard as completely misguided or erroneous. There's still a human being behind that, so you can put forward arguments against somebody's perspective or viewpoint without making another human being wrong. So what you put out is very important.

Is your communication conscious or not, or is it reactive? And then it can be used for other purposes. I'm there too sometimes.

There are certain places where I appear on, could go to YouTube or whatever, and then suddenly there's a spiritual teacher talking so do you professionally work with, what exactly do you do in your work that involves the media?

[Speaker 8] (1:19:43 - 1:19:57)
Pretty much involves the creation, the ideas around the digital products and services. So creating the product that people actually use and designing the interfaces that people actually use on the phones and on the computers.

[Speaker 1] (1:19:57 - 1:32:05)
Right. There are some meditation sites on all these things. So there's great potential for raising consciousness there.

Somebody recommended to me several apps for meditation, which I now have on my phone. I haven't tried them yet. I've been there for a while.

But I have four or five that are there. I want to try them out. So that's the very thing that otherwise would clutter your mind can actually also be used to bring about space or spaciousness in your mind.

So it doesn't necessarily mean that when you have your phone or the 99% of cases, when people look there, their mind is being cluttered, but maybe they're on a meditation app. Maybe they're looking at a beautiful spacious picture and all listening to some sound or saying, take a conscious breath, have a little reminder every two hours to take a, take a conscious breath and bring spaciousness. Oh yes, spaciousness.

So the very same thing that otherwise clutters your mind can now unclutter your mind. It's possible. So I believe that is also going to grow now and it has to, because otherwise that technology could potentially drive humans completely insane, remove their ability to focus on anything for more than a few seconds.

People create young people who are totally uncentered, have no spaciousness within, don't even communicate with humans anymore because they prefer to communicate digitally. So all these things are important, but what you put out is important. So always take into consideration whether this brings people to presence or whether it clutters somebody's mind.

And perhaps you can combine, of course, what you do needs to be also commercially viable. So, but I believe you can combine the two. It's not necessarily a question of either it's commercially viable and it clutters people's minds or it's presence and we're not going to, we are going to go out of business.

It doesn't have to be like that. It's up to you to be creative. Use, the more still you are, the more creative insights you will have into, and you might get some amazing ideas of what is possible.

I can't tell you what is possible. I don't know enough about it. I know very little about it.

So, but you're in a wonderful position. So allow yourself to go deep enough within because then it is, then the creative ideas seem to come. And if you find a thing that is not only brings people to presence, but also helps your company to grow, then that then becomes a conscious business, which is wonderful.

It's challenging. Of course it's challenging. So don't let all your attention be absorbed though by that kind of activity.

Take still, you still need to connect with nature. Take it off as much as possible away from there, connect with nature and then bring it back. Another thing that's just in connection with this, not perhaps directly related to your question, but related to this, what tends to happen is that these devices, people are never, they're still in bed and they're still doing stuff on it.

And that takes you over there at dinner and they're doing stuff on it. It breaks the relation with other people you're at dinner with. I can see, I see people in restaurants, the couple sitting at having dinner together and both are on their phones.

Now that's probably means they have known each other for a while. If it happens on the first date, the first date will probably be the last one. But if it happens after they've known each other for two years, then it's almost a normal thing that they're not present with each other.

Or then they exchange a few words and then she looks at the phone again and then he stares into space and then she's still on her phone. I've actually observed it. She's still on her phone and he's staring into space and then finally he gets out his phone too because he doesn't want to be staring into space.

And then I wonder, are they texting each other? Two good things that I learned that in some huge companies, I believe it might be VW in Germany. Well, they've had enough problems but now they tell their employees after 6 p.m. they're not allowed to use the company phones anymore, not to deal with emails or anything. They need to get off. And that's a very wise thing because the more people's attention gets absorbed by this, the more confused and non-creative they become, the more cluttered their minds become, the more ineffective they're even at their work. Not to mention as human beings, their quality of life decreases enormously.

So don't give yourself spaces. Don't allow these things to take over your life. That's vitally important.

So it's wonderful that some big companies like that have this policy now, no emails or anything after 6 p.m. Well, that's wonderful. So I talked a couple of years ago to Ariana Huffington, who has a famous news website and has also written some books. And she describes in her latest book how her life deteriorated more and more, although she was making a lot of money.

And finally she collapsed and hit her head on her desk and she was complete breakdown. And now she has, for example, in her private life, and that's a good thing, she has this policy of no digital device in my bedroom. So in her bedroom she still has books.

Sometimes she reads in bed, but it has to be a book, not a Kindle, not the iPad, not the iPhone, no digital device in my bedroom. And that's a good thing. At least you have that space for yourself.

So everybody needs to be really conscious of the addictive nature of these devices. How I sometimes say, I even said that before these things were invented, the greatest addiction for human beings is compulsive thinking. They can't stop thinking.

What is the meaning of being an addict? Whatever it may be, if you are an addict it means you have no power to stop, whether you are addicted to a drug or to alcohol. And many people who are addicts say, no, I'm not an addict, I could stop, but they can't.

So the nature of being an addict is you no longer have the power to stop doing this. And this applies for many humans. First of all, all humans are addicts, and that was already before these devices came.

All humans are addicts, addicted to their thinking, to their compulsive and unconscious, superfluous, excessive, often destructive thinking. They can't stop and they don't want to stop because they're so identified with it, the entire identity is in their thoughts. So they have to go on.

They don't even know it. So the greatest addiction for humanity is not heroin or whatever, it's the human mind that's actually, you're addicted to thinking. And now these devices are an amplification, externalization of the human mind.

And so that makes it even more difficult to deal with, because then you not only have your mind, you also have the collective mind that comes at you through your iPhone and the Samsung, which hopefully doesn't explode in your face. Well, if it did explode, that would make you present. And it might suddenly break the addiction.

So give yourself space in your bedroom, that this is a good policy and don't be on it at all times. And now the more, the younger you are, the more difficult this is for you. For old people like myself, it's still relatively easy.

But if you're 18 or 20 or 25, then you've grown up with these things. The older than us, they didn't grow up with these things. They're not quite, perhaps not quite as addicted and identified with it.

Another way to tell is whether they've grown up with these things is how they type into their phones. I always admire young people because they type, they go like that at enormous speed with their thumbs. How they do it with their thumbs, I don't know.

And they can even talk to you while they're doing it. And then I get a text message and somebody expects an answer who might not know that I'm not that fast because with a text message, you can actually see that somebody is replying. You know that he's replying.

And so they wait and say, why isn't he? He's doing something. They don't know that if I go like that, it takes time.

And that's a good thing because it's easy to be present when you're not good at this. You can be much more present. Where is the bee?

So it's a challenge. I hope you come up with something wonderful that promotes presence in this world and helps your business. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:32:32 - 1:32:42)
So part of this is of course to give more attention to the present moment because the more you think, the more future you generate.

[Speaker 15] (1:32:46 - 1:32:57)
And the more attention you give to the present moment, the less thinking because to be really present, you don't think about it.

[Speaker 2] (1:32:57 - 1:32:58)
You just are with it.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:59 - 1:33:21)
Give it attention. I recommend the little things of life to be more attentive to all the little things that make up every hour, every day, every minute, every hour and give them more attention.

[Speaker 2] (1:33:28 - 1:33:33)
Walking steps, one step at a time. Objects that you're handling.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:34 - 1:34:43)
All the time you're handling objects in your life. You're always touching something, putting something here and there. Is everything that you handle just a means to an end or are you able to just appreciate the simple presence or even of a so-called inanimate object?

Contemplation also of all the lovely things that make up your environment, part of your environment. For example, if I were sitting here alone, let's say I'm waiting for everybody to arrive. I might be sitting here looking of course at the flower, sense of stillness.

And then there's a glass table here. And then there's a glass of water here. And there's a clock and a bell and tissues.

And they all reflect the light in different ways.

[Speaker 2] (1:34:44 - 1:35:09)
There's a little bit of a rainbow effect in the glass of water here. And then the lights are reflected on the bells, almost like a mirror. And there's the clock ticking away.

It's a beautiful scene.

[Speaker 1] (1:35:10 - 1:38:10)
Sometimes you go to an art gallery. Well, not so much with modern art, but a very favorite thing would be still life artists. And it took a while in art before they discovered the artists in the history of art, before they discovered the seemingly insignificant things and started to give attention to those.

Before that happened, they were very much interested in the huge things, the saints or the kings or the huge battle scenes or the big... They painted those things or the important people or some dramatic thing, volcanic eruption or whatever, a fire. And then at some point, they started to discover the beauty and the incredible sense of the quality that is in the little things.

They started painting, for example, simple people. The Dutch artists, perhaps they're not that knowledgeable about artists, but the famous Dutch paintings show not so much big, important people. They show simple people, a woman in the kitchen baking bread, simple people sitting around the table eating a very simple meal and there's a light, incredible light effects.

Light comes through the window. There's an incredible sense of presence and aliveness in the painting. And this is a scene that in normal life, you would never have, unless you're really very conscious, nobody would have stopped and said, oh, isn't that amazing?

These people are sitting around a table eating a simple meal and there's light coming through the window. Nobody would have done that. Perhaps after these, more of these artists depicted relatively, seemingly insignificant things, perhaps it motivated some people to give more attention to that.

But even now it's still, people very much overlook that. And you overlook then a large part of your life. You don't give it attention.

When I say give attention, there's an element of appreciation of everything, of the little things. And you begin to realize that your entire life consists mainly of little things. Even if you are VIP, it still consists mainly, you're always sitting somewhere, standing somewhere, looking around, handling things, going from here to there.

[Speaker 2] (1:38:11 - 1:38:14)
Either on a bus or your private jet.

[Speaker 1] (1:38:21 - 1:39:38)
And this giving attention, that is sometimes called gratitude. That's kind of part of it, this appreciation. But I don't necessarily use the word gratitude too often because it implies that you say to somebody, oh, thank you.

But there's a simple appreciation of the isness of things, of their presence. So you no longer regard almost continuously your entire environment as a means to an end. And what's the end?

You need to get to some future moment where suddenly everything is going to be better than now. And so you're always on your way. It's a stepping stone to the next moment in every object that you handle has only utilitarian value, but has no value in itself.

It's never appreciated for its beingness. And then you do the same to human beings. They're only regarded, what can they do for me now?

How do they fit into my schemes, into my plans? Because there's a future orientation continuously, which is the mind. Because there is no future.

[Speaker 15] (1:39:38 - 1:39:57)
It's created by the mind. It becomes extremely enjoyable just to be contemplating the little things that surround you.

[Speaker 1] (1:39:58 - 1:41:18)
Then there is an element of gratitude that comes with it, this appreciation. It's an element where you appreciate the sense perceived world. This is an aspect of reality.

It's not the deepest aspect of reality, but it is the surface of the ocean and it's beautiful. And that also means it's not just when you are quietly contemplating, it's also when you're going from A to B to perform some action. You're going to buy something, going to the, whatever it is, post office.

Appreciate the journey and every step of the journey and look around so that the 10 minutes of going to the shop or driving to the shop or taking a bicycle to the shop isn't completely wasted and reduced to means to an end. And you can actually, that every moment is significant and ultimately it's only ever the one moment.

[Speaker 2] (1:41:29 - 1:41:34)
And then this waiting game comes to an end, waiting for the big break.

[Speaker 1] (1:41:34 - 1:41:50)
That's an expression. I don't know what break, what breaks, but waiting for whatever it is. Of course you have a goal.

You may have a goal in life and you're moving towards it.

[Speaker 2] (1:41:50 - 1:41:55)
But in the meantime, this is now and yes, you know you're moving towards it.

[Speaker 1] (1:42:03 - 1:42:20)

It becomes very enjoyable to be wherever you are when you have this ability to contemplate the little things, both when you're passively contemplating or even when you are moving, being engaged with things.

[Speaker 9] (1:42:45 - 1:43:47)
So when I'm not here in the greenhouse and I go back home and there's storms and chaos and I get tired and overwhelmed, the thing that I keep tripping on and struggling with is reaction. So when there's just pain, body calms, your teachings have helped a lot with that, but when the anger, reaction, particularly when there's stress and I've got three boy children, so when there's stress and there's demands and I'm tired, then I notice the reaction happens before I can, and I've heard you answer the question, but somewhere I keep, even as the presence I suppose is growing, it is probably less. It's hard to determine because I'm not in a relationship which is another trigger.

It's just me, kids, life, things that happen that are annoying or stressful. So there's that. Can you give some...

[Speaker 17] (1:43:47 - 1:43:47)
Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:43:52 - 1:44:10)
And then after the reaction, then you suddenly know, oh, there was the reaction again, right? Afterward, presence comes back, but in the moment, the reaction arises so quickly that it takes you over. I call that reactivity.

[Speaker 9] (1:44:10 - 1:44:19)
Yes. And sometimes what happens, particularly when it's with my children, I feel guilty, and so then I react more.

[Speaker 1] (1:44:24 - 1:44:53)
Yes, the human mind is complicated. Now in most people's lives there are certain situations that are more likely to provoke you into reactivity. In your case, it's perhaps to do with children doing things that they shouldn't be doing or whatever they do.

[Speaker 9] (1:44:53 - 1:44:54)
Some form of relationship.

[Speaker 18] (1:44:54 - 1:44:56)
Or relationships also.

[Speaker 9] (1:44:57 - 1:45:07)
Yeah, things that... Relationships and children, but demands from less outside, but then when there's a demand that I get overwhelmed by.

[Speaker 1] (1:45:07 - 1:45:13)
Yes. And what form, what are the usual forms that the reaction take? Anger, irritation?

[Speaker 9] (1:45:14 - 1:45:20)
Well, the anger is the one that I have the most trouble with. Okay. It comes quite fast.

[Speaker 1] (1:45:20 - 1:45:20)
Yes.

[Speaker 9] (1:45:21 - 1:45:21)
Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:45:25 - 1:57:55)
There are situations where you know, you can almost see it coming. You have to be very alert when you see people behaving in a certain way, like the children or somebody close to you starting to talk about something. You see it coming.

For some people, there are certain particular areas that provoke reaction. And there can be people who are already conscious in most areas of their life, but there are still pockets. There are areas where they lose consciousness and go into reactivity.

For some people, it's to do with intimate relationships. They can lose it there quickly. Or money matters.

Whenever I talk about money, they go, they get talking all about fear and reactivity. So if you are alert, you can look at a situation and you can see it's developing very quickly into the usual situation that makes me reactive. It's happening now.

It's coming. It's like a train coming at you. And just before it happens, you can see a minute before it's building up.

And that's the moment of practice where you realize the most important thing here is my state of consciousness. And am I able to use this situation as part of my spiritual practice? Because that's how you awaken.

It's not by eliminating situations, but by using situations to incorporate them into your spiritual practice. Whatever situation arises becomes part of your spiritual practice and don't believe when the mind tells you if I had a more peaceful life and peaceful surroundings, it would be so much easier for me to awaken spiritually. It wouldn't.

Superficially, you might fool yourself that you're awakening spiritually, but it wouldn't be very deep. It would just be a superficial awakening. So these children and other annoying people around you, they force you to go deeper and they aren't a great opportunity for you to go deeper.

But how do you take advantage of that opportunity? So knowing that is already helpful. So when the situation begins to build up, an opportunity is coming right at you.

And then you can see what it is, suddenly the usual behavior of the children or whoever else it is, you saw it coming a few seconds before, but there was an alertness now that says, oh, it's coming. And when it comes, you have it suddenly, when the awareness is there, an element of choice comes in and the element of choice is you can react or you can allow the situation to be as it is. And people sometimes learn that when they do meditation practice, when you sit in meditation, of course you want everything to be quiet around you.

You don't want to be disturbed. The ideal situation people think for meditation is to be in a very quiet room and completely undisturbed. You certainly don't want to have children screaming outside.

You don't want to have a noisy drill suddenly starting up there, breaking up the road just outside your window while you're meditating and the drill goes. And your usual thing would be, you would react. You would say, I can't meditate under these conditions.

Why can't I live in a more quiet place? I need to, this is not the right way to do your meditation. So when you do your meditation, whatever happens, you incorporate into your meditation and you surrender to it.

So the children screaming outside, the drill going up on site, what is the most annoying thing about this drill? Is it the noise or is it your reaction? It's your reaction.

If you let go of your reaction, there's just the noise and you kind of, the ego itself kind of dissolves and the noise goes right through you. That's called surrender. So people can start practicing that when they meditate.

There's nothing that does not become part of your meditation. Then you're a real meditator. When you're complaining that things are not quiet enough around you, you don't know what meditation is yet.

You're trying to. So sometimes people learn when they meditate how to incorporate seemingly annoying things into their practice of not offering any resistance to the present moment in whatever form the present moment takes. So in your case, it can be children are screaming, demanding this or that.

Are you able to accept that they are screaming and demanding because that's what children do without opposing or fighting internally? That's your practice. But if you lose it, if you find you've lost it, and suddenly you know you lost it, because in the moment of losing it, you don't know it.

If you knew it, you wouldn't lose it. I'm using this expression, I'm losing it, which real people sometimes use. But what are they talking about?

What are they losing? I'm losing it. I'm going to lose it.

What they are meaning by that is I'm going to get very angry. Usually that's the meaning. But it's a good expression because what they are really saying, I'm going to lose consciousness completely.

They don't know that that's what they are saying. But that's what is implied in that I'm going to go completely unconscious in a minute. So you better stop talking now.

Or run away from me. Now, so when you lose it, at that moment you don't know it. You just lose it because you've gone quite unconscious.

Then the moment comes after losing it that some consciousness comes back in and suddenly you know that you lost it. And the next thing is, guilt comes in, as you mentioned, in your case. Guilt comes in, I lost it, but I shouldn't have lost it.

You get angry with yourself. You're angry with the children, now you're angry with yourself. And that gives even more fuel to the anger towards the children.

So that's the mechanism. So at what point does consciousness come in? So when you lose it, you're gone.

Nothing you can do. Then, moments later perhaps, a minute, I don't know how long, two minutes, you suddenly, oops, I lost it. And then immediately comes a reaction to losing it, which is another reaction, which adds another layer of reactivity to the original layer of reactivity.

That's how complicated humans are. So one thing you can do if you do lose it, and you will again lose it, despite our talk here, it will still happen, but less so, there is a shift that's happening, but the old unconsciousness can and probably will from time to time reassert itself, but less frequently. And so if you do, the moment you do notice that you lost it, surrender, it means you haven't surrendered at first, you offered resistance to the present moment.

And then you notice that you lost it and you accept that you lost it. You can practice there too, surrender. Okay, I lost it.

You're a human, nothing personal in it. You are one aspect of a universal shift in consciousness. And it's a monumental thing that the unconsciousness that has been prevalent on the planet for thousands of years, something is happening to it and it's awakening.

The consciousness is awakening through humans. You are part of that. So don't get angry with yourself because you are part of the awakening process because what's happening to you is part of the awakening process.

If it were not part of the awakening process, you wouldn't be standing here talking about it. You would simply continuously be acting out your unconsciousness day after day after day, and you would pass it on to your children and they would pass it on to their children, and you wouldn't even know what you're doing. You have no idea that you are unconscious.

You would just be totally in the grip of the conditioning which is inherited from our parents, inherited from their parents, goes back generation and generation and generation, and is passed on to the next generation until somebody like you awakens, begins to awaken. So there's no need to be guilty or angry because the moment you know that you lost it, there is an awareness. Otherwise, you wouldn't know it.

So that's your awareness. Oh, great, I lost it, but I know that I lost it. So you surrender to having lost it, and there is awareness.

But if losing it means you're immediately going to reactivity towards that, you become unconscious again, which means there's been a flash of awareness, I lost it, which immediately turns mentally into a judgment about yourself, which means you lost it again. So, again, you need to be alert in your daily life. You watch a situation develop in such a way that you feel, okay, it's happening, it's happening, I'm about to get triggered.

And then you have a choice suddenly. You can accept this moment as it is, and the children do what they do. It doesn't mean that you become incapable, by the way, of telling the children they're doing something wrong or they must stop that.

I don't know how chaotic your home life is, but some children are totally out there. So that's a different subject. But here we just talk about yourself.

Be alert when you feel a situation developing into what usually would provoke a reaction, and then stay alert. And then you may find your action doesn't come. If it does come and you lose it, the moment you realize it, awareness is back and then you welcome, say, oh, I lost it, but I know that I lost it.

That's fine. And then you haven't lost, and then you remain present there. It's a very subtle practice, but being here, although I said that the old pattern will most likely still come up from time to time, but you can deal with it in a different way.

It doesn't have to turn into guilt or anger towards yourself. No, you accept because you've noticed. And so that's your practice.

I wish you well. That's your spiritual practice. Much better than living in a monastery for three years.

[Speaker 17] (1:57:57 - 1:57:58)
Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:58:10 - 1:59:06)
This mind-made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive. To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation. The mother bird is taking the little chick and going, and then it will, oh, no, you can't fly like that.

You have to do this.

[Speaker 9] (1:59:11 - 1:59:37)
I guess just to go along with questions about boys, my daughter is 17 years old. There are times when, and many times recently, when she does not want to follow my direction. How do I stay present when she's doing, you know, meh, you know.

[Speaker 1] (1:59:42 - 1:59:44)
So she's 17.

[Speaker 9] (1:59:45 - 1:59:45)
She's 17.

[Speaker 1] (1:59:45 - 1:59:49)
So you've only got a few more months of control over her.

[Speaker 9] (1:59:51 - 1:59:58)
Let go. Well, she's been at this for a while.

[Speaker 1] (1:59:59 - 2:00:56)
So then the shift, then, as your children grow older, of course, the younger they are, the more you need to, in some cases, control what they do because they might do something to hurt themselves, like don't play with fire, don't walk on a high wall because you might fall off. So those things, then gradually the parent needs to learn to allow a bit more, always a bit more freedom and a bit more just give guidance rather than control. Some parents find it hard to shift from exerting control as they grow older and giving guidance.

And as teenagers, especially, they resent, as you know and everybody knows, they resent being told what to do because they're beginning to be independent adults.

[Speaker 12] (2:00:56 - 2:00:57)
Well, she knows everything.

[Speaker 1] (2:00:57 - 2:07:54)
Yes, of course, yes. So there's as much learning for you as there is for her in this situation. For you it's to do with continuing to give guidance without giving the impression that you're trying to control what she does.

And if guidance is not received, no matter whether it's given but it's not received, then you need to accept that, especially as soon as she will be reaching 18. And then compassion comes in. You continue to help her as much as you can, offer help or guidance, realizing that she now has her, she is autonomous now and will decide what to do on her own and she will make mistakes, hopefully, because if she doesn't, she's not going to grow.

She will make mistakes and you may see it and she won't. And ultimately, they're not really mistakes because they're all part of one's growth process and becoming eventually conscious of mistakes if they are leading to suffering and then can lead to awakening. And then retrospectively, they're not mistakes.

If a mistake leads to awakening, it's not a mistake. Eventually, so it's a letting go internally, compassionate letting go, like think of the image of a nest and the bird, the mother bird is taking the little chick and going. And then you go, oh no, you can't fly like that.

You have to do this. But birds have learned to fly for a million years and more without the mother bird telling them what to do, they'll learn. So it's trusting in the movement of life and realizing how that so-called mistakes are an important part of our growth.

We had somebody else before, we talked about allowing them to do that. So think of the image and that will help you to be, your associated question was to do with patience or presence. This will help you, the bird, you let the bird fly off.

And the flight at first may not be smooth and they may have a hard landing. And you just watch and you know that's fine. Do as much as you can.

Patience is not quite the same as presence. In presence, the whole idea or concept of patience disappears. When you're present and somebody says, oh, you're so patient, you say, patient?

I didn't know I was patient. Patient is not something that you're trying to do, really. I'm trying to be patient here.

Here is the key word. I'm trying to be patient here. So the patience is something you're kind of holding back.

I'm very patient with you. But in presence, really, you're not thinking of yourself as patient at all. It doesn't come into it really anymore at all.

You're just present with what is. And as I said, if somebody called you patient, you'd say, what does that mean? I'm not patient at all.

It's like forgiveness also. In presence, forgiveness happens naturally. And so you don't need to make a big deal and say, I'm trying to forgive that person.

I had, again, in my life, I had for many years resentment towards my father until I finally woke up. And then the resentment disappeared and my relationship with him changed completely. There was suddenly love.

And until the age of 29, I had an enormous amount of resentment. I didn't realize, of course, that he did what he did because of his programming. He had an enormous amount of anger in him that comes from his childhood.

And again, I could explain why, but it's not necessary. It comes from his childhood and the way in which he interpreted his childhood, what his mother did to him, not actually rather how he interpreted her motivation. He was the seventh child, the youngest.

And then his father died when he was only 14. And then the family didn't have enough money to have all the children at school, at grandma's high school. So two of his sisters were kept at school and he was taken out of school because they didn't have enough money.

And he had to become an apprentice in some store, not supermarket, they didn't have supermarkets then, but some store where he had to make deliveries to big houses. And that enormous anger started to come up in him during all that time, what my mother did to me, what they did to me, and that never really left him. So living with him, the anger was usually not directed to me, but was directed to my mother always.

And living there was like living with an unexploded bomb. It could go off at any moment. Whenever he was there, it was like a powder keg.

Any moment it could go off. One wrong word by my mom, and my mom was very good at saying the wrong word.

[Speaker 17] (2:07:54 - 2:07:57)
Oh, of course. Yeah. Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (2:08:00 - 2:09:34)
I didn't, I, that was his, he couldn't help that. And as I then disidentified from that, in his later years, there was a considerable degree of awareness coming in. Some remnants of that anger remained, but far less than before.

And he read The Power of Now a few years before he died, and it was meaningful to him. And there was quite a bit, in some areas of his life, he was virtually enlightened. And in other areas, there were still big pockets of unconsciousness.

But compared to what he was before, there was an enormous shift. And it has, I'm sure, something to do with the shift that happened in me towards him. So there was no longer anything to forgive.

That's the beauty of it. And it was all my, I had to, his ego was huge. So I learned about ego before I even knew the word ego.

Throughout all my childhood, I learned about how the ego behaves and what it does through observation, without knowing that that was ego. But I saw the dysfunction, normal dysfunction in relationships. It's all fine.

It's all fine. Trust, compassion, letting go, and then life will do the rest.

[Speaker 18] (2:09:35 - 2:09:37)
Wow, thank you very much.

[Speaker 1] (2:10:03 - 2:22:12)
My prostate was cancerous, and I had surgery on it. I had been cancer-free, or so I thought, but after seven years, cancer has once again reared its ugly presence in the region. I'm having difficulty coping with this, plus type two diabetes.

Well, it is, it seems the destiny of many humans to be confronted with something like that at some point, or something similar. So I will just explain what I have addressed before a few times with regard to serious illness. And that is not to, as much as possible, avoid the mental, I'm not saying don't recognize reality like in the previous question, but what I'm saying is avoid an excessive mental dwelling on either the condition that has a name or me as the one who suffers from that condition so that your mind does not continuously strengthen that mind form of the illness mind form, or me as my identity as a sufferer from that illness by thinking about it, which of course creates a lot of fear and won't make you feel good.

In other words, in order to become free, now it is a secondary thing, what kind of treatment you go in for, whether it's conventional treatment, whether it's alternative treatment, whether it's no treatment at all, all that only you can know, but what is your state of consciousness? And it's a wonderful, it sounds strange for me to say that it is a great opportunity to have an illness like that. And this has been confirmed to me by a number of people that I've known who have had similar illnesses, one or two seem to get cured, others did not, but that was secondary.

They said that it forced them into very intense presence because they noticed when they were not present, they were very unhappy. So the illness forced them into just living more and more in the present moment. An extreme example of that was I read last year, I sent it to, I read it on the BBC news, my app.

There was a musician in England, popular music. I had never heard of him, but apparently he was quite well known in England who got diagnosed with cancer. And he reports in an interview that when he left the doctor's office, he felt ecstatic.

This is very rare. He felt ecstatically happy and he couldn't quite figure out why. And now he says, I now realize all the problems that I thought I had were completely meaningless.

And he lives completely in the now. And the rare thing with him was that that happened immediately as he left the doctor's office. I've never heard that before, that somebody, so can you be, allow the illness to push you into the awakened state?

Their motivation is very strong now. And it could happen to anybody who is Nuganti. I have not had a serious illness my whole life.

I haven't even seen the inside of a hospital, but who can say that it's not going to happen? Everybody is one heartbeat away from death. Well, the death of the physical body.

And most, if you don't die in an accident, if you die, you might die of old age, if you're lucky or unlucky, depending what your old age looks like. Or as somebody once said, old age isn't so bad if you consider the alternative. So it's either that, most people here, including myself, will probably die of something, which would be heart attack, cancer, stroke.

I think those are the main things. Could be an accident too, of course, or something more rare. Something eventually comes.

So ultimately how long your life is, although I must admit, if it comes to a very young person, it may be more difficult. A young person hasn't lived completely. But even there, the shift is possible so that you allow the condition, the illness to force you into just absolute present moment awareness in which you do not suffer.

A lot of the suffering of the illness arises from what your mind is saying. Of course, with some illnesses, pain eventually comes. That is pain.

When I use the word suffering, I really refer to psychological suffering. If there's pain, then perhaps something is done to alleviate the pain and you also need to surrender. But there may be many conditions where there is actually no pain for quite a long time, but you know there is that illness.

So go away from focusing excessively on the idea of illness in the mind. And in order to get out of the idea of illness, which is not a denial, it's not saying I don't have it. No, you're just not going there.

You're just being in the present moment. And several people that were part of, came to me over the years, especially at a time when I still had more personal contact with people who would come to me. I've seen several who had developed fatal illnesses and in the last months of their lives became quite radiant, quite awakened.

Really the flowering that is meant to be the purpose of human life, the flowering of consciousness happened. They didn't need another 25 years of life, which means 25 years of eating, 25 years of taking the dog for a walk, going on vacation, seeing a few more sunsets and adding more life experiences. You can add more and more, but is that the real purpose of your life, to add more?

And they're good, but then you need more and more and more life experiences and add more. No, there's something else that is more vital, more important. That's the flowering, the shift in consciousness.

Then time becomes immaterial, whether you have a few more months or another 20 years or 30 years. So it was wonderful to see those people becoming radiant and becoming like, in a way like little children, because the whole personality collapsed. The ego could not survive knowing that it had no future.

If the ego really knows it has no future, either it goes into intense suffering and complaining and victim identity. Why did this happen to me, to me? Or it dissolves.

And sometimes it happens to people spontaneously, even without any spiritual teaching or teacher. It just happens that they can't stand the pain anymore and then they just go, oh, there's nobody left. Nobody who says, I have an illness.

No, there's just presence. And then they look at you as if they had just been born. So a deep shift happened inside them.

So that is the potential awakening that's there. That illness, so-called fatal illness, can help you with that. There are situations that force you, if you allow, they'd force you into the present moment.

And those are good things. They force you into the present moment. As you know, some people seek out activities that force them into the present moment, dangerous activities, where you have to be so alert.

If you think you die, so you have to... Some sports events are like that. Most of the people participating in the Olympics, the sportsmen, they have to be, while they are performing, whatever it is, the discipline is, they're all...

And they love it. They love that aliveness. They may not realize that they could have the same aliveness sitting by a fireplace.

And that is the same aliveness that can be there when there is a threatened life, so-called life-threatening illness. But it's longer. It's not just a moment like five minutes.

Mind-Made Sense of Self This Mind-Made Sense of Self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive. To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation.

[Speaker 15] (2:22:47 - 2:22:48)
Okay.

[Speaker 9] (2:22:49 - 2:22:54)
Actually, my question is already being answered.

[Speaker 1] (2:22:54 - 2:22:55)
That often happens.

[Speaker 9] (2:22:56 - 2:23:05)
And I think one day we're all going to come here and once we're all in presence, we won't have any questions for you.

[Speaker 1] (2:23:06 - 2:23:07)
That's true. That would be wonderful.

[Speaker 9] (2:23:08 - 2:23:10)
You're going to be out of business. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:23:12 - 2:23:14)
Yes. That would be wonderful.

[Speaker 9] (2:23:14 - 2:23:23)
Actually, my question was, could you elaborate on ego versus healthy self-esteem?

[Speaker 1] (2:23:23 - 2:33:27)
Ah, yes. Okay. Eventually, what we call healthy self-esteem, which is a wonderful thing, eventually that is not enough.

And as a human being evolves, that healthy self-esteem is no longer satisfying as you grow older and is transcended. And what takes its place is healthy no-hyphen self-esteem. The self-esteem, of course, means that you are reasonably satisfied with who you are as a person and the achievements of the person, what the person can do, or what the person knows, or what the person possesses.

And you compare what the person can do, abilities, what the person knows, knowledge, or what the person has in terms of possessions. You compare that with others, and you come out favorably. So either you can do more than somebody else or others, feel better about yourself.

I can do this, but they can't. I can, but you can't. Or you have more knowledge.

Did you know that this and such and such is such and such a case? You didn't know that? Well, let me tell you.

That feels good. These ignorant people, they don't know anything. Or you have more.

How many bedrooms does your house have? Four? Well, we have eleven.

Do you have an advanced degree? No? I have two PhDs.

And that's fine. It starts with a child already. It says, look what I can do.

I can jump further than you. And for the child, it's fine. There's no point in telling a child, don't do this, don't do that.

Your ego is arising. No, the child has to go through that. And it is better to have healthy self-esteem, as you describe it, as it's usually described, than extremely low self-esteem.

I'm no good. Everybody's better than me. I have nothing.

Life has treated me unfairly. There's a self-image there also. As there is a self-image in healthy self-esteem, one, of course, is much nicer than the other.

It's more pleasant to live with healthy self-esteem than with a low self-esteem, or unhealthy self-esteem, one could call it. But they're both identification with some kind of form. And you compare the form of who I am with the form of others, and you are better, at least in one area, you must be.

And that's satisfying. But there's still, you're trapped in form, and you're depending on, for your sense of value or worthiness, you're depending on, ultimately, to put it bluntly, others who have less or know less or can do less than you. And that's fine.

It doesn't mean you shouldn't strive to do great things or to have things or to know things. But the question is, ultimately, is that a satisfying basis for your sense of who you are? And in the long term, it is not.

It is not satisfying. That is why people who are maybe very happy with what they possess, after a while, there's an emptiness that comes, not the spiritual emptiness, the sense of emptiness of what's it all about. And even things you can do, a time may come when you can't do it anymore.

Whatever it is that you do, that's so great. Playing an instrument, the great pianist, wonderful, why not be a great pianist? But if you derive your sense of who you are from that, then one day you find arthritis in your fingers.

And who are you now? Or just the agility goes. It's not there anymore.

Oh, my God. Suffering comes. Or you invent the greatest new computer, some computer.

I don't know the expressions, but program or whatever it is. And everybody says this is the greatest ever, but three years later or two years, these things happen very quickly. Somebody else comes and makes yours obsolete, and then you have no new ideas, and there you sit, completely devastated, because you come from somebody great, you've become nobody.

But it was all illusion, because you derived your sense of who you are from something in the world of form, which is fleeting, not reliable, not solid, dreamlike. And so the true self-esteem comes from not identifying with form. Now, whether we even want to call that self-esteem, I don't know.

The true sense of worthiness and of power, true power, comes when you realize the formless in yourself, that dimension, and that all power comes from that. But it goes far beyond the person that you are. And then you are rooted in the formless, so to speak, or you are it, and that there's enormous sense of worthiness in there, but it's not comparative.

It's not more than. You see the same worthiness in everyone, even if they don't know it for themselves yet. So there's power, but not more than.

There's just the power of life itself, and you know everybody is an expression of that, although they may not know it yet. Everybody. So this is, you transcend conventional self-esteem, and it doesn't mean you lose your sense of worth.

It shifts into something much deeper. So every human really is, there may even be some children these days who don't need to go through the egoic state anymore. That is possible.

But traditionally, and humans had to go, and some, many probably still have to go through the stage where they identify with form, develop some self-esteem, do something that you feel good about, you can do it, and then comes the time going beyond. Except perhaps, as I said, some advanced souls who may be coming into this world, already in this world as children, who don't need, even need to identify with that anymore. A question that comes from there also is, if a person has low self-esteem, in other words, a mental image of not good enough, then does that person have to go through the stage of healthy self-esteem before they can transcend it altogether?

I don't know. I haven't tried it enough with enough people. I don't know.

It may well be that the unhealthy self-esteem, if it leads to a state of suffering, great suffering, you may be able to, with the help of a teacher, go from there to no self. Because the way from unhappiness or suffering to transcendence is easier than the way from superficial happiness to transcendence. Superficial happiness keeps you in the dream world for quite a while.

It's not that bad. My life, I can't complain. It's not that bad.

It's going okay. I'm quite happy, just got a promotion. I'm so happy I just got my annual bonus from my Wall Street bank.

[Speaker 17] (2:33:30 - 2:33:31)
Great, I'm doing great.

[Speaker 1] (2:33:44 - 2:34:04)
So from there, the transcendence is not directly from Wall Street, probably not. But if you go from Wall Street to prison, then...

[Speaker 15] (2:34:04 - 2:34:05)
much easier.

[Speaker 1] (2:34:27 - 2:41:59)
Well, the ego lives in an almost continuous sense of not enough, we could say, a sense of lack. It may not be always in the foreground, but it's always in the background, at least, that sense that you're not complete, you don't have enough, you are not enough, you're not fully yourself yet, which, of course, is true on the human level, because on the human level, you can always achieve more, you can attain more, you can experience more. But it's not true who you are, who or what you are in the essence of your being.

In the essence of your being, you're already complete. So there's the depth dimension to who you are, and there is the surface dimension to who you are. The surface dimension is the ego.

The ego comes from a place of lack. And whatever you attain through the ego, and the ego has access to some power, obviously, it's a form that consciousness has taken, but you're a much less powerful creator as an ego compared to what you could be if you're aligned with the essence of who you are, and you're coming from a deeper place that is in alignment with what the universe wants and where the universe is going, which is greater consciousness. So if you come from the ego, there's a sense of lack.

You always know it retrospectively that after you have attained something through egoic endeavors, if you haven't attained it, then sooner or later, and usually sooner, it does not satisfy you. Whatever you attain, the moments of satisfactions are fairly brief, and then again, you fall back into the state of lack and dissatisfaction. So no matter what you create from ego and through ego, it won't satisfy you.

Now, you may not know this while you're engaged in the process, but retrospectively, you can always know it. And while you are creating, though, there are also certain signs that are indicative that the ego has gained the upper hand.

If you might even have started your manifestation from a deeper place, and then suddenly something happened and the ego started to take over.

And so, for example, a good sign is that when you no longer enjoy what you're doing, you're engaged in a creative process, you're active, you believe that you can achieve it, but a time comes when you suddenly realize you don't enjoy the work anymore. And whenever an obstacle appears, because in any creative process, even though it may be empowered, you will still occasionally encounter obstacles. Anybody who has created something new in this world has experienced that, yes, you are assisted.

The more you are aligned with the depths of who you are, the greater the assistance you get. Nevertheless, even in those cases, you will encounter, when you create something new, you will encounter obstacles because there are certain structures in the world that don't want to change. They are against change.

There's a certain inertia in the structures of this world. And if you want to bring about something new, then sometimes you come up against that and some of the inertia manifests through human beings who don't want the change that you are trying to bring about. So when you encounter obstacles, as you're bound to, when you're coming from ego, you will be upset and you will regard the obstacle as an enemy and you will start complaining or you will become discouraged.

You might become aggressive. You may become stressed. You can't sleep anymore.

So you're finding the obstacles create a dysfunctional state within you. And then your entire work becomes a source of stress for you. And when stress arises, it means the ego is there and is interfering, even if your initial attention might have been very good.

You say, for example, I want to create a great spiritual center where people come to learn to be more conscious. Now, what could be better than that? And that's great.

So the intention is great. Maybe the initial intention may be absolutely wonderful, but as you start working, then without you knowing it, the ego can come, can creep back in and claim, first of all, it says that you are in desperate need for this to happen and you cannot be fulfilled and happy unless this happens. These are the first thoughts that come.

They may not become conscious or at the back of your mind, this feeling arises. So you desperately need this to happen. Every obstacle and every person who represents this obstacle becomes an enemy and you get upset when you encounter them.

And so without you knowing it, if you fall back, if you fall into a state of lack, of neediness, of not enough, of the place you want to get to, the aim, the intention becomes so important to you where you need to get to. The end result that you want to achieve becomes so important to you that you neglect the importance, the primary importance of the present moment and your state of consciousness in the present moment. So instead of focusing on the step you're taking at this moment and giving your utmost attention to what you're doing now, and if you do that, you will actually enjoy what you're doing.

Instead of that, you're excessively focused on the desired outcome and the present moment is no more than an inferior moment towards this imagined future moment. So your fault is these are all egoic patterns that you fall back into and that is why it can become very frustrating. So a good intention is not enough.

You need to be conscious throughout the creative process because the ego can creep back in during the creative process without you knowing it. It's a very subtle thing.

[Speaker 2] (2:41:59 - 2:42:04)
You need to be really alert, but that's how it is.

[Speaker 11] (2:42:17 - 2:43:40)
I'm a quantum physicist by education. Now I work with blind people and people are losing their sight to try to preserve the sight. In doing so, I carry a lot of their pain with me all the time.

And wherever I look, I see your teaching. Whether it's quantum physics, whether it's how the body works. And I try to convey that to my colleagues to try and not only focus on saving the sight, but also, even in a very small part, healing these people.

Helping them deal with that. However, I'm in the investment world, so I'm always faced with a lot of resistance. Because it's not conducive to good business to spend too much time being too soft.

And I was wondering if you could comment a little bit on how can I help the patients and also help the people who are in the business side of things. Yes. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (2:43:40 - 2:43:48)
So you work in a hospital or clinic that specializes in helping people with their sight.

[Speaker 11] (2:43:48 - 2:44:12)
Actually, I'm an inventor and I take my inventions. We have an investment firm. So we work with people, not only in this country, but other countries to try and find solutions to restore sight for people who have completely lost their sight.

Or preserve whatever sight is left for people who have things like that. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:44:14 - 2:44:52)
So in addition to treating the eyes, the eyesight of humans, you realize there's more that you are able to do for them. There's an additional dimension there. And there's a little bit of conflict between this.

Again, we come again to the system that you work in and what you feel that you need to do to feel fulfilled and to help others becoming more conscious. Sometimes using their suffering to become more conscious.

[Speaker 16] (2:44:53 - 2:44:53)
Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:44:54 - 3:08:08)
So is it you need to see whether you can still... This is very important for you to continue to do that because this is why you are here. It's not just you treat the whole human being, not just one part of the body.

Are you able to still do that within the structure that you work now? Or can you change it from within? Or do you need to create a new structure?

It's basically, it's the same question as the previous question. I would not give up, do not compromise on what you feel you are called upon to do with other human beings. And don't compromise and say, okay, I'll just have to drop this and just treat them to like everybody else.

But see if you can still function from within the system and do what you feel you need to do. And if you can't, again, it's a question of doing it in a new way, creating something that makes it possible for you to work on both levels, on the outer level and the inner level with human beings. Thank you.

Again, this question comes up very often for many people in different ways. And many of you may find, because you represent the arising and the awakening consciousness, many of you will find that the existing structures within which you work are not able to carry the new consciousness anymore. Jesus used this funny expression, new wine in old bottles, because apparently at the time, the bottles were not glass bottles, they were kind of leather bottles.

And if you, for some reason, if you put new one in, they would probably burst. So what that means is many of the existing structures, social structure, that also applies to economic structures, the structures in medicine, psychiatry, psychology, education, school system, university system. Many of those structures, they were created not by the awakened consciousness.

They've all been around for a long time and they evolved out of the egoic consciousness. So many of the structures are the products of unenlightened states of consciousness. They reflect the unenlightened, unawakened states of consciousness.

So many of you will find it necessary to step out of, sometimes, as I said, they can make, in certain cases, they can be changed from within if there are enough people within who want to change it. But many structures are too rigid for change. So it is up to you to create new structures that reflect your, and come together, perhaps, with others who are also awakening so that the new structures will reflect your state of consciousness.

So this is what the world needs. The world cannot continue to function within the old structures that are a product of unenlightened states of consciousness. The economy, the political system, even here in the States, it seems to, compared to some other places, functions quite well, but it's dysfunctional too.

The economic structure, certainly, you can see how dysfunctional they are. The educational system, how children are brought up, all those things, they require new structures to reflect the arising consciousness. So that's your job to create those.

And here we come to that part of manifestation, which the universe also wants. It does not, it wants you, yes, of course, it wants you to go within, realize who you are in your essence. And then from there, it also wants you to create.

It wants you to manifest. It will use you, it will work through you to manifest new forms because the old forms don't work anymore. And that's, it's a wonderful thing to do that.

And you will see how empowered you suddenly become as you go about creating new forms, how powerful your abilities to manifest will be if they are in alignment with what the universe wants, with what the one consciousness wants. They are not little egos wanting to create something. You are in alignment with what the universe needs right now, what the awakening consciousness wants.

If you then start manifesting from that deeper level within yourself, you will be amazed how empowered you can be in your own manifestation. Sometimes there is a time gap. So sometimes manifestation happens very quickly.

Sometimes you need to, as you are inspired, so to speak, a blueprint of what is possible, of what you, or not so much you, of what consciousness wants you to create may arise in your mind. And this mental blueprint of what you want to create, this may be there for a while. It might attract others with similar mental blueprint.

And then at some point, the manifestation begins. Some action may be necessary, but again, the action that you take will be inspired by the consciousness and it will not be stressful. This is a new way of creating.

If stress comes in, you're falling back into the old consciousness. This is a joyful way of creating new forms and new structures in this world. The old way is to create, while you're creating, you're stressed and angry and you're fighting others.

You will encounter obstacles to that which you want to create because the old structures, they don't want to, they will regard you as an enemy in some cases. And that's fine. You have no enemies.

Let them regard you as an enemy. But to you, you don't attack. Another important thing.

You don't attack the old structures and say how dreadfully wrong they are. Focus on the new rather than, and especially don't attack the people who are still identified with the old structures and work within the old structures. They are just a little slower in awakening.

So the important thing in the new way of creating external forms is if obstacle arise to, then the obstacle can be overcome, not by attacking it. Some obstacles are overcome by yielding. So let's say something is coming at you.

You want to go this way and create that. And he says, somebody says, no, you can't do that. And so sometimes you yield.

Here comes the obstacle and you go, you almost go wrong. Or you use a very similar to a martial arts. Maybe Kim knows more about that than I.

Something comes at you and the very energy of the attack can be turned around if you're not in a resistance mode against. That's vital. But yes, you will encounter obstacles.

And that's part of that can only help you with deepening your resolve and deepening your connectedness to the consciousness that wants to create through you. I saw the first, many years ago, you may not even remember, on the Oprah show, Oprah said once, I don't know how many years ago, they were talking about how the slaughterhouses, how animals are treated and how, and Oprah said, I'm never going to eat a hamburger again. And then she was taken to court by the Texas cattle ranchers because the moment she said, I'm never going to eat a hamburger again, the shares of all the cattle ranching businesses plummeted.

So she was, she was a huge court case against Oprah and her company. So much so that she had to move her entire show to Texas because she had to be there every day to be in court. And she did, she moved to Texas.

And then she started having, talking about how wonderful Texas is and how nice the people are in Texas. And they all showed the problem. People were not, she actually didn't attack anybody.

She just said how great it is to be here. And people loved her suddenly being there, not the cattle ranchers, but the others. It was a wonderful example of somebody who does not engage in fighting the other.

He just cooperates with that and sees the good in the situation. And in the end, the cattle ranchers lost. So she won the case and there wasn't a triumphant, I won the case against the, it was just fine.

It was the natural outcome. If you respond to a situation consciously without creating an enemy, although you might be seen as an enemy by them, but to you, they are not. And that was a wonderful thing to watch.

So there are other examples of that when handling these things consciously rather than in the old way. But so for you, see what life, as you know what I sometimes say, it's not a question of asking yourself, what do I want from life? Or what do I want in life?

Asking what does life want from me? Life means consciousness. Consciousness is the essence of all life.

What does life want me to do? And many of you know already, it might not be come up very clearly yet, but you have an inkling at least of what it is that life wants you to do. And if you don't have it, then just wait a little, become still.

It could take a while. Some of you may not have to do anything at all. That's fine too.

Not everybody is there to create some new structures. You may remember I use the expression frequency holder for certain people who are contemplative. There are some people who are by nature quiet and withdrawn.

And then they're never really interested in creating anything. They just want to emanate peace. In traditional societies, they would have lived in a monastery or in an ashram.

Well, in India, ashrams are still popular. So you can go to monasteries. These days are closing down because these are very, some may still be lovely places, but in many cases, this is part of the old structures through which in the past, spirituality expressed itself.

Some of the most spiritual people in the West, they were not part of the hierarchy of the church. They lived in monasteries and you didn't even know them. They were simple, humble monks.

Most people in the church hierarchy had huge egos and they were only interested in power. Well, to some extent, it might still apply nowadays. So new forms, whether some of you might create healing centers, some may create a place like this, a retreat center for people to come to, all kinds of things, or you use your own modality of work and create a new structure through which that can express itself in this world.

So wonderful opportunities and challenges lie ahead. And if you are a frequency holder, that's fine too. Get a job as a gardener and tend your plants or sell tickets at the toll booth of the bridge where the cars stop and say, thank you, have a good day.

You say that 2,000, 3,000 times a day and everybody who goes past gets that, oh, a moment of presence. So there's not one thing, not everybody is called upon to go out there and create something new. Many are, and others just, you cannot not affect others if there's a transformation of consciousness and an awakening in you, it will affect others, even if you never meet them, because underneath the surface of things, all humans are connected.

There is such a thing as I mentioned earlier, the one human consciousness being an aspect of the one universal consciousness. So one human being goes, going through an awakening, makes it easier for many others to go through an awakening. Even if that human being never does anything particularly interesting in his or her outer life, others go through an awakening and they will do significant and interesting and meaningful things in their outer life.

But even if you don't, it will affect the totality of human consciousness. You could withdraw to an ashram or live as a hermit, you would still affect the totality of human consciousness. Your challenge then of course would be to stay present in the absence of challenges, major challenges, stay absolutely present and don't...

A frequency holder is at a level above thinking, somebody who is predominantly still without being very active, predominantly still. For a frequency holder who is above thinking, the danger is that he or she may inadvertently after a while, inadvertently fall from being above thinking to feeling below thinking. And the danger of the active person who acts from this higher level of consciousness is that he or she may become so focused on the doing, beginning to think that the doing is more important than the being behind it and then loses touch with the being and therefore also gets lost in doing and falls below thinking and gets trapped what he wanted to avoid in the first place, gets back into the same trap of mind. So I have seen people who...

There have been people who wanted to create a healing center and they were not vigilant enough to observe their own states of consciousness because there's so many things to do and to consider and then you come together with others. We all have the same endeavor, but unfortunately, they're not vigilant enough so the ego creeps back very quickly and then instead of creating a healing center, they create an extremely dysfunctional organization where they all hate each other. There are also churches like that, church organization.

When they have their committee meetings, there's some extremely angry people in these committee meetings. They hate others. Even while they open the book and say, love your neighbor as yourself.

As you know very well, when you want to create something or something wants to be created through you, the important thing is not to believe that you need to attract something from into your life. It doesn't manifest from there. It manifests from within, from within out.

So the feeling that it's already a reality in you, Jesus already said that, when you pray for something, believe that you already have it. And of course, many books that you can read on manifestation, the good ones will also tell you that when you want to create something, you need to feel it's reality already as here and now it is already here. In a way it is already here.

And you don't, you feel, you do not postpone your feeling of accomplishment and fulfillment and the joy of this being that needs already to be there because in a way it is on the inner level, it's already fully there. That is the secret of powerful manifestation is to feel, how would you feel if you already had that right here now? Oh, that would feel, that's the basis for creation.

That would feel wonderful. Okay. So you are feeling wonderful right now.

Yes. Why are you feeling wonderful? Because I'm imagining that it's already here.

Okay. That's the beginning of manifestation that you feel it's already here. You're not looking to the thing that you want to create, expecting some kind of future fulfillment through it.

So you need to manifest out of the fullness of the present moment. If you lose touch with the fullness of the present moment, which means being in touch with being, in touch with the essence of who you are, that's where all fullness arises. The fullness of life as Jesus called it, the emptiness, the Buddha called it.

If you are in touch with that, you create from there, then there's no, the satisfaction is already here. It's not postponed to some future moment. And that's, then you become a powerful creator or the universe creates powerfully through you.

So the manifestation is also a joyful thing. And it could be that something else wants to manifest. You might have had a vision that wasn't quite correct and something even better comes about.

That can happen also. You wanted to create a little healing center with five people and suddenly you have something with 500 people. You're not, you don't want the child to do this or that.

You're just there with a child. That's a beautiful thing. And that's beyond any pattern.

That's not an inherited pattern. It's presence.

[Speaker 14] (3:08:13 - 3:08:59)
I have a question about children. I did a lot of spiritual work on myself before I had children. And now I realize that I've transferred all of my fear of death and need for security onto my children.

And I don't know what to do about it. I don't know what the best course of action is because I realize that it's part of taking care of them is to protect them. But on the other hand, it goes against being present and being in presence and definitely brings on anxiety and wanting to control situations and overprotection.

[Speaker 1] (3:09:00 - 3:09:05)
Do you overprotect? Or how does it manifest in actual daily life?

[Speaker 14] (3:09:07 - 3:09:50)
Well, my children are unusual in that they both have special health problems. So they involved both my husband and I a great deal in caring for their health at a time when it was really important. But now we give them the same amount of attention even though for the most part they're okay.

So it's kind of like we got into that pattern of putting all of our energy into them. And it's continuing, but I'm not sure where to let go and where to hold on.

[Speaker 1] (3:09:51 - 3:23:39)
Yes. Thank you. Certain behaviors, once they are in place, have a certain momentum and they kind of take you over almost.

Especially then if it happens between two people or an even larger group, behavior pattern can become an energy stream that takes you over. You can have it, for example, when there are riots or whatever, sometimes they go on for days because the people who participate in the riots have nothing to do with you, of course. Just a similar, same phenomenon on a larger scale, the phenomenon of people being in the grip of a certain behavior pattern which is an energy stream.

And so they are not doing it, they are in the grip of it. Nobody is doing it. So that can even happen here a certain kind of behavior becomes initiated and then refuses to go away.

Similar phenomenon would be when you are in a certain state, you don't want to get out of that state. Children, for example, many children, a very simple example, and even adults, even when they are tired, they don't want to go to bed because somehow there is always something else. Because the state of being awake wants to continue despite the tiredness.

But once you are in bed and asleep, you don't want to get out of bed in the morning because then that momentum wants to continue. Or the child doesn't want to go into the bath or the shower because it doesn't want to change its state from dryness to wetness. Once you are in the bath, you don't want to get out because it's so nice.

So there are certain energies that want to sustain themselves and behavior patterns can be like that. So the essential thing then for you is to have spaces of awareness during the day from where you can be aware of whatever behavior you are manifesting at that moment so that you are not totally controlled by the old pattern. And this is why it's so essential to have your daily life, your day, totally interspersed with what I call spaces.

This is just another way of saying step out of your life situation, which is in time, past and future, mind, and step into the present moment. So a little space opens up inside. That's the space of awareness.

From the awareness you can see the energy behind an old battle of behavior and this pattern either makes you think a certain thought or it immediately goes into action. It makes you do something. And so you can sometimes then feel the arising behavior before it manifests as an action.

You can feel the impulse to go there and do this protective thing to the child when it's quite unnecessary. It's no longer needed. So you can feel the impulse arising and recognizing it as an old impulse but only from the space of awareness and then you don't need to act on it.

You can say, oh, there's the old impulse. The impulse is there, arises, and then subsides. Or if thought comes in, some compulsive thought about your child, that also from that space of awareness, that inner space of aware presence, the stillness, another word for it, from the stillness you observe the thought that wants to push itself, is pushing itself into your mind.

You have to think this now and say, OK, there it is. And you allow it. You don't fight it because whatever you fight you make stronger.

So you are not in the grip of it anymore. So more aware spaces. Vital with all children to bring spatial consciousness, as I sometimes call it, or space consciousness, nothing to do with science fiction, to bring space consciousness into the relationship with your child.

For example, it's essential not to always relate to your child from the point of view of doing. Do this, don't do that. Now we need to do that.

Now let's do that. Don't do that, don't go there. Go there.

But to relate to your child, that has its place, of course, but if that's all there is, then it's a very one-dimensional relationship because what is missing is being. What is missing is to bring in the spaciousness into the relationship where you can just be with the child and look at the child and listen to the child and be there as the aware presence for the child. And so you don't want the child to do this or that, you're just there with the child and observing, watching, listening, being, giving attention.

That's a beautiful thing and that's beyond any pattern, that's not an inherited pattern, it's presence. Presence is not an old pattern, it's eternally new, it's timeless. So most parents don't know that yet, they cannot bring the timeless dimension into the relationship with their child and so the relationship becomes full of conflict eventually.

You have the best of intentions and yet then the child grows and then suddenly the child is reactive and you don't know why and there's conflict. The reason is that the most vital dimension is missing. You've done all you could but doing wasn't enough.

Doing is necessary but it's not enough. Being was neglected, so being means to bring the aware spaces into the relationship where doing doesn't matter so much when doing can still happen within it but that's vital. And of course not only into the relationship with your child but also bring it into every relationship.

No relationship can thrive if there is no spaciousness in it. And the spaciousness is there when you look at the other person and there's no thought in your head while you look because you're simply there as an aware presence. Then there's a true relationship beyond the forms, the psychological form and the physical form.

If you can look at another person and just be there as the aware presence with no thought, just an alert presence. That's what I call, that is space. If you can't do it with another human being start by doing it with a flower but I know you can.

If you can't do it with another human being do it with a dog. It might be a little bit easier to be the aware space with a dog because the dog is already free of thought. So the dog does not stimulate thought in you as a human being would do the other person is probably thinking so that transmits itself, it's contagious every state transmits itself so you might be dragged into thinking also.

So to have that no thought in any relationship is vital. It's vital for your children so that old patterns cease to operate and the new can come in and then from that state of consciousness you can respond to the need of the child but it's no longer responding from a pattern that is no longer useful. From the aware space you also know what is right for any given moment whether you need to allow the child to explore for example or whether you need to say come away from there because there's a 50 meter drop you might fall.

So there's always a balance between allowing the child to find out for him or herself and to protect the child and say no, come here. It's a very subtle balance but it's much easier from awareness to know where the balance is and to do the right thing from there. So your entire life then it's not just that so the question has wider implications it's not just to do with your children but the spaciousness needs to be there inside yourself wherever you go if you go into nature without spaciousness you're hardly there because you're thinking while you're surrounded by beauty and aliveness you're thinking.

Now, you're either thinking about you and yourself and your problems and you're only aware of the forest or the seaside or the mountains or the clouds or the wind and the breeze and the beautiful noises of nature on the periphery of your awareness because you're thinking about your failed investments or a little bit better you might be thinking about what you're looking at oh, I wonder what that's called what's that? I can't remember what that's called I'll have to look it up you're not fully present either you're maybe a little bit more present than the person who's totally away but not much more because you're still trapped in concepts in your mind can you be there simply as spacious awareness like a little child but deeper, more intense be there can you be anywhere as spacious awareness rather than a person that's a new state of consciousness that's arising can I be here as spacious awareness with anybody of course, as I said probably a little easier with a dog or a cat because you can meet the dog or the cat in the state of no thought the dog has no thought because it hasn't arrived at thought yet it's intelligent but it has no conceptual thinking the dog hasn't arrived at conceptual thinking it's below conceptual thinking and you have gone beyond conceptual thinking into the spaciousness and there you meet in no mind that's why it's so beautiful to relate to an animal and why so many people feel drawn to animals these days because it's the only time they can be free of their conceptual mind when they look at the dog or the cat nothing to think about and you know the dog or cat is not thinking about you they're looking at you no thought it doesn't mean that you have regressed it means for you, you've gone beyond thinking stepped above thinking and then you can meet the entire dimension that is below thinking in a wonderful state of oneness the oneness that you sense with all nature that's around you if you're in conceptual thinking you're separated you meet everything because when you're not thinking about the tree and the bird and the breeze and the insect there is no me and them there's a single phenomenon the forms arising in consciousness and so you're like God that says and God saw what he, she, it had made and recognized it as good the consciousness out of which the whole universe came you represent that when you're in the state of no thought you represent the ground of being of all being and you walk around nature and you say if you had a thought it would say oh, I did a good thing there and you see that even in the tension between opposites even that there's a deeper good beyond that yes, occasionally one thing eats up another but there is a greater harmony that envelops the whole you cannot sense that harmony when you're trapped in conceptual thinking so next time you can tell me how it's going with your children it's a spiritual practice like everything else

[Speaker 15] (3:23:40 - 3:24:08)
it becomes a spiritual practice hi

[Speaker 13] (3:24:10 - 3:25:01)
I often feel overwhelmed by anger so I and that anger makes me throw my spiritual practice really out of the window so it's like a big impotence and pessimism so it's not going to work anyway so just the hell with it and that's one thing and the other thing is I also feel very often that something is wrong so I need to take some action to correct something that probably is just imaginary, so it's unreal so there is no action needed most probably but I have to do something about it

[Speaker 1] (3:25:01 - 3:25:02)
yes

[Speaker 13] (3:25:02 - 3:25:05)
and I get carried away by that

[Speaker 1] (3:25:05 - 3:25:05)
yes

[Speaker 13] (3:25:09 - 3:25:17)
for example right now I feel my heart beat very strongly yes and I guess there's no reason for that but

[Speaker 1] (3:25:18 - 3:26:25)
well you're doing public speaking right now so maybe that's why yes and that's fine you acknowledge that the heart is beating and you let that be and the feeling that

something is wrong that's not a personal problem of yours it's a universal human condition to carry that feeling inside that something is wrong and then the mind looks for what can I do about this or where is the thing that's wrong and then it misinterprets situations so anger when anger comes of course the energy field of it immediately flows into your mind and the thoughts that you then think are reflections of the anger the anger makes you think certain thoughts and as you put it it says all that spiritual stuff obviously doesn't work these are thoughts that come out of the anger, the energy field

[Speaker 13] (3:26:25 - 3:26:36)
or whatever I do it's going to be always the same no point of it because it's not going to work the kind of thoughts that it generates

[Speaker 1] (3:26:36 - 3:30:45)
yes but next time it happens see if you are able to in addition to thinking those thoughts at the same time you can be aware that these are thoughts that have arisen out of the energy field of anger in other words see if you can have an awareness it's not easy with anger because it comes so suddenly whether you can have an awareness not only that there's the energy of anger flowing through you but also perhaps that the energy of anger which may be old anger that has lived in you for a long time pain body I call it which can easily then rise into your mind and control your thoughts are you able to stay aware while it happens and recognize anger as an expression of the pain body and if you are thinking angry thoughts to realize that these are the thoughts of anger anger is thinking these thoughts they are not true so they are simply thoughts that reflect the energy field of anger so the experiment then is whether you can stay aware as the observer or the witness of those thoughts and of the energy field of anger you may not I'm just suggesting it as an experiment whether or not you are able to stay present depends on how much presence there is already in you how much presence power there is already in you perhaps after having spent some time here with us there may be more presence power in you because this energy field is helpful for drawing that out of you once you are there as the witness then changes begin to happen you don't even have to do anything you know what I mean by witness simply to witness to be aware of the energy so that you don't become completely identified with it so the witnessing consciousness is in the same way that you now witness perhaps a certain nervousness your heart is beating there may be a certain nervousness as you stand there and you witness there is the nervousness and there is the heart beating and the witness allows everything to be as it is but there is a deeper dimension in you from where you can say my heart is beating I feel nervous energy inside me these are still verbalizations but beyond the verbalization there is the ability to simply see it so to speak then that will change all the old patterns the more awareness comes in the more the old patterns will change so you don't have to change yourself because that's complicated many people try to do that I have to change myself the most powerful the real change comes with becoming aware of whatever is happening inside you so that the anger is no longer you the anger is anger and you are the awareness you know it, you see it you feel it, there it is and that's the decisive shift from being the anger to having the anger in your energy field and observing it it's a wonderful shift so use anger as your spiritual practice, if you fail of course anger will immediately say you see you failed again, you can't do it that's the anger speaking

[Speaker 13] (3:30:45 - 3:30:46)
there is something wrong with you

[Speaker 1] (3:30:46 - 3:33:25)
particularly that there is something wrong with me now I don't know if you may be surprised to know that there are millions billions of people on the planet who have that same thought pattern, there is something wrong with me it's part of the human ego but so you bring in the awareness and that will change everything that's the

only true key if you fail, next time the anger arises what happens you will become aware immediately after the anger has subsided oh there it was and I wasn't present and then the the moment will come when you are there if you can catch the anger the first moment it comes or if you might even see that it could be the result of a thought that creates the anger and if you can be there in the first moment before it becomes the fully blown anger, then you can stay there and it might not even become fully blown anger if you catch it the first moment, you can feel the first stirrings of anger, you may only have 3 seconds it may come very quickly anger is like an explosive energy you may only have 2, 3, 4, 5 seconds to stay there with your awareness and feel it, oh it's coming, there it is that's the pain body, the angry pain body coming and if you catch it in the early stage don't suppress it by catch it I mean feel it be there as a witness then you can stay even as it grows the witness grows with it it may not even grow we'll have to see whether it still grows into full blown anger or not, that doesn't matter and so you be thankful for your anger because the anger can become a very important spiritual practice for you because through it awareness can grow so it's sometimes strange for people to see you can be thankful for things that you think are the most difficult obstacles in your life but they become they can become your greatest opportunity for spiritual awakening use it as part of your practice

[Speaker 13] (3:33:26 - 3:33:31)
yeah, I think the most difficult thing to deal with is impotence, when you feel it's

[Speaker 1] (3:33:31 - 3:33:33)
not going to work, yes you feel powerlessness

[Speaker 13] (3:33:33 - 3:33:41)
yes, like a deep pessimism it's not going to work, it's not you're about to fail yes, and you have to

[Speaker 1] (3:33:41 - 3:36:52)
recognize that these are thought forms, they are thoughts that arise in your mind and when you're aware you don't need to believe in every thought that arises you don't no longer and that's an enormous freedom you recognize it as a thought that comes from anger not the truth it's a thought a thought form that comes from anger the pain body if a thought comes from anger, it's not the truth it's a distortion recognize it and you say oh, there's another thought form that says something negative there's nothing you can do you might as well give up whatever thoughts come recognize that, it's a thought form, do you see how important that is well, perhaps we will meet again in a year's time and it's always interesting to see how things have evolved as you practice now what happened to you as you bring awareness into the anger, see what happens to it a year later thank you we need to finish now thank you wonderful it's just wonderful to see consciousness evolving awakening in different human forms, in different ways and that we can be thankful for everything, especially the difficult parts of our life, because without that there would be no awakening it's that which creates, the challenges create the necessary energy for the flowering of consciousness so it's not only in the movies where things need to go wrong in every movie if nothing goes wrong, there's no movie the character doesn't develop everybody remains the same in a bad movie that which goes wrong is resolved on some external level, but in a good movie as the character faces his or her problems he or she grows, changes develops abilities that he or she didn't have before and in very good movies there's some kind of spiritual realization but only because something went wrong

[Speaker 16] (3:37:19 - 3:38:34)
ok so I always have this desire to know which I know may not be very correct all the time like based on what you have been saying but still I always feel comfortable if I know what's going to happen, especially about important things in

my life and whenever there's a situation, let's say at work or like an emotional relationship one side of my mind is like, this is not going to work out, blah blah and the other side is, yes, it's going to work out no, yes, no and all day long seriously I'm doing something and in my mind, they're going to lay you off no, they're not going to lay her off no, no it seriously comes to a point of losing my mind and sometimes, but sometimes I know it so strongly so I can calm myself down so I just wanted to ask you how can I know what's the right answer what's the voice of intuition, like how do I know the voice of intuition instead of this fighting

[Speaker 1] (3:38:35 - 3:44:21)
ok, ok, well I believe I believe many people recognize your question it's a pattern in the human mind and perhaps in you it's stronger than in some who knows but it's in many people's minds so it's of course the answer is in and this is your challenge is not trying to figure out which of these voices is the right one that's not it it's to discover within yourself that space that is not the voice that space of awareness so that can only, you can only practice that while it happens there's that voice and there's the other voice and who is aware of these voices you don't need to answer that question I'm just putting it out don't answer it because there's no answer there's only a direct realization of it within yourself there's no external answer because if you give an answer that's another voice so this is the question that you should not answer in words so I'm asking again who is it in you who or what there's something in you that is aware of these different conflicting voices there is an awareness otherwise you wouldn't know that there is a voice now the voice these are thought formations these are energy every thought is an energy field and each thought formation wants to draw your attention suck it up into itself come here and the other one says no, come here these are like little this may sound a little spooky but it's not spooky you can regard a thought almost as an entity not a physical entity but as an energetic entity and that lives there it has a lifespan and some thoughts persist for a long time and certain thought patterns are also entities that can shift, take on one form and then another form and another form so you have every thought is a little entity or energy field it wants to it wants your identification with it it wants to draw all your attention in because the more attention drawn in the more it grows it wants to grow like everything it doesn't want to disappear so it's for you to know when this happens who am I?

you are are you this voice or that voice? no, you are aware of the voice all these voices and that is the place where you go so that from that place of aware presence the voices are no longer disturbing you you recognize them as only a voice this is not important whether you go this way or that way or whether something is going to work out or something is not going to work out you don't know that your responsibility is to be present which means to disidentify from the voices and my first recommendation is when these conflicting voices come trying to figure out whether something is going to work out or not work out you don't know and the voice doesn't know it's just pretending to know one voice pretends to know that it's not going to work out the other one pretends to know that it is going to work out they don't know laughter so once you know that they don't know laughter then you don't place so much importance on these voices they are just like people around you let's imagine that each voice is a person one person stands on your left and tells you something the other person stands on your right and tells you something but they are just ignorant they are just trying to come up with something so if these people were around you would say go away laughter I don't need to listen to this all I need is to embrace the only thing I ever have in my life which is this moment I need to honor and give my fullest attention to this moment and if I honor and give my fullest attention to this moment rather than to this voice that does that and the other voice that does that then I can be sure that things are going to work out now one way or another so if there is a new relationship that you go into of course it's going to work out either you'll stay together and you'll be happy for a while or you won't

[Speaker 17] (3:44:22 - 3:44:23)
laughter

[Speaker 1] (3:44:23 - 3:48:04)
but even if you don't you have learned something you have learned that certain patterns don't work or certain humans that come into your life may not everything is a lesson in that sense there is no failure everything works because everything is something you grow in consciousness and to figure out for example people ask what am I supposed to do in life I still don't know what is my real life mission what am I supposed to do so and sometimes they become paralyzed because there are so many possibilities and I just can't make up my mind which way am I going to go this way or that way and then you sit there for a long time I could go that way and then the mind brings up more thoughts but if I go that way then those things may happen no I better try that way but if you just become present then rather than looking for an answer through the movement of thought, there is never any real answer that you arrive at through the movement of thought, you have to become present first then at some point a thought may come that has a different energy field to it a thought that you feel yes that is it's no longer a thought maybe, maybe not there is a certain realization that comes that may finally take the form of a thought when I was living in Europe in England one morning I woke up and I felt for some reason I have to leave didn't know why but the thought was so strong and it never went away there wasn't another thought that said no maybe I should stay that thought came out of presence so the question is what really matters here is realizing that you are not this voice or that voice you are something deeper you are the awareness or the presence and the awareness or the presence recognizes the voice as just a voice in the head doesn't believe it's absolutely right and sees it's relatively unimportant who am I is a vital question and ask yourself that and that will drive you deeper who am I you are the presence but you can only realize that for yourself one recommendation I have when these voices start up again consciously choose not to follow that voice or that voice but to place your attention into the inner energy field of your body that frees you from the otherwise crazy self talk in the head it's crazy that self talk it's nothing personal it's a human thing almost everybody has it but it's crazy especially when there is no aware presence underneath it or you don't know if there is but you haven't discovered it so when you get beginning of when confusion arises in your mind go realize there is no answer there place attention have you been able to do that placing attention into the inner energy field of the body

[Speaker 16] (3:48:04 - 3:48:23)
that's why sometimes I know for sure like you said but then especially recently this argument started I don't know why now so it's very and the thing is but I don't know I have to give this up but I have this desire to know also which is a bit annoying yes

[Speaker 1] (3:48:26 - 4:11:22)
very good thank you very honest many humans have that also yes it is annoying but you have to be on the one hand of course on one level you want to know it's understandable and there is a place for that but there is another dimension where you need to become comfortable with not knowing that's the being dimension then in the doing dimension yes sometimes you need to figure things out especially on the practical level of life on the practical level of life you can't figure out on that level what is my destiny who am I those things you cannot figure out on that level where you figure things out mentally there you have to go into a place of not knowing that's the being dimension don't move only in the dimension of trying to figure things out about your life about situations you are in about other people there is a place for figuring things out but a more important place is to embrace the state of not knowing which of course implies the state of not thinking where there is simply an aware presence and there is a deeper knowing there that has

nothing to do with working anything out mentally that's the place of wisdom so you need to be able to operate on the human level which is the level of figuring things out mentally of course there are situations when you need that at work etc but you also need to have access to the deeper dimension that's the most vital thing in a human life to have found that dimension within and that is not operate through figuring anything out mentally it's actually the opposite of that it's relinquishing thought and that's almost frightening to the human self that relies on thought that has built up an identity based on thought it's sometimes frightening and it doesn't want to let you go there because it believes if you're not constantly trying to work out what your life is all about and figure things out mentally it believes that your life is going to collapse even in the night you wake up in the middle of the night and have to worry about your problems and there's an underlying assumption if I don't worry about my problems I'm not taking responsibility for my life and things are going to collapse around me of course the opposite is true so you are creating a lot of unnecessary turmoil in your life and a lot of unnecessary unhappiness because 90% of human unhappiness arises not because of situations around them but because of what your mind is saying about situations in your life so the unhappiness is caused by certain stories in your mind not the situation that was already discovered 2000 years ago by certain philosophers in ancient Greece it's not and so a lot of unnecessary suffering arises there through the human mind the two dimensions of life you inhabit the human as I said before somewhere you are a human being I like that expression in English in a way the English language does not have a word that includes men and women you can use human as a noun but the English language in the past you would always read about man and you were supposed to mentally include women in that but it doesn't sound right the destiny of man well what about the destiny of woman in the past it was supposed to include women but we don't do that anymore so we have human being and I love that because that shows the two dimensions of who you are the human dimension which is the mental the working out, the physical form and the being dimension which is the formless the stillness the presence the two come together so your challenge is to take your attention away from the mind don't try to figure out not even try to figure out how you can get rid of the voices there is more voices suggesting how to get rid of the voices so just easy step but it needs a minimum of awareness when the voices start up again that you don't want that you have to have a minimum of awareness so that you are not immediately totally drawn into the thoughts, the voices and then you realize it's pointless I don't want it and obviously it is especially if it happens in the middle of the night what can I possibly what point could it possibly be in worrying about anything in the middle of the night so you don't want it, you don't need it it's actually even harmful so I'm getting out of there I'm out of here and you place attention start with the hands feel the energy in your hands and immediately you are taking attention away from thinking and there it is the hands feel alive do the arms feel alive too and you don't even need to comment on that you just feel it and then the rest of the body there is a field of aliveness that's actually so much more pleasant than thinking and that's where you go and then it becomes an anchor for not thinking and that is the whole body is participating in the arising of the state of awareness one could almost say every cell is becoming conscious it's participating in the process of becoming conscious you can feel the aliveness in every cell of the body so you don't just become conscious with your head the presence the state of presence involves the entire body become conscious and it's beautiful and you are out of the head quickly, easily you just need to be aware that thoughts will try after a minute or two or three thoughts will try one thought will try and again, try to tell you this is very important and you should think about this so you need to be recognized that and say ok, I let you go you don't fight it you don't fight a thought go away, I don't want you that's another thought they are like clouds that drift past but you are the sky and this is the sky the inner space you are the sky and the clouds are fine let them pass you don't have to go with every cloud that goes there and the more you follow the cloud the bigger the cloud gets and then another one no, no, come here get out of your mind in other words, that's my answer this mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive to be free you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation now here we have another question, another person who is dissatisfied for another reason I'm on a path of awakening but my deep loneliness at not having a life partner is an obstacle to my spiritual development I get deeply depressed though I do my best to stay present in the now instead of dwelling on my longing what advice could you offer?

okay well I won't say internet dating there is a part in every person the form the form identity of who you are and the level of form tends either towards the male or the female it might not necessarily be the physical the physical male may tend more to the other so it doesn't necessarily depend on the physical form but you tend to tend either towards the male or the female and therefore you're not complete because you're only one half on the level of form which is the physical form or just underneath that the psychological or emotional form and so there is a natural longing for the other polarity or completeness in a human being and you can feel that as a ah sex is only a part of that but it goes beyond sexual longing, there's more to it than that, there's also an emotional longing for the other and you can, so they go all together and there's that pull that you can feel on the level of form and when that is not satisfied then that can lead to unhappiness particularly if you have not transcended at all your identification with form if you're still totally totally identified with you as this physical form and psychological form the transcendent dimension has not come into your life at all then you will become very dissatisfied and ah depending also to some extent what culture you live in, there are traditional cultures still on our planet where it's almost, you have to find a partner and if you're not, everybody would look down on you as being a total and miserable failure in some traditional cultures, if you're not married by a certain age or you cannot give birth to children, people look down on you and despise you and you're miserable for the rest of your life if you have not fulfilled your form identity and so, and also in some traditional cultures the sense of self is very strongly bound up with whether you're a man or a woman so more so than in the west, it still persists to some extent in the west but much less so than in some traditional cultures where if you're a man in certain cultures, you are this becomes 70% of who you feel you are, your self identity is the male, you are the male and you look at every woman as a female, you can't relate to a woman as a human being, you are the male and she is the female and she of course is not your equal and the woman is totally identified with being the female form and behaves according to that kind of collective conditioning so depending on where it is I won't act it out but here in the west it's a little easier to step out of those collective expectations, it is more acceptable in the west to say my choice is not to get married and you can even say my choice is not to have children and people say okay so there's a bit more freedom there and yet the longing for the other on the form level is still there, emotional sexual the essence is to be able to transcend who you are on the level of form whether or not you find a partner that meets that longing or whether you go from one partner to another and another or you find one life partner with whom you are for the rest of your life that is secondary really because even if you have a partner if you have not gone deeper and encountered the transcendent dimension to who you are beyond the form identity of you as the male or the female or whatever the nationality or the particular status in society whatever makes up your form identity in addition to gender if you haven't gone beyond that then even the relationships yes you might have found your partner but you won't be satisfied in the relationship in the absence of the transcendent dimension, the spiritual dimension you may come to some kind of compromise living together somehow, managing to stay together but you'll be actually you have a longing to get out so the people who are who are outside the relationships have a longing to get in or marriage and those who are in have a longing to get out so the young girl or man late teens early twenties they want to get into the cage and those who are in the cage want to get out of the cage so it is quite possible to notice the sense of in the absence of a partner it is quite possible to notice a certain sense of lack on the level of form and yet have a lot of spaciousness around that sense of lack yes I can feel that there is a longing but the longing does not consume you, the longing has not taken possession of you and making you into an unhappy person a totally unfulfilled and bitter person perhaps no, the longing is there but the longing that arises from your particular form of you exists within a spaciousness because that is the transcendent dimension and who you are is not the unfulfilled longing who you are is the presence or the stillness around it that is the shift so the longing may persist but you can live with it however if you are no longer trapped in the longing it is also quite possible that a change will come into your life particularly if the intense neediness goes I need somebody and then everybody you meet can feel the neediness when you have given somebody a phone number, you have just met and then you are waiting for them to call and they they are less likely to call when the neediness is there they are more likely to call when a certain spaciousness is there I'd love you to call, I'd love this person to call me but he may or she may or may not and there is again a spaciousness around it so of course you can take action towards meeting somebody I don't know whether the questioner has taken any action and actually gone to places perhaps where one meets people not necessarily night clubs we might not meet the most conscious people in bars but there are other places one can go to where you meet people and even the internet, why not this is the way many people lead that way but even there if you haven't gone beyond the absolute neediness of needing somebody then it's less likely to work out for you but if you have that sense of inner some inner spaciousness around the longing then the way in which you approach others changes without that absolute that pull so that's my suggestion then is see if you can on the outer level see how and where you could meet people and explore perhaps you will find somebody here or there to realize that the transcendence is the most vital thing does not exclude the possibility of taking action on an outer level of course that is always secondary but why not and maybe you find a good website where you meet conscious, is there such a thing conscious dating if there isn't maybe it's a business idea conscious dating of course the difficulty is a person who thinks of themselves as conscious may be deluded so find that place where the polarities actually don't are not there anymore the being, the I am-ness that's deeper than the form and go there as much as you can it may not totally free you of the longing but that's okay the longing will just become a thing that's no longer overwhelming and then if you take action and see what happens this mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive to be free you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation

[Speaker 7] (4:11:57 - 4:13:28)
holy wow hi my name is Alexis I wanted to ask you a question last year I went to your retreat at Omega so I guess I've been like hanging on to this question first of all your book, Power of Now saved my life so thank you I was planning on committing suicide until I read it I have a severe mental illness, type 1 bipolar disorder I've suffered from it since I was 15 and I've only just started getting treatment so I'm medicated now I guess and even though suffering from bipolar unmedicated was hellish there was a certain component of presence to it in its own way, just that intensity of emotion and feeling all the time I've just barely been struggling since being on medication with accessing that same abruptness of being and I know that I don't really have a choice because otherwise I'll be hallucinating and things I was wondering if you might offer any insight

[Speaker 1] (4:13:29 - 4:13:40)
when did you so the Power of Now helped you greatly when you read it and then you were free of medication for quite a while

[Speaker 7] (4:13:41 - 4:13:47)
I guess I was untreated for like 7 years

[Speaker 1] (4:13:48 - 4:13:51)
and then the point was reached where you did need it

[Speaker 7] (4:13:51 - 4:13:56)
no, no, then I when I did need it or didn't need it

[Speaker 1] (4:13:56 - 4:13:58)
yes, how long have you been on medication

[Speaker 7] (4:13:59 - 4:14:02)
only a few months actually, I guess coming up on a year

[Speaker 1] (4:14:02 - 4:14:06)
what was the reason for going on medication

[Speaker 7] (4:14:08 - 4:14:18)
I fell in love and I realized that I couldn't be sick and also be present for my partner

[Speaker 1] (4:14:26 - 4:14:30)
so bipolar is what your condition

[Speaker 7] (4:14:30 - 4:14:31)
yes, type 1 bipolar

[Speaker 1] (4:14:33 - 4:15:00)
I've only had some contact with perhaps milder cases, I don't know of bipolar disorder often can you explain just very briefly maybe in just a couple of sentences what exactly you experience when the condition arises

[Speaker 7] (4:15:01 - 4:15:30)
so sufferers of bipolar usually experience two different types of phases manic phase and a depressive phase people often confuse it with a multiple personality disorder but it's actually quite different you're the same person but just sometimes you can't move or get out of bed or do anything and sometimes you can't sleep for days on end and you are seeing things that aren't there and hallucinating and running around

[Speaker 1] (4:15:30 - 4:15:34)
you do strange things yes

[Speaker 7] (4:15:37 - 4:15:59)
when you're in one state you can't ever remember the other so when you are depressed it seems like you're going to feel that way forever but then it could be two days from then you are back up and manic there are many kinds of bipolar disorder but I suffer from a rapid cycle type which means that I have like four to six times more cycles than the average

[Speaker 1] (4:15:59 - 4:16:35)
with the milder forms of bipolar it's sometimes possible for people to remain aware in both the cycles when they come so that you don't get taken over completely by the cycles and awareness remains so that you're not totally identified with the energy that arises I don't know how is the are you able to be present with the medication

[Speaker 7] (4:16:36 - 4:17:03)
yeah I think that it provides me it gives me a bit more space to reflect on when I am actually in a cycle but it's very dulling so being present doesn't have that sort of joy it takes much longer to look at something I mean I used to be able to

just like sit next to trees and have conversations with them and it was wonderful I mean I'm getting used to it but it's more difficult

[Speaker 2] (4:17:03 - 4:17:04)
yes

[Speaker 1] (4:17:06 - 4:17:08)
well do you have a meditation practice

[Speaker 7] (4:17:09 - 4:17:10)
I try

[Speaker 1] (4:17:11 - 4:18:36)
yeah I think it would be good for you to have a practice of formal meditation every day that could eventually replace the medication but you have to be very careful of course and get some professional help hopefully a physician who has some awareness of the other, the deeper dimension who can help you to gradually get off medication and I believe that a structured meditation which is not for everybody I don't necessarily recommend structured meditation for everybody it's a wonderful thing for those who feel compelled who feel they want to do it but I think for you it is a necessity and that could provide the support in consciousness that you need to eventually become free of medication what type of meditation you may have to try out one or two meditation methods I don't know if you already have done that perhaps transcendental meditation might be good for you

[Speaker 7] (4:18:38 - 4:18:39)
ok

[Speaker 1] (4:18:40 - 4:18:54)
so how do you feel right now? a lot better are you at any particular cycle of now or are you in a neutral space now?

[Speaker 7] (4:18:55 - 4:18:59)
no I am actually in one of my longest lasting neutral phases ever

[Speaker 17] (4:18:59 - 4:19:01)
oh well

[Speaker 1] (4:19:09 - 4:20:48)
of course in the neutral phase then the real you shines through as it does right now and that's wonderful so I believe being here also has helped because here but just by having been here presence power has grown and that's really what you need because if presence power in you so to speak is strong enough it can be the place in which you can be anchored when these two movements come you need a deep anchor within yourself because these two the two movements have an enormous pull as you know and without the anchor there is no hope they pull you every time this way or that way but the presence should become strong enough in you and maybe very soon for you to not need the medication anymore but you don't do it always do it with guidance don't just go off and you may be surprised how deep your presence already is so I do hope we'll have another retreat in a years time or so and you will come back and let us know how you're doing

[Speaker 7] (4:20:48 - 4:20:51)
that would be amazing thank you so much

[Speaker 1] (4:21:05 - 4:21:23)
this mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive to be free you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation

[Speaker 15] (4:21:57 - 4:22:00)
I feel like I don't have a life

[Speaker 4] (4:22:00 - 4:23:01)
that belongs to me I feel caught in this web and every time I think about getting a part time job or something like that I still have student loans to pay for I've got a partner, she's got two kids and it seems like I can't lower my income so I tried presence I've got the CD that you made, Resist Nothing every time 12 noon, 12 30 Sunday comes this huge pain body comes over me and says you better get some rest because tomorrow you're going to be working all day long and you don't have the energy for it and that's just how it feels, even if I try to put presence to it, it feels like a monster and everything else that happens in my life, it seems it's much easier to put presence to but this is like hugely overwhelming

[Speaker 3] (4:23:02 - 4:23:08)
when you say it's easy to put presence to some things what are those some things that you can put presence to?

[Speaker 4] (4:23:09 - 4:23:47)
Just little things that happen like some of the teachings that I've learned like looking at other people and myself as works in progress, there are certain things that people are going to do in life that may be upsetting but you understand that whatever their level of consciousness is at that time then that's how they're acting so not to take things quite as personally I look at my past and look at mistakes I've made and say if I wouldn't do the same thing again then I've grown so I can have more compassion on myself and I can have more compassion on things I don't understand right now

[Speaker 3] (4:23:48 - 4:23:51)
and what exactly feels overwhelming for you?

[Speaker 4] (4:23:51 - 4:25:00)
because my body's tired and when I have to work for all day long stressful kinds of situations and things, even if it was a job that wasn't quite as stressful it seems like my body's exhausted and I can't get rest okay, and what are your thoughts that go along with it? I shouldn't be that's one of the thoughts this life doesn't feel like my life it shouldn't be like this I should figure out a way so that I can live in a way that's better for me I feel like even things that have to do with the political climate that I don't like very much I wish I lived in a country that was more progressive where do you live? in the United States laughter laughter applause applause applause where in the United States?

[Speaker 3] (4:25:00 - 4:28:29)
I live in a progressive city but but it's maybe progressing too fast for you, huh? you know, I know the feeling things can feel overwhelming and that's and it starts to feel overwhelming when those kind of thoughts come in of that resistance to what is actually happening and then how do we take care of ourselves it's actually a good sign when you come to that point of feeling overwhelming the this came to me actually at a time where I was actually feeling really overwhelmed and I feel like as if I was going to just fall apart and that nursery rhyme Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall Humpty Dumpty had a great fall all the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't put Humpty together again and when that verse came into my head I realized oh my god I've been searching outside of myself all my life to try to fix me inside now I've come to this spiritual teaching and am I actually going to now live that spiritual teaching so in other words who's going to put Humpty Dumpty together again but you not you as the egoic sense of self not you as you know yourself as through the thinking mind but that stillness, that awareness that consciousness will put you back together again and will give you the tools that you need and not

only the tools but the right action will follow where you say you have say for example you've got the two kids coming up to you and then you go not now you know it's like not now and there's a not now of meaning it or do you have a not now where you just don't quite know where your boundaries are and you kind of think you have to take care of everybody else first when really it's like the you're on a plane and you know the plane's going down and the little things drop down what are they called again the oxygen mask drop down and the advice is you put your own mask on first before you help your children and often times and I know yesterday when there was that questioner who came up who said she just didn't know who she was anymore after having her two kids and taking care of her two kids and I understand that I have a child I didn't have two but I have one and it's like this precious little soul and you just feel this big responsibility and it was all transferring everything over and then not really taking care of myself first and when you don't take care of yourself first then you do end up coming to that point of breaking down of feeling that overwhelm so when you feel that overwhelm what are some of the tools that can help you get back on track do you have yeah okay

[Speaker 4] (4:28:30 - 4:28:48)
coming here is one of them I'm trying I'm going to physical therapy to get back being able to run again that used to be an outlet for me running and age group triathlons and things like that but once I stopped doing that then I really don't have much of an outlet now except for

[Speaker 3] (4:28:48 - 4:28:49)
do you do any meditation

[Speaker 4] (4:28:50 - 4:28:54)
I don't do much sitting meditation I try to do more mindfulness

[Speaker 3] (4:28:55 - 4:29:02)
what is what does that look like when you say you try to do more mindfulness so when you're doing you are being

[Speaker 4] (4:29:02 - 4:29:17)
mindful when I'm doing things I try to pay attention more like the example the washing the hands just try to be more present smelling so you know feeling the warm water try to be more mindful walking things like that

[Speaker 3] (4:29:18 - 4:29:23)
and then when you say your body just feels so tired do you then rest

[Speaker 4] (4:29:24 - 4:29:51)
yeah a lot of times I do and that's causes strain with the family because I a lot of times I don't go downstairs I stay up in the room where it's quiet and sometimes the kids can be noisy and that just adds to my stress level so I go upstairs I shut the blinds sometimes shut the door and read or I'll watch a show I'll watch the Eckhart TV things like that

[Speaker 3] (4:29:51 - 4:30:10)
okay so forgive me here but I'm failing to see when you say that you're overwhelmed and you will take a rest you will lie down you will relax so in that period of time are you truly relaxing or are you

[Speaker 4] (4:30:10 - 4:30:26)
thinking probably both I mean there are times when my mind is going on different things but I'm an introvert too so I like the quiet yeah

[Speaker 3] (4:30:27 - 4:31:31)
so do I so when you relax it needs to be a full relaxation that will recharge you

that will feed you that stillness that in that relaxed awareness and being still will recharge you is the healer will bring healing to you so become aware of the kinds of thoughts that you have but don't you can be aware of them but don't believe them stop believing in those thoughts when you say that you like the quiet and you kind of go upstairs and then it's causing stress in your relationship because the children or your partner isn't wanting you to do this so is there then an argument about it

[Speaker 4] (4:31:32 - 4:32:33)
there's not much of an argument about it just little comments or something that she says sometimes because and what are those comments oh you're going upstairs again there you go again oh it's dark in here open the blinds oh it's too hot in here it's like she doesn't mind me having time alone because she knows I'm introvert but she thinks it's excessive and I would tend to agree that I spend more time than I probably would if I didn't feel so exhausted and right now I do have physical stress that's causing problems with my body like my endocrine system and stuff is off and I didn't really realize that but it's distress coming from too much stress in my life and my day which I didn't even know was happening, I thought I was doing good

[Speaker 3] (4:32:33 - 4:33:14)
just stop for a second because this is what I'm seeing and this is what I'm hearing you're saying that you're stressed, you're saying that your body is tired but yet at the same time if you can see yourself and see that your mind is actually racing a mile a minute it's going and going so can you right now, because all it takes is the present moment when you're starting to feel stressed and overwhelmed, can you in this instant quiet your mind and just be still

[Speaker 4] (4:33:16 - 4:33:17)
I can sometimes

[Speaker 3] (4:33:17 - 4:35:16)
can you do it right now this is what I meant, I'd like you to do it right now, standing there finding that inner stillness finding your breath feeling that inner body and if thoughts arise, you notice them but you choose not to follow them bring your attention your focus right down into your breath into this room where you hear sounds you're aware of the sounds you're aware of the breath you're aware of sensations in the body you're aware of thoughts step out of that awareness of form and step into the awareness of awareness itself who or what is aware it's not a thing you can sense it you can feel it and breathe and from this place what are you afraid of

[Speaker 4] (4:35:22 - 4:35:23)
maybe being alone

[Speaker 3] (4:35:23 - 4:35:25)
being alone

[Speaker 4] (4:35:26 - 4:35:28)
it's the first thing that came to my mind

[Speaker 3] (4:35:28 - 4:36:21)
right, and yet you say that you like to spend a lot of time alone so do you see the conflict that's inside you you have on one hand you're saying to yourself I want to be alone but in the other hand you are afraid to be alone that causes stress a lot of stress, it's a pull you're being pulled in two directions so I invite you to either because I'm not quite sure whether it's that you're afraid to be alone or that you're actually afraid of people

[Speaker 4] (4:36:24 - 4:36:26)
probably non-acceptance

[Speaker 3] (4:36:27 - 4:36:28)
non-acceptance of people

[Speaker 4] (4:36:28 - 4:36:30)
people not accepting me

[Speaker 3] (4:36:30 - 4:36:36)
people not accepting you so if we turn that around you don't really accept yourself

[Speaker 4] (4:36:36 - 4:36:38)
I accept myself

[Speaker 3] (4:36:38 - 4:36:39)
do you?

[Speaker 4] (4:36:39 - 4:36:40)
yeah, I love myself

[Speaker 3] (4:36:40 - 4:36:45)
ah, ok but you just don't like other people

[Speaker 4] (4:36:45 - 4:36:50)
well I don't like I don't like it when other people are doing things that irritate me

[Speaker 3] (4:36:52 - 4:36:55)
well a lot of people are going to be can irritate

[Speaker 4] (4:36:55 - 4:36:57)
yeah, that's, I mean

[Speaker 3] (4:36:57 - 4:37:02)
so the judgment is that you're kind of disturbing me

[Speaker 4] (4:37:04 - 4:37:16)
yeah, if just the example of the noise and stuff in the house I don't like, I like to go away from that I don't dislike them, but I dislike the

[Speaker 3] (4:37:16 - 4:37:21)
so are you a spontaneous person? would you say?

[Speaker 4] (4:37:22 - 4:37:48)
sometimes yeah but not much when it comes to planning you know, I'd rather it just depends what I feel like at any given time I don't really like to make plans and then that day I don't really feel like it so I like to wait until it's time to do something and then say let's go do it

[Speaker 3] (4:37:51 - 4:38:33)
so there's a resistance to life because children are often times noisy and often times spontaneous and they just live in the moment and you're a meditator who when the kids come in the door you may not say this outwardly but inside it's like go away, stop it can't you see I'm meditating? now I could be wrong but my guess is is that you really don't accept yourself

[Speaker 4] (4:38:37 - 4:39:19)
I don't know maybe that's true but I feel like I do like I don't know when I'm

around here I feel fine it's just when I'm I guess the highly sensitive person book by Aline something I forgot her name but a lot of that is the way that I am I'm more quiet I like quiet environments and things like that and when I'm there I'm fine it's just when I'm around like type A kind of people who are like really aggressive and loud and things it causes a certain degree of discomfort like with me

[Speaker 3] (4:39:21 - 4:39:25)
was there somebody aggressive in your family?

[Speaker 4] (4:39:27 - 4:39:50)
well not in a mean way aggressive but yeah my well I know this is being recorded but but there are people who are more pushy I guess you could say and they won't stop talking I find that when I'm

[Speaker 3] (4:39:50 - 4:39:57)
so you're not able to sort of put up your boundaries and just sort of say well I guess it's enough for me and somehow excuse yourself

[Speaker 4] (4:39:57 - 4:39:58)
I do that

[Speaker 3] (4:39:58 - 4:39:59)
you do that

[Speaker 4] (4:39:59 - 4:40:01)
yeah but it's just

[Speaker 3] (4:40:01 - 4:40:04)
I'm failing to see the problem then if you do all those things

[Speaker 4] (4:40:06 - 4:40:33)
well it's for an example like my partner's she has like groups like friends and stuff that go and I often I'm there but the conversation I like conversation involving like feelings and talking about things like that I don't like small talk very much so I like the way that I am but it presents a problem when it comes to people who aren't that way

[Speaker 3] (4:40:34 - 4:40:49)
what's the problem though? I don't understand what the problem is the only problem would be if you think there is a problem if you think that the other person is I don't know thinking that you're not enjoyable or something

[Speaker 4] (4:40:49 - 4:40:55)
it feels like they're not interested in what I'm saying if I'm talking about these kinds of things

[Speaker 3] (4:40:55 - 4:40:58)
you really don't accept yourself then

[Speaker 4] (4:40:58 - 4:41:01)
I love myself I just don't like being around certain

[Speaker 3] (4:41:01 - 4:41:08)
but you don't accept the fact that you're just not a small talk person

[Speaker 4] (4:41:08 - 4:41:27)
yeah I just don't put myself in those situations where I'm not comfortable and the other people maybe are not interested in what I'm saying either like I know myself

enough to know that it's uncomfortable so I don't put myself

[Speaker 3] (4:41:27 - 4:43:19)
when I'm hearing you speak this is what I see instead of this focus right down into the situation okay and that fear of being alone it's like going outside of yourself and seeing oh well they won't like me because I'm you know not somebody who does small talk they won't like me because I want to spend time alone so there's it's like I see you bouncing around inside yourself bouncing here, bouncing there and not really getting down to the just the crux of it, the point if you are really truly exhausted and overwhelmed and tired and your body is tired then just let it go and rest be still rest your body but what I'm hearing you, you say it but then you're not really doing anything really for yourself I mean you will go and rest but then your mind is going but can you just fully be overwhelmed fall apart like humpty dumpty let yourself completely fall apart, what will happen, do you think something will happen if you fall apart are you afraid of falling apart

[Speaker 4] (4:43:19 - 4:43:22)
no at this point I really want to fall apart

[Speaker 3] (4:43:22 - 4:51:29)
great, because that's the best place to be is to fall apart and then from there so for me it was like that humpty dumpty sort of first came in, I let myself just completely go and then I realized I'm the only one and not me as the ego but I'm the only one that can now build myself, put myself back together again, and how will I put myself back together again and let that question remain and sit in you, because it's not going to come through most of the time it doesn't come through instantly and it'll come through maybe as a thought form but it will gradually it's like gradually putting yourself back together again now maybe the mind might come in and say but I want to get put back together again right now instantly, and that can sometimes take years maybe months, or maybe weeks you can't really put a time frame on the evolving the evolution the unfolding of your true nature into your true self so that you can live in this world be completely okay if you truly are a person who really wants to be alone, it would be okay if you really are a person that says I don't want the small talk but you can be in small talk and you can just be silent you can be there as this witnessing presence as this alive being and then maybe when you sit there, instead of having these thoughts of which are the egoic sense of self thoughts, the pain body thoughts of oh they won't like me and oh I'm sitting here and nobody's paying attention to me and oh they're talking really just frivolous things you're just enjoying yourself there's this wonderful little I don't know I think you call it I'm not sure if you call it a joke but there was this famous English writer at a cocktail party and you know everybody's making their small talk and he's just sitting there and somebody comes up to him and says are you enjoying yourself here? and he says it's the only thing that I'm enjoying here so it's like getting to that part where you just allow that awareness to come through, that consciousness to come through without it doesn't matter what other people are doing, who cares what other people are doing, in fact it's none of our business what other people are doing just be there as this witnessing consciousness and as you're there as a witnessing consciousness you will either be there and sit there and enjoy yourself you may not enjoy what's going on but you're enjoying yourself because maybe you have you know a partner who likes to do this so you kind of compromise and you kind of attend these things, but you're just there doesn't matter doesn't matter if somebody talks to you, but you'll find the more that you have less of those kind of thoughts and less of the demand on yourself and on other people of an expectation of how things should be expecting that it should not be this way, people should be more deeper, talk about more deeper things or I should be able to be alone I shouldn't have come here well if you truly want that in the awareness in that presence you will either find yourself moving and saying hun I'm going home you stay and enjoy yourself or you'll just surrender and just go okay I'm here but you know what, I feel the aliveness within I just feel really good I'm

having a good time wow and it's not about the other it's about what is going on inside you, are you filled with these different emotions filled with these different thoughts rather than being filled with the Holy Ghost the Spirit the Holy Spirit, your Spirit that is relaxation that is a way to get over the overwhelm you're just being yourself not that head self you start identifying and seeing what those kind of thoughts are and just really going wow you don't have to pay attention to those you don't have to believe in your thoughts they're just thoughts they're just judgments, labels, concepts whatever you want to call them they're just thoughts presence consciousness is not a thought even though we use the word consciousness, we use the word stillness, we use the word Buddha nature, Christ consciousness whatever you want to call it and there's this saying, a Taoist saying the Tao is not the Tao if you can name it and that's your true self that's the self that has that peace and that joy that is beyond all understanding beyond all activity no matter what is happening in your world so let yourself collapse and fall to pieces and then create yourself, you're recreating yourself but not you as the entity the old entity it's you as consciousness so always the practice of returning back to that consciousness returning to that stillness okay, what's going to happen here how am I going to build myself up here and don't think about it you post the question and it will be answered but not on your time on the consciousness time which is really no time it's just this moment what do I need to do for this moment how am I going to build myself up in this moment feel, oh gosh, I'm thirsty simple sip of water maybe that's what you're needing mmm ah, wonderful oh, my body's really tired I think I'll go and have a nap ah, lay down just feel the body, maybe even sleep maybe not, you're just feeling the body the kids come in ah, hey oh, hi sweetheart so I'll give you a hug, but you know what I need to rest right now I'll be down in maybe 10-15 minutes and just fully rest so that when you're resting you're fully resting when you're with your children, you're fully with your children but knowing the limits because there are limitations and maybe your limitation's a little shorter than some people in being able to be with people that's not a problem it's actually okay so maybe you take shorter moments with them and then take a break and just be with yourself and rejuvenate fully by truly being present let go of those thoughts that something should be different than what it is does that make sense?

[Speaker 4] (4:51:30 - 4:51:43)
yes, it makes sense and just a quick question when 12 noon comes or 12.30 comes on Sunday I feel this overwhelm the same thing, go into presence and say, okay, I'm going to feel whatever this is

[Speaker 3] (4:51:43 - 4:52:00)
yeah, because that thought, when you say you're even starting to create it right now and that is, you're thinking you're going into the future and that future hasn't even happened yet you don't even know what Sunday's going to be like you may not even feel overwhelmed on Sunday, but you're already predicting that you will

[Speaker 4] (4:52:00 - 4:52:03)
I want to ask, well, I have somebody who can help me

[Speaker 3] (4:52:05 - 4:57:42)
so stop that mind stop that anticipation stop going into the future and be in the present moment when the present moment is here if you're overwhelmed take care of it present moment's here maybe you're feeling wonderful great maybe you want to be with people hey, kids, let's go out be present because only in the present moment right action follows so, Sunday isn't here drop Sunday completely and when it comes who knows who knows but what we if we keep on thinking that we will create that situation again and again and again it's like I mentioned it might have been actually in the morning group maybe it was yesterday where or maybe it was even here, I don't remember where you can have this profound meditation and I've done this many times myself where I'm sitting, doing a meditation and I'm like, oh my

god, this is so profound I had this great meditation and then comes, you know, the next day and you do your ritual of your meditation and you're wanting that same profound meditation we're holding on to yesterday's meditation instead of being in the present moment, in the aliveness of now where maybe you'll have a more profound meditation maybe not but there's no attachment to the forms of this moment all forms come and go but the more that we hang on the more that we contract the more that we have expectations that our life should be going a certain way and the more that we begin to feel overwhelmed because life is not matching our thought about how it should be so now I'm seeing a little bit more focus and clarity in knowing what it is that's going to that you're going to have to do and that is coming into the present moment and stillness instead of being here or there and looking at that, thinking about that worrying about this going into the future over here right here right now I think it was I forget the woman's name who wrote the Course in Miracles what was your name again?

Right, so I believe she had a dream where she dreamed that there was this book and she could see into the future or see back into the past and she was able she had a choice, she could go into the future or go into the back past she looked at it and then she said no, I just want this moment right now and then the Course in Miracles came through her channeled the Course in Miracles all you need is right now cut through time just this moment how am I feeling this moment? what am I sensing this moment?

am I lost in thoughts? am I lost in emotions? and if you are even aware that you are you're not completely lost if you were completely lost you wouldn't even be aware, you would just be in your emotions in your mind, thinking and thinking and following your thoughts everywhere and going everywhere with it but you cut through that and then you have that choice and usually it's a very short window of opportunity when you choose choose to become be present or choose to be again, lost in thought or emotions or in the pain body but we have that choice and as awareness grows that choice is so clear to us and you might maybe sometimes choose to go into your pain body choose the thoughts, choose the emotion but eventually you'll come back to this falling apart place, this place of overwhelm, and then when it gets too great you realize, okay I gotta come back to the present moment, because this is the saving grace, is the present moment this is where you can be rejuvenated and filled with that spirit within you it's right here and right now the only moment that exists as reality is right now so be with that, work with that I know that you're going to succeed

[Speaker 1] (4:58:12 - 5:00:43)
you can have an agreement with whoever you live with and a mutual agreement if you see me falling asleep spiritually speaking, in other words becoming unconscious please let me know I will be thankful at least I'm telling you that now I won't now the person who has gone unconscious, when you first address the unconsciousness, it depends how far your partner has already gone down the rabbit hole so if he or she hasn't gone down too far he or she will still hear you when you ask, have you perhaps become unconscious are you still awake, but if he or she and then says, oh thank you well thank you, but if he or she has gone further down the rabbit hole then when you say those words they won't hear you anymore because only the unconsciousness the unconscious entity which may be associated with the pain body, the unconscious entity will be listening to you the emotional field the mental emotional pattern will have taken over that human being completely like like some horror movie completely taken over by whatever you want to call it don't want to put any strange images in your mind, you can find them on the internet so it's been taken over by this strange entity and then of course your partner won't hear you because he or she will be completely asleep and it's possible then that the entity will talk back at you and won't be happy but then it's your your next task then is not to react to the entity which is an energy field that has taken over that human being because if you react you give it more energy now that's a non-reaction

however does not mean that you close the shutters around you, metaphorically speaking

[Speaker 11] (5:00:46 - 5:00:54)
laughter laughter laughter and

[Speaker 1] (5:00:54 - 5:00:59)
then you say nothing can touch me anymore, I'm safe behind these shutters

[Speaker 17] (5:01:00 - 5:01:00)
laughter

[Speaker 1] (5:01:03 - 5:01:08)
and you can talk to the entity and say whatever you say, I don't care

[Speaker 17] (5:01:08 - 5:01:10)
laughter laughter

[Speaker 1] (5:01:12 - 5:03:07)
that's not it that's not because you separate yourself also from the possibility of staying in contact with who is truly there that human being so don't use the shutters what does work is first of all to accept that this is what has just happened that this human being right now is in that particular state of deep unconsciousness, this is what is so you might as well accept it because even if you don't it won't make any difference so say yes to the present moment this is the dictum I often repeat say yes to the present moment no matter what form it takes and it may take the form of an unconscious human being right there in front of you so you and you recognize what has happened you don't confuse this entity that temporarily has taken over your beautiful partner laughter you don't confuse that with who your beautiful partner, beautiful outside or inside or both certainly beautiful inside if you get to their real being you don't confuse who that real being is so you recognize what has happened and that makes it easier for you not to be in a state of reactivity to that unconscious the unconsciousness and the entity and thereby you don't strengthen it

[Speaker 15] (5:04:18 - 5:04:19)
Hi Eckhart

[Speaker 12] (5:04:19 - 5:04:40)
my question is when I try to maintain presence in my everyday life I'm aware that my subconscious need for superiority sabotages me pretty regularly and it happens very often so I wonder what suggestions you have

[Speaker 1] (5:04:43 - 5:04:49)
it would be nice for us to have one or two examples of how that

[Speaker 2] (5:04:49 - 5:04:51)
looks laughter

[Speaker 12] (5:04:51 - 5:05:37)
I was afraid you would ask that well typically when like this morning someone approached me and they were anxious and worried and off balance and I thought it's sort of an automatic thing sort of why don't you get your act together rather than just having a positive exchange and then I notice of course when I'm anxious or off balance I want everybody to be kind and understanding so it's I judge that as not a good thing I would like to be more automatically kind laughter laughter laughter

[Speaker 1] (5:05:39 - 5:05:41)
one more example perhaps

[Speaker 12] (5:05:41 - 5:06:24)
one more ok when my question was chosen and I was invited to be here I was really excited about that and it was tempting to think and it was kind of my first thought that oh isn't this wonderful I have this great question but laughter laughter you know I quickly realized that in reality that's it might be a pertinent question but it's not about me and it's not it doesn't mean that I'm great laughter it seems like a constant fight for me yeah

[Speaker 1] (5:06:25 - 5:10:26)
well of course it's very normal that kind of mind activity it's just as awareness arises it seems to be more of a problem than it would be for a normally unconscious person now the good thing is that the awareness is there of it if you were totally unconscious that is identified with those thought patterns you wouldn't even know it because the essence of identification is you don't know it you are it you are the thought so you would then instead of feeling superior and realizing that you feel superior and then not wanting to feel superior you would just feel superior laughter and that would be really unconscious and that would be quite normal now as because awareness arises it's a good thing you're aware of certain mind patterns subtle things where you feel superior or special it's another word for it that specialness because specialness doesn't superior always implies better than specialness could also be I'm much worse off than you that's why I'm so special my problems are much bigger than yours don't tell me about your problems let me tell you about mine or as my dad used to say when people said I have a headache or whatever you have a headache? I've had a headache for weeks laughter that's not so much superiority but well in a way it is, it's specialness I'm more special than you because I have more headaches than you I must be more interesting or whatever the reasoning behind it is it's irrational of course so awareness is there which is a decisive factor it has come in, the awareness is aware of that mind pattern then however the awareness is obscured again by an additional mind pattern that says I shouldn't be having these thoughts which are more thoughts so we have three things here in operation there's the original thought pattern, harmless as it may be but there's a recognition of the thought pattern which comes from the fact that there's awareness through awareness the thought pattern is recognized but then the mind comes in again it uses the awareness the recognition that arose through awareness to construct an additional level of problems which says I shouldn't be having those thoughts, I'm not a good person anymore if I have those thoughts I'm not kind if I have those thoughts and what is that?

Thoughts so it can happen that as awareness arises which is a wonderful thing you're not totally identified with the mind pattern anymore and then the mind is so cunning that out of that recognition it creates new mind patterns and the new mind patterns say I'm not a kind person if I think that I feel bad about thinking that, I shouldn't by now I should be rid of that whatever it says so that's where you have to be careful to become aware that the mind has come in again after the awareness that is not necessary but you didn't know that, that was unconscious so the mind has little it's very cunning, you recognize the mind there and then the mind comes back in again and uses your recognition to manufacture more thought out of that

[Speaker 17] (5:10:27 - 5:10:32)
laughter laughter right

[Speaker 1] (5:10:34 - 5:10:42)
and this is why it's very good to ask that question it helps everybody so you are special

[Speaker 17] (5:10:43 - 5:10:45)
laughter thank you

[Speaker 1] (5:10:47 - 5:12:07)
but of course everybody has similar problems so we are all special laughter that's where you once you're aware of that you can then recognize that as unnecessary you don't need that it's superfluous mind activity that does nothing except strengthen your mind so and then you can simply allow the recognition to be there without the additional mental judgment of there's something wrong with you and that in itself gradually dissolves the power of the mind pattern, all you need is the awareness of what your mind is doing and gradually what your mind is doing becomes less dense, less powerful and the awareness grows so there's a shrinking of the mind pattern and a growing of the awareness the only way the mind can stop that pattern is by, as I said by coming in after the awareness and creating more thought around that so just be happy with being aware it's a mind pattern it's nothing to do with who you are you're not an unkind person you're not whatever the mind says, it's just this, that mind pattern, isn't that interesting that is, and that is in itself sufficient

[Speaker 12] (5:12:08 - 5:12:10)
great, thank you so much

[Speaker 15] (5:12:29 - 5:12:34)
if you surrender to it come to a different relationship with it

[Speaker 1] (5:12:34 - 5:12:40)
that can be the agent that awakens you into consciousness

[Speaker 5] (5:12:45 - 5:15:36)
so my question has to do with what you were just talking about about how ego death can be painful so I'll give a little background just to give context for my question so since I was little, I had spontaneous satori's that I didn't understand and ultimately it led to shame because it wasn't normal and it led to confusion about what seemed important and I have my understandings about where it came from but at any rate so having experiences of formlessness and all of that is very familiar and understanding you know, certain understanding of identification and non-identification and I don't have fear of dying physically that I'm aware of however I have a spontaneous like how the satori's came on I suppose people would say it could be Kundalini energy spontaneously usually when I'm fully asleep I will wake up and I can have this absolute unstoppable realization that I am not going to exist I'm not afraid of dying in that moment it's that existential awareness of I'm not going to be here anymore yeah so it's not about fear of death but it is about ego death I imagine and I've tried to work with it in many different ways I don't know if it's just simply being maybe more than average narcissist and don't want to die I don't know if it's that or if it's just at any rate, I've talked with many spiritual teachers and gotten very different kinds of responses but mostly I want to understand how to be able to face it because it feels intolerable and it comes on unwittingly, will come up and my body starts to run, literally I wake up out of sleep and I'll run and sometimes I'll scream the scream is the only thing that gets me out of that realization I don't want that realization yeah and so growing up with both of these I would call it my agony and my ecstasy would have both so anything you can offer I'd appreciate

[Speaker 1] (5:15:38 - 5:15:54)
and as a child you had similar experiences so wanting to run is just an impulse that you want to run when this comes on you don't actually stay in bed or you get up

[Speaker 5] (5:15:54 - 5:16:05)
and run I wake up and I'm already running and screaming is the most effective way to try to get it out of my consciousness

[Speaker 1] (5:16:05 - 5:16:33)
and so the experience itself that makes you run it exists as an emotion and a thought or mostly a thought that suddenly triggers that or is it what is the thought the element of thinking you just mentioned a thought I'm not going to be here that's a thought and that is always there when this happens

[Speaker 5] (5:16:33 - 5:16:55)
yeah that's the it's like a realization sometimes when I'm almost falling asleep and I see it's coming I can direct my attention elsewhere but usually when I'm pretty sleepy it takes over and I can't stop it yeah and then it's just it's just like an epiphany so it's a thought

[Speaker 1] (5:16:56 - 5:17:03)
so it's almost as if you were experiencing little mini-deaths frequently yeah

[Speaker 5] (5:17:04 - 5:17:08)
and it's not like I'm afraid of dying right then it's nothing to do with that

[Speaker 1] (5:17:08 - 5:17:12)
but what about the panic that you feel isn't that fear

[Speaker 5] (5:17:13 - 5:17:14)
yeah it feels like terror

[Speaker 1] (5:17:14 - 5:17:16)
well that's extreme fear

[Speaker 5] (5:17:16 - 5:17:17)
yeah extreme fear

[Speaker 1] (5:17:17 - 5:17:26)
so there is fear maybe at other times you don't feel the fear but in those moments you feel it very strongly yeah

[Speaker 17] (5:17:26 - 5:17:26)
right

[Speaker 1] (5:17:32 - 5:17:38)
so it's particularly in the morning or at night time it happens when you wake up

[Speaker 5] (5:17:38 - 5:17:51)
it's night yeah I mean if I wanted to I could consciously and I have done this will it on like I can remember it I can get myself into that space just like I can get myself into satori it's the same

[Speaker 1] (5:17:51 - 5:24:09)
well I was actually going to suggest that as a practice if you can consciously bring it about because then you have a bit more power because it doesn't you're not if you can but before you do that there has to be a lot of conscious awareness for example generating a lot of conscious presence through inner body awareness for example do that for 15 minutes or so and then attempt to consciously bring it on so that you can surrender to what it is that you feel and then once you surrender to the feeling then it's no longer fearful and then it could bring about it's a relatively I don't have many people who have this particular experience in the way you describe it but it's very interesting so it's a if you can bring it as a practice do consciousness practice and then just experiment with it and see if you can bring it about consciously and because then there's more awareness in you so that you may not need to run away from it anymore and if you go into it suddenly it will lose it's frightful nature and then that is a kind of death it's like facing a

monster some people have terrible nightmares where they face monsters and they cannot quite the monsters are always coming from behind and you have to run away but you can't run anymore because you can only move very slowly, you're trying to run but you can't and it's always when you face the monster it becomes transformed it's no longer a monstrous presence because facing it means consciousness is there it's only when you run away from it it remains a monster and can even get bigger so you have to consciously face it that is your monster but that monster will become transformed into something completely different when you face it consciously but in order to face it consciously you need the power of consciousness there needs to be preparation for that so that there is enough consciousness in you to face it and then you may find that it's actually a powerful spiritual experience what before what is preventing you was the fear the fear of death comes up very strongly perhaps you don't notice it the rest of your life as you said, in the rest of your life you don't have a fear of death but in those moments you have an intense fear of death because death is very close it's right there and of course it's easy to say for anybody I have no fear of death they're not facing death in that moment so it's very easy to make a statement but you face it regularly, it's there anybody else who says I don't fear death well, maybe you're right but you won't know it until you're actually looking, death is right there and then you'll know and another thing is when you experience a great loss of whatever kind, that's a kind of death too so then you'll know whether that perception is correct or not, whether you fear death this is potentially a powerful spiritual experience but I would suggest that you, through the fear the panic that arises, which is the personal self fearing its demise through that you kind of stop it every time because you have to run away from it you cannot fully go into it, but the possibility is there if there's enough presence in you enough consciousness, you can allow yourself to experience that fully without the need anymore to run away from it and then the monster becomes transformed into an enormously helpful figure so to speak, it becomes an opening, it is often the case, there's a general it's a general rule some people have one major huge obstacle in their lives, which can be many different things, it could be a very serious physical thing, disability it could be very serious, something in their emotional field, it could be a very serious external thing that dreadful family karma that they are born into, some crime that happens in their childhood around them some people have one huge dreadful thing in their lives and it is often the case that the worst thing in your life that thing that would normally be regarded as unacceptable that no human could accept, if you surrender to it, come to a different relationship with it that can be the agent that awakens you into consciousness that transforms you, that becomes the opening, your cross becomes the opening to you as a Christian almost medieval Christian term the cross so I've seen people who've had one major thing that was the most dreadful burden in their lives and that eventually became the opening and they woke up through that, and so this can be the case with you, I believe it can and I trust that next time we meet you will stand there and tell us about it and you will be perhaps awakened through it, have been awakened if not what is total awakening anyway, but awakened, so that is my advice to you

[Speaker 2] (5:24:09 - 5:24:11)
and that's all I can say

[Speaker 15] (5:24:11 - 5:24:12)
thank you

[Speaker 2] (5:24:13 - 5:24:14)
applause

[Speaker 6] (5:24:38 - 5:25:01)
this person writes in I'm often fearful about being ill, being poor, growing old, death, and other worries how do I overcome these fears in other words how do I live my life without these kinds of fears, or is that possible even

[Speaker 2] (5:25:03 - 5:25:05)
yes, that's the

[Speaker 15] (5:25:06 - 5:25:09)
question that many people have

[Speaker 2] (5:25:09 - 5:25:54)
I still remember well it's now becoming distant past for me I still remember having those fears, waking up in the middle of the night sometimes almost in a state of panic although I was in a warm bed and there was nothing wrong at that moment and yet there was a sense of panic

[Speaker 15] (5:25:55 - 5:26:02)
oh my god, what's going to happen so the fear

[Speaker 2] (5:26:04 - 5:26:24)
if you look at pay attention to how the fear the anxiety arises angst is sometimes the word they use in English it's a German word

[Speaker 1] (5:26:25 - 5:26:28)
angst is used for existential

[Speaker 2] (5:26:29 - 5:27:13)
anguish, the anguish of just being alive, which is so problematic so if you see how it arises then you will notice that it's created not by any true problem in your life but by thought it's created by the unobserved mind so there is a lack of presence

[Speaker 1] (5:27:13 - 5:27:39)
which means that certain thoughts, repetitive thoughts take you over many of those thoughts refer to possible future events nothing that's happening here and now but something

[Speaker 2] (5:27:39 - 5:28:07)
in the future and as I've often you might have heard me say that ultimately the future although we need it and it makes sense for practical purposes but in your direct experience of life

[Speaker 1] (5:28:07 - 5:28:19)
well that's an important criterion for what is real it's your direct experience of life in your direct experience of life

[Speaker 2] (5:28:19 - 5:28:34)
the future does not exist because when the future arrives it's the present moment you cannot

[Speaker 1] (5:28:34 - 5:28:39)
experience the future you can only experience the present moment

[Speaker 2] (5:28:39 - 5:28:55)
for some people that's news and then you see that ultimately the future exists as thought the future is

[Speaker 1] (5:28:55 - 5:29:19)
essentially a thought in your mind so the fear of future and the fear of things going wrong in the future I might become poor I might become ill I might become old I might become destitute whatever it may be

[Speaker 15] (5:29:20 - 5:29:26)
those are all thoughts that

[Speaker 2] (5:29:26 - 5:30:15)
have such hypnotic power over you that you cannot tell the difference between a thought and actual reality actual life and then you miss and the body does not know the difference so when you think of fearful thought imagining a certain scenario the body reacts with emotion that is exactly the same

[Speaker 1] (5:30:15 - 5:30:33)
as if you were in a real situation the body cannot tell the difference whether your mind is imagining something or whether it's actually happening the body doesn't know the difference so fear arises

[Speaker 2] (5:30:34 - 5:30:48)
when a thought comes up repetitive thought persistent thought and you don't recognize it as a thought

[Speaker 1] (5:30:48 - 5:31:13)
because it occupies your entire mind there is no room for presence or awareness in other words there is no observing consciousness and then the emotion is there and the emotion gives even more power to the originating thought so then you get

[Speaker 2] (5:31:14 - 5:31:30)
thought forms that are fueled by emotion, emotional thinking, a vicious cycle, thought creates emotion, the emotion

[Speaker 1] (5:31:30 - 5:31:43)
gives more energy to the thought thought gives more energy to the emotion and so it grows so so the problem is not the future

[Speaker 2] (5:31:43 - 5:31:57)
the problem is in the present moment is are you able to be aware of your thoughts especially

[Speaker 1] (5:31:58 - 5:32:09)
thoughts that create suffering thoughts that make you unhappy thoughts that have nothing to do with what's happening around you here and now

[Speaker 2] (5:32:11 - 5:32:18)
and can you recognize first of all that those thoughts are

[Speaker 1] (5:32:18 - 5:34:18)
not referring to anything that's happening here and now, in other words that is real and can you also recognize that they are that they create unhappiness in you they create suffering in this case fear or anxiety which is not pleasant I had an encounter not long after I experienced the awakening I was in a waiting room somewhere and this this huge guy came in compared to him this puny little guy sitting there and he planted himself in front of me and obviously enjoying his power I can't remember what he wanted he wanted something and I could sense the that sense of presence intensifying and I just looked and he said a few things and suddenly he became extremely disconcerted because there was no attempt on my part to put up any kind of defense or compete in any way and

[Speaker 17] (5:34:19 - 5:34:20)
he got

[Speaker 1] (5:34:20 - 6:06:10)
deflated like a balloon and didn't know what to say or do anymore that's an

interesting phenomenon so the important thing for you is in any situation be in touch with that inherent power of presence because ultimately that is the power of now ultimately the now is the presence and the presence is you and ultimately you are in its deepest sense, you are the now because the now is the presence and this is why I speak of the power of now, the power of now is also the power of you and not the not the personal you but the you that is that remains and never was not connected and always is connected and always is an intrinsic part of universal power itself, universal consciousness itself the one the one consciousness that underlies all phenomena, the one consciousness of which all phenomena are only a temporary expression so there's enormous power there, how that manifests in this world is a secondary thing perhaps it only manifests as an emanation that comes through you or it flows into something that you you do or create and it's a great thing to feel that power which is not comparative because you know that everybody else is also a temporary expression of that inherent power although most people don't know it it's the famous guy that I spoke of in the perhaps the power of now he's sitting on, the beggar is sitting on his old box for many years asking for little coins and then somebody says what's inside that box?

I've never looked and it's filled with gold and I gave that analogy or parable at the beginning of the power of now so that is discovering that power in you and for most people they're looking for little substitutes to give them a sense of who they are and of course this is the reason why it is not unusual for humans to awaken spiritually to awaken to who they are in their essence when either one big thing or many things that they had derived their identity from good looks physical strength possessions abilities to do this or that recognition status in society those things and suddenly they lose these things or they lose one big thing that was the main that gave them their sense of identity the one main thing that gave them their sense of identity and that's gone and that's of course terrible suffering and then it can force a human to that deeper place because out here unless you quickly the ego might make an attempt to quickly rebuild some mind made identity by creating another narrative that's possible too not every human who loses who experiences great loss necessarily goes to that deeper place but the potential is there so it could be a sports person who is great great master of some sports and then he or she has an accident can never participate in it in that activity again and that gave him or her a sense of identity that at first leads to terrible suffering and then potentially there is a deepening there and the essence, then you are forced into your essence there's a medieval image of Fortuna Fortuna is a goddess of good luck or fortune it goes back to Roman times that shows the fickleness of things the transient nature of all the things of this world which are the things that people identify with it gives them their sense of identity their self esteem and it has a Latin inscription on it it's an image of the goddess and translated from Latin it says this is supposed to be a king speaking or former king, which king stands for any ego and it says as these words in Latin the first word is I shall reign the next word says I reign to reign, to have a to reign a kingdom I shall reign I reign I have reigned I have lost the kingdom the normal sequence of events old age is a great opportunity for that unfortunately missed in many, many cases tragically missed the opportunity as old age comes, approaches and then you enter old age proximity of death loss of physical abilities of social status, retired who am I when I no longer have that title my work all these things are great opportunities for going deeper and what we are attempting to do now is getting as many books and other material out to old people's homes everywhere and also hospices and hospitals and so on, because those are great places where spiritual transformation could happen so the important thing then is sense your presence the presence of you which is not the person something deeper that is consciousness being aware of itself and then you do no longer need a narrative to tell you who you are free of that conceptual sense of self and this telling yourself of a story in your mind about your life that also goes out of the window my life this is what it has come to all those illusions that I had all those wonderful ideas I had when I was twenty oh now you may well still be at the peak of your success, worldly success and that's fine, why not enjoy it it's not who you are so you better go into the presence because it doesn't last with it also comes a wonderful ability to appreciate other human beings what they can do, what they know how they look without feeling diminished by appreciating the external things connected to another human being the ego can't do that because if the ego appreciates something, it might pretend because it wants something from you but if the ego appreciates something it feels diminished if you meet somebody who obviously looks so much better than you the ego feels diminished by that, so sometimes it tries to say something critical about that person in order to restore the injured sense of self it's absurd but that's how it works but when you come from presence you can look at a beautiful form of a human being and appreciate that and feel it's so beautiful or the achievements of another human being to appreciate their achievements great, what wonderful things that this person can do, it's so wonderful I would never be able to do that and yet the fact that you would never be able to do that because perhaps you're not strong enough or you're not inclined in that particular direction does not diminish anything of you so the appreciation of others then comes in and it's a lovely thing I even appreciate when I occasionally see people getting into their Ferrari and of course usually their ego is walking with them and so the car usually it's red color just to make sure that everybody notices and actually I love that thing too it's a beautiful thing that somebody built and this ego is enjoying himself, that's okay that's okay and you may find that sometimes very creative people, there are some who are who have no ego about their creations they do not derive their identity from what they create, others have fairly big egos that happens too I believe the greatest creators in this world don't have an ego about that maybe they have it somewhere else but not around that and that sometimes means that they continue to be creative so sometimes you see this modesty which is lack of ego in people who have created something really great composers poets even some scientists like Einstein never developed an ego around what he came up with the incredible realization about space and time but he never developed this ego I created that there was a relatively little conceptual self and he found it absurd that he had become one of the most famous people on the planet even in his lifetime he just couldn't, it was so weird and he talked about the gap between what people think of me and who I am is just incredible and by the way that's the last thing that's also the place where you can manifest out of the power of presence if that presence if you are linked into that presence see what the universe wants to, because that presence is the presence of consciousness does it want to create something through you, perhaps it does but in that presence everything is already present in an undifferentiated state so whatever it is that you create externally is like the diluted form of something that in its essence, its concentrated non-form is already there in you so whatever you can possibly create is already present on some level on a deeper level there have been composers who created the most incredible pieces of music and many of them said they listened as if it came out of that place of depth already fully created and they just wrote it down so there's been an increasing awareness of people who look different from the main stream culture and so for a long long time they felt disadvantaged and people sometimes made fun of them and gradually empathy grew in humans and so all the people who did not belong for a long time because there was this exclusivity in the main stream culture many of them can now have come to a place of greater acceptance of who they are on the level of form and that's a wonderful thing gay people, people racial minorities and so on, they come to an acceptance and appreciation of their form identity and that's a wonderful thing so that was a good movement more consciousness has come in but the ego is there and although that's a good thing if you exclusively identify with whatever form it is of the form that you are temporarily if there's exclusive identification there's always ego that comes in so acceptance of who you are on the level of form is wonderful complete identification with who you are on the level of form is the ego so you need to see the difference between accepting and becoming comfortable and appreciating who or what you are on the level of form but if you are completely identified it means you are unaware of your essence identity if you are unaware of your essence identity you don't never even have glimpses of your essence identity then you are still completely trapped and you're not just comfortable accepting of your form identity no, you then have to create boundaries and the ego does that then it makes others into enemies of yours the ego likes to do that so you always have to be very vigilant something that is a good thing can be used by the ego for its own purposes and then the good thing is no longer a good thing nothing that is good now if you have more of what is good that's even better and then you add more to what is good that's even better one glass of water is good two glasses of water a day is better three glasses of water a day is even better, four glasses of water a day is even better than that but at some point you reach a point where it's not better anymore, it's worse true change cannot happen if humans if you attempt to bring about true change in society without addressing the fundamental question of who am I and who are you at a deeper level without that realization in human beings there cannot be true change only permutations of ego the fundamental questions who am I so you can identify as male female something in between that's all fine white black, yellow whatever that's fine is that who you essentially are no essentially I am not a man or I'm not a woman on the level of presence there's no gender on the level of presence there's no race on the level of presence there's no age on the level of presence I'm not young and I'm not old as presence I don't have a history as presence I'm not a victim lovely the ego loves being a victim so be careful of that people that see themselves the moment you complain about another personal situation the ego is there the victim me and it feels bigger and then you have the danger is you have entire groups it is true that there have been many groups that were suppressed or victimized but the danger is if you continue if you're a member of a particular group if you continue to derive your sense of identity from being a victim you're still trapped in ego you're not liberated and a victim is ultimately powerless but the ego believes that's power so the at first you practice in non-problematic situations you practice being the presence not having all these moments when you don't add thought so you walk around looking at the lights an object your hand the flowers a glass of water and it's an amazing thing when you're trapped in thinking the entire sense perceived world that continuously surrounds you is just a peripheral phenomenon because most of your attention is trapped in thought so you're unaware of the miraculous nature of the sense perceived universe around you and the moment you give it your complete attention without, and you can only do that without adding thought to your perception every little thing is alive and miraculous and beautiful perhaps this is what they try, I don't know in so called conceptual art when you go into an art gallery and somebody and there you have an exhibit it tells you who the artist is and all you see is on there's a on the floor or on a table is an everyday object a can of beans and then it tells you the name of the artist laughter I believe that's called conceptual art and you're lucky if it's a can of beans, it could be something worse laughter many art galleries have these exhibits and of course some people go in and say hmm, interesting laughter I wonder what he's trying to say laughter there's a message here, I can't quite get it and some people are so knowledgeable about art, they can write a long piece about this can of beans laughter and why it's there, and what the artist's intention is, by putting it there laughter and you would have to ask the artist what the intention was, if it is an artist but let's just see on the screen if it means anything if it's anything significant, then it would be drawing the viewer's attention to something ordinary so that the viewer becomes aware of the extra ordinariness of an ordinary object if it works like that then I can accept it, it might have a purpose but then I would not be able to write very much about it, except what I've just said laughter so it would really, it would take your attention away from the movement of thought, into thoughtless perception so that would be conceptual art then I mentioned a couple of times this phenomenon that arose on YouTube of people it's now thousands and thousands of people are doing it of people who take an ordinary object and handle it and touch it and make noises with it the most boring YouTube videos you can possibly imagine laughter so they might go and have something like this now the amazing thing is some of them get hundreds of thousands of views, so there is a longing they're not called spiritual but the good ones have a spiritual dimension to them, there's a longing in the collective for that kind of thoughtless perception, because it does by looking at those videos you either fall asleep and many people do they use it in order to go to sleep or you enter that state of presence and you suddenly become aware that a simple object has an aliveness and a beauty that you didn't know before, so when somebody goes and might drink and people watch that and some of these are 30 minutes long laughter I watched some of them myself laughter but I watched them for anthropological reasons laughter laughter laughter well not really, I watched them because I'm looking for is there in the background something spiritual and people don't even know it, the people who are watching it, there's a longing in humans to be free of the incessant noise of their minds and those videos they're called ASMR for some reason Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response some people claim that it produces tingles in their bodies but many others just watch because they stop thinking while they watch most people who watch them probably fall below thought laughter and a few, especially for the good videos, probably rise up into presence and you become aware that an ordinary thing can be extraordinary it has an extraordinary presence laughter so if you haven't heard of it, look it up on YouTube ASMR, because it's become so popular, there are many bad ones but somehow there's a self-selecting process at work and if you look at the number of views, the better ones have like a hundred thousand views or more with the exception of some produced by young ladies who reveal aspects of their body while they're doing it so that could be misleading, they're not necessarily good laughter laughter but something that has arisen spontaneously and there is a longing in humans to be free of the noise of the voice in their head and of course most humans believe the only way they can be free is by falling below thought I want to go to sleep, but I can't sleep laughter

[Speaker 2] (6:06:22 - 6:06:23)
so the

[Speaker 1] (6:06:23 - 6:25:18)
whether it's conceptual art or those videos, there is truth there and that is the world of ordinary things is also extraordinary the multiplicity of this universe that surrounds us the multiplicity of life forms, of things, of beings is quite miraculous and if we are continuously so absorbed in the thought processes that we are only peripherally aware of the aliveness of the world around us, then we are missing something really vital and that's again, it's to do with being too absorbed in one's mind mind made sense of self in that and occasionally they say, oh look it's a lovely flower oh that's a nice sunset, three seconds but I have other problems to think about more important things on my mind I have a lot on my mind don't have time for sunsets don't have time for beauty what are you talking about beauty I've got problems so look practice it outside or indoors there are two ways of looking around one is choosing an object and briefly just wherever your gaze falls upon whatever it might be for a moment you look and then there's something else you look at but as you look there's a two-fold awareness one is the awareness of what you are looking at and you see it fully the other is the awareness of the awareness without which you wouldn't be able to look and that is your essential beingness so the two-fold nature of this act of perception so if I'm looking at you as a person I'm looking I'm aware of what I'm seeing I'm also aware I'm aware of how you look I'm also aware of myself as the awareness and because I'm aware of myself as the awareness I'm aware of more in yourself, in you than the external appearance I'm also aware of you as the conscious presence that's the essence of who you are and I can also do that when I look at a flower there's more one could say that everything that you perceive is a surface phenomenon it's the surface of reality and underneath your perceptions there is a vastness like the ocean and whatever you're seeing is the surface of the ocean so underneath that, there's a vastness of energy formations ultimately the one consciousness expressing itself in these all very short-lived forms and the deeper you go the stiller it becomes this is probably what Plato talked about, the ancient Greek philosopher that there are ideas in the unseen realm there's the world of what is translated as ideas, but

that's not a good translation he said before things exist as a physical thing they already exist on an unseen level in the world of consciousness and then the consciousness manifests as something or someone the universe manifests briefly as you and as you become conscious, in you it is the universe that is becoming conscious you think you are a person and of course in conventional terms you are a person but ultimately you're not a person, it's absurd what does it even mean?

I mean, the word means a mask person comes from Latin persona means mask I mean, you're not a mask you're not a person what are you? who are you? you're not separate from the universe so you are an expression of the universe you haven't fallen into this universe from somewhere, you've come out of this universe and then you go back into it and then you come out again as something else you die you're born oh, what's this all about?

and then you and then you oh, that wasn't a very nice life oh oh, this one is better but it doesn't last so the one consciousness appearing as multiplicity of beings so you are the awareness of the universe, you are the consciousness of the universe, how could you not be? if being or god is the creative source of all energy and thoughts and thoughts from the ego are negative form of energy don't these negative thoughts originate from being? in other words did god create evil?

so let's just look at it again if being or god is the creative source of all energy there's only one source right and that is the creative source of all energy thoughts from the ego are negative form of energy but energy of course don't these negative thoughts originate from being? and so did god create evil? that question of course has been similar that kind of question has been asked and talked about by many philosophers and it has remained the kind of stumbling block in christian religion so let's see what the intuitive answer is in this sense perceived universe if you want to use anything here to compare god to the most appropriate thing in this sense perceived universe would be the sun because the sun is the source of seemingly inexhaustible energy and the giver of life the very heat in your body is sun comes from the sun indirectly the sun of course is not eternal but compared to the human life span could be considered as virtually eternal so much faster and it gives freely of itself millions millions and millions of years of just pouring out energy now let's say the sun is in a process of becoming conscious of itself because my intuition is that the universe or rather that which underlies the universe or the one behind the many is in the process of becoming conscious of itself in time the dimension of time although the one also exists in the timeless dimension where there is no past and future so God, to use that word for a while in the timeless God is already complete and perfect but it seems that in the realm of time God is becoming conscious through all these life forms now if that were the sun then in the process of becoming conscious let us say that light particles if there is such a thing well there is they are called photons well they are not really particles but nobody knows what they are waves or particles or both in the process of becoming conscious the sun which continuously emits zillions of photons light particles let's say the individual photon of course is part of the process of becoming conscious of the sun and in that process the individual photon of course would undergo a change of consciousness arising more consciousness and temporarily the individual photon as it becomes together with the sun, it is part of the sun it makes up, conscious it and as consciousness arises it misperceives itself as a separate entity and no longer because it is becoming conscious it no longer realizes its oneness with the sun that it is a continuum, it never really loses connection with the sun and so temporarily as part of the process of becoming conscious it believes itself to be separate it's a temporary thing and while it believes itself to be separate it creates all kinds of illusions that reflect the basic illusion of separateness and that's basically where we are at humanity is at because humanity is the human being is the photon the sun particle so to speak not the intelligence within the consciousness within is the consciousness of God, there is only one consciousness and that consciousness in the process of the whole becoming conscious misperceives itself temporarily and that creates the illusion of separateness in the individual human and that creates the illusion of identification with form which is the illusion of separateness that's seeing oneself as a separate entity and the stronger that illusion is the more that gets reflected in its actions outside which then become deluded and that's called evil ultimately in evil nothing is destroyed the essence of all life form is eternal but on its own level it's not pleasant from the point of view of the larger whole it's only a brief dream episode that takes place as the one is becoming conscious so that is the answer to did God create or does God create evil so the teachings that say that evil ultimately is not real of course that is correct but on its it's a question of look of levels if you look at it on one level it has a certain reality and the fact that it ultimately is not real does not mean that on this temporary level it appears very real and must but it must be recognized as deluded so evil, I have defined it before somewhere can be defined as complete identification with form that is the illusion and the more an entity is identified with form the more seemingly evil the entity creates and the more suffering is created and what's the answer? the answer of course is why we are here we are here you me, us here is the arising and the ending of the answer and the answer is not just the answer it's also the end of the illusion of separateness and the end of so called evil

[Speaker 10] (6:25:45 - 6:26:20)
hello so my question has to do with the ego and so much of what is discussed and what you discuss is about the ego and often times it feels like it's characterized as the enemy or someone that we are fighting against or some type of connotation like that and yet it seems like the intelligence of the universe probably didn't make a mistake with the ego so just trying to reconcile those ideas

[Speaker 1] (6:26:23 - 6:26:23)
yes

[Speaker 10] (6:26:23 - 6:26:24)
it's

[Speaker 1] (6:26:24 - 6:34:25)
it's although from a certain perspective the ego may look quite insane from a higher perspective it is no more than part of the evolutionary process of the species it's a stage in the evolution and as we are approaching the next stage in the evolution we are beginning to see that the ego has completely outlived it's usefulness but it had it's usefulness and it's we are only now beginning to see that it is insane because we are approaching the next stage in human evolution before nobody could see that the ego was insane although except very rare great masters the Buddha already said it's an illusion Jesus said deny thyself which means recognize the unreality of the ego but not many people understood what they said they were kind of precursors of the next step they were pointing to it before it actually became a true awakening on the planet so from our present perspective because we are at the end of one evolutionary stage the ego looks totally absurd once you see what it is and how much havoc it has created but from a higher perspective it's part of the evolution of humanity without there could be no enlightenment or awakening without it ultimately so it's fine, in your own life you can see it, how you had to go through the ignorance in your own life, I mean not ignorance in the sense of lack of education but spiritual ignorance not knowing who you essentially are and making so many mistakes on the basis of the illusory ego identity and you can see it now and you had to go through it there was once most likely humanity once had not an ego yet and that perhaps is captured in the myth which you find in many different cultures that didn't even have contact with each other, the myth of the golden age when humans lived in harmony with each other and in harmony with nature and life was easy and that myth points to probably to the fact that a long long time ago humans lived in at one moment in a sense of oneness with nature and the surroundings and the ego hadn't developed yet and that perhaps

became later survived, the memory of it survived as the myth of the golden age which of course is expressed in the Old Testament as paradise as just one aspect of the myth of the golden age when life was easy and then something happened the fall, whatever you want to call it, it happened and then the ugliness came in and that of course was the beginning of human ability to think which at first was a miraculous thing, thinking suddenly happened, some anthropologists are telling us that and I believe they are right, when thinking first began to happen in humans, humans were very surprised and they thought that some god was talking to them in their head and so because thought suddenly came, of course part of that was the development of language and so language started to happen in people's heads who's talking?

and then often, and they acted on it often, when a thought came and then they did it kill this man laughter the enemy, the other tribe the enemy they're not human that's what the voice is telling me so the voice in the head, language internalized that, so it was a miraculous, because but it also made many things possible that would not have been possible without it knowledge arising, you can transmit knowledge and how civilization as we know it wouldn't happen without that all kinds of transmission of knowledge, architecture and then philosophy starts and whatever all these things, conceptual knowledge arising, a miraculous thing, a strange thing and then over the millennia the voice became so all pervasive that it took over people's sense of identity whereas for a long time probably after the arising of thinking humans still had a sense of rootedness in being the natural sense of rootedness in the depths of their being and gradually over the millennia they got drawn more and more into the thinking heads mode and then the whole sense of identity was no longer rooted in the depths of their being but in the voice in the head and that's how the but it made many things possible and now the next step in the evolution is a return to the pre-egoic state with the added dimension of consciously knowing your connectedness with the one whereas before they were connected with the one without even knowing it, it was a natural state of connectedness but as we return to the go beyond ego we now knowingly we return to the one consciously and that's the next stage, so it's not a regressive step, in some sense we go back to the golden age, one could almost say but knowing and that's expressed of course in the ancient parable of what in the bible is called the prodigal son the son leaves his father's home, gives to the father, give me your inheritance and the son goes abroad to a distant country, squanders all his wealth and becomes destitute and then the message comes from the father the father sends a messenger come back home come back to me and then the son begins to remember who he is and then he comes back to the father's home and as the parable says is loved more deeply than before there's a deeper there's an added first you lose it you never really lose it completely otherwise you wouldn't even exist but you lose it and then you return when you return to it there's a depth to it of knowing and that's where we are destined to go and so once we realize that we're actually grateful to the ego because it has been

[Speaker 2] (6:34:25 - 6:34:27)
it was part of the journey

[Speaker 15] (6:34:28 - 6:34:49)
yeah thank you very much these devices it breaks the relation with other people you're at dinner with

[Speaker 1] (6:34:52 - 6:34:56)
don't allow these things to take over your life, that's vitally important

[Speaker 8] (6:34:56 - 6:35:51)
I work with technology and I actually it was quite interesting to hear you talk about technology a few times in the past couple of days and the way that you mentioned that smartphones are actually an extension of our minds and the way that the internet is actually it's a space for our unconscious mind to actually be

reactive so one of the things I do for work is to raise a bit of the ethical questions around that and the things that we usually call digital nudges which is when we try to influence other people through technology so I would really love to hear a bit of your opinion and maybe your advice if there is a way for us to use technology as a tool and as a channel to actually increase humanity consciousness and presence

[Speaker 1] (6:35:51 - 6:38:30)
yes so in itself of course it's neutral the technology is neutral it's not either bad or good it depends how it's used it is at the moment it is to a large extent a reflection of the unconscious mind so if you want to learn about human unconsciousness, if you want to learn about the human ego just go there and read what people post look at the reactivity of people on social media and so on the comments they leave you can learn a lot about unconsciousness and identification with mental positions so the first thing of course is what be careful with what you put out there, what kind of thing you post, if you post things online is it reactive give yourself a moment when you read something before you type in an answer or a comment give yourself a moment and go within and avoid making people wrong you can talk about issues but don't make people wrong amplify your ego by making others wrong even though their position, political or otherwise, you may regard as completely misguided or erroneous there is still a human being behind that so you can put forward arguments against somebody's perspective or viewpoint without making another human being wrong so how what you put out is very important is your communication conscious or not or is it reactive and then it can be used for other purposes I'm there too sometimes, there are certain places where I appear could go to YouTube or whatever and then suddenly there's a spiritual teacher talking so do you professionally work with what exactly do you do in your work that involves the media or

[Speaker 8] (6:38:30 - 6:38:43)
pretty much involves the creation the ideas around the digital products and services so creating the product that people actually use and designing the interfaces that people actually use on phones and other

[Speaker 1] (6:38:43 - 6:50:47)
there are some meditation sites on all these things so there's a great potential for raising consciousness there, somebody recommended to me several apps for meditation which I now have on my phone I haven't tried them yet, I've been there for a while but I have four or five that are there, I want to try them out, so that's the very thing that otherwise would clutter your mind can actually also be used to bring about space or spaciousness in your mind so it doesn't necessarily mean that when you have your phone or the 99% of cases when people look their mind is being cluttered but maybe they're on a meditation app, maybe they're looking at a beautiful spacious picture or listening to some sound take a conscious breath have a little reminder every two hours take a conscious breath and bring spaciousness oh yes, spaciousness so the very same thing that otherwise clutters your mind can now unclutter your mind, it's possible so I believe that it's also going to grow now and it has to because otherwise that technology could potentially drive humans completely insane and remove their ability to focus on anything for more than a few seconds people create young people who are totally uncentered, have no spaciousness within, don't even communicate with humans anymore because they prefer to communicate digitally so these things are important but what you put out is important so always take into consideration whether this brings people to presence or whether it clutters somebody's mind and perhaps you can combine of course what you do needs to be also commercially viable so but I believe you can combine the two, it's not necessarily a question of either it's commercially viable and it clutters people's minds or it's presence and we're going to go out of business, it doesn't have to be like that, it's up to you to be creative use the more still you are, the more creative insights you will have and you might get some

amazing ideas of what is possible, I can't tell you what is possible I don't know enough about it, I know very little about it but you're in a wonderful position so allow yourself to go deep enough within because then it is then the creative ideas seem to come and if you find a thing that not only brings people to presence but also helps your company to grow then that then becomes a conscious business which is wonderful it's challenging of course it's challenging so don't let all your attention be absorbed by that kind of activity you still need to connect with nature take it as much as possible away from there, connect with nature and then bring it back another thing just in connection with this not perhaps directly related to your question but related to this is tends to happen is that these devices people are never they're still in bed and they're still doing stuff on it and that takes you over there at dinner and they're doing stuff on it it breaks the relation with other people you're at dinner with I see people in restaurants the couple sitting having dinner together and both are on their phones now that probably means they've known each other for a while if it happens on the first date the first date will probably be the last one but if it happens after they've known each other for two years then it's almost a normal thing that they're not present with each other or then they exchange a few words and then she looks at the phone again and then he stares into space and then she's still on her phone I've actually observed it she's still on her phone and he's staring into space and then finally he gets out his phone too because he doesn't want to be staring into space and then I wonder are they texting each other right two good things that I learned that in some huge companies I believe it might be VW in Germany well they've had enough problems but now they they tell their employees after 6pm they're not allowed to use the company phones anymore not to deal with emails or anything they need to get off and that's a very wise thing because the more people's attention gets absorbed by this the more confused and non-creative they become the more cluttered their minds become the more ineffective they are even at their work not to mention as human beings their quality of life decreases enormously so don't give yourself spaces don't allow these things to take over your life, that's vitally important so it's wonderful that some big companies like that have this policy now no emails or anything after 6pm well that's wonderful I talked a couple of years ago to Ariana Huffington who has a famous news website and has also written some books and she describes in her latest book how her life deteriorated more and more although she was making a lot of money and finally she collapsed and hit her head on her desk and she was a complete breakdown and now she has for example in her private life and that's a good thing she has this policy of no digital device in my bedroom so in her bedroom she still has books sometimes she reads in bed but it has to be a book not a kindle not the ipad, not the iphone no digital device in my bedroom and that's a good thing at least you have that space for yourself so everybody needs to be really conscious of the addictive nature of these devices how I sometimes say I even said that before these things were invented the greatest addiction for human beings is compulsive thinking they can't stop thinking really that is what is the meaning of being an addict whatever it may be if you are an addict it means you have no power to stop whether you are addicted to a drug or to alcohol and many people who are addicts say no I am not an addict I could stop but they can't so the nature of being an addict is you no longer have the power to stop doing this and this applies for many humans first of all all humans are addicts and that was already before these devices came all humans are addicts addicted to their thinking to their compulsive and unconscious superfluous, excessive often destructive thinking they can't stop and they don't want to stop because they are so identified with it with the entire identities in their thoughts so they have to go on they don't even know it so the greatest addiction for humanity is not heroin or whatever it's the human mind that's actually you are addicted to thinking and now these devices are an amplification externalization of the human mind and so that makes it even more difficult to deal with because then you not only have your mind you also have the collective mind that comes at you through your iPhone and your Samsung which hopefully doesn't explode in your face well if it did explode that would make you present and it might suddenly break the addiction so give yourself space in your bedroom this is a good policy and don't be on it at all times the younger you are the more difficult this is for you for old people like myself it's still relatively relatively easy but if you are 18 or 20 or 25 then you've grown up with these things the older than the rest they didn't grow up with these things they're not quite, perhaps not quite as addicted and identified with it another way to tell whether they've grown up with these things is how they type into their phones I always admire young people because they type they go like that at enormous speed with their thumbs how they do it with their thumbs I don't know and they can even talk to you while they're doing it and then I get a text message and somebody expects an answer who might not know that I'm not that fast and with the text message you can actually see that somebody is replying, you know that he's replying and so they wait and say why isn't he, he's doing something they don't know that I go like that it takes time and that's a good thing because it's easy to be present when you're not good at this you can be much more present where is the bee? so it's a challenge I hope you come up with something wonderful that promotes presence in this world

[Speaker 2] (6:50:48 - 6:50:52)
and helps your business thank you

[Speaker 1] (6:50:58 - 7:32:54)
so then this ability to ask a true question comes from becoming familiar with and familiar with and comfortable with not knowing the state of not knowing which ultimately is the state of not thinking because when you're not thinking you don't know anything conceptually you don't know anything and yet when you're not thinking a different dimension of consciousness arises that is has no conceptual knowledge in it but there is an intelligence there there is a vast intelligence there that is non-conceptual in order to have a balanced life we need to be able to dwell in both of these dimensions the dimension of conceptual knowledge we can't do without it and the conception of the deeper I call it the deeper knowing that is non-conceptual so it's not ignorance I often recommend that you should try this out in everyday life and see how do you know something how do you experience something new you can go into nature you can go into a forest you can experience the forest through your conceptual knowledge depending on how much you know about trees and plants and birds and vegetation and so on and you can as you go you enter a forest, you've never been there and you immediately you can say well this is that and that's a tree of the approximate age how it grows, the nature of the soil, you know a lot or you could go and ask somebody to explain the forest to you so you have a guide so the guide takes you into the forest and explains and you learn a lot about the trees and after an hour you come out again and you have absorbed an enormous amount of knowledge about the forest that is one way of knowing the forest conceptually and there's nothing wrong with it but there's another way of knowing you go into the forest and you don't have a guide and you don't know much about trees or anything you go into the forest and simply experience the forest directly without the intermediary of conceptualization which means you look at the trees you look at the plants you take in all the sense perceptions of the forest, the totality of sense perceptions not only do you look at individual life forms you're also aware of the totality of the forest that is an energy field that surrounds you and all these things, you take that in with little or no conceptual thinking so you're beginning to know this forest in a totally different way that is non-conceptual and that moves you also you experience the forest no longer do you experience a clear separation between you and that amazing life form which is the forest around you there is a sense of merging with there's a sense of oneness with it which cannot be there when you approach it through conceptual knowledge the concept is a little little sticking labels on things and then mistaking the label for what it is it's that, oh now I know what it is this is the name of the tree, now I know what it is no you don't, you've just put a label on that mysterious and miraculous and profound thing and then you believe every label that's what it is you don't know what it is, you just have a name for it, but we need that kind of

knowledge too but the thing is if all you have or most of your life is conducted through conceptual knowledge and this is what is encouraged in our civilization when that is all you know then a vital dimension is missing from your life a very vital dimension, in fact one could almost say you inhabit very much a surface reality I think there's a Ken Whittle, the philosopher, I think calls it flat land you inhabit this flat land so there's no depth to anything, there's just conceptualization, so you inhabit ultimately a universe that is dead, deadened you are dead to it because you can no longer experience it in its depths, and also of course when you are confined to knowledge, conceptual knowledge only for example, in regard to nature you cannot possibly sense the I reluctantly use the word the sacredness of nature in fact, from a point of view of conceptualization sacredness is a meaningless term, when you say the sacredness of the forest, they say can you please define what exactly do you mean?

you want more concepts so you can't understand what this pointer sacredness, what it points to, you don't know it until you get a glimpse of it and then you say no explanation will suffice for you to know what sacredness is, in the same way that as Mathieu Ricard said the other day here the famous example from the east you can talk about honey for a long time, you can write a PhD about honey I'm sure people have done that and you've never tasted it so you know an enormous amount about honey but you have never tasted honey, so do you know honey?

no, you know about honey, but you don't know honey because there are two different different modalities of knowing the world, so we need to be in both without being especially we need to be careful not to be absorbed continuously by conceptual knowledge which is not only about things, even about other human beings how do you know a person? what do you know about a person? in some languages, this is interesting there's sometimes wisdom embodied in language in Spanish or French you have actually two words for to know there are different ways of knowing one is a more abstract knowing which in Spanish would be saber yo se, I know this is a fact I know who he is yo se quien es I know who he is but if you know him, you use a different verb conozco le conozco I know you I know who you are, uses one verb I know you uses a different verb so there's in French the same savoir, connaître this is very interesting so there's sometimes a certain amount of wisdom embodied in language so the knowing savoir, connaître that would be the more direct non-conceptual knowing so our task is to again this is related also to doing and being we need to be able to move in both and have access to both modalities of knowing our danger is losing ourselves in the conceptual mind so that we inhabit ultimately we inhabit a universe that is basically lifeless and dead because these are lifeless concepts so this means we need to develop the ability to periodically let go of the conceptual mind without losing consciousness so it's not you're not going to sleep you're not falling off the chair because you've had six whiskeys I don't know how many you need to fall off the chair but you let go of the conceptual mind and just be present with what is and then you can know anything you can know whatever it is through sense perception you're very much become very much more aware of sense perception and you take it certainly things suddenly become more vitally or vibrantly alive when you look at something without interference of the conceptual mind and at the same time you're not only acutely aware of sense perception so that things are more alive suddenly around you but you're also aware of the underlying presence of consciousness itself which is you you're aware of yourself not the person but you're aware of yourself as the presence and so you become the space for whatever arises there and so that's a totally different way of knowing something can you speak about how to be in this world with this constant push for connectivity how did we get to the most profound things from a relatively simple question oh yes we talked about doing and being without feeling that being present is another thing to do how to be in this world without this constant push for connectivity well the first thing is you turn off your push notifications that's already a big step forward and you need to be disciplined in the use of your device your phone whatever tablet, phone so that it doesn't take you over because it's simply an extension of the mind and if it wasn't enough before we invented these devices humans had already been taken over by their minds even 2,000 years ago not as much as now but even 2,000 years ago Jesus said why are you always thinking about tomorrow why are you always worried about the next thing look at the flower, look how it lives in total alignment with the present moment and it's being sustained by the one consciousness that's my translation so already then humans had been taken over by mind but even more so since then mind has proliferated and then the clever human mind came up with these devices said let's extend ourselves into the realm of things and then we can create this which is an extension of the human mind so when you might have noticed when you are with yourself you have the voice in the head unless you begin to awaken in which case you're able to experience spaces of alert still presence, it's beautiful but otherwise you have this think, commenting talking, arguing and then this becomes a burden for many people of course it is a burden because a lot of the stuff it says is actually not pleasant and it's so you experience it as a burden and since you derive your sense of identity from it it becomes yourself this talking voice you think that's you it becomes the self and you walk around with this burden of the self and in order to unburden yourself one thing you can do you think you can do is you can watch the television or you can go on there are countless things that you can watch on the little screen the entire world's knowledge at your fingertips and the moment you watch the screen, whether it's television or whatever screen you might have noticed that your own your so called own thought processes come to a stop so to some extent you are free of the self, this is why people sometimes find watching television relaxing say okay I just need to relax now, just turn it on by this they mean while they watch the television screen, they are not burdened by their self induced thought processes what they do however they replace their own thoughts with the collective thoughts, so they just you are in a state you are not in a state of thoughtless awareness when you watch television or you watch something on the screen you absorb the thoughts from there into your mind and you link into so for people often in a state of semi or hypnosis when they watch it kind of paralyzes you it can also happen with the screen with television already started of course I don't know when, whenever, 60 years ago whenever television started and you go and so your mind is just absorbing whatever is playing it's the TV mind which is receiving stuff from wherever it comes from is going into your mind and you become a no longer thinking your own thoughts occasionally your mind is saying oh this guy is so stupid and then you are watching again and then another thought why am I watching this rubbish half an hour later this is so awful but you can't you can't turn it off here is the remote let's just try one more channel there might be something else oh no that's stupid try one more this is how an addict behaves and the device is even more addictive because you carry them with you and you have to admit, you may have to admit that there is an addiction in you not everybody here but quite a few it would be almost normal to feel this draw towards it and you use it even when you don't need to use it that's the amazing thing when you are standing at the elevator waiting another person is standing next to you and he or she is pulling out the phone and then you pull out and it's yours, you don't know why or anywhere you are waiting you are ordering a tea or coffee somewhere and you are standing in line and if you look around there is almost nobody and probably nobody who is not looking at this little thing this is scary zombie like now if somebody from the past the so called past time traveler from the past came here not the distant past let's just say even 20 years ago and he arrived and would see in the streets in restaurants, in cafes, everywhere public transport people walk around with these things staring at these things what's that? something has happened to humanity they have all become zombies something terrible must have happened what was that? there are these are wonderful devices incredible possibilities of having access to all kinds of knowledge but there is always the downside there is a huge huge downside to it they are addictive they stimulate the mind the thing you want to become free from you want to become free of mind and this will prevent you from becoming free of mind so you need to be disciplined enough to not automatically look at it whenever there is a moment and you are waiting for something or whatever it is there is no need to check these things I don't even know what they are but I just know that Facebook is the biggest thing and then there is Instagram and Snapchat and countless names and some people have all of them on their phones and you need to know the latest thing crazy but if you detect the addiction in yourself then you have to first of all admit that you are addicted don't deny it you know Alcoholics Anonymous the first thing when you go there you have to say I am an alcoholic now some people say well that is not a good thing because your identity is not being an alcoholic of course not so it could be misunderstood but your nature is not being an alcoholic your present condition is that but to recognize the problem the difficulty, the challenge is just to state it yes I am addicted to this phone and I choose not to be addicted and then you can be the only one in many places who is not looking in waiting rooms waiting in line whatever it is waiting on the phone for somebody to talk to you and in the meantime but you use this beautiful thing of just being, just being present and you look around and you step out of thinking and all the others are still in their hypnotic state Meditation to another live meditation we call it meditation but that is not really what it is meditation is another concept that creates a compartment in your mind or your life different from other things but we are not really here to do a meditation as such but to realize the essential you or to put it more accurately and directly to realize the essential I because one could say and don't take this too literally because whatever language one uses is always somewhat wrong so they are only approximations they are only helpful hints used temporarily whatever words we use here are helpful pointers not the absolute truth can't be expressed in words so all pointers of course have certain limitations knowing that I can use one or two pointers so we could say then that there is two of you here or at any time there is the I that is circumstantial relative fleeting and it's not a unified body it includes all kinds of sub-I's and patterns its form the form of who you are the psychological form physical form conditioned by circumstances reacting to circumstances having fears and desires and then there is the deeper I which one could say is the dreamer of all the circumstances and the events and the experiences that make up a person's so-called life so I'm comparing then circumstantial existence to a kind of dream which is what it is because it dissolves fairly quickly not only your life but every event and circumstance in your life it changes continuously and that's why we can compare it to a kind of dream which also is not substantial it's also fleeting and subject to change and subject to impermanence just as this world that looks deceptively solid but is also subject to constant change it's not really solid and physicists agree if you look deeply into matter you see there is ultimately nothing there is no solid matter only energy fluctuations but the energy fluctuations appear to us it's an illusion they appear to us as solid so there's a solidity to the world that is not absolutely real it's part of the illusion and then people always get shocked when they realize how fleeting it all is and whenever you think your life has a secure basis very quickly you realize oh it wasn't that secure because something happens and you realize that that sense of security that one seeks in circumstances is also an illusion so the deeper eye is that which illuminates the circumstances creates them in a way like a dream creates a dream the question is whether that deeper eye which is the light behind it all without which there would be no world that deeper eye the question is whether the deeper eye is totally lost in the dream or whether it knows itself as the deeper eye even while the dream continues lucid living similar to lucid dreaming which some people are interested in which is staying conscious while you're dreaming and knowing that you're dreaming but here we're talking about that may or may not happen but here we're talking about lucid living which is to know yourself as the light behind it all the presence behind it all and to sense that presence that has no form as the life that you are or the consciousness that you are is no longer the separate you that's behind it all now the important thing is to know that not conceptually but in the background and over the years I've used many different pointers to point to it every pointer of course limits it it's not that but it can be temporarily helpful I've said the stillness and the background the space the inner space or the spaciousness or the light

light, Jesus also used that term to point to it you are the light of the world there's the world and there's the light in which it appears you are the light of the world is the light God?

if we even want to use that term well if we use that term I would say the light is the emanation of God in the same way that the sunlight emanates from the sun and is not really separate from the sun God is the absolute unmanifested timeless we can't say anything about it and from the absolute unmanifested something shines into this world and creates this world I've used other pointers also yes, stillness inner space spaciousness presence or in negative terms the cessation of thinking the end of compulsive thinking and that's why we're here to realize that possibility what's left of you when you stop thinking and of course I'm inviting you to stop thinking you can't make it happen but you can allow yourself to just be present there's the essential I not much you can say about it but you are whenever you enter that dimension so to speak power flows into you you could call it spiritual power it may not immediately become transformed into something in this world it could become creative action could become an emanation of love towards your fellow human beings it could become other things as it flows into this world but it doesn't immediately necessarily have to do that you're plugged into the source of all power and it's not the power that the ego would call power which is noisy it's not that there's a silent power that's far more powerful than that so it's not the power of the monster which is what the ego thinks of as power or power over others control very different it's silent power which from the point of view of the ego looks like weakness weakness the Tao Te Ching sometimes compares that power to water it seems very soft but it can erode the hardest rock and does and that of course is the power of now what that really means don't expect immediate results I'm saying be content with opening yourself to this influx of silent power and though the circumstantial you with its situation life situation of course is still there continues the ups and downs of circumstantial existence one day everything is going great the next day things collapse and then it's fine again new things arise and while all that happens you feel yourself you sense yourself as the presence behind it all and then you can sit there discussing this or that with people even putting forward your opinion and still sense the powerful spaciousness in the background even while you say no I think that's how it is, not like that that is what I think you don't lose yourself in the circumstantial I you stay rooted in the essential I you are essentially that of course now they are not absolutely separate the circumstantial I is the the waves on the surface of being the ripples and waves and of course there's no division between the waves on the surface of the ocean and the ocean it just sometimes looks as if every wave had a separate existence and of course you could say oh this wave, that's called John and there's wave Mary, it comes and there it comes, there it comes oh it's gone that's all terrible

[Speaker 2] (7:33:28 - 7:33:38)
is there any is there a dimension that is deeper than this self, this person

[Speaker 1] (7:33:38 - 7:34:09)
that you are here for a little while everybody has a history and you are a person you are a conditioned entity is there anything beyond this conditioned entity, the self the Buddha calls it the self and he, another other than the fact of suffering another important part of his teaching is the

[Speaker 2] (7:34:09 - 7:34:17)
ultimate unreality of that self the ultimate unreality of that self

[Speaker 1] (7:34:18 - 7:34:58)
which was also Jesus teaching but it's usually overlooked by churches and theologians because Jesus said literally, here's another little quote that I'm sure he actually said literally he said deny thyself oh I thought the Buddha said that, it was actually Jesus deny thyself means what does it mean what is the point in

denying yourself if your self is actually real if it has a substantial ultimate reality then to deny

[Speaker 2] (7:34:58 - 7:35:08)
something that is real wouldn't make sense but deny thyself he said that because he agrees with the Buddha

[Speaker 1] (7:35:08 - 7:36:19)
that that identity that people carry around with is ultimately an illusion there is something deeper that is beyond that so when Jesus says deny thyself what is really meaning is recognize the unreality of yourself that's what is deny yourself, recognize it ultimately this is not who or what you are yes it has a certain function here it is a part of who you are on the level of form physical form, psychological form, this is why I call it your form identity, everybody has one you have a body that's a physical form and you have a mental form which is you as this person that you can think about and talk about and it has its emotions that go with that, conditioned by the past, whatever happened to you

[Speaker 2] (7:36:19 - 7:36:38)
in the past conditions you to become this particular person is there anything beyond that conditioned entity and here we come to the realization that

[Speaker 15] (7:36:38 - 7:36:48)
there is it is possible to go deeper where you

[Speaker 2] (7:36:48 - 7:37:03)
your sense of who you are goes beyond this personal sense of self, the personal sense of self is still there but it is no longer all consuming

[Speaker 1] (7:37:04 - 7:37:29)
and that's a very important difference, if you discover something and we are here to many of you already can sense what it is that I'm talking about but we go in more deeply there is a dimension in you that transcends the who or what you are as a person, as a self

[Speaker 2] (7:37:29 - 7:38:07)
there is a deeper we could say higher but I prefer deeper doesn't matter what word you use higher could kind of take you out of yourself and you I'm looking for myself up there, my higher self, but it's better to go within and encounter the deeper dimension of yourself so how do we access that, how do we discover that and that's the awakening

[Speaker 1] (7:38:07 - 7:41:38)
that is the awakening what is it that you awaken from not sleep that's the ordinary awakening every morning you awaken and you open your eyes and you realize there is a significant shift from the dream state to the so called awakened state in the morning you suddenly go, oh here I am again but before you were there was a sleep state you were dreaming or perhaps you were in a state of dreamless sleep and then you come out of that and you're suddenly awake and that traditional, spiritual traditions use this to point to another awakening that is similar but much higher than awakening from sleep, the ordinary awakening from sleep that happens to you every morning there is another awakening and that is the awakening out of the ordinary level of consciousness which we could call unconsciousness spiritually speaking, which is complete identification with the mental, emotional conditioning complete identification with every thought that arises, every emotion that arises, it has you in its grip oh my god there is nobody who is there who is able to say oh what a thought the witnessing faculty is not there there is no awareness, no presence you are totally in the grip of the conditioned stream of thinking and emotion and you're like people say people say I think as if they had a choice but

most humans there is not sufficient awareness or zero awareness which is presence zero awareness, so they are not able to step out of their thinking and become aware of their thinking they are they are in it like a raging river that drags you along and they are made unhappy in many cases they are made very unhappy by this thing that drags them along, they think that's me oh god, can't stand anymore can't take it anymore what's going to happen to me tomorrow oh I must think about this can't go to sleep think how am I going to solve this problem of me me and my problems many humans consider their identity for many humans is mostly their problems and they take it to a psychiatrist or a psychotherapist trying to get rid of their problems but on the other hand not wanting to get rid because that's all they know of their identity so every psychotherapist knows you reach a stage when the humans resist they don't want to let go because that's all they know that's their identity, their problems well at least I have my familiar problems I'm not going to step into the unknown at least I know who I am I may be unhappy

[Speaker 2] (7:41:38 - 7:41:53)
but at least I know who I am it's delusion so in ancient Indian, from India in ancient Indian spiritual teachings you have

[Speaker 1] (7:41:53 - 7:42:54)
they differentiate between different states of consciousness and they have they differentiate dreamless sleep this goes back hundreds of years yes dreamless sleep the dream state that's the second state of consciousness the third state is normal wakefulness but even normal wakefulness has different levels to it but let's put that aside normal wakefulness and what they call the fourth state of consciousness which in Sanskrit called Turiya, the fourth that is the awakened state, that is the state where you no longer identify with the stream of, you're not continuously drawn into the stream of thinking and it does not absorb your consciousness continuously there is an ability to be aware

[Speaker 2] (7:42:54 - 7:43:07)
of your emotions and to be aware of your thoughts there's also an ability to step out of the stream of thinking that grows

[Speaker 1] (7:43:07 - 7:43:24)
when that arises you will find that in your life that is the beginning of your awakening, for some people the beginning of their awakening is they suddenly are aware that all the thoughts that go ahead is ultimately not who they are, they're just thoughts

[Speaker 2] (7:43:25 - 7:43:34)
and then who they are is beyond is behind that but it's not easily defined, you can't

[Speaker 1] (7:43:34 - 7:43:38)
really define it at all but I'll try just use as pointers

[Speaker 2] (7:43:40 - 7:43:58)
so you are able to take your consciousness out of the stream of thinking at least to some extent and you're able to be aware

[Speaker 1] (7:43:58 - 7:44:04)
of what your mind is doing you're able to be aware of what your emotions are doing without being

[Speaker 15] (7:44:04 - 7:44:44)
totally identified you're able to step back the moment of stillness is always a good start to anything

[Speaker 1] (7:44:44 - 8:06:53)
that you do any activity so it's important to become comfortable with stillness there are many humans in this world who are made extremely uncomfortable by stillness they can't stand it so we are here at a higher education establishment which means you've already been through lower education and have arrived at higher education and higher education of course in most fields it requires you to sharpen and to constantly use the conceptual mind and that's fine because the conceptual mind is a wonderful tool conceptual mind means the ability to think and to apply thought and so that's a wonderful thing it's been an incredible evolutionary development this evolution of the ability to think but as in anything in this world there's always a downside downside and we can clearly see the downside of the conceptual mind because millions of humans, and not just in higher education millions of humans are not so much using their mind as being at the mercy of their mind so humans say things like I think and that sounds reasonable they don't say things like I beat my heart because the beating of the heart is something that happens to you you're not actually doing it but people think that when they think, they do it but in most cases that's not true, it happens the same way that your heart beats thought happens to you thought suddenly appears in your mind and there it is where did that come from? and so the current state of human consciousness is one in which with the exception of those humans who are already going through a spiritual awakening, an awakening of consciousness and I will come I will talk about what that actually means tonight in case you have some doubts about what I'm talking about when I say awakening of consciousness with the exception of those humans who are already going through the process of a shift in consciousness the millions of others who are still totally identified with the conceptual mind totally identified with thought this continuous stream of thinking that incessantly arises and that they mistake for who they are and that's why people say I think of course especially with certain types of thought like so-called worry you can see very clearly that it happens to you so the mind goes and you cannot stop it you wake up at three in the morning and you start thinking fearful thoughts bad possible bad outcomes and it goes on and on and you're trapped thought arises in you so the beginning of spiritual awakening is to see a thought arise, to see a thought and not be completely identified with it to recognize thought as thought the awakening of consciousness then when we talk about awakening people might say well, I'm awake already we're using awakening in a different sense here as you probably know like when we talk about the Buddha the word Buddha was not anybody's name it was a title later given to this person and the meaning of the root meaning of the word Buddha in Sanskrit is Budd which means awake so the Buddha is somebody who is awake and in other spiritual traditions the term of being awake is an important one so what does that actually mean to be awake when we think we are awake are we not awake here and now in ancient spiritual in Indian spiritual philosophy there's a term a Sanskrit term called Turiya T-U-R- Y-A Turiya Turiya by the way we are at an institute of higher learning so I'm just mentioning some Sanskrit terms Turiya means the force the force they divided human consciousness into four stages one is dreamless sleep which of course you enter every night one is the dream state that's the second state of consciousness then there is the normal state of wakefulness that's the third state of consciousness and then there is the fourth Turiya which is the state of wow this is a state that is beyond the conceptual mind it is a state of being disidentified from the stream of thinking and in modern terminology we may call this awareness or presence and this state is arising already in many of you and that's why you are here so what you experience here tonight may be perhaps a deepening of that state of awareness that's arising if you are not aware, if you are not present in your daily life then you are identified completely with the conceptual mind and your entire sense of identity is a conceptual one, in other words you derive your sense of who you are and this is very important, your sense of who you are is very important because that determines how you relate to this world, it determines how you react to things, how you interact with people your sense of identity is very important so in the absence of awareness or presence your sense of identity your sense of who you are is derived

from the conceptual mind which means you inhabit a conceptual reality which basically is a narrative in your head that tells you who you are and it is derived from your past it's a way in which your mind has been conditioned by your past and these are stories that you tell yourself and basically what you, when you think or talk about your life and you say my life that is the conceptual mind that is the narrative in your head that is derived from the past and it has emotions that go with it and that's fine, there's no doubt that there is a certain reality to that dimension in you you remember your past you remember things that have happened to you, your failures your successes things that people did to you what you did to others you identify with things you incorporate things into that conceptual sense of self you incorporate possessions you incorporate what other people think of you, you take that on board, you incorporate those concepts into your sense of self this is in spiritual terms the egoic sense of self, so the ego, spiritually speaking, the ego is a sense of self that arises when the mind is completely unobserved the unobserved mind brings about the ego, in fact the unobserved mind is the ego, these are mental structures which are energy formations because every thought is an energy formation, energy formations in your head that say that's me, that's me in my life, and there are certain characteristics to this egoic state one characteristic is that it exists in a state of frequent dissatisfaction discontent and there's an underlying an undercurrent of something vital is missing in my life I have not arrived yet there are some people or many people who feel they haven't started to live yet, they're waiting for that moment when it's really going to take off sometimes they have certain expressions that say one day I'm going to make it we don't know what they're going to make but I'm going to get there, the big breakthrough or whatever it is, whatever that may be varies from person to person, it could be to achieve financial success or recognition or better the two together fame, it could be meeting the ideal partner that is going to complete me and my story because right now there's not enough of me I need somebody to complete me and then you start looking for, and sometimes you find, it seems that you found that person that the egoic sense of self was so longing for and now there he or she is and you're ecstatically happy and for a little while the ego feels, ah I've arrived, the same way that would happen if you if you're offered a great job or you've just won the lottery or you get some kind of recognition in this world, not that there's anything wrong with recognition but it's a wonderful thing to achieve things is wonderful to endeavor to achieve things is wonderful, but to look to these things and hope to find a more complete sense of self through it to hope to find that complete sense of fulfillment and a lasting sense of fulfillment that doesn't seem to work because I haven't met anybody for whom that has worked, except for brief periods that these periods are brief, you may, even though many of you are young you may already have experienced that the initial stage of meeting the ideal person does not last very long and at some point you realize that you met the wrong person and it was all a big mistake and at the latest when you start living with somebody you realize that the person that you first met and that you that was so wonderful when you were having dinners together or going for a walk on the beach or wherever that person was looking at you like this and then you start living together and suddenly that person no longer looks at you like this so there's something the ego longs for something to add to, the ego is always in a sense of insufficiency and remember the ego is a concept, ultimately a narrative in your mind a conceptual reality that can never fulfill you, no matter how much you add to it, which does not mean you should not strive to do things in this world but do not expect this world to make you happy, because happiness does not ultimately derive from this world this world is not designed to make you happy it is designed to challenge you and if you believe that this world is designed to make you happy, then you're going to get very angry, because as the years pass in your life, you realize why isn't my life working why is this reality seems to be always throwing obstacles in my path the moment I say oh, it's okay now, this problem has been solved, another one pops up from behind you and so you have these areas of your life the main areas being your physical health your financial situation, your living situation your professional situation, your relationship situation and one of these areas usually develops problems you solve a problem in your financial area and then pops up a relationship problem you solve the relationship problem suddenly you have a health problem it's interesting that you're constantly being challenged and you might have noticed one of the greatest sources of challenges are human beings because humans are incredibly challenging and although humans look to other humans for some ultimate fulfillment through other humans, more often what they find through other humans is that other humans turn out to be a source of suffering and that is because you're stuck in the egoic mind and you have the egoic mind has certain expectations of the world, which includes whatever you experience in this world has certain expectations that the world cannot meet but if you believe that the world should then that is a delusional reality that you will be continuously unhappy the world continues to challenge you but you believe the world is here to make you happy that's a terrible dilemma so it means your entire all your expectations are delusory but you don't know it and that creates an enormous amount of suffering because then every challenge that you encounter in this world and they come one after another every challenge that you encounter in this world you then, because of that underlying expectation that something is wrong when you're being challenged every challenge is then turned into unhappiness there's a big difference between a challenge and unhappiness so when you have delusory expectations of the world, then the world will make you unhappy and not happy but you continue to believe that something has gone fundamentally wrong in your life because life does not leave you alone, you want some peace, you want some ah, you want a sense of I've arrived, this is it and occasionally it comes but it never lasts for very long so that's the dilemma the underlying state of ignorance, not knowing that the function of this world is to challenge you because only by challenging you does it provide the necessary incentive to awaken you and it is that you notice after a while that as you gradually begin to awaken out of the unconsciousness which is the complete identification with the conceptual egoic mind you begin to realize that oh a lot of the unhappiness that you experience, and unhappiness is a generic term that could be many many things even a state of irritation is already unhappiness sadness is unhappiness anger is unhappiness, any state that doesn't feel good is unhappiness any state of unhappiness you begin to realize that a greater part of it is not derived from the situations in your life, and when you realize that, that's the beginning of an awakening let's say 90% of the unhappiness that you encounter is actually produced by your mind and that's an amazing realization there remain 10% unhappiness you might be very somebody, a loved one dies close to you, of course you experience, you weep that is of course normal but if you observe the various forms of unhappiness in your life from the very the mildest forms of unhappiness to the more extreme forms of unhappiness let's say just two brief examples a mild very small little bit of unhappiness arises many times when things happen in daily life and you can't immediately get what you want you're on the phone trying to get talk to your bank but of course there's no human being there and even that is a minor form of unhappiness but it is you get very irritated and you think well this is caused by this dreadful bank that has no longer human beings that you can speak to or you're lining up airports are a great place to observe small forms of unhappiness because often so many things go wrong and you're lining up and this line up is not moving and of course these people are just so inefficient I'm never going to fly with them again and you feel more and more and in any of these situations if you observe okay unhappiness is arising is it really coming from the situation or is it coming from the way in which I speak to myself about the situation does it derive from the mental commentary about the situation or is it the situation and in most cases you actually find and I suggest you start with little small forms of unhappiness you will find that the unhappiness is derived from the narrative is derived from your self talk in the head

[Speaker 2] (8:07:22 - 8:07:25)
now not each one of

[Speaker 1] (8:07:25 - 8:10:44)

you not everyone of you is able to yet step into no thought without some kind of help meditation is designed to help you with that but as you probably know the main thing I recommend is to have some attention in the inner energy field of your body and that keeps thought at bay in a gentle non-violent way not willpower it involves no willpower so it involves just a decision that right now you would prefer to be alert and still and not be thinking and that decision could you could arrive at because you've realized that let's say for the past hour you've been engaged in futile useless thinking that all it did was make you unhappy and suddenly the awareness is there again that had been temporarily lost and you say what's all this futile thinking about it's just making me unhappy it has no point whatsoever and then a decision comes to not to think because you realize there is another dimension in you that is deeper than thinking so you say okay I'd rather be there than up there in the mind and how can I get there because the mind will have its momentum so unless you're already your presence power so to speak is already quite developed you may find it very hard to stop the momentum once it started to stop the momentum of thinking has this enormous pull a gravitational pull behind it and for some if presence power is not yet that developed you can say I need to stop thinking but I can't because it goes on and on and I can't stop it it's like a river you can't get out of this raging river it drags you along just try especially when you're stuck in a train of negative thinking or fearful thinking or angry thinking you don't even want to get out because you're so identified with the stream of thinking that your sense of self is in it and you don't want to lose that sense of self it's a fictitious sense of self but it's a sense of self and so you don't want to stop your train of angry thinking you want more angry thinking and if possible you're looking for more feedback from others to reinforce your angry thinking I need another argument and after you've walked back out of the room one hour argument you walk back into the room because you haven't had enough you need to talk to that person again oh one more thing I want to tell you

[Speaker 17] (8:10:44 - 8:10:44)
so

[Speaker 1] (8:10:50 - 8:34:38)
and even when that person is no longer there you're still thinking and then you need to pick up the phone and tell your friend about it and then you repeat the whole argument you just had and how right you are and how wrong the other person was and then when you hang up the phone it still goes on in your head so you can enormous and at that moment to tell somebody you need to stop thinking would be futile the person doesn't even want to stop thinking because that person is the thinking total identification with thought so there needs to be a realization some awareness needs to be there it's totally pointless to talk to anybody about stopping thinking without having at least some access to awareness maybe not in the moment of enormously empowered thinking and empowered not in a good way but the awareness needs to bear what's going on inside me right now and then at some point you might be able to realize what's happening to you it's happening to you you didn't actually do it, it just happened to you because you're being possessed by your mind and then at some point you realize that there is a choice, you can actually perhaps not when you're in the middle of it, at some point a very strong mind stream subsides, you might get tired of it and then it goes and then finally you go oops and then do I choose to carry on?

Does it make me feel happy? No it doesn't I thought it did because I felt so good to be angry about that but it doesn't make you feel the body doesn't really feel, if you asked your body it would tell you this feels horrible but of course if you're not in touch with your body you don't even know that and then at some moment the choice comes in and so at other moments the choice may come much more quickly because it's just the usual stream of futile in the middle of the night you wake up, the usual stream of futile thinking and then awareness comes in, there's a choice and then a decision comes and that decision is it's just no willpower it's just a decision I'd rather be still than not be thinking and once you know that then you can take your attention into the inner energy field of the body that's your choice instead of giving more attention to your thinking you just take your attention into the inner energy field of the body and suddenly you feel the aliveness that pervades the entire body and so you have taken consciousness away from the mind and put it in here and you can't think that much anymore you can't feel the body and be engaged in a lot of thinking and if you really fully experience the aliveness in the inner body the mind stops and so that is a becomes an anchor for awareness an anchor for presence even if you just even if you cannot feel the entire body it would be enough to just go into your hands with your attention just take consciousness into your hands and feel the aliveness in your hands that alone can take attention away from useless thinking and can you continue to feel because that is part of experiencing the present moment which actually feels quite good it feels good to be alive that's an amazing realization so inner body or even just a part of the body, the totality of the body is best if you can it's not that difficult, you start with one part, hands and can I feel my feet also, yeah I can feel hands and feet can I feel my legs, a little bit less and then the totality of oh okay I got it you might also notice that you are breathing then which is the other way it can be combined with body awareness but breathing is the other way of taking attention away from the mind the most ancient meditation method is breath awareness because breath awareness takes attention away from thinking but keeps you alert and breath happens all the time and breath is virtually formless so it's easier to get in touch with a formless consciousness by placing attention on the formless breath other meditation objects are clearly defined in form you can have an object that you focus on you can have a mental object that you focus on you can have a mantra that you focus on those can work too, but they are more clearly defined in form the breath is a kind of where is the breath, you can't say here it is, it's semi formless or formless, so to place attention on that which can also automatically bring you in touch with the body the in-breath it's so beautiful to have attention on your breath and the out-breath and immediately your mind becomes still so you can either be thinking or can have your attention on your breathing but you can't have both the moment you think you're not aware of your breath anymore and that also really applies to the inner body, to have full attention in the inner body, you can't be thinking, so those two things which are really closely linked breath awareness you can make it into a meditation so you can sit in meditation and then you can observe the in-going and out-going breath you can also observe the gaps between the in-going and out-going breath, you breathe out a brief gap of nothingness and then you start breathing in again a brief gap of neither in nor out and the cycle continues I read somewhere that the Buddha said if you're aware of your breath for one hour, I don't know if they even had hours at the time but if you're aware of your breath for one hour you'll be completely enlightened but if you lose it, you have to start from the beginning again just one thought coming in, okay, start all over okay, I can see one or two of you saying, I'm going to do that this mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive, to be free you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation and I trust you're not waiting for me to start the meditation because then you would have missed that it started already and you would think about meditation in terms of doing something but you don't actually do a meditation as long as you're doing a meditation you're not really meditating or the meditation is not fulfilling its purpose meditation, true meditation is not a technique or a mantra it's about becoming aware of the being dimension that's already the essence of who you are and you don't have to do anything to become aware of the being dimension in fact all you have to do is to stop doing and that's not a doing now to stop doing does not necessarily mean stop external activities but it means not to be focused exclusively on doing so that your entire attention is continuously absorbed by the doing dimension which of course all goes back to thinking thinking is doing and then it becomes some external activity which is fine because that is one level of who you are you have to do things in this world and you have to think and it's good doing and thinking is good but if that's all there is in your life then you're missing the deeper dimension and then doing and thinking is continuous absorption in that dimension of form becomes frustrating leads to anxiety or depression burnout a sense of meaninglessness after a while and all those who are not in touch with the deeper dimension the dimension of being which is the essence of who you are which I sometimes call the essence dimension or your essence identity being able to sense and this is why we are here now being able to sense your essence identity in addition to having a form identity which is always connected with some kind of doing and thinking that is liberating so what you're liberated from is an exclusive identification with who you are on the level of form the body the mind and whatever the mind identifies with in the realm of form mental images that arise that the mind identifies with and says that's me that's my body me my possessions my status in society my work, my function my social function my social and economic position, my class social class or background my knowledge that I have accumulated or any other image mental image which may not necessarily be positive, it could be negative me, the victim me, the one who was never given a chance all these are mental images that you derive your sense of self from and usually it's a certain bundle of images which in every image is also a little story and this bundle of images becomes the self, the me or what you refer to when you say I and yes that is one could say who you are on the level of form but even on that level it's certain stories that you believe in that tell you something about who you are in relation to others and your past and your history your successes, failures, achievements these are perspectives on what happened to you or what you did or failed to do what other people did to you one could have other perspectives you could have the perspective I'm a successful wealthy professional and your ex-wife might have a different story about you call you an obnoxious jerk or you can have a negative story about yourself on this dimension of form one could easily have a story I could tell you a story why I am a very unfortunate human being you may not believe it but I could and it would be very convincing and I could tell you a story why I'm one of the greatest there would be stories and every one of you you could have a story about you that proves that you are justified in being miserable or you could have another story that says you are actually very good but they are all just stories so there will be some stories in your mind but is that who you are and the stories of course refer to other people your reflection in the lives of others and so they don't exist in isolation and they are reinforced by others and so on who am I?

so the question is are you what your mind tells you about yourself on the level of form that's one way of looking at who you are but there is a deeper dimension we've just been talking about form identity and what most humans don't know yet because it's not taught at school whereas it should be one of the most important things it's not one of the most the most important thing taught at school there is in you a deeper dimension there is an essence identity that you can sense even while you play whatever your role is or your function is in the world of form and even while you do things and deal with things and speak to people and even think it is possible to sense in the background of your life your essence identity and what is that?

it's this being aware that there is a presence in you which is not the right way of describing it let's put it differently being aware that you are a presence being aware of the presence that you are I am another way of pointing to it being aware quite simply right now that you are aware that you are I am and that has no content it's just a knowing a sensing of a presence and that is who or what you are the one thing that you cannot doubt is that there is a conscious presence here I am that before there is any content to it that is the light of consciousness and then things appear in the light of consciousness or illuminated by the light of consciousness or the light of consciousness becomes those things thoughts sense perceptions but there would be no sense perceptions without the light of consciousness there would be no thoughts without the light of consciousness in other words there would be no world without you because you are the light of consciousness in which the world appears and that's form

[Speaker 15] (8:34:38 - 8:34:40)
the world of form

[Speaker 1] (8:35:10 - 8:41:31)
I sometimes speak of bringing the transcendent dimension into your life without which your life no matter what you achieve is very limited the transcendent dimension is not an achievement it's more like a discovery because it's already here so it's not something you need to get which would imply future but the discovery of something that's already here it's not something but we have to use words and this is about the most important thing no matter who you are or what your function is in this world this is about the most important thing there is so we are here right now so that you can deepen your access to it or for some of you discover for yourself what it is discover it directly so here today see if you can experience yourself as presence rather than as a person when you experience yourself as presence we could also say the presence within you the presence that you are that is the transcendence of the person and the transcendence of the person and the discovery of yourself as presence is here and now when you become so alert so awake to discover that alertness that wakefulness in you that there's no thinking there are spaces in between thinking of simple alert presence and the opening up of those spaces or that one space is the transcendence of the person because as that space opens up you suddenly realize there's a depth to you that you didn't know before but you have to have enough courage to go there because you have to give up everything that you thought you knew all the thoughts that you identified with so you step into the unknown in which one could almost say you become as nothing and I like that English word, you don't have that in other languages the English word nothing consists of no thing thing meaning form, something that has a particular form and you realize the presence of that which has no form and as you experience yourself as presence in which there's no thought just an alert consciousness you don't know who you are anymore

[Speaker 11] (8:41:33 - 8:41:34)
and that

[Speaker 1] (8:41:34 - 8:48:24)
may require some courage to go there some people go there without any spiritual teaching because they just cannot stand who they are anymore the person and the life that that person creates for them can't take anymore of that suffering the unhappiness the conflict the agony the negativity that they generate I can't take anymore that's a good point to reach too at that moment you have a choice you can commit suicide or preferably step into the unknown and discover that presence that's deeper than the person and then live in and through predominantly in and through that presence so when you look at something the presence is looking not the person how do you know whether the presence is looking at something or the person when you don't interpret mentally what you're looking at that's presence but you're very alert or you listen to something but you don't interpret it, there's just the listening and the presence without which there could be no listening listening and then in little situations in your life you discover that it's much more pleasant to be there as the presence rather than as the person you do perhaps simple routine activities as the presence an alert space space without calling things that happen good or bad anymore because when you call things good or bad it's the person the conceptual self the mind made self that includes other people you don't call other people good or bad anymore places situations whenever you fall into good and bad you are again a person you lose transcendence, transcendence is lost covered up no longer realized it's never really lost but it seems to be completely lost and then you're trying to get rid of what you called bad but that doesn't really work so as long as you call certain people bad you will continue to meet even if you run away or eliminate those people you'll meet more bad people and what you focus on

mentally grows and situations also so if you can encounter people situations, places as a simple presence without taking a position towards them allow everything to be in this moment as it is now that's the ego doesn't like that the ego is the mind made self that lives on judgment if you relinquish judgment the ego disappears of course it doesn't want to disappear but you realize that life becomes a much more pleasant experience without that person continuously judging everything and everybody the unconditioned dimension of consciousness the unconditioned dimension to who you are you the unconditioned you the unconditioned I which has nothing to do with your past or your physical

[Speaker 2] (8:48:25 - 8:48:26)
body

[Speaker 1] (8:48:26 - 8:51:58)
or your person or personality and the unconditioned dimension is not something that you achieve because it's already here it's something you just something to discover here and now achievement if you think in terms of achievement and associated achievement with spiritual awakening enlightenment realization or achieving the unconditioned consciousness if you use the word achievement or if that's the underlying assumption that it is an achievement there's an implication that it's in the past because you need to achieve it sorry there's an implication that it's in the future because you need to achieve it there's something to achieve you're pushing it away out of the present and so you miss it again because you're trying to achieve it and continuously as long as you're trying to achieve that spiritual realization or whatever you want to call it then it's always one step away from you or a hundred steps or a hundred miles or a million miles it doesn't matter whether it's one step or a million miles it's not here that's the underlying assumption and so you cannot discover it because you think it's something to achieve the thought that there's something to achieve in the future prevents you from discovering what's in the present on other levels of your life achievement is fine it's good to achieve certain things to learn something new to bring something into manifestation to create something even to have goals but when it's about finding out the deepest reality of who you are the very foundation for your life your existence then the idea of

[Speaker 2] (8:51:58 - 8:52:00)
achievement is a hindrance

[Speaker 1] (8:52:26 - 8:52:30)
so the unconditioned dimension of consciousness

[Speaker 2] (8:52:32 - 8:52:43)
is to be discovered it is

[Speaker 1] (8:52:48 - 8:53:15)
one could almost say hiding or concealed covered up behind and in between your thoughts behind and even within all

[Speaker 2] (8:53:15 - 8:53:16)
sense perceptions

[Speaker 1] (8:53:28 - 8:53:39)
and so to discover it you need to find that space

[Speaker 2] (8:53:39 - 8:53:43)
in your consciousness in consciousness

[Speaker 1] (8:53:43 - 8:56:02)
where you are not thinking so to stop thinking may not be the best way of pointing

towards it although I might have used that expression a few times to stop thinking again implies that there's some active doing involved it might also make you believe that thinking needs to be forcefully pushed out of your consciousness which is not how it works it's to discover that that space of not thinking is already there between when one thought subsides before the next thought comes there's a space of pure awareness without mind activity you can do it here because this is a live meditation whenever I'm not speaking which is part of the time here be aware that I'm not speaking so we have the gaps between one sentence and another sentence, between one word and another word the moment you become aware of the gap, like now you're not thinking

[Speaker 2] (8:56:09 - 8:56:28)
it's very subtle and very simple, and yet

[Speaker 1] (8:56:28 - 8:56:53)
that's the most important thing in your life to become familiar with that dimension conscious without thought, spacious still but alert not the stillness of moving towards sleep

[Speaker 2] (8:56:54 - 8:56:56)
but alert stillness

[Speaker 1] (8:57:16 - 8:57:24)
so in daily life, become aware of that space, that inner

[Speaker 2] (8:57:24 - 8:57:30)
space of alert stillness as much as you can

[Speaker 1] (8:57:35 - 8:58:33)
initially you may need a crutch so to speak, something that helps you for example alert sense perception especially looking at something like the sky which is spacious without imposing any thought on it but being aware of the one who is looking whatever you look, it might be the sky it could be other things too you look at something at the same time you're aware that you are looking, not when I say you it's not the historical you not the person

[Speaker 2] (8:58:33 - 8:58:36)
but you as the consciousness

[Speaker 1] (8:58:36 - 9:00:24)
so there is a self-awareness behind the sense perception not the personality self the essence self which is formless and because it's formless the Buddha used the expression no self because he associated self with form anything that is has a separate sense of identity that's what Jesus pointed to if nobody understood it at the time or 2000 years afterwards deny thyself there are other translations that would be more suitable look away from the self that what you usually consider yourself look deeper, recognize the ultimate unreality

[Speaker 2] (9:00:25 - 9:00:30)
of the conditioned self

[Speaker 1] (9:00:34 - 9:00:42)
so becoming familiar with awareness of presence, pure awareness pure presence in daily life

[Speaker 2] (9:00:44 - 9:00:46)
of course here especially

[Speaker 1] (9:00:46 - 9:01:06)

becoming familiar with

[Speaker 2] (9:01:07 - 9:01:09)
just being present

[Speaker 1] (9:01:17 - 9:01:28)
as you know we can use your breath awareness to take you also out of thinking become present feel the inner body

[Speaker 2] (9:01:29 - 9:01:31)
also can be

[Speaker 1] (9:01:31 - 9:02:29)
a crutch or a portal into it and then a time comes, maybe now don't wait for it when you can just go step out of thinking without needing anything to help you step out of thinking you can just go okay I'm not thinking now and then you look around wherever you may be whether you are in surroundings that are pleasant, conducive to meditation you could do it there or whether you are in surroundings that are challenging

[Speaker 2] (9:02:29 - 9:02:33)
and you suddenly

[Speaker 1] (9:02:33 - 9:04:04)
discover that the main challenge is not your surroundings or your situation but your thoughts about it and even at that moment you can step out of thinking which implies that you accept that moment completely because the moment you step out of thinking there is nobody there to argue with what is because arguing with what is is thinking, the moment you step out of thinking it implies there is complete alignment with the is-ness of this moment, you are not arguing with it anymore which is totally futile of course which causes suffering unhappiness and suddenly the situation may still be challenging on a practical level but it's no longer challenging on a psychological level in other words it doesn't make you unhappy anymore you are not unhappy not because you pushed unhappiness away suppressed it no it dissolved because it was created and sustained

[Speaker 2] (9:04:04 - 9:04:05)
by thinking

[Speaker 1] (9:04:13 - 9:05:34)
so it's wonderful to discover in challenging situations that you can step out of thinking there too and some people need a challenge to be able to be motivated to take that step out of thinking they can't stand this unhappiness anymore and suddenly realize it's basically my thinking that's making me unhappy and not what's happening and they step out of thinking and for people who go through extreme suffering that's the erosion of the ego that can happen in that way because the ego is identification with thinking when you are not thinking there is no ego and if your life situation is so unpleasant that you can't stand the suffering anymore then the unpleasantness the challenging life situation forces you if you are ready for it forces you out of thinking whether through serious illness

[Speaker 2] (9:05:35 - 9:05:41)
serious loss and so on

[Speaker 1] (9:05:48 - 9:06:00)
but I suggest to you here that you don't wait for life to force you out of thinking but voluntarily step out of thinking it's an evolutionary

[Speaker 2] (9:06:03 - 9:06:15)

leap that step it's you jump out of thinking either because

[Speaker 1] (9:06:15 - 9:06:29)
you can't stand the suffering anymore or if you are advanced enough voluntarily and this is why we are here

[Speaker 2] (9:06:30 - 9:06:31)
what's happening here

[Speaker 1] (9:06:47 - 9:08:08)
and even while you think after a while you can notice that there is not a complete loss of awareness in the background even while you are thinking so at times it's wonderful to have these spaces of no thought and it's vital whether it's 5 seconds or 20 seconds or half a minute doesn't matter that's the evolution of consciousness that's the awakening and gradually you no longer rely on thinking or your sense of identity who you are sense of self which is always a fragile sense of identity

[Speaker 2] (9:08:12 - 9:08:18)
vulnerable always lacking in this or that

[Speaker 1] (9:08:20 - 9:13:33)
never satisfied for long and then sense of self shifts to presence you are essentially the presence awareness no form no past, no future so let's settle into the present moment access the stillness that's already within you even though you might not have realized it even with people who have the most turbulent and chaotic minds there is stillness underneath it and to find that it is vital to find that stillness within because otherwise you are at the mercy of your mind and you are lost in that continuous noise so here it's helpful for you to, as you I'm sure you know already to become aware of the silent spaces between the words rather than just pay attention to the words in fact be more interested so to speak in the silent spaces than the words the silent space on the external level is when I stop speaking so the sound is no longer produced and there is an absence of sound and that's what we call silence maybe not complete silence here because there are some background noises or perhaps you can hear birds and other other noise but when I don't speak there is the absence of noise except for the birds and when you are aware that there is an absence of noise there is a silence which is an external thing simultaneously something happens inside you and that's why it is so wonderful to be aware of external silence you may know this already but whether you've heard this before or not it doesn't matter, the important thing is to

[Speaker 2] (9:13:33 - 9:13:37)
realize it now so

[Speaker 1] (9:13:45 - 9:23:27)
when you pay attention to silence what is it you pay attention to? nothing in particular there is no content to silence when I speak the words, the sounds are the content when I stop speaking there is no content and if you are new to this you might even ask what is it that I pay attention to when I pay attention to silence and the answer is nothing really well, then the question arises how can I pay attention to nothing well you pay attention to that space of no content and then something happens inside you simultaneously you might notice that when you pay attention to just the fact that there is a silence, you can do it when you are alone in a room you can do it in the middle of the night you can do it out in nature, you can do it in a church preferably when it is empty or a temple anywhere where there is some silence you become aware of it don't overlook the silence and don't always look for the noise so what happens inside you when you become aware of that absence of noise thinking subsides and you become still inside the moment you become aware of silence and pay attention to silence you become still inside the ceaseless stream of thinking subsides and what's left is only that alert space you

may not be able to sustain it for very long by yourself, it doesn't matter as long as it's there, if it's only for a few seconds, it's good enough to start with and here perhaps you are able to sustain it perhaps during the entire duration of our meditation in other words let go of thinking without falling asleep and just be here present as a presence conscious presence now the words i speak are so simple that you can't really think about them because there's nothing to figure out so to understand what i'm saying you don't need to add some more thought to it so the best way of being here with me is to embrace the state of thoughtless awareness no need to think and you haven't disappeared the essence of who you are is not only still here the essence of who you are has emerged more fully now than you are still and that essence of who you are is not content based it is inner space formless consciousness what the Buddha called emptiness but every term that you use to talk about it is limiting it's emptiness but there's far more to it than emptiness it's consciousness that makes thinking possible that makes sense perception possible that makes feeling possible that makes it possible for you to be here as a person without consciousness there's no person but usually you're not aware of consciousness you're only aware of what arises in consciousness in other words you're aware of the content but not of the space without which the content could not be so right now as you become still inside you can realize that that stillness is your consciousness before anything arises in it and when I say your consciousness it's not absolutely true but that's okay at first you sense it as your consciousness but ultimately it's not your consciousness

[Speaker 17] (9:23:33 - 9:23:34)
it's just

[Speaker 1] (9:23:34 - 9:27:56)
consciousness the one consciousness and it's not produced by your physical brain although there is clearly a correlation between your physical brain and consciousness but I would suggest to you that the physical brain is more like a channel for consciousness than the producer or the generator of consciousness in the same way that the radio does not generate the music and the words that you hear coming out of the radio and yet the radio is necessary for this music, the words, the sounds to be produced but the radio does not produce them it gives them form channels them in the same way your physical brain is a kind of receiver for consciousness and gives that formless consciousness a particular form so that through that particular form the formless consciousness can appear in this dimension as you and as the world so often when people at night look up at the stars they get a feeling of insignificance and you might think compared to that vastness i am nothing or you might think compared to that vastness i am a microbe on the surface of this planet short-lived fleeting existence on a cosmic scale the human life is just like a spark it goes just gone, and it's gone and many other sparks but they all very short-lived one spark after another

[Speaker 2] (9:27:56 - 9:27:58)
so

[Speaker 1] (9:28:00 - 9:36:17)
but that feeling that sense of insignificance that's not all there is, and that's not the entire truth of it in fact it's not the truth of it at all you may be insignificant as regards physical size or the duration of your life but you are highly significant in the universe because through you consciousness enters this dimension and so through you the universe becomes conscious of itself be yourself in the oracle of Delphi in ancient Greece of course had the inscription know yourself but knowing yourself is the same as being yourself exactly the same at that level there's nothing to know you are present but there's no further knowing about presence, there's nothing you can know about presence, you can only be present so to know yourself at a deeper level means to be present and know yourself as presence, there's another level to knowing yourself, there are two levels one is

knowing your own ego recognizing your ego when it happens, observe it then you know yourself on that level at a deeper level, knowing yourself is being yourself is the universe telling me that I should stop speaking so to know yourself on the more superficial level is self observation and in self observation the ego dissolves and then knowing yourself at a deeper level is being the presence that's all and so both go together because if you're not the presence then there is not enough presence in you to observe the ego in you so they go together, you need the presence because only the presence needs to be there so that you can recognize your own ego in recognizing the ego it dissolves all the patterns become harmless you're no longer possessed by them let's say you look good and you like to rest nicely there's nothing wrong with that but do you derive your entire or large part of your sense of who you are from that which is you're in the grip of ego or are you simply enjoying looking good do it while you can it won't last why not enjoy if you look nice enjoy it and you can superficially even enjoy being seen by others oh okay you can still, there can be a superficial enjoyment in that as long as you're rooted at a deeper level you can still enjoy certain things on the level of form without being completely trapped in them so that they don't no longer constitute the foundation for your sense of self then you know, well okay I look nice now and I'll make the most of it because I know what's going to happen to the physical form what time will do to it also a possession if you have something that you enjoy why not enjoy it but do you derive your sense of who you are from what you have that's a huge trap so you can enjoy an object that is in your possession without the egoic attachment to it, there's a difference between egoic attachment and enjoyment of something and sometimes you may not know whether you have egoic attachment or simple enjoyment until you lose it if then there's a sense of oh it's gone the car that I loved driving in somebody must have taken it and now you will know whether there was an egoic attachment or just enjoyment if there was egoic attachment you suffer there's a lot of upset and anger and wailing or somebody scratched it, somebody when you get back to your car you just said it washed, shiny and you get back to it you scratch and here's the opportunity of finding out what kind of relationship you had with your car because before you might have told yourself I like this car, I love it but there's no ego in it whatsoever and also when there's not an egoic attachment to things you're not going to accumulate unnecessarily possessions that you don't need, that in the egoic state just have a function of satisfying the permanent sense of lack that is the ego, so then you have to go on shopping expeditions every other weekend and then you come home with these shiny bags and for a moment the ego feels elated and here's a new pair of shoes but the satisfaction doesn't last very long and then the sense of lack comes back

[Speaker 17] (9:36:19 - 9:36:20)
I need some

[Speaker 1] (9:36:20 - 9:39:28)
more and in some people it even develops into an addiction to shopping amazing and that's a clear sign if one or two of you still occasionally experience that, it's a clear sign that oh that's the ego and that there's always something lacking in this part of the egoic identity is a continuous sense of not enough on whatever level and some people try to meet it on the shopping level so the difference between appreciating something nice nothing wrong with that because that's part of our surface reality where there are objects and some objects can be very lovely to hold and you never the sense of this belongs to me is less and less and there can be an appreciation without the sense of this is my thing so whatever you have you look after it for a while as the famous watch advert tells you, it's a very expensive watch and they say you never actually own this watch you only look after it for the next generation that's a that's an ad with a slight spiritual change to it but unfortunately you have to pay at least $20,000 to buy that watch so I my confession is that on the whole I don't get attracted too much to buying things, I never know what to buy or to even clothes, it's hard to buy anything it just doesn't work you might have noticed laughter and that's why when I look into a shop window I

sometimes can look at something nice but I never feel the compulsion to actually buy it but as far as objects are concerned one I like mechanical watches so that's my personal thing, watches that tick they go, you wind them up or they are automatic when you move your hand and they go tick tick tick and people have made them, they sat down and meticulously put them together, the watchmaker in the old fashioned way giving it a lot of attention

[Speaker 2] (9:39:29 - 9:39:31)
it's just there, it's just there

[Speaker 1] (9:39:32 - 9:40:28)
and if an object is made with somebody giving it a lot of attention, it doesn't have to be a watch, it can be a little artifact that somebody has spent time making and giving it attention, then once it's finished, it has that sense of quality to it, it's like the consciousness of the maker has become part of the object and really perhaps this is what we mean by real quality that somebody has also, you can do the same with making a meal then also, if you make a meal that has been made by somebody who has given complete attention to the making of it it adds an additional energy field to the meal that you can sense it's done with care and attention

[Speaker 10] (9:40:53 - 9:41:13)
Hi I feel as I become more aware, my pain body becomes more it becomes overactive at times when it does hit me and I'm wondering if there's a way, do we ever dissolve entirely the pain body? Can we ever dissolve it?

[Speaker 1] (9:41:15 - 9:42:36)
Yes, I've quite a few times people have asked that question and it's an important valid question but a more important point is before I answer that question to what extent you still identify with it or get taken over by it because that is where the pain body continuously renews itself to what extent does this old emotion that gets triggered from time to time, to what extent does it truly possess you and rises up into your mind and totally determines while it is active what you think and what you do and how you react to people and situations to what extent does it take you over totally or is there already a gap of awareness where you are able to know that the pain body has become activated and it is not totally using your mind and not totally controlling what you do or say so how does that look in your life?

[Speaker 10] (9:42:36 - 9:43:17)
When I interact with people I feel like I'm more aware of it and able to calm it but I think it's when I'm by myself that it's most penetrating especially after a night or a beautiful day and I go to sleep feeling very at peace and I wake up and it's just there associated with certain kind of mind activity? Not really, just waking up in the morning, lately I wake up and it's boom right there, it's very penetrating I don't know why I would go to sleep one way where do you feel it? In my head very strong force, pressure

[Speaker 1] (9:43:17 - 9:43:23)
yes but not particular kind of thoughts maybe

[Speaker 10] (9:43:23 - 9:43:44)
I guess on some level when I really evaluate it probably just a cycle of lack of success in a certain area of my career or life so it repeats, am I going to start the same day and continue the day as I and not get anywhere with it yes a powerful way to

[Speaker 1] (9:43:46 - 9:47:54)
approach it and ultimately dissolve it is to accept in whatever form the pain body arises accept that's how it is at this moment accept the reality of this moment, in this case it's the inner reality of this moment, it would also apply to the outer

reality of this moment and be with it as the aware space for it, so you step back, the way of putting it is you take a step backwards from it into yourself and so here is the feeling and so you go back within so to speak, not literally of course, you step back and you become the awareness that's around it that's always there but it can be you can lose consciousness of that when a strong phenomenon arises either external or internal, a storm can absorb all your attention but be the space for it, always, and that is the most powerful way to dissolve what's there, rather than even wanting to get rid of it wanting to get rid of it very often strengthens it and produces a problem a new level of problems because then by wanting not to have it and get rid of it you not only have the problem of having that, you have the problem of not being able to achieve to get rid of it and so you can get angry about that or upset about that but you are most powerful when you are able to bring acceptance to whatever arises at this moment and that is a gesture that requires a certain alertness, it is not a passive state, it is in one sense it is passive because it says this is what is and that this gesture seems to be a passive gesture, it seems to be a gesture of allowing passivity but that's not all because without the active principle at the same time which is an uncompromising yes to what is which is not that, it's the sort of presence, this is what is and this is what I accept because this is what is that's the other polarity, the two come together in complete acceptance it's a passive principle of allowing and the active principle of cutting through all the nonsense of the human mind with a sort of presence one could say it's a masculine and feminine male and female combined so you have often you see images of Kwan Yin or Mary, like this is the archetypal female spaciousness, space beautiful, and then of course we could also say this is the female and then this is the male and the two have to come together and that is true acceptance, so it's an uncompromising yes which is the sort of presence and it's the seemingly passive embracing what is practice use that as your spiritual practice then any phenomenon that arises whether external or internal in this case it's internal phenomenon can become fuel for the fire of presence anything that arises so rather than pushing it away use it as fuel

[Speaker 10] (9:47:54 - 9:48:13)
for presence why is it I'm getting that but literally at night feeling that and being okay with whatever I wake up with but then it's just you have to let go of the why

[Speaker 1] (9:48:14 - 9:48:42)
because then you start pursuing it the mind of course does that I analyze it way too much because if you pursue the why that leads you to more whys, it leads you to that why and then you would have to go back to past lifetimes and even that's not enough because maybe it all started the bottom of the sea when before life came out of the sea where you got eaten a million times by other fishes

[Speaker 15] (9:48:45 - 9:48:46)
thank you

[Speaker 13] (9:49:04 - 9:49:26)
one aspect of the insanity of this world is we assume infinite growth on a finite planet we are coming up against the limitations of that assumption how do you suggest we accept the suffering that that will entail thank you

[Speaker 1] (9:49:38 - 9:49:53)
okay that was not the answer that was just sound the structures that are in place

[Speaker 15] (9:49:53 - 9:50:00)
the economic structures now are a reflection of a certain status[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 6:32)
Of consciousness, collective state of consciousness in humans, which is largely the egoic state. The ego needs always more because the ego lives in a state of constant

insufficiency, a constant sense of neediness and lack. It does not feel it has arrived, it needs more.

So that's the unconscious urge. So if that's in the individual human, and if that mind structure is in millions of individuals, humans, then these individual humans create these external structures, organizations, and so on that reflect the original mind setting. So the companies that sit, the economy needs to grow and grow and it cannot, nothing can grow indefinitely.

It's just not everything grows and then it shrinks or dissolves, and then something new arises. That is a constant cycle. And yes, of course, when something that is ego created dissolves, it leads to suffering.

That's inevitable. And it is this very suffering. I don't know if that's a politically correct statement, but I'd say it anyway, because perhaps the political statement is nobody should have to suffer.

It's a travesty that humans suffer. Nobody should die. Death is a travesty.

I'm against it. Of course, I'm against suffering. Yes, humans shouldn't suffer.

It's just, that's not the reality of it. Humans create out of the unconsciousness. They bring about their own suffering, both on a personal level.

And if you amplify that on a collective level. Now, if on a personal level, you, out of the egoic unconsciousness, you embark on certain causes of action that reflect the egoic unconsciousness, you will encounter self-created suffering. You make others suffer around you and they will make you suffer.

You encounter the unconsciousness and the suffering that's generated by unconsciousness as a person. And the same applies to the collective. When the collective no longer works, because it's the very foundation was delusional, then it creates suffering in humans.

But as in the individual, the suffering, or it is created through unconsciousness, the redeeming feature behind suffering is that it's the very suffering that was created by unconsciousness that has the effect potentially of awakening you and transporting you beyond ego. And when that happens on a larger scale, it still applies. So there will be suffering.

Humans will have to suffer. But ultimately, whether it's a million people who are suffering because a huge company has collapsed, it's always comes, there's always, every one out of these million individuals is one individual. There's your suffering.

This one individual is suffering. And in the suffering of this one individual, there is a potential of awakening. But it is very helpful if as many people as possible come into contact with these teachings that show the possibility that is concealed behind suffering.

And that suffering in a certain stage is inevitable as long as there's unconsciousness. And then the suffering itself has the potential of awakening you. Again, coming back to what we talked about earlier, the cross, the image of suffering, the cross is the image of suffering.

The cross is also symbol for the divine. So it's the self-created suffering, both personal level and collective level, that is actually part of the evolutionary progress, the evolution of human consciousness. And one thing that is also good to remember is that we tend to regard every human being as a completely autonomous entity.

That's list, here's the human and here's the rest of the world. Of course, the ego sees itself like that also. Here's me, the most interesting thing in the universe, and there's the rest of the universe.

That's how the ego perceives me against the universe. That's the ego's perception. Of course, it's a misperception.

And every human being is a temporary expression of the one evolving consciousness, a ray of light, so to speak, from the one source. And so every human being is an expression of that. There is the eternal consciousness that is the eternal in you is gradually awakening.

And it awakens in many cases through the dream, an unpleasant dream, but that's a long story. Don't need to go, it may make sense to you just by giving you a little hint. There's a nightmare.

Sometimes my life had to become a nightmare before the awakening happened. If my life had not become a nightmare in my own mind, there would have been no awakening. So I'm very grateful that it became a nightmare because if you're in a nightmare, you don't want to carry on dreaming.

You say, get me out of here. If you have a relatively pleasant dream, if it's up and downs, oh, I might as well stay here. I'm quite comfortable in this dream because here's another good meal waiting for me.

And I'm going to eat this in my dream. And it tastes so good. I may be dreaming, but it tastes great.

And then you're sick for a little while, but then there's something else. So your question is, how do you cope or how do you explain? Hi.

[Speaker 7] (6:35 - 6:52)
How do you accept the suffering that awaits? Accept. And one small piece, I'm old enough that I will escape a lot of it, but I think about my children who will live in a world in which there will be a lot more limits and limitations.

[Speaker 1] (6:52 - 15:57)
Yes, that may well be the case. So how do I help them? You help them by teaching them what acceptance really means by making them more conscious.

And you do that by being conscious yourself. And occasionally you might, they might be open to hearing something that you say to them occasionally. Then they will be ready then and they will be able to use the suffering.

I mean, I've been, the first half of the 20th century was a dreadful nightmare for millions upon millions of humans when the first and second world war happened, genocide happened on an enormous unimaginary scale. Insanity often, you can't even imagine the insanity of it. And you ask, will we have to go through something like this again?

Maybe, maybe yes. There is, teach them how to suffer and by learning how to suffer, to go beyond suffering. That's what you can teach them.

And then, so before you depart from this dimension, they will know and then they are ready. Is it possible to live without having a relationship with yourself? Neither good nor bad.

Is it possible to be so completely yourself that the mind made image of me dissolves? Yes, this is why we're here. This is the essence of our gathering.

The mind made image is connected to thought, to continuous thinking. It's fueled by, perpetuated by, upheld by the continuous thought processes, many of which are about me and myself. And so I have a, through thought, I have a relationship with a thought made entity.

Which sometimes feels quite comfortable and sometimes feels not pleasant, don't want to have to live with that person. And of course it's true. Many people live with a self that is very unpleasant, that creates a lot of trouble, a lot of problems, a lot of suffering, that continuously criticizes them, that continuously blames them, that continuously tells them they're not enough.

And they live with that entity, mind made, conditioned mind movements, conditioned in such a way that they attack you continuously. And that's the self that they have a relationship with. They would never live with a person like that.

You would run out of the room. You couldn't live with a person for more than a day. If your partner, somebody you live with did that to you, what your self image is doing to you through thought, you would have filed for divorce long ago.

But you can't do that with that because it's on the mind. It walks with you. And there you have this complaining and whining and accusing and, oh, get away.

Get away. And a large part of that is because you're identified with thought. There isn't the ability to step back from thought and watch thought, watch that.

And here, the mind made entity, because that self that you have a relationship with is part of the story-based self, the me. That was the self that I had a very unpleasant relationship with for many years. I had a very, extremely painful relationship with myself.

I couldn't live with myself anymore. And so I somehow said, that's it. I can't live with it anymore.

That's it. But that was so total that I no longer sustained, fueled the self through thought. I didn't know anything about it.

It just happened. So the mind made image dissolved. The self that I couldn't live with, that was so heavy, dissolved.

And what was left was simply I. So the I shifted from, whereas before when I said I, I was referring to myself, the unhappy, dense I, the story-based I, that dissolved. And then the true I emerged, had always been there, presence.

I am nothing in particular anymore, a simple sense of presence or beingness. And for the first time I could walk and be without having a relationship with myself. And that there is something so precious in that I or presence, so it's beyond words.

You could say it's like a diamond. It's something extremely, very, very precious. That's why perhaps Buddhism sometimes has the image of a diamond.

But this is not comparative. It's not a sense of that deepest self, not the mind made self, is so precious that it knows itself to be that in a non-dualistic way without needing to compare itself to others. It has nothing to do with a form or any mind form.

So as presence arises, you don't need self-esteem anymore. You don't depend on that anymore because what dissolves is the mind made entity with which you have a relationship. And it's so self-esteem is an intermediate thing that for a little while makes your life more pleasant.

It's fine. And then after a while you see the unsatisfactory nature even of that, because you cannot uphold continuous self-esteem. It's hard work, all these affirmations.

And then things come into your life that tell you the opposite, inevitably, sooner or later. So then suddenly you don't love yourself anymore, nor do you hate yourself because there's no self to love. There's simply the state of this, which is love.

It emanates.

[Speaker 7] (16:17 - 17:52)
My question is divine inspiration or its close cousin has been called divine intuition. I'm an entrepreneur or otherwise known as an inventor. I work a lot with technology and entertainment.

Like to call myself an inventor as it feels more like a hands-on or old school title. Basically, I'm a child in a man's body who gets paid to play with a big kid's toolbox. I'm the first one to say that I've been blessed all of my life as ideas and solutions flow through me like water.

On a few occasions, I've taken one of these ideas all the way to market. Most of the fun part of the adventure is solving the issues that arise during the build. Designing a new concept feels like you're giving birth and is truly the most fun of the process.

But all things that go up can sometimes go down. How can I know that I am the sole owner of the idea or just another blessed person who is around for the spiritual broadcast to all of this idea? I've taught myself to stick with my intuition and allow nothing or nobody to stop the river of answers that are coming to me.

But then I should have slowed down and done more research to see if the idea was already out there and in production from another blessed person in the one. Do you know of a store like Costco or someplace where I can find a false divine message filter that I can use? Or maybe I can buy a second divine intuition card that will tell me when to chill out and slow down.

Okay. Well, chill out now.

[Speaker 1] (17:55 - 18:55)
Thank you. So from what I gather is that you are very creative. Enormous amount of creativity flows through, which is wonderful.

And the second, there's two other things that you seem to not be happy about. The two things you don't seem to be happy about is that there's too much coming through, is that it? There's too, there's a continuous influx and you are questioning whether that isn't truly yours or a new thing, or whether it already exists.

Can you put in your own words briefly, what exactly, what is it, you're a creative person, which is wonderful, but what is it about it that you find difficult? The downside?

[Speaker 7] (18:56 - 19:28)

Yeah. The downside is that everything is coming so easily that I proceed forward with the project, get very deep into the project, try and find other people that are working on a project like it, then only to find out that it wasn't just me getting the message about building this device. It was other people and I heard it in the now, as opposed to it just being delivered to me.

I was there for sort of a spiritual broadcast where a lot of people heard it and we're all working on the same thing at the same time. Very frustrating.

[Speaker 1] (19:29 - 21:55)
That's often the case because nothing is really yours, nothing that comes. It's something that you, to use a modern expression, I don't, not familiar, you don't usually use computer terminology, but you download, so to speak, and when one original idea comes, there are many examples for that in this 20th century and 19th century, very often it comes to several people at the same time. There's basically, there's only one consciousness.

It operates through the humans, through the human form, and so it's not, it's never your idea. It would be limiting and give you a wrong perspective on it and ultimately could even stop the flow if you ever thought that an idea belonged to you. Now, on a practical level, that's fine.

You can go to the patent office or whatever you do. That's fine, but the behind it, the psychological feeling, that's my idea. You took away my idea.

Well, perhaps it came to several people at the same time, and sometimes it's a race. If you're lucky, you get there first, and the others are just a little bit behind in developing it, so that I don't remember, but if I had a better memory, I could give examples. Perhaps you know them from inventions and so on that were done and somebody just got in and somebody was just behind, it was a little bit too late.

That you just have to accept that that is in the nature of the creative manifestation through humans that especially really new things can very often come through more than one channel, which is a human being. They come through more than one channel. It's something you have to accept, but if you can take practical steps to find out when something comes before you start spending a lot of time on developing it and or getting the finances necessary to develop it, if there's any way you can find out through the interconnectedness that we have through the internet and so on, whether somebody is already approaching the final stage of that particular thing already,

[Speaker 7] (21:55 - 22:04)
in which case it would be pointless for you perhaps to pursue it. What most of us do is hide the fact that we're working on it so you don't see until it's already too late and you've got everything invested.

[Speaker 1] (22:04 - 26:18)
That's right. So then all you can do is do what you feel wants to be born through you and enjoy the process at all levels, all stages of the process. And then you may find either you come out first or somebody else does because then something else will come.

If several things come and only one out of several comes to fruition through you, that's fine. It's similar to a business. Spoke, speak occasionally to people who run businesses.

And often I've heard that they try new things. It's not perhaps as creative as you, but they try new things. And often they tell me out of 10 things they try, eight things prove to be failures.

Sometimes nine things prove to be failures. One thing works. And that one thing makes all the difference for the business.

That's right. That's often the case. So you have to accept when it's not, it doesn't reach its final stage because somebody else has gone there before you.

That's just how it is. Then there's no shortage in you of creative input. It'll come again.

And the next time you will be the first. So the main thing is to enjoy the process, not to allow frustration to build up. Do it joyfully.

And there may even be room occasionally for two people creating two things that are very similar, but not absolutely identical. I don't know, just throwing this out. Cetera.

Have fun, to use a somewhat superficial expression, but really means fun to enjoy doing what is the creative process. There's great intensity there. I know that intensity from the writing process.

When I wrote The Power of Now, the first book, occasionally, there was enormous intensity behind the writing process and I enjoyed it enormously. So there was always this. And then occasionally people ask me, what do you do?

I said, I'm writing a book. Yeah, what about? It's about living in the present moment.

And several times I heard, I wouldn't do that if I were you because so many people have written about that already. I said, haven't you read Ram Dass, Be Here Now? And that's old, that's not fashionable anymore anyway.

So present moment is passé. It's terrible. That's a great story.

So if I had listened to them, I would have thought maybe they're right, there are already so many, and there must be so many other people working on the present moment books. I might as well give up because I would have to compete with the 50 other present moment books. So I might as well do something else.

But fortunately, it was so joyful, the intense, the creative process, it wanted and needed to come out. So it wasn't really me saying, I am going to write this book. The book had to be written.

And if it hadn't been me, it would have been, very similar book, would have been somebody else. And if I had not obeyed this impulse to write, then I'm sure I would have fallen ill or died because it was so strong. I would have closed myself and the energy would have destroyed me.

It's like, it gets no outlet. You're not enabling it to manifest through you. And then it goes, gone.

That's right. So enjoy and it will work.

[Speaker 7] (26:19 - 26:22)
Keep planting seeds. Yes. Thank you.

Thank you.

[Speaker 6] (26:55 - 29:14)
First of all, I want to thank you and Eckhart for everything that you've given me and are giving me now. It's so greatly appreciated. I'm not sure if it's a question, but it's some, I need a response from you to clarify.

It's, it deals with a pain body and challenges, overcoming challenges, transcending challenges. And then I heard, I think I heard you say this morning, I heard Eckhart say yesterday, the good news is we don't have to suffer. So five years ago, coming up to five years, my son died.

And I went through, he died suddenly. So it was, and he also was my best friend. So it was, I can't even think about the suffering that I went through at that time.

You know, it's just like, it was, oh, I wailed, I cried. It was, I didn't have, I, for months, I just went there and that suffering, that pain and that broken heart was torn apart. And I remember to the point I was crawling on the ground down, I have a place down by the sea and I was there and he loved that place.

And we spent many wonderful times there together. And I was crawling on the ground and crying. And I heard him say to me, dad, stop that.

And that came to me, a shift happened. It was a change there. Of course, I've transcended it and I've overcome it, not completely, I never will overcome that completely, I don't think.

But what I want clarification from you on is I don't really believe, I don't fully understand that one can transcend, overcome, or have a choice in certain situations concerning that type of suffering. So there's where I'm wondering. When you say we don't have to suffer, we do have a choice.

I'm saying it has not been my experience in that case.

[Speaker 2] (29:17 - 30:13)
You know, as I said earlier, and what Eckhart says is suffering is our greatest teacher. So the suffering is teaching you. And you already know that in order to go beyond that suffering, that that's the evolution of human consciousness through you.

So consciousness is awakening through you. So not to say that, I almost see you and sense that in order to hold on to the memory of your son, that the fear of letting go of the suffering will somehow get you be less connected to your son. Yeah.

And that's not the case, and that's what your son was saying to you, you don't have to.

[Speaker 6] (30:13 - 30:14)
I appreciate that. You don't have to suffer.

[Speaker 2] (30:16 - 30:22)
Because you will be actually more connected to your son without the suffering being there.

[Speaker 6] (30:26 - 30:29)
Yeah, in a way, he tells me that.

[Speaker 2] (30:30 - 30:40)
Yeah. Yeah, he's telling you that. And he's saying to you, Dad, you don't have to suffer.

I'm right here.

[Speaker 6] (30:41 - 30:51)
Well, could you say that again, please? You know what? No, just tell me that I'm going to be more connected with my son by not suffering.

[Speaker 2] (30:52 - 31:46)
Yeah, absolutely. Because the suffering is just getting in the way for that real connection of, not of the form, the form is gone. Every form will pass away, but what is left behind is the essence.

And that true essence lives in you. Your son and you are no different. It's the same essence.

So you're going to be more connected to yourself, which is also your son. And that's the gift through his death that he's leaving you, is that space, that empty space, that void that he's leaving behind for you to go deeper into yourself.

[Speaker 6] (31:46 - 32:10)
Well, you know, it explains, when I go to his grave these days, I don't feel that suffering, I feel peace. So that's a wonderful gift. I know he gives me those gifts, and he's more present in a very positive way, in almost a jovial way, you know?

Because I'm trying to communicate with him. Sometimes he just laughs at my way of making efforts to communicate with him, more or less saying, hmm, I'm right beside you, kind of thing, you know?

[Speaker 2] (32:11 - 32:17)
Yeah, exactly. It's right here, it's all right here.

[Speaker 6] (32:18 - 32:19)
Thank you very much.

[Speaker 2] (32:20 - 38:48)
I have to share this story, this last story, because when Maya, our dog, passed away last September, and a few months before that, my father passed away, and actually, Maya was kind of in that very critical mode, even when my father was passing, and it was like, who's gonna go first? That sort of thing. And it was obvious my father was going first, and I said to my father, you know, Maya's gonna come right after you, soon after.

Will you greet her? And when Maya, she died at home in my arms, and when she was passing away in my arms, I felt my father's presence come. And then I felt them both there, joyful.

It was just like, they were so happy. And it was just like, wow, this is incredible. And it brought such peace and such joy.

There was no, there was just absolutely no fear, nothing. I just felt this incredible sense of joy, and I knew that joy was emanating from the essence of who they were. And it was just absolutely so beautiful, you know?

And they don't, they're still there. I could still feel them. When they passed, and when my father, because my father passed first, I was able to touch into that empty voice, that void of just, I remember being in, you know, getting ready to change, and in my closet, and just like, wow, I miss him, and that emptiness.

And then I went into that emptiness, and suddenly there was this tremendous peace there. And it was just like, wow, that emptiness is God itself. And we are God itself, through the form.

And eventually, all forms, as they always do, leave, and it leaves you with emptiness, which is really your God nature, which is God. You're left with God. And he's saying, you're left with God.

Don't hold onto the suffering anymore, because the suffering and the attachment to the form is keeping you stuck. It's keeping you further away from God. God is all around us, right here, right now, through every living being, nature.

And yet, beyond all of that, beyond the form, it's just here. And the forms pop up. But yet, stillness is here.

God is here. That little space that Eckhart talked about all of a sudden became big. That's how it works.

You take that little space, and you go right into that space, and soon enough, that space just, there is more space in this universe than there are stars in the sky. And how beautiful it is that we get to witness the stars and have the experience of our children, of our parents, even though they can bring us to unconsciousness sometimes. But you know, saying all that, when they're on their deathbed, do you think about that?

Well, sometimes you do, if you're in the grip still, the pain body, but as we begin to awaken, we tap into something else that we begin to see right through their own pain. Because that pain that they feel is no different than our own. And we know if we can transcend the pain within ourselves, so too, when we look then at the other in their pain, we don't see them only as pain, only as their pain body, in other words.

We see the essence of who they are. And the pain body is just a temporary thing. We'll get these gifts, and as we become older and older, the things and the people around us pass on, and we're left with this emptiness.

Yes. And in that emptiness, you can say it's also fullness, because you are one with God. You've merged with the essence of who you are, and you don't feel that emptiness.

You become filled with peace, with love, with joy.

[Speaker 1] (39:04 - 48:04)
Thank you. You realize that even there, one cannot say that you are choosing this. You are the expression of consciousness, and consciousness, one could say, is choosing, and you think you're doing it.

I'm surprised there's nothing on Google about Eckhart and free will, but maybe I haven't said anything about it. So here we go. As you know, it's an eternal ancient philosophical question, and there's never been a definitive answer that everybody would agree with, in that sense.

So is there free will, you mentioned everybody's doing their best because nobody can act beyond their level of consciousness, et cetera, for example. Okay, let's start on one level, and then we go on to the next level. On the level of egoic unconsciousness, where you are a conditioned entity, your mental, emotional makeup, it's totally conditioned by the past, and you are completely identified with the conditioning of your mind, and in that state, spiritually speaking, is the unconscious state, it is obvious that in that state, there is no freedom at all, because you are forced to act out the unconscious conditioning of your mind with which you are completely identified. So most people would probably agree, if you understand that, that on that level, there is no possibility of freedom.

Your actions are determined by your conditioned mind. You are forced to act as you do, because there is no choice, because choice would imply some awareness. So on that level, there's certainly no freedom.

Then, awareness comes in. The human being begins to awaken. Then it appears, I'm not saying it is the case, it appears that then the human, freedom begins to be a possibility, because you can choose to step out of the conditioning of your mind.

You can recognize a conditioned thought, and you're no longer compelled to act it out, because there is an awareness there. You can choose a certain course of action, not from the conditioning of your mind, but from the presence. So you can act, and you have much more freedom than before you could not have.

Freedom comes with awareness. So it's then relative to the unconscious state, there is now freedom to act. But if you look more deeply, even there, even there on that level, you are connected with the totality of consciousness.

You're only an expression of the totality of consciousness. You are not really a separate entity. You are a, like a, who said it, you are, was it Alan Watts who said, you are, in the same way that the wave is something that the ocean is doing, you are something that the whole universe is doing, in the same way.

So the wave is something the ocean is doing, you are something that the universe is doing. So although it appears from a certain, relative to the previous state of unconscious, there is freedom, and relative to that, there is freedom. But then if you look more deeply into that, you realize that even there, one cannot say that you are choosing this, you are the expression of consciousness, and consciousness, one could say, is choosing, and you think you're doing it.

Sometimes people ask me, can you choose to be present? And from one perspective, you can choose to be present. From another perspective, one could say that presence chooses you, it chooses to become present through you, depends how you look at it.

So in ultimate terms, or in relative terms, there is freedom relative to the unconscious state, when you become unconscious. But even there, it's only relative to the unconscious state. Even there, there is not absolute freedom, because you do not exist as an independent entity, you are part of the web of interconnectedness that is the whole universe.

So in that sense, there is no freedom of choice of the individual, because ultimately, there is no individual. Thank you so much, I appreciate it. Just want to add one more thing to that, because you mentioned everybody's doing their best, and so on, and I agreed that nobody can act beyond their level of consciousness.

A question that may arise, though, is responsibility and punishment, because if the criminal or whoever the perpetrator is not responsible, because they are totally in the grip of their conditioning, does that mean then that the perpetrator is not responsible for what they do? And it does seem to be the case, a very unconscious person, in that sense, is not responsible for what they do. Now, does that mean we must not punish this person because he couldn't help it?

Now, that's a difficult point. There is a destiny for human beings. Human beings are meant to move out of the unconscious state, and if they are not moving out of the unconscious state, they create suffering, and they will have to suffer the consequences of their unconsciousness, which eventually awakens them.

So when humans suffer the consequences of their unconsciousness, eventually, this leads to suffering, and then there is a possibility of awakening. So although they may not be conscious of what they do, it doesn't mean that karmic retribution on that level does not operate. Punishment is necessary, and sometimes it could be at the hands of the law or the judicial system.

First of all, other humans need to be protected from them, so they may need to be put away. And although they may not be responsible, but they will have to suffer the consequences of their unconsciousness, and by suffering the consequences of their unconsciousness, there is a possibility of awakening. And so, therefore, I have had contact with quite a few people who are imprisoned, and they have written to me, and they have experienced an awakening in prison.

They suffered the consequences of their unconsciousness, and that led to an awakening. I was actually scheduled to talk in a couple of prisons in California, but I fell ill earlier this year, so I had to be canceled, but hopefully soon, I will be able to talk to prisoners. I have scheduled talks to a women's prison and a man's prison.

[Speaker 12] (48:33 - 48:46)
My heart is pumping. Really hard. Thank you, Edgar, you changed my life dramatically.

Well, thank you for being the vehicle of the higher power.

[Speaker 13] (48:47 - 48:47)
Thank you.

[Speaker 12] (48:50 - 49:38)
This is like very important. It's not important. It's just, nothing's that important.

Do you cry? Because I cry a lot about just good things. Like, when good things are happening, I cry.

When bad things are happening, I don't pay that much attention to them, but I sometimes cry, too, and it's, I mean, I know it's okay, but do you cry? Because I see you as an example of, when I deal with something, I'm always thinking, well, what I could do, you know? I don't know.

I don't know. And you don't have to answer that question, but is it normal to cry? Yes, I do.

Let's see.

[Speaker 1] (49:42 - 53:31)
Well, apart from a movie that I saw recently where I cried, but the other occasion was maybe a year ago or whenever it was, the beauty in nature. Well, that happened to me. It could be anywhere.

It's happened quite a few times. It does happen occasionally when there's intense beauty. And then I was driving along the, in approaching the Big Sur Coastal Highway along the Pacific Ocean in California, and there was the sea, the clouds, the mist, the vegetation, incredible beauty and presence, the aliveness in the energy field.

And as I was driving, I was crying. So beauty is very often that does trigger that. It's a very, very happy crying, a joyful crying.

And then I cried in a movie recently. That happens occasionally. It was about a dog.

And sometimes also I cried when I see human suffering. It could be somebody in the street. Could be even be something on television.

Occasionally it happens. So the, I hadn't actually given it much thought until you asked me. So it's quite lovely.

I enjoy it, crying. It's an, some people cry when they sit here and it touches the emotional field. Although our gathering is not at all emotional.

Because that would be a very different gathering. It would go like, wow, yeah, now let's all jump up and sing. So we, this is not what happens here.

And yet sometimes as presence arises, it can, the emotions can also begin to vibrate with it. And so some people sit here and cry and I know they're quite happy, basically. But they go.

Something resonates, the emotional field is vibrating and perhaps a healing is taking place at that time. Who knows? So it's again, acceptance.

There's another kind of crying, of course, that is more dysfunctional. For example, when you're telling yourself a sad story in your head about your life and you start crying. So you believe in the story that you're telling yourself in your head and how dreadful your life has been.

And you, it's been so awful, it's just. Why, it's just not fair. Life has treated me so badly, it's just not fair.

Wake up. There's just this moment.

[Speaker 12] (53:32 - 53:52)
Don't tell yourself a story and believe in it. So when do you cry? I cry when I watch a movie, when I think about my nieces right now, like I'm not there with them, when I think about my family right now.

I'm just so happy, you know?

[Speaker 1] (54:12 - 1:09:54)
Then you can have mental viruses of a personal nature. You have a certain various thoughts that repeat themselves again and again, and then become so deeply lodged in your mind that like a parasite that gets its teeth into you and it won't let go. And they infect other thoughts around them.

Identifying with a political movement or a religion can be also something that you add to the self-image and you have self-assertion. These days, as we know, there's a talk, a lot of extremism, extremism, religious extremism. You have especially young men, they say they become radicalized and then they do totally evil and crazy things.

Those are extreme forms of ego, but the mechanism behind it is the same, or a more extreme manifestation. The mechanism behind it is the same as normal egos, which are not as extreme. What is the mechanism behind it?

It's a search for a sense of identity. And many humans have a search of identity where there's something huge missing. So they're looking for a deep identity through strengthening their ego.

They don't know it, they're seeking more self-assertion. And if there's a young man living in the West, perhaps even was born in the West, parents came from maybe a Muslim country, and this man doesn't like the society he lives in. Maybe he can even see the emptiness of the society or he doesn't participate fully, he's not given his due ego.

The ego seeks something to identify with, it wants to assert itself. And then it uses religion as an ideology and that becomes, you adopt certain belief system, which are bundles of thoughts, and completely identify with that. It gives you your sense of self.

And you have an enormously strong sense, you can now be so special that the entire society you live in, except those who share your particular belief system is regarded as evil. So you are trapped, and this is not uncommon, it's not only in that area, it can, entire nations are sometimes go through a wave of deep collective unconsciousness, when almost every human being in that nation is infected by a mental virus that takes possession of your entire mind. It happened, for example, in, well, or certain countries like National Socialism in Germany, Soviet Communism, Mao Zedong, the Cultural Revolution.

It's like every human being becomes, is possessed by the same mental virus, which is thought structures that spread in your mind and take possession of almost 100% of all your mental content, very much like a virus on a physical level. I mean, you've all experienced not being able to get a certain tune out of your head, a musical tune, which is a very minor variation of a mental virus that won't go away. And some of you may also have, but of course, after a while, it does go away, and that's a harmless thing.

But then you can have mental viruses of a personal nature. You have a certain, various thoughts that repeat themselves again and again, and then become so deeply lodged in your mind that, like a parasite that gets its teeth into you and won't let go, and they infect other thoughts around them. And so some people go through life with preconceived ideas of what the world is like and what people are like.

And these are very, very structured belief systems, and they interpret reality through the screen of their structured belief system, which may still be a normal thing. You might just have very strong political views or very strong religious views, not religion, the spiritual dimension of religion. Religion without the spiritual dimension is an ideology.

So that can be still considered normal, and then you go take it a little bit further, and then you can see that it's actually a form of insanity. And so it's, for example, normal to have... I had a, I have a relative who I've known since I was 10, since my teenage, early teenage years, and this relative was always very critical of people and very highly critical, and always, even when I was a teenager, I always thought there was always some hidden intention that he or she, I wouldn't want to define, was looking for when after going to some visiting somebody's house, he said this, what did he mean by that? What was his intention?

He had some evil intention, and then it's always looking for, people wanting something from you, wanting something to do to you, wanting to, and that was strange. And this person later developed, this grew and grew, this mental virus, and later had to go to a mental home with paranoid schizophrenia, and which is basically an extreme mental virus that infects your mind that says that the world is full of people whose main function is to destroy you or to follow you or to do something to you, and you see these enemies everywhere. And it is also a way of unconscious self-assertion because you are so important that all these people are after you.

So you make yourself really very special, but it's an unconscious process. So many normal egoic traits, when you take them to amplify them a little, then you can actually see it's a form of mental illness. So thought can be very much seen as little entities.

Thoughts are energetic entities. Every thought is an energetic entity, and some thoughts are short-lived. Other thoughts get lodged in your mind and to take up their abode in your mind, and you can't get rid of them, and they become who you think you are.

That's living through thought. And that's why what the spiritual path is about is to not one by one take these thoughts out or figure out where they came from, but just pay attention to that which is beyond thought, first as little gaps, and then as being aware that there is a dimension of stillness in you. And that's the only place where true sanity arises.

And it's the only place where then, once you have that connectedness, then the mind is no longer insane. Then the mind can be a wonderful and helpful tool. And then you no longer seek yourself in the mind.

You no longer have an identity that's based on a narrative in your mind or a mental image. And then you can use Facebook without becoming more unconscious through it. And you can actually present a true version of yourself on Facebook.

It doesn't have to be the happy selfies necessarily. Anymore, although when you are happy, that's fine. Now, from self-assertion to self-transcendence, that is the way humans go.

Self-transcendence is the awakening of consciousness. And self-transcendence is why we are here. We could, depending on how you use language, you could say we are transcending the self.

This would be a Buddhist terminology, transcending yourself. And the Buddha said there is no self, but that's only one way of putting it. You could say that the formless is the essence of who you are.

Consciousness is the essence of who you are. So that is the self. But it's probably Buddha was very wise not to make it into a mental concept.

His teaching mainly was through stating things in negative terms, not negative in a conventional sense, but denying. So the Buddha never talked about God because he didn't want you to believe in a mental concept of God. He didn't say there is no God, and he didn't say there is a God.

When he was asked about God, he kept noble silence. And that was the answer, of course. But not many people got it.

Is there a God? So there were, and then one or two people got it, in the traditional stories that says he got it. And at that moment, when the Buddha kept noble silence, he became enlightened, the listener.

And the others didn't get it. And then I imagine, and I'm sure it happened, after a few minutes, another monk said, excuse me, did you hear my question? This is a very profound answer, to keep noble silence when you ask, does God exist?

Which is very similar to the wonderful meditation that we're going to do now. It'll only take a few minutes. It's very similar to the meditation, who am I?

Because that also, when you ask yourself who am I, consciousness awakening, at first it's painful. And then, it says, what am I doing here? Not another incarnation.

When you ask yourself, who am I? The important thing is to realize that you won't be able to answer that question. So anything the mind comes up with is wrong, no matter what you say.

And even if you say, who am I? And even if you say, ah, I've got it, I'm consciousness. Wrong, because it's a concept.

Who you are is not believing in a concept. It's just a concept. So who am I?

This was recommended by Ramana Maharshi and other spiritual sages as a profound meditation. Who am I? That question, you can ask it yourself with eyes open or eyes closed.

And then wait for the answer, which is not going to come as an actual answer that you could identify. It's not going to come as a thought or a word or anything you can talk about or think. The answer is the space after the question.

Who am I? You become more interested in that little space around it than in the condition. So you give more attention to that, the spaciousness that comes with the acceptance of what is, and you can sense that space a bit more.

[Speaker 10] (1:10:00 - 1:10:45)
It feels sometimes that the yearning for getting back to the source is very undeniable and very strong. But in equal strength is the resistance, which seems to me to be almost, it almost sort of manifests as a physical energy, which I feel is a sense of sorrow and loss, which has nothing to do with this lifetime and nothing that I can understand or put my finger on, but it seems to get stronger, not any less strong. And it sort of seems to be almost a sense that if one drops into that space, there's something almost unbearable has to be born.

[Speaker 1] (1:10:46 - 1:10:54)
Can you just talk a little bit more about how you experience the resistance? How does it manifest?

[Speaker 10] (1:10:57 - 1:11:23)
Sometimes it's almost a physical, I can feel it as a physical resistance in the body. I can almost feel like there's a physical energy that I can't get underneath. And I guess, even in meditation, when it feels like maybe the mind is stilling a bit, it just doesn't go there.

It's just avoiding something.

[Speaker 1] (1:11:24 - 1:11:41)
Are you able to step out of thinking when you choose to, like taking your attention, as we said earlier, to take a conscious breath or place your attention in something else? In the body, you're able to do that?

[Speaker 10] (1:11:41 - 1:12:01)
I can do that in moments of Qigong or meditation, but I- In everyday life? Yeah, moments, but not as much as I'd like. But I think that has almost got worse.

I think the games that the mind is playing have almost got worse as this energy's got stronger of late.

[Speaker 1] (1:12:01 - 1:12:16)
Yes. And the yearning, how do you experience that? For stillness or peace?

[Speaker 10] (1:12:20 - 1:12:28)
Both of those, but also a sense of sorrow, strangely. If that makes sense.

[Speaker 1] (1:12:28 - 2:23:05)
Yes, well, I'm trying to feel myself into your reality as it is, as the moment. And a very, a powerful transformation can happen when you, and this is one way of approaching it, which may be helpful to you, is not to desire anything within you to be different from the way it is now. So that would mean complete acceptance of whatever it is that you experience at any given moment.

At the moment, there are these energies in you, but you don't really want them. So there's a conflict between what you want and what you have. Now, if you approach it in a different way, instead of having what you want, perhaps you want stillness, you want peace.

You want that deeper sense of aliveness. Perhaps that's the yearning. You want to be fully yourself.

And what you have is you perhaps, you feel contraction in the body. You feel excessive mind activity. You feel an almost semi-physical energy field blocking you.

So you have the two. You have what you want and you have what you have. Now, as a practice, I would suggest, and next time we meet, you can tell me how it went.

I suggest that you do away with a conflict between what you have and what you want, and you want what you have instead, which means whatever your inner reality or outer reality, but we're talking mainly about inner now. Whatever your inner reality is right now, as it's always now, of course, it's not a big thing. It's only the reality now.

Accept it totally. This is what it is. And so bring that.

Acceptance is a strange thing when you really can say, well, that's what it is. You might as well accept it because it is a reality of this moment. So if you bring that acceptance, no matter, even if it feels not pleasant, if it might be a contraction in the body or my mind is just so active, okay, let my mind be active.

Bring the allowing to it. And that strange thing happens, you may find, when you do it, you already have a little bit of space around the condition that you dislike, but now you accept. And so you accept the condition that you previously disliked, but now you say, well, that's what it is.

So I allow it to be. And what you then can sense if you're inside of you, a little bit of space around the condition, to not much at first, just a little bit. So let's say you have a contraction here and say, that's what it is.

And this acceptance brings space. So here's a contraction, then here you have a little bit of, that's what it is. And then it may grow a little bit, the space around it.

And then you find you become more interested in that little space around it than in the condition. So you give more attention to that, the spaciousness that around it comes with the acceptance of what is, and you can sense that space a bit more. And then it's, what I'm saying is not literally true, but I'm just saying it grows.

It seems to grow, and then there's a bit more, the condition is still the same, but it has receded somewhat. It's no longer the center of your attention. You're more aware of the space.

You become the space for it. Don't argue with me because you need to try it first. Thank you.

But you can argue next time we meet, if it didn't work, we'll talk again. Because any arguing would be the mind saying, no, no, it's not going to work. How do I deal with being impatient with myself?

Because after having a spiritually unconscious episode, I realized that with all the tools you have given us, I should know better by now. Interesting uses the word tools, so and I use the word key. Well, a spiritually unconscious episode, and then when it's over, you suddenly realize, oh, I forgot to apply the tool, or let's use the word key again.

I left the key in my pocket again. Well, at least you know it now that you left the key. And at that moment, you've taken the key out because you've taken the key of awareness out of your pocket, that suddenly you realize you had lost it.

You had lost the awareness, or not lost it, but you didn't remember that you had the key in your pocket. And then it's over this, oh, oh yeah, that's this. And then again, you lose the key when the thought arises, you should know better by now, shouldn't you?

What's the point? You can't do it, you see? Even after years, you can't do it.

What's the point? These are the thoughts that go through the head, which means the key is left in your pocket again. Then you take it out again and realize, okay, at least I'm present now.

Whoever you are judging through your mind is a fiction anyway. It's unconscious pattern that has arisen in you and you make it into some kind of me identity. It's a fiction.

Of course, that only happens when you again put the key back in your pocket. So you continue to apply the key and then it's okay, at least now, there's awareness now, that's enough. It's always enough for now.

All you ever need to be responsible for is the present moment and that's all you need. And then you don't make it into another problem. The fact that you had lost it or not used it doesn't become a problem, which is another episode of unawareness if you make a problem out of it.

There's no, your identity is not there. Your identity is present and it's present now. Your identity, you are here awake now.

And then next time, perhaps it happens again. And then real progress is there when in the middle of it, you realize you lost it in an old mind reaction and negative reaction. And then you can choose to take the key out of your pocket and apply it, open the door to awareness and the shift happens and you're no longer reactive.

So I recommend that you are very alert to see what kind of energy you're putting out into the world. Is it tinged with negativity? In which case you are mind identified, ego identified.

And once you notice it, then you can apply the key. So all self-condemnation is not helpful. It's part of the unconscious patterns.

Impatient with yourself. We are dealing with collective. These are not personal problems of yours.

We are dealing with collective mind patterns that have been around for thousands of years that each individual inherits. So it is a monumental thing that's happening now that more and more humans are able to evolve beyond the inherited collective mind patterns, but they're still very strong. They have an enormous pull still.

It would be silly to deny that. The pull is still very strong. So it's not a personal problem of yours.

It's an evolutionary transition, misperceived as a personal problem. When these thoughts come, instead of being drawn into those clouds, and then the clouds get bigger and bigger, you remain the sky and allow the clouds to pass and then to pass away. Well, that's a good question.

What do I want? I'm 34 years old and have a good job, a good home. I'm married to a wonderful man.

I have bad anxiety, and I have no idea what I want from my life. I have low self-esteem and get defensive easily. I'm rarely content or grateful.

My thinking is so negative. I need approval from others. This doesn't seem to be a question, but...

But maybe there's a question hiding in there. Now, first I'd like to congratulate the questioner on her, yes, her, probably, her self-knowledge, because the questioner is aware that she's anxious. Not everybody who is anxious know that they are anxious.

They're just taken over by anxiety and it's virtually their normal state. And if you ask them, are you anxious? They say, no, I'm not anxious.

I have no idea what I want from my life. It looks like the beginning of the place of not knowing, which is good. I have low self-esteem.

Well, but you have the awareness to know that you have low self-esteem and I get defensive easily. Again, yes, but you don't just get defensive. You know that you get defensive.

The question is, do you know in the moment of getting defensive that you are defensive or do you know it afterwards? You can look into that. I'm rarely content or grateful.

That's interesting. That's very good self-observation too. I'm not content at this moment.

I'm not content. My thinking is so negative. Another good piece of knowledge.

My thinking is negative at this moment. What are the thoughts that are going through my head? So if you apply the awareness that is already there hiding behind all these things, if you apply the awareness to the present moment when these things arise, defensiveness.

What is low self-esteem? It's something that you tell yourself about yourself in your mind. It's certain repetitive thoughts that the voice in the head tells you.

Those are, this is low self-esteem. There might be certain emotions that go with it. Emotions that are, ooh, ooh, ooh.

But really, the basis for low self-esteem is something you tell yourself about your low worth. It's thoughts. Now, the questioner already knows that she has low self-esteem.

And if she can know that she has low self-esteem in the moment of the low self-esteem arising as thoughts, she can recognize them as thoughts and not necessarily true thoughts arising, repetitive thoughts that condition thoughts, perhaps this low self-esteem might have started in childhood. It often happens to people whose parents are very critical or parents tell them you're never good enough. This can be one reason.

So it might have started there. It's a conditioned way of thinking, conditioned thoughts. Now, the awareness that's already there in the questioner would need to be there in the moment of those things arising.

And then you can see when these thoughts arise, you recognize them as thoughts that are arising and you're no longer completely trapped in what these thoughts are saying. In other words, to use an analogy that we used not long ago, your sense of being is not in the thought anymore. It's in the awareness of the thought.

In other words, if you look at the sky, the vast sky, daytime, at this time, let's look at a daytime sky, the vastness of that huge expansiveness of the sky is awareness in this analogy and clouds that come are thoughts. So when the clouds come, why can I never do anything right? Why are other people more successful than me?

Or I'm no good at this? When these thoughts come, instead of being drawn into those clouds and then the clouds get bigger and bigger, you remain the sky and allow the clouds to pass and then to pass away. And that means you begin to no longer, you're no longer feeding conditioned thinking and you are separating who you are.

You're taking your identity out of thinking. Thinking for a while has still a momentum. Old patterns will come again and again, but you're no longer renewing them.

You're no longer feeding them by, how do you feed them? By identifying with every thought that comes. There's a self in it.

So you separate, you are the awareness behind the thought. Same applies to any kind of negative thinking. You recognize it as automatic.

It arises and it's a thought. So, but you are the awareness that knows that this is a negative thought pattern. And if that can grow, because it's already there to some extent, if that grows, which means deepens, then those conditioned patterns will diminish.

They get transmuted. So another one point here mentioned, I get defensive easily. Defensive can happen, happens very, very quickly in human interactions.

The defensiveness can come up so quickly. It's an automatic pattern. And you may only know it afterwards.

Oh, that was defensiveness again. And defensiveness is, of course, these are all ego, ways of the ego to protect itself. Ego being the mind made self.

Defensiveness will just come up with any lie just to keep its ego identity intact. So it'll come up with anything just to keep, it's automatic. So you can, of course, in miracles has a lovely saying, which is whenever you become defensive about anything, know that you have identified with an illusion.

You have identified yourself with an illusion. That's interesting. Is that true?

Let's say you say that the distance from here to the moon is 300, I think in kilometers is like 350,000 or so kilometers. And that the light takes just over one second to travel from the moon to the earth. And you know that for a fact.

Well, I know that. I haven't verified it myself, but it seems to be true. And somebody else says, no, that's completely untrue.

It actually takes one minute. It does. Now this is just a difference of opinion or viewpoint.

And of course, you know very well that the other person is wrong. Now, if you say, no, that's not right. Is that defensiveness?

Well, it depends how you say it. The question is, are you identified with your mind, which has this position, which happens to be true, but are you identified with that mental position? In other words, do you derive your sense of self from thought?

If you identified with, you will get angry and defensive about the other person who is so completely wrong. And you might say things like, well, if you know that person well, you always doubt me. Why do you always doubt me?

You never believe what I say, do you? That's called defensiveness. And that's the ego trying to protect itself.

And then the cause and miracle thing applies. Know that when you become defensive about anything, know that you've identified with yourself with an illusion. The illusion is not that it takes one second for the light from the moon to travel to the earth.

That's not what the illusion is. The illusion is that you identified with a thought, with a mind pattern. And so you are strengthening an illusory identity by identifying, by strengthening the mental position of me, my mental position that's unconscious.

So this is how just a difference of opinion can degenerate into huge conflict. Just a small difference of opinion because the ego becomes defensive. So that requires alertness on your part so that you know when it arises.

Oh, so whenever you become defensive. So without ego, the same conversation would go, no, it takes one minute. I know that for a fact.

The other person says, it takes one second. The other takes a minute. Well, no, you're wrong.

It takes one second. Okay, well, we leave it at that then. I think it's a second and you think it's a minute.

End of the story. That would be without defensiveness or ego. Okay, and then you can go on where everybody goes on the internet and that would definitely solve it.

And in extreme forms of egoic unconsciousness, you will say what it says in Wikipedia is wrong. It's wrong. They didn't get it right.

That may bring me to another question. Oh, just to end on this question. The key is your awareness so that that deepens then all those patterns that you mentioned will weaken.

And there's already a considerable amount of awareness in this person, the questioner. The awareness, of course, isn't the person, but it's deeper than the person. The thing is to apply the awareness to the present moment when things arise, not in some abstract way.

I am a defensive person. Will I ever become a person who is not negative? I can't get rid of my negative patterns.

I'm so negative. So it doesn't matter. This moment is what matters.

So just apply your awareness to this moment. You can't change things into mental constructs. How can I change myself?

I don't want to be that kind of a person anymore. Look at it. This moment, this is where you apply presence.

I sometimes call it, I haven't used that expression in a while, the sword of presence that cuts through time and you go, and then you apply it to this. Usually you can recognize that it is an ideology by the fact that they are not peaceful human beings. And by the fact that they have enemies.

The question is specifically about focusing on Christian religion, but the answer, I suppose, I don't know what the answer is going to be, but it's going to be probably also referred to other religions or religions in general. Is religion necessary? It depends who you are on the level of the form.

For some people, it can be necessary or helpful for two reasons. It can provide the more superficial reason. It can give your life a certain amount of structure, which for some people can be helpful.

Regular practice gives you a feeling of comfort. Some people have too little structure in their lives and others have too much already. If you have too little structure in your life, then religion can provide that.

More importantly, on another level, religion can either obscure the spiritual dimension within yourself, and often it does, or if used rightly, if approached rightly, if understood on a deeper level, it can help you access and stay in connectedness with that deeper level of yourself or the transcendent dimension of consciousness. Whether or not you need it, only you can know. Whether you find it either helpful or a hindrance, it can be either, depends on you as a person, your past, what function it had in your past, and so on.

It is a hindrance if religion becomes an ideology. Then it operates only on the level of the mind and is very similar to any other kind of ideology that you may believe in, whether it's communism as an ideology or any political theory or anything that explains the universe. It could be a metaphysical system that you completely believe in, philosophical system, and so on.

So an ideology is something that takes possession of your mind and exerts a controlling function, and it can influence almost your entire mental functioning if it becomes something of overwhelming power in your mind. It's a little thought that grows into a huge thing in your mind, and the tentacles reach into every aspect of your mind, and there are religious people like that. Usually you can recognize that it is an ideology by the fact that they are not peaceful human beings, and by the fact that they have enemies, enemies, either even within their own religion or another religion.

Anybody who does not agree with their ideology becomes an enemy. In the same way, the people who were not nowadays that many were deeply believing in communism, which was a wonderful idea to start with, of course. The road to hell is paved with good intentions.

It was a beautiful idea of equality, everybody the same, that is wonderful. No personal possessions, sounds wonderful, too. And the only mistake was it was imposed from outside by people who themselves have not gone beyond the egoic state of consciousness.

They just played it in their minds. That's a good idea. And then it was imposed on other people who also were not in that state of consciousness.

But most importantly, those who imposed the idea on others, forced them to live it out, the ideal became contaminated with ego. So when these people came to power, their egos became inflated to an enormous degree, almost to absurdity, and without realizing it, they reenacted the same evils, in some cases worse than those that they were fighting against. Like in Russia, they saw the injustices associated with the Tsar regime and so on.

And they truly saw that, and they truly wanted to remove that, and that seemed a good thing. But they had overlooked their own state of consciousness. And the great challenge is for people, power, you can have that very meek person that seems, oh, this is what a lovely person.

He seems to have no ego, or very little. He's so, give that person power. Then the latent ego, which was there in a, let's say a person's very poor, has no power at all.

Give that poor person power, then the latent ego will no longer be latent. It will suddenly come to life. And that happens, is repeated, and has been repeated many, many times in countries where frequently the government is overthrown.

And then the previous rulers are accused of corruption. And the new people who overthrow the previous, they truly believe that now they have a just, more just society is going to arrive, because they, again, they don't know themselves. They have not observed themselves.

And the moment they achieve power, they are seduced by that, and their ego suddenly grows. And they reenact the same thing again. So ideology, religion can turn into, and often does turn into ideology.

You can recognize it, as I said, by the fact that these people are not peaceful. They will condemn other people, or other groups of people as evil. They may verbally, even physically, attack others.

And if it's not that extreme, it might be that they simply are extremely intolerant towards anybody who does not share their belief system, their ideology. And so that's a clear sign that that kind of religion is a hindrance to the spiritual dimension, to knowing who you are, to being a peaceful human being. It's in the service of the ego.

It's an egoic creation. The ego can take scriptures that are beautiful and point to the truth, and can corrupt them, completely misread and misinterpret them. And then they're used in the service of the ego.

So that's how religion can become a huge hindrance. But religion can also become an opening into the spiritual dimension. So a religious practice, or a religious reading, a reading of a sacred text, an ancient spiritual text, can be a wonderful thing.

The questioner mentions Jesus, following in the steps of Jesus, is that, or is only presence important? When you use it in a deeper sense, following in the steps of Jesus means becoming present. How?

First of all, Jesus taught presence in quite a few of his utterances, starting from the flower, that you said you should really look at a flower and see how it lives in the present moment without worry and anxiety. He taught egolessness, deny thyself, which means recognize the unreality of yourself. He spoke of the I am as the foundation, and which is misinterpreted.

We have, let's just for a moment, in Christianity, we have a historical person, probably, Jesus, and we have Christ. Now, Christ was not his actual name. It was a title given later.

And that's already mentioned in the more enlightened parts of the New Testament, that Christ is a dimension of consciousness. And I believe he's saying, Paul, who says, I must diminish and Christ in me must grow. This is a mystical, deeper interpretation of Jesus, who was an historical person who realized his kinship with the transcendent dimension, the divine, whatever you want to call it.

He realized his connectedness, his kinship, his oneness with that. And as he realized that, he became, the transcendent dimension emerged in him, as it does in you. It emerged in him, and then the historical person, Jesus, became the Christ.

Therefore, we have in mystical Christianity, the term Christ consciousness, which is the transcendent consciousness that emerges, where before there was only the person. And we have in certain Buddhist traditions, the term Buddha nature, that says that every human being and everything that's alive has at the core of their being is Buddha nature or the Buddha, as the reality of who you are. That's the teaching in some Buddhist traditions.

And it's a beautiful teaching, that your true nature is Buddha nature. And you just have to realize your true nature is Buddha nature. Isn't that what we've been talking about?

It's just a different name attached to it. In mystical Christianity, it's Christ consciousness. And so Jesus was a precursor who showed the way to Christ consciousness.

And if we're focusing on the historical figure of Jesus and realizing that he embodies both the person and the Christ can become a vehicle for you, if that is suitable for you. And if you still feel drawn to Christianity or any other religion, that is the way for you to go deepen that rather than think you have to move into something else. But if that doesn't work for you, then fine.

Then walk away and find Christ consciousness somewhere else. And some people don't need any religious structure anymore. This is for the first time, perhaps in the evolution of humanity, there's spirituality that exists outside of formalized religions.

And that's an amazing thing. So many of you may not need the formalized religion anymore and others may need it. And that is a beautiful thing.

You can deepen the way in which you live, practice and understand your religion so that it becomes an opening into the transcendent dimension within yourself. If you are a Christian and want to deepen certain readings, I would highly recommend there were certain teachers who expressed the truth of Christianity from a deeper level than the conventional church Christianity. The most, in the past, Meister Eckhart, who lived in the early middle ages.

The most wonderful, his writings are superb and in fantastic depth to them. And he uses Christianity to take you very, very deep into the core of it all. The core of all things into yourself.

The desired outcome. If the desired outcome occupies a place in your mind that's overwhelming or you desperately need to go to arrive at that place, then in the meantime, all the things that you do are then simply a means to an end. Perhaps we can start with a few, before we go on to questions, a few additional remarks about the important subject of being and doing.

Being, that's what we started with in the last session. And finding a balance. And before finding a balance, being able to enter to access the being dimension.

That's already a good start. And then at first, what tends to happen, but also not invariably, is you enter the being dimension or access it when you're in a place that is conducive to a stillness or a serenity. Or here, a protected space.

Or perhaps at home in your room or here in your room or in nature. And at first, the being dimension is associated with cessation of doing. That's how you first realize it.

It's when you're not doing anything and you can just be, consciously be, which implies a, no matter how brief, says a cessation of the primary doing, which is the thinking doing. Without a, no matter, a brief cessation in the stream of thinking, it's hard to find the being dimension. But later on, as you become consciously rooted in the being dimension, thinking and being can come together.

They are not irreconcilable. And in fact, that is one of your tasks, is to, when you do think, not to be totally identified with a stream of thinking. In other words, there's some attention in the background.

Some, there's an awareness, a field of, or a space of awareness in the background, even while you're engaged in thinking, as it is now, as I'm speaking. Of course, the mind is operating, but I can sense, and perhaps you can, in the background, behind the words, beyond the words, in between the words, there's that space of stillness, beingness, whatever you want to call it. And if you can sense it, you might believe, if you sense it's coming from here, if you can sense it, it's in you.

Because only being can be aware of being, not the mind. If you believe being emanates from me, I suppose it does, but at that moment, you, there's the recognition of being can only happen through accessing that dimension within yourself. Only being can recognize being, not the mind.

The mind, however, may come in when you, let's say you recognize the being dimension that emanates from this thing, that's the body or whatever it is. It emanates, and you sense it. The moment you sense it, it's in you also, consciously.

Now, it's possible that the mind may come in and misinterpret what's going on. And the mind may confuse the form of the spiritual teacher or whoever it happens to be, the form identity with the being dimension. And then suddenly the teacher is regarded as a being, a supernatural being or a kind of God-like figure or some great guru or whatever, because you confuse that which transcends the form, for which the form is only an opening, you confuse that with the form.

And then you make that person through whom being shines you make that person very special. This can happen easily. It's a misinterpretation, but at least you recognize being.

But what you overlooked is, because not everybody will recognize it in the being dimension in a human being. If it shines through strongly, not everybody will recognize. Some people say, what's this all about?

Why are these people all listening to this guy for two hours? And he's not special. He doesn't even jump up and down the stage.

He's just boring, isn't he? He's boring. So that's a danger.

That is also a danger as far as the spiritual teacher is concerned. Because there may be remnants of ego left in him or her. And if the teacher is bombarded with continuous projections of specialness, he or she may begin to believe.

In other words, the ego comes back through the back door and regains ascendancy and the ego comes back and the teacher begins to think, to feel a specialness in the person, the form. And then this teacher, it's happened many times, the teacher makes statements such as, I'm certainly the greatest teacher alive on the planet at the present moment. And, or it may go so far as to say, I'm the greatest that has ever lived.

All the others were precursors. I have arrived. There is something incredibly special coming through, but it is not, it is nobody's possession.

It's nobody's achievement. It does not belong to the form dimension, but the form dimension can be an opening, just like a window. In a way, one could say, this body and this mind is the window frame.

What you see is a window frame, but what the most important thing about the window is the light that comes through the window. That's the opening. And this may also happen to you when you, as presence arises, you will, if it's not happened already, for many of you probably has happened already, you come into contact with people who are helped by your presence.

Even if you don't feel that you know what to do, because it doesn't work like that. They're helped and they're drawn to you. They're helped by your presence.

There's a kind of transmission. It can awaken the presence in the other, that dimension, the being dimension in the other. And then you can find, they may then become attached to you because they feel so good in your presence and they can't let go.

And again, the danger already arises then that you feel, I, I have done this. There's a, one could call that healing in a deeper sense, not just physical healing, but the true healing is the reconnection with the being dimension. That's the true healing.

And there's a phrase in this book called the Course in Miracles. It says, the healer does not heal. He lets healing be.

He does not heal. He lets healing be. So when you are with people who are seeking help, then you don't need to go into your mind and say, how can I help this person?

It has to go, the person is talking to you and you already think, well, perhaps I could say that. I can say that. Doesn't work like that.

You're just present. At some point, you may say something from some sort of deeper place, or you may not even say anything. And there's just an answer that may suddenly appear in the other person.

And it's only, oh, and you never said or did anything. You just sat there. So at first, the being dimension, you find it as separate from external activity or thinking.

And then that's a good beginning. And then gradually you learn that it can, it is not irreconcilable with external activities. It's a presence through movement is a good practice because it shows you do not need to sit still to find stillness, which is another word for it, which people believe initially.

Stillness also has kind of two meanings in English. There's on the one hand, stillness means the absence of noise. But there's another meaning of stillness is the absence of movement.

When you say sit still, it's the absence of noise. He stood still, he sat. So it's stillness points in English to the absence of either noise or movement.

So when we talk about stillness, you might think you have to, you can't move in order to be, to consciously sense the being dimension, you can't, you mustn't move. And then you learn you can actually move. And in fact, it can be helpful.

You begin with that, and then you can perform certain tasks and still being that connectedness with being instead of completely losing yourself in the activity. You can have goals to pursue, which is in the realm of doing. It's good to have goals, although there may be periods in your life when you don't need any goals.

Certainly, if you reach a certain age, it becomes increasingly pointless to pursue goals, at least at the latest by the age of 95. You don't need to pursue any more goals unless for some reason you have to. But even before then, there may be time periods in your life when the pursuit of goals is not necessary and you can become more deeply immersed, just be engaged in ordinary everyday activity without pursuing any particular big goal, big or small, working towards something.

But on the whole, it's good to have goals. But again, goals belong to the realm of doing, and that's fine. The problem arises if the goal absorbs so much of your attention, meaning the desired outcome, the place you want to arrive at, whatever that may be, passing an exam, achieving a certain position, acquiring mastery in some activity, whatever it may be, the desired outcome.

If the desired outcome occupies a place in your mind that's overwhelming, or you desperately need to go to arrive at that place, then in the meantime, all the things that you do, the steps you take, the activities you undertake in order to arrive at your goal, are then simply a means to an end. They are not enjoyable because you desperately want to have arrived already. To summarize the question, of course, as you mentioned at the beginning, adversity can either, it can strengthen the ego, or it can gradually, or in some cases, suddenly, dissolve the ego, or at least diminish it.

It can go either way. And I must agree with you, I don't know whether you literally said it, in perhaps still in the majority of cases, it strengthens the ego because nobody knows, people don't know the opportunity that every adversity represents. So why does it happen?

How does it strengthen the ego? You can see it sometimes with people who are sick, or people who are disabled. Let's say I've met disabled people, people with physical disabilities, for example.

And in some cases, they are very, really angry with the world and bitter because look at what happened to me. They say, why do I can't move anymore? I've been afflicted with this.

What have I done to deserve this? And these are questions that are justifiable questions. The question, what have I done to deserve?

Why has the world, or whatever they say, God, the world, the universe, or whoever they've done this to me, and then they become bitter and angry, and the ego becomes more and more rigid and hardened. And that is one way it could go. And then I have met people with disabilities who through their disability, at some point, whether through a spiritual teaching, and in some cases, never coming to contact with any spiritual teaching, it just happened that at some moment, they realized intuitively that all the suffering was generated through resistance.

And then the resistance to the isness of their life, this moment, they were able to let go because perhaps the suffering was getting too much. Something happened, something clicked inside, or even if it didn't happen completely, they were able to have moments of inner peace, an inner peace that is not caused by an external condition, an inner peace that seems to be in contradiction to an external condition, so that they would say, how could a person who is suffering this feel so peaceful? And so also that applies to people who are approaching the end of their lifespan because they have some illness and they have been to the doctor, and the doctor says you have six months or one year, and suddenly something in them opens up, and all that remains is that the person already dies, there's no more future, and all that remains is the present moment and the aware space.

So I've had the privilege of working with, when I was still seeing individuals with two or three people to whom that happened, and they became luminous beings in the last few weeks or months of their lives, and became just, there was no, I couldn't see that there was any person left, there was only a space of conscious presence left, just wonderful, as if they had just come into this world. So they came, and then they came to me, and then still asking questions, very profound questions, wanting to understand what happened, and it's beautiful. So this can happen, it can happen collectively to people who have, who go through warfare in countries or become refugees, they lose everything, and again, it can go either way.

Whenever there's any great loss in your life, that again, an opportunity opens up. If you resist, and you resist the resistance origin, the origin of the resistance is a narrative that forms in your mind, that says something about the situation and about your life and about other people. So the narrative forms in your mind, and the narrative is an unhappy one, and then there's continuous resistance, a non-alignment with the isness of the present moment.

Now, one could ask, well, how could somebody who has lost their home, perhaps even lost loved ones, and then they don't know where to go, how could this person be in a state of alignment with the present moment? Isn't that, how can somebody accept the unacceptable, accept that which in conventional terms would be regarded as unacceptable? How is that possible?

But that's precisely it. If you can accept the unacceptable, that is the sudden, the opening, and then you realize the unacceptable is actually not unacceptable, it is acceptable. And the, I was homeless for a certain period in my life with not knowing what to live on the, next day or the next week, and I had already gone into a state of acceptance, so it was a very pleasant experience, but potentially would have been extremely unpleasant.

So not having a home was for me already something that was not experienced as something bad, but I knew I had to take some action eventually to get a home, and so gradually something happened. I don't want to talk too much about that. I also mentioned in the New Earth, I believe, when I was at university, there was the Stephen Hawkins, the physicist who was confined to a wheelchair, passed away a couple of years ago, and there it was.

He would always, he wasn't famous at that time, only famous locally in the university. We would always be in the same dining room, having lunch, but not the same table. I never met him, wasn't introduced to him.

Observed him many times, sitting at a neighboring table, and then I, one moment when I held open the door for him, he was coming through on his wheelchair, and I looked into his eyes, and I could see there was no unhappiness. Of course, everybody here suffers from a fatal affliction. It's called time, and eventually it's going to kill you.

But before it kills you, unless it does that very quickly and suddenly, and if it doesn't do it very quickly and suddenly, before it kills you, it does things to you. You notice those things that it does to you when you look in the mirror in the morning, and especially if you compare it to a photo taken 20, 30, 40 years ago, you notice the effect of time on you. You may not need to get ugly because the less you're identified with your external self, and as you grow old, the opportunity is there for you to identify more and more with the presence, and the presence shines through the fading form, and when the presence shines through the fading form, it's actually very, very beautiful.

It's different from the kind of beauty that's there when you're 20 years old, and it's like the apple that's just been, just fallen from the tree, and it's still not totally fresh, and you have that biological, might have maybe beauty, and this. So that's nice too, but it doesn't last. There's a deeper beauty that can shine through, and it happens to those humans who are connected with the presence that they are, and then you don't turn ugly.

In the absence of that, if you're only identified with your physical form, then I must admit, it could happen that you turn ugly. Irrelevant is another word the questioner uses. In our civilization, old age is not valued, so people who grow old have the feeling that they are irrelevant, or they are regarded as irrelevant.

Old age is not associated with wisdom. In our civilization, because our civilization doesn't even know what wisdom is. It's not highly valued.

Cleverness, yes. High IQ, yes. And whatever else, but not wisdom.

How do you measure it? What is that? But that is going to change.

We already have, in traditional cultures, ancient, older cultures, the elders are the most important people. And in the Western societies, the elders are the, well, to be charitable, they are called the elderly, and they are somewhere in a home, and you visit them. Once or twice a month.

And then they sit in their chairs, watching TV, not realizing the opportunity of old age, because nobody has told them. So you can appreciate your appearance if it happens to be good, and you're still relatively young, and your body looks good, or your face looks good. You can appreciate that in the same way you appreciate other things, lovely things.

There's nothing wrong with that. But it would be important, when you look in the mirror, to also feel your presence, so that you don't get excessively attached to the external form. You can appreciate it, but there's no need to be attached to it, because you can only not be attached to it if you can sense the underlying

presence.

So when you look in the mirror, maybe you even apply makeup. They apply makeup to my face before I come on, because it looks too oily otherwise, apparently. And I noticed last night it actually does, because last night I didn't have makeup.

I saw myself on the little screen.

[Speaker 13] (2:23:05 - 2:23:06)
I said, I'm very shiny.

[Speaker 1] (2:23:12 - 2:48:00)
And it wasn't the inner emanation of presence that was coming through. It was a different kind of shininess. Yes.

So before I go on camera, they apply makeup to the face. Does it mean I'm vain because I don't want to be shiny? Maybe.

So you may apply makeup, especially if you are a woman. Men, I don't know, some men might do it too, I don't know. And there's no reason to think, oh, should I really, or shouldn't I, or there's something wrong with me if I do it.

That must be ego if I apply makeup. Don't complicate life too much. If you want to apply makeup, apply makeup.

But while you apply makeup, feel the underlying presence. And while you look in the mirror, sense the presence of yourself, the presence of presence, the stillness. And then it's not a problem when suddenly you look in the mirror again and you realize that 25 years have passed.

And you see, oh, the apple doesn't look the same anymore. It's wrinkly. Time is a strange thing.

I described it just now as one way of looking at it, as something that is ultimately going to destroy you. And it does that to everything. But you never catch time.

You only catch the evidence it leaves. So it's a criminal. That criminal commits all kinds of terrible crimes, murderous sprees, and you can never find the criminal, because all you can ever find is the evidence left behind by the criminal, which is dead bodies.

But they all appear in the present moment. There's only ever the present moment. Nobody can experience time as such.

So time exists and doesn't exist. It exists on the surface of things, but does not exist in the depths of yourself. Nobody is evil, but they manifest extreme unconsciousness, which we can call, in many cases, evil.

Do people start becoming nicer as you become more aware, or is it just that you no longer get consumed by the anger that arises when in the company of not so nice people? Well, I would say both. When you become more aware, you're not reactive anymore towards people.

You don't personalize things anymore, make everything personal, and are always looking out for some kind of hidden insult, or look at what his real intention behind what he's saying, what does he really want. You're just, there's an openness and a non-judgmental attitude towards others that non-reactive relationships then generate already more consciousness in the other, because unconsciousness is too unconscious people to strengthen each other's unconsciousness. So if somebody says or does something that may be unconscious and I don't react to it, it does not become amplified through my reaction.

If somebody says or does something unconscious and I react to it, condemn it, even if it's just in my mind, I actually amplify it, and I myself become part of that unconsciousness through my judgment. If I can be non-reactive, I can allow other humans their behavior, because that's their present stage of consciousness. They behave as they have to behave at this moment.

So I allow them to behave, to do what they do. I accept it. And then suddenly there's a different energy there.

So I don't amplify that. And those people then, I don't condemn them. I don't equate their unconscious behavior with who they are.

That's why it's so important not to judge others. It doesn't mean you kind of go through life saying, oh, they're all, everything is fine, that you don't see unconscious behavior. You see what they do, you know what they do, but you don't equate that with who they are.

You know it is an overlay on, it is human unconsciousness, they're expressing that. It's not who they are in their essence. If you confuse the unconscious behavior with who they are in their essence, then that's called judgment.

If you see that somebody is doing something extremely unconscious, that's not judgment because you don't equate it with who that person is. And so you don't say he is evil. That statement would be wrong of anybody because in essence, nobody is evil, but they manifest extreme unconsciousness, which we can call in many cases evil.

So that's important then not to strengthen that and to get trapped in illusion because when we believe in our own judgments, we get trapped, it's not only we trap others in the judgments, we ourselves get trapped in the judgments. Also, people become nicer, which is true, what the questioner says. People become nicer when you're present and aware because they can feel the absence of judgment in you.

Even if they don't, they may not be able to tell you, but I can feel the absence of judgment. They only feel it as a certain goodwill flowing out from you towards them or an acceptance flowing out from you towards them. And humans can feel that.

Even unconscious humans, unconscious, they can feel that. And everybody's grateful for that. Underneath all their madness, they feel grateful because somehow in that acceptance, in that goodwill that kind of flows out in that space, through that space of acceptance, they feel a little bit more themselves than they usually are.

So, and when a human feels a little bit more at ease in themselves, when they come to you, they like you and they are very nice to you. They don't know why. And their usual ego patterns, not all of them are operating anymore.

Some may still come up, of course. So the ego is less, the ego doesn't feel threatened. It feels, oh, there's no need to be that defensive here.

The ego feels it can kind of relax a little bit. Of course, it's still there in the background, where you're just like a little, like a dog. But it's not at its usual state, like the Rottweiler.

So it's just, okay, can relax a little now. And then they like you. So you become a nice person to them.

That's perhaps all they know. When they ask him, oh, he's such a nice guy. Like to see him, like to go to him, and that's a nice, okay, so yes, you do experience that.

So partly simply because presence, acceptance is there and is recognized. And partly because there's the absence of reaction. When somebody suddenly blames you, for example, says, you left that door open, you shouldn't.

And say, oh, I did? Yeah. The usual ego thing, of course, is to say, no, I didn't.

Whether you did or not, because it's regarded as an in, as the ego feels diminished when somebody blames you. You did that. No, I didn't do that.

You did. And it starts from there and then escalates. Why do you always blame me?

Look what you did yesterday. That's called reaction, defensiveness. And that's not there.

So then it's just, you're stating the facts. You left that door open again. No, I didn't.

And then there's no further arguing. Yes, you did. Well, maybe, if that's what you believe.

Or say, yes, you're right, I did that again, sorry. You don't feel diminished when you were wrong. The ego feels diminished.

Just to admit that you've been wrong is a dreadful thing. So the ego can't do that. It's like a little desk.

To say that you've been wrong is a little, and if somebody proves to you that you've been wrong, it makes things even worse. And then some people will start hitting you. That's how the ego can, an ego can easily do.

If it's so obvious that you've been wrong and somebody proves it, then you start hitting them. That's a big argument. And if you knock him out, the ego still wins.

Yes, there is a general improvement in relationships, of course, with presence. The deepest prayers, they're no longer prayers as such. They are when you adopt a listening attitude rather than a saying words.

Perhaps you can upgrade your prayers from petitionary prayers, please make this happen, the petitionary prayers, to what little just mental pointers towards peace, for example, little mental pointers that still use concepts, because every prayer is some kind of, it consists of words, and concepts, in other words, to use a concept to point, to help you go beyond concepts. You could say, for example, an affirmation, the one we talked about earlier, which really what Jesus said, I am the light of the world, is an affirmation. And it's a concept, it points to a deeper reality that is deeper, that far deeper than the words.

You can say, please let me know if you still want some petition, please let me know that I am the light of the world. Duality is implied usually in the usual prayer, it implies that there is God and he is me asking God. The ultimate, of course, is that that duality is ultimately an illusion, because you are an expression of God.

You and God merge, and the deepest prayers then are no longer prayers as such, they are when you adopt a listening attitude rather than a saying words. So if prayers gradually become from saying, as long as you enjoy it, that's fine, but gradually get away from asking somebody to do something for you, because that keeps you stuck in duality. But if you can realize that this, affirmations are, if they are done rightly, can be very beautiful substitutes for prayers.

I'm healed and whole and at peace. And after that, let there be a space. And really the power is in that space.

In the space you experience that you are already whole. The outward form might tell you something different. I'm holy, because in miracles says, I am holy, for example, that's, again, you are.

And so it's simply an affirmation of how this is how it is. Or if you're healing for somebody else, you're either with that person, or that person comes into your mind, you're thinking about that person, and that person may be ill. And then the most powerful healing I find is to be, to hold the image of that person, and then go deeper into yourself where the wholeness of life lies.

Where nothing is needed, nothing is needed to be added. And there you find the wholeness also of that person. They're already healed at that deepest level.

Beyond form, they're already healed. So you go from form, and then into formlessness. That is the healing that was practiced by Joel Goldsmith.

He has a little, a lovely book called The Art of Spiritual Healing. And that is really to, not to dwell at all on the condition that needs to be healed, but to focus on the essential reality of that human being, which is one with your essential reality, and go into deep stillness where nothing is needed. So he would often get phone calls, sometimes in the middle of the night, somebody desperately needs healing, and they would say, that's the name of the person, and that's what he or she is suffering from, is this and that.

And what he would then do is immediately put the phone down and go into absolutely no thought. For a moment, he heard the name of the person. He heard what was wrong with the person, and immediately let go of that, and immediately, just for two or three minutes, went into no thought, just absolute presence.

And in that, there's absolute perfection in that realm of the formless. And that is the essence of that person that needed healing. So you take the form into the formless, where the form is no longer, no condition to be treated, nothing is needed, just go into that.

And that was his way of healing. He was quite a powerful healer. That is the ultimate form of healing.

And that really is the non-dual kind of prayer. It's no longer, it's going beyond prayer, where you say, please, God, heal. You go to the very source itself that is inseparable from who you are, and is inseparable from who that person is.

And so that's the, listening, if healing, if prayer can gradually, as I said, become listening, listening to God rather than talking to God. What does listening mean? Listening means there's a field of bare, pure attention.

And listening doesn't mean that you're waiting for some answer, then you're not really listening. In listening, you're not waiting for anything. There's just a field of just pure attention.

And that is a much deeper prayer than any words. That's the attitude of, that's true prayer, is that where prayer also becomes meditation, you could say. Not even wanting an answer, it's enough to be in the silence.

And sometimes an answer comes, or the thing becomes resolved. Sometimes, suddenly, listen. Any trouble in this world, any disturbance, and they happen all the time.

People around you, maybe even a disturbance in your mind, go into just pure, aware, bare, listening presence. Because presence and listening are very, just listening is a way of speaking about presence. You can say, when you're present, it is as if you were in a state of listening.

Now, listening usually is associated with the auditory sense perception. But this listening goes beyond the auditory sense perception. It's the state of consciousness that underlies the auditory sense perception.

Everybody knows what that is like, because when you're really listening for some faint sound, what is the state of consciousness that underlies this listening to the faintest sounds? It's a state of absolute relaxed alertness. So when we say listening, listening is a helpful thing because everybody knows what listening means, but I'm now just pointing out that it's not the external sense perception that's the essence in listening.

The essence in listening is the underlying state of consciousness, of alert, absolute receptivity and alert presence. This is why I believe that Jesus had those parables about the servant and the staying awake, because the master doesn't know when the master is going to come home. So the servant needs to stay awake to know when the master is coming home, otherwise he'll be asleep.

And I think what he really was talking about, because many of the things have come down in a somewhat distorted way because it got transmitted verbally and verbally again, and finally written down, and in the process, some things got turned around and missing. I think he was talking about the attitude of that absolute, he was talking about the state of consciousness, this servant waiting just to hear the master come home, just waiting in a totally different sense from the normal thing that we call waiting, which is the mind saying when it is going to happen, why isn't it happening yet? He uses waiting in a totally different sense.

So there are quite a few, many times Jesus talked about, obviously about staying awake. That's an important part of, very important part of his teaching. Stay awake.

Don't go to sleep. Stay present. That's, so any words you use in prayer, use them as pointers towards that.

You could say, I'm listening. So paths come, go, but it's still predominantly really awareness. It's so much nicer than thinking.

[Speaker 11] (2:48:06 - 2:49:04)
So I had the opportunity to interview you once before Eckhart about 10 years ago. And one of the things you reported to me then was that after this awakening, you experienced an 80% reduction in mental activity. And I'm curious in your life, what it's like for you in terms of your relationship to thoughts, meaning do you sometimes have hours go by where there literally are no thoughts or are there thoughts coming, but they just float by and there's no attention is given to them.

So what's it actually like? And I'm sure it's different. Obviously, if you're in the middle of a airport doing something than if you're just relaxing at home, but I'm curious to know more about the interior of your experience.

[Speaker 1] (2:49:05 - 2:55:05)
Well, there are long stretches of no thought and I can still function in that

state. For example, you talk about airport. I can perfectly check in or walk to the, go through security check.

And then onto whatever the lounge without any thought. And this would not be uncommon that I would do something or go from where I get into the car and drive to the store to buy something. And again, virtually no thought is not uncommon.

So, and all it does make occasionally little fragments may come up like little puffs of clouds and then they're gone. So it's, there can be, or let's say I'm sitting at home not doing much and occasional thoughts can drift in and out of awareness like clouds, like the sky is blue, but little puffy clouds come from time to time and they go, the thoughts have no, I don't follow them and they don't even try anymore to get my attention as is the case with people who are still very strongly identified with thought. Every thought pulls you.

Every thought pulls you where it wants you to go. And thoughts don't really have that pull anymore. They just, when they appear, there's a blue sky and the clouds appear and disappear, appear and disappear.

And there could even occasionally be a stream of thoughts in certain situations, or maybe not even connected to anything happening outside of me. There can be times when there are certain streams of thoughts, but again, they are harmless. They are not the thoughts that have this gravitational pull that just, and you have to follow them with your entire attention.

But it's a thought that, yes, from time to time, there may even be more clouds than blue sky, but these clouds are not, no longer the heavy weather clouds that I had in the distant past and that other people perhaps recognize in their own lives. They are more like innocent little puffy clouds with thoughts, but no thought matters that much. And then it disappears.

It's not amplified by following it up and identifying with it and then becomes a heavy thing that takes possession of you. So it never feels as if any thought were taking possession of me. So yes, then to summarize, I think if anybody entered my inner state, they would be surprised how little thinking there actually is compared to probably what I still, is still for most people normal, almost continuous.

How relatively little there is. Yes, there is some, and that which there is, is doesn't have the heaviness anymore that it has when you're identified with the thoughts and they have a gravitational pull and they develop into streams and proliferate and develop into streams and you lose yourself completely in it. So that doesn't happen.

So I, I'm most, the not thinking is almost, would say predominates unless there's something specific to think about. But then occasionally, yes, clouds come and go and so on, but there's always an awareness of the sky also. It's, and it doesn't really matter whether I'm in, out in nature, in the, walking in the forest, looking around.

Let's just describe, let's just describe perhaps one minute of let me walking in the forest, walking, looking, looking, the dog, trees, no thought, just looking at the trees, the plants, the aliveness of it, sensing the energy field. And then a thought may come and says, oh, when I get home, I need to, I need to do this or that. I forgot to do that.

I need to, when I get home, I still need to do that. Or I need to buy some, I need to buy some bananas later. Okay, and then it's gone.

And then, and then some other thought comes of something, maybe could be anything.

A person that tried to contact me the other day, didn't. And then it's gone again and back.

So puffs come, go, predominantly really awareness. It's so much nicer than thinking.

[Speaker 11] (2:55:07 - 2:55:25)
So just to be sure that I fully hear you correctly, it never happens that one of these puffs kind of has a little hook that comes down that catches you by the neck or something like that. And, you know, just a little hook that comes in like I forgot to do something.

[Speaker 1] (2:55:27 - 2:55:51)
Good question. I have experienced in the past, not for some time now, occasionally some thought coming in and hook is a good word. I experienced in the past sometimes, and I can't remember when the last time was, occasionally some thought coming in and wanting more of me than just appear and disappear.

[Speaker 11] (2:55:51 - 2:55:52)
Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:55:52 - 2:55:56)
It goes, I perceive it, it goes like this. It pulls your sleeve.

[Speaker 11] (2:55:57 - 2:55:58)
Yeah, yeah.

[Speaker 1] (2:56:01 - 2:56:16)
And so that's, usually I notice it and then there's an intensification of presence. There's a conscious choice at that moment to be more intensely present.

[Speaker 11] (2:56:16 - 2:56:17)
Interesting.

[Speaker 1] (2:56:17 - 2:57:40)
Yeah. The same thing happens when a challenge comes in everyday life, something goes wrong, whatever it may be, and a challenge comes in and what otherwise could easily develop into some kind of minor drama. And again, at that time, usually it's not even so much a conscious choice.

It almost happens naturally that immediately there's an intensification of presence. So that's something that I hadn't mentioned before. There is the normal level of presence is the taking over of the normal level.

When a challenge comes in, there is, I call it sometimes the dimmer switch, is turned up and there's more intense presence when the challenge comes because only more intense presence can burn the thoughts that want to arise there. And so there's then a hard to describe what a heightening of present is, but if I could act it out.

[Speaker 11] (2:57:40 - 2:57:41)
Please. Ha ha.

[Speaker 1] (2:57:43 - 2:59:18)
It's like normal presence is, and more intense presence is, and back to normal, more intense. The more intense presence is, this presence becomes a sharp sword, as I sometimes compare it to that in intense presence, which if you're surrounded by pandemonium, ha ha, could happen, then that is required. And so there's the, or if there's a very strong pull by some thought, there's come this way.

I will lead you to a wonderful place. It's called drama and unhappiness. Just follow me.

You will love it. And then you have to go. You can't fight that thing.

You can't say, no, go away. You give it more power. You just go.

You have to have that fierceness then. The presence becomes fierce presence, whereas before, presence was gentle, gentle presence.

[Speaker 5] (2:59:21 - 3:00:39)
Thank you. I have a question about stages that we go. I read the first one, Power of Now, changed my life.

And then I came to a new earth. Thank you for paradise. And so the stages, the truck, you get stuck, you either accept, and then the next one is you enjoy.

And so I already went to enthusiasm. So I found my enthusiasm when I thought, but then it felt like the ego. So is there a way to know which one is which?

It's like, okay, so am I enthusiastic because this is what the universe is pushing me to do? Or is it just me trying to be, you know, oh, I'm the enlightened one. I'm the spiritual one or so on.

[Speaker 1] (3:00:40 - 3:05:01)
Okay, I understand. Yes, thanks. So that goes back to, in the new earth, I think I wrote that the three modalities of being, if you're not one of the three modalities, you are in a state that is not harmonious and egoic or dysfunctional.

The three modalities, acceptance, you either, whatever you need to do or whatever the situation is, you accept it. If you cannot enjoy it, there's some things you can't enjoy, but you can accept that this is what is. Acceptance, then, is that important.

Others, enjoyment comes in. Enjoy the work, see if you can enjoy it rather than just accept that this, if you really, anything you do with resentment is a dysfunctional state, causing suffering. Without knowing it, you're causing it to yourself in any state of resentment.

What you're doing it, but you resent doing it. You are somewhere, but you really don't want to be there, but you are there. So these are states of dysfunctional states that actually cause suffering.

You cause it unnecessarily to yourself without knowing it. So acceptance, enjoyment, there's a flow in what you do. You are present in what you know where you're going, but you're fully present in the process of moving towards there.

The movement is more important than where you want to get to. And then the enthusiasm is the stage that I describe as happening during the creative process. When a new thing, when you are giving birth to something new in whatever form, there can be an enormous influx of energy that I call enthusiasm, which is the ancients believed that there was a higher spirit moving through you at that time, because I mean, literally enthusiasm means in God.

So enthusiasm is the stage of creativity. Now your question is correct. It can sometimes, there can be egoic, excited egoic states masquerading as enthusiasm.

And sometimes at first sight, not easy to tell the difference because you're on a high, you're on an egoic high. Now there are, but there are some signs by which you can recognize whether or not it's the ego or whether there's a deeper creative process, consciousness wanting to create something through you. One thing you can recognize the ego by is when you encounter obstacles to whatever your action is in that state of either enthusiasm or egoic excitement, when you encounter obstacles, the ego, if it's the ego, you will quickly fall into negative states the moment you encounter obstacles to what you're doing.

If it's true enthusiasm, you do not fall into negative states when obstacles arise and obstacles will arise in any creative endeavor. It's something that doesn't mean you're supposed to stop when an obstacle arises. Then you look at an obstacle and see either you can use it and transform it and incorporate it into what you do, or you can bypass it.

That's how true enthusiasm, but the ego gets resentful when an obstacle comes. It takes it as a personal insult. So that's a good sign that it's egoic or not.

And another sign of course is always, but that is more when you're getting towards the end of the achievement, when you have achieved something and it does not satisfy you soon after achieving it, then you know it was the ego too. So you always know the ego. There's a satisfaction, but not short-lived when it's ego.

So the Course in Miracles actually tells you, you can always recognize an egoic goal when you achieve it by realizing that it hasn't satisfied you.

[Speaker 5] (3:05:03 - 3:05:46)
That makes, thank you, of course it makes sense. Because at the moment when I do get creative, I write and I write the stages and it just makes sense. And I know I'm not writing it.

It has to do with autism, with my child. And I'm like, but this makes sense. How come nobody has thought of this?

And when I show it to people, they say, oh, well, yeah, this is great. So I know that this is where I'm going. And I know it's not me.

It's not this form doing it. So that's how I know. And then I find obstacles.

And then it teaches me about me because now the pain body comes and says, well, but I have to be nice. Now I have to be nice. But that's not this form.

This form is not nice.

[Speaker 1] (3:05:46 - 3:05:46)
Yes.

[Speaker 5] (3:05:46 - 3:05:49)
Sorry. This form has to be.

[Speaker 1] (3:05:50 - 3:05:52)
Yeah, I know what you mean. We know what you mean.

[Speaker 5] (3:05:52 - 3:05:53)
I really know what you mean. Oh my God.

[Speaker 1] (3:05:54 - 3:05:58)
The form is nice too. But there's something nicer even than that.

[Speaker 5] (3:05:59 - 3:06:10)

Yes, because that's what you have to do. Like, I heard like sometimes the universe wants to, you know, kick someone. That is what you have to do.

It's not violent, but that is what.

[Speaker 1] (3:06:11 - 3:07:05)
Yes. Now, another thing, the ego, of course, also whenever there's an ego endeavor with that kind of excitement that sometimes goes with ego, I just mentioned the obstacle that when an obstacle arises, there will be resentment and negativity. And also you recognize the ego when it, there's always an excessive focus on the end result that it wants to achieve.

So it's very excited about the end result that it wants to get to. In all the doing is a means to getting to the end result. And yes, it is excited about getting there.

It imagines getting there. But in the meantime, the state of consciousness that underlies your action or your activity is not the highest. If there's a lot, there can be a lot of stress arising with it and.

[Speaker 5] (3:07:06 - 3:07:45)
Yes, but it's not really stress because I don't know what the end result is. I don't know. And that's what teaching is like.

This is not me because I don't know. I don't know what the end result and it doesn't matter. It's not like it doesn't matter, but it's a different, it doesn't matter.

It's like, it's okay either or, but it's the process that when I'm going is, should I stop now? Will I stop because I have to be nice and well, that's just how it is. But that doesn't, this feeling doesn't let me, it just pushes me.

It's like, no, you have to keep going. I was like, why can't I just be nice? Why can't I just stay here and then do yoga?

But no, that this form is meant for something else.

[Speaker 1] (3:07:45 - 3:12:15)
Thank you. Thank you. So if you discover within yourself that a lot of the time you're in a state of lack, of insufficiency, of not enough, and you feel that the answer to the remedy is to be active in this world and achieve and do as much as possible, then you'll probably find that ultimately that is not the answer to your state of lack in order to transcend, to go beyond your state of lack, of neediness, of not enough.

Spiritual practice and spiritual realization is necessary. Focus on the realization of being. It's only there that you can go beyond that state of lack, which is ego.

Go within and discover who or what you are beyond. The person. Does presence require us not to be too excited about something?

Is presence serious? Don't laugh. I see being too excited about something as weakness and I feel presence should be strong.

Please explain the relationship between the two. No, well, presence does not require you to be not to be excited about something. It doesn't require anything.

Well, there are certain requirements for presence to arise. And that is, for example, finding the gap between two thoughts. Once presence has arisen, presence doesn't have requirements and doesn't say, now you must be serious.

There's a related question, but I don't know where it is. Sometimes it's nice to answer two questions in one answer. It could be anywhere.

Well, I'm sure you have seen the, there's a little symbol symbolizing the theater, which the origin of this symbol, which has two images and it goes back to ancient Greece where theater first started. The actors in ancient Greece wore masks and there was a mask for, a smiling mask. And there was also, there might've been others too.

And there was the sad or miserable mask. And traditionally to symbolize, you can even see it at the entrance to some theaters. You have the two masks, a smiling masks and next to it, a miserable looking mask.

And, and that is symbolizes comedy and tragedy. And so the excitement that you mentioned here would be the smiling mask. Oh, it's all going so well.

[Speaker 6] (3:12:16 - 3:12:18)
It's great, I got it, I got it, I got it.

[Speaker 1] (3:12:19 - 3:23:13)
Are you excited about going to Costa Rica? Somebody asked me and I said, no. And that person didn't understand how one could be not be excited about going to Costa Rica.

So that's the positive excitement. And then there's the negative excitement of, I'm in Costa Rica and I got stung by mosquitoes and I've got diarrhea. And it's too hot.

And there's the drama, that's also an excitement, the negative excitement of drama. Oh, what he did to me, what you do, I won't forget that. So it's not that presence requires you not to be excited.

There's a natural thing that comes as presence arises more in your life. You still, you take pleasure in the good things and you have a, you would rather have something nice than something not good. So when something sad happens, something might make you sad, you go, oh.

But there's no longer these extremes that is an overvaluation of conditions, circumstances, an overvaluation of circumstances in your life, either on the positive or on the negative. Now I'd like to think you have a third image because we have the smiling and we have the miserable mask. And that is the good Buddha images.

And you might have seen some on the good Buddha statues or paintings. And as you may remember, I mentioned what that really represents is not a person who lived 2,500 years ago. It represents a state of consciousness.

And on the good paintings and the high quality inspired statues, the Buddha always has a slight smile on his face. It's not the big smile of the happy mask, but it's a hint of a smile. And then you get some not so good Buddha images where the Buddha looks deadly serious, almost scary.

So that's that hint of a smile of the Buddha points to another state that is neither the positive excitement nor the negative excitement of drama. It's something deeper that again, we come back to the vertical dimension. The Buddha, Buddha is a state of consciousness, the awakened state.

The word itself means to be awake, the awakened one, the one who is awake. And that's you. So the vertical state is the state of depth.

And when you're rooted in the vertical, you're not swayed so much anymore by either when something good happens, you go, and when something bad happens, you go, you still appreciate the good. And when the bad comes, you accept what is, and you can enjoy the good, and you can accept the so-called bad. And it's not even good and bad anymore if your mind doesn't label what happens in your life.

It is, this moment is as it is. And so I can enjoy going to Costa Rica and being here, and even to some extent, look forward to going there a little bit. And at the same time, or more fundamentally, be rooted in that deeper sense of presence.

And out of that arises that strange thing or no thing that produces, that causes the Buddha to smile. And that's a kind of flow of joyful aliveness. That has nothing to do whether or not you're going to Costa Rica, whether your trip is canceled.

And even diarrhea won't affect it too much. Although on the surface, it doesn't feel good. And so if you're rooted in the vertical, then the extremes excitements just naturally don't occur anymore because the overvaluation of circumstances doesn't happen anymore.

If you overvalue circumstances, then you've always very quickly experienced the other polarity. What makes you happy today makes you unhappy tomorrow. Or what makes you happy today doesn't make you happy anymore tomorrow because you got used to it.

Or it's very often the case, a mental projection of what is going to make you happy when you achieve it doesn't work. Or if it works, it works for just a short time. Of course, in miracles mentioned somewhere that you can always recognize an egoically motivated goal in you by the fact that when you reach it, it doesn't satisfy you.

Even if, as I said, even if your body is strong and beautiful and you identify with that, you have moved towards suffering. And if your body is not, you're not happy with it, you're suffering already. So hold your form identity loosely and don't let it get in the way of your happiness.

Because obviously everybody has a form identity. It consists of many different things. It depends what importance you give certain aspects of your particular physical, psychological form.

Obviously you have a form identity. It always starts with the body because to some extent you can't get away from that. This form identity begins with the body.

As you may remember, when I talk about form identity, you have to differentiate between form identity, which is physical form and psychological form, and essence identity, which is who or what you are beyond the physical and beyond the psychological, you as the consciousness, the transcendent consciousness, which is there the moment you become still and you're still awake, you haven't fallen asleep, stillness remains.

That is the beginning of realizing your form identity, but your essence identity. But your form identity, yes, it varies from person to person. What importance could you give certain aspects of your form?

As I said, it begins with the physical body. And for some people, that's already a huge chunk of their form identity is their physical appearance. And in some cases, it's a source of pride.

So it makes you feel special, because relative to others, your body's better looking or stronger. Or for many others, it's a source of suffering and shame because the body isn't good enough. It doesn't look good enough.

It's not, when you compare the ego, always comparative in its, it compares its identity with others. So, and then you look at other, many people, some people are made temporarily happy by their bodies, identifying with it, and others are made unhappy by their bodies. But in either case, it's egoic identity.

You might think that if you have a beautiful or strong body, obviously only for a few years, then you begin to, if you are really identified with the beauty or strength of your body, then you're in for a lot of suffering. When that beauty or strength diminishes, then you begin to really suffer. Your sense of identity begins to crumble.

No matter how hard you try to repair the decaying form, you can't really, well, you can spend a lot of money trying to patch up the things, but you can't go on forever. And then eventually, as sometimes it happens with some very beautiful actors, actresses, actors, when they get really old and even the repair jobs don't work anymore, then you never see them again. They live in hiding.

[Speaker 6] (3:23:13 - 3:23:14)
It's very sad.

[Speaker 1] (3:23:15 - 3:50:12)
They live withdrawn, don't want to be seen by anybody anymore. It's a very sad end to their lives. So the identification, you know, you might think it's particularly egoic if you have to take pride in your, by the way, there's nothing wrong with being very happy if you have a strong and beautiful body.

Enjoy it while you can is my recommendation. But it's not to be despised. It's lovely, wonderful.

It's not essentially who you are, obviously. So find who you are beyond that as soon as possible before it starts to decay. Find who you are beyond that.

That's important. So, but it's not only the ego. It's not only amplified by identification with a strong or beautiful body.

It's equally, the ego is equally amplified if you have a shame or unhappiness attached to what you consider to be an undesirable looking body that's also of strong egoic thought form. It's just as strong as the one that takes pride in your appearance. Sometimes people think ego always refers to somebody who feel better and bigger than others.

Big ego seems to be like a triumphant sense of identity. That can be the case. But the ego is equally strong in the opposite of that, regarding yourself as inferior and suffering because of that, comparing yourself unfavorably with other people on whatever level, seeing yourself as a victim of life that's an equally strong egoic identity, a thought form.

So it's not just the ego. It's not necessarily and always a triumphant sense of identity. It can be just as strong as the opposite of that.

So identification with the body, which can ultimately, it will bring you suffering. Even if, as I said, even if your body is strong and beautiful and you identify with that, you will move towards suffering. And if your body is not, you're not happy with it, you're suffering already.

So in either case, go deeper, go deeper. Don't, and then that's one identification. The other identification may be other external things to your body.

Now, obviously, to some extent, the things that you put on your body become an extension of the body. So you look for, if you want to create a certain image or to reinforce the image that you have already created for yourself, the way you dress becomes an extension of, you identify with that as much as you identify with the actual physical body. It becomes an extension of the physical body.

So that can become important too. What you put on becomes part of your identity and all the advertisers, the manufacturers of clothes and brands, they all know that, that ultimately, you're not buying a piece of clothing, but you're buying an identity. And they all know that.

And that's what they advertise. They advertise an enhanced sense of identity. And again, it does not mean there's anything wrong with enjoying something beautiful to put on your body.

The question is, does that give you your sense of identity? Or is it simply something that you enjoy? Very big difference.

In the same way with a possession. There's no need to let go of all possessions because if you radically, as some spiritual people have done and still do in the past, sometimes it may work, but the danger is, let's say you're so spiritual that you say, I don't want any more possessions, nothing. And that still exists in some countries.

In India, there's an unbroken tradition going back thousands of years of humans who have done that. And some still do it. So they walk, some of them are actually totally naked.

Some were just in loincloths. They live on, they are supported because it is valued there. As to relinquish all attachments completely in your attempt to find the deeper dimension where you, the being of you, that is where you are connected with the divine, with God's source.

The danger is when you do that, that you create a substitute identity for yourself as a thought form of me, the one who has let go of everything. Therefore, the me that is superior to all those who are still attached to all those things. And that's the spiritual ego.

And that's very subtle. It can be very deceptive. You can spend the rest of your life, if you let go of everything, and then you have this huge spiritual ego walking around and you don't know it.

It's much more helpful, except in some exceptional cases, if that is your calling to relinquish everything, if you very strongly feel that is your calling, then that's why you have to go. But be careful that you don't create another identity for yourself, a mind-made identity out of that. Then you're trapped again without knowing it.

But if you do, my recommendation is, first of all, don't, because you probably have to let go of most of your clothes, too. Don't go and live in North Dakota or Canada. Move to Florida or here.

Then at least your body's relatively comfortable. But even then, you would still encounter problems. So my first recommendation would be to move to India.

And there you will be looked after by people who kind of recognize that there's a spiritual seeker there. India is still many of these people. Unfortunately, a significant percentage of them, the renunciates, the sadhus, some are genuine, wonderful beings, and others do it for a living.

It's great, you don't have to work. People give you food. You can just sit around all day and be respected.

So you have, for some, it's genuine, and others are fake. So identity, then, for some people, gender is an identity. Traditionally, being either a man or a woman was always an important part of your sense of self.

How important varies from person to person. In some countries where genders are still clearly defined and separated, your gender identity can make up an important part of your sense of who you are. For example, in some countries, if you're a man, it gives you some, you immediately have a certain superiority over the other 50% of humanity, or the women, that, I'm a man.

And then the woman is also pushed into identification with their role, and so there was, I'm a woman. And so, and you're trapped in that kind of identification. I'm not going into gender, that's a big topic these days, but is the, are you seeking some ultimate identity?

No matter what you, what gender you are, there's all these things these days, LGBTQ, et cetera, et cetera. Okay, that's fine, but are you seeking some ultimate identity in that? That's an illusion again.

Anything in form, you're seeking some kind of ultimate completion of yourself that only the essence identity can give you. It does not mean that you cannot honor your form identity. It could also be racial, what color is my skin?

Fine, you can be happy with it, or whatever, you can honor that, but not making that into your main identity, then you're trapped in the surface of life. So there's a difference between honoring your form identity and being trapped in your form identity. And also the importance is mistaking your form identity with the essence of who you are.

Mistaking that for the essence of who you are, that is a delusion. How can I free myself from my enormous desire and longing for a spiritual love relationship with a man? Although I do understand my desire for such a relationship after 25 lonely and painful years of marriage during which I could not give myself nor my ex-husband the love and acceptance that we were both longing for, I feel at the same time that this desire is the biggest trigger of my pain body.

Even during this beautiful retreat, my pain body is sometimes active for this reason. I'm aware of that. Since a long, long time, I feel a huge attraction towards a man.

I hardly talked with him. I feel a strong attraction towards a man. I hardly talked with him because this attraction freezes me and makes me feel uncomfortable because it feels almost unspiritual to have this earthly longing.

Anyhow, these are the moments which keep me away from the now. Help needed. In brackets, ha-ha.

I'm very grateful to be with you. Thank you. That longing is in everyone.

And as I mentioned earlier, it's to do with being this incomplete, form, and this form wants to unite with the other half to complete itself. So you, as this physical form, may never be quite free of that longing. But as you go beyond identification with a physical form and the psychological form of me, that longing becomes an almost peripheral manifestation in your life.

No longer makes you unhappy if it is not fulfilled. The psychological me uses that longing as a substitute for surrender. The belief that through some relationship, I can complete myself.

That the psychological sense of self, which also is not complete, the physical is not complete because the physical is one half of the whole. The psychological is not complete because it can never be. In its essence, it exists in a state of lack, of not enough, of insufficiency, of needing to add more.

And the one thing that the self, the psychological self believes often will make me complete is the relationship with the other half. Partner, the ideal, the one. And that can keep you going.

That search can keep you going for a long time for the one human being who is going to complete me. On the physical, that pull remains. On the psychological, that longing for completeness is transcended, is gone beyond as you no longer identify with a mental image of me, as you step out of identification with the mind-made self, which is always incomplete and will project its incompleteness in many cases onto that one thing that says, if I only had a partner, I would feel saved, totally myself, complete myself through him or through her.

And if you should find a partner for a while, that may work. And then you find you cannot complete yourself through any form whatsoever. So what leaves you through surrender to what is, and which in your case might mean the feeling of great lack, the feeling of aloneness, the longing for him, you may not know who, and there's this great lack at the center of your being, and what do you do with that?

That feeling of loneliness? If you're not vigilant, it becomes mind movements. It adds more to the story of the incomplete me who needs, and you can think about it, project, imagine, and that only strengthens that.

But if you allow what you feel to be there, let's say it's called loneliness, feel it, don't resist it. Let, you may not even label it anymore. Simply be attentive, look at it.

No analysis, just bringing presence to it. That feeling that you never wanted, that you want to get away from, that otherwise would continuously turn into thinking. Now you're saying, there it is.

And it has a certain feeling quality to it. And you give it, you can give it so much attention that you're not even labeling it anymore as loneliness. Your attention that you give that feeling is just complete.

And your acceptance of that feeling is complete because it is now. It is the form that this moment takes. So you surrender into that, say, all right, embrace it, and see if it kills you.

It won't. It's not going to kill you. It's not going to consume you, but it might consume the ego if you surrender into it.

So, and then suddenly you will see it has turned into something else. You can, I don't want to put any ideas into your head and say, this is what it's going to turn into. You surrender into that, the longing becomes intense aliveness itself.

The longing, if totally accepted, and that is even the longing for God, which says, I want God so much. On the other side of the longing, God is already hiding. It is already, it's a misinterpretation through the mind that says, you don't have it.

It's not here. And the beloved is on the other side of the loneliness. You then go, you suddenly experience a sense of completeness because you've surrendered totally into that feeling.

And then you have gone beyond the need, the psychological need for a relationship to complete you. There may still be a physical need on the level of physical body, on the level of sexuality or emotion that if you're a man wanting close to you, the female energy field, if you're a woman wanting the male energy field, this form may have that, but that is relatively minor. It's a very small movement, but deep down there's already such completion and completeness that that's a very minor surface movement of the form, doesn't make you unhappy anymore.

And then it is quite possible that you meet someone because you don't need him anymore. And then it is more likely that the relationship may work quite well because the need for this person to make you complete which no human being could ever fulfill, it's an impossible task and an impossible demand. Every human being will fail, will not make you complete.

So the need and the demands that this human being should provide that completion for you isn't there anymore. And that is why it is likely that the relationship may work quite well when the need, the psychological, deep-seated psychological need is gone. Then if it happens, you welcome the relationship.

If it doesn't happen, that's fine too, it's beautiful too. It's not everybody's destiny and that's beautiful too, to be alone. Solitude is beautiful, loneliness is not.

Solitude is to be alone and to be surrendered into that aloneness, solitude, beautiful, even sacred. Loneliness is to be alone and hate it and not wanting this. When you surrender into aloneness, it becomes solitude and solitude even becomes more than that.

It becomes the deep sense of connectedness with being itself because you'd really been looking for God through somebody else. And it's only through surrender that you can find God. So this is your spiritual practice to work with that.

Not to find him, that's not your spiritual practice. These are the moments which keep me away from the now because that sense of incompleteness and lack still tends to become mind movements. So it keeps you away from now, but it doesn't have to be like that.

The very feeling that you experience, let it bring you into the now. Now, give it attention, embrace it. No need to run away from it.

You welcome loneliness and then it turns into something else, beautiful. This mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive. To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation.

The most important element is the human's state of consciousness, state of being with the dog. And you call that calm assertiveness. Yes.

Your work with dogs, a large part of that is actually your work with humans. You need to show humans how to be with dogs.

[Speaker 3] (3:50:12 - 3:50:14)

I train people, I rehabilitate dogs.

[Speaker 1] (3:50:14 - 3:50:14)
Yes.

[Speaker 3] (3:50:19 - 3:50:20)
Nice to meet you all.

[Speaker 1] (3:50:21 - 3:50:28)
Thank you, it's all so good to meet you. I've seen you many times and admired your work so much. Thank you, sir.

[Speaker 3] (3:50:28 - 3:51:22)
There's a lot of wisdom in what you do. My grandfather passed that to me. He did?

I was very little when he said, never work against mother nature. So I was raised in Mexico on a farm, and low income kind of type, but very rich on an instinctual spiritual level. So I always say, I'm an instinctual man and man of faith.

Then I learned to be, to charge. Very good. And then I also learned a man has their own feminine side, which in Mexico is against.

Men will practice feminism. So America pretty much complete me. So the four worlds to me is the instinctual world, intellectual world, emotional world, spiritual world.

So when I came to America, I came with instincts and faith. And so America is my father. Mexico is my mother.

[Speaker 1] (3:51:23 - 3:51:24)
Wonderful, wonderful, yes.

[Speaker 3] (3:51:25 - 3:51:25)
That's me. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (3:51:27 - 3:52:07)
There's a book that by this bestselling writer, Malcolm Gladwell, and that's actually his latest book is called What the Dog Saw. What the Dog Saw, and I didn't realize until I opened it in the bookstore that that's one of the essays in the book is actually about you, What the Dog Saw. And it says a little bit about your life.

Yes. Very interesting. And there he mentions that at first you were not as good with people as you were with dogs, not as present with human beings.

And you learned that. How is that going?

[Speaker 3] (3:52:13 - 3:53:42)
I'll tell you how I learned. I'm a good follower too. I listen to my wife.

So that's the one who opened the door for my wall of distrust. Because animals never hurt me. Yes.

So I don't have a negative experience being with dogs. And I was fortunate to be around packs of dogs. So that was my family outside my family.

And so my relationship with mother nature has no anxiety, no fear, no tension, no nervousness. It's no past or future. It's just in the now.

And it's possibilities. It motivates me. It inspires me.

See, it brings a lot of great stuff about me. And so I can only feel joyful when I'm around dogs. And when I was around human before my awareness and I work on my issues, it was distrust.

So I didn't know how to communicate or integrate with my own kind. Yes. You know, and so that became my journey.

Yes. So I did a lot of introspective conversation. I surrender.

I do follow what I practice, you know. Sometimes you have to be assertive and sometimes you have to be a follower, meaning you surrender to what you need or to what is available to you. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (3:53:43 - 3:54:16)
And I know that in your work with dogs, perhaps the most important element is the human's state of consciousness, state of being with the dog. And you call that, I think one word you use is calm assertiveness. Yes.

Yeah. And that's really, that's something you have, that's your work with dogs. A large part of that is actually your work with humans.

You need to show humans how to be with dogs.

[Speaker 3] (3:54:16 - 3:54:18)
I train people, I rehabilitate dogs.

[Speaker 1] (3:54:18 - 3:55:08)
Yes. That's right. Because in the dog, perhaps with dogs, I know the same applies to humans also, but with dogs I feel, in a dog there's a core of goodness that is so obvious.

And in some dogs, of course, it becomes obscured by bad conditioning because of what happened to them when they were young. And the beautiful thing is when you heal a dog of that dysfunctional behavior, even a vicious dog, and I've seen one or two episodes on your show where you work with very vicious dogs. They were.

Grr, grr, grr, grr, grr, grr.

[Speaker 3] (3:55:08 - 3:55:09)
I remember one. A smile.

[Speaker 1] (3:55:09 - 3:55:09)
Yeah.

[Speaker 3] (3:55:09 - 3:55:12)
Grr, grr, grr, grr. You're gonna break a sunshade.

[Speaker 1] (3:55:14 - 3:55:29)
And of course, some humans are like that too. So the dog went, grr. And after a while that goes, and suddenly the core of goodness shines through.

The essential nature of the dog shines through.

[Speaker 3] (3:55:30 - 3:56:02)
Animals don't fight balance. Yes. Animals' biggest goal is to achieve balance.

Yes. My client's biggest goal is money. my client's biggest goal is to be seen as a lovable person, my client's biggest goal is to have a soul mate and that's a beautiful goals but animal lives in a present and animals follow a calm assertive or calm confident source of energy.

Yes. I haven't met a dog that say I don't want to be balanced.

[Speaker 1] (3:56:02 - 3:56:03)
No.

[Speaker 3] (3:56:03 - 3:56:40)
I don't I'd rather just chew all the walls, I'd rather just lick my nails all day long, they go for a walk and I have met a lot of people who question what's balance and what is that important to me. How does that make me happy? You know money makes me happy.

Yes. People loving me makes me happy. God loving me makes me happy.

So it becomes about me. What I love about dogs is how we how they bring we. Yes.

It's all about the pack for me.

[Speaker 1] (3:56:40 - 3:56:41)
Yes.

[Speaker 3] (3:56:41 - 3:56:45)
My journey is not about the money, money is a byproduct of loving what you do.

[Speaker 1] (3:56:46 - 4:50:28)
Yes. Now also humans the many humans unfortunately they're the only the only opportunity or so they seem to believe where they can actually manifest that connectedness with another being is through their dog for some humans. They can't do it with with people because with people there's the the human mind is always in the way you can you can't sense the goodness in people very often because there's too much stuff going on in their mental emotional field.

With a dog you can sense you can I walk with my dog in the street people often stop and say ah love what's her name what's his name but for a moment there's an outflow of love and perhaps that's the only time on that particular day that they have this outflow of love towards another being. So in the dog doesn't have the the heavy conceptual human mind that in the way of this is why I call dogs guardians of being and when you just look into the eyes of a dog you can there's something that responds deep within to their being so it can it can awaken your own connectedness with being it's being with a dog and that's what why I find this so spiritual to be with them with a dog and that's there's a little book which I'm going to give you or send you a little cartoon book the guardians of being it's all about dogs and I know you feel that very deeply I can see how you can relate to that.

Of course we're not denying pleasurable anticipation there's nothing wrong with pleasurable anticipation as long as it doesn't detract from the way in which you experience the present moment but if the present moment is reduced to something of little value in your mind because your anticipation is has such gravitational pull that it completely takes you out of the present moment in your mind and you into the future and you're expecting some kind of fulfillment there then of course you say I'm looking forward to my vacation there and in the meantime I completely lose awareness of this present moment in my surroundings it's only just peripheral awareness but not really there so that's a different matter if it if the anticipation absorbs so much of your attention that you miss this and that's perhaps we use this as an entry point this meaning here now if you miss this you miss the whole thing because there's never anything but this here and now. That's, some people find that if you really grasp that not just intellectually, intellectually you can say yeah of course it's that's all there's always now but if you really sense the importance of that what is of primary importance here now if you disregard that or always mentally somewhere else only yes sufficiently sufficiently here not to bump into furniture or run over by a car you still have some just a minimum of awareness in the present moment yes okay and but your main occupation is to do with past and future and in the meantime you live here now but you're not really here now because you're looking you're there you're here but you don't want to be here I want to be there you never want to be here and when you finally arrive there perhaps for a very brief moment it's nice I'm there but then the same mind pattern arises again because there when it becomes here turns out not to be all that fulfilling and it's there because the next thing comes up it comes there you cannot you can never deeply penetrate into the here now you are prevented by deeply ingrained mind patterns from really embracing and penetrating into the present moment with your attention and so millions of humans on the planet live almost exclusively through anticipation and memory the older you get the more you live through memory because you get more and more past behind you to remember and you can you can sense you have less and less future so the future is shrinking so you don't think when you reach a certain age maybe you don't think that much anymore you some people still do when I retire then I'll be happy I'm just looking forward to retirement or only another 15 years and then I will have and then I can really enjoy myself in 15 years I will start really living my life and then retirement comes and there you sit on a chair what do I do now who am I now without my job title I'm not important anymore weird what do you look for okay now you go into the past think about it there's a lot to think about so you miss there's always the mind pattern of this and this is the entry point into what we might call the spiritual dimension of life or the transcendent dimension of life it is the entry point into a certain state of consciousness that is quite different from the habitual prevalent egoic state of consciousness that most humans are still trapped in and the egoic state of consciousness needs us it lives through us in future it doesn't know what to do with the present moment or when it faces the present moment it interprets it according to its conditioning in other words it doesn't see it as it is because it sees it through the veil of its conditioning its judgments that has been inherited judgments over many years so the ego has been conditioned to interpret the world every experience in a certain way so when you are seemingly in the present moment because something is happening that requires your attention then of course then you come for more there's a person that says something to you it's challenging or situation is challenging and then even then you are not really in the egoic state you're not really present you are reacting according to the conditioning of your mind so if the past is still interfering even there when you seemingly are facing the present moment it's still facing it through the sometimes very dense way of the past in you so people carry all that around with them their past which becomes their personality becomes the person that makes up who you are or who you think you are so you you carry the past around with you and many elements go into that make up your personality that consists of the accumulated past in your mental emotional field the accumulation of past experiences in your mental emotional field this accumulation is what you usually identify with as you that's me that's what people refer to when they use everybody's favorite pronoun there are all kinds of pronouns these days but everybody's favorite pronoun is I because they use it all the time I I think I know I don't like I like I want I must have I I so what is that I what is it that they refer to each person says I and the I refers to this accumulation of past experiences and past or things that you have that have happened to you things that you have done things that you've experienced acquired and that has left traces in your mind as as memory and forms of conditioning and so that it becomes the person the and that is what humans refer to when they say I now there is a there is a deeper I another I which still most humans except many of you are awakening so you know what I'm talking about there is a deeper I that is that transcends who or what you are as a person welcome and a happy new year to you I wish you success in all your endeavors in the new year do what you can but don't expect ultimate satisfaction through what you do or what you achieve through the doing it can give you temporary satisfaction a feeling of increased aliveness a stronger sense of identity of being somebody a feeling of expansion on the outer level a certain satisfaction which comes with having overcome obstacles generated inner resources that perhaps you didn't know you had until you were faced with these obstacles that's all good but the sense of satisfaction is not a lasting one as long as you know that it's fine because satisfaction ultimately true satisfaction is not arrived at through doing or whatever you achieve through the doing this satisfaction which we could also call happiness joyous aliveness whatever comes from being rather than doing so if you do and do and do but forget to be when you encounter frustrations one after the other but what do I mean when I say forget to be how can you forget to be the forgetfulness of being is to overlook continuously a dimension in you that's always there but in the case of most people never realized so our meditation here of course is all about being going into that dimension within that is formless and timeless that dimension of consciousness where you really step back from thinking because all thinking is also a kind of doing where you step back from thinking another way of putting it rise above thinking and realize beyond all the doing and the successes and failures and conditions and situations of your life and beyond your usual sense of self based on your past there is something else in you and it is that which is continuously overlooked and it's very hard to put it into words because every word is a thought that has become a sound so it's never it you can only know what I'm talking about by realizing that dimension in yourself which is by the way the most important thing in your life to realize that you can only realize it for yourself in the present moment the to know that you are I am consciously to know the beingness that you are and by no I don't mean intellectual or conceptual knowing but a direct realization you don't know the apple by talking about it or describing it or even painting it you can only know the apple by biting into it so in that sense you can only know that in the present moment the realization of beingness becoming aware aware aware of your very being make it conscious it was always there is always there but had been overlooked in all the doing which includes thinking becoming aware of your essential beingness you cannot understand what that means conceptually but only directly so if you understand what I'm talking about then you're there I'm here to take you there so let's step back from thinking don't need it right now and when you don't remember through thinking who you are on that level of mind what is it that remains let's say at this moment if you're not thinking there's a space opens up within you and you don't remember your past because all your past consists of is thoughts and when you're thinking you don't remember your problems because really also problems are thoughts so what is left when that space opens up there is something left but what you cannot really call it anything because it seems to be a nothingness from the point of view of the thinking mind but what is beyond doubt is what's left and that is beyond doubt is that you are there is a presence there and you are that presence and that presence has no form and that's the most amazing realization is that beyond the person that you are more fundamentally you are that underlying presence and in that presence you are nobody in particular you are not something that is defined and that is the source of true satisfaction to know yourself as that which is beyond form and to some people that comes not through a spiritual teaching it can come when the forms of their lives are destroyed life does that periodically it creates and destroys forms when there's loss in your life and sometimes what's left when you lose everything is that sense of beingness of just a conscious presence and then suddenly in amazement you as the conscious presence not as a person are looking at the world and you are amazed how lovely it is when you don't look at the world through the eyes of the person which is thought and past and that is the remembrance of being there was a spiritual teacher in early the early 20th century Gurdjieff who called it self-remembering and he would sometimes interrupt his students when they were doing things talking amongst each other or engaged in this or that kind of doing and he would suddenly shout stop and everybody had to freeze and in that moment they the stop signal was meant for them to remind them of the possibility of remembering that deeper level of who they are where thought subsides and all that's left is the presence that you are it's not a question of living either in that connectedness with being or in the doing that is normal existence in this world it's not either or but both fuse merge together so that even while you do things and even while you think there's still an underlying awareness of presence of that spaciousness within and it is that which brings about the possibility of yes doing if necessary with an intensity of energy but at the same time with a detachment so you do but you are not in the grip of the doing you think but you're not in the grip of thinking you may have emotions but you are not possessed by them there is an awareness of that inner spaciousness beyond the awareness of your presence or presence we could call it it's not yours it's just how we use language there's a presence there and you are that presence and that presence is essentially what is traditionally called divine presence it is the light of the world it is the light of consciousness it is perhaps not perhaps it is not absolutely right to say this is god but it is the light of god because god is absolutely ineffable it god is beyond anything that we could say talk about so that presence is very much like the light of the sun that's why we sometimes use that expression in some sense the light of the sun is the sun the light of the sun is still connected to the sun it's an emanation of the sun but it's not the sun that incredible seemingly inexhaustible energy that gives of itself for billions of years for millions of billions so that's we can compare that of course god is infinitely more than the sun but in our sense perceived universe the closest we can the analogy we can find for god is to call it the sun that's why in some traditional societies there has there was some worshipping of course there's far more to the sun and so then we know that's another story so there's the sun and there's the light of the sun and so the presence is the light of the one the god and you are that if a totally disastrous life brings you to a point of awakening now retrospectively suddenly it fulfilled a purpose suffering in your life if it still arises use it so that the ego gets burned up by the suffering so to speak the ego gets burned up uh in this fire of suffering now we can call this conscious suffering that's a very interesting concept conscious suffering when suffering arises become aware of it and accept that it's there in the form of fear anxiety regret you have self-pity you have unhappy sense of self complaining of your life many forms of suffering you've lost things you don't know things that you had identified with taken away from you who am i now i'm nobody i'm nobody well that's great be nobody more completely realize fully you're nobody list you're nobody mess i don't know who i am anymore i've lost everything all the things i've worked for be gone everything is so pointless or their mind is still talking it's all been for nothing it's all meaningless meaningless this is your mind talking don't believe in the things it says but it continues talking many humans in this world are suffering from what we could call nihilism i don't know if you know that word nihilism nihilism means the belief that everything is absolutely and utterly pointless that's a deep form of suffering nihilism it doesn't make what's the point of it or just this awful life of mine is put the whole world is pointless it's so awful and that's a very deep suffering the total lack of meaning everything is arbitrary random and meaninglessness is a mental disease that is afflicting millions of humans it's it's because everybody the mainstream culture still believes it's and it goes back to the 19th century it goes back to darwin darwin origin of species he said life life evolved which undoubtedly is true but he said life evolved but the evolution of life on this planet is an arbitrary random course of events molecules and atoms at random coming together and forming life forms over millions of years random the idea of randomness in the theory of evolution put forward by darwin and others the idea of randomness means it there is no purpose or intelligence behind it whatsoever it's a random process in other words it's the belief that everything that all life on this planet has no meaning it just is is a meaningless conglomeration of atoms and molecules it's ultimately meaningless that basically is the underlying assumption behind the theory of evolution that many people still believe and it has seeped into mainstream culture and even people never even heard of darwin it has seeped into their belief system that we live in a meaningless universe that's a before that happened we had certain religious beliefs so we had there was some meaning and all those a lot of that perhaps was ideological and ego-driven nevertheless in the ancient religion there is the access to the transcendent is still there here and there so there's still there were still little openings into the transcendent even though many forms of religion developed into ideological belief systems that strengthened the ego nevertheless religion still carried on still carry the the secret of transcendence is still there hiding within the religions and that became inaccessible to many humans so now we have the pandemic of nihilism this is one of the pandemics far worse than any physical pandemic that everything the beef that everything is meaningless so and you can have a meaning in your life that is very limited like for many people have the meaning okay i want to have a career that gives you limited meaning in your personal life i'm working for a career nothing wrong with that i'm working to create a better life for myself and my family that's also wonderful and great i'm working to achieve recognition in this world etc etc that's fine too but at some point a meaning that is purely personal may begin to lose its power so that let's say you've spent two or three decades working for your career which is nothing wrong with it at some point you may arrive at a point where your career doesn't mean anything anymore or you lose it that you lose your career and your status or it is it consumes you so completely that you become ill with stress or in some other way turns into something that's not satisfying at all that actually creates suffering so something can give you limited meaning for a while for years and then suddenly turn out to be ultimately meaningless so and some people suddenly wake up and say all my life some people fall ill seriously ill and then they look back on their life and see all this was so pointless accumulating possessions why did i do that what was the point in that all the things that i was so anxious about when there's now there's let's say they're seriously ill now all the things that i was so anxious about that were created what was that was so unnecessary and pointless all the things that i've been striving for are ultimately pointless that can be an opening suddenly wow the limited personal meaning which was fine it's better than no meaning at all to have a personal meaning in your life better than no meaning at all but ultimately that that's not satisfying in the long term you have to go deeper to a deeper meaning that transcends who you are as a person and that is am i aligned with the purpose of the universe that that is the ultimate true meaning am i aligned with the purpose and what is the purpose of the universe the purpose of the universe is consciousness bringing more consciousness into this dimension that's the purpose of the universe bringing more consciousness into this dimension am i aligned with that that's and it then if that is the case if you're aligned with that you're you're a bringer of consciousness a bringer of light that is the ultimate true purpose and it could be that your personal purpose and the deeper purpose can go together that's fine so you can you can have a career and yet it's not totally ego-dominated while you are active working you bring in the light of consciousness you do things in your work that bring more consciousness into this dimension that's wonderful you can so you can have it is not necessarily a case of either having a career or being aligned with with universal purpose which is you can bring the two together that's perfectly that's that's the balance between the balance between being and doing as i sometimes call it the balance between being and bringing those two together but so the the purpose there's only one true purpose in your life and that you have to discover that and that is am i aligned with the consciousness and am i a bringer of consciousness so that's the end of nihilism is that and it no longer matters your entire past becomes relatively unimportant when you realize the meaning of life is to be a bringer of consciousness let's say your entire past was one disaster after another it happens some people to some people's life is like unfortunately was like that let's say you've you've ended up in prison because you did one wrong and bad thing after another and but then you look back in your so-called life and say my god that was a disaster my entire life was just a disaster and okay but at this moment i realize the consciousness that i am and the i've all the suffering that i have created for myself and others all the suffering i have created for myself and others was part of the egoic dream the delusion the egoic delusion and the conditioning that i came into this world with and then you can you awaken at this moment if a totally disastrous life brings you to a point of awakening now the whole thing was great because it suddenly has a purpose retrospectively all the disasters brought you to this moment of awakening so in retrospect what was totally absurd and meaningless suddenly it fulfilled a purpose the past can suddenly be realized as having fulfilled its purpose by creating the suffering that led to your awakening so there's no regret anymore about the past it all made sense so it's the meaning arises retrospectively it only remains absurd and disastrous if the awakening doesn't happen then you or you're trapped in the dreadful dream continue to be trapped in it wow so be aligned with universal purpose that is the ultimate birth no matter what you do no matter how it expresses itself through you that doesn't matter but realize that as and if you want to look at your life in terms of failure and success as many people do is my life a failure is my life a success how do you what criterion do you use for failure or success do you allow this world to tell you whether you're a failure success to a large extent this world is insane so are you allowing an insane world to tell you whether your last life is a failure or success well no if this world cannot tell you then what is it obviously the only true criterion is whether you are conscious or not in this moment if you're conscious in this moment instead of being totally immersed in the dream of your conditioned unawareness the fictitious person if you are conscious in this moment then that is the greatest and only true success there could be in this life your entire past becomes irrelevant if it has taken you to this point in that sense it is relevant but ultimately it's irrelevant you're awake in this moment you represent the awakened state of consciousness in humanity well that sucks nothing else is success if you even want to use the term success but i would probably recommend even here not to use the term success because that would imply that there's somebody there that says i have achieved consciousness and again you would create a sense of another another conceptual identity in your mind another form of ego that says i am conscious other than these people all these people are not conscious i have achieved something i have achieved awakening that's a delusion again because the eye that claims to have achieved awakening is the ego again but that claims some kind of achievement the true meaning you can only awaken if the ego subsides and you become on in the ego becomes transparent then awakening happens but it's not an achievement there's nobody there to have achieved anything it's something that happened through you the ego in some way created it in a negative sense because the ego created the suffering that led to the awakening in that sense perhaps the ego did achieve it but ultimately to claim i have achieved awakening is a delusion it's an ego delusion so nihilism then is something it's a disease that again a form of suffering that can lead to an awakening it can also lead to suicide it can lead to despair until you die in many cases it does it can lead to bitterness and resentment can lead to drug consume drug to desensitize yourself against the suffering of meaninglessness you take drugs you become addicted and this is an epidemic of drug addiction around these days um there's a desperate very urgent need for the awakening of humanity the awakening of humans there's a great urgency now because we're moving into a critical collectively critical situation on this planet and that is absolutely necessary for awakening nobody awakens in their comfort zone nobody awakens when the conditions are when the your mind might say these are the optimum conditions for awakening nobody disturbs me i get peace and quiet all around me no particular worldly challenges to distract me from my meditation periods excellent food everything pure and clean two massages every day and getting rubbed with essential oils fantastic conditions for spiritual awakening that you're saying in this spa where you pay two thousand dollars per day for to create let's say you've won the lottery so you go to the spa optimum fantastic conditions for awakening and would you awaken there you could become very peaceful it would be just very pleasant very pleasant and and you would be very much like a like a plant that grows from seed in a protected environment like a greenhouse just the right temperature and the plant grows very quickly and blossoms but it's very weak the moment the greenhouse let's say the plant is then put outside immediately it would shrink and collapse it hasn't developed the inner strength to to exist in the real world so for awakening the challenges that you experience in your daily life now are actually your best the optimum way of awakening is to use the challenges you're facing in your daily life instead of believing if i could only find an ideal situation then i would easily awaken spiritually no you wouldn't you would actually after some initial very pleasant experiences in this imaginary spa you would actually your level of consciousness would go down you would gradually go back to you go to sleep it's so pleasant

[Speaker 14] (4:50:35 - 4:50:42)
presence presence only arises when it's necessary when it's necessary

[Speaker 1] (4:50:44 - 5:26:17)
nothing comes unless it's needed it needs there needs to be a call for it uh in other words it there needs to be a gap between the current situation and what is needed to remedy the current situation things need to be difficult otherwise change doesn't happen that forest trail that leads up to this building that would be enough all you need walk it consciously four times a day what else do you need enough walking it consciously means one step at a time it means perceiving without labeling beauty even without labeling it beauty the depths you're walking the depths in which the perception happens and the step you're taking at this moment is not a means to an end if you're walking along the forest trail in order to get here this could happen every step that you take is a means to an end and that's not conscious the end is mind mind projected future i need to get there so it could happen especially if you're late he may be hurrying maybe he started speaking already and i'm missing something important but you're missing that step which definitely is more important than what the speaker is saying at that moment the amazing thing is you can actually walk fast also you don't you're not reduced to walking slowly always now to walk consciously you could even hurry to get somewhere and you're really maybe there is little time you maybe you need to catch a train or whatever it may be and maybe you need to very quickly now you have five minutes to pack your suitcase and that can be very beautiful to still be present even when there's fast movement and enjoy every movement of that the energy movement of it it's an energy dance and there you are going through your drawers picking this and that and not even without when you're present you don't thought is just an interference because all you do in the state of presence is you see you look and in that perception the looking reveals to you what is needed without going through the complicated and complicating process of thinking certain things yes thought may be required but you may be surprised for how many things thought is actually more of a hindrance than a help the ability to just look in that clarity of clear the clear space of awareness you look at any situation in that looking again it's the same kind of looking that we are pointing to here when we speak of looking at a tree looking at a flower but if there's pressure on you due to some external challenge it could be something as simple as needing to get ready it's late or more of a pressure some situation then you may find that the alertness that is there as you look intensifies so facing an imminent danger coming towards you that looking would intensify and out of that action then comes so it could be a simple thing like needing to see what is it that i need to pack i only have five minutes and then see simply look and you take what you know beyond thought what is needed and you take very effective way of handling things if you started to think you would become stressed i only have five minutes and i have to work out what i'm going to pack and you're projecting yourself to the end of the five minutes when you need to be ready it's so much pressure produced but there's only this movement now so any situation clear looking at any situation that may appear complex reveals to you what is needed if anything is needed if any action is needed you will find yourself doing it or you will find yourself not doing anything there are situations that are better left alone in one's life and knowing what situation requires action and what situation is better left alone you could agonize over that if you start thinking for a long time should i or shouldn't i if i do on the other hand but so the ability to come to a situation and simply see that is that there is a space of

awareness it is intelligence operating but it is not intelligence as most humans know it it is not the intelligence that does the crossword puzzles the intelligence that is good at solving iq tests although it may come in even there i don't know it hasn't in my case it is an intelligence that works not analytically it doesn't break things down into bits of information because the human mind has certain similarities with a computer it analyzes breaks it down the thinking mind but then there's another there's a depth there also there's a greater intelligence than the personal mind and that is there when awareness arises and becomes part of the perception that is silent intelligence operating unconditioned consciousness operating in your life things get much easier then needing to work things out a lot of that falls away so how it's so important we started with such a simple thing like looking at a tree and allow the perception to arise in this place of awareness and then situations you're not always in such peaceful surroundings as here some people would say it is easier to be present here because you're not being challenged that may be true for some quite a few for others it is true that they become more present when they are challenged some people are drawn into unconsciousness the moment the first talent comes into their lives which could be leaving here and stepping onto the ferry or missing the ferry and so they could be at this peaceful four days five whatever it is here and suddenly a little thing goes not the way it's supposed to go and the reactivity it comes back could do oh my god or it could be that the first challenge comes whatever it may be and you go oh you recognize immediately the isness of that it it's the suchness of that missed the ferry and that moment is good your retreat can last a little longer cooperate with the movement of life internally always great power lies in that behind anything that goes wrong if you cooperate with that movement that the mind calls wrong cooperate internally with that movement that the mind has labeled bad you can be sure that it turns around or something reveals itself that is of a greater good than the good that you seem to have lost in that situation that you call bad there's always hiding something underneath that which the mind had labeled bad when you continue to be trapped in that labeling mind you don't even see that it can't it doesn't reveal most of the time it can then not reveal itself to you you wouldn't even see it because you've already decided that this situation is bad and then the good that's hiding more often than not you would not even see or it cannot even come through so we are going back now to the forest trail where it all starts where you take one step at a time there's such beauty in walking not surprisingly buddhists have developed walking meditation to simply bring awareness into something that otherwise would be reduced to something meaningless a means to an end automatic anything you can bring awareness to that otherwise that is often with you are always with you but usually you wouldn't even know it because it's always there or it's usually an unconscious movement and those are beautiful meditations there's no real technique here you're simply bringing consciousness to what's already there so i recommend for the rest of the time that particularly when you walk here between your room and the beach or on the beach or between here along the trail to be conscious of walking of each step you don't need to change the way you walk when buddhists learn walking meditation it's fine they do it their way you do it very kind of every walk is a kind of very careful movement of the foot the heel goes down the rest of the foot goes down and the heel goes up and then the foot lifts up let's keep it more simple to simply watch that's the way the walking that's taking place now the other one is fine too but here let's just do the normal walk and be conscious of each step the simplicity of each step and the beauty that's in there where does that beauty come from is it in that step well to some extent but it really arises out of the awareness that sense of aliveness that sense of beingness of presence that is there with every step it's not the step in itself it is because awareness arises and the step happens within that spaciousness of awareness and that awareness is beauty beyond form that awareness is sacred then every step is sacred that you take there is a there's something that you cannot describe that is there in there is a quality in every step an aliveness and that's only walking and of course as you walk you also perceive there's that and you watch it's the end of believing that all you are is a person an exclusively personalized sense of self a walking to use the expression of that writer one could almost say you're just a walking narrative a story with your memories and heavy and so you're walking as consciousness a field of consciousness perceiving you are a field of consciousness it is a lessening this is why we are here as you spend time here there's a lessening of the personal dimension of your life not that you lose it completely if you lost it completely all at once it would be very disconcerting so that doesn't usually happen it happened to some people but probably not to you and it's not necessary there is a lessening of deriving your sense of self from your personal life and having to carry that around with you and remember it all the time me and my story and it hasn't worked out yet it hasn't quite completed yet so the future constantly hanging over your head is a threat oh god what is going to happen to me if you walk around like that it's a burden just to be alive and you could you can walk in the forest with a threat over your head of your future of course it can come in when you fall back into mind you realize the future is uncertain oh my god maybe i'm not going to get what i need to complete my life or maybe what i have now might be lost and so on so the that exclusively personal me there's a becomes transparent as awareness arises and more and more you go through life and you go into situations not just when everything is fine you will find it arising arising also in when situations are difficult and you may find that whereas before any challenge or difficulty in your life and the world is full of that you go back into the world and before you know it it will face you in one day with five challenges ten challenges often in the form of people occasionally it's some missed some missed ferry but it's in the form of people more often than not and the challenges come and you may find what before you the challenge pulled you back into reactivity and the miracle is when a certain level of presence has been reached within yourself there comes a point when it is less likely that a challenge will pull you back into unconscious reactivity then you you complain you are a personal self complaining that the the world is not complying with your wants and desires complaining in your head or out aloud the world is not doing what you want it to do basically that's the challenges are it's not going the way it's supposed to go and so there's the complaining and that's the reactivity of the egoic sense of self and fear and when a certain level of presence has been reached which may be the case with most of you you will find a change happening and that change is that the challenge could still pull you into yes occasionally it still pulls you into unconsciousness but there's a different tendency now and that is for the challenge to intensify the alertness that is that state of spacious presence that is the non-reactive state and so there now there's the ability to look at the challenge of the situation in that clarity of awareness and you have accessed an intelligence that is greater than the accumulated intelligence and that intelligence is not confined to your head that intelligence is connected to the totality so it can even operate and seemingly come in as an external factor once you have accessed it it not just operates from within you that intelligence it also operates from without and that often happens as just the right thing happening for that situation such as is the case in synchronistic events and so on or just simply at the right moment what is needed is suddenly suddenly it appears and sometimes almost it won't fall down from the sky but it's sometimes you see how could that have happened so just where did that come from and the intelligence operates both ways this is the the beauty of that intelligence you have accessed the totality you are no longer cutting yourself off by tying yourself into a little knot within the web of the whole the little knot claiming an independent existence for itself and it's called me and the rest of the web of the interconnectedness of all things that's the world the rest of the world welcome to our live meditation i'm in sao paulo brazil at the moment i gave a talk here last night it's seven o'clock in the evening here and the sun is going to set maybe quite soon you may have heard the story about that somebody coming to a zen master and asking him to explain what zen is all about and the zen master said come and have a cup of tea and he prepared the cup of tea and poured the hot water in the pot and then he served tea to his guest who wanted to know about zen and he poured the tea into his cup and he didn't stop pouring until the cup was overflowing and the guest thought that the zen master might have been absent-minded and said stop stop the cup is overflowing can't you see and the zen master said like this cup your mind is full of ideas viewpoints knowledge and all kinds of stuff it's overflowing with stuff how can i teach you zen or how can i show you zen unless you first empty your cup now of course that means having an open mind one could say but how do you have an open mind your mind is already cluttered with knowledge real knowledge pseudo knowledge most knowledge is perspectives but how can you empty your mind of all knowledge is that even a good thing well all that's needed is in this present moment to become so aligned with this moment and accept it the way it is so deeply that the mind comes to a stop cessation of thinking doesn't mean you lost your knowledge it's still somewhere you haven't lost your memory and yet you have all the space that contains all that memory you've become aware of the space which is consciousness itself so when you become aware of stillness you can become aware of the space of consciousness the space of consciousness becomes aware of itself and that's the deeper meaning of the now first people think that the now is what happens in the now but the true meaning is that the now is the space in which it happens that's why the now itself cannot change its consciousness itself and you are that and of course space is just a word there isn't really a word that can adequately adequately describe that they're just pointers pointer to the city that way says that way it is it's not the city or as the buddhists say the pointer to the finger pointing to the moon is not the moon we use space which isn't something that we seem to perceive in the external world to describe an inner something inner so if you were a room and somebody asked you who are you it's a strange analogy i know but so if you were if you were this room or that if the room were had consciousness the room would talk about itself who are you well well i'm this is the wall and the ceiling and the floor and the furniture in the room that seems to me what the room is it's so easy to forget what the essence of the room is and that is the space so we can use that analogy to point to something within you you are also filled with furniture the ceiling the floor the walls maybe that could be your physical body and all the your mental content would be the furniture in the room and most people people's mind is cluttered so it's a room that's full of clutter some useful things and many useless things you may also notice if you are that room that sight time comes when little cracks appear in the wall and ceiling as the room gets older

[Speaker 4] (5:26:17 - 5:29:17)
um hello um i would like to ask about um physical pain um your expression of ease of being it really speaks to me and um relaxed awareness but i feel something that always pushes me out of that is the physical pain i find inside just too much most of the time what are you what do you experience what kind of physical pain are you experiencing um stomach pain bubbles and a lot of time a lot of the time just my whole body your whole body aches yes and while i'm here um there is an immense inner body feeling it's like like eckhart says having the socket just put in is that painful it's so intense that it's sometimes too much but i can still rest in it but then the physical pain is so strong at the same time are you in pain right now in this moment when i'm speaking a little bit when i'm sitting down much more um i've tried to shake it out it seems to help a little bit but i wonder are there things i can do or just being with it i see there is a lot of resistance too and then watching the resistance makes the resistance just stronger i stiffen up and you stiffen up when the pain happens you mean no the pain is there before but trying to watch the pain makes it worse and watching the pain makes it worse yes is that what you said yeah and the tensing up of the whole body gets worse and yeah um because you don't want to feel it right yeah there's it remains you want it gone right i want it to be over i'm aware of that but i just can't avoid the thought of wanting to be it to be way it's it's just a circle and the whole body goes into a stress reaction and yeah yeah how to be with that i mean i know there is resistance i see it but i can't stop it either it's okay so if you can't stop the resistance

[Speaker 2] (5:29:17 - 5:33:19)
can you accept resistance sometimes a split second okay no can you stop resistance

again accept it i mean if the resistance is there then you got to accept resistance if you can't surrender to the pain surrender to the sensations if we drop the label pain see immediately when we feel a sensation in our body and it's painful our minds goes pain no i don't want it and then we contract more and then the pain is even greater if we let go of the label pain and just accept and feel the sensation because all it is it's sensation the moment we label it it's almost like we make it a solid form does that make sense does that make sense it's like when you are looking at some flowers and you go that's a rose well it isn't a rose it's a concept rose it's a name we call it rose but it's not a rose it's like we we stop the flow the natural flow and the connection of this beauty right here so the pain that's happening inside of you and my guess is you know how our emotions are so connected to our body and our thoughts are so connected to our body there's probably something in your conditioned self and habit forming of thoughts maybe some negativity as well and that accumulates the energy stays stuck in the body and eventually does lead to pain and maybe eventually it leads to some sort of illness so accepting what accepting means you accept the present moment you accept the form of the present moment as if it would last for eternity that's accepting the sensation of pain the pain that you have or anything that you have true acceptance means that you are willing to feel this emotion this pain in your body forever the new earth this i'm writing

[Speaker 1] (5:33:19 - 5:35:51)
a little bit more these days and that may turn into a book it seems the provisional title is a new earth but it's only a provisional title a new earth of course the words come from the bible they appear in the book of revelations which also called the apocalypse which tells you about everything collapsing the whole man-made order of things collapsing that's what it is about symbolically and then when it's all collapsed the writer says and i saw a new heaven and a new earth out of the collapsed world rises a new world so that's in a way where the title comes from a new earth and i saw a new heaven and a new earth that's what it says and the way i see that is a new heaven is a new consciousness that is arising this is causal in humans it's the transformation of human consciousness it's the inner heaven is the inner world the new earth is the outer manifestation of the transformed consciousness so the question and what of the new earth the answer to that is we don't need to be concerned about the new earth all we need to be concerned about is the new heaven and that's why we are here because heaven is the inner the inner transformation of consciousness the outer the externalization of that as a different world that humans create once the shift has happened that is obvious that politically economically socially in every respect the structures the man-made structures and even the buildings and the cities and so on will be very different from that which the egoic consciousness creates so our gathering here is the arising of a new heaven the inner the rest comes automatically

[Speaker 9] (5:36:05 - 5:36:39)
um i'm wondering if you can talk about um how to tell um the difference between limitations that we're perceiving with our mind and limitations that life is presenting to us and um um and also about um discerning needs needs that we're imagining and needs that are

[Speaker 1] (5:36:40 - 5:40:14)
really being called for real needs or imaginary needs and uh limitations that we are creating with our minds or real meditation uh limitations yes like um where surrender may be yeah yeah well the needs are really the true needs are not that many the true needs are for survival of the body air light some food shelter clothing um some heat in depending what climate you live in uh heating water uh those are true needs what goes beyond that is probably not a true need not a need but something else let's just briefly look at limitations if i if i say i'm going to train for the next olympics because i want to get a gold medal in 100 meters am i it and my mind says no you're wrong is that a true limitation or am i imagining

it it's it is of course a true limitation some extreme new age people might say if you really wanted it you could do it but i'm telling you no so there are certainly real limitations in your life and the example i just gave it's relatively easy to see the difference between what to recognize a true limitation in other cases it may not be so easy to see whether it's a limitation that you just believe in i can't do it because you've been conditioned not to believe in yourself or your power the power that can come through you that you need to look carefully into your life to see which one applies now the answer always becomes more interesting when there's a the question if you can perhaps explain if whether this or in what way the question might apply to your life in a concrete way

[Speaker 9] (5:40:16 - 5:40:55)
um well i have had some challenges with illness yes and i'm starting to understand that there's a story underlying that yes so um sometimes i get a little bit confused about whether i'm just perceiving what's arising and um giving an energy or um if it's actually real uh so there's a physical an illness or um i've had some challenges like neurological and

[Speaker 1] (5:40:56 - 5:41:01)
and and you discovered something in your mind that may be connected to that

[Speaker 9] (5:41:03 - 5:41:38)
um i think so like um there's definitely intensity that happens when i start thinking about it seems to generate um a lot more constriction yes it makes it worse yes whatever i'm perceiving um but sometimes i i'll sort of observe that i'm thinking about it and then react to that with a kind of a like it'll be a harsh reaction don't think that which doesn't help

[Speaker 1] (5:41:43 - 5:44:50)
well with illness then uh the most helpful approach is to accept whatever it is that you experience at this moment it's always this moment by the way you might have noticed to accept whatever you experience at this moment which some people believe means to accept your illness no because illness is already is a concept in the mind the reality of the illness is only whatever you experience at this moment that's the reality the term illness is already a mind-created concept if you focus on that that mind-created concept proliferates and grows and then the the mental image of illness or i am ill or i am a sufferer of this illness grows the more you focus on that so when i say accept what is some people misinterpret it and they believe that they need to accept their illness that's not the case you don't need to accept your illness because the very idea of illness is an idea in the mind because there is no illness there's only there's what you experience at this moment is the reality of the illness even if the doctor tells you it's this or it's called this or that and it doesn't look good it's still the case that the reality of it is this moment and that's what you accept internally that's what is and that can always be reduced to discomfort or pain or some form of disability that's about your weakness that's that's what that's what and that's what you stay with and then you can go from there treatment is a different matter you may seek conventional treatment you may seek alternative treatment or if you're a christian scientist you will seek a totally different kind of treatment that's not there at all but i'm not recommending anything that's all up to you i'm not saying this is wrong or this is right the important thing is not to create a mental image of illness to relinquish that as much as possible so that you don't focus on that stay with the present moment stay with what is and stay with the presence with the the attention the the field of presence that is who you are beyond the person so and then allow the challenge of the illness to push you into the present moment more

[Speaker 8] (5:45:22 - 5:45:45)
when i had been in my darkest moment i happened to read the power of now what eckhart tolle had to say about happiness had been the impetus to go on this journey

i was in vancouver to meet him so you were there on a park bench for two years and you you slept on the park bench

[Speaker 1] (5:45:46 - 5:48:33)
rarely but i did spend most of the days on park benches in parks different parks in london did you eat three meals a day no no one meal a day if i was lucky oh as you sit here is it possible for you to simply watch what's happening around you without adding any interpretation to it to just be present with what is and you get a taste of what it's like to be on a park bench and with nothing further needing to be added to this moment the sounds sights people sound of the water the light just allow it to be as it is with that comes peace you don't get continuously drawn into events and thoughts and emotions and reactions you're the wider space in which all these things happen you're the awareness behind it without which none of this would be here to just be atoms and molecules in space you are the awareness that enables this entire world to be and so knowing that that is who you truly are not through a concept but through the actual realization of stepping back and allowing the phenomenal world to be as it is at this moment allowing this moment to be as it is that takes you deeper into yourself and you may not be notice there's a certain peace in the background that happens an alertness is required for this you need to stay alert to what is to sense perceptions and the energy behind sense perceptions which is the consciousness the alertness it's there without the alertness you will drift off into thinking and then you think about the next what's going to happen to me tomorrow there is a place for making plans but not right here on the park bench this isn't the place for thinking about tomorrow because you miss all this beauty and aliveness around you

[Speaker 2] (5:48:36 - 5:48:42)
and then you're cold not even think about it as a cold no it just is the sensation of it

[Speaker 1] (5:48:42 - 5:54:38)
you don't even need to call it cold and then that's okay too it's okay there's no the reactivity goes out of life against always against something of wanting to clutch at something what about the search for meaning now you notice that just a moment ago you were in that state of alert presence and it never takes long for another thought to come in and ask a question because thought cannot tolerate the state of presence so it will always come in and say yeah but what about i don't quite understand yet can you tell me what does it all mean oh so it wants to add something it wants to control in some way by understanding what this all means now if you can let go just for a moment not for the rest of your life just for this moment let go of the need to understand anything so that you're truly present in this moment so you don't need to do it for the next hour or the next 10 minutes just right now just what is but don't forget yourself because you are the consciousness behind it you are the space the presence can you feel that your body is alive yeah so stay with that feeling and then perceive it's easier to perceive without interpretation when you can feel that your body is alive you feel the inner aliveness throughout your body so some attention some of your attention is there the rest is on the outside world that roots you in the present moment it anchors you in the present moment and if a thought comes into your mind you can watch that also just the same way as you watch a dog walking past you can watch a thought arising in your mind and you don't have to follow it to where it wants to go so you simply watch the thought that arises in your mind and let it go in the same way that the dog walks past you or if you choose to you can follow the thought and then you can say i just thought of another question can that do that too but you see the possibility that also in the same way that you observe the outer world here as you sit on the bench you can also observe the inner world the world of thoughts and emotions thoughts want to arise continuously and that's fine that's what they do but there's no need to get drawn into each thought that arises and immediately go with it to where it wants to go otherwise you're just you're always following every

thought like like a dog following the scent does it matter which no it doesn't matter you can experiment you can experiment with thought you can follow some thoughts and you can watch other thoughts you find out for yourself you can play you can see that you are bigger than your thoughts you don't have to be dominated by your thoughts because thoughts create a lot of lots of problems too unnecessary problems and they can obscure the aliveness of life at this moment there are many people walking around here who are thinking about other things they're thinking about the next one they're thinking about tomorrow but this is not the place for that there is a place for planning and thinking about tomorrow but why spoil the beauty of this and the aliveness of this we're thinking about the next moment is that going to be better than this one what this is it it's not going to get that much better this is what could could be more beautiful than this it's the awakening of something within you that is deeper than thought that's really the main thing and that's already there you just didn't know it why didn't i know this it's a deep-seated habit of being totally identified with thinking it's the human condition which could be described as lost in thought because up to now evolution has been unconscious it was automatic but now evolution is consciously chosen by a species and that's a revolutionary thing and you are part of that

[Speaker 8] (5:54:47 - 5:54:51)
which i can still make movies i can still have a girlfriend oh yes even if i'm

[Speaker 1] (5:54:51 - 5:55:05)
yes it's beautiful it's a playground you play around with the world you can you can you take action you relate but you're not lost in it most humans are

[Speaker 8] (5:55:05 - 5:55:16)
lost in it what about pain i mean physical pain or emotional pain of losing someone most of the

[Speaker 1] (5:55:16 - 6:03:20)
human pain is psychologically created there's an enormous amount of psychological pain suffering i call that when suffering goes and there's a possibility for humans now to live without suffering that is the possibility there may still be some physical pain it may be that you get tooth or bodily pains from time to time suffering is another level that lies on top of the pain suffering implies a story a little me that is unhappy a mentally constructed entity a little me that has an unhappy story that is its identity and that creates an enormous amount of suffering not only do you make yourself suffer you make people around you suffer to be at one with life is to be at one with the present moment because that's the only place where life can be found you cannot leave the space of now that stays with you whatever you're doing wherever you go your life has never been not now and will never be not now are you making the present moment into an enemy some way internally through thinking about some something which is nothing nothing to do with now i need to figure something out well first of all be here fully and then whatever is needed in your life comes it comes out of the power that dwells in the present moment that most people overlook there's an enormous power here which is the power of life itself and most people look for something and ignore this and the power of life itself is inseparable from who you are in the depth of your being many times you will forget but the moment you realize that you forgot there's a possibility of saying ah yes i lost the present moment and there's a possibility of choosing to re-enter the present moment the first thing that happens when you re-enter the present moment you become more aware of sense perceptions you suddenly there's a greater alertness and then you become more aware of the aliveness in your body you feel the life within it's like the entire vibrational frequency of your body shifts when you become present it's a different state of consciousness more alert more alive and many times you will lose it and then you remember and that's good enough now they don't believe the mind when it tells you oh you can't do it now you've got too much on your mind you can't be bothered with the present moment

those are just thoughts there's no need for you to follow those thoughts just watch them they are thoughts that the mind throws up you don't need to believe in them because they're not true when the mind tells you you can't be present now because you've got too much on your mind then okay you can say okay let's see if that's true then you feel there's an aliveness in my hand there's an aliveness in my body there's beauty all around and you become present again alertness the alertness returns and when when there is time to think then you think then you sit down and say okay let's think uh what plane am i going to catch tomorrow what time do i have to go to the airport what do i have to do now pick up the phone make a phone call fine that's beautiful you're not losing yourself in future it's practical matters and once you've done the practical matters you've thought about you've planned your next week then you come back to the now the inner transformation is not really about finding lots of answers to your questions but finding a new relationship to thought where not every thought so seduces you anymore and if a beautiful girl runs past and you find yourself following her you don't have to think oh i shouldn't be watching this girl because i'm spiritual now no if you can let go just for a of your life just for this moment let go of the need to understand anything so that you're truly present in this moment it's just right now just what is but don't forget yourself because you are the consciousness behind it you are the space the presence life wants to support you but first you need to be open to life so you've probably come here with lots of questions but let's start off with me asking you just one question and then you can ask yours okay you may ask how old you are yes i'm 24 and if not that it matters just so 24 means you've already had quite a few life experiences you've been to school you've fallen in love i think so fallen out of love i think so and have had all kinds of experiences perhaps in different places meeting different people different circumstances the body probably has been well most of the time but you've also experienced maybe one or two illnesses now is there in all those things that you have experienced so far which is a constant continuously changing flux of things is there any ingredient in there that was always not the same that didn't change i'd just like to ask you to see if you can find any ingredient in all the things that you have experienced so far that's always been the same let's we could start perhaps by asking could it be the things around you obviously not because the things around you change continuously could it be your thoughts no because the thoughts that go through your mind also change continuously could it be your feelings or your emotions no you pro as you know they also change all the time so what is it if anything that hasn't changed it doesn't change is there one ingredient in all your experiences good or bad up or down that's always been there

[Speaker 8] (6:03:24 - 6:03:32)
well i think i've been in in here i've been inside now when you say i what does that mean

[Speaker 1] (6:03:32 - 6:04:14)
what what is that i now because we've already seen it can't be your thoughts because they change all the time your feelings or emotions they change all the time your sense experiences things that you perceive around you change all the time so wherever we look there's change so when you say i and point to the eye as that which doesn't change it cannot be what happens to you it cannot be the thoughts that go through your mind it cannot be the emotions the feelings that you experience so what is the nature of that i what does that word mean or point to

[Speaker 8] (6:04:16 - 6:04:23)
so listening that's what here is what's behind

[Speaker 1] (6:04:23 - 6:39:30)
and what's behind the thoughts what's behind the sense perceptions what's behind all the experiences and the feelings and so on so the question that i'm asking does not really require an abstract answer but i want you to actually feel or sense

inside yourself that which doesn't change no matter where you go no matter what you do or who you're with or whether the body is well or unwell when i ask you said it's i and i've asked what's the nature of that i and now you may be stuck for words but you said one word and that was listening now in when you're truly listening there is a certain alert spaciousness because otherwise you're not truly listening and so if that had to be expressed through a gesture it could be you could raise a finger gently and say listen so i say i say to you listen and you listen there's a moment of spacious awareness and there's no thought in it so when you said listening you are actually getting very close to the nature of who you truly are underneath all the circumstances of your life and circumstances includes thoughts and emotions if you don't find that who or what you are underneath all the circumstances no matter how many questions you ask and how many good answers you get won't help you very much and there will be no end to the questioning because every answer generates further questions so we are talking about yeah becoming familiar with a different state of consciousness not that that has never been there it's always been there because it's the eye but it's always been overlooked because the circumstances things that happen to you and your thinking and your emotions have such overwhelming pulling force that they always pull your attention in completely and so attention is that which is there when you're truly listening and in the moment of attention there's no thinking but there is an aware presence so the answer that you gave is absolutely right not everybody would have put it this way but listening points to who you truly are underneath all the things that continuously change now i'd like you to as we speak this is not an intellectual discussion because if if this were intellectual you should have gone to a professor of philosophy or some intellectual at a university and ultimately you get many answers but all those answers will always make you end up with more questions because they don't get you to the core of who you are so let's start off with that and what we are pointing to is a sense of i of beingness that is deeper than anything that happens in your life that's always there has always been there right now and that is closely related to the state of attentive listening to get in touch with that to sense it underneath it all there is a timeless presence even in 50 years time in 60 years time when this body is getting old and this body the cells it won't be the same body the cells of the body will have been renewed many times there's not there won't be a single cell materially there won't be a single thing that's left in 50 years even though you may still be alive there won't be a single thing that's left materially that's here now every cell will have been renewed and so the body will have grown older and yet something timeless deep within will still be exactly the same as it is now untouched by time i i before it becomes this or that because the moment you say i am american i am this or that i am a professional or i am a jobless person or i am a millionaire or i'm a homeless person those all form identifications with changing circumstances and so people look for something there to provide permanency in their lives they want to identify with something that they finally can say there that's it i found it what they really want to say is i found myself finally so they look for themselves through external possessions through acquired knowledge through an accumulation of experiences or sexual encounters some people derive their sense of self from that the more women you can conquer or seduce or have sex with the more you feel i'm i'm getting somewhere of course after a few years you realize it's not getting you anywhere not if you are nothing will get you anywhere which is means to yourself if you're looking for yourself in any experience and that's the fallacy of most people they look for themselves in changing circumstances they look for themselves in their thought processes they identified with their thoughts and opinions and their judgments and this and that and it changes your opinions may change you may be a democrat now and in 50 years time when you become a solid citizen you may become a republican you have totally completely different set of opinions it's just different set of opinions and then you feel the thoughts have changed but the the underlying i hasn't changed so can you go through life being in touch with that being in touch with that in different situations different circumstances different places so that you're not completely lost in the things i sometimes call it the thingness of life one thing after another there's nothing wrong with that but if you haven't found yourself yet you have don't know what that i is then you're looking for the i in things and things include your thinking because every thought is also a formation it's a it has a certain form a thought form it comes and then it goes every emotion it comes it's an energy field inside you it comes has a certain lifespan and then it subsides and then another one comes that's all the thingness of life it's forms that come and go all the time the only thing that doesn't come and go is i that which underlies all that and that's not an intellectual thing that i'm trying to convince you of because that would not be helpful the question is at this moment can i sense the presence that i am that is prior to anything that happens to me or has ever happened or can ever happen can i sense that right now yes you can because if you couldn't you wouldn't have said listening because listening you already knew it came from that deeper place of alert attention that in itself has no content the content comes when things happen but in itself the i that you are one could describe it as space it's not lifeless it's full of life all of life comes out of that but in itself it it is spacious buddha called it emptiness and is completely misunderstood by people because the university professors look at the word emptiness and then say the buddha was buddhist teachings us life denying the total opposite is true because jesus called the same space the fullness of life because at the same time it is life in its fullness to be able to sense that at first it's very subtle in the background but as you become familiar with that dimension it's always there somewhere no matter what you do even when you meet a beautiful girl and you're talking to her and you can from from there you can you can listen to yourself talking and it's fine you're not totally lost in your experiences there's always an a sense of aliveness and peace in the background and that influences how you live your life that sense the i the timeless i because on the surface you have the the time-bound i that that grows older it's identified with thinking and emotions and things happen to it and so on but underneath it is the timeless i now the word i is probably the most frequently used word in the language whenever you listen to people say how what's the most the words they use most frequently when you listen to a probably you'll find it's the word i now what they refer to is not the timeless because they haven't found that they refer to a superficial sense of i identification with things with thinking with emotions i am angry i am american i am this i am that identification with something so that i is the greatest delusion because there's no substance there nothing permanent so if i'm not something am i nothing yes i would pronounce that differently though i would say you are no thing now there's a difference between no thing and nothing nothing is simply denial but no thing means there is a presence there but it has no form nothing that you can grasp it has no shape and no form and no name the ancient chinese call it the dao which cannot be named there's a beautiful it's three thousand years old chinese book of wisdom the dao de jing i recommend it to everybody and the first line in it is the dao that can be named or spoken of is not the true dao and so that there is the presence that you sense a presence that has no form in ancient language christian hebrew there's the word spirit but i don't use that word because it's been used for hundreds of years and misunderstood so if i used spirit people would immediately have some image of what it is some form or call it the holy spirit and there's hundreds of years of misconceptions of what spirit is so we forget about the word spirit but in its original true meaning that's what spirit points to the essence of who you are is formless now we could use the word consciousness is the essence of who you are and you can sense it but you can never grasp it and you cannot really know it you can only know something that is not you an object anything that becomes an object of consciousness i look at this plant and i know it by looking at it and by having a thought for a name for it i say i know this plant this plant is an object that arises in consciousness and i look at you i see a shape and a form and obviously what i see nobody knows whether what you see out there is actually there because the image that you have in your mind of your surrounding environment is there's an optical the eye are like a camera lens they send a picture to the into the brain that the the picture is translating to nerve impulses and chemicals that reach the brain and the brain decodes what i see and then reassembles a picture and then suddenly i see you nobody knows what's actually out there but let's just leave it here we have looking at you this is an object that arises in consciousness in the space that i am then i look away and another object arises in the space that i am or i listen to something that arises in the space that i am a thought comes that arises in the space that i am the presence that i am but the presence itself you can't know it in the way that you know a plant or you know a person or you know a sound or you know a thought because it has to it would have to reflect back on itself you cannot make it into an object so you cannot make yourself into an object of knowledge you can only be that presence but you can't know it because you would externalize it and this is the mistake that humans have made over thousands of years they made themselves into an object and they talk about me and my story i'm sure you have one the story of me and so when you make yourself into an object you live with yourself some people love themselves one day and they hate themselves the next day and the following day they're not quite sure and then you have some other and then you have feeling guilty people have relationships with an image that they have in their mind of themselves me people talk to themselves in their mind well that wasn't very good you didn't do a good thing shouldn't have done that who is talking to whom there's a voice in the head that talks to yourself the mind has split itself in two and is talking to itself and out of that continuous talking comes the story of me and identification with that and the questions that you are going to ask probably have a lot to do with the story of me to find out more about it about my life because after all that's what everybody is most interested in you are here because you are the main character in the story of yourself and the main character in that story has quite a few things that it feels he feels puzzled about and doesn't understand and wants questions and the story in some ways it's worked and in other ways it hasn't worked and so the character in the story has come here and wants to know how to make the story work better isn't that so yes now whatever answers anybody can give you of how to make the story work better there are things you can make the story work better but all that doesn't really help unless you get to the bottom behind the story the eye behind the story then if you are in touch with that throughout your life the story will unfold with much greater ease because there is a deeper dimension that is there but if there's only the story nothing will ever satisfy the main character in that story you if the main character in that story you has never known the deeper eye the timeless presence that is the consciousness that you are the attentive spacious can you feel that your body is alive because when you feel the aliveness inside your body i call it inner body the usually hyperactive mind slows down now the hyperactive mind is extremely repetitive you might have noticed that 90 probably 99 percent of your thoughts you've had them before they are repetitive so new thoughts are relatively rare when there's only the hyperactive mind it's just the old same old things going through your mind again and again the moment you feel the inner body in order to be able to feel the aliveness here some of your attention has to go from the head within into the body so you're removing some attention away from thinking it doesn't necessarily mean that thinking stops totally but it subsides slows down there may even be little spaces in between one thought and the next thought so thinking slows down because part of your attention is in the inner energy field the aliveness that most people never feel because they're so absorbed in their thoughts they cannot they don't even feel that they are alive anymore so thinking subsides and then or even little spaces in between thoughts and then it's much more likely that thoughts that come then are new thoughts sometimes they are insights there are new ways of looking at things sudden realizations they can only come if you are able to calm the mind but not as something that you feel i need to calm my mind but simply by diverting attention away from it not by making some effort to calm your mind all you do is you take attention away from it and so then there is more spaciousness not just one thought after another and then your thinking actually improves which means it's more life more original you have it's more powerful you have better ideas and the way in which you interact with people has more is more real because the real comes not from the accumulated stuff in your mind that's all the roles that you play not just you everybody everybody plays their roles then they've been conditioned to play certain roles you have an image of who you are when you meet a beautiful woman you play a certain role you want to have the best possible image you present present the best possible image and she does the same you can observe it when two young people are attracted to each other they meet the first few days and weeks there they look different from the way they usually look because they present an image like that wants to attract the other and it's unconscious it's a role that they play it's only after the honeymoon when everyday life begins that gradually the image and you believe that that image that you see in her is who she is and she believes that you don't know that you're both playing roles and but you cannot keep up the roles indefinitely so after the honeymoon gradually they wear down the roles and then that comes becomes um some discontent arises and suddenly the mask slips the role is you can't play your continuously the role of me the attractive one so that's to get out of the role playing that otherwise you're stuck with for the rest of your life you have a certain role for your partner for a while you have another role for your work situation you have another role for wherever you go you slip into the subtle differences in the way in which you behave when you talk to the chairman of the board or the Dalai Lama you will you will behave in a certain way and then you might notice when you talk to the plumber there will be subtle differences in the way in which you talk you play a different role you think oh this is not appropriate here right it's only when you stop playing roles when you observe the Dalai Lama how he behaves now you might have thought well the Dalai Lama probably plays the role of the Dalai Lama but he doesn't there's such simplicity openness and genuineness in him he talks the same way to everybody whether he meets the plumber or the pope makes no difference because he doesn't play conditioned roles anymore and that is only possible when you access a dimension within yourself that is deeper than the mind and we just did it or we are still doing it simply by taking attention away from thought and direct it into the aliveness of the body that means suddenly there's some space between thoughts and then you can relate to other human beings more genuinely and you don't need to prepare things that you're going to say next you don't say things in order to manipulate that person you don't say things in order to create an effect they simply spontaneity comes out of that place the spontaneity doesn't come out of the accumulated stuff in your mind the spontaneity comes only to the extent that you can access the dimension that is deeper than mind which we may call the the deeper eye which we may call alert stillness that is always there alert spaciousness access that so mind subsides then you live differently the more you access now at the moment these are only glimpses for you but that's good enough a glimpse later becomes a wider space of that so that is something to remember not as a memory but to remember to do in your daily life as much as possible wherever you are whatever you're doing whoever you are talking to or even when you're alone go within sometimes and feel that the body is alive there's life in my hands you're not imagining anything you actually feel that there is an aliveness here and then once you can feel the hands you can feel the arms the feet the legs you are inhabiting the body and the body loves that it loves your attention if most people don't give their body attention even if they look after the body extreme like you go to a gym every day or you use all kinds of stuff to put on your body you might think that these people are looking after their body but all they're looking after is the the external of the body they are not necessarily present within they cannot feel the aliveness some maybe they can but most not they're only concerned with the external body here we are concerned with the inner so it and it doesn't matter the inner body has nothing to do with the what the external body looks like whether you're 80 years old or 20 years old whether you have a young body or an old body the sensation of the inner body is always the same it's alive and the body loves your attention it's a bit like a when you don't give enough attention to a child after a while the child cries because it wants to attract your attention the baby does it and then finally you give because attention is an is energy it's enormous energy now most attention attention is consciousness most attention for for most people is continuously absorbed by thinking so you can see it when you talk to them they're not there really they're thinking they're looking at you but they're thinking about the next thought they're going to ask as you sit there maybe you're thinking about okay i have what's my next question yeah and that's normal it's not a personal fault of yours it's normal to lose yourself and then you lose that means you're not really present when you're thinking about the next thing so it's normal so you don't have to beat yourself up for that it's normal but there is another way to live and that's the way of to be present to give attention not just to your thoughts to give attention to your body if you don't give enough attention to a child of course a child can also become addicted to attention but that's a different matter there needs to be a balance but a child does need attention from it's vital not an excessive amount but enough because attention is energy and the body loves it as much as a child it wants to be noticed it wants your attention and if it doesn't it cries it might become ill that's a crying of the body you're neglecting it the infant you're not you're not you're not inhabiting it you're inhabiting the uppermost loft in your house you're in a big house and you live always in the under the roof you never go downstairs there are lots of floors you have no idea what's going on there so that's a vital thing and it is a way of also accessing the space within that is the the eye that has no form that is the consciousness that is also intelligence we think of intelligence as the mind's ability to accumulate knowledge and to solve problems that's probably what we consider in to be intelligence but that's an extremely narrow view of what intelligence is what people can measure in iq tests is an extremely narrow view of intelligence i cannot solve the most the simplest of iq tests so i've never done a total test but i'm sure my iq would be extremely low because that is not how this mind works solving little puzzles i've never been able to do that but intelligence is a much vaster thing than the ability to accumulate information and so and then regurgitate it or analyze it or cut it into smaller and smaller pieces what they do at universities research projects the pieces are getting smaller and smaller and smaller the phd subjects are getting more and more and more specialized because you so many people are working on things and then you have to brought your tiny piece that okay i take this piece in my phd about that you can cut that up a hundred times and then once you've written your phd somebody else comes and takes a tiny piece out of that and says i can cut this up even further and that's considered intelligence but true intelligence the true intelligence resides in that dimension of alert stillness if you have access to that that's where the original intelligence resides so anybody who is creative and there are not that many human beings in this world who are truly creative anybody who's created has some access perhaps only in the little area of their field of expertise where they have some access to that dimension this the stillness einstein had it he was very slow he was not considered intelligent at school because he was too slow they said not suitable to for mathematics they said and physics because his thinking was very slow now what does it mean it means there were lots of spaces in between the thoughts he didn't he wasn't at school like one of the the so-called intelligent children who always when the teacher asks a question the hand goes up immediately i know i know that's very superficial occasionally that may be okay but there are some children and that is not recognized by our society who are very deeply intelligent but not in the way that we consider what we consider intelligence and they tend to be slower they don't immediately have an answer because they know it's superficial to have a true answer you have to go deeper within but if you allowed those children to go deeper then you would see how original their thinking actually is so when we just went into the you went into the body already you noticed some new thoughts came not the old thoughts it only requires a tiny space for something new to arise not that you're doing it in order to have new thoughts you're doing it because it feels good to feel the aliveness within you and the more familiar you become with that with inhabiting your body the more strongly you can feel that aliveness it's almost as if you could feel every cell of the body vibrating slightly so and it's a beautiful feeling just an aliveness there and that is an enormously healing thing to do for the body i really want to know about

[Speaker 8] (6:39:33 - 6:40:02)
guilt i feel guilty you know all the time for little things i'm doing or that i'm not doing and there are things that i know i did that were mistakes to other people so i know that you're supposed to be free and liberated in the now but shouldn't i feel bad about this stuff i mean and what's going to keep me if i'm free and liberated in the now from like doing bad things to people

[Speaker 1] (6:40:02 - 6:53:11)
so human beings act out of their conditioning so every human being is conditioned by their upbringing by the surrounding culture by many factors conditioned to think and feel and behave in certain ways and so people do all kinds of things to other people and even to themselves without knowing what they are doing they're simply acting out the conditioning of their mind and jesus knew that because he said on the cross forgive them for they know not what they do so humans create an enormous amount of suffering for themselves and others but they don't know that this is what they are doing people act out of conditioning so when you suddenly see that something that you did in the past created suffering for yourself or others or both when you see that that's the seeing of it it does not come out of the conditioning of your mind when you when you become aware of certain behavior or thought patterns in you the awareness the presence the deeper presence that you are has come in and from there you can see what you did was very limited it created suffering for yourself or somebody else or other people and you didn't even know it so what was acting at that time if you say that was me and therefore i must be bad you are equating the conditioned mind your conditioned mind the conditioning of your mind with who you are if you say i did that therefore i'm bad or and continuously think about it you're equating who you are with what we could call unconsciousness unconsciousness means to be totally identified with the conditioning of the mind so you just have to act it out now there's still millions of humans on the planet who live in that way because the dimension of awareness hasn't arisen yet so they never know what they are doing they continue to inflict suffering on themselves and others to act unconsciously but they don't know that this is what they're doing they cannot do otherwise so the moment you realize this is what i did who you are is the awareness that sees that who you are is not what you did what you did was the conditioning of your mind playing itself out so you you become you trap yourself in an illusory identity if you feel that i did that no who i who is speaking who is i are you the condition patterns of your mind or are you the awareness that sees that's the spaciousness within the deeper eye that sees what the mind is doing it sees what the mind created in the past it even sees what the mind is creating at this very moment if you are aware of the things these thoughts that go through your head how you speak to another human being you may be acting out a role and suddenly there's an awareness that you know that you are acting out a role and then there comes the possibility of instead of being the role being the awareness and then act in a truly genuine way with enhanced intelligence so the unconscious action was unintelligent action because it was action created by the conditioning of your mind which has nothing to do with who you are so there's a tendency for the mind to personalize the conditioning and say i did that and that creates guilt and that keeps you trapped in a very narrow sense of self because you have equated who you consider to be yourself with conditioned patterns that you acted out at the time it wasn't you it was unconscious human unconsciousness no more and now you see it so you see it and at this moment you would not act in this way because the awareness is there maybe the awareness will stay and this will never happen again it is also possible that the awareness becomes obscured again and the same behavior pattern happens again and you don't know it except afterwards when the awareness comes again oh i did it again and this is happened can happen quite frequently so it's important it's good to be aware afterwards if you do not misuse the mind don't allow the mind to misuse the awareness and make some identity manufacture some identity out of that for yourself and say that was me it wasn't me that's the main thing who are you you are the awareness anything else is forms that arise thought forms emotional forms behavior patterns so your destiny and your

purpose in life is to increasingly be the awareness rather than the conditioned pattern but as long as the conditioned pattern is there it's there it's good if you if the moment the the moment of transformation comes if the awareness is there while the pattern plays itself out that's the beginning of the end of the conditioned pattern so if it's if it's a certain kind of behavior perhaps with women you do this essentially the same kind of thing um and it happens again and again and the awareness comes afterwards and one day the awareness comes in the middle of doing it in the middle of it you you see what you're doing there's a seeing of it and that's the beginning of the end of the pattern then it may just one or two more times the pattern may come up in a weaker form and it will then collapse so in other words you are making what was unconscious conscious and that changes it so you do not have to manipulate yourself and try to engineer inner change i have to make myself into a better person that doesn't usually work that just creates conflict because you have one image of yourself as the the the good person that you want to be or that you would like to think of yourself as that or you'd like others to think of you as a good person and then you have unconscious behavior patterns that completely contradict that image of a good person and then for the rest of your life you live in that conflict you have and you the good person can talk to the bad one in your head it's just two thought patterns so that doesn't work what works is to be the awareness to see it to be awake enough alert enough and that where the present moment comes in to see are you present in this moment to what happens in this moment not only externally but internally also and are you allowing it don't reject anything if you feel a thought comes in an emotion comes in and maybe it's not a good thought maybe your mind says after the thought has come in your mind says oh that wasn't a good thought i shouldn't have thought that but they are both just thoughts the so-called bad thought was just a thought and the next thought that said that wasn't a good thought was just another thought now it's possible that the bad thought made you do something bad that's possible but the good thought cannot prevent that well the only thing that can prevent that is to be conscious so that the thought does not control you the conditioned mind doesn't control you be there as the witness to your thoughts just don't reject anything so don't go wrong there i know you're concerned about your mind and certain thoughts that go through your mind and you would rather be a good person and have good thoughts all the time but it's not happening and i can assure you it's not happening to anybody somebody is just having good thoughts because the human mind is the human mind it has polarities of good and bad and high and low so don't try to bring about on that level the perfect me it doesn't exist allow yourself the imperfections allow your thoughts to be there they come if you fight them you make them stronger people have the worst problems with thoughts are people who are spiritual so to speak they see themselves or are seen by others as spiritual they have to live the role for example the vicar the priest they have to live the role of a spiritual person and they cannot admit to themselves that they have bad thoughts so they suppress and they have may have bad emotions anger resentment and they and they say no i'm not having bad emotions i'm a good christian they can't even admit to themselves and that makes it even worse and then suddenly very bad behavior comes out of them and they don't know where it came from so on all you have to with thought all you need to be concerned about is to be the awareness allow the thoughts then they actually have less power over you because you are not don't look for yourself in any thought that comes into your head it's not who you are they're just thoughts it's not who you are if you have bad thoughts for two hours it doesn't make you into a bad person it just means that so-called bad thoughts are going through your head and then you watch it and as you allow them there is a deeper space the eye from there you watch thoughts are like clouds passing you don't have to follow every thought and then thoughts can become very tedious they can think you can have one repetitive thought pattern going on in your mind for hours or even days you don't have to follow every thought when you're aware you watch the thought there it comes what you're going to do this to this obnoxious person i'm going to kill this obnoxious person comes the thought and then the thought drifts out of and the awareness remains and then it's lost power already it's nothing so you find a spacious relationship with your thoughts that's you are not you are nothing that arises in that beautiful space of who you are the consciousness that you are which is spacious intelligence none of that is who you they are forms they come and go so thought is not a problem be there as the witness to what goes on inside you then change happens by itself the mind will always have good and bad up and down it has polarities but that's not who you are and you don't have to act on it increasingly you act from the state of aware presence action can come from the limited mind and it's not usually skillful action or action can arise out of the state of aware presence so that's the end of guilt

[Speaker 8] (6:53:14 - 6:53:23)
what's the test i mean how do you know how do you know that this is out of the awareness after the fact if you could go back and look at your actions going yeah that was out of awareness

[Speaker 1] (6:53:23 - 6:56:35)
no but that wasn't how would you know well you know awareness doesn't create suffering for yourself or others when it comes out of awareness so you know when you look at action it has a totally different quality to it it's not self-serving the action did not happen because you needed something from that person awareness is not needy when action arises out of awareness you do not need to use the other human being for some purpose ulterior motive but when you act out of the conditioned mind the egoic mind you're always trying to not you're not only trying to use the present moment because you're hoping to get to some better moment you make the present moment into a means to an end you also make other human beings into a means to an end because you want something through them so that's where the you want to be with a beautiful this beautiful woman you because you want to be seen with her or you want to conquer her and so enhance your self-image or you want sexual pleasure from her but you want something if you if you're acting out of awareness it's not the acting is not under the law of wanting it's not that you want anything and that's also where loving action can only arise out of that because love does not want anything true love does not want anything so that's where it's it's totally selfless action and when you look back on it you can see very clearly whether there was self in the action you wanted something for yourself to enhance yourself or whether that was truly action totally free of self and that's the most effective and the most powerful action is when the self the image of me the thought structure of me comes goes out of the action and action arises that is totally selfless that action doesn't create problems such the buddhist monk said when he was asked what's the meaning of zen zen buddhism what's the meaning of zen and the monk said oh that's easy no self no problem that's it so you begin to live and act without a mentally constructed self you live from the aware presence but for a while the two are there and the awareness often comes in after something has happened that was unconscious and you see it don't beat yourself up it's only the human condition but whenever you see unconsciousness has just happened or happened the other day and now you see it or you see it in the middle of it it's good to see it the more you see it the more awake you become don't personalize it it's nothing it's not who you are that's the

[Speaker 8] (6:56:35 - 6:56:47)
main thing so can the now make me rich powerful free happy smarter more loving more loved

[Speaker 1] (6:56:47 - 7:08:36)
yes all of those things rich yes let's start with rich and then we'll look at the next one can the now make me rich yes now what does it mean to be rich rich means it's not what people think it is it's not to have lots of possessions that may be one aspect of being rich but rich means to be in touch with the fullness of life and the only place where you can find the fullness of life the intense aliveness that you sense when you are present to now is here when you are open to the present

moment what comes in is a gratitude for what is no matter what it's a little plant the air you're breathing the light that's coming through the window the sound of the bird whatever is there's a goodness to it and even if it looks bad even if it's a dead animal or dead human when you're totally aligned with the present moment there's a peace that comes into your perceptions and with that peace comes a gratitude that is very deep and so you're experiencing really life for the first time when you become present and so to be in a state of gratitude for what is is really what being wealthy means the present moment is always enough and so the definition of wealthy real is to be to have enough to feel already the fullness of life an expression that jesus used he said i want you to have the fullness of life and people didn't quite understand what he meant was jesus talking about shopping malls that you have hundred five hundred shops in one huge shopping mall and you have thousands of things to choose from was he predicting the arrival of shopping malls is that the fullness of life you can walk around and buy and have lots of money and credit cards and you can buy anything you like now there are people who can do that they are not happy so then he's not talking about many many things when he talks about the fullness of life it's not he's talking about the one thing it's to feel the intensity of being alive and you can only feel that intensity of aliveness when you're in the present moment with your attention one way of being in the present moment as you know is to feel the inner aliveness of the body to feel the aliveness that is in every cell of the body it's alive and the more you go there the stronger that feeling becomes and once you are connected with that you feel that the world around you is intensely alive too it was alive before but you didn't see it because there was too much thought stuff going through your mind continuously the world became dead because everything was immediately labeled mentally that's a tree that's a dog the moment you label it and you don't look anymore it's not alive anymore everything gets dead and through mental abstraction when you go around the voice in your head immediately calling things calling things names giving things names so when you become more present there's this alert attention with which you meet your surroundings once you know the fullness of life that is already here now and then gratitude arises for what is no matter what it is then living in this way eventually that fullness that in essence is an inner realization rather than outer that's so that's the foundation for wealth is to feel the fullness of life within and then if you live in that way in connectedness with that eventually the fullness of life will also manifest for you externally in various ways meaningful activity is a form of wealth to know that what you're doing is helping other human beings brings an external fullness also into your life which is a form of wealth and wealth may also come in the form of things coming to you more conventional things home or car or whatever it may be those things also come much more easily when basically you already feel the fullness even long before it comes externally so basically you feel already wealthy when you live fully in the present moment you never feel really poor i perhaps spent 10 years of my life at least living what people would say below the poverty line and i never felt poor i always felt rich although for a long time i had nothing no external possessions but life was it was so fulfilling to live every moment fully present to the moment that life it felt i felt wealthy abundant and much much later did actually external abundance come into my life to some extent and that didn't make me feel better i feel just when now i have a car during those years i used a bicycle mostly or the bus and i don't feel better now because i have a nice car i feel exactly the same but just i it's nice to have a nice comfortable car with air conditioning in the summer and so but it makes the fullness hasn't changed it hasn't done anything to change that so to already the foundation is to be fully alive in the present moment and then it is much more likely that external wealth will also come to you as an outer manifestation of an inner reality if you feel wealthy already but if you feel poor and feel that you really you need to make money now even if you achieve it you'll be unhappy with your wealth because it comes out of the unhappiness so there are many people who are creating wealth these days they build up a big business on enterprise but it comes out of a deep dissatisfaction with what is it comes out of an enormous neediness to show to the world that you are somebody or to prove to yourself or the world how good you are and that that is not conducive to true happiness the wealth there are many wealthy people who are unhappy in their wealth so that's and they're not really wealthy and they they are basically still deprived they are deprived of the fullness of life and they have perhaps five or ten houses in different places cars yacht and yet they're deprived of the fullness and so they need more and more and it doesn't help so here we have living in the present moment brings you into the fullness of life now and then eventually it will also manifest in different ways externally for you power was the other thing will it bring me power yes but not power to the ego it will make your life more empowered than what you do much greater power flows into what you do because because what you are doing the action that you are performing whatever it is in the present moment the only place where you can do anything the action that you are performing in the present moment is not a means to an end for most people they are active but we are active because they want to get there to that point in the future they want to the end result their eyes are on the end result so they may be busy building up a business because they want to become wealthy but they reduce the quality and aliveness of the present moment because here they are reducing the present moment to a means to an end they give it inferior inferior status in their minds the future is more important because that's where they're going to be wealthy but then the pattern remains inside them and even when they have the money they still have the same basic psychological pattern which means they need the next moment and always they reduce the present moment to a means to an end so the action is not of high quality it does not contribute to happiness they don't make themselves happy and they don't make others happy with what they do so that's not truly empowered and it is low quality action high quality action comes when you don't reduce the present moment to a means to an end that's truly empowered action and only when you no longer reduce this moment to a means to an end can you give your full attention to whatever it is that you are doing now some great artists do it sportsmen do it when they perform they are totally present it's not a means to an end they're totally in the now and so high quality action comes out of that and this is empowered action so living in the now brings power into your life true power not the pseudo power of the ego and then whatever comes out of it out of that action will be good in one way or another it will not be one could say i call it it's not karmic action which means karmic action it's an eastern term karma karmic action creates more unhappiness it comes out of unhappiness and creates more unhappiness for yourself and others but out of presence alignment with now comes non-karmic action it does not create more suffering on the planet because so many people are very very active but a lot of that activity ultimately creates more suffering on the planet so that's the power what's the next thing that the now will bring you

[Speaker 8] (7:08:36 - 7:09:16)
what was the question i really want to know about um guilt um i feel guilty you know all the time for little things i'm doing or that i'm not doing and there are things that i know i did that were mistakes to other people so i know that you're supposed to be free and liberated in the now but shouldn't i feel bad about this stuff i mean and what's going to keep me if i'm free and liberated in the now from like doing bad things to people because i'm that's a fear i think

[Speaker 1] (7:09:17 - 7:24:13)
the only place where you can be free of the conditioning of your mind because freedom is not an external thing it's an internal thing you can be in prison and you can be free people have written to me from prison and they've read the power of now and they said they now feel free what does that mean true freedom is freedom from your mind from the conditioned all the conditioned thoughts and emotions that otherwise otherwise control you freedom is the freedom to step back from the conditioning into the deeper i the awareness that you are it's freedom from thought ultimately so that not every thought controls you so that's it's the freedom from conditioning and basically it's the freedom from the past so you're no longer determined your behavior and your thinking is no longer determined by your past

it's also freedom from future because most people have a desperate need for the next moment it's i call it psychological future they need the fulfillment that they think the future will bring them it won't so this is something for you to be aware enough because i know that pattern also still operates in you believing that something in the future will bring you greater fulfillment than you have now but it won't if you don't have it now you won't have it then you have to access the power of now regardless of your external circumstances you can have that now you can't wait for the future because once you're in the waiting mode you'll always be waiting for the next moment even when you become a famous actor it won't feel quite right maybe you're already famous i don't know but it won't feel quite right and and you will there will be many things when you're very famous i've met one or two famous actors and they come to this teaching why do they come what don't they have everything no they've realized they don't have what really matters and suddenly they discover the spiritual dimension because they've achieved everything else on the worldly dimension so go deeply into the present moment become deeply aligned and at one with the only thing there ever is in your life the present moment and that is that is where true power resides and that is the only place where you can be truly free what's the next thing that you want happiness can happiness come in the future when i achieve this or that then i'll be happy when i make it but every situation that you go into will have a downside there is not if you're expecting circumstances to make you happy they can do that for a while and then you find oh it's not quite what i expected and there's always another side to it and very often the very thing that makes you happy if you have an external thing that makes you happy that very thing will also make you unhappy an example a woman comes into your life who makes you happy one two three years later the same woman makes you unhappy the same thing or you're a job a great job is offered to you and it creates so much stress that you make yourself ill it makes you happy first and it makes you unhappy you become famous and then you see the downside of fame you can't go out in the street alone anymore there's a riot the moment people see you you're a prisoner of your house you can't go out without two or three bodyguards is that freedom and you thought you would be free when you become famous i've met one or two famous people who they can't go out alone it's too dangerous and and people stop them all the time and they gather around them they have to stay inside everything has to be organized they have to jump in the car with tinted windows and bodyguards is that freedom are they happy because of their fame no they have experienced the downside of fame it doesn't mean that you should not pursue goals there's nothing wrong with being famous but don't expect it to make you happy the true happiness has to be found it comes from being aligned with life internally and where is that now here a complete openness and yes to the present moment that takes you deep into the present moment that is true happiness comes out of that and then you can go on and do things and see if you can become famous why not experience that experience as much as you can without hoping that some experience or when you have accumulated enough experiences you will finally feel fulfilled and fully yourself that won't happen there's no end to accumulating experiences and achieving this or that you cannot find yourself there you can only find yourself in the present moment the only for everything else you need time to achieve success in your career to learn to play the piano to learn a foreign language even to if you want to meet a woman it takes time you have to walk somewhere where the beautiful women hang out and then you have to it takes time everything takes time and so the mind thinks okay finding myself who i truly am will also take time it thinks when i've added enough to who i think i am maybe recognition from other people fame possessions put all these things in the back my back and when i have enough things accumulated then i will be full and that moment will come at some point in the future it doesn't because the back no matter how much you put in it'll never feel full besides from the fact that also often things fall out of the back you put something in here and then something else falls out you suddenly get wells and then you're unhappy in your marriage or you're happy in your marriage and suddenly the job doesn't work anymore or you're it's always there's nothing stability isn't to be found in the external world it's in constant flux this universe is not stable people have this absurd illusion that they're living in a stable universe and that they can achieve some kind of stability in their lives they are shocked when suddenly big disasters happen and you realize how unstable really everything is so if you looked and that doesn't mean it's to be rejected play in the world and enjoy the play play as much as you can but don't expect anything out there to truly make you happy or fulfill you happiness is to be found directly within yourself it comes from being connected with who you are to this comes as brings us back to where we started to be in touch to feel the deeper I and there's enormous joy in simply feeling the beingness that you are to feel the I am that is deeper than this or that I am the very life that you are to feel that to feel alive that's out of that comes true happiness and then you can play around in the world and you acquire things and then you lose things and you acquire some more and then you lose some more and then you in the end you lose everything that everybody does you lose the body in the end it's form dissolves sooner or later but it's finding something that is deeper than any form inside yourself that's true happiness love also come true love comes only out of the true I true love cannot cannot come out of the pseudo I that says I the actor I the good-looking actor I the famous actor I the American I the poor one or I the wealthy one or I who is good with women the true love doesn't come out of that I that's a pseudo I that's what most people refer to when they use that word that's so common I but the true love comes out when you're connected with the deeper I the I that has no form the one thing that never leaves you the one ingredient that's always there no matter where you are what you do what you experience that never changes the I the consciousness that you are when you live in connectedness with that aligned with that that's where true love comes because when you meet another human being you can sense in them also there's the depths of the same I that is your identity you recognize yourself in the other and the other as yourself and you feel a deep connectedness much deeper than anything that you can say or think with the other human being and that's true love love is to feel that you're ultimately not separate you're one that can only come out of the spaciousness that is part of the now the now is space what happens in the now is form don't confuse the two the reason why people think there are many many moments in every day in every in your lifetime in every hour because what happens changes continuously the forms around you change continuously the thoughts that go through your head change the emotions that you feel change the people around you change so people think every time it's a new moment this moment and another moment and another moment if you look more deeply you see it's not another moment it's always now but the form that appears in the now changes continuously but it's always now and ultimately now is who you are the space of now is the space of I and then things happen in it and they change continuously so there are two ways of saying when they ask you what is it that never changes what is it that's always there in your life no matter where you go and what you do you can say it's always I the deepest I not the superficial I that changes the thoughts the emotions who you are in the world but the deeper I is always that's always the same and so another way of looking at it is to say it's always now the now never changes and then you find the miraculous thing they are actually one the space of now and who you are in the depth of your being is consciousness itself before it becomes something the very foundation out of which all life comes you could say god god dwells in the depth of your being not as some entity but as the formless one life itself that is the deepest meaning of what now is and that's why the now can never leave you so I am the now in essence I am not what happens I am the space in which everything happens that's your true identity and when you live one with that knowing that your life will be fruitful and a great and wonderful adventure when you don't know who you are then no matter what you do what you achieve where you go who you meet it won't satisfy you that's how simple it is so the purpose of the work I do is to address the root cause of human suffering which is in the human mind whenever a human being is confronted with a huge challenge it is also a huge potentially a huge opening into the spiritual dimension yes yes Eckhart let me interrupt here

[Speaker 5] (7:24:13 - 7:24:26)

because one of the greatest lessons I learned and I think I learned this in a new earth is that stress is wanting the present moment to be something that it's not and all suffering

[Speaker 1] (7:24:26 - 7:24:40)
comes from that I would recommend that you ask yourself the question how would I experience this moment if I did not add these thoughts to it a few months ago after

[Speaker 7] (7:24:40 - 7:24:51)
knowing Eckhart Tolle for a while and studying the books I woke up and I suddenly got it

[Speaker 13] (7:24:55 - 7:25:37)
the Eckhart Tolle foundation is dedicated to accelerating the awakening of human consciousness to create a more peaceful and harmonious world the foundation focuses primarily on awakening human consciousness as well as alleviating and ultimately ending the suffering created by the dysfunction of the egoic human mind we accomplish this through making Eckhart Tolle's teachings available to communities in need and by funding and collaborating with like-minded organizations especially those who work with youth and students incarcerated people hospice patients the elderly and animals

[Speaker 14] (7:25:39 - 7:25:48)
well first I just think you guys are making an incredible impact and I think you know the thing that you are showing that you guys are doing really well is inviting other people into the

[Speaker 3] (7:25:48 - 7:26:18)
conversation it's been my lifelong passion to help not only myself but other people understand that we all have the power inside of ourselves to find our own love and our own connection to wisdom and nobody personifies that quite like Eckhart does yes this we are all together in the same boat now to try to build together a better world so I'm very grateful for the foundation's work in that area and I hope that you will be able to reach as many people as possible

[Speaker 2] (7:26:21 - 7:26:36)
ultimate vision one day there will be no need to have this kind of foundation to help awaken human beings the consciousness on this planet because we will be awakened

[Speaker 9] (7:26:42 - 7:27:02)
it wasn't until I started reading the books and thinking about the concepts and then applying them to my own life did I realize how life-changing and extraordinary his teachings are and and that really made me passionate about sharing them with people around me and then hopefully people even beyond that I'm so glad to be part of this

[Speaker 8] (7:27:02 - 7:27:09)
Eckhart Tolle foundation because right now is the time that the world most needs awakening

[Speaker 1] (7:27:09 - 7:27:36)
and presence the main focus of the foundation is to change the consciousness to bring about the awakening my hope is that the foundation will be able to get the message and the teaching into those places where it's needed the most and where the potential is often greater for

[Speaker 13] (7:27:36 - 7:27:43)
spiritual awakening on behalf of the Eckhart Tolle foundation we are so grateful

for your support

[Speaker 1] (7:27:44 - 7:33:37)
together we can change the world from within so there's something that is much more important than anything in your life situation and that's the ability to be still that's one way of putting it hmm and in that you realize that the depth is a depth to who you are a presence that shows to you without any doubt that whatever happens in your life situation out there is of secondary importance and when things are not satisfying in your life situation whether it's to do with money work relationships living situation health it is often precisely at those moments when things don't work in one or one or several of these areas that there's an opportunity for you to go deeper within yourself and find that realm of stillness or spaciousness or presence whatever you want to call it so you become to some extent free from external conditions because the conditions of your life including the physical body even that's still external no longer have the ability to make you really unhappy really upset and frustrated and fearful and anxious on the other side this may sound like bad news but it's not all these external things also lose their ability to make you really happy wow yeah god no no you can still feel enthusiastic and enjoy life tremendously whatever life gives you in the world of form but there's always something there's something transcendent in you from where you observe and enjoy the beautiful things that come into your life there is an enjoyment there but you don't give them an importance that they don't have you don't attach yourself to them you allow them to be maybe a possession that comes to you and it's lovely you look after it whatever it is a house an object you appreciate it it's lovely you look after it without that strong sense of attachment of mine um and when things come into your life that are not pleasant perhaps physically not pleasant you get stranded out in the cold or whatever it is

[Speaker 12] (7:33:38 - 7:33:39)
again

[Speaker 1] (7:33:44 - 8:05:23)
we can't say that you particularly like that that you enjoy that but you're in touch with the transcendent dimension so your aversion to whatever arises does not consume you it just is there on the surface you know you have some action you need to take some action to get out of the situation and then you do it so you just take a very simple example the weather of course you enjoy a beautiful sunny day and then the next day is gray and rainy as it is here today and yet there's a transcendent dimension in you where that makes absolutely no difference so when it's rainy say oh it's rainy and perhaps the mindset would have been nice if it had been sunny today we could have gone out for a long walk gone to the beach walk in the forest they had a picnic whatever and yet at a deeper level does it really matter whether you have a picnic or not today or go to the beach or stay in the source of real enjoyment is never really in out there what happens out there it's it arises out of the stillness within you conditions do not need to be any particular in a way for you to be connected with the stillness to be the stillness did you hear that it was a news flash on an ipad what's happening have to look so we are um speaking of and hopefully realize experientially what we could call a transcendent dimension to who you are where there may still be on the surface of your life some happiness and unhappiness if you even want to call it that and yet those things no longer touch the deeper the dimension of who you are there's a transcendent dimension that's not you can't really call it i know some spiritual teachers talk of happiness but like ramana maharshi but what he really means is is the transcendent state so i don't use those words because the way i use happiness and unhappiness they refer to surface reality and surface experiences the experience of being unhappy or happy there is a transcendent state of presence on inner peace that is beyond happiness or unhappiness and but it's very alive you don't become dead inside in the absence of this ability to become still to be connected with the stillness to be the stillness if you don't have that then it's

better to experience happiness and unhappiness rather than deaden yourself completely and say i don't want to feel anything anymore but who wants to be trapped in that continuous ups and downs of your life almost and the downs for many people are more frequent than the ups and react to everything that every little thing that doesn't go as it's supposed to go this this reactive me to dreadful way to live so stillness your best friend always there for you don't get attached to those words of course it's much deeper than your friend because stillness essentially is one with who you are but as we approach it i might occasionally use words just as temporary pointers and as you begin to have glimpses of stillness for a little while it may be helpful to regard it as your best friend and then you let go of that and please don't believe that stillness needs to be outside of you in so that you can become still inside in the midst of noise you can be still external noise and as you probably know the quickest way to become still in the midst of things noisy things surrounding you is to accept the present moment completely as it is just this moment it already is people are screaming around you whatever they do this is what is traffic building up okay whatever whatever situation this moment already is as it is so by completely accepting that this is what is right now which doesn't prevent you from taking action action needs to be taken but what is is and by completely accepting what is even if it's noisy or whatever it opens you up to the stillness so when you if you if you do meditate and you sit down and you close your eyes and maybe you have a technique or you don't have a technique anymore and you just sit and be still and if then a disturbing noise happens somewhere around you um sometimes you say oh i can't meditate with noise like that of course that's a thought that arises you don't need to believe that thought don't believe every thought that comes into your head i can't meditate now what's true it's precisely at that moment if you can completely accept whatever arises at this moment and it sometimes can be a great opportunity to go deep enough where the stillness is when something outside does not seem to be conducive to stillness and yet you completely accept this present moment and oh there it is despite the noise that is so spiritual awakening more often comes in spite of something seemingly that did not look conducive to spiritual awakening it more often comes that way than because of something because of would be a beautiful experience and you would think oh and these i have nothing to worry about i have security lovely surroundings now i have time for spiritual awakening do you maybe could be but more likely not so here you are let's say one day you are in a beautiful spa in a warm climate it's sunny you're getting massage with lovely oils exquisite food gentle music or sound of water in the background everything is absolutely perfect a few weeks later you get home somebody falsely accuses you of something you get put in prison and there you are extremely unpleasant noisy surroundings bad food bad company which situation is more likely to bring about spiritual awakening which means takes you to a deeper level within yourself to the stillness i'm not going to answer that i'll leave you with those two situations be still be at peace be at one with the present moment it rains one day and they go oh what a miserable day next day it's sunny oh it's sunny that means you are under the situation you're not above the situation you're under it the situation controls you and i've given them the simplest possible example but even that happens very commonly so especially if you live in london or seattle or vancouver where it rains quite a lot then if you are dependent to some extent even on the weather for feeling good or not good then that's what happens but you will notice when you look out of the window the real pain comes with saying what a miserable day it's the rain is nothing in itself it just is but you call it something and it's not just a middle but it's another miserable day and the moment you have used about the thought miserable it connects to other things in your life that you can also call miserable and there we go that's the beginning of a day and that's the beginning of a story line in your head so for 46 years i've been constantly criticized capitals letters by my mother for everything i always felt fear in her presence trying to fulfill her expectations i couldn't handle her criticism anymore and three years ago i decided to stop any contact but i suffer painful fear guilt and hatred i'm exhausted please help yes so you've gone from one unpleasantness into another kind of unpleasantness um if you see that your mother what whatever your mother says is totally conditioned by her mind she's playing the same old record cd it's not records anymore but nowadays what do you play the old download what yeah so to realize whatever comes out of her mouth is her mind regurgitating the conditioning throughout her lifetime and perhaps being conditioned by her mother and so on in that way so perhaps you've been thinking all those 46 years or whatever it was that there was some meaning or significance to what your mother said but basically it was just the noise of her mind and she believed in it she believed that whatever her mind repeated and repeated was the truth there were certain patterns she could never get beyond being the mother she knew better of course when you were four or five but she didn't couldn't let go of the belief that she knew better when you grew up she couldn't let go of the role of mother it continues to play in her and so can you see that what she is doing is simply a replay of her mind without believing that it has any significance and so approach her in a state of compassion because she's completely at the mercy of her conditioned mind and you don't have to buy into what she says because of course many people think i really i need my parents to understand me i want my mother to understand me and they feel very unhappy if they're not being understood and it may be beyond the capability of your mother to understand you and and it certainly is beyond the present capability of your mother to understand you so she is limited you have to recognize her limitations in this lifetime maybe before she dies she will go beyond before death is possible but for the time being she is very limited in her state of consciousness and that is not to look down upon her but to see it with compassion that what she does is extremely repetitive and not to believe your own mind when it tells you that she needs to understand you i need my mother to understand me do you yes okay what happens if your mother's understood you the mother says now i really understand you how you live oh thank you and now what it's just another same present moment or before the mother says what you do is all wrong you shouldn't have done this why didn't you do that okay same thing it really makes no difference she understands you doesn't understand except that your mind is telling you that it does make a difference you visit your mother you have a cup of tea with her she understands you you go off and you look at the sky and you take a breath and it's the present moment and then you remember oh my mother understands me or you go and have a cup of tea with her and she continues with her old patterns and say goodbye and go off and you look at the sky and take a breath and you say oh she's still in her old patterns well that's how it is makes no difference unless you believe your mind when it tells you that it's dreadfully important that your mother should understand you and that happens when you believe every thought that comes into your head and then the thought can make you unhappy my mother doesn't understand me and you feel something huge is missing in your life because your mother doesn't understand you but that's because you believed in the thought that says that this should be when it isn't and so you you feel this enormous burden which is not really created by your mother it's created by your own by your own mind so it's your mother is not to blame you have to see that your own mind is creating this enormous burden and when you see that you can actually you can let go and allow your mother to be who she is in that particular conditioned form right now and allow her her limitations i had a similar experience with my mother although not as extreme as your experience probably my mother did not continuously criticize me but she made it very clear that she was unhappy with the choices i made in life and sometimes she implied it she said oh well you could have done so much you had so many chances didn't you and with your intelligence you could have done so much and i was already 45 and she said but you threw it away oh well let's not talk about it and so allowing her her limitations with not as i said not looking down on her and say you are so limited but compassionately allowing her that's that's how she that's her her mind mental conditioning she thinks in terms of a man needs a career he needs to make money he needs to get married and have children and he needs to show that he's successful and all those things and that didn't happen with her son and she wasn't happy about that so she couldn't go beyond the conditioning of her mind because that was conditioned by the particular culture she grew up in and i could see that and it was fine now we earlier little earlier we talked about likes and dislikes i had love for my mother because i could occasionally one could actually glimpse beyond her conditioned mind and occasionally you could see her being shining through her eyes when she stopped talking and and that was just wonderful to see that that aliveness in her eyes and the beingness in her and even when she was talking i could still sense it in the background so i didn't have to react to her words i can allow the words to pass through me like like some sound of leaves in the wind without any particular meaning or significance and that was fine and yet talking about likes and dislikes i didn't like being staying with her for more than a few days because it got too much although i loved her my preference was after five or six days to say okay i have to go now and she got used to that and it was fine i would come once a year sometimes twice a year and visit for a few days and that was surrender to that my choice was not to say okay i'm going to now spend three months at my mom's place but if that had been inevitable if i had been forced for some external reasons to do that would have been fine too i would have surrendered to it but it's a few days was usually fine was enough as you know ramdas tells us tells you that as the great test whether you're enlightened if you think you're enlightened spend two weeks with your parents and that's the great that's the test this mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive to be free you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation how do we get into the state of presence first of all step one let's so to speak almost inevitably when you choose to be present and it is a choice but not everybody is capable of that choice if there's a sufficient sufficient degree of awareness in you you are capable of taking your attention into the present moment and the first thing then that is you notice is you become more aware of sense perceptions of the world around you that you absorb through your sensory perceptions you will also notice a heightened degree of alertness because that's why it's called awakening it's another part of the awakening a heightened degree of alertness but not an alertness where there's any tension there's no tension it's not an alertness it goes like no there's no tension in it it is a relaxed alertness that's part of presence so you decide to come into the present moment you decide to step out of the problem making mind because you have recognized that a lot of your mind activity is completely unnecessary and even harmful not all for some things the mind is a great tool but a lot of the time it creates it does not solve the problems of life it creates the problems of life so you take your attention out of the stream of thinking and bring it into the present moment so it could begin with sensory perceptions suddenly you are there's an alertness that wasn't there before why wasn't it there before because your consciousness was being absorbed by thoughts your consciousness continuously incarnated which means took form as thought your consciousness incarnated into thought forms continuously and there was you were not you were not aware of consciousness because consciousness always always assumed a thought form incarnation you see why buddhists want to become free of the wheel of continuous incarnations but many of them don't realize this is the moment when you can become free of incarnation because the most foundational the most basic incarnation is the incarnation into thoughts the primordial forms social

[Speaker 14] (8:05:25 - 8:05:28)
and emotions that go with thoughts

[Speaker 1] (8:05:29 - 8:05:56)
and here goes another incarnation and another so you come to the end of consciousness you are able to take consciousness out of that and then become aware well that's before we go there you become aware of sense perceptions alertness right this this alertness is consciousness itself

[Speaker 14] (8:05:57 - 8:06:02)
without having incarnated and then it you observe

[Speaker 1] (8:06:05 - 8:09:43)

if you find it difficult to immediately become aware of sense perceptions because the mind is still trying to get in there another helpful entry point into presence present moment that has been used for thousands of years is quite simply your breath your breathing simply become aware that you're breathing right now even without wanting to do any particular type of breathing become aware that your body is breathing become aware means you can sense that the breathing is happening that is a perhaps the most immediate entry point into the present moment awareness of your breath already recommended by the buddha might even be older than the buddha as a meditation method but not just as a formal meditation method as a simple entry point into presence become aware that you are breathing now being aware is not could be misunderstood the person might think become aware for your breathing looks like oh yes i'm breathing what's next that's not awareness awareness of your breathing is to be able to with your attention follow the breath as it enters the body and as it leaves the body so your attention moves with the breath now what it does is quite simply it removes effortlessly it removes thinking you can't do both you can't be aware of your breathing and think at the same time occasional fragments of thoughts may come in but they immediately dissolve again you can verify for yourself are you breathing just checking are you breathing are you aware that you're breathing right now sometimes the the awareness can sometimes have the effect of lengthening your breath almost without wanting to so when you become aware of your breathing that's a wonderful entry point into presence you are aware of your breathing and thinking subsides okay next thing that could happen is you're not only aware of your breathing you're also aware of the energy field in your body not the physical body but that which and the animating presence that which animates the body the life within the body not the physical body and you can sense that your breath can put you in touch with that as your breath moves into the body you feel it going into the abdomen and then spreading out the rest you can feel the body is alive you can sense if i call it the inner body you can sense the

[Speaker 14] (8:09:48 - 8:10:07)
energy behind the physical manifestation of body and thinking subsides and then it's easy to take the next step well let's okay let's uh breathing

[Speaker 1] (8:10:13 - 8:10:48)
beginning to feel to some extent there's an energy field behind the physical body within the physical body sense perceptions now you're able to look around and to listen and to hear let's just talk about the two predominant sense perceptions seeing and hearing and you're able to and this is an important part of it you're able to perceive without labeling without interpretation this room flower

[Speaker 14] (8:10:51 - 8:10:55)
man sitting on a chair and you just see it

[Speaker 1] (8:10:57 - 9:36:00)
but you don't you don't interpret it you don't label it in any way you just allow it again allowing it just to be as it is what is there to interpret you can perceive it without thought just through awareness instead of through the veil of thinking perceiving through awareness rather than always perceiving through the veil of thinking sometimes thinking is helpful and you need it but a lot of the time it's a prison it imprisons you so you become free by discovery discovering your ability to to to perceive without needing to interpret what you're perceiving and you but and you know what you're perceiving but this knowing is not conceptual anymore when you look at another human being in that state of perception of non-conceptual perception you in a way you know that you're looking that there's another human being but not conceptually so you discover a deeper way of knowing that humans have kind of they have in the past perhaps they had it a bit more than they have now you can know something there's a knowing through concepts but there's a deeper knowing the concepts are not needed what you do really is secondary some may do great things others may do things that look on the surface not so

significant but how you do it is primary when the how means the consciousness that flows into what you do on ettv we can have some stillness on normal tv that would be dreadful often people ask questions about about manifesting or the power of not the power of now the power of intention and how does that relate to the power of now and about wanting one person asked a question about what's the difference between wanting continuous wanting that i write about in a new earth always wanting or needing the next thing and what's the difference between wanting and intention intending to create something and what is the importance of manifesting things in your life or creating or is that counterproductive somebody asks maybe we should focus on something else not on manifesting or creating now there are many exciting books these days about creating and manifesting the secret teachings of abraham channeled teachings and so on and so often people ask well how does that relate to stillness and inner peace and acceptance of what is and surrender to the present moment and living in alignment with now is there a conflict is one wrong or misleading or leading you into illusion and so they ask and then expect me to answer so this is an important question for almost everybody unless you've reached the age of 95 and then you can be almost sure that you're not really into manifesting anymore when it's you've done that been there done that and some people don't have to reach 95 before they have a feeling that my life is not does not need to be focused anymore on creating or manifesting so it may have something to do with the stage not necessarily chronological age there's some there's something to do with where you are at in your own life but really your own life is a microcosm of the microcosm so if you look at the universe the first thing you see that it likes to create and it likes to manifest but on this planet alone the universe is continuously creating and manifesting countless life forms millions millions of life forms and then outer space we can only assume we don't know what exactly is there but there's a vastness of life out there that's for sure and probably many more life forms than we have on this planet which is more than we can count and the life forms both in the sea and on land including humans they seem to enjoy a dance of coming into being and destruction they eat each other up if you're born in the sea you go around and it's a transformational process and this entity becomes you and then suddenly something comes up from behind and gets you and you become that entity continuous dance and also if you observe life on this planet the universe also seems to manifest conflict and sometimes people say i don't want conflict but if there were no conflict at all in your life challenges and so on what would that be like imagine going to a movie that has no conflict in it would that be interesting maybe i doubt it but a movie in which nothing goes wrong everybody's perfectly fine all the time no challenging people everybody is so conscious and nothing happens it's well since couldn't try that maybe that's an idea for a script writer or maybe there the script wouldn't be very long how many people would come and watch that movie don't know so you have that you just by just looking not having a theory about life but just looking you see that the universe loves to manifest and also it seems to be the case that life forms over periods of time become more differentiated many more come and even the human societies become more complex we've had ancient civilizations that were quite complex but probably our present civilization if we can call it that is the most complex which of course includes problem ridden also that goes with complexity it's full of and every individual who is part of this civilization has a life that is full of problems because you live in a very complex civilization so it produces complexity i mean computers just getting in i i can't get into that anymore maybe i've gone beyond that age it's so complex i can't i cannot learn all this stuff that you need to know on computers boys can do it six year olds to me it's too complex and the differentiation of the the analytical mind science cutting every phenomenon up into little pieces and then you have little pieces and then each piece is cut up into further pieces and the microscopes get bigger and bigger now let's examine that and everybody's specialization gets narrower and narrower because you have to be because there's thousands of people writing phds about your subject so you have to have only a little corner then you have to take that out and then examine that and then spend three years examining that complexity of course complexity cannot go on forever and on some level complexity at some point if a tree grows too many branches eventually suddenly a winter storm comes and most of it collapses so the universe likes to create to manifest to experience the play of form that's one movement and you can see it in yourself on some level you enjoy that or you enjoyed it or you still do enjoy it and then there's something else in humans you can only really see that perhaps in yourself an inner phenomenon the universe also wants something else it wants not only to experience that manifested life it also wants to experience peace and something that is not touched by the continuously fluctuating forms it wants to know itself deeply directly in its essence and that really is the root of spirituality is that the universe not only wants the outward movement it also wants the inward the return movement to the one and so every human being also embodies these two movements and that seems you are torn sometimes between the outward movement into form and the inward return movement to the source where it all started but the source that was never really lost that is still there because it's timeless the source of all life is timeless and it's in you and you feel drawn back to that and that is the pull towards spirituality peace stillness being rather than doing and then you wake up the next day and you look in a shop window and say oh that looks nice i need to get that i'd like to do this get that achieve that and then you get okay but on the other hand i want peace also it's the two exemplified by perhaps eckhart tolle exemplifies the return movement mostly and you have tony robbins goes it's that and not one or the other is right or wrong it's only perhaps few you can totally lose yourself in one or the other maybe that's not quite it unless you live in a cave somewhere and you can lose yourself in being can is it possible and perhaps this is a challenge of the universe here on this planet and perhaps on other planets is the challenge to reconcile the two movements rather than have them separate either one or the other is it possible to reconcile the inner movement towards stillness and being and the outer it wants action and doing and i would say that it is and that is our challenge at this time um traditionally let's talk about human doing and action first traditionally it's been very unconscious what humans have manifested in this world to a large extent has been unconscious they have been identified with doing and identified with form because form is about the outer the creation of form and your own form and creating more forms and so that has been going on ever since anybody can remember recorded history and beyond this identification with form and identification with doing and we call that ego now what happens then is that the the one consciousness that underlies everything timeless formless the one consciousness moves into form assumes forms and enjoys the play of form but it's not enough it seems for the one consciousness to enjoy the play of forms it needs to completely believe in it to really make it real it's not real but to make it seem real you need to lose yourself in that dream of form the play of form and this has happened to humans so identified with the form that you believe yourself to be a separate entity you have you have a life of your own there is no such thing but you can't a life of my own doesn't exist there's only life and you are an aspect of that one life but humans believe that i have a life of my own and then others have their life and of course that's if i have a life then of course one day i could lose i'm going to lose my life oh god i'm losing my life i lose my life who are you and who is life you must be separate from life if you can lose your life so who is saying i is not life who is that i what is that i that says my life consciousness on the unmanifested timeless one life so the every human then believes that they have a life of their own and become that means they identified with the form of life that particular form of life this particular physical body this particular psychological life form the thoughts accumulation of thoughts your past your history your viewpoints and the emotions that go with these thoughts feelings it's all becomes all part of that form identity form identity that's me encapsulated form identity and so consciousness is trapped or believes to be trapped in that so we could say that in that state the universe or the consciousness has entered a dream-like state it wants to do that it must enjoy that dream up to a point it consciousness has entered that dream-like state where it is completely identified with form and doesn't realize that every other form is an aspect of itself every other form um and of course then you are just an isolated entity it's a becomes quite unpleasant after a while so you have to get together with other entities and instead of having an i form you have a we form us and that becomes encapsulated it starts with a tribe of big family or tribe us and all the others are totally weird and and evil people just beyond the mountains in another valley you go they're all dreadful that was quite common and in some places still is when people didn't get around that much to the greeks or also the romans everybody beyond were barbarians the word barbarian comes from trying to imitate the foreign language that those barbarians speak so there comes then and for a while that universe seems to be okay with that to have consciousness identified completely with form and then the movie goes on you read history world history and that's the the movie of what happens when consciousness is identified totally with form and then comes a point when it's time for another stage to arise where the dream of form is no longer your no longer consciousness is beginning to awaken from complete identification with form and that is happening to many humans and this is why human beings are drawn to these two spiritual teachings with the awakening from the dream of form so who am i what does it mean i what is identity what does it mean when i say i what does it feel like what is i what am i now most people yet if you ask them what is who are you they will define when the word i in terms of form they will say well obviously this body that's i this comes maybe first and then there comes the mind with its accumulations its accumulated its thought habitual thought movements its memories they come the emotions that go with the thought movements the psychological form of i so they say well i am this this body then there's a name which of course is just a sound you say john i am john and and many people say they think that's already a big part of who they are when they can say their name oh okay and then they add a little something else i'm a an architect oh okay we're getting even closer to who you are and i'm a father which okay good and your age okay something that's no okay we're almost there now just just need a few more details and then we know who you are and and so you can put it on a piece of paper a summary of it or if you want a detailed account of who you are you can write down your life history in a book and it becomes your autobiography oh that's interesting now we know who you are and if that's not enough and if you think there may be hidden parts of me then you can go to psychoanalysis for 10 years and then all these hidden memories and hidden desires and feelings that you had when you were four and a half years old towards your mother and your father and your grandmother and what they all readily they all come up and then you can add that and then okay now i've got it i've got my autobiography and i got that's i i'm me i'm complete now and then you look 50 years later which is not much on a universal scale 50 years is very little i know that now i thought when i was 20 50 years was a lot i'm a lot older than 50 by the way by that the body the 50 years pass and what's left of the body and the psychological me that entity in the head with its history what's left nothing well maybe there's a one or two copies left of your autobiography and maybe one person finds a copy in an in a secondhand bookshop this is somebody's autobiography and your grandchildren or their descendants well after my mother my mother passed away three years ago and i realized a few recently that that i'm virtually the only person now who remembers her because all her friends died before she did and her family and all the other people who knew her only knew tiny fragments at least that oh she was a little bit of an eccentric and she was outspoken and and so on they had little fragments but the person who really remembers her more than a fragment is me and when i go nothing nobody remembers and then all is left is photos and a generation later nobody will know who this person on the photo is but this is strange how an identity evaporates that seemed so solid and real and so form we are talking about form identity that is when you when you're asked who are you or you ask yourself who am i okay now is that is that all there is to who you are is that what can be defined and through form what can be that which is form thought forms emotional forms physical forms a conglomeration of that to get put together for a while becomes what you think is i is that really your i your identity or is this is there something else well perhaps we can just at this moment see as you sit here right at this moment you don't remember your past you don't have to let's pretend you don't have one you have no past there is no past let's say there is no past which by the way is the truth ultimately there is no past there's only the now so and okay and no future let's pretend there's no future well there is no future anyway but there's only this so you can't remind yourself you don't even unless there's a thought in your head that says i am such and such even that you don't know right now let's say you don't know anything about who you are nothing that you can formulate conceptualize call something you don't what is left is there what is lost nothing is lost in fact when you encounter this which cannot be named which is a formless presence aliveness that's the you've touched your that which is beyond form consciousness itself and that is identity that is where your sense of i comes from and so you are more truly yourself when you don't remember your past than when you do remember your past and you are more truly yourself when there's not a single thought in your head than when you are full of thinking thinking about me and my problems and whenever you feel this sense of i this the light of consciousness which you can you can know directly in the stillness that is always there available to you as the essence your essence identity your essence identity timeless that's always there and that is one with universal consciousness it's just coming through this form it's never lost when this form dissolves the consciousness goes out like a little tentacle being so let's stay with this for a moment here you have no past or there is no past no fear what is lost nothing essential is lost you get a stronger sense of who you are in your essence when you are not telling yourself in your mind who you are this is why i said in stillness speaks i believe you are never more truly yourself than when you are still and still means of course the mind is become still it's an inner doesn't whether there's noise outside or not doesn't matter you're never more truly yourself than when you are still then you can sense the essence of who you are and that does not depend on the age of the body whether you're 20 or 90 it's the same stillness that frees you then from the suffering that comes if you have identified with form which then sooner or later will leave you you suffer if you identify with a strong or beautiful body and that body eventually grows old you begin to suffer because you seem to dissolve you haven't realized who you are and so we have you have form identity and essence identity identity and suffering arises through knowing yourself only as form identity my history my story my body my past my this my that my that my my my let's whatever you identify within the world of form if you know yourself only as that that's the state of unconsciousness the dreamlike state consciousness is dreaming the dream of form and then it acts attempting to become free of its inner state of incompleteness dissatisfaction and fear which is inevitable when all you know is your form identity there's always underneath the surface or even very much on the surface there is dissatisfaction fear unease discomfort fear i am not enough this is not enough this is not the right place where i am now this is not the right people i'm with this is not the right thing that i'm doing right now there comes the need to go out and search for more forms that i can identify with so that i can feel more complete but the only way you can actually reach the state of being at home in being rooted in in yourself without the dissatisfaction that always comes again and again and again and without the fear the only way is encountering that which is beyond form to and it's so it's so much it's right here it's closer it's it's god realization it's another word for it but let's not go there the god within the the timeless within and so the universe then has all the people who are into creating traditionally have been very unconscious because those who were most identified with form had the strongest desire to manifest and create more things out there and conquer an empire or accumulate more and more possessions or have more power so they got driven so all the powerful people the people who created human history if you read the history books they were deeply identified with form and they're all unhappy of course very unhappy hoping by achieving this that or the other and conquering this that or the other the other tribe or whatever to become free of their state of unhappiness and of incompleteness and never getting there and that's been so traditionally the the doers there were always some people who were not into doing but in many traditional societies they that wasn't much of a place for them later monasteries came into being so they could become monks long story but so we still associate going out and doing with unconsciousness i believe there's a line by t.s elliott in a poem where he says the best lack all conviction and the worst are full of passionate intensity talking about contemporary humanity early 20th century the best like all convictions means that they don't know what to do they get because they are torn between there's some inkling of inside them of their essence so they they're not the desire to to do to to is not as overpowering as in those who are totally identified with their form identity so that's an interesting that with where we are at as humanity as a whole is a realization that there is an essence that has nothing to do with the form and only if we are rooted if some of our attention is in that formless essence can we do things in this world without creating more havoc and suffering for others and ourselves if we only go into doing without the rootedness in the eternal dimension which is stillness which is here now always now inseparable from now if you whatever you do when you lose yourself in the doing identified again with form and creating some new problem so the foundation for all doing is conscious being so that's the important realization about what about manifesting that's good but before we talk about manifesting before we build some some new building or structure get the foundation first do you have the foundation don't start building a house without any foundation let's manifest this great business empire this is going to change the world yes but have you laid the foundation what foundation being being the formless the eternal no we haven't thought about that no of course you haven't you can't think about it the foundation is being rooted realizing what that means what is what being is not intellectually not by trying to understand because as you may have noticed there's nothing much to understand about being you can't being can you explain a bit more please being stillness i don't understand stillness can you explain stillness no because there's nothing in it to explain you can't look it up like it under a microscope or dissect it aspects of stillness phd so the the human being needs to find it's his or her timeless and formless essence essence identity that's the foundation if you haven't if you haven't that forget about manifesting or creating you just create more trouble that's okay then you're at the stage where the universe still like to create trouble that's okay and i'm not saying you you you you find that which is so close closer to you than hands and feet the stillness that the formless consciousness itself without which there would be no sense perception and no thought and no feeling that it's the light in which everything appears that which the life within the form and that's always there as your s right here it knows itself here it's not that i know it it is i i am it i and it are one i know myself sounds like two again but that's because we're using language i know myself i know i i the eye knows itself and so this is the end of all differentiation and complexity because you're going back to the unmanifested source of all life there's no complexity in that at all depths yes infinite depths the vastness as vast or vaster than the outer space it's it's inner space the vastness of that inner spaciousness so what you thought of as i is a tiny tiny bit and underneath there's the vastness that is as vast although not an extension as outer space which is an externalization of who you are within the vastness of inner space people don't know how to what extent they have reduced their own reality to this little entity that runs around the surface of the planet for a few years and then evaporates and of course that's the form but what is it that animates that form the foundation and is not something that you find say okay i've got it now and then you forget it again and then you start getting bored about the next thing you have to do and identify it with every thought that comes again and reacting and you lost not this the secret is to stay connected with the being while you do and then whatever you do is conscious doing not unconscious move unconscious creation of form the but conscious creation and maybe you'll do much less than you would have done before but it's it's more powerful very different kind of doing conscious doing and conscious manifesting if that's what happens through this form foundation comes first and remains primary being needs to remain in your life whether or not you are engaged in a lot of doing or not being is primary if you lose touch with being you lose yourself in your mind and you lose yourself in doing and you don't want to any good for anybody really and it may well be that the universal consciousness may use you and you do something that is then in alignment with this new stage that is arising on the planet and that is conscious creation co-creation before the universe created unconsciously and now through the human form there's a possibility that the universe can create consciously in that sense all those books and teachings are quite exciting that tell you that there is a an important relationship between your your thoughts and so on and the outer reality and that thought creates form yes this is true thought creates form and it's exciting that if humans can fully realize that and then fully realize their power of their creative power which is vast and as unlimited eventually they'll know that as the universal creative power because humans and the universe are not separate you are an aspect of the universe you are the universe expressing itself as this form so it's wonderful creative power is there but it's not the wanting power that is the to to answer the question that somebody asked what about this wanting needing comes from a state of dissatisfaction and insufficiency now buddha called it desire and the buddha of course said become free of desire and then that's the end of suffering he looked at humans and he saw that there was this unconscious reaching out continuously for wanting he called it desire i call wanting is a more direct term that you can actually feel i want i need i must have now this is still very much in many humans there the identification with form that results in continuous wanting and it keeps a lot of our economic system going advertising depends on humans who are identified with form it does not mean that when you are when you know your essence you cannot enjoy form anymore that you will say no more maybe some some humans might do that but again there's a possibility of living in balance with form you can enjoy all the forms around you and even create new forms without any sense that this is mine or any sense of attachment or any identification with the form and only then can there be true enjoyment of forms and beauty but then the compulsive nature of your relationship with form will go the compulsive running to shopping malls the day before christmas and then running to shopping malls again the day after christmas because they've reduced the prices even more or whatever it's amazing before christmas they're running and then after christmas it's even cheaper i need i must have that's not the true enjoyment of form you can enjoy form by looking at a shop window and say oh beautiful well what do you want to buy it no or you might buy it and then it's in your house beautiful beautiful and then maybe the next day you arrive and a burglar has been there and it's it's gone and some it may only be in that moment that you know whether you were attached or not because you might have had it in your home and said i'm not attached at all but when you get home the next day and the burglar has taken it then you'll know whether or not this was true what you thought that you were not attached that's a good test so we need to then doing and stillness need to be in balance now it does not mean that you separate your life into one part of your life as you sit still and in the other part of your life you run around that's not the balance the balance is when the two are fused together and even while you're walking around the shopping mall not running around the shopping mall walking you can be in stillness as you look around you may perhaps you go with the convention of buying christmas presents or maybe you don't doesn't matter if you do okay and see what i can find still bring this bring the stillness into the shopping mall let it come with you into the shopping mall just to give one example in the north american context or the bazaar or whatever if you're somewhere else and see if you can even while your attention flows out have some attention within to feel the background of aliveness or stillness as i always point out the beginning of that is feeling the inner body the aliveness within the body that's the doorway into the formless you're already moving into the formless feel the alive you're the body is alive now it's alive it must be alive but can you feel that it is alive and that's that's life energy it's the bridge between formless and form and there it is and then if you can walk around a city well here you don't walk but you drive around if you drive around the city can you drive with not too much thinking just presence or walk around to the shopping mall and just look there's you bring a stillness in wherever you go and then when you have to think you think you can pick up the phone and say oh i found something nice maybe he what should i get this for for my mom or dad whatever to bring always the two dimensions that's the most vital thing and then you can also look into manifesting but then the question is what is it that wants to manifest through this form it's no longer this is what i want the surface i what is it that wants to manifest through this form very different and you may you may not know that immediately there may be a time period when you don't know exactly what to do with your so-called life which is not yours just a conventional way of speaking there may be for a while you don't know what to do with your life and so you just just there being as still as possible do your whatever activity you're already doing and but bring stillness into it presence into it and then at some point either the realization of what it is that you need to do that wants to be done through you comes from the outside somebody tells you something ah or you wake up one morning and ah this is what i have to do and then you start taking action always making sure you're not so attached to the outcome that you think you're it's more important than the present moment and an action can become egoic when you lose yourself it becomes egoic when you lose yourself in the doing and a good sign or good criterion is whether when something happens to that is against your seems to be an obstacle a person or situation say i want to do this or achieve that and suddenly somebody says no you can't do that no they won't allow you to do that no for some or situation becomes a challenge it's difficult it's blocked you want to go somebody says no you you're not qualified to do that you shouldn't do that it's not allowed whatever you need this and that you don't have to achieve obstacles come all the time if you get upset that means the ego is back in the doing when obstacles come if you're not upset you're still present and you look at whatever the obstacle is and you look at it with this penetrating gaze of presence which is stillness also you look at whatever this the obstacle arises you bring this penetrating stillness to it and that is like a light shines on it and then that dissolves the obstacle or it shows you a way around it that's the power of consciousness it always happens either it shows you how to get around it or it shows you how to use the very force of the obstacle and you turn it around if the obstacle is going to go this way and you go with it for i'm just demonstrating now something counteracts what you want to do it's coming this way you want to go that way but you don't meet it head on and start complaining saying no this shouldn't be happening no perhaps you go with it for a little while and you go and then you turn it around and the very power that was against you then works for you and you achieve your goal through that it happens and this is the wisdom that comes with non-resistance so whenever you go into this conscious doing resistance always pulls you back into unconscious doing can easily happen because it's an old habit pattern unconscious doing inner resistance to whatever arises in the present moment pulls you back inner resistance is some form of negativity some form of complaining some form of fear aggression anger and this is important because whenever you complain about what somebody else does that you're already beginning to fall into that trap of unconsciousness and of course you yes you meet lots of people who are still trapped in ego and they may not like what you do but just no judgment just look at what the city they say this they want that you want that and they don't say oh they're dreadful i know what he wants he wants to deceive me and he always does that he wants to go just no just clear this is the city this is what he says he wants this is where i want to go and see okay never no never any judgment of a personal situation just clear seeing clear facing this is the power it's like a light beam of consciousness it falls onto illuminates that that that situation that moment that that person that's the power of consciousness no resistance jesus already talked about the power of non-resistance and that the moment resistance comes you're drawn back into identification with form protection resistance fighting it's it's a are you going to succeed all the time in this no it's a it's a shift from a way of doing that has been with us for thousands of years and a new way of doing that is only arising now so you are transitional beings between the old consciousness and the new and don't judge yourself if you fall back occasionally into the old consciousness but you will quickly know it how will you know it you begin to suffer you get upset you get upset about situations you get upset about people you get upset about what somebody said you get upset about what somebody should have said but didn't you get upset about what somebody did or failed to do oh there's a sign that you've fallen back beautiful line in the course in miracles i am never upset for the reason i think now upset is a generic term could be any any any in any way that you're out of alignment with isness there's a disagreement with the isness of the present moment and then you become upset now many people are upset a lot of the time but they don't realize they are upset and if you talk to them and say why are you upset they say i'm not upset i'm just bloody angry or i'm not upset i'm deeply hurt because he didn't invite me to his birthday party deeply hurt not upset i'm never upset for the reason i think now the deeper meaning of this of course is you are upset because you have lost awareness of being your essence identity and the reason you think is superficial if it's not if when you lose connectedness with being you just wait a few minutes and something or somebody will upset you i'm and so if we believe that that which seems to cause the upset is the actual cause this is not the case these are interchangeable could be anything and it will so you'll be upset many times every day by other people by situations by the slightest things or the biggest things upset upset upset by the entire world is so frustrating i'm never so that's a little sign then if you're upset you want to go somewhere but but people are not cooperative situations are not cooperative and you can talk to yourself so that's a good sign then you can use also shows you to what extent the ego is active in you because what's upset is not you it's the ego in you the ego is the erroneous identification with form a false sense of i which wanted something to make itself feel more at ease or bigger or more important or whatever and is frustrated in its aims well well that's a good then it's like a little if you had a little it's almost like having a little technical device on your arm that sells you whenever your ego comes back it goes beep you don't need that well if you if somebody here is a technical wizard and is going to invent it it's fine but you don't need that because all you need is to know if you're upset or not in everyday life now for many walking egos upset is their normal state they might not even know it anymore because they're upset virtually all the time and just waiting for some other thing to happen to explain why they are upset again but of course there's the underlying dissatisfaction is always there the foundation then is stillness that's the return journey so can we be then simultaneously in the return journey to the source of all life spiritual dimension god stillness and still be active in this world and then if we are that what we then do in this world becomes empowered by the intelligence that emanates from the source and then the source creates through you no longer the power of the source is then no longer distorted by the ego and its power greatly diminished to a trickle so the source is like light you can say sunlight wanting to shine through fully but for a long time it's become reduced to tiny little hole there's a little bit of light coming through just to keep you going and now it can come through and use you when we use language we always create duality so when i say it uses you it's not quite true because you are it but language does that it uses let's then once we know that it's okay we can use those words it uses you then now what exactly it wants i don't know perhaps it simply wants to create beauty or forms that are alive and joyful and enjoy that it's enjoyed the drama of of for thousands hundreds of thousands of years it's enjoyed the drama of people cutting each other to pieces and eating each other up it's enjoyed the drama the movie is changing now and perhaps it's creating a much more pleasant movie and who knows what is in store for us i've never i cannot predict the future i'm not particularly interested this the present moment is wonderful enough but something is there's a change happening and of course there comes a comes a point in your life when you may not this the source may become much more important than whatever you do so you reach a time when you say well i've done this and that and it's been wonderful and then all you are is you're just still and you emanate that stillness and even then you affect the world around you without any doing if you just be there and whoever you come into contact with there's some almost one could say transmission even if they don't notice it you can do that and some humans perhaps will mostly live in that way how much doing you do how much varies from form to form person to person some will be very active and conscious into conscious doing and create and and enjoy the creation and others may do relatively little or may just continue to do what they're doing already but whatever they are doing will be a vehicle for consciousness or stillness that flows into this power this beautiful energy that flows it could be even a person who just gives information let's say you work at an airport and you give information to people and maybe you stay there and then everybody who comes to ask where's gate number 16 you say well you go that way and it's only about a three minute walk and there were not only the words there was a transmission of stillness with the words not in the sense that I am going to transmit stillness no it it happens because you let go of the sense of doing of I do it happens and the person this one traditional word for it is blessing the person goes away being blessed with that energy and so beautiful so so what you do really is secondary some may do great things others may do things that look on the surface not so significant and ultimately what you do is secondary but how you do it is primary when the how means the consciousness that flows into what you do or if you're working with your hands again can also happen that how do you put together this piece of wood and this piece of wood there can be a presence that flows into the doing and that's beautiful and that expresses itself in the final product if somebody something is made in the state of presence then it it contains energetically it contains quality quality now there are perhaps quite a few things in this world that are not at all conducive to presence maybe it could be certain things that are extremely repetitive if you even that perhaps is possible but let's say you're in a factory and all you do every day is uh well probably the by this time you probably have been replaced by machine anyway but there are certain things or you live in an office environment that is so insane that when you bring stillness into it there is an incompetent incompatibility with your surroundings that will result in your dismissal or will result in your walking out but if there is even the slightest compatibility if it's not a hundred percent insane the environment if it's only 90 insane then there may be a possibility that if you bring stillness to it this alert stillness you walk into the office and you listen and you're alert and you answer the phone and you go to the committee meetings where everybody's and you sit there and listen to everybody you don't say oh everybody's insane you know they're insane but you don't say it mentally they're not insane in their essence that is on the surface and you are there as the still point it doesn't mean you can't speak anymore but you embody the being rootedness in being and then it is possible if it's only 90 percent the environment is only 90 insane some change is possible and perhaps the one or two people will be changed by their interaction with you and a shift happens in them or if it's a meeting suddenly there's a change in energy in the room or suddenly you are the only person who says something meaningful and suddenly everybody listens oh or your silence is enough to bring some harmony to the surroundings many ways in which this can affect the outer world and even if you if you stay at home and all you do every day is water the plants in the garden and make a cup of tea and look around at the beauty like a little child but with a depth that is perhaps not yet there in the child a depth of non-conceptual knowing then at this you have you are a point where the universe is contemplating its own creation and knowing its own beauty and its sacredness and its aliveness through you and that's enough for a fulfilled life isn't it that's enough the mind is in yes but i should be doing something meaningful that is meaningful and for some people that is how they contribute to the shift in consciousness by being a point of consciousness through which the universe sees its own sacredness its own beauty where the flower recognizes its own beauty because the flower doesn't know it's beautiful it needs you to perceive it and respond to it and go not call it anything but go really there is no ultimately separation between you and the flower it's a single field so when you contemplate the flower the flower becomes conscious of itself through because one consciousness and so if you provide that that's a wonder that's the universe waking up through this form to its own sacredness and beauty and aliveness and depths and you all you do is walk around the garden every day and make a cup of tea it's wonderful and and if occasional thoughts come you maybe thoughts that come will say wow i made all that you become like god who says and god saw it is he rested on the seventh day and he saw that it was it was good or something like that every at the end of may he saw that it was good see the the goodness of all that and so it varies you maybe i call one word i have for that which i used in a new earth um a person who is not called to do very much is frequency holder because what what you do is not a doing you hold the frequency of that consciousness of presence by and you don't have to do anything you just hold the frequency by embodying it by embodying presence yes that's a fulfilled life every moment is fulfilled and who knows it could be that you you do that for two years and one morning you wake up and suddenly say suddenly something wants to be done and suddenly you start doing something and you pick up the phone and said we're going to have do this a huge enterprise where everybody can come and to experience beauty and healing and so on i'm going to transform my garden into into a healing center and i'm going to maybe maybe not one person asked the question is connected with this somebody who is fully awake would they still have a personal identity and of course we know the answer by now you are in touch with your essence identity and the person can still operate you have the two they're the two dimensions you have their personal identity but you are not lost in your personal identity you know that it's only it is not ultimately who you are it is only temporarily who you are on the surface but not who you are in your essence and so in that sense no you still have a personality but you are not possessed by your personality it still operates and you can function normally you don't need to look weird but if you do that's fine also you certainly have no desire to stand out and say i am special of course then you would have fallen back into some form identity there is something to be careful of which is called the spiritual ego one could say and that is the identification with form coming back even sometimes to people who are able to periodically go into the stillness and feel the power and be that and then they come out again and then the old ego pattern reasserts itself and it remembers the beauty of stillness and the power of stillness and then it says oh i am very special more special than you well it may not say that in words because the ego at that stage can be very subtle so it doesn't say more special than you but there's just a sense of superiority that can creep in easily the sense of me and again one needs to be careful any kind of conceptual identity that you really believe in is another trap being trapped in form ultimately you're only you're only yourself fully when you have virtually no concept in your head of who you actually are now that doesn't mean when somebody asks me when i go somewhere whatever to cross a border somewhere somebody says well what's your what do you do what's your profession or what do you do i don't complicate things by saying i don't do i be i just be and so it's good if you have a little concept that you can give to a person if the situation requires it you can say i'm such and such and then they they believe you don't say i'm a spiritual teacher when you cross a border

[Speaker 15] (9:36:05 - 9:36:06)
teacher

[Speaker 1] (9:36:06 - 9:50:00)
teacher is okay spiritual teacher and of course you're not a spiritual teacher and i'm not a spiritual teacher because that's another form identity if then you believe i am a spiritual that's who i am okay i'm and then the next moment when i go do my shopping i'm no longer a space of a large presence in the supermarket but i'm i carry around the identity of here's a spiritual teacher is walking around the aisle very subtle traps can happen now that doesn't mean that at this moment this form spiritual teaching happens through this form so i could say at this moment i'm a spiritual teacher but when i get up i'm no longer a spiritual teacher it's only a function it's temporary in the same way that i could do somebody's accounts well i couldn't but and i would be an accountant but if i carry accountant around with me in my head i'm a walking accountant when that's a terrible trap yeah it's only if these are only functions they're not who you are or whatever it is any identification with that brings you back into form and so to be free and that's a continuous practice in daily life to be as or to one can express it negatively it's not negative but it sounds sometimes negative to walk around as nobody in

particular not be anybody in particular just be as a presence but nobody in particular just just an alive presence you don't need to be anybody in particular except when you conform to the conventions when you talk about yourself it's fine you observe the conventions of this world and say i'm a doctor i'm an accountant i'm this i'm that not a spiritual teacher but whatever but not to be anybody in particular this is these to be free of carrying around with you a defined identity which is either in many cases it either take puts you into position of superiority towards others or an inferiority towards others because then if you have some defined identity you always look to then you give everybody else an identity too that's a dreadful thing it's not only you create the present for yourself everybody else well once you look at the world through your defined identity then you give everybody else a form identity first you do it to yourself once you've done it to yourself you do it to others and then you reduce every other being to a form and then usually because all this is part of ego usually then you will try to locate where this other being is in this form as either superior or inferior to you so it's an unconscious process where does this person fit in the ego is always looking to where inferior or superior am i inferior and if the ego feels inferior it's uneasy and then tries to get something to reduce the other so that you can feel if only make negative comments or whatever or say or if somebody on a very simple level the other woman wears a very nice dress and you feel diminished by her beautiful and expensive dress you say oh that that dress would look good on your sister or something so the ego loves to do these unconscious things because it by by diminishing somebody it it believes that it has grown a little bigger itself amazing delusions it's a whole delusional system operating gossip by by talking negatively about others every time you say something negative others who are not there it was this quite a common thing you feel a little bit superior because you have judged the other as not good enough certainly you have put yourself in a position of judging the other which implies that you are superior morally or whatever you know what she did she did that and then she said and then how dare she and then she's always wrong of course amazing silliness but for many people it's their life that's how they live so be nobody so to speak be a presence don't define yourself except when absolutely necessary when you have some interaction with somebody who do who says what's your name and so on of course name and you nothing wrong with your name as long as you don't believe that that's who you are and so on you're but the practice is to gradually shed the the belief that you're here as a person and just let the person become transparent to the light of consciousness and then you have the two that's the form and but essentially you are that which animates the form the underlying deeper consciousness and that by living in connected in conscious connection with that you live in conscious connection with an intelligence that is far greater than whatever your mind could manufacture or that may use your mind but it will then inspire your mind with creative insights creative ideas and so on it it it can use your mind or it may bypass your mind and will simply emanate throughout every cell of your body you emanate a beautiful alive peaceful presence if your mind is not highly developed it may not say the universal consciousness may say well this mind is not that way i'm not going to use this mind but i'm going to use the body to emanate peace and aliveness and presence and healing for the world it uses whatever is is there or if you're an artist then suddenly your artistic creations become inspired empowered beautiful in my case that doesn't happen because i can't draw and paint it just doesn't happen so this the consciousness is not going to flow into my arm in my hand and suddenly i'm going to produce a masterpiece and that's not going to happen nor am i going to produce the unified field theory that einstein couldn't find because my mind doesn't work in that way physics and mathematics it just so the consciousness is not going to use my mind and bring up make me into another einstein the consciousness uses what is there and empowers that and there's always everybody has something that the consciousness will use and flow into if only every cell of your body that's more than enough and then there's nobody to claim credit when something has been produced created it you just step back it's not i did that or the way people go yeah yeah no you just because you know it's not and not i didn't i did it

yes but not i it's the one eye the center of your attention always bring back into the present because it's first of all because it's all there ever is well that's a good reason because it's life itself your life situation yes it exists in time there's a past and a future as far as your life situation is concerned but it's not your life i wrote about that a long time ago but it's so important you can people confuse their life situation with something more fundamental more real more immediate deeper which is called life life situation is circumstances and events in your life and most of your life situation is an experience in your mind and then life situation is relationships work situation financial situation living situation all kinds of problem often problematic situations it's very rare that all of these situations are working smoothly and perfectly relationships family professional work financial uh environments living situation health situation all working in harmony and perfectly it can happen for short periods but usually something somewhere goes wrong it has to periodically and frequently that's normal and it's good but your so your life situation always has this element of uncertainty instability too although you might not recognize that when you look at seemingly solid things and your life is the experience of this moment the only thing there ever is and if you neglect that you miss[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 8:53)
The whole thing, and then you reach a retirement age, or old age, and you say, was that it? And you perhaps you spent your whole life trying to arrive at some point, and the points change that you want to arrive at, but you always want to arrive at some other point. So when your attention is in the present, yes, you're more alert, which is helpful.

You notice things that before you didn't notice, people, objects, all kinds of things around you, natural things, and it's quite, everything is a manifestation of life all around you. And the deeper aspect of being present is not just being aware of your surroundings, although that's fine. You're aware of yourself as the aware presence, and that is the secret, that is the key, that is not something that one can easily explain.

You can only experience it, what it means to be aware of yourself, not as an ego self, like having a relationship with this conceptual identity, that's me. I don't like me, or I love me. I'm in love with me.

That's happened to Narcissus, and things after that didn't go well for him. Although you hear that quite often in certain people. I love, I love me.

Well, it's a little strange. No, who are you, and who or what is a me? Oh, I hadn't thought about that.

I love myself. I hate myself. Oh, that's worse, even.

That's the, that's not uncommon either. I'm not happy with myself. But who is that I that constantly says these things?

Who is that I? That has a relationship with an, ultimately an imagined entity, mind-made conceptual entity. And this happened to me one night, as I talk briefly in the power of now, when my mind said, I can't live with myself anymore, because the, I was unhappy, and I couldn't stand the unhappiness anymore.

So I couldn't, I can't live with myself anymore. And this sentence suddenly, I looked at it, and I realized it was a very strange statement. I cannot live with myself.

At that point, I realized that there's, there must be two of me here. I, and the self that I cannot live with. That's an incredible, that was an incredible realization.

There's two of me. There's the unhappy me that I cannot live with. Who am I, and who is that unhappy me?

This is almost like a koan, like a Zen riddle that you can't, hard to answer, or impossible to answer conceptually, but I actually can answer it conceptually. I couldn't at the time. It took years before I realized what all this meant.

And that moment, the consciousness that I am that was trapped in the movement of thought and continuously absorbed by the movement of thought, this movement of thought created the entity, to the person, the unhappy person, the entity, the unhappy entity, the mind-made entity. And it was so active that it absorbed all of my consciousness, was always trapped in the movement of self-identified thoughts. So it was trapped in there, and when this strange statement arose in my mind, what it, and I looked at it, and looking at the statements, a sudden separation happened between the consciousness that was trapped in the movement of thought, and suddenly was able to release itself, to extricate itself from the, being held in the movement of thought, and stood back, and there was I, as the consciousness, looking at the unhappy thought movement. So it was a separation of, consciousness was withdrawing from the dimension of things and thinking, and then, very quickly, thinking subsided, it was no longer fueled, without the consciousness, there can be no thinking, because thinking is not possible without consciousness, but a thought is consciousness that has taken form, whereas the realization of I as consciousness is consciousness that is prior to form, or unconditioned. So I became aware of myself as consciousness, as the I, and the thought then began to dissolve. Consciousness had been, without consciousness, it's nothing.

Thought is consciousness that has taken form, and it dissolved, and then I was kind of, felt like falling into some hole, but it wasn't fear, not fearful. The next morning I woke up, and I was at peace, like a new person, or no person, I was just contemplating things around me, and everything was lovely, and I didn't know why I was at peace, and then I went around the city, on the buses, on the bus, still at peace, the hustle and bustle of London, where I was living, I was at peace, why I was at peace, I couldn't understand it, of course now, the peace that passed is all understanding, I suppose that's, several years it took me to understand why, that's very weird. I did not realize that I was at peace for one reason, and the reason was that I wasn't thinking that much anymore, especially there's no, the whole movement of thought that is imbued with a sense of self, self-referential thought wasn't happening anymore, occasional thoughts, yes, but a lot of the time, there was just awareness, but I didn't have a word for it, I just called it peace, and so what happened then was the consciousness had withdrawn from its, until then, it had been imprisoned in the movement of thought,

[Speaker 6] (8:54 - 8:59)
and continuously absorbed by thought, and then it stepped out,

[Speaker 2] (9:19 - 9:21)
and now on to joy,

[Speaker 1] (9:27 - 10:57)
now joy, what piece of music do you think comes to mind? Yes, the ode to joy, which is, has been around for 200 years or so, or something like that, a Beethoven, the Ninth Symphony, the last movement, and it's called the Ode to Joy. Most of you will know what I'm talking about, and those of you who are not familiar with classical music, if I sing it, then you will know what it is.

Unfortunately, I'm very bad at singing, but it goes like, Freude, schöner Götterfunken, Tochter aus Elysium. And now I can't stop. Wir betreten Feuer, Ertrunken Himmlische, dein Heiligtum.

Deine Zauber binden wieder, Was die Mode streng geteilt. Alle Menschen werden Brüder, Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.

[Speaker 7] (10:58 - 11:09)
No. No. No.

No. No. No.

[Speaker 1] (11:09 - 18:07)
I'm better at it than I thought. Now, I'd like to give you the translation, because many people are familiar with the tune and the song, but perhaps not so many people know what it actually means. Now, the words Beethoven took from the poet Schiller, who wrote this poem, Ode to Joy, which is a praise of joy.

So I'll just give you the beginning of what I just sang, or if you can call it singing. The translation of this reads, joy, beautiful, divine spark. Now, joy, the poet personifies the state of joy.

So he speaks of joy as if joy were a person. Joy, beautiful, divine spark. Daughter from Elysium.

Elysium is a celestial realm in Greek mythology. So joy is the daughter comes, in other words, comes from the celestial realm. It is something divine.

We enter your sanctuary, burning with fervor. O heavenly being, still addressing joy. O heavenly being, your magic brings together what custom or convention has sternly divided.

So it reunites what human custom has divided. All men shall become brothers. Of course, that includes sisters.

All men shall be, and that includes women, it's humans. All humans shall become brothers and sisters where your gentle wings hover. The gentle wings of joy.

That is the translation of the beginning of the ode to joy. So it brings you back to the state of connectedness with all other humans. And therefore, there is something divine in the state of joy.

That is the essence of this poem that Beethoven liked so much that he put it to music. It goes on later. There are more lines, which we don't need now, but towards the end, it has this beautiful line.

Be embraced, millions. This kiss to the whole world. That is towards the end when it says.

Seid umschlungen, Millionen. Diesen Kuss der ganzen Welt. And then there's the celestial voices of the choir.

Beautiful piece. It's absolutely divine, especially the message that it contains. Now, I'm not going to just play the whole piece here.

There's a particular version of it that I discovered that is called the flash mob version of it. Now, I love flash mobs. I don't know if everybody is familiar with that term.

It means when a group of people come together and do something very strange or unusual unexpectedly. Now, flash mobs are not spontaneous because they need to be planned beforehand, but they disrupt the normal workings of routine everyday life or existence. So, for example, you get flash mobs when people, like 200 people in a public place, suddenly freeze for five minutes in whatever position they happen to be in.

And then all the people who don't know what's going on, they go, what happened? And in a way, you could say it has no particular purpose, but perhaps there is a purpose, and often it awakens people out of their habitual slumber. And sometimes flash mobs is music that suddenly a group of people begin to perform a piece of music.

It looks totally spontaneous, but of course they all plan to do it. But all the people who experience that are transported into a state of astonishment. And this is the piece here, which has been around the internet, and some of you may know it.

Some people say, oh, I don't like this because it was financed by a bank and it's used as a commercial in the same way that our first piece that we saw this evening is a commercial. But if that is a commercial, it doesn't say you need to use our bank in order to be in a state of joy. No, they just financed it, and here it is.

So there's no link between the bank and I have no objection to it whatsoever. If they spend their money and sell something beautiful like that that brings joy to people, why object to that? Now, where this happened was in Spain in a small city near Barcelona, Sabadell.

And the piece is called Sabadell Flesh Mob. The musicians are professional musicians. Now, the most beautiful thing apart from the music, and this is a short version of it, just five minutes or so, the most moving thing apart from the music itself is the reaction of the people who don't know what's going on and how they become transformed from their habitual state into suddenly and feeling, experiencing joy or astonishment.

They are stopped in their track, their mind stopped, and they go. So all the different reactions of people are very moving, very touching. So let's watch it now.

The Sabadell Flesh Mob. Here we go.

[Speaker 7] (18:09 - 18:09)
Hi.

[Speaker 1] (23:54 - 40:11)
Welcome, all of you on YouTube, Facebook, live for the first time. We've had a few technical difficulties. So I'm a little bit late.

That was a great opportunity for, of course, for you to be present in the moment. And let's continue that before we start and perhaps look at a few questions concerning conscious manifestation. Let's just take a moment and become aware of the present moment.

Vitally important in any endeavor that you undertake, no matter what it is, is not to lose your connectedness with the present moment. So before you start a new enterprise, a new activity, always go to take a moment for awareness. Basically, that's what it is.

Sometimes people ask, well, what is the present moment? How do you, where is it? What does it even mean to become aware of the present moment?

And the first thing, of course, is that you become aware of whatever surrounds you. That's the entry point into the present moment, a very easy entry point into present moment awareness. Some people may call it mindfulness.

Mindfulness is to become more aware of whatever surrounds you here and now. Sense perceptions, just be with what is. Give it attention, some attention, the room you're sitting in.

Maybe there's a window, you can look out of the window. You can see trees behind me. I can't see them, I know they're there.

This is, you enter the present moment by becoming more aware of sense perceptions, auditory, visual, and perhaps others. And of course, what that does, you might notice, is there's less mental noise. The voice in the head that speaks and speaks, that talks to you, that you have a dialogue with, a monologue, that comments and interprets and takes positions, mental positions, identifies with likes, dislikes, says no, never stops talking.

That's the mind, the voice in the head that most people are completely identified with, and that means they are not present. So the first step is take some attention away from that by simply becoming aware of sense perceptions. And if you can look at something natural, that's even better because a natural thing, a tree, a flower, a plant, the sky, a natural thing lends itself to a present moment awareness more than a man-made, human-made thing.

So anything natural that you can look at for a moment, focus on, and give it attention, acknowledge it. You don't need to think about it. So it's just become aware of the present moment through sensory perception.

And already, if you can do that, if perhaps a few minutes before you were very much immersed in the problem-making mind, it wasn't actually solving any problem because this continuous mind activity actually creates more problem than it solves. If it's not focused, it's unconscious. So already, suddenly, there's a certain amount of peace that descends upon this, your world.

It becomes a bit more peaceful. You become aware of the aliveness of things. And then the next step for present moment awareness is you become aware of yourself.

Now, that's very important too because that's the foundation for the entire world, whatever the world that you experience, you experience it through yourself. So, and whatever you manifest in this world, you manifest through yourself. Now, what does it mean to become aware of yourself?

Now, you might be tempted to think that you start thinking about your life, you and your life. And of course, that's very problematic, your past, your future. Or you can think about things that you identify with, the huge problems the world is facing.

But that's not becoming aware of yourself. Becoming aware of yourself is something more vital, something deeper than being aware of your historical self, all your memories, all your expectations for the future. So none of that is really becoming aware of yourself because those are thoughts.

You become aware of the simple fact that you are here as a conscious presence. That's very much inextricably linked with what we call the present moment. Now, this may seem strange at first, you becoming aware of yourself as a conscious presence.

No need to remember who you are beyond the fact that you are. Becoming aware of the I am-ness of yourself. For those of you who haven't never heard of this, it might seem a little strange.

Become aware that even if you do not remember your past at all, who you are as a historical person, what is left of you if you do not remember who you are as a historical person? If you don't think about yourself, what's left is a certain inner spaciousness opens up that replaces the usual activity of continuous mental noise, thinking. A spacious awareness opens up and you cannot say much about it.

You can't analyze it. You're simply aware that you are. That there is a presence that is inseparable from who you are.

There's also a stillness there that's part of that presence, but it's not an asleep stillness and it's not the stillness that you find when you're getting tired. It's an alert stillness. And that is the core of what we call present moment awareness.

So you're not really aware of the present moment because the awareness is the present moment. Beyond sense perceptions, that was a starting point. And then you go deeper and you simply become aware of yourself as consciousness, a still alert presence.

There's a lot more one could say about it, but this is just our starting point for today. The important thing is once you have had even a glimpse of it, as much as possible, reconnect with that as you go about your daily life, as you are engaged in activities, as you speak to people, interact with people, as you interact with people on media, social media, et cetera as much as possible, reconnect and have find these moments of alert stillness, alert still presence. And that becomes then the foundation for everything you do.

And that's that another word for that is spiritual awakening. You're now, you're spiritually awakened begins with little, just a glimpse of awareness of yourself. The awareness that there's something deeper in you than the person with its history.

That awareness is a direct realization. It is not something that is conceptual that frees you from what we call the ego which is all the conditioning of your mental, emotional field, all the things you identify with. And then you derive your sense of who you are from a deeper place within.

And that's an enormous liberation. And then you can operate in this world in a much more effective way. And you can operate in this world in a way that is much more beneficial for yourself and humanity.

You can then from that foundation, we can talk about manifestation. If you manifest from that foundation rather than manifest from the usual sense of identity that is exclusively derived from the ego which is the thinking mind, the narrative that most people identify with as me. That's me.

And the narrative of me is partly personal and partly collective. These are energy streams that what we call short are energy formations that are invisible. And these energy formations are like, could be compared to ripples on the surface of being.

That's the thought activity. And humans who have no awareness of this deeper dimension, they are trapped on the level of the surface level of the movement of energy forms that we call thoughts and emotions. So that's your mind is, and whatever happens in your mind is conditioned by your surroundings and by your past, so-called past.

So humans are literally possessed in the absence of awareness. They are literally possessed by the thought forms that go through their mind. And so they can, they're partly, as I said, partly personal, partly collective.

And sometimes they are relatively harmless and at other times they can be like a viral infection on a mental level. And you don't even know what's happening to you. When violent mass movements happen, human unconsciousness expressing itself collectively through violence, that means humans are at the mercy, completely possessed by these energy formations that have taken possession of them.

And they don't even know it. Sometimes you know it in the past, perhaps all know, perhaps even from your own experience, how sometimes one thought can take possession of your mind and it refuses to go away and it proliferates. It creates other related thoughts in your mind and you suddenly become obsessive with something.

And some people live like that. They have, they are possessed by one particular mind form and they interpret the entire world through the screen of that mind form. And everything, suddenly they have an explanation for everything because everything is interpreted through that screen.

Sometimes it's a mental illness. It gets close to mental illness when you feel paranoid and so on. And everybody suddenly becomes your enemy.

So you free yourself from that. Ultimately without awareness, thinking can, even good things in your mind can very quickly turn, become amplified and turn it into something very unconscious and destructive. So always returning to that deeper dimension.

Let's start with the first question.

[Speaker 2] (40:17 - 40:17)
Let's see.

[Speaker 1] (40:28 - 1:08:17)
When it comes to conscious manifestation, my interest at this point is not in manifesting anything for myself personally, but in wanting to help manifest a world that is more peaceful and just for everyone. Can how you teach conscious manifestation help with that? Good question.

Relevant. Manifesting a world that is more just. I think that was the word.

More peaceful and just for everyone. Well, that would be a good aim. Now, ultimately, of course, what you experience as the world is intrinsically one with your consciousness.

The only place where you experience the world is in your consciousness. Philosophers have even questioned whether there actually is a world out there independent of conscious perception. We don't need to go there, but there's no doubt that the entire world happens inside you, one could say.

You don't know what you see, what the eyes transmit, the senses transmit, becomes nerve impulses that are sent to the brain, and that's just on the physical level. And then these nerve impulses are decoded, and then some kind of word appears within you. But to what extent that corresponds to a world out there, we don't even know.

So to change the world, so as you look at the world, to some, in some way, you could almost say, go as far as to say, what you're actually looking at is a reflection in the external, in the world of form, of your state of consciousness, you could say. It's an interesting way to look at it. And the state of consciousness is partly your, there is your personal world, and there is a collective world.

So the two, they are connected, but they're not the same, because first of all, there is what you experience as a world in your personal life, or the people you habitually interact with, where you live, your surroundings. It starts with simple things, like even the objects that surround you habitually, where you live. So the, your world is your personal, your relationships with humans that you live with, your relationships with other humans that you meet every day casually, the, where you work, the people you work with.

So all these things, your personal life, so-called life is one sphere that you move in. And the important thing is not to neglect that in search of a better collective world. The two are related, but to disregard, this is a mistake that is often made, to disregard your personal sphere, but the world that is immediately accessible to you as you and your life, the people in your life, where you live, all that, your work.

To neglect that, it's very seductive to think there's so much wrong with the world out there, the collective. That's really what I should be concerned with, because there's so much wrong out there. You can see it.

You just have to turn on the, you turn on some kind of device, whether it's television or that brings you the news and the commentaries, continuous stream. And then of course, that is already, that is the collective world that then enters your living room or wherever you are. And then they get mixed up.

They can obliterate, the collective can obliterate your personal life. And you think your personal life is quite irrelevant now, because what really matters, the world needs to change. It's so dreadful.

Well, yes, the world needs to change and the world is changing because humanity is a work in progress. Humanity is slowly evolving, fits and starts and regressive periods. It takes a few steps forward and then a few steps, four steps forward, three steps back.

Then a few more forward. There's a gradual evolution of humanity and to focus only on what is going wrong within that process, that evolutionary process is also very misleading because that's what you see when you watch the media and so on. It focuses not on what's going right or what has gone right.

It focuses on what's going wrong. Then you give that more and more attention. By giving attention to something, you amplify it.

So whatever you give, now, I'm not saying to completely ignore the world, no, but to give it an excessive amount of attention and only continuously think about what's wrong with the world, then you forget what's right with the world and that then diminishes. So we have the external world coming into your living room, for example, through the media. And it can be, as I said, you can sometimes believe that your personal world, the immediate sphere of influence is irrelevant, but that's not the case.

So the starting point with changing the world is to become aware of how you operate in this world. The starting point is how do you relate to the humans in your life? How do you, what is your mind, what is your mind doing?

What is your predominant state of consciousness? What are your predominant emotions? What are the predominant thoughts that go through your mind?

It's vitally important to become aware of that. If you're not aware of what the predominant emotions are, that the predominant thoughts are, plus accompanying emotions that go through your mind, you are unaware. And the emotions that, the thoughts and emotions that arise continuously within you are a form of conditioning.

And so they take possession of you. So it's vitally important as the starting point for changing the world is to become aware of your world. How do you operate in this world?

How are your relationships? Is there a lot of antagonism? Is there grievances and a lot of conflict?

Are there many people that you hate? Are there more people that you like or love? Is there love, compassion, or not so much?

How do you relate to people? How do you relate to strangers that you meet in a shop, in a store? How do you relate to somebody you meet in an elevator?

All these things are part of what you manifest as your world. So it's how do you, what is the predominant energy that you manifest in your life that affects other humans? This is a very important starting point that of course is expressed in the famous saying, be the change that you want to see in this world.

Nobody knows who actually said that. Some people say Gandhi said it. Well, he could have said it, but he probably said something similar.

I don't think he said that literally, but it doesn't matter. It's a very important pointer, a very important thought, be the change that you want to see in the world. So change starts with you.

And that means your consciousness, your state of consciousness. What is become aware of your mind? What is, how much complaining do you do?

Useless complaining, not a sort of complaining that can actually bring about change, but useless complaining about other people and groups of people and pronouncing half of humanity to be evil, whatever it is, be aware of your mind, vitally important. What kinds of thoughts are there? And once you, the ability to become aware of your mind, what kinds of thoughts your mind is producing, once that grows, that means there's more awareness in you.

There's more presence in you. Another dimension of consciousness has arisen. So be conscious.

How do you, what do you bring into this world on a daily basis? Do you bring more loving kindness, compassion, other humans, empathy, a friendly, a kind word, even to strangers to do the, do you acknowledge every other human being that you meet, even if you meet them only casually, do you acknowledge the being of that human beyond what role this human plays within that brief interaction? Somebody sells you something, you're asking somebody for information, whatever it may be.

So are you, do you acknowledge the beings of the other, if only for a few seconds, giving it attention, see there is beyond the personality, there's something deeper. Do you briefly, do you, can you sense the being, ultimately it means the sacredness of every human, no matter what their personality displays. Next question is, observe, are you at the mercy of how other people behave around you?

Do you react or are you at the mercy also of situations or circumstances? Now, what do I mean when I say at the mercy of, it means that somebody is angry at you, somebody is, the world is full of people who are very angry and frustrated. They may perhaps, they are justified in being angry because life is difficult.

So one can always justify anger and frustration and grievances, of course. Every, on a conventional level, often these things are justified, but what now, what do you, you meet somebody who's angry, says something angry at you, driving, for example. Somebody shouts at you, what, how do you, are you aware enough not to be drawn into the same energy that the other person manifests?

Are you able to simply stay clear and present? Not easy. So how do you, but you can only change the world is by not reacting in the same way in which the world impinges upon you or treats you through humans.

So you have to be more aware than that. And so that's your, the world changes when your state of consciousness is no longer determined by other people's state of consciousness that you may meet or, you know, that's, that really is a big change already. If your state of, your mental emotional state is no longer determined by somebody else's mental emotional state, that's a huge awakening.

And there, because as long as your emotional state, mental emotional state is determined by other, somebody else's mental emotional state, that in Eastern terms, it means it's a perpetuation of karma. So there's no freedom in that. So you can, if somebody is nice to you, you're nice to him or her, okay.

But if somebody is not nice to you, what happens? Jesus was talking about something similar. It's easy to be nice to someone.

Jesus said, this is a big paraphrase because I don't remember literal passages from the Bible. He said, it's easy to be nice to others who are nice to you, but what about those that are not nice to you? That's what really matters.

It doesn't mean, of course, that you become a doormat or you don't have nothing to do with that. In fact, there's a great inner power and strength that arises when you're no longer continuously reactive. That is really weakness.

So if you become angry, when somebody is angry at you, the ego regards this as power. You have compensated for feeling of having been diminished by somebody's attack, verbal attack or criticism. The ego feels diminished.

To me, sometimes it happens when I drive because I'm relatively slow most of the time. And sometimes people shout at me and say, you idiot. Okay, that's, and then I look at them.

Now they're expecting me to shout back, but I don't do that anymore. It's happened too often. So it's too unpleasant.

I don't need it. I don't feel diminished by somebody saying, you idiot. It's just that his or her state of consciousness manifesting through words at the moment.

That's a fine. And then I just look at them and sometimes they become even more disconcerted because there's a lack of reaction. Or they might think I'm completely deaf.

Maybe I'm deaf. I can't hear what they're saying. Just a little example.

But it's amazing, for example, how traffic, it's a simple thing, can make people unconscious. So the moment they get behind the wheel, they become reactive and unconscious and take everything personally. So it can be funny.

It's good sometimes if you can laugh at the ego, but if you want to change the world, you have to start with yourself. What is it that you emanate? It's not only what you emanate through words and actions, it's even what you emanate energetically.

Every human being, if you're a little bit sensitive, then you can sense that every human being has a certain energy emanation. That's part of manifesting the world that you experience because you see it through the lens or the veil of all the conditioning within you, the mental, emotional, and even energetic conditioning within you. So you meet people who are, you can sense that they are in a state of unhappiness.

It's a generic term that could mean many things. They are in a state of ultimately suffering because even a person who is angry is really suffering. They don't know they're suffering, but it's an unpleasant state and it affects the body.

That kind of stress that anger represents affects the harmonious function of the body, the immune system, the heart, blood circulation, everything. So it's not only ultimately not pleasant, it's harmful. First, it's harmful to your body.

It's harmful to other human beings unless they are immune. And so if they are immune to a negative emanation from another human being, now you can't do that through a vaccine. That's the kind of immunity that can alter.

That immunity is awareness, presence. So you're not at the mercy of other humans. You are free.

You may not succeed every time because humans can be very difficult. Not you, just other humans. So humans can be really difficult.

And you might have noticed when you are interacting with humans and you have discussions, another interesting fact you might notice that you are always right and the others are always wrong. It's a very strange fact. And if that's the case in your life, you have to wonder for a moment, isn't that strange?

I'm always right. Wow, I must be Superman or Superwoman. Or you're very unconscious.

It's one or the other. So self-knowledge is the most difficult knowledge. Jesus was already talking about that.

He said, it's easy to see the splinter that is in somebody else's eye and says, look at the splinter in your eye. Let me remove it for you. But you can't see the beam that is in your own eye.

That's a huge thing in you, but you see what's wrong with the other. That's easy. And wrong means unconscious, but to see your own patterns, that's a challenge.

But if you don't, you cannot manifest because that is a starting point for manifesting a better world. And then it spreads out from there. So the essence of what I'm saying here is become conscious of the fact that often you are at the mercy of other people or situations and your state of mind or your emotional state is completely controlled and reactive.

So I mentioned human beings that you react to. When you know, it's also situations. You find yourself in a situation that is suddenly regarded as undesirable.

And that is nowadays very common thing because many people for months have been trapped at home and can't interact with people anymore except through the technology. So many, many limitations have arisen in people's lives of collective kind. Millions of people experiencing the same limitations.

Of course, some are affected much more than others. But yes, to also not just reacting to humans, but reacting to situations that regard it as illimiting, frustrating, and so on. Can you rise above situations also and become free of that reactivity that, for example, the continuous complaining in your mind about what's wrong with the world.

Some people continuously claim what's wrong with the world. Others complain more of what's wrong with their life. And that's a very seductive thing because the ego likes that.

It inflates the ego. If you complain about other people, you experience an ego inflation. Why?

Because the ego feels itself to be superior when it can complain about others. It's implied. You are a judge of the other and you pronounce the other as delinquent, insufficient, not good enough or bad, wanting in the old sense of the word.

Very seductive to experience ego inflation. And all that, as you awaken spiritually, become more free of this reactivity. Then what the words you speak, the actions you take in your immediate surroundings make the world a better place.

And you break the karmic chain, which is action, reaction, action, reaction. Some people who come into this world, into a very dysfunctional family environment, and there are millions of people who are born into a very dysfunctional family environment. And it's a huge, huge challenge.

Because if you're not given enough love or attention, you're not encouraged as a child. If that is missing in your early years, it is a huge, a huge burden or dysfunction that you carry in many cases for the rest of your life. And in many cases, you inflict the same thing on your children that your parents have inflicted on you.

There has not been enough consciousness to break the pattern. So these things are, those patterns that we inherit, it's only through waking up, to becoming aware that these patterns can be transcended. That is our task here.

And that's how you make the world a better place. You have to, the dysfunctional patterns in your own life, you have to look at them. And I know many people who've had very dysfunctional upbringing and then have suffered enormously because they were forced to, because of their unconsciousness, not enough awareness, they were forced to reenact the same patterns that they experienced.

And that you bring more suffering into this world. Are you bringing more suffering into this world or are you bringing healing into this world? Healing is not weakness, healing is power.

So you have to seriously ask yourself, next question in your world, what do you do with the internet when you social media? What is the quality of the nature of your interactions with other humans that you, most cases have never met? So you don't need, you don't know them as humans.

They are just abstract symbols on the screen. They have expressed an opinion. And what, how do you, they've expressed an opinion that seems to conflict with your opinion.

And suddenly this unconscious reactivity, this human whom you don't know, have never met, you only know him or her through certain statements on Twitter. And suddenly this, you treat this other human being as some kind of demon. It's, and it gets, it's happened millions of times.

Is that creating a better world? And the Twitter world is showing increasing signs of insanity. So it's an externalization of the human mind.

You see it, oh, there it is. There's, it's good, it's wonderful. You can see it before it was all in here.

Now you can actually see it on your screen. There's the craziness of the human mind. Well, that's helpful.

It's good to be able to see it. It's an externalization of the collective mind. Before we invented this technology, all humans could do is what they can shout at somebody in the street, but you can only reach one or two or three people.

Or you could, well, maybe you could stand on a soapbox in Hyde Park Corner in London and give a speech. But even then you only had a few people listening to you. But now even the most unconscious person will have an audience.

He or she will attract similarly unconscious people on Twitter and other platforms. And so, as you know, one wrong tweet can destroy your entire career.

[Speaker 7] (1:08:17 - 1:08:18)
Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:08:22 - 1:43:46)
So this is the certain, every age, in every age, time period, human unconsciousness manifests in somewhat different ways. And it's easier when you look back on a past age, we can see, oh, weren't they crazy to do something like that? How could humans do something like that?

It's more difficult to become aware of the craziness in your own time period because you're in the middle of it. Retrospectively, it's easier to see the craziness. So you make sure to create a better world that do not participate in the craziness of this world.

To be very, don't be at the mercy of others as far as your state of consciousness is concerned. And you can only do that by being present more and more, always connecting with that alertness, a very key word. Be alert so that you know what's going on in your mind and in your emotion.

Don't repress anything, just know. And that will gradually dissolve dysfunctional patterns. And you still feel drawn back in, that's fine.

So this is the beginning of changing the world on your personal sphere. And then if you can then interact through the media, various internet platforms, you can put out something that is more beneficial. Then you already begin to affect a larger sphere.

You have a lot, everybody has a sphere of influence through these platforms here. And what is it? What do you put out through your sphere of influence?

So there's a great opportunity for something that in many, many cases is quite insane, but it is also a great opportunity for actually help to elevate human consciousness. So that is your great opportunity, no matter how you do it. And then we come to the larger sphere, political, social institutions and so on.

How do you change that? How do you diminish the suffering of so many humans on the planet? Well, you continue to no longer contribute to the suffering of others.

So to some extent, you have to allow humans to evolve. Humanity is evolving. The consciousness of humanity is evolving.

And it's vitally important to bring healing and compassion and so on to all your interactions, whether at home or online or wherever you go. And if you want to participate in political discourse, maybe you want to run for office somewhere, who knows? You need to be really conscious if you decide to do that.

And you may feel called upon to do that. And then it becomes, you've already, in your own past in life, you're already practicing not being reactive, not being at the mercy of other people's state of consciousness. And then you can bring that into the, that wider, greater sphere of political structures and so on, if that's what you choose to do.

But you also need to realize that humanity is, as I said before, is a work in progress. So humans are slowly evolving towards more consciousness. The entire universe is engaged in an awakening process.

And you are part of the awakening process of the universe. You can see it on the planet, how gradually from very simple life forms, gradually grew, became more complex. Then they were destroyed.

There were many, five was five extinctions already. Then they were destroyed. Then new life forms arose from, where did they arise from?

From an underlying field of vast intelligence that then manifests through physical forms, gradually manifests more fully, gradually manifests in more complex life forms that have more, greater share of consciousness, but it's always the one consciousness moving through. So have compassion with humans. A lot of the suffering that humans experience is created by other humans.

Just read history, history book, and you see how dreadful suffering humans have inflicted on other humans throughout history, 20th century alone. We've now become very much the last few, present time, very much conscious of racial suffering that humans have suffered from, tremendous suffering that humans inflicted on other humans. And it's great that we've become aware of it now instead of before just the, it was just, nobody could talk about it.

It was so not, throughout history, slavery was an accepted fact that nobody seemed to question it. Consciousness had not yet developed enough, but now consciousness is developing and we become aware of it, and it's a wonderful thing. As long as the, what arises doesn't, isn't, it's there.

There's sometimes a danger that even realizations can be hijacked by the ego, so to speak. And when you know that something has been hijacked by the ego is when you demonize others for example, because the ego loves to demonize others. So be very careful with, it's very, so that you don't, you get dragged into the gravitational pull of the ego, drags you back into unconsciousness.

We're living at a time that's very challenging, but also a time of opportunity. Nobody can predict right now whether we're going to experience a regression in state of consciousness. Every regression in the evolution of consciousness is actually part of the evolution of consciousness.

Or if we can go from here straight to a more conscious society, more conscious world. But humans have to go through this evolutionary process and not every human is at the same stage of evolutionary development. You have to be compassionate with people who are not yet evolving.

And that could be your parents. If you become compassionate with, when you go to your, visit your parents and they're trapped in the same patterns that they were already 20 years ago. And the same, they criticize you in the same way they always do.

And you realize they are trapped in their patterns and you have compassion and you allow humans to go through their patterns. And if in some cases you even have to allow humans who insist to go through their own self-created suffering, you do as much as you can to help to bring more awareness into this world, to bring love ultimately, not conventional love, but the deeper, the love that recognizes every other human as inseparable from who you are, to recognize the other as ultimately not separate from you as that is true love. Love, that is that nothing else will redeem the world and create a better world. We need humans to be able to access the dimension from which love can flow.

And love means what the Dalai Lama calls kindness. It's the same thing. What he really is talking about is love.

So Dalai Lama said, he didn't say strangely, my religion is Buddhism. The Dalai Lama said, my religion is kindness. So he's really pointing to the essence of what we transform.

And that kindness manifests as compassion and love, empathy, and also manifests as wisdom. Wisdom is very important, it's not just intelligence, it's wisdom, it's something deeper that sees the totality of things that doesn't attack one problem and then create three more problems. The solution to one problem creates three big, even bigger problems that apply only the intellectual analysis or conventional intelligence.

Wisdom sees the totality and then takes action on the basis of that. Let's see another question. Is there some type of discipline that is needed to be successful with conscious manifestation?

If so, can you describe what the discipline is that is needed? Well, basically, I have already described the discipline that's needed in your daily life. To be aware of yourself and of your own state of consciousness.

Also, an important factor, perhaps, that is implied in what we've been saying, but it's worth pointing it out explicitly, is the importance of what is conventionally called gratitude. But there could be other words. Gratitude is a very powerful transformational tool and also one of the most powerful tools for manifesting better things in your life.

Now, what does that mean? The gratitude is to acknowledge the good in your life now. And it's surprising how many people don't do that, who can only see the bad in their lives or only complain, but it's extremely powerful to acknowledge the good that's in your life now.

Now, let's talk about this for a moment. This does not mean that you have a conceptual idea of what your life is and then you compare it to somebody else's life. And you say, oh, really, I should be happy because I have it so much better than look at these people.

Their life is worse than mine, so I really should be grateful for my life. That's not it. That's not real gratitude.

You're moving within the conceptual realm and your feeling of wellbeing is dependent on somebody else who has less than you or is suffering more than you. So gratitude is not if you compare yourself because that's a misconception, very common misconception of gratitude is you compare yourself to somebody else or even a whole group of people. You say, look at people in the third world.

I really should be grateful. We are so much better off, even though I may be poor, but I'm still better off than, so let's be grateful. No, that's not real gratitude.

You're depending on others to be worse off than you, but you can feel gratitude. It's crazy. It feeds the ego.

No, gratitude is to acknowledge the good that's in your life now, now, this moment. Okay, so it's not the good in your life situation. I'm fine because I have achieved this or that or whatever.

No, at this moment. And that's simple things. It really comes down to simple things.

What can I be grateful for at this moment? Wow, there's so much I can be grateful for. Now, what is it?

To be grateful is to acknowledge something, to give it attention and to appreciate it. I have this, you can't see it, but I have a nice round table here. And it's lovely.

I touch it. It's made of wood. And it's lovely.

It's not spectacular. It doesn't need to be spectacular, but it has a presence and a beingness. There's light coming through the window there and from behind me.

I often sit here. I'm lucky to have these trees here. And I often sit here.

There's a little screen to, otherwise there's too much glare. But I often sit here. I look at the trees for 10, 15 minutes.

And there's a continuous feeling of goodness because, and we could call that gratitude, but I don't say in my mind, I'm so grateful for these trees. I simply appreciate the wonder and aliveness, the beingness of these trees. So I acknowledge the good in this moment by appreciating the wonder, the miracle of these trees.

It's just, you can look at the sky here today, happens to be completely overcast, but very, and that's fine too, because there's light filtering through. There's more light in the way today than when the sky is blue because the light is dispersed by the cloud. It's everywhere.

It comes from the sun. It filters through the clouds. Now you appreciate that.

You look at a potted plant. You become, you're grateful for that. You're grateful for all the little things.

You hear a bird. You drink a glass of water, acknowledging all your breathing. So that's gratitude.

The gratitude is the appreciation of life that's around you. So you can say the gratitude for being alive, for to feel that you're alive in your entire body, the inner body, the invisible presence that inhabits the body, to feel that. So all my, all the little things, gratitude is best applied to all the small things that continuously surround you in life.

And then you see the goodness of it all, or you can just, let's say you have little or no money. So, and you're looking for abundance. So how do you bring abundance into your life?

You have to discover, to acknowledge the abundance that is already everywhere around you. You walk past this, you go, you're walking in the street and there's a flower store. There's flowers on display and potted plants outside.

If you live in a city, an abundance of life, the flowers are just amazing. There's abundance and you can look everywhere and see abundant life. Jesus used that term.

He said, I want you to have abundant life. In other translations, he says the same term translated in a different way. I want you to have the fullness of life.

Jesus promises the fullness of life or abundant life. Now, true abundance, which many people are looking for and they think abundance is to do with having many things. It could be that quite a few things come to you when you access the source of all abundance, which of course is within you.

It's the feeling of the fullness of life. Now, once you get this feeling in the present moment, then this is the, perhaps the very core of gratitude is to feel the aliveness of life within yourself. So when Jesus talks about the fullness of life or abundant life, he's not talking about, he's not, it is not a prophecy of the arising of shopping malls 2000 years later.

He wasn't talking about the abundance that you find when you walk through a shopping mall and you say, oh, look, oh, I must have that. Oh, I must, all these things, I must have that, I must have that, that comes from a place of lack, the egoic place of lack. I must fill up the sense of lack with this and that and that, this kind of addictive thing around.

If you might've noticed when you go to the shopping mall and you feel very tired, well, I do. I walk around for 10 minutes and, ah, that's enough. So this, Jesus wasn't talking about lots of things.

He's talking about the core of life, the fullness that you, that is inseparable from what, when we started today, we started with getting in touch with the consciousness within you to realize that you are conscious, that the essence of who you are is the awareness, not your history. The essence of who you are is the awareness. And the awareness of that awareness is the realization of that which is prior to all forms, that can become forms, but that the, that which is prior to all manifestations is the unmanifested life, the one, the consciousness, the one life that underlies the entire universe.

And because you are only a microscopic version of the entire universe, you can discover virtually all the secrets of the universe by going within, because you are inseparable from the universe. You discover the most incredible, deepest realizations, not factual things, you may not know how many, how many planets have life, intelligent life in our galaxy, nobody knows, not those things, but the deeper laws and movements that underlie the manifestation of the universe, you can find that within yourself by going within. So the abundance is the aliveness that is within you, and it's the awareness of that aliveness, but the awareness of that aliveness and the aliveness are a single thing, it's duality arises when we talk about it.

Then they can say, oh, I'm aware of consciousness, but you're not, you can't be aware of consciousness because the awareness is a consciousness, the consciousness is the awareness. So consciousness is becoming self-aware. And what is that consciousness?

It's not yours, it's the consciousness of the universe manifesting through this little form. So you are part of the awakening process of the universe. So all manifestation that you do in your life must be aligned with the awakening universe and the universe is moving towards greater consciousness.

But where does it come from? It comes from an unmanifested source of all life that is traditionally has been called God. The source of all life emanates into this universe, but it has no location in space or time, it is beyond that.

But to realize that the essence of who you are is inseparable from that, that is when the ripple on the surface of the ocean suddenly realizes that it is the ocean. Yes, it's also a ripple, not for long, for a little while, it's also the ripple, but in essence, the ripple is the ocean. And when the ripple becomes aware of its true nature, then that means the ocean has become aware of its true nature and the totality of life has become aware, has woken up.

That is our, so everything that we do in our, what we want to manifest, let's make sure that it is part of the evolving consciousness. So even the simplest things, let's say you want to manifest a, let's, you're a hairdresser and now you want to manifest, now that you can, salons are open again. Okay, I'm going to have a hairdressing salon.

Okay, I'm going to focus on that. And I can feel that I already have it because I can feel the fullness of life already. And it does bring in the image of this hairdressing salon and it bring it into this sense of fullness, which means you're already feeling that it's there.

And when it comes on, it's secondary now. That's the, you become a more, very powerful manifester if you do not depend on some future outcome, you're already experiencing the fullness of life. But you also know that this hairdressing salon is a place where people will, when they go there, they not only get a good haircut or hairdo, they also get your presence.

They also get your attention. They also get the energy that you emanate there. And they will feel better while you're cutting their hair.

I'm just giving one example. I could give thousands of examples. They feel, in that moment, you listen to them.

You acknowledge that they're not just a client. You acknowledge their beingness. I always say the human being has a two dimension.

The human is the conditioned with a history. The being is the unconditioned. So that's the consciousness that you are.

That is the transcendent dimension. If you don't know that, your life is the most frustrating experience. You might've noticed that without that realization of the deeper dimension of who you are, all your experience is one damn thing after another.

It's always, oh my God, not another thing. So the hairdresser, now everybody who comes into that, yes, they're getting a good haircut. Let's presume you're a good hairdresser.

That's important too on the human level. But there's something else that you provide. And that is the love one can say to acknowledge the beingness of every human.

And perhaps some hairdressers after a few years become very good counselors because they've listened to so many stories. And suddenly they can actually give good advice. It doesn't matter what the form is that your manifestation take, but make sure that it is aligned in some way with the evolving consciousness.

So you bring something good into this world. You make a contribution. You bring more goodness into this world in one way or another.

Even if you, whatever it is, you make, if you're very good at something, let's say you're good at sports or something, and then people like to watch you. Why do people, I sometimes ask, why do people watch a tennis match? It's always the same thing.

They just knock, there's a ball, and then it goes on for hours. But it can be very, very, why are they so excited by this? Well, on the one hand, yes, they have a favorite.

They either favor one or the other. And that is an egoic thing. But I believe they also find it fascinating because the people who are, if they are masters in tennis playing, they are in a state of absolute presence while they play.

And somehow it's lovely to watch people who are in that field or the zone of mastery. And because something almost transmits itself, it doesn't mean that these tennis players are necessarily more conscious than others in the rest of their lives. We don't know.

But while they're engaged in the activities that they have mastered absolutely, you can somehow absorb a little bit of that presence. It's great to watch. So I occasionally watch, but not very often, tennis, and I can sense why people, there's the two reasons why people watch it.

One, they want their favorite to win, but there's a deeper reason. That is, there's something almost transmits itself. This presence can be contagious almost.

And again, here we come to an important point. When you are present, that also affects many, many others that you come into contact with. It's contagious in a positive sense.

It transmits, there's a transmission of presence, and there can even be a transmissions of presence in some miraculous way through the screen right now. How is that possible? These are just, well, it's possible because the screen is in your consciousness.

Who knows where there's actually a screen out there, but the screen is something that arises in your consciousness. So even there, it can work. So whatever it is you want to manifest in this life, go ahead, but realize the foundation for manifestation is, I call it the vertical dimension, that's the cross.

Life has the two dimensions, the vertical, which is the present moment, which is the depths of who you are in the essence of a being that is, and who you are in the essence of your being is already complete. You don't need to become a better person in the essence of your being. You just need to manifest into this horizontal world more of the essence of your being.

So on the deepest level, this you cannot improve upon anything or who you are, but on the horizontal, they have the cross, the two dimensions. On the horizontal, there's a lot you can do, but it is not ultimately beneficial in the absence of the vertical. But if the vertical is there, then that more and more from there, which is consciousness, can flow into the horizontal dimension.

And that's how you create a better world. That is a miracle, and that is the secret. And that is your task in this world.

What else could be? That's the purpose of your life. I mean, that doesn't matter what form it takes.

It could be the simplest things. May you acknowledge the good that's already there. And if you are not, if you feel there's much more that you could do on the horizontal, yes, there probably is.

But in the meantime, let's say you deliver, we had a meal delivered yesterday to DoorDash. So DoorDash, there was a brief interaction. I opened the door and some, before they just left it at the door, it's the virus thing.

But I opened the door and for five seconds, I interacted with the dasher, they call them. We will work for DoorDash. They bring food from restaurants in case you don't know.

We interacted for, there was a moment of interaction and I could sense a connectedness. He loved interacting with me for these few seconds. And I loved it.

He wasn't a DoorDasher. He was, there was a being behind it and I acknowledged his being. And through that, he found me, he felt very good just looking at me, nothing to do with me as a person at all.

And it was a lovely, lovely encounter for a few seconds. So, and if you're a DoorDasher for a while, why not practice that? Now, most, many people that you deliver food to will not be, probably not acknowledge your being, but that doesn't mean you cannot acknowledge their being.

So for as long as you do that, even there you can bring more consciousness into this world, no matter where you are and what you're at, instead of complaining that you really should be doing something more interesting. Yes, perhaps you will be doing something more interesting, but a starting point is acknowledge the good that's here now, then you're much more likely to evolve. The situation is much more likely to evolve from there.

But if you are in a continuous state of resistance to what is now, you're much more likely to be stuck for a long time, if not forever. As you know, the famous saying goes, what you resist persists, which is of course very true. So alignment with universal purpose.

Universal purpose is consciousness, bring more of that. And this consciousness manifests as an emanation of kindness, love, compassion, a sense of deep connectedness. And it also manifests as wisdom when you use your mind so that it's not just the conditioned mind that's operating, there's actually an awareness behind it.

And the conditioned mind is then inspired by the deeper consciousness that's behind it, of which it is an inseparable part. It's inspired then by the deeper... And then the mind is a lovely tool too.

You can create through the mind, but you can only create if you have access to real creativity, you need access to the deeper dimension that is transcendent to the mind, not separate from it. The analogy I used again is the thinking mind could be like the ripple on the surface. And then there's the ocean of which the ripple is only a temporary expression.

It's so that life is... Once you realize that, then any situation is fine for the time being, any situation that you're in. And the more you are aligned with the present moment, the more likely it is that the situation will evolve and change to reflect your growing consciousness.

That's a miracle of being alive. And that's why you're here.

[Speaker 2] (1:44:00 - 1:44:05)
So the picture is not stuck.

[Speaker 1] (1:44:05 - 1:47:08)
I just stopped talking. I just wanted to make sure you know. I have probably said enough.

The rest is up to you. Many of these things I said you already knew. And if you didn't know them in your conscious mind, there was a kind of recognition.

It suddenly made, you know, that makes sense. Somehow you knew that already. So the truth is always recognized.

It's not something new that you learn. Perhaps you hadn't realized it. So truth is realized, recognized.

And then there may be others who are not yet ready for it. That's fine. There may be some people who said, or somebody said to a friend, perhaps, oh, you must listen to this guy Eckhart.

He might have something important to say. And then the friend looks, what the hell is he talking about? So it's fine.

Not everybody's yet ready for the next step in evolution. Usually it means they need to suffer a little bit more, mostly self-created, unconsciously. That's also part of the evolutionary process of the universe.

So the rest is up to you. It is a wonderful adventure. You don't need to seek for satisfaction on the personal level.

This comes as a by-product quite often. The satisfaction on the personal level comes on the horizontal level, comes as the icing on the cake or the by-product of something that something deeper than that, something that happens through you, that you can't claim I did that. It happens through you.

And then the person, the personal sense of self, they might feel, oh, it's nice to have. But if it claims possessions as I did that, you fall back into illusion as a separate self. You cannot do anything as a separate self.

As Jesus said, I of my own self can do nothing. It is the father that does it through me. What's the father?

The consciousness that emanates from the source of all life that is called God. Thank you. I will see you again, perhaps.

Soon, but always in the present moment.

[Speaker 4] (1:47:34 - 1:51:03)
I've known all the things that you've talked about in many of your books and, well, there's two books, but the books I've read. I've experienced this presence through music. So, and it's a very profound sense of grace that I feel when I know I'm being played.

In a sense, I'm an instrument. And in a way, what we call instruments are voices. So I've been very taken with this description and imagery I've had from what you've discussed about being near the void, because that's what it feels like.

It's something comes up. I know there's something in there. We've been talking about dogs a lot.

It's like I smell it inside. It's like, and it can become obsessive because it's such a beautiful presence. But I mean, I think of Stravinsky.

He said, the Rite of Spring. He said, I did not write the Rite of Spring. I transcribed it.

Some artists get these things and the clarity is there. What I experience is mostly an inference or something that needs to be embodied and brought forth. And that which is actually, my experience is more of knowing what it isn't.

I just play it. As it moves through me, I can sense that grace, especially when I know, when I don't feel my hands. I don't feel anything.

I just feel this presence, this music that's just as surprising to me as anyone else. And I'm really fortunate because I never took lessons and never got trained or anything. So my mind doesn't really get that involved.

Don't ask me to play Happy Birthday, though. I don't know how to do that. So I guess my question was about this connection to the creative and, in a sense, the artifacts that come.

I use the word inform. And when I was thinking, does art and music inform the ego of presence? That was really what it was.

And so how does one be part of that manifestation but not get too, let's see, involved? To keep the distance so one doesn't become too obsessed with that process. So the balance of the two, that's what I'm looking for.

[Speaker 1] (1:51:03 - 2:06:24)
Thank you. Well, of course, on the one hand, you have the creative process of music or art. And then you have the finished product.

And then you have the piece of music is being played and somebody listens to it. Or the work of art is there and somebody contemplates it. When you ask, can art or music inform the ego of presence?

Well, first of all, the ego doesn't know anything about presence, so it can't do that. And there needs to be some opening in the ego in order to be receptive to the power that is latent in music or art that was created from that deep place. There's a lot of music and art that's not necessarily created from that deep place, but the ego is trying to be clever.

And so it tries to come up with something clever and then that's fine. But let's talk about some piece of music or work of art that has come out of connectedness with the stillness or the presence. So some of that then, to some extent, the work of art or the piece of music still carries that energy field.

So it can put the listener in touch or the person who contemplates the work of art can put that person in touch with the deeper dimension within, as long as there's even a little bit of opening is required. If there's only the density of the ego, then the transformational possibilities of art or music are not realized. So a little bit of opening is required in the viewer or the listener, and then it can be quite a wonderful thing to listen to music or to contemplate a work of art and be transported, if only for a moment, into that alert stillness out of which it originally came.

That's a beautiful thing. Another aspect of your question is, I believe, losing oneself, perhaps going too deep, almost losing yourself in the ground out of which creativity comes in the creative process. There's always a balance that is needed so that you don't lose yourself in being.

It could happen to an artist. It can happen to some people who awaken spiritually and they suddenly plunge so deeply into being that they lose all interest in doing. So that happened to some spiritual masters who spent several years in being without doing anything, for example, Ramana Maharshi in India, who had to be fed for several years because he wouldn't even pick up food.

He was so deeply immersed in being, he just sat there and people recognized something extraordinary about him, which they wouldn't have done in the West. In the West, he would have been a medical problem. They recognized something extraordinary and they put food in his mouth.

But there was a loss of balance, certainly, between in this, he could no longer function in this world. This, of course, to such an extreme, this does not happen to you. You're still here.

And then gradually, after a few years, he gradually was beginning to function again in this world and then gradually was able to regain a balance between dealing with things out here and connectedness with being. To a slightly, in a slightly minor way, it happened to me when I lost interest completely in doing and drifted around for two years. It wasn't a problem to me.

It was only a problem to people who were watching me or who knew me. So there was a loss of balance for a while, but then gradually the balance reestablished itself. I didn't have a teacher as such, so it had to be a natural process.

So not to go so deep that you, as long as there's the, there's the, you have to go within and then take, give form to that which was resting in the formless, be used by it so that through you, it can come into this world of form. Don't stay down there and lose yourself in it. Not necessary.

So bringing, do you, what do you compose music? Yes, yes. Well, that's a wonderful way of getting in touch with the stillness within any creative process.

Anybody who is, I don't, unfortunately. The world has not given me that gift of being able to either play music or have some kind of art to bring into this world for a reason, because the world also needs direct spiritual teaching and so, I love some listening to certain kinds of music. For the viewer, it's important not to become dependent, however, on anything external to enter the state of presence.

So whereas music can be a help, there too needs to be a balance. If the only place you can become still is when you listen to certain kinds of music, then that's not quite it because you're becoming dependent on something external to get in touch with that. So use it as a help, and this is the same as a spiritual teacher or spiritual teaching.

It can be a great help to listen to a tape or to see a video or whatever, a great help. But if you become totally dependent on that or on a group, also a group can be a great help to sit with a group of people in an energy field of presence can be a great help, but not becoming dependent on the group either, not becoming dependent on one teacher, any external teacher. And every good teacher will tell you when the time comes, enough is enough.

The true teacher is within you. And what you see in me, that which you find so precious in me must be in you, otherwise you wouldn't see it. So the good teacher will always direct you back into yourself, will not foster any kind of dependency.

So knowing what is a help, using it, any of the things that can be helpful, but not becoming dependent, eventually it is necessary for you to go there without any help, still being able to appreciate even teachers and teachings. I love listening to other spiritual teachers. If they come from a deep place, I have great joy when I listen, wow, this is so wonderful.

Or reading a spiritual book that comes from the deepest place, there's still great joy in that. I don't, it's nothing to do with need, it's enjoying a slightly different expression of the same deep truth. Just wonderful.

And so, and then also you can see it wherever it is, no matter in what form it's hiding, you can see the truth shining through wherever it is hiding. It might be hiding in some ancient religion, hiding very deeply. And there you see it shining through some, there may be a lot of mythology around it, there may be a lot of cultural beliefs around it, and yet deep down there you can still see, oh, this is about, this is the truth shining through all the mythology around it and so on.

So once it's in there, you see it everywhere, but primarily it is who you are. So I wish you well and be thankful that you have this wonderful gift. So how to reconcile accepting what arises in the present moment, and at the same time, perhaps holding in your mind an image of what you want to manifest in your life or using affirmations.

Now that's the, perhaps that's the most important part of manifesting, living in this world, is to bring the two together, accepting whatever arises in the present moment without losing the ability to, in your day-to-day life, in your personal and professional life, without losing the ability to have goals, for example, and move towards goals or to have certain aims. When you practice manifestation techniques, it might, you might do it as set aside a few minutes every day, maybe twice a day, and maybe in the morning and in the evening. When you focus on something that you want to manifest, the rest of the time you live your life without continuously thinking about something that is other than what arises in the present moment.

So it's important, the very foundation for successful living, but also the very foundation for manifesting things is to be deeply accepting of whatever the present moment brings to face it in that state of acceptance. If you're not in a state of acceptance, it's a state of acceptance that takes you deeper into the vertical dimension, which is beyond ego. The state of non-acceptance keeps you trapped in very limited egoic consciousness.

So when you are in opposition to the present moment, in whatever form it arises, and that's very easy to fall back into that, even for spiritual practitioners, so to speak, it's fall back into this deep seated habit of being in opposition to what arises in the present moment. So it's vital to recognize that something that is the case now cannot be otherwise in this moment. This is beyond any doubt.

It is because that's how it is. You cannot wish it away or say it shouldn't be. It is whatever is arising now is.

It's dysfunctional to argue with it or to create some kind of mental, emotional resistance to it. It does not mean that change cannot take place. It does not mean that you cannot take action in order to manifest something that you would prefer.

But the important thing is at this moment, there's no division, no, there's no antagonism between you and what you experience as your reality. That's very important, not to have an antagonistic relationship with whatever arises in the present moment.

[Speaker 6] (2:06:28 - 2:06:32)
Millions of humans still, that's all they ever know.

[Speaker 1] (2:06:35 - 2:42:03)
All they ever identify with is the personality conditioned by the past, problematic, problem-making. You perceive the world and judge it through the veil of your mental conditioning. You don't see anything clearly.

Some people hate themselves. I don't like my body, I don't like who I am, I don't like this, I don't, what an awful way to live, I hate myself. It's much better to love yourself.

So in new age teachings, you learn to love yourself. Let go of this dysfunctional relationship with yourself. And then this is a good thing.

It's much better to love yourself than to hate yourself. But you have to achieve that transition, not easy if the hating yourself has been deeply ingrained. You may have to put little stickers on your bathroom mirror.

I love myself. Oh yes, and everywhere. You are lovable.

Oh, thank you, thank you, yes. And again, this is fine. It's a transitional stage.

It's not the final stage. Sometimes in new age things, it's a final stage. It's a lovely transitional stage, but really it's the stage of awakening is that you begin to let go of having a relationship with yourself so that you can just be yourself.

And you have to be in the present moment in order to be yourself. And that is, you can sometimes learn by looking at an animal. The animal is at a pre-egoic stage.

What we are moving towards or into is a post-egoic stage. Now, the animal, like your dog, is pre-egoic. The dog has consciousness, but not conceptual consciousness.

The dog does not operate through mental concepts. In other words, the dog does not have an opinion about you. Isn't that, that's why you love the dog so much.

And also, the dog does not have a relationship with himself or herself. Humans have, but I have not met a single dog that has a problem with self-esteem, for example. I have not met a single dog that has a problem with body image.

Even the ugliest dog is okay. Because the split hasn't happened yet, the split into me and myself. So the dog, this is why the dog is often joyful.

The slightest thing, sometimes you go, if you have a dog, you go away for 10 minutes and you come back home. The dog acts if you have been away for 10 years. He's so happy.

And the happy is contagious a little bit, the happiness of the wagging tail of the dog. Why is the dog so happy? Because the dog does not have a self.

The dog is him, her, itself. The dog is, and then the tail goes, life is good. If the dog could say something, it would say, life is good.

In the present moment, just give me my food and then it's even better. So the humans, they love to be with their animals because it gives them a little bit of, a little glimpse of self-transcendence because when they look into the eyes of the dog, they are not being judged. And that feels good.

And you can sense, by looking at the eyes, you can sense the being of the dog. Wow, now, the dog, what you really love in, just an example, dog, cat, what you really love in the dog is not the outer surface of the dog. Although it's lovely to the touch and all that, yes, but you know there is something that you cannot see that you relate to when you look into the eyes of a dog.

That is the essence of the dog. What you love is actually the consciousness of the dog, which has no ego in it. It exists at a pre-egoic state.

You love the consciousness of the dog. And when you look in the eyes of it, you feel a little bit, you connect a little bit to that in yourself for a few seconds. When you're not, you don't need any defense mechanism or anything like that when you relate to a dog.

Although there are some humans with huge egos, I have observed a few, who relate to their pet through their ego, but that's another story. And that's a sad story. They have an ego relationship.

I knew a woman who would, in the evenings, she would put food out for her cat, would go out, the cat would be in the garden, and she had the window open. That was a neighbor of mine years ago. And she would put the food out.

And this woman had a very accomplished person, but it was a gigantic ego. She would, she put the food of her cat out. And then if the cat didn't come, well, because cats have many things to do out in the garden.

And it was dinner time for the cat, and she put the plate there, and she was sitting there waiting for the cat to come. And 15 minutes passed, and then she said, okay. Then she would close the window, said, if she doesn't want to see me, I don't want to see her.

Oh my God. She has an ego relationship with her cat. So a relationship with yourself, that eventually is transcended, so that you can simply be in the present moment, not, and let's go deeper now, so that in the present moment, which is a portal into the awakened state, in this present moment, let's see who or what are you in the present moment without reference to any thought, without reference to any thought about who you are.

That's an interesting pointer. In other words, what does it feel like to be yourself without remembering your past or thinking about the future, just in this moment? You don't need to remember your email address or anything.

It's not necessary now, or what you ate yesterday. Without reference to past and future, what does it, do you disappear, or what is left of you without the memory, the narrative that usually you describe as my life? Without that memory of that you need to revive continuously, without that, what does it feel like to be you?

And I cannot answer that. I can only give it to you as a pointer and slow down a little bit as I talk so that you can perhaps inquire, investigate internally what it feels like. What is the most essential thing about your identity?

Is, are you still there when you don't think about your life, like now? Are you still there? And what is that?

I'm not going to answer it, and I don't expect a conceptual answer. So the, that's me. There was a spiritual teacher in India whose favorite meditation was asking his disciples to ask themselves, who am I?

You can also ask yourself, what am I? Who or what? What am I?

What am I? But don't answer it verbally, but feel or sense what it means to be alive or to be you. What am I?

There's a, there's a gap in the stream of thinking. Then what, what is there when there's a gap in the stream of thinking, like now? And in that gap, there's a, there's a stillness, yes?

There's also a sense of, there's something there, but it's hard to describe. There's a sense of presence, of beingness. And in that sense of presence, of beingness, you know that you are.

You know, you can say, I am. You know that without adding any qualifiers to it, without adding anything to the I am, it's a pure sense of being, which is I am. It's very peaceful.

You need an alertness to sustain it just for a little bit. Without the alertness, you will immediately fall back into the stream of thinking, but it's not, you don't use willpower to stop your thinking mind. That doesn't really work.

So you don't hold your breath in order to stop thinking. That does, it might work for a little while, but then you think even more. It's like a boiling kettle, hold the lid on a boiling kettle.

Just alertness. And so Jesus said, as I said at the beginning, and what I say to you, I say to all, stay awake. In some translations, it's translated as stay alert.

What I say to you, I say to all, stay alert. That alertness is consciousness without thought. It seems at first just to be an absence.

It seems at first like, okay, stillness, one could say it's the absence of noise, in a stillness, an absence. It might seem at first as a kind of nothingness. And yet, if you stay with it for a little bit, just a few more seconds, stay alert, then you can sense it's not just the absence of something, it's also the presence of something.

But not so much the presence of something, but the sense of presence itself. Not of something. And so that is dimension of consciousness, that is the fourth dimension of consciousness, awareness or presence.

And you encounter that in between two thoughts or, for example, if you find it hard to stop thinking, don't use your willpower, use a little device, use a little bit of help, for example, become aware that you're breathing. You become aware of, you're aware of the inflowing and outflowing breath. And your attention moves with the breath into the body and out of the body.

And again, your attention is there. And again, your attention follows the breath into the body. Stop for a second and out of the body.

You might, it's helpful if you can breathe as deep as the abdomen, although the air doesn't actually reach it, but your attention reaches it. And now you may realize that when you become aware of your breath, which is a very ancient meditation method, when you become aware of your breath, you cannot be thinking at the same time. That's why the Buddha recommended this meditation, which is called

Anapanasati, which is the awareness of your breath stops your mind, the thinking mind, automatically.

The moment you start thinking, you lose awareness of your breath. So the Buddha said, his main teaching, I would say, would be aware of your breathing. He didn't say, stop thinking, because that seems too difficult, but awareness of your breath is possible and automatically thinking subsides.

What remains is a sense of alert presence. That is the awakened consciousness. And that is inseparable from what I call the vertical dimension of life.

It is the presence in the now. There's no time in this sense of beingness, stillness, alertness. There is no time, and yet that is essentially who or what you are.

That gets usually mixed up with content, a bit like diluted. So this is the consciousness that is in its pure form. When you start thinking, it's still consciousness, but it takes on a form, a thought form.

When you perceive things, it's consciousness perceiving. The perception is a form in your mind. Consciousness has taken on a form, takes on many forms continuously.

And there is a bundle of thought forms in your mind that make up the main part of your sense of identity. And that is the, when you identify with that, and you don't know yourself more deeply in the vertical dimension, then that's the ego. But when you know yourself more deeply in the vertical dimension of the present moment, then all that is is that which makes up your personality.

Of course, it's still there. Your story, the narrative of you, unchanged, it's still there. The difference, however, is you no longer look to it for your ultimate sense of self.

You don't derive your true and ultimate identity from the narrative of your life that you tell yourself in your mind. Of course, it's still there, but you don't look to it for liberation or fulfillment or some future self. You don't even look to that for liberation or fulfillment because all that is the horizontal dimension of life.

That is time, what time operates. And for millions of humans still, that's all they ever know. All they ever identify with is the personality conditioned by the past, problematic, problem-making, continuously, often very dysfunctional, coloring everything that you see and perceive.

It's like through this veil of conditioning, you perceive the world and judge it through the veil of your mental conditioning. You don't see anything clearly. So this is the awakening into that Turiya, the fourth state of consciousness, the awakened state that all the ancient teachings already pointed to as a possibility.

And it's here now, and it's more important now. It's not just something for very few humans to realize, but something that becomes available to more and more humans, especially now that we are being confronted collectively with various manifestations of adversity. And it's not the end yet, fortunately.

It's not the end yet. There's more to come. So, and that is, this gives you this dimension, the awakened dimension.

This is where the resilience you find for living in troubled times. This is where you are rooted in this ultimately deep and unshakable rooted consciousness of being, you are, you realize who or what you are beyond the personality. It's not, they're not ultimately two.

The analogy I often use is the ocean and the ripple on the surface of the ocean. You are a ripple on the surface of the ocean as a personality, surrounded by other ripples on this horizontal dimension. Some ripples you like, many others you don't like.

Some ripples are very unpleasant. A few others are great, you like them. And yet you're only a ripple and it's uneasy and it's never quite enough.

And others are bigger ripples and even waves come occasionally. Who is that guy? It's a wave.

And life becomes unsatisfying. And at some point you meet another ripple who says, have you not realized who or what you are beyond your ripple existence? And you say, no, no, I haven't.

Okay, then can you sense, if you stop thinking for a moment, can you sense the depths of you? Can you sense that there's more to you than this surface appearance? And the ripple goes, no, no, okay.

And finally the tension goes deep as the vertical dimension opens up and the ripple goes, oh. And then of course the ripple won't know what to say, doesn't know what it is, but it senses something. It senses that it's connectedness to something vast, infinite.

It's the ocean. And it's not only senses it connectedness, it senses its oneness with that. And then that is self-transcendence of the ripple.

And in this analogy, of course, you are the ripple. And this is the essence of all spirituality is to sense that in yourself, in the vertical dimension of yourself, to sense it as yourself. And the moment we talk about it, it sounds as if it were something that you perceive, this sense, but it's only because we use language and then every sentence has a subject and an object.

So you could say, I am aware of myself. Yes, it's true, but ultimately that's not how it is because the moment you have said that, you've created a duality, I and myself. But when you sense the essence of who you are, there's no duality.

The awareness of yourself is the awareness. So it's not aware, being aware of something, but being aware of awareness itself, so to speak. You can, you sense your own consciousness as consciousness.

You know you are, that's an amazing thing. It sounds almost, it sounds so simple that it's impossible to realize, to know that you are, not as a particular this or that, it's pure beingness. You know that you are, and you can sense that you are.

That is such a liberation and such a wonderful, and then you realize there's a depth to who you are that far transcends who you are as a personality. That's, and that is, in some spiritual traditions, that is called liberation, and you can see why it liberates you from yourself. Jesus also used the term salvation.

You can use salvation, you can use liberation. So this is the, once you have a glimpse, it's your mission to invite that dimension into your life more and more. Not just doing a, meditation is good.

If you have a meditation practice, if you meditate rightly, and many people don't meditate rightly, the mistake that can easily creep into meditation is you meditate in order to achieve a particular goal, or you have a future self of an awakened master, and you want to achieve that. And therefore, you have the idea that you are doing a meditation in order to get somewhere. That's always very hard to get rid of this mind pattern because everywhere else it operates.

You always do something in order to achieve something, and in order to achieve something through your doing, you need time. For everything, you need time. Even make a cup of tea, you need time.

And this doing idea can easily come into the idea of meditating, so you're doing it in order to get somewhere. So you bring future time into your meditation unconsciously without knowing it. Whereas meditation, true meditation, is not a doing, but it's the realization of being, and there's no time in being.

Do people start becoming nicer as you become more aware, or is it just that you no longer get consumed by the anger that arises when in the company of not so nice people? Well, I would say both. When you become more aware, you're not reactive anymore towards people.

You don't personalize things anymore, make everything personal, and are always looking out for some kind of hidden insult or look at what's his real intention behind what he's saying. What does he really want? You're just, there's an openness and a non-judgmental attitude towards others that non-reactive relationships then generate already more consciousness in the other, because unconsciousness is two unconscious people to strengthen each other's unconsciousness.

So if somebody says or does something that may be unconscious and I don't react to it, it does not become amplified through my reaction. If somebody says or does something unconscious and I react to it, condemn it, even if it's just in my mind, I actually amplify it, and I myself become part of that unconsciousness through my judgment. If I can be non-reactive, I can allow other humans their behavior because that's their present stage of consciousness or they behave as they have to behave at this moment.

And so I allow them to behave, to do what they do. I accept it. And then suddenly there's a different energy there.

And so I don't amplify that. And those people then, I don't condemn them. I don't equate their unconscious behavior with who they are.

That's why it's so important not to judge others. It doesn't mean you kind of go through life saying, oh, they're all, everything is fine, that you don't see unconscious behavior. You see what they do.

You know what they do, but you don't equate that with who they are. You know it is an overlay on, it is human unconsciousness. They're expressing that.

It's not who they are in their essence. If you confuse the unconscious behavior with who they are in their essence, then that's called judgment. If you see that somebody is doing something extremely unconscious, that's not judgment because you don't equate it with who that person is.

And so you don't say he is evil. That statement would be wrong of anybody because in essence, nobody is evil, but they manifest extreme unconsciousness, which we can call in many cases evil. So that's important then not to strengthen that and to get trapped in illusion because when we believe in our own judgments, it's not only we trap others in the judgments, we ourselves get trapped in the judgments.

Also people become nicer, which is true, what the questioner says, people become nicer when you're present and aware because they can feel the absence of judgment in you. Even if they don't, they may not be able to tell you, but I can feel the absence of judgment. They only feel it as a certain goodwill flowing out from you towards them or an acceptance flowing out from you towards them.

And humans can feel that, even unconscious humans, unconscious they can feel that. And everybody's grateful for that underneath all their madness. They feel grateful because somehow in that acceptance, in that goodwill that kind of flows out in that space, through that space of acceptance, they feel a little bit more themselves than they usually are.

So, and when a human feels a little bit more at ease in themselves, when they come to you, they like you and they are very nice to you. They don't know why. And their usual ego patterns, not all of them are operating anymore.

Some may still come up, of course. So the ego is less, the ego doesn't feel threatened. It feels, oh, there's no need to be that defensive here.

The ego feels it can kind of relax a little bit. It's cause it's still there in the background. We're just like a little, like a dog.

But it's not at its usual state, like the Rottweiler. So it just, okay, can relax a little now. And then they like you.

So you become a nice person to them. That's perhaps all they know. When they ask him, oh, he's such a nice guy.

Like to see him, like to go to him and touch a nice, okay. So yes, you do experience that. So partly simply because presence, acceptance is there and is recognized.

And partly because there's the absence of reaction when somebody suddenly blames you, for example, says, you left that door open. You shouldn't. And say, oh, I did?

Yeah. The usual ego thing, of course, is to say, no, I didn't. Whether you did or not, because it's regarded as the ego feels diminished when somebody blames you.

You did that. No, I didn't do that. You did.

And it starts from there and then escalates. Why do you always blame me? Look what you did yesterday.

That's called reaction, defensiveness. And that's not there. So then it's just you're stating the facts.

You left that door open again. No, I didn't. And then there's no further arguing.

Yes, you did. Well, maybe if that's what you believe. Or say, yes, well, you're right, I did that again, sorry.

You don't feel diminished when you were wrong. The ego feels diminished. Just to admit that you've been wrong is a dreadful thing.

So the ego can't do that. It's like a little desk. To say that you've been wrong is a little, and if somebody proves to you that you've been wrong, it's even worse.

And then some people will start hitting you. That's how the ego can, an ego can easily do. If it's so obvious that you've been wrong and somebody proves it, then you start hitting them.

That's a big argument. And if you knock him out, the ego still wins.

[Speaker 2] (2:42:14 - 2:42:19)
Yes, there is a general improvement in relationships, of course, with presence.

[Speaker 4] (2:42:42 - 2:43:21)
My question is about confirming consciousness. If you look at the world, a world of form, as all illusory and impermanent, and yet we can confirm that by witnessing its constant change or its constant impermanence or the cycles that it goes through, and yet true reality is consciousness, the background or the substratum of all of the true existence that is out there, how do we confirm that consciousness is there and that it is unchanging and that it is choiceless? Thank you.

[Speaker 7] (2:43:22 - 2:43:22)
Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (2:43:35 - 2:53:48)
I have a strange feeling that somehow you know the answer deep down, but are you conscious at this moment? Yes. Perception is happening.

Now, if I ask you how do you know that you are conscious, I don't think you would be able to answer that question because how? You just know that you are conscious. There is no how.

It's direct knowing, but it's a very different kind of knowing from how you would know something in the external world, subject, object, knowledge. Do you know that you are alive? Deep down, there is an aliveness.

There is something there, even if the entire world is a dream, which you can either say it is a dream or you can say it's not a dream, what is beyond doubt that the sense-perceived world has a lot in common with the dreamlike state in the sense that it evaporates fairly quickly. It forms, come and go, even yesterday's dinner. Was that a dream or did you actually have it?

It's not that different from dreaming that you had a dinner and that you're actually having a dinner. It is dissolved into what we call the past. It is no longer there.

This is why many philosophers have compared ordinary existence with a dream because of the fact of impermanence, everything dissolving so fast, everything being in flux. We don't need to come to some kind of conclusion as to whether this reality is actually real or unreal because that's only a mental position. It's only a conceptual thing to say, well, to me, it's unreal, or you read some Indian philosophers who speak from a very deep place of connectedness with something vitally alive, and then they say this world is unreal, and then somebody reads what they said and they take it as a belief and say, okay, and then next time you talk to your friends and you tell them, well, you know the news, this is all unreal, and then your friend says, you must be joking, and then you start arguing.

I am telling you, it's unreal. It's so unreal that you're getting angry. So when people have said the world is unreal, it came from a deep realization of a place that is felt to be far more vitally alive than the phenomena of this world, and out of that, the words came unreal.

They could have used different words. They could have said it's dreamlike. They could have said all forms are passing and some did say that.

So if it's a dream or whether it's a dream or whether it is unreal, the fact is that there is something there to whom or to which this dream happens. Otherwise, the dream could not exist. Its existence depends on the being.

Existence is a form. Being is a formless. So for anything to exist, let's say it is a dream.

Okay, who is dreaming? I am. There must be a consciousness in which the dream appears.

Otherwise, there would be no dream. Everything may be unreal except the thing that is having the dream, and it's not a thing. The dream appears in that space that you are, and that space could be equated with the now, and that's why no matter, you can look back on your life.

It was always whatever, anything that ever happened in your life, anything that you ever experienced in your life happened in the space of now. It was always now. It is always now.

Even to say it was now is somehow a paradox. There is no was. Life is always now.

For anything to be experienced, to be thought, to be felt, can only occur in the now, the space of now. And the space of now doesn't change. Why not?

Because there's no content in it. It is spaciousness itself. It cannot change because if there's nothing in it, there's no change.

Like the space in this room, because outer space is an externalization of inner space of consciousness. We perceive it as space on the outside, and the space in this room cannot change. You can't do anything to it.

No matter what you do, you can shout and punch it. There's nothing to punch, but it allows you to go like that. So space is unchangeable, external space.

And of course it doesn't, space doesn't even exist in itself outside. It's a projection of something else inside us. It's a weird thing, space and movement.

Imagine that you are traveling as a point of awareness through the vast space of the universe at the speed of, let's say, if it were possible, Einstein said it isn't possible. Let's say you're traveling at 10 times the speed of light through the universe, and you see all planets and suns like you see in the movie, Star Trek, next generation, you see the flashes of planets go past. And so you know there's enormous speed, and at that moment, let's say, everything from the universe disappears.

All planets miraculously, all suns and planets and galaxies miraculously dissolve. What's your speed now? And how vast is the universe?

It has, you're just, there's just a nothingness. And suddenly there's no speed anymore. There never was any speed.

You never went anywhere. It was just a delusion. So nobody ever goes anywhere.

I believe it was the Greek philosopher Parmenides who had that insight already. So ultimately nothing ever moves. All these things are delusions, but it's fine.

But you are the space, in essence, for all that. So that's all you need to know. And one possible approach to that is to say you are, you are the now, in which it's one way you can approach it, because the now is the space.

The now is not what happens. The now is usually confused by people with what happens in the now. But the now is always the space in which everything happens.

Otherwise there would be many nows. But only if you equate the present moment with what happens in the present moment, then there are many moments every day and every hour. But if you know that your life is always the now and whatever appears in it, appears in that unchanging space, then you're getting closer to who you are, because you are the now.

That insight hadn't come to me yet when I was writing The Power of Now. I never actually wrote that you are the now. A couple of years later I was giving a talk and suddenly I said, you are the now.

Yes, of course. That's an even better approach than anything else, to realize you are that. Sometimes it takes a while before the inner realization reaches the outer levels and becomes verbalized as a teaching.

So that's also the very fact that you're able to see the impermanent nature of all forms implies that there's something from where the impermanent nature of all forms can be recognized. Because it's only through that you can recognize if the entire world were painted green or blue, there would be no green or blue. You wouldn't be able to recognize it.

So there is something from where the changing, continuously changing nature of things is seen and that is not changing and that is who you are. And it's the present moment and it's space, inner space. And it's consciousness.

Any more pointers?

[Speaker 7] (2:53:49 - 2:53:52)
Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (2:54:11 - 2:54:29)
So in addition to visualization or affirmation in the being dimension, you may need to address also the doing dimension.

[Speaker 1] (2:54:30 - 3:01:30)
And again, bring the two together. Enjoy the doing. Don't use it, don't treat the doing as a stressful thing because you need to achieve this or that.

No, you enjoy the doing of it. That's the power, the power of presence has to flow into the doing. The doing is not just a means to an end, it's an end in itself.

That is very, very important realization so that the doing does not become stressful. If stressful, if it's stressful, it means you're excessively attached to the outcome, which means you want to be there, but you are here. And that gap between there and here creates stress.

And that's, and then you, as far as manifestation is concerned, that is disempowering. Now, some people who work very hard with that mindset of stress, they exercise willpower to achieve this. And sometimes they actually do achieve what they, occasionally it happens, but it doesn't make them happy.

It makes them, when they achieve, they are still unhappy. And in the meantime, anybody else they had contact with in whatever work they were doing, they are made unhappy too. So it's, if that is your underlying mindset, I will achieve through sheer willpower.

And of course it's stressful. You create stress for yourself, you create unhappiness for yourself, and whoever you're in contact with, you make them unhappy too. Some companies operate like that.

Everybody's stressed and unhappy. So if you work in a company like that, my recommendation would be to depart. So if your environment is dysfunctional, that can be a considerable hindrance to your power of manifestation if you're trapped in a dysfunctional environment.

So look out for any sign of stress when you're moving towards your goal and you're active in whatever area. Look for any kind of stress that arises, like something not right, if stress arises. Now, this is not to be confused with a kind of feeling low energy activity.

There can be, when you're engaged in something that is meaningful, there's intense energy behind what you do. But this intensity of energy is not stress. There is an enjoyment behind it.

So yes, you may be very intensely engaged, but as you're intensely engaged in whatever it is, let's say, let's come back to this person who wants to be a famous YouTuber, just right now. At this moment, then he or she is learning how to edit videos, how to do that, okay? And again, enjoy the learning process, trying this out and that, asking questions, what can I do here, there?

And then there's the next thing to master, and you enjoy the doing of that in order, rather than, oh, why am I not a famous YouTuber already? I want to, I need to get there to feel happy. No, you're happy in the doing.

And then even if you don't become a famous YouTuber, you'll still be happy. Maybe you reach only 1,000 people, or 5,000, or 10,000, or 200, and even out of those 200 that you reach, some people may contact you, and something else will arise out of that. If you can't, many things arise, you have to be always open to new possibilities that you hadn't even thought of.

So not everything that you achieve in this life comes through wanting to manifest this, so that often it's a good starting point, but sometimes, and quite often, the best things may come that you never even thought of to manifest. But if you hadn't started with this particular manifestation, the other things that you never thought of would never have arisen. So sometimes the universe, so to speak, may have greater plans for you than you could even think of.

But you have to take the first steps, and sometimes the first steps is, I want to manifest this now, and then you practice. You go into being, rooted in the fullness of being, then you visualize, or you affirm this or that, and in doing that, you feel it's already there, in the unseen. And then, in addition, you may have to go into the doing dimension.

And in the doing dimension, don't lose touch with being, because if you lose touch with being, you're lost in doing, and you're stressed, and you're not effective anymore.

[Speaker 2] (3:01:30 - 3:01:42)
And even if you achieve what you wanted to achieve through sheer willpower and hard work and stress, it'll make you unhappy, and make others unhappy. It's pointless.

[Speaker 3] (3:01:52 - 3:02:19)
I can walk into a room and feel other people's pain, and when I was younger, I identified with that, and thought there was something wrong with me. Now that I'm older and have more experience, I realize that it's not me, so I've disidentified with it. But I still have to deal with it.

So, any advice?

[Speaker 1] (3:02:21 - 3:08:50)
Thank you. Well, the vital thing, you're already doing that, the disidentification, and as presence grows, you are less affected by it. It takes a little longer for a woman, because there's more sensitivity to energy fields in the female form than it is in the male form.

So, for a woman, it takes a little longer to, need, a woman would need more presence, because there's such sensitivity in many women to energy fields. The feminine has that sensitivity, and so you can feel it more than a man can, generally speaking. The main thing is already, you're practicing already, which is the disidentification from it, so that there is awareness and it.

You haven't become it. You are the awareness, and there's it. It is allowed to be in the field or the space of awareness.

No longer that problematic, because it is not who you are. And so, negativity, of course, is contagious, highly contagious. The immunity gradually has become more present.

The immunity is there, because intense presence is no longer susceptible to that illness, the negativity. And so, when you feel a negative energy field, you touch, as you said, a room that you go into. There are also other energy fields in this, even when there's a full moon, for some reason, it seems to influence some people's behavior.

Lunatic, that comes from the word lunar, the moon. And when we were in Chicago two years ago, with Oprah, one day, there was a full moon. And I read in the Chicago paper that on that night, there were something like 15 murders on that night.

And all kinds of energy fields impinged upon us, but there needs to be something in us also that resonates with it. So as your pain body gradually shrinks, also you'll find there's less in you that resonates with negativity. Pain body, of course, takes a while to dissolve.

It dissolves through presence. But as long as there's some pain body there, there may well be something that resonates with certain forms of negativity. And then you feel it.

It's nothing personal. Even the pain body is not personal. Nothing is really personal.

And then as the pain body dissolves, then you find you're free. You can go into a negative energy field and you're fine. It's just not that you build up, presence doesn't build up a barrier around yourself.

It's not like that. It's just, it passes through. It's a different frequency.

It can't hang on to anything inside you anymore. So it goes through you. I haven't studied astrology, but it sometimes seems to me that there may be some truth in some of that.

And the less presence there is in you, the more it applies to you. And the same applies to the full moon. The less presence there is in you, the more you are susceptible to these energy fields.

And the moment you think a negative thought, especially if you think more than one negative thought, it goes on for a few minutes and then leads to another and another, you connect to negativity and a million other people in the same city, kind of, and then you're in it. Nothing personal. And then people are surprised if they can't get out.

It's not just yours. You have connected with the whole city or beyond. That's why it's so important to keep yourself as clear as possible through presence.

The less you carry inside, the less likely it is that it'll affect you. Well, now you may still be able to feel it, but it does not impinge upon you. Especially if you're a woman, you probably are still able to feel the negativity, but then you no longer need to...

There's nothing in you where it gets stuck. So it passes through. You know it's passing through, there it is, but it has nothing in you to hang on to.

It can't attach itself to anything. And the same applies when people are negative, their dialogue is negative, what they speak to you is negative. And again, if you are in the state of alert attention, there's no negative thought in you that this can connect to.

And so you're immune, so to speak. The mental negativity can't hang on, can't lodge itself in your mind. If there's nothing, there's no frequency in there that it corresponds to.

[Speaker 3] (3:08:54 - 3:09:12)
I've been told by some spiritual teachers that there's something in my system that is trying to take this on from other people to rid them of it. But I mean, it's nothing I do consciously, and I don't even know if that's true, but I...

[Speaker 1] (3:09:13 - 4:11:16)
Well, to some extent, presence does that, but presence doesn't take it on, it dissolves it, not only for yourself, but wherever you go, you go there as a field of presence into an energy field. To some extent, something happens, it dissolves through presence. And so, yes, that's a beautiful thing.

You don't take it on. You don't need to suffer for others, but you can let go of suffering for others. So you let go of suffering.

The same thing you do, for example, when you sit with a person who is in suffering, it is your job to relinquish resistance. And if they can't do it, you can do it for them. Enter the state of surrender.

Do it when you're with somebody who is dying, when you're with somebody who is seriously ill, or has had some other kind of disaster, or is just completely unhappy. So be with that person and become very still and very alert, and that means you surrender for them. And very often that has an effect, it affects them.

It burns up some of the suffering. It invites them also into that space. Sometimes they're able to join you in that space, but even if they are not, it does burn up suffering.

That's the most beautiful gift you can give is your presence. And so you bring that undiluted presence, just that. A good starting point is perhaps the famous statement by Martin Luther King, who said that he was looking forward to the day when people would be judged not by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.

And we take that as a starting point. We need to ask ourselves, what is the content of a person's character? What does that mean?

He's pointing to that in each human being that is actually invisible to the senses. The most important part of every human being is invisible to the senses. That begins with simple things like the thoughts that go through your mind, the emotions that you feel.

Those things are already the invisible part of who you are. You might be able to see certain ways in which the invisible manifests externally. It can manifest through words, through facial expressions.

It manifests through actions. But very important realization is that what Martin Luther King calls the character is the invisible dimension of who the human being is. And perhaps the most important realization for any human being, which is a spiritual realization, is the realization that they are essentially invisible.

What you see on the surface is a relatively superficial phenomenon. You see the physical body. So if you are able to sense, this is perhaps a good starting point, sense within yourself that invisible being that you are, which ultimately is a consciousness and the various ways in which the consciousness takes on form as thoughts and emotion.

But essentially you are the consciousness and the consciousness is invisible. You can open up the brain and examine every cell of the human brain and you will still not find, open up my brain, you won't find me. You will not find who that human being is.

You will not find the character of that human being. So he refers to the inner being. You can only get a glimpse of that inner being that you are beyond even the conditioned entity that is, yes, also the conditioned entity, which is the ego is invisible.

But beyond the conditioned entity, there is the unconditioned being or consciousness that you are. And the starting point as a very foundation for what I'm going to talk about is it might even be a glimpse to sense within yourself that invisible presence, even beyond thoughts and emotions or the thoughts and emotions are a manifestation of that. Also they are formations of the consciousness takes on form as an emotion or as a thought.

But before it takes on form, it is the unconditioned consciousness. You are essentially that. So let's, if you can even just get a glimpse of what it is that I'm talking about and sense this essential, this essence within yourself, this presence, this aware presence.

Then you step beyond ego within yourself. And it's only then that you can look at another human being and look beyond the external appearance of that human being and sense also their innermost essence. Now, most humans are not able yet to do that.

Anybody who has not yet awakened spiritually or even had a glimpse of spiritual awakening, that human being will have certain mind forms, certain thoughts in their mind with which they judge other human beings. They're not able to truly relate to other human beings because they are, one could almost say possessed by their conditioned mind, by the thoughts that go through their mind. So you cannot meet another human being, you're meeting the judgments that your mind has formed about the other human being.

So there is a complete sense of separation and that is how the ego works. The ego is a mind-made sense of self and this mind-made sense of self that consists of identifications with externals, with your body, with possessions, with abilities, with knowledge, with things that have happened to you, things that you have achieved, failures also. All these things become part of the human ego and you are not able to sense anything deeper within yourself than the ego of who you are, which is the conditioned entity, the conditioned self.

Then every human you meet is immediately labeled in some way, you attach certain labels to human beings and you need to realize that the ego in humans in order to assert its sense of identity is always looking for some kind of superiority. So the ego is comparative. When you meet another human being, the egoic sense of self will feel it's seeking superiority and it fears inferiority.

So when you meet another, there's an unconscious attempt by the ego to feel superior to another human being, but the other human being, you're not actually meeting the other human being, you're meeting a mental veil. Now, in the case of race, your mind may have been conditioned by the surrounding culture to have certain thoughts about another race, especially in the case where the other race is a minority. So if there's a majority, that is what in our Western world, it's the white race in the majority, then the most obvious thing for the egoic sense of self is to judge another human who is different, whose external appearance is different, whose skin color is different, to seek that out in an attempt to assert their superiority.

And it's an egoic fallacy, but it's a very common thing to happen that you would lose the ability to actually connect with, to actually see truly that human being, because all you see is the judgments and the labels that your mind has formed, partly due to the conditioning of the culture and ultimately the conditioning of the egoic mind. So when Martin Luther King talks about character, that's already, you're not able to meet this human being because this human being for you, as an ego, is completely obscured by the mind form that is the veil, the mental conditioning. You are judging this human being as the ego is judging this human being as inferior in an attempt to assert its superiority.

And one of the most obvious things when there is minorities in the culture is to latch onto that for the ego, which might not have much else to identify with. Perhaps you haven't achieved anything. You don't possess much that is more than others.

You might be actually of very low intelligence in conventional terms, but then you can seek out the one thing that would make the ego feel superior. And then you go on, you see there's another race and I'm superior to that race. It's satisfying to the ego.

And there are people in whose main, in whom a substantial part of their sense of identity is built around their race and the superiority of their race. And that is the definition of racist is someone whose sense of identity is predominantly based on race as opposed to another. And it's perceived as superior in the search, the egoic search to assert its superiority in order to feel a stronger sense of self.

So it's a complete inability. You meet a human of another race, but you're not really meeting that other human. All you're meeting is your own mental conditioning as a veil.

And there's complete sense of separation. And this is how the ego operates. The ego actually likes to emphasize that sense of separation.

It likes to emphasize the otherness of other humans. And the other is usually, but when the ego emphasizes the otherness of others, the other must be inferior so that it works so that the ego can feel strengthened in its sense of identity. It's of course a fictitious sense of identity.

So when Martin Luther King talks about character, of course, first he's talking about the unseen part that when you react to the color of a person's skin through the veil of your conditioning, you cannot see the invisible human being that is behind the external appearance. You're completely disconnected from the human being. And character, of course, in the first instance means who that person is on a psychological level.

The person might be a wonderful, enlightened human being, might be a human being that has certain forms of conditioning, which may be good or bad. Character is all the various things in which the human being becomes conditioned. And you can't even see that because you've already formulated a mental image, a conceptual sense of self for the other.

And character, of course, is deeper than that. I would, beyond character, I would define character as the way in which a human being has been conditioned to function in this world, the mental emotional conditioning. Beyond character, in every human being, there's a deeper essence.

And that deeper essence, of course, is totally invisible to you. You cannot sense the humanity of the other beyond their conditioning because you have already dehumanized the other by imposing a conceptual identity on the other. And enormous amount of suffering is inflicted by humans on others because they have dehumanized the other.

They have completely conceptualized the other. And then you attach labels to the other person. Once you've done that, if you're very unconscious, you can even inflict violence because you have already dehumanized the other.

So it's an inability to go beyond the other way in which your mind has been conditioned to even have a glimpse of the other, of the human being that you're meeting. It's a veil you move. And now imagine that, well, you don't need to imagine.

It's the case if a majority of humans in a particular culture if a significant percentage of humans are trapped in that egoic dysfunction, then this will become translated into externals. It will become translated into institutions, all the structures that humans create, economic structures, social structures, political structures. Those will become contaminated by the basic egoic dysfunction in humans.

And this to some extent has happened in the Western world and in the United States. It's very important to see that the root of racism is in the human mind. And the root of racism, ultimately, yes, you can.

I differentiate between the unconsciousness that is in humans, that is the egoic sense of self and the effects of that unconsciousness in the external world. So that state of unconsciousness creates certain structures in the external world. And you can, to some extent, undo the injustices and discriminatory practices and so on in the external world.

We should, to some extent, attempt to undo as much as possible those structures which are the effect of an underlying dysfunction in the collective mind. So it's important to realize, yes, we can and should do as much as possible to undo the effects of that unconsciousness in the world. But realize that the ultimate liberation from racism is in the human mind.

So my work concerns primarily what I consider to be the foundation for everything else, which is the human consciousness. No human individual being and no human society can ultimately act beyond their level of consciousness. You cannot expect an unconscious person, but you should be more conscious, he or she cannot.

He or she is trapped in the unconscious patterns. And so while it is very important to be active in this world in order to undo as much as possible the effects of human unconsciousness, I still, I consider it of primary importance to realize that the ultimate, what we could call transcendence of the ego is inseparable from the awakening of human consciousness so that people are able to go beyond the egoic sense of self so that they do not perpetuate those patterns.

Because even if you dissolve one, if you undo one of the institutions or whatever it is that the unconscious pattern have created, they will create something else. So it is obvious that in this world there's some glaring injustices, for example, in America, even to me as an outsider, it is obvious that the glaring injustices of the incarceration of hundreds of thousands of humans, in many cases, black men were incarcerated for non-violent offenses, often simply for the possession of dried leaves of a plant that they carried in their pockets. It makes them feel good when they ingest it.

They've been in prison for years, their whole lives destroyed, incarcerated. I believe 45% or almost half are in prison for drug offenses and trapped in there for years, terribly misguided, deeply misguided policies. So if that, of course, anybody to become active, that is something that many, many people should be aware of.

And whatever steps they take, they should undo that particular effect of human unconsciousness. And then there are many others. I rarely tell people, I almost never tell people what to do because that's not my function.

Because all doing arises out of a certain state of consciousness. So my main focus is always the state of consciousness out of which any activity or doing arises. My main focus is, I call that the causal realm, the realm of cause.

Everything else is the realm of effect. Now, we need to emphasize the realm of effect. We cannot say, I'm not going to do anything about the external things because I'm only concerned with awakening, spiritual awakening.

But there's nothing we can do until humans have awakened spiritually. That is not quite true. There are many things you can do without having fully awakened.

You don't need to wait for some kind of awakening in order for the world to change. So for example, we have our foundation, Eckhart Tolle Foundation. I got together with the board members of the board.

We talked about what action can be taken now. We can't wait until everybody's enlightened to take some action now. So we selected some organizations that do great work with black people in the United States to help them on various levels.

And so we've donated a quarter million dollars to those foundations in order to alleviate the effects of human, as I call it, the effects of human unconsciousness. So action is taken and we are here to interact with the world, to take action, to bring about a better world, but we need to be careful that the action does not become, so to speak, hijacked by the ego in ourselves. So as we take action to remedy certain situations, to change certain structures, that's very important, we're actually acting against unconsciousness.

We're acting against the effects of human unconsciousness. And yes, action is necessary, but we need to have some awareness while we act. We don't need to be fully enlightened, but in order not to see our actions reflect the unconsciousness that we are fighting, we need to be aware.

We need to have some degree of awareness in our actions. There's a famous saying by Nietzsche. He said, if you're fighting monsters, beware that you do not become a monster, that you do not turn into a monster.

So whenever you fight human unconsciousness, you need to stay aware, you need to have some awareness, because then without the awareness, if you address the unconsciousness in other human beings, it's very easy for this to draw you into unconsciousness yourself. I've been saying for years, not with reference to this particular topic, racism, but more generally, I've been saying for years, you cannot fight the ego. You cannot fight the ego in yourself, and you cannot fight the ego in others.

As I said, you can, to some extent, alleviate the negative effects of what the ego has created, but you cannot fight the ego itself, neither in yourself, nor in others. If you fight the ego in yourself, you create an enormous amount of inner tension, and you create a split within yourself. You have an inner enemy that you're fighting against that would keep you trapped in a terrible state of dysfunction.

So as anybody who takes action in order to change things in the externals needs to have some awareness so that they do not, you can take effective action without increasing the divisiveness and antagonism in this world. So that is very important. You always need to see what is your contribution, even on a simple level of interacting, many people on social media, what is your contribution to the discourse that people are engaged in?

Are you attacking other human beings and call them evil? Or are you actually addressing something and pointing certain things out, disseminate information so that you can help people to become more aware and to awaken? So it's in any action that you take, stay aware so that your action does not become contaminated with ego, because if otherwise, that which you are fighting, you will amplify.

Many things when we fight things, the fight against drugs, we haven't addressed the root cause of taking drugs. We've said we need to fight, we're talking about the war against drugs, the fight against drugs. Now, where has that led us?

The fight, has it been successful? Not at all. If anything, it's made things worse.

So it requires a certain amount of wisdom to be an effective agent for change in this world. And that wisdom can only arise in you if you have a little bit of access within yourself to the unconditioned being, the unconditioned consciousness. These are very, very huge challenge for humans to stay conscious at this time, but that is your challenge to take action, but stay conscious while you take action.

It's vitally important. Then the action actually much more empowered. So it's very easy when you fight unconsciousness, as I said, unconsciousness in other humans to be drawn into unconsciousness yourself.

Very subtle thing. Nietzsche added when he said, be careful when you fight monsters. Monsters means, as I interpret it, egoic dysfunction, human unconsciousness, which creates all kinds of dreadful evils in this world.

If you fight that and you're not careful, he said, be careful. It doesn't mean necessarily if you're not aware, that's my addition, you yourself become unconscious. And he added, if you gaze for long enough into the abyss, you will find that the abyss gazes back into you.

So this is the abyss of human unconsciousness. It's for example, to take an example of policing in the United States, it's a big subject, which has in time, and obviously changes are necessary in the way policing is done. It's a moment, there's a lot of brutality, especially directed towards black people.

Not every policeman, of course, but some, and those are the ones that stand out. And the entire system needs to be changed, needs to be looked at. It's understandable to feel anger when you look at what's been happening there.

It's totally understandable to feel that. And there's nothing wrong with that. It is a normal human reaction.

But when there's lack of awareness, the danger is that the anger takes possession of you. Then you lose consciousness. When anger takes complete possession of you, it leads you to do things that are not ultimately not helpful.

It's completely understandable to feel the anger, but there's a huge difference between feeling the anger and being aware of it and accept it, that is a normal human reaction. Or not to be aware of the anger so that the force of the anger takes complete possession of you. That means awareness disappears and you then become the anger.

That means the anger has become incorporated into your egoic sense of self. And so, and then the ego, once this has happened, so ego is always when you identify with something, complete identification with something becomes part of your ego, egoic sense of self. Identify, you derive your identity from.

So in the absence of awareness, it's very easy for this to happen that the anger, which is a natural thing that many humans feel when they contemplate what's happening. But in the absence of awareness, the anger can easily possess you, take you over and completely control your thinking. In other words, as I said, it becomes incorporated into your, it becomes part of your ego.

Then you're, and the actions that you then take are no longer ultimately not helpful. You are, in Eastern terms, you create more karma for yourself and others. Karma is action and reaction, action and reaction.

So anger, the energy of anger can actually be transmuted and transformed when awareness is there. The energy of anger can actually, instead of taking possession of you and becoming you, the energy of it can be transmuted and it can become conscious action that you take. It's a transmutation of anger into conscious action.

The energy of it becomes transmuted when awareness is there. The anger is accepted. It's allowed to be there, but it does not take possession of you.

You remain aware that there is anger. Then there's a possibility for the anger to be transformed into action. But then it will be action that is not, that does not amplify the human unconsciousness in this world, very different kind of action.

So if you take action that amplifies human unconsciousness and there's just no end, then the abyss is gazing back into you and draws you in. So this, I hope it can be helpful. It requires a certain vigilance in you.

There's no need to say, I shouldn't be angry. Of course you should be angry, be angry, but don't be possessed by the anger. Know that the anger is arising, know when in the face of injustice, you feel it and that's fine.

You allow it to be there and you can feel the energy of it, but awareness remains and then it can actually empower action, the energy becomes transformed. That's can be, I highly recommend that so that I cannot emphasize enough to be careful so that you are not taken over by something like that. Because if you are, you strengthen, not only that which you are fighting against, you amplify the unconsciousness out there, you also strengthen your own unconsciousness.

You're really trapped. So it's a very, very subtle, subtle difference. The key remains is awareness, awareness, awareness, presence, what's going on inside me right now.

What's to be aware of that. And the picture is not entirely negative when I look at the United States. There's a lot still that needs to happen, but quite a lot, I'm an external observer, but it does seem to me I have spent time in the United States since Martin Luther King, since the 60s, we have already come a long way, not to even to mention the time period before that, needs to acknowledge there is also, there is a lot of goodwill in the country of all.

There's a lot of goodwill and a willingness to change that is certainly there. So that is the positive aspect. The awareness of race that we have now would have been unthinkable in the 50s, just completely impossible.

So there is a gradual growth of awareness and a gradual transformation happening, but it needs to continue. The, and it seems to be continuing. The one obstacle I need to mention again, be careful that you're not being taken over by certain forms of reactivity like anger and lose yourself in that.

That's the, then what is now a great possibility for increasing awareness that we have now, we can go either way now. The awareness that had arisen is great. There's possibility of further awakening gradually also collective awakening of consciousness.

And if, but if we don't, if we are not careful, it could lead to a regressive movement. What was so promising at first to see that happening can lead to a regressive movement if we are not careful. But even if it were the case, ultimately every regression, when it results in a further step forward, eventually human consciousness evolves, not in a straight upward line, but in cycles, regressive cycles and step forward, back, forward, back.

It's a, it's a, it, the whole, it's a great, huge subject, but ultimately comes down to very simple, very simple, very simple foundation. It is stay conscious. And so the, so that you are a force for good in this world.

And continue to realize that your state of consciousness is the primordial reality. Everything comes out of that. There was a 19th or 18th century French philosopher who said, every nation has the government it deserves.

Interesting saying. So what that means, the way I see it is whatever nation has the government, it's not only the government or the institutions and so on that are created by this particular nation, it has the government it deserves, which means is there's a collective consciousness produces the external structures. So if the collective consciousness is deeply trapped in egoic, collective ego, it creates structures that reflect the ego, the collective ego.

And if there's some awakening in the collective, then the tractors will become transformed. Either they dissolve because they know that people realize they don't function anymore, or they, whatever happens to them, people take action in order to say this, we don't want that anymore. But there's a deep truth in saying that every nation has a government you have to think, oh, what do we have?

And it's not just the government, it's other institutions too. So this again, what

I said at the beginning, no human being can manifest beyond their level of consciousness. Whatever action they manifest is a reflection of their level of consciousness that applies to the collective also.

So there is a change in the collective here. So let's, I feel there's a good chance that it will lead to a change in the externals, because more and more humans are awakening. I sometimes get the wrong impression because most people that I'm in contact with are awakening.

So, and sometimes when I turn on the, well, not look at the news and I say, oh no, this is so many are not awakening yet. I'm sometimes shocked. All the people I'm in contact with all seem to be awakening.

So it's slightly distorted view, but I do know that more and more people are in the process of awakening. Now, the important thing is it's not to confuse the dysfunction that many humans still manifest, egoic dysfunction, to recognize it as egoic dysfunction, but not to confuse that with who these human beings ultimately are. Because if you confuse that, that which the dysfunction, which is just, these humans are manifestation of a particular stage in the evolution of consciousness on the planet.

And they are not yet at a very advanced stage in the evolution of consciousness on the planet. So what they manifest is the egoic part, the egoic phase of the evolution of consciousness on the planet. These are patterns that operate in these humans.

The danger is, and the fallacy is to take that to be the ultimate identity of these humans and not recognize that these humans are in the grip of unconsciousness or of egoic dysfunction. That's important because, and that's all expressed, for example, in Jesus on the cross, the final words, forgive them for they know not what they do. If they had, if he had spoken in the present age, he probably would have said, forgive them for they are completely unconscious.

Now, forgive them means, the way I interpret it, do not confuse their unconsciousness with who they actually are in the essence of their being. Because if you confuse that, you create enemies. And this means the moment you do that, you get trapped in egoic unconsciousness yourself.

So the forgiveness is to look beyond, to recognize it for what it is. It's like one could almost say they are ill. It's a mental illness.

There's a huge amount of mental illness still in human beings, in the collective. And yes, of course, if a mentally ill person comes running towards you to kill you, you might have to do something. You obviously, you would take action in those extreme cases, yes.

But the important thing is not to confuse the unconscious patterns that operate in those humans, not to construct an identity for them out of that. That is also, by the way, you can also do it for yourself, because sometimes people come and say, I've often heard people say, I've done something very bad in the past. When I was young, I did this or that, and I feel I just have this terrible burden of guilt in myself and I can't get rid of it.

And again, my answer is, at that time, these patterns operated in you. You were less, you were not conscious at that time. Now you can see that what you did was bad.

But if you had seen it then, you wouldn't have done it, but you were unconscious then. So sometimes you have to forgive yourself when you did something. Sometimes it's parents, they say how I brought up my children was, I can see now why I was so unconscious when I had my children, what have I done?

But again, not to make that into your identity and say, I am this bad person. No, there was unconsciousness in me that operated, because I'm never separate from the totality of humanity. And humanity is an evolving organism.

Humanity is slowly going through an awakening process. It takes time. It's accelerating now because in the past, it took just small transformations could take a thousand years.

But now there is an acceleration of awakening, but it's still, we're at a problematic stage. The awakening process is happening. So just remember not to transform other people's unconsciousness into an identity.

And that really is a deeper meaning of forgiveness, because then you recognize that's not ultimately who they are. There have been people in prison. Some people did the most dreadful, committed the most dreadful crimes.

And I've seen cases of people in prison who completely went through a complete spiritual awakening, having at this past of very, very dreadful crimes. And there was a complete awakening suddenly where the sense of identity completely shifted and came from a much deeper place. And they recognized their past self was like somebody else when they awakened.

Somebody else was, that wasn't, that was me. Can't even, it wasn't, it was certain patterns operating using me. You could look at the ego almost as an entity, yes, an entity that inhabits you.

And it doesn't want to go away. It wants to strengthen itself. It can use anything to strengthen you.

And racism is a great, oh yeah, I'll be a racist. That's, I feel stronger in my fictitious sense of self. So again, important thing, transcendence refers to the egoic unconsciousness and the awakening.

It does not mean that you cannot take action, but be careful so that you stay conscious while you act, which means not be taken over by some dark reactive mode that then operates through you. And then you notice, you can notice this when you see a particular thing, the enemies, you need to attack these enemies, the enemies. Jesus said, love your enemies.

That might be going a bit too far for many people, but there's a deeper meaning behind that. If you see that in isolation, it's hard to say, well, Christians have tried to do that, but not too successfully over 2000 years, but some perhaps managed, but ultimately of course, loving your enemies means have no enemies because if you love your enemy, who is your enemy? But that statement, love your enemies, cannot be looked at in isolation.

It was related to discovering the deeper dimension of who you are, which is the kingdom of heaven within you. And when you do that, then you can see every human being in their essential, not see, but sense every human being in their essential identity. And then you don't have enemies anymore, but you can still see, yes, he or she or they are in the grip of egoic unconsciousness.

They are crazy, ultimately. For a long time, I've been saying, I often say, normal means crazy. And if you look at human history, this, you can verify that, just read the history of the 20th century and what humans have done to other humans, the millions upon millions killed, not only in warfare, but also in killed by their own governments, Holocaust, mass exterminations, come in Russia, China, Europe.

The most dreadful, this is obviously, and these are normal human perpetrated by so-called normal human beings, not criminals or something. Criminals have done relatively little compared to what normal humans in the grip of unconsciousness are capable of doing. It's nothing compared to what so-called criminals are doing.

This is why I often say normal equals insane. But we are awakening. So there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Of course, the light is within you. So in the meantime, it's the question of race or the problem of race is connected with our, it's an aspect of our awakening, something that we need to overcome. And it's also something that we're at a crossroads now, as I mentioned earlier, we could go one way towards increasing awareness and increasing transcendence of ego and the undoing of the external structures that reflect racism.

Or if the other way would be if the, it could increase the divisions in society and divisiveness. So in other words, unconsciousness could take over again, and that would lead to a regressive period in human evolution. And there have been already many regressive periods.

This is not impossible that this might happen, although there's a good chance it will not happen. I can't predict the future, but even if it were to happen, if we went to a regressive period, even leading to internal conflict, even civil war is not impossible if we are not, if we are drawn into unconsciousness, all kinds of even war between nations is still possible. I'm a long-term optimist as far as human evolution is concerned.

I believe even if we did have to go through a regressive period, eventually that also will become part of human awakening. And ultimately the moment will come and race will become completely unimportant. And that is, we're moving towards that.

Some people may still love their race, and that's fine, because race is to do with your form. I call it your form identity, your form identity, as opposed to your essence identity. You have the two dimensions.

Your form identity is the physical body, and your form identity is also the makeup of your mind, mental, emotional field, the conditioning of your mental, emotional field. This is the person that you are. The person that you are is your body and the conditioned mind, that's your form identity.

And your form identity is not to be totally dismissed. You say, you don't need to say, I'm not my body. I don't want to have anything to do with my body or this all illusion.

That's not quite it. It has its place. Your form identity has its place.

So while your body, let's say, has a particular color, you might even say, I like it. I like that color. It's fine.

But you don't derive your sense of identity from it. It's just something that you honor. You can also honor your cultural traditions, whatever it may be.

If you're African-American, you might honor your ancestors, the suffering of your ancestors, the cultural traditions of your ancestors. And so the suffering of your ancestors have led you to this point of awakening. So do not, I often say, don't waste your suffering in this life, but also don't waste the suffering of your ancestors.

So it's suffering ultimately brings about awakening of human consciousness. For a long time, it awakened suffering as your spiritual teacher for a long time. And a lot of suffering inflicted by humans on other humans, a lot of suffering.

And don't waste the suffering. Use it. Honor that.

You can honor your ancestors and still realize that's part of your form identity. Then there's a timeless being, there's a timeless self, the unconditioned consciousness that is the essence of who you are. And that's your, ultimately, you derive your sense of being, your sense of beingness, your sense of who you are from that dimension.

That Buddha called it sunyata, which is translated as emptiness. It just means formless, spacious consciousness. Emptiness is a traditional term in Buddhism, but it really means formless, spacious consciousness.

In Christian terms, Jesus said, the kingdom of heaven that is within you, heaven is the vast expanse of the sky. The kingdom is the dimension. So the kingdom of heaven is a dimension of vast spaciousness.

So he's pointing, he's using that analogy to point to an inner reality. Same as the Buddha. The Buddha said spacious consciousness, which is sunyata, emptiness.

Jesus said, the kingdom of heaven that is within you, which, what is the kingdom of heaven? It's an analogy for an inner dimension of consciousness. Heaven is pure consciousness, spacious awareness, like now, this moment.

You don't need to think, you don't need to affirm your form identity, but you can sense that within yourself, there is an essence that is, we could call presence, we could call awareness, we could call the realization of being, we could call the primordial I am, the I am. And that presence or beingness is an alive, it's alive. It's, it can't be defined or explained.

It has no age, no gender, no color, none of that, but become aware of yourself as an underlying quiet presence. Your historical self becomes unimportant, but something that's left there is more vital and more essential. This underlying quiet, alert, calm presence, we could call it stillness too, inner stillness.

And that you might also notice that your thinking subsides and you don't have to affirm through thinking who you are anymore. And that spacious awareness can be there even in everyday life, to little spaces between thoughts, moments of just aware presence, while you listen to somebody, looking at the sky, looking at a tree, a flower, breathing, moments of spacious awareness. And then you use your mind again, and then you're aware again.

And after a while, the awareness remains even while you're using your mind.

[Speaker 2] (4:11:30 - 4:11:32)
Ah, so liberating.

[Speaker 1] (4:11:47 - 4:12:37)
Thank you so much for your presence, which is also my presence. There's only one presence. This mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive.

To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation.

[Speaker 5] (4:13:10 - 4:13:30)

Good afternoon, Mr. Tolle. My name is Liz Bluestam, and I'm very grateful to be here today. I'm also very aware right now that I am so not in the present moment because I'm so nervous.

So I think I need to take a breath and be still for a second, and this is the perfect group to do it with.

[Speaker 1] (4:13:31 - 4:13:31)
Feel the inner body.

[Speaker 5] (4:13:36 - 4:16:01)
Thank you. I was fortunate enough to read The Power of Now when it was first published, and it had a tremendous impact on me. And I have followed your spiritual teachings ever since.

As I went through my daily life and my daily practice, the unimaginable happened. My husband and I lost our son two years ago this August. And suddenly, I seemed to go from The Power of Now to the nightmare of The Power of Death.

And as you talked about this morning, which I found so interesting, it's the first time I've heard you mention loss. One needs to recover and cry. And I absolutely believe that you have to go through the grieving process to heal your soul.

But here's the rub. I can't help but think about my son every day, human nature. But what that does is catapult me consistently into the past because all I have left of him are my memories, which are in the past.

And conversely, even though I know there is no future, I fantasize about what it might have been like for all of us had he lived. So my question is, can you help me understand and reconcile being in the present, creating space for consciousness as it relates to profound grieving with the death of a loved one that has done nothing but propel me into the past and to a non-existent fantasy future? Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (4:16:03 - 4:16:48)
If I may ask you another question. When you think about your son, apart from the activity of thought, which may be memories of the past, or as you say, fantasizing about what might have been future or fantasies, can you also feel your son somewhere within? Apart from the memories, can you somehow feel his essence in yourself?

[Speaker 5] (4:16:48 - 4:16:49)
Absolutely.

[Speaker 1] (4:16:53 - 4:22:19)
And that essence is not in the past, of course. It's in the now. And so what is required then is a greater focus on that than on giving attention to the thoughts.

Once perhaps the thoughts have a limited usefulness when the memory comes, it also brings up the feeling of his essence. The memories of the past, the feeling of essence is now, it's alive now. If you can then give that more attention than to the thoughts, directing more attention there, closing your eyes perhaps, directing more attention there than to the memories.

The memories were fine, but now they've taken you there. Or if fantasizing about future, possible things that could have happened, again, bring attention as a conscious choice, take attention into the sense, that feeling of the essence of who he is, because the essence is. And then what you, this enables you to connect with the formless essence that was actually the thing that you loved and still love in him, the indestructible.

And you can only find it through your own, so they come together really. When you feel him, you also feel yourself as part of that. And so as a conscious choice then, take more attention to that.

If you can, if it's an occasion when it's not dangerous to close your eyes, then close your eyes and go in there and feel that and realize it's alive and it's now. Then gradually your son, you retrieve, you rescue your son from where he has been the past two years in the past and the alive essence, you still, you feel within yourself. And so, and that means gradually the memories will not disappear, there will be memories, but the heaviness that's associated with the memories and the deep sadness gradually through that becomes transmuted into something else.

And there will be then, the memories will still, there will still be a gentle sadness with the memories, but there's a rising realization of that which is beyond death in him, that's what you loves. You love and loved and still love. Now the mind says, the object of my love is gone and that's the dreadful thing.

The mind says, so the love has no object, but the love, what you loved in him was never the form. What you loved in him and still love is the formless essence of who he is. And I don't want to go into any kind of belief that you need to have of survival, but I know, all I know is that there is an essence in every human being, I know it in myself, that is beyond death, I know that.

I don't want to go beyond and tell anybody that they should believe this or that about. I don't never step beyond my experience. I know the deathless as the essence in myself and in all humans.

And you need to, you know that too, you just need to go there more deeply. And I also, anybody who has been touched by death I also recommend, in addition, it sounds a little strange, to occasionally take a walk around the cemetery. I recommend it to anybody because you get a very distorted view of life if you never have the realization of how imminent death is for every human being, the so-called death of the form.

And then the personal, the excessively personal thing about death as it becomes, you see how universal it is. And I find it extremely peaceful to walk around a cemetery and just, the mind goes totally still in just amazement of all these lives that have dissolved, the forms that have gone. That's why Buddhist monks in some traditions regularly go to the morgue and they meditate for a few hours at a time there just with the dead bodies around them.

And so they go deep within to touch what in Buddhism is called the deathless. So that is, the freedom from what you've been trapped in lies there within you. Just go there, go there, there.

Don't go into the mind excessively. Conscious choice. And then the transmutation happens.

[Speaker 6] (4:22:34 - 4:22:38)
And so your mind is just absorbing whatever is playing.

[Speaker 1] (4:22:38 - 4:57:19)
It's the TV mind which is receiving stuff from wherever it comes from. It's going into your mind and you become no longer thinking your own thoughts. Occasionally your mind is saying, oh, this guy is so stupid.

And then you're watching again. What do you think about Facebook? Is it a healthy format?

It seems a bit egoic. Not a whole lot of transmission of connection, love, et cetera. Posting pictures of yourself and quantifying friends, likes, et cetera, seems like enhancing the ego.

Are we going down the wrong path with social media? Well, the questioner has a point. As even before the advent of Facebook and similar things for hundreds of years or thousands of years, people constructed for themselves an identity in their head.

That's me. Me and my story, as I sometimes call it. And that was partly inherited from what your culture tells you you are or your family and your culture.

And partly by choice, certain things you choose to identify with and then incorporate into your sense of self. Certain possessions, certain achievements, or the lack of certain possessions and achievements can all be cooperated. They become mind forms or thought forms, which you identify with.

So there's a mental image that forms and that's the essence of ego, a mental image that's me. So that's been going on for a long time. And then people live through that mental image of me.

They seek out things or people that can improve the mental image of me and try to keep away things or people that could weaken or threaten the mental image of me. It all means not being in touch with who you are beyond any mental image, which is why we are here to go deep into that. And now we got the technology of Facebook where you can externalize the image and you can create on the Facebook page, you can create the image of me and show it to the whole world.

And so many young people, and maybe not so young, I believe the oldest Facebook user, I saw a video clip in the States, the world's oldest Facebook user is 105 years old. And it is often used unconsciously in enhancing the image one has of oneself and the image one wants to show to the world. And then you read other people's images on their Facebook page and you think that's who they are.

And then you try to compete with that image and you try to polish up your image and compete with them. Most people want to show off, it seems, I'm not that familiar with it, but most people want to show the good things. I'm having this great meal, here's a picture of it.

Why would anybody want to see what you're eating right now? But they do, it seems. Or I just bought this thing, do you want to see it?

And then you can connect people to a place where you bought it, it's another thing. And all kinds of things that I don't understand. So you can, in many cases, it becomes an artificial construct that you add to every day and everybody else has their artificial construct.

And it can actually strengthens the delusion of the false self. Doesn't have to, but often it does. Facebook can also be used in conveying interesting information and to connect with people at a deeper level or bringing about some spiritual knowledge.

So that's not impossible. I used to post occasionally things, I don't do it myself, but I would send it to Steve and he would post it. But I haven't, I must admit, I haven't done it in a while.

Although some things do get posted, quotes and so on, that's fine. Twitter is another one that is, there's a Twitter message coming in. No.

The last time I tweeted was when a few months ago in February, the Oprah Channel in the States, I don't know if you can get it here, it's called the OWN Channel, Oprah Winfrey Network. They showed a repeat of our webinar that we did a few years ago that I did with Oprah. They did a slightly shortened edited version over a period of 10 weeks, 10 Sundays, the new earth was shown again on this time, not on the internet, but well, also on the internet, but on TV on, and Oprah sometimes is an active tweeter.

And she said, it would be great if we could tweet at the same time while this program is being shown. And so I said, okay, I'll see what I can do. So I was on the phone with Steve while the program was running, and then I was watching it, and then people sent in these questions and they have to be answered immediately.

So I was attempting to dictate answers to Steve and his assistant to put in the answers. And my mind was quite, well, I felt almost dizzy afterwards because I tried to watch the program and at the same time, watch the incoming tweets and think of an answer. But Oprah must have realized it wasn't from me because she said, Twitter is the exact opposite of how you operate.

And before Oprah said it, Kim said exactly the same thing to me. And that's true. So I was glad when it was over, but while it was happening, I was surrendered to it, although I did feel dizzy afterwards.

So if you can avoid constructing some pseudo identity for yourself on Facebook and be more real, then you can avoid that trap of just the Facebook amplifying the human ego, which it does in many, many cases, especially for youngsters who have no idea what they're doing. Oh, yes. Can you speak about how to be in this world with this constant push for connectivity?

How did we get to the most profound things? Yes. From a relatively simple question.

Oh, yes, we talked about doing and being without feeling that being present is another thing to do. How to be in this world without this constant push for connectivity? Well, the first thing is you turn off your push notifications.

That's already a big step forward. And you need to be disciplined in the use of your device, your phone, whatever, tablet, phone, so that you can be in this world it doesn't take you over because it's simply an extension of the mind. And if it wasn't enough before we invented these devices, humans had already been taken over by their minds.

Even 2000 years ago, not as much as now, but even 2000 years ago, Jesus said, why are you always thinking about tomorrow? Why are you always worried about the next thing? Look at the flower, look how it lives in total alignment with the present moment.

And it's being sustained by the one consciousness. That's my translation of it. So already then, humans had been taken over by mind, but even more so since then, it's mind has proliferated.

And then the clever human mind came up with these devices said, let's extend ourselves into the realm of things. And then we can create this, which is an extension of the human mind. So when you, you might have noticed when you're with yourself, you have the voice in the head, unless you begin to awaken, in which case you're able to experience spaces of alert, still presence.

It's beautiful. But otherwise you have this thing, commenting, talking, arguing. And then this becomes a burden for many people.

Of course it is a burden because a lot of the stuff it says is actually not pleasant. And so you experience it as a burden. And since you derive your sense of identity from it, it becomes yourself.

This talking voice, you think that's you. It becomes the self. And you walk around with this burden of the self.

And in order to unburden yourself, one thing you can do, you think you can do, is you can watch the television or you can go on to watch, there are countless things that you can watch on the little screen. The entire world's knowledge at your fingertips. And the moment you watch the screen, whether it's television or a screen, you might have noticed that your own, your so-called own thought processes come to a stop.

So to some extent, you're free of the self. This is why people sometimes find watching television relaxing, say, okay, I just need to relax now, just turn it on. By this they mean, while they watch the television screen, they are not burdened by their self-induced thought processes.

What they do, however, they replace their own thoughts with the collective thoughts. So they just, you're in a state, you're not in a state of thoughtless awareness when you watch television or you watch something on the screen. You absorb the thoughts from there into your mind and you link in.

So for people often in a state of semi or hypnosis when they watch and it kind of paralyzes you, can also happen with the screen, with television already started, of course. I don't know when, whenever, 60 years ago, whenever television started as you go. And so your mind is just absorbing whatever is playing.

It's the TV mind, which is receiving stuff from wherever it comes from, is going into your mind and you become a, no longer thinking your own thoughts. Occasionally your mind is like, oh, this guy is so stupid. And then you're watching again.

And then another thought, why am I watching this rubbish? Half an hour later, this is so awful. But you can't, you can't turn it off.

Here's the, here's the remote. Let's, let's just try one more channel. There might be something else there.

Oh no, that's stupid. Try one more. This is, this is how an addict behaves.

And the device is even more addictive. You go, cause you have to carry them with you. And you have to admit, you may have to admit that you, there is an addiction in you.

Not everybody here, but quite a few. It would be almost normal to feel this draw towards it. And you use it even when you don't need to use it.

That's the amazing thing. When you're standing at the elevator waiting, so another person is standing next to you and he or she is pulling out the phone and then you pull out yours. You don't know why.

And, or anywhere you're in a, you're waiting, you're ordering a tea or coffee somewhere and you're standing in line. And if you look around, there's almost nobody and probably nobody who is not looking at this little thing. This is scary.

30 years ago, it was just radio and television and you would, people would sit there for hours. But nowadays you have countless sources of stimulus for the mind

that draws you into continuously thinking about what's your next Facebook post? What's it going to be?

And you look at the ones that are coming in. All these people are doing these fantastic things. And me, I'm just sitting here.

And then you have to pretend that you're also doing fantastic things. And usually it involves taking a nice selfie. And then you project yourself image, which has existed for a long, long time before in humans.

They have a, they have a part of ego is to have this image of who I am. But in these Facebook, now we have the opportunity to project that image into the world and it'll reach hundreds or thousands of people all at once. And then you construct your life.

There are many people alive these days who without knowing it, they partly live for their Facebook image. And they're just looking for the next thing that they can project out into the world. It's Narcissus, you might remember the myth of Narcissus, the Greek, ancient Greek myth.

There was this young man who had never seen himself before because they didn't have mirrors at the time. But one day he happened to look into a little pool of water and he saw himself and he realized that he was extremely beautiful. He said, oh, that's me.

And if the story goes, he fell in love with himself, not in a good way, not by becoming one with who he is, but the separation happened. This myth shows the beginning stage of the egoic sense of self expressed as a story. The image that he saw of himself in the pool is the mental image of the ego set and stories are part of that image.

That's me, I'm me and my story. So you have the image of me and then, oh. So this guy, Narcissus, he experienced that separation.

And then I think something bad happened to him, but I don't remember what. So, and then you have other divine things that continuously stimulate the mind that almost designed for you not to become still. It's like the civilization has made a great effort to come up with as many things as possible to prevent people from becoming still and spacious and taking a moment of, ah, looking at the sky and feeling the inner spaciousness arise and becoming aware of the leaves of the tree or the branches and the wind blowing and the noise of water, the simple thing, becoming still, alert, sensing that stillness within. And of course, a minute later, another text message is coming in.

Of course, you have to look at it immediately. And then I'm told, I didn't know that when I first started using texts, Erin told me that the etiquette is that you have to reply immediately. And emails are coming in too.

Oh dear, I must be very important. I'm getting all these messages. Please talk about spiritual bypassing.

Sometimes it feels like I'm using presence and awareness as a way to deceive myself and avoid the muddle of unresolved pain within. Awareness or presence is never avoidance. In awareness, you allow yourself to feel whatever it is that you feel.

It's not repressing it in any way. There is a fundamental misconception, an unconscious misconception in human beings, and that misconception is this. They believe that the world has the ability to make them happy, but this is being withheld from them.

And they regard that as a personal insult by life. It's doing, why is life withholding happiness from me? Why all the things always happen to me?

Because it's not happening to others. You read their Facebook posts and they're all happy. They're eating meals.

You see pictures of meals. Look, I'm eating this, oh, okay. And then you see their happy faces.

And not only are they happy, they're also so good looking. Everybody's good looking. That's the technology of filters and stuff.

Everyone can look beautiful, even I, they did it to me too. So people watch that and say, wow, these people's lives are so great. What am I, so awful.

And then you maybe, then you also pretend because everybody else is pretending. Okay, like go to a restaurant, take a picture of a meal. I mean, this is what I'm eating right now.

Oh. So the misconception is the world is here to make me happy, but it's not doing it. And this is a very serious misconception because it makes your whole life miserable because that really means that something that should be happening is not happening in my life.

Something should, it's just not happening. But of course that misconception is that the world is here to make you happy and it can't do that. It's not here to make you happy.

It's here to make you conscious, to awaken you. Oh, I see, I was wrong all along. I've been complaining uselessly for 40 years or whatever your age is.

I've been complaining uselessly for 40 years that there's something wrong with the world and my so-called life, but there wasn't anything wrong at all because the world is here to awaken me. If humans are not challenged or not just humans, any life form only grows through being challenged, which means encounter obstacles and difficulties in their process of growth, even plants and animals, they all encounter, every life form is precarious. Its existence is precarious and it encounters obstacles to its unfoldment.

And that ultimately is how evolution happens through encountering difficulties, obstacles, challenges. Because as you encounter the obstacles and challenges, they seem to block you. And you think life would be much better if I did not have these challenges, but it wouldn't because you would go to sleep even more.

So you have the challenges and that brings about an influx of energy on whatever level, even if it's physical, every organism already encounters challenges on a physical level. And then it grows, it gains new strengths by attempting to overcome these limitations. I sometimes mention, example, if you want it, because it operates on every level.

If you want to become physically stronger, you have to exercise unless you have a job that is already physically hardworking, forces you to exert yourself physically. Otherwise you have to exercise. And you have to start doing, if you want to grow stronger, you have to lift weights.

I'm not doing it anymore, but I'm just demonstrating. You lift weight. Now, how does that feel at first?

What are you doing? The way I put it is this. You are making life difficult for your body because your body is not going to grow stronger unless you make the body's life difficult.

The same with jogging. The body doesn't really want to do it, but says, no, no, you have to do it. Why are you making life difficult for your body?

Your body would be so relaxed sitting on the sofa and watching Netflix. But it's not growing stronger, it's actually getting weaker because it's not being challenged. But challenge it, and then there is a demand for added energy.

And this just operates on the physical level. And this demand for added, there's a moment when there's a gap. You're exerting yourself and the energy isn't there yet, so it's very hard.

But at some point, the energy comes flooding in because there was a demand for it. And at that point, you may actually begin to enjoy the physical movement because there's added energy, and suddenly, ah, strength is increasing. And this is just on the physical level.

There's a demand and it comes. Also on a psychological level, it can operate. And on a spiritual level, when you become very unhappy in your life, then there is a possibility that the unhappiness causes you to awaken because at some point, you realize, either because you've had a spiritual teacher or teaching, or even to some people, it happens spontaneously, the suffering, the psychological suffering that humans undergo can, at some point, bring about an awakened, when you just can't stand it anymore. And something snaps, and suddenly, you, whoosh, it dissolves, and you're, oh, suddenly, an awakening has happened. But it would not have happened if you hadn't gone through those, sometimes, years of suffering.

Quite often, I have encountered people who tell me, I would never have come to you, or understood the books, or been open to anything spiritual if I had not experienced, in some cases, it's a serious, very serious illness, or an accident, or some deep loss in their personal lives. And they come, and perhaps some of you, with some of you, that is also the case, there would not have been an opening if you had not gone through that suffering. And at some point, the suffering awakens you, and that is really the ultimate purpose of suffering, is to awaken.

And then you realize that most suffering is actually unnecessary. It's actually created by the conditioned entity. I'm talking about real, there's physical pain, physical pain isn't suffering.

Suffering is a psychological phenomenon. So, and this suffering can be transcended. If you awaken, you transcend that suffering.

In other words, you transcend unhappiness. You are no longer unhappy. The mind loses its power to make you unhappy because most of your unhappiness is created by unconscious thought processes, not situations.

Most of unhappiness is created not by situations, difficult situations that you encounter, but what your mind is telling you about the difficult situations. The situation itself is as it is. Then you impose an interpretation on it.

The interpretation says this should not be happening. This is awful. Why always to me?

Why did he do that, et cetera, et cetera. Interpretations, what causes the unhappiness and strengthens the fictitious self is the commentary, the interpretation. And that is an amazing realization that most of your unhappiness is created by your mind.

And that's an amazing thing. And then as you become more present, unhappiness disappears from your life. Now, am I saying that you will then always be happy?

No, it's not. Happiness is a little bit superficial to the way I use the term happiness because it usually means, yeah, oh, it's so great, it's wonderful. It feels a bit superficial, although there are some spiritual teachers who use the term happiness and point it to something deeper.

For example, Ramana Maharshi says happiness is your true nature, but he's using it in a different sense. Obviously, there are situations, even as your unhappiness leaves you and you become more present, situations arise where you cannot say that you're happy. Somebody close to you dies.

Your father, your mother, or even a child, or somebody, or something very bad, an accident happens to someone, and you can't say, oh, I'm still happy, I'm so happy, he died. No. Sadness will come if that happens because that's the human on you, still the sadness comes.

And yet, you are not consumed by the sadness when it comes. You are not consumed by it. It comes as a wave, and you may weep because your father died, your mother died, your child died, or somebody close to you is going through suffering, and you may weep.

And yet, underneath that, there's still a substratum, this is a geological term, there's a substratum of peace underneath it. I don't call that happiness, but it's deeper than that. There is an all-abiding peace underneath it, although there may be tears on the surface, but then they disappear, and you don't perpetuate emotional pain by continuously thinking about it for months and years, and years pass, and you're still unhappy for years.

[Speaker 2] (4:57:20 - 4:57:30)
No, it comes as a wave, and then it subsides, and even when it's there, there is still a presence that you can sense underneath it.

[Speaker 6] (4:57:35 - 4:57:39)
Sometimes people try to exercise willpower,

[Speaker 1] (4:57:40 - 4:57:45)
and they try to manifest that, I really want this,

[Speaker 2] (4:57:47 - 4:57:55)
whatever it is, that is not necessarily a good way to manifest,

[Speaker 1] (4:57:58 - 4:59:35)
because by saying, I want it, you're also saying that you don't have it yet, but the most powerful way to manifest is the feeling that it's already here, and that can only arise out of the fullness of being, of presence in the present moment, because then you merge the image of what you want with a sense of fullness, the fullness of being, so the image and the fullness of being come together, and that is a powerful way of manifesting it, which means you don't need that thing for your happiness anymore, you don't need it for your ultimate fulfillment, the most powerful way to manifest is to regard it as a play or a game, the game of life, the play of life of manifesting, then there's also a sense of detachment from the outcome, an excessive attachment to the desired outcome is also an obstacle to manifesting, if you desperately need something, if you are unhappy, if you don't get it, then there's something wrong, so if you're unhappy, when you don't achieve whatever you want to manifest, then you didn't do it right,

[Speaker 2] (4:59:40 - 4:59:55)
so there needs to be a detachment, so to speak, from the desired outcome,

[Speaker 1] (4:59:56 - 5:02:37)
so that you don't project this, whatever you want to manifest doesn't become a future projection, but whatever you want to manifest needs to be realized as already existing on some level, in the unmanifested, that's why Jesus said, I want to go back to Jesus, because whatever you want to learn about manifestation, just read what he explained it all, in very simple words, he said, whenever you pray for something, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours, that's the entire secret of manifestation already there, and the importance of the words are, not believe that you will receive it, because then there would be too much wanting, I want this, I will get it, no, he said, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours, and it will be given to you, so believing that you have, in other words, it's already there, and how does that happen?

How does that happen when you know, when your senses tell you that it's not there, let's say you live in a trailer, there's nothing wrong with living in a trailer, I love trailers, but let's say you live in a trailer, but you want a nice house, okay, your preference would be a nice house, but are you unhappy in your trailer, or are you appreciating a trailer, and you can hear the pitter-patter of rain on the roof, well, I can hear it now, I'm not in a trailer, I can still hear it from the window pane, so in a trailer, but you want a nice house, okay, where's the house, because you look around, it's not here, are you creating some kind of dissatisfaction by telling yourself a story, this is what my life has come to, I've reduced to living in a trailer, I need to get out of here, is this all disempowering, all those narratives,

[Speaker 2] (5:02:37 - 5:02:48)
telling yourself stories that are not good enough, all very disempowering, yes, your senses are telling you

[Speaker 1] (5:02:48 - 5:05:44)
that you're not living in a nice house, you're just in a trailer, but that's fine for the present moment, so where's the house, the house is in your imagination, in your mind, you can, maybe you visualize it, or maybe you have certain verbal affirmations that you have a lovely house that you live in, and then the visualization and the verbal affirmation, you bring it together, allow the visualization of the verbal affirmation to be empowered by that sense of presence, so that it meets the presence, so that house merges with the sense of presence, and then inside you feel you already have it, and the weird thing is when you finally, when you do get it, let's say next year, or in six months time, or in two years time, or in three years time, when you do get it, the nice, and then suddenly you sit in your nice house, it makes no difference to your inner state anymore, because when you were in your trailer, you were already in the same state of fullness of life, when you're in the nice house, and you sit in a nice house, and say, okay, it's fine, but you're not, you say, yes, a certain amount of satisfaction may be there, but basically, your inner state is the same as it was before, because you already touched the fullness, you already rooted in the beingness, the dimension of being, the fullness of life. In other words, when it does manifest, you don't suddenly become, oh, I'm so happy, I've got it, oh, finally, I've got, no, it doesn't happen anymore, you say, oh, it's good, but your inner state is not, it's the same as it was before, no matter what you achieve, you already have the foundation for everything, you've already rooted in that, this is why Jesus called it, all these things will be added unto you, it's no more than that, an adding, or use the expression, icing on the cake, and when you have an enormous sense of freedom, of liberation,

[Speaker 2] (5:05:45 - 5:05:52)
because you're no longer, your inner state is no longer dependent on external conditions,

[Speaker 6] (5:05:58 - 5:06:04)
whatever you want to manifest in this world, people want what they want,

[Speaker 1] (5:06:06 - 5:06:39)
better, more abundance in their life, perhaps material abundance, there's a shortage of money, you want to experience an expansion on this dimension, fine, or they want to find some companion in their life, or they may want better health, or a better way of contributing to this world, as the expression goes,

[Speaker 2] (5:06:39 - 5:06:59)
to make a difference in this world, or they want to be a positive force in this world, these are all wonderful things, but the primary thing is to touch that,

[Speaker 1] (5:07:00 - 5:07:54)
to not touch, but to access that dimension within yourself, and stay rooted in that dimension of being, presence, that in itself is so fulfilling, that anything you can manifest becomes the English expression, if English is not your native language, I don't know if you've heard the expression, the icing on the cake, the icing on the cake is the stuff you put on top of that you have a cake, icing on the cake is the stuff you put on top of the cake, little ornaments to make the cake look nice, it's the icing on the cake, but it's not the cake itself is more important

[Speaker 2] (5:07:54 - 5:07:55)
than the icing on the cake,

[Speaker 1] (5:07:55 - 5:08:02)
so the icing on the cake is the step of the realization of being,

[Speaker 2] (5:08:03 - 5:08:04)
that is this,

[Speaker 1] (5:08:05 - 5:09:25)
sorry, that is the cake, no, the icing is whatever you manifest, Jesus said the same thing, he didn't actually use, he was not familiar with English, and the expression icing on the cake didn't exist, I don't know whether they even had cake at that time, but Jesus used the expression, seek only the kingdom of heaven, everything else that you may think you, that you need will be added unto you, seek only the kingdom of heaven, everything else will be added unto you, it's only an addition, it's not the main thing, so whatever in this life, whatever you may want to achieve, it's an adding on to the main thing, the main thing is the kingdom of heaven, which is the realization of being, the realization of that which transcends the personal personality, the realization of being,

[Speaker 2] (5:09:25 - 5:09:43)
see, I am, without adding anything to it, presence itself, and so then, that's the foundation for all manifestation,

[Speaker 1] (5:09:44 - 5:09:53)
then out of that power, maybe some people like to visualize the situation,

[Speaker 2] (5:09:53 - 5:10:05)
others may want to use verbal affirmations, and that's fine, but as you use those things,

[Speaker 1] (5:10:05 - 5:10:09)
you stay connected with that dimension,

[Speaker 2] (5:10:11 - 5:10:16)
so that means when you want something in life,

[Speaker 1] (5:10:19 - 5:11:11)
the wanting is very different from the egoic wanting, because you no longer, you don't need it to be fulfilled or happy, so it's the different kind of wanting, you don't need it to be fulfilled, the fulfillment you have to find in the present moment, you have to go deep enough into the present moment, so you find, and again, quoting Jesus again, because he talked about it, in the present moment, you find what he called the fullness of life, that's actually the expression that Jesus used, he said, I want you to have the fullness of life, in some translations, it's called abundant life,

[Speaker 2] (5:11:12 - 5:11:35)
I want you to have abundant life, in other translations, it's I want you to have the fullness of life, and that fullness of life does not mean many things, it means that the essence of life itself,

[Speaker 1] (5:11:36 - 5:11:58)
that is the fullness of life, then all those things that you may want will be added, well, maybe not all of them, but many of things will be added unto you, so that is the essence of meditation,

[Speaker 6] (5:11:58 - 5:12:00)
the state of manifestation.

[Speaker 1] (5:12:09 - 5:19:55)
So if you focus on the awakening, whether you are conscious at any moment, the important thing in any situation that you encounter in your life is the state of consciousness with which you meet that situation, what is the state of consciousness in which you face whatever situation arises in the present moment, that determines the next thing, how it's going to go on in the next moment, in the next, how do you, what is, how do you perceive, react to this, whatever is arising in this moment? So whatever is arising in this moment, the situation that arises, they come and go, different situations arise, this is always maybe important, but it of secondary importance, more important is your state of consciousness now.

If you could remember only that and live that, that's really all you need, so whenever you encounter any situation, realize what's my state of consciousness right now, and there's a situation that perhaps you need to deal with, perhaps you need to take action right now, perhaps you, there's nothing you can do and you have to leave it alone, we don't know, but what is your state of consciousness in the present moment, vital question, and in order to answer that question, and it doesn't really have a conceptual answer because you immediately know whether you are present or not, that question can help you become present, what is my state of consciousness right now?

Maybe, are there certain thoughts that are happening that are telling you that something is very wrong? Emotions that are telling you that something is wrong, there are certain thoughts that are telling you you'd rather be somewhere else, very common thing, it's so common people don't realize it, some people live almost continuously as if they were longing to be somewhere else, but not here and now, to get away from here and now, this isn't right, there's something not right, never, and occasionally it seems right, ah, I have arrived, whatever it is that makes it right for a moment, it's an illusion, I'm in love, this is the completion of my life, I've fallen in love, there's a person who's going to complete me, when you go to a restaurant and observe other people sitting at various tables, you can tell if they're a couple sitting at a table, you can tell whether their relationship is relatively recent, they haven't known each other for very long, they're in that state that they call falling in love, the way they interact is very different from those who have been in a relationship for longer or are married, the ones that have just met, they've fallen in love, they are in a kind of state of delusion, you can see it in their eyes, everybody's playing their part in it, it's a theatrical performance but they don't know it, and that comes to an end at the latest when they start living together, so this, then the essence of all this is awakening, the awakened state of consciousness, and as I mentioned earlier, not surprisingly, this term awakening has been used over thousands of years since the time of the Buddha and before, the essence of the teaching of the Buddha is to awaken, the word Buddha itself means to be awake, the one who is awake, this is a Sanskrit root of the word is to be awake, Buddha is not a, it's not a name of a person, it describes a state of consciousness, and then go to Jesus and there are quite a few parables that talk about not going to sleep, about staying awake, and these are not, these are parables, they're not to be taken literally, obviously, literally you cannot tell a person stay awake because eventually, of course, you'll go to sleep, so we are just using this analogy of awake and asleep in order to point to something that most humans are not yet familiar with, to quote Jesus again from one of the gospels, he said, and this is quite a bit of what we read about Jesus' teaching, may not be quite what he said or distorted, but a few things I can sense are absolutely, literally what he said, a few things here and there, for example, he said, and what I say to you, I say to all, stay awake.

Huh, was that the Buddha or Jesus? No, it was Jesus. Oh, no, he's not talking about the normal state of wakefulness, nobody could stay awake for that long because there's something that pulls you into sleep, so we are not talking about that, we are using that as an analogy.

Everybody knows what it means to awaken in the morning when you've been asleep, which is a particular state of consciousness, you're asleep, and in sleep you have dream state and you have dreamless sleep, you have those two, and then you wake up, you awaken in the morning, and there's a huge difference between the state of sleep and the state of being awake. Everybody experienced that every morning, and you go, suddenly you open your eyes and go, oh, completely different world, you've just awakened. It's a different state of consciousness.

And so this analogy is used because there is something in ordinary consciousness, normal human consciousness, which really should be called unconsciousness, normal human consciousness could also be described as a kind of sleep because it's totally conditioned by the past.

[Speaker 5] (5:20:02 - 5:20:14)
I wanted to ask, what is the role of being in service to others in one's spiritual development? And I guess you can say it, in the overall evolutionary impulse of the universe, to borrow a phrase from your book.

[Speaker 1] (5:20:15 - 5:31:37)
Okay, thank you. It can be a wonderful spiritual practice if it arises from the right place inside you. And it can also be a strengthening of your ego if it arises from a different place inside you.

Jesus talked about that when he talked about giving arms. Some people, he said, like to be seen when they give arms to the poor. They want to be seen.

And he says, those people are not going to get a reward in heaven. What that means, we'll look at in a second, because they have their reward already. And of course, what their reward already is, is that it's a feeding of the ego.

That's their reward. So now there are two ways of being seen when you give service. Either you give something to somebody.

It could be help, providing active help, or giving something that you have away to somebody to help them, whatever it is. One needs to be able to look at the motivation and there are two ways of being seen. One is to talk about it more than is necessary, or to just make sure that others see what you're doing or aware of what you're doing.

Then you have your reward through that, which is the feeding of the ego. But there's another interior way of seeing it when you have your own self image and you're in service, because it makes you feel better about yourself. It improves your self image.

That is still fine. It may help somebody, so it's a good thing to do, but it doesn't really help you to become free internally. So there's a self image that some people need to feel that they are giving to others.

And there's this image of, I am giving to him, you're the doer. You see yourself as the doer of good and you see yourself as sacrificing something that you give to another. So it improves your ego, really, how you see yourself, because what is ego but an inner self reflection?

Ego is like an inner mirror, where you are not yourself. You have an image of yourself and you live through this mental image of yourself. And the image of yourself is usually not satisfying.

So every ego tries to improve the image of oneself and it can do it in many, many different ways. But, and then you have the image of me, the doer of the good deed, and that really strengthens the image. And then there's another way of giving I think the expression is where the left hand doesn't know what the right hand does or something like that.

The right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing, which means you don't have the self image as you are giving of something that you own. You are helping the other. There's an outflow of energy in whatever form and it's not yours.

It's not yours, you're not giving anything that is yours because ultimately nothing is yours. You're giving energy because that energy in whatever form comes from the source of all energy. All energy derives from one source.

And so you give, you allow yourself to be a vehicle through which this energy flows out into the world. And then the sense of me, the doer isn't there. And the sense of there's a poor person that I am helping isn't there either, these concepts.

So I simply, the process that happens through you and that is the non-egoic way. And then to be of service is a beautiful spiritual practice too because the ego is out of the way, dissolves through that when you realize you are not, you don't own anything ultimately and the energy is not yours. It's universal energy that comes through.

So to be a vehicle for that and in that way you are a help really when that happens, you begin to live in that way. You're always in service to others. You're even in service to others in ordinary situations that would not normally be recognized as service to others because you recognize the other in their essential being, which is the greatest service that you can give somebody far greater than anything material, although there's nothing wrong with that either.

But the greatest service is to recognize the essence or the reality of the other person. Everything else passes away. Everything else is transitory.

But that recognition of the other as God, I don't use that word very often, and one with who you are, to see that that is the greatest service you can give, which this is the realization of who that person truly is beyond the form. Not to come from form, not believing this form is helping that form, but realizing there's something here that is beyond form. So if you're only in form, then you can also very easily deplete yourself.

I'm trying to be helpful. I need to, there are many people who are social workers or therapists, and after a few years, they experience a burnout because they're continuously trying to give and help, and then they need, they can't do it anymore. So in The Power of Now, I believe I wrote that whenever you help people, there needs to be a balance between the, maybe I didn't write it there, there needs to be a balance between the doing out there and being rooted in being.

And so that's, no matter where you are in life or what you do, otherwise you will lose yourself in your service to others very quickly, and then you're not of service to anybody anymore. Then you'll need therapy yourself, or you'll need charity yourself. So to stay, be rooted in being while you do is essential so that the energy can continue to move through you.

So you're addressing, you can address the causes of human suffering in the external world, sorry, the effects of human suffering in the external world, but the cause of human suffering is in the consciousness, in the human consciousness. So that is vital to be rooted in yourself, not be part of the unconsciousness that produces the dysfunction that is in this world. There are people who try to do their best, even organizations often try to do their best to help others, and they become part sometimes without wanting to, they become part of the mess.

There's infighting in the organization itself. It's amazing how many institutions and organizations, the enormous amount of infighting that there is, they are supposed to help people. Sometimes they are even religious organizations.

The enormous amount of conflict in there, and there's, stop, stop, stop doing. Just connect with the spaciousness that is within you. Stay rooted there and then do.

Never lose the rootedness in this. Remember, I use this and this, the two modalities or dimensions. This is the world of form and doing.

This is the formless and being. So when you help others, the two need to be there also. Always the balance between doing and being.

You cannot solve the problems of this world through doing only, because if there's only doing and you try to solve the problems of the world, you will contribute to the problems of the world. Hence the expression, the road to hell is paved with good intentions.

[Speaker 5] (5:31:43 - 5:31:44)
Thank you very much.

[Speaker 1] (5:32:09 - 6:37:34)
Just making sure that everybody is present. Almost everybody is. I can sense it in the energy field.

Wonderful to be back here after quite a few years in time, but it's still the now, it seems. Strange. Can't get away from it.

Although many humans try very, very hard to get away from it. It's part of the inherited collective mental patterns, is the compulsion to get away from the now. And that's at the root of a lot of dysfunction in human consciousness.

So here we are, the main purpose of being here. Well, both here in this space at this time, but also the main purpose of being here on this planet, incarnated as a so-called human being. The main purpose is to inhabit the world the now, well, everybody inhabits the now, but to inhabit the now, to be in the now consciously.

And we could call that the awakening of consciousness, learning to be present, which seems to be a process that happens in time. Although presence itself is a timeless state of consciousness. So a slight paradox, perhaps, the ability to live here and be present, develops over time, which means you're present for a while, and you lose it, and you're present again, and you lose it, and then you're present for a little bit longer.

This is the awakening of consciousness, we could call it. And you're all here because something in you is awakening to this dimension of consciousness. There's no, it's no surprise that this term awakening has been used in many spiritual traditions for thousands of years, awakening and to be awake.

That's the most important thing that could happen to a human being here. In fact, it's the only thing of absolute importance in your incarnation here. The only thing of absolute importance is the awake, whether you represent or embody the awakening of consciousness, that is the evolution of consciousness on this planet through you.

And on a larger scale, it is the evolution of consciousness throughout the universe. It is an awakening universe, and you are an essential part of the awakening universe. In fact, you are inseparable from the awakening universe.

You look like a person, but you are the universe in the process of awakening, disguised temporarily as a little person with its problems. And so much going on in my life. I have no time for presents.

Maybe when things are going better, I'll be present, but not now. Got too much on my plate, as the expression goes, English expression. I have a lot on my plate, they say, which means a lot of problems.

Of course, there's no end to the problems. But, so there's only one thing of absolute importance, and that is whether you embody the awakening of consciousness. All the rest is secondary, I call it.

It may be relatively important. All the things that make up your life, what people call my life, this very problematic thing that you call my life, that is all maybe important. Yes, there are things that are important.

Your health is important. Your relationships, of course, situation, important. Your home situation, your professional work situation, important.

All those things, whether you have money or not, not enough money, all these things are important, relatively important, but not absolutely important. So you have the two levels. I don't deny the relative importance of all these things that make up your so-called life, but what humans neglect and do not realize that there is a transcendent dimension to your life, and to encounter that, to consciously awaken to the transcendent dimension of your life, that is the only thing that is of absolute importance.

Most humans go through life only knowing themselves and knowing the world in one dimension. There was a man that many of you have heard of. Some of you read some of the teachings, Socrates, he lived roughly 2,400 years ago in Greece.

He never wrote anything. His disciples later wrote down what they remembered, and his main disciple was Plato. And Plato then wrote the Socratic dialogues.

We don't know, of course, whether what Plato wrote was exactly what Socrates taught. In a way, what Plato wrote in Plato's writing, Socrates is a literary character. So the characteristic of Platonic dialogues is that Socrates asks questions, his people who come to him for teaching.

He doesn't seem to immediately have the answer. He asks questions, and then the person answers, and he gradually leads the person to the answer. Now, in the dialogues, which some of you may have read, some of them, not perhaps many people these days read, Plato, in the dialogues, the impression is given that Socrates kind of manipulates a little bit the people who come to him, and the impression is given that he already knows the answer.

He just pretends not to know the answer. That's what comes across in the dialogues. And I think that is the character that Plato created, but I believe, and I have evidence for this belief, that that's not actually what happened.

I believe, and I'll tell you in a minute why, that Plato actually started every teaching session from a place of not knowing the answer. And so unlike the impression we get if you read, the Platonic dialogues, that he already knows, he's just pretending not to know. No.

How do I know this? Plato said, I'm sorry, Socrates said, they call me the wisest of all men. And the reason why they call me the wisest of all men is that I'm the only one who knows that he knows nothing.

So, and again, when we read it retrospectively, after having read the Platonic dialogues, we think, oh, he's just, again, it's some kind of affectation. He's saying, I know nothing. No, I believe that his genuine starting point was the ability to go into that state of not knowing.

Rather than coming from already having accumulated knowledge just waiting to come out of his head. And this is why he was able to think creatively. He actually taught, one could say, almost he taught humanity how to think for the first time, to think rationally, but his thinking is creative.

It's fresh and new. And it was a process between him and the people who came to him. There was an energy field that arose and out of this energy field, the answers came.

Sometimes they came through him. Sometimes they came through the people who came to him. Another interesting thing he said that's not reported in Plato, but written by another disciple of his called Xenophon.

And he said that Socrates frequently pointed out that he received counsel from a divine voice. And again, that's something that the Western rationalists try to ignore. To them, Plato is the absolutely clear, rational, analytical, conceptual thinker.

And they don't see, because they don't know that dimension within themselves, they don't see the depths out of which his thinking actually came. So he said frequently, as reported by Xenophon, that he received guidance from a divine voice, Socrates. Not in the sense, one doesn't get the sense that some entity spoke through him, but obviously he was referring to inspiration from a dimension within him that was beyond thinking, beyond conceptualization, beyond the rational thought.

So the impression we get of Socrates is really we see half the story. We see only the upper half of the iceberg. Well, it's the iceberg, actually you see far less than half of it.

You see only a tiny fraction of it. And that was when these things are taught at universities and so on. The more important dimension is actually completely missed.

They only look at the upper. What's he saying? But where did all that come from?

What was the state of consciousness out of which such a creative teaching, such creative thinking could arise? And so it is that most these dimensions the dimension of conceptualization of thinking is in everyone, but the dimension of non-conceptual intelligence is also in everyone. But in the same way that we only see one half of the whole or less than one half of the whole when we look at Socrates through the eyes of Plato and through the eyes of Western interpreters, in the same way, most humans go through life only knowing themselves and knowing the world in one dimension.

And that's the, we could call that the dimension of form. And so let's bring it now after having gone to Greece, let's bring it to a very immediately verifiable place here and now. As you sit here, you are aware of yourself as a form identity, obviously, because you are aware of your body, which is a physical form.

You are aware of, although you may not remember your past, you have vaguely, you know that you have a past, you have a name, you have an address, and you have a life situation that may not be happening right here now unless you're thinking about it, but you have a life situation, your whole personal past is there. And you have thoughts going through your head, perhaps. And this is what most people identify with and know, that's all they know.

They know themselves as that form-based entity. And what else is there? There is that in you which is continuously overlooked because the world of form, which includes thinking, thoughts that continuously arise, the world of form has such a hypnotic pull, it's so seductive that you follow it.

First, you have the senses, the outer senses, but more importantly, you have the seduction of continuously arising interpretations of what the senses, the sensory input. If you look at your consciousness, your state of consciousness, the sensory input plays a relatively small part in what goes on in your mind. A much greater part of what goes in your mind is either an interpretation of the sensory input that's immediately interpreted through the conditioning of your mind, the filter, or it is ignored completely and you are totally absorbed in the stream of thinking.

In other words, totally unaware of your surroundings because you're absorbed in the seduction of thoughts arising and drawing in the totality of your attention, your consciousness, and so you become an entity that is entirely, consists entirely of thought, the me, and you know no other dimension in you. It's all, and anybody else who says, even if you're totally identified with that, even the suggestion that there may be another dimension would immediately be ridiculed or the mind-made entity feel threatened by it. There is a fundamental misconception, an unconscious misconception in human beings, and that misconception is this.

They believe that the world has the ability to make them happy, but this is being withheld from them. And they regard that as a personal insult by life. It's doing, why is life withholding happiness from me?

Why all the things always happen to me? Because it's not happening to others. You read their Facebook posts and they're all happy.

They're eating meals. You see pictures of meals. Look, I'm eating this, oh, okay.

And then you see their happy faces. And not only are they happy, they're also so good-looking. Everybody's good-looking.

That's the technology of filters and stuff. Everyone can look beautiful, even I, they did it to me, too. So people watch that and say, wow, these people's lives are so great.

And mine's so awful. And then you also pretend, because everybody else is pretending, okay, let's go to a restaurant, take a picture of a meal. This is what I'm eating right now.

How? So the misconception is the world is here to make me happy, but it's not doing it. And this is a very serious misconception because it makes your whole life miserable because that really means it's something Something that should be happening is not happening in my life.

Something should, it's just not happening. But of course that misconception is that the world is here to make you happy and it can't do that. It's not here to make you happy.

It's here to make you conscious, to awaken you. Oh, I see. I was wrong all along.

I've been complaining uselessly for 40 years, or whatever your age is, I've been complaining uselessly for 40 years that there's something wrong with the world and my so-called life. But there wasn't anything wrong at all. Because the world is here to awaken me.

If humans are not challenged, or not just humans, any life form only grows through being challenged, which means encounter obstacles and difficulties in their process of growth. Even plants and animals, they all encounter, every life form is precarious. Its existence is precarious.

And it encounters obstacles to its unfoldment. And that ultimately is how evolution happens, through encountering difficulties, obstacles, challenges. Because as you encounter the obstacles and challenges, they seem to block you, and you think life would be much better if I did not have these challenges, but it wouldn't.

Because you would go to sleep even more. So you have the challenges, and that brings about an influx of energy on whatever level, even if it's physical. Every organism already encounters challenges on a physical level.

And then it grows, it gains new strengths by attempting to overcome these limitations. I sometimes mention, for example, if you want it, because it operates on every level. If you want to become physically stronger, you have to exercise, unless you have a job that is already physically hard-working, forces you to exert yourself physically.

Otherwise, you have to exercise, and you have to start doing, if you want to grow stronger, you have to lift weights. I'm not doing it anymore, but I'm just demonstrating. You lift weights.

Now, how does that feel at first? What are you doing? The way I put it is this.

You are making life difficult for your body, because your body is not going to grow stronger unless you make the body's life difficult. The same with jogging. The body doesn't really want to do it, but says, no, no, you have to do it.

Why are you making life difficult for your body? Your body would be so relaxed sitting on the sofa and watching Netflix. But it's not growing stronger, it's actually getting weaker, because it's not being challenged.

But challenge it, and then there is a demand for added energy. This just operates on the physical level, and this demand for added, there's a moment when there's a gap. You're exerting yourself, and the energy isn't there yet, so it's very hard.

But at some point, the energy comes flooding in, because there was a demand for it. And at that point, you may actually begin to enjoy the physical movement, because there's added energy. And suddenly, ah, strength is increasing.

And this is just on the physical level. There's a demand, and it comes also on a psychological level, it can operate, and on a spiritual level. When you become very unhappy in your life, then there is a possibility that the unhappiness causes you to awaken, because at some point, you realize, either because you've had a spiritual teacher or teaching, or even to some people, it happens spontaneously, the suffering, the psychological suffering that humans undergo can, at some point, bring about an awakening when you just can't stand it anymore. And something snaps, and suddenly you, it dissolves, and you're, oh, suddenly an awakening has happened. But it would not have happened if you hadn't gone through those sometimes years of suffering.

Quite often, I have encountered people who tell me, I would never have come to you or at least understood the books, or been open to anything spiritual, if I had not experienced, in some cases, it's a serious, very serious illness, or an accident, or some deep loss in their personal lives, and they come, and perhaps some of you, with some of you, that is also the case, there would not have been an opening if you had not gone through that suffering, and at some point, the suffering awakens you, and that is really the ultimate purpose of suffering, is to awaken. And then you realize that most suffering is actually unnecessary. It's actually created by the conditioned entity.

I'm talking about real psychological, there's physical pain, physical pain isn't suffering. Suffering is a psychological phenomenon, and this suffering can be transcended if you awaken, you transcend that suffering. In other words, you transcend unhappiness, you are no longer unhappy.

The mind loses its power to make you unhappy, because most of your unhappiness is created by unconscious thought processes, not situations. Most of unhappiness is created not by situations, difficult situations that you encounter, but what your mind is telling you about the difficult situations. The situation itself is as it is.

Then you impose an interpretation on it, the interpretation says this should not be happening, this is awful, why, always to me, why did he do that, et cetera, et cetera, interpretations. What causes the unhappiness and strengthens the fictitious self is the commentary, the interpretation. And that is an amazing realization that most of your unhappiness is created by your mind.

And that's an amazing thing. And then as you become more present, unhappiness disappears from your life. Now, am I saying that you will then always be happy?

No, it's not, happiness is a little bit superficial, the way I use the term happiness, because it usually means, yeah, ah, it's so great, it's wonderful, it's a bit superficial, although there are some spiritual teachers who use the term happiness and point to something deeper. For example, Ramana Maharshi says happiness is your true nature, but he's using it in a different sense. Obviously, there are situations, even as your unhappiness leaves you and you become more present, situations arise where you cannot say that you're happy, somebody close to you dies, your father, your mother, or even a child or somebody, or something very bad, an accident happens to someone, you, and you can't say, oh, I'm still happy, I'm so happy, he died, no, there's, there's, sadness will come, if that happens, because that's the human on you, still, the sadness comes, and yet, you are not consumed by the sadness when it comes, you are not consumed by it, it comes as a wave, and you may weep, because your father died, your mother died, your child died, or some recourse is going through suffering, and you, you may weep, and yet, underneath that, there is still a substratum, this is a geological term, there's a substratum of peace underneath it, I don't call that happiness, but it's deeper than that, there is an all-abiding peace underneath it, although there may be tears on the surface, but then they disappear, and you don't, you don't perpetuate emotional pain by continuously thinking about it for months and years, and years pass, and you're still unhappy for years, no, it comes as a wave, and then it subsides, and even when it's there, there is still a presence that you can sense underneath it, so in English, we don't have a word that applies to both men and women, I don't know if in Swedish, in German, you have the word mensch, which means, could mean, it's man and woman, but the English language doesn't have that, so you have to say human being, human being, and that's great, I like that, because I realize that, that points to the two dimensions that constitute your reality, you are a human, undoubtedly, which means you have a past, you have mental-emotional conditioning that makes up the person, the ego, the personality, you have a life situation, just, you are a human, and you have your desires as a human, you have your goals, and so on, all the things that you experience as a human, right, okay, but what about being? The being dimension is overlooked by most humans, they are lost in their human nature, they are completely unaware of that transcendent dimension of consciousness that actually is the essential reality to who or what they are, I sometimes call it your essence identity, the essence, your essence identity is the being of you, and the being is timeless, the being is consciousness itself, and then there's a human, and the two are together, and if you can awaken to the beingness of you, then of course you continue to be a human until you are no longer, until the body dissolves, but in the meantime, your task, your mission, your purpose, is to, as a human, to also embody the being, then you have both dimensions in your life, the limited dimension of here that is temporal, inseparable from time, and you have the transcendent dimension to who you are in the timeless realm of consciousness itself, and that is a continuous realization. At first, it may only come to you as glimpses in brief moments, and you feel suddenly a sense of lightness, and very peaceful, but very intensely alive, and you go, oh, and you may realize you're not thinking in those moments, thinking has subsided, but you haven't fallen asleep, you're awake, and then you may remember those moments, this was so wonderful, sometimes it happens when you go into nature, if you can really be there, nature can help you in your awakening, if you can really be there with all the senses, and be aware of the awareness itself when you are out there in nature, and sometimes it can happen to some humans almost accidentally, they're out climbing a mountain, or they're swimming, or somewhere in nature, and suddenly the person subsides, and just an awareness arises, and they go, oh, oh, and they think it's been caused by the beauty that they see, but it's not really that, it's been caused by the cessation of thinking, and you can have that in the middle of a city, and that's a, this is your continuous practice, is are you able to, as much as possible, let go of habitual, especially habitual, useless, self-serving thinking, thinking that only feeds the fictitious self, the ego, the entity, that loves, actually loves its problems, whether it's, it says, no, I don't love my problems, yes, you do, because you talk and think about them continuously, in fact, you create them continuously, through unconscious thinking, you create them, no, no, I don't, yes, you do.

And that this entity then becomes, as you, at first you have glimpses, sometimes accidental, they may only be a few seconds, and then perhaps a little bit longer, and then the two, gradually, the being and the human kind of merge, the being seeps into the human, and so the human, the conditioned entity, the human becomes less and less obnoxious, and less and less dysfunctional, and less and less creating completely unnecessary and absurd suffering for yourself and others, completely unnecessary and absurd suffering, created unconsciously by the ego, this entity, in its attempt to strengthen itself, it loves its problems and its enemies, oh, I feel much bigger, anger is great, and really, and you can revive, talk about it all the time, this is completely asleep, completely asleep, and so, as the awakening happens, the presence begins to sometimes completely replace the person, and at other times, it kind of shines through the person, in the same way that a light shines through the lampshade, the light shines through the lampshade, and the person still, yes, the person still has its conditioning, to some extent, and can never be totally free of the conditioning, there's always certain ways in which you behave, that's part to do with how you were brought up, your environment, all the conditioning, the country, even the language that you speak is the form of mental conditioning, all those things, they are still there, but the most dysfunctional and unhappiness-creating patterns, they subside more and more, certain patterns remain, as long as you are a person, a human, certain patterns remain, but not the heavy, deeply unhappy and obnoxious patterns, they gradually dissolve, and all is left are certain idiosyncrasies in your personality, and so on, that's okay, so that, the person remains, but it undergoes a substantial transformation, it no longer creates suffering, even in the face of challenges, because they continue to happen, even as you awaken, the universe will continue to present you with challenges, new ones, no matter what situation you go into, at first you, oh, this is great, I'm in a new situation, and before you know it, oh, it comes up from behind, another challenge, it won't, the universe won't leave you alone, even, but the wonderful thing is, if you're not undergoing the awakening process, every challenge that arises will make you more unconscious, it will strengthen the self, the self that is reacting, is reactive, and complaining all the time, and reacting, so the challenge will make you more unconscious, if you are not awakening yet, and that is, you can verify that in your, perhaps in your own experience, when things go wrong, there is a reactive entity there, that gets, works itself up, either you become angry, or despondent, or whatever the reactivity is, people like, in professions such as lawyers, often encounter people in their most unconscious states, because they tend to go to lawyers when things go wrong, they're being sued, or the divorce is happening, divorce lawyers, to be a divorce lawyer, potentially, could be a very enlightening job, because you encounter deep human unconsciousness, which most people, when they, in a conflict situation like that, become more unconscious than they are normally, deeply unconscious, and so that's, when you're being challenged by life, the challenge will create a reaction, and the reaction will, you become completely identified with the reaction, and you can even more unconscious in your normal state, which is unconscious enough, but it's now, it's more unconscious.

Oh, I can't stop thinking about it, and now, as you're awakening, challenge comes again, and then you suddenly see the possibility of actually being more intensely present when a challenge comes, and you go, it's like a, you know what a dimmer switch is on an electrical switch, you can turn up the light, a dimmer switch, so when a challenge comes, something goes wrong, so to speak, a difficult person arises, a difficult situation arises, some kind of loss arises, whatever kind of loss it may be, and instead of reacting, and becoming more unconscious, you suddenly sense you're becoming more present in the face of a challenge, and that is when the challenges of the world are becoming helpful to you, rather than make you unconscious, they can intensify the awakening process. Dear Eckhart, if you had to name the moment, achievement, accomplishment, of which you are most proud, what would you say? Well, some of you know it already, because I have spoken about it once or twice, I don't have to think anymore when I don't want to think, I can stop thinking, just like that, that's my greatest achievement.

It's a good thing I'm not in a position anymore where I have to fill in and submit a resume, list your accomplishments, I might get a job at an enlightened company, I don't know if they exist, I did meet somebody at Google, who is responsible for the spiritual dimension of well-being of Google, I might get a job there if he doesn't want it anymore, the job title, which is official, his job title is Jolly Good Fellow, it's on his card, I don't remember his name, he's written some books too, so that's a great thing for a company to have somebody who is responsible for the spiritual well-being of the company as a whole and the employees, not a professional therapist or anything like that, although that's not bad either, well, depending what kind of therapy he practices, yes, and if that is your achievement, then your life is a success story, if you are in prison and you've messed everything up in your life and you're in prison or whatever, wherever you are, a homeless shelter and suddenly you're able to enter prison, your life is a success story, well, it's not even a story, it's just a success, it's a success because there's no story anymore, why is it a success?

Because the shift in consciousness has happened into awakening, which is the very purpose of human existence here, I want, as you mentioned yesterday, and it's also the question here, I want to know the mind of God, the rest is details, said Einstein, well, that's basically what it is, the mind of God is in you, the mind of God is, your consciousness is the emanation of the mind of God, as I said, in the same way as the sunlight is an emanation of the sun, so if you know your consciousness, you know the mind of God and you realize you are an aspect of the mind of God and then knowing that is the fulfillment of human existence, the universe suddenly knows itself and the rest is details, what happens then in your life doesn't matter that much, but the likelihood is that there will be a great improvement because when you live in that connectedness, that even affects the externals of your life, it affects the way in which you relate to people, the energy that you emanate on a daily basis and the energy that you emanate on a daily basis is reflected back to you as certain events and people you meet and how people relate to you, how people like you or dislike you, that is the energy you emanate comes back and so if you live in that presence, if you're able to access the awareness dimension, then it changes very much how you relate to things, situations and people and that in turn determines how things, situations, people relate to you, so the tendency is for the universe to become, to be experienced as more helpful rather than antagonistic, not meaning though that it will be free of challenges, it will continue to challenge you one way or another also, so challenges come in mixed in with many helpful things and suddenly there, there you have another challenge and the challenge will just take you deeper again or it'll pull you out of presence and then you'll notice it and then it'll take you deeper. And so as the adult builds up a, see the identifications that form the identity and unfortunately it's never quite enough, there's always something missing and quite often it is painful to compare yourself to others, the more am I, do I have more or less than the others, so the ego is to do with what I can do, how I look, what I have, my possessions, abilities, playing an instrument, sports, good at this, good at that, whatever it may be. For a long time I struggled with an identity because I had an unhappy sense of identity, I couldn't identify with possessions because my parents didn't have any possessions or just basic ones and I didn't have any, I couldn't identify with a great, strong, good-looking body, I didn't have that, so I was struggling, I felt diminished, let's say compared to others I felt diminished and it's been very painful and so after many years I suddenly realized, ah, I got it, I know what I can do, I can be more knowledgeable than others, I can read books and then I can talk about these books intelligently and I can show others that I know more than they do. It worked, but it didn't make me happy, I was still very insecure and basically unhappy, trying to show off how, what a great intellectual I was, dropping names of famous authors, I just dropped Kafka but that was for another reason, that was not for egoic reasons, I can assure you, and so you live in a precarious way, feeling, my identity is not complete yet, I need something, there's something missing that's a very fundamental feeling for humans who are trapped in their own ego, there's something missing, there's something not right and so they are seeking, seeking, seeking and they are seeking to add something to who I am or who I think I am, it's always conceptual and so the ego also needs boundaries, the ego needs a boundary, it needs to say this is I, me and this is the other, without the boundary it cannot sustain its sense of identity, so it needs to feel better than or superior to somebody else, the boundary around the ego needs some kind of enemy, the other, people have, I forgot to mention an important part of conceptual identity for many people is also collective identity, it's not just personal, you also take things from the collective, the country where you live or your religion, whatever it may be or your political persuasion and that becomes part of your identity, your conceptual identity of a collective identity, it could also be race, if you are a racist then you identify with your race as superior than another race, another conceptual identity, religion can be an important part of your conceptual identity too and what it usually means, my religion is the only one that is true and all the others are false, when you hear that, it's a clear sign that it is the ego speaking, the ego has adopted, identified with the religion and it needs to pronounce all the others as inferior, only ours or mine or our religion is the only true one, all the others are going to hell, we are the only ones who are going to heaven, well that's very satisfying to the ego, wow, I'm one of the few chosen ones, look at me, wonderful, but then you need others that disagree with you because without the others you cannot sustain your conceptual identity, if the others don't disagree then your identity becomes fluid and dissolves, so you need the others who have opposite interpretations of your same religion or some other religion and they are your enemy because they are probably controlled by the devil, and so there, that's them, politically you can do it too, you have a political system that pronounces the other as not just inferior, as actually evil, that's all kinds, collective identities, any kind of prejudice that people have is to do with conceptual identity, race is one that many people have, if you don't have much else in your life you could identify with your race and say okay, our race is the greatest and all the others are inferior, and then that gives you your sense of identity, now you can see how you need the other, let's, in an imaginary scenario, let's say a person is a racist, one morning he or she wakes up, not having become a beetle as in Kafka, no, one morning he or she wakes up, suddenly finds himself on another planet and then begins to realize that everybody on this planet is exactly the same race as me, there is no other race, in fact, on this planet where this person suddenly finds himself, the word race does not even exist, because if everybody is the same race and the same skin color, you will not even have a word for race, so the entire identity that was built up on race would collapse immediately, without the other, it cannot be sustained, you could also say, you can take any example, let's say you have a noisy Italian sports car, because Italian sports cars are meant to be noisy, to attract attention, so you have a Lamborghini and it's painted red to attract even more attention and it gives your ego a boost, look at me, everybody looking because it's so noisy, and then in another imaginary scenario, the next day you wake up in another dimension and in this dimension every human being has the same red Lamborghini or whatever it is, immediately your ego cannot use it anymore, it becomes totally meaningless, so then your conceptual identity would then collapse, without the other, the egoic identity desperately needs the other, who is not the different me, the enemy, it loves its enemies, that's actually how many wars even start like that, you demonize an entire group of people, make them into an enemy, and then you feel a much stronger sense of identity, another identity is for people to identify even with their gender, male or female, I'm not sure gender has become a problematic thing, I'll put that aside for a moment, let's just say there's male and female, and in older cultures or still in some cultures now, an important part for a person's identity is actually their gender, if they are male, for example, they are male, that becomes a very important part of their conceptual sense of self, because it is implied that male is automatically superior to female, so you already have 50%, you can be a very stupid man, but you have superiority over 50% of the population that is female, no matter how stupid you are, you're a man, in some countries that still operates more or less, so I'm a man, and in some countries also females are conditioned to identify with and act out a particular way of behaving and speaking, female, they don't know it's totally conditioned, it's part of their identity, so I've been talking about the ego, the human ego, one could talk for hours, but I won't go on and on, you're all familiar with the ego, because at some point, before you went through a spiritual awakening, you also had an ego.

So, it all comes back to conceptual identity, is that who I am, is that all there is to me, or is there maybe a dimension to who I am that I have never known, I'm not aware of at all, is there more, or am I just this ego entity, the I, and that's why we are here, we need to, part of awakening to this dimension that exists in every human being, the possibility of realizing that there is in you the potential of a deeper dimension of consciousness in every human, and the discovery of this deeper dimension of consciousness in every human is the most important part of your life journey here on this planet. It is probably not possible to eliminate difficult humans completely from your life, challenging humans, unconscious humans, of course there are degrees of unconsciousness, there are some very extreme forms of unconsciousness, such as humans who are so unconscious that they perpetuate violence and so on, so extreme forms of unconsciousness, and then

[Speaker 2] (6:37:35 - 6:37:40)
less extreme forms of unconsciousness, but it's still unconsciousness.

[Speaker 1] (6:37:50 - 6:49:11)
So, as far as extreme forms of unconsciousness are concerned, yes, it would be probably advisable not to associate with humans who manifest extreme forms of unconsciousness, so not to live with a violent partner, or it could also be just emotional violence or somebody who's getting the grip of deep negative emotions or pain bodies that almost never leaves, but then there are other more regular forms of unconsciousness that most humans that you meet will manifest.

First of all, there are family members, everybody has family members, and that in itself is challenging. Family can be a very loving and wonderful thing in some cases, and in other cases family can be extraordinarily challenging, and sometimes even both. You can have a parent and you can love them, but they can also be very challenging.

That reminds me, it's very funny, well it's funny or maybe not, when I was a child I had a dream once, one night, and that was such a remarkable dream that I remembered it all my life. I must have been about 11 or 12. Before I tell you the dream, I have to add my dad was very much in the grip of his ego and prone to outbursts of extreme anger.

Not directed, fortunately, not directed towards me, but usually directed towards my mother and sometimes other people too. So, living with him was like living with an unexploded bomb that could go off at any moment. So, I had this dream.

I had just killed my dad and I had cut him into little pieces and put him into a sack and I hid the sack under the bed. And after I had done that, the door opened and my dad came home from work and I ran towards him and I gave him a hug. Into such amazing dreams, so it means I both hated him and I loved him.

Both emotions existed because there was a real being there behind the anger and his ego. There was a being and I loved the being of my dad, but then there was the ego which I hated and so these ambivalent emotions were there at the same time. And often it is the case that humans, especially family members, you may have a very conflicting relationship.

You feel drawn to them and yet they're so difficult. But now, unless these are extreme forms of unconsciousness, they're family members, you just have to accept that these are family members. Maybe you don't live with them anymore, but you see them occasionally or whatever, you have interactions.

And that is a good way of practice, unless they are, as I said, unless they display extreme forms of unconsciousness, it is better to continue with and use them as challenging humans that help you become more conscious. Because you become more conscious of your reactions towards their challenging behavior. So that your reactivity is for you to, you awaken by becoming conscious of your reactivity, whatever, so that you're able to accept them as they are without resistance.

And that is a great shift that happened to me after I went through the awakening when I was 29. After that, the relationship with my father, of course, I was no longer living with him. I left at 18.

One of the happiest moments of my life when I left home, not just my dad, it's also his second marriage. And so I left wonderful, but I was still at this ambivalent emotions towards him. At 29, after the awakening, I was able to accept him totally.

It was easier because I was not a child would not be able to do that, a child living, but was able to accept him totally allow him his ego. When whenever we met come together, it was fine. And he changed a little.

His ego was not less, less and less extreme, it was still there. But chunks broke off his ego. So in some areas of his life, he was actually quite conscious suddenly.

And then in other areas of his life, the ego was still there very strongly. But that was the life that was a wonderful liberation when I was able to accept him, instead of demanding that he should be more conscious. That is a demand that that nobody couldn't meet.

If you demand of another human, they should be more conscious. They can't because nobody can display behavior that is beyond their level of consciousness. So whatever this behavior they display is a reflection of their level of consciousness.

And many humans have still have very little choice, because they are totally in the grip of their conditioning, the mental emotional conditioning. And so that applies not, of course, not just to family members. There are also then other humans that you interact with in daily life, in your work, usually.

Most people go, many people go to work, and then you interact with other humans. And then you don't have much of a choice, you have to interact, or you leave, you have to leave your job. But then you go into another job, and you get other unconscious humans.

So you might as well do it there. Unless again, there's extreme forms, some companies are totally toxic, then it might be better and more wise to leave. But unless they're extremely unconscious and toxic, then you might as well practice there.

So you practice with difficult humans. And you practice by, first of all, dropping the demand that they should be different. It doesn't mean that you put up with everything that they do.

Sometimes you may have to state clearly, your behavior is not acceptable. And I don't want not having it. If you're able to do that, probably can't do it.

If you do it to the director of your company, then it has to be associated with giving in your notice that you want to leave, then you can tell him that your behavior is unacceptable. But if you're not ready to leave yet, then maybe better not to tell him that. Unless you want to be sacked, that's another possibility.

But seeking out other humans who are more conscious, that kind of happens more naturally. As you grow in consciousness, you more naturally will come into contact and attract other humans who are also more conscious, who are also awakening. And it could even happen that some people who are in your immediate environment begin to awaken because of you.

There's no guarantee. It's certainly not everybody. But it could be that some, because they may notice, maybe not even consciously notice, but something in them registers that you are not quite the same person that you were before.

And so, and you do not reinforce or feed their unconsciousness, because you're, you bring in more presence. And then you may be able to, but not by thinking that I need to make this person more conscious, because that's not how it works. It works in a more organic way.

If you do not contribute to unconscious interactions, then perhaps, let's say a friend of yours is very much almost addicted to gossiping about others. And the main thing when you get together is that he or she starts gossiping about others. And in the past, you perhaps participated.

And now as you are awakening, you no longer participate. Then it's possible that some of their presence that the stream of gossiping, which is a mind stream of a particular type, may not, because you're not feeling it anymore, it may begin to dissipate. Because it means it's easier with two people gossiping.

One feeds the other, they feed themselves mutually, feed each other. But it could also happen that this person begins to lose interest in you, and will then interact less and less, and you don't meet them much anymore. And finally, you don't hear of them anymore, or they say, you're no fun anymore.

So that could happen.

[Speaker 2] (6:49:11 - 6:49:21)
But also, as I said, more conscious humans will most likely also come into your life. So you have both.

[Speaker 1] (6:49:40 - 7:16:34)
But your happiness or fulfillment does not depend on any other human's acceptance of who you are, that would be a deluded thought. It sometimes happens that members of the same family evolve at very different rates. So the sense of separation can come if one member of the family evolves spiritually much more rapidly than another.

And that is something that you cannot do anything about. You need to accept that your sisters, their viewpoints and their judgments of you arise because of the way in which they have been conditioned by their culture. So this is part of the mental conditioning.

There's nothing really personal about it. They have been conditioned in a certain way. To some extent, you have gone beyond your conditioning because anybody who begins to awaken spiritually goes beyond, also simultaneously, begins to go beyond their cultural conditioning.

And that applies whether you're from Somalia, whether you're from Australia or whether you're in the United States or anywhere. If you are not awakening spiritually, you are your behavior, your viewpoints, your opinions, the way in which you judge other people, the way in which you judge other cultures, all that is conditioned by the content of your mind, the culture and family and so on that you grew up in. So you are basically a conditioned entity.

And your opinions and viewpoints are not really yours. They are the product of your conditioning. And so that's the case with your sisters.

So sometimes the same thing applies to close friends. I've had many similar questions of people who had a close friendship with someone, and sometimes it's the case with a husband and wife. Often I've had many, in many cases, one of them, either she or he, began to evolve and awaken spiritually.

And a gap suddenly arose between the one that was still totally conditioned and the one that was beginning to awaken spiritually. In some cases, they can still live together. It depends on the nature and degree of the person who is not yet awakening spiritually.

Depends that the ways in which this non-awakened state manifests differs from person to person. Some you can live with, you can awaken, and you know your partner is not, and you can totally surrender to that fact that your partner is not awakening yet. In other cases, it will create a hostility, a growing hostility in your partner.

The ego objects to the other beings becoming so different and changing it. They don't understand you anymore. And so, and then a separation happens.

With husband and wife, then it sometimes happens that they do that different ways. In the case of a family member, there's a link that remains, so you cannot just say, we go our different ways. There's always a certain bond between you and your family members.

But the first thing is, you ask me what I would do. What I would do is, first of all, understand why. And this is what I've just been talking about.

If you understand, then already it is a helpful thing. If you don't understand why is this happening, but if you understand that these people act out of their, your sisters act out of their conditioning, you have begun, already are in the process of transcending your conditioning. Whether or not they will also awaken or begin to awaken spiritually, we don't know.

So in the meantime, all you can do, or all I could, if I were you, all I could do was continue to recognize the limitation in them. It is, they are conditioned in their responses. Recognize that that is what happens, not to blame them for it, not to feel guilty because you make them angry, because you don't.

It's their conditioning that makes them angry. So you don't feel guilty because you are different from them. I wouldn't.

I'm talking about, I would not feel guilty. I would simply recognize compassionately what it is that makes them say and do the things they say and do towards you. And you cannot even explain to them.

You can't, you, it would be futile to say to them, I know why you're saying that to me because you're totally conditioned. What? They wouldn't know what you're talking about because they know nothing outside of their conditioning.

So compassion arises, compassion and acceptance of a person's limitations. You can still hold them in your heart and realize there is an essence in them that is lovable. And you can continue to be connected to that essence of who they are.

If they refuse to talk to you, then you have to accept and surrender that you can hold them in your meditation. You can even sometimes look at their photo, look beyond the surface appearance of who they are, and the photo can be a little help to establish the inner connection. Then you don't need the photo anymore to establish the inner connection, feel the inner connection with their innermost selves.

And even if they don't talk to you, that can still be there. And then you send in the conventional new age language, you send loving energy to them. There's some truth in that.

So there's a loving, still a loving connection, even though you don't talk. So recognition to summarize, recognition of why this is happening, accepting their, your family member's limitations and not judging them. They judge you, of course, because their judgments of you are part of their conditioning, but you don't need to judge them.

You simply see that this is a limitation of their state of consciousness at this present time. They will awaken too, in time, eventually, this lifetime or the next. So then you can begin to feel peaceful about it so that it does not become a source of suffering, continuous source of suffering at the back of your mind.

So if you can be in a loving relationship, even though you might not meet them much anymore, or at all, you can stay in a state of love towards them, compassionately accept their limitations, and then see what happens. Sometimes in that way, a healing does happen. It may be that at some point, there's a crack in their conditioning, and they're suddenly able to accept you, who you are for who you are now.

But your happiness or fulfillment does not depend on any other human's acceptance of who you are. That would be a deluded thought. You think you can only be happy if these people accept and understand you.

Some people have that with their parents. They say, my dad, my father, they don't understand me at all. It's terrible, terrible.

I'm trying to explain what I'm at. Of course, they cannot understand you. It's beyond their comprehension if you have awakened spiritually, and they haven't.

So compassionately accept that they cannot understand you. Instead of trying to explain yourself to them, just be there in a loving way with them when you meet for Christmas or Thanksgiving, and you hear all the judgments coming at you from them. You should have, why don't you, look where it's taken you, look at your sister, she married a millionaire, and you are into that weird kind of meditation stuff that's not getting you anywhere.

Whatever judgments come, say, okay, I know that this is what you think and feel, and I think and feel differently, that's all. So you don't need to justify accepting people's limitations and suddenly realizing whether or not your father, your mother, your sister, your brother, or anybody else close to you accepts you for who you are is really not, you become free of the need to be accepted, but you can nevertheless have a deeper connection, keep that deeper connection and connectedness with them. And the other is, another great thing you want to practice is, and this is so important, awareness of sense perceptions without labeling.

You can do it anywhere, in the middle of the city, in the country, on the beach, at home, in the office, in the restaurant, in a cafe. Let's take, let's take cafe as an example. You sit, you're having a cup of tea or coffee, and you sit in a cafe and use it, instead of going to your phone, use it as a spiritual practice.

It's a cafe practice, but you don't have to drink coffee with it, you can drink anything. It's a public place, and you sit there for 10 minutes, let's say, looking around at all, what's happening around you, all the people and what they are doing, and sitting, most of them will be on their phones, that's okay, but you are not. And you look, and there's the room, and you might see what's happening in the street also.

And as you sit there, you get in touch with your presence, the sense of presence and beingness. Maybe feel the inner body, and feel your own presence, the presence of consciousness, you as consciousness. And then you look around, and you listen, there are sounds, and you look.

And your practice is not to label your sense perceptions mentally. In other words, you're just looking, and as you look, feel the presence of yourself. And then look around in thoughtless awareness.

It's a wonderful practice. And you will love what you see, because every human is an expression of the one life, in their own way. Every human is quite lovely and lovable, but you don't have to say that in your mind.

It's a realization of the aliveness of every human. But you cannot sense the aliveness of every other human if you cannot sense your own aliveness. So your own presence or aliveness is the basis for sensing the aliveness of other humans.

And by doing that, you love them, in a way. Not the clinging love that says, oh, I want you. You're quite happy with them doing what they do.

You don't need to want to interact, necessarily. You just be there. You just love them.

They're all manifestations of the one, the one life. And they're all so different. Isn't that amazing?

Not a single human is the same. Out of billions, they're all different. That's wonderful.

And yet, the essence in each one is the one essence that is one with your essence. And you can sense that if you don't label them. So that's a lovely practice, to enjoy the aliveness of things in a limited space.

If you sit, I mean, you're in a relatively passive situation when you sit in a cafe, there's a coffee, you might be tea, whatever you are drinking, but you're not doing much. So it's relatively easy to be there as the presence. And you don't have to do it in a way that people necessarily notice, or they probably won't notice anyway, because they're on their phones.

They don't see anything. But if they happen to be looking up from their phones, it might look a bit weird that you are not on your phone. There's something wrong with you.

So that's one place. Another place, of course, is in nature. And that's a wonderful way to practice also.

Choose a spot where you stand or sit somewhere. And lying is not immediately advisable if you lie down, because that can easily take you below thought. You want to remain above thought.

So you stand or sit, and then nature. That might even be easier than in a cafe, because in a cafe, there's lots of things still happening that stimulate thought, because people are talking, or the general energy field is mind. If you go into nature, you're in no mind.

And then the same way you perceive, in that alert awareness, the miraculous life forms around you that have no name, if you don't give them names, have no name. And if you don't obscure things with names, you can sense the inherent aliveness. They speak to you.

So there's another dimension that reveals itself to you that is everywhere in nature that you don't know when you're stuck in your mind and label things. And that's a beautiful way of practicing presence. Don't destroy nature by getting...

I mean, dreadfully, you're sitting under a tree in this miraculous place, the same place where the Buddha found enlightenment, sitting under a tree, and you get out your phone. It's such a wonderful opportunity under this... Trees are wonderful beings.

And you sit under the tree, and there's the vastness of the sky and nature, and to just be there in that moment as, not as a person, but as a conscious presence. And don't overdo it. Even if you just do it for 10 minutes, just be there.

Watch. So the practice is sense perception without mentally labeling them. It requires an alertness.

It's a choice. You make that choice to... And that's a shift in consciousness.

And every time you do that, you are not there as a person. The person is kind of temporarily disappeared. You are there as a conscious presence, as the deeper presence of life itself.

And that's beautiful. So that's a practice. Same thing, practice nature, practice in a public place.

You can practice at every traffic light, if you're driving. Every time the light is red, practice presence. Red light, presence.

And look at the beauty of that red light. It's not an... Ultimately, everything is natural, because that's energy, too.

It's a manifestation of energy, the red traffic light. It has an aliveness, too. It sounds weird, but it does.

And so there's a light, and it's telling you to be present. People have worked out... I don't know who did it.

Somebody reaches the age of 70, and they start driving at the age of 20. Somebody worked out how many... Unfortunately, I don't retain a lot of information in my mind.

So you would have spent a year or so or more of your life sitting at traffic lights. And for most people, that is something they don't like. But why not choose that?

Be present. Also, another thing I mentioned, little activities, washing your hands, be there completely, takes you out of your mind, sensory perception. Ah, water, beautiful.

Maybe scent of soap. And you give it complete attention, which means you're not thinking. You're just experiencing.

Elevator, lift, elevator, you're waiting for it. You can either get out your phone, or you can just be... choosing presence.

And the more you choose it, the easier it gets, and the deeper you go into presence. And then you realize after a while, you didn't really choose. Presence chose you.

Presence wanted to come through you. Because sometimes people ask me, well, who is choosing presence? Well, it's just one way of looking at it.

Presence, when you get out of the way as a person, presence is there. That is... So use all those things to transform your life.

Use the opportunities of obstacles when they arise, seemingly obstacles. Accept each moment as if you had chosen it. That's vital.

So I've given you these portals into out of the mind and into presence. And of course, a primordial portal into presence is the present moment. So that is always there.

Coming into the present moment is an aspect of every practice that I have given. It always involves coming into the, whether you go into the body, whether you're aware of your breathing, whether you practice sensory perception without labeling, it always involves being more conscious and more fully in the present moment. So therefore, an associated practice is to simply become aware of the present moment.

And that's an amazing thing too, because, and it's so vital because there is nothing else. So if you never fully acknowledge the is-ness of this moment, you miss the whole thing, which is called your life. You miss the whole thing if you're not aware of the present moment.

But how to become aware of the present moment is, encapsulates all that we have spoken about. First step, it has first level of being aware of the present moment is to be aware of your sense perceptions. That brings, it's the first step into the present moment.

Then perhaps you're aware of your breathing and your inner body and sense perception at the same time. So first you become aware of where you are, what's around you, or what you're doing. And then you go deeper into the present moment, and the essence of the present moment is you.

So if you get the essence of what we call the present moment is consciousness, and consciousness is the space in which everything happens. Consciousness is, the one thing that never changes is the present moment. It's always now, it's always now.

And what is the present moment in essence? In essence, the present moment is not what happens in the present moment. The deeper essence is the present moment is the space for whatever happens.

And there's the space like the canvas, however you want to call it. So you are aware of yourself ultimately as the present moment. And this realization that ultimately you are the present moment, those words had not come to me when I was writing the power of now.

So it never got into the book, because the words came to me after I'd already written the book, said, oh, I should have put that in. Oh no, why didn't I put that in? Oh, you're no good.

I didn't do that. So you can, you sense the essence of what present moment really means as consciousness. The one thing that is beyond any doubt that you are right now conscious, and that's not the right way of putting it.

If I say you are conscious, you are consciousness is better. You are consciousness. Everything else could be a dream or an illusion, including this room and me talking.

Am I dreaming this? He's talking, he's saying, I may be dreaming this. Okay.

Maybe you are, maybe all of sensory perceived so-called reality is a kind of dream. It's a way of looking at it. Certainly everything dissolves quickly.

And then where was it? Where is it gone? It's gone.

And the dream dissolves too. But what remains beyond any doubt, even if it is all a dream, there needs to be a consciousness for the dream to be perceived. And you are that.

But what scientists don't look at is their own consciousness. So you have the two realms, the two mysteries, the outer space, and then the macrocosm, and you have the microcosm for most fundamental mystery. The fact that the universe is conscious, that is the most amazing miracle.

[Speaker 3] (7:16:58 - 7:17:28)
Our goal is to reach as many people as possible with this new program, and that there's a generous scholarship fund that's available as well, because we want to make sure that all of the people that are interested in a spiritual guide to conscious manifestation can attend. And now it is a true honor to bring forward the renowned author of The Power of Now and a New Earth, Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (7:17:29 - 7:17:42)
Eckhart, welcome. Thank you, Tammy, and hello to everybody, wherever you are in this present moment.

[Speaker 3] (7:17:49 - 7:17:52)
Are you ready, Eckhart, for our first question?

[Speaker 1] (7:17:53 - 7:17:55)
I suppose I'm ready, yes.

[Speaker 3] (7:17:57 - 7:18:13)
You're always ready. Here we go. I've heard different things about manifesting, and I'm curious to know what Eckhart's approach is and what makes it a spiritual approach versus other kinds of approaches.

[Speaker 2] (7:18:17 - 7:18:18)
Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (7:18:40 - 7:35:47)
Perhaps the conventional approach to manifestation, we could, before I go into that, we could talk of manifestation, conscious manifestation, and spiritually conscious manifestation as a temporary division. Manifestation happens

continuously, whether you're aware of it or not. It simply means that there's a correlation between your state of consciousness, which we may also call vibrational frequency, and the way in which you experience reality or the world.

There's a correlation between your reality, your world, and your state of consciousness. That is undoubtedly true. Now, for most humans, most humans are still not aware of that.

They believe that the world they find themselves in, their reality, is a totally separate thing from their inner being. They've been put into this reality. Everybody is born into a particular set of circumstances.

Then humans grow up, and they become conditioned. In some way, they're already conditioned when they are born, although there is a belief that every baby is a blank slate, but that is not entirely true at all. Every baby already comes into this world with a certain baggage, which in Eastern terminology, we could call karma.

Obviously, the baby is not a blank slate. Even if you don't believe in karma, you can see that genetic, your genes play a particular role. As far as the person that you become is concerned, your genes have a lot to do with it.

Even the time you spent in the womb of your mother already is a form of conditioning. We all know if a mother indulges in alcohol, that can negatively affect the life of the fetus and the embryo, and then has negative effects for the rest of his or her life. Certainly, there are two factors when you look at external circumstances.

There's the conventional expression of nurture and nature. Nurture and nature, that means nature means who or what you are is your conditioning. Nurture is the external circumstances of your life that contribute to who you become as a human being, the world you're born into.

We all get conditioned in a particular way through our upbringing. I would suggest we're already conditioned through past lifetimes. The emotional state of our mother even before we were born, et cetera, et cetera.

Everybody comes into life with a particular set of mental-emotional conditioning. This mental-emotional conditioning determines how you perceive the world. It determines the way in which you respond or react to the circumstances of your life, what you say, et cetera.

You manifest your life unconsciously through the mental-emotional conditioning that you are born into. There's no freedom in that. You don't really have a choice because in that state, there's a lack of awareness.

You do not realize that you perpetuate the circumstances of your life according to your conditioning. Often, you find that the same dysfunction that were already manifested in the parent's life and the grandparent's life are then repeated and perpetuated in the child's life. Then that child has children and similar dysfunctions operate again because you inherit them.

The conditioning of your thinking mind that you identify with when you're trapped in the egoic consciousness determines how you respond or rather react to what's going on around you in your life. And you can see with very unconscious people, they always blame the circumstances of their life for what's wrong. It's always somebody else's fault that there's something not right in my life.

There's always somebody else to blame, whether it's actual human beings or fate or

God or the politicians or the social conditions. I'm not denying that social conditions often are an important factor, but people then put all the blame outside. They never look within into their own conditioning.

And so, they manifest the circumstances of their life unconsciously, often in a very negative way, because that's all ego. This unconscious identification with the mental emotional conditioning is ego. And so, they manifest from their ego.

They react to circumstances. And let's say something challenging or negative happens to you, a person or whatever it may be, and you react in the same old way. And by reacting against something challenging, you amplify it through your reaction.

You can see it when you react to an unpleasant or unconscious person. If you react, you amplify his or her unconsciousness. And you even amplify your own unconsciousness through your reaction.

If you react to difficult circumstances in your life, like lack of money, unpleasant living situation, problematic relationships, if you react against the circumstances of your life, which always manifests in the present moment, you amplify those circumstances through your reaction. And so, people don't realize that. So, they become trapped in a vicious circle.

Something negative happens, and they react negatively and amplify that thing and make it even worse. And that then becomes a confirmation that they have always been right in assuming that the world is doing it to me. So, you become the victim of the world in your own perception.

You become the victim of other people. You're the victim of the world. You're complaining constantly.

And by doing that, you perpetuate all those things that are happening to you. And not only that, you amplify them. That's karma.

You're experiencing, you're manifesting through your karma and create new karma. You make other people unhappy. You're already unhappy.

You make more people unhappy. You create new, in Eastern terms, that is karma. So, everybody's manifesting without knowing it.

Then a moment comes when you become conscious of the conditioning of your mind and emotions, your mental emotional conditioning. And then you become, you realize that it is possible for you, to some extent, step out of the conditioning of your mental emotional field. And this means awareness has arisen in you, a vital part of awakening.

You begin to become aware of your own conditioning. And then some freedom comes in. Choice comes in.

The possibility of choosing when you become conscious in certain situations, that you no longer need to react in the old conditioned way. You become conscious of what your mind is doing. The self-talk that everybody lives with, the voice in the head.

What kind of self-talk are you experiencing in your mind? Is it very negative? What is the running commentary in your mind when you go through your life every day?

What is it saying about certain circumstances and people that you encounter every day? What is that? And suddenly, you become aware of that running commentary, the voice in the head.

And that awareness is the beginning of your awakening. And when that awareness arises, you can begin by changing dysfunctional mind patterns as you discover them. For example, you may discover that you do a lot of mental complaining, both internally and externally, about other people and situations.

There's always something to complain about. And suddenly, you become aware of it. And that awareness gives you some degree of freedom.

And you can then detect the pattern and say, I'm going to let go of that. And instead, you can welcome circumstances as they arise. Instead of treating every circumstance that arises and every challenge as an enemy, you can begin to welcome it.

That's the beginning of conscious manifestation. So, you realize there is an important correlation between what your inner being and your outer circumstance. And then slowly you realize, as you change the way in which you respond to situations, the situations also begin to change.

And that's at first in a very subtle way. That first, I realized that first time in my life, when I was 17 years old, somebody left some books with us. And for the first time I read about that there is your state of consciousness and your life experience are linked.

And that was my first awakening. It wasn't the deepest awakening yet, but it was an awakening. And then you can begin to consciously manifest by making positive statements, instead of negative statements, by manifesting gratitude towards whatever arises in the present moment, appreciation and gratitude instead of complaining.

And then things actually improve slowly, you notice a definite change, you let go of the patterns of resistance, which are loosely linked to the egoic consciousness, and gradually experience positive change in your life. So, that's already the beginning of conscious manifestation. So, when you look at conscious manifestation in conventional terms, and the assumption is that you realize that you can bring about circumstances, more positive circumstances in your life.

And the assumption is that the goal is to that when you get, you can get what you want. And when you get what you want, that will be the fulfillment of your life, the satisfying fulfillment of your life is getting what you want. That's often the assumption behind conventional ways of manifesting.

That, however, has certain limitations. Because even if you become very good at getting what you want, you will find at some point that even that is not ultimately satisfying. You will find no matter what you get, and what you achieve, whatever new set of circumstances arise in your life, you will find there too, it is not in the long term, not ultimately fulfilling, there's always still something missing.

And often, the wonderful thing that you manifested can easily turn around and create suffering again, turn into its opposite. I've met many people who were able to manifest great fame and wealth, I've met quite a few of those people. And so they were poor, then they manifested.

One person I know wrote himself a check, a fictitious bank check with $10 million with his name on, put it in his wallet. And every day, every time he took out his wallet, he saw the check written to himself. He didn't have any money written to himself $10 million.

And for I don't know how long, three years, four years, every day he saw this check of $10 million. And four years or so later, he received a check for $10 million. Well, he happened to be an actor, and a good one.

So that we need to look into that also. But that's how it worked. And the next stage of the story is great success.

And then in the midst of this person's successful story, in the midst of the mansion that he then lived in, deep depression overcame him. Periods of despair and depression and darkness. How is that possible?

He got what he wanted. And that's not an isolated case. That is very common.

So getting what you want is not the ultimate aim. It will not be the ultimate fulfillment. It can be a byproduct of something deeper.

[Speaker 2] (7:35:48 - 7:35:51)
A byproduct of something deeper.

[Speaker 1] (7:35:51 - 7:39:15)
And this something deeper is realizing that in life, there are two dimensions. There's a dimension of doing and activity and action. And there's a dimension of being.

Being and doing. If there's only doing in your life, and manifesting has a lot to do with doing, because the first doing is having a thought. It's already a doing.

You create a thought. And then the thought, if done rightly, may create an external reality. But it still operates in the realm of doing.

That's fine. We need to do here. But we are also here to awaken to a deeper dimension of who we are.

We are here to awaken to the dimension of being. And the foundation, then, for whatever you do in your manifestation practice, the foundation is not something that you create at some future point. The foundation is going more deeply into being.

It's the realization of being. And that only can be realized in the still. And you realize of the presence within you.

You could call it the consciousness, the light of consciousness. You realize that you are. There's suddenly a depth that you discover within yourself.

And that is the depth of being. And that is true spiritual awakening. It's realizing the essence of who you are, which is not the person.

The person is here to do things, but there is something deeper, a source of who or what you are. And that's being. So, you realize your own beingness.

I am. In that moment of stillness, you realize the beingness of you without any thought or reference to your personal history. There's only the realization that when you forget about who or what you are as a person, when you forget about your age and your gender and your problems, what is left?

Forget about all that. What is left of you without that? There's only this moment.

And you realize that there's something essential that's left. That's the sense of beingness, of being.

[Speaker 6] (7:39:15 - 7:39:16)
I am.

[Speaker 1] (7:39:17 - 7:47:11)
That is the realization of being. And that becomes the foundation for everything. When you once you're rooted in that, from there you can manifest.

But it is whatever you you manifest in your life, it will come from a deeper level from that realization of being rather than from egoic consciousness. Because the only way to transcend ego is to discover that which is beyond the mental emotional entity that you usually call yourself, that you think you are. The only way to transcend ego is to go to that deeper place within yourself.

Then that deeper place has a vast intelligence in that depth of being that is connected to universal intelligence, not your personal intelligence. There's a vast intelligence and that intelligence can use your mind. It can flow into your mind and through that this intelligence can then create and manifest in your life whatever it wishes to create.

In order to bring more goodness, more harmony, more love, more abundance into this world, it can create through you and use your mind. And that is spiritual, that is what is spiritual way of manifesting. No longer from ego, but from the deeper level of being.

And so that's, one could say that then whatever it is that you create in your life, what you manifest in your life, is always a byproduct of something deeper. It's always, whatever circumstances arise in your life, they are important, but not absolutely important. They are relatively important.

All these things, your health, your financial situation, your relationship, your, whatever you do for work, activities, they're all important, relatively important, but not absolutely important. But only one thing is absolutely important and that is your connectedness with being, the realization of being, to be rooted in that deeper level of who you are. And so the ability to manifest is not the ultimate spiritual realization.

It is a lovely thing and for many people it's an important thing in here as, because you live in two dimensions. You live in the dimension of this world of doing activity, thinking, doing, but you are also connected to the transcendent dimension, that spiritual dimension. Now, that connectedness with the spiritual dimension is most vitally important thing in your life.

All you need is to discover that. Then if you have enough time, then from there you can manifest. I'm saying if you have enough time, because it could be that you discover that dimension when you are 80 years old, or maybe you are very ill and you discover it just a month before you die.

There's not much time to manifest anything externally. It's no longer necessary for you in those circumstances. But the most vital thing, however, has already happened.

It's the realization of being. So manifestation is important, but not absolutely important. They go together, the being and the doings.

But the rootedness in being is the foundation for spiritual manifestation. So always go back to being. So whenever you begin to use affirmations or visualizations of what you want in your life, go into stillness first.

Connect with that, the depths of stillness within yourself. Become aware of yourself as the being rather than the person, the presence, here and now. So all power resides in the present moment, because that is, you access the power of the present moment.

From there, you can manifest. And that we could call spiritual manifestation. And what it is that you want to manifest from that level also will no longer be egoically motivated.

It comes from a deeper place. So I could talk about that for a long, long time. But it's vital to realize where the power actually lies.

The power lies in the presence, in the present moment. The point of power is always in the present moment, but the present moment is ultimately the essence of who or what you are. And so that's the most vital thing in your life, that realization.

And that then changes the vibrational frequency of your entire being changes. And even if you never used any affirmation, you would still manifest certain life situations and circumstances around you because of your vibrational frequency. If you did not have any desire to manifest anything in particular, you would still manifest a reality around you that corresponds in whatever way to the vibrational frequency of your being.

So you're always manifesting, even if you're not really interested in manifesting, the vibrational frequency of your being will still determine the way in which you experience this world, your reality. So this is a very deep thing. One could talk about it for a long time.

I've already spoken for too long. Let's go on to the next question. They're all connected anyway.

[Speaker 3] (7:47:14 - 7:47:23)
The next question, Eckhart, is why is teaching on conscious manifestation at this particular time important and relevant for you?

[Speaker 1] (7:47:24 - 7:47:32)
Yes. No, we're living in a very interesting time. Interesting.

[Speaker 2] (7:47:34 - 7:47:47)
We are moving into a time of, collectively, of, I would say, turmoil, perhaps even chaos.

[Speaker 1] (7:47:48 - 8:00:15)
There is always, in the world, on every level, there's always the play between order and chaos. There are periods of dissolution, things breaking apart, and there are periods of time when things come together again. So one could say, well, isn't this a particularly difficult time if you want to manifest something growing, something new coming into this world?

But the collective around you is manifesting dissolution and chaos and decay. Well, it's doubly important in these circumstances to pay particular attention to the, what I just called the vibrational frequency of your being, because there is a gravitational pull around you in the collective towards unconsciousness. Because that is, many people, when things begin to fall apart, in many people's lives that manifest this, their level of consciousness goes down.

They become very reactive. There's conflict between groups of people, enemies, within countries even, not just one country against other countries, even within countries, there is and will be increasing turmoil. And there's a gravitational pull of that that could draw you into unconsciousness also.

So you need to stay awake and then you manifest. Your contribution could be very important so that you manifest to a greater or lesser degree a certain field of light around you so that you don't get drawn into the collective darkness that's descending. So there is, even if you don't manifest anything in particular, although you may do, you are connected with the depths of being or presence.

And that not only protects you to a great extent, it protects you, but it also alleviates the effects of the surrounding unconsciousness. It counteracts the collective unconsciousness. So if a sufficient number of humans are able to stay conscious, that will also manifest in their outer environment.

And perhaps the chaos will not be as extreme as it would otherwise have been, because your state of consciousness affects the world. It's a correlation between your state of consciousness and your surrounding reality. So at this particular time, it's very important to stay conscious.

And then if you stay conscious, that will have a certain effect on the world. So it becomes a manifestation of what happens around you. Whether perhaps where you live will be less affected by the turmoil that's coming, or if it does touch you, if the turmoil does come to you and touch you from the external, internally, you will be still be free.

Internally, you will be at peace. Even if it does come, there is a transcendent dimension within you that you're aware of. And nobody can predict how or to what degree the turmoil in this world will affect you.

But what we do know is your vibrational frequency is of utmost importance here, not only for yourself, but also for the totality. Let's see as many humans as possible. If they stay conscious, not being drawn into the collective unconsciousness, which manifests everywhere, even on the internet and social media, it's everywhere, the collective.

Don't get drawn into that. Stay conscious so that you manifest a more conscious world, even though the totality around you may be drawn into deep unconsciousness and turmoil. And another important thing is, it is at a time of collective, whether individual or collective, suffering, because when this turmoil comes, it brings about suffering for humans.

It's a time of suffering that the possibility arises for more humans to awaken out of their egoic consciousness. Many will be drawn into unconsciousness, yes. But for others, the possibility arises of awakening out of the egoic and through the suffering.

Suffering is the great awakener. Suffering can make you more unconscious. Often it is the case.

Suffering can also awaken you. The ultimate purpose of suffering is to awaken. It doesn't always happen.

You may have to wait another lifetime, and another, and another, and suffer more, and more, and more, and finally it happens. Or it could happen in this lifetime that the suffering comes, and it brings about an awakening. I've met countless people who have only become interested in awakening, or not interested in it, have come to realize that what this is about is extremely important, because they have suffered.

And this brings me to another point connected with manifestation. Sometimes you don't get always what you want to manifest. Now there can be, I think we may have another question about that, but let me already say this.

Sometimes people say, I'm trying to manifest and it's not working. I'm not getting it. Well, there can be various reasons for that.

I may go into these reasons a bit later. But one reason can be that, let's say, I met somebody years ago who told me the story. She wanted to become, help people through spiritual teaching.

And she'd read many books and been to many workshops. And she knew all the basics about spirituality, and she wanted to manifest being a teacher, and helping many people. And money was coming in also, all the abundance was manifesting as she was helping more and more people.

But it wasn't happening. And nobody came. Very few people came.

And then not only that, then very bad things happened. She fell ill. She developed a potentially life-threatening illness.

She lost her job and her home. Everything was collapsing. The total opposite of successful manifestation.

Everything was collapsing around her. But she just managed to survive that illness. But in the process of losing many things, even a possible approaching early death, a deepening happened within her.

A deepening happened. The ego dissolved. And when she realized she might die, because she just had a serious illness, something happened within her.

And she realized the depths of the being of the presence within through surrender. And suddenly she realized she became healed, and suddenly she realized that the best thing that ever happened to her was losing all that, her home and her job, and being ill, because that brought about the deepening. And then she became a true spiritual teacher.

So, she didn't get what she wanted, because there was something deeper that was necessary to happen. And so, that can be the case. Perhaps what you want is not ultimately what it is that you need.

So, sometimes when you are not able to manifest, that may be the reason that the universal intelligence knows more than you, your limited intelligence, or you may have some connectedness, but not enough to know what it is that you need. And you would never want to manifest anything negative, nor do you need to. But when it does happen, use that to go deeper.

When a period of turmoil happens in your life, a period of suffering, use that to go deeper, live in acceptance of the present moment. And then you emerge again. And then your powers will be greatly enhanced, their powers of manifestation, because they will come from a deeper place.

So, it's a very complex matter. I believe we may have a question, Tammy, about people not succeeding and wondering why it's not happening. Is that right?

[Speaker 3] (8:00:17 - 8:00:39)
That's exactly right. People say things like, I've done everything I was supposed to do, and still things haven't turned out the way that I hoped they would. Various aspects of my life continue to be really hard.

I'm disappointed and frustrated, and I'm not sure conscious manifestation works, or at least it doesn't seem to be working for me.

[Speaker 1] (8:00:40 - 8:27:52)
Yes, that's not uncommon to hear that. There are many possible reasons. I just mentioned one, you need to suffer a bit more for deepening to happen.

But realize if that is the case, make sure that the suffering does not make you unconscious through reactivity, and resistance, so that whatever challenge arises in your life, you're able to use it to go deeper. But there can be many other reasons why it's not working for you. For example, you're not doing it right.

That's one. You're not doing it right. You are not fully, there's not enough energy flowing into it.

Or you're confusing energy that flows into your manifestation, you're confusing it with willpower. Willpower is wanting to make something happen. And that is counterproductive.

That is not how true manifestation works. Now, willpower is something that, in some cases, it can work, but then it works for other reasons. And willpower, when you create something through sheer willpower, force rather than power, I would call it force.

But what we call willpower is that, let's say you want abundance in your life. I'm going to make it happen. Abundance, I have kind of agreed, let's say, yeah, okay, you already know that you should use the present tense rather than the future tense for manifestation practice, for affirmations.

Never the future tense. Okay. By the way, if you ever use the future tense, I am going to be successful in this.

I'm going to be healthy. I'm going to be living in a nice place. Whatever it is, that never works because you put into the future, then it remains in the future.

Every affirmation needs to be in the present tense. As Jesus already said, when you ask for something, when you pray for something, believe that you have received it and it will be yours. Believe that you have received it, he said, and it will be yours, which means he did not say believe that you will receive it.

Jesus said, believe that you have received it. So that's a little secret for manifestation is to feel that it is already a reality in your life. You visualize it, but that feeling of fullness comes from the depths of being.

So whatever it is that you want to manifest externally, the feeling of already having it comes from the connectedness with being because being is the, being is the, I sometimes call it, it's a little, it's a strange analogy, that's the cream, but whatever, the rest is the skimmed milk that is part of that. So you connect with the essence of it all, the essence of all life. And then you bring a visual image or also verbally, a verbal affirmation and or a visual image, and at the same time, you feel the power of presence within you.

You feel that, and then you bring two together. And there you have it, you're ready. It's already, it's a reality already.

And so you're manifesting from the fullness of being, not wanting something to happen, pushing and wanting. No, you are not doing it. You're simply putting it out so that the universal intelligence can bring it about.

It's not, you are not doing it. So willpower could be an obstacle if you think you need willpower. That's not it.

In fact, you need, yes, intensity, yes, intensity, the energy, there is an energy behind your manifestation practice, but it's not willpower, there's no force. It's a relaxed energy that flows. And you feel the fullness of being is a lovely expression.

Jesus, by the way, also used that expression. He said, I want you to have the fullness of life, the fullness of being. In some translations of the New Testament, it's translated as abundant life.

I want you to have abundant life. I want you to have the fullness of life, he said. And another thing, he was a master of manifestation, but he said, seek only the kingdom of heaven, which is the transcendent dimension within you, that is within you.

And all the things that you need will be added onto you. Added on. This is exactly what I said a little earlier.

Whatever it is, anything that you manifest is a byproduct of something deeper. It's not the ultimate thing. It's a byproduct of something deeper.

So, Jesus called it, seek only the kingdom of heaven, and all else will be added onto you. It's very profound. And then you can also have a playful attitude towards manifestation rather than a desperate need to make something happen.

If you have a desperate need to make something happen, you're already sabotaging yourself through that. Manifestation needs to happen out of the fullness of being rather than a sense of lack, a sense of neediness. That doesn't really work very well.

Through sheer hard work and determination, yes, you could still achieve things, but you'll be very unhappy doing it. The action won't make you happy, and the end result won't make you happy. So, that's not where we want to go.

What is the point in achieving anything if on your way towards achieving it, you're in a continuous state of stress? And when you achieved it, it doesn't make you happy. You still feel there's something missing.

So, there's no point in any activity or endeavor if it induces stress within yourself. Any stress that arises while you are engaged in any activity is counterproductive. You would be sabotaging your manifestation practice through stress.

The moment stress arises, you're sabotaging yourself. You're making yourself unhappy and everybody around you, too. It's horrible.

And there are many people who conduct their whole life like that, continuously in the state of stress. And nothing to do with true manifestation practice. So, for manifestation to be powerful, we need to be aware that a very dangerous obstacle to successful manifestation is the arising of stress while you're engaged in any activity towards that desired goal.

Are you stressed out? Stop. That's not how to go about it.

If you're not enjoying the activity, your manifestation cannot be powerful. You need to enjoy the doing of it. And you enjoy the doing by continuously being connected with the dimension of being while you do.

And connected with that is excessive attachment to a result can be a great obstacle to manifestation. And you desperately want this particular thing to happen. But in the meantime, you disregard if you're not stressed.

Perhaps you're stressed, too. But you disregard the present moment because you really want to arrive there already. So, while you're engaged in this and that, it's regarded as not really important.

You don't really want to be here because you haven't arrived at this thing that you want to achieve yet. So, you're doing things with resistance, reluctance, don't really want to be doing it. All that is counterproductive.

So, we have to be really alert continuously. What is your state of consciousness in the present moment? So, there needs to be an enjoyment of the doing towards that.

But not an excess. You know what your goal is. But the doing is as important as the arriving.

One could say more important because everything is a journey. Your life is a continuous journey. The doing is more important than the arriving.

Enjoy the doing. And even if you never arrive, at least you enjoy the journey. It makes no difference because you're already connected with the essence of being.

Whether or not that thing happens or not, whether or not you arrive or not is secondary. It doesn't really matter. The more you're connected with the essence of being, the more you can treat the activities and the world around you as a play.

In India, they have the term Leela, the divine play. You participate in this play of forms that come and go. And so, you can treat your manifestation in a playful manner that is most powerful.

In that way, yes. Energy, yes. But also detachment from the outcome.

You don't need a particular outcome anymore to enhance your sense of identity, which is the ego says. When I'm wealthy, then I will be somebody. When I'm wealthy, somebody will recognize me for who or what I am.

I will get recognition. People will envy me. Ego stuff.

And so, all these things are unhelpful and counterproductive. If you're looking for an identity in some particular outcome, it's not going to work because nothing external, no achievement or possession can actually show you your true identity. Your true identity is inseparable from the present moment, has nothing to do with any circumstances in your life.

You have to become still, present, go within and realize the beingness of you. You are. The rest is just a play of form.

Einstein said, I want to know the mind of God. The rest is details. To me, what that means is Einstein had a strong mystical part to him.

And the mind of God is that. The mind of God is the consciousness that you are. It emanates from, it's an emanation of source, which is God.

So, the rest is just details. Whatever you manifest is the details. It's fine.

And adding onto, as Jesus said, and adding onto. So, all these, not realizing that, they can all be obstacles in your manifestation practice and prevent you from manifesting. So, especially remember stress, etc., excessive attachment to outcome. Another reason why manifestation may not be working for you is time scale. Some things come very quickly. They can come in a matter of a day or two.

Some things take weeks or months. It depends what your manifestation is. In some cases, it can take years, three, four years, and suddenly it's there, depending what it is.

So, also give it enough time. Do not, another thing, obsessively engaging in manifestation practices also is not helpful. Don't overdo it.

There's a time when you do it, and then you let go of it. Just come back in the present moment. Do it, and then you let go.

There may be a time period when you practice intensively, and then for a little while, for a few days or a week or two or three, you leave it, except perhaps for little practices at the beginning and end of each day. So, not overdoing it. Intensity, yes, but not obsessively engaging in it.

Another reason why it may not be working for you is, well, let's put it bluntly, you have a stupid goal, a totally unrealistic goal that you want to achieve. Of course, miracles are possible. Miracles do happen in this world.

There's no doubt what we call miracles. However, there is such a thing as a totally unrealistic goal, and you need to know that. I could give countless examples.

Let's say, if I could be deluding myself, okay, I'm very, very present. I can feel the presence, and it's great, which means, okay, I'm going to become a great golf player. I'm going to play golf now, and I'm going to succeed because the presence is manifesting through me, and I become one of the greatest players of golf in the world.

Then you start. Now, the question is, are you practicing? How long have you been playing?

How old are you? The body has something to do with it, too. Are you enjoying it, or do you just have this idea of you as the greatest golf player, but you're not even totally enjoying it?

This could be anything. Golf could be a substitute for anything. Are you practicing every day for five hours so that the vehicle is ready for presence to flow into it and use it?

If the vehicle is not ready, presence cannot flow into it and use it, no matter how much time you spend with your manifestation practice. Is the vehicle ready? Could be anything.

I want to be a great musician. Okay. Are you good at it?

Okay, you may not be good at it right now. That doesn't necessarily mean you cannot be a good musician, but do you enjoy playing? Yes.

Do you play every day? Yes, I play every day for 15 minutes, and I like it. Okay.

The vehicle cannot be ready for presence to flow into it and power it. A good musician practices every day for hours, but the question is, are you enjoying it? If you're not enjoying it, why do it?

Are you only thinking of the desired outcome? When I reach this outcome, then I will enjoy it. This is not uncommon, dysfunctional thinking.

You're not enjoying the journey towards it, but when you get it, then you'll be happy, you tell yourself. That brings me to an important point that's connected with that. You may have heard the impression, I think the impression is deferred gratification, so-called postponed satisfaction, postponed gratification, which usually what it means is here's one person who is indulging in sensory pleasures and enjoying drinking and watching Netflix and hanging around, not hanging around with friends, whatever, just not pursuing any.

Next door, there's another person, let's say it's a young man or woman, there's another person who wants to go to university and study to become this or that, works every day, studies. So, one person is continuous sensory gratification every moment in conventional terms. The other person is deferring gratification and saying, well, I need to work hard because I want to achieve there.

And usually what you are told is deferred gratification actually is preferable to indulging in low-level sensory pleasures and enjoying a low-level sensory enjoyment of this or that. So, for a successful life, you're usually told you need to be practicing deferred gratification, postponed gratification or fulfillment. On the surface, this is very true, but I would suggest it's not the whole truth.

It's also dangerous because if you continuously defer gratification, which means deferred gratification, you're not gratified in the moment, but you're hoping that you will achieve your goal. But after practicing deferred gratification, postponed gratification for several years, it becomes a mind pattern within you. And even when you reach your goal, you won't be gratified because the mind pattern is you're always doing this.

Then there's the next goal that you need to achieve. It's not enough. Now is the next one.

So, you're continuously deferring gratification, never finding gratification. So, what you need to do, you need to let go of inner resistance to what you're doing in the present moment so that you can enjoy the doing of it. Be aware of your inner state while you're engaged in your activity towards a particular goal, yes, but why not enjoy the doing while you're doing it instead of hoping that the enjoyment will come when you finally achieve your goal?

Because it's most likely that the enjoyment will not last very long at all. So, that's part of successful activity is, yes, I would not say delay gratification, no, learn how to be gratified, so to speak, in the present moment while engaged in the activity. So, let's go back for a moment to unrealistic goals.

You need to make sure that you enjoy the journey towards your goal. You also need to enjoy that you take appropriate action so that it's not just the affirmation that you use, there needs to be also appropriate action towards it, then it becomes much more powerful. At the same time, if there's not appropriate action, it may still work depending on what it is, or it may not.

It's certainly usually more powerful as action behind it. So, again, unrealistic goals are many. Make sure that your goal is not whatever you want to achieve is not unrealistic.

I gave the example of golf playing, I could say almost anything if I can. At my age, there are many things that I can no longer do, because of the age of the body. So, no matter how many affirmations I use, thousand times a day that I'm going to win a gold medal in the Paris Olympics that are coming up this summer, in whatever capacity, it's not going to happen.

I cannot think of any sport that this aging body would be good at and achieve a gold medal, no matter how I'm giving an extremely absurd example, but it's easy to delude yourself. I haven't watched cable television for a long time, there used to be this thing on television about American Idol, where people would come hoping to become famous, they had a talent. Later, other countries copied it, I think in England it was called Britain has got talent, or something like that.

And so, these people, they're all performing, given two or three minutes to do their performance. And sometimes you would say, some of these people are so deluded about their abilities that it's quite funny. They were so dreadfully bad, and they thought they could be the greatest singer in the world, but they were just dreadfully bad.

True, true. Yes, it's quite funny, discrepancy between why not do something that you might succeed in. Having said that, it's also true that sometimes people who seem very unlikely to be successful in one particular thing, prove to be successful.

For example, there was this famous singer, I think Louis Armstrong, I believe it was, he had this croaky, deep voice. I can't think of any songs, but he had this, nobody would have thought that he could be a singer. I mean, if he had gone to American Idol and done, please, your voice is not suitable to be a singer.

But the miraculous thing is, despite the fact that in conventional terms, I would say his voice is not, there was an essence that moved into this voice that otherwise would not have been considered suitable, that was enormously powerful in his songs. So that can happen too.

[Speaker 2] (8:27:57 - 8:28:00)
But that's an exceptional case.

[Speaker 1] (8:28:07 - 8:29:24)
So at some point, we'll talk more about these obstacles. I've mentioned quite a few obstacles in your manifestation practice. All these things are, one learns after a while, if you make a few mistakes, you don't succeed and you rectify.

But really, I can't summarize it all, but the journey is the most important thing. It makes important that the present moment becomes enjoyable, whatever it is. The present moment is the portal into the spiritual dimension.

So never lose touch with the power of the present moment. And then that power can flow into whatever it is that you do. Then you achieve the balance between being and doing.

And that is a skillful life, a life that is of service and brings harmony into this world, loving kindness.

[Speaker 2] (8:29:25 - 8:29:36)
And all this comes to you when you are in balance between being and doing.

[Speaker 1] (8:29:37 - 8:30:57)
And then the being, the power of being flows into what you do. And that is the power that is behind manifestation. I could go on for many hours, but I won't.

So I believe we have explored quite a few interesting aspects of manifestation and deeper things that lie behind manifestation. And so it's now a question of, before we conclude, I invite you to, right now, here, become aware of yourself, not of yourself as a person, but of yourself as a being behind the person, the presence. Nothing to do with your personal history.

Nothing to do with how old you are.

[Speaker 2] (8:31:00 - 8:31:02)
Nothing to do with your gender.

[Speaker 1] (8:31:11 - 8:31:13)
Nothing to do with your life history.

[Speaker 2] (8:31:24 - 8:31:53)
The power of presence. The mind becomes still for a moment, but something remains. You can call it stillness or presence.

And it's very simple.

[Speaker 1] (8:31:53 - 8:32:23)
That's the essence of who or what you are. And once you have that, the rest is an adding onto, or as Einstein said, it's details. Or we can use the conventional expression, it's the icing on the cake.

That's all.

[Speaker 3] (8:32:33 - 8:34:05)
Thank you so very much, Eckhart, for this session that covered so much ground. And I want to thank everyone for joining us, our studio Zoom room audience, all of you on YouTube and Facebook, and who joined us on the player page. And a special thank you to our friends at Eckhart Teachings.

Also, as I mentioned earlier, this session is something of an introduction to the upcoming program, The Spiritual Guide to Conscious Manifestation. It's a four-month immersion in the practice of conscious manifestation from a spiritual perspective that begins on May 30th with a four-day online retreat. And you can visit EckhartTolle.com for more information and to register. And again, I want to repeat that we have a generous scholarship program available. We want to make sure that all of the people worldwide who are interested in The Spiritual Guide to Conscious Manifestation can attend. So please come join us.

Once again, Eckhart, thank you so much. And I hope to be with many of you as part of our four-month online immersion program, if it sounds true. Thank you.

Thanks so much for being with us, waking up the world together. Thank you. Thanks, Eckhart.

[Speaker 7] (8:34:06 - 8:34:07)
Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (8:34:10 - 8:34:11)
Thanks, friends.

[Speaker 7] (8:34:57 - 8:34:57)
Bye.

[Speaker 5] (8:35:20 - 8:35:22)
Thank you so much for joining us. Thank you, Eckhart.

[Speaker 2] (8:35:23 - 8:35:24)
Thank you.

[Speaker 5] (8:35:25 - 8:35:27)
Wonderful to be with you all tonight.

[Speaker 2] (8:35:27 - 8:35:28)
Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (8:35:35 - 9:06:32)
So here you practice being. And one of the very helpful practices here in order to avoid adding to the clutter of your mind and in fact letting go of the clutter is practice awareness of the simplicity of the present moment, the sense perceptions of the present moment. Acknowledge the is-ness of all things.

Give it attention and refrain as much as possible from labeling your sense perceptions. That is not impossible. It is, of course, a deep-seated habit to continuously have to label your sense perception, what you're seeing.

Oh, look at that. Isn't that nice? Oh, this was something I saw last year.

My aunt had that. Oh, I wish I had that in my book. Where can you buy that?

I wonder. Oh, isn't this interesting? I wonder what the tree is called.

There's nothing wrong with finding the names of trees, but don't lose yourself in that. There is another way of being in the world that is non-conceptual, that awakens the non-conceptual dimension, the non-conceptual intelligence in you. Because there is a vast intelligence waiting to be awakened, and I call it non-conceptual intelligence.

It cannot be measured in IQ tests. So you might have a high IQ, doesn't mean you're closer to awakening. In fact, if you're identified with all the knowledge, then you're further away from awakening, if you're identified with it.

Practicing sense perception without labeling mentally, and this is a beautiful, and this is part of the beingness of the practice of being. Sense perception is visual, auditory, the birds, visual, sky, amazing things to see, vegetation, plants, even feeling the breeze on your skin, the warm air. Sometimes the wind can get quite strong here.

We had it on the first day I came here, there's a trade wind that sometimes blows across the ocean that can last for hours and days, and it's a continuous, and you can feel it on your skin. It's not unpleasant, and so you can feel that, and breathe whatever scent there may be in the air, all senses, and experience that. Be there as the awareness for the sense perceptions, and that awareness is the space, so you are the space for whatever arises, but knowingly.

Right now, here we can practice that. Sit here, aware of the room, the totality of it. Look around, ceiling, there's a man sitting on the chair up here.

Who is that? Body, okay. Quite pleasant, but I'm already labeling it, but you don't, there's no need to label it, just let it be.

So in this moment, there are your sense perceptions, mostly visual probably, and auditory, because that's the sound of my voice, sense perceptions. And yes, of course, you might feel the weight of your body on the chair, all that, yes. And what else is there?

That which enables the sense perceptions to be in, we could call that consciousness, but that is the essence of you, that is the deep I. So can you be aware of that deep I at the same time as you perceive through your senses, whatever is there? So you have, there are two dimensions here now.

One dimension is the world, whatever it contains, and you take that in through sensory perception. And then you're aware of the awareness that makes sensory perception possible. You can, you feel that you are, you can sense the I am.

And here things happen, but in the depths of your being, nothing is happening. It's beyond any happening, because there's no time there. There's time here everywhere.

Time is the thing that enables you to do everything that you do. Time does that, and then it takes everything away. Time gives you all kinds of stuff, and it helps, it makes you grow, and they get stronger, and then it starts eroding you, and then in the end it kills you.

Oh my God. Time is killing me. Some people, I already realized that a long time ago, that time is killing, but the older one gets, the more you realize that time is engaged in killing you.

And that's scary. If all that you know of yourself is the physical body and the personality, then that's, there's great fear, because that's all you know. You've never gone any deeper.

Oh, so the timeless dimension, present moment, present moment is the portal into that dimension, transcendent dimension. Now, this is a beautiful practice, sense perceptions without, let go of labels. When they arise, just don't become too interested in the labels, they are thoughts.

Just let go. And then you are, while you're here especially, the practice is to be as present moment centered as possible, because your life, otherwise your normal, your life is usually, consists of your past, the present moment, and your future. Now, for most people, either future or past almost completely occupy their attention.

For younger, until you get old it's usually future. When you reach a certain age and you realize that you don't have much future left, then you become more interested in the past and you start thinking about it. Oh, that was then, now, oh, I remember that, yeah.

But the present moment is rarely fully acknowledged. It's always, it's just a stepping stone to the next moment, which is the future. Or you actively hate it, that's not uncommon too.

There are people who live in an antagonistic relationship with the present most of their lives. And sometimes older, some older people, they get, cantankerous old men, hey, don't talk to me about that, I know it all, it's all rubbish, nonsense. So here you practice living in the two dimensions, the deep eye and the surface eye is fine, it has its place, you acknowledge it, but practice present moment living.

You don't need to, the future and the past never, obviously everybody knows that, that they actually don't exist as such. One realization came to me first when I talked to a Zen monk, I happened to see a Zen monk and he, we talked a bit about spirituality and Zen, and he said quite simply, well he said, Zen is really quite simple, you stop thinking. I had expected a more complicated answer, but then I realized that's actually happened to me, I stopped thinking.

Especially overthinking, I could still think, and some thinking of course still happened, but there were long stretches, but there was just very peaceful awareness. And there was, and then what was building up was, out of that awareness came a deep joy. And that was very strange, not, sometimes the joy was so intense that it was incredible, and I was just sat there forever on my bench in the park for long periods.

That really is what's called bliss, and it's just, oh. That intensity of bliss that I had for two or three years, I don't seem to have anymore, I have peace. But the intensity of bliss, now I don't know what, it could be that when you get used to something, it doesn't stand out that much anymore, and it becomes quite normal.

And perhaps I experience, he said, bliss, because there was still the contrast, I remember my previous state of consciousness, and then I was that one, who knows. But this is the main teaching then, all spiritual teaching come down to this. Consciousness has to be rescued from where it's been, the conscience has been kidnapped by thought.

It's trapped in that, and this is, your task is to free consciousness from where it's been trapped. In involuntary compulsive thinking, that's always thinking that is imbued, we identify with, imbued, so every thought is imbued with a sense of self. And so that's the spiritual practice, is that the stepping out of the movement of thought, so that I is no longer confused with the movement of thought, that would be the super, the surface I.

So the cessation of thought, and when you practice present moment awareness, and make that the main, the central focus of your life, whether you're active or passive in that moment, it doesn't matter. If you're active, you give your attention to the doing, you honor it, you give it attention so that it doesn't become stressful, that sounds almost impossible, I know, to many people. If you give your fullest attention to the doing, it's not really stressful, unless your mind projects itself to some future point, or your mind, while you're doing something, thinks of several other things that you really should be doing also at the same time, of course you can't, you can only do one thing at a time.

Another definition of Zen that a master gave is, Zen is doing one thing at a time. Now, that's too simple, isn't it, too simple? One, so you give, if it's doing, you give your attention to it, then, as I said yesterday, high quality, it is a high quality, if inspiration is helpful in that particular activity, it will flow into what you do, because you're connected with the unconditioned consciousness, the presence.

With some doings, you don't need any inspiration, you just need to get it done, you do the dishes, or whatever it is, you don't need particular inspiration, all the while you do it in a place of giving it your attention, honor it, rather than do something, but would rather not be doing it, but I'm doing it anyway, that's how many people live all the time. If you have a work situation where you work for, your daily work, you need to decide, is it possible to honor the work that I'm doing, or even if it's something simple and may not be what I ultimately want to be doing, but right now, I need to honor the present moment, whatever it is, in whatever form it arises, my responsibility is to honor life by honoring the present moment, and if your work situation is so dysfunctional that the environment in which you work, for example, or the kind of work that is demanded of you, may be what is perhaps conventionally called soul-destroying, so that this is not a work that you could do and honor it, because it's just very unpleasant, if it's that kind of thing, then you need to remove yourself from that situation, even though you may be stepping into uncertainty, you cannot remain in a toxic situation like that, where the honoring of what you do seems impossible, because, for example, you might be surrounded by people who are in very negative states, there are many situations like that, but in other situations, you may be able to say, okay, this is not the ultimate thing that I want to be doing, but for right now, this is what I'm doing, and I'm able to honor what I'm, and I do it carefully and consciously, so only you can know whether you're able to do that, or whether you need to remove yourself from that situation, in order to seek something else that is more compatible, that is compatible with presence, many, many things are compatible with presence, and quite a few other things are not, so when you, your attention is in the present moment, let's say now, we've been talking about activity, then there are other many moments when you're not actively doing something, you're just sitting somewhere, or standing somewhere, or walking, and that is a more kind of passive state of presence, and that's very important too, are you the observing presence at this moment, as you're sitting on a plane, looking out of the window, or looking at the aisle, if you don't have a window seat, and you're sitting there, now you might say, well, this environment on the plane, maybe you don't have a window seat, but it's not particularly inspiring, and after you've looked at it for a few minutes, you say, okay, what else is there to look at, nothing, and then you might get drift off into something else, so it's important to realize there's not just, present moment awareness is not just the awareness of what is around you, it is more fundamentally the awareness of yourself in that moment, so it doesn't, your environment does not need to be particularly interesting, and if it's not interesting, like as it would be if you're going out into nature, there's wonders all around you, but if it's not particularly interesting, like you're trapped on, you're sitting on a plane, or on a bus, or wherever, or at the airport, then direct your attention to yourself, this is the essential part, the deeper part of being present, is to be consciously, to realize that you are, not to realize who you are, but to realize that you are, and that is the sense of beingness, or presence, present within, when you are conscious of your surroundings, you are present without, then being conscious of yourself as the presence being present within, one could say, it's a good thing to start and end this by looking around wherever you happen to be before you close your eyes, so you just become comfortable wherever you are, and look around, very casual way, and you're beginning to step out of thought, you're just looking around, then you close your eyes, and what helps is to take a few breaths into the abdomen, so it is, because that can put you in touch easily with the entire energy field of the inner body, as you breathe in, the abdomen expands a little, then you hold it at the end of the in-breath for two or three seconds, feel the energy expanding then throughout the body, and then you breathe out, and in again, and you follow the breath with your attention, this is the ancient breath awareness practice, and you can't be thinking at the same time and follow the breath with your attention, that's why it's such a good practice, and you become aware of your body, the inner body, the aliveness, or gradually you feel that the awareness of the inner body, the aliveness of the inner body, and the inner body become a single thing, a single whole thing, so you merge with the sense of aliveness and stillness, instead of observing it, you feel you are it, remnants of visual image of the body, but it's not necessary anymore, you just focus on that sense of pervasive presence, and that is not other than you, that is essentially you, that is the essence of who you are, that is the I, before it becomes something, it's pure presence, meditation that starts with the question, who am I, the answer is not to be found in thought, or in words, the answer is this, the presence that you sense, you sense yourself as the presence, that's the answer to who am I, for success, sense of enchanted state is deep, sense of beingness of I, nothing needs to be added to it, any better than this to use a common expression, this moment, being conscious of being, listening to awareness on the surface of things, witness with the source of all life, from which the consciousness emanates, the consciousness that you are, that realization is the very fulfillment of your life in this moment, what is there to add to it, there's still nothing that you need to become, there's nothing missing, maybe things missing on the human level, the human dimension, but not on the being level, there's nothing missing, that's the fullness of life that Jesus talked about, or the emptiness he talks about,

[Speaker 2] (9:06:33 - 9:07:07)
spaciousness is a better word for it, spaciousness, and then as you open your eyes

[Speaker 1] (9:07:07 - 9:25:31)
and look around the room again, continue to feel the stillness or the spaciousness within, as you look around the room, and that is how you realize the possibility of being present within and without, and of spaciousness, no thinking is required at this moment, it wouldn't add anything to it, and be aware of yourself and what's around you, the consciousness that you are makes this possible, the light of consciousness, you cannot yet in your daily life step from thinking into awareness, freedom from thinking for a moment, and you just use one of the portals in our body, breath awareness, acute attention to sensory perception, and after a while you can just step out of thinking when it's not needed, or reduce thinking to just a trickle, and then presence arises when you sense it with the entire energy field, and gradually this power grows in you, the power itself doesn't grow but its manifestation in you grows, presence power grows in you, at first it seems nothing remarkable and uninteresting, but first you notice it frees you from a lot of turmoil, mind generated, and then it deepens you, because it is the deeper eye, the deep eye that emerges, the deep self, the deep eye, don't wait for emergency situations to become present, don't wait for life to knock you, give you a jolt, a shock, choose it, in ordinary moments, then it grows in you, when life does something to you to intensify the presence instead of taking you out of presence into reactivity, you respond but don't react, reaction is on the conditioned mind, responding is out of presence, so when you realize that what's important is already here and not in the next moment, what really matters, that means you already have shifted to a different state of consciousness, very simple, just that realization, but it's so deeply ingrained, the illusion, the belief, the unconscious assumption, that the next moment matters more than this one, everybody inherits that mind pattern and that makes life very frustrating, you all know that, life consists only ever of this moment, so we're here to go deeper into this moment and not wait for something more significant in the next one, so we become comfortable with being here now and get rid of the illusion that there is something important missing from your life, or there's something not quite right that hasn't arrived yet, something, a very deep-seated illusion, there's something not right, but it's going to be right perhaps one day, earthly things believes it's going to be right when this or that happens or I attain this or that, and the spiritual seeker believes it's going to be right when I become enlightened, and in both cases it's future, the promise, continuously overlooking something vital that is very easy to overlook because moment of thought is so seductive and hypnotic, right individual presence that is essentially who you are and has nothing to do with your past or future, for you this moment here and to hear this and almost let's say to realize the truth of it, that means that's it, just a sense of goodness and brightness of being here, that means that dimension that has no form is already arising, so there's a huge difference between saying I'm angry and slightly, I feel angry or there's anger in me, I feel that there's anger in me, I feel angry, there's a somewhat a different when I am angry because then you equate identity with the emotion, so the letting go of any kind of complaining unless something can be done and you talk to somebody about it and again then not in a complaining way but in a factual way,

[Speaker 2] (9:25:32 - 9:25:43)
that's already a huge shift and then continuous self-observation is part of that also,

[Speaker 1] (9:25:44 - 9:25:59)
what are the thoughts that go through your mind and be the awareness of what is happening in your emotional field, as you're sitting here, are you carrying something in your emotional field

[Speaker 2] (9:26:00 - 9:26:27)
that is a residue of something that happened an hour ago, this morning, while you were traveling here, yesterday, some imaginary situation your mind is creating and the emotion reflects that

[Speaker 1] (9:26:27 - 9:27:34)
as if it were reality and again without the awareness it takes you over, you don't need to get rid of anything, you don't need to get rid of the emotion, without the awareness you don't have an emotion, the emotion has you and the emotion is an energy form, an energy field, a thought is an energy formation, everything is energy and this is emotion and thought are non-physical energy formations, so the thought then has you, you don't have it, you're not even there, you are spiritually speaking asleep and you're being run by the conditioned emotions, the mental, you're run by the mental emotional conditioning, the mental emotional conditioning says I and it refers to all that stuff, that accumulated stuff, I, everybody says I continuously,

[Speaker 6] (9:27:36 - 9:27:45)
everybody's favorite pronoun is I and what they refer to usually is

[Speaker 2] (9:27:47 - 9:27:56)
that entity, the problematic entity, the ego, that's the word, the egoic self,

[Speaker 6] (9:27:57 - 9:28:12)
I, there's a deeper I that is not the egoic self and that deeper I, this is why we're here,

[Speaker 1] (9:28:14 - 9:28:22)
to access that, to deepen that, most of you already have access to it but it may periodically

[Speaker 2] (9:28:22 - 9:28:47)
become obscured in this world, not surprisingly, when things go wrong that's a moment of

[Speaker 1] (9:28:47 - 9:29:00)
becoming more conscious, it's every, even the smallest things, if you don't react out of the conditioning, the mental emotional conditioning but be the awareness

[Speaker 2] (9:29:01 - 9:29:12)
and then oh, and you observe if emotions arise, you are there and you can say oh,

[Speaker 1] (9:29:12 - 9:30:02)
there's the anxiety again and then you know that there's anxiety without calling it anything, so that is a huge difference to know that anxiety is in you, anger is in you right now, for example, or anxiety, whatever else it may be, or some mood that suddenly gets a hold of you and you're suddenly in a bad mood, don't talk to me, don't say I'm grumpy, well to say I'm grumpy is already a little bit step forward because at least you know that you're grumpy, if you're totally unconscious, the grumpiness is you and you don't even know that you're grumpy, to say don't talk to me, I'm grumpy, that's already means there's a little bit of

[Speaker 2] (9:30:02 - 9:30:26)
awareness there, it's great, so there's a huge difference between saying I'm angry and slightly, I feel angry, or there's anger in me, I feel that there's anger in me, I feel angry,

[Speaker 1] (9:30:27 - 9:31:45)
there's a somewhat different when I am angry because then you equate identity with emotion, so it's not I am angry, that's a huge, you've fallen into a huge trap, if you equate emotion with your identity, or if you equate a thought with your identity, or a story in your mind, you equate that with your identity, or an opinion which is thought, the world is full of people who don't know the difference

between their opinion and their identity, their opinion becomes their identity, and then they have lots of fights with other people, because they are totally confused about who they are, they derive their identity from a set of opinions, politics for example, you derive, it doesn't mean you cannot have opinions, everybody has opinions, but where does your sense of identity come from, does it come from the opinions, or do you realize that you have certain opinions which may be valid or not, you're on a human level, you have opinions, or viewpoints, or perspective, mental positions, you have them, they are there,

[Speaker 2] (9:31:48 - 9:31:59)
but do these give you your sense of self, or if they do, then you're continuously

[Speaker 1] (9:32:01 - 9:32:36)
arguing with other people, making other people into enemies, because when you contradict somebody who equates opinion with identity, unconsciously they believe that you are attacking their very self, because there's a confusion about who they are, they don't know who they are, so you attack the opinion of somebody who's totally identified with their opinion, and you become their mortal enemy, they might even try to kill you, in an extreme form of

[Speaker 6] (9:32:36 - 9:32:37)
unconsciousness.

[Speaker 1] (9:32:44 - 9:34:05)
So, this is why it's so important to transcend that, transcend doesn't mean you exclude it, it doesn't mean no more opinions, I'm now, I'm having no opinion about anything or anyone, no, that's not going to work. What do you think of the Republican Party, the Democratic Party? Nothing.

But there is a deeper level, if you can go to a deeper level, and your sense of I does not come from the movement of thought, it comes from a deeper place, your identity, who you feel or sense you are, does not come from the emotional field, or from the mental formations. And that is the awakening, that is to be awakened, is to discover, first of all, is to discover that dimension.

[Speaker 2] (9:34:07 - 9:35:07)
For some people at first it comes in little glimpses, perhaps sometimes in protected settings, environments like here, and I say, are you able to, at this moment, are you able to let go of thinking, without falling asleep, but remaining alert, in a gentle way, not through willpower, just relinquish conceptualization, no need to interpret compulsively this moment, what could you add to it? Interpret, you like it, I like this, I don't like that, yes, likes and dislikes still exist

[Speaker 1] (9:35:07 - 9:35:18)
on the surface of your being, but when you become rooted in the deeper presence, the being of you,

[Speaker 6] (9:35:20 - 9:35:39)
then you are suddenly free, and you can sense that in that stillness, if we want to call it

[Speaker 1] (9:35:39 - 9:35:43)
that, stillness just means the absence of thought, and what remains when thought goes,

[Speaker 6] (9:35:43 - 9:36:00)
but you don't fall asleep, is conscious presence, pure consciousness remains, and that is the deeper I, the deeper I am.

[Speaker 2] (9:36:15 - 9:36:28)
So a moment of presence or stillness, in that moment you have transcended the person, the personal self.

[Speaker 6] (9:36:31 - 9:36:37)
Of course you go back into it after a while, and the question is, are you going to lose yourself

[Speaker 1] (9:36:37 - 9:36:52)
in it again, perhaps, and then you come out of it again, and after a while, this is your, the aim of spiritual practice, that your connectedness with the deeper dimension

[Speaker 2] (9:36:53 - 9:37:37)
is not lost, even when you are engaged in daily activities, or discussions, or whatever it may be, there is a, that connectedness remains in the background, which may be the case with you now, as you listen to this, and it's not this, something in you recognizes what the words are pointing to, and that's not the conceptual mind, that which recognizes it as true,

[Speaker 1] (9:37:38 - 9:38:30)
is the immediate realization of the truth of it, you don't have to think about it, you can't think about it, so you know immediately, yes, I know, there's a direct knowing, not conceptual knowing, conceptual means knowing through thinking, most people live through a conceptual reality, their identity is a conceptual identity, and they conceptualize everybody else, they meet, they immediately form judgments, they come very quickly, and you form a conceptual identity for the other, you trap the other person in this mental concept, but you do that because you've already done it

[Speaker 2] (9:38:30 - 9:39:21)
to yourself, so you live through a conceptual identity, me, and so we step, we go to a deeper place, or you could call it higher or deeper, it doesn't matter, I prefer deeper, well, you go to a deeper place, where the movement of thought ceases, and immediately you have transcended the self, the egoic self, if only for a few seconds, or a minute, and everybody is longing to be free of this problematic entity, unconsciously,

[Speaker 1] (9:39:21 - 9:42:26)
they want to be free, but they don't want to let go, there's a paradox here, they don't want to let go, and yet they can't stand it, they want to be free, so much drug-taking in this world, or they want to transcend this heaviness of life, experiencing life as this heavy burden, and their identity is very unsatisfying, so they're longing to be free, but they're going below thinking, the road that takes you below, you fall below thought, and to some extent, yes, you have become free of the self, before you go to sleep, there's a transitional moment when you're in bed, and you're halfway to sleep already, and that moment feels really good, you feel, ah, it feels, you can feel the pull of sleep, and you can feel, you can't think about your problems anymore, your entire sense of identity isn't there, because you're too tired, and then you're pulled into sleep. We lie in the lap of immense intelligence, it is within and without, we are pervaded by it, it fills the entire space of the universe, we lie in the lap of immense intelligence which makes us organs of its activity and receivers of its truth, if we are open to it, it's true, if you close the shutters, no matter how bright the sunlight is, it can't come in, it doesn't mean the shutters are more powerful than the sunlight, it just means shutters are closed, and so if a human being is closed, the vast intelligence cannot operate, or can only operate as a trickle, everybody has a trickle of it, otherwise they wouldn't be alive, so everybody has a little trickle of that coming into their lives, but the full power of it in most people's lives is missing, so

they live not knowing what vast power is available to them, or to put it more accurately, what vast power they themselves are, it's not available to you that creates a separation, it is, in essence,

[Speaker 6] (9:42:27 - 9:42:28)
who you are.

[Speaker 1] (9:42:40 - 9:49:49)
I could see a deeper truth being expressed than I had ever heard in church, in what Jesus was saying, and I immediately had a deep realisation of what he was talking about. There was a couple went to church, a wife and husband, and they came back from church where they heard exactly what you just said, the pastor was reading from the bible, and the wife says to the husband, you know, outside our bedroom we have this little hill or mount that blocks our view, what I'm going to do tonight, I'm going to believe that it's going to disappear, because if Jesus says you can move mountains, surely you can move this little hill, and the husband says that's a good idea, okay, so the next morning the wife opens the curtains and it's still there, and she says to her husband, oh you see, I knew it wasn't going to work, so that's not faith either, so just telling yourself I believe this is going to happen, probably not, unless you're lucky, but faith, the true meaning of faith is power, and if you have faith means if you access the power that lies beyond all phenomena, if you access the source of life, if you have find access to that, then that means you have faith, faith is sensing in yourself the power of life itself, which is not of the person, which is deeper, the power of consciousness itself, sensing that in yourself, and when you connect with that, you realize it's not so much that you connect with it, it's just that is the essence of who you are, so having faith really is being fully who you are in your essence, and of course the way to that, this is the entire, our entire teaching here is to go beyond the noisy mind, or the whatever the mind produces into the dimension of alive stillness, and that's you're touching the source, if you touch the source, so the personality needs to surrender, so that you can go deeper, otherwise the personality which includes the thinking mind, or is primarily the thinking mind, stands as a closed door, with a heavy personality you cannot go any deeper, you're stuck, there's a closed door of the personality, so there's a, the Russian spiritual teacher Gurdjieff mentioned two aspects of a human being, which he called personality and essence, and he says some people, or most people in this world have a strongly developed personality, but there's very little essence coming through, so essence is who you are beyond the personality, and he said occasionally it happens that there's an enormous amount of essence in rare human beings, and very little personality, so most people you meet in this world have a fairly highly developed personality, especially in the western world, but the whole world is becoming westernized, so even in the east now, you can even with big personalities, but if the personality recedes, and this is happening to us, then something more vital and more essential can shine through, and that is essence, and that then, and that is our life purpose, the kingdom of heaven, somebody used that expression, my translation is, kingdom is dimension, heaven, sky, is spaciousness, so when Jesus talked about the kingdom of heaven, he's pointing to something in the sense-perceived world, in order to get people to sense what he's talking about on the inner level, so he chose the sky, or heaven, because it's the most spacious thing there is, and it is not, the sky is perhaps the only thing in this dimension where you, of sensory perception, the only thing that you can see that's not a thing, because the sky doesn't exist as a sky, there's no such thing as sky, you can never touch it, or be in it, or if you're going up in a rocket, you go through a cloud, but you can never say, I am now in the sky, because there is no sky, it's just a way in which we perceive spaciousness, and so he used that analogy in order to point to something within you, the dimension of spaciousness, the kingdom of heaven, the dimension of spaciousness that is within you, that is consciousness, pure consciousness, that is the only thing the most important thing, he said, the most important thing for you to be concerned about, find that within you,

everything else will fall into place, it's a free translation of what he

[Speaker 2] (9:49:49 - 9:50:00)
said, everything else will fall into place, just your primary task as a human being here, is[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 28:55)
To find that dimension of consciousness in you. Then you have fulfilled your task as a human being. Not that necessarily your life will then come to an end because you can then be here in a much more beneficent capacity because something else expresses itself through you no longer the egoic, the limited ego identity.

And it can speak and act and do or just emanate through you into this world. You become an expression of the transcendent dimension. I don't usually, I don't use the word God very often because it's misleading.

First of all, it's because it's been misunderstood and misused over so many centuries. And also because the term itself seems to encapsulate it as if it were something that is a finite thing, God. Almost everybody imagines some kind of entity when you say God, where, where is he?

Oh, he, you see, most people still call him he. God is a slightly better pointer would be to say, for example, well, what I said just now, the dimension of the transcendent. And even what they used in Star Wars that became so popular, again, is a term they used that is not as encapsulated as the word God.

The force, may the force be with you. Okay, where's the force? It's everywhere.

It was, it's a kind of, there was a slight spiritual message in that. And this is why so many people loved, because they're all looking for it somewhere. They loved it.

May the force be with you. The divine, you could even say this is less enclosed than the term God. The divine is more of an open concept.

God is more of a closed concept. And inevitably, because of misuse, people inevitably imagine some kind of male entity still. You can't get away from that.

And a controlling one, a patriarch, or somebody who has not done a good job. I could have done better than God. Therefore, God does not exist.

You hear that sometimes. Doing God's will is an expression, been around for a long time, that has been misused a lot by the ego. And it was, in most cases, it was the ego's will.

And the ego called its own will, God's will. To the point of insanity, where people kill others and other groups of people and call it God's will. Different religions have done that.

In some, it's still happening. And for many other people who are not at such an extreme of unconsciousness, but nevertheless, there are people who are genuinely, genuinely wanting to do God's will, but it's very problematic, because how do you know whether a thought that comes into your head is God's will, or whether just a thought, it's just a thought that comes into your head? So being in the present moment really is the only way of being certain that you are becoming aligned with God's will.

What is God's will? God's will is being one with the intelligence, the consciousness that pervades and underlies the world of form, being one with that. And you can only be one with that if you become present in the now.

So the entry point into God's will, the realization of God's will, is always the present moment. Your inner alignment with the present moment, and there you have it. Now, you could say that whatever happens, you could say, in some religions or many religious people do that, well, it's God's will.

They can't explain it, but they say, well, it's God's will. I don't usually use that terminology. All I say is, it is as it is.

That doesn't require any belief whatsoever, because nobody can doubt that the present moment is as it is, always. Now, this is something you cannot doubt. But if I say, this is God's will, of course you can doubt that.

There's lots of reasons why you can doubt that. So the statement, it is as it is, and I might as well say yes to it because it already is, is something that is beyond any doubt. It is so obviously true that no philosopher could come and question that this moment is as it is.

So this is an ultimate truth. I was visiting my mother not long after that, and she had on her bookshelves, my mother was not religious or even spiritual, but I found the New Testament there, which had been left there many years ago when my mom was still married by a Jehovah's Witness, because my father would always invite the Jehovah's Witnesses into our home and then involve them in discussions. He had a love-hate relationship with them, and this is just a, he respected them enormously because my father was German, so he respected them enormously because they were the few people in Germany who refused to, in the Second World War, who refused to participate in war.

So they were pacifists, and many were brought to concentration camps and died because they refused to take up arms. And my father respected them highly for that, but when they started talking to him, he would get angry. But he must have accepted this New Testament.

Anyway, I found that New Testament on my mother's books, and I opened it at that point. Of course, I had read it at school. I had a Catholic upbringing.

I had read it at school, but then I read it, and I said, wow, I could see a deeper truth being expressed than I had ever heard in church in what Jesus was saying, I assume. And I immediately had a deep realization of what he was talking about, and realizing also that the New Testament is really fragments because nobody has a complete teaching of Jesus because people have the fragments that they remembered and they eventually wrote down. And I believe not all fragments are actually said by Jesus, but when they did, the ones that are actually uttered, but I knew beyond any doubt that certain things that I had read were actually said by someone who was deeply aligned with consciousness.

So I saw the truth there, and that shed light on it. And then you become aware of yourself as the one who is perceiving, but not of yourself as the historical person because if you were perceiving through the historical person, you would be labeling things mentally. No, you become aware of yourself as the underlying consciousness in which the perception happens, the light of consciousness in which the perception happens.

So you're aware of two dimensions, the dimension of form and the dimension of formless consciousness, the kingdom of heaven, the dimension of spaciousness, the emptiness, the spaciousness, the essence of all life. And it's not yours, it's not anybody's, it's the one. And now, as if you're thinking in terms of, well, how does that fit in with God?

You haven't mentioned God. Well, that's true. I haven't mentioned God because the term God has been misunderstood a lot over the millennia, not by everybody, but by most.

God, you cannot, obviously, you cannot understand God. It would be, it's just absurd to even make any statement because it's totally, I mean, language consists of just a few sounds, just a few sounds that are made by the vocal cords and air pressure. So you have the vowels, A, E, I, O, U, ah, oh, ooh, ooh, and then you add a few air pressure sound, psh, psh, psh, psh, psh, psh, psh.

Are you expecting to understand the secret of the universe? Through the combination of a few, ah, oh, psh, psh, psh, just, I mean, and you're asking God to explain God, but I'll carry on talking anyway. One can only give a, almost a poetic image or an analogy of what that is.

God is the source of all life, the transcendent source of all life. It has no existence in space and time. It does not exist because exist means to be manifested.

It is, God is the source of all life, that we perhaps can say. Now, we could compare that because we live in this sense-perceived universe in our dimension. We could compare God to the life-giving principle that we all share, which is the sun.

And there's no coincidence that many ancient cultures worshiped the sun because obviously, without the sun, all life would immediately disappear. The very warmth in your body is ultimately derived from the sun calories. So the sun continuously emanates.

Almost, one could almost say, yes, it has a lifespan, but relative to our lifespan, it's eternal. So it's an analogy. The sun continuously emanates.

It emanates, and what it emanates is it gives life. The stillness, the presence, whatever we want to call it, and by sensing it in yourself and being it, then you recognize it in another. And that recognition, that in the space of stillness is true love, which doesn't need the other because the other only reflects to you who you are.

So the question you're basically asking, would you then love everybody equally so there would not be one person singled out as special as the Course in Miracles calls it special relationship, which the Course in Miracles says, of course, it's of the ego to single one out as special. Now, if you single one out as special and what you see in the other is the form only and you're attached to the form, which doesn't just mean the physical form. Of course, that's an important part of it because it is part of the sexuality and all that, which is part of the attraction.

But it also includes the psychological form of the other, who you think that person is, their psychological makeup, how they behave and speak and act. That is also a form, that's a psychological form. And there can be strong attachment to those aspects, both the physical come together with the psychological, which includes also emotions.

There's an emotional link also there. And those coming, when they all come together, you fall in love. And aptly, it's called fall because it's a fall in consciousness.

But that's okay. If that's what you experience, then that life wants you to experience that. It's part of your learning, that fall in consciousness.

Now, it's not immediately, of course, experienced as a fall. It's experienced as a high. And only afterwards do you realize, oh, that was a fall.

And afterwards can be after a year. It can be after three months. It can be after the honeymoon.

It can be soon after you move in together. And then the suffering starts. What before was the love now becomes the suffering.

And then for a while, it can happen that you fluctuate or the next year or two or three between still feeling the love and the suffering. And then usually it comes to an end after a while or you compromise and for some other reason, stay together. So that's the...

Now, if you are able to feel in the other, well, first of all, in yourself, that which is beyond form, the essence, the stillness, the presence, whatever we want to call it. And by sensing it in yourself and being it, then you recognize it in another. And that recognition that in the space of stillness is true love, which doesn't need the other because the other only reflects to you who you are.

But even there, it can happen that the form of the other, because you are not just the formless. Temporarily, you're also the form. Temporarily, you are either a man or a woman.

Temporarily, you have this body and this form, this man or this woman and this body and the emotional field may find a certain resonance with on different levels, be it sexual, emotional, psychological levels, a certain resonance with the other form. And that resonance, that is what in the unenlightened romantic love makes up the entire relationship. But now, when you know who you are in your essence, all those factors are still there, but they do not make up the entire relationship beyond the resonance between the sexual or emotional or physical resonance, there's a deeper level present.

So you can go through the motions of romantic love with the transcendent level also present in yourself and recognizing it in the other. So romantic love may, after a while, of course, for the relationship to be truly deep in any relationship, some transcendent element has to be there because it's not going to last otherwise. It doesn't mean necessarily that people need to be totally awake already, totally awake knowing who they are, but some element of the formless must be there eventually in the relationship for the relationship to survive and be a true relationship.

Otherwise, all you have left in the relationship is your judgments about the other and physical attraction and just mind emotional. And that's ultimately, it's not enough, it's not enough. The added element, the transcendent element needs to be there.

And if the transcendent is there, you can be quite content even without the romantic relationship. You no longer say, I need that. It's when it's there, it's beautiful, but you don't need that.

A conscious conversation is basically a conversation where it's between two people. Each person is not identified with their viewpoint, their perspective, their mental position. They put forward their perspective, their positions, their viewpoints without any sense of self in it because they don't need that because their sense of self is derived from the presence that they can sense throughout the conversation in the background of their being.

And then they can play with concepts. They can play with opinions. They can play with words.

They can play with arguments even. My argument is this, and then the other person, well, and mine is that. There's the famous saying, we, what is it?

We agree to disagree or something like that. That sounds relatively conscious because if at least you're not identified with your positions, then that's fine. We agree.

That's okay. It's interesting. Self-identification with mental positions is the unconsciousness because then you will be defending your mental positions, but you're really defending your sense of self.

And this is why these conversations become easily and very quickly become very unpleasant. They are unconscious. So in unconscious conversation and with very unconscious people, it can even happen.

I mean, you can probably read about it in the papers all the time. They get so defensive and aggressive about their respective mental positions, they start physically attacking each other. It even happens sometimes.

You can see it in certain parliaments in some places. And suddenly all these members of parliament start attacking each other. Washington sometimes gets close, but it probably hasn't quite happened.

That what it could happen there too, who knows? Okay, so if you love everybody unconditionally, how can you possibly decide who is going to be your partner? That's the question.

Because it seems then there's no preference anymore. Or if it's physical attraction, isn't there a contradiction? If you're in a higher state of consciousness, then shouldn't or not be physically attracted to anybody?

Is that the implication in the questions? Isn't it? Well, the love we're talking about, the unconditional love towards human beings and life forms, is a, let's see, what is it that you love in the other?

When you love unconditionally, you don't love their physical form. You don't love their psychological form, their personality. The unconditional love goes deeper.

It's a transcendent love that what you love is not the form, but the formless essence of the other. And you can only love that when you can sense within yourself a dimension, a formless, when you can be still and present enough, and then look at another human being, and then you can recognize something. What you recognize is, for lack of a better word, the consciousness, which is the essence of the other human, as it is the essence of who you are, consciousness prior to the consciousness being born into some kind of form, personality, which is there, and the physical form, which is there.

But in every being, there is still the dimension of consciousness that is prior to form. Although the human being has become form, consciousness has assumed form, has incarnated, so to speak. But that doesn't mean that the formless and timeless consciousness is lost.

It's still there as the essence. And when you can sense it in yourself, you can sense it because you are still and present enough. From that dimension in yourself, you can sense it in the other, and that is love.

It's basically a recognition that in essence, the other is the same as you. But then, of course, there's always, that is the transcendent dimension to every human being. In addition to that transcendent dimension, there is a form identity of every human being.

Every human being has a physical form and emotional form and a mental form. That's the inner, that's the personality. So the physical appearance and the personality consisting of mental, emotional, conditioning, and so on.

So there are the two levels. The unconditional love towards all humans is the transcendent love. You love the formless, you recognize the formless as yourself in the other.

But then you are still here as a form too, and the form may respond to another form. The physical, there can be physical attraction. It is not incompatible with a transcendent realization, although some ancient or not so ancient traditions may tell you that.

It is not incompatible. You can have physical attraction on the level of form. You can also have an attraction towards the mental, emotional form of that other human being because it resonates with something in your own form.

So that means you may be drawn to another human being physically or mentally, emotionally, because you resonate with that. And then perhaps you enter into a relationship. So different levels operate.

The transcendent remains. It can become obscured through excessive attachment, of course, to the mental or emotional dimension in the other. So in a relationship, the realization of essence identity, as I sometimes call it, can become obscured when form identity takes over completely, which could happen through the pain body, which could happen through this emotional, getting identified with arising emotions and losing touch with the transcendent.

Yes, that can happen, but it's not incompatible. Everybody's challenge is to balance the two in their lives, in their relationships, to relate to the other on the transcendent level. And at the same time, if it's there on an emotional, mental, physical level.

For a while, it can be helpful, but not to become dependent on either, or to use it as a tool to help you, yes. But don't become dependent on listening to music so that you can be present only when you listen to music.

[Speaker 7] (29:00 - 29:14)
What is music? Somehow it does stop our minds and why it is so important to us, maybe about art in general also. And what is your favorite kind of music?

[Speaker 1] (29:21 - 1:03:55)
Yes, it certainly stops the conceptual mind, although music exists at different levels. There's some kind of music that very much stimulates the emotions. That's not the mind, but the emotions.

The listening of music can be a wonderful meditation and practicing of music even more so. Do you play an instrument? But do you listen to music?

What kind? Classical mostly. Classical music, yes.

Yes, there were several years, I don't know how many, maybe 15 years when I listened to very little music. And why? Because the strange thing, I actually said that to somebody at that time who asked me the similar question.

And I said, no, I don't listen to music much that was at that time. And why not, she asked. Because it felt to me that all those things like music and art, they were all inside me, in their, the essence of whatever music can express, I could continuously sense, well, I still can, I can continuously sense inside me and so I can appreciate music, I said to her at the time, but I don't need it.

It's like I have the cream and everything else is the skimmed milk. But even nature I perceived as a skimmed milk. I remember often sitting in nature and in a state of sometimes closing my eyes, especially when I was still living in London, I would go on Hampstead Heath every day, sit there on a bench and close my eyes and such beauty and depths of the formless life itself or consciousness.

And then when I opened my eyes again, nature was still very beautiful, but it seemed like a diluted version of what I had within or even what I was within. Not that there's anything wrong with that. For many people, it can be an entry point into that so it can take you into that.

Now, then the time came when I started listening to music again as an enjoyment and I do now, perhaps not every day, but from time to time, I listen to music. More recently on my iPad. All the speakers are very small, they're about that size on the side.

But yes, and I actually enjoy some of the kind of spiritual kind of music, some new age music, some of it I love very much, some of it can be a little bit tinkly and emotional or superficial, but other kinds of new age music, I love very much. And I found this, the other day I found a station, I think Kim found it, it's called Calm Radio. And I believe it may even be Canadian.

And Calm Radio has many channels, but it's one station and you can choose the type of music you like and it'll play that classical, oriental music, home music, healing music, spa music, folk music, classical music, opera, so many channels. Just a wonderful, yes, the practice of an instrument also can be a wonderful meditation for many people because it really stops your mind. The important thing, however, can be helpful is not for presence to become associated with any particular activity.

The activity can be helpful, but at some point, you have to see, use it as a help, like playing an instrument, the flute, whatever it may be. If I learnt an instrument, I would probably take up the flute, it's a simple thing, although not easy probably to master. This is the, I'm now playing the soundless flute.

The equivalent of one hand clapping. Not to become dependent on a particular activity so that you can be present, although for a while it can be helpful, but not to become dependent on either, use it as a tool to help you, yes, but don't become dependent on listening to music so that you can be present only when you listen to music. Don't become dependent on playing the instrument or dancing, beautiful thing too, moving your body.

Don't become dependent so that you can only be present when you're actually dancing. Well, at least it's a wonderful thing, you can be present when you dance, but you can't dance continuously. Well, unless you regard your whole life as a dance, then it might work.

Don't become dependent on climbing a mountain so that you can be present, because if you're not, you fall off. Don't become dependent on driving a fast car. Oh, really present, because, so that presence is not bound up with one particular thing that you do, but nevertheless, use those things as helpful ways of bringing you into presence, but then once more presence arises, switch off the music, doesn't mean you can't switch it on again an hour later or tomorrow, switch off the music, if music brings you into presence, the mind is not, there's just the pure act of listening. And you're aware that there's a pure act of listening and you are the consciousness, you know yourself as the consciousness that's listening. Beautiful meditation.

And then my next suggestion is, switch off the music and continue listening. To what? Nothing.

So when you remove the object of awareness, what remains is awareness itself. So this is how it can be a wonderful portal. The same thing, any activity that brings you into presence, once you feel presence is arising, it's there, stop the activity and just be aware of presence itself.

And then you can carry, if you enjoy it, then carry on doing, and then again, step out. So that's the, so that presence is not bound up with one particular activity or you can even, you can look at the, you can look at a photo of a spiritual teacher who is present to bring you into presence. Ramana Maharshi, there's one particular photo of him that was, is a beautiful photo where you actually truly feel the light shining through his eyes and that was where the photographer took that photo of 1930 or so, and the photographer said, no, Ramana Maharshi said, is there enough light?

The photographer said, you are the light. And that's a beautiful picture and the amazing thing, some people have even used pictures of me to look and you look, as long as you know you're not looking at a person, that's not why you have the photo. You're looking at, to put you in touch with a particular state of consciousness, you're ultimately looking at yourself, the essence.

So then a picture can activate that in you. And then the next step is, again, similar to what I said before, close your eyes or remove the picture and continue to feel that presence. So you can use whatever is there to help you but don't become dependent on it.

Whatever it may be, use it, enjoy it, but don't become dependent so that that then exclusively becomes associated with presence. And then you can only be present when you put a little altar with Ramana Maharshi up and then some, but as soon as you go away. So it seems we are going to spend the afternoon together, most of us, that is.

For some of you, a few, it may at some point get too much and you might feel the urge to remove yourself from here and go to a more stimulating place. Such as the beach or even more stimulating, such as the adjacent expo. The primal urge will have been stronger than the urge towards higher consciousness.

But most of you will probably stay here and to the extent to which the, what I sometimes call the new consciousness, has already arisen in you, to the extent of that, you will actually enjoy being here and listening for the whole afternoon with a short break, listening to a man sitting on a chair talking. It seems a little strange. How could that be interesting?

There must be something extraordinarily important in what he has to say to keep you here. And that is true, but of course, there needs to be something in you that recognizes that there's something extraordinarily important, not in the person speaking, but ultimately in you. So that recognition needs to be there in you.

And that's nothing to do with how much knowledge you have, spiritual knowledge or accumulated education or PhDs or degrees. Nothing to do with that kind of mental faculty. There is another faculty in humans that in most humans on the planet is as yet dormant.

And in some, a growing number of humans has awakened. I call it faculty, something, a dimension of consciousness that's different from the prevailing, ordinary dimension of consciousness on the planet. So that's a spiritual awakening.

That is the next step in human evolution because humans have not come to the end of their evolution. Humans are a work in progress. It's not finished yet.

It would be terrible, imagine that. Humans as they are now, a finished product, crazy. And that's why some people, because they have misperceptions about humans and they have misperceptions about God.

And then they say, how could God allow all this to happen? All this, this is based on two misperceptions that humans are a finished product, created by God a long time ago. And that God is a patriarchal figure controlling things from above or has lost interest completely and walked off maybe somewhere else because he didn't do a good job.

So our afternoon here works on two levels. There's the level of words and thoughts and that is necessary, but more importantly, there is that to which the words and thoughts that underlie the words point. And that is the essence of our gathering here.

And that to which they point is the essence of who you are. And the purpose of our afternoon is to either awaken or in the case of many of you, to deepen the realization or the connectedness with who you truly are. And when I say truly, I mean in the depth of your being, and I mean a dimension that is deeper than your personal history.

And most humans are completely unaware that there is a dimension of consciousness in them that is deeper than their personality, their personal self. So they are trapped on the surface level of reality. And that is not a pleasant place to be.

You are basically then trapped in your conditioned personality, the person, the egoic self, and you know somehow, you know that there is something not right. You know somewhere instinctively, you know there's something so important that's not here yet and that's missing in my life. There's something wrong.

And how humans interpret that mentally, what they perceive or feel to be wrong varies from person to person. One person might say, what's wrong is that all humans don't have the same religion that we have. There's something deeply wrong.

So we need to either convert them or kill them. Or other humans say there's something deeply wrong about society, they project it outward. Of course there's lots wrong with society, but what is society?

It's the sum total of the individuals. There's something deeply wrong with my personal history. It's so unsatisfying.

Why? Why did so many things go wrong in my life? Things that weren't supposed to happen.

I imagined things going very differently. Not all these failed marriage and divorce and all this dreadful suffering and then there was the illness and then there was that and then there were great achievements and then there were all again the opposite. So something is looking for the next thing to feel fulfilled by possessions, recognition, something missing, there's always something missing.

What they don't know is that what is missing, what they look for outside or they blame others for preventing them from finding it. You can blame entire groups of people for making you feel unfulfilled. It's a very common thing these days and very satisfying to the false sense of self because if you can see yourself as a victim either on a personal level or a collective level, that gives you a somewhat satisfying sense of identity, satisfying in a completely non-satisfying way.

It's a paradox. You feel good about feeling bad. And the more you can complain about others, and the better you feel, but it's bad.

But the ego thinks it's better. And you feel now you know who you are more fully. It's a fiction.

So you can emphasize your victim identity on the personal level to give you some kind of stronger sense of self or you can emphasize your identity as the one who is victorious in the world, me. The ego doesn't mind which one. They're both equally strong and equally false.

Usually ego, the egoic self is interpreted by people as people who have a high sense of exaggerated sense of who they are, who think they're better than others. And that is one aspect of ego. But there's another aspect of ego, which is equally strong.

And that is people who have a self image, a self identity of being more of a victim than somebody else or others. Oh, that works too. So whichever is most convenient to you, you can use that.

So people use all kinds of things to create a more satisfying sense of identity for themselves, but it's all in the head. It's ultimately all consists of the structure of thought. And that is what I call to be trapped on the level of the person or the personality.

Another way of putting it is to be trapped on the level of form, the form of who you are, which is the physical and the psychological form of who you are, the me, me and my story, me and my personal history. And then all the conditioning, the opinions and viewpoints and convictions and through which you interpret everything according to the conditioning of the personality. Then you look at things and you immediately have immediately labeled things and situations and people as they come into your perception.

There's the immediate labeling and you think it's all true. You don't realize that you are looking at reality through a veil of your conditioned mind. And really what you're seeing is the veil of your conditioning and there's something there behind it, but you can't clearly see it at all.

It's a dreadful state to be in, but it's normal. This is why I sometimes say normal equals insane. So you, and this is not such a fundamental question.

The question of identity is the most important question in your life. Who am I? And you know that, you know that it's important, but you don't know where your true identity is because at school, nobody taught you, should be the most important thing that children are taught, discover your essence identity.

Is that a subject at school? I haven't heard of it, never come across it. So your form identity relies on external things.

You compare yourself to others and according to what is most appropriate, you emphasize those aspects of your form identity where you are a little bit superior to others and that's where the ego gets in and forms a mental construct. It could be the history of your family as you come from a family, not so much in the new world here, but in the old world to some extent, a little bit still in Europe, even more so in some more traditional cultures. You think back, you have your family history, your ancestors and you have this long line of your ancestors going back and they're all more important than the rest of the population.

And you have come out of this long line of ancestry and that gives you your identity. You might even have a title. In some countries, they still have titles.

So you grow up and your 10-year-old girl is told, oh, your name is Lady So-and-so. Oh, now if you're trapped in that to get out of that, not easy. You've been given that sense of specialness and so the main, the core of your identity lies then in your ancestry and it can have you in its grip until you're on your deathbed and you never know that you are trapped in an illusory sense of identity.

Now, most people don't have that, but they may have other things. They may have more possessions than others in their family or they may have achievements in that they came out of nothing and then they achieved this, that and that and then they identify with the material achievements and so on, possessions and that can give you a great sense of identity too, never satisfying for long, that's the thing. There's always this element of unsatisfactoriness, of something really important is missing and even if you have an aristocratic title, Lady Diana, for example, going back, she was not fulfilled by her title and her ancestry, which goes back hundreds of years and, but was very unhappy and so, and this is quite normal that you have that identity but you're, and you're trapped in it and you are, there's always in the background the unhappiness and then, of course, you might have a body that's more beautiful than others then you can focus on that and that gives you a sense of superiority towards others.

So, and that's a temporarily a nice thing and then as the years pass, a day will come when you look in the mirror and something has changed. That beautiful body has shrunk or expanded, whatever the case may be. I see, I saw the other day in Sidney walking along the harbor front on a beautiful sunny morning, pleasant, not hot, less warm than it is here, people walking and there was one man who probably, who had taken off his shirt and he was walking through these crowds of people and the strange coincidence is that this man, of course, must have been so hot in this weather that he felt compelled to take off his shirt but by a strange coincidence, he had the most wonderful physique.

But, he was extremely masculine, just very impressive and many people looked and some tried not to look and just glance and you could see how satisfying it was for him to walk through there. So, he was lucky that he felt so hot that he had to take off his shirt. And of course, there will have been other egos ego identities walking and looking at him who felt diminished by looking, it's normal for the ego, it felt diminished.

And so, and then looked the other way, I'm not going to look at him. So, it's normal for the ego to feel diminished because it always compares itself to others and then the ego sometimes tries to compensate. Again, you have to arrange your identity somehow when he tries to compensate for this diminishment.

For example, by saying, just a few thoughts compensate for the diminishment of the ego and they're all, it's all unconscious thinking. For example, the thoughts go, oh, look at that beach bum there. I bet all he does is hang around the beach every day and surfing, not a thought in his head.

Okay, that makes you feel better for a little while. If you're in your big car, you can feel superior towards others and then others will look, but then there may be a man on a bicycle. He's looking at you in your big car and say, look at this materialist.

Whereas I am completely non-attached to these things. And I'm totally happy on my bicycle because I'm beyond these things. That's a very subtle, so-called spiritual ego.

You can feel superior because you're more spiritual than others, not realizing that also is a mind-made sense of self, a mind-made identity. Amazing. And many people carry a very unhappy or predominantly uneasy, unhappy, complaining, insufficient personality with them.

And that's who I think they are. And it's an awful way to be and nobody has taught them that that ultimately is not who you are. That's the conditioning of your mind.

And that is the emotions that also accompany the conditioning of your mind. And so the question arises, well, if I'm not that, if I'm not that, who am I? And that is the most important question you can ask yourself.

Now, in our mainstream culture, they will tell you that that question makes no sense whatsoever because they believe obviously you are your past and you are who you are as a person. They deny that there is anything else. So as you are here, I would suggest that that which is beyond the personality in you has already awakened and that has brought you here.

And that goes far beyond a personal thing. That which is beyond the personality, a dimension of consciousness in you, in the human, that is deeper. You could say higher, but I prefer the term deeper than the personality and then the continuous stream of thinking, which is the basis for the personality, has already awakened in you and has brought you here.

But that goes something beyond the personal. That is something, what has ultimately brought you here is the fact that human consciousness is evolving and the evolving human consciousness through you has brought you here in order to deepen the awakening. With a few exceptions, there may be some who didn't come of their own free will.

Or they were dragged here by somebody and then they reluctantly agreed, okay, I'll come along and listen to this guy for four hours. Oh my God. And then they sit here and say, what's he talking about?

It's just, makes no sense whatsoever. And because the words are being perceived by this person, this imaginary person, which may not be imaginary, maybe. The words are being perceived, but they do not go beyond the clutter of his or her mind.

So they get trapped in the clutter of the mind. So you listen to the words, but there's nothing in you that recognize that to which the words point. And so all you have is they get trapped in the clutter of your mind.

And so it's completely meaningless. And so there needs to be a little opening in the stream of, in the mind stream, there needs to be a little opening, a little crack. And most of you, that's there.

And in some of you, there's more than that already. And in that opening, then the words can go in and then that to which the words point is recognized. So when I say, for example, the essence of who you are, when I say beyond the personality, beyond your personal history, there is a deeper essence of who you are.

And for a moment, you can sense the recognition within you of the truth of that.

[Speaker 6] (1:04:20 - 1:04:34)
I wanted to ask, what is the role of being in service to others in one's spiritual development? And I guess you can say it in the overall evolutionary impulse of the

universe to borrow a phrase from your book. Okay.

[Speaker 1] (1:04:35 - 1:15:56)
Thank you. It can be a wonderful spiritual practice if it arises from the right place inside you and it can also be a strengthening of your ego if it arises from a different place inside you. Jesus talked about that when he talked about giving arms.

Some people, he said, like to be seen when they give arms to the poor, they want to be seen. And he says, those people are not going to get a reward in heaven, what that means we'll look at in a second, because they have their reward already. And of course, what their reward already is, is that it's a feeding of the ego.

That's their reward. So now there are two ways of being seen when you give service, either you give something to somebody, it could be help, providing active help, or giving something that you have, a way to somebody to help them, whatever it is, that one needs to look at the motivation. And there are two ways of being seen.

One is to talk about it more than is necessary. Or to just make sure that others see what you're doing or aware of what you're doing. Then you have your reward through that, which is the feeding of the ego.

But there's another interior way of seeing it when you have your own self image and you're in service, because it makes you feel better about yourself. It improves your self image. That is still fine, it may help somebody, so it's a good thing to do, but it doesn't really help you to become free internally.

So there's a self image that some people need to feel that they are giving to others. And there's this image of, I am giving to him, you are the doer. You see yourself as the doer of good, and you see yourself as sacrificing something that you give to another.

So it improves your ego, really, how you see yourself, because what is ego but an inner self reflection? Ego is like an inner mirror, where you are not yourself, you have an image of yourself, and you live through this mental image of yourself. And the image of yourself is usually not satisfying.

So every ego tries to improve the image of oneself, and it can do it in many, many different ways. But, and then you have the image of me, the doer of the good deed, and that really strengthens the image. And then there's another way of giving.

I think the expression is where the left hand doesn't know what the right hand does, or something like that. The right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing, which means you don't have the self image as you are giving of something that you own. You are helping the other.

There's an outflow of energy in whatever form, and it's not yours. It's not yours, you're not giving anything that is yours, because ultimately nothing is yours. You're giving energy because that energy in whatever form comes from the source of all energy.

All energy derives from one source. And so you give, you allow yourself to be a vehicle through which this energy flows out into the world. And then the sense of me, the doer, isn't there.

And the sense of there's the poor person that I am helping isn't there either, these concepts. So there's simply the process that happens through you. And that is the non-egoic way.

And then to be of service is a beautiful spiritual practice too, because the ego is out of the way, dissolves through that when you realize you don't own anything ultimately, and the energy is not yours. It's universal energy that comes through. So to be a vehicle for that, and in that way you are a help, really, when that happens, you begin to live in that way.

You're always in service to others. You're even in service to others in ordinary situations that would not normally be recognized as service to others, because you recognize the other in their essential being, which is the greatest service that you can give somebody, far greater than anything material, although there's nothing wrong with that either. But the greatest service is to recognize the essence or the reality of the other person.

Everything else passes away. Everything else is transitory. But that recognition of the other as God, I don't use that word very often, and one with who you are, to see that, that is the greatest service you can give, which is the realization of who that person truly is beyond the form.

Not to come from form, not believing this form is helping that form, but realizing there's something here that is beyond form. So if you're only in form, then you can also very easily deplete yourself. I'm trying to be helpful.

There are many people who are social workers or therapists, and after a few years, they experience a burnout because they're continuously trying to give and help, and then they need, they can't do it anymore. So in The Power of Now, I believe I wrote that whenever you help people, there needs to be a balance between the, maybe I didn't write it there, there needs to be a balance between the doing out there and being rooted in being. And so that's, no matter where you are in life or what you do, otherwise you will lose yourself in your service to others very quickly, and then you're not of service to anybody anymore.

Then you'll need therapy yourself, or you'll need charity yourself. So to stay, be rooted in being while you do is essential so that the energy can continue to move through you. So you're addressing, you can address the causes of human suffering in the external world, sorry, the effects of human suffering in the external world, but the cause of human suffering is in the consciousness, in the human consciousness.

So that is vital to be rooted in yourself, not be part of the unconsciousness that produces the dysfunction that is in this world. There are people who try to do their best, even organizations often try to do their best to help others, and they become part sometimes without wanting to, they become part of the mess. There's infighting in the organization itself.

It's amazing how many institutions and organizations, the enormous amount of infighting that there is, they are supposed to help people. Sometimes they are even religious organizations. The enormous amount of conflict in there, and there's, stop, stop, stop doing.

Just connect with the spaciousness that is within you. Stay rooted there and then do. Never lose the rootedness in this.

Remember, I use this and this, the two modalities or dimensions. This is the world of form and doing. This is the formless and being.

So when you help others, the two need to be there also. Always the balance between doing and being. You cannot solve the problems of this world through doing only, because if there's only doing and you try to solve the problems of the world, you will contribute to the problems of the world.

Hence the expression, the road to hell is paved with good intentions.

[Speaker 8] (1:16:02 - 1:16:03)
Thank you very much.

[Speaker 1] (1:17:11 - 1:33:12)
If you are a meditator, of course you can use whatever method you are familiar with, but ultimately don't confuse meditation with a method. This is very common. The method is designed to facilitate the state of consciousness.

At some point, every meditation method needs to be dropped so that you can be in meditation, which is state of presence, which is not a method. If you get too attached to your method, then the method, which was very helpful for quite a while, gets transformed into an obstacle. In some schools, such as Zen, they mostly use no method at all, and that is why they call meditation sitting.

So when you go to a Zen monastery, somebody may ask you, how long have you been sitting? And if you're not familiar with Zen, you're saying, I'm not sitting, I'm standing. But if you are familiar with the jargon, you'd say, yeah, I've been sitting for 25 years.

And then you will be asked, and you still haven't got it? So if you can enter presence directly without a method, it's, of course, best. And ultimately, there's no longer meditation, and the rest of my life is, they come together.

The rest of their life becomes meditation. Whatever you do, wherever you are, body, presence. And no drifting off into thinking.

That's the Zen master speaking, without the stick. If thoughts arise, don't get involved in them. Just let them drift past, drift in and out of awareness.

Be the sky, not the thoughts, not the clouds, you're the sky. Occasional cloud doesn't matter. You are the space.

You are the sky. You may encounter, Boredom sometimes in meditation, because meditation is not interesting. So you encounter a little barrier inside.

And then you surrender to that and you go beyond boredom. And then impulses may come.

[Speaker 2] (1:33:13 - 1:33:18)
You want to get up, start thinking about something.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:25 - 1:49:15)
And you observe that. And then it arises and passes away. Many things in meditation you can practice.

The arising of feeling or thought or some impulse. You can watch it. And if you don't have a reactive relationship towards it, you don't give it excessive importance.

It subsides again. And then you're left with just you as spacious awareness. And then the next thing comes.

And you're still there as spacious awareness, even though the thought has come in. And then it subsides. And then the body gets restless.

And then the mind says, I need to get up. I can't carry on sitting here. And then you watch that.

You watch the restlessness. Everything is allowed in the present moment. Any external disturbance immediately becomes part of your meditation.

There's never anything outside. Unless you're physically attacked by a mountain lion. There's never anything outside that can actually disturb your meditation.

Even a big, what they call in England, pneumatic drill, I can't remember what it's called here. Same thing. It starts up next door.

Imagine. And you say, I can't meditate in conditions like this. But the surprising thing is, you don't need ideal conditions for meditation.

In other words, every condition is ideal for meditation. If you totally accept the so-called disturbance, you surrender. It becomes part of the meditation.

You have transcended. If you want to overcome the pneumatic drill, you have to run out there and say, stop that. Then you have either overcome it or you are in an argument.

Transcendence is meditation. Whatever arises. And that becomes the way in which you live your life.

That you never oppose anything. Anything that comes in you. And then you go with it, around it.

You don't oppose it. It's accepted. The present moment is accepted.

So, and you can practice that during your meditation. All there ever is in your life, I think everybody must admit, be able to admit that, all there ever is is the present moment. That's how you experience life, as the present moment.

And if you disregard that and reduce it to a means to an end or actively dislike it, then your life is dysfunctional and extremely unconscious and you are a trouble to yourself. You create problems. You create conflict continuously.

It's insane. So the acknowledgement of the present moment is absolutely vital. So it begins with acknowledging whatever arises in the present moment.

Not internally resisting whatever arises in the present moment. And that's another practice here. As you let go of your habitual, the habits of your personality, they gradually recede, subside.

And you no longer argue with the present moment. Because for many people, there's a habit of discontent. They're not rooted in being, so they're discontent.

There's always a discontent somewhere floating around. And then they seek explanations for the underlying feeling of discontent. Easy to find explanations why you're not happy.

And they start even here. Various obstacles can arise here to the deepening of your consciousness. One of the obstacle is the patterns of your mind that travel with you, that are part of your personality.

The patterns of your mind, and the same thing, they create a reactivity to things or to people. But another obstacle is, it's too nice here. It's too pleasant.

How can you awaken in paradise? Nobody would awaken in paradise. You're much more likely to awaken in hell.

But don't worry, even here, you will be challenged, either by external events, seeing significant things, but they'll bring up some kind of complaint. I'm not talking about complaint when something needs to be rectified, something can be done about it, but the other kind of complaining. Ah.

So watch your mind, observe patterns of reactivity and useless complaining if they arise, because complaining is an important part of many egos. For many egos, complaining is a very important part of their sustenance, they thrive on it. Criticizing, complaining, finding fault here and there.

It's all part of the underlying discontent of something, always a sense of something not being right, something not right, something is missing, don't know what, something missing, sense of not enough, even this is not enough, this wasn't what I was expecting, I was expecting something else, there are too many people here, I was expecting something smaller. I can't do it here, there's too many, this isn't right, oh, it's too touristy, I don't like it here, there are tourists around, tourists. Well, but according to the latest research, tourists are actually human beings.

So if you come to a place of living aligned with the is-ness of the moment, this is a beautiful spiritual practice until it becomes second nature, being in alignment with the is-ness of now, and that means also the thinking mind slows down the more you are aligned with the is-ness of now, and you acknowledge the now and whatever arises in the now, including and especially the small things in the present moment.

And you begin to enjoy just walking from here to there, a few steps, conscious of taking one step at a time, handling an object, putting on your shoes or your saddles, making a cup of tea, you come to acknowledge the aliveness of everything, even so-called inanimate objects, because ultimately nothing is inanimate. I want to go more deeply into that during this retreat. All the ancient cultures, ancient civilizations, including the Polynesian civilization here, but going back everywhere, they all had the primordial spirituality of all ancient cultures was what is called, sometimes called in anthropology, animism.

Animism means not just the belief, but the feeling or the sensing that everything in this world has a spirit, has a soul, anima from soul, Latin from soul. Animism underlies all ancient spirituality everywhere. The sensing that the world is intensely alive, there is a hidden presence in all things, not just alive things, but also so-called inanimate things.

There is a hidden presence. And that is, we are returning to that realization now at a deeper level. Sometimes in ancient civilizations, they interpret it as everything has a little spirit.

There's this little spirit here and a spirit there. But of course, it's deeper than that. Everything is a manifestation of consciousness.

Consciousness is the intelligence that underlies the universe. There is a vast intelligence that is the organizing principle behind the manifestation of all life forms. There's a vast intelligence at work beyond sense perceptions.

And so everything has, the Romans believed it, Polynesians believed it, the ancient Europeans believed it, in Africa, everywhere, in China, in Taoism, all that, in Roman times, every house, they believed, had an energy field that they called the spirit of the house. And of course, in China, in Japan, you have feng shui, a similar thing, that still has survived from those times, since there is an energy field. Whereas for contemporary humans, the advanced humans, the world has become lifeless.

That started with scientific materialism in the 19th century. And the world has become, it's not really perceived as being alive. And even the natural world was regarded as a, they began to regard the natural world as a commodity.

So they lost, I think, that sense of the aliveness and ultimately the sacredness of all things that is hiding beyond the appearance. And that is a terrible loss, and this is why we have arrived at such a crisis point now. But that is a loss within the human, because through excessive conceptualization, the ego has grown and grown and grown, and this excessive conceptualization deadens the world around you, because everything is filtered through concepts.

Every human that you meet is called something, it's filtered through conceptualization. No longer, there's no longer the sense of connectedness, neither from human to another, nor from human to nature. And even the connectedness with an object.

I've had for many years, I've had this, people, when I mention it, people think I'm a little weird. Well, I suppose I am a little weird, but for always that sense of certain objects that I live with, they're kind of my friends.

[Speaker 2] (1:49:15 - 1:49:19)
It's not an attached, not an egoic attachment, just an acknowledgement.

[Speaker 1] (1:49:49 - 2:22:33)
The essence of meditation is, of course, stillness. Every meditation technique is designed to take you into stillness. So one could say that whatever technique you use is not the meditation.

Although techniques can be helpful. The true meditation, of course, is stillness, and then we don't need to call it meditation anymore. Because to be aware of stillness is the arising of your natural state, we could call that.

Your natural state of connectedness. Connectedness with what? Something deeper than the person that you also are.

You are a person, but there is a depth to who you are where the person merges with something huge. And we could call it the intelligence that underlies the manifested universe. Intelligence that pervades and at the same time is beyond the manifested universe and you as a person are one aspect, of course, of the manifested universe.

You are the universe manifesting for a very fleeting moment as a person. But there's more to you than the fleeting person. The fleeting person exists in time.

And even if you reach 100 years or beyond, it's still fleeting. So the person exists in time and the depth of who you are is outside of time. Please, as you sit here and listen, stay alert and become aware, particularly of the spaces between the words or this is not really spaces, it's one space.

Let's call it like that for a moment. We could also call it stillness. Become aware of the stillness between the words.

And realize that the moment you become aware of the stillness between the words and also the stillness behind the words, the moment you become aware of that, you have become still inside, which means you're not thinking, but fully conscious and alert. And already at that, right away, you are connected with something deep and vast. Although from the point of view of the thinking person, it may look as if you had become nothing.

So when you look into my eyes, as I'm not thinking, the words just come. I'm not thinking about them. So the mind is, the mind does operate the moment I speak, but not before and not after.

So when you look into my eyes, because I'm not thinking, you're not looking at a person. You're looking at that which is deeper than the person, which is consciousness. Of course, you can't look at consciousness, but you can connect with consciousness.

And although on the surface reality, it looks as if you were connecting with somebody out there, you're really connecting with a deeper dimension within yourself. And that's, we could call it stillness. Now the person, if the person is not connected with the dimension of stillness, it's hard for the person to realize how important stillness is.

In fact, the person is more likely to be either uninterested in stillness or even afraid of it. But if you ask me, what do you think is the most important thing in my life? What is the most important achievement in my life?

I would say it's the ability to become still, to be still. And as I said in the little book called Stillness Speaks, it's only when you become still that you are really fully yourself. So in daily life, it's important to be able to constantly step back into stillness as you go about your daily activities.

And while you think, use your mind, not think continuously, not being dragged along in a stream of one thought after another, and another, and another, and another, and another, until finally you fall asleep and then have restless dreams. Fortunately, you go into dreamless sleep for a little while, become still, you merge with something vast. But as you wake up in the morning, you quickly lose it again.

The mind immediately starts up. And we live in this era of digital gadgets. When it's become even more important than it was before, to cultivate, so to speak, your ability to be still, because the gadgets that we have, the smartphones, the games, computers, bombard us continuously.

And stimulate continuously the thinking mind. It goes from one thing to another and another. Emails, text messages, the phone ringing, Facebook, Twitter, everything demanding your immediate attention, and then you go there.

You're at the mercy of these devices, well, many people seem to be, and get addicted to the continuous constant stimulus. You get pulled this way, that way, that way. Never having any kind of stillness inside yourself, nor inner space, just stuff.

Stuff without space. And then of course, inevitably after a while, you feel depleted, and still you can't stop. And youngsters finding it harder and harder to focus on anything for very long, more than a few seconds.

Because they've been conditioned to always look to the next thing. They can never stay with anything for more than a few seconds. And now they call it an illness that needs to be treated with drugs, attention deficit disorder.

What's the answer? Give them drugs. So at this time, it's even more important to have this ability to be still, even while you're thinking, in between your thinking, back into stillness.

When you talk to somebody, you talk while you listen, you're still. Present, alert, just that field of attention while you listen. When you look at something, nature, the sky, a tree, you're still.

And you know that you're still, but not by saying in your mind, oh, I'm still. No, you can sense yourself as the stillness. So the most important thing in your life is to become familiar with stillness and have stillness as your constant companion, so to speak.

Your best friend. And that is spiritual awakening, which simply means not to be completely identified with every thought or emotion. That arises.

To realize there's something more to who you are than the continuously arising thoughts and emotions and also sense perceptions. There is more to who you are than that, meaning also there is more to who you are than your, what that in quotation marks, your life. There is more to who you are than what you conventionally consider to be my life.

What you think of as your life, your life situation, what's going on in your life, your relationships, your work, where you live, your finances, your health. Those things make up your life. They are the life of the person.

Are those things completely insignificant? No. They matter.

They have some importance. As I've said somewhere before, of course it matters whether you are poor financially or live in abundance, makes a difference. And most people would probably choose abundance except ardent spiritual seekers who believe that by choosing poverty, they might be able to discover, find God.

Or become spiritually awakened. Of course, there's no guarantee whatsoever if you choose poverty that will awaken you spiritually. It could.

It doesn't. In most cases, it doesn't for those people who practice it. Because true poverty is not to be identified with anything in the world of form.

Not to derive your sense of self, not only from things that you possess, but from any self image in your mind. So you may only possess a loincloth and a begging bowl and yet be identified with an image in your mind of who you are, a highly advanced spiritual being, infinitely superior to all these silly people who are still identified with possessions and other things. Of course, the moment this happens, you're not poor at all.

You are still rich in identification with who you are. And that's heavier than any external possession and mental image of who you are. And even, especially if the image is of spiritually highly advanced, is more of an obstacle than external possessions.

So this is why Jesus said the poor in spirit. That's what he really meant. And that somebody wrote it down correctly.

A lot of things were not written down correctly. I think a few people did take notes when he taught. Blessed are the poor in spirit, which means internally poor, no identification with anything.

So it matters whether you are rich or poor, healthy or not healthy, or have a nice job, or a nice family, harmonious, or live in a nice place. But all these things are very unstable. There's very, almost never a time, and if there is, it's very short, when all the factors that make up your life situation are working perfectly.

Health, finances, work situation, family, relationships, living situation. So, and that's how it is. It's in the nature of phenomenal existence to be in continuous flux.

It continuously changes. Things come and go and disappear. Things may satisfy you for a while, and then they no longer satisfy you.

Things make you happy for a while, then they make you unhappy, because they lose their ability to make you happy, or they disappear. So there's something that is much more important than anything in your life situation, and that's the ability to be still. That's one way of putting it.

And in that, you realize that a depth, there's a depth to who you are, a presence that shows to you without any doubt that whatever happens in your life situation out there is of secondary importance. And when things are not satisfying in your life situation, whether it's to do with money, work, relationships, living situation, health, it is often precisely at those moments when things don't work in one or several of these areas that there's an opportunity for you to go deeper within yourself and find that realm of stillness or spaciousness or presence, whatever you want to call it. So you become, to some extent, free from external conditions, from the conditions of your life, including the physical body, even that's still external, no longer have the ability to make you really unhappy, really upset and frustrated and fearful and anxious.

On the other side, this may sound like bad news, but it's not. All these external things also lose their ability to make you really happy. Wow, yeah, I got it now, yeah.

You can still feel enthusiastic and enjoy life tremendously, whatever life gives you in the world of form. But there's always something, there's something transcendent in you and something from where you observe and enjoy the beautiful things that come into your life. There is an enjoyment there, but you don't give them an importance that they don't have.

You don't attach yourself to them. You allow them to be. It may be a possession that comes to you and it's lovely.

You look after it, whatever it is, a house, an object. You appreciate it. It's lovely.

You look after it without that strong sense of attachment of mine.

[Speaker 2] (2:23:02 - 2:23:15)
If you place excessive focus on the imperfection or areas of unconsciousness, you can no longer meet this person in a space of openness.

[Speaker 1] (2:23:21 - 2:55:33)
I always start with not knowing what to say. That's the reason for the silence. And I recommend that you do that too before any creative activity or anything, just become comfortable with not knowing, which means not thinking, which does not mean you are going to sleep or unconscious, or it could happen that you suddenly drop below thinking.

It happens to some people here. Now, normally to sit in front of an audience and not know what to say could be a nightmare. In fact, some people have nightmares of that kind.

They're sitting somewhere and suddenly the curtain opens and it's a theater and they're all looking. I've forgotten my lines. Public speaking for many people is one of the most stressful things.

And that's because they can't go, become comfortable with not knowing. The big difference is becoming comfortable with not knowing and feeling, I don't know, but I should know. That's very uncomfortable.

Remember what the great philosopher, Socrates said, they call me the wisest of all men for the reason that I'm the only one who knows that he knows nothing. Nobody really has truly understood what he meant. People thought he was just pretending not to know, but I'm convinced that he was referring to the state of not knowing, which is also, of course, the state of not thinking, but awareness out of which the whole philosophy emerged.

The creative use of mind emerged out of the space of no mind. If you have no access to the space of no mind, then your mind will not be creative in any way. In other words, it's just, you can only have to rely on what you have acquired and you will be moving within the conditioned realm of the mind, whatever the mind has been conditioned by.

That's all you have then. Another area where it's very helpful, this not knowing, is not to formulate conclusions on limited, insufficient evidence, to come to conclusions that become rigid thoughts in your mind concerning, for example, other people or yourself, or what you call your life. Such as, for example, let's say you have a relationship, a intimate relationship, then he or she betrays you in the conventional narrative.

And then you've immediately, the mind jumps to this conclusion. I'm never going to trust any woman or man again, never. That's a term you've just would have constructed a dreadful prison for yourself.

So you have a thought that suddenly dominates your mind in order to, I'm not going to suffer again in that way. This is no more, these conclusions can become self-made prisons. And then you walk in and you shut the door and there you are stuck in that mind pattern and never again being able to relate openly to a man or a woman.

And then you've other weird, weird conclusions that people arrive at. Some of them are so-called prejudices and so on. They're very rigid mental formations that deprive you of openness towards reality.

So it's good to be with relation to other people, also frequently not to be very careful with formulating conclusions about other people, individuals or groups of people. Remain as much as possible in the state of not knowing conceptually. And yet there is a deep knowing there, but it's not a knowing that creates separation between you and the other.

And so it's easy to find imperfections in people when you start working with them or living with them. And if you place excessive focus on the imperfection or areas of unconsciousness, then that can obliterate the totality of that person. For example, let's say somebody lies to you about something for whatever, people lie for different reasons, maybe even to not to hurt you or whatever, who knows what the reason is.

And then you find out and then you say, oh, he's a liar, I know what kind of a person that is now, he's a liar, he lied to me, to me. Of course, that makes it much worse than me. And once you have formulated an opinion or a judgment of that kind, you can no longer meet this person in a space of openness because immediately the judgment you formulated is there between you and you relate, this becomes part of the screens of conceptualization through which you then relate to that person.

Now, if you formulate a judgment about an entire group of people, as political group of people, religious group of people, all, whatever they are, are like that, all, then when you meet an individual representative of that group, you will no longer be able to meet him or her because you're meeting your mental image that you have created. So the true meeting is no longer possible. So very dangerous traps in your mind, created by your mind, by unconscious mental activity, what is conventionally called, which is fashionable these days, identity politics and stuff like that is also dangerous because you have entire groups of people and anybody who belongs to that group, you don't no longer look at the individual human being, say, anybody who belongs to this group is like that. It could be a political, racial group or whatever it may be.

So it's all to do with forming mental screens so that make communication almost impossible, true communication. There are quite a few people who do not express emotions fully or don't express them at all. Perhaps even more so in Northern countries, the further North you go, the less they express their emotions.

That's how it seems to be. Maybe it's too cold to express your emotions. Now, the practice I describe of observing your emotions, allowing them to be, for somebody who habitually does not express emotions, it is not usually the best way to start.

Try and observe his or her emotions because they may not even know what emotions they are having. They may be so much pushed down. So particularly for those people who have been suppressing emotions, it is very helpful to express the emotions, if possible, without injuring anybody or yourself, to allow yourself to express emotions and witness that at the same time.

So the expression itself would not free you because emotions, if they are not observed and not witnessed, tend to renew themselves through renewed thinking because there's this vicious circle between emotion and thought processes. So the expression alone is not enough because you would simply be stuck with it and express the anger because the anger dissipates somewhat as you express it. But if you are not conscious of the relationship between your thought processes and the anger, the thought processes will create renewed anger.

And so you would be going to the same or other therapists and hitting the pillows for 20 or 30 years, not realizing that through your thought processes, you're continuously recreating emotion and you're identifying so much. So without the presence, expression is better than repression. Repression can make you ill, but to become, to transcend, it is essential to be alert and present and watch it as an energy field so that through the watching, it becomes depersonalized so that you don't feel you're not totally stuck in it.

And then you can express it, hit something, not a person if possible, the pillow, if it's anger or scream, and it feels good perhaps and feel the raw energy of it like fire and feel it, wow. And if you allow it completely and express it, it can even very quickly turn around and then you can do something useful that you have an enormous energy and suddenly it gets turned around and it's just, it's no longer, it can shift from anger to just being intense energy. Okay, now I'm going to clean my room.

Not angry anymore, simply with energy. You could also clean your room still being angry, but that's not good cleaning because you would be cleaning on the material level and on an energetic level, you would be polluting your room. And so to become free, for a while, some people need to express fully and then a time comes when there's enough presence and you have expressed it, then you can gradually more and more work on the inner level and bring presence to it on the inner, not that you ever hold it down.

If it wants to and needs to express itself, you may do something, maybe you can transform it into physical movement, vigorous movement or whatever it is and watch, but always be there as a witness. At some point, you may find that you have a choice. The emotion arises, you can express it or not express it.

And it can simply be transformed or transmuted through bringing presence to it. You will know in the moment whether it needs to express itself or not. If you have never or rarely expressed emotion, then by all means, allow yourself to express it without indulging and without personalizing it, recognizing it as energy, no more, just as energy.

And watch. So what in your life as you pursue a goal, another way of putting, of approaching it is to ask yourself if you are not really enjoying while you pursue the goal, whatever it is in your life, if you are not really enjoying the doing because you are so focused on becoming and achieving and arriving at this future point that the enjoyment of the doing is greatly diminished or disappears completely because all you want to do is arrive, but you're not there yet.

That's the nature of stress, how stress arises. Stress means there is a continuous focus on the next moment. So you are torn away, and this is produced by the human mind through thinking, you are torn away internally from the present moment into a nonexistent, because the future never exists except as a thought, you are torn into this so-called future, which is a never land because it can never arrive, you can never reach the future because the moment it becomes reality in your life, it's the present moment.

So by having this mindset, an excessive focus on becoming or arriving or achieving, you lose completely the being dimension. And then your life is completely out of balance, even if you achieve in the eyes of the world, fame or wealth or worldly success, and yet you are a frustrated and unhappy human being, perhaps pretending that you are happy, but you're not. And then you have to take drugs or alcohol or go from one relationship to another or compulsively pursue the next thing and the next thing and the next thing, accumulate more of this and this and this, and so that's not a mastery of life.

Even if you have your private debt, does not mean you have achieved mastery of life. In fact, you may be completely deluded. Not necessarily, you could have a private debt and have achieved the mastery, wouldn't that be great?

So that is, our purpose here is to have that balance and here the emphasis, of course, of this teaching is on finding the being dimension, awareness of being, which is why I talk so much about the present moment, because this is always the moment your attention goes fully into the present moment, you have withdrawn attention from becoming and doing, and what arises is the being dimension. So, and that is associated also with a sometimes brief, but vitally important cessation of thinking. In that moment, when you become completely aware of the present moment, and it starts with sense perception, you're suddenly aware of your surroundings.

You may also suddenly be aware of the inner energy field that you feel you're alive. In this present moment, there is aliveness all around you, and you can perceive it through your senses. You hear, you feel, you see, you smell, but there's also an aliveness, an inherent aliveness in your body.

So you become aware simultaneously in the present moment of a sense of aliveness within and without. So in addition to what you see with your senses, there is an underlying field of aliveness that you can be aware of in the present moment, and that's the being dimension or presence. And that's who you are in essence, but that's not only who you are in essence.

That is the essence of everything. So when you realize that for yourself, it's not the person who has that realization. The universe has that realization.

The universe, which for a moment, because your life is a moment on a cosmic scale, your life here as a person has a very short duration. It goes, choop, choop. Well, was that it?

Yeah. Then the element of continuous, frustration and discontent, and the feeling there's something not right here, or the feeling there's something vital missing in my life, but always looking to the next thing to find that vital thing that's missing in my life. I have to find it.

If you don't realize it's already here, so there's something. I don't feel, I don't feel complete. There's still something lacking, a sense of lack.

Something is missing. Don't know what it is. You might even not verbally say that.

There's just a feeling that something is missing or something is not right. Of course not, because your life is completely out of balance, but you're, I'm not nothing personal. I'm not talking to you.

I'm talking in general terms. If your life were completely out of balance, you wouldn't be here. Or if you had accidentally stumbled upon this place, you would soon leave.

So the being dimension is accessed, obviously, in the present moment. And the doing, of course, requires time. You cannot do anything without some dimension of time.

Make a cup of tea. You need some time to make a cup of tea. Learn to become this or that.

You need time to become a doctor or to become a musician or to become a dancer or to become whatever you need. Time, that's the time-temporal dimension. And yet, although you need time, the paradox is that you never really, not really, that you never actually experience time or the passing of time, except in your head as a thought, as an anticipation of the next moment or a memory of the last or other moments of the past.

That's how you experience time. But never as a direct experience. Time, you can never experience directly because whenever you ask yourself, where's time?

All you ever get is the present moment. So, on one level of your life, time seems vital or to do things. Now, on another side of that coin of time, where on one hand, time seems useful because you can, on the level, surface level of reality, you can do things in time and become, from being an ignorant person, become a very knowledgeable person in time.

It takes time to acquire knowledge on that level. And yet, that's a good aspect of time, but then there's something else aspect of time which you discover when you compare a photo of yourself taken at the age of 20, let's say you are now 40 or 50 or whatever, and you discover, oh, that's me 20 years ago, and then you look in the mirror, or 30 years ago, what happened to me? Time, who did this to me?

Time. Oh, my God. And if you're young and beautiful or strong and healthy, then you can still know that eventually, time is going to erode your good looks.

No, this is not tragic unless you are very much identified, you derive your sense of identity from your physical body, which might look good right now, but won't in time. Time will, and then, of course, what ultimately time, of course, what time does, it kills you. So first, it enables you to do things and to become, but then at the same time, you begin to wilt like a flower.

It does, so time does that to a flower too, much more quickly than a human, but very similar. It does it to a fruit, a piece of fruit. If you want to observe the passing of time, all you can do is to observe the effect that time has on things, but you cannot observe time because it's never there.

It's a paradox. One could go into this or make it into a huge philosophical thing, which I won't do. It's enough for you to see in your personal, your immediate experience, time is not something that you can ever experience directly.

It only leaves behind evidence it's been there. A dead body, for example. Or an apple that three, two weeks ago was very fresh and now it's all wrinkled and has gone.

And two weeks before it was, the apple looked, and it's the same with young humans. They can be very radiant and then gradually. Now, an interesting thing happens for those humans who are not totally identified with that level of form, but who have access to being dimension as they grow older, the being dimension, as the physical vehicle gets gradually eroded by time, the physical, sorry, the being dimension is actually able to shine through more.

As the body weakens and gets old, there is a light, the light of consciousness that can shine through. And then you find certain old people who, as the body weakens, the light increases of consciousness and the ego is completely gone, and there's just a beautiful presence left. That's the, at the latest, as you grow old, that's your last opportunity.

But if you've missed it for the first 75 years of your life, because you were too concerned with doing all the time and acquiring and becoming, I don't know whether you can still find it. I think if you fall ill or something like that happens to you, yes, you can. It's preferable not to wait until you're close to death to look for the being dimension, because you might not find it anymore because you're so absorbed in the doing and in time that you won't even look for it.

If you had no interest whatsoever throughout your life in any of this, it's a bit late. That's fine. The universe is abundant and patient and every life has a purpose.

We'll talk about that some other time. Time, you see. We can't get away from it.

This mind-made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive. To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation.

[Speaker 2] (2:55:36 - 2:56:23)
The essence of this is to join in the state of presence.

[Speaker 12] (2:56:28 - 2:56:35)
So it's not the words, it's the stillness.

[Speaker 1] (2:56:45 - 2:57:10)
It may be helpful, and this is why we are doing this, to look at me or the image of me on the screen because I'm not, except in the moment when I speak, I'm not thinking.

[Speaker 2] (2:57:12 - 2:57:31)
And so somehow, I don't know how, but somehow that state of pure awareness or

presence kind of transmits itself if you're open to it.

[Speaker 1] (2:57:39 - 2:57:51)
When you look at somebody, when you are with somebody who is in that state of presence, then it's easier for you to be present.

[Speaker 2] (2:57:52 - 2:58:06)
When you're with somebody who is immersed in thought activity, identified with thinking, then it's more challenging for you to be present.

[Speaker 1] (2:58:08 - 3:01:31)
Still possible, but then the danger is that you may be pulled into the same vibrational frequency, so to speak, of identification with thinking and lose yourself in it. It's just amazing that it's not yet common knowledge that such a state of consciousness that we call presence or awareness, that it even exists or is possible, that it is the secret dimension of consciousness because very few people seem to know about it and it's not in the mainstream culture. All that's been there in the teaching of the ancient spiritual teachers, it's the essence of their teaching and yet misunderstood.

So if I could just put it in a nutshell, just in one short, one brief sentence, what this is all about is to be here with me and all the others who are joining us here. We're all connected at a deeper level of the collective consciousness, human consciousness, to be here and to enjoy being aware, fully aware, fully awake without needing to think, conceptual thinking, inner dialogues, monologues, interpretations, viewpoints, past, future, regret, anxiety, all produced by unconscious identification with thinking, unnecessary thinking in many cases.

[Speaker 2] (3:01:39 - 3:01:50)
If thoughts come in while we sit here together, don't follow them, just let them dissolve.

[Speaker 1] (3:01:51 - 3:02:13)
Don't follow them with your attention. Every thought wants to grow and says, give me attention, but you just let it drift away like a cloud. The sky is blue and occasional clouds may come.

[Speaker 2] (3:02:13 - 3:03:26)
The blue sky is the awareness. The clouds are the thoughts. Now, I'm here to help you free yourself from unconscious, compulsive thinking.

And then you can do some real thinking that is effective and when it's needed. So in essence, you are the sky, the cloud, the vast, empty, spacious sky, thinking of the movement of clouds in this analogy, but it is a good analogy.

[Speaker 1] (3:03:32 - 3:05:10)
Now, if there were so much thinking in you that we could compare it to a sky that is totally covered in clouds, then you would not even know what it is I'm talking about right now. There needs to be in you at least a small opening, an interval between two thoughts, a brief, a small opening, the tiny bit of blue sky that you see as the clouds separate for a moment and there you sense a spaciousness, a stillness. And then you know what it is that I'm talking about.

And then you can begin to become comfortable with it and then actually realize how deeply enjoyable or satisfying that dimension of consciousness is.

[Speaker 2] (3:05:23 - 3:07:18)
It frees you not only from compulsive thinking, which is a dreadful affliction, it frees you also, and perhaps even more importantly, from a sense of identity, a

sense of self that is created by identification with compulsive thinking, a sense of identity that is derived from thought. And then you tell yourself and others who you are, that is connected with your life story, a narrative in your mind, which is a story of me,

[Speaker 1] (3:07:19 - 3:07:41)
whatever it is that it consists of, whatever you identify with, whether it's possessions or achievements or non-achievements or successes or failures,

[Speaker 2] (3:07:49 - 3:08:06)
whether you are proud or ashamed of yourself, it all comes down to thought forms

[Speaker 1] (3:08:09 - 3:08:14)
that you confuse with who you are,

[Speaker 2] (3:08:16 - 3:08:18)
even material possessions.

[Speaker 1] (3:08:23 - 3:08:35)
Of course, the only way you can experience a material possession or anything in the outer world is as a thought form.

[Speaker 2] (3:08:37 - 3:08:46)
It gets translated, your sense perceptions get translated into a mental formation.

[Speaker 1] (3:08:50 - 3:09:10)
So you see a big house there, and then the visual perception gets coded into nerve impulses that are sent to the brain and the brain decodes in some way.

[Speaker 2] (3:09:12 - 3:09:21)
And then you end up with a thought form and that says, my house.

[Speaker 1] (3:09:23 - 3:10:05)
And then you identify with a thought form of your house, which may add to your sense of who you are for a while. But there are many thought forms that you can identify with, positive or negative. You can have a thought form that you are, you have no house and you have no car, and perhaps you don't even have a bed.

[Speaker 2] (3:10:09 - 3:10:18)
Does that free you from self-identification?

[Speaker 1] (3:10:21 - 3:11:38)
Well, it frees you from self-identification with a certain type of thought form that corresponds to physical things, but it does not necessarily free you from identification with thought, because you could have the identification with the thought of yourself as someone who has transcended identification with possessions, is therefore spiritually superior to all these unconscious people who live in their big houses and drive their big cars.

You have risen above it. A subtle form of, also of fictitious self, a subtle form of ego, you have to be very careful, of any kind of conceptual identity.

[Speaker 2] (3:11:39 - 3:12:41)
It's always derived from thought, whereas your true identity is non-conceptual, cannot be found in any thought that you have about yourself in the same way that you cannot find the true identity of anybody else through conceptualization, thinking about them.

[Speaker 1] (3:12:53 - 3:14:49)

The art of living is to be able to function in the realm of thought and function as well as possible without looking for yourself in the realm of thought. And usually that means looking for a stronger sense of identity through thought, which for example, you create by having a hostile or antagonistic attitude towards other people or situations, to make them into enemies, so to speak, that strengthens your conceptual identity. Even being angry with somebody strengthens it.

You can see how the ego can get inflated when you're angry with somebody or you observe somebody who is angry. So, this is all part of a live event.

[Speaker 2] (3:14:50 - 3:14:56)
Can't cut it out and that's good.

[Speaker 1] (3:15:10 - 3:15:31)
So if you can use thought, but knowing always who you are, that you are not anything that can be defined by thought, that you cannot know yourself as thought or a bundle of thoughts.

[Speaker 2] (3:15:45 - 3:16:05)
And so we are here to deepen your knowledge of yourself as awareness, as consciousness. And that's nothing to do with conceptual knowledge.

[Speaker 1] (3:16:05 - 3:16:17)
You can't break it down into bits and pieces. Knowledge may not even be the best word to describe it.

[Speaker 2] (3:16:19 - 3:16:23)
Perhaps a better word would be knowing, knowing yourself.

[Speaker 1] (3:16:53 - 4:21:04)
Whereas meditation, true meditation is not a doing, but it's the realization of being. And there's no time in being. Simple realization that you are.

This is why I, some techniques are fine. Eventually, every technique you have to let go. Like a raft, Buddhism has the image of the analogy or the story of a raft that you use to cross a river.

You use a raft to cross a river. When you've crossed the river, you don't take up the raft and carry it around with you. So the raft is a technique or the teaching that can take you there perhaps.

But once you're there, you realize you don't need it. So whatever technique you use in meditation, eventually it is to be transcended or you can transcend it right now without any technique. This is why I don't call this a meditation because if I, again, I love meditation, but there's another possibility, and that is at any given moment to invite this awareness into your life, this dimension to see there is a possibility of awakening, simply realizing that you are in this moment and so that awareness of awareness, the realization of being.

And in that, then, as this deepens, again, this is time to talk about something timeless, and that becomes your identity, the being, not the personality or any achievement or whatever it may be in your past or future. That's fine. You manipulate, you hold, you handle your life consciously.

It will actually improve when you are rooted in the unconditioned consciousness, because that's what it is. Then if you are rooted in the vertical dimension, things begin to actually also improve in the horizontal dimension because that consciousness flows into your life, not that it ever becomes totally free of challenges. The challenges continue, but the challenges will then only take you deeper instead of making you more unconscious, which is what they often do for many humans.

So that is, there's an ancient word, self-realization. You can use that expression. That's who or what you are beyond the personality.

And then that is what Jesus calls when there's a parable about him. He tells a parable about a man who builds a house and the house is built on sand. And when the storms come and the floods come, the house is swept away.

And then there's another man who, before building a house, he digs deep, he digs deep until he reaches the rock, which is deep. And so he reaches the front, after he digs deep and finds the foundation. And then he builds a house on the rock and the floods come and the rains come and the storms come and the house is not swept away, it stands.

This is an analogy about states of consciousness, the state of deep connectedness with being, the vertical dimension, and the state of being trapped only on the horizontal dimension, when life becomes actually suffering, to use a term of the Buddha, frustrating, suffering, and then you can resent it all and so on. So this is the, now your mission is to invite, this into your life throughout the day. Don't miss an opportunity.

Yes, you still go about your normal activities, but allow yourself to become aware of the vertical dimension as much as possible. It seems at first there's a current in you that doesn't want that. There is an, the egoic self will tell you that this is not the time to be present.

You have other, I've got so much on my plate, I can't be present now, don't talk to me about this. Look what I'm dealing with here. And you want me to be spiritual?

Just, I'll be spiritual when I'm, when I've solved all that. And then I'll find a nice place, a retreat center in Bali, and then I can finally... Of course, life does not stop challenging you, so don't wait.

Have your life interspersed with that brief moments, initially brief, brief moments of spaciousness, brief moments of spaciousness. One conscious breath is already something. Let's say you are, you're on your computer.

Okay, one conscious breath. You look away from the screen. If you can, look away at the sky or a plant, anything natural, or close your eyes.

But if you close your eyes, then your screen will still be there. You'll still see the computer screen, awful. So you look at the screen.

One conscious breath. A little bit of spaciousness has opened up. And during that time period, which if you measure in time, it would be like maybe 10 seconds, whatever.

But that is a little bit of spacious consciousness you have suddenly experienced. And you might even want to take a second conscious breath. Follow the breath with your attention.

And maybe even a third, although your mind says, yeah, I don't have time for this. But it's only one minute. So don't believe every thought that comes in and says, I have to deal with this first.

I have to do this first. That's another parable in the Gospels where you're invited to a wedding feast. People get invited to a wedding feast and everybody says, well, let me do this first.

First, I need to sell my cattle. No, I need to do this first. Let me do this first.

There's always something. Don't believe your mind when it says, no, no, can't do it now. There's nobody who does not have one minute to be aware of their breath, unless it's an emergency.

You have to get to the hospital now. Okay. Get into your car.

Every time I would recommend you close the door and stay just a moment of spaciousness. I suggest half a minute to one minute, but don't measure it. Just feel it.

Okay, I'm going to do one minute now. Okay. And then you're just internally already trying to get to the end of it.

You have to be there. Anytime you're waiting for something, be present. Use, if you cannot just be present, this ability may arise a little bit later when you can just decide, so to speak, not the right word, to just be free of thinking, but just be aware.

So that comes a little bit later, just the ability to just have that space. Somebody asked me some years ago, what's your greatest achievement in life? And I said, well, my greatest achievement is I don't think when I don't have to think or don't want to think.

I don't need to think. That's my greatest achievement. But it's not really an achievement, is it?

It wouldn't get me a job. I'm applying for a job in my, what are you going to see? The resume can be free of thinking.

So it's not an achievement. Again, it would be a misperception to just call it an achievement because that discovery, this realization, that dimension of consciousness has already always been there. In that sense, it's not an achievement.

I have made it. No, you didn't do anything. You just became aware of being, which is not a doing.

It sounds like a doing when you talk about it. You become aware of being, not an achievement because being is the essence of who you are. And to know the essence of who you are is not an achievement.

And so, wow. First level of being aware of the present moment is to be aware of your sense perceptions. That brings, it's the first step into the present moment.

Then perhaps you're aware of your breathing and your inner body, and sense perception at the same time. So first you become aware of where you are, what's around you, or what you're doing. And then you go deeper into the present moment.

And the essence of the present moment is you. So the essence of what we call the present moment is consciousness. And consciousness is the space in which everything happens.

Consciousness is the one thing that never changes is the present moment. It's always now. It's always now.

And what is the present moment in essence? In essence, the present moment is not what happens in the present moment. The deeper essence is the present moment is the space for whatever happens.

And there's the space, like the canvas, however you want to call it. So you are aware of yourself ultimately as the present moment. And this realization that ultimately you are the present moment, those words had not come to me when I was writing the power of now.

So it never got into the book because the words came to me after I'd already written the book. Said, oh, I should have put that in. Oh no, why didn't I put that in?

Oh, you're no good. You're good. I didn't do that.

So you can, you sense the essence of what present moment really means as consciousness. The one thing that is beyond any doubt that you are right now conscious. And that's not the right way of putting it.

If I say you are conscious, you are consciousness is better. You are consciousness. Today I may just answer some written questions.

This is only a very small selection out of several hundred. It's hard to choose. It's only almost random choice, not totally random, but almost.

But before I do that, perhaps just a few words, and this will take between five minutes and one hour. Don't. When you want to strengthen the physical body, what do you do?

You exercise. But what is that actually when you exercise? What do you do when you exercise?

One way of putting it is to say that you create difficulty for the body. You create obstacles for the body to overcome. There it is, running on the track with a lifting weight.

It's when you're creating a difficulty for the body. Any exercise is making life difficult for the body. That's a way of looking at it.

That's not a normal way of looking at it. You take the body out of its comfort zone, although there is a stage where the body, once it gets going, the body may enjoy the energy of it. But until that flows, there's a discomfort.

And that's the only way the body can get stronger. If the body stays in its comfort zone, then, well, you will be lying on a sofa or on a deck chair. It's very nice, but the body doesn't change.

So that's an interesting, almost an analogy for something that happens to humans, because it seems that life for everybody creates difficulties. So it's not, one would have thought, if I were God, I would make life easy for everybody. And you would then see most likely, if you did that, most likely there would be, no evolution would ever have happened, or no further evolution if you do it right now, because it's only, it seems, both on the physical level and beyond, it's only through facing difficulties, which you could also call challenges, which you could also call problems, if you like, which you could also call one damn thing after another. The strange thing is, only by encountering these challenges do we grow in consciousness and generate energy. It awakens us eventually.

Now, if you overdo physical exercise, you put too much strain on the body, you could kill the body, you could kill yourself, and this has happened to people who were so obsessed with physical exercise that they overdid it. I've read, for example, whenever it was one or two years ago, a man who wrote about the incredible benefits of jogging died of a heart attack while he was jogging, and he wasn't that old, so you can overdo it, and then instead of the body getting stronger, it dies. And you could also say, when you look at life and humans, life on this planet, probably many other planets, you would say, well, it's all very well.

Sometimes it seems to work that through facing challenges and problems, we grow. We grow out of identification with mind. We grow out of the ego.

We transcend our conditioned state of consciousness, and a new consciousness arises. And if I know, not actually speaking for myself, without facing difficulties and challenges, there would not have been any growth in consciousness and no awakening if I had had a, what's the word? For example, a trust fund, where you know from a very early age, your parents have already looked after your security.

And you know from an early age, if you don't want to work or anything, you don't have to, you can have a comfortable life without ever doing anything. There are people like that. There may even be one or two here, but if you are here and you are a trust fund baby, then other things must have happened to you that created difficulties.

It wasn't financial, but there were other things. And even eventually to a trust fund baby, other difficulties will happen. But for quite a while, it could be that this person remains stagnant or might enjoy certain activities or is indulged in sensory, pleasures until it gets too much.

It's no longer satisfying and then it reaches a critical stage. And sometimes there was a man in, I met him many, many years ago. I was taken to a kind of cocktail party.

I didn't move in those circles, but it just happened accidentally that I ended up there. And somebody took me and says, you must come and look, this is where you're going to meet the sixth richest man in England or something. Somebody, a friend of mine who was impressed by these things.

So I met this man who became rich apparently because he invented one little thing. One, he had one idea and became a billionaire. This is not uncommon these days, by the way, with the internet.

But this was before the internet. He had one idea and that's called Tetra Pak. The drinks that come in a carton and it has a carton that has a particular kind of, opens in a particular way so that you can pour out the liquid.

It's called, it's a patent, Tetra Pak. So he came up with that and he became a billionaire. And I've talked to him briefly and then I forgot about many, many years past and forgot about it.

And two or three years ago, I happened to read in the paper that his son, who was by now, he was probably 40 years old, was a drug addict, seriously addicted to drugs and lost completely control of his life, was adrift completely. And he was, they arrested him. He was driving under the influence of some drugs.

And when police entered his house, they found in one of the bedrooms in big house in Belgravia, London, they found his wife, the dead body of his wife had been in that bed for several months. And he just couldn't, he hadn't killed her, but she probably died of a drug overdose and he just couldn't face dealing with it. So he just closed the door and there was a dead body.

This can happen to the extreme cases of trust fund dysfunction. So in other words, when life gets too easy for you, things can quickly deteriorate, but that's your opportunity then because first life gets too easy. Then because it gets too easy, it deteriorates and you lose more and more consciousness.

And then it is possible that you encounter so much suffering that then finally experience the difficulty of life. And then there's a possibility of growth. So this could happen to this man too.

Now, there's always the possibility of awakening. This mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive. To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation.

And of course, so you see your life, your so-called life crumbling and it's painful. And it's would be, we're not denying that. That's not saying it's not painful.

It is painful, but it is a chance. It's an opportunity for people to go deeper and realize a foundation, something what you could call true sense of safety or security that has nothing to do with the externals of your life. And it seems that it's necessary for many people to experience adversity in the form of loss to be driven there voluntarily.

They don't go there. And not everybody who experiences adversity will go there. Some get trapped in a reactive movement and become deeply either angry, say it's not fair, shouldn't have happened to me, or be despondent, can't take anymore.

Or you cry for the next five years. You get stuck in a reactive movement. And so you're even more deeply stuck in a rigid pattern.

But there is a chance that you can go deeper and let go of seeking to identify with any form in your life. And suddenly something arises from deep within that is peaceful. You can't name it.

And so you've touched suddenly something that you didn't know existed in you. I sometimes call it the formless. Could call spirit because spirit is the formless.

And suddenly you have the peace that passes all understanding because you can't explain it. Well, I'm trying to explain it. But it's hard.

So it seems to me there's a general pattern at work that it is inherent in the nature of physical existence of life forms that challenges an essential ingredient of their lifespan here. And part of the way through which they evolve. But when they say they evolve, what it means is the one consciousness evolves, awakens into this dimension through the different life forms in different ways.

And it awakens only because we are being challenged. And that is quite a relief to realize to be challenged doesn't mean there's something wrong. There's something wrong with my life that shouldn't be.

If you believe or act as if this shouldn't be happening, then you get really unhappy. Then the challenges become transformed into unhappiness inside you. If it's not unhappiness, it's resentment.

If it's not resentment, it's anger. It's self-pity. It's complaining.

It's despondency. So for the simple reason that you are misunderstanding the very purpose of life and expecting something that your mind has come up with, it should be different. What you are looking for is something deeper.

What every human is looking for is something deeper than the world can give you. The world can only challenge you, give you challenges and adversity so that you awaken. The world cannot, as I said, it cannot make you happy because it's not here to make you happy.

But it has another purpose. It is here to make you conscious. That's how it operates.

Also, that means whatever arises in the present moment is just right for this moment, for you at this moment. But if you are stuck in the mind, the egoic mind, then you will completely ignore or even continuously dislike the present moment. And it is an amazing way to live.

It is dreadful. But millions still live like that without knowing it unconsciously. They live for the next moment until they get very old.

Then they know there's not much time left. Then the past becomes more and more important, the happiness of the past. Oh, oh.

So living for the next moment is, for most people, unconscious and quite normal. They live hoping that at some point they are going to achieve fulfillment. And little fulfillments come here and then.

There's nothing wrong with that. It's wonderful when you achieve things. It's even wonderful when you fall in love.

Enjoy it. Falling in, it's not going to last, but enjoy it. So that's great.

It's not, but there's always, I've met in the, fortunately been able to meet over the years quite a few people who are in the eyes of the world highly successful. They've got everything. They've got fame.

They've got money. They've got everything. They have got their private jets.

They can go anywhere at any moment, can have anything, any pleasure. And they've told me that after they achieved fame and fortune, there was an initial time period when there was elation and they were on a continuous high, but then gradually, more and more, they experienced a very deep low in their mental, emotional state, including depression and wanting to, not wanting to live anymore. They had everything, but, and some had to go to drugs to make life bearable, had everything.

Wasn't enough. It wasn't enough. And then you can't fool yourself anymore when you have everything.

You can't fool yourself. When I achieve that, I'll be happy. No, you have achieved everything, but you're not happy.

So the worst thing would be for you to achieve, to get everything that you want, and then you can't fool yourself anymore and look to the future for some fulfillment, and that's really dreadful. So that is the human condition, and it all is connected to who you sense yourself to be, your identity, your identity as who you are, your sense of self. That is the foundation for your life, your sense of self, and everybody is concerned with identity.

From childhood onward, the identity becomes very important. Of course, every human needs shelter and food, and sustenance, shelter, and one can say almost the next thing, well, the next thing is, as a human grows up, needs some kind of love or affection, but that's already bound up with identity because if you don't get love and affection, then you already have a deficient sense of self that developed in early age. So identity refers to your sense of self, and where does your sense of self come from?

What does it mean to be you? And usually, most humans, especially those who are not awakening yet, they look to their sense of identity through a narrative that is connected to their past. So I call that sometimes the story of me.

So everybody has the story of me. I call that, well, it's a narrative, and people call it, this is an interesting expression, they call it my life. So you think about my life, let me think about that.

Well, it's a mixture of good and bad. It's been all kinds of weird things in the past. And certainly, almost everybody says, it didn't quite go the way I had imagined it to be when I was 18 or 17.

And many people have a feeling something went wrong somewhere. Strangely, many people have the feeling they haven't started to live yet. And it's almost like I'm still, I'm hoping at some point I'm going to start living soon.

I'll start, I just need to meet the right person. I just need to get that job. I just need to find this or that possession, or if people would only recognize my worth or recognition of one kind.

It's an unconscious process. The longing, my life hasn't actually started yet. And some people have that throughout their life until finally they are surprised that they reach retirement.

And they're still, but just maybe a few years before retirement, you can look to your retirement as the liberation. Then I can start living. Now I know when I retire, then I can start living.

Okay, two more years, one more year, six months. And then the moment comes, you sit in your office and the clock reaches five o'clock, it's my last day. And then off you go.

And the first few days and weeks are great because you go to the golf course and then sit around. If you have sufficient funds, you can have your cocktails. You may not have sufficient funds these days, so that's another problem.

And so a few weeks pass and you sit there and you take a trip and you come back. And then you move to a better climate because you don't, let's move to Florida, okay. And then you sit in Florida, just looking at the sun and then you play another game of golf.

And then a kind of fatigue sets in and then the mind says, and now what? And nothing, who am I now? I had this title, I had a job description.

I was the vice president of this company or whatever. And now I'm no longer a vice president. And a great part of my identity was derived from the concept of vice president of the company.

And suddenly the concept has dissolved and who am I now? Without that, well, that's weird. I get this weird feeling of not being nobody anymore.

And so you're retired. And it's a strange thing that it is not uncommon for people to die just two or three years after retiring because there's nothing there anymore to live for. They were looking towards retirement for some kind of a solution, but that's not it.

So it's not, everybody's looking where it cannot be found. It cannot be found in the future. That what you're looking for cannot be found in the future because, don't tell anybody, but there is no future.

There is no future. There just seems to be a future. And you are aware, just as I'm aware of what's around me, you're aware of what's around you.

You're aware of my voice. You're aware of what you see. And you may be aware of feelings or thoughts that are still coming and going.

And the all important question is, in addition to being aware of these things, are you aware that you are aware? That is the, or we could call the transcendent dimension. That is inner space opening up and that is going beyond form in your life because everything is form, sense perceptions, thoughts, thought forms, emotions, emotional formations.

And the challenge is not to get trapped exclusively in the world of form, which includes your form identity, which consists of whatever's going on in your life and primarily the thoughts and thought patterns and emotional patterns that you, the memories and so on, is all thoughts that you identify with as yourself. That's a very small, limiting sense of self that easily gets frustrated, upset, anxious, reactive. And why do you always get, not you personally, why, if one is trapped in that narrow sense of self, why does one get so easily upset, anxious, reactive, lost in all kinds of mental formations, identified with viewpoints and opinions so that other viewpoints and other opinions held by other people make those people into enemies, all those things that bring enormous limitation into your life, but that's normal. Almost everybody lives like that, except those who are awakening.

And awakening, just as you are, awakening means a dimension is coming into your life that is beyond form, and that's why we are here. So when I asked at the beginning, whether you are, in addition to being aware of whatever is going on and even of my voice, the image on the screen, in addition to all that, are you aware that you are aware? That's the dimension of depths, because suddenly you realize there's a depth to who you are that's formless.

And one could say unknowable, so what you know about yourself is very little. And what you can know, if you undergo whatever psychoanalysis, examine your psyche, repressed memories, hidden desires, what you can know is very small, but beyond that, there's a vast depths. If you are not aware of that, then it's almost as if it wasn't there, it's not there for you, you're not in touch with it.

But that depth is where the person is transcended and connects with something that is infinitely vaster than the person. And that is a source of true intelligence, of aliveness, of all life. And it, being in touch with that, knowing, sensing it within yourself, frees you from being only the little person.

And from that depths emanates love for yourself, loving kindness that can only emanate when you're not trapped in form, which needs to protect itself, enhance itself. So when you're trapped in form, you're always looking out for where the next threat is coming from, or try to solidify your form identity, enhance it, strengthen it. And then, so then no, there can be no real outflow of goodwill, loving kindness, love, if you want to call it that, goodness arising, a goodness that is deeper than good and bad.

For those of you for whom perhaps this is a new thing, a new realization, you may still be asking, being aware that I'm aware, what do you mean by that? And what does it mean? Well, what does it mean is it means that you're aware of yourself as consciousness and not just aware of yourself as this person.

Now, the person is not separate from consciousness. It's a form that consciousness has taken like a wave on the surface of the sea, a temporary form, but the wave is not separate from the depths of the sea and the ocean, it is part of it. So that's what that means.

And if you still don't know how to be aware of yourself as consciousness or to be aware of awareness, one way to give you a taste of it is, and that's why it's an ancient meditation method, is to be aware that you're breathing. You're always breathing, but usually not aware that you're breathing. To be aware that you're breathing is to be continuously aware of the breath flowing in and out like now.

And so it's not just one moment, oh yeah, I'm breathing. No, it's a continuous awareness of the breath flowing in and out, sensing it. And for a moment, let's say, feel that the air that surrounds you and that you're breathing in is consciousness.

That it's conscious consciousness, the essence of all life. So you're breathing in consciousness and now it's also inside you. So it's within and without.

Consciousness cannot be analyzed, dissected, cut into smaller pieces. So you can't know really anything about it, but you can sense it, be it, know that you are it, essentially. So breath awareness opens up that inner space of awareness.

So at first you're aware of breath, of breathing. So it still seems that you're aware of something, but breath is something that is not clearly defined in form. It's almost formless, just as your breath is formless, has not a clearly defined form.

That's why, as I said before, in various places, breath is often equated with spirit. That is the formless consciousness. And at the beginning of the Old Testament of the Bible, the beautiful myth, before form comes into being, the world is described as formless.

And the breath of God or the spirit of God is hovering, it says. So by being aware of your breathing, you also become aware of awareness. So after a little while, you can forget about breathing.

And the awareness of breath has become the awareness of awareness. Awareness. And so that awareness, you're rooted then in something timeless, eternal, very deep.

And you don't get anxious and upset anymore about all the changing conditions of your life and what other people do or fail to do or have done or shouldn't have done. All that absurd littleness that makes up most people's lives. And that makes life so miserable and frustrating.

That's what the Buddha called dukkha, which means misery, which means suffering, which means unhappiness, which means happy one day, unhappy the next. And this has often been described in spirituality as dying, the kind of deaths that you die, which happens to some people spontaneously when their sense of self, form-based sense of self, perhaps due to intense suffering, crumbles. And then that which is deeper and formless suddenly is there, and that's the death and the rebirth.

But the fact that you're here means that probably you've had enough suffering to have reached this point where you no longer need to be pushed or forced into the kingdom of heaven, which is one expression that an ancient teacher used to describe the formless dimension. And the fact that you're here now means you probably don't need to be forced into the kingdom of heaven through intense suffering anymore because it's already emerging in you, through you. So you've suffered enough.

However, if you should need just a little bit more, then that's fine, you'll get it. The world gives you what you need. Ultimately, the world is not here to make you comfortable, not here to make you happy, you might have noticed.

But to bring about, paradoxically, to bring about the transcendence of the world. And you spend a long time becoming a person, lifetimes, in order to eventually transcend the person. So first the egg forms, and it has to become a nice egg.

And then it starts cracking. The shell cracks open and something miraculous emerges. And with this comes the ability also to be comfortable with just being when doing is not required.

You don't need to run around all your life continuously doing. There can be a balance between doing and being. And it's wonderful if you discover in yourself the ability to just be like now.

Not trying to get anywhere or do anything, but just sense your own depths. And from that depth, you look around and you will find a lot of aliveness and beauty with that before you overlooked.

[Speaker 2] (4:21:32 - 4:21:41)
There is a moment of spacious awareness. You haven't interpreted it yet because you did not have enough time to interpret it.

[Speaker 1] (4:21:41 - 5:14:08)
So there was a timeless moment of pure perception. It frees you very briefly from the egoic self. So you can continue to function without going totally insane.

Awareness is rising above thinking. And I'd asked you before to become aware of gaps between words. And this is the secret, the entry point is there.

By becoming aware of gaps between words, for example, you become aware that in those brief moments you are actually not thinking. This is the key to the evolution of human consciousness is realizing the possibility of, let's put it like that, of becoming familiar with that space of pure awareness where you are able to think, but you don't have to think. This is rising above thinking instead of falling below thinking.

Rising above thinking, there's an alertness to it. This is the opposite of what happens when you take in certain substances. There's a decrease of alertness.

You become less conscious. When you rise above thinking, and I would suggest to you that as we talk about it here, that it's not just the words, that become aware of your state of consciousness right now when you listen to these words and realize that in order to understand and recognize the truth behind these words, you don't have to think. You don't have to figure out in your conceptual mind whether what I'm saying is true or not.

At a deeper level, you know it's true, but how do you know that it's true? Because you experience, if only briefly, here and now, you experience that beautiful space of pure awareness or presence. Wow.

So there are moments when you're actually, you're not thinking like now. I can stop speaking now for 10 seconds. Now, when I stop speaking now for 10 seconds, do you need to fill that space by adding thought to it, or are you able to just be with that 10-second space without adding any thought to it?

And then I'll ask you a question after that, but right now, I would stop speaking for 10 seconds and I will just do something that certain Zen masters do in order to remind their disciples of the state of alert presence. They go like this. One Zen master never gave any other explanation when he was asked to explain the essence of Zen.

All he would ever do is raise his finger and look at you. Please, can you explain the essence of Zen to us again? We didn't understand it yesterday.

So for 10 seconds, I'll raise my finger and please don't count the seconds. Now, when you're not, did you disappear when you were not thinking? When you're not remembering your problems, when you're not remembering whether your life is a big success or a big failure, to take two extremes, if you think your life is a big success, you're in a state of temporary delusion.

And just wait a little. So it's amazing that, now you may also find, because that sometimes in your daily life, you have moments when there is pure awareness, but you don't even know it. Throughout your daily life, you have brief moments when you're actually not thinking, but they may be quite short, but you have brief moments without wanting them whenever you look at something, especially if it's something natural, like this might be the sky or a flower or a dog, but not necessarily even natural.

It could be almost anything that does not immediately stimulate conceptualization like something written. So you look at something, let's say, especially you just step out of the building, you open the door or you come into the building and you open the door and you step, and for a moment, something new enters your perceptual field. Now, if you're very alert, in the first two or three seconds, you have to take it in and you're not thinking.

Then the mind kicks in and calls it something. It says, oh, this is that, this is that, whatever the mind has to say about it. It identifies it.

It gives you, it attaches a label to whatever it is that you are perceiving. But in the first few moments when something new enters your perceptual field, there is a moment of spacious awareness. You haven't interpreted it yet because you did not have enough time to interpret it.

So there was a moment, a timeless moment of pure perception. And the more you have that in your life, the more it frees you very briefly from the egoic self. So you can continue to function without going totally insane because you have these moments, these brief moments of awareness.

Now, there are humans who almost never have them, but they are in a very serious mental state of mental dysfunction. So if you're not completely insane yet, and of course, all of you here have gone far beyond all that already. If you're not completely, continuously trapped in dreadful unhappiness, that means occasionally you experience these brief moments of awareness, but you don't even know it.

You might think, oh, this is caused by, let's say you witness something beautiful. Let's say you witness a sunset. And you go, oh, and you're really looking at that sunset.

And for quite a while, the mind doesn't say anything. There's a pure perception, and there's a stillness behind the perception. But all you're aware of is the perception itself.

So when you then interpret it, you say, I felt so good because that sunset was so beautiful. Another example, you might be engaged in strenuous physical activity, perhaps even dangerous physical activity. You might be surfing, or you might be climbing a mountain wall, or whatever it is, some dangerous or strenuous physical activity, and you feel so good, you feel so alive.

You only feel alive when you're engaged in that activity. So you get addicted to that activity. Why?

Because it frees you from yourself temporarily. And what does that mean? It means while you're engaged in that activity, you are not thinking, you are just present.

And so, but you don't know that. You confuse the activity or the contemplation of the beautiful sunset. You confuse that with what caused that sense of being intensely alive.

What was the cause of feeling so good in that moment? Well, you say, well, the sunset made me feel so good. Or when I engaged in surfing, I feel so good.

The surfing makes me feel good. That's not entirely true. The deeper reason why you feel good is you are free of yourself in those moments.

And what arises is intense presence. In that intense presence, you experience self-transcendence. You are in touch with being.

Ah, and then people get addicted to certain activities. And if they're dangerous activities, then you never know how much, anything could happen. Now, the good news is, of course, if you enjoy certain activities or enjoy beauty in nature, it's wonderful.

Just go into nature with all your senses alive and take in. It frees you. It can also, if you're alert, it can free you from the problematic thinking mind, can free you from yourself.

And you take in the incredible aliveness that's all around you. And you go in a state of astonishment and wonder. I think it was Plato, or was it, well, Plato or Socrates who said, philosophy begins with wonder or astonishment.

You go, oh, and what is wonder or astonishment? Wonder or astonishment, you're not thinking, and you're not even trying to think. You're just aware, and you're aware of it.

There's a depth. You're not just aware of what's on the surface of sensory perception. You're aware of something that is deeper than sensory perception, the intense aliveness that's behind all phenomena, all phenomena of nature, but ultimately all phenomena.

Whatever we perceive is a surface dimension of reality. There's something far deeper hiding behind the surface dimension of reality. So you take in nature and you go, wow, oh.

So nature can free you temporarily. If you don't mistake the thing that you think frees you, it's not it. It frees you from your mind, and because it frees you from habitual or obsessive compulsive thinking, addictive, obsessive compulsive.

These are three good words to describe most people's mind activity. Addictive, obsessive, compulsive, dreadful. It frees you from that, and because it frees you from that, you suddenly feel good.

Now, how do you feel good? What does it mean? There's a deep sense of connectedness with, ah.

Let's return for a moment to the ripple because we forgot about the ripple. I hadn't come to the end of the story of the ripple yet. Because so far, the ripple is unhappy because it lives on the surface of the ocean.

At some point, the ripple becomes so dissatisfied with what it can find on the surface of the ocean, it comes to a stop and it goes, ah. And it suddenly becomes aware there's more to it than it had thought. There's more to it than meets the eye, so to speak, because what meets the eye is the surface phenomena of reality.

Sensory perception is there. So there's more to it than meets the eye. The ripple suddenly becomes aware that, oh.

But it cannot define what this more is. It goes, oh. It begins to realize that it's actually forever connected to and one with the ocean.

And that's an enormous realization and liberation for the ripple. Wow. And then perhaps the ripple is able to remain in connectedness with that sense of beingness or presence, even when it continues its ripple existence on the surface.

It still operates as a ripple, and yet no longer in the state of continuous fear, anxiety, dissatisfaction, regret, irritation, and all the things that make up people's lives and life situation very, very unsatisfactory, not pleasant at all. And it can then begin to even enjoy its ripple existence on the surface of things, because the neediness is gone, the neediness of needing some kind of satisfaction, ultimate satisfaction on the level of surface reality of the surface of the ocean. And the strange paradox is, or irony, is that once you, because you are the ripple, once you find the connectedness with being, the surface existence of the surface I becomes a more satisfying experience, because the neediness is gone.

You do still do things, create things, you are active, you still acquire new things, you learn new things, new skills, more knowledge, you have experiences, you have relationships, you travel, you experience a new place, you continue to explore the sensory realm, but it becomes a much more satisfying place because you are not looking to it for ultimate satisfaction. That's a wonderful liberation. And you realize ultimate satisfaction is inseparable actually from the present moment.

I find it impossible to find inner stillness and peace with the prospect of genocide in mind. How can one remain at peace knowing genocide, torture, and kidnappings have happened and will keep happening? Could I truly remain at peace if my family members were being tortured by some military army?

The last part of the question, could I truly remain at peace if my family members were being tortured by some military army? We cannot answer that here because as far as I can tell from your question, your family members are not being tortured by some military army. So the question does not arise from an actual situation, but from thoughts in your head, you imagine what would happen if.

Now it is beyond doubt, and we all know that these things have happened and are happening, as you say, all over the planet. Therefore, you find it difficult to be at peace or to find inner stillness knowing that these dreadful things are still happening all over the planet. That seems understandable, but is anybody being helped, you or anybody else, by your unwillingness to find peace?

Within. It's not the case that you actually go out into the world in order to alleviate the suffering or to stop all the genocide and kidnappings and torture, as you put it. Now, if you did feel called upon to go to some corner of the earth where violent or dreadful things are happening to alleviate suffering, that's another matter.

If you look at human history, you can see that these things have happened thousands of years ago already. They continue to happen throughout history. To the extent that, as I sometimes put it, reading history of humanity seems like reading the story of insanity with a few lucid moments here and there, and in particular, the 20th century, a place of incredible insanity and suffering inflicted by humans.

On other humans. Now, once you see that your unwillingness to embrace spiritual awakening, because so much unconsciousness is happening all over the planet that is the cause of the violence, that doesn't really make sense. Does it?

Your mind is saying, I'm refusing to invite the spiritual dimension into my life or to enter the awakening process because so many people on this planet are unconscious. Therefore, I refuse to become conscious. It's a convenient excuse for the egoic mind to stay in charge and to keep running the show.

And while it does that, it can complain, of course. It's lovely, isn't it? The complaining about all the dreadful things that are happening.

Does that help anyone? No. No.

Did the Buddha, who taught 2,500 years ago how to go beyond suffering, did he say, I'm not telling you how to go beyond suffering because so many humans on this planet are still suffering. Let's wait for them to come to an end of suffering and then I'll tell you the secret and then we can all become enlightened. Doesn't work like that.

It doesn't start with, let's wait for the rest of the universe to become enlightened and then we can enter the spiritual dimension. It has to start from you. Any change on the planet, in order to be true change and not just a variation on the same theme, must entail a change in consciousness because whatever humans produce, whatever they manifest externally arises and corresponds to, arises out of their state of consciousness.

If that state of consciousness is dysfunctional, disharmonious, negative, fearful, angry, and millions live in that state, identified with their ego, then you get huge collective egos fighting other collective egos and that's the insanity. Change, we both agree that change is necessary, but it doesn't come from out there. It would also apply to your own life.

There's some people who come to me and say, I have to sort out various outstanding matters in my life. The big problem still in my life is my business situation and my living situation and this, I don't really have time to go into all this spiritual stuff because there's too much for me to deal with at the moment or as the expression goes, I have too much on my plate to have time for spiritual awakening that has to wait, I have to sort these things out first. And if you do that, of course, you will find that the time never comes because there's no end to the problems that arise out there.

Jesus told the same story in the parable of the wedding feast. People are invited to a wedding feast and each person has their particular excuse why they cannot come to the wedding feast. One person says, oh, I've got to have some business dealings to do, just have to sell my cows and sheep and need to do that.

Let me first do that, maybe I'll come then. The other one says, oh, my father has just died, let me first bury my father. Every excuse starts with the words, let me first do this.

And that shows the prevalent attitude of believing that something out there needs to change before I can, or in your case, before I feel justified in looking for inner peace. But that is a fallacy. The external peace can only come when humans, or at least a sufficiently large number of humans, embrace inner peace.

And you can't wait for the torture and killings to stop and then embrace inner peace. Change happens from the inside out, not from the outside in. So, yes, knowing that at this very moment, every second, every minute, dreadful things are happening on the planet.

Of course, it's always been like that. At this very moment, somebody is being murdered. Perhaps bombs are exploding, people are torturing, kidnapping others, warfare between armies or groups.

Or gangs. Of course, it's happening every moment. Does your anxiety help that situation, your non-peace?

No. But if there's a shift in consciousness, there may be a change. And that starts with you.

So don't believe what your mind is telling you about the undesirability of inner peace. Because the world is so mad and so violent, that does not make sense if you look closely. This mind-made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive.

To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation. This is not a conventional meditation. I may be speaking most of the time, but there are also gaps in between the words, which of course are always more important than the words.

And if you're aware of the gaps, as much as you're aware of the words, then you're already entering the state of meditation without having to go through any preliminary technique. Not that there's anything wrong with techniques. So it's actually quite lovely to be aware not only of the words, but also the stillness that's there.

The space, one could say, between the words, even underneath the words. And the miraculous thing is when you're aware of that for a brief moment, whenever you're aware of the space, you're not thinking. So the more you're aware of the space or the spaces, the less absorbed you are in the stream of thinking and not being absorbed in the stream of thinking, not identifying with the stream of thinking, is meditation.

And of course, the aim of meditation is that eventually it becomes your normal state of consciousness, in which case you may still want to practice so-called formal meditation because you like it, or you may not. Now, usually, in your daily life, things constantly arise in your field of awareness, demanding attention, situations, people, things that need to be done. And sometimes things are pulling at you from various directions, demanding your attention at the same time.

And when you no longer know where to put your attention, you're beginning to experience so-called stress because stress means one thing is pulling this way, another thing is pulling that way, and so you get stress. And as long as you're unaware, unconscious, spiritually speaking, the world around you determines where your attention goes, people, situation, events, your electronic devices that go ping when the next text message comes in, or whatever sound it is, or go pong when the next email arrives, and immediately your attention goes there. And then somebody else, somebody, oh.

So I call that losing oneself in the world. And then, of course, there's your thinking. Every thought that arises seems to say, give me more of your attention, follow me to where I want you to go.

And so when you're unaware, then whatever thought comes into your head has this enormous pulling power. And so you identify with the thought and you're completely in it, and it takes you this way and that way and leads to a whole succession of thoughts. And so on the most primordial level, it's thinking, really, that absorbs your attention, your mind, because even external things have to be transformed into mind stuff before you can experience it so that you can experience it.

And all external objects, before you can be aware of them, have to be taken in through sensory perception, then transformed into nerve impulses, and then reassembled somewhere to make up this picture of external reality. But it's ultimately all you ever experience is your mind. So that's really what we need to look at.

So most people are continuously aware of something, and they are at the mercy of whatever arises in their mind that has this power to pull in their attention. One thing you learn in meditation is you have a choice. You can direct your attention to one thing, and then you can see if you can keep your attention on one particular mind object, which could be becoming aware of your breathing, or it could be a mantra that you repeat in your mind, one mind object, or an external object, the candle flame.

So you begin to realize that you can actually direct attention. You don't have to be at the mercy of whatever comes into your mind. So as we sit here, for example, you can direct your attention.

Your attention is, of course, in auditory perception and visual perception. But in addition, you can also have some of your attention on your breathing, for example. You're aware even as you listen and as you watch, if your eyes are open, you can be aware also that at the same time, you're breathing, you're choosing to have some attention there too.

That's a very calming thing. And you become aware that your body is alive on the inside. You can become aware that there's a sense of aliveness inside your hands.

Another ancient meditation method to do it more methodically, you become aware that your feet are alive on the inside, your legs, your entire body. There's a field of aliveness. You become aware of that.

You can then choose to put your attention on that rather than on something else. Where it would habitually go. So gradually, you become aware of your own power.

You're not at the mercy of events and things, your thoughts, ultimately. There's a deeper dimension in you, deeper than thinking, and getting in touch with that, accessing that, realizing that that is the essence of who you are. That's why we're here.

The purpose of this is to get in touch with that deeper dimension within yourself, deeper than thinking. And what is that? We could describe it as the feeling or the sense of being you at the most fundamental level.

What does it feel like to be you? Now, usually, when you speak in terms of I, let's use the first person, what does it feel like? What's it like to be you?

What does it feel like to be me? What is that sense of identity, the sense of self? Usually, you refer then to certain things in your mind, your history, your conditioned mind, the history of me, the story of me, me and my problems, me and my situation, me and this and this and this.

So there's always, on that level, your feeling of being yourself is really to be identified with certain things that arise in your mind. But here we are attempting to go deeper to a more foundational, a more real sense of what is it that underlies all that? What is it that makes the story of you, that most people tend to be who they are, what is it that makes the story of you possible?

What is the space, the light in which it appears? There's something deeper without which there could be no story. And yet it's not separate from it.

And that's always the same. There's a deep sense of beingness or presence in you that is prior and deeper than anything that happens in your life or in your mind. So I'd like you to get in touch with that and get this sense of being you at the deepest level.

What does that feel like? And it's a very strange question. So I'm, usually then your attention is directed to certain things, objects in your mind.

What we're attempting to do here is to ultimately becoming aware of that attention itself, which is awareness. So when I ask you, what's it like to be you? I'm really asking you to become aware of your own awareness.

And that is not an object. You can't say, ah, there it is, I've got it now. You cannot have it because you are it.

It's the essence of who you are. You cannot describe it because it has no form. You cannot talk about it in terms of past or future.

Because there's no time to it. It is a timeless dimension. And this, their sense of beingness, that, if that becomes the foundation for your life, so to speak, if you could not lose touch with that, in other words, not lose touch with the most essential dimension within you, then the way in which you experience this world would change.

Because you would be continuously aware of that which is deeper than whatever arises in this world or in your mind. And to feel that within yourself brings about a sense of trust in life. It is as if something were carrying you, something vaster than the little man.

You are me, and you are connected with a vastness there that goes far beyond you as the person with a history. And to sense that within yourself, you can feel there is a power there that is the power of life itself. And if you don't know that, all that's available to you is a trickle of that power.

But as you become aware of it, which really means become aware of awareness, become conscious of consciousness, which again, when we speak, when we use words, it's never quite right. Because the moment we construct a sentence, we create duality, subject and object. And you say, I am aware of consciousness.

That you have a subject and an object, which isn't quite right. Because there is no I apart from consciousness. So you'd have to qualify it and say, I'm aware of consciousness as myself.

Then you undo the original error that is semantic. That brings about a sense of, you can say rootedness in being and brings about a trust in life. In other words, what is trust, which in other spiritual traditions have other words for it, faith.

It's the absence of fear. That's really what trust is. So when you're in touch with that within yourself, the world is no longer perceived as a fearful place.

And there's a detachment that comes in, especially in your relationship with your mind. Thoughts, of course, still come. You can use thought.

In fact, use it much more effectively. And yet you don't become identified anymore with every thought that comes into your mind. So you're detached from thought, although thought can operate.

It doesn't draw you in totally. There's always some of you remains spacious beyond thought, and then thought happens. It is possible, even if for the time being you are in a job that you would perhaps not choose to do for the rest of your life, but even there to make the first step towards opening up is to let go of resistance to what you're doing and give it your fullest attention.

And sometimes then life takes you away into something else because you have opened yourself up so you can give of your best. If you, let's say for the past few, three years, you disliked working at this restaurant and everybody somehow, even though you smile, but everybody can feel that you don't really want to be there and the customers can feel it and your colleagues can feel it. And if you then shift and you do it with fullest attention and you honor every moment, every person that comes into the moment and the way you put the plate on the table, there's attention there.

So what changes then is not sometimes what you do but how you do what you do. And I would say, I don't know if you've looked at that, the first step towards finding something more satisfying can be to change, not to look for what, I don't know what, but change the how in what you're doing already and bring full presence to what you're doing. And then perhaps somebody notices how present you are, a customer at a restaurant and says, oh, what's your name?

And suddenly that leads to something else. Either you open your own restaurant and suddenly people come in and they feel good in that presence that you create, an energy field of presence or whatever it may be. So have you looked at that to changing, initially perhaps to change the how rather than necessary because otherwise if you're trapped in negativity, it may be much more difficult to break out of that.

[Speaker 11] (5:14:09 - 5:15:48)
I agree absolutely with that. It seems to me one of the things that makes us human, because in most respects we're like the rest of life on earth, our lives are short and organic and dependent. But you ask, well, why have human beings suddenly come to dominate the planet in the way that we have?

And part of my answer anyway is to say that human beings uniquely have extraordinary powers of imagination, the ability to bring into mind things that aren't present. We can look forward, we can look back. We can enter other people's consciousness virtually, which is what we mean by empathy.

And if we imaginatively engage with somebody else's consciousness, if we're empathetic, then we broaden our own lives. And it's always interesting to me that in times of war and conflict, the first thing that we try to suppress is our empathy for the people that we're rising up against. And it's only when we suppress our empathy that we can do things that are literally unimaginable.

And the reason I say that is from that power comes all the powers of practical creativity. And there is a literal sense, I think, which is clearly in what you've just said, that as human beings, we create our own lives. We create our own realities.

We compose our lives. And we can recompose them. We can recreate them.

We can see things differently. We can choose to see it differently. We can see it this way, or we can see it that way.

And often the most dreary circumstances can be transformed, not by the circumstances changing, but by our attitude to the circumstance changing. And that in due course may change the circumstance.

[Speaker 1] (5:15:49 - 5:36:13)
And that in itself, that perhaps is the, the ultimate creative act is that. It's the ultimate creative act, not necessarily create something, but to create, not to be a reactive entity, but to create your own life. Yes.

Find death before death finds you. There was a spiritual teacher, philosopher in early 20th century from Gurdjieff, from Russian area, I remember that. He later moved to France and taught there.

He had an interesting, he was a, he said, people have a personality and essence. And he said, many people have a strongly developed personality and virtually no essence. And it's very rare for people to have more essence than personality.

It was an interesting way of looking at it. And that's, of course, how it is, that I'm now elaborating. He only, there's only a little bit of that.

And then he dropped the whole matter and then he didn't talk about it again. So the essence, there is, there are two dimensions in your identity. There is the form identity, the you as form, with your physical form and your name and all your knowledge and education and abilities and your past, whatever happened in your past, that's all connected.

And it all makes up your, who you are on the level of form, who you perceive yourself to be and who others see you. And there is a connection between how the world or other people see you and how you see yourself. And when you are trapped exclusively in a form identity, so you only know yourself as a form identity, then how other people see you is of extreme importance to you because it contributes to how you see yourself.

So you might become self-conscious and see the self-conscious in English means that you're very much aware of how you're being perceived. And you feel always a little uneasy because you feel observed and people are judging you and you say, and you want to appear in a certain way. And there's a natural tendency in humans to emphasize their form identity to the world.

It's a natural thing. So I'm not, you can't tell a little child when the little child begins to say, or says, you're observing that one child says to the other child, look, I can do this. You can't do what I can do.

I can do this, but you can't. Or the child says, my dad has a bigger car than yours. You can't say to the child, don't do that.

You're emphasizing your form identity. But you know, that's what's happening. It's a natural tendency in humans to emphasize.

It could be a possession. I have more than you. It could be my body is looks better than yours or is stronger than yours or bigger than yours or taller than yours.

Or it could be, I have an ability that you don't have. Children start with that. And it's, let's, I can play the piano.

What can you play? I play the ping pong machine. Okay.

So the emphasize form identity is a natural thing. It can be, there is a point where this should come to a natural conclusion. I would say in a more evolved humanity, the emphasis of form identity as a person reaches adulthood a little bit after is replaced.

At the moment, this is not what's happening, but can be replaced by something more genuine and deeper. And that is finding your essence identity that's underneath your form identity. And that is spiritual dimension, finding the spiritual dimension in yourself so that who you think you are is no longer, you still have a form identity.

Yes, that level is still there. Undoubtedly, you have certain abilities. You're good at this.

You're not good at that. You're better than the other person in this thing, but not as good as in the other thing. That remains, but it no longer gives you your sense of who you are.

And that can only happen when something else arises that is deeper than the form. And that's the presence. And when the presence arriving in you, which has no form and is not tangible, it's there pervading your entire being, then suddenly you realize and you feel who you are essentially has nothing to do with what you possess how your body looks, your abilities, what you can do, or what you know.

That's another one. That's form identity with what I know. I know more than you.

So then comes the realization who you essentially are is nothing to do with possessions or looks or physical or mental abilities or other abilities. But it comes from a much deeper place. And that deeper place no longer operates through comparison.

Your essence identity does not deepen because it's stronger than somebody else's essence identity. You don't compare yourself anymore to others in order to find out who you are. And that's such a liberation from only knowing yourself as that particular form because with that comes a lot of suffering.

A lot of suffering comes when your, who you are is derived from the form of you. Because at some point, let's see if you have good looks and then your, who you are is based mostly on that. And you feel superior to most because you look so much better.

Then you look down on all these other people who are not good looking at all. And then you even emphasize it. So you buy, you look even greater with the wonderful things you wear.

And then as the decades pass, you look in the mirror and there's something wrong slowly. And you notice that the mirror is becoming, seems to be becoming defective. It no longer shows you the beauty of who you are externally.

And then you need to pay for repair jobs. But even there, it's just postponing the suffering that inevitably comes when what your identity was based on begins to collapse. And that's awful.

Or it could be an ability. You are very good at something, but then at some point something happens and you are not good at it anymore. Or somebody else suddenly comes who is so much better than you.

One could give many examples. Knowledge, perhaps your mind doesn't retain the knowledge anymore or it becomes redundant. And having an encyclopedic mind is no longer a great thing because the internet is always better, Wikipedia.

So sooner or later, if it's strengths, then eventually you can't compete anymore. You get arthritis, can't jump high enough anymore. But all these things, sooner or later, when your identity is based on form, then you begin to suffer.

So it's vital to have both, but it's not easy because your form identity has its own kind of momentum. And that's the ego. The ego is anything you identify with as yourself becomes part of your ego identity.

So form identity is ego. The ego is a formation, an energy field, an energy form in you that is quite, refuses to go. It wants to survive as this particular form.

It wants to defend its form. It wants to strengthen its form. So although there may be, and the evolutionary impulse of the universe may be at work in you, which wants something else to arise, there may be the ego trying, not wanting it to arise.

And so you get scared of stillness, of inner peace. Can't sit still. You don't want to stop thinking because you think I'm going to disappear if I stop thinking.

And you want to continue to have opinions about who you are, the old opinions about who you are. And there have been spiritual teachers and spiritual masters and mystics throughout the ages have realized form identity, essence identity. And there is a whole stream of spirituality that is based on de-emphasizing your form identity.

And of course, St. Francis is part of that stream of de-emphasizing form identity. Not saying, look at me, I'm so good at this or that. But it says, basically, I'm nobody.

I'm nobody in particular. That can go too far where it becomes another form. So you have to be very careful when that happens because when you say I'm the most miserable sinner, then you've, that's not quite it.

That's because that's a big, another form identity that can be even stronger than to say, I'm the most saintly person there's ever been. I'm the most miserable sinner, so dreadful. But to de-emphasize form identity can be a wonderful thing.

Once it requires enough presence so that you already can sense that which is beyond. And it starts with a little thing like in a discussion, you're able to drop your particular viewpoint because it makes no difference whether you are right or wrong anymore. And you just let it go and feel quite liberated.

It makes no difference whether who is right, he or the other person or you, who cares? That's, and suddenly you feel there's a peace that comes there when we don't need to be right anymore. That's because to be right is one way in which people will emphasize the me, the me make the other person wrong.

So that's one way. Another, it can be very beneficial for some people who have been afflicted with some kind of suffering or disability, which may be physical disability or whatever it is that makes it difficult for them to develop a, well, to have a well-developed form identity. Let's say somebody who is physically disabled and so they can either seek refuge in some other area and become very focused on identifying with their mind or whatever.

It can also happen that if there's one major thing that seems to interrupt the full development of your form identity, it can more quickly lead you to the realization of your essence identity. That is, there have been philosophers in the past or spiritual teachers who had disabilities and it's because of their physical disabilities, they were able to let go of identification with their unsatisfying form. So if the form of you is unsatisfying, strongly unsatisfying, it can be an opening, an early opening into essence identity.

The same thing happens when somebody loses all the things that they had identified with in their lives through some disaster that suddenly happens in you. Things are removed that you had considered to be an essential part of who you are and life takes them away and suddenly you're faced with that nothingness or emptiness. You don't know who you are anymore because life has taken away all those things that you identified with and then it can happen if you don't go into a contraction and quickly form another victim identity that it opens up into the formless, the essence.

That is the peace that passes all understanding as it's called in the New Testament because how can a person who has lost everything suddenly feel so peaceful? It can happen, it doesn't happen always, perhaps only in a small percentage of cases where people lose everything. Potential, the potential is there whenever there's great loss in your life, the potential is there for the arising of the essence identity and that is grace.

You can call that grace, the grace that is hiding on the other side of every disaster, it's hiding there, you just need to recognize it. But there is no need to wait for disaster to happen to you but, and this is why we are here now, we don't want to wait for disaster because that might be too late, it might not happen for a while. It will happen eventually, disaster will come to all of you because, well, yes, oh, that's because you're going to die.

The body is going to die, old age will come and then that'll be it. As well, as somebody said, each one of us has already been diagnosed with a fatal illness leading to death, it's called life on the surface level, of course it's. So therefore, the ancient dictum of spirituality is find death before death finds you.

Because death is going to find you, it's just a question of time. Now, what does it mean, find death before death finds you? It means find that in you which is beyond death.

So the death that you find refers to the death of the ego, the egoic identity in you, which when you discover the essence identity, then the ego identity begins to die. And that's a wonderful thing, but not to the ego. It doesn't mean that the forms disappear, but identification with the forms is no longer there.

So you still have the same things as before, but the identification doesn't happen anymore. Traditionally, this is a very painful process, finding death before death finds you without a strong spiritual energy that you come into contact with in one way or another, it's painful. The only way you can find death before death finds you is for life to knock you so hard that the ego gets knocked out of you.

[Speaker 3] (5:36:39 - 5:39:48)
Hi everybody, welcome. Welcome to this special Eckhart Tolle Foundation online event. I'm so glad that you're here with us.

Thank you. My name's Tammy Simon. I'm the founder of Sounds True, and I have had the great joy and honor of working with Eckhart Tolle since 2001.

And I'm also on the board of the Eckhart Tolle Foundation and have been on the board since its inception. And it's a great joy to be your host for this special online event. During this event, you'll be hearing more about the Eckhart Tolle Foundation.

Perhaps for some of you, this is the first time you'll be learning more about the foundation's history and its activities. And we're also going to introduce you to a New Earth Youth Initiative, which is a new program that the Eckhart Tolle Foundation is sponsoring. And it brings Eckhart's teachings and the experience of presence to young people who very well would otherwise not have access to these teachings and the experience of presence in Eckhart and Kim's presence.

And you're going to be learning more about that. Also as part of this online special event, we have two surprise videos. Not going to say much more about it, except that these videos are from some celebrated visionary humans who are expressing their support of bringing Eckhart's teachings to young people.

Most of all, I want to thank each and every one of you for being with us. There's a kind of ripple effect that comes from us connecting together in this way with a shared intent to bring presence to more and more people without financial barriers to access. So it is so wonderful to be with you and to have this experience together.

Oh, and of course, as part of our time together, you're going to hear from Kim and Eckhart. Did I forget to say that? Yes, indeed.

That's going to happen too. And now I'd love to introduce you to someone who is the president of Eckhart teachings and the co-founder and board chair of the Eckhart Tolle Foundation. This is someone who's very special to me personally.

I've known this person for more than two decades now and watched her grow into her role with such beauty and dignity and the power of a generous heart, Erin Jacobson. Erin.

[Speaker 6] (5:39:51 - 5:46:19)
Thank you, Tammy. And thank you all for joining us tonight. I just wanted to spend a few moments and tell you a little bit about how we started and some of the inspiration for the foundation.

I've been working for Eckhart teachings since it began in 1999. And our mission has always been the same and that's to share Eckhart's teachings with as many people as possible. Of course, back in the early days, we did not have a big team.

We basically did everything by hand. You know, there's almost, it was the early days of the internet. And I can still remember like it was yesterday folding paper flyers in the living room and packaging audio and video cassette tapes, being in charge of duplicating the audio and video cassette tapes.

I was the one taking all of the phone fax and snail mail orders, packaging them up and walking several blocks to the post office every day. In fact, our very first covers were actually black and white photocopies that we made at Kinko's. As you can imagine over the years, we have received a lot of feedback from people who have been impacted by the power of now and a new earth.

And some of the most impactful feedback that we've received have been letters from people in prison, writing to Eckhart and expressing their gratitude as well as telling their stories. And we have been so impacted by these letters and Eckhart keeps every single one. And even though we were impacted, it still made us think about all the communities with very little access that, and we were wondering like, how can we help them?

And giving back has always been a part of Eckhart teachings. And we've been doing so by giving those that can't afford to pay event scholarships, access to online courses. We have a lot of teachings available for free on YouTube and other streaming platforms.

And even though that we've been giving individuals help, we still wanted a way to be able to focus and give back to underserved communities. So in 2016, we launched the Eckhart Tolle Foundation and we chose to support incarcerated people, hospice patients and the underserved youth. We've had a couple of large conferences where all the proceeds went to fund the foundation.

We've been giving tens of thousands of books away to prisons, hospices and the underserved youth. We've brought the youth to learn directly from Eckhart and Kim in person. And we've been donating, we've given grants to these communities.

And we also recently partnered with Adovo and they are providing tablets and access to Eckhart and Kim's teachings to over 250,000 people. And we're also planning for Eckhart to speak in a couple prisons soon in person. And tonight we're highlighting the underserved youth because they need mental, emotional and spiritual support and not only for their own personal wellbeing, but because they represent humanity's future and this world needs more conscious and aware people.

We are committed to helping these communities and help them relieve the suffering caused by the dysfunctional egoic mind so that more people can show up in their lives present and aware and in touch with their essential nature. If you're inclined to be a part of this impact, we have three ways that you can help. Number one, by sharing our social media posts about our book donation programs and our grant programs with your networks.

Number two, we of course graciously welcome any donations. And number three, and it truly is the most important. My personal favorite quote of Eckhart's has always been, the world can only change from within.

And that does mean that you being here, connecting to presence and continuing to practice living your life from presence is the most essential. I'd also like to thank all of you, our incredibly generous donors and our dedicated board of directors for their service, our staff and our volunteers, and of course our executive director, Ali Weibel. All of you are making this work possible.

Now it's time for our first surprise video, expressing their support for the work that we've been doing by bringing Eckhart's teachings to young people. This person's team reached out to me several years ago in hopes of connecting with Eckhart. And little did I know at the time what their vision was and where this connection would go.

I'm amazed by this person's commitment to sharing Eckhart's teachings with his massive audience. I would say that he is making spiritual teachings cool in the eyes of young people. He's definitely opening a meaningful conversation and he's using his art and his platform to not only share his own learning and wisdom, but also Eckhart's teachings.

Eckhart was featured in his most recent album throughout his whole album, almost, Mr. Morali and the Big Steppers. He is a multi-platinum Grammy and Emmy award-winning artist. He was the first non-classical, non-jazz musician to win a Pulitzer Prize for his 2017 album, Damn.

Here he is. Mr. Kendrick Lamar.

[Speaker 9] (5:46:21 - 5:48:43)
I believe people can, they truly can use, well, not people, young people. Young people need to hear Eckhart's words the most because today we live in a society where it's so many things pushing and pulling, where there's a lifestyle, social media, friends, trends, so many things consume young people and their decision-making. And to truly crack that code and have that balance, everybody wants nice things, right?

But to have that balance is to also go within, as I said before. I wish I would have read these books when I was 16, when I was 13. I'd probably be far more advanced in my personal life and my daily, you know, interpersonal dynamics, not only with people, but with myself.

But I'm fortunate enough to come across it in my 30s, right? But for the kids that's out there listening, 12, 13, 14, 15 and up, I truly recommend that you get into it because it'll open your mind up further than you can even imagine, further than the things that you want, further than the things that you think that you need. You'll explore a whole new journey of self-worth, passion, purpose, creativity, and stillness within yourself.

It's worth it, a hundred percent. Not only on a professional level, because I know everyone has dreams and goals and aspirations, but on a personal level, it plays the same rules. And when you intertwine the words between the two, things are happening tempo for you.

[Speaker 3] (5:48:46 - 5:49:42)
Kendrick Lamar saying, young people need to hear Epgart's words the most. What a terrific surprise video. Let's learn more about the New Earth Youth Initiative.

And to share with us more about the details, we have a fellow board member of mine on the Epgart Tolle Foundation board. One of the best parts of participating on the board is the type of allyship and friendship and creative partnership that I can have with somebody like Elizabeth Lesser, co-founder of Omega Institute, author of several best-selling books, including Broken Open, How Difficult Times Can Help Us Grow, and Cassandra Speaks, When Women Are Storytellers, The Human Story Changes. Elizabeth, over to you.

[Speaker 7] (5:49:43 - 5:54:41)
Okay, thank you. Hey, everybody. What a pleasure to be with you.

It's a cold, chilly night here in New York, and I imagine you're all coming in from all over the world and the country. It's just great to feel everybody on the Zoom and YouTube and wherever you're joining us. So I'm here to introduce our next guest, but first I wanna tell you briefly about the foundation's youth initiative.

We're calling it the New Earth Youth Initiative, and it's really meaningful to me to be working on something about young people and kids because I've been in education my whole life. I started out as a kindergarten and elementary school teacher, and then I worked my way up to working with grownups in education when I co-founded Omega Institute 47 years ago. And it dawned on me as I worked with kids years ago that grownups also need to keep learning, that it's actually imperative for adults to learn how to grow and change and expand our consciousness as we age.

And not just getting facts, but the important things like how do I quiet my mind and open my heart and relate to the mysterious parts of myself, my soul, my consciousness. And throughout my 50 almost years at Omega, I've had the privilege of being in the presence of educators of the mind and the heart and the soul, people like Eckhart Tolle, although there's really no one like Eckhart Tolle. And I got to really experience him in his full Eckhart-ness back in 2008 when I helped Oprah produce a webinar focusing on A New Earth, the book, the 10 chapters.

I don't know, many of you may be tuned into that. Millions and millions of people around the world tuned into that webinar. I remember the first night we did it, it was one of the first things like it in the world.

And the entire Chicago internet went down because so many people were trying to get on. And I learned during that, that his work wasn't just for serious spiritual readers and seekers, that anyone trying to figure out this tricky thing called being human could access the depth and the scope and the magnificence of his work. And that made me think, well, then kids could also.

And young people don't just need to learn how to read and write and do math. They need education of their hearts and their minds and souls, the way Kendrick Lamar was saying, if only he had had that learning way back in his early teens, what a difference it would make. And that's why we're doing this.

That's why we are raising money and spending the money we raise to do things like bringing his books to schools and school libraries, creating programs specifically for young people like the lectures Eckhart did a few years ago with NYU students and offering grants to like-minded organizations working with youth. And I'd like to introduce you now to a leader from one of those organizations. And he happens to be a dear friend of mine.

He has taught at Omega Institute for many years and his work inspires all of us at Omega and here at the foundation greatly. His name is Andres Gonzalez, and he's one of the three co-founders of the Holistic Life Foundation and the co-author of Let Your Life Shine, which is a powerful book that documents the way yoga and meditation have transformed and empowered thousands of historically underserved kids in Baltimore. For 20 years, Andres has shared wellness, healing and present moment practices in public school systems and beyond, breathing life back into a community destroyed by drugs, poverty and systemic racism.

And what I love so much about Andres is how he personally walks his message in the world. He has this message that love can heal any heart including our own. And he is that kind of healer and welcome Andres.

[Speaker 5] (5:54:44 - 6:04:12)
Thank you so much, Elizabeth. It's so good to see you. It's been a while.

I hope you're staying warm where you're at because it's chilly here in Baltimore as well. So before I get to just a few of the topics that I wanted to address, I really just wanna give a quick shout out to the Eckert Tolle Foundation for all the amazing work they do. The Holistic Life Foundation has been going for 20 years and recently they've been supporting us not only financially in terms of giving us funds to help run our Holistic Roots Program, which is a mentoring program.

It's really helping these underserved kids in the city. But also they've donated books to us, countless amounts of books. I mean, books on top of books on top of books so we can give them to the youth, to the adults, the teenagers, to anyone that we run into in all of our programs.

They're accessible and they're there to spread his message and his truths. And it's just amazing what they're doing. And this new initiative as well is incredible and it's so needed.

And I've seen it through the work I've been doing for over 20 years now all across the nation and across the world. And I wanted to start by talking about a metaphor and how important this work is. Our teacher Uncle Will used to use this extended metaphor to describe how important breath work or meditation is for people in general, but I think in particular for our youth and the transformation that it can have on them when they start using these skills and techniques to learn how to self-regulate.

The way he would do it, he'd say, our body's like a boat and the world is the ocean. And more oftentimes than not, our waters are calm. We can set our sails and go whatever direction we wanna go.

But if you think about it sometimes, and actually now I think about it most of the time, our waters aren't calm. We're bombarded by external and internal stimuli. Externally, we have what's going on in the world.

You have your family, you have your friends, your parents, your loved ones. So again, now there's coworkers, bosses, you have society, social media, politics, right? We're so that's smacking us around externally.

That's moving our boat around. We're trying to set our sails, it's getting tougher. And then internally, the bombardment we have, our fears, our doubt, stress, worry, anxiety, trauma that we faced, whether it's our personal trauma, secondary trauma, intergenerational trauma.

So really those waters, this world is chaotic. And we're bombarded by this all the time. And it's pushing us around all over the place.

So it's hard for us to set our sails. And our teacher used to remind us how the breath or meditation, that is our anchor. That allows us to still ourselves, which in turn will still our waters, which will allow us to set our sails and go in whatever direction we wanna go and achieve whatever it is that we wanna achieve.

And I've seen firsthand the amazing transformation this has with kids. So we were based out of Baltimore and we're in Northwest Baltimore. So like where the wire came out, like the hood of all hoods, right?

And there's a young lady in elementary school, we got with her. She was from the same projects that Freddie Gray was from. And for some reason, people would bully this girl, right?

She didn't have the cool clothes or the backpack. She was kind of, had a little less material wise than anyone else did. So they picked on her.

They made fun of her. They said stuff to her. And we're always confused why they chose her because her brother had showed her how to throw her hands a little, right?

So he had a box and he showed her. So I was always confused, like why do you keep picking on this girl? She's gonna beat you up.

She's stronger than you. She knows what to do with her hands, right? So we teach her some of these techniques, some of these practices of breath work and meditation.

And this is early on in us providing these techniques and practices to youth. And so myself and the other two co-founders, Ali and Atma, we're at this school and with the principal and we go and we're walking the halls and we turn the corner. And when we turn the corner, this young lady has this other lady, she's grabbed her by the shirt and she had her thrown up against the lockers.

And she's looking at her and you can tell she is about to cop back and hit this little girl. And she looks at us and she sees us walking down the halls and she looks at the girl and she looks at the guests again and she goes, looks at the girl and goes, you're lucky I meditate. And she lets go of the young lady, sits down and starts breathing.

And it was one of the most powerful things. The principal was looking at me like, what did I just see, right? And we were like, oh my God, what did we just see?

Cause we seen how she was with the other kids too. So it's just so powerful and amazing to see the impact that it can have on these youth. And not only is it helping with dealing with their stress, dealing with their anxiety, dealing with that bombardment I was talking to y'all about, but honestly, some of these kids in these neighborhoods, these techniques and practices that we're talking about that this new Earth Youth Initiative is focusing on will help these kids so much that in some cases, it may end up saving their lives.

Cause now they're no longer reacting to what the world is throwing at them, but they're learning to instill themselves and they're able to respond. You know, and Elizabeth mentioned I'm a big love guy, which I am, as you can see by the clothes. And I just think love is the most powerful force in the universe.

And I think that these techniques in particular, one of the things I think when youth learn to go inward, like Kendrick was talking about 13, 16, to learn how to instill those waters, learn how to be able to go inside and just be, remember we're human beings. When they learn that, they gain the sense of love, self-love, they learn to love themselves. And then now when they're looking out at others, they're more empathetic, they're more compassionate.

They start seeing themselves in everyone and everything. Now they're not alone. Now they're not so disconnected to anything.

Now they see the interconnection between themselves and everyone. They're not just their corner anymore. They're not just their block.

They're not just the East side or West side of Baltimore. They're not just Baltimore or Maryland or the United States. They're not just this country, this continent.

They start seeing that universal self, that omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent self that they truly are. And that's when you see that transformation occur. And it's so beautiful and it's so powerful and it's so needed in the world that we're in right now.

And it's just, it's amazing. And so kudos to this foundation and the initiative they're making. I have two other things, I have these two quotes that Eckhart has in his books that I just wanted to talk about because they really ring true to some of the stuff and the synchronicities and the synergies that we're doing with the Holistic Life Foundation that are with his work.

So one of them is from The Power of Now. And our teacher used to always talk about how the only time that exists is right now, right? And Eckhart says, as soon as you enter the present moment, all unhappiness and struggle dissolve.

And life begins to flow with joy and ease. When you act out of the present moment awareness, whatever you do becomes imbued with a sense of quality, care, and love. And our teacher used to always say, the past causes anger.

Someone said something to you, they did something to you, you might regret something you did. The future causes anxiety. What's gonna happen?

What am I gonna do with myself? What's going on? When we teach these youth to be in the now, which is the only time that exists, right?

The past is gone. The future is never getting here. But when they learn to live in this now moment, this present moment, this present, it's a gift.

That's the reason it's called the present. It's so powerful. And what we're doing is we're allowing these kids to remember that they can access that whenever they want to.

And that reminder is something my teacher used to always say. He said, he says, I'm not a teacher. I'm not a teacher.

I'm a reminder, I'm a calm, do it. And Eckhart talks about that too. And stillness speaks.

A true spiritual teacher, he says, does not have anything to teach in the conventional sense of the word. Does not have anything to give or add to you. We have it all already, right?

Such as new information, beliefs or rules or conduct. The only function of such a teacher is to help you remove that which separates you from the truth of who you already are and what you already know in the depth of your being. And that's what this initiative is gonna be able to do y'all.

So really, we need your support. We need you to tell your friends to tell a friend. We need y'all to really understand the impact that this can have.

If we can take kids from inner cities, underserved communities, who have never had a retreat experience, never even left their city, they get to go hang out with Eckhart? Like, I wanna go to the retreat. You know what I mean?

So for real, special shout out to the Eckhart Tolle Foundation, all the amazing work that they're doing. Thank you for continuing to support the Holistic Light Foundation. And please, all y'all, please do the same.

Support as much as you can. This New Earth Youth Initiative is so powerful. It's so incredible.

We're honored to be a part of it here at the Holistic Light Foundation. I'm honored to be here. And I really just love to all of y'all.

And don't forget that love is the most powerful force in the universe.

[Speaker 3] (6:04:15 - 6:07:31)
Thank you, Andres. Bring in the heart. And it's time for our next surprise video.

I notice when I say that, I imagine like there should be confetti and music and sounds that go like rocket ship. Okay, okay, in a moment. And this next surprise video is from a quintessential multi-hyphenated artist, a Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter, actress, New York Times bestselling author, Jewel.

Jewel is also the founder of the Jewel Never Broken Foundation, which works with children and at-risk youth to give them the tools that they need to develop and grow into whole human beings. And I wanna connect a few dots for you here before we hear the surprise video from Jewel. Andres mentioned that the Holistic Life Foundation is part of the support partnering with the Eckhart Tolle Foundation in an upcoming retreat for young people to come be present with Eckhart and Kim in a retreat and environment.

The Jewel Never Broken Foundation is also partnering with us as is Echoes of Hope, a shout out to Echoes of Hope and other nonprofits who work with youth. And we're identifying 100 young people who can travel to Southern California and attend this three-day retreat with Eckhart and Kim at the end of May. And we're specifically raising funds.

This is the current focus of our New Earth Youth Initiative coming up in 2024. One aspect of it is to raise funds for the travel and the food and the lodging for these 100 young people to be part of this retreat experience. Eckhart Teachings is donating, gifting the tuition for the retreat, but you can imagine there are costs involved in bringing these 100 young people to the event and providing them with the travel food and lodging they need to attend.

And that's our goal here in this fundraiser is to raise funds specifically for these 100 young people to be at the retreat. We have a matching grant right now that's in effect. So when you donate and I'd like to invite you if you feel inspired to donate, there's a donate button below the player page to do so and your funds will be matched.

And this is our chance if this matches your inspiration. And with that, now let's have our surprise video with Jewel from the Jewel Never Broken Foundation.

[Speaker 10] (6:07:34 - 6:08:39)
Hey, everybody, it's Jewel. And it is an honor to be here with you all today and support Eckhart. I know we are all here because we love him and his teachings.

And I love what the foundation is doing to make sure that these types of teachings can get into the hands of so many people through the foundation, through the book programs, making sure it gets into the hands of youth. In prison systems, this is such important work. I really hope that you will donate and make more of these types of things possible.

His teachings have helped not only me, but my youth in our foundation. We are a foundation that's been working in mental health with youth for 22 years. And I cannot tell you how many times our kids have come up to us saying how his books have impacted them and their life.

I know this is not news to you. I know you're here because you know this and we all agree. Eckhart has done incredible things donating books to our foundation.

And it is just a privilege to show up here today because through his foundation, I know we can do such incredible work.

[Speaker 3] (6:08:39 - 6:09:04)
Thank you, Jewel. And now we have the chance to hear from Kim and Eckhart directly. We'll start by hearing from Kim Ang, Eckhart's teaching partner, the founder of Presence Through Movement.

Kim, here we go. Thank you, Tammy. Hello, everybody.

Hello, friends.

[Speaker 4] (6:09:07 - 6:20:26)
So what I'd like to do is for you to sit kind of like in a meditative state, but we're not going to really do a formal meditation. This is something that you can do for yourself like, you know, five, 10, three times, 20 times a day. And that is to

be able to just sit in presence.

And even though things are happening around us, there may be voices, there may be things that you see in the background, but we're just going to kind of allow that to kind of go in the periphery and hold our hands like with our palms up, maybe just on your lap, but the palms up in a receiving. So we're receiving that spirit within, receiving that consciousness that is within you. So not only that you are receiving it, so you are that hole in the flute in which a life then can breathe through you, create through you.

So as we sit here with our palms up, we're in that receptive, receiving, and also emanating that light of consciousness. So our purpose in life is unfolding of that spirit within, or as Jesus said, seek the kingdom of God within. Or Buddha, he didn't say it in those words of kingdom or God, but he said the end of suffering.

And right now we are in these times, it's a challenging time. There's a lot happening in the world and these youths is the next generation to create a new earth, to create a better world than what we have created. I mean, it's all been a process, you know, and it's not always uphill, but it comes around, but they are our next generation and we are, as what Eckhart calls, we are the frequency holder for this next generation.

And these youths, I mean, as all of us have been challenged, not only by external, but by the internal, the ego, the mind, and these youths will probably also have to go through that. But if we hold that frequency of consciousness for these youths to be able to live in this world and create something that will be harmonious, peaceful, holy, and this is what we are moving towards. We're allowing that consciousness to come through our very, the essence of who we are, come through our being.

And we are that vehicle, just as those youths are the vehicle for the light of consciousness to shine through, for a new world to be able to be here, that we will end suffering, that we'll have the kingdom of God shine through us. So we are here to share this together for it's one consciousness, one life, that manifests through all these various forms. So we have our part, we each have our part.

And maybe our part is just being a frequency holder. Maybe our part is working with the youths. So it doesn't matter what is happening in the family life of the youths.

I mean, ideally, it'd be nice to be able to have conscious parenting that's happening in their family life. But just as we, each one of us, just as a school teacher, even, they may have that student one hour, three hours, five hours, whatever, how many hours in a day, it doesn't take all day to be with a student. It just takes a moment of pure consciousness to be that light, where that student can then just basically transform.

They will remember that time. We all can go back probably in our memories and think of somebody who has been there for us, no matter how small, in a way, short of time that it's been. But we, the older generation, the middle generation, and the younger generation, we're here to awaken, to unfold, to manifest a new earth, to be present, to let go of that egoic form and that identification with form so that we can live and breathe, be conscious.

So these youths may be the next leaders of our country, of the various countries that are around, and so shall it be. But will they live and be a leader, be the vessel in which consciousness can use their speech, use their mind, use their bodies in the sense of creating and living, bringing together a global peace? Now, we don't know what that requires, whether that means we go deeper into, as a collective world, deeper into, well, deeper into suffering, deeper into the fall of or the end of, maybe, of a civilization.

We don't know that. We don't know what's going to happen, but we do know, and I know that life comes around. So it may be take five, 10 steps back, but it'll come back around, and we are, that's the evolution of human consciousness, is that we are evolving.

And what we do, what can we do, but be present, accepting what is in this moment, and maybe there's a lot, and there's a lot of challenges that is happening in this world at this moment, but we can go deeper into that space consciousness so we can be that frequency holder. And from that space of being that frequency holder, we begin to learn and accept the spiritual laws of just accepting, allowing this moment to be as it is. Even though that there may be some challenging times, and there will be challenging times for youths.

I think anybody who is going to be, go into a leadership role is challenged, and they will be challenged, but we keep coming back to being present, to connect with that consciousness. And since that consciousness is the one consciousness, we as the individual human beings are holding that frequency. So it's all just one, one consciousness, manifesting in all these various forms, whether it's good, bad, for in the world of form, there are opposites, so there's gonna be good, there's gonna be bad, there's gonna be happy, there's gonna be sad, there's gonna be good times and bad times, but within those times can then consciousness come through and a shift begins to happen, something will happen. And we know if you go within, you know that the shift that is happening is happening in, if we can say the world of form, that it is transforming this world as we know it.

And this is what is needed, is just for all of us together to be that frequency holder. So, speaking of the world, I forgot to check my time to see when I started, so I don't know whether I've gone over, I'm under, but it feels complete if we could just sit in again, silence, and just allow consciousness to feel that consciousness within you, with your palms facing up.

[Speaker 12] (6:21:31 - 6:21:40)
We are one and connected and holding that space for the next generation, thank you.

[Speaker 3] (6:21:44 - 6:21:50)
Thank you, Kim. And now, over to Eckhart.

[Speaker 2] (6:22:04 - 6:22:10)
Hello, everybody, good to be with you.

[Speaker 1] (6:22:14 - 6:22:28)
It's, as the Buddhists would say, an auspicious evening. The full moon has just risen above the treetops here.

[Speaker 2] (6:22:29 - 6:24:48)
I've been watching it, and traditionally, those are very powerful moments in time for meditation and going within. So it just happens that this session here coincides with the full moon. We haven't been planning it, and the moon is incredibly still.

It rises, it looks enormously big when it first rises, then it seems to get a little smaller, but there's such stillness around it. It's challenging being a human being. It's also an incredible opportunity for the arising of consciousness, but it is undoubtedly not easy.

Humans are facing a seemingly endless succession of challenges, and challenges is already a positive term. Some people would call it bad things happening. When you become a little bit more conscious,

[Speaker 1] (6:24:48 - 6:25:04)
you recognize that seemingly negative things that are happening, limitations arising in your life, obstacles arising, difficult situations, circumstances, people, and then at some point you realize

[Speaker 2] (6:25:04 - 6:25:55)
that those difficult situations, in whatever form they manifest, are actually an essential part of being human, and an essential part, as far as the flowering of consciousness is concerned, the next shift in consciousness that we're moving into.

So for young people, life is particularly challenging. The most difficult time in my life was childhood and adolescence, and many other people find that also.

[Speaker 1] (6:25:56 - 6:26:42)
When you're a child, you're born into a particular set of circumstances over which you have no control. You're completely at the mercy of whatever circumstances you're born into. Your parents, your environment, family background, the culture you're born into, the environment, the country, all this, and there's nothing you can do about it when you're a child.

But you are seemingly the passive recipient of whatever life is throwing at you. And some humans are born into extraordinarily difficult circumstances, even as young children.

[Speaker 2] (6:26:47 - 6:27:23)
And then you reach adolescence, and then often it gets even more difficult, because adolescence, for many people, is a very disconcerting time when you're halfway between childhood and adulthood, the time of transition. For many adolescents, it's a time of great upheavals and unhappiness, even when the external circumstances are relatively okay.

[Speaker 1] (6:27:24 - 6:27:35)
They're being challenged by an inner turmoil in many cases, and they're completely unprepared for that, because nobody at school has prepared them for it.

[Speaker 2] (6:27:36 - 6:27:44)
As they enter adolescence, they're going to enter, probably, a time of inner turmoil, no matter what their outer circumstances are.

[Speaker 1] (6:27:49 - 6:28:07)
And sometimes, if the outer circumstances are relatively okay, the turmoil, the inner turmoil, can be even greater than if the adolescents were born into poverty or to fight for survival every day.

[Speaker 2] (6:28:10 - 6:28:30)
So whatever it is, it's not easy, and it's essential for youngsters to be prepared for not just for adolescents, children to be prepared for what's coming, and then adolescents to be prepared for what's coming when they grow into adults.

[Speaker 1] (6:28:34 - 6:29:03)
And what we are attempting to help with in reaching as many youngsters as possible is teaching the basics of awareness, which is the key to transcending the suffering that otherwise arises in the human mind that is inherited from generation to generation.

[Speaker 2] (6:29:06 - 6:29:20)

So the most basic teachings for a young person, and it should start in childhood, is to be aware of their inner states rather than being at the mercy of their inner states.

[Speaker 1] (6:29:21 - 6:32:24)
They may be at the mercy of, until they become a little older, of their outer circumstances, but they don't need to be at the mercy of their inner states, which means emotions and thoughts. If they could become aware, if it could be shown to a child, it's not complicated, that emotions arise and that it is possible to be aware of these emotions instead of being totally absorbed in them, being totally taken over by them, that it is possible to stand back, so to speak, and witness the emotions. There it is.

That's extremely important in adolescence when sometimes very negative and violent emotions arise. Is the emotion taking you over completely or are you able to allow the emotion to be there but not being totally absorbed in it, not being totally identified in it so that it doesn't make you do sometimes things that are irreversible in many cases? So basic teaching is awareness of inner states that could start at the age of six and a few, some individual teachers are kind of introducing that, making that part of the teaching.

It has not yet entered the curriculum of many schools, maybe a few alternative schools, but the most important curriculum at school should not be any subject, whatever it may be, mathematics, English or whatever language, geography, whatever. It's all secondary relative to what is primary and that is to be aware. That should be the main subject in a more enlightened subject.

We are going in that direction. So it's awareness of emotions, which could be shown by role playing, by telling stories, all kinds of possibilities can help children to develop the ability to be aware. And the arising of awareness is the essence of spirituality.

Another word for awareness is presence. The arising of presence is the essence of all spirituality. So that, if we can make that the main teaching, everything else would then fall into place.

So it would start in childhood and then it becomes very important in adolescence when emotions do tend to arise, powerful emotions.

[Speaker 2] (6:32:27 - 6:32:39)
Also, not just awareness of emotions, but also to be aware of thoughts that arise. What are you telling yourself?

[Speaker 1] (6:32:40 - 6:36:10)
These are simple things that can be taught even to a child. It's not complicated. By telling stories, as I said, by telling stories, by acting it out, role playing, a child can learn to become aware also of how they speak to themselves in their mind, the inner voice.

What is the voice saying? So that they don't become the voice, because if you are the voice that you've been taken over by the conditioned mind, the mind which is conditioned by your environment, by whatever circumstances you were born into, whatever your parents have done, what people have done to you, et cetera, the conditioned mind, yes, it's there. You can't get rid of it easily, but you don't need to be totally absorbed by it, not totally identified with it.

So how do you, what is your mind saying? What is it doing? Simple things could be taught to children, and then gradually that ability grows, the ability to stay aware when difficult things happen, as they will in every person's life.

Every person is not only facing external difficulties, but also problems arising from the workings of the human mind. And the human mind also has incredible possibilities for manifesting and creating, but there's also built into the human mind a deep-seated dysfunction that everybody inherits. In some humans, it is present in a more acute form than in others, but in every human, this deep-seated dysfunction, which we could call the ego, the egoic mind, operates in one way or another in every person's life.

So we have that, it's been recognized in all spiritual traditions that, yes, humans are wonderful beings, they're wonderful possibilities. They also have created amazing things, but also there is a huge downside to being human, and that is the inherited, let's call it by a more direct term, the inherited craziness of the human condition, of the human mind. So we all inherit a little bit of insanity and sometimes a lot.

If that were not the case, the world would not be the way it is now when you see the enormous amount of suffering, most of it created by humans. Some suffering created by natural disaster, yes, but more suffering created by humans. But what does that mean?

It's created by the consciousness, the collective consciousness in humans that creates this world. And that's what you hear about when you listen or watch the news tonight.

[Speaker 2] (6:36:11 - 6:36:21)
What you're going to hear is manifestations of the collective consciousness of the human mind, and it's not pleasant.

[Speaker 1] (6:36:24 - 6:47:20)
And so this needs to be shown to young people so that you would have a wonderful start. You'd have already the power given to you of how to face the difficult life circumstances that are going to come sooner or later, sooner probably. So give children, give youngsters this gift of showing them the possibility of being aware, of being present, instead of losing themselves in their emotions and in their thoughts completely.

So that's really the essence what we need to teach young people. Traditionally, the knowledge of this always come in much later in life when people beginning to suffer more and more and more and then they just can't stand it anymore. And at some point, there's some awakening.

It's not guaranteed, but at some point when humans suffer, they awaken. And for quite a while, people coming to talks and retreats have seen some percentage of young people, but the potential of young people seems to be growing now slowly. Traditionally, it's been people in the second half of life who've come because they've suffered enough so that they finally begin to awaken.

Seems that humans need to suffer until there is the beginning of an awakening, but it doesn't have to be like that. Humanity has already suffered a lot. And I have observed two things in young people these days.

Seemingly contradictory, one is a high degree of disorientation and of aimlessness and of sometimes nihilism, nothing is worth doing. Sometimes a high degree of suddenly being possessed by some ideology that you subscribe to that reduces the complexity of life to one or see single things as the, yeah, this is the answer. I have the answer for everything.

So you become possessed by an ideology and then you act it out violently sometimes.

And others, completely aimless or they can't stand a seemingly empty life. So they're looking, they're going, they take drugs and so on.

So there's a very negative development on the one hand, but I've also observed, and it seems almost contradictory into something, is an increasing readiness in youngsters to awaken. They just need to hear the message, but nobody has told them. They just need to hear the message and then the shift can happen even at an early age.

But the strange thing is this, the message most youngsters have not yet been reached by this message. So there is, on the negative side, being young these days is very difficult. I don't want to go into it too deeply.

A huge challenge is that the technology that being absorbed in the virtual dimension, the virtual world of the screens that youngsters interact with, being told this is a huge challenge for youngsters and a huge challenge for human consciousness. So one would need to address that specifically. That's one of the major, if not the major challenge for young person now is how to live with this new technology, not lose yourself in the new technology.

And this technology is really an externalization of the human mind. So the human mind has always been a problem losing yourself in your mind, which is the egoic state of consciousness and having no awareness at all, being taken over by one thought after another, one thought after another. That's always been a problem already for hundreds and thousands of years.

But now you have the additional problem, this incessantly talking, active human minds that comes up, it never stops. One damn thing after another arises. It's become now externalized to the technology.

It comes at you, you interact with these screens and it never stops as a continuous input of stuff. You're bombarded by stuff. And youngsters, many youngsters these days, the major part of their reality is not this life here, the actual life that surrounds them.

The major part of their reality is a virtual world. The virtual world has become more real to them than the real world. Humanity has never faced a challenge of that kind.

It's for the first time, and it is an enormous challenge, enormous. This is why it's so important. So it's always been important to live consciously, but now we have no choice.

If we do not bring awareness in, we are going to lose ourselves completely in that the externalized mind, which is a virtual world, the virtual world can also be helpful. We're using technology here to reach people. It can be helpful, but it needs to be used with awareness.

Without awareness, without presence, it will consume you. So it's now an absolute necessity for humans to become aware, otherwise they will be consumed, not just by their mind, they will be consumed by what they have created, the externalized mind, the virtual mind, they will be consumed by it. So it's a, and this is a greater, this is the greatest danger for human consciousness, the greatest challenge, greater than any other challenge in the external world.

So it's so important now, only awareness can liberate us from all that. So the teaching, the main teaching, it's otherwise, we are actually confronted with a life-threatening situation in technology. So it's not just, it's always been a, traditionally, the awakening of consciousness is only, it's always been there for already for thousands of years.

There've always been humans who have awakened, yeah, have been able to transcend the egoic mind and become aware, but up until recently, it's been a kind of luxury almost. It was great. Some humans were able to realize it, many through the existing religious teachings, although religious teachings to a large extent have also become corrupted and misused by the human ego to a large extent, but there've always been some who were able to awaken through that, but now that's not enough anymore.

What we now need is an awakening on a much larger scale, and the possibility is there. When I talk to youngsters, and I want to do it much more, okay, I've given talks at some universities, I've talked, spoken at Stanford and New York University, and at first, I wasn't sure, but first, I wonder what they're going to make of it, and I was amazed how open they were to the teaching, and some said, wow, I've never heard that before. So the openness is there, and we just need to create channels so that they can be reached with this message.

And the message, basically, if I had to express it and define it in one single sentence, the message is that there's more to you than meets the eye. There is a possibility of accessing a deeper or higher state of consciousness. There is a dimension of consciousness in you just waiting to be discovered.

You don't have to achieve it, because that means you need a lot of time to get there. It's not something, the awakening is not something you need to achieve. It's something you discover.

To show that to youngsters, and not just conceptually, but experientially, to show them the possibility, for example, of being aware of the way in which they talk to themselves in their head. Just what are you saying to yourself? There's already an awareness, or the possibility of discovery between two thoughts.

[Speaker 2] (6:47:20 - 6:47:35)
There's a space. We call it stillness. And again, everything in this world goes against that.

[Speaker 1] (6:47:36 - 6:48:06)
Every device that you have with a screen on it is trying to obscure, to prevent you from accessing the dimension of stillness, because it's the opposite of stillness. It's stuff getting at you, content, stuff. Another text message, another Facebook post, another this, another this coming up, interacting.

[Speaker 2] (6:48:06 - 6:48:17)
Never a moment of, ah, and so the possibility to discover still.

[Speaker 1] (6:48:17 - 6:49:14)
I mean, there are a few apps, or there are quite a few apps that you can get that teach you meditation, and that's good. So it can be used for a helpful purpose. It can be, most of it is in the service of unconsciousness, this technology, but it can, but a small percentage of it is actually helpful.

There are some apps that teach you how to breathe consciously, how to be aware of your breath. One of the simplest, most fundamental ways of accessing this inner dimension of stillness that transcends thought, be aware of your breathing. So you have this little app.

I tried a few on my iPhones, and oh, that's quite good. So it goes, you can choose the duration. It says, breathe in, inhale, and it goes tick, tick, tick.

[Speaker 2] (6:49:18 - 6:50:00)
Hold, exhale, tick, tick, tick, tick, tick. Oh, inhale, hold, exhale, hold. Well, and what happens when you follow that?

The mind becomes still. So it can be used in a constructive and helpful way. It can be.

90% of it isn't yet, but, so we need to be, to use it skillfully with awareness.

[Speaker 1] (6:50:00 - 6:50:34)
Without awareness, it will destroy you. With awareness, it can be a wonderful thing, this technology, and then you may have heard about the latest developments of AI, artificial intelligence. It does the most amazing things.

You can ask it to write an essay on some subject, and it'll write it within five seconds. It would take you five hours to write that. It might not be as good.

It can do amazing things.

[Speaker 2] (6:50:35 - 6:50:44)
And so, quite soon, perhaps, the AI will be better at thinking than the human mind.

[Speaker 1] (6:50:48 - 6:51:50)
So that's another reason for going beyond thinking, so that, to discover a dimension in you that is actually higher and more powerful than the thought, the dimension of thinking. It's time now, because otherwise it'll defeat you, and it becomes better at thinking than you are. So you have to rise above thinking, the way we are able to use the mind and use the technology, but are not consumed by it.

You are above it, and that is presence, that is awareness. So this is a wonderful thing, but this is an incredible time we live in, when things are extremely challenging. One could say, who knows where it's going?

It could go very, very wrong.

[Speaker 2] (6:51:51 - 6:52:15)
It could, or it could be the very seemingly negative thing that we have created can be the opening into that higher dimension of consciousness that is waiting to be discovered in every human.

[Speaker 1] (6:52:16 - 6:52:19)
And that's vital. It's waiting to be discovered.

[Speaker 2] (6:52:19 - 6:52:32)
It's dormant in you. And so that's, children need to grow up with that, give a child this gift.

[Speaker 1] (6:52:35 - 6:52:47)
And then the child will grow into an adult and will be able to use that, and then it will become, it will grow, it will become more powerful.

[Speaker 2] (6:52:48 - 6:53:18)
Every challenge that then this human faces will make that human more conscious instead of drawing them back into unconsciousness. But of course, always, no matter in what way you become engaged in this, it always comes back to, you have to live it.

[Speaker 1] (6:53:19 - 6:53:35)
You have to live it every moment, and every moment is always this moment. In a way,

one could say there is no every moment, there's only this moment. It just looks like lots of moments, but it's only ever this moment.

[Speaker 2] (6:53:35 - 6:55:36)
And this is the only moment where you can live state of the state of presence. And you can sense the power of presence within you, beyond the thinking mind, beyond emotional fluctuations. There's a, we can call it stillness, but it's much more than stillness, it's just a word, but let's call it stillness.

Discover the stillness that is always waiting. It just was obscured. So that is the most vital message for humanity.

I want to thank all of you for participating in this, realizing its importance, and every one of you can contribute in some way. And perhaps the most important contribution, I think Aaron already pointed it out earlier, the most important contribution, of course, is your state of consciousness. The world can only change from within.

[Speaker 1] (6:55:38 - 6:55:45)
What the world humans create is a manifestation or an externalization of the collective consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (6:55:46 - 6:57:13)
If the collective consciousness is dysfunctional, the outer world will reflect it. So thank you for being part of this. It's, nothing could be more important.

This is the purpose of your life, is to participate and embody the arising of what we could call the transcendent consciousness, the spiritual dimension, the shift. And then what arises as the book that I wrote, I guess it was written through me, a new earth then arises naturally as a reflection of the collective consciousness. Thank you.

Tammy, back to you.

[Speaker 3] (6:57:14 - 7:01:06)
Thank you, Eckhart. Here, as we come to a close, I just wanna underscore, I've had the pleasure and privilege of watching Eckhart teach some groups of young people. And I've seen their openness, and I've seen, as Eckhart described, in many young people, they just need to hear the message and how it was lights going on so quickly, and I could see it in their eyes.

And I have to say, some of the happiest experiences I've had at Eckhart Tolle, Kim Eng Retreats has been watching those lights go on behind the eyes of young people. And so I wanna thank all of you for being with us here as we more formally launch, moving into 2024, the New Earth Youth Initiative, as has been said a couple of different times in terms of your contribution to the Eckhart Tolle Foundation living with presence, the alpha and omega of it all. Additionally, if you feel inspired, we would love for you to help spread the word about the Eckhart Tolle Foundation.

Many people are just learning about it. You can do this by resharing our social media posts and our newsletters. We'd also love your ideas about how Eckhart's teachings can reach different populations in creative ways.

One way through book donations, if you have ideas for where we can donate Eckhart's books, you can access a request form at EckhartTolleFoundation.org. So again, if you have ideas and you'd like to share them with us about where we can donate Eckhart's books, there's a request form on EckhartTolleFoundation.org. We'd also love your ideas for connecting us with like-minded nonprofits like the Holistic

Life Foundation and the Jewel Never Broken Foundation or other ideas you might have about how we can bring the teachings of presence to diverse demographics and people who would otherwise not have access.

You can write to us and you might wanna write this down, outreach at EckhartTolleFoundation.org. Perhaps creative ideas have been emerged in you from being part of this special online event. Write to us at outreach at EckhartTolleFoundation.org.

If you would feel inspired to donate to the Eckhart Tolle Foundation, I also warmly invite you to do so. You can scroll below the player and there's a donate button there. And again, to repeat, your donations will be matched in the coming days and will support programs like our New Earth Youth Initiative and the 2024 Prison Teaching Tour that's coming up that you'll hear more about as well.

Also, finally, if it matches your inspiration, you can include the Eckhart Tolle Foundation in your estate planning and in your will. Okay, to conclude now, Eckhart, would you be willing to lead us in some moments of connected stillness together?

[Speaker 2] (7:01:09 - 7:03:55)
Yes, Tammy, I am willing. Wonderful. So we come into the present moment so fully that we don't need to think about it, but just sense the present moment, the stillness, the power of stillness.

Thoughts fall away, but you stay alert and awake and there's a stillness. And that stillness is a presence. It is a presence of consciousness, the light of consciousness.

And then you realize that essentially I am that. I am, you realize the essential I am-ness, I am that, that's an ancient Indian saying, Tat Tvam Azeem, I might be mispronouncing it, but I am that is the realization of your essential nature as consciousness itself. The person is secondary.

More essentially, you are consciousness. And you can sense that as an essential aliveness or aliveness, has no form.

[Speaker 12] (7:04:46 - 7:04:47)
Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (7:05:12 - 7:08:21)
Hi, everybody. Welcome. Welcome to this special Eckhart Tolle Foundation online event.

I'm so glad that you're here with us. Thank you. My name's Tammy Simon.

I'm the founder of Sounds True. And I have had the great joy and honor of working with Eckhart Tolle since 2001. And I'm also on the board of the Eckhart Tolle Foundation and have been on the board since its inception.

And it's a great joy to be your host for this special online event. During this event, you'll be hearing more about the Eckhart Tolle Foundation. Perhaps for some of you, this is the first time you'll be learning more about the foundation's history and its activities.

And we're also going to introduce you to a New Earth Youth Initiative, which is a new program that the Eckhart Tolle Foundation is sponsoring. And it brings Eckhart's teachings and the experience of presence to young people who very well would otherwise not have access to these teachings and the experience of presence in Eckhart and Kim's presence. And you're going to be learning more about that.

Also, as part of this online special event, we have two surprise videos. Not going to say much more about it, except that these videos are from some celebrated visionary humans who are expressing their support of bringing Eckhart's teachings to young people. Most of all, I want to thank each and every one of you for being with us.

There's a kind of ripple effect that comes from us connecting together in this way with a shared intent to bring presence to more and more people without financial barriers to access. So it is so wonderful to be with you and to have this experience together. Oh, and of course, as part of our time together, you're going to hear from Kim and Eckhart.

Did I forget to say that? Yes, indeed. That's going to happen too.

And now I'd love to introduce you to someone who is the president of Eckhart teachings and the co-founder and board chair of the Eckhart Tolle Foundation. This is someone who's very special to me personally. I've known this person for more than two decades now and watched her grow into her role with such beauty and dignity and the power of a generous heart, Erin Jacobson.

Erin.

[Speaker 6] (7:08:24 - 7:14:52)
Thank you, Tammy. And thank you all for joining us tonight. I just wanted to spend a few moments and tell you a little bit about how we started and some of the inspiration for the foundation.

I've been working for Eckhart teachings since it began in 1999. And our mission has always been the same and that's to share Eckhart's teachings with as many people as possible. Of course, back in the early days, we did not have a big team.

We basically did everything by hand. You know, there's almost, it was the early days of the internet. And I can still remember like it was yesterday folding paper flyers in the living room and packaging audio and video cassette tapes, being in charge of duplicating the audio and video cassette tapes.

I was the one taking all of the phone fax and snail mail orders, packaging them up and walking several blocks to the post office every day. In fact, our very first covers were actually black and white photocopies that we made at Kinko's. As you can imagine over the years, we have received a lot of feedback from people who have been impacted by the power of now and a new earth.

And some of the most impactful feedback that we've received have been letters from people in prison writing to Eckhart and expressing their gratitude as well as telling their stories. And we have been so impacted by these letters and Eckhart keeps every single one. And even though we were impacted, it still made us think about all the communities with very little access that, and we were wondering like, how can we help them?

And giving back has always been a part of Eckhart teachings and we've been doing so by giving those that can't afford to pay event scholarships, access to online courses. We have a lot of teachings available for free on YouTube and other streaming platforms. And even though that we've been giving individuals help, we still wanted a way to be able to focus and give back to underserved communities.

So in 2016, we launched the Eckhart Tolle Foundation and we chose to support incarcerated people, hospice patients and the underserved youth. We've had a couple of large conferences where all the proceeds went to fund the foundation. We've been giving tens of thousands of books away to prisons, hospices and the underserved youth.

We've brought the youth to learn directly from Eckhart and Kim in person. And we've been donating, we've given grants to these communities. And we also recently partnered with Adovo and they are providing tablets and access to Eckhart and Kim's teachings to over 250,000 people.

And we're also planning for Eckhart to speak in a couple prisons soon in person. And tonight we're highlighting the underserved youth because they need mental, emotional and spiritual support. And not only for their own personal wellbeing, but because they represent humanity's future and this world needs more conscious and aware people.

We are committed to helping these communities and help them relieve the suffering caused by the dysfunctional egoic mind so that more people can show up in their lives, present and aware and in touch with their essential nature. If you're inclined to be a part of this impact, we have three ways that you can help. Number one, by sharing our social media posts about our book donation programs and our grant programs with your networks.

Number two, we of course graciously welcome any donations. And number three, and it truly is the most important. My personal favorite quote of Eckhart's has always been, the world can only change from within.

And that does mean that you being here, connecting to presence and continuing to practice living your life from presence is the most essential. I'd also like to thank all of you, our incredibly generous donors and our dedicated board of directors for their service, our staff and our volunteers. And of course our executive director, Ali Weibel.

All of you are making this work possible. Now it's time for our first surprise video, expressing their support for the work that we've been doing by bringing Eckhart's teachings to young people. This person's team reached out to me several years ago in hopes of connecting with Eckhart.

And little did I know at the time what their vision was and where this connection would go. I'm amazed by this person's commitment to sharing Eckhart's teachings with his massive audience. I would say that he is making spiritual teachings cool in the eyes of young people.

He's definitely opening a meaningful conversation and he's using his art and his platform to not only share his own learning and wisdom but also Eckhart's teachings. Eckhart was featured in his most recent album throughout his whole album, almost, Mr. Morali and the Big Steppers. He is a multi-platinum Grammy and Emmy award-winning artist.

He was the first non-classical, non-jazz musician to win a Pulitzer Prize for his 2017 album, Damn. Here he is, Mr. Kendrick Lamar.

[Speaker 9] (7:14:54 - 7:17:16)
I believe people can, they truly can use, well, not people, young people. Young people need to hear Eckhart's words the most because today we live in a society where it's so many things pushing and pulling, you know, where there's a lifestyle, social media, friends, trends, so many things consume young people and, you know, their decision-making. And to truly crack that code and have that balance, you know, everybody wants nice things, right?

But to have that balance is to also go within, as I said before. I wish I would have read these books when I was 16, when I was 13. I'd probably be far more advanced in my personal life and my daily, you know, interpersonal dynamics, not only with people, but with myself.

But I'm fortunate enough to come across it in my 30s, right? But for the kids that's out there listening, 12, 13, 14, 15 and up, I truly recommend that you get into it because it'll open your mind up further than you can even imagine, further than the things that you want, further than the things that you think that you need. You'll explore a whole new journey of self-worth, passion, purpose, creativity, and stillness within yourself.

It's worth it. A hundred percent. Not only on a professional level, because I know everyone has dreams and goals and aspirations, but on a personal level, it plays the same rules.

And when you intertwine the works between the two, things will happen tempo for you.

[Speaker 3] (7:17:20 - 7:18:13)
Kendrick Lamar saying, young people need to hear Epgart's words the most. What a terrific surprise video. Let's learn more about the New Earth Youth Initiative.

And to share with us more about the details, we have a fellow board member of mine on the Epgart Tolle Foundation board. One of the best parts of participating on the board is the type of allyship and friendship and creative partnership that I can have with somebody like Elizabeth Lesser, co-founder of Omega Institute, author of several best-selling books, including Broken Open, How Difficult Times Can Help Us Grow, and Cassandra Speaks, When Women Are Storytellers, The Human Story Changes.

[Speaker 7] (7:18:13 - 7:23:15)
Elizabeth, over to you. Okay, thank you. Hey, everybody.

What a pleasure to be with you. It's a cold, chilly night here in New York, and I imagine you're all coming in from all over the world and the country. It's just great to feel everybody on the Zoom and YouTube and wherever you're joining us.

So I'm here to introduce our next guest, but first I wanna tell you briefly about the foundation's youth initiative. We're calling it the New Earth Youth Initiative. And it's really meaningful to me to be working on something about young people and kids because I've been in education my whole life.

I started out as a kindergarten and elementary school teacher, and then I worked my way up to working with grownups in education when I co-founded Omega Institute 47 years ago. And it dawned on me as I worked with kids years ago that grownups also need to keep learning, that it's actually imperative for adults to learn how to grow and change and expand our consciousness as we age. And not just getting facts, but the important things like how do I quiet my mind and open my heart and relate to the mysterious parts of myself, my soul, my consciousness.

And throughout my 50 almost years at Omega, I've had the privilege of being in the presence of educators of the mind and the heart and the soul, people like Eckhart Tolle, although there's really no one like Eckhart Tolle. And I got to really experience him in his full Eckhart-ness back in 2008 when I helped Oprah produce a webinar focusing on A New Earth, the book, the 10 chapters. I don't know, many of you may be tuned into that.

Millions and millions of people around the world tuned into that webinar. I remember the first night we did it, it was one of the first things like it in the world. And the entire Chicago internet went down because so many people were trying to get on.

And I learned during that, that his work wasn't just for serious spiritual readers and seekers, that anyone trying to figure out this tricky thing called being human could access the depth and the scope and the magnificence of his work. And that made me think, well, then kids could also. And young people don't just need to learn how to read and write and do math.

They need education of their hearts and their minds and souls. The way Kendrick Lamar was saying, if only he had had that learning way back in his early teens, what a difference it would make. And that's why we're doing this.

That's why we are raising money and spending the money we raise to do things like bringing his books to schools and school libraries, creating programs specifically for young people like the lectures Eckhart did a few years ago with NYU students, and offering grants to like-minded organizations working with youth. And I'd like to introduce you now to a leader from one of those organizations. And he happens to be a dear friend of mine.

He has taught at Omega Institute for many years and his work inspires all of us at Omega and here at the foundation greatly. His name is Andres Gonzalez, and he's one of the three co-founders of the Holistic Life Foundation and the co-author of Let Your Life Shine, which is a powerful book that documents the way yoga and meditation have transformed and empowered thousands of historically underserved kids in Baltimore. For 20 years, Andres has shared wellness, healing and present moment practices in public school systems and beyond, breathing life back into a community destroyed by drugs, poverty and systemic racism.

And what I love so much about Andres is how he personally walks his message in the world. He has this message that love can heal any heart, including our own. And he is that kind of healer and welcome Andres.

[Speaker 5] (7:23:17 - 7:32:45)
Thank you so much, Elizabeth. It's so good to see you. It's been a while.

I hope you're staying warm where you're at because it's chilly here in Baltimore as well. So before I get to just a few of the topics that I wanted to address, I really just wanna give a quick shout out to the Eckert Tolle Foundation for all the amazing work they do. The Holistic Life Foundation has been going for 20 years and recently they've been supporting us not only financially in terms of giving us funds to help run our Holistic Roots program, which is a mentoring program that's really helping these underserved kids in the city, but also they've donated books to us countless amounts of books.

I mean, books on top of books on top of books so we can give them to the youth, to the adults, the teenagers, to anyone that we run into in all of our programs, they're accessible and they're there to spread his message and his truths. And just amazing what they're doing and this new initiative as well is incredible and it's so needed. And I've seen it through the work I've been doing for over 20 years now all across the nation and across the world.

And I wanted to start by talking about a metaphor and how important this work is. You know, our teacher, Uncle Will used to use this extended metaphor to describe how important breath work or meditation is for people in general, but I think in particular for our youth and the transformation that it can have on them when they start using these skills and techniques to learn how to self-regulate. The way he would do it, he'd say, you know, our body's like a boat and the world is the ocean.

And more oftentimes than not, our waters are calm, right? We can set our sails and go whatever direction we wanna go. But if you think about it sometimes, and actually now I think about it most of the time, right?

Our waters aren't calm, right? We're bombarded by external and internal stimuli. Externally, we have what's going on in the world.

You have your family, you have your friends, your parents, your loved ones, significant others, you have coworkers, bosses, you have society, social media, politics, right? We're sort of, that's smacking us around externally. That's moving our boat around.

We're trying to set our sails. It's getting tougher. And then internally, the bombardment we have, our fears, our doubt, stress, worry, anxiety, trauma that we faced, whether it's our personal trauma, secondary trauma, intergenerational trauma.

So really those waters, this world is chaotic. And we're bombarded by this all the time. And it's pushing us around all over the place.

So it's hard for us to set our sails. And our teacher used to remind us how the breath or meditation, that that is our anchor. That allows us to still ourselves, which in turn will still our waters, which will allow us to set our sails and go in whatever direction we wanna go and achieve whatever it is that we wanna achieve.

And I've seen firsthand the amazing transformation this has with kids. So we were based out of Baltimore and we're in Northwest Baltimore. So like where the wire came out, like the hood of all hoods, right?

And there's a young lady in elementary school, we got with her. She was from the same projects that Freddie Gray was from. And for some reason, people would bully this girl, right?

She didn't have the cool clothes or the backpacks. She's kind of had a little less material wise than anyone else did. So they picked on her.

They made fun of her. They said stuff to her. We were always confused why they chose her because her brother had showed her how to throw her hands a little, right?

So he had a box and he showed her. So I was always confused, like why do you keep picking on this girl? She's gonna beat you up.

She's stronger than you. She knows what to do with her hands, right? So we teach her some of these techniques, some of these practices of breath work and meditation.

And this is early on in us providing these techniques and practices to youth. And so myself and the other two co-founders, Ali and Atma, we're at this school and we're with the principal and we go and we're walking through the halls and we turn the corner. And when we turn the corner, this young lady has this other lady, she's grabbed her by the shirt and she had her thrown up against the lockers.

And she's looking at her and you can tell she is about to cop back and hit this little girl. And she looks at us and she sees us walking down the halls and she looks at the girl and she looks at the guests again. And she goes, looks at the girl and goes, you're lucky I meditate.

And she lets go of the young lady, sits down and starts breathing. And it was one of the most powerful things. The principal was looking at me like, what did I just see, right?

And we were like, oh my God, what did we just see? Cause we seen how she was with the other kids too. So it's just so powerful and amazing to see the impact that it can have on these youth.

And not only is it helping with dealing with their stress, dealing with their anxiety, dealing with that bombardment I was talking to y'all about, but honestly, some of these kids in these neighborhoods, these techniques and practices that we're talking about that this new Earth Youth Initiative is focusing on will help these kids so much that in some cases, it may end up saving their lives. Cause now they're no longer reacting to what the world is throwing at them, but they're learning to instill themselves and they're able to respond. You know, and Elizabeth mentioned, I'm a big love guy, which I am, as you can see by the clothes.

And I just think love is the most powerful force in the universe. And I think that these techniques in particular, one of the things I think when youth learn to go inward, like Kendrick was talking about, 13, 16, to learn how to instill those waters, learn how to be able to go inside and just be. Remember, we're human beings.

When they learn that, they gain the sense of love, self-love, they learn to love themselves. And then now when they're looking out at others, they're more empathetic, they're more compassionate. They start seeing themselves in everyone and everything.

Now they're not alone. Now they're not so disconnected to anything. Now they see the interconnection between themselves and everyone.

They're not just their corner anymore. They're not just their block. They're not just the East side or West side of Baltimore.

They're not just Baltimore or Maryland or the United States. They're not just this country, this continent. They start seeing that universal self, that omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent self that they truly are.

And that's when you see that transformation occur. And it's so beautiful and it's so powerful and it's so needed in the world that we're in right now. And it's just, it's amazing.

And so kudos to this foundation and the initiative they're making. I have two other things, I have these two quotes that Eckhart has in his books that I just wanted to talk about because they really ring true to some of the stuff and the synchronicities and the synergies that we're doing with the Holistic Life Foundation that are with his work. So one of them is from The Power of Now.

And our teacher used to always talk about how the only time that exists is right now, right? And Eckhart says, as soon as you enter the present moment, all unhappiness and struggle dissolve. And life begins to flow with joy and ease.

When you act out of the present moment awareness, whatever you do becomes imbued with a sense of quality, care, and love. And our teacher used to always say, the past causes anger. Someone said something to you, they did something to you, you might regret something you did.

The future causes anxiety. What's gonna happen? What am I gonna do with myself?

What's going on? When we teach these youth to be in the now, which is the only time that exists, right? The past is gone.

The future is never getting here. But when they learn to live in this now moment, this present moment, this present, it's a gift. That's the reason it's called the present.

It's so powerful. And what we're doing is we're allowing these kids to remember that they can access that whenever they want to. And that reminder is something my teacher used to always say.

He said, he says, I'm not a teacher. I'm not a teacher. I'm a reminder, I'm a calm, do it.

And Eckhart talks about that too. And stillness speaks a true spiritual teacher. He says, does not have anything to teach in the conventional sense of the word.

Does not have anything to give or add to you. We have it all already, right? Such as new information, beliefs or rules or conduct.

The only function of such a teacher is to help you remove that which separates you from the truth of who you already are and what you already know in the depth of your being. And that's what this initiative is gonna be able to do y'all. So really, we need your support.

We need you to tell your friends to tell a friend. We need y'all to really understand the impact that this can have. If we can take kids from inner cities, underserved communities, who have never had a retreat experience, never even left their city, they get to go hang out with Eckhart.

Like I wanna go to the retreat, you know what I mean? So for real, you know, special shout out to the Eckhart Tolle Foundation, all the amazing work that they're doing. Thank you for continuing to support the Holistic Light Foundation.

And please, all y'all, please do the same. Support as much as you can. This New Earth Youth Initiative is so powerful.

It's so incredible. We're honored to be a part of it here at the Holistic Light Foundation. I'm honored to be here.

And I really just love to all of y'all. And don't forget that love is the most powerful force in the universe.

[Speaker 3] (7:32:48 - 7:36:04)
Thank you, Andres. Bring in the heart. And it's time for our next surprise video.

I notice when I say that, I imagine like there should be confetti and music and, you know, sounds that go like rocket ship. Okay, okay, in a moment. And this next surprise video is from a quintessential multi-hyphenated artist, a Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter, actress, New York Times bestselling author, Jewel.

Jewel is also the founder of the Jewel Never Broken Foundation, which works with children and at-risk youth to give them the tools that they need to develop and grow into whole human beings. And I wanna connect a few dots for you here before we hear the surprise video from Jewel. Andres mentioned that the Holistic Life Foundation is part of the support partnering with the Eckhart Tolle Foundation in an upcoming retreat for young people to come be present with Eckhart and Kim in a retreat and environment.

The Jewel Never Broken Foundation is also partnering with us as is Echoes of Hope, a shout out to Echoes of Hope and other nonprofits who work with youth. And we're identifying 100 young people who can travel to Southern California and attend this three-day retreat with Eckhart and Kim at the end of May. And we're specifically raising funds.

This is the current focus of our New Earth Youth Initiative coming up in 2024. One aspect of it is to raise funds for the travel and the food and the lodging for these 100 young people to be part of this retreat experience. Eckhart Teachings is donating, gifting the tuition for the retreat, but you can imagine there are costs involved in bringing these 100 young people to the event and providing them with the travel food and lodging they need to attend.

And that's our goal here in this fundraiser is to raise funds specifically for these 100 young people to be at the retreat. We have a matching grant right now that's in effect. So when you donate, and I'd like to invite you, if you feel inspired to donate, there's a donate button below the player page to do so.

And your funds will be matched. And this is our chance if this matches your inspiration. And with that, now let's have our surprise video with Jewel from the Jewel Never Broken Foundation.

[Speaker 10] (7:36:04 - 7:37:12)
Hey, everybody, it's Jewel. And it is an honor to be here with you all today and support Eckhart. I know we are all here because we love him and his teachings.

And I love what the foundation is doing to make sure that these types of teachings can get into the hands of so many people through the foundation, through the book programs, making sure it gets into the hands of youth, in prison systems. This is such important work. I really hope that you will donate and make more of these types of things possible.

His teachings have helped not only me, but my youth in our foundation. We are a foundation that's been working in mental health with youth for 22 years. And I cannot tell you how many times our kids have come up to us saying how his books have impacted them and their life.

I know this is not news to you. I know you're here because you know this and we all agree. Eckhart has done incredible things donating books to our foundation.

And it is just a privilege to show up here today because through his foundation, I know we can do such incredible work.

[Speaker 3] (7:37:13 - 7:37:37)
Thank you, Jewel. And now we have the chance to hear from Kim and Eckhart directly. We'll start by hearing from Kim Eng, Eckhart's teaching partner, the founder of Presence Through Movement.

Kim, here we go. Thank you, Tammy. Hello everybody, hello friends.

[Speaker 4] (7:37:40 - 7:43:49)
So what I'd like to do is for you to sit kind of like in a meditative state, but we're not going to really do a formal meditation. This is something that you can do for yourself, like, you know, five, 10, three times, 20 times a day. And that is to be able to just sit in presence.

And even though things are happening around us, there may be voices, there may be things that you see in the background, but we're just going to kind of allow that to kind of go in the periphery and hold our hands like with our palms up, maybe just on your lap, but the palms up in a receiving. So you're receiving that spirit within, receiving that consciousness that is within you. So not only that you are receiving it, so you are that hole in the flute in which a life then can breathe through you, create through you.

So as we sit here with our palms up, we're in that receptive, receiving, and also emanating that light of consciousness. So our purpose in life is unfolding of that spirit within, or as Jesus said, seek the kingdom of God within. Or Buddha, he didn't say it in those words of kingdom or God, but he said, at the end of suffering.

And right now we are in these times, it's a challenging time. There's a lot happening in the world. And these youths, it's the next generation to create a new earth, to create a better world than what we have created.

I mean, it's all been a process, and it's not always uphill, but it comes around. But they are our next generation. And we are, as what Eckhart calls, we are the frequency holder for this next generation.

And these youths, I mean, as all of us have been challenged, not only by external, but by the internal, the ego, the mind. And these youths will probably also have to go through that. But if we hold that frequency of consciousness for these youths to be able to live in this world and create something that will be harmonious, peaceful, holy, and this is what we are moving towards.

We're allowing that consciousness to come through our very, the essence of who we are, come through our being. And we are that vehicle, just as those youths are a vehicle for the light of consciousness to shine through, for a new world to be able to be here, that we will end suffering, that we'll have the kingdom of God shine through us. So we are here to share this together for it's one consciousness, one life, that manifests through all these various forms.

So we have our part, we each have our part. And maybe our part is just being a frequency holder. Maybe our part is working with the youths.

So it doesn't matter what is happening in the family life of the youths. I mean, ideally, it'd be nice to be able to have conscious parenting that's happening in their family life. But just as we, each one of us, just as a school teacher, even, they may have that student one hour, two hours, three hours, five hours, whatever, how many hours in a day.

It doesn't take all day to be with a student. It just takes a moment of pure consciousness to be that light where that student can then just basically transform. They will remember that time.

We all can go back probably in our memories and think of somebody who has been there for us no matter how small, in a way, short of time that it's been. But we, the older generation, the middle generation, and the younger generation, we're here to awaken, to unfold, to manifest a new earth, to be present, to let go of that egoic form and that identification with form so that we can live and breathe, be conscious.

[Speaker 12] (7:43:52 - 7:44:07)
So these youths may be the next leaders of our country, of the various countries that are around. And so shall it be.

[Speaker 4] (7:44:10 - 7:50:13)
But will they live and be a leader, be the vessel in which consciousness can use their speech, use their mind, use their bodies in the sense of the creating and living, bringing together a global peace. Now, we don't know what that requires,

whether that means we go deeper into, as a collective world, deeper into, well, deeper into suffering, deeper into the fall of or the end of a, maybe of a civilization. We don't know that.

We don't know what's going to happen, but we do know. And I know that life comes around. So it may be take five, 10 steps back, but it'll come back around.

And we are, that's the evolution of human consciousness is that we are evolving. So, and what we do, what can we do, but be present, but accepting what is in this moment. And maybe there's a lot, and there's a lot of challenges that is happening in this world at this moment, but we can go deeper into that space consciousness so we can be that frequency holder.

And from that space of being that frequency holder, we begin to learn and accept the spiritual laws of just accepting, allowing this moment to be as it is. And know that there may be some challenging times and there will be challenging times for youths. I think anybody who is going to be, go into a leadership role is challenged and they will be challenged, but we keep coming back to being present, to connect with that consciousness.

And since that consciousness is the one consciousness, we as the individual human beings are holding that frequency so it's all just one, one consciousness manifesting in all these various forms, whether it's good, bad, for in the world of form, there are opposites. So there's going to be good, there's going to be bad, there's going to be happy, there's going to be sad. There's going to be good times and bad times, but within those times can then consciousness come through and a shift begins to happen.

Something will happen. And we know if you go within, you know that the shift that is happening is happening in, if we can say the world of form, that it is transforming this world as we know it. And this is what is needed, is just for all of us together, to be that frequency holder.

So speaking of the world, I forgot to check my time to see when I started. So I don't know whether I've gone over, I'm under, but it feels complete if we could just sit in again, silence and just allow consciousness to feel that consciousness within you. With your palms facing up.

We are one and connected and holding that space for the next generation. Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (7:50:16 - 7:50:24)
Thank you, Kim. And now, over to Eckhart.

[Speaker 2] (7:50:37 - 7:50:54)
Hello, everybody. Good to see you. Good to be with you.

It's, as the Buddhists would say, an auspicious evening.

[Speaker 1] (7:50:56 - 7:51:01)
The full moon has just risen above the treetops here.

[Speaker 2] (7:51:02 - 7:51:04)
I've been watching it.

[Speaker 1] (7:51:08 - 7:51:20)
And traditionally, those are very powerful moments in time for meditation and going within.

[Speaker 2] (7:51:21 - 7:52:42)

So it just happens that this session here coincides with the full moon. We haven't been planning it. And the moon is incredibly still, it rises.

It looked enormously big when it first rises, then it seems to get a little smaller, but it's such stillness around it. It's challenging being a human being.

[Speaker 1] (7:52:44 - 7:52:49)
It's also an incredible opportunity for the arising of consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (7:52:50 - 7:53:16)
But it is undoubtedly not easy. Humans are facing a seemingly endless succession of challenges. And challenges is already a positive term.

Some people would call it bad things happening.

[Speaker 1] (7:53:20 - 7:53:33)
When you become a little bit more conscious, you recognize that seemingly negative things that are happening, limitations arising in your life, obstacles arising, difficult situations, circumstances, people.

[Speaker 2] (7:53:35 - 7:54:16)
And then at some point you realize that those difficult situations, in whatever form they manifest, are actually an essential part of being human and an essential part, as far as the flowering of consciousness is concerned, the next shift in consciousness that we're moving into. So for young people, life is particularly challenging.

[Speaker 1] (7:54:17 - 7:54:52)
The most difficult time in my life was childhood and adolescence, and many other people find that also. When you're a child, you're born into a particular set of circumstances over which you have no control. You're completely at the mercy of whatever circumstances you're born into.

Your parents, your environment, family background, the culture you're born into, the environment, the country, all this.

[Speaker 2] (7:54:57 - 7:54:59)
And there's nothing you can do about it when you're a child.

[Speaker 1] (7:54:59 - 7:55:15)
You are seemingly the passive recipient of whatever life is throwing at you. And some humans are born into extraordinarily difficult circumstances, even as young children.

[Speaker 2] (7:55:20 - 7:55:44)
And then you reach adolescence, and then often it gets even more difficult, because adolescence, for many people, is a very disconcerting time, when you're halfway between childhood and adulthood, the time of transition.

[Speaker 1] (7:55:46 - 7:56:17)
For many adolescents, it's a time of great upheavals and unhappiness, even when the external circumstances are relatively okay. They're being challenged by an inner turmoil, in many cases. And they're completely unprepared for that, because nobody at school has prepared them for it.

As they enter adolescence, they're going to enter, probably, a time of inner turmoil, no matter what their outer circumstances are.

[Speaker 2] (7:56:22 - 7:57:04)

And sometimes, if the outer circumstances are relatively okay, the turmoil, the inner turmoil, can be even greater than if the adolescents were born into poverty, or to fight for survival every day. So whatever it is, it's not easy, and it's essential for youngsters to be prepared for, not just for adolescents, for children to be prepared for what's coming, and then adolescents to be prepared for what's coming when they grow into adults.

[Speaker 1] (7:57:07 - 8:00:57)
And what we are attempting to help with in reaching as many youngsters as possible is teaching the basics of awareness, which is the key to transcending the suffering that otherwise arises in the human mind that is inherited from generation to generation. So the most basic teachings for a young person, and it should start in childhood, is to be aware of their inner states, rather than being at the mercy of their inner states. They may be at the mercy of, until they become a little older, of their outer circumstances, but they don't need to be at the mercy of their inner states, which means emotions and thoughts.

If they could become aware, if it could be shown to a child, it's not complicated, that emotions arise, and that it is possible to be aware of these emotions instead of being totally absorbed in them, being totally taken over by them, that it is possible to stand back, so to speak, and witness the emotions. There it is. That's extremely important in adolescence when sometimes very negative and violent emotions arise, is the emotion taking you over completely, or are you able to allow the emotion to be there, but not being totally absorbed in it, not being totally identified in it, so that it doesn't make you do sometimes things that are irreversible in many cases.

So basic teaching is awareness of inner states that could start at the age of six, and a few, some individual teachers are kind of introducing that, making that part of their teaching. It has not yet entered the curriculum of many schools, maybe a few alternative schools, but the most important curriculum at school should not be any subject, whatever it may be, mathematics, English, or whatever language, geography, whatever, it's all secondary relative to what is primary, and that is to be aware. That should be the main subject in a more enlightened subject.

We are going in that direction. So it's awareness of emotions, which could be shown by role-playing, by telling stories, all kinds of possibilities can help children to develop the ability to be aware, and the arising of awareness is the essence of spirituality. Another word for awareness is presence.

The arising of presence is the essence of all spirituality. So that, if we can make that the main teaching, everything else would then fall into place. So it would start in childhood, and then it becomes very important in adolescence when emotions do tend to arise, powerful emotions.

[Speaker 2] (8:01:01 - 8:01:12)
Also, not just awareness of emotions, but also to be aware of thoughts that arise. What are you telling yourself?

[Speaker 1] (8:01:13 - 8:02:32)
These are simple things that can be taught even to a child. It's not complicated. By telling stories, as I said, by telling stories, by acting it out, role-playing, a child can learn to become aware also of how they speak to themselves in their mind, the inner voice.

What is the voice saying? So that they don't become the voice, because if you are the voice, you've been taken over by the conditioned mind, the mind which is conditioned by your environment, by whatever circumstances you were born into, whatever your parents have done, what people have done to you, et cetera. The conditioned mind, yes, it's there.

You can't get rid of it easily, but you don't need to be totally absorbed by it, not totally identified with it. So how do you, what is your mind saying? What is it doing?

Simple things could be taught to children, and then gradually that ability grows, the ability to stay aware when difficult things happen, as they will, in every person's life.

[Speaker 2] (8:02:33 - 8:03:07)
Every person is not only facing external difficulties, but also problems arising from the workings of the human mind. And the human mind also has incredible possibilities for manifesting and creating, but there's also, built into the human mind, a deep-seated dysfunction that everybody inherits.

[Speaker 1] (8:03:07 - 8:15:54)
In some humans, it is present in a more acute form than in others, but in every human, this deep-seated dysfunction, which we could call the ego, the egoic mind, operates in one way or another in every person's life. So we have that, it's been recognized in all spiritual traditions that, yes, humans are wonderful beings, they're wonderful possibilities, they also have created amazing things, but also there is a huge downside to being human, and that is the inherited, let's call it by a more direct term, the inherited craziness of the human condition, of the human mind. So we all inherit a little bit of insanity, and sometimes a lot.

If that were not the case, the world would not be the way it is now, when you see the enormous amount of suffering, most of it created by humans. Some suffering created by natural disaster, yes, but more suffering created by humans, but what does that mean? It's created by the consciousness, the collective consciousness in humans that creates this world, and that's what you hear about when you listen or watch the news tonight, what you're going to hear is manifestations of the collective consciousness of the human mind, and it's not pleasant.

And so this needs to be shown to young people so that you'd have a wonderful start, you'd have already the power given to you of how to face the difficult life circumstances that are going to come sooner or later, sooner probably. So give children, give youngsters this gift of showing them the possibility of being aware, of being present, instead of losing themselves in their emotions and in their thoughts completely. So that's really the essence what we need to teach young people.

Traditionally, the knowledge of this has always come in much later in life, when people are beginning to suffer more and more and more, and then they just can't stand it anymore, and at some point, there's some awakening, it's not guaranteed, but at some point when humans suffer, they awaken, and for quite a while, people coming to talks and retreats have seen some percentage of young people, but it's now, the potential of young people seems to be growing now slowly. Traditionally, it's been people in the second half of life who've come because they've suffered enough so that they finally begin to awaken.

And it seems that humans need to suffer until there is the beginning of an awakening, but it doesn't have to be like that. Humanity has already suffered a lot. And I have observed two things in young people these days, seemingly contradictory.

One is a high degree of disorientation and of aimlessness and of sometimes nihilism, nothing is worth doing. Sometimes a high degree of suddenly being possessed by some ideology that you subscribe to that reduces the complexity of life to one or see single things as the, yeah, this is the answer, I have the answer for everything. So you become possessed by an ideology and then you act it out violently sometimes.

And others completely aimless or they can't stand a seemingly empty life. So they're looking, they're going, they take drugs and so on. So that's a very negative development on the one hand, but I've also observed, and it seems almost contradictory in something, is an increasing readiness in youngsters to awaken.

They just need to hear the message, but nobody has told them. They just need to hear the message and then the shift can happen even at an early age. But the strange thing is this, the message, most youngsters have not yet been reached by this message.

And so there is, on the negative side, being young these days is very difficult. I don't want to go into it too deeply. A huge challenge is that the technology that being absorbed in the virtual dimension, the virtual world, the screens that youngsters interact with, this is a huge challenge for youngsters and a huge challenge for human consciousness.

So one would need to address that specifically. That's one of the major, if not the major challenge for young person now is how to live with this new technology, not to lose yourself in the new technology. And this technology is really an externalization of the human mind.

So the human mind has always been a problem losing yourself in your mind, which is the egoic state of consciousness and having no awareness at all, being taken over by one thought after another, one thought after another. That's always been a problem already for hundreds and thousands of years. But now you have the additional problem, this incessantly talking, active human minds that comes up, it never stops.

One damn thing after another, right? It's become now externalized to the technology. It comes at you, you interact with these screens and it never stops as a continuous input of stuff.

You're bombarded by stuff. And youngsters, many youngsters these days, the major part of their reality is not this life here, the actual life that surrounds them. The major part of their reality is a virtual world.

The virtual world has become more real to them than the real world. Humanity has never faced a challenge of that kind. It's for the first time, and it is an enormous challenge, enormous.

This is why it's so important. So it's always been important to live consciously, but now we have no choice. If we do not bring awareness in, we are going to lose ourselves completely in that the externalized mind, which is a virtual world, the virtual world can also be helpful.

We're using technology here to reach people. It can be helpful, but it needs to be used with awareness. Without awareness, without presence, it will consume you.

So it's now an absolute necessity for humans to become aware, otherwise they will be consumed, not just by their mind, they will be consumed by what they have created, the externalized mind, the virtual mind. They will be consumed by it. And this is the greatest danger for human consciousness, the greatest challenge, greater than any other challenge in the external world.

So it's so important now that only awareness can liberate us from all that. So the teaching, the main teaching, otherwise we are actually confronted with a life-threatening situation in technology. So it's not just, it's always been a challenge Traditionally, the awakening of consciousness is only, it's always been there already for thousands of years.

There've always been humans who have awakened, have been able to transcend the egoic mind and become aware, but up until recently, it's been a kind of luxury almost. It was great. Some humans were able to realize it, some many through the existing religious teachings, although religious teachings to a large extent have also become corrupted and misused by the human ego to a large extent.

But there've always been some who were able to awaken through that. But now that's not enough anymore. What we now need is an awakening on a much larger scale and the possibility is there.

When I talk to youngsters and I want to do it much more, okay, I've given talks at some universities, I've spoken at Stanford and New York University and at first I wasn't sure, at first I wondered what they're going to make of it. And I was amazed how open they were to the teaching and some said, wow, I've never heard that before. So the openness is there and we just need to create channels so that they can be reached with this message.

And the message basically, if I had to express it and define it in one single sentence, the message is that there's more to you than meets the eye. There is a possibility of accessing a deeper or higher state of consciousness. There's a dimension of consciousness in you just waiting to be discovered.

You don't have to achieve it because that means you need a lot of time to get there. The awakening is not something you need to achieve, it's something you discover. To show that to youngsters and not just conceptually but experientially, to show them the possibility, for example, of being aware of the way in which they talk to themselves in their head.

Just what are you saying to yourself? There's already an awareness or the possibility of discovery between two thoughts, there's a space.

[Speaker 2] (8:15:55 - 8:16:08)
We call it stillness. Oh, and again, everything in this world goes against that.

[Speaker 1] (8:16:09 - 8:16:27)
Every device that you have with a screen on it is trying to obscure, to prevent you from accessing the dimension of stillness because it's the opposite of stillness.

[Speaker 2] (8:16:28 - 8:16:50)
It's stuff getting in, content, stuff. Another text message, another Facebook post, another this, another this, coming from, interacting. Never a moment of, ah, and so the possibility of discovery, still.

[Speaker 1] (8:16:50 - 8:17:51)
I mean, there are a few apps, there are quite a few apps that you can get that teach you meditation, and that's good. So it can be used for a helpful purpose. It can be, most of it is in the service of unconsciousness, this technology, but it can, but a small percentage of it is actually helpful.

There are some apps that teach you how to breathe consciously, how to be aware of your breath. One of the simplest, most fundamental ways of accessing this inner dimension of stillness that transcends thought, be aware of your breathing. So you have this little app.

I tried a few on my iPhone and said, oh, that's quite good. So it goes, you can choose the duration. It says, breathe in, inhale, and then it goes, tick, tick, tick, tick, hold, exhale.

[Speaker 2] (8:17:53 - 8:18:21)
Tick, tick, tick, tick, tick, hold. Inhale, hold, exhale, hold. Well, and what happens when you follow that?

The mind becomes still. So it can be used in a constructive and helpful way.

[Speaker 1] (8:18:21 - 8:18:33)
It can be, 90% of it isn't yet, but, so we need to be, to use it skillfully with awareness.

[Speaker 2] (8:18:34 - 8:18:36)
Without awareness, it will destroy you.

[Speaker 1] (8:18:37 - 8:19:07)
With awareness, it can be a wonderful thing, this technology, and then you may have heard about the latest developments of AI, artificial intelligence. It does the most amazing things. You can ask it to write an essay on some subject and it'll write it within five seconds.

It would take you five hours to write that. Might not be as good. It can do amazing things.

[Speaker 2] (8:19:08 - 8:19:17)
And so, quite soon, perhaps, the AI will be better at thinking than the human mind.

[Speaker 1] (8:19:22 - 8:20:19)
So that's another reason for going beyond thinking, so that, to discover a dimension in you that is actually higher and more powerful than the thought, the dimension of thinking. It's time now, because otherwise, it'll defeat you. It becomes better at thinking than you are.

So you have to rise above thinking, the way we are able to use your mind and use the technology, but are not consumed by it. You are above it, and that is presence, that is awareness. So this is a wonderful thing, but this is an incredible time we live in, when things are extremely challenging.

One could say, who knows where it's going?

[Speaker 2] (8:20:19 - 8:20:23)
It could go very, very wrong.

[Speaker 1] (8:20:24 - 8:20:55)
It could, or it could be the very, the very seemingly negative thing that we have created can be the opening into that higher dimension of consciousness that is waiting to be discovered in every human, and that's vital. It's waiting to be discovered. It's dormant in you.

[Speaker 2] (8:20:56 - 8:21:05)
And so that's, children need to grow up with that, give a child this gift.

[Speaker 1] (8:21:09 - 8:21:21)
Then the child will grow into an adult and will be able to use that, and then it will become, it will grow, it will become more powerful.

[Speaker 2] (8:21:21 - 8:21:51)

Every challenge that then this human faces will make that human more conscious instead of drawing them back into unconsciousness. But of course, always, no matter in what way you become engaged in this, it always comes back to, you have to live it.

[Speaker 1] (8:21:52 - 8:22:03)
You have to live it every moment, and every moment is always this moment. In a way, one could say there is no every moment, there's only this moment.

[Speaker 2] (8:22:03 - 8:24:09)
It just looks like lots of moments, but it's only ever this moment, and this is the only moment where you can live state of the state of presence, and you can sense the power of presence within you, beyond the thinking mind, beyond emotional fluctuations. There's a, we can call it stillness, but it's much more than stillness, it's just a word, but let's call it stillness. Discover the stillness that is always waiting.

It just was obscured. So that is the most vital message for humanity. I want to thank all of you for participating in this, realizing its importance, and every one of you can contribute in some way, and perhaps the most important contribution, I think Aaron already pointed it out earlier, the most important contribution, of course, is your state of consciousness.

The world can only change from within.

[Speaker 1] (8:24:11 - 8:24:19)
What the world you want to create is a manifestation or an externalization of the collective consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (8:24:20 - 8:24:41)
If the collective consciousness is dysfunctional, the outer world will reflect it. So thank you for being part of this.

[Speaker 1] (8:24:43 - 8:24:45)
Nothing could be more important.

[Speaker 2] (8:24:46 - 8:25:46)
This is the purpose of your life, is to participate and embody the arising of what we could call the transcendent consciousness, the spiritual dimension, the shift, and then what arises as the book that I wrote, I guess it was written through me, a new us then arises naturally as a reflection of the collective consciousness. Thank you. Tammy, back to you.

[Speaker 3] (8:25:47 - 8:29:39)
Thank you, Eckhart. Here, as we come to a close, I just want to underscore, I've had the pleasure and privilege of watching Eckhart teach some groups of young people, and I've seen their openness, and I've seen, as Eckhart described, in many young people, they just need to hear the message and how it was lights going on so quickly, and I could see it in their eyes. And I have to say, some of the happiest experiences I've had at Eckhart Tolle Kim Ing retreats has been watching those lights go on behind the eyes of young people.

And so I want to thank all of you for being with us here as we more formally launch, moving into 2024, the New Earth Youth Initiative, as has been said a couple of different times in terms of your contribution to the Eckhart Tolle Foundation, living with presence, the alpha and omega of it all. Additionally, if you feel inspired, we would love for you to help spread the word about the Eckhart Tolle Foundation. Many people are just learning about it.

You can do this by resharing our social media posts and our newsletters. We'd also love your ideas about how Eckhart's teachings can reach different populations in creative ways. One way through book donations, if you have ideas for where we can donate Eckhart's books, you can access a request form at EckhartTolleFoundation.org.

So again, if you have ideas and you'd like to share them with us about where we can donate Eckhart's books, there's a request form on EckhartTolleFoundation.org. We'd also love your ideas for connecting us with like-minded nonprofits like the Holistic Life Foundation and the Jewel Never Broken Foundation or other ideas you might have about how we can bring the teachings of presence to diverse demographics and people who would otherwise not have access. You can write to us and you might wanna write this down, outreach at EckhartTolleFoundation.org.

Perhaps creative ideas have been emerged in you from being part of this special online event. Write to us at outreach at EckhartTolleFoundation.org. If you would feel inspired to donate to the Eckhart Tolle Foundation, I also warmly invite you to do so.

You can scroll below the player and there's a donate button there. And again, to repeat, your donations will be matched in the coming days and will support programs like our New Earth Youth Initiative and the 2024 prison teaching tour that's coming up that you'll hear more about as well. Also, finally, if it matches your inspiration, you can include the Eckhart Tolle Foundation in your estate planning and in your will.

Okay, to conclude now, Eckhart, would you be willing to lead us in some moments of connected stillness together?

[Speaker 2] (8:29:42 - 8:32:28)
Yes, Tammy, I am willing. Wonderful. So we come into the present moment so fully that we don't need to think about it, but just sense the present moment.

The stillness, the power of stillness. Thoughts fall away, but you stay alert and awake and there's a stillness. And that stillness is a presence.

It is a presence of consciousness, the light of consciousness. And then you realize that essentially I am that. I am, you realize the essential I am-ness, I am that, that's an ancient Indian saying, Tat Tvam Azeem, I might be mispronouncing it, but I am that is the realization of your essential nature as consciousness itself.

The person is secondary. More essentially, you are consciousness. And you can sense that as an essential aliveness or not-ness, has no form.

[Speaker 12] (8:33:19 - 8:33:20)
Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (8:33:58 - 9:08:27)
Beautiful sunshine, but the fog is rolling in slowly. That's beautiful too. And quite often along the coast here, you get fog and sunshine at the same time.

So as the fog reaches the beach, it begins to dissolve and then you have the sun filtering through the fog, quite magical. So here we are, an interesting thing to observe while you're here especially, but the rest of your life also is where your attention is at any given time or more precisely in the present moment, which is all there is, where your attention is in the present moment and whether your attention is determined by all kinds of factors or whether you have some influence over where your attention goes. Now you've all noticed and experienced when you're walking in the street or you're sitting somewhere and suddenly there's some noise behind you or somebody shouts something or you're in a restaurant sitting and somewhere behind you, somebody drops a plate.

And usually most people would go immediately. It's an automatic thing. And these days, of course you have other, not just plates breaking, which happens relatively rarely, but you have your phones demanding your attention.

So you are having a wonderful conversation with a friend and then you suddenly hear, ping, ping, ping. You were just talking about it really connecting and suddenly your attention goes, and it's a text message. Or some other sound, which means it's an email.

And that demands your attention and people don't realize that they obey immediately that little device. It's like a plate breaking, except this happens all the time and all people shouting behind you. So your attention is being pulled out continuously.

When I first got my iPhone two years ago, then I got my first text messages, which were quite miraculous. And then often I didn't reply until the next day or two days later. And then I was told this is not according to text message etiquette.

Text message etiquette dictates that you reply immediately. So occasionally I do that now, but even now I don't always reply immediately. And I don't even look at it immediately.

At first I did when I got the iPhone and then I realized what it was doing. And then apart from all these external things, and of course the electronic devices, they increase the demands that the external world makes upon your attention. Before you had all these electronic devices.

Yes, even then the world would make demands continuously on your attention, but not as frequent as with all these devices. And so people don't realize they are kind of, they lose their freedom of choice. And something even more all pervasive that was already there before the electronic devices came is that certain thoughts in your mind also demanding your complete attention.

A little thought comes in about something that you can't do anything about now, but you have to think about it now. And the thought says, give me your attention. So what I'm talking about here is you begin to identify with every thought that arises.

It has a pulling power. It pulls you in and it's an energy formation. Everything, a thought is an energy form.

Everything is not physical energy. It's probably halfway between physical and non-physical. And the greatest scientists, no matter what they tell you, their ego may not allow them to admit it, but if they're really honest and their ego is not huge, they will admit to you they don't, they have examined the brain for a long time, but they can't, they don't know what a thought is.

You've looked at brain chemistry and examined it and examined it, but what is a thought? They still don't know. And so we don't need to know on that level here.

You just experience what a thought is and how it pulls your attention in. And you follow it up. You follow it where it wants to take you and it leads to another associated thought and another.

And before you know it, you are dragged along by another mind stream out of the present moment into some conceptual reality, because that's what thought is. So you're drawn away into some conceptual reality, which includes a conceptual sense of self, a me, an image of me, a narrative of me. And so that is then the reality that you inhabit most of the time.

And so whether your attention is pulled by some external thing or an electronic gadget or your thoughts, it goes to all kinds of places in your head and outside and thing and what. You actually can choose to direct your attention to something rather than being at the mercy of all kinds of factors that determine where your attention is going to go. So you can choose when you hear the bing of a text message or the bong of an email, you can choose to not give it your attention, but just remain still for three seconds.

And then you have a choice. You can give it your attention or not give it your attention. At least now you have a choice.

The same thing with when some of this shouting behind you and obviously doesn't concern you, why automatically go? If you're really present, then you can hear the noise and you don't go there. It's not necessary.

It's just somebody dropped a plate or whatever. In a restaurant, it happens all the time. So you can choose to direct your attention.

For example, right now, you can choose to direct your attention. Of course, at the moment it's in visual perception and auditory perception. In addition, you can choose to direct your attention into your right hand, which does not diminish your ability to listen and to see what's going on here.

So you can have your attention in your right hand and feel the energy as I can feel it right now. Can feel the energy in my right hand or the aliveness, which does not diminish my ability to speak or to see you. I can feel, and I can feel the left hand also.

So you can direct attention into your feet. You can direct attention to some object in this room. Any sensory perception.

You can choose to think a particular thought and then let go of the thought. What am I going to have for dinner? What are they going to serve for dinner tonight?

Thought arises. I'm feeling a little bit peckish. What's one of the, and then you can choose to let go of that thought and not to follow it and return your attention to visual and auditory perception.

And so that's it. You have a choice when you're, when you realize that you have a choice where you don't need to, and to practice with the electronic gadgets particularly, because they, the common, the consensus is that you don't have a choice. You have to immediately look and check and reply or whatever immediately.

It used to be just telephones, but the telephones had a line attached to them. So they're in a particular place. They didn't follow you around.

But even when they had telephones, people would interrupt any conversation just because the phone was ringing. And at that time, they didn't even have a caller identification. So you had to pick it up no matter who, you had no idea who was going to call, but you had, it was ringing.

You had to pick up and give your attention to that call. Then the time came, fortunately, when there was caller IDs, at least you could look and see who is called. Do I want to talk to this person?

So the choice in directing your attention, and that is really the beginning of meditation or any meditation practice is to have some influence over where your attention goes. And usually in meditation, your attention is directed to a meditation object for a while and some people get stuck there for 20 years or the rest of their lives. The attention may go to a mantra, which really is a certain thought or certain sounds that you repeat in your head or you speak out aloud.

And so it becomes the focus for your attention and you choose to direct your attention there rather than useless thinking. Your attention becomes focused or you can have an external object of your attention, a candle flame, a flower, whatever it is, and you keep your attention there for a few minutes, 10 minutes, 15 minutes. And when it wanders away and you notice it's gone away, you choose to redirect your attention to that, the object.

of your meditation. So it's a practice, it's like a physical exercise. The muscle of choice is strengthened by realizing you can practice, you have a choice.

And then you discover you do not have to follow every thought where it wants to take you. You can drop a thought or you can recognize a thought as just another of those old thoughts, not interesting, and then it dissolves by itself. So it's not, the process is not to emphasize more and more the form of the me and the form and as God continues to build me, he is building me up, that could be the idea.

God is building me up. God, of course, you can replace with the universal intelligence, the universe, whatever you want to, whatever term you want to use. And yet I know from inner realization that it's not really how it works.

It's becoming diminished as a person and then something else shines through that has nothing to do with the form of the person. But the form of the person was necessary, like the seed has to break open and that was necessary, but the seed does not find its purpose, the purpose for its existence is not to become a better seed or to look better as a seed, but to break open and no longer being a seed. And then these amazing things come out of the tiniest seeds.

I, in a botanical garden, I bought in a little, they were selling a little paper bag seeds for trees and then I planted some in pots and I bought, there were like probably 80 or 100 tiniest seeds, you can hardly see the single seeds and they became, it said, this is the sequoia tree or something like, or it becomes a gigantic, it can live for 2,000 years. It comes out of something you can hardly see. But if the seed had a self-image of being a seed and were persistent in remaining a seed and stubborn and insisting, no, I'm seed and I want to be a better seed, then it wouldn't happen.

The whole miracle would not unfold. And there may be seeds who refuse to give way and break open. When you hold things down, often after a while, an explosion happens.

It's like a boiling kettle. You can't hold it for that long and then you have some kind of rationalization in your mind, you'll do it anyway. The mind will give you a reason.

Certain actions take place, you do things, you know they're not the optimal things to do but you can't help it. It's something acts through you. There seems to be some power there that makes you do things that you know are not right or not good for you and yet you can't stop it.

That seems to be the case. And that, of course, is often the case with people who are, with you it might be many different areas of your life but this is also the case with addictions. For example, people who are addicted to a certain substance or who are addicted to eating too much or drinking.

There's something that overpowers them in you that seems to obscure the awareness or the awareness is pushed to the side and this thing, this powerful thing does it anyway. And again, my answer is a little bit similar to what I said to the first questioner tonight. The power of presence needs to grow in you so that it is strong enough not to, it's not willpower because willpower is not the best way of dealing with these things but it's what I'm talking about could sometimes be confused with willpower but willpower includes the application of a force to hold something down.

Let's say if your addiction is to alcohol have a, to indulge in intoxicating beverages, in other words, booze is the British word, then, and you can feel it, it comes on, there it comes. You know the bottles are there, there they are and you feel you have to go there and you have to reach out and you have to pour yourself a drink. Now, when you're not aware at all, you don't even know what you're doing, you're so unconscious that you're already holding the drink and you're drinking, then at that point, you don't even know that you're drinking.

The same with food, I've spoken to people who have had addictions to food, they often say they wake up when they're already, they've already eaten in the middle of the night, they've already unconsciously gone to the fridge, taken out the chocolate cake and they're already halfway through the chocolate cake and suddenly they're like, what am I doing? But, so awareness comes in at a very late point. Willpower would be to hold an urge down, let's say, I'll go, they have the pool or even what the example you gave, you want to turn on the TV and you know it's not right because I'm not here for that and he actually told us not to do it.

And I, what I can't do, I can't help it, I have to go, I can't, I can't. Now, willpower, you would say, I'm going to hold this down, I'm not going to do it. And I can feel the urge, but you're holding it down.

When you hold things down, often after a while, an explosion happens, it's like a boiling kettle. You can't hold it for that long and then you have some kind of rationalization in your mind, why, it's, you'll do it anyway. The mind will give you a reason.

I spoke to a man who was addicted to food and he was, his body was very unhealthy, he was extremely dangerously overweight. Unfortunately, he's passed away, but he was a wonderful man and he talked to me and often, before he goes to the, to indulge in excessive eating, he would, his mind would say something like, you've had a rough day, you really deserve a treat. It explains why it's the right thing.

I'm not going to do it for much longer, but just today I need, I really need a treat. Life is not, hasn't been treating me, but it's the only pleasure I have, what should I do, it's all I have, there's no other pleasure in my life. Okay, go to the fridge.

Listen, I attempted to be able to show him that this thought is a deception and I had a little bit of success, but unfortunately it was too late to save him. Well, he is no longer in the body, but that's okay. He's the essence of never, he probably reincarnates now into the opposite, perhaps, in order to learn a lesson.

Again, what I said to the first questioner, to practice presence power when you're not particularly tempted by anything and you're just in your room, there's no particular temptation, go into the body, feel the inner body, be aware, be present. When you sense perception, I recommended that practice, sense perception, feel the presence pervading every cell in your body, the inner body awareness. And so that there's enough presence when this impulse comes, you use it as, don't say go away or something like that because it won't go away, it'll do it anyway.

The impulse comes, whatever it may be, and you observe, you realize it's not a good thing that it wants you to do. And if there's enough awareness, you use it as every time an impulse of that kind comes, this is your special spiritual practice. So instead of wanting to get rid of it, welcome when an impulse of that kind comes and see that this is a special spiritual practice specially designed for you, of course it is.

And so how do you transform this into spiritual practice? First, you realize this is an opportunity for practicing. And the first thing you could do is you practice delaying, obeying the impulse, not obeying it immediately, but delaying it.

And you observe them. Let's say when you wanted to go to the TV and turn this thing on, or you feel the impulse, or say, okay, here's my next spiritual practice. I'm now going to delay the turning on of this show on TV for three minutes.

And during those three minutes, you observe this, the impulse in you, you observe, it has, it's an energy form, and you observe it, oh, there you are. There you are, hmm, do you feel it? It's like a little gremlin or something.

It's like a little gremlin. And so this time gap can be a very useful first practice, that you introduce a time gap before you give in. You're not saying, I'm not going to give in.

No, you say, three minutes. During those three minutes, I'm going to observe you. And you shine the light of consciousness, the light of awareness on this impulse, which is an energy form.

And it can be an energy form that is in you as a kind of emotion. It can also dangerously invade your mind and make you, the explanation I gave just now with this friend of mine, the thought comes into your head that explains why you should give in to this impulse, that it can happen easily. And there too, you need to be present enough, sufficiently aware, so that you do not believe in every thought, especially those kinds of thoughts.

You don't believe in every thought that comes into your head. You observe the thought because the thought is part of it. And even to the thought, you say, oh, there you are.

There's a thought, and there's a feeling behind the thought. And you set aside three minutes. During those three minutes, you observe that, isn't that interesting?

Wonderful spiritual practice. And while you observe, you grow in consciousness. You apply consciousness to it.

Only three minutes, three minutes. And then after the three minutes, see how you feel. It may have dissolved, but probably not yet.

It's still there. And then you can see, can I do another two or three minutes? Am I strong enough for that?

Is my awareness strong enough? And yes, it is. Don't believe you might, oh, stop this nonsense.

Do it anyway. And so you, and then you achieve five or six minutes of, and then what happens after that, we don't know. It is possible that the impulse has receded, gone back to a dormant state, and you're suddenly, you don't have to do it.

It's also possible that the impulse is still there, and you cannot, after five minutes, there's not enough awareness left, and you finally have to go and do it. But at least the five-minute interval, the time gap was very important. And when anything like that happens, you always introduce a time gap for your spiritual practice, during which you do not hold it down, but you observe it.

So you don't push it down. You observe, oh, there you are. So if it's a gremlin, you don't, you don't say, hold you down.

Ah. There's a gremlin. You look at it.

There it is. Oh. Now, the interesting thing, when you apply awareness to something, you shine the light of consciousness on it, the possibility of transformation is also there.

It arises as you shine the light of consciousness on it. This is the famous example from fairy stories and so on. The frog, you don't kill the frog, or do something with it.

You kiss the frog, and the moment you kiss the frog, it turns into the prince. And so the frog stands for, and this is like mythology. There's some wisdom embedded in these fairy stories, which, by the way, were not, many of them were not created by the people who wrote them.

They were already orally transmitted over long periods of time. So they are mythologies that often contain a lot of wisdom. And there's certainly a lot of wisdom in kissing the frog, which then turns into something beautiful.

So there's something ugly, but you give it, you kind of, you give it an acceptance and love. You look at it, and then it, transformation happens. So that is the spiritual practice.

And after a while, you will find that initially, perhaps after the time gap, you still do it. But then gradually, this time gap gets longer, and then you may observe that the energy behind the impulse weakens, and it subsides until next time. But gradually, it weakens, and all these self-sabotage mechanisms then begin to gradually disappear if you apply the awareness to it, observe them.

There it is. So think of the frog. These are all the frogs and whatever they are, gremlins, frogs, that live in you as energy fields.

And the energies are trapped there. They are not in themselves bad. They are trapped.

Like the pain body is an energy that is emotional energy that's trapped. When the pain body dissolves, it's transformed into presence. It's like a fire.

You put a log into a fire, or it's consumed and transmuted, perhaps is the word. It's transmuted into presence. And here we have, again, the famous example.

In Middle Ages, certain philosophers were very interested in alchemy. Alchemy was supposed to be the transformation of base metal into gold through a chemical process of transformation. But the true meaning behind alchemy was the transformation of human consciousness.

And they have many images and so on. They could not speak and write about this openly because they would have been executed by the church at the time. So they had to hide all these symbols as if it were to do the transformation of base metal into gold, of something that is, first of all, not very desirable into something wonderful.

And that's the alchemical process of transmutation, which really is something in the human psyche. There's an entire long treatise written by Carl Jung, the psychologist, on alchemy with countless illustrations and just fascinating things. But it's all, it's the transformation of something undesirable initially into awareness or into consciousness.

And this is, so you're lucky to have that tailor-designed spiritual practice for you. That makes a difference if you can reach people in their own language. And people were grateful that I made this effort.

Normally, I'm not into efforting at all. And...

[Speaker 8] (9:08:27 - 9:13:01)
Hi, Eckhart. My name is Baba. And I started listening to you, I think a year ago during the pandemic.

Thanks a lot to my partner who introduced me to you. I have a three-dimensional question for you, sir. As a technologist, I come from this experience of creating virtual worlds, and I'd say there's some good news.

The good news there, both as a producer and a consumer, is there's a lot of suffering there. And as we always say, suffering is the foundation to consciousness, so hopefully we'll find a solution there. On a serious note, the three-dimensional question I have for you is, in regards to language, how is the understanding of multiple languages ...

I don't know if you've addressed this in the past, but just listening to you speak, since you have a grasp or a decent grasp of multiple languages, how has your understanding of multiple languages enabled you to get access to wisdom in the conscious dimension and communicate that in accessible ways? So that's the first one. Then the second one is pushing, wanting to explore your mind around digital media.

So I don't know whether you've experienced digital media or whether you spend much time on there, but if you were to explore your mind and talk about how you would design social media in conscious ways, what would you recommend there? Because I literally quit my job to leave in my car to explore some of these ideas. Because yeah, I think, as the pandemic showed me, it's important we solve this problem and exploring your mind would give me some insights.

Then the final one is the power of now, and it's ... I come from a different community whereby thoughts like yours was inaccessible to me, and I feel like it was a language barrier, and I would like to work with you and your team to help make the power of now accessible in major African languages, because it has really, in my own personal journey, first of all, being able to ... I've grown up speaking English, and being able to access your perspective.

I grew up Christian, but being able to access your perspective opened my mind to another dimension, and I was able to heal my deep, like Kim says, laundry. There's a bunch of laundry I was able to heal, but after healing my laundry, I came to the realization that, okay, there are a bunch of these amazing things I want to communicate with my parents, but I really can't, because I speak English to them. English is not their first language.

It's like, speaking of unconsciousness, slavery and colonization, it's like a second or third language for them, and so there are some things that are not accessible, but the weird thing is I started learning my native language, and there's some weird thing that started going on. It's like, the same thoughts you were saying is actually accessible in other languages that already exist, and I'm like, oh, my God, and I started speaking my language to my parents, and it's bringing so much peace to them, and it's like, what you're saying is actually true. Ancient wisdom and ancient civilization, those things are real, so I would love to work with you and your team to make this accessible, so please, languages, digital media, and power.

[Speaker 1] (9:13:10 - 9:13:30)
Thank you. Wonderful proposal, and that will help perhaps millions of people. However, I must confess that I have forgotten your first question.

[Speaker 8] (9:13:35 - 9:13:49)
Your understanding of several languages, does that help in accessing wisdom from the conscious dimension, and does that help in communicating that in accessible ways? Right.

[Speaker 1] (9:13:49 - 9:21:32)
Well, just, when was it, three weeks ago, we had a retreat in Mexico, and for the first time ever, I wanted to challenge myself, and I decided to do the entire retreat in Spanish, and that was, I learned Spanish a long time ago, over half a century ago, and haven't used it very much since, reading, occasionally reading a book, and I experienced the, at first, it was very hard for my mind to find the words that, there's an intuition that comes, before you speak, it's very hard to describe, before language happens, you already know what wants to be said, and at a non-verbal level, and then, this knowing what wants to be said, which is a non-conceptual knowing, then it gets translated into concepts and words, and with a, in English, they say, your, your, your language is rusty, when you haven't used the language for a long time, you say, it's rusty, and it's, that's how I experienced it, the, the impulse came to say something, and sometimes, the flow was there, it was fine, and then, so, can't find the right word, immediately, the mind has to work overtime to find an equivalent or similar word, and it slows you down a bit, but that was fine, so, I was able to reach, and after a couple of days, the flow came back, and it went much more easily, quite enjoyable, reaching people in their own language, that makes a difference, if you can reach people in their own language, rather than have it translated into their language, this is why I wanted to do it, so, I was able to, and people were grateful that I made this effort, normally, I'm not into efforting at all, but, it, I made an effort to speak Spanish, and it, it worked, and that was good, similar thing in Germany, years ago, I, so out of touch with the German language, that I spoke as a child, and I said, I cannot possibly, that was 20 years ago, I said, I cannot possibly give a talk in German, it's just, the words are not there anymore, and, at the first event, I had a translator, I spoke English, and the translator interpreted it into German, it didn't feel quite right, and a few times, I knew the translator wasn't correct, but I couldn't, but I couldn't say anything, and at the second talk, the organizer said, why don't you tell, tell your, just say a few words in German, and explain to them why you are not going to speak German, and that, that's a good idea, so I started, and I talked, the reason why I'm not going to speak in German, I said in German, the reason why I cannot speak in German to you, because I haven't used the language in 60 years, or whatever, and so, and then, I continued on, and talked, and talked, and 15 minutes later, I said, oh, I'm still speaking German, and then, they continued, translation was unnecessary, the flow was there, it was a miracle, and so, after that, I've always, whenever I go to Germany, Switzerland, I speak in German now, that's good, but the language is a strange thing, it's of course, it's an, it's an abstraction, language, I use language to teach, and the, the words that one uses were in spiritual discourse, the, the words have a different function from the function that words have in ordinary discourse, in spiritual discourse, the, the words are, are not the thing, they are all, they only point to the thing, they,

all the words are pointers to something that is beyond words, so I'm using words in order to point something that is beyond the words, even when I say stillness, the word stillness isn't stillness, so it's a, it's a pointer, when I say to, to, to the awakening, spiritual awakening, presence, whatever it may be, they're all, they're all just pointers, they're not, not something to be believed in, it's not, you cannot learn the terminology of spirituality, and then believe, because you have mastered the words that are used in a spiritual teaching, then you have mastered the spiritual teaching, in ordinary subjects, this is how it works, you learn, you learn the words, and in exams, you regurgitate what you have learned, you write it all down, and you pass your exam, and so, to learn the words is, you become proficient in spiritual discourse, if you learn the words, you might become proficient in spiritual discourse, but it hasn't done anything to your state of consciousness, there are actually people around these days, who, who give talks, spiritual talks, I've seen a few on YouTube, who have mastered the spiritual discourse, especially in the area of what in, in India, India is called Advaita, Advaita Vedanta, people who have mastered the terminology of Advaita, and they can beautifully explain it, whatever you say to them is, yeah, that's obviously, it's all delusion, of course, it's all totally, it's all, everything is denied, it's very easy to, to make sense, apparently, but it doesn't make sense at all, and you can see it hasn't done anything to the state of consciousness, but they have mastered the terminology, so the language, language has a different function in spiritual discourse, and so that's, I don't know whether that has anything to do with the answer to your question, but that's what, that's what came to me, when you talk to your parents, did you talk to your parents, do you speak English to your parents?

[Speaker 8] (9:21:33 - 9:22:15)
Growing up I did, but I always felt they didn't really understand me, but when I started like, because it's the same thing you're saying, so, because I'm still not fluent in my native language, so I go through the exact same process, there's a pause, you're searching for the word, and then the word just flows through you, and there's a silence from them, to show that they, like, in English, it's like a debate, the conversation feels like a debate, but when I speak in their language, there's a silence, a pause, and an acknowledgement, and a, hmm.

[Speaker 1] (9:22:16 - 9:24:03)
That's good, very good, that's wonderful, because this is means, because you haven't quite mastered the language, the communication is not totally obscured by concepts, there are gaps in the concepts, and this is why you can actually communicate better that way, although you are not proficient at the language, that's actually a plus, especially when you communicate something even remotely connected to spirituality, that's a, it's a great, you're lucky, that, I don't know whether, Kim has mentioned to you, it reminds me of Kim's, I don't think it's a secret, she has spoken about it before, Kim has a very good relationship with her mother, her mother is 99 years old, still very active mind, very, also physically good, but Kim as a child, because she was a minority in her, at school, at that time there were very few Asian people, she decided when she was six or so, or seven, she didn't want to speak Chinese anymore, not speaking Chinese, because she did, she wanted to fit in with the others, so she refused to speak Chinese, so she lost most of her Chinese completely, as a result now, communication with her mother is virtually impossible, except for very elementary things, and her relationship is wonderful, no problem arises ever, so that's a big, a big plus, and yours is not quite as extreme, but it's similar.

[Speaker 8] (9:24:08 - 9:24:23)
So, exploring your mind, do you have thoughts on how social media, digital media, can result in more consciousness? I think this is going to help technologists like me design things for the next generation.

[Speaker 1] (9:24:23 - 9:38:59)
Well, I am not an expert on, I'm not only not an expert, I am computer, almost computer illiterate, but I'm observing things, I know how these things function, how they work, I don't have a creative solution as such, I do know that a few things that appear in the virtual world are actually helpful, there are apps that can teach you to meditate or to breathe consciously, to bring you back into the present moment, also there are talks by Eckhart on YouTube, I was, not long ago I was going for a walk, and you know that people have different conceptual identities, one of my conceptual identities is I'm a writer, when people ask me, I usually say I'm a writer, or if I don't want any further questions from them I'll say I'm retired, which is not a lie because I've been retired for many decades, in a deeper sense, so I'm a spiritual teacher, I rarely say I'm a spiritual teacher because I'm not a spiritual teacher except in the moment when spiritual teaching happens, I don't carry around with me a conceptual identity in my head, I am a spiritual teacher.

I'm an author, I suppose, okay, anyway, I was walking, a young man was coming with his partner, opposite direction, and the man stopped and he looked at me and said, I know you from somewhere, what's your name? I said, Eckhart, oh, I watch you, I read you on YouTube all the time, and then he said to his girlfriend, look, this guy is a famous YouTuber. And then I realised I have a new identity now.

So sometimes the virtual world is used for good purposes, this is not the only example, of course, but there is an inherent danger in the medium itself, it's hard to describe, even a simple thing, when I occasionally read, I love books, the physical presence of books, but sometimes when I travel, I have things on my iPad or virtual books, because books are heavy otherwise, it is not quite the same to have the experience of reading on a screen as to have the experience of a book.

I find it hard to describe what the difference is, it's almost as if I was leaking energy when I'm engaging with a screen, I have sometimes the feeling there's an energy leakage, that energy pours out, it's kind of, the screen sucks it out, and perhaps to some extent this happens to everybody, because the energy is directed onto that screen, and energy, attention is energy, so there's an outflow of attention onto there, and so I don't know what the screen does with it, here we have a nice idea for a science fiction movie, that the screens are sucking up human energy, it's the Matrix. I don't know if I finished, probably not. The, somehow to, nobody can control what people put out there, there's nothing you can do about that, if people are very unconscious, what they communicate will reflect their state of unconsciousness, so there is not much you can do, to censor people becomes problematic, although obviously there are already laws against threats of physical violence or slander and things like that, then to, in an ideal world one would say, oh, let's only allow polite and nice messages to come through, anything other, we need to censor, that would not be the right way to go, but I have no solution except to encourage you to apply your presence that is already there, and apply it so that you have creative insights into what is possible, use the presence instead of looking to me for an answer, because it appears that I don't have one, instead of looking to me for an answer, look to, go into that stillness, that presence, and see what arises, because creative solutions, creative answers come from there, so trust yourself, not the personal superficial self, but trust in the depth of your being, where intuition resides, the source of all creativity, become present, become still, direct your attention, have a question, what do you want, a creative answer to allow the virtual world to become a helpful tool in the development of human consciousness, or whatever your purpose is to direct it, and then you become still, you ask the question, the question is, you let go of the question, it drops into the stillness, this applies to any creative solution that you may need, you ask a question, and then you become still, and perhaps not immediately, perhaps after several days, weeks, or months, an answer arises, and repeat that process several times, ask a question, so you focus, and then be happy with not having an answer, allow the answer to come up, so what you're asking, the question you're asking me, is what you should be asking yourself, you will find a creative solution to that, I can sense that that will happen, and the African languages, reaching people in their own African languages is a wonderful idea, so please connect with us, so that we can pursue that.

Becoming aware of your own presence, becoming aware of yourself as presence, rather than being aware of yourself as a person, with a history, when you sense your own presence, which is the presence of yourself as consciousness, you don't have a history, there's no history in presence, and what is history, other than thought, thinking, so our meditation, the essence of our meditation, is the shift, to go through that shift, from thinking to presence, the usual human state is identification with thinking, and you only know yourself as a thought-based entity or being, in other words, you're always aware of yourself as something or somebody, and you're aware of other things that arise in your consciousness, but you're never aware of awareness itself in the normal state, you're never aware of yourself as awareness, never is perhaps very slightly exaggerated, there may be moments when you are aware of yourself as presence, but in most cases, people who don't know what that is, misinterpret it, and it's confused with something else, you could be climbing a mountain, and you stand at the mountaintop, but the sun is just setting, and the exertion of climbing, and this moment of incredible beauty stops your mind, and then you go, wow, and you may think it's caused by the beauty, but the joy and the intense aliveness and the peace, the alive peace that you sense, isn't really caused by the sunset, or caused by your surroundings, even by the activity of climbing, but that which had obscured that awareness is suddenly removed, the continuous stream of thinking, and then what is underneath is the vastness of formless consciousness, that is suddenly there, and that gives you that sense of intense aliveness, peaceful, alive presence. In India, satchitananda it's called, which means being, consciousness, bliss, another word for bliss would be joy, intense aliveness, being, consciousness, bliss, meaning satchitananda, being, satchitananda, being, consciousness, bliss, you string it together, it's one word, because it's a single thing or a single no thing, you're aware of being, you're aware of consciousness, but not in a duality, when I talk about it, it becomes duality, it says, I am aware of consciousness, but that's not really how it is, language operates within the realm of duality, but this isn't the realization of non-duality, it's only when you talk about it, it becomes duality again, as if you were aware of something, no, you are aware of the awareness, the awareness becomes self-aware, the consciousness becomes self-aware, there's no object, there's only subject. We are here to give up waiting as a state of mind, normal state of mind, and that there's another state of mind, or rather, no mind, in which you're not waiting for the next moment, that's why we're here, to discover that state of no mind, awareness, you could call it,

[Speaker 2] (9:39:02 - 9:39:03)
or deepen it,

[Speaker 1] (9:39:12 - 9:39:30)
we are not here to add anything to what we know, we know enough, enough to have come here,

[Speaker 2] (9:39:50 - 9:39:52)
so we are here to discover

[Speaker 1] (9:39:58 - 9:41:23)
that thinking is not the only possible state for humans, and not the highest state, and as we go through the shift from thinking to awareness, thinking, first of all, loses its predominant place in our lives, and as a side product of losing its predominant place in our lives, it actually becomes more effective, thinking becomes more effective, less destructive, not destructive anymore, so no answer

here is going to come if you're looking for the answer on the level of thinking, or on the level of adding something to your mind, the answer lies in stepping beyond thinking,

[Speaker 2] (9:41:30 - 9:41:42)
simply by allowing what is, which is now,

[Speaker 1] (9:41:44 - 9:41:51)
allowing what is to be as it is,

[Speaker 2] (9:41:54 - 9:41:55)
because it is,

[Speaker 1] (9:41:58 - 9:43:50)
and you discover that the compulsion to think is to a large extent connected with not being willing to allow what is to be as it is now, because there's a little mind-made entity consists of thinking and accumulated thought patterns that thrives on resistance to what is, and on reactivity, and is always looking for the next thing to get a little bit bigger, it's never quite enough, this little me is never quite enough, most of you have come here because there is at work within you something that goes far beyond the personal, something that is an expression of the evolutionary impulse of the universe, on the surface level it looks as if a person had chosen to come here, but it is also possible that one or two have come here expecting something they're not going to get, what's that? More, more experiences, more knowledge,

[Speaker 2] (9:43:55 - 9:43:58)
more beliefs, more opinions,

[Speaker 1] (9:44:09 - 9:45:48)
so if there are one or two who have come here expecting more, then they might want to leave, as soon as they discover there's no more, or they suddenly after, if they can endure the discomfort that arises when the need for more is not met, and don't run away immediately, they can endure the discomfort, they may be able to break through that mind pattern, please pay attention not just to the words, but to the silent spaces between the words, that's where the shift happens, in that alertness that is required to acknowledge or to listen to that dimension of stillness that underlies the words and is in between the words, that is why we're here, and that's not an adding to, because that is discovering something that's already there, but had been ignored, just as I was coming here this beautiful night, in this incredibly beautiful place, I took off my shoes and I looked up at the sky, clear sky,

[Speaker 2] (9:45:49 - 9:45:55)
stars, brilliant points of light,

[Speaker 1] (9:45:58 - 9:47:54)
and there is something when you look up there, there's something that is so easily overlooked, but should be obvious to anybody who looks up there, it can tell you something about the nature of the universe, when you look up, what do you see?

You see little points of light, you see basically there are two dimensions there, objects, celestial objects, suns, planets, the moon, galaxies, billions, trillions, so there are celestial objects, things, objects in space, and there's space, the universe consists of things, you can look, it's so obvious, there are things in space, and there's the vastness of space, the things are that which is manifested, but when you look up there, what produces the feeling of awe, of the feeling of infinity, is the vastness of space, the depths of it which is inconceivable,

[Speaker 2] (9:48:00 - 9:48:01)
has no end,

[Speaker 1] (9:48:04 - 9:49:55)
that is such that even our neighboring galaxy, our next door neighbor in terms of galactic neighbors, the Andromeda galaxy, if you traveled at the speed of light, which is very fast, 300,000 kilometers per second, which is the distance from here to the moon in one second, is the speed of light, if you traveled at the speed of light to our neighboring galaxy, and there are billions of galaxies, the closest one to us, it would take you 2.3 million years to reach it, at the speed of light, 2.3 million years, such is the depths, the vastness of space, and what is out there, applies also the so-called external universe, applies also to the so-called inner universe, there is also within you, things, let's keep it simple, things, and space, in your life, now, things, it is obvious that your life is surrounded by things, there are many things in your life, physical things, in many people's lives there are so many physical things to deal with,

[Speaker 2] (9:49:56 - 9:50:00)
that they are constantly running after the next physical thing that they need.
[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 2:18:19)
Need to deal with, they may have a house, they may have this and this, and everything demands attention. Their entire attention is absorbed by the things that surround them. And it's just at the moment, just talking about physical things.

This is needed and that's needed and that, and then there's the belief that there are not enough physical things yet. I need some more because I don't feel quite complete yet. And then there are other things in a wider sense, all the things that make up your life situation, conditions of your life, events, things are constantly happening and constantly new things pop up.

Oh, thanks. So it's not just physical things, all kinds of things make up your life situation, what people call my life. But I say, it's only your life situation.

They don't know what their life is. Their life situation consists of an accumulation of events, things happening, situations, demanding attention, everything saying, this is important, give me attention. So there's the pull of things, not just physical things, there's a pull of situations of demanding it.

So it's the world, the world, your world, consisting of things that need to be dealt with. And it's never quite enough time to deal with it all. And when you've dealt with one thing here, there's three more things dropped up there.

And so that's, people go through life with that pull into the world of things, doesn't leave you alone for long. And on a primordial level, on a basic primordial level, all the world of things starts with thoughts. Because all the things, whether they are physical or events or situations in your life, really only exist in you as thought.

Nobody knows whether actually there's anything out there at all. Because what reaches you, they say sense perception happens, visual, auditory, and so on, is translated into nerve impulses that reach the brain. And it's then those impulses are decoded.

And then some kind of world picture emerges. Oh, this is what's going on. Nobody actually knows what's out there beyond the impulses that are being received and decoded.

And so some kind of world picture is put together so that some philosophers have even doubted that there's anything out there at all. And it could just be a dream.

And there are certain indications that it is a dream.

It's in the nature of dreams to be fleeting, to evaporate very quickly. It's in the nature of situations in your life, whatever condition, any situation, everything is fairly fleeting. It's there, one moment, it has gone the next.

Where was yesterday? What happened yesterday? When you first wake up in the morning, you might think, was it a dream or did it happen?

And then you meet some other people who agree that it did happen. But it could be that these other people are part of your dream. So all the things that seem to be out there, the world of things is really an inner phenomenon.

It's to do with mind, it's to do with thought. We don't need to take any position here. We don't need to say, yes, the external world exists or no, the external world does not exist.

Very often, the answer is both or neither. The answer is not yes or no. From one perspective, it's yes.

From another perspective, no. So most people's life is filled up with things, which on the most basic level means thoughts, mind movement. One could say objects that appear in your consciousness, one after the other.

And sometimes they are battling for this. One thought, another thought. So people's lives are crammed full with that mind stuff.

And you can see it in people's faces, the way they lead their lives, the way they interact with others. What you can see is very often the absence of space. Well, it can't be absent, but they don't know it's there anymore.

All they know is things that appear, that any sense of space is gone. And so they experience their life as a continuous dream of, I'm quoting Churchill again, as I love to do, who defined history as one damn thing after another. Oh.

And if you ask many people about their personal lives, they might give you the same answer. How has your life been up to this point? One damn thing after another.

And the next damn thing comes just in the moment when you thought now you've made it. Success at last, recognition. Everybody loves me.

And then everybody wants something from you. Now, what remains? You can't say what remains, but you know what remains directly.

A sense of presence cannot be defined. A sense of beingness. This is the most beautiful thing.

These moments without thought, but it's not loss of consciousness. It's loss of thinking when it's not needed because thinking is useful for many things. And destructive for many other things.

And so you discover when it's useful and you let go of it when it's destructive, when it destroys your enjoyment of life, your enjoyment of the present moment, your ability to just be, to acknowledge the aliveness of things around you, to acknowledge the present moment, to have some gratitude for the richness of life and all life around you. All this you lose when you're continuously absorbed only in thinking. What remains then when thinking subsides, awareness remains or presence, whatever you want to call it.

In religious traditions, in mystical Christianity, it's called the Christ within. In some Buddhist schools, it is called your Buddha nature. These are just names to talk about it.

That's what remains when thinking subsides and there's only a sense of spacious presence like now. And in that spacious presence, strange thing is you don't know anything anymore, of course, because there's no concepts anymore in your mind. You don't know anything on the level of concepts.

And yet that is the essence of who you are, this beingness or presence. So you don't know yourself anymore as an object, which is when you live through the ego, then you become an object to yourself and your consciousness and you have a relationship with yourself. You can say, I love myself, which is better than hating yourself, but you still have a relationship with yourself.

You're not yourself. You have a relationship with yourself. It's better to love yourself and to hate yourself, true, but you still have a relationship with yourself.

There's two, I love myself, I'm two. But when you, with the realization of being, you are yourself. And so you cannot know yourself as an object of knowledge, but you can know yourself as the eternal subject of all knowing.

And that's where wisdom arises. This is the source of all real knowing. And the source of all true intelligence is in this non-conceptual vast intelligence, which is the intelligence of consciousness itself, which is one with who you are.

And then when you can link into that, you become inspired. It can inspire your mind. Your mind can create when it's linked into that.

You have creative thoughts. You have creative input, ideas. You take action that is wise rather than, or as the Buddhists say, skillful, skillful, wise action rather than unconscious action that produces more suffering for yourself and others.

Perpetuates karma. So this realm of true intelligence is the non-conceptual realm. Yes, you need concepts and you can use concepts, but don't lose yourself in concepts.

Don't look for yourself in concepts and then have a narrative in your mind that says, this is who I am. It's just a story of one concept linked with others' concepts. The story of yourself is not essentially who you are.

It's a story versus this limited entity, the person. It's a surface phenomenon. It's not who you are, but it's the realization of who you are.

That's the awakening. But it's not conceptual. So look for the cessation of thought.

Look for it in little moments, like now. Whenever you look at something natural, the sky, a tree, the ocean, any plant or flower or animal, don't label it. Just be alert and present and perceive it.

And as I said before, when you go into anything natural, when you go into nature, you can then sense something that is almost awe-inspiring. I'm not romanticizing nature. I also, of course, nature can also kill you, but there is something there that is holy or sacred.

And humans have to find that urgently because then they are not going to destroy nature anymore. Ultimately, humans have been destroying nature for some time because they have lost the ability to sense what's there. And then you can cut down.

There are old forests, some are still here in Canada and other parts of the world. There are forests that have been there with gigantic trees that have been there for thousands of years, thousands of years. They are sacred spaces.

And, but if humans cannot sense it anymore, then all they see is possible profit. What can we do with it? What can we do with it?

They look at the whole world in terms of doing, what I can, what can I do with it? Because they have lost sense of being. It's a terrible loss.

So, but you've also lost it with reference to yourself. You can't sense your own being. That's why you cannot sense the forest.

You can't sense your own holiness. And that's why you cannot sense the holiness of the forest or the sky or the ocean. So it's not impossibly difficult.

What I am suggesting is the most important task in your life, which has become particularly almost one could say urgent at the present time. This is a task of realizing the transcendent dimension to who you are by the simple, very simply by realizing that you do not have to think all the time. That there's always a possibility in yourself.

It's just waiting to be discovered. You are waiting to be discovered, so to speak. That dimension is always there.

The moment thinking subsides, you feel that stillness. It's another word you can use. There's a stillness.

I wrote a little book called Stillness Speaks. It's a small book designed for meditative reading, not consecutive reading, just little entries. The first sentence in the book, if I remember correctly, is you are never more essentially yourself than when you are still.

So this is the same thing. It's just another term pointer to describe it. We are still when the mind subsides, but awareness is not lost.

In fact, awareness has grown. Consciousness, awareness. This is the light of consciousness that Jesus said, you are the light of the world.

It's in one of the gospels. In another gospel, he also said, I am the light of the world, both statements. What is he talking about?

You are the light of the world. You are the consciousness of the universe. That's what he said.

You are the consciousness without which there wouldn't even be a universe. You are essentially not a person. You are the consciousness of the universe disguised briefly as a person.

But the consciousness of the universe wants to realize itself through you. This is very strange. So in other words, the universe is in the process of an awakening.

It's an awakening of consciousness. One could almost say the universe has led a dreamlike existence for a very long time when forms were identified with just the form without a gradually loss of realization of the essence. With humans, that has become very extreme.

And a tree is still rooted deeply, not only in the soil, but in the beingness of life. When you look at a tree, you can sense it is one with itself. It doesn't, it's just, you have to be still to be able to sense that there is something there that beyond sense perceptions, the presence of the tree.

It's a manifestation of consciousness too. Or even an animal, you can look at an animal without always having to label it. And you just look or touch or listen and it also is a manifestation of the one consciousness.

And it's still more rooted in being than a human, even your dog. And the dog is already kind of becoming humanized in many cases, but even the dog or the cat, they are still more deeply rooted in the beingness of themselves than humans. Humans have gone out a long way, lost themselves in mental abstractions, but it's all fine.

It all was meant that way. It's all necessary. But what's necessary now is the next step, the shift in consciousness.

Jesus called that the repent, which has been mistranslated, metanoia is repentance. It's a Greek term used in the Old Testament. Repentance, an important concept in the teaching of Jesus.

Repentance is a shift, a turnaround of consciousness, which is not, they translate it as repentance. And then they thought it means you say, oh, I'm such a miserable sinner, which, well, you probably are because your mind is dysfunctional. But then if you create an image of yourself as a miserable sinner, you're stuck again in delusion.

So metanoia is the ancient Greek term, traditionally translated as repentance, but really means an inner shift in consciousness. And that's what it's all about. And it's a great opportunity now, especially if you want to first avoid further suffering for yourself and avoid contributing to the suffering of the world or humanity, they go together.

If you don't want to contribute to the madness, because there is at the present time an increasing craziness in the energy field, you can either become part of it and contribute to it or you begin to dissolve it in yourself. So the key is become aware of yourself as a conscious presence, consciousness. Become aware that you are conscious.

For example, one could say that there's no doubt that even if your entire life is a dream, including this moment, there's no doubt that in order for the dream to happen, there needs to be a consciousness, the light of consciousness in which the dream appears. And you are that, whether you call it a dream or reality, it doesn't matter. You are the light of consciousness in which this appears.

So everything can be doubted except consciousness. You can doubt everything about yourself except that you are conscious right now. And even that, when you use language, we distort things.

Even to say you are conscious is not quite correct because that would imply that there's two of you. There's a you that is conscious or even to say I am conscious is not quite correct because language so easily creates duality. I am conscious means there's an I and there's a consciousness but that's not right.

I am consciousness is the most accurate way of saying it instead of I am conscious because you are not separate from consciousness. You are consciousness. There's no you without consciousness.

You are the light of the world. And a person, by the way, you're also a person. But if you're a person that is rooted in the realization that you are the light of the world, at all times, then you become, by the way, a much better person too.

It's the icing on the cake. It's a side product. It's a side effect of awakening.

You're no longer a totally crazy person. You're not part of the craziness anymore. Well, that's a wonderful thing.

Not being part of the craziness of the world. That's your task, especially now as the craziness is increasing. Your task is not to be part of the craziness.

So the key is awareness, presence. And that is be aware of yourself as a conscious presence and then recognize that conscious presence in everywhere else, every other human, every life form, you can sense there too is the same conscious presence in a different, one could say different vibrational frequency, but you have to become still. Thinking needs to subside if only for a moment.

And awareness remains, become still. Take a breath, one conscious in breath, one conscious out breath. And notice, if you observe, this is a lovely mini meditation.

Observe the breath going into your body and coming out of your body. During that time, you're not thinking. And so that's the way you can use your breathing by being aware of that you're breathing.

And you can, that becomes part of being aware that you're aware. As you know, I also recommend to feel your inner body, the energy that pervades your entire body, which is consciousness. And so you become aware of this inner energy field of aliveness that pervades your hands, your arms, your legs, your feet, entire body.

But it's not the body anymore. It's the unseen. You can't find that when you could cut open the body and you can't find that.

It's beyond what can be perceived. It actually exists in another dimension. That invisible presence that you are, that you cannot find when you cut open the body and look for it.

This, the invisible presence that is the essence of who you are, it does not actually exist in this dimension. It exists in another dimension. Even that you can say that the dog, what you love in the dog is yes, the dog may look nice or the cat may look nice, lovely to look at, but you can sense there is an inside to the dog.

There is, the dog has an inner being, but you cannot cut open that dog. Let's say the dog dies or does, you cut open and you look for that inner being. You can't find it because all you find is bones and blood and flesh.

Where's the dog? It's not in the bones and the blood and the flesh. It doesn't actually exist in this dimension.

It's in, it is another, you are a being and every, it's from another dimension. And only the outer part comes into this dimension. You are, as you know, you're essentially invisible.

You are invisible. The essence of who you are is invisible. Even just thought is already invisible.

You can't find a thought by looking for it with instruments, let alone the deeper consciousness of who you are, you're invisible. You can then sense intuitively that this presence is not subject to decay or time or death. But when you only know yourself as a person, then you continuously have the fear of death.

And ultimately all fear comes down to the fear of death. So the, if you want to lose the fear of death, know yourself as this invisible presence that actually doesn't even exist in this dimension. That's already in another dimension.

And you, and you realize if you had to talk about it but you don't have to say it, that ultimately there is no death. And to know that it's a direct knowing, that means all fear goes, because if the fear of death goes, then ultimately, because that's the root of all fear, the ultimate loss. And then the virus and all that is not a threat anymore.

You can take action if action is needed and often it's not needed. So that's the secret of awakening, bringing about a shift in consciousness in yourself and bringing about an end of the craziness and restore or restore sanity. Hasn't been here for, on the collective sporadically, there has been some sanity, but a lot of insanity in the collective energy field.

And there are times when the insanity increases as it did in the first half of the 20th century. It was to the two world wars and other dreadful conflicts, huge amount of collective insanity. And then it got in the Western world, at least got better for quite a few decades.

And now we're entering another period of insanity, but this, we are more ready for it now. Many humans are more ready to awaken now than before. And of course you are one of them.

Otherwise you wouldn't be here unless somebody dragged you here and you can't stand it anymore. So meditation ultimately is, yes, it's very helpful. But we are talking about is the meditative state as your normal state of consciousness.

So you're all, there's always a background of awareness in your life, even while you're talking about the upcoming elections in November, big challenge. Background of awareness, while you put forward your, how you see things, if you feel like doing it, but often there's no point. So always background of awareness and aware presence.

And then you return to just aware presence and you look around. And then it means more and more present moment living. The present moment is actually usually not bad at all.

Global meditation. Thank you very much. Just to learn to be present, to have your attention in the present moment instead of having your attention continuously being absorbed by the thinking process, the thoughts.

So this is our global live healing meditation, particularly helpful. I would say at this present time, as we are finding ourselves in a time of global disruption, many global challenges arising and likely, it's likely that the challenges will remain with us and new challenges will come as we are moving into a period of global turbulence. And that's fine.

It's a unique opportunity for spiritual awakening, a unique opportunity for disidentifying from the egoic mind and finding the transcendent dimension to who you are. The motivation for awakening, for going deeper grows for human beings as the challenges grow. And this is a reason why this is potentially an auspicious time.

When humans are not being challenged, then the motivation to evolve is not there, it's lacking because you're relatively comfortable in your little comfort zone. But when you're taken out of your comfort zone, when things get disrupted, a huge amount of uncertainty comes into your life. Loss comes into your life or the possibility of loss.

And that's often the same thing for people because the possibility of loss is a projected future and you suffer just as much as if you were already in that situation, which may never happen. But all these things potentially become the motivating force for deep, profound inner change, for a shift in consciousness, for a step forward in the evolution of your consciousness, which is the consciousness of humanity. So we need to rise up to the challenge of our present time, because if we don't, or if you don't, then it will affect you in a very unpleasant way.

You suffer more and more, as already millions of people are experiencing suffering. For example, an enormous amount of fear in the collective energy field. Many people are in a state of fear, for example, connected to the virus.

And so there's a disruption that occurs on the outside and there's also a disruption that occurs in human consciousness. The most important realization is to become aware of the fact that the most primordial thing in your life, ultimately, the one thing that determines how you experience your life or your reality, determines how you respond or react to events and situations and circumstances. The most primordial fact is not what happens around you.

The most important fact or factor is your state of consciousness, the state of consciousness with which you meet the circumstances of your life, the situation of your life. And so if people live unconsciously, they're not aware of this, it's very easy to become a victim of your circumstances. And many, many humans are victim of their circumstances.

What does that mean? Their inner state of consciousness is completely determined by the external world, by other people, by what happens on the outside, both their personal situation and the collective situation in the world. So they're at the mercy of circumstances.

Even on the smallest level, at the mercy of another human being, you meet another human being who is angry. If you are not sufficiently present, this human being who is angry will trigger the same emotion in you. And so you are at the mercy of somebody else's state.

That's just a small example. And it happens all the time. And then you have the, whatever you absorb through the media these days, the mainstream media, social media, and mainstream media, for example, generates an enormous amount of emotion.

It's there because emotion sells, it sells people tune in. It has an almost addictive quality to it. And so without knowing it, I don't believe the people who run the media, the mainstream media are probably not aware of what they're doing, but they themselves are in the grip of this collective energy field underneath the surface of things.

And there's a huge amount of collective fear running through. And if you are not sufficiently present, then you have no immunity to what goes on around you. And you are susceptible to catching, so to speak.

I'm not talking of a virus because there's another kind of immunity that is of a different kind that is within your consciousness. You are then at the mercy of whatever mental virus is floating around in the collective energy field. And without knowing it, it infects you.

So you absorb by watching an excessive amount of news, television or whatever device you use, you absorb all that collective energy field that you can't see. It is underneath the surface of things. And you're then taken over by a mental emotional energy field.

Without knowing it, you think that's you. You're identified with this collective energy field. So you've been taken over by what could be described as a virus, a mental virus, a mental emotional virus.

And you find yourself in a state of either fear or a state of anger or anxiety. And so, and that's this, when you identify with that state of anger or anxiety or fear, you become it, so to speak, or it becomes you. It becomes part of your identity.

And spiritually speaking, we call that unconscious living. To be unconscious is to completely identify with a mental emotional energy field. Identify means you seek yourself in it.

It takes you over. You don't know yourself except through that. Your consciousness is completely identified with that energy.

And that's a terrible state to be in. Now, a state of quite normal. It's very important.

Then when this becomes more and more unpleasant, fear grows, anger grows. Then it's easier for humans to suddenly become aware of what's happening to them. And that is the motivating force that helps people to step out of the identification with this collective streams of emotional mental streams.

So that's the most vital thing. You need vigilance so that you are not drawn into these unconscious collective energy fields, which are really very much like a mental virus collective. So there's an equivalent on a mental level to what we have on the physical level.

On the physical level, we have the virus that we all know about all over the world. And the equivalent of that on the mental level is a virus of destructive, negative thought forms and emotions that people get taken over by. And that makes life very unpleasant.

It can also lead to an intensification of external problems. When more and more people are being taken over by negative energy fields without knowing it, then they create in the external, they create whatever corresponds to their inner state of consciousness. So this is a time of very critical time, but it is the most critical element of it, as I see it, is not in the external.

Yes, there are external problems, but more fundamentally, it is a problem of human consciousness. And it can only be tackled there. This is the root, the causal realm is human consciousness.

And in order to inhabit a better world, you need to go to the causal realm of your own consciousness and not seek a better world in the realm of effect, which is the external realm. It doesn't mean you cannot do things in the external realm. Factor in any action that you take is, so if it is action to be ultimately really helpful and beneficial, if the underlying mental emotional state out of which this action arises is one of anxiety or fear, it's not possible to take wise action and make wise decisions out of a state of fear.

So also many people want, they have good intentions, they want to create a better world, and that is wonderful. But if you neglect the causal realm, which is your consciousness, then whatever you do on the outer, you might be very angry. And out of your anger, where you want to create a better world, that's dangerous.

It's understandable, but it's dangerous because any action you take is contaminated by the energy field of anger and creates, in Eastern terms, would say creates more karma, more suffering. So the important thing for us is not to be taken over by the collective virus that's floating around and that's everywhere in the media and so on. So be very vigilant.

Vigilance is required. It's ultimately, and this is what meditation is all about, and this is what healing is all about. Healing in a wider sense, normally healing refers to physical healing, which is wonderful too, but the deeper healing is a healing of your consciousness, the healing of a fragmented consciousness, the healing of the suffering that arises when you completely identify with mental, emotional streams that come to you.

They take you over. And so then you identify with all your, every mental positions. You have political views, mental positions, and you derive your sense of self from your position and the other becomes the enemy.

It does not mean as you awaken out of that, it does not mean that you no longer have any mental positions. You continue to have certain views, for example, with regards to the political situation or the social situation, you have certain views and that's fine. It would be virtually impossible to say, I'm now giving up all my viewpoints completely.

I'm no longer having any viewpoint and you can't do that, but you can recognize a mental position as a mental position without deriving your sense of self from it. Then when you become involved in a discussion with someone who holds, for example, in the United States at the present time, there's a huge division. There's almost like two, gradually two universes are developing that are separate as a fragmentation.

And if you're unconscious, which means you're identified with your mental positions, then when anybody questions your mental position with an opposite mental position, the person becomes your enemy. If millions of people live in that unconscious way, a civil disorder, even civil war is not impossible. That means millions of people are so identified with their positions that they're completely unaware that they are being taken over by an energy field.

And so the answer is to become aware of the positions that your mind is taking and saying, well, this is my position. You can then have a discussion with someone without making the other into an enemy, without attacking the other, either emotionally, mentally, or even physically in the case of very unconscious people. You can have a discussion and perhaps you can arrive at some kind of, you can meet at some point in the middle if you're conscious.

If you're unconscious, which means completely identified with your mental position, there's no meeting anymore. You cannot meet the other because the other is the enemy. So the primordial problem, and this is where the healing also comes in, is healing is really to be restored to wholeness, not to be fragmented and lose yourself in the fragmentation of your mind.

And so how does this happen? How can I have a mental position, for example? Even I have certain positions, obviously every human has with regards to politics.

I don't talk about them because who cares what my mental position is? That's not important. I'm here to guide humans to a higher or deeper dimension where they are no longer completely identified with and absorbed by their mental positions, their minds, their thoughts.

Then you can have the thoughts, but the thoughts exist within a greater wholeness, which we could call the awareness. And your identity lies in the awareness, the presence, the consciousness, not in the position of the mind. Then you can still have your position, but you're no longer threatened in your sense of identity if somebody questions your position or contradicts.

So that's the, and that's the essence of meditation also. The essence of meditation is to find that, to discover that transcendent dimension to who you are. The being of yourself and you discover it.

And this is, as I speak, there's an opportunity for you to realize this within yourself as I speak here and now. This transcendent dimension to who you are, the unconditioned being is something that you do not need to bring about through arduous discipline. And you cannot generate it by being, a good person.

It comes before all that. It's already here. You, at that level, you are already complete, perfect, or to use this word, whole.

Whole, you are already whole. On the level of being, you are already whole. Now that's an interesting word, whole, W-H-O-L-E, whole.

On this, on the personal level, the conditioned mental emotional entity, you are not whole, you are, there's a lot still that you could do and many things you cannot do. And you can improve your life on the level of the person. Of course, it's a good thing to improve your life on that level.

But if you miss the fundamental dimension of the transcendent, which is the spiritual dimension, then nothing on the level of your personal self will ever ultimately satisfy you, no matter what you achieve on that level. It doesn't mean that you should not strive to achieve things. It's a good thing to try and achieve things as a human being, to learn new things, experience new things, to grow, that beautiful.

This is part of why you are here, but it's not enough. And in fact, it's frustrating ultimately and not satisfying if you miss the more fundamental task, the more fundamental human task, which is to awaken to the deeper dimension of who you are beyond the conditioned person. And that's the healing, that's the wholeness.

Do you realize on that level, you are already whole. Healing and whole go back to the same root. If you go back, the etymology of the English, healing and whole come back from, to go back to the same root, which lies in old English, old high German and Norse, which is Scandinavian language.

They all go back, healing and whole go back to the same root. Sometimes wisdom is embodied sometimes in language. See if you follow it to its root.

So healing and whole have the same root. And then there's another word that's part of that, that comes out of the same root. And that's the word holy.

So the word healing, whole and holy have the same, etymologically have the same root. So you discover a dimension that has always been there, is not subject to time. Discover a dimension within yourself that is also the realm of the holy.

And you cannot define that. Holy points to the fact that you are intrinsically connected to the source of all life, which traditionally is called God. The holy points to that.

Holy is not a word that you will hear very frequently in our present civilization. It's unlikely that the word holy has ever been used in the past few years on CNN, MSNBC or Fox News, very unlikely. And the New York Times also haven't seen the word holy.

I've been looking for it a long time. No, it's not there because humans no longer know, even know what that means. You can only get a glimpse of what that means within yourself beyond conceptualization.

When you go out into nature and you're in a state of pure awareness and you look at the totality of nature that surrounds you, no matter where you are, there are trees or there's a landscape or there's the ocean or there's a mountain or just a field or even just a park or even just one tree, you give it your complete attention then without labeling it, without analyzing it, without calling it anything, you give it your complete attention. Then you can sense that beyond that, which you see in nature with your senses or what you can hear, see, hear, take in with your senses, there is something, there is an essence in nature.

There is a presence in nature that can only be described as holy. And you're in a state of awe. I like that word, awe.

When you're in nature and you go, ah. And of course, at that moment, your mind stops. You're just conscious.

You're not labeling what you perceive. And then you sense the, every sense perception is a surface reality. But beyond the surface reality, there's a deeper reality and you can sense this deeper reality, which ultimately, what is that?

It's the universal consciousness that manifests itself through countless millions of life forms. But underneath it, there is the one, ultimately the one consciousness, the one being. And you can sense that when your mind is still, you can sense that in nature.

And then you can sense that there's not a separation anymore between you and nature. The same consciousness, but different frequency. Yes.

Is alive in you as you, as the consciousness that manifests as a plant, a tree, a flower. And so you sense that connection. That is the awakening.

That's the restoration of wholeness, the wholeness of life. When the fragmented entity, the ego, subsides and you become restored to the wholeness of who you are. That's the, this is what is needed for sanity to come back into human interactions.

The only thing that can save the world is this shift in consciousness. This realization. It begins with you and it begins here and now.

And how does it begin here and now? It begins, and I'm inviting you now, perhaps it's already happening in you, but you're not quite aware of it. It begins with a moment of no thought, but just pure presence or beingness, like now.

That's meditation. Meditation is thinking subsides, awareness remains. And when thinking subsides, the entire self, what we could call the self, the egoic self, the person, the personality also subsides because it's created by the movement of thought.

So when thinking subsides, even for a moment, in that moment, the conditioned entity, the personality also subsides and something else arises. And there are many names that we could use to describe that something else that arises, that is much deeper, much more fundamental than the person. Many words have been used over centuries and millennia to describe this.

The most neutral term you could use is the being of you or the beingness of you. It could also be called the Atman, the innermost, the divinity within. That is from Indian spirituality, the Atman.

Now, Jesus had certain words for it. He called it, sometimes he called it the kingdom of heaven, which is a dimension of consciousness. It's not something you can see.

It's here or it's there. He clearly said, you can never say it's here or it's there because it's inseparable from who you are. So the kingdom of heaven is another term.

You can use it to describe that dimension. The entire teaching of Jesus was about finding that dimension within. Sometimes he called it other things.

He also called it eternal life. And he said, I want you to have eternal life. This is that my teaching is this eternal life.

What does that mean? It doesn't mean that the person goes on and on and eternal means timeless, the timeless dimension of who you are. And then the Buddha came and the Buddha refused all positive terminology, like kingdom of heaven or the Atman or eternal life, because he knew that humans would fall into the trap of transforming any positive statement into a mental idol.

So he refused to make any positive statements. He used only negative statements. He denies everything that is ultimately not it.

So Buddha described it as a no self. This is a no self. That's the ultimate teaching of the Buddha is to discover within yourself the unreality, ultimate unreality of the person, the personal sense of the egoic sense of self, the self, which also Jesus said when he made the important statement, deny thyself.

That wasn't the Buddha. I thought it could have been said by the Buddha. Jesus said it, deny thyself, deny yourself, meaning what denies a strange word here.

It doesn't mean that you decide to say, oh, I don't exist, that's not it. Deny means, as he uses it, recognize the unreality of the self that you thought you were. That is the denial of self.

Deny thyself, recognize it. Ultimately, that is not really who you are. This is just a surface phenomenon.

It's, you find that it also has its place. You have to live with it for a while, but the deeper dimension is that that is not who you are. So it's vital for humans, especially now as we are moving into a critical time period for the totality of humanity, which is also an incredible opportunity for disidentifying from the unconsciousness that otherwise governs the world.

So how do you do it? In a way, you don't even do it. It's just a cessation of, one could almost say the cessation of doing and the realization of being.

And doing, on a primordial level, is thinking. Humans are thinking all the time, except in dreamless sleep. They're thinking and thinking and thinking and thinking and thinking.

It's no cessation. And then life gets more and more difficult. Then you watch more and more in the news on TV and whatever it's called.

The news is not the news anymore. It's just opinions. It's just stupid manipulation.

And you watch him and you get drawn into that and you think it's all so real. And then you see anxiety arises, anger arises, suffering arises. And that's, and as humans, as the suffering increases, as I said before, the motivation to awaken in many humans also increases.

So we are here to realize this and to actually welcome the challenges we are confronted with externally, because they are a great opportunity for the awakening of consciousness. Yes. Humans don't awaken, except through difficulties, obstacles, problems, challenges.

And then your state of consciousness, the state of consciousness with which you meet the external situation changes, which means how the way in which you experience an external situation changes. And, now this sounds a little mystical. What subsequently happens on an external level is also to a large extent determined by your state of consciousness in the present moment.

What subsequently happens in the so-called future, which never comes, because you can only experience the future as the present moment. So you can never experience the future, except as a thought form. Interesting to realize this, the only reality the future has is as a thought form.

You cannot actually say, oh, there it is, because the moment you say there it is, it's the present. So the, how things evolve in the so-called future are linked in very fundamental way to your state of conscience in the present. So if you meet a difficult situation or a difficult person in a state of consciousness that is not reactive, but in an awakened state of consciousness, which means present, alert, then it changes also the situation, the external situation, how it develops from there onward.

Or you can, but if you're unconscious, you face an external situation and you amplify the problem of the external situation that you're facing by your unconscious reactivity of the egoic self, it feels threatened in the situation, has a new small anxiety, then all the things that you do in order to remove the situation or make it better actually makes it worse. So it amplifies when you're unconsciously reacting all the time, and you can observe it even just meeting with a single human being, a difficult human being, and many human beings are very difficult, you might've noticed. So you meet a difficult human being, how you react if this difficult human being triggers the same in you, an angry human being triggers anger in you, then you amplify his or her anger, and then it grows and grows and grows, might become violence.

And this applies to any situation, what if you are in a reactive unconscious, the unconscious state of reactivity, then you amplify the problem. And this is what happens a lot on every level here. This is an unconscious way of dealing with things.

Whenever you're motivated by fear or anger, this is what happens. You think you're resolving the situation, but you're amplifying it. Terrible.

So the key is then to realize this dimension within yourself that is beyond the thinking mind and all the mental, emotional turbulence. And this happens very easily in a moment, like now, when your mind, your thinking mind, subsides, comes to a stop. Now, what remains?

You can't say what remains, but you know what remains directly. The sense of presence cannot be defined. The sense of beingness.

This is the most beautiful thing, these moments without thought, but it's not loss of consciousness. It's loss of thinking when it's not needed, because thinking is useful for many things and destructive for many other things. And so you discover when it's useful and you let go of it when it's destructive, when it destroys your enjoyment of life, your enjoyment of the present moment, your ability to just be, to acknowledge the aliveness of things around you, to acknowledge the present moment, to have some gratitude for the richness of life and all life forms around you.

All this you lose when you are continuously absorbed only in thinking. What remains then when thinking subsides, awareness remains or presence, whatever you want to call it. In religious traditions, in mystical Christianity, it's called the Christ within.

In some Buddhist schools, it is called your Buddha nature. These are just names to talk about it. That's what remains when thinking subsides and there's only a sense of spacious presence, like now.

And in that spacious presence, strange thing is you don't know anything anymore, of course, because there's no concepts anymore in your mind. You don't know anything on the level of concepts. And yet that is the essence of who you are, this beingness or presence.

So you don't know yourself anymore as an object, which is when you live through the ego, then you become an object to yourself and your consciousness and you have a relationship with yourself. You can say, I love myself. Which is better than hating yourself, but you still have a relationship with yourself.

You're not yourself. You have a relationship with yourself. It's better to love yourself than to hate yourself.

True. But you still have a relationship with yourself. There's two.

I love myself. I'm two. But when you, with the realization of being, you are yourself.

And so you cannot know yourself as an object of knowledge, but you can know yourself as the eternal subject of all knowing. And that's where wisdom arises. This is the source of all real knowing.

And the source of all true intelligence is in this non-conceptual, vast intelligence, which is the intelligence of consciousness. Which is one with who you are. And then when you can link into that, you become inspired.

It can inspire your mind. Your mind can create when it's linked into that. You have creative thoughts.

You have creative input, ideas. You take action that is wise rather than, or as the Buddhists say, skillful, skillful, wise action, rather than unconscious action that produces more suffering for yourself and others. Perpetuates karma.

So this realm of true intelligence is the non-conceptual realm. Yes, you need concepts and you can use concepts, but don't lose yourself in concepts. Don't look for yourself in concepts.

And then have a narrative in your mind that says, this is who I am. It's just a story of one concept linked with others' concepts. The story of yourself is not essentially who you are.

It's a story versus this limited entity, the person. It's a surface phenomenon. It's not who you are, but it's the realization of who you are.

That's the awakening, but it's not conceptual. So look for the cessation of thought. Look for it in little moments, like now.

Whenever you look at something natural, the sky, a tree, the ocean, any plant or flower or animal, don't label it. Just be alert and present and perceive it. And as I said before, when you go into anything natural, when you go into nature, you can then sense something that is almost awe-inspiring.

I'm not romanticizing nature. I also, of course, nature can also kill you, but there is something there that is holy or sacred. And humans have to find that urgently because then they are not going to destroy nature anymore.

Ultimately, humans have been destroying nature for some time because they have lost the ability to sense what's there. And then you can cut down. I mean, there are old forests.

Still, some are still here in Canada and other parts of the world. There are forests that have been there with gigantic trees that have been there for thousands of years, thousands of years. They are sacred spaces.

And, but if humans cannot sense it anymore, then all they see is possible profit. What can we do with it? What can we do with it?

They look at the whole world in terms of doing. What can I do with it? Because they have lost sense of being.

It's a terrible loss. So, but you've also lost it with reference to yourself. You can't sense your own being.

That's why you cannot sense the forest. You can't sense your own holiness. And that's why you cannot sense the holiness of the forest or the sky or the ocean.

So it's not impossibly difficult what I am suggesting is the most important task in your life, which has become particularly almost, one could say, urgent at the present time. This is a task of realizing the transcendent dimension to who you are by the simple, very simply by realizing that you do not have to think all the time, that there's always a possibility in yourself. It's just waiting to be discovered.

You are waiting to be discovered, so to speak. That dimension is always there. The moment thinking subsides, you feel that stillness.

It's another word you can use. There's a stillness. I wrote a little book called Stillness Speaks.

It's a small book designed for meditative reading, not consecutive reading, just little entries. The first sentence in the book, if I remember correctly, is you are never more essentially yourself than when you are still. So when you're, is this the same thing?

It's just another term pointer to describe it. We are still when the mind subsides, but awareness is not lost. In fact, awareness has grown.

Consciousness, awareness. This is the light of consciousness that Jesus said, you are. This is our live meditation, which basically is learning to stop thinking, which sounds a little paradoxical because usually learning involves thinking.

So it's more like unlearning because we are conditioned to think continuously. And a lot of the time it's not only unnecessary, but also destructive. Cuts you off from the depths of being, of who you are beyond the thinker.

The most dreadful limitation for a human being is to know him or herself only as the thinker with its opinions and beliefs and reactions and whatever else the mind continuously comes up with. And that cuts you off from that vast dimension of consciousness that is there beyond thinking, not separate from thinking. It makes thinking possible, but it's deeper than that.

And here as we meditate, which is probably not the right word because it sounds as if we were doing something, but we're not doing anything. We're not doing a meditation, but we're here to realize that beyond doing, there's another dimension more vital. And that we could call being.

And to sense that in yourself, there needs to be at least a gap in the stream of thinking. Even a few seconds is already a slight deepening and a little bit of peace and aliveness and a little bit of joy coming through the cracks, so to speak, in what is otherwise a solid wall of thought. But we are here to go beyond that, not just wait for the little cracks to appear occasionally, but to embrace that dimension without which your life is not really that enjoyable, frustrating, in fact, pointless, that continuous worry and upset, anxiety, complaining.

That's what most people's lives consist of. Maybe, yes, the occasional crack is there. Or maybe when they get tired, they feel a little bit better because they can't think anymore.

And then they go to sleep. But really, without that deeper dimension, life, is it worth living? I don't think so.

What for? Do you think you'll ever sort out the problems in your life? You sort out one and another two appear.

So there's nothing more important than this. And realize when you stop thinking, or thinking subsides, we could say, you essentially are still there as a conscious presence, a still, conscious, aware space. And that still, conscious, aware space needs to be there in daily life, in the background.

Doesn't mean it can only be there when you don't think. You access it most deeply when thinking subsides. But as you sense it, you realize even when you think again, it doesn't go away completely anymore, that conscious, aware space can be there even while thinking happens, or while you're talking to someone, or dealing with things that need to be done.

And then you can enjoy life every moment. But the enjoyment doesn't come from all the things that happen in your life. It comes from a deeper place.

And then what happens or does not happen is of secondary importance. You're not dependent on what happens or is not happening that you want it to happen. And then you move through life embodying two dimensions, the dimension of form, which is thinking and doing, and the dimension of the formless presence, the conscious, aware space.

The two are there simultaneously. The conscious, aware space interpenetrates, if that's the word, the world of form. Then perhaps you realize the truth of the ancient Buddhist scripture, one of the most famous sutras, which says, form is emptiness, emptiness is form.

Form and formlessness being there as one. And so the way I put it occasionally, you may have heard it before, it's not the absolute truth. It's a way of talking about it.

There's two of you in any moment, in any situation. There's the person who thinks and does things and deals with life situations and people. There's you as the person.

And then there's the other you as the conscious presence. So you can still deal with things as a person, but behind that and even within that, there is the aware space. So you become a spacious person, so to speak.

Anybody who has not realized that dimension within themselves are not spacious. And of course that still applies to many humans. They are not the opposite of spacious.

Let's say they are dense, the density of the person. You can look at anybody that you know, or even strangers when you observe them, how they go about life, how they deal with things, how they interact with people, how they react or respond to changing circumstances, especially when things go wrong, so to speak. By just observing them, you can sense and see how dense or how spacious they are.

And it's not a judgment. You just see it in just the same way as you see whether it's light or dark. You're not judging when you say, oh, it's getting dark.

It's not a judgment. You just see it. So you can see it in others.

And sometimes so-called people who are into spiritual awakening, even they can sometimes very quickly when they are challenged by events, become very dense. The spaciousness is lost. So that's your spiritual practice.

Of course, it's everyday life. Can you embody the spaciousness in addition to being a person? So you don't need to achieve perfection as a person.

The person will always have certain limitations and shortcomings. And when Jesus said, be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect, he doesn't refer to the world of form, but the deeper perfection, the wholeness that is spacious presence. In ancient Greek philosophy, they often use the term, the good.

What is the good? Where is the good? And of course, we know what it is and where it is.

The good is not in the world of form. The world of form is good and bad. Nothing stays good for that long.

It either disappears or turns into its opposite. The good is within you and it is the formless presence, the source of aliveness, of joy, the source of identity, the sense of who you are. The source of that is beingness, presence, spacious awareness, I am.

They all point to the same experience, which is not ultimately negative. It just seems negative when you are in it, but it is part of a larger purpose. It's part of the awakening, not for everyone.

It doesn't have to be, but often it is part of the awakening process. The dark night of the soul is a term from, it goes back a long time. Maybe it goes back to the Spanish mystic, Saint John of the Cross.

I'm not sure if it does, but it goes back a long time. It describes something.

Well, the questioner seems to imply that he or she is going through something like this at the moment.

The dark night of the soul, which, yes, I have also experienced, that's a term then used to describe a, what one could call, a collapse of a perceived meaning in life, an eruption into your life of a deep sense of meaninglessness. And the inner state, in some cases, is very close to depression. Maybe some dark night of the soul often to do with what is conventionally called depression.

But it is basically a sense of emptiness or meaninglessness. Nothing makes sense anymore. There's no purpose to anything.

And sometimes it's triggered by some external event. Some disasters, perhaps, on an external level, external rather than within. The death of someone close to you could trigger it, especially premature death.

For example, if your child dies or you had built up your life and given it meaning, and the meaning that you had given your life, this is what my life is about, your activities, your achievements, where you're going, what is considered important. And so the meaning that you had given your life for some reason collapses. So as I said, it can happen if something happens that you can't explain away anymore.

Some disaster which seems to invalidate the meaning that your life had before. And really what has collapsed then is the whole conceptual framework for your life, the meaning that your mind had given it. And so that results in a sense of darkness, a dark place.

But people have gone into that. You're in that dark place for a while. And then you emerge out of that.

There is the possibility that you emerge out of that. You can emerge out of that into a transformed state of consciousness where life has meaning again, but it is no longer a conceptual meaning that you could necessarily explain. It is often from the dark night of the soul, not necessarily, but quite often, it's from there that people awaken out of their conceptual sense of reality which has collapsed.

They awaken into something deeper which is no longer based on concepts in your mind. The deeper sense of purpose or connectedness with a greater life that is not dependent on explanations or anything conceptual any longer. It's a kind of rebirth.

And the dark night of the soul is a kind of death that you die. What dies in the dark night of the soul is the egoic sense of self. And of course, yes, death is always painful, but nothing real has actually died there, only an illusory identity.

Now, it is probably the case that some people who have gone through this transformation, they have been through the dark night of the soul and they discovered that out of that, a new self emerged that was a non-conceptual self, but a deeper being, the awakened consciousness. And they somehow, looking back, they realized that they had to go through that. Not everybody does, of course, have to go through that, but some people do.

And they've even, in some spiritual traditions, they try to recreate the experience of the dark night of the soul in order to bring about a spiritual awakening. And that was probably part of the so-called mystery schools of ancient Greece and Egypt, which were designed, they even survived into Roman times, mystery schools with rituals and so on. Not much, we don't know much about it because they were kept secret.

Not much was written about it. And in one tradition, you spend a prolonged period of time in darkness, sometimes even in a coffin, coffin-like place, in complete isolation and darkness. That is an attempt, I would say, on the part of someone who has gone through the natural dark night of the soul to recreate the experience of it in a kind of artificial, more artificial way of actually experiencing that utter darkness where things break down.

To what extent that worked when it's not a natural experience, but a created experience, for how many people that worked and actually did bring about an awakening and a collapse of the mind-made self, I don't know whether it truly worked for many people, but it must have worked to some extent because the tradition went on for a very long time. There are other, in other forms of, in mythological forms also, they speak of similar things, sometimes described as the night journey in mythological tradition or also the descent to the underworld. They all point to the same experience, which is not ultimately negative.

It just seems negative when you are in it, but it is part of a larger purpose. It's part of the awakening, not for everyone, it doesn't have to be, but often it is part of the awakening process. The death of the old self, the birth of the true self.

So once you know that, if it should come or if you should even be in the middle of it now, you can just, the more you surrender, the more quickly you go through it. Surrender means don't judge it anymore. You accept whatever it is.

It's your experience at this moment. But as I said, not everybody has to go through that. For many people, the awakening process starts and begins without that.

Sometimes even after the awakening process begins, it might still happen, and then finally you will break through, but that's fine. Allow life to do what it does. You don't need to seek that, and we don't need to recreate it in some artificial way, so don't shut yourself in a dark room for days on end.

It's unlikely to work. It's unnecessary. The first lesson in the Course in Miracles says, nothing I see in this room means anything.

And you're supposed to look around the room at whatever you happen to be looking at. You say, this doesn't mean anything. That doesn't mean anything.

This table doesn't mean anything. This hand doesn't mean anything. What's the purpose of a lesson like that?

Well, that's a little bit like recreating what can happen during the dark nights of the soul, which is the collapse of a mind-made meaning, conceptual meaning of life. Believing that you understand what's it all about. So with the Course in Miracles in Lesson One, it's a voluntary relinquishment of the human mind-made meaning that is projected, and you go voluntarily into saying, I don't know what this means.

This doesn't mean anything. You wipe the board clean. In the dark night of the soul, it collapses.

And in some spiritual traditions, then you can actually, you're encouraged to relinquish your conceptual reality. And so you're then meant to arrive at a place of conceptual, one could say meaninglessness, or one could say a state of ignorance, where you don't, things lose their, the meaning that you had given them, which was all conditioned and cultural and so on. And you can then look upon the world without imposing a mind-made framework of meaning.

Is there some type of discipline that is needed to be successful with conscious manifestation? If so, can you describe what the discipline is that is needed? Well, basically, I have already described the discipline that's needed for, in your daily life, to be aware of yourself and of your own state of consciousness.

Also, an important factor, perhaps, that is implied in what we've been saying, but it's worth pointing it out explicitly, is the importance of what is conventionally called gratitude. But there could be other words. Gratitude is a very powerful transformational tool and also one of the most powerful tools for manifesting better things in your life.

Now, what does that mean? The gratitude is to acknowledge the good in your life now. And it's surprising how many people don't do that, who can only see the bad in their lives or only complain, but it's extremely powerful to acknowledge the good that's in your life now.

Now, let's talk about this for a moment. This does not mean that you have a conceptual idea of what your life is, and then you compare it to somebody else's life, and you say, oh, really, I should be happy because I have it so much better than look at these people. Their life is worse than mine, so I really should be grateful for my life.

That's not it. That's not real gratitude. That means you're moving within the conceptual realm and your feeling of well-being is dependent on somebody else who has less than you or is suffering more than you.

So gratitude is not if you compare yourself because that's a misconception, very common misconception of gratitude is you compare yourself to somebody else or even a whole group of people, so you look at people in the third world, I really should be grateful, we are so much better off, even though I may be poor, but I'm still better off than, so let's be grateful. No, that's not real gratitude. You're depending on others to be worse off than you, but you can feel gratitude.

It's crazy. It feeds the ego. No, no, gratitude is to acknowledge the good that's in your life now, now, this moment.

Okay, so it's not the good in your life situation, I'm fine because I have achieved this or that or whatever, no, at this moment. And that's simple things. It really comes down to simple things.

What can I be grateful for at this moment? Wow, there's so much I can be grateful for. Now, what is it?

To be grateful is to acknowledge something, to give it attention and to appreciate it. I have this, you can't see it, but I have a nice round table here. And it's lovely, I touch it, it's made of wood and it's lovely.

It's not spectacular, it doesn't need to be spectacular, but it has a presence and a beingness. There's light coming through the window there and from behind me. I often sit here, I'm lucky to have these trees here and I often sit here, there's a little screen too, otherwise there's too much glare, but I often sit here, I look at the trees for 10, 15 minutes and there's a continuous feeling of goodness because, and we could call that gratitude, but I don't say in my mind, I'm so grateful for these trees.

I simply appreciate the wonder and aliveness, the beingness of these trees. So I acknowledge the good in this moment by appreciating the wonder, the miracle of these trees. It's just, you can look at the sky here today, happens to be completely overcast, but very, and that's fine too, because there's light filtering through.

There's more light in a way today than when the sky is blue because the light is dispersed by the cloud, it's everywhere, it comes from the sun, it filters through the clouds. Now you appreciate that. You look at a potted plant, you become, you're grateful for that, you're grateful for all the little things.

You hear a bird, you drink a glass of water, acknowledging all the, you're breathing. So that's gratitude, is the appreciation of life that's around you. So you can say the gratitude for being alive, for to feel that you're alive in your entire body, the inner body, the invisible presence that inhabits the body to feel that.

So all my, all the little things, gratitude is best applied to all the small things that continuously surround you in life. And then you see the goodness of it all, or you can just, let's say you have little or no money, so, and you're looking for abundance. So how do you bring abundance into your life?

You have to discover, to acknowledge the abundance that is already everywhere around you. You walk past this, you go, you're walking in the street and there's a flower store, there's flowers on display and potted plants outside if you live in a city. An abundance of life, the flowers, they're just amazing.

There's abundance and you can look everywhere and see abundant life. Jesus used that term. He said, I want you to have abundant life.

In other translations, he says, the same term translated in a different way, I want you to have the fullness of life. Jesus promises the fullness of life or abundant life. Now, true abundance, which many people are looking for, and they think abundance is to do with having many things, it could be that quite a few things come to you when you access the source of all abundance, which of course is within you.

It's the feeling of the fullness of life. Now, once you get this feeling in the present moment, then this is perhaps the very core of gratitude is to feel the aliveness of life within yourself.

[Speaker 9] (2:18:47 - 2:19:46)
Thank you for this opportunity, for being here and allowing us to become more aware. And my question is a little bit of a follow-up from what you've just said. I know you work with psychotherapists and therapists and helping others.

And my question is, how can we follow up on the analogy of the caterpillar? How can we support others? How can we know if they are there, if they are not there?

Is it possible to help? I don't know what the question is, but it's, can we support someone in this process? You obviously are, and Kim is obviously supporting us.

So is there different stages that we can support different people in different processes?

[Speaker 1] (2:19:46 - 2:31:23)
The moment the spiritual awakening, if we want to call it that, happens in you, which is the disidentification from the thinking mind and certain degree of arising of presence. Well, not the moment it happens, but a little bit after that, as this process continues, you, many people find that more and more people come, you meet people, sometimes seemingly accidentally, or it might be people who you know already who need you, who also are at a stage of readiness, but don't know it yet. And you may find and will find that these people are drawn to you.

You may not immediately recognize them. In fact, you may think, listen, this person is not going to awaken in this lifetime, but you can get big surprises. Sometimes the most unlikely people can come to you and you know that it's happening.

There's a moment usually when you notice there is a transmission either of presence as an energy field, or they ask you a question, you give an answer, and the answer has a certain power or aliveness to it. It comes through you spontaneously, because the question was a genuine question and there was an opening in the other person. If it's not a genuine question, if it's a question asked out of curiosity, what's that spiritual stuff all about that you do, or whatever, or tell me about that spirit stuff, but there's no real opening, then your answer will not be good, or there may be no answer.

But if it's a real question and there is some degree of presence in you, then there will be a real answer. And the helping then comes in two ways. One is through the energy that you emanate as you are present.

The second is through what you say to them. And that is the beginning of you becoming a spiritual teacher. And many of you, some of you are already spiritual teachers, whether formally or not formally, some of you will become formal spiritual teachers because the world is in great need of you.

Humans want you, they may not know it yet, but everybody, even if you do not become a formal spiritual teacher, you will do some teaching informally through everybody you meet, because you spread, your state of consciousness spreads to others. That applies both to unconscious people who spread their negativity or the viral infection of their minds, and to present people who spread presence. And it's not that you are doing it.

So an important obstacle could be if you think that you need to do something to help them. This is very seductive because it's a wonderful thing to help others. But the obstacle is you think that it is up to you to help them.

It's not. In fact, you wouldn't know how to. I wouldn't know how to.

So you have to allow it to happen by holding the presence, especially when somebody comes to you, asks a question, or you say something, hold the presence and then see what happens. So it's not you who is doing it. Sometimes I've met some people who said they've been asked to, first they saw some individuals, helped them, they're growing and growing in presence.

And then somebody approached them and said, can you give a talk to our little group? And then they came to me and said, I don't think I'm ready to give a talk to a group. Somebody asked me to give a talk to a group.

I think I'm not ready. And I said, if you think you're ready, then that's not a good sign. And I said, if you think you're ready, Because there's probably a little ego in there Because there's probably a little ego in there just come to me and I will heal you.

But if you feel that the most powerful place, whether you are with one person or with a group of people, the most powerful place is to not know. But you have to be comfortable with not knowing. If you're uncomfortable with not knowing what to say, what to do, then you go, oh dear, what should I say?

The mind says, quick, say something useful to this person. And then you think of things you've read in a book. Well, Eckhart says that it doesn't mean you should never quote, but it's always more powerful if it comes from you.

So it only comes if you are comfortable with, enter that space of not knowing, which is basically you surrender thought and you just look at the person and you listen and then see what answer comes, then see what you say, if anything. In some cases, you might not say anything. So the help allow it to move through you.

And that's a big relief. It means you don't have to do it. You only become a vehicle for it, an opening for it.

You become an opening for consciousness. So you don't have to heal people, help people. I mean, you can help physically, that's a different matter.

You can give somebody food or money to help, but at a deeper level, you can't do anything. So getting out of the way, and then it will happen through you. And in the Course in Miracles, it says the moment you become a student of the Course in Miracles, which by the way is a lovely teaching, but not for everybody.

So don't believe that because I mentioned it now, you have to go and get it. It's great for some people. It's a beautiful spiritual work, but for others, it's not the right one.

Nothing is right for everybody. Course in Miracles, however, says, the moment you start studying the Course in Miracles, which really implies the moment you begin to disidentify from the conditioned mind, you become a teacher of God. Now the ego, of course, would probably love that term.

That is why I personally would not use it, but there is some truth in it. It's not a terminology that I would use, but the moment the presence arises, you begin to teach presence, but really presence does it through you. Thank you.

Thank you. This mind-made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive. To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation.

Here's a question about the teachings of a spiritual teacher called Joel Goldsmith, who taught in the 50s and 60s. He wrote books like The Infinite Way and other books using Christian terminology, but going far deeper than the kind of Christianity you would encounter in most churches. So he's taken Christian terminology and used it in a deeper sense.

I studied Joel Goldsmith's teachings for many years before I came to your teachings. He was very much a healer, a spiritual healer. This is true.

Now I'm in a healing field, massage therapy, and would like to hear you talk about healing, physical and spiritual. I can get involved in trying to fix my clients' aches and pains and need guidance. Yes, that's interesting.

Healing, physical healing. Physical healing not infrequently comes naturally with the arising of presence, and not only physical healing, also the likelihood of being ill diminishes as presence grows, because many illnesses are actually caused by dysfunctional states of consciousness, which are egoic, and dysfunctional states of consciousness affect the body in a negative way and decrease the body's ability to fight disease, the immune system.

So not all illnesses, of course there are other reasons why people become ill, but very often a dysfunctional state of consciousness makes you, yet generally, a dysfunctional state of consciousness makes you much more susceptible to disease. It does not mean that when you are present, there is a guarantee that you will never become ill. As the body grows old, at some point, it is in the nature of things, at some point, something will fail.

At least so far it's happened to humans. I'll let you know if it doesn't happen to me.

[Speaker 7] (2:31:25 - 2:31:29)
Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (2:31:30 - 2:38:56)
The, and healing also, as I mentioned the other day, healing is often experienced, that kind of spontaneous healing, when people surrender, they no longer, not surrender to the idea of illness, surrender simply to the present moment, to what is in the present moment. Then something is generated that is very healing. Peace itself is healing, to be in a state of a peaceful state of consciousness is healing.

So that is all true. So some of you may have heard me telling the story that for, I think, I can't remember for how long, for a couple of years or so, I was a spiritual healer for a while. And the reason was that a few years after the awakening, people started coming to me.

And one lady who used to come once a week for to sit with me, she was sensitive to energy. And as she was talking about her problems, I was in that state of blissful, intense presence, listening to her with a smile on my face, which she didn't mind, but other people mind it, because I've always had this smile on my face when I was listening to people's problems. Not because I was thinking that the problems were funny.

I could just sense that at a deeper level, the problem didn't actually exist. And so some people got angry and said, why are you smiling at me? I'm telling you about my sufferings and why are you smiling?

What's going on in your mind? And I said, there's nothing going on in my mind. That's why.

And that's why I'm smiling. And so I was sitting with her and she was talking and suddenly she stopped talking and said, oh, you're doing healing on me. I said, am I?

And she said, yes, I can feel it. It's just wonderful. And she didn't talk for a while.

And then she felt so much better. And then she said, you're a healer. I said, oh, I didn't know that.

And then she recommended that certain people should come to me. By word of mouth, it started with her. You must go to this spiritual healer.

He will free you of your pain, your illness, whatever it is. And more and more people came to me who said, oh, I've got this pain here. Can you take that away?

I've got migraine, headache. Please help me. I've got a lump on my foot.

Please remove it. And for a while I did it. I kind of was present.

That's the only way I could do. And then a few people experienced healing. Some didn't.

And then more and more I realized most people that were coming now just wanted to be relieved of certain symptoms, illnesses. They didn't seem that interested in awakening anymore because they wanted to be free of their pains, physical pains, which is fine too. But I realized that that was not my function in this world.

And so I said, I'm no longer a spiritual healer. And I know that healing still sometimes happens to people naturally. But to focus on that so much, I believe, is not my function.

Maybe somebody else's function. Joel Goldsmith is a great teacher, was a great teacher. One thing where his teaching was perhaps slightly unbalanced is there was an excessive emphasis on physical healing.

And that was always regarded as a criterion for how successful you are. And apart from that, his teaching is great. But because of the excessive emphasis on physical healing, so his teaching was associated very strongly with that.

One reason being that he came out of, for several years he was a practitioner of Christian science and his teaching still has certain similarities with Christian science. So that's some balance, something a little bit unbalanced, excessive, in my view, emphasis on spiritual healing, which resulted, for example, in strange things like when he had a heart attack, it had to be kept secret from the followers because they would have been disappointed. And so you can see the loss of balance, too much emphasis on physical healing.

But of course, when finally he had another heart attack and died, they had to finally say, he died. That's it. But if you disregard that, then it might help you.

You might read Joel Goldsmith and become suddenly physically healed. So that's great. There's some many people, the book, I don't know how many people are familiar with Christian science.

I don't think I'm familiar with it, but the foundational book for Christian science, Mary Baker Eddy, was kind of channeled, and you can read it. And quite a few people have claimed, may still claim, that just by reading some chapters in the book, they suddenly became healed. The book stresses, as Joel Goldsmith does, that basically illness is an illusion, and ultimately even having a physical body is an illusion.

On the deepest level, that is true. But you don't even, I don't usually approach it from that angle. The arising of presence is enough.

And where the identification with the body ceases. I'm not trying to convince anybody that the physical body is an illusion. And then we go, really?

Feels so real to me, especially the aches and pains.

[Speaker 2] (2:39:27 - 2:49:55)
Hi, let's get ready for a approximately 10 minute guided breath meditation. So here you are, sitting at your computer screen, and just come forward to the edge of your seat. So you're sitting right up onto your sit bones.

Your feet are flat on the floor. You can place your hands either face down or facing up on your lap. And then just gently close your eyes.

Sitting up nice and tall with your eyes closed. Bring your attention to your breath. Now at this moment, we're not trying to change the breath.

But just simply become aware of how you are being breathed at this moment. Perhaps there's some tightness, perhaps your breath is shallow. Just be aware, and then become aware of your body.

If there's any tightness, tension, bring your attention to those areas of tightness or tension. And consciously relax your body. So you're relaxing your jaw, your forehead, the shoulders, your entire body.

And then bring your attention back to your breath. And let's together deepen the breath. And as we're doing this, you're bringing calm, a calmness to your body, relaxing the body.

So we will inhale for a count of four and exhale for a count of four. So at this moment, we're just going to even out our breath. And for those who are beginning, just beginning their practice in meditation, you may wish to count, actually count out your inhale and count out your exhale.

So I'll count with you for the first two or three breaths. And then you can count just on your own. And for those who have been practicing meditation for a while, it's just simply consciously aware of your breath as you inhale and as you exhale.

Feeling the breath moving in and out of your body. Feeling the breath as you breathe in through the nose and exhale through the nose. So let's empty our breath, empty our lungs with an exhale.

Exhale. Then inhale two, three, four. Exhale two, three, four.

Inhale two, three, four. Exhale two, three, four. and continue like this on your own.

Notice where you're breathing when you inhale, where the breath is going in the body. See if you can actually inhale through the belly so when you inhale your belly rises and when you exhale your belly falls inward. If you become lost in thoughts just gently guide your attention back to your breath.

Now let's increase the inhale and the exhale to the count of six. You may notice as you deepen your breathing and you inhale it goes into the belly, into your chest and rises to the shoulders and as you exhale your shoulders fall, your chest falls and then your belly falls. Now just see if you can just stop the counting and simply be aware and feel.

Feel your belly rise as you inhale, the chest rise, the shoulders rise and feel your chest fall, your belly fall as you exhale. Feel the body relax as your breath evens out. Notice the space around your breath.

Notice the space in this moment and when you're ready you can slowly open your eyes, taking in the world of form, still keeping some attention on your breath and as you go about your day just practice keeping some attention inward on your breath and if you feel like you just want to keep sitting here meditating on your breath feel free to do so.

[Speaker 1] (2:50:26 - 7:03:48)
As you look at me or the image on the screen or look into my eyes, feel, sense your own presence. So you pay attention to that presence without which you would not be able to perceive anything. The prerequisite for all perception or experience is that presence.

Another way of putting it, there is a, you're giving attention to what appears in your consciousness at this moment. You're giving it attention and that attention is your presence, is awareness and that's more important than me looking at this image on the screen. So while I'm looking, it almost seems that I'm looking at you and in a way I am.

It took me a while, just a little comment. It took me some time to be able to speak into a camera rather than to a live person or live audience until I was able to sense the camera as a kind of wormhole, to use a science fiction term, through which I reach the consciousness that is you. Because it's essentially, we are an expression of that one consciousness manifesting as the person that I am right now for a little while, the person that you are right now for a little while.

A little while could be anything from how much longer are you going to live, few more weeks, months, 10 years, 50 years, 70 years. It's all a little while. There is an essence that underlies the entire universe.

And that is sometimes in spiritual language called the one. The oneness sounds a little bit more abstract. The one is more direct.

And the one is another term for God. So there isn't my consciousness and your consciousness only when we use language, it appears that there is such a thing when I say, I reach your consciousness. But there's only the one consciousness appearing as this and that and that.

I am that one consciousness. You are that one consciousness. Knowing yourself as that one consciousness is spiritual awakening is if you know yourself continuously as that one consciousness, then traditional terminology that would be called enlightenment.

It really is your natural state. Potentially it is a natural state for all humans potentially. And it is our destiny to know ourselves as the one consciousness.

The one consciousness, in other words, knowing itself through you and me. Becoming aware of itself. Awakening in this dimension.

Coming more and more fully into this dimension from another dimension which is timeless. In this dimension there is time. Paradoxically one can say the timeless one expressing itself gradually, which means time, expressing itself gradually more and more in this universe, in this dimension.

So the universe is becoming spiritualized, you could say. And from the perspective of time that takes a long time. But it's all very simple.

From where you are, it does not take time. This realization is the realization of the timeless. The timeless dimension in you.

That is the spirit, to use an old term. There is something else to you that is the body. And there's also the mind.

They are not separate from spirit. They are expressions, limited expressions of the formless one spirit, one consciousness. And so we have the three terms, mind, body, spirit.

You know yourself as a body. You can touch the body, you can look at yourself in the mirror. You can like or dislike what you see when you look in the mirror.

You can derive your identity or a large part of your identity from what you see in the mirror. Positive or negative, good or bad. You may like what you see, you may dislike what you see.

Either case, it's possible that you derive a large part of your identity from the body. If it looks good to you or better than others, then it's a happy identity.

And if it doesn't, it's an unhappy identity.

It's a very limited identity, a sense of self, a very limited sense of self. But for people, it's the main thing that they are concerned about. And then comes the mind.

So the body, physical form, that which can be seen. And the next level is that which cannot be seen, but which can be known. You know yourself primarily as a mind.

The larger part of who you are is not visible. The entire psychological self, the conditioned entity, all the thought processes, all the emotions that go with the thoughts, all the emotions that arise, come and go. It's all the unseen you.

Science as it is at the moment wants to reduce the unseen to that which can be seen or perceived. In other words, it wants to reduce everything to matter. It doesn't really recognize there's anything unseen.

It says if you really look deep enough into matter, you will eventually find everything there. You will find the chemicals that produce the emotions, you will find the molecules that produce certain thoughts. You just haven't found them yet, they say.

We still don't know what a thought is. But eventually we'll find that matter produces thought. It's a byproduct of that's what science, mainstream science believes, believes at the moment that matter, that what we call consciousness is a byproduct of matter, accidental byproduct of matter.

And that is a, I don't want to argue with that right now, but the time will come when we will realize that is an absurd misperception of who we are. And that the entire universe can be reduced to accidental formations of matter is also a misperception. But we can put that aside for our meditation purposes here and go to what we can verify directly within.

And you can verify that there's a lot of stuff going on inside you or thought processes that give you your sense of self. So the sense of self is derived and partly from the physical body. For some people, it's a large part, for other people, it's a smaller part of their sense of self.

The next step, you derive your sense of self from your mind and the emotions, thought activity, the mental image of who you are, the self talk in the head that you may be familiar with, the storytelling of the mind that you may know, me and my life, listen to my story. And that's where it stops for most people. Sense of self derived from the body plus the mind, which includes emotion, mental, emotional.

And that's about, that's what there is for most people. So you have body and mind, but where's the spirit? Now, for most people, spirit is just a concept.

They might, if you go to church or temple, or wherever you may hear about spirit, you may repeat words that refer to the spirit. But is that anything other for you than a thought in your head, just another thought that's added? Or even one gigantic thought that controls all other thoughts, God, so forth.

There are people in whom the mental concept of God has taken over their mind and has become the controlling thought. And through that controlling thought, they perceive everything else. They think that's spiritual.

Of course, what that really is, is what's sometimes called radical fundamentalism, actually a form of insanity. One thought has taken over and controls all other thoughts. And that is a gigantic ego.

And then you share that with other people who have the same dysfunction. And you have this gigantic collective ego. It's a form of insanity, not uncommon.

But anybody who is not yet aware of a spirit in their immediate experience, partakes to some degree of that dysfunction, might not be as gigantic and as potentially violent as the dysfunction in the fundamentalist or the terrorist. But it is a dysfunction when you only know yourself as the physical body and whatever your mind is telling you, with all its conditioned patterns. But it's so easy to take one another step deeper into yourself and also know yourself as spirit.

And that's so simple as the question I asked you at the beginning of our session today. As you look at me, can you sense that in you, which is looking? And I don't mean the physical eyes.

I don't mean what you're looking at. But the energy behind the looking, the consciousness that makes a looking possible. And that is your simple presence.

And if possible, make sure that you're not disturbed while we're here. And just give this time to yourself. Because really, meditation in a wider sense, just means being with yourself.

And everybody should take time out every day, even if it's only 10 minutes to be with themselves. Now you may ask, am I not always with myself? Throughout the day?

And you might even say, I'd rather get away from myself and my usual preoccupations, worries, anxieties, fears. So what does it mean when I say being with yourself? I don't refer to your usual sense of self, which I call the surface self.

That's to do with all the thinking that goes through your mind throughout the day, the emotions you experience, all the things that happen in your life, your memories of who you are. In every human being, there is a deeper dimension to who they are. And getting in touch with that deeper dimension within themselves.

That's really what meditation is. And if you've never accessed that deeper dimension in yourself, you will always feel that something really vital is missing in your life. Even though you may have achieved many things on what I call the surface reality, the surface level of your life.

Maybe you have recognition, maybe you have wealth, you can buy whatever you like. And yet, you will notice there's something that seems is still missing a certain underlying dissatisfaction or discontent. It may not be there all the time.

But it always resurfaces. And many people, I've met quite a few people who have achieved fame and fortune. And they all told me that after a while after the initial elation of being suddenly wealthy or famous, recognized as important by the world.

And soon, the old discontent came back, a sense of insufficiency, also to do with fear. So no matter what you achieve on the surface level of life, if you haven't found that deeper dimension to who you are, your life is not really fulfilled. And there's so much frustration.

The frustration that people continuously experience in life is not really to do with the imperfection on the outer level of their life, because on the outer level, things can never be perfect, or never perfect for very long. Things come and go, you lose here, you gain something there, you lose something here. So the dissatisfaction is not realizing that there is something deeper within you, that is more truly who you are, than whatever happens on the surface of your life.

That really is the spiritual dimension. And the deeper self also connects you with the underlying deeper dimension of the universe. Because just like you, what we see in this world, the universe, the world, whatever you call it, it's all the surface of reality.

Under that, and the great teachers and philosophers since ancient times have said that, realized it, there is an unseen dimension. Underneath that, there is a universal intelligence underneath all the phenomena that we experience through the senses. And you are one with that universal intelligence.

And the way to connect with that universal intelligence that underlies all the manifold manifestations of life that continuously unfold around you is miraculous. Underlying all that, there is a, an intelligence, we can call it, there are other names we can use to talk about it. But it's only in you that you can find it, you can't find it out there.

But once you find it in yourself, you recognize it out there. You can sense that that intelligence or that consciousness is in everything. So how, how do you connect with the deeper level within yourself?

It's deeper than thinking. So you can't get there through thinking about it. It's deeper than the emotions.

And yet it's always there. It's always there. And it's not that it's totally hidden from you.

It's that the thinking, the thoughts, the emotions, and the sense perceptions draw all your attention to themselves. So people are kind of hypnotized by those things, especially thoughts. So they no longer can sense the dimension of depths, because every thought really demands your attention.

And you go, you follow it with your attention. And then it leads to another thought and another thought. And every thought is a voice in the head.

It thinks, it thinks, it thinks. And you go, and you think that's your life. All the thoughts that come and talk to you about who you are and what other life is, that's your life.

They're people who they are. And continuously, your attention is being drawn into that mind activity and emotions go with it. And that's, that's the usual surface sense of self.

And it's, it's frustrating if there's nothing else. Everybody has it, has that surface sense of self, of course. But if, if there's nothing else in your life, except that, then your life is shallow.

And the spiritual dimension is missing. So here we are. Because we want to find the dimension of depths within ourselves.

And it's already here. We just need to become aware of it. How?

Well, that's what traditionally what meditation methods are for. But here, I'd like to suggest to you to just investigate without actually using any technique as such. Just investigate with your attention.

What it means to be yourself. On the most essential level. What does it feel like to be yourself?

What is that sense of self? Can you get a taste or a glimpse of that sense of self without thinking about yourself? How is it possible that you can even think about yourself and about your life and all the things that make up your life?

What makes that thinking possible? What is the prerequisite for being able to think? You need to be conscious.

If you're not conscious, you can't think. But usually, this consciousness is completely absorbed by thinking. And that is what keeps you on the surface level of reality and yourself.

So you only know yourself as defined by your mind. You then have an image of who you are. And really, that is what ego means in the way we use it.

You then have a mental image. You have a self-talk. And you think that's who you are.

Me. But there is a more fundamental sense of self underneath all that. And that is your simple sense of presence.

So I'm inviting you now to sense that there is more to you than all your thinking. What does it feel like without the thinking to be yourself? What is left when you're not thinking but you're not falling asleep?

Let's see if we can create a little gap in the stream of thinking. To some extent, me talking to you already does that. So if there's a little gap in the stream of thinking, like now, you go, and there's a moment of no thought.

But something is there. A sense of presence or aliveness, whatever you call it. So can you sense now, at this moment, that inherent, deeper sense of alive presence that has nothing to do with your personal history?

It has nothing to do with the past. It has nothing to do with the future. It has nothing to do with your situation in life or your name or your background.

It's beyond all that. So another way of putting it, can you sense that presence? You can't define it.

It has no content. It's just space. Spacious presence.

And then you know, in that you know, that you are alive without having to tell yourself that you are alive. Because the fact that you are alive is self-evident. Because you are conscious.

And to say you are conscious, even that is not absolutely correct. Because in essence, it's not that you are conscious, but you are consciousness. That strange thing or no thing, that's the essence of who you are.

And sensing yourself as that consciousness also frees you, liberates you from being completely trapped. In your personal sense of self. Of course, that's still there on the surface.

But now, you can sense that you are actually deeper than that. Now you may notice that as I speak to you, there are little gaps between words or sentences. Now these gaps are not there to hypnotize you.

Because we are here to de-hypnotize you from being totally trapped in your thoughts and deriving your sense of who you are from your thinking. It's to bring you to that presence. Pure presence.

That's so refreshing, so revitalizing to sense yourself as that pure presence. And so, these little gaps in between words or sentences as I speak are very important. Because you may notice that in those gaps, you're not thinking.

In those gaps, for example now, you are just present. And that's wonderfully liberating to sense yourself as that presence. I'd like to mention for those of you who are new to this, to be aware as you sit here and listen and watch, to be aware that I don't talk continuously right now.

There are short gaps in between words or sentences. And as part of our meditation, please just notice that there are gaps when I don't speak. Notice means pay attention.

Just note. One could even say the gaps are more important than the words. You need a certain alertness to notice the gaps.

I could say what you notice is the silence in between words or sentences. And to the mind, the thinking mind, that is something silly and absurd. Because the thinking mind is mental noise, so it doesn't know what to do with silence.

It's not high on your list of thinking minds or list of priorities. And the thinking mind says I've got other things to worry about than silence, but that's the problem. It worries a lot.

The thinking mind is not ever silent. But to find that dimension is very important in your life. I would even say the most important thing.

Now what happens inside you when you notice the silence between words, the gap? You become silent. When you notice that there is a silence, a silent space, like now, in that moment of noticing, whether it's two seconds or five seconds, in that moment of noticing, you're not thinking, but you're conscious.

And that's meditation. To be conscious without thinking. In addition to noticing the silent gap, gaps, you could also become aware that you are breathing.

The breath flows in and out. Flows in and out. So it may help you to be aware not only of the silent space, spaces, where it's only ever one space because there's only the present moment.

To be aware of the one space, the gap between words, it may be helpful while you're aware of that space, to be aware that you're breathing also, you're breathing. You feel it, sense the air flowing in and out. So there's a knowing in the background that's not thinking.

A conscious presence, but you're not thinking. It's vitally important to be able to access that dimension, not just when you sit and say, okay, now for the next 10 minutes, 15 minutes, half an hour, one hour, I'm going to do my meditation. That's fine.

It can be very helpful. But it's more important to access that dimension in everyday life. That's stillness, another word for it.

And in that stillness, you are there, but not the historical you, the person that thinks about his or her problems and fears and desires and the past and the future. It's all connected with a stream of thinking. Me and my life, think about that.

Who I am, that's defined by thinking, the judgments about myself, things I'm proud of, things I'm ashamed of, things I regret, things I'm anxious about that might happen. All that usually gives you your sense of who you are. But when that comes to a stop, there's a cessation in that stream of thinking that usually provides you with your sense of identity.

Then, now, you become aware that there is another dimension of consciousness in you that's, one could say, deeper than thinking, or one could say, higher than thinking. Awareness, presence, stillness, spaciousness. And you can sense that there is something there that has no form.

When you think about your life, your problems, your anxieties, so on, it's all form, every thought is a thought form. And yet there's another dimension in you that most people don't know about that is formless. One could say you become aware of your being, your beingness, your presence.

When there's a moment of no thought, is there nothing there anymore? Well, there is undoubtedly a conscious presence left, the light of consciousness, and that is you. More essentially than the story of your life.

That is the universe of which you are an intrinsic part, the universe becoming aware of itself. It's conscious. You are conscious.

And suddenly you know that you are conscious. You sense that consciousness, that presence. It underlies everything.

Your entire order of thinking couldn't happen if you were not conscious. You couldn't have any emotions if you were not conscious. You couldn't have any sense perceptions if you were not conscious.

It underlies everything. It's the foundation for everything. It's the one thing that is totally beyond any doubt.

Maybe your entire life is a kind of dream. It could be. So you can doubt the absolute reality of your so-called life.

What you cannot doubt, because the evidence for it is here and now and immediate, what you cannot doubt is that you are conscious. The essence of who you are is that presence, that consciousness. I want to leave aside today for our meditation the question that may have arisen in your mind, whether the brain, the physical brain, produces consciousness, or whether the brain receives consciousness like a radio receives the signals and translates them.

I would suggest the second is the case, but we don't need to explore that here now. Our session here is practical and direct. We don't need to go at the moment into abstract speculation or philosophy, although it's interesting.

The fact remains that that presence that's there is the essence of who you are. Most people are not aware of their own presence. They are only aware of what arises in that presence, in that consciousness.

Sense perceptions, the look, the hear, the touch. Thoughts and emotions. Those are the things that arise in that light of consciousness.

Welcome to another live meditation. As you look at me, or the image on the screen, or look into my eyes, feel, sense your own presence. So you pay attention to that presence without which you would not be able to perceive anything.

The prerequisite for all perception or experience is that presence. Another way of putting it, there is a, you're giving attention to what appears in your consciousness at this moment. You're giving it attention, and that attention is your presence, is awareness.

And that's more important than me looking at this image on the screen. So while I'm looking, it almost seems that I'm looking at you, and in a way I am. It took me a while, just a little comment.

It took me some time to be able to speak into a camera rather than to a live person or a live audience. Until I was able to sense the camera as a kind of wormhole, to use a science fiction term, through which I reach the consciousness that is you. Essentially, we are an expression of that one consciousness, manifesting as the person that I am right now for a little while, or the person that you are right now for a little while.

A little while could be anything from how much longer are you going to live, a few more weeks, months, 10 years, 50 years, 70 years. It's all a little while. There is an essence that underlies the entire universe, and that is sometimes in spiritual language called the one.

The oneness sounds a little bit more abstract. The one is more direct. And the one is another term for God.

So there isn't my consciousness and your consciousness, only when we use language it appears that there is such a thing, when I say I reach your consciousness. But there is only the one consciousness, appearing as this and that and that. I am that one consciousness.

You are that one consciousness. Knowing yourself as that one consciousness is spiritual awakening, is you know yourself continuously as that one consciousness. In traditional terminology that would be called enlightenment.

It really is your natural state. Potentially it is the natural state for all humans. It is our destiny to know ourselves as the one consciousness.

The one consciousness, in other words, knowing itself through you and me. Becoming aware of itself. Awakening in this dimension.

Coming more and more fully into this dimension from another dimension which is timeless. In this dimension there is time. Paradoxically one can say the timeless one expressing itself gradually, which means time, expressing itself gradually more and more in this universe, in this dimension.

So the universe is becoming spiritualized. And from the perspective of time, it takes a long time. But it is all very simple.

From where you are, it does not take time. And this realization is the realization of the timeless. The timeless dimension in you.

That is the spirit, to use an old term. There is something else to you that is the body. And there is also the mind.

They are not separate from spirit. They are expressions, limited expressions of the formless one spirit, one consciousness. And so we have the three terms, mind, body, spirit.

You know yourself as a body. You can touch the body, you can look at yourself in the mirror. You can like or dislike what you see when you look in the mirror.

You can derive your identity or a large part of your identity from what you see in the mirror. Positive or negative, good or bad. You may like what you see, you may dislike what you see.

In either case, it is possible that you derive a large part of your identity from the body. If it looks good to you or better than others, then it is a happy identity. And if it doesn't, it is an unhappy identity.

It is a very limited identity, a sense of self. A very limited sense of self, but for some people it is the main thing that they are concerned about. And then comes the mind.

So the body, physical form, that which can be seen. And the next level is that which cannot be seen, but which can be known. You know yourself, or at least the mind.

The larger part of who you are is not visible. The entire psychological self, the conditioned entity, all the thought processes, all the emotions that go with the thoughts. All the emotions that arise, come and go.

It's all the unseen you. Science, as it is at the moment, wants to reduce the unseen to that which can be seen or perceived. In other words, it wants to reduce everything to matter.

It doesn't really recognize there is anything unseen. It says, if you really look deep enough into matter, you will eventually find everything there. You will find the chemicals that produce the emotions.

You will find the molecules that produce certain thoughts. We just haven't found them yet, they say. We still don't know what a thought is, but eventually we will find that matter produces thought.

It's a by-product of what mainstream science believes at the moment. That matter, what we call consciousness, is a by-product of matter. Accidental by-product of matter.

I don't want to argue with that right now, but a time will come when we will realize that is an absurd misperception of who we are. And that the entire universe can be reduced to accidental formations of matter is also a misperception. But we can put that aside for our meditation purposes here and go to what we can verify directly within.

And you can verify that there is a lot of stuff going on inside you, thought processes that give you your sense of self. So the sense of self is derived then partly from the physical body. For some people it's a large part, for other people it's a smaller part of their sense of self.

The next step, you derive your sense of self from your mind and the emotions. Thought activity, the mental image of who you are, the self-talk in the head that you may be familiar with. The storytelling of the mind that you may know.

Me and my life. Listen to my story. And that's where it stops for most people.

Sense of self derived from the body plus the mind, which includes emotion, mental emotion. And that's what there is for most people. So you have body and mind, but where is the spirit?

Now for most people spirit is just a concept. If you go to church or temple or wherever, you may hear about spirit, you may repeat words that refer to the spirit.

But is that anything other for you than a thought in your head, just another thought that's added?

Or even one gigantic thought that controls all other thoughts? God. So far there are people in whom the mental concept of God has taken over their mind and has become the controlling thought.

And through that controlling thought they perceive everything else. They think that's spiritual. Of course what that really is, is what's sometimes called radical fundamentalism.

Actually a form of insanity. One thought has taken over and controls all other thoughts. And that is a gigantic ego.

And then you share that with other people who have the same dysfunction. And you have this gigantic collective ego. It's a form of insanity, not uncommon.

But anybody who is not yet aware of the spirit in their immediate experience partakes to some degree of that dysfunction. It might not be as gigantic and as potentially violent as the dysfunction in the fundamentalist or the terrorist. But it is a dysfunction when you only know yourself as the physical body and whatever your mind is telling you.

With all its conditioned patterns. But it's so easy to take another step deeper into yourself and also know yourself as spirit. And that's so simple as the question I asked you at the beginning of our session today.

As you look at me, can you sense that in you which is looking? And I don't mean the physical eyes. I don't mean what you are looking at.

But the energy behind the looking. The consciousness that makes the looking possible. And that is your simple presence.

I trust you are okay with stillness. To be okay with stillness you have to access the stillness within you. Otherwise it gets uncomfortable.

If you experience joy or moments of joy or beauty, aliveness, a sense of aliveness. A loving connection with another human being or a loving connection with another life form. Or if you have any creative idea in your life or anything creative comes to you.

All those things that I just mentioned imply that you have some access already to the stillness inside you. Because all those things, the joy, the sense of aliveness, the lovingness towards others. The creative impulse, the creative idea.

All that comes from that dimension in you. Now many humans have some access to that dimension. That's why they feel it's good to be alive.

And for most humans that access gets for long periods of time covered up again by excessive mind activity. And then it resurfaces again. It's not recognized usually directly for what it is.

It is recognized indirectly. So you may be aware that suddenly you feel a sense of joy and aliveness. Or you look at another human being and you feel a deep sense of connection.

So what happens there is that dimension arises. You don't recognize it directly. You recognize it as joy.

You recognize it as a loving connection or loving kindness. Or a creative impulse or a sense of heightened aliveness. Or the recognition of beauty.

You look and, oh, isn't that beautiful? And in the looking and the recognition of the beauty you may not realize that what underlies that, that which makes it possible, is that for a moment there was no thought activity. In your mind a space opened up.

That space, that is the stillness. And that is why you could recognize the beauty. Or that is why you felt the connection with another human.

Or a simple aliveness arose within you. So it comes spontaneously to you. There are some humans, quite a few, who almost never experience that opening into the alive stillness.

And their lives are truly miserable. Miserable. They may not even know that.

They may not even know that their lives are miserable. They think it's normal to be continuously immersed in the thinking. Isn't everybody else?

Now a deepening happens when you recognize that stillness directly. It may happen spontaneously in a situation. You're looking at a tree and for a moment there's no thought.

There's just the perception and the stillness in the background. So you begin to recognize it directly as the foundation for joy, for love, for also compassion, empathy with another. You can't arrive at empathy through conceptual thinking.

You cannot sense the aliveness of another human being through conceptual thinking. But only thinking needs to subside for a moment and then the sense of separation that's created by continuous thinking disappears in that moment. So I'm inviting you to enter the stillness.

Another way of putting it, I'm inviting you to stop thinking without falling asleep. That's one way, but that's not the way here. And this is the next evolutionary level for humans, rising above thinking.

Not abandoning thinking altogether, transcending thinking. Thinking can still operate much more powerfully, by the way, when it's rooted consciously in the stillness. Now if you're still thinking, this becomes boring or uncomfortable.

If it's not boring or uncomfortable, then you are in that state of freedom from thought. You may sense your presence, so to speak, the presence that you are, the essence of you. Sense it as a whole body realization.

Just a sense of presence throughout the body as you sit here. And that is a sense of heightened aliveness. And if you choose to look around, still sensing this heightened aliveness in your entire energy field, if you then look around, you see that also whatever you are perceiving feels more alive.

Even inanimate objects have a certain beingness. They are. Even a table, chair.

Even there, there is some life. They are called inanimate, which means, I suppose, lifeless. But if you look more deeply into the molecular structure of the chair or the table, you would see intense aliveness and intense movement.

So at this very moment, the universe, we could say, appearing as you experiences itself. Of course that's the truth. You are not separate from the universe.

It's an amazing thing. The universe appearing briefly as what we call a person, a cell within the totality, experiencing itself both on the level of multiplicity of life forms, which has included everything through perceptions, but also on the deeper level, the universe experiencing itself as the unmanifested underlying life. The manifested is the world of form.

The unmanifested is the formless one life. Timeless, that which preceded the Big Bang that the physicists talk about. The timeless one that did not cease to exist when the universe came into existence, but this timeless one that continues to be at the core of every life form.

That which gave birth to the universe did not cease to exist by giving birth to the universe. Exist is the wrong word because it doesn't exist. Because exist means to stand out.

Ex is out, Latin. To stand exist means to stand out, so that's all life forms exist. But the one unmanifested life does not exist because it doesn't stand out, it is in.

It is, you could say. It's being but not existence. No, everything that exists has being.

Being is at the core of each thing the unmanifested timeless one life. Don't think about this. I'm not using this so that you conceptually arrive at some conclusion, but for you to experience within yourself that this one timeless unmanifested life that precedes the Big Bang is the very cause of who you are.

And it's absolutely still. And it's absolutely alive. And it's absolutely empty and absolutely full.

And it's you. It's I. The one I.

Appearing as many I's and U's. Now you can only really become comfortable with the continuous flux of life forms that come and go and are born and die, are born and die. You can only really become comfortable with that when you are aware of the core of yourself as the timeless stillness.

Otherwise, the continuous birth and death around you is upsetting. The continuous gain and loss and birth and death and the continuous coming and going and change is no foothold. And we have the two dimensions expressed beautifully in very ancient Greek philosophy.

I may have mentioned before, Heraclitus, Heraclitus, Heraclitus, says, you cannot step into the same river twice because of this continuous flux. It's not, it's different water. It's, it's, pantare is the Greek.

Everything flows. Everything is subject to continuous change and metamorphosis. Everything around you.

He said that's the basis of his philosophy. 500 B.C. And then came another philosopher, Parmenides, I believe, who said nothing ever changes. It's all an illusion.

And he's right too. They're both right, of course. Heraclitus talks about the manifested world.

And Parmenides talks about the unmanifested one life. What the Buddha, I don't know whether the Buddha actually used that term, but I think he probably did, or whether it comes later. It's sometimes hard to tell in Buddhism scriptures whether they go as far back as the actual Buddha teaching.

The unborn is a Buddhist term, meaning that which is prior to existence, the timeless one. The unborn within you. So the wonderful thing is the heart of the universe, this vast incomprehensible thing that you see the tiniest fraction of when you look at the stars at night.

It's a tiny, tiny fraction of what's there. And even that's not just tiny because you only see a few thousand stars out of billions and billions and billions, but also tiny because of the limitations of what your senses can perceive. And the heart of it all, the core of it all, although on the outer level you seem pretty insignificant, and me, we look pretty insignificant when we see the vastness of the universe, but there is something within you that transcends the world of form.

And that is why the secret of the universe is in you. And obviously you can't comprehend it conceptually, but there's a realization there. And it's only there that there's deep peace.

That's the only place where you can find true peace. You don't have to be always a heavy person, carrying the baggage of past and a mind full of stuff. There is another way of being in this world, and that's to be the presence.

And this is all meditation. And even as I speak, you can be the presence because there's nothing to think about. What I'm saying is so simple that you cannot figure it out by thinking about it because there's nothing to figure out.

You can't work, what is he saying? He's saying exactly what he's saying. You can't say, oh, I'm trying to understand what he's saying.

There's nothing to understand. Stepping out of thinking does not involve further understanding through thinking. That may be a little insulting, particularly to those of you who are highly educated and identify excessively with the content of your mind.

That thinking is not the highest faculty in a human being. And that is a revolutionary statement that not many people in the mainstream culture would agree with because all they know themselves is as thinking entities. But once you discover that thinking is not the highest because you've touched something, a dimension in yourself that's beyond thinking, that is an evolutionary leap.

If you fall back into thinking, for a moment you've leapt like the first fish trying to leap out of the sea because they say life has developed in the sea and trying to crawl on land. That is you stopping thinking. And then it gets too difficult and the fish gets back into the sea.

There's a common belief that when you meditate your eyes need to be closed. But they don't need to be closed. It's wonderful to realize you can meditate with your eyes open.

Of course, what do I mean by meditate? Quite simply, being in thoughtless awareness, that's meditation. And as I speak and as you listen, you can be in thoughtless awareness.

Just a presence. Why not? You don't have to be always a heavy person carrying the baggage of past and a mind full of stuff.

There is another way of being in this world and that's to be the presence. And this is all meditation. And even as I speak, you can be the presence because there's nothing to think about.

What I'm saying is so simple that you cannot figure it out by thinking about it because there's nothing to figure out. What is he saying? He's saying exactly what he's saying.

You can't say, oh, I'm trying to understand what he's saying. There's nothing to understand. Stepping out of thinking does not involve further understanding through thinking.

That may be a little insulting, particularly to those of you who are highly educated and identify excessively with the content of your mind. That thinking is not the highest faculty in a human being. And that is a revolutionary statement that not many people in the mainstream culture would agree with because all they know themselves is as thinking entities.

But once you discover that thinking is not the highest because you've touched something, a dimension in yourself that's beyond thinking, that is an evolutionary leap. Even if you fall back into thinking, for a moment you've leapt like the first fish trying to leap out of the sea because they say life has developed in the sea and trying to crawl on land. It's you stopping thinking.

And then it gets too difficult and the fish gets back into the sea. But that analogy, of course, we need to forget now because it's not going to take us several million years as it took to the fishes before they could start walking on land and if that whole story is true, who knows? It doesn't matter.

So as you might have noticed, what I'm talking about is very simple because I'm simply guiding you into presence, that's all. But more important than the words is what's behind and in between the words. And we could call that spaciousness or we could call that stillness.

Doesn't matter what you call it, but you become more aware of the spaciousness than the words and the spaciousness is within you. It's there at the moment the stream of thinking subsides and there's only the presence left. If your mind still tends to interfere and take you out of presence, allow the body, your body, to participate in the meditation so that you become present with every cell of the body.

Every cell of the body becomes present. Now somebody might say, please explain what you mean by that. No, I won't.

It's too simple for that. Just sense the aliveness in your body. Anywhere where you can feel it first is fine, the hands or the legs or the feet.

And then the entire energy field that pervades the body becomes part of presence. And at first it seems that you, the consciousness, are observing the inner body feeling. But if you go into it more deeply, you realize that there's no longer a subject-object relationship between you, the presence, and the feeling of the inner body.

You, the presence, and the feeling of the inner body merge, and the totality of that becomes the state of presence. So it's no longer an observer and the observed. There's a merging of the observer and the observed.

So it means the entire being becomes aware. And that's a lovely state. Peaceful.

And then it's fairly easy not to drift off into thinking tomorrow's breakfast or next week's problems or last year's disappointments. And many other things that thinking is concerned with. My problematic life.

Somebody, perhaps it was Carl Jung, I'm not sure, said you cannot solve the problems of this world on the same level of consciousness that created the problems. So you can't solve your personal problems, which everybody has, unless you rise to a different state of consciousness, which is why we are here. And when you solve your personal problems, that a sufficient number of humans do that, then that will affect the world problems.

And that's how truly you can change the world, or to put it more accurately, how that change can happen through you. It's not you, the doer, who is going to change the world, but it can happen through you. In the meantime, there's nothing wrong.

In fact, it's wonderful to alleviate suffering where you see it in this world, where you feel called upon to help in your immediate environment or elsewhere. That's a wonderful thing to do. But the causal level of the world's problems lies in the collective consciousness or unconsciousness of the world.

And that is the only place, the consciousness, where deep and permanent change can happen, so that eventually you don't need to help other humans anymore. They don't need your help anymore. You can just commune joyfully with them.

So you deal, of course, with the effects of unconsciousness in this world. There's a lot of suffering, physical and psychological. And your focal point, even as you help others, your focal point needs to be this shift in consciousness.

So the entire body is meditating, so to speak, is present as you sit here. And you can now perhaps easily verify the effectiveness of a meditation question that was one of the favorite meditations of Ramana Maharshi, the Indian sage, and that was the simple question, who am I? He said, just ask yourself that question and go deeply into it and then see what happens.

Who am I? And a little hint, I don't know if he gave that hint, the answer is not in words. The answer is, let's see if it comes to you, who am I?

And you need to be, of course, alert and still after the question has been asked so that you can find out, who am I? I'll give you another hint, you can't think about it. Then you get confused.

And then you will say, either you'll say, of course, I'm so-and-so, of course, then you're certain, but you're well below the answer. Or you say, I don't know, I'm so confused now, you're confusing me. That's because you're trying to find an answer through thinking.

Who am I? What remains is just an alertness, an alert space. That's consciousness, let's call it your consciousness, but it's not yours.

That's your consciousness minus the content, minus forms. Who am I? And if you had, if somebody were forcing you to give an answer in words, the truthful answer would be, I don't know.

Because it is not through any word or concept that you can know who you are. So on the level of words or concepts, you have to say, I don't know. And yet there is undoubtedly a presence there that has no name and has no content and has no past and no future and no problems.

Totally intangible, formless, this was what Jesus referred to as the kingdom of heaven. Heaven, the vastness of sky, heaven and sky in some words are the same word in some languages. He had to find some kind of word to describe the spaciousness of that inner state.

So he called it the kingdom in modern terminology, the dimension or the realm of vastness or spaciousness. But it's not the outer spaciousness, it's the inner. But of course, all words refer to outer things.

The kingdom of heaven is within you. And that's why, as it has no content and no form, God called it emptiness. This is a question about unconscious people in group situations that draw others around them into their negativity.

I've seen this, especially in meetings at work. Yes, that is very common. It happens even at church meetings.

And meditation centers, when you go to a committee meeting, Center for Inner Peace committee meeting. I'm not referring to anything. I don't know if there's a Center for Inner Peace.

If there is, please excuse me. I'm sorry. What do you recommend that would help change this situation?

And while it is happening, is there something I could do or say in the moment with this person to get the meeting to a more constructive place? Yes. I cannot specifically say what you could do or say, but the most important thing is that you don't react to the unconsciousness in the other, because that's the easiest, the most seductive thing is that reactivity arises.

And the moment you react with negativity, even saying, why don't you just shut up? We are fed up with listening to you. And we'll see what happens.

If you can be free of reaction or rather reactivity, then something is possible. If you react, you are being drawn into unconsciousness and the same level as the person you're reacting to. So in other words, you become what you are fighting against.

And this is not uncommon. There are ways in which you fight against unconscious people or people. They might do things that look evil, but of course it arises out of unconsciousness and the fight without you knowing it, gradually you are at the same level as those people.

So that's very, can happen very easily. So let's come back to the meetings. So to be intensely present is so that your state of consciousness is one of intense presence as you look around the room.

So in intense presence, there's no reaction. And you see everything for what it is. You don't personalize the unconscious behavior of another person.

You don't say what a dreadful person that is. No, it's not a dreadful person. It's just human unconsciousness in action.

A manifestation of the current evolutionary stage of the majority of humans. That's all, nothing personal about it. Manifestation of the current evolutionary stage of most humans' consciousness.

Nothing personal about it. Oh, well, that makes it perhaps a little easier, but you don't have to tell yourself even that in order to be present. You're just present and you feel go into the body so that every cell of the body is alive with presence and you feel the aliveness in every cell of the body.

Because otherwise the body and the emotion that lives in the body will react to this person's emotion. It'll come from there if it doesn't come from the mind. Be in the body.

The body's your anchor for presence. And there you are as a point of presence in this room. And whether or not you say something or what you say or what action you take, I don't know because it can only come out of presence.

Or whether you say anything at all, or whether you just totally ignore this level of discourse that the other person is involved in and just continue presenting the situation, what we need to look at. In some cases, you completely ignore. In other cases, you might address this person and speak to the sanity that's hiding somewhere underneath the insanity.

You might address that, that might work. We don't know, but you will know what the right thing to do is or if there's anything to do in that situation. But it's vital to be absolutely present, especially in the presence of very unconscious people.

Sounds a little contradictory. I'm using presence in another sense. When very unconscious people are around you, then it's extremely important to be highly present so that you don't get drawn in.

And then something can happen. The situation can change. And so you represent a different level of consciousness there.

You can probably even, I'm saying probably because I have little experience with it, you can probably even do it on the internet because the internet is full of things that have come out of very unconscious minds. And so it is sometimes possible to just give your contribution as a conscious contribution that will contrast with all the unconscious, very negative or aggressive contributions of people, what they have said. Someone says something that is, and a few people will respond to that and it might make some difference.

So you're never attacking anybody, of course, in any statement that comes out of consciousness. There's never, you're not attacking anybody. You might rectify a lie.

You might rectify something that's totally false. That's a different matter. In extreme cases, of course, if the entire room becomes wildly unconscious, you may have to remove yourself and you will find the right, when the moment comes, you'll find your body is getting up and you find yourself walking to the door.

And it could even be that you never return to this office. If you live in a very unconscious business environment or office environment, then it may be a place where no matter how present you are, there's not much that you can do. Perhaps we can affect one or two people, but if the entire, the collective energy field, because a company is also a kind of a collective entity consisting of all these humans, and if the majority or all of the humans are deeply unconscious, then you have a company structure that is deeply unconscious.

And the company has its own, is more than the sum total of the parts that make up the company. So it almost has its own ego identity. A company is an ego too.

Even a nation has an ego identity. So a company has an ego identity too. And it can do bad things that the individual human, although they are unconscious, might not be capable of doing if they were acting on their behalf, on their own behalf.

But if they are drawn into identification with the, I hinted at that yesterday too, last night, I believe. If they are identified with the collective, insane collective ego structure, then humans are capable of atrocities that as individuals, as individual egos, they would not be capable of. And this applies, for example, also to cults and sects where people within the cult and sect, people are very honorable and helpful and loving to each other and give up their personal ego, but they have exchanged their personal ego for the collective ego.

And the collective ego, with reference to the outside world, is insane. So if you are in a totally insane environment, you may not, your presence may not be enough to bring about much change there. So there are certain environments that it is better to remove yourself from.

But there too, it's good to be, just to be present because then you don't have agonizing decision-making involved in should I stay in this company or should I not? For security, I should stay because it offers some kind of security. But of course, I'll be happy for the next 22 years until I retire.

Am I going to stay in here and be happy for the next 22 years for security and for my pension that I'm going to get afterwards? No. No.

I'm not. I'm not staying in an insane environment for the sake of delusional security because it's not even security because in 21 years' time, your whole pension fund will have collapsed anyway. I forgot to say hello to all the people who are watching us in different parts of the world.

And what parts of the world? I don't know. Or maybe you're in an office building right now watching this on your computer when you should be doing something else.

But of course, that's what the company says. But you know that you're doing exactly what you should be doing. Adversity is a wonderful opportunity because adversity forces you to go deeper.

Are you able to dig and find the foundation within yourself that frees you from fear? Certain actions take place. You do things.

You know they're not the optimal things to do, but you can't help it. It's something that acts through you. There seems to be some power there that makes you do things that you know are not right or not good for you, and yet you can't stop it.

That seems to be the case. And that, of course, is often the case with people who are... With you it might be many different areas of your life, but this is also the case with addictions, for example.

People who are addicted to a certain substance or who are addicted to eating too much or drinking. There's something that overpowers them in you that seems to obscure the awareness or the awareness is pushed to the side and this powerful thing does it anyway. And again, my answer is a little bit similar to what I said to the first questioner tonight.

The power of presence needs to grow in you so that it is strong enough not to... It's not willpower because willpower is not the best way of dealing with these things, but it's... What I'm talking about could sometimes be confused with willpower, but willpower includes the application of a force to hold something down.

Let's say if your addiction is to have a... to indulge in intoxicating beverages, then... and you can feel it, it comes on, there it comes, you know the bottles are there, there they are, and you feel you have to go there and you have to reach out and you have to pour yourself a drink.

Now, when you're not aware at all, you don't even know what you're doing, you're so unconscious that you're already holding the drink and you're drinking, then at that point you don't even know that you're drinking. The same with food. I've spoken to people who have had addictions to food.

They often say they wake up, they've already eaten in the middle of the night, they've already unconsciously gone to the fridge, taken out the chocolate cake, and they're already halfway through the chocolate cake and suddenly they're like, they hold an urge down that say, they have to pull, or even the example you gave, you want to turn on the TV and you know it's not right because I'm not here for that and he actually told us not to do it. But I can't help it. I have to go.

Now, willpower, you would say, I'm going to hold this down, I'm not going to do it. And I can feel the urge, but you're holding it down. When you hold things down, often after a while an explosion happens.

It's like a boiling kettle. Can't hold it for that long and then you have some kind of rationalization in your mind. But you do it anyway.

The mind will give you a reason. I spoke to a man who was addicted to food and his body was very unhealthy, he was extremely, dangerously overweight. Unfortunately he's passed away, but he was a wonderful man and he talked to me and often before he goes to indulge in excessive eating, his mind would say something like, you've had a rough day, you really deserve a treat.

It explains why it's the right thing. I'm not going to do it for much longer, but just today I really need a treat. Life hasn't been treating me but it's the only pleasure I have.

What should I do? It's all I have. There's no other pleasure in my life.

I'm going to the fridge. Listen, I attempted to be able to show him that this thought is a deception and I had a little bit of success, but unfortunately it was too late to save him. Well, he is no longer in the body, but that's okay.

He probably reincarnates now into the opposite perhaps in order to learn a lesson. Again, what I said to the first questioner, to practice presence power when you're not particularly tempted by anything and you're just in your room there's no particular temptation, go into the body, feel the body, feel the inner body, be aware, be present. When you sense perception, I recommended that practice.

Sense perception, feel the presence pervading every cell in your body, the inner body awareness and so that there's enough presence for when this impulse comes, you use it as, don't say go away or something like that because it won't go away, it'll do it anyway. The impulse comes, whatever it may be, and you observe, you realize it's not a good thing that it wants you to do and if there's enough awareness, use it as every time an impulse of that kind comes, this is your special spiritual practice. So instead of wanting to get rid of it, welcome when an impulse comes and see that this is a spiritual practice specially designed for you.

Of course it is. And so how do you transform this into spiritual practice? First you realize this is an opportunity for practicing and the first thing you could do is you practice delaying, obeying the impulse, not obeying it immediately but delaying it and you observe then, let's say when you wanted to go to the TV and turn the thing on or you feel the impulse or say okay, here's my next spiritual practice, I'm now going to delay the turning on of this show on TV for three minutes and during those three minutes you observe this, the impulse in you, you observe, it's an energy form and you observe it, oh there you are, there you are, hmm, do you feel it? It's like a little gremlin or something. And so this time gap can be a very useful first practice that you introduce a time gap before you give in and so you're not saying I'm not going to give in, no you say three minutes, during those three minutes I'm going to observe you and you shine the light of consciousness, the light of awareness on this impulse which is an energy form and it can be an energy form that is in you as a kind of emotion, it can also dangerously invade your mind and make you, the explanation I gave just now to a friend of mine, the thought comes into your head that explains why you should give in to this impulse that can happen easily and there too you need to be present enough, sufficiently aware so that you do not believe in every thought, especially those kinds of thoughts, you don't believe in every thought that comes into your head, you observe the thought because the thought is part of it and even to the thought you say oh there you are, there's the thought and there's the feeling behind the thought and you set aside three minutes during those three minutes you observe isn't that interesting, wonderful spiritual practice and while you observe you grow in consciousness, you apply consciousness to it, only three minutes, three minutes and after the three minutes see how you feel, it may have dissolved but probably not yet, it's still there and then you can see can I do another two or three minutes, am I strong enough for that, is my awareness strong enough and yes it is, don't believe, stop this nonsense, do it anyway and so you achieve five or six minutes and then what happens after that we don't know, it is possible that the impulse has receded, gone back to a dormant state and you suddenly you don't have to do it, it's also possible that the impulse has receded is still there and you cannot, after five minutes there's not enough awareness left and you have to go and do it but at least the five minute interval the time gap was very important and anything like that happens you always introduce a time gap for your spiritual practice during which you do not hold it down but you observe it so you don't push it down you observe, oh there you are so if it's a gremlin you don't say hold you down there's a gremlin you look at it there it is, oh now the interesting thing when you apply awareness to something the possibility of transformation is also there it arises as you shine the light of consciousness on it this is the famous example from fairy stories and so on the frog you don't kill the frog or do something with it you kiss the frog and the moment you kiss the frog it turns into the prince so the frog stands for this is like mythology there's some wisdom embedded in these fairy stories which by the way many of them were not created by the people who wrote them they were already orally transmitted over long periods of time so they are mythologies that often contain a lot of wisdom and there's certainly a lot of wisdom in kissing the frog which then turns into something beautiful so there's something ugly but you give it you give it an acceptance a love, you look at it and then transformation happens so that is the spiritual practice and after a while you will find that initially perhaps after the time gap you still do it but the time gap gets longer and then you may observe that the energy behind the impulse weakens and it subsides until next time but gradually it weakens and all these self-sabotage mechanisms then begin to gradually disappear if you apply the awareness to it observe them, there it is so think of the frog these are all the frogs there are gremlins, frogs that live in you as energy fields and the energies are trapped there they are not in themselves bad they are trapped like the pain body is an energy that is emotional energy that's trapped when the pain body dissolves it's transformed into presence it's like a fire you put a log into a fire it's consumed and transmuted perhaps is the word it's transmuted into presence and here we have again the famous example in middle ages certain philosophers were very interested in alchemy alchemy was supposed to be the transformation of base metal into gold through a chemical process and the idea behind alchemy was the transformation of human consciousness they have many images and so on they could not speak and write about this openly because they would have been executed by the church at the time so they had to hide all these symbols as if it were to do the transformation of base metal into gold which were not very desirable into something wonderful and that's the alchemical process of transmutation which really is something in the human psyche there's an entire long treatise written by Carl Jung the psychologist on alchemy with countless illustrations and just fascinating things but it's all undesirable initially into awareness into consciousness so you're lucky to have that tailor designed spiritual practice for you so it's wonderful practice that's your practice it doesn't matter where you practice wherever you are in your life you practice every situation every moment and the end of fear comes with that fear being a normal human condition for most people sometimes buried under something else fear in its many manifestations nervousness tension anxiety anger really comes out of fear stress really is a form of fear all many forms of fear quite normal why? that's all you know that's fear you don't know that once you know that also it's the end of fear because there nothing can be destroyed that's why the Course in Miracles starts which is all you need to know the prologue the first before it all starts it says this course can be summarized in the following words nothing real can be threatened nothing unreal exists herein lies the peace of God nothing real can be threatened and that is here because nothing unreal ultimately exists in the world of form the form is ultimately not real in itself nothing unreal exists herein which means knowing that lies the peace of God God of course is the formless, timeless, eternal, unmanifested that is both within and beyond the world and some of you as I mentioned earlier are able to step out of their mind and you can practice that through a conscious choice be present nothing to think about right now just be present you don't carry your you don't carry your history with you when you are present your life situation I use that word in Power of Now very important your life situation everybody has one past future relationships job, health finances where you live what happens to you and all your life situation you have a life perhaps you are here with you have a life situation of course you do but you also have it's not that you have a life you are life itself and when your life situation is all you know about yourself which is another way of putting that's all you know then you miss life now you are very good at dealing with your life situation but you miss life you do all the right things but it never really gets you anywhere because you miss life life is now and life is not in the doing life is in the being now step out of thinking into alert stillness if you can and also another way is not to completely believe in every thought that comes into your head realize it's a thought it's a position it's a judgment not completely identified with it it's a story that you are telling yourself it's amazing how many stories people tell themselves in their head but many are completely distorted it's not the reality it's the story it's how you see the reality the reality usually is much more simple and more benign than the story one of the early lessons in A Course in Miracles says you are supposed to look at things around you in the room and say nothing that I see in this room means anything this table doesn't mean anything this glass doesn't mean anything this hand doesn't mean anything this floor doesn't mean anything now what does that lesson mean? it doesn't mean anything what it means is it's attempting to erase the continuous conceptualization of reality like scribbling on a blackboard because whatever you think it means is a concept in your mind and if you deny the continuous and compulsive conceptualization of reality it's like erasing the conditioning of your mind and coming to the place where the Dalai Lama is don't know so this lesson in A Course in Miracles all it's teaching is to come to the place of spacious emptiness alertness not no longer trapped in conceptual thinking doesn't mean anything and of course that's another you're moving into a different dimension by living in this way it's just you inhabit suddenly life opens up and all the narrowness that the mind had imposed on it dissolves and life becomes spacious because you found the space within there's suddenly a spaciousness to life not a threatening place anymore what's life going to do where's my next threat coming from and again the same thing for example there's an entire spiritual teaching based on denying the reality of your story and Byron Katie's teachings is based on the simple fact of denying your story how do I know do I really know that this is true no I can't really know that so you get to get to the same place where the Dalai Lama is don't know so it's a wonderful thing if you can enter that not knowing and then but it's only not knowing from the viewpoint of the conceptual mind you're actually connected with a deeper intelligence unconditioned and if you really need to know something it comes but it comes out of the spaciousness of not knowing well it's a little bit like jumping off a cliff and then seeing if you can fly to the ego it's a little bit like that the ego says don't go there because the ego has worked it all out it explains the whole it has its philosophy of life it might be very defective limiting philosophy but it has some kind of philosophy of life every person has their story through which they interpret reality and usually it's a it's not a pleasant work of fiction but at least you think you know it gives you some illusory foothold and of course the ego thinks if I let go of that I won't know anything anymore which in a way is true but not completely true in a deeper sense you only let go of a distortion of reality created by the conditioned mind which is part of the collective human mind in its present state of evolution and so the collective mind of which your mind is part has created this human made world which is full of problems and they seem to be they pop out one after another when you think one thing is better now suddenly oh god now it's the economy and then it's that and then it's that another war what has happened through the gradual evolution of thinking is that now humans tend to overthink there is a lot of not only unnecessary thinking that generates unnecessary and in many cases non-existent problems such as when you lie awake at night in bed and start worrying it generates a lot of unnecessary unhappiness so people don't realize that a significant part of the unhappiness in their lives is actually generated by unnecessary negative often destructive mind activity and they don't even know it mindfulness is first of all discovering the simple fact that there is a voice in your head that continuously comments on your life or on what's happening around you it's the self-talk everybody knows what the self-talk is in the head you talk to yourself sometimes you talk to yourself in the first person I some people talk to themselves in the second person you so you can get annoyed with yourself and then you say you shouldn't have done that and then you have another thought that says yes but I couldn't help it and you might even get a third voice coming and whatever it says why can't I why can't I get out of my self-talk that self-talk too but it's an amazing first thing what I call the first awakening spiritual awakening is something very basic and something very simple it's a discovery that there is a voice in your head that always talks talks to you but mostly silently if it talks out aloud then you're continuously and there's nobody around then you're considered insane but and that's only if it's loud but most people have that inside their heads and they are not considered insane it's considered normal but there's not such a big difference between the two and sometimes when you when you listen to there might be a man walking in the street muttering and you say oh he's really insane but it might be that you are doing the same but it's just not out aloud it's in your head why didn't I I should have said that why didn't I say that next time he does it I'm not exactly know what I'm going to reply and it goes on and on or you lie awake at night and start worrying you wake up and what happens oh my god what's going to happen what if that doesn't work and if that goes wrong and what if he does that and on and then you go into you get drawn one thought leads to another thought and another thought oh my god and then the body the body cannot distinguish between an actual reality an event that's happening in the real life and what your mind is saying so when you have fearful thoughts the body reacts to every fearful thought but the and that's an emotion the body reacts with an emotion the emotion you feel in your body the body cannot distinguish between an actual event and a thought so when you think fearful thoughts the emotions you feel are the emotions that are saying I am in danger there is an actual danger here so you feel the emotion of fear anxiety you might you might you feel agitated and it's not it's not only not pleasant if you indulge in that kind of useless dysfunctional destructive thinking year after year after year it has its effect on the body and it decreases the ability of the body to have the energy to fight disease even mainstream medicine is discovering the connection between your state of mind and your state of health and so gradually we are seeing in the past they denied it completely they only looked at your body and not only at the they not they not didn't just look at the totality of the body even within the body they just looked at one particular symptom what's wrong with that particular organ and you have of course in mainstream medicine you have specialists I'm a specialist for the liver a specialist for this and this and that not only not taking into account the totality of the body but more importantly not taking into account the totality of the person which includes the physical body and the mind so it's vitally important to discover first of all that there is a voice in your head that indulges in self-talk most of the time and for many people interestingly enough that self-talk for many people is not always negative but for many people it is more negative than positive a good event that happened yesterday a nice you might have gone to a nice reunion or you went out into nature and you witnessed a beautiful sunset okay you can remember it today and think that was a beautiful sunset or we had a nice talk yesterday but you can't do that much thinking about a nice event but the mind when there's something negative that happens yesterday somebody offended you or didn't give you the attention that you needed that you wanted from him then you can start thinking of how oh my god what he did he's really next time he just said I'm going to say that or he's really sure why doesn't he you can go on for a long time dwelling on something negative much longer than dwelling on something positive seemingly a negative event is much more food for useless mind activity than a positive event and this is why for many people a significant percentage of their mind activity is negative for some people it is almost 100% negative but it is unlikely that these people would get a job in this company and I mean that because the your predominant state of consciousness your predominant mental emotional state there's a certain correlation between who you associate with where you find yourself and even what kind of things happen to you there is a correlation which is not always immediately recognizable but there is a correlation between one's a person's predominant mental emotional state and who they are with who their friends are what where they work and even what happens to them so if you are in a very negative state a long time you tend to attract also negative events but you can only have to find that out for yourself I'm not saying believe me I know it from my own life because when I first discovered this I was still very young I discovered that there is a correlation between my mind activity and what happens to me I found a I found a book that somebody several books that somebody left with us when I was 17 and there for the first time I read about a person's mind and I suddenly realized my mind was predominantly negative because I was a very unhappy child and so my childhood was not pleasant and so the initial conditioning of my life was that my mind was continuously commenting and saying how bad my life was and whenever something bad happened to me I had a phrase that would occur again in my mind that of course bad things always happen to you don't they they're bound to happen to you it always happens to you so I was talking to myself and saying that bad things would always happen to me and they did so you can discover first that the spiritual awakening is to discover that there is continuous mind activity and for some people it's the discovery that a significant part of their mind activity is negative but the vital thing is to discover that there is this continuous talk in my head which is considered the normal human state and of course you cannot abolish thinking of course there will be thinking but the question is is there an awareness behind the thinking if you can become aware that you are indulging or caught up in that useless mind activity and you suddenly become aware of perhaps certain repetitive thoughts that tend to recur in your mind again and again you might see it in others too more easily especially in others when you go for your Thanksgiving dinner I think is it next week you will meet your family members or relatives and some of you may realize you already know what they are going to say this year because it's the same thing they said last year and five years and ten years ago and if they have negative judgments about you or somebody else then it's the same thing you will hear again next week when you go to them so it's easier to see how others are caught up in repetitive thought forms not as easy to see it in oneself this is why there's a saying that self-knowledge is the most difficult knowledge it's easier to see others but if you can discover even in the midst perhaps in the moment of a certain thought appearing in your mind realizing oh that thought is I've had this thought for years it comes again and again and again and so there is an observing presence from there and that observing presence isn't a thought it's just the ability to realize that there is a voice in your head and that there are thoughts and you realize that some of those thoughts are negative and many of those thoughts actually are not only unnecessary but make your life very difficult such as worry so most people live with what I call a cluttered mind a cluttered mind means they are completely unaware that there is a continuous stream of mental commentary and wherever they meet somebody and immediately certain judgments form and everything they feel they need to immediately adopt a position towards it immediately say I'm against it I dislike it so immediately adapt a mental position and being identified with one's mental position which is a thought and a few more practical tips so that you don't get distracted too much while you take your attention more deeply while you're here take your attention more deeply into being or into attention itself purely practical don't turn on the TV in your room please I have not installed hidden cameras to check on you second limit your interaction the interaction with your devices if you cannot eliminate interaction with your devices completely and I understand that you may not survive if you do at least put aside just maybe once a day 15 minutes when you check your whatever it is that comes through whatever text email Facebook Snapchat Tinder it's all very important but there's something more important and that's why you're here if you so now let's see I suggest to you that you make an agreement with yourself that not to go there unless any more than is absolutely necessary and I mean if you occasionally you have you get it out and to take a photo is okay but also don't interact with things around you only through imagining what it would look like as a photo on your phone and then say okay I'm going to fully experience this beautiful thing when I get home and look at my photos in the meantime I'm more interested in taking this photo because that's what the as a species that has developed out of homo sapiens a branch species called homo touristicus and they they walk around continuously with either camera or things but then you see them every day they come in buses and then in the evening the homo touristicus goes home mostly and then you are left here and you might notice it becomes quite still outside at this time and the days are very very long here you may find it unusual if you come from a more southern place there's still daylight around even at 1030 there's still light in the sky so and then it becomes very still here so you can walk along the lake or just wherever you are and just become aware of that that surrounding stillness and as you become aware of the surrounding stillness of course you become still yourself and if you are still it means you are not thinking or very little thinking and it means you are aware it means you are present it means you are living through the deep eye so use nature that is around you live through the deep eye and during the daytime if you're walking and there's lots of there's a long weekend here and tomorrow is a holiday in Canada here so there's more tourists homo touristicus than usual and if you get upset by the fact that there's so many tourists walking around then you just practice this beautiful spiritual practice of acceptance of the isness of this moment and immediately you become still too without needing external silence complete acceptance of this moment including the tourists and you're still oh I don't know how tourists will develop in the future as a species in Thailand in just near Bangkok somebody they interviewed some near Buddhist monastery they interviewed some farmers and farm workers they would give food to the monks that's the tradition in Buddhism in Thailand in the south Theravada tradition of Buddhism the monks come with their begging bowls every morning they just stand there and then the local people come and put food they're dependent it's done on purpose there's a wisdom behind it on the western they would say why don't they work for a living it's the monks stand there with their begging bowls and then the poor people who hardly have enough who hardly have enough themselves they come and put some food a bit of rice whatever in the begging bowls and the monks just stand they don't say thank you because it's a privilege for you to give food to the monks that's part of the tradition so the westerners interviewed the farm workers they said why do you give your food to the monks when you have so little yourself and they began talking to each other well because we want a better incarnation next time so we are accumulating merit so next time we come we are born into a better condition and then the westerner asked so what do you want to come back as in your next lifetime and then they talked amongst each other and finally the agreement was we want to come back as tourists because they observe these people like they are they are out of their step out of their buses they're well dressed and some are obviously so privileged that they are quite big bodies which means they have plenty of money they can eat as much as they like so that's a great thing and then they do all kinds of things they they seem to have sex all the time and so it's a great thing wouldn't it be great in my next lifetime spend my whole lifetime as being a tourist they don't realize it would be a dreadful nightmare oh yes one more practical thing intoxicating beverages there's no prohibition here on anything there's just a recommendation and that is to refrain as much as possible from intoxicating beverages if English is not your native language it means alcohol refrain as much as possible from intoxicating beverages however if you cannot enjoy dinner without a glass of wine then you can have a glass of wine one glass of wine would not unduly interfere with the arising presence in you but two might and three will unless you're really already deeply engaged in presence deeply rooted in presence in which case you wouldn't even want to drink too much and you certainly wouldn't get drunk so as little as possible I recommend none at all alcohol would be great but since everybody here is spiritually advanced if you do have a glass of wine you will not be judged I'm not one of these spiritual teachers who are very unconventional ways of teaching for people I know of two or three that did that they give their students as much alcohol as they want and said drink drink up in order to observe if they can stay conscious even while they are intoxicated a very questionable practice but I won't do that here with you I think one or two are feeling sorry now so we've talked about the distractions on the external level television devices intoxicating beverages or other intoxicating substances I would advise against it at least here and never indulge even when you are not here as you probably know I've already mentioned I tried it a couple of times I have to because people ask me questions about it I cannot answer if I haven't tried it it wasn't that great I prefer my normal state of consciousness it felt a little bit almost oppressive but I can see a person who is tortured on a daily basis by their mind it can be a relief to have a smoke but here we have something better we are not falling below thinking we are rising above thinking and that is the next step in human evolution and as you rise above thinking you don't need to fall below thinking anymore because you become liberated from your mind in the dimension that is transcendent to thought so and another practice of course here is the daily moment to moment practice of um accepting the isness of the present moment just that's a powerful way of and a quick way of going beyond the surface self the egoic self which means stop complaining either internally or externally of course if there's something that needs to be changed of course you go to the reception or you make a phone call if suddenly there's water coming through the ceiling hopefully I'm not manifesting it by talking about it there's water coming through the ceiling and the mattress and you on it are getting drenched you don't say accept what is stay stay on the bed Eckhart said don't complain so that's that's not the practice but it does mean that when you finally go to the telephone and tell them what happened it's not done in a complaining manner that says how dreadful this place is how can you allow something like this to happen to me this is dreadful that strengthens the ego no you just explain what is and what can we do about it and in the meantime you surrender to the fact that you're wet so I'm not going but that's what is the dark night of the soul is a term from goes back a long time maybe goes back to the spanish mystic saint john of the cross I'm not sure if it does but it goes back a long time it describes something well the questioner seems to imply that he is he or she is going through something like this at the moment the dark night of the soul which yes I have also experienced that's a term then used to describe a what one could call a collapse of a perceived meaning in life an eruption into your life of a deep sense of meaninglessness and the the inner state in some cases is very close to depression maybe some dark night of the soul often to do with what is conventionally called depression but it is basically a sense of emptiness or meaninglessness nothing makes sense anymore there's no purpose to anything and sometimes it's triggered by some external event some disasters perhaps on an external level external rather than within the death of someone close to you could trigger it especially premature death for example if your child dies or you had built up your life and given it meaning and the meaning that you had given your life this is what my life is about your activities your achievements where you're going what is considered important and the so the meaning that you had given your life for some reason collapses so as I said it can happen if something happens that you can't explain away anymore some disaster which seems to invalidate the meaning that your life had before and really what has collapsed then is the whole conceptual framework for your life the meaning that your mind had given it and so that results in a sense of darkness a dark place but people have gone into that you're in that dark place for a while and then you emerge out of that there is the possibility that you emerge out of that you can emerge out of that into a transformed state of consciousness where life has meaning again but it is no longer a conceptual meaning that you could necessarily explain it is often from the dark night of the soul not necessarily but quite often it's from there that people awaken out of their conceptual sense of reality which has collapsed they awaken into something deeper which is no longer based on concepts in your mind a deeper sense of purpose or connectedness with a greater life that is not dependent on explanations or anything conceptual any longer it's a kind of rebirth and the dark night of the soul is a kind of death that you die what dies in the dark night of the soul is the egoic sense of self and of course yes death is always painful but nothing real has actually died there only an illusory identity now it is probably the case that some people who have gone through this transformation they have been through the dark night of the soul and they discovered that out of that a new self emerged that was a non conceptual self but a deeper being the awakened consciousness and they somehow looking back they realised that they had to go through that not everybody does of course have to go through that but some people do and they've even in some spiritual traditions they try to recreate the experience of the dark night of the soul in order to bring about a spiritual awakening and that was probably part of the so called mystery schools of ancient Greece and Egypt which were designed they even survived into Roman times mystery schools and with rituals and so on not much we don't know much about it because they were kept secret not much was written about it and in one tradition you spend a prolonged period of time in darkness sometimes even in a coffin coffin like place in complete isolation and darkness that is an attempt I would say on the part of someone who has gone through the natural dark night of the soul to recreate the experience of it in a kind of artificial more artificial way of actually experience that utter darkness where things break down and whether to what extent that worked when it's not a natural experience but a created experience for how many people that worked and actually did bring about an awakening and a collapse of the mind made self I don't know how it whether it truly worked for many people but it must have worked to some extent because the tradition went on for a very long time they are other in other forms of in mythological forms also they speak of similar things sometimes described as the the night journey in mythological tradition or also the descent to the underworld they all point to the same experience which is not ultimately negative it just seems negative when you are in it but it is part of a larger purpose it's part of a the awakening not for everyone it doesn't have to be but often it is part of the awakening process the death of the old self the birth of the true self so once you know that if it should come or if you should even be in the middle of it now you can just the more you surrender the more quickly you go through it surrender means don't judge it anymore you accept whatever it is it's your experience at this moment but as I said not everybody has to go through that for many people the awakening process starts and begins without that sometimes even after the awakening process begins it might still happen and then finally you will break through but that's fine allow life to do what it does you don't need to seek that and we don't need to recreate it in some artificial way so don't shut yourself in a dark room for days on end it's unlikely to work it's unnecessary the first lesson in the course in miracles says nothing I see in this room means anything and you're supposed to look around the room and whatever you happen to be looking at you say this doesn't mean anything that doesn't mean anything this table doesn't mean anything this hand doesn't mean anything what's the purpose of a lesson like that well that's a little bit like recreating what can happen during the dark night of the soul which is the collapse of a mind made meaning conceptual meaning of life believing that you understand what's it all about so with the course in miracles in lesson one it's a voluntary relinquishment of the human mind made meaning that is projected and you go voluntarily into saying I don't know what this means this doesn't mean anything you wipe the board clean in the dark night of the soul it collapses and in some spiritual traditions then you can actually you're encouraged to relinquish your conceptual reality and so you're then meant to arrive at the a place of conceptual one could say meaninglessness or one could say a state of ignorance where you don't things lose their the meaning that you had given them which was all conditioned and cultural and so on and you can then look upon the world without imposing a mind made framework of meaning I'd like to share with you a short passage from the Bible doesn't happen very often that I read from the Bible as part of a teaching this is from the New Testament and it is a parable that Jesus tells that is very profound and absolutely relevant to the present time so here we go everyone who listens to these words of mine and does them will be like a man building a house who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock the rain fell the floods came and the wind blew and beat against the house but it did not collapse it had been set solidly on rock and everyone who listens to these words of mine but does not do them will be like a fool who built his house on sand the rain fell the floods came and the wind blew and beat against the house and it collapsed and was completely ruined so let's understand the deeper meaning of this everyone who listens to these words and does them means obviously anybody who listens to the teaching and practices the teaching and of course Jesus teaching is find the kingdom of heaven that is within you not anywhere else in space or time find the transcendent dimension the kingdom of heaven that is within you which is a deeper dimension or higher dimension of consciousness accessible to everyone and the man that building the house is you the house is you the floods come the rain comes beating against the house of course obviously means some form of adversity you encounter as you inevitably will in your life some form of fairly extreme adversity whether it's a personal level or as we're experiencing now on a collective level now if you haven't gone deep enough because remember you are the house if you haven't gone deep enough you have not found anything beyond the conceptual thinking mind then the floods the rain the wind the adversity whatever it may be in this case we know what it is will devastate you and even if you do not fall ill or contract the virus the fear will consume you as it's consuming millions of humans at the present time and why do you fear or does what is fear fear are certain thought forms you project yourself into some future moment and you're not present because if you were present you would realize that in this moment there's nothing to fear only when you leave this moment fear arises as a thought form which then creates an emotion so what does it mean then to dig deep and to find the foundation on the rock what is that rock the foundation for the house that you are you are that house and I'd like you to take into a little meditation now in order to illustrate and to enable you to experience it first hand what it means to dig deep for a moment just become aware that you're breathing become aware of yourself not the conceptual self not become aware of your personal history or become aware of some imagined future moment but become aware of yourself as the conscious presence a field of conscious presence and thinking does not help you there thinking is an obstacle so you go deeper than thinking and you can be completely awake and present and yet with very little mind activity and that is the beginning of the realization of your deep identity what I sometimes call your essence identity and your essence identity is inseparable from the present moment it is the timeless eternal present it is a deeper dimension of consciousness than the one that you ordinarily identify with and that is the meaning of digging deep and finding that unshakable foundation that is deep within you within everyone adversity is a wonderful opportunity because adversity forces you to go deeper adversity forces you to awaken to the deeper dimension of who you are why does adversity force you because life becomes almost unbearable when you live only on the surface the surface of sense perceptions and your conceptual mind and then you listen to the newscasts and you read all kinds of things and everybody's in a state of fear that is the house built on the sand that when the floods come the wind comes the storms come the house collapses meaning since you are the house in this parable you are devastated in a state of extreme anxiety extreme suffering although nothing actually has happened yet unless you contract a disease and this is something we'll talk about next time right is the house your house the house that you are are you living on the living on the surface is your house built on sand or are you able to dig and find the foundation within yourself that frees you from fear now when things are going well it's unlikely that most humans can't be bothered with going deeper what for if things are going okay I'm looking forward to my next vacation weekend is coming up and whatever it is a nice meal is waiting for me everything is comfort zone you're in your comfort zone I've never heard of anybody who awakens in their comfort zone there's nothing wrong with comfort zone enjoy them when they're there they last for a while and then some form of adversity arises either on a personal level or on a collective level minor forms of adversity and occasionally huge forms of adversity potential calamities whether it's you could suddenly confronted with the fact of mortality some great loss serious illness on a personal level or on a collective level war civil strife civil war financial collapse invasion of your country all kinds of things can happen and at the present time we are experiencing the so-called pandemic collective adversity not affecting just one person now affecting millions at the same time and this is an invitation to go deeper because if you don't you suffer unnecessarily millions are in a state of fear and anxiety but use this as an opportunity to either awaken out of the mind identified state of consciousness that continuously project itself into the future that you have no control over it is never present this mind identified state of consciousness that's the house built on the sand avoids an opportunity to come to this realization that you are much deeper than you had known before you are forced to go deeper because you can't stand the suffering anymore the unhappiness or whatever you want to call it the anxiety and so the most vital thing in any situation is the state of consciousness with which you meet the situation and you should pay more attention to that than to the newscasts and whatever it is that you listen to and watch yes you can do that also but what is your state of consciousness that's something you can do something about is not very much that you can do about the external situation you can take precautions you can help other people to the extent to which it is possible all that's good you do all the things that you need to do and perhaps many people are now forced to stay at home and suddenly they have to you have to be on a suddenly on a private retreat at home now that's an opportunity too so use this precious time that is here because it is part of the awakening consciousness of humanity it seems almost paradoxical to say that something that on the surface looks very negative and looks like an obstacle to the well-being of humanity and yes it's an obstacle to the well-being of humanity on a purely physical level perhaps temporarily yes but something that looks like an obstacle from a conventional point of view is actually an opportunity for you to awaken to a deeper or you could say higher level of consciousness humans don't awaken when they're in their comfort zone they awaken when they are taken out of their comfort zone not everybody does it's an opportunity if you do not awaken when you're no longer in your comfort zone you suffer you're unhappy you're anxious you're fearful you haven't found the rock now the difference between this parable and actual life is in this parable the man had already dug deep and he had already built his house on the rock and then the floods came and so on and the house was unshakable in real life often it is the case that the wind the floods the rains beating against the house which means adversity arising in your life the adversity forces you if you haven't already gone deeper it forces you to go deeper and so it's not too late to start digging now in the face of adversity many of you already in the process of awakening probably most of you listening to this and what's happening to us now is a wonderful opportunity for you to go deeper a deepening of that an acceleration of the awakening so as much as possible especially whenever you feel you feel as well drifting off into a fearful state of consciousness and a fearful emotional state whenever you realize that realize that in this present moment there is nothing to fear and you have to verify this for yourself whether this is true or not when you fear something it's of some imagined future moment am I going to catch this disease am I going to die is a loved one going to catch it is a loved one my child are they going to die imagine it it could happen but it's right now it's not happening so whenever you feel yourself drifting off into fear realize okay I have lost the present moment and I and I lost myself in my mind in the thinking mind and then the emotion reflects that mind activity so the moment you notice it okay I've lost the present moment I am lost in the mind come back into the present moment a few little things are helpful be aware of your breathing be aware of the inner energy field in your body the body is alive there is an this energy this life energy that pervades the body you feel that you're breathing you feel the aliveness in the body you're aware of sense perceptions you look around you're present and then you become aware of that presence that is inseparable from who you are that presence that is inseparable from who you are that's an amazing realization there's more to you than the person that presence is deeper than the person and you had you needed the adversity either to find it or to deepen that which you had already found it but it was not not yet a deep realization so this is a time of great opportunity use it don't waste it there's a saying that goes when the ego weeps for what it has lost the spirit rejoices for what it has found so what looks bad on the surface has a an essential function I will speak to you again soon in the meantime be here be present don't lose yourself in the mind don't lose yourself in fear find and be rooted rooted in this rock that is your essence identity thank you I always have a constant fear to try new things in my life because I'm afraid of failure since my failures in my life have dominated my successes I think you mean there have been more failures than successes therefore every time the idea comes for me to learn or to try new things I freeze and my path to any kind of achievement and the ability to get in touch with my inner guidance is blocked can you please help me to get in touch with the wisdom within me fear of failure yes that's not uncommon of course it's also a manifestation of ego because the most important thing for the ego is to the result of your action it's focused more on what it wants to get out of the doing than the doing itself the most important things in a person's life is their failures because you're more important I would say than the successes your main learnings and your main transformations you experience through making mistakes and failing the successes are nice for the ego but the spiritual breakthroughs they come when you fail at something so failure is not to be feared first of all it's it often opens you up to the spiritual dimension and takes you beyond your ego if you have the courage to do it anyway but also you begin to learn what it is that is right for you to do in many cases only by trying by learning through failing at this and this and this that these things are not do not resonate with what you really want to do there was a time i was spared quite a few things in that respect but once i applied to become a banker in the city of london the city of london means financial district i had an interview at a merchant bank how could i have been so misguided to seek an interview at a merchant bank in the city of london incomprehensible the miracle is that they actually invited me for an interview the only reason being that i was at cambridge university so they said okay we'll talk to him and so i didn't get the job that was very lucky because if i had gotten the job i would have been a dismal failure and probably would not have lasted more than a few months and that would have been a wonderful learning but it got shortened for me i didn't have to go through it i realized shortly after the interview that it would have been a terrible mistake but not really terrible there was a learning there would have been a deep learning in it later i applied for a job at a university as it's called in england a lecturer assistant professor would be here they invited me for an interview and that was after i'd already gone through a shift in consciousness but wasn't it hasn't wasn't fully integrated with my personality my life so i applied for a job got interviewed by five professors around a big table and i said a few things that might have given them an indication that i wasn't really into the academic world one professor asked me at the end of the interview and what do you really want to do that was an important learning so when i walked away from there of course i didn't get the didn't get the job luckily that was a learning i said what do i really want to do and i knew it's not this i didn't know that i would become a spiritual teacher because i hadn't met this first person on the park bench yet that asked me a question so to know what what it is that you want to do you may have to try out quite a few things and fail at them and then finally find what it is that you really want to do i talked to somebody relative of mine who hasn't displayed any ambition in his life and stayed in the same job simple job for 25 years and he said to me we talked about failure and success and he said i have never failed at anything because i haven't tried anything and it's true so he was able to avoid all failure by not trying anything but it does not lead to a fulfilling life and sometimes failure means this is not for me sometimes failure means try again and you fail and you perhaps try again especially if you enjoy the doing of whatever it is that you are doing but then the result is not what you expected but you enjoyed certainly enjoyed the doing of it try again let's say you want to become a musician now the ego may have an idea it might have an image you've been to a concert halls and you saw these soloists on stage receiving applause and you say oh i want to do that says the ego but you're not really you don't really have the love for music you have the love for being a famous musician so if you then start learning then you won't be the greatest musician because the love isn't there and if you then try again you still won't succeed and you try again you still won't succeed because the entire premise is wrong you have an egoic image of you as the great the final result the final outcome of your endeavor is to be the musician on stage that's famous and is being applauded and you go that's me this is what i want to be but in the meantime you dislike the practice and if you want to be on stage as a musician you have to practice five or six hours a day and you say okay i just have to get through this because i want to succeed at being a musician and whatever it is you practice and then you get stressed and it doesn't feel good but let's say you enjoy the practice because you love the music and then you go to the conservatory to get and then they turn you down they say okay i failed but you love the music continue try again it might lead to something else or either next year they accept you at the conservatory or it leads to some other kind of music does not require the conservatory if there is a love for the doing then failure does not necessarily tell you that you should be doing something else so and whatever it is that you attempt to do the vital factor is that you enjoy the doing and not just have a mental projection of where you want to get to which is often an egoic image of yourself over there that is the so observe choose things to try out that you actually enjoy doing without having an excessive focus on the end result the so called success at the end of all you are doing that is the success is to be aligned with what you are doing so if you are practicing music you are succeeding all the time if you are enjoying the doing of it that is success not some final outcome the world is full of people well not full but there are many people who have succeeded at what they wanted and were not satisfied by their success they are still dissatisfied and unhappy because the ego hasn't found real fulfillment in it was that it? so enjoy the doing seek out things that you enjoy then success being if success is the final outcome if there even is such a thing as final then that is secondary the enjoyment of the doing is primary I met a girl I was at university and there was a girl who worked there she said I asked her she worked in the restaurant I asked her what do you want to do with your life I said I want to be a brain surgeon okay that's funny why do you want to be a brain surgeon I think is the greatest the most advanced thing that a human could do that's what I really wanted to do are you interested in biology are you interested in the in the body in medical no but she had an image of me as the great brain surgeon for some reason her ego thought this is the highest a human being can achieve to be on the working on somebody's brain so to have to project some kind of outcome and not realize in the meantime the years in between how about and it's always you're always traveling you're on a journey there's never an really an arriving even the famous musician then has to there are other challenges there don't be afraid of failure ultimately there is no failure there's only it's a it's an essential part of your learning process it's only the ego that is afraid of failure because it it has certain image of who it is thank you this mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive to be free you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation but the more grateful you are for what is the more things will come to you would really have chosen for yourself as your life purpose perhaps it's not even that great a job but nevertheless you honor it in this moment you give it attention you do your best and then it will evolve into something else

[Speaker 7] (7:03:53 - 7:03:54)
hello

[Speaker 1] (7:03:55 - 7:03:55)
hello

[Speaker 5] (7:03:56 - 7:04:11)
so unlike you with oprah i am bursting with excitement right now so thank you so much for having me and um i also just want to um give you a giant virtual hug oh thank you as i'm sure so many in the room would like to do as well

[Speaker 1] (7:04:11 - 7:04:12)
thank you

[Speaker 5] (7:04:12 - 7:05:24)
and uh my question is around manifesting uh i get twisted in my head about that because uh all my life i i have felt i have a purpose and the purpose is connected with joining and being of service and support and expansion of consciousness and i know it's out there i know that that's going to be something i'm very involved with at some point and i am familiar with manifesting and the deep knowing of you know what that is and at the same time there are a lot of spiritual teachers that talk about being very specific when you manifest something and i have no idea what it's going to look like i and i most of the time when there is something related to my deeper purpose if i try to go you know left and make that happen usually i go right though like it's the invisible hand guiding me right and i feel like well i'm not man you know what i mean so i don't really feel like i know i'm the right one to manifest my purpose because i don't know as high as my deepest self

[Speaker 1] (7:05:24 - 7:05:32)
yes so um are you manifesting your purpose in your life

[Speaker 5] (7:05:32 - 7:06:04)
well i know that it's going to be there i i in the sense that i've always had the sense you know once i retire in five or ten years or something that i'll be doing something else right that has to do with that and but i don't know if it's here i don't know if it's there i don't know what it looks like i don't know if it's working for eckhart teachings or whether it's you know working at a wellness center or participating in something i have no idea what it looks like i just know that that is my purpose

[Speaker 1] (7:06:04 - 7:06:10)
yes can you summarize my question is do

[Speaker 5] (7:06:10 - 7:06:21)
i need to be specific because all right that's so much of what the spiritual teachers that i was just listening to one recently right be specific when you manifest your purpose

[Speaker 1] (7:06:21 - 7:14:29)
yes for some people that works but it can also limit it um if uh if i had been specific i would probably have limited it sometimes the universe have bigger plans than you have and so um my first experience of manifestation which is a it's a form

of spirituality to to manifest it's important it's not the deepest the deepest is to realize the essence of who you are then you can still manifest if you want to and you'll be quite good at it but it's secondary so for me there was a kind of spiritual awakening when i was 17 years old in the sense that i had always been very very negative and um always one of the mind patterns thoughts that could go through my head was bad things always happen to me of course they always do they always and they did uh and then i accidentally came across some books that at the time i was living in spain with my dad and a german woman had gone back to germany and he left some books with us they were spiritual a teacher who is not well known anymore a german spiritual teacher with a chinese name and um i started reading these books and they were about the there's a relationship between your external life and your inner state and if you change your inner state you change your external life that was such a revelation to me i'd never heard that before and at the time i was learning to type teaching myself on a type writer they don't exist anymore to type and i remember i copied practicing typing i copied many pages of those books and then i started practicing changing my thoughts and becoming feeling good things were going to happen to me i was not very specific because i didn't know what exactly would happen i attract good things into my life i attract whatever and then a few months later shift happened i was longing to get away from the where i was living with my dad and his second wife that was as dysfunctional as his first wife my mother with the living together i need to get out of here please take me out of here and finally i got a job offer in england without an interview it was a miracle and it was a good job and had virtually no qualifications it was an absolute miracle and the and i knew that i had created i had manifested that just amazing and one of the happiest moments of my early life was saying goodbye goodbye i'm off that was so wonderful and and in england things many things developed miraculous things that could never have expected so if i don't think you need to be too specific unless there's something that you desperately want or need but hopefully since you've gone deep enough into yourself there's nothing that you desperately want or need because whatever happens on the horizontal dimension is an adding on as jesus said whatever you manifest in this external life is lovely but seek first the kingdom of heaven said all the things that you think that you need will be added on to you so what he's saying is the world of external manifestation yes you have to deal with this world and it can be a lovely practice but it's an adding on and there may come a time when you don't need to manifest anything anymore things think i've acquired a certain momentum and it's growing the i've asked some successful people did you practice this manifestation before you achieved your sex and one or two said yes yes i did one specifically said i think he's probably told about it publicly so i probably don't need to keep his name a secret but i'll do it anyway just in case well he said he had wrote himself a check for i think it was i can't remember how much it was 10 million dollars something and put it in his wallet and he always poked at it and three years later he got a check for 10 million dollars for a movie role and he got it then i asked oprah did you ever practice but he said no it just came what she does practice is a gratitude book everyday she writes something to be grateful for or several things to be grateful for it's a very powerful tool to help you be present to be grateful means an appreciation an alignment with what is so that's a powerful thing that is non specific but the more grateful you are for what is the more things will come to you if you honor honor this moment then the future the so called future which never comes except as a present moment will reflect that mindset so there are others sometimes people just start an activity which they enjoy and then enthusiasm comes in and they do more of it and more of it first on a small scale and they continue, perhaps they are musicians like the Beatles I don't think they ever thought we are going to be the greatest in the world, the greatest group that ever lived they just enjoyed the music and then they played and played and played and that's the famous 10,000 hours of practice that somebody wrote about in a book that he observed many people who achieve mastery in one field they have 10,000 hours of practice and then at that point an additional element comes in that energizes and amplifies what they do and enormous inspiration can suddenly flow in so that is a good preparation to enjoy what you do is in itself a tool for manifesting good things and even if whatever you do is not what you would really have chosen for yourself as your life purpose perhaps it's not even that great a job but nevertheless you honor it in this moment you give it attention you do your best and then it will evolve into something else but just so the gratitude journal is another thing that we would recommend to everybody but gratitude do you do that or have you done that?

[Speaker 5] (7:14:29 - 7:14:32)
I've done it but I haven't been doing it lately

[Speaker 1] (7:14:33 - 7:16:39)
but I feel grateful it doesn't have to be a journal but it's helpful however gratitude can also be misunderstood people say okay I'm grateful because my life is I have so much that other people don't have and I should really be look at other people and I have so much more in whatever better looks or more things look at these poor people I really should be grateful for what I have that's not it if you're only grateful when you compare yourself to others who have less one way or another that's not real gratitude it's not really even gratitude for some life situation the more powerful thing is gratitude for whatever is this moment the little things of this moment for this beautiful flower you appreciate it you give it attention that's all gratitude an appreciation of the aliveness of the world around you in the present moment that's so on the whole I would advocate for less not necessarily too specific in most cases it would limit you there may be exceptions to that but non-specific does work very well and often the as you know the camel driver has his plants so the camel might have much bigger plants than you and I have found the same I could not quite have imagined the growth of the teaching I had some vision it would grow but not that much so don't limit yourself and you're doing fine

[Speaker 7] (7:16:39 - 7:16:41)
thank you thank you

[Speaker 11] (7:17:02 - 7:17:05)
it's a phenomenon on YouTube

[Speaker 1] (7:17:05 - 7:22:48)
whereby people often don't say anything but they engage in seemingly pointless activities modern technology which in many cases amplifies human unconsciousness is in itself neutral so it can also be used to help in the shift to a higher level of consciousness so if you feel you a contribution may be happening through you you may want to consider using a platform and disseminate in whatever form spiritual teaching of consciousness infinite possibilities possibilities if you're too afraid to speak maybe if you feel a little inhabited in front of a camera or your phone you could just do meditations gazing meditations make sure though you're free of thought otherwise it doesn't work there's no predicting how many subscribers you will get on YouTube or if that doesn't appeal to you you could become what is known as an ASMR artist some of you may not know what that is it started a few years ago I've spoken about it a few times it's a phenomenon on YouTube whereby people often don't say anything but they engage in seemingly pointless activities that make certain noises and that require the viewer's presence it happened spontaneously it developed, somebody must have started it ten years ago or whenever and then it caught on now there are hundreds or thousands of people doing it some very successfully the good ones have a spiritual dimension to it and there is a need for it in humans perhaps don't realize it that there is a spiritual dimension and that need is to get out of themselves to transcend temporarily the person or the personality by the act of giving fullest attention to certain sense perceptions which in this case is also visual and the auditory people are encouraged to put headphones on while they watch these videos and then you have people the people who produce them they may just have something here that they have usually very

sensitive microphones and they may for example be shuffling papers for 15 minutes that make certain noises or they have a hairbrush they go or they make strange sounds with their mouth it seems very weird if it's done well it puts the viewer into the state of presence although some are actually designed to put people to sleep, so that would be the opposite the whole phenomenon is called ASMR, people claim that it produces a certain tingling sensation in their head and their back that is one phenomenon that happens, but the other that's not clearly recognized is that people become still while they listen and watch and they have a state of attention the mind there's a cessation of thinking while they watch and listen somebody produce these noises so that was just a suggestion for you

[Speaker 8] (7:23:17 - 7:24:28)
when I took the time to kind of go into me and to become silent when I started talking I first realized I'm talking slower, exactly as you said but also what I realized that my face so basically my face had been really before that it has been blocked in a sense the face muscles so when I first talked I must have done this under some kind of pressure or it was not natural it was me talking to someone but I realized the second time I said the same words basically that I could feel that my facial muscles were relaxed relaxed and no I realized that had been before so much tense and they started relaxing when I became aware of the fact that my facial muscles were tense before yes so kind of make me really realize that if one is not conscious we just run this mental thing the way we talk to people just without thinking about it and how artificial that is in a way so it's just like a machine talking

[Speaker 2] (7:24:29 - 7:28:16)
condition self yeah very good very good and that's a really good observation that you notice that your facial muscles were tense before compared to the second time and when we act from the condition mind so when we speak from the condition sense of self from the mind we do contract our whole body actually contracts and it's this almost like this squeezing and this anxiousness instead of just being you just being yourself into that relaxed awareness so Eckhart used the words intensity intensify your awareness another way to also look at it in which I teach in the presence through movement is and his is not wrong it's just a different pointer and mine is just a different pointer I use the words relaxed awareness because when we come from that still place there's something in us that just relaxes unwinds and we then communicate we be with people we be with ourselves in this kind of relaxed awareness something happens something arises the practices just to relax that body and just become that relaxed awareness so then we can make the right action from there and that right action may be no action just as when somebody was doing this when I did this exercise and with another group and they said we never even talked there was no desire to talk there was nothing drawing us out we just wanted to sit silently together so when we live from the conceptual mind habitually and it's a habit to do this just like it's a habit just it's almost like a habit to keep thinking and thinking and thinking our bodies will just go but in the moment of realizing yourself there's this Krishnamurti called it ease of being it's this ease I call it this relaxed awareness just to observe the world observe your mind observe everything that arises in this relaxed awareness it's acceptance when we accept there's no tension when we're grasping there's tension when we're wanting something when we are looking only for solutions through thought instead of going into stillness and allowing the solution to arise there's tension so really good observation thank you for sharing that

[Speaker 1] (7:28:36 - 7:50:02)
there's a sentence in I believe it's in the book the little classic by Saint-Exupery the little prince see that book and I believe it's in that book there's a lovely sentence that says what is essential is invisible to the I the I what is essential is invisible to the I now I stands for all sensory perception it's not just the visual so what that points to is that the essential reality is hiding

behind phenomenal reality and you also every one of you and myself are you can't really put a percentage on it but let's just say you are 90 percent invisible who you are actually all what we can see is the outer form of you which is a physical body that senses can see but now we can even one could cut open hopefully not your brain or whatever and look for you there on a physical level on a material level with the most powerful electron microscopes and you would not find you at all that's the strange thing that you are you are not a material physical entity all the things that make up who you are are actually invisible and they remain invisible even if you cut open your brain or other parts of your body and examine what's there including your millions of memories where do they live could you find a memory that you have of your first teacher walking into the classroom when you were 5 or 6 years old there here she is hadn't thought of her in a long time but suddenly there she is where did she live all this time in your head in what form did she live in the form of certain molecules that are the memory of your teacher would you ever find your room if you had a room or the living room of the house that you lived in when you were 8 years old I could go there I could go there and I can even touch things still and feel that's what that felt like and there was that table and that curtain where do all these countless things live in you and these are just mind forms just memories not to mention the deeper dimensions within you but even those relatively superficial dimensions of just memories are all totally invisible and can never become visible as material entities so you are and every human being is almost entirely invisible all you see is the surface shell of the body and all your thoughts science we don't even know what a thought is and how it survives in you not really so it's all invisible and you cannot find it in the sensory realm and so the same of course applies to your dog what is it that you love let's talk about human too it's surprising that there are quite a few, many people who feel more deeply attached or connected to their dog than to another human being and I'm not saying that that is bad or that should not be the case because I can see how and why that happens because being is less obscured in the dog than it is in the human in the human the being dimension depending on who it is depending on the density of your mental emotional conditioning is obscured by that sometimes you can get beyond it and you can deeply connect with a human and recognize the consciousness that you share with the other and when that happens we call it love but with a dog it's easier to do but it's important to realize that what you love in the dog is the invisible dog although the visible is pleasant it's pleasant to the touch when you look into the eyes of a dog then you can there you can sense the consciousness of the dog so what you really love in the dog is the consciousness of the dog otherwise you could have a stuffed dog or you could have one with a have a little electronically controlled dog maybe one day they will have it and it goes but it's not the real thing so with a dog you look into the eyes and next time with your next dog realize that the essence of the dog is not what you see you can sense it when you look into the eyes of the dog you can sense the invisible essence of the dog but but only if you have some access to this invisible essence the beingness in yourself and as I mentioned yesterday probably the it happens that even people who normally don't have access to that dimension within themselves they feel drawn to the dog or the cat because for very briefly the dog or cat by connecting with the dog or cat very briefly it enables this person to have a glimpse of being within themselves and this is why I don't know if there is a little book that I produced together with a cartoonist and since I have a bad memory the name escapes me at this moment and the title of the book is Guardians of Being and it's mainly about dogs but I believe there are also some cats in it and it's based on a few quotes of things I have said or written I don't remember what and wonderfully inspired drawings that go with the text I call dogs guardians of being for humans because I have a theory that millions of more humans would go insane without their dogs their mind would just they keep they provide a kind of anchor into the realm of being so the realization that the essence of the dog is invisible and also indestructible and then you still love the dog but the excessive attachment to the form of the dog might not be that strong anymore you would still be sad when the dog passes away but you won't be devastated this applies now obviously also to humans when you connect we are deeply connected with another human being one of the most difficult experiences in your life is to experience the passing away of a loved one especially if it seems to come prematurely, then that's even more difficult and therefore it is advisable that at all times you keep alive within yourself the realization that this human being is essentially a being and the human is only a very small part and this human being is essentially invisible and what you love in him or her is invisible. Love is the recognition that you share the same essence and this essence, we could call it consciousness it doesn't matter what name we give it but that's what you share you recognize yourself the essence of yourself in the other how can I balance altruism and follow my inner needs or longings brackets if they would hurt someone can you say something on how it works ego versus altruism, following your inner true needs altruism meaning selfless action doing something for others and then there are inner needs or longings that might hurt someone if they actively hurt someone they are not true needs they would be egoic needs, egoic needs sometimes actively hurt another for example unconscious behavior such as diminishing somebody else verbally in order to feel one's own ego growing people do it all the time it's unconscious so if somebody has a success or has something that you don't have the ego in its absurd sense of self feels diminished if somebody else has something that you don't have and then the ego sometimes makes a remark that is designed either to hurt the ego of that person or to diminish the value of what that person has achieved or possesses so even children sometimes do it the ego already of course at school when you listen to children talking to each other you can already often detect very clearly the ego there the sense of identity that is based on identification with things other than yourself that you take on board to enhance your sense of self and you not that you can't stop them it just is part the natural progression I would suggest is for human being to develop an ego as they are adolescents in childhood and adolescence then when they reach adulthood begin to go beyond ego so that ego becomes a symptom or manifestation of growing up of immaturity that would be we may be going in that direction but of course the way it is now it's not the case the ego continues to grow and seek to grow sometimes until you reach your death bed and then you remember the gravestone where it says I got here first so I won that's the last triumph of the ego and so listening over hearing children you can say my dad just bought a bought a BMW what car does your dad have oh he has a VW but I know someone he carries on he says but I know someone who has a friend whose uncle has a Bentley it's far superior to a BMW got him the ego says I got him ah but it's owned by VW isn't it that's a long story altruism inner needs that hurts I just gave just one small example of hurting others other egoic manifestations of hurting others would be to actually to sabotage somebody else's success or what they want to achieve to take something away from somebody to spread rumors about some bad things about another human being in order to create suffering or stop them from doing or achieving what they want to achieve so many ways in which the ego would hurt someone for its own in order to strengthen itself the illusion of itself so those are not your true inner needs they are egoic needs you need to recognize those things in yourself then there is an indirect way of hurting someone that may not be egoic for example you let's say you are a young man or woman 20 years old 19 years old and your parents or your mother or your father want what's best for you they clearly have designs on your future and your dad was a lawyer and he has a flourishing law practice and obviously you are supposed to follow in his footsteps there's no question about it and if you didn't you would make your parents really suffer of course that is indirectly inflicting suffering if you are true to yourself and your longings which are not egoic you may feel inclined towards something else there's nothing wrong with law but it's not for everybody you may feel inclined to follow a totally different path would you and some people do that in order to spare their parents from suffering they do what makes them happy it might not be your parents do what makes somebody else happy and so you are doing something that does not corresponding that does not correspond to your true inclinations desires where you want to go but you want to spare someone else from suffering now that is not the most conscious cause of action because you are condemning yourself to unhappiness and frustration you are denying those deeper things they are not egoic they arise from a deeper level of your being and you are not making these people suffer they make themselves suffer so they have to learn their lesson of letting go of expectations and if their lesson involves suffering that's just how it is another matter would be if your parents are old or there's only one parent left your inclination may be to move somewhere and do something but then there's nobody else to look after your father or mother who needs somebody that is a moral thing that you need to become very present with to see whether there is an alternative solution or whether you will give up one thing in order for the love of another human being and if you do so you would have to be total in your doing so that you are not unhappy looking after your aging parent continuously regretting that you were not able to do what you really wanted to do whatever course of action you choose you need to surrender to and do it totally these are all a lot of presence is required altruism, helping others is wonderful but it needs to come from a deep not from some mental to help somebody because in order to improve the mental image you have of yourself but to help somebody because it feels right and it feels good and you've seen the other as yourself and to give something to another feels better more often than to give something to yourself this mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive, to be free you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation the most important spiritual practice is to bring together the stillness and the doing

[Speaker 3] (7:50:02 - 7:52:17)
I can experience since a few months better the stillness in myself and but I'm not sure if this is the full experience because I don't have that oceanic feeling, I don't feel myself expand into the universe or I don't feel myself being one with you for example when at the end of your last lecture you can feel that something unites us it pretty much seems to end at about my body so I don't know if that is awakening light or if I'm simply at the beginning of the process and my second question is when I sense that stillness I usually look in I cannot combine it with looking out or perceiving what happens on the outside or speaking to someone then I lose the stillness again and you also say attention cannot be divided we do we feel the inner body or we watch our breathing in order to remove the attention from our thoughts so that the thoughts don't bug us as much and so how is it possible to clearly feel stillness yet have full awareness of the outside that's the second part sorry I have a third part that you don't have to answer but that is when I feel that stillness I don't perceive any transmission to my body is there any contact point or any point where consciousness moves the body or affects the body but that is that's probably maybe nobody knows okay thank you very much

[Speaker 1] (7:52:17 - 8:11:35)
well thank you there are a few questions there but all connected with stillness so that's the common thread stillness it's already a wonderful thing that you are able to sense the stillness which is of course the temporary cessation of thinking that's really what stillness is so a momentary gap whether it's a few seconds or a few minutes in the stream of thinking but no loss of consciousness but rather one could almost say an intensification of consciousness you're very alert but still is that what you experience yes that is what yes now the rest is the mind comes in again and is asking questions about it and it might say as it does in your case which is not uncommon the mind says is that all there is there must be more I can't quite feel what some other people talk about that's unnecessary to go there and try to figure out mentally or from somebody else to tell that there is more you should let go of that really is connected to the desire of the mind to understand the stillness that's often part of that and you cannot understand it I don't understand it understanding understanding can arise out of the stillness that is true deeper understanding of certain things arise out of the stillness but the stillness itself you cannot understand and that's the very reason why Jesus described this inner peace as I think it was Jesus or was it Saint Paul I don't remember the peace that passes all understanding this peace which is the inner peace which is stillness you

cannot understand it passes all understanding you cannot understand it understanding involves concepts and concepts is thought so the stillness you cannot understand in fact it is the stillness comes when you relinquish the desire to understand understand yourself understand the world when you relinquish the desire to understand then the stillness is immediately there and then don't fall into the mistake of going back into thought and say yes but I need to understand whether one can go deeper or whether that's all there is it is sufficient if you are able to relinquish your need to understand and that looks like almost a sacrifice but it isn't the most important renunciation which is a term that is used frequently in many spiritual traditions, renunciation you can renounce possessions, you can renounce position and worldly position, you can renounce money, you can renounce personal relationship you renounce your name sometimes when you enter a monastery or something in various traditions you renounce many many things and but if you haven't renounced the fundamental thing then none of these renunciations actually are very helpful and the true renunciation is the renunciation of thought you can still use thought when you need it for practical purposes but for awakening to a deeper dimension of consciousness, thought does not help you but is a hindrance then once you are connected with the deeper dimension of consciousness then it can sometimes the inspiration from that level can sometimes flow into your mind and use your mind in order to speak or to do something, to create something that is possible but before that became possible there needs to have been the renunciation so that you are not trying to understand this anymore that by Socrates said Socrates the Greek philosopher I am why do people call you the wisest of all men they asked him and he said well that is because I am the only one who knows that he knows nothing he in other words he was comfortable with not knowing not knowing is an interesting state to be in not knowing is really to become comfortable with the state of not thinking because all thinking is a kind of knowing or wanting to know so you become comfortable with not thinking which is not that you fall below thinking which is can happen when you drink alcohol or take certain drugs or all kinds of things can take you below thinking there is a longing in every human being to become free of the thinking mind because the thinking mind is so troublesome and so heavy and most humans seek some kind of liberation through falling below thinking a few drinks whatever else they do sensory experience or some there are many ways of falling below thinking that is not the way to go because then you go into unconsciousness rising above thinking is the conscious renunciation of thought when it is not needed then when thought in other words you are no longer looking for yourself in thought you are no longer looking for your identity in some increase of mental knowledge or whatever you are not looking for yourself there anymore and then the thoughts that arise are no longer imbued with a sense of self so you can think without egoic contamination of your thinking and that's great when thinking does happen but you are able to become still and become comfortable with not knowing and in that not knowing but this is not knowing conceptually when you no longer know anything through thought then suddenly a deeper knowing arises that is non-conceptual you may not be able to talk about it but there is a deep knowing there some people can verbalize it in some way because their mind can kind of express it to some extent and others cannot at all and so it always gets distorted the moment you talk about it so first of all then be content that you are able to access the dimension of stillness but the next step is how not to lose it completely when you start thinking again how not to lose it completely when you start acting when you start taking action in this world as you have to do because that's part of your question so in a protected setting perhaps you can be still you sit in your room close your eyes or look around and become alert and still, it's wonderful and then somebody comes into the room why didn't you do this?

I asked you to do that says your wife that sometimes happens immediately it's completely gone it takes just one little challenge I'm not talking necessarily in your case, just in general terms so how do you having a conversation with somebody discussing something let's say you're discussing there's somebody who says we are totally overreacting to the virus it's what it's doing to us this is terrible and you say no, well, we had to do that, it would be irresponsible not to do all the lockdown and all this and then you start discussing do you lose yourself in the movement of thought or are you able to when you speak in particular when you listen to somebody are you able to have still have this alertness that is inseparable from stillness so that you can introduce these alert spaces into a conversation that's a kind of spiritual practice one could say are you able to introduce these alert spaces when you're talking to somebody and let's say every time he or she says something are you preparing the next thing that you are going to say or are you already dismissing what this person is saying mentally or are you able to listen in a state of alert presence let's say the person is talking and you are if you are able to listen in a state of alert presence then you haven't lost the stillness, the stillness is still there and the amazing thing is when you start speaking again you are uttering something that is unprepared so there is suddenly you may find your intuition, intuitive realizations and there's a certain power behind what you speak because it comes from a deeper level, you're not just repeating something that you read somewhere or whatever bring in alert spaces of alertness into a conversation then that is a practice of so that you don't lose the stillness, another thing is when you take action when you take action usually you want it to be over already the action, you're going from here to there you're doing this or that it's easy to lose the present moment when you want to achieve something even just you have to go to the supermarket it's all your are you able to to be, when you take action to be, not to devalue the present moment not to always make it into a means to an end but are you able to just honor the present moment, every step you're taking now while you are walking to the supermarket or whatever if it's or well these days people don't go anywhere but you get from one room to another you have to go to the bathroom even that can be a practice, you take one step at a time so that the moment of arriving at the destination where you want to get to is not more important than this moment, this moment is actually more important than the arriving this applies on a small scale as well as on a large scale this moment is of primary importance because it's all there ever is so it's more important than arriving at the yet you're achieving your goal or arriving at your destination that is a spiritual practice also when you're present in what you do instead of losing yourself in the doing, then the stillness is still there in the background when you're listening to someone while you're having a conversation if you can be so alert that you can just listen when the other person is speaking then you're not losing yourself in your mind and the stillness is still there in the background so both when you take action and when you speak and when you think let's say you're alone and you're thinking are you losing yourself in your mind, anxiety thoughts, all kinds of thinking arises and the moment you realize very often the realization will be I'm unhappy I'm anxious why am I unhappy and anxious my mind is making me unhappy and anxious right now because in this moment I'm not being threatened my mind is creating unhappiness when you have that realization meaning you've lost yourself in your mind the opportunity is there for you now to direct your attention away from the mind and into your breathing or into the body for example you realize the futility of making yourself unhappy and then you decide otherwise for that freedom to come in you need to have already achieved a certain level of awareness because if you had not achieved a certain level of awareness you would be so identified with your thinking you wouldn't even know it identified means you are your thinking so even to say you can you can become aware of your thinking if there's not enough awareness then you can't but for you of course there is enough awareness you can become aware that you're thinking for example is making you unhappy or is creating anxiety or fear and then you have a choice now you can carry on or you can remove your attention from the thinking movement directed into the body so it merges with the body and then stillness is back suddenly and you may notice the mind wanted to come back in and pull it wants you to reincarnate again into another thought come this way you can feel the pull because it's been there for thousands of years the pull comes again and then maybe you lose yourself again or maybe you're able to say no thanks stay present this is for you and many others the most important spiritual practice is to bring together the stillness and the doing which really means the being and the doing and which really means coming back to what I talked about earlier it really means bringing the vertical and the horizontal dimension so that you have you exist in both dimensions instead of having them separately so that you're so this is the practice and the more challenging a situation is the more alert you need to be so when you are a spiritual in the process of spiritual awakening everything that is particularly intense challenge is also a particularly wonderful opportunity for you to become present through it and intensify your presence through it and this is whatever whether the challenge is what everybody is now experiencing or personal challenge collective challenge doesn't matter challenge can come as a difficult person all kinds of things can be challenging and that's particularly important to every challenge is an invitation to intensify its presence and then whatever happens is great because it can only intensify your presence so that's the practice I wish you well I hope it makes sense

[Speaker 3] (8:11:36 - 8:11:39)
completely thank you so very much

[Speaker 11] (8:11:39 - 8:11:40)
thank you

[Speaker 1] (8:12:05 - 8:21:48)
questions people have sent in and voted on everybody wants to know the answer to me including if if let's say we love all if let's say we love we all love each other unconditionally how can I decide who is to be my partner is this based on physical attraction isn't this a contradiction with this higher state of consciousness okay so if you love everybody unconditionally how can you possibly decide who is going to be your partner that's the question because it seems there's no preference anymore or if it's physical attraction isn't there a contradiction if you're in a higher state of consciousness then shouldn't or not be physically attracted to anybody is that the implication the question well the love we're talking about the unconditional love towards human beings and life forms is a let's see what is it that you love in the other when you love unconditionally you don't love their physical form you don't love their psychological form their personality the unconditional love goes deeper it's a transcendent love that what you love is not the form but the formless essence of the other and you can only love that when you can sense within yourself that dimension the formless when you can be still and present enough and then look at another human being then you can recognize something what you recognize is for lack of a better word the consciousness which is the essence of the other human as it is the essence of who you are consciousness prior to the consciousness being born into some kind of form personality which is there and the physical form which is there but in every being there is still the dimension of consciousness that is prior to form although the human being has become form consciousness has assumed form has incarnated so to speak but that doesn't mean that the formless and timeless consciousness is lost it's still there as the essence and when you can sense it in yourself you can sense because you are still and present enough from that dimension in yourself you can sense it in the other and that is love it's basically a recognition that in essence the other is the same as you but then of course there's always that is the transcendent dimension to every human being in addition to that transcendent dimension there is a form identity of every human being every human being has a physical form and emotional form and a mental form that's the inner, that's the personality so the physical appearance and the personality consisting of mental, emotional, conditioning and so on so there are the two levels the unconditional love towards all humans is the transcendent love you love the formless, you recognize the formless as yourself in the other but then you are still here as a form too and the form may respond to another form the physical, there can be physical attraction, it is not incompatible with the transcendent realization although some ancient or not so ancient traditions may tell you that it is not incompatible you can have

physical attraction on the level of form you can also have an attraction towards the mental, emotional form of that other human being because it resonates with something in your own form so that means you may be drawn to another human being physically or mentally, emotionally because you resonate with that and then perhaps you enter into a relationship so different levels operate the transcendent remains it can become obscured through excessive attachment of course to the mental or emotional dimension in the other so in a relationship the realization of essence identity as I sometimes call it can become obscured when form identity takes over completely which could happen through the pain body which could happen through emotional getting identified with arising emotions and losing touch with the transcendent, yes that can happen but it's not incompatible everybody's challenge is to balance the two in their lives in their relationships to relate to the other on the transcendent level and at the same time if it's there on an emotional, mental physical level without the transcendent dimension in a relationship it's not ultimately satisfying and it cannot really truly work for long if the transcendent is missing completely in a relationship it's physical attraction and attraction between personalities is not enough to keep it going, it can be going for a while but then it becomes frustrating and you see more and more of the limitations of the other person and the other person sees more and more of your limitations which are always there and when you live together it becomes very obvious that the other person has his or her limitations now as long as the realization of the transcendent dimension is there that's fine, those limitations can exist within the space of the transcendent they're not destructive of the relationship now you may find with it's sometimes easier to have this unconditional love towards people that you don't know so well than people, easier than towards people that with whom you share a lot of past because they're the past the form identity of that person can be very powerfully there in your mind, in your interaction so that's the challenge of being present with family members parents parents grown up children and so on and of course as you know, Rumdust recommends if you think you're enlightened as a test, he recommends that you spend two weeks with your parents and that will tell you whether you're really enlightened or not go and spend two weeks, stay with your parents for two weeks in most cases that is a good test unless your parents are enlightened in which case there's not much point in using it it doesn't tell you anything

[Speaker 6] (8:22:16 - 8:24:47)
so last year I asked you a question about my two year old son Teddy and I look back on it now and I feel like I've awakened more because the the question the question was asked in more fear than presence and today I stand here and I have so much enthusiasm because my son who's three years old now, he has this childlike trust and faith that has not diminished from he had severe acid reflux when he was a baby and he went through intense physical suffering because of that since he was born and it was hard for me as a mom to be present with that because for a long time I didn't know how to help him but now he's three years old and now he can look in my eyes and say mommy, don't think be happy or oh your pain body mommy mommy I feel like it's a big irony because this whole time I've been thinking oh what can I do to protect his innocence and his childlike nature and his consciousness whereas the whole time he's my spiritual teacher and I feel like children and also elderly people who've gone through life have this innate knowing, they have a knowing and for me to have that realization and to dive deep within in that stillness that they have and to know how precious it is is the biggest joy of my life and so also my father has cancer and in the midst of my son having reflux and my father just getting diagnosed with stage 3 cancer I was looking on the surface, there was much suffering on my part and trying to be present with it but now, three years later looking back and seeing how my father has transcended his physical body and is in much greater peace than I could ever exude and as well as my son as well it's just a huge blessing.

[Speaker 1] (8:24:47 - 8:31:30)

Yes, oh thank you for sharing that and I'd just like to comment on some of those things very young people you mentioned and older people and you mentioned your father who is suffering from that illness it often happens if there's suffering at an early age like the physical suffering of your child at an early age can sometimes accelerate the awakening of a human being now this could be physical suffering or it could be other forms of suffering at an early age for example when there's a young child and one or both of the parents suddenly die in an accident or whatever and so the child is deprived of something that would be regarded as absolutely essential but the child is in deprivation early in life and again this is a huge challenge for a human being to have this great loss or physical suffering early in life but sometimes it happens that this challenge then generates the transcendence already at an early age it can also of course have negative consequences so then the child becomes an adult and then has to live with the burden of past pain for a long time until perhaps finally at that point more awareness comes in and dissolves it but it does happen sometimes that early suffering brings about already a very early transcendence in a human being and that probably happened to your son and that's just wonderful and then the child can become your teacher so to speak and you mentioned old people again there's a huge potential in old age that is still unrecognized by mainstream society and that's the potential of letting go of ego when you see the end of your life span approaching why hang on to this entity in your head me and it still needs to be right and still complains and still has its old patterns to step into no thought become nobody I would highly recommend not to wait until old age but old age is a wonderful opportunity for opening up and our society doesn't need to know what to do with old age I think it's just a waiting room you wait to die but of course it there was more wisdom in some traditional societies where they recognized the value of old age and the most highly respected people in those older societies were old people the elders because they recognized that there was something was just prior to the dissolution of the physical form somehow the psychological form was already dissolving before the physical form dissolved and the me entity and so humans recognized that old people would often become luminous in the last years of their life and wisdom would speak through them so traditionally you go to they go to the elders if they have important questions to ask because they realize there is an intelligence that comes through them that is not there in the young people who are still identified with their form psychological and physical form so old age is wonderful if you but don't wait for it, I would say this is, there is no need to get close to physical death to become present wait for that or what was it that Saint Augustine was it who said God he said something like God save me but not yet because he still wanted to enjoy the things of this life I want salvation but not yet so we have young people and there are more young people being born now who have a high degree of readiness for awakening so now and then we come to an illness that comes into your life like cancer and again it has that can also bring about the flowering of consciousness because it can also erode, we talked about it yesterday, it can also erode in you the egoic entity and so you time very little time left, you cannot project yourself anymore into the future you are forced into the present moment if you leave the present moment you suffer you become very unhappy so it applies to people in prison for a long time or people with a serious illness and in your case of your father this shift has already happened in him and that's wonderful and of course in you also without having to wait for old age and an illness so thank you

[Speaker 11] (8:31:30 - 8:31:31)
thank you

[Speaker 1] (8:31:49 - 9:00:01)
I've been working for 13 years in an office and I feel that my job is boring and useless I learned to surrender but I'd like to change my job but don't know where to apply how can I find out what will give me joy and happiness and a feeling of meaningfulness well start with where you are rather than trying to get away from

where you are you start with always the present moment and you say you have surrendered but have you surrendered enough, have you truly surrendered so I suggest when you travel to work every morning enter the state of presence rather than drifting off into thinking so that your present every moment whether you're driving or taking public transportation or walk to work be there absolute presence and when you're at work do one thing at a time and bring in spacious moments as much as possible, they can only be a few seconds one spacious breath after you made a phone call two spacious breaths and then when you go to have lunch, wherever it is either you eat the lunch that you brought with you or you go to the restaurant or the canteen again present with every moment, so you use what otherwise would be a boring situation and just use it as the background for presence so you're not ultimately you're not looking for some satisfaction in the work but you bring a different state of consciousness to it so in a way your work situation becomes like a canvas it's just an excuse for practicing presence and so that is, and you're lucky that you have a relatively boring job gives you great opportunity for practice, if you had a very stressful job that kept you in a state of excitement all day long, would be more difficult so be thankful that life has given you something relatively boring and then you make it interesting not in the conventional sense of interesting, but you bring that the alertness to it so you're not working at the stock exchange shouting like a mad person sell, sell, buy be on the computers now if there's any stock broker wanting to ask me a question please do, that'll be a different answer I don't know what I'll say there's a way there to what it is, I don't know until you ask the question but yes use the situation and so that as you do that discontent disappears and that is true surrender, you say you practice surrender, the questioner says but if there's discontent, of course there's still not complete surrender I'd rather be somewhere else or the mind telling you it's been 13 years how many more years to retirement and then you start counting the years to retirement so you're losing yourself in past and future and you're carrying the burden in your mind of past and future missing the opportunity of the present moment because it's not interesting enough, says the mind so that's good practice and you may find if you come into such an alignment with the present moment you feel more alive even within the routine activities there is then an added dimension of aliveness that comes in and you perform even the routine activities with a greater sense of aliveness and it is often then that change comes into your life when you align with the present moment instead of trying to get away from it, internally align yourself with it so that any kind of no to the present moment dissolves in a no and so you're so aligned that actually power begins to flow through, that's why I call that the power of now, it's the power of life itself, begins to flow through you at first it flows into your routine activities and the way in which you relate to your colleagues at work becomes more present, different somewhat different some people may notice it, others may not and so gradually the universe or life notices that you are in a different state of consciousness and often it is then that change comes into your life either through a chance event or a chance encounter or a sudden idea or realization that comes into your head one morning in whatever form it comes or some drastic thing like suddenly your company goes bust, the company that you worked for for so long, suddenly they close down, everybody loses their job, wow you're free but you were free already because internally you already became free, so in what way change comes into your life we don't know it is much more likely to come in, but you no longer depend on external change for your inner state that's the main thing that you don't depend on it anymore and even if nothing else came into your life, you would continue practice until your last breath and your last breath would be your conscious breath and you would have fulfilled your purpose on this planet, in this form which is to be a vehicle for consciousness, to come into this world so you don't need to depend you don't depend on anything, change is more likely to come, yes, but the presence practice is not a means to an end you're not practicing, you say ok, I'll practice, but if nothing happens within six weeks, I'll stop practicing laughter laughter or the lady do you know the lady who a church going lady who saw she lived in a house and outside her window there was a hill that blocked the view of the ocean so just a little hill and of course if that hill hadn't been there, her house would have been worth much more, so because of that hill her house wasn't worth that much but in church she heard if you only have faith of go big as a mustard seed, you can sail to this mountain, move from here to there and it will move for you she heard that in church Jesus said and then she said, oh, ok I only have a hill there so I can let see and said, ok I'm going to believe that this hill is going to move and then tomorrow morning I'll open the curtains and see what happens so she in the morning she got up and opened the curtains and the hill was still there and she said oh, I knew it wasn't going to work laughter laughter laughter laughter laughter laughter that's the face laughter so to all of you who are bored at work laughter there may be quite a few make it into a spiritual practice a consciousness practice bored at work also means you're not particularly challenged at work and in the absence of life challenges there's always the danger that you fall below thought and you come into a routine where you what you think is acceptance but you're really falling below thought and you you go you go to work and there's a decrease in your sense of alertness and aliveness and you become dull and you go and sometimes you see people who've been working in the same place for a long time they're gone that's not surrender or presence, they've just gone below thought, not risen above laughter laughter if you want to learn about not having a mental self image watch your dog or your cat they don't they don't have an opinion about who they are they just are who they are how can I love myself what is this I don't remember ever saying that you should love yourself so is it bad to love yourself no, of course not is it better than to hate yourself yes, of course let's start with many people are uncomfortable with themselves they dislike who they are perhaps they dislike their body how they look perhaps they dislike who they are as a person don't feel they are good enough or are self critical a lot many people live with a negative self image which of course all consists of certain types of mind activity and that's not pleasant and it may be for some of those people once they realize that they live with a mind pattern that continually criticizes them and says negative things about them they begin to realize that it's a mind pattern this self hatred is a mind pattern and that it's harmful it's not pleasant and they can go beyond it and begin to replace it with more negative thoughts more positive thoughts about themselves and having positive thoughts about yourself that kind of thing which perhaps usually be called beginning to love yourself to feel good about yourself but it's not it's not easy that shift from feeling bad about yourself to feeling good about yourself sometimes it requires a lot of convincing I would regard loving yourself as perhaps an intermediate stage in one's awakening but the essence of the awakened consciousness is that you go beyond having a particular idea in your mind that represents yourself a mental self image that you relate to because basically it's ego a mental self image you think this is what I am, this is who I am if you want to learn about not having a mental self image watch your dog or your cat they don't have an opinion about who they are they just are who they are so that removes an enormous amount of problems from their lives of course they don't have the mind activity that creates a self image in their head they are pre mind and therefore their life is far less problematic than human life you can see how wonderful it is not to have a self image you can even look at an ugly dog or an ugly cat they don't have a problem with that even an overweight dog or cat they are ok no self image or a dog that has lost it's sexual powers it doesn't become part of the dog's self image, the dog says oh my god I can't father puppies anymore I've lost my male power, how dreadful the dog doesn't have a self image if there is no sexual desire there is no sexual desire there is no thinking around that nothing to do with me there is no problem or the cat can't jump up this fence anymore it's getting too old the cat doesn't say oh I've become useless now what's the point in caring it just is it doesn't detract from the self image of the cat because it doesn't have a self image so it's wonderful to live without an image of who you are because you are the presence you are not you are not the form that's a temporary expression of you but you are the underlying presence and when you feel yourself as the underlying presence you don't need to live through some mental image of who you are and that's where you go beyond hating yourself but you also go beyond loving yourself it's just being yourself similar to the dog but it's not a regressive step it's a step forward for humans you go beyond the mind made sense of self you don't fall back to the pre mind made sense of self you don't need to live through a self image of who you are the more presence that comes into your life the more you feel yourself to be the presence not some mental construct of course somewhere on the periphery of your mind there may still be some there is a little bit of a mental construct but it does not provide the basis for your sense of identity anymore of course yes you know your body is too thin or too fat but that's just how it is or this or that lacking there is some vague self image still there but it is not the foundation for your sense of who you are the foundation for your sense of who you are is you are awareness, you are presence and that's a liberation from the self image and that's wonderful so it's not go beyond hating yourself and then also go beyond loving yourself if you need to go through the stage of loving yourself because you cannot go directly from hating yourself to presence then do go through the stage of loving and then step beyond that and it's not as stressful running anymore and if you miss the plane what does it matter it's just you're standing somewhere else and you're sitting somewhere else but not on the plane and you're breathing somewhere I need to be on that plane maybe not is it really possible somehow to be present and work fast and nevertheless be conscious at the same time interesting yes it seems at first that when you are in presence it almost seems to people they are forced to do things slowly and sometimes I'm described as slow by some people close to me and it's true but sometimes I can be fast too there are occasions there are occasions when I'm quite when it is demanded I can be fast it's presence does not have to be slow remember the famous Zen saying hurry slowly hurry slowly translated into Spanish date prisa lentamente I think that's a good translation so what does that mean how can you go fast and yet be present at the same time it has a lot to do with the focus of your attention so you're working here if a large part of your attention is where you want to get to the result you want to achieve then you're working here if you said one can't really put it in numbers or percentages but I'll do it anyway so if 80% of your attention is where you need to be I need to get this finished and in the meantime it creates a tension in you there's a mental projection where you need to go and in the meantime you're doing this in order to get there if you can be more present and have 80% of your attention reverse it have 80% of your attention in the doing itself and 20% where you want to get to because you have to get somewhere then you can work fast and working fast with presence implies enjoyment of the activity and not being present usually implies lack of enjoyment of the activity and the rising of stress or to be working with distaste or some kind of resistance and that's not good for anybody it's not good for you for your physical body the people around you so you can practice with practical things or even pretend that you're in a hurry if you want to have just a trial practice pretend that you're in a hurry and you need to get these things or maybe you don't even need to pretend because it happens often enough in real life that you're in a hurry, you need to get ready in order to leave the house or go out is it possible to do what you have to do within that space of a few minutes or whatever time you need to get ready and do it actually being fully conscious of every movement and enjoy the energy behind it which is really getting in touch with your conscious attention enjoy the energy that's behind the doing rather than mentally projecting to the future do it hurry slowly is the meaning is what that means running the same if you have to run to catch a plane or a train or a bus or whatever you can run and be totally centered and yet run fast so it's a different kind of running it's a smooth more smooth less stressful running you actually enjoy every step of it because you're not excessively focused on the next moment and of course realizing as the Zen master says Zen is doing one thing at a time that's another way of pointing to this way of acting and working Zen is doing one thing at a time which means giving your fullest attention to whatever you're doing at this moment then you know peripherally of course why you're doing it where you want to go to but in the meantime and then you're running and it's not a stressful running anymore and if you miss the plane what does it matter it's just you're standing somewhere else and you're sitting somewhere else but not on the plane and you're breathing somewhere I need to be on that plane maybe not so it's a practice of hurrying slowly there's also a tendency in our civilization to create more deadlines than are actually necessary for good functioning of things I find there are often people create for themselves organizations and so on create unnecessarily tight deadlines that often do not allow things to mature and so this has to be done by tomorrow night why? and often they don't even publishers do that sometimes they bring out books some books have a slow time they gradually acquire their readers by word of mouth and so on and some publishers, many publishers say if not enough books are sold in the first six months it's never printed again there's not even given a chance there are some TV series that may actually be quite good and they have one run and say not quite enough viewers but it was so good just allow things to mature a little bit why the constant deadlines but you may be trapped in an organization that does that more likely than not because that's how this world functions so it's ultimately you may have to create your own organization or if the organization is flexible enough you may be able to create a different environment I'm famous for not meeting deadlines and the world hasn't collapsed for some reason but if I were an employee I would have lost my job many times or probably would have walked out unless I could have introduced a different way of doing things, if there's room for that that's good

[Speaker 7] (9:00:29 - 9:00:29)
Namaste

[Speaker 4] (9:00:29 - 9:02:45)
Namaste First of all I'd like to thank you for before I ask you my question I'd like to thank you for your teaching it has helped me tremendously I'd like to thank Eckhart the form for withstanding that suffering that brought out this teaching to help all of us my questions has to do with issues of abandonment and feeling of unworthiness for about four decades I walked around with a story in my head and the story was that I was abandoned life abandoned me my life situation had it so that my mother did give me away shortly after birth and so I grew up with someone else but I felt abandoned by my mother and then later on with more challenges of life I felt that life abandoned me even though I reconnected with my mother later on but I always had this issue so I heard of your teaching I read your book and then I realized I could have never been abandoned by life I am life all one how could I have been abandoned so I thank you for that thank you from the bottom of my heart I brought tissues but having said that as you know my conditioned self always came back to remind me of that so I have issues when I'm around people powerful people you're powerful but I don't feel like that around you

[Speaker 1] (9:02:46 - 9:02:48)
I hope not

[Speaker 4] (9:02:51 - 9:03:49)
when I'm around wealthy people especially like if I met the president you talk about the story of the CEO versus the janitor in your book and yeah at work I can talk to the janitor I feel like he's the janitor so I have a chip on my shoulder but when the CEO is coming I'm like oh I'll get the door for you so how can I stay present I feel like my ego has moved into that direction because I can be around here I feel okay but when I'm with those people I mentioned I lose it I feel small I feel insignificant if I could become an aunt in the room I would yes okay thank you thank you

[Speaker 1] (9:03:53 - 9:21:36)
you may remember I gave the example that is very much related to this in in a new earth about the the zen the abbot of a zen monastery who was waiting to receive the governor of the province who was going to arrive for some ceremony and while he was waiting to receive the governor of the province where the monastery was the abbot

of the monastery noticed that his the palms of his hands were sweaty and so he had a lot of of course already a lot of self awareness and he noticed that okay the next day he went in front of his all his monks and said I'm I resign from my position of abbot I have more work to do and he went to another monastery to study under another master for a few more years and then he came back to the monastery and that was gone so what he noticed of course was that he was not sufficiently deeply connected with being he was becoming nervous in the presence of somebody who in the eyes of the world was important and that showed to him that he wasn't deeply enough connected with being the same what you described in my twenties I had similar experiences and when I met occasionally people in Europe for example I met I was introduced to a young man and they said he is the he is the great grandson of the former German emperor and I felt oh I didn't remember the mess that his great grandfather had left behind but but I had this image of him living in a growing up in a palace and I knew I had grown up in a one bedroom apartment with my parents so I felt smaller than him I was identified with form with position with the history of me I had a mental image of who that person was or is I had a mental image of who I am and I was still living through a mental image and when I compared the two mental images the one I had of him the one I had of myself the one I had of myself felt much smaller and insignificant than his and then the mind kicked in and said oh he would be if his great grandfather hadn't made such a mess of things this guy would not be the emperor or become emperor and a few more times similar things happened so there is still not the connectedness with being needs to deepen so that you can sense who or shall we could even say you can sense what who or what you are at the deeper level that transcends the form and this is of course what this our work if we want to call it work is all about is to take our attention into ourselves so that our attention and our sense of identity of self is no longer derived from mental images including mental images we have of our body or mental images that we have that are connected with our history and whatever it is our upbringing our social position they are all thoughts or mental images now most this is very normal for people to derive their sense of self from those things but it's extremely limiting and it makes you uneasy very often in the presence of others on the other extreme of that kind of limited behaviour would be that you probably don't do it, you could look down on people who you think are inferior and treat them less well and so you feel bigger than them and then you when there is somebody else you have a mental image that he is more than you, you feel smaller or you want to ingratiate yourself or whatever or want to disappear not be seen so this is why I mentioned in A New Earth to observe yourself to see and again self observation not easy it needs a certain degree of awareness you already know it but I'm just briefly saying for others to observe yourself to see whether the way in which you behave with different people differs according to social position and or whatever you want from those people, I mentioned the example in A New Earth is the way in which you speak to the janitor the same as the way in which you speak to the CEO of the company or is it different?

You need self observation to know that and that will tell you to what extent you identified with the conditioned me in the head so if you become still and discover your essential reality as the being not the human to use this terminology to feel the consciousness that you are, the life the consciousness that you are as you know you were never abandoned by life because you are life without life there is no you you are an expression of the one life so you were never abandoned you were always one with not more than supported by life one with life because if you say I'm supported by life you are still creating a duality of me and there is life somewhere supporting me you are life the life that you can feel within the consciousness is the consciousness of is life so if you can feel yourself as the unconditioned consciousness the awareness the presence, another way we used the other day here was to ask yourself what does it feel like to be you not the mind made you but the essential presence of you if you can feel that essential presence and then meet with the janitor or the CEO you will meet exactly the same person there is no longer any difference and you will never again feel either superior or inferior to anybody and that's a wonderful way of relating to people because as long as you are trapped in ego whenever you meet somebody it's very rare that you, well occasionally you might meet equal ego saying oh he is my equal but a lot of the time especially when you meet new people the ego immediately goes into comparison mode how do I rate relative to this person, physical appearance social position wealth, possessions education knowledge power how do I relate and then you kind of see and if you if you think you are less then immediately your behavior changes according, you think you are more you feel superior so you talk down to that person but it's this is a conditioned not deep way of relating to other human beings so if you the more you connect with being the easier it will be when you meet somebody not to relate from the level of position or anything else to do with form but to feel the being that you are which is precious which is like a like some jewel it's a most precious thing being is the most precious it's not a thing, we are just using language it's the most precious thing there is there is intense aliveness there there is intense joy, it is life itself then you can feel that and you will no longer be better or not as good as the other you can relate to the other as a human being a very important thing in decision making process is not to come up with a decision but to ask the right question now it's very easy to mistake an impulse that comes to you for some deeper answer that comes out of the stillness and so in any decision making process you have basically two factors well, most people only have you have the information that's available to you and so make sure that you have the information or the facts that you need sometimes before making a decision you may have a few, a number of facts and sometimes these facts may not be sufficient, so then you go within and see what questions you can ask in order to elicit more facts or information from whoever is capable of giving to you that information I'm talking very general terms whether you're in business or wherever you are or some personal decision that you need to arrive at, on one level facts need to be looked at what is the situation and sometimes the facts are not clear enough or you have not enough facts and you become still and see what questions you can ask somebody may be able to supply more detailed facts but in order to ask the right question you already need a moment of stillness so you may not immediately get an answer through stillness the first step as you become alert and still is another question a very important thing in decision making process is not to come up with a decision but to ask the right question that can elicit what you need in order to arrive at a decision and in order to ask the right question there needs to be that alert stillness for a moment and in that alert stillness you kind of listen within and then a question comes, this is often when somebody call me and say we've had this or that offer, somebody wants you to do this, somebody wants you to do that interview, somebody wants to do that, very often I don't immediately say yes or no, I usually come up with a few questions in addition to the information that they gave me well what about that and that and that and they say oh ok, I'll get back to you I'll find out then they call again, then I know a bit more and sometimes on the basis of the factual information you already know whether you want to do it or not you more easily know that you don't want to do it just by looking at the facts but it may well be that you have all the facts and you're still not clear what the right course of action is so you've exhausted the avenue of asking more questions probably, unless something else comes to you and then it's usually a question of becoming still and that's the added dimension to the decision making process it works together with looking at the knowledge that you have in the mind conceptual knowledge factual knowledge works in conjunction with a deeper intuitive knowing and you bring the two together it's not just the intuitive and in the end you completely disregard the facts so even with your bringing your ex-girlfriend it's a relatively simple thing perhaps there was an impulse that or some believe that you should obey your impulses now and just do it but you didn't and you also have some knowledge in your mind about what kind of a person she is what your relationship was like, how it ended how she might react these are factors that you also consider is it a wise thing to do just on the level of thinking, you think about it and then you go within become still an impulse to do something does not necessarily come from the deepest level it could be an emotional impulse it could be an impulse created by the ego to see itself as very spiritual that you reconnect with her many different levels it could come from also it's good to deal sometimes it's good in this case where immediate action is not required if you delay it a little bit, wait a day and see if the next day you still feel the same or the day after because in this case for example, immediate action is not required so it's often helpful to know whether something is real comes from the deepest level give it some time, if it's still there tomorrow or next week it's more likely to be true and come from the deepest level an impulse can dissolve very quickly an impulse came to me many years ago as I've told before on various occasions when I lived in England in the country one morning not an impulse but a strong knowing was there that for some reason I had to move to the west coast of North America but I didn't know why but I didn't immediately pick up the phone and make a reservation and sell everything I have I waited and days passed and every day that was still there several weeks passed and it was still there and then I couldn't I knew this I had to do it was not a temporary impulse or an idea that came into my mind it came from a deeper level if I had not obeyed it probably I would have fallen ill or something would have gone very wrong because I would not have gone with that deeper flow where the universe wanted to move me so if there is time give it time and if something is still there after a few days or even a few weeks then it probably comes from the deeper level so in many cases it's a question of balancing factual knowledge and going beyond factual knowledge and again to repeat sometimes factual knowledge is all you need and it's immediately very clear from just looking at the facts that this for example is not feasible at other times the mind could create prematurely the idea that this cannot be done because nobody has done it before and might be wrong so don't be too certain that when the mind says no you really have to be very clear and if you are not totally clear go within so what's your add on?

[Speaker 3] (9:21:38 - 9:22:13)
With regards to choosing spiritual practice, for about 25 years I've had different regular practices and I step back and go gosh have I really made any progress and is my lack of progress from not sticking with just one, be it Goenka Vipassana or Tibetan, whatever and I know sometimes in a practice we go through darkness and that it's good to push on through to the other side and sometimes there's no other side, you're just going into more and more darkness, it's the wrong direction could you recommend on

[Speaker 1] (9:22:13 - 9:28:11)
how to decide what is the right practice? The right practice underlying any practice is presence, no matter the externals of the practice may be different but what every practice points to and eventually if it succeeds and you end up with is presence remember our definition I quoted Ramana Maharshi when he was asked how do we know, because that's your question, whether we are making any progress on the spiritual path and of course you may remember his answer the degree of absence of thinking is your criterion for judging progress on the spiritual path, that's all, so to what extent is there space in you a cessation of thinking when it's not needed, rising moments of spaciousness as you evolve spiritually the spaciousness deepens and there's more of it so that eventually half of you is spaciousness don't take it too literally half of you is spaciousness and half of you is form mind, knowledge and so on if half of you is spaciousness and half of you is form you would lead a very balanced life and it could be that as in the case of Ramana Maharshi when he was a young boy and he just had the death experience he became 90% spaciousness and he couldn't talk anymore and he still had a body that's the 10% and he sat somewhere but then he came back to well very few humans are actually it's hard to quantify anyway I'm just, it's more or less speaking metaphorically very few humans are totally balanced between moving in the world of form using their mind and their knowledge and interacting and being busy and active in the world of form and at the same time not losing the deeper dimension of presence so not having two separate compartments in your life some spiritual practitioners meditators develop two compartments my spiritual practice which they do when they

meditate or go on boot camp retreats and then my daily life of course the two need to come together so that your spiritual dimension shines through all the things that you do.

In other words everything you do there's spaciousness there's a sense of peace that comes even while you're engaged in activities you don't get frantic and upset about every little thing there's a spaciousness in your human interactions a sense of presence that pervades even your business dealings that is what Ramana Maharshi means when he talks of to be free of thinking that spaciousness are moments when you're just alert and present even while conducting a business there's an alertness and a presence and then you become more creative. The person who created the iPhone the main Steve Jobs I haven't read his entire biography and he had certain personal idiosyncrasies which were very much egoic conditioning but apart from his egoic conditioning he had areas he was a practitioner of I believe of Zen and meditation he had these areas of stillness out of those came the creativity so he did not represent a complete balanced coming together of very few people have that a complete balanced coming together of spaciousness and form and you don't have to achieve that I don't have it I don't have 50% effectiveness in form and 50% spaciousness I have I'm just taking a figure 80-85% spaciousness and 20-15% form in other words I'm not that great at dealing with stuff when I do I'm spacious with it my preference is not to so I'm not that balanced Oprah is much more balanced than I am she is very effective in doing has seemingly inexhaustible energy I can't keep up with her and yet she does always return to stillness so she doesn't lose herself in the doing and there are some people but not many Oprah is a bit more in the doing than the being but there's still enough being to keep her rooted and to make her work fruitful and contribute a lot to the consciousness of the planet

[Speaker 11] (9:28:38 - 9:29:21)
I don't really have a formulated question but I'd like to hear you talk for a second it's kind of been hinted at here and there but talk more specifically about the the situation of the planet, the ecological situation, you know, without panicking, without getting self-righteous and all these other things clearly a change of consciousness is necessary but things also have to be done in real time because these are processes happening in time and so just if you had anything at all to say about that and how these two processes of consciousness and also changing things, doing whatever would be necessary for the planet how this works together

[Speaker 1] (9:29:21 - 9:37:11)
yes, thank you are you engaged in that kind of work?

to some extent and hoping to be more well one thing, as you know, I don't need to say it again, the foundation for any action you take is to be let it arise from presence rather than from a feeling of fear or anger because those two are not very productive what comes out of fear or anger is not productive presence is much more powerful there's an enormous power in presence and true intelligence intelligent, really intelligent action comes out of presence so that's vital to know there are many things that need changing in our relationship with the planet things seem to be going the wrong way right now all I can say is do as much as you can to help change the way in which we live on this planet, do what you can, with peace in your heart that's the main thing, with peace in your heart, because otherwise without peace, the opposite of peace is war and conflict so if we don't destroy the planet, we destroy ourselves through war and conflict the planet there's more to the planet this is my intuitive realization by the way there's more to the planet than we realize the planet is a being it's not a rock floating in space with things growing on top the planet is a living being that many humans or scientists cannot accept what I mean is it is pervaded by an intelligent energy field in the same way that your body is pervaded and held together and run by an underlying intelligence that keeps everything the thousands of functions in your body because the planet is another kind of body the thousands of functions that need to be constantly coordinated and controlled that keep this body alive, keep the atoms and molecules together, keep the organs from cooperating no human or the greatest computer could possibly do that even now we only understand a fraction of how our physical body operates there's a vast intelligence built into it when that intelligence says goodbye then very quickly the atoms and molecules say goodbye to each other too and then they depart and then the form dissolves the planet is also an intelligence a being that is intelligent and it has produced us in a way, not alone there have been other factors the sun is also more than a fireball we think the sun is a ball of just energy there's more to it than that we think the sun is extremely hot well hot is one way but really what that means is the energy of the highest intensity which our physical body register as extreme heat the sun is also a celestial being you don't need to believe me by the way maybe I'll just tell you what my intuitive realization is and the planet has an intelligence also that we need to one reason why we need to be active in protecting the planet so that we don't use these absurd ways of the resources of the planet, the absurd ways of getting energy that needs to, we need to go beyond that there are other ways, the universe is infinitely abundant the energy on the external level the energy obviously inexhaustible energy comes continuously from the sun, and all the other energy forms that we discover on the planet are really transformed sun energy it was once sun energy so, and to use those is a very primitive way of using energy and we need to as soon as possible and this is the task of scientists and so on who also need to be present to go beyond those primitive ways of using the energy that's left over by sun energy on the planet the planet if we do not take action, I do not believe that the planet will become destroyed but we will destroy ourselves or the planet which has an intelligence but is just slow, because to a planet 100 years is nothing 200 years is nothing one second in your lifetime or less the planet, if the planet feels threatened by by humans I firmly believe that it will eliminate humans it can do that very easily we are because we are connected our physical form is connected to the energy field of the planet it's come out of the planet so the planet could easily even without violence, the planet could end all humans within 100 years without any act of violence by simply making males and females infertile that would be an action taken by planetary intelligence, say these humans we can't have them anymore that's too much or let's just get rid of 95% of them and then they can have a new beginning and can try again but it doesn't have to come to that so before the planet takes action if the planet is slow we need to take action but with peace because otherwise we are unconscious beings, we'll just contribute even if in our unconscious action we could save the planet, we still wouldn't save ourselves, because we would create warfare if we are unconscious there are many ways we can destroy ourselves not just through destroying nature there are other ways we can destroy ourselves and we will if the shift in consciousness does not reach a sufficient number of people but the essence of what I'm saying is peace in your heart do not fear there's more to the planet than you realize if the planet needs to get rid of you it will

[Speaker 7] (9:37:16 - 9:38:29)
as a trauma surgeon

[Speaker 10] (9:38:29 - 9:39:24)
South Africa, working in Somalia I encounter and help victims of the suicide bombings and you tell us when we are dealing with pain body when the pain body is too big we need to retreat how can we as a collective deal with such severe pain body and it's really a collective question because we face it September 11 Boko Haram, ISIS so your comment just comments on something like enlightened military defense, I know it might be an oxymoron but sometimes as a collective we need to defend ourselves when the unconsciousness is so bad that you prepare to strap bombs to yourself and going

[Speaker 1] (9:39:25 - 9:39:29)

yes, well certainly thank you

[Speaker 10] (9:39:29 - 9:39:30)
thank you

[Speaker 1] (9:39:35 - 9:46:53)
certainly there are extreme manifestations of unconsciousness and it is sometimes necessary to defend yourself against that in the right way so we all know that in the past when for example 9-11 happened the reaction to 9-11 was not to put it mildly the most wise thing that could have happened in fact it made everything infinitely worse because that was not a defense, it was an overreaction of the ego in the absence of complete absence of even the slightest trace of wisdom and insight and repercussions not to mention other cultures and so on so we the unconsciousness that we see being perpetrated in those parts of the world is connected to the unconsciousness of the reaction to 9-11 of course everything is connected it's not there is not one entity to blame but the unconscious affects not only one area of human culture or one religion it manifests in different ways even in seemingly more conscious places like here politicians were extremely unconscious at the time and that opened the gates of hell and amplified the latent unconsciousness that was there in millions of other human beings or hundreds of thousands of other human beings so the everything is connected defense may be necessary sometimes if it's done wisely and if it's not reactive but a response to the situation wisdom is an absolute requirement for taking right decisions but unfortunately wisdom is hard to come by in political circles it seems that as people go into politics they might even have gone in with wisdom but then it grinds you down and it seems very hard to stay conscious once you are in the political system but there are people here and there who realize the importance there is a congressman I met from Washington who is deeply interested in mindfulness and meditation and spirituality and here and there there are people who realize the importance of wisdom so any decision one takes of how to defend oneself wisdom is required so that whatever you do does not make things worse so yes in the face of extreme unconsciousness you may need to defend yourself certainly another more general remark about these events this is only one example of humans creating something that looks actually quite insane it looks what they are doing like the suicide bombing it looks quite insane but that is how is it possible for humans to behave in such a way and is this not evil, go back to Europe in the first part of the 20th century the whole first part of Europe in the 20th century the first half of the 20th century was a nightmare and what what humans did to other humans at that time, first world war second world war infinitely worse than what is happening now with the terrorists infinitely worse just unimaginable horrors and the so that at every time period the human collective, the unconsciousness that is embedded in the collective will manifest through certain groups of people and if you close one door, another one opens and it manifests over there in the same way that the need for an enemy that is also there and manifests the cold war came to an end and said oh how wonderful there is no enemy anymore and not many years passed and quickly another big enemy arose somewhere else and now we need to fight that one I saw a funny movie about, it's a comedy about a fictitious American president who is, probably won't get re-elected in the next election and he says we need the cold wars and this was done before the whole terrorist thing happened but the cold war had come to an end the president says ok, the advisor, you're not going to get re-elected, your opinion poltergeist, we need an enemy and so they who can be our enemy because if a country has an enemy, everybody will unite behind the leader and they think ok, we got it, Canada Canada and then the rest of the movie is the humorous how the media manipulates public opinion to convince people that Canada is the great enemy the most unlikely enemy perhaps of the United States except perhaps Switzerland or Denmark but Canada is right next door so why not Canada oh yes, it's called Canadian Bacon that's the title of the movie now coming back to the atrocities that are perpetrated in different ways in different time periods

[Speaker 7] (9:46:55 - 9:46:56)
now

[Speaker 1] (9:46:56 - 9:49:55)
it's certainly the case that this is we need to recognize that this is insane it is a form of collective insanity, psychosis that is a benign way of looking at it you could call it evil, but I wouldn't I would say it's just insanity, because it seems to have no real purpose they achieve nothing through that so it's insanity now if we go then to a higher level a higher perspective then you see that the entire consciousness of humanity is involved in an evolutionary process and that evolutionary process if you look at humanity with one single whole, the consciousness of humanity as a single thing being just one aspect of universal consciousness so this consciousness of humanity at every human being is part of that one consciousness of humanity which in itself is part of the universal consciousness and consciousness, this consciousness of humanity is involved in an awakening process and you might know from your own life and I know from my life that the awakening process for quite a while involves intense suffering so you know that from your personal life I know it from my personal life the awakening process the intense suffering is part of the awakening process so humanity as a whole is going through also through intense suffering because we are all going through the awakening process when it comes to conscious manifestation my interest at this point is not in manifesting anything for myself personally but in wanting to help manifest a world that is more peaceful and just for everyone can how you teach conscious manifestation help with that?

[Speaker 11] (9:49:58 - 9:50:00)
good question[Speaker 1] (0:02 - 21:29)
Relevant, manifesting a world that is more just, I think that was the word, more peaceful and just for everyone. Well, that would be a good aim. Now, ultimately, of course, what you experience as the world is intrinsically one with your consciousness.

The only place where you experience the world is in your consciousness. Philosophers have even questioned whether there actually is a world out there independent of conscious perception. We don't need to go there, but there's no doubt that the entire world happens inside you, one could say.

You don't know what you see, what the eyes transmit, the senses transmit comes nerve impulses that are sent to the brain. That's just on the physical level. And then these nerve impulses are decoded.

And then some kind of words appears within you. But to what extent that corresponds to a world out there, we don't even know. So to change the world, so as you look at the world, in some way you could almost say, go as far as to say what you're actually looking at is a reflection in the external, in the world of form of your state of consciousness.

One could say, it's an interesting way to look at it. And the state of consciousness is partly your, there is your personal world and there is a collective world. So the two, they are connected, but they're not the same.

Because first of all, there is what you experience as a world in your personal life. All the people you habitually interact with, where you live, your surroundings. It starts with simple things like even the objects that surround you habitually where you live.

So your world is your personal, your relationships with humans that you live with, your relationships with other humans that you meet every day casually. The way you work, the people you work with. So all these things, your personal life, so-called life is one sphere that you move in.

And the important thing is not to neglect that in search of a better collective world. The two are related, but to disregard, this is a mistake that is often made, to disregard your personal sphere, the world that is immediately accessible to you as you and your life, the people in your life, where you live, all that, your work. To neglect that, it's very seductive to think there's so much wrong with the world out there, the collective, that's really what I should be concerned with because there's so much wrong out there, you can see it, you just have to turn on the, you turn on some kind of device, whether it's television or that brings you the news and the commentaries, continuous stream, and then, of course, that is already, that is the collective world that then enters your living room or wherever you are.

And then they get mixed up, they can obliterate, the collective can obliterate your personal life. And you think of your personal life is quite irrelevant now because what really matters, the world needs to change. It's so dreadful.

Well, yes, the world needs to change and the world is changing because humanity is a work in progress. Humanity is slowly evolving, fits and starts, and regressive periods, it takes a few steps forward and then a few steps, four steps forward, three steps back, then a few more forward. There's a gradual evolution of humanity and to focus only on what is going wrong within that process, that evolutionary process is also very misleading because that's what you see when you watch the media and so on.

It focuses not on what's going right or what has gone right, it focuses on what's going wrong. Then you give that more and more attention. By giving attention to something, you amplify it.

So whatever you give, now I'm not saying to completely ignore the world, no, but to give it an excessive amount of attention and only continuously think about what's wrong with the world, then you forget what's right with the world and that then diminishes. So we have the external world coming into your living room, for example, through the media. And it can be, as I said, you can sometimes believe that your personal world, your immediate sphere of influence is irrelevant, but that's not the case.

So the starting point with changing the world is to become aware of how you operate in this world. The starting point is how do you relate to the humans in your life? How do you, what is it, your mind, what is your mind doing?

What is your predominant state of consciousness? What are your predominant emotions? What are the predominant thoughts that go through your mind?

It's vitally important to become aware of that. If you're not aware of what the predominant emotions are, that the predominant thoughts are, plus accompanying emotions that go through your mind, you are unaware. And the emotions, the thoughts and emotions that arise continuously within you are a form of conditioning, and so they take possession of you.

So it's vitally important as the starting point for changing the world is to become aware of your world. But you can see how people cherish talking about what somebody did or failed to do. And then he did, they talk about it again and again and feel more and more aggrieved.

And again, it comes back to the state of connectedness with being. It's only from that state of connectedness with a deeper dimension of who you are. From there, it becomes easier to forgive because forgive means there was something that was done on the level of form, by one life form to you, perhaps another life form.

Pain was inflicted or whatever it may be, treat whatever the transgression is. And it's only from there that you can see the relative nature of what was done because you are in touch with a space within you that was never hurt by that. That dimension in you is beyond what can be injured.

It's only the form can be injured. The psychological form, somebody might have insulted you deeply. The psychological form of who you are can feel pain or the physical form of who you are can feel pain.

And somebody inflicted that out of unconsciousness. Then recognizing the first step in forgiving is to recognize that this was an act of unconsciousness and you do not equate what this person did with who that person is. And it's only from the place of connectedness with being that you can say, no longer hold a grievance about that because you are in touch with that inside you that is beyond what can be injured.

If you're not in touch with that space, then you're still, it's hard to forgive. Forgiving means not to harbor grievance or resentment or any negative feeling about it. And really that's only possible when you are connected with the formless in yourself.

As Cause and Miracle says, nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God.

Nothing real can be threatened. This means what is ultimately real cannot be threatened. But what is ultimately real is not the form.

It's that which is deeper than the form that cannot be threatened. Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal ultimately exists.

It just seems to. Herein lies the peace of God means in the knowing of that lies the peace of God, but it needs to be not conceptual knowing, but a knowing on the level of the depths of your being. And then from there, you can look at anything anybody did to you and say, it's almost as if it didn't happen.

For a while, for example, I harbored grievances against my father for many years because he was, he suffered from enormous amount of bottled up anger and living with him as a child was like living with a powder keg or an unexploded bomb somewhere in the house. And everybody, one knew that at any moment, the slightest thing somebody said, and usually it was my mother, the slightest thing somebody said and this bomb would explode and the entire house would be filled with destructive energy. And for a sensitive child and any child is sensitive young child, it's a terrible thing to live in constant anguish at an explosion could be happening at any moment whenever he's in the house.

So I had the ambivalent feelings of fearing his return home after work and wanting him to come home, divided. And that was expressed once in a dream that I had as a child. And in the dream, I had cut my father up into little pieces and put in a plastic or some kind of sack and hidden under the bed.

And after I had done that in the dream, my father arrived home and I greeted him and loved him. And of course, all this resulted, even after when I was an adult already, resulted in quite a bit of grievance towards him because my childhood was fearful and unpleasant as a result. And it was only when a transformation happened inside me and there was suddenly that deep inner peace that I realized he did what he did according to the way in which life had conditioned him.

He had, when he was a child, he had enormous amount of resentment against his family because of, and of course the story can go on many generations. He was the seventh child. His father died when he was 15 and they took him out of the school.

They had to pay for school, boarding school. They took him out of boarding school because they said, we can't afford it anymore. But his sisters were still kept in boarding school.

So, and then he had to do menial jobs. And every day he was, his anger was growing and growing and growing. He carried it the rest of his life.

There was not enough consciousness in him to disidentify from the anger. He was, the anger was using him. It lived in him as an energy field and he could come up anytime.

He was as much a victim as I was. And I saw that after I had gone through the transformation and found inner peace, I could see that he did, he was a victim of his own circumstances. There was not enough consciousness in him to see what he was doing.

And immediately forgiveness happened. I didn't even have to say, I have to try to forgive. He never did.

It was as if he had never done anything to me because basically he hadn't, he wasn't even there. There was only the unconsciousness in him acting up. And then as he grew older, some of that anger dissipated.

Remnants of it remained. He also came into touch with some spiritual teachings, especially the power of now. And that helped to some extent.

And so his ego grew less, not didn't quite disappear, but it grew less, which when I was a child, his ego was gigantic and it was continuously fueled by anger. And an angry ego is something, it's the incredible hulk that, and that, so forgiveness happened naturally. And very often you see that when an injury happens, very often it's, there's a mental judgment of a situation and actually beyond that mental judgment, not that much happened.

Let's take a simple example. You arranged to meet somebody or somebody, he says, I'm going to help you with your moving. I'm going to help you move house.

I'll be there at five o'clock to help you move with my car. And he doesn't turn up and that just is as it is. Now the mind then comes in and says, he let me down.

He, or he betrayed me or he was, whatever the judgment of the mind is. And it is very often, it is the judgment of the situation that creates the emotion that feels injured. If you can just be with, or he, you said he would come, but he didn't turn up.

That's the fact. Whatever your mind wants to add to it gives you the sense of injury and strengthens the ego. So if you can just be with the pure facts, this is why all that stuff, when people about talking about other people, what they failed to do or what they did, what he did to me, he betrayed me.

Well, what did he do? Well, he went off with another woman or man. He betrayed me.

Betrayed me is an interpretation. And the more you have that thought that he betrayed me, the more you feel the emotion that goes with that thought. And you feel, who is it that feels that emotion?

The egoic self feels betrayed because who you deeply are, who you are in your essence doesn't feel betrayed. The fact is he went off with another woman. That's what he did.

Is that all? Yeah, that's what he did. If you refrain from adding a story to it, then you don't experience the, this may not be, this comes easy when you are connected with who you truly are.

Then it is easy to let go of the unnecessary imposition of stories upon events. The event is neutral. The story interpretation of it is what creates the anguish.

And so if you can just be with what is, but you can see how people cherish talking about what somebody did or failed to do. And then he did, they talk about it again and again and feel more and more aggrieved in who they are. Nothing really happened.

He didn't turn up. He didn't return the money that I lent him. I lent him the money, but he hasn't paid it back yet.

That's the fact of it. He is dishonest. Well, you don't need that.

He did something to me. He defrauded me. Mr. Madoff did it. This, a deeply unconscious person I wonder what he's doing now. He's sitting in his prison cell and many, many people have not forgiven him. Interesting position to be in, to have aggrieved so many people and created so much anguish and suffering in humans.

But for every single one of them, beyond their financial loss, they have their own lesson to learn. He has his lesson to learn. And life has given you, if you lost money with Mr. Madoff or whoever else, yes, you lost that money, but there is a deeper lesson you can learn in any loss. Any loss is, of course, one lesson is, of course, don't invest with him again. That's understood. Or anybody else like that.

That's understood. That's easy to know. But beyond that, there's a deeper lesson to learn and that is any lesson that comes with any kind of loss.

Any kind of loss is a potential opening into the formless because what you lose is something on the level of form. Whether it's money or reputation or some possession or even an ability to do something and suddenly you can't do it anymore. Any kind of loss is a loss on the level of form.

[Speaker 7] (21:56 - 22:50)
Thank you, Eckhart, for sharing the presence once again. My question is somewhat related to that last one, but from a different perspective. As the consciousness rises around us, there are many more resources and many new technologies to ease the suffering of humankind around the world.

But the white elephant in the room that no one seems to want to acknowledge in that process is the fact that the population is increasing faster and faster, it seems. I guess you can phrase that question so the answer is included, but I'd like to hear your perspective on what we might do to facilitate that process or how that process will take care of itself.

[Speaker 1] (22:51 - 22:57)
Can you be clear what is the process you refer to?

[Speaker 7] (22:58 - 23:11)
How the strain on the planet's resources is a result of the population increasing ever faster. How will we be able to resolve that conflict?

[Speaker 1] (23:12 - 57:38)
Well, it's obvious that the population cannot go on increasing because that would

lead to disastrous consequences. Ultimately, that's fine too, because the one consciousness will manifest through any form it chooses again and again and is evolving. But it is quite possible that the larger intelligence that is, that underlies the planet, the planet, there is an intelligence that pervades the planet itself.

The planet is an intelligent being, which mainstream science would, of course, not agree with. But I very strongly feel that and anybody who becomes sensitive enough and no longer totally absorbed in conceptual thinking can sense that the entire planet is an intelligent being. It has a regulating intelligence and I feel that if humans don't take action to reduce this proliferation of bodies, they continuously produce, if humans don't take positive action, then the regulating intelligence of the planet, planetary intelligence is just one another expression of the one universal intelligence.

We'll take action and we'll do something to reduce the number of human beings on the planet. This is my feeling. I cannot prove to you that this is a correct prediction or gnostication, but the intelligence will take action and whether the action it takes is a violent form of action or whether the action it takes is nonviolent, I don't know.

For planetary intelligence, it would be very easy to reduce humans within one generation by reducing the fertility in the sperm of men so that very far fewer babies are produced and within one or two generations, the population could be reduced by 50% if many men are not able to father children anymore simply because something is missing there. That would be problemless. So if I, I'm not in charge of planetary intelligence, but if I were, that's what I would do.

It's totally painless. Don't have to kill anybody. So, but we shouldn't wait for that.

We need to look and see if we, first of course, we need to discover the wisdom inside. If we only approach it from the analytical mind, we'll just create, we tackle one problem here and we'll create a series of more problems on top of that. So we need to become, go within, find the wisdom that is in the stillness, go within.

And then the question is whether those people who are able to do that are those people that take decisions, probably not because the politicians are not there yet, most of them. But we are making a start here. So first, so that you can take intelligent action go within, never act from fear or kind of panic.

We need to save the planet. Oh my God. This is you generate fear.

If you generate fear, nothing good can come out of that. Even if your intentions are good, any action that is taken on the basis of fear is going to have negative consequences and secondary effects. So first we become still and peaceful and realize the truth of the beginning of the cause in miracles, which says, nothing real can be threatened.

Nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God. And, oh, okay.

Now, what action can we take? If you are not in a powerful position, at least perhaps you can come up with ideas that come from out of the stillness. I don't have a series of actions that mankind should take because this teaching doesn't work in that way.

This teaching is designed to take the individual human being deep enough within so that they can connect with a source of who they are and everything else other people will have to do. So I can't give, tell you what course of action to take because the focus of this teaching isn't in outer action. But it goes to the source of all intelligence and all wisdom, but I have a feeling that you have some ideas already.

Is that right? A small contribution, perhaps. Yes.

So, and that's a good start and see where that takes you because you are able to access the stillness and fruitful, creative ideas come out of that. So all I can say to you to carry on with what you're doing and see what else comes to you and in what other ways you can be helpful and useful so that planetary intelligence does not have to intervene. Hmm.

Compassion towards others implies that you have empathy and you can only have empathy to the degree to which you are in touch with the deeper levels of who you are. If you live exclusively through a mental sense of self, then you cannot have empathy because you are completely out of touch with who you are in the essence of your being. The capacity for compassion is something that is part of the evolution of the human being.

Humans, even nowadays, in this present time, there are still millions of humans who are so trapped in their egoic sense of self that they are incapable of sensing, feeling the reality of another human being. The word that we need to use here is empathy, which is closely related with compassion. Hmm.

There are still many, many humans on the planet who are so trapped in their egoic sense of self that they're incapable of empathy. And then there are many others in whom empathy is present to a greater or lesser degree. And without empathy, of course, there can be no compassion.

Now, this is particularly important when we talk about compassion with reference to other human beings or other life forms. For a moment, let's talk, though, about compassion towards yourself and what that means. Particularly as awareness begins to awaken in you, you become aware of your own patterns.

You begin to become aware of your own behavior, not necessarily in the moment that it happens, but in many cases, those people who are beginning to awaken, the awareness is beginning to arise. Those humans become aware, for example, after they have engaged in unconscious, speech, unconscious behavior, reactive behavior, and suddenly they become aware, oh, that's what I did. I got completely taken over by anger.

I got completely taken over by my overreaction. I said things to that person that I didn't really mean, that they just came out of my mouth, or I even, could even go to physical violence. I did that.

How could I have done that? And many humans who are awakening are experiencing these times when they begin to judge themselves as not good enough. So that is something to be aware of when you, as you begin to awaken, you become an observer of yourself to a greater or lesser degree, rather than just being totally identified with whatever comes into your head and whatever words come out of your mouth and whatever action you're engaged in, you're so identified that there's not the slightest space of awareness.

Now, there's no point in talking about compassion towards yourself to people who are so unconscious. So when we talk about compassion, it already implies that there's some awareness in you, you're aware of yourself, you're aware of your behavior, and you experience different levels of awareness at different times in your life from day to day. And then you become aware that there are times when you are unconscious.

And usually then you wake up, so to speak, out of it and say, oh, you're taken over by my pain body again. And for many people, that can become a source of suffering because they judge themselves as not good enough. And they even have a hostile, begin to have a hostile relationship towards the more unconscious aspects of who they are, their imperfections.

So compassion towards yourself is to still realize there are areas in your life where you're still unconscious, and that's how it is. And you forgive yourself. Again, forgiveness is related also with all these things that are closely related, empathy, compassion, forgiveness.

You forgive yourself for your moments of unconsciousness, or if you've done bad things in the past, and this is often people have asked me that question. You have, in the past, when you were not as aware or completely unaware, you did certain things that you now regret, you recognize them as very unconscious. And what do you do with that?

The compassionate way is to see that at that time, you could not have acted differently because your actions reflected your degree of unconsciousness, consciousness, unconsciousness. And that recognition is compassion. You forgive yourself.

Instead of making an identity out of your own past unconsciousness for yourself and say, I am this kind of a person, which is again a mental construct, instead of making an identity for yourself out of past unconsciousness, you recognized your behavior at that time as unconscious. So you manifested the collective, ultimately the collective unconsciousness that is in the human psyche, the collective psyche of humanity. And so when you don't make it into an identity, then you realize that it is not who you essentially are.

And so you become compassionate towards yourself. But it also applies to the present, at the present time, not making impossible demands of perfection, and then you fall short. There are certain things, certain areas in your life that will never be perfect on the level of form.

You cannot be a perfect human being on the level of form. There are always certain things that you are good at, other things you are not good at. That's fine, no matter how conscious you are.

So you don't demand perfection of yourself, not on this level of form. The realization is there is a deep, at the deepest level of who you are, there is perfection already. You are already perfect, complete, whole, at the deepest level, yes.

On the outer level, there will always be certain imperfections. And so you have compassion with yourself as far as your imperfections are concerned, which does not mean that you actually indulge in behavior that is harmful to yourself or others and say, oh, that's okay, I am compassionate towards myself, so I continue to get drunk three times a week and beat up my wife, and I'm just compassionate towards myself. This is not what I'm talking about.

You cannot become compassionate with inflicting suffering on others as you recognize it now. If it happened in the past, that is different. So there are some forms of behavior that need to be rectified through awareness, through presence, and other things you need to accept.

So there's wisdom required, but it's not that difficult to tell whether your behavior is truly dysfunctional and causes suffering, or whether there's just certain things that are not perfect, but there isn't much you can do about it. You might be too slow in certain, for example, myself. There's a huge area of imperfection in my life that there are many things that I don't deal with or don't deal with on time.

So sometimes things get emailed, emails are not answered. If you've ever sent me an email, we might not have received a reply. So I don't feel really bad about that because I'm compassionate towards myself.

But if that causes you suffering, not receiving an email, I don't suggest, I did not cause you that suffering. You caused it yourself through having certain expectations. So compassionate towards yourself is important.

Compassion towards others means, implies that you have empathy towards other human beings. And you can only have empathy to the degree to which you are in touch with the deeper levels of who you are. If you live exclusively through a mental sense of self, then you cannot have empathy because you're completely out of touch with who you are in the essence of your being.

The empathy that you have for others arises out of the realization of who you are in the essence of your being. And then, because then by recognizing your own essence, you recognize the essence of the other. But I wrote in, I believe in the power of now, that there are two aspects to compassion.

One is you observe and you recognize perhaps the suffering of another human being or another life form. You can almost feel it yourself. And you may want to do something about it.

That is often part of it. Compassion is the sensing, and it may lead to action, if action is possible or wise, or if you're able to do it. But that's one aspect.

The other aspect of compassion is not normally talked about. And that is to sense the essence of the other person underneath their suffering. Can only do that because you can sense your own essence.

By doing that, by sensing the essence of the other through your own and recognize that there's something in the other that is you, that is ultimately that's consciousness. So you recognize the consciousness, not the conditioned consciousness, but the unconditioned consciousness in the other, then you connect with the other at a very deep level. And by doing that, that is a level of perfection beyond form.

Then you recognize there is some, there is a dimension, a transcendent dimension in this human being that may be in suffering. There is a transcendent dimension in that human being that is beyond the suffering, but that human being may not know that. But you recognize it in the other.

Then you still feel the suffering also of the other, but you don't lose yourself in the suffering of the other. You recognize the suffering for what it is, but it does not draw you into suffering also. It's just on the, there is a, something resonates in you resonates with it, but you are not drawn into suffering by the other person because you're connected with the transcendent dimension in yourself and the other.

But now you can truly, because if you are suffering too, you can't be really of real help. You can truly help the other if help is possible. That if you are connected to the transcendent level at the same time, there are people who are very empathetic towards others and some of those people are called upon to become professional helpers.

You might become a therapist, you might become a social worker. So it's often people who have a lot of empathy for others. They choose helping others as their profession.

And many of those people at first, they are happy with what they're doing, but many of them actually after a few years experience burnout, experience depression. The suicide rate of among psychotherapists and psychiatrists is quite high. So they lose themselves in the suffering of others and make it their own.

That is not something that you want to do and is not something that is necessary. And this is particularly important, perhaps now what I'm saying now for to hear for those people who are professional helpers, the essence of who you are needs to be always in the background of whatever you do, whatever action you perform, whatever words you speak. You need to stay connected with that deeper essence so that there is a peace and a fullness, the fullness of life as Jesus called it, that you can sense that core of yourself as consciousness, you are consciousness.

And the other also ultimately is consciousness going through the dream of suffering ultimately, the nightmare of suffering, and you do what you can. So stay connected to the stillness within yourself when you help others, feel the stillness, the alert stillness, and then do what you have to do. I'll say a little bit more about compassion.

Compassion needs also to be, to exist within the larger contexts of awareness. Compassion is a wonderful thing. It is a sign that you as a human being have already evolved beyond complete identification with form, so that's, it's a wonderful thing.

Nevertheless, the application of compassion when it becomes action requires awareness. An example, one could give many examples. You may see a homeless person in the street.

Now, you can, you can, you can, you sense perhaps the suffering of that person, and you want to, out of that compassion that you feel, you may feel called upon to help in one way or another. You can buy a sandwich for that person and give it to the person. You can give money.

It's also possible that you might look and say, oh, I actually have a spare guest room in my house, and so you invite the homeless person into your home because there's a strong desire in you to help. But the question is, is there wisdom with it also? Let's say you invite this person to your house and wanting to help, which is a wonderful thing, and perhaps it works beautifully.

Perhaps it gives this person a new start in life. Or it could be that this person that you have invited into your house rapes your daughter, steals from you, inflicts violence on other members of the family, and then leaves. So you have exercised compassionate action without wisdom.

So what it is that you do as compassion arises, it requires wisdom. In what way can I help this person? And sometimes the help is not physical help.

It is help, for example, some people are in deep psychological suffering. The help that you can give that person is attention. You can listen to them, and perhaps out of this attention that you give, which is presence, this is what they need, perhaps help arises through something that you say to them.

How I started as a spiritual teacher, people came to me, they spontaneously, they asked questions. Then I said things. I could see their suffering, but I was not suffering with them.

I could sense their suffering, I could sense a small amount of suffering in me, but I was deeply connected already then with the essence of who I am, and I realized there was no suffering. So when I listened to these people, often there was a slight smile on my face, and that smile on my face was there, they were talking about their suffering to me, and as I was listening very attentively, there was a slight smile on my face, and some of them suddenly stopped talking and said, why are you smiling? Aren't you, do you think that is funny?

And I realized, oh, I mustn't smile, because I smiled because I could sense something beyond their suffering that they themselves could not sense. That was in me, but also in them. There was a dimension where there was no suffering, and occasionally they, by me sensing that, they also could sense it in themselves, and that is called healing, spiritual healing at the deepest level when that happens.

So I was helping many people, you can say out of compassion, but then I realized there are also other people who continuously come to you, not because they want to get better, they want to suck up your energy, which is you give them attention continuously, and they love that, and they come every day with new problems. They don't want the solution, they get addicted to your attention, and if you continue to give it, you will become depleted, you will become, ultimately you would experience burnout, and it has no purpose. Again, this is a similar case where compassion, the exercise of compassion in the practical realm requires wisdom.

So there were some people that I had to say, I'm not going to see you anymore, and they go, oh, how can you do that to me? But that ultimately was the best thing that I could do for. They were not ready for, but perhaps of what I said to them when I did see them, perhaps some of that remained in their mind, and at some point it actually did change their lives.

I don't know. But here again, helping people is great, being used by others who are unconscious beings instead of looking for their own being, looking for the source of all aliveness and energy within themselves, they look to others to give them that aliveness. So again, wisdom is required here so that you don't exercise compassion stupidly.

That's an extremely important part of awakening. In fact, you need that to provide fuel for the arising of presence.

[Speaker 7] (57:44 - 57:54)
Our listener writes, how can we stay present and in touch with consciousness on days when we feel depressed and lack motivation?

[Speaker 1] (57:57 - 1:10:59)
Right. When sometimes that is in quite a few people associated with periods of low physical energy because energy fluctuates. And so from occasionally you may experience low levels of physical energy and this can affect the mind too.

The important thing is first of all, when you talk about being depressed and so on, to see whether there is, what kind of thoughts are being created in your mind during that time. Ask yourself whether or examine whether the certain types of thinking create that feeling of depression. Thoughts like, oh, it's all pointless anyway.

Oh, what's the point of it all? I hate this world. There's no point in even struggling anymore.

I'm fed up, completely fed up with life. I can't take any more, that type of thinking. Are you aware, what is the relationship between the emotion that you feel and your thought processes?

Are perhaps your thoughts creating that emotion or could it be that the emotion is creating the thoughts? So when you are depressed, there will be certain thoughts going through your mind. And probably there will not be pleasant thoughts.

So be aware of the relationship between what you're feeling, this depressed feeling of sadness, depression, you feel dejected and your thought processes. And if in the moment of thinking, those types of thoughts that accompany the feeling of depression or pointlessness, if you can be there and observe those thoughts, then again, as in the first question, answer to the first question, when you recognize those thoughts, you no longer completely believe in them. You recognize them as a conditioned movement in your mind.

And then you may be able to come to an acceptance of whatever it is you're feeling at this moment without adding the baggage of thought to it. So what remains then is this feeling of perhaps low energy or it could be an activation of your pain body to some extent, you feel emotion in you that doesn't feel good, but you're then no longer fueling it with your thinking. So if there's enough awareness in you while you're going through a period of depression, allow yourself to feel what it is you're feeling, but be careful that you don't fuel it with your thinking.

And if you feel what you feel, that's all you have to do is surrender to your experience of this moment. You accept your experience of this moment, which at this moment may be not pleasant, but that's what is inside you. So probably the greatest spiritual practice is to accept whatever it is that you're experiencing at this moment.

So if you're experiencing depression, then that's the isness of the present moment. And as much as possible, you step out of your mind and just be the awareness. Observe, it may be the case that there is an addiction in you that periodically arises, and that's the addiction to unhappiness, the addiction to negativity.

And that is usually connected with a pain body that needs to renew itself periodically. If most of you will know what I'm talking about, you've read about the pain body, old emotion that still lives in you. Sometimes it's dormant, sometimes it needs to feed to take in more so that it can stay alive.

It's a semi-autonomous energy field in you. And so in the absence of, its favorite way to feed is on other people's reactions. So it will create drama, it will create, push your partners or other family members, people's buttons, so to speak, so that you get a negative emotional reaction.

And so it loves the drama of the emotional drama and will provoke drama. And that's how the pain body loves to feed. But if that's, for some reason, is not possible for whatever reason, the pain body is quite happy also to feed on your thoughts.

So it will periodically rise up into your mind and then you will think thoughts that feed the pain body, but the thoughts themselves already created by the pain body. And then it's a vicious circle. The negative thoughts that you don't want at that moment, you do not want to let go of that type of thinking because there's not enough awareness in you at that moment.

At that moment, when I say you don't want to let go, or when I say you are addicted to your unhappiness, when I say you, it's not really you, it's a mind pattern with which you are that moment completely identified. And that's why I call it you. So in that moment, it is you.

So there are many, many people who are addicted to their unhappy states, the unhappiness in them. And if some people have it almost continuously, but most people have periods when this happens and then it subsides, and that's the typical way in which the pain body arises from its dormant state, feeds on several hours or even days of deep negative thinking, and then subsides and then for a while you're free again. So addiction to unhappiness, this is one way of speaking about it.

Be careful to see whether you can detect in yourself when in the moment of it happening, you're almost, you're indulging in this feeling of could be self-pity or condemnation of life or others or whatever it is, you love it. You love that, you love those feelings and those thoughts. And you don't want to get out.

If somebody at that moment said to you to come out of it, you say, oh, shut up, I don't want to hear. Now, some people have them so strongly that the addiction to unhappiness has become part of their conditioned personality. So they are, part of their identity is a very unhappy sense of self.

And if that is a terrible place to be in, but again, the only way that you can transcend that and escape from that prison is to be aware when it happens. So a good question therefore is, am I enjoying my unhappiness in some weird way? Do I love my unhappiness?

And if I love my unhappiness, who is that I that loves unhappiness? It must be a weird and crazy I that loves unhappiness. So maybe that's not really me.

Maybe it's just an unhappy self in me that loves. I know that I had that very strongly for many years in my 20s. So you have to be really alert and see whether you enjoy your unhappiness.

And once you notice it, you say, oh, wow, I'm really enjoying this. In the moment of noticing it, you've made it conscious. And then it's very likely that you cannot go on very much longer enjoying it because this can only continue when you're unconscious.

It needs your unconsciousness, this false self. It's an aspect of the false self that is the ego. It needs your unconsciousness to continue to survive.

But when you make it conscious, then there comes a moment of surprise and says, oh, wow, I'm actually enjoying this. I don't want to let, I love this negative thoughts, love in a perverse way almost. This is the egoic kind of love.

And then you might even ask, is that who I am? Who am I? Why do I love this?

This awareness is coming. Awareness is arising. And then suddenly you step out of identification with that mind pattern, mental emotion.

And that is part of the awakening. So those things for many people are a very important part of their spiritual awakening. The very important part of spiritual awakening is to become aware of the unconsciousness in you, the various ways in which the unconsciousness manifests in you.

That's an extremely important part of awakening. In fact, you need that to provide fuel for the arising of presence. The dysfunctional states, the dysfunctional mental emotional states in the negative mental emotional states, the mental emotional states that create so much suffering, ultimately they provide not only motivation for awakening, they also provide the fuel for awakening.

So be grateful when you detect those things in yourself. That's a, it's not a bad thing. It's a wonderful thing to detect the unconsciousness in you, to become aware of the unconsciousness in you and realize that it is not you ultimately.

It, for years, it had been, it pretended to be you and you were so identified with it, yet you thought it was you. And suddenly or gradually another deep eye, it's the deep eye that is now awakens. And the deep eye, which is presence, recognizes that the surface eye is a conditioned entity and it's ultimately, it's not who I am.

It is there and that's a disidentification and that's all part of the awakening process.

[Speaker 5] (1:11:24 - 1:12:08)
I know you work with psychotherapists and therapists in helping others. And my question is, how can we follow up on the analogy of the caterpillar? How can we support others?

How can we know if they are there, if they are not there? Is it possible to help? I don't know what the question is, but it's, can we support someone in this process?

You obviously are and Kim is obviously supporting us. So is there different stages that we can support different people in different processes?

[Speaker 1] (1:12:09 - 1:20:11)
The moment the spiritual awakening, if we want to call it that, happens in you, which is the disidentification from the thinking mind and certain degree of arising of presence. Well, not the moment it happens, but a little bit after that, as this process continues, many people find that more and more people come, you meet people sometimes seemingly accidentally, or it might be people who you know already, who need you, who also are at a stage of readiness, but don't know it yet. And you may find and will find that these people are drawn to you.

You may not immediately recognize them. In fact, you may think, listen, this person is not going to awaken in this lifetime, but you can get surprise, big surprises. Sometimes the most unlikely people can come to you and you know that it's happening.

There's a moment usually when you notice there is a transmission either of presence as an energy field, or they ask you a question, you give an answer, and the answer has a certain power or aliveness to it. It comes through you spontaneously because the question was a genuine question and there was an opening in the other person. If it's not a genuine question, if it's a question asked out of curiosity, what's that spiritual stuff all about that you do or whatever, or tell me about that spirit stuff, but there's no real opening, then your answer will not be good, or there may be no answer.

But if it's a real question and there's some degree of presence in you, then there will be a real answer. And the helping then comes in two ways. One is through the energy that you emanate as you are present.

The second is through what you say to them. And that is the beginning of you becoming a spiritual teacher. And many of you, some of you are already spiritual teachers, whether formally or not formally, some of you will become formal spiritual teachers because the world is in great need of you.

Humans want you. They might not know it yet, but everybody, even if you do not become a formal spiritual teacher, you will do some teaching informally through everybody you meet because you spread, your state of consciousness spreads to others. That applies both to unconscious people who spread their negativity or the viral infection of their minds and to present people who spread presence.

And it's not that you are doing it. So an important obstacle could be if you think that you need to do something to help them. This is very seductive because it's a wonderful thing to help others.

But the obstacle is you think that it is up to you to help them. It's not. In fact, you wouldn't know how to.

I wouldn't know how to. So you have to allow it to happen by holding the presence, especially when somebody comes to you, ask the question or you say something, hold the presence and then see what happens. So it's not you who is doing it.

Sometimes I've met some people who said they've been asked to, first they saw some individuals, helped them, they're growing and growing in presence. And then somebody approached them, can you give a talk to our little group? And then they came to me and said, I don't think I'm ready to give a talk to a group.

Somebody asked me to give a talk to a group. I think I'm not ready. And I said, if you think you're ready, then that's not a good sign.

And because there's probably a little ego in there that thinks I'm ready to be a spiritual teacher. Just come to me and I will heal you. But if you feel that the most powerful place, whether you are with one person or with a group of people, the most powerful place is to not know.

But you have to be comfortable with not knowing. If you're uncomfortable with not knowing what to say, what to do, then you go, oh dear, what should I say? The mind says, quick, say something useful to this person.

And then you think of things you've read in a book. Well, Eckhart says that it doesn't mean you should never quote, but it's always more powerful if it comes from you. So it only comes if you are comfortable with, enter that space of not knowing, which is basically you surrender thought and you just look at the person and you listen and then see what answer comes, then see what you say, if anything.

In some cases, you might not say anything. So the help allow it to move through you. And that's a big relief.

It means you don't have to do it. You only become a vehicle for it, an opening for it. You become an opening for consciousness.

So you don't have to heal people, help people. I mean, you can help physically. That's a different matter.

You can give somebody food or money to help, but at a deeper level, you can't do anything. So getting out of the way, and then it will happen through you. In the Course in Miracles, it says, the moment you become a student of the Course in Miracles, which by the way, is a lovely teaching, but not for everybody.

So don't believe that because I mentioned it now, you have to go and get it. It's great for some people. It's a beautiful spiritual work, but for others, it's not the right one.

Nothing is right for everybody. Course in Miracles, however, says, the moment you start studying the Course in Miracles, which really implies the moment you begin to disidentify from the conditioned mind, you become a teacher of God. Now the ego, of course, would probably love that term.

That's just why I personally would not use it, but there is some truth in it. It's not a terminology that I would use, but the moment the presence arises, you begin to teach presence, but really, presence does it through you. Thank you.

Thank you.

[Speaker 6] (1:20:34 - 1:21:38)
How can we use the essence identity to help us determine in next steps or decisions or choices or responses to challenging situations?

[Speaker 1] (1:21:42 - 1:25:26)
You don't use it. You don't learn to use the essence identity. The essence identity uses you.

So you don't have to learn and figure out how to use essence identity. The more you become rooted in your essence identity, the more you will find that right action, what you need to do, what you need to say at any given moment comes from that dimension of consciousness in you. And then gradually we begin to realize that it's not you who is using it.

It uses your mind to manifest itself through you. It uses your body to emanate through. So that's the important thing.

The question then is not right. You cannot use it because who are you? You would be, it would be the form identity using the essence identity.

One, you could look at it like that, but it's not really how it works. Gradually, as your essence identity emerges more, it uses your body and mind to manifest in this world and to bring about change too. First it just emanates presence, and then it flows, it begins to use your mind, your speech becomes more, less repetitive, more interesting, more creative, probably you speak less than one used to, that applies to almost everybody, but what you say has significance and power to it.

And it changes the way you think. It's because it shines into your mind and begins to shine away all destructive, dysfunctional, and repetitive, and compulsive, unconscious thought movements and thought patterns. So it rises into your mind.

It uses you, and even that is a limited way of talking about it because it is you. It is the emergence of who you essentially are. But who you essentially are is not a separate autonomous entity.

Who you essentially are is deeply connected with the nature and the identity of the universe itself. The heart of the essence of you is also the essence of the universe. And when you go beyond this narrow identification with form, you are more deeply connected with the whole, with the totality.

And the totality of consciousness acts, speaks, emanates through you. So that is the shift, you become a different, and it's an evolutionary shift. You become a different being.

So it may sometimes look to you as if you were using it, but really it's using you. And that's how it should be.

[Speaker 16] (1:25:29 - 1:25:34)
Yeah. Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 4] (1:26:02 - 1:26:05)
It doesn't mean you cannot seek a cure.

[Speaker 1] (1:26:05 - 1:48:53)

You can take steps. But while it's there, to see it as a purification because it has the potential of completely burning up your ego. So what to do, especially if you've already tried a lot of approaches, it's always easy to speak for somebody who is not experiencing physical pain.

At the moment, I'm not experiencing physical pain. I have known pain, but not prolonged period of time, not physical pain or a prolonged period of time. But I know suffering, there is such a thing as conscious suffering.

Obviously you should continue to seek ways of alleviating the pain or finding a cure. But in the meantime, while it's there, I suggest that you explore the possibility of conscious suffering that was practiced, for example, in Christianity. And it may still be practiced by certain people who are strongly identified with the Christian religion, but it was a very common thing in middle ages to when you had pain, to equate your pain with the suffering of Christ.

Christ was the archetype of suffering. It's a, whether you see Christ as a real person that lived, I believe he did, or whether Christ is a mythical concept, it can work in the same way. Christ is the archetype of suffering and of transcending suffering.

In the same way that Buddha's teaching, he himself described, Buddha said, I teach suffering and the end of suffering. The literal words of the Buddha, I teach suffering means I show you how suffering arises. The end of suffering is the transcendence of suffering.

Jesus didn't say that, but it's all contained in his life and the image of the crucifixion and the cross, because the cross is the instrument of suffering. It's a torture instrument. And then you see the God nailed to the cross or the man nailed to the cross.

It is the archetype of human suffering. In that sense, one could say, he represents every man and woman because every man and woman has goes through suffering, whether it might not be extreme physical pain, but it is human suffering, some more extreme than others. And then he died and then the resurrection happened.

And then the cross, the torture instrument, the very thing that gave him the pain symbolizes the divine. So it becomes a portal into the transcendent dimension by completely surrendering, which is the image on the cross is the image of total surrender. And that is in some traditions called conscious suffering, which is you don't need to necessarily, if you're not a believing Christian, it would be hard for you to say that you are suffering with Christ, but there's a deep truth in here.

And that is, and I have seen it in people that I have known, people who have had pain for years. It can, if used consciously, it can erode your ego completely. If you regard it as a fire, that's burning up, burning you up, the false you in burning up.

And so conscious is to actually not to resist it psychologically. It doesn't mean you cannot seek a cure. You can take steps, but while it's there, to see it as a purification, because it has the potential of completely burning up your ego.

If used consciously. And that is for those people who, you might as well practice that because that's all that's possible for you at the moment. If you then see there's a healing method or a healer somewhere, why not go there?

But in the meantime, you practice conscious suffering. So that is not only with physical pain, you can also do it with other situations that you may be in.

Suffering arises and you come to a complete acceptance.

If you completely accept, in a way we really, to be strict, we should differentiate between suffering and pain. Normally the way I use the words are, suffering is the psychological pain that is generated through resistance. So if you have a physical pain, it can be terrible, but you can have physical pain without suffering, meaning without any resistance, psychological resistance on top of it, that's the suffering.

And that applies to not just physical pain, but any situation in life, anything that goes wrong, there's the, the suffering is the psychological layer that is created through non-acceptance. So that's, that does not need to be there. That is a practice.

So we all, most of you, most humans on the planet don't have a spiritual teacher. They don't even, wouldn't even want, they don't, haven't even heard of a spirit, anything such a spiritual teacher, what's that? But they all have their suffering.

So I say that everybody has their spiritual teacher and for most humans, it's their suffering because eventually the suffering has an evolutionary function that is both the suffering that seems to come to you out of nowhere and the suffering that is self-generated in your mind and through unconscious action in the world, which then draws to you further unconsciousness from others. Nations, for example, go to war, that's unconscious action, then drawing further suffering to themselves. So there are two kinds of suffering.

One seems to come out of nowhere and other suffering is obviously generated through unconscious mind activity. And it is that kind of suffering that creates all the atrocities on a collective level and the personal drama that people are engaged in on a daily basis that is ultimately completely unnecessary, but it is generated by unconscious mind activity and the egoic self, which is mind made. So those are, that's the suffering that, now, if you look at the amount of suffering that humans encounter, you will see that the larger part of suffering that humans encounter is self-generated.

Yes, there is suffering that happens through earthquakes, natural disasters, and illness. Illness is already on the borderline between self-generated and something that just comes to you. Many illnesses are self-generated through dysfunctional thinking and emotion.

But if you look at the amount of suffering that's self-generated, it's far greater than the amount that seems to come to you from the outside. If you look at the history of the 20th century, especially the first half of the 20th century, how many people died through natural disasters or died prematurely through an illness compared to the people that were murdered by their fellow human beings? Far more were murdered by their fellow human beings in the 20th, especially the first half of the 20th century than people who suffered through natural disasters or natural causes, just amazing.

It was hell for millions, millions of people, 150 million, who knows the exact figure who were murdered in the first half of the 20th century alone. Many of them, not even many, yes, between nations, but millions and millions of others murdered by their own governments in Russia, in Germany, in China, by insane governments, murdering or, as in China, bringing about through absurd policies, the starvation of millions. So if you want to, if you have any doubt about the dysfunction of the egoic mind, you just look at that, look at that history and see how much suffering humans generate for themselves.

So that is something that we no longer do and that's why we are here. We don't do that and there's still a certain amount of suffering that will come to us. Now, there is a belief, especially new age people, they will tell you whenever something happens to you, or you fall ill, or you have an accident, or whatever happens, they may ask you, why did you manifest that?

And that makes lots of people angry, understandably, because they say, I didn't manifest this accident, it just happened. There was a crazy driver and he comes coming towards me. Nothing I could do, I didn't manifest it.

Or I didn't manifest this terrible illness, I never wanted it, what are you saying? Therefore, I never say, did you manifest it or you manifested it, or you should look into why you manifested it. Why not leave it alone?

All I say is, whatever happens to you, once it's happening, accept it as if you had chosen it. That's the important thing. I'm not saying you chose it, you won't want to hear that.

And it's not even literally true, there's some truth hiding there, but we don't need to go there. It's more important to choose whatever is happening, whatever is happening in this moment or as if you had chosen it. And then the resistance goes.

No need to think right now. There's nothing to add to this moment by thinking about it. So all that thinking would do is obscure your awareness.

Your awareness of the present moment, which means obscure your awareness. If you have problems waiting for you, you can think about them when we finish. And even then, I would suggest and recommend that you set aside brief periods when you think about your so-called problems, if they are real.

In other words, a real problem is a situation that you need to deal with. Either right now, in the moment when it arises, in which case it's not a problem, it's a challenge. Or something that tomorrow you may have to do or next week or next month.

And you may have to think about what you're going to do to the extent to which it's possible to plan and set aside a period of time when you do that. And then when that's done, come back into present moment awareness. So the worst fate is for your mind to be occupied continuously with past and future.

And as you know, past and future exist in the mind. Remove the mind, thought. There's no past or future.

Past or future exists for you as thought. And it's indispensable for dealing with the practical aspects of life. But it's a huge obstacle for going deeper within yourself, deeper into reality.

A huge obstacle to finding that state of connectedness with a deeper reality. A huge obstacle to knowing who you are. So right now, all you need to do, and there's no doing, but just use the word, all you need to do is look at the image on the screen, listen to the words, which are all pointers, signposts, and as you look at the image on the screen and listen to the words, be aware also of yourself as the still space, the still presence, without which you would not be able to look at the image on the screen or listen to the words. It's only because there is that light of presence that receives the sense perception of seeing and hearing that there can be seeing and hearing.

The moment you start thinking about past and future, the moment you start thinking, some of your consciousness incarnates into form. The incarnation, I believe carnation comes from flesh, carnal, the word incarnation is to become form, to become physical form, but it's not necessarily physical. You become a psychological form.

Every thought is that. So some of the consciousness incarnates into mental formations. And that's okay, there's nothing wrong with that.

It's a good thing that you're able to think. It's not a good thing to lose yourself in the thinking. Why is it not a good thing?

Because it makes your life miserable. And if you make your life miserable, you make other people's lives miserable without even knowing what you're doing. That's the essence of unconsciousness.

The really unconscious people, which is still millions, billions on the planet, they don't know that they are making their lives miserable and other people's lives miserable. Or as somebody once put it, they know not what they do. And here you can learn to become comfortable with the beautiful, let's call it state, it's not a state, the beautiful state of not thinking.

Become familiar with that, experience how lovely it is, not having to think.

[Speaker 7] (1:49:29 - 1:50:02)
Here's what our questioner wrote in. I have an incredibly strong poverty mindset, which drags me down and keeps me continually worrying about small things. Don't ever waste food, this mindset says inside me.

I better keep this because I might need it someday. I'll never be able to afford that. Those thoughts are unending.

How can the power of presence help me shed this crushing burden?

[Speaker 1] (1:50:06 - 2:24:01)
Good, well, that's the good, the good news is that the questioner is already aware or let's say, I'm going to address the questioner as you because I assume the questioner is listening and watching. So the good thing is that you are already aware of those thoughts and this is not a natural thing. There are still millions of people who have these or other types of conditioned thinking and are completely unaware that they have whatever type of conditioned thinking it is that they have.

They are unaware because they are 100% identified with that conditioned thinking. So they don't recognize it as conditioned thinking. That is how they perceive reality.

That is what determines their reactions. And these are self-perpetuating thoughts that continuously create the same emotions. And this then becomes a person's reality.

They inhabit that reality and it is totally not just colored but distorted by the conditioning of their mind. So they think these thoughts, but they cannot differentiate between reality and those thoughts. So you already know that you have these types of thoughts.

So that's already an indication that there has been an awakening of consciousness, which is the arising of awareness. Awareness is a dimension that is deeper and vaster than thought. So when you become aware of what your mind is doing, then that is a sign that the awakening process in you has already begun.

So that's a wonderful thing. So now it does not necessarily mean that immediately you become free of the effect of those thoughts. So the thoughts still have a certain power and their power is to create certain emotions and their power is to create certain reactions and certain actions out in the world.

But while this still happens, there is in you an observing presence in the background. And that's also where the possibility of freedom comes in, the possibility of choice, the possibility of not acting out those thoughts, provided that in the moment of these thoughts or one of these thoughts occurring, you can still be there as the observing presence, as the awareness. And if you are, then now you may not fully realize this, but when you're able to watch a thought like that, then the possibility arises that you can, you no longer need to be controlled by the thought.

Let's give an example in your case. Let's say you have certain objects that you say, oh, I need to hang onto this because I might need it one day. I must keep this and I must keep that.

Perhaps you have already accumulated many things that you actually don't use. And whenever this happens, instead of letting go of something, your mind says, no, you must hang on because you might need it one day. So you can bring in, you recognize the thought and you realize you do not have to act out the thought.

So you can ask yourself what happens if I don't act out this thought and I do almost the opposite of what this thought is telling me. For example, in the case of needing to hang on to material objects that you probably won't need, you can make it a practice periodically to give things away. Despite the fact that your thoughts are telling you, oh, I must hang on, but you are there as the awareness and the awareness can override the thought.

You don't have to fight the thought. The awareness simply overrides the thought. And then from the, so then instead of acting according to the thought, your action then arises no longer from the thought, it arises from the awareness.

And then you can make it a practice to give things away. And you may still find your mind telling you, oh, no, don't do that. But this can actually strengthen in you the dimension of presence or awareness by simply observing a thought, recognizing it, and then realizing that that thought is not actually intelligent.

It's conditioned, part of the conditioned mind. And then what arises then is the true intelligence. So we could call it also the presence arising is also the awakening of true intelligence.

And then you make it a practice to give things away, either to somebody you know, or you bring it to a thrift store where somebody else will, you realize actually somebody else will perhaps be able to use whatever it is that you're giving away. And then you bring in gradually then the thought will have less power because you're no longer continuously reinforcing it by your actions. So that's one thing you can do.

And then this sense of lack, of course, is part of most people's egoic consciousness. In your case, it manifests as, again, let's take another thought that you have mentioned. Oh, I can't afford that.

I can't, I must keep my money for, I might need it for, but I can't afford to buy this now. So again, you can observe a thought like that. And occasionally, you may want to acquire an object that has inherent beauty or quality.

If you can afford it, you don't have to do something reckless with your money. But instead of always saying, oh no, don't, I need to keep my money, buy something as a statement of abundance, something that has quality, that has beauty or quality, or you respond, it doesn't even have to be expensive, or it may be something expensive. It could be that you buy a pair of shoes that cost three times as much as what you would normally buy.

And not just because it happens to have a label that's famous, but it could be that they're actually much better quality and they will last three times or more longer than other shoes. So as a statement of abundance, occasionally you may want to buy something that has beauty or inherent quality to it. Another wonderful practice to counteract this type of mental conditioning is to, I mentioned, it's another aspect of what I mentioned at the beginning, and that is to give away, not just objects, but occasionally to give.

To give is a powerful statement of abundance. So if you give to someone, what doesn't matter where it is, let's say it's somebody in the street. There's somebody, there's a beggar in the street and you give this person, not as a compulsive thing in your mind that from now on you have to give to everybody you see at a street corner, but you can make it a practice habitually, regularly to give as a spiritual practice because it's an affirmation of, it's the opposite of lack when you give.

It's an affirmation of abundance and it's a very pleasant thing to do. And then you might also want to give small amounts of money away, even if you don't have a lot, the act of giving is what really matters. So whether it is to a person that you happen to know who needs something or somebody you come across seemingly accidentally, or you give to a charity whose cause you believe in and feel good about.

And so again, and then you will probably encounter your mind telling you that you cannot afford to do this, you must hang on. And then you, again, you're aware enough to recognize those thoughts and realize that these are conditioned thoughts. And then you do the opposite.

And then gradually when you no longer reinforce the thoughts through your action, the thoughts will lose their power and gradually they will not appear again. So giving is a very powerful affirmation of abundance. And you may be surprised that when you give a certain percentage of what you have as a habitual thing, then the tendency is for more things to come to you.

If you give, even a poor, relatively poor person, unless you're absolutely and totally poor, there's always a possibility of giving even if it's small amounts. That's one. And another thing to affirm abundance is the appreciation of the aliveness and beauty that surround you in the present moment.

So there's a, when you appreciate what you perceive in the present moment, one aspect of this, what we call appreciation is to realize that these are all manifestations of the fullness of life, the abundance of life, the trees. Every tree has thousands of vibrantly alive leaves. The sunshine, the sun is a symbol of abundance.

It gives continuously of itself. It just gives and gives for millions and millions of years. It's just an outpouring of energy continuously.

It's a miracle. So even when you're aware of the sunshine and you appreciate that, that is already also any act of appreciation, one aspect of the act of appreciation is the act of the appreciation of abundant life, because everything that you appreciate is a manifestation of what actually, when I say the fullness of life, that's what it's an expression that Jesus used when he said, I want you to have life in its fullness. In some other translations, it's called, I want you to have abundant life.

What he was pointing to was, he always talks about state of consciousness. So when he says abundant life, he does not mean that he wants you to have a huge number of possessions. That's not necessarily, that possessions are a small aspect of abundance, but they're not the most important aspect of abundance.

It's a state of consciousness. Actually, the state of presence, one aspect of that state of presence is a feeling of the fullness of life, the aliveness of life. But ultimately, when I say life, you have, on the one hand, the manifested life that is in the external world, physical manifestations of life, but then there is the unseen life, the essence of life that inhabits every form of life.

So when Jesus uses the word life, he's referring to the essence of life, which is ultimately consciousness. And I want you to have the fullness of life, is to want you to have this realization of what the source of all life is. That is ultimately the fullness of life is the source of all life.

That's where the true fullness is. That is the fullness. So the appreciation of things that you don't need to, you don't need to own them.

You can just appreciate the beauty. You don't have to say, oh, when you see a flower, you don't need to want, oh, I want, I need to pick this flower and take it home. That's, no, you can appreciate, and then you walk on.

And you can even look into a shop window and see something beautiful. I sometimes do that, not that much these days anymore, but years ago, when I lived in London, I would often go for long walks in the city, just experiencing the aliveness of the city. And I would sometimes enjoy looking into shop windows and, oh, something beautiful there, but I didn't have the desire nor the money to buy it.

And even if I had the desire to, the money to buy it, I probably wouldn't have bought it and just, but there was an appreciation. And even now, I probably would be able to buy many things that I see in shop windows. I just don't have the desire to buy very much, but appreciate it and then walk on.

So that's a lovely, could even be a practice that you do until it becomes second nature to you. That you appreciate the manifestations of life because you're in touch with the source of aliveness, which is presence. And then you get the feeling of abundance, which does not really depend on how much you possess, how much you have, because you can have relatively little and have this feeling of abundance and somebody else might have huge amounts of possessions and continuously live in a sense of not enough, a sense of lack.

So that, to just add a practical afterthought to this, if possible at all, do not resent encountering difficulties or problems in your life because that's how it works. And it doesn't stop even if you awaken, even if you're awakened, there's still things that you get challenged further. Everybody gets challenged by life in one way or another.

You can't, even the trust fund baby gets challenged by life eventually. So when you encounter difficulties, small or big, see if you don't say this should not be happening. This is the underlying attitude.

If that's your underlying attitude, you're in a state of resistance. For example, many difficulties come in the form of other humans. Humans are difficult.

You might have noticed, many. So they come in the form of other humans. And then the underlying mindset for many people is, this shouldn't be happening.

These people shouldn't behave like that. What we're really saying is they should be enlightened. Why aren't they?

Well, what about you? So difficulties come in the form of other humans. And then you see, this is meant to be.

You're meant to be challenged by other humans. And you cannot not be challenged. No matter how conscious you are, you will encounter other humans who are not, or not yet.

And they will try to create problems for you. And sometimes they achieve that. And it is true also that you attract fewer unconscious humans into your life as you awaken more, the awakening.

It is true that you're not going to move in circles where you're surrounded completely by completely unconscious humans. But you cannot totally avoid contact with unconscious humans. In fact, they need to come into your field of consciousness because they can be helped in many cases by being in your field of consciousness.

But they can only be helped if you do not react when you encounter them. You see, you do what you have to do, but you don't, the underlying mindset is not, this shouldn't be, they shouldn't do that. They should know better.

Well, they don't. So then other difficulties come in other ways because you can encounter. So we just really talked about relationship.

Other humans means relationships. They can be the intimate relations of people living together. They can be relationships of people working together, other kinds of relationships.

Then, now this already makes up for a lot of problems that people face, it's relationship problems. And then you have others. If you don't have relationship problems, then life says, okay, I'll give him or her something else.

Then you have a work problem at work, usually connected with a relationship too, but maybe some additional factors. Or you have a health problem. You have a problem where you live.

You have a financial problem. That's a big one for many, not enough, or maybe is enough, but your mind says it's not enough. Who knows?

Shortage, the problem of losing your job, the problem of insecurity, which isn't a problem unless you think you should have security, that life is insecure. You don't know what's going to happen next to you. That can be a huge challenge.

But once you accept that, actually insecurity can contribute if you no longer fight it, if you don't demand that your life should be secure, it can contribute to the arising of presence because it forces you more into the present moment. Insecurity means you go into the future and see you can't control it anymore. You don't know what's going to happen next.

Oh dear, I wish I knew, I wish I had a secure job, a secure income, a secure family environment. I wish I had a secure pension plan. I wish I had a secure life insurance.

I wish I had secure this, insecure that. Then I would be okay. Of course you wouldn't.

These things are, if you remove the element of risk or insecurity from a person's life, this is similar to the trust fund baby, then you remove one of the most important areas where you can grow by being challenged. So sometimes the emphasis in our societies in the West is too much on security these days. I mentioned somewhere before, I read last year and I was going by a school, secondary school, and it was the beginning of the summer vacation and they had a big sign outside where there's always notices, they post notices.

And then on that big sign at the school, it said, have a great vacation, be safe. That sounds reasonable advice because you don't want to be unsafe, but is that the main thing of your vacation? I was, you come back after the summer, the teacher asks you and say, I was really safe.

What did you do? I didn't leave my room because I wanted to be really safe. So there is, life again needs to be a balance between security and risk-taking and accepting the insecurity, the basic insecurity of all life.

When I wrote The Power of Now, I was already in my late forties. And I didn't have a home anymore. That wasn't the time, the original time when I didn't have a home because after the original time, I did have a home, but then I let go of it.

And then I had a limited amount of money, as I briefly mentioned in the book, to finish the book. What would happen after that in my late forties? No life insurance, no job prospects, no income, no savings, except those that were running out, no home, no relationship even, nothing.

And that insecurity contributed to the intensity of presence through which the book came. It could have led to fear and it could have blocked me if I had demanded that my life should be more secure than it is. But I did not demand that security.

I accepted the insecurity and it became enormous presence because all security has to do with future orientation. So the more you have future orientation, the more insecure you feel because you cannot control the outcome. So the fact that my money was running out, that I had no home of my own anymore, I was just going from place to place, contributed to the energy behind the writing and the book.

So that's a wonderful thing. Some people cannot take that step, they feel, if I, that step into the unknown. The impulse that came to me was so strong at the time when I knew I had to leave England for the reason I didn't know.

And I had to move to the West Coast of North America, didn't know why, but the impulse was so strong, I had to obey it. Well, I didn't have to, but I did. But I'm sure if I had not obeyed that impulse, which didn't just come once, it was there every day, I would have probably fallen ill and maybe would be dead already by now.

So the life demanded that I step out into the unknown. If that is the case with you, then you know what to do. Without being rash about it, you still need to look at the practicalities.

So insecurity is one of the great challenges, wonderful. And all these things, of course, life insurance, these are just illusions. How can you insure your life?

First of all, life insurance isn't life insurance, it's death insurance, because that's what it is about. They just don't call it death insurance because nobody would want to buy it. So the universe, the one consciousness, whatever you want to call it, is awakening in every human.

And every human's essential identity is that one consciousness. So it's not a personal thing, because if you think yourself only as a person, then you have the delusion that you're an autonomous entity cut off from everything and everybody else. But you're not an autonomous entity, you are just a cell in this vastness.

And for a few years, the cell gives itself a name or is given a name, so-and-so, that's me. Me, me. It really changes your life when you, the way you feel, you sense your own life to be, you are the awakening consciousness in this body.

It's wonderful. This mind-made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive. To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation.

First thing then, as I just mentioned, you may detect that very often you may be engaged in doing something, and yet there's something in the background that would rather not be doing it. Or there could be a complaining voice in your head in the background that says something about this situation that you are involved in, that you'd rather, because it might involve other people when they are not doing their best, and what am I doing here? All kinds of self-talk can come into resistance, can manifest in many ways.

It also manifests, we'll come to that in a minute, it also can manifest in the body. So you may find in any given situation, as your ability grows, your ability of inner observation, witnessing your inner state, you may find that you detect subtle forms of resistance. That's often to do with what you're doing, but you're not totally in what you're doing.

And another way of not being totally in what you're doing, of having continuous resistance running in the background is already wanting to be at the end of this particular activity, already wanting to be at the end of whatever it is that you're doing, let's say a simple thing, you're shopping, you're going to the supermarket, but you have so many other things to do today, so that the shopping in the supermarket is just an unpleasant obstacle because you're trying to get to the end of it as quickly as possible.

There's only one example, but there are all kinds of activities that can become unconsciously regarded as unpleasant obstacles towards where you really want to be or what you really want to be doing, which is in some future moment. So you want to arrive more at the end of this particular activity than be engaged in this particular activity. Now, many people live their whole life.

Almost every activity they do is of that kind in their daily life. Maybe when they're on vacation, if they're lucky, they have lived short amounts of time, perhaps they are free of that, but perhaps not even then. So this dysfunctional state greatly diminishes what we could call the quality of your life, the quality of the present moment because your life is the present moment.

So instead of fully acknowledging the doing of this moment, you would rather be at the end of the doing of this. Now, what happens then as a result, very often the result is what we call stress. That's what our stress arises.

[Speaker 4] (2:24:03 - 2:24:10)
You are here, but you want to be there, either in space or time.

[Speaker 1] (2:24:12 - 2:25:39)
You're here now, but you want to be in the later. When this now is over, that's where you want to be. Or you're here physically, but you'd rather want to be somewhere else physically.

You're doing your shopping, but you'd rather be at home. But when you're at home, something else arises where you would rather be or what you would rather be doing because then you're preparing your dinner, but you would rather be already done with it and finally able to relax. And when you're finally able to relax, some thoughts arise about what's going to happen tomorrow.

Problematic things never, never really aligned with the present moment. These are normal ways of living and they're not usually recognized as dysfunctional because almost everybody lives like that. When you watch movies, that's how they all live, with some exceptions.

And exception being, of course, humans who are beginning to awaken or are awakening or awake, whatever, you begin to live in a way that is more harmonious more and more aligned with the is-ness of the present moment.

[Speaker 4] (2:25:40 - 2:25:53)
And that is not to resist the is-ness of the present moment, what arises in the present moment.

[Speaker 1] (2:25:53 - 2:26:26)
So ultimately, since the present moment is all there ever is, since your entire life unfolds in and as the present moment, so therefore, when you resist the present moment, you are living in an antagonistic relationship with life.

[Speaker 4] (2:26:28 - 2:27:02)
And that is, no matter then what you achieve, if that is your conditioned mind pattern, you will never arrive at a place of real joy or happiness or inner peace, except when you are moving towards unconsciousness.

[Speaker 1] (2:27:02 - 2:28:50)
After a few drinks, you might become more into the present moment, but you're moving towards sleep. You're moving, falling below thinking. People are trying to get away from themselves because who they are is experienced as unpleasant because of that dysfunction.

So people are trying to get away from themselves in all kinds of ways, drugs and so on. And sometimes dangerous activities could help you to get away from yourself temporarily when you're climbing a rock wall or even when you're surfing, perhaps. You can't be thinking about your problems and you won't be then, and you can't be in a state of resistance.

You have to be fully there. Otherwise you will not succeed in whatever activity it is. You have to be fully there.

They have to be free of yourself, the resistant self, the egoic self. So that can temporarily free you too. But then once the activity is over, you go back into your normal resistant state.

And then you have to do it again. And then people then say, well, these people are addicted to the adrenaline rush they get when they're engaged in these activities, which is a physical thing that happens in the body. But there's more to it than that.

[Speaker 4] (2:28:51 - 2:29:01)
They are free of themselves for that. There's only the presence. There's no longer the person.

The person cannot be there.

[Speaker 1] (2:29:01 - 2:29:17)
The person ultimately survives the personal sense of self in the absence of

awareness when there's only the personal sense of self. That's the ego.

[Speaker 4] (2:29:18 - 2:29:24)
And that cannot survive without resistance. It needs that.

[Speaker 14] (2:29:54 - 2:30:00)
Is the ego the source of our thoughts or are our thoughts generated elsewhere and pass through the ego?

[Speaker 1] (2:30:01 - 2:37:36)
Oh, thank you. There's no ego apart from the thoughts. The thoughts, identification with thoughts is ego.

But the thoughts that go through your mind, of course, are linked to the collective mind of the culture you live in, humanity as a whole. So they are not your thoughts as such, but you pick them up from the collective, most of them. And so you identify with thinking and the identification with thinking becomes ego, which means simply that you believe in every thought that arises and you derive your sense of who you are from what your mind is telling you who you are.

Opinions, viewpoints of that's me, that's some people talk to themselves and you are, oh, you are so good. Why doesn't the world recognize you? Or the mind says, you're no good.

Same thing. You're no good at all. You never, you fail at everything, don't you?

Again, and then you believe in it. And then you suddenly have a low view of yourself. Why do you have a low view?

Because you believed in your thoughts. And why are you thinking those thoughts? Probably you picked them up somewhere, maybe in childhood.

Maybe your mom was so stressed out that you said you're no good. And so you pick up certain thoughts and they get stuck in your head. Thoughts that you hear in childhood, they're little energy forms like entities and they get stuck in your head and don't refuse to go.

And the more you believe in it, the more deeply lodged they become in your mind. And so some people are stuck with very hostile entities. I'm saying entity, not in some spooky way, but every thought is an energy form and as such, we could call it an entity.

And there are many people in this world who are stuck with hostile, life-denying, continuously critical and attacking entities that they carry in their head and they believe that is who they are. And they are continuously attacking themselves. And if they are not attacking themselves, they attack others around them.

Let me tell you who you are. Of course, what they're really saying is, let me tell you who I am. So they project the famous, you know the famous saying, we don't see things as they are, we see them as we are.

Which means you look at reality through the screen of your thinking and your judgment, which is conditioned by the past. A dreadful prison to live in. It's like blinkers, worse than blinkers.

It's like looking at reality through heavy veils. Ooh, it looks so dark here. Is that a human being or?

So, and so the identification with thinking, believing in your thoughts, having no space outside of the movement of thought. Again, here we come to the vital thing, lack of space inside. That is the unconscious condition, spiritually, completely unconscious.

And then you are burdened with a heavy ego. You are the ego, which is not an entity apart from thought. It is thoughts that you have identified with.

And the first moment of freedom comes when you realize that certain thoughts have been going through your head for years, perhaps. And that they are only thoughts. And that you are not the thought, you're the awareness.

In my case, I became aware that I had a thought, for example, that started in childhood. One of many negative thoughts I had. Bad things always happen to me.

Bad things always happen to me. And that was, when I saw people around me, okay, they have got all these nice things. And always there would be bad things happening.

And of course, your perception then becomes selective. When you have a thought like that, you notice much more, because in everybody's life, things in daily life, things go wrong. You miss a bus, you get stuck in a traffic jam, or you lose some money.

But yes, this is normal. But if you have a thought, bad things always happen to me, you're extremely aware of those things. And they confirm to you that the thought is correct.

And this is the selective perception of reality through the screen of thinking. So the reality will confirm to you, not only that, that thought or any thought of that kind actually attracts bad things, negative things. Or if you believe people are basically bad, and that's a deep-seated belief, and you don't realize it's only a thought in your head or a belief, not only do you, would you single out where you observe unethical or bad behavior in others, you would, ah, there it is.

Not only that, you actually are much more likely to encounter people who manifest that kind of behavior, because you attract it. And so that's just incredible how people create their world. Through that, so freedom comes from stepping out, encountering, first of all, a little bit of space inside you, presence.

And then from there, you realize certain thoughts as repetitive and just a thought. Bad things always happen to me. Oh, there it goes again, I just thought that before.

So that's the, to become free of ego means becoming free of thought, identification with thought. That's the end of the ego. It may reassert itself from time to time, but at least that's the awakening.

What about your thoughts, habitual thoughts? Do you?

[Speaker 14] (2:37:38 - 2:37:45)
Probably that I have to get everything right. Those are the intents, you know, figure it out and get it right. It rules me.

[Speaker 1] (2:37:46 - 2:37:47)
And if it's not right?

[Speaker 14] (2:37:50 - 2:37:57)
I escape, I just won't do it. I pretty much predict ahead of time. So I won't try a lot of times.

[Speaker 1] (2:37:58 - 2:39:38)
Ah, yes. Yes. Some people are afraid of not succeeding in whatever they do, because they have a self, their self image, which is derived from thinking, would suffer.

If I fail at something, then I will, my self image will be injured. And therefore, I'm not even going to try. And again, that's to do with deriving your identity from thinking.

And even the thought I have failed is a lie. I am a failure is an even greater lie. You have not failed.

You can simply reinterpret it. I've learned something here. This is not for me, for example.

So, but why believe the lies that your mind produces? So, as you know, people, many people live with a very hostile mind. But those people, the motivation, their motivation would probably be very great.

I would hope to get out of their minds. But first, they need to realize that their problems are self-generated, mind-generated, not world-generated. Thank you.

[Speaker 14] (2:40:04 - 2:40:50)
Hi. Well, I wanted to ask you, I guess it's kind of a simple question in a way, but it's like, I feel like this whole present moment thing really works. And it's like, and so I feel like I'm so happy when I'm in the moment.

But then, you know, how do I balance that with actually being able to, you know, plan for the future? I mean, that, it's like, I don't know how, I mean, I can just be in the moment. And sometimes I feel like I can just be like this battery pack for the universe and just be so happy.

But I feel like I, then I'll wake up in the middle of the night and I'll have this anxiety about not taking care of the future or not doing the things that I need to do to take care of the future. So it's about balancing that. How do you do that?

Or do you have to balance it? Okay.

[Speaker 1] (2:40:50 - 2:45:43)
Okay. Well, the anxiety about not taking care of the future is of course losing the present moment. That's the real loss of the present moment.

But taking care of the future by doing some planning, constructive planning, even constructive thinking, not useless thinking and worrying and toxic thinking in the middle of the night, things what I should be doing or haven't done, or if I do it, it might go wrong. Not that kind of totally useless thinking, which is losing the present moment. Then there is the applied thinking, which is, oh, I need to work out what I'm going to do, whatever, schedule for the next thing I'm going to do, a plan for next year when I will have to do this or that, whatever.

And you may find that if you do focused thinking and apply it to whatever it is that you need to work out, is not losing the present moment. It's only useless thinking about the present moment that mentally projects you away from the now and doesn't get you anywhere. It detracts from the quality of life and detracts from your sense of aliveness.

So planning you can do in the present moment. Let's say I plan, where am I going to go? I'm going on a tour somewhere.

I was on a Europe tour late last year, and that had to be planned almost a year in advance. So already at the beginning of last year and before then, we were already talking about the Europe tour. And so what then, you look at the calendar, cities, geography of places where they connect, all the other factors that you need to look at.

You're not really losing the present moment because you're not projecting yourself mentally over there and imagining how it's going to go or imagining that when you finally give that talk in London, then you're really going to feel really fulfilled or projecting yourself to that talk in London when no one is going to like what you're going to say. And half the audience are going to leave. Am I going to be inspired when I reach London to give a talk?

You're just losing the present. This kind of thinking happens. It pretends to be useful and constructive, but it's not at all.

And it's not taking responsibility for anything. But applied thinking, and for applied thinking, it's good to give yourself a time limit, a space. You sit down for an hour or you talk to people and say, what do we need to do here in order to do this, that, that, that you're not losing the present moment.

Some people often, it's just not uncommon for people to have this question, thinking that I must never think about the future. But when you apply that, you're not really thinking about the future. The planning is now.

There's just, you're not projecting yourself away from the present moment. So it's applied and constructive thinking. The same with the past.

Sometimes you need to think about something that happened in the past. You need your memory for certain things. And then you need to kind of Google back there in your mind.

And then you talk about, well, but there's a reason why you bring it into the present, because you need that kind of memory or the knowledge. Perhaps you learned something there at the past Europe tour. Those things went very wrong.

The people had to line up for an hour and I was an hour late starting. It was disorganized. What did we do wrong?

That's fine. You have to go there. But if you, in the middle of the day, you think how dreadful that was, or you're blaming yourself or others about what went wrong, then you lose yourself in the past.

So you can use past and future without losing yourself in them. And then really you remain present even while you refer back to the past or while you make plans for the future. So that's really how it works.

[Speaker 14] (2:45:44 - 2:45:51)
Is there a way that you can, if you're happy, you can trust the universe that you're on the right path? Oh, yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:45:51 - 2:51:59)
That is an underlying thing, is of course the sense of connectedness with the deeper level, the deeper levels of your being, the awareness, the presence, the stillness, whatever you want to call it. And that gives you a certain rootedness. You're rooted in being.

And then what happens on the outcome of things that you do is no longer the factor that determines your state of consciousness. So when things go wrong, sometimes they do, you're not devastated. You don't, oh, you don't feel you're going to die because it went wrong and you didn't get there.

You tried so hard in the end, it didn't work out. And it's so awful. You beat yourself up mentally.

No, that's very dysfunctional and creates a lot of suffering. So you are less dependent on the, you welcome a good outcome, of course, but you're not dependent on a good outcome for feeling peaceful. And really complete in yourself.

And that sense of completeness in yourself, because there are two levels, as you know, that one could say the two dimensions. You are the person, but you are also the vast consciousness. So there's the ripple, there's the ocean.

The person lives in time and there's a development. The person learns things, gets better at certain things. And so on.

At the deepest level, there is already that sense of completion. You don't need to become anything. When you are connected with the depths of who you are, in that depth, you don't need to become, you are already complete.

On the level of the person, you're never really complete. And there are always things that could be called imperfections. Not, when you're connected, not huge things that create a lot of dysfunction in your life and make your life and other people's lives unhappy.

Not that kind of thing. But there are things that are certain personal things that are limitations on, you can't be, I have, my place at the moment is untidy. I'm not perfect there.

So there was a time when my place was tidy. So I'm not an untidy person continuously. But it started when I was writing the New Earth.

And then I couldn't focus on anything else while I was writing. And then things started to accumulate. And now I still get all these manuscripts and books sent.

And some of them are taking up more and more space at my place. So let's not go there. But that's an imperfection on my part.

If somebody had an idea of somebody who's fully awake, he must live in certain way. And then he comes and says, how can you, this is not tidy. How do you live?

Occasionally I have a cup of coffee, one a day. And occasionally people see me having a cup of coffee somewhere and say, why do you need coffee? You've written all these spiritual books and now you still need coffee?

I don't know if I need it. I just enjoy a cup of coffee. And I drink a glass of wine or two occasionally with dinner.

You drink alcohol? Well, if my state of conscience is so fragile that a glass of wine would upset it, then it can't be worth very much. So the addictiveness does not come in because the addictiveness would be something else.

If I were addicted to coffee and couldn't live without six cups of coffee a day, or if I were addicted to alcohol and wouldn't know when to stop drinking, that would be something else. But you can enjoy things, but people might interpret it as an imperfection and perhaps it is, but allow yourself to have your imperfections as long as they don't create suffering for others or yourself, become comfortable with things where you are not perfect. Some people are habitually, it's not a nice thing, it's not my problem, but they are habitually late.

Some people just have that. It's almost in their genes. I had a Filipino friend that I recently met her again after many years in London at university in Cambridge.

And it must be in the Filipino genes to be late all the time. And apparently when I talked to her, she said, yes, everybody's late. Nobody expects people to be on time.

And so, and that may be, she may not be able to get rid of that because it's in her genes. It says be late or you don't need to be on time or that. And that's fine.

That's how they live. It's not a problem in the Philippines. It might become a problem in the West, but not to them, to other people who might say there's something wrong with you.

If some things can change and that's good. And as consciousness awakens in you more, the awareness arises. It does tend to dissolve those patterns, as I said, that really F up your life.

[Speaker 16] (2:52:02 - 2:52:03)
Okay, thank you.

[Speaker 1] (2:52:59 - 3:06:57)
But when I get really afraid of losing all my money in the stock market, of getting sick or losing a loved one, how do I handle that? Fear again, the question is about fear. How do I handle the fear of catching a disease, of losing everything?

Many things, many people are experiencing not only the fear now of the virus, they're also experiencing the fear of the repercussions of what's happening. Businesses are closing down or everything is closing down. It's a very strange thing that this is happening.

It's like an enforced closing down of the busyness, not just the business, but the busyness of the world, an enforced sudden ending of all that. Many planes are not flying anymore. There's some cities are empty of people or suddenly as if because until this happened, the world was absurdly busy, noisy, busy, everything was in movement.

Everything was lost in the world, lost in their minds. And suddenly, as if somebody said, okay, let's turn it off for a while. Oh, enforced stillness almost.

Exactly what millions of humans actually need to experience. It doesn't mean that they will automatically also experience the inner stillness, but there is a possibility of an awakening for many if they can go beyond the fear, the fearful thoughts. But how do you go beyond the fearful thoughts?

Well, it requires a little bit of awareness. But if you are here with us, you probably have that awareness. What I mean by that is the awareness of what's going on in your mind.

To recognize rather than total identification with what's going on in your mind, you have in the background an awareness of what's going on in your mind. Very different. Because it's a different dimension of consciousness, the awareness.

It's not the same as a thought. The awareness can recognize what thoughts are going on in your mind and you realize, I'm thinking all these useless thoughts, but that realization, I'm verbalizing it now, but because we are communicating through language, but that realization that all these useless and destructive thoughts are going through my head, that is a realization that is not verbal. It's pre- or post-verbal because it comes through the awareness.

And there's a simple recognition that what's going on in your mind is not helpful. It's making you fearful and unhappy. So it is to be tackled there.

All these, the problem that he mentions, he mentions, or he or she mentions three, fear of losing all my money or my savings, my investments, what I've been saving, of getting sick or something bad could happen to a loved one. So you have fear for yourself. You have fear for others.

And of course, all these things are not happening now, the things that you fear, but they could happen, says the mind. So I better think about it now because in case it does, of course, if they did happen, you would face the situation. You have, with the power of your conscious awareness, you would face the sickness, you would face the loss of money, and you would even face the loss of a loved one or the suffering of a loved one with the power of your presence, you can face that.

But what you cannot do, you cannot overcome these problems or face them because they only exist in your imagination. They haven't even happened yet. There's therefore, there's absolutely nothing you can do about them.

In fact, they will simply be amplified. The more you think about them, the more they become amplified. It's a totally illusory realm that is making you suffer.

And so if there's a minimum of awareness, you can suddenly become aware of what it is that you are doing to yourself. Well, it's not that you're voluntarily doing it to yourself, but one could say it is happening to you. So you become aware of what is happening to you because the thoughts in your mind, virtually all the thoughts in the absence of awareness happen to you.

They are not voluntary. So people say, I think this, I think, you don't think, the thinking happens to you when you're not aware. You're at the mercy of thought.

You are at the mercy of the energy field that is what we call thought. It lives in you. You are possessed.

You don't know it. The moment you realize it, that this is not the fearful thinking, isn't something that you do, because if it's something that you do, you say, yeah, I'm doing it, but I can't stop it. No, you are not doing it.

It happens to you. So some people say, well, perceive it as, well, why am I doing this to myself? Well, that's already, it's a good first step.

Why am I making myself suffer by thinking all that? And then the next step is you realize, well, it's not really me doing it. It's the self-serving thought forms that are swirling around in my mind continuously that are making me unhappy, that have no useful purpose.

I'm not helping myself or anybody by thinking these things, by projecting bad things that could or will, that could happen. And so with the awareness of what's going on in your mind comes the first time a moment of freedom, because before you had no free will. Without awareness, you have no free will.

You're at the mercy of a conditioned mind. So what do you do? So you have recognized that what's been happening to you fulfills no useful purpose.

That's an important realization because before there is an assumption in the unconscious mind that unless you worry a lot, then you're not controlling your life. There is the delusion that the more you think about the useless, but when you don't know it's useless, the more you think about the problems of your life, then you need to continue thinking in order to hold it all together. You need to really worry all the problems of the world.

If you don't worry, then your life will fall to pieces. It's the underlying assumption. Of course, it's a delusion.

So the worrying, the fearful thinking does not want to end. You need to know that, that it has a momentum and you cannot fight it. If you fight it, you make it stronger.

You give it added energy. So it's not by willpower that you can stop it. Or as I just said, you can stop it briefly, but not for long through exercising willpower.

So you stop it simply by first recognizing the not only the futility, but also the destructive nature of that type of thinking. And then you begin to see that a lot of the unhappiness is produced by the narratives in your mind. And at that moment, you have a choice.

You can continue being dragged along in the stream of fearful thinking, or you can say, my choice is now to take my attention away from fearful thinking. I'm verbalizing it. But where does it go?

If the fearful thinking wants all your attention, it wants all your consciousness continuously. It says, no, I'm letting go. I want it.

And then you say, no, I don't want to go that way anymore. It's very simple. You bring your attention somewhere else.

You need something at first. My recommendation is, feel your inner body. Direct your attention.

Let's say you wake up in the night or in the morning. Direct your attention. Instead of thinking, direct your attention into the inner energy field of your hands.

And then you hold it there. It doesn't require willpower. It's just a simple decision.

And you hold it. You feel the inner aliveness in your hands. It becomes an anchor for stepping out of mind, being present.

Can you feel the energy in your hands? I can. And it's always wonderful.

I've been feeling the energy in my hands for many years. It's always fresh and new. And I don't tire speaking of it because it's always fresh and new.

And of course, it's not just the hands. If you can't feel the energy in your hands, close your eyes and ask yourself if you're, let's say your right hand, or if you're left-handed, your left hand. Ask yourself if your left or right hand is still there or not.

Is it still there? How do I know it's there? How can I know it's there right now?

Now, you can't know it because you remember it was there when you saw it a few seconds ago. That's not knowing that it's there because it might have disappeared. You close your eyes, you're not moving your hand.

How can you know it's there? You can know it's there, but how does it happen? What is it?

How do you know it? You can feel it, but what is it that you feel? You feel the energy within the hand.

It's very subtle at first, so you need to be alert to feel it. But that alertness that then goes in the body is taken away from thinking. And it's, and you suddenly, your hand feels more alive than it was before.

But that's only the beginning. You can feel both hands simultaneously. And then you realize you can also feel other parts of the body, your feet at the same time.

And legs. And then you become aware of an all-pervasive sense of aliveness in the entire body, energy field. And the amazing thing is, oh, by the way, you may also become aware that you are breathing because that's connected with the body.

You're breathing into the body. And the breath flows in and it flows out. And the more you become aware of your body, the more you become aware of your breathing.

The more you become aware of your breathing, the more you become aware of the body. There's a wonderful aliveness there. And what happened to your mind activity?

It subsided almost completely or completely because you cannot be aware of inner body and at the same time think. A few fragments may be there of thoughts, but not a sustained stream of thinking. It's not possible because all your attention, your consciousness has gone away from the conceptualizing mind into the inner body.

[Speaker 10] (3:07:07 - 3:07:59)
My question is about children. And it's a growing concern of mine that we have an increase of anxiety with children. And as an educator, what can we do to help them with this?

The anxiety in you or the anxiety in the children? In the children, they're labeling it. And at five and six years old, they know that there's a label for it and it's called, they're anxious.

And I've been teaching for a long time and it just seems to be getting to be greater and greater, young children and older children. How old are the children that you teach? The ones I have are primary, so they're grade one and two.

Grade one and two, nice.

[Speaker 2] (3:08:02 - 3:08:18)
Yeah, it's unfortunate, isn't it? You're experiencing that so early. A lot of fear, yeah.

Yeah, yeah. Are you free to do meditation in your school? That's a good question.

[Speaker 10] (3:08:19 - 3:09:06)
It is something that we're starting to do in the Canadian schools. And it's growing in popularity. And certainly, yes, we are allowed to do it, certainly in the public schools.

Okay, so they wouldn't be against you doing that? No. Okay, do you do it with them?

I do my best to do it. It's something that I'm learning and evolving with, so they do like it. The ones that are anxious actually like it probably the most.

But I'm not sure I'm doing it the right way and I was wondering if there are any strategies to use with children to help them maintain a sense of calmness.

[Speaker 2] (3:09:09 - 3:09:49)
So it's important that you center yourself first and you remain calm and be calm. And that's sometimes hard to do in your job, I could imagine. Right.

So it's going to be your practice first and foremost. As well, you can bring that in with the children, start the day, your day each. You get them all day, don't you?

When they're grade one and two? Most of the day. Most of the day.

So you can start the day with the meditation, just being quiet, just being still.

[Speaker 10] (3:09:51 - 3:09:57)
And do you have any understanding of why this is getting worse?

[Speaker 2] (3:09:58 - 3:13:41)
Oh my goodness, wow. You know, we've lost that connection to being. We make things, the world, more important than our own state of consciousness.

So it's, and we teach that to our children right away. You know, we're happy when they say their first words, we reward them, we're like, ah, yay, you know? So they'll, and it's not a bad thing, don't get me wrong, I'm not saying words are bad.

But from the moment that they come into this world and they begin to, then their brains start to form and they start to grow. They are constantly looking outside of ourselves. And that's a natural thing to do.

As Eckhart mentioned, it's natural. You can't stop a child going through the stage of age two. Mine, mine, this is mine.

Where did they learn that? Suddenly they know that it's mine and they don't want to share it. So they'll go through that process of developing an ego until it gets them in trouble and they realize that, you know, they now have to now unlearn all that.

So we can't stop that natural stages that human beings have to go through. However, we can be the light in which we can hold and help the child go through it. So with this anxiety that's starting in very young children, I mean, there is more entertainment in the world.

There are more devices in the world. I mean, now when we are out to dinner or lunch or something like that, and we see a family sitting at a table, they're not even connecting with each other. They each have their own devices.

I kid you not, they are really on their devices. As well, parents now, because they're so stressed out, it's easier to put your kid in front of a device than to have to really be with your child. So it's important that, and this is the part that you won't be able to control, just as the parents cannot control what's happening at school.

They can do either best and do their best. So they're getting little aspects here and a little aspect there. So whatever their home life is, okay?

And whatever their school life is, and here you are, awakened consciousness. Now you have an opportunity to have them for that whatever, four, six hours a day, and you are creating this field of consciousness. And they get to experience that.

And this, it's vital, it's important. You can't control what's happening at home, but you can give them the gift of love and acceptance, and hey, this is a place where you can actually relax. You don't have to be stressed out.

You don't have to be anxious. And then they get to experience that. Now, when I had, my childhood was, you know, very dysfunctional, a lot of pain, body, in everybody, in my parents.

[Speaker 1] (3:14:17 - 3:30:18)
My ego is really aggressive. It comes up without me knowing. Only after the ego is gone do I find out how can I manage my ego sooner.

That is not uncommon. It's probably more than you, the questioner, who has that, who experiences that. As more presence arises, so first of all, it's important to invite presence into your life in ordinary situations, when you're not being challenged by another person.

The anger mostly is probably with people or situations, but most situations involve people. So be present when you're out in nature, by not labeling things, by being, by observing in that state of alert attention. And presence then emanates more and more through you.

This doesn't mean that necessarily you will, next time the ego comes up, being aggressive, it comes up so quickly that you can't catch it in the moment. But as more, as the presence in you grows, manifests more strongly, usually what happens is the time period that elapses after you've been taken over by anger, gets shorter until you reach a point where a few seconds after it's happened, you suddenly realize it's happened again. Whereas before you might have read it several minutes or even an hour, in some cases to the next day, you realize, what was that?

When you had a huge drama with somebody, probably involving the pain body, your pain body is probably predominantly has the anger vibration predominantly. And pain body that is not recognized as pain body becomes part of the ego. In the same way that any thought that you completely identify with becomes part of the ego.

In the same way, an emotion that you completely identify with becomes part of the ego. Once you recognize the pain body as the pain body, then it is an energy field in you that still operates. But strictly speaking, it's no longer your ego.

Ego can only operate as long as you're unconscious. So although sometimes people say to me, I'm able to observe my ego now, in the way I use the term ego, that's no longer true. The moment you become aware of your ego, it's not really ego anymore.

It is still a behavioral or mental, emotional pattern that operates in you. But you are present when you know that there is this pattern operating in you, then you are not it. It operates in you and you are the space around it, which is the consciousness.

You know it's there. Then before it was ego, yes. But when you recognize it for what it is, it's no longer ego.

Ego means unconsciousness. Ego means complete identification. So whatever you recognize in yourself isn't really ego anymore.

And so then as presence grows in you, you reach a point when immediately after this episode, pain body episode, anger episode has just happened, you suddenly realize, oh, it happened again. And then I predict if it hasn't happened to you yet, it will, a time comes, perhaps very soon, when in the middle of it, it already has taken you over and you're shouting at someone. And in the middle of it, you realize what's going on, that you've been taken over by that.

You still may not be able to stop it, don't have to, but the awareness is there in the middle of it. And that may happen many times. And then you may find the awareness is there just the moment it begins to arise.

The moment the anger pattern wants to come in, the awareness is also already there. Now, whether or not at this moment you can stop it, we don't know, and never stop it by suppressing it. You stop it simply by shining the light of awareness on it.

That eventually stops it. So you can, and then at that, when the presence is strong enough for that, then you actually begin to have a choice. Do I choose to engage in the same way through my pain body in this situation?

Is this the best way of dealing with the situation? You may not literally ask yourself that question, but it is implied in that state of awareness. You have a choice.

You can no longer at the mercy of the old condition pattern. And then it begins to dissipate. So I predict that this will happen, that presence more and more will come in at earlier stages, and then in the middle of it, and then at the beginning of it.

But you need to cultivate or invite presence into your life in ordinary situations, in helpful situations, so that it can be there in challenging situations. Don't rely on challenging situations alone. That's not going to work.

Invite it into your life in situations where it's easy, but situations that lend themselves to presence. Nature, walking in nature, looking at the sky, or if you can't get out into nature, look at a flower, just for half a minute, a minute, and not just look. While you look at a flower, and this is just one example, it could be anything natural.

While you look at a flower, not only are you not only aware of what it is, you're looking at the sense perception. You don't need label. The name of the flower is irrelevant, all that you don't need for this.

You look at a flower, you can not only see whatever it is that you see with your visual sense, your sight, but there's more to the flower than what you see with your visual sense, and that is an alive presence. Very hard to talk about it. You remember the, I believe I quoted it the other day, from the saying from Saint-Exupéry, all that is essential is invisible to the eye.

What is all that is essential is invisible to the eye. So all of the flower is beautiful. Within the flower, there's hiding a presence that is invisible to the eye.

The flower has a presence there. It is not by accident that in many spiritual traditions, flowers are sacred symbols. In Buddhism, for example, and other traditions, certain flowers are sacred symbols.

The mandala itself, the sacred mandala paintings, basically many of them are based on flower designs, flowers are naturally occurring mandalas. And so there is, what is essential about the flower, yes, there is the external beauty, but the real meaning of beauty is there is an inner essence there. But you cannot sense that when you are looking at the flower through the screen of conceptualization.

So you have to drop the screen of conceptualization, which is thought, and look at the flower and give it a little bit of time, and then you begin to sense something. But where do you sense that? You sense it in yourself.

What is it that you sense in yourself when you look at the flower? It's both in the flower and in you. It is the essence, the animating consciousness behind this manifestation of, this beautiful manifestation of form.

There is, beyond the form, there is, we could call it the animating spirit. And that is the same animating spirit, which is consciousness, that is in you. When you have access to it in yourself, you can sense it there, but giving complete attention, for example, to a flower can be very helpful in deepening the access you have to it in yourself.

So the flower can teach you stillness, because the flower is very still, and teach you other things, because stillness is only one particular signpost that we use to speak of it. So you sense the basic, the essence of the flower, which is sacred, and you can sense the essence of yourself, which is sacred, and you can somehow sense that the essence of the flower and the essence of yourself are one and the same. And that is the recognition of oneness, which is all, all the ancient mystics and so on have spoken about this.

And that is just, you love it. Basically, that means, that is what love is. You recognize yourself in the other.

It doesn't have to be another human being, or it's beautiful when you recognize yourself in another human being, but you also recognize yourself in nature. So this is important because that brings, so allow nature to teach you stillness. Now, nature, of course, embodies a completely different degree of consciousness from yours.

I will now make a mystical statement. You don't have to believe it. The flower loves it when you give it attention, because you add something enormous to the flower by giving it attention.

The flower is not aware of its own beauty, it just is. And when you unite your consciousness with the flower, through you, because ultimately you're not, the separateness that we see in the physical is not really there. Through you, the flower gets a glimpse of self-recognition.

The flower recognizes itself. So when nature is waiting for you to recognize it, and what nature alone is also involved in, it is part of the evolving universe that is becoming more conscious. And humans are an essential part of that on this planet.

So when a human becomes conscious of nature, the nature through the human becomes conscious of itself. And it's an amazing process. Whether or not this is true, you have to kind of find out for yourself by being more attentive in nature and giving, honoring what's there.

And as much as possible, relate to nature without the screen of knowledge. When you need it, it's fine. If a child asks you, what's the name of this flower?

You tell the child what the name is, but hopefully you don't say, this is a rose. Hopefully you say to the child, it's called a rose. There's a very big difference between saying, this is a rose, because that would be saying to the child that this concept is what it is, that the sound rose is that.

No, it's only a name. The name of it is rose. And so to prevent the child from getting lost in concepts at an early age, always, once you have taught a word, always bring the child back to the actual experience of it so that the child does not come to the misperception that the name of the flower is a flower.

There's a depth to the flower that gets totally covered up when you mistake the name for the flower. So that's why when you truly want to see it, you have to remove the mental label and you can only do that by being present. The alertness rises and then you communicate, you relate to the flower without the screen of concepts.

So this was something to do with presence, this part of the answer, although I went some distance away from this, the answer of anger arising and catching it. So it's vital to generate presence in normal life, in nature, and so on, so that it's there when the pain body arises.

[Speaker 15] (3:30:47 - 3:31:01)
I want to speak about loneliness, pain body, because since two years I'm traveling alone, trying to do like you, like doing nothing.

[Speaker 16] (3:31:07 - 3:31:08)
I'm trying.

[Speaker 1] (3:31:09 - 3:31:10)
That's a good try, yeah.

[Speaker 15] (3:31:14 - 3:31:42)
And then I have difficulty to accept this nothingness, and so then I spend time on devices, on Facebook, and then the pain body arrives, and then sometimes I see the world like it doesn't exist, and that other people are like robots. So it's a lot of suffering. I don't know how to overcome this kind of feeling.

[Speaker 1] (3:31:43 - 3:31:47)
So you've been traveling for a couple of years?

[Speaker 15] (3:31:47 - 3:31:55)
Yeah, like one year and a half. I started with India, and then now I'm following you because I went to Norway, New York, Costa Rica.

[Speaker 1] (3:31:55 - 3:32:00)
Okay. And you're not running out of money yet? No.

[Speaker 15] (3:32:02 - 3:32:03)
The universe gives me what I need.

[Speaker 1] (3:32:03 - 3:32:06)
Okay, that's good. That's a good sign.

[Speaker 15] (3:32:07 - 3:32:15)
But it's about like this connection with the world when I am alone and with devices.

[Speaker 1] (3:32:15 - 3:49:24)
Yes, you're not in a relationship at present, and you haven't been for the past two years, and the relationship has not arisen, or do you on purpose avoid entering relationship? Okay. Well, whatever it is, learning to be with yourself, at ease with yourself, loneliness can be a great thing when it comes transformed through acceptance into solitude.

Solitude only arises when you accept your aloneness, become completely present, and suddenly you sense your own presence. Which does not need anything, is already complete. Which is not to say that on the level of your form, there may not be a need for some company, whether it's physical or emotional or mental or altogether.

On the level of form, you will continue to experience certain pulls and certain needs. On the level of form, if you have no relationship, you may feel that sense of needing something to complete you on the level of form to some extent. That's not a problem if you are rooted in your essence.

You can be aware that on the level of form, there are certain needs, and these needs may be met at some point, or right now they may not be met. And that no longer matters that much. It is only of relative importance whether you have a relationship or you don't have a relationship.

On the deepest level, you don't need it. On a slightly up, on a form level, you're not complete. There's masculine, there's the polarities of yin and yang, not necessarily always related to the biological masculine feminine, but you are either, if you are yin, you need some yang.

If you are more yang, you need some yin. And that operates on the level of opposites and of form. It may be advisable for you to engage in some kind of activity so that you can not only practice presence by doing nothing, because it was never my decision when it happened to me.

It was not my decision to do nothing for a couple of years or so. By the way, I'm still good at doing nothing, but. But it wasn't my decision to do nothing in order to achieve some state.

The doing nothing arose because already I was so deeply immersed in presence that I had lost the balance as a human being. I had lost the balance between human and being. Because that, I love that word human being, the English language doesn't have a word for man and woman, like German has Mensch, which is the word for human being.

But in English, you have to use two words. But there's the human part of you, that's the form. There's the being of you, that's the essence.

Ultimately, everybody needs to be in some kind of balance between those two. I was immersed in being so deeply that I lost the balance. I wasn't unhappy about that at all, but I lost the balance between the human.

The human became so unimportant to me that I didn't do anything to even, I knew what am I supposed to do with my life? Even that didn't arise, that thought. It was so delicious, delightful to be immersed in being.

And that's how this period of complete, not complete, there was some activity because I had to occasionally get little jobs to survive. And occasionally people gave me money. But I did have temporary jobs to survive so that I was forced occasionally to come out a little bit out of the being.

But I didn't last in any job for very long. The moment I had enough money, I would stop again. So I got temporary jobs at various places.

For two weeks, I worked at the Kennel Club in London, filling out forms of puppies that had just been born of different dogs. The, fortunately they had no computers at that time yet because that would have been beyond me. So there was just that the bliss of being was so all-consuming that the balance between the human and the being was lost.

And then it only began to reestablish itself when people started coming to me and asking me questions. And the question pulled me out of the being because an answer was required, but the answer came from the being. So when I started answering questions, suddenly there was a flow and the answering of questions became my doing.

So that's how the balance got reestablished slowly. I would not necessarily seek inactivity as a way of achieving some kind of purpose presence, it is sometimes easier to engage in some activity and even engage in relationships and see if you can stay present there. But it all comes back to really the present moment, whatever it is, wherever you are, wherever you are.

Is there enough intensity in you not to be drawn into mind for long periods of time? Is there enough intensity in you to stay present in that state of aloneness so that you can be the consciousness rather than the person, you are the consciousness. And it could be a great opportunity that you're able to do that, to just travel and explore, but you already went to India.

And so you did not seek, you did not find what you were seeking perhaps. And then you came to Eckhart and there you did not find what you were seeking perhaps. And the only place where you can find what you're seeking is within you in the present moment, doesn't matter where you are.

So intensity of presence is important to cut through mind. Are you motivated enough to have that intensity of presence? And it could well be that there's not enough suffering in your life to provide the motivation.

So that is a possibility, but that's not a problem because it'll come. If... My sense is that right now it's just too easy for you.

It's too easy. So the suffering is, I mentioned before, the best motivation for liberation is the desire to escape from suffering or realizing the possibility that is possible to be free of suffering. And that's why the Buddha chose that term to describe his teaching, which is very wise.

What's my teaching about? The Buddha said, I'll tell you what it is about. It's not about enlightenment.

It's not about achieving God realization. It's not about that. He's the end of suffering.

So it seems that he attracted mostly people who were at that stage where that meant something to them. I don't know if you are at that stage where the end of suffering means enough to you to provide the intensity for awakening. I was suffering.

That was the motivation. I didn't even have a name for awakening. The wonderful news though is, life always gives you what you need.

And it could well be that if you continue your life in this way, the way in which you live will create more and more suffering. Perhaps the loneliness will become unbearable. And so, and then the suffering of the loneliness might drive you into relationship.

And then something may go wrong in the relationship. And then the relationship will become unbearable. And then you will seek out another situation and something will go wrong there.

And then that will become unbearable. And then suddenly you will want to be free of suffering. And there you have the motivation.

So whether you carry on the way you are now, fine. Life will give you what you need. Or if you think, okay, I'll try a relationship.

Great too. You will find the necessary suffering to get you there. Here a related question.

As I'm awakening, I'm becoming more aware of how often I'm angry and it is getting tiresome. How do I manage the expectations of myself? Well, let's see.

So you need to manage the expectations and then you need to manage the anger. Anger management and expectation management. Expectation means you beat yourself up for being unconscious, which is more unconsciousness.

Because the mental image of who you are says, I'm not good enough. I can't do it. You see, been at it for 25 years and I still can't do it.

You can't possibly be any good if you still can't do it after 25 years. Those are thoughts that float around in your mind. And how do you feel?

As I suppose that's Byron Katie would ask that. How do you feel when you believe in those thoughts? Not good.

You're beating yourself up and you feel an emotion. Feel bad about myself. More ego, more conceptualized identity.

In your mind, concepts in your mind about you, you derive your sense of self from that. More of the same. So the, let's say it's anger, and then you wake up after the anger reaction, say, I did it again.

I'm no good. So you have the second egoic reaction to the first one. Ha, ha, ha.

Good. Anger is something that is, comes in in many people very fast. So there may not be, unless there's already considerable presence power in you, there may not be enough presence to catch it.

It takes you over before you know it, especially old reaction. And before you know it, you're talking and shouting and you are not doing it at all. It's the pattern.

It's the mind pattern, mental, emotional pattern in you, which often related to what I call the pain body, which is old, accumulated, painful emotion, which could be anger, which could be a deep, depressed sadness. Anger is a very frequent one. The pain body energy is just waiting in people who have accumulated old anger, going back to childhood, feeling powerless.

And what does a child do when the child feels powerless? Start screaming, that's all it can do. And sometimes it works.

Sometimes the parents come and say, okay, you can have the sweet if you scream loud enough. So it's powerlessness is always behind anger. And the ego pretends that there's your power there in anger.

But anger arises out of a sense of powerlessness. And there's often fear hiding underneath it. And when you are there looking at it, then you realize that at firsthand within yourself, there is a sense of powerlessness behind it.

And the ego is pretending to be powerful when really it's in a state of fear. You can see it even with little dogs. The smallest dogs are the most, bark the most.

And whenever they're little, I've seen little dogs, whenever a big one goes past, they get angry. Arf, arf, arf. Arf.

Arf. Arf. Because, I mean, if I were that size, I would do that too, probably.

Arf. Arf. Arf.

Arf. Chihuahua, or your little sweet little Bichon Frise. And a mastiff walks past, or a Rottweiler, who looks very quiet because the Rottweiler knows its own power.

It doesn't need to, it goes. Arf. Arf.

Arf. And the little one goes, arf, arf. Arf.

Arf. Arf. Arf.

Arf.

[Speaker 16] (3:49:26 - 3:49:27)
Arf. Arf.

[Speaker 1] (3:49:32 - 4:07:32)
Arf. But with dogs, we smile when we see that because we somehow recognize that pattern. And we smile, and probably the Rottweiler has an inner smile, too, when he walks past.

But with humans, it's more difficult to smile when they go, arf. And words come streaming out of their mouth. It's more difficult to smile, and what it's possible, not necessarily, you say, don't necessarily smile, but recognize it for what it is when you see it in another.

Don't equate that with who that person is. Recognize it, that the person has been taken over by that energy field. And that already is a wonderful thing.

That already, we could call, is forgiveness in a wider sense. We don't equate unconscious behavior with who that person is. If we equate it with who that person is, that is, that's the real meaning of judgment.

Judgment is not to say to somebody, I realize that you get angry a lot, and that person then might tell you, are you judging me? No, it's a fact. If I see that you get angry a lot, that was just a fact, there's no judgment in it.

But if I equate that with your essential identity of who you are, you are an angry person, and then I always expect more anger from you, that's a judgment. Not recognizing a pattern that operates unconsciously through humans and taking that for their identity is judgment. And you can do it to yourself.

So you can judge yourself for those things. And that is just as much ego as judging somebody else. You can beat yourself up and call yourself no good.

And whatever else the self talk tells you in your head, it calls you you. In many people's minds, when they talk, when the mind talks to you, it says you. See, you are such and such.

You see, you can't do it. Sometimes it says I, it might say I in some people, but in many it says you. Isn't that strange?

You talk to yourself in your head. One part of your mind condemns the other part.

When you see it, you can rise above it, and there's a suddenly an awareness that comes with it.

You're no longer trapped in those patterns. I would recommend particularly to become particularly alert when you know you're getting stressed. Something, a situation is building up in some kind of, for example, if you get, anger takes over when you get stressed, could happen.

When you feel stress building up towards it, you can become very alert so that you can, doesn't take you over. What you know the anger is about to come. Or if it's, if you know certain areas of your life are more likely to wake you unconscious, sometimes you know just beforehand that those are going to arise in the next minute or so.

And then you can be alert, feel the entire energy field in your body, be alert with every cell of your body, then pick up the phone and talk about the financial situation with your investment advisor. So that, and so you treat those as spiritual practices and realize nothing is more important than consciousness, not the situation, it's consciousness. Some people's pain bodies are, consist, as I said, predominantly of anger.

And you can, in some people, you can sense their semi-dormant pain body in the background, even when they are not particularly angry right now. But there are people who are waiting for the next opportunity to be angry. That's their pain body.

And sometimes when you are sensitive towards other, you can feel energy fields, you can sometimes sense in other people they are waiting for an excuse to be angry. Somehow, when you look into their eyes, it's already there, but it's not them. It's that which occupies their inner energy field, it's the pain body.

And so they're waiting, and any excuse, and they will get angry at you or whoever it may be. So you become a grievance looking for a cause. Thank you for your teachings.

They have changed my life. I have a fear of aging, getting old, ugly, irrelevant. I'm not an obnoxiously vain person, but I'm critical and judgmental about how I look.

Thank you. Of course, everybody here suffers from a fatal affliction. It's called time.

And eventually, it's going to kill you. But before it kills you, unless it does that very quickly and suddenly, and if it doesn't do it very quickly and suddenly, before it kills you, it does things to you. Do you notice those things that it does to you when you look in the mirror in the morning?

And especially if you compare it to a photo taken 20, 30, 40 years ago, you notice the effect of time on you. And then it does something to the body too. But it does that to all forms, to all life forms.

It does that to an apple, just goes more quickly. If you put an apple on a windowsill for a few weeks, then you know what's going to happen to you. And I saw another related question about looking after our appearance.

And the questioner, he is afraid of getting old, ugly, and irrelevant. You may not need to get ugly because the less you identified with your external self and as you grow old, the opportunity is there for you to identify more and more with the presence. And the presence shines through the fading form.

And when the presence shines through the fading form, it's actually very, very beautiful. It's different from the kind of beauty that's there when you're 20 years old. And it's like the apple that's just been, just fallen from the tree and it's still not totally fresh.

And you have that biological, might have maybe beauty in this. So that's nice too, but it doesn't last. There's a deeper beauty that can shine through and it happens to those humans who are connected with the presence that they are.

And then you don't turn ugly. In the absence of that, if you're only identified with your physical form, then I must admit it could happen that you turn ugly. Irrelevant is another word the questioner uses.

In our civilization, old age is not valued. So people who grow old have the feeling that they are irrelevant or they are regarded as irrelevant. Old age is not associated with wisdom in our civilization because our civilization doesn't even know what wisdom is.

It's not highly valued. Cleverness, yes. High IQ, yes.

And whatever else, but not wisdom. How do you measure it? What is that?

But that is going to change. We already have in traditional cultures, ancient, older cultures, the elders are the most important people. And in the Western societies, the elders are the, well, to be charitable, they're called the elderly.

And they are somewhere in a home. And you visit them once or twice a month. And then they sit in their chairs watching TV.

Not realizing the opportunity of old age because nobody has told them. So you can appreciate your appearance if it happens to be good and you're still relatively young and your body looks good or your face looks good. You can appreciate that in the same way you appreciate other things, lovely things.

There's nothing wrong with that, but it would be important when you look in the mirror to also feel your presence so that you don't get excessively attached to the external form. You can appreciate it, but there's no need to be attached to it. Look how you can only not be attached to it if you can sense the underlying presence.

So when you look in the mirror, maybe you even apply makeup. They apply makeup to my face before I come on because it looks too oily otherwise, apparently. And I noticed last night it actually does because last night I didn't have makeup.

I saw myself on the little screen. I said, I'm very shiny. And it wasn't the emanation of presence that was coming.

It was a different kind of shininess. So before I go on camera, they apply makeup to the face. Does it mean I'm vain because I don't want to be shiny?

Maybe. So you may apply makeup, especially if you're a woman, men, I don't know, some men might do it too, I don't know. And there's no reason to think, oh, should I really, or shouldn't I, or there's something wrong with me if I do it.

That must be ego if I apply makeup. Don't complicate life too much. If you want to apply makeup, apply makeup, but while you apply makeup, feel the underlying presence.

And while you look in the mirror, sense the presence of yourself, the presence of presence, the stillness. And then it's not a problem when suddenly you look in the mirror again and you realize that 25 years have passed and you see, oh, the apple doesn't look the same anymore. It's wrinkly.

There are bags under my eyes. And then you suddenly feel the presence more strongly. And one day, perhaps you'll be 90 or 100 and you'll just emanate presence while the body is just getting shrinking.

And somebody comes and asks you questions and your answers may be simple, but there's wisdom there because you speak from presence. So you have not become, or you might've become old externally, but you have not become ugly and irrelevant. Time is a strange thing.

I described it just now as almost, it's one way of looking at it, at something that is ultimately going to destroy you. And it does that to everything, but you never catch time. You only catch the evidence it leaves.

It's a criminal. That criminal commits all kinds of terrible crimes, murderous sprees, and you can never find the criminal because all you can ever find is the evidence left behind by the criminal, which is dead bodies, but they all appear in the present moment. There's only ever the present moment.

Nobody can experience time as such. So time exists and doesn't exist. It exists on the surface of things.

But does not exist in the depths of yourself.

[Speaker 13] (4:07:49 - 4:08:15)
My question is, with medications, how do you practice presence when you're forced to take medication, in particular, for very painful ailments?

[Speaker 1] (4:08:16 - 4:08:24)
Yes, so do you take your own regular medication? No, I don't. No, I don't.

[Speaker 13] (4:08:24 - 4:09:10)
But you have been. But I've taken medication for toothaches, in particular, and sad to say, when I was in Africa, I had a toothache, and when I took the medication, because of my addiction conditioning, even when the pain went away, I kept on taking the Chordine. So for a full month and a half, I was in this Chordine haze in Africa.

But then when I came back to the United Kingdom, I did stop, and I have enough presence not to take it if it wasn't for the trigger of the pain of the toothache. So I just want to ask, what do you do when you have a toothache?

[Speaker 1] (4:09:17 - 4:21:09)
I take medication. I'll tell you what I take, and it does not seem to affect my mind at all. What I take, I cannot get in North America, the United States or Canada.

So whenever I come to Europe, England, it's made in England but I can also get it in Ireland and places like that. And in Australia, they sell it too. So I always stock up because I do get toothaches occasionally and sometimes I get headaches, not very often these days, but it can happen.

So the only medication I ever take and it's pretty rare too, is this, it's basically aspirin but it's soluble aspirin because of a throat dysfunction I have, I cannot swallow pills. So I need to dissolve it's soluble aspirin. It's called

Disprin, I highly recommend it.

It's called Disprin because it dissolves in water. So in extreme cases of a toothache or that, I take that, two of those in a glass of water. I notice no difference, strangely enough, in my consciousness when I take it but there may be other types of medication which if I took those like codeine, I think is what called, that might affect my consciousness in some way.

I don't know how. Also something that we need to also talk about is not just medication that are pain medications for the physical pain. We also need to mention in this context, medication that is prescribed to millions and millions of people for mental states such as antidepressants and tranquilizers which also of course affect your mind and may diminish your capacity to stay present because it may send you into a haze as you put it.

So now the, it's a terrible thing, for example, how many people, I know that in some extreme cases, I have to be careful with what I say because in the past I've made some doctors in the audience very angry. And I don't mind making a doctor very angry but I just want it to be balanced what I say. I know that in extreme cases, medication for mental conditions can be helpful in extreme cases.

There's no doubt about that. And there may be some people who are surviving due to it but there are millions of people who don't really need it. But the first thing the doctor, for a moment I'll just talk about the mental medication then I'll come to the physical.

But the doctors, even millions of children are being prescribed certain types of medication that affect the mind. And that is a huge mistake, I believe, except in the aforementioned extreme cases. So there's an addiction, a huge, huge, massive, mass addiction to prescribed drugs, prescription drugs.

In addition to the addiction to so-called illegal drugs, well, one of them is now becoming more and more legal. That's okay. So, but a huge amount of dependency on and addiction to mind altering drugs.

And so they are specifically there to alter your mental state. And then you have the physical drugs that are meant to do something else, but have a side effect. They affect your mind also.

So I'm often asked, and I have often been asked, what about antidepressants and tranquilizers? And I could include now in this certain types of pain medication, should we take it or should we not take it? Can one still be present?

And that may vary from, there are many different types of medication. Whether or not you can still be present depends on two factors, mainly. One is how deep or strong your presence is.

When your presence is shaky, when it's just arising in you, even one or two glasses of wine can affect your presence. And that's why I basically, I forgot on this retreat, why I often recommend, if possible, don't drink alcohol while you're on this retreat, because if your presence is not, has not fully emerged yet, it is still just a tender plant. It can be affected by a small dosage of alcohol and you lose presence.

So you order a glass of wine and you say, obviously I'm not going to have more than one glass. And after one glass, your awareness has already gone down. So you don't remember anymore that you said that obviously I'm not going to have more than one glass.

And then because your awareness has gone down, you say, okay, I'll have one more. One more, please. And there you go.

I mean, you know that you've been there. Oh, yes. Now, another interesting thing is when you're, so the extent to which you are affected by certain types of medication partly depends on how powerfully the presence is already active in you and through you.

So if it's just a tender little plant, it gets affected easily and immediately. But if you're already firmly established in presence, you will notice a change in your mind, but strangely, it will not affect your awareness. I'm speaking from personal experience and I'm not telling you how and why.

I frequently, I confess. Almost every evening with dinner, I have a glass of wine and sometimes two, but rarely more than two. After two, that's fine.

After the second glass, I notice a small change in my mind. Hard to describe. It's a small, you describe it as haziness.

I don't know if I would use that word in that particular case. I know that there's a slight difference in my mind, but my awareness is there as before. Presence is there as before.

So there's a presence behind this change in the mind. Another example, a few years ago when we were in Amsterdam, you know what's coming now. No.

No. No. No.

No. No. No.

No. No. No.

No. No. No.

everywhere else too. So I said, well, I tried it 20 years ago. I didn't do anything.

I didn't like it. And they said, well, you must not have inhaled properly. So we got some and in the hotel room, I tried it.

And I could notice that it certainly did affect my mind but the witnessing consciousness was untouched by it. The witnessing consciousness was actually witnessing the haziness in my mind. So, and then I found that I don't need to do this again because my usual state of mind or consciousness is much more pleasant than the one after the smoke, much more pleasant and peaceful without, I don't need the haziness, but I can see that a person who is tortured on a daily basis by his or her mind can find some relief in that haziness that comes with smoking.

And I would not necessarily outright condemn every use of this. After all, it's only a plant. So for some people, it gives them some relief.

It's not the way to go. It's not the way you want to go, but it can have a little opening. I also tried acid once, but don't need to mention that because it's basically the same story.

So it did not affect the awareness in me, but this is my personal experience. Now, I have not experienced mind-altering drugs like prescription drugs, as far as I remember. I think I, the, so the question that is often asked of me when people say, can one still be present when one takes these drugs?

I can't really answer. I would have to actually to give you a truthful answer. First of all, it would be subjective because I can only tell you if I can still be present when I take this drug, I would have to try it.

And I would have to try every drug to give a truthful answer. So only you can know if you cannot stay, if it completely obscures your presence, then of course it's best to refrain from taking this, except in very extreme cases of toothache, in your case. But I used to suffer a lot from toothaches because for many years in my life, I couldn't afford to go to the dentist.

And I had a kind of phobia of dentists because I went to a very bad one once and the memory stayed in my mind. And with regular visits to dentists, the likelihood of having toothache diminishes. So that's a helpful thing.

You have the, in the United Kingdom, hopefully, or you can probably afford it, but it's free, I suppose. So in extreme cases, I would try, let go of codeine and try Dysprine. That's my spiritual advice to you.

[Speaker 12] (4:21:38 - 4:22:46)
Since I've been here, I feel like I'm doing the conscious suffering and I feel like I opened the top of a sewage and it just keeps coming and coming and coming. And I don't have my usual distraction methods like internet or alcohol or anything. So it's really, I'm being really present with it and I'm trying to also stay aware when the stories try to latch on to the pain and then I realize that it's just trying to make sense of it and it feels like an ancient pain.

And I'm surrendering to it, but at the same time, I feel exhausted and my physical body feels weak. And I'm just wondering, is there something I can maybe do for myself to just not so much ease it, but just somehow like go through it a little bit with a bit more strength or comfort or for physically speaking?

[Speaker 13] (4:22:48 - 4:22:49)
Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (4:22:50 - 4:32:16)
This is the strength. You are going through it without any of your addictions, whether it's the internet, alcohol, drugs or whatever. You are, this is strength.

The fact that you are going through this without any devices is strength. The only thing is is that the mind is telling you that you may have a picture of what strength is and maybe you have a picture of strength is when you feel really good and when you feel really happy. And that's a different kind of strength.

But this is a strength of emptying our baggage. And there really isn't any easy way, but just to go through it. Now, this is a critical point for you because you're at this where now you feel like as if, oh, I want it just to be a little bit easier.

And that's the point where maybe you might watch yourself and you see where you might pick up your device or have a drink or whatever your normal things that you do to not go through something. And there's hundreds of things out there that we could use as our devices. But this is the critical point.

And you're right, it is exhausting. So why not just be exhausted? There's nothing wrong with being exhausted.

Maybe you have an image of yourself that you should not be exhausted, that you should be this, I don't know, happy bubbly person or somebody who looks really strong and who isn't tired or, I mean, the physical body gets tired. Emotional work to feel it is exhausting, especially when it's been a well of emotion that we have to go through. I'm tempted to say something at the same time I'm not because I don't want you to choose this because you wanna run from this, the emotions.

There was one time where I went through really, really very strong emotions. It was very difficult, very hard. Dark night of the soul, some people would call it.

And then the fellow that I was dating at the time, who was also awakening as well, he said to me, well, you can ask for it to be slowed down if you want. I went, really? I mean, that was a thought?

Okay. So I said, yeah, okay, I want it to be slower. And I got it.

But when I look back, it's something that I regret because now over time I have these little inklings of having to go through the dark night of the soul instead of going through it, just going through it. Now, we're gonna choose what we're gonna choose and whatever, however reason that happened, it happened like that. And it's an acceptance that it happens like that.

It's just a longer process. So if you can, I invite you to just really go into it. Allow your body just to be tired, rest more.

Go into, do an inner body meditation. There was a time during some deep meditation that I would go through, like a lot of meditation. And it was in the evening, it was bedtime.

And my body slept, but I was fully awake. And just watching my body sleep, feeling my body sleep. And yet my eyes were open the whole time.

Like I couldn't move, my body couldn't move. Our body is not our consciousness. So we can be conscious and have the body do its thing because it's an impermanent device and it gets tired.

And we can allow it to sleep, rest, yet be fully aware and conscious. So this is what I'm inviting you to do when you say you're tired. Go and lay down and rest your body and be fully aware, awake.

I mean, you may fall asleep and that's okay, it's not a problem. But it's an important time to now just nurture yourself in the, probably would feel like an enveloping emotions that just are there. So do some things for yourself that will nurture instead of going to your devices, whether that means taking a hot bath, although I don't know if there's bathtubs here, whatever makes you feel more grounded and not so lost in the emotion.

So the fact that there is an awareness and you are the witnessing presence to this and you feel it, those two together are the vehicles for transformation and for letting this go. It's just, unfortunately, because whatever is down there, we don't know. We don't even know how long it's been there for and how much we've held down there.

So we don't know when it's going to end. So don't even go into your mind and say, I just want this over with. Of course, the mind wants this over with, but it's just having to go through it one by one or 10 by 10, it doesn't really matter.

It's just your experience in this moment. And if I had to guess, your mind is telling you almost like, I shouldn't be unhappy, but you're unhappy. And it's the happiness and unhappiness that we so desperately want on the conditioned level, on the level of form, which is not going to be the true happiness.

As we go through this, we have to go through, go to what is deeper, that is the uncaused happiness. So happiness that is not caused by any particular event or unhappiness that is caused by any particular event, not caused by any particular event. And this is the play and the balance that we must bring and that our consciousness, being aware of it, brings that.

So the full acceptance of that pain that is arising and allowing it to arise and feeling it while at the same time connecting to that awareness, that consciousness, who or what is aware of that pain? That awareness is who you really are, not the pain. The pain is something old that's there, something very old that needs to be let out.

[Speaker 12] (4:32:20 - 4:32:29)
I feel like a lot of it is not even mine. Yeah, probably, maybe it isn't. Some of it, some of it is.

[Speaker 2] (4:32:31 - 4:41:16)
But yes, we are, as we are the awakening consciousness through us, our individual forms, we are also awakening that which is, you can say past, present, and future, but there's no past, present, and future. You've heard of the 100th monkey syndrome where if there's enough people, a transformation happens, like everybody sort of goes into it, you know? Like for example, you get enough people talking about, I don't know, a particular thing.

Let's do the Coke, because we did the Coke commercial, okay? Enough people see that, and there's something happens, and enough people drink it, and suddenly it's like just spirals. It just like, everybody now changes.

And it could be on the other level, unconscious level, where there's enough people that are unconscious. It could take one person, say like, example like Hitler, who has somehow enough, in a way, charisma that he had, because his speeches were actually incredible, but it was that unconscious aspect of him that he was able to gather enough people around him where it almost turned that whole, the whole country into that. So the awakening consciousness that happening through each and every one of us, at some point, if there is enough of that, enough people that are awakened, something will shift.

So when you say you feel like it's just not yours, it is true. We are, past, present, and future, you can say, on a spiritual level, exist in the timeless realm, manifests in the body still, still here, still with us. It's like bringing something with you here to the present moment.

And when we awaken, we actually then, because we're so tied to each other, there's one connection, as we awaken, and something happens also on that level out there, whether it's past or whether it's future, because it really doesn't exist. I had this experience one time in a church in Switzerland. Some of it was old, some of it was new, and I was in the old part, and I had this experience where I just couldn't move my body because I saw past, present, and future happening all in this moment.

And when I saw that and had that experience, I realized that, wow, there is no time. On the spiritual level, there is no time that all dimensions are happening, but we only see a portion of that dimension. So we are more than just our body and our minds.

We are more than just our emotions or the events that happen to us and now that we have to work through because we just didn't have that ability to work through it then. But we can become lost when we lose that dimension of space in us, of stillness, and think that we're only this. And when we think we're only this, that's when it becomes difficult.

So let your light shine even more on this, not by wishing it to go away, because when you have even the slightest desire for it to be gone, you haven't fully accepted. Full acceptance means that you are willing to feel this forever. Yeah, I know.

But you know what? You know it'll change. Everything changes.

So this moment is not gonna be the same the next moment or a week or a year from now, but full acceptance actually means you're willing to accept this forever. And forever, on the form level, it just doesn't exist because all forms are impermanent. When you know that on the spiritual level, then you can really say, yeah, I'm willing to accept this, fully, completely, because we know that it will change.

But if you're not on this, the consciousness, the higher consciousness, then you think, oh my God, are you kidding me? I don't wanna feel this forever. Because remember, full acceptance has no time.

There's only this moment. And this moment and the experience of this moment is what's happening inside you now. So this is where the mind and the body are fighting each other, the mind and consciousness, the consciousness that you are.

The mind is still saying, oh yeah, but I really don't want this. I'm willing to feel it, but there's something in me that doesn't quite really want this. And then be honest with yourself and choose.

When something arises in you of an emotion, you can ask yourself, am I willing to let this go? Not with the mind, but feel your body, and your body will answer you. If it's yes, your body will open.

There's an openness and a relaxedness that'll happen, that you're able then to let it go. Maybe you're not willing to let it go, and that's okay. So then you can ask yourself, okay, am I willing to accept this?

Because the acceptance could be also the integration. Am I willing to integrate it then as part of my experience of the totality of who I am, of body, mind, and spirit? Because maybe that integration, that acceptance on that level is kind of stirring the pot in you.

There's a movement that begins to happen when we accept it as an integration into our beingness, body, mind, and spirit, that it becomes and transmutes, transform into the one consciousness, so we can then use that experience as a teaching tool for somebody else, perhaps. So this experience, which is aki, we can say, let's call it aki, if we fully accept it, and we are the awareness, and we witness it, we accept it, allow it to be there, it goes through a process, a transformational process in its own time, and all we have to do is just be awake to it, aware to it, and it just transforms, like water, boiling water turning into steam, and transforms and connects with this life that we are, and then soon enough, it's just this life.

We have the memory of that experience, and now we're able to perhaps use that as a gift for somebody else who is going through the same thing. Just got to do the work, sweetheart.

[Speaker 9] (4:41:48 - 4:42:09)
For someone who's a little bit hyperactive, what's the best way to get a balance between removing content, which is really good, but then not getting annoyed when

content comes in, and you think, oh, it's spoiling my peace. Is there some way to get a balance?

[Speaker 1] (4:42:09 - 4:42:12)
I assume the question applies to yourself.

[Speaker 9] (4:42:12 - 4:42:13)
Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (4:42:13 - 4:42:42)
So that someone is you. Yeah, yeah. Okay.

Just wanted to make sure. So you are hyperactive. Yeah, yeah.

Now, rather than explaining it to us in an abstract way, can you give an example, or one example of where this is problematic and how it manifests in your life?

[Speaker 9] (4:42:43 - 4:43:20)
So for example, here after the talks, I can go out to the nature, and I get a glimpse now of some kind of presence. Yes. And I also want to engage with other people, but I know once I get on a roll, for example, speaking how good the talk was, I'm into just a torrent.

So it's almost, should I just go and sit in the park for hours and hours, but that's too extreme probably. I'm creating probably more content, trying to analyze whether to stay out of the way or...

[Speaker 1] (4:43:21 - 4:43:27)
So when you engage in conversation, then do you tend to speak fast or...

[Speaker 9] (4:43:27 - 4:43:29)
Yes, yeah, yeah. I just totally lose...

[Speaker 1] (4:43:29 - 4:43:32)
The mind takes over and you're dragged along.

[Speaker 9] (4:43:32 - 4:43:32)
Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (4:43:32 - 4:44:34)
Yes. Now this being dragged along by the mind happens to many, many people, but perhaps you slightly more extreme form, your mind is even more powerful than the normal mind. And so you're dragged along before you know it.

Yeah. And so do you tend to sometimes avoid interaction in order not to be dragged along? Yes.

Yeah. So it's either you get dragged along or you sit there and can't interact. Yeah, it's like two settings, full blast or off.

Yeah. When somebody talks to you, of course, what is, how do you experience yourself when you listen to somebody? What is your...

How do you listen to another person? Is your mind already preparing what we're going to say or...

[Speaker 9] (4:44:34 - 4:44:43)
Yeah, definitely. Whenever anybody tells me the name, never ever remember it because I'm probably somewhere else when that's coming in. Yeah.

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (4:44:45 - 4:44:52)
Have you done any practice, meditation, any kind of meditation practice, formal meditation?

[Speaker 9] (4:44:53 - 4:45:01)
Yeah, I try. And I'm guessing if I do reasonably well for that first five minutes, when I get up and go outside, it's lovely.

[Speaker 1] (4:45:03 - 4:45:18)
Now, when you're out in nature by yourself, are you able to be present to some extent or is your mind still active while you're looking at the trees or at the sky?

[Speaker 9] (4:45:18 - 4:45:25)
To some extent now, I can. So that's progress definitely because I couldn't do that before.

[Speaker 1] (4:45:25 - 4:45:33)
So... So you find little spaces when you're of presence when you're not interacting with people.

[Speaker 9] (4:45:33 - 4:45:39)
Yeah, like wet tarmac for some reason, just, yeah, that works. I don't know why.

[Speaker 1] (4:45:40 - 4:46:02)
It's just a reflection of the... Oh, well, the most unlikely things can help you. That's fine.

It doesn't really matter what it is. So... Do you, are you in a relationship, married or...

No, no, no. Do you, have you had relationships?

[Speaker 9] (4:46:03 - 4:46:04)
Yeah, but yeah, yeah.

[Speaker 1] (4:46:05 - 4:48:14)
Not enough. Okay, the but is enough, but... I don't want to go too deeply into it because I'm not a psychotherapist and don't need to be.

Well, I would recommend that you practice here. There's still some time left. Everybody knows now who you are.

And the people here are much more conscious than people you would normally meet in everyday life. And everybody will be very happy to help you and to help you. And you can also help, for example, by just refraining from giving too much input when you're interacting, engaging in conversation.

Be more a listener than a speaker. Make that your practice for the time being. I'm not saying don't say a word, but be more like 80% a listener than a speaker.

And that, for example, you can do by asking questions when you're, rather than stating your view or whatever it is, ask questions that encourages the other person to speak more. If the other person speaks more, it forces you to listen and then make the listening into a practice while the other person is speaking. Are you able to, let's say, at any time, to feel your inner body?

Can you feel that?

[Speaker 9] (4:48:14 - 4:48:18)
The hands, but then I seem to lose them quite quickly.

[Speaker 1] (4:48:18 - 4:49:12)
Okay, but hands, you can feel the energy in your hands. The rest of the body is more difficult? Yeah, yeah.

Okay, well, it's a good start. It's a start. So I suggest that once you've asked a question, while you listen, you direct your awareness into the inner feeling of your hands.

And that keeps it there so that it doesn't, your mind doesn't take off. So you ask a question, where are you from? How long have you been with Eckhart?

How did you first discover the books? Have you been to other, many questions you can ask and people will be happy to help you by answering your questions. And they will be happy to help you by not asking you too many questions.

[Speaker 9] (4:49:13 - 4:49:15)
Yeah, no, thank you, that's good, yeah, that'll help.

[Speaker 1] (4:49:17 - 4:50:48)
So, and so while you listen, have your attention in the inner energy field of your hands. If you can amplify that and have your attention also in other parts of your body, for example, your feet and hand at the same time, that's even better. But hands is fine too.

So you feel your inner, the aliveness in your hands and from there you listen. And you know, just give it, this will help you prevent the stream of mind from taking you over. So that's the beginning of a little practice.

Another practice you can do is while you listen, you're aware of your breathing. And so you can even bring the two together. You can be aware of your breathing and your hands, but it's probably better for you to just choose one, one or the other.

So please help this gentleman and allow him to ask you some questions and give exhaustive answers. And don't ask him any questions, except, well, I'll ask you a couple of questions so you don't need to ask him. Where are you from?

[Speaker 9] (4:50:48 - 4:50:49)
Yorkshire in England.

[Speaker 1] (4:50:49 - 4:50:54)
Okay, Yorkshire, England. And so you don't need to ask him that.

[Speaker 9] (4:50:54 - 4:50:55)
So that's good.

[Speaker 1] (4:50:59 - 5:07:02)
And have you been to retreats? Before here with us here? No, it's the first one.

First one, okay. Well, that's another question you don't need to ask. Okay, I believe you can get there.

So, and of course, in addition to this practice with people, go out into nature and be engaged if necessary, even involve other senses, not just the visual sense or for most people, the visual is the predominant sense, but also perhaps touch something, see what it, a leaf or plant, pick up a stone or on the beach, the sand or whatever it is, water, give it, be aware of the tactile sense perceptions.

All these things help you get out of your mind. And so, well, I wish you well in your practice and thank you. I am late a lot.

How do you be fully present, but also keep track of what time it is? Now, you may be surprised to hear that as some people are, that I wear a watch and I actually look at it quite often and I'm rarely late. Now, this is nothing really to do with presence because many people are not present at all, are late all the time.

And some people who are present may be late because they're not used to looking at a watch or they don't wear a watch. And there's absolutely no incompatibility between being present and being aware of what time it is or how much time you have left to go to a particular place because presence is the timeless dimension of consciousness. And it just means that what falls away is psychological time from your mind.

Now, what I call clock time or watch time, practical time, of course still operates in your life and in our civilization. So it's, you don't lose presence if you wear a watch. You can lose presence with or without a watch.

So it's just really changing an old habit of yours. So you can try wearing a watch and then you occasionally you look at it and say, oh, I have 10 minutes left, 20 minutes left. Are you leaving the present moment when you look at your watch?

No, because you're looking at your watch in the present moment. And an interesting thing about watch, unless you can have a watch with a dial or of course you can have a digital watch, digital watches. Some people wear a digital watch with just the numbers.

I would prefer, and if you are in doubt which one to buy, I would suggest that you get one with a dial because there the time is also represented spatially and you can actually look at a watch and know how much time you have left to get to your appointment if it's a dial because you have a spatial representation of time in your watch. If you look at the minute hand, maybe there, and let's say the minute hand is on the nine and you need to be somewhere on the hour, then even without a single thought in your head, you can know how much time you have left because you look at the space on your dial between the minute hand on the nine and the full hour 12. So you see a spatial representation of time on your dial which means it requires no thinking whatsoever.

So that's quite good. So looking at your watch does not need to stimulate thought. With digital, digital is more likely to stimulate thought and when you look at the digital, immediately you read out the number in your mind and then you have to figure out how much time you have actually got left.

You have to figure out the minutes and you have to start thinking. So a watch with a dial is to be preferred and then perfectly fine, no loss of presence whatsoever knowing that you have this space of time left to get ready, then you just get going. So it's tried out.

If you're not used to wearing a watch, maybe it's a little strange at first. Many people these days, I understand, especially younger people don't wear watches anymore but they're constantly looking at their cell phones so that's okay. It tells them what time it is and on your cell phone, you can have a dial, I suppose, you can change or you can have the digital.

Always prefer the dial. You can actually, another little practice you can do is look at your watch and know what time it is without any mental activity. Then you can, there's a knowing there which has nothing to do, you're not telling yourself what time it is.

You just know it by looking. It's a little practice. An additional reason why I wear a watch is that I, and this is simply a personal taste of mine, I like the ticking of mechanical watches and I like mechanical watches, the old-fashioned ones that you wind up because a lot of attention has gone into the making of a mechanical watch and somehow when a lot of attention, focused attention has gone into the making of something, somehow the end product is imbued with the sense of quality.

You have to pay a little bit more, of course, for a mechanical watch these days although they are not quite as accurate as the cheaper quartz watches. So practice, experiment a little bit with that. I'm not saying it doesn't matter whether it's mechanical or not, but the main thing is practical time does not need to interfere at all with presence.

A question here about what to do. Remaining silent in order to refrain from responding to a person's pain body. How do I respond without responding to the ego, the pain body of the other person?

Staying silent seems to only fuel their fire. When somebody has been taken over by the pain body, almost anything, well, probably anything you do will fuel the fire. Staying silent, not saying anything may fuel the fire and whatever you say will fuel the fire even more.

Staying silent is probably preferable to interacting with the pain body because if you interact with the pain body, and I'm talking about a situation when the other person has been taken over completely by the pain body. If the pain body is actually, there's a remnant of awareness in the other person, then one can still communicate, but you would still be communicating to the other, to the person if there's a remnant of awareness. And to know that if you said, let's say it's your partner, and I always recommend that when you're both conscious to have an agreement with your partner that to point out to the other that the pain body is arising when you notice it and you both agree that you will help each other be conscious of it.

And if that's the case and you've done that, then as the pain body begins to take over your partner and of course the partner is about to lose consciousness completely, you can say, I think that's your pain body coming up right now. And if there's a remnant of awareness in him or her, the person will say, it is? And would kind of put attention within it.

Yeah, I actually do feel very angry right now because of what you said or whatever it is. It's okay, there's a remnant of awareness. They're saying it's the pain, but there's a moment of, okay, let me see if that's true.

If the person has been taken over completely, you will no longer be able to communicate with that person. And if any communication will be received by the pain body, so you're not, and any answer that you get will not be your partner's. I'm differentiate now between your partner and that which takes him or her over.

When he or she is totally taken over, communication becomes virtually impossible because whatever you say, the pain body will answer back. And it will never, the pain body cannot admit that it is the pain body. The pain body always pretends to be the person.

So when you say, oh, you've become your pain body, can't you see? Of course they can't see, they're totally asleep. And you're talking to the pain body and the pain body will not say, yes, I am the pain body.

The pain body will say, don't give me that nonsense. Look at your own stuff. Why do you put it onto me always?

And you go on and on and on. My pain, you look at yourself, why do you always be yourself? You remember what you did last week?

That was the pain body. So whatever you say to the pain body will be wrong and will fuel the fire of the pain body. If there's a remnant of awareness, that's a different matter.

Then something is still possible. So if there's no remnant of awareness, then say as little as possible, be as present as possible, or compassionate if that's possible. Pain bodies are very challenging.

So high degree of presence is necessary. And sometimes the best solution is to remove yourself for a while so that the pain body can naturally come to, that particular episode can subside. So if you do remove yourself and go for a walk, then the pain body and the other person for a while will continue to renew itself through their thinking.

Or they might even make phone calls to somebody else to renew. But then after a while, it'll come to an end. And then hopefully a few hours later, or the next day, awareness comes back in.

And then there's the person that you know has come suddenly come back. I haven't seen you in a while. So it needs to be particularly strong when you're in the presence of a number of people who are mind dominated, as most humans still are.

It needs to be particularly strong when you're with somebody who is mentally disturbed.

[Speaker 6] (5:07:07 - 5:07:30)
How do I stay present with my family members when we're all together? And this comes up at dinner time. I can be present with myself and present with one family member.

But when there's three of them together or two of them together, my presence goes out the window and I get caught up in the drama of what's going on.

[Speaker 1] (5:07:30 - 5:07:37)
So how do you lose presence? You get drawn into- I get drawn into it.

[Speaker 6] (5:07:37 - 5:08:07)
I also have a special needs daughter, the younger one, and she wants my attention. My husband wants my attention. And I have a teenage daughter.

He usually doesn't want my attention at all. Yeah, but it's a dynamic there. And then my husband and my teenage daughter going at it and me wanting to protect her and then take care of the younger one's needs.

I basically just want to run away, not come back home. Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (5:08:08 - 5:14:43)
Yeah, well, that's also very good practice. You have to just be aware of what's going on and how, if you are able to not lose yourself. When you give attention, as

you must give attention, of course, it's wonderful to give attention to your child or to another human being, but not to lose yourself in the giving of attention so that you are connected with the source of attention, which is within you, without losing this connectedness with a source, then your attention can flow and you can say something to your child, say something to the other, without losing yourself in that movement. And again, inner body awareness can be the anchor for staying present. So as you sit at the table, you have to feel yourself, feel your inner being.

And then you're rooted in being, and then you can give attention and you can feel the connectedness with being. You're not lost then in the mental realm. They may be, but something, if there's only one person who stays connected, it usually affects the entire energy field in the room, in the same way that a deeply unconscious person also affects the entire energy field in the room.

And if there is a deeply unconscious person there, for example, a deeply negative person that may not be the case in your family, then there would have to be, your presence would have to be quite intense to counteract that. It doesn't fight it. You don't fight the darkness.

Just the light needs to be stronger. You turn up the dimmer switch, but you have to turn it up anyway to some extent as you sit with people at home. There's also the additional factor that people with whom you share a lot of past, it's sometimes more difficult to stay present with them than people with whom you don't share so much past, people, acquaintances, friends, but family members that goes back often a very long time.

And, but it's a lovely challenge too. So practice when you're always just with one or two people there, and then there's enough presence power in you so that you can sustain presence even when there are more. And now you're, it's required, what is required here is vigilance of your own energy, your own consciousness.

Now, without the vigilance, we could call it attention too. As one Zen master explains that the essence of Zen is just this, the raised finger, which means that was his explanation for Zen. That's all that's needed, is attention.

That means alert presence, vigilance. So it needs to be particularly strong when you're in the presence of a number of people who are mind dominated, as most humans still are. It needs to be particularly strong when you're with somebody who is mentally disturbed, intense vigilance, intense presence required.

It needs to be particularly strong when you have a physical condition and a serious so-called illness, then that can be the motivating force for intense presence or vigilance. So this is, you can see how much more helpful the raised finger is than conceptual explanations. You cannot conceptually explain what presence is or what vigilance is to the mind because it immediately takes you beyond the mind.

And sometimes people ask, I had somebody after a week-long retreat some years ago who asked, can you just give us, just explain again the concept of presence? I just want to hear again what it really actually is. I didn't quite get it.

The entire week was a practice of presence. But his mind said, I didn't quite get it. Of course it didn't get it because he was expecting to understand conceptually.

And he thought, if I just explain a little bit more, then he'll really become present. No, I've already said too much. This presence is just attention.

Attention is non-conceptual intelligence. It's the spacious awareness, this. Attention basically means there's little or no thought.

There's just consciousness, just the light. So you shine the light on people and then you can speak and the light is still there. And you speak, the presence is there.

In other words, as I'm speaking to you now, the presence is there, but the words are also there. They come out of the presence. And if there's a child here that says, daddy, daddy, he just took away my toy.

Tell him not to do that or whatever they say. You can look at him in that lovely presence in which there's also, there's compassion and benevolence. It's all part of that.

And you look at the child and say, okay, well, just don't talk now. You say whatever comes to you without losing yourself in the drama, the daily drama, the drama of daily existence, the nervousness of that. So that's your job.

[Speaker 6] (5:14:45 - 5:14:46)
Thank you. Thank you very much.

[Speaker 1] (5:15:05 - 5:38:52)
You feel something huge is missing in your life because your mother doesn't understand you. But that's because you believed in the thought that says that this should be when it isn't. And so you feel this enormous burden, which is not really created by your mother.

It's created by your own mind. For 46 years, I've been constantly criticized, capital letters, by my mother for everything. I always felt fear in her presence trying to fulfill her expectations.

I couldn't handle her criticism anymore. And three years ago, I decided to stop any contact, but I suffer painful fear, guilt, and hatred. I'm exhausted.

Please help. Yes, so you've gone from one unpleasantness into another kind of unpleasantness. If you see that your mother, whatever your mother says is totally conditioned by her mind, she's playing the same old record, CD, it's not records anymore, but nowadays, what do you play?

The old download or whatever. What? Yeah.

So to realize whatever comes out of her mouth is her mind regurgitating the conditioning throughout her lifetime, and perhaps being conditioned by her mother and so on in that way. So perhaps you've been thinking all those 46 years or whatever it was that there was some meaning or significance to what your mother said, but basically, it was just the noise of her mind, and she believed in it. She believed that whatever her mind repeated and repeated was the truth, there were certain patterns.

She could never get beyond being the mother. She knew better, of course, when you were four or five, but she couldn't let go of the belief that she knew better when you grew up. She couldn't let go of the role of mother.

It continues to play in her. And so can you see that what she is doing is simply a replay of her mind without believing that it has any significance and so approach her in a state of compassion because she's completely at the mercy of her conditioned mind. And you don't have to buy into what she says because, of course, many people think, I really, I need my parents to understand me.

I want my mother to understand me. And they feel very unhappy if they're not being understood. And it may be beyond the capability of your mother to understand you.

And it certainly is beyond the present capability of your mother to understand you. So she is limited. You have to recognize her limitations in this lifetime.

Maybe before she dies, she will go beyond. Before death, it's possible. But for the time being, she's very limited in her state of consciousness.

And that is not to look down upon her, but to see it with compassion that what she does is extremely repetitive. And not to believe your own mind when it tells you that she needs to understand you. I need my mother to understand me.

Do you? Yes. Okay.

What happens if your mother's understood you? The mother says, now I really understand you, how you live. Oh, thank you.

And now what? It's just another same present moment. Or before the mother says, what you do is all wrong.

You shouldn't have done this. Why didn't you do that? Okay.

Same thing. It really makes no difference whether she understands you or doesn't understand you, except that your mind is telling you that it does make a difference. You visit your mother.

You have a cup of tea with her. She understands you. You go off and you look at the sky and you take a breath and it's the present moment.

And then you remember, oh, my mother understands me. Or you go and have a cup of tea with her and she continues with her old patterns and say goodbye and go off and you look at the sky and take a breath and you say, oh, she's still in her old patterns. Well, that's how it is.

It makes no difference unless you believe your mind when it tells you that it's dreadfully important that your mother should understand you. And that happens when you believe every thought that comes into your head and then the thought can make you unhappy. My mother doesn't understand me and you feel something huge is missing in your life because your mother doesn't understand you.

But that's because you believed in the thought that says that this should be when it isn't. And so you feel this enormous burden which is not really created by your mother. It's created by your own mind.

So your mother is not to blame. You have to see that your own mind is creating this enormous burden. And when you see that, you can actually, you can let go and allow your mother to be who she is in that particular conditioned form right now and allow her her limitations.

I had a similar experience with my mother, although not as extreme as your experience probably. My mother did not continuously criticize me, but she made it very clear that she was unhappy with the choices I made in life. And sometimes she implied it.

She said, oh, well, you could have done so much, couldn't you? You had so many chances, didn't you? And with your intelligence, you could have done so much.

And I was already 45. And she said, but you threw it away. Oh, well, let's not talk about it.

And so allowing her, her limitations, with not, as I said, not looking down on her and say, you are so limited, but compassionately allowing her, that's how she, that's her mind, mental conditioning. She thinks in terms of a man needs a career. He needs to make money.

He needs to get married and have children. And he needs to show that he's successful and all those things. And that didn't happen with her son.

And she wasn't happy about that. So she couldn't go beyond the conditioning of her mind because that was conditioned by the particular culture she grew up in. And I could see that and it was fine.

Now, a little earlier, we talked about likes and dislikes. I had love for my mother because I could occasionally, one could actually glimpse beyond her conditioned mind. And occasionally you could see her being shining through her eyes when she stopped talking.

And that was just wonderful to see that, that aliveness in her eyes and the beingness in her. And even when she was talking, I could still sense it in the background. So I didn't have to react to her words.

I can allow the words to pass through me like some sound of leaves in the wind without any particular meaning or significance. And that was fine. And yet talking about likes and dislikes, I didn't like staying with her for more than a few days because it got too much.

Although I loved her, my preference was, after five or six days, to say, okay, I have to go now. And she got used to that and it was fine. I would come once a year, sometimes twice a year, and visit for a few days.

And that was surrender to that. My choice was not to say, okay, I'm going to now spend three months at my mom's place. But if that had been inevitable, if I had been forced for some external reasons to do that, it would have been fine, too.

I would have surrendered to it. But a few days was usually fine, was enough. As you know, Ram Dass tells you that as the great test, whether you're enlightened, if you think you're enlightened, spend two weeks with your parents.

And that's the great, that's the test. So my father was much more accepting. He accepted whatever I did.

Usually he said, okay. He was very unusual and eccentric. That's why they didn't get on, my mom and my dad, like total opposites.

How they ever got married, I don't understand. But he was eccentric. And even when I was still in school age, he said, do you want to carry on going to school?

I was 14. I said, no way, don't want to go to school. He said, okay, then don't.

So in some ways, he was quite enlightened. In other ways, still burdened with a huge ego, depending which segment of his life he looked at. So that's parents.

Now let's see if we have any of this is helpful to the questioner, because the questioner is now in a dilemma. Going back to the mother is suffering. Staying away from the mother is suffering for other reasons, guilt, and so on.

So I hope this question has some, provides a little bit of help, that see that what she says is all part of her conditioning. It may be possible for you to go back to your mother one of these days or next year, or the year after, and be in a state of allowing her her limitations without feeling the need to respond to her criticism, because she does it, because otherwise you buy into the old record and you just play the duo. Her old record is combined with your old record of defending yourself or justifying yourself and then getting angry, and you play out the same scenario every time you go there.

But you're there as a conscious presence. Allow her to be. Listen to her.

You can either say nothing, or you can say, yes, I know that's how you think, but that's not how I feel. I feel differently. That's how it is.

And then at first, perhaps go spend not too long with her. Visit her for half an hour, just to see what happens. And then the next visit can be a little bit longer.

And then you may be able to meet her with compassion and awareness and allow her to be who she is temporarily in her conditioned form. And sometimes if you allow, then people change and sometimes they don't, but they're more likely to change if you bring an acceptance. If you no longer oppose a person who always putting out their old stuff towards you, if you don't, which is her egoic identity, is continuously reasserted by her criticism of you, her criticism of you, she doesn't know that, but her criticism of you asserts her sense of self, her false sense of self, because every time she criticizes you, she is right.

She is so right. And the ego loves nothing better than to be right, because the more often you are right and the more right you are, the bigger the ego is. You feel more acknowledged in your sense of who you are.

That's why she loves criticizing, but of course she doesn't know what she's doing. It's all unconscious. But if you recognize that this is what she's doing, then you realize that's not your mother at all.

The true being of your mother is somewhere hiding underneath all that stuff. It's obscured by all the egoic conditioning. It's hiding somewhere there.

But you strengthen the egoic patterns by opposing them. And every time you defend yourself against her criticism, or you start getting angry and you shout back at her, whatever you do, you strengthen her patterns and you yourself fall into egoic patterns yourself. So you both become more unconscious, because even your defense mechanisms, the way in which you defend yourself is part of your egoic identity.

The victim, you're the victim of your mother. There's the victim identity. There's, yeah, I'm not right.

Why don't you leave me alone? Can't you leave me alone? Okay, you're...

So don't feed her patterns, which means don't oppose them. It makes no difference what she says to who you are and what you do. You just, you listen.

That's okay. That's what you think. That's fine.

Or you can use the famous expression that originated in therapy sessions. I hear what you're saying. Or you can say, I hear you, I hear you.

It's a nice saying. It's overdone a bit these days, perhaps. And people say, I hear you, even when I'm not really hearing you.

But if it's done rightly, if it comes from the right place, it's a wonderful thing to say, yeah, I hear what you're saying. As long as it's not followed by, but you are wrong and I'm right. So I expect a progress report about your mother sometime next year, perhaps.

Oh, please, could you say more about the surface of the present moment and going more deeply into the present moment? Thank you. The surface of the present moment, as I call it, is whatever you perceive with your senses, seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, whatever.

So that's the surface of the present moment is sensory perception, external. And that's already beginning, if to become more acutely aware of sensory perception, it's a way of entering the present moment. The expression you can use for that is come to your senses, come to your senses.

Because when you come to your senses, you step out of the stream of thinking. So to really give attention to something, you withdraw by giving attention to sensory perception, what's around you, you withdraw attention from thought. So there's not enough consciousness available now to make thoughts because the consciousness is not directed towards sense perception.

And that's the surface of the present moment. And that's already a wonderful thing to wake up into your surroundings where you are. And you realize you might have been for hours trapped in your thought, only peripherally aware of your surroundings.

And then you, oh, and you listen and you look and you feel perhaps a breeze touching your skin. There might be certain sense in the air. And that's the, I call that the present moment, but it's the surface of the present moment.

And then you become aware of yourself not as a person, but as a consciousness that is perceiving because without consciousness, there would be no perception. And so you become aware of that still alert background to your sense perceptions. And that is the depth dimension of the present moment.

That's the one thing that never changes. You're always that conscious. You are always that conscious space.

Now what the surface of the present moment undergoes continuous change, of course, there's the continuous flux of phenomena. And what does not change is the depths of the present moment because the depths of the present moment is the space of consciousness. So at the deepest level, the present moment is the unconditioned consciousness, the space for everything.

And that's, you can be rooted in that. And then you relate to the world, the surface world, which really includes your thoughts too. All your thoughts are invisible relative to the depths of the essence of who you are as consciousness.

Even your thoughts are a surface phenomenon in the same way that the ripples on the surface of the ocean are a surface phenomenon. But of course the ripples are one with the ocean. I often use that ripple analogy, waves or ripples.

The only tragic thing is if the ripple doesn't realize that it is essentially the ocean, and then the ripple thinks it's no more than a ripple. Oh dear, that's scary. Because there are other ripples that are bigger and there are even some waves.

But of course they're all very impermanent. But if the ripple realizes the attention of the ripple is no longer just on the surface of the ocean, oh, what's the next thing I need? Oh, that ripple looks scary.

I need a different ripple. I'll run away from this one. Oh, this one is nice.

I love you. Come, come with me. I need you.

I need you. Please come. Now, if we get together, we can almost become a bigger ripple.

Okay, let's get married.

[Speaker 16] (5:38:54 - 5:38:54)
Okay.

[Speaker 1] (5:38:57 - 5:39:17)
But they still haven't realized the essence of who they are. So it's whatever happens on the surface only is frustrating if you don't realize the depths and the vastness out of which you have come, the vastness to which you're always connected and you don't know it.

[Speaker 11] (5:39:47 - 5:41:20)
Okay. I've read all your books and I listen to your recordings on a pretty much on a daily basis. And I don't say that to build up an ego that doesn't exist.

It leads into my question. What I find in trying to practice the power of now, trying to be conscious without thought is a very heavy inner dialogue of all the principles and things that I've read. Like, how should I do this?

What would Eckhart say? And actually my thought process starts getting more active. And I think I'm losing the presence by that thought process.

And then I think your latest book with the cartoons, which I love, which I think there's one with a little bird in the tree. He's talking to the dog and he's very upset. And the dog says, what's wrong?

And the bird says, well, you know, I'm thinking about yesterday and this and that, and I'm worried about what's gonna happen in a week, two weeks, it's about the future. What do I do? What do I do?

And a dog just looks at him and says, stop thinking. So how do I, you know, it seems you try to stop thinking, but and you read all this and you try to practice it. But yet in any given situation, I find that in order to get closer to practicing it or even practice it, it's causing a lot of thoughts to happen.

So it's a different kind of thoughts or those thoughts that I should break that kind of habit. And if so, how?

[Speaker 1] (5:41:20 - 6:08:56)
Okay, thank you. Thank you. Now, there's a lot of talk these days about not just talk, actually it's happening, addictions.

Many people are addicted to all kinds of things, substances, but one of the greatest addictions or one of the greatest addiction never actually, you never read about it in the papers because the people who are addicted to it don't know it. It's the addiction to thinking. It's actually addictive.

Can't stop thinking. It's like, can't stop drinking, can't stop smoking, can't stop eating, can't stop thinking. Thinking is the greater addiction than any of these.

And it's an addiction because it's, first, it's been a drug or it's just been around for so long and it's a pseudo sense of self. So it's a great reluctance on the part of most people to let go of thinking, which is equated with the state of sleep, to let go of thinking. There isn't that much to understand in this teaching.

There's a little bit to understand about how the ego works, but even that is just mainly a self-observation. The main thing about it is presence, presence. And presence is a space of no thought but presence can also be there in the background even when thinking is happening.

You can still be not completely involved in the thinking. Thinking loses the ability to create havoc in your life and confuse you. So your choice then is not to understand more or to bring some intellectual analysis to the practice, but to practice the state of not thinking, which can be arrived at by various ways, as you probably know.

If you don't think about it, just do it. Becoming more aware of the present moment and accept it as it is, slows down the overactive mind is one thing because a lot of the overactivity of the mind is an attempt to get away from the is-ness, the simplicity of the present moment. So to become more aware of the present moment as a practice, have perhaps little pointers in your office, at home, in your car.

Let's say present moment or whatever, or a symbol for it. And there are different entry points into the present moment. Present moment awareness means thinking subsides, may not disappear completely, but something else arises that is primary.

We call it presence or awareness. Buddhists call it mindfulness, which I don't use because it implies your mind is full of things, but it isn't, of course. It's just a mistranslation.

So to be present, first of all, use the present moment to become, but how do you become conscious of the present moment? Now, when you get it, after a while you can actually sense the presence of the present, so to speak, directly. And there it is.

It's just. But helpful things are sense perceptions take you out of thinking. If you're not judging the sense perceptions, labeling, naming, looking around.

Anywhere, wherever you are, look around. Practice sense perceptions without this compulsive interference of naming what you're perceiving, or that's a beautiful flow. I wonder what it's called.

I don't know what it's called. Oh, that helps. I can be free of thinking.

If I know what it's called, I can say, oh, that's such and such, and then drop that. And see what it means to perceive without the interference of concepts, words. At this moment, for example, you're looking at me.

Okay, now, let's say between now and now, were you thinking? No. Okay, and again, between now and now, were you thinking or present?

No thought. And while I speak, do you need to think to understand what I'm saying, or can you just listen and understand it? And this is what you're doing.

And so that's part of the teaching and the function of the spiritual teacher. Imparting information is secondary. What I'm telling you now is secondary.

What is primary is the underlying state of consciousness, which is presence, that's the teaching. But you can't talk about that, it's underlying. But a sign that it's working is that while you listen, there's no thought, it's just an alert presence.

And when the so-called teacher stops speaking for a moment, the alert presence remains, it does not need to be filled with anything. Shh, shh, like now. What is there to think about?

Nothing. Now, if we do this for longer, at some point, your mind will probably start up and think, how much longer is he going to sit there? And when that happens, you can allow your mind to say, how much longer is he going to sit there and say nothing, and then come back to presence?

And then some other thought will come, what's this all about? And then you can allow that thought to arise and then be present again, which means you're not really, your priority is no longer to follow the thought where it wants to take you, because the thought has a magnetic pull, it wants more of your consciousness, but it wants to grow because it's a little entity. It wants to grow, so it wants your attention.

And in subtle ways, it tries to get your attention, says, it might even use a bodily feeling, says, gosh, I'm hungry suddenly, why didn't I need to eat something? And then you think of a red, what restaurant am I going to afterwards? And so the presence is gone, you are gone, you are looking for a restaurant in your mind.

Which means the thought used as some bodily thing to make thoughts out of it completely pointless because you can't find a restaurant because you're standing here. But it can use all kinds of things to manufacture more, to get your attention. And if you're not careful, if you don't know the mechanism, it's not so much an intellectual understanding, but a simple realization that this is what the mind does.

It tries to pull you in. It's fine, that's what it does. Once you know that, you can allow a thought to arise without following it where it wants you to go, which is into another bigger thought, into a bigger one.

So then you become like my dog when it finds a scent. And then suddenly, even when the dog is off leash, usually she's fine, she just runs around you, but suddenly she picks up a scent and then she goes off completely unaware of surroundings or anything. She just follows it.

And she could get lost. She goes off to the horizon sometimes, just disappears. And that's, when you follow a thought, it goes like that, you can wake up 20 minutes later.

And it started with her sleeping a little bit hungry and thinking of a restaurant, and it ends up with thinking about how unthreatful your life is. And. How is it possible to remain present if you are fighting a serious illness where the outcome is not sure?

Greetings from the UK. So somebody in England, perhaps it is, I assume it is the person who is asking the question. How is it possible to remain present if you're fighting a serious illness where the outcome is not sure?

Well, not only is it possible to be present in such a situation, it really is the only answer you have to that situation is to allow it to force you into presence, where there's no past, no future, don't go there. You just stay with this moment and you can become acutely present. You may not have much future anymore, so you can't go there.

Most humans still have the illusion that there's a lot of future. It's not really much anyway, but they still have the illusion and that there's some kind of fulfillment still coming in the next moment. It's not going to come if it's not here now.

Presence, especially a life-threatening illness, I have seen quite a few cases of people who awakened through contracting a life-threatening illness. In some cases, they died soon after. In some cases, healing happened.

It's no longer matters really that much because the purpose of human life has already been fulfilled when the flowering of consciousness happens in you. And so those people who became fatally ill in the last weeks or months of their lives, they flowered, light was shining through them. They became like that.

Thought subsided, presence arose, the personality got burned out of them and was replaced by just conscious presence. The personality in such a dreadful situation either has to suffer tremendously. It can't survive in that situation.

Oh, what's going to happen to me? But if you surrender, it gets burned up in presence and all that remains of you, you die already in other words. You die, before you die, the personality dies and all that remains is this absolute field of presence.

And you might not be able to explain very much, but you just, there. It would never have happened without the illness. This can also happen as people get very old and approach death through old age.

I have also seen that happen. You reach the age of 95, whatever, death comes and the personality subsides and all that remains is the flowering of consciousness. You die before you die.

That's an expression sometimes used, I don't remember where it comes from, maybe Sufism. You dying before you die is, so it can happen through serious illness. It can happen through the approaching death through old age.

It can dying before you die can also happen when you lose everything through some disaster. Family members are lost, people around you, where you lose all possessions and all status, everything. And again, the personality that lived through identification with all these external things that have been taken away is in such dreadful agony that the only way out is surrender.

And then the entire structure of the mind made self collapses. Those are extreme cases. So when such disaster happens, there's always that possibility there of grace suddenly appearing.

So as I often say, grace is hiding behind every disaster. But for it to show its face fully, surrender is necessary. Surrender eliminates the ego.

And when the ego is gone, grace appears. To bring in little moments of presence into a busy day, nobody's so busy that they cannot have little moments of presence. And if you, I don't know if you have meetings frequently or not, it's always good to start a meeting with a moment of presence.

You can introduce that, you can explain to the people who work with you that it's important. Don't need more than half a minute to start with. Later on, you can build it up to one minute.

At first, people are not used to it, may feel a little bit uncomfortable. That's presence. And whenever you have these happening discussions, because probably part of your work is to discuss things, how things, what do we do now?

You can bring in presence by becoming aware of the background of alertness. When you listen to others, because then you're accessing also a more creative part of your mind. Well, it's not your mind, it's deeper than your mind.

You're accessing the deeper intelligence and you'll come up with probably better answers and solutions. So you bring stillness into a discussion, not by saying to anybody, telling anybody that you're doing it. You don't need that.

You just become aware of, let's put it like this. You become aware of your own alertness as you listen. There's an alert presence through which you're listening.

And that is very intelligent. You're not preparing mentally anything and not immediately judging what a person is saying. You give yourself a space and there's a space of alertness.

Sometimes people are too quick to react to what somebody else is saying. And they immediately say, I don't think that's going to work. Or, oh yeah, that's a great idea, but they haven't really given it any space.

So to become spacious in some areas of your work, you may not be able to sustain it all the time. But one area is when you are communicating with people, normally that would draw you completely into the mind and into thought. So you're accessing the higher intelligence that is within you, the deeper intelligence.

And then there are other things that you do. As you know, I often recommend when you get into your car, maybe you do that already. You just mentioned something about the car.

When you close the door of your car, give yourself 30 seconds to just be present. Unless it's an emergency, then you should go to the hospital or wherever you're going. So give yourself 30 seconds, but it has to be done in the right way.

You're not saying, okay, I got this, 30 seconds. And then you say, okay, here we go. You're just straining to get out of the 30 seconds.

So it has to be focused on your breath, for example, that helps, or the inner body, the awareness of the inner body. And practice the being. So you bring a little bit of being into the doing.

At some point later, the two will merge completely. And then there are other moments when you can probably, things that you do frequently every day, there you can bring in awareness so that it's not a means to an end, and perhaps create a little gap. So have a number of gaps during the day, during a busy day.

You could say, for example, whenever you wash your hands in the bathroom, that can be an absolute presence. Well, and be, come to your senses, feel the water, smell the soap. And that can be a present moment, whatever.

You can probably make a list of things that you do every day. If there's a staircase somewhere in your building, then walking up and down the stairs can be a wonderful opportunity for being present at every step. So it's not a means to an end anymore.

So I would suggest make a list of things that you do every day or very often, and use these as to bring in spaces. So you have this very brief practices of bringing in spaces. And then even while you're engaged in the doing, there too, you can see if you can, as we mentioned, the discussions that you have, sense the presence that you are while you're listening.

Be alert, that you're actually then much more alert than you were in a normal state. It increases your intelligence, and it's an intelligence that's deeper than the IQ intelligence. That's something that I find in my life that arises because I also practice that, although I don't have discussions that often, but sometimes we meet.

And this alert listening, out of that, what I find often comes is questions. You ask questions. One of the most creative ways of participating in a discussion group is to ask questions.

Other people, when they say something, the light of your awareness shines on it. Then a question arises, another question. This is in the creative process of finding solutions and answers.

This is often overlooked, especially when you're very much identified with your mind, then the mind has certain preconceived notions and opinions and positions, and it'll just repeat those. So when somebody comes forward with an idea, it's totally new. If you're very much identified with your mind, it could happen that you say, oh, no, no, that's not going to work.

But with this, you develop the ability to listen, and true listening means you're alert and still. That's true listening. The auditory aspect is this very small one.

You're alert and still. And you may find that you may not have the answers, but you begin to ask questions. And then the other person who perhaps brought forward an idea is then forced to reply, and it may drive him or her deeper to see where can we go with this.

So one of the most creative things, and the very creative people in that kind of environment, they are the ones who ask the most questions. This is how the entire philosophy of Socrates developed, because it's called the Socratic method, which is somebody comes and asks Socrates a question, but he has questions to him. And so he goes from one question to another and another.

When you read Plato's account of Socrates, I don't think Plato completely understood what Socrates was doing. Plato thought that he already knew the answer, but I don't think that's the case, because Socrates said, I'm the only one who knows that he knows nothing, which means he was comfortable with the state of not knowing that I mentioned earlier. And out of that state of not knowing, often questions arise.

And in this question, then the answers suddenly come. It's a joint endeavor. The answer may not even necessarily come through you, but you ask the right questions, and then the group suddenly comes up with an answer.

And that is also spiritual practice, and it can be totally incorporated into what you're doing. So both setting aside little spaces when you become present during the day, and also then in many areas. So maybe the hardest is being on the computer screen to be present there, but there you could practice as much as possible, have a little reminder next to the laptop, whatever it is, and have a little reminder to, for example, to be in your body, to have inner body awareness, because computer draws your attention out.

You go, it's actually depletes you. If you, after a few hours, it depletes you of energy. It flows out, it absorbs, because all your focus is on there.

And so it's doubly important to, you may not sustain it continuously, but have a little reminder. So even while you are writing something or reading something, and this is something that may not, you may not succeed immediately in this practice, but it is possible to be aware of your body, have some background awareness in the energy field of the inner body. And then you sit and you can still deal with whatever it is you're dealing with.

Or because that is really, to be totally present affects the whole body. When you're present, you're present with your whole body. So that's something to do.

Another thing where you lose energy, I notice it when you go into a place where there's continuous stimulus for an exhibition hall or a big department store, and then you kind of, you look, and then after half an hour, you're already depleted. So, and then when you come home, then there's nothing wrong with a glass of wine and Netflix, but at least you will find you have not completely spent the whole day in complete unawareness.

[Speaker 6] (6:09:21 - 6:09:46)
A question for you regarding dealing with unconscious people and whether you yourself, maybe more so earlier in your life, whether you have felt lonely or isolated or frustrated in dealing with unconscious people and what your approach was to that at different stages of your life.

[Speaker 1] (6:09:47 - 6:18:42)
Right, yes. Thank you. Well, that perhaps is the main challenge for everybody because it is people mostly, to who we get challenged by.

Other sources of challenge are, of course, your physical body could present a challenge. There can be financial challenges, but most large part of challenges come through humans because humans are difficult. Many humans are still very much trapped in ego.

First part of your question, there was, I was relatively isolated for many years of my life when after the shift in consciousness, I carried on with my normal life. It had a certain momentum. I was still in the academic world and then three, four years later, I had to go out of that, leave it behind completely.

And then many years happened when I was not related to the world through any of the usual channels. I had no particular job, no relationships, no close relationships. And I spent many, many days, weeks, months not seeing that many people.

And gradually people would come to me for advice that happened gradually, it slowly grew through word of mouth. And then I had that kind of relationship with humans. But throughout, there's always challenges.

Even if you live in relative isolation, you will come into contact with humans that are unconscious. So I think the, you need to welcome that, because it's that, it's all these, those challenges force you to become more present. You remember I talked about the other day, if you want to make the body stronger, you do exercise, you do physical exercise.

And what is physical exercise? It's making life difficult for the body. That's a new way of looking at it.

But if you look at it close, you'll see it is true because the body suddenly has to make an enormous effort. You're forcing the body, you're giving the body challenges that were not there before. Lift a heavy weight, run a mile, or whatever it is you're doing.

And so then through being challenged beyond its comfort zone, the body gets stronger. And in the case of spiritual growth, we need all those unconscious humans to challenge us. Otherwise, the presence would not intensify and arise.

So the first thing we need to do, and I learned that also, to regard these unconscious humans as blessings. So rather than believing you shouldn't be here making my life difficult, regard the unconscious human as a necessary part of being here on this planet at this time. And so you can welcome them when they make life difficult for you.

The important thing is, though, that the unconscious humans do not pull you into unconsciousness yourself. That is the challenge, the biggest challenge. And what I mentioned in the previous session also applies here.

When you are being challenged by situations or people up to a certain point of human development, the moment a situation gets challenging or you meet a challenging person, you become reactive and become more unconscious than before you were challenged. So you meet an angry person, you get angry yourself. You meet a confrontational person and you become even more confrontational.

You're fighting. Then a certain thing happens, you reach that level where, beyond which the challenges make you more conscious. I think most of the people here will have reached a level where, you may occasionally be pulled back, yes, but may have reached a level where from now on, when challenges come into your life through situations or people, you become more present rather than be pulled into unconscious reaction.

And that's your spiritual practice. That can be your main spiritual practice. So if you realize relationships are your spiritual practice, whether they are short relationships or at work or family relationships, if you can shift the way you look at relationships and then regard relationships as spiritual practice, it's much easier to deal with unconscious humans.

And then the challenge is to stay present while they are being unconscious with you. I learned that early on when, after my shift in consciousness, my father's second wife was quite unconscious and then not only unconscious, she developed a mental illness, but the unconsciousness was already, the mental illness was already hidden in the unconsciousness. The mental illness she developed was acute paranoia and she was in a mental home for a while then came back home.

Whenever I visited them once or twice, as I mentioned before, I stayed in hotels, but many times I went there, visit, stayed with them. And I realized the moment I saw her, I would become intensely present. I would just go.

And then she would start talking to me. Usually the stories would start with talking about her enemies, the people who were waiting down in the street and would follow her, people she would see in shops. And according to those stories, there must be at least one or 200 people whose main occupation is to follow her and make her life difficult.

But that was the story. So I had to listen. The moment I arrived, she would tell me the latest events of what happened to all these people who were following her and doing things to sabotage her life, all fictitious.

And immediately I went into a very intense presence. And by the second day, the stories would subside a little bit. And by the third day, she wouldn't talk that much.

And once or twice it happened that I was not acutely present when she was talking and immediately the old stories would come back up. She would even look at me suspiciously and say, what do you, why are you really here? What do you want from me?

So I noticed there was a, my consciousness had an effect on her state of consciousness. So that was particularly noticeable in that case. And she became more sane while I was there.

And the moment I left, she went back into a complete unconsciousness.

[Speaker 3] (6:19:50 - 6:40:27)
So, welcome. Here we are again, in the present moment, on the surface of life. Time has passed since last time, but at a deeper level, it's still the one moment, the present.

So usually, our live meditation lasts around 40 minutes or so, that's the average. Time passes, so I can say we're going to be here for 40 minutes, and yet you don't really experience the 40 minutes, you only ever experience this moment. So time is memory and anticipation, and of course, it's necessary for this world to arise.

To even understand what I'm saying, you need the memory of what I've just said. To complete a sentence or even a word, even to utter a word, takes time. I say time takes about two seconds or one second, time to say the word.

So you need to remember the beginning of the word, to understand it, you need to remember the beginning of the sentence, that's already memory. For music, you need to remember the preceding sounds, and then it forms a whole. And yet the actual experience is this moment.

The secondary experience is your memory. So you bring together the immediate experience of this moment, there's only this, with the secondary dimension of memory, and then the world arises, things make sense. Now there's a tendency about the secondary dimension of reality, which is memory, to obscure, distort the experience, the immediate experience, the aliveness of the present moment.

You can no longer perceive the present moment clearly. You see nothing as it is, you perceive nothing as it is, because you are overwhelmed by the memory dimension. So in actual, in your daily life, in a person's daily life, it manifests as a narrative in their mind, through which they interpret everything, all sense perceptions, reality.

The narrative in their mind, which is memory, which is the conditioned mind, colors, distorts everything they perceive in the present, and that manifests in countless ways. So it's the essence, for example, of what we call prejudice, you have a narrative in your mind about a certain group of people, a certain race, a certain political belief system, a certain religion, a certain social class, a certain gender, a certain culture. You have a narrative in your mind, and then whenever you meet a human being who belongs to that on the level of form, belongs to that race, or that culture, or gender, or subscribe to that certain belief system, you cannot actually experience this human being as a human being.

You see that passing through a narrative, and then you do it to yourself, you have a certain set of opinions, thoughts, of who you are, and that becomes a foundation for your sense of identity, and perhaps you subscribe to a particular belief system, political, religious, whatever it may be, it's a collective identity, and then it gets combined with a personal sense of self, certain things that happened in your past, or you interpret things in a certain way that happened in the past, or maybe it never happened, or it's a distorted version of what happened, and all that becomes a narrative. Me as the victim, for example, is a very favorite one for ego, collective ego, or personal ego, you can be a collective victim, you can be a personal victim, so an enormously satisfied sense of identity. It's dangerous, because there's this movement in the collective at the moment of emphasizing the victimhood of groups of people, and then so satisfied to the ego, you can make others wrong, you don't ever see who they are, you see them through the narrative.

Of course, groups of people have been victimized in the past, perhaps you as a personal entity has experienced victimization on a personal level, through other unconscious humans, whether it's your parents, or at school, or discriminated against for personal reasons, or whatever, of course all this happens, there's a big difference between seeing that this is what happened in the past, and deriving a sense of self from that. It's a huge trap, because then, the memory continuously obscures the present, or the potential, the conditioned mind, your far identity, is then what gives you your sense of self, and there's always a sense of superiority in that, concealed, sometimes obvious, sometimes concealed, you can have a far identity that you are better than most people, in whatever way, better looking, have more money, better social class, more intelligent, more knowledgeable, more physically stronger, there are many, many ways in which you can derive your identity from a sense of superiority, and even if it's a victim identity, which seems to be the opposite of believing that you are better than most, it's still a sense of superiority towards others, you're superior in your victimhood, morally superior, a dangerous trap, so you get, people get trapped in their conditioned mind, and that becomes their personality, and then the most essential thing is missing from their lives, and that is the dimension of depths, sometimes called the transcendent dimension, where the personality, the conditioned mind that makes up the personality, is transcended, which means, you become aware of something that is more essential, more real, than the personality, the conditioned mind, our meditation here, the purpose of it, is to make you aware of that dimension, or to deepen it, you're aware of it right now, in the conceptual mind, we don't even understand what I'm saying, all that happens is the arising of a sense of depth in you, and a space in the stream of thinking, that otherwise is continuous, space arises in the stream of thinking, and you're conscious, but not thinking, and you know that you're conscious, and yet there's no sense of self, no concept, you just know, it is possible that the mind may come in and say, oh, I'm not thinking, oh, yes, that can happen, and then you acknowledge that, and then that thought goes, and again, it's just a presence, doesn't matter for how long, it's just something arises that is inner spaciousness, but there's an alertness that goes with it, and that's also very peaceful, it's an alive sense of peace in you, that has nothing to do with what's going on in your life, you could realize that dimension whether you're in a prison cell, or in a mansion, or whether you're sitting on a bus, or you're sitting in your Rolls Royce, doesn't matter, it's the same thing, and then that is so liberating, because then many things that before were so terribly important to have, to achieve, yes, they may still have some importance, but not absolute importance. Now the self, the form identity, of course, is still there, you still have a physical body with certain characteristics, and you have a psychological self, there's still you as a psychological entity, based on the past, of course, still there, and you acknowledge that it's there, and you even become comfortable with it, honoring it, but at the same time, knowing directly experientially that that is not who you essentially are, and one way of putting it is that that means you are rooted in being, and yet you acknowledge and honor the human part of you, the human dimension, because you are a human being, most people only know themselves as human, they don't know themselves as the being, without which there could be no human, human is form, being is essence, human is the regular wave on the surface of the ocean, being is the ocean.

[Speaker 1] (6:40:55 - 6:53:12)
Could you describe what it feels like to play the role of Eckhart with awareness of presence continually there? What does the sense of self feel like then with you, oh there must be an error here, what does the sense of self feel like then with you, with who you are, or something like that, so I understand the essence of the question, what does it feel like to play the role of Eckhart with awareness of presence continually there, so the question asks how do you experience yourself, it's very hard to answer because there isn't much there, there is a form identity

there, but it's on the periphery, and there's simply a spacious presence there, there's a consciousness there, a space of consciousness, but there are no opinions about myself.

How do you know when the mind versus superior intelligence, which is awakened consciousness, is guiding you in a life situation? Again, we can make reference to the previous answer, there's some link here as an example, I distrust this person, what's guiding you, the mind or superior intelligence? The mind, with distrust often come certain emotions like fear, when the awakened intelligence guides you, there's no anxiety associated with it, there are no negative feelings associated with it, there's just a powerful sense of right or not right, a powerful sense of peace comes with it, love almost, well in business you set certain goals that you want to achieve, and then you take action towards achieving those goals, and in the meantime there's a lot of interaction with other people who are also working as a team with you, and there's probably also perhaps interaction with other business organizations, so first of all the goal setting and the journey towards achieving particular goals that the organization has set itself, once you have a goal, you will find as you pursue your goal as a team together, continuously obstacles arise as you go towards it, whenever you create something new, you will find it's not, it is rarely a very smooth progression, you have to overcome obstacles on the way in the form of people or situations that go wrong, this doesn't work, try something else, the important thing is not to place an excessive emphasis on the achievement which is the desired outcome, but to be as present in the doing as you can so that the doing does not become stressful, almost every business is, people who are working in it are under stress, I believe, there may be some that are not, but the stress is not the way in which you want to conduct your business because the environment is toxic, a stressful environment is toxic, so you can always tell, is the goal something that is for the greater good or is it an ego-inspired goal, are you looking, this applies both in a business environment and it applies equally when you have personal goals, the same process is involved, when an obstacle arises, to immediately face the obstacle which comes in the form of a situation, something not working, something going wrong, somebody trying to sabotage you, perhaps from some other organization who knows what happens, to never react against the obstacle as if this should not be happening, to immediately to face it and see what is the way beyond it, how can I either dissolve it, bypass it or use it, what is, so that you don't enter a state of reactivity when obstacles appear on your path, that's important for anybody who pursues a goal, how, what is your relationship to difficulties and obstacles that arise as you travel towards your goal and the only conscious way of dealing with obstacles is not to react as if these obstacles should not be happening, so you have to look into what your relationship is with arising obstacles on your path, and this is not just in business but anywhere, the unconscious person in business or elsewhere gets upset, angry, aggressive, despondent, very stressed, every time something isn't going the way they want it to go, and immediately dysfunctional inner states arise and therefore they experience their accompanies where the entire environment is toxic, because everybody lives in that way and ego is also a thing that arises as much as possible, be aware so that you don't seek ego satisfaction in the doing, there's a personal ego, then one person can sabotage another person in the same company because you are not free of ego identification, so it's very important to be aware so that you do not seek ego satisfaction through what you are doing, be present in what you do so that the doing becomes joyful rather than placing so much focus on what you want to achieve that the journey becomes very stressful, then nothing is worth achieving if the journey is stressful, you might, let's say you spent a year or two years with some scheme that you want, a new business model or whatever it is, what is the state of consciousness, the collective state of consciousness while you are traveling towards your goal, is it stressed, is it stressful, is there a lot of conflict, or is it a common enterprise and is the doing joyful, and it can only be joyful if you place more importance in what you are doing in this present moment than attempting to arrive at some future point, you know where you want to go to but as the Bhagavad Gita says, do not be too attached to the outcome, then it's much more likely that the outcome will be good, but if you have an excessive attachment, you need to achieve that, you have an excessive attachment to outcome, then the journey becomes very stressful, that's something that is important and I'm talking not from personal experience because I'm not in business, but I have spoken to people, quite a few who are in the business environment, and so I've met, I've met, been to some relatively conscious companies, they invited me, of course unconscious companies wouldn't invite me, and I have spoken to them and I'm surprised that these conscious companies actually, it's a joy to be there for all the, do the employees, whoever they are, are they your partners, do they enjoy being there, that is vital sounds very simple, or are they so focused on some kind of achievement that the doing is not enjoyable at all do they love being there, what is the relationship between, with you and your colleagues, partners and those things are vitally important and what, I don't know how many employees you have, again, it's important to make the environment as pleasant for them as possible, so your life is not determined by what happens to you

[Speaker 4] (6:53:13 - 6:53:32)
but by how you respond to what happens, and if you are unconscious, an ego, then every response or other reaction

[Speaker 1] (6:53:32 - 6:56:02)
to what happens to you makes things worse, or perpetuates the same problem, but in many cases makes it worse it's a reaction of the ego, and that's what's called, this is the wheel of samsara, of karmic action and reaction, action and reaction so really, karma is really to do with your, the unconscious conditioning of your mind, so it's not what happens to you it's always secondary, how do you respond to it, now we have react or respond, usually the way we use these terms is you react out of the conditioning of your mind, and usually it creates, it doesn't resolve anything, it creates additional or further problems reaction, reactivity, then there's response, so we use the term reaction, referring to the unconscious conditioning of your mind forcing you to act, and response, refer to the conscious responding to a situation or a problem through conscious presence, and that's where wisdom arises there, when you are, intelligence is not enough, what we conventionally call intelligence refers to the conceptual mind, the ability of the conceptual mind to categorise, memorise, analyse, logical thinking, all that has its place, it's fine this is what is valued in educational system, conceptual mind, accumulate knowledge, classify, break it up into further fragments, examine the fragments

[Speaker 4] (6:56:04 - 6:56:56)
that's intelligence, the ability to do that, wisdom is something deeper, wisdom is the ability to see the totality of a situation, rather than one particular thing wisdom doesn't fight anything out there, wisdom starts always with acceptance of the present moment, acceptance of what is, then if action is called for, acceptance doesn't mean that you necessarily don't want any change

[Speaker 1] (6:56:56 - 6:58:04)
you can be in difficult surroundings, let's say you're homeless, and you can accept that at this moment, this is what is, but you don't live through a conceptual image of yourself as I'm a homeless person now that's a very painful mental conceptual identity, any conceptual identity, whatever it is, will make you unhappy, some make you immediately unhappy, some it takes a little longer, if you have a conceptual identity of you as the greatest this or that, it will take a little longer, eventually it will make you unhappy your conceptual identity of yourself as I'm a homeless person now, this is what I've come to, that's very unhappy, but if you're a homeless person but you don't live through a conceptual identity of yourself as a homeless person because you're no longer trapped in a conceptual sense of self, but you are an alert presence

[Speaker 4] (6:58:05 - 6:59:02)
then what's left is you're sitting on a bench in the park, sitting on a bench in the park, and there's the sky, and the trees, and you're breathing, and people are walking past, and it's no longer, your identity is no longer derived from any concept become a presence, but you also know that perhaps some action is necessary, perhaps you need to get up and look for somewhere to spend the night, and then you get up and find yourself walking there or there, and when you're in strangely, the more present you are, which is aligned with the now,

[Speaker 1] (6:59:02 - 7:30:58)
the more likely it is that circumstances will be helpful rather than antagonistic, that just the right thing, you find just the right thing as the right person or the right thing, you stumble upon suddenly a helpful thing that is, that is, the more you're aligned with the present moment, the more you experience, of course, yes, life will not be free of challenges, but there's a tendency for you to experience more helpful circumstances, because you're friendly with life, with the present moment, then it reflects back to you, your inner state, if the present moment is your enemy, that means, if that is your deeply unconscious state, then life is your enemy, it reflects back to you, your inner state.

If a form gives you joy, it's not really the deepest, the true joy that is an intrinsic part of your self nature, it gives you pleasure, but pleasure exists in the realm of opposites, and what gives you pleasure will also give you pain, either because it leaves you or because it turns into its opposite. Every time you identify with a thought stream totally, you have reincarnated into that thought stream, your sense of self is completely in it, so you continuously reincarnate into arising phenomena, it could be external things, experiences, and you're totally, it matters absolutely. And so, one could say, the deeper sense of coming to the end of reincarnation is to no longer reincarnate into identification with form, into seeking yourself, or believing that yourself is in a form, and here we are speaking at the moment primarily of thought forms, so to this compulsion to reincarnate always into the next thought stream, to be totally fascinated by it, and always needing the more to make your reincarnation complete, and never getting there, that's, we are moving, that is being trapped in that normal state of consciousness, and that is still the majority on the planet is still trapped in that, but very powerfully, something else is arising now, and it's arising here. So the words, you give them attention, but they no longer have your, they no longer have your total attention, there's some attention that you give to the words, but you also give attention to the underlying stillness, even as you listen.

And of course, the moment you do that, the unconditioned consciousness is there in you, and your mind becomes still, without losing consciousness, you're fully aware, you're aware of the silence, but what really is that silence, or rather that stillness, the stillness is the unconditioned consciousness, awareness itself, and you're aware of that, now that sounds as if it were dualistic, but it's only because I'm using language, you're aware of awareness, when you are aware of stillness, and the moment you pay attention to stillness, you've become still, and that might at first be like a phenomenon outside of you, that you are attentive to, oh, and you may notice there is a certain alertness that comes with that awareness of stillness, and you cannot be aware of stillness through thinking, thought, stillness does not exist for thought, thought can come in subsequently, and say, oh, that stillness, how nice, or it can say, oh, you see, you've lost it already, I had it, I had it, only a moment ago, how can I get back to it? That was such a wonderful experience, and it's not really an experience, because it is, the stillness is always there, so during these days here, learning what that means, to be aware of that underlying dimension, not only in these sessions, and then when you leave here, become totally absorbed again, or reincarnate again totally, into arising thought streams and sense perceptions, but carry that awareness, awareness of underlying awareness, I'm speaking of things that you can't speak of, that's why it's sometimes a little funny, you carry that with you, not only here, although you can perhaps sense it more powerfully in these sessions, but then you walk out into, out there, into the gardens, and the river, and there, certain perceptions arise, and you're aware of those perceptions, and some of them will be very beautiful, and occasionally, some may be ugly, this is the world, and you watch, and you, underlying the sense perception, is a field of alert, still presence, in which the sense perception happens, and that means, the compulsion, to reincarnate, into another thought stream, is suddenly not there, you're happy, not to reincarnate, for a while, into another thought stream, the true joy arises out of that state of presence, there is a very subtle joy in that, which in some teachings, been called happiness, but I wouldn't use that word, it might even be a wrong translation, that joy, is in essence, an intrinsic aspect of yourself, I sometimes call it the joy of being, and so it does not depend on what forms are arising at this moment, so there is, you enjoy the play of forms, but the joy does not come from the forms, if the joy comes from the forms, it's not joy, it's pleasure, pleasure is something you derive, because a new form has come in, and makes you feel good, for a while, and then it leaves you, and makes you feel bad, or the good turns into bad, so if a form gives you joy, it's not really the deepest, the true joy that is an intrinsic part of your self nature, it gives you pleasure, but pleasure exists in the realm of opposites, and what gives you pleasure will also give you pain, either because it leaves you, or because it turns into its opposite, such as in a relationship, marriage, divorce, pleasure, pain, or in business, gain, loss, and so Ramana Maharshi said, and of course that is a translation, and it may not be absolutely correct translation, happiness is your true nature, I would re-translate it, and perhaps in the original what he said is closer to that, joy is your true nature, but don't look for joy, you would create some new object, mind object, you don't need to look for it, no, simply do not reincarnate continuously, and it's so simple, these sessions are helpful, and they are helpful beyond words, the words are helpful pointers, but there is much more to these sessions than the words, and so be alert here to that dimension that is beyond the words, because that dimension is also beyond thought, and that is where we are going, to know what that is, which one could describe as consciousness free of thought, and this is the next step, one could say, in the evolution of human consciousness, which until now, we have just come to the end of thought, which means humanity, human consciousness being totally dominated, run by, identified with thought, it started, as the myth tells us, in the garden of Eden, which one could say, is a symbolic representation of the arising of thought, they ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, evaluate, judge, the arising of thought, loss of Eden, and I'm told, the translation of that word, Eden, is place of joy, thought arose, and it was a great thing, and gradually, over many, many thousands of years, identification with thought came in, self and thought became one, mankind had to move through that, now, that state of consciousness has become more and more dysfunctional, look at the history of the 20th century, dreadful, madness, so the dysfunction becomes apparent now, because we are arriving at the end time, you may have seen people walking around, I don't know, it may not happen in India, but in the West, with placards, the end is near, the end is nigh, we have arrived at the end, and perhaps they don't realize how right they are, when they say, we have arrived at the, well, perhaps they should put a little another word in, we have arrived at the end of time, because to be identified with thought, totally, is also to be governed by time, past and future, to live exclusively through memory and anticipation, and all that that implies, and a completely limited and false sense of identity, we are moving out of that, a new state of consciousness is emerging, this teaching would be pointless, nobody would even hear it, if it were not emerging already, so this form is no more than a midwife, a mid husband, mid wife, I don't know, simply to help along the birth process, and I'm not here to make it happen, that would be frustrating, why aren't, and you are not here to make it happen in yourself, that would be equally frustrating, and you would come to the end of the six days or seven days here, and say, I was looking for this great spiritual experience, and somehow it didn't happen, I was looking and looking and looking, and because you were looking for something and you missed nothing, so you were looking to reincarnate into some experience and didn't get it, or if you got it, maybe you got it, or had such a great experience there, and then you're back wherever you live, and then a few weeks later it's wearing off, oh, I wish I could get that back, where is it now?

That was so great, and then you think, maybe I need to go back to India, back to India, that's where it is, so the essence of this gathering is very simple, but also very subtle, and it easily eludes you if you are too much in your mind, so not only here, but also out there, be there as a field of alert presence, that which you sense here, the underlying field, and know what it means, the beauty of this, to be free of thought, but don't look for that state, it comes by itself, and in one moment you are free of a million years of conditioning, as the unconditioned arises, because if you had to undo the conditioned bit by bit, you would never see the end of it, there's so much, so the unconditioned arises as the state of consciousness that is free of thought, that all the great teachings, not so directly, point to, some directly, some indirectly, when Ramana Maharshi was asked, how do we measure our progress on the spiritual path, how do we know if we are making progress, they asked him, and he said, and some people don't like this, they say, no, no, he didn't really say that, but it's there, the degree of absence of thoughts is your measure of progress on the spiritual path, it's as simple as that, and then some people say, no, what he really meant was, who is talking, thought, trying to convince everybody else that that's not what he said, but be careful here, not to make the state that is free of thinking into another future state to be achieved, because you can't achieve it in that way in the future, not as something to be added to you, it is an enormous, the greatest renunciation, and the only ultimately true renunciation is not so much the renunciation of worldly things, the renunciation of sexuality, the renunciation of possessions, the renunciation of certain kinds of food, whatever it may be, the ultimate renunciation is, and I'll say it, to renounce thought, and thought, it says, tries to convince you that in that renunciation you would become, you would revert to the state of the cabbage, the vegetable, and it says this is not a desirable state, and that is true, you don't want being a cabbage, it's beautiful for the cabbage, but the cabbage lives at one with the totality, all vegetative life, all nature lives totally in the state of oneness still, so it's totally right for the cabbage to be the cabbage, but it is not the destiny of humans to revert to the vegetative or animal stage, although compared to humans, nature and animals are very, very sane, compared to most of human life, there's enormous sanity there, but because they have not left, they haven't gone out into more and more highly differentiated form and form identification, they haven't left the source, they haven't gone that far from the source as humans have, and so, yes, there's great, every animal is so rooted in being still compared to neurotic humans, wow, just look how an animal moves, it is itself, completely itself, not trying to be something, it is, but no, we are not going back there, the animal also is free of thought, although occasionally the beginnings of thought movements can be observed in certain animals, we go beyond thought, one could say we are rising above thought, where we do not lose the ability to think, simply means we are no longer reduced by thinking, we are no longer trapped in thought, we can now use thought, thought will operate when it's needed, it will be applied to a particular situation, but whenever even a situation that needs to be resolved, a challenge that arises, and it can only arise in the now, before thought arises, attention is given to it, and that attention is the state of thoughtless awareness, you're looking at the totality of the situation in stillness, alert, alive stillness, there's a looking, in that looking, enormous intelligence operates, and I'm looking in a wider sense, it may not necessarily be through the eyes, attention is giving to the situation, complete attention, in stillness. Ah, one more at least, if an enlightened person can find peace at any given life situation, how could he have the motivation to change anything, why would he improve his life situation, so if you can find peace in any life situation through surrendering, as we saw in the story of St. Francis, even out in the cold outside the monastery, how would you want to change any life situation, well, let's say, just a most simple example will show you the answer, rather than talking in abstract terms, the enlightened person is traveling on a bus, and I used to travel a lot on Greyhound buses in the past, in the States, and often you wonder, at the next stop, who is going to be the next person going to sit next to you, it could be somebody pleasant, or it could be somebody drunk, or it could be somebody who talks continuously, so the enlightened person is sitting there, and somebody comes in at the next stop, and he's talking and talking and getting out his beer and drinking and getting more and more drunk, and then starts bothering you, but there's a seat over there that's free, does the enlightened person say, I'm enlightened, therefore I'm not going to change seats, because what is the need to change my life situation, I'm at peace already, it is true that deep down there is the peace, but on the outer levels, certain situations are preferable to other situations, and one seat may be preferable to another seat, and so it happened once or twice that I did that, I changed seats on the Greyhound bus, so to get away from somebody next to me, but if the bus is full, then what do you do, you can't change seats, then you stay and be at peace, with where you are, which is perfectly possible, so the changes can take place on the surface of your life, there may be one place where you would rather live than the other place, or you would rather travel to this location than to that one, that's all on the outer, on the surface of your life, there are certain choices, and you make certain choices, if there is no choice, you're perfectly fine with there being no choice, the peace is there anyway, and on the outer levels, some things are more pleasant than others, and then I would choose the more pleasant one, but perhaps St. Francis would have chosen the unpleasant one, maybe that's our difference, and maybe that's the difference between medieval spirituality and this, not one is better than the other, it's just different, but what matters is that at the core, the peace is there, so I believe everybody, even the Buddha must have made certain choices, he chose to go to that particular garden, somebody had given him a pleasure garden, so he moved himself from the forest into the pleasure garden, so why did he go from the forest to the pleasure garden, wasn't the forest good enough for you? No, it's just on the surface, that seemed to make more sense, and was more suitable, and he moved himself there, he would have been equally happy for the rest of his life in the forest, so that's quite simply how it is, so you're perfectly capable still of changing your life situation, if change is called for, why not?

[Speaker 8] (7:32:04 - 7:33:43)
My question is on karma, I grew up in a Hindu family, and often karma is talked about as something that provides a balance in the world, but it can sometimes seem rigid, and it's a powerful influence over someone's life, and when I listen to you speak, I feel so much peace, and so much hope, and you talk about presence and being as the keys to enjoying form, and creating positive circumstances in your life, or softening circumstances, and I wanted to know how karma fits into all of that, because there seems to be places in the world where there's not a lot of resources, where there's a lot of brutality, for example, I met somebody at work, and she was a refugee from Afghanistan, and she was a young girl, and the interpreter had told me that her brother and her father were killed in front of her, and she had another brother taken, and then I later learned that a lot of times the Taliban doesn't take the young boys to fight, they take them and they use them as sex slaves, and when I hear about stories like this, I just wonder how I can stay aligned with love, or trusting the universe, when I'm not able to see through your eyes yet, how do you hold both?

[Speaker 1] (7:33:44 - 8:17:05)
Thank you, thank you. Now, of course, everybody is born into a certain external environment, and also is born with certain predispositions, they may be partly genetic, they may be other things, that a person is born with certain patterns, in other words, we don't need to examine where they come from, but to see the fact

that the human being is first of all born into a certain environment, which may be violent, or it may be relatively peaceful, and the person is born with inner patterns, you inherit certain, even pain bodies, partly inherited, some babies cry a lot, they have a relatively heavy pain body already, it doesn't mean they're spiritually less advanced, the opposite may be the case, there's no knowing, other babies are relatively peaceful, and so there's a whole set of conditioning that happens, you come into the environment with certain predispositions, then the environment conditions you further, and in all that, there's no choice involved, there's just influences, and so you find yourself in this world with certain unconscious patterns that have become the conditioning of who the person is, the unconscious conditioning, so karma, as I see it, is the unconscious conditioning that runs your life, and that still applies to many humans, and karma is partly collective, you've been born into it, and partly personal, they come together, so really you can only understand karma not as an abstract subject, external to yourself, because then you get into belief systems and philosophy, we're not going that way, you can only understand karma by observing yourself, and by observing, and then you'll know many other things, but you need to, really if you want to understand karma, you need to look at yourself, and so I began to understand what karma is when there was something arose that was not part of karma at all, and really here we come to the key, the arising of consciousness or presence or spiritual awakening is not part of karma, it is another dimension that breaks into the karmic realm, so you do not become awakened by accumulating, as they sometimes say in the East, good karma, that's fine on this level, you can make the walls or the furniture in your prison a little bit more comfortable, but there is something totally from beyond karma that can come into your life at any point within the wheel of karma and rebirth, rebirth is of course part of karma, the deeper meaning of rebirth is identification with form, we don't need to even believe in transmigration or whatever, you can look at rebirth in your own life, every time you identify with a thought that arises which is form, you are born into that thought, because identify, your sense of self is in it, that's karma, you are reborn, karma then is unconscious identification with these patterns that you have inherited, the conditioned, complete identification of consciousness with the conditioned patterns, so consciousness is dreaming, one could say, this is why we use the word awakening in many spiritual traditions, consciousness is awakening, consciousness is in a dreamlike state when you are identified with the unconscious patterns, and then you are condemned to rebirth, in fact many times every day, you are reborn into a reaction, an emotional mental reaction, no presence at all, just rebirth into some form, or you're reborn into thoughts that arise and you completely believe in every thought, and then you act from those thoughts and emotions and the action creates further reactions and the actions confirm to you that you were right, if you have certain mind patterns about, for example, that other people are basically dishonest, just one example, people are so dishonest, they're all trying to get something from me, that tends to confirm itself in your life experience, you can try it out, or you may have experienced it before you became more conscious, that habitual thought patterns that you are identified with, and that is karma, creates in the external confirmation that it is correct, so if you think the world is full of evil people, you will meet many evil people, and in other words, unconscious people, and even people who are halfway between conscious and unconscious, when you come together with them, your belief will pull them into unconsciousness, and that's karma, so karma is the complete absence of conscious presence, and so it's automatic, it plays itself out, and time does not free you of karma, that is a misperception, that if you only spend enough time, eventually you can become free of karma, karma reduces itself and repeats itself, it's a wheel, and so the only thing that can free you of karma is the arising of presence, and how is it that some person's presence arises, I cannot tell you why, I only know that at any point in the wheel of karma, presence can come in, and it can happen to a criminal in prison, condemned to death, it can happen to somebody who has never heard of anything spiritual, it can happen to somebody who has been meditating for 30 years, or not happen to the same person who has been meditating for 30 years, so in your own life, I can see from what you're saying that presence has already, I can sense that, presence has already come into your life, and presence frees you from karma, not all at once, karma has an enormous momentum, meaning the patterns in yourself, the thought patterns, the emotional patterns, the reactive patterns, there's enormous momentum behind that, but as presence arises, gradually, karma diminishes, the energy behind it diminishes, and gradually you experience a fading out of those patterns, they become weaker, you're no longer completely in the grip of those patterns, so as presence arises, there's a gradual fading out of karma, not that it matters that much anymore, because once you are present, you can, as the previous questioner said, when we were talking about certain thoughts still arising, certain negative thoughts, that's still part of the karma, the old patterns, the unconscious habit patterns inherited, they still arise, but it's no longer problematic, and they no longer cause the suffering that they would have caused before, because they are seen in the light of awareness, so the light of awareness arises, and in the light of awareness, the patterns no longer dominate your life, they no longer run your life, and if occasionally it happens that the patterns do take over, then after a little while, your presence returns and you say, ah, well, there it was again, pain body is part of karma, which may be strong in some people, not so strong in others, and so as presence arises, you are freed from karma, and then you have another completely different factor coming into your life, and so, for example, for a person to become free of collective karma, you need a considerable amount of presence for that to come in, and it then will remove you in one way or another, either internally, you find yourself completely free, you might still live in a violent society, but internally, you would be free, there is a possibility you can have a holy man or woman living surrounded by violence, it's possible, it's rare, but possible, or very often it happens that life removes you out of there and you find yourself somewhere else. So, let's say vast collective karma, for example, in the case of, let's say, you have the Taliban there, you have all kinds of unconscious movements, you had Soviet Communism, you had National Socialism in Germany, and for a person being born into that and not being drawn into that unconsciousness requires considerable presence, so not that many people, for example, in Germany, when Hitler came to power, not many people were able to remove themselves somewhere, some artists, some writers, they left, they could see what was happening, and they were strong enough not to be identified with the collective, when there had been a tradition of obedience to authority for hundreds of years, a tradition of following your leader, and so on, to take yourself out of that collective karma requires considerable presence, but some people had it. So, it is our destiny then to go beyond karma by being the receptacles for presence.

All you can do to be helpful in this world and help others is those people that you come into contact with, you may, everybody in this, who is awakening will find that sooner or later they become a kind of teacher to others. And what a spiritual teacher does, the teacher points out the possibility of awakening out of identification with unconscious patterns, which means the spiritual teacher teaches you to go beyond karma. So, I was a frequency holder for a large part of my life, never very interested in going out into the world and achieving the great things, I was kind of happy being withdrawn, and until something came into my life and I felt there's more that I can do, that was a thought that came.

I was doing little workshops with people, 10 people at a time, 15 people for a number of years, giving talks in people's living rooms, and then it was fine, in many ways I felt happy being a semi-hermit, and occasionally going out and doing little things, happy not being famous, I never thought I would want to be famous, but then the thought came, I could do so much more in this world, but it doesn't seem to be happening. And one day I sat under an oak tree, you could call this, there's a question, later on we'll have some questions, somebody's asking a question about divine discontent, the question is, do you ever experience what might be called divine discontent, that is a discontent that leads to something very positive.

And you could say that there was a moment that came at that time when I experienced a mild form of divine discontent, which simply is a sense of, there's more that I can do, that I could do, but it's not happening. That's a mild form of divine discontent, it's not some unhappiness that says, oh, I have failed, I'm in my 40s, and what have I achieved, that's not divine discontent, that's just a form of normal unhappiness. With divine discontent, there is not a lot of mind activity around me and my life, there's just a sense of, my present life situation has these limitations around me, but I could go beyond that, I could be much vaster, the world needs what I know comes through me, I know that the world needs that.

So why isn't the world, I'm speaking for some of you too, why isn't the world opening up these channels for me? So that was the divine discontent, so I sat under an oak tree in Somerset, where I would sometimes go, magnificent oak tree, and I said to the universe, which ultimately to myself, please use me. I was talking to myself ultimately, so, because I am that, please use me, I'm here, so I was a frequency holder, and yet after many years of a frequency holder, I had this sense of, okay, now expansion is what is called for in this world, a moment of divine discontent, please use me.

I didn't hear any answer, and then I said something that, some years later I almost said, maybe I said too much. I said, I want acceleration, okay, and then I went home, and nothing happened for a few months, I didn't know that while nothing was happening for a few months, in my little cottage in Somerset, somebody there, I don't take it literally, the countdown has already started, like the rocket ship, which goes 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, and then one day I woke up and said, I have to move, I have to move to the west coast of North America, and that was the beginning.

And so the rocket ship had taken off, suddenly, and finally I landed at the desk of Oprah, a few years later, I never wanted that much, it's too much. And then, the lesson was to surrender to that, it wasn't too much, it was what was needed, if I had been stuck to some previous idea that I had about how my life should unfold, I would be saying, oh, I'm overwhelmed, it's too much. Well, this is surrender now to what is now, surrender to this enormous energy stream that's coming through, you asked for it, you said acceleration.

That is the greatest, the most amazing mystery, that the universe is not only conscious, but becoming more conscious, the universe is awakening, where it all goes, we couldn't possibly understand. It goes to something vast, it's like as if the grain of sand wanting to understand the earth or the universe, you can't understand, you can get glimpses of it when you step out of thinking, you can get glimpses of the vastness of it all that's unfolding, that we are part of that vastness, we are like a spark in the awakening. Consciousness that appears briefly, every human, you could look at every human as a spark of consciousness that briefly manifests out of that one consciousness, it comes out and then it brings back what it has learned, not the details, but the essence of what it has learned in this incarnation.

So the universe, every human life on this planet is that spark coming in, the consciousness coming, so it comes in and goes, that was your life. From a more universal perspective, human life is very short, and if you could look at it from a higher perspective, a more universal perspective, you would see this planet, and you would see continuously these sparks, billions of sparks, lighting up and disappearing all over the planet. Every lighting up and disappearing is one life, there's a one underneath it all, there's a one, coming again, and again, and again, and then it takes, it learns, it comes out, one amazing process, and you are part of that.

So it is liberating to know that, because it frees you from the delusion that all that matters is your little personal life. And all the problems that fill up your personal life, a few years from now, nobody will remember, just a few years. And I always, I like to look at old movie scenes from cities, where all these people are running around the city in 1903 or 1910, and they're all gone now, and I look at this, I showed, we had a retreat last week, and I showed one of those clips, people running around the city in 1900, hundreds of people, and now, where are they?

Nobody remembers their names even. And every life on the personal level was so important. So if you get to the transcendent dimension, it gives you a true perspective of how important the personal dimension is.

Yes, you look after it, yes, you honor it, you clean it, you make it better, but it's relatively tenuous and very fleeting. And so, a more important question than whether you have achieved so-called success on the level of form, if you have, fine, be happy. But is it going to last?

Probably not, but that's okay, either the $50 million are going to leave you, or you're going to leave them. But so a more important question is, are you awakening? Are you aware?

Are you awake now? So the greatest achievement, my greatest achievement in life, a wonderful achievement, is, not that these books have come through me, but I'm not burdened by thinking anymore. And in fact, I don't have to think if I don't want to.

I just go. And it's so liberating because you're free of the person. I can take everything in, whether it's a city or nature, and it's beautiful, and you don't have to comment on it.

I could comment, but I don't have to. You're there as the awareness, and there's a sense perception, and there's a depth to everything. And here we come back to being with another human being.

When you're only meeting another human being on the conceptual level, you're not really meeting them at all. You're only ever seeing the conditioning of your mind reflected in the other. So there's no true meeting.

There's no true empathy. You cannot have this outflow of benevolence or goodwill, loving kindness, feeling a connectedness, because you cannot sense who you are beyond the person. Therefore, you can only react to the other person on the level of the person.

But if you are connected, then you can look at another human being and have in the background of your perception that spaciousness. And then you look at another, and you can sense beyond their personality, there is a conscious being. And that consciousness is one with your consciousness.

And when you realize that that consciousness that you can sense in the other, beyond their personality, which may or may not be pleasant, you can sense the deeper dimension of their being, and that changes the way in which you interact with other human beings. That brings only that state of consciousness of spaciousness can bring in love. That is where love arises.

Not the love that says, come to me. Don't you ever leave me. I love you.

I love you so much. You better remember that. No, the true, the loving kindness, I think that's a good expression.

The Dalai Lama said, my religion is, he didn't say my religion is Buddhism, he said my religion is kindness. So what he's talking about is ultimately a state of consciousness. Because it's only kindness, this true loving kindness towards another human can only arise out of that transcendent state of consciousness.

Where you're able to be conscious, but you're no longer controlled, burdened by, I can almost say possessed by the thinking mind. You can then, then the wonderful thing that happens then is the consciousness that comes through you can actually throw into your thinking mind and use it for deeper purposes. To bring more consciousness to this planet in whatever way.

It can use your form, your form identity and use it to bring more consciousness through an activity, through making something, through a human relationship. Many ways in which consciousness can come into this world through you. And that's the beauty and that now becomes the purpose of your life is to express consciousness in this world.

And so there may be one or two of you who look back on your life, you say, I've achieved so much. Maybe you, I don't know if you would even be here. If you were totally identified with your achievements, you might be somewhere else up in the penthouse of your tower.

But let's say everything you ever did failed. Or it might be, as somebody told me, he said in a kind of half proud and half sad, he said, I've never failed at anything because I've never tried anything. Okay, so let's say you failed at everything you tried.

You had your business ideas and the business failed. And then you had your first marriage and the first marriage failed. And you had your second marriage and the second marriage failed.

And then you finally made some money and then you lost it all. And then you had to experience bankruptcy and then they put you in prison. And then they let you out and now you're here.

And then you sit here and you can go, this total failure of my life. So look at all these people, they're all successes, great successes. They're all comfortable, they're doing well, they're spiritual.

And here I am. And you can go that way or you can go and you can sense an alertness in the background and a spaciousness and a presence that transcends the unhappy person. And so all your failures have taken you to this moment of awakening.

And you realize that in essence, you are consciousness. Does this person who did bad things to you still live in you? They might even have passed away already as a mental emotional entity that you carry.

It's actually like a little gremlin. There's also the doorway into presence, of course, of totally accepting your experience of this moment. So if you can talk to whoever it is you're talking to and just totally accept whatever he or she says in this moment, that's fine too.

There are various doorways into presence, but it's presence. Or you meet your ex, as they call them. I'm meeting my ex about something.

So all the stuff that happened, that accumulated before the divorce happened, all those years, it's back in your mind. And there's your ex and you have a very clear image of who he or she is and it's not pleasant. Your very unconscious ex.

And then you have to be really, really present so that you don't go into the old reactive mode. And then you're meeting this person. It's almost without the past.

That's an amazing thing. Yes, you know the past, but in the moment of meeting that person, there's not you as personality. When you become really present, what emerges is the other half of you emerges more.

The personality becomes relatively unimportant. The other half, the unconditioned presence, shines through. Then you're able to meet another human being.

You might share a lot of unpleasant pasts with him or her, but you can meet this person when the other, the deep eye, shines through you. You meet the person through the deep eye, which means you meet this person without reference to the past. You have that ability, well not you as a person, but that ability is in you of meeting a human being, even a human being with whom you share a lot of unpleasant pasts, without reference to the past.

So you're meeting that person in the present, fully in the present. That's an enormous thing and I know people who have practiced it. And many of them have reported back and said that sometimes, not always, and you're not doing it in order to achieve something else through it.

It is sufficient unto itself, however, almost miraculous transformations have happened in the other person, when you met the other person without reference to the past. So it's not that you want the other person to change, all that falls away. You're just not bringing the past into this encounter.

And then it is not uncommon for the other person also, without them realizing what's happening, becoming freed, at this moment at least, from their heavy personality, and something beyond the personality in them also shines through. And that's a miracle of transformation. That's why sometimes people, when one of the two who share a lot of unpleasant pasts, one of them becomes conscious, it can lead also to the transformation of the other.

Not necessarily. If it doesn't, it's fine too. At least you are free.

And you don't need the other to be free too, to be feeling that you are free. And so it can also happen with your parents, that suddenly the way in which your parents relate to you changes when you meet your parents without reference to the past, and in absolute presence. That's an amazing, amazing experience.

So I suggest you try it out. You have quite a bit of time to practice, and then Thanksgiving is still a long way in the future. And that's where to try it out, when you sit around the big table.

Well, that's for North Americans who celebrate Thanksgiving. You sit around the table, and basically this is the past. The past sitting around the table.

Some people are dreading it. Christmas too. Oh no.

Because you are facing the living past. So it's a miraculous thing. And again, one could say that is the real meaning of forgiveness.

It's not so much a mental act, mental acrobatics that say, okay, you've done dreadful things, but I'm so spiritual that I forgive you. I forgive you. At least I'm trying to.

At least I'm trying. You're not even trying. Why do I always have to be the first?

It's always the same. You're lost again. So forgive you is not so much a mental, to formulate certain things in your mind, and then trying to live up to a certain thought in your mind, which is very difficult, if not impossible.

But the real forgiveness is to enter that state of presence, so that you're not the personality that's conditioned by the past. And then you can meet the person, even the person who did something to you, if you choose to meet them. You don't have to meet a person who did bad things to you.

But the question is, does that person still exist in you as a mind form, as a thought form, as a mental, emotional entity? Does this person who did bad things to you still live in you? They might even have passed away already.

But they live in you as a mental, emotional entity that you carry. It's actually like a little gremlin that lives in you, and it's not pleasant. And so forgiveness means to recognize that for what it is.

It's not really the other person anymore. The person maybe passed away ten years ago. It's not the other person anymore.

It's something you carry still in your mental, emotional field that lives there. And so that is, again, something to recognize. And if you recognize it as something that lives in your mental, emotional field, then it's much easier to step back from it, and by no longer getting drawn into it.

So that's something to do with something that lives in you, and you recognize it as something that you no longer want or need, and then it gradually dissolves as you're no longer reacting against it. So you have one, you have a split in you as long as it's there. There's that mental, emotional entity, and then there's you.

There's another pattern in their mind that reacts against it. It's a bit crazy. But forgiveness then is really coming, meeting the other, if the other is still there, and you're actually now meeting them in person without reference to the past.

People with whom you have a grievance, people carry grievances, and they actually like their grievance. The ego loves grievances. Peter Church, 20 years ago, he did that to me.

30 years ago. Churchill, Churchill, he did to me. The ego loves grievances, but as long as you carry even one grievance towards, and grievance is a long-standing resentment.

Resentment could be short-lived, but grievance tends to be a very long thing. It goes on and on. At least that's how I define it.

The grievance goes on and on, and you carry it in your mind. And even just one surviving grievance in you can often prevent you from fully accessing presence, from actually fully awakening. It's like a dark spot in you that prevents consciousness from arising fully.

So you have to be really very careful to see what they do to you, and see that the addiction to a grievance is only, what is addicted is your fault. The personality derives, the egoic personality, the ego derives sustenance from the grievance and strength from the grievance. So if you harbor a grievance, that means that the ego itself is still operating.

It is not you who is harboring the grievance. It's the ego in you that is harboring the grievance. So if you have a surviving grievance in you towards another person, you need to know that ultimately it's not you, it's the ego, it's still operating.

So you can develop in other areas of your life, and the ego remains, can remain in you, even can attach itself, let's say you're awakening beautifully, but there's one corner in your mind where the ego survives because it has attached itself to a grievance. And there can be other corners too where the ego can attach itself to particular, anything to do with the past. It attaches itself to a particular thing in your mind and there it's waiting.

And occasionally it can, then even in other situations, the ego can still come back more easily because it's there, it's still feeding on the grievance. So it's not starving, it's still feeding on this grievance that you harbor.

[Speaker 4] (8:17:29 - 8:17:34)
I'm talking about obsessive thoughts that are probably not correct.

[Speaker 1] (8:17:36 - 8:55:22)
And then it covers your subsequent perception of reality gets totally colored by the obsessive thoughts and it can explain everything in those terms or the evils of the world have suddenly one explanation another one that's also in the collective. You can have a thought that the entire world is divided into oppressor and oppressed. Any human being either belongs to the oppressors or to the oppressed.

That was an idea in communism in economic terms in terms of social power. They divided humanity into oppressors and oppressed. And then they look at, you can look at any human being and to me, he's oppressed.

He's an oppressor. Now thing is, of course, oppressors and oppressed have existed and to some extent and some areas still exist. But to take one fragment of truth because the totality of human life is much faster than that.

This is one aspect. But if you take one aspect that then occupies your mind because of lack of awareness, you are possessed by a thought. And this thought is the entire world.

This is just one example. Could give many examples. The entire world is either the essential identity of any human being is either they are oppressed or they are the oppressor.

Now, of course, if that is the thoughts that dominate your mind, then obviously you would probably regard the oppressed as the good ones and the oppressors as the bad ones. So that simplifies life enormously. You immediately can decide who is good and who is bad.

And you are probably good, presumably. Even if you are an oppressor, traditionally, you now recognize your sins and you will atone for your sins of being an oppressor and you side with the oppressed and therefore you become one of the good people. It's like the civilization has made a great effort to come up with as many things as possible to prevent people from becoming still and spacious and taking a moment of, ah.

The normal thing to happen is that the connectedness with your essence identity is lost very easily in human relationships because the mind is so active and we live in a civilization that provides continuously, continuous and incessant stimulus, stimuli is the plural, continuous incessant stimuli for the mind, even more than even 30 years ago. 30 years ago, it was just radio and television and people would sit there for hours. But nowadays you have countless sources of stimulus for the mind that draws you into continuously thinking about what's your next Facebook post, what's it going to be and you look at the ones that are coming in, all these people are doing these fantastic things and me, I'm just sitting here and then you have to pretend that you're also doing taking a nice selfie and then you project your self image which has existed for a long, long time before in humans, they have this part of ego to have this image of who I am but in this Facebook, now we have the opportunity to project that image into the world and it'll reach hundreds of people all at once and then you construct your life.

There are many people alive these days who without knowing it, they partly live for their Facebook image and they're just looking for the next thing that they can project out into the world. It's Narcissus. You might remember Narcissus looking at himself because they didn't have mirrors at the time but one day, he happened to look into a little pool of water and he saw himself and he realized that he was extremely beautiful.

He said, oh, that's me and the story goes he fell in love with himself, not in a good way, not by becoming one with who he is but the separation happened. This myth shows the beginning stage of the egoic sense of self expressed as a story. The image that he saw of himself in the pool is the mental image of the ego and stories are part of that image.

That's me. I'm me and my story so you have the image of me and then, oh, so this guy, Narcissus, he experienced that separation and then I think something bad happened to him but I don't remember what. And then you have other divine things that continuously stimulate the mind that almost designed for you not to become still.

It's like the civilization has made a great effort to come up with as many things as possible to prevent people from becoming still and spacious and taking a moment of looking at the sky and feeling the inner spaciousness arise and becoming aware of the leaves and the wind blowing and the noise of water, the simple thing, becoming still, alert, sensing that stillness within and, of course, a minute later, another text message is coming in. Of course, you have to look at it immediately and then I'm told, I didn't know that when I first started using text, Erin told me that the etiquette is that you have to reply immediately.

And emails are coming in, too. Oh, dear. I must be very important.

I'm getting all these messages. And people, I gave a talk with a big conference with people, business people and so on. They talked about how there's been articles in the paper, too, how people's lives get taken over by their devices.

When they leave work, they go home and the emails are still coming in, even in the evening. And they're still answering emails when they're in bed at night. And this is, some people are beginning to realize how dreadful that kind of life is.

And some more enlightened companies, they may not be totally enlightened, but they're beginning signs of enlightenment. They even forbid you to answer emails after a certain time in the evening. They might even, some have even disabled your phones.

I think VW, Volkswagen did that. The employees, they cannot use emails anymore after six or seven in the evening. And this is very wise because otherwise people will go insane eventually.

So there are great opportunities in this new technology also, but it's also very dangerous. There are both. You can spread messages of awareness.

You can spread enlightenment through that also. It can travel and incredible madness too. So the essence then is the two dimensions.

Let's just put it like that of who you are. Balance them in your life and at work. And you will find inevitably in certain situations, one will become stronger than the other.

And then the situation changes and the other will become stronger. For example, when you have to deal with detailed information, conveying detailed information to somebody else, the mind has to be very active. You have to remember this, this, and that.

Then the being dimension will recede and perhaps you will be 80% in the mind. But then it's still possible to, even while that happens, to have that being dimension there. And other times when the mind is not required very much, the presence will come forth more and there will be very little thinking and just a wonderfully filled with this wonderful sense of beingness or presence.

A huge section of humanity through conceptualization, through conceptualizing that section of humanity say they are no longer human to you. Without the awareness you are at the mercy of whatever goes on in your mind including you have little or no immunity depending on your degree of presence or awareness. If there's little or no awareness, in other words total identification with the stream of thinking, then you are very susceptible to mental illnesses and dysfunctions and mental even mental pandemics that affect large numbers of people.

And this is interesting. You may have noticed on a personal level sometimes it happens that certain thoughts usually there's a stream of useless thinking and for many people it goes on and on. There's certain recurring patterns in it.

Yes, according to the particular conditioning of this person's mind. And occasionally it happens that one thought or a couple of a bundle of related thoughts get stuck in your mind and they refuse to go away. They begin to influence and affect other thoughts and they spread in your mind.

In some cases reaching every thought that arises in your mind is in some way contaminated by one original faulty thought that may be totally irrational but it has taken it has taken possession of your mind in a very minor and held relatively harmless way. It happens that you say I just can't get I can't stop thinking about this it just goes I can't get rid of it. And then you have certain ideas in your mind that are a over a distortion a complete distortion of reality and then you look at reality through the lens of that distorted lens of your thoughts.

Any kind of prejudice for example is of that kind let's say you have a racial prejudice prejudice means prejudice pre-judgment so before you know the reality the judgment has already occurred. For example in the case of racism you have a judgment that a certain race has particular qualities that are regarded as negative in some way and then that becomes a lens through which you can no longer meet any human being belonging to that race because the conceptualization in your mind has already told you that this is has already deadened your perception to the aliveness of that human being you cannot you are totally blinded by the concepts in your mind through which you look at reality. It could also be political you can have a certain view certain political views of certain groups of people as happened for example in communism where suddenly the belief arose and millions of people got infected by it that reality or humanity can be divided into two groups the oppressor and the oppressed.

Now oppression of course existed in humanity and exists to some extent in some places more than others to some extent exists but is only one of many factors that determine societies and how they function together but so if you take one and say this is the only one the only valid one that means a huge section of humanity through conceptualization through conceptualizing that section of humanity you say they are no longer human to you at the moment you do that you conceptualize other humans you are completely desensitized to their inherent aliveness let alone the ability to relate to them and to relate to them and recognize the essence of who they are that is the same as as your essence so the moment you have then this belief takes a hold of your mind and you look you classify immediately every human being that you come into contact with is he or she oppressor or oppressed once you have deadened yourself to the aliveness of other humans the next step is very easy and often happens and that is violence and even killing them because to you they are no longer human and the there is a dysfunction inherent in the human mind which can manifest itself collectively and then it gets it's really bad and it manifests itself of course on a personal level and there are times in human history when this dysfunction becomes magnified so there are times of collective mental illness they usually they can last a few decades they can last a few years and then finally just like a physical illness finally it exhausts itself and comes to an end so this the basic dysfunction that's already built into the egoic consciousness then in a collective group setting which is could be a country or tribe or religion or a sect it suddenly becomes amplified and it in a country for example it can it get millions of people can suddenly be trapped in exactly the same dysfunctional mindset and usually violence happens then as it happened for example under Soviet communism in Russia national socialism in Germany Mao's cultural revolution in China millions upon millions killed if you if you want to learn about human dysfunction I recommend reading history books about that millions upon millions killed because they were regarded as not human anymore they had been conceptualized as the enemy in a small country like Cambodia it happened in the I believe it was the 70s or 80s under the dictator Pol Pot and the army was called the Khmer Rouge army they killed one third of the population exterminated totally in the tortured put in prison camps everybody who lived in cities had to leave the city out in the countryside if you had the slightest education you were part of the oppressors if you wore glasses because it means you could read you were part of the oppressors if your hand did not show sign of manual labor you were part of the oppressors immediately sent to labor camps or out to the countryside to work in the fields and starve there and they did one third of the population starved to death or was killed and that was regarded as necessary to bring about a more just world all in service of the future so you transform the present into hell in order to create a better future the means justifies the end that's the belief but unfortunately that is not the case the means corrupts the end and the end becomes meaningless if you create hell in order to reach it so it's easily recognized as insane completely insane a very great part of challenges actually come from your own mind and that is I would suggest the greater part of challenges in your life are not through external events although yes they also happen but the greater part of challenges is the unobserved mind what your mind is doing and saying about your life the narrative in your mind and the dysfunction of your mind the misinterpretations of everything in your mind when you as I mentioned earlier when you look at life through the conditioning of your mind the veil of conditioning the narrative and you cannot separate what is from your interpretation of what is and then that is and and suddenly you realize okay this is here this is the challenge and you're not complaining anymore you're just looking at it and facing it and you become more alert through every challenge that arises even the little ones like your flight is cancelled you arrive at the airport it's a little challenge or you you stumble and you fall and you break something it's a little bit bigger challenge but the mechanism behind the reactivity is the same so first you can start with little things little things that go wrong flight is cancelled it's cancelled nobody's telling you what's happening and there are 50 people angry all around you so you're either drawn into that or you just okay because you see it as oh it's a sign for me to be alert it's an opportunity for intensified presence and then you become actually intelligent for the first time you access a one could say higher intelligence and then if right if a certain action is possible in that moment you take action and it'll be right it's not reactive it's action but not reaction and if no action is possible you're simply in a state of complete surrender and you feel great it's just and maybe you sit there for two hours and still nothing has happened and then perhaps you go and go to a hotel or you sleep on this chair and it's not it no longer creates a problem in the conventional sense of the word it's not it no longer creates an unhappy entity that is you it creates more alertness and I have had accounts of people who were given a very serious prognosis when they went to see their doctor and usually the case is that when the doctor tells you something that might imply that there is not much time left for you that's a terrible thing when you believe that your life is not complete yet that there is so much more that you wanted to do that you could do but you may not be able to do it so usually the first reaction would be very great suffering but in some people that also has created I've had quite a few accounts of people who suddenly became intensely alert and present they refused to leave the present moment because they realized either through coming into contact with this or some other similar teaching or intuitively without having any guidance they realized if I leave the present moment I become unhappy if I go just a few months into the future where I may not be here anymore or the body or me or whatever I become unhappy so they got totally present and suddenly feel a sense of not only great alertness but almost elation there was an account a few years ago unfortunately I've forgotten his name a British musician relatively well known but not world famous and he was given he was only I believe in his thirties or early forties he was given this diagnosis that he would only have another year to live but this was an unusual case he reported he told in an interview he walked out of the doctor's office without going through the stage of suffering first he immediately experienced without having read any spiritual book he immediately realized this arising of very intense alive sense of aliveness and he lived completely in the present moment suddenly started living completely in the present moment and then he said in the interview he thought why didn't I do this before why did I wait for this and he felt not you can't call this not happiness what he felt it's not happiness that's a superficial thing something deeper than happiness he felt life itself the joy of life that is deeper than happiness or unhappiness perhaps even to call it joy is not quite right an intensified sense of aliveness and what is that what is that intensified sense of aliveness and what happened why did he or anybody to something like that happens why do they suddenly feel that and they didn't have it before because time was removed from them there was no more time no future and without future the ego cannot survive the sense of self the egoic sense of self needs future and it needs past it's built it's built it's up through the past and it needs future for its fulfillment and of course ultimate destruction but the ego doesn't want to talk about that so the ego got destroyed through that very quickly and so it has happened to people who have lost everything who had were involved in huge natural disasters or man-made disasters it doesn't happen to everybody some people remain stuck in terrible suffering but these it's always an opportunity for true spiritual awakening and so but you have come here now because you no longer need you've done the stage of suffering so suffering plays it may still be very important because it will intensify your presence when it comes but you don't need suffering as such because you are voluntarily inviting the state of presence into your life it begins to manifest through you when your primary objective is to be a conscious human being to manifest consciousness to be aligned with the unconditioned consciousness that you are then no matter what you do you will have a beneficial effect on the world the world will become a better place even through your very presence even if you were just a hermit although this is probably not your calling nor is it mine even if you were just a hermit and you would sustain this consciousness of your essence identity as I call it and you would be aligned with the unconditioned consciousness in your contemplative practice you would make a difference to the totality of human consciousness which is one single thing that there is such a thing as the totality of human collective human consciousness and if you manifest from the aligned internally aligned state of consciousness whatever you manifest will have a beneficial effect on the world even if it's just a thing like let's say you want to become a great musician and at first sight you might say how does that help people but it does create music that touches people in the innermost of their being has an important effect and makes the world a better place if you create a through your conscious manifestation a hairdressing salon because you want people to have a wonderful experience while they visit your hairdressing salon and you give them your utmost attention while they are there you acknowledge them in their being and then they not only get their hair done let's presume that you're a good hairdresser that's a given you have to know your craft so I wouldn't recommend that you practice manifesting a fantastic hairdressing salon without having learned the craft of hairdressing so that's obvious hardly need to mention that but once you know that you are good at what you do then you manifest something that goes there in some way has an effect on the consciousness of every human who comes into in touch with whatever it is that you create so they come to have their hair done but not only that you speak to them you listen to them you embody the presence and when they leave they not only look better they also feel better within themselves without knowing why so you because the consciousness that you embody spreads out to others but all kinds of giving also require wisdom because you again good intention is not enough without wisdom so and wisdom implies that again we come to the same place wisdom implies that you are in connection with the unconditioned consciousness that is the essence of who you are that lies beyond your thought processes that's presence so you need to become present in your if you are not present you have no access to what to wisdom if you don't have access to wisdom in your life and wisdom is not is not IQ is not analytical intelligence nor is is it accumulated knowledge wisdom is something that this world knows very little of our civilization but it's in some ancient civilizations was highly regarded wisdom is an intuitive knowing that is much deeper than the the intellect which moves within the realm of the polarities so you have a good intention a good intention does not guarantee a good outcome a good intention can actually be have have unforeseen consequences that are the opposite of good so yes it's good to have good intentions of course you're familiar with the famous saying the road to hell is paved with good intentions so have good intentions but have have wisdom so that when you so that your intention does not produce ultimately the opposite of what was intended again in any course of action that you undertake it is very important the most perhaps the most important ingredient is to have access to the dimension the dimension within yourself within where wisdom arises and that is an essential part of any successful let's put it like that manifestation practice is that you that you have that wisdom so that you you not inadvertently create bad when you are wanting to create good which is not uncommon so you your consciousness then to be in conscious alignment with the essence of who you are here and now so that you don't operate from ego and are not just operating through the intellect or don't get drawn into one of the polarities of yin or yang that is that requires wisdom and awareness is awareness is inseparable from wisdom they kind of go together they're virtually a single a single thing it's a subtle they're all very subtle and it's not complicated it might sound a little complex when i talk about it it is not it's not ultimately complex you just have to go deep enough within yourself to realize this and to live it

[Speaker 5] (8:55:36 - 8:56:26)
why woman needs a man why does a woman need a man yes at a certain age for example in my case i've been very successful in business been having adult beautiful daughters even two granddaughters having fantastic job which allows me to travel a lot all over the world having great friends very interesting personalities by the way why sometimes coming this desperate feeling of loneliness especially on saturday morning on sunday morning is it a question of being incomplete myself or just desire to share

[Speaker 2] (8:56:29 - 8:57:59)
well it could be both in your case just it could be not just a man but it could be any person that you do desire whether it's a woman or a man wanting a man it's the human aspect of us has this urge and usually it's when you're younger you have an urge you might want children or something like that but if you've already had

children sounds like in your case you have children so now it's just a partner to share with and if you're saying that every saturday morning you wake up and you feel this loneliness which is quite interesting because this is the picture that I have and I don't know if this is your case but this is the picture that I have wasn't the worst thing when you were a teenager you didn't have anything to do on a friday night or a saturday night it's like something was wrong with you I felt that something was wrong with me if I didn't have anything to do friday or saturday night so I don't know if this is for your case so maybe you can talk about it a little bit more like what are your feelings

[Speaker 5] (8:57:59 - 8:58:47)
when it comes to and what are your thoughts when it comes to saturday I just think sometimes that it's not normal to be alone oh interesting for a woman yes but it's okay for a man I don't know for man no in my case maybe I was taught and I was brought up in very traditional family and I was taught to be a good wife this was the destination was married 18 years and just children husband very good one but not my person and being it was my wish to be divorced when children were adult send them to study in school and then I wanted this freedom actually very much and I enjoyed very long but now at certain age it comes this feeling of loneliness

[Speaker 16] (8:58:48 - 8:58:49)
yeah okay

[Speaker 2] (8:58:50 - 8:58:52)
so do you still believe

[Speaker 5] (8:58:52 - 8:58:54)
that believe that you

[Speaker 2] (8:58:54 - 8:58:58)
should have somebody in your life like a partner

[Speaker 5] (8:58:58 - 8:59:14)
yes so it's a belief it's a belief yes I feel really it's unnormal especially saturday morning that I don't want a person to prepare breakfast to take care of so it's a belief can you see that this

[Speaker 2] (8:59:15 - 8:59:17)
unhappiness is caused from this belief

[Speaker 5] (8:59:19 - 8:59:21)
I wouldn't say unhappiness

[Speaker 2] (8:59:21 - 8:59:27)
okay well whatever you're experiencing then what is it then give a name to what you experience

[Speaker 5] (8:59:27 - 8:59:28)
loneliness

[Speaker 2] (8:59:28 - 8:59:38)
loneliness but you're judging that loneliness because you think that you should have something so it's a type of unhappiness

[Speaker 5] (8:59:39 - 8:59:48)
would you say maybe yeah maybe all right maybe type of unhappiness no I wouldn't say I cannot call myself unhappy

[Speaker 2] (8:59:49 - 9:00:14)

no no not unhappy but there's some sort of judgment is there a judgment that there's something wrong that you don't have a partner okay so let's we won't call it unhappy for you but there's a judgment and do you see that this judgment stems from a thought the mind because in reality in consciousness there's no problem

[Speaker 5] (9:00:17 - 9:00:27)
um I understand yes but should I resist this feeling or should you what should resist this feeling of loneliness no no no

[Speaker 2] (9:00:27 - 9:00:28)
no no

[Speaker 5] (9:00:28 - 9:00:29)
no first

[Speaker 2] (9:00:29 - 9:03:48)
you need to see that it is a thought and a belief and a belief is not real because beliefs change you can believe one day yeah I need a man and then you can believe the next day which maybe it happened because I'm understanding that you were married at one time so you believed that no I don't need a man otherwise you might have stayed married even though it was maybe an unhappy marriage so there's beliefs change that's what I'm trying to say thoughts change so and I can see you thinking about this really really hard and it's not about thinking about this so you experience a loneliness so go into the loneliness to feel what that loneliness is and when you go into the loneliness maybe some insights may come to you and you see everyone as a human being may experience loneliness but if you have this real like desire and you want to have this partner ask yourself why do I want to have this partner is it so I can feel somehow complete do you somehow think and believe that you will be complete when you have a partner so you're not going deep enough into yourself if you have a belief that something outside of you is going to fulfill you to make you complete you're not deep enough going within to find the presence and the consciousness the stillness within you don't judge yourself for that don't judge because we all do it all of us I've been there I've been there so many times that I end up choosing the wrong guy you know I kept on choosing the same shit but a different pile until one day I said you know what I don't even want a guy anymore I don't want it don't want it and then when I didn't want it anymore it's like Eckhart appeared so look at why you want a man in your life not to say that having a partner is not right or wrong it's just like why do you want this man in your life is it to somehow you will feel good feel complete feel whole because I'm telling you when you first meet you might feel like that but after a while you're going to end up resenting that partner because they're not going to be able to fulfill you they're going to be human they're going to get angry with you or upset you know you may end up fighting with them or you know but maybe you're so be so present you won't fight with them but it's still not perfect

[Speaker 5] (9:03:54 - 9:04:02)
this is the answer yes I was thinking like okay thank you very much anyway this was the question probably from many women

[Speaker 2] (9:04:10 - 9:17:57)
okay if I like to make a suggestion you may not like it but look at why you just ran away you know the heart what we might think is the heart as a human being has so many it's kind of almost a natural thing we go through our life and our society kind of informs us and tells us through the media through television that you know we need to have a partner we need to have a certain partner even but it doesn't fulfill you it doesn't complete you I had to learn that even through Eckhart I thought I found the most wonderful thing in the world you know like why not I mean he is compared to the other piles that I had he is but he's still a human being and I began to see within myself that nobody not even Eckhart can fulfill me can

complete me that I have to fill myself and complete myself and look at why am I constantly looking outside of myself to make me feel like as if I'm good enough or that I'm okay because now I have a partner that's it's false thinking that's the true marriage it's not the external form as the true marriage the true marriage is within you this outer form of a marriage is a representation of how we should be inwardly will you love them forever love me forever well it's true right it's loving well I mean will I be faithful to me will I be faithful to the divine self not my ego self the divine self that is within you and then my guess is is when you go deep enough and trust that within yourself and and experience that relationship with your self the true self the divine self have that kind of relationship and this other periphery worldly relationship of having another man become secondary I bet you that man will pop up into your life I've heard many people say that as soon as they drop that desire and wanting almost like that I got to have a man or I got to have a woman is dropped then suddenly they appear and that goes really for all desires when we drop that desire if it's a real true desire and you are meant to have that it will come seek ye first the kingdom of God and then all things shall be added unto you even partners and it will be a partner that is going to be on that same level as you in terms of level I mean consciousness that state of consciousness or doesn't have to be the same consciousness but you will have that consciousness and when the choice comes along of a man that enters they may be on that maybe I don't like to use the words different levels of consciousness but for lack of better maybe on a higher level maybe not it won't matter because you are conscious and you know your true self you know you don't have to depend on somebody else to make you happy or fulfill you so then you come meeting with a partner you then you have your partner and you're both standing like this there may be times that you have to lean upon each other and depend upon each other but when one moves away you don't collapse and say oh my god he's gone you know oh no I've fallen down I'm I don't know worthless without him I need need need but when you come together and sometimes you have to depend on each other it's an interdependence but when the time comes where well no I just want to remain independent so you're leaning a bit and he goes well you know what I'm just going to move away a little bit because it does happen right you can't expect your partner to always be there so you can lean on them that is codependency but when that partner leaves you go oh okay you're gone but I'm okay really and vice versa Michael he might be leaning one day and you're okay supporting it but then our support can only sometimes go so far because we're human beings we get tired and we just go oh hey hun why don't you stand on your own two feet for a little bit here and then you stand and you're both like this again so it's an okayness to depend but mainly it's an okayness to be like this two independent human beings that are sharing life together and sometimes this but then back like this sometimes this then back like this and this is the importance of standing independently and the independence is really our true nature when we're leaning too far and for too long we lose ourselves completely lose ourselves because now we become dependent and codependent at that so this is where we are moving to so it's a wonderful wonderful question and you're right it's probably many many people's question and it's a good question and I'm just pointing to come home to yourself first seek ye first the kingdom of God then all things shall be added unto you and it will and when you seek ye first the kingdom of God you might end up saying wow that was really a conditioning of mine that I really wanted a partner maybe I don't want a partner I don't want anybody I'm actually happy just as I am because I'm single but you won't know that until you come home to yourself and really be in that beingness that you are then we'll be able to see clearly what it is and what comes what goes because things come and go people come and go and it's wonderful it's really like the play of consciousness you know I've had to tell myself even you know even though Eckhart and I are okay and I have no desire or plans to leave the relationship and as far as I know he doesn't either but I have to tell myself I'm married to the consciousness within me so and I don't know the future I really don't know the future but am I okay right now with this yes absolutely and even when we have relationships they become they become tricky because you've got two people and not only two people we've got two people coming in my case from different cultures so you've got that added aspect when you find a relationship and you know that you'd like to be with this person but maybe it's really hard sometimes and as we spiritually awaken I find we need more and more time that we have to spend on our own and it's hard sharing the same space all the time with somebody so often times what will happen is that you know that's where the tension lies there's nowhere to go so for Eckhart and I we found a perfectly creative way to be together and that is that in Vancouver anyways we have another home but in Vancouver we have apartments that are right across from each other oh my god that is so ideal and I'm sure he would say the same thing because it's really hard to be with somebody all the time and it's not like we both leave our places to go off to our separate workspaces we don't we travel together we're together all the time there you know at home we have to find a creative way so we can have our space and we each value our space very much and this is how our relationship works so we have to get out of the conditioning so look at all your conditionings about what you think a relationship should be like what do you think a man should be like what do you think a woman should be like and then drop it all because if you have those expectations you're not having a true relationship with another human being your partner you're having a relationship with an idea in your head so you have to look at all those expectations and see what they are and just let them go and really be in the moment and it's like that respect of seeing okay where is he coming from he has his needs I have my needs how are we going to make this work ah different apartments that's wonderful and it works it works we have also a house that's on an island where we made sure that the house is big enough where we can each have our space our quarter okay it's like I had enough of you not in a bad way it's in a way that I need to be alone now so I go to my studio or he goes downstairs and we have our separate time when we travel man there is no way that we could share a room together and teach this teaching takes a lot of energy we need to recover and if we had to share a small little room together it would be crazy it would make us crazy so in order to make it work okay that's fine we have separate rooms maybe close together if we can possibly but that sentence is fine but if there is any thought or any sort of urge inside of you of oh but I don't think I can live that way I need my partner right here and I need to live with my partner and I need it then that is something else that is the conditioning coming through that is a codependency coming through because you are not coming and being in your true self being in your true self is independent and not identified attached to anything outside of you and that includes your partner I hope that helps you

[Speaker 1] (9:18:27 - 9:36:02)
then there are other things that you do as you know I often recommend when you get into your car maybe you do that already you just mentioned something about the car when you close the door of your car give yourself a little 30 seconds to just be present unless it's an emergency then you should go to the hospital or wherever you are going so give yourself 30 seconds but it has to be done in the right way you are not saying okay Eckhart says 30 seconds and then you say okay here we go you are just straining to get out of the 30 seconds so it has to be focused on your breath for example that helps or the inner body the awareness of the inner body and practice the being so you bring a little little bit of being into the doing at some point later later the two will merge completely but and then there are other moments when you can probably things that you do frequently every day there you can bring in awareness so that it's not a means to an end and perhaps create a little gap so have a number of gaps during the day during a busy day you could say for example whenever you wash your hands in the bathroom that can be an absolute presence one and be come to your senses feel the water smell the soap and that can be a present moment whatever you can probably make a list of things that you do every day if there's a staircase somewhere in your building then walking up and down the stairs can be a wonderful opportunity for being present at every step so it's not a means to an end anymore so I would suggest make a list of things that you do every day or very often and use these as to bring in spaces so you have this

very brief practices of bringing in spaces and then even while you're engaged in the doing there too you can see if you can as mentioned the discussions that you have sense the presence that you are while you're listening be alert you're actually then much more alert than you were in a normal state it increases your intelligence and it's an intelligence that's deeper than the IQ intelligence that's something that I find in my life that arises because I also practice that although I don't have discussions that often but sometimes we meet and this alert listening out of that what I find often comes is questions you ask questions one of most creative ways of participating in a discussion group is to ask questions other people when they say something you the light of your awareness shines on it then a question arises another question in the creative process of finding solutions and answers this is often overlooked by especially when you're very much identified with your mind then the mind has certain preconceived notions and opinions and positions and it'll just repeat those so when somebody comes forward with an idea that's totally new if you're very much identified with your mind it could happen that you say oh no no that's not going to work but with this you develop the ability to listen and to the true listening means you're alert and still that's true listening it's not the auditory aspect is a very small one you're alert and still and you may find that you may not have the answers but you begin to ask questions and then the other person perhaps brought forward an idea is then forced to reply and it may drive him or her deeper to see where can we go with this so one of the most creative things and the very creative people in that kind of environment they are the ones who ask the most questions this is how the entire philosophy of Socrates developed because do you know it's called the Socratic method which is somebody comes and asks Socrates a question but he has questions to him and so he goes from one question to another and another when you read Plato's account of Socrates I don't think Plato completely understood what Socrates was doing Plato thought that he already knew the answer but I don't think that's the case because Socrates said I'm the only one who knows that he knows nothing which means he was comfortable with the state of not knowing that I mentioned earlier and out of that state of not knowing often questions arise and in this question then the answers suddenly come it's a joint endeavor the answer may not even necessarily come through you but you ask the right questions and then the group suddenly comes up with an answer and that is also spiritual practice and it can be totally incorporated into what you're doing so both setting aside little spaces when you become present during the day and also in many areas maybe the hardest is being on the computer screen to be present there but there you could practice as much as possible have a little reminder next to the laptop whatever it is and have a little reminder to for example to be in your body to have inner body awareness because computer draws your attention out you go it actually depletes you after a few hours it depletes you of energy it flows out it absorbs because all your focus is on there and so it's doubly important to you may not sustain it continuously but have a little reminder so even while you are writing something or reading something and this is something that may not you may not succeed immediately in this practice but it is possible to be aware of your body have some background awareness in the energy field of the inner body and then you sit and you you can still deal with whatever it is you're dealing with you wouldn't say to the wind how dare you unless you're almost mad so the vigilance then as regards your inner state is very important so that you no longer believe the outer is more important than the inner that's a great delusion some outer condition is more important than conscious the state of consciousness so the vigilance needs to be there and i'm saying that to you because there's enough awareness in you for that vigilance to arise without the vigilance you have no idea what's going on inside you and you project it all outside then you don't even know this is the essence of unconsciousness spiritually speaking many really unconscious people they don't even know that they are suffering because everything is projected outward all the bad stuff is out there other people and whoever they they blame it's all out there everything is projected they have complete unawareness of their inner state that's the essence of unconsciousness but even humans who have already began the spiritual path or the awakening process can still be taken over periodically regularly completely by the delusion that something out there is more important than the inner state of consciousness and then you go in that moment you become reactive and in that moment you become identified with the reactions which are mental emotional forms that arise and so you are lost and you think it's it's all out it's out there so the vigilance then can tell you the moment you become upset about something upset is a generic term upset could be about or upset could be anger it could be despondent it could be fearful or upset is anything that's not rooted in in the peaceful depths of being is upset so then you would notice anything that upsets you and you might be surprised that little things perhaps can still upset you just a tiny thing somebody not turning up for an appointment or a handyman not doing a good job all kinds of something taking too long somebody not treating you with respect that you deserve all kinds of little things can make you driving people get upset when they drive it's strange it's I mean none of the other drivers knows you and you don't know them but they are regarded by the unconscious ego as personal personally insulting to you somebody somebody pushes in from the right how dare you if a gust of wind came probably you would not get upset because it's hard to personalize that but if you are very unconscious extremely unconscious you can even get angry with that but it's less likely because it's just a gust of wind pushing you forcing you to go that way you wouldn't say to the wind how dare you unless you're almost mad but an unconscious person is just like a gust of wind it's no more than that it's nothing to do with you whatsoever so and of course you find these unconscious every day in your daily life you'll find people who are just acting out their unconsciousness some are driving around the streets and some you meet in other ways and it's never really personal they are definitely not in the traffic so be vigilant to see do you still get upset by other drivers and then it's not something to beat yourself up about say oh dear you see I'm no good I've been on the spiritual path and I still get upset by other drivers no all you need is to notice it and so whenever you become upset you notice oh what's going on and then always you know I confused there was a confusion in my mind of what really is important I thought that thing out there was important and you forget this is important what is what do I bring to this situation and then you dissolve conflict quite often because often because you're surrounded still by many unconscious humans there are conflict situations that arise wherever you go you will find conflict where humans come together conflict situations arise it's amazing even places that should be quite peaceful church congregations committee meetings at your church or hospitals where things could be healing and peaceful places universities schools there could be over conflict even spiritual organizations because of course the people they may be trying hard but they are not there yet so there's conflict and that's why there's no need to react to that and say look at all these unconscious people or to say I'm done with spirituality look at all those so called spiritual people and look how they behave I'm done with that it's all it's all a farce isn't it all these and so on the mind goes on so again it's all put out there it's it's there's something wrong out there it's not me I'm okay no you become vigilant and whenever you are upset about situations and people oh that's a reminder then that there was a confusion about importance what matters and what is secondary and what is primary secondary is the external situation primary is your state of consciousness that you bring to it so when you are the moment you become upset you've forgotten that well that in itself can be a sign to become present again so if you are vigilant about getting upset about things then you can use it as an alarm clock any kind of upset in any situation that oh I must have confused what primary and secondary and okay and then you can bring your invite the alertness in and this is like sometimes compared to turning up the light with a dimmer switch and which is really what it feels like is from the mind identified reactive state and suddenly there must have been still a remnant of awareness from where you can notice oops I'm upset about this and then you can at that moment there is a choice okay there's a confusion about what is really important here and then you can invite in the presence attention and at that moment there's a shift from the mind identified reactive thinking state you might have just been talking to somebody about how dreadful somebody else is what they just did why can't they ever get it right and suddenly there's still a remnant of awareness in you oh and so you begin to witness that inside you and at that moment you have a choice you can say okay you recognize you got confusion of primary and secondary and then you go okay let's become present a deep breath might help looking around you might help anything that brings you into the present moment the mind brings up

[Speaker 7] (9:36:03 - 9:36:03)
okay

[Speaker 1] (9:36:03 - 9:39:47)
oh you step out of the mind identified state what that means when i say you step out of it means your consciousness removes itself from its from the thinking it where it was your consciousness was in in the thought forms you then reclaim the consciousness the consciousness reclaims itself so to speak you reclaim the consciousness from its incarnated form in the thought or emotional form it had incarnated into this form this is the dream of consciousness you reclaim it or it reclaims itself because you are ultimately it and so consciousness then is withdrawn from the form the thought form the emotional thought what let's say let's say this is consciousness and this is thought then it goes consciousness was trapped in that thought it had become that thought in the same way that water can become ice so this is just so consciousness gets out of it and then the thought collapses because it was only consciousness that had been frozen had become hardened so to speak so consciousness is withdrawn from the thinking and then it is in its pure no form and that is the amazing it's an amazing thing when that consciousness is suddenly there that before was trapped in thinking that and that you experience a heightened sense of aliveness suddenly and that is the entire vibrational frequency shifts to one could say what it feels like a higher frequency so this is why we call it waking up because waking up is awakening spiritual awakening does not mean to suddenly see angels or talk to God what do I do tell me what to do that's not spiritual awakening it's fine if you see angels it's a beautiful thing but it doesn't mean that you're spiritually awakened it just means you're seeing an angel or even if you're channeling a spirit entity it does not mean you're spiritually awakened you're just channeling a spirit entity who may have a big ego who knows and then that ego gets added to your ego there are what is conventionally called love can be many different things and there are many different levels to it some people call it love when they fall into fall in love with someone which is a

[Speaker 4] (9:39:52 - 9:39:53)
clinging

[Speaker 1] (9:39:53 - 9:49:58)
a needing that is partly usually physical emotional needing of the other and that's called love but that is a lower manifestation of what is love and can easily turn into its opposite from one moment to the next as many people have experienced how the person that you fall in love with you hate a few days later a few weeks later suddenly love hate are so closely related the opposites in that kind of love but the love for your children is a different matter there is a strong emotional bond with your children and it can probably I haven't experienced a mother's love but probably I can understand that you may get a sense of losing yourself in the other and that's the that is that strong emotional bond and then there's another higher manifestation of love that may already be also part of your emotional bond but probably a mixture of emotion plus something else but that something else is spiritual love and in some languages there's completely different words for different kinds of love for example in Greek there was eros eros is one kind of love agape is another kind of love what I'm talking about here now is agape is the love of the other because it comes from knowing who or what you are and recognizing yourself in the other and that is the spiritual love and that's the direction in

which you are moving so the foundation for that is not I would say as it's conventionally called loving yourself that's a strange thing now many people quite a few people hate themselves more than they love themselves now it's better of course to love yourself and to hate yourself it's something that people who practice positive thinking and want to shift negative mind patterns may put notices up throughout their house with little messages to themselves which might say I completely accept and love myself well I'm sure that's better than I completely hate myself much better but there's still a duality there and it's a very strange thing who is loving whom I love myself who are you and who is that self that you love people who say I love myself don't think about it what that really means and there's a little bit of a duality there I love myself so there must be two of me there's the I that does the loving and there's the myself that's being loved strange really weird and then as you begin to awaken spiritually awaken to the presence then what gradually comes to an end is having a relationship with yourself until that happens people have a relationship with themselves which is sometimes even manifests as dialogues they have in their head one part of you talks to another part of you you are talking to yourself you really should make an effort to do better I know you can do better and the other part well I've done my best what else can I do then do my best then no that wasn't your best you should have done the remember the voice of your mother and then you hear the voice of your mother in the background you should really should be doing better why do you mess up your whole life you're just like your dad that was my mom when I gave up my academic career oh that's your dad in there you have a relationship with yourself very strange it's kind of split that happens and that's a part of a normal state of consciousness everybody unless they are awakened or at least awakening in which case that begins to recede but everybody else they have a relationship with themselves which may be sometimes good sometimes bad uneasy they are proud of themselves and then they are shamed and then they call themselves a loser or somebody else calls them a loser and they believe it all kinds of weird things narratives and so on and as you awaken spiritually what gradually comes to an end is having a relationship with yourself so what is that replaced with when you no longer have a relationship with yourself you are yourself I am there's not there's no longer two of you here there's just one and that happens when you no longer live through a narrative in your head that creates two of you sometimes even more than two you have a whole crowd in there sometimes and then you have various sub-personalities that are just lurking in the background waiting to get triggered so when do you no longer have a relationship with yourself that is the beginning of the end of living through a conceptual identity in your head you have a certain set of opinions about who you are which you have adopted from what other people society tells you who you are or you're reacting against what society tells you about yourself and you adopt the completely opposite position for example society might tell you that you haven't achieved anything but but you believe that you haven't done anything because the world is not worthy of you because you could write the greatest book ever written but what's the point?

The world is crazy anyway I can't be bothered if I wrote a book it would be the greatest ever you can have all kinds of ideas about yourself whether you adopt society's view of who you are or you adopt a reactive position against it it doesn't matter when you transcend that you again you just are yourself you don't no longer live through an opinion in your head about who you are because who you are is the presence and that presence that you recognize in yourself as your essence and it's when I talk about it it's always a duality it's not that you recognize the presence it's the presence recognizes itself you are you recognize that's that's what arises and then you look at the other it might be your child and then you have two things happening simultaneously one is the emotional bond that you feel with people close to you such as your children or other people that are very close to you you feel an emotional bond an emotional connection but in addition and more fundamentally there is a recognition in you of the presence or the essence of the other and that's not emotional to recognize the essence of the other but you can only recognize it through your own essence the essence that you are and then you look at the other and you can sense beyond the personality they are consciousness and you can look into their eyes and no matter what behavior they manifest as personalities you kind of sense something that is beyond that and what you recognize then in the other is yourself because it is the consciousness that you both share is the one consciousness and to recognize the consciousness of the other as your consciousness as one with your consciousness that is spiritual love and there you don't lose yourself

[Speaker 17] (9:49:59 - 9:50:00)
you you[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 1:42)
You have found yourself, and so you don't lose yourself in the other anymore. If there's only emotion, then you could lose yourself in the other. But the emotional bond, and then the recognition of the other as yourself happens with anyone.

You have the same love for somebody you meet casually somewhere for a few minutes as to a close family member. But with a close family member, you have the additional emotional bond. But the spiritual love is not, does not single out one or two people as special.

The specialness comes in on the emotional level, and that's fine. So that's gradually you will, there will be a shift. The emotion will still be there, but there's an underlying recognition of the other because you've recognized who or what you are in your essence.

And there's no longer, then emotion is fine. There's no loss of self in it anymore because you know who you are or what you are. So gradually that dimension, because I can predict because you're here, that gradually that dimension will come more and more into, and the relationship with your child, children, son?

[Speaker 9] (1:43 - 1:43)
Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:43 - 2:02)
And it doesn't do away with the emotion, but something deeper comes in, and that transcends the emotion. Transcend doesn't mean that it excludes it or it comes to an end. Transcend means it contains it, but it is much vaster.

[Speaker 6] (2:30 - 3:25)
I want to speak about like loneliness and the pain body because since two years, I'm traveling alone, trying to like you, like doing nothing. And then I have difficulty to accept this nothingness, and so then I spend time on devices on Facebook, and then the pain body arrives, and then sometimes I see the world like it doesn't exist, and that other people are like robots. So it's a lot of suffering, and I don't know how to overcome this kind of feeling.

[Speaker 1] (3:26 - 3:30)
So you've been traveling for a couple of years?

[Speaker 6] (3:30 - 3:38)
Yeah, like one year and a half. I start with India, and then now I'm following you because I went to Norway, New York, America.

[Speaker 1] (3:38 - 3:41)
Okay, and you're not running out of money yet?

[Speaker 6] (3:45 - 3:46)
The universe gives me what I need.

[Speaker 1] (3:47 - 3:49)
Okay, that's good. That's a good sign.

[Speaker 6] (3:50 - 3:58)
But it's about like the disconnection with the world when I am alone and with devices.

[Speaker 1] (3:59 - 29:35)
Yes, you're not in a relationship at present, and you haven't been for the past two years, and the relationship has not arisen, or do you on purpose avoid entering relationship? Well, whatever it is, learning to be with yourself, at ease with yourself. Loneliness can be a great thing when it comes transformed through acceptance into solitude.

Solitude only arises when you accept your aloneness, become completely present, and suddenly you sense your own presence, which does not need anything, is already complete, which is not to say that on the level of your form, there may not be a need for some company, whether it's physical or emotional or mental or altogether. On the level of form, you will continue to experience certain pulls and certain needs. On the level of form, if you have no relationship, you may feel that sense of needing something to complete you on the level of form to some extent.

That's not a problem if you are rooted in your essence. You can be aware that on the level of form, there are still, there are certain needs, and these needs may be met at some point, or right now, they may not be met. And that no longer matters that much.

It is only of relative importance whether you have a relationship or you don't have a relationship. On the deepest level, you don't need it. On a slightly up, on a form level, you're not complete.

There's masculine, there's the polarities of yin and yang, not necessarily always related to the biological masculine feminine, but you are either, if you are yin, you need some yang. If you are more yang, you need some yin. And that operates on the level of opposites and of form.

It may be advisable for you to engage in some kind of activity so that you can not only practice presence by doing nothing, because it was never my decision when it happened to me. It was not my decision to do nothing for a couple of years or so. By the way, I'm still good at doing nothing, but it wasn't my decision to do nothing in order to achieve some state.

The doing nothing arose because already, I was so deeply immersed in presence that I had lost the balance as a human being. I had lost the balance between human and being. Because that, I love that word human being.

The English language doesn't have a word for man and woman, like German has mensch, which is the word for human being. But in English, you have to use two words. But there's the human part of you, that's the form.

There's the being of you, that's the essence. Ultimately, everybody needs to be in some kind of balance between those two. I was immersed in being so deeply that I lost the balance.

I wasn't unhappy about that at all, but I lost the balance between the human. The human became so unimportant to me that I didn't do anything to even, what am I supposed to do with my life? Even that didn't arise, that thought.

It was so delicious, delightful to be immersed in being. And that's how this period of complete, not complete, there was some activity because I had to occasionally get little jobs to survive. And occasionally people gave me money, but I did have temporary jobs to survive.

So I was forced occasionally to come out a little bit out of the being, but I didn't last in any job for very long. The moment I had enough money, I would stop again. So I got temporary jobs at various places.

For two weeks, I worked at the Kennel Club in London, filling out forms of puppies that had just been born of different dogs. They, fortunately, they had no computers at that time yet because that would have been beyond me. So there was just that the bliss of being was so all-consuming that the balance between the human and the being was lost.

And then it only began to reestablish itself when people started coming to me and asking me questions. And the question pulled me out of the being because an answer was required, but the answer came from the being. So when I started answering questions, suddenly there was a flow.

And the answering of questions became my doing. So that's how the balance got reestablished slowly. I would not necessarily seek inactivity as a way of achieving some kind of presence.

It is sometimes easier to engage in some activity and even engage in relationships and see if you can stay present there. But it all comes back to really the present moment, whatever it is, wherever you are, wherever you are. Is there enough intensity in you not to be drawn into mind for long periods of time?

Is there enough intensity in you to stay present in that state of aloneness so that you can be the consciousness rather than the person? You are the consciousness. And it could be a great opportunity that you're able to do that, to just travel and explore, but you already went to India, and so you did not seek, you did not find what you were seeking, perhaps.

And then you came to Eckhart, and there you did not find what you were seeking, perhaps. And the only place where you can find what you're seeking is within you in the present moment. It doesn't matter where you are.

So intensity of presence is important to cut through mind. Are you motivated enough to have that intensity of presence? And it could well be that there's not enough suffering in your life to provide the motivation.

So that is a possibility, but that's not a problem, because it'll come. If... My sense is that right now, it's just too easy for you.

It's too easy. So the suffering is, I mentioned before, the best motivation for liberation is the desire to escape from suffering or realizing the possibility that is possible to be free of suffering. And that's why the Buddha chose that term to describe his teaching, which is very, very wise.

It's, what's my teaching about? The Buddha said, I'll tell you what it is about. It's not about enlightenment.

It's not about achieving God realization. It's not about that. He's the end of suffering.

So it seems that he attracted mostly people who were at that stage where that meant something to them. I don't know if you are at that stage where the end of suffering means enough to you to provide the intensity for awakening. I was suffering.

That was the motivation. I didn't even have a name for awakening. The wonderful news though is life always gives you what you need.

And it could well be that if you continue your life in this way, the way in which you live will create more and more suffering. Perhaps the loneliest will become unbearable. And so, and then the suffering of the loneliness might drive you into relationship.

And then something may go wrong in the relationship. And then the relationship will become unbearable. And then you will seek out another situation and something will go wrong there.

And then that will become unbearable. And then suddenly you will want to be free of suffering. And there you have the motivation.

So whether you carry on the way you are now, fine. Life will give you what you need. Or if you think, okay, I'll try a relationship.

Great too. You will find the necessary suffering to get you there. And so this is why we are here.

And this is the meaning of retreat. It's a retreat from yourself in order to find what the Buddhists would call the no self or what other teachings would call the deeper self or the Atman or your Buddha nature or the Christ within, whatever term you want to use to point to it. And that's why we're here.

So all the external things here are helpful. It's easier here to connect with the depths of who you are and realize the depths of who you are. Of course, when you leave here, then you get challenged again.

It's not that you don't get challenged here too. And especially if you are still very much identified with the mind, you find many challenges wherever you go. This isn't right.

Don't like that. He doesn't look very spiritual to me. Or the opposite.

All these people are so much more spiritual than me. Do they know that I'm not spiritual? So the practice is to voluntarily as much as possible relinquish identification with the thinking mind and your usual self.

And what very much helps with that is just bring, just as much as you can, don't walk around as a heavy personality and person. No, walk around as a light, as a field of conscious perception, like a little child. It goes and look at everything.

In other words, presence, presence practice. Here, it's more easier than in your usual surroundings. Presence practice, present moment practice.

There's a lot of nature here. I recommend taking walks in nature, looking at the trees, at the sky. There's a lake, the grass, the flowers, many, many lovely things.

Be as present as you can and alert. And as you walk around from one building to another, from here to there, really perceive. That already is a liberation from the usual self because you're not thinking, you cannot really perceive your surroundings fully when your usual self is talking to you.

And it's probably not talking about this present moment, it's talking about what you're going to encounter when you get back home, or what happened last week, or it's doubting that being here is actually a good thing, or it's criticizing something that shouldn't really be here, but it's here. You don't want to, because that's not a retreat. You haven't really retreated, you've retreated on the external level, but you have not used this opportunity to retreat from your usual self, your usual mind.

So use the opportunity and retreat from the usual self, which is your usual mind. And the quickest way to that is alert presence. And you may notice, let's say just you're walking from point A to point B, somewhere on the campus here.

Let's say you're walking on the way there, it's from your room to the library, and you're walking immersed in your usual self, let's say it's a three minute walk. And then suddenly you wake up in the library, perhaps you open a book that says, be present. And then you walk back from the library and suddenly you go, amazing shift.

If your entire world has been transformed, the way in which you experience the world or your reality has completely shifted into something different. You're suddenly a field of consciousness that is perceiving the multiplicity of life in the universe. In fact, it feels that you are a manifestation of this universe perceiving itself.

And you see so much aliveness and beauty all around you. And other senses are part of that also. There's not just the visual, you listen.

There's a sound, there may be birds, other sounds. You breathe in the air, you feel, you hear the sound of your steps on whatever it is, gravel, if there's a sound, or you've sensed the softness of the grass. And you look at the sky without labeling very much.

You don't need to mentally call it what it is, what for? You know what it is without calling it what it is. You don't need to have a mental comment that says, oh, that's a lovely sky.

I wonder if the weather is going to last. No, you don't need that. And this is the discovery that you don't need that.

When you need it, you have it. But if you want to tell somebody the weather forecast, you have it, but you don't need it. You perceive more deeply by not labeling.

And that is the retreat from the mind. And then it becomes a true retreat. So you walk from point A to point B as in that sense of wonder.

And then you sense there's not only then what you perceive through your senses, because after all, that is the surface reality. It's beautiful. But as you perceive the beautiful surface reality of multiplicity of life forms, you can also sense an underlying stillness or presence.

As yourself, I can sense it at this moment. At this moment, words come out of my mouth, but I can sense the place where these words originate. And they do not originate in my mind.

My mind becomes an instrument for it. It formulates the words, but the words originate from a deeper place. And when you listen to these words, you can also listen to these words from that deeper place within yourself and something within you responds, not in words, but it's like a recognition of what it is that I'm talking about.

And so you can, as I speak from that deeper place of alert stillness, you can listen from that deeper place of alert stillness. And now that's a real retreat. Now it's become a retreat.

So whether you're on a retreat depends, of course, on your state of consciousness. So use the opportunity of being here and as much as possible, let go of the usual self, which includes your life situation that you've left behind temporarily. Everybody has one.

You have a certain life situation that's to do with where you live, who you live with, the job you have, your financial situation, even your health situation. It's all to do with your life situation, but you don't want to carry, you don't want to be a walking life situation because then you have to juggle all these things in your mind to keep them going. What about this and what about that?

And at least one area probably is problematic in your life, whether it's your living situation, your home, whether it's your relationship situation or your marriage or whatever it is, or whether it's your financial situation or your job situation or your health situation, it's unlikely that there's not at least one that's quite problematic. And for many of you, it's more than one. There may be even some of you if all these are problematic.

But do you want to walk around as a problematic sense of self? Not saying I'm going to ignore all these problems and never take any more action for the rest of my life. No, it's not that.

But when you don't need that, why be burdened by that? And right now, there's nothing you can do about any of it. So why not step out, transcend your life situation?

And I use that term in the power of now. Instead of being immersed and carrying around with you that your life situation is a burden, a continuous burden, a burden some sense of self, instead of that, be the life. You are life.

You're not just a life situation. You are life. You are an expression of the one life that manifests as the universe.

Underlying the universe, there is the oneness of life. You are that one life that was there before the Big Bang, if there was a Big Bang. You are the one life, the one out of which the whole universe came, and not only out of which the whole universe came, out of which the whole universe continuously comes, continuously brings forth life, new forms.

And you are that. And so, isn't that a much more satisfying way of being in this world than a walking problematic life situation? You are life.

So, and here on this retreat, it's the recognition that you are a manifestation of the universe, of the consciousness that underlies the universe. And you are that universe experiencing yourself, or the universe experiencing itself. And you go, it's all so wonderful.

This mind-made sense of self is also a manifestation of a much more focused on the negative than the positive. To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation.

[Speaker 4] (30:08 - 30:37)
My question is, how do you do the power of now for business? And specifically, I understand this with our personal lives, but in business, I find we're making future goals and plans and such, and trying to align my team with those, and when

things don't work out, so how do we sort of use what we're learning here in a business context?

[Speaker 1] (30:38 - 31:33)
Right, well, in business, you have, you set certain goals that you want to achieve, and then you take action towards achieving those goals. And in the meantime, there's a lot of interaction with other people who are also working as a team with you. And there's probably also perhaps interaction with other business organizations.

So first of all, the goal setting and the journey towards achieving particular goals that the organization has set itself. Before I continue, may I ask what kind of business?

[Speaker 4] (31:34 - 31:36)
It's an online business.

[Speaker 1] (31:37 - 31:37)
Okay.

[Speaker 4] (31:37 - 31:38)
Mm-hmm.

[Speaker 1] (31:39 - 31:41)
And what does it do?

[Speaker 4] (31:41 - 31:45)
So we sell information products, business training products.

[Speaker 1] (31:45 - 40:01)
Okay, okay. So that is a potentially a helpful thing for people. Once you have a goal, you will find as you pursue your goal as a team together, continuously obstacles arise as you go towards it.

Whenever you create something new, you will find it's not, it is rarely a very smooth progression. You have to overcome obstacles on the way in the form of people or situations that go wrong, this doesn't work, or try something else. The important thing is not to place an excessive emphasis on the achievement, which is the desired outcome, but to be as present in the doing as you can so that the doing does not become stressful.

Almost every business is, people who are working in it are under stress, I believe. There may be some that are not, but the stress is not the way in which you want to conduct your business because the environment is toxic. A stressful environment is toxic.

So when you can always tell, is the goal something that is for the greater good, or is it an ego-inspired goal? Are you looking, this applies both in a business environment and it applies equally when you have personal goals, it's the same process is involved. When an obstacle arises to immediately face the obstacle, which comes in the form of a situation, something not working, something going wrong, somebody trying to sabotage you, perhaps from some other organization who knows what happens, to never react against the obstacle as if this should not be happening, to immediately to face it and see what is the way beyond it?

How can I either dissolve it, bypass it, or use it? What is so that you don't enter a state of reactivity when obstacles appear on your path? That's important for anybody who pursues a goal.

How, what is your relationship to difficulties and obstacles that arise as you travel towards your goal? And the only conscious way of dealing with obstacles is not to react as if these obstacles should not be happening. So you have to look into what your relationship is with arising obstacles on your path.

And this is not just in business, but anywhere. The unconscious person in business or elsewhere gets upset, angry, aggressive, despondent, very stressed every time something isn't going the way they want it to go. And immediately dysfunctional inner states arise.

And therefore they experience, there are companies where the entire environment is toxic because everybody lives in that way. And ego is also a thing that arises as much as possible be aware so that you don't seek ego satisfaction in the doing. There's a personal ego.

Then one person can sabotage another person in the same company, because you are not free of ego identification. So it's very important to be aware so that you do not seek ego satisfaction through what you are doing. Be present in what you do so that the doing becomes joyful rather than placing so much focus on what you want to achieve that the journey becomes very stressful.

Then nothing is worth achieving if the journey is stressful. You might, let's say you spent a year or two years with some scheme that you want a new business model or whatever it is. How, what is the state of consciousness, the collective state of consciousness while you are traveling towards your goal?

Is it stressed? Is it stressful? Is there a lot of conflict?

Or is it a common enterprise? And is the doing joyful? And it can only be joyful if you place more importance in what you're doing in this present moment than attempting to arrive at some future point.

You know where you want to go to, but as the Bhagavad Gita says, do not be too attached to the outcome. Then it's much more likely that the outcome will be good. But if you have an excessive attachment, you need to achieve that.

You have an excessive attachment to outcome, then the journey becomes very stressful. That's something that is important. And I'm talking not from personal experience because I'm not in business, but I have spoken to people, quite a few, who are in the business environment.

And so I've met a lot of people I've met, been to some relatively conscious companies, they invited me. Of course, unconscious companies wouldn't invite me. And I have spoken to them, and I'm surprised that these conscious companies actually, it's a joy to be there for all the, do the employees, whoever they are, or their partners, do they enjoy being there?

That is vital. Sounds very simple. Or are they so focused on some kind of achievement that the doing is not enjoyable at all?

Do they love being there? What is the relationship between, with you and your colleagues, partners? And those things are vitally important.

And what, I don't know how many employees you have. Again, it's important to make the environment as pleasant for them as possible. Don't, encouraging people to, I'm sure if you are in that kind of environment that is probably more conscious than many others, and you are here, that's a good sign.

So I believe your company is already relatively conscious. Is there any particular problem still that you think is something that you have not been able to go beyond?

[Speaker 4] (40:08 - 40:56)
No, I just, as I'm trying to become more present myself, because a lot of what you talked about before, that's when I first got into business, it was for ego satisfaction. It was because I was trying to achieve things probably to make myself feel better. And now I've realized that doesn't work.

So now I'm working on it personally, and I'm trying to transfer these skills into the business. So you talked a little bit about that, and I guess the biggest takeaway I had is, it's okay to have goals, it's okay to project into the future as part of business and knowing what you're going. I'm the type of person that's like planning and planning everything down to the detail.

And I realized that that can be counterproductive and to know where we need to go. And then as challenges come up, which is normal, to then become present, become more present.

[Speaker 1] (40:57 - 41:03)
Yes, welcome the challenges rather than resent the challenges. With the team. Yes, together.

[Speaker 4] (41:03 - 41:04)
With the whole team, yeah.

[Speaker 1] (41:04 - 42:23)
Yes, so you can teach them. So I'm sure you have a lot to teach them. So it's wonderful.

So you will probably grow into something big and then invite me and I'll talk to you. Thank you. Relationships will reflect back to you your predominant state of consciousness.

And that's why they are so useful. And so if you are a hermit, then it's very easy to fool yourself as to your state of consciousness. If you avoid contact with other humans, because it's just, you just don't want to know anymore.

[Speaker 2] (42:24 - 42:26)
It's just too unsettling.

[Speaker 1] (42:29 - 45:11)
Then of course, yes, you can probably be in sustained states of if you're lucky enough, somebody brings you food, you don't, you can be in sustained states of presence and believe that you have finally arrived, but it will not yet be deeply rooted within you because it has not been tested in the fire of relationships. As a monk, I knew years ago, a Buddhist monk was telling me that he was in the East somewhere and he, the Westerner, but he had become a Buddhist monk. And his teacher, the abbot of the monastery where he was allowed him to go up a mountain and sit in a little hut for half a year.

And somebody would bring him food every day and he had nothing to do but meditate and sit. And after a few, first, the first month was dreadful, unbearable because he was sitting there with his mind, torturing him. On the inner and the mosquitoes torturing him on the outer level.

And then gradually he was able to let go of that and more and more presence was arising. And he then said, and then in the last month or so, presence was almost continuous and he was convinced that he had reached the state of liberation. And then a message came from the monastery which somebody had realized that your visa has expired.

And so he had to travel to the big city and stand in line at the consulate or whatever it was. And it took hours and then he was in the wrong line and said, I've just been standing here for two hours. No, this is the wrong lineup.

You have to go to that one. And that was the wrong one too. And when he finally got to the official, he was hitting his table.

I've been here for five hours. And then he suddenly became aware and he realized all that beautiful presence was gone. That's relationships.

And that was an easy relationship. Just an official.

[Speaker 2] (45:23 - 45:23)
Relationships.

[Speaker 1] (45:24 - 1:25:02)
Now, there are many kinds of relationships. We will talk about that. The essence of relationships, the question is always whether relationships are working harmoniously and beautifully or whether they are conflict-ridden is determined by whether there is space in your relationship.

Then that applies to any relationship. The question is, is there space in this room? What does space mean?

I don't mean space in the sense of distance between people. That's another aspect. I mean, inner space.

There is a line in Kahlil Gibran's prophet which talks about space, but this is not what I mean. This is also true, by the way. He says, let there be spaces in your relationship, which means don't cling to each other all the time.

Occasionally go your own way and then come back together. That's also true. But what I'm talking about here is inner space in the relationship.

And what that is, you probably know already, and we will come to that now as we address the different kinds of relationships that you encounter in life and see how the arising new consciousness can be sustained in those challenging situations because there is no doubt that human beings are very challenging. The others are the human beings. So you have, well, of course, the first thing that comes to mind when you talk about relationships is the intimate relationships, which often usually start off as romantic and then become something else.

Those, this is what all usually comes to mind, what is what many films are still about, movies that you see, a large part are still about that. And it is what many people's lives are preoccupied with, what people look to for their sense of fulfillment and happiness. And at the same time, those intimate relationships are one of the greatest sources of unhappiness.

So a little contradiction here, of course, people look to it for their fulfillment and happiness, and in many, many cases, the opposite happens. And in many, many cases, the people experience a shift from the very person that was going to, was supposed to make me happy, now makes me unhappy. That's the normal course of relationships.

I read the other day, I don't know who said it. And he said, there is no marriage in which a week after the wedding, there's no marriage in which one week after the wedding, you cannot find grounds for divorce. And the secret is in continuing to find grounds for marriage, he said.

Before we, let's put this aside, because that is the most problematic. But you are engaged, we will come to that, of course, but you are engaged throughout the day and throughout your life in many kinds of relationship, different types of relationship. You have relationships with your children, if you have children.

You have relationships with your grown-up children. You have relationships with your parents, relationships with siblings, family members, relatives. You have relationships with friends.

You have relationships, casual, brief relationships when you interact with people to do this or that, to buy something, to ask for information. On the telephone, these are all relationships and they're all part of, if you, if there is dysfunction in you, egoic dysfunction, that will manifest in all relationships. If you respond unconsciously out of the ego, then usually it amplifies, it fuels conflict and you bring more unconsciousness.

But in a strange way, you also, your state of consciousness affects other humans, even humans you don't come into contact with. That's a little mysterious, but all humans at a deeper level are connected. There's one collective human consciousness, which is an aspect of the greater consciousness of the universe, just a ray of the greater.

There's a collective human consciousness. On that deeper level, every human is connected to every other human. And what you, if you embody, if you begin to awaken into the state of presence, it's not a state, but let's call it a state.

If you awaken into a state of presence, dimension of presence, that makes it easier for other humans to also awaken into presence. And so in a subtle way, that's how humans are connected. For example, in a somewhat different way, it has been discovered when one person makes a new, fantastic discovery, quite often, almost at the same time in other parts of the world, some other humans have made a similar discovery almost at the same time.

It's often been discovered that's because all humans are connected at a deeper level. So in that sense, even if you have little or no contact with other humans, if you're present, you still affect the totality of human consciousness. But most humans are continuously interacting with other humans.

And then you become a teacher of presence. Obviously, if your profession involves a lot of contact with other humans, let's even a helping profession, then more obviously you become a teacher of presence when you realize that whether you are a teacher or a social worker or a doctor or a nurse or a therapist, a psychotherapist or physical therapist, so if you're in some kind of helping profession, then you become a teacher of presence. Of course, whatever you're teaching will be a different thing, but you realize when you convey the whatever it is that you, the modality that we used to interact with those humans, helping capacity, if you're present, that presence flows into the way in which you relate to the other human being.

Let's say you're a therapist. A therapist spends a lot of time listening to humans and they're talking. That's usually encouraged in therapy.

So you're listening and the other person, your client, your patient, whatever you call him or her, is talking usually about their problems. And then the therapist has a certain modality. He or she has been trained in a particular therapeutic approach, whatever it may be.

Could be old-fashioned psychoanalysis or something more modern. So the therapist will be applying their particular modality to be trained to approach the situation in a particular way. But when the therapist becomes a teacher of presence, in addition to being a therapist, there's an energy that arises when the other person is talking, the therapist is listening.

In that listening, there's an energy of presence because the therapist, if he's a good, if he becomes a teacher of presence, he's no longer listening so much to the conceptual mind, but listening in the state of the clarity of presence. Just, it's more than listening. Presence is there and you embody the presence for the other person who does not have presence yet, hasn't discovered it yet.

And then the most important part of your therapeutic relationship becomes a state of presence. And then you find yourself, regardless of your training, whatever you have been trained to say or do, you may find intuition coming in more and more. Maybe you've been trained in a particular therapeutic approach, but you will then gradually, your intuition will become more important than whatever you've learned when you're training as a therapist.

More and more, you will find your intuition will come in more. And suddenly you say something and you didn't know beforehand until you said it. It didn't come, you don't come from a place of knowing, you come from a place of not knowing, which is very deep.

And then you become an effective therapist. Only, and so I have met therapists, they've spent years sitting with people and applying their techniques, whatever they learned. And then gradually, or maybe not even gradually, they began to realize, or maybe they didn't realize even consciously, just gradually the ability to listen grew in them.

And then that became just presence. And then they became extremely effective as therapists, because presence was taking over. Whatever their training became secondary, in some cases they all completely didn't use it anymore.

But sometimes it comes only after, the question is, when can presence use you as a channel? Sometimes it requires a lot of practice before presence can use you as a, not always, but sometimes. This not only applies to helping professions, it also applies to presence arising in you when you are engaged in some creative endeavor, whatever it may be, you're a musician, or an artist, or whatever it may be, a composer, maybe, interesting.

Is presence able to use you as a vehicle, or as a conduit, can flow through you and inspire what you create and do? Yes, but often it requires many hours of practice so that the channel is ready for presence. There was a, I've often, a few times quoted, there was a writer who discovered, who examined creative people, like musicians, who created things that were, became classics, never, whether it's classic, for example, in music, classical composers, like Mozart or Beethoven, or modern pop music, like the Beatles.

And he looked at the hours they spent practicing their craft, so to speak, thousands of hours before presence was able to suddenly come in and they became inspired. And he stipulated, he even, he calculated, and said, 10,000 hours you need. And then there's a possibility for presence to flow in, and then what you then create through presence, you don't create it, what is being created through you becomes unbelievable.

How can a human create such beauty or such powerful thing? Even with, I mean, if you look at the Beatles is relatively, compared to Beethoven, Beethoven, Mozart are more complex, classical music constructions. Nevertheless, the Beatles also, the songs were deeply inspired as a quality to make many of their songs that, this is why they stay around, they'll still be played 200 years time, 300 years time, whereas most other music disappears after a few months or after a year, definitely, or even a few weeks, popular for three weeks and then it's gone, because it's just noise.

With a little bit of hype, you can make that noise popular for a little while and then it disappears. But some, there's a quality, what is created through presence, there's a quality to it that you cannot define, but almost everybody can sense it and feel it and even be touched by it. So I wouldn't say that, in a way, in a wider sense, you could say people like that, they are also teachers of presence.

They teach through whatever they create through presence, becomes extremely helpful to other humans because it still contains the energy of presence. How do I truly forgive myself for not being present with another, Janice? Well, I assume the question refers to something that happened in the past, not in the present, because if the other is here with you now, then there's nothing to forgive, you just be present.

So it must be something that you were not present with someone in the past because there was not enough presence in you. You cannot manifest any behavior beyond your level of consciousness. Either you had no idea what presence was, you were not yet able to access that dimension of consciousness, or it was there very weak in you, not strong enough perhaps to survive in that particular interaction or relationship.

Some parents have that feeling also because when they look back upon how they brought up their children, they cannot believe how unconscious they were as parents. Now, there's no such thing as totally conscious parents. No matter what you do, there's always something that you don't do right.

Absolute perfection is just not possible. But there are now for the first time perhaps in history, there are parents who are relatively conscious, who are endeavoring to be conscious as parents. In my generation, it was unheard of.

Conscious parents, what is that? You just, the parents brought you up in the same way that they were brought up and in the same way that was sanctioned by the surrounding culture. That's how you were brought up.

Conscious parents, what's that nonsense? And of course, in my generation, I didn't know anybody who had even remotely conscious parents. My parents, of course, they did the best they could.

They loved me to the best of their ability, but they were both very unconscious. In the later, when my dad was very old, some of the egoic self broke off, little bits of pieces of his ego disintegrated. There was still an ego left, but the massive ego that he had before started to dissolve.

If he had lived beyond his age, he reached the age of 90. Perhaps if he had lived to 100 or 110, he might've gone much further still. But my parents were deeply unconscious.

There was constant conflict at home, terrible drama and scenes and shouting and screaming and physical violence. It was a nightmare. And that was not uncommon.

Of course, even nowadays, there are children, still many, who have to endure that, still many, but there are conscious parents. And I have met children who are born into a conscious family. And that's a wonderful thing.

It's a new thing. So forgiving yourself for not being present, there's always a tendency of the ego to identify with certain conditions. So the ego identifies with the condition of unconsciousness and says, that was me, and I was wrong.

I should have been conscious at the time, but you were not. You couldn't have been more conscious at the time than you were at the time. So there comes a, you forgive yourself by realizing that nobody can act beyond their level of consciousness.

And whatever you did in the past was an expression of, on your personal level, of the evolutionary state of yourself and on a collective level, you manifest the evolutionary state of humanity until you begin to awaken. And then you become a forerunner, at the forefront, spearheading the growth of consciousness. There were many silly things I did in relationships when I was in my 20s, unconscious.

Nothing drastic, fortunately, but it could have been, but hurting people, but not being aware of it, ego, egoic motivations, and so on. I wasn't even there. I was, there was conditioning operating through me, the ways in which my mind had been conditioned.

I wasn't awake yet, so it was a kind of dreamlike state. So how, it shouldn't be that difficult to forgive yourself for something that you did in a dream. And it's the unconscious state is very much like that.

If you have still an opportunity to go to this person and perhaps explain that you were unconscious, if that is, we don't know what level of consciousness this person's at, whether this person would be able to listen to you and even understand what you're saying. So, or this person may not be alive anymore, or there may not be an opportunity to speak, but either way, you forgive yourself by realizing that there is ultimately nothing to forgive. And that even applies to another person because if forgiving goes both ways, sometimes you have to forgive yourself, but you also have to forgive somebody else.

If you do not want to carry the enormous burden of carrying a grievance, which is a dreadful thing, that could, just one grievance towards another human being, that is a heavy grievance that you carry, can stop the arising of presence in you. So letting go of grievances is vital. And again, it's whatever somebody else did to you, they acted out of their level of unconsciousness.

So then it, rather than make it into an identity, somebody does something that's unconscious to you, and then you transform it mentally into that person's identity that makes it almost impossible to forgive. In ordinary human interaction, it is very important to overlook things that humans do because every human being that you come into contact with will manifest, even if they are awakening, they are in the awakening process, they will still manifest occasionally areas of unconsciousness when they interact with you. They might lie to you for some reason here and there.

They might do this or that. And then if you focus on that excessively, you say, he lied to me. Okay, have you ever lied to anybody?

No, I never lie. Okay, then you need to. He lied to me.

And then you focus on that and you amplify that and you make that into part of his or her identity. And then it's very easy to do that. And this is judgment.

And you focus on that little thing and you amplify it and it becomes part of who you think that person is. So if you want to have a relatively harmonious relationship, many things you need to overlook in the other person because every person has his or her unconsciousness that occasionally manifests. Hopefully not massive unconsciousness because you might not want to be with him or her to have a close interaction.

But some unconsciousness, yes. Some insensitivity may arise in theirs. They may say or do something that is selfish or that they may have a very one-sided perspective of something.

They may misperceive you. They may misperceive your motivation. You misperceive their motivation.

All kinds of things. So to forgive in a present situation means to overlook. So it's not the big forgiving, but an overlooking of things so that you can focus on the being of the other person rather than focus on the faults, which are unconsciousness.

So the same applies to human beings. If you see a fault, don't dwell on it as applies to you if you're looking for a home in California. If you see a fault, don't dwell on it.

This mind-made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive. To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation. Your sense of self-worth is diminishing, and that's a source of great suffering.

So the story, if we go back to the beginning, the story of you, let's travel back in time to a prehistoric, mythological time where we encounter a young man going for a walk in the woods, and his name, according to ancient Greek mythology, is Narcissus. Narcissus, the young man walking in the woods, very happy, contemplating nature, not disturbed yet by incoming text messages, or Facebook postings, or Instagram, or possible Tinder dates, not distracted by anything, just being there, present, enjoying the aliveness of the present moment. And then this young man came upon a pool of water or a little pond, a very still pond.

And of course, at those times, there were no mirrors yet. There was no technology. Mirrors had not been invented.

He looked into the pond, and he saw his own reflection in the pond. And he was amazed at the beauty of his own reflection. Now, you might think, is that perhaps a very ancient prophecy of the selfie?

Can't take my eyes off it. No, it was not a prophecy of the selfie, but there's a connection, of course. There is a connection.

This is the glass surface of the selfie, and here we have the reflection of his own image in the water. Now, the story goes that he fell in love with his own reflection, and he could not get away from it. He got drawn back to it again and again.

And although the story says that he fell in love with his own reflection, a more precise way of putting it would be to say that he became obsessed with his own reflection, because ultimately, I don't know if you have experienced it ever, falling in love is a kind of obsession. Not loving. Love is something else.

I'm talking about falling in love, of course, is a very obsessive thing. I need you. Don't you ever leave me.

And then, of course, he or she leaves, or you leave. That's a long story. We all know it.

And he lost his happiness. He was no longer happy. There are different versions of the story, but in the more ancient versions, eventually he commits suicide.

So that story, in mythology, often expresses a deep truth which otherwise humans would not understand or could not express in any abstract way. The truth needs to be embedded in a story. And there's a very deep truth here that points to the arising of a mentally-created self image that people have and live with.

So it's almost as if you had a phantom that walks with you wherever you go that is your mind-created image or concept of who you are. And that is what we call the ego. The ego is a mental image conditioned by the past, conditioned by your environment and many other factors, a mental image, a conceptual sense of self that you identify with so completely that you disappear in it and live through it.

You believe that that is who you are. And that is the conditioned mind-made self. It consists of layers, different layers.

At the most fundamental level, first of all, everybody identifies, first of all, with your physical body. That's the most fundamental level of identification. You are, you believe that you are the body.

You identify with the body that you are. And the body, of course, already is a problematic thing to identify with because you compare this body, that you say, I am this body, this physical form, and then you compare to others. And it can be a source of pride if your body is better looking or stronger than most other bodies.

The ego gets in there and feels inflated, greater. And it can also be a source of suffering or shame if your body is not the way you think it should be or society tells you it should be, or when you compare it to others, it's not as strong or as beautiful as others, then you're, again, you suffer. You have a sense of self that feels less than.

On the other side, you might have a sense of self that feels more than. People who have a strong or beautiful body, when I was young, I would have given 20 years of my life if God or the universe had said to me, I can give you a beautiful, strong body and make you into a good-looking man that attracts countless women, I would have said, it's a deal. 20 years of my life, I'll be happy, but it didn't happen.

But I can see how people who are good-looking or strong or both, how easy it is for them to seek a large part of their identity in their external appearance. And that can be fine for a while, but inevitably, of course, what is a source of pleasure for some years, gradually and perhaps even quickly turns into a source of suffering because the body does not last. And a day comes when you look in the mirror and the mirror image is no longer the same as it was 10 or 20 or 30 years ago, especially if you have a photo of yourself next to the mirror.

Something went very wrong here. And then it becomes a source of suffering. Now, in our civilization, there are repair jobs that you can do that for a while will help you feel you're still okay, good-looking, but inevitably you suffer, begin to suffer more and more because who you think you are is diminishing.

Who you think you are, the value, your sense of self-worth is diminishing. And that's a source of great suffering. And of course, humans who identified with a negative body image, they are suffering already when they are young.

They don't have to wait until the body grows old. So we have identification with the body and then you put clothes on the body, of course, that they become an extension of the body and they can add something. They can hide things.

They can conceal things that don't look so good or they can enhance things that look good. And then it's nice when people are looking at me and it feels good to the ego. In particular situations, you may lose awareness and regress to total identification with some reactive pattern.

[Speaker 2] (1:25:02 - 1:25:30)
And it could be the pain body, a usually problematic area for many or most people is relationships of whatever kind or on whatever level.

[Speaker 1] (1:25:31 - 1:26:50)
It's where people seek their happiness and it's where many people find their unhappiness. And so I'm talking about both intimate relationships, somebody you live with, and I'm talking about other kinds of relationship also, at work, other family members, relatives, friends, and even very brief relationships because any interaction with another human being is, I'm using our relationship in a wider sense, any interaction with another human being is a relationship. You are relating to that person.

And so it is, for many people, most of their or a large part of their suffering or unhappiness, unfortunately, is derived from relationships. They tend to go wrong so often or present so many problems and obstacles.

[Speaker 2] (1:26:52 - 1:27:05)
And it seems that human beings are just so terribly difficult, except one.

[Speaker 1] (1:27:08 - 1:27:30)
The one who is listening to these words. You remember the statement, know thyself, famous words of wisdom.

[Speaker 2] (1:27:31 - 1:27:36)
Knowing yourself, there are two levels to knowing yourself.

[Speaker 1] (1:27:38 - 1:35:53)
One is a level of mental, emotional, and reactive patterns that you display in your life and the ability to be aware of them. That is one level of self-knowledge, of knowing yourself. That is the kind of thing that in sometimes in good therapy sessions, if you have a good, aware therapist, it can be helpful to become aware of that level in yourself so that you know what your predominant patterns are.

Doesn't everybody know what their patterns are? They are so identified with their patterns that there's no awareness left. And that usually means when a person is so unconscious, that unconscious, the definition of unconscious, the way we use it here in a spiritual sense, not in a clinical sense, I'm not talking about unconscious, but in a spiritual sense, unconscious is to be totally identified with thoughts and emotions.

So there's no room for any awareness left. So you are in the grip of the thought, in the grip of the emotion, and often the thoughts and emotions are linked, go together. They have you in their grip so that they basically, you are them, you are the emotion.

And those people who are so unconscious, there's still millions around, you might've noticed. Often they have a tendency of seeking always, there's always the people are always to be blamed out there. There's always people that point their fingers at why these people are so bad and what they're doing to you or how awful they are.

There's never looking at oneself. Jesus already had that statement. Why do you see the, what is the saying about the, but, yeah, you see a little splinter in the other person's eye, but you don't see the huge splinter that is in your eye.

Very profound statement. So why don't you find that first, he says. So in other words, he says, know thyself, be aware of your own patterns.

And most people here have that awareness, but perhaps not all the time. For many of you, when you are challenged in a particular way, in particular situations, you may lose awareness and regress to total identification with some reactive pattern. And it could be the pain body.

As you know, the pain body is old accumulated emotion that still I regard it as an almost autonomous entity that lives in you. It's a way of looking at it, but there's a lot of truth to this. There's an emotional field that lives in you as almost as an entity, one could say.

That sounds slightly spooky, but one could say that even a thought is an entity. When you think a thought, it is an energy formation. It is a little being that you give birth to.

So it has a life, it depends, for its life, it depends on you, on your life, but it is a little entity. And so in some forms of either deep unconscious or when mental illness, sometimes it can happen that the mind gets completely taken over by these little thought entities. And so you're totally then totally occupied.

Your mind is totally, pocky, another word for occupied is, I won't say it, it sounds too spooky. So you're totally occupied by these thoughts. And they pretend to be you.

So that is total lack of awareness. So it's essential for your spiritual growth to be continuously alert and aware. And vigilant so that you are able to be there in the background, so to speak, as the awareness in your daily life.

So that you're not completely taken over by the arising thoughts and arising emotions. When you interact with people, when you become upset about this or that, always any kind of upset or disturbance in your energy field can be very helpful. Do not believe that, oh, I shouldn't have this disturbance in my energy field, or I shouldn't be upset because I'm spiritual.

I don't get upset about these things anymore. But be honestly, observe what arises, and then observe how does it arise? And as I already mentioned last night, very often you will find it is caused by certain thoughts in your mind, certain interpretations, certain reactions.

It can also happen that a reaction comes so suddenly that it's just an emotion waiting to come up, an emotion. And this is what the pain body does. As you may know, the pain body is not necessarily always active in you.

There are periods when the old emotional pain that you still carry around with you is dormant, and then it leaves you in peace for a while. Then you are fine. You meet somebody, and this person is lovely, and it all goes fine.

And you might spend some time together, and it's still fine. And then you go on vacation together for the first time. And then there comes a moment when something else comes in that's not fine, either in you or through the other.

And what happens in relationships, the pain body periodically needs to feed on a certain experience that corresponds to its energy field. The vibrational frequency of its energy field is, ah, ah. A good external image of the pain body in, I think it's in Lord of the Rings, is this little being.

I can't remember the name. It goes, ah, ah. Ah, ah.

[Speaker 9] (1:35:53 - 1:35:57)
Ah, ah. Ah, ah. Ah, ah.

Ah, ah. Ah, ah.

[Speaker 1] (1:35:57 - 2:20:49)
Ah, ah. Ah, ah. And even the little being once was a normal being, according to the legend in this.

It's kind of modern mythology. That being was once a normal, lovely human. And there is still, although this being has been completely taken over by what I call the pain body, occasionally there are still instances when the original being that's been completely taken over still shines through.

There's a little bit of tiny glimmers of awareness come in occasionally. And then you almost feel sorry for it. But then again, the pain body, and if you feel sorry and you give in, then immediately the pain body will take advantage of that.

So that's a lovely mythological, modern mythological illustration of the pain body. So to observe that in yourself, in relationships, how it periodically comes up, either in your partner or in yourself, wanting some kind of drama, amplifying something little into something big, because it wants to feed on your partner's reaction. It wants the emotional negativity.

It needs emotional negativity from the other in order to suck it up. And then you give back of it to the other, the pain body. Then mutually they energize each other.

And that is unconscious. That is how couples, many couples, most couples perhaps, unless there's already considerable consciousness there in both of them, or at least one of them, they go through that periodically, don't realize that that is what it is. And at first, there are even people who feel they need that drama to feel that the relationship is still real.

And that is, there comes a point when it gets too much. So then the pain that arises so often and so frequently, it gets too much, I can't live with this person anymore. And then you separate.

But if you haven't, if the awareness hasn't come in so that you can be aware of your own pain body, what you contribute to it, then you will repeat the same thing in the next relationship. So the pain body needs to re-experience emotional pain through drama. And whoever it comes up first in, it is usually an over, it's always recognizable by being an overreaction to something, an event, something you said, something you did, or something you failed to say, or you failed to do.

But the person who is displaying the pain body does not know it's an overreaction. So only an outside observer or the other might see that it's an overreaction. But to the pain body, it seems a totally natural reaction.

So you need to know what situations, there may be certain situations in your life that tend to trigger the pain body in your relationship or at work. There may be certain people that your pain body is susceptible to, resonates with. If you live alone, then the pain body has a little problem.

What am I going to feed on? I can't have drama with myself, or can I? Yes, you can.

You can have the drama in your mind. You can have a stream of destructive and negative thoughts in your mind, either about yourself or others. They may not be here, but you have the thoughts about them.

They may be in your past, they may be dead. But the pain body, if there's nobody around that the pain body can feed on through negative emotion, it will feed on negative thought streams, your thought streams. And this is where the addiction to negative thinking comes from.

You can speak out, maybe you can post something on one of the many platforms that are available, something that is sane rather than insane. But it may, perhaps you can post something that points out the insanity of it all. So how you respond, and that, if you're, I have to, we can use the two words, react, respond.

The way I use them is, react means it's a karmically determined reaction. You react out of the conditioning of your mental, emotional field. Response implies that you are present, and your action is no longer determined by the mental, emotional conditioning of the person.

There is a higher intelligence, one could say, or I call it wisdom, but in other words, there's a higher intelligence that can then operate in your daily life. A higher intelligence, which we could call wisdom, but it's not the conventional intelligence that you can measure in IQ tests. That's a very limited version of intelligence.

There's a higher intelligence that comes in through presence, that deals more intelligently with any situation that arises in your life. That's the only possible way of dealing intelligently is by dealing with the situation through presence, especially important, of course, in human relationships, because there's so much unconsciousness that happens in the interaction between human beings, between two human beings, and larger numbers of human beings, and then groups of your collectives of your millions of human beings here, and another million there and there. You can see when you look at politics and affairs and to what's happening in the world, there's very little intelligence.

The way they deal with things, and you would be, you're amazed. How can they be so short-sighted and ultimately have to use a simple word, stupid? But these people have degrees.

They have university degrees. How can they be so stupid? Well, they only activated a very limited version of intelligence that you can measure in IQ tests.

That's not enough. I'm sorry, I don't want to offend anybody who has a very high IQ, or is a member of this, there's an organization called Mensa, I believe. So if you have a very IQ, you can be a member of that, and that's good for your identity, of course.

Intelligence. So I don't want to take anything away from you, but that is not real intelligence. Yes, it's a form of intelligence, but it's a relatively low form of intelligence.

A much higher intelligence comes in through presence, and that is lacking in the world. There are, occasionally you see, very rarely you see a politician, actually you can see, oh, this person has some real intelligence and insights, and it's usually not the people who are running things. If it's a politician, it's usually somebody who's been pushed to the periphery of politics, and from there he or she comments on the stupidity of what's happening in the world.

I've observed it, it's in different countries, a similar phenomenon. There are, okay, there are a few people here and there who can see clearly where we are going and what we are doing, and it's crazy. Because there is a lack of true, this higher intelligence that is beyond the egoic mind.

And, well, at the moment it doesn't look good because we are going, what, no. I was going to use that weird expression about the hand basket again. So when you can see it, now it's important when you look at the state of the world, it's important that you do not enter a reactive mode because that will draw you into unconsciousness.

If you watch too much television or current affairs, you will be drawn into, most likely, unconsciousness, unless you watch it as an, unless you watch it as an anthropological study of how misguided humanity can be. So you need to stay present while you look at all this and see what's happening. Question may arise, shouldn't I be doing something to, well, there may be something you can do, bring some sanity into this world, perhaps through saying something, speaking out, pointing out something, not creating enemies.

If you see people are deluded in what they say or do, don't make them into enemies and attack them and say, you are totally crazy. No, it's the, it may be that the, what they, what they do may be and probably is dysfunctional and stupid, or the opinions they hold may be extremely misguided and irrational. So you can address the opinions that they hold their mental positions and point out the irrationality and so on, without making the people who hold the opinion into enemies.

So don't equate the mental positions that people hold with who they essentially are. You can speak out, maybe you can post something on one of the many platforms that are available, something that is sane rather than insane. But it may, perhaps you can post something that points out the insanity of it all.

Some people do that, so that's a good thing. No, because some people may suddenly see, oh yes, that's true. So higher intelligence comes in and that can then deal with situations and that's the end of karma.

What humanity is doing now collectively is karma playing itself out, the movement of unconsciousness. And so, as we mentioned yesterday, with reference to individuals, you remember we talked about responsibility. Can you hold a person responsible for what they do if they are unconscious?

We talked about that yesterday. If they are in the grip of their mental, emotional conditioning, that is part, that's their karma. Can you hold a karmic formation, person, can you hold a karmic formation responsible for what they do?

Not really. So there's a deep wisdom in what Jesus said, forgive them for they know not what they do. Forgiveness means the realization that they are not responsible, they cannot do otherwise.

But we also, and this also applies to the collective, what all the politicians are doing and so on. They don't know any better. They are in the grip of egoic reactivity and short-sightedness that comes with it and so on.

But as is the case with individuals, although they may not be and cannot be held responsible and yet they have to suffer the consequences of their unconsciousness, this is how humans ultimately awaken. They are not responsible, but they still have to, they create suffering for themselves and others. And through the suffering that's created by the unconsciousness, an awakening happens.

So in other words, the ego is necessary for the awakening to happen. The ego ultimately self-destructs. It has built into it a self-destruct function.

That is ultimate wisdom. So that also applies to the collective. Already, if you look at the 20th century, the wars that happened and the internal conflicts in countries that happens, the countless millions upon millions killed by other humans, what they did, the terrible suffering, this is all the movement of unconsciousness.

They don't know what they do. And then humanity suffers and suffers and suffers. Through the suffering, gradually an awakening happens.

So the ego's dysfunction creates suffering and ultimately the suffering acts as an awakener. It's just a question of how much longer is the suffering going to go? And what's the next stage, you may ask, on the scale of collective suffering?

I don't know, but it doesn't look good at the moment. But you are here to represent, to embody the higher intelligence. I mean, hopefully you don't make that into a mental concept.

I embody the higher intelligence. It is true, but it should not become a mental concept that you identify with. And so the sanity, you embody the sanity in a world that is still predominantly, one has to say, insane in many ways.

Not all of it is insane, but a lot of it, some important parts are insane. So let's then see what the, whatever comes is, may be bad from a lower perspective, doesn't look good. But ultimately, everything that happens is in the service of the evolution of consciousness, even in your own life.

And if it applies in your own life, it also applies to the collective of humanity. When you wait for the next challenge, do you completely, does it completely draw you out of yourself? Ha ha.

Now let's look at a little bit from a different chapter. You can see that it doesn't really matter where you open the book. That's ideal for meditative reading.

He that knows how to walk interiorly and to make but little account of things exteriorly does not look for places nor wait for seasons to perform exercises of devotion. The man of interior life soon recollects himself because he never wholly porous force himself upon exterior things. Exterior labor is no prejudice to him nor any employment necessary for the time.

But as things happen, so he accommodates himself to them. Let's look at those two sentences, very important. The man, the person, the human being, of interior life soon recollects himself because he never wholly porous himself force upon exterior things.

A lovely way of putting it. The interior man, again, we had that before. It means, it points to who you are at the level of awareness, the unconditioned being, the timeless in you, the essence of who you are, the interior being, soon recollects himself.

Never really, you never, the interior man never completely loses himself in the external. He or she soon recollects himself because he never wholly, I'll just put it into slightly more modern English. He never wholly porous force himself upon exterior things.

To pour yourself into exterior things, to completely lose yourself in exterior things, you observe it all the time. When you just, before you see it in yourself, look at other humans around you, how they lose themselves or that the slightest challenge comes in the form of an unexpected setback, something going wrong here or there, some difficult situation, a person not doing what I expect them to do, whatever it is, how quickly people pour themselves into exterior things. And so this thing suddenly becomes of absolute importance.

That's what it means, pouring yourself out into things, which ultimately, of course, you pour yourself into your thoughts. Every thought that arises takes complete possession of you. You pour all your attention into that.

So you're continuously lost, a continuous loss, amazing. You can see it in others. Just wait, people around you, how, what they do when challenges come.

Okay, you've done that. Now you've recognized in others. The next step is, oh, can you recognize in yourself?

Do you do that also? When you wait for the next challenge, do you completely, does it completely draw you out of yourself? And when it does, don't beat yourself up.

But even just noticing that that's what's happening is a huge gain in consciousness. So you don't beat yourself up and say, oh, I can't do it. No, just notice it.

Any pattern you notice in yourself means there is some consciousness. There's awareness there. It's when you don't know it, that you're completely trapped in it.

And if you don't know it, there's not much you can do, except after the challenge has passed, perhaps you can look back and say, oh, I completely lost it there again. And when that, so awareness comes after the challenge, which is even, which is still better than no awareness at all. And because if there's no awareness at all, even the most unconscious reaction, you will justify afterwards to yourself and to others.

The ego is good at finding excuses and justifications. The most absurd justifications will do. It's an automatic defense mechanism of the ego.

So if you're very unconscious, of course you wouldn't even be listening to this. I'm not talking to people who are totally unconscious because they're not listening. They can't.

There's no space in them to listen to this. Without a little bit of space at least, you can't listen to this. It will be dreadful, completely meaningless or threatening.

There's a difference between appreciating something and being attached to something because you derive your sense of identity from it. This, by the way, also applies to possessions because in a way you could look at the body as something that you have rather than something as you are. Although I've said somewhere in a book, just as a meditative practice, you are your body, but not the physical body where you go deeper into the body.

That's another story. But really the physical body, you are not the physical body. Even the language knows that.

When people use language, in all languages, I assume, people refer to my body. And they say, I have a body. I have a good-looking body.

I have a ugly body, whatever. But they say they have a body. So they must have realized language has, maybe a little bit of wisdom has crept into language.

And so you say, I have a body, which means you are not the body. So anyway, everybody says they have a body. So they are not the body.

But to appreciate something that you have, whether it's a body that you have or some kind of object that you have or some kind of ability that you have, whatever it may be, to appreciate that is fine. To like it, you love it, but not in a deeply attached sense that you do not, to appreciate something is different from deriving partly your sense of identity from it. Let's say you have a nice, an object that you own, and you, perhaps it's been with you for a long time or not, and it looks nice, it has quality to it, perhaps, whatever it may be, and you appreciate it.

There's nothing wrong with your body. If you happen to have a lovely body, you appreciate it, you look after it too. You do your best to keep it going through good nutrition and exercise.

Nothing wrong with that. And even to say, oh, I look great. But in a superficial sense, not that knowing that it's not going to last, nothing is going to last.

Everything will leave you or you leave it. And to appreciate something is actually an important thing. You can incorporate it into your practice of gratitude, which is a spiritual practice strongly linked to present moment awareness.

On this, gratitude is to appreciate the goodness of things, whether you own them or not. You can walk and have gratitude for the beautiful things, such as the flowers, the trees, the sky, the sunshine. Gratitude doesn't necessarily mean thank you for this.

It doesn't necessarily involve words. It's just to give it attention and to appreciate it, its aliveness or its beauty. You can have gratitude for the flowers that are here, which means you appreciate the goodness of so many things in this world, but you are not attaching yourself or using it in the service of your sense of self.

So there's a difference. I have a car. Well, I talked about my car that I had when I lived in England.

I had this Lada, beautiful, lovely car. And I loved it. I had gratitude for it.

People laughed at it. And I was sitting, driving. Sometimes people say, ah-ha-ha, a Lada.

And I realized the people who are driving this car are either relatively poor or they have no ego. In my case, both was true, both applied. And then 17 years ago, I was no longer poor and I bought a luxury car and I still have it.

And I'm going to keep it until either it dies or I die. And I love it just as much as the Lada. It just embodies quality.

Don't use it that much, but it's still there. And when I go down, I greet it, say hello. Hello.

And it seems almost that things, even so-called inanimate things seem to almost respond. It's almost as if it could sense you. A weird thing happened when I left England.

I sold my Lada. A friend of mine needed a car. I sold it, not very much.

And this car had never broken down while I had it. And it was a month after he started using it, it broke down completely and couldn't even be repaired. And...

And... And... And...

And... The car was not happy, it seems. So yes, the appreciation of things, a gratitude for something that is in their field of awareness, whether you own it or not, become secondary.

There are people, of course, who tell you, I've met some very wealthy people who tell me, I have this wealth, but I'm not attached to anything anymore. And whether or not this is true, you can't really know until you experience loss. So if you say, okay, I have a Ferrari.

I don't have a Ferrari. That's not my type of car, but somebody says, I have a Ferrari Tester, Testeros, Testostero, Testerosa. I have to get the name right.

But I'm not identified with it at all. And so, but you, but of course you have this car and it's red, it's red and it's very noisy. It's meant to be extremely noisy because it attracts attention.

Everybody looks when you drive. Baa! Baa!

Baa! Baa! Baa!

Baa! Baa! Baa!

Baa! But I'm not attached to it. I'm not at all.

I'm not at all. And then one day you come back and somebody has scratched your car. And, Baa!

or somebody, it's gone completely. Somebody stole it. You were not attached.

No. So when you say I'm not attached, you may not know whether this is true or not until you lose it. So to appreciate the difference between ego attachment, to have some in the service of ego, or to really appreciate seeing something without using it in the service of the ego, there's a big difference.

So whether it's a body or objects or abilities also, if you're good at certain, you have certain abilities, whether they are physical or you're very good at something, it could be playing an instrument, or you're a great expert at this or that. And again, that's lovely. Again, the question is, are you deriving your sense of identity from it?

Let's say you're a great musician, piano player, and you derive your identity from it, and then something happens, perhaps something happens to your hands, and suddenly you can't play anymore. There would be, that is maybe a certain amount of pain can be involved in that, but if there has been an ego attachment, if this function was the main source of ego identity, you as the famous, let's say a famous pianist, then, or let's say a sports person who is very good, he got a gold medal or whatever place, and suddenly an injury, can't do it anymore. Does your whole life suddenly collapse, and the rest of your life you're unhappy, you're totally defeated?

It does happen to people, because their sense of identity was exclusively derived from that great ability that they had. And that is the difference between appreciating it, being grateful for what you can do, but your identity needs to come from a deeper place, a more real place, the only real place from being, not some kind of function that you may be good at, because at some point, most likely, you won't be good at it anymore. And so it's very, a huge difference between those two approaches to what you can do.

Important, be careful that you don't derive your identity from something that is part of the flux of impermanence. Impermanence, it could leave you at any moment. That's the summary of the entire course, and the course is about as long as the Bible, it's huge.

But it can summarize in these few words. If you understand what that means, you don't need to do the course, you might still enjoy reading it, but you don't need it. Now, a few, these are the interesting lines here.

About defensiveness, when you feel the need arise to be defensive about anything, know that you have identified yourself with an illusion. It is not danger that comes when defenses are laid down. It is safety, it is peace, it is joy, and it is God.

So, when you feel the need arise to be defensive about anything, know that you have identified yourself with an illusion. When you become defensive about something, then it will be something that is conceptual, you as a concept or some concept you hold that you need to defend because you've identified with it, so you are defending your sense of self, your fictitious sense of self. That means you're defending an illusion.

When you don't defend because the truth of who you are does not need to be defended, so to let go of defenses can be a way of accessing the deeper dimension of who you are. And, of course, it takes you beyond ego because the defensiveness is ego. Ego is conceptual identity.

And then there's one short line here. In my defenselessness, my safety lies. You're safe already, so you don't need to defend anything.

That brings me to, at the very beginning of the Course in Miracles, before even page one, there are a few lines that are supposed to summarize the entire course, and they go like this. Nothing real can be threatened, nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God.

That's the summary of the entire course, and the course is about as long as the Bible. It's huge, but it can summarize in these few words. If you understand what that means, you don't need to do the course.

You might still enjoy reading it, but you don't need it. Nothing real can be threatened, nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God.

Herein, meaning knowing this, lies the peace of God. I'll just let it be at that. I'm not going to interpret those lines.

I believe it's the most powerful if you just let them sink in. Judgment, again, the choice to judge rather than to know is the cause of the loss of peace. The choice to judge rather than to know.

So judgment is applying concepts. And then you have another dimension that Course in Miracles calls to know. And Course in Miracles would say that the judgment is not real knowing.

It's the illusion of knowing. You have no idea of the tremendous release and deep peace that comes from meeting yourself and your brothers, brothers and sisters, totally without judgment. You have no idea of the tremendous release and deep peace that comes from meeting yourself and your brothers and sisters, I'm adding the sisters, totally without judgment.

So when you meet another human being without imposing conceptualization, it does not mean you become defenseless or it just means that you know the deep truth and the deeper reality of that human being. But you also know in a non-conceptual way if the personality of that person is dysfunctional, has deep unconsciousness. You see that also.

It's not a judgment. You just see it for what it is, but you don't mistake the personality and its unconsciousness for who that person is.

[Speaker 3] (2:21:17 - 2:22:42)
For many years now, I've kind of been dealing off and on with certain degrees of depression, sometimes more intense, sometimes less intense. Actually, lately, a lot less intense in large part due to discovering you and kind of reading your works and stuff, which has been super helpful, so thanks for that. But one aspect of this is that my ability to feel things has, as I feel, greatly kind of diminished over time.

Things that I used to be excited about don't excite me anymore. I don't look forward to things. When I kind of hang out with my friends and things like that, which is stuff that I enjoy, the joy kind of goes away very quickly, but what doesn't go away and what I can feel is the kind of negatives in my life, the sadness and the suffering and stuff, and it got to a point where I started to crave it in a certain degree because feeling those type of emotions almost kind of reminded me of my ability to feel at all and sort of reminded me of my humanness.

So I guess my question is, how do you eliminate suffering when suffering in a certain way is all that you have left?

[Speaker 1] (2:22:44 - 2:30:20)
Right. What about your practice of giving attention to the present moment? Now, we give attention to the present moment.

You first, you become aware of whatever it is that you feel within, and then you need to be aware of within and without, that's part of the present moment, so that your attention is not completely absorbed by whatever it is that you feel, because there's also the vastness of the outside world. And so presence, to be present means to be present within and without in both worlds. So you acknowledge whatever it is you feel inside you at this moment, be also very vigilant to see whether there are any associated thoughts with that feeling.

Are there certain thoughts that go through your head that reflect what it is that you feel? For example, if you feel depressed, do you have thoughts that are telling you that life is, after all, not worth living or whatever the thoughts are saying, that people are, people suck, life sucks, I suck, we all suck, I don't want to be here, that kind of thought. So you need to observe, be aware on both on the, as far as the inside is concerned, be aware on both on the level of the emotions and feelings and on the level of mind activity, what kind of thoughts, and so it requires vigilance so that you don't indulge without knowing it in unconscious thinking, and you can't separate the unconscious thinking and the feelings, so only you can know.

I don't even know whether you can answer this question now because you have to find out in the moment of it happening what kind of mind activity accompanies those unpleasant feelings, and to see whether this mind activity actually feeds the unpleasantness that you feel or the suffering that you feel, that's a very important thing. What role does your mind play in all this? Very important.

Is your mind feeding it? Because this is, you have a big pain body there, which is not in itself a bad thing because the pain body becomes a strong motivating force for you to awaken. I also had a very heavy pain body.

That's why I had to awaken, couldn't stand it anymore. And you at this point too, can't stand it anymore. That's good.

So be very careful so that you examine your thinking. Am I feeding the feeling? And if you are, that means there's enough awareness for you to realize it.

Then you let go of the thoughts. And one way you can do it by, you remember I just mentioned, be present within and without. You can use, for example, your sense perceptions, directing attention to your sense perceptions that takes attention away from thinking.

And then you experience, the next step would be, you still feel the unpleasantness, but you're also observing sensory perception around you. There's the sky, there's the flower, my hand, the hand. And you don't have to, I'm labeling it now, but you don't have to label it.

It's better not to label it, just to perceive it fully. Come to your senses, look around. There's an entire world there.

And your suffering ends here, where your skin is. The suffering that you experience is inside you. Just one step next to you, there's no suffering.

Isn't that strange? So the table isn't suffering, I'm suffering. And this inch on the chair here is not suffering.

It's just inside this back of skin, I am the suffering entity, that's me. And then if you don't know that, then you identify with that feeling. And then you look at this, then you call, and you still have the conditioned thinking that reflects the suffering, and say, oh, it's all pointless.

The trees are pointless, the sky is pointless. What's the point of it all? I don't see any beauty in this.

And this flower is going to die soon, of course. It all, everything dies soon. So what's the point in even living?

When there's a dog, he doesn't look that healthy. Whatever it is, then you would just look at the world around you through the feelings. So to be present, you have to not label and just look.

And take in auditory, visual perception, breathing. So, and then, of course, if you give more attention to your surroundings, especially when you're in nature, but nature is everywhere. Even if you're in the middle of Seattle, there's a sky.

Well, it's usually at this time of year, it'll be gray, but that's fine, too. There's sunlight filtering through the sky, and you have lots of trees. Lots of trees.

The evergreen state, Washington, as it says on your license plate. So that's good, you have that. And that takes your attention away from, you're not denying what you feel, but you're adding a dimension to it, the external dimension.

And then nature has a very healing effect if you truly give attention to nature. And you're no longer fueling the suffering that you feel inside you. Of course, it doesn't go away immediately, or a miracle could happen, and it does, but usually not.

It's just the beginning of it gradually dissolving or becoming transmuted. Now, looking back retrospectively, if you even know the answer to this, what kind of mind activity accompanies the suffering that you feel in your body? What are the typical thoughts that go with that?

[Speaker 3] (2:30:22 - 2:30:38)
I guess it kind of depends on the situation. Obviously, it comes in kind of phases, but a lot of it is just kind of generalized self-loathing, I guess, I don't know if that's the right term.

[Speaker 1] (2:30:39 - 2:34:44)
Watch out for what kind of thoughts. It might even be helpful to write them down if they're repetitive thoughts, to see what kind of repetitive thoughts you can catch. Because they can obscure your awareness so quickly, especially old thoughts that come again and again and again, they become part of your fictitious identity of the self, the egoic self.

So you carry with you then the burden of an unhappy self. I remember that, I had that too, carrying the burden of an unhappy self. That is, and that is what motivates you to awaken.

But there's already been a diminishment of your depression. Absolutely, yeah. So that's a good sign.

That means presence is arising and it is gradually dissolving this pain body in you. But your work is not to renew the pain body through unconscious thinking. So you need to be really alert and watch your mind so that you don't create more suffering by unconscious mind activity.

And if you no longer feed the pain body, because that's, now the pain body, of course, also feeds through drama in relationships. It has the two ways of feeding. In your case, perhaps more through your mind, but I don't know, could be also enacting and reenacting drama, emotional drama in relationships with a partner, family members, or whoever it may be, usually people you're close to or work with, but the closer, the better.

The intimate partners are the best ways for the pain body to renew itself through. So don't add to the pain body. It wants to feed, it wants your unconsciousness, but don't give it to the pain body.

You're not feeding it with your mind anymore and you're not feeding it by being drawn into insane drama in relationships. So you're watching it. There it is.

It may not be pleasant, but it's not that bad. Your presence is infinitely more powerful and it doesn't even fight the pain body. It just, by shining the light of awareness on it, it gradually dissipates, or a better way of putting it, it gets transmuted because the energy is not lost.

There is enormous life energy in it, but it's trapped. It's trapped energy, so it's felt as negative. When that's freed, it becomes part of presence.

It is fuel for presence. The pain body is fuel for presence. That's amazing.

So you have plenty of fuel for presence. That's the good news. I have, as you may remember, occasionally mentioned the symbolism of the cross.

Well, one of them, the cross, the intersection of the vertical and horizontal dimension.

[Speaker 2] (2:34:47 - 2:35:11)
And that's a useful reminder for your life so that at any time you don't lose your

connectedness with the vertical dimension, which opens up in the present moment, which we could call the being dimension.

[Speaker 1] (2:35:12 - 2:36:29)
In that vertical dimension, you are already whole, complete, there's nothing to add in your, because that is your essence, the timeless essence of who you are. And that is connected to the source of all life, connected eternally to the source. It is an emanation of the source, whatever name you want to give to what I now call the source, the origin.

So that is your connectedness to source, and that is your oneness with the source, only to be found in the vertical dimension, which we can also call the being dimension. It opens up when you become present. There is a, no matter how long, cessation of the stream of thinking, and a space opens up.

[Speaker 2] (2:36:29 - 2:36:32)
An inner spaciousness.

[Speaker 1] (2:36:33 - 2:40:08)
And in that, you realize the depths of who you are, but there is no conceptual realization. There is only a silent knowing, a silent realization of the being that you are, the presence that you are, vertical. And the horizontal dimension is the dimension, we could call it the doing.

It includes thinking, because thinking is a kind of doing also. So the moment you move into thinking, you're in the horizontal dimension. And then doing, also thinking then becomes doing.

You do something. In order to do something, immediately time needs to come in. You need time, whatever you do, you need time.

Even to make a cup of tea, you need time to make it. And in doing, thinking also requires time. So time comes in.

That's part of the horizontal dimension. And you need time there. Time is the, has the two polarities, the time.

It's on the one hand, it enables you to grow, it enables you to evolve here in this dimension, but to acquire new knowledge, new experiences, to try things out. And as a person, you can become more mature. You can acquire more knowledge.

But if there's a continuous lack of vertical, then the limitations of the person will increase as the older you get, you realize that whatever you achieve on the horizontal dimension has enormous limitations and are ultimately never fulfilling. But it's not to be denied. You're here, you need the vertical, you need the horizontal also, and you need to give it, you need to honor it.

You can't just say, okay, I'm not going to be bothered with anything anymore because it's all future, no, nothing, just leave me alone. I just want the vertical. Then the horizontal dimension will make demands upon you.

And if you don't challenge yourself, it will challenge you. And even if you challenge yourself, it will still challenge you. So that's the two, these dimensions, the art of living is to bring the two together so that when you're engaged in thinking and doing, you don't completely lose yourself in the thinking and doing.

And then you give an importance to the world, an absolute importance to the things of the world, including your possessions and your achievements and whatever it may be, the economic situation. You give an excessive importance to the things of this world, and then this world will consume you and you will lose yourself in it.

[Speaker 2] (2:40:09 - 2:40:11)
And that's a terrible fate.

[Speaker 1] (2:40:11 - 2:43:07)
And there's a difference between honoring the things of this world and giving it, the things of this world, an absolute importance that they don't have. They have a relative importance. So you need to deal with it, but at the same time, know that there is something more fundamental.

It doesn't exclude that, but there's something more fundamental and that is the being, the being, which is the consciousness of you, but that you is not the person. So the great thing about things going wrong on the horizontal dimension, which happens from time to time, you might have noticed in your personal life or in the collective, things go, no matter how careful you are, no matter how many insurance policies you have and pension plans, there's nothing wrong with these things, but no matter what the world will challenge you and you will notice there's something unstable about the world. There's something unstable about people. You trust in this person or in that person, and then suddenly they turn into somebody else.

There's no matter what, wherever you go, you find an element, small and very often big, an element of instability. And so, and then after a while, when that's all you know, you become distrustful of the world and of people too, because you never know what they're going to do next because you've trusted so many men or women and then say, I don't want to know of men or whether it's men or women, it doesn't matter. I trusted them and they always disappoint me.

As the Buddha already recognized, every situation and every person, if that's all you know, and if that you give an absolute importance to it and you demand that it should satisfy you and make you happy, whether it's a personal situation, will disappoint you, disillusioned. And then you become, that's a wonderful word. I'm disillusioned.

Well, that must be a good thing because it's the end of an illusion. I'm so disillusioned with this world and people. And then people formulate weird theories on the basis of that about the world and they can tell you how bad it all is.

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:43:13 - 2:43:15)
So that's important to remember.

[Speaker 1] (2:43:19 - 2:45:40)
The horizontal dimension, whatever happens here in this world, will let you down. If you give it an absolute importance, it will let you down. And if you don't give it an absolute importance because you are connected to the vertical, out of which emanates, that it's a continuous source of satisfaction of the beingness of you, then yes, the world may still let you down, but it doesn't matter very much anymore.

It doesn't make you unhappy. You are quite okay with recognizing the limitations of the things of this world. And you don't become unhappy and you don't judge people on the basis of behavior they manifest as part of their mental-emotional conditioning.

You don't confuse the mental-emotional conditioning of a human being with who they essentially are. You can look beyond that dimension because that is part of the horizontal and you can look deeper. And that's a wonderful liberation, but that can only happen if you are connected to the vertical.

If you're able to become still and present, doesn't matter how long, but you find these inner spaces, inner spaces of awareness where thinking is replaced with awareness or presence. And then you look a totally different way of looking at another human beings through the veil of thinking. Even if you've accumulated a lot of psychological knowledge and you look at another human being, the psychological knowledge, it might have a lot of truth in it, but it's very limited.

All you're recognizing is the conditioning of that human being that makes up the person. And so you're looking at it through the veil of thinking and then you let go of that.

[Speaker 2] (2:45:40 - 2:45:46)
And then you look at a human being through awareness or presence.

[Speaker 1] (2:45:46 - 3:38:04)
And there's no conceptualization. There's a deep knowing, and you can kind of penetrate into the essence of who they are, but only if it comes, that ability comes from your essence and the essence is one with you and the other. And then comes the recognition of the other as one with who you are in your essence, because you emanate from the same source.

So you're not one out here, but you're one down there. When I visited Ram Dass, the spiritual teacher who has now passed away, he lived on Maui. On his car, I saw a bumper sticker which said, I'd rather be here now.

So as you go back into your regular daily life, hopefully the retreat does not come to an end, but remains with you and within you. The essence of the retreat is not the physical location, but a state of consciousness, transcendent state of consciousness. Your task is to live, one could say, in both worlds or both dimensions at the same time.

Occasionally you may lose yourself in the worldly horizontal dimension, the doing realm, the thinking realm. And usually when that happens, you will notice dysfunctional, unpleasant inner states arising very quickly, anxiety, fear, anger, irritation, resentment, trouble. And if you're in that state and are disconnected again from the transcendent, the being dimension, the other dimension, then that's the unconscious state.

And if there is no trouble, you will create it. That's what humans do. Troublemakers.

Both on an individual level and collectively. If you want to learn a lot, troublemaking collectively and watch the news. As much as possible, have the main focus of your attention in your daily life in the present moment.

The rest of your attention, so that's the main focus, here's this. The rest of your attention is where you want to go to. Whatever task you're engaged in has a certain purpose.

The purpose is you want to finish the task and it has achieved its purpose. And that's here. And that's in your peripheral, the peripheral vision of your consciousness.

That's where you want to get to. And this is what you're doing in order to get there. And your main attention is not where you want to get.

And in the meantime, you're just doing it in order to get there. You can see how that's already creates an inner stress. I'm here, but I want to be there.

That's the normal way of living is the main part of people's attention is there. But in the meantime, they are here, where they don't really want to be. They'd rather be there.

As shown in famous stickers on bumper stickers on cars, which say something like, I'd rather be fishing. When I visited Ram Dass, the spiritual teacher who has now passed away, he lived on Maui. And on his car, I saw a bumper sticker, which said, I'd rather be here now.

That's a good teaching on a bumper sticker. So your attention is, and this is a reversal almost of how humans normally usually live. It's the opposite.

That is in itself already a shift in consciousness. And then of course, you're also aware of the past, the certain things that may have a relevance in the present. That's fine.

So peripherally, past and future, usually future is more important because you're moving towards that. And here's the central vision of present moment. In the present moment, you're either actively doing something or you are more passively perceiving something.

You're there as an observer or you're just there, not actively doing, but simply perceiving. That could be when you travel back from here already, you might be sitting in a car. If you're driving, you're doing something.

That's particularly important to be present. Or you might be sitting on a plane and that's a good opportunity for being the, you go into the witnessing mode. There's nothing particular to do unless you get out your laptop and start doing.

It's fine. And sometimes situations arise that are problematic. That's quite normal in life.

They are challenging rather than problematic. And then you face the challenge. You look at it, so to speak, not necessarily visually, but you give it attention that this is a challenge.

Instead of unconscious reactivity, the challenge is your flight is canceled. It's not one of the greatest challenges a human can have, but some people react as if it were. And when any challenge arises, is there anything I can do to respond to this situation?

Or is that something where I simply have to say, well, for the time being, for the time being I accept the way it is because right now there's nothing I can do. I heard, for example, at some airports, they're so busy, not sufficiently staffed people. When the plane lands, they're still trapped on the plane for two or three hours.

It has happened in Toronto and other places. That's a good opportunity for surrender. Some people can't do that.

They start screaming and shouting. Doesn't have no particular purpose, but they can't help it. It happens to them.

So always the question is, is this an opportunity for surrender or is action called for? And that is some practice to get used to until it becomes second nature to have your attention in the present moment rather than elsewhere. And it usually implies you are aware of your surroundings.

That's inseparable from being in the present through your senses. A more alert human being than a normal human being, but an alertness in which there is no tension. Often alertness in a human is associated with being tense, but there's an alertness without tension, but it's not enough to be just aware of your sense perceptions.

That's a good thing. It also can help you to avoid dangerous situations that otherwise you just stumble into and you don't know how you got there. You're more alert of your surroundings.

You see how animals in that sense are very alert because if they are not, they get eaten by other animals. So many animals have this incredible alertness, not the same as the human alertness, but it is an alert awareness of their surroundings that many humans don't have. They walk in the street and they're not really there in their minds, thinking about all kinds of things except where they are, and so they're not here.

Whereas the bird sitting on a branch or the deer that's stepping out of the forest and there's a field and the deer stops for a moment and the ears, they're very huge ears, they go, and it can hear probably a hundred times better than the human, or a bird on a branch sitting, it goes like this, and then suddenly it goes. And of course, there's no decision-making involved when a bird suddenly flies off. It did not think, I'm now going to fly off this branch.

And I'm going to go over there, it just happens. There's a flow to life. There's no mind, there is a consciousness there, but there's no conceptualization at all.

But when an animal rests, an animal also rests completely. It is completely at rest, not thinking about my life. I have to figure something out.

What's the purpose of it all? Every human being, every life form emanates also a certain energy frequency. So even by the emanation, your emanation, you would become a teacher.

One of the terms that's frequently used in A Causing Miracle is the Christian term, salvation, used especially by Jesus in his teachings, salvation. Salvation can also be called the way, especially the way in which it is used in A Causing Miracle, but also in the way Jesus uses it. You could use the term liberation.

You could use the term enlightenment, realization. And the Course says that salvation asks very little of you. What is it that it asks of you?

It says, salvation is undoing. Salvation can be seen as nothing more than the escape from concepts. So you can see that why in some other spirit traditions you would say liberation, because the escape from concepts is also the liberation from the prison of conceptual thinking.

When you're identified with it, when conceptual thinking supplies you with your sense of self, then you are trapped in a conceptual prison. And that is ego, that is unconsciousness, and people don't even know it, that they are trapped in it. So the spiritual realization is through letting go of the prison of concepts so that you no longer inhabit the conceptual reality, which is what most people do, where every perception that you have is filtered through your conceptualization.

When you look on something, you immediately have an interpretation for it, you have a label for it, you have a self-reference towards it, I like it, I don't like it, et cetera. So there's already, you cannot see without concepts. So inhabiting a conceptual reality, so you have a prison that you have for other human beings because you conceptualize them, and for yourself because your self image is an edifice.

Made of concepts. And salvation is the escape from concepts. And this little part ends with these three lines.

Those who would let illusions be lifted from their minds are this world's saviors. And again, it links in to the word salvation. When you let go of the prison of concepts, when you awaken in the terminology of the cause in miracles, you become a savior of the world.

Because by embodying that state of consciousness, you help others become free also. Even just by being, not necessarily by formal teaching, although you might do some teaching too. And when you embody that state of consciousness in the terminology of the cause in miracles, you become a, as it's called, you become a teacher of God.

That's the term frequently used in the cause. Even though you might not necessarily teach as such, but by embodying this, the awakened state of consciousness, you cannot not teach. Might not even be through words.

It could be through your non-reactivity, through the way in which you relate to other human beings, and so on. And everything you do is a teaching, the way in which you behave. Even your very emanation, because every human being, every life form, emanates also a certain energy frequency.

So even by the emanation, your emanation, you would become a teacher. And then some of you also, of course, will use words to teach. So you will, perhaps even in a formal sense, you might teach groups, give talks, write books, who knows.

But anybody who awakens, even if you're not fully awakened, even if you're awakening to who you are beyond concepts, you're already a teacher of God according to the cause. Identity. All humans are very interested in identity.

Who am I? It's a very important question for humans. First, the primordial needs of a human being are, of course, food and shelter.

And for a young child, some love, loving attention. But soon after that, the next very, very important thing comes up is identity. Who am I?

A sense of self develops. And that begins in early childhood. In early childhood, the first thing a child learns is there's a sound that the parents pronounce.

And at some point, the child learns, that's me. John, Mary, Mary, Mary, Mary. Ah, it's me, I'm John, I'm Mary.

Wow, this is the first step. What arises is the beginning of a conceptual identity, a conceptual sense of self. And so the sound of your name is the beginning of that because that name is a thought form that can also be expressed vocal through the vocal cords, but it is a thought form.

And that's the beginning of it all. That's me, I am John. And then John looks at the body and there's my body.

And sometimes for a brief period of time, a child talks about him or herself in the third person as John is hungry, or Mary is. And then gradually it merges with John. It's no longer he or him, it's now I.

And then I, as the child learns to speak, the most important word becomes the word I. And again, that's another step in developing a conceptual identity, I. Another concept in the mind, I.

But you begin to identify with the concept. I is most people's favorite word. In some languages it's used more than in others because in some languages the first person is already built into the verb.

But in English or German, I don't know how it is in fact, I is used a lot. So here we have the beginning of a conception. Now the next step is John or Mary.

They have contact with objects. Objects, they play with objects, toys. And then the parent gives the toy.

And now the next step is the child learns that this is mine, my, my toy, mine. And so another interesting thing develops. Identity is the beginning of seeking identity in external objects.

Seeking identity in external objects. And once this has happened, this toy assumes enormous importance in the child's mind because it's not just an object or a toy, it's mine. And you can see how important it is when somebody tries to take away, another child takes away the toy.

And at that moment, dukkha, suffering, enormous suffering arises because it's mine. You've taken something away from my identity. It's not because five minutes later the child would have lost interest in it anyway.

But here's the identification with it. And the identity, the growing identity of the child feels diminished if somebody takes away this toy. It's like somebody tearing the piece out of you.

It's so painful. And some children scream if you take something away from them that they had identified with. Oh, I have terrible suffering.

And that's the beginning of it all. And then further things happen, of course. The child grows up and more and more begins to identify with other things.

Identity is not yet complete. It's never complete, but identity seeks more to identify with because otherwise, who am I? So the next very obvious thing is, of course, the body, the physical body, my body.

And then the child grows. The body gets stronger, grows. And then the body, you compare the body mentally to other bodies and see, is my body better or not as good as other bodies?

Or can my body do more than other bodies? Another favorite thing for a child is the child can jump. I can jump this high.

Can you? You can't do that, but I can do that. I can jump higher than you.

Oh, identity has grown a bit more. I can jump higher than most other children. Or, and then gradually the child gets older.

Then parents, who are my parents, your parents. I remember when I was, my parents were not very well off. It was in the fifties.

The next thing, what car does your dad have? My dad didn't have any car. It was a terrible problem for my identity, felt diminished because I couldn't say what car.

Others said, well, at that time, there were only about three or four possible cars you could buy. One was a VW Beetle. One was Opel.

And the other one was a Mercedes. And there was only one type. That's all.

So that determined the value of your parents. So what, I was afraid of the question, what car does your dad drive? He's going to get a Mercedes soon, I said.

And that's okay. He's going, any day now, he's going to get it. He never did, but that's okay.

And identity, and then, it becomes more and more complex. Your identity seeks other things to add to itself. It seeks, yes, body.

Of course, it's a very primordial one. Social class, what your parents, this is a little bit connected with what I said about car. Your parents have a nice house or not.

Or what social class do you belong to? In some countries, that is still important. In other countries, not so much.

And so, and gradually, other things arise. Identification with things. Identification with things which become concepts in the mind.

We need to talk briefly about body because it's such an important identification for many people. Obviously, people identify with their physical body. And it is a source of great suffering for many people.

And for others, it's a source of pride. It's a source of pride if your body is either stronger or better looking than other bodies, then you have pride. You feel your identity is enhanced.

Look at my body. You don't say it, but you show your body off. Or you're ashamed.

You don't know, my body is ugly. I was so unhappy. I'm so unhappy with my body.

And that also is a conceptual identity, but a negative one. So, whatever becomes part of your conceptual identity, not everything is good. There will be other things added to your identity that are very painful.

For example, the body. If it's too thin, too fat, too this or too that, I was very unhappy with my body. It was never as good looking at most other people's bodies.

So, for many years, it was a source of suffering to me. What do you put on your body? Clothes, so that becomes an extension of your body.

So, what clothes you wear become part of your identity, as everybody knows when you see advertisements for designer wear and so on. They are not selling clothes. They are selling identity, a piece.

They're basically saying, if you buy this, you will have added something very positive to your sense of identity, to who you are. Buy this because it will make you bigger in your own eyes and in the eyes of others. So, and then you have Prada or whatever it's called, which apparently is what the devil wears.

There was a movie called, The Devil Wears Prada. And you have a little son. Are they looking at it?

Yes. But what is it really? It's more added to a conceptual identity of who you

are.

Or if you're not good with body, you can have other things. You can have your social background. Let's say, maybe you have ancestors that were famous or maybe you have ancestors going back.

You're maybe an aristocrat. Well, they don't exist anymore here, I'm sure. But in some places, you can say you have an ancestry, very distinguished, and you can think about that and talk about it and you display it in the way you behave.

And this is the home of my ancestors. There, there it is. Oh, oh.

Enhance, you feel more than others. So the ego seeks more. It fears to be less.

It seeks more. And then other things become part of identity that are painful because you compare yourself to others, conceptual identity, and then others have more than you or are better at this than you or have higher status than you. And that's very painful.

So this, what I'm talking about is the ego, the human ego, the egoic identity. And what the human ego is, a conceptual sense of self, conceptual sense of self that you carry around with you and that you call it I. When you say I, the word I, you refer to this conceptual sense of self.

But what has happened through the gradual evolution of thinking is that now humans tend to overthink. There is a lot of not only unnecessary thinking that generates unnecessary, and in many cases, non-existent problems, such as when you lie awake at night in bed and start worrying. It generates a lot of unnecessary unhappiness.

So people don't realize that a significant part of the unhappiness in their lives is actually generated by unnecessary, negative, often destructive mind activity, and they don't even know it. But mindfulness is, first of all, discovering the simple fact that there is a voice in your head that continuously comments on your life or on what's happening around you. It's, there's the self-talk in there.

Everybody knows what the self-talk is in there. You talk to yourself. Sometimes you talk to yourself in the first person, I.

Some people talk to themselves in the second person, you. So you can get annoyed with yourself, and then you say, you shouldn't have done that. And then you have another thought that says, yes, but I couldn't help it.

And you might even get a third voice come in, and whatever it says to this, why can't I get out of my self-talk? That's self-talk too. But it's an amazing, the first thing, what I call the first awakening, spiritual awakening, is something very basic and something very simple.

It's a discovery that there is a voice in your head that always talks to you, mostly silently. If it talks out aloud, then you're continuously, and there's nobody around, then you are considered insane. But, and that's only if it's loud, but most people have that inside their heads, and they are not considered insane.

It is considered normal. But there's not such a big difference between the two. And sometimes when you listen to, there might be a man walking in the street, muttering, oh, this white man, he's talking.

And you say, oh, he's really insane. But it might be that you are doing the same, but it's just not out aloud, it's in your head. Why didn't I, I should have said that.

Why didn't I say that? Next time he does it, I'm not exactly know what I'm going to reply. And it goes on and on.

Or you lie awake at night and start worrying. You wake up and, oh my God, what's going to happen? What if that doesn't work?

I mean, that goes wrong. And what if he does that, and oh, and then you go into, you get drawn, one thought leads to another thought and another thought, oh my God. And then the body, the body cannot distinguish between an actual reality, an event that's happening in the real life and what your mind is saying.

So when you have fearful thoughts, the body reacts to every fearful thought, but the, and that's an emotion. The body reacts with an emotion, the emotion you feel in your body. The body cannot distinguish between an actual event and a thought.

So when you think fearful thoughts, the emotions you feel are the emotions that are saying, I am in danger. There is an actual danger here. So you feel the emotion of fear, anxiety.

You might, you might, you feel agitated. And it's not, it's not only not pleasant, if you indulge in that kind of useless, dysfunctional, destructive thinking year after year, after year, it has its effect on the body. And it decreases the ability of the body to have the energy to fight disease.

Even mainstream medicine is discovering the connection between your state of mind and your state of health. And so gradually we are seeing in the past, they denied it completely. They only looked at your body and not only at the, they not, they not didn't just look at the totality of the body, even within the body, they just looked at one particular symptom.

What's wrong with that particular organ? And you have, of course, in mainstream medicine, you have specialists. I'm a specialist for the liver and specialist for this and this and that, not only not taking into account the totality of the body, but more importantly, not taking into account the totality of the person, which includes the physical body and the mind.

So it's vitally important to discover first of all, that there is a voice in your head that indulges in self-talk most of the time. And for many people, interestingly enough, that self-talk for many people is not always negative, but for many people, it is more negative than positive. A good event that happened yesterday, a nice, you might have gone to a nice reunion or you went out into nature and you witnessed a beautiful sunset.

Okay, you can remember it today and think that was a beautiful sunset or we had a nice talk yesterday, but you can't do that much thinking about a nice event. But the mind, when there's something negative that happens yesterday, somebody offended you or didn't give you the attention that you needed, that you wanted from him, then you can start thinking of how, oh my God, what he did, he's really, next time he just said, I'm going to say that, or he's really shouldn't, why doesn't he, you can go on for a long time, dwelling on something negative much longer than dwelling on something positive.

It is so seemingly a negative event is much more food for useless mind activity than a positive event. And this is why for many people, a significant percentage of their mind activity is negative. For some people, it is almost 100% negative, but it is unlikely that these people would get a job in this company.

And I mean that because your predominant state of consciousness, your predominant mental emotional state, there's a certain correlation between who you associate with, where you find yourself, and even what kind of things happen to you. There is a correlation which is not always immediately recognizable, but there is a correlation between once a person's predominant mental emotional state and who they are with, who their friends are, where they work, and even what happens to them. So if you are in a very negative state a long time, you tend to attract also negative events, but you can only have to find that out for yourself, not saying, believe me.

I know it from my own life because when I first discovered this, I was still very young, I discovered that there is a correlation between my mind activity and what happens to me. I found a book that somebody, several books that somebody left with us when I was 17. And there, for the first time, I read about a person's mind, and I suddenly realized my mind was predominantly negative because I was a very unhappy child.

And so my childhood was not pleasant. And so the initial conditioning of my life was that my mind was continuously commenting and saying how bad my life was. And whenever something bad happened to me, I had a phrase that would occur again in my mind.

Of course, bad things always happen to you, don't they? They're bound to happen to you. It always happens to you.

So I was talking to myself and saying that bad things would always happen to me, and they did. So you can discover first that the spiritual awakening is to discover that there is continuous mind activity. And for some people, it's a discovery that a significant part of their mind activity is negative.

But the vital thing is to discover that there is this continuous talk in my head, which is considered the normal human state. And of course, you cannot abolish thinking. Of course, there will be thinking.

But the question is, is there an awareness behind the thinking? If you can become aware that you are indulging or caught up in that useless mind activity, and you suddenly become aware of perhaps certain repetitive thoughts that tend to reoccur in your mind again and again. You might see it in others, too, more easily in others.

When you go for your Thanksgiving dinner, I think is it next week, you will meet your family members or relatives. And some of you may realize you already know what they are going to say this year, because it's the same thing they said last year and five years and 10 years ago. And if they have negative judgments about you or somebody else, then it's the same thing you will hear again next week when you go to them.

So it's easier to see how others are caught up in repetitive thought forms, not as easy to see it in oneself. This is why there's a saying that self-knowledge is the most difficult knowledge. It's easier to see others.

But if you can discover, even in the midst, perhaps, in the moment of a certain thought appearing in your mind, realizing, oh, that thought is, I've had this thought for years. It comes again and again and again. And so there is an observing presence.

From there you get, and that observing presence isn't a thought. It's just the ability to realize that there is a voice in your head and that there are thoughts. And you realize that some of those thoughts are negative.

And many of those thoughts actually are not only unnecessary but make your life very difficult, such as worry. So most people live with what I call a cluttered mind. A cluttered mind means they are completely unaware that there's a continuous stream of mental commentary.

They'd go, and wherever they meet somebody, and immediately certain judgments form. And everything they feel, they need to immediately adopt a position towards it. Immediately say, I'm against it.

I dislike it. Immediately adapt a mental position and being identified with one's mental position, which is a thought. So if you discover within yourself that a lot of the time you're in a state of lack, of insufficiency, of not enough, and you feel that the answer to, the remedy is to be active in this world and to achieve and do as much as possible, then you'll probably find that ultimately that is not the answer to your state of lack.

In order to transcend, to go beyond your state of lack, of neediness, of not enough, spiritual practice and spiritual realization is necessary. Focus on the realization of being. It's only there that you can go beyond that state of lack, which is ego.

Go within and discover who or what you are beyond the person.

[Speaker 10] (3:38:29 - 3:38:29)
Hello.

[Speaker 5] (3:38:31 - 3:39:44)
I want to ask, I work with people and I notice, I work with people and talk about lifestyle change quite a lot and how it will relate to health. And I notice in myself, as well as in those people that I work with, that sometimes in the face of really clear experience that making a certain health choice will make them better, and in sometimes serious situations, like say they've got diabetes or something, and I just want to make this distinct from things that we know that are addictions like smoking. So I'm not talking about that, because that's an addiction and that's got a different force.

But sometimes people, for example, they'll go on a gluten-free diet, say, and they'll be much better for three months and then they'll come back and they've started to lose that momentum, lose motivation and they're drifting back into the diet that doesn't suit so well. What is that force? What is that in us, in me too, where I know that, for example, if I go to bed earlier, I'll feel better in the next day, but something in me sort of says, no, I don't want to go to bed earlier.

[Speaker 9] (3:39:44 - 3:39:48)
No. What is that?

[Speaker 1] (3:39:49 - 3:48:07)
Yes. So there is a, that's the, these are forms of conditioning that is inertia and a certain momentum in certain ways in which people live that have been there for many, many years. They could also almost be seen as energy streams inside you and they have a certain momentum.

And some of these are sluggish energies, the inertia, the pull of gravity, gravitational force of deep seated habits that are associated with the person. It's part of conditioning, mental, emotional conditioning. So then the motivation goes away again.

And sometimes it's only in a crisis situation that people are able to break out of it. And sometimes not even then. If they really realize it's a crisis situation, then sometimes that can be the trigger that pushes people out of that, gravity, the gravitational pull of deep seated conditioned habits.

So there's also a reluctance because these things are associated with the egoic sense of identity. There's also reluctance sometimes to abandon these habits because it's almost as if you were abandoning a part of yourself and people don't want to die. The ego doesn't want to die.

So often the ego is stuck in unhealthy habits, but it's become so much of their sense of self that they can't do anything about it and they don't want to. So all you can do is explain what it is that they are doing and what, there's only that much that you can do for somebody else. You cannot force them to evolve.

You can only provide the triggers for their evolution. So, and there are humans who don't want to evolve. They're not ready yet.

It's like an apple that's on the tree and it might be close to getting ripe, but it doesn't, or it might be, it doesn't want to fall. It wants to cling. Or let's say another example.

The caterpillar says, no, I don't want to become a butterfly. It's so, it's, I know who I am and I'm comfortable with who I am. Why do you want me to become a butterfly?

I don't want to fly around in the air. It's, I belong here. And then it munches, this is where I belong.

And no matter how much you talk to the caterpillar, you have to wait until finally the caterpillars, when it gets close to the transformation or metamorphosis, then the caterpillar experiences life becoming quite unpleasant. He cannot be a caterpillar anymore and he can't even crawl anymore and something is very wrong suddenly. And it's only when life becomes totally unbearable for the caterpillar, then finally he gives in and says, okay, I can't stand this anymore.

I'd rather be a butterfly. And so humans are a bit like that. And some are ready, some need more suffering before they are ready.

That's the unfortunate truth. And not all, not necessarily physical suffering. It can also be self-generated mental and emotional suffering.

Some people are not ready to give up their self-generated mental emotional suffering. They're just not ready. They may come to you and say, help me, help me.

But when it comes to the moment where they could be free, as happened to me years ago when I was still working with individual people, I was pointing out to a lady who came who had a terrible irritation with her husband. For years, the very presence of her husband caused intense irritation and everything her husband said and did, everything, the way he moved, the way he sat, the way he ate his food. I can't stand him.

And so I explained or attempted to explain these in the early stages of, before any books were written, the early stages of the teachings when I sometimes surprised myself when I gave answers, things I didn't know beforehand. They just came. And so I explained to her the mechanism behind the suffering and the possibility of, of course, she could leave him or she could discover that this is self-generated suffering and she could be free of that.

And then suddenly she began to see it and she began to see the possibility of letting go of all that self-generated suffering. And then she suddenly said, if I let go of it, what have I got left? So she was so identified with her suffering, it was like not only a close friend, the suffering was an essential part of, had become over the years, an essential part of her sense of identity, of her sense of self.

She did not want to let go. And soon after, she didn't want to come and see me anymore. So, but I do know that some of the things I said to her, later I put in the power of now.

So she's in there somewhere. And hopefully she lived long enough so that she could read the book and perhaps saw herself in there. And then perhaps at that stage, perhaps she was ready.

We don't know. We just have to accept some people are not yet ready, but do all you can, not to force them to change, but to provide that to them, that triggers has to come from within them. The readiness to let go or to change has to come from within them.

So how you do it will vary from person to person. Use your intuition, go to the place of not knowing so that the intuitive, you can say helpful things that come from that deeper level that might make a difference to them. What that is, I cannot tell you because you can only know that you in that situation with that person.

So go to the place of not knowing when you are with people, not continuously, but be there sometimes. And then it's possible that what they need that can trigger an awakening, you might say to them or do to them, well, do, what would you do? Like be the Zen master and hit them sometimes, but you don't want to do that.

But life does that if they don't change. Thanks. This mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive.

To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation.

[Speaker 8] (3:48:40 - 3:49:29)
In my life, I've always felt like a little bit of an outsider or the weird one. And there haven't been really people that I can talk to the way how I see the world. Like neither in school or later at work or in family and friends.

And like people in early life were fighting a lot and I always try to handle things differently. And now I'm at a point in my life where I wonder if I will ever find people or like in near me that I can be connected with.

[Speaker 1] (3:49:29 - 3:49:35)
Right. Right, I understand you completely. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah.

[Speaker 9] (3:49:40 - 3:49:40)
Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (3:49:41 - 3:53:57)
Yeah. Yeah. There are probably quite a few people here you can connect with.

Yes. But of course, after our event here, all these people here become dispersed again throughout the world. You can, through the miracles of modern technology, which is not all bad, you can perhaps keep in touch with some of them.

And quite a few of you, I'm sure, will keep in touch with each other. The sense of being an outsider is also something that I have had throughout my life. And the sense of not belonging here, watching my parents being engaged in continuous conflict, not because they were bad people.

They did what they did and they loved me as best they could. And they did what they did as a reflection of their state of consciousness at that time, which was a normal state of consciousness, egoic state of consciousness. But I sometimes felt, how did I get here?

Somehow, I didn't, there must have been a mistake. I think it's often outsiders being feeling an outsider on the one hand seems a terrible limitation that you can't participate as much. On the other hand, it's a great opportunity because some of the most creative people in the world have been outsiders.

They did not fit in. Misfits is the English word, misfits. Now, the friendships I had when I was a child, and that's another interesting thing.

I had a friend, one of my friends was severely physically disabled. And nobody else wanted to be friends with him because of that. And he was probably my closest friend.

And the other one was so weird that nobody wanted to talk to him. But he became my friend, so they were outsiders too. And, but the interesting fact here as you know, I couldn't believe it when they told me that there are people here from 70 countries.

It seems almost unbelievable, but it's true, I saw the list, 70 countries. And you may find, I'm sure you will find quite often you can feel a bond or you have more in common with many of the people who are here than you have with your own people in your own country at home who are not going through any spiritual awakening, who are still totally conditioned, 100% conditioned by their culture. So you feel a connectedness here with other humans that transcends culture and conditioning and all this silly political stuff.

It transcends that, and this is a wonderful thing. So to some extent, you can now connect with people even if you don't always see them physically, where you might live. I don't know whether you live in a big city or a small village.

[Speaker 8] (3:53:58 - 3:54:00)
A small city.

[Speaker 1] (3:54:00 - 3:54:01)
Small city.

[Speaker 8] (3:54:01 - 3:54:02)
Small city, yeah.

[Speaker 1] (3:54:02 - 3:54:03)
Yeah, what city?

[Speaker 8] (3:54:04 - 3:54:05)
Innsbruck in Austria.

[Speaker 1] (3:54:05 - 3:54:06)
Ah, yes.

[Speaker 8] (3:54:06 - 3:54:06)
Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (3:54:07 - 3:54:12)

Nice, very nice. I don't know how many people in Innsbruck are.

[Speaker 8] (3:54:13 - 3:54:14)
120,000.

[Speaker 1] (3:54:15 - 4:29:19)
And how many of those are awakening? We don't know. We don't know.

We don't know, of course. But this helps, I believe, being here and feeling you are not alone, you are connected. So this should be a help for the rest.

You just have to accept that this is how it is. And no matter how hard you try to fit in on the normal level, you probably won't, nor do you have to. So I know there are many people here who feel that and be happy with it, but don't make it into some kind of superiority because the ego can always creep in.

Before you know it, there's always a backdoor and then the ego is back in. So you could go from feeling bad about being an outsider to suddenly feeling, okay, I'm an outsider because I'm superior. So you have to be careful, don't go there.

So that's just how it is. If you, you probably would not be here if you had not felt like an outsider for many years. So it worked.

Well, this line is so long, I'm going to be here for at least another two hours. That's a thought, it's future, not now. There's no two hours now.

The body gains in strength because you made life difficult for your body. Don't go so far as to make life so difficult for your body that it collapses completely. That's another story.

You find the middle way, the middle way in everything. So, but again, there was a famous orator in ancient Greece, what is called Demosthenes, I don't remember the name. He had a speech defect.

He could not talk well as a young man. And in Greece, to be a great speaker was one of the most highly regarded things, to be an orator. And he wanted to go beyond his speech defect.

And they say he, in order to get beyond it, he put little pebbles in his mouth and started delivering speeches to the ocean, the sea. And he was there with pebbles and was shouting and talking to the ocean, to the sea for several years. And in the end, the speech defect disappeared and he became one of the greatest orators in ancient Greece.

And again, there was a demand for it. So if the obstacle hadn't been there, there was a philosopher, probably it wasn't Nietzsche, who said, everything important happens in spite of. Everything important happens in spite of, don't add anything, in spite of something, whatever.

In other words, something was holding it back and then it had to, the energy was. So when you face tribulation in this life, then there's an opportunity for generating more consciousness when you encounter life's difficulties. There's an opportunity for developing more consciousness.

And as you rise in consciousness, the transcendent dimension of awakened consciousness comes in, you begin to transcend these very problems that before seemed unsurmountable. You transcend them or you live with them and they are no longer that important. So you can transcend them internally.

Let's say you have a body that is disabled in one way or another. And the problem then, as you awaken spiritually, sometimes it happens that the body gets healed. And at other times, it happens that the transcendent consciousness arises and the disability of the body is no longer a source of suffering for you.

But it was a source of suffering for probably for quite a long time until a very deep surrender happened. And in this deep surrender, you transcended this source of suffering. And then you still have the same body and yet you're no longer psychologically suffering because you have transcended so many things in this life.

They can be, you can overcome an obstacle or you can transcend an obstacle. If you overcome an obstacle, when external things, you do external things in order to remove the obstacle, to get beyond it. If that is not possible, then internally you transcend.

So it no longer, the obstacle, the so-called obstacle is still there, but it doesn't matter anymore to you. It is no longer so. In fact, you may be grateful for it.

I describe in, I believe in the New Earth, when I was a student, I learned something from observing the famous scientist, Stephen Hawking, who happened to be at the same college as me in England. And every time at lunchtime, I would see him next to the table that I was at with friends. He was not famous at the time.

It was a long time ago. He was in a wheelchair, unable to move his arms already, unable to put food in his mouth, unable to speak except make croaking sounds. Later he had a machine that he could use for communication.

At that time, he just could make croakings. He was already a professor. And at first I didn't know who he was.

I asked him, who is this person? He was being fed by his, his graduate students would feed him food and he would sit there and go, oh, what a horrible fate. If you are unhappy, think of a fate like that, to be buried with a body like that.

I can't imagine anything worse. And then a great lesson was when I saw him once or twice, especially a first occasion, I opened the door for him, and he came in at the same time, he came in with his wheelchair. I opened the door and I looked into his eyes and he looked up at me.

And then I saw he was not suffering anymore. There was not a, there wasn't a psychological suffering entity. There was just an acceptance.

So although he may not have gone deep into spiritual awakening, there was an enhanced ability to use his mind. I believe he had some spiritual, he had some spiritual awakening, but he used his mind a lot in a, his mind was still active. If he had reacted against his condition, he would not have been, had achieved anything.

His ability to think creatively would have diminished. But he, through his acceptance, he was in touch with that deep power out of which intelligence arises. And so he was free of, there was not a suffering personality there.

He would have been totally justified in being very unhappy and miserable. So that, again, is an example of transcendence, transcending something that before was a seemingly impossible obstacle. I believe that the entire, all this is contained in the story of, even, which can be appreciated, even if you're not a Christian, perhaps you can appreciate it more, actually, if you're not a Christian, that there's a deep truth in, that is hidden in the image of Jesus on the cross.

It's an image that's very strange. I think if somebody from an outer planet, an alien from another planet came here and they saw that humans are worshiping a man nailed to a cross, they might think, what is that all about? And if you look more deeply, there's a teaching in there, whether you regard it as a historical fact or a deep mythological truth, it's up to you, but there is a deep teaching there that the cross is a torture instrument.

And this man, who I would regard, perhaps, the archetypal human, is suffering. He is nailed to the cross. He is in deep suffering.

There's a torture instrument. The cross then leads to death and then is resurrection. And then the cross itself, you often see it without the suffering human, and it's a symbol of the divine.

The torture instrument is also a symbol of the divine. And that is contained in the story of the torture instrument and the symbol of the divine. The cross is both.

And then there's a very deep truth embedded in there that perhaps humans would not have been able to understand if one had explained it conceptually, but they can see that this archetypal human surrenders to the suffering, brings about the rebirth and the transcendent state. And so torture instrument and the symbol of the divine are merging to one. That's a very deep, very deep teaching.

So when things happen in your life, you face it and you look at it and you become, the alertness is required when you're faced with a difficult person or situation. You become alert so that you don't react out of the conditioned mind. Even little things, when people could get irritated.

Airports these days. Airports these days are wonderful places for spiritual practice. Yes.

They've always been places for spiritual practice, but much more so now, because there's many, this is a small scale thing, but if you don't practice with small scale, you will not practice with big things. Relatively small things. Yes, your flight is canceled again.

Nobody can give you any information and the luggage is lost long ago. And there you are. You can either react out of the conditioned mind or you can say, this is what is.

That's what is. And if you have been irritated, and you can use any situation, it's been irritated or angry. I said, I recommend this spiritual practice and you do it like this.

How would I experience this situation if I didn't add any thought to it? No, you can't answer that unless you actually do it. So how would I experience this irritating moment and these awful people who are working for the airline and they're completely uninterested in their job anymore and so on and so on and so on.

How would I experience this moment if I didn't add any thought to it? Well, I'm just standing here in this line. Any thought would be, for example, well, this line is so long, I'm going to be here for at least another two hours.

That's a thought. It's future, not now. There's no two hours now.

It's just, how would I experience this moment if I didn't add any thought to it? Okay, let's try it. We might as well.

Nothing else to do. So there you are. And here you are.

Okay, I'm not adding any thought to it. I'm not, in other words, I'm not interpreting it either favorably or unfavorably. I'm not trying to convince myself this is really good.

That's another thought and it would be not really true in that here. It just don't add any, and there you are. And you look around and here we come back to sensory perception.

That's the first thing you notice is, hmm, oh. Lights, there are lights, there's people everywhere. Or movement of people standing.

But you don't even call it that. You just, artificial lights, lamps, all right. And you're breathing.

Oh, yes, yes, I'm breathing, breathing. Breathing. And if you become aware that you're breathing, it's part of this moment.

When you don't add thought to it, you may suddenly become aware that you're actually breathing. And then when you become aware that you're breathing, you might also sense that there is an aliveness that pervades your entire body as you stand there. I am trying to understand why a person would attract others who ultimately betray them.

Assuming that we create our relationships consciously or unconsciously, why is there the experience of betrayal? Assuming also that I know and love myself profoundly, what is to be learned from being betrayed? The question sounds a little abstract, but the questioner is not here.

I assume that the questioner feels betrayed. By someone. And since the questioner is a woman, perhaps she feels betrayed by a man.

Perhaps, maybe it's by a woman. Now, of course, betray already is a word that is quite heavy. He betrayed me.

She betrayed me. There's already a huge amount of heaviness and story in that. If you put it slightly differently, it loses some of its heaviness.

And putting it slightly differently could sound like this. He is a human being and he manifested behavior that corresponded to his level of consciousness at that particular time when he did it. Perhaps at other times when I met him, he seemed to be at a better, higher level of consciousness, but then he fell back to a more unconscious state and then his behavior manifested that.

Where's the betrayal? It suddenly disappeared. So that makes it easier on you to deal with it than to impose a huge narrative or judgment on another person and involve you in this dreadful act of which you become a part, the act of betrayal.

Yes, of course you suffered. We all suffer and we all encounter humans who make us suffer because many humans, most of them are unconscious and they're not always at the same level. That's an interesting fact that humans can be at enormously varying levels of consciousness according to the situation they find themselves in.

There are some humans who have a potential for committing a crime, but circumstances never put them in a position where that potential becomes actualized. And then it can happen that other humans encounter a situation that is very challenging and brings out all the worst accumulations within them that come up to the surface and suddenly they turn into these monsters. And before you might have known a completely different person, a completely different level of consciousness.

So humans get challenged or encounter situations that bring out certain aspects of their unconsciousness between in sexual encounters, because it's not unlikely that the betrayal has something to do with the man going off with another woman, not unlikely. Now, that is an area that that kind of attraction that can make people very quickly, very unconscious. There are expressions for that, but I won't say.

So, yes, that's the unfortunate thing with human beings. They're not fully enlightened. So, and then of course you say, I trusted him.

He promised me when we got married that he would be faithful. And I trusted him. And I'm sure when he promised it, he meant it.

I don't think when he promised to be faithful, he meant, well, I'm not really going to do that. When he promised to be faithful, he meant it. But then a few years passed, and then one day he had a few drinks, and then he looked at that woman there and he was gone.

Completely unconscious. And again, in Jesus' words, forgive them for they know not what they do. Now, to forgive them is only something that you do for yourself because you free yourself of the burden of having to live with a narrative or a story of betrayal and be part of that.

And then part of your sense of identity, this is very painful, but seductive, part of your egoic, your ego identity, then is I am the one who has been betrayed. And that's a dreadful burden to carry in your sense of self. So if you believe in that story that your mind has created, the act of betrayal, he betrayed me, so you're setting up for yourself an enormous amount of suffering because that story will become part of your sense of self.

And if that's the case, then even it will influence and color the way from now on in which you relate to other, men or women or whatever it is, can easily color that. So you have to be very careful and see what you're doing to yourself by creating these stories. On the conventional level, they are true.

You can say, he betrayed me. That's conventional way of using language, but it's not the real truth. You might have heard of Byron Katie, the spiritual teacher.

She always questions whatever thoughts the mind produces. And that's a wonderful thing because otherwise you might feel tempted to believe in every thought that comes into your head. He betrayed me.

And of course, Byron Katie would ask, do you know that for sure? How do you know that? Yeah, of course I know for sure.

And then eventually, if it works, the person is meant to disidentify from the thought that the mind has created and become free of being trapped by this thought, which really means consciousness is trapped by this thought that the mind has created and you are trapped in it. So be careful with the stories that your mind creates. And sometimes if you rephrase, as I just did for you, rephrase the story, it suddenly does not cling to you anymore.

And it no longer becomes part of your painful identity or sense of self because you want to be free of that. So, and of course then you, unfortunately you have to forgive him. Sorry, you have to, that is part of it when you realize, yeah, he was unconscious, you have to, forgiveness comes and that's fine.

It doesn't mean you want to start all over again or maybe you will, but probably not. Because unless a shift has happened in him, the same kind of thing might happen to him again. Next time he has a drink and sees a woman.

So careful with, very careful with stories that the mind creates and then become part of your sense of self. The feeling, first of all, needs to be acknowledged and accepted. You can't start with letting go.

So we have to start with acknowledging it and accepting that it's there because it's part of what is, the is-ness of the present moment, whether it's an external thing or an inner thing, it is what is. And to deny or to argue with what is creates suffering. So you acknowledge, you accept that it's there.

Then how much time you need to be with it depends, varies from person to person and what kind of a feeling it is and so on. And then the question arises, what is the link between that feeling and your thought processes? The person needs to find out whether the thought processes keep that feeling alive continuously, whether they renew by playing out, for example, a past scenario in their minds, by reviving memories from the past, by dwelling on certain narratives that are painful, repeating them in their minds, that gives renewed energy to the feeling.

So the first, the most important thing is to be aware of both levels. What's the level of my thinking? How does that contribute to the perpetuation of what I feel?

And so you also then acknowledge that, oh, these are the habitual thought patterns that go through my mind in relation to the feelings. And then you would begin to realize that the letting go, the most important step in letting go of feelings is to cut the link between your thinking and what you're feeling. How do you do that?

You do it by being aware of your thinking and realizing that that thinking is pain. It feeds the old feeling and the narrative, whatever it is, is a painful narrative. And you realize that you've been keeping it alive for some years.

And when there's enough awareness, you realize that it has no purpose except to make you unhappy and to perpetuate that feeling. However, it has, you need, and this is how you can help, or any counselor or therapist or spiritual teacher can help the other person by observing the feeling and seeing how the mind, the mental narrative, has both the mental narrative and the feeling seem to have a life of their own. And if they have been in there for a long time, they don't want to go.

What they want is they want you to be identified with them. They don't want you to be conscious of them. So this is really the mind aspect of the pain body and the emotional.

The pain body is predominantly an emotion, but there is a mental aspect that the pain body needs to rise up into your mind in order to feed on certain types of thinking, in this case, the old narrative. So you also need enough awareness to know that this thing does not want to go because there's a momentum behind thought patterns that have been active in your mind for a long time. So there's a momentum behind it.

So you need to be acutely aware of the process of how it creates further pain. And when you look through it and see that's actually what it does, then you've recognized you cannot be deceived anymore by completely believing in it every time it happens. In other words, you see that you create your own pain ultimately.

When you see that, that's the beginning of the end. And then you can reach a stage when the pain is no longer, the feeling is no longer fueled by thinking. Then you arrive at a stage where you realize I don't need the feeling anymore.

In fact, you don't need to let go because then when you do not revive it continuously, it subsides by itself. So you don't need to actually say, I must let go. It lets go of you rather than you need to let go.

It's because you're no longer giving it energy. You're no longer feeding it. So that's the process.

So you need to let go is a bit like saying you need to forgive. That's another one like that. You need to really need to forgive.

Okay, I'll try. I'll really, I have you forgiven your parents. Yeah, I think I have.

The forgiveness again is in a similar way happens naturally when you look, when first of all, you realize that no human being can act beyond their level of consciousness at that time when they acted. So if you haven't forgiven your parents and yet then you can see they behaved the way they did because they could have done otherwise. My father, for example, I loved him dearly.

Well, especially after I became conscious. And before I became conscious, I had a love hate relationship with him. And I found him very obnoxious, but there was love there too, emotional love.

But then when I was free, I could love him unconditionally. And then I could see that pattern in him that produced so much, gave me so much pain, his uncontrollable anger. Most of, mostly fortunately not directed towards me, but directed towards my mother.

But the anger that was directed by my father towards my mother hurt me probably more than it hurt my mother as a little, as a child. And his anger was so explosive. It could flare up at any moment.

So you were always walking on eggshells. And when I was seven, eight, I already knew, my mother seemingly never learned it. I already knew what comment that she made would immediately produce the anger.

I knew that when I was seven, she never learned it. And so I was ready. I was listening to my mother saying, oh no, she's saying that.

And so there was, I had a dream when I was seven or eight, I was asleep and I had this dream. And in the dream, there was a bag under my bed. And in that bag were the body parts of my dad.

I had cut him up and had to put all his body parts and had hidden it under the bed. So I was, I didn't, the actual cutting up wasn't in the dream, that had already happened somewhere else.

[Speaker 9] (4:29:20 - 4:29:22)
You were just cleaning up?

[Speaker 1] (4:29:22 - 4:31:20)
Yeah, so I was pushing him under my bed. And then still in the dream, at that moment, I heard the front door opening and my dad was coming in and I ran towards him and gave him a hug. Okay, so that shows the conflicting feelings.

And then later I realized, I realized where that anger came from. I don't need to go into this. Of course, it goes back to childhood, how he was treated in his family.

The seventh child, the youngest child, nobody wanted him anymore. The mother was tired. He wasn't given much attention, not treated well by his female, his sisters and so on.

Long story, don't need to go into that. It came all from there. It originated from there.

Anger towards his mother and so on and so on. And later I realized he could not help himself. He did not have the awareness.

He was taken over by this anger. And the moment I realized that he, that was, he acted according to his level of consciousness at the time, I didn't need to forgive anymore because there was nothing to forgive anymore. I had, and that's a beautiful thing.

So again, similar to letting go of feelings, when enough awareness comes in, the feeling let's go, let's go of you and all becomes transmuted into something, an energy field that is good. And so forgiveness, again, cannot really be practiced in the same way that letting go can't really be practiced. It just happens.

And then that's how it is.

[Speaker 2] (4:31:38 - 4:31:43)
The memory of what happened to you is more than just a memory.

[Speaker 1] (4:31:44 - 4:34:03)
There is self-identification with the memory. In other words, it's not perceived as just something that happened to you, but it becomes part of who you perceive to be. Now, almost everybody has in one way or another been a victim of other people, but in some cases, much, much more so than in others.

Some element of having been victim is probably present in everybody's life. In other words, you are surrounded by unconscious humans and then unconscious humans will inflict suffering on themselves and others. That's just how it is when you're alive on this planet.

Childhood, particularly, is a place where many children experience abuse, either minor forms of abuse, emotional abuse, or they live in a very toxic family environment. And then, of course, there are other children who experience much more serious forms of abuse and really suffer and have these experiences. Care and carry with them the memory, both mental and emotional memory, of what happened to them.

In some cases, the memory is repressed because the child, the emotions may be repressed. The child could not deal with them and they had to repress them. And then later, the possibility of remembering arises and then you remember what happened to you.

And how do you do, is the question, what do you do with what happened to you, what was done to you? How do you deal with what was done to you by other humans, whether it happened in childhood or whether it happened later in life, whether it was a relatively minor thing or whether it was a very serious form of abuse?

[Speaker 2] (4:34:04 - 4:34:06)
How do you deal with that?

[Speaker 1] (4:34:11 - 4:41:48)
Now, the ego, the human ego is always looking for something to add to its sense of identity. It's looking for a stronger sense of identity because it always feels, I'm not enough. So it's trying to add something that it can identify with, so add

to its sense of self.

And very often happens that the memory of having been abused is used by the ego and is added to the ego's sense of self. So that means you not only remember what happened to you, the memory of what happened to you, which is a bundle of thoughts and emotion that go with it, the memory of what happened to you is more than just a memory. There is self-identification with the memory.

In other words, it's not perceived as just something that happened to you, but it becomes part of who you perceive to be. So I am a victim of that. It's not that this was done to me, but I am a victim of.

So it's the transition from memory to self. That is the victim identity. The ego does that because victim identity is a very powerful form of identity, a very powerful form of ego.

And particularly in cases where the ego is always, does not find sufficient things that it can identify with in this world, because the most common form of identification, for example, is with the way you look. You look better than others. So you can identify with that.

If you look worse than others, of course, that could become part of your victim identity because you've been treated unfairly by life and life has made you look worse than others. That could become part of victim identity. Although that's not actually abuse, but it could also be incorporated into victim identity.

However, so normally what people identify with or what ego identifies with is appearance, which is physical appearance of the body, what external looks, even what you put on the body is then regarded as part of the body. So clothes become something you identify with because they're on the body. So firstly, if it's being part of you, possessions, common thing, what I own, I own this car, you don't.

Therefore, I feel a bit stronger in my sense of self because I have a Lamborghini and you only have a VW or bicycle. So I have a stronger identity compared to others. House, any form of possession.

Then we have social function in this world, position that you have, social position in this world you identify with that you feel gives you superiority. With every ego identification, the most important thing is superiority, a sense of superiority. The ego seeks that.

It cannot tolerate inferiority. So superiority, whether it's possessions, looks or appearance, achievement in this world, social position, oh yes, knowledge. Some people who are intellectual or highly educated, you can identify with that and feel superior to many other humans who know much less than you.

So you have identified with knowledge, identified with, you can identify with your ancestors in some countries, in the West, not so much anymore, but in some countries still, it used to be like that in the West, but in some countries still, your ancestry is extremely important, like who your parents were and your grandparents and so on, you go back several generations. So you can have that, you identify, and again, superiority is always implied. Now, it's not many humans find it easy to find things in this world that they can derive a sense of superiority from, well, children already start doing that.

They have to look for something. I can jump higher than you, look at me, that's good. That's the developing ego, gives you a bit of superiority or whatever it may be.

So many humans don't find a lot in this world that does give them a sense of superiority. They don't have a lot of possessions or no possessions. They're not particularly highly educated, don't really know that much.

They're not great looking. So what else? The ego is looking for something.

Now, it could be things like resentment, so that's a great one. Grievances towards other humans, that's a big one. So the ego can have anger towards other humans or groups of humans.

He says, well, of course, so the ego can get in there, identify with those thoughts and gives you a sense of superiority. You can sometimes, I don't know if you've all met, people who are kind of considered half crazy who are walking the streets and you have people, you see them often in big cities, particularly, they're shouting, they're shouting at everybody. They're very angry and they're shouting at everybody.

You, you, you, and you can see, it's a rudimentary form of superiority by being angry at others. It's implied, ultimately, you are superior to those humans that you're angry at. So even if you have nothing, you can get, the ego can make you angry about other people and you start shouting at them and you feel suddenly superior to everybody, all these awful people out there.

And that brings us already in the direction of victim identity. Victim identity, again, you remember what was done to you and the memory becomes incorporated, as I said, into your sense of self that becomes me, the victim of those people.

[Speaker 2] (4:41:49 - 4:41:51)
That's me, I am the victim.

[Speaker 1] (4:41:52 - 4:48:05)
So you become, in your own perception, a victim of this or that other people. This enhances your ego because by being a victim, you feel superior to others, not only to those who inflicted suffering on you, whether real or imagined, but you also feel yourself superior to anybody else who is not as much a victim as you are. It's an unconscious process.

So if you can talk about your victimhood, anybody who is less of a victim than you is inferior. And so the superiority, it's a moral one, one could say, because if unjust things were done to you, then by being a victim of unjust deeds, perpetrated by other humans, you automatically become morally superior, not only to those humans who inflicted that on you, but also to other humans who are not victims or cannot claim, have not as much claim on victimhood as you have. So you are morally superior to them.

It's a delusion, it's every egoic identity is a form of delusion. So ultimately, it's a delusion that the stronger the ego is, the more deluded you become about who you are. And that you can also have collective victimhood as very common these days.

You can, your group of people who undoubtedly has, people you identify with, whatever it may be, gender or race or a social class that was oppressed, whatever it may be, and certainly these things have happened. People, social groups have been victimized, so to speak, in the past, suffering inflicted by humans or other groups of humans, certainly happened. And to remember that is fine, to recognize it for what it is.

It's like similar to a memory of an individual person suffering abuse, injustice, and so on. And now you, if it's collective, it's a very similar process. You remember what was being done.

The question is, is it just a memory? And do you recognize what was behind it? What other, or is it more than a memory?

Is it something that becomes in doubt with a sense of self, selfhood? Then you have a collective victim identity that is also very powerful. And this is to say that that's an illusion, is not to say that these abuses did not happen.

The illusion is what are you doing to yourself by deriving your sense of identity from this thing that happened in the past? The memory is fine. We need to remember these things, fine.

But do I derive my sense of who I am from being a victim, either on an individual level or on a collective level? That is an enormous limitation on my life because I'm immediately, the implication, when a significant part of your identity is that of a victim, the implication is that you remain a victim. There isn't much you can do because they've made you into a victim.

You've made yourself into a victim. What can you do now? You're obviously morally superior to everybody who is less of a victim than you, but you condemn yourself almost to powerlessness.

When you, any kind of victim identity, you want to remain powerless because to say that you could transcend what was done to you, you can overcome the effects of it. You can go beyond it. You have the power to go beyond the abuse that was done to you, which every human has that power.

You can never discover that power if you are trapped in a victim identity. So the power to transcend, to go beyond what was done to you, not to be held back by what was done to you on an individual level or collectively, the power to go beyond it is you do not have this power as long as you remain trapped in a victim identity because the ego does not want to let go of being a victim. Once something has been incorporated into the ego, the ego does not want to let go.

It becomes part of your, it is precious to you. Is there another question that has not dissolved?

[Speaker 7] (4:48:17 - 4:49:04)
It only has partly dissolved. Hello, Eckhart. Moin, moin.

My question deals with parents. With practicing presence, felt love for them after many years, not feeling love and feeling guilty for that. But I still have huge problems to meet them.

When I meet them, if they are in the same room, even if I try to be aware of my breath and my inner body, after a while, I have huge pain body attacks. And...

[Speaker 1] (4:49:04 - 4:49:07)
Is that triggered by something they say or?

[Speaker 7] (4:49:07 - 4:49:27)
I can't even say that. Sometimes it's the way I managed to go through the meeting quite fine and my mother leaves the room and I break down. And yeah, I don't know what it is.

[Speaker 1] (4:49:29 - 4:49:31)
German parents can be difficult.

[Speaker 3] (4:49:33 - 4:49:34)
Okay.

[Speaker 1] (4:49:36 - 6:05:58)
I know. American parents too. So on one level, there's already an acceptance of them on a mental level, the acceptance of who they are, the acceptance of their limitations, they behave the way they behave.

Is the pain body is still there inside you, of course, and the pain body reacts. It may also be that the mental level, the mental acceptance is not yet complete either to see that they act the way they act, speak the way they speak, not because of who they are, but because of their past conditioning, which is their mental emotional conditioning is speaking through them. They can't help that.

If there's not enough presence, everybody is in controlled by their mental emotional conditioning. They can't help it. They are afflicted by that disease.

Which is identification with unconscious conditioning. I'm not the only one who calls that disease. Even in the ancient teachings of Zen, they sometimes call it the disease of the mind.

And there are some Zen teachers who have said they are here to cure that mental illness. I've said, that's what Zen is about. It's curing that mental illness.

So you need to, on the mental level, as you sit with them, you need to know that continuously that what you are observing is not who they are. You're observing a form of mental conditioning. Underneath that, there is the being.

And you may sometimes get a glimpse of it. My mother was very much identified also with her mind. And occasionally I looked into her eyes and suddenly there was a light shining through when she stopped talking for a little while.

In other words, the mind catching a breath after talking for 10 minutes incessantly. And then for a moment I could see, oh, there's their being. Her being was shining through.

And I have one or two photos where her being shines through. And then of course it gets obscured again. And then you get the same, get the suspicions, the complaints, the accusations, all the stuff associated with unconscious thinking.

So on the mental level, you need to know that, be present enough so that you don't forget that what you're observing is not who they are, but you're observing the past in them, the conditioning. And then comes the emotions that you feel. Of course, there's your past, the past, the living past in you from your childhood, all the things they did or failed to do because they couldn't help it.

There wasn't enough presence to change it. So that's something for you to find acceptance as you accept them, you accept what you feel at that moment. Whether you can even label it, we don't know.

Is it sadness? Is it anger? Is it heaviness or a mixture of all of that?

A feeling of wanting to run away? A contraction, whatever it is, that's all there. You don't need to even analyze it.

You just need to feel the entire energy field of that. And it doesn't feel pleasant. And it's the past in you.

So there you're observing the past in them acting out and you experience the past in you. And so what do you do with two pasts? You have the past out there and the past in here.

Only presence can dissolve the past. So you need to access the power of presence in yourself. And how do you do that?

A quick way in a situation like this is the acceptance of whatever arises inside or outside at this moment. You accept this is what you feel. This is what they do or say.

There's the acceptance of the inner and the outer. Because it is already happening. You have to accept or you suffer.

In a way, if you don't accept, you suffer more. If you don't want to feel what you feel, that's more suffering because you're resisting. Acceptance does something that I could describe as, let's say, here's the emotional field and it doesn't feel good.

And acceptance means just to say, okay, that is, I can feel that. I'm verbalizing, acceptance doesn't even require after a little while, you don't need words anymore. You can just see what is, be with it.

And at that moment, a little bit of space opens up around that emotion. A little bit of space. That space comes from your acceptance.

The acceptance gives it space. And that's already a tiny bit of freedom. You've given it a little bit of space inside yourself when you say, yes, this is what is.

And that's a beauty. You have given both them space externally to be, and you've given yourself space internally. And then as you notice that actually, it feels already a little bit better than before because there's space around the emotion.

And then you go into it more deeply and you accept even more, continue to accept. And that space grows a little bit around it. And then you encounter the strange phenomenon of an emotion that is not pleasant existing in a spacious field, so to speak, that's around it.

And then you realize that who you are is you are that field. And you can allow the emotion to be in that field. And you can allow your parents to be there and say what they say and do what they do.

They're repeating the past. Space comes in. So acceptance brings space.

And space is the transcendence of conditioning. Space is the transcendence of the past, the transcendence, transcendence of the personality and the person. And it's freedom, space.

That's the practice. And so the best place to practice is with your parents. There are many other places where you can practice, but the ultimate mastery you will achieve when you can practice with your parents, that's the graduation.

You graduate. It's the PhD in presence with. Don't jump into it too much.

Don't, if you say, okay, I'm going to spend a week with our parents now, it's too much, too much. You should give yourself short time periods at first. Say, I'm going to come for coffee and cake.

That's what they like to do. At least my mother did. I'll come for coffee and cake and I'll stay for an hour.

Or you know, if you can, I don't know how that works practically, but. And then you practice, you give yourself one hour to practice. And you know, it's only an hour.

I have to be present for an hour. And it's your spiritual practice. So the, as you know, I've written the quote in a book, Ram Dass said, if you think you're so enlightened, spend two weeks with your parents, two weeks.

The ultimate test. So happy practice. Life does not cease from challenging you.

And that doesn't change. Even if you awaken spiritually, you will get other challenges, different kinds of challenges. The only difference is as you awaken spiritually, the way in which you respond to the challenges changes.

And that is all important. How you confront the challenges of life, how you react to or respond to the challenges of life determines how you experience your life. How you experience your life ultimately is not determined by what happens to you, because most people think that that's the case, but how you experience your life or what you call your life is ultimately not determined by what happens to you.

It is determined by how you respond to what happens to you and how you respond to what happens to you determines what happens in the so-called future. How you respond now. Some people, whenever they are challenged by life, they behave as if there was something very wrong with their life, that things are not supposed to go wrong or be challenging.

This is not supposed to happen. And this works on both a small scale and large scale. And you might've met people, and perhaps you were one of those people in the past, people who are continuously complaining about things.

They're continuously not in alignment, continuously out of alignment with whatever is going on around them, situations and people and places and events. Either something is there that shouldn't be there, something is happening right now that should not be happening or something is not happening that should be happening or I should be somewhere else, but I'm here. And that's a huge problem.

I'm trying very hard to get there, but I'm here. Now, this sounds a little weird when I say it like this, but the sad fact is that many people, people live like that for most of their life. They are not aligned with what they are doing right now.

Yes, they are doing it, but they are not fully in the doing because they'd rather be somewhere else. They would rather be already at the end of this particular activity. And when you're very much in that mindset, that means your life is stressful continuously.

Stressful means there's a mental projection of where you need to be or should be, but you're here. So you're engaged in this activity, but there's a, you have mental, you have certain thoughts that tell you either you already want to be at the end of what you're doing or although you are doing this, you really should also be doing that and that and that, but you're doing this, a dreadful way to live. Normal, by the way, it's called normal.

And you see it when you watch the movies, everybody's like that in the movies. So it must be normal. They're all like, and people love to see the dysfunctional way in which people live, reflected on TV and in the movies, they reflected their own dysfunction and that's a confirmation that, okay, I'm actually okay because everybody's unhappy.

Everybody is living in this way, in this state of almost continuous dissatisfaction except for brief moments, sometimes to do with having a good meal or sex, could do it for a while. This doesn't last very long. Or you get what you wanted.

You get what you wanted. The thing that you said, oh, that's what will make me happy. And then you get it.

And for a moment you feel, ah, and you feel this happiness arising. And why do you think you feel this happiness? Because you got what you wanted.

But if you look more deeply, you will realize that you do not really feel happy because you got what you wanted. You feel happy because for a very short time period, the mind structure that was always unhappy with the is-ness of things, there's something is missing here. I need that.

I need to get rid of that. That mind structure subsides. And for a moment you don't want anything except what is here now.

And that suddenly you feel more alive. You feel, ah. And now then perhaps you begin to understand why the Buddha talked about the greatest obstacle to spiritual awakening being continuous.

Well, he called it, and in the translations, it's called desire. But a better translation of what the Buddha was talking about is a more vital term is wanting. The continuous wanting, wanting this, wanting that, wanting the neediness, the wanting.

And that is the mind structure that operates in humans that prevents them from experiencing the deeper dimension of reality, which we could call the timeless dimension, the timeless dimension of consciousness. Remember, we talked about time a few minutes ago. We talked about time.

And yes, a few minutes ago. And we talked about the express train that you can't get off. We talked about the fire that is consuming you.

That is time. That is true. But the good news is that there is in every human a deeper dimension of consciousness.

In many humans, it's only a potential, a latent potential, like a seed. In others, the seed has already began to sprout. There is the possibility in humans of accessing and living from the deeper dimension of consciousness.

And accessing that deeper dimension of consciousness is what we could call spiritual awakening, where you realize that in addition to being a person a personality or a person who lives in this world of time, of past and future, in addition to being this person, there is more to you. There are other dimensions to who you are, or more specifically, there is a deeper dimension to who you are than the merely historical person. And that's why we are here tonight, because I want this not just to be a conceptual talk, although of course we're using words, but the aim is for you to experience at first hand, even if it's only a glimpse, or to deepen, for many of you, it'll be just a deepening because you already are sensing what it is that I'm talking about.

You say, I think I know what he's talking about. You're already sensing within yourself what it is that I'm talking about when I speak of a deeper dimension of who you are, a deeper sense of identity of who you are. But basically for the really important things, it's preferable to be in the state of not knowing, which is a non-conceptual awareness.

Sometimes presence is compared to listening, and that is an analogy one can use, and Jesus used to describe it to people so they can experience it, who have no idea what you're talking about. So when you are trying to teach it to your mother or your children or your dad or your grandparents or whatever, or your uncle or aunt to say, what's all that nonsense that you can say, when you, if you're listening, if you're trying to catch the very slight noise, what stage would you be in inside if you were very intent listening, trying to catch the slightest noise that's arising, what inner state would you be in? And then let's try it.

You can practice with your children. It's a game. It's a wonderful game.

Can we listen to the slightest? What noises can you hear? Let's say you're out in nature and there's very subtle noises.

What noises can you hear? And then they go, okay, but you have to get still. Otherwise you won't know.

So you get still and then you go, okay, listen very carefully. Okay, and then they go, of course they're not thinking then. You can't think and listen very carefully.

Ah, and then they might hear noise. Oh, I can hear that. Okay, anything else?

They listen again. Oh, now I can hear that. Okay.

And so that you're putting this person or that's a child you're doing it with, without them knowing it, you are actually putting them into a different state of consciousness simply by asking them to listen very carefully because you cannot carefully listen and think at the same time. Presence needs to be taken. Consciousness needs to be reclaimed from the thinking function.

And it's all because all that consciousness is required to go into the auditory perception. So consciousness is reclaimed from thinking and then flows into auditory perception. And so you experience that you have a choice of where you want your attention to be.

You don't have to always have your attention absorbed continuously by the stream of thinking. Most people don't know that. They are identified with a stream of thinking.

They don't know that they can reclaim their consciousness from where it is usually lodged in thinking. And that's a wonderful freedom. But this is the beginning of it is to show somebody, listen, as I mentioned the other day, Jesus used the example of the master is coming home at night and you have to be awake to know when he's coming because he may be very quiet.

That's a parable used by Jesus. Why does he say that? Some people misinterpret it and think he's talking about the end of the world.

Why would he talk about, why do you have to be quiet when the end of the world, it comes whether you're quiet or not. So you're listening. It's a different state of consciousness.

You could do the same with a visual perception. Look very clearly. What is it that you can see?

Let's say, so you're out in nature. What is it that you can see over there? What's that in the distance?

What could that be? And then you're asking that person to enter a different state of consciousness, to stop thinking and putting all attention into visual perception. And they would go, and until they find an interpretation and know what it is they're looking at, they are not thinking.

So to look at something unusual, it's very helpful because when you can't interpret it, there's no thought yet. So if you see a UFO, then you would, for a while you would go. It's why it might stop your mind for a while until you say, oh, now I know what it is.

It's a UFO, which is of course a contradiction in terms because UFO means it's unidentified, so you don't know what it is. But very often the mind, by finding a word for something, seems that now you know. This is how a lot of mental knowledge operates.

You find a word for it. It's, oh, okay. The child asked the parent, how do the birds find their way when they travel thousands of miles from the Northern Hemisphere to the Southern Hemisphere, and then they find their way back in the next year to the same nesting grounds, thousands of miles away, and they, how do they do that, dad?

Can you tell me how that happens, says the child, and the dad says, oh, yes, it's instinct. Oh, okay. Okay.

Write it down, instinct. Now I know what it is. So a lot of our knowledge is just covering up our ignorance with words.

Entire PhDs are like that. And there's a refusal to recognize that at the heart of life or the universe, there is a deep mystery that we cannot conceptually understand. But because people have these huge egos, they cannot admit, especially if you're a scientist, you can't admit to yourself that there is a deep mystery and there's a huge amount of things that you do not understand.

And they can't get themselves to say that, so they have to pretend that they know. It's just words or little scribbles on a piece of paper. So to continue to be open to the mystery of life is vital so that you stay connected to the mystery.

If you pretend to know, you cut yourself off from the mystery because the mystery is also the source of all life. So to deny the mystery is a dreadful thing to do to yourself but to remain open to the mystery and to remain comfortable with not knowing most things. You just know, of course, things that you need to operate in your daily life.

That's fine. You dial a phone number, you know that. That works.

You know how to use your iPhone or your BlackBerry and all the other devices and many other things you can do. But basically for the really important things, it's preferable to be in the state of not knowing, which is a non-conceptual awareness, especially in relation to other human beings. I don't even want to understand you.

I allow you to be who you are. And I know that in your essence, you are one with my essence. We are more than connected.

And that is enough for me to, when I meet somebody, that's enough. I don't need to know their story to know them. There is a different, there are two kinds of knowing.

One, the one that most people are familiar with is conceptual knowing, you know, through mental concepts. What many people are not familiar with is direct knowing that operates without any concepts. So when I walk in the forest, which I love to do, I can apply conceptual knowledge to what I see by interpreting the trees, what they are called, by looking at various phenomena in the forest.

For example, in the Northwest Pacific, you have things like trunks, a tree, old trees that have fallen and are beginning to decay. And out of the trunk of the old tree, a new tree, a seed of a tree has gone into that decay trunk. And it's called a nurse log.

So you have a huge log. And out of that log, a new tree, totally new tree grows. The old log is nursing the new tree.

So they call it the nurse log. I haven't seen those things in Europe. I don't know if they exist.

But so I can look at that and say, ah, that's a nurse log. And I can look at other things and the birds and so on. I can also, it's one level of knowing the forest, but it's not very deep.

It's conceptual. There is another way when I do not interpret what I see at all. And I simply contemplate the trees, everything without naming mentally.

From the point of view of conceptual knowledge, it now looks as if I had abandoned all knowledge because if I don't have any, if I'm not naming it in my mind, what do I know? Nothing from a conceptual viewpoint. And yet I am relating to the aliveness of the forest and of every being in it much more deeply than I could through the conceptual level of knowing.

And if I'm confined, when I go for a walk in the forest, if I'm confined to only conceptual knowledge, or if I'm totally elsewhere, thinking about something totally different, what's going to happen next week, or my problematic life situation, I'm totally absent. But even if I'm in the forest and looking, but only knowing it through concepts, as many people do, birdwatchers, they love to interpret. And then they write, this is such and such a bird.

That is fine, there is a place for that kind of knowledge. But if you are trapped on that, you're missing something much more important. You are missing the deeper knowing that is non-conceptual that can only be there when you stop naming.

And that means you're open to the mystery of the forest. You're no longer pretending because even if you call it a nurse log, what do you really know? And even if you look more deeply, you still don't know what the life is.

No scientist knows what life is. They only know how life manifests. But nobody has found the life is the mystery.

Nobody knows what consciousness is. Scientists don't even mention the word consciousness. I'm told, I'm not sure, in the latest book by Stephen Hawkins, who's quite a good thinker, the word consciousness, it's about the universe, the history of the universe or whatever it is.

I can't remember the title. The word consciousness is not used once. The greatest mystery of life, the fact that there is consciousness, which is able to perceive the universe, he doesn't mention it because the scientist doesn't know what to do with it.

It is, so let's stay connected to the mystery and then realize that there is a very deep knowing. Let's go back to the forest. When I go through the forest, that is my preference without naming continuously, but simply perceiving the totality and the various things.

Sometimes I perceive just one thing, a blade of grass, a branch, one particular tree, or the nurse logs, or the different kinds of fern, moss. In the Northwest Pacific, apparently there are several hundred different types of moss and that's to do with conceptual knowledge. But just looking at it, just seeing, and then the totality of the forest, you take that in too.

And you can then notice it is an energy field. It is alive. It is pervaded by something.

It is alive. And you can sense that. And this is a way of knowing the forest that is non-conceptual.

And you then know it. And that knowing is no longer separate from knowing yourself because as you know the forest, you are very deeply connected with the awareness within yourself. And somehow they are not separate.

And as you walk through the forest, the forest, as I like to put it, because that's how I experience it, the forest becomes conscious of itself because it's not separate from you. You are connected to everything. You are not separate from the totality.

So suddenly as you, the person with a name and a birth date has transcended its personal self and becomes a field of awareness through which the forest becomes aware of its own sacredness and beauty and aliveness. And you go, welcome to our live meditation. We are not going to do a technique-based meditation here, but a more natural, spontaneous meditation.

So allow me to just talk you into, so to speak, the meditative state of consciousness. The two ingredients of our meditation session here are the words and the spaces between the words. Yes, there's also the visual.

You see the image on the screen, but mostly it's the words that you pay attention to and there's the silent spaces. And usually you would always just be waiting for the next thing the speaker says, but here to enter the meditative state of consciousness, you become aware of the silent spaces too. You just notice them right now.

And you may notice that when you notice the silent spaces, for that moment, your mind also becomes silent. In other words, there is a brief cessation of thinking without loss of consciousness, like now. That is the beginning of the meditative state.

And it may come as a surprise to some of you that although you probably think continuously, every moment, almost every moment of your waking life, it doesn't have to be like that. You can invite into your life these still or silent spaces. In fact, it's absolutely vital essential for any human to have some access to that inner stillness because that inner stillness is a source of great power and aliveness.

And it's also a place where you can sense the deeper feeling of being you. The word I is used a lot. It's probably one of the most frequently used words in the language, I, I, I.

And usually it refers to yourself as a, let's say, historical person, somebody, a person with a history. The history of you makes you into who you are as a person, your past. And then it includes, the I refers also, of course, to your current circumstances, whatever you identify with, whatever you derive your sense of self from, whether it's possessions, or you can derive your sense of self from your possessions.

You can also derive your sense of self from your lack of possessions, which could be interpreted as either that you are worse off than other people, and you have a sense of identity there made up of certain, certain thoughts, or it could be interpreted, the lack of possessions could be interpreted as I am more spiritual than all those people who have these possessions, which, again, it's a sense of identity based on a little story in your mind.

And usually the word I refers to that mental entity that consists of things that you, over a period of time throughout your life, have identified with mostly, and those things become a sense of who you are, successes, failures, relationships, possessions, status in society, things that you, other people did to you, you did to other people. All those things become mental stories, and they give you a sense of self, and this is what usually the word I refers to. And most people don't realize that there can be a deeper meaning to I, a deeper sense of identity than one that consists of your personal history.

And meditation, in a wider sense, or the meditative state, is here to help you realize that there's more to you than your personal history, or the story in your mind about who you are, which may be predominantly great. That may be a fiction, but I'm better than most people. It may be predominantly negative.

I'm a victim of everybody else. Or it may be a mixed bag for most people. It's probably a mixed bag of good and bad.

But if you never go beyond that sense of self, that's a very limited existence, but that kind of limited existence is normal. Whenever you watch movies and so on, it's usually about people who lead that kind of limited existence, although there are some movies occasionally where you see a glimpse of something else. That's the spiritual dimension.

That's going deeper within, as we're doing now. So when we come to that, you may remember I said, be aware of the silent spaces, even though they may be short. And as you become aware of the silent spaces, your mind becomes still, just for that moment, like this moment.

Your mind becomes still means, of course, there is a cessation, a stopping, of thought. But the voice in the head, as I sometimes call it, suddenly stops speaking. There's no longer any mental commentary about what's going on here or now.

And there's no longer a mental projection into some future moment like, what am I going to have for dinner or lunch? Tomorrow. So what's left of you when there is that brief cessation of mind activity, but you have not gone to sleep.

You are as alert as you were before in fact, you are more alert than when you were engaged in thinking. And suddenly you go. And for a moment, what's left of you is that alert presence.

And the historical person has kind of temporarily disappeared. That's quite interesting. And without having any story in your mind to tell you who you are, you nevertheless get a very strong sense of beingness or presence.

You can sense that there is a presence. And of course, that presence is perceiving through that presence is the background to your sense perceptions. Right now, you hear the voice.

You see the image on the screen, but no particular commentary on it. It's actually possible to be aware of the present moment, the now, and to be aware of the now is the state of presence. Now there are two levels to being aware of the now.

On one level, you're aware of what's happening in the now, outside or inside of you, whatever is going on around you or whatever arises in your field of perception and whatever arises inside you, a feeling or an emotion, even be aware of the occasional thought that may arise. But to be aware of the now is really more than that. There's another deeper level.

And this is what I'm referring to when I'm saying being aware of the now. Yes, you are aware of what's going on in the now, but you can also be aware of the now itself. This is very hard to talk about because obviously the now itself, you can't see it or hear it, taste it or smell it or touch it.

And obviously it's not a thought. Thinking now, now is not being aware of now, now, now, now. So to be aware of the now as something that is deeper than what appears in the now that's of course the state of presence.

And this paradoxical thing is when you're aware of the now, you're not really aware of anything because what we call the now is a field of presence, a space. So to be aware of the now is as elusive as being aware of the space outside of you. Usually you're not aware of the space in the room that you're sitting in.

You're aware of what's in the room, but you're not usually aware of the space. In the same way, you may be aware of what goes on inside you, in your mind, mental, emotional formations, one thought and another thought. But can you be aware of a deeper level within you that is the equivalent of the space in the room that you're sitting in?

And the equivalent of the furniture in your room is your thoughts, the content. And of course, the essence of this room is not the furniture. The essence of this room is the space in this room.

And the essence of you is not the furniture in your mind, which means the content of your mind. Although most people mistake the content of their mind for who they are, you have ideas in your head of who you are, and you derive your sense of self from the ideas in your head about who you are. But of course, that's not essentially who you are in the same way that the furniture in the room is not essentially the room.

So there's a space in you, so to speak, that is essentially who you are. And the furniture comes and goes, it's interchangeable. You can, when you don't know that space, which is another way of speaking of the now itself, is that inner space in which things appear.

If you can be aware of that, in addition to being aware of what comes into the space, what is in the space, as sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions, which make up your so-called life. If you can be aware of the space in addition to the things that appear in the space, then that is enlightened living, conscious, then you are conscious, you are present. So presence is being aware of that deeper dimension so that you don't delude yourself and believe that the content of your mind, because even sense perceptions, ultimately, you experience as the content of your mind.

So you don't delude yourself into believing that the content of your mind is all there is. To you, and the things happening around you, that's all there is, that's your life. Whereas it's only your life situation.

Whatever's going on in your life is your life situation. You remember, I sometimes speak about that. Is that all there is?

It's a very impoverished existence when all there is to you in your perception that is your life situation. Whatever's going on right now, with whatever's going on in your living situation, your work situation, your relationship situation, your financial situation. And at any one time of your life, at least one of these areas is probably going to be problematic.

If you don't have a problem with finances, you may have a problem with people, a relationship. If you don't have a problem with your relationships, you have some problem at work, you have a problem with health, things that rarely is your life without so-called problems, another word for which is challenges. So to look for an end to the challenges so that you can finally take a breath and say, ah, I have arrived.

And thinking that by somehow sorting out your life situation, you're going to arrive at a point where you can take that breath and say, I finally arrived. It's not going to happen. You never finally arrive as far as your life situation is concerned because it's in the nature of life to give you challenges.

So is that pessimistic or negative? When I say you're never going to arrive, of course, not on that level, not on the level of the content of your life situation, the content of your mind. But you can arrive and you can take that breath and say, ah, that's it.

I finally made it. You can do that by accessing, by realizing the deeper dimension in you of whatever you want to call it, whether you call it the now itself, whether you call it being aware of awareness itself, being aware of your beingness, the presence behind everything, being aware of yourself as the presence, not as what happens in the field of presence, but as the presence itself, a self-awareness of presence.

That is having arrived. And that is when you can take that breath and breathe out, ah, that's, I made it, so to speak. So you have arrived already because on the level of content of your life situation, you're never going to make it.

There will continue to be challenges, although there are periods when you have little plateaus, when you say, oh, life is great at the moment. I'm okay financially. I'm okay.

My work situation, relationships are fine. Family is fine. I have a nice place to live and the weather is good.

But is it going to last? Not for too long. And really, if we even want to use the word happiness, let's call it true happiness.

It's a delusion to believe that true happiness is going to come to you when certain things are sorted out or attained in your life situation. Yes, I'm not denying that it is comfortable and pleasant to achieve things, but any achievement is already an end point. So you achieve, you'd create this great thing.

And there it is. And everybody says, oh, you're great. And then what?

Okay. And for a while, that might give you satisfaction. And then it doesn't anymore.

Or people don't think it's that great anymore. So happiness, true happiness, arises from the deeper, the realization of that deeper dimension in yourself. That's the source of satisfaction, true satisfaction.

And to arrive at it, you don't need more time. In fact, as far as the realization of that dimension is concerned, time is the hindrance. That sense of psychological time prevents you from realizing that, prevents you from finding true happiness, contentment, not sleepy contentment, alive contentment.

It is peaceful. Another word for it is inner peace. But there's a dynamic quality to that inner peace.

So really, that's the only way to become a truly peaceful human being and to bring peace into this world is to access that dimension in yourself. But what that really means is to be truly yourself. To be who you are beyond the content of your mind, the unconditioned consciousness.

Then you become intelligent in the true sense. Or rather, the one underlying intelligence that pervades the universe can then flow through you and express itself even as the creation of some new form, whatever that may be. And the master raised his finger and said, enters in from there, from here.

Every point is, these things cannot be explained. You spoil them if you explain them. I just explained it, unfortunately.

Do you remember the story I recounted in a, I believe in a new earth, the story of a Zen master who is on a pilgrimage? That's the ancient word for hike. He's on a- He's on a- is on a pilgrimage somewhere with a disciple.

And so they're walking in silence, of course, except of course, a disciple hasn't quite arrived yet at the realization that Zen aims at. So the disciple is walking, but obviously thinking while he's walking. Finally, they sit down somewhere for a little picnic, a break, and then disciple says to the master, master, I've been thinking, I don't quite, still don't get it.

I've been here for five years and I still don't get what is the essence of what you teach? What is that essence? I just can't get it.

I've been trying to figure it out, but I can't. And the master said, can you hear the sound of that mountain stream, that little, and the disciple said, what mountain stream? I don't hear anything.

The master said, listen carefully. And so the disciple goes, and then in a very far distance, the disciple hears the sound of water of a little mountain stream, very distant. And then the disciple says, yeah, I can hear it now, master.

And the master says, that is the, that is the, something like, that is the portal into Zen, or that is, there is the beginning of Zen. That's it, that's it. And for a moment, I don't know how long the disciple actually gets it.

Wow. Wow. And he gets it because his mind stops and awareness remains.

And why did that happen? Because all his consciousness, conscious attention was required for the sensory, in this case, auditory perception. There wasn't enough left to be, so to speak, to be consumed by thinking.

So there was a cessation of thinking and the arising of presence. The master very cleverly arranged it in that way, rather than saying, stop thinking, which wouldn't work. So there wasn't the master, the disciple got it.

In some versions, there's a continuation of the story. So they finished their picnic, they walk on, and an hour later, by then the disciple has fallen back into a stream of useless thinking, of course. And the disciple says, I have another question, master.

What would you have said if I hadn't been able to hear that mountain stream? What would you have said then? Okay.

Slight correction in how I told the story before I finish it. When the disciple originally says, yes, I can hear the mountain stream. Yes, I can hear it.

The master says, enter Zen from there, or from here. Enter Zen from there, enter Zen from here. In other words, that's the entry point into Zen, this one.

And then hours later, when the disciple had been thinking again, they're walking again, what would you have said if I had said to you, I can't hear the mountain stream, what would you have said then? The mind is so weird, it never stops ruminations. And the master raised his finger and said, enter Zen from there, from here.

Every point is, these things cannot be explained, you spoil them if you explain them. I've just explained it, unfortunately. The mind, it doesn't stop.

So you have the mind, such a wonderful tool, such a wonderful instrument for creation. The ability to think, that's inseparable from the arising of language, ability to use language. And thinking is a kind of inner talk.

And it grew and grew, and gradually it took over. And so humans lost their connectedness with being, which before the arising of thinking was unconscious, but they felt that deep, they did not live in a state of, in a problem making state of anxiety, or if there was fear, it was short-lived because there was immediate danger. But there was no anxiety or fear generated by the thinking process, because there was no thinking process.

There was no identities that were before the time that Narcissus saw his image in the pool of water and became obsessed with it. And then, that I talked about yesterday, the first selfie, the world's first selfie, me, it's me. And then people began to have a relationship with themselves.

I hate myself, I love myself. Sometimes I hate myself, and sometimes I love myself.

[Speaker 9] (6:05:58 - 6:05:58)
Hmm.

[Speaker 1] (6:06:01 - 6:42:05)
Loving yourself is certainly preferable to hating yourself. I would recommend it, but it's not the last step. It's an intermediate step.

Beyond loving yourself is no longer having a relationship with yourself. I'm ending the relationship with myself. I'm ending the relationship with myself.

Goodbye. This is it. So this, after loving yourself, the next step is simply being yourself.

Oh, then you know that you don't hate yourself, you don't, you can't really say, I love myself, because the moment you say, I love myself, you have created a duality. I and myself. So who is that self that you either love or hate, and who are you?

Now, at first, this space of pure awareness seems to be nothing. And in a way, it is nothing in the sense that it is not a thing, that it is not an object of consciousness, because everything else is an object of consciousness. Every sense perception becomes an object of consciousness in your mind.

Every thought is an object of, in other words, you could say, it is a form that consciousness temporarily takes. It incarnates into a form, and that form is a thought, or it could be a sense perception. And so that is the incarnation of consciousness into form.

When you come, sometimes Buddhists argue, how many more incarnations do I need before I no longer need to incarnate? You can do it right here and now. Don't incarnate into thoughts.

That's the end of incarnation, which means don't identify with the rising thoughts. Be the awareness behind the thoughts, which is what you are. And so at first, it seems like, let's say, what we call it, stillness.

By the way, I wrote a little book that some of you might not know. It's called Stillness Speaks, which is a little paradox, of course. Stillness Speaks, it's a book for meditative reading.

You just read a few lines and you kind of become still. That's what it's for, but anyway. So the stillness is one way of putting it, but that's not, it's just a term, of course.

Stillness is the inner equivalent of silence in the outer world. Silence in the outer world is the absence of noise. Stillness in the inner realm is the absence of thought.

And so in the absence of thought, what remains is you do not fall asleep. In ordinary existence, when thinking stops, you very quickly fall asleep. So the only way that humans who are not awakened or awakening can experience the cessation of thinking is when they move from the wakeful state into sleep.

Then there comes a moment of you cannot remember your problems anymore because you're so tired. Five minutes before you were thinking about your problems would be the problems for your identity. And now you get very tired.

You can't remember your problems anymore. And thinking comes, but you're not totally asleep yet. And it feels so good.

You're moving towards sleep, and it feels so good. And temporarily, briefly, you're free of yourself. And then you move into the unconsciousness of sleep.

Now, most humans, without knowing it, are looking for becoming free of themselves, of themselves. And then again, they look in the wrong places. Some humans find temporary relief from themselves by taking certain substances.

And again, for some humans, it can be a good thing to have, especially those who are totally mind-possessed, that can give them a glimpse of something that's beyond their mind. It may temporarily stop their mind, but don't become dependent on anything. But, and I don't recommend it.

Now, you don't need it. But if you take such, humans, they love that smoking, these dried leaves, they were illegal for many years for some reason, but now you can smoke them. Well, no, I don't know about here, but.

So you, it temporarily calms the mind. It's like your mind becomes a bit, I tried it once when we were visiting Amsterdam. And it kind of dulls your mind a bit.

That's how I experienced it. But I can see what it does to people whose mind is very active. They go, temporarily, they become free of themselves, the mind made self.

And they've become, oh, happy, so happy. I can't stop laughing. That's how happy I am.

I'm free of myself. So the way I put it is, with this, yes, you are becoming free of yourself, but you're falling below thinking. You're going to a state prior to the rising of the ego.

You're falling below thinking. Yes, you are free of the mind that tortures you every day, but you're falling below thinking. This is not where the awakening path, otherwise we would call it the sleepy path or something like that.

The awakening path is the ability grows in you to rise above thinking. That's what it is. You are actually, you are conscious without thought.

And that is very, that is the simplicity of it. And then you find, at first, it's just an absence of thought, in the same way that externally silence is an absence of noise. This is the absence of inner noise.

And then at first, okay, and then you stay with it, and it comes back again at the end. Once you get a glimpse of that state of pure awareness, you may want to invite it into your life more often. And because then, from the point of view of time, one could say that it deepens this power that manifests through you, grows stronger.

Not that the power itself grows stronger, but it manifests into this dimension where there's time, it manifests more fully through you, so to speak. So the power, presence, power, as I sometimes call it, grows in you. That is the power of life itself.

That is the pure, pure intelligence, you could call it, pure consciousness, the very primordial thing that is behind everything. It is, that is, sometimes I'm, are you, am I talking about God here? Am I saying that this, the consciousness itself is God?

Well, yes and no. The analogy I like to use that is maybe helpful is the sun. The sun emanates light into here.

It gives, it's the life on a physical level. The light of the sun is the life-giving thing here that enables life to be, and the sun pours out light continuously, energy, and there's the sun. Now, this light, of course, is still connected to this, is connected to the sun.

It's not separate from the sun. It emanates from the sun, but it's not the sun. It's, so it is and it isn't the sun, because the sun itself is a vast and inconceivable form of energy.

This is only an analogy. So what I mean then is God is the source from which consciousness emanates into this dimension. This is the closest, as far as I'm concerned, it's the closest, and in words, to explain that which cannot really be explained.

It's the medium, nothing in excess. The challenges of life, it's important then to see that there is no end to it. So on that level, you want, life won't leave you alone, but on a deeper level, once you accept that challenges will come, you don't have to become negative when they do come.

You can actually, oh, there's another one. And then it's often through intense challenges, the bigger ones, they drive you deeper. It's, now the interesting thing is, it's not the great things that happen to you that make you more conscious.

It's, in many cases, the so-called bad things that happen to you if you deal with them correctly and come to a place of acceptance that make you more conscious. So there's an ancient saying, I believe it comes from Sufism, but I'm not sure, that says, when the ego weeps for what it has lost, the spirit rejoices for what it has found. And so many times, you may find that in your life, you lose something, death, loss of security, loss of income, loss of health, loss of long-term relationship, both these kinds of, when the ego weeps, because the ego weeps, it's terrible, but then something suddenly arises of something that had been part of your sense of self has been removed.

It leaves a hole, an empty space, such as when somebody close to you dies, you lose your livelihood, your home. It leaves an empty space, which is painful from the point of view of a personality. And when you, it is potentially also able to drive you deeper into the, who you truly are beyond form, the unconditioned.

And then you experience suddenly, how can I feel so peaceful, suddenly, if something bad has happened, and yet suddenly you feel a sense of liberation. It doesn't happen to everybody who experiences loss, but potentially, that is always there. So next time a challenge comes, and it won't be long, then say, oh, there's another one.

And then you go with it. You look at it. Is there anything I can do to change the situation?

First, when you look at it, first, the first is always to accept the present moment as it arises. Now, sometimes whatever arises in the present moment requires you to take action. And then you look at it.

Now, this looking is an important part of it, to look at a situation. It's not necessarily visual looking. It means to give attention to a particular situation that has arisen or is arising in the present moment.

And then in this, this thing that I call looking is you give it attention. In that moment, it could only be a few seconds or a minute or two, you give it attention. And that is a very important thing.

It's not, at that point, you don't think. If your thinking comes in too soon, you might come to very wrong conclusions about what action you need to take because that action will be conditioned by your mind, the old stuff. You bring in the old and try to deal with the present moment by bringing in old conditioning.

So you will act according to your conditioning. But if you can give something attention, this giving attention, you face it. You don't, you've let go of the inner resentment, and this is the most important thing.

You've realized it is in the nature of life to give you challenges. And when they come, there's no resentment. You just see, ah, there it is, another one.

Okay, now, even as you say there's another one, you don't say, oh, no, another one. There's another one, okay. And then you look at it, and by looking, I mean to be in that state of consciousness in which there's an alertness, but not yet thinking.

You don't immediately, unless it's a situation that requires immediate action, which is called an emergency situation, in which case you'll do whatever you do anyway. Often emergency situations cut your mind out completely, and something else takes over, and you take action. And sometimes people do heroic things, and afterwards, when they are praised by others, they say, I don't know, I just did it.

And then others, it can happen that they become paralyzed in the face of an emergency. They cannot get out of their mind. And their mind doesn't have time to deal with it.

It can't do, it's suddenly the whole engine in the head gets stuck. What do I do now? And then it's too late.

It's happened already, and you're dead, or whatever it is. And you didn't jump out of the way soon enough. And there the train was coming towards you.

What do I do now? The train is coming. So in emergency situations, you cannot think.

If you think, you're stuck. And so many people experience actually that the mind gets out of the way, and something else, presence suddenly does. And this happens to people who engage in dangerous activities and love it.

Climbing up a steep wall, mountain wall, driving dangerous cars fast, motorbikes, or whatever they do. Anything, any dangerous activity forces you into the present moment. You don't need that.

And it could, of course, dangerous activity means it is dangerous. Don't get addicted to just one activity to take you into the present moment, then because then every weekend you'd have to climb up this wall. So, and in the meantime, of course, you're still not present.

So if it's not an absolute emergency situation, but a challenge, then it's important. So that means you have a little bit of time to deal with it. Don't immediately go into thinking about it.

So give it attention, face it, and now this giving of attention, which I sometimes call looking, but it's not, it might involve looking, or it might not, is this clarity of consciousness with which you look at something as an entire situation and don't immediately come to a conclusion as to what action you need to take. So you go, it's that facing it and looking that connects you to a deeper level and challenge. And in other words, you become still, alert and still.

And then after a few seconds or a minute or two, it is likely that a thought comes in that tells you what the right action is. So that's not an emergency, it's just a challenge. Or it might be that you still don't know what to do, or it may be that you have to become still again after a while and look at it again.

And then you may come to the realization that there's nothing you can do, at least for now. There are certain situations that are problematic, and yet for now, there isn't really much you can do. And then you leave it alone.

You accept this is what is, the acceptance of what is. So, it happens very often when people are not able to really have that clarity of perception, a look into it. Often people take action when it would be better to leave it alone.

Many situations, it depends, of course, on what it is. Many situations are made far worse by taking unnecessary, superfluous, or excessive action. Balance in everything.

There's a balance that you need to find. But the most important thing, challenges, accept them, even welcome them when they arise because they're a great opportunity, especially the little ones. You might not welcome the big challenges, but they are great too.

Don't resent the challenges. Get rid of the belief or transcend the belief that you should not be challenged by life, that these problems should not occur. Think about the movies, how boring a movie is.

And not only the audience would go to sleep if nothing ever goes wrong in a movie, the characters would go to sleep too. And in the end, they're all asleep. And I use asleep, not necessarily as actually asleep.

You would, in the absence of challenges, you would, your level of consciousness would decrease. So if you discover within yourself that a lot of the time you're in a state of lack, of insufficiency, of not enough, and you feel that the answer to, the remedy is to be active in this world and achieve and do as much as possible, then you'll probably find that ultimately that is not the answer to your state of lack. In order to transcend, to go beyond your state of lack, of neediness, of not enough, spiritual practice and spiritual realization is necessary.

Focus on the realization of being. It's only there that you can go beyond that state of lack, which is ego. Go within and discover who or what you are beyond the person.

When I say give attention, there's an element of appreciation of everything, of the little things. And you begin to realize that your entire life consists mainly of little things. We are always going from here to there, looking around, handling things.

That is sometimes called gratitude. As you might have noticed, it always takes a while before I start to speak. I often say it's good to start with a moment of stillness and it is, but the main reason is that I don't know what to say.

And that could be a very uncomfortable place or situation to be in. Some people have nightmares like that. You're on stage, curtain opens and suddenly you're facing the audience and you've forgotten your lines, but I don't have any lines.

So here's the secret. It's becoming comfortable with the state of not knowing. Otherwise it would be awful.

What can I say now? Would be terrible. And of course that is a kind of trust which I suggested the other day as a better word for faith, trust.

And that's incredibly important to become comfortable with not knowing. But what do you do when you become comfortable with not knowing? You enter the state of non-conceptual knowing, but you have to be uncomfortable with not knowing anything on a conceptual level, thinking in other words.

So another way of putting it is to say that when I come on here and then I sit, I don't think because that's the state of not knowing. And in the gaps between sentences or words, I also don't think rather than there's no next sentence or word being prepared. It just comes and that's for you.

I'm saying that because that also is a state of consciousness that you can enter and you're doing it to some extent when you don't label things, when you step back from thought, and become comfortable with just being present. And all these questions of things like self-esteem, which apparently is a problem for many people, either they have low self-esteem or they have exaggerated self-esteem or it fluctuates. And books written about how you can improve your self-esteem and probably workshops.

I don't know what they teach you. Maybe it's good, maybe not. But the simple thing is that in that state of no thought, but alert presence, all these questions about self-esteem resolve themselves into nothingness because you're no longer looking for some perceived value in a conceptual sense of self, the personality.

And you can sense the power that is within you that has nothing to do with a person. And that's where your self-esteem comes from. And it's not comparative.

In the normal state of consciousness, self-esteem is always comparative. How do I rate myself relative to this person and that person and that? And on what level, external appearance, strength, knowledge, beauty, possessions, status.

And of course there's always, you're always inferior to some in one or two or three areas and you may be superior to some in another one or two areas, but that's the power of stillness. That's another way of putting it. The power of inner stillness, that is the true seed of self-esteem.

And you can't really call it self-esteem anymore, but you realize the infinite value that you not possess, but are, because that is the essence that underlies the entire universe. It is the light of the world. And you don't compare yourself to others anymore.

You feel neither inferior nor superior. The ego is always either inferior or superior. So you might be surprised if I tell you even, I'm a small guy, even if I'm standing next to a big muscular guy towering above me with a big ego, I'm not thinking of anybody in particular at the moment, but it has happened in the past.

I don't feel inferior, just nor do I feel superior. I'm spirit, you might have a big body and muscles, but I'm the spiritual guy. That would, of course, it's the ego talking.

And this is a very interesting strategy of the ego. The spiritual ego can come in and without you knowing it, you still have a conceptual sense of self, but it's not spiritual. That's a trap that some spiritual teachers fall into too.

And you know it when they make certain pronouncements. We touched on this before, and that is they explain that they are superior to any other teacher, for example, either any other teacher alive now, or I've seen one or two spiritual teachers or read about them who actually claimed that they are superior to any spiritual teacher that ever lived or ever will live. Well, that should cover it.

Here or any other galaxy. So the most important practice on your journey, spiritual journey into the present moment, the journey without distance, is to become comfortable with not knowing, which means to become comfortable with not thinking. You don't need to demand that there should be long periods when you're not thinking, just moments when you're simply looking, listening, perceiving, or being, and you don't know anything in that moment.

Not conceptually, but you access the source of all knowledge of all knowing. And that is a way for the ego to gradually become weaker, just gradually subside, no longer runs your life, which is what is the ego, the unobserved mind. It may still come in here and there, it probably will.

[Speaker 2] (6:42:10 - 6:42:11)
That's fine.

[Speaker 1] (6:42:21 - 6:54:27)
So part of this is, of course, to give more attention to the present moment, because the more you think, the more future you generate, and the more attention

you give to the present moment, the less thinking, because to be really present, you don't think about it, you just are with it, give it attention. I recommend the little things of life to be more attentive to all the little things that make up every hour of every day, every minute, every hour, and give them more attention, walking steps, one step at a time, objects that you're handling, all the time you're handling objects in your life, you're always touching something, putting something here and there. Is everything that you handle just a means to an end, or are you able to just appreciate the simple presence of even of a so-called inanimate object, contemplation also of all the lovely things that make up your environment, part of your environment.

For example, if I were sitting here alone, let's say I'm waiting for everybody to arrive, I might be sitting here looking, of course, at the flower, sense of stillness, and then there's a glass table here, and then there's a glass of water here, and there's a clock and a bell and tissues, and they all reflect the light in different ways. There's a little bit of a rainbow effect in the glass of water here, and then the lights are reflected on the bells, almost like a mirror, and there's the clock ticking away. It's a beautiful scene.

Sometimes you go to an art gallery, well, not so much with modern art, but a very favorite thing would be still life artists, and it took a while in art before they discovered, the artists in the history of art, before they discovered the seemingly insignificant things and started to give attention to those. Before that happened, they were very much interested in the huge things, the saints or the kings or the huge battle scenes or the big, they had to, they painted those things or the important people or some dramatic thing, the volcanic eruption or whatever, a fire. And then at some point, they started to discover the beauty and the incredible sense of the quality that is in the little things.

They started painting, for example, simple people. The Dutch artists, perhaps, perhaps I'm not that knowledgeable about artists, but the famous Dutch paintings show, they don't, it's not so much big, important people, they show simple people, a woman in the kitchen, baking bread, people, simple people, sitting around the table, eating a very simple meal, and there's a light, incredible light effects that comes, light comes through the window, and there's an incredible sense of presence and aliveness in the painting.

And this is a scene that in normal life, you would never have, unless you're really very conscious, nobody would have stopped and said, oh, isn't that amazing? These people are sitting around a table, eating a simple meal, and there's light coming through the window. Nobody would have done that.

Perhaps after these, more of these artists depicted relatively, seemingly insignificant things, perhaps it motivated some people to give more attention to that, but even now, it's still, people very much overlook that, and you overlook, then, a large part of your life, you don't give it attention. When I say give attention, there's an element of appreciation of everything, of the little things, and you begin to realize that your entire life consists mainly of little things. Even if you are VIP, it still consists mainly, you're always sitting somewhere, standing somewhere, looking around, handling things, going from here to there, either on a bus, or your private jet, and this giving attention, that is sometimes called gratitude.

That's kind of part of it, this appreciation, but I don't necessarily use the word gratitude too often, because it implies that you say to somebody, oh, thank you, but there's a simple appreciation of the is-ness of things, of their presence, so you no longer regard, almost continuously, your entire environment as a means to an end, and what's the end? You need to get to some future moment, where suddenly, everything is going to be better than now, and so you're always on your way, it's a stepping stone to the next moment, and every object that you handle is only, has only utilitarian value, but has no value in itself, is never appreciated for its beingness, and then you do the same to human beings, they're only regarded, what can they do for me now? How do they fit into my schemes, into my plans?

Because there's a future orientation continuously, which is the mind, because there is no future, it's created by the mind. And it becomes extremely enjoyable to be, just to be contemplating the little things that surround you, then you, there is something, yes, there is an element of gratitude that comes with it, this appreciation, it's an element, or you appreciate the sense-perceived world, this is an aspect of reality, it's not the deepest aspect of reality, but it is the surface of the ocean, and it's beautiful. And that also means, it's not just when you are quietly contemplating, it's also when you're going from A to B to perform some action, you're going to buy something, going to the, whatever it is, post office, appreciate the journey, and every step of the journey, and look around so that the 10 minutes of going to the shop, or driving to the shop, or taking a bicycle to the shop, isn't completely wasted, and reduced to means to an end, then you can actually, that every moment is significant, and ultimately it's only ever the one moment, and then this waiting game comes to an end, waiting for the big break, that's an expression, I don't know what break, what breaks, but waiting for whatever it is, of course you have a goal, you may have a goal in life, and you're moving towards it, but in the meantime, this is now, and yes, you know you're moving towards it, it becomes very enjoyable to be wherever you are, when you have this ability to contemplate the little things, both when you're passively contemplating, or even when you are moving, in being engaged with things, I started off with the talking about coming on stage, and not knowing what to say, I'll tell you about dreams that I sometimes have, two types of dreams, because dreams can come from different levels, there are deep dreams, and there are surface dreams, in deep dreams, I sit in front of an audience like this, and it's basically very much like this, and I speak and wonderful things coming out of my mouth, and I don't know where they come from, and the teaching arises, and I can sense, and sometimes I know towards the end that it's a dream, and then in the dream, I think, oh, it would be nice to remember what I just said, but usually I don't, it is almost like in the deepest dreams, in some astral dimension, the teaching is actually happening, and then occasionally I have a surface dream, in which I enter a building to give a talk, and then things happen, for example, I can't find the entrance to the stage, and when I finally find it, then the audience is very restless, and they're moving about, and they're not even paying attention to me, and then other things go wrong, and so these dreams come from a disconnected, when the mind is disconnected, they arise, and when the mind is connected with source,

[Speaker 2] (6:54:27 - 6:54:30)
then this is what happens.

[Speaker 1] (6:54:56 - 9:19:47)
Welcome to our meditation, people all over the planet, at the same time now opening up to the spaciousness inside, in a space, that which is prior to thoughts, prior to emotions, prior to sense perceptions, always there, can be called stillness, presence, inner space, you just have to pay attention to it, and that attention already is it, attention to awareness, or awareness of awareness, in other words, you become conscious right now, of the fact that you are conscious, you can actually sense consciousness that you are beyond the person, completely non-conceptual, nothing to do with thinking, it's that which transcends the person, and that which transcends the world, without awareness of that, the world and the person are troublesome, and without awareness of that, the world will inspire fear, because it's not all that stable, continuous flux, especially at this time, even if we are not affected directly by upheavals that are happening, or have recently happened in different parts of the world, Japan, earthquake, tsunami, nuclear reactors, North Africa, upheavals, Middle East, even if we are not directly

affected, we can get a heightened sense, just knowing that this is going on, we can get a heightened sense of the fact that the world is not all that safe, some people would say it's not safe anymore, it never was safe, of course, it never is safe, it cannot be, and it's not meant to be safe, it's the world of form, continuously changing, so whether it's your personal life, if you're clinging for security, there's nothing wrong with arranging your life so that externally you have a certain degree of security to the extent to which it is possible, but if you're looking to beyond the practical, if you're looking to the world of form, whether it is the structures around you, whether it's in your personal life, through relationship, or through your job, or through your life insurance, whether you look to that for a sense of inner peace, what is sometimes called peace of mind, or whether you look to the collective structures of your economy, social structures, whether you look to that for a sense of security, it cannot provide you with that for too long, so it's finding something within where a true sense of safety arises that has nothing to do with the externals of your life, personal or collective. Then if some kind of disaster comes, and of course, inevitably, some kind of disaster will come, because this body is going to die, that's a big disaster, sooner or later, and of course, other disasters may happen or may not happen, or small, small ways in which things around you dissolve, doesn't have to be a big disaster, it's often those collective disasters that can bring about a leap in awareness in many people who are personally affected by that. If that is your destiny, that's fine. It may not be your destiny to be affected by some collective disaster.

I am sitting here in California at the moment, probably on a fault line, so there is no absolute security that this chair that I'm sitting on and the floor the chair's on is still going to be here in 20 minutes' time before we finish. It probably will be, we can't be sure, or even that this body will still be alive in 20 minutes' time. Probably, we can't be sure.

Now it's for many people, it's the challenge of major or minor disaster in their lives that can push them into awakening. Without disaster, and I'm using this term now in a very wide sense, meaning any kind of dissolution of form around you, without that, consciousness would not even evolve. So although on one level, it is true to say that disaster, it is tragic, yes.

It's terrible, yes. True. On another level, that also is part of a much larger context, and that larger context is the evolution of consciousness here.

Consciousness, of course, is the formless essence within you. Not a personal possession. So somehow the fluctuation of forms is part of the way in which consciousness evolves here in this dimension and comes into this dimension more fully.

The dimension of time. The timeless coming into the dimension of time. There's a paradox here, but that's how it is.

The timeless within you coming into your personal life of time. That which is beyond the person, shining through the person. And that is security.

Because you can then sense beyond any conceptual explanations or beliefs, you can sense that which is timeless in you, which means eternal, which means indestructible, beyond death. It's not that consciousness, don't believe mainstream culture which tells you that consciousness is an epiphenomenon or a byproduct of brain activity. The brain is born out of consciousness, not the other way around.

There's a modicum of consciousness even in this chair or wherever you look, even inanimate, all around you. All the forms around you are consciousness having taken on a temporary form. Life, another word for it.

So there's life and there are forms of life. You move in that between the two. That's the balancing act, the dance of life between who you are in your essence, which you can sense at this very moment if this has any meaning to you.

You can sense at this very moment that which is beyond the person in you, which is just the light of consciousness. And you're also aware of you're still a person, the form. But the security, sense of security can never come from the forms.

That's always an illusory security if it's there. And illusory security is always threatened by an underlying fear. True security, true peace of mind, to use that expression, although it's not the mind.

And we do not need for disaster to happen in our lives to find that. And perhaps if we find that without a disaster, or because we've already had our disasters and it has taken us there, perhaps we don't need to experience further external disaster. But if we do, it'll just be a deepening.

It will result in a deepening. Please know that the words that are being spoken here are only moving on the surface. Underneath the words which you hear, which become concepts in your mind, underneath that is that to which the words point.

That which is beyond concepts, beyond words, the underlying deeper sense of beingness, which is consciousness itself. So as you sit here, as we sit here, as I sit here, I can sense that it's a little silly to quantify it, but I could say as I speak here, and this can also be true for you as you listen, 80% of my consciousness or maybe 90% is just an aware presence. And the remaining 20 or 10% is the mind formulating thoughts which become words.

But the mind that is formulating thoughts is inspired by that which is beyond thoughts. It's just giving expression, always very limited, to that which cannot be spoken, but can be sensed here and now. Some traditions may call it the higher self or whatever.

It doesn't, as long as higher doesn't mean that you, that concept could mislead you into thinking that it's floating up there. I'm looking for my higher self. So you're already looking somewhere else.

Maybe if your inner self would be a better, deeper self. Essential self, or don't call it a self at all as the Buddhists do, the no self, the empty space. Or call it the fullness.

The main thing is not to get attached to any concept, but just use it as a pointer. What's important is not the concept as an explanation, but that to which it points. That's why we're here.

And the strangest thoughts that always went through my mind when I was on my bicycle cycling in nature, and then I sometimes would get off my bike and just sit there, look around. And always I had this thought in my head which said, this will always be here. I already mentioned perceiving without labeling as a practice, a large sense perception.

Nature, especially natural things, and they're everywhere here. Nature is extremely helpful, especially in this, the world that we live in. For sanity, even not just here, where you go back into your everyday life, sanity can easily be found in nature if you go.

Because you can divide the world into the human-made world and the natural world. And some people live almost exclusively in the human-made world, especially if you live in a big city. But there is always, there's this vision that when I was a child, I was not happy a lot of the time when I was a child because of dysfunctional family background.

They couldn't help it. They were just in the grip of their ego. But when I was given a bicycle, I was able to leave the city and cycle to the outskirts where there was some nature.

And not magnificent nature, just ordinary trees and some fields and trees. And there I experienced my moments of happiness and relief in nature. And already there, I knew the difference between the human-made world that was a world of unhappiness for me, and the natural world, which was the world where I experienced a sense of freedom.

And the strangest thoughts that always went through my mind when I was on my bicycle cycling in nature, and then I sometimes would get off my bike and just sit there, look around. And always I had this thought in my head which said, this will always be here. This will always be here.

And I was only 10, 11, 12 years old, that this will always be here. This will always be here. Somehow, and I didn't even fully understand what this meant.

I could feel, but I realized later, this is nature and this is the man. And the human-made world is not actually going to last. The natural world is relative to the human-made world, is almost eternal.

And the planet has unbelievable ability for regeneration, which we may talk about some other time. So the humans will not destroy. They should do all they can to refrain from causing harm to the planet, obviously.

But even if they go totally insane and they don't manage, they will not be able to destroy. I will talk about it some other time. You don't need to believe me now.

So the practice then is another, tomorrow I will talk about relating to other humans here, which is another kind of practice, a bit more difficult than relating to nature. Because humans are difficult. And especially don't, as you go to sleep, make sure that the last thing that you are aware of before entering sleep, make sure that the last thing is not your device.

Or the TV is still running. A good practice is you lie in bed on your back and place attention into the body, the inner energy field of your body. So you feel the body, many times written, spoken about it as an important practice, inner body awareness.

What you're aware of is not the physical body, it's that which animates the physical body. And so it takes your attention away from thinking. It's a very easy, quick way of stopping your mind without exerting some willpower and saying, stop, stop, stop, that won't work anyway.

But there's attention into your body, abdomen, hands, feet, feel them from within. We'll do some practice tomorrow, perhaps, or you might do it with Kim also. Feel the liveness that pervades the physical body.

And from there, you gradually go to sleep. And it's a beautiful, completely different way of entering sleep. And if you wake at night with certain thoughts, fearful thoughts, or many people, I say, waking at night, oh, what's going to happen?

Nothing, this is the present moment and there's nothing happening. Yeah, but what's going, when I get back home, it's my life is just, it's all shambles, where am I, oh my God, where am I going to, there's nothing, there is no crisis now, this is the present moment, the present moment, and you're in bed, it's warm and comfortable. So go into the body, take attention away from that, and you can feel.

If you feel the inner body, there's no attention left for thinking, and it's usual, so whenever you have a sleepless night, you begin to be plagued by thoughts, direct your energy first, you start with the abdomen, breathe into it, for example, it rises, and you feel that as you breathe in, follow the attention with your breath, and the abdomen rises and falls, rises and falls, and then you feel the energy spreading out from there, or you can start with your hands until you get a sense of global aliveness pervading the body. Beautiful. And when you wake up, just one last thing, when you wake up and these thoughts begin to tell you how critical your life is, and fear, and then you say, okay, I'm going to go into the body, and then the thought that will arise most likely is no, I can't do it now.

No, this is not the time, I can't do it, I can't, I can't. Are you going to believe that thought or not? Because don't believe every thought that comes into your head.

So, and if the thought is I can't, yes, I can, look, I'm doing it. So don't get persuaded by a thought that tells you, no, you can't do it now. It's such an extraordinary, an extraordinary adventure, the consciousness, the awakening of higher consciousness in you.

It's just so amazing. And to be, and to then to experience, to become free of the personality so that you no longer feel you're trapped in it. Of course, you still have a history, it's fine.

You have a personal history, you have a life situation, everybody has a life situation, which is to do with relationships, it's to do with your work situation, your financial situation, your home situation, your health situation, all these things make up your life situation. Now, it's very rare that all these things are going absolutely fine for you. My health, wonderful.

My relationships, absolutely perfect. My work, career, great. Finances, great.

Every possessions, home, wonderful home. Children, all healthy and intelligent and great. Everything is great.

But it doesn't happen very often. And if it does, it doesn't last that long. You just have to wait a little.

And then somewhere things could break down here and there. You get challenged. Something happens that doesn't, isn't supposed to happen, says the mind.

You get challenged by life all the time. And that's good. That's how it's meant to be.

And you realize the world can't make you happy. Occasionally, you might think, oh yes, it can because I've just fallen in love with the most amazing, amazing person who is going to make me happy for the rest of my life. Oh dear.

That's a big thing to put on the person. A huge expectation. He or she is going to make me happy.

I know it. Okay. So it gives you a high, say that's finally life.

I don't need all that spiritual stuff anymore. I found the ideal partner. And then you wait a little after the wedding.

And very soon, sooner or later, usually sooner, you discover there are aspects to your partner's personality that you didn't know existed. Something must have gone dreadfully wrong. Did I marry the wrong person?

My God. All that happens is, of course, you experience the egoic, the particularly unconscious aspects of that personality, which every person has. Of course, some to a much greater degree than others, but every person has certain aspects that you experience that you will find irritating or unpleasant or upsetting.

In that sense, you will always marry the wrong person. If you're expecting them to make you happy, you're definitely going to marry the wrong person. So the real thing is the realization that the world, whether it's people or situations or achievements, the world does not have the capacity to make you happy because happiness arises from a deeper place within you, which is inseparable from the essence of who you are.

And I don't even use the word happiness to describe it because it's deeper than that. Happiness sounds a little superficial to me. Happiness sounds like, ah, so happy.

And then the next day you go, oh, no, it's like, oh, something good happens. And then, but there's something deeper. Let's be, I call it in one of the books, beyond happiness and unhappiness, this piece.

Happiness and unhappiness exist in the polarities of this world. Something good happens, of course you, yes, you're happy. Something bad happens.

If you're not connected with who you are in the essence of your being, something bad, so-called bad happens, a challenge in relationships, in work situation, financial situation, health situation, wherever, something happens can make you really, can be devastating, make you really, totally miserable. When you're connected with who you are beyond the personality, you will still experience a certain down when something bad happens. You'll experience an oh, but it doesn't go very deep, that oh, there's a depth to who you are that is not touched by the fluctuations in this dimension, and that is the peace, as Jesus called it, the peace that passes all understanding.

There is a depth to an essence that is ultimately untouched, but it's not in the sense that you're cut off from anything, but a core, a space in you that is timeless, and from there arises what is sometimes called inner peace. And then you can still experience fluctuations on the surface of your being, but there's a depth that's not affected by it. So you can cry and weep if a loved one dies.

Of course you're not, you will cry and weep. It will be sad, and yet you can sense a depth to you, and in that depth, you realize that which is beyond death. It's the essence of who you are, which is consciousness, and the person who passed away, the essence of that person is consciousness.

So reading this is an invitation, really, to join him in that state of consciousness, of that alert stillness or presence. And not only as you read or listen, when I read it to you, it may also help you to, as you go about your life, to pay more attention to the seemingly insignificant, the little things. You may find this yourself when you, as you become present, and you walk around, there's an acknowledgement of that extraordinariness of life, even in its seemingly most insignificant manifestations.

And in fact, you become more interested in those things than in the big things. Often Krishnamurti would wake up in the night, early hours of the morning or night, like four o'clock, 4.30, and suddenly would go into intense presence, and he would perceive whatever was there to be perceived in the intense alertness. And he could be for an hour without any thought, just totally still.

Here's a description of what happens when he's woken up by the cry of a bird in the middle of the night. It was long before dawn when the sharp cry of a bird woke up the night for an instant, and the light of that cry faded away. The light of that cry.

Oh, by the way, he never uses the word I once in the whole notebook. He sometimes says one instead of I, one felt hot, or sometimes he says you, you felt hot when he means I. It was long before dawn when the sharp cry of a bird woke up the night for an instant, and the light of that cry faded away.

And the trees remained dark, motionless, melting into the air. It was a soft, quiet night, endlessly alive. It was awake.

There was movement. There was a deep stirring with utter silence. Even the village next door, with its many dogs always barking, was quiet.

It was a strange stillness, terribly potent, destructively alive. It was so alive and still that you were afraid to move, so your body froze into immobility, and the brain, which had awakened with that sharp cry of the bird, had become still with heightened sensitivity. It was a brilliant night with the stars in a cloudless sky.

They seemed so close, and the Southern Cross was just over the trees, sparkling in the warm air. That was obviously in India somewhere. So reading this is an invitation, really, to join him in that state of consciousness, of that alert stillness or presence.

And not only as you read or listen, when I read it to you, it may also help you to, as you go about your life, to pay more attention to the seemingly insignificant, the little things, the miracle that's hiding in everything. A brief description here of the inner state that is the prerequisite for perceiving things in that always fresh, new way. What was necessary was a very sensitive, alert brain, he called it brain, you could say mind, you could say consciousness.

What was necessary was a very sensitive, alert brain which had stopped entirely, willingly, and easily its chatter. It had become very quiet, the brain, the mind. It had become very quiet, seeing and listening without interpreting, without classifying.

It was quiet, and there was no entity or necessity to make it quiet. The brain was very still and very alive. That immensity filled the night, and there was bliss.

And sometimes he perceived, not only describes his state of consciousness, it is as if his state of consciousness, he also experienced it as being outside. And then he uses the term when he suddenly says, the room suddenly was filled with, or the entire landscape suddenly became filled with, and he sometimes calls it the immensity, or he calls it the otherness, or he calls it the sacredness. This brief description here is probably in Switzerland.

In the morning, walking in the woods above the stream, with the sun on every tree, again it was there, that immensity, so unexpected, so still, that one walked through it, marveling. A single leaf was dancing rhythmically, and the rest of the abundant leaves were still. It was there, that love that's not within the scope of man's longing and measure.

It was there, and thought could blow it away, and a feeling could push it away. It was there, never to be conquered, never to be caught. And then he has second thoughts, he talks about the word to feel.

The word to feel is misleading. It's more than emotion, it's more than a sentiment, than an experience, than touch or smell. Though that word is apt to be misleading, it must be used to communicate, and especially so when we are talking of essence.

So he is struggling to find the right words to communicate that experience, and the word comes to him to feel, and then says, well, it's not quite right, but we have to use it. And so, and now here in this, suddenly the word essence comes to him, which he doesn't pick up again. It's here a couple of times, and then never uses it again.

But I love that, and I use that myself occasionally. He talks of the feel of essence is not through the brain, nor through some fancy. It's not experienceable as a shock above all.

It's not the word. You cannot experience it. To experience, there must be an experiencer, the observer.

Experiencing without the experiencer is quite another matter. It is in this state, in quotation marks, in which there's no experiencer, no observer, that there is that feeling, quotation marks. It is not intuition, which the observer interprets or follows blindly or with reason.

It is not the desire, longing transformed into intuition or the voice of God evoked by politicians and religious social reformers. To feel demands the austerity of clarity in which there's no confusion and conflict. The feeling of essence is the negation of thought.

We are becoming comfortable with stillness. When there's nothing much happening, what's left is the stillness or the space that's always there underneath and around what's happening, but usually obscured by what's happening. And what's happening includes, of course, the stream of thinking, not just external events.

And the arising of feelings, emotions. What's happening then is things arising, sense perceptions, all kinds of thoughts. And then the sense perceptions are perceived through the screen of thoughts.

It's normal. And mostly, these two, the external arising of sense perceptions, visual, auditory, and so on, things happening out there and things happening within, the continuous arising and subsiding of the stream of thinking and the emotions that often go with it, that together is what's happening. And what is usually considered, what you may usually consider to be your life, my life, is what's happening in my life, good or bad.

And of course, the good or the bad is already part of the arising of thinking that judges the external event as good or bad. I like, I dislike. And then you perceive the external through your likes and dislikes.

I want, I fear. And then thought forms, and then you perceive the external through your wants and fears. And all that becomes your life.

People don't realize that mechanism, the underlying structure of what they call my life. And so that is what absorbs most people's attention completely. Their thinking, emotions, and external things happening, demanding attention, they come together.

So is that all there is? Or is there another dimension to your so-called your life, my life? Is there another dimension to my life that is transcendent to what's happening?

What's arising? Well, you could say there's God, but for most people, God is another thought form. I believe in God, another thought form arising.

So we are here to find not some belief, but to go deeper where we can actually realize at first hand a dimension that is deeper than what's happening, what you call your life, that frees you from the limitations of your life because, you may have noticed, your life is full of limitations. Even if you're rich and famous, it has its full of limitations. Doesn't matter young or old.

The older you get, the more you realize, yes, there is a limitation of my lifespan. When you're younger, there are other limitations. And no matter where you go and what you encounter, you encounter new limitations.

Doesn't mean you shouldn't go out and try things. That's fine. It's all part of this dimension of the physical realm.

But a life that consists only of forms that arise, things that are happening in my mind or outside, an identity that is built out of those forms that arise is always limited and limiting. You're trapped in a self, a little self, and even the biggest self of the big ego, those out there who look big and powerful, they are trapped in the limitations of their self. And sooner or later, they realize it.

Well, some people, very late, just a few moments before they die. Very limited, trapped in a self. And so there's no ultimate satisfaction, no matter what you add to the self.

Doesn't mean you shouldn't add anything. But what every human being really is looking for is something very deep, an essence. Everybody's ultimately looking for themselves, something that is not subject to decay, loss, death.

And that, of course, is already there in you at this moment. Where is it? If you pay attention to the spaces between the words as you listen here, rather than just be interested in the words, because the words are what's happening, the words that you hear become thoughts in your mind.

It's what's happening. If you're only listening to the words, you encounter the limitations again. And the limitation here of these words is, what's he talking about?

He's not saying enough. He's not giving the initial answer. He's giving you information.

That's right. So if you only listen to the words, then there's no real depth to you being here, listening. There's only a surface phenomenon of sounds that are being perceived, become decoded by the brain and become thoughts.

But if you can listen or be aware of the spaces between the words, then something opens up that is deeper than what is happening here. So you have the surface event of what's happening here. We call it our live meditation is happening.

That's interesting. No, it isn't. It's not about interesting.

Because interesting is about what's going to happen next. Or look, oh, that's, sorry, this is not interesting. It's deeper than interesting.

So if you can be aware of the spaces between the words, something arises there that has nothing to do with what's happening. And that cannot be named easily. What it is that arises when you listen, are aware of the space.

Here, it's the space between words. It could also be called the space in which these words are being perceived. There must be a consciousness in which these words are being perceived.

And that is a dimension deeper than the world of fluctuating forms. And that is deeper than what you call my life. And that's why I call this life itself.

And what you usually call your life is your life situation with its limitations. And there's only one way to transcend the limitations so that you are not trapped in a little self, mind-made self, with its fears and desires and likes and dislikes. For the rest of your life, know nothing else but interacting with the world through your fears, desires, likes, and dislikes.

That's a very limited way of being here. But although a new consciousness is arising, and this is why we're here, this is still the fate of most humans on the planet. They have not encountered yet the transcendent dimension to their lives, which is who they are in their essence.

Transcendent, we call it transcendent because it transcends the world of form, physical forms or thought forms. And at this moment, if your mind is trying to figure out what that means, you become frustrated. Or you make it into some philosophy.

That's not it. Becoming aware of the spaces in your life. And we start here and now by becoming aware of the spaces between the thoughts, the words.

What is that? Nothing. Okay, from the point of view of the sense-perceived world and the world of thought, it is nothing because that space has no form.

It's just between the words there is an emptiness, but it's more than that. Any word we attach to it is not going to be right. It limits it again.

It is what the ancient Chinese scripture, Tao Te Ching, talks about. The Tao that can be named is not it. If you can name it, you've already reduced it.

So we're here to experience what that is with a few little hints, just to, the mind likes to just understand a little bit. So we can, we're here to give pointers, to say, okay, what is this? How do we, how are we able to realize this, not just as we sit here, but in everyday life?

First, we need to see the extreme importance of encountering that dimension in yourself, to have it in your life, so that your life becomes deeper than the things of your life. There's something not right, something is missing. It is not complete.

I am not complete. And then it formulates further thoughts on the basis of that original erroneous assumption. First of all, you have nature here, magnificent nature.

So you will be walking, you will be looking, you will be breathing and smelling, and you will be listening to the sounds, perhaps even touching the sand. There's plenty of it, a tree. So you use your senses, all your senses are there, and you, as you go about in between sessions, you interact with nature.

And that's a great opportunity for allowing nature to help you to become still and present, rather than giving in to the hypnotism of the mind with every thought wanting to draw your attention to it and saying, this is so important, I must think about this. And then you've disappeared. There's all that nature around you, but you are no longer there.

The sacredness of nature suddenly is no longer there for you because your consciousness has been absorbed again by the mind stream, very easy to happen. And most likely it will happen many times in the next few days here until the moment comes when you say, oops, this is what's going on. And then you have a choice of bringing your attention back to sense perceptions, alertness returns.

And you can, when you become familiar with the falling back into identification with the mind, and you might find that it says something that it's not happy with something, or something isn't quite enough, or there's something missing. I have that feeling, there's something. And then very quickly the mind interprets that feeling as ah, yes, that's what's wrong here.

Now I know. If you are familiar with the human mind, you may be, then you know one of the underlying patterns is that it continuously seems to say something not right, something is missing, it is not complete. I am not complete.

Something is needed here, something needs to be added to this moment, to this situation. And then it formulates further thoughts on the basis of that original erroneous assumption. Once you recognize that pattern, then you can, it is easier not to get drawn into it, at least not for too long.

So watch your mind as it becomes active, and then you have a choice of either allowing yourself to be drawn into proliferating mind streams, or you might even want to get away from here. It's quite a common phenomenon on retreats. A certain percentage of people after the second day, or even the first day, get me out of here.

Or you start looking up the flight information. Or you call a friend, oh, there's something not right here. I'll tell you about it.

So the opportunity is here for you to allow nature to bring you into that still awareness so that you can contemplate, experience, all that wonderful nature around you without undue interference by thinking. What is there to think about when you go for a walk on the beach here? Nothing.

You can only fully experience it when you become still, and then you perceive through the stillness rather than through conceptualized thought, which interprets everything you see. Oh, this is that, and that's that, and that's that. And I like, I don't like.

Mm, mm, mm, mm, mm, mm, mm. So that's, you use nature and come to your senses as the expression goes. You come to your senses, but that implies that there is an awareness there that makes clear, unobstructed sensory perception possible.

And then you, you're amazed how, at the sacredness of that space through which you move here. And sacredness is not something that I could explain to you or to your mind, because the human mind says, just a second, sacredness, what does that mean? You haven't explained that term.

And that would be extremely hard, impossible to explain. It's a term that is no longer much in use these days. Sacredness, that's a, holiness, even as the Germanic-based word, sacredness, the Latin-based word, is the same meaning.

But you can sense it. The moment your attention rises and you go, and there you see the branch of the tree moving slightly. And there you see a bird flying across and the waves.

And suddenly there's a totality of that experience. The main thing for our meditation tonight is becoming still, or rather noticing that the stillness is already in you, waiting to be discovered. So our session today probably is going to be a kind of transmission of stillness.

For the transmission to be received, it requires you to have access to a little bit of stillness inside you. And that little bit of stillness can receive the transmission, recognize itself, in the transmission, and then know itself more fully. If you can hear the ticking of the clock, that's of course, that signifies time.

And underneath and in between the ticking of the clock is the stillness, which signifies the timeless, timeless consciousness. That timeless consciousness is the essence of who you are. So as we sit here together, if it works for you, it means that the person is receding and presence is arising.

And there's a shift suddenly in identity. Your sense of self is no longer derived from the silly person. Every person is more or less silly with his judgments and all the mind stuff and the expectations and the shoulds and the shouldn'ts and the complaints and the regrets and the constant focus on future or past.

And it's resentments and grievances and anxieties and problems. God. God.

And there is another dimension of consciousness in you. That's far deeper than the person. The person is a surface movement of that consciousness, fleeting, insubstantial.

The ripples on the surface. And as the presence arises in you, you feel suddenly your connectedness with enormous power, energy, intelligence. And you're rooted in that.

It is who you are ultimately. And that's always there. And that is where fear ends.

Fear can only exist on the surface where the person lives. And the natural condition of the surface entity is fear, often disguised as other things. And the absence of fear really means that for the first time you can actually feel the deep trust.

Absence of fear means trust. So you can feel a deep trust in life. You are connected with, you are one with something vast.

And through you, it emanates into this world. And either directly without your mind, like here, now, this is an emanation of presence, but also it can flow into your mind and use your mind and inspire your thoughts and words. And actions.

Presence is felt or sensed with your entire body. Every cell of the body is alive with that presence. Can you be in that state of alert presence continuously?

Well, probably not, but it can be there in the background of your life, even while you are active, doing things, speaking, thinking, and yet you sense that spacious stillness in the background, in between two thoughts, and perhaps even while you're thinking. Then thinking happens in the foreground and that spacious, aware presence is in the background. This, for example, is happening here now when I speak.

The mind is being used and that's the foreground and there is in the background this wonderful, vast, spacious stillness. Even though you may be able to enter the presence here, you may still find in certain situations you lose it completely, that's okay. Afterwards, you realize you had lost it while you lose the presence, you don't know you're losing the presence, it just happens.

A reaction takes over. The habitual mind pattern takes over. The habitual mental-emotional reaction.

And some people have very deeply entrenched patterns in their mental-emotional field. And those patterns are an aspect of what the East calls karma. And some people carry quite a heavy burden of karma.

Usually, karma is interpreted as the things that happen to you in your life, the situation you're born into, parents, things that happen to you, the country, the energy field in which you grow up, all the relationships and so on and so on. That is an aspect of karma, but more fundamentally, karma is not what happens to you, but more fundamentally, karma is how you react to what happens to you, how you deal with situations and people and challenges. You can magnify the difficulties and the challenges through reactivity, so you have heavy karma.

Or you may have so-called good karma, in which case the conditioning of your mind is relatively okay, it will have its limitations. There may be some presence already. But the only thing that really transmutes karma is the arising of presence and it will transmute even deeply entrenched karmic patterns, reactions that you don't seem to be able to get rid of.

It happened again and again. But it may take time for the timeless to burn up karma may take a little bit of time, not as much time as it took for karma for those patterns to form thousands and thousands of years. And there's no reason why.

Those dysfunctional patterns that make your life difficult cannot be transmuted or burned up through presence in this lifetime. But you have to want presence, you have to choose presence. You have to want to be free.

You have to want peace within yourself and not think something is more important out there than the inner peace within me. And so the Course in Miracles says, I quote now, I want the peace of God. To say these words means nothing.

But to mean these words means everything. Nobody can mean these words and not be healed. End of quote.

And those of you who have deeply entrenched heavy karmic patterns will be forced to go deeper into presence. Presence needs to be more acute to burn up those patterns. So you're forced to go deeper into greater alertness.

Otherwise the patterns will not become transmuted. Some harmless patterns may always remain. Every human has a certain form.

There may be certain habit patterns that do not cause any problems. And they may well survive in the light of presence. Destructive patterns, destructive of yourself and others, problem making patterns, deeply negative patterns cannot survive in the light of presence.

But you need to choose presence as much as possible. And I'm saying this to you because there is enough presence in you to be able to choose presence. Without any presence, you cannot choose it.

So ultimately it is presence that chooses presence. For some reason, it has just come into my mind, perhaps because somebody desperately needs the answer to this. And it's connected to what we've been saying.

You are now, compared to years ago, you are now definitely more conscious than you were before. And it could be that in the past, when you were not conscious, you did things that you now recognize as not right, or you inflicted suffering on another being or other beings, and you can now see it. At the time, you didn't know what you were doing because you are not conscious enough to act differently.

Now, the fact that a person feels guilty means he or she can see something now that he or she could not see then. If you were still in the same consciousness, then you wouldn't be able to see that that was wrong. You'd say, you did the right thing by whatever, killing that person.

I did the right thing. But now you see, you have awakened, and then you can see a lot of your past as dysfunctional, unconscious action, inflicting suffering on yourself and others. Virtually every unconscious human inflicts suffering, both on themselves, without knowing it, and others.

They create their own misery, and they make others miserable. That's what unconscious humans do. And some to a greater degree than others.

So guilt can come up as you awaken and suddenly see how unconscious you were. That can bring up guilt and say, because the guilt says, I did that. The guilt uses the word I, but what does that mean?

What does it mean when you say I? What is that I? Who is I?

Is I the conditioning of your mental emotional conditioning or does I have a deeper meaning? Is who is I? When you think that your mental emotional conditioning is I, then you are deluded.

Your mental contortional conditioning is not I. It is the mental emotional conditioning in you. It is a false identity.

There is no real I there. The only true I is the I am. It's you, the essence of who you are is consciousness.

That is the I. I am that I am. That's even how God describes himself in probably one of the most profoundest lines in the Bible.

Somebody asked God, who are you? Or what's your name? I am that I am.

Because your deepest I am is the I am of the universe. It's not personal. Your deepest identity is the identity of God and of the universe.

This is the I am. That's the only true I. So when you confuse the unconsciousness of your past, which was only conditioning, which was a reflection of where humanity is at its present evolutionary stage, you reflected where humanity is in its present evolutionary stage.

That's all. You were a reflection of the evolving, or the unevolved, as yet unevolved human consciousness. That's all.

There is no I in there. It's not that I did that. The unconsciousness, human unconsciousness did that.

If you construct an I out of a human unconsciousness that you represented, that is an ego attempt to manufacture another mind-made identity for yourself because the ego loves to have a conceptual identity. The ego is conceptual identity in the head. That's me, I.

So, and the ego doesn't mind even if it's a very unhappy conceptual identity. It prefers that to having no conceptual identity because that's its end. So the ego will cling to the guilt and associate unconscious action in the past with identity, my identity.

And that's how the ego can survive for years. And it can torture you for years saying, I did that. And it's a terrible feeling that you did, that you can now see it as so wrong.

That was so wrong, but it's ultimately a delusion. Find the true I and then that will free you of that. And then you will naturally forgive yourself without needing to take an action and say, I must forgive myself.

That doesn't really work. In the same way that it does, this can also be applied to other humans. You can also do that to other humans, what you do to yourself when you see what they did.

And you can manufacture an identity out of their unconscious action also, and then say, this is who they are. This is who he is, who she is. It's not, it's unconsciousness playing itself out, human unconsciousness.

There is no ultimate identity there, but the mind likes to manufacture a conceptual identity, not only for yourself, but also for others. So the mind loves to get in there and say, these are those evil ones. And sometimes you do it to a whole group of people.

Those millions of this particular group of people, no matter what they are, they are, this is what they are and this is what they did. And this, that is who they are. No, it's human unconsciousness, that's all.

So very careful, the same process. And then you cannot forgive them because you've made an identity for them out of their unconsciousness and say that's, they are their unconsciousness. And then forgiveness will be very hard.

Okay, I have to try to forgive because I'm supposed to do that. I have to forgive them for what they did. They did such terrible things, but I have to forgive them.

Okay, I forgive you. Ah, it's not easy. It's easy.

That's. The real forgiveness happens when it's just, you realize that ultimately there's nothing to forgive and that's true forgiveness. There's nothing to forgive.

And forgiveness happens naturally in this way. Not as a conscious thing that you do, but a thing that happens by itself. It falls away.

The false identity that you inflicted on yourself or another human being or a group of human beings, that false conceptual identity falls away. And that is an essential part of being here as a conscious human being. A conscious human being does not have resentments anymore because what could you resent?

It's only if you manufacture a pseudo-identity that there's resentment. So all those things just, they fall away. And there's the flowering of consciousness.

All guidance, all true guidance, and all true knowing comes from the one, the source, presence then guides you. And you don't need, on some people's spiritual journey, for example, certain substances, you mentioned plant-based, you took on your spiritual journey. If it's done respectfully with reverence, then that can be a helpful thing temporarily, but ultimately you have to transcend that also so that you go directly.

But it can help show people what is possible and bring about a little spaciousness in their minds and temporarily put them in touch with a deeper dimension. But ultimately that is something also to be transcended and it's not right for everybody at all. If you're drawn to it, then it's right for you.

If you get too attached to it, it's no longer right. If it's something that you use on your journey, it's fine. And then you transcend that and presence then becomes your guide.

You don't need any external guide anymore. You just go directly to presence because any guide that you go to, that again is connected to the previous question, any guide that you go to, where do they get? If the knowledge or the wisdom that they transmit to you, where do they get it from?

Is it because they are more knowledgeable or are they more deeply connected to the one consciousness than you are? So ultimately all guidance, all true guidance and all true knowing comes from the one, the source is emanation from the source of all life. Consciousness itself is an emanation from the one source of life that is transcendent, that does not exist in space or time.

Like the sun, the sun emanates the light. The light is still connected to the sun. It's whether the sun, the light is in some way is still part of the sun.

Consciousness is emanates from the one transcendent source of all life, which has no location in space or time. It is transcendent. If God means anything, then that is what God means.

It's the transcendent source of all life that shines into this world, into this dimension as consciousness. So the consciousness in you is a ray of coming from source, so to speak. Like, so the consciousness you can sense in yourself emanates from God.

I don't use that word very often, so I have to do it with my hands. It emanates from the source of all life, like light emanates from the sun. This is why in some traditions, people speak of God realization.

And in some traditions, they even say things like, when they connect with a deep eye, they make statements like the mystics of Sufism, for example, they make statements like, when they have that connection, they say, I am God, I am God. And Sufis dance and so on. Well, they dance, not necessarily because they've already realized, but they may dance in order to shut off their minds.

And sometimes it works. They say, I am God. Of course, that's not favorably received by others.

And usually you get stones thrown at you if you say you're God, particularly in Islam, but even in Christianity used to be the case. If you said, I'm God, I mean, you wouldn't survive for very long in the Middle Ages. And it's true and it's not true that you are God.

Yes, of course, you're an inseparable part of the one in that sense, of course, you are God. But in the same way that as could a ray of sunlight say, I am the sun, yes and no. Of course it is an emanation of the sun, but compared to the ray of sunlight, the sun is inconceivably vast.

And so God or the source, you cannot even speak of you. There's no statement that you can make of God because one transcends everything, all polarities, everything. So you can't really say anything about it, but you can sense its emanation in you as you.

And in that sense, you are part of God, the divine. You are the consciousness that emanates from the source. And consciousness really, that's the realization.

And you don't, then after a while, you don't need anything as an intermediary to go there directly. So that is again partly connected to the previous question, whether it's a spirit guide or plant-based substances or whatever it may be. There may be a time and a place for it on a person's spiritual journey, but ultimately you transcend that and find that deep connectedness within you with the source.

And that becomes your guide and that is the unconditioned intelligence. So when you, again, thank you for your question. I'll just add, to know yourself as consciousness is the most amazing liberation of, it's not the liberation of the person, it's the liberation from the person because the person was a misperception of who you are, a false identity, a misperception of who you are.

The universe, this is our dimension here. The universe wants to become conscious and it expands. The consciousness of the universe grows, expands.

So there's gradually, you could say the light of the source gradually comes into this dimension more. So there's a growth of consciousness throughout the entire universe. And I'm sure it's on millions of planets, billions of planets.

Consciousness is growing in different forms, incarnating. So the consciousness, the most amazing thing about the universe is not the fact that there are billions of suns, stars, suns, in our galaxy alone, but there are billions of galaxies. Each galaxy is an entire world consisting of billions of stars.

It's completely inconceivable. And the vast spaces in between, completely inconceivable to the human mind. You know the speed of light.

It's in kilometers. It's a 300,000 per second, 300,000 kilometers per second. So the light, the reflected light from the moon takes about one second to reach us.

The light from the sun takes eight minutes to reach us. From here to the center of our galaxy, if I remember correctly, where there's a black hole, from where we are to the center of our Milky Way galaxy, light takes about 30,000 years. And that's only in our galaxy.

I believe the next neighboring galaxy is about 2 million light years or something like that. It's unlikely that we will travel there in a physical body in the near future, but there's something even more mysterious than that. And more miraculous than that.

The greatest mystery is not the vastness of it all or the multiplicity of star systems, but the greatest miracle is something that the universe is conscious. The universe is conscious. Why, how do I know that?

I know that because I'm conscious. You know that because you are conscious. You are the universe.

You are an inseparable part of the universe. You are an expression of the consciousness of the universe, the consciousness that underlies the physical manifestations that arise as it become more and more complex, the life forms that arise. There's one consciousness underneath it all that expresses itself and that you are that.

You are the consciousness of the universe. And that's the amazing mystery. The greatest mystery of the universe is it's conscious because you are conscious.

That's how you know it. And you can't argue with that because you cannot argue. And everything could be an illusion, but what is absolutely certain and beyond any doubt is that you are conscious.

Obviously, because you're here and you're perceiving. You may be dreaming. Maybe you're dreaming up this room and this man sitting on a chair.

That's possible, but it still means there's a consciousness. Otherwise the dream would not appear. It appears in the space of this consciousness.

So the one thing that's beyond any doubt in you is that you are conscious. I mean, even that is not absolutely correctly expressed because when I use language, duality creeps in. If I say you are conscious, that already creates a duality of you and conscious.

You are as if conscious were an attribute to who you are. But to put it more accurately, you are consciousness. The essence of who you are is consciousness.

And that is beyond doubt. Now, consciousness is invisible. Even the mental manifestation of consciousness as thought is invisible.

In fact, you are almost completely invisible, you as a human being. What you see is only the surface appearance of the physical body. Every thought exists, even thinking, which is a manifestation of consciousness, exists in an invisible realm.

You can open up, the surgeon can open up your brain. Hopefully he won't. He could open up your brain and look for a thought, a memory.

Your brain is, you have countless memories. Go back to your childhood. See the teacher you had at 10 years of age, either the one you liked or the one you didn't like.

Go there. See the teacher and you're sitting in the classroom, and there's the teacher. And then you're walking home and you're arriving, you're opening the front door, you're 10 years old, and you're walking into your living room.

Now, when I say this now, your memory can go there. And actually, yeah, you remember many, many details. You didn't even know it.

But where, what is that memory? Where was it stored? Was it, were there atoms and molecules that contain the image of your living room and your teacher you had when you were 10 years old?

Can a, could a surgeon ever find the memory of the living room in your head when you were 10 years old by using a powerful microscope? There's that thought, and there's that. We don't even know what a thought is.

We don't know how it lives in you. And scientists say everything is matter, that entire consciousness is a byproduct of matter, is a byproduct of the chemistry of the brain. And yet, when they look at the chemistry of the brain, they can't find a single thought, let alone the memory of your teacher, plus a million other memories.

How do they live in you? As atoms and molecules, or as chemical substances in a kind of soup in the brain? It's all invisible.

It does not exist in the material realm. And although there is a connection between consciousness and the physical brain, there's a connection, but it is a connection in the same way there's a connection between a radio receiver and the music that it plays, or a television. And so it's a medium through which consciousness can express itself in this world, but it's not produced, matter does not produce consciousness as much as possible.

Have the main focus of your attention in your daily life in the present moment. The rest of your attention, so that's the main focus, here's this. The rest of your attention is where you want to go to.

Whatever task you're engaged in has a certain purpose. The purpose is you want to finish the task, and it has achieved its purpose. And that's here.

And that's in your peripheral, the peripheral vision of your consciousness. That's where you want to get to. And this is what you're doing in order to get there.

And your main attention is not where you want to get. And in the meantime, you're just doing it in order to get there. You can see how that's already creates an inner stress.

I'm here, but I want to be there. That's a normal way of living, is the main part of people's attention is there, but in the meantime, they are here, where they don't really want to be. They'd rather be there, as shown in famous stickers on bumper stickers on cars, which say something like, I'd rather be fishing.

And when I visited Ram Dass, the spiritual teacher who has now passed away, he lived on Maui, on his car I saw a bumper sticker which said, I'd rather be here now. That's a good teaching on a bumper sticker. And so your attention is, and this is a reversal almost of how humans normally usually live, it's the opposite.

And that is in itself already a shift in consciousness. And then of course, you're also aware of the past, the certain things that may have relevance in the present. That's fine.

So peripherally, past and future, usually future is more important because you're moving towards that. And here's the central vision of present moment. In the present moment, you're either actively doing something, or you are more passively perceiving something.

You're there as an observer, or you're just there, not actively doing, but simply perceiving. That could be when you travel back from here already, you might be sitting in a car. If you're driving, you're doing something.

That's particularly important to be present. Or you might be sitting on a plane, and that's a good opportunity for being the, you're going to the witnessing mode. There's nothing in particular to do unless you get out your laptop and start doing.

That's fine. And sometimes situations arise that are problematic. That's quite normal in life.

They are challenging rather than problematic. And then you face the challenge. You look at it, so to speak, not necessarily visually, but you give it attention that this is a challenge.

Instead of unconscious reactivity, the challenge is your flight is canceled. Oh, it's not one of the greatest challenges a human can have, but some people react as if it were. And when any challenge arises, is there anything I can do to respond to this situation?

Or is that something where I simply have to say, well, for the time being, I accept the way it is because right now there's nothing I can do. I heard, for example, at some airports, they're so busy, not sufficiently staffed people. When the plane lands, they're still trapped on the plane for two or three hours.

It has happened in Toronto and other places. That's a good opportunity to surrender. Some people can't do that.

They start screaming and shouting. Doesn't have no particular purpose, but they can't help it. It happens to them.

So always the question was, is this an opportunity for surrender or is action called for? That is some practice to get used to until it becomes second nature to have your attention in the present moment rather than elsewhere. And it usually implies you are aware of your surroundings.

That's inseparable from being in the present through your senses. A more alert human being than a normal human being, but an alertness in which there is no tension, often alertness in a human is associated with being tense, but there's an alertness without tension, but it's not enough to be just aware of your sense perceptions. That's a good thing.

It also can help you to avoid dangerous situations that otherwise you just stumble into and you don't know how you got there. You're more alert of your surroundings. You see how animals in that sense are very alert because if they are not, they get eaten by other animals.

So many animals have this incredible alertness, not the same as the human alertness, but it is an alert awareness of their surroundings that many humans don't have. They walk in the street. They're not really there in their minds thinking about all kinds of things except where they are.

And so they're not here. Whereas the bird sitting on a branch or the deer that's stepping out of the forest and there's a field and the deer stops for a moment and the ears, they're very huge ears, they go. And it can hear probably a hundred times better than the human.

Or a bird on a branch sitting and it goes like this. And then suddenly it goes. And of course there's no decision-making involved when a bird suddenly flies off.

It did not think, I'm now going to fly off this branch and I'm going to go over there. It just happens. There's a flow to life.

There's no mind. There is a consciousness there, but there's no conceptualization at all. But when an animal rests, an animal also rests completely.

It is completely at rest, not thinking about my life. I have to figure something out. What's the purpose of it all?

This is why it can be very healing to live with an animal. Yes, it can be quite a bit of work too, but it can be very healing to live with an animal and to have an animal presence in the house, dog, cat, usually. This unproblematic existence, except when the dog or cat are neurotic, which can happen, but there are reasons for that.

You're usually connected to their early life, just like human childhood, when things go wrong in childhood, it leaves traces. So if, but usually dogs and cats' normal status, unless they're hungry or want to go for a walk, they can be rooted in being and joyful. The cat purrs, the dog's tail wags, and it's a joy just to see it.

You're not denying what you feel, but you're adding a dimension to it, the external dimension. And then nature has a very healing effect. If you truly give attention to nature, what about your practice of giving attention to the present moment?

Now, if you give attention to the present moment, you first, you become aware of whatever it is that you feel within. And then you need to be aware of within and without, that's part of the present moment, so that your attention is not completely absorbed by whatever it is that you feel, because there's also the vastness of the outside world. And so presence, to be present means to be present within and without, in both worlds.

So you acknowledge whatever it is you feel inside you at this moment, be also very vigilant to see whether there are any associated thoughts with that feeling. Is there, are there certain thoughts that go through your head that reflect what it is that you feel? For example, if you feel depressed, do you have thoughts that are telling you that life is, after all, not worth living, or whatever the thoughts are saying, that people are, people suck, life sucks, I suck, we all suck, I don't want to be here, that kind of thought.

So you need to observe, be aware on both, as far as the inside is concerned, be aware both on the level of the emotions and feelings and on the level of mind activity, what kind of thoughts, and so it requires vigilance so that you don't indulge without knowing it in unconscious thinking, and you can't separate the unconscious thinking and the feelings, so only you can know. I don't even know whether you can answer this question now because you have to find out in the moment of it happening what kind of mind activity accompanies those unpleasant feelings, and to see whether this mind activity actually feeds the unpleasantness that you feel, or the suffering that you feel, that's a very important thing. What role does your mind play in all this?

Very important. Is your mind feeding it? Because this is, you have a big pain body there, which is not in itself a bad thing because the pain body becomes a strong motivating force for you to awaken.

I also had a very heavy pain body. That's why I had to awaken, couldn't stand it anymore, and you at this point too, can't stand it anymore. That's good.

So be very careful so that you examine your thinking. Am I feeding the feeling? And if you are, that means there's enough awareness for you to realize it.

Then you let go of the thoughts. And one way you can do it by, you remember I just mentioned, be present within and without. You can use, for example, your sense perceptions, directing attention to your sense perceptions that takes attention away from thinking.

And then you experience, the next step would be, you still feel the unpleasantness, but you're also observing sensory perception around you. There's the sky, there's the flower, my hand, the hand. And you don't have to, I'm labeling it now, but you don't have to label it.

It's better not to label it, just to perceive it fully. Come to your senses, look around. There's an entire world there.

And your suffering ends here, where your skin is. What you, the suffering that you experience is inside you. Just one step next to you, there's no suffering.

Isn't that strange? So the table isn't suffering, I'm suffering. And this inch on the chair here is not suffering.

It's just inside my, this bag of skin, I am the suffering entity, that's me. And then if you don't know that, then you identify with that feeling. And then you look at this, then you call, and you still have the conditioned thinking that reflects the suffering and say, oh, it's all pointless.

The trees are pointless, the sky is pointless. What's the point of it all? I don't see any beauty in this.

And this flower is going to die soon, of course. It all, everything dies soon. So what's the point in even living?

When there's a dog, he doesn't look that healthy. Whatever it is, then you would just look at the world around you through the feelings. So to be present, you have to not label and just look.

And take in auditory, visual perception, breathing. So, and then, of course, and then you, if you give more attention to your surroundings, especially when you're in nature, but nature is everywhere. Even if you're in the middle of Seattle, there's a sky.

Well, it's usually at this time of year, it'll be gray, but that's fine too. There's sunlight filtering through the sky and you have lots of trees. Lots of trees.

The evergreen state, Washington, as it says on your license plate. So that's good, you have that. And that takes your attention away from, you're not denying what you feel, but you're adding a dimension to it, the external dimension.

And then nature has a very healing effect if you truly give attention to nature. And you're no longer fueling the suffering that you feel inside you. It's, of course, it doesn't go away immediately or a miracle could happen and it does, but usually not.

It's just the beginning of it gradually dissolving or becoming transmuted. Now, looking back retrospectively, what, if you even know the answer to this, what kind of mind activity accompanies the suffering that you feel in your body? What are the typical thoughts that go with that?

[Speaker 3] (9:19:48 - 9:20:05)
I guess it kind of depends on the situation. Obviously, it comes in kind of phases, but a lot of it is just kind of generalized self-loathing, I guess. I don't know if that's the right term, but.

[Speaker 1] (9:20:05 - 9:20:55)
Watch out for what kind of thoughts. It might even be helpful to write them down if they're repetitive thoughts. See what kind of repetitive thoughts you can catch because they can obscure your awareness so quickly, especially old thoughts that come again and again and again, they become part of your fictitious identity of the self, the egoic self.

So you carry with you then the burden of an unhappy self. I remember that, I had that too, carrying the burden of an unhappy self. That is, and that is what motivates you to awaken.

But there's already been a diminishment of your depression.

[Speaker 3] (9:20:56 - 9:20:57)

Absolutely, yeah.

[Speaker 1] (9:20:57 - 9:24:03)
So that's a good sign. That means presence is arising and it is gradually dissolving this pain body in you. But your work is not to renew the pain body through unconscious thinking.

So you need to be really alert and watch your mind so that you don't create more suffering by unconscious mind activity. And if you no longer feed the pain body, because that's, now the pain body, of course, also feeds through drama in relationships. It has the two ways of feeding.

In your case, perhaps more through your mind, but I don't know, could be also enacting and reenacting drama, emotional drama in relationships with a partner, family members, or whoever it may be, usually people you're close to or work with. But the closer, the better. The intimate partners are the best ways for the pain body to renew itself through.

So don't add to the pain body. It wants to feed, it wants your unconsciousness, but don't give it to the pain body. You're not feeding it with your mind anymore and you're not feeding it by being drawn into insane drama in relationships.

So you're watching it. There it is. It may not be pleasant, but it's not that bad.

Your presence is infinitely more powerful and it doesn't even fight the pain body. It just, by shining the light of awareness on it, it gradually dissipates, or a better way of putting it, it gets transmuted because the energy is not lost. There is enormous life energy in it, but it's trapped.

It's trapped energy, so it's felt as negative. When that's freed, it becomes part of presence. It is fuel for presence.

The pain body is fuel for presence. That's amazing. So you have plenty of fuel for presence.

That's the good news. What you sense in yourself as consciousness, the presence, emanates from the source of all life, which we can call God. So you are an emanation of God.

[Speaker 2] (9:24:07 - 9:24:16)
Go back to the source, conscious connection with source.

[Speaker 1] (9:24:19 - 9:32:24)
So the consciousness that pervades this universe, that is this universe, it becomes focalized through this particular form. This consciousness that you can know in yourself consciously as a presence, and you are that presence. You don't have it.

You don't have consciousness. You are consciousness. And even to say, I am conscious is not quite correct.

I am consciousness is more correct. So you are consciousness. Now, if the brain just is a transformer of consciousness, a receiver of consciousness, a channel of consciousness, where does this consciousness come from?

Where does it emanate from? And the consciousness does not exist in this dimension. That's important, very important to realize.

This dimension is the physical dimension. The physical dimension is where your physical body is and the physical objects of the senses. Then underneath the physical begins already that which is not part of the physical dimension.

And that already begins with your thoughts. Even your thoughts are not part of this physical dimension anymore. They live in another, they exist in another dimension.

And this is, you're going below the surface of, this is the surface world of physical things, your end, your physical body. You go by being aware of your thoughts already not part of the physical dimension. They are already exist in a deeper dimension.

How do we know that? Because you cannot find a thought in the physical realm. A surgeon could open your brain looking for your thoughts.

He would not be able to find a single thought because nobody knows what a thought is and where thought lives. Where does it live in you? Does every atom represent a thought?

Do some molecules represent the memory of what happened to you on that day when you were 10 years old and millions of other memories? Where do they live? All languages, I know apart from English, I know two other languages.

Well, they're getting a little rusty, but somewhere those two languages that I know they live somewhere, but where? Where do they live? At the moment, I'm not conscious of them.

If somebody had to say something in German or Spanish, suddenly something would come. I could say it, but where? Does this whole thing live?

If thought is, and then it's come emotionally again. Emotion, you cannot find. Emotion has certain, it correlates with certain physical processes just as thought does.

You can imagine something and then the body reacts to it. You imagine you're drinking lemon juice right now. Immediately saliva will start accumulating in your mouth because your body thinks it's real.

And if you get angry, your stomach lining, the inside will become red and many other things will happen in your body as you become angry. So, but the anger itself does not exist in the physical realm. It affects the physical, but it's in itself.

And then you go further down and into the unseen. So in other words, consciousness is not of this dimension. Consciousness represents another dimension, the transcendent dimension.

So this, the consciousness that you are emanates from another dimension and comes then into this. And an awakening happens. My suggestion to you is to consider the possibility.

This is my intuitive. Realization, I don't want to convince you that it is correct, but it is my intuitive realization. The consciousness emanates from the source of all life, which of course does not exist here.

It is, but it doesn't exist. Consciousness is the emanation of God in the same way that light is the emanation of the sun. Consciousness is the emanation of God into this dimension.

And it seems that gradually the light of consciousness flows, increases in this dimension, gradually. You can see it in yourself, how gradually you grow in consciousness. You seem to grow in consciousness and you are only a microcosm of the macrocosm.

Whatever happens in you can tell you a lot about the universe. If you could understand yourself, you could, you understand the universe. So consciousness comes into this dimension more and more.

Consciousness itself is timeless. And then it enters this dimension where there's time and there you experience it as an intensification of consciousness. You become more conscious.

A human can become more conscious. The entire planet gradually is becoming more conscious. If you go back millions and millions and millions of years, the life on the planet was less conscious than it is now.

Even animal life and plant life was less developed, less differentiated, less complex. Gradually, the world is being created still. The creation of the world is still happening.

The entire process, we have no idea why this is happening, what the purpose of it is. You cannot understand it conceptually. It's such a vast, vast process.

But all you need to know is what you sense in yourself as consciousness, the presence, emanates from the source of all life, which we can call God. So you are an emanation of God. And this is why sometimes this realization is called God realization.

God in you, God as you. Then the question arises, does that mean that you are God?

[Speaker 2] (9:32:28 - 9:32:43)
Well, yes and no. I wouldn't go so far because the ray of sunlight is an intrinsic part of the sun, undoubtedly.

[Speaker 1] (9:32:44 - 9:33:43)
But if the ray of sunlight could speak and the ray of sunlight said, I am the sun. Well, in one sense, yes. In another sense, no.

The sun is, the power of the sun is so infinite. How can a ray of sunlight compare itself? And yet it is one with the sun.

So there's a little paradox here. The essence of who you are is eternally connected to the essence of all life. You are an emanation of the one appearing as many.

That's wonderful to realize that. See, who you truly are, your home is there.

[Speaker 2] (9:33:43 - 9:33:45)
You are that.

[Speaker 1] (9:33:50 - 9:35:07)
And the sense of being a disconnected fragment in this universe, in a hostile universe, that disappears, that is a delusion. The delusion of the ego is that you are a disconnected fragment in a hostile universe. That's how egos perceive themselves.

And that illusion dissolves. And when, as you become more rooted in that presence that you are, this, the peace, a very powerful sense of peace is there then always in the background of your life. Because you have that sense of connectedness to the transcendent, to God.

That sense of connectedness to God, then that is the end of living in a state of fear. Fear, anxiety, et cetera, et cetera. That is the state of connectedness.

[Speaker 2] (9:35:09 - 9:35:12)
Ah, that means you're already home.

[Speaker 1] (9:35:16 - 9:35:37)
I always think that the famous ohm sound and the English word home are related. It's not by accident that they are so similar. I am home.

Home. Home.

[Speaker 2] (9:35:42 - 9:35:53)
So that is through self-transcendence, you realize the one self that you are an expression of.

[Speaker 1] (9:35:57 - 9:37:26)
And for many people, self-transcendence does not come until the dream of a separate self becomes unbearably difficult and painful. For many people, I'll repeat it, self-transcendence does not come until your so-called life gets very unpleasant and very difficult, and you experience all kinds of loss and limitation. And then something can happen that suddenly when the self becomes very unsatisfying and limiting and painful, then something opens up.

Then the self gives way, and you transcend it, and you realize the essence of who you are beyond the person, the being. But you don't have to wait for that. And many of you have already been through the painful, the experience of suffering, which is inseparable from considering yourself to be a separate entity.

[Speaker 2] (9:37:28 - 9:37:29)
Suffering. Suffering.

[Speaker 1] (9:37:29 - 9:37:49)
Suffering is that which leads you to awakening. That's a miracle. Ultimately, suffering is transcended, but it is not transcended until the self is transcended, the limited egoic self.

[Speaker 2] (9:37:50 - 9:38:02)
But until that happens, suffering is the most important thing in your life, the most indispensable thing in your life is suffering.

[Speaker 1] (9:38:09 - 9:38:42)
It's the way. Suffering is the way until it's not needed anymore, but it leads potentially to self-transcendence. When the self becomes too unpleasant, you can't stand it anymore.

The pain is too much. So that's, these are the, in the ancient teachings, that's the importance of suffering.

[Speaker 2] (9:38:44 - 9:38:52)
So when it happens in your life, welcome it.

[Speaker 1] (9:38:54 - 9:50:00)
Suffering happens when loss happens on whatever level, loss of possessions, loss of status, loss of certain physical abilities, loss of loved ones, et cetera, et cetera. That brings about a lot of suffering. Many other forms of suffering are only created by the human mind, like many forms of anxiety and fear created almost exclusively, but just by the mind.

Suffering, I teach suffering, said the Buddha, I teach suffering and the end of suffering. And the same message, symbolic form in Jesus on the cross is the archetypal image of suffering. Jesus is the archetypal human, represents every human.

And this is the image of ultimate suffering. This is a death on the cross and resurrection, self-transcendence. That's a beautiful teaching contained in an image, so people can intuitively understand it without having the ability to understand it conceptually.

Even a very simple person could intuitively get this message. So Ramana Maharshi, the great Indian sage who lived in the first half of the 20th century in India, said that the most important, the most effective criterion to judge your progress on the spiritual path is the degree of absence of thinking. That's pretty simple.

So this is your practice beyond any meditation, formal meditation practice that you may do is very helpful. But the spaciousness needs to become part of your everyday life. Your daily life needs to be interspersed with spaces.

And in every hour, there need to be spaces until a time comes when the spaciousness never leaves you. So you will be able to use your mind without always in the background sensing your own presence. I call it your own, although it's not your own because nothing is your own.

In the background, you sense your own presence, your spaciousness while you listen to someone. And even while you speak, not 100% of your consciousness is drawn into the mind stream that through which words are formulated. Because then you're lost, you're lost in the conditioned mind.

And you go, roll, roll, and the stream is coming out of your mouth and strengthened by the emotions behind it, because your thinking activates the emotional body. And then the emotional body participates in that outflow of stuff. And it's not, there's no wisdom in it.

You're just contributing to the problem. You might be discussing how to solve all problems, but then you get angry about this because people just cannot see the truth, but you know it, but they can't. So accessing that in daily life, and I've already given you a few little hints as to what good portals are to enter that state.

One I just mentioned, detect in yourself when you have a dysfunctional relationship with the present moment. And that could be quite a lot of times. A dysfunctional present means you dislike what is.

You hate what is. You criticize what is. You complain what is.

You complain about other people. You complain about those people there. You complain about my life.

Complain about my ex-wife. Complain about what they did to me. Complain about the, whatever the mind can, it loves complaining, but the body doesn't like it because when you complain, what do you feel?

It feels good to the ego because the ego strengthened itself when you complain about another person. The ego has enhanced itself because I'm now superior to this person or group of people that I'm complaining about. That's how it operates.

The ego feels superior when it can judge another negatively. Therefore, it compulsively judges other people, situations, places negatively. It loves that.

But if you are vigilant, you will see that it, that actually is not, the body doesn't feel good in the body. It feels good in the fictitious psychological entity that we call the ego. But if you could examine the physiological function in the body, you would feel it's the energy flow through the body becomes interrupted, decreases.

When you get angry, they've observed that your stomach lining becomes red and all kinds of secretions happen in negative states. So detect dysfunctional relationship. And when you find it in yourself in the moment, you say, oh, there it is.

At that moment, you have a choice. You can say, okay, I want to continue to be in this dysfunctional state. And then you carry on, but that's unlikely because dysfunctional state ultimately only survive as long as you're unconscious of them.

You do not recognize them as dysfunctional states. Then they survive. The moment you recognize a state as dysfunctional, then you realize you actually would be better off without it.

When you feel upset about having to wait somewhere for too long, and you suddenly discover you're upset and then you're vigilant again. You say, why am I upset? Because of this situation?

No, I'm upset because of what your mind is saying about this situation. That's an amazing realization, but you have to do it in the moment it happens. At first, perhaps the realization will come just after it happens.

And you look back on it and say, oh, that's what happened. It's amazing. There's so many situations in life that are upsetting what people say to you, but shouldn't have said or failed to say or do.

All kinds of things. And when you look closely, you see, it's the mental commentary that judges the situation, that causes the emotion, that causes the upset, not the situation in itself. When you've realized that situations are neutral, then you no longer have, you no longer personalize things.

And then this is in the ease of accepting the is-ness. You accept that humans are often unconscious. They often say things that come out of their unconscious state, and that's fine.

That's why they're at. So becoming friendly with the is-ness of this moment, if action is required, it will be more powerful when it comes out of presence, not out of resistance. And there will be wisdom in it, as Buddhists call it, right action, or skillful means or skillful action.

So you discover dysfunctional states. That's vital. Then you can become friendly with the present moment when the present moment is no longer obscured by the dysfunctional state of consciousness.

And you suddenly go, oh, well, that's what is. So is there anything I need to do now? Is there anything I can do?

Then you take action. If there's nothing I can do, then just acceptance. Welcome to our live meditation.

If you're still thinking while you're looking, I suggest you stop thinking.[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 19:03)
now just like that is that possible yes when I talk about it it sounds as if you were doing something stopping thinking but really the thinking is a doing and when

you stop thinking there's a letting go which is the cessation of doing so that you become aware of being that's why we're here that may sound a little dualistic when I say become aware of being more accurately I could say what arises when you stop thinking or when thinking subsides is the being awareness so it's not so dualistic anymore when I put it like that because there is no duality there except in language it's helpful to be here together and it's an opportunity for those of you who are not yet able to let go of thinking in daily life from time to time not continuously then here you may be able to get a taste of what it means not to think without going to sleep without becoming sleepy staying alert and being aware that you are alert being aware of the alertness that's still there when thinking subsides at first it may seem like nothingness nothing at all but as you stay with it you begin to notice there is a great depth to that seeming nothingness there's a depth there and an aliveness a presence that depth and that presence really is the essence of who you are which is not the person the person is a temporary apparition or phenomenon that arises in the world of form but who you really are is deeper than that temporary apparition in the world of form you need to know that not conceptually you need to know yourself as that if you don't you get completely lost in the world of form in the world of apparitions in the world of gain and loss up and down good and bad and that's ultimately not a pleasant way to live when you don't know your own depths that depth that connects you with a totality and with the source of all life that depth where are one with the source of all life most humans on the planet don't know their own depths there's a growing number of humans who are beginning to discover it or have discovered it or are beginning to live in a state of connectedness with it but most humans don't know themselves they don't know who they are they only know themselves as the body and their mental emotional conditioning which produces the egoic entity that they identify with as themselves enormous power is suddenly arising in you which is the power of the present moment which is the power of unconditioned consciousness also the power of dealing with the situation if there's something that you need to do suddenly right action as the Buddha calls it right action happens so be aware of the conceptualizing your life and allowing an unhappy story in your head to make you unhappy people think they are unhappy because of the circumstances of their lives in cases they are unhappy because of what they're telling themselves so what the mind is saying about what's going on around you and has happened will happen so that's a it's a suffering the origin of suffering to a large extent is there and even in extreme situations having lost your home for example not knowing where to live you even there it applies you do not in the face of a challenge if you are present you don't convert the challenge into suffering you just be with is and you start experimenting with little things in your life that cause you irritation or a little bit of anger or some impatience that situations that are very common every day and you look at the situation you become aware suddenly that this irritation arising or anger arising and you become aware that it doesn't actually feel very good and the body knows it doesn't feel good the body doesn't like it there's irritation arising and you think it's because of what's going on but if you look more closely think now is this situation causing this or is what I'm saying about it causing this what my mind the commentary of my mind and in most cases you will find it's the mental commentary that you had been identified with that causes the unhappiness and then you say let's experiment with removing the commentary how would I experience this situation if I did not add the mental baggage to it so in other words you're just now with the isness of this moment without any thing mental stuff added being added to it that says this should not be happening I don't want to be here and many other things suddenly you're fine a minute ago you were extremely irritated and angry and you couldn't differentiate between the circumstances external circumstance of your life and the inner commentary about the circumstances and this is the essence of unconsciousness I'm able to differentiate between the circumstances and the commentary so the circumstances and the commentary become single is experienced as a single phenomenon and then when you suddenly you can separate this is the isness of this moment and it is as it is enormous power is suddenly arising in you which is the power of the present moment which is the power of unconditioned consciousness also the power of dealing with the situation if there's something that you need to do suddenly right action as the Buddha calls it right action happens or non-action if action is not possible then right surrender happens but you allow this moment to be as it is without but what does it mean means you don't add unnecessary mental baggage to it that argues with the isness of this moment there are millions of people billions who go through life in that dysfunctional state of consciousness creating suffering for themselves and anybody who creates suffering for themselves create suffering for others around them you so you're spreading unhappiness and it's called normal life and it spreads it spreads imagine a country of millions of people living like that what is a collective state of consciousness of that country and what do you expect them every human is trapped in their personal ego and then the collective of the country develops a huge collective ego that's even more insane than the personal one crazy but it's so easy to step out of that except it's not nobody has told people that it's possible one not on a big scale not at school what I'm talking about here and now should be the primary subject at school for children how to live not the useless stuff they have to learn well they can add this too but that's fine but what is primary primary is how to live in a sane way I mean you have to learn how to drive before you can get a license they wouldn't let you go on in a car without having learned the basic of because you could cause a lot of havoc be a danger to yourself and others but living is infinitely more than driving and that of course implies also if you learn how to live you spread it to your children because you you can infect your children in a good way with your consciousness and you bring up your children in a conscious environment because you know how to live you still make mistakes yes you're not perfect but you know the basics of how not to live in a way that is insane and then your children grow up in that and they don't have to go through the enormous learning process that you had to go through when I had to go through too and that was the originally the basic of the ancient Greek philosophers the philosophy at that time or something totally different from what it is now basically yes it was also an early form of science but it was more fundamentally we're teaching how to live life to be applied in everyday life it's a beautiful summer day on the clock in the afternoon perfect temperature blue sky sunshine but as the Zen master would say of course temperature is always perfect

[Speaker 2] (19:03 - 19:27)
perfect which means you're okay with what it is which means there's nobody

[Speaker 1] (19:28 - 19:50)
boys inside you complain it should be different we were in Denver a few days ago it was pretty

[Speaker 2] (19:50 - 20:18)
hot there probably still is so I didn't go out too much I tend to lose physical energy

[Speaker 1] (20:18 - 20:50)
so my preference is also not very hot conditions but if they happen to be hot and it's just what is there's no in addition to the perhaps some physical discomfort there's no additional layer

[Speaker 2] (20:50 - 21:39)
of psychological suffering and it's easier to be in this state of spaciousness when you're

[Speaker 1] (21:39 - 22:19)
okay with what is because a lot of the unnecessary thinking that humans engage in unconsciously is connected with arguing with the isness of things internally or externally or externally can be either speaking it say get on your computer or social media

[Speaker 2] (22:20 - 22:49)
and you can complain there and that's good for the ego it's not a moment state of consciousness

[Speaker 1] (22:50 - 23:54)
to the state of unconsciousness it's a totally different thing changing things taking action or speaking out and there's an opportunity for change to happen or useless complaining so all that unnecessary thinking that goes into useless arguing with complaining the isness of things when that falls away that there's less compulsive

[Speaker 2] (23:54 - 26:13)
thinking significant percentage of compulsive thinking concerns that state of dissatisfaction that fuels the dissatisfaction with so you can experience that spaciousness that's there in the absence of compulsive thinking and that's why we're here we're here to deepen or to put it differently to discover the depths within ourselves which begins underneath the thinking our life meditation is an invitation to step out of thinking become still or rather discover the stillness that's already there underneath the thinking so we are in a meditative

[Speaker 1] (26:13 - 26:34)
state now even the words that i speak come out of stillness there's a lot of stillness

[Speaker 2] (26:34 - 27:53)
in between the words spaciousness it's important to be aware of that so in the gaps between the words as i speak you can discover that when you pay attention you become aware of those gaps you suddenly realize you're not thinking you're just aware and so you develop the amazing

[Speaker 1] (27:54 - 28:09)
ability to engage in thinking when it's needed step out of thinking

[Speaker 2] (28:10 - 30:24)
it's not needed right now there's a little bit of thinking because you hear what i'm saying and that becomes a thought in your head that's relatively little there's more spaciousness here so you can step in and out of thinking and then something else happens and you may discover that even when you are thinking or even you engaged in conversation which involves thought words thoughts even then there's still a part of you rooted in not thinking so you can use your mind without losing the stillness underneath

[Speaker 1] (30:30 - 30:41)
and then the nature of your thinking changes you don't you don't need to actually do it it

[Speaker 2] (30:41 - 31:46)
happens by itself thinking no longer has you in its grasp thinking is then no longer an energy field by which you are possessed no longer like a

[Speaker 1] (31:48 - 32:43)
parasite that sucks up all your consciousness and manufactures one thought after another so to speak and thinking then is no longer the place you look to for knowing who you are

[Speaker 2] (32:51 - 34:49)
for your sense of self your identity because you realize that who you are transcends thinking is far deeper than thinking and ultimately has nothing to do

with your personality so the personality still operates in this world it's fine but in a more sane way because it's no longer the ego personality it's just the personality

[Speaker 1] (34:52 - 35:37)
the difference is when your personality your historical person is all you know when you're unaware of the depths within you the spaciousness the stillness the unconditioned consciousness then that is the ego personality personality is when the ego

[Speaker 2] (35:39 - 36:30)
it's all you know you're identified with it then the ego disappears when you know yourself as the spaciousness the formless consciousness but the personality is still there

[Speaker 1] (36:30 - 36:59)
so that form identity as i call it you still are able to operate as this form identity in fact function much better as a personality when you're rooted

[Speaker 2] (37:00 - 37:40)
in transcendence because that flows that emanates into the personality also so although the

[Speaker 1] (37:40 - 59:54)
you the person or personality are now connected with the essence identity personality being form identity spaciousness stillness awareness is essence identity essence identity then shines through the form identity and you become a more peaceful human being through that you no longer create suffering for yourself and others just not to say that others may suffer because of something that you do but you don't create it they create it for themselves for example there are some patterns in the mind that everybody inherits that even for advanced presence practitioners like yourselves can still reassert themselves because they are so normal by the way my definition of normal is insane as you probably know and you may be able to catch yourself many times during the day when this normal one of these normal patterns reasserts itself and of course one of the most prevalent patterns is the is reducing the the present moment to a means to an end it could be a simple thing like you get up in the morning and you're getting ready to go to work what how what is the quality of your doing during that time of getting ready to go out or here you got up this morning getting ready to have go to breakfast and then come here how do you experience that time are you able to be present in what you're doing or is the doing no more than a means to an end and that's a huge difference whether you this you fold your pajama after and put it on your bed is that do you give it attention is it a pleasant thing to do do you acknowledge the being of this pajama and feel the texture and give it some loving attention and then you put it away or is it what's the next thing and the next and the next because i need to get i need to the next moment never comes does it no i don't think it does because when the next moment comes it's the present moment so the next moment doesn't come it can never arrive there's only this moment but if your habit is to treat this moment most of the time as a means of getting to the next moment so not being fully in it but mentally being somewhere else and then i just need so the basic attitude is i just need to get this moment out of the way then i will get to a better one and that is a very deep-seated pattern that prevents you from being present but it's only when i voice it like this that it becomes apparent to you because otherwise you won't even see it because it's so normal to live in such a way and it's not only people also treat entire life periods in that way then it's not only of course most fundamentally the present moment but they also treat entire chunks of their life in that way for example you're waiting for the weekend so it's only two more days of going having to go to work and then there comes or you're waiting for something else getting a better job finding the person who is

going to make me happy it's only in the meantime i'm just ticking over it's just i'm just waiting for well what's the expression i'm waiting for the big break or whatever i'm waiting for the big thing to happen and finally i can start living when that happens whatever form that takes when that happens then i'll then my life will really start this somehow i don't know if anybody remembers it's probably not popular anymore there used to be a genre in theater that was called the theater of the absurd Samuel Beckett and other authors and often they showed there was a famous play called Waiting for Godot and there are two men waiting for this guy to arrive with a nobody knows who Godot is but they spent the entire play it's a theater play the entire play this they're waiting Godot who knows some critics say well Godot God Godot they're waiting for God but it's not said but this entire the entire period is spent waiting and i don't think Godot ever arrives and they're similar and this is just to show the absurdity of ultimately everyday life and of course sometimes life does get better of course it doesn't if you are now living in unpleasant surroundings perhaps it's noisy or it's cold too cold or too warm or cramped or whatever it is you have might have a job that's repetitive you're waiting to get out of that feel lonely one relationship has come to an end the other another one hasn't started yet i'm just waiting and so you're hoping that things will get better and sometimes they do get better but the habit pattern is deeply ingrained and even if situation gets better then you'll be waiting for something else because no situation can ever completely satisfy you no person no condition no situation waiting for retirement i can maybe take early retirement and then what play golf lie on the beach and many people are very disappointed when they retire and don't know what to do with themselves and they lose their sense of identity that they it was always a false sense of identity because it is derived from their function but at least they had a false sense of identity and now they don't i don't have any and then to happen they can't they don't know the possibilities of human life so be vigilant if you feel that an improvement is highly desirable in your life situation that's okay but it's much more likely to happen if you give more attention to the present moment rather than trying to get away from the present moment or denying it always making it into a means to an end if you give if you give more your fuller more fullest attention to this moment the so-called future is much more likely to improve the so-called future because there is no future when it comes it's the present moment a little strange paradox different it's when you fully acknowledge the present moment and the when you give it attention then you see the good you're aware of the good in the present moment it's an amazing realization that who you essentially are is you're invisible the moment you move to thoughts what nobody knows scientists don't really know what what a thought is what is a thought where does it live in you where does it live in you that's an interesting thing the does it have a much now mainstream science is still still largely totally materialistic which means it says that matter is all that exists and everything is matter and it says that consciousness is a by-product or they say epiphenomenon other words a by-product of the human brain in some way this is a long one could talk about this for a long time i don't want to go this way and entertain you in that direction it is more important experiential to have i want this to be an experiential gathering rather than intellectual gathering but ask yourself the question what is a thought where does it live all your memories i suggest for example the memory of please go ahead the memory of your deceased grandmother for example or the memory of you when you were a child when you were a child you lived in a particular place maybe you had your own room and you can suddenly recollect many details for the room that you had when you were a child even how the doorknob felt when you opened the door the carpet the furniture and you can remember your grand grandmother or the first teacher when you first started school the teacher you had then and you can remember okay now you you haven't perhaps thought of your that first great teacher in several years but now that i mention it suddenly the he or she pops up where and in what form did this first teacher of yours or your grandmother or the memory of the room that you lived in when you were six years old and of course there are hundreds of thousands of memories like that but where did this live in you in what form was it must if it's molecules and atoms in your brain that somehow certain atoms represent your grandmother and other things represent other molecules represent other things the weird thing is if a surgeon opens up your brain he will not find any of your memories he will not find you that's a strange thing he cannot he find things but not you he cannot find because you you can you do not exist on a physical level ultimately only as a physical body but the the depths of you as who you are even who you are as a person which is still limited even that just the human you don't exist as in the physical realm really i don't know where you exist perhaps in the cloud the cloud that you and then you download the memory from the cloud so every thought is invisible but if can of course it uses the brain in order to express itself emotion to the emotion itself is not visible but it can manifest of course with physical symptoms in the body but in itself it's an energy field a non-physical energy field so the entire structure of the psychic structure of you is essentially invisible so this is why in the famous little book the little prince i think it was famous classic it says what is essential is invisible to the eye this eye which means it that means all the other senses too what is essential is not visible to the senses so you are essentially invisible you are not and i the way i see it if thought is already does not even exist in this dimension that so you are multi-dimensional you exist as a thought made entity but it's not no longer it's associated with a physical realm but it is not confined to the physical realm your thoughts are invisible your whole sense of who you are is invisible nobody could find it but by looking for you in the physical realm you're not there and that's it's an amazing realization that the who you essentially are is your you are invisible all the all the thoughts that go through your head they are not visible to the senses interesting so and that's only the surface part of you even there let's go back to the analogy of the ocean you have the ocean on the surface of the ocean there are waves and ripples now let's in this analogy let's say every little ripple or wave believes itself to be an independent entity disconnected from other ripples it only knows itself as a ripple because it doesn't know its own depth and every wave only knows itself as a wave wave could be perhaps vips if you own a private jet you're a wave and if you don't then you're a ripple so but the wave and ripple are all short-lived their destiny is the same the body one day the body is here the you're somebody the next day you're nobody whether you're a wave or ripple doesn't matter so now this this ripple of course feels uneasy on the surface of the ocean because its sense of identity is very limited and it feels sometimes threatened by other ripples or it wants to use other ripples to associate with in order to become a bigger ripple and sometimes temporarily that works but not for very long and then you're looking for yourself on the horizontal realm where can i be a more complete ripple can you help me be a more complete ripple no or i need you if we come together we can be a big ripple and it's never nothing really works in one moment the ripple goes to a talk in the and it hears this weird analogy and then says but who are you beyond the body of you as the person the the invisible you can you become aware of the invisible you which is the first of all it's the person that consists of thoughts and emotions but that's already a little bit beyond beyond the surface of the ocean you go a little bit into the ocean and there you exist as a person and there's all your emotions and your thoughts and your identity as a human there you are in already you've gone up you become aware of that and that's still very limited and then and that is sustained by the incessant thinking machine the conditioned mind is this it sustains the personal selfhood self identity that's amazing and so the key is to realizing go deeper and sense your connectedness with the ocean ocean in this analogy means consciousness universal consciousness that pervades the entire universe the intelligence that underlies all phenomenal existence the intelligence behind it all the organizing principle behind the arising of forms all forms a vast intelligence that exists does not exist as such but it gives rise to existence the vast intelligence is it is being it is not it doesn't exist because everything that exists exists in this dimension

[Speaker 8] (59:54 - 1:00:35)

um my question is how does one remain centered in stillness when we might be surrounded by and asked to engage uh mentally and emotionally with others who are not

[Speaker 1] (1:00:37 - 1:06:40)
i assume that this situation happens to you quite often because you're asking the question and of course it's a very common thing for people to find themselves in such situations let's assume then it's these are human beings that you you cannot easily or you don't want to to separate yourself from like could be family members or it could be people you work with those two situations are often situations where you feel you you want to continue to interact with these people or you have to interact with these people but it's getting difficult because you can there is toxicity or there's a lot of unconsciousness egos fighting against other egos and so on um let's just for a moment put aside the more extreme manifestations of such situations there are situations whether it's family members or at work there's there's some extreme situations that are so destructive and toxic that you the only um healthy and sane cause of action would be to remove yourself so if it's an extreme situation let's say you're in a relationship the relationship is sometimes via this physical violence or this repeated emotional violence that such an extreme situation or you are at work at the company that you work for is the environment the energy is so toxic and negative they're just going into that office you feel the weight of it and the pull of that negativity and this it's full of ego battling each other so in certain extreme situations i would recommend to that you remove yourself from this because i mentioned that at first because i want to put that aside we need to know extreme situations involving emotional violence physical violence whatever it may be uh it would you have to take responsibility and remove yourself from that situation but many situations and assume in your case perhaps it's it's not that extreme so what remains is normal human unconsciousness not the extreme forms of unconsciousness so to deal with normal human unconsciousness again uh be aware when you are interacting with people realize that you may not always succeed in doing this but the most important thing your see if you can bring about a shift in the way in which you approach the situation and these people the most important thing in such situations is your state of consciousness rather than whatever it is that they are talking about they may be talking about this or that whether it's at work or there may be gossiping or there may be whatever they're engaged in emotional ego stuff uh use it as an opportunity to stay present and it's not easy and you can only you need to intensify your presence when you are with unconscious people by that i mean when you are sitting alone in a room or you're walking out in nature it's it's being present is not that difficult you can it's especially nature is conducive to to presence or being alone in a room if you discover that you actually like sitting alone in a room that's a great thing because that means you you become comfortable with yourself uh there are still the majority of humans still become very uncomfortable with sitting alone in a room and you may discover that you actually like being alone not continuously you still love people but you also love being alone because when you're alone you can sense the presence that you are the very simple but powerful presence and you've sensed there's a stillness there it's lovely and then of course then you leave your room and then you meet other people you lose yourself you could because the the there's a gravitational pull that the mind has and so people know that they so other people's minds will try to draw you in uh i don't is it may i ask you before i carry on is it predominantly is it more a family situation in your case or is it a work situation or which one is it predominantly

[Speaker 8] (1:06:42 - 1:07:20)
um i would say thank you for asking um it is both and um both family and work occasionally uh are are issues or not issues but present themselves as as a challenge um what is an ongoing daily challenge is the unconsciousness of the city i'm surrounded in so you know by wednesday i that starts to peak and and become much more difficult

[Speaker 1] (1:07:20 - 1:07:28)
for me to stay out of my head becomes very noisy oh you can sense the you can sense the energy field

[Speaker 8] (1:07:28 - 1:07:44)
of the safety ah yeah right yes yes sunday is very pleasant wednesday thursday friday or not right right so but it's it's really you know that plus the more intense situations of work and family

[Speaker 1] (1:07:44 - 1:08:32)
which occasionally come in yes yes i need to ask one more question do you find yourself drawn into how when other people are ego uh controlled do you find yourself that emotionally mentally you be you you become just like them or do you feel you're a little bit of an outsider now that's observing what's going on or do are you a full participant temporarily in the unconscious interactions that are taking place the drama whatever it may be are you a full participant or are you a reluctant sometimes a reluctant participant or you remain there as almost an

[Speaker 8] (1:08:32 - 1:09:02)
outsider observing what's going on how is it for you i it oscillates um most of the time i am an outsider uh who enjoys engaging um i i suspect that my sensitivity to to presence and stillness is becoming is increasing or the sensitivity to that lack of in myself is increasing

[Speaker 2] (1:09:02 - 1:09:12)
does that answer your question yes yes let's thank you it's good yeah yeah

[Speaker 1] (1:09:13 - 1:15:56)
um let's talk for a moment about this the energy field of the city before we go on to your personal the um i don't know if you whether you meditate or not whether you do some formal meditation and and often you say yes the often people and people meditate and um um then some something just disturbing things happen while they meditate suddenly there's disturbing noise this morning i was sitting i was sitting in in my living room and it's wednesday so they do the gardening on wednesday with extremely noisy leaf blowers the this is the time of year with of leaf blowers and so the the noise can and i was just so it was so peaceful as i was sitting there and um suddenly there was this and often i immediately knew how to completely transcend it because i've been it's second nature to me now but often i have to tell people how to deal with disturbing things like that especially when they're trying to meditate and then that happens i always say incorporate whatever arises during this time when you're trying to meditate everything that arises make it part of your meditation in other words resist nothing that arises don't demand that anything that arises should not arise in that case even a disturbing noise such as a leaf blower is incorporated into your meditation by deep acceptance of what is the you don't resist you could you may be able to practice the same in the city when you feel the energy field let's i mean you you may be walking there or driving or just being in an apartment or office to practice surrender to this energy that you feel then you may be able to transcend that particular energy if you don't if you react to it it still you have it has you in its grip in a way one could say when you react to toxic energy you become part of the toxic energy without knowing it so the only the only way you can become free other than removing yourself and live in the countryside the the only way you can get beyond it is through deep surrender so completely and this can be a spiritual practice as i said except in the most extreme cases when there's violence of some kind or extraordinary toxicity then obviously you remove yourself otherwise surrender to something that seems unacceptable and yet and yet you surrender you're totally okay with it suddenly the toxic energy of the city but you no longer even call it toxic you just you can sense it and allow yourself to sense that and say oh that's what is and you might

also then recognize it as an expression of human unconsciousness to some extent but also yes it's still a manifestation of life at a particular stage evolutionary stage and that's what it is you can then i i had that realization many many years ago when i went through shift in consciousness at the time i lived in london and i had to travel every morning to work on the subway which is called tube or underground they call it it has different lines and one is called at that time it was decades ago i don't know how it is now one was the one the line that i had to catch is called the northern line the northern line was always considered the worst of all tube lines because had the longest delays and the most totally cramped uh carriages that always you can never find a seat you had to push yourself in and then there were long gaps no trains people called it the misery line and i had to catch that line every morning after my shift in consciousness i still was the same i went in there and i felt completely at peace on the northern line which before was a source of great unhappiness uh felt completely at peace i couldn't quite understand why for a long time and later i realized uh i'm actually not complaining about anything anymore i'm not complaining about it it's just it is my mind wasn't saying anything about it anymore i could still feel feel that energy but it it was i allowed myself to feel that and by allowing myself to feel it there was transcendence so i have what i think is the

[Speaker 4] (1:15:56 - 1:18:54)
coolest story to tell you about how your work is manifesting in australia oh yes and then i have a question okay so the story is in this crazy country of ours we have a sport called the national rugby league are there any fans here see two we're mutually exclusive for five ten yes and um the the teams are made up of of their whole bunch of teams with ferocious names so there's the tigers the eels um the bulldogs um warriors like they're ferocious right but the one team that i had the privilege of working with and introducing your work to this season is a team that has been on a losing streak for 43 years oh and they are the bunnies they're rabbits so they're called the rabidos and um by some series of coincidences you know how it works some something just happens this happens and this happens and this happens and you end up working with 35 110 kilo guys six foot two muscles on muscles tattoos piercings crazy like just loveliest loveliest big athletes and you've got them sitting there in a semi-circle starting to watch their thoughts and at the end of the first session one one of the guys comes up to me and says oh what is all this stuff i don't have any thoughts what are you talking about and i'm like okay just just keep keep showing up it's going to be fine we'll you know just see what happens end of session three the same guy comes up and goes i saw my thoughts i saw my thoughts i'm like woohoo and and over the course of this season what was very interesting was the um that we were teaching them everything it was like eckhart distilled for football players and it was about being present and it was about forget forget that you just um missed a tackle you just let a try in that that the ref has just done too bad too bad ref calls that's the sort of stuff that you just don't want in a game that's the stuff that you resist and you say that shouldn't have happened and you start beating yourself up and you've got you can lose 10 minutes out of an 80 minute game by by going into that narrative and and so that what they learned was i have to drop the story now and i have to get back and play the best game that i can and i know how to play this game if i stop thinking so that's what they did and these guys aren't renowned for um for for from a lot of these skills they're not renowned for reading a lot but one of them i i love them don't get me wrong i love them one of them was reading um nelson mandela's long road to freedom and then another guy came up to me at the end of the session and said this is sounding really familiar i'm reading a book by this guy called eckhart toller and i'm like what really so it it just is amazing me how it's how it's showing up in in the world and we're in australia and that they happened to win after 43 years a month ago very good wonderful thank you so i think you could personally take credit for the rabbitos breaking the 43 year drought

[Speaker 1] (1:18:54 - 1:18:59)

okay i'll have to find out more about them absolutely and then my question the phone

[Speaker 4] (1:18:59 - 1:20:12)
started ringing a little bit after after a little bit the word got out that we'd worked with the and and the question is uh we've now been approached by a company and my business partner said to me think of the company that you would never ever ever want to work for and i ran through okay maybe tiny abbott's office or um the nuclear industry and and then he said no uh it's a tobacco company i i could just see my narrative going over my dead body are we going to work with the tobacco industry they are peddling misery and then on the other hand i'm like well i've got a mortgage to pay and so i'm i pose the question to you a cut um this awakening it's am i just meant to go with the flow and say and just show up and see what happens or or am i actually needing to choose consciously so i don't enable dysfunctional systems on the planet what work are you supposed to do with them it's the same work it's about um helping them deal with stress and um we call it mind training because that's what what works in the corporate sector that's what gets us in the door and um it's about helping them perform better under pressure and under stress so they will probably sell more cigarettes if we do our job well

[Speaker 1] (1:20:13 - 1:22:25)
or they may leave the company exactly that yeah only you of course can know whether this is the right thing for you to do or not but helping human beings to become more conscious must be a good thing no matter where they are and even if the initial the reason why they want you is to become more efficient at what they do they may not realize that you will take them beyond that so sometimes people take up meditation companies might send their employees to to meditate so that they can perform better but often it changes the people and sometimes they don't want to perform better anymore and they leave the company so only you can i never actually or very rarely tell people what to do except our young man a while ago so only you can know whether that feels right but one consideration i'll just repeat what i said is that helping any humans to become more conscious cannot be bad and if they if they think that you are there to help them become more efficient at what they do that's at least that brings them to you so let me know what you decide and who knows what happens to that company when you have finished with them so it'll be interesting to see thank you thank you very much i just want to finish by saying

[Speaker 4] (1:22:25 - 1:22:40)
the two things i most love about you are your facial expressions and that you laugh at your own jokes like your jokes are funny but it's even funnier that you'd like your jokes it's just so beautiful thank you so much thank you thank you

[Speaker 1] (1:22:50 - 1:31:57)
so this mind-made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive to be free you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation when i meditate extreme fear often arises in my mind i feel like i would be destroyed or completely disappear so i stop meditation because of the fear i'm so afraid to keep going on although i intuitively know that bearing the fear would get me closer to enlightenment how can i conquer this fear this is yes of course the fear of the person the personalized sense of self or the ego which can feel threatened by the arising awareness and once you know that you can still meditate and allow the fear to be there it's only when you try to run away from the fear that really it becomes a great obstacle but if you can be with the fear allow the fear to be there as on a pure energy level feel the fear then you will find it begins to dissolve so rather than not wanting to feel it allow yourself to feel it then this is the beginning of change if you always run away from it then it'll linger there's no change there's a book called i think feel the fear and do it anyway or something like that but that is a quite good advice although i mean not applied necessarily to everything i'm going to jump off now but to allow yourself

to feel whatever feeling comes is part of the present the what the isness of the present moment so if the fear arises but then you also realize what is is the fear created by a thought you will know that or is the fear arising just by itself in a particular situation when you become still do you have a fear of silence do you feel uncomfortable when you go into a room and there's there's no noise in it some people do feel some people are uncomfortable in nature it's not noisy enough so see it may be that the fear arises when you when you become still you meditate then it's not necessarily associated with a thought but with that arising of awareness and instead of stopping your meditation just what happens if i just carry on and make the fear into a meditation meditate on the fear so when if you do meditate nothing really can disturb you but the good meditator incorporates whatever arises in the present moment into the meditation including the most irritating noise that suddenly starts up outside and the mind says i can't meditate now i need stillness and then you realize no perhaps this is part of the meditation and how does it become part of the meditation by allowing the isness of this moment which is that by just letting go of resistance allow whatever it is to be and if it comes from within fear anxiety you allow that to be but you have to be careful that it doesn't become a thought because the moment you are drawn back into thinking that's the end of your meditation you can allow a thought to be there but to order to allow a thought to be there that implies that there is some awareness there behind the thought so you are still there if so to be able it's a wonderful thing do you allow the thought to be that's very different from being drawn into the thought and following it where it wants to take you of course that's the end of your meditation or your mindfulness or whatever you want to call it i don't use mindfulness as you know because it's not about a full mind that's why i avoid the word mindfulness but mindfulness is a lovely thing it's really presence so you can follow a thought it takes it grabs you it grabs all your attention and pulls you along that's one way or you can realize there's a thought arising about what my ex-spouse did five years ago to me while i'm meditating and you can allow the thought to arise and be aware and if you do that instead of being pulled into it then you will find that it quickly it arises and it subsides so then it becomes very much like you know the sky in this one let's say you have a blue sky and clouds occasionally come so the clouds are the thoughts that arise in the mind the blue sky the vastness of that space is your awareness so clouds are not a problem if within the larger context of the aware presence they come and go and there might be thoughts that say ridiculous things there might be a thought about i'd like to eat uh uh apple pie now i really need to eat apple pie the microsoft most absurd things to interrupt your meditation then you imagine an apple pie you're eating and then you know there's the thought of apple pie you allow that to be you don't get drawn into the apple pie thought or even suddenly you have to get up and run to the fridge to see if there's an apple pie and still in there the thought arises you are the sky that's the awareness and the thought is what comes into the awareness now if more and more thoughts come or if you follow one of the cloud thoughts that drift into the space of awareness one of the cloud thoughts and you suddenly go it it grabs hold of you and you follow it then the cloud gets bigger then it attracts other clouds that correspond to it they suddenly come from out of nowhere and then you are in a big cloud you're still sitting there trying to meditate but you're really in a big cloud of thought and before you know it the entire sky is cloudy oh totally overcast now of course there's still some light shining through the clouds but you no longer know where that comes from there's some light of course consciousness thought cannot exist without consciousness thought is a manifestation of consciousness but so there's the consciousness that is behind the thoughts but you don't no longer know that consciousness directly only through the filter of thoughts in the same way that you don't know the sunlight anymore except through the filter of the clouds this is sarah from california

[Speaker 3] (1:31:58 - 1:32:05)
sarah please please join us and share your question with eckhart hello mr eckhart toy

[Speaker 2] (1:32:05 - 1:32:58)
hello sarah hello my question for you today is how do i as an awakening soul keep faith in manifesting global and personal love peace and harmony at this time when there's so much chaos corruption fear and a lot of hate actually and anger among the global population and among those close to me in other words how do i not fall into the darkness of fear and separation from my source from my essence and from separating from others and remembering that as you say not it is not personal it is not who they are how do i use conscious manifestation to achieve that thank you thank you thank you very much thank

[Speaker 1] (1:32:58 - 2:23:54)
you to use the term manifestation in a wider sense one could say that you manifest the way in which you experience what you might call reality or your life you could call it your life could call it reality how do you experience it and to what extent are you dependent upon external conditions as far as your state of consciousness is concerned how much freedom do you have um can you live peacefully in a world that is to a large extent not peaceful and if that is possible how how do you do that how do you not get drawn into the conflict and anger egoic dysfunction of the world egoic both individually egoic and collectively egoic let's start by looking at to some extent it might be helpful as a starting point to differentiate between what would conventionally be called your life this is whatever in your daily experience of people people that you interact with whatever you do in this world work situation family situations meeting people here and there going from here to all your your private sphere there's that so you meet all kinds of people some familiar people some people that you meet briefly have interactions with in then you have in this technologically advanced society you have another well not everybody but most people i have another level of interaction with other people it also becomes part of what they call my life and that is interaction through technology you interact through social media with more people than you actually know this is the case with many people these days they interact with more people than they actually know in their non-normal everyday existence you interact with all kinds of people that you've never met not everybody but most these days because people use facebook and they use twitter and they use all kinds of things that sending message messages and so on um and on social media you also interact with people in a different way that you haven't so look at then the third level so we have actual personal contact people and whatever that what whatever the nature of this interact these interactions is it could be is it conflict ridden is it conflict ridden in your or is there some conflict but also a certain amount of harmony in your daily life then you look at the other level of social interactions through the media through um social media what kind of interactions do you have there with people that you might never have met but nevertheless you are in contact with them you exchange um what is what is the quality of that kind of interaction that you have how much conflict is there how much negativity is there and how much is there that is a manifestation of of consciousness um you have to look at that many people are there are people as you sure you know there are many especially younger people but others too there are many people in this world for whom the human interactions that they have through technology are more much more important than the actual interactions they have with with human beings they interact through social media with countless people and and they the the virtual world becomes to them more important than their actual surroundings it's an amazing thing um a i don't believe that is a very helpful thing but that's how it is it's a huge challenge so you have that level then you have another level where you come in contact with the world through what we might call mainstream media you get the news and you get commentaries and mostly these days the news and commentaries are mixed up either they come in one you can't just get the news anymore you then you already have the news already embedded in a commentary and you get a there's a also that the third level becomes also for many people almost more important than their daily existence with the people that they actually know and interact with sometimes of course those levels can meet for

example you're in the news about people going into stores and not wearing their masks and then there's a lot of upheaval about that and people get worked up about this and very angry and you can then you can see little clips of people shouting at each other because somebody's not wearing a mask and then the other person is shouting something back and to some extent there can be that level and the person level can meet because 10 minutes later you go into the store and you might witness something similar but so well your experience of reality or your world consists of these levels so you have to look at these I think I can try to perceive those three levels not it's first of all it's important not to lose touch with the fact that level one where you have actual human interactions with people in your daily life which is relationships that you have people you work with people you meet casually but actual human interactions that really is the main part or should be the main part of your life should be that the actual living experience and so what I'm recommending is that you separate for see if you can separate those levels and look at the primordial level of your actual experience with human beings leaving aside for a moment social media and leaving aside watching the news every day and all the other things connected with the news whatever leave that aside for a moment it's important to see the difference so when you talk about negativity and destructiveness and or anger and antagonism and conflict everywhere first of all look at your your life your actual life does that apply there or to what extent does that apply there because that's an important part of your reality is your the reality that you create that you manifest in your personal life that is that is that is primary I would say is that sometimes of course the the reality that you see in the mainstream the media when you watch the news sometimes the two meet as I said before they can meet but so first of all take responsibility for you take it is you you need to take responsibility for your life here in on the level of personal interactions that's where it starts and that's where you you can do a lot of good and you can do harm too do you contribute there to human unconsciousness do you could or or do you contribute there to the awakening of humanity every encounter with another human being whether it's a person you've known for a long time family member spouse whatever it may be or whoever it may be every interaction with a true interaction not talking about social media every interaction with another human being is important what is the quality of your consciousness as you interact with actual human beings not not ciphers on the screen if they expressed an opinion and then you attack this actual human beings what what's the quality of your life on that level what is most likely happening right now we need to be aware of that it is true that though there is an increase in the collective at the present time of what we might call dysfunction or disorder or even chaos disruption we are entering or we have already entered collectively a time period of collective disorder or disruption or chaos there are time periods that they fluctuate there's always there it's true that the media the media actually is part of it they don't just report it they they be they amplify the disruption and the chaos unfortunately i'm not blaming anybody there some people say there's there's all some evil plan behind it all maybe there is who knows some conspiracy theories maybe one out of 10 conspiracy theories but actually be true but we don't even need to go there the the fact is that the mainstream media is part of part of the the disorder that's that is increasing disorder in this world and there my feeling is there's more to come so be spiritually prepared very important be spiritually prepared so that you do not become part of the disorder that's happening and increasingly i believe going to happen even more in this world we are moving the world always moves between order and chaos there are two polarities you should always strive for order that's important in your life in the world but realize the world for its evolutionary progress also needs chaos periods of chaos and disorder and out of chaos and disorder a new order develops and so there's a gradual evolution of consciousness when there is disorder there is a regressive movement and which means most people become relatively more unconscious and in the present time anybody who is not awakening even to some extent spiritually will be drawn into deeper unconsciousness because they become part of the collective movement towards disorder or chaos when structures dissolve and that is a challenge for humans now especially for you everybody i'm talking to and many others of course it is your challenge to stay conscious while this is happening so that you do not become contaminated by the collective negativity and unconsciousness it doesn't mean that you necessarily need to completely withdraw from the world you can still attempt as to the best of your abilities to create a better world if you have whatever your sphere of influence may be see if you can bring in more consciousness into whatever you do whoever you are in contact with be a bringer of consciousness you bring consciousness into an unconscious world without creating some mental conceptual image i am the bringer of consciousness then you're lost in ego again so but be prepared for increasing challenges in the collective do not be drawn into reactivity and do not be hypnotized by these events when you watch what's happening in the media and so on stay present what you're watching is an evolutionary story humanity is displaying probably entering a regressive period as they sometimes happen before there's a further awakening of consciousness we perhaps i'm not for sure but there's a good chance we're entering a regressive period which is perfectly fine it's what you're watching is the evolutionary growth of the human species and so they are manifesting whatever behavior corresponds to the particular stage in the evolution of humanity and the evolution is towards more consciousness that's that's for sure so if you discover within yourself that a lot of the time you are in a state of lack of insufficiency of not enough and you feel that the answer to the remedy is to be active in this world and achieve and do as much as possible then you'll probably find that ultimately that is not the answer to your state of lack in order to transcend to go beyond your state of lack of neediness of not enough spiritual practice and spiritual realization is necessary focus on the realization of being it's only there that you can go beyond that state of lack which is ego go within and discover who or what you are beyond the person so here we have then fundamental at the most fundamental level abundance is being in touch with a source of life within yourself and recognizing it as the essence of who you are of course so the secret of life is to to be in touch with that within yourself and from that we could say state of connectedness with being look out onto the world and the first thing you see is abundance all around you because you're surrounded by millions of different life forms everywhere unfolding continuously unbelievable profusion of life everywhere whether you're out in the country natural world or whether you're in new york city or any city walking along fifth avenue and there too profusion of manifestations of life you don't even need to differentiate between natural you can actually enjoy all manifestations of life from the tree to the store display at tiffany's if you want it's just life you don't necessarily need to you don't at that stage you don't need to have anything because you're already enjoying all that and that is a wonderful feeling of abundance already but you have to be in the background there needs to be the connectedness so there is a certain powerful field of stillness as you walk around fifth avenue looking at everything you need to have a strong a stronger connection on fifth avenue than you need in the middle of the forest but it's not that you can't be then that place on fifth avenue you can so if you're walking out in the middle of a big city of course you get all kinds of your attention is pulled this way and that and the staying rooted in that field so that you're not dependent on your environment to feel peaceful if you're dependent on your environment to feel peaceful and oh oh i can't be peaceful here i need to go out somewhere else yes i i'm often mentioned of course that nature is helpful it is wonderful to go out to nature but if you are dependent on nature to become still and peaceful then your life becomes restricted and there is a lack of depth still you're dependent on a certain environment fine you can nature is you love nature that's beautiful you love being in nature it's wonderful but you are then dependent on that and you cannot take that state of aliveness into the city so it requires greater depth and intensity aliveness so that you can enjoy the aliveness everywhere wherever you are in all manifestations of life see them as temporary play the temporary play of forms because that's what it is there's nothing permanent here nothing permanent if you take a movie picture of fifth avenue let's just stay with fifth avenue it's that stands for all cities in all streets if you took a movie camera to fifth avenue and film all the people running around the street and then a few years later let's say 50 years you watch the film then most of the people running around fifth avenue will have disappeared already not only from fifth avenue but from the planet so you watch ultimately insubstantial life forms going about their business or their play they call it business but it is play and to them it's serious but it's not it's the play of life includes wall street if you know it's play it's fine but you can only know it's play through being connected to that which is deeper than the forms in yourself then you recognize the forms as the play of form but if you are not connected with the depths of being in yourself you don't recognize the movement of form as the play of forms because to you then that's all there is and then there comes a neediness i need these forms to make me happy and there comes a concern and seriousness about forms because that's all you seem to have so you get unduly anxious about the forms of life and everything is very serious so most people in big cities are serious going about their business and there's fear underlying the seriousness they're serious because they are ultimately in a state of concealed to themselves fear and they're trying to get somewhere they never get there but they always on the way somewhere very important to get this done they never get it done because they do this and there's something else lack of that's not abundance there can be no true feeling of abundance if you don't recognize the playful nature of the world if you are dependent for your sense of fullness on the forms there's no abundance you're just seeking more forms to fill your life up with so here we have then fundamental at the most fundamental level abundance is being in touch with the source of life within yourself and recognizing it as the essence of who you are of course and then look around and experience the sensory world and then you can participate in the play without completely losing yourself in it and enjoy the play of form and then you experience as you do that you experience another level of abundance that is the abundance of experiences of experiencing life in various ways through where you go what you do relationships sensory experience even and even there you don't get lost in it you can even enjoy food tastes good without the addictive enjoyment that is very different that goes i need more of this and then there's come you want to you need to take it in to more more more more drink another one sex need more and it draws you out of yes you where's the next the next sex object and it of course it draws you out of out there you can enjoy sensory experience without becoming addicted to sensory experience and that is to being able to enjoy sensory experience and whatever you do it's also abundance it's the part of the fullness of life and then it's possible that also things come into your life and then you can enjoy things also for what they are without getting worked up about owning them or fear of loss enjoy something beautiful why not but not obsessively accumulating one thing after another pointlessly but to to honor the world of things also is part of being here so as things come to you so you're not really you don't need to seek abundance for the sake of abundance you have to go to the place of abundance from there different levels of abundance manifest in your life they may include the outermost level things coming to you how can we measure our spiritual progress well one thing i mentioned earlier when we gave the example of arriving here and being told that no we have no reservation for you similar such situations are interesting situations that can reflect back to you what your level of consciousness is how you react or respond in such a situation and life is full of situations like that when something happens and you are you're not being honored or somebody hasn't respected you or is not giving you enough attention and something goes drastically wrong and how what what does that do to you and how do you how does it affect you that you can through self-observation you can often sometimes the observation can call me can only come in retrospectively sometimes in the moment you get so taken over by some reaction that you don't even know what's going on you're just on automatic that's the ego having taken over and sometimes after it has subsided you look back on the situation and you observe your reaction say hmm what if even better if somebody could have videoed you that would be extremely helpful if you could arrange with a person close to you to pick up the iphone and and put it on the on on video and film you when you're being unconscious and then when you're more conscious ask you are you ready to look at yourself but for the deepest answer to how can we measure our progress on the spiritual path I would like to refer you to the answer given by Bhagwan Sri Ramana Maharshi when he was asked the same question sometime in the 1950s how can we measure progress our progress on the spiritual path and his answer and that is the answer at the deepest level is the degree of absence of thinking is the measure for progress on the spiritual path that's clear enough if that's too complicated an answer I can probably simplify it it's how little you think how little you think shows you how far you are progressing or progressed on the spiritual path or how much you think shows you how little progress you have made that's a little drastic perhaps but unfortunately it's true so it's just that's so simple isn't it now again many of you are already able to step out of thinking and the the thoughtless state which is presence which is awareness awareness arises in your life already here and there spontaneously when you look at something new there's a moment of before you call it anything a new person you meet a new person for the first five seconds the mind hasn't had time to formulate an opinion about that person there's a moment of spaciousness that sometimes in that moment when people can an intuitive perception of the other person in the first moment but then the mind comes in and very often what the mind says is just an expression of its conditioning and very often it's not the other person you're saying something about yourself rather than the other person you're projecting in other words so measure for progress on this road path in other words is the degree of stillness in your life your inner space in daily life not how long you can sit in meditation but more importantly the stillness in everyday life can your life be interspersed with stillness so that you no longer have the density of the mind and the emotions but something else shining through the density the light that is who you truly are shines through the density that's spiritual that's the spiritual dimension as i mentioned before at some point there was a time when i woke up one morning and i felt at peace after being a tortured individual and a strange thing at night i woke up the next morning completely at peace what's going on and i didn't have an answer why it took me about two years to realize why i was at peace and to realize that i had to actually i wasn't a kind of spiritual search i didn't know exactly what i was searching for i went to see monks and all kinds of strange teachers and teachings i just wanted to check them all out until one monk said to me that uh zen monk said well zen is all about not thinking oh and i realized i was at peace because on that day the first morning i wasn't thinking that much anymore but i didn't know i wasn't thinking it much i experienced the state of not thinking as peace so i hadn't been able to interpret it as that was not thinking so you experience no no thought as simply a very peaceful energy arising but it could only arise because the density of the mind wasn't there anymore there was some thinking of course but not the not the continuous density very much less thinking how much less i don't know a lot less much more than 50 more much more 80 probably so that's a spontaneous thing why that happened who knows and later the understanding of it came two years later and then gradually the teaching over the years developed now people asked me well to you it just happened what are you expecting us to do about it it's not happening to us spontaneously but i know that from enormous amount of feedback i get from people that the teaching actually works for many many people it their life gets renewed because the old mind patterns are subsiding and the new consciousness is arising so although it may not happen in one moment that's fairly rare it is for most of you or all of you it is a the process i call it the awakening process when presence awakens it's a new birth you are newborn if the so many words have been misused so much that i don't want to use them anymore don't say newborn fear dissolves when you start doing what you fear instead of thinking about it as long as it doesn't kill you i have the decade this is both gone actually bits i have the decade-long experience that fear arises when i talk or should talk in front of many people in similar situations i cannot deprogram myself to accept this and speak what can i do the easiest thing is to sit in front of a group of people and talk about what you feel at this moment so you would say as i sit here my hands are wet come i can feel trembling there's a panic i can i'm sweating because i'm talking to you and the more you talk about what's actually there the more quickly you actually transcend it and you connect with people so the simple truth i'm so nervous okay it's okay to be nervous you begin to accept the way things are this is what it's not that i should i should be not just speak from your heart completely honest and open and then you connect with people and after a few minutes if you have something to say it'll come out of you if you have nothing to say then you better have a script to read i remember when i had my i was very much ego trapped in my 20s even talking in a room where there are four or five people discussing something i found it difficult it was to me almost like public speaking so i should i say something and often i didn't fear dissolves when you start doing what you fear instead of thinking about it as long as it doesn't kill you often the doing is the answer rather than the thinking about do and then see me i had a friend who came to see me regularly well somebody would come for spiritual advice and so one day he met a woman on the internet and then every week he came he told me the relationship was getting deeper and deeper and i said what relationship well he said well we are talking to each other on the and then beginning to talk even on the phone after a while it's not really i'm falling in love with this woman and i think about her all the time and i said you know you're not thinking about this woman you're thinking about her there's a mental image in your head of who that woman is so when and then he said yes but i'm married should i see her it's all i said go in you must meet her i'm not even talking to you about it anymore i said go and meet her and he did and that was the end of the relationship it ended after one minute and then i stopped seeing people individually all problems are really this perhaps a more obvious kind of mind-created problem but all problems are actually created by unconscious thinking all problems when that goes and you step out of compulsive unconscious thinking all you're left with is whatever is right now the situation that you either take action or you refrain from taking action some situations you need to take action other situations there's nothing i can do like right now so it's either one or the other neither is a problem action or refraining from action there's no problem if it's an emergency obviously it's action that's required others where action is possible action happens and if it's not nothing nothing i can do surrender accept let go be just present and even if it seems unacceptable then you have to go even deeper because some situations seem unacceptable they are just if you accept the unacceptable you go very deep unacceptable meaning the death of a loved one your own approaching death the loss of your precious car unacceptable then you need to go very really deep because that's that takes you into awakening and often doing isn't possible anymore when death approaches to still think in terms of doing is absurd as they still do in hospitals where they they give you potent drugs just so that you can live another two or three months and suffer or even six months or a year because death is unacceptable to the western mind still to a large extent and it believes you do until the very end you have to do something but they yes doing is fine but there comes a time when doing needs to be relinquished and that's beautiful and that's where real realization happens i envisage whether it will come through this form or through some of the forms here places where people learn how to die beautifully how they where they learn about old age so that it's not just something that where people are put away and just waiting for the unacceptable to happen while they watch television but true places of spirituality where they use the great opportunity that's there in old age as the body begins to dissolve a great opportunity for awakening the flowering of life it could be parents are often hypocritical they demand certain things from their children but they themselves don't do it so the state of consciousness that you are predominantly in at home is the main teaching and there's just been a book published on educate on parenting by susan stifelman and the title is uh parenting with presence okay that may be helpful i believe it's a good book and i wrote the foreword for it um there may be uh in a year or two another book on on parenting but this may already help you i recommend it um i wrote i write a little bit about parenting in the in the new earth but one could say much more that many volumes could be written about it i am perhaps not the most qualified person because i've never been a parent but uh but we talked about that i mean

[Speaker 4] (2:23:54 - 2:24:03)
we talk about this being challenged every day and staying in the presence and so on it is i think it

[Speaker 2] (2:24:03 - 2:24:14)
is a very much challenging with children yes huge challenge yeah but a great opportunity to

[Speaker 1] (2:24:14 - 2:32:20)
to you um presence the main often there have been quite a few questions here also on the class written questions about um bringing up children consciously and what is the how what do what's the main main thing to do to bring up children consciously what what do we do the main thing is your own state of consciousness in the at home that's always your main teaching uh there's often a discrepancy between what parents teach their children verbally and how they behave at home and their state of consciousness and the children know that they can feel that that basically parents are often hypocritical they demand certain things from their children but they themselves don't do it so the state of consciousness that you are predominantly in at home is the main teaching so to be able to i mentioned in a new earth to be able to for example give your fullest attention to your child when you're listening to the child and not always equate attention with some kind of thing that they either should be doing or should not be doing that's how many parents relate to their children whenever they give attention they say don't do this or you should do should be doing that the entire home environment seems to consist of either stopping to do something or doing something that they are not doing and that's the only way attention flows out to the child so and that is not there's a lack of presence a lack of the acknowledgement of the being of the child there's the entire household is dominated by doing and in the doing which includes the mental doing and and the physical doing in the doing the being is completely neglected it's never acknowledged the the presence of the child is never fully acknowledged the child is not seen really by the parent and deep down the child can feel can sense that something essential is missing and that what arises then in the child is a a discomfort a sense of lack and even some anger sometimes towards the parent which often comes out when they reach teenage years for some inexplicable seemingly inexplicable reason the teenager becomes angry with the parent and they say what happened to this house can you turn into this monster and it is often the case now don't blame yourself but it's it's often the case that the for years the child's being felt unacknowledged and basically that means the child felt not seen by the parent and then that is almost to be deprived to be deprived of real lovingness which is attention and not the conditional love that is usually attached to the doing or the not doing and and that is missing and that's a vital thing that really brings about a lot of conflict between the child and the parent especially as they grow go into their teenage years can you be total can you be fully yourself can you be in your essence as much as possible when you relate to the child that includes periods when you're not talking about what he or she should be doing or should not be doing but just giving your fullest attention you look or you listen to what they have to say or you look or you're asking questions and then you listen and sometimes it may just be wordless attention too for brief moments just just looking and that is all that changes that brings in a different a different energy field into the home environment and that's the main teaching everything else is secondary what you say to the child and so on is all secondary although there are things you can say that are helpful too i have spoken a few times about the pain body in children when it begins to manifest uh to bring some attention to the child's pain body after it's happened some children have temper tantrums or go sulking and with withdraw and these are so children already experience pain body attacks some more acutely than others and so i recommend that after it has subsided perhaps the next day or a few hours later you say what did you feel when that what what was that that came up when you started screaming what did it feel like even perhaps in ask a child to draw a picture of what this thing is that it's the anger

it felt he's 14 what he's 14 14 yes i asked him to draw it this is mostly for younger children and because painting a picture of it creates some awareness and creates some space around it and and then the next time it comes up you can just it you it will you won't be able to stop it but you can say oh that is again isn't it listen so you're not trying to stop the pain body you're trying to help the child to become aware of it and you can start with that already when they're four years old five years old um so that's that is very helpful it's an amazing talent bringing up children and every parent makes mistakes that's inevitable but at least your son is lucky to have you because you are endeavoring to bring him up consciously and so and that's a new thing that's coming into there are more humans now who are actually been they may not always succeed but they are becoming conscious parents and that is a wonderful thing in my generation when i was a child conscious parent was unheard of nobody had conscious parents well at least nobody i knew all the parents were very unconscious totally dominated by ego they just the same upbringing that they experienced they inflicted on their children there was no no no change whatsoever and so conscious parent is something relatively recent although there may have been exceptions of course in the past too they're always exceptions i just never met them and certainly my parents were not conscious they were just as unconscious as everybody else trapped in their own ego and there was constant dysfunction and uh it was not a pleasant environment and there's nobody to blame that's that was the way they brought me up corresponded to their state of consciousness that's all so thank you that and then i will start

[Speaker 12] (2:32:21 - 2:32:23)
to stand on one leg

[Speaker 1] (2:32:23 - 2:38:03)
that may help too but it started when i was writing the a new earth and then i couldn't focus on anything else while i was writing and then things started to accumulate and now i still get all these manuscripts and books sent and some of them are taking up more and more space at my place so let's not go there well the anxiety about not taking care of the future is of course losing the present moment that's the real loss of the present moment but taking care of the future by doing some planning constructive planning even constructive thinking not useless thinking and worrying and uh toxic thinking in the middle of the night things what i should be doing or haven't done or if i do it might go wrong not that kind of totally useless thinking which is losing the present moment then there is the applied thinking which is oh i need to work out what i'm going to do whatever schedule for the next thing i'm going to do a plan for the next year when i will have to do this or that whatever and you may find that if you do focused thinking and apply it to whatever it is that you need to work out is not losing the present moment it's only useless thinking about the present moment that mentally projects you away from now and doesn't get you anywhere it detracts from the quality of life and detracts from your sense of aliveness so planning you can do in the present moment let's say i plan where am i going to go i'm going on a tour somewhere i was on a europe tour last late last year and that had to be planned almost a year in advance so already at the beginning of last year and before then we were already talking about the europe tour and so what then you look at the calendar cities geography of places where they connect all the other factors that you need to look at you're not really losing the present moment because you're not projecting yourself mentally over there and imagining how it's going to go or imagining that when you finally give that talk in london then you're really going to feel really fulfilled or projecting yourself to that talk in london when nobody's going to like what you're going to say and half the audience are going to leave am i going to be inspired when i reach london and to give a talk it's just losing the present these this kind of thinking happens it pretends to be useful and constructive but it's not at all and it's not taking responsibility for anything but applied thinking and for applied thinking it's good to give yourself a time limit a space you sit down for an hour or you talk to people and say what do we need to do here to in order to do this that that

that you're not losing the present moment some people often this is not uncommon for people to have this question thinking that i must never think about the future but when you apply that you're not really thinking about the future you're doing the planning is now there's just you're not projecting yourself away from the present moment so it's applied and constructive thinking the same with the past sometimes you need to think about something that happened in the past you need your memory for certain things and then you need to kind of go back there in your mind and then you talk about well but there's a reason why you bring it into the present because you need that kind of memory or the knowledge you perhaps you learned something there at the past europe tour those and those things went very wrong the people had to line up for an hour and i was an hour late starting it was disorganized what did we do wrong that's fine you can you have to go there but but if you in the middle of the day you think you think how dreadful that was or you're blaming yourself or others about what went wrong then you lose yourself in the past so you can use past and future without losing yourself in them and then really you remain present even while you refer back to the past or while you make plans for the future

[Speaker 9] (2:38:04 - 2:38:11)
so that's really how it works is there a way that you can if you're happy you can trust the universe

[Speaker 1] (2:38:11 - 2:44:23)
that you're on the right path oh yes well that's that is an underlying thing is of course the sense of connectedness with the deeper level the deeper levels of your being the awareness the presence the stillness whatever you want to call it and that gives you a certain rootedness you're rooted in being and then what happens on the the outcome of things that you do is no longer the the factor that determines your state of consciousness so when you when things go wrong sometimes they do you're not devastated you don't oh you don't feel you're going to die because it went wrong and you did you didn't get there you tried so hard in the end it didn't work and it's it's so awful you beat yourself up mentally no that's a very dysfunctional and stuff creates a lot of suffering so you are less dependent on the you you welcome a good outcome of course but you're not dependent on a good outcome for feeling peaceful and really complete in yourself and that sense of completeness in yourself because there are two levels as you as you know that one could say the two dimensions you are the person but you are also the vast consciousness so there's the ripple there's the ocean the person lives in time and there's a development the person learns things gets better at certain things and so on that at the deepest level there is already that sense of completion you don't need to become anything when you are connected with the depths of who you are in that depth you don't need to become you are already complete on the level of the person you're never really complete and there are always things that are could be called imperfections not once when you're connected not huge things that create a lot of dysfunction in your life and make your life and other people's lives unhappy not that kind of thing but there are things that are certain personal things that are limitations on you can't be i have my place at the moment is untidy i'm not perfect there so there was a time when my place was tidy so i'm not an untidy person continuously but it started when i was writing the a new earth and then i couldn't focus on anything else while i was writing and then things started to accumulate and now i still get all these manuscripts and books sent and some of them are taking up more and more space at my place so let's not go there that's an imperfection on my part if somebody had an idea of somebody who's fully awake he must live in certain way and then he comes says how can you this is not tidy how do you live occasionally i have a cup of coffee one a day and occasionally people see me having a cup of coffee somewhere and say why do you need coffee you've written you've written all these spiritual books and now you still need coffee i don't know if i need it i just enjoy a cup of coffee and i drink a glass of wine or two occasionally with dinner you drink alcohol well if my state of conscience is so

fragile that a glass of wine would upset it then what this can't be worth very much so the the addictiveness does not come in because the addictiveness would be something else if i were addicted to coffee and couldn't live without six cups of coffee a day some or if i were addicted to alcohol and couldn't know wouldn't know when to stop drinking there would be something else but you can enjoy things but people might interpret it as an imperfection and perhaps it is but become allow yourself to have your imperfections as long as they don't create suffering for others or yourself become comfortable with things where you are not perfect some people are habitually it's not a nice thing it's not my problem but they're habitually late some people just have that it's almost in their genes i had a filipino friend and i recently met her again after many years in london at university in cambridge and it must be in the filipino genes to be late all the time and apparently when i talked to her she said yes everybody's late nobody expects people to be on time and so and that maybe she may not be able to get rid of that because it's in her genes it says be late or you don't need to be on time or that and that's fine that's how they live it's not a problem in the philippines it might become a problem in the west but not to them to other people who might say there's something wrong with you no if some things can change and that's good and as consciousness awakens in you more the awareness arises it does tend to dissolve those patterns as i said that really f up your life

[Speaker 9] (2:44:25 - 2:44:27)
okay thank you

[Speaker 1] (2:44:55 - 2:57:22)
and that change in consciousness must there's only one place where it can happen and that's in you and that implies that you practice self-observation that is an essential part of the change in consciousness to practice self-observation is implies that there is enough presence or awareness in you from where you can self-observe and in almost all of you there is maybe not all the time but there is there is enough to have brought you here and that is quite a bit so is there enough presence in you so that you can self-observe your own motivations your own thought structures what are the habitual thoughts that i think so that you are not drawn continuously into every thought that comes and follow it where it wants to take you one little thought comes in about your life oh and then another thought and you follow it oh oh no and then before you know it your more thoughts come and then other conflicting thoughts and no no that's not how it is yes it is no no i can't take anymore and you believe in that thought too that you can't take anymore so the ability to to observe non-judgmentally what goes on inside you there is awareness there needs to be awareness so that is self knowledge self-knowledge means it's really not so much on knowing on a conceptual level what happened to you in the past and trying to understand the past the story of me i need to investigate the story of me there is a place for that in certain cases you may want to understand what happened how why you acted or your what your parents did to you and come to an understanding your limited understanding of that but ultimately the arising of the new consciousness is not is not a better conceptual understanding of anything it's not a better conceptual understanding of who you are it goes beyond any concept awareness in itself does not necessarily imply immediately that you understand more about yourself in fact as you become more aware in yourself you the need to understand my life and work it out diminishes and so the compulsion to also to understand every other human being that you meet immediately formulate certain judgments and conclusions about that other human being and the urge to immediately form judgment inclusion about any situation that you encounter and then this is how it is and then you have a narrative that develops in the mind and then you're telling yourself the narrative about who you are who they are and how it all is you've all met people like that and once you were like that yourself and just perhaps still occasionally that that comes back and you go it's good to act it out a bit because then you can recognize it that's not presence that's absence it's it's it's called absence the opposite of presence of course is absence that means

you are not there you are not there all that's there pretending to be you is the egoic mind the conceptual mind and the mind says it's me and my life so what arises then is the awareness which means since as it arises it seems at first that you know less than before because you no longer compulsively immediately interpret everything conceptually every human being you encounter and your own life you don't compulsively that compulsion the compulsion to judge continuously isn't there and so it seems at first and the the egoic mind will may come in and say oh wait a minute you don't know what's going on anymore if you don't if you don't judge it you don't you who knows who that person is if you don't judge it he he could be your enemy he could be or to deceive you you better be careful you need to judge but then no you don't and so I understood when I was reading Plato the Plato's works as you may know I don't know how many people these days read Plato but uh he reports in his works the what Socrates taught how faithfully he recorded what Socrates taught we don't know but one certain things seem to be because Socrates never wrote anything certain things however seem genuine and there's especially one statement that Socrates made that's often repeated by Plato and that is this when somebody went to the oracle at Delphi in ancient Greece and the oracle said who is the wisest man on the planet or in the world the oracle said Socrates is the wisest okay they heard this then they they went to Athens where Socrates was and that oh oh listen the uh the um oracle at Delphi said you are the wisest all men why is that and Socrates said I am the wisest because I'm the only one who knows that he knows nothing I'm the only one who knows that he knows nothing on another occasion he said uh I'm wise because I know that I know nothing and then people later they read it over the centuries and most people interpret it as kind of a feigned modesty and they say of course he knows what does it he knows a lot but he just says it it's it's a feigned modesty it's a in other words it's ego but that's not how it is it describes a state of consciousness out of which his enormously creative teaching his deep insights arose it is it describes the very foundation of the state of of what of what ultimately is the state of spacious awareness or presence and that state is one of actually cessation of mind activity without loss of consciousness so every of the so-called dialogues of Socrates and the way it's reported by Plato is not absolutely correct because I know exactly maybe I was there I don't know but I know how Socrates always started the he started the his blood his Socratic dialogues with just not knowing and then he begins to ask questions and through questions the knowing gradually arises he does not start with already accumulated knowledge so it starts from the he was comfortable with the state of not knowing in other words he was rooted in the state of pure awareness pure awareness in your pure awareness conceptually of course you don't know anything when when your mind stops for example now if I I stop speaking now and use and you can you're still here too we can do it together I stopped speaking for a few seconds and as I stopped speaking do you need to fill that space between me stopping to speak and starting to speak again do you need to fill that space with thought or are you able to simply be present in that space in other words are you able to just simply be don't suppress thought it doesn't work you can't you can't hold your breath and say I must not think that might work but but then thinking will come even up up even more strongly once you start breathing again so it's not that you cannot you can't hold down thought it's a pure shift into a more alert state of consciousness alert alert means okay now acting out alertness now I'm not just acting it out when I look at you in this weird way I'm not thinking and when you look at me looking at you in this weird way you also could experiment with that and see whether as I stop speaking now for 10 seconds you can just be in that space of pure awareness where you take in sense perceptions against the background of awareness and you might notice that in that space you don't know anything you don't even know your name because your name is a thought you don't know anything in that space and yet you are there conscious present without any movement in the mind

[Speaker 3] (2:57:41 - 2:57:51)
we have Celia joining us from Portugal. Celia welcome and please go ahead and share your question with Eckhart.

[Speaker 9] (2:57:52 - 2:58:01)
Hello thank you for having me it's an honor Eckhart you have shined such a light on my path thank you so much.

[Speaker 1] (2:58:02 - 2:58:03)
Thank you thank you very much

[Speaker 9] (2:58:04 - 2:58:49)
uh so my question is if I'm honest what I really want to manifest is a of a spiritual nature and I find this is the same for many on this path but these spiritual intentions are not so easy to simulate in terms of feeling like we have already received or to visualize can you address how manifestation can be applied to spiritual yearnings or is manifestation only to be applied to practical purposes while we work on our spiritual practice?

[Speaker 1] (2:58:50 - 3:31:38)
Thank you thank you good question one important thing to be aware of is that you don't make the mistake of regarding spiritual realization or being enlightened or being egoless or being in permanent conscious connectedness with source whatever you want to call it not to regard that as a state to be achieved it's very easy to fall into that error of wanting to become fully awakened for example and then you might say this is part of the question uh is there something I can do perhaps to manifest this awakened version of myself so if you have this intention or this image in your mind you want to arrive at a fully awakened state whatever else you want to call it that will become a great obstacle because spiritual awakening or the ego state or whatever it is cannot be achieved in the future you would be creating an image that you then pursue wanting to reach or achieve and you won't achieve it as long as you have an image of yourself that you want to achieve you're striving towards that in other words you make it into a goal like everything else things that you want to achieve in this world but the one thing that you will not achieve by making it into a goal is this state of awakening or being fully yourself is another way of putting it being realizing the essence of who you are so you would be striving away from the only place where it is accessible to you and that's in the vertical dimension of the present moment so for everything else manifestation practices can be helpful but not for realizing who you are because there's no you don't achieve anything you don't attain anything by spiritual awakening that's it's not an achievement it's not an attainment it's a realization that means it's already here so if you look to the future for it you miss the fact that it's already here and you don't realize that that's the place where you haven't been looking because there is if you're looking to the future and this is why i'm saying it becomes a great obstacle if you look to the future for enlightenment fulfillment whatever it may be that becomes the obstacle and you won't get your phone you won't find it and you will be striving even you might be engaged in arduous spiritual practices very determined to awaken but you have in your mind a future goal that you want to achieve without you might not call it that but underlying it underlying your practice is this assumption of arriving at a at a future goal and that is because is the greatest obstacle to that realization because what is future future is basically inseparable from thought because the future exists only in your mind as a thought form if any i'll be very happy to listen to anybody who wants to prove me wrong because then he would probably would come to me and say here's a future i have discovered it so far nobody has come to me and said here's the future you are wrong the future is more than just a thought form and i don't think anybody will come so now that means if you're looking to the future you have a thought form that you are pursuing of yourself as the fully awakened one or whatever term you use so you are pursuing a thought form in the future which the inseparable future and thought and then you reach the end of this incarnation and you become frustrated because you haven't found it why not because the thought form or the future the future self prevented you from discovering

what's already here discovering who or what you already are so it's a complete it's a reversal of normal practice is yes you need time for everything in this world in order to do this any action unfolds in time for anything you pursue you want to acquire something achieve something become good at something all these things require time yes but the one thing that does not only not require time but the one thing to which time is the obstacle is that self-realization for everything else you need time and that's fine but to find yourself you don't need time that is a an amazing realization the buddha also had to learn that he didn't know that when he started off when the buddha started off he realized the unsatisfactory nature of normal human existence he saw there's so much suffering and then you die so he saw the unsatisfactory and said there must be a transcendent dimension there must be something beyond so for many years he practiced seeking to find enlightenment transcendence and he practiced the most arduous disciplines with great teachers he almost killed himself with the physical spiritual practice and after several years of spiritual practice he still hadn't wasn't any further to his goal of enlightenment and then he said well i've had enough of that that by the way is not a literal literal quote from the scriptures this is my free translation he said i've had enough and he stopped his spiritual practice and he sat under a tree and then that was the big moment he sat under a tree and suddenly the realization happened enlightenment what does that mean all doing came to a stop he realized through the doing he cannot achieve being being needs to be discovered but not achieved so no matter what he did he didn't achieve it because you cannot achieve it you cannot achieve enlightenment you can discover it it's already here and when he sat under the tree all doing came to a stop all future came to a halt there was no more future all seeking stopped seeking for an enlightened version of myself basically that stopped and and then it happened the the realization came to him and that was the moment of enlightenment so there's a deep lesson in that now of course some people say that the buddha's search through spiritual practice was unnecessary you could say that if he had realized before he started his arduous spiritual practice if he had realized that that was unnecessary not only unnecessary that it was ultimately misleading then he could have sat under the tree immediately okay that's an interesting uh perspective on it but one could also say that he needed to go through that in order to realize the futility of it um and then give up the the surrender only happened as a result of the being frustrated with spiritual practice so who knows whether one could say it wasn't necessary at all or he had to go through it i have a way of putting this and that is the question is my answer to the question do you need time for spiritual realization do you need time to wake up spiritually and my answer is you need time until you realize that you don't need time so you come to a point of but the vertical dimension suddenly opens up so one cannot really start some spiritual teachers do that they tell people there's nothing you can do there's nothing you need to do about waking up you either wake up or not or discover who you are very often it's not very helpful uh it doesn't leave people and so i i think the the doing it's helpful to to do to want to achieve this or that you every human being needs to arrive at a point where the doing is realized as ultimately not leading to the ultimate goal or realization but you may have to become frustrated several times quite a few times before you realize that no amount of doing will ultimately lead to the realization of who you are in fact the doing is is the obstacle but sometimes you need to go through that state of doing to fully realize that so the to project a to pursue a state that you want to achieve um is not to be encouraged but to realize that there's nothing to achieve and who you are in your essence is already complete full perfect in your essence there's nothing that you could add to who you are you're already one with god to use that term one with source the source of all life you're already one with that on the level of manifestation there are many things that where you could improve your life as this manifested being that you are temporarily you can learn new things explore new things achieve get obtain and then of course it leaves you again nothing stays with you in the world of manifestation it comes and then it goes so there's nothing wrong with doing and achieving and obtaining but for realization it's not helpful it's a hindrance so we come to the point of where doing and being are reconciled in yourself to reconcile in yourself the dimension of being with the dimension of doing so if you discover within yourself that a lot of the time you are in a state of lack of insufficiency of not enough and you feel that the answer to the remedy is to be active in this world and achieve and do as much as possible then you'll probably find that ultimately that is not the answer to your state of lack in order to transcend to go beyond your state of lack of neediness of not enough spiritual practice and spiritual realization is necessary focus on the realization of being it's only there that you can go beyond that state of lack which is ego go within and discover who or what you are beyond the person it can be a more playful thing where you simply look around and acknowledge the presence of what's around you and feel your own presence in the background it's not a serious business now i have to practice presence no just don't even call it anything just be at ease in the present moment there's only this moment don't try to be present just be at ease in the now and then look around and sense and it's fine and then thoughts come don't have to stay there no and then thoughts come and thoughts go around your mind for a few minutes and then again you take some steps into your presence again walking from here to there making a cup of tea looking out of the window and then thoughts come again so you intersperse your the day or your life with presence and also when you're traveling either no matter when you go to work wherever you go whether you go whether you walk or drive or use a bicycle or use a train or use a bus it's a wonderful opportunity for just go within and be be present as you travel whenever you're waiting just be it's not there's no effort involved at all the effort is not being present is more effortful that's where all effort arises you don't use willpower to be present just an arising alertness don't demand that it should be there for long periods of time that's frustrating and then you say oh it's gone i can't do it anyway screw it i'm i'm quoting quoting you and that's the mind talking not the presence talking it's the mind saying it's useless to be present it's too hard work i can't do it i can't stay there anyway these are thoughts that arise in your mind and you believe them but they are thoughts that are designed to take you out of presence and to prevent you from returning to presence they're not the truth they are they are created by your mind to take you out of presence that's all so the mistake you made is you believed in those thoughts so even the thoughts through it is not the true thought as Byron Katie would say how do you know that's true it's not a true thought it's a thought that's there to take you out of presence and to make sure that you don't go back to it and then another thought comes and says what's the point it's not working for me maybe it's working for others but it's not working for me all kinds of you may be familiar with that kinds of self-talk in the head be very aware of what kind of self-talk happens in your head very interesting because you can learn so much about your the conditioning of your mind by listening to the way in which you talk to yourself and everybody talks to themselves and some people use the first person singular and talk as I and many people use this use the you they talk to themselves addressing themselves as you you are useless aren't you why can other people do it but you can't who is talking to whom so you're you're creating a split in your mind and one part of your mind talks the other part of your mind and calls it you and it's amazing so recognize that the self-talk rarely speaks the truth it's a form of conditioning that goes on in your mind and it is associated with the ego which does not want to go away it wants to stay in charge stick around it knows what to say to take you out but if you don't believe in every thought that arises especially thoughts concerning presence then you're free the thoughts may still come but you can say oh there goes his thought you don't actually you no longer comment on the thought and this is interesting you you become the from the awareness you can see and recognize the thought as a thought that your mind throws up without calling it anything it's a bit like holding a mirror up to something that arises that's the awareness the mirror doesn't judge what arises because if you criticize the thought that you just had it's just more self-talk and even if you say why are you always having this self-talk you should stop you should by now you should be beyond that self-talk you've been doing spiritual work for years and you still can't get out of your self-talk what's wrong with you more of it so when you did when you become aware of your self-talk don't formulate judgments around the self-talk you get just more of it don't criticize yourself be hold up a mirror to it and from there there's a knowing there in that awareness you know that this is self-talk and you know that it's not true without having to tell yourself through words that this is not true and this is self-talk you just know in this so this is a in the same way that you can know you can look at a you can look at a plant or a flower you know it's a flower but you don't have to tell yourself this is a flower you know it without formulating any words in your mind any concepts you can look at the sky beautiful vast blue you don't have to say to yourself this is a vast blue sky and i'm looking at it you that's that's knowing through concepts and words but there's another kind of knowing does not require words you just know and because you do not limit what you are perceiving through concepts you can actually sense a greater depth in that which you are perceiving whether it's the flower or the sky you can sense a depth in it that goes beyond what you see on the surface of your sense perceptions the depths becomes obscure to you when you look at everything through continental concepts when you say this is a beautiful vast sky you're still limiting yourself your the true perception does not happen until the words disappear and there's only the awareness and the perception and in that the sky is more than just the sky it's suddenly because every concept reduces it and you think the word sky is the sky you know the painting i think it's by margaret the painting of an apple and he writes underneath this is not an apple of course it isn't it's the painting of an apple in the same way that a word or concept is not it krishna murthy said when you teach a child the name of the bird from then on the child will never see that bird again because the child then begins to substitute the concept for the direct perception which and there's a depth to the direct perception in which the bird is more than a bird there's a depth to the bird and you realize that life form is more than a bird it just appears as a bird and there's what i'm trying to put into words comes from a perception that is beyond words that's why it's so difficult so you see it there's a depth to the flower and the sky and the bird that cannot be there when you look at it through concepts you can feel the aliveness of the bird you can sense its connectedness to the totality you can sense its sacredness you can sense it's it's beautiful you could never realize that through concepts so don't believe in the words that your mind throws up and that take you out of presence that's the main lesson for you here and it's a lesson for everybody because everybody is burdened and some people are plagued and tortured by their self-talk in a way that would be regarded as indefensible cruelty if somebody close to you did it to you all the time on a daily basis what are i don't know what terms they use the legal terms when you get a divorce uh cruelty or inhuman cruelty or whatever that would apply to your mind that you have to live with when you are not aware enough for perhaps not is perhaps not as bad for you it just takes you out of presence but for other many other people the self-talk can be extremely destructive and can make your life miserable absolutely miserable you don't know that's only the self talking that you think that's your life you think your life is miserable not realizing it's your self-talk that makes your life miserable is it a is i don't know whether to laugh or cry at this uh so absolutely vital lesson hold up a mirror the mirror of awareness to your self-talk so that you realize it's no more than self-talk in particular if you've had predominantly negative or even 50 and many people have 80 to 90 negative self-talk then realize this is stuff my mind produces and not not verbally you don't have to realize it verbally you it's the mirror of awareness and you look and you know wow and i've lived with that for so many years and i've survived miraculously even with that dreadful self-talk in the head and because when you no longer identify with it it begins to subside it's only when you only empower it again and again when it takes you over so completely that you identify it becomes you i haven't mentioned being in the body for a while so let's feel it now that you are actually you feel the energy field of your as you sit there and i sit here we feel a certain aliveness pervading the body it's very simple but some attention has to go there otherwise you can't feel anything which means you have to take some attention away from the thinking if you're fully in thought you can't feel your body at all you're not don't feel alive anymore just abstractions so the beautiful thing is it's not only that your body loves being acknowledged and getting your attention it's a very healing thing to do and most importantly it slows down your thinking considerably if it doesn't even stop it completely because you have to if you have your attention here you can't have it there and this be the embodied state it's quite nice what you're feeling is not ultimately the physical body it's already halfway beyond the physical body chi life energy and i call that it's halfway between form and formlessness it's a bridge chi is the bridge between the the formless dimension and the form so it's wonderful to be to sense that and it can be you can do it anywhere when you're there's enough room you don't need to focus on externals a hundred percent have some attention in the body so we sit here boredom disappears for example when you have attention in the body you're not bored you actually enjoy being feeling alive and that it can serve as an anchor for staying present and that can be one way of looking around at the world without unnecessary mental labeling this clarity of perception and looking at the situations that arise in that clarity of perception and from that clarity of perception you know what you need to do or what needs doing in that situation it's a higher intelligence that you contact via the body a higher intelligence than the acquired knowledge of the human mind and then you know what to do it it acts it tells you you have an inside or spontaneous doing or if there's nothing to do it being is enough it's you can enjoy just being sleepless nights are wonderful opportunity for going into the body oh i can't sleep i wish i could sleep why don't you do something useful go into the body um and then you lie there and feel the the aliveness oh i wish i i hope i won't go to sleep

[Speaker 12] (3:31:38 - 3:31:52)
too soon because it's so nice and before you know it you've gone to sleep perhaps

[Speaker 1] (3:31:54 - 3:51:43)
and then you wake up in the morning perhaps you still feel a lingering sensation there in the body and if you don't as you wake up put your attention into the body first before you start thinking about the day for just a couple of minutes three minutes two minutes it's a good start of the day to feel alive can't be a bad start of the day i'll tell you what a bad start of the day is listening to the news first thing it keeps it's it's a grounding but not a heavy grounding it's a rooted in being are there any thought processes connected with the fear in other words what are the thoughts that your mind is producing while you're feeling the fear well fear anxiety which is a form of fear very common for some people have it many have it in the background continuously and i would say there's some degree of fear even if you're not conscious of it if you're totally identified with the egoic mind you will have fear if only in the background and it may come out in other forms it can come express itself as anger if you look at anger closely you usually find hidden underneath the anger is a state of fear so if there's fear one important thing is to of course you need to direct your attention to it you acknowledge that there's fear the question the important question that arises is are there any thought processes connected with the fear in other words what are the thoughts that your mind is producing while you're feeling the fear is it possible that certain thoughts that you think frequently or habitually produce the fear is it possible you project yourself into the next moment into the future moment excessively trying to control something that you have no control over what's going to happen to me or project or creating an imaginary imaginary scenario of loss that you might yet you might suffer it's not happening now but it might happen and many things that the thought activity excessive thought activity often creates scenarios of things going wrong that are not happening now may never happen often probably will never happen and even if they did happen the actual situation would actually be easier to face than the imaginary situation in your mind because there's nothing you can do there's no action you can take to remedy an imaginary situation except to stop thinking it but if an actual situation arises you face it and you give it your attention and then you take the action that you need to take but an imaginary situation you're totally at the mercy of it so it only exists in your mind so you

need to see whether your mind is creating the fear by thinking fearful thoughts by projecting itself into the future and if if that is the case then you can see oh so i'm creating those because my body cannot tell the difference between an actual event that's happening outside and what my mind is producing so when when i'm thinking thought my life situation is critical if if this is the basically what your thoughts are telling you then your body believes that this is the actual truth that you are being threatened at this very moment if the body doesn't know the difference that the tiger isn't in the room the threatening presence is your thoughts the body reacts in the same way whether there's a threat an actual threat in the room all your thoughts can create the same even palpitations you can be shortness of breath because you're thinking fearful thoughts at night i had that for years awful state it's insane it's a disease but nothing is happening absolutely nothing there's a quiet room nothing it's all happening in the mind so if that's the case see okay then you need to tackle the thoughts because they will cause the fear and how do you tackle thoughts is by using by realizing the futility and the destructive nature of these thoughts and choosing to step out and what do you do to step out first you don't believe your mind that tells you no you can't step out you have to continue thinking no you step out and take a conscious breath or put your attention into the inner energy field of the body a conscious choice to remove attention from thinking and you may have to be really alert to do it if you are immersed in a mind stream it could even be that it's so powerful that you just cannot get out it has such gravitational pull it pulls you but at least you know that this is what's happening so you there's a state where you cannot help yourself yet but at least there is the beginning of a beginning of a disidentification from it when you know that this is what is happening your health your relationships your work or lack of it finances living situation usually those things make up your life my life but i call that your life situation as opposed to life which is only ever now your life situation exists in the mind you have to keep it alive there it's important of course you have to deal with situations as they arise in your life but they only arise in the present moment and when you think about your life situation you can only think about it in the present moment it's important to have these two your life and your life situation and not allow your life situation to completely obscure your life your presence your sense of aliveness your spaciousness and that's helpful to bring attention to learn to bring attention to your senses the expression we could use is come to your senses those five senses so you become more aware of what surrounds you inhabit the body it's another one that brings you connects you with life takes you out of the conceptualizing mind be here now come to your senses inhabit the body be here now they all one and then you don't carry continuously with you like a heavy burden your life situation of course you address whatever challenges arrive you deal with them as they arise in the present moment occasionally you might have to make do some planning or some strategy occasionally but also that happens in the present moment for the rest of the time don't allow your life situation to completely obscure completely stifle your sense of aliveness your presence in the moment because then you walk around with the burden of a very heavy personality and you don't see what's around you anymore you can't truly relate to other humans because you have the heaviness of your problematic life situation and whose life situation is not problematic it's in the nature of life situations to be problematic of course you arrange your life as best you can your life situation as best you can yes you you may acquire new skills so you can get a better job or or in whatever way you improve or attempt to improve your life situation find a nicer place to live why not that's all fine but the expectation that at some point life should leave you alone and not challenge you anymore and that there's something wrong when life challenges you that's a delusion that itself the unconscious assumption that there's something wrong when life presents so-called problems to you better word is challenges there's an unconscious assumption and an unconscious resentment and negative reaction the moment you're faced with a new challenge because of the underlying assumption that these things these things should not be happening but no matter how carefully you arrange your life situation and no matter how much positive thinking you do which is a nice thing you will still be challenged by life you will still experience the polarities of life you will experience for example that every situation every new situation has its new set of challenges so to cut to sever the link between the emotion that you feel and your thought processes what you do is and this is not pleasant but it's possible you place your attention on the emotion you feel it it's unpleasant but it's not going to kill you a child will probably not be able to do that if it's intense it might have to escape into some through dissociation or whatever possibly but an adult fear it's not going to kill you it might kill you if you allow it to rise into your mind because if you might even commit suicide if you can't stand this anymore but it will not kill you in itself so feel it and then you shine the light of awareness on it and you may have to do that a lot and at first it's not pleasant but it's a burning up of the old emotion and the only way to get rid of it is to accept it as it is right now if you want to get rid of it you can't but that complete acceptance of what is is actually the doorway through it it's a transformation of it and if it's extreme that can become your main meditation in life and that will become your main teacher and that will bring about your transformation there in some people's lives there is one huge disability one huge source of suffering or pain that they it could be a physical disability it could be a situation like being in prison it could be an emotion like that that you carry inside that does that doesn't need to go doesn't want to go away so one in certain people's lives there is one one major thing that seems to color your entire life and and and make make your effect your entire life and seemingly makes it impossible for you to ever be free or happy or joyful but if that that one thing if you surrender to it allow it to be and make it as a continuous spiritual practice you need nothing else that one thing will transform you if you surrender to it and there will come a point when you are grateful that that you had to go through that because it will have taken you it will be the greatest spiritual teacher so there was i believe if i remember correctly even a picture to us that philosopher always said it's not the situation that makes you unhappy it's the thought to make you unhappy i if i remember correctly he was also crippled he couldn't walk properly and he was a slave until he became freed so it's often humans who have one major disability or some huge huge difficulty in life and that becomes their catalyst for spiritual transformation if they can surrender to it allow it to be acceptance i call it acceptance of the seemingly unacceptable stephen hawking's case for example i don't know to what extent he awakened spiritually but he accepted the unacceptable and so certain miracles happened he survived just nobody would have thought it possible and he put his life became fruitful on one level at least acceptance of the unacceptable is a great source of grace in this world it's just a miracle but it's an arduous it can be an arduous process for especially for this questioner here who is here it may take a while you have to endure it and be with it and surrender to it a lot of the time and that's your meditation you don't need transcendental meditation your pain your fear is enough be with it the strange thing is only by encountering these challenges do we grow in consciousness and generate energy it awakens us eventually now if you overdo physical exercise you put too much strain on the body you could kill the body you could kill yourself and this has happened people who were so obsessed with physical exercise that they overdid it i've read for example whenever it was one or two years ago a man who wrote about the incredible benefits of jogging died of a heart attack while he was jogging he wasn't that old so you can overdo it and then instead of the body getting stronger it dies and you could also say when you look at life and humans life on this planet probably many other planets you would say well it's all very well sometimes it seems to work that through facing challenges and problems we grow we grow out of identification with mind we grow out of the ego we transcend our conditioned state of consciousness and a new consciousness arises and if i know not actually speaking for myself without facing difficulties and challenges there would not have been any growth in consciousness and no awakening if i had had a what's the word for example a trust fund where you know from a very early age your parents have already looked after your security and you know from an early age you if you don't want to work or anything you don't have to you can have a comfortable life without ever doing anything so there are people like that there may even be one or two here but if you are here and you are a trust fund baby then other things must have happened to you that created difficulties it wasn't financial but there were other things

[Speaker 11] (3:52:06 - 3:52:42)
my north star is the monk the story you shared about the monk who lived saying is that so for everything that came i am trying my best to get there in my journey to accepting the isness of things and accepting the moment what i'm struggling with is when am i being a doormat how do i determine it's clear in the example you just shared being homeless in the gray areas of life how do i determine when i need to take action

[Speaker 1] (3:52:43 - 3:58:41)
right thank you thank you good i don't know if you that story i wrote about it in the new earth i think the monk who is accused of having seduced a young girl who became pregnant because the girl told her parents that this monk did it and then the parents went to the monk and said the terrible thing you did now she told us what you did and all the monk ever said was is that so and then they told everybody else he lost his reputation and that was before that happened before the arrival of twitter and facebook and so on so but basically he was cancelled in modern terminology and then the girl gave birth to the baby and the parents said we don't want that baby we'll take it to the monk he can look after it's his baby so they brought the baby to the monk and here's your baby you look after the baby and the monk said is that so and then the monk looked after the baby for a year or so uh just looked after it very well and then the girl grew up a little bit more who had given birth and then finally she confessed to her parents that he was not the father but it was some young guy from next door bad so the parents ran back to the monk said we are terribly sorry we now know that you're not the father of the baby and again the monk said is that so and he handed the baby back to the parents that is an extreme example of non-resistance um jesus has another extreme example of non-resistance you and somebody slaps you on the one cheek and you offer your other cheek that's another extreme example of non-resistance but all it points to is not so much what you do on an outer level but it points to an inner state of non-resistance um you could still if you had were that monk you could still have said this is not true i'm not i did not father this baby this is not even then you could still be in an inner state of non-resistance you could still you could they could state simply this is how it is probably nobody would have believed him but he could have stated it and so the important thing is non-resistance is not so much to do what externally what you do but it's an it's an inner state of consciousness of non-resistance acceptance of what is of the present moment in this this moment um it doesn't if it's misunderstood then it could lead as you say it could lead you to become a doormat because then you would go along with with what everybody said anybody says to you uh and you would can you do this can you do this for me yeah okay i can do it and then you could be used by people but a state of non of non-resistance sometimes um may require you to say no to a let's say somebody requests something but you feel you don't want to do it or you cannot do it uh for some reason and you say no i i don't i think i wrote about this i had this expression a high quality no as opposed to a low quality no a low quality no is you make the other person into a kind of enemies and why you always ask me this like you're you should argue and shout you accuse the other you're just trying to use me i can see it you've used me before and now you're doing it again now you're asking me for money again i've already lent you five times here have you given it back to me no you haven't so no i'm not going to do it just don't leave me alone that's one no and then there's another no which is non-reactive it's not all right does not arise from reactivity but is a response to the situation that says uh no i don't want to let's say whatever the request is or the demand no i i can't do it anymore i don't want to do it anymore no i'm not going to give you money again because i've already given you five times so i'm just i'm i won't give you uh that's just how it is i

know i can't uh no no i cannot whatever it may be you're saying no without creating an enemy without treating or a situation without making a situation into an enemy so it's a conscious no and you're still in an inner state of non-resistance the state of resistance strengthens the ego and this is a way of not operating through not operating through ego so you don't have to become a doormat

[Speaker 2] (3:58:47 - 3:58:53)
but this this non-reactive no requires you to be alert and present

[Speaker 1] (3:58:54 - 3:59:16)
um and then you start also part of that is um you stop complaining to people about what they do as i gave in the example i gave just a minute ago when you give a low quality no you say you make the other wrong

[Speaker 2] (3:59:17 - 3:59:23)
and you complain about them all that drops away

[Speaker 1] (3:59:24 - 4:00:04)
uh i often as you might know i often remember an important aspect of the egoic mind the unconscious patterns of the egoic mind is the complaining function complaining about other humans their deficiencies what the many ways in which they are wrong and lacking in whatever it may be and for many humans it's a very important part of their life

[Speaker 2] (4:00:05 - 4:00:18)
is complaining about others uh either you can complain to them directly or very frequently to

[Speaker 1] (4:00:18 - 4:34:08)
other people when you're talking you know what he said and then you tell the story that's and again another favorite occupation of the egoist telling a story of what he or she did and then he said this and that and i said how dare you do this again and then he said and then i said it's a very frequent thing that unconscious people do and you're always the winner of course you're always the one who is right in that story the complaining disappears from your life and that's a very important shift because it has no purpose i'm not talking about complaining to say i want to exchange this thing i bought this yesterday but it's not working i that's that's not complaining you could make it into complaining because you could personalize it and regarding as a personal insult to you that they sold you something that's not working and then it becomes an unpleasant drama again but to to rectify something that is wrong is not complaining unless you make it into complaining you seem to i need to i want to return this uh because it's not working but you don't go in the soup is cold can you please heat it up but you don't how dare you serve me this cold soup do you bring in the the me that put the offended person or offended is a big thing these days as you know everybody's offended continuously on social media and everywhere i'm offended yes no i'm more offended than you another the ego has in certain time periods the ego manifests in different ways and now of course the ego uses the opportunity of the digital age social media facebook twitter whatever else it's called i don't know uh it uses that to amplify itself in certain ways that were not possible before so it's a great opportunity for the ego to proliferate and amplify itself you're just trying to use me and i'm not going to do that anymore i'm not going to be used anymore by you this is it that's it or no more that that's another kind of no but it's a low quality no so i often say say yes to the present moment or i say make the present moment your friend not your enemy so it's to say yes to the present moment is a powerful teaching but it can be misunderstood and has been misunderstood sometimes and it needs to be explained what that actually means it means oh by the way um there's a funny movie made a few some years ago with jim carrey it's called the yes man and this is a person in the movie a character the character he plays he works at a bank i think to in the

mortgage department and he's very he's very bitter and he likes to say no to people who apply for mortgages every no you can't have it he loves and it's very negative about everything now his life is uneventful boring everything is negative then he goes to a new age a friend invites him to a strange new age event with a new age teacher and the teacher says you have to say yes yes to everything say yes to everything and um he kind of becomes convinced well i might as well try that i've got nothing to lose and from then on whatever people ask him every mortgage he approves and whatever people ask him can you lend me money sure yes can you do this yes yes yes and then his life becomes very interesting but also very chaotic he he gets into most chaotic situations and he kind of all gets out of hand and i in the end he kind of seems to realize that this wasn't quite working it that that was that is not the true meaning so to say yes to the present moment does not mean that you accept everything that people ask of you in some cases you have to use the now the no but in the um don't but not in an angry way that denies the present moment i call that a high quality no uh so it's let's say um in the orchestra can you look after my children or let's be can because i i need you you're so so good with children to feel flatter you you feel obliged you're such a wonderful person i so love you can you do it again please and at some point safety i'm sorry i can't do it anymore um but without any negativity a simple statement it is not a reactive statement you don't make her into a bad person who i know she you want to take advantage of me i'm not doing it anymore that is a low quality no even if perhaps you she did try to perhaps she was trying to take advantage of you but that is not that may be then a dysfunction in her egoic self many humans do that the world is full of people who perhaps are trying to take advantage of you that's what the egos do and so it is not who she truly is but you speak to you do not speak to the ego in her you simply say i love your children they're just wonderful and i enjoyed my time but i can't do it anymore i'm sorry about that high quality no no no i can't do that a person says can you lend me another thousand dollars um and he's well i've already lent you two thousand three months ago and last year i lent you five thousand i haven't got anything back yet and then he's i'm sorry i have to say no but you don't say you're just you're just trying to use me you and i'm not going to do that anymore i'm not going to be used anymore by you this is it that's it or no more that that's another kind of no but it's a low quality no and the high quality no no i'm sorry that's it i can't do that anymore this it it implies there's a presence behind what you say it's not reactive and with the same the person who asked you to write something you say i've seen the background i'm not in agreement with that therefore i'm sorry i need need to say no to this i can't do this thank you high quality no it's beautiful and it works quite often you may have to use that make sure that it's not reactive and then becomes low quality you have to be vigilant to see if your actions any given moment whether they are no more than a means to an end another question when we lose a form that represented abundance do we resign ourselves to the loss or should we take action to bring new forms of abundance into being again the question may refer to you so i cannot question you directly here maybe you lost possessions money whatever and the question is do we resign ourselves to the loss or should we take action to bring new forms of abundance into being well you can do you can resign yourself it's not a question of either or whether or not you create more of the same whatever it is if you lost a house whether you work to have another house or if you lost investments whether you work hard to create the same again or whether you no longer are interested in doing that in any case resigning yourself to the loss applies in any case if you don't do that then you suffer and then you build up negativity and then you all your the action you take is then based on negative reaction and you can work very hard and perhaps you'll recreate the same abundance but it's not pleasant so acceptance of what is always comes first and then you're free to go on from there acceptance of loss that's what is nothing is permanent in this world it consists of gain and loss sooner or later you have to let go acceptance comes first and then there's a choice if you enjoy the creation of abundant forms whatever you do why not carry on doing it and very quickly you will probably create the same abundance if you don't enjoy the doing if the doing is only a means to an end because you need the money you want to have the psychological security of money you still haven't learned that it doesn't really work then you just go through the same cycle again and you won't be happy you'll be compulsively working hard trying to get your money back so it's the question of step one is acceptance of what is because it is step two is you listen within and see what it is that wants to be done perhaps you worked for 20 years built up something lost it do you want to work on another 20 years or even 10 years or 10 years if you enjoyed yes why not the important question whatever you do is what I'm doing primarily a means to an end or is it primarily an end in itself if it's an end in itself means as I do what I do there is an enjoyment there there is an aliveness there yes I know what I want to achieve so that's why I'm saying primarily primarily a means to an end or primarily an end in itself if your doing is not primarily an end in itself then there's lack of enjoyment and lack of harmonious doing and that's unconscious and it it makes you unhappy basically even if you don't know it many unconscious people are unhappy and they don't they are so unconscious they don't even know that they're unhappy but because it's their normal state isn't everybody else the same so that applies to whatever you do not just going going beyond this this particular question you have to be vigilant to see if your actions any given moment even simple things running errands things you do every day you need to be vigilant to see whether they are no more than a means to an end in which case you are not present in what you do you're probably impatient or stressed or complaining would rather be somewhere else as the car sticker says the bumper sticker stickers you have say things like I'd rather be fishing and if your mindset is I'd rather be even when you're fishing you won't be happy for very long and then very quickly you'd rather be sitting in your car driving somewhere exciting so taking responsibility for your life is taking responsibility for how you perform your actions what you do and if most of your actions are means to an end your whole life is of low quality it lacks presence and you're always looking out for the next moment which you think is going to be better when it comes is unfortunately only the present moment which is never good enough that's low quality life you know the quality of your life the way in which I use the term is deeper than the conventional use of the term or it's good to have the term at all quality of life because it implies that what determines the the value of your life is not quantity it's not how much you consume how many things you own or whatever how many people you control in your job or your whatever it's not quantity that determines the the value of your life it's quality so in the conventional term I'm glad that this term exists it means how you enjoy whether you enjoy whether you can go to to have quality time with another human being which means attention quality activities where you're not just working all the time but doing other things they have the quality of life or cities every year they have a list I don't remember who publishes it or how they exactly they determine it but it's an attempt to determine how pleasant it is to live or how unpleasant it is to live in a particular city many factors contribute to that so that's a good thing but the way in which I use quality goes even beyond that or it's it is connected somehow but it goes it goes deeper you can live in a city that's very low on the life quality list and lead a life of the highest quality which means as you do what you do you are giving it full attention knowing that yes I'm doing this because that I need to get there and there you know what the end is that you want to achieve but your primary concern is the doing the smallest thing and then your life is of high quality every action has a certain aliveness and presence it is not stressed it's not done with reluctance it's not done with impatience it's not done with irritation all this can't you see how that lowers the quality of your life all those things but it's so normal but you can do the same thing why bring all that to the action the irritation the stress the dislike the impatience the complaining why what purpose does it has no real purpose except it strengthens your false sense of self uh oh so you can see you have a choice you can do the same even if you do nothing to change your life on the external level let's say everything that you've been doing so far you carry on doing it but you bring a completely different you take you take out all the resistance patterns from what you've been doing you take out all the complaining and the wanting to be somewhere else and the irritation and the impatience and the stress so you're still doing exactly the same and yet your life is completely transformed on the inside an amazing thing on the outside at first nothing has changed you still do exactly the same i am you know that without adding any qualifiers to it without adding anything to the i am it's the pure sense of being which is i am some people hate themselves i don't like my body i don't like who i am i don't like this how awful way to live i hate myself it's much better to love yourself so in new age teachings you learn to let go of this dysfunctional relationship with yourself and then this is a good thing it's much better to love yourself than to hate yourself so but you have to achieve that transition not easy if the hating yourself has been deeply ingrained you may have to put little stickers on your bathroom mirror i love myself oh yes and and everywhere you are lovable oh thank you thank you yes and again this is fine it's a transitional stage it's not the final stage sometimes in new age things it's a final stage it's a it's a lovely transitional stage but really it's the stage of awakening is that you begin to let go of having a relationship with yourself so that you can just be yourself and you have to be in the present moment in order to be yourself and that is you can sometimes learn by looking at an animal with the animal is at a pre-egoic stage what we are moving towards or into is a post-egoic stage now the animal like your dog is pre-egoic the dog has consciousness but not conceptual consciousness that it not the dog does not operate through mental concepts in other words the dog does not have an opinion about you isn't that that's why you love the dog so much and also the dog does not have a relationship with himself or herself humans have but i have not met a single dog that has a problem with self-esteem for example i have not met a single dog that has a problem with body image even the the ugliest dog is okay because the split hasn't happened yet the split into me and myself so that the dog this is why the dog often is often joyful and the slightest thing you sometimes you go you if you have a dog you go away for 10 minutes and you come back home the dog acts if you have been away for 10 years he's so happy and the the hat is contagious a little bit the happiness of a dog the wagging tail of the dog why is the dog so happy because the dog does not have a self the dog is him her itself the dog is and then the tail goes life is good if the dog could say something it would say life is good in the present moment just give me my food and it's even better so the humans they love to be with their animals because it gives them a little bit of a little glimpse of self-transcendence because when they look into the eyes of the dog they are not being judged and that feels good and you can sense by looking at the eyes you can sense the being of the dog wow now the dog what you really love in just an example dog cat what you really love in the dog is not the outer surface of the dog although it's lovely to the touch and all that yes but you know there is something that you cannot see that you relate to when you look into the eyes of a dog that is the the essence of the dog what you love is actually the consciousness of the dog which has no ego in it it exists at a pre-egoic state you love the consciousness of the dog and when you look in the eyes of you feel a little bit you connect a little bit to that in yourself for a few seconds when you're not you don't need any defense mechanism or anything like that when you relate to a dog although there are some humans with huge egos i have observed a few who relate to their pet through their ego but that's another story and that's a sad story they have an ego relationship i knew a woman who would in the evenings he would put food out for her cat would go out the cat would be in the garden and she had the window open that was a neighbor of mine years ago and she would put the food out and this woman had a very accomplished person but a gigantic ego she would she put the cat food of her cat out and then if the cat didn't come because cats have many things to do out in the garden and it was dinner time for the cat and she put the plate there and she was sitting there waiting for the cat to come and 15 minutes passed and then she said okay then she would close the window said if she doesn't want to see me i don't want to see her oh my god she has an ego relationship with her cat i so a relationship with yourself that eventually is transcended so that you can simply be in the present moment not and let's go deeper now so that in the present moment uh which is a portal into the awakened state in this present moment let's see who or what are you in the present moment without reference to any thought without reference to any thought about who you are that's an interesting pointer in other words what does it feel like to be yourself without remembering your past or thinking about the future just in this moment you don't need to remember your email address or anything it's not necessary now or what you ate yesterday without reference to past and future um what does it do you disappear or what is left of you without the memory the narrative that usually do you describe as my life without that memory of that you need to revive continuously without that what does it feel like to be you and i cannot answer that i can only give it to you as a pointer and slow down a little bit as i talk so that you can perhaps inquire investigate internally what what it feels like what is the most essential thing about your identity is are you still there when you don't think about your life like now are you still there and what what is that i'm not going to answer it and i don't expect a conceptual answer um so the that's me there was a ancient spiritual teacher in india whose favorite meditation was asking his disciples to ask themselves who am i you can also ask yourself what am i who or what what am i what am i but don't answer it verbally but feel or sense what it means to be alive or to be you what am i what am i there's a there's a gap in the stream of thinking then what what is there when there's a gap in the stream of thinking like now and in the gap there's a there's a stillness yes um there's also a sense of there's something there but it's hard to describe there's a sense of presence of beingness and in that sense of presence of beingness you know that you are you know you can say i am you know that without adding any qualifiers to it without adding anything to the i am it's the pure sense of being which is i am it's very peaceful you need an alertness to sustain it just for a little bit without the alertness you will immediately fall back into the stream of thinking but it's not you don't use willpower to to stop your thinking mind that doesn't really work so you don't hold your breath in order to stop thinking that does it might work for a little while but then you think even more it's like a boiling kettle hold the lid on the boiling kettle just alertness and so jesus said as i said at the beginning and what i say to you i say to all stay awake in some translations it's in it's translated as stay alert what i say to you i say to all stay alert that alertness is consciousness without thought it seems at first just to be an absence it seems at first like okay stillness one could say is the absence of noise in a stillness in absence it might seem at first as a kind of nothingness and yet if you if you stay with it for a little bit just a few more seconds stay alert then you can sense it's not just the absence of something it's also the presence of something but not so much the presence of something but the sense of presence itself not of something the greater part of human suffering is caused by you humans do it to each other it's that is this and this is why it's so important this shift in consciousness because we would undoubtedly destroy ourselves if there is no shift in consciousness

[Speaker 9] (4:34:13 - 4:34:48)
how does one keep faith and stay on a path of awakening and having a peaceful meaningful meaningful light existence amongst all the sadness war and suffering i feel best when not taking political sides and not engaging much in current political financial economical affairs however i've been called a pacifist and been told that the problem with this world is people such as myself who don't take a stance how does one take a stance without being too attached to an ideology or group and without being brought down by the mass consciousness

[Speaker 13] (4:34:48 - 4:34:52)
thank you thank you

[Speaker 1] (4:35:02 - 4:47:39)
well the what you said just the mass consciousness that's a good term that's certainly the case and the unconsciousness of the collective is amplified by our technology of course um it's uh it does not mean that you cannot the expression is used i think you said take a stance which is means to participate in some way in

the discourse that happens on the in the world of the internet and all that there's a disc people are continuously talking to each other and there's also the secondary thing is because action is there any desirability of taking action what kind of action taking a stance most important thing is there's nothing wrong with expressing your viewpoint or opinion because i'm sure you have viewpoints and opinions the important thing is not to confuse opinion and identity that's that's when you lose yourself when an opinion which is your mental position your viewpoint your opinion if if that if you unconsciously you equate that with your identity then you begin you begin begin to fight against other humans who have different opinions or identities that clash with yours uh so and again the key to becoming free of this uh delusion of equating opinion and identity is to to have an identity that transcends to find your true identity that transcends thought that is beyond thought and beyond the personality again that's what we started with today and what which continuously in the background of what we are talking about here in the background is that to be to to be rooted in the awareness even while you express an opinion you can you might it might be a political opinion on the left on the right whatever it may be and you express your opinion and somebody else may attack your opinion um you ask at first you'd ask yourself what is the point am i am i making a useful contribution to the world by expressing this opinion that's an interesting question is this helping anybody or are you just talking to are you trying to convince people of that you are right and they are wrong you're not probably not going to succeed in that the other person will become more deeply entrenched in their opinions if you try to prove them wrong uh is it are you engaged in an egoic endeavor which is simply make others wrong and make yourself right and the world of the internet is full of people who are engaged in that practice of making themselves right and others wrong and by doing that the ego feels an enhanced sense of identity in other words you become more deluded ever more deluded of who you are is there any point in participating in some discussions there may be some point perhaps you can present put forward information that people did not have perhaps you have it and you can show instead of engaging in some kind of fight which is always egoic put forward some information and see that's how it is that that those are the facts and even then people may dislike your facts and and not want to see them but whatever it is you can participate in the discourse with wisdom uh with awareness so that you don't create enemies nobody nobody is your enemy um another question is action what action can i take the first your first responsibility is always in the same way that uh on aeroplanes when they announce what to do when the airbag comes down from this from the ceiling when the air pressure in case they always say in case there's a loss of air pressure these oxygen bags will come down from the ceiling and you're supposed to put them on your mouth and they always say if you're with a child put put it on yours first and then on the child so the uh because if you put it on the child first you may lose consciousness a second after that you can't help the child anymore to be but your state of consciousness is the foundation for your experience of this world your state of form of consciousness is a foundation for whatever you do or say so you give primary importance to your state of consciousness and then which means be aware be present don't be just trapped in the conditioned mind be present be aware and one once you know that your primary responsibility is your state of consciousness because that's the foundation for everything that affects the world in many ways even not only in ways that people you come into contact with could be affected in a good way by your state of consciousness even people you are not in contact with can be affected by your state of consciousness because everything is connected underneath the surface of the phenomenal world everything is connected and every human is connected to every other human ultimately there's a collective of humanity that is one consciousness of there's the consciousness of humanity which is an aspect of the greater consciousness of the universe so one could say there's ultimately only one human being on this earth and this one human being one human there's one human consciousness which is only an aspect of the universal consciousness this one human consciousness expresses itself in billions of short-lived forms they come and go every human form is on a cosmic scale every human form appears on this planet like a like a just a flash of light appearing that was you that was me lights continuously lights flashing one consciousness there's only one light but many it appears in many forms so once you stake responsibility for your state of consciousness and continue to realize that that is primary then you can take some action and you will know what is right the wisp because you can use wisdom then with the wisdom you will know you will know whether there's anything you can do because there are multiple huge many problems in this world which ones do you want to where do you want to take some action which is the most important one to you so there's a huge choice if you want to take action but never lose yourself in the action because all the things that are dysfunctional in this world the suffering in this world to a greater extent is created by human dysfunction the dysfunction that is inherent in the collective human mind which is the personal ego and the collective ego so there is a deep dysfunction in the human mind it's a kind of mental illness and that that mental illness in the collective human mind manifests itself in many different forms warfare is one of them and there are many many other forms the greater part of human suffering if you want to it might be easier to have a little bit of perspective look at the history of the 20th century and you can see the countless millions that were killed humans killing each other by the millions the incredible suffering that took place there most of it was not caused by natural catastrophes some was but not most of it was caused by other humans humans doing it to other humans that were the greater part of human suffering is caused by you humans do it to each other it's that is this the and this is why it's so important this shift in consciousness because we would undoubtedly destroy ourselves if there is no shift in consciousness so the dysfunction was already there even before we created the technology that we now have the dysfunction was already there but it was never life-threatening because humans did not have the power to destroy themselves but now the dysfunction is still there but now humans have the power to destroy themselves and the planet if nothing changes this is right now for the first time in human history a change in consciousness is no longer an option or a luxury one could almost say but a necessity for humanity to survive the change in consciousness is necessary and you need to embody that before you take any action or while you take action you need to embody that changed consciousness so that you don't get drawn into the unconsciousness of the world so you can acknowledge all the beauty that is in others even though in the external form of you that beauty

[Speaker 4] (4:47:39 - 4:48:04)
may no longer be manifested i often find myself comparing myself to other people particularly my my physical appearance compared to other women and it gets very tiresome as you can imagine um and i was wondering if you had any practical advice for for helping dissolve this

[Speaker 1] (4:48:23 - 4:48:36)
and i assume sometimes you come out as better than and at other times as not as good as is that right

[Speaker 12] (4:48:38 - 4:48:40)
yes yes

[Speaker 1] (4:48:44 - 5:08:26)
and better than feels good and not as good as doesn't it all feels tiresome to be honest that's a good point to reach to get tired of an old pattern like that then you're ready to let go so as the cause in miracles puts it uh comparison is one of the favorite ego devices to keep the ego going or it keeps itself going especially by comparing whether the comparing is to do with external appearance or comparing other things uh evaluating others in comparison to how in your own mind you evaluate yourself it could be to do with knowledge education class social class strengths physical strengths how many possessions worth he's worth so such and such amount of dollars and i'm worth so much more than he or so much less than he all kinds of things implied in that is a sense of a desire on the part of the ego to

enhance its sense of worthiness uh and if anybody has less than you or appears less than you or can do less than you in some somewhat nonsensical way it seems to add something to your sense of self of course it doesn't make sense it's a it's a little bit absurd but that's how the ego functions and in reverse if somebody it feels to the ego as if somebody has just achieved something or that you haven't achieved it feels to the ego as if some something of its sense of self had been taken away so it gets deflated and and he's not happy the if you're really trapped in ego you are not happy when somebody good something good happens to somebody close to you because it feels to the ego as if it had become diminished because something somebody else has become enhanced their identity in the eyes of the ego it's all you can see when you explain it in this way so that you can actually see how it operates then you actually realize that that it is absurd to feel there is now less you have become less because somebody else has received more of something or can do something that you can't do and so you can see how unreal that sense of identity is you feel diminished because something good has happened to somebody close to you and in some cases if the ego is very strong in you without any trace of awareness you cannot even admit to yourself that you feel bad when when something good has happened to somebody close to you it's it's there as an unreal an unwitnessed emotion and then it might come out in your and you speak to that person with a desire to diminish what they now have that you don't have and it's totally unconscious with you you are not totally unconscious there's already an awareness in you that is aware of that pattern if there were no awareness in you you wouldn't be asking that question you wouldn't be sitting here you would be acting out that pattern and next time somebody in your vicinity has a just bought a new dress that looks absolutely stunning you would look at it if you were totally trapped in ego you would look at it and something inside you would contract but you wouldn't know that because there wouldn't be enough awareness for that but that contraction as an energy field would then flow into your mind and then words will come out of your mouth again unconscious to diminish the worthiness of that dress and you might say oh that dress that would look good on your sister and the other person who perhaps is also identified with the completely with suddenly feels hurt deeply and in in both cases the the famous saying applies they don't they know not what they do which of course points to complete lack of awareness so in that sense people hurt each other and try to take away in order to feel and the moment the ego said that would look good on somebody else it feels a little bit better already because you've taken away a bit from that the the value the perceived value of that thing it's an insane it's a delusional system but many people are still totally trapped in that not in not with you of course it's not the case with you you're not totally trapped it still operates in you to some extent but not totally trapped so it is there's some connection with value my my your own sense of worth or worthiness which is connected to your external appearance it could be connected to other things it may also be connected to other things so you are in there's a an image in you of who you are it's a surface image of the surface appearance your body and the solution of course is very simple it's to take your attention beyond the surface where it usually is the surface of your body the surface of that which is on top of your body the clothes take your attention deeper to the inherent energy field or aliveness or conscious presence that pervades who you are the entire being nothing to do with the external nothing to do with the shape of the body or what's on top of the body and if that if you begin to go there into that dimension take your attention into that dimension where you are not the external form but you sense the very essence of who you are you sense the life that you are beyond the form then you no longer need to identify with form you're no longer than threatened when somebody else's form is seemingly better than yours it no longer does anything to your sense of identity or your sense of worthiness and then you're free and you're free to admire somebody else's good looks and you're free to be happy with the way you look for the time being until years pass and then perhaps the body doesn't look that great anymore after a few more decades you have a few decades to go but they pass fairly quickly too and the further you go the more quickly they seem to pass that's strange and and so the time comes when you notice a deterioration in the appearance and then you begin to notice that most women around you actually look better than you for the simple fact that they're younger and you can appreciate the way they look because they are a manifestation of life an external manifestation they are life forms beautiful life forms without feeling threatened in any way in your own sense of self because the life of which those lovely women around you are manifestations you can sense that very life in its essence in you so you can acknowledge all the beauty that is in others even though in the external form of you that beauty may no longer be manifested as such so and that's wonderful freedom to appreciate the beauty that you see around you even if your own body is no longer part of that because there is a beauty in you that has nothing to do with form and that one could call that the essence of all beauty that's the very essence of life itself so when you have the essence you appreciate the external manifestation of it in its so-called one could say diluted form in the flower now most egos are not threatened by flowers but in a in another human being you can appreciate the beauty in another human being with and the comparison the compulsive need to compare disappears there isn't or what about me do I look as that that thought pattern dissolved long ago by the time you reach the point where most women will externally look better than you by the time then it's disappearing already so you don't need to wait a few more decades to get there or the ego can say okay I have another 30 years of I can identify with my good looks so the answer of course is then find the essence of who you are which is what all this teaching is always about find the essence of who you are so that you get in touch with the inherent sense of beingness or aliveness or presence within you which pervades the entire so-called physical body but is not the physical body and as I speak about it now you should be able to feel that within you the the the fact that there is an aliveness that pervades your entire being can you feel that that is more essentially who you are than the external appearance of who you are and that is going to be exactly the same in 30 years time as it is now so you then you become free of form you are essentially the consciousness behind it all so know yourself as that life or consciousness there's the same no thing know yourself as that and you're free of the ego the ego is there as a substitute it's to seek yourself in some form it's a that's the delusion and that's great creates an unhappy life so it's a wonderful thing it's it's also liberating to see the absurdity of the ego once you see how the patterns that I just just described just now you can see how mad it is to feel diminished when something good happens to somebody else to feel enhanced when something bad happens to somebody else and not even know it so let's see what happens next time you can admire a beautiful female form without any comparison in fact feel more intensely the beauty that is within you when you see it out there that's a wonderful thing there's only now it's when you're when the your mind is taking you to all kinds of unpleasant places you can always you come back so there's only this moment there's only this that's a and the now of course is the opening into the vertical dimension so you become aware of the present whenever suffering arises you don't want to manifest suffering but millions of people on a daily basis continuously manifest suffering but you don't want to so when you the beginning of an awakening is the realization that that you are manifesting suffering of course that's already an awakening there because if you're very unconscious the blame for all your suffering is always elsewhere it's never in your own mind when you're very unconscious other people the world situation fate god destiny your karma your parents the unjust system whatever all kinds of things they're all to blame they are cause your suffering and you haven't realized that you are manifesting your mind ultimately is manifesting and in fact if you if you tell this to a person who is not ready to hear that they will get very angry very angry so but the that realization your mind the unconscious mind manifests suffering and to when you discover that that ultimately the suffering arises in your mind because your mind reacts to things your mind creates a narrative that makes you unhappy not the situation but the narrative that your mind creates around the situation makes you unhappy when you discover that that's the first stage of the way one the wakening is oh and at that moment that's an amazing discovery that virtually all your suffering is created by your mind amazing and then you realize you don't want to manifest that anymore and then you want to manifest something else but first before you manifest something else you need to stop manifesting suffering and a good way is bringing your attention into the present moment this what what is my problem now what nothing what's wrong with this moment this moment is as it is what's the problem so bring your attention to now whenever you feel unhappiness arising look at your mind and bring attention to the present moment which always means the externals of the present moment that's a manifested dimension of the present moment and then the essence of the now which is consciousness awareness presence and so that's the how you stop manifesting suffering and then you can if you want to manifest other things from once you have the foundation which is the being then you begin to work on the two levels so you you reconcile the two the being and the doing in your life and that's that's your purpose and you will not always succeed it's you fall back into usually you fall back into losing yourself in doing and then you suffer and this unhappiness that arises can you can then use as a very helpful way of telling you you've lost yourself you've lost the present moment and once you know that you can come back so let's leave it at that

[Speaker 7] (5:08:37 - 5:09:21)
thank you hello um i live in las vegas nevada which is very mind dominated and uh it's tough there um there seems to be two forces in my mind that's build up energy and it's very strong and it keeps me from uh getting in touch with my true self into creating more space and cultivating that space um one of them is that it's not that interesting i'd rather go along with interesting thoughts and do interesting activities and also i have this fear that if i don't analyze and constantly think about like solutions and things in my life that everything's going to fall apart so it's hard those two forces that build especially where i live it makes it

[Speaker 1] (5:09:21 - 6:05:43)
even more increases it more so the energy field there is a kind of nervous yes actually i work in a casino too well that's a wonderful challenge to stay conscious there yes it is lots of discipline yes that's your spiritual practice right i've been there i've walked through some of the casinos in amazement and the it's it's a quite a place that seems to come out of some kind of dream when you walk around las vegas it's uh but it's actually quite interesting when the mind doesn't label it it's actually quite amazing oh all these all these strange life forms and what they have created it's quite amazing it's there's an intense aliveness there would i want to live there i don't know there have been some spiritual teachers who moved there i know of at least two i think it was andrew harvey a spiritual teacher moved to las vegas and there was a spiritual teacher called vernon howard who lived near las vegas and there may be one or two others why they moved there i'm not sure perhaps they maybe they loved it or perhaps to pay less tax perhaps who knows the well the challenge of course is uh to stay present and have stillness inside you that what you mentioned now you need to think about your your life problems or your life this is a very very common uh assumption unconscious assumption in humans that if i don't think about my problems though my life is going to fall apart i need i have to think about my life and what's going to happen and transfer of course nothing is going to fall apart if you stop thinking things will get better if you stop thinking with the exception of focused thinking in case there's a specific problem that needs to be addressed then focus thinking and then step even there stepping back into stillness so it's a wonderful thing if you're able to be present and still in las vegas then of course you're a master it's many people are be able to be present and still out in nature be a beautiful forest or the seashore or on top of a mountain and you watch the sunrise wow very still so still let's move here says the mind let's move here where it's so still and then wherever it is and if you do move there for a while it'll be wonderful oh it's so still and then of course the mind is becomes restless after a while there's nothing happening and you're not challenged by anything anymore if you have a meditation practice then you can of course convince yourself that you have finally achieved in your meditate

five hours a day and let's say somehow food is brought to you as i remember a monk i knew buddhist monk telling me that story that he meditated in a hut up a mountain in thailand for half a year and he attained complete peacefulness peace nirvana he thought and every day somebody would bring him a bowl of food nothing to worry about nothing to do just be present and still the only challenge were mosquitoes he said but he learned to deal with that in other words to just completely accept and not mentally label it and just being used by them for food so he was came with that that was one challenge then he had to go back into the city to renew his visa because he was in thailand and he was a westerner and at the visa office they kept him waiting for one hour two hours and then he was in the wrong lineup for two hours and then he had to start lining up somewhere else and when he finally got to the window the man said oh no you haven't filled this out you do that again and he started so that was he then suddenly realized he had not attained nirvana so you're much better off in las vegas the thing is to use whatever environment you are in as part of their spiritual practice does not mean that you have to be stuck it may be that a deep sense of the need to remove yourself suddenly comes to you and then you go somewhere else that could happen because it seems like it's more of a challenge there yes yes so that's it's it's probably in many ways a better place to practice than a monastery right i never thought of that way and worrying about your life or your problems is a very common belief that that is necessary to hold things together but it's not you have to recognize the futility of of borrowing and realize your life is already together you're breathing you're eating when you need food you sleep when you sleep you go to work you do what you do you look around contemplate look at the sky uh look away nasir gas is a very much a man-made or human-made environment everything is kind of artificial not to say fake so everything is fake that's fine it's it's not everybody that much but there are trees there may there are some trees in there beautiful desert there is the sky there's a light there's the desert you can easily get out and you're out in the in the stillness so you can take advantage of that when you need to and so be happy with where you are and accept where you are and then while you do what you do in the casino what do you do there i'm a dealer at nighttime with the drunks yeah yeah place your bets and then yeah and then you can observe human nature there around you most definitely yes every facet you observe human nature in its unconscious state mostly yeah but that's fine that's where they're at you can be the the presence for them yeah it's hard not to judge them oh yes that's your practice not to judge because they are expressions of life of aliveness right in their form they're beautiful too yeah okay thank you so much is there a difference between daytime and versus nighttime awareness how does one work with a mind that is racing at night and does not allow any deep sleep i can control the mind during the day and not get caught up but how about the sleep time during the day yes you deal with other things your mind is busy dealing with things and at night time the mind is left to itself and then this is a typical example of useless not only useless but self-destructive and harmful overthinking or mind activity uh and this is the many people have that problem in their lives the the night time is particularly hard i remember that vaguely from my distant past when i would wake up in the night sometimes in a state of panic and the mind just would not stop so first thing there needs to be a minimum of awareness but i believe you have that otherwise you wouldn't be here there needs to be a minimum of awareness from where you can know that this mind activity is futile it leads nowhere it just creates suffering misery so you know that you know that you don't want it and don't need it there are still many people who don't have that minimum of awareness where they they are so identified with their mind activity which tells them i must think about this i need to solve this problem now nobody has ever solved a problem but by worrying at night but the mind says don't stop thinking don't stop thinking it'll all collapse if you stop thinking so you already know it's futile you already know that you would rather be free of that okay that's good you have that minimum of awareness from there you can choose you realize the power you have you can choose to direct your attention somewhere else now you may have to do that many times you you will there will be a perhaps a tug of war between your mind and where you want it to go so first thing you do take a conscious breath you're in at night thinking thinking suddenly i don't want to think anymore it's futile and it's it hurts okay how do i get out of this can i take a conscious breath if you ask yourself a question you might hear the answer in your mind saying no i can't do it now and that's a lie that's a lie by the ego invented by the egoic mind to stop you from doing it or you can ask okay i want to stop can i feel the the feeling of energy in my hands no i can't do it now i have to stop can't possibly do it now that's a lie there's nobody who cannot do it now you can do it now if you don't believe in the thought that tells you you cannot do it now and then you do it anyway either take a conscious breath or feel the energy that's the beginning of body awareness which is a powerful anchor for presence it takes your attention away from thinking into your body your consciousness moves so there isn't enough left for thinking a lot your mind and then you have to hold it in your body not through effort not not through forcing your attention into the body if you if your body becomes tense that's not it you can't go like i have to hold my attention in the body okay and now i'm forcing it down by breathing into i'm forcing attention into the body now you might even succeed for a little while but then no just take in a relaxed way attention moves into the body and you breathe into the body so the breast awareness and body awareness can become a single practice and then you feel the rest of the body coming alive there you can feel this there's life in your feet in your legs it's very subtle at first and then you feel the entire body pervaded by this sense of aliveness right now as i'm talking about it i can feel it zzzz i'm just making an audible sound for to uh because it's hard to talk about it so it goes almost like electricity and that is an anchor for presence now and then your mind will try to bring up thoughts critical thoughts that pull your attention back into thinking so it'll come up with this is really critical to think about it and then it you might you can feel your attention moving out of the body and back into your mind and then perhaps five minutes later you say oh it's gone and then you just gently go back into the body you choose where you where you want to place your conscious attention and you do it again and again and the moment will come when you actually enjoy being awake at night in your bed whereas before it was agony and so you lived that was when i started doing that it was so beautiful i always i didn't even i loved waking up in the middle of the night and would immediately go ah and sometimes already as i would often naturally just go there there was sometimes a feeling as i moved from sleep into wakefulness it was understood as if i was plugged into an electric outlet that wonderful intensely alive no thinking so it's your you have the power to choose where to direct your attention and don't believe the mind when it tells you you can't do it this is similar during the daytime some people have problems during the day too being present i can't do it now i've got so much on my mind maybe when i've dealt with that then i'll be present but it's just so much on my plate right now don't talk to me about presents it's just or as somebody i know who had done a lot of spiritual practice uh for 20 or 30 years and then suddenly she found he and she and her husband had invested money in the mad scheme or their savings with a man named madoff and he's in prison now but he had this wonderful scheme where you would get every year your investments would yield like 10 more 10 15 percent just wonder nowhere else would you get that so they had been highly recommended by friends everybody invested with mr made of totally reliable and then it turned out that mr made of had a gigantic ego and everybody was deceived and everybody lost their money when the crunch came and one day she got a call from her advisor and said sorry to tell you that the made of financial empire just collapsed and with it all your savings and she when she recovered from her panic she called a friend i think it was a friend or was it her husband go you know what happened it's all gone and her friend with whom she had been on retreat said well just take a few breaths and just come into the present moment and then she said she found herself saying this is not the time to be spiritual of course later she realized and she actually grew enormously thread and deepened her consciousness later she realized this is precisely the best time to be spirit there's no better time than this to be spiritual so she did learn that lesson but it took a while and then she wrote a book about it that did so well that most of her money returns through the book true story this mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive to be free you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation so in some other translations he says i want you to have to have abundant life now abundant does not mean lots of things because that would mean that shopping malls are the kingdom of heaven let's say your goal is to to be widely known and to impact people's lives with your music fine perhaps you'll achieve it you can visualize it oh by the way when you visualize a goal that you want to achieve it's not in the future if if if you this is to do with manifesting when you want to manifest something it doesn't work very well when you think i i i will be famous i need to be famous i want to be famous not good good for manifestation if you want to manifest something you have to start with the foundation for manifestation is always the present moment it's never it's not the future what it works very simply jesus explained it in one sentence just one sentence whenever you pray for something believe that you have received it and it will be given to you now the key is that he did not say believe that you will receive it because that puts it into the future he said when you pray for something in other words when you want something believe that you have received it now what does that mean you have to feel in this moment the fullness of life that is there when you go deep enough into the being of you then you feel there's the fullness of life and you feel there is a sense of joyful aliveness that is a sense of power in you that you sense that that is the presence in you is there is a power in that presence and that power is there's a something that you could show almost there's a fullness in it already you can't really once you contact you when you're in touch with the the presence everything else that you could achieve in this life i compared i have this comparison analogy or whatever it is that which you realize within you this the power is the cream and everything else that you could achieve in this world is the skimmed milk so the the fullness of life this is an expression that jesus used he said and these are all put together he said i want you to have the fullness of life in some other translations he says i want you to have to have abundant life now abundant does not mean lots of things because that would mean that shopping malls are the kingdom of heaven so abundant life does not mean abundance as many things that abundance is the deeper place of a sense of intense aliveness the fullness of life that you feel within you that is abundant life presence to feel the life that you are the consciousness that you are out of that everything comes that's the fullness of life or abundant life you feel it in this moment and then if you then want to achieve something you bring a vision what you want and let it merge with that feeling let's say you want you're a great musician that's reaching who's reaching millions of people and you see yourself as this great musician reaching millions of people but not in the future how does this great musician feel once he has reached or she has reached millions of people this is exactly how it feels the fullness of life you feel it right here now you merge the vision with the feeling of fullness of life which is presence and then that's manifestation that also means however when you if and when you get what you wanted to manifest you're no you're not any happier than you are already you're not more joyful or fulfilled than you are already the fulfillment can only be arrived at in the present moment because that is the fulfillment is not dependent on external conditions the fallacy is to believe that something in the external world that you you could arrive at or you could achieve will it has the capability at some point in future of fulfilling you of in whatever way of making you happy making you complete making you peaceful making you said feel your sense of self more strongly whatever it may be so the belief that something out there can give that to you in other words to put in the most general terms the feeling that the world can make you happy the world could be anything in the world could be past another person an achievement a place whatever it is the world can make me happy it cannot the world can briefly give you a sense of ah i have arrived but then you see oh no that wasn't it this is the case with relationships it's the case with anything you achieve even great worldly success i've met many worldly successful people who told me they became very miserable soon after the worldly success so that's not it so the it's the present moment is the key to all achievement if you feel the intensity of presence then everything else is an added onto you that's all manifestation jesus used that expression seek only the kingdom of heaven all the other things that you think you need will be added onto you they are additions but they are no longer the things that they totally dominate your consciousness and determine whether you turn out to be a happy unhappy person so the joy is found already if the thing is added to you you say oh that's great but it doesn't change how you feel already so you need to find the place of fulfillment in the present moment first and then you can manifest so the foundation for manifestation is becoming intensely present and realizing your essence identity and live from and through your essence identity that then the essence and through the essence identity you can manifest things but these are not the things that will make you happy they are they are icing on the cake they're not they're not the cake so whatever you whatever you can achieve is the icing on the cake it's not the cake the cake is here and now that's the that's the key and that also means your inner state is no longer dependent upon external conditions and is no longer dependent upon whether you achieve so-called worldly success or not because it's very much secondary it's nice if you have it it's not a big deal if you don't that's so and you can still be you can still be determined and feel very strongly that you have it already let's say okay let's say i want to live in a great place where there's no longer cold and uh let's say it's hawaii okay i'm i want to go i want to move to hawaii this is i want to i'll be happy there when i move to hawaii or maybe it's bali i'll be when i move to bali i'll be happy there because it's paradise it's wonderful okay i want to move to then you can manifest i want to move to but you can even paint bali on a vision board bali and so i want to move to bali but you have to be in bali in this present moment how will you feel if you're in bali if you can't feel that now then it's not going to work very well in the the tropical island that you think will make you happy no you have to experience it as this is the essence of who you are will make you happy fulfilled and joyful and then if it manifests as a tropical island that's fine but but if you when you arrive in bali when you're already feeling pleasant it's again it's an adding on to because when you arrive at bali you may find not everything is paradise even there i had i haven't been there but i had somebody who who rented a house there and then yes it was lovely lovely but there's always something when you're at night time the rats were jumping up and wanting to get into the pantry and get the food so it's not no no if it doesn't if the fulfillment does not come from within in the in the now whatever you achieve will be marred by something there's always be yes it'll be nice but something will go wrong with it but something that seems to spoil your enjoyment of it is always something that's in the nature of the external world or it doesn't last long enough because then it's taken away again or you get tired of it she's like oh this is so great okay what now it's not great anymore so the foundation is there are many ways in which you can we can talk about it realize your essence identity and there's no greater fulfillment than to realize the presence that you are the being that you are beyond the person beyond the human so that you and then you become a full human being being is the foundation that's again you remember i uh you probably knew it already the story of mary and martha i taught the other day it's in the new mary represents the being dimension martha represents the doing dimension mary is deeply immersed in being martha is active doing things ultimately they're not meant to be two different people they need to become one human who is does not not lose connectedness with being when he or she is engaged in doing and so any kind of manifestation is also a kind of doing when you want to manifest something so you the wonderful thing is you can't really fail anymore because failure means you're terribly disappointed because you didn't get to that goal that's all your life has just become you've reworked for years and you tried and then you didn't arrive at your goal and then you develop the mental concept of i have failed and whenever you give too much power to the outside world and to external conditions and to future you will fail many people who are very successful temporarily in this world are also very miserable so they fail but they fail within their success they fail there are many wealthy famous people who are miserably unhappy there are also a few wealthy famous people who are okay because they have discovered the deeper dimension within themselves there are a few but but they had to go through unhappiness first and realize that's not it i'm on the cover of all these magazines and um everybody talks about me and not me i'm just giving example no there's not enough drama in my life for people to talk much much to talk about so remember the foundation for manifestation is here and now and then enjoy the doing if you're writing a book some of you may be writing a book or have written book already or let's say you are writing uh enjoy the process of writing and always connect with the stillness within when the next when the flow is not there go within connect with the stillness within become present and it's so powerful that there are many stories of people who were stranded in the snow they knew if i go to sleep now i'm not going to wake up i'm going to die and freeze to death and then finally a moment comes when the pull of sleep becomes so irresistible that they would rather go into sleep than stay alive if you are jet lagged you might feel a wave of tiredness pulling at you tired it's a strange thing we think we know what we're talking about because we are so familiar with it everybody gets tired and everybody sleeps but if you were not familiar with it you just arrived here from some other place that i mentioned where people don't sleep or where there are no people but other beings it would be quite amazing that everyone every night goes into sleep which has both the dream state and of course it has the dreamless state and in the dreamless state you just disappear completely and of course the dream state is recognized when you look at somebody who is asleep or when you look at your dog or your cat you can recognize immediately that they are dreaming because of the movement of their eyelids if you have a dog or cat it's just fascinating to watch them asleep and then suddenly they go or their face twitches with cats the whiskers go and with dogs sometimes they can be even little barks our dog used to image little noises that were dream barks so it would go like oh and then the legs go twitching too so he must be running in his dream and we do the same well except the barking and then of course from there we go into dreamless sleep for certain periods of time there's no more twitching just complete and utter annihilation of you and the animal also does that the animal also experiences or there's nobody there to experience it the animal goes also into merges with something so periodically all beings i don't know if it applies to mosquitoes do they dream i don't know if anybody knows or flies or worms those life forms do they dream i don't know maybe some scientists might know or maybe at this very moment somebody's working on a phd about the dream life of worms which would be not surprising because phds become very specialized these days but when you feel tired something pulls you towards out of this world we call it tired and we think when we use the word tired we know what it is that we're talking about because the very familiar word kind of hides the fact that we have no idea what tired really is and we have no idea what going into dreamless sleep really is all we know is that the pull of tiredness is enormously powerful and eventually you can't resist it hopefully not while i'm talking but tonight and it's so powerful that there are many stories of people who were stranded in the snow or in the desert and they or whatever they knew if i go to sleep now i'm not going to wake up i'm going to die and freeze to death and then they resisted and then finally a moment comes when the pull of sleep becomes so irresistible that they would rather go into sleep than stay alive and it has i may have mentioned it once or twice before i suggest that in your own experience when you get sleepy and when you're in bed and you feel you're going into sleep now just be aware and feel what it's like what what what does it feel like and you then you'll notice that what is usually not looked at because it's so familiar has an enormous sweetness to it this when you're approaching sleep and you're in bed that is the attraction of sleep is so sweet and of course at that moment you forget all your troubles mind activity subsides and and then it goes and then that the last moments and it pulls you and then you enter the first probably the dream state and then you go and then you go disappear so everybody goes out of existence every night for certain periods of time although in that dimension there probably is no time and everybody needs to and wants to go out of existence every night and if you didn't you would go insane if you get if you're asleep deprived eventually you start to hallucinate you start to have hallucinations instead of dreams and then finally you would go insane so we come we are in existence during the daytime do things think do and then we go disappear and suddenly we are born again go out that seems to be really you could probably learn a lot understand a lot realize many things about the universe if you just observe yourself because all those things that patterns that occur to you as a human being are really microcosmic versions of macrocosmic reality so the universe and i believe there are certain similarities here with in the subatomic realm and we're going to have a conversation tomorrow with a scientist and also who has come to join us it'll be very interesting but here i just can only talk from my own experience which you can verify in your own life that you disappear periodically and you need to disappear and you couldn't survive if you didn't periodically disappear into what we call sleep but don't really know what it is and it is good it is it feels so good to disappear into that sleep realm so we have the dimension of dream and dreamless sleep and then when we wake up we experience the ordinary we experience ordinary existence which is a kind of dream too in many respects things come and go very quickly except you kind of share it with seem to share it with more people so there are groups of people who can share the same kind of dream here we share the mill valley dream and it's quite pleasant could be worse you might be in winnipeg right now in the middle of the winter but if you're in winnipeg that's fine it's just a different kind of dream and it has its attractions too especially next to a nice fireplace there is an equivalent of dreamless sleep in our ordinary existence but most people are not aware of that and that is a dimension of consciousness that is possible for human beings that has certain similarities with dreamless sleep and although spiritual teachers and so on have spoken about it and pointed to it for a long time thousands of years it still is not common knowledge that there's a potential in every human being for realizing within him or herself a state of consciousness that is deeper infinitely deeper than the ordinary state of thinking and doing normal life i sometimes call that state spaciousness inner spaciousness or sometimes call it presence or stillness in indian spirituality india i mean india the uh they have a word for they talk about they have been talking about it they have a term for this they call it the fourth state of consciousness which is i believe you have dreamless state dreamless sleep you have the dream state you have ordinary wakefulness and then you have the the fourth state which most humans don't know that it's there for them they don't know and that is the greatest one could almost say yes tragedy of a human life is to miss that the possibility that there is in a human life to realize that fourth state of consciousness there is a an assumption by spiritual seekers even in india and anybody who hasn't realized it for themselves or even had glimpses of it there is an assumption that that fourth state is extremely hard to attain and you need countless years of spiritual practice or countless lifetimes to finally achieve the fourth state of consciousness and that belief actually prevents you from realizing it within yourself because that state of spaciousness is already in you all the time so if you have the belief that it's something that you need to achieve at some future point that belief that thought would continuously prevent you from realizing it now because you mentally will always project and then you say i'm going to meditate because i want to achieve at some point the fourth state and then you that can be a great hindrance in your meditation because it prevents you from going deeper into the present moment where the fourth state is or one could almost say it's not just where the fourth state is the present moment is the fourth state of consciousness the space of now not what happens in the now but the deeper the space in which it happens the background to your life is continuously there and continuously also often seeps through one thought be in between two thoughts you go ah three seconds for three seconds you are free of yourself and you might look at something and ah or whatever it is or just experience a moment of peace and aliveness and then of course you get drawn back into your thinking and then at another time a little space comes in again when you're maybe all kinds when you're tasting something perhaps there's just the perception of the taste without any mental interference just an aware presence behind the sense perception and then you notice that the state is always there every thought exists in that in that space is only a wave movement in the space and so it's not something that you need to attain as if you didn't have it but because it's already here it is essentially who you are it is intrinsically one with the essence of your being and if you don't know that then your life is very limited to just a little person with no transcendent dimension to your life whatsoever and so here we are in order to deepen our realization of inner spaciousness that's all it's so you realize something that is already here rather than needing to look for it so why do you often not realize it because you overlook it just like the fish may overlook the fact that it's the fish is surrounded by water and starts looking for it where's the water people keep talking about the water and the more the fish looks the less likely that it will find the water so that spaciousness is something that at first may appear in your life as a glimpse and then and at first in many people's lives they don't know that that is spaciousness they experience it as a heightened aliveness or a deeper sense of peace or joy or an absence of problems for a little moment so they don't know that this is a different dimension of consciousness that is suddenly arisen they can still confuse it with something else as I did when the shift happened and that was a rare thing in my case it didn't it happened and then kind of stayed for most people it's a more gradual thing it comes gradually first in glimpses and then more suddenly it's there for a longer period of time or you go deeper into it and there's a gradual transformation of consciousness might be so gradual you don't even notice it and when it happened to me I didn't realize that there was spaciousness I didn't have the word spaciousness I didn't know anything about the fourth state of consciousness I knew nothing about presence or even mindfulness I didn't realize even that my mind had subsided and become spacious all I knew is suddenly life is very peaceful it feels so this moment is feels so good that's all I knew and where does this peace come from I asked didn't know I didn't know it was the depths of who I am realizing the depths of who I am was joy and peace but I didn't have a word for that I couldn't call it the depths of who I am I just why am I suddenly so peaceful and I started keeping a diary which and which said I don't know why I suddenly feel so peaceful I just want to write down my daily experience of peace in case it leaves me then at least I can remember it and I wrote it's still somewhere I don't know where it is locked away I don't need to look at it but it's interesting that there was no understanding of what where did this piece originate what is this piece how did it come about so we one could say you disappear as a person but you are there very powerfully as a presence you disappear as a person temporarily but in a very powerful way that there is a presence which you cannot define and this

[Speaker 2] (6:05:44 - 6:05:56)
you then access this dimension that is one way of putting it it's pure

[Speaker 1] (6:05:57 - 6:06:25)
pure power pure intelligence all anything created arises out of that and as you invite that into

[Speaker 2] (6:06:25 - 6:06:43)
your life it can and will transform even the way in which you live as a person and that happens

[Speaker 1] (6:06:44 - 6:07:31)
without you thinking that you need to transform yourself a transformation happens even to the person although the person obviously will always have certain limitations you're good at this but you're not good at that and so on the person obviously cannot be perfect there's always certain characteristics that define a person it has form that's understood but that dimension as you access that flows into the conditioned entity that we call the person

[Speaker 13] (6:07:34 - 6:07:47)
and can even can use the personal mind and express itself through that in other words

[Speaker 1] (6:07:49 - 6:11:22)
inspiration can happen will happen more easily intuition happens more easily a creative ability develops more easily obviously you need to have some mastery some expertise in some fields then it can the this creative energy from the trans the unconditioned realm of being or consciousness can flow into what you do and transform and empower it of course you need to already in the case of activity you need to have already developed something that it can flow into in my case it cannot flow into becoming a fantastic swimmer or tennis player it's not going to happen it's not going to empower me on that level and it's too late for that nor is it going to come up in me with the it's the creative realization finding the the unified field theory in physics at Einstein unsuccessfully looked for the unified field theory it's not going to come through this mind because the mind this is not it has not developed that particular avenue through which spirit or consciousness could express itself creatively but it is expressing itself creatively through these words so not through nuclear physics or sports it can impact in the case of this particular person or or whatever it may be where people develop the great new like Elon Musk great some great latest thing about electric cars or whatever I'm not going to be able to do that this this is not how the creative energy can express itself through me nor through nor I'm going to be a great dancer it's much too late for that too but you might or it might not be expressed itself in any of those ways too it is possible that the as as you access that dimension the power of now as you access that dimension within yourself it may not even express itself through some creative endeavor it could be something else it could be the way in which you relate to other humans changes affects everybody that you come in contact with perhaps you carry on with an ordinary activity and yet a new energy comes into that let's say let's say you have the simplest possible job

[Speaker 2] (6:11:23 - 6:11:28)
uh let's say you're at a

[Speaker 1] (6:11:30 - 6:14:40)
at a at a toll bridge where you have to pay I this came to mind just now because some time ago I was at a toll bridge where you have to you drive there you have to pay to use the road it's toll it's called so you have to stop the car there's a man and a little woman in a little booth and he or she says one dollar please or whatever and then you give and I there was one I don't remember where it was that person was everybody felt better after paying the one dollar because she was so present and there was an energy flowing through her that every time every person who went through I imagine must have felt better because of because that brief interaction there was a an outflow of loving kindness meta loving kindness that comes out of this another way in which presence then manifests itself in this dimension I've already mentioned creative things creative endeavor can empower many things that you do or it may just manifest itself as what we could call loving kindness that flows through you as you go about your normal business perhaps you haven't developed any particular avenue through which presence could express itself creatively whatever it may be sports dance science musical instrument all the various things maybe you haven't developed maybe you could still develop it or not it doesn't matter in some way presence will use you as a channel and then something will flow through you into this dimension and it could be just your presence itself can be a powerful tool of transformation in this dimension so that this loving kindness flows through you into this world that affects everybody you come into contact with so who knows how this will transform your work your the way in which you experience life but it will transform it so when you bring together the human and the being instead of just being a human it's not enough being a human it's a terrible fate if you only know yourself as a human you have in other words zero self-transcendence you are trapped

[Speaker 2] (6:14:40 - 6:14:59)

in this limited little self and even the big egos the little little selves if the egos

[Speaker 1] (6:15:00 - 6:15:33)
there are some people who seem to have achieved much in this world to only through having a huge ego that is possible but the achievements are really not achievements at all because they make countless people unhappy so there's no point in building up some huge enterprise and while you're doing it you're not only unhappy yourself you make everybody else unhappy too

[Speaker 6] (6:15:34 - 6:17:29)
that does not transform this world my question is about my kids i'm grateful that when i read a new earth that it resonated with me i've been looking for a spiritual path and it just it made sense to me it resonated with me and it took i read the power of now years ago and i kind of read it and got it up here and put it on a shelf and kind of moved on but this time it seems to have yes taken a little bit more yes so i'm working at it and i have four-year-old twins and an eight-year-old some my question is um how to teach them to expose them to this because um you know my wife and i have different views she considers herself to be catholic and i don't have an association with a standard religion so to speak this seems to resonate with me so i'm just trying to get a sense for how to interact with them and to share this with them yes so the twins are how old four four yeah and

[Speaker 1] (6:17:29 - 6:23:50)
the older one is he's eight eight that's a boy the oldest is a boy and the twins are boy girl oh yeah well the most important thing is yes and many even good parents don't know that first of all the the energy field at home the energy that you and your wife generate at home which is a reflection of both your states of consciousness it is one of the most important factors so what is the general energy field that on a daily basis you and your wife manifest generate in this home environment i do know that nowadays nowadays many home environments have a very nervous energy field because everybody is so busy getting things done the parents are busy getting things done the children are encouraged to continuously do this and do that or sometimes encouraged to stop doing this or stop doing that and then they have the this additional layer of electronic devices the pads ipads and whatever other devices samsung and so on uh the parents use them the phones children begin to use them but mainly the the constant field almost stressful environment to to visit some of these families there's always something next thing to do that seems to the the underlying in the underlying energy you're seeing what's the next thing that we need to do and have you done that yet come on let's do have you brushed your teeth no okay then do it many good meaning well-meaning parents interact with their children predominantly 90 or more even 100 on the level of doing either do this or stop doing that yeah i'm pretty good at being a human doing yes that's good to be a human being yes yeah and so the being of the child is never fully acknowledged in order to acknowledge the being of the child you have to spend moments when you you you give the child your fullest attention not not your fullest attention because because you're talking about something that needs to be done but your fullest attention to for example by just listening to the child when he has something to say to you or tell a story or giving your fullest attention occasionally by just observing them or him or her observing as they go about their life in the house it just needs to be a few minutes where your attention rests upon them even if they are sometimes not directly interacting with you because by by observing them at play for example without telling them to do this or that or don't do this or that but simply allow your attention to rest on them and watch them if possible in that state of relatively as much as possible thoughtless awareness where you're just the aware presence for the children and then occasionally when you come in when you they come close to you to look into their eyes doesn't have to be long they don't even have to you don't don't say let's look into each other's eyes you look into their eyes when when you talk to them when they talk to you and

in that moment of looking you connect with their being so that part of your interaction with the child is not based on doing but on a flow of being towards the child so that you connect on the level of being that means you acknowledge the deeper reality of that child you truly acknowledge their being i would suggest that in modern families in most modern families children very often get read in states of anxiety or great restlessness later becoming in teenage years becoming states of antagonism and anger and i would suggest that often the child doesn't know why there is this anger and restlessness it often goes back to the parents inability or they they've done everything for the child on the level of the on the doing level but the children feel unseen by the parent they feel unseen in their being they are not acknowledged in their being and if they are unseen that vital dimension of their being feels starved it is not encouraged by the child and and the deepest connection with the child is missing the parent doesn't know that they think i'm really a good i'm doing all i

[Speaker 6] (6:23:50 - 6:24:18)
can make it makes sense because with the four-year-olds in particular i get what you're saying i get with all of them but in particular with them they're not getting that i can see that they're they're angry about not getting the attention that they want they throw really big tantrums yes and my my four-year-old son actually gets physically angry yes so yes yes yes now you

[Speaker 1] (6:24:18 - 6:27:50)
don't give them the attention when they demand it through throwing a tantrum that's not the moment to give them although when the tantrum does happen it's good if you can be spacious and allow it to be while it happens instead of reacting so that they don't pull you into a similar state of consciousness when you get angry because they are in a tantrum so if you can then take that as a signal to be really alert and present and observe and so the that is not the moment though to connect because the child at that moment isn't there's the pain body is there covering up the essence of their being so the moment they demand attention is not the best moment to give them attention because the demand for attention can also be an egoic thing so it's not necessarily that they want the ego doesn't want attention on the deepest level it doesn't know what the deepest level is the ego wants a different kind of attention it wants to it wants you to to strengthen the ego in the child and so it's often is also a desire of the ego to control the environment because there's no other ways so very young children cry very loud it's an attempt of the developing ego to exert some control over their environment and that's good not to give them what they need what they demand there but give them attention in other moments and the real attention is let your awareness rest upon them look at them see them they want to be seen that's their being acknowledge their being so that that's don't again i have to repeat it because it's so important don't always interact only through doing or don't do this don't do that which tends to be the case with families and with your wife the same make sure that there is some spaciousness in your relationship no busy how the no matter how busy the household is make sure there is some spaciousness in the relationship between you so that there's some spaciousness emanating from both of you some peace even though you may be busy but there's some peace emanation into the energy field in your home that comes from you and that's children respond very much to the energy field that they grow up in that affects them very deeply so there's and the interaction between you and your wife is what generates that energy field and then give them attention doesn't have to be long periods of time but often at night before bedtime and during the day watch them listen to them occasionally fully and don't interfere with some kind of advice necessarily just listen just look acknowledge their beautiful being which is there and that's the greatest thing you can do for the child

[Speaker 3] (6:31:33 - 6:34:13)
hello friends welcome welcome everyone welcome everyone to this live teaching

session with Eckhart Tolle it's on how presence can transform our lives this session is presented by Eckhart Teachings and Sounds True and my name is Tammy Simon I'm the founder of Sounds True and it's an absolute delight and honor to be able to host this live teaching session we'll be exploring presence and its power and this session occurs as we are opening up registration to an online program with Eckhart called Doorways Into Presence you can learn more about the program at Eckhart's website EckhartTolle.com it's a program that explores 14 different gateways into presence delivered over the course of seven weeks two gateways a week in the experience as a community practicing entering and moving through these portals together to give you a sense the gateways include meditating with a candle contemplating the question who am I meditating with the sky everyday activities like drinking a refreshing cup of apple juice and more one of the practices one of the gateways that Eckhart introduces in Doorways Into Presence has us enter what he calls inner body awareness and Eckhart here in this special teaching session I was wondering if you could start by sharing with everyone who's joined us how the inner body is a gateway to presence what the link is and then actually take us into the guided experience of attuning to the inner body as a doorway into presence how does that sound as a way to begin?

[Speaker 1] (6:34:18 - 6:57:12)
Thank you Tammy hello everybody that sounds like a wonderful idea presence we could say is the dimension of consciousness most humans are only occasionally present for brief moments and some humans are almost never present at all and those that are present for brief moments usually don't recognize the significance of that their mind interprets it in a different way for example as a moment when they felt particularly alive or deeply at peace or full of life energy but usually they attribute that to some external cause so presence as a dimension of consciousness we could call that a higher intelligence that humans can access and recognize within themselves and that higher intelligence can bring about can manifest in many different ways in a person's life for example as a heightened creativity so that you're able to become more creative in whatever endeavor you're engaged in you have a creative flow suddenly happens and flows into your mind brings about new ideas that nobody has had before can improve the quality of whatever it is that you're doing whatever activity you may be engaged in it improves the way in which you perform that activity because when presence flows into what you do you do it without ego the fact that presence has arisen within you means the ego has subsided when presence diminishes usually the ego returns so for many humans for quite a long period of time they fluctuate those if you are if you have entered the awakening process as many of you have you will fluctuate from being present to being drawn back into mind identification identification with thinking which is the ego so you access presence as a dimension of consciousness and in what way it then manifests in your life in what way it changes your life varies from person to person you may not even create anything new because it presence may not necessarily manifest as a heightened ability to to become creative it could just be that it greatly improves the quality of your relationships with other humans or your ability to enjoy life the present moment deeply it enables you to have empathy with other human beings and other life forms that before perhaps only happened rarely because the ego cannot really have true empathy with other humans or life forms empathy compassion loving kindness benevolence that flows out from you towards the world all life forms other human beings all these are manifestations of presence so it is the ultimately the only absolutely worthwhile thing to realize in your lifetime i don't call it achieve i call it realize because achieve implies that presence isn't here yet and you need to work hard make efforts in order to bring presence into your life but that's not how it is because presence is already there within you waiting to be realized it is waiting to be realized so presence is the it is a realization of presence it is not to become present is not an achievement because that would be an egoic thing or i i am present now i have achieved it who has achieved it no presence has arisen the ego has subsided so it's the realization of presence is already there underneath the incessant stream of thinking that most

humans are identified with and underneath that there is this vast realm of unconditioned consciousness which we could also call stillness so to find that to this to realize that is the most important thing in your life it is a as i see it is the purpose of human existence is to embody the flowering of presence the arising of presence which on a collective level is the next stage in the evolution of humanity and is the only thing that can save us from the madness of the human ego both in its individual and collective aspect presence you cannot understand conceptually what it is you have to experience it realize it so there are doorways into presence into that realization and they these doorways they direct your attention away from where it normally is which is your attention or your consciousness is trapped in the stream of conceptualization and thinking for most humans almost a hundred percent of their conscience is trapped in that continuous stream of conceptualization which is involuntary incessant thinking and so we need to reclaim consciousness from the stream of thinking and then discover what is there beyond the stream of thinking not anything that is separate from the stream of thinking but is related this vastness of presence is related to the stream of thinking in the same way that the waves or ripples on the surface of the ocean are related to the totality of the ocean so most humans only know themselves as the waves and ripples on the surface they are surface phenomena that is the horizontal dimension of human existence that's all they know they know themselves as surface phenomena but there is a vertical dimension the intersection of course expressed in this symbol of the cross horizontal dimension vertical dimension presence is the vertical dimension so we have doorways that enable us to reclaim attention from the stream of thinking one of these doorways a very powerful one is the inner body another one that is closely related to the inner bodies and i often combine the two into one another one is awareness of your breathing sounds very simple awareness of your breathing so here for our practice i'm going to combine the two into one because they are very closely related awareness of your breath of course goes back thousands of years it's a very ancient spiritual practice very powerful spiritual practice why is it so powerful because it's a simple way of reclaiming consciousness withdrawing it from the stream of thinking by placing awareness on the inflow and outflow of your breath which means and i'm not not just talking about it but as i speak you can verify it experience it here now being aware of your breathing begins with the simple fact that you notice that breathing is happening that's simple enough mostly of course you wouldn't notice it it's usually unconscious but something in you makes it happen you cannot stop it something if you wants to live and the breathing happens now you suddenly become aware that you're breathing some of your attention is moved away from thinking and is now accompanying the inflow of the breath into the body the attention is linked to the breast now so you could say you observe the inflow of the breath into the body and you observe the outflow you feel it you sense it observe is a visual thing and we're just using the term but you sense it you feel it the inflow and the outflow and while you sense that if you're really present with your breath you will notice you're not thinking you cannot be aware of your breathing and think at the same time so it's a very simple wonderful way of taking attention away from thinking most of which is useless anyway i'm not talking about constructive thinking creative thinking but all the useless thinking that humans are tortured by you breathe in and as you breathe in you can feel the air going or the energy of it flowing all the way into your abdomen and as you read as you breathe in the abdomen rises slightly and as the abdomen rises slightly you can sense an energy field within there there's an energy that is that is the beginning of sensing the inner body the the animating presence within the body so your the the breath awareness and body awareness can go together breath awareness takes you into body awareness and you can continue to to experience both at the same time as a single experience so let's continue with that practice inhalation into the abdomen and as you reach the end of the inhalation for a brief moment two or three seconds you pause you hold it there before you breathe out again at the end of the out breath you also pause for two or three seconds and there's a deep stillness there in that pause you breathe in again abdomen you feel the energy that is the inner body there and breathe out and a moment of cessation deep stillness and then start again you breathe in abdomen hold that feel the energy and breathe out and the next time as you breathe in feel the energy in the abdomen and now you can feel the energy in the abdomen actually spreading out into the rest of your body like this is a place from where the energy spreads out you can feel the that your legs are alive your chest is alive your arms are alive you can feel the animating presence that gives life to the body the invisible vast intelligence that sustains every moment that sustains the incredibly complicated functions of the various organs of your body and coordinates them all unbelievably complex thing there is the body and there's a vast intelligence that is there it is invisible it is part of the consciousness that you are of which the thinking mind is only a tiny fragment and so this vast intelligence the animating principle that gives life to the body the invisible you before and not you become conscious of it or it becomes conscious of itself when you feel the inner body but let's continue breathing in abdomen energy spreading out throughout the body and breathe out and now we can shift our attention this is a relatively short practice we shift our attention mainly from your breathing to the feeling of the inner body energy the animating presence within the body feel that you're still conscious of your breathing but at the same time you're conscious of every cell in your body is alive you can sense in your hands you can sense there is this very subtle sense of aliveness in your hands in your feet in your legs your arms your chest and now slowly you can feel the totality of the body inner body as a single field of energy intensely alive and your attention remains there and you continue to be aware of your breathing but at the same time you feel this wonderful energy that pervades the entire body it is not the physical body it it makes the life of it is the life behind the physical body because the physical body is not life life is the invisible presence of consciousness itself and as you feel the inner body there's little or no thinking and you're very alert you may even want to close your eyes for a moment in order to feel the energy of the inner body even more every cell of the body is alive this by the way is a very healing thing to do there's enormous healing power in that inhabit the body the body loves to be noticed to be known so you feel that and you continue to be aware of your breathing also and it may be possible for you as your eyes are closed to perhaps even let go of a physical image you may still have in your mental image you may still have of your of your body so that all that remain and remains in your awareness is no longer the body but that energy itself that no longer has any form and now you have reached a level of presence which we could also call awareness in which you realize that this vastly intelligent energy field is consciousness itself before it becomes a person and you are that presence you are that presence that is your true identity so the person is a

[Speaker 2] (6:57:12 - 6:57:33)
passing phenomenon and ultimately you are not a person you are that vast energy that

[Speaker 1] (6:57:35 - 7:05:09)
briefly takes on the disguise of a person on the horizontal level of your life and then you hold that it is so once you connect with that realize that that is that your essence it's a wonderful realization and then you hold your attention there remain there and enjoy yourself in a deeper sense of the words enjoy yourself enjoy the being of you the enjoyment of being the enjoyment that you are of being i am this is why in india this realization is called it is the sat chit ananda sat is the being chit is consciousness ananda is the joy that that you feel that is the conscious being is joy conscious being realizing that you are i am without adding anything to it the primordial beingness of life itself that is a very deep realization that liberates you from the person when you realize that the person becomes a something you can play with enjoy for a while never take it too seriously it's like a role you play but you are not the role it's just something that unfolds but you are you can be rooted in the in the being of you that's why in the old testament moses asked the story goes moses meets god on a mountaintop and he asks

who are you god says i am the i am one of the most profound statements in the bible then moses says what shall i tell my people when i come down from the mountain what shall i say who spoke to me what what shall i tell them god says it's a story god says tell them that i am spoke to you did moses understand what he was saying i don't know um and then we make a jump into jesus gospel of john before abraham was i am said jesus before that is the timeless dimension of consciousness itself that is the essence of who you are it manifests as on this horizontal dimension it manifests as a physical body but that's not what it is it is a disguise so this is presence the realization of presence the most important thing in your life and even as i speak now perhaps as you're listening some of your attention will be on the words you take in the words but you can continue to feel the inner energy field of the body even as you listen and that that is a very important part it's not just here i'm aware of the inner body and then the rest of my life i lose myself again in everything no you can be you can stay conscious and at the same time perceive and even act and speak still feel the connectedness with being connectedness with being so that frees you from the ego because now you no longer need to derive your sense of who you are from the whatever your mind is telling you about who you are your memories your narratives your stories which you call my life that no longer yes you remember the stories what happened but they do not give you your sense of identity anymore they your sense of identity comes from a deeper place and so it liberates you from the narrow troublemaking ego identity that's true liberation ah and then you look at another human deeply and you can sense that they too are that divine presence even if they can't if they may not know it but if you can sense it in yourself you can sense it in the other so then your relationships change because you then you you should yes you still relate to a person whatever the person is but but but not only to a person you also relate to the transcendent dimension of that person which you recognize as one with your identity and that recognition is love true love recognition of oneness so this is we just encapsulated the entire spiritual life that is the essence that that is the essence of all spirituality and it's simple but tammy may have another question for us we have received a question

[Speaker 3] (7:05:09 - 7:05:52)
specifically eckhart about this gateway of inner body awareness because you describe it as so enjoyable and we have some participants in the doorways into presence program who have said yes sometimes it's very enjoyable but sometimes when tuning into the inner body it can actually feel like rough waters disturbing a lot of intensity anxious feelings like that and we're wondering how to work with that in this gateway yes thank you tammy that's a good point

[Speaker 1] (7:05:53 - 7:21:23)
often people ask that question so as you direct your attention into the inner body you may feel more strongly something that was already there in your emotional field which may not be pleasant a disturbance in many cases this emotion it is an emotional energy in many cases this emotion is anxiety or fear very common in other cases that emotion may also be residual anger those are those two are perhaps the most common forms of disturbance that people feel and many humans continuously in the background have an emotion that is either that is anxiety that is the most common or anger which is also fairly common there's also possible there's a deep sadness that is also sometimes occurred a gloomy energy a dark gloomy energy so whatever it is it is emotion that lives in you and perhaps has lived in you for a long time sometimes it's some it's caused by something that happened only yesterday and it's still the emotion still lingers in you but in many cases it is almost always been there sometimes very much in the background at other times a bit more in the foreground and suddenly you feel it more strongly because your attention goes there and there it is let's say it's anxiety it lives here somewhere and you feel that disturbance as you go within now the important thing is you've taken attention away from thinking by directing your attention into the inner body and that is a good thing because then the emotion that you feel as you direct your attention the focus of your attention of on the emotion emotion then cannot rise up

into your mind and use your thinking which is what it often does so when you feel anxiety the anxiety can cause you to think anxious thoughts and every anxious thought adds more energy to the anxiety that you feel and some humans live like that some humans continuously live like that they worry they're anxious they're fearful and the emotion and the thought processes are linked unconsciously thought feeds the emotion the emotion generates even more thought it's a vicious circle but if you direct your attention to the emotion itself then the emotion cannot use your mind anymore you you just observe because you are the there's an awareness there now the awareness that this is a disturbance within you and what you do is first of all you recognize it for what it is it's an energy field that is there you can feel it now that is a big difference from what normally happens in the unconscious state of humans because in the unconscious state the emotion becomes you you become a fearful person an anxious person it takes you over and when you direct your attention to it then it is still there but is it can no longer pretend to be you in other words by placing the your attention on the emotion emotion cannot become a person it remains as an emotion it's recognized as an emotion and you are aware of it and then first thing you do is you accept that it is there because it's the present moment and whatever arises in the present moment you better accept it because it already is it is so you can't argue with what is so you better accept that this is there you acknowledge it it is a disturbance within you an energy that does not feel pleasant but yes it may even be quite acute maybe perhaps it's intense fear then use your breath as described before breathe into the abdomen and then feel that the fear you decide that as much as possible you would like to release this fear and allow it to flow out with your breath and so you breathe out the fear as much as possible or the anger because you decide that you don't really want it or need it but the ego likes to identify with it the ego loves those things it says i want no i want it but it does want it so you it breathe you breathe it out and then some of it may still be there when you've done it a few times that's fine and then you feel the rest of your body where the where this energy is not present not the fearful the anxious or angry energy may not be in your hands or your arms or your legs your hands arms legs are fine they are perhaps not affected by this thing that you feel in your chest or belly area so you feel the rest of your body is alive you feel the energy in your hands and your legs and your arms and your breathing and there's still some of that emotion is still there but there's been a very significant shift from being the emotion to being the presence behind the emotion to being the space in which the emotion exists so the shift of identity you are the space for the emotion you're that you are the awareness behind the emotion as you know this i call this old emotion that lives in a human being some for many years we i call it the pain body the pain body is accumulated old emotion and that pain body as you become present gradually it becomes released sometimes in exceptional cases it can suddenly really be released in an instant but in most cases it takes a while it can take you you experience it again and again sometimes it takes you over again but more and more you become aware of it and don't mistake it for what who or what you are you are not the emotion the emotion lives in you you are the awareness behind the emotion you are the presence that witnesses the emotion so one could say almost that here's the here's the unpleasant emotion and then there's the space around it and that space around it so to speak which starts with the inner space of your body that space around it becomes bigger and then you notice that who you essentially are is the space around the emotion but not the emotion itself one could say that the emotion is like a block of ice frozen energy and then gradually it dissolves as you bring the light of consciousness to it but can use that analogy painful emotions the pain body cannot survive for too long in the light of consciousness so just being aware of it is important or that it may not feel pleasant at first but it's worth it won't kill you it's not that bad but it may kill you if you're so unconscious that you totally identify with it but recognizing it it won't kill you you can have a little bit of unpleasantness that you can have a child it's more difficult if a child experiences very because of environment whatever happening in the child's life if a child experiences painful emotion the only thing that the child often can do is cut themselves off from it because it's too they cannot tolerate the pain so they have to push it out of awareness that's the only thing a child can often do and then so it's pushed out of awareness because the child would not be able to live with it then as you become an adult you can tolerate it but many adults are still so trapped in that child pattern of not wanting not thinking it is so threatening i cannot allow myself to feel it but if you do allow yourself to feel it that is the beginning of the transmutation transmutation is the correct word transmutation because that painful emotion can become transmuted it's actually it's trapped consciousness on a lower vibrational frequency so it can be transmuted into a higher frequency then it becomes freed it becomes liberated so it's sometimes the case that people who have a lot of negative emotion in other words a heavy pain body those people often are much more motivated to awaken because they can't stand the pain anymore and they become more motivated to become present and then all that trapped emotion which is low vibrational frequency consciousness at a low vibrational frequency is suddenly freed and becomes transmuted into the higher frequency of presence ah and that's and that you see perhaps a deeper meaning behind the old idea from medieval times and beyond of the transmutation of the alchemy the transmutation of base metal into gold that was the external interpretation of it transforming base metal into a precious substance of gold so there's the alchemists worked with that there were books written about alchemy but the the they are all really talking about an inner transformation the transformation of human consciousness the transformation of pain into presence of suffering into consciousness transformation of the alchemy the alchemical transmutation of suffering into consciousness and that is the ultimate purpose of human suffering yes human suffering can end challenges no suffering can end but it has a purpose until it brings about this alchemical transmutation then you rise above suffering you will still face challenges in life but these challenges will not be transformed into suffering suffering amazing amazing process so eventually you will be thankful for you for your suffering and for the emotional pain that you have had because it was an essential part of your awakening

[Speaker 3] (7:21:29 - 7:22:21)
eckhart i just have one final question for you you mentioned towards the beginning of this live teaching that many of us in the process of awakening experience a fluctuation between being identified with our thinking mind and our emotions and presence there's this fluctuation and i'd love to hear more about your guidance on how we can make a lasting shift so that living with presence becomes our new way of living each day yes the important thing is present moment awareness

[Speaker 1] (7:22:22 - 7:34:08)
because that's all there is sometimes people wonder will i be able to sustain presence what do i how can i sustain presence better forget about that the the only vital question is am i present now or am i lost in my mind that's a vital question you can only be present now so the point of power is in the present moment now how can i how can i be present in the rest of my life it always comes back to the present moment in this awakening process many times probably you will lose yourself again in your mind you lose yourself in the horizontal dimension of life you lose awareness of the vertical dimension the being of you you lose you lose yourself in the doing unaware of being and when you lose yourself in doing which includes the primordial doing is thinking doing the thinking and then all the outer doing and all the things that continues to demand your attention they're all mental phenomena anyway so that you lose yourself in doing you lose yourself in your mind you lose yourself on the horizontal dimension and then inevitably some form of suffering very quickly when you lose yourself on the horizontal dimension very quickly some form of suffering will come into your life usually it's anxiety fear anger stress impatience regret feelings of envy of countless negative feelings all kinds of things can come in and so we could call it suffering we can call it the most generic term would be unhappiness in one form or another arises and that can be you can learn to recognize this when it arises we could call it a dysfunctional mental

emotional state you recognize it for what it is and you say oops i must have lost the present moment you get stressed about something you get upset about something oh i must have lost the present moment you can you can use it as an alarm clock that tells you wake up stay awake you can return your the moment you realize that you lost yourself you have a choice you can continue to go back into the horizontal dimension totally trapped in the horizontal dimension or you can step out of it and enter the vertical for a moment take a conscious breath feel the inner body don't believe your mind when your mind tells you no i don't have time for this you do have time for this because it doesn't take much time to take a conscious breath or feel the inner body by taking conscious breath let's say something upsets you in daily life irritates you upsets you and you can feel thoughts associated with you by the way it's more likely you're not upset by the situation you're upset by the thoughts that you have about your situation the situation is as it is every situation is as it is the upset is caused how how you enter your mind interprets the situation a negative narrative this is awful i can't stand this anymore why why did i why can't they do this he shouldn't have done that he should have done what all kinds of narratives so you realize that's losing yourself in the unconscious thought processes so you gradually learn to return to the present moment again and you lose yourself the moment you notice that you lost yourself some presence has returned because if there are no presence at all you would not even know that you are lost in your mind you would be so lost that you wouldn't know that you're lost and if you don't know you're lost in your mind you're truly lost it's the same way let's say a person who is mentally ill if they know that they are mentally ill there is some chance of recovery but if you are truly mentally ill you don't know that you're mentally ill you're so taken over by the mental illness you're totally lost in it but when you are unconscious in a normal sense that is also this normal being unconsciously and completely identified with your thinking mind now you may not be people you you're not mentally ill in the conventional sense of the word but the way i see it the normal state of human unconsciousness is a state of mental illness so normal the normal state of human unconsciousness has this it's not entirely mentally ill but it has a strong element a strong pathological element to it if that were not the case humans would not create this havoc that they create on the planet and have done for a long time so there is a strong element of something deeply dysfunctional in the human mind also wonderful things but always marked by something very deeply dysfunctional and that is the condition that all the ancient traditions have recognized they called it uh unconsciousness or delusion the state of being spiritually asleep the state of original sin which really means it's an original dysfunction that everybody inherits christianity got original sin some the state of suffering that the buddha says is normal that every human they can't get out of it unless they awaken suffering is normal unless you awaken if you don't awaken buddha says wherever you go whatever you do do whatever condition you encounter sooner or later and usually sooner you will encounter suffering no matter where you go or what you do it's very very true unless something changes within you you awaken so they all point to some fundamental dysfunction that humans are born with and this is ultimately this looks like a very negative thing but ultimately it is this fundamental dysfunction that will provide the brings about the suffering and the suffering brings about the desire to awaken the the that is the that the motivating factor behind wanting and needing to awaken out of that unconsciousness that motivating factor is provided by suffering so suffering is both good and bad amazing quite amazing so presence then you you need to find a moment of presence as the moment you remember that you are lost you can choose to be present if only if only take a moment of presence even in a complicated situation that you're dealing with take a moment of presence breathe in feel the inner body become familiar with the feeling of the inner body become familiar so that you can easily quickly go there and direct your attention away from thinking and to drop down into inner body field the being of and if it's only in terms of temporal time maybe it's only a minute and even a minute it makes a lot of difference here if you can find 10 20 times a day one minute of presence make will make an enormous difference in your life and quite soon a minute will become a bit longer and then gradually it's no longer you no longer need to interrupt your activities to be present after a while you develop the ability to sense presence in the background of your life even while you're engaged in dealing with things in the foreground and that is reconciling the horizontal and vertical dimension in your life that is across at the present moment is the intersection of the horizontal and vertical so you deal with the horizontal without losing your rootedness in the vertical and that is the mastery of life and that is the fulfillment of the purpose of your incarnation here so it doesn't matter externally what the circumstances of your life are because in any circumstances you can you might be imprisoned any circumstances you can find this uh find the intersection between the vertical and the horizontal so that you become a human who is able to deal with the things on this world in this world without losing him or herself in this world you're rooted in the transcendent

[Speaker 3] (7:34:16 - 7:36:49)
that concludes our session for today heckart thank you so much and thank you to everyone for being with us how presence can transform our lives again this session is occurring as we are opening the registration for a program that's called doorways into presence and just to share personally for one moment we filmed this program over the course of several days and at the end i had the feeling that the way that these 14 gateways were professionally filmed and delivered with so much clarity from eckhart the instruction and the guided experience where the viewer does it right along with eckhart that this was historic actually and was tremendous medicine for the culture for all of us in the society and you know i've recorded so many different programs but there's a couple handfuls where i've had this moment of kind of chills in the back of my body of knowing the historic nature and the power of the program and that's really what i felt with doorways into presence again it's 14 different gateways that eckhart takes us through it's delivered over seven weeks there are live community sessions and an online interactive practice guideline workbook additionally people who participate in the program will receive a two-month membership in eckhart tolle now which offers over 400 hours of eckhart's teachings so again you can learn more at eckharttolle.com here in the present moment thank you thank you for being with us thank you friends heard uh

[Speaker 11] (7:36:49 - 7:37:38)
just a few minutes ago before you came on stage that there was a bit of a rush to get very close proximity physically to you and i think i've i might have heard you mentioned before the idea of a silent transmission of the teacher between the teacher and the student and we just talked about how someone who's deeply unconscious in a room when you go in that room with them you can feel it and it's you can feel the pull and therefore when you're with someone who's very conscious and present you can also feel that and feel open yes can you can you speak to that a little bit about the physical presence of yes someone yes there is the

[Speaker 1] (7:37:39 - 7:55:58)
in addition to the words that are being spoken the the words come out of a certain state of consciousness so when we meet there is the dimension of the verbal dimension the words that are being spoken but there's also a state of consciousness out of which the words come and that state of consciousness also emanates it's less noticeable than the words because the words the mind looks for the words and mentally they are taken in the sound is decoded translated and in addition to the words there is another dimension of teaching that is the emanation of presence and i'd like to i'm glad you bring this up now because for the second part of our retreat i'd like to have a little bit more silence also so that you can or many of you will be able to directly sense that power of silence and if you can sense silence coming from me or stillness rather that means it's also in you if you can sense that there is an emanation it must be in you if it were not in you you wouldn't even know it so if you can sense there is a silent emanation behind the words or silent emanation when no words are being spoken then that's a wonderful thing that can strengthen your own presence it's a bit i believe i used the analogy

in one of the books of a burning a burning log in the fireplace there's a log and if you put it next to another log that's burning strongly then that will help the block that only just started to burn maybe burning is not the best analogy but it's burning in a good sense because in a way what's being burned up here is the unconsciousness of the ego the unconsciousness of the ego can be burned up through suffering and this is happening to most people on the planet that is how they make progress spiritually through suffering a lot of it self-inflicted or either on themselves or by humans on other humans and the other way of burning up the egoic self is through exposing yourself to a spiritual teaching or teacher and that can be done through a book a book has a certain power that is released if it came it if the book was written from presence in some strange way which i don't know how it happens the words still have a certain power the moment you read them and if there is an opening into presence in you they can the words can put you into presence so there are many people who read my books they've read them several times and they pick them up again and again not necessarily to learn something new on the level of information although that can also happen because sometimes you realize when your conscience has changed you hadn't really understood something that you had read previously but you pick up the book because just reading one page or half a page can put you again into the state of presence so there's definitely just as unconsciousness spreads can you an un very unconscious human can infect many others around them with unconsciousness and nowadays you don't even need to be around them you can infect others through the internet so the internet has a lot of it can be very infectious and a lot of unconsciousness in itself of course it's neutral it can be used to spread consciousness and i'm attempting to do that of course but it is also used to spread unconsciousness so it's a neutral thing can be used for for higher purposes and lower purposes yes a state of consciousness infects others presence i would no longer use for presence i would no longer use the word in fact because it has negative connotations presence uh can pull others into presence so that but only if there is some opening in the other there needs to be that receptivity the it is almost to say that there is an a faculty in a human that in many humans is dormant or completely obscured and that faculty is the faculty of presence it's like an organ that is not operating yet but not a physical organ the ability to be present is a faculty a potential in every human being that still in most humans is still dormant and at some point in a person's life that something happens to awaken that faculty and it comes to life and when that happens and often it happens through suffering but it can happen in some cases there are some children born these days that already have that openness i've met some who are already born that was perhaps almost unknown in my generation they're already born with that faculty that's already awakened so they are immediately receptive even at the age of six they would be receptive to it i wasn't i believe i don't know but but there are also some and those tend to be born also into relatively conscious a relatively conscious family so definitely there is the wordless teaching and there is the teaching through words and both operate stop cherishing opinions now he's not saying stop having opinions because that would be difficult you can't at one stroke give up all opinions when the mind becomes active especially in a conversation opinions are expressed the egoic mind usually needs to respond in order to assert its existence or strengthen its sense of self particularly with opinions it can happen easily that before you know it you have been taken over by a mind stream the question is whether there's at any given moment there's enough presence in you so you can be aware of the movement of your thoughts in a conversation that's the challenge otherwise you're lost in the mind stream and the reactive patterns of the mind a good practice is to become aware of yourself listening when somebody says something be aware of two things when you're listening to another person but the other person may be voicing an opinion or gossiping or criticizing somebody else as is often the case when you're listening be aware of two things rather than one thing so make it into a spiritual practice be aware of obviously what you're listening to the content and at the same time be aware of yourself as the listener the presence that makes the listening possible the presence in you that makes the listening possible so as you sit with people you are there as a listening presence in addition to being aware of what they're talking about you feel your continuing presence there and now if you never said anything that would be an easier practice but at some point of course you will probably because it's a normal human situation you will probably begin to speak also and then the important thing is not to get taken over by your mind stream you need to be particularly alert when a negativity comes in as you mentioned gossip about other people you find yourself you say agreeing or disagreeing so you're taking up a mental position is there is there something in between that is not necessarily agreeing not necessarily disagreeing in between the two mental positions of acceptance of what they're saying or reinforcing it with your opinion agreeing to it or disagreeing is there a neutral space from where you can simply observe possible mental positions mental positions in others and your own tendency to adopt a mental position one good practice i believe i even recommended it somewhere in the book is when everybody expressing their opinions whatever it may be about a good practice is and let's say it makes nobody's asking you let's say for your opinion and it makes no difference to the situation so they are not trying to decide some course of action but simply people are simply putting out their opinions you can observe the almost compulsion to give your opinion especially things like politics or other favorite things that people love to express opinions about you might feel the compulsion to say something and as a spiritual practice just let go of needing to put forward your opinion so in other words you ask yourself what happens if i don't express my opinion how does that feel of course it doesn't make any difference to the situation or who you are so to just refrain from unnecessarily expressing your opinion is a spiritual practice in itself and at first you feel almost that you're losing some of your identity when you're not participating in that but you're actually going away from egoic identity to a deeper place of awareness so the the pull of the mind is very strong when you're discussing things and other people are expressing their positions identifying with their positions be aware observe in other people the emotional charge behind their mental positions also observe how there's no there's no awareness of their of their mental position is complete identification with the thought streams so be there when you're with people be there as an observer also not just as if somebody's participating observe the force behind mental positions and if you see it in others how they get taken over by their opinions the buddha talks about the the thicket of opinions and how people get entangled in that really what he's talking about is identifying with thoughts so the thoughts become you and so people get trapped in the thicket of opinions as the buddha puts it and of course one zen master i can't remember the name recommended as a spiritual practice a very simple but powerful spiritual practice stop cherishing opinions he actually said don't seek the truth just cease cherishing opinions stop cherishing opinions there's no need to seek the truth stop cherishing opinions now he's not saying stop having opinions because that would be difficult you can't at one stroke give up all opinions nor is it necessary but he says stop cherishing opinions to cherish means really to identify to give your to have your whole sense of self in your opinions which are mental positions stop cherishing opinions stop identifying with the mental positions then you can still have them but you are not they don't have you that's a fundamental difference for most people who are unaware in other words for most people they don't have opinions you can almost say the opinions have them they are energy forces mental energy fields that take possession of you completely and then it's not you think you have an opinion no the opinion has you the mental position has you it'll it's kind of like a parasitic presence in you so great spiritual practice rather than looking for the truth or god or self-realization or enlightenment stop identifying with your mental positions stop cherishing opinions that's a spiritual practice thank you hello

[Speaker 7] (7:55:58 - 7:56:44)
i live in las vegas nevada which is very mind dominated and uh it's tough there um there seems to be two forces in my mind that's build up energy and it's very strong and it keeps me from uh getting in touch with my true self into creating more space

and cultivating that space one of them is that it's not that interesting i'd rather go along with interesting thoughts and do interesting activities and also i have this fear that if i don't analyze and constantly think about like solutions and things in my life that everything's gonna fall apart so it's hard those two forces are built especially where i live it makes it even more increases it more so the energy

[Speaker 1] (7:56:44 - 8:04:23)
field there is a kind of nervous yes actually i work in a casino too that's a wonderful challenge to stay conscious there yes it is that's your spiritual practice right i've been there i've walked through some of the casinos in amazement and the it's it's a quite a place that seems to come out of some kind of dream when you walk around las vegas it's a but it's actually quite interesting when the mind doesn't label it it's actually quite amazing oh all these all these strange life forms and what they have created it's quite amazing it's there's an intense aliveness there would i want to live there i don't know there have been some spiritual teachers who moved there i know of at least two i think it was andrew harvey a spiritual teacher moved to las vegas and there was a spiritual teacher called vernon howard who lived near las vegas and there may be one or two others why they moved there i'm not sure perhaps they maybe they loved it or perhaps uh to pay less tax perhaps who knows the well the challenge of course is uh to stay present and have stillness inside you that what you mentioned now you need to think about your your life problems or your life this is a very very common uh assumption unconscious assumption in humans that if i don't think about my problems my life is going to fall apart i need i have to think about my life and what's going to happen and transfer of course nothing is going to fall apart if you stop thinking things will get better if you stop thinking with the exception of focus thinking in case there's a specific problem that needs to be addressed then focus thinking and then step even there stepping back into stillness so it's a wonderful thing if you're able to be present and still in las vegas then of course you're a master it's many people have been able to be present and still out in nature be a beautiful forest or the seashore or on top of a mountain and you watch the sunrise wow very still so still let's move here says the mind let's move here where it's so still and then wherever it is and if you do move there for a while it'll be wonderful oh it's so still and then of course the mind is becomes restless after a while there's nothing happening and you're not challenged by anything anymore if you have a meditation practice then you can of course convince yourself that you have finally achieved and you meditate five hours a day and let's say somehow food is brought to you as i remember a monk i knew buddhist monk telling me that story that he meditated in a hut up a mountain in thailand for half a year and he attained complete peacefulness peace nirvana he thought and every day somebody would bring him a bowl of food nothing to worry about nothing to do just be present and still the only challenge were mosquitoes he said but he learned to deal with that in other words to just completely accept and not mentally label it and just being used by them for food so he was came with that that was one challenge then he had to go back into the city to renew his visa because he was in thailand and he was a westerner and at the visa office they kept him waiting for one hour two hours and he was in the wrong lineup for two hours and then he had to start lining up somewhere else and when he finally got to the window the man said oh no you haven't filled this out you do that again and he started so that was he then suddenly realized he had not attained nirvana so you're much better off in las vegas the thing is to use whatever environment you are in as part of their spiritual practice does not mean that you have to be stuck it may be that a deep sense of that you need to remove yourself suddenly comes to you and then you go somewhere else that could happen because it seems like more of a challenge there yes yes so that's it's it's probably in many ways a better place to practice than a monastery right i never thought that way and worrying about your life or your problems is a very common belief that that is necessary to hold things together but it's not you have to recognize the futility of of worrying and realize your life is already together you're breathing you're eating when you need food you

sleep when you sleep you go to work you do what you do you look around contemplate look at the sky look away now Vegas is very much a man-made or human-made environment everything is kind of artificial not to say fake so everything is fake that's fine it's not everybody that much but there are trees there are some trees in there there is the sky there's a light there's the desert you can easily get out and you're out in the in the stillness so you can take advantage of that but you need to and so be happy with where you are and accept where you are and then while you do what you do in the casino what do you do there i'm a dealer at night time with the drunks yeah yeah place your bets and then yeah and then you can observe human nature there around you most definitely yes every facet you observe human nature in its unconscious state mostly yeah but that's fine that's where they're at you can be the the presence for them yeah it's hard not to judge them oh yes that's your practice not to judge because they are expressions of life of aliveness right in their form they're beautiful too

[Speaker 7] (8:04:23 - 8:05:30)
yeah okay thank you so much hello um i live in las vegas nevada which is very mind dominated and it's tough there um there seems to be two forces in my mind that's build up energy and it's very strong and it keeps me from getting in touch with my true self into creating more space and cultivating that space um one of them is that it's not that interesting i'd rather go along with interesting thoughts and do interesting activities and also i have this fear that if i don't analyze and constantly think about like solutions and things in my life that everything's going to fall apart so it's hard uh those two forces are built especially where i live it makes

[Speaker 1] (8:05:30 - 8:10:32)
it even more increases it more so the energy field there is a kind of nervous yes actually i work in a casino too well that's a wonderful challenge to stay conscious there yes it is lots of discipline yes that's your spiritual practice right i've been there i've walked through some of the casinos in amazement and the it's it's a quite a place that seems to come out of some kind of dream when you walk around las vegas it's uh but it's actually quite interesting when the mind doesn't label it it's actually quite amazing wow all these all these strange life forms and what they have created it's quite amazing it's there's an intense aliveness there would i want to live there i don't know there have been some spiritual teachers who moved there i know of at least two i think it was andrew harvey a spiritual teacher moved to las vegas and there was a spiritual teacher called vernon howard who lived near las vegas and there may be one or two others why they moved there i'm not sure perhaps they maybe they loved it or perhaps uh to pay less tax perhaps who knows the well the challenge of course is uh to stay present and have stillness inside you that what you mentioned now you need to think about your your life problems or your life this is a very very common assumption unconscious assumption in humans that if i don't think about my problems my life is going to fall apart i need i have to think about my life and what's going to happen and transform of course nothing is going to fall apart if you stop thinking things will get better if you stop thinking with the exception of focused thinking in case there's a specific problem that needs to be addressed then focus thinking and then step even there stepping back into stillness so it's a wonderful thing if you're able to be present and still in las vegas then of course you're a master it's many people are be able to be present and still out in nature a beautiful forest or the seashore or on top of a mountain and you watch the sunrise wow very still so still let's move here says the mind let's move here where it's so still and then wherever it is and if you do move there for a while it'll be wonderful oh it's so still and then of course the mind is becomes restless after a while there's nothing happening and you're not challenged by anything anymore if you have a meditation practice then you can of course convince yourself that you have finally achieved in you meditate five hours a day and and let's say somehow food is brought to you as i remember a monk i knew buddhist monk telling me that story that he meditated in a hut up a

mountain in thailand for half a year and he attained complete peacefulness peace nirvana he thought and every day somebody would bring him a bowl of food nothing to worry about nothing to do just be present and still the only challenge were mosquitoes he said but he learned to deal with that in other words to just completely accept and not mentally label it and just being used by them for food so he was came with that that was one challenge then he had to go back into the city to renew his visa because he was in thailand and he was a westerner and at the visa office they kept him waiting for one hour two hours and then he was in the wrong lineup for two hours and then he said to start lining up somewhere else and when he finally got to the window the man said oh no you haven't filled this out you do that again

[Speaker 12] (8:10:32 - 8:10:35)
and he started shouting

[Speaker 1] (8:10:39 - 8:27:15)
so that was he then suddenly realized he had not attained nirvana so you're much better off in las vegas the thing is to use whatever environment you are in as part of the spiritual practice does not mean that you have to be stuck it may be that a deep sense of the need to remove yourself suddenly comes to you and then you go somewhere else that could happen because it seems like it's a challenge there yes yes so that's it's it's probably in many ways a better place to practice than a monastery right you never thought of it that way and worrying about your life or your problems is a very common belief that that is necessary to hold things together but it's not you have to recognize the futility of of worrying and realize your life is already together you're breathing you're eating when you need food you sleep when you sleep you go to work you do what you do you look around contemplate look at the sky uh look away las vegas is very much a man-made or human-made environment everything is kind of artificial not to say fake so everything is fake that's fine it's not everybody that much but there are trees there are some trees here and there there is the sky there's a light there's the desert you can easily get out and you're out in the stillness so you can take advantage of that but you need to and so be happy with where you are and accept where you are and while you do what you do in the casino what do you do there i'm a dealer at night time place your bets and then yeah and then you can observe human nature there around you you observe human nature in its unconscious state mostly but that's fine that's where they're at you can be the the presence for them yeah it's hard not to judge them oh yes that's your practice not to judge because they are expressions of life of aliveness right in their form they're beautiful too yeah i can see the beauty of life after reading one of your books there's a very strong desire or wish to share this realization did you also feel such feelings after understanding what happened does this come only from ego a strong desire to share what you know what you've read now hopefully it's not only what you have absorbed through reading the book but something that you also know in your life experience if you've only absorbed it through reading the book then it is uh generally speaking premature to share too much with others except when a special occasion might arise when it is helpful to tell somebody well what i have a nice quote for you from what i read and it might help somebody but on the whole you need to at least begin to live it before you can show the way to others and it's not always ego the desire if there is a desire built into a spiritual realization it wants to spread of course it wants to reach others but the way it happened to me was just organically spontaneously after a while people would sometimes come and ask questions and i didn't know the answer beforehand the answer only came after listening to their question and that is the true spiritual teaching you don't teach what you've read in a book you teach what you know for yourself never attempt to teach anything that's not part of your own life experience then it's not a true teaching and others may even resent it or you may get into trouble because you're trying to convince others that you are right and they are wrong and if it's it you can recognize ego if you want to get in there when nobody has asked you there's not an openness and yet you want to get in there

change somebody's life because you know the answers that is very probably your ego trying to control somebody else's life and telling yourself that this is a good thing so on the other hand anybody who awakens as you begin to live this spiritual realization this awakening the way in which you interact with other people changes and the way in which you interact with other people begins to affect other people even if you do not specifically say anything about anything spiritual so you cannot not teach when you begin to become transformed and you go through the shift in consciousness gradually you begin to teach in a wider sense not in the narrow sense of me teaching you no but it's the presence spreads and sometimes no words at all sometimes it can just be being with a person and listening to them in presence and perhaps you don't say a single word it could be lives sitting with a dying person and just being there as a still presence and you haven't uttered a single word because you didn't need to and yet it was a wonderful your presence was vital for that moment and that person so the teaching can come in many forms not necessarily verbal the teaching can come in a moment of non-reaction when somebody is unconscious around you or attacks you verbally and the teaching will come when there's absolutely no reaction in you and then the person knows what's happening he's not feeding my ego not feeding my pain but you know the person wouldn't even know that but they can so in many so it can take many forms and some of you are already engaged in a more formal teaching i know that some of you are already practitioners of this or that where you meet with people and that the presence flows into whatever you do and others many others will become here will become teachers if not formal in some other way it may just flow into what you do and all your the people you meet in your everyday life who knows or it could be a total shift that life takes you out it puts you somewhere totally different so there is this desire to teach is you have to be watch within yourself to see so to make sure that it's not your ego that wants to change others and get in there when they haven't asked for any help at all and don't want to know but you may also find that as you teach and the teaching again comes when people ask a question you say something has happened to me and perhaps is already happening to you or will happen to you you find yourself saying things that arise spontaneously because you were listening in presence then suddenly you say something that you didn't know yourself beforehand it is helpful for this person in this situation and you go oh i said that where did that where did that come from and that's wonderful you discover your own the source of wisdom within yourself and that happens to certain therapists after several years of therapy at first when you're a therapist you apply your particular modality of therapy and if you do it for long enough after a while you you just begin to just if you if it's really working the modality that you have learned to apply to the therapeutic situation becomes less important and then after a while you're just there as an as a presence then it's then that you become an effective therapist at that moment your therapy becomes empowered and then you find you are suddenly of real help to another person but why because you have gone into the state of not knowing rather than being in the state of i know the answers because my look my degree certificate is on the wall i know the answer you have gone into the state of not knowing and that's where wisdom suddenly arises so there have been therapists some famous ones who worked in that way and then other people came and tried to make a method out of it i believe that was the case with nlp there were certain therapists if i remember correctly that worked very effectively and then some people came in how do they do it how do they move their hands what is their body movement and then they discover things like they mirror the other person's body movements the the client or the patient sits there and then the therapist goes if the client does this the therapist does this or the client sits like that but the therapist did that intuitively he didn't even know he was doing it and i discovered i often do that i did that when i sat with people it just didn't there was no decision around it just happened because you tune into the other person in not in on every level and it just it just happened does it still work if it becomes a technique rather than arising out of an intuition i don't know that's my favorite quote of the dalai lama by the way i don't know he often says that because he's comfortable but not knowing and often after that he says interesting things but first he says i don't know and the mind still says i need to awaken where's the awakening it's looking for the kingdom of heaven as if it could be found as an op like a like you find an object science to be perceived well where's the kingdom of heaven oh there it's coming oh no it's over here where's the awakening the enlightenment the fireworks i've been waiting for the fireworks for 10 years nothing's happening so you find it arises spontaneously in certain either when it's things are helpful conditions around you are helpful could also happen when they seem the opposite of helpful and there's chaos around you or drama people are screaming or whatever or something has gone drastically wrong and suddenly instead of reacting suddenly you find you become very still and alert but all that that is an awake that is part of the awakening so it's not really an event that you can take on so this is the this is what happened to me or it for it very rarely happens some human beings go through a permanent shift but that happens very rarely for most humans it's a gradual transition from constantly being engaged in the stream of thinking and being dragged along by the stream of thinking one thing after another including the thought when am i going to awaken i've been to audit was what's the point in carrying on it's not hasn't happened yet it's all part of the stream of thinking transition from that to at first the occasional arising of something else that heightened alertness or aliveness that replaces thinking in which thinking can still take place but it's no longer compulsive and it's a space with really where thinking is unnecessary you have risen above thinking that is the awakening

[Speaker 6] (8:27:15 - 8:28:17)
i would just like to thank you for this morning's talk my uh mother died friday died on friday i just thought it was so appropriate and the peace of mind that gave me what you said this morning was fantastic that wasn't my question uh the question i had was really related to with all the talks you give the retreats and and advice uh have you ever looked back and thought afterwards that man i wish i wouldn't have said that or boy i goofed up there or this this was a mistake thank you thank you

[Speaker 1] (8:28:27 - 8:33:21)
well only the pope is infallible you know the the teaching if we can even call it the teaching of course is not mainly based on information not primarily based on any kind of conveying of information or facts but on on its most fundamental level the teaching is awareness awareness which is non-conceptual so that can't be wrong uh so on that on the most fundamental level nothing could possibly be wrong because it is it transcends all concepts that's the essence of the teaching the moment you move into concepts the possibility of error of course arises but the first of all the first level of concepts that are used are concepts that point back to that which is beyond concepts and beyond thought so the concepts that i use in the teachings are concepts that are whose purpose is to point back to that which is beyond so and that also there can't be much wrong about that except that it could be that i used a pointer that perhaps uh was not the most appropriate one for a certain person or group of people that could happen if we but you again error doesn't really apply here it just it might not be the best possible point and maybe i wake up in the middle of the night and say oh i could have said that that's maybe possible but usually it doesn't arise next level up occasionally i let information slap in about to illustrate certain things i might talk about something historical or might talk about some fact about something i read in the paper or whatever just as little illustrative stories and of course that's where things occasionally get wrong even in the power of now i wrote for example that 100 million people had been killed in the 20th century alone by other humans and i later realized that was the figure was much too low apparently it's quite a bit higher it could be 140 million nobody knows exactly it's dreadfully high and so i got that wrong and and sometimes in talks i might something may come in a historical fact or something and i later somebody tells me you got that wrong in one talk i talked about depressed antidepressant before taking depressants antidepressants and i wasn't perhaps careful enough to emphasize that you should do this extremely slowly with the help

of a conscious physician and so on and there was one or two physician in the audience who get up got upset and this is all wrong it's all wrong that's usually what happens is that the answer to a question or even the general talk always there's a correspondence between the questioner and the answer or when there's a talk there's a correspondence between the energy field in the room and what comes out and that's not decision based there's no there's nothing in my mind that says oh in this energy field i'll better talk about that because i don't know before the words come out what's going to come out so that doesn't apply and so it can happen though that a person asks a question and an answer comes and i later realized that the answer was not the deepest answer that i could have given but i do know that the answer that comes out reflects the degree of openness in the questioner usually and so if the answer is not that deep then the question wasn't that deep that seems to be often the case occasionally some deep answer comes even when the question is not deep but perhaps there's an intuitive realization then that it is possible to break through the surface layer this question no your question was deep enough thank you

[Speaker 6] (8:33:25 - 8:33:30)
well i do want to say this morning was was perfect you were right thank you thank you

[Speaker 1] (8:33:30 - 8:57:43)
thank you the so there's an ancient saying of course which you may have heard that which is the teacher and the taught together produce the teaching so it's a two-way process it comes out of presence it doesn't really come out of a person it comes through the person who is empty enough spacious enough so that it can come through it's not off the person so on the surface level then yes mistakes are quite possible on the most essential level no i had a i knew a person many years ago uh i only knew her for about a year then she died she was a psychotherapist and she would sometimes come me come to see me i was still doing a private sessions then she would often come to see me once a week or so to ask questions and her questions were so wonderful like the deepest answers came with that person always and i said to her maybe we should record because your questions seem to be so draw out these wonderful answers and she agreed and then a little later she was too ill and she died and just before she in the months before she died she went through this shift where she didn't need to ask any more questions she went through a complete presence shift surrender to what is and her body became virtually transparent and luminous and she was just there and then she didn't need to ask any more questions so it was too late for recording anything just the shift happened and the flowering happened and that was enough thank you thanks this question has a contains a slight misunderstanding of presence but it's a fairly common misunderstanding it can probably be explained very briefly the question is i'm afraid that if i become enlightened i will not be able to relate to others i will not say to my son you can't do this or that i will let him do whatever he wants even if it is wrong how can i be enlightened and have an agenda on the present moment point i just allow everything to be a common misunderstanding of presence when you respond to the present moment you don't have an agenda that's not an agenda as the questioner here says you have an agenda when you have a pre-planned sequence of things that you want to happen or want somebody else to do then you're not in the present moment but responding to whatever it is that the present moment requires that is not an agenda that is a freedom from an agenda so there's an error in the question and of course to be able to tell somebody like a child to stop doing something for a good reason not because you want to exercise control but because whatever the child is doing may be dangerous so you have to respond to the need of the present moment and this is what happens in presence so presence and again there's a misunderstanding here which is allowing everything to be that is misinterpreted by some people as if it meant that you never say no to anything or anybody so you if your child climbs on a on a high wall and to the other side there's a cliff i allow the present moment to be as it is the the allowing to be is an internal thing rather than an

external thing so allowing to be is it often happens you may have observed a child goes into a dangerous situation the parent suddenly panics and they run and grab the child they might even hit the child i've witnessed it and they shout don't you ever go there again you could it could kill you don't you see that this is a curb you shouldn't cross it there's a traffic you could have been killed and they shout at the child you don't ever do that again that is non-acceptance and the acceptance is that a child does these things and you take effective action you don't fight against what is you take effective action there's not an internal resistance which is a totally misinterpreting how a child behaves and the the shock that some parents in their panic or their fear give their children leaves a dreadful trace inside in in the children contributes to the formation of the pain body of emotional suffering because a child is very sensitive when you scream at a child even though your intentions may be good because you wanted to protect the child but you're screaming at the child and of course it's it's like even if you don't physically hurt the child you are hurting the child energetically it's extremely harmful and this is part of non-acceptance of what is so when a child does something dangerous as you're present you take effective action without fighting against the isness of that moment which is what the child does so you pull the child back and you explain this is this is very dangerous and there's no anger the anger always comes when there's a non-acceptance of what's going on it's internal and that puts you in opposition to the with the to the present moment and so you and then anger arises and resentment arises because this shouldn't be happening so the action you take is much more effective in the absence of inner opposition then you can take truly effective action and you're not causing in eastern terms bad karma because when you there's an outflow of negative energy you you are causing suffering to yourself and others and that's karmic and if you shout at a child many times to your child many times during childhood then most likely he or she is going to do the same to their children until somebody finally comes who discovers the power of presence and then breaks the cycle of karmic whatever they inherit karmically so allowing the present moment to be as it is does not necessarily mean that you cannot say no but you say no in a clear non-confrontational way not aggressively you just say no oh there's no negativity behind that very different from the aggressive no that is against what's happening you may have seen the movie with Jim Carrey i think it was called yes man uh he he goes to a he goes to a new age guru and listens to a seminar and this is a the character that he plays is very negative he loves saying no to he's a mortgage consultant or at a bank and his favorite occupation is to say no to people and he's a continuously negative state no no straightforward no you can't have a mortgage no and somebody takes him to the new age guru who teaches that whatever life gives you say yes to it say yes to life to everything to everything and at first he they make the character resists and then he says oh that might be interesting and then the rest of the movie shows you that from then on whatever happens he says yes and he goes with it and gets into the most incredible and absurd situations and of course it's a misinterpretation of of a basic truth of an inner yes to the present moment which does not necessarily mean an outer yes to the present moment so when somebody says okay offers you a okay do you want to i have this great drug i mean they don't call it drug i don't know what the the words are the hit you want the hit or whatever you don't say i'm not in touch with these things but uh you don't say okay i need to accept the present moment say okay i'll i'll have it now in the movie that's what the character would do and he does all kinds of things like that that's a misinterpretation you can clearly when you say when you're present you can say no to something which is non-confrontational no it you do not make the other person wrong by saying no to that you're still there is still benevolence there is still kindness and you can say a very loud no and still emanate kindness or benevolence you say no no no i'm not getting into this car with you because you're drunk i'm not i don't want you to drive me home and i would recommend that you don't drive home either to get out of the car so you say what's needed you i call that in the in the power of now i called it a high quality no no as opposed to a low quality no so and coming back to the movie as if you haven't seen it i'm not taking away the pleasure of seeing it by telling you that at the end in the end he he realizes that it wasn't quite right and i think if i remember correctly he comes to he realizes it doesn't necessarily mean doing everything that somebody asks you to do it's an inner thing rather than an outer thing so that is very common often been asked that question a very common misunderstanding of what allowing this moment to be what that actually means in practice and saying yes to what is it's an inner yes whether it's an outer yes also or whether it's an outer no depends on the situation but if you don't have the inner yes then you have a loss of goodwill a loss of kindness as like in the example of the parents shouting at the child if we say the world is crazy are we judging no it actually is crazy so how is that not a judgment what judgment really means in spiritual terms is to equate something that you see in another a deficiency a characteristic that is regarded as not so good to equate that with who that person is in their essence their identity you if you make if you see unconsciousness in another human being which you can do easily unconscious behavior either in an individual human being uh they get insanely angry they get depressed they misinterpret everything they project their insecurities onto you they project their fears onto somebody else they want to they make enemies everywhere complete and when you it would be absurd to say oh no this person is fine i'm not judging you but you can clearly see that the behavior is totally irrational and insane and creates continuous suffering for themselves and others so you see that whether or not you verbalize it is secondary but you see it and you might say this person it is unconscious which it does not mean you equate their behavior or what they do with who they are if you make an identity out of it then it's a judgment so if i said human beings are crazy that would probably be a judgment but if i see their behavior as crazy and realize that is the egoic mind operating in them they are manifesting behavior that corresponds to the present evolutionary stage of human consciousness it is not who they are it is the way in which they manifest the unconsciousness that is still part of the collective human consciousness that's all so basically the answer is when it's not equated with who they are when it when you are not making an identity for them out of whatever behavior they manifest then it's not a judgment the judgment becomes when you say he is or she is such and such for he's a liar let's say that he's a liar that's the judgment judgment he often lies is not a judgment because the you can see that the lying is something that that is a manifestation of his egoic state of consciousness for him he believes presumably that he can gain some advantage from telling things that are not true enhancing himself or whatever many egos say things that are not true to enhance themselves for example but the moment i make it into an identity he is a liar that's a huge trap i have put myself in not just him i've put myself in because i've made an identity for another human being out of their unconscious behavior once i've done that once i have attached a huge label mental label onto another human being next time i meet this human being i'm not not really meeting them anymore i'm meeting my judgment i'm looking at them through the screen of the label that i have already given them that i've mentioned to others do you know what do you do you know that he's a liar don't you yeah okay here next time he comes you're not meeting a human being you're meeting a liar and by doing that you have yourself reduced yourself you get trapped in your own judgments the way in which you relate to this person is diminished you're not relating freely anymore to that person you yourself become constrained by your judgments because it will then control this the the mental concept will control your behavior towards him also so as that's why i believe it was desert when you judge you you judge yourself or something like that so there we need to be careful when you when we make pronouncements about others when we transform their behavior that we deem unconscious into an identity for them okay now that becomes extreme when somebody's extremely unconscious even then it applies he's a thief now it may be true that he is living is by stealing things but you need to be careful with these things because it could be that this person suddenly realizes perhaps in prison realizes the transcendent dimension in him or her and wakes up and even a murderer could wake up and it has happened and does happen that if they suffer enough as they will a moment comes not necessarily in this lifetime but for some it has come they wake up people who have murdered even more than one person they have they wake up and suddenly the unconditioned consciousness emerges and it emerges because the suffering that afflicted not only on others but on themselves through their actions was so extreme that the ego self-destructed and then something emerges and suddenly they wake up now therefore i would say even to call someone a murderer is a judgment but to say that to recognize that this person may be dangerous even to you that we he may need to be confined to prison because he's a danger to others that's the case but to impose to make an identity nobody nobody is incapable of waking up even seemingly very evil people seemingly very evil people sometimes awaken only through intense suffering in their case but anytime we make an identity for a person out of something that they do that becomes a huge limitation that we impose on them and on ourselves so you see clearly what a person does but it's not what this person essentially is and the same applies to groups of people or humanity as a whole if we say the world is crazy which means of course human beings the human beings are crazy what we are saying is many human beings alive on this planet are still unconscious and manifest behavior that corresponds to their unconsciousness they create suffering for themselves and others and they know not what they do and then when you hear this in the religious book it says forgive them for they know not what they do really forgive them means don't make an identity for them out of what they do they just they but don't deny it either you don't say oh no this this is fine he's just he just kills people it's he's okay right so the deeper meaning of forgiving somebody is to recognize that in essence that's not who they are which does not mean that they do not have to suffer the consequences of their unconsciousness that happens by itself and sometimes this karmic consequences of a person's deep unconsciousness may come through the judicial system and sometimes through other ways not that the judicial system is always just

[Speaker 12] (8:58:04 - 8:58:04)
so

[Speaker 1] (8:58:04 - 9:15:59)
so that has to be the foundation for your life and becoming embracing the isness of this moment how can you run away from it how to how do i strike a healthy balance between simply accepting life as it unfolds and actively working towards and striving towards goals destinations aspirations balance between accepting life as it unfolds and actively working towards and striving towards goals destinations aspirations well accepting life as it unfolds of course is the foundation for conscious and sane living accepting whatever unfolds in the present moment there is nothing else that's the foundation does that mean you cannot have goals you cannot have aspirations wanting to achieve this do this do that it's perfectly compatible with accepting what is arriving in this moment one difference between the unconscious state which denies this moment and wants to make it into a means to an end all the time the difference then is what is the motivation for your doing if you deny this moment can never embrace it honor it appreciate it then the motivation for your action is basically dissatisfaction with what is and the action is looked towards as a possible way of overcoming the discontent and the dissatisfaction that you feel with the present moment and that's a very normal pattern and that's in for many many people that what is what motivates them they don't feel good enough they don't feel there's something they feel there's something fundamental missing in their lives they don't feel recognized they don't feel loved whatever and so they try to find something achieve something that will bring them that which they feel is missing they don't realize that it's that is not going to work you need to start with the foundation for your life which is this moment and go deeply into that and become okay with it friendly with it realize it's the only thing there ever is just this moment nothing ever exists that's not this moment so you might as well become friendly with it and appreciate it and look around and see how actually it's okay this moment is actually okay and if it's not okay that you can still say well that's what is right now something goes wrong that's what is and then things will come in that you want to do you suddenly an

idea comes or you need to do something to make a living and then out of that state of becoming one with the isness of the present moment something rises and wants that wants to take form in the world that perhaps you want to create and then you create it out of the joy of doing instead of out of a feeling of lack that you need something to make you complete or happy so the motivation changes from neediness and discontent to joyful doing it's not stressed anymore when stress is a sign that you've lost the present moment the next moment has become more important than life itself the next moment was being only a thought so the future is a thought in your head nothing else let me know if you if i'm wrong if you ever meet the future let me know so you have to in your own experience you have to see whether i'm right whether whether the future can actually be which seems so important doesn't it more important than this moment surely isn't it well if it's so important then where is it does it ever come as i said i'm let me know if you find it you won't of course there's only this moment so that has to be the foundation for your life and becoming embracing the isness of this moment how can you run away from it there's nowhere to go except in your mind and the mind does it all the time it always goes somewhere else so you can still do because you enjoy doing and you you see how it contributes to the awakening in one way or another if you if you live if you practice present moment living you cannot not contribute whatever you do you cannot not contribute to the awakening you can have the simplest job you can have a job at a toll booth at the bridge and the cars come up and you say five dollars please and even there you interact with hundreds of people every day for a few seconds even there if you are completely present something will flow as you take their money and say have a nice day something will flow out of you to the other person and you contribute to the awakening no matter what you do your present state of consciousness spreads affects others so discontent discontent as the motivation for doing is replaced by the enjoyment of doing what you do because what is the point if you are not enjoying what you do what is the point now sometimes you may say oh i can't possibly enjoy this but you may be surprised how many things you can enjoy doing and if definitely if you find that absolutely you cannot enjoy something whatever your job is then of course you need to walk out and don't stay with unhappiness live with unhappiness and do something that you cannot tolerate and be and surrender to and do with if not with joy at least in a state of acceptance the world is full of people who are doing what they don't really want to be doing not only their jobs but also at least any action they do at the moment if you really look closely into them they're going about their daily business and a lot of the time what they're doing there's something inside them just doesn't really want they don't want to be where they are but they are there but and they're doing this but they really don't want to be doing what they're doing so there's a reluctance often in people there's a resistance to what they're doing to where they are where they have to go it's so common people many people have lived with it their whole lives and they don't even know it anymore because when you have lived with it's an inner state for so long you don't even know it it's like the the humming of the refrigerator it goes on for a long time you don't even hear it anymore but when it stops but suddenly then you say wow was this noise there all the time didn't even know it anymore so their inner states that people live with of discontent and resistance but they've become so familiar they don't even know it anymore is presence possible for me if i have problems with my attention i'm burnt out and depressed and it is very difficult for me to be present with people and situations and this is the same person as far as i can see who somewhere else asked me something like i've been following your teachings for 10 years and no change has happened in my life the same person you say i am burnt out and depressed and it's very difficult for me to be present with people and situations one thing that you can that is not a help but a hindrance is the thought i am burnt out do you need that thought is that actually true it may be true that your energy level is low yes yes even the thought i'm depressed again these are concepts that arise in your mind you identify with them and you already you believe there's nothing i can do not if you're if i'm burnt out how can i be present but that's just it's an idea in your head you start with the reality of this moment which is not an idea about it but to simply face what is without the carrying some identity in your head that you are a burnt out and depressed person that's a conceptual identity it becomes can become a conceptual identity so let's you start with what is not a story about what is or a story about who you are because the story may be so negative that it that you believe in it and it becomes a closed door your entire sense of identity becomes a closed door so you begin with what is you can say you can't be present with people and situations is that true or is that just a thought because you have to find out for yourself you go into a new situation a place somewhere can you be present can you look around go to a cafe have a cup of tea or coffee sit let go of the i'm burnt out i can't be present just be and look perceive you can do that you don't need the highest energy level for that perceive look feel the energy field of the your inner body anybody can do that you can feel some life in your hands starts with a tingling sensation perhaps or warmth and in your feet and your legs and your arms and then you feel that not a big deal and then you look around and you your senses are awake you look you listen noises people you breathe in the air perhaps you taste the tea or the coffee and you're entering the present moment no big deal just entering the present moment and then you become aware of the fact that you are here that you are a conscious presence that perceives the world around you well that's that's a good start and it's not a challenging situation but that's how you start when you're not being challenged and so the next time you talk to someone can feel the inner body you've been following this teaching for 10 years and your mind keeps telling you that because you're burnt out and depressed you can't do it that's an illusion it's it's very simple don't believe in any idea in your head that what your mind is saying about who you are and then it becomes very simple then listen to your friend speaking to you feel the inner body as you listen if you can only feel the inner body feel that a little bit of aliveness in here throughout the body that means it's beginning to work for you and perhaps it's started to work already but your mind continuously denied it otherwise why would you carry on for 10 years so it's quite possible that it's there's already a beginning of an awakening but because you're listening to your mind it's denying it so I just wanted to point you in the the right direction here I'm sure I will hear from you again and you let me know how it goes this mind-made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive to be free you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation

[Speaker 10] (9:16:32 - 9:17:11)
I take care of patients from surgery chemotherapy hospice end of life and there's that that same pressure on all aspects not to spend the time and take care of them maybe the way that we would like to if we could so I'm doing this to help take care of me which is great but my question is related to all the other physicians that I work with who are suffering and I can see it in them and it's the more that I learn your teachings the more I see the suffering in them and I don't

[Speaker 1] (9:17:11 - 9:17:49)
know what to do to help them I think I saw your question I had selected it to answer it if it was written question that might have been yours that was good so I'm glad you were chosen have you had made any attempt to somehow convey this to your colleagues maybe unsuccessful attempts

[Speaker 10] (9:17:50 - 9:18:18)
so far to some degree just over the last couple years there's been real research showing you know burnout and that's a definable thing and so we can use the term burnout which doesn't seem to offend people to talk about it and then I can we I've introduced some mindfulness strategies because that's another term that doesn't seem to offend people I was just going to say that mindfulness

[Speaker 1] (9:18:19 - 9:19:45)
has become almost acceptable so you can if you use that word that might be more acceptable than presence it's the same thing of course but I don't use mindfulness

because it implies that your mind is full but that's okay so what about creating a support group for people who work in similar capacities both people that you know personally and perhaps other people because nowadays here the strange thing is the wonderful thing about the technology that we have nowadays not only it amplifies human madness because any person can put out any thought and immediately no matter how crazy it is there will be a few thousand people in the world who will respond to it and agree with you and participate in the craziness but on the other hand there's also you can reach so many people through the media those things internet and so on but you would start on a small scale what about a mindfulness group for physicians you could call it that you can become the leader of that because

[Speaker 12] (9:19:53 - 9:19:53)
okay

[Speaker 1] (9:20:00 - 9:25:39)
sometimes life asks you to do something it may ask you to do something before you may think you're ready for it but life knows better and the strange thing is you as a person would never really feel ready for this because it's it's hard to do but if you can become still and get out of the way because becoming still means getting out of the way if you can become still you'll be amazed and i'm not only talking to you but many others you'll be amazed how empowered suddenly the words that you speak become or the energy that flows through you and how inspired you become and what it might lead to because things need to change if we the the system not only in medicine but in many other areas is bribed for either collapse or complete change it cannot go on the way it's going because it can only become more disintegrating and the no matter where you look it's a question of it'll either collapse or change and if it collapses that's fine too now i'm talking about social systems and so on in general eventually something more conscious will arise or something more conscious may arise and transform the old before it collapses completely so what is it that you could the ideas will come to you you can just offer to them for example have an a meditation show show them what mindfulness is see if they like it and then go on from there and then transmit it go on the internet contact others uh it may suddenly spread there are people in mainstream who are doing this i got invited by a scientist to stanford university a couple of years ago i gave a talk there and you would have thought they would not be interested in what i have to say but that i was wrong they were very interested now not everybody came but many people did come and this is a scientist who actually he is a i believe he's a neurosurgeon and he teaches at stanford he is extremely interested in mindfulness and spreading the message he's connected also to buddhism and buddhist teachings so maybe he can also you can talk to him and see what feedback you get from him it's good if you can i don't know if you've met other physicians here if you can build up a support network of people who can then support others um there are infinite possibilities but you anybody who is here would have to consider themselves as a leader in this because you may not yet be fully present all the time um and fully enlightened continue on a daily basis but you know much more than most i mean and i don't don't mean conceptual knowledge there's a knowing in you of that dimension of consciousness that is still new still many and i believe that the world desperately needs you and you start in your world you can reach the most appropriate place for you to reach others is within your sphere of influence and that is your work so what exactly what form that will take only you can know it will be helpful to connect with others get feedback talk about it what can we do and then the person at stanford i believe is professor james doti doti unfortunately i don't know how to spell it d-o-t-y something that i can let you know um so see yourself as a spearheading this movement of awakening because they need you so not only your patients need you your colleagues need you and then the work that you do which is wonderful will be enhanced immeasurably by bringing a different state of consciousness to it and once that happens then the entire system may begin to undergo a change change always begins within how do you feel about this

[Speaker 10] (9:25:44 - 9:26:09)
i'm a i'm a little speechless but it's a crisis and and i think that uh it really is a crisis and so if i know you're speaking not just to me but to others that are here and and and i think that we need to do this in all aspects of of medicine so if i can help

[Speaker 1] (9:26:17 - 9:27:10)
so thank you for giving me the the push thank you i know that dr patel and his wife is here he's been coming for many years and have you met him he i believe he has a in his cancer clinic in field he introduces also counseling and mindfulness maybe you can connect with him thank you this mind-made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive to be free you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation

[Speaker 5] (9:27:49 - 9:35:28)
namaste so i can feel the energy kind of rise a bit in the room so let's release some of that energy some of you know what's coming okay we won't stand because there's not much space except for the front row so you can kick off your shoes if you like leave them on it doesn't matter if your feet don't reach the ground sit forward a little bit some of you may wonder why what is she going to do if you've never experienced this so energy gets trapped in the body the belief in any forms thought forms emotions events that happen in our day-to-day life so we're just going to release that a bit it's like releasing the past so we become that empty vessel for consciousness so let's just start by just wiggling a little bit maybe wiggling our sit bones in our seat so the whole body is relaxed and then allow the head to wiggle and the jaw to drop and maybe the shoulders to wiggle and your hands to wiggle your fingers wiggling and just wiggle wiggle wiggle no thought just wiggling and sigh if you'd like ah just release that energy ah and you can do this at home too for those who are watching through that wormhole and now we begin to just stomp our feet a little bit you can raise your arms up if you'd like and just stomp and let's release vocally feel different yes yeah and then we can just settle right into our bodies into the stillness that goes beyond the conceptual mind i can feel the stillness returning and from this place of stillness let's just do a meditation a short meditation or who knows maybe it'll be long okay sitting comfortably in your chair body is relaxed eyes are closed if you wish imagine the crown of your head being lifted towards the ceiling your sit bones rooted on your chair your feet planted on the floor your hands could be facing face down on your lap or face up or your hands clasp together whatever feels natural and comfortable for you in this moment let's just let go of the concepts let go of names labels ideas just become aware of your breathing oh and become aware of your body is there any tension tightness or pain just let go of those labels and just simply feel because all they are is sensations experienced in the body okay relaxing your body from head to toe if thoughts arise just notice just let it go return your attention to your breath to your body let's bring your attention to the inner body that feeling of aliveness within if you don't know what that feels like just simply raise your hands off your lap just hold them up in the air palms facing up and then you can ask yourself how do i know i even have hands and simply feel

[Speaker 1] (9:35:29 - 9:50:00)
just a quick reminder of very easy access to the present moment dimension easy access is sensory perception alert sensory perception in breathing inner body awareness inner body i sometimes call it a portal into a presence and of course breathing and inner body awareness are closely related almost they merge into one as you may know i often recommend to start with the hands when for people who have never experienced inner body awareness and you can do that with people that you know who are not especially not open to any anything else that's so-called to do with so-called consciousness spiritual whatever can you feel your hands oh that's not too spiritual nobody should be object to that and say i'm not into that

spiritual stuff well your hands just your hands and that works with people who otherwise have no idea what it is that you're talking about you ask them to close their eyes are they are your hands still there yes how do you know you're not touching anything well i can feel feel them it might take a while before they can because they may be so much stuck in their heads that they can't get their attention down there and then at some point you might say children can probably do it fairly quickly can feel them oh well if you can feel your hands and you perhaps you can feel your feet too yeah okay well then and then gradually the rest of the body that's one entry point another one is you start with breathing as you know i don't give many techniques this is the closest we are getting to a tech technique you start with breathing conscious breathing now you may know that that's just a part that i sometimes recommend in daily in your daily life to occasionally take a conscious breath so that you break the incessant stream of thinking if only for five seconds and two conscious breaths even better but that's not where i'm going right now this is now entering the inner inner body awareness starting with the breast rather than starting with your with your hands and you you breathe consciously don't without overdoing it it'll be a little deeper than your normal breath and the the quickest way most is to do abdominal breathing so as you breathe in you feel that the air is going all the way into your abdomen of it isn't really but because i don't think when you breathe in the air will actually go into the abdomen but what goes into the abdomen is your conscious attention because your conscious attention is following the breath and as it goes when it is in the abdomen it rises slightly because now the abdomen is full of air not really but that's what it feels like uh hopefully it's not full of air it feels like that but it's actually an energy suddenly is there that you didn't notice before because your attention is moved there so you you ride so to speak your attention rides on your breath as you breathe in and then as when it's in the abdomen it's good to when you feel it's full then you hold it just for a few seconds it could be three seconds it could be up to five before you start breathing out again when you reach the end of the out breath a short cessation before you start breathing in again that's also a very calm point the end of the out breath is basically you've died so the it's a miniature miniature death because every out breath is a is a miniature death and then the start of the in breath you're born again and you grow up reach maturity belly is full and then you start declining again so the end of the out breath is also just a short pause just to notice the end of the out breath there's a still point when the in breath hasn't started yet and then again you breathe in hold it and out now the next thing is while you hold it in the abdomen the you can feel the energy spreading from there into other parts of the body there's an energetic point i believe in japanese and sometimes used in zen is called hara which must be where the word hara kiri comes from but we're not going there hara is the belly and so as if you feel that then from there it's easy to feel the energy spreading into your legs and into the rest of your body so this is the energetic point and so a few times abdominal a few abdominal breaths and you are in the body and out of your mind in a good sense you're out of your mind thank you i am i take it as a compliment in particular when you're being plagued by thoughts that are futile perhaps even destructive negative unhappiness inducing and you realize that these thoughts are futile destructive and unhappiness inducing so you they are they fulfill no purpose whatsoever which applies to most thoughts that occur to you when you're lying in bed between midnight and six or seven in the morning and you wake up and she's there one can say almost any thought that happens to then is futile unless you have a wonderful incredible insight suddenly which happens on rare occasions too particularly if you go into the body first but mostly people are plagued by thoughts in their mind first of all you need to know then that's already you need that minimum of awareness to know that you don't want those thoughts if you don't know that you don't want those thoughts that means you're so identified with the thoughts that you aren't even there so spiritually speaking you are asleep or unconscious as we call it so when you are so completely identified that you your thoughts become your reality and there's nothing else your thoughts become your reality then you are not there your thoughts occupy the place where you should be

and this is like a state of being possessed by mental formations like little gremlins they live in you so you need a minimum of awareness to know that these thoughts are useless and that you don't want them but you can't push against them because by pushing against them or try to suppress them you actually would strengthen them and you might even create another set of thoughts their mind creates another set of thoughts that fights the set of thoughts that you don't want and all that doesn't work very well also to eliminate thought through willpower is also not a good idea because it doesn't work except work for a short period of time they're holding your breath let's say you have a strong yang energy in your body you're i'm going to make it and i'm going to stop thinking now it's happening it's happening i'm not thinking but at some point you have to let go again and that's like you take the lid off the pressure cooker and then and then you think even more than before and then you have to do it again and it will damage your body if you do it too often so that doesn't work so instead of fighting the thoughts just take your attention away from the thoughts but then you initially you need to put your attention somewhere else and that is the inner body so you don't fight the thoughts you recognize them as not useful that you don't want them then you simply remove attention you don't feed them with your attention with your consciousness so you break that you break this this cycle of compulsive not only compulsive but actually addictive thinking one of the greatest addictions for most humans probably on the planet is the addiction to overthinking excessive thinking unhappiness inducing thinking and you won't believe or maybe you do how many millions make their lives miserable by unnecessary addictive and destructive deeply negative thinking millions it's an enormous amount of unconsciousness is generated not only people do it to themselves it's also when you're deeply identified with obsessive and negative thinking it also of course influences the way in which you act so if habitually your uh the thoughts that go through your head are destructive and you have enemies up there that you're fighting not realizing that your greatest enemy lives between your two ears so you have enemies that you're fighting and then you get actual enemies in life so if you externalize this and this becomes the world that you create and this this becomes the way through the screen of thinking you experience so-called reality that becomes your reality and it's not a pleasant reality and if let's now imagine millions of people who are living in such an unconscious state then they create their collective reality a lot of that is on the world news every night and on the internet so once you know you don't want them then you have a choice this is where freedom comes in one could say you have a choice now without awareness you have no choice you are an automatic you are you're run on auto you are pre-programmed and what is running through your mind is the programming which is the conditioning of your mind since childhood created by your[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 25:10)
environment, your personal environment and your cultural environment. So just a just a program, then you are a walking program and you have no choice because you're so identified with the program you are asleep. So as you become aware choice, the element of choice comes in.

And this is an interesting topic of free will of sometimes people ask philosophical questions. Is there such a thing as free will? Well, yes and no.

We can see that when you are totally conditioned, your mind is totally programmed and conditioned, there's no free will, then it seems that there is free will because you can make choices. But you don't exist as an independent autonomous entity, you just seem to, you're connected to the totality of consciousness. So when it seems to you that you are making choices, for the first time you're making intelligent choices when the awareness comes in.

It's good to believe that you are making the choice. But if you look more deeply, the consciousness moves through you and is making the choice and you realize that you are an inseparable part of it. So we, even though we, it seems to be free will, especially compared to what was before.

But even that, free will would only make sense if you are a totally autonomous entity, totally separate from the rest of the world and other people and the universal consciousness. But that's not the case. So you're connected to the totality and so the universal consciousness really, when you begin to awaken, then there's an intelligence that is greater than the accumulated knowledge of the mind, which is borrowed.

It also uses universal intelligence, but it becomes trapped and limited. It forms an illusory entity. So free choice, you do feel that for the first time you have free choice.

In ultimate terms, you don't, but that doesn't mean you don't have to worry about that. So you have free choice for the first time and you can choose to, you can become responsible for your state of consciousness. And then, of course, you forget again.

And something happens, you lose yourself again in the conditioning of the mind. And then you notice again, the waking up is part of the awakening process that you are going through, is that it's a process because it's, you're not continuously at the same level of presence. Sometimes you're very present, perhaps here, hopefully, I believe you are, can feel the energy, the collective energy field here is an energy field of presence.

You may not be this present when you leave here and you arrive at the airport or whatever you do, or you arrive home and you're faced with your daily life again, all kinds of demands come up again. And you lose yourself in all the things that you have to do. And really, it means you lose yourself in your mind.

And then suddenly you notice this has been happening. And then you wake up again, and you take a conscious breath. And you don't believe your mind when it says, I don't have time for a conscious breath, there's too much to go do here.

Now, a conscious breath is five or six seconds. So it must be a lie if you say, unless you're in absolute emergency, everybody has time for one conscious breath. And almost everybody has time for two conscious breaths, even the busiest person.

And so a conscious breath is just, if it's abdominal, then immediately it puts you in touch with the energy field of the inner body. And it's a short cessation as you breathe out. Hold it for a few seconds.

And it's so lovely that you might even want to take a third conscious breath. You feel alive. The body is alive, but it's not just what you feel, it's not just the physical body.

It's an energy field behind the physical body. And for a moment, you have transcended the person, the personality, the ego, whatever you want to call it. For a moment, something has opened up within you.

And then, okay, what's the next thing they have to do? So this is being and doing. But some of this, for a little while, remains with you.

Some of the attention, even if you start doing again, especially if you do this several, frequently during the day, two or three conscious breaths. As you see, I started with one, now I'm saying two or three. Two or three conscious breaths, many times during the day, makes an enormous difference to your life.

And gradually you learn not to completely lose yourself in the activities, whatever you do in your doing, so that you can be... There is still a point of awareness, a point of stillness, a point of rest, a point of power within you that is not disturbed by anything that happens out there. And so you can still do things.

And then you do them, by the way, you do them more intelligently, then because this connects you to universal intelligence. It's also the seed of the source of creativity. When you use your mind to solve a problem, and you think about it, the possibilities, this, that, you might talk about it to somebody, or you do it by yourself, and you think, and then you can't find a solution, then it's the time to take two, three, four...

Oh, I've gone up to four now. Four conscious breaths. So it's stillness.

You become still, and you feel this power that lives in you. And when you then start thinking again, very often you come up with a new insight, or a solution to the problem. And if not immediately, you do it a few times, and then at the moment that you would least suspect, suddenly you have an insight of this is the solution, or this is what I have to do.

That frequently happens. And another thing that happens, this is a little mysterious, or some people might call it weird, but when you are connected with this, the point of power that is the entry point is the inner body, it does often bring about so-called chance events, or encounters, or synchronistic events that happen that seem to be just the right thing for the right moment. Just helpful events happen more frequently.

Just meeting the right person, a chance encounter, nobody can predict in what way. And when you find this actually does happen, that's an amazing thing, that life becomes more helpful, cooperative than it was before. But I'm not implying that life will be free of challenges.

No, challenges continue to come, and you need them, because now, as you're undergoing the awakening process, every challenge is a great help, because a challenge forces you to be more present. And you will then begin to recognize the challenges as opportunities for being more present. Then you turn up the light, the inner light.

Chhh. Chhh. And then suddenly there's an earthquake, and everything is collapsing around you, and then you go, chhh.

Or it could be your own, your death instead of an earthquake, that's a kind of earthquake too. The awareness of death is a wonderful thing, and we've talked about it before. Die before you die.

So whenever you take identification away from the egoic mind, it is a kind of death. But it's quite a nice death. If you resist it, it becomes painful.

And this is when life is forcing you to experience the ego death, that can be quite painful. But that's ultimately good too. The universe wants to create.

It wants expansion. But why is it that so often it seems to put obstacles in the path of expansion? Things go wrong.

Difficult situations, difficult people, loss, confusion. Why do some people experience life as one damn thing after another? Why does life leave me alone?

Why does expansion seem to be blocked so often, if the universe wants expansion, which it does? The universe not only wants to expand externally, it also expands internally. So every obstacle potentially is a deepening within, so it goes in two directions.

So if somebody's, let's say a child grows up with a handicap or very difficult life situation, it doesn't have to be a child or any human being encounters a huge obstacle. Either they overcome the obstacle on the external level, or they transcend that obstacle on an inner level. So this is a universal thing.

I just have to give one example. Let's say a child is weak, gets bullied at school, very unhappy because of that. Then the child could generate so much energy that he or she would take up martial arts, go to a teacher, just as it's shown in those movies.

And then eventually, he or she can defeat the bully, generate energy that would not have been generated if the bully had not been there. So it becomes stronger on that. That's expansion in a way.

Or the child is just too weak. It doesn't generate expansion on that level. It can never defeat the bully, but the energy goes within, develops other abilities, perhaps the ability to be creative, to think, to create.

And 20 years later, the child that was the bully works in some menial job, and the child that was bullied is a great creator. That's expansion too, or becomes a spiritual teacher. So the universe wants to expand, but it also wants you to experience obstacles to expansion, which are part of the expansion.

It goes in two directions. So welcome all the obstacles in your life, the obstacles to whatever. And collectively, if you listen to the news, continuously things go wrong, dreadfully, on the planet.

It happens to be the case that the news focuses on all the things that go wrong. It doesn't focus on the things that don't go wrong. So, of course, a distorted version of what life is like, but undoubtedly things do go wrong.

Humanity is being challenged through, sometimes through factors that seem to have nothing to do with, it just, things just come at you. And other factors created by humanity's unconscious mind, dysfunctional, egoic thinking. And so it's only through experiencing the effects of that unconsciousness collectively.

If you look at humanity as a whole for a moment, as one single expression of consciousness divided into billions of little entities, one new array of consciousness divided into billions of smaller arrays of consciousness, one of them is you. So humanity is evolving. One consciousness expressing itself as the human being is undergoing a process of evolution.

It's like birthing and gradually becoming more conscious. Seems to take a long time, but every human being reaches a point where the consciousness accelerates. And that's when you become, you consciously embark on the spiritual path as you are doing.

That means you no longer, your primary teacher is no longer suffering. It may still come in, but it's no longer your primary teacher. You grow, you awaken voluntarily without being pushed into it through suffering.

But you have been, otherwise you wouldn't be. You've had your suffering. It may be a bit more, but not like before.

And for many of you, suffering is coming to an end. It doesn't mean that you don't face problems anymore, but you don't transform them into suffering. The I am practice, I am, there's no doubt about that.

Everything else could be an illusion. And one way of looking at it is to say, well, it is a kind of illusion because nothing lasts for long. Everything here is impermanent.

Be aware in your daily life of the gap between two thoughts so that your mind doesn't drag you along in an incessant stream of involuntary and compulsive thinking. Invite these gaps into your life. So look, by looking at something without interpreting it, by listening to something without interpreting, by taking conscious breaths occasionally, observe the air flowing into the body, out of the body.

No thought. You become aware of the underlying presence. And only then do you become a true human being.

So humans are still undergoing an evolutionary process. They're not finished. They're not even fully human yet, most of them.

You're fully human when you are both, when you are conscious, not only of your humanness, but also of your beingness. And when the two come together, you are a human being. Before, you're only a human, unaware of being, only a personality.

A human being lives in two worlds, the manifested and the unmanifested. And that would mean you would, when humans, more and more humans begin to live like that, of course the world would look very different, the world that we create. Be not only human, but be the being so you become a true human being.

[Speaker 12] (26:22 - 27:52)
For the past several years, I've been making a concerted effort to live a especially sort of conscious, present spiritual path, and doing yoga and meditation and retreats and that sort of thing. And now when I hear people talk about spiritual stuff, I kind of cringe. It's like, I feel like there's this spiritual thing that's like separate from this, this special dimension.

At first, it was really great because I was meditating 10 hours in a weekend, and I could tell everybody how cool it was and how special and unique I felt practicing this special spiritual life. And now I listen to what you say and other people say, and I just want to hear about how I'm no one. And I mean that sincerely in being in this, but just not having to.

Even though I am conscious, all these words that just seem to get in the way a lot of the time, I mean, they're concepts and everything. But I feel the sweetness of just really not having to be this special, unique, spiritual person on top of being a regular person. It's like this double-decker sandwich that I got to carry around, and it's getting stale, and I don't know.

I don't know if there's a question in there, but maybe you could speak to that. Thank you. Yes.

Okay. Thanks.

[Speaker 1] (27:54 - 28:52)
Well, you overdid it a little bit with your spiritual practice. And hence the reaction now, because you have to get back to some normality after all that specialness over, of course, your spiritual practice where you thought of yourself as special and your practice as special. You went quite far to an extreme, and you're now experiencing the reaction to that extreme, and that's good.

In other words, you don't want to hear about anything spiritual anymore. I've had it, right? So you overdid it.

Now there's a reaction. Don't mention to me anything spiritual anymore, you say. But of course, you know the famous expression, what is it?

The baby in the bathwater. Don't throw out your baby with the bathwater. It's all spiritual, so to speak.

[Speaker 12] (28:52 - 28:53)
It's all spiritual.

[Speaker 1] (28:53 - 32:39)
It's so separate. So first you went to that extreme. Now you go to an extreme of reaction, and eventually you end up in the middle where every moment is spiritual as it is.

There's nothing special. Spirit is not separate from daily existence. So when we say spiritual, we're not referring to some realm out there that is to be achieved at some point where you become more special than you are now.

It's not going to happen. It's here and now. We're going deeper into the here and now.

That's spiritual. Now you are a little bit tired of these words because you went too far, that extreme. So you have to realize if you're a little bit perhaps like a Christian who was once very religious and suddenly got fed up, and then occasionally I have people in talks who are ex-Christians, and the moment occasionally I say, Jesus said, they go, oh, don't talk to me about anything that's remotely Christian.

I don't want to hear that. I've had all that. So they don't realize because of course they had a somewhat distorted view of what the whole thing was about, so they didn't, but they can't stand the terms anymore.

And that's fine. It's a phase. You will come through that.

Maybe it's happening already. It's the ordinariness. Spiritual means the more spiritual you are, the more ordinary you are, the more non-special you are.

And again, for the ego, that means, okay, I have to become more non-special. How do I become ordinary? Okay, I need somebody to teach me to be ordinary.

So I understand your dilemma, and perhaps you understand it also. And so this, nothing special, chopping wood, carrying water, as Zen defines spirituality, ultimately, what is the spiritual life? Chopping wood, carrying water, which is the kind of thing you do in Zen monasteries, daily doing.

In my case, it's buying some food in the store, going to have a cup of coffee, taking the dog for a walk in the forest, listening to the BBC World News, having a glass of wine occasionally with a meal, watching a movie, nothing extraordinary, and so quite an ordinary existence. And so it's hiding in there, the spirituality is in there, it's not away from there, just this. And so I'm sorry about these words that we use, but language is limited, so we have to use certain words.

And perhaps the emotion around these words then eventually is going to go and become neutral again, and you can use them for what they are, which is simply useful pointers no more. Thank you.

[Speaker 4] (33:10 - 33:38)
We talked about it off the top, right? Are you one of those people who worries

about everything, what happened yesterday, what's happening tomorrow, and your mind just keeps going and going and going and going, and there's always somebody in your life that says, you've got to live in the moment. You've got to live in the moment.

If you worry so much about yesterday and today, you're missing the now. Well, chances are, your friend who told you that read our next guest's book, because he can help teach you live in the moment. Millions of people have read his work.

Oprah loves him. Spiritual writer, teacher, Eckhart Tolle will be right here. Here's his bio.

[Speaker 1] (33:51 - 33:56)
Who you are and stillness are one and the same.

[Speaker 4] (33:56 - 34:59)
Now, if you're into this guy, you consider Eckhart Tolle one of the world's most influential spiritual leaders. People say he's a master of inner calm and peace. Was he born that way?

Is he some kind of a Buddha? Well, no. Here's how it happened.

Eckhart was born in Germany, spent his teenage years in Spain, then headed to Britain for university and grad work. Now, up until that time, Eckhart said he was depressed, he was anxious, he was often suicidal. But at the tender age of 29, his life suddenly changed.

He says he woke up one day feeling an overwhelming sense of joy and peace, and it took him years to figure out what had happened. It took him even longer to teach others how to get to the same place. So, in a nutshell, here's what Eckhart says.

You are not your mind. In fact, he says your mind is your worst enemy, that it overtakes the real you and creates thoughts that make you miserable. So, if you want to achieve peace, well, then you've got to disassociate yourself from your mind.

Eckhart's key? Live in the present. Because, according to him, dwelling in the past only leads to guilt and regret.

Thinking about the future brings anxiety and worry.

[Speaker 1] (35:00 - 35:01)
You may have noticed that already.

[Speaker 4] (35:02 - 36:01)
And it's all summed up in Eckhart's enormously successful book called The Power of Now. He wrote it in Vancouver, where he currently resides. That thing came out over 10 years ago and sold more than 5 million copies.

Yeah, you know, thanks in large part to this person. She's also a big fan of Eckhart's follow-up book, A New Earth. It was one of her book club picks.

This is the most exciting thing I've ever done. And last year, she made it the basis for 10 weeks of seminars with Eckhart on Oprah.com. Thank you.

Everybody, say hello to Eckhart Tolle. You know, when you first published that book, Paranay, with a small independent publisher, 3,000 copies, I can imagine you would have no idea that this was going to happen to you.

[Speaker 1] (36:02 - 36:58)

No, I thought the book would only appeal to people who were already deeply into spirituality or had been meditating for many years. And after about three or four months after it got published, I realized that many people were phoning and writing in to tell me they'd bought more than one copy for friends or relatives. And then I began to realize that it was a kind of snowball effect and it would be growing and growing.

That was a surprise. Another surprise was that for quite a few people, that was the first spiritual book they had ever read. And it made sense to them.

And so I hadn't realized the degree of readiness in people for this message. And that was the surprise. And then more surprises came later.

The book became what one reviewer called an underground bestseller for a while.

[Speaker 4] (36:58 - 37:02)
Usually in music, underground means people like it, but no one buys it.

[Speaker 1] (37:02 - 37:53)
Well, here underground means people buy it, but there's no publicity, there's no advertising, nothing on television about it. And so word of mouth. So it grew for about a year and a half.

It grew through word of mouth. Gradually it got to some cities. There was a time, at that time I would take a few copies of the book to little spiritual bookstores in Vancouver every couple of weeks.

And then they would phone me again and say, we need another five copies. I would carry five copies. You did it yourself?

Yes. That's fantastic. That was enormously satisfying to have this personal contact with the book.

And at that time also, there were not that many readers. People could phone in and say, oh, I'd like to meet you. And I said, okay, what time do you want to meet?

And then as it grew, after a while I couldn't do that anymore. Yeah.

[Speaker 4] (37:54 - 38:04)
Rule number one, man, if someone wants to meet you on Facebook, don't. That's the trick. Do you have horror stories?

Horror stories. Where you met somebody and you went, oh, I got to get out of here.

[Speaker 1] (38:06 - 38:35)
No, nothing that comes to mind, but the book does seem to, not only The Power of Now, also the later book, A New Earth, for some reason it does seem to upset some people. I remember my office getting, they told me, they don't show it to me, but they told me they got the open one package and somebody had shredded the entire New Earth book and sent it in the shredded version back to my office. So something must have triggered something in here.

[Speaker 4] (38:40 - 38:46)
If you go back a few decades, you're 29 years old, A Fateful Night, is that what started this whole thing?

[Speaker 1] (38:46 - 41:25)
Yes, a night when I'd had many unhappy nights, but that night I was just so deeply depressed again and I'd spent the previous weeks in anxiety and the, what happened,

a thought came into my head which said, I can't live with myself any longer. And at that moment a separation happened between myself and that thought and I looked at the thought and said, I can't live with myself, what does that mean? There must be two of me, there's an I and there must be some unhappy self that I cannot live with.

And through that, although I only understood the full implications years later, a separation happened between the unhappy self, which I later realized is a mental construct consisting of repetitive unhappy thoughts about me and my life, an unhappy story. I was continuously retelling myself the unhappy story of me and I was so identified with the unhappy story of me that there was no gap between that and me and that was the self that I couldn't live with. And when I realized that there is a self I can live with, something separated and I became the consciousness behind the unhappy self and I could see that the whole structure of the unhappy self was a kind of fiction, a narrative that I was kept repeating in my mind.

So the separation happened and I realized that in essence I am not my story, whether happy or unhappy, I'm the consciousness behind the story. The consciousness or the space, whatever you want to call it, there's not really a name for it. And I suddenly realized myself as that and with that I was in a state of peace.

From then onwards I never again identified with this unhappy mental construct, the me with its story. And that's what I call now the shift in consciousness that happened, or you could also call it an awakening. And then later it became the teaching because I tried to explain, after a few years later people started coming to me, just casually asking questions.

And gradually a spiritual teaching developed, but it's all based on that disidentification from this continuous stream of thinking that you take to be yourself, but it's no more than a stream of thinking. It's not who you are in essence. Well one other thing we know, but however it is we are or we act, ultimately we are all affected by where we come from.

[Speaker 4] (41:25 - 41:37)
That sort of sets the table for who we're going to be in the next phase of our life. And I wondered for you to get to that point, what were your folks like? I never hear about what your childhood was like that would have set these sort of dominoes up for them to come falling down that one night.

[Speaker 1] (41:37 - 42:06)
Well the childhood was already unhappy. There was always almost continuous conflict in my parents' marriage. And I was the only child that makes it even more difficult, because if you have siblings then you can kind of relate to them.

And so I suffered a lot, I think the beginnings of the deep unhappiness and depression are probably there. But again I'm glad now that it did happen, because otherwise the shift wouldn't have happened.

[Speaker 4] (42:06 - 42:40)
You know the idea of being in the now, it's something that my friends, they've sort of stopped asking me to be in the now because they recognize it's not a reality for me, because so much is like, I'm sort of in the now, but I'm going here trying this. The one thing we know is that our society is constructed in a way where we have a history and we have things to look forward to. How do you almost approach the unlearning of a people to change the way that this structure, that this society is built?

This society is built on here's my past, learn from my past, if I don't learn from my past I'm doomed to repeat the mistakes. How do you, how do you put all that together realizing how society is?

[Speaker 1] (42:40 - 43:26)
Well this is all true. Of course it's good to learn from one's past mistakes. On the other hand, if you identify with your past and your memories and that forms the basis for your sense of self, that becomes a kind of prison.

So nothing wrong with learning from the past, but the very essential thing is the realization that your life is always this moment. Your life is never not this moment. And whatever you think or experience has to be in the now.

So life and now are actually inseparable. It's tomorrow never comes right? Yes, when it comes it's today.

As they said in the British pub there was a sign which said free beer tomorrow.

[Speaker 4] (43:30 - 43:46)
And that is so unfair to drunks. That is so unfair to drunk people. You said Tiger Woods lives in the now, right?

That Tiger Woods is a great example of the now? Yes. What's the difference between being in the now and just being simply focused?

Because I don't, when I watch him golf, he golfs like a man who's chasing something.

[Speaker 1] (43:47 - 45:05)
So what's the difference between in the now and being focused? I don't think he is chasing anything. I think he is present.

There's a nice story of a Zen master who was watching a sports person perform and he was watching very closely and the person wasn't quite making it and the Zen master observed him and said the need to win drains him of power. The need, because if you have the need to win, now the West of course subscribes to that. It says you must want to win, but that's not the Eastern way and I believe that that's the truer way because the need to win, you project a goal to some future moment.

You cannot fully be present in what you do if you have the need to win. You want to get there. But if you're a pro athlete, you only have to win, right?

That's the challenge. But the great ones, when they actually perform, when they are, as the expression goes, in the zone, they don't think about winning. They're absolutely and totally present.

And so I believe that's where mastery arises, in that state of absolute and complete presence. There's also a nice film, The Legend of Bagger Vance, where it's about a golfer who learns to be present.

[Speaker 4] (45:06 - 45:16)
You said that there are certain people or things that are better at being in the now than others. You said animals are great at being in the now, but then you also said women are better at being in the now than men. Is that true?

[Speaker 1] (45:17 - 46:24)
Yes, to some extent. Women are not quite as much in their head as men. Women tend to be, they are in their head too, but not quite as much.

They tend to be still a little bit more connected with the body, the energy in the body, with their feelings. So they're not as mind identified, not quite as, of course, always exceptions, not quite as mind identified as man. And therefore, it's a little easier.

And so the many talks that I've given, often there's always more women than men. This is beginning to change a little bit occasionally now, but still the case. And the new earth is just taking the idea of the power of now to a much bigger level, right?

Yes. New perspectives on it and an elaboration and a new, also indicating what it is that prevents you from being present. Structures in your mind, the ego, the identification with the voice in the head, to become aware of that.

If you're not aware of it, it'll take you over again and again. I know you've got a lot of traveling to do.

[Speaker 4] (46:24 - 46:34)
When you come back to Canada, please come back on our show. Thank you. That's what I want to talk about.

Eckhart Tolle.com is his website and there's a lot more to see with what he's got going on. And of course, he's got them books. Good to see you.

[Speaker 18] (46:34 - 46:35)
Thank you for coming out.

[Speaker 4] (46:35 - 46:41)
Eckhart Tolle, everybody. Thank you very much for watching the program tonight. There's an awful lot more to come.

Thanks for watching.

[Speaker 1] (46:42 - 1:42:48)
No, you are intensely alive. And in the depths of that aliveness, you are not a form identity. And in the depths of that aliveness, you have no needs of other forms, but you can enjoy other forms.

Should you engage in intimacy, even though now that you are awakening and understand you don't need a human being to complete you? Should you engage in intimacy? Now, of course, should doesn't come into it at all.

Neither should you engage in intimacy, nor should you not engage in intimacy. Should is not, there's no should. You either do or you don't.

Maybe the question means, do I have to? Only you can know that, whether you feel that that is the right thing now, then it arises. But the fact that you no longer need to be completed psychologically does not mean that necessarily you no longer engage in intimacy.

It just means that the egoic part of an intimate relationship is then no longer there. And that's a great relief. You can still have an intimate relationship on a physical, emotional level, without the psychological need that says, I need you to be the answer to my life, psychological completion.

Because it is that delusion that there can be a human being who is psychologically going to complete me that creates all that, a lot of the conflict in relationship, because after a while you realise that the other human is not living up to your expectations, because no human being could. But you can still have an intimate relationship, even without the need to be psychologically completed. You still, you have a physical form.

So the physical form may, for example, have sexual desire. And again, it may also have emotional feelings, which exist within the greater context when you are awakened, or even the spirit dimension is already there in your life, then there's the greater context for all that, in the spaciousness of who you are, those things appear or happen, not as an answer to your life's problems, and not as an absolute need, not even on an absolute need on the emotional, physical level, not as an absolute need.

But the form as which you appear may feel drawn to another form, and that's fine. And if it doesn't work, or if there is no other form because you are in prison or some other reason, then you can live with that without turning into an unhappy being, because you are in touch with that which is beyond form. The unfulfillment on the level of form creates, yes, there's some area then in your life that's unfulfilled, and you can feel that, and yet it does not turn into, it doesn't make your life miserable or makes you unhappy, or creates a mental interpretation that tells you that your life is dreadful and meaningless because that need is not fulfilled.

Because as presence enters your life, that need exists as a small manifestation within the greater spaciousness that you are. And if it's met, it's fine, and if the need is not met, you can live with that also without turning unhappy or feeling that you're not alive anymore. No, you are intensely alive, and in the depths of that aliveness, you are not a form identity.

And in the depths of that aliveness, you have no needs of other forms, but you can enjoy other forms, but the absolute need is not there, because all forms are already contained in that, in you. You're ultimately from the deepest, seen from the deepest level, you're always meeting yourself in another form. So, no should or shouldn't, you may or you may not engage, as you put it, engage in intimacy.

I assume that the belief that there's a human being there that's going to make you happy has dissolved, and you realize you don't need that, not to make you happy, or to fulfill you. And so, with the psychological need gone, you can appreciate another human being, and you can appreciate emotional or physical levels, if they are there. So this, you need to work on this in everyday life, invite presence in ordinary situations that are not particularly challenging.

For some people, even a red light, a traffic light is challenging. Having to wait in line somewhere is challenging. Why not use this precious moment and bring, oh, invite, become alert, if, feel the energy field in the inner body, and just be there as an observing presence.

And then you have the two dimensions. You have sense perceptions, hearing, and you have the formless presence. So you have, there's a light and that which appears in the light.

It's always the same, the light of consciousness. So then you grow in presence power, as you use all those situations that before were never good enough, you're always on your way somewhere better, use those situations to bring presence in, and then that power grows in you. And if that hasn't, it's only then, if that power grows in you, presence power, that you can deal with the heavy, let's call it, use an Eastern term, the karmic stuff, those accumulations in you that are old patterns, some of which originating in your present lifetime, in childhood, but in many cases, patterns that go back a long way in time.

Your ancestors acting out patterns that your ancestors acted out 500 years ago, 1,000 years ago, 2,000 years ago, and still the same conditioning. Or you can look at it in terms of whether you look at it in terms of genetics that you think that come or in terms of past lifetimes, whatever approach you want to use is fine. The fact is, there are accumulations in you, there are patterns of unconsciousness that have been there a long time, we could call them karmic.

Karmic meaning unconscious patterns that you identify, usually identify with as yourself, that take you over completely. And the truth of the real karma is not the external events in your life. The external events in your life really trigger the karma that you carry inside, and they become your reactions.

And your reactions determine how you experience your life. So in a way, you could have the same thing happening to one person, creating a certain response and the same event happening to another person, creating a totally different response. I can have, for example, when I first, when I had just written my first book, the publisher said, why don't you sign some books for some famous people, they might give you an endorsement.

So I did, and they were sent out, and almost nobody replied. And I didn't realize at the time that those famous people, how many books and manuscripts they get sent every week and every month, but now I'm getting them. And now I'm the one who doesn't reply.

Because you just can't, it's impossible to read it all, even dipping in, they pile up, there's a backlog, I have now already several months of backlog to get through. So it's very hard, if not impossible. But I didn't know that.

But fortunately, I was not, I didn't take it personally. Without having read the four agreements, I already knew this is not a personal thing. So it was not problematic.

But I had some instances where people have sent me books, and they got extremely upset, because they didn't get a reply. And they get more and more upset, and the letters became more and more angry. And then I became some great, the worst dreadful person in the world.

You can, and those are old karmic patterns that people carry, the external event triggers the pattern. For some people, what becomes a huge drama for one person is an insignificant event for another. So how you experience your life is not really so much to do with what happens to you, but it's how you react, because every reaction determines the next thing that happens.

So something goes wrong, you create, make drama out of it. And that creates more stuff. And this is how more karma gets created.

Your, how you react to a person determines how that person reacts to you. And so it's a reflection. In other words, you kind of, you create, to a large extent, your life, not to a large extent, completely, your life experience, unconsciously.

And so to break the old patterns that create so much suffering, unnecessary baggage, I sometimes call it, that you carry around with you, that you, so you meet it, you interpret situations and people through the unnecessary baggage in your mind, that, for that to be transcended or dissolved, that requires presence power. The presence needs to be there when the old patterns arise in your life. And that is there, so you don't wait for the challenge when hoping that you can stay present because you won't.

Use it when you're not being challenged and invite presence into your life. All those moments that are really precious, and that generates more than you, it's like a, almost like a, the equivalent on the physical level would be working out. You get stronger, so to speak.

This mind-made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive. To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation. So our entire retreat is about deepening, for most of you, and discovering, for some of you, the ability to live from a deeper state of consciousness, a, we could call it transcendent state of consciousness, instead of the thinking state where the person resides, the movement of thought that gives rise to the personality, the person, what most people identify with as themselves, me, me and my story, me and my history, my opinions, they are very important, my likes and dislikes, desires, fears, experiences, accumulated experiences, knowledge, possessions, sufferings, bad things people have done to me, bad things I did to other people, all those things that make up the personality, and that's fine, you're not, this is not going to disappear while you're, just like that, just because you're in a retreat center, suddenly you're free of yourself. No, because as you know, wherever you go, there you are. And you can leave behind many things, your home, your usual environment, the people you live with, your work situation, but what you cannot easily leave behind is your mind, it travels with you.

And then you're in a new place and you arrive, let's say here, the retreat center, and if your mind is all there is to you, you will very quickly find a discrepancy, a gap, a conflict between the expectations of your mind and what you're encountering. You will also find old patterns quickly reassert themselves that you thought you had left behind, reactive patterns, repetitive thoughts, habits, mental habits, complaining, for example, favorite one for the ego. Oh, I'd imagine the retreat center to be different, wasn't supposed to be like that.

First of all, it wasn't supposed to rain. And then it's too big, I'd imagine something more intimate. It's impersonal, I don't like it.

Let's see what else I can find that's wrong with it. There are too many people. How can I be on retreat with all these people?

They're all talking, why are they all talking? And the food, that's not what I expected. And my place is not, it's too small, the bed doesn't come, the shower doesn't work properly.

And I had expected to be at peace and I'm not at peace. I suppose it's supposed to be a retreat, why am I not at peace? Well, because yes, you are on the level of the person and you can't expect much change there.

You can rearrange the furniture a little bit. Must think positive, must think positive. It's actually very nice here, it's nice.

I like it here, I like it. I should be feeling peaceful, I should be feeling peaceful. So that's the thing that travels with you, your mind.

I'm sure I haven't exhausted all the possible things that it can say to you. So if you remain stuck in that dimension while you're here, it's not going to be a terribly satisfying experience. And you might even be longing to get back home.

And then you can look, might look on your smartphone on the weather forecast at home, it's so much better than here. So we are here in order to experience a deeper level to who we are, rather than we, you. You are here to experience a deeper level to who you are, deeper than the personal personality, which is not going to go away completely, no, it's there.

But there is an unconditioned state of consciousness underneath all that, much vaster than the conditioned. The analogy applies that are often used. The unconditioned is the ocean.

The conditioned is the ripples on the surface of the ocean. And that's you. You are the ripple, you're also the ocean.

And to live more from the level of depth, the unconditioned consciousness is why we're here. So in order not to get trapped in the repetitive activity of your mind, we need to invite the unconditioned consciousness. You need to invite the unconditioned consciousness into your life at every moment.

Use this opportunity here to do that. And we already did it when we started just now, when I said, listen to the silence in the room. And you went, that is the something that's deeper than the personality that emerged for a moment when you went.

Your degree of attention rose a little and you went. Now the strange thing is, when you're listening to silence like now, there's nothing to listen to. So what are you listening to?

And as I say, listen to the silence, I'm basically saying, listen to nothing. Because there's no sound except my voice. But when I'm not speaking, it just goes, unless your hearing is better than mine and there is some sound that I can't hear, but I can't hear it.

So listen to the silence. A seemingly very simple thing, a seemingly very insignificant thing. But all the things, all the practice that we do, our retreat here is really, this is only one version of the same practice, which is the step from the thinking mode into the presence mode or awareness mode, whatever you want to call it, the unconditioned consciousness and experience yourself as not only the person, which is the thinking mode, experience yourself as the depths of awareness.

So you, the transcendent you emerges more as you're here. So, listen to the silence and you go. And you're not really listening to anything because there's nothing to listen to, but something happened.

It goes far beyond listening. That was only the entry point. We use the auditory perception as an entry point into a different state of consciousness.

Now, the wonderful thing is when you're listening to silence, when you're listening to sound, there's something there that you can be aware of whatever sound you're listening to. A musical sound, a bird song, any sound, the rain, my voice, when you listen to a sound, you listen to, you're conscious of something. So that's the normal state.

But when you're listening to no sound, what are you conscious of? You're not conscious of anything because there's nothing there. You are just conscious.

And when you're just conscious, the historical you has, for a moment, subsided. Because when you're just conscious and listening to the silence, you don't even remember your name, nor do you remember your date of birth, nor do you remember whether your life up to this point has been a big success or a huge failure. It becomes irrelevant.

If you listen to the silence, it's irrelevant whether your life up to this point has been great or miserable. Well, for most of you, it's a mixture. For some of you, one predominates, for some others, the other predominates.

But the moment you access that deeper consciousness, you are that deeper consciousness, that becomes irrelevant for that moment. You are still there, but not the historical you. The historical you, for a moment, has subsided.

There you go. So you're not listening to anything. You're not conscious of anything.

You are just conscious. You're not aware of anything. You are just aware.

So you are, the object has been removed when you listen to the silence because silence is nothing there. And so another way of putting it, when you listen to silence, you can become easily aware that you are aware. Usually you have a ray of, let's say, a ray of sunlight is looking for stuff and it goes, bzzz, bzzz.

Oh, there, and there, and there, and there, and there. And then suddenly there's nothing to look at. And only then the ray of sunlight suddenly becomes aware of itself.

And it may even become aware that it's connected to something vast, the sun, in our analogy. And that's a moment of transcendence of the self, which is kind of Buddhist terminology. And, or we could call it self-realization of it.

Do you realize that the transcendent self, rather than being stuck in the personal self, the transcendent self is what the Buddhists call, just to confuse you, what the Buddhists call the no self. There is no self. The Buddha says, and some Indian teacher says, yes, there is the great self, the transcendent self.

No, you're wrong, there is no self. I'm telling you, there is a self. They're talking about the same thing.

This mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive. To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation. Don't, please don't think, okay, I'm going to become an alcoholic.

Then I'll go into AA and then I'll experience spiritual awakening. The ancient Romans believed in vino veritas. What do you believe about the effects of drink and why do different people react in different ways?

In vino veritas, they said. In wine, there is truth, I think it means. I suppose it means when people get drunk, they start telling the truth.

Well, I have partly answered this question already. The effects of alcohol. Once you are disidentified from the mind, awakened, I won't say, not even necessarily totally permanently awakened, but relatively awakened, you will be able to drink alcohol if you want to.

It will not affect your state of mind and the desire to overindulge will most probably not be there. From my own experience, I enjoy more recently than before a glass of wine with dinner and sometimes even two, but almost never more than two and usually just one. That's all, and that is a pleasure.

If it's more than that, it's no longer a pleasure. It feels wrong. The body doesn't want it.

The body even rejects it. And there's not the slightest desire to have more than that. For those people who are awakening, alcohol can be a hindrance, especially overindulgence in alcohol.

As presence arises and you drink, you quickly lose the presence again, and it can activate and reactivate a lot of the unconsciousness in you, even pain bodies in some people. In some people, more men than women, getting drunk, overindulging in alcohol activates their pain body, so some men become violent when they drink, and they become even more unconscious than they are in their normal state, much more unconscious. But even if that's not the case with you, if presence is arising in you and you get even, let's say, you overindulge once a week in alcohol, that can represent a significant setback in the arising consciousness.

So you have to be very careful there, and if you know yourself and you know that you cannot stop yourself once you've had one or two drinks, then it would be better not to drink at all. So once presence becomes your normal state, you don't need to be concerned anymore about drink. You may or may not have drink occasionally, and even if you were drunk, awareness would then still be there.

Once you are established in presence, the awareness would still be there. I know that if I drank a whole bottle of wine, some people do that, some people drink a whole bottle of wine every day. Not that I could ever do that.

If I drank a whole bottle of wine, I would probably collapse, but until I collapse, the awareness would be totally there. Ram Dass, the famous story, had a guru in India, and Ram Dass, of course, was into LSD, heavily into LSD, and he gave his guru, what do they call it? Hits, pills, whatever.

He gave his guru two or three, normally you take one. He gave him three or something like that, and the guru says, oh, I'll have another. Gave him four, let's give me another.

Gave him five, and the guru put them in his mouth, and then Ram Dass sat there waiting for something to happen, and nothing happened. The guru sat there for a few hours, and Ram Dass was disappointed and also very impressed. On the one hand, disappointed because nothing happened, but very impressed because nothing happened.

Wow, he took all that, and I believe that the guru did see or experience strange things, but he didn't show it externally because it did not affect his awareness. So his awareness, his witnessing awareness was always there. So he didn't act on anything that he, perhaps visions or whatever he saw.

The awareness remained undiminished, and in the meantime, he experienced strange things, heightened sense perceptions, visions, whatever. It makes no difference. When the awareness is there, it makes little difference whether you see an actual person or whether you have a vision.

It's just things that appear in the space of awareness. So the guru knew that, and the guru was dwelled. It was the awareness, and so it didn't matter what he saw.

It was just another spectacle to him. Nobody said that, but I know that's what he experienced. I took it once.

So that's all. So awareness was not touched by that. Now, probably if he had taken 10 or something, I don't know what people, he might have collapsed, but even then, awareness is there.

So that's the... Sometimes people are surprised when they see that I occasionally have a glass of wine and say, you drink alcohol? Well, if my state of consciousness is so fragile that I can't even have a glass of wine, then what's the use of awakening?

But if you have an addictive pull towards alcohol and presence is arising in you, and you're pulled towards awakening, then it is very important to refrain completely. If that is one of the main areas that makes you unconscious in life, the addiction to alcohol, and you cannot continue to have occasional drinks, because as you know, when you have that addiction, an occasional drink is always more than an occasional drink. Because the moment you have the first drink, already awareness diminishes.

You have the second drink, it diminishes even more. The third drink, it's gone completely. So if that is your problem, then it is of absolute importance never to touch it.

Otherwise, you'll be going up, you're going up the escalator, and then it takes you down again. It's like, no, I think this analogy doesn't work, but... You would continuously fall back.

So this is what I mean. You continuously fall. You make a little bit of progress.

You go to a retreat. You come to a talk. You practice in daily life.

Wonderful. A few days later, you go to a bar. Okay, I'm just going to have one drink.

Just one, because it makes me feel I deserve a treat. I've had a rough day. Okay, just one more.

Oh, this feels so good. Third one can't do any harm, can it? Okay, I'm losing it already, so I might as well.

This is the last time, but I'll do it again and again and again. And the next day you wake up, totally in your mind. Body feels sick, totally in your mind.

And you have to start all over again. So don't do it. Quite a few people over the years have come to me and have come to talks and retreats who, if they had not been alcoholics, would not be undergoing spiritual awakening.

Quite a few people have come through AA, Alcoholics Anonymous. They do a lot of good work. They've come, for the first time, they got in touch with the spiritual dimension through AA.

And so if they had not been alcoholics, and of course, AA encourages you to admit to yourself and to others, I am an alcoholic. And as long as you don't believe that that is the reality of who you truly are, it is a useful recognition, temporary recognition. Because it's always good to face the reality instead of deny the reality.

So once you face the reality, as they do in AA, and then several people have said to me, if I hadn't been an alcoholic, I wouldn't be here now. But I suggest a more direct way rather than the long way around. Don't, please don't think, okay, I'm going to become an alcoholic.

Then I'll go into AA and then I'll experience spiritual awakening. So usually happiness exists as part of the play of opposites. You experience the happiness because something makes you happy.

And then that thing that made you happy either leaves you or the very thing that made you happy suddenly makes you unhappy. Marriage, for example. And for some reason, by some strange synchronistic event, I have two questions here, which may be by the same person.

Are you happy? Then the other one, with so much sadness in the world, how can I feel joy and happy? Be happy.

Am I happy? Uh, no. I wouldn't call it happy.

Some people might use that word to talk about, to point to a very deeper state of connectedness with being. But conventionally, happy really is the opposite to unhappy. And so you go from happy to unhappy is...

And then something happens. You know the two masks that, for theater, comedy and tragedy, the two masks, one is a comedy and then there's a tragedy. So usually happiness exists as part of the play of opposites.

You experience the happiness because something makes you happy and then that thing that made you happy either leaves you or the very thing that made you happy suddenly makes you unhappy. Marriage, for example. Or a relationship.

A relationship. Before you start living together, you're happy. When you start living together, you're unhappy.

So what is, if it's not happy, what are we talking about? There's a, if you let go of thinking and remain as the awareness, then there is, in that awareness emanates a certain peace, alive peace, joy, peace, a peaceful, joyful sense of aliveness. Inner peace may be a better word than happiness, but one would have to add to it.

It's an alive peace. It's not the peace of having deadened yourselves to emotions or anything like that. It's an alive, intensely alive peace.

You can sense it even if it's only just a glimpse right now. Surrender thought. And of course, right now, if you're not thinking about the problems of your life, there are no problems in this moment.

There's only a sense of beingness or aliveness. And that is the connectedness with being. And so you transcend the opposites between happiness and unhappiness.

I have a chapter in the course, not in the course, in America, I didn't write that. Well, in a way I did because all books are written by the one consciousness. But anyway, let's just, in conventional terms, I didn't write it.

I don't claim ownership, causing miracles. But in a deeper sense, of course, I did write it. And you did too, because we are the one consciousness.

So in the power of now, there's a little chapter called beyond happiness and unhappiness, there's peace. So instead of being subject to the fluctuations of happiness and unhappiness, there's that peace where you realize the essence of who you are. And so you're no longer ego-based.

Form identity, yes, but not identification with form identity. So it doesn't turn into ego. And then you function in this world from that place of inner peace.

And whatever you do or who you come into contact with, that your actions, your thoughts become a manifestation of that. And that's more people enter that place, then more people become peaceful human beings. And do not contribute to conflict in the world, the madness of the world.

Don't contribute to the madness of the world. Come back to the question, with so much sadness in the world, how can I feel joy and happy? Now, yes, there is a huge amount of suffering in the world.

Why is there suffering? Because humans are disconnected from the source of who they are. And that is the fundamental source of suffering.

That's how it arises. So if you say, I refuse to be happy until there's no more suffering in this world. Okay, so the end of suffering, then I'm waiting for it out there.

And you might even become very active. I'm going to bring about the end of suffering. You do good things, but you haven't brought about the end of suffering in yourself.

So how is the end of suffering going to happen? Even if you do good deeds, which is a wonderful thing, but if you are unhappy doing good deeds, then that unhappiness also flows into how you do those things and your interactions with other people. It has to, the shift in this world, the end of suffering, to use the Buddha's terminology, the Buddha described his teaching as pointing the way to the end of suffering.

That's the Buddha's teaching. He never used a negative term, end of suffering. Jesus talked about the kingdom of heaven, which is within you.

He used a positive term. They're both talking about the same thing. So the end of suffering has to begin with you and then it spreads.

Then, because that changes the way in which you experience the world, it affects others. And then what you, your relationship with other human beings changes fundamentally because only when you are in connectedness with the essence of who you are, can you have harmonious relationships with others. And can you have feel this deep sense of goodwill towards other human beings, not conditional upon whether they happen to agree with you or belong to the same political party or belong to the same religion or belong to the same nation.

It doesn't depend on that. The same tribe, no. To have a goodwill or benevolence towards all humans that you come into contact with, no matter what their conditioning is.

That can only come from that deep connectedness with being and where you do not automatically and unconsciously judge others the moment you meet them or even in an abstract way, judge an entire group of people as less than human, as evil. I mean, even in Europe, that was not that long ago, first half of the 20th century, entire nations came into violent conflict. And so there was unbelievable unconsciousness of collective ego on a massive scale.

So it needs to start with you. Then this benevolence, this goodwill changes the way in which you interact with other humans. And that changes on a small scale.

And then gradually others, other human beings here and there can also go to that place within and then start to live it. The end of suffering, let's forget about happiness. Let's talk about peace.

So it starts with you. Be the change. Somebody said it, was it Nelson Mandela or Gandhi?

I don't know. The one consciousness said it. Be the change that you want to see in the world.

So if you want to see peace, you have to embody the peace. But the end of suffering needs to start with you, your suffering. That's the end of suffering on the planet.

And then you can show the way to others too. You don't necessarily have to become a spiritual teacher, but you may. But in some way when you, even you don't even need to fully embody that shift in consciousness, fully enlightened master.

No, even just to be undergoing the transformational process you already begin to teach, so to speak, even though you might not teach in a conventional sense of the word, but whoever you come into contact with, you affect with your state of consciousness. The Course in Miracles says, you become a teacher of God.

[Speaker 15] (1:43:15 - 1:44:14)
Namaste, Eckhart. My name in this form is Rena. And my question is about euthanasia in pets.

And in February, my little dog was diagnosed with lymphoma. And, oh, I'm sorry. And there's nothing that you can really offer.

It's a matter of making him happy until his time. And I was pretty upset and panicked by it. And my vet said, you know, when he starts to be symptomatic, bring him in.

We'll give him a shot. He'll go to sleep and all that. So when I was so upset, I thought, well, this is a good answer.

It's a good plan. I, you know, have an idea of what to do. But then I thought about it and I thought, you know, I have power over his life.

He's a little guy I bought. And I have power over his life. I can end his suffering.

But really, am I ending my suffering? I mean, I don't want to see him suffer. But on the other hand, doesn't he have the right to really go through the dying, the work of dying and the process of dying?

And I guess that's my question about feeling what is right action. You know, what is the right thing to do?

[Speaker 1] (1:44:15 - 1:50:49)
Thank you. Answers to questions like that are difficult to find when you start thinking about it, because as you know, your mind can assume different positions and you might have one voice in your head arguing one way, one course of action, and another voice in your head arguing another course of action. And suddenly you're stuck.

What is the right thing to do in a situation like that? And so the answer always has to come from within you, but you have to go beyond the mind that is putting forward either the yes or the no, arguing for or against some kind of position. I never, or very rarely, probably never, I don't know, I can't remember, give advice as to what actually a person should do.

Because I believe when you get in touch with the unconditioned intelligence within you, in other words, become still, then the answer will come through you. It may not come the very first time, but it may come the next time and as you take it into stillness. I know that probably I would, if our dog were suffering, I would probably be inclined to, if there were no way beyond the suffering and you can, if I were sure that the animal is actually in intense suffering, I would probably feel the pain.

The compassionate thing to do would be to end the suffering, but that is every individual's decision, but not so much decision, but it has to come from a deeper place where it's not a decision, it's a knowing. And any individual case, animals and pain is a strange thing. The animals are very much surrendered to pain.

And when we took our dog to the vet a couple of months ago, the vet discovered a broken tooth and said, oh, she must have had this broken tooth for quite a long time and probably had a toothache for several months, never knew it. The only thing we knew that she didn't, wasn't interested in chewing bones anymore. And so, and the vet also said, it's amazing how animals can be with pain, where humans would complain and all kinds of, humans, of course, has a psychological level of suffering on top of the physical suffering.

There's an entity that comments and resists, feels sorry for itself and all those things. So humans, animals have capacity for surrendering to pain, but also animals are surrendered in death also. The same way that animals don't make life into a problem, they don't make death into a problem either.

There's something in animals that knows, that is connected with the life itself. And so they know in some non-conceptual way, they are rooted in being, so they don't have that fear of death that humans have. So take that into a meditation, become still, maybe with your animal there, and then perhaps what the animal needs will come to you from within or from the animal itself.

And then the painful decision-making process then no longer determines what action you do. I was at the vet and when the tooth got extracted from Maya, of course, with an anesthetic, and the same afternoon the receptionist said, this is very sad for us, there was a dog that had to be put down and I could hear it was being done in a room and there was a little girl crying. And I never saw the dog or the girl, but I cried a little too, but I didn't even know the dog or the girl that cried, but that's how it is.

The end of form comes to all beings, including ourselves. So becoming familiar with death is a good thing so that when death comes to someone close to you, and even a dog. Some people who don't have animals, they say, how can you make such a fuss about an animal?

But there's a deep, very deep connectedness with that being. It's not only that being, because through that being you sense the entirety of being. And so that is not something you can lose.

That remains untouched by death. So in a way, don't believe that you lose that. That would be very painful.

In a way, the dog is only an opening for that, as are you.

[Speaker 18] (1:50:53 - 1:50:54)
Thanks.

[Speaker 1] (1:51:21 - 1:56:05)
Oh, yes. Surrender. Surrender to the light.

A slight modification of the dictum, accept what is. We could also say, it's a slightly different signpost. Accept your experience of this moment, or accept whatever you're experiencing at this moment.

So if you're experiencing resistance, mental, emotional resistance, then you would have to accept that. That seems to be a contradiction, almost an impossibility, because can one accept non-acceptance? You will have to find it out.

Similarly, if you feel unhappy in whatever form, instead of wanting not to feel unhappy, and thereby, as you can't get rid of your unhappiness, feeling even more unhappy, you could also try to just be okay with being unhappy, so you no longer complain about being unhappy. I'm not saying, let me be unhappy. It's just, I'm suggesting it as an experiment.

Next time you're unhappy, what happens if you are okay with being unhappy? Because the essence of unhappiness is not being okay. So if you're not okay with whatever it is you're...

And some people are unhappy about something abstract that they call my life. They're not necessarily unhappy about a single event or a few things that should be happening, but they have this entire huge thing they call my life, and they're unhappy with it, which means you're a large part, if not the entire part of your identity, the entirety of your identity is unhappy. And there are people walking this planet who are almost or literally permanently in a state of unhappiness.

And they may be... The strange thing is, it is often not the people who have the least in the world but it's often possibly the case that there's more unhappiness to be found in the wealthier parts of the world. So if you, whatever it is, experiment with it and see to be totally okay with whatever you're experiencing at this moment.

So I don't mind being unhappy. It could be that something happens to the unhappiness when you're completely okay with it. It could be that the two states of being okay with something with the unhappiness and the unhappiness cannot coexist.

[Speaker 17] (1:56:17 - 1:56:18)
Strange.

[Speaker 1] (1:56:30 - 2:01:00)
You might have noticed that the thin layer of ice on the lake is slowly beginning to dissolve in the sunshine, forming beautiful patterns like abstract paintings. It's just like the patterns in your mind, conditioned mind patterns, slowly dissolve in the sun of awareness. But it's amazing that it does take quite a while for this ice to completely go away on the lake.

One could use this ice as an analogy also for consciousness. We could say, ice, of course, is water in a particular state. And we could say, talking about consciousness, that ice is like inanimate matter.

Things, so-called inanimate things, are like frozen consciousness. And then water can become liquid. And that would be, in this analogy, consciousness becomes a living thing, something that is alive, rather than so-called inanimate matter.

Although inanimate matter isn't all that inanimate. It only looks inanimate. As we all know, there's intense movement, even in a stone and a pebble.

There's continuous motion of atoms and molecules with vast spaces in between. So it is alive in its own way. So frozen consciousness, matter, and then it becomes liquid.

And then that means it's living things. And then what can happen to water is it can become vapor, and then it rises up. It becomes invisible, unless it's very close together.

But a lot of this moisture in the air, and you can't see it. And that would be mind. Consciousness manifesting as mind.

So you have those three stages. It's interesting, if you look upon matter as frozen consciousness, then you have a different relationship with matter. Nothing is totally inanimate.

So everything ultimately is alive. Probably even a physicist would agree with that.

But there's a big difference between something that is, there's a big difference between a pebble and a worm.

There's already what it is. Nobody knows exactly what, how does so-called inanimate matter suddenly become something else? And there's a big difference between a worm and you, I think.

Because you have a mind.

[Speaker 8] (2:01:10 - 2:01:40)
Thank you for spreading such a positive, shining light. My question is a fun kind of question. I was wondering, is it possible to have a conscious conversation?

[Speaker 1] (2:01:42 - 2:01:50)
Yes, yes. Have you experimented with that?

[Speaker 8] (2:01:51 - 2:02:05)
Yes, I have. I came to the conclusion that maybe two people wouldn't actually be talking to each other in a conscious conversation. They would be sitting opposite each other in awareness.

[Speaker 1] (2:02:06 - 2:04:41)
Oh, well, that's even better. But a conscious conversation is basically a conversation where there's at least between two people. Each person is not identified with their viewpoint, their perspective, their mental position.

They put forward their perspective, their positions, their viewpoints without any sense of self in it because they don't need that because their sense of self is derived from the presence that they can sense throughout the conversation in the background of their being. And then they can play with concepts. They can play with opinions.

They can play with words. They can play with arguments even. My argument is this and then the other person, well, and mine is that.

There's the famous saying, we, what is it? We agree to disagree or something like that. That sounds relatively conscious because if at least you're not identified with your positions, then that's fine.

We agree. That's okay. It's interesting.

Self-identification with mental positions is the unconsciousness because then you will be defending your mental positions, but you're really defending your sense of self. And this is why these conversations become easily and very quickly become very unpleasant. They are unconscious.

So in unconscious conversation and with very unconscious people, it can even happen. I mean, you can probably read about it in the papers all the time. They get so defensive and aggressive about their respective mental positions.

They start physically attacking each other. It even happens sometimes. You can see it in certain parliaments in some places.

And suddenly all these members of parliament start attacking each other. Washington sometimes gets close, but it probably hasn't quite had that where it could happen there too. Who knows?

So what is your experience with being engaged in conversation? Do you easily get into that position where you start to defend your sense of self?

[Speaker 8] (2:04:42 - 2:05:11)
In my case, I've been experimenting with thoughtless awareness. Yes. And I've been present, appreciating and being aware of the essence of the individual in front of me.

Yes. Listening to their words, but just allowing that presence of acceptance. However, I've struggled with returning a conversation point in that state.

[Speaker 1] (2:05:11 - 2:05:12)
Yes.

[Speaker 8] (2:05:14 - 2:05:15)
That's right.

[Speaker 1] (2:05:17 - 2:05:55)
And that's where the real practice begins. Because if you kind of withdraw from engagement, then it's relatively easy to sustain presence. But when you begin to actually interact verbally and thoughts, of course, thoughts become words.

Yes. Then the real practice begins. And especially if you engage in a conversation with certain things that you feel strongly about.

And ideally you choose somebody who has totally opposite viewpoints. Then you can really practice.

[Speaker 8] (2:05:59 - 2:06:45)
It's funny you should mention that because I'm an acupuncturist. Sorry? I'm an acupuncturist.

Oh, yeah. And I've just started a position in a hospital in central Sydney. And the way I operate with energy medicine is in an opposite position to Western medicine in many respects, from a thought-based point of view.

And so I'm meeting a lot of individuals who have got a very strong position. And I'm trying my best to allow this concept into this new institution. So I should imagine I'll be facing a lot of challenges.

[Speaker 1] (2:06:46 - 2:08:37)
Yes. So you can, there's a lot of, we'll be practicing conscious conversation, especially with physicians who say, I don't believe in all that. And I know that's an old, it's a load of rubbish, but you do what you do.

But then that could be an interesting conscious conversation. So it can be challenging. But the art is to remain present even as you put forward your point of view so that, and this is important, I've said it before, but I say it again, so that you don't identify with whatever thoughts you are expressing.

Identify meaning that they constitute your sense of self, and that's unconscious. That is self-identification with thinking. That's the essence of unconsciousness.

And so in order to counteract that, because there is an enormous pull when you start arguing with somebody or they argue with you, you need to, there needs to be a high degree of alertness in you. And that alertness is presence. And that alertness needs to be there.

And then the words need to come out of that state of alertness so that you don't get, and that gives you your sense of who you are. Your sense of self is in the presence. Then you can play with concepts and words.

Then you can put forward your viewpoints. And even if your viewpoints are being challenged, you will not feel attacked in your sense of self. And so that is the essence of conscious conversation.

I wish you luck.

[Speaker 8] (2:08:37 - 2:08:41)
Thank you very much. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (2:09:06 - 2:29:03)
We'll have some questions, but before, just read two or three questions that people have been sending in questions for people who are watching us, who are with us, but elsewhere in time, in space, and eventually in time too, except that it's always the present moment. So time ultimately is an illusion, but on a conventional level, we talk about time. So I forgot to say hello to everybody who is not physically present here, but present somewhere else on the planet.

This question has been asked in the past a few times and tends to come up very often. So it is a question that quite a few people have. If we live with a person who is unconscious a lot of the time, is it possible to have a harmonious relationship whether the person totally awakens or not?

That seems to be a recurring problem for many people. Now, if you have brought your unconscious partner here, that means, and he or she actually came along, that means not all is lost if he or she is still here. So it depends in what way the unconsciousness of the person that you live with manifests.

There are many ways in which it can manifest from being in negative states and misinterpreting what you say or do, anger, and then it goes up on the scale of verbal abuse, and then it goes higher up on the scale of unconsciousness to physical abuse. So if the unconsciousness is not too high up on that level of intensity, it may be possible to live with a person who may not share your, not only not share your interest in spiritual evolution, but have no idea what you are practicing or reading or talking about if you try to point something out. That person may just be uninterested.

And then if you go up on the scale of unconsciousness, then another person may be hostile towards what you're doing, and there's a big difference. But in both cases, there's unconsciousness. Your partner may just have no idea what it is, but say, well, yeah, go listen to that guy, Eckhart.

I don't know why you go there, but that's okay, I'll be fine. That's fine. So that should be, you can live with that person.

And then another one gets angry. Why do you always have to see me like, I can't stand it anymore, or whatever, criticize. So you might be able to live with that.

What you can live with, only you can know whether you can continue your presence practice and bring surrender into the situation with this person. And miracles are possible. Miracles do happen.

And sometimes the seemingly most unconscious person can suddenly shift. Now, if that person is very unconscious, usually what is required is some blow, not you physically throwing it. I'm speaking metaphorically.

Life administers some blow in the form of big loss, accident, illness, and then deeply unconscious people very much trapped in their ego can sometimes suddenly open up. The ego gets cracked. You may sometimes observe that when a person with a big ego is unconscious, it happens not to everybody.

When they become ill, they're lying in bed, and they're ill. Sometimes the ego gets even stronger, it seems. But for some people, the ego, there isn't enough energy left to keep the ego going in that, because the illness absorbs so much energy, so there's not enough energy for it.

And suddenly this person who was never a genuine person that you couldn't talk to heart to heart because there was always egoic posturing and egoic role-playing there. And suddenly this person is ill, lying in bed, and there just isn't enough energy for posturing and role-playing. And then for the first time, I've observed it a few times, people have told me and have personally observed, for the first time, you can communicate with that person in a deeper level of presence.

This can also happen when people who had a huge ego all throughout their lives, when they're approaching death. Sometimes miracles of transformation can happen in the last moments, in the last days, or in the last weeks of a person's life. When resentments that had been building up over a lifetime and other narratives of an extremely negative nature are let go of, can happen.

It can also happen when a person is ill that when this person recovers, that shift that you observed doesn't last. And the moment strength returns to that person, the old egoic patterns are back. And it's like, oh my God, you're your old self again.

You were so nice when you were ill. Loving and present and open. Well, just wait, things will happen again.

So if there's abuse, and these are more pronounced manifestations of unconsciousness. If there's verbal abuse, can you live with such a person? Only you can know whether you're prepared to do that, whether you can sustain your presence practice.

Perhaps not physical abuse. If you stay with physical abuse in the hope that this person will become transformed, that is probably a delusion. But I cannot tell you what to do.

But if you are alert and vigilant and observe yourself in the presence of that person, you will know what to do. You just have to see that what you, the right course of action is not being sabotaged by certain patterns that remain in your mind, mental, emotional patterns, such as fear of being alone, fear, loss of security, perhaps the security of being with another person. Even if it's fear of the unknown, stepping into the unknown.

So you may be held back by certain patterns in your mind. And if you are present enough, you can recognize that and then go beyond it. I've been a model for 10 years.

Somewhere deep inside, I kept hoping for a big break. It never came or has yet to come. Is it time to move on to another job if this job is not making me money?

It's time to move to another job if this job is not enjoyable anymore. If you're unable to enjoy what you're doing, then it's time to move to another job. But you have to look to see whether your inability to enjoy the job you're doing now has something to do with the particular job you're doing or has more to do with your inability to enjoy the present moment.

In which case, the next job that you find, you will also not enjoy. So if you can't enjoy your job, either one of these is true, either there is something for you to change, there's something inherently not right anymore with this particular job, does no longer corresponds to what, to who you are or your state of consciousness. Or you cannot enjoy your job because you haven't learned yet to be present enough to enjoy what you're doing now.

And you always think, oh, the next one is going to be much better. And if you don't know which one it is of those two, you may have to get another job and then see if you can enjoy that one. Many jobs that the mind tells you cannot be enjoyed actually can be enjoyed.

Also, the mind telling you if you enjoy this job that you really don't want this job to be permanent, and if the mind tells you, no, if I enjoy this job, I'll be stuck with it for the rest of my life and I don't want to be stuck with it. Let's say you got a job working, working in a diner as a waiter or waitress, but you really want to get your job as an actress or you really want to be a writer, you really want to be whatever you want to be, a senator, successor of Donald Trump, whatever your mind says. And so the mind says, I'm not going to enjoy this job because I really want to be somewhere else.

And if I enjoy it, then I'll really be stuck. But you may find that the opposite is the case. If it is freeing to enjoy what you are doing, even if it's not something that you would want to do for the rest of your life, all you have to do is enjoy the present moment.

Your energy field then shifts. And when this energy field shifts, you become open to life only if you no longer resist life. You cannot be open to life without the greater consciousness coming through you if you resist life.

And you resist life if you resist or resent the present moment. That's where life is. So the shift happens.

You need to be in the state of alignment with the present moment, no matter what activity you are doing in the present moment. And if you absolutely cannot be in alignment with the present moment, you need to walk out. So if I got a job as a bartender in a disco, I would walk out.

I could surrender if they shut me in there and it's impossible for me to leave the building, I would still surrender. But since there is still a door that I can open, I would walk out. Because although I know how to surrender, I wouldn't want to surrender there if I can help it.

So when we use the expression to enjoy what you do, we get this little word joy here again, enjoy. To enjoy, this is the English language, to enjoy what you do. So when you enjoy what you do, joy arises from within.

And I would say it's not the doing, it looks as if what you do perhaps gave you joy, but it's really your presence in the doing that allows the joy to come from within you. And then it flows into what you do. So rather than the doing giving you joy, because you are present in the doing, the joy arises from within and it flows into what you do.

And so you can say, I enjoy this work. I enjoy doing this. Now, if you cannot enjoy it, try first just to accept it, that this is what you're doing at this moment.

Let's say you start off with, you're working at Denny's, or you're not from the United States. Denny's is a chain of diners throughout the States. Not bad.

Okay, often there's nothing else if you're driving along. You work at, let's say you work at Denny's and you absolutely are resistance. You don't really want to be there, but you have to earn money.

You're a graduate, let's imagine you're a graduate. You've applied for jobs, but because of the recession, you can't get any jobs and you've had 50 rejections and you're getting frustrated. And here you are stuck in this menial job.

What did I study for all those years? All for nothing. All these thoughts go through your head while you're serving people.

Okay, and then you come into contact with a spiritual teaching or this teaching that points to the possibility of enjoying what you do. And you say, I can't enjoy that. Okay, then try something else.

Can you at least accept that right now, this is what you do? Don't try to get yourself to enjoy it. It might become unnatural.

You might play a role to yourself. You may go to a workshop, a new age workshop and say where they teach you, I'm happy, I'm happy. And then you can kind of, you go, I'm really enjoying this, but you're not.

So can you at least, can you accept that this is what you're doing right now? Not for the rest of your life, not even perhaps for the whole year, who knows, but just right now, this is all there is right now. So I might as well accept that this is what I'm doing right now.

Can you accept it if you can't enjoy it? Okay, I can try that. Feels already better, feels much better.

And sometimes from there, before you know it, there is no clear dividing line between acceptance and enjoyment. Somewhere they merge. So if you begin with acceptance, you may find suddenly there's even some enjoyment there.

Acceptance just means there is an absence of resistance. You're just, well, that's what is. And that can sometimes take you suddenly, before you know it, there's an enjoyment that arises.

[Speaker 18] (2:29:03 - 2:29:04)
Oh.

[Speaker 1] (2:29:05 - 2:41:34)
So if you think you can't enjoy it, don't force yourself to enjoy that doesn't work. Accept that's all first. This is what is right now.

I talked about that in the New Earth where I had three modalities. It's just come back to you. I haven't read the book in a long time.

Three modalities of doing. You can have acceptance. You can have enjoyment.

Or the most intense is, and this is usually when there's a creative process happening through you, I call it enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is an intense energy stream that flows, is part of creativity. And so if you are, in order to live consciously and sanely, you have to be in either one of these three modalities.

If you're neither in acceptance, nor enjoyment, nor enthusiasm, you are somewhere in dysfunction. And you're creating unhappiness and suffering for yourself. And that usually implies you're also creating suffering for others because unhappy humans make others unhappy too.

So if you cannot accept, enjoy, or be in enthusiasm, remove yourself. Remove yourself. And then try again somewhere else.

But acceptance, in a way, is the most accessible, of course, to. Just try that. That's it.

My sons drowned in the sea 10 months ago. I did surrender, but when I felt the peace and calm coming over me, it felt wrong. It was not right to feel peace and calm with such a loss.

That's the natural way of being after death of a loved one is there's suffering at first, and then there is a deepening. And in that deepening, you go to a place where there is no death. And the fact that I'm not talking to the questioner who is not here, the fact that you felt that means you went deep enough to the place where there is no death.

But their mind, conditioned as your mind is, of course, by the society, the contemporary world you live in, which knows nothing about that dimension, your mind then tells you that there's something wrong about this. And your mind says, I should not be feeling peace. It's not what one feels in a situation like this.

But that's a conditioned thought by the culture that you live in. So instead, you can recognize when this happens, when that thought comes, and recognize it as a conditioned thought that is not true. It doesn't mean that the waves of sadness don't come back from time to time.

But in between the waves of sadness, you sense that peace. And as you sense that peace, you can sense the essence of your children also, the timeless essence. So death is a very sacred thing, not just a dreadful thing.

When you react to the loss of form, it's dreadful. When you go deep enough to the formless, the dreadful becomes, it's no longer dreadful, it's sacred. Then you experience the two levels when somebody dies close to you.

Yes, it's dreadful on the level of form. It's sacred. On the deeper level.

And death can enable you to find that dimension in yourself. And you're helping countless other humans if you find that dimension in yourself, the sacred dimension of life. So death can help you find the sacred dimension of life, where life is indestructible.

Surrender can open that door for you, complete acceptance of that. So honor that sacred dimension and realize that what your mind is saying that this isn't right, is just a form of conditioning. It's not the truth.

It is supremely right. Death is always a window into the formless as you accept it, surrender, because the form is gone. Your mind becomes still when you surrender to death.

There's nothing, explanations are, it's not through explanations that you accept death. You could have explanations, mental explanations that say, well, he or she, they will move on, reincarnate or go to a place of rest. That can be comforting, but there's a deeper, you can go to a deeper place than that where you don't need even explanations and a state of immediate realization of the sacredness of death, because what opens up when the form dissolves is life that is beyond form and that's sacred.

That's the only thing that is sacred. It's not a thing. The only, that is the sacred dimension.

You can get tiny glimpses of that, tiny glimpses of that when you lose something and you completely accept that it's gone. This is a tiny glimpse of death and can give you a tiny realization, maybe even more than tiny if you're ready. This mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive.

To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation.

[Speaker 17] (2:42:07 - 2:42:09)
Thank you all for this opportunity.

[Speaker 16] (2:42:09 - 2:43:02)
My question is nearly all spiritual and spiritualists and religious traditions refer to some sort of life after death. The idea of living on after dying seems to me like an idea that egoic structures would come up with in order to support or enhance the ego. Some sort of life after death might still be true, but it seems to me that the idea could instead possibly be one big narrative lie created and propagated across human civilization by the ego.

Our embodied consciousness can be realized while we are alive, but upon death might actually become completely non-existent. Can you please speak to this?

[Speaker 1] (2:43:03 - 2:49:51)
Right, a very profound question. The ultimate answers, reincarnation, of course, there are many traditions that speak of reincarnation. And it's always good to just, whenever you are asked a question, you can speak from your own experience or realization.

And this is what I am also going to do mostly. The first thing to discover experientially is, as I've said before, it sounds a little strange, is that you are essentially invisible. Not only what I can see of you is the body, and sometimes I may be able to see certain things in your mental, emotional field.

I can hear words that you speak or your facial expressions. I'm talking to everybody, not just to Tina, but I can see facial expressions that kind of give me a hint of what you're feeling or thinking. But anybody who was looking for you in the realm of physicality would not find you.

And if that's too much, let's just go for a moment to, let's talk about, this perhaps makes sense to anybody who has a dog or a cat at home. When the dog or cat dies, which can be a very sad thing for people, and we come to humans later, it might be a little bit easier to start with the dog or cat. You may realize in that moment when suddenly the dog is dead or the cat is dead, but everything is still there, the fur, the body.

There may even be some warmth left in the body, and there it is. But that which you essentially loved and related to in the dog or the cat isn't there anymore. So you can still, the touch is still the same, but something essentially is gone, and that was always invisible.

What you love in the dog is ultimately, or the dog, you might like, love the way the dog looks and what it does. But when you relate to a dog, you essentially love, or you know what it might have actually if you expressed it like that consciously, you love the consciousness of the dog. That's what you love in the dog.

And when you look into the eyes of the dog, what's looking back at you is there's a consciousness of the dog looking back at you. And when that's gone, the dog is, and same with the human. What you love in the human is the consciousness of the other human.

And now you yourself, all that is invisible because consciousness is the greatest mystery in the universe, that science still has no idea what to do with it, cannot explain consciousness, in most cases avoids talking about consciousness. The greatest mystery is the fact that the universe is conscious and that you are conscious. A surgeon looking for you by cutting open your skull and analyzing your brain will not find even a trace of you, will not even find any of your countless, hundreds of thousands or million memories that you have somewhere.

What, in what form does a memory survive in you? Is the memory of your first teacher at school? I just mentioned the word and suddenly an image of the first teacher you had at school comes to you.

The memory of your grandmother who passed away, the memory of the bed that you slept in when you were eight or 10 years old. I just need to mention it. It was somewhere, but where did that live in you?

Was that in a molecule or an atom? One atom was your bed? Or what is it?

Nobody knows, and nobody can find even the memories that you make up the person that you are, even on that level, let alone the deeper level of the unconditioned consciousness, nobody can find you there. You don't exist in the realm of the visible and not just the deepest essence, even as a person, even the person that you are, which is a mental, emotional construct or entity, even mind and emotion, you cannot find a thought as a material form. So this is why the downloading as some science fiction predictions, downloading your mind into a computer, I don't think that's going to happen.

It's an interesting idea, but it's not going to happen. You don't even know what a thought is. Nobody knows, and it doesn't exist in the realm of the visible.

So you are essentially invisible. Now that you can, you can sense that, that you are essentially invisible. The moment there's a cessation in the stream of thinking and all that remains is even though, even all the thought is already invisible, but if you go a little deeper, there's the consciousness.

[Speaker 17] (2:49:53 - 2:49:57)
And you cannot see it, taste it, touch it.

[Speaker 1] (2:50:02 - 2:52:18)
Now the important question that arises, is this consciousness a product of the physical brain? Is it produced by the physical brain? Is it possible that the physicality of the brain, which is on one level chemistry, on a deeper level, the atoms and molecules.

So on the chemical level, the soup, the chemical soup that makes up the brain, can the physicality produced something non-physical that is consciousness, or is the entire consciousness an illusion? As some scientists say, it's an illusion that the chemical soup is having. But who knows that?

Who is the one that knows that the chemical soup is having an illusion? It's getting very complex now. Is consciousness an epiphenomenon?

That's a fancy word for by-product. Is consciousness an epiphenomenon of the brain, the physical brain? Or undoubtedly there's a connection between the physical brain, physicality and consciousness, because you can knock somebody out, or somebody could give me a substance that makes me unconscious, or I could fall suddenly on my head and stop talking.

Is that proof that consciousness is produced by the brain? Would it be proof, is it if I smash the TV, that whatever you have been watching, or let's say the radio, I don't know if people still have radios, if I smash the radio, which had been playing the Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, and suddenly Beethoven's Ninth Symphony disappears. And then I say, ah, this is proof that the radio produces the music.

[Speaker 7] (2:52:46 - 2:54:49)
So I have a pain-body question. And the basic is, how do I know if I've dissolved it, or if it's just gone dormant? My experience, like prior to four years ago, when I discovered the power now, is that when it would come up, I wasn't even aware of it, and I drank and drugged and managed emotion that way, and then I got in recovery, and I would share and talk about the pain, and it seemed to dissolve in those moments, but upon discovering Eckhart's work, I was thinking, well, maybe it's just gone dormant.

And so in the last four years, I noticed certain suggestions or triggers. They still bring it up. And I think, okay, in the moment, I can dissolve it.

I've used some of the techniques right out of chapter two, maybe three, where, you know, try not to feed it with thought, and just, you know, look where it's at, put attention there. But then, and I've had some success with it dissolving. I didn't have to go share it with another ego, but I wasn't sure if it was Eckhart's ego through the reading that helped put it dormant or not.

So this idea of dissolving, my hope is like, I want my pain body gone for good. Yeah, and we all do. And I'm being told if I can just stay present 100% of the time, then it is dissolved.

But then I can't seem to stay present. I tend to go to sleep all the time. And then all of a sudden my pain body wakes me up.

So I don't.

[Speaker 2] (2:54:49 - 2:54:50)
So you know it's not dissolved.

[Speaker 7] (2:54:51 - 2:54:51)
Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:54:51 - 3:01:44)
Yeah, yeah. Then you deal with that in the moment. What a drag.

But I want it gone. That's what the ego says. I want it gone.

Why do I have to keep on dealing with this? It's ego. The moment that we can just face it and when it comes up and not even think about whether it's gonna be gone forever because you know what?

Forever is now. There is no forever. There is no time.

There's only this moment and what arises in this moment. Are we gonna choose to deal with it consciously or unconsciously? And then the mind will bring up and the ego will bring up that oh, but I've gotta have it, you know, stay away forever and I can't have it come back.

Huh. You know, it could be gone for years. And then life will say okay, you're ready for another test to see if it's really gone.

Who are you committed to? Are you committed to consciousness? Are you committed to being unconscious?

Which means bringing in time, bringing in the ego, bringing in thoughts such as I don't want this ever to come up again. That's a thought. We are dealing with a lot of baggage, not only personally but collectively because we are all connected.

We're one. So we've got our personal unconscious actions that we have dealt with and that personal could be in your family life and your upbringing and stuff and then we have the collective unconsciousness within our own community, within our society, within our country, different egos. And it is interesting because when you say you want it gone, I mean, that's a nice thought to have but it's not the reality of this moment because even when you dissolve your own, you're going to feel, you actually become more fine-tuned, okay, where you will begin to feel the collective unconsciousness and the collective pain body.

Yeah, because you are awakening and you are meant to awaken and not only bring healing to yourself through that conscious being but we are also meant to bring healing to others. That's how it works. That's the cycle and the gift of awakening is now we have to be present for others and we are there and whether we become formal teachers or informal teachers, we will be teaching because life, the evolution of consciousness is happening through the human being and that means all human beings, including the ones that are severely unconscious.

So even when you dissolve your own pain body or when that happens, maybe it's not you as in the ego you dissolving it but when it happens through you that it's actually dissolved, your work isn't finished. You'll find life might bring you somebody that comes along who has a big pain body and you're there as that aid, that assistant, that helper. I've told this story before and the reason why I keep telling this one is because it was the most profound and the first time I really understood what Eckhart meant was that how we can bring, help somebody dissolve their pain body.

I went to a Starbucks, got my tea and there were several empty seats but I happened to sit down in a particular seat and right next to me was this young girl and an older man, maybe her father, I don't know. But she was really upset, angry. You could feel that burning energy coming off her and I'm like, well, there's other seats.

I guess I can move, that was my thought but my body wasn't moving and I recognized, okay, my body's not moving so I guess I'm staying put. And all I can do is drink my tea and feel this sensation that was happening because energy knows no boundaries. It won't go, hey, you know, I'll stop here.

It just, right? It's all one. So here I am feeling it as I'm drinking my tea and suddenly, and I don't know how long it was, whether it's 15, 20 minutes, 30 minutes, I wasn't aware of the time but suddenly what I felt inside of me, that energy that I was feeling that was inside me suddenly burst.

The moment that it burst, she started laughing and I understood what Eckhart meant by how we can help dissolve another person's pain body. If you are truly unaffected and it doesn't touch your own pain body, so meaning your start to get activated, you can sit through somebody's pain body and help them dissolve it. But as soon as it activates yours, then you need to be more conscious, more aware because you're really not gonna be much help because it's within you unless you can sit with both that's happening at the same time.

And if you can't, then I suggest that you remove yourself because you don't want your pain body to become fully activated because then you'll go into full unconsciousness. So you can remove yourself and then dissolve it within your own body. So life will bring you an event to show you whether or not it's dissolved or not.

And if it isn't dissolved, wonderful. It just means you've got more work and that's okay because it's what's happening, it's what is.

[Speaker 1] (3:02:19 - 4:05:15)
You mentioned that pain is necessary for growth, but in one of your talks in the past, you mentioned that pain is necessary for growth until we realize that it is not necessary. Which one do you agree with more? Which one do you agree with more?

Let's see. Let's see. Well, pain is necessary for growth.

There are exceptions. It's usually true. I just forgot to add until you realize that it's no longer necessary, that's all.

It's the same statement. It's just the first statement was incomplete. So it's the same thing, pain.

At some point you realize your further evolution no longer requires pain. All of you are here because you've reached that stage. But if pain should still come or suffering still come, then all it'll do is it'll lead to greater deepening of where you are already.

Title of the question is, is it possible to go to the state of presence directly? The question is, is it possible to be in the state of presence without before having questioned all our stressful thoughts? I think that Byron Katie would say no.

Thank you. Okay, I'll read it again. Is it possible to be in the state of presence without before having questioned all our stressful thoughts?

I think that Byron Katie would say no. Okay. For those of you who don't know Byron Katie's teaching, it's about questioning your stressful thoughts so that you don't believe in every thought that comes into your head anymore.

So you ask things like when a thought arises and you make a statement about a situation, a person, about yourself, about life, you ask yourself, do I know absolutely that this is true? Example. Example.

And other questions with which you address that thought. Now, the questioner says, can one be in a state of presence without before having questioned all our stressful thoughts? Well, there is no, the questioning of your stressful thoughts implies that there's already an awareness that's arising.

Without an awareness of your thoughts, you can't even question your thoughts because you would be your thoughts. So you wouldn't be able to step outside the thought. Consciousness would not be able to at least partially step outside the thought and from there, look at the thought and question whether this is absolutely true or whether this is just one of many possible perspectives.

So the questioning of your thoughts is inseparable from the arising of presence, although not for everybody in whom presence arises. It applies that they question their thoughts. It might, the disidentification can happen in various ways, but the arising of presence always implies disidentification from thinking.

Questioning your thoughts is a way in which that happens, one particular way in which that happens. So you cannot question all your thoughts and then enter the state of presence as the questioner implies. It's a simultaneous process.

As you question your thoughts again and again, as they arise, especially stressful thoughts means thoughts that cause you upset or suffering, then you begin to disidentify and with the disidentification, presence or awareness grows. And when it's grown enough, thought loses its power to make you unhappy, loses its power to bring about a state of stress inside you, to make you suffer, basically. So as awareness arises, awareness grows, the power of thinking to make you unhappy and to distort your experience of reality diminishes.

And so, and that's the transitional stage. And then you come to a stage where stressful thoughts don't even arise anymore. But the most important thing is already when thoughts, if they do still arise, the intermediate stage, they're recognized as stressful thoughts, so they lose their hold over you.

In other words, the mind loses its hold over you. There's no longer total identification with who you are and your mind. And then in the awakened stage, stressful thoughts don't arise anymore.

In other words, you don't tell yourself stories that make you unhappy or upset. And so then to a large extent, you can let things be. To a large extent, you can move around life without an excessive interference of thinking.

You can approach situations and people and let them be, even interact without judgments. That's an enormous sense of freedom that comes in. And you become free of external conditions.

The external conditions no longer have power over you. You no longer give them that power. You only give them that power through your involvement in them, and the involvement in them happens through judgment and reactivity, which are unconscious.

It's a wonderful thing when you don't need to judge people anymore. You'll just let them be. And one thing you notice then with people who are conscious in an awakened state, you don't hear them say, commenting negatively about anybody.

It's not ultimately true. Any negative comment just strengthens the ego. Don't complain about anybody.

They do what they do. What can you add to that by complaining? Situations are as they are.

What can you add to them by upset? Should, shouldn't, all those mind structures. He should have, he should not have.

They shouldn't, they should. I should have, why didn't I, why didn't he? That complicates life.

But that's the most people's reality. So with the awakened state, you become very simple and just very clear, and really no situation is complicated anymore. And you don't even try to figure out what people's motivations are.

They do what they do. And today's thief or dishonest person, or whatever they do, maybe 10, 20 years from now, they may be enlightened. So when you call a thief a thief, then you fixed him in your mind.

You've created a conceptual reality for that person and stuck it on his head. But you cannot stick a conceptual reality on somebody's head without sticking an equivalent one on your head. And since the mind manufactures a conceptual reality for everybody with fixed ideas and opinions about people, often with a focus on the negative, often with a focus on their shortcomings.

So you get trapped in prisons. You have a prison for everybody, a conceptual prison, not realizing that the more conceptual prisons you create for everybody else, the more you yourself get trapped in your own conceptual prison. Somebody else said that 2,000 years ago in slightly different words about judging others.

But it's so prevalent, that mind pattern, and it's so satisfying to the ego, the false mind-made sense of self. With every conceptual prison that you make for somebody else, it feels strengthened in its sense of identity. The more you judge, the stronger the ego feels, because you have the authority.

You are then the authority figure that judges. You are morally superior to every person that you judge and to any situation that you judge. This is the implication, the unconscious assumption.

And imagine then millions of humans living in that way, forming a nation or forming a religion or any entity, collective entity. So the world cannot change unless those patterns change. And they do not change with the collective entities.

They can only change with you. And it requires vigilance on your part to know whether or to what extent you're still doing it. As a spiritual practice, you could say, next time I complain about somebody or say anything negative, I'll notice it.

Let's see if I can catch myself. And when you do, you don't need to beat yourself up. It's a success.

It's not a failure to catch yourself in a negative conditioned thought, to notice it. You don't say, oh, you see, I'm doing it again. How dreadful.

No, it's a great success to catch a thought. And then, oh, well, there it goes again. You don't even need to say, go away.

It's enough to see it. And then it loses its power over you. That's all.

♪♪♪ Presence and stillness are really synonymous. There are different words you can use to talk about it. Another word you could use is awareness.

So let's look briefly at what presence is, both conceptually and experientially. Knowing something usually involves these two levels. So to know what presence is, it helps to understand it conceptually to some extent.

But there's also a different way of knowing something, not only presence, anything, knowing it directly without concepts. The example of, given, I think it originated in India. Some, I don't know which spiritual teacher gave that example.

So you can ask, do you know what honey is? Yes, I know what honey is. You could know a lot about honey.

You can write a PhD about honey, and I'm sure people have done it. There's a lot to know about it. That's knowing through conceptualization.

And then there's direct knowing, which is tasting the honey. Now, it could be that you know honey only as a taste, so you might not know anything about it conceptually, and yet you might experience the taste of honey every day. And you have an intimate relationship with honey without knowing much about it.

Maybe you don't even know that the bees produce it. That's already conceptual knowledge. So for many things, both are needed.

But in our world, we have placed excessive emphasis on conceptual knowing, cutting things up into little fragments, interpreting it through the veil of concepts, interpreting your entire reality. Every moment, every experience is immediately conceptually interpreted, and that's the mind. There's a place for that, we need it.

But we should not be consumed by it, possessed by it. That's the danger, and this is where presence comes in. Presence is another way of being, a way of knowing that is non-conceptual.

So if I talk about it conceptually, I could say presence is a dimension of consciousness that is accessible to a human being, although many humans don't even know that it exists or that it is possible. But quite a few humans occasionally experience moments of presence without knowing what it is. They may experience it as a moment of just inner peace or clarity or an intense sense of aliveness.

A feeling totally at one with the present moment and your surroundings and other human beings, a sense of oneness. For most humans, when it comes, it doesn't stay for too long, and then you are back in what is really the ego state, which is you identify with a conceptual self-image, a narrative in your mind, and the narrative you call me or my life, and you think that is your true identity, but it's not your true identity. It is a superficial kind of identity.

There's a deep identity that connects you with something that far transcends who or what you are as a person. We don't necessarily need to name it, but it connects you with something deep, profound, the source, and that is presence or awareness. And it's a state of consciousness or a dimension of consciousness that all ancient spiritual teachings have pointed to, spoken about, using different words to talk about it.

So people have never tasted the honey of presence. They think all those different teachings and different spiritual traditions are totally different. They don't realize that they talk about the same thing, just using different terminology.

So if you hadn't tasted honey, you could read different books about honey, and they use totally different words or different languages to talk about, say, oh, they're all totally different. No, they all point to the one thing that honey is. So let's taste the honey then.

We've spoken about it. Presence is when you're able to experience this moment without a screen of mental concepts and interpretations and judgments, clarity of perception. That's the beginning of it.

So they would mean, it implies that perhaps briefly, the stream of thinking that is usually behind your sense perceptions, continuously interpreting, calling it this or that, that stream of thinking temporarily subsides, and there's a moment of not thinking. Maybe it's just a few seconds, but you haven't fallen asleep at all. You're completely awake, but you're not thinking.

So to even have a taste of that, even here and now, to be completely awake and alert, there's a moment of, a space of no thought, just awareness or presence. You can take everything in, all the visual, auditory perception, any of the senses, and there's a stillness around every thought, sense perceptions, or behind the sense perceptions, a still presence. You can look at a tree, a plant, see it, even know it through presence, not conceptually.

You might not know what this plant is called. It's concepts, and yet you can look at this plant, and there's a background to the sense perception that's called stillness, because you're not thinking, and that enables you actually to go deeper, to relate to things, seemingly external things, without a sense of separation. You can sense, for example, you can sense the being of the plant, there's a stillness in it, or a tree.

Natural things are helpful in this. Trees are very still, plants are very still. Some trees have been there for hundreds of years, and there's always, they can just give them some attention without concepts, and they almost, they don't speak to you, but there's almost a sense of communication, or oneness.

You can sense their being, because you can sense your being. Being recognizes itself, that's presence. So it's a moment of no thought, of awareness.

Thought subsides, awareness arises, and replaces thought for a little while. Thought comes back when you need it. It'll probably come back even when you don't need it.

It'll push its way back into your mind, until you become a bit more familiar with presence, and it stays there for longer, and after a while, even while you're using your mind, there's still a sense of presence in the background. As I'm speaking now, I'm using the mind, or maybe even that's not the correct way of saying it, not I as a person is using the mind. The deeper I, which is presence, is using the mind, and talking about presence.

The deep I, I call it. The surface I is you as the person with a history, a personal history, some good, some bad, personal problems, everybody has them, but there's a deeper I. The deep I, that's consciousness itself, that's presence.

And so that is the most important realization in any person's life, in anybody's life, the discovery of that dimension within them. Is religion necessary if only presence matters? Is there a place for going to church and following in the steps of Jesus if only presence is important?

The question is specifically about focusing on Christian religion, but the answer, I suppose, I don't know what the answer is going to be, but it's going to be probably also referred to other religions, or religions in general. Is religion necessary? It depends who you are on the level of the form.

For some people, it can be necessary or helpful. For two reasons, it can provide the more superficial reason. It can give your life a certain amount of structure, which for some people can be helpful.

Regular practice gives you a feeling of comfort. Some people have too little structure in their lives and others have too much already. More importantly, on another level, religion can either obscure the spiritual dimension within yourself, and often it does, or if used rightly, if approached rightly, if understood on a deeper level, it can help you access and stay in connectedness with that deeper level of yourself or the transcendent dimension of consciousness.

Whether or not you need it, only you can know. Whether you find it either helpful or a hindrance, it can be either, depends on you as a person, your past, what function it had in your past, and so on. It is a hindrance if religion becomes an ideology.

Then it operates only on the level of the mind, and it's very similar to any other kind of ideology that you may believe in, whether it's communism as an ideology or any political theory or anything that explains the universe. It could be a metaphysical system that you completely believe in, philosophical system, and so on. So an ideology is something that takes possession of your mind, and exerts a controlling function, and it can influence almost your entire mental functioning if it becomes something of overwhelming power in your mind.

It's a little thought that grows into a huge thing in your mind, and the tentacles reach into every aspect of your mind, and there are religious people like that. Usually you can recognize that it is an ideology by the fact that they are not peaceful human beings, and by the fact that they have enemies, either even within their own religion or another religion. Anybody who does not agree with their ideology becomes an enemy.

In the same way, the people who were not nowadays that many were deeply believing in communism, which was a wonderful idea to start with, of course. The road to hell is paved with good intentions. It was a beautiful idea of equality.

Everybody would say, well, that is wonderful. No personal possessions, sounds wonderful too. And the only mistake was it was imposed from outside by people who themselves has not gone beyond the egoic state of consciousness.

They just played it in their mind as that's a good idea, and then it was imposed on other people who also were not in that state of consciousness, but most importantly, those who imposed the idea on others forced them to live it out. The ideal became contaminated with ego. So when these people came to power, their egos became inflated to an enormous degree, almost to absurdity, and without realizing it, they reenacted the same evils, and in some cases worse than those that they were fighting against.

Like in Russia, they saw the injustices associated with the Tsar regime and so on, and they truly saw that, and they truly wanted to remove that, and that seemed a good thing. But they had overlooked their own state of consciousness, and the great challenge is for people, power. You can have that very meek person that seems, oh, this is what a lovely person.

He seems to have no ego or very little. He's so, give that person power. Then the latent ego, which was there in a, let's say a person's very poor, has no power at all.

Give that poor person power, then the latent ego will no longer be latent. It will suddenly come to life, and that happens, is repeated, and has been repeated many, many times in countries where frequently the government is overthrown, and then the previous rulers are accused of corruption, and the new people who overthrow the previous, they truly believe that now they have a just, more just society is going to arrive, because they, again, they don't know themselves. They have not observed themselves, and the moment they achieve power, they are seduced by that, and their ego suddenly grows, and they reenact the same thing again.

Ha, ha. So ideology, religion can turn into, and often does turn into ideology. You can recognize it, as I said, by the fact that these people are not peaceful.

They will condemn other people or other groups of people as evil. They may verbally, even physically, attack others, and if it's not that extreme, it might be that they simply are extremely intolerant towards anybody who does not share their belief system, their ideology, and so that's a clear sign that that kind of religion is a hindrance to the spiritual dimension, to knowing who you are, to being a peaceful human being. It's in the service of the ego.

It's an egoic creation. The ego can take scriptures that are beautiful and point to the truth and can corrupt them, completely misread and misinterpret them, and then they're used in the service of the ego. So that's how religion can become a huge hindrance, but religion can also become an opening into the spiritual dimension.

So a religious practice or a religious reading, a reading of a sacred text, an ancient spiritual text, can be a wonderful thing. The questioner mentions Jesus, following in the steps of Jesus, is that or is only presence important? When you use it in a deeper sense, following in the steps of Jesus means becoming present.

How? First of all, Jesus taught presence in quite a few of his utterances, starting from the flower, that you said you should really look at a flower and see how it lives in the present moment without worry and anxiety. He taught egolessness, deny thyself, which means recognize the unreality of yourself.

He spoke of the I am as the foundation and which is misinterpreted. We have, let's just for a moment, in Christianity, we have a historical person, probably Jesus, and we have Christ. Now, Christ was not his actual name.

It was a title given later. And that's already mentioned in the more enlightened parts of the New Testament, that Christ is a dimension of consciousness. And I believe it's St. Paul who says, I must diminish and Christ in me must grow. This is a mystical, deeper interpretation of Jesus who was an historical person who realized his kinship with the transcendent dimension, the divine, whatever you want to call it. He realized his connectedness, his kinship, his oneness with that. And as he realized that, he became the transcendent dimension emerged in him as it does in you.

It emerged in him. And then the historical person, Jesus, became the Christ. Therefore we have in mystical Christianity, the term Christ consciousness, which is the transcendent consciousness that emerges where before there was only the person.

And we have in certain Buddhist traditions, the term Buddha nature that says that every human being and everything that's alive has at the core of their being is Buddha nature or the Buddha as the reality of who you are. That's the teaching in some Buddhist traditions. And it's a beautiful teaching that your true nature is Buddha nature.

And you just have to realize your true nature is Buddha nature. Isn't that what we've been talking about? It's just a different name attached to it.

In mystical Christianity, it's Christ consciousness. And so Jesus was a precursor who showed the way to Christ consciousness. And if we're focusing on the historical figure of Jesus and realizing that he embodies both the person and the Christ can become a vehicle for you if that is suitable for you.

And if you still feel drawn to Christianity or any other religion, that is the way for you to go deepen that rather than think you have to move into something else. But if that doesn't work for you, then fine. Then walk away and find Christ consciousness somewhere else.

And some people don't need any religious structure anymore. This is for the first time, perhaps in the evolution of humanity, there's spirituality that exists outside of formalized religions. And that's an amazing thing.

So many of you may not need the formalized religion anymore and others may need it. And that is a beautiful thing. You can deepen the way in which you live, practice and understand your religion so that it becomes an opening into the transcendent dimension within yourself.

If you are a Christian and want to deepen certain readings, I would highly recommend there were certain teachers who expressed the truth of Christianity from a deeper level than the conventional church Christianity. The most, in the past, Meister Eckhart, who lived in the early middle ages, the most wonderful, his writings are superb and in fantastic depth to them. And he uses Christianity to take you very, very deep into the core of it all, the core of all things into yourself.

Other mystical writers in the middle ages are good too. Some Spanish ones, some more German ones. And more recently, I would recommend Course in Miracles, which uses Christian terminology throughout, which to some people is obnoxious, can't stand it.

And others say, oh, now I understand Christianity much better. And Joel Goldsmith, he was a teacher in the fifties and sixties, also reinterprets Christianity and makes it deeper, discovers the depth dimension that's there. And other religions have the same.

You have deep teachings in Judaism. You have deep teachings in Islam. You have deep teachings, obviously, in Buddhism.

So there's the superficial level to religion. And if that's all there is for you, it will probably become an ideology and then it becomes a barrier. Or if understood more deeply, it can become an opening.

This mind-made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive. To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation. Sometimes when I hear you talk about presence, it seems like you're describing a person or describing a state in which there's no mental or emotional content.

And yet I experience emotions in presence, perhaps sadness when something happens that is difficult for another person or at the news of the death of someone I love. And I experienced that emotion happening in present time. Isn't this possible for him?

Isn't it possible for emotional experiences to arise in presence? Yes, you can have presence while the emotions are happening or even while thoughts are happening. It means you're not totally lost in, totally identified with, totally drawn into the emotion or the thought.

There is in the background a space of awareness that in the foreground there is a space of awareness where there may be anger, sadness, and you're not totally lost in it. There's a space for it that you still sense and you are essentially not the emotion. You're the awareness behind the emotion.

You know that this emotion is there. The same thing can happen when the mind is active. You can talk and the mind can completely take over and you become lost in your mind, in a stream, either a stream of thinking or a stream of speaking.

You can observe it. If you can't yet observe the mind stream in yourself, you can occasionally just quietly observe people talking to each other and especially people who are having a discussion because when you're having a usually discussion or a disagreeing about something, there is not only the mind, there's also an emotion that goes with the mind stream. That's the disagreement.

Why is there an emotion when people are having a discussion and a disagree? Why is there an emotion that goes with their mental positions because they're identified with a mental position that identify means their sense of self has become one with the thought. The consciousness, the I, has identified with the form rather than realizing that it is formless in essence.

It has lost that knowledge so consciousness is in a dreamlike state, I could say. Consciousness identifies with I, with the form and so there is a self-identification with a mental position or thought which means anybody who questions or doubts or contradicts this mental position or thought is unconsciously regarded by the self-identified thought structure which you have become. The ego is part of ego.

Anybody who disagrees, contradicts, doubts is unconsciously, not in so many words, but unconsciously regarded as an enemy because you are threatening, it's a delusion, but there's an unconscious belief that the other person is threatening my very being because the person is threatening my mental position with which I have identified. So you can, it's a very deeply unconscious process and it requires quite an alertness to see it in the moment that it happens in yourself. But perhaps next time somebody comes to you and you're having a kind of disagreement about something and suddenly you can feel an influx as you defend your position or contradict the other person or justify something, feel the emotion that flows into what you say.

It will be some kind of either aggressive or defensive emotion that goes with it, either some fear or some aggression. If you can be aware of that at that moment and realize what is happening that you have identified with something in your mind believing that that is you, believing your very existence is threatened by somebody contradicting you, it's unconscious. That's why people get aggressive and negative energy flows the moment somebody contradicts you.

It just means somebody has a different opinion, but the ego can't allow a different opinion because the ego feels its existence is threatened by a different opinion because ego's identification with thought and a mental position. This is on a personal level, this can become an entire war between nations, the similar pattern. So you can, at first you can see it, let's say you're observing two people having a discussion and of course, let's say you are not involved, then it's easier for you to see that process at work and realize that usually both of them become drawn into a very negative confrontation simply because they hold different opinions, but for them it's more than an opinion, it's their very self that's threatened. It's an illusion, but that's how it is perceived.

So it's very fundamental and very basic to the huge amount of conflict that arises in human interactions. And it's basically so simple that it's just quite incomprehensible that people haven't realized by now that this is how it works. And so, but the pattern is so deep seated that even people who are engaged in spiritual work for years still get drawn into that when their mental position is threatened.

No matter how much spirituality, there they are defending their very existence because the pattern is very deep. So alertness is required. If you don't want to carry on in that way for the rest of your life and be part of that, madness ultimately, dysfunction ultimately, because it creates continuous conflict and negative feelings and so on, and interferes with the true relationship with another human being, be aware in yourself of this process when and as it happens.

And for that, you have to wait until the moment comes when somebody contradicts you or says, no, you're not right or I don't agree or whatever they say, and then you have to be alert. What is it that comes up and wants to defeat the other or protect itself? So that is a very vital thing, but presence is required.

The pattern is deep, very deep-seated. Without the presence, each time, every time it will take you over and you'll be lost. So alertness.

I can't remember what the question was, but this is vital. Ah, yes. Sometimes when I hear you talk about presence, it seems like you're describing a state in which there's no mental or emotional content, and yet I experience emotions in presence.

So we've been talking now just about experiencing the absence of presence and there's a mental-emotional stream that comes up. You can do it to yourself also. You can have a discussion with yourself.

You can doubt yourself. You can have an argument with yourself. You can have one part of your mind accusing another part of your mind of being lazy, for example, of being not good enough.

And then you have to have a similar argument with one part of your mind split in two and says, you should know better by now. You should do better. Why did you do this?

Well, I couldn't help it. No presence. So, yes, there can be presence when there are thoughts and emotions, and it is vital that there should be presence in the background, which means just you're aware that certain emotions are coming through you and you're not the emotion, but you're the awareness.

You're aware that certain thoughts are there. You're aware that you have an opinion. You're aware that you're voicing your opinion.

That's fine, but you are not in the opinion. Your sense of self isn't in the opinion. Your sense of self is the awareness.

And then you can express an opinion, and you can say, the universe is, in essence, consciousness. And then the other person says, that's a load of rubbish, or whatever they say. Mumbo-jumbo, you are talking mumbo-jumbo.

Where is the, show me the consciousness, or whatever the flat-footed materialist is saying to you. And then observe. See whether you actually know that you, the universe, which means you, ultimately comes down to you, as this is where you experience the universe as yourself.

Do you know that the universe is consciousness, or do you just believe that the universe, at that moment, are you the consciousness, or are you the belief that you are consciousness? If you are the belief, then you are the thought, and then you'll be defending yourself. So you'll be shouting back at the other person, that they are narrow-minded bigots.

Or there is an awareness in the background, and then you say, the universe is consciousness, the other person says, that's a load of rubbish, then you say, well, I'm sure in your perception, that the universe is not consciousness, and that's fine. Why should you believe that the universe is, that's not within your reality? Fine, you are entitled to believing that the universe is a soup of chemicals, that's fine, that's your reality, it's perfectly, I'm perfectly comfortable to allow you your reality of living in a soup of chemicals, or whatever, atoms floating around, whatever it is, or the gray matter of the brain producing the illusion of consciousness, whatever, it's fine.

No defensiveness anymore, and no negative feelings. This is why I liked the, when Obama said, you don't need to be disagreeable to disagree, you don't need to become disagreeable when you disagree. The deeper implication is, you're not identified with your mental position.

He couldn't say that, because nobody would understand what he's talking about, so, well, only some people would understand. There's awareness in the background, so presence or awareness is there while things happen in the foreground. The foreground can be your thoughts, the foreground can be your emotions, the foreground can be whatever is happening around you.

And so, the perceptions of whatever is happening outside, there's also, you're not perceiving this through the screen of concepts or thoughts, you're perceiving through, you are the awareness, not the thoughts, and even if a thought comes and says, that person looks weird, then you realize it's just a thought in your head, and when you're finally communicating with that person, you can still be the awareness, and communicate as awareness, rather than communicate as if the thought, this person is weird, where the reality, you realize it's just a thought that came into the head, and you don't impose the thought on the person, and then relate to that person as if it were true, and you say, and then suddenly, you're talking to this weird person, what are you going to, everything, it'll distort everything, or you want something, but the thought says, this person could be helpful to me, or whatever the ego says, that's a thought, be there as the spacious presence. Now the question is, yes, of course, there can be presence while thoughts happen, or emotions happen, including sadness or anger, but the questioner asks, it seems like you're describing a state in which there's no mental or emotional content, there's also the possibility of presence becoming so intensified at times, that all thoughts and emotions become obliterated. This is very different from suppressing emotions or thoughts, it's simply that the presence that arises becomes so intense, that just thoughts or emotions don't arise, and usually, it could happen in a limit situation, as existentialist philosophers call it, life or death situation, it could happen that presence sometimes can become so intense, or it can become, for no reason at all, it can happen, and you're simply sitting in your room, and suddenly, there's no thought whatsoever, there's no emotion, there's just an intense aliveness, it's not you haven't deadened yourself, because that is, sometimes people believe if you have no emotion, you're dead, you haven't deadened yourself, there's an intense aliveness, a different kind of aliveness than the emotion, a vibrantly alive field of intense consciousness, so that can arise sometimes, and it's beautiful, I sometimes spend periods of time without thought and without emotion, and it's beautiful, nature, walking around nature, or with nothing particular to think about, why think, or sitting in a cafe, drinking a cup of coffee, why think, be, just be the alert presence, so you have the presence can be there without thought and emotion at times that will happen, or presence can be there as a background to whatever emotions or thoughts are there, so, and presence can be lost completely, in which case, all you have is thoughts and emotions, and you will believe that you are the thought and the emotion, that's the unconscious state, so for us, it's important to be there as the emotions happen, and I suggest you work particularly with people, talking to people, exchange of opinions and viewpoints, observing aggression, observing defensiveness, observing negativity flowing into, just because somebody has not the same opinion that you have, and then don't condemn yourself and say, oh, I shouldn't have, I shouldn't be feeling this, no, just again, observe that, observe that, suddenly you've become angry with this person, and instead of saying, oh dear, that's, I failed miserably in my spiritual practice, no, just say, okay, I'm just noticing that, you're no longer in it, you're already out of it when you notice it, so be compassionate with yourself, and just, but the important thing is you're aware, so we all know the famous joke about the person, when you tell the person, why are you so angry, the person says, I am not angry, and that's, of course, a typical example of somebody who doesn't know, has absolutely no awareness, in the middle of anger, denies that there's anger,

[Speaker 2] (4:05:52 - 4:07:01)
and just, is there a particular region of the body that is rooted in and senses our eternal, unchanging nature, yes, I think so, and where that is, it's between the eyes, not on the outside, but on the inside, let's try this experiment, look around the room, and point to an object, so I'm choosing these flowers, you can choose anything, so I'm aware of my finger pointing to the object of the flowers.

[Speaker 1] (4:07:18 - 4:48:46)
There are thousands, or hundreds of thousands that you go on, every day, they look on their screen, waiting for the next thing to be offended by, and the ego loves

it. The transcendence of thinking means the transcendence of the egoic mind, it means that you're able to spend part of your time relatively free of compulsive thinking, certainly free of self-serving thinking and destructive thinking that continuously creates unhappiness for yourself and the people around you. How many people live the compulsive narrative in your mind that for many people is very negative, constantly critical, constantly complaining, never at ease with what is, there's always something wrong, fault finding because the ego grows through constant opposition, constant antagonism, never at ease, always looking for the next thing to complain about, and it strengthens the ego itself.

The more you complain, oh, offended is a new version these days, it's very popular on the internet. I'm very, very offended, outrageous, how dare you? There are thousands, or hundreds of thousands that you go on, every day, they look on their screen, waiting for the next thing to be offended by.

And the ego loves it. And for many of them, it's the only way they can inflate their ego by sitting on the screen and sending out tweets. The transcendent of thinking is not any kind of regressive movement, we are not regressing to the state of somebody who is, whose mind is relatively undeveloped and who does not have a problem with egoic thinking because there's very little going on in their minds, what used to be called, before it became politically incorrect, idiot, or fool, the fool was, they were always, you could see, happy fools, there's not enough thinking to make them unhappy, so they are below egoic thinking. In the medieval times, every village had at least one village idiot or fool, and none was accepted, essential part of the community.

And even the royal courts had a fool. Very important figure, although that figure probably was just pretending to be a fool, and that was one of the most, sometimes very influential position in the royal court, but also one of the most dangerous jobs you could have because you could lose your head at any moment. But only the fool was able to tell the king or queen what was wrong by making it into a funny story.

But the fool is more deeply connected, as we know from mythology, the fool is more deeply connected with the source still, hasn't gone as far out as a normally developed human, he's more simple. He, the fool, for example, relatively speaking, is a simpleton, it's like the hobbit in Lord of the Rings. The hobbit is a simple guy, doesn't think in complex terms, loves the simple things of life, loves eating and enjoyment.

But why the fool has to go on this important mission that nobody else can carry out? That's a mythological motive, that's often the case, because the fool has a connectedness still with source that the more developed humans don't have. Similar motive in Forrest Gump, the movie, the fool does great things, this guy, Forrest Gump, but he's, because he's, and life always supports him.

If you watch that movie again, he always, he saves people in the war, he does heroic things, but he doesn't claim credit because he doesn't have much of an ego yet. And all his life gives him the next thing and the next thing supports him. But we don't want to go there.

When I say cessation of thinking, I'm not talking about regressing to the stage, this is the pre-thinking stage of humanity. I'm thinking about rising above, pointing to the possibility of rising above thinking. So you stop thinking, which is normally associated with the diminishment of consciousness, and transcendence of thinking is an intensification of consciousness, turning up the light.

This is why the term attention and alertness, those terms are extremely important. They're also used in Zen very frequently. The Zen teachings could be described, if you wanted to summarize Zen, it would just, you can just say simple things like pay attention.

There was one Zen teacher who would, whenever they asked him a question to explain Zen, he was, became quite famous. He would always raise his finger, please explain Zen to us. What is Zen?

I haven't quite understood yet. He was calling people to attention. Now, this attention, there's a state of attention that sometimes people experience when they're engaged in dangerous activity, you can climb a mountain.

Do you think you're doing much thinking when you're hanging on this wall? No, you can't. You have to be absolutely present.

In that moment, you have transcended thinking and the situation has forced you, is forcing you into complete presence, this highest degree of alertness. Without it, you slip and you're gone. And so this high degree of alertness however, has no tension in it.

In the case of somebody practicing dangerous sport, yes, there is physical tension, but the state itself has no tension in it and you do not need to engage in a dangerous activity in order to enter that state. We are entering it here because even as I talk about it, I hope, well, I don't really hope anything, but I trust that as I speak about it, simultaneously to listening to it, you can verify in yourself this state of attention, which is a state of very high alertness, but there's no tension in it. It's not the alertness that sometimes goes with fear and you go, but it's not, ah, ah, that's really a contraction of the entire body.

It's not really alertness. So that's not it. It's a relaxed alertness.

There's both yin and yang in it coming together and it's that. I also mentioned the other day, when you first look at something for the first few seconds, a new vista, a new landscape, you enter a room or you step out of a room into the open or whatever it is, or suddenly something new comes into your field, into your perceptual field. In the first two or three seconds, you don't know what it is.

You have to first take it in. There's a moment of alert presence in this, but usually you're only aware of the sense perception. You're not aware of the background of the alert presence itself, but you can be aware of the alert presence itself as you take it in, and that's the key.

So you're not just alertly present. You're aware of the field of alert presence in yourself, so to speak, as yourself, and the awareness of it and it are the same thing. Cessation of thinking.

Now, you can try it. Let's, even now, I would suggest that as I'm speaking, you may find, you may not know this, yet in the moments when I'm not speaking, like now, and now, and now, if you're alert, you're not thinking. You're just present.

And now, it's just an alert field of presence. So some of you may not be able yet to be totally free of thinking, but I believe that most people are able to, they have short gaps of no thought, pure awareness, but no thought. Just to show.

So, and then you look around. In that moment, your whole, your personal sense of self has receded. In the moment of pure presence, which is just this, you have no memories, and you have no expectations for future, because you have no thought, but you're not, you haven't fallen asleep.

You're very awake. In that moment, you're not a person anymore. What are you?

Just a field of consciousness, conscious presence. Something has emerged from within you, and has taken place of the person. The person is still there, it's just gone, receded.

If the only thing you achieve in life is this, that you are able to be free of compulsive and addictive thinking, if you're able to almost, one could say, to choose not to think when there's nothing in particular to think about, when you can just be present. In other words, if you can step out of thinking into aware presence, that alert space, then that is the greatest thing you could achieve in this lifetime, that any human could achieve in this lifetime. And yet, there's nobody left to say, I have achieved it.

That's a problem for the ego. The ego would love to say, oh, I have achieved the state of presence. So it's not an achievement.

I'm just saying it's an achievement, but it's not really. Because you didn't do it. You got out of the way, and then it happened.

And if I reincarnate again, it will be a kind of service to humanity or an offering. But, I mean, who would want to go? Would you want to go through your childhood again or some other kind of childhood?

My God. Well, I haven't gone through physical death yet. As the Zen master who was asked about life after death said, I don't know.

And they said, why don't you know? You're the master. And he said, yeah, but I'm not a dead master.

But I've gone very deeply to what one could call death to identification with form. So in a way, I have gone into that realm from where I can say and know that ultimately what we see as death is the dissolution of form, that the eternal in us, which I know that firsthand, cannot be touched by that. So what exactly happens, I would say, depends on whatever state of consciousness you were in.

That must be a predominant state of consciousness in this lifetime. If in this lifetime, you were continuously identified with form, your body, or the psychological form of me, that means consciousness, this expression of consciousness was still in a somewhat dreamlike state, which is identification with form. And you can easily extrapolate from that if the tendency of consciousness to identify with form was still there, which in other ways, the awakening had not happened, this tendency will continue.

There will be further identification with form and the process will continue as the consciousness that is not yet fully awake will continue to identify with form again and then gradually come to a place where awakening happens. Or if there has already been a disidentification from form in this lifetime, then you can extrapolate from there that the compulsive urge to identify with form and to seek another form or another cycle of form identification, this compulsion to seek further experiences through identifying with form, then would either be much weaker or be completely absent, in which case the consciousness that you are is no longer bound to this realm and will not seek to re-experience the realm of form. But in either case, you really, I know, I can tell you that all is well.

It does not really matter whether this person now needs further experiences of identification, in which case this will happen, or whether he's already free of this urge, in which case he will move on and live in a realm that we can't even conceive of from where we are here. I get a sense deep within in the forms of what that is, but we don't need to talk about it here. All we know is nothing, this is the beginning of A Course in Miracles, which is the entire Course in Miracles summarized in two lines.

Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God.

That which is real in him is beyond form. Anybody can know that when you see a dead body, you realize that this is no longer whom you knew, this is not the being that you knew, this is only a shell. So nothing real can be threatened.

Nothing unreal ultimately exists. This is why sages from all traditions speak of this realm of form as ultimately illusory. It ultimately, it depends what level you look at.

The important thing is all is well beyond the appearance on the level of form, which is the only level where death exists. It is a transition from one form into another form or from one form into formlessness. That is what death is.

No more than that, nothing real dies. Nothing real dies, which is to say, ultimately, there is no such thing as death. There only seems to be.

It's a transmutation of form. Either form dissolves or seeks some other form, some other identification with form. That, as you know, Buddhists and some others are striving towards the end of reincarnation.

They are striving towards merging with the absolute Buddha nature. And you can find in yourself, perhaps, people sometimes ask, would you like to reincarnate again? Or have you had enough?

And if you looked into yourself, you may find also that depends how fearful you are of death because there's an urge, there's an unconscious urge in humans, and that makes part of the personality and the ego. The urge for sensory experience, the urge for asserting your form identity and to experience more of the sensory realm. So for some people, it would be dreadful not to be able, not to reincarnate again because there's a longing for more, more of that physical sensory experience and the experience of all kinds of things associated with the personal selfhood.

And so there's still the unawakened entity or semi-awakened entity that still is drawn towards reincarnation. So, which means to take form again. And when the urge is not there anymore, you can find in yourself, do I want to reincarnate here again?

Well, I certainly have no urge for further sensory experience. If I reincarnate again, it will be a kind of service to humanity or an offering. But I mean, who would want to go, would you want to go through your childhood again or some other kind of childhood?

My God. And then I hear some people say, I definitely have had enough of this and I do not want to reincarnate again. And then you say, oh, maybe that human being is very advanced, but then it might be the next day that human being is talking to the bank manager on the phone and gets very upset about something.

Now, I thought he or she had said they don't want to reincarnate again, but they are reincarnating again into complete identification with an arising mental emotional reaction. Every time you identify with a thought and emotion completely, you reincarnate, you take form into that. So ultimately the end of the cycle of reincarnation in Buddhism has to take place in your lifetime rather than having an idea that at some point you will reach the end of the cycle of samsara and you will not.

No, the question is, are you still continuously reincarnating into form, which means you're losing completely awareness of yourself as awareness. The essence identity is not lost, but totally covered up. So you don't really know whether or not you are going to reincarnate.

You have to observe yourself in daily life to know whether or not you are ready to go beyond the continuous cycle of reincarnation. The question is how often in the course of one day do you reincarnate? The first thing to discover experientially is, as I've said before, it sounds a little strange, is that you are essentially invisible.

You, not only what I can see of you is the body and sometimes I may be able to see certain things in your mental emotional field. I can hear words that you speak or your facial expressions. I'm talking to everybody, not just to Tina, but I can see facial expressions that kind of give me a hint of what you're feeling or thinking, but anybody who was looking for you in the realm of physicality would not find you.

And if that's too much, let's just go for a moment to, let's talk about this perhaps makes sense to anybody who has a dog or a cat at home. When the dog or cat dies, which can be a very sad thing for people and we come to humans later, it might be a little bit easier to start with the dog or a cat. You may realize in that moment, when suddenly the dog is dead or the cat is dead, but everything is still there, the fur, the body, there may even be some warmth left in the body and there it is, but that which you essentially loved and related to in the dog or the cat isn't there anymore.

So you can still, the touch is still the same, but something essentially is gone and that was always invisible. What you love in the dog is ultimately, or the dog, you might like, love the way the dog looks and what it does, but when you relate to a dog, you essentially love, or nobody might have actually expressed it like that. You love the consciousness of the dog.

That's what you love in the dog. And when you look into the eyes of the dog, what's looking back at you is there's a consciousness of the dog looking back at you. And when that's gone, the dog is, and same with the human, what you love in the human is the consciousness of the other human.

Now, you yourself, all that is invisible because consciousness is the greatest mystery in the universe that science still has no idea what to do with it. Cannot explain consciousness. In most cases, avoids talking about consciousness.

The greatest mystery is the fact that the universe is conscious and that you are conscious. A surgeon looking for you by cutting open your skull and analyzing your brain will not find even a trace of you, will not even find any of your countless hundreds of thousands or million memories that you have somewhere. What, in what form does a memory survive in you?

Is a memory, is the memory of your first teacher at school? I just mentioned the word and suddenly an image of the first teacher you had at school comes to you. The memory of your grandmother who passed away, the memory of the bed that you slept in when you were eight or 10 years old.

I just need to mention it. It was somewhere, but where did that live in you? Was that in a molecule or an atom?

One atom was your bed? Or what is it? Nobody knows and nobody can find even the memories that you make up the person that you are.

The great thing, the vital thing about the book is you receive it as a kind of inspiration. Then your mind has to give it form. So it's again, it's a form and formlessness giving birth.

How do I know if a continuous thought is intuition or ego? I've been thinking about writing a book for a long time. When I sit down to write, there's great resistance in me, but still I cannot seem to drop the idea of writing it.

Now you need to look within to find out whether you have an idea that writing a book would be a good thing to do, or whether there's something in you, perhaps you've not clearly formulated, whether there's something in you that wants to be written or wants to be given birth to. So if it's just an idea in your head that it would be great to be a writer, wouldn't it? Okay, I think I'm going to write a book because it would be so great to be a writer and to have written a book must feel wonderful.

Of course, that's an egoic thought. I asked a 17 year old girl once, what do you want to be? What do you want to do in your life?

She said, oh, what I really want to, I want to become a brain surgeon. Also I said, are you interested in brains or in the human mind or in the body or biology or medicine? No, I just want to, I think brain surgery is the greatest thing.

It must be the most wonderful thing, the most complicated thing. She wasn't interested in any of the things that are the essence of being a brain surgeon, but she had an idea that it would be great to be a brain surgeon. So there was just an idea, there was nothing behind it.

You have to see whether, do you feel that there is something valuable in you which may not yet be formulated very much on the level of form, but whether you can sense something that wants to be born through you that would then become a book. Then it comes from deeper level than the ego. Or whether you just have an idea that it would be great to produce a book.

That's of course an egoic thought and it's not going to be very good. Now, let's say there is something that wants to express itself through you. I don't even know whether this book that you feel you want to write, whether is it fiction, is it nonfiction?

Do you have a story that, do you feel that these characters already exist in embryonic form somewhere in you? Or is there a story, something that already you can feel in embryonic form existing in you? Or do you have something to say to this world?

Maybe it is nonfiction, who knows what it is? Something spiritual, perhaps it's a spiritual book, but is it? And so if let's say there is something that you feel wants to come out through you, and when you sit down, yes, you may, even then you may still find resistance.

Because it's a totally, there's a momentum to your normal life and to bring out into form that which is only still largely exists in the realm of non-expression, halfway between form and formlessness, half, to give birth requires an intensity of focus and to, so you have to first of all, give yourself the space where this intensity of focus can be there, not sit down at a desk or whatever and say, okay, I can't think of any, it's not coming, it's not coming out. I better have a cup of tea first. And then just go back.

Oh, I need to, I need to polish that window. Oh, it's not happening today, I can't do it. It won't happen, you are not creating the space.

You need to, and this is a recommendation, if you do feel you have something within you that wants to be born through you, you need to provide the space for it to happen every day if possible on a regular basis so you have a space of an hour, two hours, three hours that is set aside for this to come out, to come through you and then you sit there and you, let's say no writing happens, at least you give the space of one hour where it may, you honor that space and if you've only write three words, at least that's a start, maybe one sentence within that one hour that comes or two sentences or maybe nothing at all but it's better to write something, see what comes, whether you can give form to that which wants to come through you and then gradually a certain momentum builds up as you write a little bit more. And there needs to be a total presence and total focus on just that and an openness. The great thing, the vital thing about the book is you receive it as a kind of inspiration.

Then your mind has to give it form. So it's again, it's a form and formlessness giving birth and once the momentum is there and the process starts, you may find as I did when I wrote the books that it consumes your whole life and you're not, it's hard to do anything else so it can take up your entire focus of your energy for a while and there's an intensity there of while the creative process happens, there's an intensity of energy that flows into it. When I wrote A New Earth, I noticed I couldn't pay attention to anything else so my place became more and more messy because there was just continuous focus and even now I haven't dealt with the mess that accumulated then, it's still there.

It's creative disorder. Anybody who wants to create also don't fall into the error. It's an excuse of the mind that says, I'm not, I don't have enough space in my life to be, to do this, to write this book, to be creative.

There's too much going on in my life. If it really wants to come through you and you give it, you can, there's always a time you can choose to give it space even if you have to get up two hours earlier and if the momentum does build up, you have to see whether it can be reconciled with other things you still have to do. Many writers find it can be reconciled.

I was lucky I didn't have any children to look after. I didn't have a job as such and so that was very helpful but I know of great writers who have recently had a dialogue here with Stephen Taylor who is quite a prolific writer of spiritual books and he teaches at the university. They have three young children to look after and I believe he told me that he writes mainly early in the morning and late at night when the children are not running around screaming and you'll find if you look at the history of great books, under what circumstances they were written, whether it's fiction or nonfiction, you often find that they were written not in the ideal conditions that one would think for writing a, would be for writing a book but in people who lived under great limitations either financial or living situation or health situation, some great writers were permanently ill, almost permanently ill and they wrote in that state from D.H. Lawrence, some of the post-Nietzsche, very good writers, continuously ill and yet they wrote or they produced their creative work under extreme limitation. It's almost as if the limitation created the pressure for the creation to happen.

[Speaker 5] (4:49:10 - 4:49:33)
Why is this process taking so long for me? I've been listening for years and I feel what you say but sometimes I just lapse into my old self. The answer I know is that I lose the present moment but can you elaborate?

Why is this process taking so long for me?

[Speaker 1] (4:49:38 - 5:27:21)

If you consider that humanity has been in this particular state of consciousness for thousands of years, it's not very long. If you can actually go through the awakening process in one lifetime, it's quite amazing. It's an acceleration of the awakening process going through it in one lifetime.

You are shedding or so to speak, thousands of years of collective conditioning, thousands of years. It's an amazing thing that a human being can, and in the past, it's always been very, very few isolated individuals. Not all of them we know of, we know only of some of them who have kind of created a teaching or spoken about, written about it.

But it's now happening on a somewhat larger scale, still, of course, a minority of humans who are engaged in the awakening process. And that's miraculous. There's a gravitational pull still there of the egoic consciousness, both in its personal and collective aspect.

And this gravitational pull is quite heavy. It will attempt to pull you back. It'll create all kinds of, it'll use situations and everything to pull you.

There's no need to regard it as an enemy, but just to realize that the habitual pull of the egoic consciousness of identification with thought is very, very strong. And of the ego, the ego, personal ego and collective ego. The ego is always identification with form.

Consciousness, which is who or what you essentially are, identifies with form, and then it becomes ego. And ego can take on many different forms. It can take on more subtle and refined forms than in the most basic form.

An ego wants power over others. It wants to be admired. It wants possessions.

It wants to be more special than somebody else. And if you cannot be more special in your power and your victorious pursuits, and then at least perhaps you can be more special in your victimhood. That's another big ego too.

If you can be the victim of others, and then it's, again, it's a mind-created identity, very powerful. The collective ego is even more creative, more insane than the personal ego. The collective ego, once you identify with the collective, has perpetrated unspeakable acts of violence and dreadful things in this world, through warfare and internal mass murder and holocausts and dreadful things in many countries.

So what you are, this awakening process is actually quite miraculous. And don't, it's futile to ask yourself how much longer before I'm completely awake? Oh, that's not a helpful question at all.

Or even the question, am I going to be completely awake in this lifetime? That's not a helpful question either. The only helpful question is, am I awake at this moment?

Am I identified with thinking? Or am I able to think without being identified with the movement of thought? Or am I even able to not think when I don't want to think?

That's an amazing ability. Am I able to stop, not stop, but allow thinking to subside, be just so present that the next thought doesn't come? And you may find that that can get interrupted by the thought that says, oh, look, I'm so present that the next thought is not coming.

But then you can go back to being present again. So don't ask yourself useless questions that actually represent an obstacle on your journey of awakening. Ask yourself the only helpful question this moment, what is my state of consciousness at this moment?

And if it's unpleasant, if you are having anxious thoughts and you can't let go of anxious thoughts, in other words, you are in the grip of anxious thoughts, then if there's a little bit of awareness, then you can know that you're in the grip of anxious thought. Not everybody who is in the grip of anxious thought knows that they are in the grip of anxious thought. They are so much identified with the anxious thought that all they are filled with anxiety.

There's not even a little bit of space that says, oh, look, I'm so identified with anxious thoughts. They are completely possessed by the anxious thought. In other words, the reincarnation, the incarnation of consciousness into the thought form is 100% completely, no awareness left.

In other words, consciousness is completely consumed by the every thought form. Thought gobbles up your consciousness and becomes thought, continuous incarnation and reincarnation. But if there is a little bit of awareness, then you can suddenly realize, oh, this is what's happening.

And that awareness gives you a space of freedom because from that awareness you can say, is this what I want? It's futile, isn't it? That arises, that realization arises out of awareness.

And then you can choose to direct your attention somewhere else instead of following up every thought where it wants to take you. It's to take your attention into your body or to your breathing and then into the body. And then you can notice the pull of thoughts, the gravity, it wants you to reincarnate again into another, into another.

You can feel it's pulling you and you, but you don't exert willpower. You cannot exert willpower against thought. You can only be present so that thought cannot fill your space, but you're present enough.

You're holding thought at bay. Interesting, you're so present that it outshines thought like a sun of awareness. The sun of awareness outshining thought.

And that's amazing thing. You discover that possibility. And once you that, and then very progress is speeded up very closely, very quickly.

And you no longer ask yourself, when is it going to happen? Because it's happening now. And you don't ask yourself, why is it taking so long?

Because it's not taking long, it's happening now. And then the question is, yes, but will I be able to sustain it? I know it's now, but will I?

Okay, it's gone already because you asked that question. You don't need to ask, will I be able to sustain? Now, direct your attention, take responsibility for your state of consciousness in the present moment.

That's enough. And then you look at reality through the lens of the little story. It's not just one story, of course, it comes another one, into another.

And some stories are not little, they may be big stories about yourself. Be aligned with the present moment rather than carry in your head this huge amount of mental content about your past and your future. Because the mind is primarily concerned with past and future.

So while you're walking here, you're already thinking about in a week's time, I'll be home again. And then I'll have to do that and have those phone calls to make, and then I'll have to do that. And then those problems will be, I shouldn't have come here because I've got so much on my plate at home.

Why did I come here? I should have dealt with my things there. I should have waited, gone to next year's retreat.

As I said, that's the self-talk in the head. You may encounter it here too. As you walk from here to there, you will encounter the self-talk in the head.

So how do you get out of the self-talk in the head? One, you need to know that that's self-talk in the head. If you don't know it's self-talk in the head, you become the self-talk in your head.

You become the voice in your head. You don't know it, you are it. So you have to, the vital step, and I cannot tell you how to do that.

That minimum of awareness needs to be there where you know that there's self-talk happening in my head and it's telling you some kind of story. It could be the briefest of stories, like I shouldn't have come here, or I don't fit in here, all these people are too spiritual for me, or I'm so spiritual, these people are not spiritual at all. It's all little stories in the head.

Even every fragment of self-talk is a little story in the head that goes around. And then you look at reality through the lens of the little story. It's not just one story, of course, it comes another one, and another, and some stories are not little, they may be big stories about yourself and your life and what's gone wrong with it, or what's gone right with it.

So even that's a story. More pleasant than if it's gone wrong. So you need to know when the self-talk happens in the head, the knowing is not part of the self-talk.

The knowing is just an awareness that there is self-talk. The moment there is an awareness that there is self-talk, the possibility of freedom from the self-talk opens up. If that awareness is not there, there's nothing you can do.

You have to wait until life knocks you over the head so that finally some awareness comes in and you go, huh. So you might have to sleep on a banana skin or something because you have self-talk, and suddenly you go, huh. Oh, life told you to wake up.

Awakening, which is a term that's been used for thousands of years in the spiritual context, not in the conventional context. To awaken means to come out of sleep in conventional language, terminology. But in spiritual terminology, to awaken means to awaken, one could say, basically to awaken out of the self-talk in the head because the self-talk in the head is a form of hypnosis, self-hypnosis.

You are hypnotized. You have been hypnotized by society, your surroundings, the surrounding culture, even the language that you were taught to use that becomes a large part of the self-talk, although some of the self-talk is also accompanied by images, but a lot of it is language. And all that, you've been conditioned, and this is, you are possessed by that, which is an energy formation, and humans are possessed by that and mistake that conditioned entity, which consists of thoughts.

They're so trapped in it, they're so identified with it, they believe in every thought that comes into your head. It's absurd. It's mad, but normal.

Well, another word, rather than absurd, I could say it's mad, but it's normal. It creates incredible amount of suffering, unnecessary suffering that humans create for themselves and for others. You can't create suffering for yourself without making others suffer who are close to you and whoever comes into contact with you.

An enormous amount of suffering is created by not realizing that large percentage of your problems consist of self-talk in the head. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. That's amazing, and once you see that, you say, okay, and then you can have a little bit of awareness and say, who am I?

Am I that story, or am I the one who sees that, who recognizes that there's self-talk? And in order to recognize that there's self-talk going on in you, that's not a thought, it's just an aware presence that, hmm. And then the compulsive nature of self-talk lessens somewhat because some awareness has come in, the light of awareness has come in, and then you realize you are that light of awareness, you are the awareness.

And there's a shift, the head may not immediately stop, it'll want to carry on, the self-talk wants to carry on, there's a momentum to it. You can observe that momentum, if you can't do it in yourself, you can observe it in others. Once they have a story and they're telling you their story, they can't stop, they want to go on, they don't.

And they don't want an end, if they're talking about their problems, they don't want an end to their problems, they want a continuation of the story, which is the problem. They don't know that, that's why we call it unconscious. They don't know that their primary thing is they want the continuation of the story, because that's a continuation of the fictitious person that cannot live without its story, its storyline.

And so those people, do they want an end to their problems? Of course, they will probably tell you, yeah, I'd love. No, they don't, they don't want an end to their problems, because that would be an end to their story, which is their identity.

They don't want an end to their sense of identity. I need my story. All the things that I've been telling myself in my mind about myself and other people and my parents and my relatives and my coworkers and my ex-wife and my ex-husband and what people did to me or what I did and shouldn't have done, failed to do.

Who am I without, I can't let go of that, I need to think about this more. So it becomes a habitual place, the habitual place of the mental noise where you feel that's me. And so every therapist knows that you always reach a point with your clients, patients, whatever, depending on the school of therapy, depends whatever you call your clients, your patients, whatever, there comes a point when you hit that resistance, they don't want to be free of their problems.

And the big challenge is there, is this person going to overcome that barrier? Because that barrier is not just becoming free of my problems, but also becoming free of a very limited and ultimately fictitious sense of identity, the me. So that is what I've described is the next step, one could say, in the evolution of human consciousness is stepping out of self-talk, which is the conditioned mind and realizing there is much more to who I am than this conditioned content of my mind.

And that is the beginning of awakening. It's not, it's not those words, not that you need to believe that there is much more to who I am than the self-talk in my head, because that is still self-talk in the head. I believe there's more to who I am.

And you better believe it too. No, that needs to be, and most of you are here because you already have had, or not only had a glimpse, many of you have already deeply been able to transcend the person. Because the person, the exclusive personal sense of self wouldn't want to be here.

It would feel threatened by being sitting here. It either would feel threatened or it would feel extremely restless and irritated. I need to get out of here.

Or suddenly your legs start twitching. It is quite normal, by the way, many humans have twitching in their legs all the time, or they go. So if you have somebody here who is going like this, and you know their person, the personal self is becoming uncomfortable with being here, doesn't know it, but goes twitching.

And that kind of twitching is very normal for humans, but if it happened to your dog, you would take your dog to the vet. To see how important it is to go beyond victim identity has nothing to do with denial of what happened. You fully see what happened.

You know that, and you know the emotions that it created. Daily, I keep having the same thought loop in my mind. Oh, we've just been talking about similar things.

I keep having the same thought loop in my mind. The theme is one of feeling betrayed, being mistreated, basically being a victim. With the thoughts and images, there's usually resentment and or anger.

This thought loop has been occurring over a year now. I'm having challenges with being the observer. The story seems to be so mesmerizing.

I'm feeling frustrated that I'm continuing to have these thoughts about the past. As I understand, holding onto the past is preventing a higher energy field to come through me. What recommendations do you have for working this issue?

My suggestions, any suggestions on forgiveness and letting go of the victim role so that I can express more of the deep I. The deep I, you see. I don't know if I actually use this term during our sessions here.

I sometimes use it. The deep I is the awareness deriving your sense of self from the awareness rather than from the surface I, which is the personality. So we have the surface I or the deep I.

So the thought loop here that you are experiencing is to do with feeling betrayed, being mistreated, and being a victim. Now, since I believe Susan is not here because it's a written question from New Mexico, but I assume these thoughts and emotions that are recurring again and again refer to actual events that took place. I assume that here.

So there is a reliving of the events in the mind and the feeling of being mistreated, betrayed, being a victim, and there's resentment and anger with it. Been occurring over a year now. So I assume something happened a little bit before that, perhaps, and people did something to you or somebody, one person.

Now, some people have that not only for a year as in this case, but some people have that kind of thinking, compulsive thinking going on for years and decades, sometimes going back to childhood, being badly treated in childhood or abused in childhood. So you have continuing to think about that. And the more you think about that, of course, the more you feel yourself being a victim of events or usually people, other people who did something to you.

And you dwell on it and you can't stop it because the mind has a momentum. These thoughts refuse to go away. And if there's not sufficient awareness because of the continuously recurring thoughts, they become part of your identity, your sense of self.

And so then you become a victim. To see the necessity and the possibility of going beyond a victim identity does not deny in any way that something painful happened to you in the past, that something was done to you, that some people did something to you. To see how important it is to go beyond victim identity has nothing to do with denial of what happened.

You fully see what happened. You know that and you know the emotions that it created. But the first thing is how does a human being, how is a human being capable of inflicting suffering, for example, on a child or on another human?

And it happens all the time. It happens on an individual level and it happens even more on a collective level. The ego, the human ego is dysfunctional enough in the individual, but it's infinitely more dysfunctional and dangerous and lethal when it operates as a collective ego in a group.

This is why people, warfare, internal conflict, killings, and the humans who participate in these dreadful things, dreadful, the perpetrators, when they operate as a collective ego, not a personal, they are capable of far worse atrocities and acts than they would be as an individual. So in other words, the collective ego is even more unconscious and violent and dangerous than the individual ego. It looks to, sometimes when you identify with a collective, my country, for example, my fighting for my country or the collective might be a political party or it might be a religious group.

And so you, people who belong to these entities, sometimes it seems that they become free of ego because they live completely in the service of these collective entities. I want to sacrifice myself for my country or my religion or whatever. It seems that they are completely free of the personal ego.

And same thing happens in sects, in cults. Often people who live in cults, they're totally selfless. They don't want anything.

They give everything of themselves. They want nothing for themselves. They have identified with the group.

But of course, their ego has actually not diminished. Their ego has become enormously amplified because they now have adopted a group ego and the group ego can only survive and subsist when it has a sufficient number of enemies out there. The group ego needs for its survival and its expansion because it wants to expand and survive, but it needs the other who is the very other.

In other words, the other is the enemy. So that is how humans are drawn into deep unconsciousness by identifying with the collective. It doesn't mean that you cannot, it's nothing to do with, you can belong to a religious group.

You can even love your country without being identified with and then needing others' countries to be the enemy. With awareness, you can appreciate your country and you appreciate other countries too. They are different.

So first you see the need to be a victim. Identity also, unfortunately, is a form of ego because any conceptual identity is a form of ego. And even though you seem to be amply justified in having a victim identity because of the things that other humans did to you, you yourself are finding yourself in a kind of prison that created by your mind.

So there's no denial of that bad things happen to you. Yes. Now, question is, how do you exit this mental prison?

The first step is perhaps to see that unconscious human beings, unconscious human beings in the grip of their own conditioning, their own ego, they have virtually no free will. When you are unconscious, you are controlled by the mind patterns that are lodged in your psyche. You cannot really speak of free will by somebody with zero awareness.

And yet the entire makeup is conditioning from the past. So the famous sentence, phrase used by Jesus in connection with forgiveness on the cross, he said, forgive them for they know not what they do. Now, these two interesting, these points put together, forgive them.

Why forgive them? They know not what they do. In other words, if he had spoken these days using our terminology, he probably would have said, they are completely unconscious because that's what it means.

They know not what they do. They are completely unconscious. So when you see nobody can act beyond their level of consciousness, then you see that it's almost like, it becomes almost like the evil that was perpetrated becomes almost like a natural phenomenon.

That is like you've been hit by lightning or something, or lived in very unpleasant climatic conditions that injured you near volcano. And my dad had problems with anger, huge outbursts of anger quite frequently. It was living like legs to a volcano that could erupt at any moment.

And he could not help it. It was impossible. There was no possibility of being different.

And so these humans are run by unconscious, conditioning usually goes back to their childhood and what happened there. I know why my father was angry. I realized much later that it all originated in his childhood, the reasons why he was so angry.

And also for a while, also I felt a resentment towards that. And only when I was able to awaken out of egoic consciousness, I saw that there's nothing that he could have done differently because there wasn't enough awareness. Now, when you see that, then you don't personalize or you don't create an identity for other humans out of their unconsciousness, because in essence, that's not who they are.

The recognition that there's first recognition, then step one, you recognize that no human can act beyond their conditioning in the absence of awareness. If there's awareness, they can transcend their conditioning. And then they begin to become conscious of their own conditioned, mental, emotional, dysfunctional, mental, emotional patterns.

Yes. So they couldn't, they can't help it. So that's already a useful step in forgiveness, but you may not yet be able to arrive at full forgiveness because of that.

Another, before I continue with that, does that mean then, a question may arise in your mind, does that mean then humans are not really responsible for what they do? If they are unconscious, how are they responsible? And does that mean then that we shouldn't punish them for what they do?

If they commit a crime, are they not guilty? That's an interesting question. The unconsciousness that operates in human, even if you are able to forgive a human, and we'll go more fully into that in a minute, even if you're able to forgive a human for their transgressions or whatever they did, this does not mean, and even though the human is not responsible for their unconsciousness, and yet it is built into the structure of human life, they still need to suffer the consequences of their unconsciousness.

[Speaker 5] (5:27:49 - 5:27:56)
Okay. Actually, my question is already being answered.

[Speaker 1] (5:27:56 - 5:27:57)
That often happens.

[Speaker 5] (5:27:58 - 5:28:07)
And I think one day we're all going to come here, and once we're all in presence, we won't have any questions for you.

[Speaker 1] (5:28:08 - 5:28:09)
That's true. That would be wonderful.

[Speaker 5] (5:28:10 - 5:28:12)
You're going to be out of business. Yes.

[Speaker 18] (5:28:14 - 5:28:16)
Yes. Yes. Yes, that would be wonderful.

[Speaker 5] (5:28:17 - 5:28:25)
Actually, my question was, could you elaborate on ego versus healthy self-esteem?

[Speaker 1] (5:28:25 - 5:33:40)
Ah, yes. Eventually, what you would call healthy self-esteem, which is a wonderful thing, eventually that is not enough. And as a human being evolves, that healthy self-esteem is no longer satisfying as you grow older and is transcended.

And what takes its place is healthy, healthy, no hyphen self-esteem. The self-esteem, of course, means that you are reasonably satisfied with who you are as a person and the achievements of the person, what the person can do or what the person knows or what the person possesses. And you compare what the person can do, abilities, what the person knows, knowledge, or what the person has in terms of possessions.

You compare that with others and you come out favorably. So either you can do more than somebody else or others, feel better about yourself. I can do this, but they can't.

I can, but you can't. Or you have more knowledge. Did you know that this and such and such is such and such a case?

You didn't know that? Well, let me tell you. That feels good.

You know, these ignorant people, they don't know anything. Or you have more. How many bedrooms does your house have?

Four? Well, we have 11. Do you have an advanced degree?

No? Well, I have two PhDs. And that's fine.

It starts with a child already. It says, look what I can do. I can jump further than you.

And therefore, the child, it's fine. There's no point in telling a child, don't do that, because your ego is arising. No, the child has to go through that.

And it is better to have healthy self-esteem, as you describe it, as it's usually described, than extremely low self-esteem. I'm no good. Everybody's better than me.

I have nothing. Life has treated me unfairly. There's a self-image there also, as there is a self-image in healthy self-esteem.

One, of course, is much nicer than the other. It's more pleasant to live with healthy self-esteem than with a low self-esteem, or unhealthy self-esteem, one could call it. But they're both identification with some kind of form.

And you compare the form of who I am with the form of others, and you are better, at least in one area, you must be. And that's satisfying. But there's still, you're trapped in form, and you're depending on, for your sense of value or worthiness, you're depending on, ultimately, to put it bluntly, others who have less or know less or can do less than you.

And that's fine. Doesn't mean you shouldn't strive to do great things or to have things or to know things. But the question is, ultimately, is that a satisfying basis for your sense of who you are?

And in the long term, it is not. It is not satisfying. That is why people who are maybe very happy with what they possess, after a while, there's an emptiness that comes, not the spiritual emptiness, the sense of emptiness of what's it all about.

And even things you can do, a time may come when you can't do it anymore. Whatever it is that you do, that's so great. Playing an instrument, the great pianist, wonderful, why not be a great pianist?

But if you derive your sense of who you are from that, then one day you find arthritis in your fingers.

[Speaker 18] (5:33:40 - 5:33:41)
Ugh.

[Speaker 1] (5:33:42 - 5:38:15)
And who are you now? Or they adjust, the agility goes, it's not there anymore. Oh my God, suffering comes.

Or you invent the greatest new computer, some computer, I don't know the expressions, but program or whatever it is. And everybody says, this is the greatest ever. And what, three years later or two years, these things happen very quickly.

Somebody else comes with, makes yours obsolete. And then you have no new ideas. And there you sit, completely devastated because you got from somebody great, you've become nobody, but it was all illusion because you derived your sense of who you are from something in the world of form, which is fleeting, not reliable, not solid, dreamlike.

And so the true self-esteem comes from not identifying with form. Now, whether we even want to call it self-esteem, I don't know. The true sense of worthiness and of power, true power comes when you realize the formless in yourself, that dimension, and that all power comes from that.

But it's not, it goes far beyond the person that you are. And then you are rooted in the formless, so to speak, or you are it. And that there's enormous sense of worthiness in there, but it's not comparative.

It's not more than. You see the same worthiness in everyone, even if they don't know it for themselves yet. So there's power, but not more than.

There's just the power of life itself. And you know everybody is an expression of that, although they may not know it yet. Everybody.

So this is, you transcend conventional self-esteem. And it doesn't mean you lose your sense of worth. It shifts into something much deeper.

So every human really is, there may even be some children these days who don't need to go through the egoic state anymore that is possible. But traditionally, and humans had to go, and some, many probably still have to go through the stage where they identify with form, develop some self-esteem, do something that you feel good about, you can do it. And then comes the time going beyond.

Except perhaps, as I said, some advanced souls who may be coming into this world, already in this world as children who don't need, even need to identify with that anymore. A question that comes from there also is, if a person has low self-esteem, in other words, a mental image of not good enough, then does that person have to go through the stage of healthy self-esteem because he can, before they can transcend it altogether? I don't know.

I haven't tried it enough with enough people. It may well be that the unhealthy self-esteem, if it leads to a state of suffering, great suffering, you may be able to, with the help of a teacher, go from there to no self. Because the way from unhappiness or suffering to transcendence is easier than the way from superficial happiness to transcendence.

Superficial happiness keeps you in the dream world for quite a while. It's not that bad. My life, I can't complain.

It's not that bad.

[Speaker 18] (5:38:15 - 5:38:16)
It's going okay.

[Speaker 1] (5:38:18 - 5:38:29)
I'm quite happy, just got a promotion. Or I'm so happy I just got my annual bonus from my Wall Street bank.

[Speaker 18] (5:38:32 - 5:38:33)
Great, I'm doing great.

[Speaker 1] (5:38:46 - 5:56:30)
So from there, transcendence is not directly from Wall Street, probably not. But if you go from Wall Street to prison, much easier. And as prisons gradually, you realize ultimately the most important part of your life is to embody that dimension of consciousness more and more in your daily life, rather than whatever else is personal, personal goals that you have, personal, whatever you feel you need or want to do on a personal level.

It varies a lot from person to person. There's something more fundamental than the details of your life, which is whatever goals you may have, whatever purpose your life may have on the level of the person. There's a deeper purpose, and that is to embody this dimension of consciousness, which is like, I call it sometimes the next step in the evolution of human consciousness, is the arising of that dimension of consciousness.

The only thing that, this critical point in human history, it's the only thing that will save us is that. So it's very important. Everything else is of secondary importance in your life.

If you look at your personal life, there are many things in your personal life you think are very important. Of course they are. Relationships, your health, your professional work situation, your living situation where you live, your relationship situations, all these things, of course they are important, and you should do your best to do things as well as you can to pursue, to make your life as harmonious as possible.

But ultimately, that's only possible if you realize there's something else that is more important than any of those things, which are important, but there's something more fundamental, that's your state of consciousness, out of which you respond to the situations in your life and to people. So your primary function or purpose is to embody presence, and then it flows into whatever you may be doing in your personal life. Relationships, work situation, the way in which you handle conflicts, the way in which you respond to a difficult person or challenging situation.

Then that becomes your main purpose in any situation to realize what is really important, what is absolutely important to you, and that's your state of consciousness. The second thing is the actual situation itself that you may need to either deal with, or in some cases just accept, because there's nothing much you can do right now in certain cases. There's nothing, all you can do is accept this moment as it is, and that already takes you deeper, this deep acceptance of this moment as it is immediately takes you to a deeper level.

And becoming a teacher of presence means to allow presence to flow into your life, and then gradually, slowly, you detect subtle changes in the way in which you conduct your life, personal relationships, work relationships, responding to challenges, difficulties, those things gradually change, and you notice, for example, that in some cases, people who used to trigger you, just to give an example, people who used to trigger or upset you, suddenly you're able to not be triggered anymore, and in some cases, perhaps, accept their limitations, they can't do otherwise, except for especially family members, except that this is what they say is out of their conditioning, and you can love them anyway, but your ego doesn't react anymore because your ego has subsided, and you don't fuel conflict situations anymore. It doesn't mean you become a doormat, so to speak. In fact, you're able to, in some cases, speak out, you're speaking out of presence, not out of anger or fear, speaking out of, or taking action out of presence.

If you're in a very dysfunctional work situation, you've tried to be present, but the environment is so dysfunctional that there's not much you can do, see, then presence will help you to one day walk away, and you do things that arise out of wisdom. In some cases, it means walking away from a situation or relationship without accusing or complaining or playing scenarios in your mind for years afterwards, just to see this situation is no longer right for me, does not resonate with my state of consciousness, and then you remove yourself, or sometimes the situation itself removes you. If you're in a dysfunctional workplace and you stay present as much as possible in that dysfunctional environment, at some point, they will let you go.

That will be the happiest day of your life. You become a teacher of presence in a wider sense, through every interaction with another human being, your state of consciousness affects another person. So in that sense, teaching and teaching, becoming a teacher of presence, the moment you embody presence, if not fully, at least to some extent, it's there, you are teaching presence, not by telling anybody anything, but by demonstrating that state of consciousness, by demonstrating presence, by, for example, demonstrating non-reactivity when it's totally pointless in traffic, whenever somebody shouts at you, and suddenly, and you don't automatically shout back anymore, it just evaporates what the other person shouted, and there's nobody there to say anything, and the entire energy evaporates.

Whereas before, you would have shouted something back. Unconsciously, the ego trying to defend itself, it's a natural thing for the ego. You shout, somebody shouts at you, you shout back, or you're so fearful that you're totally contracted.

Presence is, you don't amplify anymore very unconscious situations. Unconscious means people are totally trapped in their egos. They produce a lot of conflict.

Unnecessary conflict, because the ego loves conflict. So you come into contact with many humans, they don't, nobody says, I love conflict. They all say, no, no, I don't want conflict.

But their actions say otherwise. Their words say otherwise. Politicians, they all say, we want peace.

So the first level of teaching is just your state of consciousness affects others around you. If not consciously, sometimes unconsciously, they can feel there's something in you that's different. And then you discover that the way in which you experience your life does not so much depend on what's happening to you, because people say, well, that's karma.

Some people say, well, why did these things happen to this person? You think your life is what life does to you. But ultimately, the way you experience your life is not so much determined by what happens to you, but by how you respond to what happens.

Einstein said, I want to know the mind of God. The rest is details. Somebody asked what that means here.

Yeah. And of course, the mind of God is consciousness. Consciousness is the light that emanates from this.

Consciousness is not God in the same way that the light of the sun is not the sun. And yet, on the other hand, the light of the sun is one with the sun. But you couldn't quite say this light, this is the sun.

In the same way, your consciousness, which is not yours, the essence of who you are, the light of the world, is an emanation from the source of all life. I use the analogy of the sun. And there's a good reason why in many ancient civilizations, the sun was regarded as God, because it's a continuous outpouring of life energy.

And so in the sense-perceived universe, the closest analogy one can find is you can point to the sun and say, that is like continuous emanation. All life derives from it. And the life, the consciousness in things is that.

So God realization is the realization of I am that I am, your I am identity. And that's God speaking, but it would also be you speaking. So it doesn't transform the ray of the sun into the sun, but it makes the ray of the sunlight aware of its origin and its home, and what it is still connected with and always remains connected with.

At some point, we need to transcend the naive beliefs in what God is as a controlling figure that created the world a long time ago, and then he walked away and lost interest, or maybe he's still interested, but somehow things are not going well. Or he's condemning people for being dysfunctional. And then, of course, there are many arguments you could raise against that kind of view of God.

And that's the traditional argument of people who don't believe in God, who say, if there were a God who controls everything and supposedly loves people, or maybe not doesn't love, but he's controlling things, then if there is a God, how would he allow all that suffering and evil to happen in this world? Therefore, they say, there is no God. Or they say, therefore, God is morally inferior to us because we can see the injustices and the terrible things that happen in this world, and we are touched by it, but God isn't.

Therefore, God is some inferior creature that created the world out of malevolent intent. That was actually a belief held by many of the Gnostics, ancient Christian and pre-Christian group of people who otherwise had also some interesting teachings, but they believed that the entire physical universe was the creation of a malevolent deity, an inferior deity. I can see why in some way, but it's not the case.

So there isn't a controlling figure there that is. So we need to go beyond that image, that anthropomorphic image of a paternal authority figure and realize that God is the life in all beings. God manifests as the life in all beings.

God is the consciousness in you, is the emanation of God. God lives through you. Everything that happens in humans, God is suffering in humans in a way, you could say.

That's what the Christian teaching means. So it is a gradual emergence of consciousness, and the suffering is more like a dream-like thing to God. It's like a bad dream as in the process of emergence of that God consciousness into this dimension.

So human beings are not autonomous entities. It's not you, your consciousness, his consciousness, her consciousness. Every human is a temporary expression of the one consciousness.

[Speaker 14] (5:56:57 - 5:58:18)
Hello, Eckhart. Hi. A year ago at this time, it was discovered that I had stage three colon cancer.

A four-inch tumor was removed from my colon, half my colon and 16 lymph nodes, and they discovered that cancer was throughout my body. I went through extreme chemotherapy treatments for over six months, and during that time, I became bedridden, and I was in extreme physical pain. It was the best time of my life, spiritually.

During that entire time, I was in a spiritual retreat within myself. It was profound, and I experienced during that time what you have been sharing during this conference, during this retreat, and I thank you. My question to you is, now that I'm healthy, I'm not in chemotherapy, I'm not bedridden, and I'm finding myself adding activities into my life and going back into the busy life that I had before, and I wanted to ask what advice you would give to me or someone else in how to maintain that beautiful inner spiritual retreat of oneness while entering back into the world?

[Speaker 1] (5:58:19 - 6:38:34)
Yeah. Well, thank you. That is an amazing example of the potential transformational value, awakening value that a serious illness can have if you allow it to work in that way.

It's just amazing, and in your case, there has been a kind of healing, perhaps, or probably, because of the shift in consciousness and the deepening. Even if there had been no healing, it would have been worth it, even if you were no longer here in this form, and yet it had taken you into complete surrender. And then an illness like that, actually, as it forces you into presence, burns up the ego in you, fuel for consciousness.

Now you have to be careful. If you do go back into your busy life, don't allow stress to arise, ever. It is possible to be busy without stress.

If you find it's not possible for you, then it's better not to be busy at all. So being busy without stress means just being totally focused on whatever you happen to be doing right now, never focused more on the outcome that you want to achieve through whatever activity you're doing right now than the activity itself. So there can be high energy in the doing.

There needs to be, if there's no stress, there's actually a heightened sense of aliveness as you are active. That heightened sense of aliveness could be called enjoyment of what you're doing. You enjoy not only the outer doing, you enjoy the energy behind the doing.

Even if you might've heard the Zen saying, hurry slowly. So it doesn't necessarily mean that you need to be slow. You can be fast.

The slow is the inner state. The slowness is the stillness and the peace that is still there even while externally, you may be very active. But as you're not focused on the outcome, you're focused on the doing, you enjoy not only the external activity, but more importantly, you enjoy the energy that is behind it, the energy movement.

And then you can be working very fast or doing whatever you're doing very fast. And yet in a state of enjoyment rather than stress. So extreme vigilance is required so that you don't fall back into any kind of stress, which always means you're not fully in the doing.

You're mentally somewhere else. If you find it impossible or if whatever activity you're engaged in, if you cannot perform your function, if you endeavor to be without stress and several, many times you see you can't do it, stress keeps coming back, then you should leave that activity and do something else. So it's because stress will pull you back into the old consciousness, anxiety, stress, thinking that what you're doing is terribly important.

And it's secondary. What's terribly important is your state of consciousness behind the doing. So it's fine to be active again, but not if you don't enjoy it.

So the enjoyment needs to be there. Then you are not going to lose the presence that has already burned up a large part of your ego or the entire ego. Ego simply meaning complete identification with form.

So this is a very inspiring, what you just told us is a very inspiring example of what is possible, how an illness can be the great awakener. And it helps, of course, if before somebody becomes ill, he or she has already had some contact with spirituality, but it doesn't, even that's not necessary. I have seen people that had not the slightest glimpse of spirituality and yet at some point in the illness, the awakening happened.

I've also seen people who shortly before their death through illness became utterly and completely present so that they actually felt joyful. There was no fear anymore. There might've been fear initially, but fear is when you think about what's going to happen to you or the body.

So anything like that, if you allow it to force you almost into utter and complete presence, then what looks as a terrible curse actually is transformed into a blessing. And one more thing for the questioner just now, also not just talk about your activity for a moment, wherever you are at any time, don't ask, don't wait for life to have to force you again into presence. Choose the presence that is already powerfully in you and continuously invite that intense presence that you had when you were facing almost one could say imminent death.

That intense presence that arose there, choose it even when you're not being challenged now so that even when you go from your home to your workplace or drive or go or walk, whenever there's nothing in particular to do or you're waiting, that intense presence can be there now. You don't have to be forced into it any longer. So that's a wonderful thing.

There may be some others of you that are also facing an illness right now. So allow that condition to force you into presence. Healing may happen, but that's not why you do it.

It's not because in itself, that is the purpose of your life is to embody the arising of that consciousness. So anything that happens as a result of that is a by-product of the arising of presence. The arising of presence is not so that you can be healed physically.

You may or you may not. In some cases you are healed physically, but even if you're healed physically, eventually you die anyway. The body goes at some point.

So it's not a means, presence isn't a means to an end. It is the ultimate end, but it has certain side effects which are beneficial. And if you work with people who are seriously ill, you can also teach that.

You can teach presence. You can teach, but not necessarily even by using that word presence. You can start, for example, by teaching somebody to feel the energy field in the body.

And so you can show them what is possible. Never give them more than they can take. And not even then, not everybody, even facing an imminent death, not even then, not everybody will be ready to hear you.

But that's okay. Everybody learns at their own pace. Some are a little slower than others.

But eventually, really every human being is a manifestation of the one consciousness that is awakening. This mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive. To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond yourself.

Your history and your life situation. Is it spiritually hindering to have pride in others and in oneself? Is being glad of one's accomplishments pride?

Is it spiritually hindering to have pride in others and yourself? Well, if you have pride in others, of course, it usually means you have some kind of ego link with them. They may be your children or somebody close to you, family members.

There's a difference between feeling a sense of goodness about something that you have done and the sense of pride. Pride usually is based on the misperception that I did it. I did that.

And not the deeper universal I of which I'm a temporary expression, but the limited sense of I as me, the ego. I did that. Look at me.

Now, when children do that, we have to allow them to do that when the little boy or the little girl says, look at me, what I can do. Or the little girl or boy says to another little girl and boy, you can't do what I can. Look, I can jump higher, much higher than you.

And of course, that's the beginning of ego. But it would be futile to tell a child, this is your ego, stop it. Stop it.

Ego is something that is really a, like, can be and should be like a childhood disease, like measles. And measles is something that children often contract It's something you have to go through. And ego, really, as humans evolve, perhaps will be like that.

It's something that manifests as a childish, childlike state of consciousness while they're growing up. And as a human being reaches maturity, they outgrow the ego. That is where we are going.

It's not yet the case with most humans, they don't outgrow the ego, it gets even bigger. So it's fine for the child to say, look what I can do, and for the parent to be proud and say, oh, isn't that wonderful that you can do that? But then, of course, if the 30-year-old still says, look at me, look what I've done, look at my car, look at my house, or look at what I know, or look how I look, do you like the way I look?

Whatever it is that one identifies with as oneself most strongly, and usually the ego chooses the thing that the most obvious thing in your life, you have the good looks but not much knowledge, then, of course, you focus on the good looks and everything else unimportant. Or you have bad looks, then perhaps you can acquire a lot of knowledge and hit others over the head with your knowledge. Or you can acquire possessions, and then you have more than powers, worldly power.

Look at me. Sometimes it's very kind of rudimentary ego, you can immediately wreck, it's almost a physical ego moving about across the room. Pride then usually is something to do with, I did that, and often it usually really implies other people didn't achieve what I achieved.

Pride, I would say, usually implies a comparison with myself with others, and I come out on top when there's pride and I compare myself with others, I must have, or can do, or know more than the other that brings up pride. So it's ego. But there's something else that is a sense of satisfaction with something that happened through you rather than something that you did.

And I get that, for example, when people come up to me and say, you or your book changed my life. That feels good. But I know that I didn't write this, not this entity wrote the book, the book, consciousness wrote the book.

Obviously the one consciousness wrote the book, and it changed people's lives. I don't get the sense of, oh, a bigger sense of identity suddenly. It's something when I travel to the most unlikely places, people say, I was going through the airline, going, boarding a plane, I showed my passport and the ticket to board, to go onto the plane, and the man who took the ticket and passport, he looked at me and said, you changed my life.

And that's, I don't feel pride about that because I didn't do it, not the little I. Only the little I can feel pride. But it felt good.

There's a feeling of rightness and goodness that there's an awakening, and it happened through that. But so really it's not, if you have a sense of a separate doer, that is the illusion. If you don't recognize your connectedness with the totality, and it's the totality, the consciousness acting through you, if you don't recognize that, then you're in the illusion of separateness, and when the illusion of separateness is there, pride can come in, and the opposite of pride, a detection that you haven't achieved what you wanted to achieve, or the world isn't recognizing your achievements, then the opposite, this detection comes in, and you feel unworthy because something in this world of form hasn't happened to give you a sense of worthiness.

So you have pride, and the opposite of pride when there's the illusion of separateness, the separate doer, me, that's the iceberg who doesn't know, who only knows itself as the tip that's above water. So yes, feeling good about it, about something that happened through you, that's not very different from pride, and that's fine, so it could be anything, when people may love to come to you, let's say you have a business, let's say people come to you for haircuts or whatever, and they feel, and they love being there, and you know they love, not only because you're a good hairdresser, they love being in your presence because you acknowledge their being, you don't feel pride anymore, you feel a goodness about that, the totality of what's happening, but you don't take yourself out of the totality and say, me, I did that. That also takes power away from you, the more you get trapped in the illusion of separateness, the less power, the less consciousness can flow through you into this world.

And again, similar, you can have pride in your child, because that's the developing stage of consciousness, but my mother had a, her generation perhaps even more than now had a very highly developed ego, and she was very, she had great pride in me, well, only after I published The Power of Now, but I could see how much it was her ego, and she talked about, she never read the whole book, but she talked, I loved her dearly, so that I completely accepted that it wasn't, she couldn't understand it, but what she did understand was that there was worldly success. And so she kept telling people, my son's a famous author, and of course, that's complete ego, and that's pride, but that's fine, I didn't tell her you shouldn't do that, I just, there was an acceptance of that's her evolutionary stage, and that's what she does, it's fine. And so, that's, you can have pride in your six-year-old who can do something, that's fine, but it's not really pride, it's your, you've completely recognized that there's a developing ego, and you have to allow that ego to develop.

But when your child becomes an adult child, it's a different matter. If you then have, you feel, oh, you keep talking about my son, my daughter, what he can do, what he has, what he has achieved, to their friends and others, then you haven't outgrown the ego, so it's just a secondary ego, many, many parents have that, so you, some people even have, I have observed in a few cases, you can have an ego, ego identification with a family member at one moment, and an ego, competing ego with the same family member another moment. For example, a mother, when talking to her friends, can talk with pride about her daughter's position, or achievements, or possessions, implying, of course, that my daughter has more than your daughter, or is better than your daughter, but when the mother meets the daughter, she resents her success, and so suddenly the ego identification is dropped, and the ego is fighting somebody.

So the ego can shift, it can shift from one moment it identifies with, when it's convenient, and the next moment it's competing. And they're all states of unconsciousness, of course. So ego is always identification with form, mental idea of who I am, or who somebody close to me is, so close that it becomes part of my ego, and that's how it is, you allow people their ego identifications, and you can see it, when you see it, it's not, it's just, there may be a little inner smile when they do it, although I must admit some egos can be pretty obnoxious.

But that's just how it is. These things do not like the light of consciousness on them, even the pain body, your pain body does not like to be recognized. Yes, we haven't spoken about the pain body yet, so, well, you all know what this term refers to, accumulated emotional pain that you carry forward from your childhood, usually, perhaps also from past lifetimes, if you believe in past lifetimes, if you don't like past lifetimes, forget about it, carried over in from childhood, and it is partly personal, because it's to do with your life, early life experience, which for everybody is somewhat painful, and for some much more than for others, and you also absorb pain body from the collective into which you're born, which could be the country, or the energy field, or a particular area in your country, whatever it may be, you also absorb that, so there's a personal aspect to the emotional pain that lives in you, and there's a collective aspect.

And the pain body, just a very, very brief summary, the pain body is not necessarily, in most cases, always active, it has a dormant stage and an active stage, when it's dormant, you may not even know it's there, and periodically, the tendency is for the pain body to need to feed on further experience of something emotionally painful, because that is what corresponds to the vibrational frequency of this energetic entity, because that's what it is, emotion is an energy form, it's consciousness, everything is consciousness, consciousness is taken on a particular form, an emotion is a form, a temporary form that consciousness is born into, assumes, and what childhood pain, emotional pain, usually leaves behind remnants of that particular emotion, it's not completely released, so by the time you are 18 or 20 years old, you have, you carry a pain body, and for some humans it's a very heavy thing, for others it's not too bad, the pain body periodically needs to feed on the experience of emotional pain, in other words, primarily in two ways, either it creates drama with people close to you, so that they get, you get negativity coming back at you, and then you can have the drama in relationships, favorite place for pain body to renew itself is intimate relationships, that's the best, you get the best food in intimate relationships, and it will create drama, and push the buttons, it has a borrowed intelligence, it has its own little intelligence, and it is cunning, it's a little, like a gremlin kind of, and it knows your partner's weak points, and it will touch upon them in order to provoke them into responding, reacting with drama, and usually it works, because then you press the correct buttons, you awaken the other person's pain body, it goes, oh, great, I'm here too, and so at that moment you don't want to let go, and if somebody, if your therapist at that moment rang you and said, do you want to be in this drama, or do you want to be free, you would get very angry, because you wouldn't be talking, the pain body would be talking through you, and you'd be saying, get away from me, this is, I don't, this is not about pain bodies, this is serious stuff, I don't want to hear what you have to say, leave me alone with that nonsense pain body, the pain body does not like to be recognized, because that means the light of consciousness is shining on it, now what do you do if you don't have an intimate relationship, it gets a bit more difficult, how can you, oh, the pain body says, okay, I have the perfect solution, when I need to feed, I will rise up into your mind, and I will control your thinking, and every thought will be a negative thought about yourself, about other people, about life in general, or about politics, a deeply negative thought, and then it becomes, the thought is not just one thought, it's addictive thinking, addicted to negative thinking, my life is so awful, or this person is so awful, or this is absolutely, whether it's predominantly anger, predominantly self-pity, or whining, or shouting, whatever it is, you are trapped in a cycle of negative thinking, continuously feeds, because thought is energy too, everything is, thought again is a form, every thought is a form that consciousness has taken, temporary form, it's a little entity, every thought, and that gives energy, the pain body gobbles it up, it loves your negative thinking, because the more negative thinking, the stronger it gets again, but after a while, it's had enough, it's like a big meal, then you can't eat anymore, and then suddenly it goes back to sleep, and you feel, oh, what was all that about? And sometimes, if it's in a relationship, you make up, so then suddenly everything is fine again, and it's like you both wake up out of some kind of weird nightmare, but the strange thing is, this weird nightmare happens every two weeks, or three, or every once a week, who knows, maybe once a month, or every three months, it varies a lot, but it comes again and again, and until you begin to recognize it for what it is, then the awareness comes in, once you recognize it, it can no longer, first of all, it can no longer use your mind to renew itself, because you recognize it directly, say, there it is, I can feel the emotional pain, and then you may be able not to be totally controlled by it when it tries to create new drama in the relationship again, or your partner, it arises in your partner, and you can clearly see that some dark energy comes into him or her, and suddenly, if you see it for the first time after getting married, you start living together, and then for the first time you see in your partner the pain body, for many people that is the first time when they question whether they've chosen the right person, whoa.

Now, another strange thing about the pain body, it is a vibrational entity, it can sometimes attract, because there are entities floating around in this universe that we cannot see, there's a vast amount of things that we cannot see, our senses are very limited, so there are entities whose vibrational frequency corresponds to the frequency of the pain body. A bit like what you can see, it's like in the reality that you can see with your senses, it could be compared to perhaps vermin, as we call it, rats, a rat infestation in your house, or cockroaches, so there are psychic correspondents, a bit like cockroaches or rats in the unseen realms that can sometimes be attracted by strong pain bodies, and when that happens, the pain body gets, so they cling to your pain when you almost merge with it, and then the pain body can be incredibly heavy and can become really dangerous, and usually it happens to people who are either very, very unconscious, or people who are addicted to drugs, which lowers very much your consciousness, or alcoholics, lowers very much your consciousness, or have some deficiency in their mind, so it happens to them that their pain body attracts other entities to them, and then they could perpetrate the most dreadful crimes, and often it's sometimes, again, they're not always in the grip of it, but it's there, it's latent, it's waiting, and sometimes people who know these people, they say, how could he have done this, I know him, he's a nice guy, how could he have killed and dismembered six people, what, he was such a nice person, I was at school with him, what they didn't see was his pain body, and when it, his wife might have seen it, I don't know if she's still alive, but the, so it is possible that some entities cling to your pain body, and as you bring more consciousness to it, which simply means to be aware of it, then whether or not your pain body can, whether there are other entities that have come, and they might be not as bad as those entities that lead somebody to commit dreadful crimes, but little things, little bugs, unseen bugs can come in, and it is quite possible in your case, now we finally come to your question, that as you become more conscious and direct consciousness, then the pain body, it would be hard for these entities to continue to cling to your pain body, especially if they're not overpowering, which in your case, this is not, I can see that it's not, you're not going to call a kill and dismember a few people, so these are not overpowering entities, they are little things that cling to your pain body, but if left unattended, it could get worse, but it's because you're growing in awareness, you could, I believe that's the explanation, but I don't know if that is the explanation, but it seems to me that it is, that these things do not like the light of consciousness on them, even the pain body, your pain body does not like to be recognized, because it knows when you identify it and you can feel it, you put your attention on it, it doesn't like your attention, because it cannot use your mind anymore, so if you put your attention on it, there may be things that suddenly, oh, I can't stand this anymore, this person is becoming too conscious, things leave, the pain body becomes lighter, so the pain body can even, I told a story, and I believe in New Earth, when I saw somebody for counseling session, and we had a wonderful release of this person's pain body, it was like a big chunk went, and I don't know where it went, but it went up into the air, there's similar stories in the gospels too, it's not called pain body in the gospels, of course, that sounds more ominous, he was carrying an evil spirit, and then when Jesus came and said, what is this, the evil spirit fled, and says, leave me alone, I can't stand your presence anymore, this is my paraphrase, so the pain body transmutation then happens, because pain body is energy, is trapped energy, that by focusing on it, the energy becomes freed, and I compare it to, you could say the flame of awareness, or the flame of consciousness, this energy becomes then part of your presence, it's transmuted into presence, it assumes a higher frequency, it's consciousness too, and it becomes presence, it's a bit like you could say, if you have a piece of ice, and the ice is very hard, and you could kill somebody with a piece of ice, but when it gets transmuted, it becomes soft and fluid, and when it gets transmuted even more, it becomes vapor, you can't even see it anymore, and that's a bit like consciousness manifesting in different forms, so-called inanimate matter would be a consciousness that is totally asleep, or almost totally asleep, and then gradually you have different degrees of awakening of consciousness in different life forms, plant life, animal life, human life, and then awakened human life, so all you need to continue to do is to be aware of it, especially when it arises, and be aware of it when it's there in relationship, does it use your mind still, be very alert so that the emotion does not rise up into your mind, and you start thinking negative thoughts, when this happens, immediately know what's happening, when you get, when you love your negativity, then you don't really love it, but your pain body loves it, so it's a wonderful, pain body is a great teaching, and it's a great thing for, it's often people with heavier pain bodies that have a more powerful incentive to awaken spiritually than people with a relatively mild pain body, however, one cannot generalize too much, but there's a tendency for people, it's like you're in a nightmare, if you're in a nightmare, your motivation to awaken is greater than if you're in a relatively pleasant dream, it's not that great, but it's okay, but if you're facing a monster, then you really want to awaken.

[Speaker 6] (6:38:35 - 6:39:08)
Well, first I have to say you are so very cute.

[Speaker 1] (6:39:11 - 6:39:12)
Thank you.

[Speaker 6] (6:39:18 - 6:39:24)
And then also, as I told Kim in the morning, I so wanted you to come to China.

[Speaker 1] (6:39:25 - 6:39:27)
Oh yes, I want to go too.

[Speaker 6] (6:39:28 - 6:39:29)
Okay, okay, let's go.

[Speaker 1] (6:39:29 - 6:39:47)
I have been to Hong Kong, a couple of days, done retreats in Hong Kong, but not for some years. Mainland China, do you think they would be okay with me? I mean the government, the government.

[Speaker 6] (6:39:47 - 6:39:53)
The government should be okay, you haven't done anything terribly wrong there before, right?

[Speaker 1] (6:39:53 - 6:39:54)
No.

[Speaker 6] (6:39:54 - 6:40:12)
So it should be okay, because you're already so very popular in China, your books are very widely read, and so many of my friends in the spiritual community, or even outside of this community, everybody just tells me how much they are expecting your visit.

[Speaker 18] (6:40:13 - 6:40:14)
Oh, okay.

[Speaker 1] (6:40:14 - 6:40:16)
Well, thank you, I will come.

[Speaker 6] (6:40:16 - 6:40:35)
Oh, that's great, that's great. Oh here, finally comes my question. Okay, so how can we truly accept and surrender and be present without having to go through a lot of sufferings, or intense sufferings, to the point that you have no other choice but to give up your ego?

[Speaker 1] (6:40:36 - 6:40:36)
Right.

[Speaker 6] (6:40:36 - 6:41:04)
And for instance, when I hear certain statements like, you must not reject your rejection, or you must not judge your judgments, well that made me feel even more painful, because that's exactly what I'm doing. So sometimes, most of the times, I am aware that I'm judging this or that, but how to proceed further to really accept, but not just accepting in my mind.

[Speaker 1] (6:41:04 - 6:48:57)
Ah, yes, yes. Now, as you mentioned, it is true that for some people, some people are forced into surrender because they cannot stand the suffering anymore, and sometimes life does that to you, to a person. So the suffering becomes so intense that, that was the case with me.

Suffering became so intense, I couldn't stand it anymore. I couldn't stand myself anymore. On some level, there must have been a realization that I was generating the suffering.

I didn't really consciously know that, but I could not live with myself anymore, as it was the phrase that came into my head before I was disidentified from the egoic self, the mind-made, unhappy me. And then there are those people who are sufficiently conscious, like all of you here, yet they are sufficiently conscious to be able to surrender or accept voluntarily without being forced into it by life. So it's a voluntary decision to come to an acceptance of what arises in this moment, but the acceptance needs to be deep enough so that it's not just on a conceptual level, but also on a deeper level.

So the emotional level, for example. Otherwise you would be lying to yourself when you say, let's say you are in a situation that generates an irritation in you. Let's say a relatively small situation.

There's a long delay somewhere. You're waiting for something. There's a long delay.

You can find irritation beginning to build up. At some point you realize that irritation is beginning to build up. Then your mind says, I need to surrender.

I should surrender to this situation. I need to accept it the way it is. Okay.

And then the mind says, okay, I accept this situation the way it is. The question is, does it remain a statement in the mind? Because the true acceptance needs to go into every cell of your body.

You need to be in touch. This is why as a practice, body awareness is very helpful when you're not being challenged, just as to feel the inner body. So that habitually you're able to place attention into the inner energy field of your body, which also helps you to know what's going on in the emotional field of your body.

So let's say you get irritated at the airport. The flight is canceled. Now you're lining up.

Hypothetical situation. Many situations like that happen all the time. Your flight is canceled.

Now you're lining up again to book another, get on another flight. But there's 20 people ahead of you. Here in China, they're often, the airline industry is not very...

The long waiting periods and people get very upset at airports because they have to wait a long time. They suddenly start shouting, can't take anymore. So I accept this moment as it is.

And then you need to detect within yourself whether you have really accepted it because are you still feeling irritated or not? To be able to know if you're irritated or not, you need to know both whether your mind is continuing to produce thoughts of irritation. And maybe it is not because you have mentally decided you're not going to have any more thoughts.

But in the emotional field, you may still be angry and irritated. So your attention needs to move into the body so that you're aware, is there still irritation in here? While my mind is saying, I completely accept this moment.

Or you could say another example of that would be, I forgive you. I forgive you. But there's something in you that hasn't forgiven.

So you have forgiven on a superficial mental level. So you need to get your attention in there to actually feel what... It's not only what your mind is saying at this moment.

What does it feel like to be in this moment? What is the feeling of it? And that will tell you when you ask them, what's the feeling of this moment?

That directs your attention into the body. And then you'll notice whether there's still, or whether there's a contraction still. And if there is, you can notice it.

You say, oh, there's still irritation there. And then what you can do, for example, is accept whatever you feel. Acceptance, surprisingly, changes it most.

It's the greatest agent for change, accepting whatever you feel. Because whatever you feel is non-acceptance. So you bring acceptance into the non-acceptance, which is in the contraction or the vibrational frequency of anger or irritation.

You say, oh, this is, it's okay to feel that. And sometimes it's possible to just drop it too. Sometimes it's a, I don't really want that.

So you take one or two deep breaths and release it from the body. And then you have released it both mentally, because the irritation usually starts in the mind, the mind making judgments about the situation you find yourself in. The body then reacts to the judgment and creates an emotion that reflects the mental judgment.

So it's always good to start with the mind and realizing I am not irritated because of this situation. I'm irritated because what your mind is commenting on this situation. That's an enormous insight.

And that applies to so many instances in your life when you feel any kind of unhappiness being seemingly being caused by the situation you find yourself in, by people, circumstances, and so on. Seemingly caused, but 95% of the unhappiness to use a generic term in whatever form it arises, a 95% of the unhappiness is generated surprisingly by your mind, but their mind is saying about the situations that you find yourself in. Once you realize that, you realize that you can be free of that because you don't have to do it.

It's the egoic mind, the unconsciousness, the unobserved mind is generating it. So there, that's the first, there you stop. Then you look at the most, then also you have enough consciousness left when it's not continuously absorbed by agitated thought processes.

Then you have enough consciousness left to direct it into the body and examine what it is that you feel. So the two levels. So let me know how it goes next time you're at an airport in China, for example, or many, do you live, what city do you live in?

[Speaker 18] (6:48:58 - 6:48:58)
Shanghai.

[Speaker 1] (6:48:59 - 6:49:24)
Oh yeah. Well, that's where it's all happening. It must be a very dynamic place, I imagine.

And high energy. Everybody's active and doing things. And that's a wonderful place to practice presence.

It's ideal. And of course you're challenged all the time, but Shanghai needs you and people like you who bring consciousness there.

[Speaker 6] (6:49:24 - 6:49:26)
To bring you there.

[Speaker 1] (6:49:26 - 6:49:29)
Yes. Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 6] (6:49:30 - 6:49:31)
Thank you. Thanks.

[Speaker 1] (6:49:39 - 7:11:07)
This mind-made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive. To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation. I'm aware of fear that is almost continual in me.

My parents were Holocaust survivors, and in spite of my awareness of the anxiety and fear, it does not seem to lessen. Lessen. I know you talk about in any given moment, there's never a problem, but when you're terrified all the time, there is a problem because you are afraid.

This happens to be here. And of course it's connected to what we've just been saying. Now, this is somebody here who a lot of the time is in a state of fear or anxiety.

It could be related to something in his past or his parents or perhaps other generations too. And what to do? You can't get rid of being terrified except being in a state of fear most of the time.

What you can do is not to allow the fear to rise up into your mind and control your thought processes. Because then there would be a normal thing when you are identified. The emotion that's there rises into your mind and then it causes you to think thoughts that correspond to the emotion, fearful thoughts in this case.

And then you would get a vicious circle building up between the emotion of fear, the thoughts you think, which are fearful thoughts, which give more energy to the emotion. So the more fearful thoughts you think, the more it perpetuates the fear that you feel. So to cut, to sever the link between the emotion that you feel and your thought processes, what you do is, and this is not pleasant, but it's possible, you place your attention on the emotion.

You feel it. It's unpleasant, but it's not going to kill you. A child would probably not be able to do that if it's intense.

It might have to escape into some, through dissociation or whatever, possibly. But an adult, it's not going to kill you. It might kill you if you allow it to rise into your mind, because you might even commit suicide if you can't stand this anymore, but it will not kill you in itself.

So feel it. And then you shine the light of awareness on it. And you may have to do that a lot.

And at first it's not pleasant, but it's a burning up of the old emotion. And the only way to get rid of it is to accept it as it is right now. If you want to get rid of it, you can't.

But that complete acceptance of what is, is actually the doorway through it. It's a transformation of it. And if it's extreme, that can become your main meditation in life.

And that will become your main teacher. And that will bring about your transformation. In some people's lives, there is one huge disability, one huge source of suffering or pain that it could be a physical disability.

It could be a situation like being in prison. It could be an emotion like that, that you carry inside that doesn't need to go, doesn't want to go away. So in certain people's lives, there is one major thing that seems to color your entire life and make your entire life seemingly makes it impossible for you to ever be free or happy or joyful.

But if that one thing, if you surrender to it, allow it to be and make it as a continuous spiritual practice, you need nothing else. That one thing will transform you if you surrender to it. And there will come a point when you are grateful that you had to go through that because it will have taken you, it will be the greatest spiritual teacher.

So there was, I believe, if I remember correctly, even Epictetus, that philosopher who said, it's not the situation that makes you unhappy, it's the thought that makes you unhappy. If I remember correctly, he was also crippled. He couldn't walk properly and he was a slave until he became freed.

So it's often humans who have one major disability or some huge, huge difficulty in life. And that becomes their catalyst for spiritual transformation. If they can surrender to it, allow it to be acceptance.

I call it acceptance of the seemingly unacceptable. Stephen Hawking's case, for example, I don't know to what extent he awakened spiritually, but he accepted the unacceptable. And so certain miracles happened.

He survived. Nobody would have thought it possible. And his life became fruitful on one level, at least.

Acceptance of the unacceptable is a great source of grace in this world. It's just a miracle. But it's an arduous, it can be an arduous process, especially for this questioner here who is here.

It may take a while. You have to endure it and be with it and surrender to it a lot of the time. And that's your meditation.

You don't need transcendental meditation. Your pain, your fear is enough. Be with it.

Allow it to be there. And gradually you will notice the transformation. That's the alchemy of transformation, the alchemy of suffering into...

The old meaning of alchemy is base metal. There comes this guy who experiments in the chemical kitchen and he transforms base metal into gold. So there've been medieval times, there was a lot of interest in alchemy.

So that would be the material level of alchemy. But on a spiritual level, alchemy is the transformation of suffering into consciousness. And that only happens if you bring surrender to the suffering.

This is how the reason why in India, for example, you have holy men or also, I suppose, holy women who inflict the most incredible suffering on themselves for years. There's a man who stands on one leg continuously, he even sleeps on one leg. Or you might sleep, on the famous example, on a bed of nails.

Can't think of other examples, but it's incredible. And the idea behind it is voluntarily embrace suffering so that it brings about a transformation of consciousness by surrendering to it. I would not recommend that that is the way for you to go.

Life has enough. What life gives you is just right for you and enough. And some of you might say more than enough.

My prostate was cancerous and I had surgery on it. I had been cancer free or so I thought, but after seven years, cancer has once again reared its ugly presence in the region. I'm having difficulty coping with this plus type two diabetes.

Well, it seems the destiny of many humans to be confronted with something like that. At some point or something similar. So I will just explain what I have addressed before a few times with regard to serious illness.

And that is not to, as much as possible, avoid the mental, I'm not saying don't recognize reality like in the previous question, but what I'm saying is avoid an excessive mental dwelling on either the condition that has a name or me as the one who suffers from that condition. So that your mind does not continuously strengthen that mind form of the illness mind form or me as my identity as a sufferer from that illness by thinking about it, which of course creates a lot of fear and won't make you feel good. In other words, in order to become free, now, it is a secondary thing, what kind of treatment you go in for, whether it's conventional treatment, whether it's alternative treatment, whether it's no treatment at all, all that only you can know.

But what is your state of consciousness? And it's a wonderful, it sounds strange for me to say that it is a great opportunity to have an illness like that. And this has been confirmed to me by a number of people that I've known who have had similar illnesses.

One or two seem to get cured, others did not, but that was secondary. They said that it forced them into a very intense presence because they noticed when they were not present, they were very unhappy. So the illness forced them into just living more and more in the present moment.

An extreme example of that was I read last year, I sent it to, I read it on the BBC News, my app, there was a musician in England, popular music, I had never heard of him, but apparently he was quite well known in England who got diagnosed with cancer. And he reports in an interview that when he left the doctor's office, he felt ecstatic. This is very rare.

He felt ecstatically happy and he couldn't quite figure out why. And now he says, I now realize all the problems that I thought I had are completely meaningless and he lives completely in the now. And the rare thing with him was that that happened immediately as he left the doctor's office.

I've never heard that before, that somebody, so can you be, allow the illness to push you into the awakened state. Their motivation is very strong now. And it could happen to anybody who is Luganti.

I have not had a serious illness my whole life. I haven't even seen the inside of a hospital, but who can say that it's not going to happen? Everybody is one heartbeat away from death.

Well, the death of the physical body. And most, if you don't die in an accident, if you die, you might die of old age, if you're lucky or unlucky, depending what your old age looks like. Or as somebody once said, old age isn't so bad if you consider the alternative.

So it's either that, most people here, including myself, will probably die of something, which would be heart attack, cancer, stroke. Well, I think those are the main things. Could be an accident too, of course, or something more rare.

Something eventually comes. So ultimately how long your life is, although I must admit, if it comes to a very young person, it may be more difficult. One person hasn't lived completely, but even there, the shift is possible so that you allow the condition, the illness to force you into just absolute present moment awareness in which you do not suffer.

A lot of the suffering of the illness arises from what your mind is saying. Of course, with some illnesses, pain eventually comes. That is pain.

When I use the word suffering, I really refer to psychological suffering. If there's pain, then perhaps something is done to alleviate the pain and you also need to surrender. But there may be many conditions where there is actually no pain for quite a long time, but you know there is that illness.

So go away from focusing excessively on the idea of illness in the mind and in order to get out of the idea of illness, which is not a denial that, it's not saying I don't have it. No, you're just not going there. You're just being in the present moment.

And several people that were part of, came to me over the years, especially at a time when I still had more personal contact with people who would come to me. I've seen several who had developed fatal illnesses and in the last months of their lives became quite radiant, quite awakened really. The flowering that is meant to be the purpose of human life, the flowering of consciousness happened.

They didn't need another 25 years of life, which means 25 years of eating, 25 years of taking the dog for a walk, going on vacation, seeing a few more sunsets and adding more life experiences. And you can add more and more, but is that the real purpose of your life? To add more and they're good, but then you need more and more and more life experiences and add more.

No, there's something else that is more vital, more important. And that's the flowering, the shift in consciousness. Then time becomes immaterial, whether you have a few more months or another 20 years or 30 years.

So it was wonderful to see those people becoming radiant and becoming in a way like little children because the whole personality collapsed. The ego could not survive. Knowing that it had no future.

If the ego really knows it has no future, either it goes into intense suffering and complaining and victim identity. Why did this happen to me? To me?

Or it dissolves.

[Speaker 3] (7:12:06 - 7:18:39)
It's our intention. Our intention is everything. Nothing happens on this planet without it.

Not one single thing has ever been accomplished without intention. So I started thinking about my life and I started thinking about this conference and what we're about. And I looked back and I thought, well, I was two people my whole life.

I was in the living room, entertaining people, being a monkey, you know, doing my thing for the company and trying to relieve my mother who was suffering. She had rheumatoid arthritis and phlebitis and everything, everything under the sun that was nagging at her. And she was depressed and I wanted her to be free.

And I wanted her to realize that her life was worth something because she gave birth to someone who was worth something. And then I would go into my room and I would sit with a legal pad. I was a little kid.

And I would sit there and I would try to figure out what it meant, what it was all about. Why are we here? What is this?

And one day I read something from Buddha that said that all spirituality is about relieving suffering. And I suddenly realized that's what I'm doing in the other room. And I'm aligned you know this, my purpose is aligned with this.

So I felt incredibly lucky. I lose sight of that all the time. I get caught up in different concerns and ego concerns.

But I'm so lucky to be a part of this community and to do something that is of value. And I really cherish that. And we are all one thing.

It really is true. Can I speak to the person in the last row, in the very last seat against the wall? Is there someone back there that can say hello?

What's your name? Andrea, are you aware that do you have the distinct palpable feeling that your intention created this evening as well as Melissa's? Do you understand that all of this, this entire event is happening inside you?

We'll just try to feel it for a second because it's a trip, man. Some people go to the Super Bowl. I am the Super Bowl, man.

I swear. My friends are all going to see that play. That was great.

I'm like, yeah, but the energy coming out of me right now, man, is unbelievable. I'm just sitting there. I'm the stadium.

I'm the vendors outside. I'm the crack dealer on the corner. I'm everything, man.

There's no end to it and it's so much fun. It's so much fun. So I hope you can feel that and I hope you understand that you are one of the creators of this evening, that your intentions and your desires created this evening as well.

And then I hope you are able to ask yourself, why did I get such a crappy seat and be okay with it? I mean, you're in the last row in the last seat. And yet you created this.

That's got to be. It's a really selfless thing to do. A few months ago, after knowing Eckhart Tolle for a while and studying the books, I woke up and I suddenly got it.

I understood suddenly how thought was just an illusory thing. And how thought is responsible for, if not all, most of the suffering we experience. And then I suddenly felt like I was looking at these thoughts from another perspective and I wondered, who is it that's aware that I'm thinking?

And suddenly I was thrown into this expansive, amazing feeling of freedom from myself, from my problems. I saw that I was bigger than what I do. I was bigger than my body.

I was everything and everyone. I was no longer a fragment of the universe. I was the universe.

And ever since that day, I've been trying to get back there. It comes and it goes. It's like riding a wave.

Sometimes I'm on, sometimes I'm off, but at least I know where I want to go and that I want to take as many people with me as I possibly can because the feeling is amazing.

[Speaker 1] (7:19:14 - 7:44:24)
Thank you, wonderful. Welcome. My first time here, up north.

And it is perhaps not mere coincidence but synchronistic that we are coming together here at a time of crisis, politically. And it is significant that a group of people are gathering here who are focused on spiritual awakening and of course, the inevitable thing that comes with spiritual awakening, that's inner peace. And that's what needed, not only here, but in the rest of the world too.

Most of you are here because you're already undergoing what I call the awakening process. And I'm sure some of you are here who are already awake and just enjoy listening to me. Don't need to be here anymore, but that's fine.

And one or two may be here against their free will because your partner or a relative or a good friend told you that you really need to come here. And it is a sad fact that the people who really need to be here are not going to be here, mostly. But that's fine.

Awakening eventually will come to the whole of humanity. But right now, at this time, a certain segment of humanity is beginning to go through this evolutionary shift, which I sometimes call the awakening of consciousness. And I guess, although

I have no plans, particular plans for this evening, but my feeling is that it's going to be about awakening, the awakening of human consciousness.

And not only about the awakening of human consciousness, I have a feeling that this evening is going to be an essential part of the awakening that's happening on the planet here and there. So I'd like this evening to be not only interesting for you on a conceptual level or entertaining, because that wouldn't be quite enough and you might get bored after half an hour or so. But more importantly, I'd like this evening to be experiential for you.

Something that goes beyond conceptual understanding or taking in new ideas, interesting ideas, and then you can go home afterwards and say, oh, that was interesting what he talked about. I don't remember everything, but that was an interesting idea. There may be one or two interesting ideas, but this is not what this evening is about.

It's something deeper, a shift in consciousness. So I'd like you to experience as we spend this evening together, to experience or to deepen, because many of you have already, are already going through this shift. Then this evening is a deepening for you of this shift in consciousness.

And for one or two of you, it may be the first time and that may be one or two of those of you who didn't really want to come here, but were dragged here by someone else. And you may get suddenly, have your first glimpse of what is meant by awakening. And what in Zen they called Satori.

And you suddenly go, oh, now I know what he's talking about. That's what it is. And then you talk to a friend about it tomorrow and say, well, what is it?

And say, well, I can't explain it, but I realized something. Humanity is going through a very, what has been until now, a very slow evolutionary progression, human consciousness. So slow that you would hardly notice it.

Humans are slow learners. They repeat the same mistake again and again. The same thing that causes them suffering, they do it again and again and again, both personal on this personal level and on a collective level.

The same mistakes politicians make and so on, until a point comes when they can't stand the suffering anymore. And that's always a good point to reach. And then suddenly an inner opening happens.

Suffering has its purpose. And many of you would not be here. I would even say most, perhaps even all of you would not be here if you had not had your share of human suffering.

So retrospectively, we can be grateful for the suffering that we as individuals have gone through, because it has taken us to this point of the awakening of consciousness. This also applies to the whole of humanity. Humanity is an, you can consider it as an organism that is gradually evolving, the collective consciousness of humanity.

Each individual is an expression of the collective consciousness of humanity. And the collective consciousness of humanity is an expression of the one universal consciousness. The greatest mystery of the universe, and perhaps this is a good starting point for our evening.

The greatest mystery of the universe is not out in outer space, the mysteries of the galaxies, the mysteries of the black holes, the billions of galaxies that exist, that it is phenomenal, it's unbelievable. And the greatest mystery is not on the atomic level, which is also unbelievable. The world that is there, the atomic and subatomic level that scientists explore, which we only understand a tiny fragment of, just as we only understand the tiniest of fragments of what is out there.

So you have the two realms, the two mysteries, the outer space, and then the macrocosm, and you have the microcosm. And people write books, great scientists write books about the mysteries of the universe. And the amazing thing is, many of these books, very good books, fail to mention one word.

They explore the mysteries of the universe, but there's one word, you can have a whole book on the mysteries of the universe, either the macrocosm or the microcosm or the two together. The one word that's not mentioned is consciousness. Which is the foremost fundamental mystery, the fact that the universe is conscious.

That is the most amazing miracle. How do I know that the universe is conscious? Well, I am conscious.

You are conscious. The universe is conscious in us. The universe is experiencing itself for a brief moment as a human being.

It's also experiencing itself for brief moments as a plant or an animal. And that's an amazing thing. Now, scientists are probably never going to figure out what consciousness is.

If it's even possible to figure out what consciousness is, because scientists is concerned with looking out there. You can either look out into outer space or you look into the most, the innermost of matter. But what scientists don't look at is their own consciousness.

Which is the universe looking at itself. So the awakening of human consciousness is, and I'll give you now the answer in case you have better things to do. So I'll tell you the secret of the universe now.

And so if you want to have a pint after this, it's okay. At least you know the secret of the universe. And let's just settle into the present moment.

Which is not something perhaps that you would normally do because there's always something else that's more important or pretends to be more important. And then you forget that the only important, the only really important thing in your life is the present moment. Because there is nothing else, ever.

You have to really realize that fully to see the implications of that. And how one could almost say devastating it is to realize that there's only ever this moment. But most people live as if other things, past and future, were more important than this moment.

It's an unconscious pattern. So meditation is about becoming present and the word itself implies, of course, now, present moment. So we sometimes speak of present moment awareness.

I sometimes call it presence. And that is what meditation is all about. Discovering that dimension of consciousness in yourself and usually meditation techniques are designed to get you there.

But our meditation is a meditation that does not really have any particular techniques. I'm just inviting you to come into this present moment with your attention directly. Just drop into the now.

This is something you can only verify or realize for yourself that you can actually almost sense, one could say, the presence of the present moment. Well, it has no shape or form. So you can become conscious of the present moment itself.

What does that mean? First of all, you become more conscious of sensory perceptions. An alertness arises that normally is not there when you are trapped in the continuous stream of thinking.

Then that alertness that is synonymous with presence or awareness is just not there. So the normal state of consciousness is to be trapped in this continuous stream of thinking, a lot of it quite useless and repetitive. Thinking can be a powerful thing, but most people's thinking, 99% of it is repetitive, useless, often negative.

It's mental noise. And when you're identified with that, when there's that voice in your head that never stops speaking and you don't even know that you are not that voice, so you think you are the voice, you become the voice, that is a dreamlike state. And you can observe people around you often who are in that dreamlike state.

You can see it in their eyes. They're not here. All their attention is absorbed by their thinking.

They're just a little bit left, just that they know where they are going and not bump into furniture. But so you can see how many people are most of the time not really present because almost all their attention is absorbed by this continuous noise of thinking. And so they go, and when they look at you, they don't really see you.

At best, they see you through the screen of thinking, which is judgments that they may have about you. So there's never a clear perception of anything. Everything is filtered through the thinking, through the judgments of the mind.

And that's traditionally in spirituality, that's called being asleep. And that's why the term that is used in various ancient spiritual traditions for enlightenment or whatever you want to call it is awakening. So there's an alertness that is suddenly there when you become conscious of the present moment.

At first, you might notice it as suddenly becoming more aware of your sense perceptions, listening, looking, seeing, hearing. You might also find that alertness is there when something new suddenly arises in your field of vision, somebody comes into the, something appears, or in your hearing, a sudden noise, and when a sudden noise appears, and or suddenly somebody comes in or comes around the corner, and you suddenly look or listen, and there's an alertness behind the looking and listening. And for those few seconds, when that new thing arises and you give it your full attention, for those few seconds, three, four, five, maybe two, there's not a thought in your head.

Thought then comes in and after a few seconds, and it may for some people only be a couple of seconds, and then immediately interprets what it is there. But there is always, there's a moment when something new arises, when there is clear perception and just an alertness in the background. And that's an interesting moment because that is a natural way of presence arising in you, but usually it's so short-lived that people miss it.

So it's a good thing to discover that you're actually already meditating for brief moments. You are in the state that we call meditation and perhaps didn't even know it. And sometimes there may be moments when you just sit somewhere and you suddenly become completely comfortable with that moment as it is.

And an inner peace arises and you feel there's nothing missing here. And this can suddenly can happen where before your mind said, why am I still waiting here in this waiting room? I've been sitting here for an hour and why are they keeping me waiting?

And so on the mind, and suddenly there may be a shift and you say, well, I'm here this moment, I might as well be here fully. And suddenly all that noise of thinking subsides and you realize actually there's nothing really missing in this moment. I'm breathing, looking, listening, feeling alive.

And it's fine when the mind is not telling me that it's not fine. And you'll be surprised how often the present moment is fine when you really check it out. Whereas the mind would habitually tell you that it's not fine.

It's not good enough. Something is missing. Something shouldn't be there.

But of course it is. And when you argue with what is in your mind that's called unhappiness in whatever form it comes. Irritation, impatience anger, sadness.

So meditation is learning to align yourself internally with the present moment and become aware of the present moment. So first of all, through sensory perceptions. So I just said that sometimes those things arise naturally.

You suddenly either something new comes into your field of vision or your hearing and an alertness is there for a few seconds. Or there may be a moment when you are relaxing into the present moment. And I'm not talking about becoming tired because that's not where we are going.

We are not going towards sleep. We are going towards a heightened sense of alertness which is what the meditative state is. Or let's do away with the term meditation altogether and just call it presence.

There's a heightened state of alertness is very different from the lowered alertness that when you are moving towards sleep. So that is not meditation. And even when people talk about relaxation usually often it's associated in people's minds with kind of you're gradually moving towards sleep.

I'm so relaxed now. Or if you go to a hypnotist, you might say and your eyes are becoming heavier and heavier and we are not going that way. That's nice.

It gives you a little bit of relief from your mind. But here we are exploring the possibility of a higher state of consciousness, heightened alertness.

[Speaker 10] (7:44:51 - 7:46:54)
So the question I wanted to ask you is could you comment on the relationship of chi which is the relationship of chi to Tao which is Buddhist I think. I know it is. How do you experience it?

I'm not crying. This is just water. Yeah, tears are usually water.

I experience chi energy like I feel like a lot of energy. So I think of energy as formed, as something that's formed. It can be kind of gross like the energy I feel now.

I feel it's very gross. Or it can be very fine, but it's all energy. And I feel that Tao, if it's what I think it means, is more like God which is not energy.

That's my opinion. And I really was... But what makes you think that energy is not God?

Well, it is, of course. Everything is part of that, but... So may I ask you, are you trying to separate the two?

I'm sorry?

[Speaker 2] (7:46:54 - 7:47:00)
May I ask, are you trying to separate the two? Like there's Tao here, there's God here, and there's energy here?

[Speaker 10] (7:47:01 - 7:47:05)
Well, I'm not trying, but maybe that's what I'm doing. It's possible.

[Speaker 18] (7:47:05 - 7:47:06)
Yeah. Hello.

[Speaker 9] (7:47:29 - 7:49:21)
It's the first time that I stand in front of so many people, so I'm a bit nervous. I guess I represent one of those, I suppose, many women who hold trauma from their childhood and have a pain body and have experienced how beautiful the connection with Source can be and how healing it can be. And so at the moment, I am going to...

Well, I've been contemplating a lot on the different energies that we hold, so two of them, so the Divine Feminine and the Divine Masculine, and also how much separation it really causes in this world and how much conditioning there is on what is feminine and what is masculine. And so Eckhart and also you talk about the one consciousness, the oneness, the one universal energy that we draw from, and yet still we also talk about yin and yang. And so I am just a little bit confused about...

So I am a woman, also the label says, and in my form. And so I'm asking myself, when I draw from Source, is it that I draw from the yin as a woman or is it that I draw from yin and yang? Is there no difference?

Is it just a difference in the form, how I express it? So I'm really kind of fascinated by this question of what is the unconditioned yin and what is the unconditioned yang?

[Speaker 2] (7:49:24 - 7:55:04)
The Source is neither yin or yang. Your being is neither female or male. The Source, you can say, is a nothingness, it's nothing.

Yet it's potential of everything. So the yin and the yang is the manifestation of form. So form is dual.

The non-dual, the unmanifested, is formless. Absolutely formless. Yet manifests itself as duality, as form.

So when we draw from the Source, we don't draw a yin and we don't draw a yang. We draw from the vastness of the Tao that cannot be named, cannot be described. But yet we use pointers and we have these words, these limited words, that we can point to this Source and point to who we are.

That is beyond the form. And I may use the words like yin, all the yin qualities, in order to be able to access stillness. So the spiritual words to use are like yin qualities.

So we have yin, yin is the female, which is always... And you can imagine the mountains all around and we have a mountain and you have a valley. And the feminine represents that valley, which is not the form here, but just the space here.

And the yang, the masculine, represents that which exists. So we need, it's almost like we need this duality in order to be able to see ourselves. So in other words, and I've said this before, if the whole world were the color green, we wouldn't know what green was.

We just wouldn't know it. But we have these differences. The opposites.

And everything in this manifested world is opposite. We have male trees, we have female trees, although I can't tell the difference, but there are, you know. So it's all opposite.

We just wouldn't know it. We wouldn't know this flower from a different flower. We wouldn't know this flower from a different flower.

You from me if we just all look the same. If we were all green. So the source that we draw, you go beyond any concepts, any words.

Because really there are no words to truly describe the unmanifested, the formless dimension. Of the source of stillness. But yet all this describes it all too at the same time.

And the beauty behind that, so the beauty is that this stillness coming through that form, the energy, which is the purest. You can say it's still form, energy is still form. So our life energy is still form, but it's the purest life form arising from the source of emptiness, nothingness, sometimes it's called.

And that's where we go to. We go to that source of no words, no description, no form. Yet it's here within.

It's here outside, it's neither in or out. But we sense it. Without our forms we probably would not even be able to sense it.

Because we are it. But we get a chance, an opportunity to sense with our human bodies. Not only here, but inside.

That space inside us senses the space, the bigger space.

[Speaker 9] (7:55:12 - 7:55:13)
Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (7:56:15 - 7:56:29)
All the things that I was so anxious about, that were created, what was it that was so unnecessary and pointless? All the things that I've been striving for were ultimately pointless.

[Speaker 17] (7:56:34 - 7:57:00)
So suffering in your life, if it still arises, it's used so that the ego gets burned up by the suffering, so to speak. The ego gets burned up in this fire of suffering.

[Speaker 1] (7:57:01 - 7:57:57)
Now we can call this conscious suffering. That's a very interesting concept, conscious suffering. When suffering arises, become aware of it, and accept that it's there.

In the form of fear, anxiety, regret, you have self-pity, you have unhappy sense of self, complaining about your life, many forms of suffering. You've lost things you don't know. Things that you had identified with are taken away from you.

Who am I now? I'm nobody. I'm nobody.

Well, that's great. Be nobody more completely.

[Speaker 17] (7:58:00 - 7:58:06)
Realize fully you're nobody-less. You're nobody-ness.

[Speaker 1] (7:58:13 - 8:07:45)
I don't know who I am anymore. I've lost everything. All the things I've worked for have gone.

Everything is so pointless. Their mind is still talking. It's all been for nothing.

It's all meaningless, meaningless. This is your mind talking. Don't believe in the things it says, but it continues talking.

Many humans in this world are suffering from what we could call nihilism. I don't know if you know that word, nihilism. Nihilism means the belief that everything is absolutely and utterly pointless.

That's a deep form of suffering, nihilism. It doesn't make what's the point of it, or just this awful life of mine. The whole world is pointless.

It's so awful. That's a very deep suffering, the total lack of meaning. Everything is arbitrary, random, and meaninglessness is a mental disease that is afflicting millions of humans.

Because everybody, the mainstream culture still believes, it goes back to the 19th century, it goes back to Darwin, Origin of Species, and said life evolved, which undoubtedly is true. But he said life evolved, but the evolution of life on this planet is an arbitrary, random course of events. Molecules and atoms at random coming together and forming life forms over millions of years.

Random, the idea of randomness in the theory of evolution put forward by Darwin and others, the idea of randomness means there's no purpose or intelligence behind it whatsoever. It's a random process. In other words, it's the belief that everything, that all life on this planet has no meaning.

It just is a meaningless conglomeration of atoms and molecules. It's ultimately meaningless. That basically is the underlying assumption behind the theory of evolution that many people still believe.

It has seeped into mainstream culture, and even people who have never even heard of Darwin, it has seeped into their belief system that we live in a meaningless universe. Before that happened, we had certain religious beliefs, so there was some meaning. And all those, a lot of that perhaps was ideological and ego-driven.

Nevertheless, in the ancient religion, there is the access to the transcendent is still there here and there. So there were still little openings into the transcendent, even though many forms of religion developed into ideological belief systems that strengthened the ego. Nevertheless, religion still carried, or still carry, the secret of transcendence is still there hiding within the religions.

And that became inaccessible to many humans. So now we have the pandemic of nihilism. This is one of the pandemics far worse than any physical pandemic.

That everything, the belief that everything is meaningless. So, and you can have a meaning in your life that is very limited. Like for many people, the meaning, okay, I want to have a career that gives you limited meaning in your personal life.

I'm working for a career, nothing wrong with that. I'm working to create a better life for myself and my family. That's also wonderful and great.

I'm working to achieve recognition in this world, et cetera, et cetera. That's fine too. But at some point, a meaning that is purely personal may begin to lose its power.

So that, let's say you've spent two or three decades working for your career, which is nothing wrong with it. At some point, you may arrive at a point where your career doesn't mean anything anymore, or you lose it. That you lose your career and your status, or it consumes you so completely that you become ill with stress.

Or in some other way, you turn into something that's not satisfying at all. It actually creates suffering. So something can give you limited meaning for a while, for years, and then suddenly turn out to be ultimately meaningless.

So some people suddenly wake up and say, all my life, some people fall ill, seriously ill. And then they look back on their life and say, all this was so pointless, accumulating possessions. Why did I do that?

What was the point in that? All the things that I was so anxious about, when they're, now they're, let's say they're seriously ill now. All the things that I was so anxious about, that were created, what was, it was so unnecessary and pointless.

All the things that I'd been striving for were ultimately pointless. That can be an opening. Suddenly, wow, the limited personal meaning, which was fine.

It's better than no meaning at all. To have a personal meaning in your life, better than no meaning at all. But ultimately, that's not satisfying in the long term.

You have to go deeper, to a deeper meaning that transcends who you are as a person. And that is, am I aligned with the purpose of the universe? That is the ultimate true meaning.

Am I aligned with a purpose? And what is the purpose of the universe? The purpose of the universe is consciousness, bringing more consciousness into this dimension.

That's the purpose of the universe. Bringing more consciousness into this dimension. Am I aligned with that?

And then, if that is the case, if you're aligned with that, you are a bringer of consciousness, a bringer of light. That is the ultimate true purpose. And it could be that your personal purpose and the deeper purpose can go together.

That's fine. So you can have a career, and yet it's not totally ego-dominated while you are active working. You bring in the light of consciousness.

You do things in your work that bring more consciousness into this dimension. That's wonderful. So you can have, it is not necessarily a case of either having a career or being aligned with universal purpose, which is you can bring the two together.

That's perfectly, that's the balance between, the balance between being and doing, as I sometimes call it, the balance between being and doing, bringing those two together. But so the purpose, there's only one true purpose in your life, and that you have to discover that, and that is, am I aligned with the consciousness? Am I a bringer of consciousness?

So that's the end of nihilism, is that, and it no longer matters. Your entire past becomes relatively unimportant when you realize the meaning of life is to be a bringer of consciousness. Let's say your entire past was one disaster after another.

It happens, some people's life is like, unfortunately, it was like that. Let's say you've ended up in prison because you did one wrong and bad thing after another. And, but then you look back in your so-called life and say, my God, that was a disaster.

My entire life was just a disaster.

[Speaker 17] (8:07:47 - 8:07:55)
Okay, but at this moment, I realize the consciousness that I am.

[Speaker 1] (8:07:58 - 8:11:01)
And I've, all the suffering that I have created for myself and others, all the suffering I've created for myself and others was part of the egoic dream, the delusion, the egoic delusion and the conditioning that I came into this world with. And then you awaken at this moment. If a totally disastrous life brings you to a point of awakening now, the whole thing was great because it suddenly has a purpose.

Retrospectively, all the disasters brought you to this moment of awakening. So in retrospect, what was totally absurd and meaningless, suddenly it fulfilled a purpose. The past can suddenly be realized as having fulfilled its purpose by creating the suffering that led to your awakening.

So there's no regret anymore about the past. It all made sense. So it's, the meaning arises retrospectively.

It only remains absurd and disastrous if the awakening doesn't happen. Then you're trapped in the dreadful dream, continue to be trapped in it. Well, so be aligned with universal purpose.

That is the ultimate purpose. No matter what you do, no matter how it expresses itself through you, that doesn't matter. But realize that as, and if you want to look at your life in terms of failure and success, as many people do, is my life a failure?

Is my life a success? How do you, what criterion do you use for failure or success? Do you allow this world to tell you whether you're a failure or success?

To a large extent, this world is insane. So are you allowing an insane world to tell you whether your life is a failure or success? Well, no, if this world cannot tell you, then what is it?

Obviously, the only true criterion is whether you are conscious or not in this moment. If you're conscious in this moment, instead of being totally immersed in the dream of your conditioned unawareness, the fictitious person, if you are conscious in this moment, then that is the greatest and only true success there could be in this life.

[Speaker 5] (8:11:28 - 8:12:50)
As we search to focus on our true self, our true I, and we look at the various

types of attachments, status, materialism, body image, I specifically have a problem with letting go of the concept of relationship and roles, and specifically the role of mother. And although I see the agonic risk in hanging on to the role of mother and have no problem with the challenge of trying to let go of that, it's the concept of letting go of, and having motivation to let go of the bond between mother and child that I struggle with. How old is your child?

My children are adults. I have two living and one that I have buried. So I embrace and fully accept the opportunity that they all may go at any time.

It's not that, but I'm talking about the emotional bond. So I'd like your comment on how we accept and embrace the concept of a letting go of the emotional bond. Can I ask, I'm gonna stay there.

[Speaker 2] (8:12:51 - 8:12:56)
Can I ask you whether you have fully grieved the one that you have lost?

[Speaker 5] (8:12:56 - 8:13:39)
I feel that we have. It's been 30 years, and my belief in the spirituality that we speak of has assisted me in incorporating that into our lives. Are you afraid your other children may die before you pass?

No, I have no fear of that. I have no fear of death for any of us. Okay.

But you have a fear of letting go. I have no motivation to let go of the attachment between any one of the three living or dead. I'm asking for your feedback on how to let go of the attachment.

[Speaker 2] (8:13:42 - 8:15:36)
Well, what's coming through is that it's not the bond so much that you have to let go of. It's the mother role to let go of. And begin, when you let go of that, you are able to then begin a new sort of relationship, a more perhaps adult to adult relationship, a friendship to friendship relationship, rather than the mother-daughter, mother-son relationship.

Now, usually when we hang onto our roles, it gives the ego a sense of something, gives the mind something. Because after all, you know, we've been mothers for a very long time. But there comes a point where if you don't let go, then a new relationship cannot form, a different type of relationship, a more adult relationship.

Because mother relationship, let's face it, mother's, you know, concept of mother could be telling your child what to do or having your child being able to come to you. But if we don't let go of that, the result then for your child is also not being able to be fully themselves. And you know that because you're shaking your head.

And in turn, you are not able to be fully yourself. So, do you want to be fully yourself? Of course.

Then let go.

[Speaker 5] (8:15:38 - 8:15:50)
So am I understanding correctly that letting go of the attachment of roles and relationships is not literally letting go of valuing that, but rather letting go of that identifying you?

[Speaker 2] (8:15:51 - 8:17:34)
Exactly. When we have an expectation of something, so when I realized in my

relationship with Eckhart early on, I had a lot of expectations. A lot of expectations.

Things that I didn't want in a relationship anymore, things that I wanted in a relationship. And he's like, no. So, when I suddenly saw that, oh my God, it was like this aha moment.

Oh my God, I'm not having a real relationship with my man here. I'm having a relationship with the idea in my head. So you won't be able to have a full relationship with your children until you let go of the role.

Because you don't need to be a mother anymore. They're not little. So, but mothers are okay.

They're wonderful. But when they get to be, you know, like older, it's no longer wonderful. It blocks them from growing and being who they are and blocks you from growing and being who you are.

The question is, are you willing to discover who you really are? And have them discover who they really are and see them who they really are.

[Speaker 5] (8:17:34 - 8:17:37)
Thank you for the clarification. Great.

[Speaker 1] (8:18:18 - 9:24:50)
Once you become aware, do you have to have a plan of where you're going? Or do you leave that up to the universe to bring that to you for you then to make the choice? That's, many people have been asking that question.

Do you have a plan to where you're going? Or does that just happen when you are in touch with the creative power within you? Either way may be the case.

For some people, something just spontaneously and organically grows. And before they know it, they are engaged in some inspired and empowered activity. It may start very small and they may not even know that how it's going to grow and develop.

It's just the consciousness takes over and they didn't plan it. Sometimes, just an example, you could have a musician who just loves playing this instrument and then he is at a street corner playing his instrument. And then somebody comes and says, oh, this is great.

Why don't you try come to a studio? And it can develop from there without him having had any plan, just enjoying the doing. For others, something may come to them suddenly, a mental, an image of something that wants to, I put it that way, I say that wants to be created.

It's not so much I want to create this. When something comes to you from a deeper level, it feels more like that this wants to be created. So it comes, an image or a thought even comes to you and then you suddenly know what it is that wants to be created through you.

And then one could say that you have a plan, but the plan is very different from the plans that the ego had when you were still trapped in ego structures because whatever plan the ego has is very limited by its needs. The ego really seeks itself through its plans. It seeks an enhancement of itself.

So those are the plans that the ego creates and they are flawed, deeply flawed. And whatever action you take in order to carry out the ego's plans is also going to be deeply flawed and will bring about a lot of heartache and problems and creates problems more and more for yourself and others. And you get, it's hard, it's a struggle.

That's always a sign that there's the ego somewhere, that you're struggling. I'm not talking about intensity. Things that, plans, so you have ego plans.

They are really, there's always a hidden self-seeking in whatever the plan might be. The ego, when it comes through the ego, there's a hidden, it's a hidden form of self-seeking. But the plans that I'm talking about here come from a deeper level within yourself.

That's why I usually say not that you want to create this or that, but it wants to be created through you. And so there is a, the deeper, the unconditioned wants to create form through you because it loves the creation of form. How do I know that?

Well, just look around and you see that the universe loves to create multiplicity, an incredible multiplicity of life forms everywhere throughout the cosmos. Just planet Earth alone, just look at the billions of life forms. So obviously the universe enjoys the creation of form and it has some purpose that we cannot conceptually, rationally, intellectually, fully understand, although we can have an inkling of why.

But we cannot fully understand what the ultimate purpose of the creation of forms is. Yes, we have an inkling, I sometimes talk of it, but one thing is certain, that the universe enjoys that. Consciousness enjoys the play of form and it can happen through you and it's deeply enjoyable.

So something may come to you, then that something that, and then you can say, oh, I have a plan and it'll be inspired and there's no self-seeking in it. In other words, you're not looking to whatever it is that wants to be created through you. You're not looking to it for happiness or self-enhancement or fame or wealth, that those things may come.

You may get fame, you may get wealth, you may get those things as by-products, but that's not the reason why this creation happens through you. There is no self-seeking and yet, whatever the ego would have sought for itself may come to you as the adding on, as Jesus puts it. Things may be added on.

If there's an enormous energy output from you into the world, it's not yours, of course, there's no personal energy, it would be a misperception. But if you become a channel for that universal energy, then, of course, things will come back to you, usually also in material forms. So there will be, if there's an enormous outflow, an enormous giving, not yours, but as a channel, things will come back to you because if you give out to the universe, the universe gives back.

So you may enjoy wealth, but it would be just an adding on to, or you might give part of it away, or all of it, whatever it is, that you feel is right for you. Just so you can, to summarize, for some, there's just a spontaneous evolution of the creative impulse into the external, and it happens through them without any prior plan. For others, something arises in their minds and they, yes, this is what I need to do.

This is what wants to come into being through me. I feel that very strongly. And then you take action.

And important is not, be aware of the energy field behind the action that you take so that you don't lose the presence because the ego, even there, can still take over. If any action you take in order to achieve something, if stress and negativity come in when you find obstacles, because there's always some obstacle that you encounter when you begin to create something new, there will be some obstacles. There will also be enormous help coming, not necessarily immediately, perhaps immediately, but at some point you will notice an influx of supportive energy.

But you may also encounter obstacles in the form of people who don't want you to create something new. People who are so stuck in their mind patterns, they resist anything new. So that's a very common thing.

Or obstacle in some other form. So if then, if you encounter an obstacle and there's negativity or attack, you're attacking, then you're quickly losing power. The ego is attempting to take over.

So whenever you are trying hard or struggling or stress arises, stress is another indicator that you are no longer fully aligned with the power within. Then you become stressed, upset, anxious, complaining, attacking somebody, you're losing power quickly. So that's a good indicator.

Whenever you engage in creative action, manifesting this or that, is stress arising. Now, I'm not saying that there cannot, there's not going to be an intense energy behind when you're engaged in creative activity. There is intense energy behind it, which from an external viewpoint can sometimes be misinterpreted almost as stress, but it's not stress at all.

It's just intensity of energy behind creation. It is, but it's joyful, it's intense, but joyful. And you can feel that intensity when you're in the midst of some creation happening through you, enormous intensity of energy.

And that's, but very different from stress. Stress is always, there's a, it's not flowing, but this intensity is flowing. And it deals with, the intensity deals with obstacles in a very different way from the ego.

The intensity can sweep away obstacles or it can transform obstacles into something helpful. Even humans, it doesn't attack. Another thing to be, yes, you find obstacles when you create something, but as I just mentioned, also you encounter the phenomenon of being supported.

If your creation is aligned with what the universe wants, then you, it becomes enormously empowered. It's like riding on a huge wave. Somebody wrote a poem or something about it.

Was it Shakespeare? It starts with, there is a tide in the affairs of men. And if, can't remember the rest, but so if you catch that tide, which is the tide of something wanting to be created through you and that movement, and then you're riding on this enormous wave.

And at some point the creation then happens. And so then that wave comes to an end. And then there may be a time period when there's more of a withdrawal before new creation happens.

So that varies from person to person. And it's exciting to, it's wonderful to be part of that because it's something, an entirely new way of being coming to this planet. Because happiness does not ultimately derive from this world.

This world is not designed to make you happy. It is designed to challenge you. And if you believe that this world is designed to make you happy, then you're going to get very angry because as the years pass in your life, you realize, why isn't my life working?

Why is this reality seems to be always throwing obstacles in my path? The moment I say, oh, it's okay now, this problem has been solved, another one pops up from behind you. And so you have these areas of your life, the main areas being your physical health, your financial situation, your living situation, your professional situation, your relationship situation.

And one of these areas usually develops problems. So you solve a problem in your financial area and then props up a relationship problem. You solve the relationship problem, suddenly you have a health problem.

It's interesting that you're constantly being challenged and you might have noticed, one of the greatest sources of challenges are human beings. Because humans are incredibly challenging. And although humans look to other humans often for some ultimate fulfillment through other humans, more often what they find through other humans is that other humans turn out to be a source of suffering.

And that is because you're stuck in the egoic mind and you have the egoic mind has certain expectations of the world, which includes whatever you experience in this world, has certain expectations that the world cannot meet. But if you believe that the world should, then that is a delusional reality that you will be continuously unhappy. The world continues to challenge you, but you believe the world is here to make you happy.

That's a terrible dilemma. So it means all your expectations are delusory, but you don't know it. And that creates an enormous amount of suffering because then every challenge that you encounter in this world, and they come one after another, every challenge that you encounter in this world, you then, because of that underlying expectation that something is wrong when you're being challenged, every challenge is then turned into unhappiness.

There's a big difference between a challenge and unhappiness. So when you have delusory expectations of the world, then the world will make you unhappy and not happy, but you continue to believe that something has gone fundamentally wrong in your life because life does not leave you alone. Or do you want some peace?

You want some, ah, you want the sense of, I've arrived, this is it. And occasionally it comes, but it never lasts so very long. So that's the dilemma.

There's the underlying state of ignorance, not knowing that the function of this world is to challenge you because only by challenging you does it provide the necessary incentive to awaken you. And it is, you notice after a while that as you gradually begin to awaken out of the unconsciousness, which is the complete identification with the conceptual egoic mind, you begin to realize that, oh, a lot of the unhappiness that you experience, and unhappiness is a generic term that could be many, many things. Even a state of irritation is already unhappiness.

Sadness is unhappiness. Anger is, any state that doesn't feel good is unhappiness. Any state of unhappiness, you begin to realize that a greater part of it is not derived from the situations in your life.

And when you realize that, that's the beginning of an awakening, let's say 90% of the unhappiness that you encounter is actually produced by your mind. And that's an amazing realization. There remain the 10% unhappiness.

You might be very, somebody, a loved one dies close to you. Of course, you experience, you weep. That is, of course, normal.

But if you observe the various forms of unhappiness in your life, from the very, the mildest forms of unhappiness to the more extreme forms of unhappiness, let's say, just two brief examples, a mild, very, very small, little bit of unhappiness arises many times when things happen in daily life and you can't immediately get what you want. You're on the phone, trying to get talk to your bank, but of course, there's no human being there. And even that is a, it's a minor form of unhappiness, but it is, you get very irritated and you don't, you think, well, this is caused by this dreadful bank that has no longer human beings that you can speak to.

Or you're lining up, airports are a great place to observe small forms of unhappiness because often so many things go wrong and you're lining up and this lineup is not moving and just, and of course, these people are just so inefficient and never going to fly with them again. And so, and you feel more and more, and in any of these situations, if you observe, okay, unhappiness is arising, is it really coming from the situation or is it coming from the way in which I speak to myself about the situation? Does it derive from the mental commentary about the situation or is it the situation?

And in most cases, you actually find, and you begin, I suggest you start with little, small forms of unhappiness, you will find that the unhappiness is derived from the narrative, is derived from your self-talk in the head. And because the self-talk just happens to you, you're not doing it, it's like the heartbeat, it happens to thinking, the reactive thinking happens to you and you mistake it for who you are and then you become an unhappy human being. Welcome to our live meditation.

Are you conscious at this moment? Of course you're conscious because you see me on the screen, you're aware of the place where you are, the room, the doors, you're aware of other things, my voice, other noises perhaps. So you know that you're conscious because you're aware of these things.

If you were not conscious, you would not see me or hear my voice. So that is kind of secondary evidence that you are conscious, but it's not primary evidence. So secondary evidence, you're conscious of things, you're conscious of sense perceptions, you're conscious of thoughts or emotions.

And those things together, sense perceptions, thoughts, other mental activities, mental images and emotions, those things make up your life, a mixture of things, but those are the ingredients that make up what you call your life. Sense perceptions, thoughts or mental images and feelings, emotions. Now the way in which these are mixed differs from person to person, but those are the ingredients that make up what you call your life.

So you must be conscious for these to arise. They appear in the light of consciousness or the space of consciousness. And then there's something else, there's primary evidence, and that's what one may call spiritual awakening, when you're no longer totally drawn into, identified with, reacting to, sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions.

And without primary evidence, which we could call spiritual awakening, you are actually unconscious, spiritually speaking. Consciousness only reveals itself to you in disguise, assuming a certain form of sense perceptions, thought, emotion. And that draws you in, gives you your sense of who you are, your sense of identity, which is derived from your life, your life situation.

That gives you your sense of identity, which includes the past, the things you have experienced, which means perceived, thought about, felt. And these leave traces, so in the present moment, you still remember these things, re-experience them in your mind. That's you.

But you're not really awake, spiritually speaking, unless or until you're not only conscious of those things that I mentioned, but you're also conscious that you are conscious, conscious or aware of awareness, aware of yourself as awareness, aware of yourself as consciousness, aware of that formless dimension within yourself in which, for a moment, thought or thinking has subsided and you can sense an underlying presence, the beingness, the liveness, the loveness. These are all just pointers.

Stillness. Right now, I'm not asking you to become still, but to realize that dimension of consciousness that we call stillness that's always already there. Underneath all the thinking, but you didn't know it.

So stillness is actually a beautiful pointer. If you haven't read my little book, Stillness Speaks, or haven't looked at it in a long time, go back to it, read a page or two, and see if it enables you to enter that dimension of stillness, to find that dimension of stillness within you. That's what the book is for, not to give you more information.

But it gives you pointers, signposts. If I remember correctly, the first entry, the first sentence in the book is, you're never more essentially yourself than when you are still. That feeling of being you, of identity, that comes out of that stillness, that is the stillness, that is more essentially who you are than your historical person.

The identity that depends on your life situation and your past. So we have two, so to speak, identities. One is time-based, thought-based, and the other is formless.

And that consciousness, to be aware of that, is the aim of meditation. And here we are not even using any techniques. I'm just giving you pointers.

But also, I'm conveying to you the reality of consciousness itself. That's what the stillness is, the stillness that is also primordial intelligence. So the mastery of life consists in being able to operate on the level of form thinking and doing, and at the same time, not losing touch with the awareness, the stillness.

At first, it appears as two things that you consciously, during the day, become aware of yourself as awareness, become aware of the little spaces between thoughts, develop the ability to relinquish thinking if only for a few seconds, either by choice or by realizing that sometimes thinking subsides laterally. For example, when you look at something beautiful in nature, the sky, or the sunset, or the ocean, or the river, or the sound of the rain, the sound of the wind, there's an appreciation of what you perceive. You give it your fullest attention, and there's a little space in which the perception happens without any conceptualization.

In other words, the mind does not comment on it in the first moment of perceiving it, when you feel an inner connectedness with what you're perceiving. You just look, or you just listen. The realization of beauty arises in that moment of non-conceptual thinking, non-thinking.

And when that arises naturally, as it sometimes does, it doesn't even necessarily have to be when you look at something beautiful. It could happen at any moment. All the natural things are more conducive to that state of consciousness.

Then you suddenly become aware of why this moment feels so alive, so good, so peaceful. Because you're in touch with the dimension of consciousness itself. Not just the form that consciousness has taken, but consciousness itself.

There's an underlying alert stillness. In that sense, nature can reconnect you with the deeper dimension of yourself. It's sometimes called the essence identity, as opposed to the form identity.

So the mastery of life is moving in the two dimensions, so to speak. Not losing yourself in the form identity with millions and millions of people all over the world. Undoing that without knowing it, completely absorbed in their mind, sense perceptions, but it all basically happens in their mind, of course.

Completely identified with that. That's the unconscious state. The strange thing is it almost seems like a paradox.

Although there are moments when beauty, you become aware of beauty, that are portals into the unconditioned, pure consciousness awareness that you are. That is true. But as far as your life situation is concerned, the strange thing is, it's often when things are not going well on the level of form, that you're more likely to discover the dimension of essence in yourself, the formless, the stillness.

And by not going well, I mean when there's a disruption of your normal life, pattern of your normal life, so accident, illness, loss, some disruption. So on the level of form, things don't go well anymore. You can become very unhappy, that's usually the case.

But there's also the possibility that it increases your motivation to go deeper. But you don't have to wait for that here, because as you begin to awaken spiritually, you consciously choose to go to that dimension, to discover that dimension in yourself. So you don't have to wait for things to break down.

The present moment gives you access to the deeper dimension within yourself. And that starts with a little thing like, let's come back to folding the clothes. Why does that feel so wonderful and peaceful?

Because the task itself doesn't really require that much attention. You can do it, you don't have to work out mentally, how am I going to fold these pants or trousers? Or how exactly am I going to hang this shirt up?

No, you just do it, it's simple and it's easy. So a lot of your attention is left to spare. Now, most people with all that attention to spare, they go into all kinds of mind stuff.

So they're not fully conscious of what they're doing, they're just elsewhere. So I could have been here already giving a talk in my head. What am I going to say?

Well, I fold, and I wonder what's going to happen tonight. And then, when is our flight back home? Or did I let go of the menu?

What's for lunch today? What did he say to me yesterday that wasn't very kind, was it? And I really should have replied.

What should I have? I should have said this and this. That's right.

And so it's a kind of sleepwalking existence. So you're folding, okay. You're not here.

So all that attention that was to spare is absorbed by unconscious thinking. And that's normal, very normal. But it's a pity, because all that attention that is spare attention, you could have used to become aware of the fact that you are conscious.

In fact, so you become very still, and you realize that stillness is your consciousness. And then as you fold, whatever it is you're doing, your clothes, you feel this undercurrent of still, alert attention. ♪♪♪ Life without love is no life at all.

But life without love means you have not realized life, what life truly is. This questioner has a, it must be a quote from someone, but he doesn't say who, or maybe it's his own. Life without love is no life at all.

Please comment on this statement. Well, I like that statement. Life without love is no life at all.

Now, what does that mean, life without love? Love can only be there when you are connected to the source of life, who you are beyond form, stillness, spaciousness. And then from there, you perceive, you relate, you operate, you do what you do.

And there's a sense of oneness, no longer a sense of separation. You're one with the present moment. You're one with whoever you meet because the separation comes through mental concepts.

And that sense of oneness is love. It's a recognition that you share with every life form, you share the same consciousness. So it's always a self-recognition.

You see, you sense rather than see yourself in the other. That is love. And then of course you treat the other as yourself.

You love your neighbor as yourself. And you don't do to anybody what you don't want to be done to yourself. It's natural that comes out of the state of love.

And then, yes, you're not really truly alive or we could also say you're not fully human unless that dimension is there in you. So on some level, we could say human creation, the creation of the human has not yet been completed because many humans are not yet fully human. There is no love.

And why is there no love? Because they're disconnected from who they truly are because who they truly are merges with the universal divinity or the one. Who they truly are, who you truly are, who I truly am is one with the one, universal consciousness or the divine.

That's where you and the divine merge. Another way you could say it is the ray of sunlight realizes suddenly that it's not separate but realizes its source as the sun. And the ray of sunlight is not separate from the sun.

It emanates from the sun. It's not separate, but it could, let's to use this analogy, you could conceivably imagine the ray of sunlight being deluded into believing it's a separate entity and every other ray of sunlight is a separate entity with its own life because you're not in touch with the one life. So you believe that every life form has its own life.

But no life form has its own life. That's why I sometimes say, I don't have a life. You don't have a life because if you have a life, then there's you and life.

But how could you be there without life? You are life. I don't have a life because if I say my life, then I must be separate from life.

If I have life, then there's two here. There's life and there's me and I have it. It's absurd.

But that's the delusion that arises with separation when you don't realize that all life forms are expressions, manifestations of the one. And then every life form has its separate life. That's the absurdity, the delusion.

And then you create a world based on that delusion. And the kind of world you create on that delusion of separation is the world that you can read about in history books or listen to the news or look around. And so according to this quote, then that's no life at all.

That's one way of putting it, yes. It's no, life without love is no life at all. But life without love means you have not realized life, what life truly is.

All you know is separate life forms and you attribute a separate life to each life form. But they're all manifestations of the one. And you are a manifestation of the one which has no form, is beyond time.

And you can sense the one within you. And then there's love. And then you're truly alive and you're fully human.

It's only through the spaciousness that opens up that the true recognition of being in whatever life form appears in front of you, that recognition of being is there. Being recognizes itself. It disguises itself in millions of life forms, temporary disguises.

And you recognize, you look through the disguise and sometimes the disguise is very strong. That's the play of the universe. Let's really disguise ourselves.

And some humans are heavily disguised. God disguising him, her, itself very well. And with others, the disguise is not so heavy.

But the heavy disguise is more challenging. It's more fun in a way. I'm talking about, of course, difficult humans.

To recognize shared being as in a flower is of course much easier because the disguise is far, far, far less. Much easier than to recognize the shared being as when confronted with an angry human, it says, you. But there's a space for that also.

And you look, oh, give him or her the space to do their act. And you don't need to react. Let them do their act, but you don't need compulsively to react because if compulsively you react, you adopt your own, your disguise again.

And you play your part in the drama or the dream of existence. All the world's a stage. And all the men and women merely play as, or however else Shakespeare's phrase goes.

So to recognize your essential beingness is such a simple, it's so simple that it becomes difficult for the complicated humans. It's so, such a primordial fact. And then consciousness recognizes itself really.

That's what it is. And that is joyful or blissful. And so the Indian teachers, masters, they string together three words and make it into one, satitananda, being, consciousness, bliss, to describe that state of connectedness, of oneness with being.

It's very simple, too simple. And what do you access? Access also is intelligence itself, the unconditioned out of which anything new arises, an insight, an idea.

That is the place of true intelligence. I call it sometimes non-conceptual intelligence or the unconditioned consciousness. And that's where suddenly creativity opens up in your life.

Because the person is not creative. The mind is not creative, but it can be an instrument of true intelligence. And the mind has no intelligence of its own.

It borrows its intelligence from universal intelligence. So the secret then is to not lose touch with who you truly are as you go about this world, seemingly participating in the play, but knowing at the same time, not conceptually, being the space and then pretending also to be the person while you do things. So you are the space while you talk to someone, listen to someone in spacious awareness.

So you bring that dimension into the interaction. If you only did that, listening whenever other humans are talking to you, if you only did that, if you are able to use every opportunity whenever any human being talks to you, listen in spacious awareness instead of listening through mentally, immediately agreeing or disagreeing or thinking of the next thing you are going to say, or I know exactly what you need. Let me tell you what you need.

I know that already. But be there as an open field of aware presence. If you only did that, it would be enough to transform your life, your relationships with every human, because the old patterns would no longer be operating through you, would transform your relationships with all human beings.

And of course, will also help others without you feeling that you are helping, you're not doing anything, but it is an invitation to others if there's a slightest openness in the other to join you in that field of aware presence. And if they don't join you in that field of aware presence, it's fine too. But if that were your only spiritual practice, listening in that way to other, you would be enough to transform your life.

And if enough humans transform their lives in that way, then of course the world gets transformed. It's only a collective expression of the collective consciousness. So unless you live as a hermit, in other words, you never listen to anybody except your mind.

And most of you are not hermits, so you interact with people and every day you listen to people on the phone. Well, unless you get so much into texting that you don't talk to them anymore. For teenagers, I may have to think of some other way of being if they only, if they don't talk anymore.

No, no, it goes with your thumbs. You can see I haven't only had a phone for a few months of that kind, so I do like. So if that's your only spiritual practice, quite enough, just the listening.

Because whenever you listen, you are not there as an egoic entity. You're not bringing in your past. You're not even there as a person anymore.

The person recedes and you are there as awareness. And it doesn't mean that now you have to be, you can't talk anymore, no. It means then as you talk or reply or give your viewpoint, you very clearly realize that what you are giving is your viewpoint.

You don't merge with your viewpoint. And then anybody who questions or attacks your viewpoint is considered a mortal enemy because you have confused who you are with the thought in your head, which is your viewpoint, which is insane. This mind-made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive.

To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation. I thought my childhood was difficult, but yours, I think, was more difficult. You had a very violent father, and so that was your primary challenge in childhood.

And without that primary challenge, you probably wouldn't be here now.

[Speaker 11] (9:24:50 - 9:26:23)
I wouldn't, and we all, you know, there were four boys in my family, and we all used different strategies to deal with the pain because he was an abusive and violent person and a wife batterer and all these things, and very unpredictable. And sometimes among us, we'd get depressed or try to use humor or whatever. I became the family peacemaker, which became my profession later on.

Anyway, but it's partly what took me to the monastery. I had a lot of suffering. And as you said earlier on, our education system focuses outwardly on reading and mathematics and science, but it doesn't focus on the heart.

It doesn't teach us either to ask who are we or what do we do with the suffering of life or the mystery of aging, none of it. And I needed something desperately. So it was really that calling inside to find some help.

And then I read these amazing books about Zen masters and I said, okay, I wanna find one and see if, you know, that can help. And fortunate, fortunately, I was actually able to find some good teachers. And you had this remarkable experience of really doing it on your own, which is both unusual.

I mean, a lot of people try, but also, you know, in many ways, much more difficult because you didn't have anybody to talk to to say, well, what happened?

[Speaker 1] (9:26:24 - 9:34:13)
Yes, this is why I had to seek people out after that shift to understand it. So I went to Buddhist monasteries. I talked to some monks and sought other places.

I went to investigating, trying to understand. And it's through Buddhism that I understood or began to understand a lot that had happened to me, which otherwise I wouldn't have been able to understand at all. But of course, when you have a shortage of money that restricts your life, you kind of can't live where you would like to live, or there's not enough freedom of movement because there's not enough money.

There is a sense of something missing. And you see, it's not just in your mind. It's also here when you look at your bank statement, you see it's not very much there.

Going beyond the sense of lack that is an inseparable part of the ego, you need to, I believe the questioner to some extent has already done that. You need to discover the fullness of life to use Jesus' expression, which is the fullness of being, which is inseparable from the present moment. So when you go there, you can sense that abundant, another expression is abundant life that Jesus used.

You can sense this abundant life in the present moment regardless of whether there is actual abundance In this manifested dimension, you feel the abundance of life and you see, and then when you appreciate all the countless manifestations of life that are around you that you perceive with your senses, and you acknowledge the abundance of life, that's no matter whether you go out into nature, you see the abundance of nature, the abundance of brain right now that's coming down here that I can hear, there's an acknowledgement and appreciation that even a potted plant, I have a potted plant there and there's another one here, to appreciate their manifestations of the aliveness of the universe. And there's an abundance in everything.

If you live in a city, there's abundance everywhere. You can look into a shop window and you see abundance of goods there. Oh, you don't even need to go and buy them, you just appreciate it.

You go past a flower shop and you see abundance of plants and flowers and you appreciate it and you feel abundant already. But the deepest abundance is the feeling of the fullness of life. And then I believe what the questioner is asking, at times when he looks at his bank statements, the sense of lack comes back because then you see, oh, I have very little, there's not much left.

And then the mind will start creating a narrative of lack and will tell you that you've been wronged, that actually you don't have much. And that can be a great hindrance and it will diminish your power of manifestation. So what do you do when you look at your bank statement or you go to the ATM machine and you want to get out $300 or whatever it is, and it says, you put it in, it says insufficient funds.

And that's the time of, I'm not talking about right now what you can do on a practical level. The question is, as much as possible, do not succumb to the feeling of financial lack, even if there is financial lack in your life, do not succumb to the feeling of lack. And that is whatever you can do to generate a sense of abundance.

And the main thing, of course, is going within and sensing the fullness of life. Even when you look at your bank statement, you look at it, okay, that's what I, don't personalize it, don't have any kind of projection, just, this is just factually, these are the figures of what I have. And then perhaps you have a certain course of action in order to, in addition to feeling the sense of abundance, you may have to work out a certain goal that you have that may give you more abundance.

So perhaps you have something that you want to do to create more abundance. And then your manifestation can flow into that so that the sense of abundance flows into the, whatever it is that you are wanting to manifest in your life, you have to combine action and whatever technique you use or whatever method you use with relation. It is to be recommended that you combine it with some kind of action so that you can generate abundance even on this outer level.

[Speaker 13] (9:34:22 - 9:35:46)
Many of us here, and I personally feel very lucky to be able to be here, but I work, and I come from a country which is in close proximity with a lot of chaos, death and destruction, man-made, and my line of work is to do with responding to that in a humanitarian sense. So the question about access, which is basically those who have experienced such immeasurable suffering, such immeasurable loss, who have lost everything that they ever knew or had and have actually found themselves displaced across the world, they say it's the largest displacement since World War II, who could never dream of attending such a place and how to make you more accessible to people who are going through such suffering to prevent this suffering from becoming a prolonged victim identity or a prolongation of suffering but a transformation through conscious to, well, I can hardly articulate, but I think maybe you understood.

[Speaker 1] (9:35:46 - 9:49:59)
Oh, yes, yes, thank you very much. Thank you, I understand. Thank you.

Thank you. Yes, so the, as we are, as you know, the, we are attempting to reach more people through the foundation to distribute teaching material to places where otherwise it would not get to. At the moment, we have not yet succeeded in bringing it to certain areas of the world where a lot of suffering and violence is happening, but we will attempt to do so.

But another question is how many people are actually ready for it? Because although it seems so obvious to everybody here, you might think, well, everybody must be ready for this, but the case is not everybody is ready. There will be people in those suffering countries who are ready and who have been made ready by their suffering.

Many are being made ready by their suffering. Everybody, I said it a few times, everybody in this world has a spiritual teacher. A few have an actual spiritual teacher that it might be a person or a teaching or a book.

It could be, you could be a Buddhist and you are, then the Buddhism is your teacher, or you could be a Christian and have access to the deeper dimension within the Christian teaching, then that's your teacher, or you could be a Muslim and have access to the deeper dimension that's there. My favorite, of course, being Sufism, but that's, those who have actual teachings or teachers and all the others that unfortunately their teacher is suffering. And the one tries to, you can, it's only those who are ready to go beyond suffering who are then open to the teaching.

The suffering is to a large extent self-produced by humans. That's the weird things. The humans produce their own suffering.

And it's, what is needed is a raising in the state of consciousness in certain areas of the world, but it's a refugee problem is something that is, I do not know how many of those humans who are, have been, they have been deprived of their home and all their usual surroundings. They no longer belong anywhere. They are, some of those will experience a spiritual awakening through their suffering.

Some will and others will not. And some may, if we are able to get the teaching to places like that, that may help. And perhaps you can give us some ideas too.

We might talk to you. And if you can give us some ideas of how to get it there, I think that would be extremely helpful. And I thank you for asking that question.

So let's try and see if we can do that. Now, as you probably know, one of the most challenging things in your life is other people, because they're so difficult. People are so challenging.

And for many people, one of their greatest sources of suffering or unhappiness, strangely enough, is other people. Sometimes, of course, it might be a situation, but just usually every situation is associated with certain people. But of course, another source of unhappiness, of course, could be your physical body, which might become ill.

That's a different matter. But yes, people are difficult. It's not surprising that Jean-Paul Sartre, the French philosopher, said, "'Hell is other people.'" That's the ego talking, of course. Life could be so much nicer with all these dreadful people around. And of course, these are judgments. These are judgments of the mind.

And the moment you encounter another human being, the moment you meet another human being, if you are trapped in the conditioned mind, you will very quickly have things to say about him or her. And the moment you have thought arising, you're imposing judgment, you can't really experience that human being anymore. And so that happens all the time when people meet others.

But what would it be if I could meet another human being and just look into his or her eyes without making it too obvious? Even in ordinary situations, you go to a restaurant, you go to a shop, you buy something, you pay for it. There's a brief interaction with the person you give the money to.

And in that, are you able to just look at this person for a few seconds while the transaction happens and be free of thinking? And there's suddenly a connection. There's no need to make it obvious.

You don't go like, and you don't have to tell them, I'm connecting with you on a spiritual level because they'll go, what? But it's a beautiful thing to be able to just be spacious with another human being. It's easier with a dog, obviously, because the dog does not have the screen of mind that obscures that sense of presence or beingness in the dog, the consciousness of the dog.

Humans usually have this screen of mental stuff. So it's not as easy to relate deeply. You have to penetrate the level of mind, which sometimes is not all that pleasant either.

It can be very difficult conditioning of this personality. Some personalities are very difficult and might be aggressive or whatever, but it's looking at another human being and just like this, no thought. And it's always pleasant.

It's a pleasant, suddenly you sense a connection and it's pleasant, but don't try that too soon. Start with a tree because there's nothing in the way with a tree. There's no mind.

The tree is an expression of consciousness, but the tree is very still. It's even stiller than the dog. The tree is just, it might have been there for 100 years, 200 years, 300 years.

Some trees have been there for 1,000 years. And so you can look at a tree, and by looking means, we'll do more of that after the break, but just when you look at something, you give it your attention, and there's a tree. And you give it your complete attention.

Just look at the totality of it, and then occasionally you look at little details and just be with it and the totality of the tree without needing to impose any thought on it. You don't need to call it anything. You don't need to know the name in order to experience the tree.

You don't need to know the name of the tree. That's fine. There's nothing wrong with knowing the name of the tree, but the name of the tree can, if you are too attached to the name of the tree, can prevent you from experiencing the tree, and that is a very common thing, how the moment you name something, you think that's it, and then you don't realize there is a depth to that which the name obscures.

The spiritual teacher Krishnamurti said to somebody, the moment you teach a child the name of the bird, he or she will never see that bird again. Slight exaggeration. Of course, he'll see that bird again, but what he means is the child will lose the deeper connectedness with the bird because the label, the mental label will be in the way, and the child will mistake the mental label for it, and so the mental label keeps you trapped on the surface of reality, and so very knowledgeable people, and there's nothing wrong with knowledge, but people, let's say people are very knowledgeable about nature sometimes are so trapped in their knowledge, all they know is mental stuff about things, so they know a lot about the tree, but they never know the tree. You have two kinds of knowing. One is conceptual knowing through labels, and one is a deeper knowing through immediate perception through awareness, and then you sense something deeper in the tree that can never be known through conceptual knowledge.

You connect with the tree in a deeper level, it becomes almost what I'm saying now. Conventionally, one would say that's just a mystical thing to say or it's a poetic thing to say, but there's a real, there's a reality behind this, and if that dimension is missing from your life, you run around the surface of reality, never connecting with anything or anybody really deeply, never sensing your connectedness with other life forms, nature, animals, humans, so it's important to develop this ability to experience without imposing labels, so you can just be with a tree and look at it.

You don't have to hug it, you can, but it's not necessary. If you will have to want to hug it, it's fine, because the touch can free you also from thinking to take your attention into the sense of touch, yes, but all the senses are involved in that experience, and then you, the trees can then teach you stillness, because the tree is so still, but you have to tune in. You can't tune in with mental labels.

You have to be there, and then there's an alertness there, and with that alertness, you not only perceive the tree, you sense the underlying consciousness of the tree, because ultimately, it's the same consciousness that is the essence of who you are, but in a different manifestation, a different frequency level, so to speak, but, and then the tree can teach you to be still, and you become, but it's not the same stillness in you as the stillness of the tree, because the tree is a long way below thought. The stillness in you is above thought, but in there, you meet the tree.

You are above thought in presence, and the tree is long below thought in beingness, and you meet the tree, and then the tree can teach you to be still, and you can actually sense that the tree is just, oh, that's the tree, the tree would be saying, oh, if it could speak, or continuously, because that's the rootedness of, the tree is not only rooted in the soil, the tree is rooted in being, and beingness, the source of life.

[Speaker 17] (9:49:59 - 9:50:00)
It hasn't.[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 1:19)
Come out that far yet. So it's, it just is. Your latest book, this Lost and Found.

This is a very interesting challenge that came into your life not that long ago. The challenge was mercifully provided by one of your, or perhaps your most important spiritual teacher whose name is Bhagavan Bernie Madoff. And you, he mercifully took away from you 30 years of savings, all their life's savings to help you experience the essence of who you are.

Yeah. However, you did not immediately experience the essence of who you are.

[Speaker 4] (1:20 - 1:22)
I'd say that was an understatement.

[Speaker 1] (1:22 - 1:53)
And you describe it in the book, how it starts, and that's wonderful, I believe it's chapter one or two, beginning the incredible amount of the reaction and the fear that comes when you lose all your life's savings and you describe what it did to your state of consciousness, wonderfully explained and illustrated. I don't know if you want to talk briefly about it. And then something happened.

[Speaker 4] (1:54 - 8:04)
Yes, for those of you, those few of you who might not know who Bernie Madoff is, he ran a Ponzi scheme and actually all over the world and ended up stealing $65 billion of people's money. And as my husband is very fond of saying when he tells his stories, and not all of it is mine. So we had our, we did have our life savings in there.

And we got a phone call, or I got a phone call one day. My husband was away. We believed it was very safe.

A friend of ours was friends with Bernie Madoff, whose father was friends with

Bernie Madoff. And anybody could put, in our particular fund, anybody could put anywhere from $600 or $1,000 to whatever amount you had in this fund. And we just kept on putting all of our money in there because our friend had been in it for 30 years.

And also, as my husband says, that you start believing in gravity when every time you throw a ball up in the air, it comes down every time for 30 years. So we absolutely believed it was safe. And then it wasn't.

And then we got the phone call saying it was gone. And I was shocked and in terror, I think. First I was shocked and then hysterical.

And then in terror. And then I called a couple of very dear friends and teachers who I would say, we've lost all our money. And this was very soon after the phone call.

And two of them said to me, you've lost your money, but nothing of any value is gone. And I said in that moment to both of them, now is not the time to be spiritual. Farewell.

I was convinced, I was like, don't give me that. We've lost our money. What are we gonna do?

We're gonna be homeless. We're gonna be out on the street. And what are we gonna eat?

And it was such a panic. And I started very soon realizing that it was going to be unbearable to live inside my mind. That I could not, absolutely could not live inside the mind that was telling me, what did you do?

I can't believe you did that. What's the matter with you? How come you didn't diversify?

Even a four-year-old knows to diversify. And I started blaming, of course, everybody and then myself. And the ranting and the raving was so intense that I understood pretty immediately within a day that unless I brought myself back to what I had, not what I had lost, to what I could find instead of the money that I couldn't, what was already here, which is that animating aliveness or that indwelling aliveness that I've heard you speak of, unless I could bring myself back moment to moment to moment every single time my mind wandered, then I was gonna be lost.

I was going to be living in abject terror. When I wrote Lost and Found and when I traveled around and went on tour about it, I found that talking about money was very difficult, not for me at that point, because I became so interested in money after this that I would talk to people in the grocery store. So, what do you think about money?

And tell me about your relationship with money and how much money do you make? And do you and your spouse talk about? I just became fascinated with it like I became fascinated with food, as a point of departure, so to speak, or as a doorway into what we believe about scarcity and deprivation and what we're allowed to have and be.

And when I first started talking about food, which was in 1978, people didn't wanna talk to me except for those people who were willing to talk to me. With the rollers in my hair, they were willing to talk to me, but most people when I would say, it's not about willpower and it's not about force and deprivation, it's about using it as a doorway into who you are really there was a, no, it's about willpower and it's about calories. And with money, I found that I was almost had turned back the clock 30 years and so that it was a similar, no, I'm not talking about money, sort of like with me, there's spirituality and then there's money.

So I'm wondering what you think about that just in terms of why money is such a difficult subject really to bring, why people are more willing to talk about their sex lives and in great detail, mind you, and what they've eaten and not eaten and binged and not beaten and including things like stealing food and all of that rather than talk about money. So I'm curious about what you think about that.

[Speaker 1] (8:05 - 9:24)
Well, it is true that in for many people, the mention of it can bring about an immediate loss of awareness, even in people who otherwise have already embraced awareness in many aspects of their lives. And still there remains that there's a fear that coagulates around that money idea and that's the fear, I would say, of survival. Yeah.

And there is also an egoic trait that's one of the most essential traits of the ego, not enough. Not enough is one of the most deep seated ego traits. Every ego has that.

And for many people, the not enough refers to money. It could refer to many other things, not enough food, not enough whatever. The ego never feels it has enough.

And that's particularly manifests in the area of money because money is neutral, but it can become anything in the world of form almost. And so it triggers the insufficiency, the feeling of not enough of the ego.

[Speaker 4] (9:25 - 9:28)
Spirituality is fine. And then there's money.

[Speaker 1] (9:29 - 9:29)
Yes.

[Speaker 4] (9:29 - 11:44)
Yes. And also that awakening, so to speak, becoming fully alive to the aliveness was not possible for me in this lifetime. That's what I believed.

Yes. I believed I could work at, that I would always be sort of like a little busy beaver. I would be working at it and efforting at it and I would be meditating.

And even though I didn't really like meditating very much, I still wanted to be a good spiritual student. And so I'd keep on trying and trying, but that it wasn't, even though intellectually I heard, yes, of course, it's your true nature. I still believed, well, maybe it's not my true nature.

Maybe it's everybody else's true nature, but it's not true, true nature because it's not really mine. And I think it took this to experience that that aliveness, that indwelling aliveness is, if I'm not aware of it, it's just a bat of an eyelash away. And that it is possible for every human being.

I always feel like if it's possible for me, it's possible for anybody because I feel like I've just about been as crazy as any of the people I've met who have come to my retreats and workshops for 30 years. I mean, I've done it all. And so I feel like, okay then, all right then.

What Eckhart has been saying is true. It's not just a line. It doesn't just sound pretty.

It's true because here it is in this moment with no money, not a penny, here it is.

[Speaker 1] (11:45 - 24:27)
Yes, I experienced that on the park bench often. The intense happiness of simply the joy of being in that moment where the mind, if it had come in, and occasionally it did just briefly, it said, what are you doing? And shouldn't you be looking for some work or do something?

But the thought didn't have any force behind it anymore. So I don't know, it just didn't come. I could have remained that, in which case I would have become quite dysfunctional and still be happy.

But after a while, then doing happened again. I was able to do and initiate things and respond to whatever the present moment brought. And then I became a normal person again, at least on the surface, on the outside.

Oh yes, can you speak about how to be in this world with this constant push for connectivity? How did we get to the most profound things from a relatively simple question? Oh, yes, we talked about doing and being without feeling that being present is another thing to do.

How do you be in this world without this constant push for connectivity? Well, the first thing is you turn off your push notifications. That's already a big step forward.

And you need to be disciplined in the use of your device, your phone, whatever, tablets, phone, so that it doesn't take you over because it's simply an extension of your life. It's an extension of the mind. And if it wasn't enough before we invented these devices, humans had already been taken over by their minds.

Even 2000 years ago, not as much as now, but even 2000 years ago, Jesus said, why are you always thinking about tomorrow? Why are you always worried about the next thing? Look at the flower, look how it lives.

In total alignment with the present moment. And it's being sustained by the one consciousness. That's my translation of it.

So already then, humans had been taken over by mind, but even more so since then, mind has proliferated. And then the clever human mind came up with these devices. It said, let's extend ourselves into the realm of things.

And then we can create this, which is an extension of the human mind. So when you, you might have noticed when you're with yourself, you have the voice in the head, unless you begin to awaken, in which case you're able to experience spaces of alert, still presence. It's beautiful.

But otherwise you have this thing, commenting, talking, arguing. And then this becomes a burden for many people. Of course it is a burden because a lot of the stuff it says is actually not pleasant.

And so you experience it as a burden. And since you derive your sense of identity from it, it becomes yourself. This talking voice, you think that's you.

It becomes the self. And you walk around with this burden of the self. And in order to unburden yourself, one thing you can do, you think you can do, is you can watch the television or you can go on, there are countless things that you can watch on the little screen.

The entire world's knowledge at your fingertips. And the moment you watch the screen, whether it's television or whatever screen, you might have noticed that your own, your so-called own thought processes come to a stop. So to some extent, you're free of the self.

This is why people sometimes find watching television relaxing. Say, okay, I just need to relax now, just turn it on. By this they mean, while they watch the television screen, they are not burdened by their self-induced thought processes.

What they do, however, they replace their own thoughts with the collective thoughts. So they just, you're in a state, you're not in a state of thoughtless awareness when you watch television or you watch something on the screen. You absorb the thoughts from there into your mind and you link into, so for people often in a state of semi or hypnosis when they watch, it kind of paralyzes you.

It can also happen with the screen, with television already started, of course. I don't know when, whenever, 60 years ago, whenever television started and you go. And so your mind is just absorbing whatever is playing.

It's the TV mind, which is receiving stuff from wherever it comes from, is going into your mind and you become no longer thinking your own thoughts. Occasionally you might, you say, oh, this guy is so stupid. And then you're watching again.

And then another thought, why am I watching this rubbish? Half an hour later, this is so awful. But you can't turn it off.

Here's the remote. Let's just try one more channel. There might be something else there.

Oh no, that's stupid. Try one more. This is how an addict behaves.

And the device is even more addictive. You carry them with you and you have to admit, you may have to admit that there is an addiction in you. Not everybody here, but quite a few.

It would be almost normal to feel this draw towards it and you use it even when you don't need to use it. That's the amazing thing. When you're standing at the elevator waiting, so another person is standing next to you and he or she is pulling out the phone and then you pull out yours.

You don't know why. You don't know why. Or anywhere you're in a, you're waiting, you're ordering a tea or coffee somewhere and you're standing in line.

And if you look around, there's almost nobody and probably nobody who is not looking at this little thing. This is scary, zombie-like. Now, if somebody from the past, the so-called past, time traveler from the past came here and even not the distant past, let's just say even 20 years ago, and he arrived and would see in the streets, in restaurants, in cafes, everywhere, public transport, people walk around with these things, staring at these things.

Say, what's that? Something has happened to humanity. They've all become zombies.

Something terrible must have happened. What was that? These are wonderful devices, the incredible possibilities of having access to all kinds of knowledge, but there's always the downside.

There's a huge, huge downside to it. They are addictive. They stimulate the mind.

The thing you want to become free from, you want to become free of mind, and this will prevent you from becoming free of mind. So you need to be disciplined enough to not automatically look at it whenever there's a moment and you're waiting for something or whatever it is. There's no need to check these things.

I don't even know what they are, but I just know that Facebook is the biggest thing, and then there's Instagram and Snapchat and countless names, and some people have all of them on their phones, and you need to know the latest thing. Crazy. But if you detect the addiction in yourself, then you have to, first of all, admit that you are addicted.

Don't deny it. You know, Alcoholics Anonymous, the first thing when you go there, you have to say, I am an alcoholic. Now, some people say, well, that's not a good thing because your identity is not being an alcoholic.

Of course not. So it could be misunderstood, but your nature is not being an alcoholic. It is your present condition is that, but to recognize the problem, the difficulty, the challenge is just you stated, yes, I'm addicted to this phone, and I choose not to be addicted, and then you can be the only one in many places who is not looking in waiting rooms, waiting in line, whatever it is, waiting on the phone for somebody to talk to you, and in the meantime, but you use this beautiful thing of just being, just being present, and you look around and you step out of thinking, and all the others are still in the hypnotic state. So practice not to use it unless there is a true purpose. If you want the answer to something in a conversation, there's a what is what, then you can get the knowledge.

You have the world's encyclopedia there, then you can look it up. Okay, that's how it is. And then you put it away again.

There are some apps that are meditation apps. I want to check them out a bit more. I have a few on my phone, but I haven't tried them yet.

They've been there for a year or two. And that would be something great. It transformed something that otherwise would amplify your mind.

It transforms it into its opposite.

[Speaker 6] (24:54 - 25:03)
Do you believe in the law of attraction and manifestation? Where is this coming from?

[Speaker 3] (25:07 - 27:24)
Do I believe in the law of attraction and manifestation? I want to say yes, and I want to say no, because on the no level, it is the mind can want something, and you can also get it, but it's not coming from your true self. So there is a law that our thoughts can be projected and then manifested.

Yes, I do see that, and that's not a belief. It's actual, I see that. There are many things that I have wanted in my life and in growing up that I have received because I wanted it so badly.

But going through that, some of those things, I saw that they weren't such good experiences. So we can attract something through the mind, and it won't be really what our heart, our consciousness really desires and wants. And usually that consciousness that really desires and wants is not a selfish desire, but is a desire that would be not of and for ourself.

And then in that sense, that manifestation is a sacred manifestation. It's a holy manifestation. Have you ever heard of the saying, be careful what you wish for?

[Speaker 6] (27:27 - 27:30)

I think I know what it means, but I've not really like heard it.

[Speaker 3] (27:31 - 27:33)
Okay, so what do you think it means?

[Speaker 6] (27:34 - 27:35)
Can you say it again?

[Speaker 3] (27:38 - 27:39)
Be careful what you wish for.

[Speaker 6] (27:41 - 27:46)
To be exact of what you want, or I'm not sure.

[Speaker 3] (27:47 - 28:13)
Okay, so the saying, be careful what you wish for means that you could want something. I'm just trying to find an example that you could maybe relate to. I want 10 chocolate ice creams.

Oh boy, I really want that.

[Speaker 10] (28:13 - 28:14)
So do I.

[Speaker 3] (28:15 - 30:36)
Okay, so it was a good one. Must have been channeling you. So I want 10 chocolate ice creams, and I get 10 chocolate ice creams.

So I'm eating 10 chocolate ice creams, and then suddenly I get sick and I throw up. So it means sometimes our mind, we think we might want something, and then we can get it, so we can manifest it, but then it's not really good for us. However, if you were really connected to the being instead of the desire of what the mind and maybe the ego desires, then you might have said, oh, I'll have one chocolate ice cream.

And you may eat the whole chocolate ice cream, that one, or you might just have three bites and say, that's enough. I don't want any more, because you've been fulfilled. Manifesting from consciousness rather than from the mind is completely different, and the experience will be completely different.

Your will is completely different, because it is no longer, when you're manifesting from consciousness, it's not your will, but thy will. Thy will be done. You know that saying from the Bible, thy will be done?

So it means it's God, it's consciousness, it's Christ, it's the Buddha, your Buddha nature that is wanting this. And it's not even so much of a want, because it won't be a want in the same way. There may be a want because we are a human being, so just example of that ice cream, if you're from consciousness and we have a human being, so we have these little human cravings, chocolate ice cream, but it won't be 10, it'll be one or a half or just a bite.

So does that help you?

[Speaker 6] (30:37 - 30:37)
Yes.

[Speaker 3] (30:37 - 30:39)
What do you wanna manifest, by the way?

[Speaker 6] (30:39 - 30:53)
Well, I play tennis, and I have a vision board, and I even make little trophies made from paper, just using staplers and crayons.

[Speaker 3] (30:54 - 35:31)
So you wanna become a tennis pro? Yes. Ah, well, you know, that's not a bad thing to wanna manifest.

I mean, this is something that, a desire that you have. So I would say go for it, you know? Just don't think that when you get it, it's going to make you completely happy.

You'll receive and get some happiness from it, especially say if you win, you go, ah, yeah, right, I won. But life is about challenges, and it's about learning, so there'll be times that maybe you won't win, and you'll have to learn from that. So when you do your vision board, it's best when you make these vision boards that you also leave it open to the universe.

Okay, I'll give you an example. When I was kind of through the different men, I decided to make a list of what I wanted in a man, and I actually got it, and I got Eckhart. But, you know, what we try to manifest and what we try to think we want is never complete, because I forgot to put, I want somebody who cooks.

I'm serious. I mean, after, when you're in a relationship, you're thinking, if you don't wanna do all the cooking yourself, at least I didn't, and I want, you know, I didn't put down I wanted a man to clean. I listed other aspects, which I got.

So we're always, on a human level, going to forget something. So this is what I mean by, it won't quite make you completely happy, but you can receive and get happiness from it. Just, you know, leave it also open to the universe.

When we make goals, it's okay to make a goal, but then leave it open, because maybe life knows better than we do. Hmm. So we make a goal, but we kind of just leave it open-ended.

Many years ago, as Eckhart was growing in his talks, there was an organizer, and he said to me, he rented a, I can't remember, I think it was like a 2,000 venue size that held 2,000 people. And I was talking to him on the phone, and he said, I'd be happy if I got 1,000 people. I didn't say anything, but I thought, well, why did he rent a 2,000 venue if he'd be happy with 1,000?

I didn't say anything. I just went, oh, okay. Anyways, we got 1,000 people.

He got his 1,000 people. But what would happen if he said, I'd like to fill this venue, but then just leave it, leave it to the universe, whether it filled or whether it didn't fill. It didn't matter.

It's the universe that is in action when we want the will of the universe. Have that. Make that your primary focus.

So you can have this wish and desire to be a pro tennis player. It's wonderful. I used to love tennis myself.

So that's wonderful, and you make that vision board. But then, in your own mind's eye, also leave it open. Leave yourself open.

And just say, you know, I want this, but I'm also okay with having more, and I'm also okay with having less. I want the will of what's best for me as consciousness. Coming through this form, this body, this mind.

Because maybe there's something even greater for you. And we just don't, you just don't know that yet. We can't foresee that.

So you just make those goals, but leave it open to the will of God. And that God is you. It's within you.

[Speaker 6] (35:33 - 35:36)
Thank you. Did that help you? Yes.

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (36:01 - 43:42)
This table doesn't mean anything. This flower doesn't mean anything. This room doesn't mean anything.

What does all that mean? Well, let's see, cause and miracles. And the purpose of the cause and miracles Miracles is to bring you to a place where the words are not needed anymore.

It meets you, or not you personally, but the human being. It meets the human being where the human being is in the realm of thought. The Course in Miracles would say that otherwise there's no meeting at all.

It has to first of all meet the human being where it can be reached, and that is in the realm of thought. In the same way that a psychiatrist, in order to reach a deluded patient, there's no point in the psychiatrist telling the patient, I am telling you, you are not Napoleon. That will only strengthen the delusion of the patient that he is Napoleon.

He will never reach the patient. But if the psychiatrist for a little while enters the mind of the patient and says, okay, so you are Napoleon, suddenly there's a meeting. Once they have met, because the psychiatrist has entered the delusional system of the patient, once they have met, there's a possibility for him to take him out of the delusion.

If they never meet, nothing can be done. In the same way, the Course in Miracles is attempting to reach people where they are in the realm of thought, and gradually take you out of thought. But throughout the Course, thought is still used, but more and more in the later lessons, it points to the stillness.

And towards the end, the final lessons, it says, the use for words is almost over now, towards the end of the Course in Miracles. So it takes you, it's designed to take you into presence or stillness. So if you can enter presence or stillness right now, or wherever you are, if you already have presence and stillness, spacious awareness in the background of your life when you deal with people and situations, you don't need the Course in Miracles.

If you can enter stillness when you're not being disturbed, but as soon as you interact with people, you lose presence, awareness, or stillness, then the Course in Miracles may still be useful, because it has certain lessons that can be used as pointers. For example, one lesson, I remember, it says, in a situation where you feel upset or angry or irritated, it says, you can say, I could see peace instead of this. I could see peace instead of this.

It's a pointer. The words don't miraculously produce peace, but the words are pointing to the possibility of approaching that situation in a different state of consciousness. So really, the words are pointing to a different state of consciousness.

It's not in the words, it's that to which the words point. And as the Buddhists tell us correctly, the finger pointing to the moon is not the moon. Only the dog might think that the finger pointing to the moon is the moon, because if you tell the dog, go there, most dogs will look at your finger.

So it's not the...the words are pointers. And particularly useful, Course in Miracles, for human interaction, it really uses relationships as spiritual practice, and that's a good thing. So many lessons can be applied to relationships, and you need it, or if the course is right for you, it's definitely not for everybody, but it might be useful for some people who still find that they have a lot of conflict with other people, and a lot of upset with other people.

So you can bring the lesson into relationships. If you don't have that anymore, of course you don't need the Course in Miracles. And even if you...if you understood deeply, or could practice deeply, just Lesson 1 of the Course, it has 365 lessons, just do Lesson 1, nothing that I see here means anything. That's what the lesson tells you. So, this table doesn't mean anything, this flower doesn't mean anything, this room doesn't mean anything, what does all that mean? It means you're giving up all your interpretations and judgments, you're approaching, you're cleaning the blackboard of your mind, erasing all the scribbles on it, or let's say, or let's call it deleting all the noise on the tape, no they don't have tapes anymore, they delete all the digital signals, whatever they have in your mind, nothing that I see here means anything, takes you to a place of not knowing anymore, and what's left when nothing means anything? You're not thinking anymore.

Now, if you deeply, could do deeply Lesson 1, you don't need anything else, because it would stop your mind from its useless interpreting and judging and so on. So in your own life, if you feel, have you already practiced the Course in Miracles lesson? If you still find difficulties in relationships with other people, you can still use it, then it can take you, it can eliminate, help you to become more conscious there.

In the end, it takes you to the essence of this teaching, which is awareness, pure awareness or stillness, and that's the end of, and also by the way, the Course says, this Course is the beginning, not the end. So it takes you to that place where you open yourself up to awareness, which can then flower through you. If it's for you, it's definitely not for everybody.

[Speaker 8] (43:43 - 43:50)
I use these sentences when I feel I'm getting angry now, so I say some sentence and push it down.

[Speaker 1] (43:51 - 44:37)
Yes, but don't push it down, don't push it down, just, you can say the sentence and then allow it to dissolve, if that's what it wants, because if you get upset or angry and try to hold it down, it'll build up. Don't hold it down, just allow it to dissolve, different approach, never attack an inner state, never attack any emotion that arises, because it creates resistance again. Allow it to be, and then if it's not resisted, it dissolves, lovely practice.

Now you asked something else about prayer, the Indian man behind you.

[Speaker 8] (44:38 - 44:45)
And in general, prayers, is this talking to me, or how do you explain prayers?

[Speaker 1] (44:52 - 54:38)
That's a huge topic, of course, prayer, in the way this, he uses prayer as a kind of repetition, a kind of mantra perhaps. The good thing about it, of course, is

that it stops your mind from doing other things, like indulging in fear-producing thoughts, or negativity-producing thoughts, so it stops your mind from that, but ultimately, that kind of thing, for us, for anybody, has to be left behind. When Jesus said, pray unceasingly, or pray without ceasing, that does not mean, because it would be absurd, that he's telling you to continuously pray, pray without, he's using prayer in a very different sense, but it's possible that people who wrote down what he said misunderstood, because they didn't realize the truth in themselves.

Jesus teaches presence, teaches, points continuously to the present moment, the importance of the present moment, and the importance of staying awake. There are parables about going to sleep, not going to sleep, but staying awake. Jesus says, the truth will make you free, which implies that right the way you are, you are not free, because you are run by the conditioning of your mind.

So, all the basic teaching is there, you just have to see it. Repetitive prayer, if you need it, that's what you will practice. And a time will come when it's no longer right for you.

Any meditation method can be helpful, let's talk about meditation, you have a method, some people count while they meditate, from one to nine, from nine to one, from one to six, from six to one, they count their breaths, or they do this or that, have a mantra that they repeat in their minds, which keeps out other kinds of thinking. Now the purpose of a mantra is not to be stuck with a mantra, but to eventually let go of the mantra. The mantra reduces all thinking to just one thought movement, so you can focus on that, and then it's meant to be dropped.

When you drop the one thought that was left, first your mind was full of all kinds of thoughts, then the guru comes and says, I will give you a mantra, you repeat every day 500 times, and if you do that, it brings your mind to a one-pointedness. Some people then get attached to the mantra, my mantra, no, then you are meant to, at some point, the guru will point out, it's time for you to let go, because what is left when all your thoughts have flown into one thought form, and then that one thought form is dropped, just awareness is left. So it can be, take you there, if you don't get stuck on the way.

If you get stuck on the way, then you're stuck until you suffer a bit more again. So let's leave it at that. It's knowing when to let go of something that is helpful for a while, like a ladder, you climb up a ladder, and then you don't need it anymore.

Or the Buddha has a famous example of a raft you use to cross a river. The raft in the Buddha's, when the Buddha uses the parable of the raft, he's talking about the teaching, Buddhist teaching and Buddhist practice. So you use the raft to cross the river.

When you have crossed the river, you don't carry the raft around with you, it's heavy, that there's the point where you let go of the raft, and there's complete freedom then. Whether you still call that Buddhism, or whether you still call yourself a Buddhist, it's up to you. But suddenly, there's freedom.

That something is helpful for a while until it's a hindrance, any kind of practice. And in the end, there's just awareness, presence, consciousness. And some gurus teach that directly.

They don't give you, they hardly give you any technique. And that's for certain people who are ready for that, that's fine. So it's what you feel drawn to is what is right for you.

And then know when it's time to let go. So on the level of doing or becoming, there are certain things still perhaps that you want to achieve. There are maybe certain things that you want to become.

You might be at right now, you might be engaged in learning this or that. Music or some whatever, some science, some skills, whatever it is, dance, engineering, astronomy, astrology. You can't immediately be a master at that.

That involves becoming, and it involves doing. So you're not complete on the level of becoming yet. And that level of doing and becoming is one part of life.

The emphasis in this teaching is not on becoming, not because I reject becoming, but because what the world needs more at this time, because the balance is totally lost, what the world needs more is the awareness of being, the being awareness, so that a balance can happen in the world, whereas most of the world is lost in becoming and doing. Go to any big city, and they're all running around. And they're all becoming.

Now it might be for a few years, it might be exhilarating, but then the frustration sets in and your body begins to suffer and become ill. We are constantly achieve the next thing. Part of becoming is what I often describe as always the next thing, never this.

This is never fully acknowledged because the full acknowledgement of the present moment belongs to the being realm. So a person who is constantly engaged in becoming can never fully acknowledge the present moment, because he or she is always running away from the present moment. And there is, of course, there needs to be the balance between, yes, you're going somewhere, you have a life goal, or either a huge life goal or a limited life goal, like you want to learn this or that subject.

You have that life goal, but as you pursue that goal, whatever it is, are you losing continuously the present moment? So you're no longer, you're never comfortable with the is-ness of the present moment. You never see the, except perhaps for brief glances, you never see the beauty around you and the aliveness.

There's never a full appreciation of the miraculous nature of life that is always around you. That's because you're too absorbed in becoming.

[Speaker 2] (55:47 - 1:16:23)
Let's come into the present moment, accept what is, whether it's sunny or bright or dark, it is what it is. And entering the meditative state, which is a state of presence, all you have to do, and it's not even doing, is to become aware of yourself. Now there are different levels to that awareness.

So what does it mean, becoming aware of yourself, and what are the levels? Of awareness? Well, first you're aware of your body, the external body, that's yourself, one level of yourself.

And then you notice you may already have an opinion about your body. Like it or dislike it. And that's already the next level of awareness, which is awareness of your thoughts.

So you have certain thoughts that tell you something about your body. So there's already interpretation, which is in the mind. And that level of thought very often complicates what essentially is very simple out here in external reality.

It interprets, it objects, it likes and dislikes, it says, I want, I should, you should, you should not have, I should not have. And many other things. An entire sense of identity builds up around your thought patterns.

Habitual thoughts, reactions, and so on. Leading to another level of awareness, which is the emotional level, which is linked to the level of thinking. There's an enormous difference, whether you're aware of your thoughts and emotions, or whether the thoughts and emotions just appear and take you over so completely.

And that's all there is of you. So to become self-aware, first of all, means to become aware of, yes, your self as the physical body, of yourself as habitual, or whatever, thinking, emotions. And that's already a great game, to become aware of those things, rather than to completely be those things.

And then at the deepest level, you are aware of your own awareness. You're aware of yourself as a presence with no particular form. And that really is the essence of meditation.

You can be aware of yourself as I speak, and as you listen. Be aware of yourself as the presence that makes the visual and auditory perception possible. There's a presence there.

You may be dreaming up this very thing. And yet, even if you're dreaming right now, what's happening right now, there is still, there has to be a consciousness, a presence, in which the dream, in the light of which the dream appears. It doesn't really make any difference whether it's all a dream, or whether it's all real, or something in between.

What matters is that you are aware of the essence of yourself. Otherwise, you mistake many things that are not the essence of yourself, which is who you really are. You mistake those things for who you are.

And then you're totally in the grip of whatever arises in your mind, in your mental and emotional field. Because that's what ego means, to be totally in the grip, totally identified with whatever arises in your mental and emotional field. That's the ego, a misperception of who you are that needs to defend itself, and enhance itself, and protect itself continuously.

Reaffirm its identity through continuous thinking, very often, despite, you know, very often, unpleasant and negative. And yet, you're stuck with it, defending your mental positions all the time, fighting for your life, your psychological survival, survival of your ego entity, which is made out of thought, and just being wrong in an argument, it's a terrible defeat. It's an injury to your sense of self.

So, living like that, you can call unconscious, not knowing who you are. You could even say it's being deluded. And it leads to an enormous amount of problems that are generated by the egoic entity.

An enormous amount of misery, of unhappiness, drama. It's all unnecessary. Life is challenging enough as it is, without adding all that unnecessary reactivity to it.

Every challenge that life presents you with, and it does that, you get challenged through situations, and through people. You get challenged the moment you are born. And not only humans, every life form gets challenged.

And survival of the physical form is always precarious. But you amplify the life challenges enormously through unconscious thinking and reactivity. A small challenge becomes a huge one.

And it creates additional, your, the way in which you respond or react to a situation, determines subsequent events. So, if you amplify through your reactivity, you amplify a challenge that leads to further challenges. So, one small thing can then grow and proliferate into something big.

So, your degree of awareness, you can easily measure it, get a sense of where you are at, by becoming aware how you react to everyday situations. Especially challenging ones. Small challenges, mostly small challenges, occasionally a big one.

Small challenges mean challenge. It means something doesn't go the way you would have expected or wanted it to go. Somebody doesn't do what you expected him or her to do or say, expected, should have said, omitted this or that.

You're waiting too long on the phone, trying to talk to your bank. All little challenges. People are not, people who are supposed to do work for you, don't do it the way they should be doing it.

They're unreliable. Hundreds of little things continuously arise. So, the question is, can you deal with a situation in a way that is free of reactivity, so you remain peaceful and can still deal with it.

If there's something to do, something, there's nothing to do, just isn't, nothing you can do about it. Any reactivity or complaining mentally or out loud is unnecessary baggage that you carry around. So, as you know, continuously, but people don't do or say what you're supposed, they're supposed to do and say, according to your mind.

And then the complaining starts in your mind. And then it goes, might become verbal complaining. All that is unconscious living.

Awareness becomes obscured. The moment you get challenged, that can happen to people who are meditators, to meditate for half an hour a day or whatever. And yet, the moment you get challenged by life, awareness is completely obscured.

So, the question is, in daily life, not just here, but this is a kind of training ground for daily life, where do you sense your identity, who you are, where do you sense that? Do you sense that on the level of thinking and opinions, likes and dislikes, and memories and expectations, as most egos do? Or do you sense a deeper identity, a deeper sense of who you are, deeper than anything that arises in the field of thought, a presence.

That presence is not threatened by all those things that the ego cell is threatened by. So, the practice, the spiritual practice is really a continuous one. And the greatest practice is daily life.

The greatest spiritual practice is not when you sit in meditation. One could almost say it's a preparation for the spiritual practice.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:50 - 1:56:43)
Okay, I have so much to deal with here. I need to do that first, and then I can, when my plate is empty, because you have so much on your plate now, as the expression goes, and of course, the plate is never empty. Before they came up with all the digital devices, there was only the human, the busy mind.

So, creating one thought after another, keeping you trapped in content, the content of the mind, so that your entire life was content-based, no spaciousness. Of course, there was already television, has been around for a long time. And when I talked to Arianna Huffington last week, she said what she used to do for many years, the moment she opened her door, the door to her apartment, she would turn on the TV news.

So, come in the door, news. So, that's one way of filling up your mind continuously, avoiding any moment of stillness, presence. And now, of course, the television has been around for a while, radio.

And then came all the devices that we have now, that can amplify the tendency of the human mind to live exclusively in the realm of content. So, you get continuous input of stuff, in other words, for content, so that you get the input from your emails and text messages, each one very, very important. And I'm sure much more important than this talk, according to the mind, more pressing than a talk about waking up.

All the mind is, I can do both things. I can do, I have developed the ability to text and email, and at the same time, I know exactly what you're talking about. I could repeat, if you ask me afterwards, although I have been texting, I could repeat to you what you've been talking about.

And this may be true. Maybe you could repeat what I was talking about, and on that level, you took it in, but you would have missed a much more important level, which is not the words, but an energy field that comes with the words. It is behind the words and in between the words.

That's really it. And so you, unfortunately, you would miss that. So, you would take only in the teaching on the level of stuff, because the words are also stuff, but it's a particular kind of stuff that points beyond stuff, not self-serving stuff.

But if you only take it in as stuff, then it's just more stuff, interesting perhaps, or not that interesting. I've heard that before. So, I might as well send another email.

And you wrote that in your book, didn't you? The now is very important. I read that years ago.

What else can you tell us? So, I have plenty of time for more text messages, because I've heard all that before. Okay.

So, that's one level of being here or not being here. So, you would miss the more important dimension, because the words are secondary. And all the words really point to is a particular inner state.

So, while you listen, if it works for you, that inner state of spaciousness arises. But you have to be really there with your attention, because it is the state of that spaciousness is the attention. It is the alert presence.

So, as you sit here, the alert presence needs to be there. This cannot be there if you are texting, then you're only taking in the words, the information. So, the most essential thing here is the alert presence.

So, all the words point to the alert presence. Sometimes the words point to obstacles that may arise to prevent you from being in the alert presence, so that when they arise, you recognize them. That's fine.

But the very essence of being here is a deepening of that state of consciousness. And the mind, the egoic mind can very easily convince you that it has more important things to think about than presence. I've got so much on my plate.

Interesting expression. I've got so much on my plate. I can't deal with all this now, present.

Maybe when I've sorted out all the stuff that's going on when my plate is empty, then I can deal with it. It's a very common mind pattern. Jesus already talked about it.

He had these stories of a man who was invited to a wedding feast and he comes up with excuses why he can't go to the wedding feast. And always what he says, or different people are invited and different people are asked and each person has a different excuse. And the excuse always starts with the words, it's in the gospels.

The excuse always starts with the words, let me first, I have to sell my cows and my oxen. Let me first sell my cows. Let me first, even one second, let me first bury my father.

But there's always, let me first do this before I can do, before I can accept your invitation. The mind always can set, okay, yeah, but let me first, and that is the mind pattern, which says, okay, I have so much to deal with here. I need to do that first.

And then I can, when my plate is empty, because you have so much on your plate now, as the expression goes. And of course, the plate is never empty. As you might have found, life gives you one thing after another.

In that sense, the plate is never empty, but the emptiness can only be accessed within, in the present moment. As long as you get hypnotized by the excuses of the mind, then you can never access that dimension. So quite amazing how the gadgets can amplify the tendency of the human mind to be continuously trapped in stuff.

So before it was just, well, before radio and television, you just, you just had your mind and you could talk to other people. And then came the beginning of devices. And now the digital devices, of course, you get bombarded.

Most of humans, especially younger generation, some of the older generation too, get continuously bombarded with things that require your immediate attention. With, it comes through your phone, your smartphone in the form of, well, phone calls, but even more frequently, probably text messages, bing, bing, bong, bing. And they come in all the time and immediately go, and then it requires a reply.

And then emails, they can come in through all kinds of devices too. And then the latest postings on Facebook, your friends, very important, what they're doing right now. You need to know that.

And they need to know what you are doing right now. It's so important. Oh, and Twitter.

Tweets coming in all the time from all kinds of people. And if you're connected to these people, the youngsters get famous pop stars, you get their tweets, continuously things coming in. Or Justin Bieber is tweeting me, he says, the little girl, the girl, oh, wow.

And that's becomes a continuously filled with, there's never a moment of spaciousness because these devices amplify the tendency of the human mind to be reborn. The tendency of consciousness, one could say, to continuously be reborn into some new mental formation. And then sleep, people sleep at night.

I hear with many sleep, even with their phone on the pillow next to them or right next to the bed. And I read that when people wake up in the night or the last thing before they go to sleep, they're still sending emails and receiving emails. And, but there's a little bit, there is some hope on the horizon.

I was told I was, when I was at the conference last week in Wisdom Conference, where there are many people attending who are, who work for these companies that engaged in digital producing or digital devices. I don't know how it all functions, but, and we were told that some companies now each, for example, even in Germany, WVW, motor cars, Volkswagen, they give you company phones, which are programmed to turn off at 6 p.m. and to turn on again at 8 a.m. That's a wonderful, that's progress. That means there's some awareness here that the continuous engagement with these devices can be very harmful.

And even companies are discovering that these things can be very harmful. So our alertness really needs to be there and some discipline so that we do not become the slaves of our gadgets. There are wonderful possibilities that are opening up through these.

They're neither good nor bad in themselves. They're wonderful possibilities of connecting with people on a certain level. It's not necessarily the real connection, but on a certain level, and consciousness, news are no longer the exclusive, no longer can just big corporations disseminate news, which used to be the case.

Anybody can now disseminate news, which is good and bad. It can be a wonderful thing. You can reach, if you have something important to say, you can put it on the net.

It could go, as the expression goes, viral. And a few days later, millions of people, you've reached millions of people. It can happen.

Now, in many cases, those things may not be very helpful that go viral. Often things that are particularly unhelpful for awakening go viral, but it could be something helpful. So we need to be very careful when we use these, have some discipline also, especially at night, so that we don't get this continuous input of stuff.

Welcome to our meditation. An interesting question to ask yourself, and you can find out the answer right now, is whether you're able to stop thinking for a few seconds or so, or whether it's impossible to find any gap in the stream of thinking. And you don't stop thinking by exercising willpower that would not be helpful.

For example, holding your breath, I don't recommend that because you, yes, you could stop thinking by holding your breath and getting very tense. And then you're feeling you're holding thought at bay like this. But the moment you start breathing again, thought will rush back in even more strongly than before.

So it's holding your breath I don't recommend. But if you're not able to just stop thinking, not that many people can do that, you may want to use something to help you to not think. And that is, for example, not holding your breath, but being aware that you're breathing, observing that you're breathing, observing the in-breath, feeling it, sensing it, and the out-breath.

And even being aware of a short gap at the end of each in and out-breath. You breathe in, hold for two seconds or so, but don't even have to do that. And out.

And there's a cessation at the end of the out-breath, a natural cessation. And then you breathe in again, and you continue to be aware of your breathing. And when you do that, you're not thinking.

That's why breath awareness is an ancient meditation method. It's also very pleasant. And then after a while, you may notice there's a sense of aliveness behind the breath, so to speak.

So if you're looking for a very simple meditation technique, observing your breath is a good one, just as inner body awareness that I've written and spoken about. They are related. If you're observing your breath, you're also becoming aware of the energy field inside your body.

It's all very pleasant, very simple, peaceful. Sometimes thinking may come back in, and if that happens, you just return your attention to your breathing. And in daily life, when you want a moment of no thought, which is extremely important to get into the habit of cultivating the state of not thinking, when you don't actually need to think, so that when you do need to think, your thinking is actually more effective, more powerful, more intelligent.

When you are connected with a deeper realm of not thinking, which is the unconditioned consciousness. So in daily life, you cultivate as much as possible, just finding brief moments of no thought throughout your daily life. You could associate it with the breath.

I call it, the briefest one is one conscious breath, as I call it, which is you breathe in, you breathe out, and while you breathe in and out, just one in breath, one out breath. And while you do that, you're just very much aware of the air flowing into the body, the air flowing out of the body. Conscious, one conscious breath, means you're not thinking during that brief moment.

And that's very significant. When you're not thinking without losing consciousness, in fact, being more alert than when you are thinking, that is finding a new dimension of consciousness within yourself. We're entering the now with our attention.

That's all there ever is. You might as well be there fully, because that's your life. Don't fall into the trap that some spiritual seekers have fallen into, who are telling themselves, if I only had a life that's more undisturbed, that I could really practice being present and practice meditation, preferably in a lovely climate, so that I'm not disturbed by unfavorable weather.

So it's, let's tell you, the tropics, there's a warm breeze, then I could really practice and become present. And especially if I get massages every day. Oh, and the purest of foods, cooked for me, or not cooked, better not cooked.

Then I could really, but life, why doesn't life give me an opportunity to, well, if you have it, it's good to be on a retreat, it's a wonderful thing. But to always look for some situation that's ideal for your spiritual practice, no. What works much better is to say this moment is ideal for my spiritual practice.

And my spiritual practice, whatever it is that I'm facing at this moment, what is the state of consciousness that I'm bringing to this moment, which ultimately is all that ever is. There is nothing else other than your experience of this moment. There never has been anything else.

Isn't that weird? And there never will be anything else. People think the future is incredibly important, and of course, on a practical level, it has its place.

You can't do without it. But on a deeper level, the future, of course, you might have noticed, you have never yet experienced the future, but you've thought about it a lot, for years, thinking about the future, but never arrived. You cannot arrive at the future because ultimately, on a deeper level, because it doesn't exist.

Is that true? Let me think. Well, that's easy.

If the future existed, you could have experienced it. When it comes, it's the present. The past, nothing happened.

I said in The Power of Now, nothing ever happened in the past. It happened in the now. And when you remember the past, you remember it now.

There is only now. Now, The Power of Now came out for the first time 20 years ago. How is that?

Well, that was the now. Paradoxical. But in your time is something so weird.

On one level, it's everywhere. It's all consuming. It ultimately eats you up.

It burns you up. The fire of time burns you up. The body burns you up.

If you haven't noticed it already, you will in a few years. One morning, you look in the mirror. You say, what's this?

Who's this? And then you remember the apple you left on the windowsill three weeks ago. That's what happened to the apple in three weeks.

Happens to you in 30 years. Oh, shrink. Time does that to you.

Everything is consumed by time. Everything is consumed by time, Jesus calls it, where moth and rust consume. Now, he uses that as an analogy for time.

Rust, even the hardest of substances, metal, is ultimately consumed by rust. Moths, they eat up your clothes. But really, it means time is eating up everything in this material universe is being eaten up by time.

So it's everywhere. Time is, you can't get away from it. And yet, you have never experienced time.

You can only experience this moment, but you can think about time. So future exists as a thought in your head. The past exists as a thought in your head.

So future and past are necessary in order to cope with life in this dimension, undoubtedly. We could not have met here without future, where it said, at such and such a time, on such and such a day, Eckhart is going to talk here. It would have been difficult to say, one day in the now, Eckhart is going to talk in Calgary.

Let's hope you'll be there. So you need time on the practical level also. But losing yourself on that level is losing yourself on the level of the mind, the thinking mind.

To be able to use time doesn't matter that you have to be used by time. And so the transcendent dimension of consciousness that I started with when I talked is encountered when you enter the now with your attention. And okay, the now means now.

So as I'm speaking, we're entering the now with our attention. That's all there ever is. You might as well be there fully, because that's your life.

So you might as well. And here we are in this moment. You are perceiving visually, you're perceiving auditory perception, visual perception, perhaps other senses involved.

And you're perceiving the totality of this room. When this is the beginning of becoming more conscious of the present moment is to come to your senses. In order to come to your senses, you have to take some attention away from this stream of thinking.

A lot of that is useless anyway. You have to take some attention away from the stream of, you cannot be totally absorbed in your mind, as many people are throughout the day. They go through their day like sleepwalking.

They are so absorbed in their minds, which means they are not present. And they go through like, when you look at them, you can see they're not there. They might see a vague outline of you.

Or when they talk to you, they talk through the screen of their, what they think of you in the mind. So to come to your senses, take attention away from, you have to take attention away from thinking. You then become more aware of your surroundings, visual, auditory.

You might breathe, scent might be in the air or feel the breeze on your skin, this tactile, but the predominant senses are listening, hearing, and seeing. And that already takes you out of your, the trap of your mind. And then there is a moment right now when you are aware of your surroundings, or one single, sometimes it's a single thing, like a flower, the table, your hand, or it's the totality of your surroundings at any given time.

You're aware of your surroundings, and you might notice when you come to your senses, there's a momentary cessation of mental noise, which means thinking. There's a momentary cessation. It could just be for a few seconds at first.

For a moment, you are aware, you're perceiving, you're aware, but you're not thinking. You're not labeling your perceptions. That's an amazing way, an amazing shift in consciousness.

Another way of putting it is you become still, and then the perception happens against the background of stillness. It's a beautiful way to perceive things. There's a background of, and that stillness, that, in other words, is spaciousness, is not the stillness that you find when you are moving, when you get tired, and you're moving towards sleep, and then you're halfway asleep, but you're too tired to do any more thinking.

That can be a beautiful moment when you catch it. You're half asleep, and it feels so good. You're moving now towards sleep.

It feels so good, and you can't remember your problems anymore, can't think about your problems anymore. You don't remember anything anymore, and there's a moment of deliciousness, and then you're going to sleep, but this is not it. That has its place.

Of course, you go to sleep. Nor is it what you encounter when you have a few drinks. This is empty.

I'm just demonstrating. So you go. You're unhappy.

Your mind, the torture of your mind. Then you wait a few moments. You feel a little bit better.

Why? Because probably your mind slows down a bit. I have another one, and gradually you go, life is great, isn't it?

You're not thinking that much anymore. Isn't that great? So for a little while you get free of the torture, the daily torture of your mind, which is useless, but then you're moving towards eventual collapse.

That's another matter. We're not going that way here, because that way, what I just described, going towards sleep, taking alcohol or some other substance. I don't totally condemn anything.

I love a glass of wine or two occasionally. It's nice. No, but to desensitize yourself, you are falling below thought when you do that.

And that's okay. When you're going to sleep, you fall below thought. When you take excess alcohol, you begin to fall below thought.

But here, the practice of being able to come to your senses, to look around, to listen, to sense, to feel, perhaps to be aware of your breathing, perhaps to be aware of the aliveness in your body. Every cell is alive, but your attention is never there because you live in the upper part of the building of your body. You live under the roof, not unaware of what's going on in the rest of the building.

So your attention goes into, you might feel the body at the same time. It's all part of becoming present. You look around and there is a stillness arising that is not the stillness that is the stillness below thought.

It is the stillness that is above thought. And that is spiritual awakening, to encounter in yourself right now. I'm not just talking about it right now.

Encounter in yourself the possibility of accessing that dimension where for initially brief moments, you are free of thinking, but totally conscious. That's delicious. And at first it may not last for very long, but that doesn't matter.

And you may find that even without practicing it consciously as a spiritual practice, you may find that it can also happen spontaneously in your life. For example, during certain activities that require your total presence, because these activities have a certain element of danger to them, such as climbing up a rock wall, or race driving, racing car, or surfing, probably skiing downhill. All these kinds of things require your complete presence.

So they stop the mind and you're totally there and you go. In other words, the unenlightened, so to speak, partner becomes your teacher. That is sometimes the case.

And surprisingly, often says or does exactly what you need to become conscious in yourself.

[Speaker 7] (1:56:47 - 1:58:38)
The question I have is along that process over the last couple of years, almost every one of my relationships is gone, including my relationship, my marriage of 25 years. It's like hanging by a thread at the moment. And I can't tell if it's judgment or it's discernment, because it feels like I can no longer engage in some of the behavior.

And so I'm with a crowd of people that I no longer relate to. And so what has happened is my partners, our friends have become my partner's friends where I no longer kind of engage. And so it's caused a lot of distance.

And early on in my personal growth, somewhere along the line, I had heard the line, only someone with low self-esteem stays in a relationship that doesn't meet their needs. But it's now come to the point where it feels like any need that I think this egoic identity has is going to cause suffering if I try to, even as something simple as what you're saying is offensive, it's hurting, can you please rephrase it? Even something like that seems like it's going to be misinterpreted.

It's going to feel like an attack. And maybe it's riding on judgment that's just slightly beneath my consciousness. I suspect that's probably true.

Like there's some, whenever you speak about spiritual superiority, it brings some kind of, it's like, oh, you better pay attention there. So I don't know how much of that over the course of our lifetime, trying to get my partner to do some kind of spiritual growth work has had the exact opposite effect or anyway, that's where I'm at. She actually was coming.

I finally got her to come and it didn't happen. It blew up before. Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:58:40 - 1:58:42)
So, but you are still together.

[Speaker 7] (1:58:43 - 1:59:00)
Um, we're, we, in the last year we had a big windfall. I did some, one of your manifestation processes, a big house just showed up and we're in two different houses now. I'm in a big house by myself.

I don't want it. I don't want the house. I bought the house for her basically anyway.

[Speaker 1] (1:59:02 - 1:59:04)
Well, yes, that's an interesting story.

[Speaker 7] (1:59:05 - 1:59:08)
The emphasis on the word story though.

[Speaker 1] (1:59:13 - 1:59:22)
So could you, um, before I speak, have you already asked a question or not yet?

[Speaker 7] (1:59:22 - 1:59:48)
Uh, I think the question is maybe, well, number one, how do I know when it's time? If it was up to me, I would never throw in the towel for me. What's coming up is supposed to come up.

It's an opportunity for us to heal. And so I'll, I'll plant my feet, but the other person doesn't seem like that's their agenda. So when do you say it's time to let go?

I guess is the question.

[Speaker 1] (1:59:49 - 1:59:53)
And other relationships have already come to an end.

[Speaker 7] (1:59:53 - 2:00:15)
There was no formal end, just growing away, like not a drawer or a lack of connection, lack of ground to connect on, I guess. And at the same time, I feel more connected to everything. So it's like the farms are going away, but the connection to energy, it's like, I just see waves of energy.

[Speaker 1] (2:00:16 - 2:03:04)
Right. Right. Thank you.

Often that question is one form or another is often asked, when is it time to let go of a relationship or is it possible to continue in a relationship, even if there's a huge gap in the level of awareness, for example, in the two partners, there's a huge gap. Usually the best answer comes not through the decision-making process of the mind, trying to figure out what's the best thing to do. The best answer comes as a sudden realization that this is the thing to do.

Either you leave or you stay. If you live in two separate houses, of course, then it makes it a little easier to be in a relationship because you have a lot of space to yourself. And she has a lot of, he or she has a lot of space also.

So it often happens that one person, let's say two people meet, they come together, married or not married, they'll start living together. And at some point, one of them begins to grow spiritually. For some reason, there's a spiritual growth happening, the arising of awareness, some transcendence of ego.

And the other person, let's say, is staying behind. So the communication becomes a little bit more difficult. Also, as far as pain body is concerned, because the pain body in couples, for example, pain body needs the other person's pain body in order for the ultimately dysfunctional relationship to work.

The other already has gone beyond the pain body. I don't know whether you are still engaged in emotional.

[Speaker 7] (2:03:05 - 2:03:13)
I get hooked after I feel like I'm verbally attacked. If you keep misinterpreting, I'll get hooked. So there's still places where I need to work.

[Speaker 1] (2:03:14 - 2:03:29)
Yes. So it could be that the other person can provide people the training ground for you. That's what it feels like to be non-reactive.

[Speaker 7] (2:03:29 - 2:03:30)
That's what it feels like.

[Speaker 1] (2:03:30 - 2:04:20)
In other words, the unenlightened, so to speak, partner becomes your teacher. That is sometimes the case. And surprisingly, often says or does exactly what you need to become conscious in yourself.

So there's a reflection. And this can be highly, very useful. It might even ultimately, at some point, the other person may experience also the beginning of an awakening, but not necessarily.

But in the meantime, a relatively unconscious partner can teach you a lot about yourself when you observe the reactivity within yourself.

[Speaker 7] (2:04:20 - 2:04:20)
Great.

[Speaker 1] (2:04:26 - 2:05:54)
So unless something else comes to you that is beyond any doubt, and I very rarely make recommendations as far as people's personal lives are concerned, but I'll make one now. So I would continue for a while and allow the person to reflect back to you the things that you need to still become conscious of by provoking you. And often that is the case.

And you have some space. If you can't take any more, you go to a house. The comfort zone is not conducive to any kind of deepening.

Through resistance you suffer, or your presence deepens, because it has to. Many of these things are regarded as negative, but they're actually exactly what you need.

[Speaker 13] (2:05:58 - 2:06:15)
My question is, how does one remain centered in stillness when we might be surrounded by and asked to engage mentally and emotionally with others who are not?

[Speaker 1] (2:06:16 - 2:12:20)
I assume that this situation happens to you quite often, because you're asking the question. And of course, it's a very common thing for people to find themselves in such situations. Let's assume then it's, these are human beings that you cannot easily, or you don't want to, to separate yourself from, like could be family members, or it could be people you work with.

Those two situations are often situations where you feel you want to continue to interact with these people, or you have to interact with these people, but it's getting difficult, because you can, there's toxicity, or there's a lot of unconsciousness, egos, fight against other egos, and so on. Let's just for a moment put aside the more extreme manifestations of such situations. There are situations, whether it's family members or at work, there's some extreme situations that are so destructive and toxic that you, the only healthy and sane course of action would be to remove yourself.

So, if it's an extreme situation, let's say you're in a relationship, the relationship is sometimes violent, there's physical violence, or there's repeated emotional violence, that's an extreme situation, or you are at work, the company that you work for is, the environment, the energy is so toxic and negative, that just going into that office, you feel the weight of it, and the pull of that negativity, and it's full of ego battling each other.

So, in certain extreme situations, I would recommend that you remove yourself from this, because I mentioned that at first, because I want to put that aside, we need to know extreme situations involving emotional violence, physical violence, whatever it may be, you have to take responsibility and remove yourself from that situation. But many situations, and I assume in your case, perhaps it's not that extreme. So, what remains is normal human unconsciousness, not the extreme forms of unconsciousness.

So, to deal with normal human unconsciousness, again, be aware when you are interacting with people, realize that you may not always succeed in doing this, but the most important thing, see if you can bring about a shift in the way in which you approach the situation and these people. So, the most important thing in such situations is your state of consciousness, rather than whatever it is that they are talking about. They may be talking about this or that, whether it's at work, or they may be gossiping, or they may be whatever, they're engaged in emotional ego stuff.

Use it as an opportunity to stay present. And it's not easy. And you can only, you need to intensify your presence when you are with unconscious people.

By that I mean, when you are sitting alone in a room, or you're walking out in nature, it's, being present is not that difficult. You can, especially nature is conducive to presence. Or being alone in a room, if you discover that you actually like sitting alone in a room, that's a great thing, because that means you become comfortable with yourself.

And there are still, the majority of humans still become very uncomfortable with sitting alone in a room. And you may discover that you actually like being alone, not continuously, you still love people. But you also love being alone, because when you're alone, you can sense the presence that you are, the very simple, but powerful presence.

And you've sensed there's a stillness there. It's lovely. And then of course, then you leave your room, and then you meet other people, you lose yourself, you get to go see the, there's a gravitational pull that the mind has.

And so people know that they, so other people's minds will try to draw you in. I don't, is it, may I ask you before I carry on, is it predominantly, is it more a family situation in your case? Or is it a work situation?

Or which one is it predominantly?

[Speaker 13] (2:12:22 - 2:13:03)
I would say, thank you for asking. It is both, and both family and work occasionally are issues, or not issues, but present themselves as a challenge. What is an ongoing daily challenge is the unconsciousness of the city I'm surrounded in.

So, you know, by Wednesday, that starts to peak, and becomes much more difficult for me to stay out of my head, becomes very noisy.

[Speaker 1] (2:13:03 - 2:13:08)
Oh, you can sense the energy field of the city?

[Speaker 13] (2:13:08 - 2:13:09)
Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:13:09 - 2:13:10)
Ah, right.

[Speaker 2] (2:13:10 - 2:13:11)
Yes, yes.

[Speaker 13] (2:13:11 - 2:13:25)
Sunday is very pleasant. Wednesday, Thursday, Friday are not. Right.

Right. So, but it's, it's really, you know, that plus the more intense situations of work and family, which occasionally come in.

[Speaker 1] (2:13:26 - 2:14:16)
Yes, yes. I need to ask one more question. Do you find yourself drawn into how when other people are ego-controlled, do you find yourself emotionally, mentally, you become just like them?

Or do you feel you're a little bit of an outsider now that's observing what's going on? Are you a full participant temporarily in the unconscious interactions that are taking place, the drama, whatever it may be? Are you a full participant?

Or are you a reluctant, sometimes a reluctant participant, or you remain there as an almost an outsider observing what's going on? How is it for you?

[Speaker 13] (2:14:18 - 2:14:47)
I, it oscillates. Most of the time, I am an outsider who enjoys engaging. I suspect that my sensitivity to presence and stillness is becoming, is increasing, or the sensitivity to that lack of in myself is increasing.

Does that answer your question?

[Speaker 2] (2:14:48 - 2:14:49)
Yes, yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:14:49 - 3:10:43)
Thank you. That's good. Yeah.

Yeah. Let's talk for a moment about this, the energy field of the city, before we go on to your personal thing. I don't know if you, whether you meditate or not, whether you do some form of meditation.

And often, you say, yes, often people meditate, and then something disturbing things happen. While they meditate, suddenly, there's disturbing noise. This morning, I was sitting, I was sitting in, in my living room.

And it's Wednesday, so they do the gardening on Wednesday with extremely noisy leaf blowers. This is the time of year with a lot of leaf blowers. And so the noise, and I was just so, it was so peaceful, as I was sitting there.

And suddenly, there was this, and often, I immediately knew how to completely transcend it, because I've been, it's second nature to me now. But often, I have to tell people how to deal with disturbing things like that, especially when they're trying to meditate. And then that happens, I always say, incorporate whatever arises during this time when you're trying to meditate.

Everything that arises, make it part of your meditation. In other words, resist nothing that arises. Don't demand that anything that arises should not arise.

In that case, even a disturbing noise, such as a leaf blower, is incorporated into your meditation by deep acceptance of what is. You don't resist. You may be able to practice the same in the city when you feel the energy field.

But I mean, you may be walking there or driving or just being in an apartment or office. Practice surrender to this energy that you feel, then you may be able to transcend that particular energy. If you don't, if you react to it, it still has you in its grip.

In a way, one could say, when you react to toxic energy, you become part of the toxic energy without knowing it. So, the only way you can become free, other than removing yourself and live in the countryside, the only way you can get beyond it is through deep surrender. So, completely, and this can be a spiritual practice, as I said, except in the most extreme cases when there's violence of some kind or extraordinary toxicity, then obviously you remove yourself.

Otherwise, surrender to something that seems unacceptable and yet you surrender, you're totally okay with suddenly the toxic energy of the city, but you no longer even call it toxic. You just, you can sense it and allow yourself to sense that and think, oh, that's what it is. And you might also then recognize it as an expression of human unconsciousness to some extent, but also, yes, it's still a manifestation of life at a particular stage, evolutionary stage, and that's what it is.

You can then, I had that realization many, many years ago when I went through a shift in consciousness. At the time, I lived in London and I had to travel every morning to work on the subway, which is called tube or underground, they call it. It has different lines and one is called, at that time, it was decades ago, I don't know how it is now, one was, the one, the line that I had to catch is called the Northern Line.

The Northern Line was always considered the worst of all tube lines because it had the longest delays and the most totally crammed carriages that always, you can never find a seat. You had to push yourself in and then there were long gaps, no trains. People called it the misery line and I had to catch that line every morning.

After my shift in consciousness, I still was the same. I went in there and I felt completely at peace. On the Northern Line, which before was a source of great unhappiness, felt completely at peace.

I couldn't quite understand why for a long time and later I realized I'm actually not complaining about anything anymore. I'm not complaining about it, it's just it is. My mind wasn't saying anything about it anymore.

And I could still feel that energy, but it was, I allowed myself to feel that and by allowing myself to feel it, there was transcendence of it. So, that is something to practice. And then also often in the middle of, sometimes in London, I would catch a bus too, so I might always sit on the upper level of the double-decker buses, would sit on the upper level and I contemplated the city.

I had the most peaceful meditations contemplating the hustle and bustle of the city, sitting on the upper deck of the bus. Wow, everything was so peaceful. Why was it so peaceful?

Everybody is stressed. Most people in a big city like that is stressed, most people are stressed and yet I felt peace, so peaceful. I was completely okay with everything.

That was, seems, was the reason. So, it's a practice of surrender and through surrender you transcend. Now, going on to people, dealing with people, individual people or small groups of people, family members, in any situation, as much as possible, remember that the most important ingredient of that situation is the state of conscience that you bring to it rather than whatever is being discussed.

And see that it's a little bit like without accepting the way people behave and, but, and recognized by, you can only accept it if you realize that they behave in this way because they cannot, they can't help it. They cannot, they, they behave the way they behave because they're still in the grip of that unconsciousness. Now, you have to be careful that the ego, when you observe people's unconsciousness and recognize its unconsciousness and you recognize that's just their conditioned behavior, it's the ego that makes them, that's a true recognition.

When you have that true recognition, you need to be careful, though, that your ego doesn't come back through, come, return through the back door, as I put it, and suddenly you feel very superior to them. Because any sense of superiority is a conceptual identity again. Yes, it's important to recognize that they are still in the grip of that unconsciousness.

So, it's a little bit like observing children. You wouldn't come, when children do the wrong things or break something, they can't help it. A three-year-old can't, if the three-year-old spills something or breaks something, they can't help it.

That's just how it is. It corresponds to the evolutionary stage as a human being. And so, you wouldn't complain about it.

Well, some parents do, if they're very unconscious, they get angry with a two or three-year-old when they break something. That means you're really unconscious. But, so, able to accept people's behavior and see when they do it.

Be very careful, though, with your reactions. So, stay as present as you can, through breath awareness, or even listen, when you listen to somebody, be really there, listen to them, be there as a conscious presence. Don't let, especially when it's a family surroundings, the pain body can often come in.

The pain body wants a reaction, an emotional reaction from you. Other person's pain body wants you to react emotionally. And when that happens, you can recognize it.

And you may not need to react emotionally, if you stay present. Staying present is the important part. Accepting the way a person behaves, for the time being, is fine.

Unless, if it's in your family surroundings, it may be helpful to talk about certain patterns of behavior that you're not okay with. When you shout at me, when you're tired and you get irritated and you shout at me, that's not okay. Catch the person when he or she is relatively conscious, to point out moments of unconsciousness.

But when it does happen, you just have to, they're like children. People who are still unconscious are like children, in evolutionary terms. So, it's challenging, but you need that in order to deepen your presence.

If your surroundings were ideal for sustaining presence, your presence would never go very deep. If you lived, if you had unlimited money, and you lived in the most wonderful surroundings, and you're being looked after, you can meditate every day, because nobody's making any demands on you. You get the best possible food that is served every day, and clean air and wonderful surroundings.

Now, you might think, then I could really grow spiritually and awaken. Unfortunately, that's not the case. For a little while, you'll feel peaceful, but it wouldn't go very deep.

Your presence wouldn't go very deep, because it doesn't have to go very deep. It doesn't go, nothing happens unless it has to. It's only when you're confronted with a demand, a challenge, an obstacle, then you are forced to go deeper.

Otherwise, you're like a little flower that grows in a greenhouse, very protected conditions. Let's say, a seed that sprouts in a protected environment of a greenhouse, and then it grows very quickly. If you take it outside, it wouldn't even survive, because it was never confronted with the adverse conditions.

It didn't generate enough energy to deal with the adverse conditions in the same applies to presence. Your comfort zone is not conducive to spiritual awakening and deepening in presence. The mind might tell you, there's nothing wrong with comfort zones, enjoy it when it's there.

But don't believe that the comfort zone is the ultimate purpose of your life. In a way, the opposite is true. You don't necessarily need to seek discomfort, although that has been done and is still being done by certain types of spiritual practice, seeking out discomfort.

In India, there are still many people who practice that. In the West, there used to be many people, not anymore. The West is more about seeking comfort zones.

Comfort zone is not conducive to any kind of deepening. When you're not in your comfort zone, either you suffer or your presence deepens. Through resistance, you suffer.

Through judgment, resistance, and on, you suffer. Or your presence deepens, because it has to. You're taken out of your comfort zone, sometimes because of the people that you need to deal with, or you could be taken out of your comfort zone, where you live, or what you have to do, or whatever it may be.

But all these are good things, or you lose things that were important to you, so you're taken out of your comfort zone in that way. Many of these things are regarded as negative, but they're actually exactly what you need to deepen your presence. I had a relative many years ago who suffered from a mental illness.

I would only visit this person once a year for a brief time, because, anyway, this person was very deeply in the grip of a condition called paranoid schizophrenia, and sometimes this person was in a mental home, sometimes at home. And so, when I visited once a year, I could see, first I had to listen to the narratives, which were complete fake fantasies about all the enemies that are surrounding us, and so on. Paranoid schizophrenia, misinterpretations of reality.

And I just, first I had to sit there and listen. I knew already, every time I arrived, I would hear the stories of the dreadful things that's been happening, and I would just sit there. And normally, everybody, sooner or later, would become incorporated into this person's fantasy world.

If you questioned anything she said, you would become one of the enemies. So, I never questioned anything. And whenever I arrived there, I could sense my, in the presence of a very unconscious person, I could sense my presence deepening, becoming much more intense, or just automatically, because there is a, the way in which you experience presence varies.

There can be intense presence, or there can be just background presence. In certain situations, I experienced intense presence, like a dimmer switch, turning on the light on the dimmer switch, but I'm not doing it, it just happens. So, whenever I sat with her, I would become very, very present, and just listen.

And many times, while I was there, she would become virtually normal, and not talk about it anymore. And her condition subsided, and she could converse like the normal person. And the moment I left to go back home, I was told by somebody else who lived with her, she would immediately revert back into her fantasies.

But while I was there, she was, initially, I had to listen to the stories, but as I stayed present, some of that presence transmitted itself to her, it seemed, didn't have a permanent effect, but it had a temporary effect of bringing some light into the unconsciousness. So, but this is a practice that is very important. Difficult people are very important on your spiritual path.

And difficult people means, obviously, ego people, unconscious people. In other words, most people are difficult in one way or another. Some are much more difficult than others.

Some are close to insane. And those then you have to remove yourself. As I said, if you can, if you can't, that's fine, too.

But we deepen through interacting with other humans. And to some extent, you find also that your state of consciousness gets reflected in other humans and the humans that you attract after a while. If you remain present as much as possible, you attract other humans into your life that are also relatively present.

And sometimes there's a healing effect that you can have without wanting to change the situation, but by remaining present in a situation, non-reactive, you can sometimes change the environment without feeling that you are doing it. Because one present person can make a difference to the entire energy of a group of people. Or sometimes the group energy is so deeply unconscious that even that doesn't help.

At least you don't become part of it. And you remain on the periphery, you don't become part of it. So, in the same way, however, if you have a group of people, let's say you have a meeting, you have a committee meeting, sometimes one very unconscious person can draw everybody else into a deep unconsciousness.

So, that's the reverse of what I was just talking about, present. If one person is very unconscious, it sometimes happens that everybody else gets drawn in and their level of consciousness also diminishes. That's not uncommon either.

But you need difficult people to evolve. That's the truth of it. So, and ultimately, even your childhood, when I, many people, when they look back on their childhood and their parents, you can see parents were unconscious, behaved in unconscious ways.

In my case, for example, and they couldn't help it. There's no, I don't blame, just in the grip of their conditioned behavior. My life was not pleasant as a child.

But even that, retrospectively, it all made sense. Retrospectively, I needed to go through that. I remember talking to Oprah, it was actually, I can mention it now because it was a public conversation.

She grew up with a single mother, never saw her father. And her mother did not have the ability to love. She was not given any love whatsoever.

It was just very bad, very bad situation. And I said, when she explained the situation, the details of which I had forgotten, but it was awful. I said, you would not be who you are now if you had had a loving mother.

Because this forced you to go deeper to something that you did not find outside. It forced you to go deeper into yourself. So, that is, may help you to remember, thank you for difficult people.

That is your prayer of gratitude. Oh, by the way, when you awaken spiritually, it doesn't mean this is the end of challenges. They don't stop.

The only difference is, and it's a big difference, you no longer unconsciously transform the challenges of life into unhappiness. The entire psychological self that you think you are, that your identity that is derived from whatever it is that your mind identifies with, your past, what happened to you in your past, what you did, what people did to you, what you achieved, your successes, your failures, your sufferings, victories and defeats from your past, they gradually, a story forms in the mind. And a story is thoughts, certain thoughts, they come together as a bundle.

And so after, as you grow up and you become an adult and you grow, this becomes more developed, this mental image of who you are. And that becomes who you sense yourself to be as a person. That becomes your personality.

And that is the foundation for most people's sense of identity. That is all they know. And that is the unawakened state of consciousness.

So you are confined to this ultimately mind made sense of self that consists of a storyline, a narrative that you think about, and you call it my life, me and my life. Hmm. And that exists in time.

This is where the time dimension becomes very important, because the me and my life is me, the person that I am now, which is conditioned by my past, all the things from the past that make up the person that I am now. And then future becomes important for this me and my life, because you can look to the future as a destination, a source of possible greater fulfillment, because, strange thing is, the sense of self that arises from the past, that is, that consists of a bundle of recurring thought forms plus emotional formations, a mental emotional entity, that entity that you call me and my life, is, a lot of the time, spends its time worrying about me and my life and considers itself problematic. So you carry you as that entity, you as that person, everybody here carries a life situation with him or herself.

You carry a life situation with you, and everybody here has certain, a certain set of problems in their life situation, which, whether they are related to your relationships, whether they're related to your health situation, whether they're related to your financial situation, your work situation, any of these areas, it's rare that you're totally free of perceiving yourself as being kind of almost burdened by problems.

And that many people have a view of themselves, of their identity, as a problem to be solved, unconsciously. They don't say, they don't say, I am a problem to be solved, but there's an underlying current of unspoken thought that says, there's something that is not quite right here. And you've, and then you look at others, especially on Facebook, and you see, they don't have those problems.

So what's wrong with me? What's wrong? And even if you walk in the street, they seem to be okay.

And you could perceive, why am I always, have all got that stuff going on? And then of course you begin to pretend too. You don't know that the others are pretending, but you are pretending.

And then you start taking the selfies for your Facebook post. So this, this mental image that people have, we now have the technology, isn't that great, to amplify this mental image and send it out into the world. And we can polish it up so that it looks great out there.

But the greater it looks on your Facebook page, the worse you feel inside. So the interesting fact is then that everybody carries the burden of their life situation. And whether it's a heavy burden for you at this time, or whether it's a relatively light burden for you at this time, as you sit here, may vary from person to person.

But there is not a single person, unless there's a baby here somewhere, there's not a single person who does not carry this burden of their life situation, whether it's heavy or light at the moment. And it could change. If it's heavy today, it might not be heavy anymore tomorrow, but then it'll be heavy again another time.

So then that's an interesting fact. And that is part of a person's sense of identity, is what I call the life situation. What is me and my story?

And there's always, and that's the strange fact, there's always something missing. There's always a sense, an underlying sense of, I am not enough. I haven't arrived yet.

There's a search ultimately for greater fulfillment, a search for yourself ultimately, for a better version of yourself. Now there's nothing wrong with engaging in activities that help you learn a new skill, acquire new knowledge. And so you gradually, you become a better version of yourself.

You become, let's say, you acquire a better education or whatever it is, a skill, dance, whatever. That's fine. But whatever it is you acquire, on one level, you can improve yourself, no doubt.

But on a deeper level, that sense of dissatisfaction will resurface again and again. And no matter what you achieve or attain, for a little while, sometimes it happens that a person is totally feeling, now I'm fully myself. I have arrived.

This happens, it could happen when you win the lottery. And there's been many things written about lottery winners. Many of them became more unhappy after winning the lottery.

There was a moment of elation, and then there was greater unhappiness. So there's that sense of, the underlying sense of not enough, not enough yet. I'm not enough.

And you never actually arrive. And then you reach retirement age, and you suddenly realize that you've always been waiting to start living. And that's a pity.

Without knowing it, you've always been lived for the next moment or some other future moment, and thought, I'm going to get there. One day, I'm going to make it. Whatever, it's a weird expression.

Make it really, make yourself, I suppose. That's one day, I'm going to make it. And ultimately, several times you think you made it.

But then you realize that your life situation, again, sabotages you. That's what it does. You might have noticed.

You do your best. You do your best intentions, and you should. But no matter how good your intention, how well-focused you are, and how much positive thinking you do, which are all great things, I'm not saying don't do them, do them.

But even there, you do not escape this fact that challenges come one after another. And challenges sometimes come in the form of some form of chaos. It's good to strive for order.

But no matter how good you are in bringing about order in your life, and it's a great thing, you will periodically encounter the eruption of disorder in your life, whether it's an illness, or some kind of loss, or some huge drama in your relationship, or toxic. You might have noticed, by the way, a great source of challenge in your life, one of the greatest, apart from the fact that as you grow older, the body is being consumed. A great source of challenge in your life is human beings.

So if you look at your life situation, you realize, where does a lot of that suffering and happiness, where does it come from? It's other people. And sometimes the very people that make you happy for a few years, suddenly, the very same people make you unhappy.

The person you fall in love with today, five years from now, you hate each other at the divorce court. The worst person you ever met. So everybody carries a life situation, and there's a certain heaviness to a life situation.

And if you are totally trapped in your life situation, you think about it, you talk about it compulsively, either you think about it in your head, or you talk about to others, the more you are trapped in it, the more unsatisfying your life is. That is really the temporal dimension, because you as the person, you as the personality, you that has a life situation, you that is the story of me, me and my story that exists in time. And the wonderful thing is that there is a way out.

There is a dimension of consciousness where you are not trapped on that level. So one could almost say that you can get off that speeding train, but not as a physic, not with your physical body. But there is a possibility of transcending a sense of identity that is exclusively derived from mental, emotional patterns in you, because that's what the person or the personality is.

Now, most humans don't even know that. But the ancient teachers pointed to it using different signposts. Buddha said, life is suffering.

What did I just talk about? I just didn't use those terms. Buddha said, life is suffering.

But he also said, I teach suffering, he said, and the end of suffering, which means, when he said, I teach suffering, he meant, I show you how suffering arises. And when he said, and the end of suffering, what he meant was, I show you how suffering can end. A lovely statement.

I teach suffering and the end of suffering. So the Buddha talks about the possibility of the end of suffering. Jesus talks about the necessity of, on the possibility of what is called salvation.

And in other spiritual traditions, other terms are used, liberation, awakening. So they all pointed to it using different signposts, different terminology. And yet very few humans realized what they were talking about.

So even like Christians, most Christians don't know what salvation is. They might think an emotional high is salvation, or a certain belief. You say, I believe this, which is a story in your head that you don't question.

Thought, in other words, thought forms. There's a story in your head and say, this is how it is. I don't, you don't question.

I believe in this narrative. And then they say, this narrative will save you if you believe in it. I would suggest to you that what Jesus was pointing to was much deeper than that, but there was a beautiful truth hiding there.

I would say hiding because you don't very rarely do you actually hear the depths of the teaching explained to you in churches. So it is possible. There is a possibility of transcendence.

You can internally transcend the limitations of the person, which doesn't mean you're no longer a person. You continue to be a person. You also continue to have a life situation and you continue to be challenged by life.

The difference is, oh, by the way, when you awaken spiritually, it doesn't mean this is the end of challenges. Really? Oh, they keep coming.

They don't stop. The only difference is, and it's a big difference, you no longer unconsciously transform the challenges of life into unhappiness. You no longer transform the challenges of life into an unhappy me, an unhappy sense of self, a dissatisfied person with, in the background, always a sense of dissatisfaction, discontent, irritation, not enough.

But sometimes, of course, you smile. How are you? Great.

I'm just great. Haven't you seen my Facebook page? I'm...

This is the food I'm eating now. Now, as the Buddha said, I show you suffering. I teach suffering.

I show you how suffering arises. Now, how does it ultimately arise? How does the unhappiness, let's use that kind of generic term, unhappiness, which could be all kinds of things.

Unhappiness starts with a slight irritation when you're waiting in line and the mind is not moving, and you have a slight irritation, and you're beginning to be unhappy. And then it builds up into something more, perhaps. Or unhappiness is when you arrive home and your house has gone up in flames.

A little bit more unhappiness. Or unhappiness is when suddenly your spouse leaves you, and you go bankrupt, and you lose your job, and you don't know what's going to happen next month, where you're going to live. Another form of unhappiness.

Many forms of unhappiness can arise. But when you look at the, you need a little bit of awareness to detect, and this is already kind of the beginning of a spiritual awakening, when you develop the ability to know what's going on in your mind. And when you develop, and this is awareness slowly arising, when you develop the ability to know what your mind is doing, what your thoughts are going through your head, then you may detect, where does the unhappiness come from?

Does it come, and you can then divide it into two types of unhappiness. One is completely unrelated to an actual event out there. It's entirely produced by dysfunctional thinking.

A typical example of that would be worry. You wake up in the middle of the night, and you start to worry. Worry means you have to create scenarios in your thoughts about things going wrong.

You create scenarios about things which you might lose, things you might not get, but you need. Something may happen to you, and you play it out in your mind. You worry about problems that you say you have, but while you worry, there's no, worry is never given a solution to anything.

It's just pointless going around in your mind, and you don't even know it. Many people are addicted, there's no awareness there, they are addicted to worrying. Their sense, their personality, to a large part, is a worrying personality.

Take the worrying away, and a huge chunk of their personality is suddenly gone. Of course, they don't want that. They want to hang on to that.

I need to worry. Well, I mean, if I don't worry, I'm not taking responsibility for my life. Everybody worries, don't they?

When I look at movies, they worry. Everybody worries. You have to worry.

Okay, let me worry a little bit more. Now, worry is a very good example of dysfunctional thinking, and it produces an emotion. It's not just in the mind.

You have certain types of thinking, the body reacts, responds to the thinking, and creates an emotion that reflects a type of thinking. The energetic frequency of that thinking, the story that you create in your mind, the body can't tell the difference between an actual, real event out there, and something that only your mind is creating. So when your mind is creating critical situation, your body believes that you are in a critical situation, or that you're lying in bed at three in the morning, and it's very nice and warm and soft, but you're in a critical situation in your mind, and the body believes this is bad.

And then you experience the emotion that you would experience if you were really in a critical situation. And then that becomes, and the emotion fuels even more that type of thinking. So you're trapped in a vicious circle.

And so there are human beings who are burdened with these personalities that continuously produce totally superfluous, unnecessary unhappiness. All unhappiness is ultimately superfluous, but in this particular case, this type of unhappiness has nothing to do at all with any situation that's actually happening. It's created by dysfunctional thinking.

By dysfunctional thinking here means every thought that comes into your head absorbs your consciousness totally, and that you, when I say identify, this is the key. When you identify with thought, there's a sense of me, a self in every thought. There's no space between you, who you ultimately are beyond thought.

There's no, you're totally unaware of who you are beyond thought because you're so totally identified with that voice in the head that never stops talking. It goes on and on. Oh, why don't you shut up, shut up.

But that's the voice too. That's just another aspect of the voice. It says, why can't I shut up, shut up, shut up?

Well, that's the voice also, so that doesn't work. And some people are so unconscious when I say you have a voice in the head that never stops talking. Say, what are you talking about?

What voice? This kind of a voice. What is that one?

So from anybody who is not, who is totally identified with mind, is virtually trapped in that particular dimension. So you have unhappiness arising simply as a product of your mind, even without an external challenge. And then you have other types of unhappiness arising because there is an external challenge in your life.

There is a difficult relationship situation. There is a difficult work situation, a difficult financial situation, a difficult health situation. So you might think, well, I'm fully justified in being unhappy because let me tell you about what's going on in my life.

And then you will tell me that, yes, you have a right to be unhappy. And so, yes, but if you look closely at those things, and again, it requires a certain degree of awareness. When you seemingly become unhappy, and I'm using again, just reminding you, I'm using this as a generic term, it could be anything from slight irritation to extreme anger or extreme sadness or anything in between, or even an undercurrent of an undercurrent of unhappiness, which many, many people, almost everybody has, unless they have awakened.

There's an undercurrent of dissatisfaction, of unease. And it comes in every situation, whether they know it or not, there's an undercurrent there. It's also, it's emotional.

These are emotions that have been created by years and years of dysfunctional thinking, and that undercurrent is there. So something in your life situation is challenging. We can look at one small example of how unhappiness arises.

Let's say, just something seemingly insignificant, but life is full of seemingly little things and they accumulate. So if you become irritated with one little thing after another little thing, after another little thing, that eventually grows, and becomes part of your personality, and you become an irritated person. And the irritated person is actually, without knowing it, looking for more irritation.

Just waiting, just the slightest thing to go wrong. And then you make a phone call to your bank. Please wait, we appreciate your call, but we are in the Philippines and we can't answer immediately or they don't say that.

You have to wait, please. Okay, there you are. And five minutes pass.

We value your call very much, but there's nobody yet ready. Okay. And then the mind starts saying things.

If it hasn't started already, this is dreadful. How can they do it? I'm going to change banks, but they're all the same, aren't they?

Why can't I get a human being to talk to? What's wrong with them? I hate this whole civilization anyway.

All kinds of things. And you become unhappy if you weren't unhappy already, because you were probably a little bit unhappy already, and then it grows. And then you're dealing with the next thing, or if you're lucky, you get a lovely Filipino person that is, hi, how are you?

And say, oh, but you have to be open. If you're not open, you don't even know that there's another. Finally, there's a human being there, but you don't even know that anymore.

I've been waiting for 25 minutes on this. And then the next thing comes up in your life, and you're already bringing that into that situation. And there goes an irritated person, an angry person.

And then you have to go to the airport, and you wait in line. It is not moving. Why can't they?

Why don't they? They're completely incompetent. What's the story?

Now, if you look, how does the unhappiness arise? And again, it needs a little bit of awareness so that you're aware of what your mind is doing. If you're totally identified with your mind, you don't even know what's going on.

You are the thoughts. Every thought has a self in it, a sense of self in it. There's an awareness.

You can suddenly see, oh, where is the unhappiness arising? Is it because I'm sitting or standing here waiting for this or that? Or is it because I am telling myself something about sitting here, waiting, and about standing here?

Where is the unhappiness coming from? Could it be that the narrative that I have created around this particular situation, rather than the situation, is causing the unhappiness? It's possible, but you have to figure it, try it out.

Now, because you've got plenty of time, because they're not answering the phone. So you investigate. It's a spiritual investigation while you're waiting.

How would I experience this situation if I did not add these thoughts to it? If I didn't add the possibly unnecessary burden of thought to it, how would I experience this moment without the addition of a narrative? Okay, let's find out.

I've got plenty of time. And so there you are, holding the receiver.

[Speaker 16] (3:10:44 - 3:10:45)
Okay.

[Speaker 1] (3:10:47 - 4:24:45)
Well, I would experience this moment as I'm breathing, and I feel myself breathing,

and I'm looking out of the window, and I'm looking around the room, and as I'm breathing, I can feel the energy in my body. There's an energy that's, the body is alive, and I can feel that it is alive. I've got nothing else to do right now.

I can feel the body is alive. There's an aliveness that pervades every cell of the body. And suddenly, you now realize what this is without the addition of thought.

Without the addition of thought that says, this should not be happening. This, because ultimately, that's what it's saying. This should not be happening.

Or it might say, this should not be happening to me. Or it says, why is this always happening to me? Those are, that's the type of thought.

And then you experience, okay, that's a relatively small situation, but you are looking into the origin of unhappiness. So you can become free in little situations of the mental, emotional, reactive patterns that before you were completely identified with, so identified that they became you, that they became part of your personality, part of the person. And so that's an amazing thing.

And then you can, after a while, these are all little challenges in life. And then occasionally a bigger challenge comes. And again, and a big challenge comes, you lose your job.

You go to a doctor and there's a health challenge. Relationship comes to an end or relationship is very difficult and toxic. Something collapses around you.

And again, you can, there is a similar, yes, you realize there is a challenge here and you realize that it may be necessary to take some action. But in the meantime, you can experiment and see, this requires, by the way, more developed, more intense presence when a bigger challenge comes into your life. But you've practiced already with little things, telephone calls and lineups in the supermarket and airport and countless other things.

So you've already been successfully practicing with that, just getting ready for the next big challenge to come into your life. And it will come. And there it comes.

And then you have already developed the muscle presence power in you has already grown. The ability to relinquish dysfunctional thinking and being able to be with a situation as it is right now, without the addition of this burden of superfluous suffering, creating thought. And let's show you have developed that already.

And then the big challenge comes and there you are. Let's say you lose your job. And one day you go to the office and the boss says the famous expression, they don't usually say, you're fired.

That's somewhere else in New York, somewhere they'll say you're fired. But usually there are much more clients say, I'm afraid we'll have to let you go. As if you had been longing to go for a long time.

And perhaps you have, you just didn't know it. We'll have to let you go. Really?

Oh, thank you so much. Finally, they're letting me go. We'll have to let you go.

And, but usually it's not people who usually react as and there comes a slightly bigger challenge because who knows how you're going to pay the mortgage next month. Who knows? And there we go.

And if you, if presence has grown in you, you can then walk out of the office building with a, carrying the box of your belongings from your office. And then you put it in your car and then you sit in your car. And again, your question, if I didn't add any thought to this, how would I experience this moment?

It is as it is. And right at this moment, it's actually fine. It's actually, this moment is actually better than it would be if I were still stuck in the office.

This moment, certainly now the mind says, yeah, but you've got the future to think about. And of course, yes, you may have to take action, but the question is how, what is the quality of your consciousness in the present moment? Because that determines what kind of action you take is the basis for your action, a sense of fear or anger or panic.

I need to write another job. And then if you go, if you get another interview, you're so, so tense that they don't want you to say, no, we can't have a nervous person like that. But so you differentiate between taking action and even perhaps focusing your mind on what, what is it that I can do?

What steps can I take? What are the possibilities? I usually, when I do something on that, I get a piece, I'm a paper and pen person.

I write it down on a piece of paper and then see the possibilities. And then you return into this present moment. So you develop the ability to always have your conscious attention anchored in the present moment rather than in your thinking mind.

So you're at, this is the, you're becoming aligned with the present moment and it requires, I must admit, some situations require more intense presence than others. If it's a bigger thing, more intense presence. You go to the doctor's office and the doctor says, okay, you have about 12 months and then maybe not beyond.

That's a big challenge. It's a huge challenge because it means, but by the way, he may be wrong, but it means time has been taken, virtually been taken away from you. It's like, like, like some deity, malevolent deity, or maybe a good deity that suddenly you have no more time or, because you had been looking for some self-fulfillment through time, unless you're 95 years old, but maybe even then, you've been looking for self-fulfillment, for some kind of completion of who you are, of the story you want.

You want the happy ending of the story of me. Of course it never comes, but don't tell anybody. It never, the happy ending of the story of me never comes.

And then somebody takes away time from you. And that could be the most dreadful shock to you as a person, because then you mentally go somewhere that doesn't exist anymore. No more vacation, no more this, no more that.

And so some people have become terribly, terribly, dreadfully unhappy in that situation, which has only been normal, I suppose, one would say normal, but others have become intensely present through having no more time. And they went, I've met some, and some, the body began to deteriorate more and more, more quickly. And they were like luminous lights.

They were just sitting there looking at me. And I remember a lady years ago who came to see me when I was still seeing people. She had developed this illness, only had a few more months, and she was just, every time she came, she was more luminous and just sit there.

And we were just present together. There was nobody left. There was no person left.

There was only a space of conscious presence. So the person had been burned up completely by this. That was amazing how, there's another thing I read a couple of years ago.

There was a musician in England, apparently quite famous, but I had never heard of him, which doesn't mean anything. So there was a pop musician and he went to the doctor. I don't know if he is still alive now or not.

He went to the doctor and he says he told him, the doctor told him something like that. And this is a very rare case. He said in an interview, he walked out of the doctor's office in a state of enormous elation.

He was just, and suddenly he said he was able to enjoy every moment intensely. And he said, why didn't I do this before? And what happened to him?

So some people are forced into awakening by a situation. Now, any big challenge in your life potentially is that it is a way of how life forces you into awakening. And there are some people who have never come into touch with any spiritual teaching and it happened to them.

Others encounter intense suffering and they suffer and suffer, and then they come into contact with the spiritual teaching that points to the possibility of transcendence. And suddenly the very same suffering situation suddenly becomes the opening. So any seemingly bad event in your life, which usually entails some kind of loss, disappointment, something crumbling, somebody leaving you or dying, somebody dies close to you, you lose your job, whatever it may be, that any such event can be extremely helpful and significant spiritually.

It's not only a foretaste of what is to come later. If you surrender into it, it can be an opening into the spiritual dimension and into a stillness. And even such a relatively mundane thing as, for example, finding your car got stolen when you go back to get to your car, it's no longer there, it got stolen.

Or even a pleasant weekend with friends or family coming to an end, anything coming to an end, having to say goodbye. Even such a trivial thing as dropping something and it breaks and you, some, an object that you liked, you lose your job. All these things, seemingly negative things, or there's some kind of loss or dissolution of form, can be an access point into a deeper dimension within you, traditionally called spiritual.

If you catch that moment, and instead of going into inner resistance, mental condemnation, telling yourself how dreadful that is, this event, then experiencing the corresponding emotions, the emotions that correspond to those thoughts, that these things that are happening right now or have just happened, should not have happened, have no right to have happened. This is something wrong with the world, because this just happened, or is happening. And the mental commentary that tells you all these things, and then the painful emotions, that's a natural reaction.

And the ego actually loves that, because it strengthens the ego, when it can resist something and become upset about something, make something wrong, or someone, usually it's associated, you can make yourself wrong too, or somebody close to you, another person, an entire situation that you're in. So those are normal reactions that the false self actually enjoys, even if they are painful, it strengthens itself. But if you catch yourself at those moments of loss, something going wrong, something or someone leaving you, and if at that moment you come into complete alignment internally with what is, then that takes you into that stillness.

And you may experience a glimpse of peace that cannot be explained causally through the situation that you are in. In fact, it seems to contradict the situation that you are in, which looks negative, but suddenly, because you are surrendered to this event, suddenly you can sense that peace. And at that moment, you have become free of externals, you have transcended the normal state of consciousness, where your mental emotional state is completely dependent on what's going on around you.

If things are going fine, you're relatively happy. Things break down, there's loss, you become unhappy. So it's that continuous movement.

So you are at the mercy of other people, how they behave towards you, at the mercy of unpredictable situations, whether the plane is on time or not, whether you get to that place in time or not, whether this person does what he or she is supposed to do in relation to you, or whether he or she lets you down, as the little mental story goes. He let me down. Oh, yeah, terrible.

Now, you might have noticed that living in this world, it's fairly normal to experience being let down by situations and people. Even missing your plane is a letting down. Expectations crumble, disappointment happens.

So everybody living here, as part of a fairly significant part of their life experience, is being let down by situations, events, people. You can let yourself down because you have these expectations and you can't manage to do it. I'm always letting myself down.

So that's an interpretation. It's a little story in the head that causes painful emotions. And it's based on a misperception of what this world is all about.

It's based on the erroneous assumption that this world is here to make you happy. And the erroneous assumption that this world is not supposed to let you down. And if a person or situation or an event happens that lets you down, that there is something deeply wrong.

So if that is your underlying assumption, then you'll experience life as quite frustrating. And a lot of the time, time upsetting and disappointing. Because there's a clash between your assumption of how things should be in the mind and how things actually are.

And that gap is painful. Suffering arises. And suffering arises because you haven't recognized the nature of this dimensional world.

World where everything, to use the Buddha's terminology, everything is impermanent and unstable. But once you recognize that that's how it is, and you recognize that the world is not here to make you happy, neither is it here to make you unhappy, but it's here to challenge you. How can I cope with the feeling of family members not understanding you and betraying you?

I feel my family has betrayed me and I can't forgive them. How can I understand these feelings? Thank you.

Now you have to see that when you say that your family has betrayed you, that's an interpretation of their behavior. It's a thought in your head that causes you corresponding to feel corresponding emotions. It doesn't sound very good, does it?

My family has betrayed me. And when that thought goes through your head again and again, what you feel is not pleasant. But is that the truth or is it an interpretation?

But this is frustrating to the ego because when there's no longer any story where you oppose the other, where you make yourself feel superior to the other, then there's no food for the ego anymore. Hopefully you had a light meal, otherwise all your consciousness will be drawn into the stomach. I'm beginning to receive your questions.

Thank you very much. And we will, this evening, have our first session dealing with questions. If possible, write as legibly as you can, otherwise I'll get really irritated.

And my mind will say, do they expect me to read this, to be able to read this? Why can't they write more legibly? Isn't it common sense that they should write legibly?

Why do people do things like that? That would be a normal ego reaction to something that in itself is perfectly okay because you can either read it or you can't, but the ego adds a story to it. And behind the story is always an attempt to be more right than the other person.

There's always an attempt to have in some kind of superiority. It's unconscious, of course, ego is always unconscious. And this is alternatively what actually I don't get irritated as you might have guessed.

If there's a paper that's not legible, I look at it. Okay, I'll put this aside and give it more attention later. In the meantime, I'll read the legible ones.

And then if there's time later, I'll give it more attention. There's no problem without a story. And there's no, you are not wrong and I'm not right.

This is just what is. It's just a tiny example of the difference between aligning yourself to the simple isness of the present moment and imposing a story on it in the service of the self that wants to inflate itself, indignation, irritation. They should.

Why do they, don't they know better? I said, oh, they're all stories in the service of a false sense of self. And so the, in presence, all this, what I sometimes call unnecessary baggage that people manufacture mentally and emotionally or that unnecessary baggage that really is a, there's a heaviness to it that they carry around doesn't arise anymore.

And there's the simple, this is what is. I can either do this or I can do that. I can deal with it now.

I can put it aside. No story. But this is frustrating to the ego because when there's no longer any story where you oppose the other, where you make yourself feel superior to the other, then there's no food for the ego anymore.

But there's an incredible lightness and the lightness of being comes and the heaviness goes out of situations. That really, that's what the ego is. The heavy me.

And even when it attempts to make itself superior, what it doesn't recognize is that all these are really forms of suffering. The ego doesn't even recognize suffering as suffering. It doesn't realize that when you get angry or irritated about somebody else's behavior and bring up a big story about it, you are actually in a state of suffering.

If you were able to have attention in your body, you would notice that your body is suffering because those things affect the smooth, harmonious working of the energy field that goes through the body. So an angry thought has an effect on the body. Small irritation all has an effect and the body doesn't really like it.

But the ego, the ego itself is not in touch with the body. So it mistakes suffering for something good. Anger, I can really get into this.

So you can look at your own life and see where you are manufacturing unnecessary stories, both in small situations and in bigger life situations and in situations to do with relatives, family members, partners, ex-partners, a wonderful source of egoic stories, can talk about your ex-husband or wife for hours, either to somebody else if they're ready to listen or in your own mind. Or you had a confrontation or an exchange with somebody yesterday and you can go on, continue that in your mind and say so many hurtful things to the other person that unfortunately you couldn't think of in the situation. But you can relive it now and it's almost as good as the real thing.

So in that fantasy world of the mind, you can be right again and again and the other person can be wrong again and again. How wonderful. These things are not, all this is what we call unconscious.

So people don't know what they are doing. For them, that is their reality. Now can we understand why Jesus said, forgive them for they know not what they do.

They're unconscious. It's an automatic process of ego inflation, of ego reinforcement. It's conditioned, learned.

It's part of the structure of the mind. What part does willpower play in the awakening process, if any? Don't I use some willpower to motivate myself to follow your teachings?

I must listen to Eka now. I don't want to, but... So it's not willpower because if you use willpower and you listen because you think you should be listening or you're a spiritual person and you should be listening to a spiritual talk to just prove to yourself that you are spiritual or you are determined to awaken.

No, there is something in you that wants to listen and that responds. And that in you that wants to listen has nothing to do with willpower. It's an energy field that rises up.

And whatever, the only way you can listen to any spiritual teaching is from that deeper level, not from the conceptual mental level. And whenever you listen to a spiritual teaching, it's always from the deeper place. It's always a recognition of what you already knew deep down.

So the truth is always recognized because it comes from, you listen from the same place from where the teaching arises. And so it recognizes itself. The truth, you already know it, even though it may not, it may be too deep for you to access it for yourself.

Then you listen to a spiritual teaching and suddenly the truth that is in you is called forth and drawn out and responses, oh yeah. And you immediately sense, that's it, yes. Why didn't I know that before?

Of course you didn't know it before because now you recognize it. Now there's something else in you that does not want to listen. The egoic entity may sometimes take over and say something like, I can't deal with that spiritual stuff now.

God, it's just too much. What's the point of all this? It's not getting me anywhere, is it?

Been doing that for years. Where is it getting me? Nowhere.

The story in the head. And then you believe in what it says. And sometimes it can stop people temporarily from going to the spiritual teaching.

But then if that goes on for long enough, you start to suffer more and more. And finally the suffering becomes the thing that awakens you again, that creates the gap or the opening in you and you're ready, ah. Now you want to listen again.

Can't stand the suffering anymore. So willpower is not it. Now it may sometimes look to, at first sight, it may look, when I say, be present, you can choose to be present.

When there's a certain level of presence in you already, you can choose to be present rather than to drift back into your mind. And there is an alertness associated with presence. But it is a relaxed alertness, not a tight alertness.

It's not a, no, it's a, you see the difference? It's easier acting it out than talking about it. It's not the tight, almost fearful alertness, or even some anger behind it.

It's a relaxed alertness. So it's almost, it might seem incompatible almost, relaxed alertness, but it's not. So the alertness has an intensity to it.

And, but that's not willpower. The non-relaxed alertness has an element of willpower in it, and that's not it. You can sometimes see in paintings or drawings of Zen masters, that alertness, and in Zen masters, that particular version of spiritual awakening, there is a fierceness.

There's a fierceness to the way they look sometimes in the ancient drawings. And there is also a fierceness to the way in which they teach. That's partly culturally conditioned, because everything comes through the particular veil, the teaching is the same, no matter what cultural veil or conditioned veil it comes through.

But the way it manifests can be conditioned by a culture, or in the case of a teacher, it can be conditioned by the energy field of the teacher. Some teachers are, seem more forthright and aggressive, almost. It's not really aggressive, but it might look so to the ego.

So there can be, there's a fierceness sometimes to the alertness, which is sometimes required to break through all the mental stuff you need to go into. Now, whether you look fierce at the same time, doesn't matter, you can. But if you look, the greatest drawings of Zen masters, at first sight, they look fierce.

If you look more closely, you'll see that behind the fierceness, there's a compassion and a gentleness. And of course, those can only be done by artists who are masters, who can capture what the inner reality of the Zen master, which is both the fierceness and behind it is hiding compassion. The same applies to meditation practice.

Willpower is not a good way to ensure that your meditation practice is successful. In other words, it doesn't work. Because willpower in meditation is the famous lid on the boiling kettle.

You're holding it down, forcing yourself to be still instead of surrendering into the present moment so that stillness arises naturally, forcing yourself to be still. And then that may work for a while. And when the next episode of unconsciousness happens, which will be soon, when you go back into your normal life, after the meditation, you come downstairs into the kitchen.

And before you know it, you're shouting at somebody. And everybody's disturbing your serenity. Just to remind you, especially people who are meditators or have been meditating for some time, a few years or many years, perhaps the greatest obstacle to true meditation is the idea that you are doing a meditation.

And as part of that idea, the belief or assumption that you're trying to get somewhere or achieve something through the meditation. And so meditation becomes like the rest of your life. What you do is a means to an end.

And the end is considered more important than the present moment. So you're doing in order to achieve or get or attain something. And that underlies most people's meditation, that unconscious assumption.

And that's a great obstacle because true meditation is about something much more immediate. It's getting in touch with, we could say, being, which is prior to all doing. Now, being has been talked about in philosophy.

There are big books written about being. Jean-Paul Sartre wrote Being and Nothingness. Heidegger wrote Being and Time, two very big books.

They're interesting, well, in some respects. But they're still trying to reach being through doing. In their case, it's through thinking and conceptualization to reach what they correctly assume to be something absolutely fundamental that underlies all of existence.

They try to reach it through conceptualization and thinking, which is another way of doing, of course. Thinking is a kind of doing also. And they didn't quite realize, of course, they were professional philosophers, so they couldn't stop thinking.

Philosophy being the activity of thinking, at least in modern times. In very ancient times, there was something else there that went beyond thinking. So true meditation is getting in touch with something deeper than any kind of doing, where you no longer try to achieve or attain anything, any point in the future.

Add anything to yourself as some kind of additional achievement or even realization. In fact, the belief that what you need is some kind of realization is the great obstacle to true realization. So being, the substratum, to use a geological term as a kind of analogy, being is a substratum of all existence and all life, that which underlies it all.

And that can be known directly within you, but not in the sense in which things in this world are known. Not even in the sense in which anything is known that becomes an object in your consciousness. It's a direct knowing where subject, the subject that knows and the object that is known merge into one.

Now, being or to be, sometimes people overlook that when you say I am, that is the first person singular of the verb to be. So being can be sensed directly. Again, I have to mention not as an object, but as object and subject in one can be sensed directly if you realize the I am that underlies all of which arises in your life.

All sense perceptions, all thinking, all emotions, feelings, that which makes it possible for sense perceptions to be there, thoughts to be there, emotions to be there, what is it that makes it possible for these things to arise and then to become your so-called life? Because your life consists of sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions. I think that's about it.

I can't, there's nothing else is there. It's just a different combination of sense perceptions, thoughts and emotions or feelings that make up individual people's lives. So a different combination of sense perceptions, this is what constitutes individuality as we call it.

But if you look closely at what individuality or individual existence means, it is a mixture, a particular mixture of sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions and feelings. So then we can then, the common denominator in all individuality so-called is they're all different kinds of mixture and there are billions of people on this planet with each one slightly different or sometimes fundamentally different mixture of sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions. Okay, we have that.

And yet what makes it possible for these sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions to arise and to become a person? What is that? What is the light in which these are known?

What or who is the knower of all these sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions? And that is the substratum, that is the being or the knowing, the eternal subject of all knowing. And essentially you are that.

What is infinitely more fundamental than anything that arises in your life that's to do with experiences. When we say experiences, really it's sense perceptions and thoughts and emotions coming together, experiences that make up your life. So we are getting at now as an experience, an experiential realization here and now is who or what you are beyond sense perceptions and experiences.

Experiences includes those things, sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions, feelings. Is there a more fundamental dimension than the temporary coming together of your experiences, which of course come and go fairly quickly and then evaporate completely and then the person is gone. So the question is, who are you beyond those things?

But don't look for an answer on any kind of conceptual level, but as a direct realization here and now, sensing in yourself that which makes all those things possible, your life experience. And that is the being that underlies it all. We could say also the unconditioned consciousness that underlies it all.

So you can access here the silent spaces in our meditation. Become aware of the silent spaces. This is why we still call it a meditation or it's not a doing.

Become aware of the silent spaces here, like now and now and now and realize that when you become aware of the silent space, there is no thinking anymore. There's a cessation of thinking. It arises naturally.

And what remains of you when there's this cessation of thinking and with that, the cessation of doing? All you know then, what is left, is there is a presence there, but it has no form or attributes. What remains is a silent presence in the background.

And you can sense that silent presence not just with your head, but I could almost say with your entire being, with your whole so-called body, you can sense the silent presence in the background. And the background, when it temporarily actually becomes the foreground, and you sense it not as something, but as yourself. That is why I say subject and object merge into one.

The perceiving, it's not perception, the knowing subject and that which is known are one. And that's the realization of being. And you don't need to read 500 pages or whatever of Sartre's being in nothingness or Heidegger's being in time.

Oh, that's a relief. Perhaps the mind comes in and says, can it be that simple? Of course, it is the most immediate and the most natural thing to know that in yourself.

But somehow humans at some point lost it. Perhaps that's what's called the fall. And humans are now regaining it here and now.

And when you regain something that had been lost, you know it more deeply. So what was before a natural connectedness with being, perhaps many thousands of years ago, natural, by the way, means you don't even know it's there. You're just connected with being.

And there's that rootedness in being there now becomes a conscious rootedness in being. And that's the next step in the evolution. Could also be called the awakening.

Your challenge is in daily life to stay connected with that dimension, realize that dimension as the essential I am, the self-realization. So that remains then in the background as this silent presence or spaciousness. It remains in the background while in the foreground you deal with your daily life.

And you even you think again, you do things, you respond, you feel, you have emotions. But now there's a fundamental difference when that dimension is present consciously in your life. That which happens in the foreground of your life, which is thinking and doing and experiencing, never absorbs you totally anymore.

You give it its due, yes, but it does not take up the totality of your attention or your consciousness. Or in other words, you don't lose yourself completely anymore when you start to think and to do and to react, which is the normal state, lost, lost in doing and thinking. So you become a grounded, in the true sense of the word, in the deepest sense of the word, a grounded human being, rooted in being, and then able to deal with things in a different way also, because it does change when that dimension is present in the background of your life.

You can sense the beingness in the background. It's not difficult. Then the way in which you do, the way in which you think and experience undergoes a change.

You don't need to change it yourself. It just happens. And everything you're thinking and you're doing becomes imbued with quite a peaceful energy.

The next step, one could say, in the evolution of human consciousness is stepping out of self-talk, which is the conditioned mind, and realizing there is much more to who I am than this conditioned content of my mind. And that is a beginning of awakening. It's not those words, not that you need to believe that there is much more to who I am than the self-talk in my head, because that is still self-talk in the head.

I believe there's more to who I am, and you better believe it too. And suddenly you go, and your attention is suddenly in the present moment. The self-talk is never in the present moment.

And suddenly your attention is in the present moment, and you go, and the whole person at that right now is not there anymore when you go. You're not a person at that moment anymore. You are an aware presence.

So that shift in consciousness can happen very easily, whether it stays with you for a few seconds or a few minutes or an hour or a day or longer. It doesn't matter that much. The important thing is that it arises.

It arises. And suddenly the unhappy self-talk entity is disappearing, and what has taken its place is just a sense of presence. And that sense of presence is first of all aware of sense perceptions.

So you look more consciously, you listen more consciously, because there's so much to look at and so much to listen to. And it's not only looking and listening, it's also feeling the breeze on your skin, the air. Do you feel the warmth of the air?

And there might be a scent in the air. And you become conscious of that. But feeling the air, the movement of air on your skin requires a considerable degree of awareness.

A person who is immersed in the self-talk in the head, they cannot feel the breeze touching their skin. They can't feel that. It's a very subtle thing.

And to feel subtle things, you need to have that aware presence, that alert, aware presence. You cannot be immersed in the self-talk to really honor and appreciate deeply the present moment, which is life. We could say honor, appreciate deeply life, because present moment and life are synonymous.

There is no life away from the present moment. If you cannot appreciate the present moment, it means you are away from life. Instead of life, you have a substitute in your head, which is abstractions in the form of thoughts.

So to notice the breeze on your skin, you need to be quite alert and basically still inside. And then you can go. Ego is something that needs to be overcome.

Schools should encourage children not to excessively identify with concepts.

[Speaker 14] (4:24:49 - 4:26:02)
Question is on kids. I have a teenager at home. And like many, most teenagers, they tend to get unconscious.

So I think what I've seen is when they are small, I mean, they are the most present, right? They are in the present and doing everything with the joy as they grow up, middle school, high school. Some stage we give them a cell phone.

They have computers to work on homeworks and everything. And obviously they're trying to identify themselves and they become unconscious. So the question is, and it is a good spiritual practice, even for me, sometimes I can be conscious when they are unconscious and sometimes you're drawn into the unconsciousness.

So the question is, what can we do to bring in that presence into their lives or what are, if there's anything that, you know, you are doing or Eckhart Teachings is doing with the schools, in middle schools or high schools where we can have a course or something where, you know, as a group, they can get some kind of presence teachings.

[Speaker 1] (4:26:03 - 4:45:19)
Yes. Thank you. That's very important.

Thank you. There's also, the question could also refer to parents. How to approach teenage years typically are difficult for, so the human ego has to, at that point, the human ego has to develop and grow.

Unfortunately, the way it is for most humans on the planet so far is, the human ego should be a limited time period when it grows in a human being, let's say up to the age of 20, 25, at the most 30, let's say mid-20s. Then you cannot prevent the arising of ego in a child and an adolescent, nor should you want to prevent it. It's not possible.

They need to develop a sense of separate identity that is part of the evolution.

The tragedy is, unfortunately, if people get stuck with that ego for the rest of their lives, they never go beyond it. So for a parent, to begin with parents, it's to observe the growth of the ego in the child, which already starts with, may start at the age of two or three when the child begins to, well, the child learns his or her name and then the child learns that it is possible to possess something.

It learns the concept of mine fairly early and so it possesses a toy and it learns the concept of my toy. That's the beginning of ego. And then also the beginning of the suffering that comes with ego identification because if the toy is lost or disappears or somebody takes it, enormous suffering arises.

Oh, oh, my toy, mine. This is the early suffering of egoic consciousness. The next step would be for the child to assert that it is better in some ways than another.

I can jump higher than you. Can you jump this high? No, you can't.

Look at me. I can do it. And parents say, you're great.

You're doing it. And that's fine. If you don't overdo the praise, give praise when praise is deserved, but don't just praise anything because then there comes an inflation of praise and that can create a narcissistic personality, which is an overblown ego.

Many parents these days do that. They say, everything you do is so great. You're the greatest.

You're wonderful. It feels good for the child, but when you print money, when you print money, it loses its value. It's called inflation.

I know that, but many politicians these days don't seem to know it. And they probably have degree in economics. But that's on the side.

So you are there to gently guide them. You observe the growth of their ego as it has to gently guide them. And school ideally should prepare children for adulthood and should also prepare them perhaps for the transcendence of ego.

Even when I said 25 years old, just a number came to me. It could already be at 21. Ego is something that needs to be overcome, but something that is necessary for a certain stage of human development.

So schools should encourage children not to excessively identify with concepts. And there are a few alternative schools, I believe, that already to some extent do that. There are perhaps, I don't know, Montessori schools or Rudolf Steiner schools and so on.

They, to some extent, they encourage children not to be excessively drawn into conceptualization at an early age. That is very dangerous. Also to be given the devices at a very early age has a very detrimental effect on their development.

I know it's an easy thing to do for parents to keep them quiet, but it is not good for the growth of their consciousness. Children need to remain in touch for as long as possible with nature. Some way they need to be taken out into nature, even if it's just a park, but preferably out of the city periodically where they are encouraged to interact with nature, leave all the devices behind.

Every school should do that, take them out in groups where they spend time connecting with nature without their devices. These are all important things. To teach even abstract subjects like mathematics and so on at too early an age is also detrimental for their development.

So there are many things that I know, I have met quite a few teachers over the years who are already bringing that into their classrooms. But so far, mostly on an individual basis, it's rare that it has become, for it to become a already part of the official curriculum, that's still relatively rare. Although there are some schools now also, I don't know what schools they are, whether they may be private schools that teach mindfulness, so-called, I don't often use that term, but basically mindful is to be present in what you do.

I don't use that term because it implies that your mind is full. So I'd rather not use that, but they teach mindfulness. So for a parent to encourage the child not to get lost in conceptualization, to encourage the child to continue to interact with nature if you can't have an animal in the house, that is nature too, a cat or a dog, encourage the child to look after the animal, to relate to the animal.

Animal presence can be very important in a home, especially for children. So it requires the teachers to finally establish the teaching of presence as part of the curriculum. And that implies also, it signifies to help children to become aware of their emotions.

That was one of the most vital things. And if it's not taught at school, the parents have to do it or the parents would do it anyway. Help the children to become aware of their emotions because the emotions can wreak havoc with the child's life.

And sometimes they get amplified in the teenage years when many adolescents become very hostile and they're consumed by negative emotions, by self-hatred, by hatred of others, by hatred of everything, very destructive emotions. So the most vital thing that a child already at an age of four or five needs to begin to be taught to observe his or her emotional field rather than be always taken over by it. As I mentioned before, not that it's not challenging anymore.

There will be challenges, but of a different kind. External challenges will continue to come. The challenges, the problems and difficulties of the unobserved mind, however, will no longer be there.

And that's a huge percentage of suffering in a person's life. A huge percentage of suffering, of unhappiness to use a generic term, a huge percentage of unhappiness arises not created by situations, but by the mind. You can verify that wherever you are and see when you begin to feel upset, you begin to feel unhappy.

What is it that causes you to feel upset or unhappy? Is it a situation or is it what your mind is telling you about the situation? What makes you unhappy?

You can test it in the most seemingly insignificant situation because the mechanism is the same, whether it's a big suffering or a small suffering. You're in a queue in the supermarket. It's not moving.

The person is so slow, the cashier, and so inefficient, and you have so much else to do. Well, why should you be standing here waiting if they could only find people who are more efficient and just can't stand it anymore? I'm not going back here anymore.

I really should be. That's the beginning of suffering. It's unhappiness.

And what's creating it? The situation or your mind? And this is only a small example.

You can take almost your entire life when suffering arises. Is it really the situation? In some cases, it may be because there can be dreadful things that can happen.

But if then, if you're still unhappy several months later, then it's also your mind again. But so observe how, when you become aware of what your mind is doing, when you're upset, when unhappiness arises, see, okay, is it a situation? Is it my mind?

And suddenly the awareness comes and your mind is no longer the unobserved mind. Now your mind becomes the observed mind. And then you realize what your mind is doing.

And then you stand in the supermarket and Nick you and said, okay, I don't really need all that. What would it be like to just accept this moment as it is without adding the mental stuff to it? Oh, not so bad.

I'm just standing here, breathing, looking at people. Okay, there's nothing wrong with it. If your mind doesn't tell you there's something wrong with it, it's actually okay.

It's just the present moment. If I were not standing here, I would be standing somewhere else. Or if I wouldn't be standing, I would be sitting somewhere else or walking somewhere else.

Not that different, but their mind tells you should be somewhere else. I shouldn't be. So you become, and you can tell the difference between situations where you can do something about it and situation where you can't do anything about.

But even if you can do something about it, make sure that you accept the present moment first and then you take action. Because if you don't accept the present moment, the action you take will be action arising from upset or from anger. And this is karmic action.

It creates more of the same stuff coming back at you. It might solve this particular situation, but in solving this particular situation through your angry reaction, you've created two or three other situations in the next moment that reflect back this karmically. Insane.

Normal. This is why I say normal equals insane. So observe your mind.

See how much of your unhappiness is not the situation that you lost your job, your marriage collapsed, whatever it is, is that causing the unhappiness or the mental commentary, the story in the head, that tells you how bad this is. Either by blaming somebody else or by blaming yourself or blaming life or blaming God. Can choose whatever you want to blame.

The mind is happy. Whatever the mind can blame is the egoic mind is happy with that. But that's all those challenges or suffering or difficulties, those things begin to evaporate from your life.

What remains, however, is certain challenges that come in wherever you are, through situations, through other people who are still unconscious. There are a few left, you might have noticed, who are still unconscious and you can't remove yourself from that. So you're faced with certain situations that correspond to where humanity is at in their collective level of consciousness.

You might have physical problems still, although many illnesses are created by the unobserved mind, there are other factors too. And the body will eventually grow old. And that's a big problem if you make it into one.

And a dreadful thing, if you had completely identified with the body and now it's beginning to shrink or disappear or collapse, who am I now? If for the past few decades, you're looking in the mirror, gave you most of your sense of who you are or taking selfies, one day, a few years pass, then the selfies are not that satisfying to look at anymore. Who am I now?

There's something wrong, I need to get a new iPhone. So that's the, beware of what your mind is doing. And if you only get, there are many things from this evening that are potentially life transforming.

And even just taking one with you would be enough. Even if you took the one, the last thing we just mentioned, whenever suffering arises, upset, angry reaction, unhappiness, be aware of where does it come from? My mind or the situation?

And if it is your mind, do I want that? Who am I? Am I those thoughts?

No. Well, who am I? Do I want those thoughts?

Do I want that unhappiness? Is that my choice to think unhappy thoughts and feel unhappy? Year, day after day, night after night, every time I wake up in the middle of the night, the same thoughts come, make me unhappy.

And I think this is the reality of my life. The thoughts that make me unhappy, people think that's the reality of my life. It's a total illusion.

And so you step out of that into, oh, that's just things that happened. And that's just life. Things come and go.

You lose, you gain. And then you lose again. And then you gain and loss.

Impermanence. Can't hang on to anything. There's no security out there.

No matter how many life insurances, insurance you have or whatever, it's an illusion. Life insurance. I have a big life insurance.

Well, to start with, it shouldn't be called life insurance. It should be called death insurance. But that's not so attractive anymore.

It would destroy the illusion. This mind-made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive. To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation.

[Speaker 6] (4:45:22 - 4:46:15)
I think it's even wrong to use the word consciousness because we make it a thing. We make it a noun. And as soon as we add ness to anything, we turn a quality or an attribute into something which we can talk about.

It's useful for language. Yes, it becomes an object again.

[Speaker 1] (4:46:15 - 4:46:25)
Exactly. A mental object. Yes.

But so can one talk about it all? Is there a better word that doesn't have that? Is it the Tao?

[Speaker 6] (4:46:26 - 4:46:58)
Well, I think we should not use nouns for it because as soon as we use a noun, whether it's Tao, consciousness, awareness, whatever, as soon as we use a noun, we're making it a thing which implies we're beginning to look for another object,

another form of perception. And so even the question, what is consciousness, which they're asking, to me is a wrong question. It's like we are knowing, we are conscious, and then we're asking, what is it?

We're looking for something other than what we are.

[Speaker 1] (4:46:58 - 4:47:02)
The question immediately makes it into an object again.

[Speaker 6] (4:47:02 - 4:47:27)
So I prefer to use verbs for it. Let's see what that sounds like. Well, I am aware and there is a wearing.

I mean, what I know is there is, we could call it a wearing. There is experiencing. Consciousing doesn't work quite.

[Speaker 1] (4:47:28 - 4:47:37)
Well, a wearing, so you have to create a new word to get rid of the inherent error in nouns and so on.

[Speaker 6] (4:47:37 - 4:48:18)
Yes, or even knowing. Knowing. I mean, knowing is a word we do have.

There is that knowing. I know my experience. There is this experience now, being here, talking to you, and there is the knowing of that experience.

And that to me is, that's what we're referring to as consciousness. And that is, as you pointed out many times, that's what is always there. It is unchanging.

Just that knowing or the knowingness. So I think science is actually misleading itself by looking for something. Yes.

Not realizing it's the act of looking. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (4:48:18 - 4:48:53)
So in a way, science can never find the answer to consciousness until or unless the scientist becomes introspective, to direct attention away from there, redirects attention back to the source within himself. In other words, the scientist has to become a meditator or a mystic. Yeah.

And then, of course, whether the mystic would still want to be a scientist, I don't know.

[Speaker 6] (4:48:55 - 4:49:35)
I actually think the mystic can be a scientist. I think we have to, again, draw a distinction between science as it's practiced now and the belief systems of science, which are, it's a very materialistic belief system. Yes.

And it excludes awaring or consciousness and deliberately has done so because you can't measure it. Yes. You can't put a rule up against it.

And it hasn't seemed important. I mean, science is explanation of how the universe works, seems to work perfectly well without ever getting into this funny thing called subjectivity or knowing that we don't need bother about that.

[Speaker 1] (4:49:59 - 6:19:34)
I come from an evangelical Christian background and was a true believer until five years ago when my beliefs literally fell away. So many of the ideologies and stories in the ancient texts, both old and new testaments, began to ring as insane.

I didn't want to let go of my faith.

I just couldn't continue to believe. It was as if the decision was made for me. It occurred to me at that time that a belief is just a thought and yet we hold beliefs to be this incredibly important thing.

Why are beliefs a source of identity? Have you ever heard of someone's religious beliefs just falling away? What are your thoughts on beliefs and consciousness?

Thank you. Now, obviously, you believe when you believe that something is the case, it implies that you don't know. You have no evidence for it, but you believe it.

So you wouldn't say, I believe in this table. I don't have to because I know it's here. Well, we call it table.

Who knows what it is on other levels? But you don't need to say, I believe in this flower. I know there is a flower here, at least that's on this level of perception.

There's so belief implies you don't really know, but you would like something to be or... And that's interesting in religions. Those things are regarded as very important.

You believe in certain things that have been transmitted to you from generation to generation that are in the books. And then you have a certain belief structure. And since you're not free of ego, it becomes incorporated into your sense of identity, the collective identity of we, the believers in these particular kinds of stories.

There is in the English language, there's the word belief. And there's also the word faith. And they're quite different, but sometimes people don't realize the difference.

In some languages, there's no difference between these two words. In Spanish, you have faith, which is faith, and cliencia, which is belief. But if I remember correctly in German, you only have one word for faith or belief, and that would be glaube or glauben.

But they're very different. Faith is, a true meaning of faith is a deep sense of trust. And what you are trust, and you have that deep sense of trust because you are connected with the essence of who you are, which is one with the essence of the universe.

I forgot to mention that before. You are connected with the essence of who you are, that's the vertical dimension. You realize yourself as consciousness.

And that consciousness is not yours, although I sometimes call it your consciousness. It's not yours. Because if I said, my consciousness, I would have created a duality.

There would have been me, an entity who has consciousness. But there is no me without consciousness. I am consciousness.

It is the essence of who I am. So, when you know that you are connected not only with the essence of who you are, but that essence of who you are is linked to the very source of all creation, it emanates from there. And when you are therefore connected with that, then what arises is this deep sense of trust in life.

And what is trust? Well, one definition of trust would be absence of fear. There is no more psychological fear.

If you only inhabit the horizontal dimension, fear is inevitable to a greater or lesser degree. It is your companion as anxiety, as worry, and for many other manifestations of fear, including anger, which in most cases, hiding underneath anger is fear. So, faith is something wonderful that does not require belief, although in some languages, as I said, they are the same word.

So, when Jesus talks about faith, it is about that, that state of connectedness with being, with the essence of who you are and yet something infinitely greater than you could call you. For a long time, when human consciousness was not all that developed, the only way millions of humans could be reached with some kind of spiritual truth was through stories. And so there are stories that contain truths that are not literally, these stories are not literally true.

They have actually a deeper truth than a literal truth. And this is sometimes called mythological stories. Let's give another example of literal truth or historical truth.

And there is a deeper truth than the historical truth. If you read a great work of literature, that all the characters, they might've been inspired originally by certain historical events or they might've been inspired by people that the author knew and observed. But basically, all the characters that are described in this great work of literature, whatever it may be, they never existed as such.

These characters never exist. It's not an historical account of what happened. But in fact, this tells you more about the human condition than any historical work could do.

So it contains a deeper or higher truth than if it had been a historical account of something. And so there are many things in the old religions that are of that kind. And they have had a useful and continue to have a very useful helpful function of transmission of truth, which people, if you expressed them in a more abstract way, nobody would have understood a word.

But if people can identify with certain stories, there are more than stories. There are expressions of a deep truth. And then there are the literalist interpretations of these things.

In Christianity, for example, evangelical interpretations, they take everything absolutely literally. And then it can easily becomes an ideology in the mind. And there's no depth anymore suddenly.

So this is something that the questioner grew out of. Now it's important not to throw out the baby with the, what's the, baby and with the bath water into a funny expression. I don't think it exists in Spanish.

A child, baby, con el agua del baño. So it could then suddenly arise, all this is just nonsense. If somebody suddenly grows beyond the stories, sometimes they arrive at the conclusion, oh, this is all nonsense.

But that is not the case. There is a deeper level on which these things can be understood. And in the case of here, there are certain churches, of course, where you might not be able to continue if they are mainly ideologies, then you may not be able to continue in a particular church.

It is possible to deepen whatever your religion still is. You can see a deeper truth as presence grows. And in some cases, it may happen that you leave it behind completely.

That's possible too. Even in Buddhism, you have to separate the mythology from the essence teaching, very profound teaching about the human condition. And then you have the mythology, which says when the Buddha came out of the womb of his mother, he immediately uttered the word, I have come for the salvation of the world.

That's a lovely story. On the downside of the story, on the one hand, it's a way of transmitting certain things, but on the downside, it confuses form and essence. And then the Buddha becomes a kind of God, God-like figure to be worshiped.

The Zen masters recognize that. And that's why there's a story of when the Zen master was getting cold in the middle of the winter and he ran out of firewood, he used the wooden image of the Buddha for the fire to keep warm. So I have certain respect.

I know it can be terribly misused, the religions in the service of the ego, the personal and the collective ego. And they have been misused for egoic purposes over the centuries, have been quite, have become part of the insanity in many ways of the human ego as it was growing. But despite all that, there is something there that is of value, of great value.

It's still, it might be deeply hidden, but it's still there. And that's, for example, why although a conventional Christian would probably, I'm not a Christian in a conventional sense. Well, I'm everything.

I'm a Buddhist. I'm Christian. I'm Hindu.

I'm a Muslim. I'm all religions. You know, the essence that underlies them, you can say I'm all of that.

But although I'm not a conventional Christian, Jesus has something, is something of profound significance. To me, and some people believe that he didn't even exist. Some people, there are some books that provide convincing arguments that actually he didn't actually exist.

And even that to me doesn't matter because Jesus exists in the collective human consciousness. And there was a time when they made a movie many years ago that the Monty Python team, they made a movie called, I think it was called Life of Brian. And that was a kind of parody of Jesus.

There was a man who spoke and behaved like Jesus, but he wasn't Jesus. But anyway, I read about it and I could not get myself to see it. I just did not want to see it.

And to this day, I wouldn't, I would not want to see it because I have too much respect for what that means that in the collective human consciousness. Let's start with the more complicated questions. This one is typed, so it must be really complicated.

I don't have any doubt that we are being, playing a human role. And I don't have any doubt that we are one with the entire universe. And that individuality as a person, an ego is nothing else but an illusion.

So when death occurs, it sounds natural to me that we will come back to the dimension we always have been in where we belong to the universal unity of the cosmos. Home. In the very seldom occasions in which you slightly touch, something's happening to my voice, the edge of the issue of reincarnation, I always get the impression that you, with your often used explanation that you are not a dead master.

I think that that was a Zen master who said that. What happens after death? They asked him and he said, how do you ask me?

I'm not. Well, they said, you're the master. And then he said, yeah, but I'm not dead.

So the obvious question then that keeps floating in the air is being every, here comes the question. Being every one of us one with the totality and seen clearly that individuality is just an illusion created by the mind, then what or who is that unity that supposedly reincarnates? Now that's a profound question.

So if it's an illusion, what is it that reincarnate? That's an interesting word. It comes from Latin and it has in there somewhere C-A-R-N which means flesh and reincarnate.

It's the same as chili con carne. In the dish chili con carne, of course means meat because it's dead. When it's alive, it's flesh.

English language has two words because who would want to eat flesh? In German you eat flesh, but that's another story. Reincarnate is to assume a physical form, a fleshly body.

So you reincarnate into that. What is it then that assumes the form of the physical vehicle? And the answers to questions like that are best found through self-observation.

And you can observe reincarnation in yourself many times during the day when you identify with a thought because the moment you completely identify with the thought, you as the consciousness have forgotten your essential nature as consciousness, forgotten who you are, and you have reincarnated into a thought form. You have assumed a thought form. So that incarnation that happens many times during the day, unless you're really present, you may catch yourself completely identifying with the thought.

You become it and then you think you are it. It gives you your sense of self. And that's basically how reincarnation happens.

And now you know directly without needing some abstract philosophical discourse on my part, you can verify in your own experience what incarnation is and how it happens. You lose yourself in a kind of hypnotic state. It's a kind of, when you're completely identified with a thought, it's a kind of dream.

It's a kind of hypnotic state or dream. So the consciousness, then one could say you as a person, well, this goes a little bit into almost philosophical thought. You as a person is a dream of the one consciousness.

It's an analogy. It is not totally correct. Nobody could give a totally correct statement about something that transcends language and even analytical thought.

But just as an approximation, just to get you a feeling of what it might be like. You as a person, you can, well, I'm just suggesting to you that maybe for a moment, you consider the possibility, not trying to convince you of anything, or I'm not saying this is the ultimate explanation, but just suggesting that you might consider the possibility that you, the person that you are or seem to be in this particular life, time, incarnation, is an aspect of the dream of the universe. You are a figure in the dream of the universal consciousness.

You are being dreamt by the universal consciousness. And then you disappear. And then perhaps you reappear again because you haven't realized your identity with universal consciousness.

So the dream continues in a slightly different form and to a bit more drama. And then you disappear again. And then the dream happens again in a slightly different form until the urge to, that this pull towards incarnating, identifying with form begins to dissipate.

And this may be happening in this dream character that you are here. The urge, the desire to reincarnate into the next thought, the next thought form, because the thought form gives you your sense of self and your identity. And you begin to awaken to a deeper reality of who you are.

And then you will notice in this lifetime, the urge to reincarnate into another thought and another decreases. And so you can observe in this lifetime that the urge towards reincarnation diminishes. So, and that's the, one could say perhaps that process happens because the universe is becoming more conscious, is awakening to itself.

One could almost say that the universe started off, it all started off as a big, huge dream, the dream of form gradually becoming more and more complex. And then another stage is reached when the dream begins to, there's so many things that you can, with reference to yourself and self-observation, that will tell you a lot of mysteries in the macrocosm. If you look into the microcosm of yourself and observe yourself clearly, because there's a famous ancient dictum, as above, so below.

So you are in a way, in many ways, you are a reflection of the macrocosm of the totality. So just through self-observation, you can find many answers to questions that arise concerning the universe. So in fact, the deepest answers you find by turning your attention within, the less deep answers you find by turning your attention without, and you get big telescopes.

And then you forget who or what is looking through the telescope. The mystery is out there. And you forget that the greatest mystery is the fact that there's a consciousness, that the universe is looking at itself.

And the universe is conscious, or becoming conscious, waking up. So these are not ultimate explanations, but approximations or analogies that perhaps can give you a sense of how this all works. Why is love not reciprocated?

Why does one-way love traffic situation arise? I'm placing my aching heart before you. So please operate.

Thank you, thank you. All right, I will begin the operation. Now, one form loves, and the other form doesn't reciprocate.

Why is that? And the pain that comes with that, great pain for many people, this enormous pain. Now, you know that the basic condition of the self, or the egoic self, is one of a very deep-seated sense of lack, of not enough, of not complete.

And then it tries to fill through strategies. The mind-made self tries to fill that lack that it knows and feels almost continuously, except for brief moments when something has been put in there. And then for a moment, the lack is not felt.

It never lasts long. So it looks for the next thing, and it looks to the future. It looks to add to me, to fill that hole that is always there, where I'm not myself.

I'm not complete. I haven't, I'm not home. I haven't arrived.

And so all kinds of strategies are there. But, and one of the main areas where it looks to fulfill that lack is in the area of relationship, the other person, he or she. And then when that happens, the entire focus of the self becomes focused on one other person who is perceived unconsciously as the one who is going to complete me, make me whole.

He or she is the one. And so almost an obsessive attachment forms to that image, that form of that person. And that is called falling in love.

And sometimes if you're lucky, the other person feels the same about you. That you are going to complete him or her also. And of course that is great.

You both feel that you are going to complete each other. And then probably you will want to get married, sign a contract just to make sure that for the rest of your life, you are going to complete me and you're not going to leave me because that would have dire consequences if you broke that contract and left me. Don't you even think about that.

And then you marry. This is where the films end. The director says cut here.

But life goes on. And you marry. And after, perhaps even during the honeymoon, the first doubt comes into your mind whether this actually works.

Whether the other is going to live up to that enormous task of fulfilling and completing you. And then you start an ordinary existence, jobs, family, and gradually it doesn't seem to be working anymore. The completion.

The sense of lack comes back. He or she isn't behaving in the way that he or she should to make me feel complete, make me happy. You read it in ads.

I don't know if you read it in India. Looking for man or woman to make me happy. Oh, wow.

Who could live up to that? And nobody can. And then the luck that was covered up by the temporary delusion that this person was fulfilling you, this person who has a pain body, but you didn't know that.

The temporary delusion that this person should be fulfilling you, that suddenly the sense of incompleteness, aloneness, fear, not being yours reemerges. But now through your mind, you attach that to the other person and say, he or she is the cause for what I feel. You're feeling again the basic egoic condition.

You're feeling it more strongly now because for a little while, it was covered up by the love relationship. And so gradually, the love then periodically turns into hate. And every time the person is not fulfilling his obligations or her, the love turns into aggression, hostility, withdrawal, complete withdrawal.

What's wrong with you? Nothing is wrong. Just don't want to talk, whatever, or throwing something, whatever they do.

And then the relationship fluctuates for a while, it works again. And then it doesn't work. It works again, it doesn't work.

And then it becomes the periods when it doesn't work become longer. And you feel it feels bad. The happiness of marriage turns into the unhappiness of just coexistence.

The happiness of the honeymoon becomes the divorce and they're all one really. So it was an attempt to fulfill you through some form, some outer form. And then all that happens in the end, you sense the unfulfillment more strongly.

And then you blame that form for causing you that pain. It's egoic pain. This is the pain that arises out of love-hate relationships.

Now, the questioner, of course, is not at that stage because it is one way traffic, as he puts it. That great love is felt for this form, but it's not reciprocated. What do you do then?

Then you feel that lack even more strongly. And it's painful. And there's the tendency for the mind to weave all kinds of fantasies around it, all kinds of stories.

And the self gets in there and becomes a very painful self-image of me. And it can then, if it goes on, it can happen that that attraction turns into hate. Can happen.

Not saying it will happen in your case. And then you see it never was love in the first place. So what is called love is the deep-seated need of the ego.

It focuses on one form. So this is a retreat. You've been taken out of your usual surroundings and put here.

For some of you who have come from more distant places, this is a very exotic environment. Tropical with wonderfully exotic birds and animals and kangaroos and Australian gigantic lizards and all kinds of wonderful things and trees that, if you're not familiar with this part of the world that you've never seen before. So all this is wonderful and helpful.

It can be a helpful thing to be in unusual surroundings because it's easier to be more present in unusual surroundings. That's the advantage of traveling. And that's why, as I've written somewhere, many people feel more alive when they travel.

And when they are at home, their surroundings are so familiar that they lose presence completely. They don't see things anymore. They go from where they live to their office or wherever it is, gone, done it so many times, they don't see it anymore.

And you would be surprised even at home, your usual surroundings, you might have a painting on your walls and haven't looked at it in the past three years, might be very beautiful. Or your garden or the plants in there. So this is the familiarity can lead to a kind of semi-sleep-like state.

And when you're traveling, you go, oh, and the good thing is you might not even have a name for all the new things you see. At home, you know what everything is called, but here you see things, you might see a weird animal. The mind stops because you can't name it and that's a wonderful thing.

Or you see trees that you haven't seen before and you go, or you might say to your friend, look at that. And you might notice in the moment of looking at that, you're not naming it in your mind because you don't know what it's called. So there's a moment, a few seconds of just being present, being the presence rather than the naming person.

And so let's hope we're here for a few days. Let's hope that by the last day, this place will not have become so familiar to you that you're not looking anymore. So it helps to be wide awake to your sense perceptions because that is one way of coming into the present moment, which is why we are here.

Because there is more to the present moment than we realize most of the time. There's more to it. It's the access point to the deeper dimension within yourself.

So as a general theme, underlying theme for our retreat, I recommend, surprisingly, that you practice being in the present moment. So we have this helpful thing that you are in unusual surroundings unless you live just a few miles from here, then it may be a harder job or you might even live next door. However, although you've been taken out of your usual surroundings, you have carried with you something else.

And of course, that's your mind that travels with you wherever you go. That is perhaps the meaning of the book that somebody wrote. I believe the title is Wherever You Go, There You Are.

So wherever you go, you carry your mind and the conditioning of your mind with you. So that is the challenge here on our retreat to transcend the conditioning of your mind, the habitual way of interpreting, the habitual way of reacting to things, habitual mind patterns, if a mind pattern in you is that you frequently and very quickly become discontent with where you are, if that's a pattern in you, then that pattern will arise here also. If your mind pattern is one that loves complaining and finding fault with things, then it's very likely that very quickly this mind pattern will appear here also, despite the fact that you are in these wonderful, unusual surroundings.

The first thing you might complain about is the dinosaurs. And the mind says, I'd rather see a big Buddha or something like that. Or the mind says, we've come here on a spiritual retreat.

Isn't there supposed to be a Buddha somewhere? So you get surprising things, that your expectations are not met in various ways. And that is a challenge to the mind, to the conditioned mind, because the conditioned mind wants its expectations met.

And if they're not met, it gets uneasy, restless, irritated, angry, starts talking about what's wrong. Either silently in your mind or to others. And if others can agree with you, then it's even better.

Or you can go on the internet and then you can get 1,000 people agreeing with you. So you always find those in some of you, maybe one or two of you that have that complaint pattern. I'm not saying if there's something really wrong, you shouldn't do something to rectify it.

So if something is leaking in your room, say, no, I'm not going to say anything because I'm not supposed to complain. No, of course. You go to reception, say there's something there that needs to be rectified.

That's not a complaint. It's just information. Complaint means there is an emotion behind it.

And the emotion says, this should not be happening. Then it becomes a complaint or it's your fault. Then it becomes a complaint.

If it's simply presenting information, it's not a complaint. It's just a fact. And then the question is, can anything be done about it?

If yes, good. Or if they say there's nothing we can do, do you go on insisting that this is very bad and create suffering for yourself? Or do you simply then accept this is what it is?

And there is no situation ever, including at a retreat in a wonderful, almost perfect place, except for the dinosaurs, for some of you. Almost perfect place as far as the natural environment is concerned. You can't imagine anything more, the profusion of vegetation and aliveness that surrounds you.

You cannot imagine anything more wonderful. And yet it's not perfect. And not just because of the dinosaurs.

There will be other things too that are not perfect. You cannot find a place where you go, everything is just so perfect. It doesn't exist.

If it did exist, you would become incredibly unbearably bored with saying, it's so perfect. What am I going to do now? But of course, you're lucky.

There is no such place. So there's always something that goes wrong. And that's a wonderful thing.

You can not only anywhere, as you might know in life. I believe I'm not the only person who can say that since I was born, life has been challenging ever since then. And very rarely do you get a little bit of moment of freedom from challenges.

And then suddenly something drops behind you or falls on your head, metaphorically speaking. So something you can practice here is to have an expectation that things should be in a certain way and nothing should go wrong. And that reality, external reality, should conform to exactly the expectations of the conditioned mind that creates ultimately unhappiness.

Because a lot of the time, reality does not conform to the expectations of your mind. In some ways it does, in other ways it doesn't. And not only in a retreat, but also in daily life, as you might have noticed.

One damn thing after another. One damn thing after another. And then the mind says, I can't take anymore.

Of course, that's just another thought. Completely untrue. You can take anything.

If you drop the thought, this is what is. So you practice here letting go of the expectations of your mind and live in alignment with what is, internal alignment with what is, rather than demanding that something should be otherwise. The exception is conveying information so that something can be changed.

If it can be changed, that's understood. Or doing it yourself. Clean it up, do this, do that.

That's fine. But other than that, see if here, make it your spiritual practice to live in alignment with the is-ness of the present moment and honor the present moment. And bring a kind of appreciation to the present moment.

Appreciate while you're here, appreciate whatever the present moment presents to you. Another word for it is you welcome the present moment. And that's not, this is actually a relatively easy place to do that.

It's not, nothing is perfect. We know that. But this is a, you're in a protected setting and it's relatively easy here to welcome the present moment.

It might be easier here than to be at a crowded airport and the flights have been canceled or to be stuck anywhere or to be in the hospital then things, big things, small things happen. Wherever you go, welcoming the present moment is the practice that gives you access to the spiritual dimension, to that which is beyond the person in yourself. It seems too simple almost, but let that be your practice here.

You may remember, I mentioned it once or twice before, there was a Zen teacher and a disciple came to him and said, I'm going away now on a journey for several years.

And since I haven't made it, I've been in this monastery for five years and I still haven't got it. Can you give me some practice for my journey?

And the Zen master said, okay, here's your spiritual practice for your journey. Come back in five years and let me know how it went. Wherever you are, whatever situation you find yourself in, whoever you are with, whatever happens, say, thanks for everything.

I have no complaint whatsoever. Is that it? One imagines spiritual practice, some complicated meditation method that takes years to master, but no, he said, make it your spiritual practice to say, thanks for everything.

I have no complaint whatsoever, no matter what happens. So if you miss, whether you catch the bus or you miss the bus, you catch the bus, say, thanks for everything. I have no complaint whatsoever.

You miss the bus, thanks for everything. I have no complaint whatsoever. You're in a lovely hotel room, in a warm bed, thanks for everything.

I have no complaint whatsoever. Or you're out in the cold with nowhere to sleep. Oh, then it not only gets more challenging to say that, but if you say it, and you mean it, saying it is just words.

But if you say it and mean it, when instead of being in a luxury hotel, you find yourself penniless in the street, if you then say it and mean it, that will take you much deeper than being in a luxury hotel bed and saying, thanks for everything. I have no complaint whatsoever. That's relatively easy.

Or you might say, the pillow is not quite the way I want it. But it is, it's relatively easy to say, but say it when you're out in the cold and you can't get a hotel because you don't have the money or whatever. There are no hotels, nowhere to sleep, cold, wet.

Thanks for everything. Thanks. Thanks.

That's a sarcastic thank you. Thanks, God. It's just what I needed.

That's not the thanks. That's not it. It's if you say thanks, which means a total acceptance of this moment, not a total acceptance of the, okay, I might as well accept it for the rest of tonight.

I'm going to be out in the cold. You don't know. Maybe a minute from now, something will happen and you'll find somewhere or somebody will offer you a place to sleep.

It's just this moment. Thanks for everything is thanks for this moment. So, and thanks really here means a complete acceptance of this moment.

And if you accept a moment that seems difficult to accept, that takes you much deeper than accepting a moment that's easy to accept. If you have a nice meal, you have a, you're drinking a cocktail and then you've ordered the starter, which is whatever, let's say oysters, half of what, if some people love them, some don't, but it's, that's a general thing that people think, oh, that's okay. And they can, thanks for these oysters.

Thanks for everything. I have no complaint whatsoever. Thanks for everything.

And then you go home and suddenly you feel sick in your stomach. So when you were eating the oysters, thanks for everything. I have no complaint, right?

But what about now? Because you ate too many oysters. So it's bringing your inner self into alignment with the present moment, a very powerful spiritual practice.

Why is it so powerful? Especially when it's, when it's a situation that's challenging and you still say it and you mean it. Because everything that sustains the person, the exclusively personal sense of self, in that act of complete surrender to what is, the personal sense of self gives way to a deeper transcendent sense of self, which the Buddhists call no self.

A deeper consciousness of self. Suddenly shines through. So really it's a kind of denying your form identity.

It doesn't mean you don't have it anymore, but you are no longer trapped exclusively in your form identity. The form identity is strengthened the more you can be in opposition to what is, the stronger your form identity, me, the person, the me, the more you are in opposition to what is, the stronger the me becomes, your form identity. And if you can have enemies, lots of enemies, it loves, that gets even stronger.

They're all against me or us, if it's a collective ego. The collective ego loves its enemies, can't actually survive without them. Every collective even needs the others.

We're not us. This is us and that's the others. So that's the wonderful thing that the person, the exclusively personal sense of self becomes weakened, subsides, and something else emerges when you are no longer habitually oppose what is, something emerges that is deeper than the personal sense of self, the transcendent dimension, presence, whatever we want to call it.

Some people call it your higher self or you could call it your deeper self, words, doesn't matter. But something emerges that is from beyond the person. And that is a place of great power and aliveness and possibility.

And that is where you are connected with a vastness and with everybody else too. So it's when you feel, when that transcendent dimension arises, you feel a greater sense of connectedness, no longer the separation with, not only with nature, but also with other humans. You no longer feel the otherness of the other.

It's just yourself in another disguise. That's really becomes your experience. Whoever you meet, there's yourself in another disguise.

Isn't that a wonderful way of being with other humans that essentially you can sense not only your connectedness, but you can also sense your inherent oneness with others. Becoming aware that is more to you than meets the eye. And that's an interesting expression, meets the eye.

Not believing that there's more to you than the physical body and the thoughts that go through your head and the emotions. Not a belief that there's more to me than that, but knowing that there is infinitely more to me, and I'm talking for every I here, knowing that there's infinitely more to who I am than what meets the eye, and what goes on in my head as thought, or in my body as feelings or emotions. If you don't know that directly, real knowing, not knowing about something, but knowing, then you'll just inhabit the surface reality.

There's a philosopher, Ken Wilber has the expression, flat land. I don't know if he coined it or borrowed it from somebody else, but it's a good word. If you inhabit flat land, there's only the horizontal dimension to your life, then there's no depths.

And that includes thought, and that's a very impoverished existence. If you cannot feel or sense, it's not a feeling. Let's use the word knowing.

If you cannot know your own depths, not as an occasional high that you experience at a retreat or after meditating for a long time, and then you go, and then the moment you go back into your daily life, it's gone again. But to know that continuously, a little analogy, or we could say a visualization, it's what I'm saying now, it's going to be halfway between an analogy and a visualization. That could be helpful, is to imagine yourself, the person that you are on the surface of a globe, which in a way, you don't have to imagine, it's actually you are.

You exist on the surface of a sphere, a globe, and that's where your life happens. You run around the surface. Some people stay in one small spot on the surface and others move about the surface a lot.

They go around to different places. So you exist on the surface of this globe and your reality is what you see around you on the surface. You look around and big things happen there.

Your life happens there. And then there's a little bit of, below that which can be perceived on the surface, there is the activity of thought. It's a little bit below the surface, but it's really still also a surface phenomenon.

So you exist on the surface of this globe and everybody else that you see and every other life form that you see running around or not running around on the surface is a totally other. That's what the word other comes from. It's not you.

There's another. Every human being, you could have a human being next to you on the surface and it's the other. You don't really feel any true connection with that person because there's a distance between you and that person.

There's a separation. Now, let's say this person that exists on the surface derives his or her life, the life that animates this life form from the center of the sphere. And this person who is perhaps only aware of the surface of the sphere is not aware that he or she derives his life and is connected with, is only an outer expression of a deeper life that originates within the center of the sphere.

Because he or she doesn't know that, because what happens on the surface of the sphere is so hypnotic or seductive and there's so much going on and there's continuously, the attention is drawn to the surface phenomena. And then another thing happens and then there's many things you need because as the little surface entity, you feel very incomplete. You feel there's something very important still missing in my life.

You may be familiar with that feeling or that belief, there's something missing here. And so, but the surface entity looks around the surface to find what's missing here and continuously reaches out on the surface to grasp at something that hopefully will make him or her feel more complete. So there's that search for that.

But there continues to be this underlying sense of, either in some entities, it's felt as there's something wrong. It's not quite right. Hopefully at some point in the future, when I have explored more of my surface reality, it's going to be right.

There's something not right or there's something I'm not complete. And this is an underlying feeling that majority of the population on the planet has a sense of lack. And even if they become wealthy, it's still there.

And also the sense of fear, you feel threatened, feel threatened by other entities that are moving around the surface. What do they want? Oh, there's another one coming.

And there's always completely other. So there's this sense of separation, but occasionally you grasp at another and say, I want you to complete me. It's called falling in love.

And after a while you realize that doesn't work either because it's short-lived. And then you realize one morning, that's not the person I married. What happened?

Totally different person is suddenly here. Something again is fundamentally wrong. So the wrongness comes back, no matter where you go and what you do, that sense of there's something missing or wrong, always sooner or later and usually sooner, creeps up on you.

And so, because you don't know that what really would make your life feel complete and whole and remove the fear would be knowing that the life that you are comes from a very deep place that far transcends who you are as this surface, temporary surface reality. So, and this is where really any spiritual teaching, even might use different terminology, is about that. And to some people, the realization comes without any spiritual teaching because they are so frustrated by their surface reality that somehow suddenly their attention goes deeper.

So here you are connected with deriving your life from the center of the sphere without knowing it, that the life that you are transcends the form reality. So we could differentiate between your form reality, the person with a name and a history and a body and the essence reality, which far transcends the person. If you know your essence reality, then the form reality is far less problematic.

You are no longer then a problem to yourself as if you don't know who you are in essence, you are inevitably a problem to yourself. You create a world of, the way in which you experience the world is problematic and you create a world of problems for yourself. And then of course, you do it to others too.

You can't create problems to yourself without creating problems for everybody around you. So you become the source of the problems in the world, not the solution. But you're accusing others that they are the source of the problems in the world.

So let's, again, this kind of visualization that you are on the sphere and suddenly your attention moves from sense perceptions and from thoughts to a deeper place. And that is easily done when you allow thought activity to subside and the consciousness that usually would have been absorbed by thinking is suddenly free to realize its own depths. You become still.

And as you become still, you become aware of your own depths. When I say that, it sounds dualistic, but this is only because we're using language. It's not so much that you become aware of your own depths.

Really, there's not two here. The depths that you are is becoming aware of itself. And that's what we call self-realization.

So there are many ways in which this can be pointed to. I sometimes say you become aware that you are spacious inside. You're not just the stuff in your head and that does not make up your true identity, whatever goes on in your mind.

You become spacious as the mind, as there is a gap between two thoughts, for example. Or right now, when there isn't really very much to think about, you suddenly realize there is something else to who I am, although I cannot analyze it in any way. I can only sense it as my own aliveness.

I can only sense it as my own essential beingness. But the dilemma or the fallacy is the belief that whatever you manifest is going to make you happy. It's to seek the fullness of life through what you manifest.

So to go about wanting to manifest material abundance in your life is perhaps not the right way to go about it because you're concentrating on the outermost layer of abundance. And even if you manage to manifest abundance on the outer level, it's not going to give you the true feeling of abundance. It's not, in other words, it's not going to make you happy.

It's not going to fulfill you except for a few days. The new possession, nice and shiny, whatever it is, and there you look at it, got it now, it's mine. And after a few days or a week or two, or give it a month, it wears off.

It's no longer that fulfilling to be driving the Ferrari or whatever it is. There's nothing wrong with the Ferrari, but if you're looking to the Ferrari for happiness and fulfillment and to give you the feeling of, it's not going to work for that long. If you're just driving it because you enjoy that experience, that's a different matter.

There's a very, there is a difference here. So don't condemn the world of things. This has been done traditionally by many religious people.

They were afraid of it. And so don't go there. You must not have any possessions in many religious orders and so on, not just Christian, but also other religions, monks, nuns.

No, you must not have any possessions. In some traditions, Buddhist monks are not allowed to touch money. Of course, I can see the reason behind it, but it would be even greater, of course, if you could touch money and you're free of attachment to the money that you touch.

I'm not attached to that, and you can touch it. It's fine. Rather than being a, ooh.

And of course, you're not allowed to touch a woman. Oh, ooh. It's dangerous because, of course, the reasoning behind it is, it will take you into complete unconsciousness.

The sexual urge will arise up in you and will make you totally unconscious. Maybe that's the reason why in some cultures, women are covered, scared. It could be chaos.

And yet, if you are connected with a source, then all that is not a problem. So, manifesting abundance is not really the right way. Go to the source and allow from the source for abundance if it wishes to manifest in your life.

You start with the source, then you go into enjoying all the forms of life, next level of abundance. Then you enjoy relating with the forms of life, the play of whatever you do in life. You enjoy that, and then that is how, and out of that enjoyment of what you do, that energy most likely also brings things into your life, forms that before you thought you needed desperately to feel abundance.

So they come as icing on the cake, and you might give them away again if they come. You have them for a while, just, oh, I've had this for long enough, now you have it. And so the flow is there beautifully.

As you give things away, new things come. And if they're all taken away from you, that's fine, too. You're quite happy with that.

So manifest abundance from the inside out, not from the outside as hoping that you go find some inner state through external things. That is a dilemma of many people who practice manifesting, which, of course, manifesting is a something that you can use, and it works if it's done rightly. But the dilemma or the fallacy is the belief that whatever you manifest is going to make you happy.

It's to seek the fullness of life through what you manifest, through things. And that doesn't really work. So when people manifest something in that way in their lives, a material thing, initially they're quite elated.

I've got it now, I've got the house or whatever it is that I wanted to manifest. And then that manifestation wears off and after a while brings about its own problems and a new level of problems. And the feeling of fullness does not stay.

It doesn't stay with them. Nothing can give it to you, can give you the true feeling of abundance. And that's the amazing thing, which implies nothing that you achieve in the future can get you there.

You have to start with that and you don't need to ask for things to be different in your life. You start here and now where you are. And here now you go within and see if you can find that place within where life is born continuously, but which in itself is unborn, timeless, consciousness itself.

So don't start there and allow abundance to come from there rather than start with the outermost layer, hoping that it will fulfill you. If you are in touch with the, whatever you want to call it, that which cannot be named, the Tao which cannot be named, what about manifesting something? Yes, you can.

If you want, it's part of the play of life. If you've wanted to manifest something and you feel the connectedness with source and say, oh, well, I'd like to manifest maybe a bit more space in my life on an external level and some greenery. It's a preference.

You don't need it for your happiness and fulfillment, but a preference. You can do that. You can visualize.

It's a play of form and if you feel the abundance already, visualization is very easy of abundance if you wanted it. Usually it comes even by itself. If you're connected with abundance, it comes by itself.

If you want to add something just as a play, as a preference, you can. It's playful. Nothing more.

It's not that important. There are many books that tell you how to manifest, but some forget to tell you that it's not going to make you happy. So you could get the impression that if you've manifested enough pairs of shoes, I don't know how many it would take to make you happy, but maybe 200.

Maybe a few more, 300. Or ask the great master of manifestation of shoes. Apparently it's Mrs. Marcos, they say. She has several thousand pairs. Yes, so just a little thing that some of these books don't mention, but otherwise they may be quite useful. But that little thing is quite vital.

It won't make you happy, by the way. Because happiness is really another word for... I don't often use the word happiness because it sounds a bit superficial.

Something good has just happened to me. It's been so great, so great. And then the next day is, oh no.

Happiness, happy, unhappy. So I don't, and some teachers use the word happiness, even some great teachers, and I know exactly what they mean. Ramana Maharshi, the great Indian sage, used, said, happiness is your true nature.

But I know exactly what he means, and he's absolutely right. Except the term happiness as a pointer may not be the best, but if you know what he means, then you can see beyond the limitations of the pointer and say, yes, he is absolutely right. Because happiness is the connectedness with the unmanifested, with, it is the joy that is not caused by anything out here.

Uncaused joy. That is the joy of aliveness itself, the joy of being conscious, of consciousness itself, life enjoying itself, life recognizing itself. And in that self-recognition, there is joy.

I am life. That's joy. And it's very subtle that it's in the, that joyful aliveness in the background of your life is very subtle at first, and as you pay more attention to it, you feel how there's a vast power there.

Your mind has to become still, by the way. As long as you're interested in every thought that comes, you can't sense that. You have to let go of the thoughts, at least don't be drawn into every thought that comes up and follow it with your attention.

Like somebody pulling, has got a piece of a carrot on a string or something, and pulling, you're running after it. Or yeah, a dog running after a bone on a piece of string. That's the thought that comes into your head.

And you follow every thought that comes. And before you know it, half an hour has passed, and you followed up a train of thought into all kinds, into weird places of fear and anxiety and feeling not good enough and anger towards others. And finally, you have depleted your life energy just by following up one thought, which led up to a train of thoughts.

And then your mind doesn't leave you alone. And another one comes up. Oh no, go this way now.

So you don't follow every thought with your attention. If a thought comes, say, okay, let it go. If you don't give it your attention, you're not interested in following it up.

You just let it. It comes, it comes. Where's your life going?

Where are you really going with your life? Have you, what are you going to achieve? What have you achieved?

You haven't done anything with your life, have you? What are you? And you recognize it as just a thought.

Don't follow it up. And then your attention becomes free for presence. Before it reverts back into the formless, where it came from, it's consciousness.

Consciousness born into a thought becomes limited. And consciousness, the attention is taken out of the form, the thought form, and remains as pure attention.

[Speaker 2] (6:20:03 - 6:20:08)
She heard this in her voice, this is a course in miracles, please take notes.

[Speaker 1] (6:20:10 - 6:37:29)
And she went to her colleague and said, I hear this voice, I think I'm going insane. And her colleague said, just write down what the voice says and then we'll decide whether you're insane or not. When I was young, a long time ago, I had some interest in that and experimented a little bit with that.

And I had a little bit of experience with presences. But when I went through my awakening, I lost interest in that. My focus was not on that.

Although I have come into contact with quite a few people who, over the years, who channel spirit, spirits and spirit presences, who you know what channeling is. And I've looked at various, I've spoken to and looked at what is being channeled. And the important question is, these presences are also just manifestations of the one consciousness, obviously.

So whatever you contact, and even if you contact extraterrestrials, they will be manifestation of the one consciousness. So ultimately, there's nothing alien in this world. As far as my interest, for many years, even after awakening, has been in channeling, although I never attempted to channel myself.

Channeling would mean one specific entity uses your mind and speaks through you. Some people, occasionally people thought that I was channeling when I speak. But I don't have the sense that a specific entity is speaking through me, rather than that consciousness is using my mind directly, rather than through an intermediary, so to speak.

Because the entity that speaks through the channeler, again, is an expression of consciousness. You always get, it's always consciousness. I've had some people who've told me that, I don't know, they saw me being overshadowed by some, I don't know whether that's the case or not.

I don't want, I don't need to explore this. In a way, when I speak, it flows from the presence. In that sense, it's channeled in the sense that I do not, as a person, I do not construct the sentences that I speak.

They flow from a deeper level. But I don't feel that they are dictated, so to speak, by an entity. I have examined the product of channelings.

Lots of channelings are not that profound. They are very nice words, but ultimately don't say very much. Or there are exceptions.

I'll get that in a minute. Or they tell you stories that could be very interesting science fiction. What Ashtar is doing, the commander of the galactic fleet, and so on.

Maybe he is, maybe he is not. I don't need to know that. There are some channelings that are exceptional, where there's actually a higher consciousness at work.

So, for example, the Course in Miracles is a book that was channeled through a medium, a medium, Helen Schucman was a psychologist at Columbia University. And this voice came through her and spoke through her. And she was writing, basically taking down dictation every day in her office at Columbia University.

She only told one colleague about it. She had to lock the door when she was doing it, because they would have thought she was insane. So she was taking down dictation.

It started with, she heard this inner voice, this is a course in miracles, please take notes. And she went to her colleague and said, I hear this voice, I think I'm going insane. And her colleague said, just write down what the voice says, and then we will decide whether you're insane or not.

And she wrote down, and it was not insane, it's actually a deeply inspired teaching, not for everybody, because the form in which it comes is not suitable for everyone. No one spiritual teaching is suitable for everyone. But the Course in Miracles has survived and will survive as a spiritual classic.

There are other channelings too that are quite profound, but they tend to be exceptional. So my main interest is, as far as the spirit realm is concerned, what comes through when people channel the messages. Now, there is the belief in many people that if they have passed away, they automatically are in possession of greater wisdom.

And I don't believe that to be the case from some experience. According to the famous dictum, just because they are dead doesn't mean they are smart. So you get a lot of posturing from these entities, sometimes they want to be taken seriously, they exaggerate their importance sometimes.

And at other times, it can also be the case, I observed, that the ego of the person channeling is actually the entity. So there isn't an entity, but the ego gets blown up and amplified, and the ego realizes how much power it can have over others when it suddenly changes its voice and looks up at the ceiling or something and goes, Hello, entities. I am here to guide you.

And it's very impressive. I mean, it's scary when you listen to them. Oh, my God.

He really must know the secret of the universe. So I wouldn't, spiritually speaking, I would not seek that out too much. It is comforting, of course, if you go to somebody who can contact deceased, it is very few who are genuine.

It can be very comforting to know that a loved one is still there, has not disappeared into nothingness. But there's also a lot of deception there with people who do that. But a few are very good.

But don't lose yourself in that, because then you give your own power away to other entities, and that can be also quite dangerous. So don't lose yourself in that realm. Go to consciousness directly, rather than seeking an intermediary through which to access wisdom.

Rather than that, find the wisdom that is within you. You don't need an intermediary in order to provide you with wisdom. Because it is inseparable from the essence of who you are and what you are.

The wisdom is in you. So don't seek it. If something like that happened to Helen Schucman, that's a different thing.

Suddenly, you are overpowered by this. And in most cases, when a voice comes to you, it's not good news. This person asks, after many years of meditation and all the twists and turns of life, I'm now in the grip of intense fear and anxiety.

It seems it was always there, only more intense now. Sitting with it, letting it be there seems to make it grow. So, well, fear, anxiety, which is a form of fear, very common.

Some people have it, many have it in the background continuously. And I would say there's some degree of fear, even if you're not conscious of it. If you're totally identified with the egoic mind, you will have fear, if only in the background.

And it may come out in other forms. It can come express itself as anger. If you look at anger closely, you'll usually find hidden underneath the anger is a state of fear.

So if there's fear, one important thing is to, of course, you need to direct your attention to it. You acknowledge that there's fear. The important question that arises is, are there any thought processes connected with the fear?

In other words, what are the thoughts that your mind is producing while you're feeling the fear? Is it possible that certain thoughts that you think frequently or habitually produce the fear? Is it possible you project yourself into the next moment, into the future moment, excessively trying to control something that you have no control over?

What's going to happen to me? Or creating an imaginary scenario of loss that you might suffer. It's not happening now, but it might happen.

And many things that the thought activity, the excessive thought activity, often creates scenarios of things going wrong that are not happening now, may never happen, often probably will never happen. And even if they did happen, the actual situation would actually be easier to face than the imaginary situation in your mind because there's nothing you can do. There's no action you can take to remedy an imaginary situation except to stop thinking it.

But if an actual situation arises, you face it and you give it your attention and then you take the action that you need to take. But an imaginary situation, you're totally at the mercy of it, so it only exists in your mind. So you need to see whether your mind is creating the fear by thinking fearful thoughts, by projecting itself into the future.

And if that is the case, then you can see, oh, so I'm creating those because my body cannot tell the difference between an actual event that's happening outside and what my mind is producing. So when I'm thinking thought, my life situation is critical. If this is basically what your thoughts are telling you, then your body believes that this is the actual truth, that you are being threatened at this very moment.

The body doesn't know the difference, that the tiger isn't in the room. The threatening presence is your thoughts. The body reacts in the same way, whether there's an actual threat in the room or your thoughts can create the same, even palpitations.

You can be shortness of breath because you're thinking fearful thoughts. You go, ah, at night. I had that for years.

It's an awful state. It's insane. It's a disease, but nothing is happening.

Absolutely nothing. There's a quiet room, nothing. It's all happening in the mind.

So if that's the case, see, okay, then you need to tackle the thoughts because they will cause the fear. And how do you tackle thoughts? It's by realizing the futility and the destructive nature of these thoughts and choosing to step out.

And what do you do to step out? First, you don't believe your mind that tells you, no, you can't step out. You have to continue thinking.

No, you step out and take a conscious breath or put your attention into the inner energy field of the body. A conscious choice to remove attention from thinking. And you may have to be really alert to do it.

If you are immersed in a mind stream, it could even be that it's so powerful that you just cannot get out. It has such gravitational pull. It pulls you, but at least you know that this is what's happening.

So there's a state where you cannot help yourself yet, but at least there is a beginning of a disidentification from it when you know that this is what is happening. So at least there's a part of you that knows this is not totally real. This is the fears being produced by my mind.

Or in those early stages, you may not yet be able to step out of it. It may be so strong that you're still totally in the grip of it, but at least you know that you're in the grip of it. The worst thing is to be in the grip of it and not even knowing it because you're so identified with it.

It is absolutely real to you. So even to know that this is happening is already a step forward. And then perhaps after a while, the energy exhausts itself a little bit of this, and then you can begin to say, okay, you will step out of those fearful thoughts because they are creating suffering.

And you take a conscious breath. And another. And another.

Then begin to feel the energy field of the body. Wow. It's like this huge burden is suddenly dropped away.

Now the important thing is then when you show the child what is wrong, that the showing does not come from a place of fear. It's always easier to answer something that's a concrete situation. So for example, with your child, can you give just one example of choice of behavior?

[Speaker 15] (6:37:30 - 6:37:31)
Well, there are some children who bite.

[Speaker 1] (6:37:32 - 6:37:33)
Bite?

[Speaker 15] (6:37:33 - 6:37:33)
Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (6:37:33 - 6:37:35)
Okay, now we're getting somewhere.

[Speaker 15] (6:37:35 - 6:38:27)
There are some children who bite other children. And it's true. And they do it.

Some do it just because they're still sensing with their mouths. And others do it out of anger. But it's a behavior that's harmful and frightening for others.

So parents certainly are confused about whether the child is able to understand consequences or whether it's just more love, more love, more love that's going to help that child to grow out of that particular behavior or running into a street or breaking away in a parking lot. Any of those behaviors are dangerous. And it's important to modify them.

But is it through firmness or is it through grace and love?

[Speaker 1] (6:38:28 - 6:46:12)
Now I understand completely what you're asking. You needed to mention the biting,

then now I get it. Well, that's a very subtle balance because, of course, certain behaviors have consequences.

And if that's completely ignored on the side of the parent, then eventually the consequences of that type of behavior will come worse. So at some point, they will learn that biting others is wrong. And they will experience the consequences if you don't show them the consequences or make them aware of what they are doing.

We'll talk about how in a second. If you don't, then eventually when they go to kindergarten or school, eventually another child will bite them back, which may be a more painful way of experiencing the karmic result of their behavior. So the more you wait, the more painful the karmic result of your behavior becomes.

Or youngsters who are left free to do whatever they like. And eventually the parents try to shelter them from all consequences of their actions and protect them from consequences. And eventually then they will do something and then society will show them in the form of the police coming to your door that there are consequences to actions.

And then the karma might have worsened by then because the consequences may be... And what they do to others may be far worse than what they would have done at the age of six. So eventually the universe will show you the consequences.

So it's good for a parent in a gentle way to show the child the consequences of certain unconscious actions if only not just to protect them from karmic retribution at a later stage, but also sometimes simply to protect them from themselves because they might get themselves into a very dangerous place if you don't. And I've seen some parents that allow their children to walk along the seawall or whatever and they can go one false step and they would be gone. But the parent just doesn't want to interfere.

So they lose the balance between allowing and showing the child what is not right and protecting the child. Now the important thing is then when you show the child what is wrong, that the showing does not come from a place of fear because if it comes from a place of fear in you and that could be for example when you see the child going close to a precipice or close to the traffic or the road and sometimes I observe mothers or fathers who become almost hysterical because out of fear and then they run up to the child and they shake the child. Don't you ever do that again!

For the child it's a dreadful trauma. It's almost worse than being run over by a car or it's the emotional equivalent of being run over by a car. Can you imagine the trauma inflicted on a little child when a big grown-up shouts at them and there's an outflow of extremely destructive fear energy onto the child and that moment within a space of one minute the child's pain body is growing.

It's absorbing all that and then they are surprised if a little later the child goes into extreme negative emotions and moods and shouts and screams. The child has already absorbed the fear of the mother but of course the mother wanted to do well. It wanted to protect the child but the mother was unconscious.

She doesn't realize that the protection is almost worse than that which she's being protected against. It's almost like using an insecticide that is far worse than the insects. And so the question then, your question, grace is very important that you use that word.

Grace must be part of the showing. Grace is a compassionate space where you recognize that the child does not know yet. You don't punish the behavior.

You simply show clearly that this is wrong in the same way that we have to show our dog in some ways. Dogs also need to be taught that certain behaviors have consequences. So you don't hit a dog.

Well, I don't know. Maybe if you have a put book, what are they called? Pit bull, you might occasionally have to slap because it might have enormous energy but our dog doesn't need that.

Our dog comes, we hold out a little treat and usually the dog will go, ah! And sometimes it gets, you get your finger in there and that is karmically not good for the dog. So we say, we say, when it happens, we go, ouch!

And the dog is a little bit shocked and realizes on some level that she has just hurt you. You go, ouch! And the dog realizes, oh, I shouldn't have done that.

That's a very gentle way of doing it. So the grace when you do that child, the worst response is always the one that comes out of fear because out of fear also comes anger and so on. So when you pull the child back from the road, getting too close to the traffic, then you might have to act fast.

But the important thing is that just enough consciousness in you that you do not put fear onto the child. So you pull back in awareness and then, oh, this is very dangerous. But not the fear, just an alertness rather than the fear.

That's grace. And so that's the, every parent has to walk this, find this balance, of course, between interfering and stopping the child and showing the child consequences and allowing the child. There needs to be a balance.

It's not always easy, not always immediately obvious which one, whether to allow or whether not to not allow. But if you're not allow, the important thing is that it doesn't come from negative reaction. So that's the, might maybe helpful a little bit for you.

Again, self-awareness is the key, especially in a moment of crisis. You need to be doubly alert within yourself. The more critical a situation is, the more alertness is required.

[Speaker 10] (6:46:40 - 6:47:03)
I have a question about relationships. You mentioned yesterday not to have any expectations. And my question is, how do you differentiate between expectations and what you want and what you need?

Because I'm aware they both come from the ego. But where do you draw the line? Okay.

Well, there's nothing wrong with expectations.

[Speaker 3] (6:47:04 - 6:48:14)
Just don't attach yourself to them too much. If you believe in your expectations and you demand that they should be met, then you're setting yourself up. Of course, we have needs and we have desires.

But then you need to ask yourself, where are those needs and desires coming from? Are they coming from the egoic self? Are they coming from the pain body self?

Or are they just coming because that's part of a healthy, successful relationship, to have a balanced relationship? So you have to ask yourself that and then look at that and answer honestly. So are you speaking about like, who does the dishes?

No. Okay.

[Speaker 10] (6:48:14 - 6:48:29)
Give a real example. So for example, spending time together. So me and my partner, we don't agree on the amount of time because we don't have the same needs.

And he tells me it's my ego who wants that.

[Speaker 3] (6:48:29 - 6:48:38)
Ah, that's a good one. So you want more time with him than he wants with you. Okay.

[Speaker 10] (6:48:39 - 6:48:55)
Why do you want more time with him? Because I need to connect and spend time together. That's something I need.

Okay. But the amount of time that you spend together, are you together with him?

[Speaker 3] (6:48:55 - 6:49:00)
Yes. Like really together? Yes.

And that doesn't satisfy you?

[Speaker 10] (6:49:01 - 6:49:03)
No, it's very, very limited.

[Speaker 3] (6:49:04 - 6:49:08)
Very limited. So when you say limited, you spend one minute a day together?

[Speaker 10] (6:49:09 - 6:49:10)
Two evenings a month.

[Speaker 3] (6:49:11 - 6:49:16)
Two evenings a month. Do you live in separate countries or something?

[Speaker 10] (6:49:17 - 6:49:20)
No, separate areas in the same city.

[Speaker 3] (6:49:21 - 6:49:37)
And is this a monogamous relationship? Yes. Okay.

All right. And what's his reason for two days a month or two evenings a month or whatever it is?

[Speaker 10] (6:49:37 - 6:49:59)
So he's very busy, but his main reason is spiritual. Have you been to this guy's house? No.

Interesting. Why not? He hasn't invited me.

How long have you been together? I knew you were going to ask this. Two years.

Two years and you've never...

[Speaker 3] (6:49:59 - 6:50:02)
Is this guy married? No. Are you sure?

[Speaker 16] (6:50:03 - 6:50:03)
Yes.

[Speaker 3] (6:50:05 - 6:50:10)
And he hasn't invited you. So have you invited yourself?

[Speaker 10] (6:50:11 - 6:50:12)
I tried.

[Speaker 3] (6:50:12 - 6:50:24)
Oh, and he says no. Well, this is very interesting. This would put up a red flag for me.

Me too. Well, okay. So what are you doing with him?

[Speaker 10] (6:50:25 - 6:50:26)
That's the question.

[Speaker 3] (6:50:27 - 6:50:39)
So the question... Okay. But my question, because...

No, my answer would be different if you were to say, oh yeah, we spend every day together, you know, but I still want more time with him.

[Speaker 10] (6:50:42 - 6:51:00)
So... But this is putting up a red flag for you. It raises a question for me in terms of which part of me...

How can I differentiate the part of me that wants to spend time that comes from the conditioned self and the part of me that wants to spend time because it's healthy needs? That's where I get confused.

[Speaker 3] (6:51:02 - 6:52:10)
I don't think you're confused. I really don't. I think you're justifying.

You're trying to fit this all in. You know the amount of time that you need. But how do I know?

If you want more, say for example, you're spending almost every day together and you're still saying you want more, this is probably more of the pain body wanting more. But... This one's a challenging one because you're only spending two days out of a month.

So you haven't even yet figured out what your real need is compared to this other thing that's just two days a month. So now I'm not saying two days a month is wrong. It would be good if you were happy with it too.

Then what's the problem? You're both happy with it. But you are not happy with it.

You would like a partner who is able to spend more time with you. So I'm asking you, why are you with him still?

[Speaker 10] (6:52:11 - 6:52:19)
Because I got confused as to maybe it's my ego that wants this. Why can't I just accept what I have?

[Speaker 3] (6:52:22 - 6:55:23)
But you're not accepting your inner self first. You're not accepting the inner calling for you and that divine desire to have a partner that you can spend more time with. Every relationship is a challenge, but we have to find our way to be in relationship with each other.

You're not finding, and he's not meeting you, to find that relationship. You haven't even been to his home yet after two years. Hello?

Wake up. Wake up to yourself. You know the answers.

You know it. But my sense is there's fear there. There's fear.

And you got to work past that fear. That fear of being alone. You're willing to sacrifice yourself and your needs and your wishes, your wants, your desires, human desires.

And take a little crumb and go, oh, I guess, you know, I don't want my ego in a way, so I guess I just have to accept what is. But you're accepting the external before you accept the internal, where it needs to be the reverse. You accept the internal, and then the external will follow.

And that might mean when you accept the internal, it's bye-bye. Unless you can accept the internal, and then suddenly you accept the internal, and you're just like this presence. And he might turn around and want to spend more time with you.

You don't know. But you need to be present first and accept what's in here first. So I will be very interested to hear what is going to happen.

Because the longer that you stay in something that is not feeding your soul, because relationships do and can feed our soul, not that we expect and want it to and demand it to and think that this person will make me whole, because another person cannot make you whole. It just enhances your relationship, your life situation, and challenges it too. So what do you think you'll do?

[Speaker 10] (6:55:24 - 6:55:26)
It's pretty clear.

[Speaker 3] (6:55:27 - 6:55:29)
But say it.

[Speaker 10] (6:55:31 - 6:55:38)
I want to hear what you're going to do. I'm going to look after myself first. Right.

[Speaker 16] (6:55:39 - 6:55:39)
And leave him.

[Speaker 10] (6:55:40 - 6:55:41)
And leave him.

[Speaker 16] (6:55:41 - 6:55:42)
All right.

[Speaker 10] (6:55:45 - 6:55:47)
You got the support behind you, man.

[Speaker 1] (6:56:21 - 7:13:11)
So your task is not only to find moments in your life when you become still, alert, present, and to realize for yourself the possibility of stepping into no mind, not thinking, and yet being fully conscious and alert. It's a wonderful, wonderful thing. It's part of the awakening, essential part of the awakening, to be able to stop thinking.

For example, now, and now, and now. Don't get scared. It's only the ego that might get scared, because it says, I'm disappearing.

There's just a nothingness. You're not disappearing. Who you are essentially is emerging more fully when the mind stops, like now.

And there's not just a nothingness. There is an intense field of alive presence. It has no form.

It has no location. It is within and without. So it's wonderful to be able to step into that state of consciousness, means you're awakening.

The awakening process is happening. Even to say you are awakening isn't quite correct. But the awakening process is happening.

But make sure that it's not confined to moments that you set aside to become still, to become present, or to listen to this teaching. That's wonderful. You need that also until you don't need it anymore.

But it's essential to have your daily life, your working life at work, your relationship life, relationships, family relationships, other kinds of relationships at work, interspersed continuously with the presence of the stillness, so that you have, you don't spend, let's say, where you work in an office, you don't spend nine to five getting lost in doing, and in your mind, and getting upset, and getting angry, and participating in all that. And then you get home, and then finally you sit when you've had your dinner, and finally you say, ah, now I'm going to meditate, or be present, or practice stillness, and then you become still. Well, it's better than nothing, but it hasn't changed your life.

Make sure there's not a separation between your spiritual life and your working life. Some people tell me, well, I can be spiritual when I'm alone, or I can be spiritual when I'm walking in nature, but I lose it when I start talking to people, or I'm back at work. So you need to be aware of that, so that even while you are engaged in doing, so that even while you are engaged in doing, you're still rooted in being.

Be aware of your mind, of thoughts that arise, so that you don't become possessed by every thought that arises. It helps when the mind is very active, and it's being challenged by people or events. It helps to have some attention in the inner energy field of your body, and feel the presence that is in every cell of the body.

It's alive. You need to know and decide for yourself that you don't want to be part of the madness of this world anymore. And when something challenging happens, you lose something, your bank manager calls about something, and then the assumption of the egoic mind is, this isn't the time to be spiritual, I have to deal with this first.

What does it mean to be spiritual? It means to be aware of yourself as the presence. That's your prime responsibility in life.

The very purpose of your life is that. The very purpose of your life is not to succeed at this or that undertaking or endeavor or business activity or whatever. That is not the purpose, it's to succeed on that level.

It's not your real purpose. It's a secondary purpose, perhaps. But your primary purpose is presence.

To know yourself as the presence, as the alert presence. And then deal with things. And then you will notice what happens or does not happen.

You recognize that as secondary. Whether some endeavor succeeds or doesn't succeed is also secondary. You still, you are very active, and yet you realize everything is secondary to secondary.

Something else that's primary. I've told the story before, I haven't mentioned it in a while. On the spiritual teacher, Krishnamurti, who passed away in the, I believe in 85.

He used to travel around the world giving talks for 50 years or more. And in one talk, towards the end of his life, he said, people have often asked me what my secret is. And now I'm going to tell you what my secret is.

Everybody got very alert suddenly, including the people who had been following him for 30 years without getting it. And then he said, my secret is this. I don't mind what happens.

So the people listening, they thought something else was going to come, but that was it. I don't mind what happens. What does that mean?

First of all, in the English language, I don't mind is very different from I don't care. If English is not your native language, you can look up the difference. If English is your native language, you know intuitively that I don't care is a negativity.

I don't care what happens. I don't care what happens to me anymore. I'm fed up with life.

I don't care. That's, you really, you still do care. You're in a negative relationship to the world and to yourself.

I don't mind is a detachment from what happens or doesn't happen, but you can only be detached because you are rooted in something deeper in being. And with that comes a detachment with which you not only observe things and other people and events around you, but also a detachment that comes into your doing, the way you relate and do things. First of all, important aspect of detachment is you are not attached to the result.

You're not attached to the outcome. It creates a lot of fear and anxiety if you are attached. So you do your best.

It works out fine. If it doesn't work out, it's also fine because you are rooted in being. And the strange paradox is, it's more likely to turn out fine if you're rooted in being and you're not anxious about the outcome because the anxiety about the outcome creates a lot of secondary negative energy.

If the outcome is threatened, for example, you got angry. If the outcome is threatened, you get upset. Lost, completely lost.

So that is the secret of life. The rootedness in being. And then enjoy the spectacle of life around you.

Every moment there is beauty. Every moment. And you can even enjoy the doing.

You might not be as hyperactive as somebody who is completely lost in doing, but that you're doing whatever you do do will be more effective because there'll be an unconditioned intelligence behind it and a power flowing into it that is deeper than the merely personal realm of mental power, not separate from it, but deeper. Every moment there is beauty and aliveness around you. You appreciate what is.

So I wish you a happy Christmas and I'm here in British Columbia, Canada, just outside Vancouver. And the beauty here is the trees and the sky. You can perhaps see a little bit of that on the screen.

And wherever you are, it'll be something else. Let's give it attention, whatever is there. Acknowledge it's being.

When you are rooted in being, you can acknowledge not only the being, you can sense the inherent aliveness of other humans, of animals, and even of inanimate objects, of nature, of course, but even inanimate objects. Everything has a beingness to it. It is.

I'll leave you with that. And the contemplation of the trees here that I can see from my place. I wish you well.

Be at peace.

[Speaker 16] (7:13:41 - 7:13:42)
Thank you.

[Speaker 9] (7:14:11 - 7:14:35)
I'm not really attached to things per se anymore, but I find myself being very, very attached to people, even people who abandon me, whether my father or my best friend. And it's clear to me that they don't want me in their life, so why am I so attached and cling on to wanting them in my life?

[Speaker 3] (7:14:38 - 7:14:41)
Is this still happening today, where they don't want you? Yes.

[Speaker 9] (7:14:41 - 7:15:05)
You're alive, your parents? My father, yeah. Your father.

And my best friend. So the two people I thought would never leave me has left me. And whenever I go into a very, very deep meditation, there they are.

And I just get stuck by this complete feeling of suffering, and I don't know why I'm still chasing these people. Attachment, I guess.

[Speaker 3] (7:15:11 - 7:15:24)
We keep chasing something when we haven't fully, really accepted it and felt the repercussions of the event. When did your father leave?

[Speaker 9] (7:15:25 - 7:15:27)
When I was about 10.

[Speaker 3] (7:15:29 - 7:15:31)
And he's still out of the picture. Have you seen him at all?

[Speaker 9] (7:15:31 - 7:15:38)
Yeah, I have, but we only see each other when it suits him. Oh, you're angry.

[Speaker 3] (7:15:39 - 7:15:44)
Yeah, of course. Yeah. So have you ever felt that anger?

Really feel it?

[Speaker 9] (7:15:44 - 7:15:52)
Yeah, I feel it all the time. The problem with the anger is that I latch it on to other people now, people I don't even have any connection with. I find myself being

angry with them.

[Speaker 3] (7:15:52 - 7:16:33)
Yeah, yeah. So the problem in itself isn't anger. It's what you do with the anger that becomes the problem.

So you latching, attaching it to other people. But the anger that is inside of you, have you really felt that? Or do you go, I'm angry, but your mind might say, oh, but I really shouldn't be angry.

And maybe on some subconscious level, on an unconscious level, you maybe say, oh, you know, I'm too spiritual for this. To really feel anger? No, that's somehow wrong.

[Speaker 9] (7:16:36 - 7:16:41)
No, I've been a very, very angry person. I think everyone around me knows that.

[Speaker 3] (7:16:42 - 7:16:58)
Yeah, so it manifests outwardly, but I'm asking you, have you actually really felt it without the manifestation of it, outwardly? It's manifesting in you, but outwardly. So in other words, you don't react to this feeling of anger.

[Speaker 9] (7:16:59 - 7:17:03)
Have you really just felt it? I feel I have, but.

[Speaker 10] (7:17:07 - 7:17:08)
But what?

[Speaker 9] (7:17:10 - 7:17:13)
But I think that anger is a cover-up feeling.

[Speaker 3] (7:17:14 - 7:17:15)
Okay, covering up what?

[Speaker 9] (7:17:16 - 7:17:19)
Well, I think that anger is the easiest feeling to have.

[Speaker 3] (7:17:19 - 7:17:20)
Okay.

[Speaker 9] (7:17:20 - 7:17:31)
Instead of being terribly sad, I mean, who would want to say, nobody wants me? Or the most important people that I love don't want me. It's much easier to be angry.

[Speaker 3] (7:17:32 - 7:17:45)
Yeah, you're right on that. Anger is a stage of the grief process. So if you know that, then can you uncover and go deeper than the anger?

And have you felt that?

[Speaker 9] (7:17:48 - 7:17:49)
That's a good question.

[Speaker 3] (7:17:50 - 7:18:03)
You answered it, actually. I'm just saying, can you feel that? Can you go underneath the anger, and what is it that you feel?

Go there now.

[Speaker 9] (7:18:07 - 7:18:18)
Yeah, I feel that. Then there's no point in me being here. Like, if other people.

[Speaker 3] (7:18:18 - 7:18:22)
Talk to me more about that. What do you mean, there's no point in you being here? Did you have that feeling?

[Speaker 9] (7:18:23 - 7:18:39)
Yeah, I mean, if the people you love the most don't love you back, I know I'm supposed to be one of a bigger consciousness and say, well, that doesn't matter. Nobody loves me, but I'm part of a greater consciousness. But in reality, that's very difficult.

[Speaker 3] (7:18:39 - 7:19:58)
So that's the error that you're holding onto is the expectation of what love is and how love should be shown to you. We are only able to love at the level of consciousness that we are at. So I don't think your father doesn't love you.

I think your father loves you. It's just he is more unconscious. He's unconscious.

So he can't love you the way that you desire and the way that you want and the way that you expect and maybe even need because he's just not there. Can you accept the level of consciousness that he is at? It's hard because you have the expectation that parents ought to love me.

Unconditionally. The only real unconditional love unless you're fully awakened is awareness, your own inner stillness.

[Speaker 9] (7:20:01 - 7:20:01)
That's true.

[Speaker 3] (7:20:04 - 7:22:04)
So right now, what I see is a disconnection from your head, your body, your emotions. They're disconnected. You have that thought, that expectation of, geez, a mother and a father should do this, do that, do this and love this way and only this way and forgetting that their level of consciousness might be quite low.

In fact, it might be really low. So who am I now as this adult? Who is going to love me unconditionally?

So long as we are stuck there, we're gonna point and look out there for that person who's going to unconditionally love me and whether it's a male or female girlfriend, oh, there is that girlfriend who I know will unconditionally love me, who will love me and you've had this great friendship for a while and then as all things happen, including relationships, they'll dissolve. We may live together until one of you dies. It's still an ending of a relationship.

So as long as we keep that unprocessed event that happened to us when we were younger and keep that in our consciousness and think now because we have read in books that good parents do this. I mean, maybe the words aren't said like that but basically we read these things, we hear these things and we believe that this is the now new way how parenting should happen. Well, it's a lot more complicated than that because shit happens to everybody all the time.

Where did they come from? What part of the world were your parents from?

[Speaker 9] (7:22:04 - 7:22:13)
They're Danish. They're Danish. So and how old are they?

He's 73 and she's 63.

[Speaker 3] (7:22:14 - 7:23:22)
Let me see, I'm not really good at math but in a sense, what I'm trying to get at is that if they were brought up, say, during the war, they've got that shit. So that shit gets piled. This is where Christ says the sins of the generation be passed on from generation to generation if we're not awake.

So it will get passed on. So he's just passing on his shit but you have awakened, hallelujah, really. And it's a tough call to be that first to awaken in a family because that's what you're still having to deal with.

But then that's where you go through that process and learn that compassion and you learn that compassion by actually then feeling what you're really feeling inside. That sadness, that grief of that little girl who just needed to be loved, wanted to be felt like as if my parents want me.

[Speaker 9] (7:23:25 - 7:23:32)
Thank you very much. You're welcome. It helped a lot.

[Speaker 3] (7:23:33 - 7:30:10)
But that is our work for each and every one of us because we most likely, it can happen, though. It can happen where our parents awaken and then they come and they do that apology bit and it's a sincere apology and then things shift. But a lot of times it's not gonna happen that way and it may not happen that way.

And as we awaken in consciousness, then we feel all that suffering that has happened in our childhood and not only our childhood but that is now in our cellular structure, that of our ancestors, our parents, our grandparents and theirs. It's in us, it's like in our bones and that's the collective consciousness. So that's what we then have to also transcend and transmute.

It's hard work, I understand that fully because I have to do that as well. It's work, it's not only my shit but it's also the shit of my parents and then their parents. And I can sometimes feel that.

When I've worked through mine and I still have this sense of something that is there, I go deeper and I go, okay, is this mine? And I feel it and it's like a definite no but I can feel that it's coming from my family. I mean, we are all connected, all connected.

Just because we appear to be separate, there is a connection on an energetic level and not only an energetic level but on the actual cellular level. So I really applaud you. It is really good work that you're doing and sometimes it feels really lonely to do this work but we only feel lonely because we still have that little bit of expectation that somebody should be there.

But you know what? Somebody is there but sometimes it's not in form. As we awaken everybody here today, there is a connection and even though that you may leave this room after this weekend and we go through our everyday lives and awaken and we may be alone, we are not alone because we are the formless dimension and the awakening consciousness that is you and me, it's one.

And if we can remind ourselves that, that alone feeling begins to dissipate and disappear. I had this sense, this image come up for me when it's like making that leap to cross from that form world into that unknown world and being suspended kind of between that mid-air point and it's like standing on that edge and I'm like, oh, I don't know if I can make that jump. I don't know if I can make that jump.

Nobody is around telling me, yeah, you can do it, you can do it, but it was like this feeling inside where I just felt, oh my God, everybody who has crossed this path was standing there saying you can do it, you can do it, you can make that leap but the only thing is is that they can't do it for you. You are, so which in a way you are alone in this, you are the only one that can finally just jump, nobody else. They can say, go, yes, yes, yes, go for it, go for it and they won't push you.

So this is a critical time in our spiritual awakening. Am I going to make that leap? Consciousness and everybody out there in the so-called awakening consciousness, very patient, very patient, will not push you, just kindly and gently encouraging you and waiting for you on the other side and on this side saying, yes, you can, go ahead, you can do it and when you're ready because we're only going to do something when we are ready.

It's like what I mentioned about the flower. There's a certain point that just keeps blooming and blooming and we can't make it bloom any quicker. This intuitive, natural, spontaneous, so-called action will occur and happen where we will just finally just go, poop, no thought.

It's only while we're just sitting on the edge and our thoughts are still there so there's still that attachment to the world or to the pain body and emotion, something old that's happened to us. So it's not just material items. I'm speaking about emotional items as well or thought patterns or anything that we attach ourselves to.

So long as there's this attachment, we will not make that leap, but that's okay because we are getting ready to make that leap by looking at what we are attached to, by disconnecting from all that we are attached to. And usually it's deep suffering that will bring about a deeper awakening where we just finally cross.

[Speaker 1] (7:30:56 - 7:44:05)
Something you can practice here and for the rest of your life is to perceive things, look and listen. Sometimes even smell or touch or taste without any mental label. This is an ideal environment to do it in, in nature, but you can do it anywhere.

And it's not even a doing, we call it doing. Just you look at something or even just looking around. So either a specific thing or you take in the totality of what's there, either in the room or out in nature, the sky, the trees, or you look at one thing and you don't, you're still while you look.

And that's very important practice. And then you listen, various sounds arise most of the time and you just, then always two things are there. There's that which arises in your sense perception, listening, seeing, and there is the space of consciousness in which it arises.

You can also call it the light of consciousness in which it is perceived without which there would be no perception. And whenever you do that, you are not a person in that moment. You are not a person.

You are what comes to the forefront is the transcendent dimension to who you are, the consciousness. And so you can sense yourself as the consciousness, which is the space for whatever is being perceived. And that's, it's, there's almost a kind of joy in that, an aliveness, a beingness.

You're really, you can sense your own identity beyond who you are beyond the person by just perceiving something. And then at the same time, sensing your own presence, which isn't your own, but let's call it your own, the presence. And that is a passive thing.

It seems seemingly, it's a taking in what's there. The next step is to practice being yourself. Being in that transcendent state of consciousness while things are going on around you.

More challenging. Being in that state while you're engaged in some activity, start with simple activities. And again, there's a, the background is the presence.

You can, you're doing whatever it is you need to do for certain activities. Of course, you need to think and your thinker will start up. That's fine.

When you speak, there's thinking, but you can, if you are, while you speak, you can still be connected to the transcendent. Then you don't speak from the level of the personality. Then you speak from a more intelligent level of consciousness, the unconditioned consciousness.

Very different kind of speaking. When you speak from the personality, whatever you say is colored and determined by the conditioning of your mind as the person. There's another way of speaking.

Even if it's a simple conversation, you're speaking from a truer, deeper level of who you are. And those words are, have a certain quality. They may, you might not be saying necessarily anything significant, but those words have a certain aliveness and quality that is different from what comes from the personality level.

So at any given time, there's, there's the two dimensions to who you are, one could say. Let's, for the time being, let's put it like that. There's the personal level.

And there's the transcendent you. And usually the transcendent in your normal daily life will be in the background. If you can sense that in the background, then you can deal with the stuff you need to deal with in the foreground of your life, to this and this and this.

Even thinking is in the foreground of your life. Think, I have to think about this. And yet, at the same time, you sense yourself as the presence.

So that's the, the depths within you. There's a stillness. There can be a stillness even while you're speaking.

There's a stillness in the background. And when you've come to the end of a sentence, you might notice, you might get, there's a gap and you're not thinking between the end of one sentence and the beginning of a new sentence. And so more and more, the transcendent self comes in, emerges more into your life, comes in more.

And the conditioned self does not disappear completely, but the conditioned self becomes more, less dense. The density of the personality, that many people are in the grip of that. There's a heaviness to it.

I can sometimes see how people carry this burden of a personality without any, not the slightest glimpse of anything beyond. And it's a terrible burden to carry. The only sense of self they have is that conditioned sense of self.

And it's a, there's a heaviness to it and a density. And as the transcendent emerges more, the personality level becomes more lighter and more, one could say transparent almost. So the light shines through more.

You can, the analogy you could use is a lampshade. When there's only the personality, the lampshade is so heavy, there's only a little bit of light shining through, but the layers of the lampshade are so thick that only very little comes through. And whatever comes through is totally formed by the lampshade.

And then the shade gets a bit more transparent and there's more light coming through. The same person is still there, the same lampshade, but there's more, there's a transparency to something deeper. And that's the only way you become more authentic.

You become more truly yourself, the deeper, unconditioned self, which the Buddha calls the no self. And if in spiritual terminology, you could call Buddha nature is arising, Christ consciousness is arising, whatever you want to call it. So you cannot love your neighbor as yourself, as somebody once said, he said, love your neighbor as yourself, but he didn't give that as a commandment because he would have known that that's impossible for the personality.

They missed a little bit when they wrote down what he was saying. He said, when you put the kingdom of heaven bit goes together with the loving your neighbor as yourself. So when you find that dimension within yourself, that is the kingdom of heaven, which in modern terms, I would translate as the dimension of kingdom is dimension.

Heaven is in many languages is the same word as sky in French, in Spanish, in German, heaven and sky are the same word. So Jesus uses this thing, the sky, the vast expanse of the sky as the closest word he can get to describing the inner space, the inner spaciousness. Sky has no form.

Sky, we have a word for sky, but sky doesn't actually exist. There is no sky. There just seems to be a sky because what you're seeing as the blue, if it's blue, is just the light against the background of space, the dark of the space behind this creates that illusion that there is something there.

But if you travel upwards, you will never reach the sky. You may reach the clouds and then you go to the clouds and then there's more sky. And finally it's gone.

Where was the sky? There is no sky. So it has no form.

So he used the best word he could find was heaven or sky, the kingdom of heaven, the dimension of formlessness, which is within you, he said. And that's the most important thing in your life to find that, that's priority number one. And then as he found that, then you love your neighbor as yourself because you recognize the same formless essence in you is the same formless essence in the so-called other.

And then you love your neighbor as yourself. But no matter how hard you try, you can't really, real empathy, real loving kindness, real benevolence, real goodwill towards another. It's not really, you cannot sustain for very long if there's only the personality level, you have a resemblance of that, but it's usually the ego playing a particular role.

This mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive. To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation.

[Speaker 8] (7:44:40 - 7:44:54)
Hello, my name's Dominique. I'm a doctor in Australia and I work combining natural medicine and Western medicine. Just breathe for a second.

[Speaker 1] (7:44:54 - 7:44:59)
That's good, take your time. We are not in a hurry. Thank you.

[Speaker 8] (7:45:04 - 7:46:46)
Just like, I guess some pointers about how to think about the situation that I've seen in medicine. I'm really shocked quite often by the standard that Western doctors work at. And I see that it seems fairly straightforward to do a reasonably good job, I think, to assist people who are starting to have early signs of sickness and imbalance.

And there's so much knowledge now about how to address that and how to help them feel better. And it's really important to me that for myself and I think for patients as well, that when we're in balance, when we're physically well and stronger, it's easier to be at peace. It's easier to be conscious and to access the transcended dimension.

So it's really important. So yeah, I see this kind of, I don't know, I feel really compelled and concerned by this gap between what's being practised in medicine and this need. Because people do the right thing, they go to the doctor.

And I feel really sad.

[Speaker 1] (7:46:51 - 7:46:55)
You're talking about mainstream medicine, the way it's practised?

[Speaker 16] (7:46:55 - 7:46:56)
Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (7:46:58 - 7:47:07)
Which does not consider the entire human being and the consciousness of the human being, but the symptom only.

[Speaker 8] (7:47:08 - 7:47:40)
Well, yes, but even in that, often I see that very basic tests are not done and drugs are given, like antidepressants, for example. Someone will go to the doctor because they're tired and maybe they're a bit depressed because they're tired. And many, many times a blood test isn't even done, which is really bad medicine.

But that's very normal now because of this alignment we have with drugs.

[Speaker 1] (7:47:40 - 7:53:18)
Yes, yes. Well, I'm sure there's, although I know personally some doctors, even within mainstream, who are practising it consciously, but those are still the exceptions. I just want to acknowledge that within mainstream medicine, there are some people who are conscious and making a wonderful contribution.

Also, before I say anything else, to acknowledge other practitioners like nurses who are doing a wonderful job. They somehow, although some nurses are under great stress, but they provide the human dimension, which is often lacking in mainstream medicine. And having said that, mainstream medicine is, to a large extent, still very unenlightened and creating a lot of, almost as much suffering as it solves.

So a change is imminent in mainstream medicine. And I don't think we will have to wait for too long before it happens. In the meantime, we depend on people like you to do things differently.

And don't focus on what's wrong. You can point out what's wrong, but don't focus too much on what's wrong and focus only on how things need to be done with awareness and you can show the way. You can show the way and then things will change more quickly.

So don't focus on, don't, instead, don't, even criticizing too much can be counterproductive. Just point out certain things that people need to know and make your contribution. Focus on that, show others, explain to others.

And then the change starts with you or you are contributing, important contributing factor in that change. So many things are going to change as consciousness awakens on the planet from science to medicine and many other things are going to go through deep changes so that in a few hundred years, we look back on this age in the same way in which we look back on not just the middle ages, but even much before then, almost the stone age. And we think we know it all right now, but we don't and even science only knows the surface of reality right now.

It's very, it's done a very good job with exploring the surface of reality, but there's far more than meets the eye, far more than Higgs, what was that thing called? Higgs particle, bosom, bosom, bosom. So do your thing and allow the change.

Change starts with you and then it'll spread from you. So don't dwell on what's wrong, focus on what's right. That's very important.

And sometimes if you allow, then people change and sometimes they don't, but they're more likely to change if you bring an acceptance. If you no longer oppose a person who always putting out their old stuff towards you, if you don't, which is her egoic identity, is continuously reasserted by her criticism of you. Her criticism of you, she doesn't know that, but her criticism of you asserts her sense of self, her false sense of self, because every time she criticizes you, she is right.

She is so right. And the ego loves nothing better than to be right, because the more often you are right and the more right you are, the bigger the ego is. You feel more acknowledged in your sense of who you are.

That's why she loves criticizing, but of course she doesn't know what she's doing. It's all unconscious. But if you recognize that this is what she's doing, then you realize that's not your mother at all.

The true being of your mother is somewhere hiding underneath all that stuff. It's obscured by all the egoic conditioning. It's hiding somewhere there.

But you strengthen the egoic patterns by opposing them.

[Speaker 11] (7:53:36 - 7:53:39)
How do I deal with the election of Donald Trump?

[Speaker 1] (7:53:41 - 7:53:43)
I thought somebody might ask that.

[Speaker 11] (7:53:51 - 7:55:34)
But last night I listened to you. I listened to you at my home here in San Diego. And what you told me and what I've done, and Donald has helped me, he's made me go deep very quickly.

Okay? And he is going to be my spiritual practice for the next four years. And you help me with that to understand instead of saying, you son of a gun.

I don't like you. I don't want you to be there. Why are you there?

This is impossible. It must have been some sort of alternative fact. Okay?

It isn't. It wasn't. But that's okay.

Because I'm going to accept it. And it's going to be my spiritual practice for the next four years. Thank God.

It's wonderful. Now, my question. I read your books.

And there's one little phrase that you have that, and I listened to the tape you've done with Oprah, the ten sessions you did, about five times. And you talk about it. But the part of when you say, life is the dancer.

And we are the dance. And Oprah said, isn't it the other way around? And you explained it somewhat.

But I didn't grasp it. And you being here in front of me is the most joyous thing in my life to have you answer that. I couldn't ask for anything more.

This is one of the most special times of my life. So if you could answer that.

[Speaker 1] (7:55:34 - 8:01:36)
I think a lot of people have that question, too. Thank you. And first of all, thank you about what you said about Donald Trump.

That is very helpful. I hardly need to answer any more questions about Donald Trump, because you've said it already. Thank you.

The acceptance of what is, because that's what is. You can't argue with what is. That is what is.

Not being, I'll just talk for a moment about the first part. That wasn't the question, but you beautifully told us your realization. To use any condition, we talked about the comfort zone.

So there's also collective comfort zones that people want to be in. You are drawn, for example, to the news sources that correspond to your beliefs, the conditioning of your mind. So you don't want to be taken out of your comfort zone.

And this happens, life does it to you. It does it to individuals. And then it takes entire groups of people out of their comfort zone, which has happened here.

And this is a relatively minor way of being taken out of their comfort zone. People in Syria are being taken out of their comfort zone in a much more violent way than what's happened here so far. So people experience collectively these upheavals.

And it's also need to realize that, if possible, try to enter the mind space of the other part of America who are in their comfort zone now, who were not in their comfort zone before. So why is that? They are now in their comfort zone and we are not in the comfort zone.

Try to enter what is it that, how do they see the world? I'm not talking about the fringe extreme, because those exist, obviously, deeply unconscious people who, well, there's not much one can do there. But it wasn't just the extreme, the fringe extreme fringe that brought him into power.

There were many ordinary humans who genuinely felt that deep change was needed. And then he happened to be there and represented it. So what is there?

I listened to Marianne Williamson, who is much more engaged in politics than I am. And she even ran for Congress. And she went to some events in Washington soon after the election.

And she talked to some supporters of Donald Trump and in a very open way. And those were not deeply unconscious people that are on the on the fringes. And they said to her, you didn't vote for him, did you?

And she said, no, I didn't. And she had a human interaction beyond the mindset of those people. She was able to reach these people.

So not to demonize half of the population. So because it's not that simple. There is unconsciousness on both parts of the population.

So hold it all in that space of awareness. And do what if you feel you want need to take action, make sure it is not a reaction that comes from anger, because the more you're motivated by anger, the more you contribute to the unconsciousness. If you see the rising of unconsciousness in here, don't contribute to it and become angry because unconsciousness is rising.

Because then you become what you are fighting against. You need to be very careful that you do not become what you are fighting against. And this happens, for example, when people start smashing up places, destroying property and cars, because they're wanting to fight the fascists.

So don't become that. So let's take consciousness and then disseminate information, talk, create your YouTube channel if you feel you have to, and explain how you see it in a loving way. You don't need an angry YouTube channel.

There are enough of those already. So don't need to add another one. And then this is just one example of what you can do.

I don't know much about social media. There's also Facebook. I don't know how that works.

But although I have in the past occasionally posted something by, not personally, but I gave it to somebody to post. I may do so again, by the way. I may even comment on political situations.

So. And then your question is?

[Speaker 11] (8:01:40 - 8:01:47)
Life is the dancer. Yes. And we are the dance, which is the opposite of what we would think.

[Speaker 1] (8:01:47 - 8:01:58)
Okay. I'm not sure if I can answer that question, because that's something that I said a long time ago. So fair enough.

[Speaker 11] (8:01:58 - 8:01:58)
Okay.

[Speaker 1] (8:01:58 - 8:02:23)
If I said it right now, I would be able to tell you what it means. But give me, just one moment. Well, I believe what I meant was, it's always strange when one goes to the past and people say, what did you mean when you said that 10 years ago?

Did I say that?

[Speaker 11] (8:02:23 - 8:02:27)
I'm sorry. I went fairly deep.

[Speaker 1] (8:02:28 - 8:04:32)
The dancer and the dance, this analogy, if that's what it is, that I used is. The dancer is the consciousness and life as this unfolds in the world of form and multiplicity on this planet and many other places is the dance of life. The dancer is who you are in your essence.

The dancer is God, ultimately the one consciousness. You are the one consciousness. And the one consciousness expresses itself as this so-called person or human being.

I love that expression, human being. You remember how I interpret human being? Human is the form.

Being is the formless. Being is the dancer. And human is the dance.

That's beautiful. Thank you so much. Thanks.

Once you've asked a question, while you listen, you direct your awareness into the inner feeling of your hands. And that keeps it there so that it doesn't, your mind doesn't take off.

[Speaker 12] (8:04:36 - 8:04:57)
For someone who's a little bit hyperactive, what's the best way to get a balance between removing content, which is really good, but then not getting annoyed when content comes in and you think, oh, it's spoiling my peace. Is there some way to get a balance?

[Speaker 1] (8:04:57 - 8:05:00)
I assume the question applies to yourself.

[Speaker 12] (8:05:00 - 8:05:01)
Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (8:05:01 - 8:05:30)
So that someone is you. Yeah. Okay.

Just wanted to make sure. So you are hyperactive. Yeah.

Now, rather than explaining it to us in an abstract way, can you give an example or one example of where this is problematic and how it manifests in your life?

[Speaker 12] (8:05:31 - 8:06:08)
So, for example, here after the talks, I can go out to the nature and it's, I get a glimpse now of some kind of presence. Yes. And I also want to engage with other people.

But I know once I get on a roll, for example, speaking, how good the talk was, I'm into a, just a torrent. So it's almost, should I just go and sit in the park for hours and hours? But that's too extreme probably.

I'm creating probably more content trying to analyze whether to keep up, stay out of the way or...

[Speaker 1] (8:06:09 - 8:06:15)
So when you engage in conversation, then do you tend to speak fast or...

[Speaker 12] (8:06:15 - 8:06:15)
Yes. Yeah. Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (8:06:15 - 8:06:54)

I just totally lose... The mind takes over and you're dragged along. Yeah.

Yes. Now this being dragged along by the mind happens to many, many people, but perhaps you slightly more extreme form, your mind is even more powerful than the normal mind. And so you're dragged along before you know it.

And so do you tend to sometimes avoid interaction in order not to be dragged along? Yes. Yeah.

So it's either you get dragged along or you sit there and can't interact. Yeah.

[Speaker 12] (8:06:54 - 8:06:56)
It's like two settings, full blast or off.

[Speaker 16] (8:06:58 - 8:06:59)
Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (8:07:04 - 8:07:23)
When somebody talks to you, of course, what is, how do you experience yourself when you listen to somebody? What is your, how do you listen to another person? Is your mind already preparing what we're going to say or...

Yeah, definitely.

[Speaker 12] (8:07:23 - 8:07:31)
Whenever anybody tells me the name, never, ever remember it because it's, I'm probably somewhere else when that's coming in.

[Speaker 1] (8:07:31 - 8:07:40)
Yeah. Have you done any practice, meditation, any kind of meditation practice, formal meditation?

[Speaker 12] (8:07:40 - 8:07:49)
Yeah, I try and I'm guessing if I do reasonably well for that first five minutes, when I get up and go outside, it's lovely.

[Speaker 1] (8:07:51 - 8:08:06)
Now, when you're out in nature by yourself, are you able to be present to some extent or is your mind still active while you're looking at the trees or at the sky?

[Speaker 12] (8:08:06 - 8:08:13)
To some extent now I can. So that's progress definitely because I couldn't do that before.

[Speaker 1] (8:08:13 - 8:08:21)
So you find little spaces when you're of presence, when you're not interacting with people.

[Speaker 12] (8:08:21 - 8:08:27)
Yeah. Like wet tarmac for some reason, just, yeah, that works. I don't know why.

[Speaker 1] (8:08:28 - 8:11:02)
It's just a reflection of the... Oh, well, the most unlikely things can help you. That's fine.

It doesn't really matter what it is. So do you, are you in a relationship, married or? No, no, no.

Do you, have you had relationships? Yeah, but yeah, not enough. Okay.

The but is enough, but I don't want to go too deeply into it because I'm not a psychotherapist and don't need to be. Well, I would recommend that you practice here. There's still some time left.

Everybody knows now who you are. And the people here are much more conscious than people you would normally meet in everyday life. And everybody will be very happy to help you and to help you.

And you can also help, for example, by just refraining from giving too much input when you're interacting, engaging in conversation. Be more a listener than a speaker. Make that your practice for the time being.

Just, I'm not saying don't say a word, but be more like 80% a listener than a speaker. And that, for example, you can do by asking questions when you're in a, rather than stating your view or whatever it is, ask questions that encourages the other person to speak more. If the other person speaks more, it forces you to listen, and then make the listening into a practice while the other person is speaking.

Are you able to, let's say, at any time to feel your inner body? Can you feel that?

[Speaker 12] (8:11:02 - 8:11:06)
Yeah, the hands, but then I seem to lose them quite quickly.

[Speaker 1] (8:11:06 - 8:11:12)
Okay, but hands, you can feel the energy in your hands. The rest of the body is more difficult.

[Speaker 12] (8:11:12 - 8:11:13)
Yeah, yeah.

[Speaker 1] (8:11:13 - 8:12:00)
Okay, well, it's a good start. It's a start. So I suggest that once you've asked a question, while you listen, you direct your awareness into the inner feeling of your hands.

And that keeps it there so that it doesn't, your mind doesn't take off. So you ask the question, what, where are you from? How long have you been with Eckhart?

How did you first discover the books? Have you been to other, many questions you can ask, and people will be happy to help you by answering your questions. And they will be happy to help you by not asking you too many questions.

[Speaker 12] (8:12:01 - 8:12:03)
Yeah, no, thank you. That's good. Yeah, that'll help.

[Speaker 1] (8:12:04 - 8:13:36)
So, and so while you listen, have your attention in the inner energy field of your hands. If you can amplify that and have your attention also in other parts of your body, for example, your feet and hand at the same time, that's even better. But hands is fine too.

So you feel your inner, the aliveness in your hands. And from there, you listen and you know, just give it, this will help you prevent the stream of mind from taking you over. So that's the beginning of a little, a little practice.

Another practice you can do is while you listen, you're aware of your breathing.

And so you can even bring the two together. You can be aware of your breathing and your hands, but it's probably better for you to just choose one or the other.

So please help this gentleman and allow him to ask you some questions and give exhaustive answers. And don't ask him any questions except, well, I'll ask you a couple of questions so you don't need to ask him. Where are you from?

[Speaker 12] (8:13:36 - 8:13:37)
Yorkshire in England.

[Speaker 1] (8:13:37 - 8:13:52)
Okay, Yorkshire, England. And so you don't need to ask him that. So that's good.

And have you been to retreats before with us here?

[Speaker 12] (8:13:53 - 8:13:54)
No, it's the first one.

[Speaker 1] (8:13:54 - 8:30:22)
First one, okay. Well, that's another question you don't need to ask. Okay, I believe you can get there.

So, and of course, in addition to this practice with people, go out into nature and be engaged, if necessary, even involve other senses, not just the visual sense, although for most people, the visual is the predominant sense, but also perhaps touch something, see what it, a leaf or plant, pick up a stone or on the beach, the sand or whatever it is, water, give it, be aware of the tactile sense perceptions. All these things help you get out of your mind. At least put aside just maybe once a day, 15 minutes when you check your Tinder.

It's all very important, but there's something more important. And that's why you're here. And a few more practical tips so that you don't get distracted too much while you take your attention more deeply while you're here.

Take your attention more deeply into being or into attention itself, purely practical. Don't turn on the TV in your room, please. I have not installed hidden cameras to check on you.

So, second, limit your interaction, the interaction with your devices. If you cannot eliminate interaction with your devices completely, and I understand that you may not survive if you do, at least put aside just maybe once a day, 15 minutes when you check your, whatever it is that comes through, whatever, text, email, Facebook, Snapchat, Tinder. It's all very important, but there's something more important.

And that's why you're here. If you, so now let's see, I suggest to you that you make an agreement with yourself that not to go there unless any more than is absolutely necessary. And I mean, if occasionally you get it out and to take a photo is okay, but also don't interact with things around you only through imagining what it would look like as a photo on your phone.

And then say, okay, I'm going to fully experience this beautiful thing when I get home and look at my photos. In the meantime, I'm more interested in taking this photo because that's what the, there's a species that has developed out of Homo sapiens, a branch species called Homo turisticus. And they walk around continuously with either camera or things.

You see them every day. They come in buses. And then in the evening, the Homo turisticus goes home mostly.

And then you are left here. And you might notice it becomes quite still outside at this time. And the days are very, very long here.

You may find that unusual if you come from a more Southern place. There's still daylight around even at 1030. There's still light in the sky.

So, and then it becomes very still here. So you can walk along the lake or just wherever you are and just become aware of that surrounding stillness. And as you become aware of the surrounding stillness, of course, you become still yourself.

And if you are still, it means you're not thinking or very little thinking. And it means you're aware. It means you're present.

It means you are living through the deep eye. So use nature that is around you. Live through the deep eye.

And during the daytime, if you're walking and there's lots of, there's a long weekend here and tomorrow is a holiday in Canada here. So there's more tourists, Homo turisticus than usual. And if you get upset by the fact that there are so many tourists walking around, then you just practice this beautiful spiritual practice of acceptance of the isness of this moment.

And immediately you become still too without needing external silence. Complete acceptance of this moment, including the tourists. And you're still, oh, I don't know how tourists will develop in the future as a species.

In Thailand, in, just near Bangkok, somebody, they interviewed some near Buddhist monastery. They interviewed some farmers and farm workers. They would give food to the monks.

That's a tradition in Buddhism in Thailand, in the South, Theravada tradition of Buddhism. The monks come with their begging bowls every morning. They just stand there.

And then the local people come and put food. They are dependent. It's done on purpose.

There's a wisdom behind it. Or the Westerner would say, why don't they work for a living? The monks stand there with their begging bowls and then the poor people who hardly have enough, who hardly have enough themselves, they come and put some food, a bit of rice, whatever, in the begging bowl.

And the monks just stand. They don't say thank you because it's a privilege for you to give food to the monks. That's part of the tradition.

So the Westerners interviewed the farm workers. They, why do you give your food to the monks when you have so little yourself? And they began talking to each other and say, well, because we want a better incarnation next time.

So we are accumulating merit. So next time we come, we are born into a better condition. And then the Westerner asked, so what do you want to come back as in your next lifetime?

And then they talked amongst each other. And finally the agreement was, we want to come back as tourists. Because they observe these people.

They are out of their, step out of their buses. They're well-dressed and some are obviously so privileged that they are quite big bodies, which means they have plenty of money. They can eat as much as they like.

So that's a great thing. And then they do all kinds of things. They seem to have sex all the time.

And so it's a great thing. So wouldn't it be great in my next lifetime to spend my whole lifetime as being a tourist? They don't realize it would be a dreadful nightmare.

Oh yes, one more practical thing. Intoxicating beverages. There's no prohibition here on anything.

There's just a recommendation. And that is to refrain as much as possible from intoxicating. If English is not your native language, it means alcohol.

So refrain as much as possible from intoxicating beverages. However, if you cannot enjoy a dinner without a glass of wine, then you can have a glass of wine. One glass of wine would not unduly interfere with the arising presence in you, but two might and three will, unless you're really already deeply engaged in presence, deeply rooted in presence, in which case you wouldn't even want to drink too much and you certainly wouldn't get drunk.

So as little as possible, I recommend none at all would be great. But since everybody here is spiritually advanced, if you do have a glass of wine, you will not be judged. I'm not one of these spiritual teachers who are very unconventional ways of teaching.

I know of two or three that did that. And they give their students as much alcohol as they want and said, drink, drink up, in order to observe if they can stay conscious even while they are intoxicated. A very questionable practice, but I won't do that here with you.

I think one or two are feeling sorry now. I don't know. So we've talked about the distractions on the external level, television, devices, intoxicating beverages or other intoxicating substances.

I would advise against it, at least here, and never indulge even when you're not here. As you probably know, I've already mentioned, I tried it a couple of times. I have to because people ask me questions about it.

I cannot answer if I haven't tried it. It wasn't that great. I prefer my normal state of consciousness.

It felt a little bit almost oppressive. But I can see a person who is tortured on a daily basis by their mind. It can be a relief to have a smoke, but here we have something better.

We are not falling below thinking. We are rising above thinking. And that is the next step in human evolution.

When you rise, as you rise above thinking, you don't need to fall below thinking anymore because you become liberated from your mind in the dimension that is transcendent to thought. So, and another practice, of course, here is the daily, the moment-to-moment practice of accepting the is-ness of the present moment. Just that's a powerful way of, and a quick way of going beyond the surface self, the egoic self, which means stop complaining, either internally or externally.

Of course, if there's something that needs to be changed, of course, you go to the reception or you make a phone call if suddenly there's water coming through the ceiling. Hopefully, I'm not manifesting it by talking about it. But if there's water coming through the ceiling and the mattress and you are on it and getting drenched, you don't say, well, accept what is, stay.

Stay on the bed. Eckhart said, don't complain. So that's not the practice.

But it does mean that when you finally go to the telephone and tell them what happened, it's not done in a complaining manner that says, how dreadful this place is. How can you allow something like this to happen to me? This is dreadful.

That strengthens the ego. No, you just explain what is and what can we do about it. And in the meantime, you surrender to the fact that you're wet.

So that's what is.

[Speaker 2] (8:30:50 - 8:31:38)
So just being present with your sense perceptions. Some people tell me that sometimes I have to demonstrate the arising of the inner space without thinking.

[Speaker 1] (8:31:38 - 8:34:33)
I sometimes go like that. So in between the left hand and the right hand, there's a space of no thinking. So normally in the unconscious thinking state, there's no space, just one thought after another.

And then you become alert enough to create a space between thoughts. And some people have told me that they actually find it helpful occasionally in daily life when nobody's looking to hold your hands like that, because that's an outer representation of an inner state. And it can be helpful to have the outer representation as an anchor, at least as you practice the thoughtless state, to have that as an anchor for thoughtless.

So you're holding that space of no thought, both externally, so to speak, and internally, more importantly, of course. So eventually you don't need it anymore, but some people do find it helpful. I will talk just a little bit more, but with lots of spaces between the words so that you can practice meditative listening, which means you're aware of the words that you're hearing, but you're also aware of the spaces between the words.

And while you're aware of the spaces between the words, you may notice you're not thinking. If you are thinking, you cannot be aware of the spaces between the words.

[Speaker 5] (8:34:39 - 8:37:41)
And this is good practice to be aware simultaneously of form and formlessness of things and of space. And you may notice when you are aware of that space, you're really aware of yourself as the presence, because that presence is in a space. And you may notice when you're aware of space, you're not waiting for the next thing to happen.

You're not waiting for what I'm going to say next, no need, because you know that what I'm going to say next, whatever I'm going to say next, cannot add anything important to the realization of your presence.

[Speaker 1] (8:37:49 - 8:38:26)
And so intentionally, I'm not saying anything very interesting right now, because if it's too interesting, you will get drawn back into the words and into thought and into form.

[Speaker 2] (8:38:32 - 8:38:35)
So it's good that this talk is boring.

[Speaker 1] (8:38:38 - 8:39:23)
That leaves more room for the awareness of space. Music, when it has a spiritual dimension, also has spaces in it or an underlying spaciousness.

[Speaker 5] (8:39:36 - 8:40:02)
Some visual art also has spaciousness in it. And when you look at it, you may find there isn't much there.

[Speaker 1] (8:40:08 - 8:40:46)
For example, certain Asian paintings, a little tree in a corner, a little distant mountain, a tiny human standing somewhere, and 85% of the painting is empty space.

[Speaker 5] (8:40:48 - 8:41:38)
It might be the sky or just empty space. And you look at it, and if you really look at it, you become aware that the essence of the painting is not what's there to be seen, but the essence is what's not there, space.

[Speaker 1] (8:41:39 - 8:46:38)
And so looking at that can be a realization of your own spaciousness. It's so liberating to realize the essence of yourself as stillness, space. You are so much more than the little me, more than your personal history, successes and failures, the successes that turned into failures, the failures that turned into successes.

One little practice I would recommend, take five minutes or so. You can practice here, of course, but at home, everybody has five minutes. Don't believe your mind when it tells you you don't have five minutes.

And the practice is sit somewhere outside or indoors for five minutes and practice perception without interference of thinking, which means you just look around wherever you are. You may look at occasionally your gaze rests upon one thing for a little while, and then you look on. Then you take in the totality of whatever surrounds you.

And as you do, you're aware simultaneously of what you are seeing, but without calling it anything. And you're aware of the stillness that is your essence. That's the background to the visual sense perceptions, like a canvas.

And so this is a blank canvas. And whatever you see is the painting on the canvas. It appears and disappears, appears and disappears.

But the canvas is the spacious stillness.

[Speaker 5] (8:46:39 - 8:46:44)
It's a beautiful way of perceiving the world.

[Speaker 1] (8:46:48 - 8:51:44)
And another practice similar to this, is particularly good when you're outside, but also indoors. Sit for five minutes again and be very alert. Pay attention to whatever you are hearing, alert listening, the slightest sounds.

No sound is better or worse than another. Just every sound is received. Beautiful bird song, a motorbike driving past.

But you are again the canvas for the sound this time. And it's all just register. And you have no preference, any sound is fine.

And you're aware of yourself as the presence, the listening presence. The alertness that makes the hearing possible. And again, as much as possible, no mental labeling.

The subtlest sounds are the best that wake, because they require your greatest alertness to some distant sound. So if you sit in a very still place, in nature perhaps, see how far you can hear. Do you remember the story in a new earth, the Zen master walking with a disciple, and they sit down, have something to eat.

And then the disciple says, can you explain how to enter Zen? Which means, can you explain how to enter the state of consciousness that is Zen? And the master says, can you hear that distant mountain stream?

And the sound must have been really distant. And the disciple at first can't hear, and then he becomes more alert. And of course, as he becomes more alert, he stops thinking because you cannot be really alert and think.

Thinking implies a certain degree of non-alertness. So the disciple listened.

[Speaker 2] (8:51:47 - 8:51:49)
Can you, yeah, I can hear it now.

[Speaker 1] (8:51:54 - 9:08:59)
And the master says, enter Zen from there. In other words, that's a portal into presence. I've been working for 13 years in an office, and I feel that my job is boring and useless.

I learned to surrender, but I'd like to change my job, but don't know where to apply. How can I find out what will give me joy and happiness and a feeling of meaningfulness? Well, start with where you are.

Rather than trying to get away from where you are, you start with always the present moment. And you say you have surrendered, but have you surrendered enough? Have you truly surrendered?

So I suggest when you travel to work every morning, enter the state of presence rather than drifting off into thinking so that you're present every moment, whether you're driving or taking public transportation or walk to work, be there, absolute presence. And when you're at work, do one thing at a time and bring in spacious moments as much as possible. They can only be a few seconds, as one spacious breath after you made a phone call, two spacious breaths.

And then when you go to have lunch, wherever it is, either you eat the lunch that you brought with you or you go to the restaurant or the canteen, or again, present with every moment. So you use what otherwise would be a boring situation and just use it as the background for presence. So you're not ultimately, you're not looking for some satisfaction in the work, but you bring a different state of consciousness to it.

So in a way, your work situation becomes like a canvas. It's just an excuse for practicing presence. And you're lucky that you have a relatively boring job, gives you a great opportunity for practice.

If you had a very stressful job that kept you in a state of excitement all day long, it would be more difficult. So be thankful that life has given you something relatively boring. And then you make it interesting, not in the conventional sense of interesting, but you bring that, the alertness to it.

So you're not working at the stock exchange, shouting like a mad person, sell, sell, buy, be on the computers. Now, if there's any stockbroker wanting to ask me a question, please do. That'll be a different answer.

I don't know what I'd say. There's a way there too. What it is, I don't know until you ask the question.

But yes, use the situation. And so that as you do that, discontent disappears. And so, and that is true surrender.

You say you practice surrender, the questioner says, but if there's discontent, of course there's still not complete surrender. You're still, I'd rather be somewhere else. Or the mind telling you in 13 years, how many more years to retirement?

Oh, and then you start counting the years to retirement. So you're losing yourself in past and future. And you're carrying the burden in your mind of past and future, missing the opportunity of the present moment because it's not interesting enough, says the mind.

So that's good practice. And you may find if you come into such an alignment with the present moment, you feel more alive, even within the routine activities, there is then an added dimension of aliveness that comes in. And you perform even the routine activities with a greater sense of aliveness.

And it is often then that change comes into your life when you align with the present moment, instead of trying to get away from it, internally align yourself with it so that any kind of no to the present moment dissolves in an inner no. And so you're so aligned that actually power begins to flow through. That's why I call that the power of now.

It's the power of life itself begins to flow through you. At first it flows into your routine activities and the way in which you relate to your colleagues at work becomes more present, different, somewhat different. Some people may notice it, others may not.

And so, and gradually the universe or life notices that you are in a different state of consciousness. And often it is then that change comes into your life. Either through a chance event or a chance encounter or a sudden idea or realization that comes into your head one morning.

In whatever form it comes or some drastic thing like suddenly your company goes bust. The company that you worked for for so long, suddenly they close down. Everybody loses their job.

Wow, you're free. But you were free already because internally you already became free. So in what way change comes into your life, we don't know.

It is much more likely to come in but you no longer depend on external change for your inner state. That's the main thing that you don't depend on it anymore. You already, and even if nothing else came into your life you would continue practice until your last breath.

And your last breath would be a conscious breath. And you would have fulfilled your purpose on this planet in this form, which is to be a vehicle for consciousness to come into this world. So you don't need to depend.

You don't depend on anything. Change is more likely to come, yes. But this, the presence practice is not a means to an end.

You're not practicing. You say, okay, I'll practice. But if nothing happens within six weeks, I'll stop practicing.

Or the lady, do you know the lady who, a church going lady who saw, she lived in a house and outside her window there was a hill that blocked the view of the ocean. So there's a little hill. And of course, if that hill hadn't been there her house would have been worth much more.

So because of that hill, her house wasn't worth that much. But in church she heard if you only have face of as big as a mustard seed, you can sell to this mountain, move from here to there and it will move for you. She heard that in church, Jesus said.

And then she said, oh, okay. I only have a hill there so I can let's see. And said, okay, I'm going to believe that this hill is going to move.

And then tomorrow morning I'll open the curtains and see what happens. So she, in the morning she got up and opened the curtains and the hill was still there. And she said, oh, I knew it wasn't going to work.

That's the faith. So to all of you who are bored at work, there may be quite a few, make it into a spiritual practice, a consciousness practice. Bored at work also means you're not particularly challenged at work.

And in the absence of life challenges, there's always a danger that you fall below thought and you come into a routine where you, what you think it's acceptance, but you're really falling below thought and you go to work and there's a decrease in your sense of alertness and aliveness and you become dull and you go. And sometimes you see people who've been working in the same place for a long time. They have not, it's not surrender or presence.

They've just gone below thought, not risen above. This mind-made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive. To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation.

Many questions have come from people asking about feeling drained after working with people for a long time. For example, I work in a healing capacity and often find helping professionals come to us asking for help when they find their energy to be drained by those they support. Health professionals, social workers, even hairdressers who spend much of their time listening to the problems of others can feel exhausted at the end of each day.

Any advice from you would be welcome. This is Sally asking and several, quite a few other people. The energy loss mostly happens if you engage too much with the mindstream of those people.

Now, this is for people who listen to people, talk like counselors and so on. If you engage with the mindstream that comes through the words and follow it, that tends to take energy out of you. So the art is to remain, while you listen, to remain aware of your own presence so that you don't allow the mind to link in with your mind and then pull you along.

And this is why you may remember I mentioned when I used to work with individuals, I would sometimes, a smile would come to my lips when I was listening to them, their problems. And the smile comes because the presence is so peaceful and beautiful. And it knows that that person also, their essence is also that presence.

So you allow the, you listen to the words, but they, instead of being drawn into that mindstream, you allow it to go through you. So to continue to have your awareness in your inner space while you are engaged in listening. So it's the, so that I would almost say at least more than 50%, if one could even quantify it, more than 50% of your attention, 70% of your attention needs to be in the energy field of presence, your stillness, and then you listen from there.

Then it's not draining to listen. But if you listen with, then it draws you, it draws your attention and you link into the other person's mental stream. Your mental stream unites with the other person's stream and then you get dragged along.

So that almost looks as if you were a little detached and I don't know if detachment is the right word, perhaps it is, but detachment is a, limits it because you're not only detached, you're on a deeper level, you are more at one with that person than you could ever be on the mental level. So on the mental level, there is some detachment, but on a deeper level, there is a sense of some, there's the unifying field of awareness that is there between you of presence. So there's no separation.

Yes, attachment on one level, detachment on one level, but on another level, there's the realization of oneness beyond the conceptualized identity. It's again, it's a practice. It's an art.

[Speaker 2] (9:09:29 - 9:30:19)
This is not a conventional meditation. You can do that by yourself easily by using a meditation method and focusing the mind and coming still. I haven't planned this session at all.

So I have no idea how it's going to unfold. It's much more interesting and alive. I'd like to mention for those of you who are new to this, to be aware as you sit here and listen and watch, to be aware that I don't talk continuously.

There are short gaps in between words or sentences. And as part of our meditation, please just notice that there are gaps when I don't speak. Notice means pay attention.

Just note, oh, one could even say the gaps are more important than the words. You need a certain alertness to notice the gaps. I could say what you notice is the silence in between words or sentences.

And to the mind, the thinking mind, that is something silly and absurd because the thinking mind is mental noise. So it doesn't know what to do with silence. It's not high on your list of thinking minds, your list of priorities.

And the thinking mind says, I've got other things to worry about than silence. But that's the problem. It worries a lot.

The thinking mind is not ever silent. But to find that dimension is very important. I would even say the most important thing.

Now, what happens inside you when you notice the silence between words, the gap? You become silent. When you notice that there's a silence, a silent space, like now, in that moment of noticing, whether it's two seconds or five seconds, in that moment of noticing, you're not thinking, but you are conscious.

And that's meditation, to be conscious without thinking. In addition to noticing the silent gap, gaps, you could also become aware that you are breathing. The breath flows in and out, flows in and out.

So it may help you to be aware, not only of the silent space, spaces, where it's only ever one space because there's only the present moment, to be aware of the one space, the gap between words. It may be helpful while you're aware of that space to be aware that you're breathing also, you're breathing. You feel it, sense the air flowing in and out.

So there's a knowing in the background that's not thinking, a conscious presence, but you're not thinking. It's vitally important to be able to access that dimension, not just when you sit and say, okay, now for the next 10 minutes, 15 minutes, half an hour, one hour, I'm going to do my meditation. That's fine, can be very helpful, but it's more important to access that dimension in everyday life.

That's stillness in a word for it. And in that stillness, you are there, but not the historical you, the person that thinks about his or her problems and fears and desires in the past and the future. It's all connected in a stream of thinking.

Me and my life, think about that. Think about who I am as defined by thinking, the judgments about myself, things I'm proud of, things I'm ashamed of, things I regret, things I'm anxious about might happen. All that usually gives you your sense of who you are.

But when that comes to a stop, there's a cessation in that stream of thinking that usually provides you with your sense of identity. Then, now, you become aware that there is another dimension of consciousness in you that's, one could say, deeper than thinking. One could say, higher than thinking.

Awareness, presence, stillness, spaciousness. And you can sense that there is something there that has no form. When you think about your life, your problems, your anxieties, so on, so on, it's all form.

Every thought is a thought form. And yet there's another dimension in you that most people don't know about that is formless. One could say you become aware of your own, your being, your beingness, your presence.

When there's a moment of no thought, is there nothing there anymore? Well, there is undoubtedly a conscious presence left, the light of consciousness. And that is you, more essentially than the story of your life.

That is the universe of which you are an intrinsic part, the universe becoming aware of itself. It's conscious. You are conscious.

And suddenly you know that you are conscious. You sense that consciousness, that presence. That underlies everything.

Your entire order of thinking couldn't happen if you were not conscious. You couldn't have any emotions if you were not conscious. You couldn't have any sense perceptions if you were not conscious.

It underlies everything. It's the foundation for everything. It's the one thing that is totally beyond any doubt.

And maybe your entire life is a kind of dream, could be. So you can doubt the absolute reality of your so-called life. What you cannot doubt, because the evidence for it is here and now and immediate, what you cannot doubt is that you are conscious.

The essence of who you are is that presence, that consciousness. I want to leave aside today for our meditation the question that may have arisen in your mind, whether the brain, the physical brain, produces consciousness, or whether the brain receives consciousness, like a radio receives the signals and translates them. I would suggest the second is the case, but we don't need to explore that here now.

Our session here is practical and direct. We don't need to go at the moment into abstract speculation of philosophy, although it's interesting. The fact remains that that presence that's there is the essence of who you are.

Most people are not aware of their own presence. They are only aware of what arises in that presence, in that consciousness. Sense perceptions, the look, the hear, the touch, thoughts, and emotions.

Those are the things that arise in that light of consciousness. So, most people's attention is completely absorbed by those things. So, they're totally drawn into, identified with, those three things that constitute your so-called life.

Sense perceptions, thoughts, and usually sense perceptions are perceived through the filter of your thoughts, which are conditioned by the past. So, you don't really see that clearly. Sense perceptions, thoughts, feelings, emotions.

So, that is your life, it's a kind of hypnotic state. It's like going to a movie, see it in the cinema, and you watch it, what's happening. You're on the screen, and you're completely drawn into it, and you forget yourself completely.

Identify with the characters, or with one of the characters. And that's how most people live. They live in that, oh dear.

Sometimes, almost accidentally, moments arise when thinking subsides, and they go, and they perceive, but they're not burdened by sense perceptions. Sometimes spontaneously, that spaciousness, or stillness, or presence can arise, and suddenly life feels good. It's good to be alive.

There's a joy, an intensified sense of aliveness.

[Speaker 1] (9:30:54 - 9:49:58)
The French writer, Albert Camus, wrote this one sentence, that's the best sentence he ever wrote, because it's based on a spiritual realization. And he wrote, in the depths of winter, I finally learned that there was in me an invincible summer. And obviously, winter and summer are used metaphorically.

I finally, in the depths of winter, I finally learned, finally means, he spent quite a long time in the depths of winter. I finally learned that there was in me, or maybe he said there is in me, because that is the timeless. If he didn't say is, he should have said is would have been even better.

In the depths of winter, I finally learned that there is in me an invincible summer. And of course, summer refers to the inner state of transcendence, of spaciousness, where a sense of aliveness, a peace, not an asleep peace, but a vibrantly alive peace, emanates, and goodwill, lovingness, a sense of connectedness, all emanates from that transpersonal, to use that word, transcendent, perhaps, but it's transpersonal too, because it transcends the person. This was the entire, our days here, that's the essence of what this is all about, as you know, the realization of the transcendent dimension within yourself.

And so, you live, your life is then a balance between dealing with things on the personal level, being a person, using the person, it's a, it's your form, identity, it's fine, you have to honor that also. It has its shortcomings, and you become compassionate with that. I, my form identity has lots of shortcomings, not answering emails is only one of them.

But they are, those shortcomings, once you connect with the deeper dimension within yourself, they are not seriously dysfunctional anymore, in the sense that they would create suffering for yourself or others. But there are certain idiosyncrasies and things that could be better, and perhaps you can improve on the level of form, there are many things you can do, but if you add something here, you might lose something there, so it's never, you're never full, that, that completion on the level of form is just not possible, and not necessary. And there's always something else you can do, to explore, to acquire, to learn, and yet the essence of you is already absolutely complete, and you don't need time to be yourself, you already are yourself, fully, on the level, on the formless.

I call that essence identity, your form identity, your essence identity, the invincible summer, in this sentence by Camus, okay? That metaphor refers to the, your essence identity. The winter is the suffering that the form identity undergoes, but if he hadn't spent a lot of time in the depths of winter, as he calls it, he probably wouldn't even have found the invincible summer in him.

And just as many of you, if you hadn't spent time in suffering, and had not had deep challenges, you wouldn't even be here. I know I wouldn't. You, one thing you need to be careful about, the moment you start to speak, you remember last night, we looked at ways of interacting to bypass the mind, which quickly can bring up the ego.

The ego is mind-based, a mind-based sense of identity, and we saw these video clips where people just looked at another human, so you bypass all that, so it's easier, if you're not even engaging in any dialogue, so you're not even attempting to connect on the conceptual level, which can quickly, completely pull you into that dimension of thought, and back into ego. The moment you completely identify with the thought, it becomes part of your ego. Thought in itself is not ego, it's just thought.

Complete identification with a thought that arises would be part of your ego. Emotion is not ego, but complete identification with an emotion that arises will become part of your ego. So the ego is complete identification with form, which in this, and the primordial form is thought form.

Of course, the ego also identifies with a physical form, but more importantly, underlying that is identification with thought forms. So the danger is, yes, to be present when you are not being challenged by other humans, and interacting with other humans on the verbal level, it's easier. The challenge comes the moment you start to engage in a conversation with someone, and then the challenge is to have some of your awareness in the underlying awareness, stillness, to be aware of that underlying spaciousness, so there's not complete loss of stillness, even while you speak.

That's a skill you can, it requires vigilance to see that you are not dragged along with a mind stream as soon as you start to open your mouth and words come out. So you can, you're very present, and then somebody says something, and then you're, well, well, and you're gone. And then it gets worse, because the other person has a slightly different opinion, and then it amplifies your mind stream, and then what it's all, you're just totally in your form identity, and something is terribly important now, something has become so important, much more important than anything else, like your essence identity just, it's disappeared completely within three minutes, two minutes, it's gone. Because there's a, there was, for example, there was a difference of, slight difference of opinion that became so important, you needed to show that your viewpoint is absolutely the right one, and then all your energy flows into that assertion of yourself, ego, you don't know it, it's the ego, you want to, the opinion doesn't really matter, I mean, who cares if you are right or he is right, it's just a game of thought, and it makes no, in most cases, it makes no difference to any situation, but it is the desire of the egoic identity to assert itself, and to emerge victorious. It's unconscious, it's an unconscious movement, but you can see that even in relatively insignificant exchanges between two people, even if the viewpoint slightly differs, there's a force behind the way in which you express your mental position, your viewpoint, it's not just presenting

your perspective, your viewpoint, or your mental position, if you are vigilant, it's of course much easier to observe in another, you can start by doing that, the force behind what people say is completely superfluous, unnecessary, but there is, so there is another dimension, this is not just what people are saying, they are, they may be doubting what you've said, and they express, it's not just that, because that in itself would be a neutral thing, it's a neutral, you put forward your perspective and said, I believe your viewpoint is not quite right, here's mine, but in itself, it's neutral, there's nothing, there's no egoic involvement, it's just that there's an awareness behind it, in the way in saying that the android data last night in the video clip, in the same way that he presented his viewpoint, there was no force behind it, because he's egoless, he's not human, he's egoless, so in that sense, there was no, there's no force behind what he said, he just presented clearly the situation as he saw it, and with humans, that is not, not easy, so it requires great vigilance, I'm always surprised when I observe humans interacting, my initials are ET, so I call them human, I'm always surprised when I observe humans interact, how quickly this, this force flows into what they say, so there's not just whatever their opinion is, whether they question yours, or whatever it may be, it's not just that in itself, it's completely harmless, but there is a force behind it, that as an, is aggressive in a way, even if it's not obviously aggressive, there is that element in what they say, why? Because it is a, you have identified with the arising thoughts, which means lack of awareness, awareness has been lost, or a better way of putting it perhaps, awareness has been obscured, or covered up, and all there is to you now, is that movement of thought, and therefore, you've identified with it, your consciousness has completely been hijacked by thought forms, and then you identified, and then you're really not defending, or any more your position, or you are fighting to triumph as an, as an form identity against the other, who has a slightly different opinion. So that is the, the presence, that has no form, that is a, something opens up within you, that is very deep, and far transcends your form identity, it connects you with something vast, it's not even something, it connects you with a great depth, and therefore, I often use the analogy of the ripple on the surface of the ocean, and every human being is that ripple, in this analogy, as long as the ripple is not aware of its true nature, it only knows itself as a little ripple, and it looks to other ripples for fulfillment, or wants to protect itself from other ripples, or to compete with them, or compares itself to other ripples, it's a very problematic existence, because it only knows the surface of reality, it's an entire, experiencing entire reality as a surface phenomenon, and continuously trying to find some kind of ultimate fulfillment, happiness on the surface level, through other ripples, or other situations that are also ripples, and it's frustrating to live as a ripple, because you're just a little, this little thing, and, and some ripples manage to get bigger, they might, they might gobble up a few others, and then they grow into a wave, in this analogy, it means, you have your private jet waiting nearby, it's a clear sign that you have grown into a wave, you're no longer just a little ripple, but you're just as short-lived as the ripple, and now you have to compete with other big waves, so it becomes problematic again, and a moment may come when the ripple, or the wave, suddenly, perhaps becomes frustrated with that surface existence, and says, hmm, is that all there is, that I can't take anymore, because things continuously, obstacles continuously arise, and there's always things that are unfulfilling, and even the most promising things that you enter into.[Speaker 1] (0:01 - 2:03:52)
Relationships, situations, places, all kinds, even the most promising things, there's always, sooner or later, some flaw appears in it. What's wrong with the world? Why is there always this not, this ultimate, the fulfillment is always kind of short-lived, because you're still on the surface, only.

And then the moment comes, hmm, and perhaps accidentally, or because another ripple close to you, who has gone beyond its mere ripple existence, says something, or you can sense something, and then perhaps for a moment, there's a cessation in the stream of thinking, without loss of consciousness, and the ripple goes, the ripple goes, oh, there's more to me than I thought. It doesn't know what it is, it doesn't have a name for it, but it can sense the depths, suddenly. And as it senses the depths, that is, suddenly the vertical dimension has come in, it's no longer just the horizontal dimension, there's the vertical dimension of consciousness, where there's only the present moment.

Past and future exists in the vertical dimension of reality, and there's a transcendent reality, there's the vertical dimension, and the ripple suddenly discovers that it is a manifestation, a temporary manifestation of something vast, and it is not separate from it, it is a manifestation of it. So it's no longer just a little ripple, it senses its origin. In Buddhism, and sometimes in Zen, you have strange expressions, your true face, before you were born, all kinds of expressions to point to it.

It discovers that it is the ocean, or it probably doesn't have a name for ocean, it discovers its connectedness to something transcendent, that transcends its ripple existence, and then gradually, that's the first discovery, and then it occasionally loses it again, but gradually it is able to have some attention in that depth, even when it is occupied with its surface ripple existence, and operates there, it does that, and yet there is a depth, there's a rootedness in being, and that transforms the way in which the ripple, we'll let go of the ripple in a moment, as you know, the ripple is you, the ripple existence then becomes no longer as problematic as it was before, a little bit more sane, the dysfunction that has created an enormous amount of unnecessary suffering, the reactivity that amplified every challenge that the ripple encountered in life, that amplified it and made it a huge thing, and then through reactivity, that challenge actually grew even worse, because you amplified it, well, the ripple, sorry, it's not, the ripple amplified it, it's easier, we can bypass the remnants of ego in you by talking about ripples, and then the ego doesn't feel offended, that's the power of parables and stories, so the ego doesn't realize that it's about me, so it listens to a story, and whereas before, the ego would have created a barrier, without knowing, it's a little bit like a sugar-coated pill, so you give to a child, and it tastes good, and then you swallow it, and then it begins to work, it's called, I believe it's called the red pill, before I forget, I would like to acknowledge all those people who are with us, not physically, but in other parts of the world, and apparently, if I look straight ahead, there's a, into the camera, then I can connect with them visually, it's nice to have you with us, wherever you are, whatever time it is where you are, of course it's the present moment, there may be more people there than here, but it doesn't really matter, I have a feeling that we may have questions and answers in this session, it's no more than a feeling, so we'll see, remember, being here in this environment especially, the sensory perception, not just visual and auditory, have you noticed that there's a fragrant scent in the air, a very wonderful freshness and scent, be aware of that, there's a breeze coming from the sea, you can feel it on your skin, so you have all the senses simultaneously, that should bring you into the present moment, can't do a lot of thinking when you're aware simultaneously of visual, auditory, tactile, and I suppose olfactory senses, very helpful, and have you noticed that there are quite a few ancient olive trees around here, which these must have been here, of course, before this was built, there must have been a olive groves or olive tree plantations here, and you can see that some of them are of an enormous age, what perhaps you may not know, I know it because I googled it, it is, olive trees can reach an age of two to three thousand years, so it's not impossible that you look at a tree here, it may be 2,500 years old and was a young tree when Socrates walked past it or sat or looked at it, or said what a lovely young tree that is, or some other ancient Greek philosopher might have already been sitting, leaning against this young olive tree and giving philosophical discourse, they have almost a presence, they have a presence almost like an old, even almost a personality in addition to an invisible presence, one last bit of information, there's a tree apparently on the Isle of Crete, not that far from here, that is supposed to be the oldest or one of the very few olives that is probably 3,000 years old, olive tree, that was 500 years before the Buddha, but that tree continuously lives in the timeless dimension of now, deeply rooted not only in the earth but also deeply rooted in being, if I start speaking now, there may be no end to it, so I won't say too much in order to allow time for questions in case any questions have still survived in you after being present here, some questions you may notice dissolve at some point because they're not important, because the mind had a curiosity, I wonder Eckhart, how many incarnations have you had, what did you have for breakfast, questions like that tend to dissolve in the presence, and other questions, an answer may suddenly arise from within you because you became still, there's a story of, I believe it was a British writer, Paul Brunton, I think it was, who in the 30s visited the guru spiritual teacher Ramana Maharshi at his ashram in India in order to, he was preparing a book on the spiritual teachers of India, the book was later published under the title In Search of Secret India, and he visited Ramana Maharshi, the guru at that time was not too well known outside his immediate circle, and he had a list of questions, very important questions for his book, so he came into Ramana's room and Ramana looked at him in a state of thoughtless awareness, and Paul Brunton looked at him, and he didn't ask a single question, all the questions dissolved in the presence on that particular occasion, that was the first time he met him, he may later have asked him questions, another little anecdote connected with Ramana Maharshi, the famous British writer visited the ashram, Somerset Maugham is his name, and again he was preparing a book, a novel that involved an Indian spiritual teacher, and just before he was to meet Ramana Maharshi, Somerset Maugham fainted, probably because it was so hot, so they carried him into a room and he was lying there on a bed, and when he came to, Ramana Maharshi was sitting there next to his bed looking at him, and he was confused, he didn't know what to say, and Ramana Maharshi said something like, silence is the best speech, and that was the end of that encounter, and later on in a novel called The Razor's Edge, Ramana Maharshi appears as one of the characters. This meditation period is always an opportunity to connect with who you are at a level deeper than the person, the surface self, and not only connect with, but realize that that deeper self is the essential self, and the person, which is the surface self, is the non-essential, temporary, conditioned, time-bound self. They are not entirely separate, the conditioned self, the person, of course, could not be without the deeper self, which you can sense at this very moment by becoming aware of the presence, or the life presence, whatever you want to call it, within you.

One way of doing it, as we sit here together, is to be aware of the spaces in between my words, and realize that when you're aware of a space, whether it's short or a little longer, at that moment, you are not thinking, you're simply present, like now. And you can then sense your more essential being underneath the surface self, which is the physical body and the mind, and emotions. No thought, no thinking, is the essential self, you can only become aware of it when thinking subsides, without you going to sleep.

Thinking subsides, and an alertness remains, an alert presence. One could almost say a kind of nothingness, and yet it is evident that it is only nothing in the sense that it is not a thing, it has no form, but there is clearly a presence there, which you can sense with your entire energy field. So you become aware of yourself as a space of consciousness, the sense of an underlying sense of aliveness, of beingness, which has nothing to do with your past or future, or who you are as a person.

And then you also may become aware that there is a presence that pervades the so-called external world, that the entire universe is pervaded by a sense of alive presence, although in you, so to speak, it becomes focalized, and in you, it can become aware of itself. Another way of putting it, of course, is to say that you become aware of yourself. And gradually then your daily life becomes interspersed with moments of presence.

That's how your life begins to change, which means the conditioned mind, with its habitual thinking, thought patterns, reactions, reactive patterns, mental positions, likes, dislikes, is no longer all there is to who you are. So you become deeper. The more your life becomes interspersed with the presence, you deepen.

It's not really the person that deepens, but the opening up of the dimension of depth in you, so the person remains the person. So it's a welcoming the challenges, we talked about it before, welcoming the challenges of everyday life. Without that, first, you wouldn't get the reflection of where you are at as far as your state of consciousness is concerned.

How upset do situations, how much power do situations and other people have over you and over your state of consciousness? How often do you get upset, irritated, reactive, and so on? That's a good reflection of how present you are.

Not, although this meditation is a wonderful device, a wonderful tool, but how deep you can go when you meditate is only a small part of the transformation of consciousness. You can't really tell the state of consciousness unless you go into normal life and then get reflections of yourself there. Human beings, it's not the case that humans either have an ego or are totally free of ego.

The ego manifests in human beings to varying degrees. Most humans have a lot of ego that determines their thought processes and their emotions, but a little bit of awareness also in between. They may still be capable of empathy, sometimes with a limited number of people, perhaps only as empathy with your family members or empathy with the people who belong to your particular group, your collective.

And there are, when you look at, you can see the, understand the ego more deeply. If you look at the extreme manifestations of ego that a certain percentage of humanity suffer from, where it's actually labeled as a mental disorder, then you see that many mental disorders are actually just a more extreme form of what is the normal egoic state. And when you see the normal egoic state in a more extreme manifestation, then you can recognize it also when it appears as a normal state.

An example of that is paranoia. Paranoia is the belief that there are people who are plotting against you, enemies who have spent most of their life following you or plotting against you. So it's a delusional system that is the result of the egoic state of fear on the one hand, because there's always fear in the background when you live through a false sense of self.

And so the mind tries to explain the fear and then it creates a story. And then you believe in the story. Secondly, another reason why the mind creates paranoia is to give itself a heightened sense of significance.

I am so important is the implication that the CIA has 55 people whose full-time job is to control, try to control me. Now I'm not saying that CIA don't, they don't, I'm not saying they don't do things, they do sometimes as you know, but I don't think they have 55 people or even one in my case that try to, who knows, I may be wrong. If you work for the CIA, please raise your hand.

But you can see if that is a story that your mind believes in, how important you suddenly feel. So sometimes paranoia arises because the egos need to enhance its sense of existence, its sense of significance, its sense of importance. And if life doesn't tell you that you are important, then you have to create a story that you are important.

And paranoia is one way of creating a story that gives yourself importance. There are slightly less extreme forms of that are people who believe, for example, believe they are great geniuses, but they are so, so superior to everything that they never even try to create or do anything because that's beneath them. So you can have, occasionally I've met people who tell me, oh, I'm a spiritual teacher too.

They tell me, oh, I see, that's great. Have you written anything? No, no, no, I don't write this.

The true teachings are all beyond words. I don't bother with that. Oh, that's fine.

But that gives you a sense of you are actually superior to most people, all these insignificant people who are so, in their sense, in their insignificance, they have to write books. Many stories that one creates to give oneself a sense of importance, stories that have, in the more extreme cases, little relationship with external reality. And then there is the talking about narcissus.

There's another extreme form of ego that when you look at it, you can see that it has all the elements of the normal ego, but greatly emphasized, and that's called narcissistic personality disorder. And people who suffer from that are totally obsessed with themselves, with their appearance, and the way they are perceived by others. They live for that.

They are totally incapable of empathy. In fact, they're hardly aware that other humans exist. They only see other humans through how they can help, how they can amplify their own ego.

So what they want from other humans is attention or other forms of so-called narcissistic supply. They are always looking to enhance their self image through being told that they are awesome, they're wonderful, they believe they know everything. The moment you question their opinion about something, they will become very angry and aggressive.

You see quite a few of them on Facebook. But there's still a human being underneath that dysfunction. It's just an extreme form of ego.

Nobody knows how many people suffer from narcissistic personality disorder, but the estimate is three to 5% of the population. Now, that means three to 5% of the population suffer from this very extreme form of ego. And perhaps you've all met somebody who can think of somebody to, oh, I wonder if that was my dad, or that was my ex-husband, my ex-wife.

Hopefully not your present husband or wife. So continuous vigilance so that you are there in the background as the awareness. When you become aware of your ego operating, it's not really ego anymore.

The real ego exists in complete unconsciousness, in complete identification. When you notice something in you that's egoic, with the need to be right, the need to be superior to somebody, whatever it may be, by noticing it, that means you are there as the observer, the awareness. So, strictly speaking, it's not even ego anymore.

Once you notice your ego, what you are noticing is a deep-seated pattern in you. And it's only really ego if you are completely identified with it and there's no awareness whatsoever. This mind-made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive.

To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation. Partners evolve sometimes at different speed, the evolution of consciousness, and some may not evolve for a while at all. So it's possible that suddenly the awakened consciousness comes into you and your partner remains where he or she is, and you go into enormous presence and aliveness and newness, and you still see he or she is still no change.

And then wait a little and see. It's quite possible that your state transmits itself. It says even the slightest degree of readiness in the other, the fact that you do not strengthen his or her mind anymore by opposing his or her mind, the vital thing, don't oppose the mind.

Can express your viewpoint without opposition. Something may happen, an opening may happen. Often it is, or it is possible that you may have to separate and it may be that this, the other partner will leave you because it is no longer satisfying to live with you without the drama.

The pain body, of course, many of you know about the pain body and hopefully not only know about the pain body, but have direct knowledge, immediate knowledge of your own pain body. The pain body, of course, is the favorite place for the pain body, which is the old accumulated pain, which is an energetic, almost an entity that lives in you, that lives on emotional suffering. It loves its vibrational frequency.

It thrives on relations, close relationships. That's where it gets its food, most of its food. There isn't much you can do with, if your pain body needs food, it can't do much when you go to the supermarket and only see the cashier for half a minute or one minute.

Even there, it could happen. I've been standing here for 10 minutes and you've been talking to this customer instead of serving me. But favorite place for pain bodies to renew themselves are families and intimate relationships.

That's their place. And so you will know your partner has a pain body, which occasionally takes them over and makes them say and do things that one could say they're completely out of character. Well, yes, it's unconscious.

It comes as a surprise when you've started living with a person and you've experienced their pain body after perhaps two or three weeks for the first time. And that used to be the big surprise when people got married. Nowadays, often people live together for a while before they get married.

So they already know that the other has a pain body. It's good. And you haven't committed yourself yet.

You can still get out. But what a dreadful thing when you have to, when you marry somebody, start living with that person, and two or three weeks after the honeymoon, a totally different person is suddenly there. A person who is in a deeply negative energy field, says hurtful things, misinterprets what you do.

You say, who did I marry? And you think this must be the real person. Maybe I married, this was all a disguise.

The real person is coming out now. That's of course not the case. It's not the real person.

It's the pain body. And where's yours? Oh, your partner's pain body wants yours, wants your emotional reaction.

Pain body is an emotional aspect of ego. It's part of the egoic consciousness. Pain body needs to be recognized in yourself and the other as it arises.

It's not usually there all the time. That would be dreadful, but it comes periodically. And then you go back to normal for a while, and then it comes back.

And so you need to recognize it, be there as the space for it, be the presence in the other and in yourself. Perhaps the most destructive thing in relationships is the pain body that people carry around with them, that takes them over and makes them, even sometimes people who are already awakening, they still periodically get taken over by their pain body and completely lose consciousness and then completely identified with that energy field. It uses their mind.

It rises up when the pain body needs to renew itself, feed on somebody else's reaction. It moves into your mind, and every thought you think is the thought of the pain body. It completely, the emotional energy field takes possession of your mind, which is probably, if you're not conscious, is probably problematic enough as it is even without the pain body.

But then the pain body rises into your mind, and then if you observe it in your partner, because if it happens to you, you can't observe it anymore, the presence is lost, but you can observe it in another more easily. Every word they say to you is the pain body speaking through them, as if an entity, and in a way it is like that, has taken possession of them and is now using their mind and speaking through their mind. You need to know that so that you do not react as if that were who they are.

So that is where a degree of compassion comes in when you recognize that they are being possessed at that moment by this entity called pain body. That helps to know it. But this entity is very cunning and knows exactly how to get an emotional reaction from you.

It will accuse you, blame you, mention, it knows your weakest points, and it will go in there and press all the right buttons until you finally go, and your own pain body has awakened, and you're in the grip of it, and you start shouting, and whatever form the pain body takes. Or you may be present enough so that you don't get taken over by your own pain body. But even being in the grip of the pain body, if you're awakening, if the new consciousness is arising, there is a good chance that at the back there is still an observing presence, and you are able to say to your partner, I think my pain body has just come up.

I can feel it. There it is. And if your partner's pain body has not come up yet, then he or she can help you to stay present with it.

You can address it, see it happened just at this moment when you said that, or that happened, that, and now I can feel it. Okay, let's stay with it. You may also point out to your partner that the pain body has come up when you observe it, and if you're lucky, there's still enough awareness there to recognize it.

But the pain body is very cunning. It may even be that your own pain body is coming up, and you're accusing your partner that their pain body is there. Whoa, very cunning.

And, of course, the interesting thing is if somebody says to you, there's your pain body, if there's a reaction, then he or she was right. What do you mean my pain body? If there is an open looking, you say, that's my pain body?

Okay, let me just feel into this. Then probably wasn't my pain body. Well, that's strange.

Didn't feel like a pain body, but maybe. We feel a certain aliveness pervading the body. It's very simple, but some attention has to go there.

Otherwise, you can't feel anything, which means you have to take some attention away from thinking. If you're fully in thought, you can't feel your body at all. You don't feel alive anymore.

Just abstractions. So the beautiful thing is, it's not only that your body loves being acknowledged and getting your attention. It's a very healing thing to do.

And most importantly, it slows down your thinking considerably, if it doesn't stop it completely. Because if you have your attention here, you can't have it there. And this is the embodied state.

It's quite nice. What you're feeling is not ultimately the physical body. It's already halfway beyond the physical body.

Qi, life energy. And I call that halfway between form and formlessness. It's a bridge.

Qi is a bridge between the formless dimension and the form. So it's wonderful to sense that. You can do it anywhere when there's enough room.

You don't need to focus on externals 100%. Have some attention in the body. Boredom disappears, for example, when you have attention in the body.

You're not bored. You actually enjoy feeling alive. And that can serve as an anchor for staying present.

And that can be one way of looking around at the world without unnecessary mental labeling. There's clarity of perception. And looking at the situations that arise in that clarity of perception.

And from that clarity of perception, you know what you need to do or what needs doing in that situation. It's a higher intelligence that you contact via the body, a higher intelligence than the quiet knowledge of the human mind. And then you know what to do.

So you have an insight or spontaneous doing. Or if there's nothing to do, being is enough. You can enjoy just being.

Sleepless nights are a wonderful opportunity for going into the body. I can't sleep. Why don't you do something useful?

Go into the body. And then you lie there and feel the aliveness. And before you know it, you've gone to sleep, perhaps.

And then you wake up in the morning. Perhaps you still feel a lingering sensation there in the body. And if you don't, as you wake up, put your attention into the body first before you start thinking about the day.

Or just a couple of minutes, three minutes, two minutes. It's a good start of the day to feel alive. It can't be a bad start of the day.

I'll tell you what a bad start of the day is, is listening to the news. It's a grounding, but not a heavy grounding. It's rooted in being.

Oh. Welcome to our Christmas meditation. Lots of people are joining us today from all over the world.

Let's start with a moment of silence. And so we can be aware of our breathing, breathing consciously in and out. I was reading the other day about something that happened at Christmas in the year 1914, in the middle of the first world war, when the soldiers, I believe it was in France or Belgium, the soldiers were in their trenches, French, German, British soldiers.

And then on Christmas Eve, the fighting spontaneously stopped. And the soldiers could hear from the opposing trenches singing of a Christmas song that everybody recognized. And that song was Silent Night, Holy Night.

And gradually they came out of their trenches. And in the area between the trenches, so-called no man's land, they shook hands, started talking to each other, exchanged gifts of food and other little items. And they sang together that song, Silent Night, Holy Night, each in their respective languages.

They talked to each other, showed each other photos of their families. And that became known as the Christmas truce of 1914. Somebody even wrote a book about it.

And then the superiors, the officers, the command in the command centers were informed that this was happening. And they said, oh, we must put a stop to this. Fighting must resume as soon as possible.

And of course, a few hours later or the next morning, the craziness, the insanity continued. And in a way, that event that happened spontaneously the instantaneous arising of ultimately is what is only sanity between human beings. That seems almost miraculous.

And the insanity seems almost normal. So if you believe that our present political discourse, not only in the United States, but also in other countries in Europe, if you believe that's crazy, then of course, just think back to the first half of the 20th century and the insanity of all that. So that moment and that song, which triggered it, that Christmas songs, Holy Night, Silent Night, brought about a shift in consciousness.

It didn't last. And that's an interesting song to me. That song embodies something that transcends anything cultural or anything belonging to any particular religion.

It transcends all that. Because the song Silent Night really embodies the essence of spirituality, which is inner stillness. It was composed in the early 19th century by an, was the lyrics were written by an Austrian priest in a village in the mountains in Austria.

He had written these lyrics a year before and then Christmas Eve arrived. And he had to present a piece of music in the evening service in the church. So he had the lyrics and then he went to the schoolmaster of that village.

I believe he was. And he, in the last few hours before this, the church service composed the music to it. And then that evening, they both performed it together in the church.

And then it's gradually over the years, it spread all over the world because human beings recognized something in that, that went beyond any particular culture or even religion. All of the words point to something specifically Christian, the birth of Jesus, the spirit that this song embodies goes beyond that it transcends or that it goes very deep. And so it was actually declared by UNESCO as something, I don't know what the official designation was, world, an intangible world heritage.

So in many ways, Christmas, of course, has degenerated into consumerism and so on. Although there's nothing wrong with buying gifts and giving gifts. That's a beautiful thing.

But it has degenerated into that. So it's important to rediscover the essence of it. In the English language, Christmas in English speaking countries, many people don't use the word Christmas anymore.

They call it holidays. The intention behind it, I suppose, is to not to exclude people who are not Christian. And I can see the reasoning behind that.

But there is something there that is of great value. And somehow, to me, the word holiday does not, although originally that word is also beautiful because it refers to a holy day, but it's been used in so many other contexts that it no longer really has that, does not carry that sense anymore of holy. But Christmas still has the Christ in it.

And that's a very interesting word. Christ. In English, it's pronounced when it's only in its by itself, it's been of course pronounced Christ, Christ.

It's usually associated with Jesus, of course. But we need to remember that Jesus, Christ was not his name, Jesus or Joshua was his name. Christ is a title that was given to him later.

In the same way that Buddha was not a name, it was a title given to somebody. And Buddha means the awakened one. And Christ means literally the anointed one.

It refers to anointing with sacred oil, which a holy person, you could do that to a holy person, you would pour sacred oil over them. It's the anointing. That is a literal meaning.

But I believe there is a deeper meaning behind that word. And I also believe it's no coincidence that Christ or Christ and Krishna, the deity, one could say in Hinduism, the most important figure in the Hindu tradition, those names are so uncannily similar. Christ comes from the Latin Christus, which comes from the Greek Christos.

And then we have Krishna, Christos Krishna. Now, is that just a coincidence? Or are they etymologically related?

I believe they are. And if it's just a coincidence, it's a very interesting coincidence with a deeper meaning. Because what that Christ refers to, in its esoteric sense, is a particular state of consciousness.

In mystical Christianity, that's called Christ consciousness. And in some traditions, even the term Krishna consciousness is used. And a similar term in Buddhism is called Buddha nature.

It refers, all these refer to a particular state of consciousness that is possible for humans to realize. Not to achieve, to attain, to acquire, but to realize. Why am I making that distinction?

Because that state of consciousness is not something that is not already here. That consciousness, which we could call the awakened consciousness, Christ consciousness, Buddha nature, is a potential that's already there, dormant in many humans, but already there. So you don't need to acquire it or go somewhere else or find it in the future.

It's a realization that within you, there is a deeper state of consciousness than the one that you experience mostly in everyday life. And that's the realization of, in mystical Christianity, it's called the realization of the Christ within. In Buddhism, it's the realization of your own Buddha nature, which is your deepest sense of identity, of being.

So you are, on the one hand, a person or a personality, and the kind of personality that you are is determined by your past, all the things that have contributed to the arising of that particular personality or person. And beyond this person, which consists of mainly of mental and emotional conditioning, beyond that, you are something deeper. And Jesus pointed to that in his teachings when he said to his disciples, disciples, you are the light of the world.

And somewhere else, Jesus also said, I am the light of the world. I believe the I am the light of the world is in the Gospel of John. You are the light of the world is in one of the other Gospels.

In other words, the essence of who I am, is also the essence of who you are. The difference between us, this is the implication. The difference between us is only that I know, I realize the essence of who I am, and you have not yet realized it.

That's the only difference. And therefore, Jesus also said, all the things that I do and greater things you will also do. So ultimately, we are one, the essence of who we are, Jesus said, is the same.

You just have to recognize or realize that essence within you. But how do you do that? Now, I could use examples from Buddhism or examples from Christianity that point to the possibility of realizing that dimension within you.

Let's look just at one saying of Jesus again, because this is Christmas, our Christmas meditation. Jesus talks about the kingdom of heaven. That's perhaps the very foundation of his teaching.

Seek and find the kingdom of heaven, which is within you. That's the foundation. Some people believe that love your neighbor as yourself is the foundation.

But I would suggest to you that that is not the foundation, because that cannot be a starting point. It is pointless to tell anybody who has not realized the essence within themselves to love their neighbor as themselves. They won't be able to do it.

Not for long, because if they have not recognized their own essence, they cannot recognize the essence in the other and realize that who I am in the essence of my being is one with who you are in the essence of your being. And when I realize that, then I love the other as myself. But I cannot tell somebody, you must love the other as yourself.

They live totally trapped in the mental emotional conditioning of their personality or their ego. They may want, genuinely want to be a better human being and try to love the other, but they will always fail again and again. And so the foundation is finding the kingdom of heaven that is within you.

And then as a consequence of that, you will love the other as yourself. In other words, it'll change your relationship with other human beings. There will be a goodwill, a benevolence coming into your interactions with other human beings.

Your interactions with other human beings will no longer be dysfunctional. The dysfunction that we see on every level, not only when we listen to the news, but in our personal lives, in every level, personal to collective, within nations and between nations. So what is this, the kingdom of heaven that is within you?

What does that mean? Well, of course they read it in the churches, have been reading it for a long time. And mostly it's been misinterpreted, although Jesus clearly said it is within you.

Christians traditionally have believed that it is somewhere else. It's going to come when you, when you die, you will enter the kingdom of heaven or it's come at the end of times. Or the kingdom of heaven and so on.

Disregarding what he said about, don't look for it here or there. You can't say, oh, there it is, or here it's over there. That's what he said.

It is here now. So that we can relax into being, let's go of the idea that we are doing meditation here. So let's get rid of the idea of doing anything right now.

Become comfortable with being. No next moment to look forward to or to fear. No past moment that you need to think about right now.

So the now is enough for being. Awareness of being implies transcendence of thinking, compulsive thinking. And if there are spaces in yourself right now where you're not thinking, just, then it's working for you and you're not doing anything.

What's left of you when you don't remember your past and are not thinking about the future? Because the future is always something that you think about, never an actuality. So what's left of you when you don't remember the past, don't refer to a memory of the past, don't think about the future, just this.

Now what is left is the essence of who you are. But you can't call that anything really. The being, perhaps, the presence, the space, the consciousness.

You can use all kinds of pointers. They're all just pointers. The light, the light of consciousness.

Becoming comfortable with that space in which there's no conceptual knowledge, just a presence, formless presence. You can't name it. The moment you name it, you give it form.

It is who you are beyond form. And it is deeply fulfilling. There's a joy in being who you are beyond the form as which you appear.

It's the joy of being, very subtle at first. At first you may not notice it as joy, it's just a space, a spacious presence. It is being.

In India called sat, it is consciousness. In India called cit, and it is joyful. The consciousness of being is joyful, ananda.

It's the Indian description of that state of realization of who you are underneath the form is sat, cit, ananda, being, consciousness, bliss, one single realization, not three realizations, one realization. And then in the truest sense of the word, you are enjoying yourself. Not in the superficial sense when people say, go and enjoy yourself, have a good time.

This is different. You're not having a good time, you're having no time. You're in joy in yourself, regardless of your life circumstances right now.

It's not your life situation, it has nothing to do with it. It's life itself. Something that may prevent you from dwelling in this beautiful realization and being consciously rooted in being is the compulsion to think, even when it's not needed at all.

When life would be more clear, more free, more enjoyable, more life without the interference of useless thinking. Thinking. Now in this world, in our culture, very few people as yet know about the possibility of not having to think all the time.

When they speak of not thinking or no mind, the word is used mindless, it means you're falling below thinking, becoming unconscious. And here we are going beyond thinking or rising above thinking. A few thousand people in different parts of the planet at this moment, transcending compulsive thinking.

In a few thousand human beings at this moment, a new consciousness is arising. Transcendence of thinking, presence, which is awareness of being, awareness of awareness, self-realization. And it's happening at this moment.

Nothing to do really with the person, the different persons that are here on the planet or this person or that person. The person has made room for this to arise. The person has become transparent.

The person being complete identification with thinking, an illusory identity, a form identity, short-lived form identity, me, the person. My personal past and my personal future makes me have to think about that. And here the person subsides, loses its density because spaces are rising in between thoughts.

In that space the person is transcended and something else flows through this form. The form becomes an opening for that. A little analogy, let's say you are an actor on a cinema screen involved in the usual personal dilemma, various dilemmas that are part of being a person who is unaware of the transcendent dimension.

If you're only a person unaware of the transcendent dimension then your entire life is a dilemma. The dilemma takes on different forms but it's always problematic, conflict-ridden. So let's say you're an actor on a film screen acting out preconditioned roles according to the script in your mind, which is the conditioning of your mind.

Of course the only reality an actor or any figure or anything that happens on a cinema screen is the light that is shining through the film in the camera. And what is perceived as persons running around the screen getting anxious about this and that are really various ways in which the light is being obscured that's behind the film in the camera. So let's stick for a moment to this analogy.

The various forms that you see on the screen are ways in which the light is being obscured. It's being obscured in different ways and so they are doing whatever they do. The only reality is the light.

That is what gives it life, animates it. Now we're coming to the end of the analogy but you're not quite there yet. Now the end of the analogy is say one or several of the figures on the screen are becoming aware of that light that makes up the essence of who they are in the midst perhaps of acting out the drama or the short-lived happinesses followed by unhappiness in the midst of all that they're becoming aware that in essence they are that light and the awareness is not a thought it's a realization.

And the very realization comes because there's a moment of not thought when they've stripped the learned script the conditioning of their mind a moment has made it parted and spacious awareness is there which is the light and suddenly they're no longer totally identified with the role they're playing. They're in touch with something that transcends the limitations of their role and their person and they feel that light that they are the light of consciousness in the background of their being as a spacious stillness or awareness and then they go about doing what they do perhaps for a while nothing much changes the conditioned script still being acted out but then they notice little changes happening even the script isn't is changing because space is there in between the lines and then the next line suddenly there's something new in it suddenly they say something that they themselves didn't know before something new fresh alive it doesn't conform to the script the conditioning of their mind and then perhaps where before they would have reacted to another character in the usual pre-conditioned way suddenly instead of the reaction there's a there's a space a non-reaction and something totally different happens so as the as they're becoming aware of their essential nature even the way in which they deal with the world of form in the way in which they are here as persons changes it's the end of our cinema analogy so this is very much what's happening here awareness of the transcendent dimension without that it's a little bit pointless to go on with just the limited conditioned actor or actress just again same thing being acted out the same reactions the same opinions and viewpoints and identification with mental positions and me and now of course the secret is to sustain that spacious awareness as much as possible in everyday life which means even when you do things here we are not doing anything we're just going into being now what happens when you start doing again doing includes thinking that's the primordial doing when you start doing again is there still an awareness of the background awareness so to speak of spaciousness presence you're doing here but not completely lost in it there's a while you're doing there's an awareness of being what is that awareness of being you're aware of yourself the fullness is consciousness aware of awareness you may be going through an awakening spiritually and when the ego comes in through the back door you begin to feel very superior to ordinary people who are not awakening on a collective level then as humans awaken there will no longer be completely pointless conflict between nations but it must begin with the absence of pointless conflict on an individual level the way in which you experience life is a kind of mirroring back to you your predominant state of consciousness so if you're engaged in continuous conflict and unpleasantness year after year with people if you're engaged maybe in countless court cases with all these nasty people who want something from you who are all if you find that when you talk about people you may find that the strange thing is that those people that you talk about they are always wrong and you are always right isn't that strange that's an if that is still the case with you you might have to it's very unlikely because you're here but you might just be when you talk to others to third people about others this this is what he said this is what she said and then he did this and then i said and then and he never did he should have but he didn't and if you find the strange phenomenon that you are always right and others are always wrong that's an important realization how is it possible i must be super human and in the eyes of the ego of course that's kind of the case because the ego which is that which is perhaps the major obstacle towards the realization of that deeper dimension in the the ego strives incessantly for some kind of superiority and so this is what you are condemned to when you have not yet awakened even to at least to some extent to the deeper essence of who you are the awareness the presence the stillness then you are in the prison of your own personality and it's not a pleasant place to be i sometimes watch people and they are so burdened with their personality so in the grip of that thing what is personality it's the sum total of their mental emotional conditioning from the past mental emotional conditioning mental conditioning means certain thought forms mind structures that become repetitive certain narratives concerning your life my life says the ego a certain narrative concerning my other people in my life what i did what they did to me my victories my defeats many things form the the egoic conditioned self and one important aspect of the egoic conditioned self is it it talks about my life all the time in the head and out aloud and my life is what concerns me obviously it's my life and what is my life it's a story in my head but they don't know that they think it's the reality but it's a story in my head it's a narrative it's the predominant narrative in my mind and it's a narrative through which i interpret everything that coming that i come into contact with it becomes a screen through which i interpret other people situations places events i don't know that because i am so identified with that mental emotional conditioning that it has become me it has become me and my life it's i don't know anything else that's the fate still of the majority of humans on the planet although they the minority that is awakening is growing it is still a minority most humans are still totally in the grip of their egoic self and probably most of you are moving still in and out of your egoic self this is usually how the awakening process happens sometimes you're drawn back completely into it and it it talks and and there's the search for superiority and you compare yourself to others and you need to be right right in any argument being right is more important than the truth and you're always right that's a good sign that there's ego so the egoic entity i'll just say a few more words about it because it can be very deceptive it can use you come back in sometimes through the back door but that i mean you may be going through an awakening spiritually and when the ego comes in through the back door you begin to feel very superior to ordinary people who are not awakening and now what does that mean it means and this is always ego there is a conceptual sense of self and you derive your identity you derive your sense of who you are from a conceptual mind-made self um if for example let's take myself in the the world tells me now you are a great spiritual teacher now 25 30 years ago so he didn't tell me that the world basically was saying who are you nobody nothing has changed if i walked around with an image of myself this is requires a lot of awareness because what i'm describing now has happened to some spiritual teachers the spirituality is only one example if i had a mental image of myself as a great spiritual teacher i would be lost again lost in ego and so anything that you do let's cut stick with spiritual detail some of you i know some of you are already spiritual teachers in whatever capacity perhaps you're your therapist perhaps you are working with people in some capacity and many others of you are destined to become spiritual teachers it's either directly or indirectly either formally or non-formally of course you're destined because the world desperately needs awakening and awakened humans and so a danger no matter where you are but right now we're just talking about becoming a spiritual teacher or being a spiritual teacher in whatever way anything that becomes a conceptual sense of self means the ego is coming back in through coming in through the back door and so is it not true then that at this moment i am a spiritual teacher yes but only in the sense that it's a function and while this function is happening right here now one i could say i'm a spiritual teacher but when i walk off this stage and out the door if i then carried a mental image of myself as a great spiritual teacher i would be walking like that and of course everybody else would be inferior in my mind and i without knowing it i would be walking around with a huge ego and sooner or later the ego would contaminate or obstruct my ability to teach it could contaminate the teaching with egoic falsehood or it could completely block the intuitive teaching that happens when you which means the ego when you get out of the way when you get out of the way something that transcends the limited you i call that sometimes the surface eye that gets out of the way and then the deep eye emerges as the unconditioned consciousness and it can use your mind and that's the way to ultimately use your intelligence in a way that no longer puts the intelligence in the service of madness so spirits being a spiritual teacher is a function when i when i go away from here i need to immediately relinquish the mental image a narrative in my mind that tells me who i am that is a conceptual sense of self but of course this not only applies to spiritual teachers it applies to anybody in any situation where do you derive your sense of self from what is it that gives you your sense of self i know of course it on a on a purely surface level spiritual teacher works it so can solve problems when you can tell a person who says what do you do you could say this and that usually i don't say spiritual teachers if i go to a foreign country and sometimes at the border or at the airport a custom thing what do you do why are you here and usually i say i'm a writer i'm an author okay that solves the problem i don't go into i don't advise you to do it either saying i have no conceptual identity they probably won't let you in we don't want people who have no conceptual identity all morning i've been looking for something that i lost i wonder if you know what it is i don't know if i found it or not i've been suggesting various ways of becoming present stepping out of the mind for the first part of our questions i'd like to invite you to address specifically what we've been talking about and that is your practice your ability to step out of thought into awareness into presence or your inability or whatever what obstacles you encounter or whatever your experience is of practicing of being present rather than involved in thinking so this faculty one could say there is a dormant faculty in everyone that is just waiting to come to life in you it has already awakened this faculty and that is the faculty of being aware being present it's like it's been waiting inside humans for thousands of years like an egg incubating inside the collective human consciousness and that's the potential for the next leap forward i'm talking almost like mouths i don't but this is the that was a pseudo leap forward it didn't quite work the great leap this is a now humans are ready not all humans but we are beginning to be ready for for this faculty to come out of its dormant state and actually begin to grow and blossom so for the first part of our questions and answers uh i'd like you to specifically address questions that are to do with stepping out of thought how you what is your experience with that good or bad maybe if it's not a question i'd also like to invite anybody who wants to just simply briefly not don't need no need to go on for 10-15 minutes but briefly just share your your experience of are you one question that i'd like to i'm wondering how how it is for you whether you're already able to by choice step out of thought and simply take your attention out of to the word we could use is reclaim the reclaim your attention your consciousness from where it has been for a long long time in always in thought reclaim it and so that you suddenly have the consciousness in its undiluted unconditioned no form that the formless unconditioned undiluted consciousness so the impractical terms it's the ability to simply relinquish when you're when you wish to to really relinquish thought and that is the ultimate renunciation all the other renunciations are really substitute for that now i'm going to renounce coffee well that's fine but there's some more important more fundamental this is lemon and honey and hot water by the way can't get it at starbucks the renunciation of thought is also the renunciation of ego because without thought ego immediately dissolves so it is a big renunciation it is not just the renunciation of thought because it wasn't just thought there was an entire mind-made entity involved in thought the self so it is not just a renunciation of thought it is a renunciation of the entire false self that for not throughout your entire lifetime but many lifetimes has claimed to be you

[Speaker 7] (2:03:55 - 2:03:55)
uh

[Speaker 1] (2:03:58 - 2:16:16)
and so no matter what you renounce if you're a spiritual person they may practice different kinds of renunciation and very often you just exchange one thought-based entity for a slightly different one so if you indulge in alcohol and sex and orgies for a few years and suddenly you get tired of it and you say i'm now going to be a spiritual person i'm done with all that and then you you live a very pure life no more substances uh celibacy no more wild parties and you get up at 4 30 every morning for three hour meditation and you begin to feel very good about yourself and but it's very very cunning this little this egoic entity because without knowing it you may have exchanged one egoic entity for a more subtle one and the more subtle one is um your sense of self has now become a spiritual one me the one who has become pure me the one who has renounced as opposed to all these others who are still drinking coffee and then you can walk starbucks and feel very superior let alone bars and nightclubs so again you have an a mind-based entity the me the self because you haven't renounced it's kept going by identification with ideas in your head about who you are and you can get together with other spiritual people and then you can strengthen that idea you can mutually strengthen the idea of who you are and then you get a group egoic group identity um it was very comforting you feel really oh now i know where i belong and it's i'm not saying don't go to any spiritual group there's just a danger in that that you then partake in the collective egoic entity which is usually becomes revealed because it starts to reject others oppose others to define its own collective identity more clearly so you find many spiritual groups actually believe they are the only ones who really have got it they are the only ones who are really in possession of the truth and

all the others are not in some more extreme forms of that you are the only ones who are actually going to be saved the rest of humanity is going you are we've all seen these these are collective egos that develop when you join a group it may not be that every group falls into that trap but most of them do and why again because they derive their sense of identity and now it has shifted from a personal sense of identity to a collective sense of identity at first when you look at the individual that makes up the collective it looks as if the individual had become free of ego because he's totally free of the personal sense of ego he has totally identified with the collective ego and of course as i might have said before if there's one thing that's more insane than the personal ego it's the collective one political parties it's not just spiritual groups religions little groups within churches within religions they are that disregarding others of the same religion as evil they're the same religion and you might even want to kill them that's what happens on a daily basis if you're listening to the news within the same religion it's a different this group they call themselves this because they have some different beliefs of what once happened hundreds of years ago others don't quite agree with those beliefs of these things that happened a few hundred years ago they believe in somebody else all insane it's more my stuff it's all just thoughts so they haven't renounced anything they could have the most pure lifestyle they haven't renounced the most basic renunciation which is identification with thinking so and the collective ego it's just unbelievably can be unbelievably insane it can also cause the individuals that make up the collective to do things that as individuals they would not be capable of doing in the service of the collective they can go out and kill people it's happened even i mean nations do it look at 20th century history of the 20th century one nation is a it becomes a huge ego just so you can see how vital it is to renounce but foundation the the true renunciation is thought that's that is the true shift without that you can play around for many lifetimes am i spacious to even ask the question can immediately bring about that opening of the moment of cessation of thinking because to check within your attention goes am i spacious well it's almost inevitable that after asking the question you are spacious because after the question mark there is an inquiry non-conceptual there is a looking there is a field of attention that arises and you go am i spacious yes now probably before you ask the question you were not so you remembered to ask the question because something was going on you were upset about this or that or stressed or anxious or many of the so-called normal states and so then suddenly you are spacious it's so easy a little space opens up and then you remember no matter how important the things of the world or your world pretend to be nothing is more important than being spacious another version of this question refers to relationships whether it's an intimate relationship or whether it is just a short or superficial relating is there space in this relationship is there space in the relationship between yourself and your partner or family member or whoever it may be a friend so again all related without the space it gets taken over by stuff without the space your life gets taken over by stuff

[Speaker 2] (2:17:24 - 2:18:00)
so another good practice is when after you just do something anything whether it's even getting into your car once you get in instead of getting in and turning on that engine right away and putting it in drive and go just get in and just take a break just a moment just one moment and become still so the practice is keep coming back in keep coming back inward to draw your attention inward okay

[Speaker 1] (2:18:22 - 2:35:14)
we're talking about identity which is the most fundamental thing just where where do you get your sense of self from this is the most fundamental thing in your life because if you derive your sense of self from a fiction in your mind which ultimately is what the ego is your whole life will reflect back to you that this is a fiction and it will color all your experiences it will create a neediness it will create all kinds of emotions that are completely unnecessary that are manufactured by your mind and the identity in the mind that we call the ego the almost like a

little entity that doesn't want to go away it wants to i want to suffer a bit more i need my enemies i need to complain what can i complain about now well why does he talk so much he's been going on talking for so long i can't stand it anymore so the words are pointing to something in you if you then of course you cannot undo your personal history of course you remember your personal history and you there's your life situation everybody has a life situation you have relationships you have a work situation probably or you or you have lost your job then you don't have a work situation but that's similar you have a living situation you have a health situation you have a relationship situation a huge source of suffering and occasional happiness those things make up your your life you have those situations but is that all there is to who you are so you need to to be free you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation the essence your essential being is the aliveness of presence consciousness and you can only get that in the gap between two thoughts this is why stillness is an important point pointer to it stillness does not mean you fall asleep it could mean you fall asleep because humans the habitual level where humans exist is thinking then the only time when you are free of thinking is when you fall asleep if you haven't awakened yet when you move towards sleep thinking gradually slows down when you get very sleepy there's very little thought going on in your head and you go and you might even like that because suddenly you can't remember what your problems are anymore and you feel the pull of sleep which is so delicious what we call tiredness it's it's so normal we accept it but if you really look at what tiredness is something absolutely delicious is pulling you to come this way you must come this way it's so delicious and at some point even if you're trying not to go there the attraction attraction of that place becomes so overwhelming that you have to go there and in the last moment when you still have some consciousness you feel ah even if you were out in the cold and know if i fall asleep i'm going to die in the last moment you would still feel the deliciousness of going ah it would the rest wouldn't matter anymore you're moving towards the source you're moving to to regenerate you're moving but you don't know it anymore you're moving below thought towards sleep another way of moving below thought is having a few drinks and that can free you for some people it frees you it frees them of their unhappiness and they become jolly suddenly suddenly they can enjoy life because they're not thinking much anymore they're just it's a way of being present too in some way and then you think i need another one because if i feel jolly now i'll be even more jolly with the next one but that's not the case because the more you drink the more you move towards unconsciousness so you're falling again you're falling below thought until finally you fall off the chair so we are not going there below thought yes that can free you also but as we awaken spiritually as consciousness awakens in us universal consciousness awakens in us we become conscious of being conscious and the moment you are conscious of being conscious you have risen above thought and you are still you have transcended thought which means you're able to think but you're no longer trapped by it or in it you're no longer at the mercy of your thoughts you can use them they can still operate but you can also by choice and this possibility is coming to many of you already and to many more of you i would say after this evening to realize it is possible for you and even desirable in many many instances to transcend thought and simply be aware that is by the way the state of that is the entire teaching of zen is contained in this it then teaches you that you can rise above thought become free of thought and just be aware this is why the zen master often looks so fierce because he's in that fierce awareness and he goes in the old drawings of zen masters or they might one zen master when asked please explain zen he would the only thing he would ever do was raise his finger and look at you that was his teaching and became famous famous teacher some people got it others didn't if they didn't get it they said please explain zen to me and he would go and some people went wow and others didn't get it they said did you hear my question there's in zen for those of you who are interested in zen or might even have spent a decade in a zen monastery there is nothing to understand in zen you cannot understand zen because there is nothing to understand zen is about transcending thinking not falling below thinking but rising above thinking this is why that is then oh oh now many of you especially after this evening will discover in yourself the ability to step beyond thought when you don't want thought not perhaps always sometimes the challenge is maybe too much and you fall back into thought for a while it's fine but from time to time and you can actually invite it into your life in many many situations that are relatively neutral step out of thought and lose the illusion that in order to hold your life together you need to think all the time about you and your life and if you stop thinking about you and your life it's all going to fall apart it's not going to it's going to fall apart if you overthink which most people do overthinking is a disease overthinking means you are completely identified with thinking you are in fact addicted to thinking a lot of which is not only completely unnecessary but actually harmful to your health to your well-being and to other people it's harmful to you also because you're making yourself unhappy through it and if you are making yourself unhappy the chances are that you're making other people unhappy too so overthinking identification with thinking that is all part of the unconsciousness the old or the old consciousness as i call it now there a certain percentage of humans has reached a point of readiness where they are able to transcend thinking become aware of themselves as awareness as presence as consciousness and that becomes their sense of identity or sense of self their presence it doesn't need there's no longer any superiority or inferiority in it there is in it a recognition when you now look not just the dog it's easier with a dog or the baby but when you look at another human being and you can you're not trapped in the conceptualizing judgmental mind you are looking at another human being and you can sense the the background to your perception of this other human being the sense perception you may be looking and may be listening the background to your sense perception is the space of awareness you're looking as a conscious presence and not as a person at this human being because for a moment your mind is still while you're looking and listening or just looking at another you into the eyes of another human being you either somebody close to you or somebody you only meet casually in a shop or whatever but for a moment you're looking and there is a recognition at that moment when you know yourself as consciousness the wonderful thing is you recognize that essence in every other human being or any other living thing and that recognition you recognize that there is something of the same essence that is in you also in the other and you are able to so to speak look through the personality which is there which manifests through their words whatever they are saying the conditioned personality which is their mind their egoic mind that of course will be there but you're able if you are still and present you can look at them and and then for a moment you sense their essential beingness or consciousness because you know your own consciousness and that's the one the recognition of oneness and it is only there out of that state of consciousness that that which frees you from eternal conflict with other humans which is ego condemns you to it is only that that can free you from the eternal conflict and out of that emanates that which makes you truly human or more than human almost empathy a loving kindness towards another arises this mind-made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive to be free you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation i don't know if anybody still experiences that he awake you wake up at two or three in the morning and you're thinking and it's not pleasant it's about my problems and if you then suddenly you discover the futility of it and then you also have a choice at that moment you have a choice and then you can say i choose to place my attention on the inner energy field of the body and from one moment from one minute to the next you're suddenly you enjoy being awake at night and feel the intense aliveness in every cell of the body that's one simple way it's a kind of meditation practice it's one simple way of taking attention away from thinking when it you realize it is not only futile it's also destructive so that's a and that needs to be then practiced in a day if you have a meditation period that's wonderful of course daily meditation period but in addition i always recommend mini mini meditations throughout the day which could be a simple thing as taking two or three conscious breaths while you're waiting for the elevator or do something consciously with full attention that usually you do unconsciously something anything that is usually a means to an end make it into an end in itself washing your hands be totally present you're getting out of your mind walking down a few steps be totally present rather than needing to get to the bottom be there in every step so little mini meditations gradually help you to disidentify from the movement of thought so that's i would this is what i would recommend to our questioner and to anybody else who is still burdened by their minds or tortured

[Speaker 5] (2:35:14 - 2:36:34)
by their minds so for those of you who like formulas here's one stop okay it's an acronym s stands for stop t stands for take three deep breaths as Eckhart just told us to and while you're taking those three deep breaths smile everywhere in your body from head to toe o stands for observe observe your body as you said and p stands for proceed with love and kindness we break the break the response okay so it's it's nine o'clock and our live stream is ending so i want to bring wayne we don't want to lose this opportunity at least um so you know i've known wayne now for 25 years we've grown up together he just looks a little older but we are brothers

[Speaker 1] (2:36:58 - 4:11:46)
what else is absolutely essential that you don't learn at school well it is also connected with awareness and that is awareness of your thoughts if you do not learn that you can be aware of your thoughts then you are trapped in your thoughts and by your thoughts and that is the fate still of many millions of humans on the planet they are so identified with their thoughts that that's all they know of the world and of who they are so there is a dimension of consciousness in every human that is beyond the thinking mind and why don't they teach that at school it's so basic and simple so you can think a lot of the time you think many humans think almost without interruption they have a voice in their head that never stops talking in other words thinking and yet there's the possibility of realizing another dimension of consciousness that's one could say it's behind all your thoughts or it's a canvas for your thoughts or can say it's the space in which your thoughts arise and into which your thoughts subside whatever you call it it's the dimension of awareness or presence and we live in a civilization that has been one could almost say being completely taken over by thought by mental concepts and there's been a loss of a tragic loss of that deeper dimension that is in every human being in that sense it you do not need to achieve it you only need to discover it there's a big difference between achieving and discovering to achieve something you need time obviously but to discover some discovery is of something that is already here so you discover that dimension of consciousness in you that is awareness in between two thoughts for example at this moment when i stopped speaking and then i speak again so there was a gap and that gap was you were just aware and it's happening again in that gap if you are alert you are not thinking in these these gaps you notice you're conscious but you're not there's no conceptualization and again now and this is so natural and so but so vitally important to have to be in touch with the dimension to be rooted in that dimension uh it's amazing that it it is not common knowledge that that this is the most vital thing that there is in any human life the great teachers pointed to it it's the the emptiness of the buddha the kingdom of heaven of jesus that is within you here now different words and it can happen naturally it's perhaps more likely to happen when you look at something natural again a tree the sky in the first moment of looking at the sky in the first moment of looking at a landscape or at a tree or at a flower you may find in the first moment of looking you're not conceptualizing it there's two or three seconds when there's just sense perception and an awareness of the sense perception look at the sky two three seconds then usually the mind comes in and says something about it it conceptualizes it that's fine but kept if you can catch so to speak always the first moment when something arises in your in your sensory field sensory perception catch the first moment and then you will notice for brief two three seconds there's no conceptualization you're just there's a perception but what is behind the perception awareness the light of consciousness without which there

would be no perception so you know whenever you look at something new or you begin or there's a sound that suddenly arises and you may not know what it is so you have to listen carefully a sound is arising the mind may want to interpret it but in order to first you need to be alert and listen and there's a sound and for the first two or three seconds the mind is not saying anything about it because there's only the perception of it then comes the interpretation uh now if you are completely trapped in the conceptualizing mind these these moments are so short when you're just perceiving you're hardly aware of it and whatever you're almost immediately labeling it or you're not even aware of it or just peripherally aware of it because all your attention is absorbed by the voice in the head by the by mind activity so the there's a consciousness you are this consciousness the consciousness gives rise to thought in the same way that the ocean gives rise to a wave and that's fine it's been it's an incredible thing that conceptualization happened in human beings it was a an evolutionary step forward but there's great danger associated with it and the danger is that you lose yourself in it there's a power that came with focused thinking is a great power being able to memorize and anticipate and all these things are amazing we could make amazing things then science developed just as an extension of the of the human mind the focused application of human mind and that created new incredible things but then the something dangerous happened we we got increasingly we got taken over by that which ultimately is only an instrument and we got taken over by it completely so that many humans are basically in present in present in their minds which is the conditioned mind which is all the content of your consciousness conditioned of course by the past and most humans are still completely in present in that so you derive your identity from the movement of thought so you don't know who you are beyond the move whatever thought is telling you about yourself whatever the story of you is telling you about yourself that's where you derive your sense of self from and that's normal in this world but it's extremely limiting and then it happens that quite often certain thoughts invade your mind can easily happen so you your mind becomes colonized by certain thoughts that take over sometimes almost the totality of your mind and obsessive thoughts it can happen to individuals where your one obsessive thought suddenly takes over and then you perceive the whole world through the veil of one obsessive thought which has all the answers but it can also happen to collectives it can happen to a collective civilization that collectively certain thoughts arise in the collective and they invade every individual's mind and take over the way in which you perceive they perceive the world that can that happens for example with totalitarian regimes when wonderfully described in the writer who took it to an extreme or well described in 1984 where you get completely taken over you have a thought police you're only allowed to think certain things it's a collectively the collective mind becomes completely possessed by certain thoughts now thoughts are it's perhaps helpful to look at thought as they are little beings they are energy forms everything like you are and everything is an energy form and thoughts that arise are energy forms so imagine them as little little entities you can't see them they have a relationship with your physical brain but you can't see thought they're little entities that arise and there they come and one entity can act like a virus acts on a physical level which can invade the body and take over the body and live there as a parasite can even kill the body even you can also have a mental virus that enters your mind and then begins to proliferate and create thoughts that are in alignment with those with one central thought which may be a total delusion but you have one central thought attracts other related thoughts and you have suddenly a gross this you have a viral infection on a mental level now this can happen to individuals in one case and when it reaches a certain point this infection of a mental virus can be recognized as clearly disease a disease a insult insanity when it's but until it reaches this point in an individual we may not even recognize it as a mental illness a met complete mental dysfunction then it reaches a certain point and you can suddenly when you listen to this person saying let's for example in the case of paranoia then everything is interpreted as enemies are everywhere they're following me they're listening to me they're listening devices and they're going into my mind and the entire world is conspiring to to destroy me and follow all these it starts with one thought and then so your mind gets totally infected by thought this can happen to an individual it can also happen to a collective when the minds of millions of people or whatever number it may be become taken over by certain thoughts viewpoints or opinions and sometimes they can be very much divorced from anything that's real any reality but once you've taken being taken over you don't even know it you cannot nobody can question it because you have you are not really there anymore only the conditioned mind is there pretending to be you and so you cannot question it nobody it's if you believe if somebody came to me with a delusion and said they are what's what's a common delusion i am i am napoleon so their mind has been taken over by a delusion i wouldn't it is not wise to tell this person this is a delusion you're not napoleon or it's better to just to be present and to listen to that person not to say yes or no just listen that's how you experience the world and it may be possible to connect with that person so that a little bit of awareness comes in then that there's a possibility of healing and a little bit of awareness comes in but if you deny a delusion then there's there's immediately a disconnection so i don't talk about things that i perceive in this contemporary world as collective delusions there's no point the most important thing is to bring about the discovery of the dimension of awareness in humans and then that is how they become immune to the viral infection on a mental level so the only way you can become immune to being infected by all kinds of strange thoughts that come at you in these days through the devices that you have the media mainstream media social media and all these kinds of things or we are being flooded with thought forms continuously if you're not careful i highly suggest you reduce the amount of time you spend there and look at a plant instead or at the sky so the immune the the immunity the only immunity you have is awareness so that you're not taken over by thoughts and the otherwise the the ability to think even although you're still thinking but the ability to think rationally and it diminishes the more you get taken over by by dysfunctional mind patterns you can no longer deal with situations rationally and so you're on a downward slope so the important thing then is the realization that apart from thinking there's something a more vital in you and that is the dimension of awareness or presence from that dimension you can know what your mind is doing and the likelihood that you that you get taken over by certain thoughts decreases the more aware you become you still have thoughts of course you still have opinions which are thoughts you still have viewpoints political viewpoints whatever viewpoints you still have viewpoints but this but they do not give you your sense of identity anymore there are viewpoints and you may believe that this is the truth when the other viewpoint is not true but your identity is not no longer invested in it your sense of self because your sense of self has shifted to awareness you are consciousness and then you know the other the other human who holds a different viewpoint is no longer your enemy because your identity is not derived from your viewpoint your opinion your thoughts if your if your thoughts give you your identity then the others who hold opposite thoughts or very different thoughts become your enemy it's it's mad but that's how it is it's the basic human dysfunction which operates on a personal level and on a collective level so the most vital thing that to learn which again should be the very foundation of all of everything that is done at school is that there there is this dimension of consciousness in you that you can access and discover you can access it by becoming alert and observing your thoughts become aware of frequent thoughts that frequently go through your mind but most importantly becoming aware of yourself as conscious presence rather than as a mind-made entity so very often the practice to be engaged in is to realize that a lot of thinking that happens in your mind is not only unnecessary some of it is necessary and great but a lot of it is not only unnecessary but is actually destructive to your health your well-being your happiness a lot of thought is destructive of happiness of well-being of the ability to feel alive the ability to feel joy your ability to be creative a lot of mind activity is destructive so whenever you you're engaged in worrying worrying worrying is completely purposeless nobody has ever found a solution to a problem by worrying about it worrying means that you don't even want a solution you want to worry but when i say you at that moment you are your mind the mind has its momentum and the momentum wants to carry on the worrying thoughts don't want to cease they don't want to die they want to continue to be worrying thoughts so or other destructive thoughts when you have very you're deeply negative let's say you are trapped in deeply negative thought patterns and every therapist knows that often in therapy you reach a point where human being there's a possibility of going beyond and then the enormous resistance arises they don't want to go beyond because there's the thought patterns are they don't they don't want to die they don't they want to stay so worrying destructive thoughts useless thoughts it's what they take you come always out of the present moment that make it impossible for you to even appreciate beauty and aliveness around you that's always there so you you need to have some minimum of awareness to realize that this is what's happening to you oh in the middle of the night you wake up three o'clock in the morning anxiety rises why does it arise are you confronted with the problem you're in bed a relatively warm bed anxiety rises not being confronted with a problem but the mind is creating it the mind is creating the anxiety and so when you realize that you can then learn to let go of thought that is recognized as not only unnecessary but actually bad for you and everybody else around you you don't want it you don't need it but it but it has a momentum so how do you break the momentum of the thought it doesn't seem to want to get go away once you recognize it that you it has no useful function except to make you miserable so you've recognized that this thought pattern has no useful function but it's making me all the function it has it's pretending to be useful worry always pretends to be necessary but worry is not necessary it's unhelpful focused thinking you become still then you begin to think what is the situation what can i do about it this and this and this okay if i do that focused thinking that's great worrying is something very different completely unhelpful and self-destructive once you've recognized it you become free by first by recognizing its dysfunctional nature then direct your attention elsewhere it's a conscious choice and that's that's possible and it's not that difficult so you withdraw energy from the thoughts and energy in this case is consciousness you you withdraw the lifeblood of the thoughts which is consciousness and you direct consciousness somewhere else for example sense perceptions especially things of nature or breathing you become aware of breathing and breathing makes you aware of the inner body the that the the alive presence that that pervades your body but the moment you become aware of your breathing you've taken the lifeblood from thought and placed the attention the conscious attention into the inner body so you connect with the aliveness within and immediately thought begins to subside it cannot survive if you take away attention consciousness from it it then will try many times it will try to get consciousness back and so it will come up again the moment you you you you lose connectedness with the inner body or your breath it will try to start up again and then you have to catch it again so you and then you learn to keep thought at bay but not by suppressing it simply by being so alert and directing your attention elsewhere that it begins to subside so vital practice is to keep thought at bay when you don't you real you recognize it is unnecessary dysfunctional and creating that it creates a lot of unhappiness so that's a wonderful practice just take your attention into your breath you breathe into the body even down to the abdomen and out and breath awareness means you're no longer trapped in your mind you have taken attention away from the mind simple practice of breath awareness and breath awareness can take you into body awareness and the two can go together your awareness of your aware of your breathing and you're aware of that your body is alive and that becomes a single thing the breathing and awareness of the inner body and so and this when you discover that you have that power that that year you are more powerful than your mind it's a wonderful liberation to the discovery that that is not actually that difficult but you just have to know that you have that power to become free of dysfunctional thinking just breathe be feel it feel the aliveness that's who you are not the narrative in your mind that's consciousness the consciousness the end the intelligence that pervades your body that is consciousness that keeps the molecules of the body together for a while that's the consciousness that is a totality of who you are that's who you are not the story in your mind it doesn't matter on the level of the story that becomes secondary you can try to improve your story that's fine make your life a bit better on the surface of things that's a good that has its place too but not to do ultimately to look for your ultimate identity on that level of this better story that doesn't work your ultimate identity is here and now when you step out of the thinking mind but you don't become unconscious you become more conscious of the essence of who you are and become one with the essence of who you are wow and so the the power of awareness grows in you it's so to speak you become more aware of it the power of awareness of presence grows in you and then the you can still your thinking then becomes more constructive more focused and it's no longer the important thing i sometimes put it like this the mind loses its ability to make you unhappy the mind loses its ability to make you unhappy because then you realize a lot of your unhappiness did not come from the circumstances of your life but from the way in which your mind the story your mind told you about the circumstances of your life a great deal of unhappiness comes from the narrative in your mind and not from the circumstances and so that's enormous liberation if you've been whenever you're unhappy right where does the unhappiness arrive where does it come from is it actually the actual situation or is it the story that i'm telling myself about it and in most cases you'll find it's the story the unobserved mind creates the unhappiness the unobserved mind creates the unhappiness the unobserved mind also creates what we can call evil in this world because the unobserved mind is the mind of very unconscious people unconscious means the unobserved mind and the evil in this world is perpetrated by deeply unconscious people complete lack of awareness and so our our step now is to go beyond the dysfunctional state of humanity and so that we begin to awaken to that higher or deeper level of consciousness and the possibility is here now the possibility is here now because the if we don't awaken things will get worse and worse we have reached a critical point and humans only evolve when they reach a critical point when there's no way forward in the old state of consciousness so change happens when it actually absolutely needs to happen and it needs to happen now and that's why it's happening well it's true that the most important things that a human being needs to know to lead a life that is conscious and does not create unnecessary suffering those things are generally speaking not taught at school or university there are some exceptions there are certain alternative schools where some of these things i believe are being introduced or are being taught and there are individual teachers also who bring in these important teachings into their classroom although they're not part of the official curriculum but on the whole i believe it is true that all those essential things for a human being to know how to live skillfully and consciously these things are not yet being taught on a large scale so what's with what's lacking is wisdom in our contemporary world and wisdom of course should not be confused with intelligence or information or even education you can be highly educated and completely lacking in wisdom or you may have little education but be connected to that inner realm where wisdom arises which is the dimension of awareness or presence so the most vital thing to learn is to be in touch with this inner dimension of presence or awareness and that certain things you can teach that are purely conceptual you can teach mathematics or historical information facts those things you can teach easily all it is required is that the teacher has sufficient knowledge to be able to teach these facts then there's another type of teaching which would apply to subjects such as music or dance or anything creative even even cooking those things require more than conceptual knowledge so there's something that you need to absorb that goes beyond conceptual knowledge and so you wouldn't go to a teacher to taking music lessons and the teacher doesn't know how to play music might only have conceptual information about music so that would not be a good music teacher the teacher needs to have absorbed the practice of playing music on a deep level before he or she can teach it and that applies to other subjects even as I said even cooking you wouldn't want to take a cooking lesson somebody who has only read 500 recipe books but never done any cooking themselves so a teacher in order to teach awareness to students the teacher needs to have some access at least within to that dimension to even know what what he or she is talking about and so that's it's vitally important then to realize that this is not an academic subject that is added to the other subjects that you learn in school but it's something that should underlie all teaching at school something of a foundation for everything that is taught and done at school should be that everything arises out of that so it's not an added on not it's not even it's not a separate subject that can be taught but something more vital and so that also then applies to adults who are beginning to learn what really matters in life or already practicing it so the question being asked was to perhaps isolate three areas that are of vital importance that we don't learn at school that but that every human being needs to know and practice and I would like to start with the fact that many humans alive nowadays seem to be disconnected from nature and this is especially important for children who live in big cities inner cities it is a huge handicap for children not to be in touch with the natural world and that of course not only applies to children but also applies to every every human being so the I'd like to talk for a while about the importance of connecting with the natural world of bringing awareness to the to the way in which you experience the world of nature and how important it is to make that connection how nature can keep you not only keep you sane in this almost increasingly insane world how going back into nature periodically and connecting with nature can keep you sane and can help you to stay present so I would recommend as a not as a spiritual practice but as a normal way of being to as much as you can to go out into nature and whether it is a city park whether it is actual nature outside of the city the seashore the forest the open fields the desert whatever it may be whatever may be closest to you go out there and spend time as much as you can regularly in the natural world and if you might even just be your backyard if you can't get out there may be something in your the little garden that you have if you have one um it doesn't matter if you can't get out into wide open nature nature is everywhere around you important thing to realize is when you look at the world around you it can easily be this fact can easily be overlooked you can it's divided into the things that humans have made that surrounds you and then another part of reality is the things that humans have not made that came into being and all that is nature and even where you are sitting where I'm sitting or you are sitting there is part of what surrounds you is human made and another part of what surrounds you unless it's night time you might not but wherever you are is the natural world for example where I'm sitting here I'm sitting in a room and I see the furniture in the room and whatever is here and then I'm looking outside and there's the sky and there are trees very fundamental two different other different realities the human made world and the natural world and whenever you go outside of your house immediately you go into you realize this on the one hand you have this there's the street it's paved probably or unless you live in the country and then there you have cars and you have buildings and but then also there's trees perhaps there's a tree and then there's always the sky and you can always look up the sky even if there's no particular nature around you you can look at the sky there's nature the ever-changing sky is incredible just awareness of the weather I'm always I love weather I loved different kinds of weather no matter what it is and that changes well sometimes it doesn't change for several days here in the winter it rains a lot not today but but that's fine too I love the rain I love the sunshine I love the sky it's just it's a whenever you look at the sky it's a it's a it's a new painting every every day sometimes every hour there's a new painting that appears it's all this is a non-human made world should you become more aware of all those things that have not been made by humans but the natural things and so the so even just that little awareness that whenever you're outside even in a city there will be things all in a city the majority most of the things that you see in the city will be human made but there's always the sky and there may be some trees or some patches of grass so there's always this there's always something there that is not human made and then of course you may be able to get out of the city or go into a city park where the you have more we become aware of more things that are natural than those that are human made so you become aware of those and now you are out in nature whether it's a park let's say you're in a park or in out in actual nature then the question arises are you actually there or it's only your body there and your mind is still somewhere else because you're thinking about your problems or some mental dialogue or monologue is going on in your head and you're peripherally aware of nature you say oh how nice and then again you go and you and you're walking on and you're not you're not you're not present in nature so you're not really there so that doesn't help you that much it might be give you a little bit of relief but you're not really connecting with nature there's another thing that people do and there's nothing wrong with that they go into nature with a specific purpose they have a specific purpose in mind and the purpose might be they go jogging in the on the forest trail or out in the fields or on the beach they go jogging and so they have that they have their watch on and then they go yes that's great there's nothing wrong with jogging it's good for the body you're breathing but are you really there connecting with nature no because the purpose that what you're doing is more important than connecting with with the ocean if you go let's say on the on the beach you're jogging your main thing is the timing and the jogging that can be exhilarating there's nothing wrong with that there is a place for that but but there's something else to if it's not jogging it could be you go into nature in order to achieve some some other purpose you go with a specific purpose you go bird watching or something and then you can identify birds into that's there's nothing wrong with that either but these so you can this is all you can you can bring doing into nature and there's nothing wrong with it there's a place for it climb a mountain fine but so that there's a doing element that you can bring in and modern humans are more obsessed with doing they are obsessed with doing and not connected with the being dimension they've lost the being dimension because they're always doing and they bring that into nature they're always doing something then so then they're doing nature the important thing then to more deeply connect with nature is to bring in the being dimension you could call it if you like yin and yang so if you go into in a yang state into nature you're there's something there's a doing element or in you bring in the being which is the simple fact of awareness now you can be aware even while you're walking perhaps you can even be aware of even while you're jogging but i would recommend that that you bring in this element of quiet perception of nature so that sometimes you walk you walk slowly or you stand or you sit and then an alertness arises in you an alertness and this alertness is the rising of presence and then you begin to see whatever it is that surrounds you that is there and so this alertness then becomes the background to your sense perceptions and this is a different way of being in nature this is the beginning of connecting with nature at a deeper level so you bring in that element of could call it awareness so you begin to look at something and you see a tree sometimes you see you you may find that your attention focuses on a single object that you see in nature occasionally you look at one tree or you look at a branch or even the leaf of one tree or you look at a fern in the forest here i go for walks lots of ferns they thrive even in the winter because the winters are not very terribly cold here so the ferns continue to survive the ferns have been here very early plants have been here for a hundred million years they've been the same and they're still there they're there and they're beaut their quiet beauty so you and you look at sometimes you look at single things in nature and sometimes you look at the totality of whatever it is the forest you take in the totality but you become still you become present and then you're fully there and then you and then you connect with that there is a field in nature there is a field of aliveness or presence that underlies whatever it is you perceive with your senses and at the moment i'm only talking about the visual sense but there's also the other senses can come in and should come in when you're out in nature there's the auditory the perceptions what is it what are the sounds of nature and so there may be occasional birds there may be the the wind in the trees you hear or you can go there might be a brook or water trickling water is an amazing sound the sound of water if you pay attention to the whether it's rain or a brook or river or the ocean the sound of water in any form if you give it attention it's a wonderful way of just connecting there's something incredibly soothing and and and healing just by directing your attention to the sound of water and i'm just taking water as one example it could also be the sound of birds it could be the sound of the wind uh whatever it may be so you can be aware simultaneously of what you see and what you hear and then there may be of course you're breathing there may be certain smells of nature so it's the ocean the ocean has a particular smell or here the forest going to the forest it has a you feel the the moisture and the aliveness of the of the soil where there's decaying matter but out of the decaying matter new life continuously arises and you can smell it's all vitally it's so alive everything is alive and but when you're not really there when you're in your mind you don't you have no idea you don't know you don't know you're not there so when you're there you can sense this this this aliveness of what surrounds you and so nature whatever it could even if it's a city park you might still hear noises of traffic and so on and yet there you are there's grass there's trees there's the sky uh that's beautiful for i lived for many years in london for example and so the the great redeeming feature about london which otherwise can i mean as great city can really grind you down having to go to work on the in the underground the subway the tube and every day and or can really ground you down but london has these open spaces the parks reed and spark hyde park and a little bit in the north my favorite hamstead he's would go out there almost every day and immediately stillness descends and you know ah and then there's a the appreciation of nature then grows in you and this is not connected with knowledge about nature that has its place too you don't need particular knowledge of what these trees are what how they grow and what they do that's another way of but there's a deeper this is a knowing that is not conceptual you know nature in this is unitive knowing that's you know nature but not conceptually you have a deep relationship with nature and nature can help you to not get lost in your mind but you you have to take the initial steps always the initial steps is your choice to be present to direct your attention to your sense perceptions in nature what that's how you could begin to connect with it and then you may sense an underlying energy field that it goes beyond that which you perceive with your senses and people have used different words to describe what that is but this is there is a sacredness that's the the most appropriate words that occurs to me there's a sacred a sacred presence there and i'm not romanticizing nature by saying that i know very well that nature can kill you less like everything else the water is a wonderful thing what you physically you are like 75 percent water but water can kill you too the heat of the sun is is the same heat that's in your body but of course the heat of the sun can also kill you that's the there's enormously powerful energy there it's not a romantic view it goes beyond that and if you cannot go out you might be just at home and maybe you have a plant at home a potted plant i have quite a few and even that it's how but how after you've had plant do you do you really give it attention by the way there have been books written i don't want to go into that but if you give attention to a plant it thrives more than another plant that is not given attention and this actually is a fact because the attention that you give is an outflow of energy towards the plant but not only that something comes back at you to it there's a connection there here i have one for example that's a jade plant in a pot and i have several jade plants now again you look at a plant you're not only looking you have to give it attention and become still and then you can sense its aliveness you can sense it's kind of one could almost say it's surrounded by a field of stillness and sometimes i like to touch it you touch the leaves are firm and very alive and they're shiny that means the plant is happy when the leaves are shiny the plant is happy i have lived with jade plants for many years and observed them very closely not only as potted plants here in california they grow outside in the garden here they would not survive in the winter just it's love and in the garden they grow quite tall taller than me some of the jade plants with trunks that are like massive trunks like a little like bonsai tree trunks some jade plants grow in the sun they're exposed to several hours of sunlight and the leaves are very small and light green those who are exposed to a lot of sun other jade plants out in the open california they grow under the oak trees and the leaves are much bigger and dark green but they adjust the any climate they adjust to and therefore i mean any temperature except when it gets too low but these are this is just what i've observed so that each plant is uh is like an individual being the important thing is to connect without labeling it or i'm talking about it now but these are just pointers i want to point to the possibility of connecting without mental labels so just look and give it attention the fullness the aliveness of it and it is still there's no doubt about it that everything is every plant is very very still very it's rooted i say it's rooted in being and the more attention you give it the more rooted in being you become it teaches you one could say the plant teaches you to be more rooted in being and teaches you to be free of unnecessary conceptualization and here i have the forest and i often sit here and just look at the forest this is a we've got that some transparent blind here because otherwise the light doesn't work but um and that's a wonderful meditation just to just to sit and every day i spend a period of time looking at the trees it sounds um it's deeply peaceful and so again if you go out into nature bring in other senses it's not just the visual there's also the auditory and there's also the what is the word olfactory olfactory smelling and there is the you can your skin you can sense the air on your skin when you this might be a slight breeze so you come you're you're in your you become you come to your senses and this is a spiritual practice then to go into any natural environment and direct your awareness to your sense perceptions of nature and if it's as i said if it's only the sky that's wonderful give attention to this to look at the sky don't think about it you just you just look and it's like a people going to art galleries to look at paintings if you look at the sky it's a painting every and it changes constantly it's an it's an incredible artist seems to be doing it it's the abstract paintings every time you look in sky it's a new abstract painting now the most important thing about this is the realization that you do not live in a world that is dead but vitally alive humans are so disconnected from nature that nature is not perceived as intensely alive let alone sacred because humans are trapped in the conceptualized mind and this deadens everything you cannot even sense your own aliveness because you have a mental concept of who you are and that gives you your sense of identity that's a terrible disconnection the disconnection from nature is cannot be separate from the disconnection with with your own deeper nature so humans are disconnected from nature because they're disconnected from their own nature the the who they are who or what they are in their essence they come together so to give more attention to nature can also help you to awaken the connectedness with your own nature with because everything is the pervaded with as i see it pervaded with spirit there's only the one the one the one consciousness that's manifesting this world manifesting as life forms in this world and so especially at the present time it's vitally important for you to connect with nature and deepen your connectedness with nature and use use these little practices if you want to call it that until these practices become second nature to you so to speak these are no longer practiced they're a natural way of being in nature you do not need your conceptualizing mind when you are in nature let go of that use this opportunity to be present and uh then nature will can heal you on every level even if you have an animal in your home that's also nature and we know that how healing it is to have an animal presence in your home a dog or a cat and even mainstream science have figured out that it's not only soothing and healing to have an animal it's even good for you physically it helps people it's they've they've done studies that people who have an animal have a have better health and live longer you can you can but that well it's not was no surprise to me yes an animal is nature didn't when you and you have to again give it give attention to give attention to the animal look into the eyes of the animal and realize what the animal that you love what you ultimately love in the animal is invisible everything else is lovely to touch yes to look at but there is a presence there and that present in the cat in the dog there is a presence and that presence is what you love and there's also a presence in the tree and in the flower that is you cannot see but you can sense that presence and that presence is the sacredness of every life form it's the essence of every life form and it's inseparable from the essence of who you are so vitally important go as much as possible into nature and let's say if you are in prison well there are some people who are virtually in prison these days if you are in prison and some are actually in prison if you are in prison and you can hardly see the sky you cannot even see the sky in extreme case you still have your body your own body and you become aware of the aliveness in your body and that's also nature so that is always there and again the that's a vital thing that on the spiritual path is to sense the aliveness within which is the in that is the beginning of the invisible presence that you are that is inseparable from who you are look how still the trees are i'm getting i should be getting out of the way and just let the trees speak and there's the sky too ah wonderful and again something vital that children should learn at school is how to recognize their emotions because children have very strong emotions and without the ability to recognize your emotions the emotions take you over completely what that means is the emotions when emotional influx comes it takes you over it controls what you say it controls what you do it controls what you think then the emotion is in charge of you and what is an emotion and again like a thought is an energy entity in emotion too is an entity that is an energy form you cannot see it but you can only see how it manifests in the external world but an emotion is an energy form that lives in you it's a little entity and if you recognize it then there's an awareness there without awareness often you can easily be run by your emotions and that means the emotion whether it be let's say it could be anger it could be sadness could be anxiety whatever it may be deep regret jealousy envy whatever whatever it is the the emotion the this energy invades which at first you might feel in the body it then rises up into your mind and then it controls your thinking so when you feel deeply negative then or angry then the emotion rides into your mind and every thought reflects the emotion that you feel because the emotion is sinking through you and the emotion is feeding on your thoughts so the loop happens the vicious circle the emotion creates thought and the thought amplifies the emotion so in the case of anger you get more and more angry the more you think about it the more angry you get until finally you lash out completely lost and of course if it's a child also experiences that sometimes very some children have temper tantrums and or they may other very violent emotions uh some children have learned that the only way they can get attention from their parents is by displaying violent emotions because otherwise parents don't give them attention so a child would say as you know if you're probably aware of the time i use pain body pain body is the time i use for an accumulation of old emotion that still lives in you it's unrecognized as emotion it lives in you as an entity it's an accumulation of of negative emotion or often goes back to early childhood an accumulation of negative emotion that hasn't left you that dwells in your body somewhere and i call it the pain body and i it's helpful to look at it as a little entity almost an entity that lives in your gremlin that lives in you and sometimes it's dormant for periods of time but it cannot stay dormant forever it has to occasionally rise up into your mind and then suddenly you get taken over by this old emotion sometimes it's triggered by an event uh and you do usually know it's the pain body when the reaction to a triggering event is out of proportion to the triggering event the reaction is far greater than would be warranted by the triggering event and that usually means it has triggered old latent emotion in you the pain body it's come to life and then it takes over your mind and you are no longer you then you are the pain body you are the old emotion that lives through you if you have a partner the partner if it the partner doesn't know you well yet you've only just moved in together or got married and then the partner is suddenly surprised that you that you're no longer you you're some weird awful jerk that's what is this uh you may not know it's the pain body because you just think you made a terrible mistake but your partner's pain body may awaken yours and then you have a wonderful drama that and the pain body loves not only negative thinking because every negative thought feeds it thought is energy it feeds the emotion and the emotion gets even stronger then you have another thought and feeds this is the loop and so if you're it is also when you feel very bad about your life you're very unhappy about your life what you call your life these are it's a narrative what you call your life is a narrative it's it's a sequence of thoughts in your mind that are repetitive a repetitive sequence of thoughts is what you call your life and for many people this this thing that they call my life is a huge a burdensome dreadful thing that they carry around that is a very unhappy thing my life whenever i start thinking about my life i get more and more unhappy i'm not i'm not talking about me i'm just whenever i think about my life i get more and more unhappy and uh and the more unhappy i get the more i want to think about it it's it's i call it the it's what arises here is the addiction to unhappiness it's it's actually addictive no more why is it addictive because the emotion wants more of it the it's more of itself it wants to be fed by the thinking that reflects the same energy with it's the vibrational frequency so to speak of the emotion so every negative thought feeds the negative emotion a positive thought cannot feed the negative emotion a thought that oh what a beautiful sky isn't that this gives the emotion doesn't want that that doesn't feed it or my life is so wonderful no it's not the emotion loves the thoughts but it's not only the thoughts what it loves even more is to get the same emotion from others and this is how the pain body operates it then goes to whoever is around you at the time your partner or at work or family member and the emotion will then speak through you and say something negative in order to provoke a similar emotion in the other person it's all unconscious it's crazy but it's normal and so the and again here we have it's the the unobserved mind lack of awareness the unobserved mind gets taken over it gets taken over by toxic thoughts it gets taken over by emotions that arise they could be we could be your old emotions from the past the pain body that come up periodically and then subside once if you're once you've had a drama in your relationship lasting for an hour or two or the whole day then the pain body subsides and the next day you wake up you're a bit more conscious again and the emotion has subsided your mind is not is not quite as crazy as yesterday it's still not very not conscious but not quite as crazy as yesterday and you wake up and then oh you can't even remember what it was all about the drama that you had with your whoever it was you think what was how did it all start it didn't matter how it started the pain body needed it wanted it so the again lack of awareness through lack of awareness you are at the mercy of your emotional fields so the the moment awareness comes in the emotion may still be there but you're no longer totally possessed by it or trapped in it it's still there but at least there's an observing presence there and that's an enormous step forward so whenever you feel emotion arising that is of a very negative kind let's come back to mom for a moment to what i said about telling yourself how unhappy you are or how awful your life is or how awful other people are whatever this narrative may be then recognize that uh there is this very strong energy in you the emotional mental energy they you know they've come together and suddenly be the observer say oh for the past hour i've been thinking bad things about my life but is it really that bad because i'm sitting here breathing looking at the plant and the sky and feeling the aliveness in the body you're beginning to get out of your narrative and into the present moment the only way where there's free the only place where there's freedom from the past from the conditioned mind conditioned by the past is the present moment so it's always to become aware is inseparable from present moment the power of the present moment arises the moment you become aware and where is you but you're the observer of your inner states and then you're no longer at the mercy of your inner states freedom arises and so the emotion for example cannot renew itself anymore through using your mind because then you say there's no i don't want that you recognize a dysfunctional way in which the emotion is linking up into your mind and you come into the present moment and again breathing and deep breathing deep into the abdomen a few times and your attention follows the breath that's the important part and then you feel the aliveness that pervades the entire body and there may still be an emotion in there it may not have gone away immediately there's still whatever it is the anxiety the fear the heaviness or the anger you can still feel it somewhere in you but you're not consumed by it anymore it's it's still there and not it's you can it's you can live with it it's not that bad because you are the awareness that's all that's around it and and as the and as the awareness deepens it begins to the way i put it transmute the energy that was trapped in the emotion it was energy that got trapped in early childhood very often and through the awareness it gets because the awareness also means that you you allow it to be there in this moment it's not renewing itself in through your mind but in this moment this is what you feel awareness allows is space gives it space is the space for it that is i feel this can can still feel the anxiety but because you're aware the anxiety does not rise up into your mind and controls your thinking anymore that's an important difference and so you you feel it and then it it gradually diminishes it doesn't renew itself anymore but you allow it while it's there you say well that is and you may be able to feel other parts of the body that are actually fine anxiety might be here in your chest area and but in your hands are fine you feel the energy in your hands and your feet and your arms and a lot of the rest of your body you feel that aliveness let's see how you begin to be free of the pain body or any no longer at the mercy of emotional energies and that again children could learn that easily at school by the game playing for example and children parents can teach their children if children have ang bouts of anger for example sometimes some children do it's not uncommon this this could be already the young the the pain body in the child after it's happened talk to the child and say what was it what did what what happened yesterday when you started screaming and throwing things what was that what what did you feel what what can you paint it what would it look like if you make a picture of it what color is it does it have a name that thing that comes into you from time to time and makes you throw things what does it have a name what if it had a name what name would it have and by asking these questions the the awareness in the child grows awareness of it could be done as game even as playing it out in games at school and so on so that the fostering the awareness in children as the most important subject in school the founder foundational subject at school of course should be awareness i mean is that so difficult to understand the most consciousness is the primordial subject that underlies all other subjects it's at school and then it's so that's how it it starts so now we we most of us do it as adults we do we but what could have perhaps been done in a more enlightened civilization at school we do it as and that's fine at least it's happening now and eventually um it may even reach politicians and media people eventually even they may be destined to become conscious so in the meantime i recommend that you don't that you're very careful with linking into the collective at the present time especially be very careful when you connect with social media mainstream media whatever media it is because there is it in many ways it is toxic and very unconscious so you wouldn't voluntarily expose yourself to a virus that's that's quite dangerous you wouldn't go out and say okay well i'll go to to an environment where many people are infected with this virus and hope for the best i wouldn't do that in the same way we be very careful when you link into those forms of media because a lot of what's going on there is what is a viral infection of the collective so yes a minimum to know what's going on that's fine you want to know what's going on but beyond that you do not need to listen for one two or three hours of five people on the screen talking to each other how dreadful the situation is and you because you absorb that it don't expose yourself to unnecessary risks of catching collective mental viruses or the of course the more present you are the the more immune immunity you have but still you wouldn't even want to even if you have the immunity why expose yourself to that it's more important that if you contribute to the discourse through social media or whatever if you use any of these things whatever they're called facebook twitter instagram snapchat or whatever just make sure that everything you put out is conscious it's not a reactive thing not attacking anybody don't confuse the virus in that mental virus that people get infected by with who they essentially are so whatever you put out make sure it's something of a constructive nature that does not contribute to human unconsciousness but diminishes human unconsciousness um so it's a wonderfully challenging time we live in but that's a good thing so emotions awareness catch the emotion as it arises especially if old emotion pain body emotion uh detect it and recognize it for what it is that's then you've already won half the battle so to speak recognizing it for what it is emotion or emotion stay present as the observer the witness so you're here to bring sanity into this world that's a good life purpose to bring consciousness one could even define this as your main life purpose to bring consciousness into this world the light of consciousness you be the light of course that reminds me of the famous saying i don't know who first said it it's attributed to various people whether it was nelson mandela or somebody else be the change that you want to see in this world so that's very true so be the light of consciousness because that's the change that we need that the world needs

[Speaker 3] (4:12:03 - 4:13:21)
now there is a new mind emerging emerging maybe a new human species and there are signs for this that would fit contrary to what we are learn or learn or being told about evolution um like darwin said nature doesn't make jump well the evolution of life proceeded in jumps it made jumps and the jumps typically happened when the earth got in stress like in an ice age life survived not because some life forms were better than others and ate everybody else no because they cooperated and you can see how now the earth is beginning to be under stress you see at the same time how the world is globalizing there is more and more support for international cooperation rather than making another war we may be at the beginning of a new leap and out of it would come a new human being it's possible yes yes and you have also written

[Speaker 1] (4:13:21 - 4:13:44)
about this yes yes that's i believe that's how it is and us talking here and us being here together is perhaps already part of that emergence the new human being will believe

[Speaker 3] (4:13:44 - 4:14:11)
in cooperation not in competition will believe in kindness and support not in in violence and war and all that yes so that's what i believe and it's in a way an optimistic yes yes but i would share that but it's it's it's not stupid it may actually be the only way you can look at how things are developing yes

[Speaker 1] (4:15:14 - 5:11:15)
i have been looking for happiness for 20 years now i've done everything correctly everything i was supposed to do but i can't find happiness or joy please help i'm glad you asked the question the answer of course is very simple you have to give up your search for happiness because it hasn't worked in 20 years so it's not going to work in the next 20 years yes the very search for happiness prevents you from finding the happiness that is available to you already because the search for happiness implies that you are not fully inhabiting with your conscious attention this moment and you cannot fully accept it because it is judged as in some way lacking the present moment is judged as something lacking here always and the search for happiness implies you're looking for some future state you imagine yourself at some point in the future when you're going to be happy happiness as such is also a strange term i don't use it usually to really point to the state of connectedness with your essential identity in the present moment that perhaps a more suitable word for that would be joy a joyous sense of aliveness a quiet but intense sense of aliveness and joy and peace some people may call that happiness ramana mahasi the indian spiritual teacher a great teacher who lived in the 40s 50s he used the word happiness to talk about this but when he uses the word happiness he does not mean the happiness the conventional way in which this word is used so he says happiness is your true nature so you just have to find your true nature and then you find happiness and what he means is find the essence of who you are and then you have that state of joyous aliveness that some people call happiness at least peace an inner peace not a dead peace not the peace of unconsciousness or drunkenness are you peaceful yeah not that one the peace where you have risen above thought not fallen below thought to the vertical dimension again so what to do you give up your search for happiness and give more attention to the present moment and don't look for happiness in the present moment don't look for anything just be with the present moment and make it your friend you might as well since there's nothing else ever and since your entire life is experienced as the present moment you might as well have a friendly attitude towards it it is your entire life it can only be experienced in and as the present moment even memories you remember you remember something that once was the present moment and you remember it in the present

moment if it hadn't been happened in the present moment when it happened it couldn't have happened and you couldn't remember it if it weren't the present moment now don't try to work that out mentally so everything is the your entire life is only ever now and so by appreciating the now becoming friendly with the now aligning yourself with the now you live your life unfolds differently and you appreciate the little things instead of thinking of the big things that would make you happy if you could only achieve them including the idea of enlightenment or whatever else it is those big things that are going to make me happy instead appreciate whatever is here in the present moment and then you may find one day that the that listening to the the leaves of a tree moved by the wind that sound suddenly makes you happy and you may find looking at the sky suddenly makes you happy to become aware that you're breathing and to feel the aliveness within the body makes you happy touching paper that has been in the sauna for a while and the soft touch of it it's everything suddenly is fine and good and if something unpleasant arises as it sometimes does of course if action is possible you take action towards changing the situation or removing yourself from the situation if that either is not possible or not possible yet then you simply practice acceptance of what is instead of generating unhappiness about what is and even if action is possible the basis is well this is what is now what can I do about it well this is what is there's still an acceptance of what is and then that acceptance of what is that before would have been judged as highly undesirable instead of making you unhappy produces more depth in you because more acceptance means more depth a greater depth in you vertical dimension so you appreciate the good things even all the little good things they're continuously arising around you so you practice that gratitude for all that appreciation of all the little things and then happiness arises and when something not good happens or the mind says it's not good or it is actually unpleasant really unpleasant acceptance and that can take you even deeper than the little good things one big back one big bad thing can take you quickly deeper than many good things by accepting accepting means the egoic structures that create continuous resistance subside and this gap opens up and you as a person the ego lives in and through resistance in one form or another you as a person suddenly give way dissolve become transparent and then something deeper arises is there and that is what Jesus called the peace that passes all understanding because you cannot figure out the relationship in your mind between this so-called bad event and the peace you feel the reason of course being now i'm explaining to you so you can actually understand it the peace that passes all understanding is this relationship normally a good thing produces inner peace or happiness and here a bad thing produces an even greater much greater inner peace and happiness and that is because it through acceptance it causes the ego which is a mind-made self to get out of the way dissolve become they're much weaker become transparent instead of dense and and then your essence identity as consciousness itself shines through in other words the ripple which is the ripple on the ocean lives on the horizontal dimension all ripples are on the horizontal dimension but when the life becomes too unpleasant for the ripple that may force the ripple to become aware of that which is beyond the vertical dimension oh so more present moment awareness instead of looking for happiness appreciating the many beautiful things and then also gradually becoming aware of your presence which ultimately is what the now is it is the presence of consciousness the space in which everything happens and you are that of course that's the sense-perceived life there is deeper life too that is not sense-perceived but we start with the sense-perceived life and as we go deeper deeper during our retreat we will see that the sense-perceived life although beautiful is only the surface of reality but you have to start with that and it's beautiful and if you give it your fullest attention even then you already begin to go deeper than the surface because then you sense an aliveness in everything you can sense that the life in this flower i'm just making sure it's not plastic even if it were plastic there is some life in plastic too but not as intense life as in the natural flower the life that is expressive that expresses itself through this flower is the life that expresses itself through this form this body this mind and millions of other other forms and so you go around in a state of astonishment because there's so much that you had not really acknowledged before it's easier to be astonished here at the multiplicity of life perhaps than if you were in uh what's a boring place well there are many boring places i'm not going to name any it's easier but even if you're in a so-called boring place a suburb somewhere there's beauty there too you might have to look more and even if you were in a street without any vegetation there will still be beauty there too and there comes a moment when you actually see beauty in everything even in a simple pavement a window the surface of a table how light gets reflected of objects the colors and when for i also suggest so look for be aware of the little things because that requires that brings your alertness up big things are fine that's nice to be aware of the little things and go go when you walk around here in between sessions you go a bit like a little bit like as if you as if you had just arrived on this planet in some sense you have because these surroundings here may be so unusual to you if you live somewhere very different it's almost as if you had arrived on a new planet and how would you be if you arrived on a new planet you don't you go and you don't you don't do a lot of thinking you just you're just there as an aware presence perceiving like a child before a child learns the names of things but you're not regressing you're transcending that level of conceptualization that which most that most humans are trapped in you're not regressing to the child stage you are transcending but as you transcend the conceptualization level there is there certain things that are similar to a child or that's deeper than the child perceives because you've been through that growth you have transcended conceptualization there's a deeper knowing that the child does not have but in other ways there are certain similarities with how a child perceives the world and it's not for nothing that jesus said truly i tell you if you want to enter the kingdom of heaven you must be like a little child that's a very important pointer and how is a little child before the child can name things when the child does not happen to be crying the child is going he takes everything in without naming it and there's a clarity of perception and then the naming stage comes and then the problems start another thing need to mention for to be aware of here i highly recommend that you do not switch on your television if you have one in your room and if you find that difficult it means you're addicted and so if you find yourself going to the tv or the remote and you go i can't stop myself oh that's a good way of realizing that you're addicted even more addictive these days are the little gadgets well from laptops to pads ipads and similar devices phones which are much more than phones these days which absorb many people's attention a lot of the time so much that for many humans their interaction with reality 50 or more of their interaction with reality is through a little screen that they hold in front of their eyes and they live for it they live for the next facebook post so you may find that you are addicted to some extent to that also i would recommend to keep that to a minimum the devices if you absolutely have to set aside 10 minutes 15 minutes a day when you actually do interact or you look at your emails or facebook posts just to see what other people are eating or what they're wearing and you can say oh that looks great or you may compulsively take a selfie of yourself here look where i am and then hopefully everybody will feel jealous about you we may talk about those things a little bit more at a later time but in the meantime i would recommend that you break the habitual if for many of you what is habitual interaction with these devices while you're here in order to fully benefit from being here so that your attention is not absorbed by that because that really amplifies the mind unless you have something that you're looking there that promotes presence you might see a present moment reminder uh oh i have to remember to put in a as a present moment reminder it needs to come up on the screen says put away your phone we'll have to write that down for the next one stop looking at the screen look at the sky oh what else oh alcohol i believe you can buy alcohol here and there's nothing wrong with a glass of wine or beer occasionally but at least how i see it but but it can easily pull you out of presence into unconsciousness especially if after one glass of wine you cannot stop if you feel you need one glass wine to enjoy your meal fine fine but if you're one of those many who cannot after one they need to have a second because and then they don't they don't realize it but when they started drinking their one first glass of wine they were totally determined determined only to have one glass of wine but by the end they get by the time they get to the end of the first glass of wine they forgot that they were totally determined to only have one glass of wine say oh one might as well have another and then you're gone so if you are one of those don't don't have the first one or beer if you cannot enjoy the meal without a beer you must have your beer before the meal okay but if you if you cannot stop and you must have another one after that this is not this is would prevent you from benefiting from being here if you can avoid alcohol altogether it would be preferable while you're here so that is only there no this is not a boot camp retreat there are retreats like that where you get strict instructions no alcohol you're not watching television you're not going to talk to anybody you're not going to look at anybody and we're going to meditate for 10 hours a day okay some of you may have been on that retreat now sit and close your eyes there's a place for that kind of retreat too if it's right for you if it's right for you you've already been to it or you're going to go to it so i'm not mentioning other drugs because i don't think i need to here i don't think you will indulge in those things here there's something much better than acid or pot and that's called presence it's not a drug it's true that some of these drugs can give you a little glimpse of of what it is to perceive the world without the intrusion of the habitual mind and this is why people who take some of these drugs have an experience that goes a wow experience and you look at something you look at a simple object and suddenly see its beauty and aliveness and you go wow and wow look at that look at that glass of water i can't believe it and the truth is it is miraculous and the truth is we don't see it because of the habitual nature of the mind if you if you suspend thinking and look at this glass of water water is an amazing substance it's a miracle and what is a glass it's a solid thing and the light shines through it it's amazing it's completely solid but the light travels through it and yes you can go wow without any drug if you're real if you're present really present so and you again do this occasionally you can do it here people won't think you're mad if you do it out in the world they would think oh he must have taken something or she but if you go to really appreciate an object any object a natural object or even a man-made object pick it up give it your fullest attention feel it see it this mind-made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive to be free you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation when you can sense the essence of yourself as consciousness there's a vast power in there which has nothing to do with egoic power power over somebody but sensing that is really the only thing that can free you of fear so you can know a very old illustration or example to explain it i believe it comes from india is they use they could you could use anything but they use honey so you can know honey by examining the structure of honey and where it comes from and how it's produced by the bees and the molecular structure and the chemical composition and you can write several phds about honey and you can know everything there is to know well perhaps that's even impossible because there's always more to know but you can know a lot about honey so there you are a doctor of honey after you have successfully defended your thesis and one day somebody asked have you actually ever tasted honey no that's not part of my phd so if you taste honey you would know nothing about it necessarily you just but there's a different knowing there that is more immediate direct nothing to do with concepts but you know honey on a level that is deeper in a way than this person who only knows honey through concepts and now we can apply that first to yourself and also of course we can apply it to other people how do you know somebody else but you have to start with yourself so in addition to knowing yourself as this historical person which really is knowing about yourself you know all kinds of things about yourself and you can talk about it for a long time you can write your autobiography and perhaps some people will be interested in it or not everybody has their own autobiography in their head and it consists of things that you can talk about so an autobiography consists of stories this is what happened to me or this is what i did i let me tell you the story and this is what i experienced that's what i suffered but do i know myself at a deeper level am i able to let go to relinquish when i choose to to relinquish all conceptual knowledge about myself all narratives and stories and not live through the narratives and stories although i'm able to remember them when i need to but am i able to know a deeper essence that enables the narratives to exist to be you need to be conscious to have a narrative a story you need to be conscious to perceive things with your senses is you need to be conscious to have an emotion all these arise they are objects that arise in let's temporarily call it your consciousness but it's not yours they are all objects that arise in consciousness so your life consists on the and except on the deepest level your life what i call your life situation is the term i choose to use consists of the arising of objects in the space of consciousness or the light of consciousness so perception it's a it's an object that arises in consciousness there it is and then it disappears and then another perception replaces it a thought arises a stream of thoughts they can take over your consciousness almost completely they they gobble up they suck up if thoughts can be so overpowering if you're in the absence of awareness as a stream of thoughts can take take your whole conscious consciousness and manufacture thoughts out of it and so you're completely unaware of yourself as consciousness you're completely you're just completely identified with a thought it takes up all your consciousness and makes it into thought and emotions the my continuously manufacturing more thoughts cook i need more and you can see it when people talk to each other sometimes how they are taken over by taken over by a stream of thought and confuse it with who they are and then they have to defend that stream of thought whatever that stream of thought is saying whatever position it's whatever perspective it has it people become mortal enemies because your stream of thought does not agree with my stream of thought and groups do it because there are collectives that are dominated by certain commonly held jointly held beliefs there are some collectives that are held together by belief systems ideologies and everybody takes it on board and then their other collective have conflicting ideologies and they become your mortal enemy and really all this happens because you don't know who you are you only know yourself as an object in consciousness so the deepest meaning of knowing yourself is knowing yourself beyond concepts not through concepts not knowing yourself as an object in consciousness but as the eternal subject which is consciousness itself and so the mind subsides and a sense of still alert presence remains i am and now you don't need to add anything to it you just know that you are the beingness of you and if that can be sustained in the background so to speak then you could have a discussion with somebody and you can put forward your point of view which are thoughts without making that person into an enemy because he or she holds opposite or conflicting points of view and you can have a conversation and while you're having a conversation you remain spacious inside but you can still clearly state your point of view without having a self-identification with your point of view this is how i see it but you don't derive your sense of identity from that mental position but you can still you don't have to give up all all mental positions you just recognize them as thoughts you happen to this is how i see reality this is how i see that but there's always something else in the background something deeper and then it is more likely that the awareness of the that which is deeper which is awareness itself may enable you to think in a different way so that you you're not just take on board what the collective that you happen to be born into tends to think you don't adopt if you're born into what a certain political system or whatever it may be you don't necessarily adopt all their beliefs and make it part of your sense of identity but you're able to and even our civilization will perhaps our western civilization is not dominated by any one particular ideology as for example communist russia wars or china wars which still is to some extent just getting mixed up with other things but even here if you you may not realize that how many of the thoughts that you think are your thoughts you have absorbed through a screen either the tv screen or the ipad screen or the samsung screen and or some people still read newspapers and you have absorbed certain viewpoints that most of the media tend to agree on with certain relation to your country or a group of countries in relation to other countries certain and you just absorb that and that becomes your viewpoint and you may not realize that perhaps it's a quite a distorted way of looking there may be other ways of looking but people think these are my thoughts they are not they're not your thoughts and it's not just with reference to the media but with everything these are thoughts that you absorb from the from the collective but if you are aware if this this awareness is in the background it is more likely that you are able to think creatively that you can look through certain forms of almost hypnosis that if you live in a collective you are hypnotized into that you become part of that particular way of looking at the world and you can see things more clearly and have creative thoughts so you can actually think better when you're able to step out of thinking and then when you think don't lose yourself completely in the thinking then you can you can see more clearly and another strange thing that happens when you can sense the essence of who you are it's not just although the buddha called it well as it's commonly translated emptiness is not i don't think that's a good translation of certain terms he used like sunyata spaciousness i would prefer some call it nothingness but there's more to it than that when you can sense the essence of yourself as consciousness there's a there's a power in there there's a vast power in there which is nothing to do with egoic power power over somebody but sensing that is really the only thing that can free you of fear because fear means oh you're the little the little me and you feel threatened and fearful of what's going to happen to me and all these other me's around me the others but to be free of fear if you can sense that deep within you there is a silent power and perhaps that is the the deeper and original meaning of the term faith faith is to sense that power it's not an intellectual thing belief i would say is an intellectual thing because the term belief as a noun means you you believe in the uh veracity of certain things that are being told as it could be a story you believe in this particular narrative that's a belief faith is something the way i interpret the word or use the word is something deeper that is not connected with concepts faith is a deep trust that's perhaps a better a better translation of to a better pointer a deep trust in life which you cannot arrive at through telling yourself certain things i really should be trusting because the universe is going to look after you i just need to believe you're still stuck in your head and you're saying i just need to believe that the universe is going to look after i'm just going to look after okay well as maybe that is a that is a bridge or maybe that is a sign post that can take you to the actual realization of what you're saying but it's also possible that it remains a sign post and you never get to where the sign post points to i'm trying to have this trust in the universe but i still wake up in the middle of the night and in a state of panic i don't know why i keep telling myself that i need to trust the universe now even it's on my bathroom mirror and a piece of paper written stuck in there god loves you quit well is it a thought that you believe in that does not free you from fear or if it's a sign post and then it takes you to a deeper place where you realize your connectedness with the source ultimately your connectedness with the source of all life that there's not a separation that you're not an autonomous entity thrown into out you come through into thrown out of the universe or fallen from the sky so the to sense your connectedness with the source is the realization that god loves you but you can let you don't need the words anymore you there's just a trust and there's no duality anymore because you're an extension of the one an emanation of the one so faith really is trust but the trust is not something you can think yourself into ultimately you need to let go of all these concepts although when you later talk about it you may take them up again but for the experience of it you let go of concepts and you can sense in the space between two thoughts in the space of awareness you can sense the stillness the presence and you can sense it as a silent power silent that's the dao it's chinese the silent a silent power and that silent power is inseparable from who you are it's you and much infinitely vaster than you both at the same time but it's almost as if a ray of sunlight that arrives here suddenly realizes its source it is a ray of sunlight suddenly realizes its own source where it comes from and it also realizes that it that it can never be totally separate from its source because there's the ray of sunlight somehow is still connected to the sun which in this analogy that's the source so the ray of sunlight then could say my fear has disappeared because i realize that i'm connected to something much vaster and this vastness is sustaining me it could say that it could also say and some have some rays have done that i am the sun ecstatic translated in this analogy there have been mystics in various traditions who said i am god it's not advisable to say that people don't like it so that power is something that you can then have in the sense in the background and it can it's not just a passive thing always in the background it can it emanates intelligence so to speak it uses it can use your mind and it can inspire it out this is the dimension of creativity which is this prior to form but it's where form arises out of the formless so all the great creations that humanity has been able to achieve over the centuries and millennia anything truly creative comes because the human being who created that had some connection with the silent power within perhaps only in the act of creation perhaps not in their private life but in the act of creation there was suddenly that connectedness and many many great composers and artists and even some of the great scientists who had breakthroughs say that it came to them almost full fully formed as a revelation it already arrived as if it had been already formed at a deeper level and then suddenly they just received it and some report that they are overpowered almost by the sudden influx of an amazing thing that then becomes perhaps a work of art or an amazing insight or a piece of music that comes from that place and those things that come from that deeper place are the things that remain because although most humans are not sufficiently connected to be able to to create any of these things there are quite a few who have at least have some connections or they are able to recognize the greatness in something when they see it and so the humans value for example the great classics of literature there are some books that have survived for two thousand and more years it's miraculous because a book is a very fragile thing and for cent many centuries it can only survive if there were always people who valued it enough to copy it again and then a few more copies and then they got damaged and burnt and then maybe one copy survived and then some other people saw how valuable it is they could sense the there was something something transforming transformative in it and so they copied it again so books such as the Tao Te Ching or the Bhagavad Gita they met one of my favorite books the meditations by Marcus Aurelius two thousand years old somehow they survived even the dark 80s when almost nobody could read and write except a few monks in monasteries and they kept it alive but our the main purpose is not to produce necessarily produce some great thing or have some great insight that may come as an addition the main purpose is to bring this state of consciousness into into your life and then

[Speaker 4] (5:11:15 - 5:12:50)
whatever happens through it happens it's a question about personal and romantic love if one is in the surrendered state of consciousness can they i've heard teachings from my own experience and from just reading with romantic love there can be i need you behavioral expectations and then there's like the selfless kind of love where there are no behavioral expectations and you still love the person my question is if you're in the surrendered state of consciousness if you're if you're completely surrendered to what is do you still have that kind of selfless love for a specific person romantically or does that kind of dissolve or do is it just only the universal which is wonderful the universal love it's amazing it's wow you know but can you also have that specific kind of love for okay thank you

[Speaker 1] (5:12:52 - 6:37:56)
so the question you're basically asking would you then love everybody equally so there would not be one person singled out as special as the course in miracles calls it special relationship which of course america says of course it's of the ego to single one out as special now if you single one out as special and you what you see in the other is the form only and you're attached to the form which doesn't doesn't just mean the physical form of course that's an important part of it because there is part of the sexuality and all that which is part of the attraction but it includes also includes the psychological form of the other who you think that person is their psychological makeup how they behave and speak and act that is

also form that's a psychological form and there can be strong attachment to those aspects both the physical come together with the psychological which includes also emotions there's an emotional link also there and those coming when they all come together you fall in love and aptly it's called fall because it's a fall in consciousness but but that's okay if that's what you experience and that life wants you to experience that it's part of your learning that fall in consciousness now it's not immediately of course experienced as a fall it's experienced as a high and only afterwards do you realize oh that was a fall and afterwards can be after a year it can be after three months it can be after the honeymoon it can be soon after you move in together and so and then the suffering starts what before was the love now becomes the suffering and then for a while it can happen that you fluctuate for the next year or two or three between still feeling the love and and the suffering and then usually it comes to an end after a while or you you compromise and for some other reason stay together so that's the now if you are able to feel in the other well first of all in yourself and that which is beyond form the essence the stillness the presence whatever we want to call it and by by sensing it in yourself and being it then you recognize it in another and that recognition that in this in the space of stillness is true love which doesn't need the other because the other only reflects to you who you are but even there it can happen that the form of the other because you are not just the formless temporarily you're also the form temporarily you are either a man or a woman temporarily you have this body and this form this man or this woman and this body and the emotional field may find a certain resonance with on different levels be it sexual emotional psychological levels a certain resonance with the other form and that resonance that is what in the unenlightened romantic love makes up the entire relationship but now when you are when you know who you are in your essence all those factors are still there but they do not make up the entire relationship beyond the resonance between the sexual or emotional or physical resonance there is a deeper level present so you can go through the motions of romantic love with the transcendent level also present in yourself and recognizing it in the other so romantic love may after a while of course for the relationship to be truly deep in any relationship some transcendent element has to be there because it's never it's not going to last otherwise it doesn't mean necessarily that people need to be totally awake already totally awake knowing who they are but some element of the formless must be there eventually in the relationship for the relationship to survive and be a true relationship otherwise all you have left in the relationship is your judgments about the other and physical attraction and just mind emotional and that's ultimately it's not enough it's not enough the added element the transcendent element needs to be there and if the transcendent is there you can be quite content even without the romantic relationship you no longer say i need that and it's when it's there it's beautiful but you don't need that yeah pull so the the mind it is often in relationships the mind prevents the deeper level the transcendent level from arising in the relationship so the mind destroys the relationship identification with the story in the mind which you is about yourself and the other obscures love it might even say love well it's no such thing as love i read a lovely in a novel last year by a british writer it does mack ewan he's a well-known contemporary writer ian mccune and he wrote this book about it's called on chesil beach it's about two young people falling in love in england in the 50s and these two young people they feel this the pole towards each other and they begin to fall in love and but sexually they are completely repressed and very fearful about they haven't it's in the 50s so the sixth revolution hasn't happened yet about sex so they're but they're both extremely fearful about that and then they they get married and their first night they stay in a bed and breakfast on on near chesil beach in the south of england and they're they're trying to have sex for the first time and it's a disaster dread dreadful disaster and and she she is so shocked she runs out of the room to the beach oh they don't realize it's actually quite funny i don't explain what disaster you can probably imagine it the so she runs out and the next day so they don't see each other that night that's their honeymoon their their wedding night and the next day he tries he goes to the beach chesil beach and she sees she's walking on the beach they start talking to each other and both feel still the pole is still there but both their minds are bringing up stories why it's no longer why it's not possible it's dreadful they are projecting things onto the other what she's and so the the pull is there but they're all they both create stories in their minds that cuts them off from the other and they separate and then they spend the rest of their lives doing other things the rest of their lives in the no risk is compressed to five or six pages and that shows how how destructive the mind can be of true relationship how the mind imposes interpretations on the other total fictions but there's so much as don miguel ruiz would say there's so much faith in these fictions that they there's it's an impossibility for the human being to see what the mind is creating is a fictitious judgment on that that creates a barrier between yourself and the other this writer is not spiritual at all he just observed human nature and he presented it and and that is the ultimate lesson is spiritual thank you very much the good practice is not always to feel you have to fill up the present moment with something but in actually enjoy a present moment that is not filled up with anything by filling up i mean external activity or internal activity so both are kind of filling up the present moment and on the external as we mentioned before of course you have all the devices that humans have invented to help you fill up the present moment to make it easier not to have any space whatsoever uh so whether it's your television or radio or cell phone or text messages or emails or facebook or twitter or the old-fashioned magazine that you consume weekly magazine gossip or maybe a little bit more elevated and you can there's a when you do it you can sense the addictive nature of needing to fill up your inner space it's an automatic thing and people are actually afraid of the to have a moment they're afraid of having this a moment that's not filled up then they feel there's something very wrong and they might interpret this as some people even feel anxiety i should be doing something or thinking something or something wrong or they may feel unbearable boredom even after two minutes not doing anything or they have something in the head a mind form that says you should be doing something how dare you just sit there oh there's so much to do come on do something somebody beating you up in the head you lazy so-and-so but you're missing out on something very precious and very vital and that is experience the depths of life rather than the continuous horizontal extension of life and you don't have to overdo it just become make it a habit from time to time to enjoy the spaciousness of the present moment and everything at this moment just is the way it is and you come to an acceptance and then the compulsive need to fill it up with something may subside for a moment and then there comes perhaps for some people a moment of unfamiliarity with having the space now then you accept that then it's actually quite pleasant this moment you might occasional thoughts may come in but they're no longer occupying your entire space and then you this is the first step of appreciating what's around you which is a manifestation of life also and if you're in the mind you would call it uninteresting everyday things are happening around me but if you don't interpret you might see that there's a certain aliveness and beauty in everything so the appreciation comes can only come there thankfulness is a term often used in spirituality in new age especially and of course it's important but the real thankfulness isn't through words although a word can point you to it you could say thank you for this moment and don't wait for some spectacular moment because they're not that many they'd come when you say finally thank you for this moment some people think something spectacular has to come along you have to stand on the mountaintop oh i've made it thank you for this moment but it doesn't last that you can't stay on the top for too long you have to come down and then you have to look for another one some people look for a wedding or something like that it's a great thing but that doesn't last that long either preparations can go on for months and months and it's all exciting and building up towards it and finally it happens and if you're lucky it doesn't get spoiled by something by relatives getting drunk or pouring pouring with rain or whatever could happen but then it's over and then ordinary life starts with one ordinary moment after another and if you then become dissatisfied because you can't appreciate the ordinary moment and why can't you appreciate the ordinary moment because you're not going deep enough into it you're not allowing yourself to settle into it a danger when you come to the moment of settling into the present moment and you're not used to it in order to stay there and it doesn't matter how long one two minutes of being feeling comfortable in the now is fine it's a good start one minute or you can start with half a minute of just ah if your mind comes in and says something it's not necessarily true and says you can't afford to just sit here and do nothing well i think anybody can afford to sit for one or two minutes and do nothing if the mind tells you you can't it's not true there might be an emergency situation that's a different matter but i often tell people when you get into your car why immediately go into automatic mode but give it use the opportunity when you shut the door to have 30 seconds or so and you don't have to count the seconds because then you're filling up the present moment again 30 seconds or so of just spacious being and you look out of the window whatever you see there feel yourself breathing and you for a moment you break the momentum of the mind that otherwise pulls you along so you shut the door and you go 30 seconds unless there's a real emergency 30 seconds don't really make much difference although if you believe the mind you will believe that you can't afford 30 seconds it's too much to do there's a dimension in you a dimension of consciousness one could say where ultimately these artificial divisions of reality that we call minutes and hours and days weeks months and years well these things don't really matter anymore there's a dimension where that's not relevant including how old you are and unless you find that dimension which we could call the inner spaciousness stillness presence awareness whatever term or pointer works best for you of course as you know the word isn't it unless you find that dimension and it's there in your daily life consciously then the new year just be another one more thing same thing as before basically more of the same happy one day unhappy the next if you're lucky or even more unhappy than happy for some people mostly unhappy except when they're getting too tired to be unhappy or i've taken a few drinks now some people especially spiritual seekers believe that at some point they are going to realize that dimension sometimes this is called self-realization or awakening or enlightenment they think they can at some point hopefully come to that self-realization and there are many spiritual seekers who have been seekers for a long time who are getting quite frustrated because they haven't found it yet despite the search and there are some people listening to this watching this who may be getting quite frustrated and saying so when do we start meditating and they have missed the most essential dimension here which is a space of stillness in between and underneath the words that's the dimension where the year or how old you are or what your life situation is doesn't matter anymore not relevant and the moment you notice that here in addition to what you see and hear the words and the image on the screen there's also dimension of stillness the moment you realize that there it is inside of you you can't realize that notice let's say notice an even simpler word realize still sounds a little bit complex but notice can you notice that they are the words and what you hear and see there's something that you don't hear and see that's even more vital this is why we call this a meditation because as i speak to you that dimension is there the words come out of that stillness that is one could say is in me but the moment you notice that it's also arising in you because if it were not arising in you you wouldn't be able to notice it because only the stillness in you can notice that same dimension in another or around you so instead of waiting for one day when you're going to be self-realized or enlightened why not notice pay attention to that dimension and this is a good opportunity here and now but it's always there in your daily life it's easier here to notice it but you're just training here in this protected space but wherever you are you can notice that in addition to whatever your life consists of which comes down always no matter what what's going on in your life it always comes down to sense perceptions thoughts and emotions and the mixture of how these things arise vary from person to person so every person has his or her life situation sometimes good sometimes not so good but there's always another dimension there but most humans overlook it continuously this is why we're here to realize that the immediacy of self-realization how close it is to you and you don't have to wait for some day when you're going to be realized that's an idea in the mind that is a huge obstacle notice whatever is going on in your life what i call your life situation whatever it is it's sense perceptions thoughts and emotions but there's always something else and you overlook it as i said you overlook it because sense perceptions thoughts and emotions have cast a hypnotic spell upon you one spiritual teacher called dole goldsmith had the expression for that the universal hypnotism i think he called it and so that is the most powerful for contemporary humans the most powerful hypnotic spell out of these three sense perceptions thoughts emotions i would say is thoughts and you could even reduce those three that i just mentioned sense perceptions thoughts emotions to one because ultimately what are sense perceptions thoughts and emotions other than forms that arise in your consciousness it all arises in your consciousness or in consciousness in that vast space or that the light of consciousness that is formless you can't say there it is or i have it so when you notice the stillness in between and underneath the words that you're listening to now then you are listening to the words and noticing at the same time a stillness that is the transcendent dimension and that is self-realization but really we only we it doesn't mean that you are i wouldn't say that you are self-realized to say a person is self-realized would imply that he or she lives continuously knowing that dimension in every situation but it always starts it's here and now this is the where the possibility opens up not at some future point and this dimension is what in the buddhists i if i remember correctly sometimes call it the other shore the other shore like a river you're crossing the river to the other shore and there's the scripture i believe i remember correctly it says gatte gatte paragate gone gone to the farthest shore or to the other shore describing the inner shift from being identified continuously with all the forms that continuously arise in consciousness hypnotized by them hypnotized by every thought that arises and follow it wherever it takes you and then another thought comes and look at me i'm so important this you need to think about more from this now oh oh this is hypnotized so most humans are hypnotized by their own minds or by the ultimately it's the human mind the collective mind sleepwalking another word dreaming another word all describes the same state whatever you want to call it sleepwalking hypnotized dreaming because nobody has told them that that there is another dimension there and all they have to do is pay attention and notice it isn't it strange that that basically is still unknown despite this old scriptures that point to it in various um traditions but it's not that unknown anymore because more and more people are beginning to realize the truth of it in their own lives in themselves please i've been looking for so long i only have a few more years to live still haven't found it and i say the looking is it asking is the ability to ask is wonderful um please thank you the um because if they if you're truly asking there is as you there's a space of openness if you're truly asking you you voluntarily enter the state of not knowing so and this is a wonderful ability to ask whatever it is so that you become a space you can ask a person something you can ask the universe something and but there needs to be the receptivity if you can ask any kinds of questions but the question needs to be the question needs to come out of the spaciousness of which is there when you truly ask there are many people who ask questions and there's not the openness to receive the answer and that is not true asking but to put yourself in this basically it's connected with the state of not knowing so that you can and that's the part of the state of awareness is that you're an aspect of it is that you're in that state of not knowing conceptually so there is a there's nothing more beautiful than asking a question and if it's directed to other human beings then people love to be asked true questions and they can feel whether there is an openness there or whether you have certain expectations as far as the answer is concerned so that in itself is a spiritual great spiritual practice to ask of course there are certain questions that do not require an answer not all answers are necessarily conceptual answers they may when there's this the non-conceptual space the answer may come as an intuition as a realization that you may not yet before be able to formulate conceptually you just suddenly know but you can't explain what it is that you know and that certainly applies to your sense of who you are which is you suddenly there's a deep knowing inside yourself perhaps because you asked yourself the question who am i and that's a beautiful question it creates the openness and the and then you start to investigate your attention arises who have we talked about that before but this is here relevant in this context you ask who am i question mark and there is a kind of looking but it's not looking visually there is a kind of searching there is the attention arises right now the attention arises who am i and it's looking and suddenly it realizes what you're looking for is in the looking or in other words you are what you're looking for the very looking the very question which becomes a non-conceptual question is the answer so when you ask who am i there's just a silent presence which is that you're looking for the answer and then suddenly you realize that presence that arises the alertness that is there looking is it so the search and the object of the search become a one so if you're looking for yourself the looking is yourself that's wonderful so that is the ultimate secret i'm glad i got a chance to say it before the end of the retreat and that is just it's miraculous thank you so people sometimes come to me please help me find god or please help me find myself or please help me find the place where i and god merge please find help me find my place where i know myself as the source as an expression of the i'm looking for god and i've had some people have been looking desperately for 30 40 years looking please help me they say please i've been looking for so long i only have a few more years to live still haven't found it and i say the looking is it haha it's always been there in the in the consciousness that you called looking you are it oh some got it some didn't get it and they're still looking not knowing that they already found it a positive thought is much less likely to become obsessive some that you can't get rid of than a negative thought well the first thing i think that would anybody would probably say it's more pleasant to have nice thoughts than negative thoughts it feels better certainly the body likes it more too because negative thoughts you use the negative to influence the body in some way obstructing the energy flow you can test it out for yourself when you feel stressed or got into repetitive negative thoughts then your body doesn't like it it reacts even mainstream medicine is discovering there is a link between well some still say no but there is a link between your predominant state of mind or consciousness and the physical functioning not that now you may also find that negative thoughts proliferate and multiply much more readily than positive thoughts the negative thought wants to proliferate and it wants and it wants to produce more negative thoughts so and then you may find a positive thought is quite happy to stand alone there isn't the the pull towards proliferation of more more of itself a positive thought is much less likely to become obsessive some that you can't get rid of than a negative thought so when you are trapped in the mind it's very rare if ever happens that you are trapped in obsessive good thoughts you are usually trapped in obsessive negative thoughts because that is what negative thoughts love to do it love they love to take you over they want to for some reason they're like certain insects that suddenly reproduce and become from one you get they give birth to 50 and the 50 give birth to another 50 and suddenly you have millions and billions of them and so the difference a fundamental difference then is a negative thought is actually first makes you feel better is easier to experience that which follows the thought because often after negative thought you just experience the reality of what the thought just pointed to life is beautiful the person here mentions as an example of a of a positive thought life is beautiful what's wrong with that thought because after that thought you're actually going to have a certain experience of life being beautiful so the thought was no more than a pointer a sign post and that's perfectly fine you use thought as a pointer it does not absorb all your attention as a thought it's quite happy to be just a pointer life is beautiful and then perhaps for the next few minutes you appreciate everything that is around you and it becomes a true experience so as a pointer it can work beautifully and the negative one is just one and after another after another it becomes obsessive so but even if you change all your thinking from negative to positive if the most vital thing is to realize that which is beyond all thought positive thought in itself is not yet liberating it doesn't liberate you can be nice but it doesn't liberate you only to find the place that is beyond all thought liberates you now does that free you from negative thoughts yes after a while your the negative thoughts need your identification which means your unconsciousness in order to proliferate continuously in your life it's only if you identified with them you give them your total attention in fact it's not only that you become them they come out of your mouth when you speak they're in your thoughts they take you over they possess you you become them and that's how they continue to grow and grow and take over your life and it can happen some thoughts or thought patterns have the same function in the human mind in many cases as a virus has in the body a virus can proliferate and takes over the body and so there are many mental viruses that people get taken over by and can't get rid of sometimes you have that virus the whole lifetime persistent deep-seated negative thoughts that occupy either your entire mind or a particular section of your mind and sometimes the virus that can take over can take over collectively an entire collective entity of human beings be it a nation or a tribe or a religion or a section within a religion it can be a political movement that suddenly has all the answers and knows who where the enemies are it happened when national socialism in germany was an infection of a collective mental virus soviet communism which started of course with good intentions but of course no that had been absolutely no change in consciousness so good intentions are not enough unless there's a shift in consciousness good intentions will lead you to more suffering if there's no shift in consciousness soviet communism became an awful thing and it took over as again a collective mental virus china under Mao Zedong a collective mental virus millions and millions died in china in the soviet commission obviously nazi germany millions and millions in under Mao Zedong children would denounce their parents if they child was unhappy with their parents they would go to somebody at school and say my parents are saying this and that the next day they would be taken away to a labor camp and never be seen again total insanity so a collective flowers were declared illegal they had to tear out all the flowers bourgeois infection we don't want flowers and many just countless things being taken over by a mental an entire nation being taken over by a mental obsessed with certain mind forms and then it passes it doesn't it it lasted can last a couple of decades in soviet communism lasted fairly long national socialism the 1000 year rise lasted i can't don't know 15 years or something so it it runs its course and then like a virus infection after a while the virus disappears it's and a semblance of sanity returns certainly sanity compared to what was there before there's still there's still the normal insanity that's part of the normal state of consciousness but not the extreme unconsciousness that can take over when thought form becomes a virus and of course it happens to individuals they have then they interpret the world through their mental virus you might have certain ideas if you go on the internet too much and you you might see things that suddenly put the trans the the virus infection can happen by looking up certain things on the internet and you suddenly believe totally in what this it could be a total fantasy but it looks so convincing that it it becomes a thought form in your mind and then from there it grows and after that you only have contact with those people who are also infected by that thought form and you think that becomes a new reality that is the case with many conspiracy theories now i'm not saying that one out of 10 20 or 50 conspiracy theories may not be correct it could it'll be but many of them are fictitious constructs but of course the world is pretty insane so it's probably more insane than you realize and that includes particularly politicians and political power play and so on so i'm not denying all that absolutely there is no conspiracy there are quite mad things happening that we don't know about and yet i wouldn't go that way even if it's true don't get drawn into that your job is to be present your job is to embody a different state of consciousness you cannot fight unconsciousness on its own level you have to rise above unconsciousness so good thoughts yes good thoughts are preferable to bad thoughts but then go beyond thought also then negative thoughts will lessen in your life even if you've been around for a long time as more presence arises good thoughts can arise naturally and a lot of your consciousness is no longer dependent on what thoughts you have there's just more presence and you appreciate life through presence rather than trying to convince yourself that you should appreciate life you appreciate life directly gratefulness is another important thing gratitude is of course wonderful a very transformative gratitude implies a deep appreciation of what you are perceiving around you whether or not you have the thought in your mind that accompanies that that says thank you it's secondary and after a while you don't need thank you anymore but when you first practice gratitude thankful can be helpful when you say some beautiful thank you for things that otherwise you wouldn't even acknowledge thank you for how this the light reflects off this table thank you for this shiny clock i know it's not real gold but it shines beautifully thank you for this amazing substance that we call water got these little like tiny bubbles in it and here it is i can look at it drink it it's alive it's an amazing thing and you can appreciate it it's it's it's filled with light life giving substance why not appreciate it so and whether or not you say thank you it's up to you it's thank you is not the main the main thing is the the act of giving it attention that again is perceiving it through presence and then everything is something to be valued that's around you so you go and that's wonderful spiritual practice and of course for a while it's a spiritual practice then it becomes second nature that it's how you live so there is some association with certain thoughts yes expressing gratitude but it's not the main thing the thoughts are more like pointers towards that which is beyond thought but in many people's lives the beginning of spiritual practice and realization is that they suddenly realize how much they've been trapped in negative thinking over past years and they suddenly wake up to their own thought processes whereas before they were trapped in their own thought processes that's the beginning of spiritual awakening if you realize what kind of thought processes have been predominant in your life over the past few years on every day through which you interpret other people the world yourself your life and so on and that's an amazing jump because it implies suddenly awareness or presence has emerged my emotions and thoughts are mostly occupied with worry and guilt about my daughter's marriage and children i feel the need to often tell her and her husband how to do things better and bring up their kids better it feels that this destroys my life i mentioned that kind of thing briefly in new earth i believe that to be a parent is a function an important function for many people it's not only a function they identify with the function of being a parent then it becomes a role that you grow into that it gets hold of you and then you remain a parent because that's become part of your ego function it becomes a role that you cannot get out of and even when your children are already adults might be 30 years old you still are forced to act out the role of parent and that does usually does not have a good effect on the relationship and it is quite possible that you know better or it is possible that you just think that you know better but in either case perhaps yes you have more life experience you've seen more things so why aren't they listening to you because they want to be free so to give to let children go to let go of your identity of parent after you have fulfilled the function of parent and you have to start doing that as when your children reach adolescence gradually you have to let go you have to allow them to make mistakes advice yes up to a certain age you still can impose your will but not for too long but then they reach 16 17 18 if you're still trying to impose your will when they're 18 19 things get problematic so you can still guide diplomatically gently but then realize they will go their own way and they will and must make mistakes yes so that's that can be a significant letting go which requires a certain amount of consciousness if you have been identified with a role of being a parent because that's become part of your the ego identity has a certain inertia to it it does not want to let go of whatever its identity is every psychotherapist knows that patients come to him or clients whatever they're called and there's always a point is reached when the in many cases the patient or client sees the possibility of going beyond certain types of dysfunctional behavior or misery but they are attached to their unhappiness because it's become part of their sense of self and that is often a critical point in therapy and often clients or patients disappear just as they reach the point that there's a possibility of transcending these limitations because the ego feels i need to hang i'm going to lose myself so what you need here is presence so and especially self-observation rather than focusing all your attention on what your children are doing with their children and so on and how what they can do better put at least as much or more attention into the workings of your mind and see how it is associated with not being able to let go of the role of parent so you know and here you say your emotions and thoughts are mostly occupied with worry and guilt about my daughter's marriage and children so it's all even when you're not seeing them you're thinking about it now this is just another example of the uncontrolled use of mind which is not a use of mind you are being used by the egoic mind is there enough awareness in you you have to ask yourself and verify it in your own experience is there enough awareness in you when this happens again you start thinking about her worrying about her they're making mistakes at that moment are you able to know what's that this is what your mind is doing and perhaps in the past that wasn't possible perhaps after this retreat your awareness has grown so the awareness can be there when the mind does its usual thing and then you recognize that actually it serves no useful purpose to worry about this except to keep this identity alive in you you're not helping them by boring and you're probably not helping them by giving them advice that they don't want so to recognize the futility of what the mind is doing this this is so futile isn't it that's still a thought but it comes from the awareness that's a true thought the rest are unconscious thoughts you can have true thoughts that arise out of awareness and often those true thoughts have something to say about the unconscious thoughts say this is so crazy do i want to do this for the rest of my life i'd rather not think these thoughts anymore and therefore i will put my attention on the fact that i'm breathing and i'll put my attention on looking at the sky and be in the present moment and then a few minutes later you you will find the thoughts trying to creep in again and they want your attention one little thought comes come this way and you watch that okay i'm not going there again sorry i've had it for years it's had solved no purpose just made me unhappy made my relationship with my daughter unpleasant i don't want it anymore that's thanks but you've been very kind thank you and then you choose to put your attention on something else your inner body the aliveness and preferably present moment and preferably not annihilate yourself by having a few drinks i mean those kind of drinks that annihilate you that doesn't work you don't need that and another way of annihilating your own thoughts is by turning on the tv now you may notice interesting thing when you turn on the tv you're not thinking anymore so one could think that occasional thoughts may come in but you could actually sit there in a trance like state for a whole hour watching whatever is there and even changing channels and you would still be in a trance like state and you can't even get out you know there's nothing because there's always the next channel might have something interesting and even if it's every channel is totally uninteresting there's always what about the next one and you're in a trance like state in which actually you might think oh isn't that good my i'm not thinking anymore but you have fallen below thought and if you if you're actually watching a program a sitcom or whatever it is then you are linking into the thoughts on the screen that people are talking there's drama on the screen you're linking into you're not free of thought you're free of personalized thought but you exchange personalized thought for that kind of thought so that's not the way to go to become free of dysfunctional thinking because that's just another way of falling below thinking so you need to rise above thinking it could be other things that plague you on a daily basis certain types of thoughts that recur that if you look at them clearly fulfill no purpose except to make you unhappy and to strengthen your fictitious sense of identity so yes your psychological function you're not a mother anymore not as it's not your identity but biologically yes you are the mother for this daughter but but your your identity is not being a mother anymore you have to transcend that limited identity you may go to a workshop a new age workshop and say where they teach you i'm happy i'm happy and then you can you can kind of you go i'm really enjoying this but you're not so can you can you at least can you accept i've been a model for 10 years somewhere deep inside i kept hoping for a big break it never came or has yet to come is it time to move on to another job if this job is not making me money it's time to move to another job if this job is not enjoyable anymore if you're unable to enjoy what you're doing then it's time to move to another job but you have to look to see whether your inability to enjoy the job you're doing now has something to do with the particular job you're doing or has more to do with your inability to enjoy the present moment in which case the next job that you find you will also not enjoy so if you can't enjoy your job either one of these is true either there is something for you to change there's something inherently not right anymore with this particular job does no longer corresponds to what to who you are or your state of consciousness or you cannot enjoy your job because you haven't learned yet to be present enough to enjoy what you're doing now and you always think oh the next one is going to be much better and if you don't know which one it is of those two you may have to get another job and then see if you can enjoy that one many jobs that the mind tells you cannot be enjoyed actually can be enjoyed also the mind telling you if you enjoy this job that you do you really don't want this job to be permanent and if the mind tells you no if i enjoy this job i'll be stuck with it for the rest of my life and i don't want to be stuck with it let's say you you got a you got a job working working in a diner as a waiter or waitress but you really want to get your job as an actress or you really want to be a writer you really want to be whatever you want to be a senator successor of donald trump whatever your mind says and so the mind says like i'm not going to enjoy this job because i really want to be somewhere else and if i enjoy it then i'll really be stuck but you may find that the opposite is the case if you it it is freeing to enjoy what you are doing even if it's not something that you would want to do for the rest of your life all you have to do is enjoy the present moment your energy field then shifts and when this energy field energy field shifts you become open to life only if you no longer resist life you cannot be open to life the greater consciousness coming through you if you resist life and you resist life if you resist or resent the present moment that's where life is so the shift happens you need to be in the state of alignment with the present moment no matter what activity you are doing in the present moment and if you absolutely cannot be in alignment with the present moment you need to walk out so if i got a job as a bartender in a disco i would i would walk out i could surrender if they shut me in there and it's impossible for me to leave the building i would still surrender but since there is still a door that is i can open i would walk out because although i know how to surrender i wouldn't want to surrender there if i can help it so when we use the expression to enjoy what you do we get this little word joy here again enjoy to enjoy what is the english language to enjoy what you do so when you enjoy what you do joy arises from within and i would say it's not the doing it looks as if what you do perhaps gave you joy but it's really your presence in the doing that allows the joy to to come from within you and then it flows into what you do so rather than the doing giving you joy because you are present in the doing the joy arises from within and it flows into what you do and so you can say i enjoy this work i enjoy doing this now if you cannot enjoy it try first just to accept it then this is what you're doing in this moment let's say you start off with you're working at dennis or you're not from the united states um dennis is a chain of diners throughout the states not bad okay often there's nothing else if you're driving along you work at let's say you'd work and you absolutely are resistance you don't really want to be there but you have to earn money you are a graduate let's imagine you're a graduate you look you've applied for jobs but because of the recession you can't get any jobs and you've had 50 rejections and you're getting frustrated and here you are stuck in this menial job what did i study for all those those years all for nothing all these thoughts go through your head while you're serving people okay and then you come into contact with the spiritual teaching or this teaching that points to the possibility of enjoying what you do and you say i i can't enjoy that okay then try something else can you at least accept that right now this is what you do don't try to get yourself to enjoy it it might become unnatural you might you might play a role to yourself you may go to a workshop a new age workshop and say where they teach you i'm happy i'm happy and then you can you can kind of you go i'm really enjoying this but you're not so can you can you at least can you accept that this is what you're doing right now not for the rest of your life not even perhaps for the whole year who knows but just right now this is all there is right now so i might as well accept that this is what i'm doing right now can you accept it you can't enjoy it okay i can try that feels already better feels much better and sometimes from there before you know it there is no clear dividing line between acceptance and enjoyment somewhere they merge so if you begin with acceptance you may find suddenly there's even some enjoyment there acceptance just means there is an absence of resistance you're just well that's what is and that can sometimes take you suddenly before you know it there's an enjoyment that arises oh so if you think you can't enjoy don't force yourself to enjoy that doesn't work except that's all first this is what is right now i talked about that in the new earth where i had three modalities it's just come back to you i haven't read the book in a long time three modalities of doing you can have acceptance you can have enjoyment or the most intense is then this is usually when there's a creative process happening through you i call it enthusiasm enthusiasm is an intense intense energy stream that flows is part of creativity and so if you are in order to live consciously and sanely you have to be in either one of these three modalities if you're neither in acceptance nor enjoyment nor enthusiasm you are somewhere in dysfunction and you're creating unhappiness and suffering for yourself and that usually implies you're also creating suffering for others because unhappy humans make others unhappy too so if you cannot accept enjoy or be in enthusiasm remove yourself remove yourself and then try again somewhere else but acceptance in a way is the most accessible of course to just try that

[Speaker 6] (6:38:23 - 6:39:28)
just one one comment uh uh for the benefit of everybody is that uh in the indian custom today is the day of the full moon and and on that day consciousness is enlivened the most and a lot of knowledge and energy and bliss comes from the guru so you're our guru today so we want to thank you for sharing that enlivened consciousness with us so that's one comment and i had one question and that is that uh uh in order to maintain the unity and the diversity all the time uh would it be advisable to cut down activity and make your life a lot more simple with less belongings because according to nisargadatta one of the things he comments is that you should give up pretty much everything in life and maintain as little as possible and your sole purpose in life should be just enlivenment of your own self and consciousness okay thank you thank you

[Speaker 1] (6:39:32 - 7:58:25)
of course it's true that many people have many superfluous things they're not only concerned with innumerable things that are ultimately superfluous they also try to accumulate more and more things that are ultimately superfluous but the liberation does not lie in whether or not you have things but it's more important what is your inner relationship to what you have talking for a moment about things that you possess or acquire another aspect of your question of course is things that you do activities that you are engaged in we have the two aspects of as far as activities are concerned many people in this our civilization are hyperactive they are continuously active they are stressed almost continuously they're pursuing one thing after another and then they never arrive there's always the next thing to do and the next thing and then the hurry with everything that's the stress disease of our civilization and that's a form of madness that has to be relinquished because it's an insane way to live now people might say well i'm going to lose my job if i'm not if i'm not stressed and or if i don't do what i'm supposed to do and i cannot do what i'm supposed to do without stress because there's always deadlines one deadline after another another aspect of living in our civilization is that you get continuous deadlines for obscure reasons publishers say the book has to be out by such and such a date what why does it have to be out by such and such a day can't you wait until the book is mature and complete no no we have all the things i don't know what the justifications are but they always say it has to be out you need to hurry it's insane and so many things that our civilization produces are

rushed rushed jobs one could say very rushed they're not fully matured decisions are taken before they even know fully whether that is all the facts that involve the decision they did on tv executives they put on a show and then they look at the what are the audience number the numbers and if it's not kind of no take it off take it off if they'd given it a chance it might have developed into something great or employees companies not doing well okay we have to sack a thousand people do it now but no there's no no spaciousness at all there's only rushed decision making all insane so to bring not to be part of that is essential your state of consciousness you need to it's not easy living in this world to say i'm not going to live in this way i will do what is required of me but i won't be part of the madness i'll do what i can i'll do it as well as i can but i'm not going to live the rest of my life in a state of stress you just give attention to whatever it is you're doing now and see if you can do it well not looking to the fruit of the action do it now reducing unnecessary activities but more important than that is reducing the unnecessary mind activity because really that's where the whole thing originates because the mind is becoming more and more active what is being projected is external activity so a hyperactive mind produces a hyperactive life what's the next thought what's the next thing really what's the next thought about what i have to do and the next thought and so you're rushing after one thought after another trying to capture this and this and this so it goes back to the mind so it needs to be tackled on the inner level primarily rather than the outer if you do not come to grips with or bring awareness to your hyperactive mind there isn't that much you can do on the outer level because you will continuously be driven by the hyperactive mind into all kinds of activities many of them quite useless even useless even even people who have jobs hyper they're still doing many things that are quite unnecessary superfluous just hyperactive can't stop doing you have to stop doing you inability to just be so reducing the hyperactive mind slowing that down is of the essence that's the most important part of it and then that will then manifest in your active life so that they will the hyperactivity will not be there you will be actually more effective in what you do but you do fewer things but you do them better than countless things half done because you're always not not enough time to really do it well of course that's all mind mind and that's the dilemma is our whole civilization is in that dysfunctional state so to take yourself out of the dysfunctional state so to speak not not physically but internally is not easy it's a sort it's a challenge because you're surrounded by a certain state of consciousness the collective consciousness that you move in so it's your job to be awake enough so that you gain don't get drawn into that state of consciousness which really should be called state of unconsciousness the collective so that some sanity comes into this world through you and so that's the reduction of activity begins with the reduction of thought in your hyperactive mind and then automatically then that will flow into reduction of activity now we come to the second part that's to do with things or acquiring things as some people recommend you should get rid of as many things as possible in your life now i'm speaking as somebody who has relatively few things although i have more things now than i ever had before in my life and that's strange because usually it goes the other way when as you get older you gradually let go but life has so strange that now i have more material possessions although not vast amount but more than before i don't feel particularly attached to any one thing in other words if it disappeared it would be okay that's fine so it's not and i believe not everybody it's not for everybody to let go of things on the physical level it's not even necessary you need to examine what your inner relationship to the things that surround you is whether there is an identification with possessions or whether you simply appreciate something beautiful that is in your life without the attachment to it or the it giving you as an enhanced sense of self as it often is the case and you need to see whether you are whether there's some kind of acquisitive tendency in you that propels you to buy or acquire more and more and more or whether you're simply just happy with what is already there and simply appreciate what's there or do you compulsively go to the shopping malls every weekend and look for something to buy to fill up this emptiness you feel inside and just the action of buying something confirms that you are somebody to the ego it feels there's nothing wrong with buying you can buy something beautiful but not as an addictive thing as a compulsive thing so it's finding a right relationship with the external world not an addictive relationship but a free relationship the appreciation of nice things is it is not not something that is non-spiritual it's actually spiritual to appreciate nice things whether you call the nice things mine or whether it's not yours for me sometimes it's enough well not anymore when i lived in london i would sometimes walk around the streets and look in shop windows and love in regent street or bond street and look at the nice things in the windows and wow that's beautiful i neither had the money nor the desire to buy these things but i loved i loved it now if i had had the money i might have bought an occasional thing so it would be nice to have that at home and look at it and feel its presence perhaps it was made with attention and care why not appreciate beautiful things the attachment is what keeps you unconscious so i happen to know your home and i know that you are surrounded by beautiful things so uh and i also believe that although you are surrounded by beautiful things you're you you don't have a enormous attachment to those things i can sense that there's a certain spaciousness there between you and that there's a simple appreciation of it and that is fine now if the time comes in your life where you feel from within the urge comes to leave even that behind although you may not be attached but you at some point in your life it is possible that you may feel now i want to live in totally simple surroundings i just want to not have things anymore at all that's if it comes that's fine and then you will take action you might remove yourself or you might give away all the beautiful things that fill up your house and just be in the empty relatively empty space who knows if that comes to you at some point that's fine too but primarily really is what your inner relationship is to the outer and so i'm right now i'm using certain concepts as signposts towards presence but you may notice especially if and many of you are already going through this awakening process you may notice in a way that you cannot explain as i mentioned these words there is a kind of recognition in you of what i'm talking about but you would not be able to perhaps explain it because as i talk about presence as a state of consciousness as i talk about it there's not only the words which are signposts that are pointing towards it but there's also underlying the words and in between the words there is already that state of presence and this is then the hidden dimension of our gathering here the hidden dimension of this gathering is deeper than words and this is why sometimes i slow down a bit it just happens so that you don't attach excessive importance or give excessive attention to the words they are helpful but don't be like somebody who collects signposts and has a wonderful collection let's say the signposts say rome or mecca and they point that way and say oh this is a beautiful signpost i'm going to keep this and talk about it then after a while you confuse the signpost with the destination so you don't become a collector of signposts because then you become intellectually very knowledgeable perhaps about spirituality but you're like the proverbial person who writes a phd about honey without ever having tasted honey so there is a there is a knowing the possibility in you of accessing and knowing that is non-conceptual and this is completely overlooked in our civilization almost completely because our civilization encourages the ability even already in young children to conceptualize and to to analyze and to think and be the teacher asked a question and the best students according to the educational system are those that immediately go huh i know that's that's it and then you begin to mistake names for the deeper reality of things it starts with something like when the child learns language and the child asks the parent what's that the child is looking at a big something doesn't know yet what it is what's that and the dad or mom says that's an oak tree oh oak tree okay thanks dad and from then on whenever the child looks at that kind of tree he says oh that's an oak tree and you confuse the naming with what it is in many many cases when when you think you know it's only the illusion of knowledge because you've attached labels to things and the moment the mind attaches a label to a thing the mind says oh now i know dad how do birds find their way when they migrate every year from here to south america and how do they find their way back to their nesting grounds the following year how is that possible dad please tell me and the dad says oh that's easy instinct oh okay you've attached a label now you think you know how it works oh it's by instinct they find then the exam comes and right by instinct that birds find oh great we give it an a plus so part of this awakening of consciousness is to realize that there is a whole hidden until now or until recently there is a whole dimension of consciousness in you that you had been unaware of that you had always overlooked the whole dimension that actually our whole civilization is continuously encouraging you to overlook just don't look there and there are many ways in which we can approach talking about it but more importantly of course we are here to deepen our experience of that dimension and that dimension of consciousness which in spiritual traditions all the ancient teachers have pointed to it using different kinds of signposts which of course the collectors of signposts say no this signpost is totally different from that one look they're totally different writing on it and let's analyze it even more not realizing they point exactly the same way so the ancient teachings and teachers have spoken about it in various ways whether they talk about liberation awakening salvation or the buddha in negative terms the the end of suffering or another term the buddha used is emptiness which is not very inspiring as you might have noticed but it's very deep if the buddha says emptiness he's giving you a signpost that is very hard to to take and say i believe in this signpost because it's a negative term but he's pointing to a certain state of consciousness is pointing to a certain realization and he calls it emptiness very wise because this discourages people from worshiping the signpost you can worship the kingdom of heaven it's the term that jesus used by the way they talk about exactly the same thing as you'll see in about two minutes they talk about exactly the same thing but the buddha's one of the key terms in buddhism is sunyata which means empty translated as emptiness that's an interesting choice of signposts because you cannot worship or make an idol out of emptiness but you can make an idol out of the kingdom of heaven because then you can say or where is it it is somewhere probably up there and when am i going to get there so you create space and time and then the kingdom of heaven a certain location and you can you can even be becomes part of your your thought structure and you begin to worship the kingdom of heaven not realizing that it's a signpost so emptiness the buddhist term emptiness is closely related to the kingdom of heaven of jesus in churches you they won't explain it to you of course it's it's closely related my translation of emptiness is spaciousness and my translation of the kingdom of heaven is kingdom in modern terminology is dimension heaven is the vastness of the sky this vastness of the sky the sky stands for spaciousness the dimension of spaciousness is the kingdom of heaven which is buddha's emptiness or spaciousness same same thing or the same no thing and what is this thing what is this dimension of spaciousness it is a dimension within you it is a dimension of consciousness that is possible for humans to access although in most humans it only exists in seed form as a potential not that many humans have actually even began to realize that that dimension exists in them except you and that's why you're here but that is the look that also you can practice it is the look that where you're not a person you're just a presence i've been looking at this folder it has questions in it people submit lots of questions so i will answer perhaps a few and from tomorrow we are open or i am open to receiving questions from you that arise spontaneously or that you've kept at the back of your mind for a long time wanting to ask and it still hasn't dissolved it's beautiful by the way if a question dissolves that you've had which means well you could still ask it but it's no longer of vital importance sometime in the 1930s a british writer went to india i believe his name was paul brunton he went to india to visit the living masters and interview them and then write a book about them and he did and one of the masters he visited was ramana maharshi at the time not known in the west at all and to limit only to a limited extent in india and so when he went in to see ramana maharshi with his list a long list of questions for his book and ramana maharshi just looked at him there are some photos around with ramana maharshi looking at you especially one that's very beautiful and so he just looks you can feel when he looks even on that photo he's not thinking whatsoever there's no thought whatsoever in his mind there's just spaciousness but but it's not not a look of a zombie it's it's presence spacious presence well you can have that now please just there's nobody there looking there's just consciousness nobody in particular just consciousness so it's not not a person looking and that's uh that's the energy transmission also happens in the way it cannot happen when a person is looking at you because that means the looking happens through the veil of conditioning that is the person mental emotional conditioning but here the looking is come straight from the depths of consciousness unconditioned consciousness so it's just the light looking so paul brunton came to see me into ramana maharshi's room and he just ramana hashi just looked at him and suddenly paul brunton had no no longer any desire to ask his questions and they sat in silence together for 20 minutes or 30 minutes i don't remember and then paul brunton thanked him and left the room that was the interview this happened again a few years later the famous british author somerset maugham visited india and he had probably read paul brunton's book that in the meantime had been published where he wrote very favorably about ramana maharshi who was the one teacher that impressed him most so somerset maugham came to experience the presence of this master probably to write about him because whatever somerset maugham did and whoever he met he would write about them later he continuously was collecting notes about making notes about people and just before ramana maharshi came into his room it was so hot there he fainted and they not sorry not ramana hashi somerset maugham fainted they carried him into a room to put him on a bed there to regain consciousness and then they told ramana mahashi there's a famous british author who came to see you but he fainted and ramana mahashi said okay i'll go to where he is and when somerset maugham opened his eyes there was ramana mahashi sitting looking at him uh and again or no words were spoken except i remember correctly they looked at each other and then ramana mahashi said something like silence is the best speech and that was about it that was the meeting of the famous british author with the spiritual master and of course yes he did write a book and ramana mahashi appears as a character in that book and although he doesn't of course under a different name as a master and if you're interested the book is called the razor's edge the novel but that is the look that also you can practice it is the look that where you're not a person you're just a presence and when you look at a tree or the sky or a flower or another person if that's not too difficult if you look at them and there's no mind activity just just an underlying presence as the backdrop so to speak to your sense perception then at that moment you're not a person looking at the world you are consciousness looking ultimately at itself its own creations because everything is an is consciousness that has taken a particular form a temporary form there's only the one underlying all forms and in that looking there's not only the absence of the person there is also the presence of presence and that means whatever you are looking at you sense something that is deeper than the surface appearance of that thing that you are looking at in the case of a plant or a flower yes there is the surface beauty of the flower or the plant but there is also something that the eye cannot see and there is a beautiful quote that is by belief from a book called I think the little prince Saint-Exupéry said the author and there's a quote it says what is essential is invisible to the eye but what is essential is invisible to the eye the eye this eye uh this does not only refer to the visual sense it also refers to all the other senses so what is essential the essence of things of human beings of yourself of a tree of a dog the essence of the thing is you cannot see or perceive with the senses so if you only perceive through the conditioned mind as the person then all you ever see or perceive with the other senses is the surface never the essence of that life form so what is essential is invisible to the eye how can you become aware of that which is beyond the sense perception that the deeper dimension of things which for many humans alive now does not exist and the majority of scientists would probably there are maybe some exceptions but Einstein was an exception but the majority of scientists would probably deny that there is such a thing as a deeper dimension for things but there eventually they will come around if not this generation when this generation is dead the next one will come around so then you look at something at a tree a flower and that presence of presence through which you're looking recognizes something of itself in that which you're looking at and that is the dimension of depths and that is where you feel connected or a better word where you feel a that sense of oneness with that which you are looking at no longer the separation when you're looking through the conditioned mind as a person there's always a sense of separateness there's whatever you're looking at is the other there's always a sense of otherness and that sense of otherness is the absence of love in the deepest sense you cannot love the other in that state of consciousness you can try or you might convince yourself for a while that it's working but it won't last so to sense something deeper with that is within that is the essence of that life form that is that adds a depth to all your perceptions it's no longer a surface reality everything has a depth to it and that depth in traditional spirituality is called sacredness and every human suffers every life form suffers because life is hard and challenging and precarious for every life form from the moment life comes into being life is challenging and precarious for humans for animals for plants every life form encounters obstacles in its attempt to grow and expand and it continuously encounters obstacles to its expansion every human in one form or another if you come into this world very quickly you'll find obstacles seeming obstacles to your expansion and growth and well-being and flowering i think you can all if you think about your so-called life how many obstacles life seems to have put in your path towards happiness and some people perceive life as life continuously is sabotaging my attempts to find happiness why is that and then they have these strange theories that god is against me or whatever the theory is but it does seem like and this is related to the buddhist term dukkha or suffering wherever you go you will find life is sometimes helpful and then obstacles again and all and this is perceived as some people believe if you only practice positive thinking continuously you will no longer encounter obstacles but that unfortunately is not the case positive thinking is a great thing can be extremely helpful and bring about certain shifts in you but it does not free you from experiencing the obstacles that life will put on you in your path and the challenges that come so those obstacles whether they come in the form of loss or illness or relationship problems many of them arise from their own mind because your mind creates an enormous amount of problems that are quite unnecessary but the mind doesn't know that so the mind creates an enormous amount of conflict that is unnecessary in your life that's one kind of obstacle is your own mind then and again you are you need to experience the consequences of the obstacles that your own mind creates the conflicts and the unnecessary problems that your own mind because you identified with the mind creates you need to experience the suffering that you create for yourself out of that unconsciousness of unconsciousness means completely identifying with the mind the egoic mind which in many cases transforms challenges which could be solved easily into much bigger problems so you have the your mind created obstacles that you ultimately create yourself because you're not conscious enough and then you encounter suffering this is one level of suffering and this is you need to experience the suffering that comes through unconscious use of the mind in order to awaken it's only through the suffering that eventually you go can't take anymore as it happened to me when i was in bed one night and said i can't live with myself anymore and it's and then somehow i realized this myself that i couldn't live with anymore was an illusion an illusory entity and very unhappy mind created entity but before i realized that i had to go through this suffering for years and years so the suffering worked it fulfilled its purpose and then you have another level of suffering or obstacles obstacles come to you seemingly from the outside that suddenly you have an accident an illness that's a kind of outside it something seems to happen to you that you have not contributed to something happens somebody close to you dies as an accident many things can happen but you seem i haven't created that of course in new age it's very normal to say when things go wrong in your life the typical new age person will say how did you create that you slipped on a banana skin and broke your leg why did you create that how did you create that it's an interesting question i don't want to go into this whether even those obstacles or challenges that come to you not seemingly not from your own mind but from the outside did you still create that or not let's leave that aside i don't want to convince anybody one way or another i have a much more simple recipe here which goes like this instead of telling people you better look at your life and see why you created that or how you created that i say accept each moment as if you had created it accept each moment as if you had wanted it or caused it wanted it to happen i can't remember my own writings it's always not good to go into memory don't quote just present moment so but if you live whatever happens you accept this moment as if you had chosen that's the one i wrote accept accept each moment as if you had chosen it no that's a good recipe for working because if it already is the case you might as well accept whatever is as if you have chosen it because it's already here so i'm not telling people you chose it maybe you did maybe you didn't doesn't matter it still accept it as if you had chosen it that shifts things that your whole attitude to it shifts and it dissolves more quickly than whatever the obstacle is but let's go back to the suffering the first the suffering that arises from your own mind creates conflict and all those things that create suffering and then at some point you awaken and then what remains is the suffering that comes with having a body for example because eventually the body gets older no matter how much you go to the gym every day no matter how fantastic your nutrition is no matter how many pills for the longer life you take which is all fine and good but of course every form eventually dissolves and the time comes when the body can be perceived as a burden almost the older you get the more likely it is to happen and so of course you might then say old age isn't so bad if you consider the alternative which is you die younger and then you don't have to experience the body getting fragile and old but if you get old the body can become problematic a source of suffering potentially but the those challenges if approached correctly don't have to turn into suffering accept each moment as if you had chosen it if you can go with the isness of things there's no complaining entity that says something about being a victim and complaining how dreadful things are now i wish my mother had learned that lesson when she suffered in that way because she had always identified very much with her body good looking always nicely dressed going out and liked to be looked at very normal thing for many people and then the body got older and older and then hip problems and other fractures and this and got worse and worse and their unhappiness grow and grow not so much of limited movement but the identity that's so much was in the body that those tremendous suffering i tried to free her and occasionally there were moments when she could disidentify from body but very very brief and that is the destiny of many humans but this the suffering is really that every end every life form encounters the obstacles that every life form encounters whether they come in young at a younger age older age middle age in whatever form so these things are absolutely necessary without which there would be no human evolution whatsoever and no life form would ever evolve if the life form did not encounter obstacles so that which looks like an obstacle is actually always potentially an opening potentially it that seems to stop your progress in life always potentially can make you more conscious so you can use every obstacle that arises in your life if you can especially works especially quickly if you accept each moment as if you had chosen it and when it looks this moment is an obstacle you go with it instead of complaining or running away from it and then accept and then act if action is possible or don't act if no action is possible you identify with thinking and the identification with thinking becomes ego and there are many people in this world who are stuck with hostile life denying continuously critical and attacking entities that they carry in their head and they believe that is who they are to become free of ego means becoming free of thought identification with thought that's the end of the ego welcome to our live meditation i'm in denmark today we are only interested in one thing here for our live meditation and that is to sit together not physically together but nevertheless together in presence thinking is not important here as much as possible let go of thinking without any effort and realize that you are more fully yourself when you're not thinking and when you're not thinking you can realize what being is what it means to be and you can sense the being that you are which can be expressed as the first person singular of the verb to be i am so you sense or you are the presence prior to thinking the clear space of presence that's why we're here to be that to realize that we are that i don't think as i sit here the words just come out of the stillness there's no thinking prior to the words and as soon as a word has been uttered there's just presence or stillness so you can join me in that as i don't need to think you don't need to think right now but just be present the great teacher ramana maharshi who taught during the first half of the 20th century in india was once asked by a visitor to his ashram this question how do i know whether i'm making progress on the spiritual path and he said the degree of absence of thought is the only true criterion for your progress on the spiritual path the extent in other words to which you are free of thought in daily life you are still able to use thought whenever it's needed perfectly more efficiently than before more creatively because you have access to the unconditioned intelligence itself which is presence how long you can sit in meditation formal meditation is not a good criterion for progress on the spiritual path but to what extent presence comes into your daily life which initially may just mean little moments of presence in between all the doings of your life little moments of being awareness alertness alert stillness conscious consciously looking at something consciously listening consciously walking across the room consciously washing your hands which does not mean when you walk across the room you're thinking i am now crossing the room or when you look at something i'm now looking at that tree that you're not present yet it can be an intermediate step but the actual presence is when there's no background commentary and when there's virtually no background commentary throughout your life that is the awakened state there may still be fragments of thoughts saying this or that but basically or fundamentally free of the involuntary compulsive background commentary in your daily life that's an enormous evolutionary leap to live like that but you don't need to have that as some aim i want to be totally free just be free of background commentary now it's easier than to say throughout my life i want to be free of that or just do it now renounce unnecessary thinking be present instead then the ego diminishes and eventually cannot survive in you when you are present people have practiced traditionally all kinds of renunciations in spiritual life in christianity and buddhism and hinduism and so on and they're still being practiced in many cultures to some extent renunciation of possessions renunciation of your name let go of your old name adopt a new spiritual name renunciation of physical comforts exposing the body to discomfort but all these can be helpful but if the most basic renunciation is not known then the most basic attachment will still be there and that's attachment to your thoughts you haven't renounced unnecessary thinking setting aside a period for being present is traditionally called meditation so you could say that that's what we are doing here although we're not really doing anything all we are doing which is not a doing is realizing our presence realizing presence right now in different parts of the planet little points of consciousness waking up where before there was only a person there's no conscious presence arising in different parts of the planet at the same time and this of course has no form and there's no time past and future become irrelevant in presence and that's an amazing realization that who you essentially are a feeling of identity of essential identity does not need the future to complete itself it is already complete it does not need the past so you don't need past to know who you are that's a delusion that's a story you don't need future to finally arrive at some more complete version of yourself because presence is already complete you are already complete in presence one could say presence is the cream and whatever happens in time and whatever happens in future to you is the skimmed milk but once you know the cream and have the cream and skimmed milk is not that important anymore so as more presence arises you lose the fear of death which of course arises because you unconsciously think you need more time to be fully yourself of course the truth is you need to get out of time to be fully yourself so we are here relaxed and alert at the same time alertness does not require tension and to be free of tension does not mean that you're going towards sleep and at this moment who are you with no reference to your story the space of presence not a person you still look like a person from the outside so with this shift the person recedes and presence arises you don't lose anything real in this and what about my personal identity i don't want to lose that if you look more deeply at the bottom of what you feel is your personal identity there's the fact that right now you are conscious that's the foundation of what you sense and call your personal identity it's consciousness is your personal identity it gives light to the story of who you are which consists of thoughts and past past is thoughts the consciousness is the light behind your story and without it there would be nothing let's close our eyes for a moment and just continue to be present without any visual perception if thoughts interfere take your attention into the inner body feel the aliveness inside the body be present with every cell of the body presence of course transcends the body but it shines through the form open your eyes look around the room wherever you are and stay present be the awareness behind the perceptions innocent fresh perception alert perception and back at the screen as we finish our meditation you may want to sit a little longer in the stillness and when you then start moving again start doing things carry that presence as much as possible with you as i don't have my bell with me i will now simulate the bell as best i can

[Speaker 7] (7:58:32 - 7:58:54)
i think once is enough thank you

[Speaker 1] (7:59:23 - 8:06:55)
there was a man that many of you have heard of some of you read some of the teachings socrates he lived two thousand roughly two thousand five two thousand four hundred years ago in greece he never wrote anything his disciples later wrote down what they remembered and its main disciple was plato and plato then wrote the socratic dialogues uh we don't know of course whether what plato wrote was exactly what socrates taught in a way what plato wrote in plato's writing socrates is a literary character so the characteristic of platonic dialogues is that socrates asks questions his people who come to him for teaching he doesn't seem to immediately have the answer he asks questions and then the person answers and he gradually leads the person to the answer now in the dialogues which some of you may have read some of them not perhaps many people these days read plato the in the dialogues it the impression is given that socrates kind of manipulates a little bit the people who come to him and the impression is given that he already knows the answer he just pretends not to know the answer that's what comes across in the dialogues and i think that was that is the the character that plato created but i have i believe and i have evidence for this belief that that's not actually what happened i believe and i'll tell you in a minute why that plato actually started every teaching session from a place of not knowing the answer and so unlike the impression we get if you read if you read the platonic dialogues that he already knows he's just pretending not to know no how do i know this plato said i'm sorry socrates said they call me the wisest of all men and the reason why they call me the wisest of all men is that i'm the only one who knows that he knows nothing so and again when we read it retrospectively after having read the platonic dialogues we think oh he's just again some kind of affectation he's saying i i know nothing no i believe that is his genuine starting point was the ability to go into that state of not knowing rather than coming from already having accumulated knowledge just waiting to come out of his head and this is why his uh he was able to think creatively he actually taught you one could say almost he taught humanity how to think for the first time to think rationally but his thinking is creative it's fresh and new and it it was a process between him and the people who came to him there was an energy field that arose and out of this energy field the answers came sometimes they came through him sometimes they came through the people who came to him another interesting thing he said that's not reported in plato but written by another disciple of his called xenophone and he said that socrates frequently pointed out that he received counsel from a divine voice and again that's something that the western rationalists try to ignore they to them plato is the absolutely clear rational analytical conceptual thinker and they don't see because they don't know that dimension within themselves they don't see the depths out of which his thinking actually came so he said frequently as reported by xenophone that he received guidance from a divine voice socrates is not in the sense one doesn't get

the sense that some entity spoke through him but obviously he was referring to inspiration from a dimension within him that was beyond thinking beyond conceptualization beyond the rational thought so what we the impression we get of socrates is really we see half the story we see only the upper half of the iceberg well the iceberg actually is you see far less than half of it you see only a tiny fraction of him that was when we when these things are taught at universities and so on the the more important dimension is actually completely missed they only look at the upper what's he taught what's he saying but where did all that come from what was the state of consciousness out of which such a creative teaching such creative thinking could arise and so it is that most these dimensions the dimension of conceptualization of thinking is in everyone but the dimension of non-conceptual intelligence is also in everyone this mind-made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive to be free you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation

[Speaker 2] (8:07:28 - 8:18:25)
you know when i was a little girl i don't know what it is is i mean i do notice this in all in in most asian people that if they're not smiling they just look sad so when i was a kid you know and if i wasn't smiling they always say why do you look so sad and i'm like i don't think i'm sad you know smile smile you got such a pretty smile smile so i learned to hi even when i'm really sad i'll go hi hi hi yeah i'm fine you know we we take on these roles because people may have said something i mean i you know i did it and then i when i take on that role i actually lose that authentic self of of me that okay i might be this person that you know just looks sad but i'm not sad i mean you know it's i was trying to please somebody else make somebody else comfortable because they told me that it wasn't nice they didn't they weren't feeling good because i looked the way that i looked which appeared to them in their mind and interpretation that i was sad so i learned to keep smiling you know it's easy to do but it can be very exhausting if you hang around with a bunch of people all the time because i think i have to be like this that's why i don't hang around with anybody no i mean wow we just got to be ourselves and you know somebody told me i i was in a a body worker in california and we often just share and we talk because we really love talking with each other and and she told me this this story this man who used to come to her he was a very old gentleman and seeing that he was old she asked him wow you've lived so many years what what great wisdom can you share with me and he said don't believe in it what anybody says so it's not only don't believe what they say don't believe what your own mind says and don't believe the mask they wear you'll know something when it's just genuine because something in your body just melts you just feel it and when that melts because they're melted and then you melt you go oh wow this is nice it's not like this great excitement that happens it's just a nice feeling it's kind of like oh okay this is nice this is comfortable so in my uh on my retreats that i do sometimes i'll do an experiment with with the group and it's a smaller group than this so we can do a lot more experiments and stuff exercises but i will have them talk to each other just you know somebody that they don't know go up to them and just have a conversation with them right away it'll start off and that gets louder and louder and louder and louder and you just know that vibration of that energy is coming strictly from the mind that's how they're meeting each other and communicating is through the mind and then i'll go okay let's stop before you talk i want you to go into your body feel your body and then if you can access stillness access stillness go into stillness so feel your body and then speak from there so it's quiet for a moment because they feel their body and then suddenly they speak and there's a level there it doesn't rise like it's not like before you know where it was just like so loud it can get so loud and they're speaking from a different place and i love i did a retreat a couple of weeks ago at hollyhock and then i had you know the person share like well what was different from them for them and they said i just felt like as if i was raw because they were just being them there's themselves we are raw we come we're vulnerable and it was wonderful for her and at the same time it was very strange because it's unfamiliar we've forgotten that

familiarity of how vulnerable and how raw and how open and how exposed we can be because we're so used to hiding ourself protecting ourselves and this has become our habit is the protection of ourself but who are we really protecting we're protecting that ego identity because what is there to protect of your soul of consciousness nothing because that soul that consciousness is that open space or that all consuming love the love that has no opposites or the peace that passes all understanding it's who we are really in reality the other thing that comes and goes the body the mind the ego that's all illusion it's all impermanent it's not who we are but when we attach ourselves to that and only live from that place you're living out of your shadow self you've covered that light that you are here because it went and this is where then you talk you act and you think you're being yourself but you're not and what i've observed most human beings are not themselves it does take an vulnerability a willingness to be vulnerable a willingness to be exposed a willingness to be raw and open just to be this but every time that you believe that you are this then it's like you become sensitive to that and think oh i might get hurt so it's easier to cover myself yeah you might get hurt yeah humans hurt each other let me just look at last half of the century i mean we hurt each other all the time all the time but when you know that you are the consciousness that's why i was saying ultimately there is no one to forgive because when you know that you are a consciousness the other is consciousness too and that is just the ego the illusion of it so that's why there's no one to forgive but most of us you're not in that place so you're not in that place you need to you kind of need to merge these two places together and have that your ego your mind to understand that to tell the truth and when you live in that truth it does open up that space there because there is this too just because it's an illusion doesn't mean that it's not there because it is there it's like that i don't know it was some sort of uh zen story where the student would say well if all this is if our body is an illusion then you know why why bother you know with it and i don't know i can't even remember but then the master just hits him with a stick and he goes oh and he goes when the master goes well if you said your body's an illusion why does it hurt so we do feel why separate ourselves from that because when we are in the very essence of your soul and you know that the the consciousness is you are that consciousness then you're more mindful because you know how sensitive this body is how sensitive the mind is and how you know just vulnerable it can be so we just kind of hold that we hold ourselves in that without that attachment because we know that there is this body here and then we speak from a different place we don't just go right into the mind and start talking so that's your your homework during lunch is to before you speak go into your body

[Speaker 1] (8:18:49 - 9:49:45)
welcome to our christmas meditation lots of people are joining us today from all over the world let's start with a moment of silence and so we can be aware of our breathing breathing consciously in and out i was reading the other day about something that happened at christmas in the year 1914 in the middle of the first world war when the soldiers i believe it was in france or belgium the soldiers were in their trenches french german british soldiers and then on christmas eve the fighting spontaneously stopped and the soldiers could hear on the opposing trenches singing of a christmas song that everybody recognized and that song was silent night holy night and gradually they came out of their trenches and in the area between the trenches so-called no man's land they shook hands started talking to each other exchanged gifts of food and other little items and they sang together that song silent night holy night each in their respective languages they talked to each other showed each other photos of their families and that became known as the christmas truce of 1914 somebody even wrote a book about it and then the superiors the officers the command in the command centers were informed that this was happening and they said oh we must put a stop to this fighting must resume as soon as possible and of course a few hours later or the next morning the craziness the insanity continued and in a way that event that happened spontaneously the instantaneous arising of ultimately is what is only sanity between human beings

that seems almost miraculous and the insanity seems almost normal so if you believe that our present political discourse not only in the united states but also in other countries in europe if you believe that's crazy then of course just think back to the first half of the 20th century and the insanity of all that so that moment and that song which triggered it that that christmas songs holy night silent night brought about a shift in consciousness it didn't last and that's an interesting song to me that song embodies something that transcends anything cultural or anything belonging to any particular religion it transcends all that because the song silent night really embodies the essence of spirituality which is inner stillness it was composed in the early 19th century by an was the lyrics were written by an austrian priest in a village in the mountains in austria he had written these lyrics a year before and then christmas eve arrived and he had to present a piece of music in the evening service in the church so he had the lyrics and then he went to the schoolmaster of that village i believe he was and he in the last few hours before this the church service composed the music to it and then that evening they both performed it together in the church and then it's gradually over the years it spread all over the world because human beings recognized something in that that went beyond any particular culture or even religion although the words point to something specifically christian the birth of jesus the spirit that this song embodies goes beyond that it transcends all that it goes very deep and so it was actually declared by unesco uh as something i don't know what the official designation was world an intangible world heritage so in many ways christmas of course has degenerated into consumerism and so on although there's nothing wrong with buying gifts and giving gifts that's a beautiful thing but it it has degenerated into that so it's important to rediscover the essence of it in the english language christmas in english-speaking countries many people don't use about christmas anymore they call it holidays the intention behind it i suppose is to not to exclude people who are not christian and i can see the reasoning behind that but there is something there that is of great value and somehow to me the word word holiday does not although originally that word is also beautiful because it refers to a holy day but it's been used in so many other contexts that it no longer really has that cat doesn't no longer does not carry that sense anymore of holy but christmas still has the christ in it and that's a very interesting word christ in english it's pronounced when it's only in its by itself it's of course pronounced christ christ it's usually associated with jesus of course but we need to remember that jesus christ was not his name jesus or yoshua was his name christ is a title that was given to him later in the same way that buddha was not a name it was a title given to somebody and buddha means the awakened one and christ means literally the anointed one which it refers to anointing with sacred oil which a holy person you could do that to a holy person you you would pour sacred oil over them it's the anointing that is a literal meaning but i believe there is a deeper meaning behind that word and i also believe it's no coincidence that christ or christ christ and krishna the deity one could say in hinduism very important the most important figure in the hindu tradition those names are so uncannily similar christ christ comes from the latin christus which comes from the greek christos and then we have krishna christos krishna is that just a coincidence or are they etymologically related i believe they are and if it's just a coincidence it's a very interesting coincidence with the deeper meaning because what that christ refers to in its esoteric sense is a particular state of consciousness in mystical christianity that's called christ consciousness and in some traditions even the term krishna consciousness is used and a similar term in buddhism is called buddha nature it refers all these refer to a particular state of consciousness that is possible for humans to realize not to achieve to attain to acquire but to realize why am i making that distinction because that state of conscious is not something that is not already here that consciousness which we could call the awakened consciousness christ consciousness buddha nature is a potential that's already there dormant in many humans but already there so you don't need to acquire it or go somewhere else or find it in the future it's a realization that within you there is a deeper state of consciousness than the one that you experience mostly in everyday life and that's the realization of in mystical christianity it's called the realization of the christ within in buddhism it's the realization of your own buddha nature which is your deepest sense of identity of being so you are on the one hand a person or a personality and the kind of personality that you are is determined by your past all the things that have contributed to the arising of that particular personality or person and beyond this person which consists of mainly of mental and emotional conditioning beyond that you are something deeper and jesus pointed to that in his teachings when he said to his disciples you are the light of the world and somewhere else jesus also said i am the light of the world i believe the i am the light of the world is in the gospel of john you are the light of the world is in one of the other gospels in other words the essence of who i am is also the essence of who you are the difference between us this is the implication the difference between us is only that i know i realize the essence of who i am and you have not yet realized it that's the only difference and therefore jesus also said all the things that i do and greater things you will also do so ultimately we are one the essence of who we are jesus said is the same you just have to recognize or realize that essence within you but how do you do that now i could use examples from buddhism or examples from christianity that point to the possibility of realizing that dimension within you let's let's look just at one one saying of jesus again because this is christmas our christmas meditation jesus talks about the kingdom of heaven that's perhaps the very foundation of his teaching seek and find the kingdom of heaven which is within you that's the foundation some people believe that love your neighbor as yourself is the foundation but i would suggest to you that that is not the foundation because that cannot be a starting point it is pointless to tell anybody who has not realized the essence within themselves to love their neighbor as themselves they won't be able to do it not for long because if they have not recognized their own essence they cannot recognize the essence in the other and realize that who i am in the essence of my being is one with who you are in the essence of your being and when i realize that then i love the other as myself but i cannot tell somebody you must love the other as yourself they live totally trapped in the mental emotional conditioning of their personality or their ego they may want genuinely want to be a better human being and try to love the other but they will always fail again and again so the foundation is finding the kingdom of heaven that is within you and then as a consequence of that you will love the other as yourself in other words it'll change your relationship with other human beings there will be a goodwill a benevolence coming into your interactions with other human beings your interactions with other human beings will no longer be dysfunctional the dysfunction that we see on every level not only when we listen to the news but in our personal lives in every level personal to collective within nations and between nations so what is this the kingdom of heaven that is within you what does that mean of course they read it in the churches have been reading it for a long time and mostly it's been misinterpreted although jesus clearly said it is within you christians traditionally have believed that it is somewhere else it's going to come when you when you die you will enter the kingdom of heaven or it's come at the end of times or the kingdom of heaven and so on disregarding what he said about don't look for it here or there you can't say oh there it is or here it's over there that's what he said it is here now these are old words kingdom of heaven especially kingdom so i want to offer you a fresh translation of that so that it becomes more effective as a pointer towards that state of consciousness because it is pointing to something that is within you kingdom there are not that many kingdoms left these days it's no longer a word it's really alive within us and so what did he mean when he used the term kingdom i suggest dimension it is speaking of a particular dimension of consciousness a dimension of consciousness that is different from your usual dimension of consciousness what is heaven heaven is up there in many languages heaven and sky are the same word in in german in spanish in french heaven and sky are the same word so there in those languages jesus said the kingdom of the sky c l c l o himmel and so on so what is what what is that heaven or sky you look up what do you see now heaven or sky is not something that is a particular object it's it's all over when you look at it it's vast spaciousness so jesus used a something in the sense perceived world that was closest to that what he was talking about in the nonsense perceived world and the closest he could find was the vast spaciousness of the sky he was pointing here to an inner dimension of consciousness the inner dimension of space or spaciousness because that is the sky the sky is not something nobody can touch it nobody can even reach it if you wanted to if you go up in a rocket you will never find the sky you can never say oh here's the sky clouds yes but not sky if you go up in a rocket suddenly you find yourself in outer space and you say oh where was the sky so the sky is and isn't it exists and it doesn't exist so it's a very uh good choice for pointing to something that is totally intangible that is within you so what he was pointing to is the dimension of spaciousness the dimension of spaciousness or space that is within you now where is that now you may have noticed that your mind most of the time talks in your head not always out aloud but in the same way that a person walking in the street who is maybe mentally unbalanced talk to talk aloud to themselves all the time and you say oh this guy is crazy you need he or she they talk but almost every human being does it all the time except that they don't do it out aloud there is the voice in the head that continuously speaks and comments and complains more often than not uh has negative things to talk about internally the self talk in the head and for most people that goes on and on as long as they awake in daily life the voice never stops for many people that voice is a torture because it's it's so negative that it it makes their life miserable they don't realize that they think the situations they find themselves in and the people they interact with and whatever they are doing but don't want to be doing that all these things cause them their misery they don't realize that the greater part of their misery is caused by what their mind is saying and the emotions that reflect what their mind is saying how bad this is how bad that is the complaining the accusing the blaming the the regret the resentments the guilt they're all connected with unconscious thinking the compulsive thinking the voice in the head so there is a lack of inner spaciousness the mind is cluttered full like a room full of furniture most of it useless the mind is a beautiful instrument if it's used in a focused and constructive way of course it's the ability to think is wonderful to use thought is a incredible thing it's an evolutionary attainment but most people don't use thought they are used by thought they are possessed by the unconscious mind activity they can't do anything about it there's a lack of spaciousness and that spaciousness is exactly that dimension of consciousness that jesus points to the inner spaciousness the dimension of spaciousness how how do you find it it's always there but it's usually covered up by the incessant noise of the mind so what we are talking about here goes back to that christmas song what we are talking about here is inner stillness for example in the gap between two thoughts for example in this moment in order to be conscious at this moment do you need to think being aware of the weather the various ways in which the weather manifests in the present moment is also a way of bringing you into the now to feel the breeze of the air on your skin for example listen to the sounds of rain or the wind in the trees and one of my favorite my favorites is watching the sky the continuously changing paintings abstract paintings that appear in the sky the air breathing in the air the sense the smells of nature and taking in the entire energy field that surrounds you now where i'm sitting there's not much nature in this room it's a little studio but that's okay if you go within you encounter your own nature your own essential nature i believe it was ralph baldo emerson the american writer spiritual writer 19th century who said something like the wick of individual life runs deep into the oil of pure being that's an interesting analogy and quite a powerful one the wick if english is not your native language and you happen not to know what wick is wick is the string that is in the candle that you light that draws up the wax so it's a string in an oil lamp and you light the wick that sticks out of the oil and you light it then as a flame the wick draws up the oil that oil is then consumed by the flame so that's the wick and in this analogy he said the wick of individual life your individual life runs deep into the oil of pure being so that means there is a great depth within you and your individual consciousness derives its sustenance from the greater universal consciousness is only a manifestation or an emanation of the greater one consciousness that you also are that you are more fundamentally than the individual the wick that's burning on the surface you are a surface phenomenon on the level of your physical body and the sense perceived all the sense perceived aspects of yourself and even your thinking although your thinking is already already exists in the realm of invisibility nobody has ever seen a thought you cannot see a thought you cannot perceive it with your senses and yet even thinking is a relatively superficial or surface phenomenon it belongs to the dimension of your individual form but there could be no thinking and there could be no sense perception if you were not connected to something deeper which is consciousness so you are an an emanation of something very profound very deep that connects you with the totality of the universe now the important thing is to to realize the truth of this directly which means to sense that depth in you here and now so that in addition to knowing yourself as an individual person in the analogy that emerson used that's the wick in addition to knowing yourself as an individual person surrounded by many other individual persons and life forms in addition to that you are aware of a deeper dimension within yourself and when i say you are aware of it may not be totally correct because the awareness when you become aware of your own awareness when you become aware of the fact that you are conscious right now and you can only become aware of that if for a moment there's no thinking and yet you have not fallen asleep for a moment there's a cessation of thinking like now and what do you need to think about now nothing for a moment there's no thinking in that moment there's a stillness an alert stillness that is the awareness of who you are beyond your individual form that is the beginning of the the pure being that emerson speaks of it's not that difficult especially here right here and now where you're not being disturbed hopefully by all the demands that the world normally places upon you it's not that difficult here now to have these brief moments and perhaps even longer moments when you are aware of an inner alert stillness cessation of thinking what remains is consciousness prior to thought consciousness before it becomes a thought and that i sometimes describe as the deep eye as opposed to the surface i'm not talking about this eye because that's also an interesting analogy but i'm talking about the first person singular i pronoun pronoun pronoun the deep eye is that being the i am awareness of the i amness beingness the surface i that you normally identify with and that normally when you use the word i in every day usage you refer to the surface i your personality your past the person that you are the bundle of thoughts and emotions that form make up the personality that's the surface i and in the absence of thought activity the surface i subsides and if you have not fallen below thought and towards sleep but have risen above thought then there is an alert stillness not a tired stillness that is the essence of who you are that is the unconditioned consciousness and it's so close it's not that difficult to experience to realize this alive depth in you where the personality is transcended although you still have you still have or you still are for a while of course also the the surface self is still there and most likely you will again and again become completely identified with the surface surface self which is a normal human consciousness the normal unawakened consciousness the normal fairly dysfunctional consciousness and dysfunctional because it doesn't know its own depth it doesn't know the root you're in other words dysfunction because you're out of touch with yourself yourself meaning the deep i the unconditioned consciousness you cannot sense that in the background even while you are acting in this world as a person you can still this is the the aim of awakening means if you are awakened first you have glimpses of awakening but you can sense yourself as this deep i that's fine and then the glimpses are a little longer and then you may find gradually in your everyday life you can live from that deeper place that changes the way in which you think habitual thoughts are still there but a greater a deeper intelligence flows into your mind your thinking becomes creative more creative more alive less dysfunctional doesn't create suffering anymore for yourself and others because otherwise your thinking creates an enormous amount of suffering unhappiness this is still the case for millions of humans on the planet so the deepest meaning of shakespeare's words is to your own self be true the deepest meaning of that is to be in touch with that pure being which is the unconditioned consciousness which is your true being your true self it is no longer a separate self it connects you to the totality so this frees you from the prison of your personality if you are not aware of that deeper dimension to who you are you are trapped on the surface level of who you are constantly looking for an enhanced sense of identity on the surface level where no true and ultimately satisfying sense of identity can ever be found welcome to our meditation we start with the surface of now which is whatever we perceive at this moment whatever you perceive whatever i perceive really it's the the i so you perceive this person talking you hear the voice there's the totality of the room there's the ever-present noises the ceiling and the walls all part of the totality of your visual perception so there's a totality of sensory perception that's the actually call it the surface of the now or you can call it the outside of now and then you're also aware of yourself breathing and you may be aware of the energy inside the body so we are gradually moving from the outside to the inside and if you allow the outside to be as it is although there's nothing special here in this room it is it's quite nice it has its own beauty sounds are quite nice if you allow them to be imagine it's the om sound and now comes the really important part you're aware of yourself as the perceiver of all these things you're not aware of yourself right now you're aware of the the personal self because at this moment let's use this word i hope that you are not thinking about your personal history right now or the problems you've had in the future in the past or might have in the future so when i say you're aware of yourself it's not your way of yourself in the usual way because when you usually say you're aware of yourself you're aware of the story of yourself you and your life you and your position in the world you and other people and so on no more simple now in our meditation you're aware of yourself not as a person with a history but a deeper level of self and i'm begin by calling it the perceiver of whatever it is that arises in your perception auditory visual feeling sensing so but who is it that is perceiving this not the person because the person is a story the story is not perceiving this so for a moment let's not call it anything but be aware of the simple fact that you are perceiving this but you don't know what that is that i that is perceiving but there's no doubt that that is there and even if what you are perceiving is a dream perhaps it is it certainly has a lot in common with the dream because the dream evaporates very quickly it doesn't last many philosophers have discussed whether human existence is a dream we don't need to go there can say it might be but even if it is it's all not real as some people say there is something in which the dream appears the dream is being experienced one could say there's a light in which the forms appear and you are that and there's no doubt that if it's a dream it's happening if it's all unreal at least that unreality is happening in that light of awareness because without that awareness there would be no sense perception there would be no room there would be no voice or somebody listening to the voice so that's the one thing that cannot be doubted everything else you can doubt whether it's actually real and that awareness is formless it doesn't have a history because your entire history appears in it when you remember it in that awareness and when things happened that once happened they happened in the present moment in the light of awareness and you can only remember it as the awareness now so i'm now asking you although you continue to be aware of sense perceptions to simply acknowledge the fact that you are aware and even that is not perhaps putting it rightly to acknowledge the fact that there is awareness in other words you are aware that you are aware you are conscious of being conscious it sounds a little strange but it's an amazing thing it also sounds if there were a duality here i am conscious of being conscious the subject i but that only appears in language in fact when you are conscious of being conscious and that's a it's a it's a strange thing just and you can't you can't say much about it it just has no form and no shape it's totally elusive and yet all pervasive can you feel the fact that you are conscious or rather that you are consciousness and that's an to to sense yourself as that and still be able to perceive all this and you have long since left compulsive labeling behind when you are aware of yourself as consciousness and then perceive as consciousness labeling things mentally doesn't come in anymore there's just consciousness and forms arising and subsiding in consciousness arising they some forms stay for a while this room stays as long as you sit here this room arises in consciousness and then you leave and it subsides but the voice the words arise in consciousness and subside arise subside you could call consciousness the the eternal gap behind everything the gap in between everything the space behind everything whatever you want to call it these are just pointers and there is a an intense frequency that arises in you when you become aware of consciousness it makes the personal self fade out it burns up the karmic accumulations in you old stuff from the past pain body old mind patterns and your entire being is vibrating at a higher frequency that's the only way i can put it but the words may not be absolutely right but that's how i sense it in you and that is inherently joyful and energizing to sense this essence in yourself we are learning here not to have it as a very short-lived glimpse but to be able to stay there and every moment you stay in that the old gets burned up in you and you connect with intelligence not the iq intelligence that you measure in iq tests that's a very limited form of intelligence creative intelligence i talk about this does not mean that you or i this moment will come up with the solution to the problem that einstein couldn't solve the unified field theory or whatever it was nor does it mean that suddenly i can paint a masterpiece or compose an exquisite piece of music because i have these are not vehicles that have been prepared in this body for this by this body but this intelligence can flow into something if you there is a vehicle in your life it can flow into that transform it and make it absolutely creative and even that is no more than a bonus for some people it may be enough to walk around the planet for the rest of their life in this form as peaceful intensely alive beings that are astonished at the beauty of all things and bring that vibration of peace that comes with the awareness of pure consciousness whoever they meet it's a little whiff of that and for some humans that's enough and they fulfill their purpose here others may create some more elaborate forms but empowered by not the ego but by the greater intelligence it creates it can flow into the human mind and body and create through the human form let's come back to the simple secret be conscious that you are conscious feel the awareness as your essence and you will notice it's very still the awareness is still still i compare it sometimes to space i call it inner space or space consciousness it has no extension it is vast but not like the outer space that you see you don't see it but that is there when you look at the sky at night the vastness of space is only a reflection in the external of who you are in the essence of your being and that's the awe-inspiring thing when you look at this starry sky at night the absolutely awe-inspiring thing that if you're really looking will really shut up your mind immediately because it's so astonishing that was my first meditation when i was in my teens i had no idea it was meditation lying on the deck of our we lived on the top floor there was a little terrace it was in the south of spain where there were beautiful skies at night there was no thought i had no idea that was going on then i just it was so deeply enjoyable the awe-inspiring thing is not the countless countless suns that you see which are stars but the vastness of it the nothingness that makes it all possible the vastness of space unimaginable infinity and there too that can put you in touch with the vastness within you just looking at that and space again is very similar the outer space is very similar to inner space because both of them don't really exist because as i mentioned earlier existence means to stand out but space is you can't say oh here's space all you can ever be aware of is things in space and again in yourself you can't say here is the essence of who i am you cannot be aware of it as an object all objects are things forms that arise in this place why can't you be aware of space because you are it you cannot separate from it and look at it as an object it is the formless i the i am that i am the most profound statement in the entire bible which is of course a mixed bag of all kinds of writings but there are some deep insights if you know how to find them when god is asked what's your name god says i am that i am that's my name see i am that immediately there's space in you when you become conscious of being conscious that is space in any situation you find yourself in a quick access to inner space spaciousness essence is to become conscious that you are conscious that's presence then yes you are still a person you can function as a person but you are not trapped in the person that's the hybrid i talked about you function as the person we are not trapped in the person and now for a little while we just see if we can stay there in that consciousness of consciousness so welcome to our saturday meditation the focus of our meditation is stillness inner stillness what happens outside doesn't really matter so much stillness is just a word a pointer to most people it means absence of noise and in that sense stillness could be called a negative pointer it points to the absence of something but it doesn't really refer to the absence of noise even the absence of inner noise although it is true that when the inner noise stops there is stillness but every pointer we use is not really it it's not quite right ever it reduces that to which it points to something we think we can understand so it's much more than the absence of something although as a pointer that works another word for stillness is presence and that's a positive pointer by implication presence points to the presence of something the presence of what all you can say here is the presence of presence so there are two levels one could say to who you are on the one hand on one level you are the presence of certain things the existence of certain things you are the existence of the body the existence of sense perceptions the existence of emotions the existence of thoughts so we can call that the presence of something that's you as a person and here we are not concerned with that we are concerned with who you are beyond the person that deeper level and we are here together a few thousand people perhaps on in different parts of the planet going beyond the individual persons personalities to a deeper level of being and that's our meditation and i am speaking the words point to it the words of course are not it the silence the stillness the presence which cannot be perceived with the senses is what matters here so there's nothing for you to do except be who you are beyond the personality and realize there is a stillness in you that has nothing to do with the personality and its problems because a large part of your personality consists of your problems as you access the deeper level of stillness or where you just sense as i sometimes put it your own presence it's not your own but let's just put it this way where you sense your own presence or rather where you sense the presence that you are you are that presence before you become this or that a person there is a presence an aliveness there is the light of consciousness in which the person arises but the light of consciousness itself is not the person it is it transcends the person it is not separate from it the light assumes a certain form and becomes a person in the same way that when you watch a movie there's a light a projector light and the ways in which the light is obstructed by the film and those obstructions of the light not never total obstructions because then you wouldn't see anything partial obstructions of the light and that becomes the movie the characters the events and so on that's a little analogy and normal life isn't really that much different so if you only know the obstructions to the light of consciousness the light of god then you are trapped on the level of problems and drama and difficulties anxieties regrets past future me me but here we become aware of the presence not the presence of something in us that would make it into some formal thing again but more simply the presence of presence so the presence underlies the words that i speak it underlies the words that you hear and so i am inviting you to be aware of that in you that underlies the sense perceptions and the thoughts that's what we could call that the essence of who you are that transcends the person that's the most important realization in your life but it seems to be still a secret because nobody very few seem to know about it and many are not interested yet until existence as the person only becomes increasingly frustrating both for the individual and for the collective on the planet societies civilizations where the transcendent dimension is missing completely nothing no individual or civilization can remain sane for long without it there's an increasing madness if that is all you know and the presence the realization of presence frees you from bondage to the person the personality with all its little concerns that keep it busy all day long and on a larger scale the collective realize that the concerns of the collective that you hear through the media and so on may be relatively important but ultimately they are not just as your problems which sometimes are related to the problems of the collective at for example now in times of the recession and so on your problems too

are ultimately not that important they certainly won't be important in 50 60 years time to anybody and not to you because you as the person probably won't be there anymore that's quite soon i suggest you visit a graveyard from time to time and look at the gravestones with these names on them all these people thought that their problems were incredibly important and their successes were important incredibly important their failures were very important and none of this suddenly matters 50 years later all gone and another generation is there with the same beliefs totally absorbed in their life their so-called life but without connection to the transcendent dimension they're not really fully alive and they're not really enjoying life except as temporary passing sense pleasures to high followed by low[Speaker 1] (0:05 - 3:29:34)
And on that level only, life, so-called life, will always disappoint you, even when you achieve change that you wanted, which is fine, but it cannot give you real satisfaction for long. Only discovering the transcendent in you can do that. So real satisfaction is realizing who you are beyond that level of person, form, we could call it.

Realizing who you are sounds as if you suddenly understood something, you can't really understand it, but you can, it's a being it rather than understanding it. So you'll notice when you join me here in the state of not thinking, just being present, at that time, something other than the person with its past and future and concerns has arisen, something other than the usual person. So the person has stepped aside or receded temporarily and there's a presence which has no content as such because it's space.

All the little things, and so that means most of your life, you can actually use them in this way so that they become a help. All those things that don't require that much of your attention, they become, use that spare attention to go within and another way of putting it, become aware of that field of attention itself as the consciousness. And this is why it was so pleasant when I put away the clothes this morning, just, it wasn't the putting away, it was something deeper.

And that's, you can practice that, practice it here and in the rest of your life with all the little things that make up most of your life, whether you are a so-called VIP in the eyes of the world, a totally meaningless concept or not, it's still little things that makes, even, and you become most effective when you give your attention to little things. If there's something that absorbs more of your attention, then some attention will move more into mind and thinking and you will have less than the being awareness, so to speak, goes a little bit into the background if you have to work something out. Or write something, but it's vital that it's still there.

So there's, or you're engaged in a discussion that can very quickly pull you completely out of the being awareness. When you're getting your viewpoint, you need to defend your viewpoint now. Now, there are two ways of defending your viewpoint.

One is losing yourself in your viewpoint. And one is remaining in connection with the being awareness and then just put forward your viewpoint and why you have it. And then allow the other person to forward their viewpoint and don't make them into an enemy, which is much easier now when you have not, you're no longer seeking your identity to derive your identity from your opinions and viewpoints.

That's a dreadful state to be in because then you're surrounded by enemies or those who don't share your viewpoints or have opposite ones. They are awful. These people are evil.

The same thing happens with collective viewpoints. You have a collective belief system. It's the same mechanism.

Our belief is the only one, obviously, that's true. All other beliefs are fallacy. They are lies spread by the devil.

They're not our beliefs. So these people are less than human who don't share our beliefs. It's insane, but normal.

And what kind of a world does that produce if millions of people are trapped in that dysfunctional belief system, egoic belief structures? And so when I talk about the little things, another Zen quote, yeah, I love these Zen people. And there was a Zen master who was asked, what's the essence of Zen?

And now there are many different kinds of answers the masters give. None of them are answers that you would expect. And he said, Zen, well, the disciple, of course, came, please explain to me again.

I've only been here for 10 years and I don't get it yet. What is it? I need a fuller explanation.

You haven't said enough. And what is Zen? And the master said, Zen is doing one thing at a time.

Is that it? Yeah. Okay, thank you.

I'm going to look for another master who gives me a better explanation. But if he had really listened, that's all you need to know. Doing one thing at a time.

Attention. So attention on what you're doing and attention on attention. Then you're no longer an egoic doer.

If you don't have attention on attention, the doing becomes egoic seeking. And it's not empowered. It comes out of the conditioning of your mind.

So attention on what you're doing and attention on attention. Then you are in touch. Again, that's another aspect of what we called yesterday, one foot in one dimension, the other foot in that dimension.

And then you are both a human and a being, a full human being. And until you are able to live like that, you're not a full human being yet, as Confucius already said over 2000 years ago. And many humans are still not, evolution has not come to an end of humanity or anything.

We are still evolving, obviously, this is not the end product. Where we are at, I don't know, not that advanced. So the most important thing to get here, get, get it, get.

The most important thing to get here is to be able to be aware of yourself as consciousness or attention on attention. This means, oh, this is another Zen story that just came to me. The disciple said, I'm going to take my leave now because I'm going to look for another monastery and another master because you actually haven't given me the full answer.

Can you just write something down so that it's just something for me to remember that is important, so some explanation. And the Zen master, he goes, give me paper, pen. He wrote, there.

And he said, attention. Okay, is that all? Yes, please add a little bit more, just another few more words.

Okay, give it to me. And then the disciple reads it, attention, attention. What does that mean?

He said, attention, attention, what does it mean? The master said, attention means attention. So the disciple was seeking to pursue Zen through mental concepts.

And the master was attempting to help him break through mental concepts because the answer to all, to who you are, the answer to the secrets of the universe, which are all in you, of course, you are a microcosm of the macrocosm, as above, so below, as the ancient philosophers already said, the answer, all the secrets of the universe are not to be found through conceptual thinking. What conceptual thinking can do is relatively little. And the human evolution, which has now reached a critical stage, does not mean that we are going to improve conceptual thinking.

It's been helpful. It's done interesting things. It's created, of course, it has a downside, lots of huge problems, especially if it's not connected with wisdom, which comes from the being.

But you cannot further develop more refined conceptual thinking. We've come to the kind of end of the road of conceptual thinking, because what else? It's just putting words together in a different way.

So we've tried so many ways of putting words together. How many words? There are a limited number of letters in the alphabet, not to mention sounds.

I talked about that already. There are a limited number of letters in the alphabet and a limited number of words that you can put together. Every book in the library, or nowadays on the computer, anything you read, any text you read, is words put together in a certain order.

And then you jumble them, and then you have another text, and you put different one. But the number of words is limited. And they're just words.

So the answer is not in further development of conceptual thinking, or another way of putting it, more information is more information, because we live in the so-called information age, and you can get all the information on the computer. It is quite amazing. Of course it is on that level, that before you had to buy the encyclopedia Britannica, and it was quickly out of date.

And now you can Google and Wikipedia and all those things, and it's all whatever, all the human knowledge is there. But human evolution does not consist in finding, getting more and more information. You don't evolve by getting more and more information.

In fact, the more you stuff, get information, the more confused you get, if you're not connected with being. So much stuff, and then stuff accumulates in the head, and all the devices, the more stuff comes into your mind, you absorb more and more stuff. And you get completely scattered.

Human attention deficit disorder, all these things, can't focus on anything for longer than 20 seconds. Dreadful state to be in. Of course, yes, you know more than Jesus did 2,000 years ago, and of course you do on the level of information.

You know 100,000 times more than the Buddha did, but that's not vital. It's knowledge, but it's not knowing. So human evolution is not to completely abandon conceptual thinking, no, to be able to use conceptual thinking without being trapped in conceptual thinking.

So it's to transcend conceptual thinking. Transcend mean you don't remove it, you go beyond it, but it's still there for you to use, but not for you to be used by.

This mind-made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive.

To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation. When I was writing The Power of Now, I wrote, I don't know why I wrote that, it just came to me one day, I wrote, there is a black hole at the center of every galaxy. And the editor saw it and said, you can't say that because you don't, how can you know that?

The people are going to argue with that, so it was taken out. And some years later, I read an article by a scientist and said, now scientists believe that there is a black hole at the center of every galaxy. Humanity is, this species is at a critical stage now.

There's a possibility of a shift into a deeper state or a higher state, if you want to call it that, of transcending conceptual thinking, going beyond. You can still think, but no longer trapped in thinking. This is where humanity has to go.

And as you transcend conceptual thinking, you regain what was lost eons, eons ago. You regain your sense of connectedness with being. You feel deep down, you're connected with something vast and it's not different from who you are.

It just, when we put it into language, it sounds as if that was something different from who you are. You're connected with being, with a sense of simple beingness. Being comes from the word to be, to be, the most primordial thing.

And everything in nature is an expression of that underlying beingness, and including the physical body, this body, this body. All that we perceive in this world is existence. Exists, it exists, this body exists, this body exists.

Underlying existence is being. Being is the formless, timeless dimension within yourself. It's very much like the black hole at the center of the galaxy.

When I was writing The Power of Now, I wrote, I don't know why I wrote that, it just came to me one day. I wrote, there is a black hole at the center of every galaxy. And the editor saw it and said, you can't say that because you don't, how can you know that?

The people are going to argue with that, so it was taken out. And some years later, I read an article by a scientist and it said, now scientists believe that there is a black hole at the center of every galaxy. And so, why did I know that?

I knew that because I could feel the black hole inside myself. The spacious, formless, one life, the origin. And I know that the human being is a microcosm.

It's just, you can understand the whole universe by understanding yourself. You are just a microscopic version of that. So that's the, we are regaining by no longer being lost in the conceptualizing mind, we regain something that was lost a long, long time ago, very much like the prodigal son in the New Testament, your origin.

Not your origin in, you can't say, it's not really your origin in time, it's not saying, okay, my origin was six billion years ago, that's where I started, when the Big Bang happened, that was the beginning of me. That's true, of course, that was the beginning, but it's not so much that the origin is in the distant past or not even in the near past, the origin is timeless. The origin of your being, it is still there, this primordial nothingness, nothingness before the Big Bang is still in you now.

Nature can help you rediscover that if you approach it not with the conceptualizing mind, but you approach nature and perceive nature in a state of alert attention, spaciousness, and that's a wonderful, wonderful, first we could call it a practice, but then it's no longer a practice, it becomes a natural way of being. First in nature and then even in the man-made world, but you need to first of all be able to, we are going into it now, do it in the forest or on the beach or in the field, wherever it is, before you can be in that state in the shopping mall where everything, it's not so being, you can't really find being that easily, you have to be rooted very deeply in yourself to find being in the shopping mall because everything is surface phenomena. Buy me, do this, do this, eat a hamburger.

Look here, look here, and then after 20 minutes in the shopping mall, you're totally exhausted because all the energy is flowing out of your eyes into phenomena and music is in the background. Not the most profound music. And yet you could be walking in the forest for three hours and not feel exhausted, in fact feel invigorated, isn't that strange?

So the shopping mall takes it out of you and the forest or whatever, the beach or the desert puts it back, there's something there that's very, very different and, but not for everybody. There needs to be the openness and the alertness so that all the seemingly insignificant things in nature, you are alert to that, and that, for example, you're looking at, you're walking a tree, a slight movement of leaves in the breeze, perhaps a sound associated with it, your senses are alert, not strained, there's no tension, you don't go, no, just alert and in that alertness, of course, there's no thought anymore because if you were thinking, you would not be alert. Thought is not alert, it's a lower state.

Alertness is a higher state than thought, higher consciousness than thought, but good, by the good thoughts, which means creative thoughts, original thoughts, original insights can only come out of the alertness. You need to have the alertness and then sometimes thought becomes fruitful and original and creative out of that, but if you never touch the alertness, then thought is repetitive, old records, CDs, not records anymore and not CDs anymore, old iPods or whatever, same. So, nature then, you have to approach nature with that alertness, attentiveness, like a little child as if you had come there for the first time into that place.

Let's say, maybe you drive somewhere or maybe it's close to where you live, you get out of the car, out of your door, in most, for most people, even wherever you live, there will be something natural when you step out of your house somewhere. Even if you live downtown, there may be a little tree somewhere, not acknowledged by most people, almost everybody walks past it without looking because they have more important things to think about, but you, for a moment, you acknowledge that, not by saying, oh, I should be acknowledging the tree, you just acknowledge, you give it attention and in that moment, you notice little things about it that before you didn't notice, how the quivering leaves, how the light shines through the branches or the leaves, how the light interacts with the tree and you notice all these things without having to call it anything, it's just a noticing and this is a practice, you can practice that as a choice because you choose to relate to nature in a different way and when you do that, then nature gives you something back. What it gives you back is some of that energy of connectedness with the source that the tree is still in, this energy comes back to you, the tree gives you that back, it says, have some of this, I have more than enough and you get, so it helps you to feel that connectedness but you are also helping the tree, I'm saying that intuitively, the tree hasn't spoken to me like that.

Maybe some trees speak to some people but not to me, I haven't, well, Prince Charles years ago said, he talked to the plants and that's of course a wonderful thing and I think he not only, he meant he not only talked to the plants, I think he meant he gives them his full attention and ever since the newspapers have been making fun of him because they don't understand, it's just the mind doesn't want to understand that. So you're giving it attention, it's not just that the tree and I'm only using tree as an example, it could be a tree, it could be a flower, it could be an entire forest because the attention that you give, you can give to either a single natural phenomenon or being like a tree or a flower or even a blade of grass or a little plant, whatever it may be. You can also give attention to a more inclusive energy field like an entire valley that is, it has its own energy field, its own spirit almost one could say or a forest as you walk.

So there are two modalities one could say of being there in let's say it's a forest. You can notice single things like trees or plants and for a moment you give them attention, there's a looking, in alertness and then you look at something else and there's no choice really involved in not saying, okay, what can I look at? Now it happens naturally, your eyes you'd look at this and then suddenly you look at something else and then you look, you take in the totality of what's there just a general without always necessarily focusing on one thing, you take in the totality and that is, there's an expression in Zen which is translated as a choiceless awareness, an expression that also I believe Krishnamurti used, choiceless awareness of so you take in the totality of what is around you and then the nature, the entire energy field of what's around you then connects with you and you connect with it. So it gives you what some of that connectedness with a source that nature never lost, almost transmits itself to you but it's a reciprocal process, what you give nature is the awareness of itself because we need to remember that nature, it's not that you are separate from nature, you haven't been put into nature, you have come out of nature, you are nature also, you are nature that is in the process of becoming conscious of itself and so what you then give back to the tree or the flower or the forest is awareness of itself. It recognizes, because this flower, I would say it does not know it is beautiful, it just is, the flower is.

Its beauty is there, it comes from the source and now when any human perceives this flower as a true act of perception, not conceptualizing it or judging it, something responds from within, there's something is touched within, there's such beauty there but even to call it beauty, you don't need that, there's something there, something within response, almost a recognition because and when you perceive in such a way, you realize that you and it are not separate. The illusion of separation which is created by the thinking mind disappears and there's a sense of oneness when you are not calling it anything, this pure spacious perception, that immediately there's not me and the flower, there's a continuum, the flower arises within the field of consciousness, it comes out of that.

I'd like to share with you a short passage from the Bible, doesn't happen very often that I read from the Bible as part of a teaching. This is from the New Testament and it is a parable that Jesus tells that is very profound and absolutely relevant to the present time. So here we go.

Everyone who listens to these words of mine and does them will be like a man building a house who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. The rain fell, the floods came and the wind blew and beat against the house, but it did not collapse, it had been set solidly on rock. And everyone who listens to these words of mine but does not do them will be like a fool who built his house on sand.

The rain fell, the floods came and the wind blew and beat against the house and it collapsed and was completely ruined. So let's understand the deeper meaning of this. Everyone who listens to these words and does them means obviously anybody who listens to the teaching and practices the teaching.

And of course, Jesus' teaching is, find the kingdom of heaven that is within you, not anywhere else in space or time. Find the transcendent dimension, the kingdom of heaven that is within you, which is a deeper dimension or higher dimension of consciousness, accessible to everyone. And the man that's building the house is

you.

The house is you. The floods come, the rain comes, beating against the house, of course, obviously means some form of adversity you encounter as you inevitably will in your life, some form of fairly extreme adversity, whether it's on a personal level or as we're experiencing now on a collective level. Now, if you haven't gone deep enough, because remember, you are the house.

If you haven't gone deep enough, you have not found anything beyond the conceptual thinking mind, then the floods, the rain, the wind, the adversity, whatever it may be, in this case, we know what it is, will devastate you. And even if you do not fall ill or contract the virus, the fear will consume you as it's consuming millions of humans at the present time. And why do you fear?

What is fear? Fear are certain thought forms you project yourself into some future moment and you're not present. Because if you were present, you would realize that in this moment, there's nothing to fear.

Only when you leave this moment, fear arises as a thought form, which then creates an emotion. So what does it mean then to dig deep and to find the foundation on the rock? What is that rock?

The foundation for the house that you are, you are that house. And I'd like you to take into a little meditation now in order to illustrate and to enable you to experience at first hand what it means to dig deep. For a moment, just become aware that you're breathing, become aware of yourself.

Not the conceptual self, not become aware of your personal history or become aware of some imagined future moment, but become aware of yourself as the conscious presence, a field of conscious presence. And thinking does not help you there. Thinking is an obstacle.

So you go deeper than thinking and you can be completely awake and present and yet with very little mind activity. And that is the beginning of the realization of your deep identity, what I sometimes call your essence identity. And your essence identity is inseparable from the present moment.

It is the timeless, eternal present. It is a deeper dimension of consciousness than the one that you ordinarily identify with. And that is the meaning of digging deep and finding that unshakable foundation that is deep within you, within everyone.

Adversity is a wonderful opportunity because adversity forces you to go deeper. Adversity forces you to awaken to the deeper dimension of who you are. Why does adversity force you?

Because life becomes almost unbearable when you live only on the surface, the surface of sense perceptions and your conceptual mind. And then you listen to the newscasts and you read all kinds of things and everybody's in a state of fear. That is the house built on the sand that when the floods come, the wind comes, the storms come, the house collapses.

Meaning, since you are the house in this parable, you are devastated in a state of extreme anxiety, extreme suffering, although nothing actually has happened yet unless you contract a disease. And this is something we'll talk about next time, right? Is the house, your house, the house that you are, are you living on the surface?

Is your house built on sand? Or are you able to dig and find the foundation within yourself that frees you from fear? Now, when things are going well, it's unlikely that most humans can't be bothered with going deeper.

What for? If things are going okay, I'm looking forward to my next vacation, weekend is coming up, and whatever it is, a nice meal is waiting for me. Everything is, it's comfort zone.

You're in your comfort zone. I've never heard of anybody who awakens in their comfort zone. There's nothing wrong with comfort zone.

Enjoy them when they are there. They last for a while. And then some form of adversity arises, either on a personal level or on a collective level.

Minor forms of adversity, and occasionally huge forms of adversity. Potential calamities, whether it's you're suddenly confronted with the fact of mortality, some great loss, serious illness on a personal level or on a collective level, war, civil strife, civil war, financial collapse, invasion of your country. All kinds of things can happen.

And at the present time, we are experiencing the so-called pandemic, collective adversity, not affecting just one person, now affecting millions at the same time. And this is an invitation to go deeper because if you don't, you suffer unnecessarily. Millions are in a state of fear and anxiety, but use this as an opportunity to either awaken out of the mind-identified state of consciousness that continuously project itself into the future that you have no control over.

It is never present. This mind-identified state of consciousness that's the house built on the sand avoids an opportunity to come to this realization that you are much deeper than you had known before. You are forced to go deeper because you can't stand the suffering anymore, the unhappiness or whatever you want to call it, the anxiety.

And so the most vital thing in any situation is the state of consciousness with which you meet the situation. And you should pay more attention to that than to the newscasts and whatever it is that you listen to and watch. Yes, you can do that also.

But what is your state of consciousness? That's something you can do something about. It's not very much that you can do about the external situation.

You can take precautions. You can help other people to the extent to which it is possible. All that's good.

You do all the things that you need to do. And perhaps many people are now forced to stay at home and suddenly you have to be on a private retreat at home. Now that's an opportunity too.

So use this precious time that is here because it is part of the awakening consciousness of humanity. It seems almost paradoxical to say that something that on the surface looks very negative and looks like an obstacle to the wellbeing of humanity. And yes, it's an obstacle to the wellbeing of humanity on a purely physical level, perhaps temporarily.

Yes. But something that looks like an obstacle from a conventional point of view is actually an opportunity for you to awaken to a deeper, or you could say higher level of consciousness. Humans don't awaken when they're in their comfort zone.

They awaken when they are taken out of their comfort zone. Not everybody does. It's an opportunity.

If you do not awaken when you're no longer in your comfort zone, you suffer. You're unhappy. You're anxious.

You're fearful. You haven't found the rock. Now, the difference between this parable and actual life is in this parable, the man had already dug deep and he had already built his house on the rock and then the floods came and so on and the house was unshakable.

In real life, often it is the case that the wind, the floods, the rains, beating against the house, which means adversity arising in your life, the adversity forces you, if you haven't already gone deeper, it forces you to go deeper. And so it's not too late to start digging now in the face of adversity. Many of you are already in the process of awakening, probably most of you listening to this.

And what's happening to us now is a wonderful opportunity for you to go deeper, a deepening of that, an acceleration of the awakening. So as much as possible, especially whenever you feel yourself drifting off into a fearful state of consciousness and a fearful emotional state, whenever you realize that, realize that in this present moment, there's nothing to fear and you have to verify this for yourself, whether this is true or not. When you fear something, it's of some imagined future moment.

Am I going to catch this disease? Am I going to die? Is a loved one going to catch it?

Is a loved one, my child, are they going to die? Imagine it, it could happen. But right now it's not happening.

So whenever you feel yourself drifting off into fear, realize, okay, I have lost the present moment. And I lost myself in my mind, in the thinking mind. And I don't know.

And then the emotion reflects that mind activity. So the moment you notice it, okay, I've lost the present moment. I am lost in the mind.

Come back into the present moment. A few little things are helpful. Be aware of your breathing.

Be aware of the inner energy field in your body. The body is alive. There's this energy, this life energy that pervades the body.

You feel that. You're breathing. You feel the aliveness in the body.

You're aware of sense perceptions. You look around. You're present.

And then you become aware of that presence that is inseparable from who you are. That presence that is inseparable from who you are. That's an amazing realization.

There's more to you than the person. That presence is deeper than the person. And you needed the adversity either to find it or to deepen that, which you had already found it, but it was not yet a deep realization.

So, this is a time of great opportunity. Use it. Don't waste it.

There's a saying that goes, when the ego weeps for what it has lost, the spirit rejoices for what it has found. So, what looks bad on the surface has an essential function. I will speak to you again soon.

In the meantime, be here, be present. Don't lose yourself in the mind. Don't lose yourself in fear.

Find and be rooted in this rock that is your essence, identity. Thank you. When things go wrong, little things like last Sunday or bigger things, it's always a good test for your degree of presence.

So, it gives you a reflection of how present you are or how non-present you are when something goes wrong. Is there, so you can look back, it might be the case with you, maybe not. If you look back to last Sunday, was there a reaction of whatever kind against what is?

And what is was that Eckhart wasn't there. He didn't make it. Well, I was here, but didn't reach many of you.

So, Eckhart didn't make it to our appointed meeting. What was your mind saying? What did you verbally say, comments to people around you?

Or what did your mind comment about it? That's an interesting thing to look at. And accompanying the mental commentary, what was the emotion that went with it?

And some of you, I'm sure, were already so present that there was no sense of upset, disappointment, anger, irritation, some kind of mental complaint. And perhaps it was just, perhaps some of you just went into meditation, just became present and realized you don't need Eckhart to be present. Oh, wonderful.

But if there was a reaction, then it's very useful retrospectively. Usually I don't like, as you know, don't like to go to the past, but from time to time can be helpful to look at a past reaction in which perhaps where you lost consciousness, you lost presence. And you don't beat yourself up.

No, you just say, oh, that's interesting. There was the mind talking and there was an emotion going with it. And I was completely that.

I became that. It took me over. So whenever something goes wrong, big or small, you either react against it in one way or another.

In other words, you are against what is ultimately a dysfunctional state, which in extreme forms becomes insanity, normal insanity, I mean. So the reaction against what is or complete alignment with what is. And there you are.

That means whenever something goes wrong, you either react or you go deeper into presence, deeper into yourself. You can notice that with little things. When little things go wrong, you go a little bit deeper to a place where you don't need the external to be this way or that way because you already sense the fullness of life at this moment.

You already sense yourself as consciousness and nothing needs to be added to that. So sometimes it's only when things go wrong, quite often, it's only then for many people who are not yet able to voluntarily enter presence, only then the possibility of going deeper opens up for them or they become reactive. So another example, you're standing at a street corner meeting somebody, waiting to meet somebody for an appointment and he or she doesn't turn up.

So you stand there 10 minutes, 15 minutes, 20 minutes what happens during that time inside you, in your mind and what is your mind saying about it? And then of course, the emotions that go usually are reflection of what the mind is saying about it. It's an interesting thing to look at.

What is it that your mind is commenting and are you totally identified with what your mind is saying or do you realize, oh, these are just judgments that are coming up and there's the possibility, the opportunity for letting go of all interpretations at that moment as you're standing there at the street corner the person isn't turning up, letting go of all interpretations and just be there as the field of presence.

So to do that, you go deeper within where whatever happens on the surface of life doesn't determine any longer your state of consciousness, your happiness or unhappiness. And it's a wonderful sense of freedom. You can be free of externals.

And then at some point you call the person and say, where are you or where were you? And then there may be a perfectly reasonable explanation why he or she couldn't come or in which case all your mental commentaries which were perhaps negative are revealed as totally invalid, totally inaccurate. It was a total misinterpretation.

That's possible. Or it could be that your mental commentaries were justified and that person says, oh, I completely forgot I was doing something else. What's the reaction then in you?

Am I of so little importance to this person that he or she forgot about our appointment? That's an interesting thought. And that thought can lead to many other thoughts.

On a purely practical level, of course, if it happens several times and this person doesn't turn up then you simply don't arrange to meet with this person anymore. And can you do this without any negativity around it? That's just what is.

A very powerful state to immediately be with what is. That's what is. Instead of mentally saying it shouldn't be or strengthen your ego by complaining about it, the same as saying it shouldn't be.

Because the more you can complain about somebody, somebody or something, the more, the stronger the inflated ego becomes. Huffing and puffing, I call that. So the more you can huff and puff about people and what they do or this person and that, of course, the ego feels bigger and bigger.

It's like a balloon. The more you huff and puff, the bigger you get. Can you live without huffing and puffing?

Any complaining about others, what they do, what they fail to do, huffing and puffing. If you make a commentary in order to point something out so that something practical can be done about it is a different matter. But huffing and puffing is not like that at all.

It has nothing to do with changing the situation. What it changes is the way in which you deal with the situation, which becomes dysfunctional. So you can tell a person's presence by observing another person.

If that person never complains about anybody, that's a good sign. Presence doesn't complain about anybody. It's still relatively rare that you meet people like that, but perhaps you're already on your way or perhaps you're already at that state where you have relinquished all that futility of complaining about other people.

It's an enormous step forward. So let's welcome the many ways in which things can go wrong. In your life.

Not wrong means, of course, with quotation marks, go wrong. Doesn't go wrong. It's the mental interpretation says it's going wrong.

But we're using that conventional label, things going wrong, to point to something very important. Expectations are not being met. You're not getting what you want.

Something happens that shouldn't be happening or something fails to happen that should be happening like last Sunday. As you know, there are always two levels to this. I'm speaking and pointing out something that is helpful in your daily life.

At the same time, there is an underlying presence here. So that's why we call it meditation. It's not a conventional meditation.

But as I speak about becoming aware of a certain type of dysfunction, at the same time, there's a presence there. So it works on two levels here. And that's also why the pause is important when there are no words.

So that next time there is a something goes wrong, little or small, little or big, there's either already such presence that the reaction doesn't even arise or there's a reaction and then there is the recognition immediately after, to a second after or a minute after, there's the recognition that there is a reaction and there's a recognition that the mind is creating its story around the simplicity of what is. And there's the recognition that you don't need it. You're better off without it.

You're more effective in what you do when you're free of that. So there's a choice of then being present instead of reactive. And then the reaction subsides and presence takes its place, arises, the reaction goes.

And then that's an enormous thing when you suddenly realize in the very same situation, a minute ago, you were upset and reactive and then recognized it. The recognition comes, of course, from heightened presence and then you became the presence instead of the reaction. And then the reaction crumbles.

And then in the very same situation, in that minute later, you're free of upset and you feel empowered. It means externals no longer control you. So as I said, let's be grateful for all those occasions when things go wrong.

There are always an opportunity for going deeper. And if it's something big that goes wrong, something truly huge, something big crumbles in your life, then you'll have to go even deeper so the depths increases. When you just let go of a little upset, you go a little bit deeper.

But when something big happens, some big loss in your life, then you have to go even deeper. It's always miraculous to suddenly discover that you can be free of externals as far as your inner state is concerned. Occasionally you may experience low levels of physical energy and this can affect the mind too.

The important thing is first of all, when you talk about being depressed and so on, to see whether there is, what kind of thoughts are being created in your mind during that time. Ask yourself whether or examine whether the certain types of thinking create that feeling of depression. Thoughts like, oh, it's all pointless anyway.

Or what's the point of it all? I hate this world. There's no point in even struggling anymore.

I'm fed up, completely fed up with life. I can't take anymore. That type of thinking.

Are you aware, what is the relationship between the emotion that you feel and your thought processes? Are perhaps your thoughts creating that emotion or could it be that the emotion is creating the thoughts? So when you are depressed, there will be certain thoughts going through your mind and probably there will not be pleasant thoughts.

So be aware of the relationship between what you're feeling, this depressed feeling of sadness, depression. You feel dejected. And your thought processes.

And if in the moment of thinking, those types of thoughts that accompany the feeling of depression or pointlessness, if you can be there and observe those thoughts, then again, as in the first question, answer to the first question, when you recognize those thoughts, you no longer completely believe in them. You recognize them as a conditioned movement in your mind. And then you may be able to come to an acceptance of whatever it is you're feeling at this moment without adding the baggage of thought to it.

So what remains then is this feeling of perhaps low energy or it could be an activation of your pain body to some extent. You feel emotion in you that doesn't feel good, but you're then no longer fueling it with your thinking. So if there's enough awareness in you while you're going through a period of depression, allow yourself to feel what it is you're feeling, but be careful that you don't fuel it with your thinking.

And if you feel what you feel, that's all you have to do is surrender to your experience of this moment. You accept your experience of this moment, which at this moment may be not pleasant, but that's what is inside you. So probably the greatest spiritual practice is to accept whatever it is that you're experiencing at this moment.

So if you're experiencing depression, then that's the isness of the present moment. And as much as possible, you step out of your mind and just be the awareness. Observe, it may be the case that there is an addiction in you that periodically arises, and that's the addiction to unhappiness, the addiction to negativity.

And that is usually connected with a pain body that needs to renew itself periodically. If most of you will know what I'm talking about, you've read about the pain body, old emotion that still lives in you. Sometimes it's dormant.

Sometimes it needs to feed to take in more so that it can stay alive. It's a semi-autonomous energy field in you. And so in the absence of, its favorite way to feed is on other people's reactions.

So it will create drama. It will create, push your partners or other family members, people's buttons, so to speak, so that you get a negative emotional reaction. And so it loves the drama, the emotional drama, and will provoke drama.

And that's how the pain body loves to feed. But if that's for some reason is not possible, for whatever reason, the pain body is quite happy also to feed on your thoughts. So it will periodically rise up into your mind and then you will think thoughts that feed the pain body, but the thoughts themselves already created by the pain body.

And then it's a vicious circle. The negative thoughts that you don't want at that moment, you do not want to let go of that type of thinking because there's not enough awareness in you at that moment. At that moment, when I say you don't want to let go, or when I say you are addicted to your unhappiness, when I say you, it's not really you, it's a mind pattern with which you are that moment completely identified.

And that's why I call it you. So in that moment, it is you. So there are many, many people who are addicted to their unhappy states, the unhappiness in them.

And if some people have it almost continuously, but most people have periods when this happens and then it subsides. And that's the typical way in which the pain body arises from its dormant state, feeds on several hours or even days of deep negative thinking, and then subsides for a while you're free again. So addiction to unhappiness, this is one way of speaking about it.

Be careful, see whether you can detect in yourself when in the moment of it happening, you're almost, you're indulging in this feeling of could be self-pity or condemnation of life or others or whatever it is, you love it. You love that, you love those feelings and those thoughts, and you don't want to get out. If somebody at that moment said to you to come out of it, you say, oh, shut up, I don't want to hear.

Now, some people have them so strongly that the addiction to unhappiness has become part of their conditioned personality. So they are, part of their identity is a very unhappy sense of self. And if that is a terrible place to be in, but again, the only way that you can transcend that and escape from that prison is to be aware when it happens.

So a good question therefore is, am I enjoying my unhappiness in some weird way? Do I love my unhappiness? And if I love my unhappiness, who is that I that loves unhappiness?

Must be a weird and crazy I that loves unhappiness. So maybe that's not really me. Maybe it's just an unhappy self in me that loves.

I know that I had that very strongly for many years in my 20s. So you have to be really alert and see whether you enjoy your unhappiness. And once you notice it, you say, oh, wow, I'm really enjoying this.

In the moment of noticing it, you've made it conscious. And then it's very likely that you cannot go on very much longer enjoying it because this can only continue when you're unconscious. It needs your unconsciousness, this false self.

It's an aspect of the false self that is the ego. It needs your unconsciousness to continue to survive. But when you make it conscious, then there comes a moment of surprise and says, oh, wow, I'm actually enjoying this.

I don't want to let, I love this negative thoughts, love in a perverse way almost. This is the egoic kind of love. And then you might even ask, is that who I am?

Who am I? Why do I love this? This awareness is coming, awareness is arising.

And then suddenly you step out of identification with that mind pattern, mental emotion. And that is part of the awakening. So those things for many people are a very important part of their spiritual awakening.

The very important part of spiritual awakening is to become aware of the unconsciousness in you, the various ways in which the unconsciousness manifests in you, that's an extremely important part of awakening. In fact, you need that to provide fuel for the arising of presence. You don't have to be as slow as I am to be present.

I'm not always slow. But often. Interesting thing to find out for yourself if you've reached a stage in your spiritual evolution where you're able to choose to be free of thinking without exerting willpower to suppress thought and without stopping your breathing.

And without engaging in a life-threatening activity, which could easily stop your mind. Walking on a tight rope will certainly stop your mind for two seconds before you fall off. Now, some of you are able to do that when you're not being disturbed by anything or anybody.

Everything is fine. You're sitting quietly in your room or outside. And then you just go.

There's an intensity of awareness, but there's no willpower. You're not willing it to happen. You're not suppressing thought.

So if you're not yet there, that's fine. You can choose other ways of taking attention away from the stream of thinking by placing attention on sensory perception into your body, the inner body, or on your breathing that's happening naturally. So as the Buddha said, when they asked how to attain enlightenment, he said, just be aware that you're breathing.

Is that all they said? He said, yes. I don't know if that's in any of the scriptures, though.

But I'm sure that's what he said. He did recommend highly awareness of your breath. The rest was me adding something to it, which I do believe he did say, because every spiritual teacher is very simple.

Now, as long as you're aware that you're breathing, you can't be thinking. So he didn't say, don't think. He said, be aware of your breath.

So your attention moves away from mind and goes, you feel the inflow and outflow of the breath. You even feel every subtle movement of the breath where it enters your nose. Then it flows in and then it flows out and you follow it with your attention.

And while you're doing it, you're not breathing. You're not thinking. And then at some point you could let go of that too.

Then you're just not thinking. The important thing is you're above thinking. We're not talking about falling below thinking.

It's easy to tell the difference, but it's possible if you try to sustain the no thinking stage for too long, it's possible that without you noticing it, you're going. And then that means you're going from. It can happen very quickly.

If you go to a Buddhist monasteries where monks spent a long time meditating, you can observe how it happens to the monks. They start off and then they go after 20 minutes, half an hour, especially if it's 4.30 in the morning. And then you're able to be in that state of pure awareness or presence, even while things happen.

That's the next step, so to speak. Even while you're talking to your attorney, there's a court case coming up. Are you able to be in presence while you listen to what he has to say?

Or there's an obnoxious person in your vicinity and this is not an uncommon occurrence. Since a greater part of humans, if not are obnoxious, but periodically become obnoxious. In other words, very unconscious.

Humans move into different levels of consciousness and unconsciousness. It's not always the same person that you meet. It's a delusion.

Do you think once you have become acquainted with somebody that this is going to be the same person you're going to meet the next day? Because he or she may be in a very different state of consciousness the next day, or when an event happens to trigger that person into diminished consciousness, and then one of the sub-personalities that is associated with that diminished consciousness is suddenly there and talking to you. Who are you?

Who are you? And that's even more shocking if this happens after you've signed a contract that says you're going to live with this person for the rest of your life. And then the mind comes up with strange conclusions.

I won't trust anybody anymore. He really let me down. He's a liar.

He's just pretending to be nice. He was so nice when I, I know now I know he was just pretending. No, he was nice.

Perhaps he was at a relatively more conscious stage at that time, but now he's not nice because something that you said triggered him. And another sub-personality emerged, so to speak, or somebody mentioned the word money. You owe me.

And you can observe it in yourself that you're sometimes more conscious than at other times. You're sometimes very present, even in a challenging situation. At other times, a challenging situation or person pulls you into unconscious reactivity.

And then you wake up a few minutes or an hour later or a day. And as more consciousness emerges through you, the time period between unconsciousness and waking up again out of an unconscious reactive episode is shorter. You don't stay in it for a week, complaining about people and what they did to you.

Your mind never stops replaying a situation in your mind, different versions of it that could have happened if you only had said the right thing. And what you're, and then you can imagine, but next time you're confronted with this person, how it's going to unfold. And you feel angry and can't sleep at night.

And you don't even know what's happening to you until something suddenly, it actually is like waking up out of a dreamlike state. What was that all about? So as far as trusting other people is concerned, can you trust people?

Yes. Trust everybody. To behave, you can trust that they will behave according to their level of consciousness at any given time.

Complete trust. No more is possible. Now to be more integrated, to be a human being that is no longer taken over by reactive episodes to such an extent that virtually another person emerges temporarily, there needs to be more awareness that there still may be remnants of these subpersonalities surviving for a certain period of time in you, but they no longer take you over, that you can still feel the energy behind it when certain things happen. But what awareness does, it integrates all that.

It's no longer one entity that takes you over completely. And of course, especially the pain body as the most powerful subpersonality. And the pain body may even have two or three aspects to it.

So it could be divided into two or three other sub, but let's treat the same one as one huge subpersonality when it comes up. To have that no longer controlling you, that requires that energy field of awareness around it, its presence around it. And then you know it's still there, but it doesn't take over anymore.

Or if it does, then immediately after, you know, oops, there it was. So eventually awareness, then you become an integrated being with still a few energy flows here and there, but not a big deal anymore. Welcome to our live meditation, wherever you are, whatever the time is, where you are, it's the present moment, there's nothing else ever.

We're here to become comfortable with something very precious that is both within and without, within you and without you, outside of you. And that is stillness. If you lose touch with that, as many millions of people in our civilization have lost, touch with that inner stillness, you lose touch with that, no matter what you achieve or attain or do, it's always going to end up in frustration and some form of unhappiness because the foundation will be missing from your life.

Stillness, of course, is only a word. We use it here as a pointer. We could use other words, other pointers to that same reality within you that is usually overlooked, covered up.

Everybody has stillness deep inside, no matter how mad their mind may be. The French philosopher Pascal must have realized this important truth when he said, all of man's misfortunes derive from one single thing. And that is their inability to be at ease in a room.

Of course, that implies stillness, their inability to find that inner place. And so they cannot be at ease in a room, as he put it, which is at ease with themselves. They haven't touched that sense of inner being or rootedness that is the foundation of all spirituality.

So this is what we are here to realize, not to do because we are not doing anything. We are not doing a meditation. If you have the idea in your head that we are doing a meditation here, that will detract you from being.

We're not doing anything. We're not even saying, okay, now we have to become still. We don't have to become anything.

We just have to be with what is in this moment. And then find that underneath all the stream of thinking that usually gives you your sense of identity, there is something more vital that, however, cannot be defined through thinking. It is here, particularly in between the words, you encounter it as the space in between the words, which to the conceptual thinking mind is completely uninteresting and completely unimportant, completely meaningless.

So to the extent that you are completely trapped in your stream of thinking, our meditation here is meaningless to the conceptual mind. And if you are trapped in thinking, you are the conceptual thinking mind. You're unaware of any other dimension, so you are trapped on that surface level of who you are.

Or you could be aware of the gaps in between the words and just notice that there are gaps in between the words. What does that mean? What happens then when you notice, for example, now there's a gap, nothing is happening in that gap.

What is there in that gap? Is there anything in that gap between two words or between two thoughts? No, it's just a space.

And yet there must be something because there is an awareness that there is just a space. In this gap, there's still an awareness, an awareness that there's a gap, but there's nothing happening in that awareness. It's just a spacious awareness, an awareness of no thing, nothing.

And what happens inside you when you're aware of the gap? Suddenly you've become still or you've realized that dimension of stillness that's always there. In you, no thought.

For a moment, you're aware of the gap between two thoughts or in this case, a brief gap between sentences or words or even in between words. So in that gap, something arises within you that before was covered up by thinking or emotions that go with thinking. We could call that stillness, we could call that being, a sense of being or beingness, a deep sense of I am-ness, I am being, of course, the same as be, the first person singular of the verb to be.

The realization that you are, I am, that you are without any definition of who or what you are. In that space, there is an awareness you are that essentially. It is a very foundation for everything else.

When a thought comes, it can only come because there is an awareness in which the thought appears. When a sense perception comes, it can only be there because there is an awareness in which the sense perception appears. What you see, what you hear, what you touch, feel, taste, smell.

There is an awareness in which the world appears, a light in which it appears, you could say, a consciousness in which it appears, a field, a space. Whatever. The words don't matter.

The realization matters, that the foundation of who you are is that space or that light of consciousness. It has no form. You have no form on that level.

Everything else is form, thought forms, emotional forms, and sense perceptions of the physical forms around you. It's all form. Now, to most people, that's all there is.

Their life consists of absorption in forms, thought forms, sense perceptions, emotional forms. That's their life. They pursue form.

What's the next form that can be more fulfilling than this one because this one isn't fulfilling enough? It never is, never for long. No form can be fulfilling for that long.

It cannot serve as a foundation for your life. It's ephemeral, fleeting, short-lived, impermanent, comes and goes. But what is it that enables it to be?

You, the entire world arises where you are. An entire world, an entire universe arises at that focal point. But you are essentially not what arises.

You are the space. You are not the form. That's a temporary aspect of who you are.

So the most vital thing in your life on this planet here is the realization of who you are in essence and that essence has no form. It's just spacious consciousness. And that word is only a pointer, stillness.

Just a sense of being with no particular content. Now, does it have to be lost? Let's say you have glimpses of it here or perhaps more than glimpses.

Connectedness with who you are on the level of the formless and that you are the formless, the timeless. It goes together. Now, does this have to be confined to brief moments like this?

Or can that be active, an active realization in your daily life? When the world of form makes continuous demands on you, the demands made by the thinking mind, give me attention, says every thought, so that I can become bigger and so that I can give rise to lots of little children which are other thoughts. Give me attention.

I am so important, says every thought, and pulls your consciousness into it and your consciousness becomes form, the thought form, and more thought and more thought. And every emotion says, give me attention. I want to grow.

You can observe it even with anger, how the anger takes you over and wants to grow and use your mind, add more thought to it. I matter, give me attention. And in the outside world, every event, every situation says, it's so important.

It may be important relatively, but it's not important in absolute terms because whatever the problem is now won't be the problem in a few years or tomorrow or in 100 years. Everything changes. The people that lived on the planet 100 years ago, everybody had their life problems and dilemmas and difficulties and things they had to worry about and think about continuously, even at night.

Where are all their problems now? Gone with them. The forms have dissolved.

And everything was so important, so important, my life. But it was only a tiny aspect of what, this wasn't truly my life, their life. They thought it was, most of them, and perhaps very few realized the deeper dimension where the problems and the preoccupations and whatever makes demands upon you on the level of form is secondary, is not of absolute importance.

As Jesus puts it, only one thing matters. He says to Mary, while Martha, her sister, is preoccupied with lots of things and busy. Only one thing matters, and you have chosen that one thing.

Many parables in Jesus is about the one thing, the one, he finds the one valuable coin and sells everything else. It's the one thing that truly matters. Everything else will be added, is an addition.

But there's a one thing, but of course the one thing is not a thing. We have to call it thing because words reflect things. The words in themselves things, but that one thing that matters absolutely is not a thing, it has no form.

It's not subject to decay. It's nothing to do with time. It's inseparable from who you are.

Welcome to another live meditation. We are not doing a meditation. It's not a doing, but we're becoming aware of the being behind all doing.

That's the presence. You are that. I'm not asking you to become still, but simply to discover that underneath all the thinking, you're already still.

So we could call this also a kind of retreat, a stepping back. Retreat, I suppose, means something like stepping back. Stepping back from the stream of thinking.

And there's then the essence of who you are, the presence, which has no form, the presence that is prior to thinking, to thought, but without which there couldn't be any thought. And so we are here to allow thinking to subside and then find out what's left when thinking subsides. And of course, you can't put a name really to what's left when thinking subsides, but you haven't gone to sleep.

Normally, when thinking subsides for people who are not yet awakened or awakening, when thinking subsides, that means they go to sleep. Or they are completely spaced out because they've taken some kind of substance. But here it's different.

The most wonderful discovery is you don't have to think all the time. And there's a power that's greater than thinking. And that's the presence.

So on the one hand, there is you as the person that consists of thinking, plus the emotions that go with thinking, feelings, emotions, sense perceptions, interpreted through thinking. That's you as the person. That's the person.

That's most people's only reality. And here you discover, well, most of you already have discovered it or it becomes obscured periodically. You discover there is another dimension to who you are.

That is deeper than thinking and sense perceptions and emotions. And that is called liberation. It liberates you from bondage to sensory perception, to thinking, and to the emotional ups and downs.

I say bondage because that really is how it is when you are identified with form, which is what it is, sense perceptions, forms that arise, sensory formations, sounds, images, so on. Thinking, identified with every thought that arises. Emotions, identified with every emotion that comes.

That's bondage. You are in the grip of all these things that come and go. And then you discover that there is another dimension that doesn't come and go, although your awareness of it may come and go.

And that is the presence. We could also call it, I sometimes call it the space around the things that come and go. The space behind, the space around.

And that is essentially who you are, the timeless being, the consciousness. So there is a kind of detachment that comes with that awareness. Detachment means you're not attached anymore.

So you contemplate the world, and the things that come into your field of consciousness that arise visually and all the other senses. And you're not attached, and you don't compulsively judge it anymore as it arises. That's really what creates the attachment.

And that's why in Shakespeare, in one of his plays, it says, there's neither good or bad, but thinking makes it so. And that's the attachment to whatever arises every moment. Sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions.

And as you become aware of yourself as the underlying presence, a kind of spaciousness is suddenly there inside you. Not only when you sit like now, it's easier to sense, to feel that as we are here, but also when you start talking to someone. You say what you have to say, and then it becomes second nature to you that you are then, in addition to what you have to say, what's the thoughts, the words that come out of your mouth, there's still an awareness of that space around all the things.

It's very hard to put this into words because it has no form. So then you are both the speaker and the thinker, and more fundamentally, you are also the space out of which the thinking arises, and the words. So that's why I sometimes say there's a space around everything suddenly, and you are, that gives you a sense of, ah, it's, life is, you're no longer in the grip of everything that comes and goes.

There's a, this is detachment, one could say. There's a sense of spaciousness around everything that arises in your life. Without that, you are trapped, and you're in the grip of all your old conditioning which runs your mind, the old conditioning that determines your emotional, mental reactions.

And of course, basically, you're asleep, and thinking you're awake. It's a dream, often not a very pleasant dream, or the pleasant moments are few and far between. So another way of putting this is that you, you know there's something called lucid dreaming, which is when you're having a dream at night, you're in bed, and in the middle of the dream, you suddenly become aware that you're dreaming.

That's quite a lovely thing to realize. Oh, this is a dream, and then you look around, and you experience in a totally different way with detachment, and you're still interested. You say, wow, this is amazing.

It's a dream. So it's called lucid dreaming. Sometimes happens to people just accidentally, and others, some people actually try to cultivate that, which you can do before going to sleep.

You can bring awareness, say, I'm going to be conscious in my dreams. But much more important than that is to have lucid living, because without lucid living, everyday living is a kind of dream. So it is similar then, this lucid living is similar to lucid dreaming, because there comes an awareness into your life that wasn't there before, or was obscured.

And from there, your experience of life, your life experience becomes much more pleasant and interesting, just like in a dream, when you become aware, oh, this is a dream, and suddenly, whatever happens in that dream is not that frightening anymore, because you know it's a dream. You could actually look at something that scared you before, because you know it's a dream, and you look, whoa, that monster doesn't look that bad. It's actually quite interesting.

And of course, in a dream, if you look at a monster in a dream that before frightened you that you couldn't bear to look at, very often it becomes transformed into a benign presence. And that's even a mythological motive. If you give it your attention, a transformation happens.

It's only if you try not to look, you don't give it your attention, it is threatening. So that happens in a dream. If you give it your attention, which you can now do, because you know it's a dream, and then you can look at whatever is there in the dream, and in the act of looking, it's not just a passive thing.

That's the amazing, the looking at the dream images is not just a passive thing. The act of looking, giving conscious attention, transforms that which you are looking at. And really, and ultimately, that also applies to lucid living.

It's not just that internally you, there's a transformation in the way in which you perceive the world and in the way in which thinking happens, transformation because of that added dimension of spaciousness or depth. It's also, your life experience also changes. It's not just how you perceive it changes.

For example, when you interact with another human being on whatever level, whatever kind of relationship it is, if you're there not only as the person saying what you have to say, your opinions, what needs to be done, your viewpoints, there's not only that, there's also the space, you as the person and you as the space. And when you bring in that dimension of spaciousness, presence, depth, that is there in the background or around whatever it is that you say, you feel, so how does it look in practice? You're talking to somebody, whatever you need to talk about, discuss, and at the same time, you can still feel, let's put it like this, you can still feel a presence or spaciousness in the background as yourself, a space around what it is that you're saying.

There's still an awareness of awareness around the thoughts and the words. A moment of spaciousness. No thinking is required at this moment.

We wouldn't add anything. Do it and be aware of yourself and what's around you. So the consciousness that you are makes this possible.

The light of consciousness. If you cannot yet in your daily life step from thinking into awareness, freedom from thinking for a moment, then you just use one of the portals, inner body, breath awareness, acute attention to sensory perception. And after a while, you can just step out of thinking when it's not needed or reduce thinking to just a trickle.

And then presence arises and you sense it with your entire energy field. And gradually, this power grows in you. The power itself doesn't grow, but its manifestation in you grows.

Presence, power grows in you. At first, it seems nothing remarkable. Even uninteresting.

But first you notice it frees you from a lot of turmoil, mind generated. And then it deepens you because it is the deeper I, the deep I that emerges, the deep self, the deep I. Don't wait for emergency situations to become present.

Don't wait for life to knock you, give you a jolt, a shock. Choose it in ordinary moments. Then it grows in you.

And when life does something to you, it can only intensify the presence instead of taking you out of presence into reactivity. You respond, but don't react. Reaction is on the conditioned mind.

Responding is out of presence. As I said before, with reaction, you are at the mercy of events and people. Your inner state is at the mercy of other people, their behavior towards you or in general.

And you're at the mercy of what's going on around you. Always like somebody's nice and somebody's not nice. That's reactive.

Responses comes out of, you can't predict. Reactions you can predict in people. If you have lived with somebody for a while, you know exactly how they are going to react when you say this or when that happens.

You learn how they react. You know it beforehand. You can push their buttons if you wanted to, and you know exactly how they're going to react.

Totally predictable because they are programmed to react in certain ways. That's their conditioned mind. But when they become present, you can't predict anymore how they're going to respond because they won't be reacting.

Maybe they'll just be there. Who knows? And you can't predict what you, how you will respond to certain situations.

People sometimes ask, what would you do if this happened to you? I don't know. The new possession, nice and shiny, whatever it is, and there you look at it.

Got it now. It's mine. And after a few days or a week or two, it wears off.

You can actually enjoy all manifestations of life from the tree to the store display at Tiffany's, if you want. It's just life. You don't necessarily need to, you don't, at that stage, you don't need to have anything because you're already enjoying all that.

And that is a wonderful feeling of abundance already, but you have to be in the background. There needs to be the connectedness. So there is a certain powerful field of stillness as you walk around Fifth Avenue, looking at everything.

You need to have a stronger connection on Fifth Avenue than you need in the middle of the forest. But it's not that you can't be in that place on Fifth Avenue. You can.

So if you're walking out in the middle of a big city, of course you get all kinds of, your attention is pulled this way and that. And the staying rooted in that field so that you're not dependent on your environment to feel peaceful. If you're dependent on your environment to feel peaceful, then, oh, I can't be peaceful here.

I need to go out somewhere else. Yes, I'm often mentioned, of course, that nature is helpful. It is wonderful to go out to nature.

But if you are dependent on nature to become still and peaceful, then your life becomes restricted. And there is a lack of depth still. You're dependent on a certain environment.

Fine, you love nature, that's beautiful. You love being in nature, that's wonderful. But you are then dependent on that and you cannot take that state of aliveness into the city.

So it requires greater depth and intensity, aliveness, so that you can enjoy the aliveness everywhere, wherever you are. In all manifestations of life, see them as temporary play, the temporary play of forms, because that's what it is. There's nothing permanent here, nothing permanent.

If you take a movie picture of Fifth Avenue, let's just stay with Fifth Avenue. That stands for all cities and all streets. If you took a movie camera to Fifth Avenue and film all the people running around the street, and then a few years later, let's say 50 years, you watch the film, then most of the people running around Fifth Avenue will have disappeared already, not only from Fifth Avenue, but from the planet.

So you watch ultimately insubstantial life forms going about their business or their play. They call it business, but it is play. And to them, it's serious, but it's not.

It's a play of life, includes Wall Street. If you know it's play, it's fine, but you can only know it's play through being connected to that which is deeper than the forms in yourself, then you recognize the forms as the play of form. But if you are not connected with the depths of being in yourself, you don't recognize the movement of form as the play of forms, because to you then, that's all there is.

And then there comes a neediness. I need these forms to make me happy. And there comes a concern and seriousness about forms because that's all you seem to have.

So you get unduly anxious about the forms of life. And everything is very serious. So most people in big cities are serious, going about their business.

And there's fear underlying the seriousness. They're serious because they are ultimately in a state of concealed to themselves fear. And they're trying to get somewhere.

They never get there, but they're always on the way somewhere, very important to get this done. They never get it done because they do this and then there's something else. Lack of, that's not abundance.

There can be no true feeling of abundance if you don't recognize the playful nature of the world. If you are dependent for your sense of fullness on the forms, there's no abundance. You're just seeking more forms to fill your life up with.

So here we have then fundamental, at the most fundamental level, abundance is being in touch with a source of life within yourself and recognizing it as the essence of who you are, of course. And then look around and experience the sensory world. And then you can participate in the play without completely losing yourself in it and enjoy the play of form.

And then you experience, as you do that, you experience another level of abundance. That is the abundance of experiences, of experiencing life in various ways through where you go, what you do, relationships, sensory experience even, and even there, you don't get lost in it. You can even enjoy food.

Tastes good. Without the addictive enjoyment that is very different, that goes, I need more of this. And then there's come, you want to, you need to take it in to, more, more, more.

More, more, more. Drink, another one, another one. Sex, need more.

And it draws you out of, yes, you, where's the next, the next sex object? And it, of course, it draws you out of, out there. You can enjoy sensory experience without becoming addicted to sensory experience.

And that is to being able to enjoy sensory experience and whatever you do is also abundance. It's a part of the fullness of life. And then it's possible that also things come into your life and then you can enjoy things also for what they are without getting worked up about owning them or fear of loss.

Enjoy something beautiful, why not? But not obsessively accumulating one thing after another pointlessly, but to honor the world of things also is part of being here. So as things come to you, so you're not really, you don't need to seek abundance for the sake of abundance.

You have to go to the place of abundance. From there, different levels of abundance manifest in your life. They may include the outermost level things coming to you.

All being said already in the New Testament by Jesus, seek only that connectedness with the source within yourself, which he called the kingdom of heaven. And all the other things that you thought you needed for your happiness will be added unto you. You thought you need it, you don't need them anymore for your happiness, but they will be added.

So to appreciate beautiful things is also part of abundance. And you don't always need to own what you appreciate. You can appreciate beautiful things for a while that you see that somebody else has.

You can say, oh, that's a beautiful thing you have without the compulsion to say, I need to have that too. Appreciate it. You can look.

When I lived in London, I would sometimes enjoy walking along Regent Street and Bond Street where the expensive shops are and look in the windows. I couldn't afford a single item that I saw in these windows, but I didn't really want it. Just enjoying some of the beautiful things.

And two minutes is enough, okay, I've enjoyed it now. I couldn't have bought it, but I didn't really need it. Even if I'd had the money, I don't believe I would have bought it.

Maybe one or two things I might have bought, but not more. So you can visit somebody's home and say, oh, this is so beautiful without mentally saying, oh, his thing is much more expensive than mine. It used to be the custom in Spain, it's probably no longer the custom because the country has become modernized.

When you visited somebody's home and you said, oh, isn't this beautiful? The host would immediately say, take it, it's yours. It's yours.

Of course, you are not supposed to take it. You would have been shocked. Some foreigners did make that mistake.

So to go about wanting to manifest material abundance in your life is perhaps not the right way to go about it. Because you're concentrating on the outermost layer of abundance. And even if you manage to manifest abundance on the outer level, it's not going to give you the true feeling of abundance.

It's not, in other words, it's not going to make you happy. It's not going to fulfill you except for a few days. The new possession, nice and shiny, whatever it is, and there you look at it, got it now, it's mine.

And after a few days or a week or two, or give it a month, it wears off. It's no longer that fulfilling to be driving the Ferrari or whatever it is. There's nothing wrong with the Ferrari, but if you're looking to the Ferrari for happiness and fulfillment, and to give you the feeling of, it's not going to work for that long.

If you're just driving it because you enjoy that experience, that's a different matter. There's a very, there is a difference here. So don't condemn the world of things.

This has been done traditionally by many religious people. They were afraid of it. And so don't go there.

You must not have any possessions in many religious orders and so on, not just Christian, but also other religions, monks, nuns. No, you must not have any possessions. In some traditions, Buddhist monks are not allowed to touch money.

Of course, I can see the reason behind it, but it would be even greater, of course, if you could touch money and you're free of attachment to the money that you touch. I'm not attached to it, and then you can touch it. It's fine.

Rather than being a, ooh. And of course, you're not allowed to touch a woman. Oh, ooh.

Ooh. It's dangerous because, of course, the reasoning behind it is it will take you into complete unconsciousness. The sexual urge will arise up in you and will make you totally unconscious.

Maybe that's the reason why in some cultures, women are covered, scared. It could be chaos. And yet, if you are connected with a source, then all that is not a problem.

So manifesting abundance is not really the right way. Go to the source and allow from the source for abundance if it wishes to manifest in your life. You start with the source.

Then you go into enjoying all the forms of life, next level of abundance. Then you enjoy relating with the forms of life, the play of whatever you do in life. You enjoy that, and then that is how, and out of that enjoyment of what you do, that energy most likely also brings things into your life, forms that before you thought you needed desperately to feel abundance.

So they come as an icing on the cake, and you might give them away again if they come. You have them for a while, just, oh, I've had this for long enough. Now you have it.

And so the flow is there beautifully. As you give things away, new things come. And if they're all taken away from you, it's fine too.

You're quite happy with that. So manifest abundance from the inside out, not from the outside as hoping that you go find some inner state through external things. That is a dilemma of many people who practice manifesting, which of course manifesting is something that you can use, and it works if it's done rightly.

But the dilemma or the fallacy is the belief that whatever you manifest is going to make you happy. It's to seek the fullness of life through what you manifest, through things. And that doesn't really work.

So when people manifest something in that way in their lives, a material thing, initially they're quite elated. I've got it now, I've got the house or whatever it is that I wanted to manifest. And then that manifestation wears off and after a while brings about its own problems and a new level of problems.

And the feeling of fullness does not stay. It doesn't stay with them. Nothing can give it to you, can give you the true feeling of abundance.

And that's the amazing thing, which implies nothing that you achieve in the future can get you there. You have to start with that. And you don't need to ask for things to be different in your life.

You start here now where you are. And here now you go within and see if you can find that place within where life is born. Continuously, but which itself, in itself is unborn, timeless, consciousness itself.

As promised, I checked the news this morning. So that you don't have to do it. And I didn't find anything extraordinary.

But as I was reading, I got inspired to share with you the first, although it's not extraordinary, to share with you the first news item today as a spiritual practice. And for this reason, I brought this device. The good thing about it, it saves trees, which otherwise would be used for newsprint.

So what I'll share with you is a very brief news item, which was at the top. If I read it to you in the normal way, it would take 30 seconds to read, but I'll read it to you in a different way so that it can become a spiritual practice. Listening to it can become a spiritual practice.

And that is with lots of spaces between the words and the spaces between the words and sentences, while they happen, I'd ask you as part of your spiritual practice to pay attention to the silence in this room, because the silence in this room is ultimately, one could say, what makes the sounds possible. If there were not silence in this room, there could be no sounds. And as you know, I mentioned yesterday, and you probably know it already, both conceptually and from your own experience, that when you pay attention to external silence, immediately there's inner stillness.

So that's one way of accessing inner stillness is to notice when it's there, to notice external silence around you. Once you are able to connect with inner stillness, you no longer need silent conditions around you, although you might welcome them when you encounter them. It's lovely, but you could be still in the midst of traffic and a shopping mall and a noisy restaurant, because most restaurants these days are noisy.

I don't know if it's the same here. It's hard to find a restaurant without loud music. Because people who are identified with the mental noise actually become very uncomfortable with silence.

Ooh. And so you have in some places in North America, elevators, some of them even have music playing, and some elevators not only have music, they have a TV screen too. So while you're ascending or descending, you're not condemned to having to suffer this dreadful silence for a few seconds.

You can continue to clutter your mind by watching the screen and continue in your state of habitual hypnosis. So to be able to listen to something and then be aware of that dimension, the underlying dimension, ultimately, of course, it's consciousness, the formless dimension, so that you don't get totally drawn into, hypnotized by the world, the mind. And that, by doing that, you bring sanity into this world.

Now, the news item I'm going to read is, it could be regarded as funny, it could be regarded as potentially terribly, terribly serious, it's a mixture. But no matter what perspective you have on it, whether it's funny or potentially terribly, terribly serious, it is important that you connect with the transcendent dimension. Otherwise you contribute to the lostness, if that's a word, the lostness of the world.

The world is lost. Humans are lost, lost in their minds, lost in crazy, compulsive, habitual mind patterns, collective mind patterns. So even if it's serious, it's very important to be aware of the transcendent dimension.

And even if it affected you, it's particularly important to be connected with that. And then you no longer, you become free of fear by being connected to the stillness within, which is more than that. We just, it's one of the words we can use to talk about it.

So be as interested in the words that I read, be as interested in the silence, noticing, listening to, being aware of the silence in this room, which ultimately is the stillness within you, because only with the stillness within you can you be aware of outer silence. So be as interested in, so to speak. It's not the right word because silence is not interesting.

It's deeper than interesting. Only things that you can dissect and think about are interesting. So the news item may be interesting.

The underlying silence is not interesting. There's a vast depth to it, but it's as uninteresting as the most spectacular sunrise or sunset. You go, wow.

But nobody says, oh, that's such an interesting sunset. Let's think about it. What can be so interesting, this sunset, isn't it?

No, you don't, because when you respond to beauty, some vast beauty out in nature, you don't approach it with a thinking mind, because the moment when you really are overwhelmed by some grand spectacle in nature, your mind stops and awareness remains. And you go, allow the mind to subside, which means thinking right now is not important. Something else is important.

Meditation begins when thinking is recognized as not all important. And you begin to sense there's something in you that's deeper than thinking. And becoming aware of that dimension beyond thinking, that's meditation, not below thinking, in which case you would go into sleep, but above thinking, so to speak.

So right here and now, how do you become aware of that dimension? Simply by becoming aware of yourself, not the historical self, person, but a more fundamental sense of beingness or presence that is always there, but most people don't know it's there. And so for them, it is as if it didn't exist.

So meditation is becoming aware of yourself as a sense of presence. And that sense of presence could also be called stillness and could be called many other things. And realizing that dimension within yourself is the most important thing for you in this life.

In this lifetime, it's a kind of foundation for all that is good in your life. And if you're not aware of that dimension that transcends the person, it means that continuously you derive your sense of who you are from the movement of your mind. Which is thought.

And nothing is going to give you lasting fulfillment if you haven't found that dimension. In other words, life becomes frustrating, frequently upsetting, consisting seemingly of a succession of problems and conflict situations, things going wrong, continuously demanding your attention. With an unspoken promise, which is an underlying assumption, unconscious, that at some point your life is going to work out and will be fulfilling and become free of your problems.

Perhaps a better relationship, better place to live, better work situation, improved health situation. And then when you come into the new situation, it seems at first, yeah, this is better. And then the old patterns reemerge in the new situation.

In other words, it's no longer fulfilling. So nothing in this world can be fulfilling for long if you haven't transcended the person and the historical sense of self. To be, this is the being dimension, to become aware of the simple fact that you are.

I am, when you make that statement, you say, I am. And you can sense the meaning behind the fact that you are the words. You can sense the meaning, but you cannot understand it.

I'm using the word understand as conceptual knowledge, conceptual realization. You cannot understand conceptually what I am means or points to, you have to give up wanting to understand, which means you have to give up thinking. And although I am is still a thought, a word, but behind the word is the thought.

It takes you to the edge. And what it points to is beyond thinking. What it points to is that you can become aware of being conscious right now.

So you're becoming aware of yourself as a space of consciousness. And that's who you are. That's the very foundation for your sense of identity.

I am. So, when you become aware of that, there's no dualities to the dualities there when I speak about it, because of the way a sentence is constructed, subject and object. So I am aware of consciousness.

I'm aware of awareness. Sounds like duality. It sounds as if there's the I that is conscious of consciousness.

But the I and consciousness are synonymous. They're one and the same. So you cannot be aware of awareness.

Ultimately, although when we speak about it, it sounds like it. What it really means is you become self-aware. Consciousness, which is you, becomes self-aware.

That's meditation. If you need a technique to get you there, use it. Don't get attached to it.

Ultimately, it's not the technique. And it's not a doing. If you're thinking, I'm doing a meditation, you can't do meditation.

And even to say, I meditate, is misleading. And can become an obstacle, the idea that I am meditating or I have to meditate. Because it implies that you're doing something.

Doing takes time. Meditation is the realization of the timeless dimension of consciousness. So it can't be a doing.

It's only when doing is relinquished, you become aware of doing. Being. Like now.

So there's the timeless dimension, which is inseparable from who you are in your essence, which at the same, is also the timeless dimension of the universe. So the ability to be still, or to realize the stillness that's already there within yourself, and not believing that you need to still your mind, which becomes almost a battle, becomes a doing. But to realize, even if your mind is in turmoil, underneath it, there's a stillness, like the deep waters, the depths of the ocean.

And you realize that just by becoming aware of yourself, not the historical self, but the I presence. So in itself, of course, it's neutral. The technology is neutral.

It's not either bad or good. It depends how it's used. It is, at the moment, it is to a large extent, a reflection of the unconscious mind.

So if you want to learn about human unconsciousness, if you want to learn about the human ego, just go there and read what people post. Look at the reactivity of people on social media, and so on, the comments they leave. You can learn a lot about unconsciousness and identification with mental positions.

So the first thing, of course, is be careful with what you put out there, what kind of thing you post. If you post things online, is it reactive? Give yourself a moment when you read something before you type in an answer or a comment.

Give yourself a moment and go within, and avoid making people wrong. You can talk about issues, but don't make people wrong and amplify your ego by making others wrong, even though their position, political or otherwise, you may regard as completely misguided or erroneous. There's still a human being behind that.

So you can put forward arguments against somebody's perspective or viewpoint without making another human being wrong. So what you put out is very important. Is your communication conscious or not?

Or is it reactive? And then it can be used for other purposes. I'm there too sometimes.

There are certain places where I appear on, could go to YouTube or whatever, and then suddenly there's a spiritual teacher talking. So do you professionally work with, what exactly do you do in your work that involves the media or?

[Speaker 2] (3:29:34 - 3:29:48)
Pretty much involves the creation, the ideas around the digital products and services. So creating the product that people actually use and designing the interfaces that people actually use on their phones and on their computers.

[Speaker 1] (3:29:48 - 6:01:17)
Right. There are some meditation sites on all these things. So there's a great potential for raising consciousness there.

Somebody recommended to me several apps for meditation, which I now have on my phone. I haven't tried them yet. I've been there for a while, but I have four or five that are there.

I want to try them out. So that's the very thing that otherwise would clutter your mind can actually also be used to bring about space or spaciousness in your mind. So it doesn't necessarily mean that when you have your phone or the 99% of cases when people look there, their mind is being cluttered, but maybe they're on a meditation app.

Maybe they're looking at a beautiful, spacious picture and all listening to some sound or something, take a conscious breath, have a little reminder every two hours to take a conscious breath and bring spaciousness. Oh yes, spaciousness. So the very same thing that otherwise clutters your mind can now unclutter your mind.

It's possible. So I believe that it's also going to grow now and it has to because otherwise that technology could potentially drive humans completely insane, to remove their ability to focus on anything for more than a few seconds. People create young people who are totally uncentered, have no spaciousness within.

Don't even communicate with humans anymore because they prefer to communicate digitally. So these things are important, but what you put out is important. So always take into consideration whether this brings people to presence or whether it clutters somebody's mind.

And perhaps you can combine, of course, what you do needs to be also commercially viable. So, but I believe you can combine the two. It's not necessarily a question of either it's commercially viable and it clutters people's minds or it's presence and we are going to go out of business.

Doesn't have to be like that. It's up to you to be creative. Use, the more still you are, the more creative insights you will have into, and you might get some amazing ideas of what is possible.

I can't tell you what is possible. I don't know enough about it. I know very little about it.

So, but you're in a wonderful position. So allow yourself to go deep enough within, because then it is then the creative ideas seem to come. And if you find a thing that is not only brings people to presence, but also helps your company to grow, then that then becomes a conscious business, which is wonderful.

It's challenging. Of course, it's challenging. So don't let all your attention be absorbed by that kind of activity.

Take still, you still need to connect with nature, take it off as much as possible away from there, connect with nature and then bring it back. Another thing that's just in connection with this, not perhaps directly related to your question, but related to this, what tends to happen is that these devices, people are never, they're still in bed and they're still doing stuff on it. And that takes you over there at dinner and they're doing stuff on it.

It breaks the relation with other people. You're at dinner with, I can see, I see people in restaurants, the couple sitting at having dinner together and both are on their phones. Now that's probably means they have known each other for a while.

If it happens on the first date, that's the first date will probably be the last one. But if happens after they've known each other for two years, then it's almost a normal thing that they're not present with each other. Or then they exchange a few words and then she looks at the phone again and then he stares into space and then she's still on her phone.

I've actually observed it. She's still on her phone and he's staring into space. And then finally he gets out his phone too because he doesn't want to be staring into space.

And then I wonder, are they texting each other? Right? Two good things that I learned that in some huge companies, I believe it might be VW in Germany.

Well, they've had enough problems, but now they tell their employees after 6 p.m., they're not allowed to use the company phones anymore, not to deal with emails or anything. They need to get off. And that's a very wise thing because the more people's attention gets absorbed by this, the more confused and non-creative they become, the more cluttered their minds become, the more ineffective they're even at their work.

Not to mention as human beings, their quality of life decreases enormously. So don't give yourself spaces. Don't allow these things to take over your life.

That's vitally important. So it's wonderful that some big companies like that have this policy now, no emails or anything after 6 p.m. Well, that's wonderful. I talked a couple of years ago to Arianna Huffington, who has a famous news website and has also written some books.

And she describes in her latest book how her life deteriorated more and more, although she was making a lot of money. And finally she collapsed and hit her head on her desk and it was complete breakdown. And now she has, for example, in her private life, and that's a good thing, she has this policy of no digital device in my bedroom.

So in her bedroom, she still has books. Sometimes she reads in bed, but it has to be a book, not a Kindle, not the iPad, not the iPhone, no digital device in my bedroom. And that's a good thing to have that, at least you have that space for yourself.

Welcome to our live meditation. It's all about becoming still within, which means not to be engaged in the stream of thinking. The stream of thinking has a very strong pull for almost everybody, because for most people, their entire sense of who they are and their sense of self, sense of identity is bound up with their stream of thinking.

The stream of thinking, which includes, of course, reactions, likes, dislikes, opinions, mental positions, a story, my story. It's all in the stream of thinking, accompanied a lot by certain emotions that reflect whatever is going on at any given time in the mind, in the stream of thinking. So that is most people's, that is the basis for most people's sense of identity.

The I sense, who I am, or think I am. The most amazing discovery you can make in this lifetime is the discovery that you don't have to think to be yourself. There's another dimension in you that has nothing to do with thinking, but out of which thinking arises.

So it's perhaps not totally right to say it has nothing to do with thinking. Thinking arises out of it. It could, thinking could not exist without that dimension, but that dimension in itself is far beyond thinking, much deeper, vaster.

And as I speak to you about this here and now, I suggest that you become aware of the gaps between words because it is there that that dimension is known. You might notice the gap between words, the space between words, between sentences. That space is just that, it's space.

It has no content. The words are the content within the space. And most people are never aware of the space, but only aware of the content.

So here you'll become aware of the space within, which we can also call stillness. And you realize beyond any thoughts that there is a presence there. It is a presence.

And if you can sense yourself, feel yourself, sense yourself as the presence with no particular attributes, not that underlying sense of beingness or presence is not old or young. It's not successful or a failure. These are all mental labels that you give yourself or other people give yourself and you accept them.

Not young or old, not successful or unsuccessful, rich or poor, even man or woman. So it's nothing to do with that. It's deeper than that.

All the story, your life history, or your life situation right now, whatever your situation is in the realm of relationships, finances, work situation, living situation, health, they all make up who you are on the level of form, but they are not who you are on a deeper level. And at that deeper level, you are simply conscious presence. There must be something to do or think about or worry about.

Just to endure it and suddenly you feel alive without mental stimulus. What is boredom? Why this pervasive unsatisfactoriness that I feel everywhere, but most intensely when I'm alone with nothing to do, pervasive unsatisfactoriness that I feel everywhere, but most intensely when I'm alone with nothing to do.

What is this? It's called boredom. That's a good way of putting it, pervasive unsatisfactoriness.

And of course there's a whole industry designed to help you not feel this pervasive unsatisfactoriness. In other words, to stop you from being bored. So you can always, as most people probably do, they always provide their mind with some kind of stimulus.

And these days that's not difficult to do. It's available everywhere. So the mind wants to be stimulated.

It's always hungry for the next thing. So when people get home from work, immediately their mind needs to go into the next thing. And once you've cooked your dinner and eaten your dinner, then the mind goes into what's the next thing?

Is it television? Is it picking up a phone? Is it internet?

Is it emailing or texting? Is it teenagers too? And many others.

There's nothing bad about it. It's fascinating. I recently started occasionally texting and it's quite fascinating.

But what is important to become aware of the mind's demand for food, for stimulus? And if you don't get it, immediately you get into a state of restlessness or pervasive unsatisfactoriness, as the questioner says. You don't feel at home.

You don't feel there's something. Of course, that feeling is always there. It's just it's obscured by the mind.

So that means if you continuously feed your mind with these things, you never reach the deeper levels within yourself. You're stuck. You have to at some point confront the unsatisfactoriness without continuously anesthetizing the unsatisfactoriness and getting some kind of substitute for true aliveness, because that's really what it is.

You don't really feel alive, the aliveness. So you need some kind of stimulus to get a sense of being alive. So it's important to be able to just stop feeding the mind all the time.

There's enough for the mind to do with the things that it really needs to do. And just sit with yourself and allow boredom to arise without running away from it. Because that's your first, you're beginning to go a little bit deeper, but first you need to send to feel that.

And if you don't run away from it, you can actually go through boredom. It's like suddenly you're through. So it becomes, it's a little obstacle there inside you.

But if you don't run away, stay with it, suddenly before you know it, you've gone deeper into yourself, especially if it might be helpful to feel the inner body while you sit, when boredom begins, boredom comes in, you can feel it. You start looking around. What's the next thing I can do or think about?

There must be something to do or think about or worry about even better. And you stay and you notice that. And then you just endure the discomfort of the mind not getting enough stimulus, food.

And it doesn't, it's not that bad. It's just, you just endure it and then begin to feel the inner body, the aliveness in your hands, your arms, your feet, your legs. And you've already gone through the thresholds of the boredom into something deeper.

And suddenly you feel alive without mental stimulus. Much, actually more alive than you could ever feel through mental stimulus. Because mental stimulus is always on the surface of who you are, ripples on the surface.

And now you go deeper. And then you have the ability to sit or stand or lie and be at ease with the here and now. It's all there ever is, life, here and now.

Be at ease with yourself, here and now. To feel at home, here and now without needing to escape into some mental realm that's not here and now. Need to think about that.

Need to play a video game. Need to watch this program. Look at the magazine at least.

You can see how people, the mind consumes. See how they look through magazines, go to waiting rooms or into people's homes. Nowadays, magazines seem, in many cases, are being replaced by the screen.

But people still, so they go. A greedy search for what's the next, and nothing is quite interesting enough. It's always the next thing.

So that's the dysfunction. And so the wonderful, this ability then grows in you of being rooted in the present moment, in yourself, without needing some mental external stimulus to make you feel complete or alive. In fact, it's only now that you really come to life.

There was a famous French philosopher lived a few hundred years ago. Was it Pascal? Or perhaps, who said, all the problems of humankind and can be traced back to man's ability, man includes women, can be traced back or have their origin in man's inability to sit quietly in a room.

All the problems of the world can be traced back to your inability to sit quietly or at ease in a room. Of course, the implications are deep and vast. It's not just sitting quietly in a room, but because sitting quietly in a room implies for you to be able to do that, to sit quietly in a room, you need to be connected with that which is deeper in you than the mind.

Otherwise, you can't sit quietly in a room. You'll be bored. You may be quiet on the outside, but you won't be quiet inside.

So you go within, use the inner body as a starting point for going deeper and taking your attention away from where it's usually lodged in the thinking mind. So you go through boredom into being. And suddenly, you enjoy just being.

That's an enormous awakening if you can just enjoy the simple fact of being. And then you, from that state of aliveness of being, you can look around you and find pleasure and satisfaction in what you see or hear or perceive with your whatever sense. The little things around you, their quiet presence, the flowers, the table, the curtains, whatever is there, the sky through the window, the room, the totality of the room, the quietness, and it's all lovely.

Lovely. So you don't need all these substitutes anymore. You may still, of course, you still use the internet or you use it for, but not anymore to, continuously, because you cannot stand being with yourself.

You can't stand yourself. And that's the reality for most people. Think of that or realize what that means, how dysfunctional that is.

You can't stand yourself. That's why you continuously run into this and into that and into that. And if a person who cannot stand him or herself, of course, what kind of relationships is that person going to have?

If you can't stand yourself, then you're using others to make you feel a little better, but that doesn't work. And basically, the inability to be with yourself gets reflected and projected onto others also. And comes the ability of being with other humans, because at first you try to use them and then you can't stand them either.

So you have to break through that mental barrier because otherwise you spend the rest of your life not being able to sit quietly in a room. And as the French philosopher said, all your problems arise there from that inability, because what that really implies is you are not connected with being. You are not connected with that which is deeper than the mind made personality, the thinker.

So come home to yourself so that you can enjoy your own company. And then you can truly enjoy also other people's company rather than use them as substitutes. Enjoy yourself, as the expression implies, it all starts there.

Can you enjoy yourself, your being? Otherwise, nothing will satisfy you ever because you're not at ease with yourself. And you take your dissatisfied self wherever you go.

Into any relationship or any place. Attention to the resistance of the present, if powerful enough, will dissolve that resistance and a state of presence will emerge. What will dissolve the central core of the self so that it doesn't create endless waves of resistance?

Can we explore the nature of the realization that is necessary? What will dissolve the central core of self so that it doesn't create endless waves of resistance? The central, so what is the central core of self?

The mind structures, the mind movements that are the mental image of me with its accumulated content plus the pain body, the two in cooperation form the central core of self. So what will dissolve that? Of course, that's easy.

Surrender, only now, surrender, it's too easy, isn't it? It's too simple. Surrender to whatever form this moment takes.

Then the self cannot survive in the state of surrender to what is. It's as simple as that. The pain body cannot renew itself when you surrender to the fact that there is a pain body.

And so surrender, I'm not telling you from now on, you need to be in continuous surrender for 24 hours a day. Oh no. It's not that difficult.

It's only this moment that you need to surrender to, not just this, just this, whatever form this takes, it's always this and that you meet in and through surrender. That you can do. You can't surrender for 24 hours a day.

That's a problem, but just this, it's only now. And so the egoic self, nor the pain body can survive in surrender. And so, and then the question may arise, well, how long is it going to take before the central core of self, and my pain body have dissolved?

And that question implies that surrender is not yet complete. Is this moment that bad that you need to get to a future one where you achieve a certain state? To realize the goodness and depth that is already here.

And only through surrender, you realize that. Who you are already. You are greater than in your wildest egoic dreams.

You could ever be, you are already greater than you could ever be, even if the wildest egoic dreams of achievement became realized. Now, already, you are that. This mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive.

To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation. Now, if you're new to this, you're going to wonder, what's he waiting for? Or when are we going to start?

And of course, the implication behind that question is that meditation is something that you do. And that's a fallacy of many meditators. Then meditation becomes just another doing.

And you can put it in your schedule somewhere after all the appointments and whatever you have to do, then you do the meditation. But meditation is really about finding the dimension of depth in yourself, which is not a doing, it's discovering or sensing a deeper level within yourself, which we could call being. Now, you can't really do anything to find being because being is prior to doing.

And it's always already there as the essence of all life, including the essence of yourself. And now, again, if you are new to this, you may wonder, what's he talking about? How do I find being?

Being is all-pervasive, but because it's so all-pervasive, it's so easy to overlook, just as easy as it is for a fish to overlook the eternal fact of water, because it's so all-pervasive. And so the fish says, water, I've never seen it, it's looked everywhere. So what does that mean, this analogy?

There's something all-pervasive that is both within and without, and that is the essence of who you are. And that is where your sense of identity ultimately derives from. So as we sit here together, can you become aware of the simple fact that you are, the fact of being, the fact that I am right now?

To give you another pointer, can you become aware of your own presence here, without which there would be no sounds to listen to, there would be nothing to see? What is it that makes the listening and the seeing possible? That's the dimension of depth.

That's ultimately where your sense of identity comes from. You can't define it, it just is, you just are. When you become aware of that, all that it really means is not so much that you become aware of something, but you become aware of the fact of awareness.

Still, when I put it into language, it still seems as if you were aware of something, because that's how a sentence is constructed, subject and object, but that's not the reality of it. The reality of it is awareness becomes aware of itself. It's not two, but one.

And awareness is consciousness, consciousness that has become aware of itself. And that's so all-pervasive, that's always in the background of your life, as a deeper sense of I am, or of beingness, or of presence, but you get distracted and seduced by all the things that happen and that you do. And continuously, consciousness identifies and gets attached to all the things that occur, especially the thoughts in your mind.

Consciousness becomes seduced into losing itself in every thought, and then you don't know who you are anymore. You get a false sense of identity, and you don't feel enough, and you feel there's something missing, and that you need more to grow in your sense of identity, and it never is enough. And here, in the dimension of depth, you are already enough.

There's already a sense of completion, of fullness and aliveness. You don't need to become more alive. You're already alive.

So another way of putting it, it is you become aware of the very aliveness that you are, the life that you are, which is one with the totality of life, the one life. Let's just take a moment and become aware of the present moment. Vitally important in any endeavor that you undertake, no matter what it is, is not to lose your connectedness with the present moment.

So before you start a new enterprise, a new activity, always good to take a moment for awareness, basically. That's what it is. Sometimes people ask, well, what is the present moment?

How do you, where is it? What does it even mean to become aware of the present moment? And the first thing, of course, is that you become aware of whatever surrounds you.

That's the entry point into the present moment, a very easy entry point into present moment awareness. Some people may call it mindfulness, is to become more aware of whatever surrounds you here and now, sense perceptions. Just be with what is.

Give it attention, some attention, the room you're sitting in. Maybe there's a window, you can look out of the window. You can see trees behind me.

I can't see them. I know they're there. This is, you enter the present moment by becoming more aware of sense perceptions, auditory, visual, and perhaps others.

And of course, what that does, you might notice is there's less mental noise. The voice in the head that speaks and speaks, that talks to you, that you have a dialogue with, a monologue that comments and interprets and takes positions, mental positions, identifies with likes, dislikes. Yes, no, never stops talking.

That's the mind, the voice in the head that most people are completely identified with. And that means they're not present. So the first step is take some attention away from that by simply becoming aware of sense perceptions.

And if you can look at something natural, that's even better because a natural thing, a tree, a flower, a plant, the sky, a natural thing lends itself to a present moment awareness more than a man-made, a human-made thing. So anything natural that you can look at for a moment, focus on and give it attention, acknowledge it. You don't need to think about it.

So it's just come aware of the present moment through a sensory perception. And already, if you can do that, if perhaps a few minutes before you were very much immersed in the problem-making mind, it wasn't actually solving any problem because this continuous mind activity actually creates more problem than it solves. If it's not focused, it's unconscious.

So already, suddenly there's a certain amount of peace that descends upon this, the world, your world. It becomes a bit more peaceful. You become aware of the aliveness of things.

So being the light, what does that mean? There's a very important statement that Jesus made that kind of inspired me to use this perhaps seemingly strange expression. In one of the gospels in the New Testament, Jesus said, addressing his disciples or whoever was listening to him, basically addressing each one of us, he said, you are the light of the world.

That's a very profound statement, not perhaps necessarily understood in the churches. There's another statement that he made in another, the Gospel of John, where he said, with reference to himself, I am the light of the world. So we have two statements of profound significance.

On the one hand, he said, you are the light of the world. And then elsewhere, we find him saying, I am the light of the world. So what does that mean?

He's talking to, and he says, you are the light of the world. He was talking to his followers, simple people, not people who are important in the eyes of the world. They were simple people.

So he was not telling them that they are very special. He was pointing to a deeper reality, a deeper, I would say, a deeper identity within them, deeper than their superficial social identity, their form identity in this world. He was pointing to an essence within every human being.

Now, you may find that probably nowhere in the Bible is the word consciousness used. Jesus never used the word consciousness. It would have been meaningless, and probably in his native language, which was Aramaic, the word consciousness probably didn't even exist.

There's even a dispute whether the word consciousness existed in ancient Greek, which of course is the language in which the New Testament was written. There probably is, but we don't need to go into that. So if there had been the word consciousness, it would still have been meaningless to his listeners who were simple people.

And somehow humanity was not ready to hear this. It would have been meaningless to most people alive on the planet to say, the essence of who you are is you are conscious. The light stands for obviously consciousness.

It could not stand for anything else. And the light in which the world appears is the consciousness. Without consciousness, there's no world.

The greatest mystery about the universe, there are many mysteries in the universe. I love mysteries. There are superficial mysteries.

I love the mysteries of UFOs. And I love the mysteries of crop circles, things like that. And then of course there are the deep mysteries of the vastness of space, outer space, the almost infinite number of galaxies.

Every galaxy is an entire world system. Incomprehensible, inconceivable, unbelievable mystery. We've only scratched the surface of that.

We've only scratched the surface of what this universe is. Then we have the mystery, the outer mystery. Then we have the mystery of the atomic realm and the subatomic realm, which also is inconceivable, incomprehensible, we cannot fully understand it.

It's just an amazing mystery. So we have the macrocosmic mystery and then we have the microcosmic mystery of the world. And in between, we have our everyday world, which we move in.

And yet underlying all that, underlying both the macrocosmic and the microcosmic and our everyday world is the deepest mystery of all. And that is the mystery of consciousness. The most incredible thing is that there is not only a universe, but the most mysterious thing about the universe is that the universe is conscious.

And we don't know what consciousness is. We cannot know what consciousness is in the same way in which we can know something that we look at and examine, that a scientist can examine. The macrocosm, the galaxies, the microcosms, atomic and subatomic realm, scientists rarely talk about consciousness because they don't know what to say about it.

How does it originate? What is it? Where does it come from?

And yet it's so beyond any doubt, one could almost say the one thing that you cannot doubt is that you are conscious right now about yourself. You can doubt everything about yourself, but what you cannot doubt is that you are conscious. Even if the entire world that you, what you experience as the world could all be a dream.

It could be, maybe it's even the matrix. I don't think it is, but a matrix is just a modern form of saying it's a dream-like thing. This very moment could be your dream, that you are dreaming that you're listening to somebody talking about the fact that you might be dreaming and that you might be dreaming that you're seeing this image on the screen and this person and this person is talking.

But of course, where is this person talking? This person is talking, where does this talk take place? In your consciousness.

I am in your consciousness. Obviously, that's where the whole thing is created. Now, whether, when we say your consciousness, whether that is correct, I would say probably not, although we use that term, your, the way I see it, there's only one consciousness.

You are a manifestation of that one consciousness. So I am speaking in this one consciousness and who am I? I am the light of the world, the one consciousness.

As are you. You are that consciousness. And that is the one thing that you cannot doubt.

You are the light of the world. And this is an experiential realization. It's not something abstract.

It is not something to believe in. Then I believe that I am the light of the world. It's nothing to believe in.

But to realize firsthand, immediate, to realize this in your immediate experience, the very fact that the one thing that you cannot doubt about yourself, your whole identity may be just a mental construct. It is, by the way. Your whole identity is just maybe so that you don't, you won't stop listening to me.

Your whole identity may be just a temporary mental construct that can be doubted a little bit, perhaps a bit like a dream. And your whole life could be, it is a kind of dream. Is it, it's a question of perspective where you say it's real or it's a dream.

A dream evaporates very quickly, dissipates, it disappears. But every experience that you have disappears very quickly. Even the dinner you had last night, was that a dream?

Your last vacation, was that a dream or did it happen? And then you remember a dream you had last night. Okay, that was a dream, but the vacation was real, but it's gone now.

So you can doubt many things. You can doubt the absolute reality of this world and your experience that may be, but there was a famous, as you know, probably a French philosopher, Descartes, who came to this point. He wanted to, and he came at the end of the Middle Ages, which had all kinds of weird beliefs and superstitions.

And so he wanted to know, is there anything that is beyond doubt? Everything can be doubted. And he went inside, and then he realized that he was still thinking all the time.

And so he said, I think, therefore I am. That's beyond doubt. But he hadn't gone quite deep enough.

He was on his way towards the true realization, but he stopped before he reached the point where you transcend thinking, but are still conscious and aware. If he had waited a little, and if he had stopped thinking for a moment and realized that beyond thought, there is a consciousness, there's a vast realm of consciousness. Beyond thought, there is an awareness, and where there is the light, the light of consciousness before it becomes a thing, that the light shines through every thought form.

The light is not separate from, the thoughts are not separate from the totality of consciousness. They are like a form that consciousness takes. So the realization, I am the light of the world, is extremely important.

And that's the realization of the one thing within you that is beyond doubt, that you are conscious. And even if it's all a dream, for the dream to be perceived, to be experienced, for the dream to happen, there needs to be a light in which it happens, in which it is perceived and known. And that is the light of consciousness.

And the entire world, to appear, it needs to become a world, it needs the light of consciousness. And so this consciousness, which is the light of the world, which is the essence of who you are, you cannot, scientists have such a problem with it, because that's the one thing, not a thing, I'd just call it a thing. It's the one thing that cannot be an object of knowledge.

Everything else, you are the subject that knows the object. You look at something, you're the subject. I look at my hand, he is my hand, I look my hand.

Anything that the scientist does, the scientist is the observer, and what he or she examines is the observed. Now that works with everything, except with one thing. You cannot be the observer of consciousness.

In other words, consciousness cannot become the observed, because consciousness is the eternal subject, the eternal observer. So if let's say the scientist is looking for consciousness, and the power that is looking for consciousness is the light of consciousness. So whatever the scientist looks at to solve the mystery of consciousness is the consciousness looking for itself.

And so you could never find that consciousness and say, oh, there it is. You can never say, I have it. You cannot even say, I understand it.

It's the eternal mystery, but that is the eternal mystery of who you are. So you cannot, essentially you cannot make yourself into an object of knowledge. That would be the ego itself.

You can know yourself as an ego and say, that's me, and talk about yourself or your conditioned entity, the person, the personality, the historical person, the mental construct that is who you are, that can be an object of knowledge. But the essence of who you are can never be an object of knowledge because it is the eternal subject. So you cannot, and it is inseparable from the transcendent, which is really God.

So in essence, you are God, or perhaps say more acceptable and perhaps more accurate to say, perhaps I wouldn't go so far as to say that you are God, but I would say that you are an emanation of God in the same way that a ray of sunlight is an emanation of the sun and is connected to the sun, but is not the sun. In the same way, you are an emanation of source, the one, but God, you are. Now, if you look for God, the same applies because really that is consciousness is the emanation.

If the same applies, you cannot find God as an object, and there it is. Jesus said that literally, but people just don't seem to get it because people asked him, he used this expression, kingdom of heaven, which in my translation is kingdom is dimension and heaven is spaciousness. It's the dimension of pure consciousness, spaciousness, the dimension of spaciousness.

And kingdom of heaven is not an external thing, it's an inner dimension of consciousness. So find the kingdom of heaven that is within you. Okay, he said, and then his disciples said, when does the kingdom of heaven come?

Because they had completely misunderstood what he was talking about. When does the kingdom of heaven come? And he said, now he's talking, this kingdom of heaven is the consciousness.

And he said, the kingdom of heaven does not come with signs to be perceived. You cannot say, look, it's over here, or look, it's over there, because truly I tell you, it is within you. He said it all.

What does it mean? He says, the kingdom of heaven does not come with signs that you can perceive. You cannot perceive it in the way in which you perceive external things, because it is the eternal subject.

You cannot make God or consciousness, which is the emanation of God, into an object of perception or an object of knowledge. And that's why the only way a sign can be perceived is can understand consciousness. If the scientist becomes, directs the attention that goes outward back into itself, and the scientist or anybody, you, becomes aware that what he, she has been looking for is already the answer.

It's in the answers, what you are looking, you are what you're looking for. Because if you try and try and try to get enlightened, and then it just, you get so frustrated, it's just not happening, so you join the suffering group, and then you're much more likely to find it. Now, here's an interesting little paragraph on the Bhagavad Gita.

What kind of people become spiritual seekers? And it divides into, there are four types of persons, according to here, and this still applies very much nowadays, and this was 2,000 or 3,000 years ago. There are four different types of persons who seek spirituality or God.

So Krishna talks again as the personification of the one. Four types of people seek a connection with me. One, the world-weary, people who worship God for the alleviation of physical or mental agony, or to be released from fears and adversity.

There's many people, of course, who come to a spiritual teacher or teaching or a spiritual book, come for that reason, and it is a good reason to be, one, to be free of suffering. And of course, the whole Buddha's teaching is about freedom from suffering, so that's one type. Two are the seekers of happiness.

They are seeking happiness through worldly things, people who pray to God to obtain wealth, family, power, prestige, and so forth. So maybe those are people also who do go into manifesting things through positive thinking and affirmations, but come out connecting with a somewhat deeper level, yes, in a limited way still, yes. So they're seeking spirituality because they want something in this world.

It still applies. Not that much has changed, apparently. And then there are the seekers of, this number three now, the third group, are the seekers of spiritual advancement, people whose motive for connecting with divinity is to gain knowledge and experience to aid their self-realization.

And I would add, people also who want to have the high of what they conceive of as the high that surely enlightenment must be, as I sometimes call it. They want the fireworks, they're waiting for some ultimate experience. So that's another group, many like that.

And of course, I'll talk about that in a minute. Number four, these are relatively rare, according to the Bhagavad Gita, are people who want to know God, who truly want to know the Atma, the Self, who know that God alone exists, and whose only impulse is for the divine and nothing else. And those are relatively rare.

I just want God. So the ones numbers, whose motive for connecting with divinity is to gain knowledge and experience to aid their self-realization. So we have wanting to be free of suffering, wanting to be happy through this, that, or the other, three, wanting knowledge or experience or some high, and four, the direct wanting the one.

I just want that. So it's, of course, Bhagavad Gita says, of these four, the last is the highest because they know my truth and are devoted to me as I'm supremely dear to them, they are very dear to me. The first three are attached to the worldly objects or mental states they desire.

But certainly all four types are noble because any reason for turning Godward or inwards will in due time lead to spiritual transformation and is therefore ultimately good. So my comment on this is the, it is true that the ones who just want God are rare, and that's fine, it's not needed. Wanting to be free of suffering is more helpful.

Those who want to be free of suffering or adversity who've had enough suffering, that is a very powerful motivation for seeking spiritual awakening. It's a more powerful motivation and more likely to lead to realization or awakening than those who are seeking either happiness because they will have to experience it. None of the things they seek, even when they get them, is really going to fulfill that purpose of making them happy and fulfilled.

And then they begin to suffer. And so they join group one. So first you're in that group for quite a while, and then when you realize, okay, my manifestation is great, it works, but still it's not quite right because nothing fulfills me.

Then you join, you go back to group one. You're suffering. And if you're seeking, now many spiritual seekers seek some kind of enlightenment experience or awakening.

And sometimes I get, they write in and say, I've been trying so hard for so many years and it's not happening yet. I want to be free. I want to be enlightened or whatever they call it.

And they are expecting some kind of experience or they believe that if they acquire enough knowledge about it, finally it's going to work. And so they become very knowledgeable. They can quote all kinds of scriptures.

It's all there. And they know more and more about it and more and more. And for those people, it's quite hard.

In fact, unless they join another group, they're not going to make it. But they will have to join another group, which again is group number one, suffering. Because if you try and try and try to get enlightened and then it just, you get so frustrated, it's just not happening.

So you join the suffering group and then you're much more likely to find it. So I'm really very fond of group one, suffering. As long as you're not identified with yourself as the suffering entity, when that becomes your identity, then you have another problem.

But nothing that cannot be addressed and recognized in yourself. It can be a helpful thing to be in unusual surroundings because it's easier to be more present. In unusual surroundings, that's the advantage of traveling.

And that's why, as I've written somewhere, many people feel more alive when they travel. And when they are at home, their surroundings are so familiar that they lose presence completely. They don't see things anymore.

They go from where they live to their office or wherever it is, go and done it so many times, they don't see it anymore. And you would be surprised even at home, your usual surroundings, you might have a painting on your walls and haven't looked at it in the past three years. Might be very beautiful.

Or your garden or the plants in there. So this is the familiarity can lead to a kind of semi-sleep-like state. And when you're traveling, you go, oh.

And the good thing is you might not even have a name for all the new things you see. At home, you know what everything is called. But here you see things, you might see a weird animal.

Or the mind stops because you can't name it. And that's a wonderful thing. Or you see trees that you haven't seen before and you go, oh.

Or you might say to your friend, look at that. And you might notice in the moment of looking at that, you're not naming it in your mind because you don't know what it's called. And so there's a moment, a few seconds of just being present.

Be the presence rather than the naming person. So it helps to be wide awake to your sense perceptions because that is one way of coming into the present moment, which is why we are here. Because there is more to the present moment than we realize most of the time.

There's more to it. It's the access point to the deeper dimension within yourself. So as a general theme, underlying theme, I recommend, surprisingly, that you practice being in the present moment.

Although you've been taken out of your usual surroundings, you have carried with you something else. And of course, that's your mind. It travels with you wherever you go.

That is perhaps the meaning of a book that somebody wrote. I believe the title is Wherever You Go, There You Are. So wherever you go, you carry your mind and the conditioning of your mind with you.

So that is the challenge here, to transcend the conditioning of your mind. And the habitual way of interpreting, the habitual way of reacting to things, habitual mind patterns. If a mind pattern in you is that you frequently and very quickly become discontent with where you are, if that's a pattern in you, then that pattern will arise here also.

If your mind pattern is one that loves complaining and finding fault with things, then it's very likely that very quickly this mind pattern will appear here also. So you get surprising things, things that your expectations are not met in various ways. And that is a challenge to the mind, to the conditioned mind, because the conditioned mind wants its expectations met.

And if they're not met, it gets uneasy, restless, irritated, angry, starts talking about what's wrong, either silently in your mind or to others. And if others can agree with you, then it's even better. Or you can go on the internet and then you can get 1,000 people agreeing with you.

I'm not saying if there's something really wrong, you shouldn't do something to rectify it. So if something is leaking in your room, say, no, I'm not going to say anything because I'm not supposed to complain. No, of course.

Say there's something there that needs to be rectified. That's not a complaint, it's just information. Complaint means there is an emotion behind it.

And the emotion says this should not be happening. Then it becomes a complaint, or it's your fault. Then it becomes a complaint.

If it's simply presenting information, it's not a complaint. It's just a fact. And then the question is, can anything be done about it?

If yes, good. What they're saying, there's nothing we can do. Do you go on insisting that this is very bad and create suffering for yourself?

Or do you simply accept this is what it is? Remember to turn off the ringer on your phones so that you don't get disturbed. And let's just settle into the present moment, which is not something perhaps that you would normally do because there's always something else that's more important or pretends to be more important.

And then you forget that the only important, the only really important thing in your life is the present moment because there is nothing else ever. You have to really realize that fully to see the implications of that and how one could almost say devastating it is to realize that there's only ever this moment. But most people live as if other things, past and future, were more important than this moment.

It's an unconscious pattern. So meditation is about becoming present. Then the word itself implies, of course, now, present moment.

So we sometimes speak of present moment awareness. I sometimes call it presence. And that is what meditation is all about, discovering that dimension of consciousness in yourself.

And usually meditation techniques are designed to get you there. But our meditation is a meditation that does not really have any particular techniques. I'm just inviting you to come into this present moment with your attention directly.

Just drop into the now. This is something you can only verify or realize for yourself that you can actually almost sense, one could say, the presence of the present moment. Well, it has no shape or form.

So you can become conscious of the present moment itself. What does that mean? First of all, you become more conscious of sensory perceptions.

An alertness arises that normally is not there when you are trapped in the continuous stream of thinking. Then that alertness that is synonymous with presence or awareness is just not there. So the normal state of consciousness is to be trapped in this continuous stream of thinking, a lot of it quite useless and repetitive.

Thinking can be a powerful thing, but most people's thinking, 99% of it is repetitive, useless, often negative. It's mental noise. And when you're identified with that, when there's that voice in your head that never stops speaking and you don't even know that you are not that voice, so you think you are the voice, you become the voice, that is a dreamlike state.

And you can observe people around you often who are in that dreamlike state. You can see it in their eyes. They're not here.

All their attention is absorbed by their thinking. They're just a little bit left just so that they know where they are going and not bump into furniture. But so you can see how many people are, most of the time, not really present because almost all their attention is absorbed by this continuous noise of thinking.

And so they go, and when they look at you, they don't really see you. At best, they see you through the stream of thinking, which is judgments that they may have about you. So there's never a clear perception of anything.

Everything is filtered through the thinking, through the judgments of the mind. And that's a, traditionally in spirituality, that's called being asleep. And that's why the term that is used in various ancient spiritual traditions for enlightenment or whatever you want to call it is awakening.

So there's an alertness that is suddenly there when you become conscious of the present moment. At first, you might notice it as suddenly becoming more aware of your sense perceptions, listening, looking, seeing, hearing. You might also find that alertness is there when something new suddenly arises in your field of vision.

Somebody comes into the, something appears, or in your hearing, a sudden noise, and when a sudden noise appears, and, or suddenly somebody comes in or comes around the corner, and you suddenly look or listen, and there's an alertness behind the looking and listening. And for those few seconds, when that new thing arises and you give it your full attention, for those few seconds, three, four, five, maybe two, there's not a thought in your head. Thought then comes in after a few seconds, and it may, for some people, only be a couple of seconds, and then immediately interprets what it is that's there.

But there is always, there's a moment when something new arises, when there is clear perception and just an alertness in the background. And that's an interesting moment because that is a natural way of presence arising in you, but usually it's so short-lived that people miss it. So it's a good thing to discover that you actually already meditate for brief moments.

You are in the state that we call meditation, and perhaps didn't even know it. And sometimes there may be moments when you just sit somewhere and you suddenly become completely comfortable with that moment as it is. And an inner peace arises, and you feel there's nothing missing here.

And this can suddenly can happen where before your mindset, why am I still waiting here in this waiting room? I've been sitting here for an hour, and why are they keeping me waiting? And suddenly there may be a shift and you say, well, I'm here this moment.

I might as well be here fully. And suddenly all that noise of thinking subsides and you realize actually there's nothing really missing in this moment. I'm breathing, looking, listening, feeling alive.

And it's fine when the mind is not telling me that it's not fine. And you'll be surprised how often the present moment is fine when you really check it out. Whereas the mind would habitually tell you that it's not fine.

It's not good enough. Something is missing. Something shouldn't be there.

But of course it is. And when you argue with what is in your mind, that's called unhappiness in whatever form it comes. Irritation, impatience, anger, sadness.

Oh, no, not this. So meditation is learning to align yourself in time only with the present moment and become aware of the present moment. So first of all, through sensory perceptions.

So I just said that sometimes those things arise naturally. You suddenly, either something new comes into your field of vision or your hearing and an alertness is there for a few seconds. Or there may be a moment when you are relaxing into the present moment.

And I'm not talking about becoming tired because that's not where we are going. We are not going towards sleep. We are going towards a heightened sense of alertness which is what the meditative state is.

Or let's do away with the term meditation altogether and just call it presence. There's a heightened state of alertness. It's very different from the lowered alertness that when you are moving towards sleep.

So that is not meditation. And even when people talk about relaxation, usually or often it's associated in people's minds with kind of you're gradually moving towards sleep. I'm so relaxed now.

Or if you go to a hypnotist, you might say and your eyes are becoming heavier and heavier and we are not going that way. That's nice. It gives you a little bit of relief from your mind.

But here we are exploring the possibility of a higher state of consciousness, heightened alertness. So I'm talking you into it as we sit here. And as I speak, you may find that shift already happening in you that as you sit here and now you're becoming aware of this moment as it is and no longer needing it to be different.

So if you thought you were here to meditate so that eventually you can reach a meditative state or some kind of peace that you don't have now, let's forget about that and just be with this moment as it is and accept that this moment is as it is. Of course, it always is as it is. So you might as well accept it.

So you become comfortable with it, aware of what you're looking at. You see this man on the screen. You hear the voice talking.

There is the room or wherever you are. Peripherally, you're aware of that and it's fine. This moment is as it is.

And what else is there apart from your sense perceptions? What you see, what you hear, is there anything else? Well, you may feel a sense of aliveness in your inner energy field, the body.

You may feel, as you sit here, just a distant sense of that, yes, there is this. I can feel that the body is alive. So some attention moves there.

An all-pervasive sense of aliveness in your body, in your legs, your hands, your arms. It's a very subtle thing. Sometimes you may want to focus on one little thing, one flower, one leaf, one tree, one bird.

And then at other times, you can take in the totality of a particular view. So you have a totality here of trees and plants and one or two houses, sky. So you can take in, but whether you focus on one thing or you focus on a larger landscape, larger section, visual section, sense yourself as the presence while you look.

And that is how you become aware of the sacredness of nature. And nobody could explain to you what sacredness means, but you will know when you sense it, you'll know it. It's all an expression of the one place.

It's all an expression of the one, the underlying one life, one consciousness. And if you love whatever you see, you, there's a sense of no longer separateness. You love it.

There's a joy that comes with seeing that. But the joy is there because you're in touch with yourself. So that is again, an aspect of the balance between being and doing to be aware of being while you do.

And even when you're not doing something, not to lose consciousness. The danger is when you do activities, let's say your normal work situation, a little bit more complex than putting away clothes. The danger is that you lose yourself in the activity.

And so you're no longer rooted in being, you're out there. And then the sign, the clear sign signal that you are out there and lost yourself in it is something arises like stress, anxiety, some negative reactivity, some belief that something out there is terribly important that needs to be done now and nothing else matters. So you lose yourself in the doing.

Now, if you sit quietly in your room, the danger is that you drift off to sleep. At first you're there present, you're above thought. And then before you know it, you can observe it.

Many years ago, I spent some time occasionally in one Buddhist monasteries and you can observe the early morning meditation, especially when the monks sit 4.30, 5 o'clock sitting for an hour for the early morning meditation. Now I must have been not meditating all the time because occasionally I opened my eyes and looked at the monks. And so at first they're always there.

And then after 15, 20 minutes, some of them go. And of course, in a Zen monastery, you have the head monk who may hit you if he sees you're drifting off. That works.

So don't overdo the being, not doing anything to do it. Sometimes don't say, I'm not going to sit for one hour in this room and be. No, just take it as it comes.

There's a time for being and there's a time for doing. Now, many humans alive now are actually feel very uncomfortable with just being. They can't do it.

They can't do the being. Or when they're trying to be, they are trying to do the being, which is like trying to do the meditation. You can't do a meditation because the meditation is about being.

Doing a meditation implies you want to get somewhere. But true meditation is you are somewhere. You go into the vertical dimension.

So many humans who are very uncomfortable with silence, can't stand it, need some noise, or they need continuous sensory or mental stimulation, need something to get my mental teeth into. And when they don't have it, they were very restless. The worst thing that you could do to them is put them in a room where they have no devices to produce noise.

That would be hell for many humans these days. Sense deprivation of noise. So not with you though, because all of you are comfortable.

With being and with the absence of noise, and you're actually appreciative of silence. It's precious and it's beautiful. Now, you wouldn't want to have it all the time.

No, there needs to be a balance between noise and silence, and between thinking and not thinking, and doing and being. Some ancient cultures who are not yet lost in mental development, like our more advanced, so-called more advanced culture, some ancient cultures, the people have a natural ability to just be, and they're not uncomfortable with being. It was reported by when North America, the Europeans came and settled in North American continent.

I remember reading one doctor or somebody observed people lining up somewhere in the States for a doctor's appointment. And some of them were Europeans who had come to America, and some were native Americans. And it took so long, the doctor was overburdened with work.

And these people, there were not enough chairs. People had to line up long way. And whether it was a doctor or nurse who wrote about it, observed it, all the Europeans became increasingly restless.

And then they got very angry. What's going on? I've been here now for three hours.

And all the native Americans were just completely happy with just standing there. So the person who wrote it was so amazed that he wrote about it. So there's a natural ability to drop in and go still.

Now, then the Westerners came, and then of course there was a clash between the old culture of the native Americans and the mind dominated culture of the West. And then many of the native Americans became very confused and became very destructive for that culture. Now, when we go there, we have been through the development of the intellectual faculty and the mental faculty, and we come out the other end, and then we encounter that ability again and even more deeper.

If you haven't lost something, don't appreciate it that much. You don't even know it that much. So for thousands of years, humans could actually drop into stillness.

I'm sure as these native Americans could, they could drop into stillness quite easily. Perhaps they were fighting one moment and the next moment they go. In the same way that a duck does it, as I described in the power of now, the ducks get into a fight.

And then two minutes later, flap their wings completely back into stillness. So, but they didn't even know it. It's just, they just did it.

They didn't know they did it. But once, when you lose something and then you regain it, there's always an element of depth to it that wasn't there before, because then you knowingly go into the stillness. It's not a natural thing anymore.

It's a knowing thing. This mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive. To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation.

There was a question somebody submitted. I don't have it here, but I remember it. Probably asked by a young man or woman.

I'm not sure. And he said, this is somebody who was watching us. Hi.

So, he said, when I listened to you, I have this strong compulsion to become a spiritual teacher also. But when I listened to a great business leader, suddenly I have the compulsion to become a great business leader. What to do?

What to do? And my recommendation to you is to try the business leader first. I also recommend Tony Robbins seminars.

And there's nothing wrong with that. It's one aspect of life. It's, I can do it.

Yeah, I can do it. Yeah. Build up your energy.

And it's quite enlivening. So, it's not a bad place to go to and try things out. There is a, if you say, let's say that he represents doing and I represent being, but there is, as you know, the symbol of yin yang, the intertwining, the two.

And in the middle of the one, of the one polarity, the yang, there's a little dot and that represents the other. And in the middle of the other, there's a little dot that represents the yang. And so, I have a little bit of the other in me too, as you can see.

And as I found to my amazement that Tony Robbins, I don't know when he started doing that, he has introduced short periods of meditation into his seminars, usually towards the end. And then he goes, now let's just be very quiet. And wow, so that's the other, the other one, the yin is coming into the yang.

Well, that's good. Of course, ideally, in a human life, a human being, human being, you remember how, what that word means, those two words mean when you put them together. Human is the form that you are.

And human is the doing, whatever the form does. The being is who you are in your essence. So you are both.

You are the being, the consciousness, and you are the form that that consciousness takes. And the form that that consciousness takes will do things and think and do and act upon the world and be acted upon. So there's hardly any human, there may be some human beings who are completely balanced between the human and the being, who are in the being and the doing, the human and the being.

They're quite in the middle. Most people go a little bit that way or a little bit more that way. Our civilization as a whole, of course, has gone into the doing mode, very, very far to one extreme.

So the civilization itself is actually mentally ill because of that. And the connectedness with being has been almost entirely lost. So it's a very fragile civilization, despite its many achievements.

It's a little bit like when you go into a supermarket where they sell fruit, you'd look at the oranges, and they're all, they look so shiny and polished, and the tomatoes, they look so shiny and polished. But often when you cut them open, they're completely dry inside and tasteless. So that's a little bit our civilization.

The surface appearance is nice and shiny, but if you look deeper, you can see there is a, there's something that is, something fundamental that's not, that is missing there. And therefore, the civilization, unless it returns to, back to some kind of balance between being and doing, it cannot survive for that much longer. And that's why we are here.

And so predominantly what we focus on here is the being side, because that's, we need to redress the balance within the collective and in your personal life too, because every individual conditioned by this society tends to live, even starts with little young children. They're already taught to be in the, just do and think and to play, right? Go, let's get going.

Okay, all the tension goes out, and then they start their video games and stuff. We can't focus on anything for very long. That's a huge disability.

Many, many young people have that these days because of the influence of many, many factors, and especially the video stuff and devices that they have, cannot focus on anything for very long anymore, cannot give attention to anything for very long because the mind goes. Because that's what, when you, then they watch video games or even many movies, the scene changes every few seconds. And so, if you cannot give attention to something for a certain period of time, there's never a flow of creativity.

You cannot, because creativity, you have to, your attention needs to rest upon something and you need to give it time and look and be with it and become still, and then creativity flows. If a whole generation grows up that is unable to do that, then the civilization cannot produce anything new and it cannot even cope with its problems anymore because even to cope with problems in a good way, you need to be able to look at a problem and be with it and then allow the greater intelligence to inspire you and then come up with a solution. So, humans, as I call it, yeah, they are lost in doing, lost in the mind, they're lost in thinking.

Because thinking is a kind of doing too, you're doing your thinking. Well, you are not. The thinking is doing stuff to you, you're not even thinking.

Thinking happens to you. Humans say, I think. They don't think.

Thinking is an autonomous activity in their minds, a reflection of the collective mind. They are not thinking, they are being used by thought, which is, and well, their personal thoughts are just an aspect of the collective thoughts and they don't know that. So you are being thought, you don't think.

So, and all that is doing, that's the doing mode. Those who are naturally more drawn towards being, they don't really fit into our society at all. In older cultures, there was some room for them, they could go, there were many monasteries they could go to and there were many jobs that actually did not require you to do a lot of doing.

You can just be, there were simple jobs that you could do. And nowadays it's harder for the humans who have this natural inclination towards being to fit into this world. Some of them are here now.

But even those who are very effective at doing eventually become frustrated and unhappy because they realize the emptiness of their doing. So even those who have become very successful doers encounter frustration and emptiness, not the Buddhist emptiness, a different kind of emptiness. And so society is, our civilization is longing without knowing it, is longing to return to the roots, to the being dimension.

And that's why things like these strange videos on YouTube are becoming so popular because this is one way of getting a little bit of being and getting out of doing. And so you watch half an hour of somebody handling an object. Wow, so lovely.

And then comes a point when it's time for another stage to arise where the dream of form is no longer, your no longer consciousness isn't beginning to awaken from complete identification with form. And that is happening to many humans. And this is why human beings are drawn to these two spiritual teachings with the awakening from the dream of form.

Who am I? What does it mean, I? What is identity?

What does it mean when I say I? What does it feel like? What is I?

What am I? Now, to most people, yet, if you ask them, what is, who are you? They will define the word I in terms of form.

They will say, well, obviously this body, that's I. This comes maybe first. And then there comes the mind with its accumulations, its accumulated, its thought, habitual thought movements, its memories, they come the emotions that go with the thought movements, the psychological form of I.

So they say, well, I am this body. Then there's a name, which of course is just a sound. You say, John, I am John.

And many people say they think that's already a big part of who they are. When they can say their name, John, oh, okay. And then they add a little something else.

I'm a, an architect. Oh, okay, we're getting even closer to who you are. And I'm a father, which, okay, good.

And your age, okay, something, that's, okay. We're almost there now. Just need a few more details.

And then we know who you are. And so you can put it on a piece of paper, a summary of it, or if you want a detailed account of who you are, you can write down your life history in a book, and it becomes your autobiography. Oh, that's interesting.

Now we know who you are. And if that's not enough, and if you think there may be hidden parts of me, then you can go to psychoanalysis for 10 years, and then all these hidden memories, and hidden desires, and feelings that you had when you were four and a half years old towards your mother, and your father, and your grandmother, and what, they all readily, they all come up, and then you can add that, and then, okay, now I've got it, I've got my autobiography, and I've got, that's I, I'm me, I'm complete now. And then you look 50 years later, which is not much on a universal scale, 50 years is very little, I know that now. I thought when I was 20, 50 years was a lot.

But I'm older than 50, by the way, by the body. The 50 years pass, and what's left of the body and the psychological me, that entity in the head with its history, what's left? Nothing.

Well, maybe there's one or two copies left of your autobiography, and maybe one person finds a copy in a secondhand bookshop. This is somebody's autobiography. And your grandchildren, or their descendants, well, after, my mother passed away three years ago, and I realized a few, recently, that I'm virtually the only person now who remembers her, because all her friends died before she did, and her family.

And all the other people who knew her only knew tiny fragments. They said, oh, she was a little bit of an eccentric, and she was outspoken, and so on. They had little fragments, but the person who really remembers her more than a fragment is me, and when I go, nobody remembers her.

And then all that's left is photos, and a generation later, nobody will know who this person on the photo is. But this is strange how an identity evaporates that seemed so solid and real. And so, form, we're talking about form identity.

That is, when you're asked, who are you? Or you ask yourself, who am I? Okay, now, is that all there is to who you are?

Is that what can be defined through form, what can be, that which is form, thought forms, emotional forms, physical forms, a conglomeration of that put together for a while becomes what you think is I. Is that really your identity, or is there something else? Well, perhaps we can just, at this moment, see, as you sit here, right at this moment, you don't remember your past.

You don't have to. Let's pretend you don't have one. You have no past.

There is no past. Let's say there is no past, which, by the way, is the truth. Ultimately, there is no past.

There's only the now. So, okay, and no future. Let's pretend there's no future.

Well, there is no future anyway, but there's only this. So you can't remind yourself. You don't even, unless there's a thought in your head that says, I am such and such, even that you don't know right now.

Let's say you don't know anything about who you are. Nothing that you can formulate, conceptualize, call something, you don't. What is left?

Is there, what is lost? Nothing is lost. In fact, when you encounter this, which cannot be named, which is a formless presence, aliveness, that's the, you've touched your, that which is beyond form, consciousness itself.

And that is identity. That is where your sense of I comes from. And so you are more truly yourself when you don't remember your past than when you do remember your past.

And you are more truly yourself when there's not a single thought in your head than when you are full of thinking, thinking about me and my problems. And whenever you feel this sense of I, this, the light of consciousness, which you can know directly in the stillness that is always there, available to you as the essence, your essence identity, your essence identity, timeless, that's always there. And that is one with universal consciousness.

It's just coming through this form. It's never lost. When this form dissolves, the consciousness goes choo, out like a little tentacle, choo.

Being. So let's stay with this for a moment here. You have no past or there is no past.

What is lost? Nothing essential is lost. You get a stronger sense of who you are in your essence when you are not telling yourself in your mind who you are.

This is why I said in Stillness Speaks, I believe, you are never more truly yourself than when you are still. And still means, of course, the mind has become still. It's an inner.

Doesn't, whether there's noise outside or not, doesn't matter. You're never more truly yourself than when you are still. Then you can sense the essence of who you are.

And that does not depend on the age of the body, whether you're 20 or 90, it's the same stillness. That frees you then from the suffering that comes if you have identified with form, which then sooner or later will leave you, you suffer. If you identify with a strong or beautiful body and that body eventually grows old, you begin to suffer because you seem to dissolve.

You haven't realized who you are. And so we have, you have form identity and essence identity. And suffering arises through knowing yourself only as form identity.

My history, my story, my body, my past, my this, my that, my that, my, my, my. That's whatever you identify with in the world of form. If you know yourself only as that, that's a state of unconsciousness, the dreamlike state.

Consciousness is dreaming the dream of form. And then it acts, attempting to become free of its inner state of incompleteness, dissatisfaction and fear, which is inevitable when all you know is your form identity. There's always underneath the surface or even very much on the surface, there is dissatisfaction, fear, unease, discomfort, fear, I am not enough, this is not enough.

This is not the right place where I am now. This is not the right people I'm with. This is not the right thing that I'm doing right now.

There comes the need to go out and search for more forms that I can identify with so that I can feel more complete. But the only way you can actually reach the state of, being at home, being rooted in yourself without the dissatisfaction that always comes again and again and again, and without the fear, the only way is encountering that which is beyond form. And it's so much, it's right here, it's closer.

It's God's realization, it's another word for it, but let's not go there. The God within, the timeless within. And so the universe then has, all the people who are into creating traditionally have been very unconscious because those who were most identified with form had the strongest desire to manifest and create more things out there and conquer an empire or accumulate more and more possessions or have more power.

So they got driven. So all the powerful people, the people who created human history, if you read the history books, they were deeply identified with form and they're all unhappy, of course, very unhappy, hoping by achieving this, that, or the other and conquering this, that, or the other, the other tribe or whatever, to become free of their state of unhappiness and of incompleteness. And never getting there.

And that's been, so traditionally, the doers, there were always some people who were not into doing, but in many traditional societies, there wasn't much of a place for them. Later, monasteries came into being, so they could become monks. Long story, but.

So, we still associate going out and doing with unconsciousness. I believe there's a line by T.S. Eliot in a poem where he says, the best lack all conviction and the worst are full of passionate intensity. Talking about contemporary humanity, early 20th century.

The best lack all convictions means that they don't know what to do. They get, because they are torn between, there's some inkling of, inside them, of their essence. So, they're not, the desire to do, to, is not as overpowering as in those who are totally identified with their former identity.

So, that's an interesting, that where we are at as humanity as a whole is a realization that there is an essence that has nothing to do with a form. And only if we are rooted, if some of our attention is in that formless essence, can we do things in this world without creating more havoc and suffering for others and ourselves. If we only go into doing without the rootedness in the eternal dimension, which is stillness, which is here now, always now, inseparable from now.

Whatever you do, when you lose yourself in the doing, identified again with form and creating some new problem. So, the foundation for all doing is conscious being. So, that's the important realization about what about manifesting.

That's good, but before we talk about manifesting, before we build some new building or structure, get the foundation first. Do you have the foundation? Don't start building a house without any foundation.

Let's manifest this great business empire. This is going to change the world. Yes, but have you laid the foundation?

What foundation? Being, being, the formless, the eternal. No, we haven't thought about that.

No, of course you haven't, you can't think about it.

[Speaker 2] (6:01:17 - 6:01:18)
No. No.

[Speaker 1] (6:01:22 - 7:29:05)
The foundation is being rooted, realizing what that means, what being is, not intellectually, not by trying to understand, because as you may have noticed, there's nothing much to understand about being. You can't, being, can you explain a bit more, please? Being.

Stillness. I don't understand stillness. Can you explain stillness?

No, because there's nothing in it to explain. You can't look at it under a microscope or dissect it. Aspects of stillness, PhD.

The purpose of our meditation, of course, is always getting in touch with that which transcends the person to discover that there's more to you than the person. Person meaning both the physical body and your mind. Plus emotions and so on.

So all your thinking is to do with the person. Emotions, your history, successes, failures, so-called. And even if you've reached a very high point in your life right now, you've just succeeded at something, just gained something, just fallen in love, you will find that it won't be long until that is no longer a real source of satisfaction for you and it may even turn into its opposite.

High becomes low. Now, that's not a negative way, a gloomy, pessimistic way of looking at things. And it's not saying that you should not appreciate when good things happen to you or you achieve things.

It's wonderful and it's to be enjoyed. So you can enjoy it knowing that, of course, it's not going to last forever and it cannot be a source of continuous satisfaction forever if you were suddenly transplanted to the most beautiful place. Let's say you're not happy where you are living now, maybe the climate isn't good enough or the environment isn't good enough.

There's nothing wrong with striving towards finding a better place. But even if you were suddenly transplanted to the most beautiful location you could imagine, perhaps for some people that would be an island and where it's always warm and pleasant. And there's the blue sea and there's white sand or whatever else you could imagine to be the ideal place and suddenly you're there and you have nothing to worry about, all your needs are met.

And of course you might say, well, then I could really get into the spiritual stuff because we wouldn't have to worry about all these other things anymore, making a living or succeeding or helping my family members or whatever. So it's all ideal suddenly and you would be happy for a while. And then gradually you would become dissatisfied.

First boredom sets in and after a while your energy level would go down too because in the absence of challenges, you would, the degree of alertness would diminish. So as far as your spiritual life is concerned, the best place is where you are right now and discover the dimension, the transcendent dimension here and now and use whatever problems or difficulties you have as an encouragement or an incentive to go deeper into yourself, not running away from problems. Of course, you still may have to take action if action is possible or necessary or desirable and take action to change situations, to improve situations in your life.

But at the same time, see if you can discover the deeper dimension within that has nothing to do with what goes on in your external life. And that's why we're here, to discover that. This is not about managing your external life better.

There's nothing wrong with that, but you can, there are other teachings that can help you with that if you still need them. But it's discovering a deeper dimension within and that also has a byproduct of discovering that is actually that it improves your external life immeasurably because you're no longer dependent on the ups and downs, the gains and losses, the good days and the bad days of your external life. You're not dependent on those things anymore for your sense of well-being or fulfillment or inner peace.

And isn't that an incredible thing when you can enjoy things, deal with things? Yes, but you're no longer dependent on the ups and downs. So all of you already have some access to that dimension within and we're just here to deepen it.

Or if you're completely new to this, this may be an occasion when you have your first glimpse of that in you which transcends your person, the personal life, the personal dimension. So just like the universe, and the universe is whatever is around you, the room you're sitting in, or you look at the stars at night or look out of the window. There's the universe with lots of things in it and it's easily overlooked that you're not dependent the most essential thing is not the things, but the space in between things.

Even the room that you're sitting in, there's stuff in it, furniture, there's a floor, a ceiling, walls, but the essence of every room is the space in the room. So there are two dimensions, form, furniture, walls, ceilings, floor, ceiling, floor, and space, formlessness. Or you look up into the sky at night, what do you see?

You see countless stars, most of which are suns, just like our sun, many of them much bigger, countless stars, and the vastness of space. Well, you can't actually see the vastness of space, you cannot see space, that's the strange thing, you can never say, oh, here is space, because space is not something, everything else is something. And now the amazing thing is there's an equivalent in you of what we call outer space, space, we could call it inner space, and that's the essence of who you are, just as the space in this room is the essence of this room, or the space that allows billions of stars and galaxies to exist out there is the essence, and yet you can never pinpoint it or examine it under a microscope.

So the essence of you, you also cannot pinpoint, scientists can examine your brain, but they won't find you there. We know almost nothing about the brain, of course, there's a connection between the brain and consciousness, but the brain is a kind of transmitter of consciousness or receiver, it does not actually generate consciousness, most scientists haven't discovered that yet. They claim to know what the brain is all about, we don't even know what a thought is.

No scientist knows what a thought, does it exist as molecules? Nobody knows what a thought is. And that's still the level of form, thought.

So the essence of who you are cannot be defined just as this place around you cannot be defined, it has no boundary, it's absolutely mysterious, you cannot know it in the sense that you know something in this world, you can only become aware of it by unknowing, by letting go of all that you know for a moment, and just be conscious and realize, you can be conscious of something, which is normal for everybody, you're conscious of perceptions and so on, but you can also be conscious of being conscious, and that is the transcendent dimension. And that at first, people may not understand what it is that these words are pointing to, be conscious of being conscious, sounds like some kind of duality, but that's only because we're using language. Now, as you know, as I've often pointed out, life or your life could be compared to a dream, things happen and then they evaporate, when you get towards the end of your life, it may begin to look more and more like a dream when you think back, and of course, a real dream, when you wake up in the morning, it dissolves, and you say it was just a dream, and many philosophers have argued about whether what you experience as your life is real or it's a dream, it's a question of perspective, of course, but it does have a very strong dreamlike quality, or if you want to use modern terminology, it's your movie, the movie of your life, some movies are very dramatic, with lots of sound and fury, to use the words of Shakespeare, full of sound and fury, and then Shakespeare adds signifying nothing, or another expression of Shakespeare is actually a play, much ado about nothing, and that's many people's lives, and it may not be until you reach the end of your life that you realize that most of it was really, you got upset about nothing much, it's better not to wait until the end of your life to realize that you often still get upset about nothing much, the movie, that's all. So is your life real?

Yes and no. Is it a dream? Depends how you look at it.

It certainly is dreamlike. Is this moment really happening, or am I just imagining it? Am I imagining that I'm looking at the screen and somebody is talking to me, and saying, are you dreaming?

You just don't know. What you do know is, that this is what you are experiencing at this moment, it is being experienced. And a prerequisite for this, so that it can be experienced, whether it's a dream or not, is what we could call the light of consciousness.

Without consciousness, there could be no dream or no experience. So the one thing you know without any doubt, is that you are conscious. And even that is not absolutely right when we put it like that.

Let's put it differently. The one thing that you know without any doubt, is not that you are conscious, because there's again a duality, I am conscious as if we're conscious with something added onto you. No.

The one thing that you know beyond any doubt is that you are consciousness. One does not accomplish great ends in some by and by future. Only in the present can you hammer out real achievement.

The worried mind tends to veer from the only real goal, realizing the atma, uniting with divinity, the true self within. So you cannot accomplish great ends in some future moment, only the present, only in the present, can you hammer out, as he translates, real achievement. So all true achievement is in the present moment, and that determines the quality of your life, as I call it.

How present you are in what you do, immediately brings quality into what you do. It's hard to define what I mean by quality if you cannot feel it. There's a, do something totally as a means to an end or observe somebody performing some action, only concerned about the outcome.

And you can see what I mean by low quality action. You'll be doing, going, want to get, I need to get there, do this, not paying attention to really to anything because you have some thought of future outcome, and you get upset at the slightest obstacle that comes into you. Of course, obstacles arise all the time, of course, in one's life.

I want to get there, but then something stops me. And immediately, when an obstacle comes in, somebody even questions something. You get either angry or fearful.

This shouldn't be happening. Whereas if you're aligned with the doing, then when an obstacle comes, immediately it's accepted and you look, you give it attention. And then you see, you immediately adjust to the newly arisen situation and take action.

You don't complain, oh, about somebody or some situation that has arisen. There's no huffing and puffing. As I sometimes call it, because many humans go through life huffing and puffing about this, complaining about this, shouldn't be this.

All that drops away because they're huffing, puffing, because they have some idea of what they want in some future moment. It's never going to come anyway. So as an obstacle arises, immediately you look at it.

And then intelligent action arises because you're aligned with the present moment, you become much more intelligent. Not knowledgeable, necessarily, but intelligent because you connect with a deeper level within yourself. And then what you say and do is more intelligent when you're aligned with what is instead of trying to get it out of the way.

That's the only way you can truly become intelligent. That's why there's a book by Krishnamurti called The Awakening of Intelligence because that's what it is. The true intelligence is not really awakened at universities.

There you acquire knowledge or you develop your ability to analyze, but it's not yet true intelligence. A little example from my own life. I was for several, quite a few years, I was counseling individuals and giving small talks for a number of years.

Spiritual talks. And I would write down often after giving a talk or after a counseling session, I would take notes and write down what I had said during those sessions. Often happened that I said things in counseling sessions with individuals or in very small groups.

I said things very often that I didn't know beforehand. It only came to me in the moment because it came from the depths of my being. They were intuitive realizations that came out of the present moment.

And they only came because the question was asked. Somebody asked the question or somebody had a problem. And so an answer came.

And then later, of course, I didn't know it. I knew these things. So I wrote it down afterwards.

So writings kind of notes accumulated over the years. And then at some point I realized there's a book that's going to be written, but I also knew the notes themselves are not the book yet. But I had a sense that a book was wanting to be written, wanting to be born into this world.

And that sense was halfway between having a vision of something that is almost inevitable and desiring something to happen. It was halfway in between. So when I wrote down, there is a book I knew.

I never used the future tense, as you must not in any manifestation. There is a book that will change the lives of millions of people and bring consciousness to the planet. And I wrote that down.

And that was, as I said, it's hard to describe, but the only way I can put it was halfway between writing down something that I already knew for sure, because it is a vision that had already some reality on some level, and halfway between that and between wanting something to manifest. So the wanting to manifest it and seeing it already as manifest, it was this kind of, became a single thing. And perhaps that is the most powerful way of manifesting when you have the feeling that what it is that you want to manifest actually already exists not in the physical universe, but on another level.

So I knew this book already existed. And the writing down of this affirmation was only just a reflection of what I already knew. This book already exists, and that I'm writing it down.

I drew a little circle on the paper. In the middle of the circle, there's the book. I don't think I didn't have the title for it yet.

And then I knew, then I said, now what comes out of that? Out of that comes this one line that says, I give talks all over the world and thousands of people come. I knew that.

And that again was not so much that I wanted it to happen. It was almost knowing that it would happen. It was almost like predicting the future rather than wanting to create the future or halfway in between.

There's a book, there's traveling English talks. And then there's another book I think I wrote. And there are various other things that I wrote down.

And I also wrote down that my life circumstances are more pleasant and there is financial abundance. So I'm not worried. I was not really worried about money and I lived on very little for many years and I was quite happy.

But my preference would be to have more abundance in my life. And through this, I said more abundance is coming into my life. And a very pleasant living situation.

There were a few other things associated with the central thing. And those things I've focused on for, I don't know how long, maybe several weeks. And then I put it aside and then a few more weeks focused on it every day.

I think it's on my wall somewhere and focus on it. And then I moved many times. This piece of paper got forgotten.

It got somewhere to my paper. And two, three years passed and I actually completely forgot that I had written this piece of paper. And then various things happened.

And I've suddenly, without going into detail, the energy stream came within me. Oh, and the book suddenly started to come, be written through me. I used a little bit of some of the notes that I had written, but they were not the book.

The book was an empowered energy stream. Oh yes, that came maybe three years after doing this piece of paper. Vision board, they call it sometimes, or something like that.

I realized, well, not that much is happening yet. I'm still doing these small, very small scale. I'm helping a small number of people and that's good, but I knew I could help so many more, but why isn't it, it's not happening yet.

And then as well, one further affirmation I did, and it only, I only did it for one day, I think, or two days. I went into a church in a small village church in Somerset in England, where the county where I was living at the time. And this empty church, I sat there and I looked at the symbols and I just, in the stillness, I said, I asked, I actually asked for something.

That's strange, one shouldn't normally ask for things, but all I asked for is acceleration. I said, I'm asking for acceleration. I knew it was happening, but it was too slow.

Said, I'm asking for acceleration, please. And I could feel it had been received and I could feel, somehow I could feel the reality of acceleration within myself already. And soon after that, everything started to change in my life.

I had to move away from where I was living. I had an internal impulse to move away. I had to sell everything.

I had to move to the West Coast of North America. And there suddenly the book came out and then everything got accelerated. And now let's go forward a few more years.

The power of now is out. It has reached millions of people. Oh yes, I'd also written down on this original paper, translated into don't know how many languages.

All that was there. I'd even colored it. I remember there were red colors and blue black.

The center was like the sun emanating various things. And so forward a few years, the power of now was out. It was a bestseller, been translated into many languages.

Oprah had discovered it. I had financial abundance. All those things were there.

I was unpacking my things. A trunk was coming from England where some of my things had been stored. And I was going through my old papers.

And at that point I saw this old paper that I had written many years before. This thing that I described and then read it. Oh my God, it's all happened.

I forgot that I had written all this completely. And then it was all already written down and it all came to pass. How amazing.

I was kind of speechless. So that's more or less the story of how it happened. The story goes that he was the only one that understood that sermon of the Buddha, the one who smiled.

I could have held this flower up and stopped speaking. And the Buddha's silent sermon, 2,600 years ago, people still remember it. He sat there and he was going to speak and then suddenly he saw this flower and he took this flower and looked at it.

For how long, nobody knows, but it must have gone on for a long time and everybody got restless. That's called the Buddha's silent sermon. And then after half an hour or one hour, we don't know, because they didn't have clocks then.

One of the, because they were all monks at that time, other people didn't have access to anything, to spiritual teachings. I talk about that in the New Earth at the beginning. One of the monks, all the other monks looked puzzled.

What's he trying to do, what's he saying? And one monk suddenly started to smile. And the story goes that he was the only one that understood that sermon of the Buddha, the one who smiled.

And this smile was, according to the story or the legend or the scriptures, the smile was passed on from generation to generation of teacher and pupil. So he became a teacher, that monk. And they say he passed on the smile, which really means the realization, to the next and the next and the next, and after six or seven or whatever generations, it became the origin of Zen.

That's how the story goes. So what is it then that he smiled about? Well, let's not conceptualize it.

I think you will realize it for yourself as we progress here. Not, are we then returning, when we go into nature, are we then returning to the level that trees live at or flowers or minerals or birds, whatever it is, is it an act of return to a primordial stage of being? Not quite.

We join whatever natural thing it is that we are perceiving. We join it in the state of no thought. But when we go there, we've gone through thought already.

We rise above thought. The flower exists below thought. So, and then we meet in the dimension of no thought.

But at a very deep level, we do not become the flower or the cabbage. Well, you had a choice. You'd probably rather be a flower than a cabbage, but cabbage is beautiful too.

We are not regressing. Cabbage is fine for the cabbage, but not for us. The cabbage is totally at ease with itself, one with a source, doesn't inhabit a world of problems, doesn't generate conflict.

The cabbage is rooted in being. So is the tree, so is the flower, and even the dog. Well, most of them, and the cat, except those who have lived for 20 years, or too long with neurotic humans, they are rooted in being.

And this is why people love dogs and cats. It's not, there's actually a deep reason, a deep meaning to that, because they can sense that the dog or the cat is more deeply rooted in being, is more at rest within him or herself than the human. The human has gone out very far from the source into further and further differentiation.

Everything originates from the one source of all life, the unmanifested, formless, timeless, one source. Everything then comes out of that source, and humans are a product, a very differentiated product, gone out a long way from the source, a little bit like the prodigal son in the New Testament who leaves the father's home and squanders his wealth and becomes destitute. He has left the source.

He has gone so far out that he becomes destitute. He doesn't remember his origins anymore. So the dog, and even less so the flower or the tree, they haven't gone out that far, so to speak, from the source.

There's still more of a connection to their origin, and this is also why they are not fearful of death. They don't think about, oh, I'm going to die, and when an animal dies, an animal is very accepting. It surrenders into that.

It doesn't make a problem out of living, and it doesn't make a problem out of dying. It doesn't live on the level of problem-making, which is a level when you lose your sense of connectedness with the source, and this is because you're identified with a thinking mind, then a world of problems arises. You create a world of, that's what you manifest then, and that's what you end up with on this planet, on this beautiful planet, which is paradise.

You end up with layers and layers of complexity and increasing problems. Oh, my God, it's all getting so complicated. It's just survival is getting complicated, very complicated.

So really, now, when we talk about nature exists closer to the source, we have gone out very far, and for us, it's not a return to the original level where the animal lives or the tree lives. It's a transcendence where you regain awareness of the source of being with full consciousness rather than as a natural state, and you don't really know. The dog doesn't know that the dog is one with being.

He just is one with being. The tree doesn't know. If you tell the tree, are you one with being, if the tree could understand you, of course, but it doesn't have conceptual.

Trees are one with being? Don't know. So there is a, but if you look at nature, everything exists in its, it's so much, so at rest within itself.

It has so much integrity. Everything natural has such integrity. Integrity, the word originally means being one with yourself, not having split yourself into two or three.

For example, when you say me and my life, the tree doesn't say me and my life, my difficult life. The tree is life, an expression of life. The human says, I have a hard life.

And the hard life that the human says he or she has is a mental construct because it has no real reality except as a movement of thought because the only real life that you have is at this moment ever, always. This is your life now. I'm sitting here, breathing, perceiving.

There's aware presence. This is life. This is your life.

The rest is memories or anticipations or thinking. So the dog doesn't have a life. The dog is an unproblematic expression of life.

So it's everything in nature. It is life manifesting, the one timeless, sacred, deep down, the one formless life becoming form as millions of life forms coming out of them. They say with the Big Bang, it all started.

Who knows? So before the Big Bang, there was nothing. Nobody understands that because you can't understand nothing.

No thing, no form, no time. Out of that void, which is also the fullness of infinite potential, came the forms. More and more differentiated over millions and millions of years.

And then finally, it becomes the human mind, the most differentiated as far as we can see. There may be others even more mad somewhere else in the universe. You are continuously thinking and analyzing and evaluating.

And then the entity that has to carry that mind is completely out of touch with the source. You're not cut off from the original source, the original oneness. You just don't know it's there.

And so that's it. That's the state of being lost, lost in your mind, lost in the world, split yourself in two or three, having a life that you don't like, me and my life, me and my story, my sad story. And then life is perceived no longer as a joyful expression of the underlying oneness, but becomes a burden.

Gets heavier and heavier. And so this has happened to humanity. Humanity is, this species is at a critical stage now.

There's a possibility of a shift into a deeper state or higher state, if you want to call it that, of transcending conceptual thinking, going beyond. You can still think, but no longer trapped in thinking. This is where humanity has to go.

And as you transcend conceptual thinking, you regain what was lost eons, eons ago. You regain your sense of connectedness with being. You feel deep down, and you're connected with something vast, and it's not different from who you are.

Just when we put it into language, it sounds as if that was something different from who you are. You're connected with being, with a sense of simple beingness. Being comes from the word to be, to be the most primordial thing.

And everything in nature is an expression of that underlying beingness, and including the physical body. This body, this body. All that we perceive in this world is existence.

Exists, it exists. This body exists. This body exists.

Underlying existence is being. Being is the formless, timeless dimension within yourself. It's very much like the black hole at the center of the galaxy.

When I was writing The Power of Now, I wrote, I don't know why I wrote that, it just came to me one day. I wrote, there is a black hole at the center of every galaxy. And the editor saw it and said, you can't say that because you don't know.

How can you know that? People are going to argue with that. So it was taken out.

And some years later, I read an article by a scientist and said, now scientists believe that there is a black hole at the center of every galaxy. And so, why did I know that? I knew that because I could feel the black hole inside myself.

This spacious, formless, one life, the origin. And so, and I know that the human being is a microcosm. It's just, you can understand the whole universe by understanding yourself.

You are just a microscopic version of that. So that's the, we are regaining by no longer being lost in the conceptualizing mind. We regain something that was lost a long, long time ago, very much like the prodigal son in the New Testament.

Your origin. Not your origin in, you can't say, it's not really your origin in time. It's not saying, okay, my origin was six billion years ago.

That's where I started when the Big Bang happened. That was the beginning of me. That's true, of course.

That was the beginning, but it's not so much that the origin is in the distant past, or not even in the near past. The origin is timeless. I'm glad you could make it.

I trust you're okay with stillness. To be okay with stillness, you have to access the stillness within you. Otherwise, it gets uncomfortable.

If you experience joy or moments of joy or beauty, aliveness, a sense of aliveness, a loving connection with another human being or a loving connection with another life form, or if you have any creative idea, in your life or anything creative comes to you, all those things that I just mentioned imply that you have some access already to the stillness inside you, because all those things, the joy, the sense of aliveness, the lovingness towards others, the creative impulse, the creative idea, all that comes from that dimension in you. Now, many humans have some access to that dimension. That's why they feel it's good to be alive.

And for most humans, that access gets, for long periods of time, covered up again by excessive mind activity. And then it resurfaces again. It's not recognized usually directly for what it is.

It is recognized indirectly. So you may be aware that suddenly you feel a sense of joy and aliveness, or you look at another human being and you feel a deep sense of connection. So what happens there is that dimension arises.

You don't recognize it directly. You recognize it as joy. You recognize it as a loving connection or a loving kindness, or a creative impulse, or a sense of heightened aliveness, or the recognition of beauty.

You look and, oh, isn't that beautiful? And in the looking and the recognition of the beauty, you may not realize that what underlies that, that which makes it possible, is that for a moment, there was no thought activity in your mind. A space opened up.

That space, that is the stillness. And that is why you could recognize the beauty. Or that is why you felt the connection with another human.

Or a simple aliveness arose within you. So it comes spontaneously to you. There are some humans, quite a few, who almost never experience that opening into the alive stillness.

And their lives are truly miserable. They may not even know that. They may not even know that their lives are miserable.

They think it's normal to be continuously immersed in the thinking. Isn't everybody else? Now, a deepening happens when you recognize that stillness directly.

It may happen spontaneously in a situation. You're looking at a tree, and for a moment, there's no thought. There's just the perception and the stillness in the background.

So you begin to recognize it directly as the foundation for joy, for love, for also compassion, empathy with another. You can't arrive at empathy through conceptual thinking. You cannot sense the aliveness of another human being through conceptual thinking.

But only thinking needs to subside for a moment, and then the sense of separation that's created by continuous thinking disappears in that moment. So I'm inviting you to enter the stillness. Another way of putting it, I'm inviting you to stop thinking without falling asleep.

That's one way, but that's not the way here. And this is the next evolutionary level for humans, rising above thinking, not abandoning thinking altogether, transcending thinking. Thinking can still operate much more powerfully, by the way, when it's rooted consciously in the stillness.

Now, if you're still thinking, this becomes boring or uncomfortable. If it's not boring or uncomfortable, then you are in that state of freedom from thought. You may sense your presence, so to speak, the presence that you are, the essence of you, sense it as a whole body realization, just a sense of presence throughout the body as you sit here.

And that is a sense of heightened aliveness. And if you choose to look around, still sensing this heightened aliveness in your entire energy field, if you then look around, you see that also whatever you are perceiving feels more alive. Even inanimate objects have a certain beingness.

They are. Even a table, chair, even there, there's some life. They are called inanimate, which means, I suppose, lifeless.

But if you look more deeply into the molecular structure of the chair or the table, you would see intense aliveness and intense movement. So at this very moment, the universe, we could say, appearing as you experiences itself. Of course, that's the truth.

You're not separate from the universe. It's an amazing thing. The universe appearing briefly as what we call a person, a cell within the totality, experiencing itself.

So that's the, so the cessation of compulsive and involuntary thinking could be described as the essence of spiritual awakening. The cessation of compulsive thinking. Thinking is addictive for most humans.

Almost every human, except those that have started to disidentify from thinking are addicts. And the greatest addiction is the addiction to thinking. Not to fruitful thinking, not to creative thinking, not to thinking that actually solves problems, but to thinking that is futile, that is destructive, that instead of solving problems, creates problems.

Thinking that creates anxiety, that creates fear, that creates grievances, that creates regrets, that creates all kinds of dysfunctional states, that creates enemies because it's ego, egoic thinking. That is what needs to come to an end. And when that comes to an end, then real thinking, constructive, fruitful, creative thinking can happen.

Thinking is an amazing thing. And we don't, we haven't even started. We're just beginning to touch on what is possible by using the human mind.

A time will come, I don't predict the future very often, but when humans can create through thought already, to some extent, you can do that. You can manifest things through thought. Many of you have already done it.

It's not an answer to your state of dissatisfaction because so we need to go, there's something more fundamental than that that needs to be done first. That needs to be realized first. And then you can create, but it will no longer be the ego that's creating, but something deeper from within you will be creating through your mind.

So a time will come when we won't have factories anymore and all these weird things. We won't need that anymore. We'll create the few things in the material realm that we need.

They can just go, there it is. It's not going to be a Rolls Royce or anything like that, but you won't need that. But so the mind is powerful, a powerful creator.

As Causing Miracles says, every thought creates form on some level. Thought is creative. But more importantly is to access the dimension that is deeper than thought.

And then thought can be in the service of universal intelligence. And then you are the intermediary. You are that through which universal intelligence creates.

Your mind is that through which universal intelligence creates. So this is why, although there are books like the secret and so on, there's a lot of good things in those books, but what they sometimes neglect is to showing the absolute importance of the foundation, which is prior to manifesting through your mind. The foundation is finding the fulfillment of the essence of who you are and the fulfillment of your life, not by projecting, by thinking, when I achieve this, I will be fulfilled because no matter what you create, if you haven't gone, your ability to create is limited anyway, but yes, you can create as an ego too.

Although the ability is limited, you have enough ability to create to create havoc on the planet. So what sometimes these books fail to mention is to put the emphasis on the fact that nothing that you manifest or create in this world is going to satisfy you for long, unless you have accessed the essence of who you are, unless you have realized the essence of who you are beyond the person that comes first. That is the foundation.

This is why I don't speak too much about how to manifest things. This will come by itself. So the cessation of thinking is something that you need to invite into your life, not by suppressing thinking, but by letting go of resistance, resistance, one of the quickest portals into cessation of thinking is letting go of resistance to the present moment, inner resistance to whatever appears in your consciousness at this moment as whatever, and it changes all the time.

One situation, another situation, people, events come into the field of consciousness. And as we mentioned the other day, most humans are in an almost continuous state of not wanting what is, or rather wanting something else that seems to be more important at some future point. And we need to recognize the dysfunction of that state of consciousness.

And one of the greatest spiritual practices is what I call to make the present moment your friend. To make the present moment your friend is to say yes internally to whatever arises in this moment. The conditioned thought processes never stop.

They go continuously. There's a voice talking to you, or you're talking to yourself, or you're having a monologue, or you're having a dialogue. Some people argue with themselves.

It's all the voice in the head never stops for most people. And that is, spiritually speaking, that is a state of unconsciousness, completely identified with the conditioned mental emotional patterns, which make up the so-called person, personality, the ego. So if you are completely identified with it, every thought has you in its grasp.

Every emotion that arises has you completely in its grasp. And you're thinking, you think you're thinking, but you're not thinking. Thinking happens to you.

There's no, you don't have a choice. If you're unconscious, there's no choice. All your thought processes happen to you.

You're at the mercy of your thoughts, of the conditioned thoughts in your head. And all the reactions that come with it, every situation you encounter, there comes a conditioned reaction to the situation. It's the person or the personality that reacts.

And you don't even have a choice. Why don't you have a choice? Because you're asleep, spiritually speaking.

This thing, it's taken you over. It's a dream-like state also. And you can see, often, people are completely up there.

They're never really, they're not really here. You can see sometimes the complete absence in a person's eyes. They're not really here, they're asleep.

But they're thinking very hard. And even at night, when there's nobody around to talk to, you're still, the voice is going on. And it's telling you, I have these problems.

What's going to happen next? Awful, sick, my God. I can't take any more of this.

What's my life come to? I imagined something different when I was 20 years old. I imagined something very different.

Why did it all go so wrong? Well, that's, well, many people actually have that feeling that something, that has gone drastically wrong in my life. And with others, it's a mixed bag.

Some things went okay, and others didn't. It depends what their mind, and your mind tends to focus more on the negative than the positive. Much more memorable, the negative, than the positive.

If you go on vacation, and everything goes perfectly fine, okay, you'll remember some nice moments and sunsets. But if something went drastically wrong, you'll remember that for the rest of your life, and you talk about it continuously. You tell the story of what went wrong.

If everything went fine, you don't talk about it, you'll be at a wonderful holiday. Oh yeah, okay, well, that's the end of it. But you know what happened?

We went into our room, and there was these cockroaches crying on the floor, and then the water was coming to the ceiling, and then they stole all my bags. Oh my God. It's so interesting.

And then you know what he said to me? He said, how dare you? And I said, how dare I?

What about you? You are the one with the biggest ego, I said. And then he started hitting me, and whatever.

And the stories go on and on. And so a lot of the things, the negative things are much more memorable, that the ego focuses on that. It loves its enemies, and every negative situation is the ego's enemy.

And then it can claim, it can enhance its fictitious identity. The more enemies you have, the stronger your fictitious sense of self becomes. Entire nations do that, too.

They need their enemies. Except Sweden, it's so peaceful. And...

All the non-peace-loving people have left Sweden a long time ago. They were called the Vikings. And they occupied other lands.

So, then we have, in Indian spiritual philosophy of psychology, there's a word that's been around for a long time. It's called Turiya. Turiya means the force.

First, second, third, fourth. Turiya is the force. It's the force is, it refers to a state of consciousness.

They divided the human consciousness into these four parts. There is dreamless sleep. There is the dream state in sleep.

There is the state of wakefulness, which is ordinary human consciousness. And Turiya is the awakened state of consciousness. That's the fourth state of consciousness.

They've been talking about that for hundreds of years, thousands of years. The possibility of this dimension of consciousness arising in humans, the fourth state. This is what this is all about.

And it is not some distant possibility that you may achieve in some future lifetime. As many people still believe that. Many Buddhists, I've met Buddhists who say, I think I'll need another 15 lifetimes.

And then, in fact, my teacher told me, they say, he told me 15 more lifetimes and then I'll be enlightened. Oh, wow. Okay, that's right.

Well, you have plenty of time so you can stay unconscious now. It's okay. But the strange thing is, the awakened state of consciousness is already there within you.

It's just covered up, hidden. An essential part of awakening spiritually is going beyond a conceptualized sense of self and living in a conceptual reality. And of course, all that implies being identified with thinking because concepts are thoughts.

So for many people, the question arises, how do I see myself? And there's a very common problem people have and that's called self-esteem. What value do I have?

What value does my life have? Compared to others. Some years ago, the Dalai Lama was asked by somebody about self-esteem and he didn't understand the word self-esteem.

And somebody, the interpreter, spent several minutes trying to explain to him the meaning of self-esteem and she just couldn't get it. Now, of course, you might say, well, if I were the Dalai Lama, I wouldn't have a problem with self-esteem either, but that's not it. Self-esteem and the way in which it's conventionally used is comparative and it's always connected to ego.

How do I rate myself relative to others, either in achievement, worldly achievement, abilities, knowledge, physical appearance, physical strength, good looks, bad looks, fat, thin? And usually it's related to what you have, possessions, what you can do, abilities, what you know, knowledge, and physical appearance. And that's an interesting thing when you look at your life from that point of view.

There's always a sense of unease because there are always others who are better at at least some of these than you are. And then there are others who are worse. I would suggest that the only healthy self-esteem is a self-esteem that is derived from a deeper place than any of those things that usually make up a person's self-esteem.

How you look, what you can do, your knowledge or your abilities, or even weird things like who you know. The strangest thing make up a person's self-esteem. And sometimes it's based in some kind of reality, of course.

And in many other cases, it's a total fiction, but the ego needs that. So if you are, let's say, you're not good at anything in particular, there's nothing much that you can do. You're not wealthy, don't have much, don't have a lot of knowledge, haven't read many books.

Don't look great. And your body is not that great, neither your facial appearance nor your body are that great. What do you do then?

I hope there's nobody in this room who thinks, oh, that's me.

[Speaker 2] (7:29:06 - 7:29:12)
Oh. Oh. Oh.

Oh. Oh. Oh.

[Speaker 1] (7:29:17 - 8:18:15)
Oh. Oh. Oh.

First of all, usually the ego would create a certain narrative to compensate for that feeling of inferiority in an attempt to create some sense, at least in one area of superiority. So I would suggest there is no, in that, used in that sense, there's no healthy self-esteem. The only healthy self-esteem is not derived from how you look or how physically strong you are or your abilities in whatever area or your possessions or the knowledge that you have acquired or any other things, your family background.

In some countries, that's a very important thing. Who is your family? Your grandfather, your great-grandfather.

They have that sense that determines their self-esteem. In the West, especially in the new world, North America, maybe South America too, Central America, that sense of family history is not as strong. But if you go to Europe, there are still quite a few people who have very high self-esteem, and that's derived from the existence of their ancestors.

They've never done anything, but their ancestors did. You have to go a little deeper into yourself, and true self-esteem is not comparative. It's not I am better than or less than.

Quite simply, that sense of value, of worthiness, is derived from that deeper place of, quite simply, your presence, the presence of you, the presence of consciousness. If you can sense that presence of you, you don't need to compare yourself anymore to anybody else. You know that that is who you are in your essence, and no narrative is required anymore in your mind to justify your existence or to explain who you are in relation to others.

When you think you have a choice and suddenly you become present, that means presence has chosen to come through you. So I sometimes say that you can choose, once a certain level of presence is in you, you can choose to be present, like now. I can choose to go into my mind and start thinking about my life.

Where am I coming from? Where am I going? Where am I going?

Or I can choose to be reactive when things happen. Well, it looks as if I didn't have a choice, but many people still don't have a choice. The reaction comes.

They're taken over by the reaction. But when there's a certain degree of presence in you, you have a choice. You might forget that you have a choice, but you have a choice.

This is how it looks like, looked at it from the outside, that you have a choice. It's true. But if you look at it from the inside, when you think you have a choice to be present, presence is choosing to come through you.

When you think you have a choice and suddenly you become present, that means presence has chosen to come through you. Nevertheless, it is helpful to feel that you have a choice from this perspective, the outside perspective. That's what presence wants you to feel that you have a choice.

Ultimately, you are present. You are the one consciousness. So it's not that you don't choose presence.

It's just a helpful perspective, a temporary perspective. So when you are dealing with a difficult person or an unconscious person, which is the same thing, an obnoxious person, unconscious person, angry person, unconscious person, then you have a choice. You can be drawn into their unconsciousness, can easily slip.

Any one person, one angry or upset or deeply negative unconscious person can pull an entire room full of people. Like let's say there's a committee meeting of 20 people and one of those 20 people attacks others. This one person can pull almost virtually everybody into his or her deeply unconscious negative state.

This is how contagious a negative state can be. One very unconscious person in a room can do that. You could almost also say that sometimes a few very unconscious people, and this happened before, can create an entire war because they draw others in.

This could, perhaps it was how the First World War started. Nobody exactly knows what were they all fighting about. It started with one person killing somebody in what later became Yugoslavia.

I don't know the details. It's just too much. Don't want to go into that.

One so-called terrorist or whatever killed somebody and that became the First World War. So one, millions and millions killed in a room. The same thing, one unconscious person can pull everybody into, and before you know it, they're all fighting and shouting at each other.

So there is a danger there because you need to know that. But if you remember that there you have a choice at that moment to be drawn into that or to be there as an aware presence, then you can be where as an, continue to be there as an aware presence. And then that could make all the difference to the energy field in the room.

It could dissolve the unconsciousness of that one deeply unconscious person. Just one person who remains presence. And sometimes it's very helpful.

You can have a group of people discussing things, an organization, whatever they're doing. And one person there who can be, as we could call it, an anchor for presence can help the entire group to remain relatively present while they are discussing whatever it is that they need to discuss. That is a wonderful thing when you realize that possibility.

Or if you are in a group of people and you are there as a non-reactive presence, and if the others in that group are so deeply unconscious that they go on and go off into violent conflict, mentally, emotionally violent, might even come to blows. Often you see in certain countries in parliaments, they discuss something and then suddenly they jump up and start hitting each other. And some countries, it doesn't come, they don't quite hit each other, but they get close.

There's a lot of shouting, can be quite amusing, but so if you, often one person can make a lot of difference, so-called persons, not the person. And if it cannot, if you don't affect the energy fields, then very quickly you will not remain where you are. If your state of consciousness is completely incompatible with your surroundings, your surroundings are so deeply unconscious that there's no way it could affect those, then a separation will happen like oil and water.

You will find yourself being removed from there. That just happens. It can happen with yourself waking up one morning and saying, okay, I'm not going in, this is it.

Or find yourself walking out, goodbye. Or they call you and say, we don't need you, I'm afraid we'll have to let you go. You're too conscious for this organization.

You don't fit in at all anymore. I don't know what happened to you. And you're disrupting everything here.

Although this is not a retreat as such, I suggest that you use your time here, make it into a kind of a retreat. And all that it means is, your main interest is in consciousness while you are walking in this lovely small town, looking at things, talking to people. Be the presence rather than the power of the mind.

Be the person that needs to interpret everything. Be the presence behind the awareness. Sorry, be the awareness behind the sense perceptions.

Like now, you cannot improve this moment by adding unnecessary thought to it. What thought would you want to add to this moment? You just, it just detracts from the aliveness and beauty of this moment.

The mind, of course, can't sense that. And it'll say, what do you mean? What's beautiful about this moment?

Well, everything, the stillness in this room, the spaciousness, the lights, the beings, your being, and the consciousness that you are, without which none of this would be, could be. Sensing yourself as the conscious presence, let's see, ocean. Yes, you're also a person with a body and a personalized sense of self, that's the ripple.

So you go from being a ripple to being ocean. And then you can be both, so that you no longer have, okay, you can be either meditating and very aware. And usually the people go then, I'm practicing mindfulness, or they go about their daily life.

Okay, I've done mindfulness for 20 minutes. Yes. Okay, what do I have to do now?

Oh my gosh, gosh, gosh, I can't deal with all this. There are emails I haven't answered, all these emails, funny. Okay, and then eight hours later, oh, time for more mindfulness.

It's better than no mindfulness, of course. At least you have it there, if you have it. Maybe you're just trying.

But bring it into every moment so that you have whatever it is you're doing and always a sense of yourself as the presence. And this is wonderful when you can feel your presence. It's not yours, but I call it yours.

Because the moment I say your presence, I've created a duality. There's you and there's the presence, but there is no duality there. You are the presence.

Language or language creates duality. So that's fine. So feel the presence.

Right now, you are both a person, but to be a person, you need to remember who you are. Of course, you need to think about me and my life. Then you're a person.

Or at this very moment, you can also be the presence. When there's little or no conceptualization in your mind, but just an arising of what before was the background comes into the foreground. And then you start thinking without losing a sense of presence in the background.

Then thinking is actually not bad at all. It's only when thinking becomes self-serving and you lose yourself in it, then it gets very problematic. It creates one problem after another, pretending, wanting to solve problems.

That's self-serving thinking. So let's practice now here being the presence. No thought and sensing how liberating that is.

Not needing to know anything beyond that. No conceptual knowledge required for that at all. And if some concept is needed, somebody approaches you, you're just looking around.

Somebody comes and says, oh, can you tell me how to get to such and such a street? Then the mind starts and it's fine. And that's an amazing way to live.

But you can only, you don't need the narratives anymore. Only when you live in connectedness with the deeper level of your being, with the, only when you know that you are and the sense of already being complete on that level, not needing anything on that level, already being fully yourself on that level. You're not perhaps fully yourself on the level of form.

You can still achieve things. You can still learn new things, master new things, try out new things. Why not?

There you are not complete. But on the level of the depth level of being, you are at the deepest level, you are already fully yourself in the timeless present moment of being. You only need to sense that in yourself.

Then you can operate on the two levels and then you don't need these narratives, spin these narratives anymore in order to continuously enhance your mind made sense of self. And then you can be with situations, allow them to be as they are without imposing any unnecessary story on it. So people behave the way they behave.

People don't always do what they're supposed to do. They just act according to their level of consciousness and you just accept that. They act or whatever they do, that's what they do.

The situations are as they are already. So you no longer, because many narratives have this element of deep resentment to them too. You might notice that when the mind constructs narrative as they do in the collective too, these people don't believe what we believe and therefore they are actually bad, evil people.

How can they not believe the truth? They believe that this event happened 100 years, and in the year so-and-so, but in Christianity it happened too in the past, more than now. When was Jesus born?

I'm telling you it was then. What? You don't believe he was not born on the 24th of December?

That's totally wrong. And people killed each other for that. So be careful of narratives, but the only, I cannot, I'm not saying don't have narratives anymore.

First, get in touch with the stillness within, then you'll notice from there that when the narrative still arise, you can smile, or when you can, before you know it, you might have been talking to somebody about your story, and then you notice it and you can smile, and then you realize you don't really need that story anymore. And then it could be that you're not as popular anymore at dinner parties, because you don't have these interesting narratives about what happened, or these people did, but do you know what he did? You'll never believe it.

That's what he did. Oh God, wow. I thought he was, I knew he was like that.

I had my suspicions. So the, there are many Zen stories like that, where the essence of Zen is, of course, to live without a narrative in that simplicity of awareness. And then the simplicity is the famous saying that you probably know from Zen, chopping wood, carrying water, is a Zen saying, which is what you do in the Zen monastery every day.

You chop the wood for the fire, and you carry water for washing or cleaning, and every day you chop wood. And so there's a Zen saying, chopping wood, carrying water, which means you go about your life without adding anything to it. There's not the story of, I can't stand this anymore.

I've been chopping wood now for three years. Why doesn't somebody else do it? Why the, oh, we should employ somebody.

We must get, and this carrying water, just, it's getting too much for me. Why should I have to do that? I'd rather be somewhere else.

I'd rather be playing golf than carrying water. These are all stories that go through people's minds that stop them from being, giving their fullest attention to whatever they're doing at the present moment, doing with resentment. You do what you do it, but there's resentment behind the doing.

You're doing it, but you don't really want to be doing it because I shouldn't be doing that, or whatever the narrative is, why you shouldn't be doing that, or don't want to be, would rather be doing something else. The famous bumper stickers on cars. I'd rather be fishing.

I'd rather be golfing. I'd rather be in Hawaii. Or as Ram Dass's bumper sticker that I saw on his car, I'd rather be here now.

So, that's a good one. I'd rather be here now. So, then you have then always fully in whatever activity you're doing, it's not being obstructed by some kind of story in your mind, then you can give your fullest attention to whatever you're doing without interference of some entity up here that doesn't really want to be doing it for some reason.

And so, many people have continuously some stuff going on there that is in conflict with whatever is happening or with whatever they are doing in the present, not perhaps permanent conflict, but a lot of conflict with whatever they are doing.

That prevents a high quality of activity because one can look at activity in terms of quality. Quality in doing something is intrinsically connected with the degree of presence of consciousness that flows into the doing.

So, when you buy something that is of quality, whether it's a work of art or somebody has made it, then that sense of quality derives from the consciousness of the maker of that thing, whatever it may be, because it shows there is attention in it. There is complete attention to the present moment. It wasn't somebody said, oh, we must finish that as soon as possible so that we can make as many things as we can today.

Let's make it as quickly as possible. So, every doing is a means to an end, to the next moment. Let's make this.

And you're already looking to the next one while you're making this. So, in other words, you'd rather be there than here. That's low quality doing.

You're not present in the doing. And because there's mental interference, it creates the thought of the next moment where you would rather be because the next moment is always a thought. The next moment has no actual existence except as a thought.

Isn't that interesting? There is no next moment unless you think about the next moment. I have to think about that.

No, you can't. Is that true? You have to start thinking.

Is there no next moment unless I think about the next? Let me think about that. I'm getting very confused.

It's actually quite simple. It's so obvious. It's like saying, here's an apple.

Yeah, it is an apple. It's true. That's what we call it, an apple.

There it is. There is no next moment. There's only ever this moment, obviously, away from your thoughts.

So if you continuously live as if the next moment were more important than this one, you cannot give your fullest attention to this one. That diminishes the quality of your doing. It decreases your connectedness with true intelligence where creativity comes from, inspiration comes from, which can then not flow into what you're doing or only trickles, little trickles might still flow, but perhaps not even that because you're always, you're looking to the next thing.

You're not fully with this thing, when the next thing is mental stuff. It's a thought. So that's another aspect of the interference of narrative because even the next thing is a small narrative in your head.

And that tells you, I need to get there. I'd rather be there already. Therefore, I need to get this out of the way quickly.

And then whatever you are doing here is not, you're not fully present with it, which is reflected in the quality of the doing, which has infinite repercussions because other people are affected by it also. And so your life then continuously is experienced as unsatisfying because you never arrive at the next thing because when the next thing comes, it's the next thing. You're trapped in a mind pattern that says you live for the next thing.

So if you discover within yourself that a lot of the time you're in a state of lack, of insufficiency, of not enough, and you feel that the answer to the remedy is to be active in this world and achieve and do as much as possible, then you'll probably find that ultimately that is not the answer to your state of lack in order to transcend, to go beyond your state of lack, of neediness, of not enough, spiritual practice and spiritual realization is necessary.

Focus on the realization of being. It's only there that you can go beyond that state of lack, which is ego. Go within and discover who or what you are beyond.

That's the person. If dreadful things happened in your past, it is especially liberating to sense that. And it's often people who have had a very difficult life that come to this realization.

They have had their crucifixion and then there comes the transcendence of suffering. And again, please remember, I'm just using words. So it's not the ultimate truth cannot be expressed in words.

It's only a distant approximation. That which you sense when thinking subsides, if only for a moment, and you can sense the beingness that is always there underneath it, the timeless presence, you sense that. Is that, and then as you can sense that and you become more rooted in it, even in your daily life, you begin to be able to sense that in the background through the simple fact that you're aware that you're aware, even when you're doing things.

You're aware that you're aware when you're looking at something, there's not only what you're looking at, there's only the awareness that you're aware of. So that's there, the awareness of awareness. And that, now, is that God?

I would suggest not quite. It is, I'm speaking purely intuitively, but some mystics and others have had similar realizations. It's the emanation of God, in other words, the consciousness that inhabits you and temporarily disguises itself as a person is an emanation of the source, of all life.

And that source, which cannot be named, which does not exist, because exist means to have a location in space and time, everything exists is somewhere. So in that sense, God does not exist because God does not have a, God is beyond this dimension where existence unfolds. But like the sun emanating light, God, or the source of all life, which cannot be named or understood at all, emanates consciousness into this dimension.

And gradually, this dimension evolves. Gradually, it expresses more of that light that emanates from the transcendent source of all life. Gradually, because this was an important discovery of Darwin that there is an evolution of life.

It becomes increasingly complex. What he didn't realize is there's an intelligence that expresses itself through that. So there's a source of all life beyond the transcendent source, which is God.

And God shines like the sun shines. And the light of the sun, you can feel it on your skin. Now, whether you say this is a sun, in some sense, the light of the sun is the sun because there's no separation.

But in another sense, the sun is not different, but infinitely faster than the light that you feel on your skin. In the same way that the emanation of God, which is consciousness, yes, it's God in the sense of it is an emanation of God. And so this is what you are.

You're an emanation from source, source emanation. And the consciousness in you is the light, as Jesus said to his disciples, but he meant really every human being because his disciples were not that special. You are the light of the world, he said.

And he said it of himself in another gospel. He said, I am the light of the world. He said both things.

He told others, you are the light of the world. And he said, I am the light of the world. What could that possibly be except that because the people he was talking to were not special, particularly important VIPs in this world, but you are the light of the world.

The light in you is the consciousness in you. And without the consciousness, you are the consciousness of the world. You are the light of the world.

Without the consciousness, the world would not even be. And that is when you realize that, that your essential identity is being consciousness, which is an emanation of source, whatever you want to call that, and your essential identity is that, the being. And then that, then that is where you derive your sense of identity from who you are.

It's no longer the memory of your past becomes relatively insignificant. Yes, you remember it, but the wonderful thing about your past, it has brought you to this point of awakening, no matter how senseless it seemed at the time, because every life is kind of messy in one way or another. And many things seem, why did this happen to me?

Why did I do that? That was so stupid. Or why did this have to happen to me?

My childhood could have been, it was so unhappy. Why did this? But all your past, it brings you to this point of awakening.

So it fulfilled its function, but it no longer gives you an identity. You recognize it. You acknowledge it, you know it, but you no longer derive your sense of who you are from your past.

That comes from a deeper place. Ah, you can sense the presence that you are, the being that you are, not conditioned by your past whatsoever. And this is especially liberating if you have a very heavy past.

If dreadful things happened in your past, it is especially liberating to sense that. And it's often people who have had a very difficult life that come to this realization. They have had their crucifixion, and then there comes the transcendence of suffering.

As it's pointed out, even for non-Christians, even if you're not a Christian, you don't have to be Christian to understand the deeper significance of the cross, which is no different from the Buddha's teachings. Buddha said, I teach suffering and the end of suffering. And in the Christian cross, it's there as an image.

The teaching is that suffering is, the cross is the instrument of suffering. Jesus is nailed to the cross, the deepest image of suffering. But the cross is also the symbol for transcendence of suffering.

The cross is also a symbol for the divine. It's both. It's a torture instrument, and it's a symbol for the divine.

That's amazing. The two together. This can be, a teaching can be transmitted in this way, even to people who would never understand it conceptually, as I'm talking about it conceptually.

There's a deep truth embedded in that archetypal image. Jesus is the archetypal human, and the cross is the archetypal journey of every human being. So be thankful for all the suffering that has brought you to this point.

It's brought you here. That's amazing. Awakening.

Does it mean that from now on, life will not be challenging anymore? No. The challenges continue.

But they may be of a somewhat different kind, no longer produced by the dysfunction of the egoic mind, as is often the case with many humans. But still, challenges come in many forms. The difference is, as you become increasingly rooted in the being of yourself, the transcendent self, not the being, the challenges are no longer converted into suffering.

So there's no longer a personality that complains about what's happening to me. The challenges are simply accepted for what they are. Action is taken if action is necessary or possible.

No action is taken. A simple surrender happens when a challenge comes and there isn't really anything you can do. Then that's what is.

And then once you reach this point, every challenge can deepen. If it's a real challenge, it deepens your state of consciousness. It makes you more present.

And that is a wonderful thing when you've reached that point. I have noticed with the so-called pandemic for the last couple of years, some people have become very, very, become less conscious than they were before the pandemic, some. This is the same with any, also the challenge that happens to you individually, anything going wrong in your life, a breakup, loss of a job, loss of home, a desk from one close to you, a court case or whatever threat.

Some people become more unconscious when they're being challenged, but are more reactive, more deeply entrenched in their conditioning, in their ego. Every divorce lawyer meets people at their most unconscious, usually, unless they're already evolving, in which case it's fine. And even realtors and people like that find people that are so, why are people, they get so attached to the outcome, result.

It really pulls them down. A challenge can make you unconscious or more conscious, depending where you are at. And some people through the pandemic have become more present.

They've accepted, they have had perhaps been affected in different ways, financially or jobs or life situation or relationships have been affected by it. All kinds of things have happened. And some people have been able to use that and become more, go more into being.

Sometimes there wasn't that much doing anymore. You had to go more into being. And others have become more reactive and more angry and more fearful.

Fear has been a big thing. More fearful of the fear of, ultimately the fear of death, what could happen to me, the fear of, oh my God, that's ultimately, fear is always ultimately the fear of death, the fear of the greatest loss of myself. And that tends to go away when you are rooted in the being.

It's hard to explain why it goes away and how it goes away, but it does. The fear of death seems to disappear. I have to, I'll just mention, the challenges continue to come.

I've had my entire life, I've had virtually no health challenge until last, late last year, early this year, late last year. And I'd never been in a hospital as an inpatient, hardly ever see a doctor. And suddenly I was hit by a, just a few months ago, a huge challenge, what normally people would consider a huge life challenge to a medical condition.

And immediately comes the possibility, okay, well, I may only be here for another few more months or not, who knows. And after the initial diagnosis, I just went, okay. I became even more emptier than I normally am.

I'm normally fairly empty, but I would just like that. And there wasn't any, no fear. I was basically dead already.

There was no, but there was a presence left. The person didn't matter very much. And then I spent many hours in just complete presence.

And then I was operated on. And then I, they looked at it again. And for the time being, the challenge seems to have dissolved completely.

Will it come back? Who knows? So that's it.

They continue to come, but just the greater the challenge, the greater the intensity of presence. I've often found that in other situations in my life too, and the challenge has come, they go more. So there's no longer a person that reacts to what's happening.

It's just the beingness, just the presence, just the consciousness. That means you become aware of your thoughts. You still have your opinions, but yourself isn't in your opinions, which means you hold them more lightly.

You are not possessed by your opinions because otherwise, humans that have no awareness, they don't have opinions. The opinions have them. They don't even have thoughts.

The thoughts have them. So that's the shift is the person remains, but there's a suddenly a depth to you that was there all the time, but because of the seductive or hypnotic nature of sensory experience, and more importantly, mental experience, you didn't know it was there. You didn't know the dimension of depth.

You had been seduced out of the depth of who you are onto just the surface level of life, thoughts and perceptions, surface. And it becomes a very unsatisfying experience to live on the surface of life only because on the surface of life, nothing is fulfilling for very long. So there's the continuous search.

[Speaker 2] (8:18:40 - 8:20:42)
Getting what you want and not getting what you want is a very strange thing, because I feel that when I walk through life, you don't even know you're getting whatever you want.

[Speaker 1] (8:20:42 - 8:24:47)
away from the mind is to transcend the thinking mind. Transcend doesn't mean it becomes completely abolished, but you discover in yourself a deeper dimension. It's only by discovering that depth in you that you can become free of being the slave to conditioned thinking, the voice in the head that never stops.

So we are here to find or deepen that dimension that is in everyone. One could call it a dimension of consciousness that has been pointed to by ancient teachers for thousands of years, the possibility that there is another dimension in you, not something that you need to bring about, but something you just need to discover because it's already there. It's just being overlooked continuously, very much like the fish may be tempted to overlook the presence of water and spend his whole life looking for it.

And says, I've been told there is this incredible thing that pervades everything and surrounds us and is within us, and I've been looking for it all my life. And it's very much the same with what is sometimes called a spiritual dimension of life. It's already here within you, and yet most people haven't found it.

You're just directing your attention to sense perceptions rather than thinking. So there's a shift from being absorbed in interpreting sense perceptions and just noticing the sense perceptions. I cannot predict what your reaction or response will be to this gathering.

It could be a wonderful beginning of discovery of a deeper state of consciousness, or it could be that you are finding this gathering and this talk incredibly boring or irritating. I can't, what is he talking about? I can't stand it anymore.

And then the mind goes on.

[Speaker 2] (8:25:00 - 8:25:01)
Sorry, sir.

[Speaker 1] (8:25:01 - 8:50:09)
Help is coming. Thank you. So this is all about what we might call the awakening of consciousness.

So just, I'll be coming back to it again and again, this terminology, but just to summarize what that means for those of you who are new to it, is when you discover in yourself the ability to know what's happening in your inner space, either on the level of emotion, on the level of mind, so that you are, you're beginning to find there is an observing presence there. The observing presence can observe whatever happens in your mind, the movement of thought, instead of being totally drawn into it, totally identified, identified with it. That is the awakening, the disidentification from thought plus emotion, the disidentification from thought.

So that's what it's all about. We can approach it from many different angles and directions, but the core of this is always that. So as a little exercise in awareness or presence, let's do this.

I call it do, but it's not really a doing. Becoming aware of sense perceptions, because that is part of your experience of the present moment. Sense perceptions, visual, auditory are the main sense perceptions, but the others may come in too.

So there's the totality of this room. There's a man sitting on a chair. You see him on the chair, you see him on the screen, stage, people.

So you take that in, the voice. You're becoming aware of that. You're giving it attention without any strain or effort.

You're just directing your attention to sense perceptions rather than thinking. So there's a shift from being absorbed in interpreting sense perceptions and just noticing the sense perceptions. Huge shift.

And that's already an enormously wonderful and empowering and important spiritual teaching to become aware of sense perceptions, sensory perceptions, and remove the interpretation of the sensory perceptions. Very fundamental, deep spiritual practice. It may sound a little strange, but to be aware of something, you can either direct your sense perception towards a particular noise that you hear in the background, whatever it may be, a bird singing or the engine noise of cars or whatever, or visually a flower or a tree or the sky or the totality of whatever surrounds you and take in the various sense perceptions and just be with it, be alert.

They build an alert presence for the sense perception like now. There's no need to interpret. So what can you add to it?

You let go of the, sometimes one should say, compulsive need to immediately find some kind of interpretation for it, naming it, the continuous naming. Every moment has to be immediately classified and personalized and named in some way. I'd like it, I don't like it, or this person is not quite right.

And a lot of the naming is of a negative kind. You might notice when you name, there's a difficult person around or you observe an unconscious person behaving in an unconscious way because what else can an unconscious person do? You can't ask them to behave in a conscious way.

So you're looking at an unconscious behavior and say, awful person. And then you let go of that. It's easier with trees and flowers and with people, of course.

With people, it's a more advanced stage, but I'm just pointing it out already because you have ample opportunity in this world, in your life to practice with people, continuously. You may have noticed people are not easy. They're difficult.

And some are quite crazy, but we'll go to that. And there are moments of craziness and relative sanity, and then they got crazy again. That's another story you might remember your ex-husband or wife.

So sense perception, bringing just awareness to sense perception like now. You can do it in your room. You sit in your room alone and look around the room, let go of the mind wanting to say something.

We don't need it. So instead of naming, there's just an awareness behind the sense perception. That's a spiritual practice.

You can do it anywhere. I recommend that you do it whenever you're waiting for something to happen. Even a simple thing like waiting for the elevator to come or while you're riding in the elevator or you're waiting at the traffic light or you're waiting on the phone, you're waiting for your bank to speak to a human being.

Half an hour, an hour. That may be too much for this spiritual practice to start with. So whenever you're waiting, and you might be surprised how many times of your day you're waiting for something.

Now, most of the time, unfortunately, these days, when humans are waiting for something, even at the elevator or in a lineup in the supermarket, whatever it may be, airport, oh, there's a lot of waiting at airports these days. Wherever they are, unfortunately, most humans immediately get hold of this device. Even I have one.

Here it is. They can't wait. They cannot give themselves even half a minute without needing to fill this half a minute with something.

Now, before they invented this, it was a little bit more difficult. You had to fill it with something. You had to think of something or you became restless, waiting, the elevator's still not coming.

It's only been 20 seconds. But now, of course, you have this. You can immediately go because everybody else is doing it, too, so you have to do it, too.

So you pull this out. There's nothing in particular happening, but everybody's doing it, so you do it, too. And you're adding to the clutter of your mind and you're adding to the unawareness of the present moment.

And even worse, it is when you're out, let's say you're out in nature, and then even there, you're on a bench, you're sitting on the beach or somewhere, wherever it may be, going out. Even there, some people cannot let go of this because this is an extension of the thinking mind. The thinking mind was already a huge challenge and a problem for thousands of years, and it grew and grew and grew, and then the thinking mind was so clever that it came up with an extension of itself in the form of this.

And now it's even more challenging because it amplifies the thinking mind. It amplifies and adds to the clutter of your mind. Clutter meaning useless thinking, just going around in circles, ruminating at night even when you can't sleep.

And a lot of the thinking is not pleasant for most people. You don't think for very long about a wonderful sunset that you saw last night or two days ago that was such a wonderful sunset. You can't do a lot of thinking.

The mind needs something else. It needs a difficult person to think about, somebody who was rude to you last week, and you cannot let go of the memory of that and what you should have said to him, but you didn't, but now you can do it in your mind. Or what may happen tomorrow or the next week, you have to think about that now because otherwise it'll all fall apart if I don't think about this now.

And people don't realize that they live with a burden of unconscious thinking. I'm not talking about useful thinking when there's something to apply your mind to. There's a problem that needs to be solved.

And what can we do? What can I do about it? Let's look at this and that and that.

The mind is a very wonderful thing when you're not the slave of your mind. So a lot of that thinking is actually destructive and unpleasant. People don't realize that the burden they carry in their minds, the burden of, for many people, an unhappy story they carry in their minds and they think about it.

And what is that unhappy narrative they carry in their mind? What do they call it? They call it my life.

Oh, my life. So why did it go wrong so many times there? And that shouldn't have happened.

I had imagined it when I was 17 and 18. I imagined something real, very different, but that didn't happen. And then, of course, there are good things too.

It's for many people, it's the narrative of my life is a mixed bag of good and bad. But for many others, my life is very problematic and I cannot stop thinking about it. And the story, I have to tell myself, the story of me and my life.

And anybody who wants to listen, I'll tell them the story too, of me and my life. Are you ready to listen to my life? Okay, and then I'll tell you mine, okay.

That is the narrative in your mind that you confuse with who you are, which is all your memories, accumulated memories, not necessarily objectively true, some maybe, but many of the memories are colored by faulty interpretations of what people did or said or did. You can verify this. If you have siblings and you're grown up and then you talk about events that happened in your childhood, when we were six years old, you talk to your brother or your sister, do you remember this event when I was six and you were eight or you were seven?

Do you remember what happened? And then your sibling says, no, that's not what happened. So this is what happened, completely different.

But each one thinks that's exactly how it is. And in some cases it may well be, but whatever it is, it's a memory in your mind. You replayed an old movie, it replays itself.

And often involving people, but if somebody did to you, undoubtedly, they did do that to you and they shouldn't have done it. This is very true. Many people have had relatively unconscious parents.

They did their best, but nobody can act beyond their level of consciousness. I realized that it was a wonderful liberation when I realized, I was ready later in my life, I realized that my parents could not have acted differently because they would have been beyond their level of consciousness at that particular time. I would like to explore with you this afternoon the deepest truth of human existence.

When I say that, that may sound a little bit abstract, interesting, but abstract human existence. And it may sound a little bit philosophical, but this is not a lecture on philosophy, nor is it a lecture at all. The best way to look upon it is as a meditation.

Although somebody is speaking, look upon it as a meditation. So when I say the deepest truth of human existence, it sounds a little bit removed from your everyday concerns. So let's put it in another way.

We are here to explore the deepest truth of who you are. Because you are human existence. We are here to explore the deepest truth within yourself, knowing yourself at the deepest level.

A level so deep that knowing yourself and knowing God become one and the same. There are two levels to this talk, if it can be called that. One is the words, and one is the gaps between the words, a certain stillness.

I just point this out because it is helpful as you listen to be aware not only of the words, but of an underlying field of stillness out of which the words come, nothing personal. There's a field of stillness that is both within and without, gaps between the words, a silent space in between and underlying the words. And simply to be aware also of that dimension.

Then listening to these words is more than absorbing information because there isn't that much information here. It's not an information-based talk. Then it becomes a meditation to just sit here and listen.

And the deeper teaching, if it can even be called teaching, is not in and through the words. The deeper teaching lies in the dimension of stillness because the moment you acknowledge that underlying dimension, you have accessed a realm within yourself that is deeper than the stream of mind with which most people are identified as themselves. Simply as we sit here to acknowledge, to notice, to listen to an underlying stillness, that which acknowledges that in you, that which is able to listen to that dimension, listen not to something, listen to nothing, to nothing, just the act of listening, that in you which is able to acknowledge that dimension, to be attentive to that dimension is a realm of stillness underneath the stream of mental noise.

In other words, the moment you pay attention to that dimension of silence, there is a stillness in you because through thought, you cannot pay attention to silence because thought is noise. So already, although through words, we are going to progressively explore the deepest truth of human existence, even as you sit here and follow the words that progressively explore the deepest truth of human existence, that deepest truth of human existence is already emerging in you as you sit here and listen, even now, simply by paying attention to silence through the inner stillness. That is the only way you can notice.

The stillness in you notices that. And you have gone beyond the continuous stream of mental noise that for most people is who they think they are. Everybody, every human being in life form is an expression of that one formless and timeless one life.

And that is beyond anything that could be destroyed. It's life itself. It has no opposite.

The one life has not, death is not the opposite of life. Death is the opposite of birth. And birth and death apply to the forms that appear on the surface of the sphere.

So when death happens to life forms, even violent death, yes, it is from the perspective of the surface reality is dreadful, but from the perspective of knowing the transcendent dimension, even that is no longer dreadful. It is transcended because the realization is there. The life that you are and the life that I am can never be destroyed.

The essence of every life form is eternal. It derives from the one. It's an expression of the one.

To know that, not just as a belief, but deep within yourself to know that which cannot be destroyed, what the Buddhists call amara, the deathless, this is the closest perhaps that the Buddhists come to talking about God, the deathless dimension, timeless, deathless, that which cannot be destroyed, every human and every life form is a temporary expression of that. When you know that within yourself, you look with deep compassion upon the madness that happens on the surface reality, perpetrated by humans who don't know who they are. And because they don't know who they are, they don't know what they are doing to themselves, ultimately, because every other is yourself.

Thank you for being my spiritual teacher.

[Speaker 2] (8:50:09 - 8:50:32)
You've really helped me a lot. You say in the power of now that you are here to enable the divine purpose of the universe to unfold. Could you please explain what the divine purpose of the universe is?

No. No. No.

[Speaker 1] (8:50:36 - 9:50:00)
No. No. No.

Coming into this dimension is the divine purpose, but the divine purpose is twofold. One is the universe delights in creation. It delights in creativity.

It delights in creating new forms. How do I know that? Well, just look around on the planet here, the millions of life forms in the sea, on land, in the air.

The universe delights in creating this multiplicity of forms and it delights in experiencing itself through all those forms, because you are not a separate entity. It's not the case as sometimes the ego, ego itself believes here's me, and there's the rest of the world or the universe, or the ego thinks that it is in the universe. It somehow suddenly appeared, fallen into this universe, and then where am I?

On this, I'm in this universe. You're not in the universe. You are the universe.

The one life expressing itself through countless life forms. And there's a growing complexity in life forms. And with every experience, the universe is experiencing itself.

Your life is extremely differentiated in human beings. The way in which life or the universe or the one consciousness experiences itself in this dreamlike world is extremely differentiated. It is amazing.

Every human being is different of those billions of humans on the planet. Every human not only looks different, you could recognize if you know one person out of these billions, I can't remember how many billions are on the planet now, you could recognize this person out of billions of other human beings just by looking at their face. This is how differentiated it is on the surface level already.

And then every life experience, of course, there are many similarities, but there's a uniqueness to every life experience. Every life experience is a world that arises and subsides. My mother's life, your mother's life, your parents' life, anybody's life, was a particular world.

The way she experienced the world was very different from the way I experienced it. It's like my mother and I, and I'm just taking one example from my personal experience, seemed to inhabit completely different universes. But we were in the same place.

But experiencing life in a totally, totally different way. And the universe delights in that complexity of experience, so it wants to experience itself as form. It means, and so the forms become evolving more, more complex.

The humans that are alive now have far greater complexity than the humans that were alive 10,000 years ago, or 50,000 years ago. Life at that time was more simple. Gather the food, gather the plants, or hunt an animal if they did that.

Prepare the meal, go out hunting, come back home. It's fairly simple. There wasn't the complexity of New York City, LA, freeways, and all that's behind that.

There were nuclear physics, whatever, and so on. And so the universe delights in that, and you are an expression of that. It wants to become conscious of itself through you.

And it's doing that, attempting to do that through humans, but that one consciousness is not separate from you. You are an expression of it. But the universe also wants to know itself deeply, its own source.

It wants the source realization also. So I know that because I know it by looking within myself. There is an outgoing movement into creation, and there's a return movement that wants to realize itself in its essence.

The universe wants both. It wants to go out and create. It also wants to realize its own essence through you.

In a human life that expresses as wanting to do things in this life, wanting to contribute to this life, wanting to create something, to make something of your life, your so-called life, it expresses as that. And the other, the return movement, so you have the outward movement of the universe. The return movement expresses as coming totally into the present moment, stepping away from becoming into being.

Becoming is the outward movement. What can I do now? I need to do something.

I want to create this. I feel that this wants to, there's something coming through me. I feel a piece of music wants to come through me.

A book wants to be written or something, whatever, I want to do this or create this, set up this business or that or whatever. And then it's this becoming, doing, but then there's another movement that says, I just want to be and be still. And this present moment, go deeply into this moment.

I don't need to become anything at all. I just want to be fully who I am already and go deeply into being. So you have, it's almost this contradictory movements.

In some humans, the outward tendency is greater. In others, the inward tendency is greater. Both are necessary and somehow both need to be there as long as you're here in a human form, both to some extent will be in you, but there will be different to different degrees.

Some are much more going within and to being, to the source. But I would suggest that it's not either or. There are certain spiritual additions that look upon it as more as either or.

They say, forget about the world, just realize who you are, and then you can just sit in a corner for the rest of your life and never do anything again you don't need to. That's one way. But for us, it's finding a certain balance, which doesn't mean it needs to be totally in balance.

A very few humans who are totally balanced between the outward movement of creating and the inward movement of connecting with your inner being and the source of all life, you need to have both. So that the universe can create through you without losing itself in its creations. So you can create not from a place of egoic need where you depend on the outcome.

If I don't get that, I'll kill myself. If I don't achieve, if I don't get famous and rich, I don't know what I'll do. Not that, but a playful participation in the world of form and contributing to it, to the world of form without losing itself in the creation and in the doing.

If you become stressed, means you're losing yourself in the doing. This is more important than you completely forget, you become uprooted. You're no longer connected to the spaciousness, the unconditioned, the one within.

So to be and do at the same time. But some humans, yes, are much more drawn to being. I call them frequency holders.

They hold the frequency of being on the planet. They're not interested in creating huge things out there. They're interested in doing perhaps little things, gardening, cooking, looking after animals, being with animals, helping humans in some capacity, helping even physical, helping humans with their bodies and so on.

So they are frequency holders. They are more into being than there's some doing, but you cannot, you always have to do something. You can't, but they don't put the emphasis on doing, the emphasis on being, and then they allow presence to flow into what they do.

And they affect the world also very significantly. Others have a greater tendency to performing creative action. They need to go out there and become active, but their challenge is not to get lost in what they do and thinking that's all important.

They forget that this is a play of form. And then there comes a seriousness and a heaviness into the doing, and they get unhappy. And when you are unhappy, whatever you create has some flavor of that unhappiness.

So the divine purpose of the universe, to summarize my long explanation, is to know itself both through the creation of form and through realization of the formless essence of all life. And that is the divine purpose of the universe and that you are here as part of that. That's it.

Thank you. But even if it is a dream, there must be something that is more real than the dream, without which the dream could not be taking place, could not be. Here we focus on being because most humans are suffering from the dreadful affliction, which we may call forgetfulness of being.

And because there's forgetfulness of being, they are lost in doing. They lose themselves in their doing. Or if they're not doing anything, maybe they're hanging around at street corners, then they are lost in semi-consciousness.

They'll have moving below thinking, or they're trapped in very dysfunctional mind patterns. And even the thinking we could even categorize as that's also a kind of doing, that doing is not just activities that you're engaged in in daily life, but underlying this external doing, there's the doing of thinking. The thinking is happening and that belongs to the realm of doing.

Although, in most cases, it's not you who does the thinking. You are not doing it, it is a doing, but really thinking is something that happens to most people. It's not something they do voluntarily as a choice.

So your thinking happens to you, one could say. So I sometimes say you don't think, you are being thought, you're being created by the involuntary and compulsive movement of thought that is conditioned by the past. And this involuntary compulsive movement creates a mind-made kind of entity, a sense of self, and this entity is the ego.

And for most people, that's who they perceive themselves to be. And so you live with this entity, you are, there's a good analogy one could use, and that is that you, as the deeper consciousness, are asleep and you're dreaming the dream of your life. Occasionally, you might wake up briefly and then you fall back into the dream state, which is the, whatever drama is happening in your life, whatever situations are happening in your life.

So there's a personality or a person that's a dream-like entity. From the point of view of the awakened consciousness, you can clearly see that when you retrospectively, perhaps, as you awaken, you look back on your life and you can see how many unconscious things happened that you were involved in, that you participate in, and so on, and there was a whole drama unfolding, sometimes not so bad, and at other times, really dreadful, and a kind of nightmare in some cases.

And so if you go back in all traditions, whether you go to Western philosophy or Eastern spiritual traditions, there's often the comparison of unawakened existence with a dream state. Many Western philosophers also have questioned it. Is life a dream?

A famous play by Spanish playwright, Calderón de la Barca is La Vida is when your life is a dream. It's an ancient play. So the extent to which you are still identified with you as a person, you may still be trapped in the dream.

It is possible that as you sit here or wherever you sit or stand or lie, the awakened being is emerging, has emerged partially or maybe fully. And so there's a, you might be a hybrid between the dream, the dreamt entity and the one who is doing the dream, which is the consciousness. You've probably heard of lucid dreaming, which means this is actual dreaming when you're asleep and you dream.

It can sometimes happen you're in the middle of a dream, you suddenly realize that you're dreaming. It's a very interesting point. Oh, it's all a dream.

And then you might think, okay, I could do anything now. Let's, what can I create in this dream? In most cases, this doesn't last very long because the awakened, the wake, the state, the state of wakefulness in conventional terms is not really compatible with dreams.

So it's very brief. If you become aware in the dream, it's most likely that very quickly you'll wake up out of the dream, then it's gone. And then you wake up into normal wakefulness, which is another, spiritually speaking, another kind of dream.

Now, let's assume that this, right now, this room here, a man speaking, you sitting there with your history, with your person, conditions created by your history. And we could perhaps assume, could this be a dream? Could you be dreaming this?

Were you, in the middle of the dream, you're dreaming of a man who says, you may be dreaming. Oh. And let's assume for a moment that that is the case, that you're actually dreaming this very place, that situation, everything is part of your dream.

And we don't know, it could be the case. It depends how you look at it. From certain perspective, it is.

From another perspective, it's not. Let's assume that it is for a moment. But even if it is a dream, there must be something that is more real than the dream, without which the dream could not be taking place, could not be.

And this prerequisite is, of course, there must be a consciousness in which the dream happens. So it becomes of secondary importance whether you're dreaming this moment or not. Even if you are dreaming this moment, there must be an essence within that dream that is real.

And that essence is the light of consciousness in which the dream images appear. And that light of consciousness is creating the dream. But the moment you realize that light of consciousness within you, that's the same thing as awakening within the conventional dream, the normal kind of dream which I just talked about right here now.

Now, let's assume this is a dream, a dream-like thing. In many ways, it is, because dreams evaporate very quickly. They come, and then something else happens.

After this retreat, you might wake up the morning after and say, did I just dream of this retreat? Or did it actually happen? So let's assume it is.

And suddenly you become aware of something within this dream, if that's what it is, of something beyond, something that transcends the dream, is not separate from it, but without which the dream could not exist. And that is the sense of beingness or presence of I am, of consciousness, the realization that you are conscious, or rather, language is very deceptive. Mistakes can easily creep in the moment you verbalize something.

When I say you are conscious, it's not quite right. You are consciousness. The essence of who you are is consciousness.

If I say you are conscious, and there's two of you, the you and the consciousness. So in the dream, if you suddenly realize that which is beyond the dream by becoming aware, not becoming aware of something that arises, because everything that arises would be part of the dream, not becoming aware of any new form that arises as a thought or a sensory perception or an emotion, but becoming aware of awareness, which is not something. It's not, you can't say, there it is, I got the awareness, there it is.

Or no, it's over there. I just had it, but it's gone now. So awareness or consciousness cannot become an object of consciousness.

Everything else is an object that arises in consciousness. But if you attempt to make consciousness into an object, then you're lost again. You cannot make consciousness into an object because consciousness is the very thing.

If you're looking for, let's say you're looking for yourself beyond the person, where's the real me, where's the real, I want the being behind the person that I'm looking for it. If you're looking for it, waiting for an experience in which this thing happens, that would be very misleading because you would be waiting for some experience, fireworks, spiritual fireworks. Tsk, tsk, tsk, tsk, tsk, tsk, tsk, tsk, tsk.

The ultimate vision, as you see in some ancient paintings of Christian mystics, and they go. And you can't have that for that long. I mean, the vision is there.

How long is it going to last? So if you're looking for yourself in the realm of experience or in the realm of manifestation, phenomena, object of consciousness, you can't find it there because the very thing or no thing that's looking for yourself is you. It's like a flashlight.

You use a flashlight to find the flashlight. I'm looking for the flashlight. Becoming aware, right?

For example, now, becoming aware that you are conscious right now. That's a strange thing. There's no content to that.

There's simply a presence. And for that to happen, and I'm finally getting to it, that is, there needs to be the cessation of thought. And so this is my invitation to you.

You do not need to think continuously in your daily life. It's if your mind tells you that if you do not think and do not worry, then your life is going to collapse. That is not true.

It's a lie. But your mind might either explicitly or implicitly say that I need to really think about my life. Thinking has its place.

It's a wonderful tool. It can be used for manifesting. It can be used for creating.

It's a tool, but if it takes you over, if you're identified with a tool, then it comes to possess you, and that's a terrible limitation. So the new state of consciousness is a mixture of thought and spaciousness so that you can go about your daily life, walking from point A to point B in that state of simple aware presence. Let's do it now.

I'm calling it do, but it's not doing involved. Simply become aware of yourself as you sit here, just as I am aware of myself as a conscious presence. This is a very strange thing.

It's not, you can't say, oh, you cannot become an object to yourself in this. Everything else is an object that arises in your consciousness, an object of consciousness. But knowing yourself, you cannot be an object in your own consciousness.

So you cannot know yourself in a subject-object relationship at the deepest level. You can only know yourself as the eternal subject. There is a space of stillness in that moment of knowing yourself as the essence identity.

There is an alive sense of stillness and presence. Like, let's separate. Let's just say my two hands, this is thought, you're thinking, and then you go, and here's a space of no thought, just awareness.

You can't define what that is. You can't think about it. You can only be it.

Stillness is one word we could use to point to it. Stillness has nothing to do whether there's noise outside or not. It's inner stillness, is the cessation of thinking without loss of consciousness.

And that is realizing yourself as the unconditioned consciousness, because everything else is conditioned by the past, but that is the unconditioned in you. That is your essence identity. You cannot, by exercising willpower, that is not the way to go to stop yourself from thinking.

I'm not even saying stop thinking as an active practice, but simply become so alert that thinking stops by itself. One way you can do it is by becoming aware of sense perceptions, acutely aware of sense perceptions. I give the example in the power of now of a cat watching the mouse hole, and the cat watching the mouse hole is in that state of absolute attention.

And the cat goes, no, you don't have to stare like that, but that is the state of, that is this state of awareness, consciousness. That's the only thing in your life that you cannot question, that the only thing that is absolutely and undoubtedly real. Everything else you can question, for example, whether our gathering here is a dream or not, you don't really know.

It could be that you are dreaming, that you're sitting here and there's a man talking on a chair, suggesting to you that you might be dreaming. You cannot, as many philosophers have pointed out, you cannot know for sure that this life that you're experiencing is not a kind of dream. And from one perspective, it is a kind of dream.

Look at, I like to sometimes look at old photographs made, taken in 1900, early days of photography, 1920, whenever, of street scenes or gatherings. And you look, you can go to secondhand shops and they sell sometimes old photographs. You can buy one for a penny or two.

You have no idea who these people are, nor has anybody else an idea who these people are, but they are running around the city street excited about this or that. And then there's another gathering, see people sitting around a table, eating and laughing in this old photo. And where is that now?

It has evaporated like a dream. Nobody even remembers who they are. And that is the same with anything that you experience here.

It quickly evaporates. So there is a dream-like quality to human existence, any existence. So you could say, okay, maybe it's all a dream.

That may well be, but one thing you cannot doubt that is that you are conscious. Because if you're not conscious, there couldn't be a dream. A dream can only arise in the light of consciousness.

So the one thing, whether or not this is a dream or not, it becomes irrelevant. The only thing that matters, if it is a dream, is whether you can realize what the essence of the dream is, consciousness. And you can only realize that directly here and now as this.

Oh, Descartes, of course, the French philosopher, said, I think, therefore I am. If he had waited a little bit longer before saying anything, he could have come to the point of cessation of thinking, and then he could have made the more profound statement, I am conscious, therefore I am. Thinking is only an expression of consciousness, a surface expression of consciousness.

So this realization of, we could call inner stillness, of spaciousness, of presence, of, well, there's a term that's very popular these days, and that's a good thing. It's called mindfulness, which I use almost never, except when I explain why I don't use it. I don't use it because it seems to imply that your mind is full, but it's not what mindfulness is.

It really should be called mind emptiness. The entire practice of, for example, people find certain esoteric spiritual practices very strange and hard to understand. Zen is one of those.

So what does it all mean? What's Zen all about? Cessation of thinking without loss of consciousness.

That's what the Zen masters are trying to show you, non-conceptually, as the Zen master became famous, because when he was asked, please explain the meaning of Zen, all he would do is raise his finger and look at you. Is that it? Yeah.

And I was in the, I've been in the monastery for 15 years for that. Yes. Sometimes it takes a long time before realizing that it doesn't take time to know who you are.

That's a paradox. So I'm not saying don't go to a Zen monastery. Perhaps you have to.

It may take time to realize that it does not take time, but it doesn't have to take time. It's here and now. I'm saying this to especially the spiritual seekers among you who have made it your life purpose to seek whatever it is, the ultimate spiritual experience or transformation.

And the very seeking has become without you knowing it, the greatest obstacle to spiritual realization. Because by being in the seeking mode for some spiritual realization or awakening, you're in the same, basically the same state of consciousness that everybody else is in, except they are seeking through material possessions, achievement, relationships, this or that. They're seeking there.

What's the next thing that I can? It's a mind structure, the seeking mode. And spiritual seekers adopt that.

They see themselves as more spiritual than the one who is seeking after the latest model of that particular car or seeking a life partner who enhances their sense of self, the trophy husband, the trophy wife, the beautiful arm hang. And seeking and never being satisfied because if you're in the seeking mode, you never reach the satisfaction, you get stuck in the seeking mode. So to the spiritual seekers, I would suggest that you stop seeking and come into this present moment and find out whether it is possible for you to stop thinking.

You won't surrender, which means, surrender means only accept this moment as it is. But you won't be able to surrender unless you're completely fed up with suffering. You've had enough suffering.

And at some level, you recognize that most of your suffering is self-created. It is created out of resistance to what is. It is created out of an interpretation of something that is.

It comes from a thought, from an interpretation, not from the situation. So you realize really that I've had enough suffering and only when you've truly had enough suffering in your life, are you able to say, I don't need it anymore. Suffering is a wonderful teacher.

Suffering is most people's only spiritual teacher. And suffering deepens you. It gradually erodes the mind-made sense of self, the ego.

And for some people, the point arrives where they realize I have suffered enough. And that, for example, is the case with almost all the people who come to a retreat. If you ask them, they've all had their share of human suffering, otherwise they wouldn't be open to the message.

They've had their share of human suffering and they have reached a point where they are ready to listen to the message that says there is another way to live. There is another way in which you can live that does not create further suffering. For yourself.

Because to a large extent, humans create their own suffering. And so, when you are ready to hear that message, and that's really the message that is in every religion. That's the message, the central message of Buddhism is the end of suffering.

And even the central message of the teaching of Jesus is finding the pearl of great price, finding the kingdom of heaven that is within you here and now, as Jesus says. And that, of course, is the end of living in a state of suffering. So, one could say that you need suffering for you to realize, for you to come to a point of realization that you do not need to suffer anymore.

There's a paradox here. If I had not suffered, I would not, this teaching would not exist. So you could say it has come partly as a result of intense suffering.

Because as a human being, I would not have evolved spiritually if I had not suffered. So suffering was my main teacher. And suffering is for many people their main teacher.

But then, some people are, when they are ready, they come into contact with a spiritual teaching or teacher, and that can speed up the process of realization that you don't need to suffer anymore. You're ready to hear that. So that was, the Buddha talked about nothing else already 2,600 years ago, that there can be an end to self-inflicted suffering.

And when you don't inflict suffering on yourself anymore, and remember, it's the thoughts, your thoughts make you suffer more than anything else. It's not usually the situation, it's your interpretation of the situation, of how dreadful it all is. And so when you see that, then you see there is another way to live in which I no longer mentally argue with what is.

And that's the end of self-inflicted suffering. And if I no longer inflict suffering on myself, I no longer inflict suffering on others because the two go together. Once you know that also, it's the end of fear, because there nothing can be destroyed.

So it's wonderful, that's your practice. It doesn't matter where you practice, wherever you are in your life, you practice. Every situation, every moment is the two dimensions and that's the end of fear comes with that.

Fear being a normal human condition for most people, sometimes buried under something else. Fear and its many manifestations, nervousness, tension, anxiety, anger really comes out of fear. Stress really is a form of fear.

All many forms of fear, quite normal. Why? That's all you know, that's fear.

You don't know that. Once you know that also, it's the end of fear because there nothing can be destroyed. That's why they cause in miracle starts, which is all you need to know, the prologue, the first before it all starts, it says this course can be summarized in the following words.

Nothing real can be threatened, nothing unreal exists, herein lies the peace of God. Nothing real can be threatened and that is here because nothing unreal ultimately exists in the world of form. The form is ultimately not real in itself.

Nothing unreal exists. Herein, which means knowing that, lies the peace of God. God, of course, is the formless, timeless, eternal, unmanifested, that is both within and beyond the world.

But some of you, as I mentioned earlier, are able to step out of their mind and you can practice that through a conscious choice. Be present. Nothing to think about right now, just be present.

You don't carry your history with you when you're present. Your life situation, I use that word in power of now, very important, your life situation, everybody has one. Past, future, relationships, job, health, finances, where you live, what happens to you, and all your life situation.

You have a life, you're here with, you have a life situation, of course you do, but you also have, it's not that you have a life, you are life itself. And when your life situation is all you know about yourself, which is another way of putting, that's all you know, then you miss life. Now, you're very good at dealing with your life situation, but you miss life.

You do all the right things, but it never really gets you anywhere because you miss life. Life is now, and life is not in the doing. Life is in the being, now.

Step out of thinking, into alert stillness, if you can. And also, another way is not to completely believe in every thought that comes into your head. Realize it's a thought, it's a position, it's a judgment, not completely identified with it.

It's a story that you are telling yourself. It's amazing how many stories people tell themselves in their head. Many are completely distorted.

It's not the reality, it's the stories, how you see the reality. The reality usually is much more simple and more benign than the story. One of the early lessons in A Course in Miracles says you're supposed to look at things around you in the room and say, nothing that I see in this room means anything.

This table doesn't mean anything. This glass doesn't mean anything. This hand doesn't mean anything.

This floor doesn't mean anything. Now, what does that lesson mean? It doesn't mean anything.

What it means is it's attempting to erase the continuous conceptualization of reality, like scribblings on a blackboard, because whatever you think it means is a concept in your mind. And if you deny the continuous and compulsive conceptualization of reality, it's like erasing the conditioning of your mind. And coming to the place where the Dalai Lama is, you just don't know.

So this lesson in A Course in Miracles, all it's teaching is to come to the place of spacious emptiness, alertness, no longer trapped in conceptual thinking. Doesn't mean anything. And of course, that's another, you're moving into a different dimension by living in this way.

It's just you inhabit, suddenly life opens up. And all the narrowness that the mind had imposed on it dissolves and life becomes spacious because you found the space within. There's suddenly a spaciousness to life, not a threatening place anymore.

What's life going to do? Where's my next threat coming from? And again, the same thing, for example, there's an entire spiritual teaching based on denying the reality of your story.

And Byron Katie's teachings is based on the simple fact of denying your story. How do I know, do I really know that this is true? No, I can't really know that.

So it takes you to the same place where the Dalai Lama is, don't know. So it's a wonderful thing, you can enter that not knowing and then, but it's only not knowing from the viewpoint of the conceptual mind. You're actually connected with a deeper intelligence, unconditioned.

And if you really need to know something, it comes. But it comes out of the spaciousness of not knowing. Well, it's a little bit like jumping off a cliff and then seeing if you can fly.

To the ego, it's a little bit like that. The ego says, don't go there. Because the ego has worked it all out.

It explains the whole, it has its philosophy of life. It might be very defective, limiting philosophy, but it has some kind of philosophy of life. Every person has their story through which they interpret reality.

And usually, it's not a pleasant work of fiction. But at least you think you know. It gives you some illusory foothold.

And of course, the ego thinks, if I let go of that, I won't know anything anymore. Which in a way is true, but not completely true. In a deeper sense, it's you only let go of a distortion of reality created by the conditioned mind, which is part of the collective human mind in its present state of evolution.

And so the collective mind of which your mind is part has created this human-made world, which is full of problems, and they seem to be, they pop out one after another. When you think one thing is better now, suddenly, oh, God. Now it's the economy, and then it's that, and then it's that.

Another war. And see what happens when you pay attention to the way in which you interact with objects and what is, okay, every minute of the day, you pick something up, you put something down, you unbutton your shirt.[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 1:01:20)
You take off your shoes, you lift this, put this there, open your zipper back. You look inside, take something out. Can you feel it as you take it out?

Can you feel the texture of that? And then you put it on the table. It makes a sound as you put it on the table.

And then you have a glass of water and the light is reflected in it and it moves. Perhaps you drink and it tastes and you put it down again. And then you look at a familiar object and instead of using it always as a means to an end, here you have the luxury of occasionally just taking an ordinary object that you handle every day and just for a few seconds give it attention and acknowledge its being just as that object.

Just feel it, see it, as it makes a noise as you put it down. And again you bring in sense perceptions. Getting dressed in the morning, putting pants on, they make a noise as you put them on a little bit.

Listen. Do things. You pick up the toothpaste, you hold it for a moment, open, put the cap on the sink, click, and then turn on the tap.

And then while you brush your teeth you turn off the tap because you don't want to waste water. But that's not part of the exercise, that's the natural thing. And you can actually begin to like and to enjoy the tiniest things around you that would normally be completely overlooked.

So the way in which you interact with the world of objects and that brings a richness into your life that doesn't depend on how many objects you own. You don't need to own them to interact with them. And so here you acknowledge their beingness and you sometimes you might just put your hand as I'm doing now, here's a table, it's wood, and I'm putting my hand on it and for a moment I feel the smooth texture surface of this table.

And it feels very pleasant. But I don't need the mind to tell me that. I can sense that.

And the strange thing is even so-called inanimate objects in a strange way have a life of their own. Forgiveness is something we need to be very careful with because it's often used in a superficial sense. People say you need to forgive yourself for something you did and they say you need to forgive somebody else for what they did.

And then sometimes people say I forgive you but how deep does it go? Perhaps they have an image of themselves as quite spiritual and then that what they say corresponds they want to simply to reinforce the image they have of themselves as a spiritual person who does not harbor resentment. I'm too spiritual for resentment.

I forgive you, you're fine. But deep down there's still many negative emotions when you have a strong self-image of a particular kind for example spiritual or religious. You have that this is who I am and then it can easily happen that you deny certain things that contradict your belief in who you are.

They're the exact opposite of your belief of being a spiritual or religious person.

So if there are many cases that happened over many centuries to many religious people, impossible to recognize the negative emotions within themselves because they would have conflicted with their self-image. And if you then repress them they get even worse and then they come out in bursts of extreme anger or even violence.

And then the mind, even that is justified then by the egoic mind. So the unconscious parent who beats their child in a rage but who thinks of themselves as spiritual say I'm doing it for your own good. So they reinterpret what they are doing which is bad.

They reinterpret it so that it fits in with their self-image as a good person. So you lie to yourself continuously. Crazy.

So all these things happen when because there's lack of awareness and there's a you're looking for an identity and you're grasping some wherever you can find your identity in the past. You're grasping at some things, certain memories, images. So you haven't found your deeper identity which is the indwelling consciousness itself.

And then you need some substitute identity. So these are all cases where people have substitute identities. They have conceptual identities of who they are and basically you live in a kind of in your own matrix conditioned my egoic mind.

And you cannot see reality. You can't see what you are doing. Jesus said the famous words on the cross, forgive them for they know not what they do.

What he means of course maybe if it had been in recent times he would have expressed it slightly differently, would have said forgive them for they are totally unconscious. Now the forgiving, the real forgiving happens when you recognize that there is a dimension in you that has not been affected by whatever happened to you, whatever anybody did to you. There's a dimension in you which is why we're here to access that more deeply.

And again whether we call that this the stillness, the consciousness itself, the unconditioned consciousness or if you are religious Christ consciousness, the Christ within the inner Christ, the inner Buddha, Buddha nature, whatever you want to call it. There is something that actually cannot be touched by anything that happens to you as a person. As a person you can suffer a lot in this world and some people suffer more than others but everybody suffers.

As a person you suffer. As a human you suffer. The being beyond the human, because as you know you're a human being, the being beyond the human is actually not touched by suffering.

So you have to find that, that timeless essence that is within you, that is the inner aspect of what we call the world soul, which also the world soul also is beyond suffering. Among the many questions I found this one. I'll answer that first.

That was the answer. On the surface of things the retreat comes to an end but in the same way that the Buddha image really represents the state of consciousness, so the the real retreat underneath the surface of surface appearances is a state of consciousness. That's the essence of the retreat, deepening presence.

It is that state of consciousness that's the retreat. In that sense you could be on a permanent retreat after this and in that sense the retreat doesn't leave you and you don't leave it. Although the scenery around you is going to change.

Some of you are leaving today, others are leaving in a day or two, one or two days time. So soon the scenery is going to change and there's a continuous flux of things as described by Heraclitus or Heraclitus, one of the first philosophers of ancient Greece, pre-Socratic, so he taught before Socrates taught, and he's famous of course for the saying everything flows and also for the saying you cannot step into the same river twice. He emphasized, he lived about the same time as the Buddha, but of course in Greece, he emphasized the impermanence just as the Buddha did.

It must have been in the consciousness, there was an awakening at that time. So this retreat on the surface is impermanent of course, everything is, but soon after Heraclitus or Heraclitus, another philosopher came whose name was Parmenides, also a pre-Socratic, and he said to Heraclitus, I'm not sure, nobody knows if they actually ever met or he just read, he said you got it all wrong, nothing real ever changes. At the heart of the universe there's a timeless essence, this is a very free translation.

So he said impermanence is ultimately a kind of illusion from his perspective and he said reality remains constant and timeless, the rest is just fleeting forms like dreams. Of course both are correct, Heraclitus and Parmenides, so there is at the heart of you and at the heart of the universe, which is the same thing, there's a timeless essence. So there's the temporal you, the person, and we saw that when we watched these movie clips of the city scene in Berlin 1900, the temporal selves moving about the surface of things and then disappearing.

And so there's the temporal you, the person, and then there is the transcendent you, which is connected to the transcendent dimension of the universe. In some teachings it might be called the higher self, that's the consciousness, the conscious being that you are, because as you go within you don't immediately dissolve into God, there's the non-physical being, the higher self, but they're not divided and then there's the transcendent dimension. I don't normally use the term higher self because it makes you look upward, to look for you, you're looking for yourself.

I'm getting a message from my higher self, it's coming through. A better expression might be the deeper self, deepening presence, and if you can sense as you move away from here this unchanging presence in you, then you can enjoy the short-lived nature of all things. You don't need to attach yourself to anything in particular, you can appreciate everything, you can honor everything, see the beauty and aliveness in everything, without needing to attach yourself to anything.

Attached means in some way it is linked to your sense of self, then that creates the attachment. You can create things, enjoy the act of creation, without attaching yourself either to the outcome or mentally projecting yourself forward to the outcome, or when you finally achieve the goal, attaching yourself to the goal and claim credit, feel, I did that, look at me. Why sometimes you people go, yeah, yeah, a little bit of ego in there.

If there's no ego you create and then you step back. So this non-attachment is something that comes with being present. As a natural result of being present, you become less attached to outcomes, to achievements, to things, even to people.

Although you can love, you love, there's a loving, an outflow of loving kindness, but not the clinging attachment. I love you, don't you ever leave me, because you know it's going to happen then. As I mentioned in a book, the Spanish for to love, te quiero, literally means I want you.

It's the same word, and that's the normal word for I love you, so that's a very honest way of saying it, because most love comes from the ego. It might have other elements mixed in with it, but most of that kind of love is egoic and can easily turn into its opposite. So it's not real love, if it can turn into its opposite suddenly.

I want you. In English it would sound strange. There's a poetic way in Spanish to say I love you, but not many people use it.

Te amo. It's like a poem, and it's beautiful. I want you.

I really want you. You want me? As strongly as I want you?

And so when wanting is thwarted, and things happen, then anger arises. Even hatred can arise quickly. So that's attachment.

So many teachings, spiritual teachings, speak of the importance of non-attachment, but it's not really possible to practice non-attachment in the absence of sensing the presence. You cannot sense the transcendent dimension of who you are, and you cannot sense yourself as the presence. You may do your best to practice non-attachment, but it's almost impossible.

And then you will end up getting attached to your practice of non-attachment, and feel unhappy because you don't quite manage it. In the same way, loving your neighbor as yourself, your neighbor being anybody you happen to be with, not your next-door neighbor, that's not... people have tried to practice that because they were taught to do that, but it's been a struggle, and most people have failed, unless presence arose within.

They connected with that transcendent dimension within, stillness, awareness, and then there was a natural outflow of loving-kindness, and that's loving your neighbor as yourself, because as you look at another and listen to another, you can sense that what you share, what is one, your oneness is consciousness. The essence of the other also is consciousness. It's the same consciousness that you are, and that is seeing your neighbor as yourself, and seeing your neighbor as yourself is valuing and appreciating him or her as yourself, and that is loving your neighbor as yourself.

And since the teachings of Jesus have come to us as fragments, there was nobody there who was taking things down in shorthand when he was talking, and there were no recorders, so we had to rely on people's memories and defective understandings also. So I'm sure that Jesus didn't quite say, you must love your neighbor as yourself, because he would have known that that's impossible, unless you find the kingdom of heaven that is within you. He always talked about that, and then he said, and when you find that dimension within you, that realm, that kingdom, that dimension of heaven, heaven is the sky, and the sky is vast, spaciousness, it has no form, it's the closest you can get in the physical reality to the formless dimension of consciousness itself, it's the closest thing you can find, the sky, because it's not even a thing, you can never reach the sky, there is no sky, it just seems to be a sky, it's just emptiness, spaciousness, it's the Buddha's emptiness, and it's the kingdom of heaven, so it is the kingdom, it is around the dimension of vast spaciousness, inner spaciousness, the kingdom of heaven, so my translation of kingdom of heaven is the dimension of spaciousness, oh, okay, now I get it, and if you find that within, and are rooted in that, then as a natural byproduct of that realization, you love your neighbor as yourself, because you recognize your neighbor as yourself, and this love your neighbor as yourself has been misunderstood, most people think it's about you have to love him or her as much as you love yourself, so you look in the mirror, I really love myself so much, I'm really in love with myself, I'm so great, I love myself, okay, now I'm going to try and love you too in the same way, I love you in the same way that I love myself, but at least I'm trying, but I still love myself more if I really have to admit that, and so when you're rooted in that dimension, you're not really on the surface of things, you're going somewhere, but really you're not going anywhere, just things change around you. I know you say that whatever you feel the world is withholding from you, in my case true love, you already have, and you just need to let it out, so I know you say that whatever you feel the world is withholding from you, you already have, you already have it, and you just need to let it out, in this person's case it's true love, do you have any more practical tips for doing this?

I wrote about that in the New Earth, because there are many people who go around life saying or thinking that life is depriving them of something, in some cases it may be, yes, as the questioner says, true love, we'll have to see what that means, or recognition, people don't appreciate me, or care, nobody really cares about me, or I'm deprived of, say, wealth, I'm lacking, the world is withholding from me abundance, these are all beliefs that seem to find confirmation in external reality, because the person who has these beliefs says, well, it is a fact that life is withholding abundance from me, because I have very little, or it's a fact that life is withholding love from me, I haven't found anybody, nobody loves me, or it's a fact that life is not giving me any appreciation, nobody appreciates me, and so on, so many people feel then it's something that's being withheld, and I wrote that what you believe is being withheld, you are in reality, you are withholding it from the world, because what you think the world should be giving you to make you happy, recognition, care, love, abundance, whatever it may be, is really something that is inseparable from the essence of who you are, it comes out of that, and so you have to discover that it's already inside you, what you think the world is not giving you, it is already in you, but you have to allow it to flow out into the world, and then that very quality comes back to you. Love, can you love that which is, the isness of life, love is connected with to appreciate, to appreciate the being of any life form, can you love on a daily basis, do you love what is, do you love when you look at the sky, do you appreciate the beauty that you see in the sky, do you appreciate the flower, do you appreciate whatever it is that is around you, the fact that you're breathing, do you appreciate a simple object that usually one takes for granted, its silent presence, so are you giving out that appreciation of things which is a form of love, and then you can notice there's an outflow of attention onto things, rather than somebody says, I'm not getting it, you can sense energy moving out, nobody cares about me, nobody calls me, well do you care about, or do you call them, not because you call them as a means to an end, no, because you're truly interested in them, you're truly wanting to know, you're giving them attention, how are you, not as an empty question, truly being able to listen to somebody, giving them attention, appreciation, listen, which means an outflow of attention, so if you care for people around you, or strangers, then you always get back what flows out, life always reflects that back to you.

Abundance, how do you get in touch with, and again I say, abundance is inseparable from your state of connectedness with being, that's where all abundance arises out of the one, the unmanifested one life, that's where abundance arises, the fullness of life, Jesus calls it, so can you appreciate the fullness of life and the abundance of life at every moment, before life gives you things that in conventional terms would be called abundance, abundance comes when you see the abundance of nature, you walk past a flower shop and see the abundance of beauty and the flower, all these flowering plants, you see, you don't even need to have a plant, a flower, even to appreciate what you see as the infinite abundance of life, or you see the vegetables and the fruit in a store, the abundance of that, the abundance of the Sun pouring out its abundance of energy continuously upon the planet, can you feel that on your skin, how the Sun pours out its abundance for millions and millions and millions of years, no end to it, and it's given the very warmth in your body is derived from Sun energy, because you eat plants and it's the energy that the plants have accumulated from the Sun, and so you appreciate the incredible abundance of the Sun, the abundance of rain that comes down from the sky, the abundance of water, no matter where you are, you will find some abundance in one form or another, and you don't need to own anything to appreciate abundance, you must respond to it and recognize it, so your attention moves there, the abundance of life forms, when you look around the street where all the people and the cars going by, life is producing billions of different life forms everywhere, as humans, as animals, or going to a forest, or anywhere in nature and see the incredible abundance there, but of course the essence of abundance is not multiplicity, when you see it in the outer world, abundance is many things, many beautiful things, all kinds of forms, but the essence of abundance isn't in the forms, the forms are manifestation of abundance, but if you appreciate the manifestation of abundance outside of you, that puts you in touch with the source of abundance that is within you, as the fullness of life, before life becomes a form of life, so by appreciating the manifestations of abundance around you, you get in touch with the feeling of abundance, which is the aliveness that is behind and within every life form, so the more you appreciate it, you can actually feel that, go to a little store where they sell fruit and vegetables and look at that for just a few seconds or half a minute and really see how alive everything is and how so many beautiful things are there, the vegetables and the fruit, you can do the same in a shopping mall with other things, but let's keep it simple, and feel the aliveness that's there, amazing, and at that moment you feel it in yourself, because you can only feel the aliveness that you see in the manifested, you can only feel that through your own, which is basically residing in the unmanifested, and you begin to feel alive, you respond to the world's aliveness, and that's abundance, beginning to arise, the feeling of abundance, so you acknowledge that abundance is already in your life, you don't need to own anything to feel that, it's all around you, and that initiates the process of outflow, of recognition of abundance, and then you'll see that life brings things to you that confirm your innermost feeling of abundance, and actually, things tend to come to you, they like to be acknowledged, strange as it may sound, they seek you, and it's no longer that you then need the external abundance to feel abundant, you feel abundant first, external abundance follows, it's no longer primary, you just feel just as abundant as before, so for many years I lived below the poverty line in official terms, not in third world terms, but in Western official terms, below the poverty line, and yet I didn't feel poor, I continued to feel the abundance of life, and I was surprised when I read in the paper a person who has that much, less than this amount of money per year, is below the poverty line, oh, I must be poor, that's strange, I knew I couldn't, there are many things I couldn't buy, but it didn't seem to matter, and I had this love, strange thing for, let's talk about just this seemingly trivial thing, my means of transportation, and I still have that, a love for, it's almost as if it were alive, in my 20s, my means of transportation was a bicycle throughout my 20s, and so I felt some connection with that bicycle, and the strange habit which I still have, even now, once I parked the bicycle somewhere, chained it to a railing or whatever, I would walk away and still occasionally stop for a moment and look back at it, why?

I felt a connectedness, and I loved just its presence, that's the bike, and then when I was 30, somebody gave me an old car, and I had that again, when I appreciate just its being there, and I felt a connectedness, even a form of love, one could say, perhaps, but feeling appreciation for it, and it's, again, I did, whenever I parked the car, I would just walk a few steps and look back at it for a few seconds, and I still do the same now that I have a much better car, I still do it, what I did once with my bicycle, there's still a, it's a strange thing, it's an inner, it's a sense, I have that with many things, that things are, actually have some life, even so-called inanimate things, and so you feel there's a fullness to life, and that whether it's a car or a bicycle, didn't really matter. And now, this questioner talks about true love, so he or she feels, he, I believe, that what the world is withholding from him is true love, which I presume means another human being in their life, and again, do you love other humans in your daily life? Are you able to look upon them, not with what is conventionally called love, that would be a little silly to, you can't go around and say to everybody, I love you, I love you, you can try, but it's not advisable, most humans would not be comfortable with that, and you don't even have to say in your mind, I love you, because you can't force yourself to love, it's not like that, but are you able to give them, to appreciate their being, when you look at them, to give them space to be, for example? Judgment and love obviously can't go together, so if you compulsively go around judging other humans, there can be no love.

To use a slightly different term, the Buddhists have a term that's translated as loving-kindness, which is quite nice, it's an outflow of loving-kindness meta. You have that loving-kindness towards other humans, but that implies a spaciousness while you relate to them, perceive them, or interact with them. The loving-kindness towards another human can only arise if there's some inner spaciousness in you, like here now.

And from there you look upon that human with appreciation and loving-kindness, and you can look through the ego in the other, because the moment you judge another, you get stuck in their ego, and you strengthen your own ego. Looking through the ego, or egoic behavior, or whatever front the humans present to you, some role they play, and you immediately see that there's the role, you see it without naming it, you see the role and you don't react to it, you look through that in stillness. In stillness, you look through their roles, and there's something emerges that's underneath that's more real.

And sometimes the roles collapse or are relinquished temporarily by the other person, and there's a true interaction. But the important thing is, do you give out love as you move through life? And again, it's really all, when we talk about care, love, recognition, appreciation, abundance, but it all, when you go deep into those things which seem to be different things, when you name them, if you go deep to their source, you realize it's all, they're all really one.

They're all manifestation of one underlying state, so to speak, and that is the unconditioned consciousness. They all arise out of that. As you look at me on the screen, and as you listen to the words, you become aware that there is a background to this experience that you are having at this moment, which is visual, mainly visual and auditory.

There is a background of, could say, stillness to that experience. So the surface reality is your experience of looking, hearing, listening, then in your mind, decoding the sounds and the visual signals. But then, becoming aware that there is a background of stillness, which is in between the words and behind the words.

And that is a dimension that, if I perhaps had not pointed it out, some of you might not have become aware of. And you would only be interested in the words or in looking at me for some reason. But you can also be aware that there's a background to this experience that you're having right now.

Which is a little bit like the canvas on which the artist paints. The difference here is, of course, this metaphorical painting, which is the experience that you're having at this moment, is not fixed. A painting, once it's done, is fixed on the canvas.

But this is a fluid, continuously moving painting, which is your present experience. And you can be aware, simultaneously, as you're having this experience right now, which, from a conventional viewpoint, could not possibly be called interesting. But there is something deeper to this reality than what is conventionally called interesting on the surface of things.

If I start screaming now, then it becomes interesting. Or something happens. A house collapses.

Oh, that's interesting. That's the surface reality. So, meditation is deeper than interesting.

You can now be aware, simultaneously, of the experience you're having at this moment. Words, visual image, mainly. Some thoughts, because the words I speak become thoughts in your mind.

They become your thoughts. But these thoughts point elsewhere. They are pointers or signposts.

They are not self-serving thoughts. They don't say, look at me, believe in me, adopt me as your opinion, identify with me. That's not what these thoughts are saying.

The thoughts are simply pointers beyond thought. And what is it that the thoughts point to? The thoughts appear, they are part of the surface appearance on the canvas, the metaphorical canvas, that on which your present experience is painted, appears.

But these words that appear on the canvas point to, speak of, the canvas on which they appear. They say, don't just be aware of me, the thoughts say that, don't just be aware of me, be aware of where I appear and how I appear, how I emerge, where I emerge. Don't just be aware of what makes it possible for me to be.

Now, what makes it possible for a painting to be? The canvas. So, you become aware that there is a stillness, as I said, in the background of your present experience, in the background, and it even interpenetrates your actual experience.

It becomes into, it goes, you find it in the cracked of between words. It's there everywhere. And what else could we call it?

So, I want to give you a few more pointers, helpful pointers. In addition to the experience you're having, and whatever makes up the experience you're having at this moment, and right now it's a very simple thing, because there's only a few simple words, and a man talking to you through the screen. But in addition to that, there is a silent presence that has no form.

You can't say, there it is. You can't say, look at it. You can't grasp it.

You can't analyze it. In fact, you can't know anything about it, and yet it's there. It's the one thing that is beyond doubt about the reality of this moment.

Everything you're experiencing at this moment could be a dream. So, you can doubt that. And in some ways, it is a dream.

It evaporates quickly. It dissolves, and then something new appears. So, you can doubt that what you're experiencing right now is absolutely really real.

What you cannot doubt is that you are experiencing something, whether it's real or unreal, whether it's dream or reality. You cannot doubt that something is being experienced. You don't even have to say, I am experiencing, because the I that says, I am experiencing me, the person, could be part of the dream, and in some way it is.

But even if the person is a dream, and in some way, yes, the person is a kind of dream, but the dream is happening right now. What is it that enables the dream, if it is a dream or if it's not a dream, what is it that enables the reality of this moment to be? And since I use the word to be, we could say, it is the being that is behind everything.

The silent presence, which is being. So you become aware of that, this again is the canvas, as we called it. But what is that?

The mind may ask. And many answers are possible. Not one answer is the correct one.

Every answer, what is to the question, what is that? Every answer will limit it, will not be absolutely correct, will distort it. And yet, let's say this, it is you, that canvas, that silent presence, is the essence of you.

Not the surface you, the essence of you, the surface you knows what that is, a kind of dream. And you become aware of that underlying silent space or presence.

[Speaker 2] (1:01:47 - 1:02:33)
I do have a question for you, this is a terribly personal question, and we can edit this out of the tape if you don't want it in the program. But I want to know whether, because I want to tell you, and I'm not pumping sunshine into your ear, this is the truth for me, you have stood for me as as close as I have come to see on this planet as a living master, who understands, but who does more than understand, because to be honest with you, I think I understand. But the difference I see between you and me, to be honest, and totally transparent is, we both understand it, we can both say it really well, but he lives it.

[Speaker 7] (1:02:35 - 1:02:36)
I don't.

[Speaker 2] (1:02:39 - 1:04:13)
Except when I do. But what I notice is that I live at probably 20, who can give a number, not enough of the time. And when I'm with my beloved, with my family, in private, I somehow get into all of my, you know, thoughts.

And I forget what I'm saying right here to you, as if I didn't even say it, to the point where my loved ones look at me sometimes and say, you ought to read one of your own books. And it's well deserved. It's well deserved.

So I've come to you for a personal counseling session on television. How do I take what I think that I am? How do I take what I've experienced?

I'm going to not even say what I think I am, because it's out of thought. It's not from thought. How do I take what I experience myself to be?

And wash the canvas of my life with it, especially when it matters to me the most. In the end, honestly, I don't really care how it is with you. I'll never see any of you again.

That's the truth. But that lady sitting over there, my wife, I see her every day, every hour. Why can't I summon this, then?

[Speaker 1] (1:04:24 - 1:04:58)
First of all, in certain situations, the presence is there fully in you and comes through you, such as here. You know that. In a so-called teaching situation or writing situation, the presence moves through you, and then there's the rest of your life.

And it is sometimes there, I would assume, and sometimes not. Is that right? Or is it mostly not?

[Speaker 2] (1:04:59 - 1:05:08)

I think it's more there now than it used to be, but it's still the majority of time not. And people who know me would tell you that. They'd say, you think this is a nice person, you should work for him.

[Speaker 1] (1:05:12 - 1:07:29)
So all it means is your mind still takes over, and either you relinquish it voluntarily in your daily life, which requires the minimum of awareness that this is what's happening right now, my mind has taken over. But I believe that you do have that. It comes in sometimes that you realize that your mind has taken over.

And in that moment, you can relinquish that and invite presence into your life. Whenever any conflict situation arises or any kind of suffering arises, irritation, anger, whatever it is, then it can be used as an alarm clock to tell you, oh, something has happened here. I sometimes say it's an alarm clock that tells you, I've lost the present moment.

I'm not present in the now. So in other words, you're trapped in your mind. So you can use any conflict situation, and the moment you notice it, you can invite presence back into your life, and so immediately the alertness comes back.

It's a voluntary death. If you don't do it, you'll need more suffering, and then it'll happen. But if you voluntarily relinquish, because you know how it works, you know how it works because you experience what you do in a situation like this, there's that complete openness.

You are not identified with old mind. Your mind is simply a servant of the deeper awareness. As you speak to us, it's beautiful.

You're not here. You're not protecting your ego, which is a wonderful thing, and because there is one thing much vaster here speaking through you than the limited ego that still arises in your daily life. So as you sit here, the ego is not operating.

Otherwise, you would have to hide the fact that you don't live it in your daily life, but something much greater than the ego is speaking through you right now.

[Speaker 2] (1:07:29 - 1:07:32)
You think he's going to miss a chance to talk to Eckhart Tolle about this? You're crazy.

[Speaker 1] (1:07:52 - 1:38:44)
I am a therapist, and I now feel that I don't take people's problems seriously. I don't know if I can continue to be a psychotherapist. Okay.

I also find myself, when I listen to people's problems, a smile arises sometimes, not because of their problems, but because I'm in touch with a deeper reality where their problems are relatively unimportant, and to be in touch with that deeper reality is liberating, and there is a joy in knowing who you are beyond your problems. There is that joy that's there, and I can feel the reality for that person beyond their problems, and that is, I'm not laughing or smiling at them, but at the relative unreality of their problems, and that is actually a form of healing. So if that is the case with you, then you can continue to be a psychotherapist.

You're not just, you can continue to listen to their problems without giving their problems this absolute reality. A relative reality, yes, but be in touch with that level deep within where there is no problem, where that person is already complete and whole, and that is the formless consciousness. Every form identity is not complete.

It never has the feeling of being complete and whole. There's always stuff missing in your form identity, and there are things that didn't go according to what you imagined when you were young. How did you imagine your life to unfold?

Well, you had all kinds of ideas. In many cases, that didn't quite happen, and then people come and say things like, oh, I would have imagined when I was, I imagined my life to unfold very differently from the way it did unfold. It's really a sad story, and I feel I haven't, my form identity is really, there's so much still missing in who I am.

There's so much that I could have achieved, but things happen to stop me from achieving it, and then there's that stuff that I did achieve, and it all came to nothing. It dissolved. I tried so many things, but why didn't I, why didn't I succeed in this or that?

Or if you did succeed greatly in this or that area, you go, why was I, why am I still so restless and unhappy? I've had, everybody thinks I'm so great, and I've got all these fans on Twitter and Facebook. Why am I still, why am I still unhappy?

Why do I need more of this or that, even though my picture is in People magazine, and other magazines that are not that great? So whatever it is, there's always something wrong with their form identity, and if you think everything is right about your form identity, it won't last for very long. Then you happen to just have hit a period, a brief period, when you feel it's all, everything is going great in my life.

I've got a great place to live. I've got a great relationship. I've got a great job.

I've got a great income. I have a great car, and people recognize my importance. They tell me I'm a VIP.

Everything is great. That's how life should be. Now, it is possible for human to, for brief periods to be in that place, but they would be quite brief, because life just isn't like that.

It is designed for things to go wrong. No, no matter how much positive thinking you do, which is all good, but no much, no matter how much positive thinking you do, there is this thing designed into life. It's a, we could call it a sabotage element of sabotage or disruption, which universal intelligence has built into everybody's life.

You, you might have noticed it, but you, what you might not have noticed is that it is built into everybody's life, and you might have thought that life singled you out to sabotage your life, because some people are very good at hiding the, that element in their lives from others, and they wouldn't even admit it, that at night they lie in agony and, or whatever it is. So that's an interesting fact. Once you know that this disruptive thing is built into your life, then you may come to actually accept that fact, that that is a universal thing that every human is meant to face.

So there's always, in some area of your life, there's always some disruption happening, or just happened, or happened a few years ago, but still leaving a lot of traces around, and you're still influencing the way in which you experience life. And then the next thing comes in, and the next, and once you've resolved your financial problems, and you're okay there, finally I've got financial security, ah, and suddenly a health problem comes up, or the other way around, or the great job, you suddenly have this wonderful, fulfilling job, but, and suddenly your company gets taken over by another company, and suddenly you're told, we don't need you anymore. Who am I now without that? No matter, you can, you all know examples from your own life, so, and with some of you, it seems to be just a succession of things going wrong, but they can't have gone that wrong if you are sitting here now, because it's taken you to a spiritual awakening.

Nobody would go to a spiritual awakening, well, nobody I know, without experiencing the unsatisfactory nature of one's life situation. So I am grateful to that in my life, and you can be grateful to that in your life, because otherwise the evolution of consciousness would not have happened. If you had been totally happy all your life, no evolution is possible, no development is possible, no deepening is possible, you would be dancing on the surface of things.

Let's have another drink, and good food, and lots of other good movie and sensory pleasures, and sex, and let's travel and go to another place and explore that, and isn't that nice? And just no depths whatsoever. Of course, you would be incapable of compassion or empathy with other human beings.

You would have no deep insights, which all come out of suffering, just surface existence. But fortunately, very few humans or no humans have that, and if they had it, that would become the disruptive element. The fact that there is nothing disruptive would become the disruptive element in your life.

So on the level of form identity, you never arrive at complete satisfaction. You can't. I can't get no satisfaction.

And once you realize that, you're actually, it's liberating to know, okay, you can still try to improve your life. It's a wonderful thing. Of course, you try to make your life better.

If you're not happy where you live, if you can find a better place to live, or if your health is not well, maybe you can do something about it. Maybe you can't. If you can't do something about it, take action out of, but the foundation for action needs to be present moment acceptance of the isness of now, and then you take action.

But it'll never be totally satisfying. Therefore, the only satisfying thing is to realize that there is another dimension to who you are. And that's where all satisfaction comes from.

The realization that there's more to you than the person, the personality and the personal history. And that is consciousness. You are in essence, timeless consciousness.

This mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive. To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation. Most humans, except for those who already are in touch with that dimension within that lies beyond this superficial realm of delusion.

Most humans then have a number of things that may derive their sense of self from partly collective, partly personal. Collective could mean your nation, your tribal identity, which relates to sport teams, and so on. Religion, my religion, our religion, or particular church or movement within one religion as opposed to another church.

That's different. Nationalism, in some places is still strong, not as insane as it perhaps as it was in the 20th century in many places. And many other collective identification from my club, my town, my this, my that, or our, and then personal possessions, status, recognition from others, or lack of it.

Knowledge, personal appearance, external appearance, and so on. All things the mind identifies with. Very precarious, because basically they're all mental fabrications, stories.

There's nothing wrong with mental fabrications and stories, you can enjoy those as long as you know that's what they are. But if you take them to the ultimate reality, then very quickly you begin to suffer. We continue to live surrounded by these stories.

Enjoy them, you can watch the game, can even be happy if your team wins and the other team loses, but it doesn't go that deep anymore. So if your team loses, yes, there's a surface dissatisfaction which you observe, or if your team wins, there's a surface elation, you go, oh yeah, but it doesn't go that deep. Because on a deeper level, you know that that has nothing to do with who you are.

It's a game, it's a story, a play, a dream-like formation. Now mostly in a dream, you don't know that you're dreaming. Occasionally it happens that you have a lucid dream, and you suddenly, in the middle of a dream, realize that you're dreaming.

And then there's a fundamental shift in the way in which you experience the dream. And the same in daily life, most people are so identified with mental formations, things, events, and so on, which all become mental formations, that the lucidity factor is missing. So they are in the dream of daily existence, but so identified with it, they don't know it is a kind of dream.

So they try to derive a satisfying sense of self from it, which is impossible. Now the equivalent of having a lucid dream, or realizing in the middle of the dream that you're dreaming, is, of course, to become aware in your daily life. Suddenly there is an awareness, which is not a thought.

The awareness, sorry, from the dimension of awareness, you can recognize a thought is just a thought. And you realize who you are, essentially, is that deeper aware presence, the lucidity that enables you not only to have sense perceptions, but also enables you to have thoughts. That is lucid living.

So you have, you can have lucid dreaming, but more important, it's much more important to experience lucid living. And that is the beginning of the end of misidentification with who you are. And what then happens is that there can still be minor manifestations of happiness and unhappiness.

But it doesn't go that deep anymore. Now some people might say, okay, I'm okay with unhappiness not going that deep. But they might feel uneasy with happiness not going that deep anymore.

What I mean, of course, is the what is conventionally called happiness is a temporary surface phenomenon. But there is a deeper happiness, if we even still want to use that term. Usually I don't.

There is a deeper sense of presence of rootedness, of vast spaciousness, of aliveness, that is sometimes called joy. But you can call it inner peace. You can call it a deep sense of contentment in the background.

And this is why we're here to be reminded that that dimension is there within you, waiting to be discovered, or waiting to reveal itself to you. Or if you already live in connectedness with that, to deepen it. That's why we're here.

So the question then, of course, is, do I know who I am, beyond my physical body, or beyond my external appearance? Beyond my place in society? Beyond whatever country I happen to belong to, because I happen to be born there?

Beyond my religion, which, again, in most cases, is my religion, because I happen to be born in a particular place? Beyond my social function, status in society? Or beyond my possessions?

And all those things I mentioned are really, they may have an external existence, but you experience them as images in your mind. And of course, you are the presence behind those images, and even within those images. So right now, there's a chance for you to stop thinking, not through any kind of effort, not through any willpower, act of will, not through suppression of thinking.

But simply because you realize that right now, thinking is not really necessary. You don't need to figure out what I'm talking about, by thinking about it. You understand the words.

So of course, there is some mental activity. But the words are not understood on the level of mental concepts. They are understood by you at a deeper level.

Where the truth that these words point to is immediately recognized as your own presence. So the only presence, when words point towards presence, only the presence in you can recognize the meaning. You go, oh, you might not be able to explain it to anybody.

It's just the simple fact that you are conscious right now, which is beyond doubt. Everything else may be a kind of dream, but there must be a consciousness for the dream to appear. It appears in the light of consciousness.

I am that I speak for you and for myself. I am that I am. I am conscious presence.

I am consciousness, formless, timeless. And I know myself as the formless, timeless consciousness. But that knowing can only arise between two thoughts or in the absence, temporary absence, cessation of thought right now.

Between this moment, because on the external, there is time. The deeper, there's no time. Between this moment now and this moment now, there's no thought.

It's a very amazing thing. So let's try it again. I say now twice.

And in between the two nows, see if you can just be there as the presence. Now. Now.

Well, that wasn't that difficult. Now a little longer. Now.

Now. You can either close your eyes, or you can look into my eyes. It may be helpful to look into my eyes because I'm not thinking.

And that can connect you with the state of not thinking. Do it again. Now.

[Speaker 7] (1:39:02 - 1:39:03)
Now.

[Speaker 1] (1:39:10 - 1:40:13)
There's nothing more important in your life. And I'm totally 100% confident and certain that that's the absolute truth. There's nothing more important in your life, no matter who you are, then accessing that dimension, which is not only the dimension of your true identity, but also the place where true intelligence arises and creativity and peace and loving kindness towards all beings, because that is the formless realm of life itself, of consciousness itself, that then recognizes

itself in all other forms.

So it's vitally important.

[Speaker 2] (1:40:40 - 1:41:21)
To this special three-part video series on Conscious Manifestation 2020. In this series, Eckhart addresses how we approach conscious manifestation right now, right in the midst of the global pandemic, when so many people are feeling so much instability and economic insecurity. Here's Eckhart Tolle with part one on the first step of conscious manifestation.

[Speaker 1] (1:41:21 - 2:01:19)
So whenever you encounter adversity or loss or extreme limitation that suddenly comes into your life, some kind of disruption that comes into your life, that is a call to come more intensely and intensely into the present moment, first of all. So allow the, whatever form the adversity takes, whatever it is that you're experiencing right now, allow it to, one could almost say, force you into the present moment. If you're not in the present moment, you will be in a state of fear.

So the first step for manifesting something better is to forget about manifestation and be completely concerned with the present moment only and give your fullest attention to the present moment. That includes not only whatever is happening around you at the present moment right now, your sense perceptions and so on. This is, of course, part of the present moment.

It also concerns the thoughts that you're going through your mind at the present moment. So there's a huge difference between having thoughts go through your mind and being aware that certain thoughts are going through your mind at the present moment. This is something very important, easy to overlook.

Thoughts go through your mind all the time. For most people, particularly people who have not awakened yet in any way, who are still unconscious, which means completely identified with a thinking mind, for those people, there's no awareness behind the thought. This is why we say they are unconscious.

Without awareness, there's only the movement of thought. And the movement of thought reacts to whatever is happening around you. And the way in which the movement of thought reacts to whatever is happening around you depends on the way in which your mind has been conditioned by past experiences.

So the conditioning of your mind determines how you react to things that are happening around you, how you interpret them, what kind of narrative you create around what is happening around you. You talk to yourself, that's the voice in the head, the thought processes. This talking to yourself becomes a narrative.

Without awareness, you are completely identified with the stream of thinking that is reactive to whatever is happening around you. And if something is happening that is challenging, in other words, some kind of adversity, limitation, loss or disruption of your life, then the normal thing for most people is a very scary narrative that arises in your mind. The way in which you interpret what's happening is scary because you're not only looking at what's happening now, you're also extrapolating from there and saying, how is this going to affect me?

What's going to happen tomorrow, next week? There's the future. You project yourself into the future where you see things are getting even worse than they are now.

You see already how whatever is happening now, how it's going to affect your life and you play out scenarios in your mind, which are not pleasant. And you don't know what you're doing. You believe that what you're experiencing is the reality, but it's not the reality.

What you're experiencing is what your mind has created. It is a narrative that your mind has created as a reaction to what's happening around you. So you're not experiencing reality, you're confusing what is happening in your mind with reality.

So once an awareness comes in, awareness, another word for it is presence. When awareness comes in, you suddenly become aware of the kind of thoughts that your mind is creating. And that is the beginning of awakening, spiritual awakening, the awakening of consciousness.

That is to become aware of the way in which your mind functions and what it says. And this is why it's so important to become conscious of the present moment, because that is an intrinsic part of being present is to become aware of what your mind is doing in this moment. And this is why I said, the first step is to forget about wanting to manifest something different.

We can go there later. The first step is become more intensely, more acutely aware of the present moment, because if you're not without that awareness, you are at the mercy of your mind, the conditioned mind, without even knowing it, you have become a victim of your mind. And so it is true to say that for many people, their worst enemy lives between their two ears without, and they don't know it.

So the most foundational step is coming into the present moment, which implies the arising of awareness or presence. And as that awareness arises, you become aware not only of your immediate surroundings, which is part of the present moment, but you also become aware of the thinking mind and what thoughts is your mind producing. And you look at the, are these thoughts reflecting truly a reflection of reality, or are they a fiction that my mind is creating, projecting itself into the future where things are usually seen as going to get worse.

And then you experience the emotions, the emotion usually reflects mind activity. So if your mind is producing thoughts that are telling you that your situation is dangerous or critical, although in the present moment, it is very unlikely, highly unlikely that your situation is dangerous or critical in this moment. If it is dangerous or critical, of course you take action.

You have to do something to get out of this immediate challenge, but it's highly unlikely that in this moment, there is immediate danger or your situation is critical right now. So it's, first step then is coming into this moment and realizing, okay, this is, you become aware of sense perceptions. Then you become aware of thoughts.

It may take a little while for some people who are deeply identified with the stream of thinking, it may take them, it may not even be very easy at first to become aware of sense perceptions, which is part of being present. Why is it not easy for many people to become aware of sense perceptions? Because the entire consciousness is continuously being absorbed by the conditioned mind.

And so their entire attention is in the thought processes. So their entire attention is consumed by unconscious thought processes. And so they go, and if somebody says to them, become aware of your surroundings, it may not be easy at first for people who are deeply, deeply trapped in fearful thinking, particularly, to even liberate some of their attention, so to speak, to extract, to take some of your attention away from thinking and direct it towards sensory perception.

So you may find, particularly when you find yourself in a challenging situation, when the mind has become very reactive and is thinking and thinking, what am I going to do now? What's going to happen to me? I need to do something, but I don't know what, and all kinds of scenarios.

So your mind is, your attention is completely taken up by the unconscious thought processes. And if then I say, or whoever it is says, become aware of your sense perceptions, you may find there is an almost magnetic pull by your mind. It wants to continue thinking, and it has a certain, I sometimes call it a certain gravitational pull.

There's a gravitational pull like a magnet, and that, and you cannot free even a small part of your conscious attention and give it to sense perception. And sometimes you have a, your mind may even be creating a thought that tells you why you cannot give attention to sense perception. And that thought might tell you, what's the point?

I've got other problems now. I have to think about my life. I can't, this is completely irrelevant.

I have to solve the big problem of me, my life, my life situation. I have to think about this. Don't tell me about, become aware of my surroundings or sense perception is pointless.

So that the gravitational pull of the conditioned mind is there, and it might even find some kind of justification to prevent you from taking attention, even some attention away from unconscious thinking. But once you discover that, you say, okay, you don't have to believe in every thought that arises in your mind. You don't have to believe every thought.

Okay. Even that little realization, that little realization, I don't have to believe in every thought that comes into my mind is already the beginning of a liberation from your mind. Oh, I don't have to believe in every thought.

Interesting. Because that already implies that there's at least a minimum of awareness. It's not just the thought processes.

When you realize that you don't have to believe every thought in your mind, then that already implies that there's some awareness there from, because it's only from awareness, you can be aware of a thought. This is a very subtle thing. It's fundamental to understand this because your mind, your consciousness has another dimension.

There's a dimension of consciousness in you that we can call awareness or presence. And many people, most people still don't know that. And millions on our planet still are so identified with the mind, they have almost no awareness.

Some awareness occasionally arises, but they don't recognize it. In other words, there may be occasional moments when the mind subsides briefly. And that's a little bit of a liberation, but they don't really, they don't know, they don't recognize that and immediately the mind starts up again.

So you become aware of your thought processes. And then you realize how much of your thinking is directed towards the future, how much it is creating a scenario that is fearful. And you realize the connection between what your mind is saying, the voice in the head, that says, it's partly, it may be, it's partly a voice in the head that thinks about, it could also be a visual images that arise to accompany the voice in the head.

There are visual images that arise. And when these visual images arise, then for example, you see yourself suddenly as a homeless person sitting on a bench. Oh my God.

You see yourself living in your car. Oh my God. And fear arises.

But the thing is, if you were actually living in your car for a while, some people are, and if you became present in that moment, it wouldn't actually, wouldn't be that bad. It actually, there were times, occasionally I spent, somebody once gave me an old car that was the first car I ever had. And that was shortly after I spent a period of homelessness.

And there were sometimes nights when I spent in that old car and I enjoyed it tremendously. It was just almost romantic to be in this little bubble. This is just a little anecdote.

What this is pointing to is really the present moment is never quite as bad as the mental projection of some future bad moment. And in the mental projection of some future bad moment, there's nothing you can do about it. But if you have something in the present moment, you can meet whatever arises with the power of your conscious presence.

This is what is. And you, so you become, you come into this moment and become aware of this moment and realize in this moment, there is no problem as such. That's a very strange realization.

It's not a denial. It's not a denial. It's, it takes you to a deeper level, a deeper consciousness, and that is presence or awareness.

So you realize coming into this moment, you've taken some attention out of your thinking mind and some attention now goes into sense perceptions. This is a very important part of becoming present. And in this moment, sense perception means you look around and you listen, whatever noise may be there.

And not just, you really give attention to whatever it is you're looking at or listening to. You become, come to your senses. If you come to your senses, look at the sky, trees, anything natural is the best thing to look at if you can, but it could be anything.

So you come to your senses means there's less mind activity, more presence. And then you become aware that the mind activity that you have been engaged in is ultimately not helpful. That the mind activity itself, the narrative, these unconscious scenarios that the mind created, they are not helpful.

You become aware that worrying is not helpful. And worrying, which is thinking in circles, thinking the same things in the same lines again, without any possibility of taking action right now. You're just, it's not only not helpful, it's actually destructive.

And when you become aware of that, you can more and more let go of unhelpful mind activity and replace it with aware presence in the now.

[Speaker 4] (2:02:14 - 2:02:24)
That state of spaciousness is already in you all the time.

[Speaker 1] (2:02:29 - 2:49:26)
There is an equivalent of dreamless sleep in our ordinary existence, but most people are not aware of that. And that is a dimension of consciousness that is possible for human beings that has certain similarities with dreamless sleep. And although spiritual teachers and so on have spoken about it and pointed to it for a

long time, thousands of years, it still is not common knowledge that there's a potential in every human being for realizing within him or herself a state of consciousness that is deeper, infinitely deeper than the ordinary state of thinking and doing normal life.

I sometimes call that state spaciousness, inner spaciousness, or sometimes call it presence or stillness. In Indian spirituality, India, I mean India, they have a word for, they talk about, they have been talking about it, they have a term for this, they call it the fourth state of consciousness, Turiya, which is, I believe, you have dreamless sleep, you have the dream state, you have ordinary wakefulness, and then you have the fourth state, which most humans don't know that it's there for them. They don't know.

And that is the greatest, one could almost say, yes, tragedy of a human life is to miss that the possibility that there is in a human life to realize that fourth state of consciousness. There is an assumption by spiritual seekers, even in India, and anybody who hasn't realized it for themselves or even had glimpses of it, there's an assumption that that fourth state is extremely hard to attain and you need countless years of spiritual practice or countless lifetimes to finally achieve the fourth state of consciousness. And that belief actually prevents you from realizing it within yourself because that state of spaciousness is already in you all the time.

So if you have the belief that it's something that you need to achieve at some future point, that belief, that thought would continuously prevent you from realizing it now because you mentally will always project. And then you say, I'm going to meditate because I want to achieve at some point the fourth state. And that can be a great hindrance in your meditation because it prevents you from going deeper into the present moment where the fourth state is.

Or one could almost say, it's not just where the fourth state is, the present moment is the fourth state of consciousness. The space of now, not what happens in the now, but the deeper, the space in which it happens, the background to your life is continuously there. And continuously also often seeps through one thought, in between two thoughts, you go, three seconds.

For three seconds, you are free of yourself. And you might look at something or whatever it is, or just experience a moment of peace and aliveness. And then of course, you get drawn back into thinking.

And then at another time, a little space comes in again when you're maybe all kinds of, when you're tasting something, perhaps there's just the perception of the taste without any mental interference, just an aware presence behind the sense perception. And then you notice that the state is always there. Every thought exists in that space, is only a wave movement in the space.

And so it's not something that you need to attain as if you didn't have it, but because it's already here, it is essentially who you are. It is intrinsically one with the essence of your being. And if you don't know that, then your life is very limited to just a little person with no transcendent dimension to your life whatsoever.

And so here we are in order to deepen our realization of inner spaciousness, that's all. It's so you realize something that is already here rather than needing to look for it. So why do you often not realize it?

Because you overlook it, just like the fish may overlook the fact that the fish is surrounded by water and starts looking for it. Where's the water? People keep talking about the water.

And the more the fish looks, the less likely that it will find the water. So that spaciousness is something that at first may appear in your life as a glimpse. And then, and at first in many people's lives, they don't know that that is spaciousness.

They experience it as a heightened aliveness or a deeper sense of peace or joy, an absence of problems for a little moment. So they don't know that this is a different dimension of consciousness that has suddenly arisen. They can still confuse it with something else as I did when the shift happened and that was a rare thing.

In my case, it didn't, it happened and then kind of stayed. For most people, it's a more gradual thing. It comes gradually, first in glimpses, and then suddenly it's there for a longer period of time or you go deeper into it.

And there's a gradual transformation of consciousness. Might be so gradual you don't even notice it. And when it happened to me, I didn't realize that there was spaciousness.

I didn't have the word spaciousness. I didn't know anything about the fourth state of consciousness. I knew nothing about presence or even mindfulness.

I didn't realize even that my mind had subsided and become spacious. All I knew is suddenly life is very peaceful. It feels so, this moment feels so good.

That's all I knew. And where does this peace come from, I asked. Didn't know.

I didn't know it was the depths of who I am. Realizing the depths of who I am was joy and peace. But I didn't have a word for that.

I couldn't call it the depths of who I am. I just, why am I suddenly so peaceful? And I started keeping a diary which said, I don't know why I suddenly feel so peaceful.

I just want to write down my daily experience of peace in case it leaves me, then at least I can remember it. And I wrote, it's still somewhere. I don't know where it is locked away.

I don't need to look at it, but it's interesting that there was no understanding of where did this peace originate? What is this peace? How did it come about?

The understanding came later. So you too, you may, well, not you, but people in your life, anybody who is not totally, continuously unhappy, anxious, angry, fearful, or continuously upset, or continuously in a state of deep discontent. And there are people like that.

Don't know what the percentage of the population is. Not insignificant percentage of the population live in an almost continuous state of discontent in one form or another. There's always a residue of anger.

They're just waiting for the next thing to be angry about, to be upset about, or there's a continuous, whatever the state is. Certain percentage, yes, or they're totally unhappy and depressed and everything is just dreadful. Or they are approaching the borderline of what we conventionally call sanity and insanity.

And then they step beyond this borderline and then they're declared clinically, whatever, insane or what. And so there are many people in mental homes who are so obsessed with their minds, but no space whatsoever. And people are very unhappy, totally unhappy most of the time.

Also they experience virtually no relief from their mind. So no spaciousness at all creates, makes for very unhappy life. So, and that is the equivalent of somebody who cannot, if that were possible, who cannot go into dreamless sleep.

All you ever experience is your dreams and something prevents you from going into dreamless sleep. That would be awful. And of course you would go insane.

The same applies to ordinary wakeful state. Somebody who has absolutely no access to the spaciousness within will be extremely unhappy in their ordinary wakeful state and will make others unhappy. Some become violent and create violence.

And then sometimes they are, sometimes people, of course, violent people are so unconscious and unhappy that they create, become violent. Often they attract, get attracted to each other. Then you have a group of people, thousands, hundreds, thousands, sometimes a million, millions who are violent, no spaciousness.

And then they create whatever, what we call genocide and so on. All these things, the most awful things created, life becomes a nightmare. They create a nightmare, either a collective nightmare or a personal nightmare in their personal lives.

So that is like somebody who has absolutely no access. Imagine you could only dream but never reach the dreamless state. You would go insane because you need the dreamless state.

Now, in ordinary wakefulness, you also need the spaciousness. And if you have absolutely no spaciousness, you go virtually insane. You switched off your cell phones, I hear.

And what about your minds? Not as easy because it's not just, well, it is a voice in the head, but over the years and centuries and millennia, it's more than just a voice. There's a kind of entity.

It has turned into a kind of entity. And me, not ultimately real, but seemingly real enough when you confuse who you are with the talking and reacting entity in the head, energized, amplified by emotions in a vicious circle. The emotions are created by whatever the entity is thinking and the energy of the emotion further amplifies the entity.

Ego, the ego. And the strength of that varies from person to person. In some way, we could say that the entity is an aspect of karma.

What is in the East is called karma. It's the patterns inside you, inherited patterns inside you that you confuse with who you are. Consciousness identifies with the patterns.

And in some humans, it's a very heavy entity, extremely dramatic or angry, or very heavy and sad, easily upset, always looking out for some perceived injury or slight, always ready to jump to its defense, even questioning somebody's viewpoint because you identify with the mind, which is ego. So any viewpoint is invested with a sense of self. The ego is in your viewpoint that you're expressing about this or that.

So even somebody questioning your viewpoint can lead to extreme defensive measures or aggression, as you can witness everywhere on television or in daily life. A peaceful discussion with that entity is not really possible because a peaceful discussion about something implies that there's some degree of disidentification from that mind-made entity. There is at least a little bit of space in you and the other person, primarily in you.

That's the main thing is not to demand that there should be space in the other person, but to make sure that there's space in you when you're discussing something. And you can see if the other person is already getting upset. You can see why immediately.

Identification with a mental position, ego. The entity feels threatened and is barking back at you. Oh.

Oh. Some dogs do that also. But the same as in humans, even in vicious dogs, they are only vicious because of their past.

Underneath the viciousness in every dog, there is a goodness. And underneath the madness, of the egoic entity, there is also the truth of who you are or who that other human being is. So your task as you're confronted with these entities, and you are all the time, occasionally your own still takes over perhaps.

One or two of you may still experience it occasionally. But the task is to be there as the observer or witness of your mind. Then you're no longer in the grip of the egoic entity.

So ego then is the unobserved mind, complete lack of awareness. In other words, there is only mind. And that's the state of, one could call it hypnotic state or dreamlike state.

In which you dream up your life. And then things happen around you. Because in every human, every person's life, there are, you come into this world here and there are, you're surrounded by a certain situation.

Things happen to you. And then you react. The entity reacts without any awareness.

It reacts according to its aggressive, defensive conditioning. So it's completely at the mercy of what happens around it. And it perpetuates its own state.

So an event that for somebody who is relatively free of the ego, at least in that particular area of their lives, the same event happening to one person is relatively unimportant. Oh, Eckhart didn't reply to my email. To one person, that is, he must be very busy.

Or maybe he doesn't even read it. And that's just how it is. And the other person feels deeply offended.

I wrote to him three times. Nothing. Didn't even bother to reply to me.

And that's the beginning of the story. And that proliferates into how dreadful a person he is. And then you find other things that you can focus on.

And that's how the entity strengthens itself. It grows. It inflates itself by this reactivity.

So a relatively insignificant thing is this entity of course personalizes everything that happens. It's to do with me. They're trying to do something to me.

He's ignoring me. How dare he? And so it grows.

The next thing is the emails become angry and accusations or phone calls. I'll get you. That's how it grows.

Next time you walk out of your house, I'll be behind you. That's how it can grow. These are more extreme forms, but not uncommon.

So it doesn't matter to what extent it grows, but you can see the simple fact of somebody not replying becomes something dreadful that's happening to me and proliferates into a story. It can occupy a large section of your life. And another person said, well, that's how it is.

When the power of now first came out, some people suggested to me it would be a good idea to send a copy to Deepak Chopra. And I did because that maybe he'll read it and there was only, it was published in 3,000 copies the first edition, which had to be taken. I carried it to bookstores in a paper, in a plastic bag.

And so I signed it to him and nothing. As if it had disappeared into a hole. And now this is what happens when people send books to me, but now I know why.

Because you can't even read them all. You can't possibly read them all, the manuscripts and the books. But luckily that entity was no longer operating inside me so there was no complaining that Deepak had not, it just, there was no reply.

Well, that's just how it is. He must be busy. Maybe he read it, didn't like it.

Maybe he didn't read it. Who knows? The moment I interpret something, I'm projecting.

So it's futile to interpret something, you have no clue why. It's just, that's how it is. It's the simple isness of fact.

And of course the truth is, sure, he never even saw it because he gets too many books. It's impossible. By the way, later, when Power of Now was already doing very well, he did write an endorsement when it wasn't needed anymore, but it was, that was very nice.

But if I had sent him angry emails, I still have not heard from you after three months of sending 10 emails, you still neglected to inform me whether, et cetera, et cetera, then I don't think he would have written an endorsement. So your reaction determines also what happens next. So if your reaction is an egoic one, it's not simply the reaction to something that has happened in the present moment, it also determines how the events unfold from now on.

So if the egoic reaction is aggressive, negative, demanding, complaining, whatever the ego does to strengthen itself, to feel stronger, then that creates an echo in the external world. It's like you're shouting a particular sound, you're shouting it out into the world, and then it echoes back. So what you're putting out then as in your reaction, which comes to words and actions, then comes back at you.

People react to your reaction because they are not perhaps totally enlightened, in which case they wouldn't react to your reactions, but they are also, they have their egos, so they react to your reaction, and you create a whole train of reactivity, and this is how the drama develops and grows. And it's all taken for absolutely real, and that's how it is. You don't realize, the entity doesn't realize, it's creating the whole story.

And all it hears back is the echo of its own conditioning, coming back to you from the external, the outside world. And so, and of course that then serves as a very powerful confirmation that your initial interpretation of events was absolutely correct. So, because, as you see, his original intention was to deceive me to whatever, and then when I confronted him, he got angry because I was right, and so on and so on.

And if you have ever tried to argue with him, the egoic entity with someone, you can see the futility of it, it is impossible. You cannot convince this egoic entity of its own illusory nature, you can't. You only strengthen it.

Arguing with the ego is quite funny ultimately, but it's an absurd enterprise. On its own level, it will always win, and it will draw you, well, the moment you start arguing with the ego, you're already trapped in your own mind patterns. So the karma then, this being an aspect of karma, karma is what happens, usually people say karma is what happens to you, but more importantly, karma is how you react to what happens, because that is what perpetuates the conditioning, and that creates what you experience as your life, and it creates how other people react to you, so how you experience interactions.

Amazing. Amazing. So often I observe the futility of egoic reaction to nothing, to reacting to nothingness, and blowing it up like a huge soap bubble, talking about it for days on end, until finally reality confirms you were right all along.

It's quite a trap. So you need to, the heavier the egoic entity in you is, the more dense it is, because the density, we could call it that, I'm talking about ego, the emotional aspect of ego is a large part of the emotional aspect of ego is the pain bodies, pain body really is the emotional aspect of the egoic entity, and the density of the ego in you varies from person to person. There is probably nobody listening to this here or there, this is the wormhole of the camera through which the words are reaching out, and there's somebody at the other end.

Hi. Hi. Hi.

Not just somebody, far more people than sitting here, there's thousands of people at the other, through some, but there's nobody, people sitting here or at the other end of the wormhole whose ego is extraordinarily dense, or if they are, they won't stay here for very long, or they would switch off this screen saying, this is awful. There's nothing that the ego likes less than to hear about itself. So it is then not so likely that in you there is this great density of the ego and pain body, but you still encounter in your daily life, you will still encounter many humans who manifest extreme density of ego and pain body.

And of course, those people create suffering for themselves and others. That's their purpose in life. That's where they are at in their evolutionary journey.

They are here as spiritual teachers. They are creating suffering, which eventually will awaken them when they realize that the suffering they experience is self-created, but that could take a while before they realize that. In the meantime, they might attempt to create suffering for you at the same, it's because they go together.

And so they become your teachers because they force you into more intense presence, or they draw you into the egoic unconsciousness. So when you are confronted with dense egos, as one spiritual teacher in India called them ego Gs, G being a term of respect, so eat the ego Gs. There are still many around.

And they're here to teach you more presence, of course. They don't know that that's what they're doing, but within the totality, that's ultimately what their function is in the evolutionary journey of humanity. The greatest obstacle is probably when meditation comes out of a sense of lack or neediness.

So you feel you are deprived of something, be it money or a relationship or a living situation, and you feel there's a great lack in your life and you desperately want to get out of it. You desperately want this to change. And so you perhaps use manifestation in a way that is not likely to work.

When, for example, you use affirmations, such as I want a better job. I want a job with a good income and a life situation and a nice place. And I want this and I want that.

By making these statements, you're actually, by implication, saying that you don't have it. So you're also, by saying that you're, there's a reverse side to your statement, I want, and on the reverse side of the statement I want, there is the statement I don't have and I need. And similar things, please give me, if you pray to maybe God, maybe you pray to Jesus, maybe you pray to Buddha.

They do that in Buddhist countries. Maybe you pray to a saint or whatever it is, or you pray to the universe and say, please universe, please give me this, please give me that. That also doesn't work very well.

If it works, it could be accidentally, who knows, but usually that greatly diminishes your power of manifestation because the manifestation practice arises out of a state of lack or neediness. So there's no powerful manifestation there. The secret of manifestation is expressed in one simple statement by Jesus, and that encapsulates all the books that have been written on manifestation and will ever be written on manifestation.

It's just one simple sentence. It says, when you pray for something, believe that you, that it has been given or that you already have it, and then you will receive it. So the important thing is he doesn't say, believe that you will receive it.

He says, believe that you have received it. So there, the secret is hiding in that statement, believe that you have received it. Now, the second obstacle to manifestation is, yes, people understand this statement, but they just cannot get themselves to believe that they have received something when they know fully well that they have not received it.

So it almost looks as if you had been asked to deny reality and you just cannot get yourself to deny reality. So that becomes the second obstacle to manifestation. And the reason why this is the obstacle is the people do not understand what it actually means, what is required for you to believe that you already have it.

How can you overlook external reality and believe that you already have it? And that, the answer to that takes us even deeper where you have to become into full alignment with the power of the present moment and go deep into yourself. That is the most fundamental practice where you discover who or what you are beyond the thinking mind and beyond the ego.

Discover that in essence, you are consciousness and consciousness is the unmanifested life that is the essence of all life, the source of all life and contains everything that could ever be manifested in external reality. I sometimes in a slightly humorous analogy compare that realization of your inner essence with having found the cream and all external reality is the skimmed milk that is a diluted version of the cream, which is the essence of all life that is within you as your deepest reality. So the very foundation for successful manifestation is finding who you are in your essence.

And once you've found that, that already contains everything that you could wish for on a feeling level. So you then, whatever you attain then comes out of the state of fullness, not out of a state of lack. So when you feel the fullness of life that is within you, that's inseparable from the present moment, it's inseparable from who you are in the depth of your being.

When you find the fullness of life, you virtually have everything already. Nothing that you could obtain, could possibly obtain, could improve upon this realization. So let's say you want to obtain great wealth or whatever it is, who knows?

How will you feel when you have it? Or you want to have some specific purpose. I want to create the most beautiful thing that helps millions of others.

How would you feel if you've had it right now? And this is exactly how you feel right now when you get in touch with the essence of who you are. And when you finally obtain it, you will feel no different.

So you feel already that fullness. Whatever else, whatever comes to you in the external is only a reflection, a distant reflection of what you have found within. And so the foundation for true manifestation, of course, lies in the present moment and discover the depths of the present moment.

That's the foundation. If you cannot come into alignment with the present moment and discover the secret of the present moment, that is inseparable from who you are, then no matter what you achieve, either through hard work or through manifestation practices will not satisfy you.

[Speaker 4] (2:49:27 - 2:49:31)
And your powers of manifestation will also be greatly diminished.

[Speaker 1] (2:49:47 - 3:01:37)
So it's when your surface reality, your surface reality becomes frustrating, that's the beginning of potentially finding the portal into the awakened state. But when your surface reality is relatively pleasant, by the way, it doesn't stay like that, but for the time being, let's say it's relatively pleasant, you're not really motivated into finding the deeper essence of who you are. Because why not?

Let's fly to Paris, we'll have a great meal there where you feel a little bit uncomfortable and discontent. Okay, let's go there, let's do this. Let's try this, more sensory experience.

You can buy any sensory experience. And then after a while you find being in your comfort zone, after a while it becomes your discomfort zone. And then finally you've made it.

And then finally there's a possibility of awakening. And so this is the challenges that we encounter in life. Many people have an attitude of resentment or a feeling that there's something very wrong with the world, or there's something very wrong with my life when they're being challenged by difficult situations, difficult people, loss of some kind, did I mention difficult people?

Oh, yes. You may find a lot of your suffering, unhappiness, strangely enough, comes from other people. They are so difficult.

And often the very people that were supposed to make you happy, suddenly they don't fulfill their purpose anymore, and they make you unhappy. It's called the divorce court. And there's an implied belief that this shouldn't be happening.

Life should unfold beautifully without all that stuff going wrong. And to some extent, yes, to some extent, especially as you live more consciously and no longer totally in the grip of ego, you're beginning to awaken. There's an awareness.

You no longer create unnecessary suffering in your mind through reactivity. We are able to drop the unnecessary baggage of creating narratives and creating your own suffering through your narratives. You let go of that.

So it's a huge chunks of suffering begin to fall away. But challenges still come, even then challenges. And even then, it doesn't mean everything will now go totally as expected and as it should.

There's still loss happening from time. There's still, you still come across difficult people. How is that?

I don't want any more difficult. Yeah, but they're everywhere. As the famous French philosopher said, hell is other people.

He looked very unhappy by the way. Well, the only photo I ever saw of him, he looked unhappy, so I don't know. Jean-Paul Sartre.

Oh. It's true, other people are difficult. So your life improves immeasurably as you become more conscious, but it will still challenge you.

And it won't mean you will never experience loss again. It doesn't mean things may not go wrong still occasionally, not perhaps as drastically as before. You don't create your own mayhem and chaos anymore.

But challenges, yes, different kinds of challenges come. And if you no longer complain that a challenge shouldn't exist, difficulties shouldn't exist, obstacles shouldn't exist, things should not be canceled, they shouldn't go wrong. If you drop that expectation, then it's actually fine.

But be careful that if you still have an unspoken assumption that there's something wrong when challenges happen, that would draw you back into unhappiness. There's nothing wrong when challenges happen. We grow through them.

And if you hadn't had yours, you wouldn't be here. If I hadn't had mine, I wouldn't be here. So we wouldn't be here.

We would not be here without it. And so retrospectively, we can actually be grateful for the suffering that we've had, retrospectively. The question is, the challenges of life, when they come, do we transform them into unhappiness or are we able to just face them and then go with it, go with them and do whatever action is possible or necessary or totally accepted at this moment, this is how it is.

So when you live more consciously, you no longer convert the difficulties of life, the inevitable difficulties and challenges of life, you no longer convert them into unhappiness, which means they don't contribute anymore to your unhappy personal identity. You're no longer becoming a more unhappy person. You'd be surprised how many people's main sense of identity in this world is unhappiness.

And they're just looking for the next thing to be unhappy about. And they always find something or to complain about, to be angry about. There's an expression that then you become a grievance looking for a cause.

And of course, you always find the causes. So important thing then to realize that if I'm sure there are some of you who have carried the burden of a very unhappy self for many years, and perhaps you're just beginning to step out of it. You're just perhaps beginning to transcend it.

And there are still millions in this world who carry the burden of an unhappy narrative in their minds, unhappy self. And that means my... And you think about then my life.

Why did it come to this? Why didn't my own... These are my expectations that I had when I was 20.

Why didn't they work out? Why did my marriage collapse? Why did I lose that job?

Why did I succeed and made millions and then I lost them? Why, why? Why did I work for nothing for 15 years and then the whole thing that I built up collapsed?

Why is it dreadful, dreadful? All this begins to dissolve because you realize you're unconsciously creating suffering and strengthening the egoic personality through that. And then my life then is just memories.

And you begin to realize, as I sometimes put it, or people find it a little weird, when I say my life isn't a correct way of putting it because you don't have a life. You don't have a life. Because if you have a life, there's you and life.

How can you be separate from life? So if you don't have a life, one could even say you can't even lose your life. You can only lose something that you have, but you are life, you don't have a life.

I am life and life and consciousness are synonymous. It doesn't mean that every form of life is conscious, but every form of life is, the way I see it, is matter, the table, a rock, mineral, it's like frozen consciousness. Plant life is like liquid consciousness.

It's an analogy. And the mind and thinking and beyond that, consciousness itself is like vapor, mist, it rises, this isn't a water analogy. All life is manifestation of the one underlying life or consciousness in manifold forms.

So you are that, I am life is a wonderful realization. I am consciousness, I don't have a life. Yes, I have a history, but the history is not my life.

It's stuff, it's stuff in the mind, it's memories. And these are, all these things are wonderful that they happen to you because they have brought about your awakening. They all make sense if you now look back on all the things that happened, including, and not only including, but especially the so-called bad things.

They brought you to this point. They brought you, they pushed you into awakening.

[Speaker 3] (3:02:04 - 3:02:24)
Hello. As the now becomes more and more my experience, I started to question why be in a relationship with another. And I guess I want to know a little bit more about how things shift in what we're seeking in a relationship.

[Speaker 1] (3:02:36 - 3:18:07)
And again, through observing yourself in relationships, you can actually find the answers to your question or the answer to your question. Nevertheless, I will continue to speak. It's to ask, to find, try to find some mental conclusion about the function of relationships when you are present or awakened.

Actually, isn't that helpful? Although many people actually wanted to know the answer to your question. That's why you're here.

But you can observe yourself how relationships operate in your life and or how new relationships, if they come into your life, how they differ from the old relationships when you were not present. You may notice that when you're not present, you seek something from the other person. It may be a very subtle thing, or it may be not so subtle.

But when you're not yet connected to the source within yourself, which is the transcendent dimension, which is the stillness, which is consciousness, when you don't know yourself as the light of consciousness, as a living realization, which is not difficult, it's right here, but when that gets obscured, you seek, because that's the only source of true satisfaction and peace and aliveness. And then, but if that is blocked, you're unaware of it, then you seek it through something else. And often it's through another human being.

So you seek something that the other human being cannot really give you, nor any other situation can give you, because you may seek it through some imagined situation. I have to work out the right structure for my life, good income so that I don't have to worry anymore, nice place to live, lovely relationship on top of it, and be able to travel, wouldn't that be great? And even that would not provide permanent satisfaction, it would provide short-lived satisfaction, always followed by dissatisfaction.

So you would be seeking something in the other human some kind of completion, make me complete, make me at home in the now, help me find myself through you. I will have a deal, I make you feel complete and you make me feel complete. It sounds good when you say it like that, but when you actually begin to live it, it doesn't work, not for long.

So you'd see in the old way of seeking relationships, there's the seeking, something through the relationship. It could be just physical pleasure, that is often the case, or it's, and then of course comes the psychological pleasure through the relationship, some kind of psychological completion through the other. And as long as there's the seeking for completion through the other, the relationship is doomed ultimately.

And as presence arises, the mind may still ask, well, would I still need a relationship or want a relationship? You don't need to find some kind of answer, abstract answer or arrive at some kind of conclusion about relationships and then live the rest of your life on the basis of it mentally derived at conclusion about relationships. The mind loves that, it says, I need to sort out my mind what relationship is all about and whether it's still needed when I'm present.

And once I have the answer to that, I can use that for the rest of my life. And build my life on that. Of course, you would be back in mind activity and that kind of conclusion is just a limitation you would impose on yourself.

So that, some mental conclusion about relationships doesn't help you. It's only the direct observation as relationships happen and relationships happen the moment you look at another human being. It's not just intimate relationships because that remains when you look at another human being who knows where it may lead.

But if you already have a conclusion in your mind that says, I don't need relationships anymore, for example, or whatever it is, or I only have relationships with highly evolved beings. And that's another conclusion in your mind. And then you would look through every human being on the basis of that conclusion, which really is mind stuff, and say, are you highly, sufficiently evolved for me?

And probably not. And that's the end of all relationships because every time, every person that comes in is, what's the biblical expression? Weighed and found wanting, for example.

So any kind of conclusion does not serve as a valid basis for your life. So you don't need to have an answer on that level whether relationships are still needed when you are present. Just start living the presence.

You live in presence and then find out how it goes when you look at another human being and you listen to another human being. And perhaps the words coming out of your mouth is, let's have a cup of tea. Without some kind of mental baggage about, I'm now entering a relationship.

Or even when you get, let's have a meal. And then, you know sometimes the person asks, is that a date? They want some kind of concept to fit that into the meal.

Is the meal a date or is it not a date? It's just a concept. We're having a meal together, that's all.

Is this a, does this relationship have a future? No, of course not, there is no future. There is no future.

In fact, it's probably best to let go of the whole idea of relationship and just relate in the present moment. Just, which means you look, you listen, you sense your presence, and then you find words come out of your mouth. You say something.

Or you may even touch the other person without saying, should I touch or not? It's just, there's a more, there's a flow to life when you're present, where you don't need to live from conclusions, but live out of that presence. So the answer, the real answer to your question comes as you bring presence into your contact, not calling it relationships now, bring presence into your contact with other humans.

And then you'll see how that evolves. Who knows where it'll lead? But an important thing is you begin to enjoy just simple relating, perhaps just looking and listening.

You enjoy the presence of the other because you enjoy your own presence. That's where the whole neediness disappears from relationships. When you enjoy the other's presence, you don't need it, you just enjoy it.

But you can only truly enjoy it if you enjoy yourself. And you can only enjoy yourself if you know yourself as consciousness, the light of consciousness, the aware, still, vibrantly alive presence. And you are then, primarily you are that.

In second place, you are still a person, of course. So that's the, and then it becomes a beautiful thing. And less and less do you need these mental judgments about what to do or what its place is.

So what the answer then is, enjoy relating in the present moment. And then whether or not there can still be a close relationship, an intimate relation or not, you have to find out. That's the adventure of it.

But it will be enjoyable. Thank you. Thank you.

So we are moving beyond thought, not back. We step beyond thought. This is humanity's destiny.

And it's urgent now, not in the sense of, oh, we must get there. It's urgent in the sense that there is an intensity now to the arising consciousness. Because the madness that is the dysfunction of the old consciousness is also getting accelerating.

It gets worse. And at the same time, the new is already arising. The two movements, the old still not even having reached yet the end of its madness.

And the new arising at the same time. The old is still much more visible in this world. The madness of the old state of consciousness with its need for conflict and problems.

And the violence that arises out of that state. And the immeasurable suffering that humans inflict on each other and on themselves out of that state. That madness is continuing on the planet.

You only need to watch the news on TV or read the paper. That's a continuation of what we have seen in the 20th century and before that. And the new is arising, not so much visible on the surface of things yet.

Rarely mentioned in the media. Occasionally it is mentioned already here and there. This is why we are here.

Simply not to make it happen, but to allow it to happen. We are simply opening the door wider so that less and less, we're not offering resistance to that anymore. So your practice here is continuous, but don't make impossible demands upon yourself.

Of course you will get drawn even here, back into mind streams. Yes. You may reincarnate into a reactive mind stream.

And then a moment comes when suddenly there's an awakening out of that. Oh. Oh.

Oh. You can see how clear, how obvious the difference between the states of the awakened state. A moment ago, you were in that heaviness, that dense energy.

And suddenly you step out. And it's also like having left, when you're on the plane, it goes through the clouds and suddenly the clouds are underneath you. Oh.

And there's vast clear space, infinite. And so, and the clouds are still there, but you're not in them anymore.

[Speaker 7] (3:18:08 - 3:18:09)
Oh.

[Speaker 1] (3:18:23 - 3:44:54)
And so as you walk here through the gardens, along the river, see if you can be in that state where the sense perception does not absorb your attention entirely, nor the mental labels that arise to do with those sense perceptions or to do with something totally different. They don't absorb your attention totally. Attention remains free as the field of attention.

In other words, you perceive in and through stillness without needing to label everything immediately through the mind. Of course, you know you're looking at this flower. You know it's a flower without having to tell yourself that this is a flower.

You know it's beautiful without having to tell yourself that it's beautiful. And so you realize that there is vast knowing beyond mental labels and concepts. And then you know far more than you could ever know through labels or concepts, because you sense there is a depth to that which we call flower and an aliveness to that which we call flower, that mystery that is not explained by the label flower at all, that mystery that is covered up by the label flower and gives you the delusion that now you know what it is, just a sound.

You've made a sound that has come out of your mouth or you've uttered the sound in your mind, and that gives you the delusion that you know what that is. Children are told that when they learn a language, the delusion is reinforced every time you tell a child, that's called such and such. I have forgotten the names of flowers.

What's that? Gladioli. This is a gladioli, if that's what it is.

And the child will believe you, dreadful. So what can you do to, do you tell a child, don't call it anything, that doesn't work either. Yeah.

But you might say to a child, well, look at it, smell it, touch it. Look. And then as an afterthought, after thought, yeah, you can say, oh, by the way, we call it such and such instead of saying it is such and such.

Then that creates some distance from the label so that the child doesn't totally believe in that label because then you get more and more trapped in concepts and labels until you reach the age of, then finally at 18, you're totally impressive. You've been through the system that has done it even more to you. And you're totally impressive in a conceptualized reality of mental labels that concern both the world around you.

And they're all conditioning, all the surrounding culture has conditioned you with whatever mental labels they've put into you. And you inhabit a conceptualized reality, not knowing how dead your universe has become, how dead and deadened your reality has become. And you live in equally in a conceptualized sense of self.

You make yourself into mental concepts. And so this is the essence of not knowing who you are. That's the essence of this false self.

Once you have a false self, nothing is seen as it is. And everything is misinterpreted through that conditioning. Everything is distorted and deadened through that conditioning.

And that's how people live. And that is our entire civilization has come out of that. And is it surprising how mad the civilization is?

Of course, it's not surprising considering the state of consciousness out of which it has come. So we are stepping out of that, the compulsion to label continuously. And so you move here, you walk through the gardens and along the river.

And what arises is the state that is free of the need to label. And should a label arise in you as you walk, which is a thought, you recognize it as just a thought and not it. And then it arises and passes and you're back in just, and then perhaps another compulsive label comes.

Okay. Okay. And then somebody comes towards you on the path, walking.

And some mental judgment comes in concerning the form of this being. And you recognize it as a thought, no more. You no longer completely believe in it.

You're not completely in it anymore. You allow that to be also. And then, so gaps arise in which there are no labels, in which seemingly you no longer know anything.

And that's why it's a little bit frightening for some people to enter that realm because it seems at first as if you no longer knew. And how can I, I need to know what's going on here. I need to judge it in some way, classify it in some way.

No. And you see how beautiful, powerful, intelligent, and deep that state is of not labeling. And great intelligence operates here, but it is not the limited intelligence of the human mind.

It's only a small aspect of the vastness of intelligence that ultimately you are. This mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive. To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation.

Just to remind you, as I'm sure everybody knows, the quick way of dropping out of thought is to take a conscious breath, which means in, and out. Conscious breath means what? Conscious breath means you observe the inflow and the outflow, not visually, but with your internal attention.

Some people may put their point of observation on the nostrils, but it's probably best to observe the inflow of the air. In other words, to feel it. So you feel yourself breathing.

You're doing it anyway, but usually it's unconscious. If you had to remember to breathe, of course you would die very quickly. Oh, I forgot.

Too late. So conscious means your attention is there. Your attention then follows the breath as it moves into the body, and you feel that.

And it follows the breath as it moves out. That is one conscious breath, in and out. And immediately your attention has disentangled itself from thought, consciousness.

So that's how you can discover inner space immediately. Even one conscious breath means one in, one out. That's one breath takes about, who knows how long it takes, 15 seconds, whatever, 10 seconds, 10, depends on the length of your breath.

You don't need to particularly make it very long or any different. The body is doing it anyway. So you're just observing what's happening anyway.

And you will find, if you're really there, if you're there with your attention at the beginning of the breath, and the middle of the breath, and the end of the breath, and again, the middle of the out-breath, and the end of the out-breath, you're not thinking. So if your attention is really there, you can't think at the same time. That's why it's such a wonderful meditation tool or method.

Of course, it's recommended as a meditation method. Some people practice it for an hour. I'm saying here, you can intersperse your life with many meditations, consisting of one or two conscious breaths.

Those are many meditations you can do anywhere, wherever you are. And that means every time that you do that, you're not thinking. If you're thinking, you're not observing your breath.

It's as simple as that. So, and it's an interesting thing to observe that in yourself when you are, when there is breath awareness, there's no thinking. When there's thinking, there's no breath awareness.

So it's a very simple way of, especially at night when your mind is telling me you absolutely need to think about your problems now, three o'clock in the morning. And if you don't think about your problems now, your life is going to collapse very soon. Don't believe every thought that comes into your head and then say, okay, let's say, let's take a conscious breath.

And then immediately you notice a shift in consciousness because you stepped out of thinking. And that will feel so good that you might want to take another one. And it's not a drug.

It's not another fix. A drug would mean, a drug usually quickly takes you below thinking, but the awareness that we talk about here takes you above thinking. It requires an alertness.

There are certain similarities, of course, between the state below thinking and the state above thinking, but there are huge differences too. So the state below thinking is the state of the, in human terms, a simpleton, a person who is so simple that his or her mind is not creating any problems yet. Just enjoying things as they come, just enjoy eating and drinking, and just like the hobbit in the, and they're lovely, lovable creatures.

They haven't got an ego yet, or just a very rudimentary ego because they haven't been totally absorbed by thinking. So they are in a deeper state of connectedness with being than the mind absorbed person. That's why they can perform important tasks that the more intelligent people cannot perform because the fool, this is the traditional mythological figure of the fool, very important in different mythologies, has certain powers that the more advanced people don't have.

So often the important task is given to the fool to perform because, and this of course is not made explicit, I'm saying it now, because there's an intuitive knowing that the fool is more deeply connected with the source of life and of being. He's not totally lost in thinking yet. But you don't want to become a fool again.

We're here as the awareness of thought means there's an alertness, you rise above thinking. There are some similarities. One is that you're not creating unnecessary problems anymore like the fool, but you've risen above.

There's a much deeper knowing there. There's a same state of connectedness, but you've been through thinking and you're still able to use the tool of thinking without being used by it. That's an enormous step forward in evolution.

But to an external observer, sometimes the fool and the so-called awakened human they can't tell the difference because they both look very simple, they go. And so there are stories about some Zen masters when they had visitors, occasionally they mistook them for, there was one visitor arrived to see a famous Zen master and there was a person working in the garden and he said, where's your master? And he said, in there in that room.

And when he got into that room, the same gardener was sitting on the chair of the master and said, what are you doing on his chair? And then it turned out that the gardener that looked so simple, he was the master. And often, a long time ago, there was this TV series about Kung Fu with Karen D, what?

Karen, David Karen D. That was very well done because the main character was often, and that was part of the attraction of watching it, the main character was often mistaken for somebody weak and totally ineffective because he always, he had no ego. So he moved in a very simple, he just had a bamboo flute or something he carried with him and he always kept, and then he met these huge egos.

He would visit tech places like Texas where they have, the egos are even bigger than, can be, not necessarily, but. And then the meeting of this person who took him to be a fool and only in moments when suddenly action was required, this fearful being would suddenly, enormous energy would flow into him and so to defeat the evil people, whoever they were, but the particular episode, and suddenly the energy would flow through his body and he would go. And then immediately he would go, there's no ego that said, I did it.

Not immediately, no identification with this action, immediately going back to a presence as if nothing had happened. So it's the person who did that, the director or script writer must have had some insights into the state of egolessness. So on conscious breath, out breath, and you rise above thinking, you don't become stupid.

Don't need to fear that. You don't become stupid when you're not thinking. You actually connect with a more powerful intelligence that can then use thought when it's needed.

You only become stupid when you're not thinking, when you're drifting off into sleep or unconsciousness. It's a state of relative torpor or whatever the word is. So when you get tired, a certain torpor, if that's the right word, comes over you and you would go to, and you're not thinking anymore.

That yes, there perhaps you're moving towards a certain state that could be called stupid, but this is very different. You rise above thinking and that is actually, you're connecting with that deeper intelligence that is consciousness itself, the unconditioned consciousness. And then as you make that your habitual place where you dwell, your mind can actually work more effectively because it can be used by that.

It's because you have developed it already. You've had, you developed it, it became an ego. And now you transcend it, which means you don't leave it behind completely.

It's still there to be used effectively, but you cannot use the mind effectively as long as the mind is using you. Then you have an imposter pretending to be you and thinking all kinds of thoughts according to its conditioning, which have nothing to do with you. They're the conditioned thoughts.

They're conditioned by your upbringing, by your environment, by the culture you grew up in. And so on. And so all this continuous stream of thinking that is invested with a sense of self takes over and pretends to be a person.

Well, basically that's what a so-called person kind of is. A conditioned thought activity that is, that has a sense of self in it. So the Buddha already explained all these things.

And that self is an illusion. It's the same self that Jesus tells us to deny, deny thyself, the illusory self that the Buddha said doesn't even exist. Anatta, no self.

I'll take a, so remember the breath many times during the day. And that may take you into also, you begin to feel your body more easily as you take a conscious breath or two, and you feel the inner aliveness in the body. You can take your attention also directly into the body.

It's another way related to breaths because breath takes your attention into the body, but you can focus on the body more. So that's another way of taking attention out of thought. So if you think you can't, your mind won't leave you alone.

I just cannot stop thinking. I must, this is not true. That's just another thought that tells you you can't do it.

So if you believe that thought, then that becomes true for you. But if you realize that thought, you can't do it, I have too much on my mind, or whatever expression you use, I have too much on my plate, which means your mind. Can't do it now, maybe a little later.

Or, of course, it never comes the moment when your mind tells you, okay, now you can stop thinking. But you can, so attention in the body. Immediately you step out.

It can be a choice. There's enough awareness in you to have the choice. There are still millions on the planet whose awareness is not developed enough to even have a choice as far as their inner state is concerned.

They are totally, totally run by their conditioning, totally conditioned entities. So to tell them that they have a choice would be wrong. They don't.

You need to come to a place where there's already a certain degree of awareness. There's already to a limited degree you have separated from thinking and realize there's an aware space and there's my thoughts. Then you begin to have a choice.

And ultimately, of course, everything you express in language is a limited perspective. It's never the entire truth. So whenever anybody says anything, it can never be the complete truth.

You always have to look at other perspectives too. When I say you have a choice, this is what it appears to be. And it's a useful and helpful perspective.

Ultimately, you are not separate from the totality of consciousness. So I might as well say then, consciousness chooses to express itself through you. But to you, it looks as if you had a choice, but you are consciousness.

Let's not confuse it too much because language can complicate things excessively. And don't demand some ultimate truth to be expressed through concepts. Concepts can only point.

The famous finger pointing to the moon, the Buddhists talk about the finger pointing to the moon. Now, usually your dog will think when you point somewhere, the dog will usually look at your finger. I've heard there are some dogs who are advanced enough to look beyond the finger.

I haven't met any yet. So when there's spiritual teaching, when you take a statement and believe in the statement rather than go to where the statement points, then that's mistaking the finger for the moon. There's still, for example, I say, the stillness is already in you.

It's just covered up by mental noise. And then somebody could come and say, I believe that the stillness is already in me. I believe that completely.

Yes, but have you tasted it? No, I just believe it. It's not enough.

That is mistaking the finger for the moon.

[Speaker 3] (3:45:14 - 3:45:50)
Thank you, Eckhart, for waking us all up. My question concerns the cultivation of virtue. I hear many traditions speak about cultivating loving kindness, cultivating compassion.

And in our previous session, I heard you say that loving kindness comes naturally out of presence. So can we cultivate virtues like you practice, and you become it?

[Speaker 1] (3:45:51 - 3:52:03)
Thanks. That term tends to be used a lot in Buddhist teachings, the term cultivate, cultivating virtues. And so in Buddhism, there's a list of nice things that you swallow.

I only know the essential Buddhism. I can't remember the long lists that you get in Buddhism of virtues and so on. I know the basic thing, which undoubtedly is what the Buddha taught is the origin of suffering and the way beyond suffering, that's the Buddha.

I think all the longer lists were compiled at a later stage by monks who wanted to make things more understandable and accessible to other monks, but they were not fully present when they did these long lists, but that's okay. So ultimately, of course, it is better that somebody should at least attempt to cultivate the various virtues, the primary one in Christianity would be, of course, love your neighbor as yourself. That's the primary.

And really, it all boils down to that. In Buddhism, metta, loving kindness towards others is important, but ultimately to cultivate this, it's a wonderful intention and it's better than not trying to cultivate it, but ultimately you won't really succeed unless there's a shift in consciousness in you that is primary. Once there is that shift in consciousness, and this is what our gathering is all about, it's virtually impossible to sustain the virtues for very long from the old state of consciousness because the old state of consciousness is dominated by ego.

And if you want to cultivate the virtues, it's very often a desire of the ego to improve one's self-image, not only for others, but for oneself too, because one wants to feel virtuous. And so the ego feels better if it can convert its sometimes negative self-image into a good one. And so the ego decides, okay, I'm doing this, I'm virtuous now.

But in Christianity, this for hundreds, thousands, 2,000 years, Christians have tried to live, well, not all, many haven't even tried, but to love your neighbor as yourself. Not that many succeeded because I don't believe that Jesus actually said, love your neighbor as yourself. I believe that they took, that was taken out of context.

He said, the kingdom of heaven, which I translate it, as you may remember, as the dimension of formlessness or the dimension of spaciousness is within you. And there's only one thing that matters. There's only one thing that of primary, it was of primary importance.

There may be many other things that are important, but there's only one thing that is of primary importance. And that is to find within you that dimension of consciousness and then live from that dimension of consciousness. And if you live from that dimension of consciousness, then naturally you will love your neighbor as yourself because you recognize your neighbor as essentially one with who you are.

And then you will also love God as yourself because you will then recognize essentially that God is the source of your very being. That's what he said. But perhaps people who wrote it down, they got to the bottom of the page where it said about the kingdom of heaven.

And if you enter the kingdom of heaven, if that's the dimension of consciousness, turn over the page, then you love your neighbor as yourself. And then at some point, the two pages got separated. And so all the virtues arise naturally out of that state of connectedness with being, which is presence, love, benevolence, goodwill towards other human beings, which is all aspects of love.

And whatever else, whatever other virtues, really it all comes down to no longer feeling that acute sense of separation between yourself and other human beings and between yourself and the source of who you are, the source of all life. So as God being the source of all life, the unmanifested source of all life. I'm not, when I use the word God, I'm not speaking of an authority figure, a controlling authority figure, but the source of all life.

So your question was good. I had selected your question. I saw it on a piece of paper and it had been selected for an answer too, but I'm glad you asked it.

[Speaker 7] (3:52:03 - 3:52:03)
Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (3:52:12 - 3:52:29)
This mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive. To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation.

[Speaker 4] (3:53:00 - 3:53:02)
This applies in many cases.

[Speaker 1] (3:53:03 - 3:59:13)
People have, let's say you might feel a sense of lack of something meaningful in your life, or you might feel a sense of lack of feeling that you are not good enough. You are not enough in this world. And some people then come up with, what is it that I want?

And the ego, so I might say, in many young people you have that, you might say, I want to be a famous this or that. I want to be, if you ask young people, because they're always online and doing things in the virtual world, I want to be a famous YouTuber. I want to be a famous, okay.

Now what, let's say somebody says, I want to be a famous YouTuber. That is not good. That is not enough.

You can sit down and then you imagine, I'm a famous YouTuber. And even if you feel the power of beingness, there's still something missing. And what is missing is in the dimension of doing.

Let's say you have the dimension of being. You're rooted in the being and you feel the fullness of life. And then you say, okay, I am, if I meant, I am an influential and famous YouTuber.

I am influential. But what are you doing? Do you have anything to convey to people on YouTube?

Is there anything that you are enthusiastic about? Is there anything that people would love to hear from you or people would find helpful? It's not enough.

The foundation, yes. The foundation is to be rooted in the dimension of being. So that this sense of fullness of life within you here and now.

But then for many things, maybe not for all things, but for many things, you need to also address the dimension of doing. You have the being dimension, but that's the foundation. The doing dimension is, okay, let's come back to the famous.

I want to be a famous YouTuber. Do you have something that you feel enthusiastic about that perhaps other people would appreciate and it would help them? What could it be?

Is it music or singing or information, conveying information or entertaining? Whatever it is. And then you focus on that, develop technical skills because putting things on YouTube, you have skills of editing and cameras, producing videos and enjoy the doing of it.

When you're engaged in the doing of it, this enjoyment of being flows into the doing. And again, do not be attached too much to the outcome. That's very important, but enjoy the doing of it so that the being flows into the being dimension, flows into the doing dimension too.

So you enjoy learning how to produce videos, learning editing, video editing, learning. And then whatever subject matter you have that you feel enthusiastic about that would help the world and other people, then you will learn more about it or you go more deeply into it. And then you begin to practice and it's all a wonderful thing.

And you're not attached to the outcome, but from time to time, then you're able to, from time to time, you go within and you imagine yourself as a famous YouTuber that's reaching hundreds of thousands or millions of people who are being helped or you contribute something to other people's lives by doing whatever it is you're doing. And by doing that, you are a famous YouTuber. Then it's more powerful if you feel that this is already the case.

It's already, I'm already a famous YouTuber. Perhaps for the time being, you only get 20 views per video. It's, that's fine.

That's at the moment, that's all that, that's fine. But even that, you appreciate those 20 views. Great, I've reached 20 people.

And then you go within and again, you feel you're already a famous YouTuber and you're helping. It's not just this image of me as a famous YouTuber. There must be another dimension to it that relates to the world.

How does that affect the world? Whatever you want to achieve, that can be, that empowers you. What does, how do you help?

What does the universe want to manifest through me? When I say universe, I mean the intelligence that pervades the universe, that's behind it all. The universe or the intelligence behind it all.

The divine intelligence behind the phenomenal world. What does it want from me? And maybe it wants me to become a famous YouTuber.

But the most important thing is not the famous.

[Speaker 4] (3:59:13 - 3:59:20)
It's just, what is it that's the energy that's flowing through me?

[Speaker 1] (3:59:28 - 4:14:27)
So you can look at the world wars. You can look at all the terrorism and all the other mad wars that are being fought as just, it's just a question of degrees of unconsciousness. Not different.

So when you go into that state of unconsciousness, it takes you over, you lose it. Basically then, that is the same energy field that has created what we see as the madness of human history and what we see of the madness of the so-called world news. The same energy.

So don't complain about all these violent people who are doing all these dreadful things. All that it is, is human unconsciousness in a more pronounced form than yours or your partners. And so that helps a little bit to find perhaps almost some compassion towards all these crazy people that are doing such crazy things and creating such terrible suffering.

Now, if you become compassionate towards them, don't worry. It doesn't mean that they will not experience the consequences of their unconsciousness. That still happens.

You jump by being compassionate to another human being, you don't necessarily remove the karmic consequences of their action, but you yourself become free from being drawn into the karmic cycle. So the act of forgiveness does not mean that this person is not going to suffer the consequences, but life makes sure in whatever form that they do suffer the consequences of the suffering that they inflict on other human beings. It's a karmic law.

But if you don't want to be part of that anymore, if you want to step out of the karmic law, the first step out of the, and the most important step out of the karmic law is forgiveness. Then you do not feed it, you don't become part of it. That's why traditionally in spiritual teachings of various traditions, forgiveness is always emphasized.

It must be real though. It's, there are many forms of superficial forgiveness when just the mind is, okay, I forgive you. It's not deep, it's not real yet.

The mind is trying to forgive, but you can only forgive if you realize that whatever actions have been perpetrated are the effects of human unconsciousness. In other words, what Jesus said on the cross or is reported to have said, forgive them for they know not what they do. Very profound statement.

It is a profound statement that can be applied to any act of violence perpetrated against other humans or life forms. Forgive them for they know not what they do. Not knowing what they do, of course, means they are unconscious.

The word unconscious probably in that sense wasn't used at the time. So he said, they don't know what they do. Karmic law still operates, but without you.

And you can notice karmic law when you see a movie, some movies like to manipulate your emotions. And so there are particular types of movies where they first, they build up the tension by showing you some very evil person. And this evil person is killing all these people or hurting all these people.

And then you're being manipulated to feel that incredible pull that this person should suffer for what he or she has done. That's the manipulation. And the audience loves that.

They love watching things like that. So then the emotion builds up. And finally, there are even some movies like the movies about vigilantes who take justice in their own hands because the justice system doesn't deal with the criminals anymore.

So finally you have this guy who goes out and kills all the bad guys. And your emotions have been manipulated so much that the audience says, yes, yes, he must die. Not realize, no, what you are feeling this incredible, it might also happen if you read about some dreadful crime that somebody has committed.

And then if you read it on the internet, you can read on some news websites, you can read the comment section. And in the comment section, every other comment says, we should have the death penalty. He needs to sit in electric chair.

He needs to be done to what he did, they should do to him and all these. And this is an enormous pressure that people feel inside. And this is connected to karmic law because there's a compensatory factor in karmic law.

And you can feel that as the pressure inside you, but it keeps you trapped in karma. So in that sense, watching these movies is not helpful because it keeps you trapped in that wheel of karma. So they don't teach forgiveness there.

So this is, we are talking about something very important and that is dealing with human unconsciousness and what looks like evil. So there are many things that are quite dreadful. So how do we, how does that affect our state of consciousness?

And what role does our state of consciousness play in this whole scenario? It does have a role to play. So it's for us important that we are no longer part of action and reaction because the definition of karma is action.

Karma means action and reaction. And it goes on and on. And as you can see in certain societies and so on, the karmic thing goes back centuries and centuries, the same grievance transmitted from one generation to the next and the next and the next, and they are all asleep.

This is why spiritual teachings say you are asleep. They are all so unconscious, they get taken over by the collective mental emotional pattern and the mental story. They just inherit it from their parents and then they pass it on to their children.

And then they, and each generation suffers. They suffer, they call much suffering great for each other. And at some point, the suffering becomes almost unbearable for certain people within that society.

And that's beginning of a shift when it gets too much. So suffering drives humans to a point of awakening. That's a strange paradox here is the suffering is created by the unconsciousness in humans, but in some strange way, eventually it wakes you up, it awakens you.

That's the redeeming feature behind the suffering that humans create for each other. Eventually it leads to a spiritual awakening. So it all is a good thing to realize it all comes down to your state of consciousness and how you relate to the people around you.

And that spreads, that is what creates the world. And even how you react to when you listen to the world news has certain influence because all human minds are connected at a deeper level. So the way in which you react to what you hear on the world news contributes either to the unconsciousness.

If you get on your computer or the iPad and you type in, this guy does not deserve to live. He should die slowly and they should torture him. Then you become part of the same karma.

If you've ever done that, please forgive yourself. And if you enjoy reading those comments, also forgive yourself. This mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive.

To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation. The greatest mystery of the universe is not out in outer space, the mysteries of the galaxies, the mysteries of the black holes, the billions of galaxies that exist, that it is phenomenal, it's unbelievable. And the greatest mystery is not on the atomic level, which is also unbelievable, the world that is there, the atomic and subatomic level that scientists explore, which we only understand a tiny fragment of, just as we only understand the tiniest of fragments of what is out there.

So you have the two realms, the two mysteries, the outer space, and then the macrocosm, and you have the microcosm. And people write books, great scientists write books about the mysteries of the universe. And the amazing thing is, many of these books, very good books, fail to mention one word.

They explore the mysteries of the universe, but there's one word, you can have a whole book on the mysteries of the universe, either the macrocosm or the microcosm or the two together. The one word that's not mentioned is consciousness, which is the foremost fundamental mystery, the fact that the universe is conscious. That is the most amazing miracle.

How do I know that the universe is conscious? Well, I am conscious, you are conscious. The universe is conscious in us.

The universe is experiencing itself for a brief moment as a human being. It's also experiencing itself for brief moments as a plant or an animal. And that's an amazing thing.

Now, scientists are probably never going to figure out what consciousness is, if it's even possible to figure out what consciousness is, because scientists is concerned with looking out there. You can either look out into outer space or you look into the most, the innermost of matter. But what scientists don't look at is their own consciousness, which is the universe looking at itself.

Oh. Oh. Oh.

[Speaker 7] (4:14:33 - 4:14:33)
Oh.

[Speaker 3] (4:15:22 - 4:15:25)
I am, I go to bed with you at night.

[Speaker 7] (4:15:32 - 4:15:35)
It's very nice to see you here in person.

[Speaker 3] (4:15:39 - 4:16:19)
So I'm here asking a question for several people. We were all praying that I would get chosen so I could ask this question. We're just curious.

Do you still experience moments of losing, losing it, losing consciousness? For example, if someone cuts you off in traffic, the person who called you or said, slow driver, the story you gave, bad driver. Do you ever still experience yourself losing it and what is that like for you and calling yourself back?

[Speaker 1] (4:16:20 - 4:19:31)
No, in those cases I don't. I'm just fine, it doesn't affect me at all. But sometimes I don't, there are emotions.

They can come when I see violence inflicted on humans or animals. I can experience weeping. There are, sometimes when I see human suffering, there is an emotion.

It doesn't last very long, it passes through. But there's no reaction to those things, traffic or humans. I think people who have worked with me can probably tell me if I'm wrong because when you work with somebody, then you get to know them, especially when things need to get done.

So there's a fairly constant sense of presence, but it's not always the same intensity of presence. The intensity of presence varies. It can be, it sometimes recedes into the background, and then more of my attention is taken up with the foreground.

I have to deal with this and this and this, and the attention goes there, and there's just this kind of background presence, like a humming, like an alm in the background, and here things happen. But then times, because I love doing nothing, and I do that quite often. And then sometimes presence comes completely, so the person is virtually obliterated, and there's just consciousness.

In teaching situations, for lack of a better word, like this, the person is not really here. It's not the person who is teaching. It's consciousness.

It's using the vehicle of the person. It's using the mind of the person in order to manifest this. So in a teaching situation, there is just consciousness.

Eckhart is only the frame or the window frame, but the light comes from somewhere else, the light that comes through the window. Yes, there are degrees of intensity of presence, but it's always there, either obliterating Eckhart or in the background, and then the person deals with things as best he can.

[Speaker 3] (4:19:32 - 4:19:41)
And did that come after you had your experience of awakening? Was it like that from the very beginning, or did that come with your practice?

[Speaker 1] (4:19:43 - 4:41:38)
Well, the peace was there, has been there since then, but there has been an integration of that into life that took longer so that it went into every aspect of my life. I was still deluded in some ways, even after the shift happened, because the personality was still working, and I still thought at that point my destiny was to be in the academic world, and I continued to pursue a PhD, not knowing that it was no longer what I was meant to do. The personality still had a momentum, and went on with that for a few years.

There were also times after that when a few times I could feel the pull of suffering in the form of the mind tugging me, like occasionally went like, come this way, come and suffer. And what that did was, there was an intensification of presence suddenly when that happened, so then it went, so I'm not going that way. And so suddenly the light went up, and then a few more times it happened, and, come, be unhappy.

You have so many reasons to be unhappy, don't you remember? Now, if you, any mind can, if you want to remember reasons for being unhappy, I'm sure everybody here could do that. I could, even now I could.

Reasons for being unhappy, anybody can do that if you allow that kind of thought to take over your mind, and then confuse it with reality, a story, a sad story in the head. So a few times the mind tried, but didn't get very far. And then another shift came to a deeper level when I started to work with people, because that required a further deepening.

Working with people required a further deepening, especially people who were in suffering. And I noticed that when I started seeing individuals who came, often very unhappy people or suffering people, or people who were suffering from serious illness or had great loss, and I noticed whenever I sat in front of these people and listened to their story, I would go into a very deep state of presence, deeper than I'd experienced before, very deep and intense presence. And some of those people, if they were sensitive enough, it happened several times, they stopped and said, what, you're doing something.

I wasn't doing anything. Yeah, you're doing something. One lady said she was a former nun in the Catholic monasteries and became, after 15 years, became very unhappy because she hadn't found God.

And so then she came to me looking for God, but of course she was looking for herself, the deepest source of her being. And I was sitting, listening to her, and then she said, oh, you're doing healing. You're healing me.

I said, oh, because I didn't know that I was doing that. And for a while, because I didn't, at the time I wasn't, didn't fully understand the consciousness and the process, it just was there, but I didn't understand it. I thought I was a healer suddenly.

And then she sent me some people who wanted just physical healing. But I noticed when people who just wanted physical healing, I didn't go that deep at all. It's only people who are ready for a deeper transformation, then I would go very deep.

And then when groups happened again, a deepening happened again of a different kind, because a group is a different energy field again. So there was a deepening there that was somewhat different kinds, it's hard to describe. But my great learning was with individual people, spiritual counseling, also the words that came out of that deep state of connectedness, surprised me many times.

I know that some of you have already had similar experiences when people came to you with problems and you were able to just be still and listen. And then you found yourself saying some words that were just right. But there are always two parts of that.

One is the words and one is the energy field that's behind the words. And sometimes words are not even necessary in a situation like that. So there was a process, and then later the teachings became a book.

And there itself, the writing of the book was another way of connecting with presence and allowing presence to use this mind to express itself through. It's a long adventure of ways in which presence manifests it through this vehicle as it is for you. Nobody can predict in what ways presence will flow through you and manifest through you, but it is doing it already and it will.

Who knows what situations you go into and become a healing influence in those situations. You are meant to do that, to be there, because the universe needs that. The evolutionary impulse behind the universe is behind you.

It wants you to go through that transformation and then be the agent for transformation in this world. So that is our common destiny. Thank you.

This mind-made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive. To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation. When you go out into nature and you see something extraordinarily beautiful like a sunset, and it's a moment of intense aliveness and you feel that was such a beautiful moment.

Why? Because that freed you from the incessant stream of thinking. I don't know if you're familiar with the famous Zen story that the, I mean, everybody knows a bit about Zen.

Well, for many people, Zen means simplicity of interior design or whatever. But that's not what Zen is. It was not created by an interior designer.

There was a story about a man comes to the Zen master and he's a university professor who has studied all the Zen scriptures and all the other Buddhist scriptures. And so he comes to the famous master and the master says, sit down, please. And the professor says, well, I've started it all, but I want to hear from you also what really Zen is.

Can you explain the essence to me? And the master was making tea. So the master was, there was the cup, the professor's cup, and the master took a teapot and started pouring tea into his cup.

And he didn't stop pouring. And then the tea overflowed and the professor was looking and saying, stop, stop, can't you see the cup is overflowing? And the master said, well, just like this overflowing cup, you are full of your opinions, viewpoints, knowledge, and speculations.

How can I teach you Zen unless you first empty your cup? That was his main lesson. How can I teach you Zen unless you first empty your cup?

So the cup here stands for the full cup, the cup that's overflowing with stuff refers to the clutter of your mind, the incessant thought stream of your mind, the accumulated clutter, the incessant repetitive thought stream. And that and the personality that I talk about, the personal identity and the thought stream are really go together. So you are familiar with that.

Now the difference between you and a unawakened person is that you know that there's a voice in your head. There's still millions of people out there who don't know that there's a voice in their head that never stops speaking because they are so identified with the voice that they have become it. There is no separation.

There is no awareness. There is no presence. Their entire consciousness is trapped in thought.

And that is the state of being trapped in your personality. So every thought that comes into your head immediately grabs you and possesses you and you're so identified with it that you believe in every thought that comes into your head and that's how it is. The simplest thing, the simplest thing, you don't see it clearly.

You see it through the thinking, veil of thinking, which is conditioned by your past, your culture, your upbringing, the country you grew up in, the culture, the society, the family, your personal circumstances, your collective circumstances determines the type of thinking that has you in its grip that varies from person to person and culture to culture. But the basic mechanism behind it is the same. They are all in the grip of the unobserved mind that is invested with a sense of self.

Every thought has a sense of self in it. This is what the word identify means. You identify with every thought that comes into your head and you believe in every thought that comes into your head.

This is the case if there's no awareness whatsoever, then that is your fate. Then awareness is the dormant faculty, presence, awareness, whatever you want to call it. That's the dormant faculty in you.

It's still dormant. And as long as it's completely dormant, you're totally in the grip of your conditioned personality and your conditioned mind. You are basically possessed.

It thinks through you. It acts through you. It is an energy field that has you in its grip and you don't even know it because you think you are it.

And for many, the beginning of spiritual awakening is to realize that there is this stream of continuous commentary in their minds. And that is the thing. Oh, that's interesting.

That's a thought, of course. But before the thought, that's interesting. There's the recognition.

It's the voice in the head. And the recognition is not the voice in the head, although you might say it after the recognition. But in the moment of recognizing there's a voice in the head, that's not a thought.

The recognition of thought is not a thought. The recognition of thought comes through awareness or presence. And awareness or presence is the higher consciousness, the arising new consciousness.

Wow. So that is really the meaning of spiritual awakening. By the way, in this first half of our gathering, I will be talking more about it.

In the second half, we will do more experiential. But even while I talk about it here, I would hope that if it works for you, there's already also an experiential realization of what it is I'm talking about. So there's the voice.

There's the voice in the head. And people say things like, I think. They don't think, because thinking is not a voluntary action for them.

So it's a delusion to even say, I think. You don't think. You are being thought by thought.

You are created by thought. There's that energy field. It's amazing.

So the master said, how can I teach you Zen unless you first empty your cup? Now that's a huge demand. If I'm full of clutter, mental clutter, how am I going to empty my cup?

I would immediately be enlightened if I could empty my cup. But the teaching points to something. It points to the word empty.

And that's interesting. That is an important word in Buddhism. And I don't think it's a good translation.

Who first came up with it? I don't know. In the 19th century, the Europeans started to translate ancient texts from Sanskrit.

And one person came up with a translation, probably of the Sanskrit terms sunyata, and translated it as emptiness. That doesn't sound so nice. It sounds like something missing or something like that.

So I have an alternative translation for the Buddhist term emptiness. So that empty is an important word. So remember, the Zen master said, how can I teach you Zen unless you first empty your cup?

Empty. Emptiness, my alternative translation for that is spaciousness. Spaciousness is a dimension of consciousness in you.

And that is what we could call the spiritual dimension of consciousness, the deeper or the higher consciousness, just words, doesn't matter. And that is, in every human, it's there. Many don't know that it's there because the clutter is so dense that they have no realization of the underlying spaciousness.

And that is why I say, in millions of humans, that is still a dormant faculty, so to speak. So the most important realization in your life, much more important than what you have achieved on the level of the world, whether your life in worldly terms is regarded as a huge success or a dismal failure, or for most of you, probably something in between. That's normal.

Sometimes you fail. Sometimes you succeed. Sometimes you move from gaining, losing, high, low, up and down.

That's the identity for most. So the clutter of your mind is there, but there are moments in your life when you become aware of something spacious underneath it. But you may not call it that.

You may not call it anything. It may arise, for example, in many humans who may never have heard of anything spiritual. They're still out there.

They don't know that a little bit of that is in them. But they don't know it. Little glances come occasionally into their lives of that dimension.

It's not enough to actually say that the spiritual dimension has awakened in them, but little flashes come up now and then into their lives. And that is enough. Those little flashes from that dimension come into their lives, and that is enough to keep many people sane.

And those flashes can come when they're... You might think when you go out into nature and you see something extraordinarily beautiful like a sunset, for a moment you go, ah, or the vastness of the ocean, or the sky, or the elements, the wind, the storm, and for a moment you go, ah, and it's a moment of intense aliveness and you feel, and then you may remember that moment a little later, that it was such a beautiful moment. Why was it?

Yes, maybe what you perceived was beautiful, but you felt something in that moment. You felt a heightened sense of aliveness and a deep peace and connectedness with being, so to speak. Why?

Because that moment of sense perception of something vast or beautiful freed you for a moment from the incessant stream of thinking. So the incessant stream of thinking, let's say you see this vast, this incredible sunset or whatever, and for a moment you give it your complete attention, and for a moment you're not thinking about yourself, your problems, your problematic life history, or your even more problematic future. Actually, you're not thinking about anything.

For a moment, the stream of thinking subsides, and it goes, and that is without knowing it, you have a little flash that's come up from that dimension, and then the next moment, it may come up a few days later again, when you look into the eyes of a baby, one year old, maybe just in the street or in a cafe, and the baby looks at you, and the baby is one year old, and the eyes are like the baby's. And you know instinctively that the baby is not thinking about you, because thinking hasn't started yet. The words have not accumulated yet, the thoughts haven't started yet, and yet there's a consciousness there, and you can see very clearly there's an intense consciousness that's looking through those eyes at you, without judging you in any way.

And in that moment, for just a few seconds, you feel so good.

[Speaker 7] (4:41:40 - 4:41:41)
And you say, ahhh.

[Speaker 1] (4:41:43 - 4:42:53)
Why do you feel so good? Because at that moment, the baby liberated you from your stream of thinking. And again, a little bit of spaciousness opened up inside you.

For those few seconds when you looked into the eyes of the baby, you were not thinking. And the baby wasn't thinking. So through the baby, you are able to be in that dimension, and it felt so good.

And yet, spontaneously, they can arise. They're not recognized by people as ultimately spiritual, but they are. And so, many people, there are millions of people who experience those things briefly, but that's enough to give you a sense still of life is worth living.

And then there are others who are so burdened by their minds, they cannot even communicate with the baby. They cannot even perceive the beauty of nature anymore, because their mind is so noisy that they never... There's a total veil.

So they don't look at the baby like... They look at the baby, oh, that's a nice baby. They don't really see the baby.

[Speaker 4] (4:42:54 - 4:42:56)
Immediately, it's labeled.

[Speaker 1] (4:43:21 - 5:11:41)
Keith Baker asks, I have owned the audio version of The Power of Now for over 10 years, but I feel that I still get stuck around my pain body. There must be something very seductive about it, as I feel like I spend a lot of time in negative thoughts, like, what's the point? And, you'll never get past this, so why even try?

Which can lead to feelings of hopelessness and depression. I've read that emotions generate chemical compounds in the brain, which can be addictive, like drugs, so that it's possible to be addicted to negative thinking in a sense, and I think I suffer from that addiction. Do you have any insights as to how to break free and above the summary of the process for dealing with a pain body on page 33 of your book?

Laughter Laughter Laughter Let me just visualize my book. Laughter Laughter It's not working. Laughter Laughter It is true that negative thinking can be very addictive.

From my point of view, it is not caused by the chemical that's generated in the brain, although I do not deny that the chemicals in the body very often reflect certain things that happen on the mental-emotional level, but what comes first, the chicken or the egg? So if you become very angry, of course there are certain chemicals that are released in the body, and if you become peaceful, then they go. The addiction is not in the chemical, although I don't deny that there is a chemical component to emotional states, but it is the addiction to negative thinking, and the addiction to negative thinking is usually connected to the pain body, which is the emotional field that feels fed, fueled by the negative thinking.

So addiction means it feels, on some level, it feels good. If you're addicted to something, on some level, it feels good. If you're addicted to alcohol, the drinking feels good while you drink, not afterwards, but while you drink.

So if you're addicted, to whom does it feel good? Not to you, not to the physical body, because the physical body suffers through it, but to the pain body. This emotion loves to get more of the same energy by generating further negative thinking in your mind, and it feeds on it, because it doesn't get enough food through the drama in your relationship.

Either you don't have one, or your partner doesn't cooperate enough. So how this you are aware of these negative thoughts that you mentioned that are repetitive and happen frequently. You give two examples.

One is you'll never get past this, so why even try? And what's the point? That's another one.

And there are probably others. So you are aware of these thoughts, but it seems that you are not aware in the moment that these thoughts arise. You are aware retrospectively.

After the thoughts, you realize, oh, there was that thought again. The question is whether there's enough presence in you to be aware in the moment, or immediately after, a thought of that kind arises to notice it, to notice also its futility, to notice its repetitiveness, to notice its pointlessness, its untruths, to notice that you don't want it, because you don't want it. When you notice it, you are the awareness, and you as the awareness don't want it.

The pain body wants it. So the awareness has to come in so that you break the link between your pain body and your thought processes. That is the key, is to sever the link between your thought processes and the pain body.

In order to sever the link between those, there needs to be enough awareness, presence. Only the presence can sever the link. The presence comes in, and so you no longer, the emotion is no longer controlling your thought activity.

That's the key. And that's the beginning of the end of that vicious circle that otherwise will take over your life. So, what is needed is for you to be there in the moment these thoughts occur, or immediately after.

And then immediately look at the thought and say, there it's again. And do not believe it. You know, some of you, or many of you might know, Byron Katie's work, and Byron Katie's work questions your thoughts, and that's a wonderful thing, so that you no longer believe every thought that comes into your head.

What's the point if you believe it? So what's the point? It's not working anyway.

Nothing works in my life. It's never, never has anything worked in my life. I remember these thoughts I used to have in my 20s, and even in my teenage years, for a long many years.

One of my favorite thoughts was bad things always happen to me, of course. Bound to happen to me. It's always to me.

Always bad things happen to me. And the strange thing is, they always did. There was one, my early awakening, an awakening, not the real awakening, an episode, an awakening episode I had, which actually to some extent already transformed my life in my teenage years, when I was 17.

And already, in my 20s I was unhappier even, especially the second half, but well, first half too. But But in my teenage years I was still, I had such thoughts like, of course bad things always happen to you. And there was a lot of anger and resentment about life.

And the first awakening came when a woman, we were living in, I was living in Spain with my dad, and a woman left some books with us. She was going back to her country. German books.

And she said, can I leave these with you? I'll pick them up again next year when I come back. She never came back.

And so we had these books. We didn't have many books. I started reading them.

And they were books by a spiritual teacher in a German, Swiss German, or German spiritual teacher. And for the first time I read that your thoughts have something to do with what you create in your life. And that was almost, my mouth opened in astonishment.

And at the time I was teaching myself to type on a typewriter. Of course there were no computers. So I had this old typewriter and I used his texts, the most important parts I copied as part of my typing practice, how your thinking, you manifest through your thinking, you manifest outer reality and how you can change outer reality through changing your thinking.

And I practiced it and it worked. My greatest desire was to leave home. And a year later an opportunity opened up for me to go to England.

And it would never have happened if I had not I know it was the result of practicing changing my thoughts. So that was one wonderful opening. And then I was fine for a while and then gradually I forgot about it and for other reasons more and more happiness, unhappiness, accumulated again.

But that was a temporary breakthrough, amazing realization. So be there when the thoughts happen, recognize they're pointless, they're futile, they're painful, I don't want them, I don't need them, they have no purpose whatsoever. So Byron Katie approaches thoughts by asking, is it true?

So whatever people say is that true? And in most cases say, well, do you know it to be true? There's no point.

Is that true? Yeah, it's true. Do you really know it to be true?

No, I don't know if there's no point or not. So it kind of diffuses the power of thought over you by asking the question it kind of it's like taking the valve out of an inflatable toy by asking, do I really know the thought is and you pull out the stopper and it goes Do I really know this to be true? No, not really.

So You and Krishnamurti both talk about the importance of choiceless awareness directly confronting what is without judgment. You also talk about the primacy of presence as the way to transcend thought the improper use of which is the cause of our suffering. Another teaching respected by many celebrates thought and desire as being responsible for our evolution and the expansion of the universe.

While both teachings have much in common this appears to be an important point of departure that I cannot reconcile. Can you help clarify? Is that the same Jeff who asked the previous question?

Anyway doesn't matter. It's only one consciousness so So there seems to be basically two teachings he says and many people have asked similar question. One is accept what is choiceless awareness, presence the other one is using thought to create to manifest to transform Are they separate?

Can they be reconciled? As I mentioned the other day the two represent the two movements of the universe. One is into creation multiplicity increasing complexity of life forms.

It experiences itself as that It loves to create that's for sure because if you look around even on this planet alone how many life forms there are all perceiving the universe in a different way or saying the universe, the one consciousness perceiving itself through all these different forms in different ways. You could call it a dream, you could call it reality it doesn't matter. These are just words and so and then the universe also wants to know its own source and that's the return movement.

First there's the outbound movement and then there's the return movement. This might correspond to the big bang what scientists call which the universe came out of nothing nobody knows what that is it started from nothing and suddenly it expanded and went into creativity and my forms began to multiply over billions of years and then the story goes some scientists say and even in ancient Hindu mythology and others there's a story that eventually it will come together again and return to the one.

In that case it would be like the in-breath and the out-breath of God the entire universe God breathes out and the and then it all returns back to the source for some reason that we could not even fathom and even if we even start thinking about it what might the reason be you would never find it through the conceptual mind but that seems to correspond to what we do because we have a heart that also goes and we also breathe in and breathe out and we also wake up in the morning and do all our activities and at night time we go and then we go now everything is reflected on every level you are a microcosm of the entire universe so if you observe yourself you observe how the heart works, how the breathing operates how the sleep and wakefulness dreamless sleep dream state the so-called wakeful state which is not that wakeful for most people but here we have similar there may be certainly is a similar pattern everywhere so I'm talking about this because this is how the two movements are reconciled the universe needs both it needs the creativity it needs also the stillness and for humans it's not enough to go unconsciously to the source it's our destiny because it's the destiny of the universe to consciously unite with source, source consciousness and that's why we are here so your life needs to be a balance a dance between creating and not getting lost in your creations what is the motivation for creation if you are already accepting of the present moment if you feel completely at one with the is-ness of the present moment there are two two reasons why you take action here one may be as a response to a situation that requires action so certain situations somebody may need help you can be, you can sit at ease contemplating nature and suddenly there is a human being who says oh help me do you sit there and say no I'm too at ease in the present moment laughter so a situation you respond to whatever the situation the present moment requires you to do you respond from within I was in the lucky position when I was a teenager we lived in I lived with my dad in Spain for a few years and he had gone to Spain to drop out and lead an alternative life and then he ran out of money and then when I was there we had so little money we had not even a fridge I mean almost everybody had a fridge but there in the hot summer in Spain no fridge, no radio no television of course you wouldn't even think of it laughter so basically just the minimum and I wasn't dreadfully unhappy because of that to some extent I accepted it because I was still young enough children find it perhaps easier to accept situations that they go into but normally if I lived in a place like that now I have no fridge I have only basic things to live with, things get I can't buy anything in advance I have to go shopping everyday because everything goes off immediately I'd rather move than be here and you can be you can accept that this is where I am right now it can still be fine but you would start looking I'd like to live somewhere else you see this situation has certain it can have a preference and why not have a preference everybody has a preference some buddhists might talk to you about or some masters say I have no preference whatsoever but they live in an ashram so they'd rather be in an ashram than be on wall street and work there so there must be some preference so this is one thing dealing with responding to situation and having preferences and then taking action another one is bringing about something entirely new into this world and that comes when you are able to become still enough so that you know what the universe or the one consciousness wants you to do if it wants you to do something it may take a while before you know that I lived for years doing relatively little except doing occasional counseling sessions sometimes only two a week and the years passed and I was just continuously just in presence on my bicycle chopping wood carrying water and the years passed and I spent hours in thoughtless awareness in London sitting on a hamstead heath three hours later I go home having a little salad and then having a counseling session at five could live on one person a day one counseling session a day and I wondered, my mind wondered sometimes there must be something else that I'm supposed to do and there was even slight moments of what am I doing here but there was nothing else to do than be present and just be go back to hamstead heath sit there again but there were long periods also of incredibly blissful states that people noticed even people who were not tuned into spirituality particularly say I can feel something, what is that there were great states emanation of peace but I wasn't doing anything it was just that emanation sometimes waiters and waitresses occasionally went to little restaurants they felt something but still nothing, the universe still wasn't telling me what I was supposed to do and I believe the decisive change came perhaps I should have thought of that earlier there was a I was in I had moved out of London to Somerset and lived in Glastonbury the spiritual mecca that attracts all kinds of weird people including myself and just outside there was a village just a few miles out of Glastonbury I would sometimes go there like the English villages they have their ancient church sometimes a thousand years old a few houses around it there was an oak tree I would go to an ancient oak tree in the middle of the field magnificent and I had a wonderful relationship with that tree but that church that was always empty I went into that church and one day I went in and suddenly I had this impulse to say I want acceleration now I want I knew there was something for me to do I clearly demanded acceleration of my life purpose and then I went home again and for maybe three months two or three months nothing happened I'd forgotten about it already and then one day it came it came when I woke up and I suddenly I knew as a thought and a deeper knowing I have to move to the west coast of North America why? I don't know it wasn't just one day it stayed the next day it was still there the next week it was still there and then finally I had to leave couldn't not leave if I had not left I would have died so that was the first step in writing The Power of Now because I needed to be in the energy field of the west coast for some reason to write it and that's how the book started a few weeks after arriving on the west coast it started and then the acceleration it came more and more and then it became so much that I almost wanted to put the brake on but it was the power just grew and grew but it came because for years I went so deep within that eventually the outer movement into creation the outward creation reflected the depths of years of going within into just into stillness and deep into stillness so the outward creation reflected the inward movement it was as powerful out there as it was the power that was in the inward movement so you too will find that the more you align yourself with the essence the stillness within the unconditioned consciousness the more the power will there might be a time gap but hopefully not as many years as in my case there may be a time gap but the power that is within you that you sense when you become aware of yourself as the consciousness then flows through you and that is what creates through you not the little ego anymore so you don't create because you think when I achieve this or that I'm going to be happy and fulfilled no the happiness something deeper than happiness the fulfillment is already here now the true creation cannot come out of a neediness that's egoic creation that doesn't make you happy whatever you create eventually either will not satisfy you or make you unhappy that comes out of a neediness the egoic creation believes I need to attract something to me I need to attract that into my life the non-egoic creation that consciousness uses you as an instrument uses this form as an instrument comes out of the inner fullness so the creation comes from within to without it creates the outward from within rather than needing to attract something from the outside although in language you might sometimes express it that way you might say I attracted this or that person into my life but really it's the other way around you can only create out of this fullness that you sense when you are in touch with presence so if you discover within yourself that a lot of the time you are in a state of lack of insufficiency, of not enough and you feel that the answer to the remedy is to be active in this world and achieve and do as much as possible then you'll probably find that ultimately that is not the answer to your state of lack in order to transcend, to go beyond your state of lack, of neediness, of not enough spiritual practice and spiritual realization is necessary focus on the realization of being it's only there that you can go beyond that state of lack which is ego go within and discover who or what you are beyond the person

[Speaker 4] (5:12:07 - 5:12:09)
so if you focus on

[Speaker 1] (5:12:09 - 5:41:48)
the awakening whether you are conscious at any moment, the important thing in any situation that you encounter in your life is the state of consciousness with which you meet that situation what is the state of consciousness in which you face whatever situation arises in the present moment that determines the next thing, how it's going to go on in the next moment, in the next, how do you what is, how do you perceive react to this, whatever is arising in this moment so whatever is arising in this moment the situation that arises they come and go, different situations arise is always maybe important, but it's of secondary importance, more important is your state of consciousness now if you could remember only that and live that that's really all you need so whenever you encounter any situation realize what's my state of consciousness right now, and there's a situation that perhaps you need to deal with, perhaps you need to take action right now, perhaps there's nothing you can do and you have to leave it alone, we don't know, but what is your state of consciousness in the present moment, vital question and in order to answer that question, and it doesn't really have a conceptual answer because you immediately know whether you are present or not that question can help you become present what is my state of consciousness right now maybe are there certain thoughts that are happening, that are telling you that something is very wrong emotions that are telling you that something is wrong there are certain thoughts that tell you you'd rather be somewhere else very common thing it's so common people don't realize it, some people live almost continuously as if they were longing to be somewhere else, but not here and now to get away from here and now this isn't right there's something not right never, and occasionally it seems right, ah I have arrived whatever it is that makes it right for a moment, it's an illusion I'm in love this is the completion of my life I've fallen in love there's a person who's going to complete me when you go to a restaurant and observe other people sitting at various tables you can tell if they're a couple sitting at a table you can tell whether their relationship is relatively recent they haven't known each other for very long they're in that state that they call falling in love the way they interact is very different from those who have been in a relationship for longer or are married the ones that have just met have fallen in love, they are in a kind of state of delusion you can see it in their eyes everybody's playing their part it's a theatrical performance but they don't know it that comes to an end the latest when they start living together then the essence of all this is awakening the awakened state of consciousness and as I mentioned earlier not surprisingly this term awakening has been used over thousands of years since the time of the Buddha and before the essence of the teaching of the Buddha is to awaken the word Buddha itself means to be awake, the one who is awake the Sanskrit root of the word is to be awake Buddha is not a name of a person it describes a state of consciousness and then go to Jesus and there are quite a few parables that talk about not going to sleep about staying awake and these are not these are parables they are not to be taken literally obviously you cannot tell a person stay awake because eventually of course he will go to sleep so we are just using this analogy of awake and asleep in order to point to something that most humans are not yet familiar with to quote Jesus again from one of the gospels he said and this is quite a bit of what we read about Jesus teaching may not be quite what he said or distorted but a few things I can sense are absolutely literally what he said a few things here and there for example he said and what I say to you I say to all stay awake was that the Buddha or Jesus? no it was Jesus oh no he is not talking about the normal state of wakefulness nobody could stay awake for that long because there is something that pulls you into sleep so we are not talking about that we are using that as an analogy everybody knows what it means to awaken in the morning when you have been asleep which is a particular state of consciousness you are asleep and in sleep you have dream state and you have dreamless sleep you have those two and then you wake

up you awaken in the morning and there is a huge difference between the state of sleep and the state of being awake everybody experiences that every morning suddenly you open your eyes oh completely different world you have just awakened it is a different state of consciousness so this analogy is used because there is something in ordinary consciousness normal human consciousness which really should be called unconsciousness normal human consciousness could also be described as a kind of sleep because it is totally conditioned by the past are there specific suggestions for cerebral helpers physicians, therapists etc.

to help us become present and stop thinking to listen better just prior to encounter taking deep breath prior to entering patient room perhaps so what suggestions for cerebral helpers I mentioned, I talked about that a little bit couple of days ago people who use a lot of knowledge in their work with others so if you are a certain type of spiritual healer then you would most probably not apply your conceptual mind in the healing situation but if you are physician then you have to apply your knowledge to the healing situation acquired over many years and so just to remind you what I said a couple of days ago or three days ago you need to be able to still use whatever modality you use your knowledge, apply it but see if you can also have your, the application of your knowledge interspersed with little spaces of aware presence sometimes that happens when you listen to whatever the patient is telling you sometimes it may happen when you look at the patient sometimes it may happen when you place attention on a particular symptom and you might notice before you come to a conclusion about whatever the condition of this patient may be there is a moment when you are looking at the patient or at the presenting symptoms and there is a moment perhaps of three seconds when there is no thinking yet anybody to look at something first, in the first moment of looking at something you are not yet thinking most people miss that completely they don't realize that for the first two or three seconds when you are looking at a patient, let's call him a patient, client, whatever you are looking and before the before the mind begins to, the application of its knowledge to the situation there is a space of just aware looking and that many people do that without knowing it at all it's a natural thing to do, there is a moment of space but if you are aware of that moment of space of looking then it becomes a little deeper and longer it goes and that is you become aware of what already you are doing naturally without knowing it when you become aware of it it actually deepens and it might get a little bit longer instead of looking for three seconds you might look for five seconds before the mind comes in and that's ok, this is what this person needs and I need to do this, this, this and this is interesting whenever you encounter a new situation and not just let's take it beyond the therapeutic situation whenever you encounter a new person, comes into your field of vision, you are walking you are going around a corner a new vista opens up anything somebody is knocking at your door you open the door and then you look who is standing there and for the first two seconds there is no thinking, you need to take it in fast you need to take in the sense perception so naturally in daily life people have the tiniest moments when they are not thinking and there is always something something new arises in your field of consciousness and in the first few moments or in the first moment there is not yet an interpretation of it, there is only an absorbing it if you find you are particularly peaceful or at ease then you find there are longer periods when you are out in nature then you spend longer periods perhaps five seconds looking at a tree before your mind says anything and you go oh, this is so nice be aware in your daily life of the first, whenever something new comes into your field of vision there will be a moment when you are just aware of it and usually the mind tries to come in as quickly as possible because it does not like the specific mind does not like to be in a state of not knowing what is going on it needs to adopt some kind of position towards what you are seeing what you are perceiving so as quickly as possible it wants to come in with some kind of judgment or interpretation I need to know if you become aware of these naturally arising moments of presence that are very very brief then you can they will be there consciously and if they are there consciously they naturally become a little bit longer and there is a deeper awareness so catch those things in your daily life they will be there every time something new arises you need to look first and there is that space before the mind steps in and if you are a deep person so to speak then that space that precedes thinking is longer then you become a deeper human being if that space is incredibly short almost non-existent in some people then they are superficial they might have two PhDs but they are superficial there is no depth to them well there is a depth but it is as if it wasn't there because it's totally covered up so a deep human being has longer spaces of no thinking before that person replies or that person this is a natural thing you can't you can make it into a practice, yes, too as long as the ego doesn't get in there and say I want to appear I want to be a deep person so I'm going to take a long time in answering any questions from now on so in the therapeutic situation also be aware of this so bring in the spaces and observe the spaces that occur naturally in that situation they will be brief in addition to the spaces that occur naturally in the situation bring in these spaces for example when listening to the patient just listen when you may also occasionally be aware of your breathing as you do so any way you can bring in little spaces give fullest attention to whatever you're doing you're preparing something, perhaps you're going to administer something to the patient if you're a physician you're preparing something in that moment there's another opportunity for absolute presence so it's an art to have your knowledge not completely obliterating these little moments of spaciousness in you it's an art that needs to be practiced otherwise you the effect that it has on you after many years of being completely absorbed only in your knowledge when you work with people then you live in a world complete conceptualization and you will no longer be able to see the human being you will see a patient you will not relate to a human being anymore you will relate to a patient or you will only relate to a symptom in a patient and some doctors unfortunately have gone that way because nobody has told them that another way is possible so perhaps many of you have experienced being with certain doctors who actually don't see you as a human, they see you as a patient or they're only interested in the symptom some doctors even hardly look at you, of course there's pressure of work, they have a few minutes to see you but all those physicians and other cerebral as the questioner says practitioners of course obviously you are here because you have already gone beyond that to some extent so you're not totally burdened by the acquired knowledge so that it obliterates everything else interspersed, so what applies to the therapeutic situation applies to anybody's daily life too you must have your daily life interspersed with presence otherwise it's just the human mind dragging you along this mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive to be free you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation now what you neglect then and what you continuously overlook is all the small things that actually make up the vast percentage of your life is all the little things that before are relegated to the periphery of your life what are those little things? well whatever, for example things that you handle in your life, things that you pick up and put there and objects around you the world around you walking, breathing looking at the sky looking at a tree seeing, breathing in the air, looking at another human being sensing their deeper aliveness all the little things that constitute life even if you are a so called VIP in the eyes of the world which is pretty meaningless, it's just a narrative and you go from one significant thing to another but all the steps that you take even if you get picked up in a limo as I sometimes do when I go for a talk, the organizers send a limo well a big car, a big room in the back, that's a limo and you can stretch your legs so then it's just very little things you walk to the car and you breathe and then you get in and you sit okay well it's just you're sitting somewhere and breathing and looking you're looking out of the window and then you arrive at a venue and you take a few steps into the car and you sit again and then you walk onto the stage it's all little things and even if you're the pope or the president of a huge corporation or the president of a country, it's still the same life consists of small things all the things that look at just your relationship with objects, this is usually overlooked because every object is treated as a means to an end but if you live in a way that is more present then the objects may still be a means to an end but they are also giving just short attention just picking up a glass there is pleasure in enjoyment in even just looking at a glass and the water and drinking and to realize that most people realize that for the first time if ever when they take certain types of drugs like acid because it amplifies your sense perception and it shuts off your thinking mind and then for the first time you pick up a glass of water and you go oh wow so amazing so amazing I can't believe it and it is and then you drink and the taste is so incredible it's water, it's amazing it's liquid, alive it's alive, it's liquid no I haven't taken acid before coming here and it's just giving it your fullest attention without interference of thinking just awareness and all this the background then to that state of inner peace or contentment is all the aliveness of everything around you when you you pick up something put it in your suitcase pick up something else it's unfolded it's a nice thing to do taking a fruit maybe peeling it or biting into it the present moment in its richness that is usually overlooked because you're looking for something more significant but even the most significant thing, let's say you got the Nobel Prize can come to Oslo I think there's one Nobel Prize that goes from people come to Norway for that's peace so and then you stand on the balcony of that hotel that overlooks the square where the parliament is, I think apparently that's where they go and there you are I have made it you're just standing on a balcony looking and breathing and unless you live through and for a narrative in your mind that you completely believe in and that becomes a conceptual sense of identity I am such and such a person who has achieved this and that and this is all the story and that's me and a big narrative that gives you your sense of identity thought movement and then you feel bigger while you stand on this balcony and then you feel deflated when you step off the balcony or let's say you're a pop star what's the word that a rock star that's millions of people say wow, wouldn't be great especially youngsters wouldn't it be great to be a rock star you can do anything and people and of course they experience this in a magnified way, they are on stage and energy moves through them and then they walk off stage and they are regarded as gods by all these by the audience let me only touch you, I hope nobody does that to me but but let me only may I just touch you they say to the rock star and to the rock star then having in most cases not that much awareness they feel they are more and more like a god because they believe in the narrative that all these unconscious people have mentally manufactured for them and then they begin to believe in it and then there comes the huge conflict or discrepancy when they go off the stage and they sit in the green room or somewhere where am I now and then they have to take drugs because what happens, there's a sense of a lack returns much more strongly than ever before, a sense of lack and insufficiency so I need another fix a drug or I mean to smash up my hotel suite that's what they do rock stars apparently and that enhances their sense of self a little bit more so people many people live for something that's going to happen in the future and of course you may succeed in your endeavors, this is a nice thing but it's not going to give you long-lasting and ultimate fulfillment or tell you who you actually are it's fine to achieve things, especially if they are beneficial but for humanity and the totality on the planet it's lovely to have that but even that doesn't make up your identity

[Speaker 4] (5:42:18 - 5:42:19)
most people derive

[Speaker 1] (5:42:19 - 6:13:34)
their sense of identity their sense of who they are from the movement of thought in their head thought identifies with certain things as you begin to grow up it identifies with the first possessions that you have the toys it identifies with the name that you are given that's me, your parents tell you that's you then the beginning of identification is the name that becomes the receptacle for all other identifications, possessions toys and you can see how painful it is once you have identified with something when it's taken away from you the child will scream if a toy is taken away because the identification has already happened with something

and five minutes later the child might lose interest in the toy completely but when somebody takes it away it is extremely painful because already at that stage the child experiences the beginning of ego identity and how painful it is when the ego identity is injured or something is removed from it it hurts on a psychological level as if you had sometimes even more than a physical injury the pain you would experience with a physical injury and then come, the child goes up more and more identifications come people that you know, relationships you identify with your knowledge you identify with your physical strength your ability, look what I can do you can't do that but I can do that look what I know, I know that but you don't know that let me tell you, this is how it is opinions, you accumulate opinions about this and that and nothing wrong, everybody has opinions but the opinions become part of your sense of self, you identify with these thoughts that constitute those opinions so the opinions which are thought forms are imbued with a sense of self, there is a self in them, a me and you can notice that when somebody starts to question your opinion you get defensive or upset or aggressive or fearful you might even well not you but a very unconscious person may even become violent, physical aggression why? because somebody questioned my opinions even the entire religions that would in the past it's been like that in the middle ages Christianity was like, they will kill you if you disagree with the conventional beliefs what, you don't believe what I believe or we believe okay let's kill you ego, egoic identity with a personal or collective ego they are the two aspects of ego but ego is always identification with something and identification means it gives you your sense of self, this is why for people it is so precious and they hang on to it and they defend it with their life it's that's all they know, that's me and it's a totally normal it's been like that for thousands of years ego in the past ego and in certain societies even nowadays the predominant ego is collective still whereas in western societies ego tends to be more individualized it started of course thousands of years ago with tribal egos, every, you had tribes and you identified with this particular tribe and you were nice to the people in your tribe but not very nice to the people outside of your tribe because there were less than you, all these were primitive rudimentary manifestations of ego but whatever it is, ego means you have a bundle of thoughts, predominant thoughts as I said, opinions likes, dislikes the story of who I am, what people did to me what I did, what I've achieved what I know, what I can do, what I possess and these are all really thought forms and they give you your sense of self, it's very normal and you cannot stop a child from developing that kind of identity it's a normal progression you can't tell a child do not, there's no such thing as possession, don't identify with that toy, it's not yours stop, stop, don't but one can as you begin to awaken you begin to see in yourself that you carry an ego you might see for example, that you become defensive or when somebody disagrees with your opinions you can even have an ego around the city you live in, the team sports team that you identify with, these are rudimentary ego forms if you have little else, you can a huge part of the identity can be your football team and then the others are your enemies who identify with another football team and then you fight it out on Sunday afternoons so you have different manifestations of ego but it's ego, it's a sense of self, you can have a spiritual ego some of you might remember that before you went beyond that you had a spiritual ego and spiritual ego means you have a sense of self that begins to form in your head, a self image of yourself as a more spiritual person than most others very subtle ego you can have an ego of yourself as egoless a self image that says I am one of the most egoless humans on the planet and it's hidden it doesn't necessarily explicitly say I am the most egoless person on the planet well it might do but usually it's more hidden, it's implied you look down on others who still have their egos whereas I I'm free of it and these are more subtle forms, it's this ego, it's more a more subtle form of ego than the person who gets into a fight against the opposing fans of the other football team soccer team whatever it is but it's the same the same mechanism is behind it and ego also you always recognize it when that it compares itself with others the moment you meet somebody or even just you see somebody in the street the ego goes into comparison mode and usually the result of comparison mode of the ego is it comes to the conclusion that you are either inferior or superior to the other of course it wants to be superior if it can but some it just doesn't work sometimes so the ego tends to select the thing that is most that is your strong point that's what it will then focus on in my case for example the ego that I could not develop an ego around a strong physical physique a person who is good at sports or whatever because I was a little guy who got bullied at school so the ego said what can I do what can I identify with and wasn't particularly good looking so it couldn't say but I'm better looking than you ok that doesn't work either so eventually it sought refuge in trying to be more knowledgeable and educated than others so I started reading books and then in discussions I could suddenly show off my knowledge and show that you don't know that let me tell you about that ok that worked for a while physical appearance is a very common thing for comparison do I look better than the other woman, man whatever it is and then you look in the mirror and this is greatly enhanced these days by the technology that's available to us through facebook and selfies the original in Greek mythology the original story that shows the development, the beginning of ego was in the midst of Narcissus who was a young man of course at that time there were no mirrors but he happened to look into a pool of water one day this young man and he saw that he was so beautiful and he fell in love with himself that's where the word narcissism comes from so he fell in love with himself, there was an image of himself that he saw there, he fell in love with the image which to me means he identified with the image this is a pictorial representation of an inner process the image formation that gives you your sense of self which is ego so that was the beginning of Narcissus now you don't need a pool of water anymore you have not only mirrors more importantly you have your smartphone and you can go and then you send it out into the world you're not confined anymore to one person looking at you or two people you send it out into the world and hundreds of people suddenly see you and then you're waiting for your egoic feedback which usually comes in the form of little comments like cool I like it and if it's not you, you take a picture of the rest, you're in a restaurant and you're eating this lovely meal I am eating this meal me look how great this meal is that I am eating and of course many people who look at other people's posts feel diminished a little bit because their life is so interesting and then what you do, you have to also pretend that your life is interesting and select all those things that make your life look interesting in other words, and this especially young people, you begin to your life merges with a fiction a fictional image which is available to the public and you don't know it this is an extension of egoic identity that has become possible through technology very seductive but also extremely limiting it's a huge trap the ego of course is never satisfied not for long, it always is in a seeking mode because it doesn't feel fulfilled, it doesn't feel I am enough, it doesn't, it feels I am lacking in something which may be either money or knowledge or looks or relationship significant relationship all kinds of things I'm lacking in, not enough it's in seeking mode but as it's pointed out in this book called The Cause in Miracles it says the dictum of the ego is seek but do not find so it's always seeking because it's always seeking for the next thing which implies the future is extremely important for the ego it looks to the next thing there's a continuous reaching out an inability to be present here and now that's all part of the unconsciousness that I call unconsciousness is in this terminology complete identification with the mind and this is where the ego resides, it resides in your mind it is a mental formation, it is a kind of fiction that every human being creates for themselves and of course you get a lot of feedback the particular fiction that you create for yourself depends to a large extent on the culture that you grew up in the people you grew up with they will tell you who you are as a child and then you become conditioned by your surroundings, the surrounding culture and your family and so on this mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive to be free you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation I only have one thing to show you or teach you, it's not teaching teaching would mean giving knowledge to your mind so the only real reason is to find the spaciousness within who you are beyond the person what could be more important than that all the ancient teachings pointed to it using different words and yet humans only a few people here and there never ever got it the history of humanity but now it's happening on a wider scale thank you I'm grateful for that so now let's just experience a little bit spaciousness for example now don't need to think here's the space here's the thinking and here's the space some people find it helpful to be aware of their breathing one conscious breath a breath consists of the in breath and the out breath and a conscious breath means as you breathe in and out your awareness is there on the breath breath is formless, relatively formless so it gets you closer to the formless consciousness to be aware of your breath this is the ancient breath meditation but I often say just one conscious breath brings some space or helps you realize some space inside you your attention follows the breath as it moves into the body and out and while it does that you are not thinking, you can't because then you are not following the breath with your attention and while you are following the breath with your attention in and out you become spacious so one conscious breath is a mini meditation nobody can tell me that they don't have time during the day to take one conscious breath from time to time everybody has time for that the busiest person and two is even better let's make it three and you went to a doctor for physical treatment not a single question about what about, how do you feel what is your mental state your emotional state, how do you feel no question just look at the symptoms and those traditional doctors would say oh no, there is no connection first question here is does the mind create a physical problem to distract us from emotional pain it is often the case that emotional pain that is not recognized when there is not enough awareness the emotional pain exists beneath your level of awareness and it can come out as certain kinds of reactivity in daily life so you are taken over by reactions to certain things that trigger that type of emotional pain that is in you that you are completely unaware of and emotional pain that is in total unawareness can very easily become a physical symptom it is transferred into the physical realm any kind of prolonged negative mental states which produce corresponding negative emotions affect the functioning of the physical organism and even research has been done on this and been confirmed that negative states mental emotional states affect in the long term affect the physical organism you can verify it for yourself if you are in a state of anxiety, thinking thoughts thoughts that create anxiety fearful thoughts usually not about the present moment the present moment is fine but about some imagined future moment then that affects the body, your breathing becomes shallow, your heart beat increases your entire energy field contracts all kinds of physical symptoms appear so there is no doubt that what goes on in the mind affects the body and again for a long time doctors completely ignored that, they actually denied it and you went to a doctor for physical treatment not a single question about what about, how do you feel what is your mental state your emotional state, how do you feel no question just look at the symptoms and those traditional doctors would say oh no, there is no connection of course there is you can teach your child that there is a connection between their mind and the body and immediately think of imagine you are biting into a lemon close your eyes and imagine you are biting into a lemon and taste it and immediately you feel saliva accumulating in your mouth and there is no lemon there was just the thought of a lemon, so the thought creates a physical response in the body it's just a tiny example and then we have another thing that is totally almost completely ignored by conventional mainstream medicine, the so called placebo effect and all the drug companies when they test their drugs a certain number of test subjects when the drugs are given to humans are just sugar pills or whatever, they are placebos, they contain nothing but the test subject is not told the test subject is told that this is a new powerful drug and always there is a significant percentage of people who become cured or if not cured whose symptoms improve significantly after taking these placebo pills, in all clinical trials they have these results, not all of them, and sometimes the placebo is very close to helps as many people as the actual new powerful drug but this is dismissed, oh this is a placebo, so let's not look at that, because we are only interested in what this drug does, so all these placebo results are discarded and nobody seems to really ask, wow there is the most powerful healing agent here people heal themselves if they believe that they are being healed but they have to believe it completely, so you can see how powerful the mind how powerfully the mind can impact the body and if we could explore a little bit more what placebo means and whether this could become in some way replace conventional replace the taking of drugs and how to do that of course that moves into the realm of what spiritual healing but there are vast possibilities there for healing there are other factors that can bring about disease, not all diseases are caused by mental negativity or dysfunctional thinking anger sadness and so on all kinds of negative emotions, envy regret, guilt they all impact the body there are other factors that we live in a world that is full of poisonous substances created by the clever human mind, so we ingest poisonous substances all the time and there are all kinds of we are bombarded by all kinds of man-made radiations there may be certain genetic factors also but the fact remains that there is a very strong correlation between how well the physical vehicle functions and how harmonious or disharmonious the mind operates so it's everybody's responsibility of course to become aware of their the negativity that they harbor inside and of course as part of this teaching is to recognize your identification with thinking which creates those structures and you step out of that and many people will experience an improvement in their health surrender and presence often is also associated with the complete healing of physical symptoms surrender here means a space of acceptance of what is not acceptance of a disease there's a huge difference between accepting a disease which is not a good thing but accepting what is in the present moment what's the difference the disease is a conceptual form, a concept in the mind whatever it may be, let's say it's a serious disease multiple sclerosis do I have to accept that I've been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and I need to accept that I have this disease called multiple sclerosis no, that's a concept all when we talk of acceptance all that is required is accepting whatever arises at this moment so if the something arises at this moment that you can feel that it's some form of disability or pain or weakness that's what you surrender to not an idea of illness just what arises at this moment and when you bring that surrender to it, then often healing happens because the energy of presence burns up one could say a large amount of karma of old stuff inside you, whether physical physical manifestations of it or mental or emotional manifestations in the presence of presence the past gets burned up so often surrender makes healing much easier, it makes it easier for the body to heal itself because healing no doctor heals you when healing happens it's always the intelligence that inhabits the body produces the healing and that can function more powerfully when you surrender to life and surrender to life is in the now so never to the idea of illness but just what is now

[Speaker 5] (6:14:04 - 6:15:53)
I wrote you a note in which I explained a dark night of the soul experience that I'd had a number of years ago in which really culminated in a catastrophic breakdown of sorts for me maybe sort of similar to what I read in your book The Power of Now and during that there was a cathartic release I was in the fetal position on the floor crying frankly and there was an utter and complete surrender this is sort of a humbling story but after that happened I was sitting in an empty room in a chair and there was this unbelievable post cathartic stillness that took over me and there was complete silence and then the strangest thing started happening I began witnessing my thoughts and as I witnessed my thoughts I had this unbelievably simple awareness that if I'm witnessing my thoughts, what am I?

and that completely changed my life. I can't even begin to tell you what happened after that awareness happened and then one thing led to another and then there was a point where I started realizing that what I am I couldn't find a boundary for and so I was sort of interested because in your book you talked about this in The Power of Now about the dark night of the soul experience but I'm sort of wondering about your journey from there through the process of realizing that this awareness that I am is not personal it's intimate but it's not personal and that seems to be the toughest part of it all to really get a handle on so if you could walk me through that I would appreciate it

[Speaker 1] (6:16:02 - 6:27:29)
It seems that I will comment but the most important thing it seems that what your mind is trying to do is to understand awareness and you can't really the mind can't so you cannot really come to a satisfying conclusion about the nature of awareness it's only awareness itself really in awareness awareness is known but awareness as an object or thought is not it and that's why the Tao Te Ching starts with the line the Tao that can be spoken of is not the true Tao so all that language can do is use pointers to point you in the direction of awareness or language can point out the obstacles, the likely or possible obstacles in yourself to the state of awareness so that these two kinds of pointers, one is points, the pointers to the moon awareness being the moon so the words there's only this moment and so on, it all points to the same whatever I talk about is really they're all pointers they're either pointers towards awareness or they are pointers that look at the obstacles that may arise in yourself in a human being so that you recognize them when they happen so that the obstacles in the form of certain mind patterns don't take you over and obscure the arising awareness, but once awareness has arisen the mind is not useful anymore and you don't need further pointers in order to, the mind will continue wanting to understand a bit more about awareness but really this is where conceptual understanding comes to an end and I can call awareness personal and I can call it impersonal, it's not personal in the usual sense everybody everybody has a certain sense of I'll just say a few words about it but we're not trying to understand awareness we can't everybody has a sense of I-ness of identity everybody has the sense of him or herself as a hard to describe the sense of I now usually the sense of I is mixed up with certain mind movements thought patterns which you could also call stories they're thought patterns that hang together as a story and so your sense of I gets mixed up with a story thoughts in your mind and that is called the personal sense of self but the story really is nothing they're just thought forms, temporary thought forms, the real sense of I is the awareness inside the thought forms without which the thought forms could not even be there so the true sense of I is the awareness that got mixed up with the story or the thoughts so most people have a sense of identity that is of that mixed kind where consciousness or awareness has become entangled in thinking and then people only know themselves through thinking, they believe they are what their mind tells them they are and their memories and so on and that's called the personal sense of self but even there the real, the substance behind it and in it is the consciousness, it's not the story, that's where the sense of the preciousness that everybody feels that I am and where the mind says I don't want to lose that, I don't want to die this is what people are scared of they might lose themselves, they might lose that preciousness, everybody deep down feels that preciousness inside even people who are unhappy they're still here, they haven't jumped off the bridge yet they feel a preciousness still inside, hiding somewhere and that that preciousness is consciousness itself, it's not your story now that consciousness is not personal it really only becomes personal when it gets mixed up with memories and a story or expectations and memories so if you're dis- what happened to you then was the disentanglement happens spontaneously and so there was the realization of that which is there when consciousness is no longer entangled in form because the consciousness is the formless it's the unconditioned consciousness so that is called then self-realization in some traditions or it's called awakening in other traditions whatever you call it that's the realization of the formless essence of who you are and so the mind of course continues but there's no longer investment in it, some consciousness still flows into mind activity but the important thing is there is no longer a self in the mind activity and so because the self is realized as essentially formless and timeless so that's a beautiful thing now, the fact that mind activity still continues means that occasionally the mind is wandering about consciousness and awareness and so the mind needs to then see that it is futile and since there's no self in it anymore it won't be too difficult the mind just needs to be told that it cannot you cannot come to any kind of satisfying or satisfactory

conclusion about the nature of awareness or further conceptual understanding of what awareness is all about the mind would like that but there's a vastness in awareness and awareness begins to operate through your mind without needing your mind to understand more about it, because that's what the mind always says, I need to understand more you can understand a lot more about the things of this world, there's many things that you can still study, everybody can, there are many books you can still read things you can still learn there's always the possibility of acquiring more in this world, it's fine nothing wrong with that but as far as self-realization is concerned, there's no more, there may be a deepening or the aware state may express itself more and more fully through your mind your mind may have your mind becoming the servant of awareness can take a bit of adjustment from a self-serving mind to becoming aligned with the aware state may take a while, I'm speaking from my own experience not that I ever could explain awareness, you can't explain emptiness but the ability to say things, to point to give pointers to other people the ability to understand even what had happened to me when the shift happened that took several years to understand for example to understand that my mind had mind activity had become reduced after the shift by perhaps 80% in other words, I was spending long stretches from the external point of view of time I was spending long stretches in the timeless paradox paradox here because you have the outer and the inner and this was the reason why I felt so peaceful but I didn't know that my mind wasn't saying much anymore because it wasn't saying, I'm not saying much and all I knew was there was a deep sense of peace and aliveness and I was looking through, perceiving things through the sense of peace and aliveness so that even the traffic became peaceful and there was nothing wrong with the traffic and there was, or whatever and things that before I had resented having to live in the, I had little money, so living in a little room which in England is called a bedsitter where you have a little stove in a corner and then you have your bed and you have a seating area and then you share the bathroom with I think eight or nine people in different rooms and so before I didn't like where I was and suddenly it was great, it was fine because there was this beautiful light shining through the window the little objects on the table were full of aliveness and even waiting for the bathroom wasn't that problematic anymore except occasionally I had developed constipation because of the waiting but that in itself wasn't a problem either it was the same, or I had complained about going, having to go by tube or underground which is the subway in London can be very unpleasant at times and again there were blissful states traveling in the subway waiting for the train wow but it wasn't in the world of form, the form was perceived through the awareness but understanding, very little all I could have said suddenly I'm so peaceful, I don't know what happened that was all, that was my limit for two years approximately that was the limit of my understanding and so that's how it is, so what does take then perhaps time from our external viewpoint is the alignment of your mind with the aware state and then gradually it can flow into the mind structures and you can speak about opening yourself up to awareness and many other things pointers will arise that may be helpful for others you may write a book but not too soon it's often the case that people write books too soon laughter laughter laughter so just let it mature and the one thing that you won't get much further in this conceptual understanding of awareness itself

[Speaker 4] (6:27:30 - 6:27:31)
and that's the answer

[Speaker 7] (6:27:32 - 6:27:33)
laughter

[Speaker 4] (6:27:52 - 6:27:54)
this ability to

[Speaker 1] (6:27:55 - 6:31:32)
look at things or listen to things or with other senses smell taste, touch as the

awareness rather than the interpreting mind practice that in your daily life it's a primordial spiritual practice if that's your only spiritual practice it would be quite enough so innocent perception requires awareness it requires an alertness in the background of your perception without the alertness thinking will always overpower you the alertness keeps thinking at bay you remember the story I wrote about in the New Earth it's an ancient Zen story where the disciple and the Zen master are walking on a long journey through the mountains and then they stop for a little picnic and then the disciple who is still having problems understanding what Zen is all about he's only been there for 10 years laughter he asks the master I don't quite get it yet how do I enter Zen, meaning how do I enter the state of consciousness that is Zen, how do I and the master looks at him and says can you hear the sound of that mountain stream and the disciple no, I can't hear it the master says see if you can listen, see if you can hear it and that this is the point of the master to the disciple to to become more alert the master associates the alertness with the auditory perception there so the alertness flows into the auditory perception and as the master tells him you have to listen more carefully to hear that mountain stream and then the disciple at that moment the alertness, the awareness in the disciple rises and he goes and of course at that very moment while he's in that intense listening he's no longer thinking or trying to figure out what Zen is all about he's just and then he can hear in the far distance there's a tiny mountain stream that makes a sound and suddenly he can hear it and he says yes I can hear it and the master says that's it enter Zen from there

[Speaker 7] (6:31:32 - 6:31:33)
oh

[Speaker 1] (6:31:38 - 6:38:51)
this is a practical to show by means of practical example what that means, that alertness Jesus talks about it too, he says be so awake as if you were he gives the parable of a servant waiting for the master he doesn't know when the master comes he may come in very silently so you have to be alert don't go to sleep, be alert and wait for the master so the servant is sitting in that house the door maybe is in my version of the story the servant is on the upper floor and the master could come in any moment the master is very quiet so you go so the servant basically would be in continuous presence, otherwise he might miss the master again it's an example to show what that state of consciousness is, again using the analogy with associating awareness with the auditory perception you can associate it with other perceptions too, or with all perception or with no perception and there's no stress or strain in that alertness, there isn't a willfulness behind it, that's not it, you can't hold your breath and make yourself be more alert you can't I still can't hear the mountain stream you have to it's a relaxed alertness I'll sometimes use the expression vibrational frequency and there is a truth behind it, whether or not it's scientific I don't care by the way I can sense when, because I also experience fluctuations there's always a certain alertness in the background but sometimes there's an increase in alertness and sometimes it's just, it recedes it's in the background the awareness, and then the awareness the light gets lit, like a dimmer switch it goes and then it goes and it's still there according to the situation now the the so-called enlightened state which is the destiny of each human to reach although many won't reach it in this lifetime but that's okay that would mean there's a continuous background awareness Indian continuous and you many of you already have it sporadically and there may be some of you who already have it continuously in the background the only reason why you're here, because it's enjoyable but there's no point in asking oh, when is it going to be continuous for me? irrelevant question the only true question is is it there now?

that's the only place where it can be now whether it's going to be there ten minutes from now, who knows is it going to be there next week when I get home? who knows but when you get home it's now so the only relevant question is am I aware now? and if you even remember to ask that question which is a powerful pointer to awareness very easily you can step from the question which is still a thought I call it a pointer certain thoughts are pointers that point beyond thought so that says, am I aware now?

it's a powerful pointer and after that you're yes that can immediately bring you to that alert heightened alertness am I aware now? let me just check and that checking creates a rise in the vibrational frequency you can feel that and you can observe you can learn to observe in people it's not judgmental, it's a simple fact you can look at a person and to some extent you can see what degree of awareness is there there are many humans who might never have heard of any spiritual teaching who have some awareness in their life they don't know what it is but it's there I can very often I don't like to be stopped and recognized in the street all the time but it does happen a lot and when it happens it's lovely so it's a paradox I try to wear sometimes sunglasses and a baseball cap a funny incident I was in a supermarket and I was wearing dark sunglasses and a baseball cap and just looking at the shelves and a man came up to me and said Hi Ekan Mir, shake your hands do people recognize you a lot? now I am saying this is quite but not infrequently I know a few seconds I look at a person a few seconds before they recognize me I recognize them I've never seen them before but I recognize them I know there is a fairly strong presence there and then I know this person and this is not a thought it's just a realization this person is going to recognize me and most of the time

[Speaker 4] (6:38:51 - 6:39:23)
I'm right reality itself

[Speaker 1] (6:39:23 - 6:44:25)
as you perceive it goes through the filter of your mental emotional conditioning from the past the non-conceptual dimension of consciousness as we could call it is already emerging in most of you and that is about the most important thing that could happen in a person's life which is the emergence of a deeper dimension of consciousness I would say that this is what Jesus referred to when he was talking to Mary in the parable of Mary and Martha and just to quote one brief sentence of just a few words he said to Martha only one thing is needed only one thing is needed my translation of that is there is only one thing in life that is of absolute importance and everything else may also be important but it is of relative importance so all the things that happen in your life and in the world may all be important some more important than others, your entire life situation everybody has one and everybody's life situation is somewhat if not very problematic you know, you're not the only one so there's that there is all the things that happen your financial situation, your health situation your relationship situation your work situation, your living situation yes these things matter relatively speaking, but there's one thing that is more important that matters absolutely and that is your state of consciousness and whether or not you have awakened to what we could call it sounds a little abstract but it's not, we could call the transcendent dimension of consciousness in you the transcendent dimension of consciousness now, I'm not going to immediately define what that means because actually it cannot be defined it can be pointed to, this is what these words are for but these words are not a substitute for it the words point famous phrase in Buddhism it's the finger pointing to the moon but the finger is not the moon so there's nothing that I say tonight that you need to believe on a conceptual level I'm not asking you to believe anything whatsoever there is what I sometimes call the two levels of consciousness the conceptual I sometimes call that object consciousness these are all the things that happen in your perceptual field and in your mental field thoughts, thinking emotions, sense perceptions things arise things pass away things come and go sense perceptions, ideas, thoughts opinions, feelings, emotions all belong to object consciousness one object after another happens you perceive things and then thought objects arise it's continuously a stream of thoughts

[Speaker 7] (6:44:25 - 6:44:26)

now

[Speaker 1] (6:44:27 - 6:57:03)
for most people the stream of thoughts is such a gravitational pull that they get completely dragged along by this continuously proliferating stream of mental activity I sometimes call it the voice in the head it never stops speaking it continuously comments on where you are, what you are doing or takes you somewhere completely different in the so-called past or the so-called future one thing after another one damn thing after another, to paraphrase Churchill Churchill was talking about history history is one damn thing after another and that's true but for many people their conditioned mind the experience of their conditioned mind is just one damn thing after another because it never leaves you alone it goes so most humans who are not awakened or even awakening are completely trapped in their object consciousness they are confined by it and not only that they are completely identified with all the arising thoughts and emotions that continuously go through their mind and there's no separation between the thoughts and the emotions that accompany the thoughts and you, you don't you're not even there when you're totally identified with the voice in the head you are spiritually speaking asleep or another word for it is unconscious so an unconscious person in ordinary usage, unconscious means of course, you've completely lost, you don't know what's going on and this is unconscious in conventional usage, unconscious means in spiritual usage unconscious means completely and continuously identified with a stream of thinking and the emotions that go with the stream of thinking what does it mean to be identified?

it means you derive your sense of who you are from the stream of thinking every thought is imbued with a sense of self so you're identified it has you in its grasp and therefore if people conventionally say, I think, I think what do you think? as if thinking for most people were a voluntary activity, whereas for most, not you but those who are not awakening yet which is the majority of the population still on the planet for most that is, they are completely identified with the stream of thinking they are spiritually speaking unconscious and that is a terrible thing because then everything that you perceive reality itself, as you perceive it, goes through the filter of your mental emotional conditioning from the past so you never see anything as it is perceive anything clearly and most importantly there is never a sense of inner true inner peace, spaciousness joy sense of aliveness sense of connectedness with something that is deeper than your historical person you are always at the mercy of what goes on out there and the reactive patterns of your mind so you are completely unaware of the possibility of realizing the other dimension of consciousness, which is not object consciousness but space consciousness I call it sometimes space consciousness now, what is space consciousness?

you cannot define it because it's beyond concepts you can know what space consciousness is in this very moment by becoming aware of the gaps between words when I speak I'm just slowing down a little bit so instead of being totally interested in the words you're also interested, although that's probably not the right word you're also giving attention to the empty spaces between the words because they are needed without the spaces there could be no sounds the sound needs the space to exist now that's interesting to be aware of the gaps between words or in this room, in this hall to be aware not only of the objects in this room the objects that make up this room what's in it the bodies, the objects that which confines and defines the room the ceiling, the walls, the floor this is the room you're not only aware of that that would be in this analogy object consciousness you're also aware of the space in this room now the space isn't something that you say oh it's there, or it's there but it is the most important part of this room is the space and it's a wonderful space but you cannot define it it has no actual you can't even say that space exists because exist means to manifest, to stand out exist, x means out, in Latin exist means to be manifested but space doesn't manifest it enables everything to manifest in the physical realm without space these things could not be here, so space is prior to existence space is prior to manifestation and that's very interesting so there is something in you which I sometimes call space consciousness that is prior to who you are as a person your personality and you can know it, not conceptually but immediately and experientially by becoming aware, either of the spaciousness outside of you or becoming aware of spaces between sounds spaces between words now how do you do that? how do you become aware of a space between two words there is no how because it's too simple for how, quite simply there is an attention in you, a field of alert attention and this field of alert attention is aware of the space between words and you notice that silent space what does it mean?

to notice that silent space it means in this brief moment of noticing or noticing the space in this room in this brief moment you're not thinking you're just aware thinking through thinking you cannot be aware of those spaces between words because thinking is object consciousness the space between words takes you to space consciousness so the entire secret of our gathering here of all spirituality is just one thing now amazingly I'm going to talk about this one thing for hours laughter I'm sometimes asked and I think I even wrote it somewhere what is the most effective spiritual practice in daily life or if I only had one spiritual practice what would it be?

what would be the most highly recommended spiritual practice and I would say observe your breath that would if you spent a lot of time in your spare moments and so on that would bring about an enormous influx of presence into your life and so that's very quite simple another thing that happens as you follow the breath with your attention your attention moves out of the mind into the body and as the breath enters the body you also become aware almost inevitably of the inner energy field of the body I hope that well I don't hope anything but it would be great if as I talk about this you could feel what it is that I'm talking about so if I'm talking about verify in this moment what it is that I'm talking about when I say, when I talk about follow your breath then follow your breath you can still listen and be aware of your breathing at the same time it's quite pleasant and then you can sense as the breath moves in there's also a sense of aliveness in your body hard to describe you feel that the body is alive it may start with the area here because that's where the breath moves and if you follow the breath with your attention your attention may move a little deeper than the actual breath it may move into the abdomen so you become aware of an energy field down here and so the abdomen falls and rises

[Speaker 4] (6:57:05 - 6:57:19)
as you breathe in it rises and then it shrinks and you feel at first a very subtle

[Speaker 1] (6:57:19 - 7:04:59)
feeling of energy that pervades the inner we call it the inner body inner body awareness and there's an energy field that then it's not just here it pervades your arms and legs it's everywhere you can feel that the body is actually alive, you feel the life of the body from the inside so what is that? it is the animating presence in the body it is that the organizing principle that in a miraculous way keeps the body alive every moment, coordinating countless highly complicated functions of the body all the organs the chemical laboratories the unbelievable complexity there's an intelligence behind it that temporarily organizes the molecules and atoms in that way you are not doing it, it's happening so you you connect with that intelligence it becomes conscious and you feel you're not only aware of your breathing you're also aware of the entire inner body and it's not really the body it's something that's beyond the body it's a portal into something deeper but let's call it inner body it's invisible and so breath awareness if it can lead you into and become combined with inner body awareness and that's a beautiful, very powerful meditation that can take you out of any turmoil situation

even if you several times you lose yourself in the mind again you bring it back to the breath and body and as you sit here and listen to me you may be able to be aware not only of auditory perception which is the words you're hearing but at the same time you're aware of the inner body so what is that it is the presence that pervades the entire body, presence isn't just a head phenomenon, presence is experienced with the entire body and then after as it becomes more deeper and more intense presence you're almost you begin to feel also that you are surrounded by a presence, that's a strange thing and that the space that is around you, we mentioned space briefly yesterday the space that is around you is something very, very mysterious very mysterious and you can sense that there is this is a mystical thing I'm saying, no you don't need to believe it, you can sense that that space that's all around you is there, there's something to it that you cannot define it's not just nothing well it is nothing in the sense that it is no thing it is not a thing it is not an object but it's not just nothing there is a presence all around you and so don't want to talk about it too much it becomes too mystical for many people, but I'm suggesting this as to experience first of all the inner the aliveness of the inner, the presence that pervades the inner body, that is the inner body and then you can sense that the world around you also is becoming more alive especially the space around you, actually there is an alive presence in which you live that surrounds you and that presence is both within and without and when you sit in your room or here now you sense this invisible presence all around you what did Ralph Waldo Emerson the American, I would say spiritual teacher, 19th century he said we live in the lap of immense intelligence great great teacher by the way I highly recommend Emerson we live in the lap of immense intelligence we are surrounded by this intense this vast intelligence and if you know that there is a difference between just not knowing it and living completely unconsciously as a little misperceiving yourself as an entity a separate entity there is me and there is the rest of the universe no you don't end here you are you are extended into the vastness of the universe in this dimension of space so because there is outer space and there is inner space and first you become aware of that inner space when thinking subsides you become aware of that spaciousness within consciousness without the content of consciousness just the space you could describe it as like a room and you remove all the objects in the room and all that remains is the space that is the equivalent of when you come to a cessation of thinking but you are not falling asleep at all to stop thinking here means to rise above thinking we are not talking about falling below thinking falling below thinking you do that every night when you go to sleep or when you here when you are suffering from serious dead lag you begin to fall below thinking or when you drink alcohol the tendency is for you to take you below thinking or any most other substances I haven't tried all that I have tried very few substances you cannot pronounce doesn't on all substances but some substances take you below thinking it can be very comfortable for a while at least you're not being tortured by your mind for a while and so you puff away so good feel so good what are your problems I don't remember what my problems are it's and it's also funny sometimes

[Speaker 4] (7:04:59 - 7:05:15)
falling below could be mistaken for a state of enlightenment but then this is not the way we are going we're not regressing although

[Speaker 1] (7:05:15 - 7:06:18)
there is a desire for in every human being to become free of the self an unconscious desire in every human being to become free of the self what the Buddha calls the self the egoic entity the problem making heavy person personality that heaviness I want to be free of that there's so much suffering that goes with it want to be free and so the drug taking these days is enormous in youngsters a terrible epidemic of drug taking this and because the truth is not being taught vital knowledge is we live in a society in a civilization the entire global civilization almost totally ignorant of what really matters we have knowledge a lot of knowledge but absolutely no knowing totally ignorant

[Speaker 4] (7:06:18 - 7:06:33)
of what matters and has lost touch with the with the source God if you like don't

[Speaker 1] (7:06:34 - 7:06:38)
always people misunderstand what that is

[Speaker 4] (7:06:38 - 7:07:09)
so presence within and without when I grew up

[Speaker 1] (7:07:09 - 7:18:54)
was a Methodist teaching and was sort of dry yet there was this prayer Lord forgive us our trespasses and forgive us those who trespass against us and when you open the door last time to the course of miracles and I came across that principle of the forgiveness and I had a question on that what is forgiveness is it different from compassion is it different from the Buddhist concept of bodhicitta and I don't know thank you thank you and again it comes back to the state of connectedness with being it's only from that state of connectedness with a deeper dimension of who you are from there it becomes easier to forgive because forgive means there was something that was done on the level of form by one life form to you perhaps another life form pain was inflicted or whatever it may be treat whatever the transgression is and it's only from there that you can see the relative nature of what was done because you are in touch with a space within you that was never hurt by that that dimension in you is beyond what can be injured it's only the form can be injured the psychological form somebody might have insulted you deeply the psychological form of who you are can be can feel pain or the physical form of who you are can feel pain and somebody inflicted that out of unconsciousness then recognizing the first step in forgiving is to recognize that this was an act of unconsciousness and you do not equate what this person did with who that person is and it's only from the place of connectedness with being that you can say no longer hold a grievance about that because you are in touch with that inside you that is beyond what can be injured if you are not in touch with that space then you're still it's hard to forgive forgiving means not to harbor grievance or resentment or any negative feeling about it and really that's only possible when you are connected with the formless in yourself as Cause and Miracle says nothing real can be threatened nothing unreal exists herein lies the peace of God nothing real can be threatened means what is ultimately real cannot be threatened but what is ultimately real is not the form it's that which is deeper than the form that cannot be threatened nothing real can be threatened nothing unreal ultimately exists it just seems to herein lies the peace of God means in the knowing of that lies the peace of God but it needs to be not conceptual knowing but a knowing on the level of the depth of your being and then from there you can look at anything anybody did to you and say it's almost as if it didn't happen for a while, for example I harbored grievances against my father for many years because he was he suffered from enormous amount of bottled up anger and living with him as a child was like living with a powder keg or an unexploded bomb somewhere in the house and everybody knew that at any moment this slightest thing somebody said and usually it was my mother the slightest thing somebody said and this bomb would explode and the entire house would be filled with destructive energy and for a sensitive child, and any child is sensitive a young child, it's a terrible thing to live in constant anguish and an explosion could be happening at any moment whenever he's in the house so I had the ambivalent feelings of fearing his return home after work and wanting him to come home divided and that was expressed once in a dream that I had as a child and in the dream I had cut my father up into little pieces and put in a plastic or some kind of sack and hidden under the bed and after I had done that in the dream, my father arrived home and I greeted him and loved him and of course all this resulted even after, when I was an adult already, resulted in quite a bit of grievance towards him because my childhood was fearful and unpleasant as a result and it was only when a transformation happened inside me and there was suddenly

that deep inner peace that I realized he did what he did according to the way in which life had conditioned him he had, when he was a child, he had an enormous amount of resentment against his family because of, and of course the story can go on many generations he was the seventh child his father died when he was fifteen and they took him out of the school they had to pay for school, boarding school they took him out of boarding school because they said we can't afford it anymore, but his sisters were still kept in boarding school and then he had to do menial jobs and every day his anger was growing and growing and growing he carried it the rest of his life there was not enough consciousness in him to disidentify from the anger he was the anger was using him it lived in him as an energy field and he could come up any time he was as much a victim as I was and I saw that after I had gone through the transformation and found inner peace I could see that he did he was a victim of his own circumstances, there was not enough consciousness in him to see what he was doing and immediately forgiveness happened, I didn't even have to say I have to try to forgive he never did, it was as if he had never done anything to me because basically he hadn't he wasn't even there, there was only the unconsciousness in him acting up and then as he grew older some of that anger dissipated remnants of it remained he also came into touch with some spiritual teachings especially the power of now that helped to some extent and so his ego grew less not didn't quite disappear but it grew less when I was a child his ego was gigantic and it was continuously fueled by anger and an angry ego is something it's the the incredible hulk that and that so forgiveness happened naturally and very often you see that when an injury happens very often there's a mental judgment of a situation and actually beyond that mental judgment not that much happened, let's take a simple example um you arrange to meet somebody or somebody he says I'm going to help you with your moving, I'm going to help you move house, I'll be there at five o'clock to help you move with my car and he doesn't turn up and that just is as it is, now your mind then comes in and says he let me down he or he betrayed me or he was whatever the judgment of the mind is uh and it is very often it is the judgment of the situation that creates the emotion that feels injured if you can just be with oh he you said he would come but he didn't turn up, that's a fact whatever your mind wants to add to it gives you the sense of injury and strengthens the ego so if you can just be with the pure facts this is why all that stuff when people are talking about other people what they failed to do or what they did what he did to me he betrayed me well what did he do well he went off with another woman or man he betrayed me, betrayed me is an interpretation and the more you have that thought that he betrayed me the more you feel the emotion that goes with that thought and you feel who is it that feels that emotion the ego itself feels betrayed because who you deeply are, who you are in your essence doesn't feel betrayed the fact is he went off with another woman that's what he did is that all yeah that's what he did if you refrain from adding a story to it then you don't experience the this may not be this comes easy when you are connected with who you truly are then it is easy to let go of the unnecessary imposition of stories upon events the event is neutral the story interpretation of it is what creates the anguish

[Speaker 7] (7:18:56 - 7:19:07)
music music music music music

[Speaker 4] (7:19:08 - 7:19:25)
music reactive is karmic action karma actually means

[Speaker 1] (7:19:25 - 7:30:07)
action so when you react to a situation to a person whatever in whatever way you react then you produce in eastern terms you produce more karma so it's in any situation then what really matters is not the situation but your state of consciousness that you bring to it and that's important to remember because the world otherwise will seduce you into believing that what matters is the situation itself and then you react to that so that requires then a vigilance on your part

which of course implies that there is already a certain degree of awareness in you otherwise there cannot be a vigilance so we are already taking for granted we assume all those of you who are here and listening to this in you there is already a degree of awareness and that enables you to be vigilant as to your inner state in any given situation so that your primary vigilance is towards ok from second nature you become aware of primarily of your response to the situation and you pay more attention to that than whatever it is that you do with regard to the situation and so you realize attention so you bring yourself to attention and there it is and then everything changes as you bring that precious gift into this world it's amazing the world is and you become one with the entire evolutionary impulse of the universe which is towards consciousness and then you actually when you become one with that evolutionary impulse then you actually find things unfold in your life with greater ease because you become one with that vast movement something that wants to come into this world and you transcend the personal the merely personal so you can say that anything that arises in your life any so called problem or challenge whether to do with finances, relationships health living situation, job I think that's about it that's where the problems arise other people, a lot to do with the problems in your life probably large percentage of problems come through other people dreadful other people hell is other people example that's from the egoic point of view that can easily happen so all those things whatever is the main problem, so called problem area in your life the main limitation in your life health finance relationships job and so on meet it with that state of in that state of attention instead of the reactive mind that identified state and then look at the problem from there and then you may find that sometimes almost miraculously it shifts it may dissolve something negative may, you may see suddenly a positive side of it you may find helpful factors suddenly coming in and you didn't know how it happened or you may find that internally you transcend it completely so your inner state is no longer dependent on the external condition that is perhaps what is sometimes called detachment through you are free internally from the situation it may not have changed but your state of consciousness has changed although it does as I just said very often as attention arises that presence arises shifts happen much more easily or there may be a time gap at first nothing happens and that could be for a while and then suddenly the shift happens so external shifts happen more easily that way but also if they don't happen you transcend internally or action, the impulse to take action arises suddenly and because you know exactly what it is that is needed suddenly in this situation and then you change it through your action but the action was not a reaction the action didn't come from the reactive mind, it came from a deeper place, it is not reactive reactive is karmic action, karma actually means action so when you react to a situation, to a person whatever in whatever way you react then you produce in eastern terms you produce more karma when you are free of reaction you do not produce more karma which is unconsciousness you do not produce more unconsciousness in this world which in other words you do not contribute to the problem making that all other humans who are not giving the consciousness to this world they contribute to the problem making even those who have good intentions because there are many humans who have good intentions but whatever they, whatever endeavor they undertake you will find things happen that they hadn't foreseen and the good intentions turn into something else you can see it collectively, good intentions without a shift in consciousness just because the mind says wouldn't it be nice to have a more peaceful world yes, of course but a fair world where everybody is nobody people are actually equal and wouldn't it be nice to bring that about says the mind don't people don't accumulate possessions anymore wouldn't that be nice and then exploitation comes to the end of wealthy people exploiting all the poor wouldn't that be nice let's create a society that does that ok, how can we do that ok let's work out some philosophical system how it all fits in and then we have a book called Das Kapital and then let's create a society on the basis of those philosophical assumptions it looks all great at the beginning and then as you get into it before you know it you've created another hell on earth and it all started with good intentions two wonderful books that of course I'm talking about the arising of Soviet communism and so on two wonderful books that show you how things go wrong in that way George Orwell Animal Farm and another less known novel, Arthur Koestler, Darkness at Noon tells the story of how wrong things can go and of course we have the famous expression the road to hell is paved with good intentions ha ha ha so there needs to be all these things are true the world where exploitation no longer happens but for this world to come into being there needs to be a shift in consciousness and this is why we are here

[Speaker 4] (7:30:32 - 7:30:34)
manifesting doesn't always mean

[Speaker 1] (7:30:34 - 7:35:29)
that you have a clear vision of what it is that you want to achieve sometimes that is fine and works but to be in a state of appreciation of life in deep alignment with the present moment in so that you do not you're not in an antagonistic relationship with the present moment anymore, you're just deeply aligned with the flow of life in the now and you appreciate all, everything that is and the things you do, the things you do you do them fully you give your fullest attention to what you do, that's another obstacle for many people, they somehow are not able to give themselves fully, they're not, there's something holding back, there's something that's holding them back you can sometimes see it with people on stage or sometimes singers or musicians, you can sometimes see they're not the full, there's not the full energy is not there for some reason perhaps they're afraid for some reason of they may be afraid of giving themselves fully, to be fully in what you're doing to give your fullest attention to what you're doing in the present moment is a very powerful way of manifesting but whether or not you have a vision that you project and you feel it's already happening the vision can only work if you continue giving your fullest attention to the present moment and to enjoy the energy of what it is that you are producing in the present moment that empowers the vision the vision is always, the point of power is always in the present moment a great obstacle for achieving a vision or any success is to be, and this almost sounds paradoxical at first until you begin to understand it is to have an excessive attachment to the outcome that's a huge hindrance, now you might think well if I have a vision of what it is I want to achieve, would it not be natural for me to be attached to the outcome that I want to get there I want to reach millions of people with my music and I want millions of people to feel better by listening to my music, perhaps to get a glimpse of presence by listening to my music so you that's a great vision but the the the mastery of this lies in not attaching yourself to the vision so that you lose you lose consciousness in what you are doing and it gets dissipated into the vision which ultimately is a mental thing the point of power is always in the present moment, excessive attachment to the outcome, one could almost say any real attachment to the outcome weakens your ability to manifest so you can hold an outcome in your mind and then return to I give the example of a pilgrimage, let's say you're on a pilgrimage, life could be regarded as a pilgrimage or journey and you know where you're going, you want to go to whatever it is, your pilgrimage to a holy site, in medieval times there were pilgrimages to Rome and other sacred places, your pilgrimage to Mecca, pilgrimage in Spain, you can go on this pilgrim trail in northern Spain to Santiago de Compostela and you walk for many many days now the very purpose of pilgrimage is to bring about a transformation of who you are, transformation of consciousness the arriving is relatively unimportant, arriving at your destination is just a short moment and there you are but the journey is how conscious are you of the step you're taking at this moment if you're excessively attached to the outcome which in this case would be your destination then you're mentally you already want to be there, that takes away from the quality of your step at this moment now the step it's an analogy for whatever it is you're doing at this moment

[Speaker 4] (7:35:29 - 7:35:35)
and quality means how much consciousness flows into what you're doing in this moment

[Speaker 1] (7:35:46 - 7:45:47)
welcome to our gathering meditation talk as you may know I spent a little bit of time with the Dalai Lama recently and one of the most impressive things he said and he said it several times during those days when people ask him all kinds of questions complicated questions the impact of technology on the economy and the economic and this and that and several times I heard him say I don't know now you can look upon this as something a superficial thing, I don't know or something that's actually very significant because it points to a certain state of consciousness in which the realm of conceptual thinking isn't that important anymore and I could actually feel that many people felt love towards him deepening when he said I don't know people laughed and he laughed and there was an opening which would not have been there if he had given a very clever answer and sometimes after he said I don't know actually he said something that was meaningful and deep at other times he didn't but it started whether or not something came out of that not knowing the point of departure the foundation is that state in which you don't need to know conceptually and once you realize that it's a kind of denial of the self the mind made self because the mind made self lives on taking up positions of knowing opinions, viewpoints judgments and the more one is identified with opinions, viewpoints judgments, reactions the stronger the self which already the Buddha discovered a long time ago that sense of me-ness, the me that's ultimately illusory and creates all kinds of trouble and problems for yourself and for others if that's all you know if that's the only dimension that you move in the mind created self then you will create suffering for yourself and others so to come to a position of, not a position a place of not knowing it is an act that from the point of view of the self looks almost I could say negative, it looks like a kind of suicide self annihilation who am I if I don't know if I don't have a position some mental position that I identify with, what's left of me so we come to the denial of the absolute reality of the form of me we don't need to go as far as some teachings do, some spiritual traditions they proclaim that to be, the whole thing is totally illusion they say and from a certain perspective you could say that, the whole thing of egos walking around this world going through their drama and then dissolving and then other egos coming back up and going through the same kind of drama and dissolving and the same kind of drama and dissolving so you are born and then you go through a little bit of turmoil here and there into one or two little happinesses and then that's the end but mostly of course while you are in between the birth and the death you are waiting for the end of problems and while you wait for the end of problems you are creating problems for yourself and others that's ordinary existence normal existence and so this act of self annihilation this is one way of putting it it sounds a little bit frightening self annihilation but all that's annihilated wasn't real anyway not in absolute terms it was relatively real one could say the fact that we are here is relatively real but it won't last for very long so was it ever really real?

if it dissolves like a dream if the whole story of me dissolves like a dream very soon in that sense it's very fleeting like a cloud so the vital question then is do you assert the self or do you deny the self can you live in a balance where the self is still there but you don't realize it not as ultimately who you are so when the Dalai Lama says I don't know and of course everybody projects something onto him he is the Dalai Lama so they give him a strong identity now his challenge is not to fall into that same illusion in other words people believe that he is a mountain and he knows his deeper reality is that he is a valley and that's your job to know that for yourself not the illusory self, the essence of who you are this mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive to be free you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation

[Speaker 4] (7:46:18 - 7:46:19)
now

[Speaker 1] (7:46:25 - 7:56:49)
when you read what Jesus said when you have faith faith is faith in the terms that Jesus used is to be connected with the the power within you that is inseparable from the source consciousness when you have faith you can tell a mountain move from here to there and it will happen now there could be a kind of parable or analogy or some people might want to take it literally he also said as you know I've said before the one statement that encapsulates the entire secret about manifestation Jesus said when you ask for something believe that you have received it and it will be yours believe that you have received it, I've spoken about that at length in other sessions to believe that you have received it is to feel connected with the the essence of being where you anything else is that's the cream, everything else is the skimmed milk, so if you have the cream you can manifest anything in the realm of the skimmed milk now that would mean that you can entirely change if the statement about the mountain is to be taken literally then it would be saying that it is possible to completely change external reality, so called physical reality simply by the power of your mind and I believe that is the destiny of humans eventually humans will be able to simply manifest through the mind if that were at the moment to some you can manifest quite a bit not immediately you always need a little bit of time mostly, there is a lot you can do and even sometimes things that you think might be almost impossible, that is too far, that is possible to manifest, but there are limitations, you are absolutely right to what you need to recognize those limitations so that you are not engaged in completely useless manifestation practice aiming at something that is not within the realm of possibility for example, let's say I suddenly got it into my mind that I am going to participate in whatever capacity in the Olympic Games the next Olympic Games whenever they are going to be and I am going to win a gold medal in boxing or whatever or jumping or whatever it is and no matter how powerful my manifestation is that is not going to happen so I know that is an impossibility, or let's say I got it into my mind, I want to become the world's greatest ballet dancer ok now if I had been 10 years old it might have worked but it's not going to happen, that's for sure no matter how powerful my manifestation practice is so there are now these things are kind of obvious, that there are physical limitations to what you can do or what your body can do there may also be mental manifestations sometimes people have an image in their mind of what they want to be but I remember watching years ago when we still had cable television American Idol American Idol is all these people who perform, they want to be chosen as the next American Idol in all kinds of singing and dancing and so on and one is sometimes amazed at the discrepancy between what people thought of themselves how good they were at singing or dancing and how bad they actually were when they performed it's just, the discrepancy was just incredible they thought they were they were the potential greatest singer but they were just awful just, everybody could see they can, now that's now that could be that they haven't practiced enough, it could be that they haven't, that they forgot that in order to achieve mastery in anything you have to focus your mind and you have to enjoy what you're doing for quite some time before power flows into what you do so they have just a mental projection I'm going to be a rock star but then all this, the practice you have to live it, you have to live the music you have to live or you compose the music and you live it every day and you live your instrument becomes part of your your very being and you live it and you enjoy it and then you go into the subway and you play there for a year or two and then you go somewhere else to a little bar and you play there, so many great stars have started and then you leave, and there was this book I can't remember the title he found it and he looked at various great musicians and dancers who had achieved great things he calculated that they had 10,000 hours of practice before mastery was achieved and something was able to flow through them that made them great, with the Beatles for example he examined how many years the Beatles performed in just little bars in Liverpool and in Hamburg they were performing in little beer cellars and tiny bars and he calculated and he came to the average figure of 10,000 hours 10,000 hours of practice and that's so very often the people don't achieve the heaven, the goal may not be totally unrealistic, it may be within the realm of

possibility but what they miss is the intervening the journey towards the goal and they don't enjoy the journey and they don't want to the energy is not there to practice every day to do every day so that the power increases and flows through them now quite a few of those people they never they never consciously manifested something, the Beatles I'm sure it just was a gradual evolutionary process for them before they, what they created was very deeply inspiring I mean the songs are relatively simple but they have an essence, there's something there that makes them, they'll still be around in 200 or 300 years time there's something there that suddenly came and it wasn't there initially so are you able to enjoy the doing, the present moment really comes back to the present moment do you enjoy the journey towards it or let's say you want to become a a people have an image of what they want to become but are not able to give it attention in the continuous, in the present moment so that the journey must be joyful to be empowered so many things are possible now even people who seem to have a very bad voice, let's say this person could never sing, that's not necessarily true, if this person continues, it could happen that something will become through, look at somebody like who was this jazz singer, very famous african-american very famous jazz singer, who had this deep croaky voice the name escaped me right now, one of the most famous Louis Armstrong I think, was he a jazz singer? Was he? I think he was

[Speaker 7] (7:56:53 - 7:56:54)
and you would say

[Speaker 1] (7:56:54 - 8:02:39)
how could this person ever have a singing career, it's totally impossible but the strange thing is everybody would have said there's no chance for you, just do something else when he did, eventually something happened it didn't matter anymore that this wasn't normally regarded as a good singing voice there was an essence that came through him that used the voice and touched everybody so that was incredible if this person had asked anybody I want to be a singer, and they said of course what you can do please think of something else so often it is the case and I don't know, I haven't read his biography I don't know what his past was, what his journey was but it's amazing that somebody who has such a bad singing voice can create such wonderful songs quite amazing so there are incredible possibilities that the mind would exclude by saying prematurely so many things are possible but some things are not possible often involving as the examples I gave for myself I think to get a medal in the Olympic Games there may be one or two disciplines that I could still be good at, who knows one could be the favourite Canadian discipline called curling where you push that thing on the ice it doesn't require too much physical strength so there might be a chance for me participating in the Canadian team of curling but I doubt it that's a little aside yes, knowing what is possible but without limiting yourself as in the example of Louis Armstrong he would have done if he had listened to others and said probably told him your voice is no good, if he had listened to others and he didn't fortunately and when I was writing The Power of Now people sometimes asked me what do you do and I said I'm writing a book spiritual book and they said what about I said it's about present moment, living in the present moment and several times people said oh forget about it, it's been done so many times this is something that's already been overdone, you should think of something else possibly present moment is old hat, just don't do it there's no point, you're wasting your time somebody actually told me literally he had read many spiritual books and said if you are writing another book about the present moment, you're wasting your time and I was writing The Power of Now I didn't listen to him I knew I wasn't wasting, I loved the process, it was an empowerment that happened, it didn't matter to me very much whether the book would be successful or not which was very much secondary I knew the book had to be, if I had not written it I would have become ill and I would have died that's how strong the energy flow was, if I had not responded to it I would have died or become seriously ill so don't necessarily listen to others, but yes it is true on the one hand there are things that are not possible for example physical flying right now is not yet

possible, at least not in this dimension, you can probably fly in the astral dimension when you dream you might travel to the astral dimension and experience as I sometimes do that you actually lift off and you can, there you go but in this dimension I would not step off my balcony and jump off or start practicing flying I don't recommend it certain things are impossible and you need to just use your discrimination and look at it without limiting yourself unduly because many things that other people might tell you are impossible are actually within the realm of possibility and even certain things that your mind will tell you are impossible may be within the realm of possibility and again there's a fine line there important thing is make sure that you enjoy the doing of it and then you can, you focus on your destination but enjoy the doing in the present moment and then whether or not you even arrive at your destination becomes secondary

[Speaker 4] (8:02:39 - 8:02:43)
because there's such deep enjoyment in the present moment

[Speaker 1] (8:02:51 - 8:22:24)
I'm going to make a cup of tea and again this is just a little example or illustration of performing an action consciously rather than reducing it to a means to an end so the water has already boiled a little bit let's see if I can bring it back to boil you may have heard of the Japanese tea ceremony that's been practiced in Japan for centuries under the influence of Zen and the Japanese tea ceremony is to be conscious acutely conscious at every step of the action of making the tea so it's been perfected it's a little work of art the making of the tea is not a means to an end it's become a work of art now it doesn't have to be every time you make a cup of tea you don't have to perform necessarily the tea ceremony but to bring some consciousness into the doing into something that is actually a very simple but enjoyable action that is extremely helpful I'm bringing the kettle here I've got this interesting tea here, it's green tea and apparently it opens up in the form of a flower when you pour hot water over it and now we wait a little now in ordinary life you may perhaps while you wait perhaps be engaged in other things but if you can this little waiting period itself can be a meditation another thing they practice in Japan again under the influence of Zen is flower arrangements that you might have heard of this is to place flowers artfully into the vase it's very slow conscious movements it's done intuitively if it's performed by a master it's done intuitively so it's one could call that consecrated action consecrated action that's actually a term used in the Bhagavad Gita there's also a kind of almost say respect that you have for the objects that you handle you treat them with respect it's a strange thing perhaps for some people because for many people most of the objects that they handle are just a means to an end they wouldn't really give attention to the object itself but you treat the object with respect even the way you put it down there's even a way of placing something on the table consciously and their way of placing it unconsciously I have observed I'm talking a little while we wait for the tea oh yes I have observed in some in restaurants some waiters they just they put their plates on the plate on the table occasionally you find a waiter who actually does it consciously who places the waiter there's care in which the waiter places the plate on the table and it's always very enjoyable when that happens it goes like carefully like this consciously it's a high quality I call it high quality action now if you want to create something that is not an egoic thing but is something something you realize from the depth of your being that something wants to be created through you whatever it may be maybe you want to you're writing a write a book open a hairdressing salon create a retreat center or a conscious business or whatever you want to create and the vision comes to you or you may want to create it's not necessarily selfish a better place to live a place that is externally more peaceful than where you are now or warmer you may have a vision of what it is that you want to achieve and then you focus on that vision and the most powerful way to manifest as you probably know I don't usually talk about that too much because other things are more important I talk about the foundation for your life but manifesting is a secondary thing that can be significant in your

life and to manifest the most important secret to use that word I'm not specifically referring to a book called the secret but that's the but there's helpful things in there too as long as you don't believe that certain things that you want to manifest are going to make you happy the the power to manifest is in experiencing the the fullness of the present moment the undifferentiated fullness what Jesus called life in its fullness in one of the translations I want you to have life in its fullness he said and that is not stuff he's not referring to things life in its fullness is an inner state of being it is to experience, to know, to realize the beingness within you, the I am which is consciousness itself that is life that is the fullness of life in the words of Jesus the fullness of life is to realize that so that once you realize that, and it is consciousness you know yourself as consciousness once you know that then no future moment can possibly be better anything that can happen in the future isn't adding on to so if you bring together if you have a vision in your mind of what it is you want to achieve or create or manifest and you bring this vision into this sense of still fullness that you sense now and you bring that together that is the most powerful creative tool, the way that it's usually expressed, Jesus expressed it too, he said when you pray for something believe that you already have it but I think he probably used actually slightly different words but that's how it was written down he said he probably said feel that you already have it whatever it is that you want to have, that you think is going to be you need to feel already the feeling now how do you do that? by feeling that which is beyond the world of phenomena out of which everything arises which is consciousness so when you know yourself as consciousness that's already the fulfillment, let's say even an insignificant thing let's say you want to have a nice house let's just say if I had a nice house out in nature then I would be really happy I want to have a nice house in nature next to a little forest and then there's a lake there and I can walk to the lake and then how would you feel? okay I would feel exactly the way I'm feeling now so I want to live in Hawaii and have a deck behind my house with a very comfortable chair and then I would sit in there every day and contemplate the ocean well good luck how would you feel? what would you feel?

I would feel the fullness of life okay and you can't feel it now no, why can't you feel it now? because I'm not sitting in this deck chair and I'm not looking at the ocean and it's not sunny that's why I can't feel the fullness I don't have a house behind me that I say is mine so I can't feel the fullness of life now okay then do you think you're going to feel it when you finally sit in the deck chair? no, if you can't feel it now you can't feel it then because you will be again dissatisfied in your deck chair behind the house because you will get very bored and stung by mosquitoes and it's too hot anyway, I should have gotten a house higher up because down here by the beach it's just too hot why didn't I get a house higher up because there's a mountain just behind me, it would be cooler when you sell your house get one higher up, but then the nights are too cold, you can't sit outside anymore if you're not if you cannot feel the fullness of life on your bicycle and enjoy that moment tremendously of being on your bicycle you will not feel the fullness of life when you're sitting in your Rolls Royce or Bentley or Ferrari Testarossa there's an over overvaluing of things around you that I need things to be in a certain way around me to be happy and content that doesn't mean that you cannot change the environment around you you can take steps towards changing it because you may have certain preferences that's fine, everybody has preferences, preference there's some spiritual teachers who say I don't know who I can't remember, but there are some who say I have no preference well they live somewhere, but not somewhere else so you must have a preference for being there unless somebody picks them up and puts them somewhere so you can have a preference for living here rather than there, yes this country rather than that country but while you're not there you can be be in touch with the fullness of life within yourself now and then it's much more likely that your external surroundings will reflect your state of consciousness as you might have noticed it always takes a while before I start to speak I often say it's good to start with a moment of stillness and it is but the main reason is that I don't know what to say and that could be a very uncomfortable place or situation to be in some people have nightmares like that you're on stage curtain opens and suddenly you're facing the audience and you've forgotten your lines but I don't have any lines so here's the secret it's becoming comfortable with the state of not knowing otherwise it would be awful what can I say now would be terrible and of course that is a kind of trust which I suggested the other day as a better word for faith trust and that's incredibly important to become comfortable with not knowing but what you do when you become comfortable with not knowing you enter the state of non-conceptual knowing but you have to be comfortable with not knowing anything on a conceptual level thinking in other words so another way of putting it is to say that when I come on here and then I sit I don't think because that's the state

[Speaker 4] (8:22:24 - 8:22:25)
of not knowing

[Speaker 1] (8:22:37 - 8:31:40)
and in the gaps between sentences or words I also don't think rather than there's no next sentence or word being prepared it just comes and that's for you I'm saying that because that also is a state of consciousness that you can enter and you're doing it to some extent when you don't label things when you step back from thought become comfortable with just being present and all these questions of things like self-esteem which apparently is a problem for many people either they have low self-esteem or they have exaggerated self-esteem or it fluctuates and books written about how you can improve your self-esteem and probably workshops I don't know what they teach you, maybe it's good maybe not but the simple thing is that in that state of no thought but alert presence all these questions about self-esteem resolve themselves into nothingness because you're no longer looking for some perceived value in a conceptual sense of self the personality and you can sense the power that is within you that is nothing to do with the person and that's where your self-esteem comes from and it's not comparative in the normal state of consciousness self-esteem is always comparative how do I rate myself relative to this person and that person and that and what on what level external appearance strength, knowledge beauty, possessions status and of course there's always you're always inferior to some in one or two or three areas and you may be superior to some in another one or two areas but that's the power of stillness that's another way of putting it the power of inner stillness that is the true seed of self-esteem and you can't really call it self-esteem anymore but you realize the infinite value that you not possess but are because that is the essence that underlies the entire universe it is the light of the world and you don't compare yourself to others anymore you feel neither inferior nor superior the ego is always either inferior or superior so you might be surprised if I tell you I'm a small guy even if I'm standing next to a big muscular guy towering above me with a big ego I'm not thinking of anybody in particular at the moment but it has happened in the past I don't feel inferior just nor do I feel superior you might have a big body and muscles but I'm the spiritual guy laughter laughter laughter laughter of course it's the ego talking laughter this is a very interesting strategy of the ego the spiritual ego can come in and without you knowing it you still have a conceptual sense of self but it's turned spiritual it's a trap some spiritual teachers fall into too and you know it when they make certain pronouncements we touched on this before and that is they explain that they are superior to any other teacher for example either any other teacher alive now or I've seen one or two spiritual teachers or read about them who actually claimed that they are superior to any spiritual teacher that ever lived or ever will live laughter well that should cover it laughter laughter here or any other galaxy laughter laughter so the most important practice on your journey spiritual journey into the present moment the journey without distance is to become comfortable with not knowing which means to become comfortable with not thinking you don't need to demand that there should be long periods when you're not thinking just moments when you're simply looking, listening, perceiving or being and you don't know anything in that moment not

conceptually but you access the source of all knowledge of all knowing and that is a way for the ego to gradually become weaker just gradually subside no longer runs your life which is what is the ego the unobserved mind it may still come in here and there it probably will

[Speaker 7] (8:31:45 - 8:31:46)
that's fine

[Speaker 1] (8:31:55 - 8:57:13)
so part of this is of course to be give more attention to the present moment because the more you think the more future you generate and the more attention you give to the present moment the less thinking because to be really present you don't think about it you just are with it give it attention I recommend the little things of life to be more attentive to all the little things that make up every hour of every day every minute, every hour and give them more attention so let's start with some very basic things to enter that meditative state of consciousness because that's what it is all about meditation is about a shift in consciousness away from concern with doing and thinking and becoming aware really directly aware of the present moment and that's perhaps the easiest and most accessible starting point for most people to enter the state of presence which is the aim of meditation is to get you into that state of absolute presence in this moment and that's being becoming aware of being most people are always engaged in doing that includes thinking continuously and a lot of the thinking that people do is not very uplifting a lot of the thinking that happens compulsively creates negative feelings and a lot of the thinking is actually harmful and dysfunctional it doesn't serve any useful purpose but you just can't stop it or you think you can't but you can and that's of course what meditation is about to realize there is in you a deeper dimension of consciousness deeper or higher you could call it depending from where you look at it deeper or higher than thinking and that is the state of presence in the now so it's an amazing realization for most people that they can actually easily access that state of presence by bringing their attention into the present moment like now so I'm kind of although I'm talking my aim is to talk you so to speak into that state of meditation and it helps if while I talk you can become conscious or aware of the small gaps between words as I talk so you're just aware not only of the words of course you hear the words you take them in but you're also aware that there are little spaces between the words you just acknowledge that these are little meditative gaps so to speak and in order to be really aware of the meditative gaps you can't be thinking you're just aware of that space there is what does it mean aware there is a presence in that awareness you know in that awareness like now you know that you are here as a conscious presence without any thought telling you that in other words you become aware of yourself not as a person because to be a person you need to be thinking about you and your life and your problems and so on but there's a deeper dimension in you deeper than the person and this is what we are here to access so you become aware that really on the surface of your life there is the person with a past and a future and all the thinking and the emotions that keep the person going of course and so you're happy one day unhappy the next happy one day unhappy the fluctuations of the person it's quite normal and the person is always concerned with doing and thinking and the next thing or the past the future the past is never really present when you become present like now you realize that there is a deeper part in you there is a deeper dimension to who you are where you are more than a person where you are a presence, a conscious presence the question is can you sense feel or be aware of yourself at this moment as a conscious presence without which there couldn't even be a person so it's almost like saying the person is the surface of the ocean or the ripples or the waves on the surface of the ocean but you are not just the ripples or waves on the surface of the ocean you are the ocean so there is a deeper presence in you and to access that and to sense that in yourself to sense yourself as the presence a presence that is what liberates you from being completely trapped and limited in an exclusively personal identity in other words there is more to you than meets the

eye you are deeper than you ever knew by thinking about yourself and it's not difficult to access that dimension in yourself can one describe it?

one can give a few pointers let's see if that makes sense the pointers I'm giving you now let's see if they make sense in your own experience at this moment sensing yourself as a presence there is a peacefulness there that is really the essence of what is sometimes called inner peace the person the surface of the ocean the waves and the ripples of the ocean cannot be at peace for long it fluctuates, occasionally things happen to go well or yeah, I'm happy but it never lasts for very long and then the storm comes and big waves come or little irritated waves, whatever then you are unhappy but there is a deeper if let's say you are a ripple on the surface of the ocean with a name and a date of birth and a past and a future and problems and suddenly the ripple realizes there is more to me and realizes oh, I'm actually much deeper and vaster, I'm the ocean manifesting as the ripple and so you are the universe or the consciousness that underlies the sense perceived universe manifesting temporarily as a person you are the universe becoming conscious of itself at this moment in your life as a person you are not separate from the totality of the universe you are the universe the universe has or the consciousness that underlies the universe has given form to who you are temporarily in order to experience itself as a person it's an amazing thing and the universe here is in the process of becoming more conscious that's what the entire evolution of the universe is about it's consciousness so your life is part of the evolutionary impulse towards greater consciousness and if your life is not primarily about greater consciousness which actually you can build into whatever you do it doesn't mean you stop doing all I'm interested in is consciousness no, it needs to flow into what you do if that if your life purpose is not aligned with the evolving consciousness of the universe then what is the point of it all and then sooner or later you get very frustrated and things become pointless so you are here to become more conscious because that's what the universe has put you here for instead of universe you can use other terms you are more comfortable with them the universal intelligence God so right now in addition to being a person which right now is not important it becomes important again when we finish our meditation I'm sure but right now something else is more important that's realizing yourself as the presence coming into the present moment and feeling just being aware right now that you are conscious if you were not conscious you wouldn't be able to hear hear, see, perceive anything the fact that you can perceive things the fact that you can think the fact that you can have emotions all implies that you are conscious the meditative state is becoming aware directly of that consciousness sometimes the word that is used also is stillness right now you become still you become aware of just being of being that presence and that feels energizing you don't go to sleep you are actually alert and still at the same time and now you access an intelligence that is deeper than the thinking mind by entering that state of alert presence and then when you think again you are connected with a source of all intelligence with creativity you become empowered your thinking and your doing and your actions are then aligned with a deeper purpose of the universe not just little egoic desires so all this is so terribly important and aligning your life with that presence so you need to during your normal day I'll give you a few hints how to invite that presence into your life which by invite I mean direct your attention to it because it's always there that really is what supports you in life and if you can be aware of that fear anxiety happen less and less in your life because you can feel supported by that vast presence which is not just your own presence it is the universal presence of consciousness you connect with that you are that that so on a day normal day you go to work or whatever you do as much as you can become aware of just brief moments of yourself as the presence in addition to being a person so one of the things I recommend is it sounds almost too simple but from time to time look at the sky for a few seconds you look up it doesn't matter whether it's blue or cloudy today today here is the early afternoon happens to be a sunny day look at the sky for a moment you are looking but not thinking you could do that with anything but sky is easier because there is this vast expanse that has some correlation with the presence of stillness within you so you look and for a moment there is just there is the sky and you can sense yourself as the presence that is perceiving and you are not thinking so there is a brief moment of not thinking but not going to sleep alertness without thinking that's the key to bring that into your life more often and don't believe when your mind tells you that you need to think and think and think all the time bring in gaps of just alert presence that's the being the rest is the doing the two need to be there needs to be a balance in your life between being and doing otherwise you go mad and a civilization that completely loses touch with the being dimension is going to self destruct and a person who completely loses touch with the being dimension is going to be very unhappy unfulfilled always anxious depressed or always stressed what does many people live in continuous stress what does that mean they are always focused on the next thing and the next thing pulls them away from where they are here and now and always there is the promise when I reach that point I will be okay but of course the reaching that point is always very brief and then they realize oh I'm not okay I need to reach another point it's a great thing of course to have goals in life but if the goal takes up so much of your attention continuously where you need to get to that you continuously miss the present moment which after all is all there ever is then your life is completely out of balance the balance is yes having goals you know where you're going that's good and but you are aware of the step you're taking at this moment and you're aware of the flowers the sky the trees life that continuously unfolds around you you acknowledge you honor the present moment and on a deeper level you are aware of yourself as

[Speaker 4] (8:57:14 - 8:57:16)
the presence

[Speaker 1] (8:57:43 - 9:25:05)
this question requires only a brief answer but it's maybe helpful I would like to know if the thought watching meditation vipassana would be useful in increasing my presence and diminishing my identification with the ego if so could you or Kim provide an example of meditation I won't provide an example of meditation but Kim wants to do it at some point of vipassana it would take quite a while vipassana is a buddhist originally associated with buddhism but there's nothing particularly buddhist about it it's directing your attention into the body basically in a very structured way and it's a good meditation it's basically inner body awareness and it's for some people it's an excellent meditation it's inner body awareness in a much more structured way than I do it when I point out the possibility of having your attention inside the body it definitely takes your attention away from thinking and so you connect with being vipassana retreats tend to be boot camps for meditation where you spend many many hours each day sitting in meditation and it can be quite an ordeal but that could be helpful too because either you can't stand it anymore and run away or you surrender completely it's not as pleasant initially as our retreat but it can take you deep it's not for everybody it's fine not one way is for everybody and it may well be as the vipassana teachers claim that that was one of the original meditations taught by the Buddha I wouldn't be surprised if that was including also breast meditation I would say that that was also related that is also original meditation breast meditation may even precede the Buddha nobody really knows I believe unless there's some extremely knowledgeable expert here and says I know so that meditation is called vipassana vipassana ultimately their opinion they are beginning to defend their identity sense of identity is derived from the movement of thought and so whenever somebody questions something that's connected with your thinking it is regarded as an attack on your identity why not start with a good spiritual practice especially for people in the back rows and it may sound a little bit funny but it's actually a very powerful spiritual practice and that is to become aligned with the present moment obviously this is I'm Mr. Now so I'm talking about the present moment become aligned with the present moment and refrain from complaining for example that you are too far away mentally a very powerful spiritual practice so then you become okay with the is-ness of

things and the is-ness of things happens always in the present moment you might have noticed nothing ever happens that's not now one could almost say the word happen must imply present moment and most people completely underestimate the incredible importance of the present moment and of living in a harmonious relationship with the present moment and you would be surprised how many people in this world live almost constantly in an antagonistic relationship with the present moment and that of course causes a lot of unnecessary suffering and unhappiness so one of the most important things in life to be aware of is your relationship so to speak with the present moment and this is now of course is the present moment welcomed or appreciated or at least accepted for the way it is because it already is the way it is that's the weird thing about the present moment it's already the way it is no matter how you argue in their mind with it the is-ness of things is already the case and that's all there ever is in your entire life your entire life this is not something to just understand intellectually but to grasp at a deeper level your entire life unfolds in the present moment that's all there ever is that's all there ever is is this moment and most people live as if some future moment whether it's a minute from now or tomorrow or next year they live as if some future moment were always more important than this moment that is implied they don't tell themselves the next moment is more important than this one no, it's an assumption, an underlying assumption it's a mindset and that mindset is a form of conditioning cultural conditioning that mindset by implication, if not literally always says there's something more important coming and I'm on my way to it and that is a dysfunctional way to live because you're never fully alive you never feel at home you're always looking for your home in some future moment or when you get old enough and you realize there's little future left then you think about the past more than the next moment which is why many old people talk continuously about the past so coming into alignment with the present moment brings about a shift in consciousness and this is so simple and yet so profound now this shift in consciousness is what our evening here together is all about it is about a transformation of consciousness in you and the reason why you're here most of you is that this transformation of consciousness is already happening it's a process for most people it's already happening in you and you're here because you know that this or you hope that this is an opportunity for deepening this shift in consciousness or accelerating the shift in consciousness there are other terms we could use we could say it is about an awakening of consciousness it is about a spiritual awakening and this is a term that in several spiritual traditions is used and has been used for a long time the term of awaken which implies that the ordinary the normal state of consciousness of most human beings is a kind of dream like state it is a kind of sleep but people if you tell that to somebody says what are you talking about dream I'm completely awake this is just nonsense and then I might say have you noticed that there is a voice in your head that almost never stops talking and commenting and analyzing and interpreting and judging and liking and disliking and all the time it talks and talks it is in your head and if it talks out loud and there is nobody there then you are crazy but it is in your head it talks about you about other people it has comments about things a lot about the future sometimes totally imaginary things that are going to go wrong especially at 3 o'clock in the morning when you are in a warm bed you can start thinking about all the things that are going to go wrong in your life and that is the voice in the head and most people are so identified with the voice that they become the voice they become the compulsive almost obsessive thoughts that continuously roll through their heads and if I say to somebody you are not awake they say what the hell are you talking about and I say that is it, that is the voice that keeps you asleep identification with that voice is a kind of hypnotic trance that you live in on a daily basis what the voice says varies from person to person from culture to culture it is the conditioned mind and the way the mind has been conditioned depends on the surrounding culture that you grow up in if you had grown up in a totally different part of the world somewhere in Africa or in Asia or Saudi Arabia or South America you would have different types of thought not all of them would be different but there is a different type of conditioning that goes with that particular culture but what everybody has in common no matter what the voice says is that they are identified with the voice which means apart from the voice they are not there apart they are the voice they are their mental positions you notice it for example when you start discussing something with someone and you have a disagreement which happens very quickly of course when you start talking to somebody and then quickly you find something to disagree with and you then might notice in the other person it's always easier to notice the unconscious in the other person you might notice in the other person defensiveness and aggression arising and emotion arises they're getting upset because you are questioning their opinion, their viewpoint which they don't even know it's a viewpoint to them it's the truth that's how it is and you question it they are beginning to defend not ultimately their opinion they are beginning to defend their identity because identity is bound up with thought identity sense of identity is derived from the movement of thought that's and so whenever somebody questions something that's connected with your thinking very quickly it is regarded unconsciously of course this is why we call that the unconscious state it is regarded as an attack on your identity it's almost as if somebody was physically attacking you and of course in some cases in very unconscious people even a disagreement can lead to physical violence incredible so the voice in the head is what most people derive their sense of self from all the people who are not yet at least beginning to awaken out of that voice and so that is in the larger context for this is that the evolution of human beings and the evolution of the consciousness of human beings has not come to an end humans are not yet a finished product they are a work in progress if they were a finished product that would be very sad and a terrible tragedy if you look at human history up to now is that the best you can do it would be a tragic thing then you say well god must have made a huge mistake to create beings that create so much unnecessary suffering for themselves and for other human beings that they kill each other by the millions millions and millions just read the first history of the first half of the 20th century it's insane and that is the manifestation of the unconscious state on a collective level and then you have the manifestation of the unconscious state of consciousness on a personal level so on a collective it might manifest as violence between nations and so on but the same mechanism is at work when two people are having an argument and they are beginning to hate each other because they have different opinions you'd be surprised how many people when somebody expresses an opinion that conflicts with theirs whether it's political or religious whatever kind political is a good example somebody questions their viewpoint and immediately they have an emotional meltdown and the other is no longer a human being the other becomes the enemy and this has been going on for thousands of years but of course now with the miraculous arrival of advanced technology called the internet this dysfunction that is in every human being that makes other human beings into enemies because they hold different mental positions now you can get on your keyboard and send out your hatred towards all these dreadful people who have different opinions from yours and then you feel satisfied and you don't know that you are completely unconscious spiritually speaking unconscious is that complete identification with a conditioned mind and the emotions that accompany the conditioned mind and it's the now complete identification with the conditioned mind is what in spiritual terms we call the ego the ego is a very simple definition the unobserved mind complete identification with the mind is your egoic identity and for millions of people on the planet that is who they, not who they are but who they think they are now that's an amazing thing so that has been an evolutionary development in human consciousness the ability to think was an amazing development in human consciousness it's of course bound up with the arising of language the ability to think it was not a mistake it was an incredible step forward in the evolution of human consciousness and has created civilizations and so on but there is a heavy price to pay as there always is in this world of polarities there's a heavy, very heavy price to pay for the power to think, the ability to think and that is that gradually your entire sense of self your sense of who you are becomes bound up with thinking and this happened over a long period of time at first humans started to think from time to time they were surprised, some anthropologists believe that when humans first started to think and use language, they do happen at the same time they were surprised that suddenly there was a voice in their heads talking and they thought a god, some god was talking to them and so they heard this voice go and kill these dreadful people in the other tribe okay and so but you may have, you may know that in many ancient cultures there's a mythological tale of called the Golden Age, you have it in India, you have it in the beginning of the Old Testament, the Garden of Eden and other cultures, as if there were some distant memory in human consciousness, in the collective consciousness of something a state a long, long time ago that was lost and that is the myth of the Golden Age and this of course some people say that's a complete fantasy, that's something humans are longing or some people might say, oh it's a longing to return to the womb before you were born and so on or it could be as I believe the actual distant memory of a state that humans lost and that was the state of connectedness with the totality connectedness with being to have the ability to be rooted in the being of yourself and that is of course how everything in nature still has that when you look at a tree if you can really look at a tree, really sense the presence of the tree the beingness of the tree then you can sense that the tree is not only rooted in the soil but the tree also rests in itself it is very still when you really give yourself a moment and contemplate a tree without formulating words about it, concepts about it, just be with it then you can sense that the tree exists in this field of deep stillness, it just is if the tree could speak it would probably just utter the ancient sound of ancient India which is

[Speaker 7] (9:25:06 - 9:25:06)
om

[Speaker 1] (9:25:13 - 9:26:03)
that's the Oh, by the way, just a little aside. As you know, the languages that we speak in Europe are called Indo-European languages.

And there's a link with Sanskrit, the ancient language of India. And it is my personal theory that the English word home is related to the om sound. And because home, the deepest meaning of home is not your external home.

The deepest meaning of home is to be rooted in the being of yourself.

[Speaker 6] (9:26:28 - 9:27:41)
My question's probably been answered three times. So, and frankly, I can't remember exactly what I wrote. So I'll sort of speak from the cuff.

Talk about the honest no, talk about giving and receiving the honest no in terms of exchanges. I just finished business school and thank God this is a totally different learning experience than what I learned in the classroom. So perhaps talk about exchange and how to give and receive an honest no in business dealings and maybe romantic relationships also.

So the actual question is, what, is there anything in this world that I ought to associate with an exchange the way that economics and business and profit making sort of teaching tells us that that like business, any sort of exchange in business, profiting. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (9:27:43 - 9:27:44)
Whether there's anything wrong with it.

[Speaker 6] (9:27:45 - 9:27:54)
Right. How to deal with an exchange perhaps without being in a business dealing without being taken advantage of or exploited.

[Speaker 1] (9:27:54 - 9:29:35)

Yes. Whether it's business or something else, the question is always whether, what I sometimes call the transcendent dimension is still operating in your life while in the background of your life, while in the foreground, you talk about business dealings with another person or whatever it may be. If the transcendent dimension is not there, then it becomes very problematic and all kinds of psychological self-seeking and so on comes in and interferes with what could be a much more efficient way of even doing business.

It's through self-seeking and seeking something, seeking some advantage through the other that a lot of dysfunction comes into business. So there are always two levels. It's probably easier to give an actual example.

Let's say you want to sell something to somebody, whatever it may be, whether big or small. Maybe you're selling a...

[Speaker 6] (9:29:35 - 9:29:39)
I work in the hospital business. Hospital services, for example.

[Speaker 1] (9:29:39 - 9:48:33)
Yes, yes. So you're always relating, there will be another human being there. You were talking about whatever it is on a practical level that needs to be discussed.

You explain what you have to offer and the other person listens or asks questions. You explain more. Can you, the question is then, can you sense, where's the word, empathy?

Meaning feeling your way into the other human being to feel or to sense the consciousness that is that which animates the other human being. The consciousness behind the words, not what the person says, but the consciousness that enables those words to be articulated. In other words, the essence of that other person.

Can you feel the essence of that person? But you can only feel that if you can feel it in yourself. So while you explain the practical side of it, you're also, there is an awareness behind, at the back of you, of this other human being and you sense the shared consciousness of you and the other.

That sounds perhaps a little bit abstract, but it's actually quite easy. For example, it just means you become very still when you listen to that person because that person will occasionally speak and then you're alert and still. And you begin to sense and acknowledge the aliveness of that human being beyond the function of that human being.

Because on the function level, you have this particular function, a role that you play, and this person has a particular function, a role that he or she plays. Two roles. And people kind of slip into their roles and they act out their roles and that's fine.

There's nothing wrong with that, except that is that all there is? If you are, if the other person is a client, here already we have a role, because the moment you say, my client, you've already, of course, put that person into that role and that person sees him or herself as a client. So he or she accepts the role and you have another word for yourself as this or that, another role.

If there's only that, then you really, the other person becomes to you a means to an end. And if it doesn't work out on the level of your respective roles, not infrequently, there is negative feelings. You see that with many people when the deal is not going to be reached, they get angry and negative.

And suddenly, before they gave you all kinds of things and now suddenly they become angry towards you just because the deal is not being reached, that they wanted, they wanted something from you. They were never interested in you as a being, they were only interested in you as the role because through that they were seeking something to enhance their role. But those that are very good at, that are very successful even in business, tend to be those who are not primarily interested in the outcome of their particular role playing, but are truly interested in the human being.

They enjoy being with the other. That's perhaps how they perceive it, but what that really means, you can only enjoy being with the other when you transcend the limitations of your person, personal selfhood. In other words, the transcendent dimension.

Now that's in any relationship, whether it's an intimate relationship, business relationship, any relationship, is the transcendent dimension there? That is the question. I have occasionally met people who are so in business who want to sell you something and you say, no, not really, after listening to them, no, I'm not really, and they truly don't mind because they love interacting with other humans.

And it's often they that finally, people actually come back to them. They say, no, I'm not interested, I'm going to look at some other of your competitors. Fine, yeah, that's fine.

Why do you have a look around? And they enjoy the interaction in the present moment without making you into a means to an end. So that's the question, bring the transcendent dimension into the relationship and also then the fear that they might cheat you isn't there anymore because that's only, again, as we talked about earlier, the mind projecting itself and being suspicious is an important part of the egoic sense of self.

Suspect what are his motivations? What does he really want? Whereas if you live in presence, you don't even question people's motivations.

You just look and you speak. You don't care what their motivations are. I'm always surprised when people talk about people's motivation, I've never seen that.

Maybe they're right, but I don't see it. Don't want to see it. So in any human interaction, the two dimensions need to be present.

You as the person playing a role, yes, but you are not confined, your consciousness is not confined to that role alone. There is some free consciousness left, so to speak, the unconditioned in the background and you sense that and then that is you beyond the role, you as presence rather than you as a person and also the other. There's the other as a person with his role and then there's the other as consciousness.

So whenever you look at a human being, first you look at the physical and usually when you're in your mind, already the mind will judge the physical and then the next is what you see is the psychological self of that person, what the kind of how they speak, what they say. You look into that and so this is the physical form of the person and then you see the psychological form of the person and usually that's where you get, most humans get stuck there. They see this physical and the psychological and in themselves also they're identified with their physical body and their psychological form identity, I call it.

So they relate only to form, roles, bodies, egos, form identity. Essence identity is the transcendent. So in any situation, can you sense your own essence beyond the person, it's presence.

That's the question and while you are interacting and conducting your business, if you can continue to sense your essence while you talk about the products or whatever it is, your attention is not totally absorbed by that and then the strange thing happens, people love you because they feel so good in your presence. Maybe not everybody, some may not get it at all. They're so identified with their mind that they don't get it at all but most people have some, a little bit of an opening where they can sense that you are present.

They don't have a word for it. What they register is that they like to be in your company and so I experience that occasionally, I visit an accountant and always, we love, I don't like, I have no idea what the accountant is talking about ever. So the moment she opens her mouth, and talks for 10 minutes, I haven't understood a single word but the interaction is lovely because I go there and look at her and we talk about the weather, how was the weekend but there's more than the words.

There's a meeting on a deeper level and while she talks and I don't understand, I'm just present. I don't even try because I know I won't understand it. Just presence and we have wonderful interaction.

She loves hearing from me and there's just one example of bringing transcendence into ordinary situation. So I believe if I became a second car, second hand car salesperson, I would do very well because I don't care whether they buy the car or not. I'm just.

Thank you. Something much more pleasant is our interaction at this moment. don't, whatever you want to buy, buy it or don't buy it, but I enjoy the interaction of this moment.

It's much more enjoyable than any future moment where you might buy it or not. It's just wonderful if you don't care about that. And of course that's already expressed in the, what I call don't care is expressed in the Bhagavad Gita, the ancient Indian sacred scripture, where it is called karma yoga, which means not to be attached to the fruit of your action.

That means not to be attached to the outcome, the mentally projected outcome, but simply to be present with the action. The fruit will look after itself. That's what it says.

And Jesus puts it in slightly different words. He says, don't be concerned about tomorrow, but tomorrow will look after itself. That's also because the fruit is the future outcome.

So the beautiful teaching of karma yoga is to bring presence into whatever you do, so that the doing is not a means to an end, at least not primarily. There may also, a little bit of that may be there, a means to an end, because the reason why this person has come to you when you're a car salesman is because he wanted to buy a car. So there's a little bit present of that reason, but the true reason is the human interaction.

If that comes the primary thing, then all these relationships are enjoyable in themselves. And the amazing thing is the fruit of the action is actually much more bountiful when you are not looking to it. The bounty comes of itself because you give your fullest attention to the present moment.

You don't have a large percentage of your attention where you want to get to, the fruit of the action. So you lose power then. You lose not egoic power, but true spiritual power.

When you take your attention into this is what I want, then a lot of your attention is there, and then you are interacting there as a means towards getting there. It just doesn't work. So really anything you do can become karma yoga, it can become a spiritual practice.

That's the beauty of it, by letting go of attachment to the outcome. A huge amount of conflict disappears from your life, totally unnecessary but very normal conflict, when you let go of attachment to the fruit of your action, of the outcome, then you can just be with the present moment. Because an enormous amount of conflict is generated by people who are attached to the outcome.

Even just humans letting go of that, the amount of conflict on the planet would be reduced enormously. But we don't have to wait for others to do it, we have to do it for ourselves. So experience the freedom that comes when you let go of attachment to the outcome of what you're doing.

Then you can truly give your fullest attention to the doing, and there's joy in that, there's a liveness in that. So your whole life becomes a spiritual practice. Your entire life then becomes the spiritual practice, and it becomes increasingly present moment centred.

That's where the power is. And it's in you, but it's not of you, not the form of you. Just wonderful.

So happy practice, and when things arise, negativity and upset or whatever arises, often you may ask yourself, am I attached to the outcome here, what I want to come of this situation? Or am I giving my fullest attention to that? The moment you're attached to the outcome, ultimately you suffer.

You suffer. And some people still need that, they're not ready to hear, let go of the attachment to the outcome, they're not ready to hear it and need a bit more suffering. As long as you need suffering, you'll get it.

For many people suffering is their spiritual teacher, and eventually it awakens you. When you've suffered enough, and then at that moment when you're ready to not suffer anymore, you've had enough of it, something comes into your life that shows you another way. It could be a book, it could be something you overhear on the radio or television, a comment, or you meet somebody who says something, or you walk in a bookstore and the Power of Now falls off the shelf as you walk.

Which actually happened to one person who told me that story. She walked in and the Power of Now fell off the shelf and she picked it up, and it changed her life. This is why there's a saying, when the student is ready, the teacher appears.

And that's always the case. So don't get too concerned if you know people who you're hoping and wanting that they are ready to hear what you're saying or to get it, and they don't, it's fine, they will in time. If they don't, just a little bit more, they need a little bit more of that teacher that's called suffering.

The most popular spiritual teacher on the planet. The greatest guru. No doubt about that.

A moment of stillness, although the stillness has been there in the background all the time.[Speaker 1] (1:28 - 6:28)
In this lecture, we are going to look at the relationship between quantum mechanics and In quantum mechanics, quantum mechanics is defined as the relationship between quantum Quantum mechanics is defined as the relationship between quantum mechanics and quantum Your state of consciousness is the most important factor in your life. Not what happens to you externally, but your state of consciousness determines how you perceive the world, what actions you take, how you react, and how you behave.

to circumstances and events, your relationships with people and other life forms.

It is, in other words, primary. The primary factor in your life is not the events or whatever circumstances of your life may be, successes, failures, and so on, but your state of consciousness. So you should give your state of consciousness in the present moment, that's when it arises, your consciousness inseparable from the present moment, give it your fullest attention.

It is more important than anything you do externally. And in fact, what you do arises out of your consciousness. So wise or skillful action, action that is helpful and does not create further suffering, further problems, arises out of state that is non-egoic, the state that we may call presence or awareness.

For thousands of years, humans have been trapped in egoic consciousness, and all the ancient spiritual teachings and religions have stressed the fact that there's something dysfunctional within human consciousness, which in many ways is a wonderful thing and quite miraculous, but there's an element of, a strong element of dysfunction in human consciousness that was already there thousands of years ago.

It now is becoming intensified and is amplified by our scientific and technological knowledge. The Buddha stressed the fact that you are condemned to a life of ultimately suffering in one way or another, unless you awaken. So the Buddha pointed to the possibility of awakening, which is a shift into the state of presence out of the egoic state.

And that will change the way in which you experience your life and how you affect others. And in the Christian teachings, the term salvation is often used. So Jesus points to the possibility of salvation because there's something not right.

Jesus said, for example, you are the slaves of sin. Sin, literal translation of the word as used in the Greek Old Testament, New Testament, is missing the mark of human existence. So you fail, there's a failure, missing the mark like an archer who misses the mark.

That's sin, the slaves of sin. And sin is therefore unconsciousness. The destiny of humans is to evolve into the awakened consciousness.

And this is why I am offering you here some doorways into the awakened state.

[Speaker 5] (6:44 - 7:14)
Manifestation, creating things consciously is important, but it's not of primary importance.

[Speaker 1] (7:14 - 9:41)
It is of secondary importance. Important enough, but there's something that's of primary importance, and that is to become conscious of your connectedness with, now, whatever term you want to use to point to it, your connectedness with, your oneness with, that which transcends all manifestation, that which transcends the world of physical forms, also transcends the world of mental forms, emotional forms. It transcends your identity as a person.

To connect with that, connect implies a duality, so it's not really connect. It's to become aware of your oneness with a deeper realm of being. And here, this is a good word.

Being, to become aware of your essential beingness, your essential identity as the I am, which is nothing to do with any mental concept. Mental concepts are also in the realm of forms, of the manifested realm, or sometimes in philosophy, it's called the phenomenal realm. The realm of phenomena, things happen, they arise, they pass away, and then interesting things continuously arise in your personal life and collectively.

There's infinite creativity at work. Just listen to the news tonight, and you see how infinitely creative the universe is in creating extremely challenging problems and situations. The challenges ultimately seem to be a great obstacle in one's life, whether they are of a personal kind or collective kind, and sometimes the two cannot be separated.

[Speaker 2] (9:43 - 10:06)
These often seem to be the greatest obstacle, but as you come to deeper realizations, you begin to see that the challenges are actually a necessary part of finding the path to transcendence.

[Speaker 1] (10:07 - 10:13)
The challenges push you into awakening.

[Speaker 5] (10:14 - 10:20)
They force you, eventually, they force you to awaken. So it's all fine.

[Speaker 1] (10:28 - 20:12)
The most important thing is the realization of the importance of being, which is also the foundation for any kind of manifestation you want to do. I sometimes use this weird analogy. It came to me years ago when I was in meditation.

I was just in a space of thoughtless awareness for quite a while, just sense the beingness of myself. Which is one with the being of the universe. And then I opened my eyes and I started becoming aware of sense perceptions again.

And it very clearly saw, I was actually sitting in a park in London many years ago. And then I looked around, I saw the trees and people in there and the grass and the sky. And then this weird analogy came to me.

It felt like whatever I was perceiving through the senses was a skimmed milk. And what I had just come out of and realized was the cream that is being. Everything arises out of the being.

The being gives rise to forms. The being itself is formless. And so become aware of the cream and then you realize whatever you perceive with your senses, the phenomenal realm is the skimmed milk.

It's one with, of course, skimmed milk is not separate from the cream. It's just thin. It's differentiated kind of.

There's other things in it, more water, but let's not take this too far. This analogy, there's the, so when you realize the I am, and I'm not just, hopefully not just talking about it because as I'm pointing to it, it may be possible for you to verify in your own experience, if only a little bit, verify what it is that I'm pointing to so that it doesn't remain a mere concept. Your own spiritual awakening came about spontaneously while you were in the midst of a depression.

Now you teach people various approaches to awakening, such as paying attention to the inner body. But since your own awakening happened on its own accord, not because of techniques or approaches, what makes you think that what you are teaching will actually work for people since you did not use any of these approaches to awaken? If awakening happens spontaneously, why meditate?

Why pay attention to the inner body? Why invite awakening in any way? Why indeed?

Now you may have noticed I have never said to anybody, you should listen to me or you should pay attention to the inner body or you should be conscious or whatever. But I have never said to anybody, for some people, the awakening happens spontaneously, very quickly. For other people, the awakening is a more gradual process.

And all the things I mentioned in the question, in paying attention to the inner body, meditate, any kind of spiritual work is not separate from the awakening, but it's part of the awakening. It is the awakening consciousness that makes you do these things. It is not something separate from the awakening process, but part of the awakening process.

If you come here more than once, you're awakening. Once could be a mistake. Or if you read an entire book, an entire spiritual book that's truly empowered by spirit and you're enjoying it, you're awakening.

Now you could read a few pages and hate it or you could read an entire book because you had to write a review about it and hate it. That's possible. So there are some exceptions to this, but then you're not enjoying it.

So we can't separate the awakening from what is happening to you right now. You would not be drawn to this if the awakening were not happening. So in other words, you are awakening.

And if you are awakening, then you may feel that a pull towards that, but the pull is not so much, the mind may misinterpret it. It may say, I need to become fully awake. But you're awakening already, right?

It's already happening. That's why you're here and why you're listening. So we can't really separate that.

And another similar question, it's almost the same question as this, is do we do something? These are very two extreme schools of teachings, spiritual teachings. You have to work hard at it.

Otherwise you won't get it, says one. The other one says there's nothing you can do. But you're not going to work hard at it just because somebody tells you you need to work hard at it.

You work hard at it, if you even can call it that. Something wants to come through here, through this form. Something wants to come through you.

And so then you take up some spiritual practice. There's an inner urge to take up spiritual practice. That's the awakening.

It's happening. It wants to make room. And sometimes the awakening makes room drastically, just pushes everything out of the way, like a volcano.

And at other times and more frequently, the awakening is a more gradually eroding of the egoic layers that cover the splendor that's underneath, that which wants to come forth. It's a gradual erosion from within and from without. Suffering helps too, a little bit.

So it's undergoing the process of awakening. So you're awakening already. It's not something that's going to happen.

Doesn't mean that occasionally you can't be asleep. I mean, spiritually speaking, you can still go back to sleep periodically. Most people do.

That's why it's called awakening process. Means there's a falling back, all patterns. You don't go like that.

You go like... And sometimes... No.

No. No. The mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive.

To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation.

[Speaker 6] (20:45 - 24:59)
A few months ago, after knowing Eckhart Tolle for a while and studying the books, I woke up and I suddenly got it. I understood suddenly how thought was just an illusory thing and how thought is responsible for, if not all, most of the suffering we experience. And then I suddenly felt like I was looking at these thoughts from another perspective.

And I wondered, who is it that's aware that I'm thinking? And suddenly I was thrown into this expansive, amazing feeling of freedom from myself from my problems. I saw that I was bigger than what I do.

I was bigger than my body. I was everything and everyone. I was no longer a fragment of the universe.

I was the universe. And ever since that day, I've been trying to get back there. It comes and it goes, it's like riding a wave.

Sometimes I'm on, sometimes I'm off, but at least I know where I want to go and that I want to take as many people with me as I possibly can because the feeling is amazing. You know, it's our intention. Our intention is everything.

Nothing happens on this planet without it. Not one single thing has ever been accomplished without intention. So I started thinking about my life and I started thinking about this conference and what we're about and I looked back and I thought, well, I was two people my whole life.

I was in the living room entertaining people, being a monkey, doing my thing for the company and trying to relieve my mother who was suffering. She had rheumatoid arthritis and phlebitis and everything under the sun that was nagging at her and she was depressed and I wanted her to be free and I wanted her to realize that her life was worth something because she gave birth to someone who's worth something. And then I would go into my room and I would sit with a legal pad.

I was a little kid. I would sit there and I would try to figure out what it meant, what it was all about. Why are we here?

What is this? And one day I read something from Buddha that said that all spirituality is about relieving suffering and I suddenly realized that's what I'm doing in the other room and I'm aligned. My purpose is aligned with this.

So I felt incredibly lucky. I lose sight of that all the time. I get caught up in different concerns and ego concerns but I'm so lucky to be a part of this community and to do something that is of value.

[Speaker 1] (25:30 - 1:18:01)
Welcome to our live Easter meditation. You're here not because you want to awaken but because you are awakening. Unless somebody dragged you here or wherever you are, wherever you're here is, if our meditations are deeply enjoyable then you are

awakening.

So this is all part of the awakening, the collective awakening process goes far beyond the personal. In fact, that which is transcended in the awakening process is the personal dimension. Transcended does not mean it gets totally eliminated but you go beyond it.

It no longer dominates your consciousness. And in a manner of speaking, you die to the personal dimension. And for some of you or many of you, most of you, it's a gradual dying process.

And for a few, it's a drastic and sudden death. For most, as I said, it's a gradual dying of the being centered in a personalized sense of identity. And that dying of the personal self of which our being together here is a part, that's the Good Friday message.

The truth contained within that. And the death, as I see it, the death of Jesus happens on Friday and the birth of Christ, the resurrection, the rebirth into a different dimension happens at Easter. And until the death of the personal sense of self is voluntarily embraced, it's painful.

But what's even more painful is to be trapped in that narrow sense of self. What is that narrow sense of self? Consciousness is identified with form.

Another way of putting it, consciousness is trapped in form, doesn't know it, dreamlike state. Whenever you get upset about trivial things, what he did or he said or she did or she said or your parents or your spouse or your ex-spouse or money matters and you get upset, and reactive, that's a good indication that consciousness is trapped in form. And then form becomes all important, which is a delusion.

So you are trapped. Another way of putting it, you don't know who you are. Another way of putting it, you are nailed to the cross of matter.

You are nailed, you, consciousness, are nailed to the cross of form. And you suffer. Eventually, you surrender.

In other words, the reactive entity does not operate anymore and then you're free. The awakening to who you are beyond form. The words I'm speaking here are, of course, thought forms, but there is the unseen dimension to our being together here that has nothing to do with thought or sense perceptions, but it's the awareness that is arising of consciousness itself, the formless dimension in you, one could say.

The words which are form, thought forms, continuously point to that. That to which they point is, of course, beyond words, beyond form, is who you are essentially, and you recognize it as we sit together here, that there is something here that is not the words, not what you see, not the image of this person, the form, but something arises from within you that you cannot name, although I occasionally try to find a little word for it, inner space, stillness, awareness itself arises. That's where the person is transcended.

Of course, this is helpful to be here together and enter that dimension or allow that dimension to rise in which the person is transcended. The real challenge is in everyday life, which for many people seems to consist of nothing but the personal and all the personal concerns. And some of you who are able to be here or sometimes when you're not disturbed or you go out into nature or sit quietly in a room, you can become still, alert, present, transcend the personal.

And some of you, yes, you're able to, it's beautiful. The awakening is happening. And some of you are not able yet to sustain it the moment a challenge comes from the world of the personal.

Now, the phone rings. Are you able, when you answer the phone and talk to whoever, your accountant, be there as the person who deals with whatever needs to be dealt with, but also not lose awareness of spaciousness? Let's see the real, your purpose for being here, not just here now on this planet here, is to master that art of being rooted in the impersonal and still dealing with the world of form, the world of matter, the world of thoughts.

Ultimately, more effectively than before, because one of the great benefits of mastering this art of this dancing, the dance between form and formlessness, one of the most wonderful benefits is you lose your fear of form, the world, other people. In other words, you lose fear. And fear is that which blocks love, which would naturally be there in the absence of fear.

Fear ultimately saying form is all there is. Now, a belief that there is something beyond form doesn't help you. Belief, I believe in God, I believe in the spiritual dimension, that doesn't help you because a belief is still a thought form, so you still have fear.

It needs to be an actual realization, not an understanding thing as, oh, now I understand. No, it's not that kind of realization. A knowing, non-conceptual knowing, a living knowing of that in you that is formless, that is still, present, alert, spacious.

You have to bring that into this world, into the world of madness. Madness meaning the complete, absence of transcendence. Otherwise, the world makes you mad.

And whenever you go back into the world, you become mad again, like everybody else. So you can bring sanity to the world, or you can allow the world to make you mad, draw you into its madness. Whenever you're fighting something or someone, the world is drawing you into its madness.

Of course, somebody 2,000 years ago, already said that, forgive your enemies, is basically the same thing, saying the same thing. Don't fight anything or anybody. Fighting is a form of self-destruction.

It's an inner state of consciousness, a reactive state of consciousness. Any reactivity is a form of fighting. So you have all the fights in the world that are not working because they are fights, the fight against terrorism, the fight against drugs, the fight against crime, the fight against poverty, the fight against illness.

So these are not solutions, they add to the problems. The solutions, that's not really solutions, there is one solution to all the problems, which is find the transcendent dimension in you. And it's not a question of saying, okay, I found it now, what's next?

By finding means to continuously live that knowing. It's not a once, okay, I found it now, I'm awakened. It's a continuous knowing in the background of your life, non-conceptual.

Awareness stays with you. That's what it is. Shines through the personal.

And then through that, the light that shines through the person that was before was so heavy and dense, that is what transcendence means. Now, I had quite a few questions about, well, two things, one, quite a few questions about the refugees or migrants that are pouring into Europe, how some here that I picked at random and then there are others, how best to be in a state of compassion and so on. It's already wonderful to see that there is a lot of compassion and especially in some countries, like Scandinavian countries, Germany, and so on.

There is a lot of openness and compassion towards the suffering of others. And it's heartening to see that. There's also a lot of fear in other countries and also in Germany and Scandinavia of what might happen to their society, their cultural values, if there's a continuing inflow of people.

So it's a question of balancing the heart and the head. A time will come when there will be no more borders, but at the moment, just as a time will come when we don't need laws anymore, but for the time being, they still have a function. If we open borders totally, then of course, the entire social system would break down.

There are not enough jobs for everybody. There's nowhere to live. After a while, if millions and millions come in, that would be the end.

So compassion is wonderful and needs to be balanced with wisdom, compassion and wisdom as a balance. The middle way, the Buddha's recommendation is the middle way. The challenge is initially on a physical level, finding accommodation and work.

A greater challenge is the integration, which hasn't really been done very well in most countries. So they need to focus on that, because if they don't focus on the integration, it could lead to huge challenges for the society. Which would be fine too, because humans evolve through challenges.

But if you can have wisdom, then you'd no longer need a huge challenge to develop because by applying wisdom to a situation, which means a balanced view, by applying wisdom to a situation, you prevent it from becoming a huge challenge. And if you cannot apply wisdom to a situation, then it will become a huge challenge. And that will be fine too, because humans evolve through challenges.

Wisdom usually means that, yes, there'll still be challenges, but you don't create gigantic challenges for yourself. In the absence of wisdom, you do. That's...

So it's an interesting fact that not only for individuals, but also for the collectives, there's a continuous, one thing after another arises. Oh no, now this. First it was Greece was the big challenge.

And now you have an even bigger challenge. It's as if some script writer for the drama, the collective drama, infinitely creative script writing. Okay, what can we do now for the next episode of humanity?

Now let's give them that. It's a challenge for, of course, for the refugees themselves. It's a huge challenge.

And for the others where they go to, it's also becoming a challenge and could become a huge challenge. Mindset, people, these people come from different places that represent different forms of conditioning of their mind, just as in the West, the mind is conditioned in certain ways. So in the West is only just arrived at certain insights through painful, very painful, insane behavior that they manifest in until recently.

They've only just arrived at a fragile realization of the importance of seeing another person's point of view or another coming to a compromise rather than wanting my way or our way through incredible suffering that they inflicted on themselves. They've now arrived at this fragile point where they value tolerance and compassion. And that's been a long road and it could be lost again easily.

It's only just, it's part of the growth of, it implies some diminishment of ego in order to practice tolerance and compassion means on a collective level, there has been some diminishment of ego and it has happened through suffering that was self-inflicted through endless wars culminating in the insanity of the first and second world war and genocide and so on. So all that self-inflicted suffering has finally brought them to this point and it has been going on for centuries. The gradual equality for women to value equally man and woman is also relatively recent.

We've arrived at now, the separation of church and state also was a relative recent achievement and that took centuries again of struggle. And not all parts of the world have arrived yet at that stage. They're still stuck in other more intolerant mindsets.

And this is why the integration is very important because integration means, are they able to adapt to our mindset? Now, there are some people who say, all cultures are totally equal, it's just different. I would suggest that there is such a thing as a development in cultural values and the development of collective consciousness.

And if a society displays compassion and tolerance towards others, that is a sign that there has been a development in consciousness in that society. If another society displays intolerance, then that hasn't happened yet. Even in European societies, not that long ago, there was huge intolerance.

So what is the mindset that people come with? Are they able to undergo the shift? That is the question.

Is there going to develop an alternative society that has a totally different mindset within the same country that remains to be seen? It is a challenge. There are many good signs.

It's wonderful to see the compassion that is in many humans now in Europe. And it is also understandable that in others, there's also fear. There are some small minorities in Europe that are very unconscious, that violently attack or try to attack immigrants, but that group is relatively small.

So let's see where this challenge takes us. Humanity ultimately is going to evolve as a whole, as a single organism, more and more. So, and it seems natural that there's more coming together now of cultures that before were totally separate.

Now it's growing into something that we cannot foresee what form exactly it will take. Societies that are still in a different mindset, there are still places on the planet where the collective mindset corresponds to the Middle Ages in Europe. Not saying that those places cannot have humans who are highly evolved, just as in the medieval times in Europe, there were human beings.

Some human beings were deeply spiritual, egoless and highly evolved. Even within those societies which collectively were quite ignorant and deeply, deeply in the grip of the collective ego, which in Middle Ages in Europe took the form of religious dogma and so on. So there are still some societies which are at about that time period.

So that the shift can be speeded up. If they come to the West, to what extent can they go beyond their mindset and not all the refugees are from those parts of the world because the Middle East, there are many different energy fields. Syria is not the same as Afghanistan.

It's not the same as Iraq and so on. There were ancient cultures in many of those places that predate European culture. And Islam, for example, in itself, Islam in the Middle Ages was more advanced and more tolerant than Christianity, more culturally advanced.

And so it's not the religion. A religion does not exist outside the consciousness of the people who practice the religion. So really it's what is the state of consciousness of the people who practice the religion.

It doesn't exist outside of that. It's something in human consciousness. This is a huge thing that perhaps some other time we can talk about it in more detail.

So let's welcome the challenge and see if you, on a personal level, if you live in Europe and you can help, you feel called upon to help, that's a wonderful thing to do. Thank you. The question is whether at this moment you can know or sense within yourself that underlying presence that is deeper than the person.

And it's very hard. It's very intangible. It's very elusive.

You can't say it's here or it's there. It's all pervasive. It's your own presence.

And if you're thinking very much, you can't sense it, not while you're engaged in thinking about it. Okay, where is the presence? I'm trying to find it, but I can't.

I wonder if I'm doing something wrong. Well, the only thing you're doing wrong is you're trying to find it through thinking. So if thinking subsides for a moment, what remains seems like nothing at first, a spacious, just a space.

But in that space, which at first seems like nothing and certainly doesn't seem interesting, that space, if you don't immediately run away from it, and then gradually you begin to sense that there is a depth there and a peace, and there is more to it than one could ever put into words to that emptiness. And that connects you with something that transcends the thinking mind, but without which there would be no thinking. That is the ripple becoming aware of its own depths where it is more than the ripple.

And then the ripple continues to be a ripple for a little while, but the way in which it experiences the world, the surface world, actually is different because it senses a deep connectedness with something that it cannot be named really, something deep and vast. And it can sense that as the foundation for its life at the very essence of its life. Could you speak about the role of conscience in the awakening experience?

How is the sense of moral right and wrong manifest in the egoic state versus a more awakened state? Conscience. The strange thing is that in some languages such as French or Spanish, consciousness and conscience are the same word.

They don't have separate words for consciousness and conscience. English has separate words, German has separate words, French and Spanish don't. I don't know about other languages.

So conscience, of course, is an intuitive knowing of right and wrong. And deep down, everybody has that in the same way that deep down, everybody has consciousness that may be obscured by the egoic mind. And it's only when presence begins to run your life, you live predominantly through presence that there's absolutely no longer any doubt about right and wrong.

Right action happens spontaneously. You don't inflict suffering on others in order to enhance or protect yourself. The ego may talk about conscience or what's right or wrong, but when it comes to actual situations, the ego will always serve itself first.

So it will inflict suffering on others without knowing it. In the egoic state, you have no empathy. The more you're in the grip of the ego, the less empathy you have with other humans or other life forms.

So there's a complete absence of the conscience. The ability to have empathy is covered up. It's there somewhere deep down, but it's covered up.

And you cannot sense your way into another human being, which is what empathy is. So it's almost like suffering from a disability, certainly a dysfunction. And that is where this huge amount of suffering is created by humans for other humans, including killings, because you don't know what you are doing anymore.

Not anymore, you don't know what you're doing. In the words of Jesus on the cross, forgive them for they know not what they do. And not knowing what you do, some you may ask, what do you mean they don't know what they do?

If you have a terrorist like the man in Norway who goes around shooting people, he has a certain rational, seemingly rational explanations for what he's doing. He explains it all, he can write it down, saying this is all, it all makes sense to me, he says. In what sense can we possibly say he doesn't know, he knows full well what he's doing?

Well, yes, he knows on the level of conceptual knowing, he knows what he's doing. But there are two ways of knowing in a human being. One is the conceptual knowing.

When I walk in the forest, I know the forest to some extent conceptually. The trees, I know the names of some of the trees or plants. I know the name of the forest.

I can, I have other conceptual knowledge, I even know myself as the form that I am. Eckhart is walking in the forest. Conceptually, I know what's happening, I can explain it.

I'm walking in the forest, I'm seeing this tree, I'm seeing that, I'm smelling the air now. And this and that, I can explain it. I can name it and know it conceptually.

But whether I'm truly experiencing the forest depends on whether another level of knowledge is active or activated in me. And that's non-conceptual knowing. And in non-conceptual knowing, when I look at a tree, and I can feel and I can sense the tree's being or aliveness.

And I can perceive the totality of the forest with all the look around and feel the, I can feel the energy field of the forest. Without any labeling, I feel the aliveness of it. I know it, but not through concepts.

I also know myself walking in the forest, but not as a concept. Me, Eckhart, the writer, is walking in the forest as a concept. But I can, I can sense the consciousness that I am and that is the deeper knowing.

And it's only through the consciousness that I am that I can be aware beyond concepts of the aliveness all around me. And only then am I in wonder and awe of the forest. Before, if I only have conceptual knowledge of the forest, I may have some ideas in my head that say, oh, it's a nice forest, but I don't really know that.

I certainly wouldn't be able to feel the sacredness of the forest. I wouldn't know the forest on that level. I would only know it on a superficial level.

And so, because so many humans are identified with concepts, the entire consciousness consists of an accumulation of concepts, including concepts they have about themselves, which is the ego. Concepts they have about others, they relate to others through their mental concepts. Naming, judging, opinions.

And concepts easily get agitated. The bundle of concepts in people's heads in the absence of a deeper level of knowing, very often these bundles of concepts that people consist of become agitated about other concepts. That's the ego.

Just look on the internet, how about people, what they write. Some people get angry and upset. It's full of that.

Aggression. Concepts fighting other concepts. They're not relating to other human beings.

It's a conceptualised reality, trying to survive. It's all part of the madness of the ego. So the question is whether conscience implies an ability to empathise.

And you can only have empathy... if the second, the deeper level of knowing has become activated in you, so that you're no longer trapped in concepts. Can use them, but you're not trapped, imprisoned by concepts.

Then you suddenly realise when you relate to another human, you empathise, which means... The word, by the way, is only about, I think 200 years old or something like that. It came into English via German, translating a German term, which wasn't also created about that time.

The German word is Einfühlung, which means to feel yourself into someone. And then you don't... You know, now you know what you do.

You cannot, in fact, you cannot inflict... ..suffering when you have empathy. Then something stops you.

It's like you're doing it to yourself. There seems to be a gradual growth of the ability to empathise. If you look at the past, when humans, for example, they loved watching executions in the village square or the city square, and laughing at disability was also common.

Disabled people were treated very badly. It seems that not being able to laugh it was harder for them to empathise. Who knows?

There's even a book I came across recently, quite interesting, that somebody wrote an account of... I don't remember, unfortunately, the name of the author. He wrote an account of world history from the point of view of the growth of empathy.

And the title of the book is Empathic Civilisation. So, it all is to do with the two levels of knowing. Knowing through concepts, it has its place, but does not make you into a...

..full human being. It's only when the deeper level is activated... ..we could call that unitive knowing, then you become truly human. What is the role of sex in consciousness? How should it be approached as a way to be more awake? Are lust and casual sex a detriment to consciousness?

Are they always detrimental? LAUGHTER Well, let's see if I can remember. LAUGHTER No, sex, of course, is a wonderful thing.

We could call it an addiction that nature has built into the human so that they continue to survive as a species, because if that addiction were not built in, that causes pleasure, if that were not built into the human body, who would engage in that absurd act? Because it's such a pull, it does have a tendency of making humans unconscious. You may have observed it in yourself when it takes over.

It's a very strong pull that you go... LAUGHTER ..or you may go into your mind.

[Speaker 10] (1:18:02 - 1:18:05)
LAUGHTER So it's either out there...

[Speaker 2] (1:18:07 - 1:18:10)
..or you go...

[Speaker 1] (1:18:10 - 1:29:39)
LAUGHTER And, of course, it pulls you towards where it wants to go, which is the final orgasm. That's where it wants you to go. So, tantra is an ancient Indian way of engaging in sexuality without losing consciousness, but growing in consciousness through it, bringing consciousness into something that usually would make you unconscious.

And the simple thing is to become the observer at any stage, so that you... Let's say the sexual impulse arises, for whatever reason, you see something or think of something, or someone, rather, to bring awareness to it without needing to take it anywhere, to bring awareness to it and just feel it and sense it and be the awareness for it. And if you're with another person, not necessarily engage in the full act of sexuality, but even if it's just a touching, to be aware with that, bring awareness to that, to the sense perceptions, so that awareness arises even as the impulse is there.

You meet it with awareness. And that's a beautiful spiritual practice, and then you don't always need to take it to the end. You can actually enjoy it more than when it takes you over and makes you unconscious.

I call it an addiction. It really becomes a true addiction when it takes over your mind, and then you compulsively seek sexual partners, in which case it really pulls you towards more and more unconsciousness and becomes one of the ways in which the mind seeks fulfillment and never finds it. And that's where the song implies, I can't get no satisfaction.

And then you need the next fix. It can become a true addiction in the conventional sense, like a drug. It can become that.

If there's a sexual impulse, let's say you look at a man or a woman and there's a slight sexual impulse, you can just be with that. And that's the beginning of tantra. You don't need to go anywhere.

You don't need to go up to that person and say whatever your pickup line is. But just be allowed to watch the beauty of it, the male form, the female form, and be aware, and at any stage bring awareness to it. This applies to anything that tends to make you unconscious, any strong urge, like let's say overeating, if that is your urge, if you can bring awareness to the impulse of wanting to eat before acting on it, that is tantra too.

Anything that usually pulls you to unconsciousness, when you bring awareness into it, you actually use it in your growth of awareness. The very thing that before made you unconscious can then be used and make you more conscious. So if your impulse is to overeat and in the middle of the night you find yourself, without you knowing it, you got up and your hand is on the refrigerator door, and in that moment you wake up, I mean truly wake up, and feel the urge to open the door and take out the chocolate cake, then you can observe the impulse inside you and you can sit down for a couple of minutes and feel this urge to indulge in the need to take something in and feel it fully. You may find sometimes it subsides as you bring awareness to it. It begins to subside.

If it doesn't subside, maybe you still have to eat the chocolate cake, but at least there was some awareness and if you bring awareness into the eating, ah, because it's only you really overeat when you lose awareness. If you eat consciously, we have Janine here who wrote a book about it. She could talk to you much better, explain it much better than I can.

So bring awareness to the act of eating, then I believe, I've never actually had the problem of overeating. I've had other addictions, but that wasn't one. If you bring awareness to it, the desire to overeat, I would say, would quickly subside if you eat consciously.

So anything that pulls you usually towards unconsciousness, use it as awareness practice. There could be any other addiction too. Drug, whatever drug, whatever substance you use, feel the need inside you.

Feel it arise. Watch it, observe it. Allow it to be there so that it doesn't take you over.

It's only when you're unaware that these things can completely take you over. So you're not fighting it as such. Awareness never fights it.

Awareness is really the space in which it arises because you're not fighting against it. You're not pushing it down. Don't do that with sex because they've tried that for hundreds of years.

Aesthetics, religious practices, pushing it down, it makes it far worse because then it seeks channels that are actually quite destructive. Because sexuality is such an enormous urge, you can't push it down. Rather than pushing it down, it would be preferable to have a different sexual partner every night.

It's probably preferable to pushing it down. So that's not the answer. But to meet it in awareness, that's where whatever would usually be an addictive urge that makes you unconscious, meet it in the space of awareness where then it comes in there and it goes, shh, and maybe another wave comes, shh, and in that spaciousness that you are, it comes in and talks.

It's like a dark cloud. It comes into the space of the blue expanse and then it goes, shh, and then another one comes, shh. So whatever the impulse is, awareness is the answer, not fighting against it.

And, of course, cutting the link also in sexuality, especially the link between thinking and the sexual urge. Otherwise it can keep you awake at night. You see the source of power in that teacher, which it isn't.

It's in you. Very good teachers. It's time for you to leave now.

I'm thinking about the evolution of spirituality and how over time more people have had access and it's moved from a situation where... Yeah, this is nerve-wracking. Anyways, it's moved from a situation where often esoteric mysticism was not accessible and now it's much more accessible.

And I'm curious if you see a point in the future where the student-teacher, the guru-student relationship will begin to pass in favor of a direct feed where we're able to draw in the wisdom directly ourselves or maybe through something like Bohem Krishna Murli Dialoguing where it's an instinctual process. And my concern is, I think as long as there's a student-teacher relationship, we're always looking up to the person who can rather than looking into ourselves. Yes.

Thank you. Thank you. And this is very true.

This is why it's often a wonderful thing for people who have been following a particular teaching or teacher. It's a wonderful thing for the followers when the teacher finally passes away. I have no immediate plans, and often they're distraught when it happens.

They feel abandoned because there was such an attachment. There was ego in that too, but they didn't know it. They feel like a child.

Suddenly the main parent figure is gone. So they're thrown back upon themselves. And some of them remain in that state of disorientation, but others are able to suddenly realize what they didn't realize before.

But I hope this is not the case here. It's more likely to happen if they kind of almost worship a guru-like figure, which there's still quite a few of those around in the world. Then it's much more likely that you see the source of power in that teacher, which it isn't.

It's in you. So it's if the teacher... Some teachers actually send their disciples away.

They're very good teachers. They say, it's time for you to leave now. What?

[Speaker 10] (1:29:39 - 1:29:40)
Oh my God.

[Speaker 1] (1:29:41 - 1:34:41)
Yes. So you're ready. It's like a little bird.

The time comes when the bird has to leave the nest. Don't be like this 30-year-old man who refuses to move out of his parents' home. So it's to be able...

It's not only the teacher. It's also the teaching to be able to use the help that the universe gives you. You know the famous phrase, when the student is ready, the teacher appears.

So when you are ready, whatever corresponds to your state of consciousness, helpful thing comes to you. It could be a book. It could be something, a person you meet or something like this.

So I believe that the guru-disciple relationship perhaps eventually will disappear in its traditional form and will be replaced by something more informal. This already is a little bit more informal. There's not that attachment, I hope, to the figure of the...

There's not all the confusion between the vehicle through which the teaching comes and the teaching. And I sometimes say I feel like a window frame. And of course, the light comes through the window.

And so don't confuse the frame, the window frame with that which transcends all form. When you can sense the presence sitting here and your mind might interpret it as perhaps coming from me, but when you can sense the presence, where do you sense it? It's in you.

You sense it in you. A good teacher always encourages you not to become attached, to go your own way. If you don't need to come back to another retreat, that's great.

And if you... Increasing number of people will begin... I know that many people who are here will become, and some already are, teachers in their own right.

So that's... Whether it's formal or informal, whether it's part of a certain practice, they might be therapists already or they might be working as counselors with people or they might be engaged in education or in healthcare, many different capacities. And gradually, they already, by being present, they disseminate the teaching and the words may accompany that.

So many of you are growing into the role of teacher, which has its own danger because, again, we've talked about it a few times, the danger is that a conceptual identity arises in your mind of you as a great teacher. And that will be a block. But you can sense the power that is in you that is different, but that is not superior to anybody.

It's very hard to explain, but you need to be careful of any conceptual identity and then there will be more and more teachers arising, not just a few. And so I believe that's the way we are going because that means some humans awaken before others awaken. And those that awaken before others awaken, they become teachers, either formal teachers or informal teachers.

In the Course in Miracles, it says anybody who practices in their daily life the Course in Miracles is called teacher of God. You become a teacher of God the moment you start practicing presence. Even if you don't speak the words that are out of presence, simply by being, for example, in a non-reactive mode in relationship with people, by sensing an outflow of goodwill towards other humans with decreasing judgment in your mind about others, all this, you become a teacher.

You become a teacher of God. So the answer is there will not just be a few isolated famous figures, but more and more teachers will arise, which are those who awaken before others begin to awaken. And then inevitably they become teachers.

[Speaker 3] (1:35:01 - 1:37:19)
Welcome, friends. Welcome to our special School of Awakening webinar with Eckhart Tolle. My name is Tammy Simon.

I'm the founder of Sounds True, and it is absolute joy to be your host for this session. We're going to begin our live session with Eckhart guiding us through a meditation on pure awareness. This is a meditation that he originally introduced at our very first School of Awakening that took place two years ago, and I'm so glad that this larger public audience will have the chance to experience the meditation as part of this webinar.

For those of you who are just learning about the School of Awakening for the very first time, let me tell you just a little bit more about this program. The Eckhart Tolle School of Awakening is the most advanced and in-depth learning program that Eckhart Tolle and Kim Ang teach. It's a five-month immersion program that this year includes two virtual retreats along with monthly teachings and meditations with Eckhart and Kim, all in the context of a vibrant online learning community.

The goal of the School of Awakening is to intensify presence and align with the awakening process that many people are already undergoing. If you want to learn more about the School of Awakening, you can just click the button on this page. Also, please note that we're in the final enrollment period for the School of

Awakening, and that's because the program starts at the end of this month.

The first day of school is soon. It starts on March 27th. Again, we'll be starting our webinar with a guided pure awareness practice, and then following that, I'll ask Eckhart some questions that we've received from the Eckhart Tolle community about the awakening process.

And now, as I said, a great joy to welcome Eckhart Tolle. Eckhart?

[Speaker 1] (1:37:20 - 2:00:41)
Hi, Tammy. Hi, everybody. Nice to see you.

Well, I don't see everybody, but you see me. So apparently, we are starting with a pure awareness meditation, if we want to call it that. Pure awareness is an interesting idea.

Well, it's not an idea. It only becomes an idea when we talk about it. Pure awareness is beyond any idea or concept.

It's the essence of who you are, and most people go through life without ever encountering that dimension of their being, and that's a great pity. I often use the term form identity and essence identity. Your form identity is whatever you add after you say, I am, whatever you add to that statement, I am, is part of your form identity.

Usually, people would start with, and identity is very important for everybody. Everybody is looking for a stronger sense of identity. It starts in childhood already.

So it's after meeting the basic needs of food and shelter, one could almost say, the next thing that arises is not a physical need, but a deep-seated psychological need, and that is a need for an identity. So everybody is searching. It starts in early childhood already.

They're searching for a more stable, more secure, more expanded sense of who they are, sense of identity, sense of self. So everybody is searching. So wherever you go, lots of the things you see on the internet, it's a search for an identity.

So let's just explore what you would add to, if you said, I am, the normal things that you would probably add is perhaps your gender, a very popular subject these days, used to be a very simple subject. Now it's much more complex, but for our purposes here, it's not complex. Whatever it is that you want to add as your gender is fine.

I am. And then other things come, of course, perhaps racial things are also very much in the forefront these days. So perhaps that would come to you also next.

White, black, whatever, shade of color, doesn't matter. You add that because it has become part of your sense of self, your sense of identity. And then, of course, there's the body, whether it's old or young, your age.

You add, I have such and such an old, an old white, black man, woman, whatever, and so on. And then it goes on after that to do with your, say, station in life, perhaps work, profession, or your relationship to other human beings, mother, father, daughter, and so on. Anything else that you have incorporated into your sense of self and manufactured a sense of self out of that.

Possessions, perhaps you are a big person who has lots of possessions. I am the owner of a company. I am the owner of a private jet.

That would be a big sense of identity. Or perhaps you have the opposite. You might have developed a sense of identity of somebody who has less than others and been disadvantaged all their lives.

And then you have an equally big sense of identity. I'm somebody who has been treated unfairly by life. It's terrible.

Another big, also part of your identity, negative or positive, doesn't matter. You add more, things accumulate in your inner space and you hold them together with your name. That's your, my name is such and such.

The name becomes the receptacle for all the other things that you put in there that you derive your sense of self from. And then you say, oh, well, that's me. And it's never quite very satisfying for long.

And it's very rarely enough. That's the strange thing about that sense of self. And this is what I call the form identity.

And it's fine. Everybody has one, nothing wrong with that. So you acknowledge your form identity.

You don't need to say, I don't want to have a form identity. You have a form identity. As long as you're here as this particular form, you have a form identity, whatever it may be.

And it's fine. The problem is that there's always a sense of, there's still something missing of the things that I have in here that I've put into this receptacle. This is my name.

And I've put in all those things that I identify with as me. And then this thing's not quite right. I need something else.

More needs to be put in. So there's always a sense of dissatisfaction that arises very quickly. I'm not enough, ultimately.

There's something missing in life, in my life. I don't know what. And you come up with all kinds of things.

And the awakening, spiritual awakening, begins with the realization that there is more to you than that. And this more to you is your essence identity. And you find your essence identity if as an experiment now, let's say we have a board, a blackboard or a whiteboard.

And on this board we have written, I am. And then imagine whatever you would have added to that, a list of things that you feel is you, gender, age, profession, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. You add that.

I am. Let's say you add it vertically to me. And that for our meditation, or it's not really meditation, it's a little experiment.

You take a, whatever it is you do, you used to erase whatever is written on the board. I used to have chalk and a sponge. You would erase what's written with chalk on the blackboard.

So you get that. And you start just for the best. What is left of me if I temporarily, just for this moment, I erase what I have added to I am.

So you, whatever it is, mother, father, profession, gender, race, et cetera, age, opinions about yourself. I'm the best that's ever been, or the worst that's ever lived. That too is a concept that you have identified with.

There are concepts that you accumulate there. And you erase just temporarily. So you don't give it any more attention.

It's gone. And then even the last thing, the receptacle itself, the name, you can temporarily erase that. I don't remember my name.

I don't remember my email address. I don't remember my gender. So what's, in order that you have to let go of all the accumulated concepts, because there are ultimately all mental concepts that gave you your sense of self.

You let go of the mental concepts. What is left of me? If there's no more anger, no mental concept left of who I am.

There's only I am. Is the essence of me gone? Or is the essence of who I am still there?

If I don't even remember my past or any conceptual thing about me. I'm so present at this moment. That all I know, and I'm talking for you, I'm so present at this moment that all I know is that I am.

Now, if you can just add a glimpse of that. What is left? What is that?

I am. And there's no concept there anymore. But what is that feeling?

Is it a feeling? That sense of being. That sense of I am.

Being and I am is the same thing. To be is the infinitive, and I am is the first person singular. They just sound very different.

Really, you should be saying I be, but English language has developed in a different way. I am, it comes from being. All you are left with is a sense of beingness or presence.

And then you ask yourself, is anything vital, anything of absolute value, lost now? Am I essentially still here? Without referring to any concepts about myself or any thoughts.

And you'll become aware at this moment that you are aware because that awareness is what's left. When you take everything away, that beingness, that sense of presence or beingness that you cannot define is what's left. We can use certain words to talk about it or to point to it, yes.

But in itself, it is beyond words, beyond concepts, beyond thoughts. So there is a space in you that is beyond words, concepts, and thoughts, that is beyond thinking, but you're not asleep. There is that space in you that is always there underneath the fluctuation of words, concepts, and thoughts.

They're all thoughts, ultimately. Thoughts are inner words. Underneath this fluctuation of concepts and words, there is a sense of presence or beingness of I am.

And this sense of, this is pure awareness or consciousness that gets absorbed by thoughts. It flows into the sense of I, flows into, it animates the concepts in the mind. And then you derive your sense of self from the concepts without realizing that that which animates the concepts is the awareness, the pure awareness.

And so it's not realizing the essence of your being and moving only on the surface of life, the surface of the ocean of being. That's your form identity is what happens on the surface of the ocean of being. Waves and ripples and waves clashing and all kinds of things.

And every wave thinks it's me, I am, a wave. It doesn't realize it's the ocean. So what animates, what gives life to all the things that you identify with, which are ultimately concepts, because you don't identify with objects, you seem to, let's say you have possessions, you identify with the possessions, but you experience the possessions.

How do you experience them? You experience them as mental concepts. My house, my car, my private jet.

You experience them as concepts in your mind and you attach the my to it, the sense of, you associate a thing with a sense of self, but the thing is experienced as a concept. Maybe there is no car, maybe the whole thing is, maybe the whole thing is, you live in that matrix and everything is made up. Nobody knows whether the actual, the external world is actually there or it's being created as a dream of consciousness.

But all you know is you can't know whether the, what is it? The Aston Martin or the Ferrari that you derive some of your sense of identity from is actually there or you have made it up in your mind. But all you know is that you have this thing in your mind and that's your car.

You have form identity, nothing wrong with that. You need to operate, be able to operate on this level of form. Yes, use your mind, but the essence identity is there that is underneath all that.

And if you don't find that, I call it the deep eye sometimes as opposed to the surface eye. So the surface eye is whatever you add to I am. The deep eye is the realization of beingness of I am.

And the two can live together. They are compatible. It doesn't mean you can have either one or the other.

You can have one leg. So to speak a metaphorical leg, you can have one leg in the being and one leg in the form identity. It's a deep eye and the surface eye.

And that is the purpose as I see it of human life is to be able to live in that way where you are rooted in the I am and you're able to deal with the things of this world and continue to have a form identity, but you no longer exclusively derive your sense of self from that. It's a relatively superficial sense of self for a little while, but your deep sense of being becomes from another place. And that is a place really that is at that level, you are one with every other human being and every other being.

It's the level of oneness. On the level of form identity, you need the other because without the other, you cannot define yourself. You always need something that's not you.

Imagine, let's say, your racial identity is strong. A very important part of who you are is your race. And it's fine.

You can honor that. As a little thought experiment from science fiction, let's say you suddenly want, suddenly the ETs come and they transport you to another planet where everybody is exactly the same race and exactly the same skin color as you. There's no other anymore.

At that moment, your entire sense of who you are as this race would collapse because without the other, that race doesn't even exist. They wouldn't have a name for it. If you went to a planet where everything is green, every object and everything is green, they would not have a word for green, obviously.

You need the other. So for your form identity, you always need the other. And the ego very strongly emphasizes the other.

It needs the other to be as other as possible so that I can sense this, my sense of self ultimately. If it's only your form identity, it's fictitious. To sense myself, to sense more strongly, I need to have the other, more other.

We can see it everywhere in this world. You need to emphasize the otherness of others. It's an egoic need to strengthen your identity.

It's an illusion, and it leads to a lot of turmoil and suffering and chaos. But it's the ego at work. You have to recognize that and go to that deeper place where there is no other.

And that is the awareness. And then you can do some good in this world. You can bring about a different world because you're no longer trapped in the world of needing to make the others other as other as possible.

It's an egoic delusion. Terrible, terrible. So here we have the deep eye.

For here, for all purposes, just experiencing the deep eye, even if it's just a glimpse. Letting go of concepts. What remains when you wipe clean what you've written on the board after the I am, and all that's left is I am.

Pre-ness, presence. And then as you become familiar with that place, so to speak, it deepens, and you can sense the power that resides in you, which is the power of consciousness itself, which is the essence of everything. You can sense that power, but it's not power over others because in that power there is no other.

You have power without having power over others. It's the inherent power of the universe. And you can sense it now, perhaps only as a glimpse right now.

As I stop speaking for five seconds, you can sense it now as a glimpse, and that's a good start. Oh, and you don't know much about it on that level. What can you say about it?

Not much. That's fine. And then you become more, then you sense it more strongly, and then it begins to even change the way in which you operate on your form identity.

It actually, it makes a difference to that also. Pure awareness is simply then being aware right now, being aware that you are aware. Sounds strange.

Being aware that you are conscious. Being aware that you are consciousness. Better way of putting it.

So that's the essence of all spiritual practice. Just that. It's not complicated.

So it's taken us 25 minutes to explain the essence of all spiritual practice. No, don't need to read all the books anymore. Just practice.

[Speaker 3] (2:01:03 - 2:01:44)
Wonderful, thank you, Eckhart. As I mentioned at the beginning, we've received

questions from the Eckhart Tolle community and have chosen a few to ask you here. And here's the first one.

This person wrote in, you're offering a new school of awakening, but can spiritual awakening actually be taught like other subjects that are taught? Your own awakening was spontaneous. If spiritual awakening can be taught, tell me more about that.

And why do you feel now is the time for us to come together and explore these deeper teachings? Oh, right.

[Speaker 1] (2:01:52 - 2:16:40)
Would everybody benefit from spiritual teaching? No. Not everybody would benefit from spiritual teaching.

There needs to be a readiness in you, which is very hard to define what that is. There needs to be a readiness for you to receive the teaching so that it can accelerate your awakening. Now, when I say accelerate your awakening, that implies that something has already started.

Something has already opened up in you. And there's still many humans who not only would they not be interested in hearing any spiritual teaching, many would even feel hostile towards it if they had to listen to it. They'd feel almost as a personal attack.

There are many humans who are still extremely self-possessed, which means possessed by the egoic sense of self. And there's no opening for anything else. They still believe that they can make it.

They are basically in total control of their lives and they're going to make it or whatever the ideas is that they have in their minds. And even the suggestion that there is a power that is beyond who they are as a person, even to hear that suggestion would be regarded as a personal insult. So not everybody can be reached.

Not everybody is ready. Many young people are still not, although many are ready, but as if you're very young, the ego is still forming and you think you're not open yet to receiving what the spiritual teaching has to offer. And often I've met many, many accounts of people who have come to me and said, somebody gave me your book 15 years ago and I opened it.

And I thought it was just complete mumbo jumbo complete mumbo jumbo. There was even a reviewer quite a few years ago in Time Magazine who actually wrote that. He or she, I can't remember, wrote a review of the power of now and described it as mumbo jumbo.

And of course, from the reviewer's point of state of consciousness, that was an absolutely correct statement because that is how they perceived it. And so people have come to me, said somebody gave me that book and I opened it was just, what is this? I read a page, they said, and I didn't understand a word.

What's he talking about? They put it on a shelf. Five, six years later, they picked it up and opened it.

Many people have told me similar accounts. They opened it, wow. Suddenly it all made sense.

What does it mean? They recognized the truth in it. But what happened in the meantime from the time when they were given the book and it was meaningless to when they opened it up again, they suffered.

They suffered, something happened. They lost something vital. They experienced some kind of perhaps a serious illness or had an accident or somebody close to them died or their business collapsed.

They became ill, whatever, something happened and created suffering and the suffering created a crack in the egoic, dense egoic cell. And then there was an opening suddenly. And then there was a recognition.

The spiritual teaching, a school of spirituality, of awakening, it doesn't really teach you anything new. It's always perceived as a recognition. It's a recognition.

Ah, and there's an immediate realization. Oh yes, I knew that. I could not have said it, but I recognize the truth of that.

So it addresses the deeper level of who you are. So in other words, it requires a minimum degree of awareness for there to be a receptivity to spiritual teaching so that spiritual teaching can be helpful. Without that, it's not helpful at all.

So at this minimum degree of awareness is, yes, it's awareness or presence, which is the same thing, the same no thing. Awareness or presence is the dimension of consciousness that is beyond thinking. And that is realized the moment you stop thinking without falling asleep, for example, now.

And you realize you are still very much there when you're not thinking. But a deeper dimension of you is there when you're not thinking. And of course, that is in a spiritual school or school of awakening, that deeper dimension is pulled out of you more.

That is helpful. It would come anyway. Life ultimately is the greatest spiritual teacher.

So, but a spiritual teaching can accelerate it. But what otherwise would take much more longer time, that realization. So it can be taught.

What can be taught is partly, let's say one could divide it, three parts to it can be taught. One is, what can be taught is making people aware of what it is in them, that what are the greatest obstacles or hindrances to the full unfolding of their consciousness. What are the hindrances in you?

What are the obstacles in you? If your spiritual teaching can help you, you can point out what the obstacles are. They are all part of the ego.

The obstacles are like reactivity, becoming aware of the various ways in which you react to things, becoming aware of identification with your thoughts when anxiety, worry arise, becoming aware that you are not your thoughts, explaining how the pain body works, how it can take you over, how it can pain body can use your mind. All kinds of things can be pointed out that otherwise you may overlook and they may obscure again the arising awareness. So spiritual teaching can help you to point out what the obstacles are.

Because once you recognize the inner obstacles to awakening, which are the ego, that you can transcend them more easily. If you do not recognize the obstacles, they have you in their grip and they can easily obscure the arising awareness. And another way in which spiritual teaching can be helpful, it uses pointers, concepts, words, but they point to something.

When I say the deep eye, that's a pointer. The deep eye is still a concept, but it points you beyond concepts. When I say, can you sense the deep eye in you?

You can't think about that. When you think about it, you can't. So you have to stop thinking.

So the concept points beyond itself. That's how a spiritual teaching can work. It can use helpful concepts, but point beyond the concepts.

And another way in which it can work is as a direct transmission of presence. When words arise out of presence, they come out of this energy field of presence and that can awaken the presence in you, but only if there's already some presence there. A minimum of presence needs to be there.

And how do you know whether it's there? It's very simple. If these words that I'm saying now make sense to you and say, yeah, I can sense the truth of it, then you have that minimum, or you may have more than a minimum.

You have that awareness. If what I'm saying to you now makes absolutely no sense to you, I suggest that you wait a little, three, five, 10, 15, 20 years, and life will give you more suffering. It's inevitable.

And at some point, the suffering may have cracked the egoic cell sufficiently for the light of awareness to shine through. And that receives the teaching and that can then grow. So there needs to be something in you that's able to receive the teaching, which ultimately it's not the teaching.

It's the consciousness of the so-called teacher. There's no teacher. There's only consciousness, but consciousness uses different channels.

And Jesus said... Nowadays, it would be a deeply offensive statement, but he lived in a different time when you could say deeply offensive things. He said, do not cast pearls before swine.

All that it means is that they are not ready for the teaching. They are interested in eating, drinking, and fornicating, so to speak. Let's be blunt.

There are still many humans whose main interest is different. They're not interested in any spiritual awakening. So Jesus used that expression, but I would not use that because they are not swine.

They are just humans waiting to be awakened or to come to an awakening. The essence of who they are is one with the essence of who you are. So you are not superior to them in essence.

You're not superior to any human because every human has come out of... is a manifestation of the one consciousness. So one more point.

Yes, to summarize, the spiritual teaching with limitations, I'd say it can be taught if there's a readiness in the sense, not adding information to your mind so much, but as an acceleration of what's happening in you already. A subsidiary question would be, what about religion? Is it being religious helpful for spiritual awakening?

Oh, hmm. If you're very religious people, are they closer to spiritual awakening? Are they more open to spiritual awakening?

And there's no... Some may be more open because their religion, because every religion has a transcendent dimension hidden somewhere, even though it might be obscured by ideology and dogma and very often heavily obscured by ideology and dogma. But every religion, there is a transcendent dimension there in the background somewhere.

And some people may have access through their religion, may have access to it, and then they would be open to it. I have had letters and communications from monks, Buddhist monks, Christian monks, nuns, in monasteries saying, your book has deepened my faith and what wonderful. However, there are others for whom religion is an ideology, it strengthens their egoic sense of self, and they would be totally closed to any spiritual teaching.

So there's no receptivity there. So religion can be, yes, it has given you access to the transcendent dimension, or it has closed access to the transcendent dimension completely. But perhaps if you suffer a bit more, then it might still...

So suffering is so valuable. What would we do without suffering?

[Speaker 3] (2:16:45 - 2:17:04)
All right, Eckhart, we have another question here for you. This person wrote in, I've heard that having a strong inner intention to awaken can be helpful when a person wants to accelerate spiritual awakening in their life. Do you think that is true?

And if so, can you say more about this?

[Speaker 1] (2:17:05 - 2:25:33)
Right. Do you have a strong inner intention? I'm asking not Tammy, I'm asking everybody.

A strong inner intention to awaken. Yes and no. Intention usually implies you want to get somewhere.

If I have an intention to learn a new skill, I project myself, I want to get there. Intention implies I'm here, but I want to get there. I have an intention to achieve this, to obtain that, to build that, to manifest that, which is my intention.

Now, if you use the same for awakening, spiritual awakening, it would not be helpful, it would be a hindrance because the strong intention to become awakened would place the awakening in some future moment and you would create a conceptual sense of self that you, the so-called awakened being, want to achieve again in the future. And therefore, the strong intention to awaken in this case would be the greatest hindrance to awakening. However, if we, instead of intention, we could say motivation, do you have a strong motivation to awaken?

Or if we use the word intention in a different way, instead of intention, you would direct it towards the future, is it possible to use the word intention directed only into the present moment? And then your intention is, in this moment, I intend to be awake. So there's no time.

In this moment, your intention is to be awake now. So there can't be any future. Your intention is to be present now.

And if that intention is very strong, that's great, then you are present now. And to be present means to be no longer seduced by thought, useless thinking especially. And this is why, if I may quote a famous, wonderful spiritual teacher from India who passed away many years ago, Nisargadatta Maharaj, who said, when they asked him what is spiritual awakening, he said, he had a lot of yang in him, so whatever he said was very forcefully expressed.

He said, what's spiritual awakening? It's a radical refusal to harbor thoughts. That's how he spoke.

It's a radical refusal to harbor thoughts. Now that's a strong intention. But it's not an intention for the future.

It's an intention that merges with the present moment because that's where awakening is inseparable from present moment awareness. Awakening is present moment awareness. And you can only achieve, so to speak, you can't achieve it, discover it perhaps, you can only have it now.

So there's no future in awakening. That's, again, we have some schools of thought, of spirituality teach or claim that there's nothing you can do to spiritually awaken. They say, let go of all effort, just do nothing, then it'll come.

Just don't let go of all, no effort, every effort is an obstacle. Okay, that's one extreme school. Okay, then you go, okay, that's great, I have nothing, that's nothing to do.

Okay, and 10 years later, you still find yourself sitting on your couch watching TV and drinking beer and waiting for your awakening. It's not come yet, but that's okay, it told me it's going to come. Then you have another school that says the opposite, that says, if you do not want spiritual awakening as much as a drowning man wants air, you're not going to get it.

Now, of course, that would be a very strong desire if you're drowning and you really want air. So which one is right? The secret is you bring the two together, have no intent, direct, no intention directed towards the future, but only present moment.

There's an intensity suddenly in the present moment. That intensity is presence and you no longer, you no longer, that intensity, in that intensity of presence, you no longer want anything because it's already there. So you, it's so easy to be awake in the present moment.

You can be awake in the present moment. You might lose it the next moment. You're not talking about the next moment, but right now, and that's the only thing you can do is be present now.

And let go of thinking unless it's helpful as much as possible. The radical refusal to harbor thoughts, and again, that's only one approach. It's the active approach.

You can also have the passive approach. You're so surrendered to this present moment that very few thoughts, if any, arise because what is there to think about? I completely accept this moment, or as an ancient teacher recommended as a best spiritual practice to say the mantra whenever any situation arose that was a little bit difficult or challenging, use the following mantra.

He said, thanks for everything. I have no complaint whatsoever. That's the mantra, but you have to mean it.

If you just say it, it doesn't work, but if you mean it, thanks for this. I have no complaint whatsoever. Thank you for this.

I have no complaint whatsoever. That's also, that brings you to the same point as the radical refusal to harbor thoughts, which is a Yang approach. Thanks for everything.

I have no complaint whatsoever. It's a Yin approach. Yin, Yang.

Yin, Yang. So I love that. Thanks for everything, which every moment is good as it is, even the seemingly bad ones, especially the seemingly bad ones.

If somebody puts a great meal in front of you, it's great to say, oh, thanks for everything. Thank you. Thank you.

I have no complaint whatsoever. It's a great meal, but then something else happens. Something is given to you that you don't want.

Of course. Thank you. Because it's the present moment.

You might as well be friendly with it because it's all there ever is. You appreciate what is. There you are.

That's the opening into the transcendent dimension.

[Speaker 3] (2:25:38 - 2:25:55)
We have one final question for you, Eckhart. There's two parts to this. The person wrote in, can you tell us more about what it feels like to be fully awakened and what are signs of awakening along the journey?

[Speaker 1] (2:25:59 - 2:38:40)
What it feels like. Well, let's put that aside for a moment. But the signs of awakening are perhaps more important for people because people ask, well, is it happening?

Am I awakening? Or a question I often get, when am I going to awaken? It's the wrong question.

When am I going to awaken is the wrong question. But a slightly better question would be how do I know if the awakening process is happening in me or to me? How can I know that?

Because for most people, it is a gradual process of disidentification, ultimately disidentification from thinking, so that you realize that thinking and awareness are no longer completely intertwined. Awareness or pure consciousness, pure awareness, separates itself from thought. And then thoughts very easily collapse because they're no longer feeding on consciousness.

So there's a separation of thinking and awareness. That's the disidentification from thought. And that is the process.

And that has its ups and downs. But there are certain signs that you have. And one of the clearest signs is you live more in the present moment.

That's a very simple thing. One of the clearest signs is you have the ability to live more aligned with the present moment. In other words, there is an appreciation of whatever it is around you at this moment.

There's an appreciation of the little things, the little things because you're no longer waiting for the big thing. But in the unenlightened, egoic consciousness, you're waiting for some big thing when you're going to start living. However you interpret the big thing, the big thing would be you meet the ideal partner or you meet the big thing, you finally make it in whatever you want to achieve.

Or the big thing is the world finally recognizes you as one of the greatest or whatever the big thing is. And so you're no longer looking for that. I mean, some people look for the big thing.

They want to get married or they want to have the wedding. The wedding lasts one day and they spend several years thinking about it. And then let's not talk about what happens after that.

So the little things, all the appreciation, the gratitude is one word that you can use for present moment living because you appreciate the little things that including objects as an appreciation of the... I have a... You can't see it.

I have a wooden desk here. It is lovely. I love touching the wood often.

Looking at the sky, many times during the day, I look at the sky and it changes all the time and it's so wonderful. The weather is for me a wonderful source of joy because these are... You're always surrounded by some kind of weather and I love weathers, always changing weather, rain, clouds, sky.

And I give it attention. It's a natural thing because it's part of being in the present moment. So all the little things in the looking out of the window, giving attention, appreciation of what is, even anything, even man-made things.

So you live more like that as you live more in the present moment, you also notice that life becomes... You experience fewer problems in your life because most problems are manufactured in your mind, the unobserved mind. And many humans inhabit a world of problems.

The entire identity is derived from their problems and it's all make-believe in the mind. What's the problem at this moment? Well, nothing.

That's a miraculous question because at any given moment, there is no problem. Even if you don't know what you're going to eat for dinner and you don't have no money left, it's not a problem right now. There was a time in my life when I was more or less at that stage and it was very interesting.

It was an important part of deepening what had already happened to me, not knowing what to live on the next moment. But if you're present in the moment, what you need does come to you. It's almost miraculous.

So as you live more in the present moment, there's more inner peace. And so you notice that less obsession with past, less obsession with future, more appreciation of this moment, which means there's more inner peace that you feel. So that is a clear sign as you're able to live more in the present, is a clear sign that the awakening has happened.

Another good sign is you notice that you're not complaining the way you used to in your mind or out aloud. Because many people spend a lot of their time complaining mentally, out aloud, and on social media and the internet. It's true.

They've always tried something to complain about. And that's part of the egoic sense of self, the need to emphasize the otherness of others, even to emphasize the otherness of situations. I'm critical about this situation.

This shouldn't be happening. This shouldn't be. This shouldn't be happening.

And then you can be critical of others, complaining about others, what they did, failed to do, did wrong, said great. Of course, now the ego has created, the egoic mind has created social media. It's a wonderful thing now for complaining.

You can spend your life on Twitter and Facebook complaining about others, and millions of people are doing it. So you find the end of complaining, that's another sign that the awakening is happening to you, because you recognize it's not only, it's futile, it's destructive, it's unpleasant. Before you didn't know that, because the ego can't tell the difference between pleasant and unpleasant.

For the ego, often what is unpleasant is regarded as pleasant and the other way around. So no complaining anymore, and that's also connected with being able to live in the present. And so that's a huge burden that's lifted.

If you don't, this obsessive complaining is gone. You notice also you're less reactive in situations where before you used to be reactive. You might notice it when you're driving, you're not reactive to other drivers.

You don't misinterpret other drivers, whatever they do, as a personal insult to you. So there's less reactivity in people that you normally trigger you, to use that word, people who trigger negative reactions in you, and suddenly it doesn't happen anymore. You're able to just accept them for who they are.

You can visit your parents without going through the same thing that goes through every time you get together with your parents. They criticize you. Just not everybody, but they criticize you.

You defend yourself, and then you criticize them. The same, like old, I used to say old records, but records don't exist anymore. So old, you have to, different metaphors and computer programs are still, the same programs are running.

And so people have computed the same programs are running in their minds for years and years and years. And they don't even know it because they're completely identified with it. And when you, as you begin to awaken, you recognize these old programs and gradually you detach from the old programs in your mind.

It's another clear sign that you're awakening. So there are many signs, but they all means your life actually feels less heavy. The burden of being, the burden of yourself becomes less because people don't realize it, but they carry a huge burden of themselves with all their preoccupations and worries and reactions.

And there's an absence of the transcendent dimension, complete ignorance of the transcendent dimension, which is the deep eye. So all that is, these are signs that the awakening is happening. And another sign, as I pointed out before, is when you listen to a talk, a spiritual talk, or you read a book that was written from a spiritual state of consciousness, there is immediately a recognition.

And you feel more enlivened in some way. You feel better. You feel definitely it's an act of recognition.

Oh, yeah, sure. Yes, yes. There's always, when you hear Tish, we're teaching, it's not really ultimately anything new.

And you say, oh, yes. I knew that. I couldn't have said it, but I knew it.

I knew that. But that knowing is not conceptual knowing. It's non-conceptual knowing.

And that's something that our civilization doesn't know anything about. Schools cannot teach you that this, apart from conceptual knowing, there's a deeper sense of knowing that is non-conceptual. Well, we may be talking about that in the school of awakening, but don't wait for it.

So I trust that it will be helpful to those of you who were open, who are open to the message. And if you're not open to the message, you've left us long ago anyway, I assume, unless you're in the process of writing critical comments about it on Facebook or Twitter. That's fine.

That's fine, too. So let's leave it at that for today. I wish you well.

And let's spend just a moment in presence of becoming aware of, to go back to the very beginning where we started, become aware of the deep eye, erase all the other stuff that gave you your sense of self and realize the deeper sense of self that arises from the deep eye, which is beingness of presence. I am that I am. I am.

[Speaker 2] (2:39:06 - 2:39:07)
Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (2:39:11 - 2:41:59)
Thank you so very, very much, Eckhart, for this special School of Awakening webinar. Thank you. Again, I want to remind everyone who's joining us that you can find a button on this page that allows you to learn more about the Eckhart Tolle School of Awakening.

Registration is open through March 23rd, and then the School of Awakening begins on March 27th. You can just click the button on this page to learn more. I also want to share just a little bit that will give you a little bit more insight into the program.

The Eckhart Tolle School of Awakening is a five-month immersion program that includes two virtual retreats. You'll also receive monthly teachings from Eckhart and Kim, practical exercises, and meditations to help accelerate the awakening process and enable you to integrate presence into every aspect of your life. Additionally, one of the most powerful parts of the program is the opportunity to join online with a vibrant community of like-minded people dedicated to intensifying presence in their life.

This is certainly the deepest and most advanced online program that Eckhart and Kim teach. Some of the additional topics that Eckhart will cover include the specific obstacles to spiritual awakening, how to work with feelings of disconnection, irritation, and difficult emotional states, what it means to view suffering as a great teacher, and how when viewed in this way, suffering can quicken spiritual realization, how to live from the deep eye, as Eckhart mentioned, instead of the surface eye, and contribute to the collective evolution of our species. When you join the program, you'll have access to attend the two virtual retreats, and then also these five months of live teachings with question and answer sessions and live group meditations. Again, you can click the button on this page to learn more, and whether you join us or not in the School of Awakening, I want to thank you so much for being with us here for this special webinar and for your own interest, commitment, resonance, and motivation to intensify presence in your life.

Thank you so, so much. And thank you, Eckhart, for this special School of Awakening webinar and everyone for being with us. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (2:42:02 - 2:57:01)
The usual mistake or dysfunctional way of living, unconscious way, is, as I've mentioned before, is devaluing the present moment and overvaluing the next moment. The ego lives always with reference to past and future. The mentally are always somewhere else.

Instead of giving fullest attention to this, because this is the most valuable moment. Why? Because it's the only one in the present moment.

Give your fullest attention to this moment, because it's not true that the next moment is more significant, because it never comes. So there is a way of being totally present in the planning for the future. It's all little things.

And even if you're the Pope or the president of a huge corporation or the president of a country, it's still the same. The present moment in its richness is usually overlooked, because you're looking for something more significant. It's fine to achieve things, especially if they are beneficial, but for humanity and the totality of the planet, it's lovely to have that.

But even that doesn't make up your identity. The more you honor the small things, the more likely it is that you'll experience more good things in the so-called future, because you have such a good relationship with the present. Gratitude is an underlying state of consciousness, which is giving your fullest attention, honoring what is.

The power to manifest is in experiencing the fullness of the present moment, the undifferentiated fullness. So when you don't complain about not only other people, but also about your life, then you can't be a victim anymore. I is the light of consciousness in which these feelings are being experienced right now.

The victim is a huge, a huge present. It is not who you are. And remember, thanks for everything.

I have no complaint whatsoever. So there's this wonderful stillness here, and let's acknowledge it. The power is not just in you.

It's all around you. Free of compulsive thinking. And then you are free to use thinking as a beautiful tool for creating.

But you're no longer creating from an egoic neediness. You're creating as an expression of consciousness that creates through you. Whatever it is that you create depends on who you are on the form level as a person.

You may have certain abilities or certain things you have learned, and how or what you create depends on that. But that which inspires the creation is the consciousness that then moves through you into a particular channel. And then creativity comes in, whether you're an artist or even a scientist needs that, or the science is based on rational thinking and analysis.

The greatest breakthrough in science came to people. There are many stories about that. They came to people who suddenly went blank, not really blank, but spacious.

Einstein had many moments of spaciousness. And then things suddenly come that could not be arrived at through thinking. Thinking was necessary too, but it didn't.

The real breakthrough comes as a revelation, even in science. So, and it transforms your relationships to other humans. And that's a beautiful thing.

Even if that's all, if you're not creative in any other area except in all your relationships to relate with that feeling of benevolence towards others, no matter whether it's your intimate relationships or relationships that happen for a few minutes that during the day, all these are important. And so when you're no longer judging a human being, then you can sense and flow of goodwill towards a human. But it presupposes that you are not judging yourself either.

So first you have come into your own spaciousness, and then you discover the spaciousness in the other, even if they don't know it yet. When your gaze, in a wider sense, gaze, not just the visual gaze, but directing your attention, directing your attention to somebody and going deeper than the surface appearance of that person, which is first of all, the physical form of that person. Now for many people, that's the first thing they notice and the last thing they notice.

They only relate to another as a physical form, which they either don't, are not interested in or they want it. I want you. And then beyond the physical form, there's the psychological form of that person, the kind of personality that this person has.

So that's the next thing. So level one is a physical thing. When you meet somebody, level two is a personality of that person, which is also, it's a psychological, this is the physical form.

The next level down is a psychological form. And if you are stuck on those two levels, you can never truly come to a relationship of true lovingness towards the other, of true goodwill towards the other, of truly sensing something that unites you to the other. There's always that sense of separation because you haven't gone deep enough into the other.

Why haven't you gone deep enough into the other? Because you haven't gone deep enough into yourself. It's only if you've gone deep enough into yourself and by deep enough means, into the inner spaciousness in which you're not thinking, no compulsive thinking, an alertness remains, that is, you become suddenly very deep.

And then you can look at another human being, no matter what they say or do or how they look. You can then sense their beingness also, but only through yours. And there you meet, when you can sense a human's beingness, even if they can't sense it for themselves, you can, there's a feeling of love, not in a conventional sense, a lovingness towards the other.

And that is, you recognize the most essential thing of who you are is also in the other. You recognize that oneness. And what is that?

It's consciousness. What you love in true love, what you love in the other, is their consciousness. What you love in the dog, although it's lovely to touch a dog, it's lovely to look at the dog or the cat, but what you really love, when you look into the eyes of the dog, is the consciousness of the dog.

The beingness looks back at you and you look into the eyes, unobstructed by thinking in the dog. And for a moment, the dog frees you from your own thinking. People don't know that that's what happens.

And that's why they love dogs, because for a moment, you look at a dog and there's always a few moments when you're not, unless you're so bad that you can't even be present with your dog. For a moment, the dog frees you off and you go, you feed yourself more fully, because there's a being who is one with itself and is not imposing anything. So there's the shared beingness or consciousness you suddenly sense.

And this shared consciousness, to realize the shared consciousness is love in the true sense. And the same could happen even with a tree, when you truly acknowledge the beingness of the tree from your inner, so that you look at it without imposing judgment or interpretation on it. It does not mean that you can never say anything about the tree.

It means, for example, it means there are two ways of knowing the tree or anything, or knowing a human being, of knowing anything. There are two ways of knowing, even yourself. One is through thinking and concepts.

So I can know you by knowing many things about you and your past and what happened to you and your background. And so all these things I know about you, but there is a more fundamental and more essential way of knowing. I can know you as consciousness rather than as the form that you are.

I can know the tree by looking at it, giving it my fullest attention and just the awareness for the sense perception. And I'm looking at that tree and I can suddenly sense its aliveness, its stillness, its beingness. I can sense that.

Sensing that means I'm connecting with it and connecting means the connection has always been there, but now you notice it, you connect it, connect with the tree and you love it. It does not mean that in some other moment when a child wants to know what the name of this tree is, because there is a time when a child asks about names and concepts, you're not going to refuse and say I'm not going to tell you about the name because I don't want you to get trapped in concepts. You have to encourage the child not to lose the deeper knowing when you give the name.

So you tell this is an oak tree or better you tell the child we call it an oak tree because it isn't an oak tree, we call it an oak tree. And then encourage the child to look, to continuously continue to perceive it, touch it. If there's something to smell, smell it, listen to the leaves, listen, look, touch, interact, give it your attention so that the child is not trapped in a world of concepts as is the destiny of many children these days at an early age get completely absorbed by concepts and before you know it at a fairly early age they are lost in their minds.

Unhappy a lot of the time. What's the next thing that I can think of that I need? We'll talk about that.

So if you discover within yourself that a lot of the time you are in a state of lack, of insufficiency, of not enough and you feel that the answer to the remedy is to be active in this world and achieve and do as much as possible then you'll probably find that ultimately that is not the answer to your state of lack. In order to transcend, to go beyond your state of lack, of neediness, of not enough, spiritual practice and spiritual realization is necessary. Focus on the realization of being.

It's only there that you can go beyond that state of lack which is ego. Go within and discover who or what you are beyond the person.

[Speaker 4] (2:57:22 - 3:00:58)
Welcome everyone to today's live online event The Shift That Changes Everything. In just a few moments we're going to be joined by Eckhart who I know many of you know is widely recognized as one of the most visionary teachers of our time. Eckhart's also the author of the international bestsellers The Power of Now and A New Earth and he has literally introduced millions of people across the world to the joy, peace and freedom of living life in the present moment.

My name is Sybil and on behalf of Eckhart Teachings and Sounds True I want to thank each and every one of you for coming tonight and attending this session. We're just so honored to have so many people from all over the world joining us. And before we get started I just wanted to mention that part of the inspiration for tonight's talk comes from an online program that we're doing with Eckhart called Doorways into Presence How to Quiet Your Mind and Live in the Now.

Have you ever wondered what it's like to live a day in presence like Eckhart? This is a question all of us were asking ourselves the team here at Eckhart Teachings and Sounds True and we're like I think there's so many other folks who are asking that too. How does Eckhart actually live in the now every single day?

Many of us want to be present as we move through the day and feel all the freedom and peace that stems from the present moment but how do you actually do that? Right? Like especially when life throws you challenges or problems or it's just the general busyness of the day that can be so distracting.

Well, this new online program with Eckhart shows us how. Eckhart's going to be guiding a community of students through 14 experiences so we can learn how to use our everyday moments differently and build what Eckhart calls presence power. And when you make this shift and live in the now each day it changes everything.

We're able to quiet our minds and continually experience the dimension of stillness that's always available. We're very much looking forward to this and the upcoming program with Eckhart and we hope you'll all join us too with a lot of students from all over the world. And also today we're offering a special teaching bonus when you sign up.

So after you enroll you'll receive a collection called Living Free from Stress and Anxiety. It includes three of Eckhart's most popular audio programs The Secret of Happiness The Joy of Being and Freedom from the World. We wanted to give everyone the opportunity to listen to these special teachings and prepare for the program that Eckhart's going to be guiding us through called Doors to Presence.

So in addition to receiving a special discount when you sign up today you'll also get these teachings when you enroll. And if you're interested you can find out more about the program and register at EckhartTolle.com And I'll also be able to give you some additional information about the program at the end of the event this evening. And now without further ado please allow me to introduce and welcome our friend and guide for tonight's talk Eckhart Tolle.

Eckhart, welcome.

[Speaker 2] (3:00:59 - 3:04:30)
Thank you, Sigru and hello everybody. Welcome to the present moment. I'd like this session to be to become for you an actual experiential realization what presence is.

So we're not just talking about presence but being present. Sensing the presence. So that presence that you can sense is in between the words behind the words it's behind all sense perceptions it makes all sense perceptions possible it's behind all thinking it makes thinking possible it's behind all emotion it's what makes emotion possible but in itself it transcends all these things it is inseparable from sensory perception thinking and emotions but also transcends those it is likely that you have encounter presence and you do from time to time or perhaps quite often encounter presence without recognizing it for what it is it could just be a moment when you feel at ease you feel a sense of well-being a sense of peaceful aliveness not because you have desensitized yourself not because you've taken some substances not because you're about to fall asleep not because there's a lowering of your consciousness no it's a heightened consciousness thinking of course is a manifestation of consciousness emotions are a manifestation of consciousness sense perceptions could not exist without consciousness so what we're talking about when we use presence we're talking about the essence of what you are which is consciousness the light of consciousness one could say this vast consciousness that is

[Speaker 1] (3:04:30 - 3:04:33)
universal consciousness it's not only within you

[Speaker 2] (3:04:33 - 3:06:08)
it is also without it is the one could say the intelligence that underlies all phenomenal manifestations of the universe there's a hidden concealed hidden vast intelligence that gives rise to the evolution of all life forms impossible for us to understand it but we can sense it within ourselves as the essence of our being

so the easiest way to point to presence to say that you encounter it when you stop thinking for a moment without losing consciousness stop thinking means the continuous voice in the head that usually comments on what's going on around you or comments on all kinds of things imaginary scenarios and so on the conditioned voice in the head that you live with

[Speaker 1] (3:06:08 - 3:06:28)
everybody lives with that voice in their head that talks all the time inside or if it talks aloud then you're considered crazy people say there's people walking in the streets talking out aloud and you say oh they're mentally insane but the only difference between a normal human being

[Speaker 2] (3:06:28 - 3:06:58)
and those people that you call mentally insane is that those who you do not call mentally insane when they're still doing the same thing they're just not talking out aloud it's happening in their head it's a continuous stream of thinking and that creates the ego the egoic sense of self an ultimately fictitious identity that you are infinitely more than the entity created by the movement of thought and the emotions that reflect the movement of thought

[Speaker 1] (3:06:58 - 3:07:04)
there's infinitely more to you than what you conventionally call the person

[Speaker 2] (3:07:05 - 3:07:24)
a person is a conditioned entity a form that consciousness has taken and most humans unless they are awakening already spiritually which is what we are talking about the arising of presence is spiritual awakening unless you are awakening

[Speaker 1] (3:07:24 - 3:07:27)
and many of you are awakening

[Speaker 2] (3:07:27 - 3:12:34)
even if you don't have words for it many of you are here because you are awakening otherwise this session would be totally meaningless to you and there may be a few to whom it is totally meaningless what is this guy talking about? so you must have had a glimpse of what it is that I'm talking about and if you haven't perhaps you can have it now and that glimpse is the possibility of arriving at the briefly at first the cessation of thinking the voice in the head stops and yet consciousness remains and you can look around or look at this image on the screen or look around the room take everything in but you are not thinking about it it's just sensory perception and what is behind the sensory perception?

presence another word for it is awareness so there is an awareness that is perceiving at this moment and that awareness is silent but it's awake and that awareness is the deeper dimension to who or what you are that's no longer the person that you usually think of when you say I there is a deeper I a deeper sense of being that transcends the personal sense of identity so you can sense there is an awareness in you a consciousness and that consciousness is perceiving it doesn't need to interpret it it knows at a very deep level but not conceptually you can look around your room or wherever you are you know that there is furniture or whatever there is but you don't call it anything you just allow it to be so there is instead of a person perceiving things which is what you are always interpreting, commenting and labeling mentally instead of a person you are now perceiving not as a person you are perceiving as awareness so there is a shift from personal sense of self a shift to a deeper level you could call it deeper or higher it doesn't matter to a deeper level of consciousness where you are not a person you are that which is prior to the person and that's awareness presence and that's amazing you can then be aware of that awareness you can sense this presence that you are in addition to whatever you are perceiving it's in the background of your sense perceptions the background of your life it's a spacious vast presence that connects you to something that we cannot really define or talk about it's deep and it's infinite it's a soul it's not just the depth of your being it connects you to the very soul of the universe the ancients ancient Romans and Greeks had this wonderful term anima mundi which is latin for the soul of the world there is such a thing as a world soul and that is your your soul presence the consciousness that you are is a ray or a spark of that inseparable from the soul of the totality so it's a liberation from the ego itself liberation of the self and then life becomes more harmonious when you begin to invite that consciousness into your life that presence your life begins to flow with greater ease more harmoniously

[Speaker 1] (3:12:35 - 3:12:43)
not that you are not challenged anymore challenges continue but all the challenges do once you begin to awaken to presence

[Speaker 2] (3:12:44 - 3:12:53)
challenges then deepen your presence in fact you need the difficulties in your life to deepen your presence

[Speaker 1] (3:12:54 - 3:13:00)
as you begin to awaken any challenge will deepen your presence

[Speaker 2] (3:13:00 - 3:15:24)
in the early stages it could also happen that challenges take you completely out of presence when you encounter difficult situations or people can take you totally out of presence but gradually as you become a bit more established, rooted in that presence the opposite happens challenges don't make you unconscious they make you more conscious so in a nutshell presence is awareness without thought and then thinking becomes a more helpful tool rather than something that torments you many people their thinking mind torments them continuously they have an unhappy sense of self they talk to themselves using unhappy words they talk about other people using unhappy words and concepts and they confuse what the voice in the head with actual reality out there they can't tell the difference between what is and the way in which they interpret what is which is the conditioning of the mind when you come to an alignment with what is which is always now life becomes easier not free of challenges but much easier and challenges don't produce unhappiness anymore that's a big thing and the difficulties of your life don't make you unhappy anymore amazing I believe there are a few questions that people have submitted or want to ask I don't know if there are any questions left Sybil you have some?

[Speaker 4] (3:15:24 - 3:15:46)
I do, I have questions that people submitted prior to the session and the first one we wanted to ask you was from Randy in New York and Randy's question Eckhart is if you could choose only one practice to bring about the greatest impact of presence in your life what would it be?

[Speaker 2] (3:15:48 - 3:21:00)
Great, wonderful question thanks one practice that's not complicated at all you don't need time to master it this practice it does not take time obviously if a practice of presence takes time it's not really working very well is it? so the the most simple direct practice is to be aware of your breath to be aware of your breathing for example now to be aware of it, your breathing now before I just said that it's very likely that you were not aware of your breathing unless you knew already what this great practice is but the moment I said it your awareness went to your breath and you can feel the air moving into the body and out of the body and so to speak you follow it with your attention you follow the air with your attention as it goes in and out that is the most direct and simplest practice of being present I'm not the first person to come up with that somebody called the Buddha already talked about it 2,500 years ago it was called Anapanasati Yoga it's

the practice of the ingoing and outgoing breath ingoing and outgoing breath awareness now the breathing is always there most of the time you're not conscious of it, when you direct consciousness to your breathing something very interesting happens it slows down or completely eliminates your thinking and there's only an awareness of your breath so if you want to, if you're being tortured by your thoughts as many people are many people don't even know that they're tortured by your thoughts, they think they're being tortured by life whatever their life situation it's so dreadful my life is so difficult and complicated I can't stand it anymore and then the narrative continues and continues and you think that's your life not knowing that it's a narrative in your mind, it's not your life to confuse a narrative in your mind with your life is a fundamental, very dreadful error but very, very common has anybody taught you that at school or university? probably not the most fundamental knowledge not to confuse a narrative in your mind with your life because your life isn't a narrative in your mind it's always now, it is never not now, this is most fundamentally your life is now not the narrative of past and future, that is helpful for practical purposes but no more than that not to give you an identity that's a fictitious identity your true identity is rooted in the power of the present moment the power of now be aware of your breathing you don't even have to control it, there are certain meditation practices that have a very structured way of approaching your breath and you can change the length of your breath you can count your breath you can do all kinds of things, that's fine for meditation practices but the simplest thing is no matter where you are, and you don't even have to say, ok, I'm going to meditate

[Speaker 1] (3:21:00 - 3:21:14)
now it's fine, I love meditation but I sometimes make fun of it a little bit then you enter a totally different ok, now it's time to meditate for 10 minutes and throughout your life

[Speaker 2] (3:21:14 - 3:21:28)
wherever you are be aware of your breathing whenever you can it creates an inner spaciousness because when you're aware of your breathing, you can't do much thinking and most of the thinking

[Speaker 1] (3:21:28 - 3:21:40)
as you may know or maybe it's news to you most of your thinking is not only unnecessary but actually very harmful it creates all kinds of

[Speaker 2] (3:21:40 - 3:23:08)
pseudo problems well the mind is telling you it's working on solving your problems it's actually regurgitating old narratives not real problems there is such a thing as focused application of the mind thinking ability becomes enhanced when there is a presence behind it so when you have an actual real problem to solve in your life approach it not only with your thinking mind but also with the cessation of thinking you can continue step back from thinking into stillness and if you want to use your breath to access the stillness, it's a good portal, be aware of your breathing so first, these are the problems when I have something to think about I usually, because I'm old fashioned I have a notepad and a pen and if I have to think about what can I do in this situation, what are the solutions, I start writing down possibilities these people, modern humans like you you probably use some device, I don't know what you do on

[Speaker 1] (3:23:08 - 3:23:14)
a keyboard or whatever so you write what is it that I can do in this

[Speaker 2] (3:23:14 - 3:24:10)
what can I do to solve this if it's an actual problem, because many things that humans come up with in their mind are not actual problems, they're imaginary constructs if there's an actual problem, okay action needs to be taken, what is it

that I can do, write down this, this, this and then you run out of ideas and then it's time to become still be aware of your breathing you don't need to close your eyes you can, but it's not necessary to be aware of your breathing because you can be aware of your breathing and there's still enough awareness left to be aware of your surroundings if you want to focus more deeply on your breathing, you can close your eyes and then really focus on your breathing but I say even one conscious breath makes a difference in your life

[Speaker 1] (3:24:10 - 3:24:23)
if you take that one conscious breath several times during the day what do I mean by one conscious breath it's one conscious in and out breath

[Speaker 2] (3:24:23 - 3:25:38)
how long does it take, I don't know, maybe, let's see I'm doing it, conscious breath goes like this, that was it, in and out 10 seconds, maybe, doesn't matter and that's one conscious breath, what does it do it creates a gap in your stream of thinking a stillness a presence arises, has always been there, is always there underneath all the thinking so presence is not something that you need to achieve or attain it's something that you discover because it's already there so you can't really work hard to become present because it's already there and this is why in some traditions people say well you are already enlightened

[Speaker 1] (3:25:40 - 3:25:45)
and the person says what are you talking about, my life is a complete mess, how can I be

[Speaker 2] (3:25:45 - 3:26:14)
enlightened, all my relationships are in shambles I'm not enlightened, well underneath all that mental noise and emotional turmoil, there is a presence there is a deeper consciousness so the simplest practice is to be aware of your breath and even if it's only one conscious breath

[Speaker 1] (3:26:14 - 3:26:28)
but taken many times during the day whenever you remember and you might want to take two or three instead of one, even better two or three conscious breaths while you're on your computer on your keyboard

[Speaker 2] (3:26:29 - 3:27:09)
okay stop for a moment one or two or three conscious breaths or just observe that you are breathing just direct your attention there you are breathing there is no doubt about it you are breathing so just observe that you are breathing breathing happens to you, you are not doing it but for most people thinking is the same, thinking happens to them, they are not doing it they have no control at all what their mind does, they have no awareness

[Speaker 1] (3:27:11 - 3:27:48)
so thinking happens to them in the same way that breathing happens to them but this doesn't have to, breathing yes that always happens something in you wants to live and it's breathing, it wants you to live in this incarnation and that's why you're breathing and no matter how unhappy you are, you cannot kill yourself by stopping breathing, you won't be able nobody has ever committed suicide by stopping their breath holding their breath something in you does not want to commit suicide it wants to come to the end of your incarnation naturally

[Speaker 2] (3:27:50 - 3:28:33)
and only the silly person wants to commit suicide so get in touch with that in you that does not want to commit, it's not unhappy the presence is not unhappy the awareness is not unhappy so the simplest practice be aware of your breathing now that can lead you into the next practice that they are closely connected the other

practice is to be aware of the inner energy field of your body when you're breathing that connects

[Speaker 1] (3:28:33 - 3:28:55)
you almost inevitably with the inner energy field of your body because you breathe into and if you can feel that you're breathing into as deep as the abdomen without no effort, it's just happening don't make an effort it's just happening, you're breathing and your attention follows the

[Speaker 2] (3:28:55 - 3:29:08)
breath as deep as the abdomen, belly although the air probably doesn't go there but your attention goes with the breath and from there you can sense an energy spreading

[Speaker 1] (3:29:08 - 3:29:24)
out throughout your body an inner energy field it pervades the body I call it inner body awareness it's also an ancient meditation practice if done in a more structured way it's called Vipassana

[Speaker 2] (3:29:24 - 3:29:55)
or going back also probably taught by the Buddha too and by Jesus, we only have fragments of his teachings he talks about the possibility that your body can be full of light that's what he's talking about so inner body awareness to sense the inner energy field of your body and breath awareness are closely

[Speaker 1] (3:29:55 - 3:30:09)
related and sometimes breath awareness inevitably could connect you to the inner energy field of the body and then they merge into one practice you're aware of your breathing and you're aware

[Speaker 2] (3:30:09 - 3:31:03)
of that your body is pervaded by a sense of aliveness, that is the intelligence that inhabits your body it transcends who or what you are as a person and you feel intensely alive not in an excited way in a calm way so there's breath awareness and inner body awareness, they merge into one let's see if there are any other questions, Sybil?

[Speaker 4] (3:31:03 - 3:32:06)
We have a question from Southern California from Tam she says she loves all of the tools that you've given so far and it's been really really helpful throughout her entire life and there's times where some situations happen and it just becomes really overwhelming what's your best advice to help become present when we do have these overwhelming times and it just feels like it's too much to bear and none of the regular practices of presence are working, when you see or hear something that's extremely upsetting or you just feel totally overwhelmed and consumed in unconsciousness in the moment recently it felt like all the wonderful tools that were helping so far didn't help in moments of overwhelm and stress and probably deep unconsciousness what would be your advice to help pull me back to consciousness when that happens?

[Speaker 2] (3:32:08 - 3:33:29)
Thank you, we probably need to differentiate between different things here, there is such a thing as emergency situations emergency situations in your life that require an immediate response you're being attacked by a wild animal or a crazy human or your house is on fire or there's an earthquake all these things are happening more and more these days by the way, as you probably know for many people actually emergencies happen and they require an immediate when this happens there is no time to think about how can I be present the emergency can either

[Speaker 1] (3:33:29 - 3:33:35)
cause you to enter a state of panic

[Speaker 2] (3:33:35 - 3:33:56)
and extreme well panic is extreme fear it's also possible that an emergency makes you very present itself it it can have

[Speaker 1] (3:33:57 - 3:33:59)
either one or the other effect

[Speaker 2] (3:33:59 - 3:34:12)
on you, it can make you panicky and fearful or it can make you intensely alert and out of that alertness comes whatever response is required in that situation

[Speaker 1] (3:34:13 - 3:34:24)
no thinking is involved in an emergency situation if the emergency forces you into absolute presence

[Speaker 2] (3:34:25 - 3:34:39)
it's not a practice you can't say your house is on fire and say now I need to practice presence but it may be that the emergency itself creates this intense presence

[Speaker 1] (3:34:39 - 3:34:45)
in you and then an intelligence operates in you and causes you to take

[Speaker 2] (3:34:45 - 3:34:55)
right action for that moment whatever that may be, it is not premeditated and it does not come from the conditioning of your mind accumulated conditioning of your mind

[Speaker 1] (3:34:55 - 3:35:05)
so you are not reacting in some old predictable way when you are present it is more likely should you encounter an emergency situation

[Speaker 2] (3:35:05 - 3:36:08)
but you have been practicing presence in your daily life beforehand it is your chances of staying present and experiencing an intensification of presence when an emergency happens is much greater, it is in other words it is more likely when you've been practicing presence already in normal situations in your life when a true emergency happens, that presence will become very intense and that means immediately it will take action through you and you will do just the right thing for that situation, nobody can predict what that might be so sometimes people think people probably heard of accounts of people who have performed heroic actions maybe they have saved other people or heroic things and they later ask what did you how did

[Speaker 1] (3:36:08 - 3:36:38)
you are so brave, how could you do that and they say I couldn't help, I just did it, I couldn't help it there was no thinking involved it just happened, I did it and when this happens also you don't take credit for it if you save somebody's life because it just, the action then happens through you a greater intelligence one could say acts through you, it takes action so you are more likely to be prepared

[Speaker 2] (3:36:38 - 3:36:54)
you will be prepared for true emergencies if you have been practicing presence because the presence power has been growing in you, so you will not be paralyzed for example by an emergency, some people are

[Speaker 1] (3:36:54 - 3:37:05)
either paralyzed or they go into intense mode of panic and it's not likely that panic will lead

[Speaker 2] (3:37:05 - 3:38:15)
to really intelligent and effective action they will probably do the wrong thing that makes the situation even worse or gets them killed that's panic so presence practicing of presence is a good preparation should life present you with an enormous challenge, an immediate an emergency that needs to be dealt with immediately, so that the emergency does not overwhelm you you can face it that's one thing but there's another form of overwhelm that's to do with the the thinking mind so you have some problems in your life or maybe a succession of problems that's why you become overwhelmed, you have several problems not absolute emergencies but difficulties in your life, somebody close to you dies and you lose your job the next day and then you get home the following day and your wife has left you or your husband left you or whatever

[Speaker 1] (3:38:15 - 3:38:35)
many things suddenly come I can't take it anymore, I'm so over well okay so here we're talking somewhat different situation from the actual immediate emergency this overwhelm is produced by the thinking mind trying to find some

[Speaker 2] (3:38:35 - 3:38:49)
kind of coping with impossible, seemingly impossible situations that you cannot actually do anything about right now at some point you can take action to to solve situations but

[Speaker 1] (3:38:49 - 3:39:04)
right now because it's not an emergency so right now you just have all these problems arriving in your life what is your my investments have collapsed if you had any my bank account is empty I can't pay my rent

[Speaker 2] (3:39:04 - 3:39:30)
all these things are could lead to overwhelm but what is the overwhelm is the thinking mind creating havoc in your mind oh my god I can't take anymore, what should I do my life has come to an end I can't cope with it there you need to take action

[Speaker 1] (3:39:30 - 3:39:38)
and here again the preparation for that should it happen that in your life you are

[Speaker 2] (3:39:38 - 3:40:39)
faced with several problems occurring in a short space of time practice presence in your daily life again is a wonderful preparation for coping with a series of problems that may arise in a short space of time in your life so that's why it's very important to practice presence when things are going relatively okay so that what I call presence power grows in you and as presence power grows in you when these situations happen you are able to take your attention out of the chaotic thinking mind and bring your attention into the present moment in whatever way through your breathing or your awareness

[Speaker 1] (3:40:40 - 3:40:44)
don't believe your mind when it tells you I can't do it now

[Speaker 2] (3:40:45 - 3:41:09)
I need to think about my problems I can't do presence now it's impossible this thought is a lie if you have been practicing presence and then you have this thought that says I can't do it now there's no point don't believe in every thought that comes into your mind that's another practice don't believe in every

[Speaker 1] (3:41:09 - 3:41:24)
thought that comes into your mind your thought says I can't do it now there's no point of course you can take a conscious breath there's nobody who cannot take a conscious breath if you decide to take a conscious breath and if you don't believe your mind

[Speaker 2] (3:41:24 - 3:41:55)
it tells you you can't do it then you take a conscious breath on a practical level physical movement helps if you feel overwhelmed go out into nature and breathe consciously there and take in your surroundings nature is a very healing thing

[Speaker 1] (3:41:56 - 3:42:05)
when your life is especially when your life has become chaotic go into nature even if you live in a city there will be nature

[Speaker 2] (3:42:05 - 3:42:49)
somewhere maybe you have a backyard maybe you have this big park where you can go there will be nature somewhere you can get out of the city even better so you go into nature and nature can help you become present it's easier to be present in nature than to be present in a city. Once presence power grows in you it makes hardly any difference you may still have a preference for nature but you can be as present in the city too.

But in the early stages of presence arising in you, nature is very helpful. So when life becomes

[Speaker 1] (3:42:50 - 3:42:54)
a burden to you then go into nature

[Speaker 2] (3:42:54 - 3:44:02)
and bring your attention to your sense perceptions and your breathing, be there fully and it can liberate you to some extent it liberates you from this mental overwhelm this was perhaps an interesting story from my early life when I was a child I was I didn't have a happy childhood well there were some happy moments, yes in fact this is what I'm going to talk about now on the whole my life, my whole life was not happy because my family environment was chaotic and a lot of screaming and anger and horrible so my parents meant well but they were in the grip of their own unconscious conditioning they couldn't help it so I was not happy there very unhappy at school too so I carried this unhappiness and at some I don't know how old I was, maybe ten, I got a bicycle for Christmas

[Speaker 1] (3:44:03 - 3:44:05)
so I was able to get out of the city

[Speaker 2] (3:44:06 - 3:44:07)
it wasn't

[Speaker 1] (3:44:07 - 3:44:15)
it was a medium sized city so I took like a 15 minute bike ride and I would be out it wasn't grand nature

[Speaker 2] (3:44:16 - 3:44:28)
like just cornfields and hedges and trees and little groves but it was nature so I got out of the city

[Speaker 1] (3:44:29 - 3:44:44)
many times on my bike the moment I reached nature I felt so much better and there was one thought that repeated itself every time I did this it repeated itself in my

mind and that thought said

[Speaker 2] (3:44:45 - 3:45:34)
I didn't fully understand what it meant but I just thought that this will always be here this will always be here this will always be here and this referred to nature so I had this intuitive realization there is a human made world which was a world of unhappiness for me and there was the natural world which represented the liberation from unhappiness and it represented well-being and harmony so that's my first that was my first spiritual experience in life was that occurred many many times

[Speaker 1] (3:45:34 - 3:45:39)
so nature is wonderful in a way you could people may not realize

[Speaker 2] (3:45:39 - 3:46:04)
the world that you inhabit consists primarily of human made things and natural things you can divide all your sensory perceptions into human made things that surround you all things furniture, cars buildings utensils everything human made and then you have

[Speaker 1] (3:46:04 - 3:46:09)
nature even as I sit here in my room I can see all the human made things

[Speaker 2] (3:46:11 - 3:47:34)
and then there is nature, look out of the window there is trees there is nature and I've got some plants here potted plants you can look at the plants there is the human made world and there is there is a plant and there is another one behind me it's a rubber plant it is and that's natural and it's interesting to see that you have these two dimensions the human made things and the natural things and then of course there is always the sky sky is always, even if you are in the middle of a huge city you can't see a single tree the sky is still there and the sky is a beautiful thing that actually can represent the inner consciousness this is why Jesus talks about the kingdom of heaven which in my translation is the dimension of spaciousness which is an inner dimension which is presence so Jesus talking about the kingdom of heaven dimension, kingdom of heaven vast spaciousness is the inner spaciousness of presence

[Speaker 1] (3:47:34 - 3:47:54)
Buddha talked about sunyata usually translated as emptiness but a better translation is spaciousness again as an inner state, a realization of this inner dimension all pointing to that it all comes together

[Speaker 2] (3:47:55 - 3:48:08)
it's only one truth one true teaching comes in just different forms so overwhelm is actually emergencies

[Speaker 1] (3:48:08 - 3:49:25)
and then there is the overwhelm by your mind and that you can do something about and get ready for it because we all get challenged and we are living in a time when collectively humanity is going to be challenged more and more so there will be challenges that affect every one of us there have already been some and there are some now collective challenges so you are either prepared for them or you are not, if you are not prepared you will become very unhappy and you won't be able to cope but if you are prepared it will, the challenges that humanity is facing will be an inseparable part of the awakening of humanity humans don't awaken even other life forms don't awaken unless they are challenged deeply that is part of the evolution of consciousness so it's all good what looks bad on the surface on a deeper, higher perspective

[Speaker 2] (3:49:25 - 3:49:38)
is all good and it all makes sense be ready for the challenges in life, it's incredibly important to grow in presence so to speak

[Speaker 1] (3:49:38 - 3:49:59)
so that presence power can manifest itself more fully through you presence itself is timeless of course but your ability to become a vessel for presence a conduit for presence that grows in time because here we inhabit the dimension of time

[Speaker 2] (3:49:59 - 3:50:05)
and yet presence is the transcendent dimension that is timeless

[Speaker 4] (3:50:11 - 3:50:37)
Eckhart, along those lines the final question as you know the title of tonight's event is the shift that changes everything and the final question we wanted to ask you this evening is what is that shift that changes everything and why is it essential right now for humanity to undergo this shift

[Speaker 1] (3:50:38 - 3:50:44)
right, thank you so I've already started kind of already started talking about that

[Speaker 2] (3:50:44 - 3:50:52)
question before you asked it so it's the

[Speaker 1] (3:50:56 - 3:50:59)
awakening to use that term

[Speaker 2] (3:50:59 - 3:51:09)
the term awakening has been around for thousands of years Buddha, the word Buddha means the one who is awake

[Speaker 1] (3:51:09 - 3:51:23)
Buddha means being awake Jesus talked quite often about staying awake it's misunderstood in most churches Jesus said a literal quote

[Speaker 2] (3:51:23 - 3:51:53)
this is probably one of the fragments that he actually truly said I can't remember what gospel it is from said, and what I say to you, I say to all stay awake that's Jesus Buddha is the one who is awake when people ask Buddha what are you, he said I'm awake so what is that awake awake is

[Speaker 1] (3:51:57 - 3:52:09)
they have gone through this shift in consciousness from the egoic consciousness that is totally identified with the thinking function to a deeper or higher consciousness

[Speaker 2] (3:52:09 - 3:52:19)
I usually prefer the term deeper but higher is fine too a deeper consciousness that transcends all this

[Speaker 1] (3:52:20 - 3:52:24)
so that you find a deeper sense of identity

[Speaker 2] (3:52:26 - 3:53:14)
than the one that is based on your personal history for most people their sense of identity is based on their personal history and however they interpret their personal history their personal history is a narrative they tell themselves, a story they tell themselves and they call it my life it's very limiting and ultimately very frustrating because this narrative is never fully at ease it's

always a lot of the time it's an unhappy narrative, sense of identity it's a burden that people carry, it's the egoic sense of self, it creates problems where problems didn't exist before it creates dysfunction

[Speaker 1] (3:53:15 - 3:53:23)
as reflected also collectively in world history, read the history of the 20th century first half especially but

[Speaker 2] (3:53:23 - 3:53:48)
any history of oh my god this is insane millions, I can't remember, nobody knows exactly how many humans were killed by other humans in the 20th century alone but hundreds of millions and that's the manifestation of the collective level of this unconsciousness

[Speaker 1] (3:53:48 - 3:53:53)
so unless we, now we have created enormous technologies

[Speaker 2] (3:53:55 - 3:54:04)
which can amplify the dysfunction of the egoic mind it's already been doing that so it amplifies the egoic madness

[Speaker 1] (3:54:04 - 3:54:09)
and if we don't transcend the egoic state of consciousness

[Speaker 2] (3:54:09 - 3:54:17)
to a higher state of consciousness we are going to kill ourselves because

[Speaker 1] (3:54:18 - 3:55:10)
it's just technology amplifies the mental dysfunction that humans have been carrying for thousands of years it wasn't so bad in the past people had only got they had all these swarms to kill each other and then the technology grew and grew and grew and now we are confronted with the digital technology which to a large extent also amplifies the dysfunction of the human mind what people do on facebook not everybody you can use it consciously too but millions of people are using it to simply to amplify their egoic sense of self the image that they want to create of who they are, some fictitious image and now

[Speaker 2] (3:55:10 - 3:55:24)
through technology they can project this image to the outward world using of course lots of filters so they look, everybody looks beautiful with all the filters they can apply to their facebook pages even I could look beautiful

[Speaker 1] (3:55:24 - 3:55:42)
if I put a filter supply oh everybody looks so great and everybody looks so happy and it's all fiction so you have an externalization of the human ego through the technology

[Speaker 2] (3:55:43 - 3:55:59)
we can talk about this for a long time but there's no need here and now but to see there's an enormous amount of dysfunction in the human mind that we need this all the ancient traditions talked about that already that

[Speaker 1] (3:55:59 - 3:56:45)
human mind has great possibilities but it has an inbuilt fundamental dysfunction the Buddha called it dukkha, suffering you always, wherever you go you encounter suffering unless you wake up and Jesus terms it's called sin sin means really missing the mark of human existence, that's the original translation of the word sin in the new testament is to miss the mark so you miss the purpose of your life the purpose of your life is to awaken as a human being to become more conscious, to

awaken to this consciousness there is no other purpose to your life

[Speaker 2] (3:56:45 - 3:56:55)
than this awakening all the others are secondary purposes yes, on a personal level you have secondary purposes in your personal life, everybody has different personal

[Speaker 1] (3:56:55 - 3:59:04)
purposes, but they must be aligned with a greater purpose which is to live more consciously to awaken to this new consciousness these are the ancient teachings, they've already spoken about this but for the first time I would say in the history of humanity is the awakening now an absolute necessity rather than a kind of luxury so in the past a few humans here and there, not many of them we never heard of there have been humans always awakened humans in history but it has never been an absolute necessity for humanity to go through this shift in consciousness but now unless we go through this shift in consciousness we are undoubtedly going to destroy ourselves so this is why it's so vital, but the strange thing is, we need this, we need this crisis the evolution of consciousness needs this crisis so it's not a bad thing it's actually a necessary thing to be facing this crisis and because that will bring about the awakening then we begin to inhabit a different world, not a world totally free of challenges but not the havoc that we are creating at the moment which is all, whatever world humans create is a manifestation of their underlying state of consciousness it cannot be otherwise and so the only thing that is threatening us is the human mind dysfunction of the human mind, it's within us there are no external enemies ultimately, the true enemy lies within so that's what it is all about, so the shift in consciousness is now absolutely necessary but it is also

[Speaker 2] (3:59:06 - 3:59:22)
more available and somehow I would say, easier to realize than it has been in the past that's a good thing it is more accessible and easier to realize than it has been in the past but be ready

[Speaker 1] (3:59:24 - 3:59:29)
big challenges are coming and either

[Speaker 2] (3:59:29 - 3:59:43)
they will bring about your awakening or they will make you very, very unhappy to say the least so it's a wonderful thing that

[Speaker 1] (3:59:44 - 3:59:53)
the possibility of human awakening, that is the essence of our age the age we live in is a

[Speaker 2] (3:59:54 - 4:04:37)
deep crisis leading to the awakening of human consciousness and it all comes back to where we started this moment presence is called presence because it's inseparable from the present moment that's why it's called presence intense present moment awareness of course you remember the past when necessary you can plan for the future when necessary, fine but otherwise the focus of your life is present moment then everything shifts this is all there ever is actually there is nothing else ever so you might as well recognize it present moment awareness, that's all there ever is this is your life not the memories or future projections this is your life your life is now, it's never not now so you become a friend of the now friendly with now you wake up into the now so to speak and no longer carry this heavy burden of this exclusively personal sense of self the heaviness of the self Buddha talked about the fiction of the self, the illusion of the self the mind made itself with its heaviness of course it's still there, but you're not trapped in it anymore you're still a person but there's more to you than the person and you can sense that there's more to you than the person, so it comes it all comes, very

simple present moment present moment awareness is you're aware of whatever is in the present moment sensory perception feelings occasional thoughts and you're aware of yourself, very important you're aware of yourself but not the self that's the person but you're aware of yourself as the awareness itself as the consciousness itself you can sense your beingness so to speak you can sense your presence, you can sense the I am which has nothing to do with your history whether your personal history was a wonderful success story or a great disaster doesn't matter anymore there's something that transcends that if your personal history was a great success story you're probably not motivated yet to enter presence because you are satisfied by superficial things until they collapse because they will if your personal history is a disaster then there's a better chance of awakening but for most people it's a mixed bag bad things have happened, good things have happened but wasn't that great it's very limiting so you go deeper so you become aware of being aware, this sounds a little weird, you sense yourself as beingness or consciousness the presence, I am the presence I am and there's no time in it

[Speaker 1] (4:04:37 - 4:04:44)
nothing to do with whatever happened to you in your past, nothing to do with it and nothing to do with what's going to happen to you

[Speaker 2] (4:04:44 - 4:06:04)
in the future and there's enormous power there, it's the power of life itself, it's the Dao however you want to call it and so and then gradually you live more in that you become more rooted in that dimension and that's the shift that is needed great, thank you everybody stay present that's all that ultimately matters your state of consciousness is the most important thing, it's not an ego thing at all your entire world that you experience is mediated through your state of consciousness thank you, thank you

[Speaker 4] (4:06:07 - 4:06:08)
thank you so much Eckhart

[Speaker 2] (4:06:08 - 4:06:09)
thank you

[Speaker 4] (4:06:09 - 4:07:24)
and thank you all of you for being with us this evening, I wanted to invite you again for those of you who are joining us a little later in the program to Eckhart's new online program, if you want to continue this teaching with Eckhart the program will be beginning in several weeks and we hope you'll join us in a community all over the world and tonight when you sign up after you enroll you'll also receive a special bonus teaching called Living Free from Stress and Anxiety and it includes three of Eckhart's most popular audio programs and we wanted to give everyone the opportunity to listen to these special teachings and prepare for the upcoming program with Eckhart where he'll be guiding us through the doorways into presence, so in addition to receiving a special discount on the program you'll also receive the special bonus teachings when you enroll today and I hope you had a really really good experience here tonight it was so wonderful being with all of you and you can find out more about the program and register at EckhartTolle.com thank you so much

[Speaker 5] (4:07:24 - 4:07:25)
for joining us this evening

[Speaker 1] (4:07:38 - 4:28:15)
something is still missing in my life something is still not right and then you try other relationships and you try other places to live and you try other activities and sooner or later and usually sooner you come again to the place this isn't right either and then you ask what am I really meant to do, where am I really meant to be

because it's not here it's never here ultimately because you're not at home deep enough in the now so you can never feel this is never but there's no external solution to that there's only an inner solution to that you come home to the now and you have to drop down beyond the mental emotional accumulations that you confuse with who you are and you sense as I sometimes say the ripple on the surface of the pacific ocean stops thinking of itself as a ripple and senses its own depths and suddenly the ripple feels at one with the depths of the ocean but also feels at one with every other ripple that it sees on the surface of the ocean because it senses its connectedness with the totality with the one and therefore recognizes every other ripple as also being an expression of that and then for the first time it can become comfortable with other ripples really at ease the ripples of course in our analogy are people but there is a source of power in you that transcends the person and it's not egoic power over somebody and it's one with the power that is the power of life in the universe where all life arises and people sometimes have a problem with self confidence or valuing yourself and sometimes you try to convince yourself by changing your thinking that you are actually good enough that you should be self confident but there is a better way to find the source of self confidence on the egoic level self confidence is there because you see you can tell yourself I'm actually more intelligent than most of these people or I'm better looking than most, I have to remind myself that I'm better looking than most and then you, okay yeah I feel a bit more confident now or you say I actually have more money than these people so I should have more self confidence whatever it is, some way of convincing yourself and then you compare yourself with others and then you focus in on those areas where you feel superior to others and try not to think about other areas where inevitably you are inferior to others because you cannot be superior in all areas it's a complicated game when you start comparing yourself to other people and if you want to bolster your self confidence and you only have to focus on where you feel I'm actually better than most but that doesn't really work that well so there is a better way of self confidence that has nothing to do with comparing yourself with others or with feeling you are better than or not as good as and that is direct access to inner power you don't need any comparison you can have it right now at this very moment if you are not stuck in your thinking mind but take your attention a little bit beyond the thinking mind and then realize that you are the presence behind the thinking mind without which there could be no thinking you're the aware presence behind it all that is deeper, you've gone deeper than the thinking mind and that aware presence is where power resides and it's not yours because it connects you with universal power therefore you don't need to compare yourself to anybody anymore or feel as the ego always does that you are either superior or inferior to somebody else that's not a comfortable way to live where you have to classify yourself when you meet people and so your fear is always I might be inferior or behind that fear is a desire to be superior power really, it is feeling your inherent power, I don't often use that word, I just use it for title of a book but there is a source of power in you that transcends the person and it's not egoic power over somebody and it's one with a power that is the power of life in the universe where all life arises and people sometimes have a problem with self confidence or valuing yourself and sometimes you try to convince yourself by changing your thinking that you are actually good enough that you should be self confident but there is a better way to find the source of self confidence on the egoic level self confidence is there because you see you can tell yourself I'm actually more intelligent than most of these people or I'm better looking than most, I have to remind myself that I'm better looking than most and then you, okay yeah I feel a bit more confident now or you say I actually have more money than these people so I should have more self confidence whatever it is, some way of convincing yourself and then you compare yourself with others and then you focus on those areas where you feel superior to others and try not to think about other areas where inevitably you are inferior to others because you cannot be superior in all areas it's a complicated game when you start comparing yourself to other people and if you want to bolster your self confidence and you only have to focus on where you feel I'm actually better than most but that doesn't really work that well so there is a better way of self confidence that has nothing to do with comparing yourself with others or with feeling you are better than or not as good as and that is direct access to inner power you don't need any comparison you can have it right now at this very moment if you are not stuck in your thinking mind but take your attention a little bit beyond the thinking mind and then realize that you are the presence behind the thinking mind without which there could be no thinking you are the aware presence behind it all that is deeper you've gone deeper than the thinking mind and that aware presence is where power resides and it's not yours because it connects you with universal power therefore you don't need to compare yourself to anybody anymore or feel as the ego always does that you are either superior or inferior to somebody else that's not a comfortable way to live where you have to classify yourself when you meet people and so the fear is always I might be inferior or behind that fear is a desire to be superior and when you access true power you recognize you can relate to humans without any sense of either superiority or inferiority and that's amazing liberation you can only do that when you feel your inherent power beyond the mind and mental images of who you are it's wonderfully liberating to be able to meet other human beings and absolutely have no interest in finding out whether you are superior or inferior because you see it's a delusion anyway and then you have that sense of absolute equality with every human being they are all your equals and you are their equals which is nice when you met VIPs then you don't have to go who am I compared to this person you are consciousness essentially and this person is consciousness essentially which has taken form so you may remember the story I told in one of the books there was a Zen teacher abbot of a Zen monastery in Japan who was about to meet VIPs that were visiting the monastery, the governor of the province was coming with his staff and as the governor of the province approached the abbot got up to greet him and at that moment he noticed the palms of his hands were sweaty which is a sign of nervousness and because, so he was very much able to observe himself and he observed that but of course he went on with the ceremony of greeting the officials and the next day he announced to the monks that he was going away, that his realization was not deep enough because he explained he became nervous when the governor of the province came he felt his palms got sweaty so he was not deeply rooted in his own being he went off for several years and then he came back and finally he was able to live in true connectedness with power which is not personal it's an amazing act of self observation another act of self observation you can do you can observe when you relate to people, whether your behavior changes even slightly, whether you behave to, whether you're talking to the lady who is cleaning your office or whether you're talking to the CEO of the company observe in yourself, is the ego still operating and don't beat yourself up if you find that the way in which you relate to the cleaning lady is different from the way you relate to the CEO of your company that's an insight because whenever you discover the ego operating in you which is built on image making it's a great thing meaning you're becoming more conscious the process of becoming conscious often involves becoming conscious of your own ego and see it in action if you then beat yourself up about it, that's more ego on top of the original ego so you get layers of ego, oh my god but I'm still not rid of my ego no ego is nothing, even ego looks personal but it's nothing personal really in ego, it's a pattern of behavior in humanity in the collective unconscious that has been there for been growing for thousands of years, a separate sense of identity, a sense of separateness yes, so observe how whether a great sign if you're beyond ego is that you're the same with everybody and you feel like actually the same with everybody and if you don't then you can observe the ego in action but when you observe the ego it begins to change it cannot sustain itself in the light of your observation the ego requires your unconsciousness so all the egoic patterns in you can only survive if you don't know what you're doing but if you know what you're doing, in other words you're there as the witness as it's sometimes called the observing presence then you can the ego cannot survive when you recognize it as silly for example or you smile at it and you see how silly it is to play one kind of role with one person and then play another kind of role with somebody else who has a different social function why?

what for? are you neither with the CEO nor with the cleaning lady it is a role and the ego plays many roles so is it possible to not play roles?

yes, just be straight, be yourself is the famous saying and of course the question is how can I be myself? who is myself? so you cut through the mental to the place of power and feel that the presence right now for example you are both a person and the deeper presence the moment you start thinking about where you're going to go next or you just think about what happened this morning or what's awaiting you next week or anything else you are the person and the moment you drop down into just spacious presence which feels very much alive you are the aware presence you're not a person right now this mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive to be free you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation the most basic thing is not to have a confrontational relationship with what's going on right now and that's not only with your children if you can master that with your children you can master it anywhere that is one of the primary ways of dealing with things in a conscious manner not to internally oppose the isness of this moment

[Speaker 7] (4:28:18 - 4:30:06)
hello now that I'm up here my planned question has eluded me but I have the essence of what I wanted to ask I have two young children and a very busy house on a daily basis it feels like working at a night club it is just chaos with two very young children at the end of the day I feel so exhausted that often I find myself going oh I'm so tired and over time that kind of begins to mentally wear and I don't know how to do the meditating I take quiet moments in the day but I don't seem to know how to feel ah the days ended and that's great because physiologically I am so exhausted and I wanted to know is there a pointer that you could offer or even another form of talking to myself or not talking but whatever it is the response to the intensity of raising two young children which in time will pass but in the now I'm in it is incredibly overwhelming and I cannot seem to stop feeling even when I accept it I'm kind of getting sick of the accepting of the

[Speaker 1] (4:30:08 - 4:30:10)
how old are they

[Speaker 7] (4:30:10 - 4:30:12)
two and six

[Speaker 1] (4:30:14 - 4:32:44)
well ideally I would spend some time at your place to observe how you deal with things and then I could advise you perhaps on how to deal with things in a different way but this probably is not practical so you have to be rather than me you have to be the observing presence in your home you can imagine that it's me the awareness in you so here's Eckhart which just briefly symbolizes the awareness in me it's you watching how I deal with situations that arise throughout the day with the children and all the demands of daily life and that self observation may already be the beginning of some a little bit more spaciousness coming in so you can observe to what extent you just react to every situation so you're at the mercy of every situation because it triggers a reaction in you rather than having a space of freedom and then respond to the situation it doesn't necessarily mean that a lot of the time while you're dealing with things that you have to withdraw and sit on a chair or just rest a moment you probably won't be able to do that and it's not necessary you can't say I need to take a minute off now for presence they won't let you laugh cough but can you be present now let's see since I can't be there could you give one or two examples of because it's always best to look at how it actually arises of a situation and there are probably many during the day that create stress for you that create that kind of reactive turmoil yes

[Speaker 7] (4:32:44 - 4:35:11)

so I've got in the house organized some sort of organized sense it feels a bit calmer the I get the children they go to nursery school for a couple hours a day they come home and my two year old he's pumped up and ready to play and throwing stuff around and they love to run and scream and have a good time that's what they're doing is really having a good time we have calm down time but they're brothers they want to play with the same toy at the same time so that the it appears and feels not unnormal it feels like this is just the functioning of children but the intensity when I'm trying to stay conscious and using my own mind without reacting to them yelling and screaming and fighting over a toy and then we set up a new system this is going to be the new system and then that quickly changes so the changing is this it's like this it's so fast that my brain it's doing this this face expression this is it I'm like this and then they need the food and then the two year old needs all the needs met the clothing and the this and then the six year old wants all the needs met at the same time and it's just mom at home because dad's not home until eight and it is so much that my brain feels like it shorts out so I do take moments of I'll just stand there with them that's when they really try and get me going they know mom is getting peace and they're really great kids I mean it but when they see me getting the peace then they want to really get riled up and have a good time so at the end of the day I just feel knowing that this is a period of time and they grow and it will pass but at this exact now the lack of calmness even amidst a decent schedule a calm schedule feels really challenging

[Speaker 1] (4:35:13 - 4:35:43)
well the calmness of course has to come from within you it doesn't come from outside so one way of accessing it is to not it seems to me that this is quite normal that you spent a lot of time in an antagonistic relationship with what's happening in the present moment

[Speaker 7] (4:35:44 - 4:35:47)
yes I just discovered that the other day yes

[Speaker 1] (4:35:47 - 4:50:58)
and that is the basis of the dysfunction it's not what's happening in the present moment it's your inability which is not really inability because you are able but you just are not practicing it yet to align yourself with the present moment and whatever is taking place in it and not operate with the underlying assumption that this whatever is going on at this moment should not be going on because it's only that underlying assumption that what's going on now should not be going on they're screaming they're throwing things of course if the mind says this should not be going on but it is going on that's how suffering happens and how you then contribute more to this to the upheavals that are continuously taking place because you can't accept this moment as it is and so I would suggest to set aside at first brief practice periods give yourself five minutes ten minutes when you are so bring so much alertness when the children are there and do what they do you bring so much alertness into those five or ten minutes that whatever they do is okay and then you still talk to them tell them something whatever you feel you need to do but in a different way because it doesn't come from a place of non acceptance uh uh very unconscious parents and of course you are not one of them very unconscious parents get angry with their children I've seen parents with small children they knock over a glass at dinner or in a restaurant and the parent gets extremely angry uh no now it's in the nature of a young child not to be able to handle very well they're not as skillful yet handling physical objects so it's in their nature to knock things over and spill things of course you still teach them how to hold it and after some time they learn but obviously they cannot handle things as skillfully and things will get spilled and I have observed parents getting very angry and even hitting their children and spilling something that of course is totally it's a more extreme example I'm sure that's not what you do but it's just taking the same dysfunction to a more to an extreme but the underlying dysfunction is to not be at one with the

present moment so instead of feeling that you need to seek stillness and then they will know that because they interpret it as you're withdrawing attention from them when you go into when you kind of stand still or something like that and then they make even more nice because they want to get your attention back so but in this practice they don't even have to notice what you're doing because it's not as doing as such it's see if you can immediately whatever they do it's already done it's already the present moment you can't argue with what is so and then if whatever action you need to take you take this is the most basic thing is not to have a confrontational relationship with what's going on right now and that's not only with our children if you can master that with your children you can master it anywhere in other areas of your life because it's for everybody in whatever situation you find yourself in that is one of the primary ways of dealing with things in a conscious manner not to internally oppose the isness of this moment basically you're already a master when you live like that but if you practice for five minutes at a time then okay then you're a master for five minutes and then you might get you might not succeed even during those five minutes but then you might but there will be times when you actually feels better to live in this way and then you get an incentive to practice a bit more give yourself instead of don't tell yourself from now on I'm going to be completely present with whatever they do that's too much give yourself small spaces at first and then when you find actually it works then they grow a little bit a little bit more space until it becomes second nature and then you're awake and then bringing up your children will have become a more helpful spiritual practice than 20 years in a meditating in a Zen monastery so that really it's your spiritual practice the another thing that is helpful to remember and bear in mind is ultimately bringing up doing what you do with the children telling them what you need to tell them and helping them with what they need is all important but there's something that's more important and that is your state of consciousness behind what you do and say or another way of putting it how you do what you do is more important than what you do how refers to the underlying state of consciousness so this is really the what I'm talking about is surrender doesn't mean they can do whatever they like but internally to be one with what is as it arises then you will sense a certain peacefulness underneath it all and a spaciousness and you don't even, nobody will even notice by looking at you well if I were there I probably would, looking at you very closely so that's the awareness in you growing and I'm leaving aside now other things that you can that are more of a practical matter to what extent to create boundaries for their children, to what extent their behavior those are things that you can learn from other people there used to be a thing on television, well we haven't had cable in some years but when we had still cable I occasionally saw a weekly episode of, I think it was called Super Nanny it was an English nanny she was an actual nanny and she became quite famous because of that program of course it helped that she had a British accent and so she went into the most dysfunctional families, at first the program would always show the chaos in the house and mother and father can't deal with things, everybody screaming and then the super nanny would walk in and I don't think she would have said anything what I said like surrender to the present moment but she had other ways, very useful ways of how one can deal with situations, create certain boundaries but not too many boundaries the balance between boundaries for the children of what behavior is acceptable and what is not acceptable the boundary needs to be wide enough to allow for creative art flow and trying things out and making mistakes and yet it needs to be prevent them from bringing total chaos into the house and those are more external things that you could look at the super nanny is the equivalent of the dog whisperer with the dogs who is again Cesar Milan as you may know had a conversation with on our TV a few years ago he has this ability, he always goes into places with the most dysfunctional dogs, so at first they show you the dog is and then Cesar Milan comes in and sometimes he just looks at them and then they start to behave differently so those are intuitive I believe he does it very intuitively but to come back then to what I can address here is only the level of consciousness what your state of consciousness needs to be in addition to what I said you may want to look into some external things concerning boundaries and so on because some parents for example as everybody probably knows some parents they tell children not to do something but when they start whining and shouting or throwing a tantrum after a few minutes they say okay then go ahead so that's teaching them dysfunction already at an early age another one because then they learn that if they just complain enough and shout enough and show aggression or anger then they'll get what they want another one of course is giving attention some parents only give attention when something is going wrong the main way the main instances when they give attention to their children is just when the children have done something wrong or when they're screaming then they get attention when they're quiet the parent is so busy they can't give attention they've got other things to do then the children learn the more I scream or do things wrong or break things or cry some children learn that the moment I cry she comes running okay then with some children you can actually see they're not really crying they're just going through the motions ahhhh and then the mother comes running get attention what lesson do they learn then when they become adults unhappiness works unhappiness gets me what I want they don't know that that's the lesson they learned it's unconscious and I had that too I had for a long time I was addicted to my unhappiness and the underlying assumption was that somebody, presumably God if I was really unhappy would eventually come and do something about it that was, I knew that was the underlying assumption and why there was so much unhappiness so people, basically they think unhappiness works the adult but the adult may have learned as a child that unhappiness works, because that's what their parents taught them, unconsciously so the adult and some people are stuck with that pattern until they die so they get, they complain and the pain body rises up and thinks I really have to be more unhappy because it's not working yet, but it will work and of course when you're an adult, the opposite is true when you're in that state of consciousness, nothing really works so don't teach the wrong lessons for the rest of their life and attention giving is vital and again just mention it again don't just give attention when there's something going wrong or when they cry or shout it's vital to give real attention when you have a quiet moment together and the reason why there are no quiet moments the children don't even know what it is, because the parents don't give them any quiet moments the life seems to be so demanding, life around them, that parents don't, it's only when something needs to be done, or something needs to be put right, or they need to stop them from doing something then attention is given so give attention, not when they're doing something wrong but when they're just sitting there there's a moment of, and then you talk, you look at them there are parents who only, whatever interaction they have with their children is about either telling them what to do or not to do now you do this, stop doing that now do that, you haven't done that yet, do that in some households the only thing you should do is either do this or don't do that that's from my superficial observation of things so there may be a little bit of that in your house too I don't know, but the quality of the interaction well, you know the expression, there's an expression quality time, it's a little bit of a cliche to spend quality time with someone what that really means is to be present with someone, that's quality time quality time is not watching TV together and have a beer, that's not really not quality time quality time means no time, it's present, giving your fullest attention to somebody, that's quality no time so all these wonderful learning for you and of course for them too so maybe I will see you again next time and you can give a progress report

[Speaker 5] (4:50:59 - 4:51:00)
thank you

[Speaker 1] (4:51:14 - 4:54:52)
so this is a typical example here of Saint Francis teaching and spiritual practice which is to make yourself into nothing very radical a very radical form of spirituality to make, allow yourself to be to disappear don't be the total opposite of what the ego wants the ego wants to stand out and Saint Francis goes that way I sometimes call that the mountain or the valley the ego wants to be the mountain, it

wants to assert it's form identity, it's form it's me, it wants in some way it wants to stand out it wants to be the mountain if it cannot be the mountain in victory and triumph, it can at least be the mountain in misery so when you see yourself as a victim egoic identity, you're still a mountain you haven't become a valley it's a very strong ego identity and you complain to people how miserable you are and how life and other people have treated you you're still a mountain it's exactly the same as you say how great you are and the great things that you have achieved, both are egoic mountains and by strengthening your form identity you cut yourself off from the true power which is, of course that which is beyond the person, which is deeper than the person so in one way or another, the ego has to dissolve either through intense suffering that life inflicts on you, or the voluntary surrender to life, which is what Saint Francis preaches but also that what we do here, it's the voluntary coming into the present moment and so on they're all ways of transcending the ego

[Speaker 2] (4:55:58 - 4:56:19)
it is likely that you have encountered presence and you do from time to time, or perhaps quite often encounter presence without recognizing it for what it is it could just be a moment when you feel at ease

[Speaker 5] (4:56:20 - 4:56:28)
you feel a sense of well-being a sense of peaceful aliveness

[Speaker 2] (4:56:30 - 4:56:44)
not because you have desensitized yourself, not because you've taken some substances not because you're about to fall asleep not because there's a lowering of your consciousness, no it's a

[Speaker 5] (4:56:44 - 4:56:46)
heightened consciousness

[Speaker 2] (4:56:46 - 4:57:09)
thinking of course is a manifestation of consciousness emotions are a manifestation of consciousness, sense perceptions could not exist without consciousness, so we're talking about, when we use presence, talking about the essence of what you are

[Speaker 5] (4:57:09 - 4:57:21)
which is consciousness, the light of consciousness, one could

[Speaker 2] (4:57:21 - 4:57:52)
say this vast consciousness that is universal consciousness, it's not only within you, it is also without it is the, one could say the intelligence that underlies all phenomenal manifestations of the universe, there's a hidden concealed hidden vast intelligence that gives rise

[Speaker 5] (4:57:54 - 4:58:40)
to the evolution of all life forms impossible for us to understand it but we can sense it within ourselves as the essence of our being so the easiest way to point to presence is to say that you encounter it when you stop thinking for a moment without losing consciousness, stop

[Speaker 2] (4:58:40 - 5:00:49)
thinking means the continuous voice in the head that usually comments on what's going on around you or comments on all kinds of things, imaginary scenarios and so on, the conditioned voice in the head that you live with everybody lives with that voice in their head that talks all the time inside, or if it talks aloud then you're considered crazy people say there's people walking in the streets talking out aloud and you say oh they're mentally insane, but the only difference between a normal human being and those people that you call mentally insane is that those you

do not call mentally insane they're still doing the same thing, they're just not talking out aloud, it's happening in their head it's a continuous stream of thinking and that creates the ego the egoic sense of self an ultimately fictitious identity that you are infinitely more than the entity created by the movement of thought and the emotions that reflect the movement of thought there's infinitely more to you than what you conventionally call the person a person is a conditioned entity, a form that consciousness has taken and most humans unless they are awakening already spiritually, which is what we are talking about, the arising of presence is spiritual awakening unless you are awakening and many of you are awakening even if you don't have words for it many of you are here because you're awakening otherwise this session would be totally meaningless to you and there may be a few to whom it is totally meaningless what is this guy talking about so you must have had a glimpse of what it is that I'm talking about and if you haven't perhaps you can have it now

[Speaker 5] (5:00:50 - 5:00:54)
and that glimpse is the possibility

[Speaker 2] (5:00:55 - 5:01:04)
of arriving at the briefly at first the cessation of thinking the voice in the head

[Speaker 5] (5:01:05 - 5:01:27)
stops and yet consciousness remains and you can look around or look at this image on the screen or look around the room take everything in but you're not thinking about it

[Speaker 2] (5:01:29 - 5:01:39)
it's just sensory perception and what is behind the sensory perception? Presence. Another word for it

[Speaker 5] (5:01:39 - 5:01:59)
is awareness awareness so there's an awareness that is perceiving at this moment and that awareness is silent but it's awake and that awareness is the

[Speaker 2] (5:01:59 - 5:02:09)
deeper dimension to who or what you are that's no longer the person that you usually think of

[Speaker 5] (5:02:09 - 5:03:00)
when you say I there's a deeper I there's a deeper I a deeper sense of being that transcends a personal sense of identity so you can sense there's an awareness in you a consciousness and that consciousness is perceiving it doesn't need to interpret it it knows at a very deep level but not conceptually you can look around your room or wherever you are you know that there's furniture or whatever there is

[Speaker 2] (5:03:00 - 5:03:39)
but you don't call it anything you just allow it to be so there is instead of a person perceiving things which is when you are always interpreting commenting and labeling mentally instead of a person you are now perceiving not as a person you are perceiving as an awareness so there's a shift from personal sense of self shift to a deeper level you could call it deeper or higher it doesn't matter to a deeper level of consciousness where you are not a person you are that which is prior to the person and that's awareness

[Speaker 5] (5:03:39 - 5:03:44)
presence and that's amazing you can then

[Speaker 2] (5:03:46 - 5:04:05)
be aware of that awareness you can sense this presence that you are in addition to

whatever you are perceiving it's in the background of your sense perceptions, the background of your life it's a spacious vast presence

[Speaker 5] (5:04:06 - 5:04:14)
that connects you to something that we cannot really

[Speaker 2] (5:04:15 - 5:04:44)
define or talk about it's deep and it's infinite it's a soul it's not just the depth of your being it connects you to the very soul of the universe the ancients ancient Romans and Greeks had this wonderful term anima mundi which is latin for the soul of the world there is such a thing as a world

[Speaker 5] (5:04:44 - 5:04:47)
soul and that is

[Speaker 2] (5:04:48 - 5:06:19)
your soul presence, the consciousness that you are is a ray or a spark of that inseparable from the soul of the totality, so it's a liberation from the ego itself liberation from the self then life becomes more harmonious when you begin to invite that consciousness into your life, that presence your life begins to flow with greater ease, more harmoniously not that you are not challenged anymore, challenges continue but all the challenges do once you begin to awaken to presence challenges then deepen your presence and in fact you need the difficulties in your life to deepen your presence as you begin to awaken any challenge will deepen your presence in the early stages it could also happen that challenges take you completely out of presence, when you encounter difficult situations or people can take you totally out of presence, but gradually as you become a bit more established, rooted in that presence the opposite happens, challenges don't make you unconscious they make you more conscious

[Speaker 5] (5:06:25 - 5:06:45)
so in a nutshell presence is awareness without thought and then thinking becomes a more helpful

[Speaker 2] (5:06:45 - 5:07:23)
tool rather than something that torments you many people their thinking mind torments them continuously they have an unhappy sense of self they talk to themselves using unhappy words they talk about other people using unhappy words and concepts when they confuse what the voice in the head with actual reality out there they can't tell the difference between what is and the way in which they interpret what

[Speaker 5] (5:07:23 - 5:07:29)
is, which is the conditioning of the mind when you come to an alignment

[Speaker 2] (5:07:29 - 5:07:45)
with what is, which is always now, life becomes easier not free of challenges but much easier and challenges don't produce unhappiness anymore

[Speaker 5] (5:07:47 - 5:07:59)
that's a big thing and the difficulties of your life don't make you unhappy anymore amazing

[Speaker 2] (5:08:28 - 5:08:29)
on solstice

[Speaker 1] (5:08:34 - 5:09:51)
the sun reaches its highest point and then reverses its course so to speak from our perspective doesn't really, but from the perspective of Tom here on earth and from

our perspective it's a kind of still point between two movements solstice actually means sun and stis comes from latin which means standing still so it appears that for a moment the sun stands still poised little bit like throwing a ball into the air, you throw it up and it rises and then there comes a moment a very brief moment when it stops rising and hasn't started falling yet and that's the point of stillness

[Speaker 2] (5:09:54 - 5:10:04)
and perhaps that's the reason

[Speaker 1] (5:10:05 - 5:10:12)
or the deeper reason why in many cultures solstice is a spiritual event

[Speaker 2] (5:10:12 - 5:10:21)
the still point

[Speaker 1] (5:10:25 - 5:10:29)
it's a similar point that is there when you

[Speaker 2] (5:10:34 - 5:10:39)
breathe in and you come to the

[Speaker 1] (5:10:39 - 5:10:49)
end of the in-breath for a brief moment there's that still point between the two breaths

[Speaker 2] (5:10:49 - 5:10:51)
between the in-breath and the out-breath

[Speaker 1] (5:10:59 - 5:14:31)
and again at the end of the out-breath there's another brief still point before the in-breath starts and those are very powerful points if you become aware of them they are wonderful portals into stillness you can do it even now as you listen to me you breathe out the end of the out-breath there's a cessation of movement when you pay attention to it it might become a little bit longer but there's no need to force it in any way when you pay attention to it it naturally becomes a little bit longer so reaching that dimension within you becoming aware of that stillness the in-breath and out-breath can be helpful they contain the whole movement of your life and the universe the beginning of the in-breath that starts from the still point is the coming into form birth growth development then reaching maturity achievement and then you reach that point of cessation point of stillness and then comes the reverse movement and you have to become aligned with that reverse movement in your life

[Speaker 2] (5:14:31 - 5:14:33)
for example

[Speaker 1] (5:14:33 - 5:15:32)
and surrender into it and recognize it for what it is the natural movement return journey back into where it all started the stillness if you're not aligned with it or resist it it's very unpleasant because you realize that instead of growth and development and gaining and obtaining and multiplying and adding to you're experiencing the opposite you may experience loss

[Speaker 2] (5:15:33 - 5:15:36)
or people around you begin to

[Speaker 1] (5:15:38 - 5:15:39)
disappear

[Speaker 2] (5:15:39 - 5:15:48)
things are shrinking instead of growing

[Speaker 1] (5:15:50 - 5:15:57)
even your physical body you might begin to notice starts

[Speaker 2] (5:16:02 - 5:16:04)
shrinking in some way

[Speaker 1] (5:16:20 - 5:18:39)
so if you become aligned with that movement which traditionally might be called you realize that you're beginning to grow old that can be a wonderful thing and as I said if you're not surrendered to it recognize that it is a universal movement and can be deeply spiritual if you're aligned with it but if you're not it's a painful process if you're still stuck in your ego by the time you reach that reversal from development and growth to the opposite movement then the opposite movement is experienced as very painful in meditation I'd say that the out-breath is more important than the in-breath it's when you let go and in your life potentially the stage of dissolution has greater potential spiritually than the developmental stage but no matter how old you are, you may be 20 years old you can already experience in every in-breath and out-breath you can already experience that universal movement

[Speaker 2] (5:18:44 - 5:18:50)
outgoing outgoing and ingoing

[Speaker 1] (5:19:23 - 6:47:22)
there's content the content of your mind which consists of thoughts and most people have the need to fill up their mind and their life with more content it's a compulsion almost an addictive searching for more stuff to identify with so that you can increase the content of things that the mind identifies with so most people carry around content in the mind in the form of thoughts bundles of thoughts that contain a sense of self that you identify with or in the words of Don Miguel Ruiz that you have faith in and that's all they know their life consists of content both externally one could say everything absorbs their attention continuously stuff things things to acquire things to be worried about things to do problems and thoughts one after another you have to think about this and this continuously continuously so your entire inner space is filled up with content no breathing room a room full of stuff and that's the self there's a self identification with stuff which ultimately is the mind thought stuff life and you feel you're choking to death almost life is experienced as frustrating and bringing up one dilemma after another so the essence of our gathering here is to find the inner space that is there although you may have accumulated a lot of content in your mind there is always behind it or underneath it a vastness of inner space or stillness even in the most nervous and irritated and hyperactive human mind even there underneath there is a dimension of stillness you just have to look for it to feel it to sense it within yourself underneath all the stream of thinking it is therefore vital that you have space in yourself be aware of space in yourself stillness or space just two different pointers to the same thing no thing at this moment is there space in you now if you're not bored when you listen to these words there is space in you so don't try to figure out don't try to figure out whether or not there is space in me through the mind how do I know whether there is space in me a very simple criterion to use is if you are not bored or angry right now or irritated there is space in you the dimension is there that's because it's only from there that you can sit here and not be bored or irritated or angry now if you are bored or irritated or angry you can either walk out and be irritated bored and angry somewhere else or even there you can say oh I feel bored irritated angry and who knows that how do you know that well I'm aware that I am bored or irritated or angry so are you the

boredom the anger or the irritation or are you the awareness of the boredom the anger or the irritation so I'm giving you another chance so before you walk out you can try that now I assume that most of you are not bored irritated or angry from sensing the energy field and so there's the why are you not bored irritated or angry because there is a stillness or space in you now oh oh and you haven't disappeared as a form identity you're still sitting there in the chair yes here's the body there may even be occasional thoughts occasionally in and out and then again under that all that is there may even be a little bit in your stomach that says oh I should have had breakfast am I picking up somebody's thought I should have had breakfast then I wouldn't be hungry now okay and again the stillness underneath it and between it and so your life then is continuously a movement of being there as a form identity but knowing yourself essentially as the space then you are free from being trapped in the form and making your life a misery because no matter how hard you try and what you do you can do all the right things but if the valley is missing in your life then the most vital dimension is missing from your life and no matter how conscientious you are and do all the right things and are tidy and your life is arranged logically and maybe you have a life plan for the next 15 years for every year you know what you want to do nothing wrong with that and you'll still be creating misery because no matter how hard you try if that the vital dimension is missing your life is one dimensional and then even the greatest success who knows one or two of you in three four years time or five years time maybe will reading about you in people magazine and there are worse magazines than people, people is actually people is not so negative there are many others who love talking negatively and then you taste the, what success is like and fame now am I saying don't seek success no the beautiful thing is you can you can still play in the world of form and you play more beautifully when you realize it is only a relative truth and anything that you achieve as this mountain is only relatively true and valid and it will come to an end and everything you achieve as a mountain will have its other side to it everything you lose is loss and gain there is always the interplay you may gain many things and they will produce their own challenges and you will see the other part of success and so you no matter what you do you will never for long find that now your life is actually great it's working, it's all working now that on the form level never really happens for very long but that doesn't matter when you are in touch with the formless however I am not saying that if you are in touch with the valley that it does not affect the world of form it does you will notice that first of all the sense of heaviness and seriousness which is ultimately fear goes out of your life and when you are no longer dealing with situations and people from that place of seriousness and heaviness and ultimately anxiety and fear then the world that you experience or what you experience as the world changes because a different quality flows out, it is that quality that comes from the unmanifested so there tends to be a great improvement in the way in which you experience the world because you experience in a more gentle way even the so called problems because you are not giving them you are not feeding the so called problems with your reactivity and your heaviness and your fear because the more fear you bring to the challenges the greater the challenges become or the so called problems become through your reaction and it's only from the place of being the valley that you can be in a state of non-reaction when challenges arise in the form of people or situations people can be very challenging situations can be challenging but if you if every challenge brings out the fear you cannot be without fear as long as you are identified with the mountain because you want to survive as this thing that fear only goes when you are in touch with the space and then you don't need to react respond when necessary, yes react, no and many problems are dissolved when you simply don't react because quite often there is nothing much you can do anything you do in many cases, not all, sometimes action is required, but in many cases anything you do, you only add to the problem so what's the problem now? what happens when you look at that phrase, what's the problem now?

your attention then goes from being absorbed in oh my god, what's going to happen to now is that a problem now? and then you have to wake up into now to answer the question on this little card, what's the problem now? you have to actually wake up into the now because you never know there might be a problem now, you have to focus attention and look and so suddenly your attention moves into the present moment, and there you stand in front of your bathroom mirror and, okay, what's the problem now?

you look, well then the mind says, oh, you're looking old it looks in the mirror that's the problem no, of course it's not a problem it's a thought that arises and usually the mind has of course more complicated things to say, but then you realize that at this moment it's not actually a problem but the mind says, yes, but it will become a problem in the next moment but of course when the next moment comes, it comes again as this moment and you have to ask the question again what is the problem now? and the amazing realization will come to you that there never is a problem now only a situation you can deal with it, or leave it alone for the time being it's never a problem some situations demand immediate action and then, of course, it's not a problem there's no time for it to become a problem if it demands immediate action you look, and you act other things you may have to think about you might occasionally have to think okay, what are the possible solutions to this situation and what to do then is to apply focused thinking, but before you do that you become still present and then you, out of that then comes, okay, what are the possibilities in this situation, I could pick up the phone and make a phone call to that person I can look, go to that place and ask for help, I can go there too, and I can do that 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, write it down put it aside, okay and then, which one of these can I do now, and then you do it it's never, it's not a it's not a problem, if I juggle ideas thoughts in my mind uselessly that's a problem what what if, what if attention back to now, what's the problem now and so it's always amazing to realize that the now is free of problems because you're breathing you're perceiving your senses you feel the aliveness in the body and more than enough to deal with any situation that may arise or may be there I've mentioned a few times the ancient Greek myth of Narcissus the young man who, according to this tale, mythological tale he looked into a pool of water and saw his own reflection and according to the story fell in love with himself or rather the reflection of himself and I see this as a way of explaining what happened to the human mind that created a reflection of itself in the mind and began to identify with the reflection so at that point humans began well when the myth of Narcissus was created by we don't know who by then probably that process had already started a long time before that so falling in love with the mental reflection of yourself or I would slightly reinterpret that not so much falling in love because it's not always necessarily love the relationship that you have with yourself can be a very problematic one and sometimes it's self-hatred so rather than calling it love I would say he became obsessed with himself he became obsessed with that image that he saw but what the myth is pointing to is that it's something that happened in the human psyche collectively and suddenly humans started every human being started to have a relationship with himself or herself it's a strange thing and then the increasingly the mind the thinking mind the unobserved mind contributed more to that so the image it's not just a visual image gradually got replaced more and more by a conceptual image in one's mind of who one is and then gradually deriving one's sense of self from that conceptual image of oneself the other day I looked up I'd forgotten what happened to this man Narcissus in the mythological tale I looked it up the other day and it seems that he eventually committed suicide this is significant too because here too there's a deep truth embedded in that and that is that the human ego seems to have a self-destruct mechanism built into it in other words it is the main it is the main cause of human suffering because it is the egoic unconsciousness especially on a collective level that creates a large the largest percentage of human suffering if you look back 20th century most of the dreadful suffering was not through natural disasters or even through illness that happened to individual human beings or accidents that happened to individual human beings but man-made suffering suffering through violent conflict and so the ego creates suffering for yourself both on a personal level and on a collective level the ego being the unobserved mind in the absence of awareness in the absence of presence it creates suffering, it doesn't want to create suffering it wants you to be more fully yourself it wants you to be better than others if you can't be better in victory you can be better in your misery than others more miserable than others and through the suffering it creates the suffering is also the factor that as you may remember yesterday I described as a spiritual teacher everybody has a spiritual teacher and for most people it's their suffering it's a strange fact that eventually the suffering that is to a large extent not 100% self-created that huge amount of suffering that if you look at it objectively you say, why? it seems so absurd and unnecessary both what humans do themselves on a personal level and collectively it is so unnecessary if you look at the madness of the first world war that then got extended into the second world war for almost for nothing they started killing each other the ego, the collective ego needed to triumph so the suffering large amount of which is self-ego created eventually awakens you and then the awakening is the end of the ego so there is a self-destruct mechanism built into the ego which is a good thing one of the most important things on your spiritual path is awareness of those patterns that we call egoic that still operate in you and you only really recognize them in situations when you relate to people when you encounter problematic situations, difficult people obstacles on your path it's then that's why these things are so helpful you could easily remove yourself to a little cabin for a year and you might find either you will go insane because your own mind will drive you insane or you might if you are a good meditator you might be able to achieve a measure of inner peace through daily meditation in your cabin and there is nothing wrong to occasionally withdrawing but if you do that as your as a way into the spiritual dimension then you may find that the depth of your presence that arises in the protective environment of the cabin or even the ashram it may not be very deep and then when you come out of your cabin and go back into being with people and encountering situations you may find that you quickly lose it as the story I told before that was told me by a monk, a buddhist monk, western born buddhist monk in Thailand he went very deep eventually but when he was a young monk he meditated in a little hut up the mountain half an hour from the main monastery and was there in isolation for I believe six months or longer and one person would bring him food once a day and nothing disturbed him except the bees and the mosquitoes and the heat so he had to surrender to these things which after a while he was able to do and then he became more and more peaceful. At some point the bees, for some reason there were lots of bees there and his sometimes his body would be covered with bees and he made peace with the bees and said it's okay giving them loving kindness, metta and he didn't get, they didn't sting him it's amazing and then after a few months he had to go, come back into the monastery and then he had to go to the city, Bangkok to renew his visa after achieving what he thought was sublime states of inner peace in the cabin so he overcame the obstacle of the bees, he overcame because he surrendered, the obstacle of the mosquito, the obstacle of the extreme heat the obstacle of relatively little food all that he surrendered to and so became very very peaceful and thought this is enlightenment, I made it and so he had to go to Bangkok to renew his visa and there was a line up and although he was a Buddhist monk for some reason he was highly respected in Thailand but he still had to line up and after one hour in this line up he got to the man and said no this is the wrong line up you have to go there and then he could feel he was beginning to lose his inner peace and then he went to the second line up waited there and finally after half an hour got to the next man and said okay well there's something missing here there are two stamps on this form you should have gone over there first before you line up here and at that point he lost his peace completely and he found himself banging onto the table I have been standing here for two hours lining up and you are telling me now I must go there and at that moment he observed himself again so he wasn't totally lost he just lost it briefly but the deep peace didn't come back for a long time after that this mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive to be free you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation it's working it says the time is now totally accurate over the years many people have sent me now watches I have a collection of about 10 with different dials some dials at every hour it says now, now, now and then I have others you have to press a button and then it says now and then another button that gives you the time or we have in our kitchen we have a clock that somebody sent it doesn't say now but it shows all the numerals the numbers in a pile at the bottom of the clock and on the dial it says whatever laughter it's easy to forget that it's always now and only now and if you could remember that, not as a memory but have that as a live realization every moment or to put it more accurately in the moment because there's only really one moment although what happens in it changes if you knew that then there would be it that's the awakened state of consciousness you would be in alignment with whatever happens so the ultimate spiritual practice is to remember remember may not be the right word that it's now and only ever now this is now this is your life that you may remember from a power of now or somewhere I talked about usually when people refer to my life, they say my life I call that it's your life situation whatever is going on in your life connected with the usual things that are of concern to people which is your health your relationships your work or lack of it finances living situation usually those things make up your life, my life but I call that your life situation as opposed to life which is only ever now your life situation exists in the mind you have to keep it alive there it's important of course you have to deal with situations as they arise in your life but they only arise in the present moment and when you think about your life situation you can only think about it in the present moment it's important to have these two your life and your life situation and not allow your life situation to completely obscure your life your presence your sense of aliveness your spaciousness and that's helpful to bring attention to learn to bring attention to your senses the expression we could use is come to your senses those five senses so you become more aware of what surrounds you inhabit the body it's another one that connects you with life it takes you out of the conceptualizing mind be here now come to your senses inhabit the body be here now all one and then you don't carry continuously with you like a heavy burden your life situation of course you address whatever challenges arrive you deal with them as they arise in the present moment occasionally you might have to do some planning or some strategy occasionally but also that happens in the present moment for the rest of the time don't allow your life situation to completely obscure completely stifle your sense of aliveness your presence in the moment because then you walk around with the burden of a very heavy personality and you don't see what's around you anymore you can't truly relate to other humans because you have the heaviness of your problematic life situation and whose life situation is not problematic it's in the nature of life situations to be problematic of course you arrange your life as best you can your life situation as best you can yes you may acquire new skills or you can get a better job or in whatever way you improve or attempt to improve your life situation find a nicer place to live why not that's all fine but the expectation that at some point life should leave you alone and not challenge you anymore and that there's something wrong when life challenges you that's a delusion that itself the unconscious assumption that there's something wrong when life presents so called problems to you better word is challenges there's an unconscious assumption and an unconscious resentment and negative reaction the moment you are faced with a new challenge because of the underlying assumption that these things should not be happening but no matter how carefully you arrange your life situation and no matter how much positive thinking you do which is a nice thing you will still be challenged by life you will still experience the polarities of life you will experience for example that every situation, every new situation has its new set of challenges and you will realize even when you achieve what you want to achieve the very thing that you believe would lead to ultimate fulfillment when you achieve what you want to achieve when you finally get there you will find very quickly that even that new wonderful situation presents a new set of challenges so you're never left alone your life will not leave you alone and so it's in the nature of life to give you challenges in your life situation so if you could remove or realize the fallacy of believing that such challenges should not occur then that will improve your or enhance your ability to deal with situations greatly it also will remove the otherwise continuous arising of negativity when you are faced with life situations from big to small with challenges in your life situation if you assume that there shouldn't be any challenges you become negative there's something wrong you resent it you resent, if you believe in God, you can have an argument with God I can't take anymore God you've gone too far this time laughter or you can draw the conclusion that there is no God because your life would be easier if there were an intelligent God he would obviously make your life easy and everybody else's life too so therefore there can be no God we'll address that some other time laughter so the it's the very same thing as I've mentioned before somewhere people like to watch movies and movies are a kind of reflection of life, especially if they are good movies and they are art in general, like literature good fiction is a reflection of life it's always ultimately about you and would you want to see a movie in which nothing ever goes wrong? laughter it would not be very interesting the characters would not be faced with any dilemma, no challenges they wouldn't develop you would fall asleep or you walk out it's the essence of every movie the plot, the so called plot, almost every movie there might be one or two exceptions can't think of any you can reduce every movie, explain what happens in the movie soon after it starts something goes wrong in the plot it has to, otherwise there's no interest so you love it when you see it in a movie you hate it when it happens to you laughter so if you discover within yourself that a lot of the time you are in a state of lack, of insufficiency of not enough and you feel that the answer to the remedy is to be active in this world and achieve and do as much as possible then you'll probably find that ultimately that is not the answer to your state of lack in order to transcend, to go beyond your state of lack, of neediness of not enough spiritual practice and spiritual realization is necessary focus on the realization of being it's only there that you can go beyond that state of lack which is ego go within and discover who or what you are beyond the person and you become aligned with the isness of things thereby the ego diminishes now most people only begin doing that when they realize that they've been unhappy for too long the greater part of their unhappiness arose through the mental narrative about the situations they encounter in their lives the I that most people then refer to this word refers to is what I call the surface self that is made up of your personal history of course all the things that you have experienced and all the things that from your past that you identify with, things that you have done, things that were done to you, things you have achieved things you have experienced, the entire culture in which you grew up the collective culture in your particular country the familiar the background of your family how they behaved all those things together leave traces and all these after a while it begins at an early age of course it begins already when the first time you utter the word I, when you are whatever two years old as you probably know very young children when they first learn to speak they often refer to themselves in the third person and they might say oh John wants a drink, but who is John? I oh that's interesting after a while they switch from the third person to the first person and they utter the word I and that becomes the most fascinating word for them and gradually things accumulate around this I which at first is just a sound I and then over the years things accumulate around that sound but of course it's not just a sound but it's also a thought it's a concept in your head it's a thought, it's a primordial thought the thought form of I so it's not just a sound it's a thought and around that thought gradually things, it's like things stick to it it attracts things so with a child it starts with toys, there are certain toys, but this toy is not the child very quickly learns this toy is not just any toy it's mine I have a relationship with this toy, it belongs to me it's my toy and that is how very often the child well, not very often, always the child experiences for the first time the suffering that arises through egoic identification just remove that toy from here to there or maybe just touch it and the child goes that deep suffering oh my god my toy and then of course you put it back and then immediately it goes and then another child comes and again the same thing happens and you can see how enormous suffering arises not because this toy has been removed from the child or moved from this point to that point by somebody, that would be a very neutral event but because something has happened in the mind of that child the concept of I has attracted to itself this thing which is another thought ultimately because the toy is out there but in my mind the toy is a concept this my toy and that concept sticks to the primordial original concept of I which is the surface I of who I think I am the I and then for the first time the child experiences what 2,500 years ago the Buddha described as suffering and the Buddha said wherever you go whatever you do whatever situation you are in you will encounter dukkha which in the Pali language translated is suffering because the I that you think you are identifies with things that are unstable that cannot last things that do not have the capacity to make you happy or to fulfill you or to tell you who you are and so for the first time the child at this early age experiences the truth of the utterings of the Buddha without knowing it of course and the suffering that arises when you identify with something so when your feeling of identity becomes associated with things and concepts and then of course you graduate from the it's not just a toy only the beginning and of course then the person grows up and identification comes with many other things your parents what your parents have or don't have or more and more concepts accumulate around the I what you are taught by the surrounding culture that you live in who you are, the culture may tell you who you are you belong to this particular culture if you grow up in Australia whatever sticks to the I will be very different from the collective culture from what would stick to your concept of I if you grew up in Saudi Arabia would be very different, a very different I and yet the basic mechanism behind it would be the same, the central concept I identifies with certain things and then your sense of who you are gradually develops and it consists of things that ultimately you are not, but you don't know that, so you identify with the collective, you identify in some countries you still identify very strongly with not only your family, but the history of your family which are all mental concepts what your grandparents did and their, what their parents did and in some cases you can you need that people from some cultures who come to the West are surprised that many Western people know very little about their ancestors and in other cultures you have a very strong awareness of your ancestors and again, that looks like a nice thing on one end you could say but unfortunately these ancestors that you identify with, either in a positive or negative way positive, hopefully positive, they have achieved this or that or they were the victims of those other people 300 years ago and then that becomes part of your collective victim identity that you are already taught when you are 6 years old that 300 years ago these things happened to your people, inflicted by those people and of course immediate, all those concepts accumulate around the central the central concept of I and you, without knowing it, you become more and more trapped in a prison-like identity and finally you reach adulthood and then you have an I that is feels semi-complete but by no means complete, it is still looking out continuously for things to enhance its sense of self, its sense of identity, of who you are because your personal history, yes it has done a lot to give you your sense of identity but it's not enough, it feels unfulfilled, this sense of I it feels not enough and it feels not clearly defined yet so in order to be more clearly defined in some cases you might say what I need is achievement, there is nothing wrong with achievement but in the service of I achievement is something different I need a possessor and possessions to tell me who I am I need that and once I have that then I'll be okay and then you spend a few years 10, 20, 30 striving after accumulating this or that or recognition of other people they need to recognize that I am the greatest or people need to recognize that nobody has been more victimized than me I have been so victimized by life that I'm superior in my victimhood to most people so the I doesn't mind whether you have, when people talk about ego, people usually think that these are people who have a strong ego who think they are better than everybody I'm the greatest I'm the master of the universe I work on Wall Street and I manipulate things behind the scenes and so you feel great until your bank collapses or whatever and then you have big suffering but let's put that aside for a moment so you have, you identify with that very strongly and so this is usually what people associate with E when they say he has a big ego or she has a big ego or if you're not on Wall Street maybe you have a wonderful body I saw a man walking in the street this morning he had taken off his shirt it wasn't that warm but he was he was the only one who walked around the streets by the harbor without a shirt but of course I immediately realized why he had taken off his shirt because he had the most fantastic physique just masculine everybody looked at him and some people tried not to look maybe he's even here tonight in which case I congratulate you on your fantastic physique and why not enjoy that but realize that it's being used in the service of this surface identity it becomes a mental concept that makes you feel superior to most others and if you say my body is superior to most others then well it probably is for a while and then of course a time will come when it no longer is superior just wait a little as the years pass and then one day you look in the mirror and you realize that something has happened to the mirror and it's not good but in the meantime of course you can be okay for a while and the suffering comes later the suffering is always just around the corner when you identify with things concepts, things, because even that body it's not really, it's not the body that makes up the ego it is the mental concept of my body of identification with that then it becomes ego you can enjoy your body if it's strong and I never had that my body was never strong and great looking so my ego didn't go that way my ego said leave the body alone because this is for people who are not highly developed so my ego said but I have intelligence and knowledge I've read more books than these people they probably never read a single book in their lives but I had more and more I attempted to accumulate knowledge through reading and then I could feel and sound temporarily superior when I met people with wonderful bodies and I could say I could say clever things and make them feel inferior so it was a struggle sometimes it worked but it always meant there's an underlying feeling of unease am I superior or not other people, I lived in England for many years when I was young there of course you still have identification with your social background less these days than it used to be but the way it used to be in England to some extent perhaps still is the moment you opened your mouth and uttered a word in English in England, people would immediately know what social class you belong to weird and so people consciously emphasized their accent upper class accent and even the way you pronounce the word no would betray your social background or you were so good at imitating and many people did that that you sounded upper class just by saying, you don't say no, you say no no and you could talk about your ancestors and their country and their very mansion and whatever okay, that's great I feel superior I couldn't do that either because I didn't know I'd know my grandparents but nothing beyond that so it can't have been a very big story to identify with so all these things as you know the collective eye in some cultures is much stronger than the personalized eye in the western world it tends to be a bit more personalized for men, not for everybody but in some countries you're a very strong collective and often might have to do with your religion and of course that was also the case in the west until not that long ago and then you have a sense again of superiority that's one of the key things to understand about the surface eye is a feeling of superiority it looks for that it needs that and it always finds it and even if you are if you have nothing if you can't think of anything any way in which you are superior to anybody else neither physically nor mentally nor in possessions nor in ancestry what do you do then?

you become a victim and you can in your mind what clings to the eye is you as either the personal victim or the collective victim and this is becoming very fashionable these days collective victimhood not to deny that of course things have been done to certain groups of people in the past things also have been done to individuals in the past that were very bad but to use that history, that collective history or personal history in the service of an identity that is a delusion and it is unconscious and people don't know that this is what they are doing because everybody is seeking for a stronger sense of identity so if they can't find it in a positive way they will happily have a negative identity as the greatest victims so the this is the collective identity thing is very fashionable these days and again it's unfortunately an illusion because that is not you get trapped in your surface identity enemies it loves the surface identity if it can't feel superior in any other way it loves its enemies we are surrounded by enemies you can do it personally regard other people as wanting something from you or out to get you or the whole collective does it in some ways certain nations do it, entire nations cannot survive without the collective concept of our enemies for example, National Socialism was that in Germany, Communism was that especially in Soviet Russia and nowadays we still have North Korea North Korea can only be held together by this collective victim identity of we are surrounded by enemies and that keeps the collective ego going or we feel so our identity is now so clearly defined because we are surrounded by enemies, isn't that wonderful they are all out to kill us now we know who we are and let's kill them first so they don't kill us you can see how the it is a form of it is a delusional identity so that is everybody walks with that sense of self and it makes your life difficult it creates enormous amount of unnecessary conflict when I talk about enemies, just one more thing almost everybody the way in which there is one little function that one could call also creating enemies, I call that complaining complaining is when you can do it either in your mind or out loud it doesn't matter, it works both ways you can complain in your mind about where you are something is not right about the situation who you are with, what you are doing, but don't want to be doing but you are doing it, but it's terrible or you complain about something that should have happened, but didn't happen or something that should not have happened, but it happened and you can complain about how people behave when you talk about how people behave towards you for example, you have a enormous, inexhaustible source of complaints because people tend to be difficult and not do things that they are supposed to do so you have an enormous source of complaints and every complaint in your mind, you know what he did he told a story of what he did or didn't do or you all know people wherever they go into a hotel they are looking for something to complain about and of course, invariably they find something if you are looking for something to complain about, you will find something you can come here too to this talk and if you are deeply trapped in the complaining pattern you are already in your mind complaining about what is this guy saying I shouldn't have come here I knew I shouldn't have why did I listen to him I always do that complain if you can catch and this is an egoic device which is really you making either a person or a situation or a location or an activity that you complain about mentally, you are basically making it into an enemy and therefore it strengthens the illusory identity of the ego so I recommend that as your spiritual practice you catch yourself mentally whenever you have a complaining thought in your head and when I say complaining, I am not talking about something you can actually do something about obviously if you move into a hotel you get into your room and the bed has not been, the sheets have obviously not been changed and it's dirty, the bathroom is dirty I am not telling you to be so spiritual that now you sit there and say I am not complaining I am going to sleep in this dirty bed and feel really spiritual no by complaining, I mean the useless complaining that is not designed to and cannot change anything in the situation so there of course you have an example of something you can take action you can go down to the reception and you can say the bed has not been the sheets have not been changed and the bathroom is dirty, could you please do something about it and again there are two ways of doing that and saying that, one is in the service of making wrong which is the ego way so then you talk to the receptionist or it's probably not the receptionist's fault but you're making the receptionist wrong how dare you put me in this room with a dirty bed the ego loves that and then the receptionist becomes your enemy and in making the receptionist your enemy you feel stronger in your identity and then you look for something maybe I can complain about something else just wait until they serve you the soup or the food at dinner laughter it's not hot enough laughter but you can also go to the receptionist and say without any kind of undertone of making wrong in a way that is free of ego you can say oh I got in my room and I discovered that the sheets have not been changed and the bathroom is still dirty, can you please do something about it, no ego so the situation is there not used in the service of the ego, not used to strengthen the illusory identity of ego, therefore to in this situation the second option I just gave you is not satisfying to the ego, it does not feed it and this is why many egos don't like doing it that way laughter so complain is something very very common in many people even people who are already awakening to the spiritual dimension to the deeper eye, they're still trapped in this complaining pattern in their minds of course it's easier to catch others your friends or relatives when they complain and of course I recommend unless you have a prior agreement with your friends or relatives or family members to remind the other when the ego surfaces I don't recommend that you tell people you're complaining again laughter because then you come into conflict with their ego and you cannot fight another ego without being dragged into a useless conflict which probably will bring up your own ego complaining there's a story about the same master who had several disciples and one disciple came to him and said I've been studying with you for five years and I still not quite get it therefore I'm going to leave you and travel for a year, can you give me some spiritual practice for that year and the master said yes, I'll give you a spiritual practice okay thanks, here it is so in your travels wherever you go, whatever situation you find yourself in whatever you're doing or whoever you're with just repeat these words thanks for everything I have no complaint whatsoever and then you'll become enlightened oh that's cool, thank you so after a year he came back to the master and the master said well how did your spiritual practice go and the disciple said well I did what you said, thanks for everything, I have no complaint whatsoever I said it all the time and I'm still not enlightened why did you give me that practice and the master said thanks for everything I have no complaint whatsoever and at that moment the disciple became awakened ah so before he had repeated the words but there was not the underlying consciousness behind the words and when the master did not complain that the disciple didn't get it, that was fine too so alignment with the present moment is already the beginning of the end of ego non-alignment with the present moment strengthens the ego and that is why the ego most of the time tries to get away from the present moment so that is actually a very, if you really practice that little practice recommended by the Zen master, thanks for everything there are two aspects to this practice thanks for everything I have no complaint whatsoever thanks for everything of course refers to gratitude I have no complaint whatsoever is the absence of the mind arguing with what is and by arguing almost constantly with what is continuously strengthening an illusory sense of identity that needs superiority how do you become superior when you complain about something well, when you complain about a person you obviously feel superior in some way morally, whatever way to that person when you complain about a place you feel superior to that place because you are pronouncing judgment you are the judge even when you complain about an activity that you are doing you become the judge and this is bad so you can see how the illusion arises so we have on the one hand gratitude and on the other hand the absence of interference mental interference with reality where is reality?

in the present moment and again it does not mean you are condemned to non-activity it does not mean you are like remember the person whose bed has not been made in the hotel you can take action but it is a different kind of action and you become aligned with the is-ness of things and thereby the ego diminishes now most people only begin to do that when they realize that they have been unhappy for too long and at some point they realize that the greater part of their unhappiness and this is an enormous realization the greater part of their unhappiness arose not through the situations they encountered in their lives but through the mental narrative about the situations they encounter in their lives so it is not what it is in most in 95% of cases when unhappiness in whatever form arises in you unhappiness is a generic term it could be slightest irritation it is already a form of unhappiness I don't want to be here they shouldn't do that already arising of unhappiness then more unhappiness can come because you can have an entire sense of narrative in your mind an identity that sticks around the eye and this is my unhappy life my unhappy life and many people are trapped in a mental narrative that is the foundation for the illusory sense of identity and they call that my problematic and unhappy life oh how do I what can I do about this all these things that happened shouldn't have happened but did happen were not meant to happen but happened I never expected these things to go so badly wrong life has treated me so unfairly what these people did to me and what God did to me I've had enough of God there is no God how could it be all long stories how unhappy my life now millions of people carry they are unhappy they have an unhappy life because of the narrative in their minds even if you were in a more extreme situation now you might think well you're talking about westerners who are relatively well off even if you were let's say if you were a refugee now there's always these days there are many refugees moving from place to place and you would say is this person not justified in being unhappy no I was happy I was lucky enough to have experienced a period in my life when I had no place to live as a kind of refugee and already I had stepped out of unhappiness so I could verify in my own life that if I had been unhappy in the situation of sitting on a park bench with virtually no money in my pocket and not knowing what to live on the next day that would be regarded by many people as justification for unhappiness but it's not this is how certain limit situations in your life things that go badly wrong and then not just waiting in the supermarket and starting to get unhappy about how slow they are that's one form of unhappiness a minor form of unhappiness but that accumulates too over the years every other time you're in the supermarket you get irritated and unhappy it accumulates more in other places every traffic jam you get worked up mentally why are they they shouldn't be more dreadful than this so in extreme situations often it is in extreme situations and I know that quite a few of you have been there you have been there you have encountered either something happening to your body you encountered some great loss in your life either to do with relationships or work situation or home situation or finances or people close to you people dying you have been there you have experienced a collapse of certain structures in your life and the reason why you are here is that this collapse in the certain structures in your life has created an opening in the egoic shell because you suddenly became so unhappy that you woke up so the suffering that the ego generates is also potentially an opening into realization of first of all of who you ultimately are not many people have to lose a lot before they realize who they are so this can be a great blessing to lose your foothold either because the body becomes ill or you lose somebody close to you who dies or leaves you or people close to you suffer enormously or you lose your home or your work or all your money possessions or your reputation all these things are potentially are first of all things that are enormously painful for the ego that has built an identity around these things but potentially they are an opening into who you are beyond the ego but the good news is yes many of you or quite a few of you are here because you have already experienced that and some of you may even be in the middle of experiencing a very difficult life situation it is not unusual for people to experience a very difficult life situation it is not unusual at all so the ego might tell you that you have been singled out for this type of suffering but that's not the case there is suffering all around you and sooner or later in one form or another it will come to everybody so but the wonderful thing is it has worked to the extent to which it has created in you an opening so you are no longer completely trapped in the ego because something has broken off the egoic structure a big chunk of ego of this mental structure has broken off and that at first is painful, the breaking off of a big chunk of ego is painful but it allows an opening there are the lines I believe it was Leonard Cohen who wrote there is a crack in everything there is a crack in everything that's how the light gets in so when something cracks in your life it is potentially an opening into the deep I because what cracks is the surface I that had identified with this, that or the other but the wonderful thing is now you have reached a point where you no longer need to be hit over the head by life to crack your ego that's probably happened already and if you haven't suffered deeply maybe it happened in a past lifetime if you are 20, 25 years old and things have been fine in your life and yet you are here, there must be a deeper reason why you are here so the good news is it worked it has brought you here and I don't mean here, this particular occasion or with me it has brought you to a certain state of consciousness that is deeper than the usual state the deepening has started to happen now this deepening for many humans is first brought about by suffering but then a point comes when you can actually choose the deepening so you don't have to wait for things to go drastically wrong in your life before you awaken to the deeper which we could call the spiritual dimension of life before you deepen and for most of you that applies, you don't need to be hit over the head by life anymore and be inflicted with dreadful suffering I'm not saying challenges will not come to you, they come all the time we'll come to that in a minute but already what we are learning here and now we come to the more essential part because so far I've really been talking about the bad news which is the ego but it's important to understand the mechanism behind the ego if you don't understand how the ego works and the favorite ways of the ego to reinforce itself and strengthen itself, then if you don't understand it, then you cannot recognize it when it happens for example, if you didn't understand how the ego loves complaining you could be trapped in a complaining mindset for the next 30 years why am I not enlightened yet? I've been trying all that kind of stuff why is it not happening? these people seem to be enlightened, they're smiling I'm not why doesn't it happen?

why is it etc but now you recognize it now you can actually choose to be present rather than to be trapped in a mental thought form, that is ego now ego is ego consists predominantly of thought so when your identity is egoic you are deriving your sense of self from the movement of thought and not only that you are identified with certain thoughts which means you derive your sense of self from thoughts all the things that I've mentioned you believe in thoughts that arise in your mind and there is an identity in the arising thoughts, my car my suffering and everything that comes in it's not just a thought that's how it is my life is awful why is it this situation is awful I just can't stand it anymore why are these people that's how it is you look out in the morning you open the curtains the weather is quite good but in other places it rains a lot so if you live in London or in Vancouver or in Seattle often you open the curtains in the morning and then there's a difference between looking out and saying oh fuck not another not another grey miserable day what am I doing here stuck in this hole that's called suffering now there is another way of getting up and opening the curtains and looking out and you open the curtains and looking out and you see there's water dripping down from the sky and on the window pane and there's not a single thought in your head not even a thought oh the rain is good for the trees and the grass no just you look and you see there's an aliveness there but you don't have to tell yourself that there's just there's light filtering through the clouds of course there must be light light comes from the sun but you don't have to tell yourself that you just see it you open the curtains and you look and there's a moment of wonder and a moment almost of yes gratitude remember thanks for everything I have no complaint whatsoever the spiritual practice of course you don't even need to say that you can actually experience a situation without the baggage of a complaining or negative commentary the same situation that before made you unhappy because it became your entire life suddenly it's neutral and it's not only neutral it's actually alive this moment is alive the rain is aliveness but you don't have to tell yourself that you just see it and so this really I gave just one example of how something changes when you do not impose the baggage mental egoic baggage of a narrative on the situation and then you see the rain is completely neutral it's fine but you don't even have to tell yourself that it just is and you become aligned with the isness of things it doesn't mean that you cannot move to Hawaii or somewhere else where it's sunshine, you can but if you're unhappy there then you move to Hawaii where you will be elated for a few weeks or a few months and then you'll be lying on the beach and you suddenly realize I'm turning into a beach bum and mosquitoes are there at night that's not, shouldn't be happening that's not happening

[Speaker 10] (6:47:22 - 6:47:28)
and it's too hot

[Speaker 1] (6:47:31 - 6:48:56)
can't stand this heat anymore now this is some many of you will know him Jack Kornfield renowned writer of many spiritual books and spiritual teacher and meditation teacher that's a mountain and a lovely formless presence and that's where the books came out of Jack has been bringing the essence of Buddhism to the West for the past 40 years through his books and you were a Buddhist monk for a while in Thailand and then how many years were you a Buddhist monk?

[Speaker 8] (6:48:56 - 6:49:03)
I was there initially for about 5 years and then I've gone back at different periods

[Speaker 1] (6:49:05 - 6:50:23)
and if you haven't read any of his books many of you will have I'm just rereading Wise Heart and one book I haven't read yet but it has a wonderful title it's After the Ecstasy the Laundry and which of course is about incorporating presence or mindfulness as it's called in the Buddhist tradition incorporating it into everyday life rather than just experiencing it in a meditation setting or meditative environment where you can go and then you have to go back into daily life you have to bring it in there mindfulness is the term that of course is used in the Buddhist tradition I don't use the word because although I respect it because it kind of implies that your mind is full I don't know who first came up with it what is the original Pali or Sanskrit word that has been translated as mindfulness

[Speaker 8] (6:50:23 - 6:50:45)
the Pali word is Sati S-A-T-I and the very best Buddhist scholar that I know a man named Anilayo who lives in Hamburg Germany says that the closest translation to Sati that he would give in English is presence But it's too late now

[Speaker 10] (6:50:45 - 6:50:46)
because everybody

[Speaker 8] (6:50:47 - 6:51:19)
Mindfulness has become a kind of industry you know there's mindfulness in education and it's a good thing in mindfulness there's all this wonderful neuroscience another translation that I like a lot we talked about a moment ago is loving awareness which has both the quality of presence of awareness and also somehow weds or gives the sense that we can rest in love, that love and awareness actually are the same

[Speaker 1] (6:51:21 - 6:52:03)
Metta is another word, loving kindness is sometimes translated as the loving there are metta meditations where you send we send out loving kindness to your surroundings the the meditation that you teach mainly is called Vipassana which is to do with bringing awareness into the body is that right? maybe later on you can give us a little taste of it towards the end so can you say a bit more about Vipassana?

[Speaker 8] (6:52:04 - 6:53:25)
Vipassana is a Sanskrit word that means basically to see clearly and the primary practice of it is mindfulness or loving awareness and it's generally established although not always first in the body partly because there's this line from James Joyce where he wrote Mr. Duffy lived a short distance from his body, that characterization that somehow we're so lost in our thoughts that a first step in coming into presence is to recognize that there's this body and breath that are actually present here and now and that the body experience is a here and now experience and then from awareness or loving awareness of body and presence then it becomes possible to first notice the rivers of feelings and thoughts and so forth and then to actually become the space of awareness the knowing that to recognize

that there's experience and there's also the knowing of experience so that's kind of there you have it you don't have to go to the Himalayas or you know travel all the way that's the essence of it save you airfare laughter I also talk

[Speaker 1] (6:53:25 - 6:55:30)
about that as although the meditation is very structured and when I talk about inner body awareness it's the same thing in an unstructured way so for example as we speak now I could invite everybody here while we listen to actually have some awareness in the inner energy field of their body as you have it now I have it now you can have it now I call that sometimes an anchor for presence to have awareness in the inner energy field of the body and you can you have plenty of awareness left for sense perception sensory perception so a very quick way I would say you would probably agree of getting out of continuously being trapped in the movement of thought is to consciously decide to direct awareness into the body and then look around and you can then give some people the first taste of being able to have sensory perception without the continuous involuntary interference of conceptualization and judgment so you can look around you feel the energy field we can do it now and this is I'm doing now an unstructured body awareness meditation later on Jack is going to do with us a slightly more structured so right now just as you listen feel the energy throughout your body it's easy and then you don't have you don't have unnecessary stuff that you add mentally to this moment let's see Vipassana then has been around for a long time it is possible which is that that was actually one of the original meditations taught by the Buddha

[Speaker 8] (6:55:30 - 6:55:41)
it's believed so of course you get history and myth and so forth you never know but it's certainly been taught for thousands of years yes

[Speaker 1] (6:55:41 - 6:55:54)
yes and of course the breath awareness is also probably was also taught by the Buddha and breath awareness is part of Vipassana yes

[Speaker 8] (6:55:54 - 6:56:57)
and the point in doing it isn't to become a good breather particularly or to have particular special kind of breath it's just what you're saying Eckhart it's to use the ever changing life flow of the body of breath to just invite presence and to be if you're trying to control the breath you already start to struggle and suffer but if you realize oh it breathes itself and in fact the world starts to breathe itself more as you feel it it invites that quality of presence or loving awareness through the breathing and one of the beautiful things is that as people deepen in their ability to be quiet for the mind to quiet and the breath to open then there comes quite naturally a lightness and a joy very often that is just innate in us when we're not fixated in past and future yes

[Speaker 1] (6:56:57 - 6:57:38)
so breath is also thousands of years old as also breath being a term similar to I just talked a while ago about the sky heavens or emptiness breath is also something that is has no form as such and this is why traditionally it's a word that sometimes means spirit breath and why in the German language for example the word to breathe is Atman which is goes back to Sanskrit

[Speaker 8] (6:57:38 - 6:57:44)
Atman the spirit within or to inspire in English the same thing yes

[Speaker 1] (6:57:53 - 6:58:11)
this mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive to be free you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation

[Speaker 2] (6:58:47 - 6:58:49)
there are some patterns

[Speaker 1] (6:58:49 - 7:06:27)
in the mind that everybody inherits that even for advanced presence practitioners like yourselves can still reassert themselves because they are so normal by the way my definition of normal is insane as you probably know and you may be able to catch yourself many times during the day when this normal, one of these normal patterns reasserts itself and of course one of the most prevalent patterns is the is reducing the the present moment to a means to an end it could be a simple thing like you get up in the morning and you are getting ready to go to work what, how, what is the quality of your doing during that time of getting ready to go out or here you got up this morning getting ready to go to breakfast and then come here how do you experience that time are you able to be present in what you are doing or is the doing no more than a means to an end and that's a huge difference whether you you fold your pyjama and put it on your bed is that do you give it attention is it a pleasant thing to do do you acknowledge the being of this pyjama and feel the texture and give it some loving attention and then you put it away or is it what's the next thing and the next and the next because I need to get I need to if you are not you may, if you don't this habit is always there the present moment is a stepping stone that and not much more than a stepping stone to the next moment which is always a mental projection because it never comes, the next moment never comes does it no I don't think it does because when the next moment comes it's the present moment so the next moment doesn't come, it can never arrive there's only this moment but if your habit is to treat this moment most of the time as a means of getting to the next moment so not being fully in it but mentally being somewhere else and then just need, so the basic attitude is I just need to get this moment out of the way then I will get to a better one and that is a very deep seated pattern that prevents you from being present but it's only when I voice it like this that it becomes apparent to you because otherwise you won't even see it because it's so normal to live in such a way that unconsciously it's not, you don't you don't tell yourself in your mind that I just need to get this moment out of the way because the next one will be better that is an unspoken and unconscious assumption behind what you do and it's not only, people also treat entire life periods in that way then it's not only of course most fundamentally the present moment but they also treat entire chunks of their life in that way for example you're waiting for the weekend so it's only two more days of having to go to work and then there comes or you're waiting for something else getting a better job finding the person who is going to make me happy in the meantime I'm just ticking over I'm just waiting for well what's the expression I'm waiting for the big break or whatever I'm waiting for the big thing to happen and finally I can start living when that happens whatever form that takes when that happens then my life will really start and that's another way another manifestation of the same dysfunction I don't know if you remember reading about Socrates Greek philosopher who never wrote anything he just talked and Plato who was one of his disciples wrote about what Socrates said, we never know how much of this is Plato and how much of it is Socrates but one certain things are definitely Socrates and one of his most famous sayings of course is well when he was asked why

[Speaker 2] (7:06:29 - 7:06:44)
does the Oracle of Delphi call you the wisest of all men he he said the reason why I'm the wisest of all men is

[Speaker 1] (7:06:44 - 7:06:59)
that I'm the only one who knows that he knows nothing not many people actually have understood over the

[Speaker 2] (7:06:59 - 7:07:05)
centuries what I see as the deeper meaning of those words

[Speaker 1] (7:07:09 - 7:07:14)
mostly it's interpreted as pretending not to know feigning modesty

[Speaker 2] (7:07:16 - 7:07:24)
which is a disguised form of ego it's like saying

[Speaker 5] (7:07:30 - 7:07:33)
I'm the most egoless person of all

[Speaker 1] (7:07:46 - 7:09:27)
I'm the most egoless person of all nobody is more egoless than me that's for sure I'm the only one who knows that he knows nothing so it's not I suggest it's not feigned modesty there's a deeper meaning and the deeper meaning is that all his extremely creative teachings they all you might know that the teachings all are he used to teach in the form of dialogues with people so they would ask him questions and he would ask them questions and finally the teaching emerged out of the dialogue and often he showed that the original premise that somebody started with is erroneous but it gradually emerges so I'm the only one who knows that he knows nothing means as I see it that he started every talk in stillness he did not begin his teachings with accumulated knowledge in his mind which he then regurgitated he was able to be so creative in his thinking very creative thinking in fact many people say that

[Speaker 10] (7:09:29 - 7:09:30)
that

[Speaker 1] (7:09:30 - 7:10:38)
that we learned western civilization at least learned how to think through the ancient greek philosophers and especially Socrates he taught us how to think so he was thinking able to think creatively use of his mind he had access to the creativity within him and the only way you can do that is by not starting from knowledge but starting from ignorance now the ignorance the way I use the term is not the conventional meaning of ignorance it's to step out of the thinking mind into just aware stillness and in that moment you don't know anything that's how I start

[Speaker 5] (7:10:38 - 7:10:44)
every talk it always starts with

[Speaker 1] (7:10:45 - 7:13:22)
thoughtless awareness in other words I have no idea what I'm going to say that's another way of putting it thoughtless awareness sounds better but the truth is I have no idea what I'm going to say before I start occasionally earlier I came in with a newspaper of course I had some idea then I was going to show you the newspaper and the article so it does happen occasionally and that is not only when you are about to give talks that is the most vital state for you to become familiar and comfortable with that state of not knowing which is there the moment you step out of the thinking mind with its continuous interpretations and judgments then you are in a state of not knowing when you look at a sky or a tree or at another person and there's just a background of awareness to your sense perception at that moment you don't know anything not conceptually you know nothing because without thought you don't know anything there's no knowledge and that is something that could hold you back because the ego is afraid of that state it feels I become as nothing I become stupid I no longer I'm at the mercy of other people if I can't judge them anymore and all kinds of things that are obstacles that can arise unconsciously and they very quickly take you out again of that state of aware spacious presence so it's good to look out for that there is something in you that's not comfortable with it is even afraid of it feels diminished by it and that's the ego the ego

feels diminished of course by not knowing the ego has to say I know even to utter the words I don't know the ego it feels like a diminishment to the ego

[Speaker 3] (7:13:45 - 7:17:25)
hello friends welcome welcome to this special live meditation with Eckhart Tolle the world needs you as a teacher of presence and from my perspective that's a very true statement a teacher of presence someone who is grounded in being and knows that their most important purpose in any given moment in any interaction is the state of their being the state of their attention the state of our here-ness our now-ness our total presence becoming teachers of presence at a time when the world is experiencing such a feeling and a sense of accelerated turbulence my language for it sounds true and Eckhart teachings are working together and we've created a new school of awakening five month program it's called becoming a teacher of presence and it begins on May 21st and many of the themes that Eckhart touches on and will touch on in this live global meditation about how the world needs you to become a teacher of presence are what we're exploring in this five month online deep dive immersion program it begins with a virtual retreat that will be broadcast from Lake Louise and then it's followed by a five month robust community journey that we have the opportunity to take together and if you're interested in learning more if you're on the player page you'll see a learn more button and if you're on YouTube you can look for the notes in the description you can click to learn more about becoming a teacher of presence the final registration date is May 16th now as we move into this global live meditation together here with Eckhart this is an invitation for us to deepen presence as a practicing community it's an invitation to how we listen how we receive right now and that also includes how we might potentially relate or not relate to the comments function that is available both on the player page and on YouTube you may choose to not engage in the comments at all if you feel and sense that it increases your ability to be part of our practicing deepening presence community perhaps by not engaging in the comments at all or if you do deepening presence and as you comment or read comments do it with a full sense grounded in being and with that here's Eckhart Tolle on the world needs you as a teacher of presence

[Speaker 1] (7:17:28 - 7:17:33)
thank you Tammy welcome to our live

[Speaker 2] (7:17:36 - 7:18:05)
meditation session I will probably be talking for most of the time but there may be

[Speaker 1] (7:18:09 - 7:18:14)
quite a few gaps of stillness in between the words

[Speaker 2] (7:18:16 - 7:18:24)
as they are now and these gaps are very important

[Speaker 1] (7:18:25 - 7:18:44)
I would even say more important than the words if you become conscious of these gaps of stillness

[Speaker 2] (7:18:46 - 7:18:52)
in between words you notice the gaps

[Speaker 1] (7:18:54 - 7:19:24)
instead of just impatiently being in your conceptual mind and saying why is he talking so slowly why hasn't he said anything significant yet if you are able to notice the gaps give them attention that is the arising of that state of consciousness

[Speaker 2] (7:19:24 - 7:20:02)

that we call presence it is a state of alertness relaxed alertness clarity a state in which the conceptual mind

[Speaker 1] (7:20:02 - 7:20:24)
has come to rest and something else arises thinking is most people's normal state of when they are awake in conventional terms and when you become aware of these gaps

[Speaker 2] (7:20:26 - 7:20:40)
thinking subsides and presence or we call it awareness arises thinking subsides

[Speaker 1] (7:20:42 - 7:20:53)
presence arises of course thinking will come back but it has briefly or materially subsided something else has emerged

[Speaker 2] (7:20:56 - 7:21:03)
and that is what we call presence it is

[Speaker 1] (7:21:03 - 7:21:09)
a state of one could say pure

[Speaker 2] (7:21:09 - 7:21:23)
awareness or pure consciousness so that is what sometimes people

[Speaker 1] (7:21:23 - 7:21:52)
hope to achieve when they actually do formal meditations meditation is a good tool but it is not enough it is not even for everybody the most important thing is to bring that state of clear

[Speaker 2] (7:21:53 - 7:22:08)
alert presence into everyday life then the way in which you interact

[Speaker 1] (7:22:10 - 7:22:33)
with other people the way in which you perceive the world respond to situations is very different from the way in which you would habitually react to situations if you were completely identified with the conceptual mind

[Speaker 2] (7:22:33 - 7:22:39)
that's the egoic state

[Speaker 1] (7:22:39 - 7:22:56)
complete identification with the conditioned mind, conditioned by the past that's the ego identification with that it's vital for us to go beyond that state of consciousness, that egoic state of consciousness

[Speaker 2] (7:22:59 - 7:23:10)
because it creates a lot of suffering in the world a lot of trouble you create suffering for yourself

[Speaker 1] (7:23:10 - 7:23:14)
you create suffering for others it operates on an individual

[Speaker 2] (7:23:14 - 7:23:21)
level, it operates on a collective level it is a

[Speaker 1] (7:23:21 - 7:24:08)
to a large extent dysfunctional state of consciousness it had its purpose, we had to go through it but now we need to emerge out of it to the next stage in human evolution if we get, this is a very critical transition from the egoic state of

consciousness to a more enlightened state, an awake awakened state almost all the problems that we are facing both on an individual and collective level

[Speaker 2] (7:24:09 - 7:24:18)
arise from the human mind the greatest danger

[Speaker 1] (7:24:18 - 7:24:28)
humanity is facing does not come from without, it comes from within the human mind and the havoc

[Speaker 2] (7:24:28 - 7:25:02)
that the egoic state creates in the world so the danger comes from within so this is presence in that state of presence

[Speaker 1] (7:25:06 - 7:25:53)
who you are or who you perceive yourself to be shifts from deriving your sense of self your sense of identity from a narrative in your mind which you call my life that's the normally egoic state you derive your identity from the movement of thought in your mind it tells you the story of me, you call it my life that is the deriving your identity from the stream of thinking ultimately me, what's going to happen to me

[Speaker 2] (7:25:53 - 7:26:04)
and then there's all the past that has created that me the past that has created me but it's

[Speaker 1] (7:26:04 - 7:26:57)
in ancient spiritual teachings such as Buddhism that's called a fiction, you live it's a mentally created fiction that becomes your personality, your person your sense of self there are certain characteristics that are dysfunctional for example it needs conflict, it loves conflict it says I seek peace but it acts out conflict it loves enemies because it defines itself through the other it demonizes the other it criticizes the other judges the other makes the other as possible in order to strengthen its own fictitious sense of identity that is the ego that is what we need to go beyond

[Speaker 2] (7:27:01 - 7:27:29)
entire nations can do it to other nations too so there's the your identity then is no longer derived from this narrative this ultimate mental fiction your identity comes from a deeper place a place of beingness or presence and at first it seems

[Speaker 1] (7:27:29 - 7:27:49)
perhaps a little disconcerting because when you're not involved in conceptual thinking, who are you? when you don't remember your past or not at least don't derive your identity from your past, who am I without that?

[Speaker 2] (7:27:50 - 7:28:38)
in this space of stillness of alert presence, alert relaxed presence who am I? you are that sense of beingness or presence that has no form it is just the light of consciousness itself so what's left of you is a sense of a sense of aliveness of beingness of presence stillness, but alive stillness and that is your deeper identity

[Speaker 1] (7:28:38 - 7:30:10)
I call it your essence identity so connecting with that essence identity is the vital step of transcending the egoic identity and then you can feel that this presence is not just an absence of thought or an absence of sounds the stillness is not just an absence it is a very powerful sense of presence there's an enormous power in that stillness in every human it's already there potentially underneath

the stream of thinking so to speak like a vastness of the ocean underneath the turbulent surface of the ocean there's the vastness of the ocean underneath the turbulent waves on the surface which is the stream of thinking they're not separate the consciousness that you are is also your thoughts your thoughts are not separate, they are a manifestation of form that this consciousness takes but it's only a surface phenomenon the consciousness itself is far deeper than any thoughts in your mind or even any emotions

[Speaker 2] (7:30:10 - 7:30:40)
there's a depth to who you are that is unfathomable it's and when I say you that connects you with something much vaster than what you normally call you I don't want to give it any name right now but it connects you to

[Speaker 1] (7:30:40 - 7:30:49)
a vastness that you are an expression of but if you don't know that then you

[Speaker 2] (7:30:49 - 7:30:55)
realize you live like a fragment disconnected from other fragments in this world

[Speaker 1] (7:31:01 - 7:31:09)
and then as you get little taste of that state of consciousness

[Speaker 2] (7:31:09 - 7:31:20)
that we call presence for example now you feel yourself you feel your presence right now beyond any

[Speaker 1] (7:31:23 - 7:34:27)
beyond any thought that's connected with your life situation or whatever it may be whether what age you are becomes irrelevant what gender you are becomes irrelevant what you have achieved or suffered in this world it transcends all that it is more powerful than any of that it liberates you from all that it's not that the person disappears completely of course the person the personal self is still there it continues to operate in this world but there is a continuous knowing that there is more to you than that and that is vital so you continue to operate as a person in this world but no longer deriving your identity from the personal sense of self you can operate as a person you need to in this world in this world of time past and future you can operate in this world without losing yourself in this world and without losing yourself in identity that ultimately is a very shallow and fleeting thing that you call me the person so that thing continues to operate for a while but your challenge is while you operate in this world as a person not to lose connectedness with a deeper dimension and that is bringing presence into every situation that you deal with every interaction in this world and that is a skill that skill develops and it is quiet presence itself is timeless but it is a skill for you to it requires some practice a high degree of alertness to bring presence into everyday life whatever you do here whatever function you have in this world function and for example not to confuse your function with your identity it is a function I am a teacher of presence you are a teacher of presence or you are becoming a teacher of presence by living in that way by bringing that consciousness into every situation so that you don't lose yourself in the doing whatever it is you are doing in the situation and you don't lose yourself sense of identity that is to do with your function

[Speaker 2] (7:34:28 - 7:34:38)
and to reduce other people to their function in this world so when you when you

[Speaker 1] (7:34:39 - 7:38:41)
talk to somebody whatever purpose the interaction has let's say it is a very simple thing it is it is you are in a restaurant and you order a meal and or you are the server in the restaurant and you are talking to the customer is all there is to

this interaction the customer talking to the server or is there a deeper is there some presence there that causes the interaction to be deeper and more meaningful than just a customer talking to a server that reduces you reduce yourself and you reduce the others to some temporary function and so you lose your sense of the humanity in the deeper sense of the other because you have reduced the other to a mental concept and you are relating to the mental concept this is the waiter, the waiter is the server and you by doing it to another you do it to yourself also you reduce yourself to that particular in that particular situation you are the client, the customer, could be any situation so what's the difference then when you bring presence into that moment in that moment you may still be talking, there is a menu you are looking at the menu I would like a minestrone soup and you are looking at the server and yes all that functions in a normal way but while you order this meal, I'm giving just one example out of hundreds of thousands, while you order the meal you can sense what I've been pointing at in our session today you can sense within yourself this presence underneath the thinking there is a space of stillness behind the thinking and you are aware of it and that's you, that's your presence and you speak the words and then you listen to or you look at the other person and you can sense the same dimension of consciousness in the other the other also is essentially that presence, the other also is essentially that consciousness that is the essence of who or what you are so you sense the consciousness of the other through sensing the consciousness within yourself beyond the personal selfhood and that brings an added vital dimension into the interaction and it's not something that perhaps is immediately noticed by the other the waiter may not notice that you can sense his or her being however

[Speaker 10] (7:38:43 - 7:38:44)
the

[Speaker 1] (7:38:44 - 7:43:38)
server in this particular example it's possible that he or she may be so absorbed in their mind that it just does not penetrate but it's also possible that the response the person that you are connecting with at this deeper level not through words just sensing his or her presence or some other pronoun, you have to be careful with pronouns these days so it doesn't matter which one you sense their presence and it may well be that you get a response so the person may suddenly feel so good about you, doesn't know why because everybody deep down they love being recognized in their beingness beyond their personality, there is an unconscious longing in humans to connect with a deeper level that is beyond the person, the personality there is an unconscious longing in every human being to become free of being trapped in their personality the person, they want to be free, they don't know that but they feel I can't stand it anymore, so they go to drugs or some other things just to have a moment of freedom for themselves so to speak, but it doesn't last and not only that, they fall below the normal state of consciousness instead of rising above the normal state of consciousness you don't want to free yourself from from yourself by moving towards sleep or unconsciousness that's happened with many drugs, or why they make you feel better feel so relaxed so good you can't think about your problems anymore so how wonderful and then of course you come back and you haven't risen above thought, you haven't risen above the ego you have fallen below the ego, yes it's been a moment of freedom but it didn't last and it is not our purpose to go that way our purpose is to rise above to rise above to transcend the egoic self so that your identity increasingly is derived from that beautiful sense of presence of beingness and not the story of you and so you become a teacher of presence by in a wider sense by bringing this state of consciousness into every interaction teaching itself can be interpreted in different ways usually when things of teaching is imparting information a teacher teaches gives information facts, or teaching can be teaching somebody how to acquire a skill how to do this, how to do that teaching presence could involve words in certain situations, it can be very helpful to say something to a person if the situation is right maybe I'll come back to that a little later, to say something but more than

words a teacher of presence lives endeavours to bring presence into every situation in life this obviously applies to people who have helping professions people in helping professions psychotherapists doctors, nurses teachers, social workers body workers people in close contact with other humans in helping professions some of them already in some way without knowing it bringing presence into what they do but others are just stressed and can't it becomes it's so hard many teachers are stressed

[Speaker 2] (7:43:38 - 7:43:41)
doctors are stressed, nurses are stressed

[Speaker 1] (7:43:42 - 7:43:45)
social workers are stressed not everybody

[Speaker 2] (7:43:47 - 7:43:48)
I was

[Speaker 1] (7:43:48 - 7:48:29)
for the first time in my life I was a patient in a hospital last year and so I experienced the nurses primarily more contact obviously with nurses than with doctors and some nurses seem quite stressed they're doing their job but it's tough and I've seen a couple of others were actually bringing presence and they probably don't they've never heard of the word presence something has arisen in them naturally and spontaneously when they relate to people you're not just to them particularly two I found that I had contact with you're more to them than a patient again, they don't reduce you to a conceptual identity called patient and you can sense that they give they relate to you as a being, a human being and so that without perhaps knowing it without having a word for it spontaneously in the course of their work some presence has already arisen and that's beautiful and this may be the case with many of you also that already in your whatever work you do there's already that dimension coming in perhaps not all the time but already you're able to bring that dimension in or perhaps a better way of putting it is to say you're allowing that dimension to come in because when I say you are able to bring that dimension in that seems to imply you need to do something and that's not quite it it's not that you need to do something to the other it's allowing the presence to flow through you it's not a doing as such you have to be careful that in any situation the ego can come back in so for example when we say I become a teacher of presence you become whenever you use words referring to yourself through words it's dangerous because when you say I'm a teacher of presence and not realizing that it's only a function but it's not an identity it's a function and it could easily happen that you create another conceptual identity of I am a teacher of presence, you have another conceptual identity and then you compare yourself to others which is what the ego itself does and then you say I will show you the path let's just listen to me ego comes in very easily through the back door so being a teacher of presence is a function, it's not an identity your identity is presence itself your identity is consciousness itself and so as I said some people especially in helping professions are already bringing some presence into what they do without having a word for it and if they do it more consciously this can deepen but it doesn't have to be just the helping professions because anybody who has contact with other human beings in their work, you may be a hairdresser, you may be a flight attendant, you may be a lawyer the incredible opportunities because you are relating to others of course it's important there to differentiate between the function that you have on the level of your conceptual interaction and the deeper transcendent consciousness that can flow into that some people have very difficult jobs with other people

[Speaker 2] (7:48:29 - 7:48:39)
for example lawyers for example lawyers tend to

[Speaker 1] (7:48:41 - 7:48:58)

come into contact with their so called clients with other human beings when they are at their most unconscious because lawyers tend to come into contact with people involved in some kind of conflict

[Speaker 2] (7:48:58 - 7:48:59)
with others

[Speaker 1] (7:48:59 - 7:52:09)
and often divorce lawyers for example so if you are a divorce lawyer you are more likely to encounter people at their most unconscious they may be in other situations they may be significantly more conscious than in the situation if you encounter them if you are a lawyer so this is an even greater challenge for you to stay conscious there because you typically you will encounter other humans at their most unconscious and so a lawyer for example needs to be really intensely present it's a huge challenge but also a wonderful challenge if you can live up to that challenge and bring presence into interactions but even in professions like a realtor maybe not quite as bad as a lawyer but when people are involved in signing contracts they become reactive they become aggressive and the ego comes in so again being a realtor is also maybe not quite as challenging as being a lawyer but can be challenging too all kinds of jobs flight attendants these days, very challenging job, it used to be relatively easy but now humans have become so toxic in many so unconscious to various challenges they encounter collective challenges and others so that can be very very very challenging job too and again here wonderful opportunity for bringing presence and again I have encountered some flight attendants my frequent travels who are able to bring that presence, who give you attention beyond reducing yourself to a passenger which is a conceptual identity they don't reduce yourself they relate to you as a human being and some do it and others don't quite manage it and so this is a skill that is vital, the challenges that you encounter in relating to other human beings is exactly what is needed for you to strengthen the arising presence if you were not challenged you could meditate every day and it's fine, you feel quite good and you think okay I'm present but the moment a real challenge comes the presence, you're not deeply enough connected with that dimension and you lose it again and the difficulties that you encounter

[Speaker 2] (7:52:09 - 7:52:17)
you challenge with other human beings are perhaps the most important

[Speaker 1] (7:52:19 - 7:52:53)
ingredient in the arising of presence, you need the challenges and you may have noticed that many of your challenges of course some are physical challenges or financial challenges, all kinds of living situation challenges but many of your challenges or I could say your suffering comes from other human beings

[Speaker 10] (7:52:53 - 7:52:55)
because

[Speaker 1] (7:52:57 - 7:52:59)
humans can be so difficult

[Speaker 2] (7:53:03 - 7:53:05)
and but that

[Speaker 1] (7:53:10 - 7:53:29)
that for most, there may be a few humans here and there whose spiritual path is to be a hermit to withdraw from life to live out in nature there may be, there are a few whose destiny is to be

[Speaker 2] (7:53:29 - 7:53:42)

not very much in contact with other humans but most of us our spiritual path is through relationships with others we evolve

[Speaker 1] (7:53:43 - 7:53:54)
through, we no longer demand that other humans should be more conscious, we realize that what matters is

[Speaker 2] (7:53:56 - 7:54:01)
what matters is your state of consciousness, not the other person's state of consciousness

[Speaker 1] (7:54:05 - 7:57:25)
so it's a this is very vital to be able to hold presence in challenging situations and life is full of them fortunately because you need them holding challenges holding presence in challenging situations so whenever a challenge happens small or big always realize in any situation the most important thing is not what's happening the most important thing in any situation is the state of consciousness with which you meet what's happening this is easy to forget people always think the situation that I'm dealing with right now is the most important thing this is really important it's it's importance is secondary the really important thing is with what state of consciousness are you facing that situation what state of consciousness do you bring to this situation and so if you can reorient so to speak yourself and remind yourself continuously the moment a challenge happens be aware of your state of consciousness that is primary the situation is always secondary and the state of consciousness needs to be one of non reactivity reactivity comes from the egoic self that says you shouldn't behave like that, this shouldn't be happening, this is wrong that mustn't be, I don't want to be here I want to be somewhere else it's always opposition to what is reactive and in presence you respond to situations if a response is called for but you don't react, react comes from the conditioning of your mind so you react in the old predictable way and then you recreate situations through your reactions because in the way in which you react to a situation that then determines to a large extent how this situation develops, does it get worse or does it get better so many people amplify conflict a challenge comes into their life some small conflict they unconsciously react and the reaction amplifies the conflict and then gets bigger and the other person perhaps caused the conflict gets even more unconscious and they become even more reactive and this is part of the old egoic consciousness where very often it's not the situation that's so bad, your reaction makes the situation so bad

[Speaker 2] (7:57:26 - 7:57:32)
and it blows it up and that's karma one could say, it's a karmic reaction

[Speaker 1] (7:57:33 - 7:58:23)
karma by the way means action and karma is a law of action and reaction so any unconscious human being you meet a person who is angry at you for some reason are you angry immediately in turn do you react with anger too, which is a normal thing for humans, one person is angry accuses you of something and you immediately instead in any situation my state of consciousness right now is what matters are you able to just observe and be present bring that relaxed clarity to the situation instead of amplifying it

[Speaker 2] (7:58:27 - 7:58:33)
and that determines what happens in the future so

[Speaker 1] (7:58:34 - 8:02:09)
it also collectively it applies also when we have a collective problem how do we deal with the collective problem through presence or through reactivity and if we deal through by the way when you deal with something through presence it means there is wisdom this is another important word wisdom arises out of presence wisdom

is different from intelligence, intelligence is the ability to use the conceptual mind that has its purpose, it's fine but there is something deeper and more important potentially in every human being and that's not intelligence, it's wisdom wisdom is this faculty that arises out of presence and then you can deal with situations truly intelligently rather than reactively and you do not make the situation worse by your reaction to the situation so you need wisdom what the world needs is not more intelligence very soon AI is probably becoming more intelligent than humans and the human challenge is to access the dimension where wisdom arises that's computers don't have that they can be very good at thinking probably they are making incredible advances but not wisdom so we need to as we are being almost replaced by artificial thinkers this coincides with the transition of human beings to a higher state of consciousness than thinking of course they can still think but they are not trapped in thinking and so it's terribly important and again coming back for a moment to that situation collective situation there is a collective challenge we have the pandemic situation as a huge collective challenge was there wisdom in the way in which we reacted to that challenge not very much there was a lot of fear there was a lot of panic there was a lot of anger and many measures were taken not necessarily seeing all the possible repercussions of measures that were taken that would play themselves out in the next few years we don't need to go into details but the question is always do you create more suffering by your reaction to a situation than is contained in the situation itself that's lack of wisdom does that and lack of wisdom means lack of

[Speaker 2] (8:02:09 - 8:02:18)
presence or awareness whatever word you want to use so using

[Speaker 1] (8:02:20 - 8:02:35)
life situations all the life situations that arise in your life become your spiritual practice when you realize it's not the situation that's the most important thing it's my state of consciousness

[Speaker 2] (8:02:35 - 8:02:44)
that's the most important thing give your attention to that at this moment

[Speaker 1] (8:02:45 - 8:02:49)
it may be relatively easy to be present

[Speaker 2] (8:02:51 - 8:02:57)
or not maybe you're challenged

[Speaker 1] (8:02:58 - 8:04:05)
maybe not by some external situation but maybe you're challenged by your mind if you're not challenged by some external situation like you're in bed it's 2.30 in the morning and you wake up or you couldn't go to sleep and dreadful things are happening in your mind oh my god you're not challenged by an external situation because it's a warm bed and you're fine in the now but you're challenged by your mind so many times the challenge may not come from external situation but from your mind and ultimately everything comes from your mind in a deeper sense because every event becomes a mental thing you experience it as a mental event anything in the external world is recreated

[Speaker 2] (8:04:05 - 8:04:40)
in your mind it becomes a mental event so everything is ultimately your mind so when you encounter a difficult situation

[Speaker 1] (8:04:41 - 8:04:48)
and you don't react in the usual old way but you stay present and you look

[Speaker 2] (8:04:48 - 8:05:04)

see the situation and this presence arising it's a difficult person and you don't react

[Speaker 1] (8:05:04 - 8:10:49)
in the old predictable way your lack of reaction is a teaching also I've sometimes found when people were difficult no matter various situations difficult people, angry people accusing or just being in a bad mood and when you don't react they get very disconcerted because they want, they almost need the reaction, the ego itself or their pain body needs the reaction and if you don't react then they become a little confused and then the whole thing collapses even a little thing in traffic for some reason, traffic makes people very unconscious too when they are driving and they get angry at other cars other drivers they don't know them they get angry it's very strange so they personalize all that and occasionally I found people got angry at me, I'm sometimes maybe a bit slow driving and then they shout something and then I look at them they expect please shout something back, almost unconsciously they expect I could see this it was pointless to react what is the point in shouting something back there's no point whatsoever so I just looked and then some thought I was deaf and they shouted louder and but the situation very quickly collapses if it's not being fed, it's not being reinforced many conflict situations if you deal with it only factually take the ego out of it, which is the reactivity presence then arises and presence arises, you can deal with the situation factually, what can we do here, this, that or maybe nothing then very quickly a situation that potentially could have become enormous conflict written and gone on and on begins to dissolve so as a teacher of presence in a wider sense a lot of the time your teaching is dissolving conflict, not avoiding conflict or anything, it's nothing to do with that, but dissolving conflict through non-reactivity and not bringing a self into it and you stop complaining about other people for example, when they don't do what they're supposed to do which happens a lot or they do something that they're not supposed to do, which happens a lot too and so you don't bring so an important thing that a teacher of presence does is they dissolve conflict they don't feed it and if you don't feed it it very quickly collapses now if conflict collapses it's not food for your ego so your ego does not want conflict to collapse, it might say that it wants peace, but it acts differently the words say I want peace no, the ego doesn't want peace it wants more conflict so when you when you are present you are able to dissolve conflict and that simultaneously it is a dissolution of your ego too because the ego wants the conflict, but you don't you the essential you the you that is transcendent to the ego does not want conflict, it loves peace it loves the state of love so so the teacher of presence teaches not very often, a lot of the time not through words not even necessarily through doing but through bringing a certain state of consciousness to the situation and it dissolves conflict, imagine if that happens on a world scale if there were world leaders conscious enough present enough to dissolve conflict instead of amplifying conflict, because what happens on an individual level also happens collectively the amplification of conflict that's how for example I mean if you know the history of century century first world war it started with one little thing, well tragic for the person, but an assassination, the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand whoever his name was somewhere in the Balkans and then people, various nations the leaders of nations reacted and it became bigger and bigger just one event reaction, and the others reacted against their reaction, before

[Speaker 2] (8:10:49 - 8:10:50)
they know it

[Speaker 1] (8:10:51 - 8:12:08)
you have the most unbelievable devastating conflict that ever happened on the planet until then like 30 million dead or something, just unbelievable it all happened from one little thing unconscious people amplifying conflict at every stage and this could happen again to some extent it is happening again in the world

because not many leaders are present or conscious very few let me see trying to think of a conscious leader it's not coming to me right now but it must be someone so all these things are vitally vitally important and even just this one little thing of not not contributing to conflict but dissolving conflict would change the world it changes your life and if people who have a certain amount of power are able to practice that then it's the end of useless

[Speaker 2] (8:12:09 - 8:12:19)
warfare and terrible suffering that humans create for other humans

[Speaker 1] (8:12:19 - 8:12:44)
and for themselves so that's the path, our path is the path of awakening to presence so important it's never been more important than it is now consider the world situation but the true change starts with you and then it spreads

[Speaker 2] (8:12:44 - 8:12:47)
from you to others

[Speaker 5] (8:15:39 - 8:15:40)
thank you

[Speaker 2] (8:15:49 - 8:15:53)
there's a line in Shakespeare I don't remember which play

[Speaker 1] (8:15:54 - 8:51:53)
it says nothing is either good or bad but thinking makes it so there's a very important lesson here an essential part of spiritual awakening or we could call it the awakening of consciousness is to learn to become aware of the difference between the situation that you find yourself in and what your mind says about the situation that you find yourself in particularly challenging situations many of you at this time are perhaps confined to a small space perhaps a small apartment not allowed to go out except to buy groceries or other essentials perhaps you have to share that space with several people or there's nobody else and you're feeling lonely or you may be experiencing that money is becoming scarce because you've been laid off no more income or you're feeling sick and there's a fever this cough now all these things that many of you are experiencing now would conventionally normally be called bad and yes I suppose on a conventional level they are not pleasant particularly if you're sick so what does it mean, what does Shakespeare mean when he says nothing is either good or bad but thinking makes it so so your very essential spiritual lesson is to be able to differentiate between a situation that you are experiencing and your mental commentary about the situation that you're experiencing the thoughts that you have concerning the situation that you're experiencing now for most people anybody who's not sufficiently aware for most people whatever they experience and the mental commentary that they have about their experience are a single phenomenon they cannot separate them so let's say you are cooped up in a small space have been there for already a week or two weeks and you're thinking about how much longer and you can't stand it anymore, this is just too awful and the self talk continues and it's telling you how awful and unacceptable this situation is and you might this self talk may generate self pity may generate anger it may generate depression it will certainly will generate fear because a lot of the self talk is about how bad it is, it's not just how bad it is now but how bad it's going to be, it's going to be worse that's what the mind is often saying and then when the mind saying that it's going to get worse then basically for you it is already worse and it gets worse and worse so since many of you have spare time these days I suggest experimenting a little bit and becoming aware of the difference between the situation you find yourself in and the mental commentary about the situation so when you feel unhappy basically suffering where you are and you're saying I can't take much more of this whatever the mind is saying or the mind is saying it's going to get worse I can't take another three

weeks of this, how could I what am I going to live on and so on so the commentary concerns certain things that are happening now, it may concern certain things in the so called future so you become aware of the self talk basically most humans talk to themselves a lot or you may also be talking to others if you share a space with other people then the self talk becomes the dialogue that you have with others and as an experiment I would suggest that you ask yourself how would I experience this situation if I did not add any unnecessary thought to it how would I experience this moment, the situation that I'm finding myself in without the addition of an interpretation of the mind I sometimes call that in most cases this addition this interpretation, in many many cases it's negative there's usually not that much that the mind can comment on a very pleasant experience, it just experiences it but the mind can loves it when it there's a difficult situation then the mind can really get going and has a long story about it how would I experience this moment without the addition of unnecessary thought, that's a strange question I sometimes say that this addition of thought is excess baggage in your life and many humans don't realize that they are making themselves unhappy for years and years and sometimes a whole lifetime because they never learn to differentiate between situations they find themselves in and that which the mind adds to the situation, so they experience the situation through the narrative of the mind they cannot say here's a situation and here's a narrative, but this is what I'm asking you to experiment with now, because you have plenty of time, or many of you have how would I experience this moment if I refrained from interpreting it, calling it either good or bad okay now this question doesn't have an answer on a conceptual level, this question directs your attention into the present moment the aliveness of the present moment, and if you don't add any thought to it, with just an experiment, you can if the experiment fails, if you don't like it then you can continue with adding, continuously adding narratives to the situation and continue to experience the situation through the veil of the narrative that comments how awful it all is that your life is falling apart, the world is falling apart it's all so dreadful that's the narrative so how would I experience this moment if I did not add, okay let's do it, or let's refrain it's not a doing, it's a refrain from doing something that is normally an unconscious mind process okay, what am I left with?

here I am, I'm sitting here looking around, breathing whatever is here in this room look out of the window, see a bit of sky, tree see light coming through the window furniture in the room, whatever else is happening here, sensory perceptions and you're breathing and you're alive presumably, although you may not actually experience being alive but you can experience it by feeling the inner energy field of the body which is alive, it's all part of the experience of this moment and there you are sitting there and you have dropped the narrative and all you are left with is the bare isness, beingness or isness of this moment that's interesting and you may suddenly feel a kind of weight lifting of your shoulders the weight that you habitually probably carry which is the weight of this is why I call it excess baggage it is a weight of unconscious thinking reactive thinking the mind creating unhappy narratives and then what you then experience is the body is reflecting back to you the unhappy narrative in the form of an unhappy emotion that's called normal living that's what when you watch a movie or everybody is doing it that's just normal, not very few people question it but there is another way and that's the way of awareness or presence so this is the perhaps one of the most or the most fundamental spiritual practice is to be able to separate the narrative from the situation and if possible as much as possible let go of the narrative and just be present with this moment as it is and of course the amazing fact is this moment is all there ever is your entire life unfolds in and as this moment, in other words it's always now it's never not now your entire life is now whatever happened in the past happened in the now and when you remember it you remember it now whatever will happen in the future will not happen in the future it will happen in the now because when the future comes it's no longer a future it's the now and when you think about the future it's a thought in the present moment in the now so life and now your life and the now are inseparable and there's an enormous power hiding in the now which means hiding in you and a deep sense of aliveness and beingness that goes far beyond what we conventionally call happiness it's not happiness, it's deeper but you need to be challenged by life to find it and this is what's happening for millions collectively now on a personal level everybody gets challenged periodically also but now collectively we're being challenged we need to wake up wake up out of unconscious thinking out of complete identification with the thinking mind which is conditioned by the past and we need to realize that there is in us there is in you another dimension of consciousness that has always been there but habitually one could say overlooked and that is the dimension of awareness which is consciousness without thought and you probably have experienced it on many occasions briefly for example when engaged in an activity that requires you to be absolutely present climbing up a mountain or sometimes perhaps engaged in some kind of sport activity requires you to be absolutely present and then there's an awareness there but there's no conceptual thinking, there's no time for thinking and the strange thing is this awareness is a deeper identity the awareness that you are frees you ultimately from yourself, the self the limited self the conditioned self the mind made sense of self that for most people that's all they know but there's more to you and there's a deeper identity in you and that identity is awareness itself, that is consciousness itself, it's the unconditioned consciousness itself and it's not difficult to experience that, to realize that but humans don't they need the challenge to be driven there and this is why what we are going through right now is potentially very helpful so the practice is how would I experience this moment without the addition of thought and then you come to experience the pure isness of this moment in which there is no suffering there is only the isness of this because all the unhappiness ultimately was not created by the situation it was created by the narrative but you didn't know that as most humans still don't know that because they cannot separate the situation from the narrative and so whenever you feel unhappy you feel fearful you feel depressed you feel resentful what's happening, self pity, whatever it may be use that as a little wake up call say okay, how does this arise, where does this how is this feeling of unhappiness in whatever form how does it come about and then you become more and more aware of what goes on in your thinking mind the awareness is deeper, a deeper dimension of consciousness, we can say higher or deeper, it doesn't matter it is a deeper dimension of consciousness than the activity of thought, which is also consciousness every thought is a form that consciousness takes but underneath that there is a vast realm of consciousness in the same way that a ripple on the surface of the ocean, let's say that's the thought but the ripple is only a temporary fleeting expression of a much deeper reality underneath it and so you wake up to that deeper identity by realizing the fundamental difference between what is and what the mind has to say about it and then more and more you're able to experience situations with the power of your presence, you're facing a situation with the power of your presence it's not your presence but let's just call it yours you face it with the power of your presence, which is true intelligence instead of being reactive and complaining about what it ever is you're experiencing a lot of that unnecessary mind activity the narrative the excess baggage a lot of that you might have noticed is complaining you can complain about life about other people around you you can complain about the unfairness of it all, how life has treated you or whatever it is you can complain about, whatever the politicians and all kinds of the infinite things you can complain about so a lot of that narrative has an element of complaining to it and it's not pleasant but the false sense of self, the ego, the me it loves complaining because then it feels it has a stronger sense of identity, a fictitious identity it loves to make somebody wrong another person, you can make a whole situation wrong, this should not be happening, it should not be happening, it's a travesty but it is happening this should not be happening is the narrative and that what makes you unhappy in most cases perhaps all cases, is the narrative in the mind not the situation the situation is as it is and as when you realize that, then more and more are you able to face every situation which is in the present moment the only place where any situation can arise, you face it as it is in the now, with the power of your presence and if action is required, you take action if nothing can be done you leave it alone it is as it is and you are not unhappy about it anymore you rise above it so to speak, you are no longer at the mercy of whatever is happening or not happening around you yes, it is nice when nice things happen and it is not so nice when unpleasant things happen but it doesn't touch you that deeply because you have access already, a deeper dimension within yourself, so you are no longer at the mercy of conditions because as long as you are at the mercy of conditions life is very frustrating because conditions or situations you find yourself in are never satisfying for very long and a lot of the time they are unsatisfying, a lot of the time they are challenging because life is not here to make you happy the world isn't here to make you happy it is here to awaken you to make you conscious how does it do that? it does that by challenging you and it is doing it now so and as you are able to let go of the unnecessary narrative that makes you unhappy then you automatically become present to what is and then you understand perhaps what Shakespeare meant when he said nothing is either good or bad but thinking makes it so thanks, I will talk to you again soon in the meantime please try it out, practice and see what happens thanks as you know I may have mentioned before nature can always help you to get back into presence and out of your mind out of your mind is usually has negative connotations but not in the way I use it so even in the midst of a city there's always a little bit of nature somewhere, in New York you might have to look like a tourist but the tourists are looking at the buildings and you'll be looking at the little bit of sky so the sky is always there so even to look at the sky can be a meditation you can look at the sky and whether it's cloudy if it's cloudy there will still be light coming through the clouds otherwise it would be completely dark so there is the analogy is the sky is your consciousness the emptiness of the sky the vastness of the sky is the unconditioned consciousness and the clouds are the thoughts thought formations or mental emotional formations and sometimes the sky is totally cloudy, dense layers of cloud even then there is some light coming through and there's the interesting, it's a good analogy the best thing probably that you can find in this world of sense perceived phenomena the best comparison or analogy to the inner spaciousness stillness unconditioned consciousness is actually the clear sky now the interesting thing about the clear sky we have a name for it we say the sky in some languages you have two names one is heaven and one is sky in other languages there's only sky which can mean heaven or sky so in those translations Jesus says the kingdom of the sky in French Italian, probably Italian Spanish, German Jesus actually says when he talks about kingdom of heaven it's actually translated the kingdom of the sky and so that's very interesting because the sky is actually nothing if you ever went up in this direction hoping to get there you would never find it because ultimately the sky does not actually exist as something in this sense in the same way that a table exists or a cloud exists although we have it appears as if it were one of many things in this world, we have a noun for it the sky but if you look, there is no such thing as the sky, it's a certain appearance, there is the sunlight, beyond it there is the vastness and darkness of outer space and somehow the two coming together creates the illusion that there is something there but you could never touch it or feel I'm now in it, you can be in a cloud, but you can't be in the sky, you never know where is it I've been going upwards for 20 miles and still don't know where it is and before you know it you're in outer space, where was it?

There is no sky, in the same way that the consciousness that underlies everything that is the essence of who you are does not actually exist in this world in the same way in which an object exists in this world, although we have a word for it, we have a noun for it, we call it the consciousness believing that there is something that is consciousness but there isn't, it is an emanation from the unmanifested, so in itself, the consciousness is not an object you could never say, there it is, that actually Jesus said literally when they asked, when does the kingdom of heaven come or where is it? kingdom of the sky you can never say, ah there it is or it's over there that's what he literally said so you can't say the consciousness this is the analogy, the sky is the consciousness, not the only place where it's used, it's also used sometimes in Chinese, ancient Chinese spirituality, Taoism and so on the heaven, the sky the vastness of it, but it is intangible it does not exist in the same way that consciousness does not exist, because exist that word means x is from the Latin out, is to stand, it stands out something that exists, stands out into this world, it projects itself into this dimension but the sky does not exist, because you can never find it and the consciousness does not exist in the way that something out here exists, it is the the ground for existence it is the being before the being becomes something so there is being and there is existence, the being very different it sounds almost like an obscure existentialist treatise, being and existence but that is why people like Jesus use this use the sky as the closest he could get to explaining what the unconditioned consciousness is and so when you look at the sky, the equivalent of the vast emptiness or spaciousness of the clear sky is your inner spaciousness or emptiness and you can never say it can never become an object for yourself in the same way as I see the table or I am now aware of the consciousness you can't be aware of the consciousness because the awareness is it so there can't there is no duality, you can't make it into an object and that means when you are rooted in that dimension within yourself that is very different from the form identity, the egoic identity in the egoic identity you have made yourself into an object of consciousness starting with, as we mentioned the other day the pool of water in which Narcissus saw himself, the ancient myth and so that was the beginning of human consciousness forming an image of itself and mistaking the mental image for who you are so you make yourself into an object of consciousness then you have a relationship with this object of consciousness which is a mental creation a mental formation and this object of consciousness becomes you and you have a relationship with yourself that's a strange thing now you will find that this your dog is so much happier than you and experiences so much more joy because the dog does not have a relationship with him or herself hasn't created a mental image that he can be unhappy with I'm not happy with the way I look my tail is too short my legs are too short so it has no therefore it's life, nothing in nature has a relationship with itself, it is itself, the tree is itself, the flower is itself, it is never unhappy about itself you can only be unhappy about yourself if you have a relationship with yourself which is the ego so if you discover within yourself that a lot of the time you are in a state of lack of insufficiency, of not enough and you feel that the answer to, the remedy is to be active in this world and achieve and do as much as possible, then you probably find that ultimately that is not the answer to your state of lack, in order to transcend to go beyond your state of lack, of neediness, of not enough spiritual practice and spiritual realization is necessary focus on the realization of being it's only there that you can go beyond that state of lack, which is ego go within and discover who or what you are beyond the passing

[Speaker 5] (8:51:53 - 8:52:18)
the book has been used

[Speaker 1] (8:52:18 - 9:21:54)
I'm told, to combat anxiety and depression how?

people who read the book begin to realize that the majority of their problems most of their problems ultimately arise not so much from the circumstances of their lives, but from how their mind interprets the circumstances of their lives, there is a story that people could continuously tell themselves in their head they talk, this is the self-talk that most people engage with, sometimes without even knowing it, we've all met people in the street who are talking out aloud and we say they're crazy they're talking to themselves but ultimately everybody is doing it inside their heads, so there is a there is a voice this is a conditioned thinking it never stops talking and for many people it's not a pleasant voice because it works on small scale in small situations as well as in significant situations, let's say you are you're becoming anxious because you're lining up at a supermarket or the airline check-in counter and it's not moving and you're becoming upset and anxious and this is awful and at that moment I would recommend that you ask yourself the question how would I experience this moment if I did not add these thoughts to it, if I did not add this baggage of thoughts to it that says this is awful, how would I experience this moment, this is just an experiment you can conduct, okay here I am, I'm still standing here and now I'm not adding any narrative to it, I'm just taking this moment as it is and suddenly you don't experience the upset, the anger or the anxiety anymore because you have let go of the narrative which interprets this event in negative terms there are many books by Krishna Murthy, most of the books were not written by him, they are skillfully edited transcripts of his talks there are only about two books that were written by him and one of those books is the book we're just going to look at today it's called Krishna Murthy's Notebook and in 1961, 62 the impulse came to him to get a notebook and write every day a few small short entries into his notebook every day and he did that for a year and a half or so and then suddenly stopped and that was it and the entries, I'm going to read a few to you today and comment on each one they are all about the way in which he perceives nature so many descriptions of nature nature perceived through his state of consciousness of stillness so to read that, to read those brief passages can also take you into stillness and as we read them here some passages together that's an invitation for us to enter the same state of consciousness through which he perceived what he describes that is some practice to get used to until it becomes second nature to have your attention in the present moment rather than elsewhere have the main focus of your attention in your daily life in the present moment the rest of your attention, so that's the main focus, here's this, the rest of your attention is where you want to go to whatever task you're engaged in has a certain purpose the purpose is you want to finish the task and it has achieved its purpose and that's here and that's in your peripheral the peripheral vision of your consciousness, that's where you want to get to and this is what you're doing in order to get there and your main attention is not where you want to get and in the meantime you're just doing it in order to get there you can see how that already creates an inner stress I'm here but I want to be there that's a normal way of living is the main part of people's attention is there, but in the meantime they are here where they don't really want to be rather be there as shown in famous stickers on bumper stickers on cars which say something like, I'd rather be fishing when I visited Ram Dass the spiritual teacher who is now passed away, he lived on Maui on his car I saw a bumper sticker which said I'd rather be here now that's a good teaching on a bumper sticker so your attention is and this is a reversal almost of how humans normally usually live, it's the opposite that is in itself already a shift in consciousness and then of course you're also aware of the past, the certain things that may have a relevance in the present that's fine so peripherally past and future, usually future is more important because you're moving towards that and here's the central vision of present moment, in the present moment you're either actively doing something or you are more passively perceiving something you're there as a an observer or you're just there, not actively doing but simply perceiving that could be when you travel back from here already you might be sitting in a car, if you're driving you're doing something there it's particularly important to be present or you might be sitting on a plane and this is a good opportunity for being the you go into the witnessing mode there's nothing particular to do unless you get out your laptop and start doing that's fine and sometimes situations arise that are problematic that's quite normal in life they are challenging rather than problematic and then you face the challenge, you look at it so to speak, not necessarily visually, but you give it attention that this is the challenge and instead of unconscious reactivity the challenge is your flight is cancelled it's not one of the greatest challenges a human can have but some people react as if it were and when any challenge arises is there anything I can do to respond to this situation or is that something where I simply have to say, well for the time being I accept the way it is because right now there's nothing I can do I heard for example at some airports they're so busy not sufficiently staffed people when the plane lands they're still trapped on the plane for two or three hours it has happened in Toronto and other places that's a good opportunity of surrender some people can't do that they start screaming and shouting no particular purpose, but they can't help it it happens to them so always the question is is this an opportunity for surrender or is action called for that is a practice to get used to until it becomes second nature to have the your attention in the present moment rather than elsewhere and it usually implies you are aware of your surroundings that's inseparable from being in the present through your senses a more alert human being than a normal human being but an alertness in which there is no tension often alertness in a human is associated with being tense but there is an alertness without tension but it's not enough to be just aware of your sense perceptions, that's a good thing it also can help you to avoid dangerous situations that otherwise you just stumble into and you don't know how you got there, you're more alert of your surroundings you see how animals in that sense are very alert because if they are not they get eaten by other animals many animals have this incredible alertness not the same as the human alertness but it is an alert awareness of their surroundings that many humans don't have, they walk in the street they're not really there in their mind thinking about all kinds of things except where they are and so they're not here whereas the bird sitting on a branch or the deer that's stepping out of the forest and there's a field and the deer stops for a moment and the ears, they're very huge ears, they go and it can hear probably a hundred times better than the human or a bird on a branch sitting it goes like this and then suddenly it goes and of course there's no decision making involved when a bird suddenly flies off it did not think, I'm now going to fly off this branch and I'm going to go over there, it just happens there's a flow to life there's no mind there is a consciousness there but there's no conceptualization at all but when an animal rests an animal also rests completely it is completely at rest not thinking about my life my life I have to figure something out what's the purpose of it all this is why it can be very healing to live with an animal, yes it can be quite a bit of work too but it can be very healing to live with an animal and to have an animal presence in the house dog, cat usually this unproblematic existence except when the dog or cat are neurotic which can happen but there are reasons for that you're usually connected to their early life just like human childhood, when things go wrong in childhood it leaves traces so if but usually dogs and cats normal status, unless they're hungry or want to go for a walk they can be really rooted in being and joyful the cat purrs the dog's tail wags and it's a joy just to see it no problem with no psychological problems unless it spent too much time with neurotic humans it's a conscious practice so an animal can bring you into the present moment just to look at an animal in the present moment an animal that lives with humans may not be quite as alert as an animal out in the wild because it knows that the environment is relatively protected nevertheless dogs are quite alert and cats too so you become again the center of your attention always bring back into the present because it's first of all because it's all there ever is, well that's a good reason, because it's life itself your life situation yes it exists in time there's a past and a future as far as your life situation is concerned but it's not your life I wrote about that a long time ago but it's so important people confuse their life situation with something more fundamental more real, more immediate deeper which is called life life situation is circumstances and events in your life and most of your life situation is experienced in your mind and then life situation is relationships work situation, financial situation living situation all kinds of problems often problematic situations it's very rare that all of these situations are working smoothly and perfectly relationships family professional work financial environment living situation health situation all working in harmony and perfectly it can happen for short periods but usually something somewhere goes wrong, it has to periodically, frequently that's normal and that's good but your life situation always has this element of uncertainty instability too, although you might not recognize that when you look at seemingly solid things and your life is the experience of this moment the only thing there ever is so as we sit here I'd like to put a little question mark into your mind and like you to ask yourself whether at this moment you're thinking so you will know the answer and try it again I'll stop speaking for a few seconds and just be alert inside yourself to find out whether you're thinking, because usually you don't even know that you're thinking you are the thinking so there's no outside thing that knows that you are thinking you are just the thinking you become the thinking, the thinker and the thinker is the person and to step out of the person you have to experience that there is a dimension in you where the person is not but something deeper is there that's what we want to explore so again a moment of stillness in the power of now I talk about a mouse sorry, a cat watching a mouse hole now if you've ever watched a cat watching a mouse hole then you will have noticed that the cat could spend a long time there being extremely alert and just watching in the same way that my dog watches a treat when I put it down and say, not yet and then the dog goes and so the cat watches the mouse hole, is in a complete state of complete attention so one spiritual master I believe it was a Sufi master said his teacher had been a cat when he was asked who had been his spiritual teacher he said a cat, how is that and he said, I watched a cat watching a mouse hole and by watching a cat watching a mouse hole I realized I awakened because by watching a cat, he entered a state of alert attention in which there is no thinking like now just that, there's no just a short moment but it's not matter how long, it's a wonderful thing to realize that you can not think it's a wonderful thing to realize that you are still there when you're not thinking as Oprah said, when we started for the first time in the moment of silence and we started to talk again, she said ok, I'm still here I just checked in, I'm still alive I'm still here, I haven't disappeared one more time be alert, you need to be alert to know whether you're thinking or not so there's an alertness like a cat and there may be thinking or there may not be thinking there may just be the alertness I also mentioned in the Power of Now that another question you can ask yourself is what's my next thought going to be I'm going to just watch out, see what's the next thought is that's going to come into my mind if you're very alert it'll be quite a while before the next thought comes, but the moment the degree of alertness decreases thoughts come flooding back in interesting experiments you can do with yourself and your mind now from the point of view of the usual thinking mind the realization that there is a dimension in you where thinking either does not happen at all or becomes unimportant to the thinking mind, that is either a threat or completely uninteresting because what could be less interesting than not thinking so from the point of view of the thinking mind the state of consciousness in which there is no thinking is either a threat oh, I don't want to go there, I'm going to disappear, but of course Oprah didn't disappear after the stillness I'm still there, I'm still alive and then when she said that I said perhaps you're even more alive now and that is pointing to something you there is an intensification of aliveness when you begin to enter that let's call it dimension in yourself the dimension in which compulsive thinking doesn't operate anymore but you have to be careful because you could easily because, okay what we're doing here is we rise above thinking we become so alert that thinking either doesn't happen or is seen as unimportant from there you can easily suddenly drop through thinking to below thought in other words you go to hot sleep so when you stop thinking there's the alertness here's the thinking level that's the normal level for most human beings while they are awake and even when they dream they're still going on here's the thinking level underneath the thinking level there's consciousness above the thinking level there's consciousness and even within thinking there's consciousness, thinking is an expression of consciousness but there are infinite varieties of manifestations or expressions of consciousness this flower is an expression of consciousness taking on the form, this beautiful form, incredible beauty consciousness being born into forms and consciousness, not all consciousness is form, there is a dimension of consciousness that is formless out of which all forms come the ground of all being and that's what we are exploring here thinking you rise above thinking or you fall below thinking we met, well I can't remember when we first met but then we really got to know each other a few years ago when Oprah was doing the webinar with me the ten week seminar on the internet and you were a part of that

[Speaker 9] (9:21:54 - 9:25:51)
yeah, that was that was I've had a lot of wonderful experiences here, but I count that as one of the great experiences of my life I didn't know Oprah at all before that, I had been interviewed once by her but she admitted later she was interviewing me to test to see if I'd be a good person to work with, with you on this someone had told her that I had experience creating curriculum out of spiritual books, which I do from being here and I knew your work you had been here once before so actually I was driving in my car one day home from work, it was snowing and I I went to turn my cell phone on to call my husband and tell him I'd be late and the phone rang and it was Oprah, but I didn't think it was Oprah because if Oprah called you would you think it was Oprah?

I thought it was one of my friends pretending to be Oprah but it was and she invited me to do this and I would meet with her to go over, it was all happening very fast so I was living in a new earth, I was living in that book she had chosen it, her first non-fiction book she ever chose for her book club and she chose this and I was so impressed and I remain so impressed that she chose a very subtle, not easy book to grasp for her audience of millions of people for whom are on all different steps in the spectrum of awakening and it was her intent to bring the teachings into a language and a form that perhaps the most people could understand because she loved it and felt it had changed her so much so she would meet with me to help we'd dive into a chapter starting with chapter one obviously and try to talk about what did it mean to us and then she would say can you ask Eckhart to do this, this and this and get me questions and then I was writing a workbook that would go online so people could prepare for the next chapter all in that same week so if I got to the airport and the airplane was cancelled for six hours, I wouldn't care because I was just feeling the energy in my hands and it didn't matter if I was at O'Hare and there were kids going stranded, going to Disneyland on school break, like I was I was so present for all those weeks I think it's the most present I've ever been for an extended period of time and then I would come to you and say like Oprah wants some meditation exercises for chapter three and you'd say no you'd say exercises takes you away from the present moment just tell her to feel the energy in her hands so I'd go back to Oprah and say no we just have to feel the energy in our hands and we would laugh hysterically and then and she did such a masterful job the first night, eight million people tried to log on and it wiped out the entire internet at Chicago in all of Chicago and then they got it together and by the end, something like fifteen million people were together in those two hours live, Skyping in from Russia and Ghana and Brazil and Singapore and everywhere and it was a true it was a new earth and it was and she often says it was one of the best experiences of her life

[Speaker 1] (9:25:52 - 9:49:53)
yes, well she said to me it's the most exciting thing I've ever done and she's done many exciting things so thinking can happen against that background of awareness speaking can happen but it's also possible for the complete cessation of mind activity to happen and happen is not the right word to be there that you may notice it in the gaps between words or sentences you can be aware so acutely aware that thinking does not arise anymore you have risen above thinking or transcended thinking a state of consciousness higher than thinking in which thinking can operate doesn't have to transcend means gone beyond it's not eliminated you're able to use your mind when needed but you have the choice and this is the radical step into a new state of consciousness you have the choice not to think that's an amazing thing and not everyone here tonight is able to have that choice yet but many of you are and we are here to strengthen that ability to rise above thinking when you rise above thinking you also rise above the person or the personality which of course can still operate and does operate in everyday life but another dimension is present another dimension to who you are and if you even want to use the word enlightenment what it means is that in addition to the personality the person a deeper dimension is present and whether you call it deeper or higher it

doesn't matter a deeper or higher dimension of consciousness that is more essentially you than thinking more essentially you than your personal history and in that all the other things that for most of your life you have been identified with as yourself such as the physical body whether you are a man or a woman your background your upbringing your achievements your failures your knowledge your abilities your likes your dislikes your opinions all these other things that in the so called normal state of consciousness give people their sense of who they are all those things are recognized as not self of course if you know a little bit about Buddhism or a lot about Buddhism you recognize in this the teaching of the Buddha in the Pali scriptures the word is anatta not self or no self it's a recognition that all the things that had given you your sense of self are ultimately illusory and are not yourself I have a little bit of a cough but that's okay so your sense of self is no longer in all those things although they still exist for you on the level of the person and that's a big relief because you're no longer looking for yourself where you can't be found you're no longer looking to strengthen yourself by strengthening an illusory construct with the inevitable frustration and suffering that it leads to and with the inevitable misinterpretation of other people of yourself of situations because if you live through an illusory construct of your mind whatever you perceive whatever situation you are in your relationships with people will reflect that illusion and that illusory construct the egoic self the mind made self creates an enormous amount of unhappiness in your life or as the Buddha called it suffering dukkha which can also be translated as misery or unsatisfactoriness and in that illusory state when you derive your sense of self from this illusory construct you don't realize that most of your suffering is created by your state of consciousness and you think the cause of your suffering and suffering is a generic term it's any form of unhappiness, upset discontent frustration irritation anger despondency irritation you think that all your unhappiness in whatever form is caused by factors outside of you other people situations events things that happen or fail to happen when they should be happening according to your mind things that people do or fail to do according to your mind situations or places that are found unsatisfying when they should satisfy you according to your mind so you can observe this at work even when slight upsets arise in your life where do they come from or bigger upsets and then you can if you are aware enough in that moment and I recommend that you use any form of upset as a signal that more awareness is required that you need to become present and then you discover that in most cases the upset is caused by your mind and a misinterpretation of situations and people and so on the mind creates a gap between the isness of things which it cannot accept so there is a gap between what is and what should be and then you start complaining about situations and people and you become anxious or angry or frustrated it's tedious to live like that and people live like that all their life and all that is dukkha misery, suffering, unsatisfactoriness unhappiness but the egoic mind doesn't even recognize it as such to the egoic mind it's enjoying itself the egoic mind enjoys unhappy states it strengthens itself through unhappy states so the egoic mind a lot of the time doesn't even recognize suffering as suffering it believes implicitly it's a good thing that you are angry now with that person or about that situation you have the right to be angry these people shouldn't behave like that the situation shouldn't be as it is he shouldn't have said that he should have said that or you can imply to yourself I should have in other words normal existence is like that there is a line in the course in miracles it says I'm never upset for the reason I think how do I transcend the limited me the conditioned entity it's very simple becomes still[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 37:21)
Limited entity is transcended. So if you find the stillness in you, that is the realm where the conditioned mental emotional entity is transcended. And if you haven't found the stillness, no matter what you achieve in life, it'll turn into something frustrating.

In other words, the whole life experience that you have, even though the world may tell you that you are phenomenally successful, the whole life experience will be a very frustrating business and what I call frustrating, the Buddha called dukkha, suffering can also be translated as being miserable or translated more freely as being unhappy at the mercy of conditions and circumstances. The weather is good, you feel great, it rains, you're miserable or whatever it is in your circumstances. So the most vital thing is to find the stillness and let's just, that's just a word.

What is, what is the stillness? What is behind, what is hiding behind that word stillness? So if you go on the internet, you can see a significant percentage of whatever people post there is angry and critical about others to the point of saying, these are all awful people, awful.

And so those are the patterns that come when you live for years and years and years and years and years identified with the conditioned mind. And then you grow old and you bang a cranky old man or a woman, but this has been going on for decades already. It just becomes more and more rigid.

Anyway, you are not going that way, but we need to see what we are up against, which is your mind. It's not an enemy, but you need to see that it's been the momentum that is there. It's been there, been growing for thousands of years.

And it's been a wonderful thing, a wonderful evolutionary development to have a thinking mind, except that it has absorbed almost everything into itself. Your entire consciousness has become absorbed by really, it's more than an instrument, an instrument for communication, instrument for dealing with things in this practical realm, an instrument for manifesting even, but nevertheless an instrument. So just as in the movie theater, even much more so in the movie theater, everything demands your attention.

External things and your mind. And this is, we are here in order to deepen our ability to live from a different state of consciousness where the thinking mind is transcended, can still operate, still does operate. But you have stepped beyond it.

You, which is the consciousness, you are the consciousness. So the entire essence of spiritual life is not, one could say, is not to have your consciousness continuously being absorbed by primarily your mind and sense perceptions. In the Bhagavad Gita, there is the analogy of the wild horses that are drawing the carriage in which Arjuna travels and Krishna, I think.

And the horses represent the sensory organs which continuously take your attention out. Now that was 2,000 years or more ago. Nowadays, what demands, what absorbs your attention even more than externals is your mind.

And so as you walk around here, the hour retreat place, outside or inside, look at it, you take everything in, your sense perceptions, of course. But see if you can be aware of yourself in addition to being aware of whatever you happen to be aware of at that moment, people, nature, objects, the sky, walking. In addition to being aware of whatever you're aware of, can you be aware of yourself?

Not the historical self that gets restless and impatient, but yourself as the conscious, the unconditioned consciousness, which is the same as what emerges when you listen to the silence right now, that, that self. Can you be aware while you're walking, sitting, eating, listening to people or listening to other sounds? Can you be aware of the fact that you're aware, which means to be aware of yourself as the consciousness?

That's a new way of living. And that's why we're here, in order to deepen our ability to live from that level that frees you from believing that all there is to you is your historical person, the little me. And that's a wonderful liberation.

It's not that it no longer exists, the historical person continues to exist. It will also, the egoic self, if you identify with it, it becomes the ego. If you simply observe it, it's just the historical self.

That's the difference. If you lose awareness, your historical person becomes an entity that you think is you, that's delusion. But if you're aware, the historical entity is still there, your personal you, your personal history, or whatever is in your mind is still there.

But let's use a Buddhist term. You recognize that it is not who you are. And the Buddhist term would be, you recognize it as no, not self.

And that's an enormous liberation. So it's not, we are not eliminating who you are as a person. We are just adding a dimension to it, or rather, we don't do anything, we don't add it.

We discover that there is another dimension to you. And then you begin to live from that deeper dimension, whereas the historical person and the person, the personality, it still operates. But not as you anymore.

It operates as a person. That means you become aware of your thoughts. You become, you still have your opinions, but yourself isn't in your opinions, which means you hold them more lightly.

You are not possessed by your opinions because otherwise humans that have no awareness, they don't have opinions, the opinions have them. They don't even have thoughts, the thoughts have them. So that's the shift is, the person remains, but there's a suddenly a depth to you that was there all the time.

But because of the seductive or hypnotic nature of sensory experience and more importantly, mental experience, you didn't know it was there. You didn't know the dimension of depth. You had been seduced out of the depth of who you are onto just the surface level of life, thoughts and perceptions, surface.

And it becomes a very unsatisfying experience to live on the surface of life only because on the surface of life, nothing is fulfilling for very long. So there's the continuous search. Now, because of the momentum that's behind the conditioned self, you may find that even here from time to time, although the environment is conducive to awareness, to presence, to being the unconditioned, unconditioned consciousness, nevertheless, there's such momentum to the mind.

It will, from time to time, take you over again, probably or possibly, some of you. And so even here, you may lose awareness and get totally absorbed again in the mind. Not present, absent somewhere.

And then the moment comes when you notice it. It could be a moment when you feel restlessness, impatience, irritation with something, upset, complaining, angry, all the usual things that accompany, inevitably, the personal sense of self. All the things that many persons are addicted to because it strengthens their personal selfhood, self, their personal self.

They're addicted to those patterns, addicted to being right, which means somebody else has to be wrong, otherwise you can't be right. And you can go on the internet if you have nothing else to do to strengthen your ego, no other great achievements. You feel, I did that, look at me.

Okay, well, I can't think of anything that I did. Look at me. But I can go on the internet and I can make a hundred people wrong and then wait for a response.

There are so-called trolls, trolls on the internet. They leave posts that are offensive or extremely angry and it's an ego device that didn't exist before the advent of the internet. An ego device for those who have nothing else they can identify with, that's good enough.

If I can make 10 people wrong a day as I sit behind my computer, that's good enough for my ego. It enhances itself every day through that. And the more people respond, the better.

I'm just giving examples of extreme forms of unconsciousness, which are very common, of course, but little remnants of those things, which you may occasionally discover in yourself, even here. So there is a pull to the mind. You cannot fight it.

You can only be aware of it. This mind-made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive. To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation.

Internally, transcendence is a state of mind. It is possible. And some people had to encounter the most severe limitations on their lives through physical disability, complete loss.

Had to encounter, in whatever area, severe limitations on their lives, prison cell, to realize that there is a freedom within where limitations can be transcended through non-judgment of the present moment, non-reaction, reaction is unconscious, response, yes, reaction is against, through bringing that openness, the yes to what is, the internal yes, not necessarily a verbal yes, but as in the inner attitude of being one with the present moment, that opens up in you that which is beyond form, and there you transcend limitations, and there's freedom. And that's what being dead means, dead to the world. It's not a negative thing at all.

You are much more alive when you're dead. Much more alive. And you are much more powerful when you are valley than when you are mountain.

The mountain aspect of you, by mountain we mean the form identity. Of course, you have that for a while anyway. You don't have to worry about that.

Yes, you have a form, okay. Be the valley while you are walking around as if you were a mountain, and that's peace. That's inner peace.

You walk around this world, which is not peaceful, as an energy field of peace. Not the peace that has abdicated consciousness and said, okay, I'm going to go back into semi-consciousness, desensitize myself, and go back into the vegetative realm, and be peaceful in that way. There could be an escape also from the world of form.

I'm at peace now, peace. That's the state you can also encounter just before you go to sleep in that last few moments. Something pulls you, something very sweet that we call tiredness.

Tiredness is something, we think we know what it is because we have a name for it and it's so common, but there's something very, what is that? And you say, I'm tired. It means there's a pull.

You're being pulled from within. That pull gets stronger and stronger. And that pull can get so strong that you'd rather give up your life than resist it.

People who get lost in the wilderness, they will lie down in the snow knowing that they're never going to wake up again, but the pull becomes so strong. Now, in conventional terms, we say they're so tired, they have to go to sleep. But what is tiredness?

It becomes so sweet wanting to go there. You can tonight have a look, have a feel, to stay conscious and feel the pull, how sweet it is to go into sleep. Just as you enter sleep, feel the sweetness of sleep.

And there are no problems there. Now, am I saying that's where we are going? No, but it's one way.

You're going below thought to the one. Our destiny is to go beyond thought and then reach the one consciously. Reach it realizing that you are it, but consciously.

So the sweetness of being is there when you go into sleep. It's so beautiful. After a long day, you lie in bed and go, ah, no more problems.

You're going below thinking into that beautiful sweetness of being. And here the evolutionary impulse of the universe is to encounter that consciously, to be one with that consciously, which is the dead state. Because when you go into dreamless sleep, you're virtually dead.

You don't exist as a person anymore. Temporarily, you unite with the source and then you come out again. But it is our destiny to consciously unite with the source.

Don't ask me why, I know that it is. It's our destiny to consciously unite with the source. Unite with the source of who we are.

And you can only do that if you go around as if you were already dead. Because dead means it's the formless. Death is just a dissolution of forms, but death ultimately is already life.

So that's why we have the old saying, the ancient saying, die before you die. Die before you die. Or we could, in some traditions, find death before death finds you.

Because death will find you. And if you find death before death finds you, in Christian terms, Jesus' teaching, you find what he called eternal life. Now, eternal, of course, means not it goes on and on.

It means timeless. If eternal meant it goes on and on, it would become very boring. It would become a limitation.

In heaven, you would be, after a while, you say, I don't want to be in heaven anymore. Maybe there's more going on in hell. There was a song somebody played to me some years ago by a music band.

I don't remember the name, but the title of the song was Heaven, the Place Where Nothing Ever Happens. So find death before death finds you. Beautiful.

Eternal life, of course, the teaching of Jesus has been misunderstood. First of all, they interpret it as being something that you're going to find it in the future, where after you die, you find eternal life. And then eternal was interpreted as everlasting.

There are even some translations of the Bible where it's called everlasting. But that's not right. It's eternal means timeless.

So I would substitute, then I would neither call it everlasting nor would I call it eternal anymore. I would just call it timeless. Timeless.

The timeless life that you are. That's hiding in death. And so as we realize that, more and more humans realize that dimension that is a new evolutionary level that humanity reaches, consciously uniting with that, that means you save the world.

The world becomes saved, the world out there. And it's an added bonus. Oh, that's good.

And if it were to collapse, ultimately, there is no death. Only the forms dissolve. That is the deepest.

That's not conventional reality, of course. In conventional reality, death is everywhere. So we've had the bad news, which is everybody's going to be wiped out of the planet.

Okay. Which ultimately is not the bad news at all. It's the good news.

If you realize that how so fleeting it is that why attach yourself to form as if that were all there is. The little problems of my life obscuring the divinity of who you are, the depths of who you are. All the little stuff of your life, allowing it to completely obscure who you are, how vast you are as an expression of the whole, as an expression of the timeless life, of consciousness itself, how vast you are.

And you're allowing little marital troubles and stock market concerns to obscure that. Ultimately, you're allowing the mind, because that's what it is. The stock market isn't the problem.

Your thoughts about the stock market are the problem. And the identification of millions of people with their minds have actually created the stock market, but that's another matter. So now, it's not that the problem is never out there.

The problem is always your thoughts about it. Out there, you may have a situation that may require action. That's fine.

You look at it, become still for a moment, and you act, action arises out of intelligent action, out of the stillness, that little space of no thought. Alert stillness. You look, okay, and then action, if possible.

If no action is possible, you look, and you are, that's what it is. That's power. You're in touch with power.

Not your power, the power. So we do not need to fear the end of the world, nor do we need to long for the end of the world out there. Get to the end of the world in you.

The end of the world is the end of reliance and identification with the mind. Because the mind is the world. We don't, you don't even know whether there is a world out there.

Because you can only experience it through your mind. The mind is the world. Attachment to the world really is attachment to your mind, to your thoughts.

And so, that is the transition from one state of consciousness to a higher state of consciousness. The relinquishment of that attachment to every thought that arises. Is there a world out there, or is it just our mind?

Maybe it comes to the same thing. Waking up means stepping out of identification with thought, and that means death. So simple, it's death.

When you don't believe in thoughts anymore, suddenly a spaciousness arises, an awareness arises, which from the point of view of thought is called death. Thought calls it death. Amazing.

All this we could call the good news. This is one, sometimes the gospels in the New Testament are called the good news. And of course, basically, that's what it is.

The basic message was already there. It became distorted and obscured and misinterpreted. That's all very well, but it's there.

All the ancient teachings point to it. And now it comes in a new form, because the expression of it is form. That which it points to is formless.

And that out of which the expression of it arises is the formless also. So what is happening here is happening because the universe wants it to happen. Life wants this to happen, this awakening.

Awakening out of the dream of form, ultimately. Consciousness is awakening. It's a huge, vast thing.

I do not fully understand it, nobody can, but you can be a conscious expression of that movement. And it frees your life from problems. Oh, that's a little bonus.

Oh, and it gives you inner peace. Oh, that's another bonus. It makes you a loving being.

Oh, that's a bonus. You no longer contribute to spreading unhappiness in the world. Oh, that's good.

That's good. And you actually, you change the world by being an expression of that shift in consciousness, by allowing it to happen through you. You change the world because you are all that.

And a few more doing, a few more not doing it, but realizing it. And the world changes. Now, whether in the meantime, whether the world as we know it now has to collapse substantially first before the new change can manifest and express itself also through new forms remains to be seen.

It perhaps depends on how quickly the new world and new consciousness arises in humans. And if forms need to collapse that were created by the old consciousness, from Soviet communism to Wall Street, just to take two extremes, but basically the same things, to the political system, the economic system, social or the institutions and so on. Are they going to survive?

Some may survive, many probably will not. Is that something to be feared? No.

It's enormous change coming in internally and externally. They go together. Yeah.

[Speaker 12] (37:49 - 38:06)
I wonder if you can have any advice about ego longing for something. For example, an experience that was so wonderful that I want it to be repeated.

[Speaker 1] (38:08 - 38:48)
It could even be a spiritual experience. It's not uncommon for people who have had, and then 10 years ago, I had this great meditative experience. And ever since I've been trying to get back there and- Yeah, something like that, for example.

Is it, in your case, is it one particular thing, especially, or is it something that happens frequently, thinking back on monetary experience? Or is it something that you want to mention? Tell us what it is, or would you prefer not to say what it is?

[Speaker 12] (38:48 - 39:10)
Yeah, of course, I can be open. It's spending time together with a particular person. And it's wonderful.

And I do realize that ego wants more, and it's never enough. And I do see it's kind of insane.

[Speaker 1] (39:10 - 39:18)
And that person is no longer in your life? Yeah, he is in my life. Oh, but why don't you spend time now with him?

[Speaker 12] (39:21 - 39:37)
Because I do realize that he's another human being, and he might want something else. And it feels not healthy to have this desire to be with that person all the time. I would like to have my freedom, too.

[Speaker 1] (39:38 - 39:42)
So you are in a relationship with that person, but you're not living together?

[Speaker 15] (39:43 - 39:43)
Yes.

[Speaker 1] (39:44 - 39:46)
Right. And you want to spend more time.

[Speaker 15] (39:46 - 39:46)
Yes.

[Speaker 1] (39:47 - 39:48)
But he wants to have his freedom.

[Speaker 12] (39:49 - 39:51)
I guess. Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (39:53 - 53:10)
It's good sometimes to know a few details of the question, because that can be helpful. Details are very important. Sometimes I've had, before I answer your question, I don't know if there is an answer, we'll see.

Sometimes people send me manuscripts of things they have written. Often it's called my life. And often I read, and I read things like, when I was between the age of six and 10, I went through the most horrific experiences with my dad who had issues with this and that.

And I was totally, and it's all abstract. The reader cannot even imagine what exactly did happen, except we are told it's horrific. And they say, and I don't want to go into it here.

Well, if you don't go into it, nobody's going to read it. People want to know concretely what actually happened. And anyway, that's, it's helpful to know because then we can truly relate to the question.

It's the important thing is to become more comfortable with yourself and spending time with yourself. Now, in order to become more comfortable with that, you have to go more deeply into yourself where the, what I sometimes call, I haven't used this term here so far, but recently have been using it occasionally. What I call the deep eye, not this eye, the first person singular eye, the deep eye, as opposed to the surface eye.

The surface eye is of course, the egoic identity, the things that normally people refer to when they use the word eye, they refer to me and my story and my needs and my desires and my anxieties and my ambitions. That's eye. But, and I call that the surface eye that is identified with forms and is fields, certain needs, continuous needs.

And the surface eye lives in a state of frequent and in some cases or many cases, permanent and permanent state of unease at best. Unease, not quite, not completely satisfied, except briefly just after a great meal with two glasses of wine, ah, but of course you're moving towards unconsciousness or after having sex perhaps for a little while, ah, no more desires. Of course, the desire movement is just starting up again at the back and an hour later, the unease comes back.

This is the, Freud wrote this book I read it 30 years ago, so I don't remember exactly what's in it, but I remember the title. The Unease in Culture. It's the English translation.

He's saying there's an unease that underlies civilization. Now, I assume, if I don't remember the details, he says a civilization needs this unease, but I think he's wrong. The original word for unease as used by Freud for those of you who speak German is das Unbehagen, das Unbehagen, translated into English as unease.

So there is an almost continuous sense of unease and it says, what I need. I need, I need, I need. Sometimes you don't even know what it is you need, but there's just a neediness, a free floating neediness.

And these are all symptoms of the surface I. And as long as you live on the surface I, then you can't get rid of these symptoms. They will remain.

So the practice is exactly why you're here. This is the reason why you've come here. You've come here in order to go beyond, in order to transcend the surface I.

It'll still be there, but it's no longer the foundation for your sense of identity. So you become still and the mind subsides. And then you begin to, at first, just as little glimpses, little glimpses of presence of yourself as experiencing yourself as an underlying presence, consciousness, you become aware that you are conscious of consciousness.

And at first it seems to be insignificant. Okay. And the mind says, and now what?

And you just, you just, oh, it does. Yes, I knew that. And now what do I do with that?

Now, where does that take me? So you have to give yourself a little bit more space because space is exactly what you want and allow yourself to go more deeply. And then the thoughts will keep coming in and say, think about something else.

Think about what you need. This is what you need on a truer level, but it's not so much that you need it because you already have it, but you need to be conscious that you have it. You be conscious of the deep eye.

It's already there. You don't need to bring it to you or to go do penance or work hard for the next 25 years and then find it. No, it's already there.

So you have to give yourself that space where you go within what we're doing here.

I mean, by coming here, you're hard doing it because you realize that the solution to your so-called problem lies here, which means it's all about you, lies in you. Become still.

Find that dimension of stillness in you where you're fully alert, but not thinking. Five seconds and then a little longer. Go into nature.

Allow nature to help you. Look at a tree. Allow the tree to teach you stillness.

Look at a tree for two minutes and you will notice the tree exists surrounded by stillness and it's very still. And so you tune into that. So you go into, you look at the sky, the spaciousness.

I take photos of the sky all the time. I think they showed some here before. It had to be cropped a bit, unfortunately, but the original photo, there's even more spaciousness because I love the spaciousness of the sky because the moment you take that in, you become aware of spaciousness in you.

The moment you look at the spaciousness of the sky, you're not thinking. You're just taking it all in and then become aware of the presence that's taking it all in. You are that, and this presence, then you feel that more and more strongly in you, the still presence.

And that is not a place that needs anything. And there you become, you're at home then, at home with yourself. Rather than always trying to get home because it's the ego state, so to speak, it's, I'm trying to get home, but where's home?

You never feel, this is where I belong. This is where, you might think sometimes a physical place is it, but it's not it. Home, home, home.

It's wonderful that the English word and the home are so closely related. So the answer is in yourself, the more you live from the deep eye, the less you need the other. But that does, that also means the more deeply you can relate to the other, because then you can relate to the other no longer through your neediness, but through your aliveness, through your inner peace.

And you can share that with the other. And then the other wants to spend more time with you because it's so lovely to be around somebody who doesn't need anything. And the other then feels so much, feels so good to be with you.

But that's not why you do it. That's not why you go there. But, so the, the thing is it's written somewhere.

I don't remember where, well, I do. And the, the things that you, that you need, all the things that you need, or more accurately, the things that you think you need, many of those things, when you connect with a deep eye, will be added unto you. They will be added.

Now, what does that mean, added? Added means you no longer need them. And then you get them.

You didn't get them when you needed them. This is the irony of the universe. The universe is smiling, or God.

And when you don't need, it comes, or he comes. When you need, it stays away, or he stays away. That's a, well, the ego says, well, that sucks.

And another way, another story would happen to me is the, in my twenties, when the ego was growing and growing and growing, and I was becoming more and more unhappy, if I had gone to a psychic and the psychic had said to me, you will become a great spiritual teacher, the ego would have said, whoa, this is so great. Wonderful. I'll be great spiritual teacher.

It would have been very elated. But if it had been a good psychic, he or she would have added, you are great, but you have to die first. You have to die to the illusory self.

And then, yes, it may be satisfying when you're a great spiritual teacher, but you don't even think of yourself as a great spiritual teacher. And you do not regard it as a personal satisfaction. There is a something satisfying there, but not a personal, like I did something.

And if the psyche had predicted that, the ego would have said, hmm, I'm not sure if I want it anymore. So that's, so the paradox is the adding on. Seek first that, find that, and then the things that you thought you needed will be added on.

And that's, it's miraculous how that works. And so that's good. So the whole situation has brought you here.

It's all perfectly designed to bring about your awakening.

[Speaker 15] (53:14 - 53:15)
Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (53:44 - 56:12)
The way in which you communicate can be done in such a way that you don't make the other person wrong. That is a very helpful thing. Don't, I was staying, many years ago, I was staying with, in somebody's, when I didn't have a, I was actually writing, it doesn't really matter what I was doing.

I was writing the beginning of the power of now. Somebody offered me a room in his apartment and he had three cars and he said, you can have one of them, you can use it. I don't use it anymore.

He would always buy the next more expensive car because he got dissatisfied with the old one. So I got one of the old ones that he was dissatisfied with to drive around. And it was a beautiful car, a few years old.

But I thought when I, one day I left the car and there was a signal when I closed the door, but I didn't realize why the sound was beeping. And when he realized, he realized the next day, well, I wanted to use it again and the engine wouldn't start. So it seems that the light stayed on.

The sound was to advert me to the light. But why I'm telling you this is, he had done some spiritual work and I was very impressed when he left me a note because he got up before me. He left a note which said, the lights were on and the battery got depleted.

You need to call the AAA too. That's all. And I was very impressed by that note because he didn't, a normal person who had not done any consciousness work would have said you left the lights on despite the fact that you must have heard the warning signs of the engine.

So I would say, well, this person has some awareness. He's not making me wrong or that it was my mistake, but he's not making somebody else wrong in the service of being more right than me. Oh.

[Speaker 15] (56:15 - 56:37)

Oh. Oh. Oh.

Oh. Oh. Oh.

Oh. Oh. Oh.

Oh. Oh.

[Speaker 1] (57:20 - 1:06:58)
In the Pali scriptures, the word is anatta, not self or no self. It's a recognition that all the things that had given you your sense of self are ultimately illusory and are not yourself. I have a little bit of a cough, but that's okay.

So your sense of self is no longer in all those things, although they still exist for you on the level of the person. And that's a big relief because you're no longer looking for yourself when you can't be found. You're no longer looking to strengthen yourself by strengthening an illusory construct with the inevitable frustration and suffering that it leads to, and with the inevitable misinterpretation of other people, of yourself, of situations.

Because if you live through an illusory construct of your mind, whatever you perceive, whatever situation you are in, your relationships with people will reflect that illusion and that illusory construct, the egoic self, the mind-made self, creates an enormous amount of unhappiness in your life, or as the Buddha called it, suffering, dukkha, which can also be translated as misery or unsatisfactoriness. And in that illusory state, when you derive your sense of self from this illusory construct, you don't realize that most of your suffering is created by your state of consciousness. And you think the cause of your suffering, and suffering is a generic term, it's any form of unhappiness, upset, discontent, frustration, anger, despondency, irritation.

You think that all your unhappiness in whatever form is caused by factors outside of you, other people, situations, events, things that happen or fail to happen when they should be happening according to your mind. Things that people do or fail to do according to your mind. Situations or places that are found unsatisfying when they should satisfy you according to your mind.

So you can observe this at work even when slight upsets arise in your life. Where do they come from? Or bigger upsets, when you can, if you're aware enough in that moment, and I recommend that you use any form of upset as a signal that more awareness is required, that you need to become present, and then you'll discover that in most cases, the upset is caused by your mind.

[Speaker 2] (1:07:43 - 1:12:05)
I may have mentioned before that one obstacle to meditation, especially for people who practice formal meditation regularly, they may not realize, although whatever method they use, whatever meditation practice they use, may be good, potentially helpful. There tends to be, however, always an underlying, unexpressed thought, feeling, perhaps, that you are doing a meditation. Sometimes you do many things every day, and one of the things you do is you're doing a meditation practice.

I'm doing my meditation practice. But what is the aim of meditation? Meditation, it's supposed to take you into a realization of being.

Now, we live in a culture, westernized culture, which is not confined to the geographical so-called West these days. Westernized culture is many places in the globe. We are predominantly focused, or almost many people exclusively focused on doing.

So it seems normal that you include, when you start meditating and even continue that practice, becomes part of the idea in your head that this is something that you have to do. There's a doing idea involved. Doing involves time.

Doing has an aim. I'm here, I want to get there, or I'm doing this in order to achieve that. All doing involves time.

So with the idea of doing comes the idea of time that you are, that you need to get somewhere with your meditation practice. For example, I want to become enlightened, or maybe you're not as ambitious as that, I want to still my mind. Now, meditation is a practice that is meant to give you access to a particular state of consciousness.

I call it presence. To help you realize that apart from doing, and of course doing is not just external doing, running around on the computer. Doing also is thinking.

Every thought you think you're doing something, you're doing, you're thinking.

[Speaker 1] (1:12:09 - 1:12:18)
Meditation, the aim of meditation is to bring you to a realization of being.

[Speaker 2] (1:12:21 - 1:29:17)
So to help you access another dimension within yourself, it's not thinking, and it's not to do with external activities, but you don't go to sleep either. So it's the realization of being, to become aware of your own presence. So to speak, of presence or your presence is just words.

Right now, instead of thinking we're doing something, I would suggest that an alternative access point to the state of consciousness that is presence is to let go of all doing, or any idea that you have to get somewhere. Improve yourself. There is a place for that, that exists on another dimension that also operates in your life, getting better at things and so on.

But then there's something else where any kind of doing doesn't really help. If, I'm not saying let go of all your meditation practices, if they're used correctly, they can take you into being also. But for many people, there's an underlying, continuously arising obstacle created by the idea that you're doing something and need to get somewhere.

So instead of taking you into being, it just creates more doing. Being and doing, those two dimensions, need to be present. And it's not just meditation is there to help you access being.

But in the rest of your life, which is most of your life, 98% of your life, even if you meditate a lot, 95% of your life is still something else. It's not the meditation. There, there needs to be a balance between being and doing.

Not as separate things, but coming together. And this is why here I'm not using any technique. And I just want to invite you to become aware of the fact that you are.

I wouldn't say that you exist. Of course you exist. But exist, the word itself comes from Latin, in Latin, ex means out.

Exist means to stand out. Now that's your body exists, your psychological self with its conditioning and thought processes and emotions exists. It's there, it manifests.

Whatever is manifested, not necessarily just through the senses, because the more important part of you, you can't see through the senses, that's invisible self, psychological self, exists, stands out, is manifested. So it's not so much becoming aware of the fact that you exist, but becoming aware of the underlying being that gives rise to your existence. Something deeper, becoming aware of yourself right now, as I speak, of the essence of who you are, not as a physical body, not as a psychological entity with a past, a personality conditioned by the past.

But is there anything deeper than your personality that's conditioned by the past, consists of all thought processes and emotions and opinions and viewpoints, likes and dislikes and so on, so on? Is there something else, something deeper, something without which all those other things could not manifest? Yes, you can't define it, you can't understand it, there's nothing to understand there.

If you examine your historical self, your psychological self, then you may need understanding, you might need to go to a psychotherapist to figure out things that you had not been aware of, your psychological self. But here, in that immediate realization of being, I am. There's no doubt about that, that there is a consciousness here.

Prior to whatever arises in that consciousness, there is a presence, a consciousness. Even when I don't think in exact, it's only really when there's a moment of not thinking that I become aware of that consciousness that I am. I become aware of awareness, which is not how it is, it's just language.

Awareness, which is who you are, consciousness, which is who you are, becomes aware of itself, there's no duality anymore. Can you feel yourself? Your consciousness, your beingness, the I am, without adding anything to the I am, which would be your name, your age, your gender, your position in society, your knowledge, your memories, these are all things you add to I am.

The I am is the essence. If you can sense that in your daily life, in the background, then you are always connected with being, you're rooted in that deeper dimension. And then all the comings and goings in your external life, and all your doings may still be important, are still important, whether you gain something, you lose something, whether you're healthy or ill, rich or poor, but then there's always something deeper.

And from that deeper dimension of beingness, where you can sense your essential reality as that, and not the psychological personality, that means you have found that which is of primary importance and then you deal with all the things that are of relative or secondary importance, which is everything else in your life. So you are both who you are in this world, the person, the historical entity, the physical, psychological entity, yes, you are that, but more fundamentally, you are the consciousness without which the person would not even be, would there even be a world without a consciousness perceiving the world. Molecules, atoms, and empty space make up this body, this room, everything, wherever you are, molecules, atoms, and mostly empty space.

It's not a world at that level, it's not a room, and then consciousness comes and suddenly there's a world. But molecules and atoms themselves may also be just primordial manifestations of consciousness. And ultimately, humans will realize first of all through spirituality, through your own spiritual realization, at some point, perhaps even through science, we're not there yet, that all is consciousness, that the entire universe is an expression of the one consciousness, vibrating, so to speak, at different frequencies from so-called inanimate matter to plant life, to animal life, to human life, and other dimensions of existence. In the same way, the kind of water that can be solid, it's ice, seems to have nothing to do with water, it's very hard, and then water exists as a liquid, and that water can also exist as a vapor. The same thing, at least at different frequencies, one could say, and consciousness is just an analogy for consciousness, you are essentially consciousness.

And then there's a temporary appearance of you as a person, and that's fine, it's part of the miracle of manifested existence, where consciousness breaks up into countless streams, coming all continuously from the one source. To realize yourself as consciousness, you need to become aware of the space between thoughts. When I stop speaking for brief moments, are you able to stay so present that you do not add any thought to this moment?

You add nothing to it, it's just a sensation. Yes, there is still, if your eyes are open, you can still see the screen, and can see me, or the image of me, and hear the words, or if your eyes are closed, you can still hear the words. But what else is there?

Something deeper, more vital, than whatever appears in your sense perceptions. Something without which there would be no sense perception. Oh, yes, just a stillness at first, a seemingly, a seeming nothingness.

I like that English word, nothingness. You can, the word nothing consists of no thing. An apparent no thingness when you're not thinking.

And if you were in a place where it's very totally quiet, nobody is speaking, and your eyes are closed, you can become even more aware of the no thingness. It's just a presence, an underlying presence. It has nothing to do with who you are on the level of the person, but you know.

An alive stillness.

[Speaker 1] (1:29:43 - 2:24:55)
Through thinking, you cannot be aware of those spaces between words, because thinking is object consciousness. The space between words takes you to space consciousness. So the entire secret of our gathering here of all spirituality is just one thing.

All the things that happen, your financial situation, your health situation, your relationship situation, your work situation, your living situation. Yes, these things matter, relatively speaking, but there's one thing that is more important that matters absolutely, and that is your state of consciousness. And whether or not you have awakened to what we could call, it sounds a little abstract, but it's not.

We could call the transcendent dimension of consciousness in you, the transcendent dimension of consciousness. Now, I'm not going to immediately define what that means, because actually it cannot be defined. It can be pointed to, this is what these words are for, but these words are not a substitute for it.

The words point, famous phrase in Buddhism, it's the finger pointing to the moon, but the finger is not the moon. So there's nothing that I say tonight that you need to believe on a conceptual level. I'm not asking you to believe anything whatsoever.

There is what I sometimes call the two levels of consciousness, the conceptual. I sometimes call that object consciousness. These are all the things that happen in your perceptual field and in your mental field, thinking, emotions, sense perceptions.

Things arise, things pass away, things come and go, sense perceptions, ideas, thoughts, opinions, feelings, emotions, all belong to object consciousness. One object after another happens. You perceive things, ah, oh, there, oh, and then thought objects arise continuously, a stream of thoughts, oh, no, no.

No, for most people, the stream of thoughts has such a gravitational pull that they get completely dragged along by this continuously proliferating stream of mental activity. I sometimes call it the voice in the head. It never stops speaking.

It continuously comments on where you are, what you're doing, or takes you somewhere completely different in the so-called past or the so-called future, one thing after another, one damn thing after another, to paraphrase Churchill. Churchill was talking about history. History is just one damn thing after another, and that's true, but for many people, their conditioned mind, the experience of their conditioned mind is just one damn thing after another because it never leaves you alone.

It goes, so most humans who are not awakened or even awakening are completely trapped in their object consciousness. They are confined by it, and not only that, they are completely identified with all the arising thoughts and emotions that continuously go through their mind, and there's no separation between the thoughts and the emotions that accompany the thoughts, and you, you're not even there. When you're totally identified with the voice in the head, you are, spiritually speaking, asleep, or another word for it is unconscious.

So an unconscious person, in ordinary usage, unconscious means, of course, you've completely lost, you don't know what's going on, and this is unconscious. In conventional usage, unconscious means, pfft, in spiritual usage, unconscious means completely and continuously identified with a stream of thinking, and the emotions that go with a stream of thinking. What does it mean to be identified?

It means you derive your sense of who you are from the stream of thinking. Every thought is imbued with a sense of self, so you're identified, it has you in its grasp, and therefore, if people conventionally say, I think, I think, what do you think? As if thinking, for most people, were a voluntary activity, whereas for most, not you, but those who are not awakening yet, which is the majority of the population still on the planet, for most, that is, they are completely identified with a stream of thinking.

They are, spiritually speaking, unconscious, and that is a terrible thing, because then everything that you perceive, reality itself, as you perceive it, goes through the filter of your mental, emotional conditioning from the past, so you never see anything as it is, perceive anything clearly, and most importantly, there is never a sense of inner, true inner peace, spaciousness, joy, sense of aliveness, sense of connectedness with something that is deeper than your historical person.

You're always at the mercy of what goes on out there and the reactive patterns of your mind, so you're completely unaware of the possibility of realizing the other dimension of consciousness, which is not object consciousness, but space consciousness. I call it sometimes space consciousness. Now, what is space consciousness?

You cannot define it, because it's beyond concepts. You can know what space consciousness is in this very moment by becoming aware of the gaps between words when I speak. I'm just slowing down a little bit.

So instead of being totally interested in the words, you're also interested, although that's probably not the right word, you're also giving attention to the empty spaces between the words, because they are needed. Without the spaces, there could be no sounds. The sound needs the space to exist.

Oh, that's interesting, to be aware of the gaps between words, or in this room, in this hall, to be aware not only of the objects in this room, the objects that make up this room, what's in it, the bodies, the objects, that which confines and defines the room, the ceiling, the walls, the floor. This is the room. You're not only aware of that.

That would be, in this analogy, object consciousness. You're also aware of the space in this room. Now, the space isn't something that you say, oh, it's there, or it's there.

But it is the most important part of this room, is the space, and it's a wonderful space, but you cannot define it. It has no actual, you can't even say that space exists, because exist means to manifest, to stand out. Exist, ex means out, from Latin.

Exist means to be manifested. That's it. But space doesn't manifest.

It enables everything to manifest in the physical realm. Without space, these things could not be here. So space is prior to existence.

Space is prior to manifestation, and that's very interesting. So there is something in you, which I sometimes call space consciousness, that is prior to who you are as a person, your personality, and you can know it, not conceptually, but immediately, and experientially, by becoming aware, either of the spaciousness outside of you, or becoming aware of spaces between sounds, spaces between words. Now, how do you do that?

How do you become aware of a space between two words? There is no how, because it's too simple for how. Quite simply, there's an attention in you, a field of alert attention, and this field of alert attention is aware of the space between words.

You notice that silent space. What does it mean to notice that silent space? It means in this brief moment of noticing, or noticing the space in this room, in this brief moment, you're not thinking, you're just aware.

Thinking, through thinking, you cannot be aware of those spaces between words, because thinking is object consciousness. The space between words takes you to space consciousness. So the entire secret of our gathering here, of all spirituality, is just one thing.

Now, amazingly, I'm going to talk about this one thing for hours, using different pointers, also perhaps, as you might have noticed, I haven't prepared anything, so I say perhaps because I don't know exactly what I'm going to speak about, but I assume I will also be speaking about the obstacles to this realization. This is very helpful to address the obstacles that may and probably will arise in you to the realization of that transcendent dimension of consciousness, which is the most important thing, this realization, the most important thing that can happen in your life. It's not even, happen is the wrong word.

The most important thing in your life is to connect with that depth dimension. Because without that, even if you don't fully awaken, whatever that is, but to have an inner connectedness with something that transcends the personality of the historical person, the very historical person that you are has its place. It's fine.

I mean, you have to live with yourself on that level, and it's problematic. Every person is problematic. Every person's life is problematic.

Although you might not know this if you read people's Facebook posts, because they're all doing great. And they're all looking so happy, and they're all eating their wonderful meals, and you have to fake it. Oh.

Oh. Oh. Oh.

Oh. Oh. Oh.

Oh. And they look all so beautiful because the pictures are so overexposed, like the photo on the front cover of that magazine. The photos are so overexposed that everybody looks so ethereal and beautiful.

All that's left is you see the eyes and just a little bit of blurry outline of the face, but that's all. You don't know whether they're 20 years old or 60. You wouldn't know.

So that's... But life, people have a mental construct of what their life is. One is that project into the world through modern technology.

And then you have another mental construct that you live with in your life that you call me and my life. Me and my life. That's the person talking.

That's the personality talking. So, and when you start questioning people or you'll listen to people or listen to your own, the voice in your own head talking about me and my life. It's not the greatest story.

It's a problematic story. It's not easy being me. In fact, I don't think anybody is having a more difficult time than me.

And I need to think about that a bit more. How can I solve this dilemma of me, this conundrum, this... I am, it's amazing that many people consider themselves without verbalizing it in that way.

They consider themselves to be a problem to be solved. There's something, and this is very interesting. There's something in the human psyche, if you're not awakening at all yet, so in the normal state of consciousness or unconsciousness, there's something there.

There's always either in the background or in the foreground. If it's in the background, there's a sense of unease, a sense of something is missing, something is lacking. And what it is that's missing, perhaps the mind will figure out, okay, what I need to be fulfilled is this, that, that, that.

Or the mind might not even know because whenever you achieve something that you think will liberate you from this permanent sense of insufficiency, then whenever you think you found it, it doesn't take long. And then you say, oh no, because there's something else goes wrong there too. There's a new relationship.

There's a new work situation. There's a new living situation. So there's often you deceive yourself.

You say, no, I found the answer to the dilemma of me. I'm liberated now because I have found the partner that I've been looking for, the one. I have found the one.

And this delusion lasts for a little while. We don't know how long it could last for a year, probably less. You can see when you look to anything for, let's use this almost spiritual term, salvation, because you're really looking to something out there for salvation, salvation through a deeply satisfying relationship, permanently satisfying, salvation through some kind of acquisition of something adding to your life, salvation through moving to a totally different country or place, salvation through recognition from other people. Once people recognize me as when I become famous, oh, then I'll be fully myself.

Then I will have found salvation. But all these people, when they find those things, it doesn't take long, they take relationships. You go out, you go dating.

I don't know if they still do it these days, dating. Maybe dating is old fashioned because everything happens on the phone. Tinder, swiping.

Then you have a date. When you go to a restaurant, you can see, you can immediately see with a couple sitting, whether a couple has been together already for quite a while, or whether they're only meeting for the first, second, or third time. We're dating.

The others are not dating. They're already living together. Totally different energy field.

Because the ones who are dating, they still are under the delusion that they found salvation through the other person. And you can, when you observe people, you can see it, the way they look at each other. They're both in a state of hypnosis because they go.

So wonderful. And you don't even know that you're playing a role unconsciously, and the other person's playing their role. And these two roles interact.

And you think, well, this is the reality. And then you see another couple. They obviously have been together for a while.

And they kind of, they sit there. And most likely these days, they are on their phones. So they're already living together.

And so when the dating goes to the next stage, you start moving in together. Then, these days, it often happens before the wedding, if there even is a wedding. But, so you move in together, and you quickly notice that this person is not the same person that you dated.

Soon after a few days or weeks, sometimes months, but that's maximum, you find, who is this person? There are suddenly aspects of the personality that you find deeply irritating, if not disturbing. And then you question yourself, say, I must have made a mistake.

But it could also be that your partner feels the same thing about you. What happened? Well, so you're experiencing a conditioned personality.

You're no longer experiencing a part that somebody is playing. You experience the conditioning of the person. And every person is, if you live with them for a little while, everybody, you will display behavior that is not that pleasant.

They also have a pain body. If you've read my books and talks, you know what a pain body is. And we may talk about it later.

It's an accumulation of past emotional pain that lives in you, but it's dormant. And then, after a while, it becomes active because it needs to feed on some kind of drama. And when you start living with somebody, and for the first time, you experience this person's pain body when suddenly there's a shift in the entire energy field of that person.

It's no longer the same person at all. It's a dreadful thing. And you don't know what it is.

You say, well, and that's how somebody wrote an article a while ago in the paper that says why you married the wrong person. So in that sense, it's not pessimistic, but it sounds pessimistic. You always marry the wrong person.

Unless, unless you awaken to a deeper dimension in yourself that transcends the conditioned personality, then you have something more, something genuine, something that is not part of the conditioned entity that we call the person or the personality. Without that, the state of insufficiency, of lack, of not enough, of something missing, but you don't know what, or you think you know what, but that's not it, you can never get rid of it. So if you remain trapped in the mental conditional, the conditioned energy field of the personality, then you are condemned to perpetual dissatisfaction, to put it mildly, or to use an even more generic term, unhappiness, that's a translation of a generic term that the Buddha used when he used the term dukkha, which can be translated, it's usually translated as suffering, but in more generic terms, it basically means unhappiness, misery, unease, let's stay with unhappiness in whatever form. So you're condemned to, that every situation turns into, eventually something turns up to mar the situation in some way, whether it's a person, or a place, or an activity, or something that you add to your life, that you obtain, there's always something, and that's in the nature of things, but it only happens, and that's the positive part of the Buddha's teaching is never really spoken of because he doesn't want you to believe in something. So whatever you, whatever happens, there's always something that goes wrong, so to speak, but that's not a pessimistic statement, that only applies if you are dependent for your sense of well-being, your sense of who you are, if you are dependent on all those external factors for your sense of who you truly are, your sense of identity, your sense of well-being, because nothing can satisfy you for long, and if you leave it at that, it sounds a little pessimistic or nihilistic. Okay, so what's the point in anything, says the person who superficially studies Buddhism, or other teachings? So if nothing can satisfy, what's the point in anything?

I might as well get drunk and then experience briefly that, and then the next hangover, and then get drunk again, and then eventually I'll kill myself. But that is only the first part. He says, if you seek yourself in all those things that you think will bring you salvation, if you seek yourself in those things of the world, that the world offers, then you will be unhappy.

But now, the unspoken part is, but if you find yourself in the formless realm of transcendent consciousness, then the world is actually no longer such a bad place, because you don't look to the world, which means other people, achievements, situations, and places, and acquisitions. You don't look to the world for completion of your sense of identity, you don't seek yourself anymore in the things of this world. Then the things of the world are no longer as frustrating as they were before.

And you can allow things to be, you can participate in the play of form, in manifesting, you can even enjoy relationships, because you're no longer looking for completion of your sense of self through those things. Why are you no longer looking for completion of your sense of self through those things? Because you have found yourself not in the realm of object consciousness, not in the realm of thought or sensory perception, you have found a deeper dimension within yourself, which we call temporarily space consciousness.

I also sometimes call it the deep I, by that I don't mean this I, it's a pronoun, first I, I am. The deep I, as opposed to the surface I. Now, there's the two of you exist, well, the deep I doesn't really exist, it's a prior to existence, that you have both in you, but most humans are only aware of the surface I, and that's a terrible deprivation that really is a non-fulfillment, permanent sense of non-fulfillment with brief interludes of deluded fulfillment.

Like you can have a sensory gratification, you have a wonderful meal, and then you feel, okay, I'm really fulfilled now. Well, okay, the body is full for a moment, or you can drink, you can take in some substances, and you have brief moments of, ah, a substance, whatever, can free you of yourself, briefly, too, but I don't recommend it. But I can see why people, and millions all over the world are longing, and many cannot live without some substance.

There's an enormous pull, an enormous longing. What is it that they experience when they take this substance, whether it's alcohol or other things? They experience briefly, never lasts, a sense of self-transcendence.

So the substance can briefly free you of yourself. This mind-made thing that you live with this problematic sense of I, this problematic me and my life. Oh, dear, how am I going to solve this problem?

Well, you can't. So alcohol can briefly free you because you take a few drinks and you feel lighter for a while. Ah, because it slows down your mind.

You can't think that much anymore. And because you can't think that much anymore, life becomes somewhat less problematic. Because if you don't remember your problems, they're gone.

All you're left with is immediate situations that you either deal with or you don't deal with. But the place where your problems live is in your mind, and they only exist if you think about them. Of course, they refer to situations that is true.

But every situation can only be experienced or faced or solved or simply accepted in the present moment. Nothing ever arises in your life that's not in the present moment. So the rest and the present moment you can deal with.

It's just here and now. Either you take action or you don't. But this is the present moment.

But then you have a whole superstructure of the problematic, my problematic life that lives in your mind. And that's an incredible burden to live with. And everybody lives with this burden if they have not awakened to the deeper dimension of the deep eye.

They are trapped in their surface eye. It's a terrible prison. I can sometimes watch people, how they are trapped in their personality.

And everything they say and the way they perceive things is totally colored by the conditioning of their mind. And they're identified with every thought that comes into their head. If you just question something, an opinion, they express an opinion.

And you say, no, I don't think that's right. And you give, they immediately get defensive or aggressive or angry or, sometimes people get violent when you doubt their opinions. They know you're wrong.

Wrong. People sometimes kill each other because they can't agree on a subject. Why?

Why? Because you derive your sense of identity from thought. An opinion is a thought or a group of thoughts in your mind that you identify with.

When you identify with it, it becomes part of the ego. So we're talking here, of course, I haven't used the word so far. We are talking about egoic consciousness.

When you're identified with thought completely, you are in egoic consciousness. The ego is operating in you and it pretends to be you. And so you are, spiritually speaking, asleep.

You are a totally conditioned entity. And so every opinion that you have, anybody should question it, that this person is questioning your very sense of identity. And that's how you react.

You feel threatened in your sense of identity. It's an absurd delusion, but millions live like that. So the identification with mental positions is a very important part of the egoic consciousness.

Now, does this mean as you awaken to the deeper levels, the transcendent dimension, does that mean you no longer have any opinions? No, it doesn't. You continue to have opinions and of course, thoughts also, but you do not derive your sense of who you are from those thoughts or opinions.

Why do you no longer derive your sense of who you are from those thoughts? Because you have found something much more real, much more fundamental than any thought that tells you who you are. A thought is, by the analogy I often use, is a ripple on the surface of the ocean.

You, as a personality, and the personality consists of the conditioning of your mind, you're like a ripple on the surface of the ocean. And you exist as this ripple. So some ripples are bigger than others, but it doesn't make that much difference.

Some ripples are even waves. They might have a private jet, so there's a wave, I'm a wave, I'm not a ripple on the surface of the ocean. And so the ripple considers, it looks at other ripples and feels uneasy and it's never complete.

And deep down it knows that its existence is short-lived. So it hopes to become a little bigger ripple by looking to the future, because if I get this, that or that, I'll be a bigger ripple. But it also knows deep down that the future that it looks to for fulfillment will eventually kill it too.

So the future is a two-edged sword. It promises fulfillment, but it really will kill you. That's time.

Well, we are all suffering as a physical entity. We are all suffering, of course, from that disease. The prognosis is not good because we all have this virus called time and it's already consuming our bodies.

And you don't have to wait long and finally it kills you. They haven't found a remedy yet against time. So the ripple lives an uneasy existence on the surface of the ocean, looking for some kind of completion and fearing other ripples or wanting to use other ripples.

Come, let's join the two together. We can become a bigger ripple, but it probably won't work. And then let's say the ripple in a moment of complete dissatisfaction with life, when it says nothing makes sense anymore, it finally comes to a stop in its incessant search for fulfillment.

And it comes to a stop in its incessant doing and looking to the next moment for some kind of fulfillment and the ripple for a moment stops. But it doesn't stop because it has taken... I don't know if this analogy still works if I continue with the ripple, but I talked about transcending a sense of self through taking in a substance.

It frees you from a moment from this sense of insufficiency. The ripple feels a little bit better in just taking something and it doesn't think about its problems anymore. Ah, it doesn't always work because sometimes it can awaken the pain body.

Certain substances like alcohol can awaken your pain body, in which case, because it lowers your level of consciousness to an even lower level than your normal level. I'm not talking to you personally. It lowers your level when you drink, lowers your level of consciousness to an even lower than the normal level.

And then this gives the pain body an opportunity to completely take you over. But with other people, they become temporarily quite happy when they drink or take other substances. You can smoke.

It slows down your mind. It goes, ah, and it feels so good. Your problem, the whole superstructure of problems begins to subside because you're not thinking about the problems.

Therefore, they disappear. So you have glimpses of self-transcendence and that's why people feel drawn to it because without knowing it, people are longing to become free of themselves. They don't know it, but there is a longing and this is built into the evolution of the human being.

This longing for self-transcendence is built into the evolution of human consciousness. Every human experiences it, but they look for a solution to this longing in the wrong ways, completely wrong places. Time is ultimately not helpful as far as your awakenings is concerned.

Time is not helpful. In fact, it's a hindrance in your awakening. Okay, so no time is required for awakening.

Okay, now let me, the mind says, let me try to figure this out. That doesn't make sense. That doesn't make sense.

Meaning I've been meditating for nothing all these years. Meditation, if it works as it should, ultimately the purpose is, the aim is to be present while you meditate, not to seek some future condition. This is a fundamental mistake that meditators make is they imagine a future condition that they want to arrive at or achieve.

And they think, if I just practice more and harder, I will eventually achieve that awakened state. And that belief is actually a hindrance. So, because then you are doing a meditation.

And if you're doing a meditation, you miss the one thing that is the awakened state and we could call that being. The realization of being. There needs to be a cessation of doing, an end of doing in order to realize being.

You have the two dimensions in your life. Doing, it requires time and being, that requires no time. Now, most humans are unaware of being.

They are lost in doing. And the primordial doing is thinking. And then you miss the now, which is inseparable from being.

So, I invite you as we speak, or I speak, all the speaking happens. I don't know who is speaking, something is speaking. And invite you here and now to become aware of being here and now.

Now, how does, some of you may just, as I say these words, which are only pointers, like signposts, as I say these words, some of you may be able to sense their own beingness. You sense that you are. And if you cannot, if you have no idea what I'm talking about yet, you're still trying to understand it mentally.

Let me take you then gradually into being. Let's become aware of this moment. And the first thing you become aware of in this moment is sense perceptions, visual, auditory.

And then some of the others do tactile and so on, but the most predominant sense perceptions are the visual and the auditory. You hear and you see. So this is the, you're becoming aware of the present moment, which taken the form of sensory perception here and now.

And you look around the room, or you see this person, so-called person sitting on a chair. And you can take in the totality of the room. The question that arises is, are you able to take in the totality of your sense perceptions at this moment without any mental commentary?

Just be like a, maybe like a one-year-old child hasn't learned the language yet and just looks in wonder and amazement at the world. And you don't have to look like that, I'm just... So you look around at the innocent perception without, is it possible for you, only you can answer that for yourself, but not through words, through just knowing.

Are you able to be here in this moment, allow your sense perceptions to be there? Being aware of all these things without commenting mentally, without interpretation. Just let it be, like the Beatles song, let it be.

Now that's, there's a shift in consciousness that's already happened, because when you interpret your sense perceptions, that's the conditioning of your mind. It's a person perceiving things. But when you don't interpret, there's still a knowing there, but not conceptual.

There's a deeper knowing, but the person isn't there really at that moment when you're not commenting, not interpreting, not imposing some kind of interpretation on the world. Then the person that was there before when you were commenting has been replaced by awareness or presence. So there was a person, but then the person comes to an end temporarily.

And they simply, who or what is perceiving this room when you're not commenting according to the conditioning of your past? Who or what is perceiving this? Awareness itself.

So something has, something has receded, the person, and something else has arisen to replace it, so to speak, awareness. That awareness is very still. Stillness is sometimes, in spiritual discourse, stillness is another important term.

It's just another pointer. It's stillness. And that stillness is not a sleepy stillness.

It's an alert stillness. And so a shift has taken place from being a conditioned entity, conditioned by the past, and now the shift has happened, and suddenly just, you are that space of awareness. And so the next step in presence, you're not just, yes, you are aware of your sense perceptions, and you're not labeling, but you're also aware of the awareness itself, through which you are able to be aware of sense perceptions.

You're aware of your, let's say, words are very limited, but we have to use them. You're aware of the being of yourself, the presence that makes sense perceptions possible, the presence of consciousness that makes sense perceptions possible, and you can sense that, not as a subject-object relationship, although when we talk about it, it sounds like a subject-object relationship because language operates in that way. Language has a subject and an object, so as you use language, you say, I am aware of awareness.

That creates a duality that's not really there. When you talk about it, there's an I that is aware of awareness, so there's two of you, but there isn't. It's only when you start talking about it, it's you become aware of yourself as awareness itself.

Awareness becomes self-aware, whatever you want to call it, but that is an amazing thing that you are able to enter that, even if it's just for brief moments. For brief moments, you can become free of the person. Oh, my God, that heaviness, that burden that people carry around that they are so identified with, that they are that heaviness, and that's why many, many persons, their identity is intimately bound up with this burden of problems.

That they have to figure out how to solve my life problems. So for many people, their identity is, I am a problem to be solved, that's seeking a solution, and then you go to a therapist. Come on.

Come on. Come on. However, if the therapist is present, that makes a huge difference, and I don't know.

I'm sure there are some therapists here, and some of you are probably doing fantastic work because you are able to, even though your client or patient is talking, perhaps you are able to be present while you listen instead of interpreting everything, but be the consciousness. Oh. And then perhaps some awakening can happen if you embody presence.

So the little, the big secret, it's not a secret, but it seems to be a secret, to be aware that you're conscious, to be aware of yourself as consciousness, as awareness, as presence, to sense the beingness of you, which is not the you, the limited you. It's actually the beingness of the universe in you. Only presence can dissolve the past.

Do you accept this is what you feel? This is what they do or say?

[Speaker 11] (2:24:59 - 2:25:37)
My question deals with parents, with practice and presence. I felt love for them after many years, not feeling love and feeling guilty for that, but I still have huge problems to meet them. When I meet them, if they are in the same room, even if I try to be aware of my breath and my inner body, after a while, I have huge pain body attacks.

[Speaker 1] (2:25:39 - 2:25:42)
Is that triggered by something they say or?

[Speaker 11] (2:25:42 - 2:26:02)
I can't even say that. Sometimes it's the way I manage to go through the meeting quite fine, and my mother leaves the room and I break down. And yeah, I don't know what it is.

[Speaker 1] (2:26:04 - 2:51:04)
German parents can be difficult. I know. American parents too.

So on one level, there's already an acceptance of them on a mental level, the acceptance of who they are, the acceptance of their limitations, they behave the way they behave, is the pain body is still there inside you, of course, and the pain body reacts. It may also be that the mental level, the mental acceptance is not yet complete either. To see that they act the way they act, speak the way they speak, not because of who they are, but because of their past conditioning, which is their mental emotional conditioning is speaking through them.

They can't help that. If there's not enough presence, everybody is controlled by their mental emotional conditioning. They can't help it.

They are afflicted by that disease, which is identification with unconscious conditioning. I'm not the only one who calls that disease. Even in the ancient teachings of Zen, they sometimes call it the disease of the mind.

And there are some Zen teachers who have said they are here to cure that mental illness. I've said that's what Zen is about. It's curing that mental illness.

So you need to, on the mental level, as you sit with them, you need to know that continuously that what you are observing is not who they are. You're observing a form of mental conditioning underneath that there is the being. And you may sometimes get a glimpse of it.

My mother was very much identified also with her mind. And occasionally I looked into her eyes and suddenly there was a light shining through when she stopped talking for a little while. In other words, the mind catching a breath after talking for 10 minutes incessantly.

And then for a moment I could see, oh, there's their being. Her being was shining through. And I have one or two photos where her being shines through.

And then of course it gets obscured again. And then you get the same, get the suspicions, the complaints, the accusations, all the stuff associated with unconscious thinking. So on the mental level, you need to know that, be present enough so that you don't forget that what you're observing is not who they are, but you're observing the past in them, the conditioning.

And then comes the emotions that you feel. Of course, there's your past, the past, the living past in you from your childhood, all the things they did or failed to do because they couldn't help it. There wasn't enough presence to change it.

So that's something for you to find acceptance as you accept them. And then you accept what you feel at that moment. Whether you can even label it, we don't know.

Is it sadness? Is it anger? Is it heaviness or mixture of all of that?

A feeling of wanting to run away, a contraction, whatever it is, that's all there. You don't need to even analyze it because you just need to feel the entire energy field of that, and it doesn't feel pleasant. And it's the past in you.

So there you're observing the past in them, acting out, and you experience the past in you. And so what do you do with two pasts? You have the past out there and the past in here.

Only presence can dissolve the past. So you need to access the power of presence in yourself and how do you do that? A quick way in a situation like this is the acceptance of whatever arises inside or outside at this moment.

You accept, this is what you feel. This is what they do or say. There's the acceptance of the inner and the outer.

Because it is already happening. Why? You have to accept or you suffer.

In a way, if you don't accept, you suffer more. If you don't want to feel what you feel, that's more suffering because you're resisting. Acceptance does something that I could describe as, let's say, here's the emotional field and it doesn't feel good.

And acceptance means just to say, okay, that is, I can feel that. I'm verbalizing, acceptance doesn't even require after a little while, you don't need words anymore. You can just see what is, be with it.

And at that moment, a little bit of space opens up around that emotion. A little bit of space. That space comes from your acceptance.

The acceptance gives it space. And that's already a tiny bit of freedom. You've given it a little bit of space inside yourself.

When you say, yes, this is what is. And that's a beauty. You have given both them space externally to be and you've given yourself space internally.

And then as you notice that actually, it feels already a little bit better than before because there's space around the emotion. And then you go into it more deeply and you accept even more, you continue to accept. And that space grows a little bit around it.

And then you encounter the strange phenomenon of an emotion that is not pleasant existing in a spacious field, so to speak, that's around it. And then you realize that who you are is you are that field. And you can allow the emotion to be in that field and you can allow your parents to be there and say what they say and do what they do.

They're repeating the past, space comes in. So acceptance brings space and space is the transcendence of conditioning. Space is the transcendence of the past, the transcendence, transcendence of the personality and the person and it's freedom, space.

That's the practice. And so the best place to practice is with your parents. There are many other places where you can practice, but the ultimate mastery you will achieve when you can practice with your parents, that's the graduation, you graduate.

It's the PhD in presence. With, don't jump into it too much. Don't, if you say, okay, I'm going to spend a week with our parents now, it's too much, too much.

You should give yourself short time periods at first. Say, I'm going to come for coffee and cake. That's what they like to do.

At least my mother did. I'll come for coffee and cake and I'll stay for an hour or you know, if you can, I don't know how that works practically, but, and then you practice, you give yourself one hour to practice. So that's a little, and you know, it's only an hour.

I have to be present for an hour and it's your spiritual practice. So the, as you know, I've written the quote in a book. Ram Dass said, if you think you're so enlightened, spend two weeks with your parents, two weeks.

The ultimate test. So happy practice. It is madness to argue with is.

It is. Intelligent action arises if the starting point is alignment with what is internally. The nature and function of challenges and difficulties in the evolutionary process.

We can use the term challenge, which is already has a positive spin to it. Something happens and you call it, it's a big challenge. But without the positive spin, you would say it's really bad.

It's, oh, it's so bad what has happened. Then you become more spiritual and say, I'm faced with a challenge. Okay.

Now, challenges come in many forms. There's no human life that is not profoundly challenged in one way or another. Some humans are challenged by physical challenges, difficulties.

Other humans are usually challenged by dreadful psychological challenges and their own minds. The personal challenges in your personal life, collective challenges that affect millions of people at the same time, all in various ways. We've just had one.

So it seems that many things are almost designed in one's life to stop you from evolving or becoming more conscious. And many people say, if I only had surroundings, if I lived in a place that was peaceful and calm, and my needs are met, my basic needs are met, I got pure food and everything else, so I don't have to worry about things anymore. If I could only live in this perfect environment, I could really make spiritual progress.

If I only had that, but I don't. And no matter what stage you're at, always obstacles arise continuously. Sometimes things go well and then another obstacle goes and then they go well again.

Oh, obstacles come in many, many forms, physical, relationship, financial, home situation, all kinds of things. Pandemic is a collective one and other collective ones most likely coming soon. The strange thing is evolution happens only when faced with obstacles.

That happens on every level, physical level, every level. It's only when an obstacle is encountered that there's a call for more energy and then more energy flows in and whatever frequency of energy could even be physical. For example, if you want to have a stronger body, it's not going to happen if you lie on your sofa every day, drinking beer and watching Netflix.

You can say, I want a stronger body. Yeah, well, it's not happening. Now, what do you have to do to have a stronger body?

To put it in strange terms, you have to, at first, you have to make life difficult for your body. For example, you go jogging and you think, I wish I was watching Netflix on my sofa, but the body doesn't like it, but you say, and then you lift a weight. Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh.

You're making life difficult for your body, very difficult, but only then it happens, your body then demands more energy and an influx of energy comes that eventually is translated into muscle growth and so on. And then a point comes when actually more energy has come, then you suddenly enjoy that. But the enjoyment is preceded by experiencing difficulty and obstacle.

On every level, humans evolve. Many, many people here, I know that from what people have told me, it's always the case, many of you would not be here if you had not encountered very difficult life situations. Either through loss or breakdown of relationships, loss of loved ones, physical, serious physical illness, accident.

Many people have told me, I would never have come realize what this is about if I hadn't gone through this difficult period in my life. It's then, there's an influx of energy that comes and at the highest level, it is an increase in consciousness. As you're faced with difficulties, some difficulties can be removed on a practical level.

Many other difficulties require an increase in consciousness for you to overcome them or transcend them. I've had correspondents from people in prison, for many, some are in prison for life. And they've said, I have awakened through coming into contact with this teaching.

I have awakened and I am free in a prison cell. So they have, it is, in your comfort zone, it is very unlikely that the awakening will happen to any human being, as long as they remain in their comfort zone. Perhaps if they had, this is the last incarnation as they've already gone through an enormous amount of evolution in previous lifetimes.

And then perhaps at a very early age, they can already awaken. But most humans, they do not awaken as long as they're in their comfort zones. Oh, it's good enough.

I mean, comfort zone is not all that happy mostly, but at least it's not too bad. But when you're taken out of your comfort zone, that's where evolution happens, the evolution of consciousness. So in other words, you need the bad to evolve.

Sorry. And life doesn't leave you alone. Even after awakening, you've got challenges come.

Oh my God. But what changes is, and this is important, that you no longer demand that the world should leave you alone and should make you happy. It can't.

As long as you think it should, and there's always something wrong when you're being challenged by this or that. You think there's something deeply wrong with my life. I'm being challenged.

Or in other words, I'm experiencing all these difficulties. And then you realize, you drop the demands that the world should make you happy because the world isn't here for that. It's here to make you conscious, to awaken you.

And it does that by confronting you with difficulties. One after another. Now, some difficulties are so bad that they kill you.

That's true. They could happen. And then you get another chance after that.

It was perhaps a philosopher Nietzsche who said, what doesn't kill me makes me stronger. There's some truth to that. And so the, when challenges happen, important thing is, how do I meet this challenge?

With what state of consciousness do I meet this challenge? And that determines the further development of that particular situation also. If you're able to meet a challenge consciously instead of reactively, then quickly it becomes transformed also externally as a challenge.

To meet it consciously means, in the first instance, to accept this moment as it is, no matter what it presents you with, no matter what this moment, what form this moment takes. You accept this moment as it is, because you might as well, because it already is. It is madness to argue with is.

It is. Of course, then you, what can you do about it? If you need to take action or can take action.

Action, intelligent action arises if the starting point is alignment with what is internally. This is what is, and then if action is needed, right action will arise. But when, if you immediately, you go into reactivity, you make the situation worse than it is.

It, you often amplify something bad and becomes even worse and worse through reactivity. You can verify this when dealing with an unconscious human. If you react to their unconsciousness, then you yourself become more unconscious and you make them more unconscious and you get huge drama.

So, and again, collectively too, when faced with a difficulty, how aware can you be when you are prior to taking action? Are you just reacting or are you able to be aware? Which means, is wisdom present?

That's, we haven't mentioned this word before, but it's inseparable from what we're talking about. Wisdom is the higher intelligence that operates through you when you're in touch with the vertical dimension. All you have when you're not in touch with the vertical dimension, you might have the clever human mind that can work things out in a very limited way.

But wisdom is not there. Wisdom can seize the totality of the situation and in taking action, it considers immediately other possible consequences of the action and the totality. And you do not through breaking things down, but there is the same way in which you, you remember we talked about the two modalities of knowing, conceptual and direct knowing through awareness.

And that applies here too, when you look at a problem that needs solving. You look at, is there wisdom in what you do or just mental cleverness? And anything you do when you react to a problem, then if you will make it worse, or you solve one problem and curate four or five others in the process of solving one.

So the world drama gets amplified through the egoic reactivity that always says, this should not be happening, not aligned with the present moment. So wisdom is what the world needs and wisdom can only come through awareness. And that is the deeper modality of knowing.

Intelligence is not enough. The world is full of intelligent people, so-called. I mean, really, if you really look, is that intelligence?

And they're creating that, what are they doing? They got their university degree. So I suppose in conventional terms, we have to call it intelligence.

And then they're creating havoc on the planet. No wisdom. An increase in intelligence will not save us.

On increasing knowledge, what's most, wisdom, only wisdom can, and wisdom is inseparable from awareness, the arising of awareness. It comes, it's from the dimension of the vertical dimension of depth, not through thinking. So when you look at a situation and you are able to be alert and still, you look.

And then the realization of what action is, the right action, comes.

[Speaker 9] (2:51:25 - 2:51:58)
Welcome to the second part of this special video series on Conscious Manifestation 2020. In this second part, Eckhart Tolle addresses how once we've developed a level of presence and awareness of thoughts and emotions, how do we work with anxiety or fear that keeps erupting, that we keep feeling in our felt experience? Here's part two of Conscious Manifestation 2020 with Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (2:51:59 - 3:48:57)
Now, what about the fear? What about the anxiety, the anxiety that has been in you? For many people, it's in the background, most of their lives, some fear, some anxiety.

And when they're being challenged as now, the anxiety that is a kind of background, distant background noise for some people is almost always there, but sometimes obscured by the second, that suddenly becomes very pronounced, this anxiety in the face of a challenge, the anxiety that had already been there in the background, the fear, that now comes out fully and you are in the grip of it. And now you become aware of the link between your thought processes and your emotions. And you realize that your unconscious thought process, such as boring, actually fuel the emotion that we call fear or anxiety continuously.

So a vicious circle arises, and then the emotion that you feel, which you feel it, tend to feel it in your stomach, in this area here, you feel it, a contraction, almost a painful thing dwelling in your stomach or solar plexus area. But it can affect the whole body, the whole body can be tense, it interferes with the harmonious functioning of your body. So it's very, this anxiety lowers your immune system on the physical level, even mainstream medicine recognizes the fact that what they call stress, which stress is mostly fear and anxiety, makes you much more, lowers your immune system and you're much more susceptible to illness.

It doesn't mean if you're not anxious, you will never catch an illness, but you're much more susceptible to being sick when you are in an almost continuous state of stress or anxiety. So then the fear, of course, rise this up back into your mind and creates more emotionally charged fearful thinking, which is not just fearful thinking, it's now emotionally charged fearful thinking. And that creates even more of that emotion.

This is why it's called a vicious circle. The fearful thinking feeds the fearfully emotion with energy, one could say the fearful thinking vibrates at the same frequency as the fearful emotion. So it is food that the emotion loves.

So it wants more of it. Once you're on the grip of worrying, anxious thinking, you don't want to stop. Well, you might want to stop, but you are not even there when you're completely identified.

It does not want to stop. So you are trapped in this fearful vicious circle of emotion, fearful thinking, creating the emotion of fear and the emotion of fear rising back up into your mind and creating emotionally charged fearful thinking. And when you are in that state, you cannot think clearly, whatever thought that arises, what do I have to do now?

What can I do now? It's very unlikely that you will have a creative and useful thought. Whatever your action you take on the basis of fearful thinking is likely to be not wise, not effective and probably wrong and leads to more suffering.

Whatever, in whatever way you interpret the world through the veil of fearful thinking, in whatever way you interpret the world when you're in the grip of fearful thinking is going to be a complete misinterpretation. But to you, when you identify with it, it's the reality. So the first thing is to become aware of thoughts and emotions.

And then, so that means the awareness has arisen. It's there. Then once you recognize the futility and destructive nature of certain types of thinking, you're able to increasingly let go of it and replace it, not immediately necessarily with positive thoughts, but it's better to, because you still have a negative emotion there.

So if you immediately replace the unconscious fearful thinking with positive thoughts, there's a conflict between the emotion that is still there, which is the fear and the thoughts that are floating on top there. And so, and you will feel that there's something not right because the emotion says you're in a critical state and your mind has a thought that all is well, life is good, I'm going to be abundant. It's unlikely that this will be effective.

So again, realize what kind of thoughts go through your mind, recognize the futility and destructive nature of these types of thought, and then replace these thoughts, not immediately with positive thoughts, but with awareness. Replace, instead of engaged in negative thinking, be more present as much as you can, be more in the present moment, because after all, that's all there ever is. Mind doesn't seem to know that.

All there ever is, is the present moment. There's nothing else ever in your life. So you might as well give it some attention.

You might as well make it the focus of your life because that is, it unfolds in this now moment, everything. Future never comes, it's always now. When the future comes, it's the now.

When the past happened, it was the now. When you remember the past, you remember it now. When you think about future, you think about it now.

There is only now. So you might as well give it your fullest attention, make it the focal point of your life, and then see what you can do with the so-called future. But first you need to come into a relationship with the now that is helpful, sane, and that is friendly.

Become friendly with them. When you enter the now, you see the now is not really that, is not a threatening place most of the time, except when there's an emergency happening and you have to do something, an immediate life-threatening or whatever it is. But the now is actually a much more benign place than the mind would be able to recognize.

But you need to have your awareness there. You need to be aware. You need to be present in the now in order to recognize that the now can actually be your friend and it's not your enemy.

The now is your friend. You become friendly with the present moment. And that's, however, so you begin to recognize and begin to cut the link between your thought processes and the emotion because you let go of these fearful thoughts.

You recognize their futility. Instead, you're much more present. Thoughts will occasionally still come in and then you recognize them, let go, be more present.

However, in that presence, the emotion of fear may not and probably will not immediately disappear because it's been there for a long time. So even if you no longer feel the emotion with your thinking, you become present and you may notice, yes, I'm aware of, more aware of sense perceptions, the aliveness of this moment. You can see perhaps beauty in things, the things that you didn't give any attention to before.

However, you can also still feel this anxiety or fear living in you, still there. Even when you're no longer feeding it with your thoughts, you can still feel it, there it is. And that becomes part of your experience of the present moment, that anxiety.

Now, what do you do with it? The normal tendency would be to say, I want to get rid of this. I shouldn't be feeling this.

I don't want to feel this. And some people just cannot tolerate the anxiety. So they need to, they might go to their doctor and say, please do something about this anxiety.

The doctor will then give you a prescription. In some extreme cases, those things may be temporarily helpful in some extreme cases, but a lot of the time you would have missed an opportunity. And that is the opportunity of evolving through facing pain or suffering.

If you face the emotional pain that you feel, it's anxiety or fear, and not even, not try to run away from it, or say, I can't stand, become so uncomfortable being in your own skin, can become so unpleasant and uncomfortable that you just want to run away or say, please give me something so that I don't have to feel this anymore. But actually it doesn't help to want to get rid of it. It just creates another layer of anxiety or problems on top of the emotion.

Now, I suggest as an alternative approach is to make the emotion that you feel that still lives in you part of your experience of the present moment and accept it in the way you accept the totality of the present moment. And that's a new way of living, a very powerful way of living, a very powerful way of connecting with a deeper level of consciousness in you, of finding enormous power that dwells in you if you can accept the present moment as it is, internally, externally, and internally. So it's not going to kill you.

The anxiety is there, but it's not going to kill you. It might kill you if you react to it and create further anxiety. And you then allow the anxiety to be there as it is.

Completely. It's almost like saying, it sounds a little strange, it's almost like saying, I don't mind being anxious. Sounds very paradoxical.

But it's a very interesting experiment you can conduct. Any form of unhappiness, of course, some unhappiness is telling you that something is wrong in your life, it's a different story. But habitual unhappiness that arises in you, no matter where you go and what you do, unhappiness arises in you.

No matter where you go and what you do, fear and anxiety are there. And this applies to countless humans on the planet. Now, as an experiment, as I said, what happens when they say, I don't mind being unhappy, I don't mind being anxious.

But of course, you're not fueling the anxiety with your thinking, you're aware of your anxiety. So you've reached that step where you're no longer giving it further fuel or food, and you're becoming aware of the anxiety. And then, as you place your attention on it, which is part of the attention that's in the present moment, you become aware that it's actually, there's very intense energy in that fear.

Almost a burning energy in that fear, but the energy is not a flowing energy, it's trapped energy. It's like being in a, like a boiling kettle, you're holding the lid down, the energy is trapped, but there is enormous life energy in that fear. And if you can completely accept your fear in this moment, without feeding it any longer with your thinking, just being aware of it, that's what it is.

You may find, in a very subtle ways, a change happening. And the change is, it's a transmutation of this energy, fear, when you accept it completely, a transmutation of this energy into intense presence. So the same energy that before was fear, when it's completely accepted, it suddenly goes, and there's enormous power that was in there, trapped.

And suddenly it becomes fuel for your consciousness, becomes transmuted into presence or awareness, when it's completely accepted. And then it's no longer fear, it's just in suddenly intense awareness. And that intense awareness is like a, one could almost say a higher intelligence that suddenly begins to operate in you.

You're no longer just reliant on the conditioning of your mind. There's an intense presence there. And it can, now it doesn't mean it happens once and then it's never fear again.

After that experience, you have to experiment. It may not last very long, the initial transmutation, then you may fall back into fear. And the fear may repeatedly try to rise back up into your mind and make you think fearful thoughts.

And from time to time, it probably will succeed again. And you fall back into the same pattern, but then more and more at shorter and shorter intervals, you wake up again and you realize that this is what's happening. And so, and then again, you come to a place of just acceptance and then notice that the transmutation happens again.

And this is how, it is not just fear, it can be with any kind of suffering in your life. When it's completely accepted, a transmutation begins to happen. And that is how suffering is actually an essential part of the evolution of human consciousness.

Because if you reach a point where suffering can be transmuted into a higher consciousness, awareness or presence, it becomes fuel for presence. So it's bringing your inner self into alignment with the present moment. A very powerful spiritual practice.

Why is it so powerful? Especially when the situation is challenging and you still say it and you mean it. Because everything that sustains the person, the exclusively personal sense of self, in that act of complete surrender to what is, the personal sense of self gives way to a deeper transcendent sense of self, which the Buddhists call no self.

A deeper consciousness suddenly shines through. So really, it's a kind of denying your form identity. Doesn't mean you don't have it anymore, but you are no longer trapped exclusively in your form identity.

The form identity is strengthened the more you can be in opposition to what is, the stronger your form identity, me, the person, the me. The more you are in opposition to what is, the stronger the me becomes, your form identity. And if you can have enemies, lots of enemies, it loves, that gets even stronger.

They're all against me or us, if it's a collective ego. Collective ego loves its enemies, can't actually survive without them. Every collective ego needs the others.

We're not us, this is us, and that's the others. So that's the wonderful thing that the person, the exclusively personal sense of self becomes weakened, subsides, and something else emerges when you are no longer habitually oppose what is, something emerges that is deeper than the personal sense of self, the transcendent dimension, presence, whatever we want to call it. Some people call it your higher self, or you could call it your deeper self.

Words, doesn't matter. But something emerges that is from beyond the person. And that is a place of great power and aliveness and possibility.

That is where you are connected with a vastness and with everybody else too. So it's when you feel, when that transcendent dimension arises, you feel a greater sense of connectedness, no longer the separation with, not only with nature, but also with other humans. You no longer feel the otherness of the other.

It's just yourself in another disguise that's really becomes your experience. Whoever you meet, there's yourself in another disguise. Isn't that a wonderful way of being with other humans that essentially you can sense not only your connectedness, but you can also sense your inherent oneness.

With others. So that is why this presence practice, honoring the present moment, welcoming the is-ness, that's why that's such a powerful practice. Yes.

I suggest that you bring a certain spiritual practice, if you even want to call it that, it's not really anything separate from normal everyday existence. I suggest you bring that little spiritual practice into your normal life. And that is invite these brief periods of no thought into ordinary human life, into your normal everyday existence.

And this could be a simple thing like, whenever you look up at the sky, the sky is a beautiful thing, I love the sky. I've taken hundreds and hundreds of photos of the sky on my iPhone. Most of the photos I have on my iPhone are of the sky.

And whenever you look at the sky, and you don't need to become a sky gazer, no, just a brief, a few seconds out of the window or outside, and for that moment, are you able to look without the addition of thought, without adding thought to the sense perception? So all you have, not the sky may be completely clear, it may be completely clouded, or there may be clouds floating around, it doesn't matter. You take it in, whatever it is, and there's a moment of looking, three seconds, five seconds, 10 seconds.

In that moment of looking, there's no commentary. It doesn't say, oh, it's going to rain, or not another dreary day, or, oh, I wonder if it's going to stay like that for the rest of the day. None of that.

But this can only happen if there's an alertness there. There needs to be an alertness that keeps thought at bay. And this is not willpower.

It's simply an alert presence. It goes, one could say, a raising of your frequency, and it goes, shh, and then you look, and there's a, the background to the sense perception is no longer you as the person, but you as awareness or consciousness. You are looking as consciousness.

You're not looking as a person. The moment you comment on what you're seeing, you interpret what you're seeing, you become the person. So, and I'm only giving one example.

You can make it a habit several times during the day to look at the sky in that way in which you don't add thought. Another practice I suggest, a tree. And even if you live in London, the lovely thing about London is there are lots of trees around, and not only in the parks, but many streets also have trees.

And so look at a tree every day, or whenever you see a tree, give it five seconds, give it 10 seconds, and see if you can look at that as presence rather than as a person, just that sense perception and presence. And then you can do it here and now. You can either be aware of something specific and aware of awareness.

Those are always the two. You're looking at the sky, and you're aware of who is looking or what is looking, the two dimensions. As you're sitting here, you're aware of the room.

You're aware of the voice. You're aware of the lights. You're not, whatever it is, what in addition can you be aware of in order to be the presence?

You're aware of yourself as the awareness. And you don't need thought for that. Thought would interfere with that.

So take in this, here's the room, here's the person sitting on a chair, there's a screen there, and take in the totality of this room without adding thought to it. And that's beautiful. You don't need to interpret it.

And just, it's still there. You know what it is without calling it anything. And then it deepens.

The strange thing is when you don't add thought when it's not needed, sometimes you need thought. When you don't add thought when it's not needed, there is a depth even to your sense perceptions. So when you look at the sky, it's more than just the sky.

When you look at a tree, you don't reduce this mystery that ultimately the tree is because who knows what the tree is. But by calling it tree, you don't know what it is. You just attach a label to a mystery that applies to virtually anything or to anything.

When you call it something and you say, oh no, that's what it is, you don't know. It's a convenient label, but it covers up the mystery. It covers up the depth of aliveness that is in everything.

As Krishnamurti said once, the moment you teach a child the name of the bird, the child will never see the bird again. No, this does not mean that you should refrain from teaching the child. The child needs the words.

It wants to know the words. It says, what's that? Oh, that's a sparrow.

Sparrow, okay, okay. What's that? But you see how the moment you give the label, it obscures the depth that's there behind the label.

And it's only when you then can relinquish the label, then there is a greater depth to what you see even to sense perceptions. There is an aliveness in the flower that some people can only get a glimpse of this kind of perception when they take something and they go, wow, or they look at the sky and say, wow, isn't that amazing? They took the little substance, but what that little substance did, it momentarily made sense perceptions so strong that there was no room for thought anymore.

So there was just the experiencing of it. And that can be a liberating thing for certain people who are totally in continuously immersed in the voice in the head, but it's not a long-term solution, the little substance. So this is an amazing practice.

It is also when, if you want to get in touch with the level where intuition arises, where a fresh creative idea arises, where any kind of creativity arises and made to do with whatever work you do, any creative contribution, if there's something, a problem to be solved and nobody has the answer, if you are able in all those situations to step out of thought, instead of thinking, they need to think harder to find the solution. And then you go and you can't even sleep at night anymore.

And you go, well, what's going on? Many people look at their own lives as one big problem that they can try to solve somehow. So people seek, for many people, their sense of identity is me the problem that's to be solved.

And if I could only solve this problem of me, I would be okay. And of course, yes, you can't really solve it, but you can step out of it and then it solves itself. I don't know what happened and I don't know why, but I feel this deep peace and I have nothing.

I've suddenly feel, Jesus called it the peace that passes all understanding, which means you cannot explain, well, although I'm trying to explain it, you cannot explain why this person should suddenly be so peaceful. So I believe that no matter whether you are a Christian or whether you are not a Christian, there is a deep truth embodied in the central image of Christianity. And the central image of Christianity is a man who is on the cross, an extremely serious man.

An extreme form of suffering. And ultimately that means every human being, one could say Jesus is the archetype for every human. Every human being is crucified by life.

Every human being goes through the suffering and with the suffering comes the possibility of transcending the ego by entering a state of complete surrender and acceptance. Ultimately, you step out of your thinking mind and what's left when you're no longer thinking about yourself and your life and what went wrong, in fact, thinking subsides. And what's left of you when you're not thinking about yourself or about anything?

Is that even possible? Is that even possible? For example, at this moment, are you able to experience as you sit there being in that space of not needing to add any thought to this moment?

Can you allow this moment to be as it is so completely that you do not add any interpretation to it? Just be it. So what is left of you right now?

You're not remembering your story because you are still completely yourself without the story. Isn't that surprising? Even without remembering all your past suffering, there is a sense of being, in fact, it's stronger.

You don't remember all the things that went wrong in your life. Okay, that's gone. You don't even remember your email address, it's gone.

Or your telephone number, you don't need it right now. When you need it, it'll be there. You don't need it, that's gone.

So instead of I am this and I am that and I am that, what remains is a sense of beingness, which is I am. But nothing is added to the I am. This is what's left of you right now.

What is left, there's a stillness. When thinking subsides, you have not lost consciousness. You have not become, you have not gone down.

You have not fallen below thinking. You have risen above thinking. There are two ways of becoming free of compulsive thinking, which is how the ego arises.

There are two ways of becoming free of compulsive thinking, the compulsive thinking that makes your life miserable, not the thinking that is useful, not the thinking that is a useful tool for creating and manifesting and inventing things and so on. There's a beautiful thing, thinking is an enormous advance for humans, evolution of human consciousness, but the way it has developed now, humans are possessed by thinking. They do not think, the language you use, you say, I think, you don't think, thinking happens to you.

And the thoughts that happen to you are thoughts that you absorb from the surrounding culture. You watch the media, the mainstream media, and you take that in and then you regurgitate, this is what I think, or you're against it, this is what I think. Thinking happens to you, you don't think unless you are aware.

And awareness or presence is a dimension of consciousness that is deeper, or we could say higher, than thinking. Awareness is when thinking stops and you have not gone to sleep. In fact, you are more alert than before and you can look around wherever you are, for example, here and now in this room, you can look around this room and perceive everything, visually and listen to everything without adding any thought to it, just be still and perceive.

There's still a knowing there, but it's not conceptual knowing. There's a deeper knowing there. Become familiar with the state of being free of thinking and just aware, but that requires a certain alertness.

Without the alertness, you drift back into thinking. So what the true spiritual teaching shows you the way of rising above thinking so that you can begin to use thinking, not you as the ego, but you as the higher consciousness that you are, can use thinking as a tool instead of being used by thinking, by thought. So there are two ways of being free of thinking.

One is rising above, which is why we're here. The other is falling below. If you want to fall below, you have to walk out of here, go to the bar next door and order a few whiskeys.

And then you can experience becoming free of thinking also gradually, but you're falling below thinking. Oh, it feels so good. I can't even remember my problems anymore.

It feels good. You start singing. And there's a joy of life.

No need to think, just be. I have another one. And then, of course, you're moving towards unconsciousness.

And this is not the way we are going. It is not the destiny of humanity to regress to a pre-thinking stage just because you want to be as happy as your dog. You say, well, the dog isn't thinking, and so I'm going to go there too.

The dog hasn't arrived at the, the dog is a beautiful manifestation of consciousness, but it's not a thinking consciousness. So you need to discover in yourself the ability to be free of thinking initially for brief moments. And this is a good moment.

When you perceive the world around you without mental labels, just an alert presence in the background of your sense perceptions. The conditioned thought processes never stop. They go continuously.

There's a voice talking to you, or you're talking to yourself, or you're having a monologue, or you're having a dialogue. Some people argue with themselves. It's all the voice in the head, never stops for most people.

And that is, spiritually speaking, that is a state of unconsciousness, completely identified with the conditioned mental-emotional patterns, which make up the so-called person, personality, the ego. So if you are completely identified with it, every thought has you in its grasp. Every emotion that arises has you completely in its grasp.

And you're thinking, you think you're thinking, but you're not thinking, thinking happens to you. You don't have a choice if you're unconscious. There's no choice.

All your thought processes happen to you. You're at the mercy of the conditioned thoughts in your head. And all the reactions that come with it, every situation you encounter, there comes a conditioned reaction to the situation.

It's the person or the personality that reacts. And you don't even have a choice. Why don't you have a choice?

Because you're asleep, spiritually speaking. This thing, it's taken you over. It's a dream-like state also.

And you can see, often people are completely up there. They're never really, they're not really here. You can see sometimes the complete absence in a person's eyes.

They're not really here, they're asleep. But they're thinking very hard. And even at night, when there's nobody around to talk to, you're still, the voice is going on.

And it's telling you, I have these problems. Oh, what's going to happen next? Oh, awful, sick, my God.

I can't take any more of this. What's my life come to? I imagined something different when I was 20 years old.

I imagined something very, very different. Why did it all go so wrong? Well, that's a, well, many people actually have that feeling that something, it has gone drastically wrong in my life.

And with others, it's a mixed bag. Some things went okay, and others didn't. It depends what their mind, and your mind tends to focus more on the negative than the positive, much more memorable, the negative than the positive.

If you go on vacation and everything goes perfectly fine, okay, you'll remember some nice moments and sunsets. But if something went drastically wrong, you'll remember that for the rest of your life, and you talk about it continuously. You tell the story of what went wrong.

If everything went fine, you don't talk about it, you'll be at a wonderful holiday. Oh yeah, okay, so that's the end of it. But you know what happened?

We went into our room, and there was these cockroaches crawling on the floor, and then the water was coming through the ceiling, and then they stole all my bags. Oh my God. It's so interesting.

And then you know what he said to me? He said, how dare you? And I said, how dare I?

What about you? You are the one with the biggest ego, I said. And then he started hitting me.

And whatever. And the stories go on and on. And so a lot of things, the negative things are much more memorable, that the ego focuses on that.

It loves its enemies, and every negative situation is the ego's enemy. And then it can claim, it can enhance its fictitious identity. The more enemies you have, the stronger your fictitious sense of self becomes.

Entire nations do that too. They need their enemies. Except Sweden, it's so peaceful.

Oh. All the non-peace-loving people have left Sweden a long time ago. They were called the Vikings.

And they occupied other lands. So, then we have, in Indian spiritual philosophy of psychology, there's a word that's been around for a long time. It's called Turiya.

Turiya means the force. First, second, third, fourth. Turiya is the force.

It's the force is, it refers to a state of consciousness. They divided the human consciousness into these four parts. There is dreamless sleep.

There is the dream state in sleep. There is the state of wakefulness, which is ordinary human consciousness. And Turiya is the awakened state of consciousness.

That's the fourth state of consciousness. They've been talking about that for hundreds of years, thousands of years. The possibility of this dimension of consciousness arising in humans, the fourth state.

This is what this is all about. And it is not some distant possibility that you may achieve in some future lifetime. As many people still believe that.

Many Buddhists, I've met Buddhists who say, I think I'll need another 15 lifetimes. And then, in fact, my teacher told me, they say, he told me 15 more lifetimes and then I'll be enlightened. Oh, wow.

Okay, that's right. Well, you have plenty of time so you can stay unconscious now. It's okay.

But the strange thing is, the awakened state of consciousness is already there within you. It's just covered up, hidden. Are you able to give your fullest attention to the doing or are you so consumed by the desired outcome that you create continuous stress in the doing of it?

And here we come to a new word that we need to, okay. It is a shameful matter to be poor and humble when the way prevails in the state. Equally, it is a shameful matter to be rich and noble when the way falls into disuse in the state.

Here, Confucius uses the term the way, which in Chinese, of course, is the Tao, the Tao. Now, the Tao doesn't, Confucius doesn't mention it very often. The Tao, of course, is the, that which cannot be named or explained.

And yet I'm attempting to do it right now. The Tao is that, that which the organizing intelligence, the intelligence that underlies all physical or other phenomena that underlies the entire world, something that is transcendent to the appearances, that is beyond appearances, but is that which always brings things back into balance and harmony. It's an underlying vast intelligence, the Tao, which emanates, as I said, it emanates from God, and God is the ultimate source of everything.

So the Tao emanates, the Tao underlies everything, the entire, it's the intelligence behind phenomena. It exists in many, in many, it's called different things in different traditions. One could say, you could, in Christianity, it could be the Holy Spirit that is there.

You have it in Egypt, in ancient Egypt, that's where they have a beautiful personification, a visual, pictorial personification of that very thing, the underlying principle behind things. It's the, and that's, it's a good, the goddess called Mart, M-A-R-T, Mart in ancient Egypt. And I've shown you here, I think it might still be on my iPad, the pictorial representation of it.

[Speaker 14] (3:49:02 - 3:49:16)
Oops. Oh, technology is very difficult.

[Speaker 1] (3:49:33 - 3:56:11)
This is a, this is Mart, the wings, vast wings that enfold the entire world. This is what protects the entire world from destruction and collapsing. So this is the organizing intelligence, the intelligence, it limits it when you call it intelligence.

You can say it's the love behind it all that holds it together. That's the, that's Mart, the wings represent that power, that's the Tao. And now he is talking about a country or a state.

It is a shameful matter to be poor and humble when the way prevails in the state. The way is the Tao. When the, when in a state, humans are relatively speaking in alignment with the underlying harmony of it all, then things go well.

And then he says it's to be poor and humble when there's connected, when you are in an environment where the Tao is recognized and humans live in accordance as much as possible in accordance with that underlying harmony, then why be poor? Then you should thrive. But it is a shameful matter if you are rich and noble when the way falls into disuse in the state.

In other words, when there's corruption and all kinds of destructiveness in the state that you live in, if you are then, if you are rich and, if you are rich and noble in a state that is corrupt, that is shameful. So if you get very successful in a corrupt environment, then it must mean you are corrupt too. If you're, but you should be successful in a state where there is, that is more aligned with the Tao, then there's no reason to be poor.

Again, there's nothing wrong with being poor, but you can, basically he's saying, if you're well, if you're well-off, wealthy and powerful in a corrupt country, then that's shameful. If you still remain poor in a country where the collective is aligned, which is very rare, the collective is aligned with the underlying Tao, then you might as well do well. If you're not, I wouldn't totally agree with him.

It's shameful not to do well, because it may be your choice not to participate too much in the country and just live in your little hut with rice and water. That's fine too. So very often spiritual teachings seem to stress different points according to who is speaking to at any particular time.

So who was asking him this question and who is he speaking to? So often you need to take that into account when sometimes certain teachings may seem to be contradictory. Who is the teacher speaking to at that point?

We don't know that because all the disciples was, they wrote down what he said. And again, the teachings of Confucius are very much to do with using your life here as a spiritual practice. He's not very much in favor of totally withdrawing from society and living, just being in meditation.

And becoming a hermit. You learn more, interacting with other humans is the most important element of your spiritual practice. And basically the teaching is to use your interaction in society with other humans, with your next of kin and et cetera, everybody as spiritual practice.

That's, and beyond that, he does not talk about metaphysical things. He does not talk about, as I said, doesn't talk about God. And here, when somebody asked him, Zilu asked how the spirits of the dead and the gods should be served.

The master said, you are not able even to serve man. How can you serve the spirits? And then somebody asked him, may I ask about death?

And the master says, you do not understand even life. How can you understand death? So he doesn't get into how to serve the spirits or the gods, serve man.

You learn by, through your interaction with other humans, not some other worldly thing. And think that if you practice sacrifices to the gods, you're a superior human being and nothing changes in your interaction with your fellow human beings. So what the criterion for inner change is your interaction with other human beings.

That's the ground for practice, that's Confucius. It's not other worldly at all. It's using this world in order to become more conscious, a fully developed human being.

[Speaker 14] (3:56:25 - 3:56:35)
Oh, here, again, this looks a bit complicated, but.

[Speaker 1] (3:57:48 - 4:00:45)
Somebody asks him about benevolence again. What is benevolence? The master said, love your fellow man.

And what about wisdom? What is wisdom? Master said, know your fellow man.

Love your fellow man, that's benevolence. Know your fellow man is wisdom. I wouldn't use wisdom, it's practical intelligence again.

So you love the other, the human, because if you recognize that in them, that is beyond the merely human, the being beyond the human, as I put it, because you recognize the being beyond the human that you are as consciousness right now. But you also, you know the other on the level of their personality also. You can see, for example, the conditioning of their personality.

You recognize, for example, that perhaps maybe this person is dishonored and dishonest and wants to cheat you. And you recognize the conditioning in the other, you see it, that you know him as a person, but you still love him as a being beyond the person. You can have the two levels.

You don't become totally naive when you're in a state of loving kindness to other human beings. And then you get taken in by everybody who wants to manipulate you or use you for their own egoic purposes. Say, oh, yes, yes.

You're not naive when you love you. You know the difference between the conditioning that operates in the other as the person and that which is beyond the person, which is maybe latent. The other doesn't know it in him or herself, but you can sense it in the other.

That's the loving kind. In that sense, even if somebody wants to defraud you, you can still be in that state of benevolence towards that person. But you recognize, you see the conditioning of the personality, which may be quite obnoxious.

Many personalities are really obnoxious and toxic, but don't confuse that with the essence of the other, the so-called other.

[Speaker 14] (4:00:49 - 4:01:00)
And here we have, this looks complicated, but I'll read it.

[Speaker 1] (4:01:00 - 4:39:03)
It's not really. Somebody asked him, may I ask about the exaltation of virtue, the reformation of the depraved and the recognition of misguided judgment? That seems to be a difficult question.

So you're asking about three things. The record, he's asking, first of all, the exaltation of virtue. The master said, what a splendid question.

To put service before the reward you get for it, is that not exaltation of virtue? He often phrases his teachings as questions, but he means, yes, it is. So to put service before the reward you get for it, is that not exaltation of virtue?

So you are virtuous as a human, if you put the service before the reward you get for it. Now that's an important principle that is also part of the perennial philosophy. This does not just apply to a particular service you give to another or that includes that.

It means whatever action you perform, not place excessive emphasis on the result that you want to achieve through your action. As it's called in the Bhagavad Gita, the fruit of the action. You do not, you perform an action without excessive attachment to the expected outcome.

That is what he calls the reward. And that is a conscious action, which implies that you give your fullest attention to the action itself. You give it, you do it fully.

You focus your attention fully. You are not distracted by what you want to get or achieve through the action. Yes, of course, the action has a purpose.

Anything you do has a purpose and the purpose necessarily is in the future. You want to achieve this or that through what you do. But if there's an excessive emphasis in your mind on the future thing that you want to arrive at or attain, then the action is no longer given fullest attention.

In fact, that's where stress and anxiety arises because your mental focus is on where you want to be already or the reward you want to achieve through what you're doing. This is the point in the future. This takes attention away from the doing.

It diminishes the quality of your action. That's very important when you interact with human beings and let's say you're a salesperson and you want to sign the deal with other. Now how, if that, if you're in your mind, you give undue importance to the result, which is to sign the deal so that you get your commission through the sale, maybe you're a realtor or whatever, or you're a car salesman or whatever.

Then the quality of your interaction with a human diminishes and the other human actually can feel that unconsciously or consciously that you are only interested in them as a means to an end. And the end is getting the reward for what we're doing. And because the quality of your interaction diminishes, the quality means you're not giving your fullest attention to the other as a human being.

The other is only a means towards an end. And the other can sense that he or she is only a means to you. It's only a means towards an end.

And you are actually much less likely to get the deal signed because the other does not feel fully recognized. He feels you're only interested in using him or her to arrive at the reward, the fruit of your action. But if the reward is very much secondary, yes, you know you want to, you would like to, let's say you're a car salesman, you would like to sell this car, it would be nice, but you give your fullest attention to the interaction as you talk to the human being.

The fruit is secondary. That means that's the more conscious way of dealing with things. And it doesn't even necessarily imply other human beings.

It could just be you're engaged in creating something with your hands or intellectually. Are you able to give your fullest attention to the doing or are you so consumed by the desired outcome that you create continuous stress in the doing of it? So as you know, here we are mainly concerned with entering the realm of being, of presence.

There hasn't been a lot for you to do, just little doings, walking from here to there, eating your food, some talking, some thinking, which is a doing. But mostly this has been and still is about connecting with being, the dimension of stillness beyond thinking out of which all thinking arises. Now, when you leave here, many of you, if not most of you, are going back into more doing again.

So your challenge will be not to lose the rootedness in that deeper dimension while you're engaged in whatever you do. And the world will do all it can to challenge you, to pull you out of that rootedness. And it will tell you, not in so many words, but it will in the form of events and people and happenings and things not working.

And so it will tell you, this is all important. Give me your fullest attention. This really matters.

It may matter, but as I put it, although things matter relatively, they may be relatively important, whether or not you miss your plane, whether you're not, you find that great job or you lose that great job, or whatever happens, it's all relatively important. But only one thing is of absolute importance, and that is your connectedness with being so that that dimension is with you, as you in your daily life. That's the challenge.

A few things will be helpful in this. One is letting go of the unconscious assumption that there should be no problems and difficulties. And if they are, that they are undesirable obstacles that really shouldn't be there in the form of events or people or situations.

But if you look back on your life and I look back on my life, it's always been challenging. There are brief moments when it's not challenging, and that's great, but you know very well that life won't leave you alone. It'll challenge you one way or another.

If you look at the world situation, it's the same. There's all kinds of challenges in the news. First there were the communists, there was a Cold War, and then there are suddenly other huge challenges arising, and it goes on and on.

So in the words of the first sentence in the book called The Road Less Traveled, which I never read because the first few sentences were so good I didn't need to read the rest of it. And the first sentence is, now this might go against certain new age beliefs, and it might at first sound negative because the first sentence is, life is difficult. That doesn't sound very inspiring.

And then the next sentence, although I don't remember, it literally says, and if you know that, you're completely okay with the fact that life is difficult, then it's no longer difficult. So that's all I read. Because that says it all already.

How does that work? How is life, when you know that life is difficult, it's no longer difficult? You try to work that out.

Well, here's the explanation. It's really only difficult if you think that it shouldn't be difficult because then you're in continuous resistance to things and people and events. But once you accept it's an essential part of life of being difficult, then whenever the next difficulty rises, you say, oh, there's life again, being difficult.

In other words, what does that do? It creates an acceptance of what is. If you carry around the assumption in your head, it shouldn't be difficult.

There should be no difficult people and obstacles and problems, and things should not get canceled, and plans should not be interrupted, and nobody should fall ill, and then people shouldn't die, certainly. That's a travesty. These things should not, they're all dreadful.

This is an underlying assumption. Things should go smoothly. And of course, sometimes they do go smoothly.

But the irony or the paradox is that once you recognize the fact that life is difficult, that life is not meant to make you happy, it's not meant to make you unhappy, but it makes you unhappy if you have a wrong attitude towards life. Happiness comes with accepting the fact that challenges are an essential part of the evolutionary process for all life forms. So challenges for you, even if you don't call them challenges, challenge is a nice term because something positive is already implied within it.

If you call it problems or bad stuff happening, then it doesn't sound so good. Challenges are here to awaken you. And even if you're awakening, continuous life continues to give you challenges, and then the awakening accelerates and deepens.

And at whatever stage you're at, you won't be free as long as you're here of challenges. So if you recognize that, you no longer need to be in a hostile, confrontational relationship with life. I don't, sorry about the term.

You're not pissed off all the time with another thing happening. I'm so pissed off with life. Just can't go on.

And people just can't take anymore, just. Then you can, there's a kind of accepting, not necessarily welcoming, but sometimes welcoming every situation that arises. That is, so if you welcome it, there's a book by Byron Katie called Loving What Is.

That means you are in an accepting relationship with whatever arises. Of course, it all arises in the present moment. Anything else that arises is in your mind.

So you need to differentiate between challenges, problems, difficulties that are actual, in the form of people, events, or situations, and challenges, problems, and difficulties that are fictitious, that are purely created by your mind, creating pseudo problems. For example, when you worry in the middle of the night, huge problems. Are those the real challenges of life?

No, these are fictitious problems created in your mind, dwelling on things, things that happened but should not have happened. Those are not the real challenges of life. Those are the challenges of your mind, the mind-created problems.

So you need to very clearly differentiate in your life between actual difficulties, challenges, or problems. There is a person who is shouting at you, that's an actual. Or there is the thing, you just missed your flight, and you can't get on the next one, or the next one.

Or financial challenges, relationship challenges, family situations, work situations, actual things that happen that need to deal with. But then there's a huge amount of suffering that is generated not by the actual challenges of life, but by the fictitious problems that the mind creates, sometimes around the actual challenges of life, and sometimes out of, no, out of thin air, things that could go wrong. So, on the one hand, you have your mind creating a lot of useful, useless suffering through unconscious thinking, and then you have the actual situations in your life.

So, you don't have to endure your mind, but when it says life is difficult, that shouldn't really include your mind, because that's something you can do something about immediately, you don't have to live with a dysfunctional mind, millions still do. That is something that can be transcended, and this is, of course, what we are doing here, what you are doing as part of the awakening, is a huge amount of the life is difficult, a huge percentage of that difficulty is created by the mind. That we can deal with, that can change, that does not have to be.

Once, when you do that, then the next part is actual situations will still occur. Once you know that, then you can come to a more surrendered approach to life and actually, almost or actually welcome the difficult people in your life, the difficult situations in your life, loss, and so on. Without demanding unconsciously, not in so many words, perhaps, that demanding this should not be happening and there's something dreadfully wrong when things go wrong in your life.

And that makes life really difficult. This is what the man means at the beginning of the book, the author, when he says, life is difficult, but when you know that life is difficult and you fully come to terms with the fact that life is difficult, it's not difficult anymore because the greatest difficulty is the mental resistance to things that arise and the underlying assumption that they should not. So once you have then a surrendered relationship with the present moment, because everything arises in the present moment, then it's not really that difficult anymore and you can, even in the midst of turmoil, still be connected with the realm of being within yourself.

So there's always a core of stillness, if only in the background. And no matter what happens, that core of stillness is there, if you want to call it stillness. It's also, as we saw, and as you know, it's also the source of satisfaction, where true satisfaction or a true sense of wellbeing that goes beyond physical wellbeing, a true sense of wellbeing comes from.

It's the transcendent dimension. So life will challenge you with its difficulties, the small and big. Small happen probably every day in some form.

So you don't get upset anymore when things don't go according to plan. You don't get upset and complain or irritated or angry when people don't behave the way they should behave. And that makes it so much easier when you no longer demand that these things should not be the way they are.

Nobody should, they shouldn't cancel flights. Weather shouldn't be in such a way that they can't fly anymore. And the body shouldn't get old.

Nobody should have catch an illness. Now, a lot of illnesses are produced, or you're much more prone to have an illness if your mind is very dysfunctional because it lowers the physical resistance. It affects the body.

What the mind does obviously affects the body. Even mainstream medicine is beginning to recognize your mental emotional state affects your physical state. So if your mental emotional state is very dysfunctional, your body's resistance to illness decreases.

The likelihood increases that you catch something. There are other causes of illness. So nobody can be totally free and say, I'm never going to be ill.

The body is a physical vehicle with a certain lifespan. And as it approaches the later stages of its lifespan, it's just like an old car. Things start to go wrong with it.

It's another form. And the older your car gets, the more things need to be replaced. And the time comes when it's just not working anymore.

So welcome or welcome back. And there's a chair here, which, as you may know, means it's time for one of our dialogues. And it's time for me to briefly incarnate as a talk show host.

And I always, I have to resist the temptation when people, when I have dialogue partners, when they come on stage, say, welcome to the show. I have not had many scientists as dialogue partners. I had Peter Russell, who is not a scientist, but who has a good scientific background.

But otherwise, I don't recall having, well, I had a conversation with Deepak Chopra, who also has, of course, a scientific background, but is not a scientist as such. And the reason may be that my science IQ is very low. It could be due to an undeveloped left brain, who knows?

Not only that, I know that I never do well, well, I only tried it once, to be honest. I never, I don't do well in IQ tests. But my consolation is that IQ tests do not measure the whole spectrum of intelligence, but only a very small segment of intelligence.

And basically, IQ tests are not how intelligent you are, but how good you are at IQ tests. So I have some books here. My guest today is a scientist, Lothar Schaefer, who was born in Germany, but has taught for, I believe, 40 years at the University of Arkansas as professor of physical chemistry.

And about maybe a year ago or so, I received this book that he wrote, not long ago, with a foreword by Deepak Chopra. And the title of the book is, "'Infinite Potential,' "'Infinite Potential.'" The subtitle is very interesting. It says, "'What Quantum Physics Reveals About How We Should Live.'" That's very intriguing, because nobody had thought of quantum physics as being able to reveal to us how we should live. So I get so many books sent, every month, manuscripts, books, and it's not even possible to read them all or even a few pages sometimes. So, and then when I travel, the books accumulate. And when I get back home, it's a huge pile.

And my intention is always that eventually I will get to it. And of course, then they pile up more and more. And that's one of my challenges.

But for some reason, I don't know whether it was Deepak Chopra having written a foreword, I opened it and immediately responded. Something within responded. And as I read, continued reading a few more pages, then I didn't start from the very beginning at first, but now, of course, I have read the whole book, even almost the whole book twice.

But when I first looked at it, I didn't start from the very beginning, but somewhere a little bit into the book, and I came across a passage that I want to read to you in a minute that sounded so similar to what I often say in talks. And I know that that's not where he got it. So I didn't get it from him and he didn't get it from me because when he wrote the book, he had never even heard of me.

So then obviously it was something that is produced like everything by the one universal consciousness that came to a realization and expressed it in a similar way. And I'll read that to you in a minute, but before that, just one brief look at another book he wrote a few years ago. It has a very interesting title, In Search of Divine Reality, Science as a Source of Inspiration.

Now, before you read this book, I think he would agree, I would highly recommend that you start with this book because this is more challenging. It's a very erudite and scholarly examination. It's wonderful.

My intention is to get my teeth into it this summer when I have plenty of spare time. So I'll be reading it, but I have opened it here and there and it's wonderfully fascinating. And for those who are familiar with the German language, there's a German version of it.

It's not exactly a translation. It's a reworking, it seems. And the title is somewhat different from the English title, Versteckte Wirklichkeit, which translates as hidden reality.

And the subtitle is How Quantum Physics Can Lead Us to Transcendence. Now I'll read that. This was one of the first things that jumped out of this book when I first opened it.

So this is a little passage that I will read to you. And then I will invite Lothar up on stage. He addresses here the interconnectedness of seemingly separate things.

You can think about this in the following way. If you've ever flown over an ocean or a large body of water, sometimes when the weather is right, you can see some white patches on the water below. Tiny white dots that suddenly appear like out of nothing, move around, one this way, one that way, and fade out of existence again.

It is really a beautiful sight and a fascinating play of forms, and it is easily understood. The white patches are the crests of waves in the agitated ocean. Now, here's the interesting thing.

You can't see these waves because you're too far up. You can only see the crests, but you have no doubt that the waves are there. You may even say that you know it.

And if anybody tried to tell you that the white spots on the water were some sort of big white fish, you would not believe it. Furthermore, when you see how each of the patches is going its own way and couldn't care less about what the others are doing, you can't be fooled into thinking that the waves are isolated, independent appearances, because you just know that the waves in an ocean are not independent, but conjoined in one giant movement of the whole. This is a useful experience because now when you look out into the world and see the things and people around you, you will not be fooled into thinking they are separate and independent appearances because you know that they are the patches on the surface of an agitated ocean, the ocean of potentiality.

In this non-material ocean, which seems alive and more mind-like than thing-like, the waves constantly build up to new empirical possibilities and perhaps even to new forms of thinking that may find consciousness in a human mind. After each transition from the possible to the factual, as one of the great pioneers of quantum physics, Werner Heisenberg, described it, the evolution of tendencies or possibilities for future actual events starts anew, but now from a different starting point than before, so that the universe is evolving. Physicist Hans-Peter Dürr, longtime coworker of Heisenberg's, has called this a learning process.

With the experiences that it makes through us, the cosmic potentiality is learning. It constantly manifests and reabsorbs. There is a continuous flux from the evolution of tendencies to their actualizations, empirical events, and from empirical events to new tendencies.

Each new state of potentiality carries in it, like a stigma, the memory of the last state. You are a white crest on the surface of this ocean. So the one manifesting through you, thinking through you, perceiving through you, then going back within and then re-emerging.

Wonderful image. Now, the interesting thing is that Lothar Schaeffer, our guest, did not arrive at this realization through going within, but going, examining matter and going so deep into matter where matter wasn't matter anymore. And so going, and he came to the same conclusion that mystics, or I myself, arrived at by going within.

Very interesting. Now, I'm going to ask him in a minute how that happened, the process by which he arrived at that conclusion. So I'd like to welcome Lothar Schaeffer.

He will come up here in a minute. We don't have any music to play while he comes up to the stage. And...

[Speaker 15] (4:39:04 - 4:39:09)
And... And... And...

[Speaker 1] (4:39:09 - 4:39:15)
And... And... And...

And... And...

[Speaker 4] (4:39:16 - 4:39:18)
Is it on?

[Speaker 1] (4:39:18 - 4:39:53)
Yes. Okay. So thank you for this wonderful book.

And you told me that, or you wrote to me, sometime after this book came out, somebody mentioned my name to you. And then you said, who is that? I guess I never heard of him.

But then you looked at a book and you saw certain similarities and you were surprised. And then I think you sent the book to me or the publisher sent it, but with a letter written by you.

[Speaker 4] (4:39:53 - 4:41:00)
Well, you know, it doesn't sound likely, but I didn't know of you. Well, you know, you hear names and so on, but I didn't know of you. And now I've nearly read all of your books and I'm thinking, how does it happen?

I mean, you have written things, and I can say before me that I've written, but I didn't copy them. You get the strong feeling of a connectedness. Yes.

And none that is under our control, but there is a mental background, spiritual background. And if you open your mind, you have to open your mind, then you can be connected. And then also you can be connected with different minds and so on.

This is in a way not classical science, because classical science was materialism.

[Speaker 1] (4:41:01 - 4:41:04)
And still is, this is materialism, right?

[Speaker 4] (4:41:04 - 4:41:15)
Yeah, the classical science. Classical science, in a way, has been found to be insufficient, but most scientists still are classical. They don't like the change.

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (4:41:17 - 4:41:29)
So despite all these discoveries in quantum physics, the mainstream science is really still, the philosophical foundation is the classical science.

[Speaker 4] (4:41:30 - 4:43:46)
Yes, the business is still. So, you see, in the beginning, Newton, he said, God in the beginning formed matter in solid, massive, hard, impenetrable particles. So very hard as never to wear or break in pieces.

Nature is lasting. It's materialism. The early French scientists, they said, there are two kinds of stuff, extended stuff and thinking stuff, but it had to be stuff.

And it was, of course, a progress compared to the terrible things that happened in the spiritual world before that. It was a liberation. Mm-hmm.

And it also led to development, led to technology, all the things we have. I mean, they developed within this framework up to 1900. And then was the beginning of quantum physics.

And quantum physics is a kind of idealism. It says that there is a part of the world that we cannot see, but it is real. But before that happened, physics became so successful then it entered biology.

And in the theory of evolution, having or not having stuff is the essence of life. If you don't get it, somebody else gets it. If he gets it, he eats you.

No, you get it, you eat him. And it has often been said, but I think it is wrong, science has nothing to do with ethics. No, if this is what the world is like, then having or not having stuff and being aggressive is what you should be.

That's a virtue. Somebody is a kind person, forget about him. He'll already be toast before he knows.

[Speaker 1] (4:43:46 - 4:43:50)
Yes, survival of the fittest.

[Speaker 4] (4:43:51 - 4:43:51)
Survival of the fittest.

[Speaker 1] (4:43:51 - 4:44:16)
And that becomes an underlying assumption, philosophical assumption that spreads. And even people who know very little about Darwin or his theory, it seeps into everybody's mind and as a substratum of their minds, there is that mindset, that philosophy.

[Speaker 4] (4:44:20 - 4:48:59)
And that in a way is still prevalent now. And it is what we teach our children. It is what we teach in schools.

Quantum physics says it is wrong. Why do we not teach quantum physics in high school? I don't know that it is conscious, but unconsciously, we don't want our children to know this.

We want them to become good consumers, not spiritual minds. It's bad for business. But quantum physics, quantum theory, also the extension to chemistry, quantum chemistry, is a sort of idealism because it says that the basis of the world is not things, but its forms, non-material forms.

If you, as science has done, pursue the nature of things of matter to the foundation, then all of a sudden you end up with elementary particles, molecules, electrons, and so on. And then all of a sudden something happens. When such, these things are particles, they have a certain mass and so on, it is constant.

But when they are on their own, like in a vacuum, they're never completely alone, but in a vacuum there are much fewer interactions. When they do not interact, when you have an electron and it doesn't interact, it vanishes, it becomes a wave. That wave is extended in space.

You can't see it. The thing leaves the empirical world. The wave doesn't have units of matter or energy.

It's just a form. It's a pattern of information. Out of this form, the particle can jump out again.

I'm not sure physicists know exactly where it gets the mass, maybe a Higgs field, and it doesn't matter. We can think that all material particles, all things are made of particles, all these particles came into existence like this. So the entire visible world is an emanation out of a realm of forms, ultimately.

The forms have no units of mass or energy. They're just information. We don't see them.

They appear to us as waves. So maybe we can think it's like an ocean, they're wave-like, but we don't really see, and that is also important because it says there is a part of the world that is non-empirical. We cannot see it.

Science cannot say anything about it. You don't know how mad scientists can get when I say something like that. That guy, it's like a traitor.

Because what does it say? It says there is a part of reality where science cannot enter. Science can deal with the empirical world, and yes, it deals with this very well.

You make experiments, you observe, you learn a lot. Then there is a part, the visible comes out of the non-visible. We can only guess or have like, blessed person like you have an inspiration.

We can say it probably consists of something that we have to call forms. Maybe there are waves, and when there are waves, we think they're hanging together like waves in an ocean. It means the hidden reality is a wholeness.

The forms are patterns of information, so you can think if there is information. Normally, information is meant for a mind. Does it mean there's a cosmic mind?

[Speaker 1] (4:49:02 - 4:49:12)
Would you compare what you call the forms to what in the human beings, also something that you cannot see, thoughts?

[Speaker 4] (4:49:13 - 4:50:01)
Are those the thoughts of the universe, those forms? Now you can start thinking. I've sometimes said this way.

In 1900, before the beginning of quantum physics, the age of classical physics, you could not believe in science, have a religious faith, and be logically consistent. At that age, it was stupid to believe in something. Now, I don't want to say it is not reasonable not to have a spiritual faith, but you can believe in science, in the order of the world, and have a spiritual conviction, and it is logically consistent.

Nobody can tell you what you have to think. I mean, that's up to you.

[Speaker 1] (4:50:20 - 4:50:34)
The love in the dog, that which has no form, their consciousness, and that can connect you with your own consciousness. That the consciousness is indestructible. The essence of the dog remains.

[Speaker 13] (4:50:38 - 4:51:06)
Hi, Eckhart. Hi, Eckhart. I wanted to ask you a question about my dog that we just had to put to sleep.

And I know we're talking a lot about the human, and dying, and being already dead, but we just can't reconcile with taking her life, you know? And I wonder if you could talk a little bit about that.

[Speaker 1] (4:51:13 - 4:51:22)
So you were present when the dog- Yeah, when she took her very last breath, and- And how was your state of consciousness while you were with the dog?

[Speaker 13] (4:51:22 - 4:51:54)
Really present, but... It just, her form just went so fast, and she wouldn't have never died. I mean, her will was so strong.

I mean, she was just tremendous, and we were being encouraged to do that. Just to not let her keep suffering. And I just, I mean, I think it's one thing to have your own life, but to take her life is just- Yes.

[Speaker 1] (4:51:55 - 5:08:52)
Well, you wanted to spare her this further suffering. That's the death, a body dissolving, a form dissolving, is painful, whether it's a human or an animal, because there's love there. Now, the love is, on the one hand, yes, there's a form.

Of course, you love to touch the dog. You love to hold the dog, to feel the dog's aliveness, the softness of it. But what you really love in the dog you can't see.

And I'm just, we're talking about dogs now, but we could talk about any life form, including humans, but let's talk about dog. What is it when you look into the eyes of the dog, and there is an inner response, an inner response, which is love? And this is why people, it's easier for many people to look into the eyes of a dog and feel love than it is to look into the eyes of a human and feel love.

There are millions of people who find it easier to feel love looking into the eyes of a dog. And that is because there's less in the way, when they look at the dog, there's less that obstructs the dog's connectedness with the source, which is the one. In humans, there's the mind in the way.

So many people find it harder to feel love when they look at a human being, perhaps they may have one or two with whom they do feel it, but many don't even have that. Why? Because in the other human, there is a screen of concepts and that activates your own screen of judgments and concepts.

And that prevents the flow and the realization of oneness from happening. The moment you look at a human, most humans are, we'll come back to dogs in a minute, but don't worry. Most humans are trapped in mental noise, continuous judgments in the mind, stories, judgments.

So if you could free yourself from that, it requires enormous presence for your own soul structures, not to become activated when you're looking into the eyes of a human being whose mind is very, very active. So that requires great presence and not many people have that yet. So they love, there are millions of people in this world whose only, the only being for whom they can feel love is their dog.

That's, you could say, oh, that's tragic, isn't it? Well, it's not tragic. At least they can feel love there.

At least, of course, it would be wonderful if you could feel love for humans also. A little bit more difficult, possible and necessary ultimately, but we know now what the barriers are. Once we know why we can't feel the love for humans, then we can do something, which is relinquish our judgments.

But it remains for the time being that dogs provide an access for many humans into feeling the connectedness with being. That is why I call them sometimes guardians of being, dogs, because they, when you look into the eyes of a dog, you feel that the dog's connectedness with the source. In a way, then, you could say the dog, or any animal really, is closer to the source than humans, closer to God.

Humans have gone further out into further differentiation and complexity. And there you have the dog, but there's enough consciousness in the dog to meet the human. The dog's already quite close to the human consciousness without having suffered yet the influx of conceptualization.

So that's the beauty of it. So what you love in the dog is not ultimately the external form. The love in the dog, that which has no form, their consciousness.

And that can connect you with your own consciousness. The consciousness is indestructible. The essence of the dog remains.

Where exactly it goes, I don't know. But it may go into the universal dog essence that underlies the divine idea of dog, Plato would have said something like that, or Socrates. It goes back to the source, the dog source.

We know that the formless essence of life is indestructible. And so you can sense as you are with that, what all the tears may be there, sadness may be there, you experience the dissolution of a life form. And the dissolution of a life form leaves, especially in the moment of death and a little bit after, leaves behind an open space in you.

And that open space is the formless. I sometimes describe it as, let's say here's the texture or the tapestry of your life with all its ingredients, people that you know, where you live. Let's imagine your life as a tapestry, intricate.

And one aspect, important aspect of the tapestry is the dog. There it is. And there the tapestry shows you petting the dog and feeling love for the dog.

And suddenly you're looking at this tapestry and suddenly the dog begins to dissolve in the tapestry. What's happening to it? It's dissolving.

There you were petting it and suddenly there's a little empty space in that tapestry. That's very painful. It's that the empty space is left to the body as the form has dissolved.

But what was the ultimate, what was it or what is it that gives life to this whole tapestry? What is it that makes it alive? What is it?

And that is behind it, there's a light and that shines through all the forms. In fact, it gets obstructed by the forms but it still can shine through somehow. And because the light shines through all the forms, it's alive.

I'm using the, continuing to use the analogy of tapestry. It feels it has an aliveness for the simple reason that the aliveness is given to all the forms by a light that shines through it, through the forms. Gets somehow obstructed by the forms but the obstruction of the forms creates a diversity.

So ultimately every life form obstructs the universal light but that gives it individuality. But some of the universal light still shines through. For a moment, let's use another analogy related to it which is the cinema film in the cinema projector.

When you put a film is put in the projector, I don't know whether they still do it but there's a film, there's a light behind the film and the film runs through the projector and that creates the images on the screen. Now, all the reality that these images on the screen ultimately have is the light behind the film. Without the light behind the film, there would be nothing happening there.

Now imagine a character in that, just we're taking this analogy a little bit further, almost too far, but let's do it. Let's imagine the characters in the film who are acting out their drama and conditioning with maybe a tragedy or a comedy or a mixture but the characters are all acting out their script, talking, let's say one of the characters suddenly becomes aware that what is my reality? There's a moment of cessation and he or she is not acting out the script.

He stops for a moment and can feel, he can suddenly feel that light shining through. Oh, I'm really that light. I'm not ultimately that character.

The light gives it, and so all the figures in the movie are ways of obscuring to a greater or lesser extent the light that comes through but their likeness is the light. Without the light, it's nothing. Okay, let's go back to the tapestry.

There we have a form has dissolved. Now at first, if you concentrate on the lack of what was there that was so lovely, then you get stuck on that level where you equate the loveliness and the love with the form that has dissolved. But if you go look more deeply, then you see that where that form was, there's actually now more light shining through.

And that happens when you completely surrender to the fact of death, whether it's a human or a dog, any form of life. When you completely surrender to the fact of death, then you're not just sad because the form has dissolved, that may still be there, but you also sense a deepening in yourself because you sense that where the form was, the light now shines through more fully. So the empty space that's left behind, this is why death is ultimately potentially always sacred.

There are remnants of this in ancient cultures when people see a dead body. In our culture, of course you don't because we hide them. When they see a dead body, they make a sign of respect, even if they disliked the person that just died.

But when the coffin comes past and it's open, there's a dead body, they show respect because there's some obscure recognition of the sacredness of death. Why is death considered sacred? Because when the form dissolves, the formless can shine through more strongly and then it can be transformative in you, but it requires surrender to the fact of death.

And so it can be a transformative thing, which doesn't mean you're not sad anymore. You're still sad because the form has dissolved. But if you go into complete acceptance of the fact of death, which is going to happen to you, this form, to this form, and this, and this, and this, and this, and this, and this, and this, and this, and this, each form is going to pop sooner or later.

Some sooner, some later, and leave behind. If you saw that in a speeded up version of life over the next 70 years, as we sit here, let's say we have a film camera that compresses. Let's see, we're not moving from here.

Another strange analogy. I'm trying to get some, to see something. That's why I'm doing all this.

Just hang on. Now, if we had a camera here, let's say we're staying here and instead of going about our lives, we just dream our lives over the next 70 years. Let's say the camera stays here for 70 years.

And instead of going about our daily life, we just dream that we are going about our daily life. It's basically the same thing, by the way. Because in the end you die and say, okay, what was all that?

So if you had that camera here, you would be amazed. Let's say it runs, it compresses 70 years into three minutes or five minutes. And you would then see the film.

Then you would see bodies dissolving one after the other. One here, one there. Gone.

All gone. It happens to all life forms. So we need to see that and face that fact of death.

To some it comes sooner than later. To some it seems premature. Sometimes it seems it's too soon.

The dog was not ready. I'm sure the dog was ready, but you were not. You were not ready for the dog's death.

For the animal, death is easier. The animal can surrender into it, although there is a will to live, yes. But the animal can surrender.

Surrender is the key. Death is universal. It's all around you, continuously.

Everything is dying around you and being born. Dying and being born. We don't seem to see that very clearly.

You may have to travel to India to get a true view of the fact of death because they burn the bodies out in the open. And anybody can just sit there and meditate. And you would just go, wow, wow.

First you'll cry and then you'll cry a bit more. But then after a while you come to, because we're talking about the realization of something in you that's beyond death. And that is what you loved in the dog and still love.

And that cannot go away. So let it become this meditation for you and a transformative experience. And let the tears still flow if they flow.

There's nothing wrong with that. But surrender to the fact of death and realize that only the form dies. That which gives life to the form is not subject to decay or death.

You can sense that in yourself. And then you can sense it in the dog. And then the death of the dog is not as heavy as it would be if you were only identified, if you equate the essence of the dog with the form of the dog.

So what you love in the dog is the dog's consciousness, which ultimately is one with your consciousness. It's life itself, an expression, a beautiful expression, temporary, of course, of the one life. And then you honor that and are grateful for that.

You also are that.

[Speaker 13] (5:08:53 - 5:08:57)
So it's best to honor the process of taking her life as well?

[Speaker 1] (5:08:58 - 5:57:15)
I mean, I think that's what bothers us the most. That was a compassionate thing to do. We feel so guilty.

Yes, but that's, again, that requires surrender and see that it came out of love for the dog, not any other reason. And it's therefore compassionate. Now, the mind will construct further thought processes out of that, but you don't need that.

People who are unaware of the true self within do not recognize this soul in them that is using the senses. As the senses are limited to the mind level, they are incapable of comprehending atma, which is above the mind. Now, Krishna, the personification of God here, explains a little bit more about human life, human existence, and says, I will now explain more about the individual soul, which is called jiva in Sanskrit.

I'm now using for one or two sentences, which I scribbled in here, this translation, which I thought was slightly better in this case. A spark of my eternal spirit becomes in this world a living soul, and it draws around its center the five senses and the mind. So this is, again, the divine God, the one consciousness talking.

A spark of my eternal spirit becomes in this world a living soul, and it draws around its center the five senses and the mind. A body comes into existence. The atma, which is a part of divinity, atma, a part of this God within, enters into a body in the womb before birth.

Thus, it enters the world of matter. And in this translation, it says, it draws around itself the five senses with the mind as the sixth sense. Now comes a very poetic way of looking what happens.

Like a breeze wafting the scent of perfume, the atma, when it migrates from one body to the next, carries with it the mind and the senses. So the atma is the consciousness, and it carries with it this scent of fragrance of previous existence. That means it brings along the intellect, the ego, the sense of being a separate identity, and the lower mind, thought mind, transferring thoughts and tendencies from previous lifetimes.

The individual soul, because it has drawn the senses around itself, experiences the pleasures, desires, and pains of the world. Now, important part comes now. People who are unaware of the true self within, the underlying atma, the underlying timeless consciousness, do not recognize this soul in them that is using the senses.

As the senses are limited to the mind level, they are incapable of comprehending atma, which is above the mind. The yogi, however, the yogi is the person engaged in spiritual practice or spiritual living. The yogi, however, possessing the eye of wisdom, the yogis, however, possessing the eye of wisdom, do see me, their atmic self, within.

The eye of wisdom. The translator here put in brackets, intuitive faculty. Now, this is according to the Bhagavad Gita, the faculty of becoming aware within oneself of that which is deeper than the person, it calls the eye of wisdom.

And the translator, to explain a little bit, as I said, put in brackets, the intuitive faculty. And really, this is what my teaching, it's not my teaching, it's just what it's all about, is of course, becoming aware of yourself as consciousness, so that there is the dimension, the timeless dimension suddenly is realized within you. And you do it at any moment by becoming aware that you are aware, like right now.

Can you become aware at this moment that there is a presence there, that you are awake, that there is an underlying presence, even when you're not thinking, without which you couldn't exist? There's an underlying aliveness, a presence, whatever you want to call it. You don't have to think to know that, in fact, it's only when there is a gap between two thoughts, you become aware that you haven't disappeared, or that you don't remember your personal history.

You don't even, at this moment, you don't even remember your name, you don't need it. But there is an essential aliveness or presence there. And that is the eye of wisdom that suddenly arises, knowing yourself as that.

You could also say, what's left of you when you stop thinking? Now, you can't think about that. The usual tendency when I ask a question like that, that seems difficult to comprehend is you start thinking about it.

So when I ask what's left when you stop thinking, then you might say, oh, I have to think about that. But that's never the answer. So there is that which has assumed form in you, which is the person with its history.

And there is that which is timeless and formless that underlies it all, that is actually the essence of your sense of identity, atman, and that is self-realization. It says here, to obtain this eye of wisdom, you must do two things, surrender your ego and purify your mind. And that is done, I would say, by realizing that you are not your mind.

Because if you're identified with every thought that comes into your head, as many humans still are, then basically you are your mind. And beyond the thoughts that go through your head, there is nothing else. That's all you know.

And the thoughts that go through your head are conditioned by your upbringing, by your past, by your environment, the country you live in, the time period you live in, your family background. All those things determine what kind of thoughts go through your head. And all those thoughts that go through your head habitually make up who you consider yourself to be.

That's a certain story arises in the mind, and that becomes the mind-made self. And that is the reality for most humans. And it's also a fact that for most humans, that is a very limited reality.

They don't realize how limited their worldview is, how limited all their opinions are. They don't realize that they're inhabiting these little presents in their minds. That's their reality.

And when you're totally trapped in your mind, then you create a lot of conflict because then you, all the other minds become like enemies to you. And then you can become an extremist, whether political or religious, or you just have a lot of conflict in your personal life. You're just totally stuck in your little, in your head.

Cannot recognize your connectedness with nature, your connectedness with other human beings. You're cut off by concepts, by thoughts. And so that's most people's reality.

And spiritual awakening is realizing that there is a dimension in you that is far deeper than that. And that here, according to the ancient teachings, it's Atma, which is the God within, the divine within, whatever you want to call it. And that's a liberation.

That's, even just having glimpses of that is liberating, that there's more to you than the little person that before was running your life. And with that, an intelligence comes into your life that is greater than the intelligence of your conditioned mind. And that's what all spiritual teachings are about.

I was putting away some clothes this morning, hanging up some clothes and folding something. And we talked yesterday about somebody asking a question about repetitive things. You get up in the morning, you do your repetitive tasks every day.

And most of one's life consists of little tasks. There's rarely anything big. And if there is, it doesn't last long.

What would be big? A wedding, a funeral, or in North America, Thanksgiving, turkey dinner, Christmas, a promotion, or suddenly they write about you in People Magazine, hopefully something good, or some big thing, you're going to talk or give a talk to a few hundred people. But even a seemingly big thing consists of just one little thing at a time.

Now, if you had the idea, this is just a little example. I'm coming back to the clothes in a little while. One could say that folding up clothes and hanging up shirts is an insignificant thing that one would only do in order to get somewhere else.

And in this case, if I thought, okay, I have to get this done because this really big thing is waiting for me there. All these people are waiting for me to talk, give a big talk. Then in the meantime, all the little things leading up to it would be regarded as something that you have to get out of the way or pay little attention to because I have this big thing coming up.

And then this big thing coming up is a mind form, would become a mind form, a big thing called, big people wanting me to say something significant, but who knows if I can say something significant. That would have led to not only not paying much attention to the little things, but also most probably to a sense of anxiety because the mind has created a big thing. Now, if I had that, then it would not be enjoyable to do what I do because if every time I got anxious before a talk, that would be dreadful.

I'd rather not do it. So why is there no anxiety? Because I realized that even a so-called big talk is consists of little things.

You approach it, you take, they pick me up in a buggy and then drive. And then I step out and then it's one step at a time. And then I sit in a little room for a few minutes and look around and breathe.

And then I come here, it's still one little step at a time. And then I sit here and then one word comes out and then another word comes out. It's just, that too is just small.

It's only the mind that creates differences and says, I'm waiting for the next big thing. And for other people, a big thing could be the next vacation they look forward to. In the meantime, they're just trying to get to that future moment or the next or getting married, looking for someone to get married, finding the right relationship.

That would be the big thing, wouldn't it? If I could find that, the partner, the ideal partner for me. And then you're looking towards that.

And in the meantime, little attention is paid to the intervening periods. But the strange thing is most of your life is the intervening periods. 95%, no 99% is something that happens while you wait for something else to happen.

And it's an unconscious way to live. So as I was folding up my clothes and I realized how extremely pleasurable the activity is and not because of the simple movements of putting it away, but there's an underlying stillness with it that goes with that. And so as you notice that, as you do little things, in other words, 90 something percent of your life, if you're aware, not only of what you are doing, of course, yes, that's part of present moment awareness is to give attention to what you're doing so that the doing is not just the me.

It's a means to an end. The greatest fallacy and big dysfunction in people's lives is that almost all they're doing is a means to an end. That implies future, of course, is a means to an end.

And unconsciously the end is regarded as more important than the means. But of course, the end, which is in the future, is always in the future. The moment it comes, it's the present moment.

But the mind pattern that has lodged itself firmly in people's minds is always that the next thing, and it's a thing that I really need to get to. So the moment the so-called future comes, it appears as the present moment. Something else almost simultaneously or very quickly afterwards, something else appears looming up in the so-called future.

Oh, I need to get there. Of course, there are things that you need to achieve and go towards and that involves time and so on. But if that absorbs almost 100% of your attention, or even if it absorbs 80% of your attention, that's you're out of balance.

Because if future absorbs 80% of your attention, you only have 20% of your attention left for the one thing that is ever real in your life, which is the present moment. So the present moment is just okay. That's why many, many people don't actually, very rarely feel really comfortable with the present moment.

It's rare for people to regard the present moment even in a friendly way. Many people live continuously in some kind of almost confrontational or denying relationship with the present moment. And then their entire life is then not aligned with the present moment, which is life itself.

Because the only place where life can appear to you is in the present moment. There is nothing else ever. And so your life is not aligned.

Your life with a small L is not aligned with life with a capital L. And that out of alignment creates an unhappy existence. And millions of people leading such an unhappy existence create an entire culture or civilization, every aspect of which reflects back to you that unhappy, basically unhappy state that all those millions are in.

So all the things that the culture produces, the civilization produces, the structures, the economic structures, political structures, educational and so on, they will contain these elements of that state of consciousness that created them. So that's the dysfunctional element in politics, in economics, in educational system, and so on. Which all that, all those things that you can see are not working very well because they are products of a certain collective state of consciousness.

And the collective state of consciousness is made up of millions of individuals that produces the collective state of consciousness. So if you try to tackle exclusively the products of that collective consciousness in the form of the economic structures, the political educational system, and so on, then you're working only on one end of the spectrum and it's not the causal, you're working on effect. And what you can do is limited.

There are, yes, you can initiate changes, but what is the state of consciousness in the individuals and in you as you try to initiate changes? So the causal is the individual so that the individual no longer lives in a way that produces unhappiness and is dysfunctional. This mind-made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive.

To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation. In the old consciousness, the predominant state is one of waiting for the next thing. And in the new consciousness, even when you're waiting somewhere, you're not really waiting, you're just being where you are.

And you can use every opportunity when there is an external waiting, you're waiting at the airline counter or bus, at the traffic light, at the supermarket, to meet somebody, you have an appointment, somebody to arrive, so much waiting. I read somewhere that the average person who learns, who starts driving at the age of 20 and drives a car every day throughout their lives, how they worked it out, I don't know, they spend, I believe, it was four or five days of their life waiting at the red light. If you sum it, add it all up, it's four or five days of your life, you spend waiting at the red traffic light.

And most people are not happy unless it's just one instance of waiting and so much, so many other occasions when you are waiting and mostly people are not comfortable with waiting. They get restless, uneasy, complain, they shouldn't be waiting. Well, maybe not, but you are waiting.

Things should be different if people only were more efficient and punctual and did their job properly and were aware of the time, but they're not. So whenever you're waiting, see if you can, your state of conscious can be one of just being present, enjoy being where you are. Start with a supermarket.

And if you once, if you notice the shift from the restlessness and discontent and complaining, the anger, even irritation with having to wait at the supermarket and then say, okay, is that a pleasant state? Do I really want, am I, is it possible to be here in a different way? Do I choose to be in that unpleasant state?

Am I forced to be in that unpleasant state? Is somebody forcing me to be irritated? No, I'm just irritated.

I can't help it. Well, that's just a thought that may not be true. I can't help it.

And then you realize that you can help it and you simply drop your irritation and come into the present moment. Irritation is just a thought. This should not be happening.

Or I'd rather be out of here than in here, but you're in here. And this is just a tiny thing, of course, but as we mentioned before, life is made up of tiny things. And if one tiny irritation is followed by another tiny irritation somewhere else and followed by another tiny irritation somewhere else, and every tiny irritation leaves behind something, an energy, and that gradually it builds up.

And then you get more prone to irritation and not just irritation, then add up 100 little irritations and then you become a potentially angry person. Who's just waiting for the next thing to be angry about. Hopefully you can find something to be angry about.

So you can just drop it. You drop it by realizing it's futile. You're actually creating it yourself.

It serves no purpose. There's an underlying assumption, and this is a childlike way of looking at the world or a childish way of looking at the world, an immature childish world that says, if I get really irritated, things are going to change. In the same way, a child might think if I cry hard enough, something will happen.

And of course, in the case of the child, often it is the case, and then the parents come running. But if you're an adult and you cry hard enough, not necessarily cry as such, but metaphorically speaking, unhappy, you believe the same thing is going to happen, but it's not. In fact, people run away from you.

They don't come and say, oh, you have that energy of get away from me. So it's practiced with those little things, so you can not only be free of irritation, you can also actually use those opportunities to be present. Then you're welcome every time you're waiting.

And if you don't succeed, that's okay occasionally, but you're welcome every time you go, oh. One very small anecdote happened to me recently. I was at a supermarket waiting, and the cashier was the slowest that I've ever seen, perhaps in my entire life.

And not only did she not know what she was doing, she also engaged every customer in a long conversation. And even I, who, is usually okay with these things, could feel a small amount of irritation creeping up. And then immediately I let it out and it went away, and then another one came.

But by the time I finally reached her, the irritation fortunately was gone, and I was present again. And when she saw me, she said, oh, I've been waiting to meet you all my life. And I was so glad that the irritation wasn't there anymore.

And she said also that she hadn't been there for very long, not worked there for a long time yet, so she's still learning. And she had recently moved back to Canada from after spending 10 years in Maui, Hawaii, where time is not so important, of course. People have a loose relationship with time, island time.

So that was an interesting encounter. So it can happen, irritation can still arise. If you don't catch it.

So you have to be alert so that you catch it before it takes you over. And then realize you don't want it. What for?

And it's gone. Related to that is unhappiness. A lot of so-called unhappiness is also a childish way of trying to change things.

By being as unhappy as you can about them. And the underlying unconscious or semi-conscious assumption is if I'm really unhappy, somebody, perhaps God, is going to do something about it, or I'm going to prove him wrong. I'm going to show him how dreadful it is.

And then finally, this is an unconscious assumption behind the unhappiness, because you believe if you're habitually and frequently unhappy, you believe that it has a purpose. It's an underlying assumption. Perhaps you wouldn't verbalize it in that way, but you believe that it works for you.

Of course, it doesn't, but things are going to change. But just need to be really unhappy so that God finally, even if you don't believe in God, this can still be the mechanism, the underlying unconscious assumption behind it. It's something that's going to happen.

And of course, the opposite is true, because the more unhappy you are with something, the more you are stuck in the situation. There are some patterns in the mind that everybody inherits that even for advanced presence practitioners like yourselves can still reassert themselves because they are so normal. Well, by the way, my definition of normal is insane, as you probably know.

And you may be able to catch yourself many times during the day when this normal, one of these normal patterns reasserts itself and of course, one of the most prevalent patterns is reducing the present moment to a means to an end. It could be a simple thing like you get up in the morning and you're getting ready to go to work. What, how, what is the quality of your doing during that time of getting ready to go out?

Or here, you got up this morning, getting ready to go to breakfast and then come here. Here, how do you experience that time? Are you able to be present in what you're doing or is the doing no more than a means to an end?

And that's a huge difference, whether you, this, will you fold your pajama after, and put it on your bed? Is that, do you give it attention? Is it a pleasant thing to do?

Do you acknowledge the being of this pajama and feel the texture and give it some loving attention and then you put it away? Or is it, what's the next thing? And the next and the next, because I need to get, I need to, if you're not, you may, if you don't, this habit is always there.

The present moment is a stepping stone that not much more than a stepping stone to the next moment, which is always a mental projection because it never comes. The next moment never comes. Does it?

No, I don't think it does, because when the next moment comes, it's the present moment. So the next moment doesn't come, it can never arrive. There's only this

moment.

But if your habit is to treat this moment most of the time as a means of getting to the next moment, so not being fully in it, but mentally being somewhere else, and then I just need, so the basic attitude is, I just need to get this moment out of the way. Then I will get to a better one. And that is a very deep-seated pattern that prevents you from being present.

But it's only when I voice it like this that it becomes apparent to you, because otherwise you won't even see it because it's so normal to live in such a way that unconsciously, it's not, you don't tell yourself in your mind that I just need to get this moment out of the way because the next one will be better. That is an unspoken and unconscious assumption behind what you do. And it's not only, people also treat entire life periods in that way.

Then it's not only, of course, most fundamentally the present moment, but they also treat entire chunks of their life in that way. For example, you're waiting for the weekend. So it's only two more days of having to go to work.

And then there comes, or you're waiting for something else. Getting a better job. Finding the person who is going to make me happy.

And in the meantime, I'm just ticking over. It's just, I'm just waiting for, well, what's the expression? I'm waiting for the big break or whatever.

I'm waiting for the big thing to happen. And finally I can start living when that happens. Whatever form that takes, when that happens, then my life will really start.

And that's another way, another manifestation of the same dysfunction. Reducing an entire chunk of your life to a waiting room. And so for many people, they're almost their entire life with very brief episodes, often connected to falling below, thinking with brief episodes of little bit of relief.

They live in a waiting room and this somehow, I don't know if anybody remembers, it's probably not popular anymore. There used to be a genre in theater that was called the theater of the absurd. Samuel Beckett and other authors.

And often they showed, there was a famous play called Waiting for Godot. And there are two men waiting for this guy to arrive with a, nobody knows who Godot is, but they spent the entire play, it's a theater play, the entire play, they're waiting. Godot, who knows some critics say, well, Godot, God, Godot, they're waiting for God, but it's not set.

But the entire period is spent waiting. And I don't think Godot ever arrives. And they're similar.

And this is just to show the absurdity of ultimately everyday life. So you have to be really vigilant to see whether, either as concerning the present moment, reducing the present moment to a means to an end. And if you do that habitually, chances are that you also reduce huge chunks of your life to a means to an end or a waiting room.

And of course, sometimes life does get better. Of course, it doesn't, if you are now living in unpleasant surroundings, perhaps it's noisy or it's cold, too cold or too warm or cramped or whatever it is, you have might have a job that's repetitive. You're waiting to get out of that, feel lonely.

One relationship has come to an end. The other, another one hasn't started yet. I'm just waiting.

And so you're hoping that things will get better. And sometimes they do get better, but the habit pattern is deeply ingrained. And even if the situation gets better, then you'll be waiting for something else because no situation can ever completely satisfy you.

No person, no condition, no situation. Waiting for retirement. I can maybe take early retirement.

And then what? Play golf. Lie on the beach.

And many people are very disappointed when they retire and don't know what to do with themselves. And they lose their sense of identity that they, it was always a false sense of identity, because it is derived from their function, but at least they had a false sense of identity. And now they don't, I won't have any.

And then to happen, they can't, they don't know the possibilities of human life. So be vigilant. If you feel that an improvement is highly desirable in your life situation, that's okay, but it's much more likely to happen if you give more attention to the present moment rather than trying to get away from the present moment or denying it, always making it into a means to an end.

If you give more, your fullest attention to this moment, the so-called future is much more likely to improve the so-called future, because there is no future. When it comes, it's the present moment, a little strange paradox different.

[Speaker 6] (5:57:47 - 6:00:37)
I want to welcome you to the first ever Google Plus Hangout with Eckhart Tolle. He will spend the next hour answering questions on awakening and living with greater presence and purpose in modern life. Before we begin, we're going to take a short period of silence.

So I'm going to invite you to sit comfortably. You can either close your eyes or keep your eyes open and focus your attention on the breath as it comes in and out of your body, or simply focus your attention on the feeling of presence and aliveness. We'll take about one to two minutes now, and then we'll begin.

Welcome again to the first ever Google Plus Hangout with Eckhart Tolle. Eckhart Tolle is a spiritual teacher who is the author of numerous books, including The Power of Now and A New Earth. He's one of the great spiritual teachers of our time who is currently offering his teachings through Eckhart Tolle TV, an online community dedicated to putting into practice the teachings and exploring what it means to live and embody a new earth.

We are also joined today by people from around the world who will be asking questions and engaging with Eckhart, and we're very happy for you to join us. So I'm particularly happy, Eckhart, that you have taken the time to be here with us today for this unique experiment.

[Speaker 1] (6:00:38 - 6:00:41)
Nice to be here. Welcome, everybody.

[Speaker 6] (6:00:44 - 6:00:59)
Before we begin with questions, I'd like to introduce the group of speakers that we have from, again, all over the world. So we will begin with Angelica. Angelica, would you please introduce yourself?

[Speaker 9] (6:01:00 - 6:01:15)

Hi, my name is Angelica. I live here in Germany, in Freiburg. I come originally from the Dominican Republic in the Caribbean.

That's why the name Angelica is a Spanish name. Very nice to be here.

[Speaker 6] (6:01:15 - 6:01:16)
Thank you.

[Speaker 7] (6:01:23 - 6:02:18)
Dale? Hi, everybody. Welcome to this Hangout.

Isn't this fantastic that we can all be here together? Many thousands of you, I'm sure, watching. I'm in South Australia, as you can see from the flag behind, right across the other side of the world from Vancouver, where Eckhart is at the moment.

I first discovered Eckhart's teachings when I was riding a hand cycle because I'm in a wheelchair and I can't move my legs. I was riding a hand cycle all the way across Australia, from Melbourne to Darwin. And Eckhart's audio book, The Power of Now, popped up on my iPod somehow and I synced it to my computer.

So I started hearing this wonderful man speak and here I am today. That was about four years ago or so. So yeah, I'm very happy to be here and it's great to meet everyone.

[Speaker 6] (6:02:19 - 6:02:24)
Thank you, Dale. Jan, would you introduce yourself, please?

[Speaker 10] (6:02:25 - 6:04:12)
Yes, my name is Jan. I live in Phoenix, Arizona. Was born in Columbus, Ohio and moved here when I was two years old.

So I've lived in Phoenix most of my life. The way I was, the universe brought me Eckhart's work after going through quite a lengthy time of emotional difficulties. I went to the Health Institute in San Diego just for survival.

And while there, I went to their bookstore and picked up a book off the shelf called The Power of Now. And during one of my classes at the Health Institute, they asked, what is the most important book in your life? And I said, well, The Power of Now.

And I still say that. However, when I first picked it up and took it back to my room to read it, I had to lay it down and say, I have no idea what this man was talking about. However, what I did is I went and I bought the audios, brought them home with me, and I left them play in the background over and over and over until there was space in me to receive what I was hearing.

Then I experienced the changes in my being and discovered that there was another way to live. And I was so happy. So I'm still with Eckhart after six years.

His work and his contribution to this planet, I am so grateful for. And he doesn't know it, but he even assisted me in helping me care for my mother for six years who had Alzheimer's. To that, I'm all so grateful.

Thank you, Eckhart. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Pam.

[Speaker 8] (6:04:13 - 6:05:36)
Hi, my name is Pamela Peterson, and I'm one of the lucky people that, for some

strange reason, Eckhart thought we had a good question. I've been a fan of Eckhart since about nine years ago when my mother, who passed away last year, introduced me to his book. She was a very metaphysical and spiritual person, and I've been involved in that.

That's interested me since my 20s. And so it was at a difficult time in my life, and Eckhart, thank you. You helped me get through that very, very well.

And I needed you again this year, and pulled out my old copy, and also found the CDs. And I agree with Jan, the tapes are great. The audio books are wonderful.

That really brought it home to me in a better way. And it was this January, when I was listening to the tapes, I decided to see if you had a website, because it's been a long time. And I found Eckhart Tolle TV, and it said, ask a question.

And I thought, wow, I've had this question about, to ask Eckhart, and so I did submit the question. Quickly, I live in Florida. I am from Chile originally, and I've been in the United States since 1979.

I knew Angelica was Spanish when she said Angelica. So that was cute. But I'm now living in Florida, and thank you for having us.

And thank you, I hope some of my family and friends are watching. So hello to everybody.

[Speaker 15] (6:05:37 - 6:05:38)
Wafa?

[Speaker 5] (6:05:39 - 6:06:43)
Hello everyone, hello Eckhart. My name is Wafa. I come originally from Jordan.

However, I moved 12 years ago to the United States. So right now I'm sitting here in Indiana. I began observing the mind and becoming conscious of thoughts several, many years ago.

A business mentor suggested that to me. In 2008, I became acquainted and I started to know about Eckhart through Oprah's web class, which I became, I'm very, very grateful for. That took me and took my practice of awareness to a total new level.

And I have to say, this is what happens when you begin observing and watching your thoughts and feeling your body. Eckhart comes and visits you at home or something as wonderful. So I am very grateful for everything.

I'm very grateful for this occasion. And I'm very happy that Eckhart continues to be open to accommodate new technologies such as Google Plus and Google Hangout. So thank you everyone for having me and I'm looking forward to our conversation today.

[Speaker 6] (6:06:46 - 6:07:24)
And my name is Soren Gordhammer and I host something called the Wisdom 2.0 Conference, which looks at how do we use, live wisely and purposefully in an increasingly digital age. And I think this is a good example, I hope Eckhart, of technology and wisdom coming together and using technology to serve awakening versus using technology to limit consciousness and increase the pain body. So I'm happy to be here as well.

I think we'll start out with Dale from Australia since I believe you're the furthest away. Your question for Eckhart, please.

[Speaker 7] (6:07:25 - 6:07:40)

Thanks Soren. Eckhart, my question is from presence, I have been helping my young son to recognize his thoughts. And do you think he can truly identify his egoic thoughts at this age?

He is four years old, Eckhart.

[Speaker 1] (6:07:42 - 6:07:54)
Okay, can you give an example of how you do that to help your son become aware of his thoughts? Can you give us a practical example of what that looks like in practice?

[Speaker 7] (6:07:55 - 6:09:59)
Certainly, at any time he may be playing, he may be grumpy, he may be really happy. So at various times, I ask him, what are you thinking at the moment? What's in your mind?

And he says, ah, there's not much in my mind at the moment, daddy. Sometimes he draws me a picture and I say to him, what was in your mind when you drew that picture? And he says, nothing.

He says, when he's grumpy, grizzly, frustrated, bored, and he's moaning, I say, what is in your mind now? And he says, ah, lots of things are in my mind. And so there seems to be some direct correlation that when he's content and peaceful, that there is some smaller amount of noise, and he can identify that at the moment.

And in fact, Eckhart, I've been able to see a direct correlation with when, particularly when he's unhappy and really frustrated, and he's angry at me, really angry, I will say, just watch, where is that coming from? Is it coming from here or is it coming from here? And I have a picture of a face with some eyes looking upwards to a space above the eyes, and I say, what's in here?

And he says, I'm not doing that, daddy. No, I don't care, I don't like you. You're not my friend.

But he goes away, or I leave him there at that place, and I retreat out of it carefully, and I just say, that's okay, that's okay. And then 30 seconds to one minute later, he comes back and he says, it's all gone now, daddy. So it's really quite, I see the difference in him, and I was just wondering what might be happening there.

[Speaker 1] (6:09:59 - 6:13:20)
What do you think? Well, that's wonderful that you're able to do that, and it's working, obviously. He doesn't, your child does not need to differentiate between egoic or non-egoic.

The main thing is that awareness is arising by asking him the question, by making him aware of what kind of thoughts are going through his mind, and he's already beginning to do it for himself. So this is a great example for everybody, because it happens so quickly these days that children get completely taken over by the mind. So you're doing wonderful work.

Don't, as you probably know, you don't need to bring in the word ego at all. What really matters is that awareness is arising, and awareness is a space of consciousness that is deeper than thought. Thought arises within the space of awareness.

Now, most people don't know that. They are not in touch with that dimension. It is as if that dimension didn't exist for them.

All they know is the thoughts that they are continuously identified with, and what you are doing, I hope soon will become one of the main things that children learn at an early age at school. It would be, I would say, the most important subject to learn at school before anything else. And of course, together with everything else, it's to learn what awareness is and to experience awareness in oneself.

So it's just, you're doing wonderful work here. Just one more question to you. The pain body, which is what I call the pain body, is an accumulation of emotion that builds up in humans.

And I would say humans already come into this world with a greater or lesser degree of pain body. So that is closely linked to the thought activity in the head. So does your son have pain body episodes?

Perhaps a little bit of that you mentioned when you said, I don't want to, I don't like you right now. And of course, at that moment, who is it that is speaking? It is the pain body, which is the emotional aspect of ego.

So I sometimes recommend that parents also find a way for children to observe that deeply negative emotion that can arise in them. Sometimes it could be a temper tantrum or whatever. And when it has subsided, you ask the child, what was that that came into you then?

What did it feel like? What would it look like? How would you draw an image of that so that an awareness arises there also?

So what is your experience with the pain body with your child?

[Speaker 7] (6:13:22 - 6:14:44)
Yes, when he hurts someone unintentionally, so when he makes a mistake and he might poke someone in the eye, or he might tread on the dog's tail and the dog might yelp, he takes that incredibly personally. He's a very caring little boy. And when he hurts someone like that, it's like he can't handle that.

It's like this embarrassment, like there is immense pain that comes immediately to the surface, and he can't deal with that. He then gets very angry at the whole environment that he's in. And I really feel for him compassionately.

And that brings me to immense presence. If I'm off with the pixies somewhere else, it makes me, hey, it's okay. And I just put my hand out and I say, it's okay, it's okay.

And he said, no, I don't want anything, anything. I said, it's fine. No one is hurt.

No one is angry. Just watch, just watch. It's okay.

And I calm it right down. And he goes through that pain. You can see him go through it.

You can see his energy change. And then he bursts out of it. You can see it within three seconds.

He comes out of it like he's surrendering, like that pain body has been identified and it disappears.

[Speaker 1] (6:14:45 - 6:15:16)
It just fizzles away. So yes, that's a good question. He does have that happen.

Yes, wonderful. So it's a great blessing for the child to have a conscious parent. I didn't have that benefit.

My parents did the best they could according to their level of consciousness and I'm grateful to them, but they were not conscious parents. And I think many people, especially my generation can say that, that they probably did not have conscious parents. It's a wonderful blessing.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, Eckhart.

Thank you.

[Speaker 6] (6:15:20 - 6:15:24)
Pamela from Florida. Pamela Peterson, would you like to be next?

[Speaker 8] (6:15:25 - 6:16:57)
Sure. As I was saying earlier, I had my first encounter with Eckhart nine years ago and it helped me greatly. I was reading the book, The Power of Now, which I think was your first book that explained your experience that you had a very painful experience that brought you this awakening and enlightenment and an understanding of life the way I see it that is just incredible.

And so I had forgotten about it a little bit through the years and again picked it up this year when I felt I needed it again and got into it more deeply with the tapes and again went to the website. And as I was listening to the tapes and was thinking about you and about how you came to all this knowledge and real quickly, the book talks about the power of now in essence for anybody that hasn't read it, the power of now has to do with living in this moment right now, not in the past or in the present or in the future, in the present. So it occurred to me that what does Eckhart, if he felt the guru of living in the moment, what goes through Eckhart's mind every second of the day when the key is, the secret of this enlightenment is to just really live in this minute and not think about the future of the past.

So what's going through your mind every second of the day? Are you, you're human also, are you able to control the mind chatter better than most of us or is it a battle for you every day too?

[Speaker 1] (6:16:58 - 6:22:03)
Well, it's not a battle anymore. I'm glad to say a lot of the time I walk around and do things and in the background, there's just a spacious presence and some thoughts of course arise, sometimes thoughts that are not particularly interesting. The thoughts no longer draw me in, thoughts that come like clouds, that you have a blue sky and then clouds come drifting past.

I'm mostly, I feel that I am the sky rather than the cloud. So people who are not yet disidentified from thought, they are every cloud that goes past that draws in their attention completely and then they follow it where it wants to take them and that leads to more clouds, so to speak. So I don't have that anymore, fortunately.

Sometimes, of course, you have to use your mind when certain practical matters need your attention and there's no problem with that. You apply the mind to a specific area and see what is it that needs to be done now. But it's amazing how much one can actually do without too much mental interference that you can start, I recommend that by the way as a spiritual practice, one of the main spiritual practices, one is the developing the ability to perceive things that are around you without unnecessary mental labeling.

Everybody can practice that and it's actually not that difficult. You just look around and feel rather than you as a person immediately interpreting things and having a mental commentary about what it is that you're perceiving, instead of that, you are simply a conscious presence and as conscious presence, you perceive the world without needing to interpret it and yet you are not totally ignorant in that state. There is actually a deeper intelligence that comes in and that then operates in your life and one aspect of that deeper intelligence is it appreciates deeply what it is perceiving and listening to and looking at.

So as the deeper intelligence comes in, with that comes a deep appreciation of the aliveness of life that is all around you, including other human beings. And so to know these things, there is a knowing there and this is how I experience it on a daily basis and how many people also are beginning to experience their daily life. There is a knowing there that is non-conceptual.

So when you look at another human being, you can know that human being without having any concepts in your mind. There's a deep connectedness that comes with everything that you're perceiving when you're not continuously compulsively labeling it mentally, which is I call it the voice in the head that comments on all your life experiences, which of course is the conditioned mind. And very often for many people, the commentary is negative.

It's the conditioned mind dwells more in the negative than the positive because when something really positive arises, the mind subsides and you go, oh wow, isn't that beautiful or that's lovely or you feel love or you feel joy. And you observe when you feel joy, there isn't much thinking at that moment. So thinking is fine when you need it.

So I walk around a lot of the time in just being present with what is and accepting, this is part of it of course, accepting the present moment as it arises. It is always not really problematic. If a challenge comes, it's addressed.

So it's a very kind of childlike way of perceiving things with an added dimension to it, an added dimension of depth and knowing. A very lovely way of being. The first time that happened to me, of course, as I describe it in the introduction to the power of now, is that night when I disidentified from the mind and I woke up in the morning and I looked around.

That was the first time when I had a real experience of that. I looked around the room and I suddenly saw everything is so alive and beautiful. But there was very little thinking anymore.

And so there was a peace in the background. And that kind of has stayed with me since then, although the intensity of it can vary, but it's always there somehow. And it's lovely for most people, this is a gradual realization that one can live in that way.

May I just ask you, what is your experience of your mind on a daily basis?

[Speaker 8] (6:22:05 - 6:22:30)
I'm definitely not where you are, and I would love to be there someday. I always say that I would love to be Zen-like. I've been saying that for years, which means that things just come by and go and I just perceive them, but they don't affect me, and that would be wonderful.

But I'm still stuck a little bit in the mind chatter, but I'm more aware of it today. I'm more at peace because I don't give it as much importance.

[Speaker 1] (6:22:31 - 6:24:22)
Yes, thought loses the ability to draw you in totally, so it no longer has that

gravitational pull or the seductive power that it usually has, and there's a little bit of spaciousness that arises. And this is really the most important thing. So I'm glad, with a little help by the way, to anchor you in that state of presence, as I point out in The Power of Now and other places, to anchor you in the state of presence.

It is helpful to feel the aliveness inside your body as you are going around and perceiving things and even doing things. And even as we sit here right now, everybody can experience it for themselves as we sit here right now. We can be aware of what's going on there.

You can see me or whoever is there on the screen. You can hear the words. You're peripherally aware of the room that you're sitting in.

And at the same time, you can actually feel the aliveness that pervades your entire body, that your hands are alive inside, your legs, your feet. The entire body feels alive. So some of your attention moves from thinking into the sensing of that global field of aliveness inside you, which you cannot see, but you can sense it.

That is the life that which animates the body and that can serve as an anchor. And so from there, you can then perceive things without unwanted, unnecessary interference of old conditioned thinking. So it's always a great help to inhabit the body that keeps you present.

[Speaker 8] (6:24:22 - 6:24:40)
I will just say quickly that it really is a moment to moment awareness and knowing what you have to do. It's homework. And eventually, hopefully it becomes more of a natural thing like it is for you, but it's something that it's an everyday, every moment we have to be focusing on living quietly in this moment.

[Speaker 1] (6:24:40 - 6:25:21)
That's right. Yes, it becomes a practice. Once you've had your first glimpses, then you're able to, by choice, invite that presence into your life.

And by choice, you can then take attention when you don't need to think particularly, and especially when you notice thinking is becoming negative or dysfunctional, in other words, creating unhappiness inside you, when the moment you notice that, your choice can be to take attention into the present moment by becoming aware of your inner energy field, and then becoming aware of sense perceptions around you. And immediately you've stepped out of the old conditioned thinking.

[Speaker 8] (6:25:22 - 6:25:22)
Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (6:25:23 - 6:25:24)
Thank you, Eckhart.

[Speaker 6] (6:25:25 - 6:25:33)
Jan, I think this might be a good time for your question. Jan from Arizona, would you like to ask that now?

[Speaker 10] (6:25:34 - 6:25:55)
Okay. Yes, I'm Jan in Phoenix. And my question for you today, Eckhart, would be this.

I'm separated from my husband, and I live alone, and I can't stop myself from crying at times. What can I do to stay in the present moment and avoid these feelings?

[Speaker 1] (6:25:56 - 6:26:00)
How long have you been separated from your husband?

[Speaker 10] (6:26:00 - 6:26:01)
38 years.

[Speaker 1] (6:26:02 - 6:26:03)
Sorry, how many?

[Speaker 10] (6:26:03 - 6:26:03)
38.

[Speaker 1] (6:26:05 - 6:27:24)
Okay. Now, once a feeling is there, then instead of attempting to avoid it, it's better to simply allow it to be there so that you'll become the space for whatever feeling happens to be there. But it's important to observe whether there is a link between those emotions that arise in you and certain thought processes in your head.

And it's only you can be the observer of your mind. Perhaps, in some cases, people don't even know that many emotions that they experience are actually caused by certain thoughts in their head. Let me ask you, do you know whether certain thoughts tend to bring up those emotions and the weeping that you periodically experience?

What kind of thoughts tend to be associated with that in your mind? Okay, a little bit.

[Speaker 6] (6:27:24 - 6:27:26)
Jan, did you hear the question?

[Speaker 1] (6:27:26 - 6:30:15)
I think Jan is frozen at the moment. But let me just, until she comes back, let me just talk a little bit about that because it's something that applies to many, many people. What tends to happen is that certain thoughts come into your head that tell you a story about yourself.

And, for example, the thoughts that you are lonely now, that you are alone, that you have, I have nobody. Let's just, let me be the thoughts for a moment. I have nobody in my life.

These people are all happy with their partners. No, I'm alone. He has left me or I left him, and now I probably won't find anybody anymore.

And why do I have to be so alone? And you begin to feel self-pity, and you begin to feel really lonely because you are creating a story in your head about yourself and that story is what makes you unhappy. And there's nothing wrong really with being alone as long as you don't have a story around it because being alone can also be a great opportunity for becoming present in the moment.

So that's the difference of being lonely and experiencing solitude. Lonely is a state that nobody would want to experience. That means lonely means I am lonely, usually means I'm alone and I don't like it because I have a story in my head around it that tells me that that's a negative thing.

So a self, this is of course egoic thinking, a self, an image is created in one's mind. That's me. And this me image is reinforced by continuous further thinking.

And in many cases, that me image in the mind, which is the egoic self image, in many cases, it's an unhappy one. It's an unhappy story. And that was my case, my identity.

I lived with an unhappy sense of self for many years that made me anxious and depressed, a deeply unhappy self, but I was so identified with those thoughts that made up that unhappy sense of self. I didn't know that there was a deeper dimension in you that had far deeper than any thoughts going through my head until that night. So is Dan back now?

Can you hear me?

[Speaker 15] (6:30:15 - 6:30:15)
Yes.

[Speaker 1] (6:30:16 - 6:30:40)
Okay, you disappeared for a moment. And I wanted to ask you, are there certain thoughts in your head that tend to occur as these emotions arise in you, the sadness and so on? Do you know whether there are certain thoughts that tend to be associated with those feelings and emotions?

[Speaker 10] (6:30:41 - 6:30:43)
Yes, and they're extremely subtle.

[Speaker 1] (6:30:44 - 6:33:12)
Yes, yes. And I'm very aware to... So you recognize they're very subtle.

This means you need to be very alert to catch those thoughts and identify them as not the truth, but a story about your life and about who you are and about what has happened to you. So those thoughts tend to, you construct a little story about me, the lonely one, self-pity perhaps arises as part of that. And if you're not very alert, then the thoughts take you over.

In other words, you believe in every thought that arises, you become the thought, this is called self-identification with thinking, and then you become an unhappy me, an unhappy self, and the emotions then come. And so if you catch those thoughts, and as you say, they're very subtle, as they arise, you say, oh, there goes another one of those thoughts. And then you realize it is not a helpful thought and it's not even the truth.

The truth is simply that you are here, there's nobody else around, and there's no problem with that. Actually, it's a wonderful opportunity. As I said earlier, you might not have heard it.

It's a wonderful opportunity for being just totally present in the moment. You're not, aren't you lucky, you're not being distracted by some husband who wants this or that, and has his demands. So life has given you an opportunity to be free of that, and use that opportunity to inhabit more deeply, not only the inner body, but the present moment, so that you experience the aliveness of life that happens around you every moment, instead of identifying with some old thoughts in your head and becoming a story in your head.

So it's a, use the opportunity of being alone for your presence practice. There are millions of people who wish they were alone. And of course, when they are alone, they wish they were with somebody else.

So half of the people are unhappy in their relationship, and the others are unhappy because they're not in a relationship.

[Speaker 6] (6:33:13 - 6:33:23)
So I think we might've lost her, but we'll see if she comes back. But Eckhart, this is a little bit different than trying to re-fame a good story around the experience. Would you say that?

[Speaker 1] (6:33:24 - 6:34:24)
Yes, that's a good point. There's nothing wrong with improving a story and saying my life is actually quite good compared to other people. Look at those people, they're far worse off than I am.

That's another story that kind of makes it feel, feels a little bit better. But I would say that's fine as a transitional step if you want to do that. But I'm here pointing to the possibility of actually going beyond any story so that you don't exchange a happy story for a good one.

Are you able to just step out of any story and just be the conscious presence in your life, the conscious presence that is your life, be there as a conscious presence, then some thoughts may still arise out of that, but they tend to be happy thoughts. But it's not that your happiness is not caused by the happy thoughts. The happy thoughts are caused as they come out of the state of presence.

Yeah, yeah.

[Speaker 6] (6:34:25 - 6:34:34)
And so even if the external world is reinforcing a certain story, good or bad, you don't necessarily have to have your being identified with that.

[Speaker 1] (6:34:35 - 6:34:38)
That's right, yes, yes, yes, absolutely, yeah.

[Speaker 6] (6:34:39 - 6:34:55)
So we'll see if she's able to come back, but I think we should probably move on to Wafa Lababina, and she can probably pronounce her name better than I can, who is in Indiana. Welcome, Wafa.

[Speaker 5] (6:34:56 - 6:38:24)
Thank you, welcome again, sir, and thank you. And I forgot to mention, thank you for your work, for bridging technology with consciousness and reminding us that we can put it at the service of consciousness versus only at the service of ego, as we might have seen in the past. So thanks, I greatly appreciate your work.

I already checked it out, and it's fabulous. And my last name is Lababne. You said it right the first time.

Eckhart, as I mentioned, I began deliberately to become aware of my thoughts many, many years ago at the suggestion of a business mentor who said, who would just say, just become aware of your thoughts, watch your thoughts, and that's what's it. There was nothing more. So for many years, I became aware of my thoughts, the process, I'm pretty sure you are well aware of the process, that was fascinating, scary at the beginning, confusing at times, but as I began to become aware, many realizations occurred, realizations.

Naturally, I started writing, because I'm a writer since I was a child, I always write, and I document, and I have a scientific nature, so I tend to write everything. Years later, I decided to write a book about conscious consciousness, because, and I like to call it that and not say presence, just to make sure that I am precise, I am aware of my awareness, which are moments that don't come yet so often in my life, but they come at least once or twice a day, which is a great achievement. As I began to write the book and collect my thoughts or the observations through the years, friends, family members, at some point an author and a person, a CEO of a publishing house, suggested that I write my story.

They all had the same thought patterns, the same rationalization or logic behind it, which is so that people can relate, so it can reach a wider audience, and it gives us credibility. I'm relatively young, and people always kind of like, well, what am I gonna learn from a young person? I had great resistance for that initially.

I see their logic, I agree with it, I understand it, but every once in a while, and I started to write, put memories and start to do the work to integrate the realizations with the life story, but every once in a while, a thought would come and say, but do you really have to tell the story? Eckhart didn't tell his life story. So my question to you is twofold.

Number one, do I really have to tell the story so that people can relate? And number two, if I do, how can I tell the story without energizing the ego and triggering the pain body? The story is filled, since age two, the story was filled with trauma, violence, many things.

Of course, there were always doses of love, as I call them, and joy, and glimpses of joy here and there kept me alive. However, the numerous stories of trauma are there. So if you're going to tell the story, you have to say what happened.

So how can I tell the story? If you think it's necessary so people can relate, how can I say it without energizing the ego and most importantly, triggering the pain body? Some people may have trauma, and I want to contextualize it in a way that it doesn't just provoke the pain body and then good luck.

[Speaker 1] (6:38:25 - 6:42:29)
Yes. Thank you. Yes, thank you.

I do believe that it is helpful to connect with the reader. It is helpful to actually tell the story. I often, of course, I get many books and manuscripts sent to me, far more than I can read and sometimes even look at.

But I do often, when I do look at manuscripts, often people write things like, I had dreadful child experiences and so on. Some of the substance is not there. The reader wants to know, what is it actually that happened to you?

And it's only when you talk about your own suffering, then you begin to connect with the reader because the reader has his own suffering also. And so you then resonate. The important thing, of course, is there are two different ways in which one can tell a story.

One, you can tell a story in an unconscious way where you put blame and you accuse and blame those people who perpetrated those things, who perpetrated the abuse. You can tell it in an unconscious way where you create an identity for those people out of their unconsciousness, what they did unconsciously. Or you can tell a story in a conscious way where there's already an awareness underlying the telling of the story, which means you still tell exactly what happened, but you are also present as you write.

You are also present already as the aware consciousness that wasn't there when those things happened to you, but is there now. So you can bring in two dimensions as you write. There's the dimension of the present where you're telling the story, which includes your own presence, your state of consciousness, the awareness that you are now.

And from that level, you can tell the story and then the story becomes infused with awareness. And then it does not trigger the pain body in the reader. And it would also probably be a more pleasant way of writing.

So I would then recommend that you do tell your story, but be careful that you have the two dimensions, not just totally from the dimension of who you were then, just absolute suffering. Suffering is there and the reader needs to know that and to some extent experience it with you because the power of a book is that the reader can identify with the narrator. And that identification can be powerful.

And if the narrator has also awareness as he or she tells the story, then the reader can identify also with the level of awareness and not just with those negative things that happened, the suffering that happened. And so as you are a writer, so I'm sure you know how to do that. So my main advice then to just briefly summarize is as you write, write from awareness and bring in awareness as you write.

So you have the two levels existing at the same time. And then I think what you write will be very helpful to others. So does that make sense?

[Speaker 5] (6:42:30 - 6:43:26)
It makes sense, but can I just reiterate to make sure that I understand it correctly. The previous idea I had in my mind was to chronologically mention everything as it happened so that people can relate. However, it gets to a point where I became aware of awareness and aware consciously and all that.

However, that's where I thought it was weak or it could be danger and triggering. However, what your suggestion as I understood it is that as I'm writing all that, it's kind of like I write the life story, but I also add that it's like two tracks, two sound tracks at the same time. When that happened, this is what had happened.

However, I'm right now here and I can see how simultaneously bring the presence that I am right now along with the story. That will protect the reader from only just going through the drama and the ride.

[Speaker 1] (6:43:27 - 6:44:21)
That's right. It's a little bit like when you're in certain movies, there is a background commentary. Sometimes it's a voice.

Sometimes it's a character that appears in the movie at a later stage where one of the protagonists in the movie is there not only as the protagonist, but also as a background voice that comments on the action from a much later perspective. So in a similar way, you can write that book that gives it, when that happens in a movie, it gives it a certain depth. And the same thing, again, happens as you use it in your writing.

There will be a depth to it when you have the two levels, you now, which is the awareness, and you then the suffering entity coming together.

[Speaker 5] (6:44:21 - 6:44:41)
Yes. So it's basically what the ego does. However, the ego is always the soundtrack that's negatively commenting and narrating.

So right now here, instead of ego, we learn from ego and we consciously, I consciously narrate the presence that I have right now. That's wonderful.

[Speaker 1] (6:44:41 - 6:45:11)
And also, of course, if you had not gone, I may suggest, I know it from my own life and from many other people's lives, if you had not gone through those so-called

negative experiences, the suffering, you would not be at the level of awareness that you are now. So there comes even a gratitude comes in, even as concerns one's suffering.

[Speaker 5] (6:45:12 - 6:45:51)
Yes. I am immensely grateful that it came. People look at me when I talk to people.

I'm relatively young and I talk to people who are always like sometimes double my age. And I feel very grateful. It's like, you know, I had to take this course, but it came to me compact.

And I'm so happy. I'm done with it. I continue to grow and learn and become more aware and deepen my awareness.

But however, I am very grateful. Hey, I'd rather have it early on when I was much younger and many tools that are powerful. And I'm here right now to integrate it with consciousness.

I am truly, truly grateful for everything.

[Speaker 1] (6:45:51 - 6:45:58)
Thank you. One last question. What does the writing behind you say, the writing of yourself there?

[Speaker 5] (6:45:59 - 6:46:01)
Well, I was going to ask you if you could read that.

[Speaker 15] (6:46:01 - 6:46:02)
No.

[Speaker 5] (6:46:02 - 6:46:34)
That's actually, it says it's a prayer. It says it's as you wake up, you say, we awaken and everything belongs to God and much gratitude to the one that is to the one and to him we return. So it's a very weak translation right on the spot.

I should have thought of that. But it's a prayer that I put there. My friend, actually, my sister wrote, actually, and I put there.

[Speaker 1] (6:46:34 - 6:46:35)
Oh, thank you.

[Speaker 5] (6:46:35 - 6:46:39)
Oh, thank you. Thank you. Thank you, Eckhart.

I greatly appreciate your help.

[Speaker 1] (6:46:39 - 6:46:39)
Thank you.

[Speaker 6] (6:46:40 - 6:46:49)
So, Eckhart, we have Angelica Mischendahl from Germany who also has a question now. Angelica?

[Speaker 9] (6:46:52 - 6:46:54)
Hi, very nice to be here.

[Speaker 1] (6:46:55 - 6:46:56)
Thank you.

[Speaker 9] (6:46:57 - 6:47:59)
My question is a very simple question and I'll tell you how I came to it. I was writing an email one day and, you know, to the dear ones I always write with love. I send you my love or I give you my love.

And I asked myself, you know, I write this, I give you my love. What is that? What happens when I give somebody love?

What happens there? What is that? What does that mean?

How does that feel inside? So this question led me to look a little bit deeper into it. And I saw, I realized that I actually don't give anything when I give love to somebody or when I say it even when I feel it.

I'm just there. And so the question that I have is, what is then the difference between love and presence?

[Speaker 1] (6:48:01 - 6:58:21)
Good. Well, that's a good question. Now, love, of course, can mean many things.

There is the love as the ego sees it and there is the true love which is a transcendent state. Now, I have, I believe in one of, I occasionally post things on Facebook. Well, somebody does it for me, but I write it.

And I had a quote a few months ago. I don't know, can't remember who it is by. It said, in romantic love you want the other person and in true love you want what's good for the other person.

So the pseudo love is always wanting something. And if the wanting is not met or no longer works, then it can very quickly turn into its opposite. So true love is very different from that grasping, clinging or wanting that we normally associate with love.

That's the egoic state. Oh, there is a word that is, let's explore some alternative pointers to that, to what we call love. There is a word in the English language called benevolence.

Now, benevolence is, of course, a Latin-based word. Bene is good. Volence is willing.

Of course, the English language also has a Germanic-based word, which is goodwill. So there is goodwill towards all beings or all creatures. Now, when you say you don't give anything, there is a kind of, when you look at something in that space or state of goodwill or benevolence, which really you can only do when you are present, when you are not perceiving through the filter of your conditioned thinking and the filter of the emotions and the filter of the ego itself that consists of conditioned thinking.

So when you relate to another human being, not through that filter of the ego, which says, I want you, I need you, you can somehow enhance my sense of self, you can compliment me, I can't live without you, and whatever the ego says, there is another way of relating to a human being. And when you relate no longer through the filter of the egoic mind, then you relate through presence. And when you relate through presence, there is, although you say it's not a giving, I do perceive it, however, almost as an outflow of energy that is not your energy, but it's energy that moves through you, and it flows to whatever it is you're perceiving in that state of presence.

And there is a benevolence that comes with that. So there's a deep peace that underlies that perception. And in that deep peace and in that benevolence with which you perceive other human beings or another life form, anything, even an inanimate object, sometimes you can pick it up and appreciate it in its beingness or its beauty or the simple fact that it's there.

So all these words that I'm using, appreciation, an outflow, an outflow of attention that doesn't want anything, a benevolence or a goodwill towards that which you are perceiving, with that the separation that is the sense of separation that is created by the conceptualizing egoic mind is no longer there. And then you can have love towards another human being that you meet for half a minute because you're buying something from him or her, and you are looking at him or her in that state of spacious presence. And out of that state of spacious presence flows this energy.

And often you find it coming back at you also because it can sometimes awaken that same oneness consciousness, as we could call it, in the other, or at least the other no longer feels threatened by you because consciously or unconsciously they realize that they are not being judged in any way whatsoever. They are being completely accepted as they are in the present moment. And in that complete acceptance, which is inseparable from presence, in that complete acceptance, in that spacious presence, there is an energy movement.

And that is what I would call love. And the world is waiting, one could almost say, the world is waiting to be loved in that way by you. I would say that even the flower loves to be recognized in its beauty by you because it cannot recognize its own beauty.

It is beautiful. There's ultimately no separation. Every physicist will agree there's ultimately no separation between you and the flower.

There's just, we perceive this absolute separation. When you perceive a flower in that state of presence, the flower begins to recognize itself. And so that happens when there is this appreciation of things around you.

Another word that is associated with that is gratitude. They really all go together. You then perceive things in a state of gratitude.

Of honoring everything, every human being, not just using things for some end in the next moment. That's the mind projected to the next moment, and it uses every human being and everything in order to get to the next moment, what I want to achieve through this human being. It starts with a simple thing like buying, you're buying a newspaper in a shop.

Now, it's the only way in which you interact with this other person that you're buying the newspaper from. Is that person just a function of receiving the money and giving you the newspaper? Or is there another dimension to the interaction where for a few seconds while you're there, you acknowledge the beingness of that other person?

And that is, of course, you have to be present with him or her. You just, you look at him, for a moment there's no thinking. It's just a spacious presence.

Out of that spacious presence comes goodwill, comes benevolence, comes an appreciation, and comes a deep sensing that ultimately you and this so-called other person are not truly absolutely separate. There comes a sensing, a realization that the essence that you share with the other is consciousness. No matter what form the consciousness takes on the surface, it's a little bit like ripples or waves on the surface of the ocean.

Every ripple looks a little bit different. You are a ripple and the other person is a ripple. It looks different.

But what is the actual nature of the ripple? What is the true nature of rippleness? The true nature of rippleness is the ocean.

Each ripple is an expression, a beautiful temporary expression of the vastness of the ocean of being. And so you no longer take the appearance of the person for who that person is, because there can be no love there. You look through that and you sense there is an essence there that is inseparable from presence.

So presence then and love are very, they go together. You cannot have one ultimately without the other. There is, there are other forms of so-called love that the love of a mother has for a child.

That is fine. That's a natural kind of love that has its place, but is not yet transcendent love, but can, there can be transcendent love also there at the same time. But many people, because you mentioned in your question sending love to your, to relatives and so on, with relatives and family members, you have, you have, you can have two levels.

You can have the emotional bond, which is called love. And in addition, you can have the transcendent dimension, which is the true love. So you don't have to be confined to the emotional bond.

There needs to be something to really deepen it. There needs to be the transcendent dimension also. And that would be the case even with those with whom you don't have no emotional bond.

So for true love to exist, the emotional bond may be there or it may not be there. In many cases, you won't have an emotional bond. And yet there is this outflow of benevolent and gratitude and appreciation.

So that's really how it is.

[Speaker 9] (6:58:22 - 6:58:41)
Um, uh, you know, the question, so you, you, there is a, you, there is, when I, when I looked at this, when I looked at this question, um, and I removed all the emotions are associated with love.

[Speaker 15] (6:58:41 - 6:58:42)
Yes.

[Speaker 9] (6:58:42 - 6:59:00)
So why we, we, yeah. Um, then it felt for me, presence has a neutrality. Yeah.

It has like a neutrality. It's very, you know, it's just there, but there is no, there is no flavor to it. You can, if you, you know, yeah.

[Speaker 15] (6:59:00 - 6:59:00)
Yes.

[Speaker 9] (6:59:01 - 6:59:46)
And, uh, and when I took out of love, all this emotional charge, if there's a way to call it that way, then I couldn't see, it was, I couldn't see any difference almost. That's why I asked you. And, and the way you talk about a flower, the flower is also present.

It's just there. Yeah. It's just there, but there's no, yeah, there is no, there are no flavors to it.

I mean, it's beautiful when one looks at it, but you talked about this outflow. So is it, is there, is this just being there? And then out of this, then a flow, this out, feeling this outflow or this current?

[Speaker 1] (6:59:48 - 7:01:04)
Yes. Yes. Just right now, you can, I can look at you, you can look at me without necessarily thinking anything, and, and you can feel a sense of connect, not just connectedness, but something deeper, a oneness where there's, you don't need concepts in that.

There's a, there's an underlying piece of beingness, of presence. And in that, concepts are not needed. And you don't even need to understand more about it, because one thing that can, the mind can be a help or a hindrance.

The mind never stops asking the next question, what's this really like? So I'm just inviting you right now, instead of asking to elucidate further, why not simply be here in this beautiful moment and appreciate whatever arises in consciousness at this moment, and be there as the underlying presence for it, and appreciate it in that way deeply. And that is love.

[Speaker 6] (7:01:08 - 7:01:59)
So our hour is up. And I want to take a moment first to thank all of the viewers who tuned into this from all over the world. I know there are thousands and thousands of you.

Thank you for taking the time. I also want to thank the members of the Eckhart Tolle community who came here today to ask questions. We really appreciate your efforts.

And to thank you, Eckhart, as well, for having the interest and courage to try out this new form of technology and dialogue. We greatly appreciate you taking the time. And this concludes our first ever Google Plus Hangout with Eckhart Tolle.

And thank you again for attending. And please go out and remember the practice of presence and awakening.

[Speaker 1] (7:01:59 - 7:02:01)
Thank you, everybody. Thank you.

[Speaker 5] (7:02:01 - 7:02:04)
Thank you, Eckhart. Thank you, Søren. Thank you, everybody.

[Speaker 1] (7:02:04 - 7:44:18)
Welcome to the present moment. So to start with, let's just become aware of the present moment. And that can have two or three steps.

You can go deeper into the present moment, or you can just begin to be aware of it. Step one is always, well, you could say remembering that the present moment is life itself, and it's all you ever have. And if you forget that, you live in a kind of hypnotic trance, which is how most people live, entranced by their thoughts and emotions, and a sense of self derived from the conditioned thinking and the emotional conditioning.

That's normal existence. And so you're not present. Your attention is absorbed by the conditioning, mental, emotional conditioning, and the egoic self, which arises when you mistake the conditioning for who you are.

So it often starts with remembering, oh, the present moment. And then first your attention goes to sense perceptions. That's usually when you realize you had been lost in the mind, and suddenly your attention comes into the present moment, and first it means an awareness of sense perception.

And suddenly you look around as if you had just arrived in that place, because you have, if you've been absorbed in the usual problem making, anticipating, remembering, regretting, that kind of mind activity. When you then first become aware of your surroundings, it's like as if you were arriving here after a prolonged absence. It could be your familiar room, but you never really looked at it anymore, just peripherally.

And suddenly you become aware of each thing, the table, the chair, the plants, the walls, without having to name them. I'm naming them because I'm directing your attention to them. You become aware of whatever is there, and there's the silent presence of each thing.

That's already an enormous shift in consciousness. It's already the beginning of a shift in consciousness. Become aware of the silent presence of things.

And the whole problem making activity of the mind subsides, and you realize that at this moment, there is no problem. You don't have a problem at this moment. But if you do, then you go and deal with it.

But usually you don't, unless the mind manufactures it. So it's quite a wonderful thing to become aware of. Let's say you're in your room, in a room, become aware of the presence of each thing and briefly acknowledge it.

It's presence without any mental activity. You just become comfortable with those things. And there's almost a kind of appreciation of everything.

And then you take in the totality of the place where you are. You might not be in a room, you might be outside. It doesn't matter if you're outside, then your attention goes out to whatever is there.

Whether they are man-made objects or natural objects, doesn't really matter. Of course, natural things are more conducive to taking you into that presence because there's no thought associated with a tree or flower. Or the grass or the sky or the clouds.

But even looking at a car or a house or traffic flowing, you just acknowledge the is-ness of all things that you are perceiving around you. And that is comforting. And it already frees you to some extent from the heavy burden of being a person, a personality, a me.

There's a heaviness to that. If that's all you know about you, then it's heavy. You carry around the baggage of me and my problems.

And already just allowing your attention to dwell on each thing that surrounds you. Already, to some extent, frees you from the heaviness of the conditioned person. And then you become aware also not just of each thing.

You become aware also of the totality of that place where you happen to be. If it's a room, you become aware of the totality of the room without focusing specifically on one thing. Just take in the wholeness of it.

And if you're outside, the same. Become aware of the totality of your surroundings as a single whole. So there's two ways of being aware.

You can place attention on individual things and as much as you can without needing to label it, just attention, just taking it in, just noticing it. Appreciation sometimes comes with it naturally. Oh.

So this is the first step in becoming present. That's already, for some people, that's all, they might not go any deeper and that already is a liberation. When they remember, they can go to that place where there's the non-problematic present moment.

Then you also become aware of sounds, of course. It becomes part of your experience of the present moment. It's not only what you see, it's also what you hear.

So there may be sounds, little sounds, big sounds. And again, you become aware and in the same way that you give attention to a table or a chair or a tree, you give your attention to the sounds that arise. And most sounds come and go.

They suddenly come up out of nothingness and then they disappear. Whatever it may be, a child screaming or shouting or dog barking or human voice or car passing by or motorbike or bird or gust of wind or raindrops, whatever. Most sounds come and go, so they arise and they subside.

And again, there's an attention there. And again, natural sounds, yes, they can take you more easily into presence than man-made sounds because man-made sounds can more easily stimulate thought. But that's fine.

So there's visual, there's... So you're becoming free of the heavy me and something arises that is just an aware presence. And that aware presence is aware of these things around you that you perceive with your senses.

And the next thing is you become aware of the fact that you're breathing, very calming in itself. So if you're sitting in a room like here and now, you become aware of the things in the room, the totality of the room, any sounds that may be there and the fact that you're breathing. It's a kind of peace descends because the problem-making entity has temporarily gone away and something else has taken its place, we could say.

So that possibility is always there when life becomes heavy or you feel there's a heaviness to life, a burden, or it's, I'm close to a nervous breakdown, I don't know what to do anymore, I just can't cope anymore. Okay, so then look around where you are. Oh, where's the nervous breakdown now?

You're breathing, you're listening, you're seeing everything. So it's liberating, you can see how liberating the present moment is and how it's the entry point into something else. And as I said, for some people, that's already enough, developing the ability to step out of, especially out of excessive and unnecessary problem-making mind activity and becoming comfortable with, appreciative of whatever is here now.

And then you realize why some artists choose as their subject matter, not the extraordinary things of life, but some artists choose very ordinary things and paint them, an ordinary chair, an ordinary table, an ordinary landscape. Or just a normal, just ordinary tree, because the artist looked at that and gave it his or her fullest attention. And then he saw or she saw that there is something in the most ordinary thing, even the most ordinary table or chair or landscape, there's something there that you cannot name or define.

One could almost say there is more there than meets the eye. And the artist realized that, and that's why he then, or she, picked up a brush and painted this thing that, he wants to show on the canvas his or her perception of it, that added dimension that you cannot define or name. There's something to it that's more than meets the eye, even the most simple thing.

And then if the artist is successful, some are, some are not, some become successful after they're dead, but at some point, the painting may be in a gallery, and then the people come and look at the painting of that old chair. Oh, look at that, so powerful. But they would never look at an old chair in real life, in the old chair itself, they don't look at it, but they look at the painting of the old chair.

Yeah. But the real purpose of art, or if not purpose, how art can be, contemplation of art can be helpful and beneficial, is it shows you what is possible, a perception that is possible, a deeper perception of things. So if you look at an ordinary landscape in a painting and you realize there is a depth there, then perhaps next time you find yourself in an ordinary landscape, you look at it with new eyes, not labeling it, but giving it your fullest attention.

And that's the present moment, of course, it's an aspect of the present moment. And that's really what your life consists of, there is nothing else but all the things that arise around you as you go through life. And the miraculous nature of it, and the mysterious nature of it.

If you miss all that, you miss the entire thing. You might as well not have come here. But, the aliveness of it all, and then to go a little deeper if you want, you're not only aware of all those things that you perceive with your senses, you become aware also of an aliveness in your body that's not really a sense perception anymore, because you don't see it, you don't hear it, you don't smell it, taste it, touch it.

You become aware of it in some other way. The simple fact that the body is alive. Your main goal is in your relationships, in your work situation, in your home situation, your main goal is being present wherever you are and whatever you do.

Then your life becomes empowered, and you will do a lot of good without necessarily feeling that I am doing it. It flows through you. And those of you who are still looking for something to do, the question often people ask me, what am I meant to do?

Where am I meant to be? Who am I meant to be with? And of course, the first answer is the foundation for it all, to find out where you're meant to be, what you're meant to do, who you're meant to be with.

The first answer is you're meant to be here, you're meant to be doing what you're doing right now, and you're meant to be with whoever you are with right now at this moment. That's foundation. I'm not talking about for the rest of your life, but right now, so you come to a full acceptance of whatever is in the present moment.

Now, most people who are trying to figure out what they're supposed to do in their lives, they don't give their fullest attention and they're not fully aligned with the present moment, where they are, who they are with. They are rejecting it in some way. And that obstructs the power and obstructs the arising of presence.

So you become accepting and comfortable with where you are right now. So you're meant to be here right now. That's why you're here.

I'm meant to be here. And in the movie of your life, also there must be things that go wrong and they do all the time. Otherwise it's not interesting.

And then there is another dimension that is accessible in human consciousness.

There's a potential of realizing the vertical dimension as opposed to the horizontal dimension and the vertical dimension is realized. You enter it as you become present.

And as you become present, the stream of thinking subsides, is replaced with a space of awareness. Awareness arises. And then when I ask you, who or what are you without reference to any thought?

What does it feel like to be you without reference to a narrative in your mind that you call my life? So for example, in this moment, you don't need to remember anything about your life. But when you don't remember anything about your life, are you still there?

And what does that mean? I am still there without reference to a narrative. What is that I am that's still there that doesn't seem to have any content anymore?

Without the narrative, there's an I am without content. This is why it's so hard to describe it or to talk about it. What is left is a presence.

It's all you can say about it. It's an absence of thought, but there's a presence there. Can't define it.

And there, you have no age. It doesn't matter whether you're 20 years old or 100. There's a presence.

A beingness. Being. One could say, you know that you exist.

Well, exist is the wrong word. You know that you are in that realization in the vertical dimension. You know that you are, but that's all you know and all you need to know.

Nothing needs to be or should be added to it. The beingness itself. In ancient Greece, the Temple of Apollo at Delphi had inscriptions.

One inscription on the enormous wisdom arising in ancient Greece. One of the inscriptions was, it goes back to Socrates or Pythagoras, know yourself. Know thyself inscribed.

And then on another side of the temple, there was a strange inscription. You are. And people didn't know later on when they looked at it, hundreds of years later, thousands of years later.

What does that mean? Maybe there's something missing. Let's look more closely.

You are. Maybe it got eroded by time. There must be something else.

But they couldn't find anything else. And a few people later realized the deeper meaning of it. And they actually go together with know thyself and you are go together.

Know thyself does not refer to the personality. It does not refer to knowing the story of you in great detail. Exploring perhaps hidden things that you hadn't known about yourself.

There's a place for that too, but it's not meant by the ancient know thyself. It's not the self that you get to know through going through psychoanalysis for 10 years. Because there's always new layers of memories.

Oh, I hadn't realized that. That's so interesting. My life is becoming so complex.

Interesting. The longer I have psychoanalysis, the more interesting it gets. That has its place.

It's fine. It's interesting. It's like a movie.

That's an interesting movie. And people like to see movies that are not only interesting, but interesting must mean there must be things that go wrong in the movie. Otherwise, it's not interesting.

And in the movie of your life, also there must be things that go wrong and they do all the time. Otherwise, it's not interesting. So know thyself doesn't refer to all the details of your life, hidden motivations, all those things, repressed desires.

Know thyself doesn't refer to that. That's a different knowing and a different self. A different knowing and a different self.

The knowing, the verb to know here, is not used with reference to conceptual knowing, analytical knowing, knowing through thought structures, thoughts, words, concepts. There is a deeper knowing that is non-conceptual. And there is a deeper self than the conceptual entity that is the egoic entity.

The self that the Buddha described as an illusion, that is the conceptual entity. There is a deeper self that in Buddhism is described as the no-self, and in Hindu teachings is described as the transcendent self. The Atman.

So the inscription on the Temple of Delphi refers to that. First of all, the knowing is not the conceptual knowing. There is another way of knowing, and there is another self other than the self that you are familiar with, that you call your life, me and my life.

So that's important to know. And the key is given in these two words, you are, that is the key to knowing yourself. And you are is the realization of being, which is the transcendent self.

I am trying to understand why a person would attract others who ultimately betray them. Assuming that we create our relationships consciously or unconsciously, why is there the experience of betrayal? Assuming also that I know and love myself profoundly, what is to be learned from being betrayed?

The question sounds a little abstract, but the questioner is not here. I assume that the questioner feels betrayed. By someone.

And since the questioner is a woman, perhaps she feels betrayed by a man. Perhaps, maybe it's by a woman. Now, of course, betray already is a word that is quite heavy.

He betrayed me. She betrayed me. There's already a huge amount of heaviness and story in that.

If you put it slightly differently, it loses some of its heaviness and putting it slightly differently could sound like this. He is a human being and he manifested behavior that corresponded to his level of consciousness at that particular time when he did it. Perhaps at other times when I met him, he seemed to be at a better, higher level of consciousness, but then he fell back to a more unconscious state and then his behavior manifested that.

Where's the betrayal? It suddenly disappeared. So that makes it easier on you to deal with it than to impose a huge narrative or judgment on another person and involve you in this dreadful act of which you become a part, the act of betrayal.

Yes, of course you suffered. We all suffer. We all encounter humans who make us suffer because many humans, most of them are unconscious and they're not always at the same level.

That's an interesting fact that humans can be at enormously varying levels of consciousness according to the situation they find themselves in. There are some humans who have a potential for committing a crime but circumstances never put them in a position where that potential becomes actualized and then it can happen that other humans encounter a situation that is very challenging and brings out all the worst accumulations within them that come up to the surface and suddenly they turn into these monsters. And before you might have known a completely different person, a completely different level of consciousness.

So humans get challenged or encounter situations that bring out certain aspects of their unconsciousness between in sexual encounters, because it's not unlikely that the betrayal has something to do with the man going off with another woman, not unlikely. Now that is an area that that kind of attraction that can make people very quickly, very unconscious. There are expressions for that, but I won't say.

So yes, that's the unfortunate thing with human beings. They're not fully enlightened. And then of course you say, I trusted him.

He promised me when we got married that he would be faithful and I trusted him. And I'm sure when he promised it, he meant it. I don't think when he promised to be faithful, he meant I'm not really going to do that.

When he promised to be faithful, he meant it. But then a few years passed and then one day he had a few drinks and then he looked at that woman there and he was gone. Completely unconscious.

And again, in Jesus' words, forgive them for they know not what they do. Now to forgive them is only something that you do for yourself because you free yourself of the burden of having to live with a narrative or a story of betrayal and be part of that. And then part of your sense of identity, this is very painful, but seductive, part of your ego identity then is, I am the one who has been betrayed.

And that's a dreadful burden to carry in your sense of self. So if you believe in that story that your mind has created, the act of betrayal, he betrayed me. So you're setting up for yourself an enormous amount of suffering because that story will become part of your sense of self.

And if that's the case, then even it will influence and color the way from now on in which you relate to other men or women or whatever it is, can easily color that. So you have to be very careful and see what you're doing to yourself by creating these stories. On the conventional level, they are true.

You can say, he betrayed me. That's conventional way of using language, but it's not the real truth. You might have heard of Byron Katie, the spiritual teacher.

She always questions whatever thoughts the mind produces and that's a wonderful thing because otherwise you might feel tempted to believe in every thought that comes into your head. He betrayed me. And of course, Byron Katie would ask, do you know that for sure?

How do you know that? Yeah, of course I know for sure. And then eventually, if it works, the person is meant to disidentify from the thought that the mind has created and become free of being trapped by this thought, which really means consciousness is trapped by this thought that the mind has created and you are trapped in it.

So be careful with the stories that your mind creates. And sometimes if you rephrase, as I just did for you, rephrase the story, it suddenly does not cling to you anymore and it no longer becomes part of your painful identity or sense of self because you want to be free of that. So, and of course then you, unfortunately you have to forgive him.

Sorry, you have to, that is part of it when you realize, yeah, he was unconscious. Forgiveness comes and that's fine. It doesn't mean you want to start all over again or maybe you will, but probably not.

Because unless a shift has happened in him, the same kind of thing might happen to him again next time he has a drink and sees a woman. So careful with, very careful with stories that the mind creates and then become part of your sense of self.

[Speaker 3] (7:45:25 - 7:55:35)
But there were several questions, a number of them, which I like to kind of lump together and address. And that had to do with pain in the body, that being related to the pain body. And different parts of the body, some people had shoulder problems, some people had it in their face, in their hips, and various other places in their body.

And, as I mentioned, every thought, every emotion, if not processed fully, leaves an imprint in the body. So if there have been any trauma in your life, or any just emotions that come up and that you haven't processed, it leaves an imprint in the body. And usually those imprints of emotions have a story.

And each time you tell the story, either it's out loud or in your head, okay, we know that one, where it goes around, it actually, the energy, because it's every thought and every emotion is energy, the story goes around. And if you believe that story, you believe, I mean, the event may have happened to you, yes. But if you actually sort of feed on that, and then you allow the story to play around in your head, and you tell somebody else, you know what happened to me, or you have this victim role where you just feed on that event, the emotion.

And that's what the pain body does. The first time I realized what Eckhart meant, because Eckhart would sometimes say, you know, we will feed the pain body, or, you know, you connect with somebody else with a pain body, and you feed off of each other. And I didn't really quite understand that.

I kind of understood that intellectually. But there was one day where I was meditating, and I was watching my pain body arise, so there's some old emotion there. Yes, I have a pain body, and it will activate itself.

And I was watching it, because it was something very old. And something very old sometimes takes a long time to process. I mean, if it's been very traumatic, it will take a while in time to process.

And then I had the story come up, the memory of the story. And I was able to witness that. And I saw that as soon as the story came up in my mind, it was like this energy ball that came down and fed right into my gut, where I was holding my pain body, where I could feel the pain.

I was actually feeling the sensation of pain in my body. So, and I went, ah, that's what Eckhart means by feeding the pain body. So if the story goes around in your head, keeps going around, and you play it out, it actually then makes this pain body bigger.

So I went, okay, all right, now I understand. And then you're able then, that awareness is there that you can drop, you make that decision, and you don't follow the thought. But you stay connected to where you are feeling it internally, because that energy now is blocked in your body and it's something very old.

And it has to be felt. You didn't feel it back then, so don't think you're going to get away with not feeling it now, as it becomes active. So, and it's not, you don't have to create it into a problem.

It is not a problem. The mind thinks it's a problem, but it is not a problem. There is enough awareness in you where you are now able to free the pain body.

Hallelujah. So when you feel it, hallelujah, really, truly, because your awareness is there and all you just have to do is just feel it. And sometimes it is so intense, and the reaction, the habit, is to be able to run away from it, because we don't want to deal with it, we don't want to feel it.

We go, oh no, no, no, not this, not this. Or when will this stop? As soon as you have those thoughts, you're not in acceptance mode.

You're in resistance mode. So the only way out is through. Yes, yeah, the only way out is through.

And will that pain last forever? No. It feels like it will, but it won't.

It won't. So we just feel that and allow that, your awareness, shining the light of consciousness on the energy itself within the body, and then it will dissolve or transmute, transform, it'll change. Maybe it'll start to dissipate and the energy then can run freely.

And then your energy body opens up and the life force that is naturally and just always here, flowing within, can then flow. And there's a release. Sometimes it's a big release, sometimes it's a quiet release, but there's just a release.

Now, it doesn't mean that it won't come up again, because it may come up again. Don't go into your head and think that, okay, well, I forget to feel this once and I want it gone. Usually it doesn't work that way.

Life will bring something about to activate that dormant state of pain body so that we can release it and become free human beings. There was one here where somebody had hip replacements, two hip replacements, and with something like that, or changing something that's in the body, inviting a foreign object in the body, it takes time for the body then to be able to coexist with something that is foreign. And it will coexist.

And there might even be a grieving process because it's a loss of something. It's like losing a limb. So there's the experience, the body experience this, oh, jeez, what's going on here?

Something's different is happening. And there could be experience of a loss and a loss also on the emotional level. So pain can actually be our teacher and our alarm clock.

Because when our body's in pain, it's saying, hey, pay attention, pay attention here. Wake up, wake up. Don't go away.

Feel this. Release this. So I invite you to bring that awareness, the acceptance into your practice when the pain body arises.

And then when you think the pain body is completely gone, as Ram Dass says, go home and to your parents for a week. Ultimate test. And not just like, you know, there for a moment and pop out.

Stay with them for a week. But life will show you because we are evolving here and that evolution calls for the release of all things old. So that we can stand new and fresh with this beautiful vessel that we have been given so that life can bring forth a more conscious way of relating and living in this world.

[Speaker 1] (7:56:07 - 8:05:46)
We'll have some questions, but before, just read two or three questions that people have been sending in questions to people who are watching us, who are with us, but elsewhere in time, in space and eventually in time too, except that it's always a present moment. So time ultimately is an illusion, but on a conventional level, we talk about time. So I forgot to say hello to everybody who is not physically present here, but present somewhere else on the planet.

This question has been asked in the past a few times and tends to come up very often. So it is a question that quite a few people have. If we live with a person who is unconscious a lot of the time, is it possible to have a harmonious relationship whether the person totally awakens or not?

That seems to be a recurring problem for many people. Now, if you have brought your unconscious partner here, that means, and he or she actually came along, that means not all is lost. If he or she is still here.

So it depends in what way the unconsciousness of the person that you live with manifests. There are many ways in which it can manifest from being in negative states to misinterpreting what you say or do, anger, and then it goes up on the scale of verbal abuse. And then it goes higher up on the scale of unconsciousness to physical abuse.

So if the unconsciousness is not too high up on that level of intensity, it may be possible to live with a person who may not share, only not share your interest in spiritual evolution, but have no idea what you are practicing or reading or talking about. If you try to point something out, that person may just be uninterested. And then if you go up on the scale of unconsciousness, then another person may be hostile towards what you're doing.

And there's a big difference. But in both cases, there's unconsciousness. Your partner may just have no idea what it is, but say, well, yeah, go listen to that guy again.

I don't know why you go there, but that's okay. I'll be fine. That's fine.

So that should be, you can live with that person. And then another one gets angry. He says, why do you always have to see me?

I can't stand it anymore. Or whatever, criticize. So you might be able to live with that.

What you can live with, only you can know whether you can continue your presence practice and bring surrender into the situation with this person. And miracles are possible. Miracles do happen.

And sometimes the seemingly most unconscious person can suddenly shift. Now, if that person is very unconscious, usually what is required is some blow, not you physically doing it. I'm speaking metaphorically.

Life administers some blow in the form of big loss, accident, illness, and then deeply unconscious people very much trapped in their ego can sometimes suddenly open up. The ego gets cracked. You may sometimes observe that when a person with a big ego is unconscious, it happens not to everybody.

When they become ill, they're lying in bed and they're ill. Sometimes the ego gets even stronger, it seems. But for some people, the ego, there isn't enough energy left to keep the ego going.

Because the illness, it absorbs so much energy, so there's not enough energy. And suddenly, this person who was never a genuine person, that you couldn't talk to heart to heart because there was always egoic posturing and egoic role-playing there. And suddenly, this person is ill, lying in bed, and there just isn't enough energy for posturing and role-playing.

And then for the first time, I've observed it a few times, people have told me and I've personally observed, for the first time, you can communicate with that person in a deeper level of presence. This can also happen when people who had a huge ego all throughout their lives, when they're approaching death. Sometimes miracles of transformation can happen in the last moments, in the last days, or in the last weeks of a person's life.

When resentments that had been building up over a lifetime and other narratives of an extremely negative nature are let go of, can happen. It can also happen when a person is ill, that when this person recovers, that shift that you observed doesn't last. And the moment strength returns to that person, the old egoic patterns are back.

And it's like, oh my God, you're your old self again. You were so nice when you were ill, loving and present and open. Well, just wait.

Things will happen again. So if there's abuse, and these are more pronounced manifestations of unconsciousness, if there's verbal abuse, can you live with such a person? Only you can know whether you're prepared to do that, whether you can sustain your presence practice, perhaps not physical abuse.

If you stay with physical abuse in the hope that this person will become transformed, that is probably a delusion. But I cannot tell you what to do. But if you are alert and vigilant and observe yourself in the presence of that person, you will know what to do.

You just have to see that the right course of action is not being sabotaged by certain patterns that remain in your mind, mental, emotional patterns, such as fear of being alone, fear, loss of security, perhaps the acuity of being with another person, even if it's fear of the unknown, stepping into the unknown. So you may be held back by certain patterns in your mind. And if you are present enough, you can recognize that and then go beyond it.

[Speaker 11] (8:06:10 - 8:06:34)
Hello. My question raises the issue of trauma. People having survived earthquakes, crimes, car accidents.

What would you recommend for their practice? I'm a crime survivor and sometimes dealing with heavy pain, body attacks or difficult emotions during meditations. I have a question Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (8:06:34 - 9:30:35)
Thank you. Do you want to sit again? Because we never know how long the quest, the

answer is going to be.

It could be a minute, could be 30 minutes. It may well be that for humans who have suffered trauma, catastrophic events, anything of that kind, deep suffering. It may well be that, not necessarily, but it may be that during this lifetime, they will not become entirely free of the remnants or the energy left behind by the trauma.

But the important thing is the realization that there is in you a dimension that is beyond anything that could ever suffer. And you have to get in touch with that in you that has always been and will always be and always is the transcendent, the formless dimension within you, the formless essence of who you are. And of course, this is our entire reason for being here is to go deep enough within where you encounter that presence or that spaciousness.

Within that presence or spaciousness, it can still happen that the old pain from time to time arises, or it could happen that the presence gradually consumes, burns up the accumulated pain from the past, the pain body. Either way is fine, even if the presence does not completely burn up the accumulated pain or suffering and which therefore then occasionally resurfaces. At least you know your essential being to be the spaciousness.

So from the difference from not having access to the transcendent dimension within yourself and having access is when you don't have access to it, you're completely in the grip of the pain. It occupies you completely. You become it.

It may also use your mind to renew itself because then you remember what happened. And then by using those thoughts, you feed the old pain through the memory of what happened. And so you are trapped in it.

It has a grip on you. Now, when you have access to the transcendent dimension, you realize that you, the pain is there, but you are there. So here's the pain and you are the space.

And the more you practice, the more you realize you are the space around it. Another useful practice is to, when you feel it, to accept what you feel at any given moment, the present moment, accept when it arises, but know that it is the old pain and the acceptance itself creates the space. And so you, more and more, who you are is not lodged in, identified with the pain, but who you are.

So what I'm saying is the sense of self begins to move out of the pain or the pain may still be there. The sense of self shifts from being identified with the pain and the suffering me to being the space behind or around it. And it's a very subtle thing.

You have to practice. The important thing is practice being the space when you are not, at times when you are not in the grip of the pain, because then you need to see if you can be the space in ordinary circumstances and surroundings. And especially here, of course, a great opportunity for dis-identifying from all the mental, emotional content that still lives in you some fine, some painful, some extremely painful, but to dis-identify from it so that it no longer has a sense of self in it, including all thoughts.

Thoughts still arise, but without the me in them, emotions still come, painful emotions come, but they become divested of the sense of self. And that's a big difference between feeling that you are, you are the pain. It has taken possession of you completely, and it can easily define your sense of who you are, especially in the case of deep trauma.

The pain can easily define your sense of identity. So I have encountered people, I'm sure it's not the case with you, but I have had sometimes questioners and people who have asked about their deep suffering, and they were so identified with their old pain, when I suggested a way of going beyond it, they got angry because they felt that their sense of self had been threatened. And then in a few cases, when I pointed that out to them, they realized.

In one or two cases, they didn't want to realize. But when I pointed out, can you feel that you are angry now? Because I just made a suggestion that it may be possible to not perhaps to eliminate the pain at once, but to transcend it.

And then, so the egoic sense of self, because here too, whatever you identify with becomes part of ego. And it can happen that people identify with some pain or something they suffered in the past. In fact, it's almost a normal process.

And it needs to be pointed out. You need to realize that is not who you are. And compared to who you are, one could say it's like a bad dream compared to who you really are.

You are beyond that and have always been beyond that. You have to access that in you which cannot be touched by that. And it doesn't mean you cut yourself off.

No, the difference is make sure your sense of identity is not in the old pain. That is very important because if it is, you will always fight any attempt to get rid of it. It's an unconscious attempt of the ego to survive.

Very normal egoic motivation. It wants to survive. So the same thing can happen with deeply held viewpoints or opinions.

If you have certain, whatever it is, political, religious, or whatever thing you might have seen on the internet which suddenly has taken possession of your mind and become a kind of mental virus in your head that has taken over 75% of your thought processes. And then your identity is in it and you don't want to let go or the ego doesn't want to let go. So presence, access the presence when the pain is not obvious at those times so that when it comes, you can continue to be there as the accepting witness or presence behind and around it.

So when it comes, you accept it. It forces you to go beyond identification with form. And a point will come where you are thankful for anything, even though it seemed, at the time seemed terrible, for anything that forced you to disidentify from the egoic sense of self.

That's why retrospectively often people become thankful for their suffering, but then you have to realize you can't just go through the motions. It has to be a true thing and that may happen to you also. That's the the important thing is that the old pain is no longer able to use your thought processes and control your thinking so that you can feel when it comes, it comes in waves.

Occasionally it comes up so that you can be there as the presence and accept it without it moving into your mind and make you think the memories of what happened and so on, all kinds of thoughts associated with the energy of the pain. That keeps it in place and renews it all the time. And then you get into a vicious circle.

So, and for this, this is why it's helpful to be here as you sit here, even if you don't do anything, presence power grows in you so it comes more and more and then that begins to surround, so to speak, that begins to surround the accumulated pain. It may dissolve it, don't know, but even if it doesn't, basically, if you're no longer self-identified with it, you are free already. So it's a, and in, the strange thing is, and you may not realize it until later, so I'm not trying to convince you that what I say is true, that it is often humans who go through intense pain of that kind, and sometimes already children have to go through it, that happens.

It's often those that are, that becomes their opening into the transcendent dimension because the pain is too much and then the crack opens in the ego. The opposite can also happen, that the pain solidifies the ego and then the human being becomes totally enclosed in their painful identity and it goes like, or it could, potentially, it can always be the opening, the crack in the shell of the ego. So there may be quite a few of you, I don't know what the percentage is, who have suffered traumatic events and all of you have had certain forms of pain in your life as a child, as an adult.

My childhood was, there was not one traumatic event, but the whole thing was traumatic. So it wasn't concentrated in one event, it was dispersed, not as intense as one traumatic event would be, but dispersed over a period of whatever, 15 years of my life and especially the first 12 years when my parents divorced at the age when I was 10 and then for two or three years after that, it was still very unpleasant every day. Nobody's fault, every human being acts according to their level of consciousness.

What do you think about Facebook? Is it a healthy format? It seems a bit egoic, not a whole lot of transmission of connection, love, et cetera.

Posting pictures of yourself and quantifying friends, likes, et cetera, seems like enhancing the ego. Are we going down the wrong path with social media? Well, the questioner has a point.

As even before the advent of Facebook and similar things for hundreds of years, or thousands of years, people constructed for themselves an identity in their head. That's me, me and my story as I sometimes call it. And that was partly inherited from what your culture tells you you are or your family and your culture and partly by choice, certain things you choose to identify with and then incorporate into your sense of self, certain possessions, certain achievements, or the lack of certain possessions and achievements can all be cooperated.

They become mind forms or thought forms, which you identify with. So there's a mental image that forms and that's the essence of ego, a mental image that's me. So that's been going on for a long time.

And then people live through that mental image of me. They seek out things or people that can improve the mental image of me and try to keep away things or people that could weaken or threaten the mental image of me. It all means not being in touch with who you are beyond any mental image, which is why we are here to go deep into that.

And now we got the technology of Facebook where you can externalize the image and you can create on the Facebook page, you can create the image of me and show it to the whole world. And so many young people and maybe not so young, I believe the oldest Facebook user, I saw a video clip in the States, the world's oldest Facebook user is 105 years old. And it is often used unconsciously in enhancing the image one has of oneself and the image one wants to show to the world.

And then you read other people's images on their Facebook page and you think that's who they are. And then you try to compete with that image and you try to polish up your image and compete with them. Most people want to show off, it seems, I'm not that familiar with it, but most people want to show the good things.

I'm having this great meal, here's a picture of it. Why would anybody want to see what you're eating right now? But they do, it seems.

Or I just bought this thing, do you want to see it? And then you can connect people to a place where you bought it, it's another thing. And all kinds of things that I don't understand.

So you can, in many cases, it becomes an artificial construct that you add to every day and everybody else has their artificial construct. And it can actually strengthen the delusion of the false self. It doesn't have to, but often it does.

Facebook can also be used in conveying interesting information and to connect with people at a deeper level or bringing about some spiritual knowledge. So that's not impossible. I used to post occasionally things, I don't do it myself, but I would send it to Steve and he would post it.

But I haven't, I must admit, I haven't done it in a while. Although some things do get posted, quotes and so on, that's fine. Twitter is another one that is...

There's a Twitter message coming in. The last time I tweeted was when a few months ago, in February, the Oprah channel in the States, I don't know if you can get it here, it's called the OWN channel, Oprah Winfrey Network. They showed a repeat of our webinar that we did a few years ago that I did with Oprah.

They did a slightly shortened, edited version over a period of 10 weeks, 10 Sundays, the new us was shown again on this time, not on the internet, but well, also on the internet, but on TV. And Oprah sometimes is an active tweeter. And she said, it would be great if we could tweet at the same time while this program is being shown.

And so I said, okay, I'll see what I can do. And so I was on the phone with Steve while the program was running, and then I was watching it, and then people sent in these questions and they have to be answered immediately. So I was attempting to dictate answers to Steve and his assistant to put in the answers.

And my mind was quite... Well, I felt almost dizzy afterwards because I tried to watch the program and at the same time, watch the incoming tweets and think of an answer. But Oprah must have realized it wasn't from me because she said, Twitter is the exact opposite of how you operate.

And before Oprah said it, Kim said exactly the same thing to me. And that's true. So I was glad when it was over, but while it was happening, I was surrendered to it, although I did feel dizzy afterwards.

So if you can avoid constructing some pseudo identity for yourself on Facebook and be more real, then you can avoid that trap of just the Facebook amplifying the human ego, which it does in many, many cases, especially for youngsters who have no idea what they're doing. We're all ultimately invisible and what you see of another person is relatively insignificant and not destined to survive. Every human being is consciousness manifesting as a temporary form, taking form as what we perceive as a human being.

So the human being itself is a manifestation of consciousness and ultimately no other than consciousness. The death experience, when you die, what happens? There's a question here that might as well answer at the same time about death.

I laughed a little when I saw it. Why is it that we need to awaken? We all die anyway.

That seems to make sense. Is it that you are still awakened after death in the next lifetimes in eternity? Now, if you have experienced, I don't know if you have, been with somebody, if you sat with somebody who died, who is dying, I don't know if you have experienced it, then you will have experienced if you're able to surrender to that moment.

It's a very sacred thing, a very sacred moment. And there's the moment when the transition happens between this body being inhabited by this field of consciousness and then suddenly the body is just a body. And there's a huge difference.

And you immediately see this body was never that being. It just looked like that being. So that being, as I said earlier, we're all ultimately invisible.

And what you see of another person is relatively insignificant and not destined to survive. So my intuition is, I'll verify it, I'll come back to you after I've died and let you know whether it's correct. The person does not survive.

The personal sense of self does not survive. But that which is deeper than the person in you as let's call it a spark of consciousness, that form, first you are the physical form, deeper than the physical form, you are the consciousness that inhabits the form. And that consciousness is inseparable from the one consciousness.

There is no separate consciousness. Consciousness does not have a plural. There are no consciousnesses.

Consciousness is a singular. There's only one consciousness that manifests as we could call it a ray of consciousness. You are this ray of consciousness.

As a ray of consciousness, consciousness is not subject to birth and death. So it is timeless. This ray of consciousness that you appear as this particular person does not necessarily immediately dissolve into total anonymity.

It remains in most cases as a particular ray, but it's not the person anymore. What happens then, it returns briefly to the source in the same way that a bee returns, goes to the beehive and deposits what it has collected. And every human is the one consciousness experiencing and learning and evolving in some way.

Even the most insignificant life form is the one consciousness evolving and learning. And what it has learned, not the details, but the essence, it contributes something to the whole. That is an intuition that came to me some time ago.

And I believe it, there's some truth in it, but we can only speak of it in terms of analogies. So your growth in consciousness becomes part of the one consciousness. The one consciousness, which is the consciousness of God, we're talking about things that you can't talk about, I'll do it anyway.

The transcendent of God is totally beyond time and does not evolve because evolution would mean time. It would mean... So the transcendent does not exist in our time, it is in a transcendent dimension.

So you can't even conceive of it or talk of it. And that is God. Then God, the emanation of God shines into our dimension and creates our dimension.

And then God is an evolving being when God enters this dimension. And there's no doubt that there is an evolutionary process of consciousness happening in our universe. The ultimate, I cannot explain the ultimate purpose of it all.

I don't know it. And even if I knew it, I have occasionally an intuitive insight, but it cannot be put into words. How anybody could explain the universe by choosing the vocal chords is beyond me because after all, we only have a few sounds.

And as I often say, putting a few sounds together and attempting to explain the universe is a futile attempt. After all, there are only five vowel sounds. And a few consonants or whatever they're called.

So you put together the vowels, A-I-E-O-U, A-I-E-O-U, plus put them together in a certain combination. And there you have the secret of the universe. It doesn't work.

You cannot actually, and you cannot speak about what happens after death without already having to talk about the ultimate purpose of it all, because we are part of the ultimate purpose of it all. But the ultimate purpose of it all, you can never, you can only have little glimpses of it. You can never fully comprehend it with your limited mind or talk about it.

So who you are in your essence survives, does not, ultimately there is no death. And when you die as an ego in this lifetime, which is called die before you die, then you already know that as a living experience that you in your essence are beyond death. And that's a beautiful thing.

When the ego goes, then you die before you die. And you can sense the essence that you are. So I'm never going to die and you are not either.

But of course, the body dissolves. The body will dissolve. What is your level of consciousness throughout your life?

And as you die, that is an important factor in what happens after that. There are people who tell me that I don't want to reincarnate again. I don't want to come back.

It's so hard. Please don't let me come back. And then there are others who say, I hope I'm going to come back because I don't want to disappear into nothingness.

I really hope I'm going to come back. Reincarnation, is reincarnation a fact? Yes, but I would like to bring reincarnation into something that you can actually experience at firsthand here and now.

The deeper meaning of reincarnation, as I see it, is you identify with form. Then you reincarnate. Reincarnate comes from flesh.

Flesh means form. Carnate, chili con carne, it's flesh. And it's, so you reincarnate, which means you identify with form.

Then you reincarnate into a form. So the Buddhists striving towards the end of reincarnation so that you no longer are compelled. The consciousness that you are is no longer compelled to reincarnate into another form and have to go through another lifetime of problems and suffering.

So the Buddhists are striving, they want to come to the end of this cycle of reincarnation, where perhaps you're conscious enough to choose whether you want to reincarnate or not. You can say, no, I've had enough, thank you. Now, when people tell me that I don't want to, they say, I don't want to reincarnate again.

I often point out, doesn't, what, how do you respond? You react to the, when the things of this world, how serious is it when things go wrong in this world? How are you, how, it shows you your attachment to form.

Is the moment you, something problematic happens, do you immediately get upset about your, that your investments have lost 50% of their value? Does it upset you a lot? Yeah.

So you're saying you're not attached to form and you are not going to reincarnate anymore, but you're attached to many forms in this world. So you do want to reincarnate. Reincarnation is identification with form.

How do I go beyond reincarnation? You can, you have to do that here and now. And that means that is what we are doing here.

Do not identify with thought forms in your head. That is the most basic reincarnation that happens continually to human beings is the complete identification with every thought form that comes into their heads. And then they become it.

That's how it is. Let me tell you. You can see how completely identified they are with thought.

So the consciousness is completely drawn into the form. The consciousness that they are, the consciousness that you are, is completely drawn into form. It does not know itself as consciousness.

It only knows itself as form. And that is the compulsion to reincarnate, which most humans who are not awakened, or at least awakening, still have. And you can extrapolate from there that when you have this compulsion throughout your lifetime, the compulsion to reincarnate will continue after this body dissolves.

But if you have gone beyond the compulsion to reincarnate in this lifetime, which means identify with every thought and every emotion that comes up, when you have recognized the essence of who you are beyond form, that realization does not leave you. When you die, there is a freedom that comes. But a freedom you have already found in this lifetime because you have died to this identification with form.

And for many, the beginning of spiritual awakening is to realize that there is this stream of continuous commentary in their minds. And that is the thing, oh, that's interesting. That's a thought, of course.

But before the thought, that's interesting, there's the recognition. It's the voice in the head. And the recognition is not the voice in the head, although you might say it after the recognition.

But in the moment of recognizing there's a voice in the head, that's not a thought. The recognition of thought is not a thought. The recognition of thought comes through awareness or presence.

And awareness or presence is the higher consciousness, the arising new consciousness. Wow. So that is really the meaning of spiritual awakening.

By the way, in this first half of our gathering, I will be talking more about it. In the second half, we will do more experiential. But even while I talk about it here, I would hope that if it works for you, there's already also an experiential realization of what it is I'm talking about.

So there's the voice, there's the voice in the head. And people say things like, I think, they don't think, because thinking is not a voluntary action for them. So it's a delusion to even say, I think.

You don't think, you are being thought by thought. You are created by thought. That energy field is amazing.

So the master said, how can I teach you Zen unless you first empty your cup? Now that's a huge demand. If I'm full of clutter, mental clutter, how am I going to empty my cup?

I would immediately be enlightened if I could empty my cup. But the teaching points to something. It points to this, the word empty.

And that's interesting. That is an important word in Buddhism. And I don't think it's a good translation.

Who first came up with it? I don't know. With the 19th century, the Europeans started to translate ancient texts from Sanskrit.

And one person came up with a translation, but probably of the Sanskrit terms sunyata and translated it as emptiness. That doesn't sound so nice. It sounds like something missing or something like that.

So I have an alternative translation for the Buddhist term emptiness. So that empty is an important word. So remember the Zen master said, how can I teach you Zen unless you first empty your cup?

Empty. Emptiness, my alternative translation for that is spaciousness. Spaciousness is a dimension of consciousness in you.

And that is what we could call the spiritual dimension of consciousness, the deeper or the higher consciousness, just words, doesn't matter. And that is in every human, it's there. Many don't know that it's there because the clutter is so dense that they have no realization of the underlying spaciousness.

And that is why I say in millions of humans, that is still a dormant faculty, so to speak. So the most important realization in your life, much more important than what you have achieved on the level of the world, whether your life in worldly terms is regarded as a huge success or additional failure, or for most of you, probably something in between. That's normal.

Sometimes you fail, sometimes you succeed. You move from gaining, losing, high, low, up and down. That's the identity for most.

So the clutter of your mind is there, but there are moments in your life when you become aware of something spacious underneath it. But you may not call it like, call it that. You may not call it anything.

It may arise, for example, in, and oh, in many humans who may never have heard of anything spiritual, they're still, they're out there. They don't know that the little bit of that is in them. So, but they don't know it.

There's little glances come occasionally into their lives of that dimension. It's not enough to actually say that the spiritual dimension has awakened in them, but little flashes come up now and then into their lives. And that is enough.

Those little flashes from that dimension come into their lives, and that is enough to keep many people sane. And those flashes can come when they, you might think when you go out into nature and you see something extraordinarily beautiful, like a sunset, for a moment you go, ah. Or the vastness of the ocean or the sky or the elements, the wind, the storm.

And for a moment you go, ah. And it's a moment of intense aliveness, and you feel, ah. And then you may remember that moment a little later.

That was such a beautiful moment. Why was it? Yes, maybe what you perceived was beautiful, but you felt something in that moment.

You felt a heightened sense of aliveness and a deep peace and connectedness with being, so to speak. Why? Because that moment of sense perception of something vast or beautiful freed you for a moment from the incessant stream of thinking.

So the incessant stream of thinking, let's say you see this vast, this incredible sunset or whatever, and for a moment you give it your complete attention. And for a moment, you're not thinking about yourself, your problems, your problematic life history, or your even more problematic future. Actually, you're not thinking about anything.

For a moment, the stream of thinking subsides and it goes, ah. And that is, without knowing it, you have a little flash that's come up from that dimension. And then the next moment, it may come up a few days later again, when you look into the eyes of a baby, one year old, maybe just in the street or in a cafe, and the baby looks at you, and the baby is one year old, and the eyes are like the baby's.

And you know instinctively that the baby is not thinking about you, because thinking hasn't started yet. The words have not accumulated yet, the thoughts haven't started yet, and yet there's a consciousness there. And you can see very clearly, there's an intense consciousness looking through those eyes at you without judging you in any way.

And in that moment, for just a few seconds, you feel so good. And you say, ah. Ah.

Why do you feel so good? Because at that moment, the baby liberated you from your stream of thinking. And again, a little bit of spaciousness opened up inside you.

And so for those few seconds, when you looked into the eyes of the baby, you were not thinking, and the baby wasn't thinking. So through the baby, you are able to be in that dimension, and it felt so good. Spontaneously, they can arise.

They're not recognized by people as ultimately spiritual, but they are. And so many people, there are millions of people who experience those things briefly, but that's enough to give you a sense still of life is worth living. And then there are others who are so burdened by their minds, they cannot even communicate with a baby.

They cannot even perceive the beauty of nature anymore, because their mind is so noisy that they never, there's a total veil. So they don't look at the baby like, they look at the baby, oh, that's a nice baby. They don't really see the baby.

Immediately, it's labeled. And for many, the beginning of spiritual awakening is to realize that there is this stream of continuous commentary in their minds. And that is the thing, oh, that's interesting.

That's a thought, of course. But before the thought, that's interesting. There's the recognition.

It's the voice in the head. And the recognition is not the voice in the head, although you might say it after the recognition. But in the moment of recognizing there's a voice in the head, that's not a thought.

The recognition of thought is not a thought. The recognition of thought comes through awareness or presence. And awareness or presence is the higher consciousness, the arising new consciousness.

Wow. So that's, that is really the meaning of spiritual awakening. In the, by the way, in this first half of our gathering, I will be talking more about it.

In the second half, we will do more experiential. But even while I talk about it here, I would hope that if it works for you, there's already also an experiential realization of what it is I'm talking about. So there's the voice.

There's a voice in the head. And people say things like, I think. They don't think, because thinking is not a voluntary action for them.

So it's a delusion to even say, I think. You don't think you are being thought by thought. You are created by thought.

There's that energy field. It's amazing. So the master said, how can I teach you Zen unless you first empty your cup?

Now that's a huge demand. If I'm full of clutter, mental clutter, how am I going to empty my cup? I would be immediately be enlightened if I could empty my cup.

But the teaching points to something. It points to this, the word empty. And that's interesting.

That is an important word in Buddhism. And I don't think it's a good translation. Who first came up with it?

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You move from gaining, losing, high, low, up and down. That's the identity for most. So the clutter of your mind is there, but there are moments in your life when you become aware of something spacious underneath it, but you may not call it like, call it that.

You may not call it anything. It may arise, for example, in many humans who may never have heard of anything spiritual. They're still, they're out there.

They don't know that the little bit of that is in them. So, but they don't know it.

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It's not enough to actually say that the spiritual dimension has awakened in them, but little flashes come up now and then into their lives. And that is enough. Those little flashes from that dimension come into their lives, and that is enough to keep many people sane.

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And for a moment, you're not thinking about yourself, your problems, your problematic life history, or your even more problematic future. Actually, you're not thinking about anything. For a moment, the stream of thinking subsides.

And it goes. And that is without knowing it, you have a little flash that's come up from that dimension. And then the next moment, it may come up a few days later again, when you look into the eyes of a baby, one year old, maybe just in the street or in a cafe, and the baby looks at you, and the baby is one year old, and the eyes are like the baby's.

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In that dimension, and it felt so good. Spontaneously, they can arise. They're not recognized by people as ultimately spiritual, but they are.

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So they don't look at the baby like, they look at the baby, oh, that's a nice baby. They don't really see the baby. Immediately it's labeled.

Somebody sent me a sticker to put on, why sticker? I don't know where it originated. It says, you don't, what do you think?

Now, Stephen Mitchell, fortunately, does not exclusively use the masculine pronoun as it's done in most other translations. He, the master, he varies between she and he. So sometimes the master is seen as feminine and sometimes the master is seen as masculine, which is a wonderful thing since the Tao has many qualities that are closely related to the feminine, the openness and so on.

There are many images in the Tao Te Ching that are feminine images to point to the essential nature of the Tao, not that the Tao itself is feminine, but to get a feeling for what Tao is, the Tao Te Ching uses feminine imagery. So here we have a little few lines about the master. The master keeps her mind always at one with the Tao.

That is what gives her her radiance. The Tao is ungraspable. How can her mind be at one with it?

Because she doesn't cling to ideas. The Tao is dark and unfathomable. How can it make her radiant?

Because she lets it. Since before time and space where the Tao is, it is beyond is and is not. How do I know this is true?

I look inside myself and see. Let's look at it again and see. The master keeps her mind always at one with the Tao.

That is what gives her her radiance. Keeps her mind at one with the Tao. In the next line, it says, if it's ungraspable, how can her mind be at one with it?

And it says, because she doesn't cling to ideas. Interesting. She doesn't cling to ideas.

That reminds me of the famous Zen saying. I don't remember who said it, but Zen master said it. Don't seek for the truth.

Just seize or stop cherishing opinions. That is, I believe, points to the same inner state of disidentification from thinking. She doesn't cling to ideas.

Cling to, it doesn't mean she doesn't have ideas, the master. But the master does not cling to ideas. And the Zen master, when he said, don't look for the truth, just stop cherishing opinions.

He didn't say, stop having opinions. Just as Lao Tse does not say, don't have ideas. Says, don't cling to ideas.

And the other master says, stop cherishing opinions. So this clinging, which is the same as cherishing, is self-identification with thoughts that arise. In other words, you then believe completely in every thought that comes into your head.

Amazing. You believe in it, that means you are it. That is self-identification with thinking.

So how then to be at one, always at one with the Tao? So simple. On the one hand, you could call it, stop cherishing opinions.

Now, any thought that arises, ultimately is an opinion, you could say. Stop cherishing, stop your self-identification with that. Or don't cling to ideas, in the words of Lao Tse, or this present translation here.

So that there's always a space between you and your thoughts. Or rather, you are not the thought, you are the space for the thought. This is how I put it sometimes.

You're familiar with that. And perhaps in yourself, you know it. You don't have to be in your thoughts, but you can be the space for your thoughts.

Then no matter how weird your thoughts are, it doesn't matter that much. You don't say, oh my God, I shouldn't be having these weird thoughts. No, because that's another thought.

I'm spiritually, I'm supposed to be spiritually advanced, and why am I still having these thoughts? There must be something wrong with me. Does that sound familiar?

That's also thoughts. That's more thoughts that say, I shouldn't be having these thoughts, there's something wrong with me. And then you believe in those thoughts.

Thoughts that judge other thoughts. That may sound familiar to some of you, and there's nothing personal in it. It's the human mind.

So you don't need to eliminate thoughts or to say, I should only have pure thoughts because I'm a spiritual person. Because by now, I should have transcended all impure thoughts. Well, then you're in a dilemma because in this world of polarities, if you only want to have pure thoughts, you're creating the other polarity in the unseen.

And sooner or later, the other polarity will come up from behind, creep up. And this has been done sometimes by Christians who try to practice the teachings of Christ without entering the state of consciousness out of which that comes. So they try to be pure and spiritual and good Christians and denied the other polarity, repressed it.

And then suddenly, they get overpowered by something deeply destructive and negative. So you have a nice, wonderful person who always talks in spirituals, just thoughts and spiritual. And before you know it, he's screaming at his wife or even hitting his wife.

Where did that come from? And he can't even admit to himself that this is what's happening. So if you push away certain thoughts because they do not fit into the mental image of who you are as this or that, then they get to assume a life of their own.

And before you know it, they invade your mind again, if only in your dreams. And suddenly, you have dreadful nightmares. During the day, you're such a spiritual person.

And at night, you suddenly have dreadful nightmares, monsters come, or you become a monster. Oh my God, this shouldn't be happening. And that's because you're pushing something away.

The true spiritual does not lie in one thought or another thought. It lies in being there as the space for your thoughts. Then it doesn't matter anymore, really.

Whatever thought arises is no more than that. It's a form that arises at this moment. You don't resist it.

You don't need to resist it. But you are the space for it. You don't become it.

Somebody sent me a sticker to put on the car. I haven't put it on my car yet. A very wise sticker.

I don't know where it originated. It says, you don't need to believe every thought you think. So this is the practice, then, of being the space or the witness for your thoughts rather than being the thought.

And you can practice with your opinions. Many thoughts are actual. All thoughts could be called opinions, but there are certain things that are definitely, clearly recognizable as opinions when you are talking to people every day, when you're having a discussion or talk with friends or colleagues or neighbors.

So they will express their opinion, whatever it may be about, and you may express your opinion. And you can then observe whether or not there is self-identification with your opinion. And your opinion, of course, is a mental position, the position of the mind.

Are you identified with a mental position? If you are, then you are cherishing opinions in the words of the Zen master, or you are clinging to ideas in the words of Lao Tse. And how do you know that?

You know that when, as you discuss things, you become either defensive or aggressive in the expression of your opinion. Emotion flows into, and you get worked up in, why is that happening? Why are you becoming defensive or aggressive?

And of course, you have to look inside yourself to see whether this is the case or not. Are you becoming defensive or aggressive? You feel the influx of emotion.

And why is this happening? Because unconsciously, you feel threatened by somebody who attacks or questions or contradicts your mental position. Why do you feel threatened by somebody who questions your mental position?

That is a sign that you had identified with a mental position. And identified means your sense of self was in it. So the person is not attacking your opinion in your unconscious viewpoint.

The person you're being attacked in your very life is being, is under attack. Because you identified this, this is not true, but this is how it is perceived, as if they were attacking your very existence. Because you identified with a mental position, there was a self in it.

So anybody who questions it, questions your very existence. It's unconscious process. So that's an amazing thing to realize in yourself.

And it's a deep seated unconscious pattern in most human beings. And of course, as you become conscious of that, you can usually see it much more clearly in others, more easily in your friend or whoever you're having, then in yourself. Usually says, oh, yes, that's what he always does.

Of course, now I understand what my husband or my wife does. I understand completely. That's step one.

This questioner here asks, what if one is secretly angry at God? And I assume the questioner is secretly angry at God. And if you look more closely, you'll see that there are certain thoughts associated with it that create the anger.

Now, what if that's what you want to experience? Is that pleasant? When those thoughts arise, whatever the thoughts say, God neglected me, treated me unfairly.

For some people, it's God. For other people, they call it life. Life treated me unfairly.

I didn't deserve this. Why do other people get all the breaks? I never get any.

To meditate successfully, the idea that you're doing a meditation can be quite an obstacle. So maybe that's the first thing we can get rid of tonight. The preconceptions and the expectations that come with that term.

So why did we call it guided meditation? Well, we had to use some word to get you here. Yes.

Yes. Meditation is usually something that you do among many other things. Doing implies all kinds of things.

It implies time. Even future, to some extent. And yet, true meditation, if you even want to call it that, and it's better not to call it anything, is not to do with doing.

It's not a doing. It's the realization that you are of being, which underlies all doing. It's prior to all doing.

Thoughts, emotions is prior to that. The simple realization, not the realization who you are, because there can be so many perspectives on that, not the realization how you fit into the totality of the cosmos, how that seemingly little life fleeting existence fits into the totality somewhere. Not realizing how I fit into the whole.

It's impossible to comprehend. But an alignment with the totality, without the need to mentally understand anything, is a realization, a simple realization that you are, which is expressed in the sublime words, I am. I am.

And if you've missed elementary grammar at school, you might not realize that I am is the first person singular of the verb to be. Now you think it's two completely different words. The realization that you are not as a concept, but as a deeper sensing of the life that you are.

The aliveness, the life. And something helpful to realize that is to pretend for one moment that there is no past and no future. I'm saying pretend so that everybody is still with me.

If I said, if I said there is no past and future, some of you might suddenly start thinking, just a second, aren't you going to sign books in an hour? And the moment you go into thinking, you're off into the realm of mind, the realm of things, object, objects in consciousness. Every thought is an object in consciousness and every thought has a pulling power.

That's how it arises. And it pulls your attention in and you start thinking, okay, but there is, I came here half an hour ago, there must be a past. I'm not realizing, of course, when you came here, it was the present moment.

And when the books are going to be signed, it will be the present moment because there is nothing else. Okay. But no need to believe that.

Let's pretend. Let's pretend for a moment that there is no past and future. Okay.

Or let's just say, past and future become peripheral to who you are. There's only this. That is the entry point into the realization I am.

[Speaker 12] (9:30:46 - 9:31:07)
Thank you for being such a great master, Master Eckhart. And my question is about

music. What is music?

Somehow it does stop our minds. And why it is so important to us? Maybe about art in general also.

And what is your favorite kind of music?

[Speaker 1] (9:31:13 - 9:41:41)
Yes, it certainly stops the conceptual mind, although music exists at different levels. There's some kind of music that very much stimulates the emotions. That's not the mind, but the emotions.

The listening of music can be a wonderful meditation and practicing of music even more so. Do you play an instrument? But do you listen to music?

What kind? Classical, mostly. Classical music.

Yes, yes. Yes, there were several years, I don't know how many, maybe 15 years, when I listened to very little music. And why?

Because the strange thing, I actually said that to somebody at that time who asked me the similar question. And I said, no, I don't listen to music much. That was at that time.

Why not, she asked. Because it felt to me that all those things like music and art, they were all inside me in their, the essence of whatever music can express, I could continuously sense, well, I still can. I can continuously sense inside me.

And so I can appreciate music, I said to her at the time, but I don't need it. It's like I have the cream and everything else is the skimmed milk. But even nature I perceived as a skimmed milk.

I remember often sitting in nature and in a state of sometimes closing my eyes, especially when I was still living in London, I would go on Hampstead Heath every day, sit there on the bench and close my eyes. And such beauty and depths of the formless life itself or consciousness. And then when I opened my eyes again, nature was still very beautiful, but it seemed like a diluted version of what I had within or even what I was within.

Not that there's anything wrong with that. For many people, it can be an entry point into that. So it can take you into that.

Now, then the time came when I started listening to music again as an enjoyment. And I do now, perhaps not every day, but from time to time I listen to music. More recently on my iPad.

Although the speakers are very small, they're about that size on the side. But yes, and I actually enjoy some of the kind of spiritual kind of music, some new age music. Some of it I love very much.

Some of it can be a little bit tinkly and emotional or superficial, but other kinds of new age music I love very much. And the other day I found a station, I think Kim found it. It's called Calm Radio.

And I believe it may even be Canadian. And Calm Radio has many channels. Well, there's one station and you can choose the type of music you like and it will play that classical oriental music, OM music, healing music, spa music, folk music, classical music, opera.

So many channels, just wonderful. Yes, the practice of an instrument also can be a wonderful meditation for many people because it really stops your mind. The important thing, however, it can be helpful, is not for presence to become associated with any particular activity.

The activity can be helpful, but at some point you have to see, use it as a help, like playing an instrument, the flute, whatever it may be. If I learned an instrument, I would probably take up the flute. It looks, it's a simple thing, although not easy probably to master.

This is the, I'm now playing the soundless flute. The equivalent of one hand clapping. Not to become dependent on a particular activity so that you can be present although for a while it can be helpful, but not to become dependent on either, although use it as a tool to help you, yes, but don't become dependent on listening to music so that you can be present only when you listen to music.

Don't become dependent on playing the instrument or dancing, beautiful thing too, moving your body. Don't become dependent so that you can only be present when you're actually dancing. Well, at least it's a wonderful thing.

You can be present when you dance, but you can't dance continuously. Well, unless you regard your whole life as a dance, then it might work. Don't become dependent on climbing a mountain so that you can be present because if you're not, you fall off.

Don't become dependent on driving a fast car. Oh, really present and so that presence is not bound up with one particular thing that you do, but nevertheless, use those things as helpful ways of bringing you into presence, but then once more presence arises, switch off the music. It doesn't mean you can't switch it on again an hour later or tomorrow.

Switch off the music. If music brings you into presence, the mind is not, there's just the pure act of listening and you're aware that there's a pure act of listening and you are the consciousness, you know yourself as the consciousness that's listening. Beautiful meditation.

And then my next suggestion is switch off the music and continue listening. To what? Nothing.

So when you remove the object of awareness, what remains is awareness itself. So this is how it can be a wonderful portal. The same thing, any activity that brings you into presence, once you feel presence is arising, it's there, stop the activity and just be aware of presence itself.

And then you can carry, if you enjoy it, then carry on doing, and then again step out. So that's the, so that presence is not bound up with one particular activity or you can even, you can look at the, you can look at a photo of a spiritual teacher who is present to bring you into presence. Ramana Maharshi, there's one particular photo of him that is a beautiful photo where you actually truly feel the light shining through his eyes and that was where the photographer took that photo 1930 or so and the photographer said, Ramana Maharshi said, is there enough light?

The photographer said, you are the light. And that's a beautiful picture and the amazing thing, some people have even used pictures of me to look and you look, as long as you know you're not looking at a person, that's not why you have the photo. You're looking at, to put you in touch with a particular state of consciousness, you're ultimately looking at yourself, the essence.

So then a picture can activate that in you and then the next step is again, similar to what I said before, close your eyes or remove the picture and continue to feel that presence. So you can use whatever is there to help you but don't become dependent on it, whatever it may be, use it, enjoy it, but don't become dependent so that that then exclusively becomes associated with presence and then you can only be present when you put a little altar with Ramana Maharshi up and then some, but as soon as you go away. So enjoy the music.

[Speaker 14] (9:42:00 - 9:42:01)
Hi. Hi.

[Speaker 6] (9:42:03 - 9:42:30)
The hardest word that I'm having trouble with right now is responsibility and I have a hunch that most of the things that I consider responsibility are just my ego telling me things I have to do but I also, when I think about the future of the earth and human evolution and stuff like that, sometimes I have big emotions of responsibility so I'm just curious. Thank you. About the right relationship to the word responsibility.

[Speaker 1] (9:42:30 - 9:49:58)
Okay. Thank you. Yeah, it's a strange word.

It has been pointed out that if you look at the word it seems to be talking about the ability to respond. So, to take responsibility for what is it that you can take responsibility for primarily it's taking responsibility for your state of consciousness which determines what kind of world you create. You, because you are humanity.

Humanity is an abstract concept, doesn't exist. Humanity is the human being. You are humanity.

So for humanity to take responsibility you need to take primarily responsibility for your state of consciousness because only a diseased or dysfunctional state of consciousness produces a diseased and dysfunctional world out there. By world I mean the human-made world that is, has been imposed on the what's already there, the planet which is potentially, of course, a paradise. The planet pristine, unbelievable jewel.

A being of great intelligence. We are not separate from it. But the being is going through a transitional process and every transitional process is critical.

It may or may not work in which case the being will go some other way. But the your state of consciousness determines what kind of world you create, what kind of action you take and what consequences your actions have. So here this is why my main work is to address the cause of dysfunction which lies in the human mind.

The dysfunction of the human mind or as it is sometimes called in Zen the sickness of the human mind. So as I see it and I don't anybody who reads history can doubt it there is a deep-seated dysfunction in humans has been there for thousands of years and if we know if there's no shift in that then the dysfunction will destroy us. It probably won't destroy the planet because the planet has enormous resources but it will take a while would take a while for the planet to recover.

All you have to do then is primarily take responsibility for your state of consciousness now. Now. Now.

And this is what the entire teaching really is about. What is what is my state of consciousness at this moment? Am I generating disturbance?

Am I generating negativity? Am I generating conflict and suffering for myself and others? Am I generating inner pollution?

Am I polluting my beautiful the beautiful being that I am with continuous absurd movements of thought producing negative emotions producing an entire entity that is illusory that I call the me. So to take responsibility it needs to be just of course an awakening where you can say okay I will take responsibility now. Some people don't know that there is even the possibility of taking responsibility that's why you are so important.

Anybody who realizes it this is you are the beginning of the transformed world. I don't know who first coined the famous phrase you hear it quite often these days you need to be the change that the change that you want to see out there you need to embody that. And that's not primarily what you do there's something more primary than what you do it's who you are.

Who you are is your state of consciousness whatever you do flows out of that. So that's the primary is that so the change is the transformed state of consciousness now that is your responsibility anybody once you've seen that that's your responsibility now you know it. People who are not yet at that level don't realize it and that's fine you can't expect the whole world already to be at that stage it's enough for you to take responsibility knowing there's still a few millions others who don't know that they can take responsibility because they live in such unconsciousness that they see the entire evil in others what they see as evil it's all in them and they make half the world into their enemy it's all out there they're still you don't that's fine your response it's only those are required to take responsibility you who are up to it but even those who are totally unconscious still on the one hand they don't know what they're doing obviously as Jesus said on the cross they know not what they do in other words they are in the grip of unconscious forces or unconscious mental emotional streams they don't know what they do they cannot be held responsible and people say well they should be held responsible no they can't but they don't know what they do however the fact that they are not responsible because they can't be responsible does not mean that they do not suffer the consequences of their unconsciousness so they generate suffering and eventually suffering is the fire in which the ego gets burned up the collective ego and the personal ego that's the long way the slow way the painful way and then there is a shortcut which is any spiritual teaching is just it cuts through that the painful way the long way of waking up more and more suffering the planet might not endure that such a long learning process for humanity so if the learning process of humanity does not become shortened it is doubtful that the planet can allow the humanity to learn

[Speaker 14] (9:49:58 - 9:50:00)
through further learning[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 0:15)
further suffering for another 500 years, or even 200 years, or even 100 years. So that's, you're responsible for all that.

[Speaker 6] (0:23 - 0:26)
Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (0:49 - 6:19)
What is self? Now I notice that it's spelled with a capital S, I don't know whether that's a mistake or on purpose. Probably on purpose.

There's one self, that's the illusion, that is the identification with the mind and the ego, which is the unobserved mind, and there's a self that arises there that is a dreadful burden to live with. You carry around, most people for their whole life they carry the burden of a mentally defined sense of who they are, me, what about me? That's the little self, the illusory self, and that's the self that most people refer to when they say I.

But I potentially has a deeper meaning and is the deepest word perhaps we could say in the language, in its truest sense, I refers to who you are beyond the form, beyond the thoughts and the emotions. You as the consciousness is the self. Now the self has no form, you cannot grasp it, you cannot see it, you cannot really define it, you can never say, ah, there it is.

Because who is saying that? You are the consciousness, the perceiving, you are it. You can never see it as an object external to yourself, it's the essence, you are not what is seen, you are the seeing, you are the consciousness behind the seeing.

You are not what you hear, you are the consciousness behind what you hear. So it's never, this is what Jesus said when he used the term the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God, he said in one of the gospels, the kingdom of heaven does not come with signs to be observed. You cannot say, ah, here it is or ah, it's over there.

It's a free translation more or less, that's what he said. And of course, what do Christians do? They're waiting for the kingdom of heaven to arrive.

When they've been told, you won't be able to see it. You can't say, ah, there it is, it does not come with signs to be observed, literally he said that. It's, and I'm sure that's one of the, there's a lot of things that people later put into his mouth, but that is one of the things, the words that were uttered by somebody who knew the reality.

It doesn't come with signs to be observed. You can never see it or grasp it or know it as an object for your knowledge. Because you essentially are it as the consciousness that perceives, the consciousness behind your thinking, behind your emotions, behind your perceptions, behind your experiences, the very light of the world.

Another thing he said, he not only said, Jesus, I am the light of the world, he said also you are the light of the world. So he's pointing, what is the light? It's the light of consciousness which illuminates the world.

You are that, that is the self. It has no form. Therefore it seems that Buddhism and Buddhists and Hindus are in disagreement, but only those who haven't realized the reality behind their teachings, those Buddhists and Hindus who have not really realized the reality behind their teachings, they are in disagreement and they have arguments whether there is self or no self, atman, anatman.

The Hindus believe in atman, that the existence of self, the fundamental underlying reality, and the Buddhists say no, anatman, no self. And then whenever you see a Hindu and a Buddhist discussing, perhaps even with negative emotions, whether one or the other is true, then you'll know that they haven't experienced, they haven't known the reality behind the teaching, because the reality behind the teaching is exactly the same, it's just a different perspective on the same. The Buddhists like to deny, they don't want to give it, call it something, as if the moment you call it, you say the self, the danger is that you make it into a mental object and start believing in it.

The Buddhists don't like that, so they say there is no self, which in a way is true also, there is nothing that you could say, there it is, it is an empty space almost, you could say, but it's potential fullness also, it's full and empty at the same time. It's all the same, the self, and that's why the Dalai Lama I saw giving a talk a while ago to Hindus and he said, you believe in atman and we believe in anatman, what does it matter? And he laughed, ah, ah, ah, makes no difference, ah, ah, ah, that's a good answer.

[Speaker 4] (6:46 - 6:59)
Hi, my question has two parts, it's what is the purpose of mental illness, how can something that is consciousness depriving have its necessary place and function?

[Speaker 1] (7:02 - 7:08)
Somebody, perhaps it was me, probably said that everything has its necessary place.

[Speaker 6] (7:08 - 7:09)
Yes. Okay.

[Speaker 1] (7:23 - 18:01)
Now, in the larger context, if you look around the world, it's not only mental illness which exists in different gradations, mental illness in its acute form where it is recognized as mental illness, mental illness in its less acute form where we call it neurosis, whatever, and mental illness, well, neurosis already is normal, so mental illness in its normal form which is normal human consciousness and the world is full of consciousness, seemingly consciousness blocking events, all the suffering, you say, what purpose could that possibly have? For example, you could say, what purpose could human beings killing each other in the 20th century alone, human beings killing 100, not 100 million as I said in the Power of Now, that was a mistake, I've realized later, but closer to 170 million people killed in the 20th century alone, humans killing other humans, 170 million, nobody knows the exact figure, but that's, 170 million killed, what purpose can that possibly have?

You can ask also that all that suffering can't possibly have a purpose, can it? And then all the other things that you have, young children dying in accidents or illnesses, all kinds of things that seem to be blocking consciousness, people trapped in dreadful conditions, slave-like conditions still in many parts of the world and it was like that until recently even in the Western world, trapped and not totally deprived of freedom, all these things that seem to block the arising of the flowering of consciousness, particularly if you look at it in isolation, but it does seem that first of all, a misperception arises when we look at a human being as if he or she were an entirely autonomous entity, in other words, as if he or she, the life that he or she has were his or her own life. Because then you see, you then look at everybody as an autonomous life form without realizing that all life forms and all humans are a temporary expression of the one life, the life in you or in me or the consciousness in you is the consciousness in me, the same consciousness expressing itself in a different form. And there is something happening in this universe which is consciousness coming into the world of form and expressing itself more and more fully through the world of form, but it is always the one consciousness, assuming billions of life forms constantly.

But the human thinks, that's me, that's my life. No, it's life. It's not my consciousness.

I don't have my consciousness. It's the one consciousness, the one in the many. So all life is one.

So when something seemingly dreadful happens, all life is one. On one level, it is always dreadful. Nobody can say that humans killing 180 million of their fellow humans is not dreadful on that level.

But if you go to a deeper level, you see that something is emerging and for some reason it is through, in many cases, seemingly being blocked here and there, that the consciousness is emerging more fully. That also has its place. You can't see it when you look at individual cases, but when you look at the totality of consciousness wanting to emerge yet finding seemingly obstacles everywhere, but it's through the obstacles that the flowering actually happens.

And so you might say, oh, isn't it unfair that this person represents a greater obstacle than another person? But the essence of any person is the one consciousness. So nothing is lost ever.

And in so-called mental illness, there's also something to be learned by the one consciousness. What it is, I don't know, but I do know that many mental, a certain percentage of mental illnesses are arising of consciousness that has gone slightly wrong, that isn't quite, or is unrecognized. There are people in India who have become saints and masters who would have been put in a mental home in the West, because the West doesn't recognize certain things, the spiritual arising.

And fortunately, they were not born in the West, but there are probably many people in the West. I'm not saying that all mental illness is a misinterpretation, a non-recognition of awakening process, but ultimately everything is part of the awakening process. And why do I know all these things?

You know things by looking at your own life. And I know that all the things that seem to block the full arising of consciousness in my life, and I'm sure you can find the same in your life, all the seeming obstacles to living a life of fullness and ease and greater awareness, ultimately, all those things are part of the awakening and those things actually led to the arising, to the awakening. When I look at my own life, and my own life is only a microcosm of the collective, it must be.

And I see all the blockages and all the suffering actually was part of the awakening, without which it would not have happened. And collectively, the suffering of humanity in so many forms is also unfortunately a necessary part of the awakening, but realize that what we see as somebody's personal identity is not who they are. They are an expression of the one which is constantly finding new channels through which to express itself in this world.

So if this channel is blocked, we see it as a person who is suffering. That's also true on one level. And of course, you help if you are there, you give whatever help you can, that's part of it.

But this, that personal sense of self is ultimately an illusion. And because who you are is ultimately timeless and beyond the person. So I know that if I had not encountered all these seeming blockages in my life, I wouldn't be sitting here now.

And if you had not suffered what you suffered, you wouldn't be here now. And so the obstacles to the arising of consciousness are ultimately part of the arising consciousness. And there's only one life.

And that's a liberating thing to know, that the life in you, the life in me is the one life. And if I die at this moment, nothing is really lost. If you die, nothing is lost.

So we need to get away from the misperception that you have your life and it's a unique thing and you are an expression of the one and everybody is. And so humanity as a whole is awakening. And there's a term in the Bible which says the birth pangs of the new age, the birth pangs, before giving birth there's a pain.

So these are the birth pangs of the awakening. And it all, if you could see the totality, that also would make sense. It doesn't mean that killing 180 million is okay.

Recognizing that it is insanity is part of the awakening. The recognition of that as insanity, that collective part of the collective insanity, that's part of the awakening. Does that make sense?

[Speaker 8] (18:10 - 18:10)
Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (18:27 - 33:39)
And ultimately, if there is a true message, that includes angels or angelic presences, it always boils down to find out who you truly are. Find your connectedness with the source of all life. Well, some people seem to have contact with different entities that are not physically embodied.

And there's no doubt that there are entities that are not physically embodied. There are lots of guides, those entities who are also pretending to be somebody else. And the main criterion is what is the quality of the information that you are getting?

Rather than trying to figure out who they really are. And this also applies to so-called channeling, when this is still quite popular, I suppose, in some places more than in others. In the States there's a town called Sedona, which is a New Age kind of, in Arizona, a New Age town, where it seems every other inhabitant channels some kind of spirit guide.

So I have seen many channeled writings, and a large percentage of them seems not all that relevant to anything. Small percentage, yes, there's something there. A prominent example is the Course in Miracles, which is not for everybody, but it is a high quality text, scripture, whatever you want to call it.

And that was definitely channeled, because the person who wrote it had an inner dictation, and she wrote down what she heard. She did not fully understand what the dictation was saying, and she couldn't live it, the teaching, and yet the book was produced. You may have heard the saying, as far as deceased people are concerned, some people think when people, at the moment they are deceased, they know everything.

But there's a saying that goes, just because they are dead doesn't mean they are smart. So, whether you do channeling, or you go to somebody who does channeling, who goes, the eyes usually close, and they go, this is so and so talking to you. And whether or not it's genuine, listen to the quality of the teaching, if it is a teaching, the words, is it truly, is it just, is it fictitious, could it be information that you have to believe in, and they could say anything, and does it make any difference to your life whether or not what they say is right or wrong.

Perhaps they're talking about life on those distant planets and what happens there. Could be a science fiction novel, as far as you are concerned, but some people are so impressed by the fact that these are channeled entities, they go, okay, and then what happens on those planets? Or they identify themselves as big entities from outer space.

Who knows? Ashta, my name is Ashta, commander of the galactic fleet, and I have come here to guide you. Okay, so what do you have to say?

And ultimately, if there is a true message, that includes angels or angelic presences, it always boils down to find out who you truly are, find your connectedness with the source of all life. All true answers will come from within you, and whatever I say, verify it in your own experience, don't believe me. If you cannot verify it in your own experience, then it's not relevant.

This is what the true guide would say. So the great scriptures of the world, they're not the author, some are anonymous. There's a difference between spirit guide and teaching that comes from a deep connectedness of the teacher with the source.

In that case, the teacher does not feel that it comes from an entity, but it comes from the source. And if an entity gives you information, where do they get that from? From the one consciousness.

So it may well be that this entity is more closer, more deeply connected to that one consciousness, but they are not separate consciousnesses, there's only one consciousness. And every guide, the one consciousness can only speak through any guide, no matter who it is, whether it's an angel or a deceased person, or Ashtar, commander of the galactic fleet, there's only one consciousness that can speak through them. And the essence of their message needs to be, if it is to be true, find out who you are in your essence, and then begin to live from the essence of who you are.

So use your own insight, and I believe you will be able to tell whether what they say is helpful or not. At the moment, I can only think of causing miracles, that's of a high quality. There was a time when there was Seth, the writings of Seth, the woman channeled, an entity called Seth.

Some of that is interesting and has some helpful things there. It doesn't necessarily go to the deepest level. Nevertheless, there's some useful information there, but not at the deepest level.

What's interesting is that when I speak, I don't feel that some other entity speaks through me, but I do realize that this is not the person speaking. This is consciousness using the mind, this person's mind as a vehicle, and consciousness speaks through me. In that sense, what I say is also channeled.

Also, I don't know what I'm going to say next, and most of the time, I don't know, even before I talk, what words are going to come out of my mouth. And that connectedness is important. That is the connectedness with the source, with being, with stillness, with presence, whatever you want to call it.

And that you have that available to you also, you might not give public talks, or you might at some point, and some of you already do. But in whatever area you are active in, to be connected to the source will empower you in whatever area you are active in and will make your work much more helpful to others and more empowered. You become more inspired, and you become an inspiration for others, even if you are just, even if you sell tickets, cinema tickets, or whatever, it doesn't matter.

Everything becomes transformed through your connectedness with source. But to have that, the vital thing is to be able to access the space of no thought. And that, and another way of calling that space of no thought, which I sometimes express by, because it's an inner space, thinking, thinking, thinking, you remember?

And then you go, shh, present. That's the space of no thought. So in order to have the connectedness with source, you need to open up that space of no thought.

Alertness, relaxed alertness. It seems almost paradoxical, but they go together. Relaxed alertness.

And you could also call that becoming comfortable with not knowing. Because otherwise, your mind always thinks it knows already. So when you're trying to help somebody, somebody has a problem, often people will immediately try to say something helpful.

They think hard, okay, what can I say to this person who is so suffering so much? I need to say something helpful. And you search in your mind.

And usually, it's not that great. And it's not, and it's not well received by the person. And it's not that helpful.

They might say, okay, thanks. But they feel it doesn't come from any deep place within yourself. All your intentions are good.

You're trying hard to say something helpful. But to be really helpful, you need to become comfortable with not knowing anything. And that because the space of no thought is, you don't know anything in the space of no thought, at least not conceptually.

The miracle is that in the space of no thought, you access the source of all knowledge. But it hasn't reached concepts yet. It's potential.

It's potential of all knowledge, the primary source. So many people are actually afraid of going there, because they're afraid of not knowing. And so they need to keep thinking.

So if you can, somebody comes to you, let's presume, let's assume you have practiced already beforehand not knowing, for example, by not labeling compulsively everything around you, but actually be present with a tree, with a sky, with another person. And so you, you almost, another way of putting it, you almost disappear as a person in that state of no thought. Because in no thought, who are you?

You're simply a presence. You're not a particular person anymore. So it's a voluntary kind of disappearing act where you as the personal entity disappear.

And there's just a space of consciousness where you were before. This sometimes happens to people who suffer greatly. They suffer so much that their ego gets destroyed and eroded.

And what's left is just a presence. And you, this could happen to you, but probably won't need to happen because you're already voluntarily going there. So life doesn't need to push you into it.

So to become comfortable with not knowing, let's say a person is comes to you with, is in suffering again, or is close to death, or somebody has just died, or they have just lost everything, whatever it may be. Or of course, it could be pseudo suffering too. It could just be a suffering totally created by their mind.

No actual situation, just totally mind created. In which case, I naturally always have a little smile on my face. I'm not laughing at them.

I'm just smiling because I realize it's a delusion. But let's assume it's real suffering. Somebody has just died or is approaching death, or has an illness.

And then instead of figuring out what can I say, you just go still. And you just listen. And it may be that no words come.

But an energy, you contributed an energy to that situation that is helpful, that is healing. Some healing comes in, healing, the deepest healing really comes in that way too. When you access that, it's not always words that come out of that space.

Sometimes a wordless emanation comes out of that space, which some people might call healing. And healing is not necessarily healing of a physical symptom. There's a deeper level of healing that helps that other person to connect with the deepest source within themselves.

And that's really the true, the ultimate and true healing. So when I was many years ago, I was many, many years ago, I was beginning to work with people who came to me for advice and counseling and so on. And I was always naturally becoming very still.

So that's, and it all came out of that. I never knew the answer beforehand. Just get still and listen.

[Speaker 6] (33:41 - 33:41)
Oh.

[Speaker 1] (33:42 - 53:16)
And I may have told the story before. For a while, I thought I was a healer because that was early on after my shift in consciousness when I didn't understand much. So I was sitting with this woman who had been a Catholic nun for 15 years and then left the order because she hadn't found God yet.

And she came to me and I was sitting in that state of not knowing, but being comfortable with not knowing, not being uncomfortable with not knowing because that's not pleasant and then it gets blocked immediately. And she said she could feel the energy suddenly that was flowing and she'd, oh, you are doing healing. You're a healer.

I said, oh, that's what I am. And I thought, oh, so that's what this energy is. And then for a couple of years, the word must have spread.

People called me a healer and some people came for physical healing and some people had a pain there and the foot was hurting and can you heal my foot? Well, I don't know. And so I, and then I realized after two years, most people who then came were just interested in getting rid of certain symptoms.

They were not interested in a deeper healing. So I made an announcement as I am not a healer. So consciousness to me is the emanation of God, like the light of the sun, which expresses itself as the universe.

The essence of every human is immortal because the one life is beyond life and death. It's eternal. It's only in this dimension that time seems to be real.

So God expresses itself as you. One of the challenges I faced when I first started reading your books and in the experience I was going through at the time is something that everyone in here shares, the experience of losing someone they love. So a lot of things, if you lose them, you might even say your money, a spiritualist might say, well, that's probably a good thing.

You'll be in a better place when you realize you don't need money. But when you lose a child or a spouse, being present, how do you be present with that and make everything okay? Because sometimes it's not okay.

It will never be okay again. But some people might feel like their lives are over. I don't have that thing that I love.

How do you deal with that? Yes. Deep loss, whether it's through somebody close to you who died, or there's also a sense of deep loss if a long relationship, like a marriage that lasted for a long time suddenly comes to an end.

It's also a kind of death. And so there can be the emotions that then arise of sadness. You may find yourself periodically, it comes in waves, periodically you cry and the deep emotion of sadness comes.

The important thing is to, you know, to be bring acceptance to what has happened. At first it may be difficult. The first thing you cannot accept the death or the loss, but that's okay.

But what you can do is you can accept the emotions that you feel at this moment. It's natural. You don't feel, oh, I shouldn't be.

No, you should. This is natural. So you accept that there's this deep sadness and that it comes in waves and you cry.

And then gradually you realize certain things that everything in this world is, as the Buddhists say, is impermanent. If you live with a partner, soon or later, he or she will leave you or you will leave him or her because one of you will die first. So everything, there's an impermanence built into everything in life.

Nothing lasts forever. And the sense perceived universe is not as solid as it seems to be. The structures are not as solid as they appear.

If you live in a Western country, you often get the impression that everything is, there's a solidity to the external world. If you go to other, another country like India, you realize that things are not as solid as they are in the world. Even the buildings look a bit shaky and things are not as organized.

Things don't work very well. You see in many third world countries, you see old and decrepit people in the street, which in the West very rarely see because old people and sick people are in buildings. They are kept away.

They say they are looked after, okay. But you don't get a real sense of the reality of life in the West because old age and madness and sickness, I'm not saying they shouldn't be, but the fact is people who are approaching death, unless they are close relatives and you visit them, you don't see them. In a third world, this is everywhere around you.

So you get more of a sense of the nature of the fleetingness of human life, of every human life. Also, all these things that you have life insurance here and you think there's a solid foundation to your existence. It's not anything good that could happen any moment.

Life insurance is an illusion. It's fine. It has a function on a practical level, but really, first of all, it should be called death insurance because it's about death.

It's not about life. But if you called it death insurance, nobody would want to buy it. So there's a fleeting sense of the nature of life in the West.

So you get a sense of that. First, you come to a sense of acceptance of it and when it happens, first you accept the emotions that you feel and then you may be able to accept that this has happened without too much of imposing a narrative on it. Although you could, depending on your beliefs, because you may believe that the essence of who they are has not died and in a way that is, I would suggest, the truth because the essence of a human being, you can see so clearly that if you look at a dead body, you can see so clearly that that body was never the true being that was there.

The essence is gone, that human being. And so some people can even feel that that person is still there, the essence of that person is still there. So I want to, but I'd like to be able to suggest that even without having any particular belief, you can still come to an acceptance of the short-lived nature of all forms so that you do not, the period of mourning after great loss is natural and should be allowed to happen, but if you then impose a narrative on that, which is negative, that can prolong the sadness that you feel for many, many years or the anger that you feel about it, you feel that it is unjust that this happened and so on, which are all mental judgments, and then it is normal for a period of sadness where they'd last a few months or a year or two years, and then you practice surrender. And surrender is really the deeper acceptance, surrender to the is-ness of life. There's a story of the Buddha, a mother came to the Buddha and said, was weeping because a child had died and was asking for advice, the Buddha, and the Buddha says, okay, I'll tell you what to do in this village or town where you live, go from one house to another and ask them whether they have ever had a death in their family and then come back to me.

So she went from one house to another, it took several days, and then she came back to the Buddha and there was a relief because in every house that she came to, she had heard, they confirmed that yes, they had also experienced people dying. Yes, yes, yes. And the Buddha said, and suddenly she was able to come to an acceptance, to surrender.

But in that surrender, there is a strange realization comes. Surrender means you're not judging this anymore as good or bad, you just accept the is-ness of that. In that, I experienced it when my parents died, both in the same year, although they didn't even live together and didn't even live in the same country.

They were divorced many years ago, but they both died within six months of each other. So in that year, I had the two, there was the death of my mother in the summer and the death of my dad in the fall. So twice I sat with first my mom's dead body, and then a few months later with my dad's dead body, and there were tears, I cried, then they subsided, then tears came again, subsided, and I sat with the dead body, and suddenly I could sense this deep peace underneath the sadness.

So there was both the sadness, but with the surrender came also a deep peace. And that peace was something feeling my own essence. But in feeling my own essence in this, and this is really what we've been talking about today also, getting in touch with that, the deepest level in you, which is cannot be seen.

There's a beautiful quote from a French book, what is essential is invisible to the eye. Whatever is essential is invisible to the eye. So what I see in a human being, I see the body, and I see whatever their mind, the words I hear, whatever I perceive is their mind and their body, their personality, but the essential thing about the human being is deeper than that.

The essential thing about me is deeper than any thought or any emotion, it's consciousness itself. And so in that peace that I felt underneath the sadness, I could also feel the essence of my mother and father as a deathless essence, and I don't even want to say whether reincarnation or no reincarnation, but every human being is like a spark of the divine. I see consciousness that is the essence of every human being, of every being, is like a ray of, if you take the analogy of God, let's say in this analogy God is the sun, and as you know in the past, in other cultures they worship the sun, because the sun is life-giving, it gives force of itself continuously, it gives and gives, it pours out energy continuously, and every life on this planet is the life of the sun. The warmth in your body comes from the sun, it's calories. So the sun is in you, the sun is can be used therefore as an analogy in the sense-perceived universe for God, which of course God is not in the sense-perceived universe, God transcends the sense-perceived universe or anything we could imagine, even talk about, and yet I'm talking about it.

And then you have the sun, then you have the sunlight, the sunlight comes from the sun, and the sunlight gives life to everything here. Now is the sunlight separate from the sun? No, it's an extension of the sun, it's not a separation, you can't even say exactly where the sun ends, it has no surface as such, so you could say that the sun ends wherever the light of the sun ends, which would be beyond the earth.

So this is an analogy then for what to me God is, and what consciousness is, to me the consciousness that is the essence of every being, oh by the way, consciousness to me also manifests in every life form, that to me solid, so-called inanimate matter is like frozen consciousness, plant life is like consciousness in a different state, the human mind is like water, you can have water in different states, you can have water as ice, you can have water as liquid, you can have water as vapor, so consciousness can exist in many different states, but the entire life is an expression of the one consciousness which emanates from the source, from God, the central intelligence of all life, and so every human is an expression, a temporary expression of the central intelligence of all life, briefly, very brief, I mean on a cosmic scale every human life is a flicker, if you could see the planet, humans on the planet, a human life on the planet on a cosmic scale, one human life would go like, just a spark, and it's gone, and so there are billions of sparks on the planet, the one consciousness continuously expressing itself in forms, but of course we attach names to the sparks, so the essence of all life is really divine, consciousness is not God, in the same sense that the light is not the sun, and yet it is, so consciousness to me is the emanation of God, like the light of the sun, which expresses itself as the universe, and so as that, the essence of every human is immortal, because the one life is beyond life and death, it's eternal, God is eternal, it's not subject to time, it's only in this dimension that time seems to be real, so God expresses itself as you, as me, as even as the dog in a different form, as the flower, these are expressions of the one, and then when you recognize that, now does this particular expression of the one, which is a human being in a human body, does this particular expression of the one still continue in its seemingly separate, individualized state, even after the body has dissolved, so does this particular expression of consciousness that is you, or somebody close to you who died, does this particular expression of consciousness still continue to express itself as a particularized expression of consciousness, or does it immediately go back to the one consciousness, this is something that one can look at, my suggestion would be that for a while it continues on its journey as a seemingly separate entity, even after one particular body has dissolved, so in other words, it's not immediately absorbed in the oneness again, it continues for a while, as perhaps other separate existences, the journey continues, and so in that way, the universe becomes more and more conscious, now God exists in a transcendent dimension that is timeless, so in that sense, God does not need to become more conscious, but when God expresses itself in our dimension here, there is a seeming evolution of consciousness, in other words, one could say that God gradually is expressing him, her, itself, gradually, more and more fully in this dimension, and I think what I've just said now is the most one could say, because I've already said too much, because the mystery

[Speaker 8] (53:16 - 53:44)
of the universe cannot be contained in words. Questioner Hello.

[Speaker 3] (53:47 - 54:25)
My question is about charisma. It seems to be a phenomenon that we all recognize, but unlike embodying stillness, it doesn't seem to have an intrinsic, be intrinsically good or bad. We can say that Nelson Mandela has charisma, but Adolf Hitler must also have had charisma.

So my question is, what is the energy or the force behind charisma? Is it something that you're born with? Is it something that you can learn?

[Speaker 1] (54:26 - 1:20:28)

Ajahn Brahm Thank you. Thank you. You better sit down.

Yes, that's a very strange thing, isn't it? Some people seem to have some kind of emanation as personal power or something, sometimes people call it. Hitler probably had it, but other people who seem the opposite on the opposite polarity also had it.

Angela Merkel does not have it, and yet Angela Merkel is better for Germany than Hitler, much better. It seems that some people, at some point, they access something, a source of power, and I believe charisma is a manifestation of what is traditionally called chi or shakti or whatever. It's an inner power that comes and emanates through the person, and you may remember that I wrote somewhere that chi is the bridge between the unmanifested and the world of form.

So the unmanifested is totally beyond form, and then out of the unmanifested form is born, and forms also return into the unmanifested, but as I'm talking about something that is totally beyond words and becomes distorted, of course, and reduced the moment you talk about it, but let's do it anyway. So there's the unmanifested, and then the energy comes out. I would say that's what the beginning of the creative process, the energy that is the creative energy that then goes and creates form in this world, mental formation first, then physical formations, and there we have the energy in its half form-like state and half unformed state, which is chi, and some humans, in some humans, they have access to the chi, they're not just manifestations of it, they can connect with it at an earlier stage, and so it sometimes happens to people who have, for example, Nelson Mandela, if he has charisma, it probably happened because he was in prison for many, many years, which probably forced him to go within very deeply because there was nowhere to go without. So it forced him to go within very deeply, and then there was a source of power that he contacted which is chi power, and that power then was able to, he manifested that when he left prison. That power is beyond good and evil.

There are spiritual teachers who have it very strongly, some of them, but just to be connected to chi is not a guarantee that you're free of ego. It's only when you go deeper than chi and touch the unmanifested and realize that who you essentially are is beyond anything that has form, and chi is already moving into the world of form. That is the only place where the ego dissolves.

There are people who are powerful transmitters of chi and still have a huge ego. There are spiritual teachers where people go to them and they say, oh, I can feel his energy, and they get addicted to the energy they feel, so they all come and go. It's not a guarantee.

It may well be that the teacher is free of ego, but there's no guarantee that he is, and in some cases it turns out that there's a huge ego. In fact, the ego can become energized and magnified by somebody who touches that halfway power in him or her. It can magnify the ego and then you become a very powerful Genghis Khan or Hitler or, I don't know, Stalin, maybe he also had it, who knows.

And everybody listens to you when you speak and you project this energy and you influence people and have power over people and you love it, you love the power you have over people. But in the end it leads to your destruction. It's like the genie that comes out of the bottle, but in the end you encounter disaster.

If you magnify the ego, the end result is always magnified disaster. You can't have a good outcome if whatever an amplified ego produces will create disaster sooner or later. So that's how Hitler and Stalin and all those people, and it all ended in disaster.

So some have it, some don't. Those who are at the deepest level, those who embody the spaciousness also have an emanation that sometimes is not detected as easily by other humans. You need to be attuned to it to feel it.

Just Qi can be a very raw energy. There are people who can project Qi through their hands, they can light a fire with their hands. You just project the energy out through your hands.

Are you free of ego? Who knows? Maybe not.

Maybe your ego loves being able to do that and you build up a big ego. Or maybe you are free. We don't know.

But that in itself is not spiritual attainment. It's a great power, but the spiritual only comes in as you go deeper so that you realize who you are instead of identifying with an energy stream of Qi and think that that becomes part of your sense of self, which would be a magnified ego. So if energy moves through you, there is a famous word in cities in Indian spirituality, they have a wider vocabulary than we have in the West to describe these phenomena.

People who go very deep within and touch and access the transcendent dimension, sometimes they manifest what is in conventional language called supernatural powers. Certain things happen around them, the strangest things, and these in India are called siddhis, they are supernatural powers that are a by-product sometimes, but not always, of the transcendent dimension. A by-product of deep spiritual realization.

And all the great teachers will tell you that do not pay too much attention to the siddhis, the powers that arise as by-products of the deepest realization. When they are there, it's fine. They are there, you can acknowledge it, welcome it.

If you get attached to them or identify with them, it will lead you back into ego. And the same thing the teacher will tell his followers, don't get too attached if you observe certain powers arising, that's ultimately not it, it's a by-product no more. It is not, to develop certain powers is not the aim of spiritual awakening, it's a by-product sometimes of spiritual awakening.

So that's important to realize and every, all true teachers will tell you that. So if I appear to you in two places simultaneously, if I'm here and then somebody else sees me in Los Angeles at the same time, don't pay any attention to that. And if you live in a false identity, a conceptual identity that you allow the world to tell you who you are, you allow the world to determine your worth, so you've stopped thinking, the ripple has stopped thinking, and in that at first there is a strange, I'm not thinking about who I am or my problems, and yet what is left here is just a presence.

And that means the ripple is becoming aware of a transcendent dimension that is deep. And that is the awakening of the ripple, and that is the awakening of the ripple. And that is actually the main purpose of your life, is to become aware of that, because that is the awakening of the human species.

And the human species is only one manifestation of the consciousness of the universe manifesting here as a human species. I'm sure there are others on other planets or galaxies who are also awakening, and your purpose is that. You may sometimes question whether your life is this weird notion of life.

How do you judge your life so far? Success? Failure?

Something in between? And of course it's, yes, it's nice to achieve something in this world, to create this or that, but it cannot tell you who you are. It always leaves a sense of lack ultimately behind, even if you can hang on to it until finally you die and you have to let go.

Or it leaves you, either you leave it or it leaves you, whatever it is. It leaves you or you leave it. And many things leave you before you die.

Achievements too, especially in the age of reputation can leave you, especially in the age of Twitter. One wrong tweet and your entire life is destroyed. And if you live in a false identity, a conceptual identity that you allow the world to tell you who you are, you allow the world to determine your worth, you look to the world and other people to tell you that you are good.

And if you allow the world to tell you that, then it's ultimately, you're trapped in a conceptual identity, that's me. And that can be destroyed. In the past you had to do a little bit more to destroy your reputation, but nowadays it's so easy.

Just tweet something and suddenly the hive mind will pounce on you and you have to say, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. And you can't show your face in public again anywhere. Exaggerating only slightly.

But that's all, it's so fragile because it's a fictitious sense of self. It's a surface I. But to lose your reputation or to lose your possessions or to lose your position is a wonderful opportunity for realizing who you are beyond your position and your possession and your achievements.

Some people need that. It's a blessing for them to lose, not everybody needs it, but many people need to lose some things very significant in their lives in order to bring about, to initiate the awakening process. And retrospectively, many humans look back and say they're really grateful that they lost this, which they regard as irreplaceable and extremely valuable.

And with that loss they lost mostly most part of their identity was a fiction anyway, but they didn't know that. And that led to suffering, of course. So the loss of fictitious identity, which can happen to anybody, to some people it doesn't happen until they retire.

They had a particular job title and suddenly if you pack your bags and you look forward to, okay, now I can start living. But then suddenly you realize you're nobody, beyond your job description and your function that you fulfilled for decades, perhaps an important function, member of the board. And suddenly you're not a member of the board, you're just bored.

But you have been looking forward to the golfing or there's a lot of golfing around here. Nothing against golf, can be wonderful meditation, but you've been looking forward to the golfing or whatever it is, you're very tired and I can start living. And you do some golfing and then you sit there and do a bit more golfing, whatever it is.

But who are you suddenly? You don't get these phone calls anymore, only very occasionally. And this great sense of something missing arises, oh, I'm nobody suddenly.

Yeah, because your entire life, your entire identity was built upon a fiction, a conceptual edifice in your head. And everybody else confirmed its truthfulness, but it wasn't. So the loss can be great, a great, great help, but it can be, most of you are not in desperate need of a huge loss, or it might happen, the universe gives you what you need, because you've already voluntarily come here.

You have voluntarily embarked upon a course of, to put it in blunt and somewhat scary terms, a course of meditation. A course of self annihilation. But it was only the surface self, there was nothing real there.

So when you, for example, when you now, especially now during the COVID pandemic, especially in six months, when your practice is your inner state, the practice is becoming familiar with awareness, allowing awareness into your life, realizing that nothing is more important than that. And then the most important thing is, you discover your ability to refrain from thinking. It doesn't have to be long at first, just long.

Not just when you're meditating, say, okay, now I'm going to do a meditation. That's fine, it's good. But there's more, there's much more to it.

To refrain from thinking, in ordinary situations, when thinking is not required, simple thing like looking at flowers, looking around the room. Do you have to think while you look around the room? Or can you look around the room without thinking?

And who is looking when you're not thinking? Is the person looking when you have no labels for your perception? Or when you're listening to a bird or the sound of the ocean?

Or the sound of rain, which may be coming tomorrow? When you're listening to that, and you're not labeling it mentally, you're not saying anything about it, but there's an alert listening. Who is listening?

Are you then a person with a history and so on that's listening? Or is there a deeper eye that has emerged and the sensory perception is happening against the background of, or within the space of, that deep eye? So in that sense, you could say the universe is listening to itself.

And there is a, let's say there's the bird song, or there is the crushing of the waves, or there's the sound of the rain. And suddenly, that listening is an enormous addition to the universe. The universe is awakening to itself, its own depth, its own beauty, through you.

But you can only fulfill that function as part of the totality, the function of the awakening universe, if you're not excessively burdened and excessively trapped in your personalized sense of self. And because otherwise you carry the burden of your self, the surface self, the little self, but the little self can feel very huge. It occupies your entire mental and emotional space.

And it sings about itself, and it talks about itself, and it moans about itself. I am the most important thing in the universe. He's me and the rest of the universe.

Oh dear. And now, how do you become free of, how do you step out of this, the trap, the prison of the self? As the Buddha just called it, the self.

Jesus also called it the self. It's not a very well-known fact, because they don't understand it in the churches, most of them, some may do, but they don't understand when he said, deny yourself. Jesus said, deny yourself.

Deny thyself, in the old translation. Meaning, obviously, you're not supposed to deny something that is real. The implication when Jesus says, deny thyself, is obviously that the self is not real.

Why would he ask you to deny something that is real? Would not make sense. And so the Buddha, of course, always pointed out to the, pointed to the fictitious nature of the self.

It said, Buddha said, self is an illusion. And as long as you are trapped, I'm paraphrasing the Buddha now, as long as you are trapped in the illusion of the self, you will encounter dukkha, translated as suffering. Sometimes translated as misery, or translated as unhappiness.

Suffering, misery, unhappiness, unsatisfactoriness. When you're trapped in that ultimately illusory self, you continuously generate dukkha, which is from the Pali language which is related to Sanskrit, meaning suffering, unhappiness, unsatisfactoriness. And wherever you go, whatever situation you go into, whatever relationship you go into, whatever place you go to, whatever attainment, whatever you attain or achieve, or get, there's always, sooner or later, and usually sooner, you will encounter the element of dukkha.

In other words, it gets tainted with unhappiness. And so the Buddha, that was the teaching of the Buddha, said wherever you go, you'll find dukkha. But why?

Because you take something that you are not to be real, and ultimately, who you are. And so that is a fiction. And therefore Jesus said, deny thyself.

Meaning, not deny the reality of yourself, meaning, deny the un-reality of yourself. Recognize the un-reality of yourself. That's the significant meaning of deny thyself.

Recognize the un-reality that is a denial of the self.

[Speaker 4] (1:20:55 - 1:21:11)
I read a quote where you were discussing people's food choices, and how that's connected maybe to their spirituality. And I'm wondering if you could elaborate on how that's connected, especially concerning ahimsa?

[Speaker 1] (1:21:13 - 1:41:11)
Thank you. I would say, I've never, as I never do, to tell people, you should do this, or you should not do that. But you should be present with whatever your food choices are, and then the right food choice will happen for you, rather than giving an abstract guideline.

It needs to come from within, rather than as something from without. So, if you are vegetarian, that's wonderful. It doesn't mean it immediately makes you into a person who is spiritual.

You could be egoically identified with being vegetarian, in which case it would be a hindrance to the realization of the spiritual dimension. So, I shocked a vegetarian once when I said, did you know that Hitler was a vegetarian? That person was very strongly identified with the mental image of me as a spiritually evolved vegetarian.

And so, yes, he was a vegetarian. I don't know why he was a vegetarian. Perhaps, I don't know, I haven't read about it, but I know that whenever people around Hitler were eating chicken soup, and so he said condescendingly, so you're eating dead bird soup.

So, it really is, it comes, the answer to that comes from within. Within you, and you have to do what feels right, what corresponds to your state of consciousness at any time, when you go into, when you even look at food, or even think of food. It is helpful to, sometimes when I buy some food, I go into a supermarket, and I look at the shelf, I imagine that this is going into my body, and then the body either opens up to it or closes down.

And so, if you're in touch with the body, then that is quite helpful, it makes it easier. The mind often doesn't really know what the body really wants. The mind remembers some past pleasure and wants to repeat it, and that's where overeating also occurs, because it's just, overeating is on the external level, on the physical level, the need to fill a sense of insufficiency that is ultimately there on the psychological, spiritual level, the sense of not enough is ego.

The ego lives from that sense of insufficiency, of not enough, and of needing more. And for some people that comes into the physical realm, in which case then you eat more than the body really needs or wants. And again, it's a spiritual dilemma and can only be really ultimately transcended if you realize that you are not that needy entity that says, I need more.

So body awareness helps a lot in food choice, and then it's up to you what it is that you feel, and you will know, you will not be in a dilemma, you will know what is right for you. And so this is, all important answers need to come from within you. And what you're experiencing here, realizing here, is the Tao, or consciousness of the Tao, in its pure form.

Well, I don't remember what I say it is, so let's see. Whatever you say about consciousness ultimately is not it, which is actually the first line in the Tao Te Ching, talking about the Tao. The Tao that can be spoken of is not the true Tao.

This is one of the translations, this is the first line in the Tao Te Ching. So in the widest sense Tao can be equated with consciousness, and the moment you speak about consciousness, consciousness becomes an object. But this is the reason why Lao Tse, the author of the Tao Te Ching says, the moment you speak about it, realize that it's not it.

Because the moment you speak about it, it becomes an object of thought. Whereas the essence of consciousness is that it is the eternal subject. So consciousness, you cannot understand it, you cannot understand what it is, you can only realize it as the essence of who you are.

And instead of talking about it right now, I suggest that you, I, right now, see if we can realize it as the essence of who we are. Realize or even just get a glimpse of what is meant by consciousness. And you might notice that the words I'm speaking are slowing down a bit.

And if you are listening attentively, then your attention will be such that you tune in completely to the words which arise out of thought and make them your own. So as I speak, these words are perceived as by you and they become thoughts in your mind. And if you're very attentive, then you don't add any other thoughts.

So you can actually experience this moment of me speaking in the same way in which I experience this moment. I experience this moment as I am speaking thoughts that become words arising spontaneously. But I'm slowing down, which means in addition to the thoughts and words arising, there are gaps in this discourse.

There are gaps between words and sentences, although there's lots of gaps. And if you're attentive enough, then you will also become aware of these gaps. So you're aware of the words which are only pointers right now.

The words that I'm speaking right now are only pointers that point your attention towards the gaps where there are no words and no thoughts. So you become aware of the words, yes, which are the objects that arise in consciousness. And if you're attentive enough, you're also aware of the spaces, gaps, spaces between the words and the sentences between the words.

And while you're aware of these gaps, you realize that you're not actually aware of any object. A gap or a space is not an object. It cannot be an object.

When you talk about it, it becomes an object. But when you experience the gap, it is just a space. It's not an object.

And so what is it that you experience? There is just a spacious presence. It has no content.

And what you're experiencing here, realizing here, is the Tao or consciousness in its pure form, its pure, no form, which is the Tao, which is the Tao before it becomes something, before it becomes a thought or words. So right now, you're aware of sense perceptions because you can still see me. You're aware of the words.

But more importantly, you are aware that you are aware. You know yourself as this aware presence, space. Without that space, that aware space, there would be no sense perception.

It is the light of consciousness in which all the objects of consciousness are perceived. Most people are not aware of themselves as consciousness. They're only aware of the object that arise in consciousness.

And their sense of identity also, their sense of who they are, ultimately, is an object that arises in their consciousness. That's me. This is my story, me and my story, my identity.

I am this and that and that and all those things together, that's me. But they're all thought forms or emotional forms that arise in consciousness. They are an object in consciousness.

And this object in consciousness, for most people, is the foundation of their sense of identity. But that, unfortunately, is an enormous limitation and, ultimately, a misperception of who they actually are. Most people's sense of identity, therefore, is based on a misperception.

Because who you truly are is not an object in consciousness. That's ephemeral. It's here for a while, then it evaporates.

Who you truly are is a space of consciousness itself. And so you become aware of an underlying presence, just to use a word. And a wakefulness, a certain alertness, a stillness.

But not a stillness that is asleep, an alert stillness. That's the realization of consciousness, of yourself as consciousness. That frees you from this misperception that you are an object that arises in consciousness, the egoic self.

That has its place, of course. You have a past. You have certain conditioning.

Your mind, your mental, emotional field is conditioned in certain ways. And that conditioning becomes the person or the personality. But there's a deeper dimension, a transcendent dimension to your identity.

And if you realize that, that's an enormous liberation from this extremely limited and, ultimately, erroneous sense of self that is the person. And now the interesting thing is you can actually sense this presence that you are in the background of your life at all times. Now you may not be able to do that yet.

It may become obscured many times. And then, again, you become identified completely with the conditioned mind, with the personality, with the person, with its reactive patterns, its conditioned likes and dislikes and opinions and so on.

And then, suddenly, again, you know yourself as this alert stillness.

So it's deeply satisfying to know that there's infinitely more to you than your personality. So you're no longer, you still have a personality, but it's no longer a prison. It's no longer your prison.

You're no longer totally confined within it. You're aware of a transcendent dimension to who you are. And this is, this can only be realized directly.

So the answer to the question, how do you know that consciousness is what you're saying it is, is quite simply this. The cessation of thought and what remains is the unconditioned consciousness. That's who you are in your essence, but that's not only who you are.

That is also, and more fundamentally, who or what the universe is in its essence. It is a disguised desire also for God. But those who are trapped in ego don't know that what they are really looking for is not the house or the car or the recognition from others or the fame.

What they're really looking for is themselves.

[Speaker 5] (1:41:18 - 1:42:20)
Hello, Eckhart. The question that I submitted was, what is the fundamental difference between your teaching of presence and the current popular teaching of the law of attraction? Behind that teaching is really a question about desire.

And I have always felt very drawn to the Sufi teaching which says, hidden deeply within my desire is the desire of God. And yet, the law of attraction people are saying you can have or do or be anything you want if you think and feel in a certain way. And I always feel a red flag when I hear that because I think the ego could go wild with that.

So my question is, is there a deeper fundamental level of desire which is not of the ego?

[Speaker 1] (1:42:28 - 2:25:18)
The Sufis are right, of course, when they say that ultimately every desire is really a disguised desire for God. It's a disguised desire for ultimate satisfaction and fulfillment and being fully and truly, completely who you are. And basically, we're talking about the source, realizing the source of all life.

Everyone is longing for that, but in most humans still, the longing for what I sometimes call the return journey to where you came from, the source of all life, but never really left the source, of course. It's not really a journey, but it's words. There's a longing to return to the very source of life, and it's really only then, when you have discovered it, found it consciously, then there's a completion there of life.

That's what the universe wanted. It wanted not, it wants two things. If you observe yourself, you know that this is true and you are the universe, so you can learn a lot about the universe by observing yourself, because you are it, and it is you, and as above, so below.

The tendency, or the desire, to create, the human being has the tendency to create. There's a desire to create in the world of form, to bring things, to give birth to whatever it may be. It may be a material thing, it may be something else, but there's a desire in humans to participate in the act of creation, which, of course, the act of creation is there even without humans.

The millions of life forms on this planet alone come into being every moment. Millions of life forms of different kinds, it staggers the imagination, how many different life forms on this planet alone are being created every moment, and of course die at the same time, continuous. Birth, death, birth, death, continuously.

Humans too, humans are being created every moment. I can say a human being is being born now, now, now, now, now, somewhere on the planet, and a human being is dying a little bit slower, now, now, now, now. At this moment, somebody is dying on the planet, and again, and again, and again, and being born.

So that's, there's the act of creation that the universe is engaged in, and creation is becoming, is increasing in complexity. If you look at our planet alone, you see that there was a time when it was barren, there was only minerals. Then came plant life, and then other levels of life, increasing complexity.

Like a tree, first there's only one branch, the stem, one branch, and then a lot more smaller branches coming out of that, so it grows, and it goes into complexity. And even human life forms, if you go back in human history, human society and the human being was relatively simple thousands of years ago, even a few hundred years ago compared to now. There's much less complexity in people's personal lives, what they had to deal with, and the collective.

So there's the, the universe then is growing in complexity and is indulging in or wanting or delighting, perhaps, in the act of creation, because otherwise it wouldn't be happening. It is a desire of the universe to create, and that's what it does, and that is reflected in humans. We participate in the, this wanting to give birth, so the human, the act of creation can happen to the human, the human can create, and that's, in that sense we are different from animals, because we can create all kinds of things that are totally new.

We can create music, science, and many, many other things, art, philosophies, pictures, movies, organizations, Wall Street, all kinds of things, and you can probably find in yourself that there's part of you that would like to do and participate in the act of creation and bring something into this world that wasn't here before, in the world of form. Maybe it's a book you want to write, or a piece of music, or you want to create an enlightened organization that changes things in the world, or whatever, or you want to, to help people who are suffering, you create a structure that is helpful, but you create something. There's that desire to, or in some people it is more fundamental, it's a desire to acquire something.

Some people who are very much in the egoic consciousness don't see it so much as giving out into this, giving from your treasure, and then create something. You must to some extent have already gone beyond ego if you, the creationist comes from the fullness that you sense inside you, and from there you can truly create, this is really presence. In the egoic consciousness they're also very interested in the world of form, but it's the egoic consciousness is not so much, doesn't come from the wanting to give, but wanting to have.

So the ego goes, what can I get? And the, from presence, when you participate in the creation, it's more what can I give birth to? That's the difference, so there is the egoic aspect of increasing complexity in the world of form, and life forms, the egoic part is wanting something, so the ego comes not from fullness, but from neediness, from a sense of not enough.

And so it says, where can I get, and that is the ego desire, the ego says, I desire that car because I will really feel better when I'm sitting in that car and driving it, especially if other people see me in it. Without other people it doesn't really work, because it's only, okay it's comfortable for the ego, yes it's a comfortable ride, but that's not such a big thing, it only begins to work for the ego if other people have cars that are not like mine, then it works. The same with a house, or whatever you acquire, any possession, you can perfectly enjoy a nice house, or a nice car, without the ego deriving any pleasure from it or enhancing itself, I'm not saying things cannot be enjoyed, if you have no ego you can still enjoy lovely things, but not because they add to your sense of self, it's a simple enjoyment of a beautiful thing that perhaps a human has created, a beautiful piece of furniture, beautiful, could be a house, you enjoy that house. You would probably not want to acquire a 20 bedroom house for yourself when you're not coming from ego, it's unlikely that presence would say, I'd love a 20 bedroom house.

We have, so the, I suppose the egoic aspect of wanting to, not so much the ego, not so much create, but have, but it's a world of form, and the non-egoic desire of the universe to give birth to more forms and experience more forms. So the universe does it without the humans, but an added dimension comes in when the universe or the greater intelligence or consciousness creates through the humans, a completely new level of creation comes in. And this is why we have the expression, we become co-creators with God, God creates the fishes in the sea and the plant life and all the animals and the human bodies, and then through the human form, the human mind, including thought, the universe can create things that wouldn't be there without the human co-creators.

So that's, desire as such is really an egoic phenomenon. When you create beyond ego, it's not so much a creation out of desire, it's a creation, because desire implies some kind of lack. Creation comes as wanting to give from the fullness that you sense within you.

Something wants to be, the way I perceive when I wrote the books, the books wanted to come out and I could feel it wanted to be created. It's not so much that I had a desire to write a book, the book wanted to come, and so that is creation when it's not, does not come from ego. The desire of the ego, as I mentioned earlier just now, if you look deeply, it is a disguised desire also for God, for spiritual realization.

But those who are trapped in ego don't know that what they are really looking for is not the bank account or the house or the car or the recognition from others or the fame or whatever it is that the ego thinks would give it fulfillment. What they are really looking for is themselves, a fuller version of themselves. And who are you in your essence?

You are the source. Who you are in your essence is consciousness itself, which is, if God is the sun, so to speak, an analogy, then the light of the sun is, you are, the consciousness is the light of the sun. God is the source, the unmanifested, of which you cannot speak because whatever you say is a distortion, it's absurd to speak of that mystery as the Tao Te Ching says, you can't speak of the Tao, and nevertheless we are speaking, and nevertheless the Tao Te Ching did get written in words.

And the people who are impelled by egoic desire eventually experience frustration and suffering, even if they attain an egoic state, and particularly if they attain whatever they desired, because then they realize, no, this doesn't seem to work, I'm still, I still feel this unfulfillment, perhaps even more strongly when you no longer have anything that you could mentally project yourself to and say, when I have that, I'll be okay.

And so when you have everything that this world can offer you, some people do, not many, most people are wanting, want that, desire that, but those few who do, I've met a few, who have everything, and they can either realize the futility of desiring things that ultimately cannot give them themselves ultimate fulfillment, ultimate satisfaction, a sense of permanency, vibrantly alive inner peace, these things can't give that to you.

But in the meantime, as long as the egojis don't know that, they are free to practice manifesting, they are free to practice, okay, I need to manifest the car, I need to manifest the house, I need to manifest this, and they, to some extent it can work. You're a little bit hampered when you're coming from ego consciousness, so your powers of manifestation are limited, nevertheless you have some. In addition, what the ego also manifests, of course, it's its own dysfunction that comes with the house and the car, so what we're not mentioning here is that while the ego can manifest a house and a car and whatever else it wants, it will also manifest the drama in the marriage that's in the house, the drama with the wife and the husband in the big house, that's a side manifestation of the ego that it hadn't planned that, but because of its inbuilt dysfunction, it also manifests continuous conflict around whatever else it manifests.

So it's a, and eventually you realize that this does not provide you with satisfaction, and then you begin to awaken. So, am I, I'm, there are then two ways of manifesting the ego. One comes with the ego's neediness to manifest, and another is out of the fullness of presence you can manifest.

You, even coming from the fullness of presence, presence can use also the human mind, because presence flows through the, can flow through the mind and can energize your thoughts, your thought structures, and they're no longer dysfunctional, and whatever the, whatever presence wants to manifest through you, it can and it can use the power of thought to manifest, but it will come from a giving behind it, it's a desire to give, a wanting to give, not to get.

So, thought can be used, and it used more powerfully when the ego is no longer interfering, but presence, when the human becomes co-creator with God, then presence can flow into the human mind and use also human thought and create original things out there, and that's a beautiful thing. What part does willpower play in the awakening process, if any? Don't I use some willpower to motivate myself to follow your teachings?

I must listen to Icarus now. I don't want to, but I have to. So it's not willpower, because if you use willpower and you listen because you think you should be listening or you're a spiritual person and you should be listening to a spiritual talk to just prove to yourself that you're spiritual, or you're determined to awaken.

No, there is something in you that wants to listen and that responds, and that in you that wants to listen has nothing to do with willpower. It's an energy field that rises up, and whatever, the only way you can listen to any spiritual teaching is from that deeper level, not from the conceptual mental level, and whenever you listen to a spiritual teaching, it's always from the deeper place. It's always a recognition of what you already knew deep down.

So the truth is always recognized because it comes from, you listen from the same place from where the teaching arises, and so it recognizes itself. The truth, you already know it, even though it may be too deep for you to access it for yourself, then you listen to a spiritual teaching and suddenly the truth that is in you is called forth and drawn out and responses, oh yeah, and you immediately sense, that's it, yes. Why didn't I know that before?

Of course, you did know it before because now you recognize it. Now there's something else in you that does not want to listen. The egoic entity may sometimes take over and say something like, I can't deal with that spiritual stuff now, it's just too much, what's the point of all this?

It's not getting me anywhere, is it? I've been doing that for years, where's it getting me? Nowhere.

The story in the head. And then you believe in what it says, and sometimes it can stop people temporarily from going to the spiritual teaching, but then if that goes on for long enough, you start to suffer more and more. And finally the suffering becomes the thing that awakens you again, that creates the gap or the opening in you and you're ready, ah, now you want to listen again.

Can't stand the suffering anymore. So willpower is not it. Now it may sometimes look to, at first sight, it may look, when I say be present, you can choose to be present.

When there's a certain level of presence in you already, you can choose to be present rather than to drift back into your mind. And there is an alertness associated with presence, but it is a relaxed alertness, not a tight alertness. It's not, it's not a, no, it's a, you see the difference?

It's easier acting it out than talking about it. It's not, it's not the tight, almost fearful alertness that is there, or even some anger behind it. It's a relaxed alertness, so it's almost, it might seem incompatible almost, relaxed alertness, but it's not.

So the alertness has an intensity to it. And, but that's not willpower. The non-relaxed alertness has an element of willpower in it, and that's not it.

You can sometimes see in paintings or drawings of Zen masters, that alertness, that intensity, that willpower alertness, and in Zen masters, that particular version of spiritual awakening, there is a fierceness. There's a fierceness to the way they look sometimes in the ancient drawings, and there is also a fierceness to the way in which they teach. And it's partly culturally conditioned because everything comes through the particular veil.

The teaching is the same, no matter what cultural veil or conditioned veil it comes through, but the way it manifests can be conditioned by a culture, or in the case of the teacher, it can be conditioned by the energy field of the teacher. Some teachers are, seem more forthright and aggressive almost. It's not really aggressive, but it might look so to the ego.

So there can be, there's a fierceness sometimes to the alertness, which is sometimes required to break through all the mental stuff you need to go into. Now whether you look fierce at the same time, doesn't matter, you can. But if you look at the greatest drawings of Zen masters, at first sight they look fierce.

If you look more closely, you'll see that behind the fierceness, there's a compassion and a gentleness. And of course, those can only be done by artists who are masters who can capture what the inner reality of the Zen master, which is both the fierceness and behind it is hiding compassion. The same applies to meditation practice.

Willpower is not a good way to ensure that your meditation practice is successful. In other words, it doesn't work. Because willpower in meditation is the famous lid on the boiling kettle.

You're holding it down, forcing yourself to be still instead of surrendering into the present moment so that stillness arises naturally, forcing yourself to be still. And then that may work for a while. And when the next episode of unconsciousness happens, which will be soon, when you go back into your normal life after the meditation, you come downstairs into the building and you're shouting at somebody.

And everybody's disturbing your serenity. So when you realize that what's important is already here and not in the next moment, what really matters, that means you already have shifted to a different state of consciousness. Very simple, just that realization.

But it's so deeply ingrained, the illusion that you believe, the unconscious assumption that the next moment matters more than this one. Everybody inherits that mind pattern. And that makes life very frustrating.

You all know that. Life consists only ever of this moment. So we are here to go deeper into this moment and not wait for something more significant in the next one.

So we become comfortable with being here now and get rid of the illusion that there is something important missing from your life. Or there's something not quite right that hasn't arrived yet. Something, a very deep-seated illusion.

There's something not right. But it's going to be right perhaps one day. The person who is still deluded by worldly things believes it's going to be right when this or that happens or I attain this or that.

And the spiritual seeker believes it's going to be right when I become enlightened. In both cases, it's future, the promise of that. And you're continuously overlooking something vital that is very easy to overlook because the movement of thought is so seductive and hypnotic.

There's a light in you, not a visual light, a presence that is essentially who you are and has nothing to do with your past or future. And we are here to become familiar with being that presence consciously. If it feels good and right for you this moment to be here and to hear this and almost, let's say, to recognize the truth of it, that means that's it.

Just a sense of goodness and rightness of being here, that means that dimension that has no form is already arising. So for example, St. Francis of Assisi, he was born as the son of a very fairly wealthy merchant in Italy. And he was so disgusted by his father's wealth and consumption and that he told, there were very few spiritual who rejected all material things so completely.

He was the ultimate hippie before hippies. So he didn't, he would always go barefoot, have no possessions whatsoever. I don't want anything, no nothing material.

And so he, and many people joined him, young men, often some women, they joined him and wanted to live like him. It seemed a wonderful thing. And then gradually his teaching spread and more people joined the order.

And then they had to come to the church, it was becoming suspicious. He had to go and visit the Pope and ask to have permission to have an order and so on, and he had to do that. There's a wonderful scene in a movie, Brother, Son, Sister, Moon, where St. Francis visits the Pope. It's a beautiful scene. And then as the movement grew, and St. Francis got older, the order started to have possessions. They had, beginning to have buildings and lands.

And he was so disgusted by this, he didn't want to have much to do with it. He let other people run it. I don't want it anymore.

He didn't like. But if that had not happened, the entire Franciscan movement would have evaporated after his death. It needed to be somehow rooted in the materiality, the physicality of things.

Jesus lived by, was supported by women, mostly. Strangely enough, many people don't know that. And it's only said in one line in the New Testament, where many women followed him and served him with their possessions, with their money.

So if you, and then how would some, let's say, a publication, a Western publication, where Jesus lived nowadays, a Western publication would say, he's exploiting this, look at this spiritual teacher. He's exploiting these women. He's taking all their money.

This would be the headline. Some of them have left their families, and he just dreadful charlatan, look what he's doing. So there's no clear, everybody has to decide for themselves what they feel comfortable with.

If you are a spiritual teacher, what is it that you feel comfortable with? Do you chant? Do you say donation?

Whatever you do, somehow you need some money. And if you go to a spiritual teaching also, you can see, do you feel comfortable with paying something or not? If you don't feel comfortable, go somewhere else where you don't pay.

You can go to a Buddhist monastery, and for a while you don't pay. If you go there a few times, they're going to look at you and say, well, where's your donation? I mean, you need, it wouldn't make sense.

So there was a time when after my shift in consciousness, when I explored, I had this need to explore all kinds of spiritual traditions. And I went, I tried everything, because I didn't understand what had happened to me. I, eventually the understanding came through Buddhist teachings, and then I understood, oh, this is what it is about.

It's a cessation of thinking. When a Buddhist, a Zen monk said to me, well, Zen is about not thinking. And I said, that was a revelation to me.

Not thinking. And then I realized that I was doing very little thinking. But I only experienced the not thinking as inner peace.

I didn't know it was not thinking. But anyway, I explored other things, causing miracles. There were workshops.

I went to, wanted to know, what's the cause in miracles? I read, very interesting. I went to Scientology.

I never became a member. I did one test. I just wanted to, but they were so, the guy who was doing it was so stupid that I didn't even want to know his interpretation of my test.

But then I went to other workshops. There were some workshops charge money, and occasionally I was so interested that, okay, this one charge is 500 pounds for the weekend. Well, I don't have 500 pounds.

And I remember, okay, I need to get a job. I need to make, I was really interested. I can't remember what it was.

There are so many things. I need 500 pounds. Okay.

I remember what job I got to get the 500 pounds for two weeks. I got a job at the

Kennel Club in London, registering dogs on little cards. What's the name of the dog?

They were all coming in, every day they were coming in. I had to open the envelope, register breed, name, age, gender, all called, there were no computers then. Okay.

And after two weeks, I had enough money to join the workshop. It wasn't very good, but at least I knew that wasn't for me. And I never felt, oh, these people are terrible.

If they want that money and people do it, perhaps it's worth it. Perhaps it's a wonderful thing. It happened not to be a wonderful thing.

So, generally speaking, you're very right. Money can make people very unconscious. Even just some people, even just beginning to talk about money, especially people who have had an experience of scarcity in their childhood and whose parents were fearful around money.

And money was always discussed in their family with negative emotions. There was never enough and so on. So, I know I've met people who were relatively conscious in most of their lives, except the moment when money was mentioned.

Then immediately it pulled them into unconscious reactivity. And not just necessarily huge amounts of money, it could just be, he charged me too much, it was $10 too much. The entire bill was $200, but the $10, it's terrible.

So, just mention money and they become unconscious. For some people, there are other triggers that still make it. Maybe some of you have certain triggers that make you unconscious.

Whenever you think about it or talk about it, it could be, for example, your ex-spouse. Whenever you think or talk about him or her, you go, awful. Or it could be money, or it could be something else, some other, your pet subject that you feel something in politics.

That's the moment it's mentioned, you go react, become reactive. But for many people, it's money. So, you need to observe that money is only, one could see symbolic energy, it symbolizes energy.

And in itself is not problematic, but for many people, it becomes associated with fear, the fear of not enough, and also ego. It becomes associated with ego. So, how much money you have determines your worth.

How much, this is a weird expression, how much is he worth? That's ridiculous. So, what's your relationship with money?

[Speaker 3] (2:25:20 - 2:25:29)
It's one which has evolved over time, and now it's a place where I see it as symbolic energy, and that's what I'm going and teaching the world about. Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (2:25:29 - 2:35:11)
Yeah, good. That's good. I'm doing good with the money.

Not everybody, almost nobody knows what exactly I do with it. I feel like Jesus' advice when you give something, don't let the left hand know what the right hand is doing, or something like that. So, nobody knows, because it can so easily become ego.

I met somebody last year, lovely, wonderful man. He's doing such good in the world, and he's very wealthy, but he's not here, so I'm just saying it. He probably won't even know I'm referring to him, but soon after meeting him, he gave me a list.

He pronounced, well, I'm engaged in the following charities, this one. I've been supporting this charity for 15 years, and then I'm supporting this, and then I created that charity. It's wonderful work, but I could see he was already spiritually awakening, but his ego was clinging to his charity.

So, he's doing good, but it's not doing him much good, not his ego. So, it's better to give anonymously, as I often do, to give anonymously. People don't even know where it's coming from.

It's a lovely way of giving. Marina asks, from North Carolina, in my efforts to be in the now, I find I'm able to reach a state of peace and connectedness. I think that I wouldn't call it effort, but I know what you mean.

It feels complete and fulfilling, and yet there's a voice in my mind saying that to be truly connected, I should find a way to be in service to others. Can you help me understand the role that being in service to others plays in the evolutionary impulse of the universe? Thank you for bringing a ray of hope to humanity.

It is an interesting synchronicity to me that the day of your program launch is also my birthday. Happy birthday. The evolutionary impulse of the universe, the arising of presence, you cannot not be of service to others as presence arises, one way or another.

The way in which you are of service to others will vary from person to person. You may not immediately know what your way is. Again, the mind sometimes wants to know too soon, okay, what am I going to do with it now?

I'm present. Be present. And gradually, the realization of how you are to serve others, whether it's through direct spiritual teaching or whether it's through some activity into which the energy frequency of presence flows, you don't know.

It may come to you. It might take a while. It took years for this teaching to come out of the state of presence, so many years.

It may take a while, or it may happen very quickly. There is an acceleration happening on the planet now of the arising of presence, so it's probably happening more quickly to you than to me. How to be of service to others, whether it's through direct spiritual teaching or some activity, it will come to you either through an external circumstance that will tell you what it is that you need to do.

It can come from the outside as a synchronistic event, and many people are telling me that they're finding that things that are just right as they live more and more in presence come into their lives, the right offer, the right meeting, the right person, and suddenly what it is that you need to do arises from the outside. It comes, or you wake up one morning with the realization of, this is what I need to do, and then I would wait and see just to make sure that it comes from a deep enough place, and if it's still there the next day and a week later and there's a deep sense of peace with it and power, then it comes from a deep place and then it's good to act on it. This is how I got taken away from living in England.

I loved England, but one morning I knew I have to remove myself without knowing why, and it was so strong that I removed myself. I knew I had to go to the west coast of North America, not knowing why, and it took a while before I got rid of everything, removed myself, landed on the west coast. What now?

Don't know. And so I sat there for a few weeks in presence, and the mind, yes, came in occasionally and said, this is, why did you come here? And the mind even got, started to look at ads for flying back to England, fares, and then at some point the impulse came to buy a notepad, to carry the notepad, not home, I didn't have a home, somebody had put me up, and there in his kitchen the pen came and a very strong impulse came to write, and I wrote, what is enlightenment?

Somebody had once asked me that, but I hadn't, I remembered more or less what I had said, but that was a new stream that came, and I'd written one page and I knew this is a book, it's coming, and so there was simply something I couldn't have predicted, obedience to what came out of the present moment, and the trust to go just into the, with a limited amount of money, into complete unknown, but don't do it on an impulse that is a restless kind of impulse, or that comes out of any kind of negative emotion, and see if it's still with you after a while, then it's right, it's peaceful and it's powerful. It seemed the book could only be written on the west coast of North America because of the energy field there. I realized that later when I went back to England, the writing stopped, I could only do editing, and so all kinds of things people will be called upon to serve in all kinds of capacities according to your abilities.

It may be that you produce something artistic or music that is inspiring to many people, whatever it is, we don't know. It may be that you set up a business and everybody who comes there is greeted for who they are, so you recognize everybody as spirit, as consciousness, and everybody who comes away from your business feels lighter and more themselves. Many things can be used as excuses for spiritual transmission and spiritual teaching, and if you already have some business or some activity, it is quite possible that this could continue to be used then as a vehicle for transmission of spiritual energy, and then it will become empowered.

Beautiful thing. There's no predicting how this will change your life, except that it will change your life, and even if some people may not remove themselves, they may stay where they are, and yet it will change, might not change what you do, but it will fundamentally change how you do what you do. That's always the most important thing, it's not what you do, it's how you do it, what is the consciousness that flows into it, is it the egoic consciousness or is it the unconditioned consciousness?

[Speaker 7] (2:35:32 - 2:35:35)
To be enlightened, how does it feel like?

[Speaker 1] (2:35:44 - 2:35:45)
Feels good.

[Speaker 7] (2:35:45 - 2:36:06)
I mean, I need to know what I'm doing, you know, so I think I have to go through the mental process of understanding this, and what will I get out of this?

[Speaker 1] (2:36:06 - 2:44:39)
The motivation to seek enlightenment can be of various kinds, some work better than others. There's a danger that the search for enlightenment is ego-motivated, that can easily happen. The ego feels a sense, which is quite normal, of lack or dissatisfaction with the things, either the things it has or the things it has already achieved and didn't fulfill it, and then it went on to something else, and that wasn't quite that fulfilling either, and then it reads or hears something about the possibility of achieving a state of enlightenment.

Well, that sounds much better than all the things I've been looking for so far, because those things haven't satisfied me, so I'm going to go for that. And then the ego creates, of course, a goal, I want to reach that goal, in the same way that before it created other goals that it either reached or did not reach, either way it wasn't satisfying. You might have heard the saying, there are two ways of being unhappy, one is not getting what you want, the other is getting what you want.

That's when the ego operates, that's the case. So, either it achieved already what it wanted and it didn't satisfy it, or it couldn't achieve it, and now it's looking for something else that maybe it could achieve, and enlightenment seems a good option, because the Ferrari, that didn't satisfy me, and then I tried the Lamborghini and that didn't satisfy me, and then I tried whatever else, didn't satisfy me, but enlightenment, that's it, I want to go for that.

And then, of course, it wants to know, okay, but what exactly does that mean? I want to know what I'm striving towards, because it might be the wrong thing, maybe when I achieve it, I won't be there anymore, or maybe the only way to achieve it is for me to dissolve. I don't know if I want it anymore.

I think I'm going to ask Eckhart that question. So, what I can tell you, in addition to what I've already said, is enlightenment will not satisfy your ego. Sorry about that.

Ego needs to be recognized as an illusion, an ultimate fiction in your mind for something else to emerge, and in that sense, one can say nobody actually becomes enlightened. You don't become enlightened, but when you get out of the way, there it is. So enlightenment is not something you can actually achieve, and I have no feeling that I achieved anything or that I am enlightened.

I said it feels good because just the present moment feels good, that's all I know. So, even to make that claim, I am enlightened, is ultimately, cannot be correct, because who is saying that? Who is making that claim?

So, in ultimate terms, you cannot be enlightened, but if you, the person, recognize its ephemeral nature and you no longer see your sense of self there, then something else is suddenly there that has always been there, but you just didn't know it. It was obscured. It was continuously overlooked.

The presence of consciousness was continuously overlooked in every experience. You could have been conscious of it at any moment, but it was overlooked because the hypnotic nature of the sensory world, and especially of the mind, was so overpowering that you overlooked something more essential in you that has always been there, is always there, will always be there. So, and therefore, if the motivation to seek so-called enlightenment comes from that place of seeking some permanent fulfillment, then it's not going to work, and there are spiritual practitioners, without knowing it, they spend years and years looking for that thing, and they're mentally projected into this place called future, which, by the way, only exists as a thought, but has no reality as such. There is no future except as a thought in your head.

Nobody has seen future, touched it, been there. You can't. It's not there.

Life is now, always. There is no future. So if you seek a future state, it's misleading, and if you seek enlightenment in the future, that very search is the obstacle.

So there can, however, there can be another motivation for seeking enlightenment, but then I would suggest a different word for it, and not enlightenment, but liberation. And that motivation can be not to find some greater fulfillment, but that motivation can be to become free of suffering. So there can be another motivation for seeking enlightenment, but although I would prefer the term liberation here, or in Christian terminology, a related word that's used in Christian terminology is salvation.

So if the suffering in your life gets too much, and then realizing that there is a way beyond suffering and wanting to know more about that, that is a better motivation for finding liberation than seeing what can I get out of it when I finally get enlightened. And of course, the answer is, the one that's asking that question won't be even there to experience it. If we do not take action, I do not believe that the planet will become destroyed, but we will destroy ourselves.

[Speaker 5] (2:44:39 - 2:45:27)
I don't really have a formulated question, but I'd like to hear you talk for a second. It's kind of been hinted at here and there, but talk more specifically about the situation of the planet, the ecological situation, you know, without panicking, without getting self-righteous, and all these other things. Clearly, a change of consciousness is necessary, but things also have to be done in real time, because these are processes happening in time.

And so, just if you had anything at all to say about that, and how these two processes of consciousness, and also changing things, doing whatever would be necessary for the planet, how this works together.

[Speaker 1] (2:45:27 - 3:01:47)
Yes, thank you. Are you engaged in that kind of work? To some extent, and hoping to be more, yes.

Well, one thing, as you know, I don't need to say it again, the foundation for any action you take is to let it arise from presence, rather than from a feeling of fear, or anger, because those two are not very productive. What comes out of fear or anger is not productive. Presence is much more powerful.

There's an enormous power in presence, and true intelligence, intelligent, really intelligent action comes out of presence. So, that's vital to know. There are many things that need changing in our relationship with the planet.

Things seem to be going the wrong way right now. All I can say is, do as much as you can to help change the way in which we live on this planet. Do what you can, with peace in your heart.

That's the main thing, with peace in your heart, because otherwise, without peace, the opposite of peace is war and conflict. So, if we don't destroy the planet, we destroy ourselves through war and conflict. The planet, there's more to the planet, this is my intuitive realization, by the way.

There's more to the planet than we realize. The planet is a being. It's not a rock floating in space with things growing on top.

The planet is a living being. Many humans or scientists cannot accept that. What I mean is, it is pervaded by an intelligent energy field in the same way that your body is pervaded and held together and run by an underlying intelligence that keeps everything, the thousands of functions in your body, because the planet is another kind of body.

The thousands of functions that need to be constantly coordinated and controlled that keep this body alive, keep the atoms and molecules together, keep the organs from cooperating. No human or the greatest computer could possibly do that. Even now, we only understand a fraction of how our physical body operates.

There's a vast intelligence built into it. When that intelligence says goodbye, then very quickly, the atoms and molecules say goodbye to each other, too, and then they depart, and then the form dissolves. The planet is also an intelligence, a being that is intelligent, and it has produced us in a way, not alone.

There have been other factors. The sun is also more than a fireball. We think the sun is a ball of just energy.

There's more to it than that. We think the sun is extremely hot. Well, hot is one way, but really what that means is the energy of highest intensity, which our physical body registers as extreme heat.

The sun is also a celestial being. You don't need to believe me, by the way, but I'll just tell you what my intuitive realization is. And the planet has an intelligence also that we need to, one reason why we need to be active in protecting the planet, so that we don't use these absurd ways of the resources of the planet, the absurd ways of getting energy.

We need to go beyond that. There are other ways. The universe is infinitely abundant.

The energy on the external level, the energy, obviously inexhaustible energy comes continuously from the sun. And all the other energy forms that we discover on the planet are really transformed sun energy. It was once sun energy.

So, and to use those is a very primitive way of using energy. And we need to, as soon as possible, and this is the task of scientists and so on, who also need to be present to go beyond those primitive ways of using the energy that's left over by sun energy on the planet. The planet, if we do not take action, I do not believe that the planet will become destroyed, but we will destroy ourselves.

Or the planet, which has an intelligence, but it's just slow, because to a planet, a hundred years is nothing, 200 years is nothing, one second in your lifetime or less. The planet, if the planet feels threatened by humans, I firmly believe that it will eliminate humans. It can do that very easily.

We are, because we are connected, our physical form is connected to the energy field of the planet. It's part, it's come out of the planet. So the planet could easily, even without violence, the planet could end all humans within a hundred years, without any act of violence, by simply making males and females infertile.

That would be an action taken by planetary intelligence. Say, these humans, we can't have them anymore, that's too much. Or let's just get rid of 95% of them, and then they can have a new beginning and can try again.

But it doesn't have to come to that. So before the planet takes action, and the planet is slow, we need to take action, but with peace, because otherwise we are unconscious beings, we'll just contribute. Even if in our unconscious action, we could save the planet, we still wouldn't save ourselves, because we would create warfare, if we are unconscious.

There are many ways we can destroy ourselves, not just through destroying nature. There are other ways we can destroy ourselves, and we will, if there is no, if the shift in consciousness does not reach a sufficient number of people. But the essence of what I'm saying is, peace in your heart, do not fear.

There's more to the planet than you realize. If the planet needs to get rid of you, it will. How do you deal with challenges?

And challenges will continue to come, that's the weird thing. And that's a wonderful thing, because if life did not give you challenges, you would not evolve. And that not only applies to humans, it applies to every life form on the planet.

Life is challenging for every plant, and every tree, and every animal on the planet. There's no doubt about that. It presents challenges for every species on the planet.

And that is how consciousness grows, through being faced with challenges. And once you see that, you might recognize it in a movie. You wouldn't want to go to see a, watch a movie where the characters are not challenged by life.

In other words, let's say you go to a cinema, and the movie begins, and nothing goes wrong. And then you would say after 15 minutes, this is not an interesting movie, there's nothing going wrong. Because almost any movie, something needs to go wrong, otherwise there is no movie.

Because it's only if things go wrong, the character gets challenged. And then something happens. Either the challenge is resolved on an external level, which is a not so good movie, which means the bad guy is finally eliminated, or put away.

Or if the challenge is, if it's a good movie, the challenge with which the characters are faced brings about a change in the character. And in a very good movie, and there are not many of those, but some, the character becomes more conscious through the challenges. And then you might even want to see that movie again, and again, and again.

It no longer depends, you already know what's going to happen, but that's secondary. You just enjoy the process of watching somebody awaken. And as you watch somebody awaken, you somehow participate in that awakening.

And it could even be a funny movie in addition to that. So one of my favorite movies, or I'm sure most of you know it, Groundhog Day. And I've watched that many times.

And that shows somebody deeply unconscious, and suffering, and suffering, and suffering, is stuck in the same day again, and again, and again, and he can't get out. This is, of course, the state of the egoic state. And then until finally, something changes in him.

Finally, he comes to acceptance, and surrender, and becomes helpful by accepting and surrendering what is. He becomes helpful to other people. And then in the end, the same day, which is forced to repeat again, and again, and he's stuck in a place that he hates, in a town that he hates, doing what he hates, seeing people that he hates.

And finally, he can't stand the suffering anymore. And then he's not hating anymore. He just accepts.

And then suddenly experiences the same day differently. He begins to awaken. And in the end of the movie, he says, oh, this place is so nice.

Let's stay here. And then he's free to go. So that kind of movie that you want to watch many times, because that is a rare thing.

It shows the unconsciousness, and then how a character by facing challenges, ultimately self-created. And then there's a deepening that happens. So, and that's reflective of life.

You would not want to see a movie where nothing goes wrong. But when things go wrong in your own life, implicitly, you think this should not be happening. The movie of my life should be such that nothing goes wrong.

I want it to be totally boring. So people complain when what they love to watch in movies, when it happens to them, they complain and think this shouldn't be happening to me. So I'm talking about the challenges that are an inevitable part of your daily existence.

And even as you awaken, you get challenged by the gravitational pull of the unconsciousness within yourself, but also in the form of other people around you and situations that you encounter, your workplace, family members, relatives, friends, you are challenged by the unconsciousness of the world that you inhabit. And that's how it's meant to be. Now you might develop a theory that if only the conditions in my life were more suited for my spiritual growth, all would be well.

And then if you could devise a list of things that you need in order to facilitate your spiritual growth, you would say, okay, I have enough money to go to the most exquisite spa places in the world where I will have massages two or three times a day, live in absolute bliss through the most pure food imaginable. My needs are being met so that I can meditate if I want to, I can exercise my body, clean, pure air, not being disturbed by noises and things around me. Everything will be so beautiful.

I can dedicate myself totally to being present. And if that became a reality for a while, you would be happy. And then after a while, you would find yourself, you would find your level of presence decreasing after a while.

It can be nice as an interlude in your life for a week. It might be great. Withdrawal and so on can be great.

But if you think that that will facilitate your spiritual growth, the absence of challenges will facilitate your spiritual growth, you would be very much mistaken. You would eventually find yourself, your level of presence decreasing because it is not needed. Things are going too well.

There's no challenge. Everybody is so nice. Of course, they're nice because you pay them.

If you lived with them, they wouldn't be nice. But that's, so you have enough money to pay all the people around you so that they can be nice to you. And you're not being challenged by these obnoxious humans anymore.

And it would not ultimately facilitate your spiritual growth. And you may reach a moment after spending two years in this wonderful spa of longing to get back to your challenging life. If you even have enough consciousness even to long for something at that point.

So what I'm really saying is, whatever arises in your life is your practice. It is the practice designed for you. It is your spiritual path and particularly the challenges.

[Speaker 8] (3:01:50 - 3:02:11)
Okay, now tell me the ultimate secrets of God in the transcendent universe.

[Speaker 1] (3:02:12 - 4:23:59)
You can't. It's absurd. I am is the word.

All you can say is I am. But you don't need, you don't add anything, not this or that. I am.

In the Old Testament, God is asked, who are you? And that's perhaps the most profound sentence in the Old Testament is I am that I am. Where God defines him, her, itself as the I am, as the essence identity of all forms.

And also another beautiful sentence in the Old Testament, as you know, the Old Testament is a mixed, the New Testament, the Bible is a mixed bag of fantastic things and other things. But I like to look for the jewels that are there. And another beautiful statement that points to all this is, be still and know that I am God.

Be still and know that I am God. Now these words are all synonymous. Be refers to being.

Still is a state of consciousness without thought, stillness. Being and stillness, the same thing. And know there is a deep knowing in that.

In fact, it's that is because that is the source of all intelligence. There's a deep knowing but from the point of view of the conceptual mind, it looks like unknowing. It looks like ignorance because it's not knowing through concepts anymore.

There's a deeper knowing. And this is where what we call wisdom arises, which is very different from intelligence, the IQ kind of intelligence. The wisdom that the world needs, not more intelligence, please, no.

But wisdom that yes, be still and know that I am, it is the I am of being God. Oh, here we come to a difficult word, but they're all synonymous. What is God then?

I rarely talk about God because you can't really, it's so transcendent that whatever you say would be very limited. As you know, human language and human thought is relatively limited. How can I make statements about the ultimate transcendent reality?

Just by producing a few weird sounds with my vocal cords, plus air pressure through my tongue and lips. Oh, the vowels, A, I, A, E, I, O, U, E, U, R. This is what language is.

Okay, now tell me the ultimate secrets of God in the transcendent universe. You can't, it's absurd. Just produce a few sounds and that explains.

No, however, I'll carry on talking. All we can do is give an analogy or like a poetic image of what God might be and how God relates to who you are. And that image is that I prefer is the image of, you know, we can only use images from our sense-perceived universe.

The sun is a life-giving thing in our universe. The sun gives of itself ceaselessly for millions and millions of years. One could almost say eternally.

It's not eternal, but as far as we are concerned, it's eternal. Without the sun, there would be no life, no physical life here. So the sun gives of itself, it emanates continuously.

The very heat in your body ultimately comes from the sun. So the sun, if you use the sun as an analogy for the transcendent God, God has no location in space or time. God is neither there, or if we have to say anything, we could say God is right here because it's transcendent to this dimension.

So if we use this as an analogy, the transcendent emanates into this dimension, something that creates form, that creates life. And what it ultimately, this thing that it emanates is consciousness. At first, very little.

At first, consciousness appears as if we're frozen as minerals and stones. And then consciousness becomes as if it were a liquid. If we use an analogy of water, then it becomes vegetative life.

And consciousness gradually evolves. So one consciousness, more of it comes in, then you get animal life. And then you get human life.

It becomes ethereal as a human mind. So emanating from the source of all life that is transcendent, of which you cannot say anything, into this world, as the sun emanates light, the God emanates consciousness, and this brings about this universe. And in this universe, it's a process.

It grows in the transcendent. We don't know anything about that. So not the important thing is the ray of sunlight that you come that hits your hand, you feel the warmth on your hand.

That ray, it's not the sun, you couldn't say I have the sun on my hand. I mean, if you got close to the sun, you would immediately disappear. But this ray of sunlight is still connected to the sun in some way.

It is still part of the sun. We can't even say where the sun exactly ends. It doesn't really end anywhere.

It doesn't have a clearly defined surface. It extends outward. So it emanates continuously.

So what the source of all life emanates is consciousness. And you can sense that in yourself. When you can sense yourself as consciousness, the presence, then you realize this, the ripple on the surface of the ocean has realized that it is not only a ripple, I'm mixing analogies now.

It's not only a ripple, more fundamentally, the ripple is the ocean. And suddenly the ripple is no longer fearful, because it can sense its deep connectedness to that which is vast and all encompassing. And so the ripple suddenly lives in a different way because it realizes its own timeless essence.

Or the sun, the ray of sunlight could do the same, it could suddenly become aware that it is still connected and part of the sun. It can, and you can sense in yourself the undoubted fact that you are conscious. But not only that, we're creating a duality here that doesn't exist when we say that you are conscious.

The essence of who you are is consciousness. So you are consciousness. And this consciousness is the brain, yes, mainstream science, most of it will still tell you that consciousness is a byproduct of the physical brain.

But mostly scientists avoid talking about consciousness because they don't know what to do with it. It does not make much sense in their universe. They say, well, it's a byproduct of the chemical activity in the brain.

Okay, well, what does that mean? A more sensible thing that some scientists are beginning to already embrace the possibility, they're mostly scientists who are close to retirement, so they have nothing to lose anymore. They're beginning to embrace the possibility that consciousness, that the brain, which undoubtedly is linked to consciousness, acts more like a receiver and a transmitter of consciousness than a generator of consciousness.

So the brain is like a radio. The radio does not produce the music. The radio just transmits and then gives it form.

And that could be, and I believe that is the relationship between the human brain and universal consciousness, which is one. So there's not your consciousness and my consciousness, there's only one consciousness. And that one consciousness manifests as this flower too.

And it manifests beautifully. It manifests as any life form. It even manifests as so-called inanimate matter.

It's just a totally different frequency. So the entire universe is really consists of one substance, which is not a substance. It's one.

It's the multitude, the manifold manifestations of life in this universe are all manifestations of the one. And this one, the one that you can find, this is what in the past only rare mystics have talked about it or realized it. But now it becomes more accessible.

This is why here we're talking about it and not just talking about it. This one, which is the essence of not just of who you are. The weird thing is the essence of who you are is one with the essence of the entire universe.

So when you realize this essence of yourself as consciousness, when the ripple realizes that it is also and more fundamentally the ocean, then it's not only a realization of the ripple. It's a realization of the ocean too, through the ripple. So the consciousness that is underlies this universe, which emanates from the one is awakening through you.

It's awakening. It wants to awaken. One cannot say much more about it because there's a limit to what one can say.

But the most important thing is the realization within yourself of you are consciousness. And you need to be able to realize it is not that difficult to, as much as you can, step out of the stream of thinking so that you are not throughout the day, that you are not trapped in this continuous torrent, this current that drags you along one thought after another and another and another. Invite gaps into your life in the stream of thinking, for example, by conscious perception.

For example, if you wanted to do it now, bring a gap into the stream of thinking, I would say, become aware of your sense perceptions. Look, listen, be alert. Look and listen.

Be the alertness for the perception. No need to label what you are perceiving. Just look.

Look at a flower, at a tree, at the sky. Look and don't label it through concepts. And that's a wonderful way of inviting presence into your life.

And then there's in the background, there's an alert stillness. And then in the foreground, there's sense perceptions. That alert stillness is the essence of who you are.

But it's also the essence of the universe. And that is a wonderful, very simple spiritual practice as much as possible, especially when you're waiting somewhere just for a moment. Conscious perception.

No labeling. And the more dependent you become on the way things are going to turn out, the more likely it is that they're not going to turn out the way you want them to turn out because there's fear in you. The most important teaching in the Bhagavad Gita that runs through, it's mentioned in almost every chapter, is what's called karma yoga, which is a way in which you perform action in this world.

I already briefly talked about it in our first session, but since this is perhaps the central theme, and it's the main spiritual practice, one could say, recommended in the Bhagavad Gita, is to do whatever you do in a certain way. And what that is, I'll explain again briefly. And if you do whatever life gives you to do in a certain way, that will lead to a deepening and spiritual realization.

And that can be really, you can summarize that as in the words of the Bhagavad Gita, do not be attached to the fruit of your action, which, of course, simply means don't look to the goal of what you want to achieve through whatever you're doing now. Give your complete attention to the doing rather than where you want to get to through the doing. And that's, again, a very important lesson nowadays, because most humans don't know that yet.

They are always one moment ahead, they want to get there. You may find in your own life, still, a lot of the time, you are not present moment centered, you are focused on the next moment that you need to get to. So whatever you are doing at this moment is designed to get you to the next moment.

And internally, you project yourself away from what you're doing now, because the doing becomes a means to an end. This is very normal, everybody lives like that. Whatever they do is a means to an end.

And in their mind, the end is more important than what they are doing. That is so habitual and unconscious that most humans don't even know that that is how they live, that they always live for the next moment, but they're never completely in this moment. They also don't know that by living in that way, they create frustration and suffering and stress and discontent.

Basically, they're condemning themselves to continuous discontent and to stress. Because if you ignore the present moment continuously, and ignore means, you make it into a means to an end, because the next one is so important that you need to get to, then you miss life completely. You miss the depths that potentially is there in life.

And life becomes shallow, because it's all mental, because the next moment is always a mind formation. The next moment is a mental projection. Next moment is never a reality, because it doesn't exist.

When the next moment comes, okay, one minute from now, I've got one minute to finish this. And then after one minute, it's not one minute, it's always now again. And then there's the next thing to do, of course, immediately you look to the next thing, because you have become used to being uncomfortable with the present moment, conditioned since childhood to feel ill at ease in the present moment.

Oh, I should be doing something, and doing implies some future projection. You can never be, you're always doing. And now the Bhagavad Gita by recommending as a spiritual practice to renounce, as it's called here, to renounce the fruit of your action.

Sometimes that is called a sacrifice. And what is really in this ancient terminology, what is to put this into modern terminology, is really designed telling you to pay attention to what you are doing in this moment, and make this moment the primary focus of your life, whatever you're doing in this moment. And the secondary focus is what you want to achieve through whatever you're doing.

And that is called a sacrifice. One could say you sacrifice the future, you renounce the fruit. It says if you renounce the fruit, a different energy flows into what you do, and then many helpful factors come in.

And that is the truth. And it's a new way of living, where you actually, whatever you're doing now, you give it your complete attention. This is more important than what I want to achieve through it.

Yes, I know what I want to achieve through it. But since there's only ever the present moment and nothing else, surely this must be important than the projected future moment. And then you can give your fullest attention to the doing and not to the desired outcome.

And also then you are not dependent for your sense of fulfillment on the way things turn out. Because if you're dependent for your sense of fulfillment on the way things turn out, quite often you will become frustrated, because they may not turn out the way you want them to turn out. And especially, and the more dependent you become on the way things are going to turn out, the more likely it is that they're not going to turn out the way you want them to turn out, because there's fear in you.

And when you need things to be in a certain way, there's already fear in you. So the fear flows into what you do and contaminates what you're doing now. The quality of your doing is contaminated by fear.

And so the very thing that you were dependent on is less likely to happen, because the quality of your doing diminishes. In other words, you are less conscious in the way in which you act. The less consciousness flows into the way in which you act, the less likely it is that the outcome is going to be productive and satisfying.

So the more you depend on a satisfying outcome internally for your well-being and sense of identity or sense of worthiness or whatever it may be, the more you depend on the desired outcome, the more likely it is that you're not going to get it. It'll fail in some way. And that makes life very frustrating.

But if your sense of fulfillment is derived from the doing itself, that is, the outcome is secondary. You no longer need it to make you feel fulfilled. The fulfilling thing is what you're doing now, the attention behind it, the consciousness behind the doing.

If you can feel the consciousness flowing through you as you do something with your hands or as you speak or whatever it is you do, relate to other humans, if you feel that and you enjoy the doing of this moment. Let's say you have a business negotiation. The outcome is you want the contract to be signed.

And if your focus is excessively on wanting the contract to be signed for the company you work for or whatever, then the quality of your interaction with the humans that you need to sign the contract diminishes. The other human, the other person will intuitively feel your unease. You are uneasy because you're fearful about the outcome.

So will also intuitively feel that you are not truly relating to him or her as a human being. You are making him or her a means to an end unconsciously because you want them to sign the contract. Now these, the people that you're dealing with, they don't know these things consciously that I just mentioned, but they can feel that and they will feel, no, I don't think I want to sign the contract with this person.

It doesn't feel quite right. Or something will come in, they'll verbalize it in some way. No, it doesn't feel right.

Or they bring up some obstacle and magnify it and say, no, no, I can't do that. And then you have the alternative, somebody who doesn't need the outcome, but who gives his or her complete attention to the other person and actually enjoys the negotiation, the talking. Enjoys not just the words that are being spoken, but enjoys the presence of the other human being there behind the words.

But you can only enjoy the presence of the other human being if you can enjoy your own presence beyond the mental constructs in touch with yourself. So there comes a sense of goodness and rightness in the present moment of being with this other human. So you acknowledge their being.

You're not using them as a means to an end. Primarily, yes, it would still be nice if they signed the contract, you know that, but that is not your primary focus anymore. And if they don't sign it, you're not suddenly turning hostile.

In the business world, often you find if the people, if you don't do what they want you to do, they become hostile. Or they walk away, immediately lose interest in you. You haven't signed the deal.

And that's quite normal. The people who are most effective and successful actually are people who perhaps without even knowing it, perhaps because they have good karma, as the Bhagavad Gita would say, they live in this way. They like every moment of it, of interacting with you if you are the client.

They love interacting. They love that present moment. They don't transform the present moment into some means to a future end.

And this teaching about renouncing the fruit of your action is the primary teaching of the Bhagavad Gita, which is 2,000 or 3,000 years old. And still, most humans haven't learned that lesson. Whatever the obstacle arises, you bring this penetrating stillness to it.

You can also look into manifesting, but then the question is, what is it that wants to manifest through this form? It's no longer, this is what I want, the surface I. What is it that wants to manifest through this form?

Very different. And you may not know that immediately. There may be a time period when you don't know exactly what to do with your so-called life, which is not yours, just a conventional way of speaking.

There may be, for a while, you don't know what to do with your life. And so you're just there, being as still as possible, do your whatever activity you're already doing, but bring stillness into it, presence into it. And then at some point, either the realization of what it is that you need to do, that wants to be done through you, comes from the outside.

Somebody tells you something, ah, or you wake up one morning and say, ah, this is what I have to do. And then you start taking action, always making sure you're not so attached to the outcome that you think it's more important than the present moment. An action can become egoic when you lose yourself, it becomes egoic when you lose yourself in the doing.

And a good sign or good criterion is when something happens to, that is against your, it seems to be an obstacle, a person or a situation. Say, I want to do this or achieve that, and suddenly somebody says, no, you can't do that. No, they won't allow you to do that.

Or a situation becomes a challenge, it's difficult, it's blocked, you want to go. Somebody says, no, you're not qualified to do that, you shouldn't do that, it's not allowed, whatever, you need this and that, which you don't have to achieve. Obstacles come all the time.

If you get upset, that means the ego is back in the doing when obstacles come. If you're not upset, you're still present and you look at whatever the obstacle is, and you look at it with this penetrating gaze of presence, which is stillness also. You look at whatever the obstacle arises, you bring this penetrating stillness to it, and that is like a light shines on it.

And then that dissolves the obstacle or it shows you a way around it. That's the power of consciousness. It always happens.

Either it shows you how to get around it, or it shows you how to use the very force of the obstacle. And you turn it around, if the obstacle is wanting to go this way, and you go with it for, I'm just demonstrating now, something counteracts what you want to do. It's coming this way, you want to go that way, but you don't meet it head on and start complaining, saying, no, this shouldn't be happening.

No. Perhaps you go with it for a little while, and you go, and then you turn it around. And the very power that was against you, then works for you, and you achieve your goal through that.

It happens, and this is the wisdom that comes with non-resistance. So whenever you go into this conscious doing, resistance always pulls you back into unconscious doing. It can easily happen because it's an old habit pattern, unconscious doing.

Inner resistance to whatever arises in the present moment pulls you back. Inner resistance is some form of negativity, some form of complaining, some form of fear, aggression, anger. And this is important because whenever you complain about what somebody else does, you're already beginning to fall into that trap of unconsciousness.

And of course, yes, you meet lots of people who are still trapped in ego, and they may not like what you do, but just no judgment. Just look at what the situation is. They say this, they want that, you want that, and they don't say, oh, they're dreadful.

I know what he wants. He wants to deceive me, and he always does that. He wants to go.

No, just clear. This is the situation. This is what he says he wants.

This is where I want to go, and see. Okay. Never any judgment of a personal situation.

Just clear seeing, clear facing. This is the power. It's like a light beam of consciousness.

It falls onto, illuminates that situation, that moment, that person. That's the power of consciousness. No resistance.

Jesus already talked about the power of non-resistance, and that the moment resistance comes, you're drawn back into identification with form. Protection, resistance, fighting. Are you going to succeed all the time in this?

No. It's a shift from a way of doing that has been with us for thousands of years, and a new way of doing that is only arising now. So you are transitional beings between the old consciousness and the new, and don't judge yourself if you fall back occasionally into the old consciousness, but you will quickly know it.

How will you know it? You begin to suffer. You get upset.

You get upset about situations. You get upset about people. You get upset about what somebody said.

You get upset about what somebody should have said but didn't. You get upset about what somebody did or failed to do. Oh, there's a sign that you've fallen back.

Beautiful line in the Course in Miracles, I am never upset for the reason I think. Now, upset is a generic term. It could be in any way that you're out of alignment with is-ness.

There's a disagreement with the is-ness of the present moment, and then you become upset. Now, many people are upset a lot of the time, but they don't realize they are upset, and if you talk to them and say, why are you upset? They say, I'm not upset.

I'm just bloody angry. Or, I'm not upset. I'm deeply hurt because he didn't invite me to his birthday party.

Deeply hurt. Not upset. I'm never upset for the reason I think.

Now, the deeper meaning of this, of course, is you are upset because you have lost awareness of being, your essence, identity. And the reason you think is superficial. When you lose connectedness with being, you just wait a few minutes, and something or somebody will upset you.

And so, if we believe that that which seems to cause the upset is the actual cause, this is not the case. These are interchangeable. It could be anything, and it will.

So, you'll be upset many times every day. By other people, by situations, by the slightest things, or the biggest things. Upset, upset, upset.

The entire world is so frustrating. So, that's a little sign then. If you're upset, you want to go somewhere, but people are not cooperative.

Situations are not cooperative. And you can talk to yourself. So, that's a good sign then.

You can use, also shows you to what extent the ego is active in you, because what's upset is not you, it's the ego in you. The ego is the erroneous identification with form, a false sense of I, which wanted something to make itself feel more at ease, or bigger, or more important, or whatever, and is frustrated in its aims. Well, that's a good, then it's like a little, if you had a little, it's almost like having a little technical device on your arm that tells you whenever your ego comes back, it goes, bleep, bleep, bleep, bleep.

You don't need that. Well, if somebody here is a technical wizard and is going to invent it, it's fine. But you don't need that, because all you need is to know if you're upset or not in everyday life.

Now, for many walking egos, upset is their normal state. They might not even know it anymore, because they're upset virtually all the time, and just waiting for some other thing to happen to explain why they are upset again. But, of course, there's the underlying dissatisfaction that's always there.

Foundation, then, is stillness. That's the return journey. So, can we be, then, simultaneously in the return journey to the source of all life, spiritual dimension, God, stillness, and still be active in this world?

And then, if we are that, then what we then do in this world becomes empowered by the intelligence that emanates from the source. And then the source creates through you. The power of the source is then no longer distorted by the ego, and its power greatly diminished to a trickle.

So, the source is like light, you can say sunlight, wanting to shine through fully. But for a long time, it's become reduced to a tiny little hole. There's a little bit of light coming through just to keep you going.

And now, it can come through and use you. When we use language, we always create duality. So, when I say, it uses you, it's not quite true, because you are it.

But language does that. It uses, then, once we know that it's okay, we can use those words. It uses you, then.

Now, what exactly it wants, I don't know. Perhaps it simply wants to create beauty, or forms that are alive and joyful, and enjoy that. It's enjoyed the drama of thousands, hundreds of thousands of years.

It's enjoyed the drama of people cutting each other to pieces and eating each other up. It's enjoyed the drama. The movie is changing now.

And perhaps it's creating a much more pleasant movie. And who knows what is in store for us. I've never, I cannot predict the future.

I'm not particularly interested. This present moment is wonderful enough. But something is, there's a change happening.

And, of course, there comes a point in your life when you may not, this, the source may become much more important than whatever you do. So, you reach a time when you say, well, I've done this, and that, and it's been wonderful. And then, all you are, you're just still, and you emanate that stillness.

And even then, you affect the world around you without any doing. If you just be there, and whoever you come into contact with, there's some almost, one could say, transmission, even if they don't notice it. You can do that, and some humans, perhaps, will mostly live in that way.

How much doing you do, how much varies from form to form, person to person. Some will be very active into conscious doing, and create, and enjoy the creation. And others may do relatively little, or may just continue to do what they're doing already, but whatever they are doing will be a vehicle for consciousness or stillness that flows into this power, this beautiful energy that flows.

It could be even a person who just gives information. Let's say you work at an airport, and you give information to people, and maybe you stay there, and then everybody who comes to ask, where's gate number 16, you say, well, you go that way, and it's only about a three-minute walk. And there were not only the words, there was a transmission of stillness with the words.

Not in the sense that I am going to transmit stillness, no. It happens because you let go of the sense of doing, of I do, it happens. And the person, this one traditional word for it is blessing, the person goes away being blessed with that energy.

And so, beautiful. So what you do really is secondary. Some may do great things.

Others may do things that look on the surface not so significant. And ultimately, ultimately, what you do is secondary, but how you do it is primary. And how means the consciousness that flows into what you do.

By dissolving the ego, won't I be dissolving my self-esteem? Do I not need self-esteem to love myself and others? Yes, self-esteem.

Many people seem to have a problem with that. Lack of self-esteem. I read a while ago that when the Dalai Lama was younger, he was meeting with a group of Westerners, and they were talking about the lack of self-esteem.

And he just couldn't understand that, what that was. And they tried to explain it, and then he went around the group and asked everybody, do you have that? And most people said, yes.

It's very strange, self-esteem. Now, the human species, it's the only species on the planet, of course, that has a relationship with itself, where you have a relationship with yourself. That's normal.

But the cat doesn't have a relationship with itself. Or the bird doesn't have a relationship with itself. Or the tree doesn't.

So birds, cats, trees, monkeys, flowers, none of them have a problem with self-esteem. And even the most ugly looking cat wouldn't have a problem with self-esteem. It hasn't created a secondary, an image self, mind created.

And once, of course, that's created, it walks with you, like next to you, behind you, or wherever it is, you always walk with a mental image of me, and you have a relationship with that. And often, you don't like what you see, that image self. That's poor self-esteem.

And then you may be in conflict with it, with itself. You may be talking to yourself in the head, telling yourself something about yourself. Some people talk to themselves in the first person, but many more people talk to themselves in the second person, as you, you see.

You failed again. You see you are not as good as you see you. Why can't you?

And then at times, perhaps the self feels suddenly great about itself. Some people predominantly have low self-esteem. In other words, feel bad about the mind made image me, feel bad about that, and then realize that some realization comes in when they realize that it is mind created.

And they realize, and usually in the West, it's connected with new age teachings, and they realize that they can do something about their bad self-esteem, the image. They can, you can actually change your thinking about yourself. First, you discover that the thinking about yourself is predominantly, or to a large extent, negative.

And then, you see, that's a little bit of presence is arising. It must be, because you are able to stand back a little bit and watch and see what you are creating with your thoughts. And then the possibility comes of changing your thoughts, your self-esteem through workshops, affirmations, visualization, and all those practices.

And then after a while, that image looks a little bit more comfortable. And you feel more comfortable with that thing, walking alongside you. But since everything in form, all mind creations, thoughts are subject to polarities, you can't walk with a high, continuously with high self-esteem and feel great about yourself.

There's always a polarity to it. And it's usually bound up with what happens or not happens in your life, what feedback you're getting from others. And it is usually comparative.

The self-esteem is comparative. How do I rate myself in relation to others? And that gives you the indication of where you are on one to 10, or whatever it may be.

So self-esteem is mind, is connected with the mind made me, lack of it, or in a good self-esteem, but it exists within polarities. Even if you spent a whole year affirming continuously that I love myself, I love myself. And maybe until now you hated yourself.

And your whole, your house is full of little stickers. And wherever you look, you see, I love myself. And you look in the mirror and look into your eyes and repeat that, I love myself.

To some extent, it works to some extent. You have a better relationship with yourself, but there's always a downside. It's hard to sustain that because the other polarity will manifest also in your life.

And you go through life when, in order to know how you feel about yourself, you need to compare yourself with others. And then you say, oh, I'm actually better looking than this person. So I actually feel quite good about myself.

I'm actually much more educated than that person I feel good about, or whatever you can get. Well, this person is ill and I'm healthy, so that's good. So you need for self-esteem, if you look, you need relativity and you need comparison.

And ego is always comparing itself. Is it possible to live without having a relationship with yourself? Neither good nor bad.

Is it possible to be so completely yourself that the mind made image of me dissolves? Yes, this is why we're here. This is the essence of our gathering.

The mind made image is connected to thought, to continuous thinking. It's fueled by, perpetuated by, upheld by the continuous thought processes, many of which are about me and myself. And so I have, through thought, I have a relationship with a thought made entity, which sometimes feels quite comfortable and sometimes feels not pleasant, don't want to live with that person.

And of course it's true, many people live with a self that is very unpleasant, that creates a lot of trouble, a lot of problems, a lot of suffering, that continuously criticizes them, that continuously blames them, that continuously tells them they're not enough. And they live with that entity, mind made, conditioned mind movements, conditioned in such a way that they attack you continuously. And that's the self that they have a relationship with.

They would never live with a person like that. You would run out of the room. You couldn't live with a person for more than a day.

If your partner, somebody you live with, did that to you, what your self image is doing to you through thought, you would have filed for divorce long ago. But you can't do that with that because it's on the mind. It walks with you.

And there you have this complaining and whining and accusing and, oh, get away. And a large part of that is because you're identified with thought. There isn't the ability to step back from thought and watch thought, watch that.

This mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive. To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation. If you are at the mercy of situations, you're at the mercy of things going exactly the way you planned them and the way you're supposed they are supposed to go.

And if they don't, you get upset. Some people get sad or depressed, others get angry and irritated, whatever it is. So you are at the mercy of things happening or not happening or happening in a particular way, or people behaving towards you in a particular way.

So you're under, you're always at the mercy of stuff happening or not happening. And if you are more deeply connected with the presence, that is the source of satisfaction in your life. Every other source of satisfaction is kind of fake, pseudo, not the real thing.

Presence, that arising presence is the source of satisfaction. The primary source of satisfaction in your life. Yes, there are secondary sources of satisfaction, of course, an apple pie.

You have a nice swim, feels good. You go for a hike. You have sex.

You have a drink. You even achieve something. You learn to master a certain skill.

And then as you practice, that is a satisfying, it's satisfying. And then you achieve it, it's satisfying. It's, these are all secondary satisfactions in your life.

And there's nothing wrong with that, of course. And if you meet a long lost friend, suddenly, it's great to meet you. It's so wonderful.

Of course, it's, there is a satisfaction in that, but they are all secondary satisfactions. The main source of satisfaction is the presence. And even all those things that are secondary satisfaction, many of them are, because for a moment, they bring you into presence.

For example, if you're climbing a mountain or you're hiking, or you're walking on the beach, or you're swimming, certain activities take you out of your mind and can bring you into presence while they last. And you feel so good. And you think it's caused by the activity, but it's caused by the fact that you're, all the habitual torturous thinking subsided, and you're suddenly completely there.

That was so good, that swim, that hike, that whatever it was, it was so good. Okay, why? Well, it was good because, were you thinking?

No. Were you thinking about yesterday or tomorrow or your problems or your difficult life or difficult people in your life? No.

Okay, you were completely present. So once you realize and sense that true satisfaction is derived from presence, that means when things go wrong in ordinary life, when you encounter undesirable, so-called undesirable circumstances, when things don't work out, they were supposed to work out, things break, suddenly you lose something, a difficult person comes into your life, you can, even in that situation, you can continue to be in touch with the source of satisfaction.

Let's say you made great plans for some great wedding, and suddenly on the wedding day, something happens, and the groom or the bride are detained somewhere, and they can't make it. And we've invited 300 people, and we've paid thousands of dollars for this wedding, and I've been looking forward to this for years. It was supposed to be the culmination of my life.

It's a fictitious situation, but it could happen and probably has happened. It's just one of many possible examples. So this is a very unpleasant thing, if you're not in touch with the true source of satisfaction, and you go all shaky and upset, or hysterical, whatever, depending on your predispositions.

You lock yourself in a room, or you scream, depending on whatever kind of ego you have. But if you are in touch with the source of satisfaction, in presence, wow, okay, that's a pity. But of course, we'll have it some other day.

And you continue to feel a sense of aliveness, because after all, this moment isn't that bad, just because the wedding has collapsed. And I'm using the collapsed wedding as a metaphor, whatever collapses or goes wrong. So here we have...

And you are then above the situations in your life. They don't control you anymore. And I wouldn't go so far as to say that you control them.

To some extent, of course, you can manifest certain good things, but you're never totally in control of externals. There are many other factors. And you don't need to be totally in control of externals.

So question always arises, are you above the situation, or are you below the situation? Are you at the mercy of situations and people, or are you free of dependency on how other people behave towards you, or how certain situations evolve or happen, or dependent on whether something happens or does not happen? And shortly after this shift in consciousness, I had saved some money to visit my dad in Spain.

And because his wife was extremely challenging, it was agreed that I would stay in a small hotel. That was... I was in my...

I think I was about 30 years old. So I was looking forward, of course, to going to... I lived in England, going to sunny southern Spain, spending 10 days there.

And I booked, or my dad booked for me a place. He didn't have any money at that time. Well, he had some money, but not, I think, not enough to book a great room for me.

So he made a booking, but he hadn't looked at the hotel or the room. And when I arrived, the hotel was by the sea. So I imagined a view of the beautiful blue Mediterranean Sea.

And when I got there, and I looked out the window, there was a brick wall. It was facing away from the sea, and there was a kind of cliff, and there was just a brick wall and a little bit of sky. And so I stood there, and looked at the brick wall, and suddenly I felt incredibly peaceful.

And I suddenly realized it doesn't matter at all whether I have a sea view or a brick wall. Why didn't it matter? Because there was a flow of satisfaction coming from within.

If it had been my choice, I would have said, I prefer a sea view to a wall view. But I didn't have a choice. And I was amazed, because that was not long after this inner shift.

So I wasn't yet familiar with all the effects it has on things in one's life. And there were many, many instances when I was amazed. I said, why do I feel so peaceful?

I don't know. I just feel... I did nothing.

In this particular case, I knew that at some level it did ultimately did not matter. And that was so liberating, so liberating, that reminds me of a very similar story. We had a retreat in probably Oregon many years ago, and one of the participants, who was also a friend of ours, had just started to unpack things in her room, the retreat room, when a woman burst into her room without knocking in tears and sounding hysterical.

And she said, this was supposed to be my room. And they put me somewhere else. I asked specifically for this room.

I've been waiting for this retreat for a long, long time. And I'm having difficulties in my life. This is all just so dreadful.

And our friend, without even having given it a single thought, said, you can have it. I'll move into yours. And the woman's, really?

No. Do you mean that? Oh, my God.

Oh, wonderful. Thank you so much. I'm so happy.

It is probably true that she had been through difficult times. Yes. But she was totally at the mercy of externals.

And our friend, I didn't inquire further how she felt when she moved into that undesirable room, which probably wasn't that bad. I don't think there was a brick wall outside the window. So she was fine.

So in her, there was some connectedness with the source of satisfaction. So her well-being did not depend on what kind of room she was in. Now, does that mean whatever room they put you in, when you book a room in a hotel, you should say, okay, not necessarily.

Why not? If that is not the right room, you can talk to them and say, this isn't the room I booked. I'd rather have the room that I booked and paid for, and then see what happens.

But again, there is not going to be that, uh, uh, or the anger. How dare you put me in this room? You lose all, there's no longer a flow.

Do you remember we talked about what makes up a true human? It's goodwill towards other humans, a flow of benevolence and goodwill, no matter what the situation is. And even if you're complaining about your room, you can complain.

And there can still be a flow of benevolence and goodwill because there is a human being there. That human being may have nothing to do with the fact that they put you in the wrong room. And you probably know that, but you're angry with him or her.

So of course you can change situations. And I think I probably asked, I don't remember all the details. I may have asked, I'm sure I did in that when I got to that hotel with a brick wall outside, do you have another room with a sea view?

Sorry, that's all we have left. Okay. So it was a surprise to me that one, that I could be okay with that.

And I don't know how this woman from the retreat, whether she benefited from the retreat and whether by now, I haven't seen her in a long time. I wish her well. And

I do hope that by now she has found the source of true satisfaction within herself so that the wrong room does not create an enormous amount of suffering.

If a wrong room creates an enormous amount of suffering, how much suffering when something really goes wrong. This mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive. To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation.

Do we need ego only for the purpose to find out that we are not it, or could it be useful for anything else? Ego is a necessary stage to go through because there is a pre-egoic stage for humans. There was a where they live in relative happiness compared to the egoic state in a simple oneness with nature, with each other in tribal communities.

But for the growth of consciousness, we have to go through the egoic stage, form identity, developing. The ego is not to be totally, the ego has its purpose. You cannot become awakened without going through the ego.

It's like having those pre, in pre-egoic societies, people lived in oneness with nature. They didn't even know it. They didn't know that they lived in oneness with nature.

They just did. So in order to experience or to know something at a deeper level, you have to go through a loss of it first. You go through a loss as described in the parable of what is called the prodigal son in the New Testament.

The prodigal son is the son of a father who loves him and is wealthy, but he wants to leave, lead his own life. He leaves the father's home, goes to a foreign country, gradually squanders his wealth and becomes destitute. He loses his connection to the source of happiness and wealth.

And then messengers come to remind him who he is and that the father wants him back. So he then returns to the father's home. And then he is known by the father and the father loves him more now.

So he is back home, but it's not the same home as before. There is an added dimension to it that wasn't there before. So we are all prodigal sons.

We have to lose our sense of oneness in order to regain it at a deeper, more conscious level, our connectedness to the source. Before it was an unconscious connectedness which just resulted in relatively unproblematic life, simple, unproblematic life. And then, so it's paradise lost and paradise regained.

When paradise is regained, it is regained at a much deeper level than before. There's an added dimension of consciousness there. And that is there because we moved through the egoic stage.

And what we learned in the egoic stage will not be totally discarded. The form identity remains. Our next stage is in the evolution of humanities.

Once humans are rooted in being, the next stage is conscious creation, where humans can manifest without having to go through the laborious processes that at the moment we still have to go through. Factories, heavy technology. For the future of humanity, I don't necessarily see an ever-increasing technology.

It is more likely that technology is one branch of human's development, but not the one, not the branch that will lead further up the tree. The ability to manifest through consciousness will, you already have it to some extent. There are things that you can manifest in your life, especially if you are rooted in the

consciousness.

So it's not the ego that wants to manifest, but the consciousness wants, can use you as a vehicle for what it wants to manifest consciously in this world. So a time will come when we can manifest what now we laboriously produce energy. It's absurd how we use, where we seek energy in fossil fuels and so on.

Ultimately, obviously, the next step is there are two inexhaustible sources of energy. One is outer and one is inner. The outer inexhaustible energy is our sun.

It's an outpouring of energy and it's virtually limitless, although we know that the sun has a lifespan, but that is not relevant to us because the lifespan is a few more million years. And that is an inexhaustible supply of energy on the outer. And then even the sun is only an external expression of the inexhaustible energy that is the source of all life.

So it's just an outer manifestation. And this is why ancient traditions worshiped the sun because in a way one could say, well, that's very much like God because it's a continuous giving of life. It's a life giving entity, not asking anything back.

It just gives of itself continuously. So when people say energy is limited, of course, energy is not limited. It's only where we look for it that's limited.

If we continue to look for it in fossil fuels and so on, that's limited and can be very harmful, but energy itself is not limited. The sun is unlimited and the source of all life is unlimited. We just have to find it.

So the next step is using sun energy. And then after that is being able to use the energy, source energy for creation. You can't even imagine what even science fiction books, they're not, can't even think of any that have even thought of what life can be when humans can effortlessly generate or manifest what they need or want.

But it won't be, they will not manifest superfluous or unnecessary things as the ego would. So let's not go too far into that. So if you discover within yourself that a lot of the time you're in a state of lack, of insufficiency, of not enough, and you feel that the answer to the remedy is to be active in this world and achieve and do as much as possible, then you'll probably find that ultimately that is not the answer to your state of lack.

In order to transcend, to go beyond your state of lack, of neediness, of not enough, spiritual practice and spiritual realization is necessary. Focus on the realization of being. It's only there that you can go beyond that state of lack which is ego.

Go within and discover who or what you are beyond the person.

[Speaker 3] (4:24:25 - 4:24:53)
I was watching a talk with you and Neil Donald Walsh and he said, you know, we both wrote great books but the difference between him and you is that you live it. And so first I just got to thank you for being such an example for something that's truly missing in most of the world. But my question is, what's a day like in the life of Eckhart?

It sounds like a bad reality TV show but...

[Speaker 1] (4:24:55 - 4:26:27)
It's not terribly interesting. It's very ordinary, unless when I'm traveling it

gets a bit more interesting because there's a plane to catch and there's a hotel and so on. But when I'm not traveling, it's extremely ordinary.

I love being, so there's always set aside time for just being still or walking in nature. And I'm notorious for not meeting deadlines. Everybody knows when they say there's a debt, this needs to be done, this thing needs to be done by so and so.

Well, we'll see. And I love night times, so I sometimes don't go to bed until 1.30 or 2 and sleep about five hours. And I like little things, going to a cafe, have a coffee somewhere.

Nature, as I said, love walking in nature, reading occasionally, being, doing whatever needs to be done, people call. There's always things that need to be done. I do them quietly.

Some things don't get done at all and then they disappear.

[Speaker 3] (4:26:29 - 4:26:38)
Easier for you, right? Are you still able to go out in public though and still able to go out in public?

[Speaker 1] (4:26:38 - 4:33:47)
Well, that is interesting. I go out usually with a baseball cap, which I never really liked, but I've been wearing them for years now. And the, because I love privacy, I love to be invisible, I love to be in a room and being able to just observe what goes on in the room without anybody being aware that I'm there.

That's more difficult now. So often people come up, even with a baseball cap, they come up and usually it's lovely. They say some that it's been so wonderful, my life has changed.

It happens almost every day. And that's wonderful. I prefer not to be recognized, but the moment it happens, I'm happy and I respond and it's a loving interaction.

But my preference is not to be seen. Uh, I'm an introvert by nature. So even to go out and give talks was a very strange thing for me.

I knew that this is what the universe wanted me to do or the universe acting through me. So it's, it's things that one surrenders into things and then they're fine. It's not my nature to go out and sit on stage and talk.

Uh, and uh, so every situation brings its own challenges. The loss of privacy and so on is, could be seen as a challenge and requires then surrender to see in this world, there are polarities. You gain something here, you lose something there in the world of polarities on the surface, on the surface level, you experience polarities.

The gain here has to be paid for something. So the fact that the teaching has gone out to so many people, that's wonderful. Of course, then yes, privacy is lost that need to accept that.

Uh, before I had privacy, but very few people were reached by the teaching. Well, I did workshops in the, in the eighties and early nineties. Uh, but I, there was one evening talk in England that had been scheduled.

Nobody turned up. I was alone. I just sat there, but I had my privacy and then I had a workshop one schedule.

Usually I had about a seven, 10, 12, 15 people for little workshops or one workshop had been, somebody had organized a workshop for me and I arrived for weekends, Saturday and Sunday. One person turned up waiting at the door and said, okay, let's do it. So not that many people were reached, but I was wonderful privacy.

No. So that's how it is. It's, um, uh, simple.

I don't live in an ashram, uh, where, uh, some spiritual teachers live in an ashram where they're surrounded by, by people who go. And that can be, of course, comforting for a while to the ego. If you still have an ego, hopefully not the spiritual teacher, but, uh, it's not good.

It's, I prefer to be in every normal everyday life and, uh, go to the supermarket. And so it's, so it's not interesting, unfortunately, and not, not even glamorous, except occasionally when I visit Oprah, then suddenly it's, ah, driving into the big, the gates open to the big mansion and you drive in. But otherwise not that much glamour.

Thank you. Another question is, what is the key to stop the self-talk in the head? Well, just briefly, because I've spoken about that a few times in various occasions.

First of all, you need to know that there is self-talk in the head, not after, uh, several hours of being totally immersed in self-talk in the head and suddenly you get a moment of reprieve and then you say, oh, there was so much self-talk in the head. In order to, to, to become free, you need to know that there's self-talk in the head while there's self-talk in the head. Otherwise, there's just self-talk in the head without any awareness.

There needs to be a glimpse of awareness. And from there, you can, you can see that you want to be free of it, and that's not who you are. And the past, everything dissolves and then it becomes the past, which is a memory of a present moment in the now.

You talk about the past, you're remembering something that happened, but when it happened, it was a now, and it's still the now. So, but that absorbs human attention completely for the most, for unawakened humans. My past is my life.

And then you look back on your past and you come to some kind of conclusion about yourself, your identity and your life.

[Speaker 6] (4:33:49 - 4:33:49)
Hmm.

[Speaker 1] (4:33:50 - 4:42:31)
Well, that's my life. For many people, it's a mixed bag. They're not completely, it's not a, it's not the greatest, because there are things that are not going well in my life.

It could be, it could be your financial situation. It could be your relationship situation, your professional situation, your living situation, your health situation. Somewhere, other people, oh my God, problems.

You can look in your life, where are the main problems in your life? They're somewhere there, what I've mentioned. Hardly any human is free of experience.

This one or two of these dimensions is problematic at any given moment in time. And if you, for a moment, everything is going well. Let's say you have achieved great professional success.

Your income is great. You have a wonderful place to live. Your family is doing well.

You have two healthy and intelligent and wonderful children, and your wife is perfect, and your health is great, and your body looks fantastic, and you're great looking. Is that possible? It may be possible for a brief moment, but not for long.

So if that's the case with you, just wait a little, and something will pop up out of nowhere and challenge you and say, oh my God. And especially you just solve something here, and then something pops up there. Even if you practice positive thinking, which is a great thing to do, it will improve your life considerably, but it does not mean you will not be challenged by life again.

You will experience the opposite. Every situation contains opposites. You gain something here, but you lose something there, and you will experience being challenged by life.

And you can't get away from it. That's the weird thing. So if all is going perfectly in your life right now, it's unlikely that there's anybody here to whom this is happening temporarily, because why would you come here?

Everything is perfectly fine. So you get back into your big car and have a big meal and drink, and then you go to your radiant family in your beautiful home. Okay.

Everything is so satisfying, it doesn't work. It's not... So being challenged does not stop even when you begin lucid living, which means what we are talking about here, to bring consciousness into your daily life by not losing touch with the underlying awareness or presence within you, which would be my call still a field of highly, let's say, a field of highly intelligent presence that underlies it all.

And that, it is a stillness, but it's alive, vibrantly alive, a stillness within you. Underneath the personality, not separate from it, but underneath it. So one could almost say that, well, one could say that you as a person or the personality exists on the surface of being, so to speak, in the same way that a wave or ripple exists on the surface of the ocean.

Triples everywhere. And this, I often use this analogy because it's quite helpful, because that's actually how it is. You exist on the surface of being as a physical entity and a psychological entity.

And as such, you are a ripple on the surface of the ocean, a ripple that has forgotten its nature, not only its connectedness with the ocean, but its absolute oneness with the ocean. The ripple is the ocean, the ocean temporarily manifesting as a ripple. Look at me, says the ripple, and looks at other ripples and fears other ripples and complains about other ripples.

And then seeking out some satisfaction on the surface of the ripple existence, never getting a feeling of home, of having arrived. Ah, briefly, yes, briefly, but usually it means there's a lowering of consciousness. I mentioned drinking alcohol, for example, you drink a couple of glasses, you feel a little better.

Why do you feel a little better? Because it slows down your thinking process, which sustains the person, the problematic entity. And so that slows down towards, and you suddenly, you can observe it in people when they have a couple of drinks.

Not everybody I come to, there's another possibility what could happen too, but let's stay with that for a moment. You have a couple of drinks and you feel life is suddenly lighter. You feel like singing, you might even sing, and then you say, I need another one, because if two is good, three must be better.

And if three is better than four, surely. And finally, you're moving more and more towards unconsciousness, and then you fall off the chair. So that's not the way to go.

So you, yes, humans are longing to become free of the self. And then many of them, whether it's unconscious, they go to drugs to experience a little bit of that. Some release from their problematics and almost continuously unsatisfying existence, continuous sense of lack, continuous sense of not enough, something missing, of discontent, of restlessness.

Even youngsters have that. And then they need some substance, and they take something in to feel that there's something missing, and that slows down the apparatus of your thinking mind that creates continuous unease and discontent. And suddenly, or you smoke a little bit, you go, ah, feels so much better.

Yes, it is you becoming free of yourself temporarily, but I'm not necessarily saying never do this. But that's not the ultimate way. It's not a regressive movement.

We don't want to fall below thinking. We don't, because animals and plants, they are not burdened with this self. They are not burdened with incessant, unconscious, conceptual thinking.

[Speaker 8] (4:42:31 - 4:42:34)
They are conscious. There's a consciousness there that operates.

[Speaker 1] (4:42:56 - 4:48:26)
When you were in utter despair, would having access to someone like you have helped you? That's another interesting idea for a science fiction story of time traveling, where my old, my 28-year-old self comes here and sits somewhere in the audience and listens. Now, would that have helped?

There needs to be a readiness in the person to be helped. Some definitely want to suffer a bit more. They would definitely refuse.

Any kind of the openness would not be there. There were times at that time when people noticed around me that I was unhappy. There was a professor of the university.

He was doing transcendental meditation. And he said to me, you really should be doing meditation. And I said, no, I don't want to do meditation.

I lose all my motivation to work and that's not what I want. I was a bit scared of meditation. He said it would transform me and make me completely ineffective because I wanted to achieve.

I wanted to become an important intellectual. So meditation would have thought might be an obstacle to that. No, I'm not doing this.

So I refused. The help could have been, this was a hint of the universe said, why don't you do transcendental meditation? You might be less anxious.

But I didn't do it. So perhaps if I had met myself, I would have said, who is this guy? I don't know.

Some, you cannot help everybody. You might've noticed. And some humans need, and if they cannot, if there's no openness to be helped, it means they are happy with the spiritual teacher they already have.

And his or her name is suffering. Then they just need to experience that a bit more because if you show them the possibility of going beyond suffering or somebody else in a different way shows them the possibility and somebody else does and another therapist and another, or they open a spiritual books. What is this mumbo-jumbo?

Not ready, not ready to listen. Need to suffer a bit more. Suffering has a certain function in the evolution of consciousness.

I would, if let's say, if you were an omnipotent, the omnipotent God and you removed all human suffering right now, that's the end of the evolution of consciousness. Of course, you could, if you were totally omnipotent, you could say, let consciousness only express itself right now. That's not how it works, but the, it cannot express itself except through this.

Suffering is necessary until it no longer is necessary for you. And so it has a function within the totality. It is, you can see it in your own life.

I had to go through it up to that point. And there's a lot of collective suffering. There's not only suffering in poor countries.

Yes, there is. There is different kinds of suffering everywhere. There's intense suffering in the rich countries.

You can probably find more happy people in the poor countries than the rich countries. So they're just different degrees of suffering. And so at some point, the individual realizes that suffering that is ultimately self-made, self-produced, and then the shift happens.

And then evolution has a, is of a different kind. It is no longer impelled or fueled by suffering. You still evolve, but it's no longer through suffering.

It's so, and that helps when you encounter a spiritual teaching or a spiritual teacher, that is the moment when that spiritual teacher takes over from suffering. That's the old spiritual teacher. And then you, you get, you get handed over to the new one.

That's a wonderful, that should be celebrated in a person's life. The transition from Mr. and Mrs. Suffering or the guru called Suffering, three, three Suffering, to an actual teacher.

[Speaker 6] (4:48:26 - 4:49:38)
I love you.

[Speaker 4] (4:49:41 - 4:50:29)
So in talking about thinking, I know this has an obvious answer and I'm actually asking beyond this, but where do our thoughts come from? So oftentimes I'll, I'll have thoughts and I, I recognize them as even not my own or, or possibly patterns that have existed for years and years. You know, jealousy thoughts or competitive thoughts or the thoughts of being threatened and fear.

But truthfully, is this something is waking us up in the middle of the night that you were just talking about? What is that? Is it, is it just part of the condition of being alive?

[Speaker 1] (4:50:30 - 4:50:45)
Thank you. The Buddha was asked a similar question. I'll tell you what he said, but then I'll, I will answer it because he didn't.

[Speaker 6] (4:50:47 - 4:50:48)
Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (4:50:54 - 4:57:12)
Somebody asked him a question like that and he gave a parable. He said, you've got, somebody shot you with an arrow. You've got an arrow stuck in your body.

And before you remove it, you're trying to find out where did that arrow come from? Before I remove it, I need to know who shot it and why and where it came from. Let's examine this in more detail.

And that was his answer. What he was saying was, our main concern should be to remove the arrow instead of trying to find out where it all started. How did it all start?

Where did it all originate? That was, his teaching was very practical, totally practical. Not all of Buddhism is that practical anymore.

Some of it still remains practical compared to other traditions. But in the very beginning of the Buddhist teaching was just totally practical. Remove the arrow.

The arrow, of course, stands for suffering, any form of suffering that is self-generated through the mind. And, okay, so that was his answer. Now, of course, I agree with that, and I'm sure we all do.

Thought, going a little bit beyond it, thought is, there's such a thing as a collective mind. And so many thoughts are not your thoughts, really. They arise in the collective mind.

They are energy fields or energetic entities that one could almost think of them as little bubbles floating around. They may not be literally true. I haven't actually seen any bubbles, but little bubbles, thought forms floating around.

And if the thought form discovers any resonance with anything inside you, for example, any form of negativity, and then there's a thought form in the collective mind, an even heavier thought form of negativity floating around, just a slight irritation about what somebody said today. And then there's another thought form that resonates with that negativity, and then that little, that bubble comes. And before you know it, the irritation has become something bigger.

So you connect with the universal mind, and it moves through you. So when we deal with our so-called our own minds, with far more than our own minds, and whatever awareness arises in you is not just your benefit. It has an impact on the totality of the collective mind.

When awareness arises in you, it means awareness is arising in the collective mind of humanity. So it's not just a personal thing. In the same way that any thinking that takes possession of your mind is not really personal.

There is no personal thought as such. It pretends to be personal. It's the human collective mind.

In the same way, of course, an emotion generated by that is not, it looks like my emotion, but it's either it's anger or it's sadness or it's jealousy or it's whatever this, and that's basically, it's the same in everybody when it arises. It attaches itself to slightly different stories in the mind of why I'm angry, but the anger is anger, human anger. So again, it's not yours.

You pick it up, and then it gets hold of you, and then many humans live virtually with a mind that has taken possession of them, pretends to be them, and they're stuck with it without even knowing it. If they knew it, there would be the beginning of freedom. They don't know it, and if you tell them they are, they get angry, but they don't.

The mind does because it feels threatened. So there's still humans who won't hear this. They can't hear this because immediately they would feel threatened by it because they're totally possessed by the mind.

You can see how, for example, certain collective thought forms can take possession of an entire country. Such has happened, for example, during communism, Soviet communism in Russia, Maoism in China. Millions of people all thinking the same thing.

But even in our society, it's not necessarily one monolithic thought form such as that, but there are different thought forms through the media become perpetuated, and without knowing it, often they are our most basic assumptions, how we interpret the universe and the world around us. Our basic assumption are thought forms that come out of the collective, have taken possession of us, and they're all forms that consciousness takes in the mind, and that's all fine in itself. It's fine if there is an awareness, but if thought is all there is, it becomes destructive and insane without awareness.

Of course, your next question, if you want to carry that, is why? How did it all start? Where does it come from?

And that's the arrow again.

[Speaker 4] (4:57:12 - 4:57:12)
Right.

[Speaker 1] (4:57:13 - 4:57:13)
Yeah.

[Speaker 4] (4:57:13 - 4:57:20)
In fact, my friend Jen and I use the phrase, when you ask why, that is the lie.

[Speaker 6] (4:57:20 - 4:57:21)
Yeah.

[Speaker 4] (4:57:21 - 4:57:40)
Just the need to let it go. But the thing that occurred when you shared your answer, thank you, is that the thinking isn't something I need to war against, but rather it's a tool, and it's showing me where I'm allowing myself to identify with something that I'm not, and thus identify with being separate from this one.

[Speaker 1] (4:57:41 - 4:57:41)
Yes.

[Speaker 4] (4:57:41 - 4:57:42)
It's a wonderful tool.

[Speaker 1] (4:57:42 - 4:57:43)
Yes.

[Speaker 4] (4:57:44 - 4:57:49)
That is ultimately powerless in the face of consciousness. Is that correct?

[Speaker 1] (4:57:49 - 4:58:16)

Yes. If you are identified with thinking, is it powerless? Yes.

Because you're not there. You're absent, virtually absent, or completely asleep when you're identified with thinking. So you're being run by patterns on the karmic collective patterns, mental patterns.

And so your true power comes as you wake up out of that.

[Speaker 8] (4:58:21 - 4:58:23)
Thanks Eckhart. Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (4:58:44 - 4:59:20)
My question is around, before you were talking about intensification of presence. So at times I've felt intense energy in my body, throughout my body. But that's more rare.

And it's, I feel that I experience presence in more of an underlying calmness. So my question is, is presence experienced, is there something consistent with presence?

[Speaker 1] (4:59:20 - 5:04:19)
Do you mean, does it always feel the same? Is that what you mean, perhaps? Well, the, as I said, the intensity of presence can vary.

Then, so presence is the energy field. Now, this is very hard to talk about, but I'll just, I will make an attempt. It is almost as if there's a place inside from where presence emanates.

And that place is timeless. And I can only compare it in the sense-perceived world, could compare to this, like the sun that continuously shines, and yet it has no form. So it's like a space rather, out of which presence emanates.

So the sun is an actually positive presence. But if you imagine that the sun were an empty space, out of which the light emanates, then you get a better, this is closer to the truth of how it is experienced as you go very deeply into it. So there is a space within, or a spaciousness, that is the point out of which the emanation of presence happens.

And that space is absolute repose, absolute stillness. And to feel that in yourself is joy, very joyful, in the, for lack of a better word. There's an aliveness there, but it is absolutely still.

That's the core. And that is, perhaps as I speak of it, you can get a sense within yourself what that is. You can only sense it when you're not thinking.

You can't be thinking and sense that. That's the innermost stillness within you. Out of that emanates presence, which can emanate directly from the body, can also move into your mind and begin to use your mind and inform the mind and speak through the mind.

There were times in my life when I was very passive for, you know, my episodes on seeking on park benches, but even after that, for long periods of time, I was so immersed in that inner stillness that there seemed no point in doing anything. And you don't need to go that way. I didn't have any guidance, so nobody could tell me what to do with that.

So I gradually had to learn for myself that you can be active in the world and at the same time completely rooted in the stillness. So you particularly mentioned the state of calmness when you can feel it. So it may be that you have that connectedness with a still point within and feel that very strongly.

It's very hard for people to, people also differ in their choice of words when they speak about it. So you could ask, if you go to India or you go to any Buddhist country, you may find that, and ask them about spiritual awakening, you may find that the words they use to describe it are very, very different. And only if you know already from direct experience what it is they're talking about, you can recognize that they are talking about the same thing.

So I've already said too much about it because what I have said may, those words may not be what the words that you would choose to talk about your experience of presence. So are you, are you able to suspend thinking for certain moments without going to sleep? Um, I'm not sure.

Okay, try it now. Okay, stop. Okay, how was that?

[Speaker 3] (5:04:20 - 5:04:23)
Um, I don't remember a thought.

[Speaker 1] (5:04:23 - 5:04:28)
Okay. Yeah. So there was no thought.

Yeah. Because not thinking is not memorable.

[Speaker 6] (5:04:29 - 5:04:32)
Yeah. Okay.

[Speaker 1] (5:04:33 - 5:17:18)
Now, this is very significant. So the mind doesn't know what to do with not thinking because the mind is thought. The mind cannot really appreciate how important not thinking is, because what the mind is interested in is, let me ask another question.

That's what the mind is interested in. It's not interested in, in stepping aside and allowing no thought to arise. So the mind has a certain momentum.

The most important thing is to become familiar with that state of no thought. Far more important than any question that could arise in your mind or any answer that the greatest spiritual teacher could give you. So that's why I mentioned in the New Earth, I was visiting that big, a big center where they offer countless fascinating courses on developing this and that faculty and spiritual development and, and physio, physical development and all kinds of huge number of courses are offered.

You can have anything, a menu of courses, you can pursue any interest, wonderful and fascinating. So I don't know if you remember reading it, I wrote, somebody came to me and showed me that program, that menu of fascinating courses and workshops. So which one do you think is most suitable for me?

And I looked through it. There's so many, I don't know. But I can tell you this.

What are the way I put it at that time was be aware of your breathing just for a few days and you will gain more than attending any of these courses. And it's free. Be aware of your breath as you go through daily life as much as you can.

What does that imply? That implies there's a space of no thought because you cannot be aware of your breath and think at the same time. If you want rapid acceleration of spiritual awakening, don't ask another question.

Because that the next question and the next and the next won't get you any closer, especially after. As you can see, I'm winding down. Especially after being here for several days, I have said all that can be said about spiritual awakening.

The next step is up to you. And it does not consist in. Well, let me see.

No, I need to do something else. I need to know. I know that some questions are helpful because.

But ultimately, the most essential thing is bring presence into your life now, for example, by being aware of your breath as much as you can. It's just one way of bringing presence in or feel the inner body as much as you can. And that's rapid.

Or if you can, just step out of thought already without using any of those portals. Just move out of thought. And some of you can do that already.

Then choose that as much as possible in your daily life. Choose to be in thoughtless awareness whenever you don't actually need to think. And that's quite a lot of the time.

That's the spiritual practice. There's no other spiritual practice. Everything else would point to that.

But this is the most direct spiritual practice. And very rapidly, you'll find the shift happening. You have a choice.

Now, with choice comes responsibility. Because the moment you have that choice, it implies that there is sufficient awareness in you for you to have choice. Once that has arisen, that choice becomes your responsibility.

We have to look at it from that point of view. Because if people ask me, well, who is responsible? Presence or you?

And all kinds of strange questions. But the most useful approach is to see that you can choose to be present. That's your responsibility.

Choose to be present in many, many situations in your daily life. Choose presence over useless thinking, for example. When you're in bed at night, when you wake up in the morning, when you're walking in nature or walking to work from here to there or traveling on public transport or sitting in your car, stopping at a red light.

Choose presence over thinking. You are able to do that. First, you have to remember that you have a choice.

That comes one. Okay, I have a choice. And then exercise the choice and take your attention away from thinking and put your attention on attention itself.

Become conscious of being conscious. From another perspective, which is also true and actually more true but less helpful, it is true to say that when you exercise your choice of being present, what is really happening is that presence is choosing to manifest through you. But what presence wants you is to feel that you can have that choice because it helps it to manifest.

Ultimately there isn't you and presence. You are an aspect of presence. So forget about what I just said.

But exercise your choice to be present, no matter where you are. And if you lose it, fine. It's coming back again and again.

Of course you will drift off again sometimes. You drift off into thinking. You may drift off into reactivity and find, oh, and then come, but then come back.

The moment you notice it, the moment you notice that you've drifted off into reactivity, your choice is to come back. If you cannot come back directly by saying, okay, I'll just be present, then use either your breath to bring you back, use the awareness of the inner body to bring you back, use some conscious movement to bring you back, or use sense perception to bring you back. Looking without labeling.

It's all, all the, especially natural things are helpful. You look at them, look at your dog. He's not thinking.

So, and immediately, it's so easy to be present with an animal, with nature, with the sky. You can use those things as help. So if you need some additional help to be present, use that.

I sometimes call it a portal into presence. There was a man working with Byron Katie, a spiritual teacher. The man was saying, if I had enough money, I would move to Hawaii, and that would be so great.

That's my dream. And she said, well, what would you do in Hawaii? Said, well, I would sit in a deck chair by the beach or in my backyard and look at the palm trees, breeze.

And she pointed out to him, well, where are you sitting now? Is the chair comfortable? Yeah.

So what's wrong with that chair? How different would it be to have just a slightly different view around you? You can be in Hawaii now.

It's an inner state. It's just the mind telling you, you need to be somewhere else in order to be happy. You need to be somewhere else.

It's here now. What's wise to seek, postpone fulfillment to some future imagined point, not realizing that the source of all satisfaction is within you already. And then sense that as your very presence and everything else, whatever happens or doesn't happen, you catch the bus or you miss the bus, you lose money, you gain money, up and down, hot and cold.

That's all the details. This mind made sense of self is also much more focused on the negative than the positive. To be free, you awaken to who you are beyond your history and your life situation.

Now, where is the limit between necessary discernment, perceiving insanity or insincerity, meaning not being naive by expecting only good things from another person, and judgment? So again, where's the limit between necessary discernment and judgment? Necessary discernment, the questioner says, would be perceiving insanity or insincerity and not being naive by expecting only good things from another person.

Discernment, judgment. Now, if you distrust a person, that's a thought form that, of course, creates a big barrier between yourself and that person. If you distrust a person, you cannot go beyond the conditioning of that person.

When you distrust a person, of course, what you react to is the conditioning in that person. The distrust on a conventional level may be justified or not. You may be right, let's say, I don't want to do business with this person.

I distrust him because he seems to me to be dishonest, or you could say I have evidence that he is dishonest.

[Speaker 8] (5:17:20 - 5:17:22)
And so I distrust him.

[Speaker 1] (5:17:48 - 6:28:25)
Which is more effective as meditation practice? To mentally ask, who am I? Or mentally think, I am.

It amounts to the same. If you ask, who am I? Don't expect an answer.

If an answer comes to you, that's not it. Because any answer that comes to who am I will be some kind of concept, and that is a thought form, and that's not who you are. Many people who are unawakened are very, very strongly identified with their physical form, and that's only level one of their form identity.

In the moment of noticing, you're not thinking. Because you cannot notice a silent space and think at the same time. There needs to be something in you that corresponds to that silent space, and that is the inner space of awareness.

And amazingly, that is also a way of realizing who you are at the most essential, the most fundamental level. Because you are essentially that silent presence, that awareness, that consciousness. That is the essence of who you are.

It's the essence of each person in this room. And that's an amazing realization. It transforms the way in which you perceive your identity, your sense of self, because that is perhaps one of the most important questions in life, in your life, is the question of identity.

And that's why the ancient Greeks, in ancient Greek philosophy, probably going back to Pythagoras, one of the most important sayings they had, which is actually inscribed at the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, know thyself, know thyself. That is one of the most important things in your life, to know who you are. Now most people think they know who they are because they identify with, first of all, of course, you have a physical body.

And on the level of form, that physical body is, of course, a part of who you are. I call that, this is the level one of form identity. So the most important realization, this is so essential, I don't know why they don't teach that at school or university, the most important realization is that there are two dimensions to your identity, whereas most humans on the planet, which is all those who are not yet awakening, only know themselves through one identity, one dimension, and that's the dimension of form, form identity.

Form identity begins with the physical form, and that is the first thing, of course, when you meet somebody else, the first thing, of course, you notice is the physical identity of that person, a man or woman with a body and an external appearance, and that's the first thing you notice. And with yourself, many people who are unawakened are very, very strongly identified with their physical form, and that's only level one of their form identity. They are very strongly identified with their physical form, either in a positive or a negative sense, in a meaning, some people are proud of their body and appearance, look at me and compare themselves mentally to other bodies who are not as beautiful, strong, whatever it may be, very strongly identified with body and with appearance, and that's all negatively identified, I'm very unhappy about my body, it looks so awful, that again is a negative identification with body, and of course that's amplified these days through the clever technology that humans have developed, selfies are very popular these days, and usually they show aspects of your body, I suppose, your appearance, so you go, and then you send it out to as many people as possible, and then everybody, all your friends, including hundreds of people you've never met, they look at your body or your external appearance, and feel bad because you look so happy, and that makes them feel even more unhappy than they were already, and to compensate for this, they also get out their phone and take a selfie, looking extremely happy, and perhaps you can find a background that makes people feel envious, or you show yourself in a restaurant having this incredible meal, and for a while that can keep people, well, not never happy for very long, but busy, and you feel relatively okay in that dimension, of course, sooner or later a time comes when the body changes, strangely, changes its appearance, and you may think that the mirrors are no longer as good as they used to be, because you don't look quite the same as before, and so there are many options open to you, but you begin to be then a little bit unhappy more, because you identified with something that doesn't last, and particularly people who had a very strong body identification become very unhappy as they grow old, very unhappy, and nobody has told them that such an identity is extremely limited, extremely limited identity, but they don't know that, that's all they have, all their life, and then suddenly the body that made them feel superior now becomes a source of great unhappiness, and that is the fate of all those who cannot, do not go deeper within in order to discover deeper levels of who they are, so I never particularly was tempted to identify even when I was young with my body, because it wasn't particularly strong or good looking, so what do I do? I felt inadequate, it was a source of suffering, however, I realized I am more than my body, I'm also my mind, if I can't look stronger and more beautiful than the person next to me, I can be more intelligent, I can be more knowledgeable, so my sense of identity shifted instead of physical, although there was some negative identification, but my sense of identity shifted to my mind, it shifted to that, which of course is the next level down for your form identity, is your mind, your mind is all the accumulated knowledge and memories and so on that are kept alive by thought processes, so to compensate for my inadequate body, I read as much as possible, so that I could make other people feel inferior to me, because they didn't know as much as me, so I was still very uneasy, but whenever I was in a group of people, I would immediately start talking about knowledgeable things and show how much I knew, to make other people feel less than me, that's a very normal egoic strategy, was that the ego saying, don't talk about me so much? Of course I wasn't happy, I was continuously in a state of unease, because there were always people who knew more than me, what do you do with them?

And then there were others who didn't know more than me, but they had something else to identify with, they had a high social standing, went to university, I met a few lords and ladies, they didn't do anything to deserve those titles, they were born with them, so the baby comes out of the mother's womb and say, well this is lady so and so. So many of those people had a very strong, they derived a very significant part of their identity from their social background, upper class, basically it means family history, so they identified very strongly with that, and it could give them a sense of superiority towards most others, and even if the others were more intelligent, you had so much more class, so much more influence, background, whatever you call it, even the way you speak in English language in England, and even the way you speak, you will immediately show others, well not a little less these days, but when I was young and lived in England, the moment you opened your mouth, people would judge you, which social class you were, working class, middle class, upper class, upper middle class, upper class, and many of course pretending, trying to sound very upper class in an exaggerated way, it's very embarrassing, but they thought it worked.

Again, people are looking for an identity, and the sense of identity is never ultimately satisfying, they're always looking for more, they're looking for something to strengthen their sense of identity, to strengthen their sense of who they are, and the ego, basically that's what the ego is, to have a sense of identity that is based on the conditioned mind, plus the emotions that reflect the conditioned mind, if the ego, usually people think when one speaks of a big ego, that ego is people who are bigger than life, they have a huge ego, they think they are the greatest and the most wonderful and superior to everybody, that can be one aspect of ego. There's also another ego, if you don't have enough stuff to identify with, you don't have more knowledge than most people, you don't have a great body or appearance, you don't have social class background, you don't have possessions, what do you do then?

What do you identify with then? Oh my God, who am I? Or then the ego very cleverly shifts to a kind of victim identity, I am so, I've been treated so unfairly by life, my parents, it started when I was born, dreadful background, life always been at a disadvantage, always been a victim, either you personally or you can identify with the whole social group, and say we have always been victims and we still are victims.

Not that certain, of course people have, there are individuals who have been born into very dreadful circumstances, there are also, there have been on our entire groups of people who are born into bad circumstances, that is undoubtedly true, the danger is making that into your sense of identity that keeps you trapped very much in a kind of prison. Very seductive, there's a big tendency these days for people to have a collective victim identity, very seductive for the ego, you can read about it on the internet very quickly how this becomes more and more fashionable almost these days to have a collective victim identity. So let us be still an instant and forget all things we ever learned, all thoughts we had, and every preconception that we hold of what things mean and what their purpose is.

Well today I'd like to read to you and comment on some brief quotes from A Course in Miracles. A few years ago I gave a talk about The Course in Miracles in a little bit more detail, The Course in Miracles, I don't know if you have read it or done it or heard of it, it's a channeled book, first channeled in the 60s, later part of the 60s, and first published in 70, probably 76, and it's been around since then become a kind of spiritual classic, it's one of the few channeled books that are deep and quite profound, and it's not for everybody definitely, it uses Christian terminology but reinterprets Christianity so that it becomes a very deep teaching, perhaps that's the original teaching of Jesus.

It was channeled by a psychologist, clinical psychologist at Columbia University in New York, so she didn't understand the content very well, having little spiritual background, so it was dictated to her by an inner voice. So the Christian terminology is helpful to some people and a hindrance for others, it uses this old-fashioned language with exclusively masculine pronouns and God, the Father, and he going about God as he, that may be considered a limitation, but you can't look beyond that. Today I would like to, instead of using the entire course here, which is a big book, I don't even have it right here, this book was published, just a little volume here of quotes from The Causing Miracles, and it's called Accept This Gift, Selections from The Causing Miracles, four words by Marianne Williamson, published by Tartar Cornerstone Editions, and the quotes are quite very short and beautiful, and they selected also quotes that are relatively neutral in their language, so you don't get a lot of the masculine pronouns and the old-fashioned terminology. So what I will do today is just select a few of these very brief quotes and comment on them. This does not mean I'm simplifying The Causing Miracles or reducing it to something simple.

With a spiritual text, it's very different from other kinds of texts. It does not work in a cumulative sense, so the truth can be contained, the entire truth can be contained in one sentence. So it operates in the dimension of depth, not extension.

Although, of course, paradoxically, The Causing Miracles contains lessons. One part is the text, the other part is the lessons, 365 lessons, one for each day of the year. So it gives you time in that sense, but it gives you time because you need time to remove time from your mind, so to speak.

That's quite a paradox. Some of The Causing Miracles writings are quite poetic. They're almost like little poems, and maybe I'll start with one of those little almost poems.

They're quite beautiful, and perhaps the most profound one that I will start with comes towards the end of the course, which is, if somebody does the course 360, so it would be towards the end of the year doing the course. This is the longest quote in our session today, so it's actually a poem that I will read to you, and I think you will appreciate the beauty of it, and then I will comment on the meaning in case you need it. You probably don't.

I don't know yet if I'm going to read it all at once or I'll read parts first and then comment on each part. It's about a couple of pages, well, short pages. There will come a time when images have all gone by and you will see you know not what you are.

It is to this unsealed and open mind that truth returns, unhindered and unbound, where concepts of the self have been laid by is truth revealed exactly as it is. That's the first paragraph, first of the poem. Let me just briefly comment.

There will come a time when images have all gone by and you will see you know not what you are. It is to this unsealed and open mind that truth returns, unhindered and unbound, where concepts of the self have been laid by is truth revealed exactly as it is. Images have all gone by and you will see you know not what you are.

Now, does that mean that somewhere else in the Course it uses the ancient expression, know thyself, as one of the main purposes of the Course is to teach you to know yourself, know thyself? I don't know if I can find it. How does that relate to you?

A time will come when you will realize that you know not what you are. How can you know yourself? And then it says time will come when you, as a positive thing, that you know not what you are.

Well, that's easily explained. To know yourself you have to let go of concepts about yourself. And when you let go of concepts, mentally held concepts about yourself, then you no longer know who or what you are on the level of concept.

And when you have then let go of concepts, where concepts of the self have been laid by, let go of, is truth revealed exactly as it is. So when you surrender mental concepts about who you are, which is stories, narratives, interpretations, then another dimension of knowing arises which is deeper or higher, doesn't matter what term you use, than concepts. And instead of the conceptual knowledge which you let go of, a deeper dimension of knowing arises.

And in that deeper dimension of knowing that is not conceptual, it's not based on thinking, the truth of who you are reveals itself. So that's the essence of all, whether you look at Indian or Hindu teachings, Buddhist teachings, mystical Christianity, it's all the same. Sufism.

Now let's carry on with this poem on the same theme. I call it poem, it's just part of the text. Let us be still an instant and forget all things we ever learned, all thoughts we had, and every preconception that we hold of what things mean and what their purpose is.

Let us remember not our own ideas of what the world is for. We do not know. Let every image held of everyone be loosened from our minds and swept away.

Be innocent of judgment, unaware of any thoughts of evil or of good that ever crossed your mind of anyone. Now do you know him not, but you are free to learn of him and learn of him anew, him being any other person. So this section here points to the clarity that comes and the deep realization that comes when you let go of thinking basically.

So let us be still an instant and forget all things we ever learned, all thoughts we had, and every preconception that we hold of what things mean and what their purpose is. Let every image held of everyone be loosened from our minds and swept away. So it's not only about ourselves letting go of self-concepts, it's also about letting go of concepts that we hold of other people, judgments, concepts, conceptualization.

So meeting another person without any concepts. So you let go of the conceptual knowing so that a deeper knowing arises. Be innocent of judgment, it says.

Judgment is basically interpreting things through thinking. Every judgment is a thought. Jesus also said, do not judge.

So be unaware of any thoughts of evil or of good that ever crossed your mind of anyone. Now do you know him not? Once you've let go, you don't know him or her.

You see, we have the masculine pronouns. But you are free to learn of him and learn of him anew. What are you learning?

You're learning about the deeper reality of the human being, of who he or she is in their essence, and then knowing yourself in the same way. Now the book continues. Only be quiet.

You will need no rule but this. To let your practicing today lift you above the thinking of the world and free your vision from the body's eyes. Only be still and listen.

Simply do this. Be still and lay aside all thoughts of what you are and what God is. All concepts you have learned about the world.

All images you hold about yourself. Otherwise you are consciousness identified with form, the ego, trapped in form, the dream of form. And then consciousness disidentifies from form, wakes up and knows itself for the first time.

This is a very short question and hopefully the answer also will be short. Who becomes enlightened? So we could say the person does not become enlightened, but the person becomes transparent, one could say, and then light comes through, the light of consciousness comes through where the person was, perhaps still is for a while.

It's not an attainment, it's a disappearance of the density of the mental-emotional layers, that identification with which is the person. So the person becomes transparent, so to speak, all the structures. For example, it starts with the mind.

The mind movement is interspersed with spaces and that's how the light gets through, the light of consciousness. And so nobody becomes enlightened as such. Enlightenment, if you even want to use that word, is an awakening of consciousness.

Was consciousness then asleep? Well, in some way, yes, whenever there's identification with something, consciousness is dreaming the dream of form. And so, on the one hand, consciousness wants to continue the dream of form, and on the other hand, the dream of form means creating more forms.

This is one movement in the universe, is to create more differentiation in the forms. The universe is obviously creating form. Look at the life on one planet.

Even if you just look at the life forms in the sea, millions of different life forms. So the universe actually loves that movement into form. And then there's something else that the universe loves, and that's the return to the source, to know itself.

How do I know these things? Well, just through knowing this outer movement, the return movement. Us here, this gathering, anybody who is present with us here, is really part of the return movement to the source.

The universe wants that as much as it wants to flow out into things and create. So you have the two movements. And it may not even be a question of either one or the other.

It is possible for us to embody within both movements so that we continue to create, but not blindly anymore, not egoically anymore, not compulsively anymore, which is there, for example, with the compulsive wanting more things, wanting more. That's part of the ego, and that's part of the universe's need to have more, more things, more stuff. But we can also embody the return movement, and then when the awakening happens, the awakened consciousness can also create.

Why would it do that? Not out of any need, but out of joy, a joyful creation, like an artist is joyful, not an egoic artist, but an artist who deeply enjoys the act of creativity. So we can consciously create form, but be aligned with the source.

So through the human form, the source can create consciously, rather than dreaming the dream of form, which is identification with forms. Conscious creation, a beautiful thing. So there may be some questions about that today, we'll see.

I know that a very important, we live in this, at this time, on this planet, and perhaps everywhere, it could be that everything that happens here is a reflection of whatever happens in the universe. There's definitely a strong pull towards the return movement of the awakening of consciousness, how it awakens out of identification with form. How do you know that?

Well, because it happens to you. Otherwise, you are consciousness identified with form, the ego, trapped in form, the dream of form, and then consciousness disidentifies from form, wakes up and knows itself for the first time. Nothing needs to change for you to know you stay where you are, and then you suddenly know reality as yourself, and then you become a conscious co-creator.

The universe moves through the human form and creates, either a lot or little doesn't matter, or nothing, it doesn't need to create. It's free not to create. Maybe you're a frequency holder who doesn't, is not interested in creating.

You can just be aligned with the source, and yet there too, something, you're still here in this dimension, something of the source will flow through you into this dimension. Don't attempt to understand all this intellectually because it cannot be understood. I'm giving as much, perhaps too much already, of what can be understood.

The entire thing is far too vast for the human mind to understand. It doesn't need that. It's not necessary.

You can be aligned, I've said it before, you can be aligned with the source, but you cannot understand the source, and yet you can be one with it, conscious oneness with the consciousness. You cannot understand consciousness. God, amazing what they did in the 19th century.

There were some vast, these philosophers that created a huge system, and every philosopher created his own system of thought to explain the entire universe. Intricate. And then they presented these as books that here's the entire universe explained.

And then they had followers, and now it's not fashionable anymore to attempt to explain the entire universe in some kind of system. Hegel did it, Fichte, Schelling, Schopenhauer to some extent. He had deep insights into something beyond.

But it's still a little limited because nobody can present us a mentally constructed system that explains the universe. Or God can explain neither the manifested, let alone the unmanifested. Many humans are going through the enlightening process.

Enlightening has two, fortunately, in the English language. Light has two meanings, which is very nice. As you go through the enlightening or awakening process, you become lighter, not physically, but psychologically.

A lightness comes into your being, not the heaviness of the ego, the seriousness of the ego. You become lighter. But also, the other meaning of light is the light shines through you.

You become porous to the light. Consciousness moves through you. I can sometimes, when I go to a public place or anywhere, occasionally I'm wrong, but usually I can point out the people in whom the process is happening and who are most likely to come up to me and talk to me and say, oh, we read your book.

I can look at, they haven't seen me, I've seen them, and said, out of these, these are the most likely to, I don't think that, I just see it. And then I put my sunglasses on. So no matter where you look on the surface level, you're not going to arrive.

And the Buddha recognized that because he said, wherever you go and whatever you do, you will encounter suffering. Oh. And that, if only read as a statement, sounds very pessimistic or nihilistic, which means you are condemned to perpetual frustration.

Other translations of the term that the Buddha used, which is dukkha, other possible translations of that term would be misery, unsatisfactoriness, unhappiness, frustration. Nothing is ever good enough. And that manifests in some people more extremely than in others, that state of consciousness.

But in many people it manifests as a continuous discontent, a continuous sense of something wrong here, except for brief moments, brief interludes, you've just arrived at your vacation destination, until then that feeling comes up again. So dukkha, it's a very profound realization that on that level, there is no ultimate fulfillment or happiness. And so you cannot look for it in the future, because when you look at it on the surface level of life, to fulfillment through a situation, through a new place, a new activity, a new way of relating to people, becoming important, becoming, getting recognition by others, all these things are surface phenomena, which are dukkha.

And so I've met some people, famous and wealthy people who have actually achieved all that, and then they realized it actually, it got worse, because they could no longer be under the illusion that when they finally have enough money, they'll be free. And so finally they got all the money, and they could go anywhere, and they tried it out, and wherever they went, they found themselves. And they found their own state of consciousness, the unrealized state of consciousness.

And wherever they went, because they found themselves, they found frustration. And they were unhappy sitting in their private jet. And that's a good point to reach, but the good news is you don't need a private jet to get to that realization, because otherwise the chances for most of us would be slim of realization were only possible through the acquisition of a private jet, or at least a share in, a time share in a jet, which you can buy, but that's still very expensive.

So the surface level is not to be totally denied, because undoubtedly you exist here on the level of form also, and there are things to do and to acquire on the surface level as part of who you are on the level of form. So you need to be able to operate well on the level of form, learning new things, trying out new things, creating things on the level of form, whatever it is that you may want to create, or simply being engaged in certain activities on the level of form, having a personality that's not going to totally evaporate, so there's still things that are in you. You need to honor also that level of who you are, which does not mean being totally absorbed by it, trapped in it, and only know yourself as that.

So to to do, to be active, that happens on the on the surface level of life, that's fine. If you live in a place that is not the best, that way perhaps it's noisy or not nice enough, why not see if you can find a better place to live or get a better job? These things still operate.

Where it doesn't work is expecting some ultimate fulfillment through whatever you achieve, and then it, because if you expect some ultimate fulfillment, ultimate happiness, then you're telling the world, the world in whatever form it manifests to you, you're telling the world, make me happy. You have, you place expectations upon the world that it cannot meet. So the world, the world includes whatever happens to you, whatever other people, places, activities, relationships, it's all the, that's all the world, what you own, experiences on the level of form, all that is fine, is part of the dance of life, but if you expect it to make you happy, it's frustrating.

If you no longer expect these things to make you happy, they actually are quite pleasant. You can experience many things, it's very pleasant things. You visit new places, it's nice, you don't expect that someplace you should find some ultimate fulfillment just because you've moved from A to B, or you meet a new person, a relationship, without placing an impossible demand upon the other person, looking for the ultimate spiritual partner to make me happy, please apply here, send your photo too.

So the, when you, when you don't have the expectation that this person should make you happy, then the relationship actually works much better. But how can you not have that expectation only if at the same time that you operate on the level of form, you also are connected with the essence of who you are, you also realize experientially in the present moment, the meaning of the letter E, the inscription, you are. So what the inscription is telling you is to have that realization in the background of your life, so to speak, continuously, to have that inner spaciousness continuously as a backdrop, so to speak, to your life.

So when you do things, not just when you meditate, not just, although it's nice to have glimpses of it, or realizations when you, I mean, there are people who've been meditating for 20 years and never even had a glimpse of that, because they always try to get somewhere through their meditation, not realizing the meditation is not a doing. So if you practice meditation as a doing, you'll continuously miss it, because doing implies you want to get somewhere, which means it keeps you trapped on the surface level, because only on the surface level you can get somewhere. On the depth level, you already are somewhere, or nowhere.

On the depth level, that's the letter E, you are the beingness, to note, and that is the inner spaciousness where you, that consciousness that you are transcends the person, and that is where the sense of being at home, or to put it in a more conventional language, to be comfortable, there's an expression in English, to be comfortable in your own skin, of course it's more than that, it's deeper than in your own skin, but it points to that, to feel that sense of rootedness in something indestructible, and that is knowing that you are, and it's nothing to do with thinking, it's not a concept, it is knowing yourself as consciousness. Now as you might have guessed, I have a bit more yin than yang, this does not mean I'm going to burst into your lady's bathroom.

Another thing to be aware of, that's all part of it, is the yin and yang in every human being, the movement, the polarity manifests in every human being, of the feminine and the masculine, and again it's important to be, to not to stray too much to one extreme, or too much to the other extreme, nothing in excess, but there's no human being who is totally in the middle, and if you're a man, it does not necessarily mean that you energetically have a more yang than yin, there are men who have more yin than some women, there are some women who have more yang than a man. Now as you might have guessed, I have a bit more yin than yang, this does not mean I'm going to burst into your lady's bathroom and claim my right to use it, and if you become aggressive with me and say get out of my bathroom, I can say, I have more yin than you, and the fact that you are aggressive towards me proves it, you should be in the yang bathroom.

Michael, our Swedish organizer, who just spoke to you just now, yin or yang? He has even more yin than me, that's why he's so lovable, but don't go too far with your yin, you have countries too that have predominant, are more yin or yang, in the United States, you have states that can be in the collective energy field, either more yin or yang, typical example, or for example, on the whole, doesn't mean that every individual in that state corresponds to that, but on the whole, probably most people would agree that California is more yin, Texas is more yang, so if your car breaks down in the middle of the night, and your cell phone doesn't work, you have to knock at the door, and if it's an extreme yang household, the door will open with a guy with a gun, what do you want?

Get off my property, if you come to an extreme yin household, oh hi, yes, you will come in and have some soup, now the danger is with the extreme yang, you have just not helped a person who is truly in need of assistance and help, and you're totally closed, your boundary is so rigid that nothing penetrates, you've desensitized yourself in your hardened attitude, it's an extreme form of yang, so you don't even know what you're doing to yourself ultimately, now there's also danger involved in the extreme form of yin, obviously, perhaps you're helping a person in need of help, or you invite somebody in who's going to rob and kill you, and this is because you are loss of awareness, you are not more in the middle, to stay in the middle, more or less, of course you'll fluctuate, I'm always, will always probably be more yin than yang, but in certain situations, I may suddenly be a bit more yang, but that requires wisdom, it requires openness to the present moment, rather than living through mental concepts, and then your response to that situation will be correct, it will be either, there will be more yin in it or more yang in it, on the whole, and that is not a bad thing, Western civilization shifted from a very long time being predominantly and excessively yang, began to shift in the 60s more towards yin, and that was a wonderful thing, absolutely necessary, and that enabled a lot of this spirituality to come in from, spirituality come in from the East, the human potential movement, the equality for women, the respect for people who are outsiders, rather than empathy towards other human beings who are of a different race, or who are of type of minority, or human beings who are other different gay people, finally, the acceptance of gay people, all these wonderful things that happened through the shift to a more empathetic, state of consciousness through shifting to yin, and that was a great thing, otherwise we probably wouldn't even be here talking, but you have to be careful with the movement because when once it starts and there's not enough awareness, it can go on and on and on, and so the empathy towards others, which is a great thing, if you take it to an extreme, it becomes political correctness that can be very extreme, so you cannot say many things you can't say anymore, don't disagree with me because, or with us, because anything you disagree with is hate speech, stop, don't talk, of course, there is such a thing as hate speech, and that is clearly recognizable, so just as an example of an extreme form of permissiveness, well, actually, there was already a great thing, education changed very much, that's much more respecting the child, the end of corporal punishment, all wonderful things, then, of course, permissiveness came so much that there was a total lack of guidance given to a child, so it went too much that way, another interesting thing is, in many schools these days, they don't want to differentiate between children's achievement anymore, and I can see why, because it makes a child feel bad to be said, this, you are better than, you are not as good as that one, so when I was a child, we had sports events, and I wasn't very good, as you might have guessed, at sports, and it was a little bit like the Olympics, you needed to have a certain number of points, and then you got a bronze medal, and then for even better, more points, you got a silver medal, and then you got a gold medal, and I got 39 points, which was just one point below the bronze medal, and all the bigger boys condescendingly came to me and said, oh, you did really well, I'm so surprised, now, nowadays, perhaps, I would have received a gold medal, don't even have to make an effort, is that a good thing? You have to see, finally, nothing in excess, it didn't kill me that I didn't get a bronze medal, I realized that I knew that already, the physical was not my strength, being a puny weakling, oh, as Arnold says, don't be a puny loser, so, just to give a very extreme point of view now, you have to allow the child to choose their own gender at the age of seven already, so if they feel they're a tomboy, a girl is a tomboy, says, would you rather be a boy? Might be a good idea, don't you want to be a boy? Yeah, yeah, I want to be a boy, okay, you dress you up as a boy, and there's a new, I couldn't believe it at first, in Ontario, Canada, there's a new law, if the parents, if the child expresses his or her desire to be the opposite gender, this seems almost incredible, and I hope it's not true, but several people have told me it's true, and I saw it on the internet, a reliable source, not fake news, if the child expresses a desire to be the opposite gender, might be an eight-year-old or a 10-year-old, and the parents refuse to take this child to a doctor for hormone treatment, the state authorities are entitled to take the child away from the parents, seems incredible, but there will be an extreme form of where something has gone wrong, so we need to be very careful with balancing things between the two. Templar tend to identify with a particular movement, so even though yang lends itself more to ego, yin also can become ego, if you're unconscious and you identify, that means it then determines the way you think, and the way you see things, if I've said anything that you feel angry about right now, it means you have identified with something, and your ego identity, you derive from that particular collective position, and that's fine, at least now you know it.

Perhaps that is, this has become the teaching, so the understanding of what happened to me, gradually became the teaching, and I realize it's not complicated at all, and I realize many humans are ready for it.

[Speaker 4] (6:28:30 - 6:28:52)
You said this happened, this peacefulness, awareness, happened to you spontaneously, and I wonder why did it happen to you, and exactly how did that happen, and?

[Speaker 1] (6:28:56 - 6:38:01)
Okay, the first one, I don't know if I'll be able to, the first part of it, I don't

know if I'll be able to answer it, it just happened. Well, I can say that it happened because the egoic sense of self got eroded, and what happened was a disidentification from thinking, this is what happened, but I didn't know that that's what happened when it first happened, it just happened, I couldn't have explained it. The last thought that I was identified with was I can't live with myself any longer, and then I looked at the thought, well, there was myself, who am I?

I didn't know that at the time when this thought came, who am I if I can't live with myself any longer? Who is the self and who am I? I didn't know at the time that I had voiced an ancient question that has been used in meditation for hundreds or thousands of years, the question, who am I?

It's spiritual teachers in India have used that question to take people into this realization since ancient times, and the question arose spontaneously in my mind, who am I? Because it seemed strange, I no longer know if the sentence, I cannot live with myself any longer, seemed so strange because there seemed to be two people there, the I and the self, and that was so strange that I was wondering, who am I if I can't live with myself? And that simple question, who am I, led to a realization of the essence of I, of what I means, and the I I realized is not my thoughts, so I disidentified from the unhappy self that was telling itself unhappy stories all the time, and so the sense of I was no longer lodged in thought, it removed itself from thought because it just couldn't stand it anymore, simple as that, that's why it happened, it couldn't stand it anymore, it removed itself, it was too painful, and all was left was that the sense of I-ness or beingness or presence, which is inherently peaceful, which has no problems in it, is timeless, and that is the true source of everybody's identity, the true source of the beingness, the formless, and then the self that consisted of thinking, identification with thinking, couldn't survive the sense of self that was no longer invested with the identification, so the unhappy me, as I called it later, dissolved, and what's left was just the I-presence, it seemed so simple, but even that I couldn't have explained at the time, it took years before I could verbalize something like this, what I'm saying now, but it is basically a very simple thing, in a way it's a very natural thing, and it could well be that at some point in human evolution, perhaps soon, there could be a natural thing that happens to people when they reach adulthood, I would suggest that as you grow up, you're a teenager, it seems a natural stage to still be at, perhaps to still be identified with the ego, to grow identified with thinking and so on, and then you become an adult, and then to outgrow that, and then perhaps ancient cultures, as you know, had rituals and ceremonies, and in ancient Greece, you had the mysteries that people underwent, they were kind of workshops, I suppose, but where transformation of consciousness happened, and so that could happen in a more enlightened culture, as people reach young adulthood, perhaps these are the new mysteries that we can create, mysteries was what is described, not everybody here may know what in ancient Greece was called mysteries, was a kind of initiation process, people were not supposed to talk about it, so nobody knows exactly what they did, but it was some kind of deepening of the human being, there were ancient things going back to ancient times, to Egypt and to India, so we could have this modern mysteries where people step out of identification with egoic self and simply realize the I, the I-ness, perhaps this has become the teaching, so the understanding of what happened to me gradually became the teaching, and I realized it's not complicated at all, and I realized many humans are ready for it, it was a surprise when I realized that, I first realized it when the power of now came out and without any advertising or anything, more and more people started to read it in the first few months, at first when the book was finished, I thought a few people may respond to it, and that's fine, if nobody wants to buy it, that's fine too, I said I will go and sell tomatoes to make a living, why I said that, I don't know, it just came, and then I realized far more people are ready, they actually went into the book and understood it or realized the truth of it because they were ready to hear it, it wasn't totally new, they were ready to hear it, yes, yes, it's always a recognition when you read or listen to true spiritual teaching, something in you already knew it, it's not totally new, and that is the power of the spiritual teaching, is the presence in you that's already there, recognizes the truth when it sees it, and then you feel it, you respond, yes, it's always a recognition, it's never somebody telling you something new, you can read other books, you get lots of new facts that you had never heard of and say, wow, that's interesting, yeah, it may be interesting, but it won't transform you, only things that you recognize as true actually then bring out that level in you, that dimension in you, and that's the power of a spiritual book, and I didn't realize how many humans actually were ready for that, it's only when they start writing to me, at that time people were still writing letters, writing to me and saying, I bought five copies for my four friends or relatives, and then somebody else said, I bought three copies, and there was people, so wow, it's amazing that so many people seem to be ready for it, so that's good, it's happening, it's a relatively simple process, and- Theoretically. Yes, there is still, of course, the old consciousness still has its gravitational pull upon people, but everyone who is here or wherever you are listening to this, seeing this is part of the transformation and contributes to the awakening, so it is a very significant thing that as you awaken, and most people who join us here or here in this room or at home are already undergoing the awakening process, in a few people it comes very suddenly, but that's rare, in most, it's a gradual awakening, and then it doesn't go like that, it goes more in a spiral, you go, this presence arises, and then you fall back, and then again it's, and so it gradually goes, it grows slowly with setbacks.

[Speaker 5] (6:38:01 - 6:38:03)
Why do you think it happened like that for you?

[Speaker 1] (6:38:04 - 6:39:46)
Well, for some reason, it happens for a few people like that, but it seems to be rare, I cannot tell you why that is, there was, it's better, it's good not to look for an event, I almost regret telling people how it happened to me later, because it makes people to look for an event, and in a way what happened, I describe it as something happening, it's not real, it's more of a non-event than an event, because it's a, it's a, you kind of disappear in that, the form, the form self, the form identity kind of dissolves, so it's more of a non-event than an event, it's better not to look for it, it's not an, for most people, it may come as an occasional glimpses, you have the famous Satori in Zen, Satori is a flash of enlightenment, when you suddenly go, wow, yeah, but that doesn't necessarily last, if you have a Satori, it doesn't mean that the next day you're still conscious, but it's a nice thing when it happens, it's a flash of realization, so the Zen master tries to sometimes bring about in you the flash, and that's good, but it's not, of course, it's not the permanent state, that comes gradually, it's an adventure in consciousness, and we can enjoy it while it happens.

[Speaker 7] (6:39:50 - 6:39:52)
Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (6:39:58 - 6:41:36)
Oh, let's ring the bell. You wanted to go on? Yeah, well, it's in, it goes on in you now.

Oh, it's now. It's already now?

[Speaker 6] (6:42:07 - 6:42:08)
Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (6:42:37 - 6:42:51)
Hello Eckhart, my question is not about your breakfast, but a little bit personal,

it's about something that I read about you, that at one point in your life, you picked up the name Eckhart for yourself.

[Speaker 6] (6:42:52 - 6:42:53)
Yes.

[Speaker 3] (6:42:53 - 6:43:17)
So you were talking about today, in your books, about form identity, about pain body, about the surface self accumulating the stories of the past, and I just want to know, what was the motivation, or the urge behind that choice, that urge?

[Speaker 6] (6:43:17 - 6:43:18)
Right.

[Speaker 3] (6:43:19 - 6:43:26)
And were there any impacts on your wellbeing, afterwards, of making that change?

[Speaker 1] (6:43:26 - 6:53:15)
Right. Well, one has to come with some kind of arrangement, with a world of form, the world of labels, and so on. Sometimes it's convenient, when somebody asks you, what's your name?

Before I answer your question, I'll get there in a minute. Somebody asks you, what is your name? And then it is more practical, and avoids a lot of complication to say, my name is so-and-so.

It doesn't mean that you identify with that particular sound, but it works better than to say, I have no name and no form. No, that'll throw them. And it'll probably be the end of the conversation.

So it helps to have a name, in normal life. But there's another thing, these are forms, thought forms. And your name, of course, is something connected with your form identity.

And as you grow up, and go through life, you have all kinds of experiences. And your name then kind of absorbs, one could say, the flavor of all those experiences that you have. They become part of what the name absorbs.

So a name can become heavy after years and years, especially of suffering. Then the name reflects the suffering of your whole past. There's a reason why, in many or most spiritual traditions, when you enter the formal spiritual path, whether it's in Christianity, or in Hinduism, Buddhism, you adopt a different name.

And the idea behind it is, that you let go of your past completely, because the name kind of symbolizes your entire past. And sometimes even carries an energetic charge to it, that comes from the past. All the things that cling to that name.

So the idea in many spiritual traditions is, as you embark on the spiritual path, you adopt a spiritual name, which you then regard as more real, or it's not ultimately real, because it's just another sound, but more real than your old birth name. And definitely it's something that does not have this weight of past to it. But the danger with that, of course, is the moment you adopt a spiritual name, then everybody will know that it's a spiritual name.

And so very quickly, there could be an egoic identification with you as having a spiritual name, which immediately makes you superior to all these other people who have not yet chosen the spiritual path, and are still using their birth names, all these unawakened people. But I now have a spiritual name, because I'm spiritual. And so the ego, again, always comes in through the back door.

In my case, there has been a, I felt as the awakening happened, the shift in consciousness, there was a certain or considerable degree of discontinuity with my past. And I felt that my past, my childhood was predominantly unhappy with a few happy moments, of course, but predominantly unhappy caused by parents' unconsciousness. They were not bad parents.

They did their best. I never experienced any kind of physical punishment. And yet there was continuous drama in my parents' home.

I was the only child. My pain body grew through that. It was nightmare living there.

And I sometimes felt, how did I get here? This is so crazy. So there was a lot of suffering, a lot of ideas of suicide.

My first idea of suicide came at the age of about eight. And I was very happy when scaffolding, they built the house where we lived. They painted the exterior of the house and they were scaffolding up to the third or fourth floor, and a ladder going up.

And I said, oh, as long as it's there, I can always climb up and jump down. That's great. So I'm lucky that scaffolding is there.

I can always end it. I'm laughing now because it's gone. It's kind of dissolved completely.

I wasn't laughing then. And then there was already a sense of dissociation from my name and my entire personal past, so that I could remember it. And then the two events that led to it were two synchronistic events.

One is a dream I had in which I walked up the stairs into some circular tower. And in that circular tower, there was a table and on the table, there were some books. They had the name Eckhart on them.

And some, I can't remember what visual, what picture was there. And they had the name Eckhart. And I knew I had written those books, but at that time, my name was not Eckhart.

So that was a strange thing that I saw these books. I had written them, but the name was Eckhart. So I woke up the next morning.

That's how strange. And a few days later, I was walking down the high street, the town I was living in. I mentioned it yesterday.

It was a town that attracts all kinds of spiritual as well as weird people. So I felt quite at home there. It was Glastonbury in Somerset, England.

And I was walking down the high street. Of course, if you live there for a few years, you know almost everybody. And almost everybody is either a channeler or a psychic or a clairvoyant or a reincarnation of King Arthur.

That's all. At any given time, there are several reincarnations of King Arthur living in Glastonbury. And so I ran into this person and he was a psychic, but he wasn't doing any psychic work at that moment.

But he said, hi, Eckhart. I said, what? Oh, he said, oh, I'm sorry.

I don't know why that came. I came into my head that name. And that was that.

That was a synchronistic thing that happened a few days after the dream. And I was ready to let go of the past and to let go of the old name. And that seemed to be a sign to me that it is time for that.

And only later did I... I knew, I was aware at that time already of the medieval mystic, Meister Eckhart. If you have not read Meister Eckhart, I highly recommend the wonderful, deep teachings.

And I often say, if you really want to... Of course, Meister Eckhart was a monk in the Christian tradition in medieval times. But I often say, if you really want to understand Buddhism, Meister Eckhart, of course, had never heard of Buddhism.

If you really want to understand Buddhism, read Meister Eckhart, because he really shows you the essence of Buddhism. And he's very... In Christianity, he's a very strange figure.

He was lucky that he was not burnt or anything. So he survived until he passed away. And only later did I realize interesting things that Eck is Sanskrit for one.

And heart is lovely too. So that became then the... It's still just a name.

It's not... At some point that dissolves and it's fine. It's something that is like a piece of clothes that you wear until you don't wear it anymore.

So it's fine. And basically that's how it happened. Are you considering changing your name or have you done it already?

I am considering. Right. Are you waiting for some kind of sign?

Not really. No, okay.

[Speaker 3] (6:53:15 - 6:53:23)
I just wanted... I read it in your biography and I was just wondering your personal perspective.

[Speaker 1] (6:53:23 - 6:53:52)
And thank you very much for sharing it. Oh, you're welcome. So I was given a kind of sign that's a synchronistic thing.

Often it's very interesting when synchronistic events like that happen. So I wish you well. Thank you.

And maybe at some future retreat or if there are any future... Well, there are no future retreats, but another retreat. Let me know if you have adopted a new name.

[Speaker 8] (6:53:52 - 6:53:52)
Okay.

[Speaker 1] (6:53:53 - 6:54:03)
But of course, realizing the essence of who you are is Anami, nameless, no name.

[Speaker 6] (6:54:04 - 6:54:05)
Thanks.

[Speaker 1] (6:54:25 - 7:52:39)
That is the reason why suffering has a purpose in this world. Suffering is here, including even those forms of suffering that are entirely generated by the mind. And that too is there to ultimately awaken you.

So you have the suffering that is generated through this misuse of the mind, unconscious thinking, and you have suffering that comes through encountering disaster in one form or another in your life. And that's not to be denied. And in the course of this weekend, we will explore how that also can become an opening into transcendence.

And it often is, you will hear stories of people who were confronted with the most extreme forms of suffering and were able to go beyond it, not by denying it, but by transcending. There's a huge difference between denial and transcendence. We'll be looking at that.

So there's the person who lives confronted with problems and with challenges. And there is the potential of discovering, and sometimes through encountering extreme forms of disaster, but not always, not necessarily, but there's a potential of discovering within yourself a dimension of depth that transcends who you are as a person. And in this moment, when the thinking mind stops for a moment and is replaced with an aware presence, then the transcendent dimension has emerged in you.

And the invitation to you is right here and now, to see if you can invite that dimension into your life. And it is almost as if you disappeared temporarily, what you before you called I, because when you're not thinking and just are aware, then the person has temporarily subsided and an aware presence has arisen. And that's the discovery of the transcendent you, or as I call it sometimes, the deep I.

And for some people it comes, and there are many, many accounts throughout history, it comes through encountering extreme forms of suffering. I know that Steve Taylor will probably address it. He's done a lot of research, and we have one speaker, I don't want to say too much, who encountered awakening through very extreme form of suffering.

And that is the potential for awakening that is hiding beyond the seemingly most dreadful thing that could happen to you. And it's all expressed symbolically, whether or not you relate to it as whether you're a Christian or you're not a Christian, you simply understand there's something there that the symbol of the cross points to. This is something I don't think it's fully understood by most churches or conventional Christians, that what the symbol of the cross points to, and a man who is dying on the cross, to me that is the archetype of human and what is possible.

The cross is a torture instrument. It's an expression of extreme suffering. So you have this human being on a torture instrument.

Now, then something happens. There is this human being dies, this in a state of surrender, not my will, but thy will be done. The human being dies in a state of surrender and the very torture instrument is a symbol for the divine.

The cross is a sacred symbol, but the cross is also a torture instrument. The torture instrument, the greatest obstacle to fulfillment, the greatest obstacle to life, it seems, is also potentially the opening into the transcendent dimension. And I believe this to me is the deep symbolism of the cross.

And traditionally, the humans, many humans who encountered awakening, encountered it through extreme suffering. And that drove them to a point of surrender. That drove them, because they couldn't stand the pain anymore, that drove them to the state of acceptance of what is.

And then suddenly the vertical dimension opened up. That's also, you could say the cross also points to the two dimensions of what is. The horizontal dimension and the vertical dimension.

So as awareness arises or presence, then it begins to shine through the person. The person no longer has, does no longer have the density that completely obscures the awareness, the consciousness, the unconditioned consciousness underneath. And it's often the case that the density is destroyed by a suffering.

And that is the reason why suffering has a purpose in this world. Suffering is here, including even those forms of suffering that are entirely generated by the mind, that too is there to ultimately awaken you. So you suffer and the suffering, and all of you have been through different forms of suffering, some very deep, some just a succession of many, many minor frustrations and things going wrong.

So you somehow lost confidence in, you lost belief that this world would ultimately be able to satisfy you or make you happy. That's not it. And perhaps you became frustrated with yourself.

That's possible too. So the suffering is a potential awakener. It has a purpose and it is there to destroy you ultimately, or at least to crack, to create a crack in the egoic shell.

And then something emerges through the crack. Some people in this lifetime continue to have an ego, but it's no longer totally, it's no longer a impenetrable shell. Through suffering, it has received cracks here and there.

There's a, is it Leonard Cohen? I think he has a song or poem. There is a crack, a crack in everything.

That's how the light gets in or gets out, I would say. So suffering destroys the false self, the identification, complete identification with your form identity. So what I call presence, there are other words for it, such as awareness is a state of consciousness that transcends thinking.

You may have noticed that most of the time you have a voice in your head that never stops speaking. And what I call the voice in the head are your habitual thought processes. For many people, the voice in the head, which is the self-talk is not, is predominantly unpleasant because for many people, the self-talk tends to be to a large extent negative.

In fact, there are millions of people in this world who are tortured by their own minds, by the self-talk in the head, which of course is the conditioning of their minds. But they don't even know that because they're so identified with the voice in the head that there's no space beyond from where they can realize that there is a voice in the head because when they're identified with the voice in the head, they are the voice in the head. Presence is the arising of a dimension of consciousness from where you can become aware that there is the voice in the head.

That awareness is above thinking. It's a space of consciousness where you can be the observer of your own mind, the awareness behind the thought processes. And for human beings to discover that dimension within themselves is extraordinarily important.

It is, in fact, as I see it, the next step in the evolution of humanity to discover that unconditioned dimension of consciousness within themselves. And that's an amazing shift. All the ancient spiritual teachers have already pointed to the possibility from the Buddha to Jesus and so on.

But until now, only very few people have been able to actually experience that state of consciousness and embody that state of consciousness. One could say that until now or until fairly recently, it's been a luxury for human beings to attain that new consciousness. But the world situation that we are at now is so critical.

We're faced by so many problems collectively that the transformation of human consciousness, which is what the arising of presence is, is no longer a luxury. It's a necessity for the survival of humanity. The problems that we are facing, most of the problems, if not all the problems we are facing as a species, are actually generated by our own minds.

So all the problems are not problems of natural disaster or anything except disasters that were created by humans. So there is a strong element of, one could almost say, insanity or dysfunction in what I call the old consciousness, the normal human consciousness. It has produced an enormous amount of suffering quite unnecessarily.

And already the ancient teachers have pointed to that. The Buddha said the human condition is one of suffering. And Jesus said, what we need is to find the kingdom of heaven within.

We need salvation. And only now are many, many humans on the planet, still a minority, but far more than ever before, are ready to enter that new state of consciousness and make presence part of their lives so that there is a shift, for most people, a gradual shift, for some, a few people, a radical sudden shift from the state of consciousness of being identified with the continuous stream of thinking, a lot of it dysfunctional, as I said, the shift from that to discovering the possibility and the reality of another dimension of consciousness within you that is the space of presence or awareness. And from there, you can observe your own thought processes and you're no longer trapped, completely identified in the conditioned mind.

That's about the most important thing in your life, to undergo that shift. And it's not extraordinarily difficult. It's not, unfortunately, it's not yet knowledge, general knowledge in the mainstream culture that such a thing is even possible.

So the arising of presence is something that needs to happen now. Humans are ready for it. You are ready for it.

And as this gradually, this new state of consciousness arises in you, you will begin to notice changes in the way in which you react to events in your life, changes in the way in which you relate to other people. And they're all changes for the better. You will find, for example, that situations that before caused you a considerable amount of pain or suffering no longer have the power to cause you that pain or suffering.

You'll also discover the amazing truth. You will discover it experientially within yourself. You can verify what I'm saying now by becoming aware of situations in your life and observe how, when you become unhappy in situations, unhappy in whatever form, unhappiness takes on many forms, whether even irritation is a small form of unhappiness, irritation, anger, resentment, many, many kinds of unhappiness, self-pity, and or...

And you become aware that the unhappiness in your life, to a large extent, is actually due to the thought processes in your mind rather than the actual situation. So you feel unhappy because not in majority of cases, not about the situation you find yourself in, but about what your mind is telling you about the situation. I often give the example of being in a lineup, either at the airport or in a supermarket, and it's not moving, and there's some kind of delay because people are not...

They are too slow, not efficient enough. And easily people get irritated, angry, upset in situations like that. And this is just a minor example.

And they believe that they are being upset because of the situation. However, if they looked more closely into the origin of unhappiness, they would find that they're not unhappy because they're standing there in line. They're unhappy because their mind is saying that it is a bad situation to be standing there in line.

It says all kinds of things. The voice in the head comments. If you could be aware of this, if you were present in that situation, you would become aware of what your mind is saying.

And if you were present in that situation and many, many other situations, even so-called serious situations, if you were really present in that situation, you would see that the unhappiness that you experience actually arises in your mind is not ultimately caused by the situation you find yourself in. And when you discover that, the possibility of freedom comes in, the possibility of choice, because now you have the choice. Do I want to continue thinking these thoughts and feeling unhappy, or would I rather be free of that unhappiness in this situation?

And then presence arises more strongly and suddenly you accept this moment as it is because there's nothing much you can do. And there's a complete shift in the way in which you experience that moment. You'll be free of the burden of unhappiness.

This is just one small example of how presence can actually transform your life. And of course, talking about relationships, when you no longer judge people continuously, through the conditioned mind, you experience many changes in the way in which you relate to other human beings. So I would suggest to you that the most important thing that can happen to you in this lifetime is to undergo this shift in your life so that you're no longer at the mercy of the conditioning of your mind, which has been conditioned through your whole upbringing, your childhood, many, many influences.

And so instead of being at the mercy of the conditioning of your mind, and there's no freedom in that, suddenly the possibility arises of transcending the conditioning of your mind and actually becoming free. And that's why the term liberation is sometimes used in various spiritual traditions. Becoming free, becoming liberated.

Liberated from what? Liberated ultimately from your own mind. And then you're able to use your mind and your thinking ability in a much more effective way.

What changes is that you are no longer used by your mind, but you are using your mind. And that's a vast difference. When you're identified with that continuous stream of thinking that ultimately you are not thinking, the thinking happens to you.

You don't even know it. You identify with it and you think it's you thinking, but it's just the conditioned mind thinking in you and you give it a sense of self. But there is really no self in it as the Buddha already pointed out a long time ago.

So there's a shift from being self-identified with a stream of thinking then discovering that there is a stream of thinking in you, discovering that very often it interprets reality in a certain way that actually produces suffering for yourself and others. And then discovering that you can be free of it. And coming back to the example I just gave just now, a simple situation, you're standing in line at the airport or the supermarket, getting very upset and you discover you can actually be free of unhappiness in that moment by not adding a dysfunctional mental commentary to the situation.

And suddenly the situation is the way it is and you actually feel quite good. So, and this is a small example, but presence affects all areas of your life as you will discover. So if you get a sense of what I'm talking about and it sounds, oh yes, that's interesting, that means you're probably ready for this shift in consciousness.

If, however, you have not the slightest idea of what I'm talking about and it sounds like a load of nonsense, that probably means you're not quite ready yet and I'm not, won't try to convince you that you should be ready. And it also means that you just need a little bit more suffering before you're ready. So we will meet again in a few years time.

Thank you. But this is almost an analogy for the rest of your life too. If things don't get difficult, then there is no growth in consciousness.

So to become aware of presence is not really it. You become aware of yourself as presence. That's a bit better.

Or perhaps even better, presence or consciousness becomes aware of itself. That's kind of the closest you can get if you want to get it as far as language is concerned. So it is important to experience, to awareness, not in relation to, let's forget for a moment our sense perceptions because we talk about that also, how to perceive without conceptualization.

Unless conceptualization is needed, then it's fine and you bring it in and so on. But now awareness, just awareness, which is in essence, this is the essence of meditation. The essence of meditation is not something that you do because it's misleading to think of meditation as a doing, because any kind of doing requires time.

You can't do without time. It implies that there's something, you're moving towards something. So even the underlying idea when you meditate, that you're doing meditation can be an obstacle to true meditation.

So meditation is not a doing because meditation is a realization of being. So you have these two dimensions, the doing dimension, which is to do with the world of form and the transcendent dimension, which is the timeless being itself, the formless, which is consciousness. We want to give it a label.

And you embody both. One could say there's two of you almost. This is not the ultimate truth, but it's a way of putting it.

There's two of you. There is the personal being, the person, the personal self, the human, the human you, and you know that very well. The human you is not easy, doesn't have an easy life.

No human has an easy life. And if you, and maybe one or two of you who were born into very privileged circumstances, and you might say, oh, that's an easy, I'd like to have a life like that, to have a, never need to worry about making enough money, or it's all there already provided. There's a trust fund.

You're born with a baby, you have a trust fund baby. Then for the rest of your life, you have to worry about that. Okay, I love that.

And then everything you want is immediately given to you in your childhood. And then you go on. So it seems an easy life.

And this very easy life would turn out to be your greatest obstacle and create the greatest amount of suffering for you, because you will develop into a very superficial, egoic creature that makes life difficult for yourself and others. And then you suffer more and more. So you can't escape it.

You can't escape the challenges of life, no matter how you imagine it to be. The human is here in order to be challenged. The human is not here in order to find ultimate happiness, ultimate satisfaction or fulfillment on the level of the human.

The level of the human is not designed for that. And the world doesn't know that yet, because humans are looking for solutions, the real solutions on the horizontal level of the human dimension. And it's not there.

You get challenged. And whatever situation you go into, you will find the element of dukkha, the word mentioned last night, unsatisfactoriness, suffering, unhappiness, misery will creep up, creep into whatever you do somehow, sooner or later. If it hasn't crept in yet, just wait a little and you'll find, even if you meet the most wonderful person and then you get married or you don't or whatever, but you start living together and sooner or later, you'll discover this most wonderful person that you thought is going to make you happy, also makes you unhappy, because you hadn't seen the full person yet.

There was something hidden that only reveals itself when you start living together. As long as you only go to have dates, it's fine. You can gaze into each other's eyes and it's wonderful.

So you can't escape it on the human level. You get challenged and that's fine. You need the challenge and you need to challenge yourself.

If you want to create something, if you want to bring about some change in this world, you want to make your life, your so-called life better, you're looking to achieve this or to learn this or to acquire this, that's part of being human. We don't deny that. And if you don't want to achieve anything, let's say you have no ambition whatsoever, you say, oh, it's all pointless because you don't want to challenge yourself, then life will challenge you even more.

If you challenging yourself would be even to engage in physical activity and jogging. You're challenging yourself or you're lifting weights or you're challenging the body on a physical level. The only way you can make the body stronger, the physical body is by making, let's put it like this, it's a strange way of putting it, but it's true.

You have to make life difficult for your body. Otherwise it doesn't get stronger. Well, to lift a weight is, I mean, if you ask the body, would you rather have a good, just relax or lift this weight?

Oh no, I just want to relax. I don't want to make my life more difficult than it needs to be. So I just, okay, you don't get stronger without, but when you make life difficult for the body, then more energy is demanded and more energy comes flowing in.

Energy doesn't come until you demand it. There's a request or a demand for energy because there's a gap between what you want and what, at the moment, the body doesn't have enough energy and suddenly it comes. Then you reach a point when an influx of energy starts, then it's no longer perceived that you make life difficult for your body once the energy starts flowing.

The body enjoys this flow of energy, but before the energy starts flowing, life was difficult for the body. And so you always, you meet always the threshold of life gets difficult for the body and then energy comes in and then suddenly not even perceived as difficult anymore. And that you may experience it every day when you start exercising.

And this is, but this is almost an analogy for the rest of your life too. If things don't get difficult, then there is no growth in consciousness. We talked about the influx of energy for the physical body, but energy can manifest in many frequencies and ultimately it is consciousness.

And so you cannot become a more conscious human being unless you experience the challenges of life. And it's good to create, want to create this or that. So you are choosing to some extent, you can choose the challenges that you want to experience.

Whenever you want to bring about something new in this world, it's a challenge, but you created it. You say, you want to create this. Hopefully it comes from a deeper level, not the ego that says, I need, I need this.

Otherwise I won't be happy and fulfilled. I won't be completely myself. I need to achieve this in order to become happy and recognized and make it, I want to make it.

Weird expression, make what? Myself, I want to make myself. And if you don't challenge yourself, life will challenge you and you will encounter challenges where you certainly didn't want that.

So you can't escape. It's good to challenge yourself in a sane way, not in an insane way. And so one part of the challenges of life is the challenges that you yourself create and that can be divided into conscious creation.

You want to manifest something new, whatever it is that you want to in your career or something you want to build up. And then there are challenges that you create unconsciously through the conditioned mind. And that's a huge amount of suffering for humans.

They create their own challenges, but they perceive it as if the challenges were coming at them from the outside. Not knowing that a huge amount of problems, difficulties, challenges, whatever you want to call it, are created by their unconsciousness in relation to other people, in relation to situations. The reactivity that amplifies every little problem that comes from the outside through other human beings or situations.

The reactivity, the unconscious reactivity of the ego amplifies the problem and makes a drama out of relatively little. It doesn't have, it didn't need to become a drama, but it becomes a drama through reactivity. These are challenges that humans create unconsciously for themselves.

And it's a great moment of awakening when you realize that many of your difficulties, you were a significant contributing factor. Let's put it like that. In the difficulties that you seem to encounter in situations and through other people and so on.

And you discover your own reactivity example. That's a huge discovery. And then there are other types of challenges that come at you seemingly out of nowhere.

It could be that an earthquake could happen here in a minute. Or let's not manifest it. And we don't know, it comes out of nowhere.

Who knows? Or aliens suddenly land. So challenges, some challenges seem to come out of nowhere, but you can't, there are so many different types of difficulties or challenges that you encounter, but you cannot escape the difficulties and the challenges.

And because it is not only on the human level, animals encounter their own challenges. Even plants and trees encounter their own challenges. Every life form encounters obstacles, opposition.

Every life form experiences the fragility of life that it's not, it's very, life is fleeting and uncertain. And that is how gradually consciousness evolved because consciousness needs to come in as a response to the challenges of life. And that is, once we realize that life is meant to be challenging or difficult, once you realize that, then a huge, you become free of the huge illusion that there's something wrong when your life becomes difficult.

It's because these are all necessary and you need to, you need that. That's the good news or bad news. The world isn't here to make you happy.

This is how I put it. The world is not here to make you, this is the human level of this. It's not here to make you happy.

It can't do that, no matter how hard you try. It's here to make you conscious by challenging you. By making your life difficult.

And of course, as I said, that part of, great part of it may be your own unconsciousness, but that's how you, if you make your own life difficult through your unconsciousness, you begin to suffer more and more and more. And you don't even, for a long time, you don't know that you're creating your own suffering. It's always like, it's them, it's there, it's there.

The most unconscious people are continuously projecting that all causes of their misery and unhappiness are outside. It's all outside. When you listen to a very unconscious person, you listen to the themes that run through them, their narrative are blaming, complaining.

It's always, it's them, him, her, them. All the situations, all the places. Emotions do not make their home in you.

You could have, let's see, I don't remember the last time I was angry. I'll have to think. It's not that when you awaken that you no longer experience emotions.

Certain emotions will still arise, but less than in the unawakened state. But certain emotions, such as when there's the death of a loved one, you will feel an emotion, you will weep, and you will experience that emotion. The Zen master who experienced probably the emotion that he experienced, that he detected through becoming aware of his, the palm of his hands becoming moist, was probably anxiety.

But these are different things, different causal factors for these emotions. The Zen master was justified in saying that I'm not, I'm still, this shows me that I'm still in the conceptual mind and I'm not free of role-playing ultimately, because the person who came to him had a particular social role and he proved that to be a reality. On the whole though, emotions are to be accepted and recognized as emotions.

Every emotion that arises in you is something that you are aware of. And then you say, well, there it is. And the strange thing is, the more you live in acceptance of the present moment, the less will you experience negative emotions, because most negative emotions arise through non-acceptance of the is-ness of things, of the present moment.

Some emotions may still be there, but rarely would you experience negative emotions. You may still, but they will be short-lived. Emotions do not make their home in you.

You could have, let's see, I don't remember the last time I was angry. I'll have to think. I can't remember.

It can't have been very long, but it can happen. But it's short-lived because the mind does not keep it alive. The emotion is there and an emotion arises.

It's certainly an emotion of deep sadness that arose when my parents died. Within the space of five months, they both died in the same year, although they lived in different countries. And so I went to the funeral of my mother in the summer.

And in the fall, suddenly my dad died, and I went to the funeral of my dad. And then I was able to experience this, the sadness. And I cried a few times.

I sat with my mother's body, and I sat with my dad's body. And it was very clear that there was an emotion of pain, there was emotional pain. And it was also clear that there was a deep peace behind the pain.

And this is what I described yesterday or whenever it was as the transcendent dimension, like the hint of a smile of the Buddha being in the background. That is, and that comes through acceptance, through acceptance that arises more quickly and more strongly. When you accept something, there's still the emotion on the surface, but, and you accept the emotion, and then there's a peace underneath it.

It's two things that when I talk about them, they almost seem incompatible, but they are totally compatible. Now, without the transcendent dimension, it's a devastating experience. And without awareness, there are people who carry the sadness of the mourning of when somebody close to them dies.

There are people who carry that for, not for a few months, they can carry it for years. Because in the lack of awareness, it gets continuously revived. The emotion is fed again and again by mind activity.

And then you think all those memories and all that's gone, all the times we spent together, three years after they die, you're still weeping at night because you remember all those times and it's all gone, it's all dissolved. And you're continuously devastated. That becomes dysfunctional.

And that arises because there is not enough awareness in you. So the emotion makes its home in you and starts to, it kind of says, oh, I like to be here, actually becomes incorporated into your pain body. And then you continuously suffer the same emotion, which in an aware person, the emotion has a certain lifespan, the sadness, and then it becomes transmuted.

And then it becomes, I still, sometimes I look at photos, my mom, my dad, I have a, my mother, when she died, I had to, within a space of a couple of days, I had to get rid of all her belongings because she lived in Europe. I could only spend a few days there. So I just rescued a few small items that I could take back home.

One is a rug and one is a little clock that she had had for 30 years. And so it's a little clock in a glass dome and it's electric, but it has this revolving thing that goes. And I had that when I visited my mom once a year, I would hear that, the room where I slept at my mom's place, I could hear the ticking of that clock around Christmas time.

And I was there, I heard this tick, tick, tick. And now I have this clock at home and it's still working. And I, this clock to me, I, is the memory of my mother.

When I look at it and I listen to the ticking noise, it's the memory of my mother. It is also a symbol of impermanence of all life forms. And once you accept the impermanence of all life forms, that brings about a deepening in you because you see how fleeting all this is.

And then suddenly you become deeper. And also this little clock, it goes tick, tick, tick. That symbolizes to me, there's the ticking is time, but in between the ticking, there is silence.

And that is the timeless dimension. So I, this clock is more than a clock to me. But when I look at this clock, I no longer experience any painful emotion.

That is gone. I don't experience a painful emotion when I look at pictures of my mom or dad. I only experience a deep peace and a very strong awareness of the fleetingness of all life forms.

And that's a beautiful, very deep and peaceful thing. So in the presence of awareness, certain emotions are natural and are actually fine, but they have a relatively short lifespan. They are not, they don't make their home in you.

Similar is something, somebody makes you angry. Somebody offends you. Somebody does something to you or take something away from you.

You may feel an angry reaction. And that angry reaction has a lifespan. If there's awareness, suddenly you're aware that you're angry, but there it is, you're angry.

And you might even shout something in your anger and then you're aware, okay, there's the anger. And then you become aware of the anger directly, which means it cannot make its home in you. And then it becomes transmuted.

It's not as quick as the duck that I describe in one of my books. When the duck gets into a fight with another duck, the fight doesn't last long and the energy builds up. And every duck, after they separate, they stop fighting, gets up on the water a bit and flaps their wings vigorously, the duck.

And then after that, the duck becomes completely peaceful again. So this, humans are not quite that quick, even aware humans. But metaphorically speaking, that's through awareness, you're able to, the emotion is released and then it leaves you.

So certain emotions have their place and that's fine. But there are many, many emotions that are produced, negative emotions that are produced by mental dysfunction, such as you wake up in the middle of the night and there's enormous anxiety. And you start thinking about all the things that are going to go wrong.

Or you have, you start thinking about the past and you have terrible regret and you have resentment and you have sadness and you're thinking and thinking and you feel more and more the emotion that corresponds to your thinking. And every night it happens. That is not the kind of emotion that is natural to you.

It's not the kind of emotion you need to recognize. Where does this come from? It's produced by my thoughts.

I am producing this emotion every night when I can't sleep. And even during the daytime, I am producing this emotion. And then if there's enough awareness in the moment of thinking those anxious thoughts, you suddenly know what you're doing.

You suddenly realize what you're doing. And then you say, okay, you suddenly remember, oh, Eckhart talked about the inner body. What happens if I stop thinking these thoughts that are totally useless and completely unnecessary and harmful actually?

Why do I not instead choose to place my awareness in the inner body right now instead of thinking? So there's enough awareness. Then you no longer produce all those emotions that are part of dysfunctional misuse of the mind or rather being used by your mind.

So all those emotions, as you become aware, you don't produce them anymore. Certain emotions remain, but their lifespan is short and they are seen for what they are. And that's fine.

So do not believe that you need to arrive at a state where you no longer experience any emotion whatsoever. So some emotions go with the human form. They're part of the human form.

There's a story, I believe I quoted it in one of the books. One of the ancient Greek philosophers, he belonged to the school of Stoicism, which is a wonderful philosophy, but Marcus Aurelius' book, Meditations is one of my favorite books written 2,000 years ago, if you haven't read it. Meditations by Marcus Aurelius, the Roman emperor, is a beautiful, beautiful book.

But that's the school of Stoicism. There was one Stoic philosopher, I can't remember his name. People came to him and said, your son has just died in an accident.

They were, my God, your son has died in an accident. He fell off the horse. And the Stoic philosopher said, I knew he was not immortal.

Now, the question is, we cannot judge what he said because we do not know what, out of what state of consciousness these words arose. Perhaps there was an emotion, but he didn't express it. Perhaps he had already repressed all emotions, it's possible.

I like to believe that he was aware and the emotion was in him, but he didn't express it. And the statement was a statement that came from a deeper consciousness, which is very true because death can happen to any of us at any moment. And I knew he was, and I don't know in what way he said it, but did he say it in a facile way?

Oh, I knew he was, no. Or did he say it, I knew he was not immortal. So you could, perhaps there was an emotion, but there was also a deep awareness there at the same time.

I love the Stoics, so I like to believe that there was an awareness at the same time. Oh, thank you.

[Speaker 6] (7:52:39 - 7:52:39)
Thank you, Jacob.

[Speaker 1] (7:53:01 - 8:08:05)
Here's my wife. And she's better looking than yours. Now you begin to lose the present moment internally when the place you want to get to, whatever that may be, whether it's tomorrow or in five years time, or even a few, five minutes from now, you lose the present moment and your state of mind becomes somewhat or very dysfunctional when whatever goal you have or destination you have in the future occupies more of your attention than the present moment. So the place you want to get to or achieve one day when I'll become a great this or that, perhaps you have a

great idea of, maybe let's say you want to become a rock star.

I want to be a rock star. Okay. Well, hopefully you enjoy music and have not just a mental image of who you want to be as somebody important, but you don't enjoy the several years that you need to get there.

If you don't enjoy the journey, which is always now the step you're taking at this moment, if there's a lack of enjoyment, then you have lost the present moment and the place you want to get to has assumed an importance that becomes dysfunctional. So this is already mentioned in ancient scriptures as a teaching, for example, in the ancient Bhagavad Gita, wonderful if you haven't read it yet, wonderful ancient Indian scripture. It talks of not being too attached to what it calls the fruit of your action, which is the outcome, which is you project yourself one day, I'm going to be happy.

That's the fruit. One day when I get, when people realize that I'm a fantastic human being and I get all the recognition from people, then I'll be fine. When I have those possessions that I need, I won't be happy until I have a private jet.

It doesn't have to be big, just a little one. I won't be happy until I, then I feel I'm fully myself. I cannot be fully myself unless I have a car that's better than most people's cars.

And so you strive towards that. And in the meantime, you're not happy because you're striving towards a place that promises some form of fulfillment, whether you call it happiness or having arrived or this weird expression in the English language, making it, making what? I want to make it.

And then you have weird ideas in your mind. An enormous amount of fear arises because you have certain thoughts, especially at three o'clock in the morning, you wake up and the mind starts up and a weird word comes. I don't want to be a loser, a loser.

Oh my God. And then fear, maybe I will be a loser. Maybe I'm not going to get this car and maybe I'm not going to become the greatest this or that.

Or maybe I'm not going to find the person who's going to make me happy. Well, you won't. There is no human being on the planet that can make you happy unless you find the source of happiness within yourself, in which case you'll be quite happy with somebody.

It's likely, but that person will not cause you the happiness except while you are going through the honeymoon period. And that is human beings. They look to, you look to human beings, some future, I need to meet my soulmate.

I need to meet my, or whatever it is, or it's a, maybe it's a trophy wife. It can show off, here's my wife. And she's better looking than yours.

Because she wouldn't be with a loser, would she? So, and then of course, after a little while, the trophy wife won't satisfy you. And then you have to look somewhere else.

In fact, she might make you unhappy. And or you make her unhappy, you make each other unhappy. So this is very common.

Many of you may have experienced as far as looking to a human being to make you happy. You may already have experienced that that didn't work because the very human being that you chose to make you happy, only two or three years later, or four, five, made you unhappy. The very same person whose purpose it was to make you happy and you signed a contract.

So it was all fine. The contract was signed. And then something happened that wasn't supposed to happen.

The person who's supposed to make you happy suddenly starts making you unhappy. And you may not realize that you are making him or her unhappy too. Self-knowledge is more difficult than knowing somebody else.

So always looking to some future moment. And then you realize on a practical level, future works. But on a deeper level of finding a true satisfaction in life, you have to look somewhere else.

All these things are good. Achieving things is good. Even relationships, of course, if they're conscious, then all the better.

I'm not saying stop looking for somebody to marry. That's fine. But don't look for somebody to make you happy.

They're always, I don't look at these things anymore. But in the past, when people put ads, I sometimes enjoyed reading ads. And when they had newspaper ads for finding relationships or marriage ads, it was always amusing what people were looking for.

Nowadays, of course, it's all on your phone. It's called Tinder. And the hand movement associated with it, apparently, I've never actually looked at Tinder, but I know that the hand movement associated with it goes like this.

And each wife represents a human being. Well, that's weird. Very weird.

So when I saw, I enjoyed reading the newspaper ads, and sometimes it said, looking for woman or man to make me happy. Oh dear, I thought. So the future then, what is the future that never appears, that can completely occupy our attention?

To such an extent that we lose, actually, the most important thing in life. And that is to be at home with yourself in the present moment, to feel where you are, to feel a kind of, this may sound a little strange, to feel a connectedness with being, the connectedness with being. So you're rooted in something deep, abiding.

There's a deep peace, not a dead kind of peace, but an alive peace to be rooted within yourself, to be yourself here and now in this moment. Losing that or never discovering it, never realizing even the possibility of this existing in your life, then if you don't find the true meaning of present moment of the now, which is very deep, as we will see, we will see. It's very deep.

Then you live flitting around the surface of life. There's always some future moment to either be afraid of or be attracted to. The future is a two-edged sword, as you might discover when you're starting to think and worry and you're, oh, there's the hope that the future is going to make me happy in some way through a human being, some attainment, a possession, some recognition, whatever it may be, or security, ultimate security.

One day, I just want to feel secure. I want to feel secure. And they might even sell you life insurance and say, you will feel really secure just by this.

And you have a pension plan, and then I'll be okay. I just need a good pension plan. Life insurance, of course, means you have to die first before anything.

So it should be called death insurance. It's security. I'm looking for some sense of security.

And you look some security in external conditions. I want to have a place. Yes, it's a very human thing.

But you may need to live for a while to realize, no matter what situation you go into, no matter who you are with, and no matter what you achieve in life, always this sense of insecurity, of fear, of insufficiency, of some underlying sense of lack or something not quite right, always it resurfaces. Sooner or later, and usually sooner. And so if you thought, let's say you achieve everything that commonly in our civilization, the media and so on, or the magazines or internet, whatever, tell you that the highest you can achieve is wealth and fame.

And then you think, oh, if I only had all that, then I would be a happy human being. I would have security. And of course, many human beings who have achieved it, I have met quite a few, that was quite interesting, who in the eyes of the world had everything and they were unhappy.

In fact, some of them were more unhappy when they got everything than before when they still were striving to achieve those things. They were more unhappy because now, when you have already tasted everything, you no longer have some ideas. Once I achieve that, I'll be happy.

Well, you have everything. What can you achieve now? Okay, well, you could think enlightenment.

I've got the private jet. I've got all the money that I can do anything, but I'm still unhappy. Okay, if the unhappiness that arises there, if that brings you to the possibility of awakening, then that's a good thing.

Now, the thing we need to recognize is no matter what you achieve, there's nothing wrong with achievement. But ultimately, that is not which is going to give you this sense of self that you are looking for, that sense of being rooted, that sense of security. Everything in this world is insecure, ultimately.

No matter how secure your job may be, whatever, there's the radical insecurity. And uncertainty, nobody knows what the next moment will bring because it can only appear as this moment. What is the future then that everybody looks to?

It's always associated with a thinking. It's a thought. On a deeper level, future is a thought in your head and you only experience it ever as a thought in your head.

That's the only reality future has. Isn't that interesting? It has no actual immediate existential reality except as a thought that you're thinking about some future moment.

But even while you're thinking that thought, it's still the present moment and you don't even know it because nothing can happen that's not in the present moment. And then there's the past. When you think about the past, again, where is the past?

It's in your head. It's a thought in your head or a lot sequence of thoughts in your head.

[Speaker 8] (8:08:06 - 8:08:13)
So future and past are associated intrinsically linked with the activity of thinking.

[Speaker 1] (8:08:57 - 8:17:42)

Wisdom can only come if you access the dimension of no thought in yourself. The only thing a wise person has that you don't have, or that's the wrong way of putting it, the wise woman, the wise man has nothing that you don't have. He or she is simply aware of the dimension of stillness, the dimension of no thought, that's out of which all wisdom comes, which is also in you.

So bringing that into everyday life through being aware of the inner energy field of the body, being alert to sense perceptions, another way of entering the state of alert thoughtless presence. Look around the room a few times a day where you're sitting as if you had just been born into that room. It requires a high degree of alertness.

Yes, but that is in you. So periodically, even if it's only five seconds at a time, you bring in thoughtlessness, not in its usual... Thoughtlessness usually is a negative term, but here thoughtlessness implies more consciousness, more intense awakeness, to awaken.

Ah, and then you realize the compulsion to think is just a habit, deep seated habit. And you don't listen to the mind when the mind says, I have no time to be present now, not even 10 seconds. Not true.

You're waiting at the elevator, the lift, press the button. Are you projecting yourself mentally to where you want to get, or are you really there? Are you immersed in thought, or are you using that opportunity to simply be present with your entire being standing there, not waiting for anything?

Because most people spend maybe 70% of their lives waiting for something. There's always the next thing to do that hasn't quite been finished yet. There's always the next thing to happen that I'm just waiting for this.

Why not use all waiting periods for being present? And then you step into the elevator and you press ground floor, and it's going down. And there is an aliveness in your entire energy field, and it's beautiful.

That moment has a fullness to it that is more than the externals that you perceive, because after all, there's only four walls around you, and a light above you, and some buttons. So on the external level, this moment has nothing to fulfill me. But if you go deeper into that moment, which is into yourself, it's actually very fulfilling.

But you have to step out of that which takes you out of the moment. Learning what it means to be present and alert. And then perhaps you arrive at the ground floor, and you forget and you go about your business.

And 10 minutes later, you're in your car, the traffic lights stopping, thinking, come on. And suddenly you remember, oh, the now, this is the now. And then again, you look at the red light, and the red has an intensity to it that's quite beautiful.

That before to notice that, you would have had to take acid. Because taking acid, I'm not recommending this, but for some people, it can give them a first glimpse of what it means not to be burdened by continuous mental commentaries. But it doesn't really raise your consciousness.

It simply amplifies sense perceptions. And the red of the traffic light, don't do it. The red of the traffic light becomes so intense, you haven't got, you can't think about it anymore.

It just is overwhelming. So it gives you a little, it only, I took it once just to try it out, because people told me, people told me, this is like acid, isn't it? And I always had to say, I don't know, I haven't taken it.

And finally, I said, okay, I need to be able to answer these people. So I'm going to try it once. And so what I've experienced was the amplification, everything was vibrating.

There was intensity of smell, hearing, the visual, tasting, everything was amplified. Nothing special that I experienced otherwise. But some people say, wow, the world can be so alive.

It always is. You just don't know it because of the screen of your thinking. So here, this is much better than acid.

But it's a, there's a slight similarity, yes. But here you'd notice it because you become more awake. There's the traffic light.

And here I am. And you feel the energy field in your body as you sit there. And you become aware of the movement of people.

And you just look. The movement of cars, you just look. Oh, it's not that bad.

Before you were complaining about that moment. What's this? Why am I sitting in this?

I should be there, but I'm here. Yes. Can you argue with that?

Well, you can, but it's mad. So you accept the is-ness of that moment and enter that moment more fully. So nobody can tell me that they cannot bring that into their everyday life.

Not continuously, yet it's not required. It is more important how often you become, you awaken out of thinking than it is how long you remain in the state of not thinking. That looks after itself.

Yes, after a while, that will be longer. More important, how often you step out of thinking, becoming alert. There's an intelligence there that wasn't there before.

And it doesn't need to call the world. You know what you're looking at without concepts. You look deeply.

You also sense a certain aliveness in whatever you look at, which is no different from the aliveness that is in you. Everything has being-ness to it. Everything has presence to it.

Even so-called inanimate objects have a beautiful presence when you are not thinking about them, just looking. So I'm not telling you now you must live in that state of consciousness. Just occasionally bring it in.

Enter it. Five seconds is fine. Two seconds.

See the change in relationships as you are able to face another human being without the compulsive judgments and labels of the mind.

[Speaker 7] (8:17:52 - 8:18:38)
First off, I want to say thank you. And just like the lady said earlier, the power of now changed my life. I listened to the book about a year and a half before I got out of the army.

And I just returned from Afghanistan and I experienced acute combat stress. And so just to give you the context of my question, I've created a lot of karma in this life. I'm studying all the teachers, spiritual teachers, and obviously being here now.

My question is, no matter how much karma you create in this life, the life we're all living right now, is liberation possible? Well, that's the question.

[Speaker 1] (8:18:38 - 8:22:50)
Okay, thank you. Thank you. Some people believe they are not right.

Even some teachings would tell you that liberation is achieved by gradually improving your karma. So it's a kind of progression of gradually you get better and you get better lifetimes and better karma and so on. But that's not really how it works.

Because even to have a very good karma is not liberation. You're not free of the conditioning of your mind. At any point within the wheel of karma, it's possible to jump off the wheel of karma.

And it is precisely at the worst times that the opportunities are greatest. So if there is intense suffering in your life, those are times when the opportunity to transcend karma and to step off the wheel, so to speak, is greatest. So you don't need to be concerned about that.

But what you have suffered actually can become an extremely helpful thing in your life because it's the great awakener. Suffering that others inflict on you, suffering that you inflict on others because you are part of this huge, massive accumulation of unconsciousness that is when you're going to a war situation. You are part of a massive accumulation of collective unconsciousness.

And there, of course, you get drawn into that collective karma. You participate in it, become part of it, and then you come out of it. Then your egoic self is at a state of perhaps greater readiness than ever to crack open, and this has brought you here.

So there have been people in prison for many years in prison because they murdered people or whatever. And I regularly receive correspondence from people in prison who have disidentified from the egoic self and their entire life history as if they're emerging out of like a butterfly, the caterpillar becoming transformed into a butterfly. So the important thing for you is not to misinterpret in your mind what has happened in your past and to make it into something that some form of guilt identity could build up.

And this could just become a very heavy mind form, and that would be the obstacle, not what has happened. You were part of this massive unconsciousness, and already you are coming out of it. You responded to the power of now, which means you were already ready.

At what point in your life did that happen? Was that where you at that time before you went to Afghanistan or in the middle or after?

[Speaker 7] (8:22:51 - 8:23:10)
Well, it was after redeploying over and over again, and then I got injured, and then I went back and had anger aggression. Yes. And then by chance, I started meditating and doing yoga, and then I found...

[Speaker 1] (8:23:10 - 8:25:14)
Okay, well, it wasn't by chance. So you are on an accelerated path of awakening.

That's because you were in that situation can be described as an accelerated path of awakening, and it brought you to that point of readiness.

And the awakening process has already begun in you quite clearly. The only obstacle would be your mind misinterpreting your past. So if you don't realize that you are on an accelerated path of awakening, and if you realize it, you will have gratitude for what happened in the past.

So thank you for giving me this accelerated awakening experience, and then you will no longer misinterpret, because when you came here, I could see the beginnings of a misinterpretation of the past. This is not something that has anything to do with your true identity. So be grateful and allow presence to emerge in you, through you, more fully now.

And the universe gave that to you because it saw that you needed it, and it wanted you to awaken quickly. Otherwise, you would have had a more comfortable, a much more prolonged path. So thank you.

I wish you well. You're on your way.

[Speaker 6] (8:25:15 - 8:25:16)
Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (8:26:32 - 8:37:22)
Sometimes, there's awareness there, and there's the pain body there, and you've chosen awareness. Not that the pain body goes away, but then you get to almost like witness your pain body. So you're not in a reaction mode.

You can feel the energy of the pain body, but you witness it. Maybe some words may come out, and you witness that, and you might go, oh my goodness, why did I say that? But you remain present in that awareness, because sometimes this pain body has something to teach us.

So don't be in a hurry, into a rush to think that, and desire that you have no more pain body. Because to tell you the truth, without this pain body, I would not be sitting up here today. And same with Eckhart, without that pain body that he experienced, he would not be here today teaching.

Now, it seldom happens with people to be free of the pain body and free of the ego, virtually overnight, like it happened with Eckhart. And if some of you are wanting that, but I want that, I want it gone. And I want it gone now, and never to come back.

You are in your mind. That is a thought. It can be gone right now, if you choose the present moment.

And choose the unconditioned self. Could be gone right now. And only the mind will come in, and bring in time, and start thinking, oh, but will it be gone forever?

This moment is forever. There's only ever this moment. Time, and it's useful, is a concept.

And we all agree what time it is. What time it is here in Greece. What time it is in Germany.

What time it is in Canada. Those are all agreements that we have made. And we forget that it is just a concept.

There is no time. But this time as a concept is useful, because it gets us, say, for example, here. Otherwise, if we didn't have this concept of time, it may take us a million years for all of us to get here, and be with each other.

So it just, it's useful. Concepts are useful. But we forget that it's just a concept.

Just as we say, we are in Greece. Yes, that's a concept. We are in Greece.

But does Greece really exist? Does Canada exist? Does the USA exist?

No, it's just a concept. And yet we believe in this concept, that we are willing to fight for that concept. We are willing to kill to keep that concept alive.

And yet it doesn't exist. So if no time exists, your name doesn't even exist. Your gender doesn't even exist.

The countries don't exist. What is there? Look within.

It's that sense of Self. The Self with a capital S. That stillness.

The essence of who we are. The nothingness. The Tao that cannot be named.

Your God essence. Consciousness. Your Buddha nature.

So all these are names that point to the formless dimension. I've had many people experience that formless dimension. And then they'll experience a thought.

Now what? What's next? It's that momentum of the mind that will keep going and keep alive.

Keep itself alive for a while. And not that the mind, we don't know, it's not that the mind, we want it to go away. We just don't want that mind to be controlling us with those thoughts.

And they're habitual thoughts. But it's that nothingness, that no-thingness, to be comfortable with that emptiness. So I like the Buddha's teaching where it, you couldn't really hang on to anything.

How can you hang on to emptiness? It's formless. To be comfortable with that.

At first, when that formless dimension arises in you and you're aware of it, it feels a little bit like getting into an elevator. And you're alone and it's okay being alone. And then somebody enters and then it's that awkward feeling.

So become comfortable with the unknown. No thought is it. No emotion is it.

No experience that you have is it. I used to travel to India quite a bit to go meditate in the caves and visit spiritual teachers in India. And I remember being in this temple and suddenly I was just, had this magnificent experience.

Oh my gosh. I saw the sky open up and I saw angels. And I heard music where I don't even know where it was coming from, but it wasn't coming from the earthly realm.

And it was just like, oh my God, wow, this is incredible. It's like, I saw God. And that evening I went to go visit a spiritual teacher and I told him of my experience.

And he says to me, that's not it. I go, no, no, no, no, no. You didn't hear it.

Or maybe you didn't hear me. I saw angels. I saw God.

I heard music. The sky opened up. That's not it.

And this went back and forth, me repeating myself, really believing that I saw angels. I saw God, etc. And him just saying, that's not it.

And his wife who was there said, I'm going to bed. And so I don't know, maybe 20 minutes went by going back and forth. Just, he would just repeat the same thing.

That's not it. That's not it. And me really determined to think, no, no, no, no.

I experienced it. I saw it. That's not it.

And then suddenly, after his, the last time of saying, that's not it, I understood. I didn't have to repeat anymore. That's why it was the last time.

I went, oh my God, you're right. No experience is it. We've all perhaps had that wonderful, profound meditation where you're sitting there and you're just like, wow, you finish the meditation and you go, oh my God, that was great.

Wow. That was incredible. And then the next day you come to sit in your sitting meditation and hidden behind in the background in your mind is that you want the same experience.

And you're just sitting there trying to get that same experience. Of course, that experience will never happen again. And then you finish that meditation.

You go, damn it. Why didn't I have that same experience? You will never have the same experience.

If you want the same experience, you are holding onto the past. And you will never experience this moment again, which may or may not be more profound than the last experience.

[Speaker 1] (8:37:49 - 9:49:39)
So thinking is a wonderful thing if you are not possessed by it. If you're able to use thinking, it's a beautiful, amazing tool for creation. But if thinking becomes a basis for your sense of identity, in other words, a narrative in your mind of who you are, the story of me, then thinking becomes a kind of prison.

Or to use a different analogy, thinking becomes then almost like something that possesses you and you don't even know it. And when you make the statement, I think, I am thinking, it's not quite accurate. It would be more accurate to say, thinking is happening to me.

If you can't stop it, that means it must be happening to you. If you don't even want to stop it, it must be because you are almost addicted to it. You think you would die without it.

So if you can't stop thinking, then you are not thinking. Thinking is happening to you. Or you could say you are being thought.

You are not thinking. Oh, by the way, while I speak to you, and many of you know this, but it's easy to forget, too, since this is a kind of meditation session, although not a conventional one, while I'm speaking to you, be aware of the silent gaps between sentences, between words. Be aware, notice them, be aware of them, because the meditation part of our session together here is in the silent gaps.

The rest is just the words that point us towards the silent gaps, that point us towards stillness. When you become aware of the silent gaps while I speak, breathe, like now. And now, and now, while you notice the silent gaps, acknowledge them, you may also notice that you are not thinking while you notice the gaps, and that's meditation.

In that way, I can talk you into the meditative state, but you have to be aware that our session has two dimensions, the words and the space. The space is the silent gaps. And not only the silent gaps, it's also an underlying silence, or stillness would be a better word.

So you notice those gaps, that's meditation, and in the moment of noticing, you're not thinking. And as you practice here, when you go into your daily, back into your daily life, you may notice silent gaps within yourself, between two thoughts, the space of no thought between two thoughts. Don't need to measure it in time, who knows, three seconds, four.

So you have now, you have then access to a deeper or higher, depending how you want to use the word, dimension of consciousness. And when you notice the gaps between two thoughts in yourself, in daily life, then they deepen, or you become more aware of them, and they get a little longer. Another word for the gaps between thoughts is stillness.

To realize that behind all thoughts, there is a realm of stillness. And you become aware of it when one thought comes to an end, and the other one hasn't started yet, suddenly you become aware of what is beyond thought, consciousness. And then you begin to embody that dimension in your daily life.

And then you become a two-dimensional being, you're a person, and you are an expression of consciousness, which transcends the person. It's the consciousness of the universe, of which you are in your personal self, a temporary expression. You are the universe being conscious in you.

You are the consciousness of the universe. That's a very significant thing. It doesn't matter what you have achieved or not achieved as a person, more fundamentally, you are the consciousness of the universe.

You are a focal point of that consciousness. Of course, the consciousness of the universe pervades all space, but you are a focal point of that consciousness, appearing temporarily under the guise of a person. Not for too long, when the person evaporates, like a soap bubble, it goes pop.

Many people have a problem with self-esteem, with thoughts arising that say, I'm not good enough. I'm not as good as those people or that person. I'm not as good looking, not as physically strong, not as knowledgeable, not as intelligent, not as popular.

But when you, of course, you could work on self-esteem on the level of the person with limited success, some success, yes. You can repeat affirmations. I am good enough.

I am good at everything I do. I'm getting better and better every day in every way. I'm getting better and better.

No doubt that is, that was one of the first affirmations that somebody came up with a long time ago when books started to appear about positive things. Thinking, yes, it is a positive statement. Every day in every way, I am getting better and better.

But who is that I am? The person, not the person. Yes, things can get better.

And then they get worse. And then they get better again. And then something else happens.

So the person exists within the polarities of gain and loss, good and bad, up and down. That's inevitable. There's nobody who can continuously be successful.

The life will put obstacles in your path of different kinds. That's how it is. So you can get better up to a point, but not continuously.

There are polarities, but there's a deeper dimension in you that exists beyond the polarities of good and bad, gain and loss. This dimension is not dependent on the polarities, good and bad, gain and loss. That's a transcendent dimension.

And then you're in touch with something which we could call, if we wanted to use a terminology used by the ancient Greek philosophers, such as Socrates, the good. The good is the ultimate. Sometimes the good, as they use this term, means perhaps something like God.

It just happens to be that the English language good and God are very similar. Words, perhaps that's no coincidence, but that's only in English. Well, in some Germanic languages too.

So you feel there is a good deep down, a something. It's not something. Let's just call it something.

Language always refers to things. Something that is beyond the polarities, that there's a good that's also even there, even when you're experiencing great loss. And sometimes, particularly in those times, when you experience great loss, you feel that which is beyond the polarities of good and bad.

There's a deep peace. It's nothing to do with a person. It transcends the person.

But when there's no cessation in the continuous stream of thinking, then you're unaware of that dimension. People don't realize how much of a burden they carry through overthinking, excessive thinking, purposeless. How many people are making themselves unhappy continuously through unconscious mind activity, judgments, interpretations, negative interpretations of themselves, of other people, of situations.

That's habitual thought patterns that you're identified with and that is karma creates in the external confirmation that it is correct. So if you think the world is full of evil people, you will meet many evil people. Now, of course, everybody is born into a certain external environment and also is born with certain predispositions.

They may be partly genetic. They may be other things that a person is born with certain patterns. In other words, we don't need to examine where they come from, but just to see the fact that the human being is first of all born into a certain environment, which may be violent or it may be relatively peaceful and the person is born with inner patterns.

You inherit certain, even pain bodies, partly inherited. Some babies cry a lot. They have a relatively heavy pain body already in this world.

It doesn't mean they're spiritually less advanced. The opposite may be the case, which there's no knowing. Other babies are relatively peaceful and so there's a whole set of conditioning that happens.

You come into the environment with certain predispositions. Then the environment conditions you further and in all that, there's no choice involved. There's just influences.

And so you find yourself in this world with certain unconscious patterns that have become the conditioning of who the person is, the unconscious conditioning. So karma, as I see it, is the unconscious conditioning that runs your life and that still applies to many humans. And karma is partly collective.

You've been born into it and partly personal. They come together. So really, you can only understand karma not as an abstract subject external to yourself because then you get into belief systems and philosophy.

We're not going that way. You can only understand karma by observing yourself and by observing, and then you'll know many other things. But you need to, really, if you want to understand karma, you need to look at yourself.

And so I began to understand what karma is when there was something arose that was not part of karma at all. And really, here we come to the key. The arising of consciousness or presence or spiritual awakening is not part of karma.

It is another dimension that breaks into the karmic realm. So you do not become awakened by accumulating, as they sometimes say in the East, good karma. That's fine on this level.

You can make the walls or the furniture in your prison a little bit more comfortable. But there is something totally from beyond karma that can come into your life at any point within the wheel of karma and rebirth. Rebirth is, of course, part of karma.

The deeper meaning of rebirth is identification with form. We don't need to even believe in transmigration or whatever. You can look at rebirth in your own life.

Every time you identify with a thought that arises, which is form, you are born into that thought. Because identify, your sense of self is in it. That's karma.

You are reborn. Karma then is unconscious identification with these patterns that you have inherited, the conditioned. Complete identification of consciousness with the conditioned patterns.

So consciousness is dreaming. One could say. This is why we use the word awakening in many spiritual traditions.

Consciousness is awakening. Consciousness is in a dreamlike state when you're identified with the unconscious patterns. And then you are condemned to rebirth.

In fact, many times every day, you are reborn into a reaction, an emotional, mental reaction. No presence at all. Just rebirth into some form.

Or you're reborn into thoughts that arise and you completely believe in every thought. And then you act from those thoughts and emotions. And the action creates further reactions.

And the actions confirm to you that you were right. If you have certain mind patterns about, for example, that other people are basically dishonest. Just one example of people.

People are so dishonest. They're all trying to get something from me. That tends to confirm itself in your life experience.

You can try it out. Or you may have experienced it before you became more conscious. That's habitual thought patterns that you're identified with.

And that is karma. Karma creates, in the external, confirmation that it is correct. So if you think the world is full of evil people, you will meet many evil people.

And in other words, unconscious people. And even people who are on the brink or who are halfway between conscious and unconscious, when you come together with them, your belief will pull them into unconsciousness. And that's karma.

So karma is the complete absence of conscious presence. And so it's automatic. It plays itself out.

And time does not free you of karma. That is a misperception that if you only spend enough time, eventually you can become free of karma. Karma renews itself and repeats itself.

It's a wheel. And so the only thing that can free you of karma is the arising of presence. And how is it that some person's presence arises?

I cannot tell you why. I only know that at any point in the wheel of karma, presence can come in. It can happen to a criminal in prison, condemned to death.

It can happen to somebody who has never heard of anything spiritual. It can happen to somebody who has been meditating for 30 years or not happen to the same person who has been meditating for 30 years. So in your own life, I can see from what you're saying that presence has already, I can sense that presence has already come into your life.

And presence frees you from karma, not all at once. Karma has an enormous momentum, meaning the patterns in yourself, the thought patterns, the emotional patterns, the reactive patterns. There's enormous momentum behind that.

But as presence arises, gradually karma diminishes and the energy behind it diminishes. And gradually you experience a fading out of those patterns. They become weaker.

You're no longer completely in the grip of those patterns. So as presence arises, there's a gradual fading out of karma. Not that it matters that much anymore because once you are present, you can, as a previous questioner said, when we were talking about certain thoughts still arising, certain negative thoughts, that's still part of the karma, the old patterns, the unconscious habit patterns inherited.

They still arise, but it's no longer problematic and they no longer cause the suffering they would have caused before because they are seen in the light of awareness. So the light of awareness arises and in the light of awareness, the patterns no longer dominate your life. They no longer run your life.

And if occasionally it happens that the patterns do take over, then after a little while, your presence returns and you say, ah, well, there it was again. Pain body is part of karma, which may be strong in some people, not so strong in others. And so as presence arises, you are freed from karma.

And then you have another completely different factor coming into your life. And so, for example, for a person to become free of collective karma, you need a considerable amount of presence for that to come in to remove and it then will remove you in one way or another, either internally, you find yourself completely free. You might still live in a violent society, but internally you would be free.

There is a possibility you can have a holy man or woman living surrounded by violence. It's possible. It's rare, but possible.

Or very often it happens that life removes you out of there and you find yourself somewhere else. So let's say vast collective karma, for example, in the case of, let's say, you have the Taliban there, you have all kinds of unconscious movements. You had Soviet communism, you had national socialism in Germany.

And for a person being born into that and not being drawn into that unconsciousness, requires considerable presence. So not that many people, for example, in Germany when Hitler came to power, not many people were able to remove themselves somewhere. Some artists, some writers, they left, they could see what was happening and they were strong enough not to be identified with the collective when there had been a tradition of obedience to authority for hundreds of years, a tradition of following your leader and so on.

To take yourself out of that collective karma requires considerable presence, but some people had it. So it is our destiny then to go beyond karma by being the receptacles for presence. All you can do to be helpful in this world and help others is those people that you come into contact with, everybody in this, who is awakening, will find that sooner or later they become a kind of teacher to others.

And what a spiritual teacher does, the teacher points out the possibility of awakening out of identification with unconscious patterns, which means the spiritual teacher teaches you to go beyond karma. And so that is your function and will become increasingly, you will find in your life, whether you become a formal teacher or an informal teacher, formal meaning that you say, okay, I'm giving a talk or somebody invites you and you give a talk, that becomes formal teaching. For many years before this, I became a formal teacher.

I mean, it's not my identity, it's just a functional thing. It would be terrible if I saw myself as a teacher. Any identity is an illusion, any form identity is an illusion.

But it's a functional thing. You can, I'm saying, you become a... For several years, the teaching happened informally on park benches at first, then in people's living rooms, then in little groups.

And so gradually it grows and some people will continue to teach informally. So people you come into contact with, some people are, more and more people are ready for spiritual awakening. Which means spiritual awakening and stepping out of karma is the same thing.

And so many people will be drawn to you. Anybody who is going through the awakening process is already a teacher. And the more you teach, teaching means you find yourself listening from spaciousness when somebody speaks or asks a question or tells you about their problems.

And then you may find yourself, an answer comes out of that stillness in which you listen. And that's the beginning of teaching. You don't have the sense that, okay, I'm going to teach this person now.

That's never it. You will find that teaching is spontaneous. So you will help people to step out of identification with unconsciousness, which means going beyond karma because it's already happening in your life.

And this applies to everybody who is awakening and going through the awakening process. What is the essence? Let's go there slowly.

What is the essence of who you are? What is the essence of the life that you are? I'm not saying that you should not try to improve the conditions of your life.

But more importantly is to realize that you do not have a life because people say my life. Now, if you look at the structure of that sentence, my life, there's a duality there. Because if you say my life, that implies that you have it, it's mine.

So it implies two duality. If you say my life, there's you and the life that you have. It belongs to me, it's mine.

So this thought, this language creates a duality in your mind. Call it my life. That's interesting.

So there's me and I have a life and then the fear comes in, if I have a life, I might lose it. And of course, then you visit the cemetery and you say, yes, they all once had a life and they lost it. They lost their life.

And that's going to happen to me too. Not realizing you are trapped in certain mental formations that create an illusory identity and create a duality. Actually create delusion.

You don't have a life because there is not a duality. Without life, there's no you. So you can't have it.

You are one with life. There isn't you and life. You are life.

You can't, you don't have it. Now, if you are it, you can't lose it. Because you are it.

But of course, we'll have to see more deeply what we mean when I say you are life. But let's for a moment stay with that. You are life.

You don't have a life. You are. So you can say it for yourself in your mind.

I don't have a life. I am life. This is the end of duality.

So you realize there's a oneness of you and life. And when I say life, we can use another word. The essence of being alive.

What is the essence? Let's go there slowly. What is the essence of who you are?

What is the essence of the life that you are? Okay, now, normal humans, which means unawakened humans, say, well, the essence of my life is my, whatever they identify with in there. It's my possessions, my, what I have, what I know, what I, my body, all those things that I identify with.

Let's see. The essence of who I am is whatever I derive my identity from. It could be the physical body, but, or it could be my car or my house or my work, my function in society.

Or it could be friends that I have, things that I have attained. It could also be, these things are all in the mind also. Because when you identify, let's say your sense of identity, which is, you compare yourself to others all the time.

This is you do when you're in your mind. You compare yourself to others. Let's say your body looks better than other people's body for a while, these two will pass.

But for a while, you can get in there and then you become, this is my body that also is a mental formation. So it's not so much you identify with the body, you identify the thought of my body. That's what you identify.

You don't identify with your Ferrari if you have one. It's the thought of my car, which is, makes you superior to others who only have a little car. Or your body makes you superior to others who have a puny and weak body.

So you can display for a few years, you display your body on the beach and feel good about yourself. And after a while, the day comes when you look in the mirror. What happened?

There's something wrong with the mirror. In the past, the mirrors that people made were so much better than the mirrors now. So for a while, you identify with this or that.

That is quite normal. And so when you ask, what is the essence of who you are? Most people would tell you, well, I am, this is who I am.

This is what my identity is derived from this, this, this, and this, and this bundle of things is who I am. It's not always positive because I was just talking about having a body that looks better than other people's body. You could have a body that looks worse than other people's body.

And so that serves too. You could either, either you look for something else that gives you an identity, like actually you're more intelligent than all these stupid beach bums. So you can say, look at these people, but you have so much more knowledge and intelligence and you can look down on them.

Or you can, or you can be more spiritual. So if you, I can't afford a Ferrari, I'm on my bicycle and you say, look at this materialistic person with Ferrari. So you can still, or if that doesn't work, you can see how, how unfairly treated by life you have been and how much more, so much more miserable you are than most, most people.

And you've really been a victim of, of circumstances. You've been a victim of your birth and of your, your parents did a dreadful job with you. Maybe if their parents had been more conscious, things could have worked out, but they weren't.

So, but that, that also gives you a strong conceptual identity. So if you can't have a positive one, the negative ones can be just as strong, if not stronger. You can have a huge victim identity.

It's a favorite thing. Sometimes in the collective, certain egoic things become fashionable for a while. Nowadays it's the victim identity for certain groups of people are very fashionable.

So people can feel, oh, yes, we are all being victimized by those people. And of course there's some truth in it in some cases, but that doesn't, but to derive an identity is a delusion. To, to, to, to derive a sense of identity from that is a huge delusion.

That is not who you are. That's all my life. That's all.

So if you are not all those things, so when I ask, who are you? If I ask that question, don't go, let's do this for a moment. Don't go into the past.

Can you, can you feel or sense who you are without reference to the past in you?

You don't even need to remember your name right now. What for?

You don't remember your email address or your phone number or what happened to you 10 years ago. Don't need to remember that. Can you still get a sense without reference to your personal history?

Can you get a sense of beingness or presence? There's no past in that at all. But what is that?

You can't really describe it. All you know is that you are. I am.

You can sense the underlying beingness or presence of you. But to really sense it, what needs to happen is that for a moment, the stream of thinking needs to subside. And it may be happening for many of you at this very moment.

The stream of thinking that is normal for most people, that never stops except when they fall asleep, the stream of thinking for a moment subsides. And when I asked you whether you can be, sense yourself without reference to your personal history, what I was really talking about, what I was really asking was, can you get a sense of your presence without thought? Ah, and there's enormous revelation here.

This question, who am I, does not have a real truthful answer on a conceptual level. It's not in thoughts or words. The true answer to who am I has no thought in it.

It is a sense of presence or beingness. And you can only sense that if it's only a moment. So the stream of thinking subsides, and what happened is you are completely present without your mind saying anything.

You can perceive everything. You can still, you can see, you can hear, you're fully there, and your mind is still. Still does not mean that you've gone to sleep.

It's the opposite. You're actually more alert in that stillness than you would be if you were identified with this continuous stream of thinking. That's the stillness, the inherent stillness, that actually every human has that.

You don't need to work hard to attain stillness or think that if I follow the right course of action, it might take me 10 years, and then I'll be able to have a still mind. No, it's already there. And if you're not totally miserable and unhappy every moment of your life, that means without perhaps you knowing it, anybody who is not extremely miserable all the time has a little bit of access, without even knowing it, to that stillness within.

They don't know it. All they know is from time to time they feel a little bit good. They feel, ah, they don't know.

For three seconds, they stopped thinking. Ah, they might have some other explanation of why in that moment they felt good. Maybe they were looking at a dog.

And in that moment, because the dog wasn't thinking anything about them, because the dog doesn't think, the dog is conscious but not conceptual thinking, the dog does not have an opinion about you. And so when you were petting the dog, for perhaps you suddenly felt good about petting the dog. Why?

Because for a moment, the dog freed you of the judgmental, conceptual mind that otherwise would be very active if you were petting a human. It would say something. Of course, you can't do that because people would think you're insane.

You can't go up to a human, may I pet you? That would be nice if they did that to each other, but the humans have judgments about you. So whenever you go to a human, you know that he has certain thoughts about you.

So the other human cannot free you from your thoughts. But the dog or the cat can, for a short moment, free you from your thoughts. And in that moment, it feels good.

That's why people love their pets so deeply. There's a reason, a deeper reason why they love because the pet frees them a little bit from their minds. And there are moments when you interact with your animal that you can hear in brief moments of thoughtless awareness.

Two seconds, three seconds, but it's enough to keep you going. It's enough so that your life doesn't become totally miserable. And then you might have other moments.

You might have moments when you engage in some physical activity, you swim or you climb a mountain. And then there are moments that your total presence is required by the activity so that there's not enough left for thinking. And again, you feel intensely alive.

Oh, that was so good. Why was it so good? I love it.

It's just so good. I don't know why it's good. Well, it's good because it freed you for a moment from the incessant stream of thinking.

And there was some degree of awareness or presence arising, but you didn't even know that. All the things that you identify with as yourself, whether it's your possessions, your relationships or the things you have achieved or the things you failed to achieve, your successes and failures, what other people think of you, they're all thought forms. They're all thought forms in your mind.

And then these thought forms in your mind, they come together, they congregate in a bundle. And then this bundle of recurring thoughts become the place where you derive your sense of self from. It's a story-based entity, the me, me and my story, me and this story is called my life.

Not my life. People think about my life is, I have to think about my life. I need to work out my life.

But my life is actually a mental construct, me and my life. It consists of your past and the memories and the things, the ways in which you interpret your memories, because the things that you think happen to you, that may already be a falsification. You know that when you ask siblings, ask one sibling what the parents did 20 years ago and ask the other sibling, no, this is not what happened at all.

They experienced something, their memory is totally different of the same event. So there's the egoic entity, the me, consisting of thought. And this little me, the person, the historical person, is never at ease for very long.

And many egos live in an almost permanent state of underlying discontent. They don't even know it because it's so permanent. The same way that you don't know the noise of a refrigerator, the humming when you're in the kitchen.

And suddenly it stops and you go, oh, wow. And you had no idea that the noise was going on all the time. So for many people, their state of consciousness is this underlying discontent or unhappiness is there except for brief moments when they step out of thought.

But usually because they're falling below thought, they're not rising above thought, they're falling below thought. So you need a few more drinks in order, at least now I can be a little bit happy. Of course, it doesn't work all the time.

In fact, some people, when they drink, they become even more unhappy and violent. So it doesn't necessarily free you. So you have the, your sense of self is derived from this thinking in your head, which is maybe predominantly personal for, but in, there are also collective aspects to it where you derive your sense of self from.

And in some cultures, more traditional cultures, a person's sense of self is predominantly a collective one, which means there are collective thought forms that this person identifies with. They have been taught at school and through their family background. And this may be an idea, a political ideology, or it may be a religious ideology that you totally identify with.

And it has you in its grip. You don't know it. You don't know that you are in the grip of certain deeply lodged thought forms and through the screen of those thought forms, you look at the world and then you interpret it through that and you react and you take, you act through that screen.

So you are a, you inhabit a conceptual reality cut off from the deeper levels of your being. Terrible, terrible. But that is a transitional stage for humans.

The awakening is to realize that you had been trapped in those thought forms, which we call the ego. And suddenly you realize there's something else in me that is not thinking, but it's conscious. So I can think, and the universe is telling me to stop speaking for a moment and come back to where we started, which is, you remember I said, when you listen to the silence underneath and in between the words, what happens inside you and what happens inside you is you stop thinking.

You cannot notice the silence, even just notice it like now. In the moment of noticing, you are conscious, but not thinking. Wow, that's an amazing discovery that you are able to be conscious without thinking.

Now, how long that can be sustained in you is another question. But first of all, don't ask, okay, don't try to sustain it by applying willpower that doesn't work or stop breathing. Okay, and don't push your thoughts away that is not to be recommended.

You may be able to stop thinking by using willpower and saying, okay, I'm not going to think now. And you will have to stop breathing too. And you can hold it for a while.

But when the thinking comes back, it'll be as if you had taken a lit of a boiling kettle because you have some catching up to do. So, the most amazing discovery, and that is the awakening of consciousness. And let's see if we can go more deeply into that.

The most amazing discovery in yourself is that the arising of that dimension of consciousness where you are conscious, but you're not thinking. I call that rising above thinking, as opposed to falling below thinking. We talked about that already.

Both free you from this problematic level where humans have lived for thousands of years. That is the conceptual thinking mind. Now, we had to go through that, the conceptual thinking mind is a wonderful, wonderful thing.

Where it becomes a burden and a huge source of suffering is when it becomes the source of your identity. Then when you look to thought for your sense of self, and that is a very unsatisfying place to look for yourself. Because that is what the ego does.

And if you look for yourself on the level of thought, you will never be satisfied for very long. You'll always come back to the state of dissatisfaction where you say, okay, that wasn't it. I thought that would free me.

I thought that would make me happy. I thought that person looked so ideal until we started living together. It didn't work.

They were supposed to make me happy. That was a deal. We even signed a paper.

And then you get really angry. You can get angry at that person because you didn't fulfill your side of the bargain. You can become angry at God.

Why don't you say, this is the right person. I want to, I demand a partner that makes me happy. And so you look for the other thing.

And maybe you look for happiness in an acquisition of something. A bigger house or a bigger car might give me a more satisfying sense of self. But this house or that car, when you get it, it's not really the house or the car that gives you temporarily a more inflated sense of self because you only can experience the house and the car as a thought form, as my house and my car.

So you're looking to the enhancement of your sense of self, not really through the car or the house, but it's because you only experience the car or the house as this thought form. This is my car and this is my house. Have you seen it?

It's mine, look. Now that temporarily enhances your sense of self, but that also is based on thought because these things are thought forms. Welcome to our live meditation.

Last month we had our live meditation from Amsterdam. I was still on a Europe tour and we used a webcam rather than a bigger camera as we used to do. And then I realized and many of you realized that our meditation or teaching, whatever it is, actually works better with a little webcam than it does with a bigger camera.

It may have something to do with the fact that I'm very close to this little webcam and there is a deeper sense of connectedness. So we can share this state of consciousness, presence, and we're using the medium, the technology. How it works, I don't know, but there's a transmission of presence and that's why we're here to enter that shared state of consciousness, the dimension of inner space, stillness, presence, whatever you want to call it.

And while we are in that shared space, inner space ultimately, who you are as a person is of little or no importance. Who I am as a person is of no importance, at least while we're here. And then hopefully that will have some effect on the rest of your life when you go about your business so that the me, the person, loses its overriding importance in your life.

It's still there, but it's no longer what dominates your life. So it's really transcending the person and being here together can give you an intensified experience of the shift from being primarily a person to being primarily a presence. I don't speak to you as a person.

My mind is used as a tool through which presence speaks. That's why I have a little book called Stillness Speaks. Seems almost paradoxical.

This entire teaching, if you even want to call it that, does not come from a person. It only happens because the person got out of the way, became transparent, subsided, and so something deeper was able to come through into this dimension.

That's your destiny and purpose also.

So to be the presence consciously, to experience yourself as that underlying presence is liberating. It frees you from the density of being only that person, knowing yourself only as that personal self, being a self in the Buddhist sense, which is ultimately a delusion, deluded. What emerges is, in Buddhist terms, we might say the no self, which is not something.

It's not an object. It has no form. Or in Hindu terms, the transcendent self emerges, the formless self, not the me anymore.

And it's timeless. There's no past and future to it. And so this is recognizing yourself as essentially timeless, timeless awareness.

[Speaker 8] (9:49:53 - 9:49:58)
So when you look at me, you're not looking at a person. You're looking at yourself.
[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 43:01)
But you're connecting with yourself. So the depth of who you are is reflected back to you. That's all.

When you go back into your daily life, there may be times when the person reasserts itself completely. So you lose yourself again in the person. And then you wake up again.

And some presence comes back. There may also be times when you are primarily the presence. That's wonderful as that happens more and more in your life.

With that comes an openness, a non-judgment. The judgmental mind subsides. And a real sense of connectedness or rather oneness with other beings, human beings, other life forms.

And so that means the way in which you experience your so-called life, the way in which you experience the world, people, situations, events, that changes. The reactive person, the reactive me is no longer running the show. And where before there was a reactive, judgmental person, there's now a deep, benevolent presence.

When you go on the internet and read what people have to say about this or that, most of all that is the reactive person. And there are millions of people who are angry and upset and they can energize other people who are equally unconscious. And when you begin to notice in your daily life when things happened, things went wrong, people didn't do what they were supposed to do, which happens a lot, and you begin to notice where before there was an immediate reaction, an immediate complaint, an immediate judgment.

And now when something happens like that, there's a non-reaction, there's just an aware space, that in that space, here's the situation, there's the person, and that's what is. And that's wonderfully liberating when you don't need to react all the time. You can see how very unconscious people love their reactivity.

You can't take it away from them. They have to arrive at a point where they realize that they are causing themselves and others suffering. Until a human being arrives at that point, they don't want to let go of their reactivity.

The ego loves it. So you have to see how it makes your life difficult. You have to experience the suffering that it creates to a sufficient degree so that you reach that point of readiness, because this is really seeing that 90% of the suffering in your life is created by the conditioned mind, by your mind.

And it's good to arrive at a point where you say, I can't stand it anymore, I can't take this anymore. But at that point, some people still think that what they can't take anymore is to do with whatever happens around them. But really, it's to do with their mind.

Now, when we go deeply into the present moment, which is the same as being still, when you're still, you're very present. You can sense within yourself this essential presence right now, which you cannot define or analyze. It can only be sensed directly It has no form, every thought has a form.

It's a thought form, an energy formation. It arises and it subsides. So everything has form, except the presence, without which you wouldn't even be able to be aware of any form, the light of presence.

It is formless, it has nothing to do with time. And there, when you sense that presence, that is the deeper self. That is a deeper sense of identity than anything in your personal history or your life situation, because all that is form.

But underlying that and pervading that is something much more vital. That is the presence of consciousness itself. And you can sense the presence with your entire being, with every cell of your body, right now, here and now.

Every cell of your body can partake of this sense of all pervasive presence in which you need no thinking to tell you who you are because beyond concepts, beyond thinking, you realize this is who essentially I am. Not some thought in my head that tells me who I am, good or bad. So sense the presence, that vital presence with your entire being.

Feel it in your legs, in your hands, in your entire body, but it's not the body. It's that which animates the body. It's the presence.

So here we have another word, another pointer. The presence is the stillness. The stillness is the presence.

The term stillness points to that reality in negative, one could say, in a negative way in the sense that to most people, stillness means lack of absence of noise. In this case, of course, it's the noise of thinking. Yes, it's the absence of the noise of thinking, but it's also a very powerful presence.

The Buddha called it emptiness, but it would be equally true to call it fullness, the fullness of life, the unconditioned life prior to form. Prior to the arising of form. Another term the Buddha used to point to it, he called it the unmanifested, the uncreated, the unborn.

And he said, you can be aware of that. Within yourself, it is already here. It requires a redirecting, one could say, of your attention.

In the unawakened state of consciousness, which is the normal state of consciousness or unconsciousness, your attention is continuously, or your consciousness is continuously absorbed by form. Thoughts and sense perceptions and emotions. And you go into the seductive power of every thought, of every emotion, of every sense perception.

And then suddenly you become aware of the silent space between two thoughts. Or you become aware of a sense perception without the interference of thinking. Then you have the sense perception.

Like right now, you may be looking at the screen and hearing the words. So you have visual and auditory perception. But if this is working for you right now, there is little or no thinking.

And you haven't disappeared. There is a presence. And if it's working for you right now, there is, you are aware in the background of your sense perceptions, so to speak, you are aware of a powerful sense of presence.

Now that is self-realization. That is spiritual awakening. That is enormously liberating because it liberates you from the prison of your conditioned mind, from being controlled, possessed by your conditioned mind and whatever energies the conditioned mind attracts to itself.

Without this, without this dimension operating in your life, you are to a greater or lesser degree insane. And this is why a large part of human history, when you look at it objectively, is a history of collective mental illness. And once you discover this deeper dimension and you sense and realize its intense aliveness, but at the same time, peace.

So not the peace of drowsiness or unconsciousness, but a vibrantly alive sense of peace. And once you realize that that dimension is there in you and how it frees you from the conditioning, which maybe not all at once, which may continue to operate in your life here and there, but you're able to step out of it and go beyond it. And a deeper intelligence can then operate in your life.

And that is the unconditioned intelligence, which can then operate through your conceptual mind also. It can use, it can move through it, but you're not identified then anymore with the conceptual mind because you're not looking for yourself in it. You don't need to identify with the thoughts.

You can use thoughts. You are no longer used by thought. In other words, you know who you are.

When you're used by thought, you don't know who you are. You mistake every thought for who you are. It takes you over.

The presence beyond thought, it's there. Why don't they teach that at school? It's here at this very moment.

That's the real meaning of the power of now. The power of now is the power of presence. And the presence is primordial intelligence.

In theistic language, which I don't use very much, it would be called God. Not the childish God of the angry or jealous man controlling entity somewhere. But in a deeper sense, it is the source of all life.

And that can then, it wants to, for some reason, express itself fully more and more in this dimension through you. You become a channel for it. And you bring something new into this world.

And above all, you bring peace, you bring creativity, joy, aliveness, whatever form that may take. Then you can become whatever you want to be. It is without loss of being, rooted in being.

And then you do whatever life wants you to do, always realizing being is primary. The present moment is primary. Presence is primary.

Everything else flows out of that or any doing or thinking is secondary. So this is being fully yourself. And being fully yourself also is relinquishing ultimately ideas about yourself.

The need to tell yourself who you are, good or bad. For many people, it's more bad than good. And this presence that you sense now, that you are now, can operate in your daily life when you do things and deal with things.

Just remember it's there, not once you remember it's there, you can sense it's there. So you are both the presence, the unconditioned, and you are also a person with his or her history and life situation. But allow the presence to shine through the person and then be the presence more than the person.

That's the most liberating thing that you can walk through life, being essentially a conscious presence. And secondary, yes, you're also a person. Be aware of the mental baggage.

If you're still from time to time, imposing mental baggage on a situation, be aware of the narrative that goes through your head referring to people or situations, or your so-called life. People have all kinds of judgements about my life. And when the moment people think my life, a heaviness descends upon them because, oh God, what is how, what's going to happen?

And what has happened? Ooh. So that they can look to the past, they can have regrets, a few pleasant memories, but it's all gone now anyway.

And then the future is so uncertain of my life. Where is it all going to go, my life? Of course, not realizing that on that level, my life is a mental construct because the absolute reality of what your life is is this moment is your life.

Your life is never not this moment. The rest is a mental construct. Now, it may well be that you cannot live entirely without mental constructs.

Of course, you will have mental constructs, but you do not need to be trapped in your mental constructs and you do not need to derive your entire sense of identity, your entire sense of who you are from the mental constructs in your mind. And that is a liberation. So your life is now, and this is why I believe it's in my first book, there's your life situation.

Normally what's called my life is my life situation. All the stuff that makes up my life and my life situation is I have to remember it. I have to think about it.

Otherwise there is no life situation. So my life situation is a mental construct in the head. That's okay.

I have memories. I can't get rid of that. Nor do I want to or need.

You don't need to get rid of it. But you recognize that there is my life situation, but there's also my life. Now, my life is now and my life situation exists in time and it exists in the head.

And on that left, that is the personality. That's where it lives. And that's fine.

It continues to live, but I don't need to be trapped in that anymore. And more and more you come, you step into the nowness of now and live your life fully now, instead of being prevented from living your life fully now by excessive identification with the narrative, excessive identification with your life situation in your head. And think, oh, how is it ever going to change?

What about this moment? I'm not interested in that. I want to get somewhere else.

Where? I want to get somewhere where my life situation is going to be better. What about now?

And so, and then if you really open yourself to now, you realize actually, and this is an incredible realization for people who think they have lots of problems, which is most people. You cannot have a problem at this moment. You cannot have a problem now.

Challenge, yes. You can be challenged by some situation. Now there could be a grizzly bear escaped from Grouse Mountain coming into here and suddenly attack me.

Now, that's not even a problem because a problem needs time. It's a challenge in this moment. I wouldn't say now I really have a problem.

It's a challenge. And so either nobody can predict how you respond to a challenge. I might either play dead, run away, or who knows, or make friends with it.

And coming to the present moment. And so, yes, there are situations in your life that you need to deal with, or you might have to wait some time before you can deal with them, or there's nothing you can do about them. That's all true.

But the magical question you can ask yourself many times in your life is, especially when you're burdened by problems, do I have a problem right now? You may be ill. Yes, you might feel a disability.

You might feel a weakness. You might feel dysfunction on a physical level. That's the fact of what is.

This does not become a problem until your mind gets in there and starts constructing a story around it. So you can, can you be in the present moment and go into it, what problem do I actually have now? Well, now, well, I mean, I have to, I have to, the moment you go to problems, you go into the future.

I have to, well, tomorrow I'm meeting that guy and I have to think about what I'm going to say to him and then my lawyer has to see him about my divorce. Not mine, but it's just an example. I'm joking, I'm joking.

I have to declare bankruptcy tomorrow. That's a huge problem. My whole, my company, not mine, by the way.

A huge problem. Yeah, I have to think about it. But do you have a problem at this moment?

What? Yeah, I have to think. This moment, well, no, I don't see it.

I don't, I don't see the bankruptcy anywhere. Why is that strange? Well, I see there's the lights and there's flower and there's, I can feel myself breathing.

So the bankruptcy is also a mental construct because in the moment I take action, when it comes tomorrow, which is not tomorrow, it'll be now, then I take action. I'd say this, I'd sign that paper, and then I do that, and then I do that, and then I look at my bank statement and it will say zero. And again, just looking at that is not a problem until your mind, and I'm not saying take no action.

Action may be necessary, but it's not a problem. It's only the desire of the egoic mind to create problems by dwelling unnecessary on situations that creates a problem. And the ego grows.

The more problems you have, the bigger the ego gets. Me, there are many human beings who consider themselves a problem to be solved. That's their identity.

And many people go to a therapist with that underlying assumption. There's nothing wrong with therapists. Therapists do great work if they are connected with a deeper level of God.

And they go to a therapist with the assumption that I am a problem that needs to be solved. That's my identity. But of course, when it really comes to the crunch, they resist it because they are so, that it derives their identity from their problem, so they don't want to let go because then who am I without that?

Oh, okay, better stay in my problems. So what problem do I have at this moment? None, never a problem.

You could have pain, yes, it's pain. Not to be underestimated, but it's not a problem. But most things that make people happy, it's not even pain.

It's not, it's in the head. It's the problem-making faculty in the head. In the present moment, problems cannot survive.

And then you actually become much more effective at taking action when you don't create problems.

[Speaker 2] (43:25 - 1:06:08)
I have this makeup artist that comes to make me pretty for the camera. And as she was putting makeup on me, she goes, so tell me all the secrets to happiness. And I'm like, wow, that's a big question.

I suppose if we just don't think about it, we're happy. And it's so true. I mean, in our lives, I mean, we have all these roles that we play, you know, where perhaps, you know, a wife, a father, you know, a mother, a husband, a daughter, doctor, lawyer, janitor, whatever it is, we have all these roles that we play in our everyday lives.

And it can consume us, literally consume the space that we are and fill up that space. And we believe heavily and identify with those roles. So we will do together a who am I meditation.

Who am I? Beyond the conceptual mind, beyond the roles that we play in life. And roles are okay, as long as we can kind of like know, really know that that is not who we are.

So deep within us, there is a presence, consciousness, the Tao that cannot be named, but yet we can directly experience and know thyself, not through the conceptual mind, but through awareness, being aware of itself. So this day and age, maybe even some of you might be thinking, oh my goodness, a 30 minute meditation well, it's now 20, but 20 minute meditation, that's just like too much. Maybe 10 minutes is good, five minutes is good.

And now they have these apps that will count down for you to do a five minute meditation so you can become present. It's almost like gone are the days where when we would sit down and meditate and you would sit for an hour to meditate. I don't even know if those exist anymore.

However, I'd like to bring back 19 minutes now of meditation. So let's sit comfortably, I know we had lunch and maybe you had a lot of lunch and your tummy's maybe full, but if you think that you may fall asleep, which often can happen during a meditation, perhaps sit away from the back so you're not leaning against your back of the chair. Whatever will be comfortable for you.

Make sure your feet are flat on the floor or if you're sitting cross-legged, that's fine too. But sitting up nice and tall, either your hands can be face down on your lap or palms facing up and close your eyes. Let's everyone take a deep breath and just let it go with the sigh, letting go of the morning.

And one more time. Ah. And just becoming aware of your breathing.

Becoming aware of form and your breath is form. Unseen, but definitely felt. And perhaps some thoughts arise.

If they rise, just let them arise, but let them go and return your attention to your breathing. Become aware of your body, feeling your sit bones on the chair, perhaps scanning your body from head to toe, noticing any tension, tightness, or maybe even pain, just simply observing it, feeling it. Letting go of the label.

And if emotions are there or they arise in you, just simply notice and feel. And relax your body, relaxing your forehead, relaxing your shoulders, your jaw, relax your entire body. And with the sense perceptions of your ears, just notice the sounds that arise.

And now become aware of your inner body, that feeling of aliveness within. If you don't know what that feels like, just draw your attention to your hands and ask yourself, how do I know I even have hands? And just simply feel.

So there's an awareness of the form dimension, the form of your breathing, the forms of emotions, thoughts, sounds, the body, the sensations in the body, and the inner body. All that we can say is the world of form in this moment. Now see if you can become aware of the formless dimension, the awareness that you are aware, awareness itself.

Ask yourself, who am I? And notice maybe that the thoughts may arise and your attention is in the mind, looking for yourself in the mind. Your brain is such a small fraction of the totality of who you are.

So simply be still, be aware that you are aware. The form dimension remains, but yet there is the essence of who you are, the presence. It's always forms that arise.

Keep your attention on the formless and the stillness in which all forms arise and dissolve, arise and dissolve. You are both those dimensions of form and formlessness. Become familiar, as Matthew Ricard said, we can say meditation, we can say contemplation, can say we become familiar with thyself, to know thyself beyond the conceptual mind, to know thyself as that spiritual dimension.

It's why we are here, why we are on this planet, to evolve and awaken, so we can be in this world, but not of this world, can dance in this world, play our roles, but then lay them back down when we're just here sitting together. Or at any time, you're at work, you play your role, but when you go home, you're no longer that teacher, or doctor, or lawyer, or janitor, but to see our true selves, non-conceptually, is that inner happiness, is that joy, that peace that passes all understanding. So you can sit here with your eyes closed, or you can gently open them, taking in the world of form again.

The world of form tells me it's zero minutes left, so I leave you here with yourself. Thank you.